DEPARTMENTAL MISSION

To explore, experiment with, and improve the mobilisation of scientific and engineering knowledge and expertise within public decision-making around the world.

DEPARTMENTAL VISION

By 2021, UCL STEaPP will be globally recognised as a pioneering leader in educational, research and policy engagement activities focused on the mobilisation of Science & Engineering knowledge and expertise within public decision-making.

OUR RESEARCH ETHOS

Research in STEaPP strives to be ‘applied in focus’ in its study of the mobilisation of ST&E knowledge in order to enhance the collective capacity of public decision-making processes and institutions to address complex 21st Century societal challenges. At the same time, STEaPP researchers have an explicit mandate to be ‘global in reach’ by bringing together international networks of academic and policymaker. This ethos is geared towards leveraging diverse global experience, and supporting more resilient public decision-making informed by science and engineering across societies’ around the world.

OUR RESEARCH LANDSCAPE: CHALLENGES AND PRACTICES

Our ethos comes to life through research that focuses on the intersection of a set of focal societal Challenges (e.g. sustainability) and a growing set of Practices that enable the mobilisation of expertise across disciplines, challenges, and scales of governance scales (e.g. science advice). This framework helps our research maintain a balance between applying our expertise to understand and address pressing societal issues, and exploring and developing the general processes through which ST&E knowledge can be most effectively mobilised for society.

OUR CHALLENGES

In our first two years, STEaPP has developed active portfolios of research on the challenges of sustainability and urbanisation. Our work on sustainability ranges broadly across energy use and systems; climate change mitigation and adaptation; ecosystems services; the nexus of water, energy and food; natural resource management; and green innovation. At the same time, UCL STEaPP is emerging as an important hub of investigation for urban policy. Active research includes projects on the governance of urban infrastructure; the impact of universities on city governance and economics; city leadership; and the cross-cutting influence of international city networks. Research is also emerging on how knowledge mobilisation and us is shaping urban policy and decision-making.

The department is now actively building three additional challenge-oriented research portfolios in the areas of development; digital and cyber governance; and humanitarian and crisis management. Several early research projects in these areas are building out of...
our existing research strengths; for example, focusing on the interface of energy and development, or on science advice for digital governance. Over the course of the next several years, new projects – and new faculty hires – will expand our portfolios in these areas.

**OUR PRACTICES**

Underpinning and cross-cutting our challenge-oriented portfolios are our practice-oriented research programmes. In our first two years, STEaPP has focused primarily on developing the areas of science advice, science diplomacy, and impact. Current projects in these areas focus on: charting the dynamics of science advisory activities in national and city governments; examining the use of scientific knowledge and expertise within international diplomacy; and exploring how research and researchers impact the democratic functions of legislatures such as the UK parliament. These investigations are laying the foundation for the analysis and development of practices research that enables the mobilisation of expertise across disciplines, across societal challenges and across governance scales. With these as exemplars, other practice-oriented research programmes STEaPP is actively exploring include: risk; innovation; engineering policy; modelling for policy; foresight & games; and socio-technical analysis.