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MALUTI FRESH PRODUCE MARKET FACES CLOSURE



Lesotho's first produce commission market

Maluti Fresh Produce Market
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...LNDC refutes this, claiming the facility is merely relocating

...Agricultural ministry is unaware of either closure or relocation

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Maluti Fresh Produce Market faces closure

...LNDC refutes this, claiming the facility is merely relocating

...Agricultural ministry is unaware of either closure or relocation

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Barely five years into operations, Maluti Fresh Produce Market is reportedly facing closure, a decision that is likely to directly affect local fresh-produce farmers.

According to insider information obtained by this reporter, the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), which manages the centre, has instructed employees to prepare for closure, with the facility set to shut down on March 31, 2026.

Launched in October 2021, the Fresh Produce Market employs approximately nine full-time staff members.

"They were informed verbally that March 31, 2026, would be their last day at work, following a management decision to close the facility due to its lack of sustainability," a source familiar with the situation revealed.

"They were told that the market would remain closed pending an investor to finance daily operations," the source added.

Maluti Fresh Produce Market was established to provide farmers with market access, offer post-harvest services (washing, sorting, packaging), primary processing (peeling, cutting, dicing), cold room storage, a transparent trading platform, consultation and advice, job creation, and advantageous location and facilities.

The nine employees were reportedly waiting for an announcement regarding their relocation to the Masianokeng/Basotho Cannery Facility, a move announced last year. However, to their shock, they



now face unemployment in the coming month.

Affectionately known as Tikoe, the market served as a hub for various Basotho farmers producing cash crops. Some farmers have confirmed to this paper that they were turned away when attempting to deliver their consignments since last Monday, being informed that the facility is closing down.

Many farmers have invested significant resources in production, as this centre served as a one-stop shop for the country's farming value chain.

"This shutdown will threaten our income and disrupt our businesses. What is worse is that no one thought it necessary to inform the farming community about this; it is very angering," said one farmer who wished to remain anonymous.

Maluti Fresh Produce Market is a unique facility in Lesotho, designed specifically to meet the needs of local farmers and ensure they have a reliable marketplace for their fresh produce. It also provides agricultural producers with solutions for storage, processing, and trading under one roof.

The market allows farmers to bring their produce directly to consumers, ensuring prompt payment for their goods. This has enabled farmers to scale their operations and engage in international trade as well as with established retailers.

The construction and establishment of this facility were made possible through the support of funders and LNDC via the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) Project, initiated by the International Trade

Centre (ITC).

It plays a vital role in meeting market demands and supporting the sustainability of local farmers.

In response to questions from this publication, Tiisetso Moremoholo, the LNDC's Corporate Communication Manager, denied reports of the market's closure, stating that the facility is instead relocating.

"The Lesotho National Development Corporation has not decided to close the Maluti Fresh Produce Market Centre. Rather, the Market Centre is being relocated to the Masianokeng Cannery building. The equipment at the Market Centre will be dismantled and reassembled at the new location, which will necessitate a temporary halt in input from Basotho farmers, as the produce would spoil without adequate storage facilities.

"This move has been prompted by the opening of a textile factory that will commence immediately after the refurbishment of the outgoing Market Centre, creating 500 jobs," said Moremoholo.

She further emphasised that the Maluti Fresh Produce Market Centre remains a priority for the LNDC and will continue to serve farmers across the country while assisting them in accessing markets.

"The Corporation is also seeking a private investor to acquire and optimally operate the market centre at its new location," Moremoholo revealed.

However, Moremoholo did not address questions regarding stakeholder involvement in the LNDC's decision regarding the Market Centre.

When contacted for a reaction on the impact of the relocation, Lekhoee Makhate, the Director of Marketing in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, expressed ignorance of any developments.

Makhate stated that, to his knowledge, there have been no decisions regarding either the relocation or closure of the Market Centre.

"While there is a new directive that all communications to the ministry be routed through the office of the Principal Secretary, I am not aware of this issue you are mentioning.

"My department is responsible for licensing market centres in the country, and if any changes were to be made, I trust we would have been officially informed. As far as I know, we do not have any information regarding this matter; however, I have heard the naysays, and I am not at liberty to take them to heart as I believe LNDC would have officially communicated any decision that would directly impact farmers," he said.

Magistrate Murenzi forced into retirement over misconduct

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Maseru Senior Resident Magistrate Peter Celestine Murenzi has been compelled to retire following findings of misconduct stemming from his handling of criminal cases.

The decision follows an inquiry led by High Court Judge Realebaha Mathaba, which investigated the circumstances surrounding the release of two inmates from Maseru Central Correctional Institution (MCCI) under what were described as "suspicious circumstances."

This week, High Court Registrar advocate 'Matha-to Sekoai confirmed Murenzi's removal in a circular, noting that cases previously handled by him would have to start afresh.

In his findings, Judge Mathaba concluded that Murenzi had brought the Judiciary and the public service into disrepute.

"His image has been dented. Consequently, his actions have rendered him incapable of fulfilling his judicial functions, whose fulfillment depends on public trust," the report states.

Murenzi faced three misconduct charges.

Count One relates to an incident on 21 January 2025, where he allegedly contravened the Codes of Good Practice by bringing the public service into disrepute. He is accused of allocating to himself a case—CR/T/0663/2024 (Rex vs Moeketsi Rantheba and Hei Nketsi)—without following proper procedures.

The inquiry found that Murenzi handled the matter using only a warrant of commitment (commonly referred to as a "Blue Form") and outside the established magistrates' duty roster for remand proceedings. On the same day, Magistrate T'Soanelo 'Nyai was officially assigned to conduct remand court at the correctional facility.

Murenzi is further accused of conducting the remand in the absence of a clerk of court, prosecutor, the accused persons, and their legal representatives.

Count Two concerns the same date, where Murenzi allegedly disregarded Section 4 of the Subordinate Courts Order by presiding over a matter not assigned to him. He granted bail to Rantheba and Nketsi despite bail having previously been denied by Magistrate Itumeleng Letsika in October 2024.

The two accused were facing murder charges in connection with the killing of media personality Ralikonelo "Leqhashasha" Joki, who was shot dead in May 2023 after hosting his radio programme.

Count Three relates to a separate incident on 12 December 2024, where Murenzi is accused of again presiding over an unassigned matter and granting bail to Lebajoa, Molahlehi, and Retšelisitsoe Mpeke. Bail had earlier been denied in the same case, which was already under appeal before the High Court.

The inquiry commenced on 20 May 2025 in terms of Rule 26 of the Judicial Service Commission Rules of 1994 and concluded on 1 July 2025, followed by oral submissions.

Evidence presented showed that proper remand procedures were not followed.

Central Chief Magistrate 'Mantankiso Nthunya testified that she was on leave during the week in question and that, according to the duty roster, Magistrates 'Nyai and Nkhetsoa Molapo were assigned to handle remand proceedings.

Prosecutor Motiki told the inquiry that correctional officers retrieved Blue Forms from the court registry and later discovered that the accused persons had already been released. One was re-arrested the same day, while the other was apprehended the following day.

Motiki emphasised that prosecutors play a mandatory role during remand proceedings and confirmed that the remand court cannot sit in their absence.

Court clerk Lineo Thulo testified that remand proceedings are conducted on Tuesdays and require prior reconciliation of court records with Blue Forms from the Lesotho Correctional Service. She further stated that the accused persons were not present during the remand conducted by Murenzi.

The inquiry also established that case allocation is handled by clerks of court and recorded in an allocation book. Judge Mathaba found that the case in question had not been assigned to Murenzi at the time he handled it.

In his defence, Murenzi argued that it was not unusual for correctional officers to bring Blue Forms



Former Magistrate Peter Murenzi

directly to a magistrate. However, he failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for proceeding without a prosecutor or confirming the presence of the accused.

The adjudicator found his explanations inadequate, describing them as "superficial" and failing to address the core issues.

"Most of the facts giving rise to this inquiry are not contentious," the report states. "What is clear is that the case was not allocated to Mr Murenzi at the time he remanded the inmates."

Despite acknowledging Murenzi's long and previously unblemished service, Judge Mathaba found the misconduct serious enough to warrant removal.

"It is my considered view that Mr Murenzi must be compulsorily retired from the Judiciary," the report reads, citing Rule 27(1)(ii) of the Judicial Service Commission Rules.

The Judicial Service Commission adopted the recommendation, resulting in Murenzi's compulsory retirement. He will, however, retain his pension and benefits.

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Qacha's Nek	23 – 24 February 2026	2	Thimo & Sons Guest House
Quthing	25 – 26 February 2026	2	Fuleng Guest House
Mohales Hoek	2 – 3 March 2026	2	Mapalesa Guest House
Mafeteng	4 – 5 March 2026	2	City Center Hotel
Berea	9 – 10 March 2026	2	Assumption High School, Berea
Thaba Tseka	12 – 13 March 2026	2	Motherland Guest House
Leribe (Hlotse)	17 – 18 March 2026	2	Naleli Guest House
Butha Buthe	19 – 20 March 2026	2	Moroeroe Lodge
Mokhotlong	23 – 24 March 2026	2	Mount Crest Guest House

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LHDA officially launches 40th anniversary celebrations of LHWP

Staff Reporter

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has officially launched the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), marking four decades since the signing of the landmark treaty that established one of Southern Africa's most strategic infrastructure and regional cooperation initiatives.

