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EU speaks out amidst Sesotho Media controversy

Staff Reporter

The European Union (EU) has stepped into a simmering controversy, defending its funding of Sesotho Media & Development (SM&D) despite growing concerns over the organisation's dual legal identities.

Newsday reported last week that SM&D, long lauded as a champion of human rights and social justice, has been registered both as a trust under the Deeds Registry Act of 1967 since 2000, and as a society under the Societies Act of 1966 since June 2021.

Notably, the society registration occurred just two months after the EU publicly announced a €750,000 (around M15 million) police accountability project involving SM&D, a timing critics say reeks of strategic manoeuvring to secure funding.

In an email to Newsday this week, the EU insisted its funding procedures were rigorous and stated that SM&D's trust status was sufficient for eligibility.

"The EU awards grants to civil society organisations through open and public calls for proposals. Each call specifies criteria that applicants must fulfil when submitting their proposals – that is, prior to awarding funds," the delegation said.

"As such, the EU does not impose conditions on beneficiary entities' status. Eligibility criteria are assessed by the evaluation committee based on the documents submitted by the applicant," it added.

The EU further stated that under the call Eu-



ropeAid/166129/DD/ACT/LS, a contract was signed with SM&D in February 2021, after the evaluation committee concluded that the trust fulfilled the eligibility criteria as a non-profit-making entity.

When asked whether other trusts had received funding in Lesotho, the EU said: "In fact, other non-profit making CSO who benefited from EU funding are registered as trust."

Documents seen by this publication reveal that as a trust, SM&D vests control in a board of trustees, but the constitution remains opaque on critical details.

Section 3, titled "Trusteeship," states that "only such persons may become trustees who belong to the society and subscribe to the aims and objects." But the constitution does not clarify how one becomes a member of this society or how subscription to its objectives is

verified.

"All the affairs and business of the society shall be managed and controlled by trustees, who shall have full powers to carry out objects of the society as hence before provided and who shall also hold the society's funds for the application of income and/or capital thereof for the promotion of the society's business, provided that every act or decision of the trustees shall accord with aims and objects of the society," the constitution read.

It further said the trustees shall consist of five trustees who shall hold office for two renewable and/or terminable before or at the end of the term. However, it did not mention who would elect or appoint members to the trusteeship.

The constitution specifies that the board shall consist of five trustees serving renewa-

ble terms, but it fails to detail who appoints or elects these trustees.

SM&D's executive director, 'Mamolefe Petlane, told Newsday last week that the dual registration is part of a "transition" and that the organisation remains compliant.

"The organisation is currently transitioning from a trust to a society, with amendments underway. We anticipate convening the AGM by the end of the year. Until then, Sesotho Media remains a registered non-profit trust. This is to ensure that all legal and governance requirements under the new constitution are complied with."

Asked directly whether SM&D was currently registered as both a trust and a society, Petlane responded: "SM&D is a non-profit making organisation registered under the laws of Lesotho."

The EU-funded project, launched in September 2021, was designed to create safe spaces for joint consultations between the public, civil society organisations, and the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) to address human rights violations.

According to the EU, the initiative aimed to strengthen local participation in security sector reforms and empower marginalised groups.

On its website, SM&D states that it was established in 1999 by the esteemed international filmmaker Mr. Don Edkins, and has been predominantly supported by Bread for the World (BfW).

On its website, SM&D claims it was founded in 1999 by international filmmaker Don Edkins and has evolved beyond its initial HIV/AIDS focus to tackle gender equality, child marriages, human trafficking, sexual and reproductive health rights, child labor, gender-based violence, climate change, digitalisation, human rights, economic and social justice, and sustainable development.

Staff Reporter

Maseru English Medium Preparatory School (MEMPS), one of Lesotho's most prestigious primary schools, is reeling from a deepening financial crisis, marked by mass staff resignations, unpaid debts, and delayed salaries.

Newsday has learned that at least five staff members have recently resigned, citing frustration over the school's deteriorating financial health and unpaid wages. Staff members who remain say morale is at an "all-time low."

One teacher, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "We cannot work under these conditions anymore. Last month, we only received 30 percent of our salaries. How do you expect us to survive?"

In a memo circulated to staff earlier this month, the school confirmed the partial salary payments:

"Please be notified that when processing the salaries, the 30 percent is calculated on the net salaries," it read.

The memo further instructed staff who preferred to receive wages via eWallet to submit their names and cellphone numbers through WhatsApp "to speed up everything," noting that balances in existing eWallet accounts would block transfers.

The financial strain extends beyond staff pay. According to sources, the school allegedly owes the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) approximately M120,000. The debt reportedly resulted in electricity cuts that disrupted classes.

"There has been no electricity, and we only learned later that the school allegedly owes LEC M120,000," said another staff member.

Newsday sent questions to Acting Headmistress Phano Sharite on Wednesday, invit-

Resignations, salary delays, debts rock Maseru Prep



ing her to respond to the allegations. Sharite acknowledged receipt of the questions and inquired about the publication date.

Newsday granted her until the close of business on Thursday to respond, but no replies had been received by yesterday's deadline.

The crisis comes barely a month after Newsday reported that MEMPS had been slapped with a staggering M3.4 million legal demand by Nashua Maseru over unpaid rentals and damages.

According to legal documents filed by Weber Newdigate Attorneys, MEMPS defaulted on two long-term rental agreements signed in 2022 and 2023. The school was accused of failing to pay M647,786.39 in rentals, while Nashua is also claiming M2,803,482.32 in fu-

ture rentals that would have been due by the end of the contracts.

"We are instructed that the User has failed to pay rentals and is therefore in arrears in the amount of M3,451,268.71," the attorneys wrote. "As a result, the User is in breach of the rental agreements, and Nashua is entitled to claim immediate payment."

The letter, dated March 3, 2025, warned that unless MEMPS settled the debt within seven days, legal action would be launched to recover the full amount, along with interest at 14.56 percent and legal costs.

But instead of addressing the mounting legal and financial troubles, MEMPS management went silent. Despite repeated attempts by Newsday to secure comment, Acting Head-

mistress Sharite did not respond within the deadlines she herself proposed.

On June 26, Sharite acknowledged receipt of Newsday's formal inquiry and asked for more time: "I kindly request that you give me until next week, Wednesday the 2nd July 2025, to have responded."

On July 3, she requested a further extension, promising to respond after a school board meeting by July 10. That deadline also passed without communication. Follow-up messages were ignored.

Internal correspondence seen by Newsday last in June confirmed that MEMPS was unable to pay July salaries on time. In a letter to staff dated July 10, 2025, Sharite admitted the school faced a "serious cash flow problem" caused by parents defaulting on school fees.

"We had a genuine hope that parents would meet their school fees payment obligation as per promise. However, we are still experiencing further delays," the letter stated.

"As a result, salaries normally paid by the 20th of each month will only be disbursed on or after July 30. We understand the inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience and understanding. For that, we sincerely apologise," Sharite wrote.

But for many staff members, patience has run out. "The school is collapsing before our eyes, and management is not being transparent," one staff member told this publication. "We are tired of empty promises."

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Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Although Mopeli declined to reveal the DPP's directives, insiders told Newsday that



Maqutu has been sharply critical of the ongoing probe, accusing the police of overreach and intimidation. In a May 27 letter to Police Commissioner Holomo Molibeli, he slammed the Commercial Crime Court Unit (CCCU) for what he described as “prolonged and disrup-

“The management of the Commission under the Director of Elections is extremely concerned by the conduct of the LMPS, CCCU, which purports to be investigating the

"I trust that your office will look into this matter, and urge the CCU to conclude its investigation so as to take up the issue of the missing ballot box, among others."

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DCEO to appeal after High Court stays Tšolo's corruption case

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) has vowed to appeal this week's High Court ruling permanently staying the M1.7 billion corruption case against former Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Temeki Tšolo, citing prosecutorial failures.

Public Relations Officer Mathokomelo Senoko told Newsday that the DCEO was "not satisfied with the ruling" and will exhaust legal avenues to challenge the judgment.

The High Court's decision has sparked intense public debate over the DCEO's competence in handling high-profile cases.

In delivering the ruling, Judge Tšeli-so Mokoko criticised the prosecution for being "never ready" to pursue the case. The Judge noted that the DCEO had failed to prosecute on two separate occasions and had neglected to inform the court of their unreadiness or to formally request a postponement.

Addressing the DCEO's lawyer, Advocate Mojalefa Shakhane, Judge Mokoko said: "I have one problem. Your conduct shows you only became aware of this matter last week. You have failed to prosecute. You had all the resources at your disposal and did nothing. I will not allow you to use the court's time to secure witnesses."

The lead prosecutor assigned to the case, Durban-based Advocate Jay Naidoo SC, had not subpoenaed witnesses for the scheduled hearing between 18 and 22 August. Furthermore, Advocate Naidoo SC was absent from court on Monday, even though he had attended another DCEO matter last week.

In dismissing the case, Judge Mokoko stated: "The court finds that the crown failed to prosecute the matter on two occasions – the week beginning 21 October 2024 and the week beginning 18 August 2025. The crown had all resources at its disposal. The court notes that Naidoo SC was in Lesotho last Thursday but did not



have the courtesy to inform the court."

