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EBA KAROLO EA PHETOHO!

Lintlha ka botlalo
Leqepheng la 11

2026
January
Friday 30



**NATIONAL
MARKET
DAY**

SA ConCourt rejects Tholo's M4.25m appeal



Staff Reporter

In a unanimous judgment with sweeping consequences for South Africa's fuel industry and cross-border trade, the Constitutional Court has dismissed Tholo Energy Services CC's last-ditch appeal, confirming that the company is not entitled to a R4.25 million fuel levy refund and entrenching the South African Revenue Service's (SARS) uncompromising, literal approach to fuel export rules.

The ruling, delivered on January 16, 2026, brings to an end a nine-year legal battle and decisively vindicates every adverse finding made against Tholo by SARS, the High Court and the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA).

Thabiso Moroahae is the sole member of Tholo Energy Services CC, registered in South Africa, and a shareholder and sole director of Tholo Energy Services (Pty) Ltd, a Lesotho-incorporated company that supplies fuel primarily to the construction and mining sectors.

At the centre of the dispute were refund claims totalling R4,254,924.80 for fuel levies allegedly paid on 25 consignments of diesel exported to Lesotho between April and June 2016.

Court papers show that approximately 40,000 litres per consignment were collected on behalf of Tholo from depots of the Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa (PetroSA). PetroSA operates a licensed customs and excise manufacturing warehouse (VM), a refinery, in Mossel Bay.

However, it was common cause that none of the fuel was obtained from that licensed

warehouse. Instead, 22 consignments were uplifted from PetroSA's depot in Bloemfontein, two from its depot in Tzaneen, and one from TotalEnergies' depot in Alrode, Alberton, none of which are licensed manufacturing warehouses.

It was also common cause that at the time of export, Tholo did not hold an export permit, and that PetroSA had no VM at any of the depots from which the fuel was collected.

Tholo submitted its refund claims on March 17, 2017. SARS requested further information, audited the claims and issued a letter of intent on June 27, 2017, informing the company that it had failed to comply with the law and did not qualify for a refund.

SARS specifically demanded proof that the fuel was obtained from the stocks of a licensed VM, proof of actual quantities exported, and evidence of a valid export permit.

In response, Tholo claimed that duty had been paid at source and that export permits were not required for exports to BLNS countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Eswatini). SARS rejected the explanation and disallowed the refund claims on July 20, 2017.

An internal administrative appeal, oral representations and further inspections followed, but on December 10, 2018, the appeal committee dismissed the matter, finding that the fuel had not been obtained from a licensed VM.

Courts close ranks against Tholo

Tholo then turned to the High Court in

Pretoria, which dismissed its case in November 2022. The SCA upheld that decision in August 2024, ordering Tholo to pay costs, including the costs of two counsel.

"The appeal is dismissed with costs, including the costs of two counsel," read the SCA judgment.

Undeterred, Tholo approached the Constitutional Court.

That bid has now failed.

"I am therefore satisfied that the Supreme Court of Appeal correctly applied the law to the facts and reached the correct conclusion," the Constitutional Court held.

"Tholo's failure to satisfy any one of the statutory requirements is sufficient to defeat its refund claim. Its failure to satisfy multiple requirements makes the case clear-cut."

Leave to appeal was granted, but the appeal itself was dismissed.

This time, there is no higher court to run to.

SARS allowed to expand its defence

One of Tholo's final arguments was procedural. It accused SARS of unfairly ambushing it by expanding the grounds for refusing the refund during litigation, an alleged violation of the right to just administrative action.

Initially, SARS relied on two grounds: the fuel was not collected from PetroSA's licensed warehouse, and Tholo had no export permit. Later, SARS added further grounds, including that Tholo could not prove the fuel's origin, that it was not transported by licensed removers, and that the fuel was

paid for by Tholo Lesotho, not Tholo Energy Services CC.

The Constitutional Court rejected the complaint outright.

Writing for a unanimous bench, Justice Mbuyiseli Mathopo held that a tariff appeal under the Customs and Excise Act is a "wide appeal," a full rehearing in which SARS may rely on any lawful basis supporting the same determination.

"The determination, the refusal of the refund, remained constant throughout the proceedings," Mathopo wrote. "The grounds advanced were reasons supporting that determination, not the determination itself."

Strict reading of the law prevails

On the substance, the Court delivered a ruling with major implications for the fuel and logistics sectors.

Tholo argued that it was sufficient to buy fuel from any depot owned by a licensed manufacturer, even if that depot was not itself a licensed manufacturing warehouse.

The Court flatly rejected this interpretation.

Fuel, it held, must be obtained directly from the physical premises of the licensed warehouse itself. Anything else defeats the traceability and control mechanisms built into the customs system.

"This interpretation ensures that refunds are only granted where fuel can be traced through controlled environments, reducing the risk of fraud and revenue leakage," the Court said, stressing that refunds are a privilege, not a right, and require strict compliance.

In doing so, the Constitutional Court expressly shut the door on a more flexible approach previously adopted in Tunica Trading (2021), which now stands effectively overruled.

"Common practice" defence collapses

Tholo's claim that export permits were not required for BLNS exports also failed.

The Court found no evidence of a uniform or binding "practice generally prevailing" that excused exporters from compliance. Diesel is a restricted product under the regulations. A permit was required. Tholo did not have one.

That failure alone, the Court held, was fatal.

The judgment confirms, in full, the conclusions already reached by every court that heard the matter: Tholo Energy Services' refund claims were fundamentally non-compliant from the start.

The High Court exposed the failures. The SCA crushed the appeal with costs. The Constitutional Court has now extinguished the matter entirely, endorsing SARS at every turn and setting a precedent that will reverberate across South Africa's fuel and cross-border trade sectors for years to come.

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Minister denies ban on seven-seater school buses

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Minister of Transport and Public Works Matjato Moteane has distanced himself from claims that the government has banned seven-seater vehicles used to transport school pupils.

The clarification follows leaked information from the Road Transport Board, which operates under the ministry, suggesting a recommendation to phase out seven-seater vehicles such as the Toyota Noah and Alphard, which are commonly used for learner transport.

Moteane said the speculation has caused anxiety among school transport operators, many of whom fear losing their livelihoods. Reports circulating among operators suggest they have been given six months to replace their seven-seater vehicles with 15-seater minibuses.

Opposition leader and Basotho National Party (BNP) Member of Parliament Machesetsa Mofomobe has since written to Prime Minister Sam Matekane, urging the government to halt the proposed move.

In his letter, Mofomobe stated: "It has been officially communicated to learner transport operators that seven-seater vehicles, popularly known as Noah and Alphard, will no longer be permitted to ferry school learners. Operators have been told they have six months to replace them with 15-seater vehicles. This decision is economically reckless, socially insensitive, and



Minister of Transport and Public Works Matjato Moteane

politically indefensible."

Mofomobe further called on government to engage in proper consultations and to consider compensation or transitional support for affected operators. He urged the Prime Minister to intervene immediately, suspend the directive and order a comprehensive review of the policy.

However, Newsday investigations indicate that no formal directive has been issued to learner transport operators. Operators re-

newing their vehicle licences have, however, reportedly been informed that this may be the last renewal for their current seven-seater vehicles.

Earlier this week, Moteane said he suspects the leaked information originated from within his office before the matter had been formally concluded.

The Road Act of 1981 established the Road Transport Board to advise the minister on matters relating to the transport industry. Moteane said he recently met with the board and

requested a report on the issue, but stressed that no final decision has been taken and no timelines have been set.

He added that the vehicles in question currently comply with existing laws governing learner transport.

Under the law, vehicles with a minimum capacity of seven passengers are permitted to ferry pupils. Children between the ages of three and six are counted as one passenger for every two children, meaning a seven-seater vehicle may legally transport up to 14 learners.

Additionally, three children aged between six and 13 are counted as two passengers.

"We are thoroughly discussing an issue that has not yet reached my office for a final decision," Moteane said.

Asked when the ministry would act on any recommendations from the board, the minister said this would depend on several factors, including the complexity of the matter and the extent of consultations required.

One learner transport operator, who asked not to be named, said the proposed changes would severely affect small operators.

She said many operators would be forced out of business, as few can afford the cost of purchasing a 15-seater vehicle. She added that learner transport businesses also support mechanics, drivers and other service providers in their communities, all of whom would be affected if operators are pushed out of the market.

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Senqu Bridge completion seals infrastructure phase

... Highlands' icon ready in days

Staff Reporters

The Senqu Bridge, a towering engineering marvel in Lesotho's highlands, is on the verge of full practical completion in the coming days of early February 2026, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) announced this week.

This milestone arrives as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), a landmark binational partnership between Lesotho and South Africa, enters its 40th anniversary year, commemorating the 1986 treaty that launched one of Africa's most ambitious water transfer and infrastructure initiatives.

Final touches are now underway on the extradosed bridge, which spans approximately 825 meters across the Senqu River at a height of about 90 meters above the valley floor.

"Final works include completed expansion joints and balustrades scheduled for completion this week. The bridge marks the end of Phase II advance infrastructure works. Planning for the official opening is underway," LHDA said.

The bridge, Lesotho's first of its extradosed design, a hybrid incorporating cable-stayed elements with a prestressed concrete box girder, was constructed by the WRES Senqu Bridge Joint Venture under a contract awarded in 2022.

Designed to endure the region's extreme high-altitude conditions, including fierce winds, heavy snowfall, and sub-zero winters, the structure features 15 piers of varying heights and is built to last over a century.

As the largest of three major bridges being built under Phase II of the LHWP, alongside



the Mabunyaneng and Khubelu bridges, the Senqu Bridge will play a vital role in maintaining connectivity along the A1 national road from Maseru to Mokhotlong.

Once the Polihali Dam, a key component of Phase II, begins impounding water, the rising reservoir would otherwise submerge or disrupt existing crossings, potentially isolating communities, schools, markets, and emergency access routes.