The launch took place on Tuesday this week, through a live national broadcast simulcast across multiple radio stations including PCFM, Lekope FM, Harvest FM, and Moafrika FM, as well as online platforms.

The two-hour programme invited stakeholders and the public to reflect on the project's journey since the treaty was signed in 1986 by the governments of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.

A project of continental significance

LHWP is a multi-phased initiative designed to provide water to South Africa's economic heartland, the Gauteng region, while generating hydro-electricity for Lesotho. The project harnesses the waters of the Senqu/Orange River in the Lesotho highlands through a series of dams and tunnels, and delivers water via gravity-fed systems to the Vaal River System, which supplies millions of people in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Phase I of the project, completed in 2003 and inaugurated in 2004, included the construction of the Katse and Mohale Dams, the Muela hydropower station, and 82 kilometres of tunnels. Phase II is currently underway, with the Polihali Dam and Transfer Tunnel under construction and expected to be completed by 2029.

"Over the past 40 years, the LHWP has demonstrated what is possible when vision, partnership and long-term thinking come together, delivering not only water and energy security, but also meaningful socio-economic impact," the Authority said in a statement.

Substantial achievements across four decades

The project currently delivers approximately 780 million cubic metres of water to South Africa annually, which amounts to well over 40 percent of the water supply to the South African economy and about 60 percent of Gauteng's water needs.

For Lesotho, the benefits have been equally transformative. Water royalties from the project have earned the country more than R18.8 billion since 2003, contributing significantly to the national budget. The Muela Hydropower Station has generated 11.7 million MWh of electricity for domestic use, reducing Lesotho's dependence on imported power.

"The LHWP not only delivers vital water to millions in South Africa and generates clean hydropower for Lesotho, but also fosters trust, economic interdependence, and stability across borders," noted the government of Lesotho when the project was recognised as a continental model for transboundary cooperation at the Africa Water Investment Summit in 2025.

Socio-economic impact and job creation

The project has been a significant driver of employment and skills development. Phase II alone has created approximately



16,000 job opportunities, including business development and skills transfer initiatives.

The project has also delivered tangible community benefits, including improved road access, better access to health and education facilities, and the provision of electricity to remote highland areas.

On women's empowerment, women from four local councils within the project area have benefited from training programmes, including detergent and cosmetics manufacturing.

Phase II progress and future outlook

Phase II of the project is progressing steadily. South Africa's Water and Sanitation Minister Pemmy Majodina, who conducted an oversight visit in December 2025, expressed satisfaction with progress while stressing the urgency of meeting the 2028/2029

completion deadline.

"I am very satisfied with the progress. While relocation has taken longer than expected, there is a plan in place. We are also pleased that 92 professionals have been developed through this project, including women, and that 16,000 jobs have been created. That is quite significant," she said.

Community engagement and resettlement

The project has implemented comprehensive socio-economic programmes to address the impacts of physical and economic displacement. Since 2017, communities have been engaged through focus groups, public gatherings, and household discussions to ensure transparent involvement in decision-making regarding resettlement sites, housing designs, and compensation preferences.

To date, 270 households and 21 business structures have been identified for relocation under Phase II, with construction of replacement housing underway at various sites. Over 570 graves have been relocated from access road sites, with additional relocations scheduled.

Looking ahead

LHDA framed the anniversary as both a celebration of achievements and a forward-looking exercise. The milestone comes as discussions are set to commence in April 2026 to renegotiate aspects of the original 1986 treaty, which was due for review 15 years after its signing but never formally revisited.

The anniversary celebrations are expected to continue throughout the year, with various activities planned to commemorate the milestone.





VCL FINANCIAL SERVICES AND NEDBANK LESOTHO ANNOUNCE NEW MILESTONE IN THEIR FINANCIAL INCLUSION MANDATE

Maseru, (19/03/2026) - VCL Financial Services (VCL FS) and Nedbank Lesotho have announced the extension of their joint services by introducing cash deposits and withdrawals at Nedbank Lesotho branches nationwide. These services are available to M-Pesa Agents, M-Pesa Mokhatlo Group Savings users, and other M-Pesa customers, for transactions with a minimum value of M5,000.00.

The two institutions have, over time, developed an integrated suite of services meant to offer greater convenience to their customers. These include bank card to wallet transfers, which enable Nedbank clients to credit their M-Pesa wallets directly from bank accounts using bank card details on the M-Pesa mobile app, currently available to Android users. This functionality followed the earlier introduction of airtime purchases through Nedbank's digital channels, delivered as part of a broader partnership with VCL FS holding company, Vodacom Lesotho.

The extension of this capability to Nedbank branches represents a significant step towards strengthening Lesotho's digital financial ecosystem and advancing the national agenda of financial inclusion. By improving access to formal banking infrastructure, the partnership enhances convenience, security and reliability for a broader segment of Basotho.

Commenting on the partnership, the Managing Director of Nedbank Lesotho, Mr Nkau Matete, said: "We are particularly pleased to see this phase of our collaboration come to life. At Nedbank, we believe that extending our banking technology to serve a wider portion of the population, including those who are not formally banked, is fundamental to our purpose. A financially inclusive economy is better positioned to

remain resilient, even during challenging times. We look forward to introducing further innovations that deliver greater convenience to our clients through technology."

On his part, the Managing Director of VCL Financial Services, Mr Seenyane Nthejane, emphasised the partnership's impact on everyday users: "Strengthening our partnership with Nedbank Lesotho brings increased certainty and convenience to our customers. This investment in our ecosystem ensures that more M-Pesa users can access their funds securely and reliably when they need them. It represents an important step towards democratising access to financial services and we are excited about the additional innovations we will introduce together in the future."

Nedbank Lesotho's Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Molupe Mothepu added, "this partnership represents an important digitization step in our journey of transformation as Nedbank Lesotho. We are committed to enhancing our technology to significantly enhance how we serve our valued clients and all stakeholders."

The service is currently available at Nedbank branch tellers only. For enquiries relating to this service, Nedbank Lesotho clients are encouraged to visit enquiry desks at any Nedbank branch or to engage through Nedbank's digital channels and the Greenline Customer Care platform. M Pesa technical enquiries will continue to be supported through Vodacom Lesotho's Customer Care platforms.

ENDS

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Newsday Business

Mokhotlong tourism set for major digital exposure

Seabata Mahao

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has strengthened its strategic positioning within Lesotho's tourism economy by adopting Mokhotlong District under the "Re Bontše Lesotho" campaign.

The move positions ETL to leveraging its connectivity infrastructure to unlock value in one of the country's untapped highland destinations.

Speaking at a recent official signing ceremony, ETL's Chief Executive Officer Dennis Plaatjies said the company is proud to partner with Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) in advancing a campaign that encourages Basotho to tell their own stories through creativity and digital platforms.

"Lesotho is a nation rich in history, culture and breathtaking landscapes. Our mountains, traditions and communities tell a powerful story of resilience, identity and pride," Plaatjies said, noting that these attributes position the country as a unique destination for global visitors.

He emphasised that tourism is no longer solely about destinations, but about people, culture and narratives that shape national identity.

"Today, ETL is proud to announce that we have adopted the Mokhotlong District as part of this exciting national campaign."

Mokhotlong, located in the highlands of Lesotho, is widely regarded as one of the country's most distinctive tourism regions. The district is home to iconic attractions such as Thabana Ntlenyana and Sani Pass, both of which draw adventure tourists seeking authentic high-altitude experiences.

From a business perspective, ETL's adoption of Mokhotlong represents a targeted investment in a high-value, niche tourism segment, adventure and eco-tourism, which continues to attract premium



ETL Chief Executive Officer Dennis Plaatjies with LTDC Acting CEO Mamello Morojele

international travellers.

Plaatjies highlighted that Mokhotlong's dramatic landscapes and rich highlands culture, combined with developments like the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II, present significant opportunities to elevate the district's tourism profile.

"By supporting storytelling from Mokhotlong, we are shining a spotlight on a district that embodies the true essence of Lesotho's identity and heritage," he said.

By amplifying visibility of such assets through digital platforms, ETL is effectively contributing to demand creation, an essential driver for increased tourist arrivals, longer stays and higher local spending.

A key pillar of the Re Bontše Lesotho campaign is the empowerment of local content creators. ETL has

committed to sponsoring a digital storyteller from Mokhotlong who will document and share the district's cultural and tourism experiences with global audiences.

This approach reflects a shift towards content-driven destination marketing, where digital storytelling becomes a low-cost, high-impact promotional tool capable of reaching global markets in real time.

