

## Hydro Nation International Centre Annual Report

<b>Project</b>	<i>Scotland's Global Partnership for Knowledge and Expertise in Water and Climate (SPARKE)</i>	
<b>Document Reference</b>	<i>HNIC_SPARKE_AnnualReport</i>	
<b>Document Purpose</b>	<i>This document reports on annual progress across agreed deliverables. The report will capture 1) highlights of progress made in Year 3 of SPARKE 2) claim summary 3) progress by milestone (as stated in the delivery framework), 4) detailed expenditure 5) project outputs</i>	
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## 1. Annual highlights

Highlights of the SPARKE project for Year 3 include:

- Delivery of the SPARKE hybrid workshop and associated report. The workshop was attended by 26 participants from Malawi's government ministries, academia, and NGOs and focused on aligning research with Malawi's National Research Agenda (NRA) to support evidence-based policymaking. Participants co-developed a six-stage roadmap to establish a science-policy exchange mechanism for Malawi's water sector (Figure 1).
- Delivery of two SPARKE webinars and supporting briefing note. The first webinar reintroduced previously engaged Malawian partners and introduced new Malawian partners to the SPARKE project. The second webinar advanced discussions on overcoming barriers to evidence-based decision-making in Malawi's water sector. Building on insights from the SPARKE Decision-Maker Workshop in 2024. The webinars brought knowledge-makers and decision-makers to together to address challenges in science-policy exchange (SPE) and explore solutions for improved data, information, and knowledge flows.
- Completion of Global Science-Policy Exchange Mechanism Report. The report reviewed 28 centres or organisations with a remit for relevant climate and water centres/organisations that deliver similar North-South science-policy exchange activities that are similar to the remit of SPARKE.
- Completion of the Water Asset Management Information System MWaMIS Handover Report. The report details the conditions and steps required for adopting MWaMIS as the Ministry of Water and Sanitation's official management information system for water-related data. It outlines plans to align with data protection and compliance standards under the Ministry's E-Government department, highlighting effective cross-departmental collaboration. Additionally, potential future collaborators are being identified to support the ongoing updating of water point functionality, demonstrating how Scottish Government support can leverage further funding.
- Through the management of the National Data Centre and MWaMIS, 2,753 water points were mapped across four districts in Malawi and district officers were trained in data collection to support continued reporting. Data was shared with national non-government organisations and higher education institutions and time was spent in planning meetings and conferences including the Malawi's World Water Day event. The data collection, data sharing, capacity building and knowledge sharing made possible through SPARKE helps support evidence-based decision making to improve water access in Malawi and had helped response efforts to the ongoing Cholera outbreak.

- The SPARKE impact brief outlines the impact of the project in Year 3, summarising the key outcomes of the outputs included as supporting documents to this annual report, and the engagements carried out throughout the year.
- Each of the previous highlights has helped further develop the SPARKE Blueprint document (Due date Mar 26).

### 1. Baselining

- Create a centralised repository for research outputs accessible to all stakeholders.
- Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify knowledge-makers and decision-makers and understand the roles and gaps in the sector.

### 2. Establishing institutional structures

- Develop a knowledge translation platform within the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to coordinate the communication with knowledge-makers, including the communication of knowledge-needs.
- Form research committees at ministry and district levels to oversee and coordinate research activities.

### 3. Identifying resource and innovative funding mechanisms

Identify and mobilise funding through levies, joint funding initiatives, and partnerships with academia, CSOs, and the private sector.

### 4. Engaging stakeholders from the start

- Co-design research questions with policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the relevance and ownership of research projects. Involving decision-makers or end-users throughout the research process, from planning to dissemination.
- Implement collaborative research to strengthen partnerships and multidisciplinary approaches.

### 5. Enhancing communication and accessibility

- Promote regular interactions between knowledge-makers and decision-makers through structured mechanisms.
- Simplify scientific communication by translating research findings into easily digestible formats. Ensure capacity building for entities involved in research to undertake credible and impactful studies.
- Utilise the media and community outreach programs to disseminate research findings to the public.