By ensuring uninterrupted road links across the future reservoir, the bridge will safeguard livelihoods, trade, and daily life for highland residents while supporting the broader goals of the LHWP which are to transfer billions of cubic meters of water annually to South Africa's Vaal River system to bolster water security in Gauteng and surrounding areas, while providing Lesotho with royalties, hydropower, and transformative infrastructure.

Earlier construction faced challenges, including design adjustments, severe weather, labour issues, and occasional community-related delays, pushing the timeline from an

initial November 2025 target to early 2026.

Progress accelerated significantly in recent months, with the deck largely completed and the overall project reaching advanced stages by late 2025. The Senqu Bridge's completion formally concludes the advance infrastructure phase of Phase II.

This achievement underscores four decades of bilateral cooperation under the LHWP, which has delivered iconic structures like the Katse Dam and Muela Hydropower Station in Phase I, while continuing to drive socioeconomic benefits and regional development.

As one LHDA official noted in prior updates, the bridge is "not just about engineering; it is about ensuring that communities remain connected, that children can still get to school and that trade and livelihoods can continue, despite the changes the dam will bring."

The LHDA's announcement aligns with strong parallel progress at the Polihali Dam, the centerpiece of Phase II.

As reported by Newsday in December

2025, the dam achieved a key construction milestone by reaching a rockfill placement elevation of 1,977 meters, 65 meters above the riverbed, following an intensive 2025 push that placed over six million cubic meters of rock by the end of November.

The main dam wall continues at a remarkable pace, exceeding 22,000 cubic meters of rockfill per day, equivalent to filling nine Olympic-sized swimming pools daily. The saddle dam has seen more than 154,000 cubic meters placed.

In total, around 14 million cubic meters of rock will be required to complete the dam, a concrete-faced rockfill structure rising to 166 meters, surpassing the 145-meter-high Mohale Dam from Phase I as one of Africa's largest of its kind.

Rock for the embankment, sourced from a precision-blasted quarry within the future reservoir basin, which will be submerged upon impoundment, is loaded directly onto dump trucks and compacted in layers up to 0.8 meters thick.

Operating on a two-shift system, the site sees roughly 2,700 truckloads transported daily.

When finished, the Polihali Dam's embankment will crest at 921 meters long and nine meters wide, with a base span of about 490 meters. Associated infrastructure includes a spillway, intake tower, bottom outlet, compensation outlet structure, and a small hydropower station.

The resulting reservoir on the Senqu and Khubelu rivers will cover 5,053 hectares and store up to 2,325 million cubic meters of water at full supply level.

Top home affairs officials charged with corruption

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Two senior officials suspended from the Ministry of Home Affairs have been granted bail in a corruption and fraud case linked to the alleged unlawful issuance of official documents, including passports.

The accused are suspended Director of Passports Mpiko Rafono (58) and Nthatisi Thabane (48), a Refugee and Migrants Liaison Officer who also coordinated Lesotho's Multi-Sectoral Committee Against Trafficking in Persons. Both have been on suspension since last year.

They appeared before the Maseru Magistrate's Court this week, where they were formally charged with corruption and fraud. The court granted each accused bail of M5,000. The matter was postponed to 10 February 2026.

According to police testimony, Inspector Voyelwa Mateisi of the Special Investigations Unit at the Ministry of Home Affairs told the court that a report was received in June 2025 alleging widespread corruption within the ministry.

Investigations were subsequently launched, leading police to the offices of the suspended Director of Passports and the former Migrants Liaison Officer.



Director Passports, Mpiko Rafono

Inspector Mateisi said investigations revealed that the accused allegedly abused the authority entrusted to them by their offices by unlawfully facilitating the issuance of official documents to certain refugees, without transparency and in violation of procedures set out in the relevant laws and regulations.

The alleged offences relate to the handling of sensitive immigration and identity documents, including passports, residence permits and naturalisation cer-

tificates.

Separately, the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) last year reported that Thabane allegedly unlawfully received and retained funds intended for the processing of naturalisation certificates.

According to the DCEO, the amounts involved total M280,000, with an additional M30,000 also unaccounted for. As a result of the alleged conduct, the Ministry of Home Affairs is said to have suffered a fi-

nancial loss of approximately M280,000.

The accused are expected to return to court on 10 February 2026.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, which oversees the issuance of critical national documents, including national identity cards, passports, residence permits, naturalisation certificates, and other official travel and identification documents, has faced intense scrutiny over alleged systemic corruption.

Reports indicate that some officials have solicited bribes to expedite or facilitate the processing of these services, particularly passports, amid ongoing public frustrations with delays in issuance.

Recent broader challenges in passport services have included prolonged backlogs, perceived shortages of materials, and allegations that desperation among applicants has fueled bribery attempts.

For instance, frustrations over not obtaining passports promptly have reportedly contributed to corruption incidents, as highlighted in parliamentary discussions.

The standard passport issuance process requires applicants to submit prescribed forms, a valid Lesotho identity card, fingerprints, passport-sized photos, and fees at the Ministry of Home Affairs or designated offices.

However, deviations from due process, such as bypassing transparency requirements, have been central to the accusations.



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The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) invites sealed tenders from both locally and internationally registered Service providers for supply and installation of access control at LNDC Development House Block A, Level 1 & 2.

A **Compulsory pre-bid meeting** shall be held on **Tuesday 03th of February 2026 at 10:00 am, at Development House Block A, Level 2, Reception area**

Interested and eligible bidders may obtain the tender document by paying a non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Maloti (M 500.00) directly to LNDC bank account and submit proof of payment** at the Finance Office at LNDC Development House Block A, Level 6.

Tenders must be deposited in the **tender box** situated at the 1st Floor of LNDC Development House Block A, Reception area on or before **Thursday, 12th February 2026 at 10:00AM**.

The tender box will be opened publicly immediately thereafter. Submissions received after the deadline will not be considered.

All tenders must be accompanied by valid copies of traders' licence, tax clearance, and proof of authorized signatory. A Margin of Preference will be applicable as per the LNDC Procurement Policy.

The LNDC reserves the right to cancel the tender, reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. The LNDC is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.



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Newsday Business

Nearly 9 in 10 MSMEs in Lesotho lack insurance cover

Bereng Mpaki

A staggering 89 percent of micro, small to medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Lesotho are not insured for either personal or business risk, exposing firms and their employees to all manner of risks that could affect operations.

A 2023 FinScope MSME Survey Lesotho revealed that most businesses surveyed found insurance too expensive (48 percent), while some (27 percent) said they did not need insure. About 20 percent of those surveyed did not know available insurance types for their businesses.

"Currently, 89% of MSMEs are not covered for any personal or business risk," the study report said, noting that a slight improvement compared to the previous 2016 study.

"The main barrier is the perceived cost of insurance and its relevance (perception) compounded by the lack of information on how to obtain insurance and the types of insurance that are relevant to MSMEs."

The issued of low MSME insurance was highlighted in a recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) Selected Issues Paper prepared by Athene Laws and Ann-Alice Ticha titled: Unleashing Private Sector Job Creation: Challenges and Opportunities for Lesotho.

The IMF Selected Issues Papers are prepared by IMF staff as background documentation for periodic consultations with member countries. It is based on the information available at the time it was completed on August 21, 2025.

"While financial access for individuals has seen



MSME pic Cred Lesotho News Agency

gains in Lesotho, firm access remains a key barrier to growth...Banks report MSME lending as too high risk, with limited bankable projects, and instead focus on FDI and state-level projects.

"SACCOs provide localised business finance through their cooperative structure, but they are limited in scale. Banks, in turn, do not leverage SACCOs local networks and enforcement as intermediation to scale lending. There is an insurance gap too with 89 percent of firms not covered for any personal or business risk."

On the other side of the market, the report said firms are hesitant to use products from formal financial institutions. Financial literacy is a factor with many entrepreneurs unaware of the financial

products available, unsure how to access them, or afraid to take on financial risks. Only 11 percent of businesses have a written business plan, and only 35 percent have a business budget (Finscope 2025).

The report said only four in ten firms are aware of support organisations, such as the Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO), with even fewer utilising services available.

"Lending terms are another barrier—33 percent of firms report "unfavorable rates, collateral, or procedures as main reason for not applying to loans" (B Ready Lesotho 2025). The lack of business insurance is similarly driven by perceived costs, and a lack of knowledge of how to obtain, or the types of insurance, available."

The authors said these gaps in financial knowledge and capacity hinder MSMEs from engaging with formal financial institutions or scaling their operations.

"The authorities have developed a comprehensive reform agenda to address the challenges, and recent developments are encouraging. Discussions with industry stakeholders in June 2025 highlighted some green shoots of financial deepening to MSMEs: the take up rate of the main partial credit guarantee scheme is increasing, and banks and NBFI are experimenting with new MSME-focused lending products, such as operating loans based on signed government tenders."

"In addition, coordination across the key actors in the system (BEDCO, banks, MFIs, industry groups, development partners) appears to be improving. The authorities have put forward a comprehensive reform agenda in the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2024–28) and (forthcoming) Financial Sector Development Strategy II (2025–30)."

"Key pillars include strengthening credit infrastructure (e.g., expanding credit bureau coverage to include MSMEs, integrating registries), enhancing public support instruments (e.g., reforming partial credit guarantee schemes, establishing a development finance institution), and promoting financial literacy through targeted education programs. The strategies also emphasise digitization, fintech regulation, and the development of inclusive financial products. Success will depend on sustained political commitment, effective institutional collaboration, and mobilisation of resources from both public and private sectors."

The authors recommended for expansion of insurance access for uninsured firms among possible means of unleashing private sector job creation in the country.

They said addressing job creation problem requires a concerted effort on multiple policy fronts including combining public-sector reform, business-environment reform, expanding financial access for firms, better skills matching, and careful macroeconomic management.

Lehae Funerals in expansion mode

Seabata Mahao

Lehae Funeral Services has demonstrated its rapid growth trajectory with the official opening of a new mortuary branch in the Berea district, less than a year after launching its first branch.