According to Plaatjies, the initiative aligns with ETL's broader mission to expand connectivity and enable participation in the digital economy. "Digital connectivity allows stories from even the most remote parts of our country to reach audiences across the world," he said, adding that ongoing investment in network infrastructure will ensure inclusivity.

For the local economy, this creates new income

streams for youth through content monetisation, brand partnerships and freelance digital work, broadening the economic base beyond traditional tourism jobs.

LTDC's Acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mamello Morojele welcomed the partnership, describing it as a milestone in repositioning Lesotho's tourism sector.

"When Basotho tell the story of Lesotho, the world listens differently. This campaign places the power of destination storytelling in the hands of our own people."

Conceptualised by LTDC, the campaign targets all ten districts and encourages young creatives to produce compelling digital content showcasing landscapes, culture and hidden tourism gems.

Participants were tasked with creating 120-second promotional videos, attracting around 100 submissions nationwide. From this pool, ten finalists, each representing a district, will be selected.

The initiative is aligned with Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II), which identifies tourism as a priority sector for economic growth, employment creation and poverty reduction.

ETL's involvement therefore reflects a broader private sector response to government's call for investment in high-impact sectors, particularly those capable of driving inclusive growth in rural areas.

Beyond destination marketing, the campaign is expected to stimulate enterprise development across the tourism value chain, including accommodation providers, tour operators, transport services and cultural enterprises in Mokhotlong.

Improved digital visibility is also likely to enhance investor confidence by positioning Mokhotlong as a viable tourism investment destination, particularly for eco-lodges and adventure tourism ventures.

Through their partnership, ETL and LTDC aim to cultivate a new generation of digital ambassadors capable of positioning Lesotho competitively within the SADC region and beyond.

"By combining technology, creativity and storytelling, we believe we can showcase Lesotho in a way that inspires pride at home and interest from visitors abroad," Plaatjies said.

...As Qacha's Nek benefits from similar deal

Refloe Molise

Metropolitan Lesotho has affirmed its commitment to tourism development and youth empowerment through the Re Bontše Lesotho campaign by adopting Qacha's Nek under the national 'adopt-a-district' initiative.

Re Bontše Lesotho is an initiative designed to showcase the country's tourism potential while unlocking economic opportunities at grassroots level.

Launched by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), the campaign seeks to promote both domestic and international tourism, while encouraging Basotho, particularly young people, to tell authentic stories about their communities through digital content.

Speaking at the official launch held at 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre, Metropolitan Lesotho's Managing Director, Rethabile Motsoahae, announced that the company has adopted Qacha's Nek under the initiative.

Motsoahae said the move reflects Metropolitan's long-term strategy of investing in people and communities beyond its core financial services offering.

"This initiative deeply aligns with what we stand for as Metropolitan Lesotho. It is about investing in our people, uplifting communities and shaping a better future," he said.

He highlighted Qacha's Nek as one of Lesotho's most distinctive tourism destinations, with strong potential to attract visitors due to its scenic landscapes, cultural heritage and resilient communities.

"By adopting Qacha's Nek, we are saying we see

its value, we celebrate its people, and we want both Basotho and international visitors to experience what we see," he added.

From a development perspective, the adoption of Qacha's Nek signals a targeted effort to stimulate rural tourism and integrate local communities into the broader tourism value chain.

Motsoahae emphasised that the campaign goes beyond destination marketing, focusing on equipping young people with digital and creative skills that can translate into income-generating opportunities.

Through the initiative, youth will be encouraged to produce short-form video content showcasing local culture, heritage and untold stories, while also receiving training to strengthen their storytelling capabilities.

He said this approach is expected to support the emergence of new digital entrepreneurs and content creators in the district.

"When we empower young people, we do not just create opportunities, but we also build hope and unlock potential,"

Motsoahae further noted that for nearly six decades, Metropolitan has supported Basotho families through financial services, education support and business development, and that the initiative builds on this legacy.

"We want to be a long-term partner in building dreams and protecting the future of Basotho. When we invest in our people and communities, we build a stronger nation," she said.

Meanwhile, LTDC's Interim Chief Executive Of-



LTDC's Head of Strategic Marketing, Phomolo Lebotsa, with Metropolitan Lesotho's Managing Director, Rethabile Motsoahae

ficer, Malichaba Koetlisi, said the campaign is aimed at positioning Lesotho as a competitive travel destination while strengthening domestic tourism uptake.

She noted that previous collaborations with international content creators have demonstrated the growing influence of digital storytelling in attracting visitors and reshaping perceptions about Lesotho.

Koetlisi added that the Re Bontše Lesotho campaign is structured to ensure that tourism revenues benefit local communities directly by supporting small enterprises, creating employment and retain-

ing income within the country.

Phomolo Lebotsa, representing LTDC leadership, underscored the importance of youth participation in shaping the country's digital tourism narrative.

"Young people do not always need to wait to be employed. They can create opportunities by telling stories about their surroundings," he said.

He added that increased online visibility of destinations such as Qacha's Nek will improve accessibility for tourists while boosting demand for local services, including accommodation, transport and cultural experiences.

ESTATE NOTICE

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Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 37 of Administration of Estate and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024, calling upon all heirs, legatees, and creditors of the deceased to attend before the Master of the High Court, DR's offices, Teyateyaneng, Berea, next to Police Station on the 23rd March 2026 at 10:00 A.M for the purposes of;

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Newsday Health

6 tech innovations improving tuberculosis care

Staff Reporter

Partners In Health (PIH) takes a community-based approach to tuberculosis (TB) treatment, the organisation said this week.

This means bringing care and resources directly to hard-to-reach areas in Lesotho, collaborating closely with local leaders and neighbors, and keeping patient concerns at the centre of care.

A recently launched initiative, called the TB Elimination Project, is deepening community outreach by bringing screening, diagnosis, and care directly to people most at risk of TB, the world's deadliest infectious disease, according to PIH.

"The project is built around an innovative, multipronged approach known as the universal access search, treat, and prevent approach," it said.

"Over five years, PIH Lesotho seeks to detect and treat an additional 5,151 people with TB, significantly reducing TB incidence in the country," it added.

Digital tools and diagnostic technologies play a key role in the project, drastically increasing TB detection.

Below are six tech innovations improving tuberculosis care in Lesotho.

1. Mobile X-ray Trucks

Box trucks were converted to mobile X-ray clinics, equipped with technology to provide screening, education, and follow-up care directly in communities. PIH Lesotho currently has three of these trucks in its fleet, which provide weekly outreach to Mohale's Hoek District, a rural region with a population of approximately 153,000 people.

Each outreach team includes a doctor, two nurses, a laboratory technician, and an X-ray assistant. From September 2025 through February 2026, the mobile trucks have screened 2,237 people for TB, tested 1,712 people for TB, and diagnosed 47 people with TB.

2. Digital X-ray Machines

TB diagnosis relies on chest X-rays, as the infectious disease usually attacks the lungs. The trucks are equipped with digital X-ray machines, which provide instant results on a mobile phone, enabling rapid review by a doctor, and timely next steps for patients.

In addition to the truck-based machines, staff also use portable digital



A mobile X-ray truck travels through Mohale's Hoek District, Lesotho on Jan. 19, 2026. Photo by Justice Kalebe

X-ray machines. The portable machines are compact enough to travel via horseback to reach patients living in communities without road access.

3. Portable Ultrasound Devices

PIH Lesotho uses portable ultrasound devices that connect to a tablet or smartphone. They're designed for whole body imaging and allow clinicians to detect TB in other parts of the body, beyond the lungs. The ultrasound has artificial intelligence (AI)-supported features that help clinicians capture and interpret images.

Two of the mobile trucks are equipped with portable ultrasound devices. The devices are also used across all PIH-supported rural health clinics and Botšabelo Hospital, where, in 2007, PIH and Lesotho's Ministry of Health launched the country's first treatment, care, and support program for people with multi-drug-resistant TB.

4. TB Hunter

TB Hunter is a data system, designed by PIH Lesotho, that enables real-time management of cases, tracks linkages to care, and supports contact tracing efforts. The digital system incorporates teleradiology and geographic information systems (GIS) to monitor data across PIH Lesotho's seven rural health facilities.

Through teleradiology, medical images are shared remotely with a full-time radiologist, based in Maseru, the country's capital, who provides expert interpretation and feedback to frontline clinicians

at rural health clinics. GIS technology is used to identify and map TB hotspots, enabling targeted follow-up in areas with the highest TB burden.

This strategic use of GIS ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, reaching the populations most in need and facilitating the swift containment of outbreaks.

5. Artificial Intelligence

AI software analyses patients' chest X-ray images and determines if the patient has been affected by TB in less than one minute. This computer-aided detection tool helps clinicians prioritize patients who need further testing. AI is also used with the portable ultrasound devices, allowing for faster diagnostics and care.

6. Smart Pill Boxes

Digital adherence technologies, such as smart pill boxes, help patients keep up with their TB treatment by sending medication reminders, logging doses in real-time, and allowing remote monitoring by health care staff.