### 6. Regular monitoring and evaluation

- Develop indicators of change to measure the impact of research on policy and practice.

Figure 1: Stages included in the science-policy exchange roadmap for Malawi's water sector developed during the SPARKE hybrid workshop in March 2025.

## 2. Claim Summary

An overview of the expenditure for Year 3 is provided in Table 1. A full summary of expenditure can be found in Section 4.

Table 1: SPARKE Year 3 Claim Summary

Project Partner	Q1 Spend (£)	Q2 Spend (£)	Q3 Spend (£)	Q4 Spend (£)	Total Claimed (£)	Budgeted Total (£)	Over (-)/ Under (+)
HNIC	12,693	25,740	50,392	76,543	165,367	164,780	-587
BAWI	5,264	5,861	4,676	6,534	22,335	22,954	+619
BASEflow	0	0	10,000	12,954	22,954	22,954	0
Total	17,957	31,601	65,068	96,031	210,656	210,688	+32

### 3. Progress per milestone

Table 2. Milestones completed across the project.

Milestone (number and title)	Milestone achieved. (Yes/No)	How the milestone was achieved and any outputs delivered	Impact achieved (or desired impact)
Deliverable 1: Project Management			
1.1 SPARKE Proposal Submission & Contract Completion	Yes	The SPARKE year-on-year proposal was submitted, and funding was agreed by the Scottish Government for the 24/25 funding year. Contacts and data-sharing agreement between project partners were drafted, reviewed and signed off.	All project milestones for the project were delivered on time and within budget. Reports submitted highlight the impact of the SPARKE project across the year, while the impact brief details the extensive impact across the entire SPARKE project.
1.2 SPARKE Delivery Framework Development	Yes	The SPARKE delivery framework outlining deliverables, milestones, project GANTT chart and budget has been created. The delivery framework is included as an attachment to this report.	
1.3 Project reporting, quarterly and annual	Yes	Reports for Q1-3 were submitted to the Scottish Government. Receipt of this annual report is the final milestone for reporting.	
1.4 Project Submissions to Scottish Government	Yes	The annual impact brief was changed to an overall SPARKE project impact brief, given the decision to end funding earlier than anticipated. The impact report is included as an attachment to this annual report.	
1.5 Annual Impact Brief	Yes		
Deliverable 2: Delivery of SPARKE Virtual Seminars			
2.1 Seminar Concept and Design	Yes	Seminar invitations were disseminated and promotion materials distributed. Seminars were delivered in Q4 (19 <sup>th</sup> of February, 2025).	To continue engagement with Malawian decision-makers and expand engagement with Malawian stakeholders, through project updates. Shared learning regarding science-policy exchanges in Malawi and Scotland, while providing space for potential partnership working.
2.2 Seminar invitations and promotion	Yes		
2.3 Seminar Delivery	Yes		
2.4 Seminar Blog Post	Yes		
Deliverable 3: Delivery of SPARKE Hybrid Workshop			

