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## BASOTHO BORROW MORE AS JOBS DISAPPEAR



**Credit growing faster than the economy** **Page 2**

**More than 40% of textile jobs wiped out by US tariffs** **Page 8**

**Lesotho's diamond export revenues collapse by 55.8%** **Page 9**



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# Basotho borrow more as jobs disappear

**Lesotho's households are taking on more debt even as jobs disappear, incomes weaken and repayment pressures intensify. The trend is being accompanied by rising mortgage distress, deteriorating loan quality and persistent fiscal vulnerabilities, creating a convergence of risks that the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) says is increasing pressure on the country's financial system.**

## Kananelo Boloetse

The warning forms part of the CBL's recently published 2025 Financial Stability Report, which frames the economy as one where vulnerabilities are no longer isolated to a single sector, but are instead building simultaneously across households, businesses and the public sector.

The central bank puts it bluntly: "Financial stability risks increased as vulnerabilities build across households, businesses, and the public sector."

At the centre of the concern is household debt, which has continued to expand even as economic conditions have weakened.

"Household borrowing from the banking sector continued to grow despite the weak labour market, indicating rising vulnerability in repayment capacity."

The report shows that borrowing trends were not linear but cyclical. After a decline in 2021-2022, household debt rebounded strongly in 2023, slowed in 2024 due to weaker mortgage lending, and then picked up again in 2025, driven largely by personal loans.

That shift matters.

"Therefore, the growing reliance on personal loans signals rising household indebtedness and heightened vulnerability, as unsecured borrowing is more sensitive to income shocks, highlighting increased financial stability risks."

In other words, more households are turning to unsecured credit at a time when incomes are under pressure, a combination that typically increases default risk.

### A labour market under strain

The central bank links this borrowing behaviour directly to weakening labour market conditions.

"Labour market conditions remained fragile in 2025 amid subdued economic activity, particularly in key sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and health."

The report points to multiple shocks hitting household incomes at once. They are job losses linked to falling diamond prices, reduced export activity, and the suspension of some USAID-funded projects.

"Job losses driven by declining global diamond prices, reduced export activity, and the suspension of some USAID funded projects placed downward pressure on household incomes."



From left, CBL Deputy Governor Lehlomela Mohapi and CBL Governor, Dr. Maluke Letete

Despite this, borrowing continued to rise — a divergence the CBL treats as a warning signal rather than a sign of resilience.

### Early signs of repayment stress

The impact is already visible in credit performance.

"These pressures are reflected in a 2.5 percent increase in household non-performing loans in 2025, largely driven by mortgage loans defaults, pointing to intensifying credit risks within the household sectors."

The deterioration is not uniform across loan types.

Mortgage-related non-performing loans have been gradually worsening, while personal loans have shown more volatility but an overall upward trend in stress levels between 2022 and 2024.

"Mortgage NPLs remained relatively moderate but trended upward over time, rising notably in 2024 and further in 2025, signalling growing stress in the housing segment."

The CBL adds that unsecured lending remains a key pressure point. "This surge reflected delayed stress transmission from weakened household incomes and rising debt servicing pressures."

Even where some indicators improved in

2025, risks did not disappear.

"In 2025, personal loan NPLs declined but remained elevated relative to earlier years, indicating persistent credit risk pressures in the household sector."

### Credit growth moving above trend

One of the more technical but important warnings relates to how fast household borrowing is growing relative to the size of the economy.

The central bank notes a shift from below-trend to above-trend credit expansion.

"The household credit to GDP gap increased from -0.5 percent in 2024 to 2.0 percent in 2025, marking a move from below trend to above trend credit growth."

At the same time, household credit has deepened relative to the economy.

"Over the same period, the household credit to GDP ratio grew from 17.5 percent to 19.9 percent, reflecting deeper financial intermediation and a greater reliance on credit to support household consumption and overall economic activity."

The CBL's concern is not that credit is growing in itself, but that it may be growing faster than incomes can sustainably support.

"Although this increase in credit growth

may bolster short term economic performance, the persistent upward trend could heighten future financial stability risks."

### Mortgage market stress builds

The same pattern of rising vulnerability is visible in residential real estate lending, where repayment pressures appear to be intensifying.

The report describes a widening mismatch between lending growth, asset quality and interest rates.

"Developments in residential lending point to mounting repayment pressures and growing vulnerabilities in the housing credit segment."

After strong growth in 2019 and 2020, residential lending contracted in 2021, recovered briefly, and then slowed again in 2024 and 2025, a sign of cooling demand and tighter credit conditions.

At the same time, loan distress has risen sharply.

"Residential NPL growth surged dramatically in 2024, marking a clear deterioration in asset quality, before easing in 2025 but remaining elevated."

Restructuring activity has also become more volatile, suggesting increasing stress management by lenders rather than underlying recovery.

"At the same time, restructured residential loans showed extreme volatility, with strong growth in 2020, a contraction in 2021, and a sharp negative swing again in 2024, suggesting that lenders increasingly relied on restructurings to manage borrower distress as repayment pressures intensified."

### A broader warning about financial stability

Across households and housing, the central bank sees a consistent pattern: credit is expanding in an environment where incomes remain weak, repayment capacity is under strain, and economic shocks are accumulating.

The concern is not confined to any single segment, but to the interaction between them — borrowing behaviour, labour market weakness and rising non-performing loans reinforcing each other.

The report ultimately points to a financial system where risks are becoming more interconnected, and where pressure in one part of the economy increasingly feeds into another.

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# Lesotho signs 'landmark' energy deal with US firm

## Thoboloko Nfšonyane

Minister of Energy Lejone Mpotjoane has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with Convalt Energy Inc founder and CEO Harry Achuthan to undertake a feasibility study at Kobong in Leribe for a renewable energy project.

It is expected that this United States solar manufacturing and renewable energy developer will generate 1,200 megawatts of electricity for the country once the project is completed.

The deal is also envisaged to transform the energy sector in Lesotho, as it is expected to bring about US\$6 billion (about M110 billion at the 4 June 2026 exchange rate) in investment, according to Mpotjoane. It further includes a proposed US\$20 billion (about M366 billion) investment for a 900-megawatt data centre.

The Principal Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Energy, Tankiso Phapano, said the company met with Lesotho in Morocco in August 2025 and was then sold on investing in the country. From that point, Phapano said, the government has been in discussions with the company. It submitted its proposal and, following scrutiny, a letter of intent was issued for it to undertake the feasibility study at Kobong (the Kobong Project).

The study will take 12 months, and may be renewed.

Convalt CEO Harry Achuthan said the project is a stepping stone for further investment in Lesotho. He said Lesotho distinguished itself as the most viable destination for investment when compared with other African countries.

Convalt Energy Inc's footprint spans different parts of the world, including the United States, India and Chad, among other countries, where it has invested in green energy, data centre construction and recycling, among other sectors.

Senior Energy Adviser to Lesotho, Dr Albert Butare, who is also Rwanda's former Minister of State



for Infrastructure, said the project will not only revolutionise Lesotho's digital economy but will also transform it into an energy hub.

He said the company will be able to pump water for hydropower generation and that it plans to install a transmission line from Polihali to Durban, relying on optical fibre infrastructure. He added that this will also be connected to the data centre, which is expected to be one of the largest in the region. The plan also includes linking undersea optical fibre cables through Durban, South Africa.

Solar panels will be used to generate power, with installations both on land and floating on the Senqu River.

Lesotho reportedly enjoys 300 days of direct

sunlight annually. Mpotjoane said this would be the country's advantage in attracting the investment, and pointed out that Lesotho is well positioned to generate clean energy.

Mpotjoane said that as the world moves rapidly with digitisation, Lesotho cannot be left behind, and that if the project is well executed, it could attract investment from major tech firms such as Google and Facebook to build data centres in the country. He said that before exporting energy to other countries, Lesotho must first meet its own demand and should not rush to export in a way that leaves the country short of power.

He highlighted that once the project kicks off, the country is likely to see significant capital inflows,

many job opportunities and investment across multiple sectors. "We need to support this project as Basotho," he said.

While the Ministry could not disclose the full contractual terms, Phapano said it would assist the company by removing any hurdles that could impede smooth operations, granting rights to undertake the feasibility study, and sharing information in the Ministry's possession where required. Upon completion of the feasibility study, Convalt Energy Inc will submit its report, which will be subjected to governance and legal processes; once requirements have been met, the government will proceed to sign an implementation agreement.

The power purchase agreement for the project has also not yet been finalised.

Meanwhile, Lesotho has previously signed problematic energy deals with other foreign firms, including a Chinese company and Fraser Solar GmbH. Those agreements have been criticised for unfavourable terms, limited local benefit and delayed delivery; observers warn the new US deal must avoid similar pitfalls if it is to deliver genuine long-term value for the country.

The government is embroiled in a protracted legal battle with Fraser Solar over a deal allegedly signed by the then Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Temeki Tšolo. The German company is suing the government for failure to honour contractual obligations, and the government has spent millions fighting the lawsuit.

Recently, the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) in Bloemfontein reversed a prior ruling by the Gauteng Division of the High Court on a €50 million (approximately M970 million) arbitration award under which the country's assets had been attached.

Last year, before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), it was disclosed that the government had saddled itself with a US\$53 million (about M970 million) debt in relation to a contested deal involving China-based Beijing Jinyuntong Technology Co. Ltd (JYT), which would finance, build and operate a 40MW solar plant with a 20MW energy storage system under a Build Operate Transfer (BOT) model, before handing the project to the government after 15 years.

Although Lesotho urgently needs more generation, it currently produces just 72MW against peak demand of 240MW. The country imports power from South Africa's Eskom at a cost of over M600 million annually.

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# Inside the August 2014 'coup attempt'

**... High Court hears chilling account of the police headquarters attack**



High Court

## Lekhetho Makhanya

The High Court this week heard details about how members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) invaded the Lesotho Mounted Police Service headquarters on the fateful night of 29–30 August 2014.

In an attempted coup, the army ambushed police officers deployed at the police headquarters in Maseru, resulting in the fatal shooting of Sub-Inspector Mokheseng Ramahlolo.

Several LDF members, including their then Army Commander, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, are now facing treason and related charges before the High Court.

Political party leaders Mothetjoa Metsing and Selibe Mochoboroane of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Movement for Economic Change (MEC), respectively, are also joined as accused in the trial.

Other LDF members accused in the trial are Captain Litekanyo Nyakane, as well as Lance Corporals Motloheloa Ntsane and Leutsoa Motsieloa.

They are facing multiple charges, including murder, attempted murder, risk of injury or death, and aggravated assault, all of which they have pleaded not guilty to.

One of the police officers who were on duty at police headquarters on the fateful night told the court on Wednesday how a heavily armed group of soldiers stormed their office and unleashed their anger on the officers on duty.

"We were made to roll while we were kicked and beaten with sticks and rifles by the soldiers," Sergeant Mokete Litulo said.

Litulo noted that while they were being assaulted, the army had inquired whether the police officers knew that their boss, Police Commissioner Khothatso Tsooana, had allegedly connived with then Prime Minister Dr Motsoahae Thomas Thabane to dismiss their commander, Lieutenant General Tlali

Kamoli, from his duties.

"They referred to him as 'this recruit'. One of the soldiers said 'this recruit is violating the constitution,'" Litulo told the court.

