



Development of a National Biomass Energy Strategy (BEST) Malawi

Background

In response to a request from the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Natural Resources of Malawi, EUEI PDF supported the development of a Biomass Energy Strategy (BEST).

The government's energy spending had been concentrated on electrical generation and petroleum imports, and very little attention had been given to sustaining the country's biomass resource base that consumption statistics indicated. The resources applied by the Department of Energy Affairs (DoE) and the Department of Forestry (FD) towards the biomass energy sector thus did not reflect the importance of biomass energy to the energy security of the country. The production of biomass and woodfuels has a major economic impact with the potential to be sustainably managed. It should therefore not be abandoned in favour of expensive alternatives such as electricity or Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

The strategy developed with the ministry was intended to ensure a sustainable supply of biomass energy (e.g. firewood and charcoal) and promote access to modern cooking fuels and efficient biomass combustion technologies in households and small enterprises. The strategy development process was led by the DoE in close cooperation with the FD and all relevant stakeholders. This activity originated from a cooperation programme between the BEST initiative, a joint initiative of EUEI PDF and of GIZ programmes – Energising Africa and the Household Energy for Sustainable Development (HERA) programme, along with the governments of Lesotho, Botswana, Rwanda as well as Malawi.

Strategic Targets

The overall objective of the Biomass Energy Strategy is to ensure a sustainable supply of and demand for affordable woodfuels. Its three specific strategic components aim to:

- ▶ Increase the supply of sustainable woodfuels
- ▶ Increase the efficiency of energy use
- ▶ Create the institutional capacity to manage the biomass energy sector effectively and implement the strategy

Country	Malawi
Project Partner	Ministry of Mines and the Department of Energy Affairs (DoE) Malawi
Project Manager	Ray Holland
Term	January 2008 – August 2008

Strategy Actions

The first of the three strategy components relates to the supply side. Four subcomponents have been identified to increase the sustainable supply of woodfuels, through a better managed supply chain:

- ▶ Design a Woodfuels Supply Master Plan
- ▶ Design and implement District Woodfuel Management Plans
- ▶ Modernise and strengthen charcoal flow monitoring and control
- ▶ Promote the production of affordable alternative fuels

The second major element of the BEST is the promotion of more energy efficient appliances and a demand-side management programme proposed for three types of end-users:

- ▶ Urban consumers (e.g. more efficient stoves, better information about efficient equipment, use of different fuels)
- ▶ Rural consumers (disseminate better rural stoves)
- ▶ Commercial and institutional users of woodfuels (scale up the adoption of existing fuel-saving technologies, e.g. through credit or subsidies)



Biomass energy will remain dominant for cooking and other household uses and in this regard it is imperative that forests and woodlots be more productively managed.



The overall objective of the Biomass Energy Strategy is to ensure a sustainable supply of and demand for affordable woodfuels.

The strategy was intended to promote access to modern cooking fuels and efficient biomass combustion technologies.

Subsequently, an institutional arrangement for BEST implementation was proposed. Rather than consider how the DoE and FD can collaborate, the development of a new and more independent institutional structure to deal with biomass energy was proposed. This would be in the form of an autonomous Biomass Energy Agency to deal with all aspects of supply of and demand for woodfuels.

An independent project management unit (PMU) will be established by the government for this purpose, and will develop and supervise this implementation plan. It is recommended that this unit runs as an autonomous and impartial extra-governmental institution with a fixed term of five to ten years and is managed by an independent organisation.

The Way Forward

Proposals for implementing the BEST indicated a more comprehensive integration of the biomass energy sector within national energy planning as well as the allocation of substantial resources for its management. It would also be essential to review and revise the National Energy Policy to reflect a more pragmatic and proactive approach towards biomass recognising its economic value to the nation and elaborating more direct forms of government and private sector engagement in managing the biomass energy sector.

This approach is a radical departure from previous strategies regarding cooking energy, which were based on a large scale switch to energy. It may require some time for the Government of Malawi (and indeed its NGO and private sector partners) to adopt this new approach, given that anti-woodfuel views have been entrenched in policymaking and environmental circles.

A more detailed implementation plan can be developed and funds sought for its enactment once stakeholders agree to the BEST findings.

For more information,
please contact:

EU Energy Initiative
Partnership Dialogue Facility
(EUEI PDF)

c/o Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
P.O. Box 5180
65726 Eschborn, Germany

T +49 (0) 61 96-79 63 12
E info@euei-pdf.org
I www.euei-pdf.org

November 2011