The expansion signals the company's growing presence in Lesotho's funeral services sector and its ambition to make dignified end-of-life services more accessible to communities.

The new Berea branch forms part of Lehae Funerals' broader strategy to decentralise its operations and bring services closer to clients across the country.

The move also responds to increasing demand for reliable and professional funeral services, particularly in districts that have traditionally relied on facilities located far from their communities.

Lehae Funerals is a sister company to Alliance Insurance Company and operates as a subsidiary of the Alliance Group Investment Holding Company. This corporate backing has enabled the funeral services provider to expand steadily since its establishment.

Speaking during the launch, Lehae Funeral Services Chief Executive Officer Motjope Mokhathi reflected on the company's modest beginnings, noting that when it was founded in October 2023, it did not have its own physical offices and operated under the umbrella of Alliance Insurance.

"Through determination and growth, we were able to establish our first branch in Likotsi last year," Mokhathi said.

"The opening of the Berea branch represents continued progress and stability for the company."

Mokhathi also used the occasion to clarify the

difference between funeral insurance and funeral services, an area that often causes confusion among clients. He explained that funeral insurance is designed to provide financial support to bereaved families, while funeral services are responsible for managing the practical aspects of burial arrangements and the final send-off.

Mokhathi revealed that the company has set its sights on further expansion going forward. He said land has already been secured in several parts of the country to accommodate future developments.

Beyond business growth, he added that the Berea branch is expected to contribute to socio-economic development by creating jobs and supporting poverty reduction efforts in the district.

The Berea Branch Manager Tsepelo Manong echoed the emphasis on community impact, highlighting the branch's role in boosting local employment and economic activity.

"The branch will employ six permanent staff members while additional temporary workers will be outsourced as needed. Our goal is to ensure that every Mosotho receives a decent and dignified funeral."

On behalf of the local community, Principal Chief of Ha 'Mamathe, Gabsheane Masupha, welcomed the opening of the new branch and commended Lehae Funerals and Alliance Insurance Group for investing in Berea. He also highlighted the significant role played by women in driving the project.

"I would like to applaud the womanhood that has elevated this project. This shows that Alliance Insurance Group is truly here to work for Basotho," Masupha said, urging the company to continue supporting community initiatives in the area.



PUBLIC NOTICE

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA)

Green Mould Consultancy, in association with Greenleaf Investments, hereby informs the public and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) of an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) being undertaken for the proposed construction of a Cancer Treatment and Radiotherapy Centre at Botshabelo, Maseru, commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Kingdom of Lesotho.

The ESIA is conducted in accordance with the Environment Act, 2008, to assess potential environmental and social impacts during the construction and operational phases of the project and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures.

Members of the public and all I&APs are invited to submit written comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding the proposed project.

Comment submission deadline:

On or before 3 February 2026

Comments may be submitted via Area Chiefs or directly to the consultants:

Email: gmc.lss10@gmail.com

Mobile/WhatsApp: +266 620 11651

Telephone: +266 223 31411



TSEBISO EA SECHABA

BOITHUTO BA LITLAMORAO TIKOLOHONG LE BOPHELONG BA SECHABA (ESIA)

Green Mould Consultancy, ka kopanelo le Greenleaf Investments, e tsebisa sechaba le bohole ba amehang ka boithuto ba litlamorao tikolohong le bophelong ba sechaba (ESIA) bo etsoang bakeng sa kaho ea Setsi sa Phekolo ea Kankere le Radiotherapy Botshabelo, Maseru, se laetsoeng ke Lekala la Bophelo la 'Muso oa Lesotho.

Boithuto bona bo etsoa ho latela Molao oa Tikoloh (Environment Act, 2008) ho lekola litlamorao tse ka bang teng nakong ea kaho le ts'ebetso ea morero, le ho fana ka mehato ea thibelo. Sechaba le bohole ba amehang ba memeloa ho fana ka maikutlo, lithahiso kapa lipotsa mabapi le morero ona.

Letsatsi la ho qetela la ho fana ka maikutlo:

Pele kapa ka la 3 Tlhakola 2026

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Newsday Health

MAMA project launched to curb maternal deaths in Lesotho

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has launched a new maternal health initiative aimed at reducing one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world.

According to the 2023/2024 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey, the country's maternal mortality ratio stands at 530 deaths per 100,000 live births, placing pregnancy and childbirth among the most dangerous experiences for Basotho women.

Most of these deaths are caused by preventable complications.

In response, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), has launched the Maternal Aid for Mothers Assurance (MAMA) project, an M8 million programme designed to strengthen maternal care services and save lives.

The project was officially launched in Maseru and will be implemented over two years in Maseru and Berea districts, covering 11 health facilities.

Health officials at the launch identified several factors contributing to maternal deaths, including long distances to health facilities, particularly in hard-to-reach areas, which often result in dangerous delays in seeking care.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative Blandina Motaung said unwanted pregnancies frequently lead to unsafe abortions, which remain a significant contributor to maternal mortality.



Health professionals attending the launch also raised concerns about gaps in continuity of care, noting that some women receive antenatal care but lack adequate support during labour and in the critical weeks after childbirth.

Women living with disabilities were identified as facing additional barriers in accessing maternal health services.

Maternal Health Manager 'Mampho Mafereka said the MAMA project focuses on improving both the quality and dignity of care provided to mothers.

Mafereka said respectful maternity care encourages women to seek professional medical assistance rather than giving birth at home.

The project will also promote the use of

tools such as the modified partograph, which helps healthcare workers monitor labour and detect complications early.

Instead of responding only to emergencies, the initiative aims to strengthen prevention by identifying high-risk pregnancies early and managing them appropriately.

ADRA Country Director Thotolo Maketekete said the project will place special emphasis on improving referral systems between communities and hospitals to ensure that mothers experiencing complications are transferred quickly.

Maketekete added that the project will also

support mothers living with disabilities and ensure that they have equal access to services during pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding.

While the MAMA project currently operates in Maseru and Berea, Maketekete said there are plans to expand it to other districts.

"This project is a necessity, and we want to see it rolled out across the country," he said.

He also stressed the importance of reducing reliance on donor funding by building strong local systems and partnerships, so that the standards introduced through MAMA become permanent.

High cervical cancer screening rate among women with HIV in Lesotho, ... But gaps remain, study finds

Ntsoaki Motaung

A new study using nationally representative data from Lesotho has found a high prevalence of cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV, though significant disparities linked to age, location, and reproductive history persist.

Published in *Scientific Reports*, the research analysed 2023/24 Demographic and Health Survey data from 611 HIV-positive women aged 25 and older.

Titled *Determinants of cervical cancer screening among women living with HIV in Lesotho using national representative 2023/24 DHS data*, the study revealed that 85.4 percent of these women reported ever being screened for cervical cancer. Among those screened, the vast majority (95.63 percent) received normal results.

"The relatively high screening coverage in Lesotho may reflect the integration of cervical cancer screening into HIV care services and the support of donor-funded programs that promote routine screening among women living with HIV," the authors noted in the study.

However, the analysis identified key factors influencing who gets screened.

Women aged 40-44 were over four times more likely to be screened than the youngest

group (25-29 years). Perhaps most strikingly, women who had undergone a clinical breast examination were more than five times as likely to have also received cervical cancer screening.

"This association indicates that women who use other preventive health services, such as breast examinations, tend to undergo cervical cancer screening," the study states, highlighting a "powerful implication for integrated care policy."

Conversely, the study found that women living in rural areas were only half as likely to be screened as their urban counterparts. Additionally, women with low parity (1-2 children) were significantly less likely to be screened than women with no children.

"Strengthening integrated, equitable, and context-specific screening strategies within HIV care services may contribute to further improving coverage and reducing cervical cancer-related morbidity and mortality in this high-risk population," the authors concluded.

The research team recommended several actions to address the gaps, including integrating breast and cervical cancer screening services, enhancing rural outreach programs, and providing targeted health education for women with fewer children.

Thriving Together
STRENGTHENING MARRIAGE THROUGH CONNECTION AND GROWTH

Save The Date
14 February | Saturday | 2026
5pm - 10pm

Mr. Marumo
Financial Audit, Risk-specialist & Financial Advisor

Adv. Limakatso Mejaeli
Lawyer | Child's rights Advocate | Author | Entrepreneur

Mr. Mochaba
Psychotherapist | Marriage-Counselor & Life coach

Corp-College
EcoCash 6343 6260 (Thato Matheka)
mpesa 5160 6998

Registration: M200

Entrance fee:
Couple - M500
Single - M350
(snacks included)

Hurting Basotho where it hurts

The recent developments in the public sector reveal a troubling pattern. Institutions meant to serve and protect citizens are instead becoming sources of hardship, exploitation, and uncertainty for ordinary Basotho.

In the Ministry of Home Affairs, two senior officials, Mpiko Rafono, the suspended Director of Passports, and Nthatisi Thabane, a suspended Refugee and Migrants Liaison Officer, now face formal charges of corruption and fraud.

The allegations centre on the unlawful issuance of sensitive documents such as passports, residence permits, and naturalisation certificates, often to refugees, in breach of established procedures. Police investigations, triggered by reports of widespread corruption, uncovered abuses of authority that allegedly deprived the ministry of around M280,000 through mishandled funds for naturalisation processing.

These officials, who held positions of significant trust, are accused of exploiting the very system designed to provide identity and security to Lesotho's people.

This case is not isolated. It reflects deeper, long-standing frustrations within the ministry: chronic passport delays, material shortages, and backlogs that push desperate applicants toward bribery just to access basic rights like travel or proof of identity.

When ordinary citizens must pay extra under the table, or wait indefinitely, for documents essential to education, work, family reunification, or emergency travel, public trust erodes.

The human cost is real. Opportunities lost, families separated, dignity undermined.

Corruption here is not merely financial theft. It is a betrayal that disproportionately burdens the vulnerable, and turns a public service into a pay-for-play scheme.