Section 278 of the Speedy Court Trials Act, 2002, mandates that trials proceed expeditiously. It also requires lawyers engaged in a matter to be present unless the court is informed otherwise. The court expressed concern that Advocate Naidoo SC may have been double-booked.

Advocate Shakhane attempted to argue that he and Tšolo's lawyer, Advocate Molefi Masoabi, had agreed on a postponement. Advocate Masoabi refuted this, clarifying that while Shakhane had suggested the idea, he was advised to formally request the court's approval.

Judge Mokoko emphasised that postponements must be justified: "What will move the court is whether reasons advanced for postponement are valid or not. The court is not bound by resolutions between defence and crown lawyers."

When Advocate Masoabi suggested withdrawing the matter, Advocate Shakhane said he was aware of the pro-

vision but lacked authority to pursue it.

Judge Mokoko concluded that the prosecution could not drag the accused through court proceedings, incurring time and expenses, without valid reasons.

Tšolo is accused of charges including fraud, forgery, obstruction of justice and superior orders in which he allegedly signed a "deal" in 2018 while serving as the Minister under then Thomas Thabane's led administration without the Cabinet's approval and on behalf of the government with the German based Fraser Solar GMBH company. This "deal" involved a supply contract of energy saving equipment to supply the government with 350,000 solar lanterns, 40,000 solar water heating (SWH) units to replace electric geysers and 1.5 million LED lights.

However, the government did not opt for this "deal" and instead chose the Chinese one where it would build a solar plant in Ramarothole in the Mafeteng district. It would be recalled that the

government commissioned the Phase I of this project which generates about 30 megawatts in 2023.

Fraser Solar company demands €50 million about M1 billion in compensation for "breach of contract" allegedly by the government. And the "contract" was about M700 million.

While he appeared as only one accused, Tšolo was charged jointly with the Fraser Solar GMBH director, Robert Fraser as well as the company, but since he was away, there were processes that had been engaged to extradite him into the country to face prosecution.

"On or about November 2024, the Directorate on corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) initiated a criminal investigation against Mr. Temeki Tšolo and Fraser Solar Gmbh together with its Director Mr Robert Fraser on allegations of fraud and corruption. On or about 22 November 2022, the DCEO initiated criminal proceedings and jointly charged Mr Tšolo, Mr Fraser and his company for fraud and corruption and contravention of the section 21(3)(b) of the Prevention of Corruption and Economic Offences Act of 1999 as amended," reads the DCEO statement published on 11 April 2024.

Fraser Solar has entered into a protracted legal battle with the government of Lesotho accusing it of reneging on its "contract". And this lawsuit has cost the government millions fighting it locally and in the international courts.

Entering into the contract with the Fraser Solar would have seen the government contravene the provisions of the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act, 2011 as well as the Procurement Regulations of 2007.

The ruling is expected to be delivered in this case in the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein, South Africa where Fraser Solar has appealed the Gauteng Division of the High Court's decision.

When asked for comment following the dismissal of his case, the emotionally overwhelmed Tšolo who kept wiping tears with the handkerchief, said "I have always maintained that I was framed."

Loti Brick faces M7.4 million tax crisis

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Loti Brick is currently embroiled in a major tax crisis, facing liabilities of just over M7 million. This financial storm comes at a time when the company's affairs are already in disarray.

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) has secured a court order against the company. On August 19, 2025, the Maseru Magistrate's Court directed Loti Brick to pay M7,401,813.03 to the RSL.

"This is therefore to authorise you to attach, remove and take into your custody or possession the movable goods of Loti Brick Pty Ltd, and if insufficient, attach the immovable property of Loti Brick Pty Ltd to be realised by public auction in the sum of Seven Million, Four Hundred and One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirteen Maloti, Three Lisente (M7,401,813.03) togeth-



er with your costs of this execution, and pay to the Revenue Services Lesotho the

aforsaid sum... and return to this court what you have done by virtue thereof,"

reads the order.

The order further imposes an annual interest rate of 22 percent on the amount owed.

Loti Brick, established in 1978 and operational since 1980 under the oversight of the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), manufactures, sells, and distributes clay brick products.

Last year, the company ceased operations due to persistent financial troubles. Poor sales over the years forced the company to downsize its workforce, reducing production capacity. Despite these measures, the company has remained closed.

Concerns have also emerged around a potential acquisition of the company by Lephema Executive, owned by Cabinet Minister Lephema Lebona. However, the parliamentary committee has been in serious discussions with the LNDC, and the sale has not yet been concluded.

Mofomobe calls on govt to act on frozen bank accounts of Basotho in SA

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The leader of the Basotho National Party (BNP), Machesetsa Mofomobe, has urged the government to urgently intervene in the growing plight of Basotho nationals in South Africa, citing reports of frozen bank accounts. This week, Mofomobe moved a motion in Parliament calling for immediate government action to address the issue.

According to reports, South African commercial banks are reportedly requiring work permits from Basotho account holders before allowing access to their funds. Newsday was unable to independently verify this claim at the time of going to press.

Mofomobe said many hardworking Basotho are being left in financial limbo, unable to access their earnings. He cited tip-offs from nationals working across Gauteng, Limpopo, Cape Town, and the Eastern Cape. He stressed the vital role of remittances from South African-based Basotho, which support families and contribute to the domestic economy.

He highlighted the case of a Mosotho hawkler who discovered only upon visiting her bank that R15,000 (M15,000) had been frozen, preventing her from buying stock for her business.

The opposition MP called for the government to prioritise the matter, including exploring litigation if necessary. He referenced a recent meeting between the Minister of Health,

Selibe Mochoboroane, and his South African counterpart, Dr Aaron Motsoaledi, which aimed to ensure Basotho were not denied healthcare services. Despite this, Mofomobe said incidents persisted, with some Basotho reportedly being removed from clinic and hospital queues.

The ministerial meeting was prompted by reports that Basotho were being blocked from healthcare access by groups such as Operation Dudula and other South African citizens. Mofomobe expressed frustration that South Africa had ignored appeals from its President and Health Minister to curb these actions.

Letsekang Moloi, MP for Lebakeng, who seconded the motion, described the situation as “worrisome” and emphasised Lesotho’s sovereignty. He called for a task force to travel to South Africa and advocate for Basotho rights. “What are we saying as leaders?” Moloi asked, noting that the challenges faced by Basotho across multiple sectors in South Africa are widespread and cross-cutting.

Mokhothu Makhalanyane, MP for Mokhetloaneng, challenged the government to repurpose the M10 billion earmarked for capital projects to boost domestic production and strengthen the country’s economy.

Minister of Home Affairs, Lebona Lephema, responded that one of the resolutions from ongoing discussions is a new migration model, which he plans to review with his South African



can counterpart in September. He did not provide a specific timeline for its implementation. When asked about the frozen bank accounts, Lephema said he had discussed the matter with the Minister of Finance to address it ur-

gently. Following the parliamentary debates, the government acknowledged the need to act swiftly to protect the interests of Basotho nationals in South Africa.

TENDER NOTICE

MAINTENANCE OF TWO (2) FOOTBRIDGES

- The Roads Directorate has received financing from the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contracts for two (2) Footbridges.
- The **Roads Directorate (RD)**, now re-invites tenders for maintenance of two (2) footbridges in the Thaba-Tseka, and Mohale’s Hoek Districts as stated below: -

Tender No.	Name of Footbridge	District	Span (m)	Coordinates	Site Visit Date/ Time (Assembly Point)
RD/FB-01/2025	Qoba-cha-Lephoi	Thaba-Tseka	45	29o42’38”S 28o26’31”E	4th September 2025 09:30Hrs -Mantšon-yane Near Police Station
RD/FB-02/2025	Qhoasing - Seturumane	Mohale’s Hoek	18	30o06’06”S 27o51’38”E	8th September 2025 09:30Hrs - Mt Moorosi-Bethel Bridge.

- Tenderers who have ongoing contracts with Roads Directorate and the physical progress of works to date is less than 80% are not eligible to tender.**
- The invitation is open to all Basotho contractors who has category **E3 to E1** under The Roads Directorate, who can show relevant capacity and experience in the in the construction and maintenance of footbridges and/or construction of Structural Steel and Reinforced Concrete works.
- Sealed Tenders comprising One (1) Original and Two (2) Copies plus a soft copy (in a memory stick) clearly labelled as stated in the Instructions to Tenderers, Bidders may obtain further information from the Roads Directorate, Mr N. Manoeli (Procurement Specialist), (e-mail – manoelin@rd.org.ls /marek@rd.org.ls /mahiritonaf@rd.org.ls) and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 0800 to 1630 hours at the address given below.
- The bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders (starting on

- Tuesday, 26th August 2025)** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Maloti (LSL 5,000.00)** per project. Bidders/Companies may purchase as many documents as they wish, however, no contractor will be awarded more than one contract. The method of payment will be by transfer or deposit into the following Bank Account: **Roads Directorate Operating Revenue Account, Account No.: 021000067633, Swift Code: NEDLLSMX, Branch Code: 390161, Nedbank, Lesotho**, and proof thereof be presented to the Roads Directorate. Facility shall be made available for purchasing the tender documents by POS/swiping at the Finance Division (Room G03), Roads Directorate Headquarters
- Bids must be delivered to the address below and deposited in the Tender Box [see address below] on or before 10:00 hrs. (local time) on **Thursday, 25th September 2025**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened on the same day as the submission date at 10:30 hrs. (local time) in the presence of the Bidders’ designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below.
 - All Bids must be accompanied by a “*Bid Security*” of **Five Thousand Maloti Only (LSL 5,000.00)** in the form of a Bank Guaranteed Cheque addressed to “Roads Directorate.”
 - Each Bid must be accompanied by copies of valid
 - Tax Clearance Certificates and
 - Traders Licenses. All copies should be certified at source. All Bids should include VAT and Tenderers are advised to note that the Bids are expected to be following Lesotho Government tax obligations.
 - Site visits, at the Tenderers’ own cost, have been organized from 4th to 8th of September 2025.** (as stated in above Table). Failure to attend the site visit will result in disqualification from bidding. Any further details shall be available from the Roads Directorate’s Procurement office. **Also, a mandatory Pre-Tender Conference** shall be held on site on the site visit dates stated in Table above. **Note: The person who previously attended the site may not attend again.**
 - The Roads Directorate reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders for reasons that may be advanced.** The address(es) referred to above is (are):

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Newsday Business

US tariffs a threat to women-owned businesses

Marcia Moyana

Concern has been raised that women-owned businesses are going to suffer as the United States President Donald Trump's tariffs are rolled out across 90 countries.

