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OPEN DATA AND “CROWDSOURCING” CAN HELP DEVELOPING COUNTRIES MAKE CRUCIAL DECISIONS ON ENERGY PLANNING

London and Vienna, 25 June 2012. **Decisions on energy policies and associated investment are among the most difficult facing countries – particularly in developing economies. On them may depend billions of dollars, and even determine whether energy services are available to the poor.**

The paper, *Open Source Software And Crowdsourcing For Energy Analysis*, co-authored by nine experts on energy decision-making, examines how open data and so-called “crowdsourcing” – the out-sourcing of tasks to a distributed group of people – can assist developing countries.

Governmental acceptance and adoption of open data has been growing rapidly with examples ranging from the US and the UK, to Kenya and Ghana.

The document provides a survey of existing research, and also explores the potential role that linked, open data can play in both supporting analysis, and in enhancing public engagement with energy issues. The paper argues that open modelling efforts can improve the utility and accessibility of energy models, and also lower the cost of data collection and management.

“Applying these innovative tools and methods into energy sector analytics will considerably help the job of policy-makers and investors. It will also require ongoing international support” said Morgan Bazilian, the paper’s lead author.

In April 2012, Robert Zoellick, President of the World Bank, ‘tweeted’, “Open information, open data, and open access to knowledge may turn out to be the most important legacy of the past five years.” Still, the transformative impacts of applying open source software (OSS) and data as well as associated training tools are in the early stages of adoption in the area of energy system analysis.

The paper is being submitted for publication in peer-reviewed literature, and comments are welcome on the draft. The working paper can be found at: <http://www.bnef.com/WhitePapers/view/108>

It was written by: Morgan Bazilian of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; Andrew Rice of Cambridge University; Juliana Rotich of Ushahidi, Mark Howells of the Royal Swedish Institute of Technology, Joseph DeCarolis of North Carolina State University, Stuart Macmillan of Stanford University, Cameron Brooks of Tendril Networks, Florian Bauer of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, and Michael Liebreich of Bloomberg New Energy Finance. A final version of the paper will be published in the Elsevier journal, *Energy Policy*.

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