Meanwhile, in the transport sector, anxiety swirls around unconfirmed reports of a potential phase-out of seven-seater vehicles (such as Toyota Noah and Alphard models) commonly used for learner transport.

Although Minister Matjato Motane has publicly distanced himself from any formal ban, insisting no final decision has been made and that current laws permit these vehicles, with adjusted passenger counting for children, the leaked suggestions from the Road Transport Board have already sown fear.

Small operators, many running modest family businesses, face the prospect of replacing affordable vehicles with costlier 15-seaters, a shift few can afford without risking ruin.

Opposition voices, including BNP MP Machesetsa Mofomobe, rightly highlight the economic recklessness and social insensitivity of such a move without consultation, transitional support, or clear justification.

These operators are not faceless entrepreneurs. They are community members providing livelihoods for drivers, mechanics, and families while ensuring children reach school safely.

Abrupt policy changes, even if only rumoured, threaten to disrupt education access in urban and peri-urban areas, force job losses, and deepen poverty, all without demonstrated evidence that seven-seaters inherently compromise safety under existing rules.

Both stories underscore a common thread. Decisions, or the perception of decisions, made at high levels can devastate lives on the ground when they lack transparency, empathy, and genuine public engagement.

In Home Affairs, unchecked corruption exploits citizens' desperation, in transport, unclear signals risk devastating small-scale providers without adequate safeguards.

Lesotho's leaders must act with humanity at the forefront. The courts should swiftly and fairly address the Home Affairs charges, and send a clear message that abuse of power will not be tolerated.

At the same time, any review of learner transport policy must prioritise consultation with affected operators, impact assessments on livelihoods and school access, and support mechanisms for transitions, rather than top-down impositions that ignore economic realities.

Ultimately, governance succeeds when it uplifts rather than burdens its people. Basotho deserve institutions that deliver services efficiently, equitably, and without extortion or sudden livelihood threats.

Restoring trust requires not just prosecutions or clarifications, but a renewed commitment to accountability, compassion, and the common good.



Dr. Tseliso Moroke

Common Concern



No Comment

How the country moves

A country built without a plan — and the politics behind it

Neighbourhoods in Lesotho are not planned. They do not consistently meet basic planning standards, zoning principles, or long-term spatial logic. This condition is not limited to informal settlements. Even suburbs described as middle or high income fail to comply fully with accepted planning norms.

Roads are narrow or improvised, drainage is often absent, land use is incoherent, and public spaces are poorly designed or missing altogether. What distinguishes these areas is income, not planning quality.

Taken together, Lesotho's settlements can accurately be described as informal, not because of poverty alone, but because of the absence of deliberate spatial order. This is not merely an urban design problem. It is a development problem.

Well-planned neighbourhoods are not about beauty or elitism. They are economic infrastructure. Spatial planning determines how workers move, how businesses cluster, how services are delivered, how land values rise, and how cities absorb population growth. Planning shapes productivity, competitiveness, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Countries that understand this treat planning as a strategic economic tool. They know that without proper planning, they will continuously pay through congestion, inefficiency, inequality, and weak investment performance.

To understand the power of spatial planning, one needs only study apartheid South Africa. Separate development was not sustained by political ideology alone. It was engineered through zoning laws, transport corridors, settlement layouts, and housing design. The apartheid economy was spatially constructed, and that spatial legacy remains visible and economically costly today. Plan-

ning was politics expressed through physical space.

In Lesotho, we fail to grasp this connection. Because we do not understand the effect of planning on quality of life, we replace substance with symbolism. We invest in monuments, façades, and isolated prestige projects and claim these enhance national identity. They do not.

Urban identity is not created by how a city looks from a distance, but by how it functions up close. It is defined by accessibility, density, safety, integration, efficiency, and opportunity. A city that is visually impressive but functionally broken is not a development success. It is a distraction from deeper failures.

This confusion reflects deeper political choices. Countries that take planning seriously deliberately organise living areas, work zones, transport systems, and recreational spaces as part of an integrated economic strategy. Barbados offers one such example. There, spatial planning is not buried inside a technical department. It is housed at the centre of government because it directly affects growth, climate resilience, and national competitiveness.

In Lesotho, the centre of government is focused elsewhere. Political energy is consumed by struggles over power and control, especially over the security sector, while the instruments that quietly shape everyday life and long-term prosperity are neglected. Authority matters more than organisation. Control matters more than coordination.

Even decentralisation, at minimum, should be strategically located at the centre of government because it directly affects spatial development, service delivery, and local economic systems. Yet this remains a marginal debate. Our strategic priorities are misaligned.

We speak passionately about job creation, investment attraction, and economic growth, yet we allow settlements to expand in ways that actively undermine these goals. Land is allocated without infrastructure. Developments are approved without services. Disorder is normalised instead of corrected. Planning institutions are weakened to accommodate political convenience rather than strengthened to protect public interest.

This pattern is not accidental. It is political.

When planning is ignored, discretion flourishes. When standards are weak, patronage fills the gap. When space is unregulated, power becomes personal rather than institutional. Poor planning is not only a technical failure. It is a governance choice.

This is how the country moves. Not by design, but by default. Not by strategy, but by accommodation.

The result is a settlement pattern that constrains opportunity, deepens inequality, and locks the economy into inefficiency. Workers travel long distances at high cost. Businesses operate far from customers and suppliers. Public services struggle to reach scattered populations. Infrastructure becomes expensive to build and impossible to maintain. Informality spreads not because people reject order, but because order is never provided.

Until spatial planning is recognised as a core economic and political instrument and placed where it belongs in the architecture of the state, Lesotho will continue to build neighbourhoods that undermine its own development ambitions. Planning must move from the margins to the centre of decision-making. It must be treated as a tool of economic policy, social policy, and governance reform.

A country that does not plan its space cannot plan its future.

The possible dangers of the Lesotho-USA health deal in simple terms

"The most immediate risk from genetic technologies does not come from the production of scary new weapons; they instead come from nefarious actors, including governments, obtaining information and abusing genetic data" - Ingesson, Nord, Lentzos (June 2025)

Nkopane Mathibeli

The three names to which the above quotation is attributed are of an Assistant Professor of Intelligence Analysis (Lund University), a Professor of Molecular Pathology (Lund University) and an Associate Professor in Science and International Security (King's College London), respectively. How is what they say related to the Bilateral Health Cooperation MOU between Lesotho and the USA? To answer this question in a complete and simplest way possible, it is most logical to begin by explaining how the core component of this MOU (sharing genomic data) could become a security risk if abused by nefarious actors, as highlighted by these three experts (Ingesson, Nord, Lentzos). This is a potentially difficult conversation because we must essentially ask whether the very same US government that funds important projects/programmes in our country can possibly fall among nefarious actors. Won't probing in that direction represent the highest form of ungratefulness and, at worst, raising a false alarm on conspiratorial grounds? It probably might elicit such sentiments in various quarters, but it is definitely not based on conspiratorial grounds.

Origins of the concern

This is because this concern raised by Ingesson, Nord, Lentzos seven months ago is purely scientific as it is based on scientifically proven facts. Equally important to note is that this concern was first raised 26 years ago by a British scientist working for the British Medical Association (Dr Vivienne Nathanson) in response to work then being done under the USA initiated Human Genome Project (HGP). This project ran from 1990 to 2003 to map the genetic make up of the entire human

race with the noble goal of undertaking effective genetic based medical diagnoses to facilitate efficient medical treatment for various groups of the human race.

This is precisely what the America First Global Health Aid Strategy says in Goal 2 titled outbreak response: "We will engage counterparts in the local government to understand the risks for additional spread and obtain basic genetic sequencing information or physical samples of the pathogen to inform the response and development or deployment of medical countermeasures".

Four years before the HGP completed its work, Dr Vivienne Nathanson warned that such information as was being pursued could be used to target biological weapons at particular ethnic groups. This is precisely what Ingesson, Nord, and Lentzos mean by the abuse of genetic data by nefarious actors. But can the government of the USA be a nefarious actor? But before we answer that question, what does being nefarious mean? For a start, the Oxford English Dictionary gives, among others, the following words: criminal, immoral, wicked and sinister.

Evidence of nefarious conduct

In last week's opinion piece titled "Venezuela's fate and South Africa's correct but vulnerable global posture", I referred to a concept formulated in 1936 by an American think tank (Council on Foreign Relations) called The Grand Area. This area is described as the geographical area across the globe necessary for the productive functioning of the economy of the USA. Given what documented history teaches about the actions of consecutive USA governments to control this area, it is not worthwhile to ask whether the USA has the capac-

ity to act nefariously because that history itself is a colourful display of criminal, immoral, wicked and sinister behaviour that disregards every aspect of International Law.

To drive this point across, I proceed to substantiate it with several documented examples. In 1936-37, the USA criminally and immorally interfered in the internal affairs of Nicaragua by supporting Somoza Garcia's coup against Baustista in 1936 and rigged the election outcome. Somoza went on to oversee a 40-year military dictatorship that served the USA's interests.

In 1950, the people of Puerto Rico rose against the government of a pro-USA Luis Muñoz Marín because of a repressive law that prohibited singing Patriotic songs, displaying the national flag and talking about freedom. The USA intervened by bombing towns and conducting mass arrests. In 1953, the USA, through the CIA, executed a coup to remove Prime Minister Mohamad Mossadegh for having nationalised the Anglo-Iranian oil company.

In 1959, the USA came to the rescue of Francois Duvalier's government when Haitian exiles attempted to forcefully take over. Duvalier, popularly known as Papa Doc, had not only militarily taken over in 1957, but he was an extremely violent voodoo practitioner whose evil acts traumatised the populace while he kept them in extreme poverty. When he died in 1971, his son, nicknamed Baby Doc, took over until 1986. It is impossible to outline all the evidence demonstrating the criminal and immoral capacity of the government of the USA. As a result, I sum this by simply listing some of the most prominent examples of its mischief.

