



# Operational Contact Centres (and Contact Persons) in Demonstration Case Study Sites.

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## Executive Summary

Atlantic Technological University Sligo in collaboration with the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) is implementing a project known as “CEANGAL” meaning “connect” in Irish. The project aims to connect underserved communities to sustainable electricity, by connecting such groups to mechanisms and tools to ensure ownership and sustained operation of RES. The CEANGAL project puts forward an ambitious adaptable and replicable model to support activities and know-how relevant to the selection, procurement, installation, and ownership of renewable energy systems (RES), as well as providing support structures to ensure the continuous local operation and maintenance of these RES.

Work package 3 of the Project highlights the need to set up operational contact centres where the local communities would take a leading role in managing the renewable energy systems. carry out demonstration and validation activities to test the CEANGAL framework. The report begins with the introduction which gives the background of the project as well as the tasks that are supposed to be performed in deliverable 3.1. Section 2 of the study provides an overview of the demonstration sites including the criteria used in selecting the sites. Section 3 outlines the rationale for Contact Centre Structures in Case Study Sites whereas Section 4 the details of Contact Structures and Persons in Case Study Site

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## **1. Introduction**

Overreliance on connecting households through grid extension has proven to be slow and expensive in hard-to-reach areas. Off-grid energy solutions are considered a better option in addressing such challenges. However, the implementation of renewable energy systems (RES) has faced the challenge of sourcing funds for the maintenance and repair of the systems as households in remote areas cannot afford to pay the maintenance and operation costs. Therefore, mechanisms that can be used to expand electricity access in such regions are needed.

As one way of accelerating electricity access in rural communities through off-grid, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Atlantic Technological University Sligo in collaboration with the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) is implementing a project known as “CEANGAL” meaning “connect” in Irish. The project aims to connect underserved communities to sustainable electricity, by connecting such groups to mechanisms and tools to ensure ownership and sustained operation of RES.

Work package 3 of the Project highlights the need to set up operational contact centres where the local communities would take a leading role in managing the renewable energy systems. carry out demonstration and validation activities to test the CEANGAL framework.

### **1.1 Objectives**

Specific objectives of the establishment of the operation centres;




- i. To improve accessibility to information and support services for residents and stakeholders within the demonstration case study sites
- ii. To promote community engagement, involvement, and participation in the demonstration projects by encouraging residents and stakeholders to voice their opinions and contribute ideas.
- iii. To facilitate monitoring and evaluation activities by tracking inquiries, feedback, and interactions received through the contact centres, thereby aiding in assessing project performance and impact.

## 2. Demonstration Case Study Sites

### 2.1 Overview of the sites

The demonstration activities were conducted in the three districts in all the regions of Malawi. The targeted villages include Naluwade in the Mulanje District, Matuwamba in the Mchinji District, and Luviri in the Mzimba District. The demonstration sites were selected with assistance from the Ministry of Energy, Malawi from a priority list of off-grid “pre-electrification” candidate sites. The candidate sites represent an implementation intention in which off-grid technologies are tested in one village, and if successful, would be scaled up to neighbouring communities. To qualify the village had to be more than 10 km from an existing grid line and active in economic activities such as farming. The other aspect that was considered was the energy resources available in each community. A summarized description of the study sites is presented in Table 2-1.

**Table 2.1: Brief description of the study areas**

Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
Naluwade Village	Matuwamba Village	Luviri Village
		
<p>Naluwade Village is located in the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Mabuka in Mulanje district, Southern Region, Malawi. The village has a population of 121 households. The village is 5 km from existing grid lines. The key economic activity of the village includes tea farming. The site is endowed with rivers with the potential of construction of a hydro mini-grid</p>	<p>Matuwamba is situated in the Traditional Authority of Mkanda, Mchinji district, Central region of Malawi. The village has 409 Households. The village is 10.7 km from existing grid lines. The community is involved in the farming of maize, vegetables, and groundnuts among others. The site has solar and wind resource potential</p>	<p>Luviri is in the area of TA Mudzikuola, Mzimba District, Northern Region. The village has 375 households. The village is 17 km from existing grid lines. The communities are involved in commercial farming among the key economic activities. The site has solar and wind resource potential</p>

