EngEx Partnership Protocol – Engineer

The Engineering Exchange provides technical and scientific knowledge and skills to community groups in London, with the aims of:

1. making UCL Engineering expertise more accessible to local community groups;
2. supporting UCL Engineering staff and students to align their work with local community needs.

Projects are designed and agreed in partnership between community groups and UCL engineers, with support from the EngEx team.

Who we work with:

We work with a range of local community based groups such as residents’ associations, environmental groups and youth organisations. We aim to work with organisations who might otherwise find it difficult to access engineering expertise.

We are seeking committed UCL engineering practitioners who can be contacted through our register to work on projects when a knowledge match is identified.

What types of projects we take on:

Community groups are welcome to suggest for consideration problems or ideas they have to improve their community, local area or London more widely. If we can make a match between the group’s needs and our register of practitioners, we will suggest an initial meeting between all parties.

Equally, you are welcome to come to us with projects you have in mind, if you already have links with community groups who have expressed a research need. We can help to identify community based opportunities to improve the impact of your current or proposed research, including support for Pathways to Impact statements for research council proposals and other bids.
We work on projects that have a technical or scientific problem at their core. Engineering deals with technologies, the environment, buildings, transport, water, construction, healthcare technologies, security and designing against crime, energy, information and communication technologies and many more issues that might be important to community groups.

Project length can be an afternoon, six months or more.

The impact of the project doesn’t have to be huge, but it does need to serve the community and benefit a group of people by improving knowledge of technical issues and contributing to better quality of life.

What we provide:

The EngEx provides resources for project management, including templates and protocols for you to work with (see website). We will match you with a community group looking for a project requiring specialised knowledge in your area of expertise, and will help you scope and agree your project together. We will also oversee progress reviews.

We have some funding in place from within the Faculty of Engineering, which can be used for travel to and from research sites and for project outputs (printed materials, events etc.). We will coordinate printing of reports and launch events.

What we expect from you:

You must commit to the agreed timeframe. If you are unavailable for the full duration of the project but would like to participate during particular phases, we will try to accommodate this. We will also need you to be available during the report review and printing process (if relevant) for edits and alterations.

We expect you to take on a proactive role within the project; the EngEx team is available for support at particular project phases, but we foresee the bulk of the work being completed in partnership between practitioners and community group representatives.

We expect all work to be undertaken to high academic and professional standards. All major reports or papers should be independently peer-reviewed before public release, and time for peer-review should be included in project planning. Fair attribution must be given for contributions by community groups.

The following comprise the usual steps to completing a project, which may vary depending on the specific needs of the project:
Project steps:

1. Initial conversation where we discuss the issue your community is facing and consider possible engineering perspectives. Groups and/or engineers may approach us with ideas.

2. If we think we can help and we have interest from our register of engineers, we set an initial scoping meeting with you, the EngEx team and a UCL engineer or engineers who will work with you on your project.

3. During this scoping meeting, we consider objectives and outputs. This could include a report, briefings, a launch or other event, publicity (media, social media), video production etc. We will together set a timeline and agree a date for progress reviews, if necessary.

4. During or following the meeting, either the UCL project lead or the community group leader will complete the ‘Small Project Initiation Form’, which all parties must agree to before work commences.

5. Following the scoping meeting, the project work begins.

6. Throughout project delivery, the project team is available to facilitate evaluation of actions against milestones, as well as other support at needed.

7. A final debriefing meeting is set for participants to give their views on successes and challenges of the project. This helps us improve how we deliver future projects and will make us aware of any outstanding issues that we need to address.