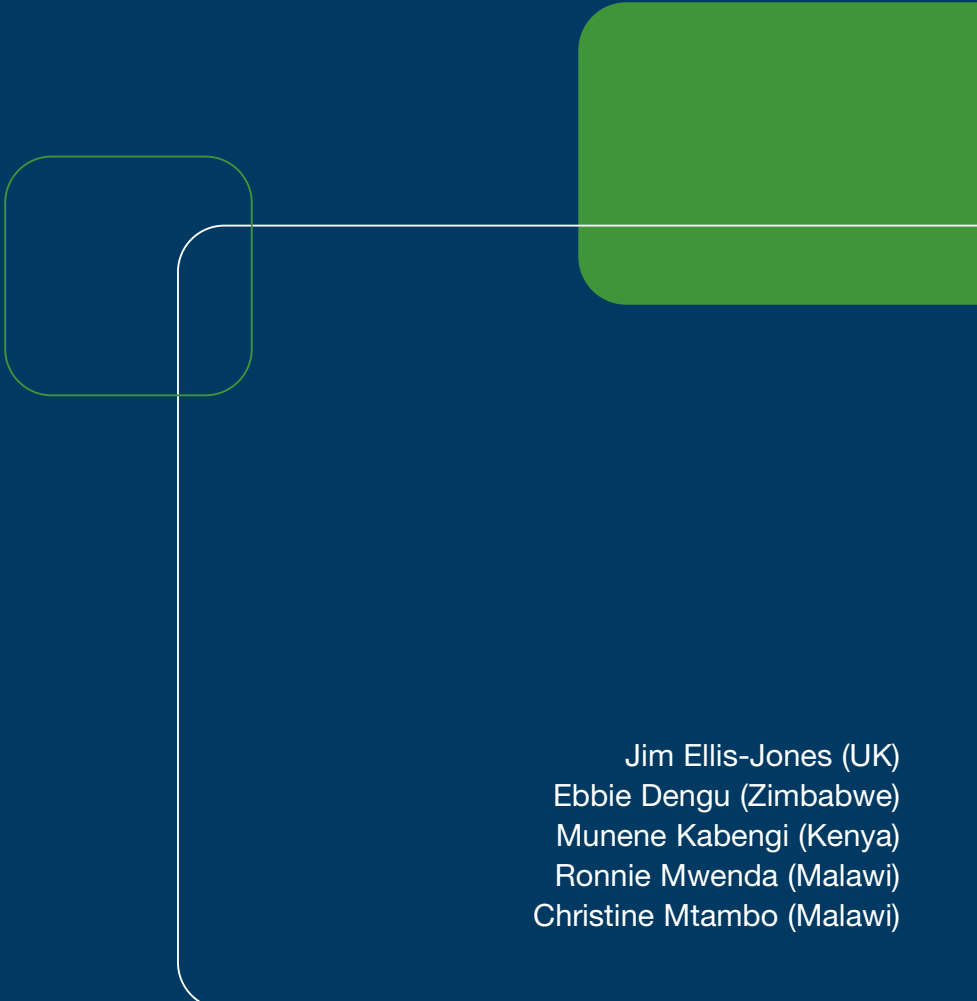


# Malawi RIU

## Country Assessment Executive Summary

A decorative graphic consisting of a white line that starts from a rounded square on the left, extends horizontally to the right, then turns vertically down, and finally turns horizontally again to the right, ending near the author list. A solid green rounded rectangle is positioned above the horizontal line on the right side.

Jim Ellis-Jones (UK)  
Ebbie Dengu (Zimbabwe)  
Munene Kabengi (Kenya)  
Ronnie Mwenda (Malawi)  
Christine Mtambo (Malawi)



# Malawi RIU Country Assessment

## Executive Summary

### Background

#### Existing support services provided to rural households can be broadly divided into a number of sub-sectors:

- i) Government, primarily though not exclusively the MoA&FS at national level through to the MoLG&RD at District level.
- ii) Farmer representative organisations.
- iii) Nine CGIAR centre led networks, each of which is led by a CG centre but includes a platform of stakeholders including Government Research and Extension, NGOs, and the private sector. These networks operate in a number of countries in the Region.
- iv) Some 140 NGOs working in the NR sector, approximately 40 international and 100 local NGOs.
- v) Large scale private sector companies including cotton ginneries, dairies, food processors and distributors.
- vi) Private sector agri-input suppliers and marketing agents (large, medium and small scale) and
- vii) A number of credit agencies ranging from commercial banks through to micro-finance institutions.