This approach has helped replace directly observed therapy, which involves watching people take their medications. In the coming months, the smart pill boxes will be used in Mohale's Hoek District.

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. Lmakatso Mejaele
Lawyer | Child's rights Advocate | Author | Entrepreneur

Mr. Mochaba
Psychotherapist | Marriage-Counselor & Life coach

Postponed to the 21st March 2026

College
Cash 6343 6260 (Thato Matheka)
mpesa 5160 6998

Registration: M200

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







By now, we have a clear blueprint of what development is supposed to achieve. Development is not an abstract aspiration; it is measurable, tangible, and lived. It must create employment, eradicate poverty, and diffuse inequality. Anything less is an administrative motion without societal progress.

The question, therefore, is unavoidable: is our national budget an instrument of development, or has it degenerated into a ritual? An annual performance dressed in numbers, detached from the lived realities of the people?

Year after year, budgets are presented with technical precision and political confidence. Allocations are made, sectors are named, and projections are tabled. But beneath this procedural correctness lies a deeper concern: does the budget meaningfully confront unemployment, or does it merely acknowledge it? Does it structurally reduce poverty, or does it manage it? Does it actively narrow inequality, or does it quietly reproduce it?

A budget that is serious about development must be intentional. It must disrupt existing patterns of exclusion, not reinforce them. It must prioritise productive sectors, those that create jobs at scale, over administrative expenditure that sustains the state but does not grow the economy. When a government spends more on maintaining itself than on empowering its people, it signals a misplaced set of priorities. It reflects a state that is inward-looking rather than people-centred, procedural rather than transformational.

Equally critical is whether the budget is geospatially aware. Development does not occur in a vacuum; it is shaped by geography. Where people live, how they move, and what infrastructure connects them to opportunity all determine economic outcomes. A budget that ignores spatial inequality entrenches it. Rural communities remain isolated, urban areas become overburdened, and economic participation remains uneven. Spatial planning must not be an afterthought; it must be central to how resources are allocated. Infrastructure investment must be deliberate, linking production zones to markets and communities to services. Otherwise, we are merely financing isolation.



Dr. Tšeliso Moroke

Common Concern

How the country moves

Budgeting without direction

Beyond geography, there is geopolitics. We operate in an interconnected world where global events shape domestic realities. The ongoing tensions involving Israel, the United States, and Iran are not distant conflicts with no bearing on us. They have direct implications for global oil prices, food supply chains, and inflationary pressures.

The critical question is whether our budget anticipates these shocks or merely reacts to them after the damage is done.

When fuel prices rise, transport costs increase. When transport costs increase, food prices follow. When food prices rise, the poor are pushed deeper into vulnerability. This chain reaction is predictable. It is not a surprise, it is a pattern. A responsive budget must therefore include buffers: strategic reserves, targeted subsidies, and investment in local production to reduce dependency on imports.

If we know that global instability will affect fuel and food prices, why are we not building resilience into our economic framework? Why are we not aggressively investing in agriculture to secure food sovereignty? Why are we not diversifying energy sources to reduce exposure to

global oil volatility? Why are we not strengthening local industries so that external shocks do not immediately translate into domestic crises?

A budget that is blind to these realities is not neutral. It is negligent.

What we are witnessing is a deeper structural issue: the state behaves as though budgeting is an exercise in compliance rather than a tool for transformation. It satisfies legal and procedural requirements, but it does not fundamentally alter economic conditions. It becomes predictable, safe, and ultimately ineffective. It reassures markets and political actors, but it does not reassure the unemployed graduate, the struggling household, or the informal trader navigating daily uncertainty.

Development requires courage. It requires breaking from the comfort of incrementalism and confronting entrenched inefficiencies. It requires aligning expenditure with outcomes, not just intentions. It requires accountability that goes beyond reporting and enters the realm of measurable impact.

If employment is the goal, then every major allocation must be interrogated: how many jobs will this create? If poverty eradication is

the goal, then spending must be assessed on its ability to lift people out of dependency into productivity. If inequality is to be reduced, then the distributional impact of the budget must be explicit, not assumed.

Ultimately, the budget must answer a simple but uncomfortable question: who does it serve?

The danger we face is normalising a budget that moves numbers but does not move the country. A document that satisfies Parliament but fails the people is not a success; it is a systemic failure dressed in compliance.

The moment demands more than technical competence; it demands political will. A budget must be a living document, responsive to both domestic realities and global shocks. It must anticipate, adapt, and protect. It must be bold enough to shift resources where they matter most, and disciplined enough to measure whether those shifts are working.

Otherwise, it becomes what it increasingly appears to be: a ritual of governance that maintains the illusion of progress while the underlying conditions remain unchanged.

This is how the country moves - or fails to move at all.

A scholarship policy that must benefit a Mosotho child

The recent appointment of Mr Thabo Ntoi as the Director of the Loan Bursary Fund, previously known as the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS), comes at a critical moment when many Basotho families are grappling with challenging questions about access to higher education. This appointment should signal not only a change in leadership but also the start of essential policy reform. For many young people in Lesotho, the challenge is no longer merely gaining admission to a university; the more pressing issue is that after acceptance, Higher learning institutions deny them a scholarship in the guise of a 'quota' from NMDS, and in that way, many have been left outside. But why? Isn't education a fundamental right???

A few weeks ago, the Minister of Finance and Development Planning addressed Parliament regarding the difficulties faced by students at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). These students were admitted to the university but did not receive government scholarships. While the explanation made institutional sense, NUL admits students based on capacity, while scholarships are allocated according to government quotas through the Loan Bursary Fund, and this reveals a troubling disconnect between admission and affordability. A young person can achieve academic qualifications, celebrate their acceptance with family, and then face the harsh reality of lacking sponsorship. For low-income households, this situation is not just disappointing; it is devastating.

Many believe that the current system has strayed too far from the original social mission of the NMDS. In the past, scholarship applications

were processed through District Administrators' offices, where parents and guardians would line up with their children. There was a clear vetting process before university admission was finalised, allowing students to know early whether they qualified for government support. They would sign the necessary loan bursary documents before starting classes. While that system was not perfect, it upheld an important principle: it aimed to identify students who genuinely needed financial assistance, providing poor families with certainty, dignity, and a real opportunity.

Today, this social screening function seems to have diminished. By allowing higher education institutions to fill government quotas primarily based on academic performance, the state has effectively relinquished a crucial responsibility. Universities are designed to assess academic merit and institutional capacity, not to serve as social welfare agencies. They do not primarily determine who is poor, vulnerable, or dependent on bursary stipends, not only for tuition but also for day-to-day survival. When scholarship allocation becomes merely an extension of admission lists, socio-economic factors can easily be overlooked, and that's a serious worry for me as a young revolutionist.

This is the core injustice of the current model. It does not just exclude certain students; it risks sidelining those for whom public financing was

originally intended. A child from a low-income family may qualify academically and gain admission, but still be unable to pursue higher education due to a selection system that is insufficiently grounded in socio-economic need.

Meanwhile, families with greater financial resources may continue to benefit from a process that fails to adequately differentiate between those who can afford to pay and those who cannot. This approach is not only an inefficient public policy; it betrays the equalising role that government sponsorship is meant to fulfil.

Education should be viewed as a national investment, not a privilege reserved for those who can afford the gap between admission and sponsorship. Every Mosotho child who qualifies for higher education deserves a fair chance to continue their studies. This does not mean that the government should abandon discipline, accountability, or budgeting; rather, it necessitates a redesign of policy based on a more equitable principle: no eligible student should be denied access to higher education scholarship simply because their family is poor. When resources are limited, the state's primary duty must be to protect the most vulnerable. That is the essence of public financing.

Even though Mr Ntoi is not new to the system, I know he has acted in that position for some time; his substantive appointment presents an opportunity to restore purpose and credibility to the

Loan Bursary Fund. The country needs a policy that integrates merit with social justice. Students should not only be evaluated based on examination results but also assessed through a transparent national framework that considers financial need, household vulnerability, and ability to pay. The government must return to a system where students know whether they have sponsorship before accepting admission. This change would reduce uncertainty, mitigate emotional and financial distress, and refocus the bursary loan scheme on the same Basotho children from places like Ha Khohlopo rather than on institutional convenience.

Lesotho cannot build a strong future while denying capable young people from pursuing their studies when they are capable and willing to do so. For low-income families, the opportunity to succeed is solely based on the hope that their child receives such a scholarship. For emphasis's sake, I want to reiterate the fact that for many households, a bursary is more than just academic support; it represents hope, food security, relief for siblings, and the potential for generational change. If the government is serious about youth development, reducing unemployment, and promoting national progress, then access to higher education must be expanded, not limited by administrative hurdles.

The time has come to transform this policy. The Loan Bursary Fund must once again serve as a true instrument of social mobility. Basotho children who are eligible for higher education must be prioritised, protected, and given a genuine opportunity to thrive. This is not charity; it is justice. The Future is NOW!