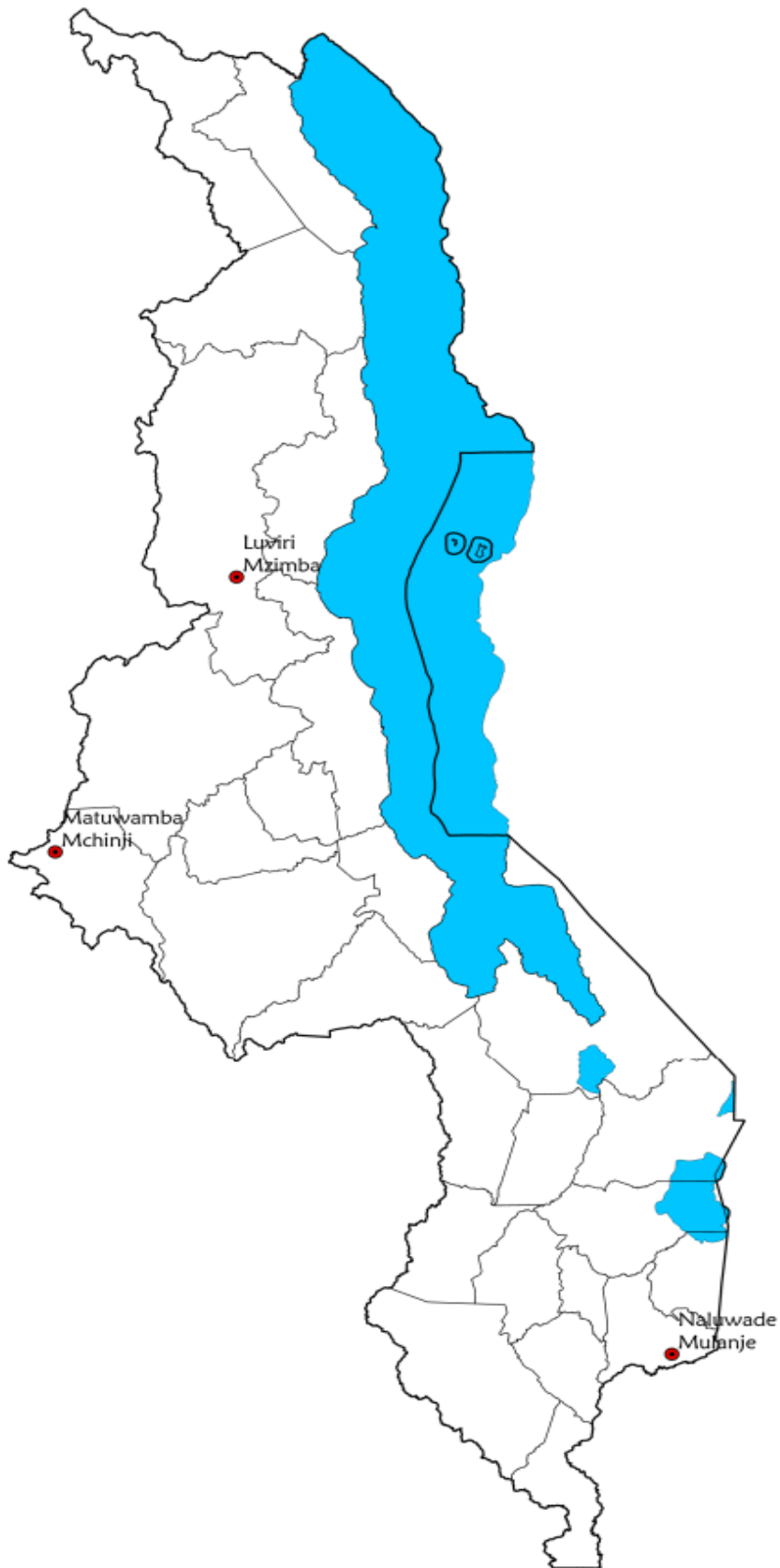





Figure 2-1: A map of Malawi Indicating the demonstration sites of the CEANGAL Project

## 2.2 Overview of Cooperative Case Study

Mwaiwathu Sagonja Cooperative is an agricultural cooperative comprised of 25 women located in Che Lifa village, Mdeka, within the Blantyre district of Malawi. Despite their dedicated efforts, the cooperative faces challenges in irrigating their maize and vegetable fields, as they currently rely on manually carrying watering cans and buckets over a distance of 50 meters to reach the field. The potential impact that renewable energy could bring to their irrigation practices, leading to improved crop yields and processing efficiency, is evident.