The tariffs ranging from 10 percent to 41 percent on imports to the US will affect businesses from 22 African countries, with 11 of them being from the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Lesotho has been hit with a reduced 15 percent tariff from the initially proposed 50 percent, while South African goods imported into the United States will be slapped with a 30 percent tariff.

The International Finance Corporation estimates that Africa has up to 24 percent of women who are entrepreneurs, the highest rate globally.

Many of these women struggle with access to markets, funding opportunities and an enabling environment to grow their businesses beyond their borders.

General manager and winemaker at Her Wines, Praisie Dlamini, sees the tariffs as a challenge that will stifle the growth of women who are operating in markets that have historically been predominantly male.

Dlamini explains how, as an exporter to the US, they have had to negotiate their prices down earlier amidst the uncertainty created by Trump's threats of tariff increases.

They then had to renegotiate their prices once more.

"How are you supposed to grow? Because if you don't have reserve capital that you can fall back on, should the situation not really improve, the sustainability of your business is threatened," says Dlamini.

As a young company, they lack the reserves old businesses have been able to build over time and face high interest rates from banks, resulting in many young companies requiring the government's support.

The women-owned businesses also have to deal with the unbalanced scale of gender, where women



have historically been prevented from owning businesses and are still battling to find sustainable funding opportunities to compete in the already highly competitive space.

Intra-Africa trade for women

South Africa's deputy minister of Sports, Arts and Culture, Peace Mabe, says women struggled to grow beyond their borders and governments were responsible for creating an enabling environment for their businesses to thrive.

Mabe was speaking at the DLO African Women in Leadership Summit that was held on August 5 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

During her address, she spoke about the restrictive and undefined border management laws that often work against women.

She says for intra-Africa trade to be equitable for all businesses, funding models must be reinvented to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and micro enterprises.

"We do not want connections, but when you do your business, it should be a business that is supported and understood. We must continue to demand not only seats at the table, but the power to shape the agenda, allocate the capital and open doors of opportunities for generations to come,"

says Mabe

Opportunities for women in emerging industries

Founder and CEO of DLO Energy, Linda Mabhe-na-Olagunju, says that while women's participation in the energy sector remains low, she has been spearheading conversations for women in leadership.

Through the DLO African Women in Leadership Summit, top voices across business, politics, civil society, and the creative economy have been gathering to discuss critical issues that affect women leaders on the continent.

This year's summit, held earlier this month, sought to look at ways to close the gap between capital and opportunity for women leaders.

Noting the seven percent representation of women CEOs at the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) listed companies, a four percent representation of board chairs, and a stagnated 30 percent representation of women on boards were a concerning underrepresentation that affected mostly black women.

"I want to see more women rise into key positions in the economy, and this summit has shown that it is not just a talk shop; people make deals, strategise, formulate partnerships, and the feedback we have received over the three years is that this is a signif-

icant and much-needed platform for women," says Mabhe-na-Olagunju.

As a founder of South Africa's only 100 percent black female-owned renewable energy company in a field with only about 21 percent of women on the entire African continent.

Her De Aar-based wind farm is one of the largest wind farms in the country and currently provides power to over 200,000 households in South Africa.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimates that up to 50 percent or over 600 million people in Southern Africa are energy poor. While the World Bank estimates that 900 million women and girls on the African continent lack access to clean cooking technology, resulting in many of them suffering from smoke inhalation-related diseases.

Addressing energy poverty would enable girls to focus on their education, improving their health and ability to participate meaningfully in the economy.

And the clean energy space presented women with the opportunity to gain the skills and opportunities needed for them to thrive, she says.

AI is not a threat to women

The Global Head of Operational Risk Research at BMI, a Fitch Solutions company, Chiedza Madzima believes that artificial intelligence (AI) should be seen as another avenue that women can leverage on to participate in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field which currently on has about 30 percent of women representation.

Women can also pursue opportunities in the information communication technology (ICT) sector as website developers, coders and other required skills.

"What we do know is that STEM and ICT give us the ability to think technically and creatively. I think women can certainly benefit from more financial support programs that are specifically dedicated to supporting women in tech, health sciences or even mining, fields that are not traditionally women's spaces because a lot of the labour no longer requires brute strength," explains Madzima.

While some industries and skills are being replaced by AI, she highlights that AI has made doing business easy and is now at the centre of doing business globally.

Creating an environment where the ongoing process that requires investment, results in workers and AI automation processes working as a unit.

Econet marks education milestone with the King

Seabata Mahao

His Majesty King Letsie III this week officially unveiled the fourth cohort of Econet Telecom Lesotho's (ETL) Moshoeshoe I Scholarship recipients, marking another milestone in the company's commitment to education and youth empowerment.

The ten new beneficiaries, recognised among the country's brightest students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), were celebrated at a prestigious ceremony held at the Royal Palace.

The event was attended by the Minister of Education and Training, Professor Ntoi Rapapa, and Econet Telecom Lesotho CEO, Dennis Plaatjies.

Launched in 2022 through a partnership between Econet Telecom Lesotho and Higherlife Foundation Lesotho, the Moshoeshoe I Scholarship continues to support outstanding young Basotho in STEM fields.

Since its inception, over M2.1 million has been invested in tuition and stipends for the scholars, affectionately known as "Moshoeshoelites." In the past year alone, ETL pledged a further M8.1 million toward education-focused social investment nationwide.

In his keynote address, King Letsie III described the scholarship as a "beacon of opportunity" and urged the students to emulate the values of King Moshoeshoe I.

"To the students, this scholarship comes with a huge responsibility as it is named after a great King," he said. "We urge you to serve this nation with love and dedication just as Moshoeshoe I did. We are amazed by what ETL is doing for Basotho,



His Majesty King Letsie III officially unveiled the fourth cohort of the Moshoeshoe I Scholarship recipients at the Royal Palace

and we firmly believe that by investing in education, Lesotho's economy will grow."

Minister Rapapa commended Econet and Higherlife Foundation for their "unwavering commitment" to educational advancement.

"This programme does not merely offer financial support," he said, "it provides a platform for transformation, both at an individual and national level."

Econet's CEO Dennis Plaatjies spoke with pride and optimism, celebrating the progress of the initiative.

"It is with great humility and pride that I stand before you today as we mark yet another milestone in the journey of the Moshoeshoe I Scholarship," he

said.

"To our 4th Cohort of Moshoeshoelites we are proud of you, we believe in you, and we cannot wait to see the extraordinary heights you will reach."

Plaatjies highlighted the importance of continued partnerships with the Royal Family and the Ministry of Education in ensuring the success of the programme.

He also reflected on success stories from previous cohorts, such as Noi Mokoaleli, now studying Mining Engineering at the University of Johannesburg; Temoho Morobe, pursuing Actuarial Science at the University of Lusaka; Puleng Mohlomi, studying Geology at Rhodes University; and Kabelo Late-

la from the current cohort, who has already begun his MBChB Medicine studies in Lusaka.

Speaking on behalf of the new recipients, Bokang Ismael Masenyetse expressed his heartfelt gratitude to ETL.

"This scholarship is more than financial aid, it is a vote of confidence in our potential, a call to rise, and a challenge to lead," he said, stressing the programme's role in addressing national challenges in digital transformation, sustainable agriculture, and healthcare.

A highlight of the event came with a farewell to 19-year-old Palesa Moiloa, who departed for Lebanon to pursue Mechanical Engineering with a focus on Mechatronics at the American University of Beirut.

Though not a Moshoeshoe I Scholarship recipient, Moiloa's story, from ranking fifth nationally in her LGCSEs to winning the Best Societal Impact Award for her research on 3D-printed prosthetics, served as an inspiration to all present.

"Her story reminds us of the boundless potential of Lesotho's youth. We live in a world of possibilities," said Plaatjies.

Beyond scholarships, Econet continues to drive digital innovation and infrastructure development. Plaatjies announced the company's rollout of 5G across all 10 districts, expansion of fibre connectivity to nine districts (with Thaba-Tseka next), and network upgrades in Maseru under the Re Le Utloile initiative.

"As we award these certificates today, we also renew hope, inspire ambition, and affirm our collective belief in the transformative power of education," he said.

