

Setting up Community Energy Projects @ Universities

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- *on behalf of Solar SOAS/ UniSolar*

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- @solarsoas

- Solar SOAS

- www.Uni-Solar.org

Hello!

- ❖ Who am I?
- ❖ What is Community Energy
- ❖ National situation & London situation
- ❖ Why is it important
- ❖ Broader picture



Outline



Overview of Solar SOAS

- ❖ How we started
- ❖ Key milestones
- ❖ What we achieved
- ❖ The structure of Solar SOAS
- ❖ The next steps for Solar SOAS

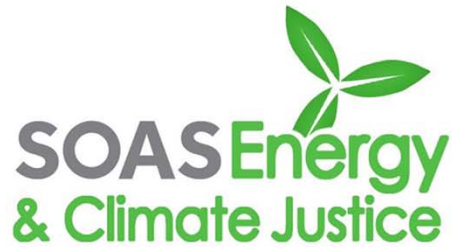
How to set up your own project!

- ❖ Steps
- ❖ Potential challenges

Q + A



How did Solar SOAS start?



The Guardian article titled "Soas becomes first London university to divest from fossil fuels" by Emma Howard, dated Friday 24 April 2015. The article reports that campaigners hail success as Soas follows in footsteps of Glasgow and Bedfordshire universities, and calls on other universities to follow suit. The image shows a group of students holding a banner that reads "Dear SOAS, WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR (DIVESTMENT) COMMITMENT, WE'RE READY TO DIVEST".

the guardian

home > environment > climate change > wildlife energy pollution

Fossil fuel divestment

Soas becomes first London university to divest from fossil fuels

Campaigners hail success as Soas follows in footsteps of Glasgow and Bedfordshire universities, and calls on other universities to follow suit

Emma Howard

Friday 24 April 2015 15.27 BST

Shares 3328 Comments 37

Save for later

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

Dear SOAS,
WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR
(DIVESTMENT)
COMMITMENT, WE'RE READY TO
DIVEST

Most popular

- Kids Company closure: 6,000 children have lost support
- MH370: Malaysian PM confirms Réunion debris is from missing flight
- Win or lose, Jeremy

Solar SOAS Timeline

| Month | Sept 2014 | March 2015 | November 2015 | Jan 2016 | June 2016 | September 2016 |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Action | Solar SOAS established by students in the Energy and Climate Justice Society; raise UGM motion about solar power to get student mandate | Solar SOAS become finalists in the Mayor of London Low Carbon Entrepreneur Award | Solar SOAS awarded £20,000 from the urban community energy fund (UCEF) to do the feasibility work on our project | Set up Community Benefit society 'UniSolar Limited; get Built Heritage Status' | Get pre-registered for old Feed-In Tariff; secure green light from SOAS board | Funding for solar panels achieved and 114 solar panels were installed on roof of SOAS Old Building |



What has Solar SOAS achieved?



solar
SOAS

- ❖ 114 solar panels with 29.6kwp at peak production
- ❖ Pre-accredited for the old Feed-In Tariff (FITs)
- ❖ Registered Community Benefit Society UniSolar Limited
- ❖ Welcomed into the network of community energy
- ❖ Annual green fund to use at SOAS
- ❖ Year on year engagement of new students
- ❖ Hands-on experience with green technology
- ❖ Business/ organisational skills experience for students

Solar SOAS structure



Funding structure

- ❖ Crowdfund
- ❖ SU loan
- ❖ SU investment
- ❖ Grant from SOAS

Long-term governance

- ❖ How to look after the project over a 20 year lifespan of the solar panels?

Green community fund

- ❖ Feed-in tariffs
- ❖ Some towards repayment of investment/loan
- ❖ Some towards upkeep of solar panels
- ❖ The rest as a fund for the community!

Developments

MAYOR OF LONDON



- ❖ Community Energy London position
- ❖ Solar Action Plan for London
- ❖ London Community Energy Fund
- ❖ NUS Divest/ Invest
- ❖ Bristol Community Energy Fund
- ❖ Camden Climate Fund
- ❖ Islington Community Energy Fund

How to set up a University community energy project



A 15-STEP GUIDE TO SETTING UP A University Community Energy Project



1. FORM A GROUP OF ENTHUSIASTIC VOLUNTEERS

- Team up with anyone excited about the idea. Look for uni environmental groups, Fossil Free campaigners, students or alumni in engineering, business, energy, finance, design, law and more!
- Familiarise yourself with what community energy is, including the workings and structures. Useful resources: Plan LoCal, UniSolar, Community Energy England, CSE, Community Energy Coalition, Leapfrog, 10:10
- Start a public Facebook page, a private Facebook working group and a group email thread. E.g. Solar SOAS
- Organise regular meetings (weekly or bi-weekly). You will need a core team who can commit to regular meetings and work on this project

2. IDENTIFY SUITABLE GREEN ENERGY SOURCES ON CAMPUS

- Big open windy space for a wind turbine? A nearby river fit for hydro?
- For solar PV, identify uni buildings and halls of residence with unused roofs and check their rough solar power generation capacity using 10:10's free mobile app LookUp!. Or empty spaces like fields could potentially house a solar farm.