3.1 Workshop concept design & Ethics	Yes	<p>The SPARKE Hybrid Workshop aims to foster collaboration between Malawian decision-makers and knowledge-makers with the goal of co-creating a conceptual science-policy exchange mechanism tailored to Malawi's specific needs. The workshop will facilitate a structured dialogue, furthermore participants will be asked to discuss the barriers and opportunities of the approach to inform the development of the conceptual mechanism.</p> <p>Through this collaborative process, the workshop aims to create a sustainable, effective model that aligns scientific knowledge with policy action, enhancing the country's ability to address complex development challenges.</p>	<p>A six-stage roadmap to establish a science-policy exchange mechanism for Malawi's water sector was co-developed by participants. The roadmap can be utilised to align research to water-related pillars within Malawi's National Research Agenda. The roadmap seeks to bring decision-makers and knowledge makers together to ensure research is utilised to inform decision-making and knowledge generated is relevant and accessible for decision-makers.</p>
3.2 Workshop invitations	Yes	<p>The SPARKE hybrid workshop was delivered in Q4 of the project bringing together 26 participants from 16 cross-sectoral organisations across Malawi's water sector. The workshop report is attached as an appendix to this annual report.</p>	
3.3 Venue hire and logistics	Yes		
3.4 Workshop delivery	Yes		
3.5 Workshop report	Yes		
<b>Deliverable 4: Global Science-Policy Exchange Mechanism Report</b>			
4.1 Report concept and design	Yes	<p>The concept, design, literature review and report have all been completed in Q3. The report is included as an attachment of this report. Learnings from the report have been included in the updated SPARKE Blueprint.</p>	<p>To understand the operations and impact of global water centres and partnerships similar to HNIC. The exercise will help inform the SPARKE blueprint through identification of current science-policy exchange mechanisms and the unique selling points of the HNIC mechanism in Scotland, while also providing content for stakeholder engagement.</p>
4.2 Literature review	Yes		
4.3 Report delivery	Yes		
4.4 Transfer to SPARKE Blueprint	Yes		
<b>Deliverable 5: Updated SPARKE Blueprint</b>			
5.1 Review of Current Information	Yes	<p>A comprehensive review of all information collated through stakeholder events was used to underpin milestones 5.2 and 5.3.</p>	<p>Continued development of the SPARKE blueprint synthesising work done as part</p>

5.2 Concept & Design	Yes	The concept and design was informed by participants at hybrid workshop in March 2025. The latest version includes the SPE roadmap, recommendations for SPARKE activities and a working group has been formed to plan and guide this work in FY 2025-26.  The Blueprint was scheduled to be updated based on the roadmap agreed by workshop participants and aligned to national research agenda.	of the first two-years of SPARKE, steps for the final year of SPARKE and beyond the SPARKE project.
5.3 Updated Blueprint Document (Review through Publication)	Yes		
Deliverable 6: MWaMIS Handover			
6.1 Hand over planning	Yes	BAWI Consultants and BASEflow have communicated the steps required to support the handover process.	An implementation plan for MWaMIS has been developed and adopted by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation as the official asset management system. This includes the collection of water point location and functionality data and will help ensure sustainability beyond Scottish Government support.
6.2 Continued Data Centre Management (Until Handover)	Yes	Collaboration with World Vision Malawi (WVM) continued to support analysis of water point data in Kasungu, Mzimba, and Nkhata Bay for inclusion in MWaMIS. WVM is expanding water point mapping to Phalombe and Ntchisi districts. As a result of this partnership, five boreholes have been drilled, with 85 additional monitoring boreholes planned.  Data requests were addressed throughout the year, including from Palladium, Design Outreach, PumpAid and Higher Research Institutes. The data centre task force supported preparation meetings for events such as the Joint Sector Review and World Water Day, while continuing to support bi-weekly sanitation and national WASH cluster meetings, providing ongoing data support for Cholera intervention and current emerging issues in the sector.  Through the management of the National Data Centre and MWaMIS, 2,753 water points were mapped across four districts in Malawi and district officers were trained in data collection to support continued reporting	
6.3 Handover Confirmation	Yes	A report by the Malawian Ministry of Water and Sanitation outlines a crucial meeting with all key partners supporting the	

