# SMp renewable energy, sustainable economic development Strand Meeting

# thursday 16th november, edinburgh city chambers, high street, Eh1 1yJ

# 16.30 – 18.30

**ATTENDEES**

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| Ankit Agarwal | LTS International |
| Janey Andrews | University of Strathclyde |
| Richard Bates | University of St Andrews |
| Alison Connelly | RSPB |
| Ian Dickson | Rotary Club of Ayr |
| Emma Duncan | The Global Concerns Trust |
| Stuart Galloway | University of Strathclyde |
| Daniel Gilbert | Pivot Natural Resources |
| Jackie Farr | SMP |
| Charles Fawcett | Aiming Higher in Malawi |
| Sarah Knight | LTS International |
| Victoria MacKay | TownRock Energy |
| Jamie McCloskey | SolarAid/SunnyMoney |
| Lorna McDonald | Tearfund |
| Dory McIntosh | Challenges Worldwide |
| William McQuilter | Power2Center |
| Ruth Milliken | Dunelm Energy, Scotland Lights Up Malawi |
| Tione Mtalimanja | SMP Board |
| Grace O’Donovan | SMP |
| Graeme Reid | Scottish Government |
| Fiona Savage | George Watson’s College |
| David Townsend | TownRock Energy |
| Kathy Wright | SMP |

**APOLOGIES**

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| Aran Eales | University of Strathclyde |
| Madeleine van Hilten | Microloan Foundation |
| David Hope-Jones | Scotland Malawi Partnership |

**SUMMARY MINUTES**

# Welcome and Introduction to Malawian Input

Attendees were welcomed to the SMP’s last of five strand meetings around the Scottish Government’s Malawi Development Programme current round of grant funding. The purpose of the meeting was to allow for the sharing of opportunities, challenges, priorities and issues alongside Malawian input from a panel of colleagues and counterparts in Malawi. The meeting was conducted under Chatham House Rule and as such these summary minutes are anonymised.

Roundtable introductions were given by each attendee on their organisation and experience of Scottish Government funding and other funded projects.

All attendees were reminded of the importance of reading the funding round criteria and eligibility requirements before applying. It was noted that this meeting is not the official Information Day; this will be held by the Scottish Government and Corra Foundation on Wednesday 29th November in Edinburgh – full details to be announced.

Attendees were reminded that the SMP is core-funded by the Scottish Government but is independent of them, and of the grant making process.

Malawian input remains at the heart of the SMP and all the meetings held. Thanks were given to the Malawi Scotland Partnership for their role in supporting and gathering input from key stakeholders. For this meeting the Malawian input was fed through an interactive WhatsApp discussion. Attendees were asked to write anonymous questions down, which were sent to the panel in Malawi, and their responses were revisited later (see section in minutes below).

There was discussion around the priorities for the civil society and governance strand from the Malawi government:

* Former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said “Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, social equity, and a healthy environment”. There are close links between energy supply and practically all aspects of sustainable development.
* In keeping with the commitment to the UN’s Sustainable Energy for All initiative the Scottish Government welcomes concept notes for projects in this funding round that include support for renewable energy access. Stand-alone renewable energy projects in Malawi will again be funded (with a 50% capital budget limit), or can form part of a concept note with one or more of the priority themes listed above: illustrative examples are solar energy for a community health clinic project, small business or school (noting 20% capital budget limit, see Assessment Criteria).
* The Government of Malawi is particularly keen to see support for renewable energy via alternative sources of power from Solar (eg, wind, microhydro, biomass).

It was recognised that the priorities for Renewable Energy are not as detailed as in other strands. It was also recognised that alternatives to solar energy will be a substantial challenge in this strand, however there was a recognition that approaches to Renewables should be a mature thought process.

Key policy documents were also noted:

[Malawi Renewable Energy Strategy (Draft) 2016](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2653/)

[The Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2656/)

[The Sustainable Energy for All Action Agenda](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2655/)

[IPP Framework](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2654/)

**ACTION:** Attendees to share links to projects with SMP, SMP to upload links to these (and others as they are identified) on the past events page [here](http://scotland-malawipartnership.org/news-events/past-events/malawi-call-renewable-energy-water-climate/).

# Sharing of Learning

The sharing of learning was focused on three areas: application, grant management, and sustainability of projects. Some of the successes, issues and challenges identified were:

Malawian input is the key to a successful project.

In-depth communications consultation, and demand-driven projects that align with the Scottish Government priorities are paramount.

Be realistic about capacity, and emphasise sustainability from the start of your application.

Maintain full transparency with all partners from the beginning – give them copies of everything, include the copy of the grant award. However, full transparency as an approach can also have potentially negative consequences. Be mindful of internal rivalry when multiple partners know that your approach is one of full transparency.

Include monitoring and evaluation in the planning and budgeting, and make this as detailed as possible in the concept note. Have regular reviews about budgets with all partners with clear outputs, milestones and timelines.

It is better to have a few local partners on the ground.