The fourth cohort of Moshoeshoe I scholars left the Royal Palace not only with certificates but with a mandate: to honour the legacy of King Moshoeshoe I, serve the nation, and strive for excellence. With sustained investment, strong public-private partnerships, and inspiring stories like those of Palesa and the Moshoeshoelites, the future of Lesotho's youth shines brighter than ever.



Makhalanyane proposes M10 million incentives to improve health services

Ntsoaki Motaung

To address poor services provided to patients by health professionals, the Chairperson of the Parliament Portfolio Committee on Social Cluster, Mokhothu Makhalanyane, has proposed an additional M10 million to the Ministry of Health's budget.

Speaking to the Principal Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Health, 'Maneo Moliehi Ntene, Makhalanyane suggested that at least M10 million be earmarked specifically to incentivise best-performing health professionals.

He explained that rewarding excellence would motivate health workers to provide quality care as expected by communities, while also encouraging those who mistreat patients to improve.

This proposal emerged on Thursday during a meeting between the Ministry of Health and the Parliament Portfolio Committee on Social Cluster to review the Ministry's financial performance, achieved targets, and asset status.

According to Makhalanyane, the Ministry's report was unsatisfactory, particularly on issues of quality assurance and patient care. He further recommended that outstanding health professionals be recognised and incentivised every six months.

"I have personally experienced poor

treatment, and we need to take steps to improve our services. Reports on quality assurance, governance, and performance indicate that overall, our hospitals are performing poorly," he said.

He added that community-led monitoring reports also reflect negative feedback, with many patients raising concerns about the quality of care in health facilities.

Meanwhile, PS Ntene acknowledged the concerns, noting that the ministry has identified at least four hospitals strug-

gling with service delivery: Berea Hospital, Motebang Hospital in Leribe, and Machabeng Hospital in Qacha's Nek.

"After identifying these challenges, we engaged District Medical Officers (DMOs) from the affected districts to discuss solutions. We agreed to review progress in upcoming meetings after addressing the identified gaps. For instance, following the incident at Berea, we hired 10 staff members to operate x-ray services," she said.

Ntene admitted that health facilities across the country face significant chal-

lenges, which the Ministry is working to resolve.

Berea District Medical Officer (DMO), Liketso Mochochoko, confirmed that the district is struggling with multiple challenges. He cited a limited budget that only allows for routine operations, making it impossible to address additional needs.

"For example, we are expected to review data quarterly, but due to the high costs of meetings—each costing more than M200,000, we cannot meet that expectation with our limited annual budget," he explained.

Mochochoko further highlighted that Berea Hospital faces overcrowding, as patients bypass nearby clinics and head directly to the hospital.

"The challenge is that many of our clinics are run by the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL), which is currently struggling with shortages of medication. As a result, communities turn to the hospital without referrals," he said.

He added that Berea Hospital has also been severely affected by U.S. government funding cuts, which reduced staffing levels, particularly those working on TB and HIV programs.

"We no longer have lay counsellors or contact tracers, and the number of village health workers in our communities has also declined," he noted.



Health ministry confirms cancer center completion by 2027

Ntsoaki Motaung

The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed that Lesotho's long-awaited cancer center will be completed by 2027, despite earlier delays.

This was disclosed during a recent meeting between the Ministry and the Parliament Portfolio Committee on the Social Cluster.

The project was initially allocated a budget of more than M182 million. By the end of the last quarter of the previous financial year, more than M29 million had already been spent, while a further M18 million has been used in the current financial year.

According to Mosito Mosehle, Acting Estate Director at the Ministry, the construction of the facility was originally scheduled to begin in the 2024/2025 financial year but was postponed due to legal challenges and a revised design.



"The site was only handed over for construction this past January. The design was revised to be a full-fledged cancer center, incorporating essential facilities and equipment that were not in the initial plan," Mosehle said.

He explained that the review ensured the inclusion of critical infrastructure. "We were advised that in order for us to have a full-fledged cancer center we would have to review the design to include medical

equipment, a laboratory, a theater, and an ICU," he added.

The revised designs are now being finalised, with construction expected to resume on September 1. Mosehle stressed that despite the setbacks, the project remains on track for completion in 2027 within the allocated budget.

Dr. Kabelo Mputsoe, a Clinical Radiation Oncologist, highlighted that the new design will provide 65 beds, including 15

dedicated to children. The facility will also feature an operating theater, a palliative care unit, an isolation recovery room, and specialised chemotherapy chairs.

In addition, it will be equipped with advanced diagnostic tools such as an MRI scanner, a CT scanner, and a fully equipped pathology laboratory, ensuring comprehensive care for cancer patients.

The constitution must come first

The controversy over the Tenth Amendment has once again revealed a dangerous fault line in Lesotho's politics: the willingness of leaders to sacrifice constitutional principles on the altar of political expediency.

At the heart of the matter lies a fundamental truth that should not be negotiable, our Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No reform, no matter how urgent or well-intentioned, can justify violating the very framework that safeguards our democracy.

The government must, therefore, initiate deep and honest discussions with all relevant stakeholders, parliamentarians, opposition parties, civil society, traditional leaders, and ordinary citizens. These conversations must seek solutions that preserve both the integrity of the Constitution and the momentum of the reforms.

To attempt reforms by cutting constitutional corners is to build a future on a foundation of sand.

It is important to stress that neither the Constitution nor the reforms should come at the expense of the other. Both are critical. The reforms are designed to correct historical weaknesses in our governance system, to prevent recurring crises, and to pave the way for stability and progress.

But the Constitution is the supreme safeguard against tyranny and abuse of power. Undermining it in the name of reform would be not only short-sighted but also deeply destructive.

If, however, a painful choice must be made between constitutional compliance and the pursuit of reforms, the choice should be obvious: the Constitution must prevail without hesitation.

This is not a matter of preference but of principle.

A reform process carried out through unconstitutional means is inherently illegitimate. It cannot inspire the trust of the people, nor can it guarantee respect for the rule of law once the reforms are enacted.

Indeed, bending or disregarding the Constitution today sends a chilling message to the nation that tomorrow's laws, including the very reforms now being championed, will also be ignored whenever they prove inconvenient.

Such a precedent would undo everything the reforms are meant to achieve. Instead of ushering in an era of stability, it would entrench lawlessness and weaken public confidence in democratic governance.

The real test of leadership, therefore, is not in forcing reforms through at any cost, but in demonstrating fidelity to the supreme law even when it is politically difficult. True reform cannot be built on illegality. It must be grounded in respect for process, in the spirit of compromise, and in the understanding that legitimacy is as important as substance.

At this critical juncture, our leaders must ask themselves: What kind of future are we trying to build? One where the rule of law reigns supreme, or one where laws are bent at the convenience of those in power? If it is the former, then the answer is clear, the Constitution must come first, always.

History will judge this moment not by how quickly reforms were passed, but by whether they were passed lawfully, transparently, and with the full confidence of the people. To choose expediency over legality is to choose instability over democracy. That is a price Lesotho cannot afford.



No Comment



Lerato Matheka

Common Concern

AI tools are exposing the laziness of Lesotho's journalism

Artificial Intelligence, particularly tools like ChatGPT, can be a powerful companion for planning, brainstorming, and even sharpening a rough draft.

When used responsibly, it can elevate journalism by assisting reporters to think more deeply, write clearly, and save time on technical tasks. But what it cannot, and must not replace is the creativity, poetic expression and core ethics that have long defined journalism: curiosity, fact-checking, human storytelling and writing with inspiration.

Yet, over the past few months, I have watched with shock, disgust, and deep disappointment how AI writing tools, particularly ChatGPT, are being misused in Lesotho's media space. Stories with the unmistakable "DNA" of machine-generated text are creeping onto our pages. What began as a quiet concern within my own newsroom became glaring when I looked outward and realised that many of our news outlets are falling into the same trap.

Instead of sharpening their craft with AI tools, too many journalists are surrendering their pens to it. The result? Bland, repetitive, soulless articles that sound polished but lack depth, originality or truth.

The worst example I encountered recently was a front-page story that carried a damning headline, but the content beneath it screamed "AI template", no fact-checking, no editing, no copy tasting, just filler text, printed as though it were newsworthy truth.

This is not journalism.

As an editor, a media manager and trainer and a journalist, I feel compelled to issue a gentle but urgent warning: the careless

use of AI tools is exposing the laziness of Lesotho's journalism. And if unchecked, it risks destroying the credibility of our profession altogether.

I speak not from theory but from practice. I have used AI tools, including ChatGPT, a few times to reshape raw copy submitted by reporters. I regularly use Grammarly to ensure the grammar is polished and ready for consumption. At its best, both tools and other can help untangle messy drafts and give structure where it was lacking. But what worries me is how many reporters now abdicate their responsibility to think, to research and to write with authority. Instead, they lazily type a half-baked prompt into ChatGPT, wait for a machine to spit out paragraphs, slap their byline on top and call it a day.

Too often, these same bylines belong to people who do not even understand the core issue of the articles they are signing. How can one claim authorship over a story they have not lived with, interrogated, or contextualised? How can journalism fulfil its duty to truth when the very people tasked with it show no intention of fact-checking, cross-verifying, or adapting machine output back into human storytelling?

These incredible tools have not failed us; we have failed ourselves for refusing to grow in the digital age. The technology is not the enemy. The real problem is the mediocrity it is exposing.