Theko Tlebere



The national interest, a fed-up electorate and Matekane's prospects

Nkopane Mathibeli

Overall, the electorate in Lesotho votes because it seeks economic prosperity, social development, and political stability. As Basotho, many of us will agree that these three constitute the totality of our national interests, i.e., our highest aspirations as a nation. For example, economically, we all yearn to see Lesotho move from its total dependence on South Africa to producing what it consumes. Socially, we yearn to see our communities emancipated from the social dysfunction that feeds from a broken moral fibre, broken homes and rampant poverty. Politically, we yearn for wise and upright leadership whose virtue lies in selfless and patriotic service. In fact, every political leader who has ever become Lesotho's Prime Minister (democratically) was so elected because the majority believed he had the capacity to make all these possible.

However, having elected Prime Ministers for a total of eight times within a period of twenty nine years (1993 – 2022), the bulk of what Basotho consume still comes from South Africa; social dysfunction has become a hallmark of community life across the country and instead of stability and virtuous leadership, the political front is plagued with power mongering, defections and distrust. Even though we are far from securing the basics of our national interest, political loyalists speak highly (and rightly so) of milestones achieved when their parties governed. They include roads (gravel & tarred), rural and urban electrification projects, bridge construction, school and clinic construction, and interventions through various policies and legislation. Each of these is a necessity and is rightly celebrated. However, their combined contribution to the achievement of the national interest has been minimal. My intention with this piece is to argue that this occurs primarily because governments undertake development initiatives with the next election, rather than the national interest, in mind. Why has this become a norm?

A ceremonial national interest

The problem is that we have a ceremonial national interest. As a rule, anything that is ceremonial is, in passing, afforded half-hearted recognition because that which is ceremonial is not the ceremony itself. This is precisely how the political class treats our national interest. They all recognise what ought to be done to improve the welfare of the masses, yet once in office, they prioritise self-enrichment for a good part of the term. Only a year or two before the next election, they pick a few items from the national

"Society is a system of normalised averages. So then, leaders are a reflection of the average standard of that community or society... If you are not happy with the way things are in your part of the world, remember this truth: 'Don't blame the leaders, take a deep look at the citizens that elect those leaders,'"

-Unknown

interest and begin serving the masses in "earnest". They launch a couple of important national-level projects, supplemented by upgrades to existing infrastructure in various communities across the country. This typically involves upgrading older gravel roads, patching potholed tarred roads, and intensifying garbage collection in urban centres. To the credit of incumbent governments, a fair number of people get those badly needed jobs, even if temporarily. A new and equally effective addition to this election-oriented actualisation of the national interest is the provision of food parcels in communities by both government-aligned and opposition-aligned politicians. For years, this is how the national interest has been treated without consequence.

Changing the script

For the political class, the value of this modus operandi is that people enter the electoral booth with uplifted spirits due to tangible evidence of a government that is demonstrably working. Given that these interventions do indeed give hope, they would normally deserve unconditional recognition. Time has, however, taught us that they do not serve to dignify the existence of the masses but to pacify their anger; to neutralise the frustrations arising from the reported embezzlement of billions amid collapsing social services, nepotism, and cronyism. In this regard, they constitute an insult to the national interest and must be condemned and rejected. Rejection does not imply turning their backs on food parcels or vandalising vote-buying projects. It implies a principled resistance to their votes being swayed in the direction of these fake philanthropists; it implies their recognition that the expressions of concern are superficial. That would be a sign of civic virtue, which is best complemented by a calculated execution of civic duty – voting in line with the national interest. This is ideal, but realistically, it is only possible if

the national interest is mainstreamed into the political psyche, thereby becoming a core determinant of political culture. If we are to avoid falling into the trap of believing that democracy has failed in Lesotho, we must pursue this ideal with earnest, uncompromising determination, because it is the only safeguard against the political manipulation of the electorate.

Who leads this process?

Perhaps we should begin by asking whether our country has formalised and documented its national interest as a reference point and compass. Have Basotho ever articulated their highest aspirations for their country? The answer is in the affirmative. In 2000, Vision 2020 was launched. The document was the outcome of a national dialogue, the goal of which was for Basotho to express their long-term vision for the Lesotho they wanted. So in essence, the suggestion for a mainstreaming of the national interest into the political psyche is not about reinventing the wheel. It is recommended that we turn the wheel with slightly more force. It is the recognition that our democracy is at risk of losing its legitimacy because the electorate is unable to exercise the power it holds. As a result, it has become imperative for the national interest to be the subject on which national consciousness is inculcated.

Luckily, much of the work of shaping the national interest was done in 2000, and Basotho expressed consensus on six components of their national interest. They expressed that in the long term, their collective aspiration is a Lesotho that is: (a) a stable democracy; (b) a nation at peace with itself and its neighbours; (c) healthy and has a well developed human resource base; (d) strong economically; (e) well managed environmentally and; (f) well advanced technologically. This is literally the template of our national interest. All that is left is to set performance targets and timeframes of execution within both

the constitutional framework and electoral cycles. A programme must thereafter be drawn to neatly knit this structure of our national interest into the subconscious of the masses. In time, it will become a reference point on which their political psyche is based. Who then must take ownership of this programme? It is obviously not the government. After all, the goal of the programme is to empower the electorate to dictate terms to the government. On this ground, it is clear that the role with all its logistics and costs falls squarely at the door of our perfectly capable but seriously underfunded civic movement.

Matekane's prospects

Just like previous governments, the current one is similarly implementing development initiatives with the next election in mind, not the national interest. None of its flagship projects is directed to any of the six components of our national interest. For instance, it was the completion of the reform process that would have secured a stable democracy for us. Unfortunately, the process got stalled for unpatriotic reasons. Given the high rates of domestic and cross-border crime, nothing substantial is being done to ensure that we are a nation at peace with itself and its neighbours. With the collapse of businesses due to low demand, closure of factories and loss of jobs without the tabling of credible solutions, nothing is being done to ensure that the country is economically strong. There are, however, celebrations about the construction and upgrades of roads, the provision of vehicles to various government departments and the acquisition of agricultural equipment to intensify food production and yields.

In all of these, the electorate does not care about the finer details. They do not ask critical questions such as: under which component of the national interest does this initiative fall; what is its position in the hierarchy of national priorities, and is its current implementation done with the national interest or the next election in mind? As a result, the outcome of the next general election may still favour Matekane as the euphoria around him remains relatively intact despite evidence of rampant corruption. It is correct to blame those who still see him as a saviour because democracy demands that they hold him accountable to the national interest. We must, however, acknowledge that their failure to correctly hold him accountable is not a distinctly RFP problem. Rather, it is a reflection of Lesotho's entrenched political culture of maintaining loyalty to political leadership, not the national interest.



**Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP II)
Matching Grant Programme**

4th Round Call for Applications

Background: The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security of Lesotho, with the support of the World Bank has established within the SADP II, a Matching Grants Programme (MGP) to support investment by small and medium agriculture-related businesses, farmers, farmer groups, cooperatives and rural youth seeking to increase climate resilience, raise productivity, improve commercialization and increase production and consumption of high nutrition food products.

Priorities: The MGP invites applications for investment projects, with a maximum duration of one year, which focus on the adoption and use of appropriate technologies and business initiatives by smallholder farmers and small and medium-scale private agri-business enterprises in Lesotho. These investments should: increase climate resilience, raise farm productivity and improve commercialization among smallholder farmers; increase competitiveness and profitability, increase value-added to local products among agri-business enterprises and increase market opportunities for smallholder farmers; and increase the production, consumption and availability of high nutrition food products.

Eligible investments include:

- Improved seed and seedling varieties for vegetables under shade nets, tunnel houses, drip irrigation, water storage equipment, boreholes and pumps
- Improved piggery production
- Improved broiler production.
- Product collection, storage, post-harvest handling, processing, grading/sorting, marketing, packaging, labelling, brand development, presentation and promotion of agricultural products
- Diversification and introduction of high value-added and niche products.

Grant financing: Two grant windows will be available to applicants: (i) grants for smallholder farmers and farmer groups to support investment in climate smart agricultural technology and other productivity enhancing technology up to a maximum of \$US 30,000 (M400 000.00); (ii) grants for small and medium size agri-businesses up to \$US 100,000 (M1 500 000.00), to support investment in value added activities including small-scale processing and marketing as well as provision of inputs and services

Eligible Applicants: Applicants with farms and/or agri-business activities operating in all ten districts of Lesotho are eligible for grants. Eligible applicants include a) farmers or farm groups; b) registered cooperatives or associations; c) registered small and medium size agri-businesses; d) registered local, district and national associations and cooperatives; e) sub-groups of registered associations and cooperatives; rural youth; and f) partnerships between the above categories and registered processing/trading businesses in Lesotho. Smallholder farmers, members of farm households, rural youth and small and medium-scale agri-business enterprises will receive priority for grant support but non-farm applicants with demonstrated farming experience and a strong knowledge of the proposed investment will also be considered. Eligible applicants may also submit joint proposals up to the maximum grant stipulated above. Youth under 35 and women are particularly encouraged to apply. Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Nutrition, Project Financing institutions (IFAD and World Bank Group) and their direct beneficiaries are not eligible. Persons with an annual income of more than 600 000.00 Maloti and having access to more than 0.1 ha of irrigated land are not eligible to the Smallholder grant window, but only to the Agribusiness window.