Look ahead to the full application, and factor this in when designing the concept note – the concept note should be an overview or introduction to an already fully-formed project.

In universities, it is recognised that there can be internal inter-departmental rivalries when competing for a Scottish Government grant, however this can often be resolved by partnering with larger organisations and thus larger bids, and taking a step back on leading the project.

When avoiding duplication, it is worth liaising with the District Commissioner of the local council you are looking to operate in. Present your project to them, and they will help make you aware of other projects working within the area, and the cultural nuances and politics involved.

It was noted that it is also crucial to foster a close relationship with the person who gave you the grant. They are on your side, and as the projects are collaborative, you will need their help (ie. with log-frames, etc). They will also be able to help you regarding any flexibility of the spending period. If you are applying for an extension, for example, you need to be honest, straight-forward and transparent with the Scottish Government so that they can be flexible, accessible and maintain good relationships.

Be mindful of currency fluctuations, the length of time it takes to complete an international bank transfer, and inflation. Also ensure that you keep a record of all receipts.

When the project starts, look at the log-frame in extreme detail. It will become crucial in assessing timing, and it will minimise any misunderstandings or misinterpretations or when indicators can’t be measured in the way you thought they could.

Recognise the importance of quantitative and qualitative reporting. There is a need for a communication strategy to capture qualitative outputs, not just quantitative outputs, as it is an important value-add and funded projects are intended to be people-focused.

In terms of project sustainability, long-term maintenance of a project should be built into the design regardless as sustainability is interconnected with the Renewable Energy agenda. There is, however, a real need for capacity in technology and skills training on the ground as there is a lack of qualified technicians, as well as a lack of spare parts for when the project comes to an end.

It is key to create an enabling environment to ensure that for-profit organisations don’t capitalise the market. There should be a move towards making successful projects non-profit. For example, solar has had such success that it could be moved into the public sector.

# SUPPORTING DEVELOPING APPLICATIONS/DISCUSSION

Attendees were also given the option to disclose whether they were considering applying for a Scottish Government 2018-23 Malawi grant via the Feedback and Evaluation Form. They were also given the option of having these details made public on the SMP website along with their details to be contacted directly. Others noted that the information could be posted but not their personal details, and as such they would prefer for interested parties to contact them through the SMP.

**ACTION:** Attendees who did not complete the form at the event can complete [here](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SDTYJBZ).

An anonymous attendee is starting a project on community charging stations. To find out more or to get in touch, please contact grace@scotland-malawipartnership.org.

Ian Dickson of the Rotary Club of Ayr is looking at solar-pumped water at Chiruga (east of Phalombe, near the Mozambique border), involving standpipes at different points in the community. Ian is looking for assistance in providing extra facilities, including latrines, dining areas and hotel accommodation). To get in touch with Ian, you can contact him at: home@thedicksons.me.uk.

Charles Fawcett of Aiming Higher in Malawi currently works with 450 children with disabilities in rural Mulanje and Thyolo, and homes a Clinical Disabled Assessment Centre, training staff in 21 villages, a primary school, secondary school, and a nursery (due for completion in September 2018). Charles is seeking a partner for solar electrification. You can contact Charles at: h.lifestyle@coatbridge.n-lanark.sch.uk.

Richard Bates from the University of St Andrews is looking at integrated energy networks for off-grid/end of grid solutions. Integrated includes all renewables “as-needed” conformed to local community demand that will stimulate growth (in particular, young entrepreneurs) with local ownership. Contact Richard at: crb@st-and.ac.uk.

Daniel Gilbert of First Natural Resources currently has two local partners and one Scottish partner identified, however he is open to extending this partnership. The project idea and structure is currently under development, although it will be led by the University of Stirling. You can contact Daniel at: danielgilbertpersonal@gmail.com.

An anonymous attendee is working in collaboration with the University of St Andrews and another partner. It will be a demonstration of integration of renewable energy, including geothermal energy available at hot spring locations. There will be identification of design and build of local businesses which are profitable and sustainable as a result of innovative integrated renewable energy use. To get in touch with this attendee, please contact grace@scotland-malawipartnership.org.

# Feedback from Malawian Input

Some of the answers to the anonymous questions posted on WhatsApp were shared, and are also posted on the SMP website for future reference.

Read the questions and answers [here](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/download_file/2657/).

The Renewable Energy Panel were as follows:

Name: Saidi Banda

Organisation: Department of Energy Affairs

Name: Chawezi Gondwe

Organisation: Community Energy Malawi

Name: John Paul

Organisation: Africa Green Economy

Name: Sithembile Tembo

Organisation: United Purpose

# Closing Remarks and next steps

The Scottish Government will be hosting its own formal Information Day in partnership with the Corra Foundation for prospective applicants, which will be announced soon.

All minutes and notes from the five strand meetings can be found [here](https://www.scotland-malawipartnership.org/news-events/past-events/cpg-on-malawi-the-malawi-development-programme/).

Everyone was thanked for attending and for their open and honest contributions. Attendees were reminded that the SMP is here to help and to keep in contact.