For years, some of our reporters have relied too heavily on press releases, avoiding the hard work of digging deeper. Now, with AI, that laziness has a faster, shinier tool. But instead of elevating the quality of our

work, it is making the shortcuts painfully obvious.

Journalism has always been more than words on a page. It is about context, accountability and voice. It is about standing in the rain to get the story, sitting with communities to hear untold truths and asking the uncomfortable questions that others avoid. AI can never

replicate that; it cannot feel the weight of silence in a grieving family's home. It cannot smell the dust of a protest march. It cannot probe evasive politicians until cracks appear in their answers.

Only journalists can do that.

So, where do we go from here? First, we must remind ourselves and our newsrooms that AI is a tool, not a crutch. Reporters must own their stories, research them, understand them, and then, if need be, use AI tools to polish them.

Editors must sharpen their oversight, spotting generic writing, checking facts rigorously and rejecting laziness masked as productivity. Media trainers must prepare the next generation not just to use new technologies, but to uphold the ethics that define us as truth-tellers.

The credibility of journalism in Lesotho hangs on this balance. If we continue to misuse AI, we will erode public trust, dilute the power of storytelling and reduce our newsrooms to hollow echo chambers of machine text. But, if we embrace it wisely, pairing its efficiency with human curiosity and creativity, then we have an opportunity not just to survive but to thrive.

The choice is ours. And it begins with honesty: AI is not exposing the strength of Lesotho's journalism. It is exposing its laziness.



Speaker acted outside the constitution: Can the High Court clean up the mess?

Minister of Law and Justice, Richard Ramoetsi, has openly admitted that the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution Bill, 2024, which has since been passed by Parliament and assented to by His Majesty the King, amended Chapter II of the Constitution, a Chapter that, by clear constitutional command, cannot be amended without a referendum.

Despite this, the bill was never subjected to a referendum. It went directly from Parliament to the Royal Palace for assent, and the King duly assented. To “cure” this glaring defect, Minister Ramoetsi has suggested that the High Court could simply sever the two offending provisions, sections 20A and 22B, leaving the rest of the law intact.

At first glance, this may appear to be a pragmatic suggestion. However, on closer inspection, it raises fundamental constitutional and jurisprudential problems.

Section 85(3) of the Constitution is unequivocal. It stipulates that any bill seeking to amend certain entrenched provisions,

including the entirety of Chapter II (except sections 18(4) and 24(3)), must go through a mandatory four-step process: passage by the National Assembly, passage by the Senate, 3approval by a referendum of the electorate, and assent by the King.

Without compliance with these steps, the process is constitutionally incomplete. Just as a bill cannot bypass the Senate, it also cannot bypass the referendum.

By transmitting a bill amending Chapter II directly to the King without a referendum, the Speaker of the National Assembly acted ultra vires the Constitution. Equally, by assenting to a bill that had not been validated by the people through referendum, the King too acted ultra vires his constitutional powers.

This means the entire law suffers from an incurable constitutional defect. It is not merely a matter of severing offending provisions, it is the entire process that is fatally flawed.

This means the defect is not minor or technical—it is fundamental. The constitutional amendment procedure is mandatory, not

discretionary. Where the Constitution says a referendum “shall” be held, failure to do so cannot be corrected by judicial surgery after the fact.

Can the High Court “sever”?

The Minister’s suggestion that the High Court can sever sections 20A and 22B is problematic for several reasons:

1. Judicial severance cannot cure ultra vires acts: The doctrine of severance is ordinarily applied where a law contains unconstitutional provisions that can be cleanly excised while leaving the rest of the law intact. But here, the problem is not with the content of the sections alone, it is with the procedure. A Bill requiring a referendum was submitted to the King without one. That defect renders the entire enactment void ab initio.
2. Judicial overreach risk: If the Court were to sever, it would in effect be validating unconstitutional acts by both the Speaker and the King. The judiciary would be rewriting history by pretending the referendum require-

ment never existed. That is beyond its powers.

3. Section 2 – Supremacy Clause: Section 2 of the Constitution makes clear that the Constitution is supreme and any law inconsistent with it is null and void. If the Tenth Amendment violated Section 85(3), then the purported amendment is void from inception, not partially valid pending judicial pruning.

The unavoidable conclusion is that the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution Act, 2025, is invalid in its entirety for want of compliance with section 85(3).

Severance cannot cure a flawed process but can only operate within a constitutionally valid framework. In this case, both Parliament and the King acted outside their powers, and the High Court’s duty is not to salvage an unconstitutional law but to declare it null and void.

Bokang Sekopa is the Deputy Secretary General of the Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution, popularly known as SECTION 2.

Teachers and parents should advocate AI as a tool and not a crutch

Relebohile Kabelo

“Luddites” is a term that came into use in the 19th century. It derives from the eponym Ned Ludd, who instigated a movement that resisted the spread of industrial machinery, particularly in the textile industry. His followers launched raids on factories, destroying machines that threatened their livelihoods. Between 1811 and 1816, the movement was ultimately suppressed by government troops. Although those years were turbulent, the term Luddite continues to be used today to describe those who resist technological change.

In contemporary times, artificial intelligence has emerged as a technology that many workers perceive as a threat to employment. Opposition comes not only from workers but also from groups such as parents and teachers, who remain wary of its impact. They argue that AI encourages students to become overly dependent on it rather than cultivating independent learning. This may hold some truth; however, the question arises whether such critics are doing enough to teach constructive uses of AI, or whether they are, in effect, becoming modern Luddites.

History shows that every new technology has faced opposition before being accepted. In the fifteenth century, the printing press

was condemned for spreading dangerous ideas. Later, electronic calculators were accused of making students dependent, while computers and the internet were once seen as threats to jobs and even human intelligence. Yet over time, each of these tools became not only accepted but essential to education and society. AI today follows the same path: it inspires fear, but it may eventually be recognized as another tool that reshapes how people work and learn.

As a student at the National University of Lesotho, I once had a discussion with my esteemed lecturer, Dr. Godfrey Hove, Head of the Historical Studies Department. He was very open during our discussion, but his main argument was that artificial intelligence is a potentially harmful tool. In his words, “AI is killing all these students, because everyone has their own tone, and therefore AI introduces a whole new different tone that leads lecturers into reading the same words in every student’s work. This is why students should be given tests and not assignments.” I understood his point, but I argued that AI can also be used as a tool rather than a crutch. While many students do rely on it inappropriately, I suggested that it could be formally taught in schools as a cost-effective way to edit written work. Dr. Hove disagreed, asserting that professional editors preserve the writer’s voice while AI distorts it, and therefore teaching AI would not be appropriate. I found it difficult

to see the difference, since AI can edit while maintaining the writer’s style, but at a fraction of the cost of professional editors.

I have many arguments that advocate for technology, but potential Luddites would disagree. My first argument is that technology should be dynamic rather than stagnant. In juxtaposition to Dr. Hove’s point, he taught us in class that “population growth drives agricultural intensification and technological innovation, rather than being limited by it.”

These are not his words but an argument from Ester Boserup, which he presented in one module. They may not be his words, but they illustrate that “modern problems require modern solutions.” We cannot oppose technology, as it is always integrated within the human community. Stagnation means that we remain stuck, using the same tools that exhaust us. People who resist AI should logically oppose all technology, calculators, medicine, televisions, the internet, and more.

The internet was once seen as a threat to printed works, yet it created new opportunities: people became professional YouTubers, bloggers, and printing itself was digitalised. In our region, the internet can help preserve our culture and traditions, such as lithoko, lits’mo, and our lexicon.

Secondly, AI teaches faster than Google or any other form of education. It can instantly provide solutions to problems, from troubleshooting televisions and computers to almost

anything else. This means that teachers can instruct students more efficiently using AI, and research work can be simplified. Students can learn better ways of presenting scholarly work, and children can quickly grasp basic concepts, such as the alphabet, directly on their screens. Long-standing problems can be solved much more quickly, and diagnoses can occur almost instantly.

AI should simply be seen as a learning instrument rather than a threat. The same workers who complain about it can explore new ways of earning money just by prompting a few words. While it may not be instant, AI can tailor solutions according to the user’s abilities and privileges.

The Luddite mindset may pose a threat to progress, but technology always finds its way into societies. Basotho were initially sceptical about the arrival of missionaries in their land, yet they benefited greatly from them. I often argue that much of Basotho culture is derived from these foreigners, including schools, seanamarena, maize, peach trees, ploughing equipment, and more.

These contributions continue to benefit Basotho to this day. My lecturer once taught us that culture is borrowed from one society to another, and it is evident that Basotho have gained significantly. They have adopted phones, televisions, electricity, and many other technologies, yet teachers and parents continue to argue against them.

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Government of Lesotho
MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

TENDER NOTICE

Tender number: **MTIBD /001/2025-2026**
The Ministry of Trade and Industry invites tenders from suitably registered Security Firms for provision of security services required at its premises at the Ministry of Trade and Industry Headquarters LNDC and Maputsoe, all armed security guards that will be contracted for the next three financial years; 2025/2026, 2026/2027, 2027/2028.