3. LAUNCH THE PROJECT IDEA

- Invite all students to an event to get more people involved (e.g. open consultation, host a movie, do a speaker event with UniSolar)
- Meet with students' union and get their feedback
- Think about putting forward a UGM motion to get the union's official support for student community energy
Research (and maybe meet with) established community energy groups

4. IDENTIFY YOUR UNIVERSITY'S ENERGY MANAGER OR EQUIVALENT. ARRANGE TO MEET AND ASK:

- Has this been tried before on campus? Are there any existing feasibility studies to build on? Are there certain roofs unsuitable due to equipment up there, or access difficulties in the next few years?
- Can the Energy Manager, Sustainability and Estates staff help you?
- Who owns the university grounds/buildings? What does the roof/space lease situation look like?

5. FIND ONE OR MORE CONTRACTORS TO DISCUSS FEASIBILITY

Solar installer companies for example might be able to provide a free desktop survey to get some initial insight into generation capacity.

6. MONEY - WORK OUT HOW YOU WILL FUND THE EARLY AND LATER STAGES OF THE PROJECT

You will likely need funding to enlist the help of experts like engineers, solicitors, accountants.

- Student Enterprise departments and Student Hubs can offer useful (and free) advice on setting up a business and projects as well as competition prize money
- Set up a student society and use the society budget
- The university itself might be able to offer some funding, as might the local authority council
- Research other (external) grants/competitions you can apply for e.g. Mayor of London Low
- Carbon Entrepreneur Competition (£20k 1st prize); Rural Community Energy Fund (relevant once you're further along and ready to do formal feasibility work); NACUE; Santander, Community Action Awards

7. IDENTIFY DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES AT THE UNIVERSITY AND MEET WITH INDIVIDUALS IN MANAGEMENT YOU NEED PERMISSION AND SUPPORT FROM (FOSSIL FREE TEAM MAY HAVE TIPS)

- i.e. Head of estates and governance board - ask (perhaps through Energy Manager) to meet up in order to pitch your idea (formally or informally) and gauge the level of support, or identify crucial barriers early on e.g. land/building lease restrictions

8. EXPLORE FORMAL LEGAL BUSINESS STRUCTURES

You might need to be legally incorporated for some funding opportunities, and it can help you be taken seriously by stakeholders.

- i.e. CICs, Community Benefit Society, Co-ops, Charities, IPS.
- Look at how different structures will impact how income is distributed, implement a sustainable governance structure and embed certain company rules about social/environmental objectives
- Consider costs of registering as a legal entity- use society budget/prize/grant
LEAP, Student enterprises and UniSolar can provide some legal resources and advice

9. NAME AND REGISTER THE PROJECT AS YOUR CHOSEN STRUCTURE

(get specialist advice on Model Rules from a community energy facilitator like Pure Leapfrog or Sharenergy)

- Note that this process can take several weeks/months

10. FINANCIAL MODEL

- Get financial modelling advice (from expert friends, relatives, supporters, or pro bono from financial firms) and estimate potential income and costs for community energy projects

11. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Survey university stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, alumni) in person, through social media and/or by email to gauge interest on campus for joining/ investing/ donating to a potential community energy project

12. ENGAGE WITH YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL

- Talk to the sustainability/planning officer, identify council initiatives that can support what you're doing, and identify any obstacles (e.g. listed buildings, conservation area, local opposition groups)

13. GET STARTED WITH RURAL COMMUNITY ENERGY FUND OR OTHER BIG FUND APPLICATIONS

- UniSolar, as a successful applicant for UCEF (securing a £20k grant!) can help with this – remember we can consult you at every step of this process!
- Get letters of support from important stakeholders (e.g. local council, university management, 10:10, UniSolar Limited)

14. GET INVESTMENT READY WITH ABOUT £20K

- Raise capital through an appropriate crowd-funding initiative (ie equity, community share offer, reward/donation based crowdfunding), install your renewable technology and make progress towards your financial, environmental and social benefits and goals.

15. MAKE LASTING FRIENDSHIPS, JOIN THE ENERGY REVOLUTION, AND SPREAD THE WORD!

Main challenges

- ❖ Getting an interested group together
- ❖ Money to carry out feasibility studies;

London Community Energy Fund, Rural Community Energy Fund, Bristol Community Energy Fund etc.

- ❖ Impact of lower Feed-In Tariffs
 - need to use electricity directly rather than selling it to the grid
 - need to have a 'Power Purchasing Agreement' (PPA) with the school



Useful Websites

<http://communityenergy.london/>

<https://communityenergyengland.org/>

<http://hub.communityenergyengland.org/>

<https://www.bristolcommunityenergy.co.uk/>

Any other suggestions?



Support

Solar SOAS has so far received support and interest from the following organisations:



MAYOR OF LONDON

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

nus
national union of students



JOJU
SOLAR



LIGHTSOURCE
RENEWABLE ENERGY LIMITED

leapfrog
energising communities



Community
Energy
England



student hubs
Connecting students with causes

Hoxton
Community
Energy



PROJECTDIRT
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES FOR GOOD



STUDENT
ENTERPRISE



Any questions? :)



Thank you!



- @solarsoas



- Solar SOAS



- www.Uni-Solar.org