Litulo said he understood that the soldiers were referring to the police commissioner when they said "this recruit". The soldiers, he said, argued that Tsooana was violating the constitution.

Further expressing their frustration against the commissioner of police, Litulo said the soldiers accused Tsooana of allegedly sending police officers in grey blankets (likobo tse thokoa) to deliver letters of dismissal of the then Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Leaba Thetsane, as well as the Attorney General (AG), Tsokolo Makhetha, from their duties.

The soldiers had also inquired about the whereabouts of police spokesperson Lebona Mohloboli and other senior detective officers, including Makharilele and Chechile, the court heard.

Prime Minister Thabane had fired Kamoli as Army Commander earlier in August, citing insubordination. It was this dismissal that seemed to have triggered a major political and military crisis in Maseru, sparking an attempted coup.

Following his dismissal, Kamoli had refused to step down, and Thabane had temporarily fled to South Africa and sought refuge.

ASADC commission of inquiry, set up by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to investigate political instability in Lesotho, recommended Kamoli's ouster.

On Tuesday and Wednesday this week, the High Court heard from crown witnesses — Sub-Inspector Mahanetsa and Sergeant Litulo, both from the LMPS — how the angry soldiers tormented police officers before fatally shooting Ramahlolo.

Sgt Litulo told the court that he was stationed at the radio room, "an office within

the headquarters building responsible for handling all official telecommunications between police officials on police business." The office was equipped with telephones, fax machines and computers, he said.

On the evening of 29 August 2014, he said he was working a night shift commencing at 6:00pm until 6:00am the next morning (30 August).

He indicated that he was on duty with Lance Sergeant Thamae when Sub-Inspector Ramahlolo arrived in the office to request a telephone.

Ramahlolo was deployed at the Special Operations Unit (SOU) and during that particular night he was working a shift at the headquarters guardroom to control movement in and out of the police headquarters, Litulo explained.

The guardroom is situated close to the main gate so that police officers on duty there are able to control movement through the gate.

At the time Ramahlolo had come to request a telephone from the radio room, Litulo said they received a telephone call around the same time from Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Loke, who requested to speak to Ramahlolo urgently. Ramahlolo was already in the same office to receive the call from ACP Loke, Litulo said.

According to Litulo, ACP Loke had called the radio room to inform Ramahlolo that the army was on its way to the police headquarters.

It remains unclear how ACP Loke knew about the alleged army attack plan on the police and why he called the radio room to inform Ramahlolo specifically. It is also unclear whether it was a coincidence that Loke called at the exact moment Ramahlolo was in the room to receive the call.

Ramahlolo then, after receiving the call and communicating with Loke, rushed back towards the guardroom, "but he returned

quickly to inform us that the soldiers were already at the main gate," Litulo said.

Litulo added that Ramahlolo also indicated that soldiers were already assaulting a group of police officers deployed with him at the main gate/guardroom. Litulo was being led by prosecutor Advocate Rethabile Setlojane in his testimony.

Asked how they knew that the intruders were soldiers, Litulo said they were in army uniform, "although they all covered their faces with scarves and black hats," he said.

While they were still in the radio room, Litulo said he was with Thamae and Ramahlolo when they were joined by Mahanetsa, accompanied by two soldiers.

"He (Mahanetsa) stormed into the radio room with soldiers. With him were two soldiers armed with AK-47 rifles. They were on both his sides, left and right, and their rifle muzzles were pointed at us in the radio room. The rifle muzzles were visible from Mahanetsa's shoulders as the two soldiers drove him inside the radio room," Litulo told the court.

He said the four of them — Ramahlolo, Thamae, Mahanetsa and himself — were ordered by the soldiers to walk out of the radio room and join other police officers at the main gate. They were made to walk through the entire headquarters building until they were outside.

"Immediately when we were outside the building, we were ordered to stop walking and forced to roll on our bodies while we were being kicked and beaten at the same time," Litulo narrated.

When they neared the main gate in the same fashion, Litulo said that was when he realised there were many soldiers inside the headquarters yard, "heavily armed with AK-47 rifles but covering their faces with scarves and black hats".

They were made to join other police officers seated in a line along the walls of the guardroom.

"There was a private car that moved from the BNP Centre direction towards the main gate, but when it arrived at the gate, it was reversed speedily by its driver," he said.

As the car reversed, the soldiers swiftly approached the driver and instructed him to drive into the yard as was his original intention.

It appeared, Litulo explained, the driver was a police officer reporting for duty at the police headquarters, "but he reversed abruptly from the gate upon realising the situation in the yard. He reversed speedily for fear of his life," Litulo said.

At this time, Litulo estimated it was around 4:00am, "and there were already passersby visible from outside the yard."

The soldiers were asking the police officers held hostage to identify almost everyone who was passing by, Litulo said.

The intention of the soldiers was to arrest every police officer who happened to be around the headquarters at that moment, he explained.

The police officer who attempted to reverse his car from the gate in an effort to flee for his life was later identified by Litulo as Police Constable Nkhabu. Nkhabu, too, was ordered by the soldiers to alight from his car and join other police officers in the yard.

For his part, Mahanetsa testified about the fatal shooting of Ramahlolo in the radio room. He detailed how Ramahlolo was fatally shot by the soldiers, who then dragged his body from the radio room to the main gate.

Litulo said he later noticed Ramahlolo's lifeless body at the main gate before he, Nkhabu and Thamae were instructed to lift the body into a car boot.

# Press Release

For immediate release



## Letshego Lesotho becomes the first microfinance institution to offer savings and investment products.

**Maseru, Lesotho – 3 June 2026:** Letshego Financial Services Lesotho has launched Savings and Investment products, becoming the first microfinance institution in Lesotho to offer customers the opportunity to save and invest alongside accessing credit. This milestone marks an important step in the organisation's evolution from a credit provider to a broader financial services partner.

The launch reflects Letshego's commitment to deepening financial inclusion and empowering Basotho to not only access credit, but also save, grow and secure their financial futures.

The newly introduced products are designed to meet the diverse needs of individuals, communities and businesses, offering accessible, flexible, and affordable options that encourage a culture of savings and long-term financial resilience. Customers will now be able to build savings, earn competitive returns, and confidently plan for key life goals such as education, home ownership, and retirement.

The offering includes LetsGo SaveSmart, LetsGo Flex and LetsGo Fixed designed for individuals and businesses seeking secure and accessible ways to build savings and grow wealth over time. These offer minimum deposits from M50.00 and a minimum term of 3 months

"Today represents a transformative step in our journey to be more than a lender," said Selloane Tsike, Chief Executive of Letshego Financial Services Lesotho. "By introducing savings and investment solutions, we are enabling our customers to take control of their financial well-being—today and into the future. We believe that true financial inclusion is achieved when people have the tools to both access and grow their money. For many Basotho, financial services have traditionally focused on borrowing. Today's launch gives customers the opportunity to build assets, plan for future goals and strengthen their financial resilience through saving and investing."

As a trusted provider of inclusive financial solutions across Africa, Letshego has built a strong reputation for delivering customer-centric, responsible financial services. The introduction of savings and investment products in Lesotho reflects the organization's broader strategy to evolve into a holistic financial partner for individuals, and micro-entrepreneurs.

### Key features of the new offering include:

- Low barrier to entry, ensuring accessibility for underserved segments
- Flexible savings plans tailored to customer needs
- Secure and regulated investment options
- Digital and branch-based access for convenience and reach
- Competitive rates to provide higher returns on investments

This milestone aligns with national priorities to enhance financial literacy, promote savings culture, and strengthen economic participation among citizens.

Letshego Financial Services invites existing and new customers to visit their nearest branch or digital platforms to learn more about the new savings and investment solutions and begin their journey towards sustainable financial growth.

### Notes for the Editors:

#### About Letshego Financial Services Lesotho

Letshego in Lesotho

Letshego Lesotho started its operations in September 2012 as a credit-only licensed financial service provider. The company has positioned itself as an inclusive financial solutions partner for the people of Lesotho. Through continuous customer experience improvements, Letshego Lesotho's customer base has grown to over 7,500 customers. Customer access points are well distributed across the country in Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Mafeteng, Maseru, and Mohale's Hoek, expanded further by Letshego's digitisation of further access channels such as Digital Mall, WhatsApp, and USSD. Letshego Lesotho continues its focus and progress in diversifying its customer segments into non-government sectors, boosted by the Group's regional rollout of world-class digitised channels and systems to support customer access, convenience, and product diversification.

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# Khetheng's mysterious murder trial postponed

**Lekhethe Makhanya**

A trial for the murder of Police Constable (PC) Mokalekale Khetheng of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) has been postponed to June 30 after one of the defence lawyers, Advocate (KC), was reported ill and therefore absent from court on Tuesday.

Standing in for Advocate Mda was Advocate P. Molise, who informed the court of the former's ill health.

Advocate Molise said he had further been instructed by Advocate Mda to inform the court that he had not been able to finalise drafting

his heads of argument due to his illness. Consequently, Molise could not present them before Justice 'Maliepollo Makhetha when the judge requested them.

The case was therefore postponed to June 30, and the defence was instructed by the court to finalise and submit its heads of argument by June 22, ahead of the resumption of the matter for hearing on June 30.

The accused persons in the trial are Inspector Haleokoe Taasoana, Senior Inspector Mabile Matona, retired Inspector Mothibeli Mofolo



*Advocate Mda*

and retired Superintendent Thabo Tsukulu, all of whom were PC Khetheng's colleagues in the LMPS.

They are standing trial for allegedly murdering him on March 26, 2016.

Khetheng was alleged to have burned down the Mokhotlong District Police Commander's house and Pitso House in Leribe in 2016.

He was arrested on allegations of arson the same year but was never seen alive again. The police later claimed he had escaped from custody under sketchy circumstances.

His disappearance sparked national outrage and, in August 2017, his remains were exhumed from Lepereng Cemetery in Maseru, confirming that he had been secretly buried.

The four accused officers were initially charged alongside former Police Commissioner Molahlehi Letsoepa, who reportedly fled the country.

They were also charged together with the current Minister of Labour and Employment, Tšeliso Mokhosi, but the charges were eventually dropped against him

# World Bank backs Lesotho electrification push

*... As M900m project targets 147,000 people*



**Thoboloko Nšonyane**

The World Bank Group has approved a US\$50-million (approximately M900-million) concessional credit for Lesotho to expand electricity access to nearly 147,000 people and businesses under a new clean energy programme aimed at closing persistent gaps in rural electrification.

The financing, channelled through the International Development Association (IDA), will support the Accelerating Sustainable and Clean Energy Access Transformation in Lesotho (ASCENT-Lesotho) project, a programme that seeks to accelerate grid expansion and deploy off-grid solar systems in hard-to-reach areas.

In a statement, the World Bank said the initiative is designed to "bring reliable, affordable electricity to nearly 147,000 residents and businesses, reduce energy poverty, and create the conditions for stronger household incomes and private sector growth".

Despite progress over the past two decades, Lesotho's electricity access rate remains uneven. National coverage has risen from about seven percent in 2004 to 59 percent in 2024, but the pace of new connections, estimated at roughly 4,000 per year, remains far below what is required to achieve universal access by 2030.

That target would require more than 45,000 new connections annually, according to the World Bank, with rural areas still significantly behind urban centres.

The gap is particularly stark in mountainous and remote regions, where only 43 percent of households have electricity compared with 84 percent in urban areas. Many families continue to rely on kerosene, candles and biomass for lighting and cooking.