Partnership with Service Providers: The potential applicants will be required to form partnerships with a qualified service provider(s). The service provider(s) will (i) provide technical and financial assistance and advice to the applicant to develop the business idea and prepare the application, (ii) work with the applicant to clarify different technical and financial aspects of the activity and prepare an activity implementation plan; (iii) provide technical and financial assistance to the applicant during project implementation and provide the products and services to be delivered according to an agreed schedule; (iv) support the applicant in managing grant funds, including keeping the necessary accounts and collecting contributions from beneficiaries; (v) supervise the inputs of beneficiaries/applicants and sub-contract technical assistance as necessary; (vi) monitor the progress of activities; (vii) support the applicant in the preparation and submission of the required financial

and technical reports. Eligible service providers include a wide range of specialists such as private sector technical specialists and business consultants, traders, associations, NGOs and on-going international-funded projects and programs present in Lesotho, as well as university and college faculty, and public extension and research staff outside of normal working hours. Employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security are not eligible to work as Service Providers.

Service Providers will need to show that they have successfully completed a training program on the preparation and technical and financial analysis of investment projects approved by the PMU or the MGC.

Beneficiary contribution: In all cases, successful applicants will be required to make a co-finance contribution in cash to engender ownership and demonstrate commitment. The larger grants for agri-business enterprises will also be conditional on their willingness and ability to generate employment and build effective supply agreements with smallholder producers. Co-finance cash contributions will vary according to the grant sub-program as follows: (i) Improving smallholder production grants for farmers or farmer groups: grants up to \$US 30,000 will require a 20% co-finance contribution; (ii) Agri-business grants for registered agriculture-oriented and privately-owned enterprises, associations and cooperatives: grants in this program will require a 30% co-finance contribution. 100% of the needed matching contribution for both grant categories must be available upfront.

The participation and contribution from different partners should be confirmed by written agreement reached between the principal applicant, the service provider and/or other partners.

Eligible Expenditures under Grant: Of the grant amount, the indicative types of financial support are:

Investment Acquisition, Installation and Operation: This category must comprise at least 60% of the grant amount and may include costs associated with the purchase of improved seed, seedling and livestock varieties; the purchase and installation of equipment for cultivation, harvesting, post-harvest handling, processing, preservation, storage, grading, packaging etc; the construction of necessary buildings for livestock production, storage, processing, marketing; the purchase and installation of tunnel houses, shade nets, irrigation equipment, pumps, boreholes, tanks etc; product development; alignment with national and international food and safety standards; and marketing campaigns. Where the investor is making substantial physical investments, the costs of land surveys will be covered for smallholder farmers in order to ensure that they have secure land ownership as a means to secure the benefits of investment. Agri-businesses will not be eligible for support for land surveys. Land survey costs may not be more than 10% of the grant amount, up to a maximum of \$US 2000 equivalent. The costs of land purchase, land lease or land rental will not be covered for any grants.

Non-Eligible Expenditures under Grant: The following items would not be covered out of the grant amount: (a) Salaries or payment for works and services provided to the project by the grant applicants or its members; b) any expenditures made prior to the date of signature of the Grant Agreement or after closure date of the project; c) purchase, rent or leasing of land and existing buildings; d) any expenditure related to operating costs, which are expected to be the direct responsibility of the applicant; e) any expenditure made in territories of any country that is not a member of the World Bank for goods produced in or services supplied from such countries; f) any expenditure with a hazardous impact on the environment.

Deadline and Place for Submission of Applications: The deadline for submission of applications is not later than 17 April 2026. Applications should be submitted in four copies (one original plus three photocopies) and delivered by hand at the District Agricultural Offices in the 10 districts of Lesotho at 12:00 noon. Applications submitted after deadline will not be considered.

Evaluation of the Applications: All applications received within the deadline will be screened by the MGP Secretariat for compliance with the above rules. The successful applications will then be evaluated by specialized Technical and Financial Reviewers and submitted to the MGC review and field verification. The list of successful applicants will be published in SADP II website and social media pages. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed and their original project documents could be returned to them on request.

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

IFB No. NDSO/BUDGETMANAGEMENTSYSTEM/2026/02

SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF BUDGET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The National Drug Service Organization (NDSO) is the Central Medical Store for the Ministry of Health. It is mandated to **procure, store and distribute** Medicines, Medical Supplies and Laboratory Consumables for the Health Institutions in Lesotho. NDSO is legally gazette -Legal Notice Supplement No.4 to Gazette No.19 of the 2nd March 2007. NDSO has set aside the funds to finance the Supply and installation of Budget Management System needed within the Organization.

NDSO invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for the:

Supply and Installation of a Budget Management System
PROCUREMENT METHOD

Bidding will be conducted through **National Competitive Bidding** procedures in accordance with the Public Procurement Act 2023.

AVAILABILITY OF BIDDING DOCUMENTS

A complete set of bidding documents in English is available for viewing at:

- At the NDSO Procurement Building, Mafeteng, Lesotho and
- From the NDSO website www.ndso.org.ls
- For further information, contact:

Procurement Manager

National Drug Service Organization
 Main South One Road
 Mafeteng 900, Lesotho
 Tel: +266 222 15 300
 Email: tenders@ndso.org.ls

BID SUBMISSION & OPENING

- **Closing Date:** 27th March 2026 at 14:00 hrs
 - **Bid Opening:** 27th March 2026 at 14:30 hrs
 - **Venue:** NDSO Procurement Building Boardroom, Main South One Road, Mafeteng, Lesotho
- Late bids shall be rejected.


Invitation to Bidders

BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE BIDDING

06/03/2026

Drilling and Blasting Services - TTDC/ MoLGHP/01/2026/2027

1. The Thaba-Tseka District Council] has allocated/received funds to be used for the acquisition of Drilling and Blasting Services for Thaba-Tseka rural roads.
2. The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above works.
3. Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures contained in the Public Procurement Act and the Regulations made under the Act and is competitive to all bidders.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below at 8(a) from 8.00am to 16.30pm.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in English *language* may be purchased by interested bidders at 8(b) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of M2,500.00. The method of payment will be *cash at Thaba-Tseka Urban Council*.
6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before 21/04/2026. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 2% of the bidding amount. Bid securities must be valid until 21/06/2026. 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 8(d) at 10.30am on the 21/04/2026
7. There shall be a site visit at Ponseng-Bobete, Mokoto-Matsaile, Ramabeta-Phuleng, Khanyetsi-Khoshane and Mantsonyane- Chooko on the 18-20/03/2026 and the meet up place

will be Thaba-Tseka District Council at 9.00am on the dates indicated in the proposed schedule in this notice.

8. Bidders should note the following:
 - (a) Documents may be inspected at: *Thaba-Tseka District Council Near Education office 63205290*
 - (b) Documents will be issued from: *Thaba-Tseka District Council Procurement office near Education office 63205290*
 - (c) Bids must be delivered to: *Thaba-Tseka District Council procurement office near Education Office 63205290*
 - (d) Address of bid opening: *Thaba-Tseka District Council Reception near Education Office 63205290*

9. The Planned Procurement Schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Publish bid notice	06/03/2026
(b) Site visits where applicable	18-20/03/2026
(c) Bid closing date	21/04/2026
(d) Bid closing Time	10.00am
(e) Evaluation process	22-24/04/2026 and 27-28/04/2026
(f) Display and communication of Notice of Tender	To be decided
(g) Contract signature	To be decided

Signature:
 Name: Makhauhelo Koali
 Position of Authorised Official: Assistant Procurement Officer



TSEBISO HO SECHABA

THUTO/THUPELO KA TLHOPHO BOCHA EA PHEPELO EA METSI MABALANE

Morero oa Phepele ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tsebisa sechaba sa libaka tse anngoeng ke Morero hore khoebo e bitsoang 4D Climate Solutions eleng Moeletsi, e ntse e potoloha le libaka tsa Morero ho fana ka thuto, ho ruta le ho hlokomelisa sechaba ka Tlhopho Bocha ea phepele ea metsi mabalane, e reretsoeng ho kenngoa tšebetsong ke 'muso oa Lesotho

Ele karolo ea lenaneo lena, Moeletsi o ntse a:

- Tšoara likopano tsa sechaba le lipitso,
- Etsa likopano le Baetapele ba Sechaba (Marena, Makh'anselara),
- Akofisa mananeo a thuto le tlhokomeliso ea sechaba.

Sechaba se khothaletsa ho nka karolo ka mafolofolo likopanong tsena molemong oa ho fumana kutloisiso e pharalletseng ka Molao oa Metsi o sisintsoeng le bohlokoa ba oona tsamaisong ea metsi Lesotho.