Vietnam (1965 - 1973); Guatemala (1966); Laos (1971 - 1973); Nicaragua (1972); Grenada (1983); Libya (1986 & 2011); Honduras (1988); Iraq (1991 & 2003); Somalia (1992 - 1994); Sudan (1998); Afghanistan (2001); Syria (2011 & 2018) and Venezuela (2026).

African responses to the USA health strategy

To date, fourteen African countries have signed the MoU pertaining to the America First global health strategy. In the order of their signing, they are: Kenya; Rwanda; Liberia; Uganda; Lesotho; Eswatini; Mozambique; Cameroon; Nigeria; Madagascar; Sierra Leone; Botswana; Ivory Coast; and Ethiopia. Kenya was the first to sign on the 4th of December 2025. On the 10th and 11th of the same month, the Consumer Federation of Kenya (Cofek) and Senator Okiya Omtatah, respectively, filed petitions to the Kenyan High Court and the Constitutional Court challenging the MoU.

The four issues of concern for the petitioners were data privacy, constitutional and procedural gaps, data sovereignty and control and lastly, financial risks. A day after Cofek's petition, a conservatory order suspending the deal on grounds of data privacy was granted. Six days later (19 December), a second order stopping the whole deal was issued by the constitutional court in response to Senator Omtatah's application.

The grounds on which this second order was granted were a lack of public participation and fiscal responsibility. All this was primarily the outcome of Cofek being vigilant and proactive as mobilised by Resilience Action Network Africa (RANA). RANA is a Pan-Africanist civil society advocacy network established in November 2023 and is dedicated to strengthening Africa's resilience to threats such as pandemics and climate change.

Out of the 14 African countries that have signed the MoU, it was only in Kenya that legal challenges were launched against it from both the civil society and political spheres. Of course, in other countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Madagascar and Ethiopia, concerns were raised, but they were only verbal and therefore of no consequence. This in itself is very important as it tells a rather sad story about acutely low levels of both civic and political virtue across our continent.

The Lesotho dynamics

Just like the rest of the thirteen countries which signed the MoU, both the civic movement and political circles have thus far remained as silent as a cemetery. This silence also extended to the media, if not only this publication as per its December 19th 2025 and January 9th 2026 coverages of the issue. What could be the cause? Might it be the deeply internalised and seemingly subtle and irredeemable beggar mentality that leads many of us to reason that our sorry state of finances does not give us the right to reject assistance if it includes money? Purely based on many years of observing how it operates, what I am certain of, regarding our political class on this issue, is that it welcomes it without question. This is because time has proven that the majority in this class is both inherently incapable of determining an innately Lesotho-specific development trajectory and secondly, that its parasitic nature makes it susceptible to being co-opted into accepting externally formulated and funded development initiatives in return for kickbacks. Those who give these kickbacks do so knowing that in the long run, the return on those kick-backs will be more than double to their mother countries. What I am saying here has been an open secret since 2007, when a man named John Perkins published a highly acclaimed book called *The Confessions of an Economic Hitman*.

In summary, we must determine our own development agenda, particularly now when the weak are being devoured for believing that the strong care about them. The concerns raised by Cofek in Kenya about data privacy regarding this health deal are legitimate, and so are the constitutional shortfalls raised by Senator Omtatah.

Must we in Lesotho ignore its similar constitutional shortfalls raised by this publication earlier? Over and above these stated constitutional transgressions, there are also serious loopholes in our Data Protection Act, 2011. Its most critical weakness is that of a non-operational commission responsible for enforcement. These issues are not light.



NOTICE !!! NOTICE !!! NOTICE!!

Lesotho Public Procurement Authority (LPPA) is an autonomous entity established by the Public Procurement Act of 2023 to oversee and regulate public procurement processes in Lesotho.

With the Support from the **European Union**, LPPA will hold a workshop on **Suppliers Guidelines on Participating in Government Tenders** in line with the Public Procurement Act of 2023 on **Thursday 5th February 2026**.

The workshop will be held for entities that engage in Public Procurement activities (Provision of goods and services for and on behalf of the Government of Lesotho). These include:

- i. Members of the Business Community,
- ii. Civil Society Organisations
- iii. Private Sector entities that do business with the government
- iv. Members of the Media.

Date : **Thursday February 5th, 2026**

Venue: **Mpilo Boutique Hotel**

Time: **08h00 – 16h30**

For questions and enquiries please contact LPPA on info@lesothopprocurement.org.ls

TSEBISO !!! TSEBISO !!! TSEBISO!!!

Setsi se ikemetseng se lisitseng le ho laola tsamaiso ea theko ea mesebetsi le thepa ea sechaba/'Muso, Lesotho Public Procurement Authority (LPPA), se thehiloe ka molao oa Public Procurement Act of 2023.

Setsi, ka ts'ehetso ea **European Union**, se tla ts'oara 'moka moo setsi se tlo manolla tokomane e tataisang bahoebi boiketong ba ho hoeba le 'Muso (**Suppliers Guidelines on Participating in Government Tenders**) ho ipapisetse le lipehelo tsa molao oa Lesotho Public Procurement Act of 2023.

'Moka ona o tla t'soareloa mafapha ohle a hoebang le 'muso ho kenyelatsoa:

- i. Bahoebi;
- ii. Mekhatlo ea Sechaba e hoebang le 'Muso;
- iii. Litsi tse ikemetseng tse hoebang le 'Muso;
- iv. Litsi tsa bophatlatsi;

Letsatsi la 'moka: **Labone la 5 Hlakola 2026**.

Sebaka sa 'moka: **Mpilo Boutique Hotel**

Nako: **08h00 – 16h30**

Lipotso le likopo tsa lithakisetso li lebisoe ka mogolo ho: info@lesothopprocurement.org.ls



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO District Procurement Unit - Mohale's Hoek

TENDER NOTICE

Tender #: FC-26-MOA/01

District Procurement Unit Mohale's Hoek hereby invites tenders from suitably qualified and registered security companies, for provision of 24hrs **security services** in the **Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security Mohale's Hoek**, for the fiscal year **2026/2027**.

Tender documents will be obtainable at Ministry of Agriculture and food Security Mohale's Hoek, at a non-refundable fee of **M2000.00**

Work Description: Supply of security services: Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition- Mohale's Hoek

Bidders' qualification:

To tender for the proposed contract, bidders must be companies **WHO** have registered with **Ministry of Home Affairs and Public Safety and Parliamentary Affairs**.

The closing time and date for the receipt of tenders is **10:00hrs**, on the **17th February 2026**. Tenders will be opened on the same day at **12:05 noon** in the presence of Tenderers or their representatives.



REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Individual Consultants: PROJECT ACCOUNTANT)

LESOTHO
GAFSP
Assignment title: Recruitment of Project Accountant
Reference no.: LSO-200002563-0069-NP
The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition under the SADPII Project has received the grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) that is financed by contribution from Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). It intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services provided by an individual consultant who will serve as a Project Accountant.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies, and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses, and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with GAFSP.

The consulting services ("the services") include the engagement of a Project Accountant for 12 months

This request for expressions of interest (REOI) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on the IFAD website on 26th March 2024, on UNDB on 26th March 2024 and on Lesotho local newspapers on 26th March 2024.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

Interested consultants shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. Consultants with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. Consultants are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, or b) have a business or family relationship with a member of the client's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of (i) the preparation of the REOI, (ii) the selection process for this procurement, or (iii) execution of the contract. Consultants have an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the REOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition Lesotho under SADPII Project now invites eligible Individual consultants ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services in the form of a curriculum vitae (CV). A consultant will be selected in accordance with the individual consultant selection (ICS) method set out in IFAD's Project Procurement Handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. Interviews will be conducted as part of the selection process.

The shortlisting criteria are: Qualifications, Specific and General experience as stipulated in the TORs.

TERMS OF REFERENCES

POSITION/ASSIGNMENT: Project Accountant

REPORTING TO: Financial Management Specialist

DUITY STATION: Maseru

1. BACKGROUND OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The Government of Lesotho is implementing the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP) 2 with financial support from the World Bank, Government of Japan

The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.

The policy is accessible at www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy.

The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>

and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project covers ten districts – Maseru, Leribe, Botha-Bothe, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Berea Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Qacha's Nek. SADP is coordinated by the Project Management unit (PMU) based in Maseru. The project has four components:

Component 1. Promoting Climate Smart Agricultural Practices and Advisory Services. This component aims at strengthening the adaptive capacity of smallholder farmers to adjust and modify their production systems to minimize the potential future impacts from climate variability.

Component 2. Improving Agricultural Commercialization and Nutrition. This component will build on Component 1 by addressing financial constraints in the agricultural sector so that the training and advisory services provided under Component 1 is complemented with much-needed financing to help the farming community undertake productive and profitable investments.

Component 3. Project Management, Coordination, and Monitoring and Evaluation. It is responsible for: implementation and coordination, financial management and procurement, communication, visibility and awareness programs, environmental management and safeguards, and monitoring and evaluation.