ASCENT-Lesotho is expected to take a dual approach: expanding grid infrastructure in peri-urban, rural and highland areas, while deploying standalone solar systems for communities unlikely to be reached by the national

grid in the short term.

The programme also includes technical assistance to support utility reform, strengthen national electrification planning, and promote clean cooking solutions.

Off-grid solar, officials say, will play a central role in extending access to remote settlements where grid extension is considered costly and technically difficult.

Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, said expanding access to electricity is central to the country's development trajectory.

"Expanding access to reliable and sustainable electricity is critical to reducing energy poverty, improving household productivity, supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises growth, and strengthening essential social services," Matlanyane said. "Expanding energy access contributes to the country's broader development agenda."

The programme is anchored in Lesotho's National Energy Compact under the Mission

300 initiative, a joint World Bank Group and African Development Bank effort targeting electricity access for 300 million people across Eastern and Southern Africa by 2030.

According to the World Bank, the compact provides a roadmap for regulatory, institutional and financial reforms needed to sustain long-term energy access expansion, with ASCENT-Lesotho serving as a key implementation vehicle.

"Lesotho possesses abundant renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and hydropower, which have the potential to surpass Lesotho's energy needs," said Dinara Djoldosheva, World Bank Country Representative for Lesotho.

"Harnessing these resources into transformational energy sources will ensure that every Lesotho has access to power. This is a catalyst for job creation and private sector growth," she said.

Djoldosheva also warned that energy poverty has broader social costs. "The human cost of inadequate energy access falls disproportionately on women and girls, and expanding electricity access will be an impactful intervention to reduce the energy burden in many households across Lesotho," she said.

Beyond infrastructure investment, the programme includes reforms aimed at strengthening sector governance, improving energy security, narrowing gender gaps in access and boosting investor confidence in the energy market.

While the World Bank frames the intervention as a pathway to inclusive growth, Lesotho's energy sector continues to face structural constraints, including limited generation capacity and heavy reliance on electricity imports. These raise questions about the pace at which universal access can realistically be achieved.

For now, ASCENT-Lesotho represents one of the country's largest externally supported electrification pushes, but its success will depend on implementation capacity, institutional reform and whether grid expansion and off-grid solutions can be scaled fast enough to meet demand in remote areas.



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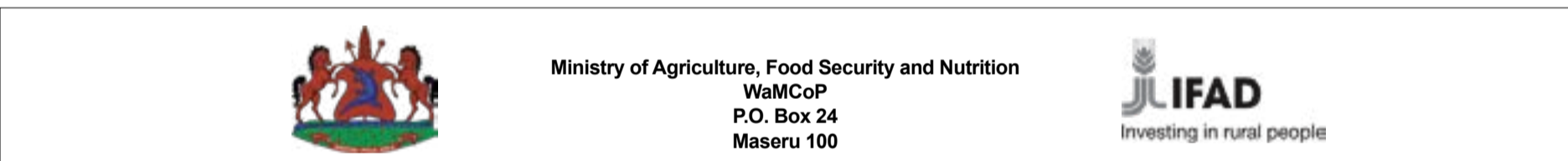
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<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>SATURDAY</b>
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>FARMERS</b>	<b>GALA</b>
EXHIBITIONS & COMPETITIONS	AWARD CEREMONY	DINNER (BLACK TIE)

PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS

**11 & 12 SEPTEMBER 2026**



**Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition**  
**WaMCoP**  
**P.O. Box 24**  
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**IFAD**  
 Investing in rural people

**General Procurement Notice**

**Government of:** Lesotho  
**Project/procuring entity:** Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project  
**GPN version:** 2026.2  
**GPN publication date:** May 11, 2026

The Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project and intends to apply part of the financing to payments for contracts for goods, works and services. The procurement program for the 04/2026 - 03/2027-year period will include the following:

Procurements for 04/2026 - 03/2027	
Estimated value - 3,883,082.63 EUR / 75,981,500.00 LSL / 4,479,161.46 USD	
<b>Procurement of Goods, to include:</b>	
1)	Promotional Material
2)	Communication material
3)	Generator and Extension Cord
4)	Mobile Kraals
5)	Feeders and Drinkers
6)	Aprons and Overalls
7)	Additional AI Equipment
8)	Liquid Nitrogen Plan
9)	Semen for AI Program
10)	Fodder seeds
11)	Silage Making Equipment
12)	Concentrates
13)	IEC Material
14)	Animal ear tags
15)	Promotional Attire
16)	Protective clothing for Auctioneering team and CAHWs
17)	Vet Kits and drugs
18)	Video Editing softwares
19)	Corporate Identity Materials
20)	Meeting Amplifier

21)	Tender Box and Trolley
22)	Zippel
23)	Protective Clothing for PCU
24)	Laptops
25)	ICT Equipment
<b>Procurement of Consulting Services, to include:</b>	
1)	Certification of Wool and Mohair Consultancy
2)	SECAP Risk Management Consultancy
3)	EIA Consultancy
4)	Asset Valuation Consultancy
5)	AI Service Provider
6)	Fodder Demo and Silage Making Consultant
7)	Productive Alliance Consultancy
8)	Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Consultancy
9)	MIS and Website Development
10)	Corporate Identity
11)	Valuation of Physical Assets
<b>Procurement of Works, to include:</b>	
1)	Rehabilitation of Bucks and Does Structures
2)	Construction of the NDL
3)	Parkhome

Contracts for goods, works and services will be implemented according to the principles, rules and procedures set out in the current versions of the IFAD Project Procurement Guidelines and IFAD Procurement Handbook. Specific procurement notices for contracts to be tendered under the competitive bidding procedures will be announced as they become available on selected portals, in local newspapers, and other media outlets as appropriate.

Interested eligible bidders and consultants who wish to be included on the mailing list to receive a copy of advertisements, or those requiring additional information, should send an email to the Moroesi Lejota Thakong ([procurement@wamcop.org.ls](mailto:procurement@wamcop.org.ls)) using the subject line "GPN 2026.2 for Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project" and indicating which of the procurement items they are interested in. **Valid trading licenses must be attached.**

This GPN is based on the 1st edition of standard procurement document for the general procurement notice issued by IFAD on [www.ifad.org/project-procurement](http://www.ifad.org/project-procurement) for use in projects financed by IFAD. IFAD does not guarantee the completeness, accuracy or translation, if applicable, or any other aspect in connection with the content of this document.



## More than 40% of textile jobs wiped out by US tariffs

More than 40 percent of jobs in Lesotho's textile sector were lost in 2025 as US tariffs and weak global demand battered the country's largest private-sector employer, exposing deep structural weaknesses in the economy and increasing risks to the banking sector.

### Kananelo Boloetse

The textile industry was never supposed to be Lesotho's future. It was always a stopgap – a way to employ thousands of mostly women workers while the country built something more sustainable.

Three decades later, the stopgap has become a crutch. And now that crutch has snapped.

According to the Central Bank of Lesotho's 2025 Financial Stability Report, US tariffs imposed on trading partners triggered a chain reaction.

The report argues that the country's business sector remained under severe pressure throughout 2025 and that the effects are increasingly being felt beyond factories and company balance sheets.

"The business sector remained fragile, largely due to heightened external policy uncertainty and persistently weak global demand," the report says.

For Lesotho, where the textile industry remains a major source of employment and export earnings, the consequences have been severe.

The central bank says private-sector firms "faced significant headwinds, particularly in the first half of 2025, following the imposition of tariffs by the U.S. administration on its trading partners."

Those measures had a direct impact on the country's export-oriented manufacturing sector.

"These measures dampened external demand, resulting in a decline in export revenues and the loss of more than 40 percent of jobs in the sector."

The finding is one of the clearest indicators yet of the economic damage inflicted on Lesotho's textile industry by global trade disruptions and slowing demand in key export markets.

### The danger of relying on one market

Beyond the immediate job losses, the report identifies a deeper structural problem: Lesotho's dependence on a narrow range of export markets.

"This highlights the lack of market diversification, which continues to expose the sector to external shocks, particularly those originating from the U.S. market."

That observation goes to the heart of a long-standing concern among economists. For decades, Le-

sotho's textile industry has relied heavily on preferential access to the American market. While that relationship has generated employment and export earnings, it has also left the sector vulnerable to policy shifts beyond the country's control.

The central bank suggests that vulnerability is now being exposed.

### From factory floor to bank balance sheet

The report's most significant contribution is its attempt to connect economic weakness in the real economy with emerging risks in the financial sector.

According to the CBL, the slowdown is no longer simply a business problem.

"The contraction in economic activity not only weakened business performance but also had indirect implications for the banking sector, as reduced revenues among textile firms constrained their debt-servicing capacity and heightened credit risk."

In simple terms, companies earning less money become less able to repay loans.

As firms struggle, banks become more exposed.

That risk appears to be materialising across several sectors simultaneously.

The report says the business sector "remained under significant strain in 2025, as renewed credit risks across major industries highlighted rising vulnerabilities."

After several years of relative stability, the quality of business loans has deteriorated sharply.

"After a period of relative moderation between 2022 and 2024, NPL ratios increase markedly in 2025, driven by a broad-based deterioration across wholesale and retail trade, construction, manufacturing, and mining and quarrying."

The increase in non-performing loans suggests that more businesses are struggling to meet their repayment obligations.

### A problem bigger than textiles

While textiles are at the centre of the current crisis, the report makes clear that stress is spreading across the wider economy.

"The sharp increase in wholesale and retail trade NPLs reflects subdued domestic consumption, which weakened business revenues and strained

repayment capacity."

At the same time, the mining sector remains under pressure from falling diamond prices, while manufacturers continue to battle uncertainty in global markets.

"The mining sector continues to face pressure from declining diamond prices, while manufacturing remains constrained by challenges in the textile industry amid heightened global policy uncertainty, all of which have contributed to rising loan distress." The result is a broad-based weakening of business conditions.

"This broad-based deterioration across sectors suggests that vulnerabilities are becoming more widespread within the business environment."

### Credit remains concentrated in a handful of sectors

The report also raises concerns about the structure of business lending itself.

Demand for business loans remains concentrated in a relatively small number of industries, particularly wholesale and retail trade, construction, real estate and business services.

By contrast, productive sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and mining account for a much smaller share of borrowing.

According to the central bank, this reflects "weak profitability, high operating costs, and heightened uncertainty surrounding export markets and input prices."

Business borrowing peaked at around 28 percent of total loans in 2023 before declining to approximately 26 percent during 2024 and 2025.

The moderation, the report suggests, may indicate weakening business confidence and reduced appetite for expansion.

"The persistent concentration of credit demand in a narrow set of sectors underscores the need for continued monitoring of sectoral exposures to safeguard financial stability and mitigate vulnerabilities arising from concentrated lending patterns."

### The LHWP-II effect

Another trend identified by the central bank is a resurgence in corporate borrowing linked to major



The Governor of CBL, Dr. Maluke Letete

infrastructure spending.

The report notes that the credit-to-GDP gap, a commonly used indicator of financial stability risk, turned positive in 2023 and again in 2025 after years of remaining below trend.

The increase was "partly driven by financing needs for infrastructure projects such as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II (LHWP-II)."

While infrastructure investment can stimulate economic activity, the central bank warns that it can also create risks if expected cash flows fail to materialise.