Morero oa Phepele ea Metsi Mabalane – Mothati oa Bobeli (LLWDP II) o tšehelitse ke lichelete ke 'muso Lesotho, Banka ea Lefatse, Banka ea Ntsetsopelo ea Europa le Mokhatlo oa Linaha tsa Europa (European Union).

4D Climate Solutions e ntse e tšoara lithupelo le lipitso libakeng tsa Leribe, Mafeteng le Mohale's Hoek, moo morero o ntseng o tsoela-pele teng. Sepheo ke ho fa sechaba le bohle ba amehang ka lintlha tse fuperoeng ke Tlhopho Bocha ena, sepheo sa eona le kamoo e tlo ama litšebeliso tsa metsi kateng mabalane.

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Behind the spotlight: Substance use shadows creative industry

Chris Theko

The applause is loud, the images are polished, and success appears effortless.

Yet behind the scenes of Lesotho's creative industry lies a quieter reality, one shaped by instability, pressure, and, increasingly, substance abuse.

Recent conversations within the sector have drawn growing attention to the impact of substance use on artists' careers and well-being. While such cases are often discussed informally in public spaces and on social media, they are rarely documented in ways that allow for deeper understanding or accountability.

This silence makes it difficult to quantify the scale of the problem. It also reflects a broader culture in which creatives are expected to endure pressure without support.

In the absence of open dialogue and accessible mental health services, substance use continues to thrive as an unspoken coping mechanism rather than being addressed as a public health and industry concern.

For many creatives, addiction does not begin with recklessness. It begins with proximity, expectation, and survival.

Popular hip hop artist, who rose to stardom in the early 2010s Moji Mokotso, popularly known as Jiji F, shared that his substance use began in spaces where power and opportunity intersect.

"Peer pressure was my downfall, but these people were not my peers," Jiji F recalled.

"They were people I once looked up to, saw on TV. I was in a room with them, and they were doing coke, so I just wanted to blend in."

Those moments carried unspoken promises.

"They were big people in the industry. I believed they would put me on, that being close to them would open opportunities."

What followed was not an isolated incident, but a gradual shift.

Initially, substances served a purpose. "After that first time, we'd do it at clubs and networking," Jiji said.

"Then I started using at shows because coke gave me energy I didn't have before."

Over time, reliance replaced choice.

"I started using more frequently, feeling like the night isn't complete without having a line."

This progression is common in high-pressure creative environments where stamina, confidence, and constant output are rewarded. Available data suggest that illicit drug use among young people in Lesotho is a growing concern, although comprehensive national statistics remain limited.

School-based surveys and community screening programmes show that cannabis (dagga) is the most commonly used illicit substance among adolescents.

In urban areas such as Maseru, studies have reported lifetime cannabis use among learners at approximately 15-17%. Inhalant use has also been recorded among school-going youth, with prevalence estimates of about 10-12% in some surveys.

While alcohol and tobacco remain the most widely used substances overall, emerging reports from law-enforcement



agencies, civil society organisations, and health ministry point to increasing exposure of young people to synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine (Crystal Meth), particularly in urban settings.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and local researchers caution that early initiation, limited access to treatment, and low awareness of substance-use disorders contribute to underreporting, suggesting the true scale may be higher than current figures indicate.

These gaps mirror the silence that often surrounds addiction in creative spaces.

National University of Lesotho (NUL) lecturer and mental health practitioner Steny Mohapi explained that the creative environment itself creates vulnerability.

"Creatives work in unstable conditions," she said. "There's public scrutiny and an expectation to always perform at a high level."

Substances often enter as tools.

"At first, drugs are used as an enhancement, especially for people working long hours who want to stay productive. Over time, they become susceptible."

Creative work, she noted, is inseparable from identity.

"Their work is their lifestyle. When their work is rejected, they feel personally rejected, which pushes them to seek belonging in substances."

Irregular income intensifies this pressure, forcing creatives to overextend themselves during peak seasons.

Clinically, many creatives use their work to process pain.

"Creativity becomes a way of repairing what is broken, transforming trauma into art," Mohapi explained.

When trauma remains unresolved, anxiety and perfectionism follow. "There's a performance fear: 'If I don't release a hit, I'm not good enough.' That anxiety drives emotional numbness."

Substances then become coping mechanisms.

"Drugs like crystal meth are used to reduce anxiety and convince the person they are good enough."

Early indicators are frequently misread. "Most people assume the artist is just tired," Mohapi said. "It starts with energy drinks, then moves to substances like weed."

Other warning signs include reduced sleep,

increased irritability, and unusually intense productivity, often mistaken for passion or dedication.

One of the OGs and an active creative, an artist mentor and hip hop artist, Mokebe Mohasoa, known as Skebza D, said that for most creatives, expectations escalate once success arrives.

"Once people love what you create, it becomes a benchmark. You're expected to outdo yourself every time."

For Jiji, image maintenance became

exhausting.

"People see flashy videos and expect perfection," he said. "But you're still a regular person."

Meeting those expectations often means spending more, financially and emotionally, than creatives can afford.

Substance use is widely accepted in entertainment spaces.

"It's normalised," Jiji said. "Weed, cocaine, especially among big artists."

Silence reinforces the culture, while fear of judgment keeps many from seeking help.

"I was afraid people would know me and label me a junkie," he admitted.

Industry stakeholders, including Moeketsi Kebise, have increasingly acknowledged that the sector prioritises visibility and output while neglecting mental-health support. Burnout is rewarded; wellness is treated as a personal issue.

Mohapi stressed that many creatives need therapy, not substances.

"Some artists express pain beyond art. That's a sign they need trauma-informed support," she said.

Rest, she added, is not the enemy of creativity.

"Being a creative does not mean working all the time."

Addressing legal gaps in Lesotho's business sector

Mamello Rakotoana & Refiloe Molise

Entrepreneurs and business professionals in Lesotho have been urged to prioritise legal awareness as a critical pillar for sustainable business growth, ahead of the Molao le Khoebo Annual Conference scheduled for March 26-27, 2026.

In an exclusive interview, Advocate Thapelo Donald Ntsiki, Co-Founder of E-Legal Solutions, said the two-day conference represents a strategic evolution from last year's three-day bootcamp, broadening its focus from small enterprises to more established businesses.

"Last year, we hosted a three-day bootcamp aimed at increasing our reach in providing legal information to small businesses. It was successful, but after evaluating its impact, we realised there was a need to change both the format and the target audience," Ntsiki said.

He explained that while capacity-building workshops for small businesses remain important, the organisation identified an opportunity to expand its reach and impact by engaging larger enterprises, leading to the rebranding into a fully-fledged annual conference.

"We recognised the importance of legal aspects in doing business because law is the backbone of any business. For a business to exist, it exists because of the law. For it to be protected, it is protected by the law. For it to operate, it operates within the law, and even when it ends, it is resolved by the law," he said.

This year's conference will run under the



E-Legal Solutions representative addresses entrepreneurs and professionals during a legal training session focused on improving compliance and business sustainability

theme 'Building Legal Resilience', focusing on equipping businesses with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate regulatory environments and withstand operational risks.

"We want businesses that stand on firm legal foundations so they can survive any storms that may arise," Ntsiki added.

The two-day event will feature a diverse lineup of speakers from sectors including insurance, finance, consultancy, academia and the broader private sector. Institutions such as the National University of Lesotho, alongside regulatory bodies, are expected to participate.

According to Ntsiki, the programme has been deliberately condensed to maximise participation and impact, following feedback from previous events.

"We reduced the programme to two days because business people often struggle to attend longer events due to their work commitments," he said.

Each day will include keynote addresses, educational sessions and panel discussions. Keynote speakers will provide high-level perspectives, while technical sessions will focus on practical applications and real-life business scenarios. Panel discussions will further unpack key issues, offering deeper insights into legal challenges faced by businesses.

"The aim is to create a clear and practical understanding of legal concepts and how they apply in everyday business operations," Ntsiki explained.

He also highlighted a persistent gap in legal literacy within Lesotho's private sector, not-

ing that many businesses continue to operate without a basic understanding of regulatory obligations.

"There is little to almost no legal awareness in Lesotho's private sector. We always emphasise that ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Attending workshops and conferences like this helps business owners gain essential knowledge of legal processes," he said.

Drawing from last year's bootcamp, Ntsiki revealed that many participants lacked awareness of fundamental compliance requirements, including annual filings and the need to update company records with the registry.

"That kind of knowledge is critical. Businesses cannot operate effectively without understanding the legal framework they fall under," he added.

Attendance fees for the conference have been set at M1,300 per individual, covering access to all sessions, meals, refreshments and conference materials. Group bookings of five are discounted to M1,000 per person.

Organisers say early response has been encouraging, with further announcements and invitations still in progress.

Ntsiki urged business owners to take advantage of the platform, stressing that legal knowledge is indispensable for business sustainability and growth.

"This is about empowering businesses with knowledge. When you understand the law, you are in a better position to protect and grow your business."