Component 4. Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC). This is a zero allocation to partially cover emergency response via the implementation of key activities by the appropriate agencies to respond to the emergency.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT

- Reporting to the Financial Management Specialist, the Project Accountant will work within the SADP 2 financial management team, aiding and supporting in financial planning, budgeting, implementation, and financial monitoring of the projects in accordance with the project documents.
- Under the supervision of the Financial Management Specialist, the Accountant Officer will be required to work closely with the financial management team and the entire PMU team.
- Ensure that all the financial management requirements of projects are carried out smoothly and on timely manner.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The work of the Project Accountant (AO) will include the following tasks, among others:

- Shall be responsible for the overall financial management of GAFSP component of SADP 2.
- Under the supervision of the Financial Management Specialist, liaise with the finance department of MAFSN and the accounting team of the IFAD/World Bank for coordination of GAFSP funds disbursement.
- Provide inputs to the Project director, through the Financial Management Specialist, and Component Leads on all financial aspects of SADP 2.
- Provide inputs in preparation and approval of budgets and financial cashflow projections/ forecasts for the project.
- Assist in implementation of satisfactory financial and accounting policies and procedures for the projects, and ensure adherence to these policies and procedures in accordance with the finance regulations.
- Provide inputs in ensuring that an effective system of internal controls is operational and the internal audit system for the project is working satisfactorily.
- Support the Financial Management Specialist in ensuring the timely follow-up on issues arising out of internal and external audit.
- Ensure smooth flow of funds to all levels of the projects' organization, payments to various parties, and ensure adherence to service standards.
- Ensure effective cash management including short-term forecasting.
- Make necessary and timely preparation of reports and other documentation needed and submission of appropriate requests to Government of Lesotho/ Ministry of Finance and Development Planning / Central Bank of Lesotho to ensure timely flow of funds to the projects.
- Support the Financial Management Specialist in ensuring the timely preparation of financial management reports and financial statements,

liaise effectively with auditors to ensure timely audit and publication of financial statements.

xiii. Preparation of project financial closing statements and reconciled with STEP as well as IFAD financial management tools.

xiv. Support the preparation of documents for external audit of the project accounts and submitting audit management notes and following management recommendations.

xv. AS instructed by the Financial Management Specialist, maintain and update Financial standard procedures for Donor funded Project in Lesotho.

xvi. Maintain proper documentation of the projects, contracts as required by the laws and regulations of the Government of Lesotho.

xvii. Processing of vouchers for payment.

xviii. Through the office of the Financial Management Specialist, prepare the submission of regular project financial reports to government institutions as required.

xix. Conduct quarterly analysis of Expenditure.

xx. Maintain and manage complete filing system for financial records of SADP 2/GAFSP.

xxi. Establish a complete and accurate fixed asset register, arising out of SADP 2/GAFSP.

xxii. Under the direction of the Financial Management Specialist, work with the Project teams to ensure the financial data management is synchronized with the physical progress of the project components.

xxiii. Any other work-related tasks assigned by the Project Director and/or the Financial Management Specialist.

CONTRACT DURATION AND CONDITION

- Contract duration is 12 Months from the date of signature, subject to a satisfactory performance during the probationary period of One (1) month of the incumbent and subject to business continuity and availability of funds.
- The assignment is planned to end by May 2027.

FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT

- The Client shall render the Officer with all such facilities as may be reasonably required to enable the Officer to discharge his/her duties that is:
 - office space,
 - laptop/computer,
 - landline telephone, and
 - transport related to the assignment delivery.

DELIVERABLES AND FINAL OUTPUTS

- Accounting system Chart of Accounts.
- Internal and external audit response and action.
- Annual budget Cash Flow projections.
- Filed accounting records financial reports.
- Timely Payment of invoices.
- Financial recommendations /advice report.
- QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIRED EXPERIENCE
- Minimum undergraduate degree in Finance, Accounting, Finance Management or related field or General Accounting.
- Must have professional work experience of at least seven (7) years in the field of Finance including 5 years experience in Donor funded projects.
- Experience in providing expert advisory and/or consultancy services in Finance, Accounting, Business Administration, or in a relevant field of the assignment.
- Sound understanding of principles underlying good procurement practices and national and international procurement guidelines will be an added advantage.
- Sufficiently experienced to manage project finances, prepare essential financial management reports including annual financial statements and monitor project financial progress.
- Experience in preparing budgets and cash flow statements is desirable.
- Possess strong analytical, administrative and computer skills in spreadsheets and any other application.
- Familiarity in dealing with annual audits will be an added advantage.
- Previous experience in public finance related projects will be an added advantage.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below

procurement@sadpii.org.ls no later than 30th January 2026, 16:00hrs and Harare Pretoria time zone. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by 5th February 2026, 16:00hrs and Harare Pretoria time zone.

Expressions of interest in the form of curriculum vitae (CV) must be delivered in a written form to the address below by 12th February 2026, 12:00hrs.

Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Nutrition SADPII Project

Attn: Project Director

P.O. Box 24

Livestock Offices Mosheshoe II , Maseru

100,
Lesotho

Tel: +266 22312578



Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

LAA ICT/M365/27/01/2026]

- The **Land Administration Authority** has allocated funds be used for the acquisition of supply and delivery of **M365 Licences**.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 7(a) from **[08:00am to 05:00pm]**.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **[12:00 Noon 27/02/2026]**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 7(d) at **[27/02/2026]**.
- There shall NOT be a pre – bid meeting as indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
- (a) Documents may be inspected at: **Land Administration Authority**
- (b) Documents will be issued from: **Land Administration Authority**
- (c) Bids must be delivered to: **Director General and Chief Executive Officer**
- (d) Address of bid opening: **P.O. Box 11856, Maseru, Lesotho. Lerotholi Road Opposite, The Royal Palace**
- The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	27/01/2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	27/02/2026
d. Evaluation process	(02nd to 06th March 2026)
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	(09th to 21st March 2026)
f. Contract signature	(23th to 27th March 2026)

[LAA HRA/ MOHALE'S HOEK PARTITIONING/ 27/01/2026]

- The **Land Administration Authority** has allocated funds be used for the acquisition of supply and delivery of **LAA HRA / MOHALE'S HOEK PARTITIONING**
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 7(a) from **[08:00am to 05:00pm]**.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **[12:00 Noon 27/02/2026]**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 7(d) at **[27/02/2026]**.
- There shall NOT be a pre – bid meeting as indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
- (a) Documents may be inspected at: **Land Administration Authority**
- (b) Documents will be issued from: **Land Administration Authority**
- (c) Bids must be delivered to: **Director General and Chief Executive Officer**
- (d) Address of bid opening: **P.O. Box 11856, Maseru, Lesotho. Lerotholi Road Opposite, The Royal Palace**
- The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	27/01/2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	27/02/2026
d. Evaluation process	(02nd to 06th March 2026)
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	(09th to 21st March 2026)
f. Contract signature	(23th to 27th March 2026)

[LAA ICT/laptops/27/01/2026]

- The **Land Administration Authority** has allocated funds be used for the acquisition of supply and delivery of **Seventeen (17) Laptops**.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open national bidding method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 7(a) from **[08:00am to 05:00pm]**.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **[12:00 Noon 27/02/2026]**. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 7(d) at **[27th 02/2026]**.
- There shall NOT be a pre – bid meeting as indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.
- (a) Documents may be inspected at: **Land Administration Authority**
- (b) Documents will be issued from: **Land Administration Authority**
- (c) Bids must be delivered to: **Director General and Chief Executive Officer**
- (d) Address of bid opening: **P.O. Box 11856, Maseru, Lesotho. Lerotholi Road Opposite, The Royal Palace**
- The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	27/01/2026
b. Pre-bid meeting where applicable	N/A
c. Bid closing date	27/02/2026
d. Evaluation process	(02nd to 06th March 2026)
e. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	(09th to 21st March 2026)
f. Contract signature	(23th to 27th March 2026)



NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION

P O Box 1167
Mafeteng 900
Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 2221 5300
Fax: (+266) 2270 1340

OPPORTUNITIES

INVITATION TO REGISTER AS AN APPROVED SUPPLIER ON THE NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION'S PREQUALIFIED SUPPLIER DATABASE

1. The National Drug Service Organization (NDSO) is a Trading Account for the Ministry of Health in Lesotho. It is mandated to procure, store and distribute Medicines, Medical Supplies and Laboratory Consumables for the Health Institutions in Lesotho. NDSO was legally established through a gazette Supplement No.4 to Gazette No.19 of the 2nd March 2007.

2. NDSO invites legally registered suppliers interested in doing business with the organisation to register on its database. The Organisation specifically request service providers in the following categories:

No.	Category	Scope of Supply / Services
1	Travel, and Transport Services	Travel agency services, transport hire, including airline
2	Valuation and Asset Disposal Services	Asset valuation, auctioneering and disposal services
3	Branding, Media and Communication Services	Corporate branding and promotional materials, graphic design, print media and advertising agencies, radio advertising, photography and videography
4	Accommodation, Catering, Conferencing and Events Services	Accommodation, Catering services, conferencing facilities, event management
5	Logistics, Courier and Clearing Services	Courier services, customs clearing and forwarding

6	ICT Equipment and Electronics	ICT equipment, electronics, and related accessories
7	Office Equipment, Furniture and General Supplies	Office equipment and stationery, furniture and fixtures, general supplies
8	Printing, Publishing and Content Services	Printing and photocopying, editing and publishing
9	Facilities Management and Maintenance Services	Facility maintenance and repairs, fumigation and pest control
10	Utilities, Power and Environmental Systems	Power supply solutions (generators, UPS, solar), HVAC systems including cold rooms and refrigeration units
11	Fleet Maintenance and Vehicle Support Services	Tyres, spare parts, panel beating, repairs and service, towing and accessories
12	Legal and Professional Services	Legal advisory and related professional services
13	Health, Safety and Environmental Services	Personal protective equipment (PPE), Pharmaceutical waste management services

14	Construction, Engineering and Technical Works	Construction and renovation of building facilities, electrical installations and repairs, plumbing and sanitation works, fire detection and suppression systems, cold room construction and maintenance
15	Insurance service	Staff/employees Property Fleet and equipment

3. Mandatory Documents for submission

Interested vendors must submit the following mandatory documents:

- Company Profile
- A valid Tax Clearance certificate
- A valid Traders' License or equivalent
- Three Reference letters for services recently provided

4. Submission Instruction:

Mandatory documents should be send in **PDF format** not exceeding 9MB by e-mail to tenders@ndso.org.ls. The e-mail subject should be **Supplier Database 2026**. Suppliers should on the body of the email explicitly show the category and scope of supply that they fall under for proper classification. If one supply falls in more than one category, all those categories must be listed.

The deadline for registration and submission of mandatory documents is **Thursday, February 12th, 2026, at 17:00 pm**.

For further clarification, please contact the Assistant Procurement manager be email at tenders@ndso.org.ls Telephone +266 2221 5300.



EBA KAROLO EA PHETOHO!