"The widening credit gap underscores emerging financial stability risks, including potential loan impairments if project cash flows are delayed or economic conditions weaken."

In that scenario, banks could face rising losses, adding further pressure to a financial system already dealing with deteriorating credit quality in several sectors.

### A warning about economic resilience

Taken together, the report paints a picture of an economy facing simultaneous pressures from external trade shocks, weak consumer demand, declining export performance and rising business distress.

The loss of more than 40 percent of textile jobs is perhaps the most visible symptom of that strain.

But the central bank's broader warning is that what begins as an employment and export crisis can quickly become a banking-sector problem if struggling businesses are unable to meet their debt obligations.

The report suggests that the immediate challenge is not only supporting affected industries but addressing deeper structural vulnerabilities, particularly Lesotho's dependence on a narrow range of export markets and sectors.

## FNB Lesotho and Visa launch campaign tied to World Cup

### Seabata Mahao

First National Bank (FNB) Lesotho, in partnership with Visa, has rolled out a customer rewards campaign that links everyday card usage to the excitement of the FIFA World Cup 2026™.

The 'Swipe, Tap and Win' promotion, running from 30 April to 31 July 2026, incentivises customers to use their FNB Visa cards for daily transactions, offering them chances to win attractive prizes while accelerating the shift toward digital payments.

The campaign comes as the bank seeks to deepen customer engagement and promote secure, cashless banking solutions in the build-up to the global football tournament, co-hosted by the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

FNB Lesotho Chief Executive Officer Delekazi

Mokebe described the initiative as a strategic move to enhance customer value and convenience.

"Our partnership with Visa demonstrates our commitment to making everyday banking simpler, safer, and more rewarding," Mokebe said. "As excitement builds for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, we are giving our customers the opportunity to win incredible prizes simply by choosing how they make payments."

She added that the campaign supports the bank's broader goal of empowering Basotho with modern financial tools that improve efficiency and accessibility.

Customers automatically enter prize draws by using their FNB Visa cards during the campaign period. Weekly draws, starting 1 June 2026, will offer petrol vouchers, paraffin vouchers, and cash prizes. Month-

ly draws will feature significantly larger rewards, including a three-month salary payout, grocery vouchers, and substantial cash amounts.

FNB Lesotho Head of Retail, Nthabeleng Khoali, emphasised the customer-centric design of the promotion.

"This competition is designed with our customers at heart," Khoali said. "We want to encourage effortless and secure payments while delivering real value through weekly and monthly rewards. Whether buying groceries, fuelling up, or making regular purchases, using an FNB Visa card could turn everyday spending into life-changing prizes."

The campaign is expected to play a meaningful role in driving digital payment adoption across Le-

sotho, where banks continue to push for reduced cash dependency in favour of safer and more convenient transaction methods. It also reinforces FNB Lesotho's position as an innovative player in the local market through strategic partnerships.

Such collaborations between financial institutions and global payment networks are increasingly important for enhancing customer loyalty and supporting national financial inclusion objectives.

FNB Lesotho is encouraging both individual and business customers to increase their card usage during the campaign period to maximise their chances of winning while benefiting from secure digital banking services.

### ESTATE NOTICE

Notice in terms of section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024;

#### ESTATE LATE RAMAROU JOHN MAAMA E434/2026

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the administrator of the deceased's estate within thirty (30) days of this publication.

The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder;

ADDRESS: MASIANOKENG MASERU 100 CELL NO. (+266) 58844463

NAME: MAPHILICIA MAAMA ADMINISTRATOR

### ESTATE NOTICE

#### LATE ZIPHO FELIX RAMOLOKO B71/24

Notice is hereby given in terms of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 2024. The first and final distribution account in the above mentioned estate shall lie open for inspection in the offices of the Master of the High Court for three (3) weeks from the date of publication of this notice. The account can be inspected on working days 8:00 am till 4:30 pm.

The offices of the Master of the High Court are situated at the following address;

ADDRESS BEHIND PASSPORT OFFICE BUILDING OPPOSITE POST OFFICE BOTHA-BOTHE 400

### NOTICE OF LOST LEASE

NOTICE is hereby issued that the Executor of the late MASECHABA MARY LITABE & ZECHARIAH LITABE intend to apply for issuance of certified copy of registered Lease to immovable property registered under NO.13282-405 in favor of MASECHABA MARY LITABE & ZACHARIAH LITABE in respect of every right or interest on and to the building (s) and other developments express or implied in certain PLOT NO.13282-405 situated at MAPELENG, MASERU URBAN AREA in the DISTRICT of MASERU.

All persons having objection to the issue of the said copy are requested to lodge such in writing to the Land Registrar within three weeks from the last publication of the notice.

APPLICANT'S NAME & ADDRESS THEOLO ISHMAEL MAKHELE (EXECUTOR) RASEKOAI, RAMPAI & LEBAKENG ATTORNEYS HOPLANG BUILDING ROOM 1 & 6

P.O.BOX 1899 MASERU ADDRESSES LAND REGISTRAR

LAND ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY LEROTHOLI ROAD P.O.BOX 11856 MASERU 100

# Lesotho loses more than half its diamond export earnings

**A prolonged collapse in global diamond prices is no longer just a mining story. According to the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL), it has become a financial stability concern with implications for government finances, banks, businesses and households across the country. Lesotho's diamond export revenues collapsed by 55.8 percent in just three years, falling to M2.3 billion by 2025.**

## Kananelo Boloetse

The warning appears in the CBL's latest Financial Stability Report, which paints a sobering picture of an economy heavily exposed to a commodity whose fortunes are increasingly being shaped by changing consumer preferences, laboratory-grown alternatives and weak global demand.

The report notes that diamonds remain central to Lesotho's economy, accounting for around eight percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and contributing significantly to exports, government revenue and employment.

However, the global market has shifted dramatically since the post-Covid recovery period.

"Global diamond prices significantly declined between 2023 and 2025, reflecting weakening demand and structural changes in the global diamond industry," the CBL says.

Demand has weakened in major consumer markets such as the United States, China and India, while laboratory-grown diamonds (LGDs) have emerged as a disruptive force.

According to the report, laboratory-grown diamonds cost "about 73 percent less than natural diamonds" and have rapidly gained market acceptance.

"The sale of LGD jewellery increased from 5.2 percent in 2019 to 41.1 percent in 2025," the report states.

For natural diamond producers such as Lesotho, the implications have been severe.

### Mines under pressure

The CBL says deteriorating market conditions have forced difficult decisions across Lesotho's mining sector.

"Liqhobong and Mothae mines have halted operations and are at risk of permanent closures, while Letšeng and Kao mines are at risk of scaling back production and revised expenditure plans in response to weaker global market conditions."

The consequences are already visible in the country's export performance.



The report records "a sharp drop in diamond export revenues that fell by 55.8 percent to M2.3 billion between 2022 and 2025."

At the same time, the mining sector contracted by five percent during the 2024/25 financial year.

The CBL observes that even where production volumes temporarily improved, low prices erased the gains.

"Although there is a brief recovery in carats sold around 2024, this did not translate into improved financial performance, as prices remained relatively low."

The central bank adds that "most mining companies experienced a plunge in revenues, highlighting that higher volumes alone were insufficient to offset the impact of depressed prices."

### Fiscal pain reaches government coffers

One of the most significant findings in the report is the extent to which the diamond downturn is affecting government finances.

During the diamond boom of 2021 and 2022, Lesotho earned approximately M4.8 billion annually from diamond exports, equivalent to about 13 percent of GDP.

By 2025, however, export earnings had fallen to M2.3 billion, representing only 5.5 percent of GDP.

The impact on state revenue has been equally dramatic.

The report says government royalties from mining "fell sharply by 170 percent to M99 million between 2019 and 2025."

While the percentage figure may warrant further clarification because declines cannot mathematically exceed 100 percent when measured from a starting point, the broader message from the report is clear that government income from mining has deteriorated significantly.

The CBL warns that reduced revenues could have knock-on effects throughout the economy.

"This weakened fiscal position could delay gov-

ernment repayments to suppliers and contractors, creating liquidity strains in other sectors of the economy."

Those delays, in turn, could weaken businesses' cash flows and increase credit risks across the financial system.

### Why banks should be worried

The report's most important warning is arguably not about mining itself, but about the financial sector.

The CBL identifies what economists call a transmission mechanism, the process through which problems in one sector spread into others.

"The financial strain within the mining sector is increasingly evident in credit performance," the report says.

Since 2019, lending to the mining sector has fallen by approximately 52 percent to only M200 million.

At the centre of the concern is Letšeng Diamond Mine, one of Lesotho's flagship mining operations.

According to the report, Letšeng's debt-servicing capacity has deteriorated significantly.

"Over the same period, Lesotho's largest mine, Letšeng Diamond Mine, has experienced a marked deterioration in debt-servicing capacity, with its debt-to-EBITDA ratio rising from below 1x to around 5x, largely driven by a sharp decline in earnings rather than an increase in debt."

The mine's challenges have already translated into employment losses.

"This weak performance of the mine has also resulted in over 200 job losses, amplifying economic stress beyond the mining sector."

The central bank links these job losses directly to broader economic pressures.

"These layoffs have reduced household incomes, leading to lower consumption and generating spillover effects in linked sectors such as retail."

For commercial banks, this creates a familiar problem: borrowers with shrinking incomes become less able to repay loans.

"As displaced workers and struggling businesses face reduced cash flows, their ability to service loans weakens, placing pressure on banks' asset quality and profitability."

The CBL warns that these developments "continue to elevate credit risk, constrain credit extension and dampen overall economic activity."

### A structural challenge, not a temporary downturn

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the report is its recognition that the challenges facing natural diamonds may not be cyclical alone.

The rise of laboratory-grown diamonds represents a structural shift in consumer behaviour.

Consumers, particularly younger buyers, are increasingly attracted to cheaper alternatives and are placing greater emphasis on environmental, social and governance considerations.

The report notes that concerns about the ESG impact of natural diamond mining have become one of the factors contributing to sustained pressure on prices.

This raises a difficult question for Lesotho: what happens if global demand for natural diamonds never returns to previous levels?

The CBL appears to acknowledge that possibility.

"The outlook for global diamond prices remains uncertain and growth in the market will largely depend on how players strategically position themselves to adapt to this evolving industry."

### The central bank's prescription

The report suggests that survival will require adaptation rather than reliance on a market rebound.

It argues that natural diamond producers should focus on product differentiation, rarity and stronger ESG standards.

"To remain competitive, it is important for natural diamond producers to emphasize product differentiation through rarity, strengthen ESG standards, and build trust through traceability and responsible sourcing."

More significantly, the CBL points to diversification as an increasingly urgent necessity.

"The need for diversification into LGDs or recycled diamonds to capture shifting consumer demand has become increasingly urgent."

It also suggests exploring industrial and technological uses for diamonds beyond jewellery.

"Additionally, exploring alternative applications of diamonds in high-tech industries offers an opportunity to diversify revenue streams and reduce reliance on traditional jewellery markets."

### More than a mining problem

The central bank's analysis amounts to a warning that the diamond downturn should no longer be viewed solely as a challenge for mining companies.

The report makes clear that falling diamond prices now have implications for fiscal sustainability, employment, household incomes, business liquidity and banking sector stability.