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Mamello Rakotsoane

The Premier League Management Committee (PLMC), in partnership with Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) and the Sam Matekane Foundation (SMF), has officially launched the 2026 People's Cup.

The launch event, held at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena, confirmed a M1.1 million sponsorship package for this year's edition, underscoring the competition's growing commercial value and its role in supporting domestic football.

The tournament will be staged on April 25, 2026, at Bocheletsane Stadium in Mantšonyane, where the four most-voted Premier League clubs will compete for top honours.

Voting officially opened on March 18, with bulk voting set to close on April 12, while all voting lines will shut at midnight on April 15, 2026. Supporters can vote for their preferred clubs via SMS using designated codes, maintaining fan participation as a central feature of the competition.

PLMC's General Manager, 'Mabonolo Senekane, said the tournament continues to play a pivotal role in developing local football while deepening fan engagement.

"We are proud to officially launch the 2026 People's Cup here in Maseru, marking the return of a tournament that continues to grow in both impact and excitement. This year's M1.1 million sponsorship reflects the strong commitment of our partners, including Econet Telecom Lesotho and the Sam Matekane Foundation, towards the development of local football,"

"As PLMC, we believe the People's Cup is more than just a competition, it is a platform that empowers supporters to actively shape

People's Cup returns with M1.1 million boost



Traffic officers honoured for race-day dedication

Kananelo Mokhele

A total of 119 traffic police officers from the Lesotho Mounted Police Service have been honoured for their exceptional dedication during the 2026 Nedbank Maseru City Run marathon.

The recognition ceremony was held at the Police Training College on Wednesday, April 18, 2026, where officers were commended for their critical role in ensuring the smooth running of the high-profile event.

The annual race, sponsored by Nedbank Lesotho, promotes healthy lifestyles, community participation and the growth of local athletics. It features multiple categories, including 42 km, 21km, 10km, 5km distances and aerobics attracting fitness enthusiasts, elite athletes and social runners.

Over the years, the event has grown into a major fixture on Lesotho's sporting calendar, drawing large crowds and requiring extensive logistical planning.

This year's edition saw over three thousand runners take to the streets of Maseru, placing significant demands on traffic management. The officers were tasked with coordinating road closures, ensuring pedestrian safety and maintaining steady traffic flow across key routes.

Their efforts were credited with delivering a safe and incident-free event, underscoring the often-overlooked role of traffic police in large-scale public gatherings.

Speaking at the ceremony, race organiser Thabo Tšoeute praised the officers for their professionalism and discipline.

"Their professionalism and discipline ensured that the event ran smoothly with-



A total of 119 Lesotho traffic officers were honoured at PTC Hall for their exceptional dedication and service during the Nedbank Maseru City Run.

out any major incidents. They demonstrated true commitment to public safety," he said.

Tšoeute further emphasised that the recognition was not only meant to celebrate past achievements but also to encourage continued excellence within the police force.

"This award is not just about celebrating what has been done, but also about encouraging even greater dedication in future," he noted.

Some of the honoured officers expressed appreciation for the recognition, noting that



The Organiser of Maseru City Run, Thabo Tšoeute

their work often goes unnoticed despite the demanding conditions.

"We are proud to serve the nation, even in challenging conditions. This recognition motivates us to continue working hard to keep our roads safe," said one recipient.

The ceremony concluded with calls for stronger collaboration among stakeholders to improve traffic management and road safety, particularly as major public events continue to expand in scale and importance across the country.

the game while creating real value for clubs. The voting process ensures that fans remain at the Centre of the tournament, giving them a direct voice in determining which teams compete,"

"We encourage Basotho to participate fully by voting for their favorite clubs and supporting this initiative. The tournament, set for the 25th of April in Mantšonyane, promises to deliver exciting football while strengthening the future of our sport," Senekane explained.

On his part, PLMC' Chairperson, Hlomphe Maitin, highlighted the tournament's contribution to strengthening the domestic football ecosystem.

"The People's Cup has become an important platform for growing football in Lesotho because it places supporters at the centre while creating direct value for the football clubs," he said.

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, ETL's Acting General Manager for Marketing Communications and Customer Experience, Puleng 'Mathabo Masoabi, emphasised the competition's broader socio-economic impact.

"The People's Cup demonstrates the power of football in uniting Basotho while creating meaningful opportunities for clubs and communities," she said, adding that digital platforms such as EcoCash and SMS continue to enhance fan participation.

The 2026 winner will take home M400,000, while the runner-up will receive M200,000. Third and fourth-placed teams will each earn M100,000. Individual accolades, including Player of the Tournament, Top Goal Scorer and Goalkeeper of the Tournament, will also be awarded.

Revenue generated through voting will be shared, with 45 percent allocated to participating clubs, 45 percent to ETL and 10 percent covering administrative costs, ensuring the sustainability of the competition.

To further incentivise participation, 10 lucky voters who spend at least M100 will win access to 30 matches in the upcoming Premier League season.



Seabata Mahao

The senior national football team coach Bob Mafoso has named a largely unchanged provisional squad, signalling a cautious start to his tenure with Lesotho national football team.

In his first squad since his February 2026 appointment, Mafoso has leaned heavily on the core group that featured prominently under his predecessor Leslie Notsi, favouring continuity over sweeping changes.

The squad, unveiled in Maseru this week, shows minimal deviation from recent selections, with most of the established players retaining their places despite expectations of a shake-up following the change in technical leadership.

Addressing journalists in Maseru this week, Mafoso expressed satisfaction with preparations, which have been underway for the past three weeks, as they gear up for their crucial 2027 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) preliminary round fixtures against Seychelles national football team.

Likuena will face Seychelles in a two-legged encounter scheduled for March 26 and 29 at Toyota Stadium in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

"The majority of players have been performing well for their respective clubs, and we have been fortunate to avoid injuries so far," Mafoso said.

The composition of the squad suggests a deliberate decision to maintain stability, with only a handful of less familiar names included alongside a dominant contingent of regular call-ups.

The defensive and midfield departments, in particular, remain largely intact, reflecting trust in combinations that have been used in recent international assignments.

The coach has primarily been working with locally based players, with only Thabang Malane, the sole international call-up so far, expected to join camp this week. Other foreign-based players are set to arrive following their club commitments over the weekend.

Mafoso also indicated that the technical team has done extensive analysis of Seychelles based on their previous AFCON qualifying matches and COSAFA

No shake-up in Mafoso's selection



Likuena players during their previous match campaigns - MatchDay

Cup performances.

"We have gathered sufficient information on their previous games. We are now waiting to assess their final squad selection and compare it with our analysis," he said.

He noted that Seychelles had fielded varied line-ups toward the end of their AFCON qualifying campaign, particularly after their chances of qualification had diminished.

While a few new or fringe players have been drafted into the provisional list, their inclusion does little to alter the overall outlook of the squad, which remains largely familiar to local football followers.

The spine of the team from defence, midfield and attack continues to mirror that of recent squads, underlining

Mafoso's reluctance to overhaul the team ahead of a crucial assignment.

The provisional squad includes:

Goalkeepers:

Sekhoane Moerane, LelumaMofoka, MonahengRamalefane, TankisoChaba.

Defenders:

Thabo Mafatle, KatlehoKoeana, Mofokeng Lebusetsa, FusiMatlabe, Itumeleng Falene, Thabang Malane, Thabo Makhele, Rethabile Mokokoane.

Midfielders:

Tšepang Sefali, TholangMakuru, LimphoRalesupi, LehlohonoloFothoane, LehlohonoloMatsau, TlotlisoPhatsisi, Teboho Letsema, Neo Mokhachane, Mpho Teele, KatlehoRapuleng, Thabo Matšoele, Tšepo Toloane, LebohangLesako.

Forwards:

Jane Thabantšo, KatlehoMakateng,

Motebang Sera.

Meanwhile, the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, has announced a combined M300,000 incentive for Likuena.

The announcement was made by LeFA President LijaneNthunya during a press conference held at BambathaTšita Sports Arena. He was joined by Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC) President Baba Malephane. The initiative is aimed at boosting morale within the national squad ahead of the decisive fixtures.

Nthunya revealed that the incentive package is a joint effort, with the government contributing M150,000 through the Ministry, while LeFA will match the amount from its own resources.

"We approached the Ministry with the support of the LSRC, and we are proud to inform the football fraternity that they have committed M150,000. As LeFA, we will also contribute M150,000 to make it a total of M300,000 as an incentive for Likuena to beat Seychelles," said Nthunya.

He stressed the importance of the upcoming matches, expressing concern that Lesotho should not be competing at the preliminary stage of major continental tournaments.

"Likuena should not be playing in the preliminary qualifiers of any competition. The team must win this tie by hook or crook," he said.

Nthunya added that the M300,000 is a minimum incentive, with further contributions possible if ongoing requests to corporate sponsors are successful.

"We have made requests to companies, and while we have not yet received responses, any additional support will be added on top of this amount," he noted.



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