REQUIREMENTS

- Provide proven means of communication, e.g. Security Guards must have a two-way radio and cell phones.
- The personnel of the prospective successful company must be fully armed with guns for all offices' premises.
- Show that it has adequate (at least one vehicle) capacity for efficient and effective mode of transport that would enable them to attend to emergencies
- Attach Police (LIMPS) certified copies of valid licenced firearms
- The security personnel must wear uniform at all times, day and night
- The security firm should take full responsibility for any theft or damage to Trade, Industry, and Business Development property arising out of the negligence of its personnel.
- Provide certified copy of proof of insurance covering the Company's employees.
- The security firm must have a minimum experience of three years in operation.
- Provide at least three reference letters from recent clientele.
- Completed certificate of attendance
- The Security personnel should be able to read, write and speak Sesotho and English

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS:

- Copy of a valid Tax Clearance Certificate
 - Certified (at source) copy of Registration certificate
 - Certified (at source) copy of VAT registration
 - Certified (at source) copy of Two-way radio licence from Lesotho Communications Authority.
- Completed tender documents written in English will be obtainable from the Procurement office at Level 2,

during working hours. The tender document will be available from **18th August 2025 to 31st August 2025**. Site inspection will be conducted from the following dates;

LOCATION	DATE	TIME
MTIBD head-quarters - LNDC Maseru	02/09/2025	11 :00am
MTIBD -Ma-putsoe - Maputsoe	03/09/2025	11:30am

Tenders must be submitted in **four (4) copies** and **one (1) original** in a sealed envelope, bearing no identification of the bidder, must be deposited in the Ministry's Tender Box placed on the 2nd floor, LNDC, Shoprite Building Kingsway, Maseru in a sealed envelope marked **“PROVISION OF SECURITY SERVICES FOR THE MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT”** on or before **11:00 am on 19 th September 2025**. No electronic copies will be permitted. Late tenders will not be accepted. Tenders will be opened on the same date, **12th September 2025 at 11:30am** in the boardroom of the Ministry at 2nd floor, Shoprite Building, LNDC, Kingsway Street, Maseru.

Interested bidders are expected to be legally registered and to comply with their tax obligations. To prove compliance, they must attach valid certified copies of registration certificate and valid tax clearance and traders licence. Source tax will be deducted. All prices charged should include VAT where applicable.

The Government of Lesotho reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders for reasons that may be advanced.

All tenders must be delivered to:
The Secretary of Tender Panel
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development
Level 2, Shoprite Building, LNDC
Kingsway Street, Maseru



Government of Lesotho
Tender Notice
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSIONER OF WATER

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Introduction

Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) through its Department of Commissioner of Water received funds from Government of Lesotho to procure consultant to develop a comprehensive natural resources policy that will detail government policy towards various sectors of the natural resources.

Desired Skills and qualifications

Following the assessment and understanding of the current prevailing situation within government about management of the natural resources, that includes existing policies and the institutional arrangements, the consultant will utilize the information gathered to develop a comprehensive natural resources policy that will detail government policy towards various sectors of natural resources.

Scope of Work

The scope of work of this consultancy involves making a review of all government policies that relate to management of natural resources which form thematic areas in this assignment through their assessment of the current situation.

The consultant will asses the policies belonging to the following sectors: Water and Sanitation, Environment, Range management, Soil and water conservation, Fisheries, Forestry and Land Use Planning. Consultations will be made with the Ministries and Departments responsible for the listed sectors and any others that the consultant may deem relevant owing to the nature of their work. The Consultant is expected to undertake the following activities:

- Mapping of the key stakeholders dealing with the natural resources.
- Conducting an assessment of the existing policies on various natural resources in the country as part of the situational analysis.
- Assessing institutional arrangements for management of the natural resources in the country.

Arrange and conduct consultative meetings with different sectors dealing with natural resources. Interested firms must provide all necessary infor-

mation and credentials including, technical and financial Proposals , list of Clients, highlights of similar assignments, projects undertaken as lead firm. Applications may be addressed to; The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160

Terms of Reference Issuance and Submission

The Terms of Reference document is issued on the **25 July 2025, and closes on the 03 September 2025 at 10:00am. The closing date for collecting document is Friday 22nd August 2025, at 4:00pm. To register for this RFP, Consultancy Firms have to pay a non-refundable fee of M500** to Department of Rural Water Supply Head Office (DRWS), Accounts Office from **Friday 25 July, 2025 until Friday 22 August, 2025.** The method of payment is cash. Consultancy firms must produce the receipt obtained from accounts to procurement Unit at the (DRWS) in order to receive the documents.

The MNR therefore invites competent consultancy firms to compete for this RFP.

RFP Opening

RFP documents will be opened by the Ministry of Natural Resources Procurement Committee on the **03 September, 2025 at 10:30am** in the presence of bidders or their representatives who wish to attend at the following address: Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru

Clarifications and Contacts

All questions and clarifications relating to this RFP should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160



Government of Lesotho
Tender Notice
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Department of Water Affairs

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Groundwater Hydrocensus in Lesotho (Lot 1)

Introduction

Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) through its Department of Water Affairs received funds from Government of Lesotho to procure consultant for the **execution of a Groundwater Hydro-census activity nationwide, (Lot1) and River Longitudinal profile and Cross-Sectional Surveys, River Ratings within the three main Catchments. (Lot2) and Community and Stakeholder Engagement in areas around Wetland Areas and Natural Springs Declared as Protected Water Resources .(Lot 3)** Therefore invites qualified and experienced consultancy firms to submit their proposal for the execution of a Groundwater Hydrocensus activity nationwide and **River Longitudinal profile and Cross-Sectional Surveys, and River Ratings within the three main Catchments.**

Scope of Work for Groundwater Hydro-census activity

The scope of work includes identification, verification, characterization and capturing groundwater monitoring points (boreholes and springs) and individuals geolocation. SECTION B: Objectives This project aims to: - Collect and update information on groundwater sources. - Establish a comprehensive digital registry of all identified groundwater point

Objectives

This project aims to: - Collect and update information on groundwater sources. - Establish a comprehensive digital registry of all identified groundwater points. - Support planning for groundwater monitoring and management

Scope of Work

The successful bidder will be expected to undertake the following:

- Desktop Review and Preparation - Review existing hydrogeological maps, borehole data, and spring inventories. - Identify target areas for field verification and census.
- Field Data Collection (Hydrocensus) Locate and verify existing groundwater sources: - Boreholes (equipped/unequipped) - Springs (protected/unprotected) - Groundwater monitoring points (e.g., piezometers) - Record GPS coordinates (in decimal degrees), physical characteristics, spring yield tests (where possible), usage type, status (functional/nonfunctional), and ownership. - Conduct basic water quality testing insitu water quality testing. - Water sample collection for analysis at DWA laboratory
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement - The consultant is expected to work with all Local Authorities/Community Councils during the execution of the project. - Ensure community knowledge of water resources management is incorporated.
- Database Development and Integration - Design and populate a geospatial database (compatible with the existing systems) and maps - Submit data in formats agreed upon (e.g. shapefiles, etc.)

River Longitudinal profile and Cross-Sectional Surveys, and River Ratings within the three main Catchments. (Lot2)

Objectives of the Assignment

The main objective of this consultancy is to conduct detailed hydrometric surveys, develop updated cross-sectional and longitudinal profiles of selected rivers, and generate reliable river rating curves to improve discharge estimation at excising gauging stations as well as for proposed gauging sites.

Scope of Work

The consultancy will undertake the following tasks:

3.1 Preliminary Assessment and Planning

- Review existing hydrological data, station records, and previous survey reports.
- Select Priority Rivers and stations in collaboration with DWA.

3.2Field Surveys

- Conduct cross-sectional surveys at each selected gauging station using standard equipment (e.g., Total Station, Real-Time Kinematic Global Positioning System (RTK-GPS), and Acoustic Doppler Current Profile (ADCP)).
- Perform longitudinal surveys covering approximately 1–2 km upstream and downstream from the station to capture reach variability.

- Identify hydraulic controls, floodplain characteristics, and obstructions.

3.3 River Rating Development

3.3.1 Conduct manual discharge measurements at different flow levels where possible.

- Compile historical stage-discharge data for curve fitting.
- Develop or revise rating curves using appropriate hydraulic and statistical methods (e.g., power law regression, Manning's equation, HEC-RAS modelling).

3.4 Capacity Building

- Provide training to DWA staff on hydrometric survey techniques and rating curve development.
- Prepare simplified field protocols and survey manuals.

3.5 Reporting

- Submit a comprehensive technical report with:
 - Survey data (coordinates, elevations, river profiles)

and Community and Stakeholder Engagement in areas around Wetland Areas and Natural Springs Declared as Protected Water Resources .Lot 3

Background

The Government of Lesotho, through the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) in the Ministry of Natural Resources, is implementing measures to protect key water resources by declaring them as protected water resources areas under national water and environmental legislation. These efforts aim to ensure water security, preserve ecosystem integrity, and align with national and international commitments

Effective and inclusive stakeholder consultation is critical for the success of these initiatives. The Department seeks the services of a qualified individual consultant to conduct community and stakeholder consultations around these protected water sources to raise awareness, gather inputs, and secure community ownership.

Detailed Specifications and Terms of Reference are found in the RFQ document.

Interested firms must provide all necessary information and credentials including, technical and financial Proposals , More details about this RFP will be found in the Terms of Reference.