## Letshego Lesotho launches savings and investment products

### ... Expands beyond lending



key financial goals such as funding education, home ownership, and retirement planning. Key features include flexible savings options, secure regulated investments, digital and branch accessibility, and attractive interest rates.

Tsike noted that financial services in Lesotho have historically been dominated by borrowing, leaving many citizens with limited avenues to build assets or financial resilience. "Today's launch gives customers the opportunity to build assets, plan for future goals and strengthen their financial resilience through saving and investing," she added.

The expansion aligns with national priorities to promote financial literacy, encourage domestic savings, and broaden economic participation. Financial

sector analysts view the development as timely, given the country's push to reduce reliance on credit and strengthen household balance sheets.

By venturing into savings and investments, Letshego is capitalising on an underserved segment of the market that has traditionally been overlooked by commercial banks. The move forms part of the group's wider African strategy to evolve from a micro-lender into a comprehensive financial services provider for individuals and micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Industry observers believe this initiative could stimulate greater competition in Lesotho's financial services landscape and encourage other players to expand their product offerings beyond lending.

## Seabata Mahao and Fusi Hlaoli

Letshego Financial Services Lesotho has become the first microfinance institution in the country to introduce savings and investment products, marking a significant shift from its traditional credit-focused model to a full-service financial provider.

The launch, announced this week, positions Letshego as a pioneer in deepening financial inclusion in Lesotho by offering Basotho customers opportunities not only to borrow but also to save and grow their wealth.

Speaking at the product launch, Letshego Financial Services Lesotho Chief Executive Selloane Tsike described the move as a strategic milestone for the institution and its clients.

"Today represents a transformative step in our journey to be more than a lender," Tsike said. "By introducing savings and investment solutions, we are enabling our customers to take control of their financial well-being today and into the future. True financial inclusion is achieved when people have the tools to both access and grow their money."

The new product suite, LetsGo SaveSmart, LetsGo Flex, and LetsGo Fixed, targets individuals, communities, and small businesses. The products feature a low entry barrier with a minimum deposit of just M50 and investment terms starting from three months, making them accessible to low-income earners and the unbanked population.

According to the company, the products are designed to foster a savings culture while delivering competitive returns. They aim to support



### Ntsoaki Motaung

Imagine walking through Maseru and handing over M900 (about \$50) to every man, woman, and child you meet. That is the hidden annual economic cost gender-based violence (GBV) imposes on every citizen in Lesotho, according to data presented by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

At a recent media capacity-building workshop, Miriam Engeler, GBV Analyst at UNFPA, highlighted that GBV is not only a serious human rights and public health issue but also a major economic burden. It drains an estimated 5.5 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"Each citizen could be 50 USD richer if we did not have GBV in the country," Engeler explained, translating complex economic findings into everyday terms.

The figures originate from a comprehensive baseline study (primarily the 2020 Commonwealth Secretariat report on the economic cost of violence against women and girls). Experts note that the true cost is likely higher today because many cases still go unreported due to fear, stigma, and shame.

The economic impact of gender-based violence manifests in three major ways. Every reported case diverts valuable public resources toward police investigations by the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), hospital treatment, court proceedings, and the imprisonment of perpetrators.

"Those doctors use that time to care for her instead of others," Engeler said. "Any service rendered incurs a cost to society."

Survivors also suffer significant loss of productivity. When fleeing abusive partners, women frequently lose their homes, leave belongings behind, or are forced to pull their children out of school. Many are unable to work for extended periods due to injury or trauma. "When citizens buy less, the broader economy shrinks," Engeler explained.

Furthermore, a large portion of the country's workforce operates below full capacity, which reduces overall economic output and slows national growth.

Lesotho's statistics paint a particularly grim picture. According to the widely cited Gender

# GBV costs every Mosotho M900 a Year, UNFPA reveals

## LESOTHO GBV AT A GLANCE

- **5.5% of GDP – Nationwide economic cost of GBV**
- **M900 (\$50) per citizen – Annual loss per Mosotho**
- **86–87% of women – Have experienced GBV in their lifetime**



Links study, nearly 86 to 87 percent of women and girls in the country have experienced some form of gender-based violence in their lifetime. Maseru District records the highest number of reported GBV cases, while Mokhotlong and Mafeteng districts suffer the highest rates of

murders linked to gender-based violence.

Police data further shows that the vast majority of this violence occurs in the home, perpetrated by intimate partners or family members rather than strangers.

Breaking the silence for all victims

While the economic study focuses primarily on violence against women and girls, officials stress that men and boys also suffer abuse, often in silence due to cultural expectations of masculinity.

Mrs 'Mapuleng Secheche, Acting Director General at the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, urged male survivors to speak out: "Recent trends indicate that men are increasingly becoming victims of sexual and physical abuse, but these cases largely go unreported."

She emphasised the media's role in educating communities and reducing stigma for both genders.

UNFPA Representative Mr John Kennedy Mosoti added that responsible reporting can shift mindsets from individual shame to collective accountability, encouraging survivors to seek help from authorities.

A call to action

As the workshop ended, participants called for better access to up-to-date data and stronger collaboration between media, government, and communities. Addressing Lesotho's culture of violence is not only a moral imperative but also essential for the country's economic recovery and development.

### Ntsoaki Motaung

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged African governments to act urgently against evolving tactics by the tobacco industry, which it says is deliberately targeting children and young people with new nicotine products.

In a message for World No Tobacco Day 2026, Dr Mohamed Yakub Janabi, WHO Regional Director for Africa, warned that nicotine addiction is not accidental but a calculated business strategy designed to hook users from a young age for lifelong profits.

This year's theme, "Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction," focuses on exposing how the industry designs, flavours, packages, and markets its products to attract new users.

Africa has made significant progress over the past two decades in reducing tobacco use through strong legislation, smoke-free public spaces, and higher taxes. As a result, the continent still has some of the lowest smoking rates globally. However, these gains are now at risk.

Dr Janabi noted that while the industry's goal remains recruiting new users, its methods have become more sophisticated. Manufacturers add sugars, fruit flavours, menthol, and cooling agents to mask nicotine's harsh-

## WHO warns of engineered nicotine products targeting youth

ness, making products easier to use and more appealing to beginners. Many modern devices also allow users to unknowingly increase nicotine strength and exposure to harmful substances.

"Young people are the primary targets of these tactics. Because the teenage brain is still developing, it adapts very quickly to nicotine. Even small amounts of exposure can cause strong dependence, harm brain development, and lead to a lifetime of addiction," he said.

He added that statistics show nine out of ten adults who smoke daily began before the age of 18. With over 60 percent of Africa's population under 25, the potential long-term impact is particularly severe.

The WHO stresses there is no safe level of tobacco or nicotine use. Products such as e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and nicotine pouches all carry serious health risks. Health

officials also debunked the myth that nicotine relieves stress. It actually creates dependency, and the "relaxation" felt is merely relief from withdrawal.

Nicotine pouches, in particular, pose an acute poisoning danger to young children who may swallow them accidentally.

While quitting brings rapid health benefits, such as improved lung function within weeks and a halved risk of heart disease within a year, prevention remains the most effective strategy.

Governments are being called upon to close legal loopholes by banning flavours and additives that appeal to minors, enforcing stricter packaging rules, and reducing nicotine levels to non-addictive concentrations. Dr Janabi strongly warned against allowing tobacco industry interference in public health policy: "Companies that profit from addiction should

have no seat at the table where solutions are decided."

Lesotho stands out as one of Africa's countries with the highest tobacco use rates. According to WHO 2024 global tobacco prevalence estimates, 49.4 percent of Basotho men aged 15 and above use tobacco, far above the African regional average of 16.6 percent.

When both sexes are combined, Lesotho's age-standardised prevalence rate is 28 percent, nearly three times the African average of 9.5 percent, making it the highest on the continent.

Among women, the rate stands at 6.6 percent, matching the global female average but well above Africa's 2.5 percent average, signalling a concerning rise in tobacco use among Basotho women.

In absolute numbers, Lesotho has approximately 391,000 tobacco users (343,000 men and 47,000 women), including around 323,000 active smokers. Despite its small population of just over 2.1 million, the country's per capita tobacco use is among the highest in Africa.

# 'Socio-economic pressures fuel Lesotho's alarmingly high suicide rates'

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

Widespread unemployment, the rapid proliferation of gambling outlets, and mounting personal debt are driving a severe mental health crisis in Lesotho, health officials have warned.

These daily struggles point to a broader failure to tackle the country's underlying socio-economic challenges, resulting in hundreds of suicides each year.

Dr Thabo Mokhothu, Acting Director of Mental Health, stressed that the crisis reaches far beyond hospital clinics. Speaking at a stakeholder meeting on Tuesday, he said the psychological distress seen in health facilities mirrors the wider challenges facing the nation.

These challenges include unemployment, gambling branches everywhere, and debts," Dr Mokhothu explained. "They reflect that, as a country, we have problems addressing our socio-economic determinants. We are not tackling people's challenges at the root. So even when they present as mental health issues, they affect the country at large."

The meeting, supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), aimed to validate



Stakeholders and health officials during the meeting supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), to address data collection gaps and discuss urgent prevention strategies for Lesotho's high suicide rates.

global statistics that rank Lesotho with the world's highest suicide rate. WHO data shows 87.5 suicides per 100,000 people annually, with some sources citing 82.7. This is more

than double the rate of the next highest country, Guyana, and nearly ten times the global average of about 9 per 100,000.

"Most countries have a rate of about 9 per 100,000, which shows they have made progress in suicide prevention," Dr Mokhothu noted.

He pointed out that Lesotho has long depended on external data without sufficient local studies to verify the figures, underscoring the urgent need for domestic research.

To address this, the mental health programme convened diverse stakeholders to identify gaps in data collection. "Today we have brought together different stakeholders to discuss the gaps that exist in finding data and the challenges that hinder us from getting accurate information," he said.

While local data is limited, clinical observations indicate that young women often attempt self-harm due to gender-based violence and relationship problems. Men, meanwhile, tend to die by suicide more frequently, often using more lethal methods such as hanging or shooting.

Efforts to tackle the crisis are severely constrained by funding shortages. This is only the second year the mental health programme has received a dedicated budget allocation. Dr Mokhothu highlighted the limitations: "The money is very limited, about M300,000 for the whole financial year."

The Ministry of Health is actively seeking external partners to sustain operations.

Going forward, new data collection tools are being distributed to health facilities. Discussions are also underway to integrate these systems with the police, home affairs, and community structures.

Dr Mokhothu added that a long-awaited national mental health policy addressing suicide prevention is expected to be finalised before the end of June. Once approved, authorities will develop a funded implementation plan to confront this national tragedy at its roots.

## Rapid response teams deployed as flu-like illness clusters emerge

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

The Ministry of Health has deployed emergency response teams to seven districts amid a rise in clusters of influenza-like illnesses in schools and villages, the ministry announced this week.

"The Ministry of Health has received reports of clusters of influenza-like illness from the districts of Botha-Bothe, Berea, Maseru, Thaba-Tseka, Mafeteng, Mphahlele's Hoek and Quthing during the month of May 2026," the ministry said in an official statement. "These clusters have been identified in various settings, including schools and villages."

In response, "District Rapid Response Teams have been deployed to the affected areas and are investigating the reported cases," the statement continued. "The teams are also providing medical care to those who are ill and conducting health education activities to help communities understand how to prevent further spread of the illness."