The current ongoing SWAP process is intended to provide overall coordination and a strategic programme approach to agriculture development. Notwithstanding these positive developments, rural households are still faced with a large number of support agencies, often funded by different donors, and often working with little coordination and communication between sub-sectors or even within sub-sectors.

### Opportunities for RIU Engagement

**There is potential for RIU to strengthen coordination, build capacity and assist in the use of existing research knowledge.** Four broad and contrasting platforms have been identified.

- **Farmer representative bodies**, represented by FUM as the apex body. Within this broad platform we have identified a number of commodity based sub-platforms which include

dairy, seed production, fruit, cotton, roots and tubers (cassava, potatoes and sweet potatoes).

- **An NGO consortium**, eight of whom are coordinated by I-Life but with potential to be expanded to include other NGOs consortiums (Christian Aid, MASIMI, CISANET etc)
- **A private sector consortium** of agri-input dealers and marketing agents, including large, medium and small scale with CNFA-RUMARK and AISAM being key amongst the medium and small scale dealers.
- **A community forestry management platform.**

Government has input on all platforms in providing support to farmers and a coordinating role through District Assemblies as part of the decentralisation process. Credit institutions also cut across these platforms. The CG networks are ongoing initiatives and can be regarded as complimentary to RIU initiatives, the main difference being that RIU will seek to use existing knowledge rather than initiating new research.

### Opportunities

- i) Input and output marketing and associated extension activities (through the private sector platform)
- ii) Seed production and distribution (through ASSMAG, SMAGS and individual seed producers)
- iii) A variety of agricultural production and processing activities through an NGO consortium. This would include high value and nutritious crop and livestock enterprises.
- iv) Milk production, processing and marketing through National and Regional Dairy Associations and private sector milk processors.
- v) Fruit production and processing through various farmer associations.
- vi) Cotton production through the Cotton Growers Association and Ginneries.
- vii) Cassava, sweet potatoes and potatoes production and processing again through commodity associations and involving NGOs and larger processors.
- viii) Community forestry management.

As a result of interactions with these platforms, RIU outputs are likely to be

1. Repackaged research knowledge in a form that can be used by AEOs, FAs and farmers.
2. Increased capacity of platforms to use existing/research knowledge and share best practice.
3. Strengthened demand for knowledge by farmers and farmer organisations through capacity building leading to increased productivity and efficient markets.
4. Improved information networks and communication flows on input and output prices.
5. Strengthened policy framework through lesson learning that will facilitate improved communication and interaction of stakeholders and innovation platforms.

## Potential Regional Opportunities which Compliment National Opportunities

**Information sharing and communication with the CG networks, and COMESA/SADC, NEPAD/CAADP/FARA initiatives are seen as the key links that will encourage lesson learning and scaling up.**

## Next Steps

**Although the main constraints have been broadly identified through individual discussions, there remains a need to reach consensus and prioritise these within each platform.**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Feed back workshops with each potential platform to consider options and further investigation for RIU input</li> </ul>	Late April-May
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop and agree a Malawi implementation strategy for RIU including core and short term input requirements</li> </ul>	June
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agree local governance, funding mechanisms and management responsibilities</li> </ul>	July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Agree and establish local management requirements and conditions for coordination</li> </ul>	July
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sign memorandum of understanding or agreement with local hosting institution</li> </ul>	July-August
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Appoint Coordinator with admin back up</li> </ul>	September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiate RIU Malawi activities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify/confirm/finalise proposals</li> <li>- Approve proposals</li> <li>- Organise support as required</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	September October October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Some field activities commence (with rains)</li> </ul>	November

## Other Issues

**A process approach which builds local ownership is required to identify of the areas to be addressed and how this should be undertaken.**

- i)** Although the assessment team has identified the demand for RIU input, the supply side requires further assessment. This should be undertaken as a priority to assist in finalising platform priorities.
- ii)** RIU should liaise closely with the MoA&FS in ensuring coordination of RIU activities as the SWAP develops.
- iii)** Close liaison should be maintained with FIDP and IDAF, EU funded projects in the MoA&FS in developing the RIU strategy and implementation plan.
- iv)** The timetable identified for further investigations and process for developing a strategic plan and implementation proposals should be followed as closely as possible to ensure any field activities are able to be initiated by November 2007.
- v)** RIU should enter early negotiations for a local in-country hosting institution, noting local capacity issues but seeking someone, a driver, who can make things happen. At the same time early establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems is recommended. Clear objectives and governance structures within a local hosting institution should be agreed as part of the strategic planning process.



### For further information, please contact:

The Research into Use Programme (RIU), NR International, Park House, Bradbourne Lane, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 6SN, UK  
[riuinfo@rint.co.uk](mailto:riuinfo@rint.co.uk)

[www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com)

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