Applications may be addressed to;

The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160

Terms of Reference Issuance and Submission

The Terms of Reference document is issued on the **08 August 2025, and closes on the 17 September 2025 at 10:00am. The closing date for collecting document is Friday 8 September 2025, at 4:00pm. To register for this RFP, Consultancy Firms have to pay a non-refundable fee of M500** to Department of Water (DWA), Accounts Office from **Friday 08 August, 2025 until Monday 8 September, 2025. The method of payment is cash. Consultancy firms must produce the receipt obtained from accounts section, to procurement Unit at the (DWA) in order to receive the documents.** The MNR therefore invites competent consultancy firms to compete for this RFP.

RFP Opening

RFP documents will be opened by the Ministry of Natural Resources Procurement Committee on the 17 September, 2025 at 10:30am in the presence of bidders or their representatives who wish to attend at the following address: Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru

Clarifications and Contacts

All questions and clarifications relating to this RFP should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160



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Arts
Entertainment

Newsday

Govt boosts music awards with M500k

Chris Theko

The government will once again support the creative industry with M500,000 to host the 2nd National Music Awards (NMAs) slated for September 27 at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre.

The announcement was made this week by the Minister of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, Motlatsi Maqelepo, during the official launch of the awards. Maqelepo highlighted the government's commitment to growing the music sector despite economic challenges.

"It was only last year when we concluded to establish the National Music Awards," he said.

"Both last year and this year, under difficult economic conditions, we were able to put aside half a million maloti as the government. Despite earlier thoughts of prioritising other policy areas, we decided to begin with the National Music Awards to show appreciation. Those who are nominated and those who win will truly feel valued."

Maqelepo acknowledged that while pressing needs remain in areas such as infrastructure, health, and education, deliberate investment in the creative industry was essential to ensure local talent receives recognition.

"We must accept that at the moment, the creative industry in Lesotho, especially the music



Minister of Tourism Sports Arts and Culture - Hon Motlatsi Maqelepo

sector, is still behind. I always say I am part of the creative industry; I make the noise from the corner, calling for both the government and the

private sector to support us.

He said the creative industry has the potential to change the country's economic prospects and more.

"We are making a case to the cabinet, to the private sector; and to the public to see more resources pumped into this sector."

The minister stressed that music has long been a tool for social cohesion and national pride, adding that investing in it was an investment in Basotho themselves. He further revealed that the government plans to expand support beyond music to other creative fields, including film, dance, theatre, and fine arts.

"We are looking at initiatives that start from the grassroots level," he explained. "We want to build platforms that give opportunities to young Basotho creatives to showcase their talents, sharpen their skills, and eventually compete on an international scale. This is about building a sustainable creative economy, not just celebrating one night of awards."

He also called on the private sector to partner with government, emphasising that public funding alone would not be enough to sustain the industry.

At the same event, Rorisang Motsamai, representing the NMA's organising team, thanked the ministry for its continued support.

"We are grateful to the ministry for this great initiative and the relentless support they have

shown since the beginning of the awards last year," Motsamai said.

He revealed that this year's awards will feature 22 categories, including Song of the Year, Record of the Year, Single of the Year, Classic of All Times, and the prestigious Queen Mamohato Lifetime Achievement Award. Entries were submitted earlier this year, and nominees were finalised in May.

Winners in all categories will receive a trophy and M5,000 cash prize, while the Queen 'Mamohato Lifetime Achievement Award will carry a M10,000 prize in recognition of its significance.

Motsamai emphasised that the NMAs were not only about competition but also about celebrating and preserving Lesotho's musical heritage.

"The awards are also about preserving our heritage and ensuring that music as an art form continues to thrive for generations to come," he said.

The inaugural NMAs in 2024 drew significant attention and marked a turning point for the recognition of Basotho musicians. With this year's expanded categories and greater participation, organisers expect the 2025 edition to set a new standard for the industry.

As the countdown to 27 September begins, the NMAs are shaping up to be more than just a night of glitz and glamour. They symbolise a growing recognition that music, and the creative industry as a whole, can play a key role in national unity, cultural identity, and economic transformation.

"This is about showing appreciation. It is about building an industry that can stand on its own and one day contribute meaningfully to our economy. With the right support, our creatives can change the prospects of Lesotho," Maqelepo said.

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Private sector pledges to combat GBV



Minister of Gender Youth and Social Development Pitso Lesaoana formally unveiled the Statement of Commitment on Private Sector Engagement in Preventing GBV in the Workplace.

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho's private sector has taken a monumental step in the fight against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), with leading institutions unveiling a Statement of Commitment on Private Sector Engagement in Preventing GBV in the Workplace in Maseru this week.

The event, supported by GIZ, signified a new era of collaboration between the government, civil society, and the business community to create safe and equitable workplaces.

The Minister of Gender, Youth, and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana, formally unveiled the Statement of Commitment, calling the event a "milestone in our nation's journey towards safety, dignity, and equality in the workplace."

The minister acknowledged the critical contributions of survivors, advocates, employers,

and workers, whose insights have ensured the commitments are not only strong in words but also "actionable in practice."

Lesaoana highlighted the devastating economic and human costs of GBV, noting that it costs Lesotho billions of maloti each year, approximately 5.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"We cannot pretend that Gender-Based Violence and harassment are not costing human suffering, lost productivity, damaged reputations, and national resources. Yet beyond the numbers are the real people, employees, who cannot thrive because they feel unsafe," he stated.

The minister outlined the seven core commitments for the private sector, including adopting and enforcing zero-tolerance GBV policies, providing regular, survivor-centred

training for staff, establishing safe and confidential reporting systems, offering access to psychosocial, legal, and health services, raising awareness and promoting gender-transformative public messaging, fostering cross-sector collaboration and monitoring and reporting progress using evidence-based tools.

Bokang Mareka, Head of People and Culture at the Lesotho PostBank, shared the institution's motivation for signing the commitment, stating that it was inspired by a desire to make a positive contribution to the well-being of the community.

"We are a caring bank," Mareka said, "the caring element must be seen; if activated, it is in the deeds that we pursue that we shall indeed bear testament for it."

When asked about the bank's initial focus, Mareka identified commitment number two:

"to provide regular, survivor-centred training for staff and management."

Mareka explained that this is a foundational step, "as the act made people perish because of a lack of knowledge."

The training will empower employees to identify and prevent GBV and go beyond policies and into an active implementation phase. The goal is to totally eradicate the issues of gender-based violence within the bank and beyond, according to Mareka.

Meanwhile, the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Lesotho signed a three-year strategic partnership to combat GBV.

The collaboration comes at a crucial time, with a staggering 86 percent of Basotho women reported to have experienced such violence.

Vodacom Lesotho CEO Mohale Ralebitso underscored the severity of the crisis, calling it "a severe challenge to our national development and social fabric."

He stated that this partnership is a "testimony to our shared commitment to addressing this crisis holistically, from prevention to survivor support. The partnership will focus on preventative measures within communities, holding perpetrators accountable, and empowering survivors to reclaim their lives."

John Matlosa, Chairman of the Vodacom Lesotho Foundation, highlighted how the new collaboration will significantly amplify the Foundation's existing initiatives, which include logistical and financial support for GBV safety homes.

"We are immensely grateful to UNFPA for joining forces to exponentially amplify our collective fight against GBV," he said.

UNFPA Country Representative to Lesotho, John Kennedy Mosoti, reiterated the need for a unified response from all stakeholders, regardless of status or wealth. "Its eradication requires a firm, unified response from all stakeholders," he stressed.

Mosoti praised Vodacom Lesotho's leadership as a demonstration of the "crucial role the private sector must play in driving social change and setting a precedent for other corporations."

The shared vision, he concluded, is to "forge a Lesotho where every woman and girl can live free from fear, able to realise their full potential without the shadow of violence."

Morija artist to exhibit in Antwerp

Staff Writer

For the first time, an artist from Lesotho is exhibiting in Antwerp.

The exhibition will take place from Thursday, September 11 to Sunday, September 14 at the RUIJME34 gallery, Cobdenstraat 34, Antwerp. The opening on Thursday, September 11, at 5:30 PM will be attended by the Ambassador of Lesotho, 'Mantoetsi Mohatonyane.

Patrick Rorke (1953)

The painter Patrick Rorke is self-taught. A descendant of an Irish/French missionary family active in Lesotho since the mid-19th century, he was born in the village of Morija, about 40 kilometres from the capital Maseru.

Professionally, he taught art and ceramics at the Alex Art Centre in Johannesburg. He also made a significant contribution to the completion of the new Constitutional Court in Johannesburg (2004); he contributed more than 200 engravings of sunscreens.

Following a visit to Spain, he started the Morija Arts Centre in 2010. The centre offers a platform for artists and students where they can work and exhibit their work.

Patrick is currently working on the construction of the Maloaleng Artist Residency, where artists from Lesotho and abroad will be invited, also with a view to holding work-

shops for local schools.

The exhibition

The exhibition primarily features oil and watercolour paintings of Lesotho's unique landscape. Since childhood, Patrick has been fascinated by the poetic power of this landscape; he captures this in his paintings in his own unique way.

Lesotho, unprecedented, unknown

Lesotho is known to few. It is an independent country completely surrounded by South Africa. It is roughly the size of Belgium, has a population of around two million, and is a major diamond producer.

Situated on a plateau, Lesotho's lowest point is the highest lowest point of any country in the world. Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy headed by King Letsie III and became world news when President Trump announced new trade tariffs in April of this year.