Eba karolo ea phethoho ka ho fetola moruo oa Naha! Letsatsi la 'Maraka la Naha ke Lena, sebelisa Matla a ho reka ho fetola maphelo.

For more information regarding registration please contact:

Mr Raliengoane; +26658015256, Ms Thabana; +26658752620 or Mr T'sabo; +26662300414

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JAN 30

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06:00-1700



SADPII



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Chris Theko

Many people today know him as Uncle Fif, a name that carries wisdom, maturity, and lived experience.

But behind both identities stands one man; Refiloe Thoahlane, an artist whose journey reflects growth, reinvention, and purpose.

Thoahlane's early work as Chocolate Soul positioned him firmly within the soul and alternative music space. His sound was intimate, expressive, and emotionally grounded, music that invited listeners to feel rather than simply consume.

At a time when commercial appeal often overshadowed authenticity, Chocolate Soul carved out a lane defined by honesty and musical integrity.

But evolution is inevitable for artists who remain truthful to themselves.

The transition from Chocolate Soul to Uncle Fif was not merely a rebrand; it marked a deeper personal and artistic shift.

Before he was known as Uncle Fif, he was Chocolate Soul, a name that carried the urgency, emotion, and restlessness of a young artist searching for belonging. For Refiloe Thoahlane, that chapter was not a mistake or a phase to be erased, but a necessary foundation.

"Chocolate Soul was a younger version of me trying to find belonging and confidence through sound," he said.

"He was hungry, experimental, and deeply emotional. That identity came from a place of wanting to prove something, both to myself and to the world."

In those early years, music was more than art, it was survival: "Music was escape, therapy, and validation all at once," he says. "It was how I processed life and how I announced my existence. I didn't just want to be heard; I wanted to be understood."

As his life experiences expanded, something began to feel misaligned. The name that once fitted so perfectly started to feel restrictive.

"I realised I was outgrowing the Chocolate Soul chapter when the name no longer matched my reality. My experiences had matured, but the identity was still frozen in a younger mindset."

That realisation marked the beginning of a bold transition, not just a rebrand, but a reorientation of purpose. Enter Uncle Fif.

"Uncle Fif represents wisdom earned through living, not age alone. In African culture, an uncle is a guide, a storyteller, sometimes even a warning sign. 'Fif' connects me to my roots. Together, the name feels honest, grounded, and free."

But the transition was not without friction.

"Some people resist change because it disrupts familiarity. But I learned that staying true to yourself eventually filters the right audience. Resistance is often confirmation that you are growing."

The most profound shift, however, happened internally.

"I moved from chasing validation to creating with intention. I stopped asking, 'Will this work?' and started asking, 'Does this feel true?' That shift changed everything."

Musically, Uncle Fif's work is more layered and deliberate. Gone is the need to impress; in its place is a commitment to meaning.

From Chocolate Soul to Uncle Fif:

Refiloe Thoahlane's journey of self-discovery and reinvention



"I am less interested in impressing and more focused on storytelling and emotional honesty," he notes.

The themes he now explores, identity, healing, accountability, legacy, and complex African narratives, reflect an artist unafraid of nuance.

"I am interested in real life. The contradictions, the beauty, and the uncomfortable truths."

With this clarity has come creative freedom.

"Freedom came when I stopped performing a version of myself and started documenting who I actually am. There is power in that honesty."

Years in the industry have also reshaped his understanding of success.

"Before, success was visibility. Now it's sustainability, impact, and peace of mind. Being able to create on my own terms is success."

Uncle Fif sees himself today not as an endpoint, but as a bridge for younger artists navigating the same uncertainties he once faced.

"I want to tell the truth, not just sell the dream. Helping artists avoid unnecessary mistakes while finding their

own voice, that matters to me."

When asked what he would say to his former

self, his answer is tender and resolute:

"Thank you for surviving. Thank you for dreaming. And it's okay to let go. Growth doesn't erase you, it completes you."

Ultimately, Uncle Fif hopes his listeners walk away feeling grounded and seen.

"To understand that evolution is allowed," he says, "and that depth is not weakness."

If his journey is remembered at all, he hopes it will be for one thing above all else:

"Choosing truth over comfort, and growth over memorabilia."

Uncle Fif's evolution is also clearly traceable through his discography, which reads like a sonic journal of growth and self-exploration. From earlier releases such as S'momo, Babes Wodumo, and Standard, where experimentation and emotional urgency defined his sound, to more reflective and grounded works like Forever Ena, Thabeng, and Vapour, his music charts a steady deepening of intent.

Tracks such as Lesela, Sebopheho, and Waya Waya lean into identity and cultural texture, while Love Business and Preach explore vulnerability, relationships, and moral tension. Later releases like Macgyver and Collide encapsulate the Uncle Fif era, layered, self-aware, and unapologetically honest, marking an artist who is no longer searching for a voice, but refining it with purpose.



21 MARCH 2026

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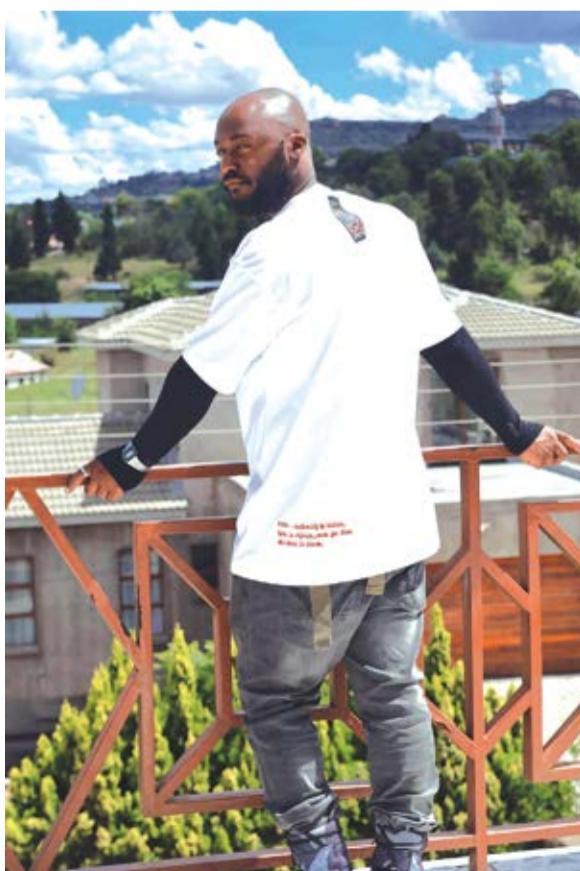
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Econet investment powers landmark rugby league season

Staff Reporter

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL)'s enduring investment in local rugby once again took centre stage as the curtain officially came down on the 2025/26 Econet Rugby League season, closing what has been described as one of the most competitive and inspiring chapters in the history of the sport in Lesotho.

The season finale crowned Lesotho Rugby Academy as new league champions after a thrilling 25-22 victory over LDF side Lihomane, marking the academy's first-ever league title and earning them M10 000 in prize money. The triumph provided a fitting end to a campaign defined by growth, resilience and steadily rising standards across both the men's and women's leagues.

Fans, players and administrators turned out in numbers for the electrifying finale, which showcased not only tactical excellence on the field but also the growing depth of talent being nurtured within Lesotho's rugby ecosystem. Many observers hailed the season as clear evidence that rugby is fast positioning itself among the country's most exciting and rapidly growing sporting codes.

At the heart of this progress lies ETL's sustained investment in rugby development, a commitment spanning more than a decade. Speaking on the impact of the partnership between ETL and the Federation of Lesotho Rugby, ETL Acting General Manager for Marketing Communications and Customer Experience, Puleng 'Mathabo' Masoabi, said the Econet Rugby League reflects the company's belief in sport as a catalyst for national development.

"ETL's investment in rugby goes beyond sponsorship; it is about creating platforms where young men and women can grow, compete and dream," Masoabi said.



The president of the Federation of Lesotho Rugby (FLR), Fetang Selalia

"Since 2012, we have seen rugby transform lives, communities and aspirations, and the Econet Rugby League continues to be a powerful vehicle for that change."

She added that ETL takes pride in supporting a league that promotes inclusivity, discipline and excellence, noting that the growth of both the men's and women's competitions shows what is possible when corporate partners, federations and communities work together.

Federation of Lesotho Rugby president Fetang Selalia echoed these sentiments, crediting ETL's

long-term commitment for enabling structured growth across all levels of the game.

"The support of Econet over the past 14 years has allowed us to strengthen our leagues and invest in grassroots development through communities and schools," Selalia said. "It has created meaningful opportunities for both male and female players. This season is proof that rugby in Lesotho is moving in the right direction."

Selalia said the emergence of a new champion was a strong indication that competition standards are improving. Last season's winners

Mabote Beavers failed to reach the final this year, while last year's finalists Lihomane fell short against a Lesotho Rugby Academy side that reached the final for the first time.

"The competition is growing, and every team is showing massive growth," he said.

Despite the progress, Selalia acknowledged that significant work remains to transition rugby in Lesotho from an amateur to a professional sport. However, he said encouraging signs include increasing interest from schools and the export of local talent to South Africa.

One notable example is former Mabote Beavers star Sekhohola Phate, who joined the Free State Cheetahs in 2024. "South Africa is way ahead of us in rugby, so it is a huge achievement to see our players getting opportunities even at provincial level," Selalia said.

He also highlighted Lesotho's attainment of World Rugby Full Membership status in late 2024 as further confirmation that the country is now recognised among the fast-growing rugby nations. To strengthen coaching and development structures, the federation has appointed South African-based Ronald Doyle as technical advisor until 2028.

For Lesotho Rugby Academy, the championship was the reward for months of discipline, teamwork and belief. Head coach ReitumetseMasaisa described the title as a collective triumph.

"I am extremely grateful to ETL for the support and proud of the players for their commitment and character throughout the season," Masaisa said. "This title belongs to them, the federation and our partners who believe in Lesotho rugby."