6.4 Legacy Report	Yes	<p>MWaMIS handover. The meeting was facilitated by BAWI Consultants and BASEflow, leveraging additional resources from other funders. Key outcomes included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implementation Plan:</b> The taskforce developed and codified an initial implementation plan for the handover.</li> <li>• <b>Service Level Agreement:</b> A 12-month service level agreement will be formulated and signed between the Ministry and BASEflow to manage the handover process.</li> <li>• <b>Funding and Project Timeline:</b> The future of Scottish Government funding (or through SPARKE) was reaffirmed, with a confirmation that the project is scheduled to end on 31 March 2025.</li> <li>• <b>Legacy and Future Collaboration:</b> Plans were established to sustain the legacy of Scottish Government support by identifying potential partners and collaborating with Malawi's E-Government.</li> </ul> <p>The inclusion of the E-Government department added significant value by providing guidance on the data compliance checklist. Importantly, the department clarified that a standalone server was not necessary for MWaMIS; instead, the National Data Centre can host the required datasets, meeting the government's pre-requisite for system adoption.</p>	
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4. Budget and Claim Details

Table 3: Expenditure of each delivery partner and the total claimed for the reporting period. Over-and-under budget details are provided.

				Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Ovr/Und
	Budget Type	Total (GBP)	Description	Q1	Q1	Q2	Q2	Q3	Q3	Q4	Q4	Total	Total	Total
BASEflow	Staff Cost	£17,500	BASEflow Staff Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0	£8,750	£9,424	£8,750	£9,155	£17,500	£18,579	£-1,079
	Travel and Accommodation	£2,300	Travel required to support milestone delivery, collaboration and communications in Malawi	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,150	£576	£1,150	£601	£2,300	£1,177	£1,123
	SPARKE Workshop	£2,954	Budget for coordinating the SPARKE hybrid workshop	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,954	£3,198	£2,954	£3,198	£-244
	Incidental expenses	£200	--	£0	£0	£0	£0	£100	£0	£100	£0	£200	£0	£200
	Sub-total	£22,954.05		£0	£0	£0	£0	£10,000	£10,000	£12,954	£12,954	£22,954	£22,954	£0
HNIC	Staff Cost	£162,779.90	HNIC Staff Costs	£40,695	£12,693	£40,695	£25,740	£40,695	£49,920	£40,695	£76,492	£162,779.90	£164,845	£-2,065
	Travel and Accommodation	£2,000.00	Travel within Scotland for project meetings	£500	£0	£500	£0	£500	£472	£500	£0	£2,000.00	£1,680	£320
	Incidental Expenses	£0		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£51	£0.00	£55	£-55
	Sub-total	£164,779.90		£41,195	£12,693	£41,195	£25,740	£41,195	£50,396	£41,195	£76,543	£164,780	£166,367	£-587

BAWI	Staff Costs	£10,686	Staff costs for NDC manager and BAWI consultancy fees	£3,185	£3,183	£2,501	£3,147	£2,501	£2,234	£2,501	£2,653	£10,688	£11,217	£-529
	Data Centre Operations	£2,659	Running of the data centre including data and internet for NDC manager and task force.	£665	£499	£665	£495	£665	£815	£665	£614	£2,659	£2,422	£237
	SPARKE Workshop	£2,954	Budget for coordinating the SPARKE hybrid workshop	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,954	£1,099	£2,954	£1,099	£1,855
	Travel and Accommodation	£2,513	Travel required to support MWaMIS handover tasks and NDC operations	£628	£604	£628	£1,104	£628	£548	£628	£757	£2,513	£3,013	£-500
	Admin	£4,142	BAWI admin fee	£1,036	£978	£1,036	£1,116	£1,036	£1,079	£1,036	£1,411	£4,142	£4,584	£-442
	Incidental Expenses	£0.00		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Sub-total	£22,954.05		£5,513	£5,237	£4,830	£5,861	£4,830	£4,676	£7,784	£6,534	£22,955	£22,335	£619
	Total	£210,688.00											£210,655	£32

## 5. Project Outputs

If you have any questions regarding the content of the report, please contact the Hydro Nation International Centre ([hnic.scotland@hutton.ac.uk](mailto:hnic.scotland@hutton.ac.uk))

Attachment	To be attached (Y/N)	Description
Relevant outputs	Y	Science-Policy Exchange Mechanisms Report, MWaMIS handover report, Webinar Briefing Note, SPARKE Workshop Report, Impact Brief