On that occasion, it was announced that Lesotho's exports would henceforth be subject to a 50 percent tariff, the highest of any country. The Lesotho-based textile and garment industry (suppliers of Levi's, Calvin Klein, and others), which employs some 20,000 workers, primarily women, was naturally affected.

The tariff has since been reduced to 15%, but the significant uncertainty has had a huge

impact on the industry, the textile workers, and the residents of Lesotho.

About the organisers

The exhibition is Patrick's initiative. The

organisers (Hans Duynhouwer and Marlies Biekmann) know Patrick from their time (2010-2014) when they lived in Lesotho, where they worked for the European Union.



Kick4Life Ladies set for CAF interclub bow

Seabata Mahao

Reigning champions of the 2024/25 Women's Super League (WSL), Kick4Life Ladies, are set to make their historic debut in the CAF Women's Champions League – COSAFA Qualifiers on Monday next week.

The Lesotho side will open their Group B campaign against Eswatini's Young Buffaloes FC on August 25, at 12PM at the AW Muller Stadium, University of Johannesburg. They are drawn in a tough group that also includes Gaborone United Ladies FC of Botswana.

Running from August 22–31, the COSAFA Qualifiers serve as the gateway to the prestigious CAF Women's Champions League, providing a platform for regional dominance and international exposure.

Kick4Life's participation marks a major milestone for Lesotho women's club football, as they aim to make a lasting impression on their continental debut.

On their way to qualifying for the coveted CAF interclub competition, Kick4Life Ladies blitzed their way through the 2024/25 WSL season, where they finished without being defeated.

Staying with women's football, the national senior women's team, Mehalalitoe, will travel to Blantyre, Malawi, on August 27 for two international friendlies against the Malawi Scorchers. The matches are



Kick4Life Ladies FC

scheduled for Friday, August 29, and Sunday, August 31, at Mpira Stadium.

The friendlies form part of head coach Shalane Lehohla's preparations for the upcoming COSAFA Women's Championship later this year. With all Kick4Life players unavailable due to their CAF commitments, Lehohla will field a squad made entirely of locally based players.

Despite the absence of some of his most experienced stars, Lehohla remains optimistic of his charges's chances.

"This is a chance for other players to come in and show what they can do. We have not been conceding many goals in the games we have played, but now it is important that we start winning and scoring goals," he said.

"As a country, we are unfortunate; we got used to not winning. Even when there is an opportunity, we do not take it. It is important to work on our mindset. The players must get used to winning."

Mehalalitoe's team captain Thato Mapepesa echoed the coach's sentiments, praising the high morale in camp.

"We all understand the importance of working hard and preparing properly for COSAFA. Games like these against Malawi help us deal with pressure and test our readiness."

Lehohla, considers the Malawi matches as more than just preparation, but a platform for players to showcase their talent internationally.

Mehalalitoe's squad to face Malawi is as follows:

Goalkeepers: Nketsetseng Chaole, 'Mamakhabane Makibinyane, Nthabiseng Hlao.

Defenders: Thato Mapepesa (Captain), Tsoanelo Leboka, Bokang Ntsane, 'Mantiti Tlholoane, 'Mathabo Maphalane, Limpho Nthako, Maphaki Qhalehi, Ithabeleng Letumanyane.

Midfielders: Nthabeleng Makhabane, 'Mamasoabi Monese, Lineo Sekhonyana, Nthabeleng Potsane, 'Makhotso Moalosi, Ntebohelong Ramatsoku.

Forwards: Phuzile Molefe, Karabo Mabeleng, Motšelisi Makhoaphe, Nthabiseng Mohlahlobi, Mahlapane Matete.

Maseru schools star at LISA games

Seabata Mahao

Maseru schools dominated the 2025 Econet LISA National Ball Games, showcasing depth, skill, and determination as they clinched the majority of the coveted titles at the Lesotho High School grounds last weekend.

The national competition, hosted by the Lesotho Institutions Sports Association (LISA) in partnership with title sponsors Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), drew 83 schools from across all 10 districts.

Hundreds of students, both boys and girls, competed in football, netball, volleyball, basketball, handball, chess, and public speaking in both English and Sesotho.

The three-day event, held from August 15 to 17, was a lively celebration of school sport and youth potential, culminating in action-packed finals and a colourful awards ceremony. Trophies and medals went to the best-performing schools, with Maseru institutions leading the charge.

Life High School from Maseru captured the boys' football crown, while Abia High School (Maseru) triumphed in the girls' division. In netball, Leqele High School (Maseru) won the girls' championship, while Leqele also secured the boys' basketball title.

Maseru's dominance continued in volleyball, with Phuthiatsana High School winning the boys' section and Lithabaneng High School crowned girls' champions.



The 2025 Econet LISA National Ball Games at Lesotho High School

Other winning schools from outside Maseru included Mopholosi High School from Quthing, which took home the boys' handball championship. Another Quthing school, Masitise High School, clinched the girls' basketball championship, while Ma-boee High School from Leribe won both the boys' and girls' handball divisions.

Ntai Marabe, LISA's spokesperson felt the competition met its objectives of unearthing talent from across the country and preparing athletes for future international representation.

"We aimed to ensure national-level competitions for both boys and girls as part of preparations for future development," said Marabe.

"These games are a critical scouting ground for development coaches across sporting disciplines."

He confirmed that football teams have already been shortlisted for the upcoming COSASA Games in Eswatini, with the support of the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA). Marabe also appealed to the private sector to assist with resources to en-

sure that teams can compete successfully beyond Lesotho's borders.

On his part, ETL's Chief Executive Officer Dennis Platjies reaffirmed the company's commitment to nurturing sporting talent.

"These games are a powerful platform to develop future international champions," he said. "We commend all schools, coaches, and young athletes for their energy and passion."

The Minister of Sports, Motlatsi Mapelepo, praised the unifying and transformative nature of the tournament, encouraging young people to take sport seriously as a pathway to international exposure and economic empowerment.

"To those wondering who will one day raise Lesotho's flag on the global stage, here they are. I want to see some of the athletes at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles."

Mapelepo thanked ETL for its continued support while challenging more private companies to invest in youth sports. He also urged the government to increase its backing for the sector, citing its potential to combat unemployment and social ills.

Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission's (LSRC) President Baba Malephane also hailed the tournament's success.

"With sustained investments and collective efforts, the future of sports in Lesotho is brighter than ever," he said.



We are building squad to compete continentally - Lioli



Lioli Football Club clinched the 2025 Alliance Challenge title on Sunday after a narrow but hard-fought 1-0 victory over LCS

Seabata Mahao

Fresh from lifting the TJ Nthane Foundation tournament, Lioli Football Club last Sunday added yet another preseason trophy to their cabinet by winning the 2025 Alliance Challenge.

The Teyateyaneng giants edged LCS FC 1-0 in a tightly contested final that was played at Bambatha Tsita Sports Arena to claim the championship.

Only last month Lioli defeated Linare 2-0 to lift the TJ Nthane Foundation cup, as they stepped up their preparations for participation in the Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Champions League preliminary stage, where South Africa's Orlando Pirates awaits them in the preliminary round.

Last weekend's victory earned Lioli the trophy and the lion's share of the M100,000 prize money offered by tournament sponsors, Alliance Insurance. This year marked

the eighth edition of the competition, which features only teams sponsored by the insurer namely Lioli, Matlama, Linare and LCS.

Lioli's path to the final was far from easy. They faced Linare in a thrilling semi final tie where they drew 2-2. Lioli eventually overcame the stubborn Linare 4-2 after a penalty shootout.

In the tense final against LCS, which edged Matlama FC via another penalty shootout, both teams created chances but failed to convert until Lioli finally broke the deadlock to seal the win and lift the trophy.

Their composure under pressure and squad depth ultimately paid off as they lifted the coveted trophy, sending a strong warning to rivals ahead of the new season.

Reflecting on the performance of his charges, Lioli's head coach Bongani Maseko expressed pride in the squad, praising the balance between experienced and young players.

"We trust all our players to step up when needed," Maseko said after the final whistle.

"In the first match, we used experienced players to build momentum, and they delivered. After reaching the semi-finals, we introduced younger players to test their readiness, and they did not disappoint."

Maseko singled out Makuru as a promising talent and reiterated the club's broader ambitions.

"We are focused on building a stronger squad that can dominate games and compete at the continental level. We aim to win every tournament we enter."

Despite the narrow defeat, LCS's head coach Leslie Notši remained positive.

"This tournament came at a good time. It helped us assess our strengths and areas that need improvement," he said. "We also tested some of our new signings in the final, which gave us useful insights."

Notši admitted the target was silverware

but stressed the value of lessons learned.

"There were many positives. We will work hard to improve and ensure we give our supporters something to cheer about this season."

The competition also shone a light on individual brilliance. Lioli's goalkeeper William Huni and midfielder Tholang Makuru each received M2,500 for their outstanding contributions, Huni for his penalty heroics and Makuru for his energy and creativity in midfield. Linare's striker Mofihli Mabokoane walked away with the top scorer's award, also worth M2,500.

Looking ahead, Lioli is currently out in Namibia where it will play friendly matches as part of its preparations for CAF Champions League participation on the weekend of September 19-21 against Pirates.

Lioli along with Matlama, Linare and four A Division League teams will feature in the Ramela Foundation Cup, scheduled for August 30-31 before the league begins.



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