The outbreak coincides with Lesotho's annual flu season. "The country is currently experiencing its annual influenza season, which typically occurs between April and Septem-



ber," the ministry noted. "While the Ministry awaits laboratory results to better understand the current situation, the public is encouraged to continue following recommended prevention and control measures to help reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses including seasonal influenza (flu)."

The ministry listed the signs and symptoms of seasonal flu as fever, cough, headache, mus-

cles and joint pain, sore throat, and runny nose. "Most people often recover from flu within a week without requiring medical attention," the statement said. "However, it can cause severe illness or death in certain high-risk groups including pregnant women, children less than 5 years of age, people aged 65 years and above, and people with chronic medical conditions such as HIV/AIDS, Diabetes, Lung disease."

According to the ministry, the virus "spreads from person to person through inhalation of infected respiratory droplets when people are sneezing, coughing or talking. A person can also be infected by touching contaminated objects or surfaces that the flu virus is on and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose." The incubation period, the statement added, "is 1 - 4 days."

On treatment, the ministry advised that "most people will recover without medical treatment within a week. However, the public, particularly those at risk of severe disease are advised to seek medical treatment at the nearest health facility early, where a medical professional will manage them appropriately according to the clinical presentation."

Precautionary measures outlined by the ministry include "covering the mouth and nose during coughing/sneezing," "regular washing of hands with soap and running water or with alcohol-based sanitiser," "using face masks," and that "people with signs and symptoms of flu should avoid congregate settings."

"Although respiratory illnesses are common during this season, the Ministry of Health is investigating these clusters to determine the cause and assess whether additional public health measures are required," the statement said. "The Ministry of Health will also continue surveillance and follow up in areas where clusters have occurred."

The ministry also reminded citizens that "COVID-19 cases continue to occur in different parts of the country." It added: "Implementation of the above-mentioned preventative measures will not only prevent 'Seasonal Flu' but will also limit the transmission of COVID-19."



# Farmers Pitso Agriculture & Excellence Awards 2026 Categories

## 1. Primary Farming Excellence Categories

These categories form the foundation of the awards and recognise excellence in core agricultural production. They celebrate farmers who demonstrate productivity, innovation, resilience and leadership within crop and livestock farming.

### CATEGORIES

#### Crop Production

- Smallholder Farmer of the Year
- Commercial Farmer of the Year
- Emerging Farmer of the Year
- Young Farmer of the Year
- Woman Farmer of the Year
- Best Horticulture Producer
- Best Grain Producer
- Best Organic Farmer
- Climate-Smart Farmer of the Year
- Conservation Agriculture Champion
- Best Potato Producer of the Year

#### Livestock

- Best Broiler Farmer
- Best Layer Farmer
- Best Free-Range Poultry Farmer
- Best Dairy Cattle Farmer
- Best Dairy Goat Farmer
- Best Wool Producer
- Best Mohair Producer
- Best Horse Breeding & Performance Farmer
- Best Pig Producer
- Best Aquaculture/Fish Farmer
- Animal Health Champion
- Best Bee-Keeper

01

## 2. Innovation & Agribusiness Categories

This segment recognises businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators contributing to agricultural transformation. It positions agriculture as an economic driver and encourages investment, technology adoption, and value addition.

### CATEGORIES

- Agribusiness of the Year
- Agri-Tech Innovation Award
- Best Agro-Processing Enterprise
- Best Agricultural Start-Up
- Best Agricultural Cooperative
- Best Agri-Finance Support Institution
- Best Market Access Initiative
- Best Export-Oriented Agricultural Business

02

## 5. Media, Advocacy & Knowledge Sharing Categories

Agriculture cannot grow without communication, awareness, and information sharing. This segment recognises journalists, content creators, researchers, and educators advancing agricultural discourse.

### CATEGORIES

- Best Agriculture Radio Programme
- Best Agriculture TV/Digital Content Creator
- Best Agriculture Newspaper
- Agricultural Photography Award
- Agricultural Storytelling Award
- Best Agriculture Influencer of the Year
- Best Research & Extension Excellence Award

05

## 3. Youth, Women & Inclusion Categories

These categories ensure the awards are socially inclusive and developmental. They highlight the contribution of women, youth, schools, and marginalised groups in strengthening food systems and rural livelihoods.

### CATEGORIES

- Rural Youth Agripreneur of the Year
- Women in Agriculture Leadership Award
- Best Youth-Led Agribusiness
- Disability Inclusion in Agriculture Award
- Community Food Security Champion
- Best School Garden Initiative
- University/College Agricultural Innovation Award

03

## 6. Community & National Impact Categories

These categories celebrate individuals, institutions, and communities making a lasting contribution to national development, food security, and agricultural leadership.

### CATEGORIES

- District Agricultural Excellence Award
- Community Farming Initiative of the Year
- Food Security Champion
- Agricultural Mentor of the Year
- Agricultural Leadership Award
- Traditional Leadership in Agriculture Award

06

## 4. Sustainability & Climate Categories

These awards recognise individuals and organisations implementing environmentally responsible and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

### CATEGORIES

- Climate Resilience Award
- Water Conservation Champion
- Sustainable Land Management Award
- Indigenous Seed Preservation Award
- Renewable Energy in Agriculture Award
- Regenerative Farming Award
- Environmental Stewardship Award

04

Nominate or apply here:

<https://seahlolo.co.ls/farmers-pitso-agriculture-excellence-awards-2026/>





## ADVERTISEMENT

### REQUEST FOR APPLICATION APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE LESOTHO HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LHDA) STAKEHOLDER PORTFOLIO

#### Background

The Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC) is mandated by the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Treaty of 1986 and related Instruments to provide oversight, approval, advisory, and monitoring roles to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) on behalf of the Governments of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) is the implementing Institution for the LHWP, and is governed by a Board of Directors. The LHDA Order, as amended in 2000, mandates the LHWC to appoint the LHDA Non-Executive Director.

The Commission hereby, on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources in Lesotho, invites suitably qualified and reputable individuals from Lesotho to express interest in serving as a non-executive member of the LHDA Board of Directors, representing the stakeholders' portfolio.

This non-Executive board directorship requires both stakeholder insight and governance capability, with full collective fiduciary and governance responsibilities. The tenure for this position is fixed at three (3) years, with a possibility of renewal.

The Board and Committee meetings are primarily conducted at the LHDA Headquarters located in Maseru, Lesotho, with periodic travel and meetings at the LHWP sites.

#### Educational Qualifications:

Applicants must possess a Tertiary Qualification with a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree in any discipline or a relevant professional qualification.

#### Core Experience

Applicants must demonstrate proven experience in the following areas:

- Governance experience, including familiarity with Board roles, statutory bodies, or regulated entities;
- Board exposure, either as a Board member, committee member, trustee, or senior executive engaging regularly with Boards;
- Strategic oversight experience, with the ability to contribute to long-term institutional strategy, policy direction, and performance monitoring;
- Public reputation and credibility, demonstrating ethical leadership, sound judgement, and the ability to uphold the reputation of a nationally and internationally significant institution.

#### Board accountability

As a non-executive director, the successful candidate will be expected to:

- Discharge full fiduciary duties in the best interests of the LHDA, exercising care, skill, diligence, and independent judgment;
- Provide financial oversight, including review of budgets, financial statements, audit reports, and financial controls;
- Contribute to risk management, ensuring that strategic, operational, financial, environmental, and reputational risks are identified and appropriately managed;
- Ensure compliance with the Lesotho Highlands Water Project treaty, related protocols, legislation, and governance frameworks;
- Uphold collective board responsibility for decisions, performance oversight, and institutional accountability.

The following competencies will be added as an advantage:

- **Experience working in a corporate or structured organisational environment**, with demonstrated ability to **learn quickly, adapt effectively**, and operate confidently within a governance and regulatory framework.
- **Knowledge of social, economic, and environmental impacts** associated with large-scale infrastructure or water projects, with sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable groups

#### How to Apply

Interested individuals are invited to submit their application, which should include the following:

1. A detailed Curriculum Vitae;
2. A cover letter explaining their motivation and suitability for the role;
3. Certified copies of relevant qualifications; and
4. Contact details of at least two referees.

**To: The Commission Secretary,**

Lesotho Highlands Water Commission  
5th Floor, Standard Lesotho Bank Tower  
Private Bag A156  
Maseru 100

Email: [sec@lhwc.org.ls](mailto:sec@lhwc.org.ls)

**By Friday, the 12th June 2026. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**



## INTERNAL &amp; EXTERNAL ADVERTISEMENT

## DRIVER SALESMAN

**Location:** Blue Ribbon - LESOTHO  
**Reporting to:** Sales Manager

**Purpose of the job :** To ensure service delivery and bakery sales growth through on time in full deliveries of products as per customer requirements, collection of payments and bakery sales asset management daily.

**Responsibilities:**

- Communication
- Crate control
- Vehicle use
- Cash management
- Sales Growth
- Stock management

**Qualifications:**

- LGSCE/COSC
- Valid code C1 license & PDP
- At least 1-3 years' experience in a similar position in the FMCG industry with emphasis on customer service FMCG background and sound knowledge of bread

**Competencies (knowledge, skills and attributes):**

- Self-motivated and responsible with the ability to achieve personal work goals and objectives
- Ability to build good trade relationships
- Ability to persuade and influence
- Ability to present and communicate information to all levels
- Good management skills
- Business processes, rules and procedures
- Legislation
- Accuracy/ Attention to detail
- Problem solving
- Numerical ability

**Other Requirements**

- Pressurized environment
- 6-Day position
- Required to work Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays
- Required to work in alternative areas

**Values**

- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Sense of urgency
- Respect

Interested candidates are invited to apply through our email: [hr.lesotho@PremierFMCG.com](mailto:hr.lesotho@PremierFMCG.com)

Documents should be sent together or on one email (School certificates and a CV), alternatively, you can hand-deliver at Blue Ribbon Offices, Thetsane Industrial Estates

**Closing Date: 13 June 2026. PS:**

**Should you not receive a reply within 30 days of your application, please treat it as unsuccessful.**



## INVITATION TO TENDER

## INVITATION TO TENDER: MATSIENG CAMPUS FENCING CONSTRUCTION

Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP) hereby invites you to submit a Bid to this Invitation to tender (ITT) for the above-referenced subject. Lerotholi Polytechnic, hereinafter referred to as LP or the institution, intends to engage the services of competent contractors to secure the Matsieng Campus premises with fence. Contractors must possess the necessary professional and technical qualifications and competence, financial resources, equipment and other physical facilities, managerial capability, experience in the construction field.

Interested bidders can obtain Tender Documents from the Procurement office at LP main campus in Maseru at a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Maloti Only (M2,000.00)**. For further clarifications, kindly communicate with the Procurement Office on **22324402**.

The following documents are mandatory.

- Copy of valid trader's license
- Copy of valid tax clearance certificate
- Category Certification (C) from BDS Ministry of Public Works

Prices quoted should be Vat net inclusive of all the Taxes and delivery and must be in local currency and shall remain valid for 90 days from the closing date of the tender. Completed tender documents in sealed envelopes bearing no identification of the tenderer, clearly marked "**Tender No. LP/ADM/03/2026 For Construction of fencing**" as per instructions in the tender documents and addressed to:

THE PROCUREMENT MANAGER  
LEROTHOLI POLYTECHNIC  
P.O. BOX 16  
MASERU

**ATTENTION: Procurement Manager**

must be deposited in the Tender Box situated in Administration II Foyer at Maseru Campus, on or before 30 June 2026 at 12:30p.m.

