

Request for Quotation - Advancing the Black Carbon (BC) Add-On Methodology for Clean Cooking Projects

Background to the assignment

Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) is a major international research programme funded by UK Aid (FCDO) and leading the Modern Energy Cooking Challenge of the Ayrton Fund. MECS works through a geographically diverse, multicultural and transdisciplinary team in close partnership with NGOs, governments, the private sector, academia and research institutes, policy representatives and communities in multiple countries to accelerate a transition on from biomass to genuinely clean cooking.

The MECS programme is led by the Sustainable Transitions: Energy, Environment and Resilience Centre (STEER Centre), within the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Loughborough University.

MECS has been at the forefront of methodological innovation within results-based climate finance mechanisms for clean cooking, including the development and refinement of metered approaches under the Gold Standard (GS).

Black carbon (BC) is a critical short-lived climate pollutant (SLCP) with a disproportionately high near-term warming impact relative to its atmospheric lifetime.

While carbon dioxide (CO₂) has long been the dominant metric in carbon finance frameworks, growing scientific and policy attention - including increasing references to BC within updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) - underscores the importance of quantifying and reducing BC emissions

Phase 1 of this MECS-supported initiative developed a structured methodology to quantify black carbon (BC) and organic carbon (OC) reductions intended as an add-on to the Gold Standard Methodology for Metered & Measured Energy Cooking Devices (MMMECD), incorporating spatially resolved, country-specific radiative forcing conversions.

Phase 2 focused on stakeholder engagement, scientific validation discussions, and preparation for Gold Standard submission, including identification of the steps required for endorsement and eventual market adoption. The Phase 1 and Phase 2 work are written up as a combined report, [available here](#).

MECS now seeks to commission the next steps in advancing the BC add-on methodology toward full market readiness and scalable adoption.

Scope of Work

MECS seeks to appoint a suitably qualified consultant or consortium to undertake a structured programme of work addressing the following areas:

1. Methodology Finalization and Submission Support

On behalf of (and supported by) MECS, submit the methodology to Gold Standard (GS) and lead on responding to review comments and revisions to the methodology.

- Make formal submission of the BC add-on methodology to GS as an extension to the MMMECD.

- Respond to comments from the GS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) (and any reviewers they appoint), in consultation with MECS, through potentially multiple review cycles, making necessary adjustments to the methodology.
- Assuming the TAC approves the add-on for public consultation, respond to comments from this process, making necessary adjustments to the methodology.

Key questions are expected to include:

- What methodological clarifications are required to meet Gold Standard Technical Advisory Committee standards?
- How should uncertainties in BC and OC quantification be treated transparently yet conservatively?
- Are regional radiative forcing factors sufficiently robust for application across multiple project geographies?

2. Development and Operationalisation

The estimation of impacts of the BC and OC emissions and reductions depend on suitable impact factors; work to date has used the GEOS-Chem model, but the consultants may propose an alternative approach as being more suitable. For practical use, some form of accessible look-up table is needed, proposed to be in the form of an online tool. Building on Phase 2 recommendations, the consultant shall:

- Develop a functional BC/OC impact calculator capable of translating emissions reductions into warming impact metrics.
- Incorporate regional differentiation where feasible.
- Address both direct and indirect radiative impacts.
- Integrate uncertainty ranges and sensitivity parameters.
- Develop the tool in an accessible online format suitable for independent use by project developers.
- Provide costed recommendations for hosting, updating and maintaining the tool over a three-year period.

Key questions are expected to include:

- How can usability for developers be maximised without undermining methodological rigour?
- What governance and update mechanisms are required to maintain access and scientific credibility?

3. Continue targeted outreach activities.

Once the Gold Standard has reviewed and accepted the methodology, a limited programme of awareness raising is suggested. The consultant shall:

- Propose a series of webinars and other outreach activities to promote the new methodology to key interest groups, such as scientific stakeholders, project developers, and other carbon market actors.
- Deliver the webinars, in collaboration with MECS.

Deliverables

The consultant will produce the following:

1. **Submission to Gold Standard**
 - Documentation for submission of the add-on tool
 - Response documents for review comments
 - Revised methodology following review
2. **Operational BC Impact Calculator**
 - Online deployable tool
 - User documentation
 - Maintenance and governance plan
3. **Webinar and Stakeholder Presentation**
 - An outreach plan
 - PowerPoint presentation for use in webinars
 - Delivery of at least one public-facing webinar

Budget & Duration

The research is expected to commence no later than **1st May 2026**. All deliverables must be completed and delivered by **31st December 2026**. The consultant should demonstrate in their response to these ToRs how the work can be completed within the time available.

The total budget is a maximum of **£53,000** (This must include all VAT/tax liabilities and all third-party fees/charges associated with the assignment). A breakdown of the budget should be provided as part of the response.

Payment is contingent on successful completion of all deliverables.

Responding to these ToRs

Each submission will be evaluated based on the following combination of price and quality.

Quality	Score
Appreciation and understanding of the task	5%
Quality of proposal and methodology	50%
Skills, expertise and experience of consultant/organisation team members including evidence of similar work completed	10%
Proposed management of the activities including Gantt chart	5%
Price and costs (including a full budget breakdown)	30%
Total	100%

The University will accept the quotation which is the best value for money i.e. a balance between cost and quality. Shortlisted organisations may be invited to an interview (online) to finalise selection.

Responses should be a maximum of 12 pages (plus up to 3 CVs, 2 pages each).

Please send all responses to mecs@lboro.ac.uk with the subject 'Black Carbon Add-On Methodology – Phase 3'. All proposals must be received by **Friday 24th April 2026**. The time will be determined using the time of arrival in the MECS inbox. Any offers received after 23:55 on the closure date will be rejected.

Proposals should be submitted in Word (do not submit PowerPoint/Prezi or PDF).

Contract Management

This contract will be managed by Prof. Matt Leach. All deliverables should be emailed to them on or before the date required. Loughborough University reserves the right to request the consultant to make revisions to the deliverables if they do not meet the required quality. The consultant will be required to make these revisions at no additional cost to Loughborough University.

Appointments to discuss the overall progress against the contract will be agreed at mutually convenient times to the consultant and the project manager.

Ethical considerations

All research must be in line with the [Code of Practice for research, Promoting good practice and preventing misconduct](#) (UK Research Integrity Office, 2009).

The UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) is an independent charity, offering support to the public, researchers and organisations to further good practice in academic, scientific and medical research. Its confidential advice service is available to free of charge to individuals (members of the public, research participants, patients, researchers and students) and subscribing organisations. Their advice service can be [accessed here](#).

At a minimum, participants must not be subjected to physical, social, legal or psychological harm. Due consideration and ethical steps must be taken into safeguarding all participants, especially the vulnerable. A detailed Participation Information Sheet explaining the full scope of the study, what confidentiality entails, and that no participants will be forced into participating, must be provided at recruitment. Participants are to be made aware that participation is fully voluntary and there are no repercussions if they choose to no longer participate in the study at any point in time. Participants should, ideally, sign a consent form which includes consent for the use of photographs and videos.

Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. With regards to confidentiality and privacy of participation, participants must be informed that their anonymity will be maintained in any outputs and that all identifiable markers will be removed from any data sets that are published.

The consultant will be responsible for securing any research or ethical permissions needed from local authorities in each of the field work locations. There may be additional ethical, or research clearance needed for this kind of user centric design research in the chosen country.