As the season draws to a close, the 2025/26 Econet Rugby League stands as powerful proof that with sustained investment, growing fan engagement and inclusive development, rugby in Lesotho is entering a promising new era.

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Coachless Likuena press on with AFCON preparations

Seabata Mahao

The national football team, Likuena, has kicked off preparations for the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers despite ongoing uncertainty surrounding the appointment of a new head coach.

As the search for a substantive coach drags on, the Lesotho Football Association's (LeFA) technical department, led by technical director Caswell Moru, has named a provisional 20-man squad to begin preparations for the preliminary round clash against Seychelles.

Lesotho will face Seychelles in a two-legged tie as part of the preliminary phase of the 2027 AFCON qualifiers for the tournament to be co-hosted by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Twelve lower-ranked teams are competing at this stage for a place in the group phase.

The encounter will see Lesotho and Seychelles contest an all-Southern African showdown, with the first leg to be played away before Likuena host the return fixture between March 25 and 31. The winner will advance to the group stage of the qualifiers.

The squad reported to camp on Monday for medical assessments before resuming training sessions yesterday under an interim technical team led by former LeFA technical director Lehlohonolo Thotanyana.

He is being assisted by Tšepo Hlojeng, Shokhoe Matsoai and Mosa Mosenike. LeFA has indicated that the interim arrangement will lapse immediately once a new head coach officially takes charge.

The provisional squad features the return of Monaheng Ramalefane, Tšoanelo Koetle and Itumeleng Falene, although LeFA has stressed that the incoming head coach will have the authority to make changes.



Likuena squad

Veteran forward Jane Thabantšo has also been included, despite previously submitting a letter to LeFA expressing his intention to retire from international football. Now in the twilight of his career, Thabantšo remains one of Likuena's most experienced campaigners, having served the national team for more than a decade. His inclusion is expected to bring leadership and continuity to the youthful squad.

Meanwhile, Likuena will continue to host their home matches in South Africa, as Setsoto Stadium is yet to meet Confederation of African Football (CAF) requirements. The stadium was banned by CAF and FIFA in 2021 due to dilapidated infrastructure. Although artificial turf has since been installed and renovations are ongoing, several facilities still fall short of international standards. Government has also announced

plans to expand the stadium's capacity, with Setsoto expected to reopen for domestic competitions.

With the Seychelles encounter fast approaching, pressure is mounting on LeFA to conclude the coaching recruitment process to ensure adequate preparation for the crucial qualifiers.

LeFA has confirmed that interviews were conducted with both local and international candidates, but no appointment has been announced despite earlier indications that a coach would be in place by February. However, the association has dismissed claims that the process has stalled.

LeFA's media officer Mikia Kalati said the recruitment exercise is still ongoing.

"The process is not over. I have seen the reports circulating on social media, but when it is complete the association

will make an announcement," Kalati said.

Provisional Likuena Squad:

Goalkeepers: Leluma Mofoka (Matlama), Tankiso Chaba (LCS), Monaheng Ramalefane (Lijabatho).

Defenders: Tšoanelo Koetle, Fusi Matlabe (both Lioli), Itumeleng Falene (Bantu), Tlotliso Mapola (Majantja), Mohlomi Makhetha (Lijabatho), Rethabile Mokokoane (Matlama).

Midfielders: Lebusetsa Mofokeng, Tsepang Sefali (both Linare), Thabo Lesaoana, Kanelo Rapuleng (both Bantu), Lehlohonolo Matsau (LDF), Tholang Makuru (Lioli), Tlotliso Phatsisi (Lijabatho).

Forwards: Jane Thabantšo (Lijabatho), Tseliso Botsane (Bantu), Katleho Makateng (LDF).

LSRC rolls out district competitions to boost Region 5 team selection



Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission (LSRC) has announced plans to host a series of district competitions as part of preparations for the AUSC Region 5 Youth Games to be held in Mozambique this December

Seabata Mahao

In a move aimed at enhancing transparency and broadening talent identification, the Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission (LSRC) has announced plans to host a series of district competitions as part of preparations for the AUSC Region 5 Youth Games to be held in Mozambique this December.

The initiative seeks to expand the national database of sporting talent by giving athletes from across the country an opportunity to compete, rather than relying on last-minute selections from a familiar pool of players. The competitions will cover a wide range of sporting codes, including disciplines that are not part of the Region 5 Games programme.

While it remains unclear which sporting codes Lesotho will ultimately enter for the Mozambique Games, the commission has opted to act proactively. Outstanding athletes from the district competitions will qualify for the National Championships, where the final selection for the Region 5 Games team will be made.

Historically, team selection for international competitions has drawn criticism, with stakeholders raising concerns over a lack of transparency. LSRC believes the district-based approach will help address these concerns while strengthening the country's talent pipeline.

The first district competition is scheduled

to take place in Butha-Buthe next month and will feature boxing, taekwondo, basketball, tennis, netball, volleyball, football and athletics.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Head of Delegation for the Region 5 Games, Refiloe Maphallela, said the commission was determined to move away from the practice of late team selections.

"In the past, we often waited until the last days to select a team, and it seemed as if we simply took athletes we already knew. That is not what we want anymore," Maphallela said. "We realised that we do not have a complete picture of the pool of players in different sporting codes, so we decided that now, with leadership for the games in Mozambique in place, it is time to go around the country and identify talent that can represent the country in the under-20 category."

He explained that the long-term plan is to host district competitions nationwide, with top performers progressing to the national youth games, from which the final team for Mozambique will be selected.

Maphallela added that the LSRC intends to stage these district competitions every two months in the lead-up to the national youth games.

The AUSC Region 5 Youth Games are regarded as a cornerstone of sports development in Southern Africa. The event brings together under-20 athletes from 10 member countries — Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Beyond competition, the Games provide a

vital platform for identifying and nurturing future sporting stars, while promoting regional

integration, friendship and cultural exchange among young athletes.



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Bantu Football Club

Seabata Mahao

All eyes will be on Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena on Sunday as Matlama Football Club host long-time rivals Bantu FC in a mouth-watering Vodacom Premier League (VPL) second-round encounter.

The fixture renews one of Lesotho football's oldest rivalries, with both sides eager to settle scores and strengthen their push for a title-contending position. In the first-round meeting, Bantu edged Matlama 2-1, and Sunday's clash presents the hosts with an opportunity for revenge in front of their home supporters.

Matlama head into the encounter buoyed by

a resurgence in form under newly appointed coach Thabile Secker. Last weekend, Secker marked his debut in the dugout with an emphatic 4-1 victory over struggling Manonyane at the same venue, a result that ended Matlama's four-match winless run.

Sitting seventh on the log with 27 points, TsePutsoa will be desperate for an outright win to climb the standings and re-enter the title conversation.

Bantu, meanwhile, arrive in confident mood after shaking off an unconvincing start to the 2025/26 VPL campaign. A pair of narrow but important victories 2-1 against Linare and 1-0 over Members have lifted A Matšo Mate-

bele into third place with 31 points. Another win on Sunday could see them rise to second position, should Lifofane drop points against Manonyane in Maputsoe on Saturday.

The Matlama-Bantu clash is the headline fixture in a busy VPL weekend as the second round gathers momentum and clubs jostle for supremacy.

At the summit of the table, Lijabatho continue to set the pace after edging Limkokwing University 1-0 on Saturday. Since their 2-0 defeat to Lioli on 22 October last year, Lijabatho have gone an impressive 12 matches unbeaten and now lead the standings with 35 points, three clear of Lifofane on 32.

At the opposite end of the table, Members are enduring a torrid campaign. From 16

matches, they have managed just one win a surprise 3-0 victory over Manonyane in October alongside four draws and 11 defeats. With only seven points, they remain rooted to the bottom in 16th position and face an uphill battle to avoid relegation.

Weekend Fixtures:

Saturday (16:00): LMPS FC vs Majantja FC (PTC), Lifofane FC vs Manonyane FC (Saxophone Thejane Ground), LDF FC vs Members FC (Ratjomose), and LCS FC vs Machokha FC (LCS Grounds).

Sunday: Matlama FC vs Bantu FC (Bambatha) - 16:30, Liphakoe FC vs Linare FC (LCS Grounds) - 16:00, Lioli FC vs LU FC (Saxophone Thejane Ground) - 16:00, and Maroala FC vs Lijabatho FC (Bambatha) - 14:00.

and men's teams. His familiarity with the club's philosophy and values is expected to ease his transition into the role.

In his remarks, Lehohla said he was motivated by the challenge ahead and committed to building on the strong foundation left by his predecessor. He emphasised his desire to compete for honours and continue delivering success for the club.

"I know what this club stands for, both on and off the pitch," said Lehohla. "My focus is to continue the winning culture and help the team achieve even greater success."

Kick4Life co-founder Steve Fleming paid tribute to Yelimala, acknowledging her immense contribution to the club over more than a decade. He highlighted her role in shaping the women's team into one of the most successful sides in the country.

"We would like to thank Lizzy for the outstanding job she did for Kick4Life from 2013 to 2025," Fleming said. "She guided us to our first major trophy, the Super League Cup in 2018, the Dare to Dream Trophy in 2021, and the Women's Super League title, as well as participation in the CAF Women's Champions League last year. We wish her well for the future, and at the same time welcome Shalane as we look to build on this success in the years to come," Fleming said.



Kick4Life have announced the appointment of Shalane Lehohla as the new head coach of their senior women's team

Yelimala, a role that further underlines his experience and suitability for the Kick4Life post.

Lehohla was officially unveiled on January 27, 2026, at an event facilitated by Kick4Life Academy Manager Mahapilo Putsoane. Speaking during the ceremony, Kick4Life Executive Committee Chairperson Baba Malephane expressed strong confidence in the club's new appointment, describing Lehohla as a prov-

en leader with a strong understanding of the women's game.

"Shalane brings experience, leadership and a deep understanding of the women's game," Malephane said. "We believe he is the right person to take this team forward."

Lehohla is no stranger to the Kick4Life environment, having previously worked within the club's structures across both the women's

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