Compulsory site-visit and pre-bid meeting will be conducted on the 19 June 2026 at 10:00 am at Lerotholi Polytechnic Matsieng Campus. Contractors will assemble at the Matsieng Campus premises for registration. Contractors are to provide their own transport.



## Independent Electoral Commission

## VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

**POSITION: DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS**

**CONTRACT DURATION: FIVE (5) YEARS**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The vision of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) is to contribute to the strengthening of a peaceful, stable and prosperous nation through sustainable and inclusive democracy. The Commission is committed to the continuous development and improvement of relationships that create an enabling environment for the promotion and delivery of regular, credible and acceptable elections and referenda that are timely, participatory and accessible to all.

The IEC therefore seeks to recruit a suitably qualified, visionary and dynamic individual to fill the position of **Director of Elections**. The successful candidate must demonstrate exceptional leadership, sound strategic management capabilities and the ability to provide effective direction under the supervision of the Commission.

**2. REQUIREMENTS****2.1 Qualifications (Essential)**

2.1.1 A postgraduate qualification in Law, Public Administration, Political Science, Electoral Management, Governance, Public Policy, Procurement and Supply Chain Management, Communications, Finance, Business Administration, Management, Sociology or other related disciplines relevant to executive leadership and electoral administration.

2.1.2 Candidates must demonstrate strong competencies in strategic leadership, governance, public affairs, stakeholder engagement, communication, procurement oversight, financial management and institutional administration within complex public or democratic institutions.

2.1.3 A PhD qualification or a recognised executive leadership certification will be an added advantage.

**2.2 Experience (Essential)**

2.2.1 A minimum of six (6) years' relevant experience leading a similar organisation or serving in a senior management position.

2.2.2 Demonstrated experience in the development, implementation and management of strategic plans.

2.2.3 Strong political awareness complemented by a sound understanding of public and private sector organisational processes.

2.2.4 Proven ability to establish and maintain constructive relationships with government, business and non-state actors.

2.2.5 Proven experience in managing and facilitating complex projects involving multiple stakeholders will be an added advantage.

**2.3 Knowledge, Skills and Abilities**

2.3.1 Extensive knowledge of electoral processes, procedures and policies as provided for under the Constitution and other electoral laws of Lesotho.

2.3.2 Working knowledge of the operations and functions of the Government and Parliament of Lesotho.

2.3.3 Ability to work independently and execute assignments based on broad strategic direction.

2.3.4 Demonstrated understanding of electoral processes, diversity management, human resources and financial management.

2.3.5 Proven performance in the role of Chief Accounting Officer, Chief Executive Officer or equivalent senior leadership position.

2.3.6 Strong leadership and supervisory skills, with the ability to organise, direct and motivate staff.

2.3.7 Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including government institutions, political parties, civic organisations, the media and the public.

2.3.8 Sound knowledge of organisational governance, financial management and administrative principles.

2.3.9 Ability to produce high-quality reports in line with IEC policies and operational requirements.

2.3.10 excellent verbal and written communication skills across diverse stakeholder groups.

2.3.11 Strong teamwork and collaboration skills.

2.3.12 Demonstrated honesty, integrity and high ethical standards.

2.3.13 Proficiency in computer applications and information technology systems.

**2.4 Competencies**

2.4.1 Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

2.4.2 Ability to develop, articulate and implement strategic goals and objectives.

2.4.3 Strategic and creative thinking ability, including problem-solving skills.

2.4.4 Sound understanding of Lesotho's social, political and economic environment.

2.4.5 Ability to work effectively under pressure and meet strict deadlines.

**NB:** Shortlisted candidates shall undergo a competency assessment test.

**3. JOB PURPOSE**

To manage the operations of the IEC under the supervision and direction of the Commission.

**4. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES****4.1 Strategic Planning and Leadership**

4.1.1 Provide overall strategic and operational leadership of the IEC in accordance with policy directives issued by the Commission.

4.1.2 Define and articulate the IEC's mission, vision and values, and develop strategies for their achievement.

4.1.3 Develop annual operational plans and budgets aligned to the Commission's strategic direction.

4.1.4 Submit annual plans and reports to the Commission for approval.

4.1.5 Develop, coordinate and monitor strategies to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the IEC.

4.1.6 Develop and oversee the IEC capital development programme.

4.1.7 Develop future leadership capacity and strengthen human capital within the organisation.

**4.2 Management and Administration**

4.2.1 Provide leadership and management of the IEC Secretariat and oversee the execution of its operations and administration within the strategic and accountability framework established by the Commission.

4.2.2 Work closely with the Commission to ensure sound governance of the IEC.

4.2.3 Advise and inform the Commission in a timely, comprehensive and appropriate manner.

4.2.4 Ensure compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements and mitigate institutional risks, including litigation risks.

4.2.5 Develop and maintain systems and procedures for implementing Commission-approved plans and programmes.

4.2.6 Promote a culture that reflects the values of the IEC, encourages high performance and rewards productivity.

4.2.7 Oversee recruitment, management and development of staff in accordance with approved human resource policies and applicable laws.

4.2.8 Ensure that staff and Commissioners have adequate and up-to-date information to execute their responsibilities effectively.

4.2.9 Conduct regular organisational and staff performance evaluations.

**4.3 Financial Management**

4.3.1 Oversee the preparation and submission of annual budgets for approval by the Commission.

4.3.2 Ensure prudent management of the IEC's resources in accordance with approved budgets, laws and regulations.

4.3.3 Ensure compliance with appropriate accounting standards and financial procedures.

4.3.4 Provide timely, accurate and comprehensive financial information to the Commission.

4.3.5 Oversee the management of IEC assets, facilities, infrastructure and stores.

**4.4 Responsibilities as Chief Accounting Officer**

4.4.1 Ensure ethical, efficient and accountable financial management in accordance with approved accounting principles and procedures.

4.4.2 Ensure proper collection, safeguarding and accounting of all revenues and receipts accruing to the Commission.

4.4.3 Ensure that expenditure is incurred only within approved warrants and budgetary provisions.

4.4.4 Ensure the establishment and maintenance of an effective internal audit system.

4.4.5 Ensure submission of all statutory and financial reports as required.

4.4.6 Perform any other financial duties assigned by the Commission.

**4.5 Human Resource Management**

4.5.1 Oversee recruitment and contracting of Secretariat and project staff.

4.5.2 Promote employee welfare, development and training.

4.5.3 Develop and implement human resource policies and procedures.

4.5.4 Manage employee relations effectively.

4.5.5 Develop and oversee performance management systems.

4.5.6 Ensure compliance with labour laws and regulatory reporting requirements.

4.5.7 Promote diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity principles within the IEC.

4.5.8 Develop remuneration and benefits proposals for approval by the Commission.

**4.6 Institutional Representation and Stakeholder Relations**

4.6.1 Protect and enhance the image and reputation of the IEC through effective corporate governance, stakeholder engagement and media relations.

4.6.2 Serve as spokesperson of the Commission when authorised.

4.6.3 Ensure transparent, inclusive and timely communication of Commission activities.

**4.7 Programme Management and Innovation**

4.7.1 Monitor developments and trends relevant to electoral management and anticipate future institutional needs.

4.7.2 Promote innovation and increased adoption of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

4.7.3 Monitor and evaluate IEC programmes and ensure readiness of electoral infrastructure, logistics and voting facilities.

4.7.4 Promote research and institutional learning to strengthen electoral management and operational capacity.

4.7.5 Support the Commission in maintaining institutional independence in line with international best practices for electoral management bodies.

**4.8 Statutory Responsibilities**

4.8.1 Lead the IEC Secretariat in the administration of National Assembly elections, Local Government elections and referenda.

4.8.2 Ensure registration of all eligible voters in Lesotho.

4.8.3 Compile and maintain the national register of electors and constituency voter registers in accordance with the Constitution and electoral laws.

4.8.4 Oversee implementation of all electoral and election-related activities required to fulfil the Commission's constitutional and statutory mandate.

4.8.5 Advise the Commission on the review and reform of electoral laws, regulations and frameworks.

**5. WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

5.1 The IEC is a constitutional institution established to support democracy in Lesotho. The Commission is committed to promoting diversity, inclusion, transparency, accountability, ethical conduct and respect for human rights.

5.2 The position requires a highly motivated and energetic individual capable of leading large multidisciplinary teams and implementing programmes effectively.

5.3 The incumbent must be capable of managing sensitive electoral matters with professionalism, tact and diplomacy.

5.4 The successful candidate must demonstrate respect for diversity and the ability to work effectively in a rights-based environment.

5.5 The incumbent must be able to manage competing priorities and meet multiple deadlines.

**6. REMUNERATION**

The IEC offers a competitive remuneration package commensurate with the responsibilities of the position and market conditions.

**7. APPLICATIONS**

Interested suitably qualified Basotho nationals with proven senior leadership experience, high integrity and demonstrated professional competence are invited to submit applications accompanied by:

- A detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- Certified copies of academic qualifications; and
- Names and contact details of three (3) contactable referees.

Applications should be hand-delivered to IEC Head Office in the Registry Office at Corner Maluti & Caledon Road, Maseru West and be addressed to:

**The Chairperson**  
Independent Electoral Commission  
IEC Head Office – Maseru West (Corner Maluti & Caledon Road)

P.O. Box 12698

Maseru, Lesotho.

**Important Notes:**

- Appointment shall be subject to security clearance and vetting processes.
- Applicants must be registered voters with the IEC.
- Note that Political Party representatives will be represented in the recruitment processes

**8. CLOSING DATE**

All applications must be received on or before **Friday, 26 June 2026 at 16:00 hours**.