Recognizing this opportunity for enhancement, the CEANGAL project aims to collaborate with local innovators to design and install an efficient irrigation system tailored to the needs of the cooperative. By harnessing renewable energy sources, this initiative seeks to revolutionize the agricultural activities of the cooperative, empowering the women members and fostering sustainable development in the community.

**Table 2-2: Women’s agriculture cooperative in Mdeka, Blantyre, Malawi**

Agriculture Cooperative Case Study	
	
	
<p>The Village is located in Mdeka, Blantyre Malawi the area of Traditional Authority (TA) Mabuka in Mulanje district. The village has a population of over 200 households. The site is endowed with water streams that the cooperative uses for irrigating the maize and vegetable fields.</p>	

### **3. Rationale for Contact Centre Structures in Case Study Sites**

The rationale for implementing contact centre structures in case study sites within the CEANGAL project is rooted in the necessity for effective communication, community engagement, and sustainable development. These structures are designed to facilitate seamless interaction between project stakeholders, local authorities, and residents, thereby ensuring the success and long-term impact of the project. Below is an overview of the contact structures for the case studies and their relevance throughout the project phases:

#### **3.1 Village Heads/Community Leaders**

The relevance of these contact centre structures extends beyond the CEANGAL project's demonstration activities to encompass the entire project lifecycle, including pre-project preparation, implementation, and post-project sustainability efforts. Before the project, these structures facilitate needs assessment, stakeholder consultation, and project planning. During the project, they support effective communication, coordination of activities, and resolution of challenges. Post-project, they facilitate knowledge transfer, capacity building, and the integration of project outcomes into community development plans.

#### **3.2 Technical Middleman**

These individuals play a vital role in bridging the gap between project technical teams and the local community. They possess technical expertise and knowledge of local conditions, enabling them to facilitate communication, provide technical guidance, and troubleshoot issues related to project implementation. Technical middlemen contacts are instrumental in ensuring the smooth execution of project activities and promoting sustainability post-project completion.

#### **3.3 Community Representatives**

In addition to village heads and technical middlemen, the inclusion of community representatives in the contact centre structures enhances inclusivity and participatory decision-making. These representatives serve as voices for various segments of the community, ensuring that diverse perspectives are considered in project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Their involvement fosters community ownership and empowerment, laying the foundation for sustainable development outcomes.



### 3.4 Local Business owners' representatives

Through their insights and connections, they can facilitate partnerships between the contact centre and local businesses, encouraging the adoption of renewable energy solutions for productive purposes. This collaboration not only enhances the economic viability of the project but also fosters sustainable development by promoting local entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic growth powered by clean energy. Thus, the involvement of local business owners is instrumental in maximizing the productive use of energy within the community, driving both social and environmental benefits.

## 4. Details of Contact Structures and Persons in Case Study Site

Table 4-1: Contact details per demonstration site

Site Name	Name of Contact persons	Phone numbers
Naluwade, Mulanje	Village head Gumbi	+265993157940
	George Karichero-Technical middleman	+265995188225
Matuwamba, Mchinji District	Group Village head Matuwamba	+265999300184
	Mark Banda-Technical middleman	+265991140369
Luviri, Mzimba District	Group village head Sawagumba	+26599535528
	Bernadetta Msiska-Technical middleman	+265990287561
Agriculture women's cooperative-Mdeka, Blantyre district	Mrs. Mdala-Chairlady	+265996555674
	Joshua John- Technical middleman	+265991059168

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, the contact centre structures established within the CEANGAL project case study sites are integral to fostering collaboration, promoting transparency, and empowering local communities. By leveraging the expertise of village heads, technical middlemen, business owners, and community representatives, these structures ensure that project interventions are contextually relevant, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable, thereby maximizing their impact on underserved communities.