

New Scottish space project to boost global sustainable development

Today, on World Humanitarian Day (19th August), the UK Space Agency has announced new funding for a Glasgow-based company to help Kenya develop cleaner and more efficient energy in a sustainable way.

Omanos Analytics, in partnership with Global Surface Intelligence (GSI), will be working with the Kenyan National Environment Management Authority to characterise and monitor land-use around current and prospective geothermal power plants in order to support the socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable growth of the Kenyan geothermal energy sector.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, David Duguid said:

Congratulations to Glasgow-based Omanos Analytics for securing this new funding from the UK Space Agency.

It is fantastic that satellite technology developed here in Scotland will be used to support the geothermal sector and help communities in Kenya develop cleaner and more efficient energy.

This project is not only important for Scotland's space sector but also shows leadership in climate change with Glasgow also set to host UN Climate Change talks next year.

The scheme is one of 10 new cutting-edge projects involving UK companies helping tackle global development problems – from the spread of malaria to human trafficking. The UK Space Agency's International Partnership Programme (IPP) has provided £3.4 million funding in total, including just over £300,000 for the geothermal Kenya project.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

From flooding to climate change, around the world people continue to be affected by crises that are having a profound impact on their countries' economies and their lives.

These 10 new projects have the potential to provide solutions to the world's biggest development problems by using the latest and most high-tech space technologies such as satellites, and help improve millions of people's lives in developing countries.

Omanos Analytics, based in Glasgow's Fairfield Govan Heritage Centre, will combine on-the-ground intelligence from local stakeholders with satellite data, application of machine learning algorithms to satellite data, and

dissemination of bespoke data products to key stakeholders.

Celia Davies, Director, Omanos Analytics, said:

We founded Omanos because we wanted to make space data more accessible and useful to communities around the world, and we're absolutely delighted to have the IPP's support for this mission through gE0thermal Kenya.

We'll be working with Kenya's National Environmental Management Authority to support the sustainable growth of the geothermal sector, through a combination of satellite data insights and community consultations.

This announcement comes as a new report is published, evaluating the impact of existing IPP projects.

The report reveals that since launching IPP in 2016, satellite training has been delivered to over 300 health workers across three states of Nigeria, saving an estimated 30 lives; and a marine pollution application has prevented two oil spills from reaching the coastline, saving an estimated £3 million in clean-up costs and significantly reducing the impact on the environment and its wildlife.

The report also shows that space-based solutions continue to be twelve times more cost-effective at delivering sustainable forestry, seven times more economical in supporting agriculture, and twice as resourceful for ensuring disaster resilience, than ground-based alternatives.

Liz Cox, IPP's Head of International Relations at the UK Space Agency, said:

The compelling results of the previous projects cement the case for investment in space for sustainable development. IPP is not only demonstrating the value of satellite solutions and improving the lives of people on the ground in developing countries but also facilitating effective alliances between the United Kingdom and international organisations. It's a 'win-win' and an exciting moment in the Programme.

IPP, a £30 million a year programme, has already grant-funded 33 projects in 44 countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and built partnerships between 120 space-enabled data organisations and 147 international partners in developing countries. These projects are designed to meet UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) such as support for precision agriculture, early warning systems for disaster prediction, maritime safety, and disease forecasting.

The Programme has so far generated £279 million in Gross Value Added for the UK economy and supports 3,300 jobs globally. The UK economy gains more than

£2.50 for every £1 invested in IPP projects.

The UK space sector is an economic success story, growing by over 60% since 2010. The sector already supports £300 billion of UK economic activity through the use of satellite services, and the government has established a new National Space Council to consider how space policy can enhance the country's prosperity and place in the world, as well as our security interests.