## Request for Bids

**Framework Agreement(s) for Goods  
(Primary Procurement, One-Envelope Bidding Process)**

- Procuring: **Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition**
- Country: **Lesotho**
- Name of Project: **Supply and Delivery of Agricultural Inputs (Field Crop Seeds, Vegetable Seeds and Pesticides)**
- Framework Agreement Title: **Agricultural Inputs**
- RFB Reference No: **MAFSN/G001/2026/2027**
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has received financing from the Government of Lesotho toward the cost of Agricultural Inputs, and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under Call-off Contracts that may be awarded under the Framework Agreements (FAs) for Agricultural Inputs concluded through this RFB Procurement process.
  - The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition is undertaking the Primary Procurement with a view to concluding Framework Agreements. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition is the sole Purchaser under the Framework Agreements. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for supply and delivery of agricultural inputs (Field Crops Seeds, Vegetables Seeds and Pesticides).
  - The Framework Agreements to be concluded will be Single-User. The Single-User entitled to purchase under the Framework Agreements is Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.
  - The Framework Agreements to be concluded will be Multi-Supplier.
  - The selection of a FA Supplier to be awarded a Call-off Contract will be done through a Secondary Procurement process as defined in Framework Agreement. However, the conclusion of a Framework Agreement shall not impose any obligation on the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, to purchase goods under a Call-off Contract. The conclusion of Framework Agreement does not guarantee that a FA Supplier will be awarded a Call-off Contract.
  - Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the Public Procurement Act, and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Act.
  - Bidders may submit Bids for one or more "lots".
  - The Framework Agreements shall be concluded for a Term of **two years**, note: the initial Term cannot exceed 3 years from the commencement date stated in the Framework Agreement.
  - The Primary Procurement shall establish a **Closed Framework Agreement(s)**.
  - Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Procurement Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Procurement Officer and [rd.sefooko@yahoo.com](mailto:rd.sefooko@yahoo.com) and inspect the Bidding document during office hours from 8:00 to 16:30 hours at the address given below:
  - The Bidding document in English may be purchased by interested Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 500 maloti. The method of payment will be cash.
  - Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **13:30hrs, 11th June 2026**. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend, at the address below at **14:00hrs, 11th June 2026**.
  - Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition**
- Ranamane Sefooko Procurement Officer  
Corner Constitutional and Linare Roads,  
Maseru 100, Lesotho  
+266 22322741  
[rd.sefooko@yahoo.com](mailto:rd.sefooko@yahoo.com)**



Kingdom of Lesotho

## Invitation for Registration

**Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition**

- The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho intends to improve Agricultural service delivery. Therefore, part of the proceeds will be utilized on eligible payments resulting from the procurement of the above.
- The Permanent Secretary now invites interested Basotho vehicle owners for **Registration of Vehicles for short term hire in the Ministry database for financial year 2026/27**. Interested Basotho vehicle owners may obtain further information from the following address:

Procurement Unit and Administration Office  
Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition  
Corner Constitution and Linare Roads  
Maseru 100, Lesotho  
Tel: (++ 266) 22322741

- It is mandatory for Basotho vehicle owners to submit and note the following:**

**Vehicle Type: Double Cab 4x4, Single Cab 4x4, SUV 4x4, SUV, Ten-Ton & Fourteen-Ton Truck, Minibus (13 Seater) or Quantum**

- ▶ **Vehicle Registration**
- ▶ **Vehicle Model: 2015 upwards**
- ▶ **Valid third party insurance for short term rentals**
- ▶ **Valid comprehensive insurance for Basotho short term vehicles**
- ▶ **Complete tool kit**
- ▶ **Double Cab 4x4 with Canopy or Tonneau cover and Tow bar for pulling trailer**
- ▶ **Single Cab: Valid B permit & Tow bar**
- ▶ **Ten (10) ton: Valid F permit & Fitness**
- ▶ **13 Seater: Fitness**

- Submission and registration with Administration Office.**



## Invitation for Bids

**ROLL Project -Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials to Support Vulnerable HHS - LSO-2000002340-0241-G-NCB**

Maseru, Lesotho  
05 JUNE 2026

**Re: Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials To Support Vulnerable HHS-LSO-2000002340-0241-G-NCB**

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and intends to apply a part of the proceeds of the financing to this purchase. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods.

- The Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods includes rehabilitation of sixteen identified landscapes in Lesotho and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the rural areas, within a period of eight years.
- This invitation for bids (IFB) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on **IFAD** website on the **21st April 2026**, Lesotho Times newspaper on the **23rd April 2026** and Public eye newspaper on **24th April 2026**
- The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the **Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials To Support Vulnerable HHS** More details on these goods and related services are provided in the schedule of requirements in this bidding document.
- This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the bidding document, eligible entities may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the procurement.
- Bidding will be conducted using the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** method, the evaluation procedure for which is described in this bidding document, in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook which is provided at [www.ifad.org/project-procurement](http://www.ifad.org/project-procurement). The NCB process, as described, will include a review and verification of qualifications and past performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.

- Please note that a pre-bid conference **will not be** held as described in the bid data sheet (BDS), Section III of the bidding document.
- Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall download the bidding document from the following website: [www.rollproject.gov.ls](http://www.rollproject.gov.ls) and complete the registration form available on the website

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**Ministry of Environment & Forestry**  
**Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281-609, Near Ministry of Forestry, Maseru 100 Lesotho**  
**Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203**  
**E-mail: [procurement.roll@gov.ls](mailto:procurement.roll@gov.ls) and copy to [morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls](mailto:morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls)**

- Bids must be delivered to the address and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than **10:00** local time on the **06 July 2026**.
- Bidders shall be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance and will be returned unopened at the written request and cost of the bidder. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security or bid-securing declaration (as required) in the manner and amount specified in the bid data sheet.
- Please note that electronic bids **shall not** be accepted.

Yours sincerely,  
**Procurement Manager**  
**Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project Ministry of Environment and Forestry**  
**Industrial Area, Plot No. 12281-609, Near Ministry of Forestry, Maseru 100 Lesotho**  
**Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203**  
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# The making of Allegro Africa In Concert

## Chris Theko

When details of Allegro Africa In Concert were first unveiled in April, music lovers were introduced to an ambitious concept that promised to redefine the live entertainment experience in Lesotho.

The production was billed as something unlike anything local audiences had seen before — a carefully curated fusion of DJ culture, live instrumentation, vocal performances, and immersive audience engagement. At the centre of it all was Nthethe Sekoli, better known as Allegro Africa, who envisioned a concert experience that would go far beyond a traditional DJ set.

Now, with just under four weeks to go before the June 27 show at the 'Manth-

abiseng Convention Centre, the full story behind the concert is beginning to emerge. What many may see as a bold new idea is actually the culmination of years of artistic growth, experience, and a dream that refused to fade.

For Allegro, the seeds of this project were planted long before the announcement.

"The concept of performing with a band has been in my head since my days with Zagro DeeJays," he explains. "The idea kept coming back to me and I eventually realised I needed to align it with the current direction of my brand."

Turning that vision into reality required both belief and the right collaboration. That breakthrough came through

conversations with veteran creative and event organiser Rethabile Hlalele, popularly known as Zipompe.

After sharing the concept with her, Allegro found someone who not only understood the vision but expanded it.

"She upgraded the idea by suggesting that we include a string quartet and then offered to take charge of organising the entire show," he recalls. "She broke the concept down and showed me how possible it was."

The encouragement came at a crucial time. "One of the things she told me was that if I didn't believe in myself, I should trust in God," he says. "That became part of the direction of this journey. God bless the vibe."

The resulting production blends musical disciplines that have shaped Allegro's journey over the years. While audiences mainly know him as a DJ and music curator, his roots run much deeper.

"I have been DJing for many years and producing music throughout my career," he says. "Before that, I played drums for about 15 years, and during that time I worked extensively with live bands."

His experience performing with jazz artist Mookho Moqhali's band further deepened his understanding of live performance and musical collaboration.

However, one element of the production has pushed him into completely new territory.

"The strings have been the biggest learning curve," he admits. "This is the first time in my life working with a string ensemble. Arranging and coordinating that aspect has been challenging, but it has also been one of the most exciting parts of the journey"

*Continues on page 21*

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# 3rd NMAs announced: MP among the nominees

## Chris Theko

The excitement surrounding Lesotho's biggest music awards reached fever pitch on Saturday as the National Music Awards (NMAs) unveiled nominations for its third edition at a packed Victory Hall in Maseru.

Rising R&B star Mochana stole the spotlight after securing a rare double nomination in the Upcoming Artist of the Year and Newcomer of the Year categories. This achievement places the artist among the frontrunners in what promises to be a highly competitive awards season.

Veteran gospel artist and politician Ntate MCT, formally known as Mokherane Chaltin Tsatsanyane — a Member of Parliament and former deputy minister — was also nominated in the Traditional Gospel category.

Mochana joins Malichelete and Koete Maisane as multi-nominated artists, making them ones to watch as public voting opens in the second week of June.

Few nominees bring as rich a pedigree as Ntate MCT. A respected figure in both politics and music, he has played a behind-the-scenes role in shaping the careers of several prominent artists, including Morena Sway, Ntate Stunna, and Malome Vector.

His nomination alongside Julious Kutlo, St Vincent, and Mable Mahasele highlights the depth of talent in the Traditional Gospel category.

Addressing the audience on behalf of the organisers, Rorisang Motsamai reflected emotionally on the growth of the NMAs. "When we started this journey, we had a vision to create a stage that reflects the true weight of our musical heritage and the limitless potential of our modern creators," he said.

"In its third year, the NMAs have become more than just an event — they have become a movement."

Motsamai also unveiled a newly redesigned trophy, created to commemorate Lesotho's 60th anniversary of independence. The new design incorporates elements of national heritage into the symbol of musical excellence.

The organisers expressed gratitude to key partners who supported the event, including the Ministry of Tourism, Sports and Culture, the Lesotho



MCT

Copyright Society of Authors and Artists (LESCOSAA), LNBS, and Maluti Premium Lager. "Organising an event of this nature is not an easy task at all," Motsamai acknowledged.

Patrick Matete, speaking on behalf of the three-member judging panel — which also includes 'Mapitso Se-kete-Tšiu of Ultimate Radio and Likopo Kolozi from Harvest FM — revealed that a record 800 submissions were received this year and carefully short-listed to 400.

Entries were judged on criteria such as artwork quality, personal brand, production standards, and airplay.

"The goal is to see the Awards grow each year, hence we had to be very thorough in our criteria — no mediocrity, but excellence," Matete stated. Maseru District led in the number of submissions, followed by Quthing.

Selected Nominations:

Best Jazz: Mookho Moqhali, Siphon Lukhele, Senqu Jazz Band, Maleh, Lemile

Best Single: Litsepe, Thope Tse Khang, Morena Sway, Sannere, Mavele & Tash, Selloane Thakanyane, Sir Scha-ba

Best Amapiano: Master Peace, Naleli, The Boys, Tankiso Moahloli, Zehae, Jah Mummy

Best Producer: MJ Elphy, Titos Da DJ, Salem, Pheko Rafolatsane, Salem Nike-lo

Best Afrosoul: Dee Leche, Morena Thoso, Naylo, Nthabiseng, Ntota

Upcoming Artist of the Year: Matobetsa, Mochana, Malichelete, Terebele Ha Makhaola, Sleek Savage, TL Recalos Nunes, Koete, Kutloano

Newcomer of the Year: Maine, De Nationa, King Leah, Mabena C, Uno G, Lazy King LS, Lady Ray, Malichelete, Naleli, Mochana, Steja, Jobo, Koete Maisane, Makosholo, Monna Motsamai, Shekesha, Nylo, Adrena, Skitimi

Sotho Hop: Kayman, Malakabe Music, Magnum Maestro, Marvel Peace Boy, Terebele Music, King Lee

Traditional Gospel: Ntate MCT (Mokherane Chaltin Tsatsanyane), Julious Kutlo, St Vincent, Mable Mahasele

Hip Hop: Mathibi 058, Majakathata, Jobo & Gflaggs, Magnum Maestro, Lakabane Music, Cici Sehloho, Back Ceiling, KC Paul, Clamourise, Question 9, Sekang, Dr Pass, Herocks LS

Record of the Year: Morena Sway, Nthabiseng Flora, Litsepe LR, Phoka Ea Boroa, Minister Spokes

The NMAs feature 20 categories in total.

Several prestigious awards, including the Queen 'Mamohato Lifetime Achievement Award, Recognised Artist, Best Radio Music Presenter, Artist of the Decade, and Artist of the Year, will be decided by the organisers and judging panel and are not open to public voting.

Public voting for the remaining categories opens in the second week of June.

Continuation from page 19



Allegro Africa

Despite the challenges, the rewards have been significant. “Watching everything come together and hearing how beautifully all the different elements complement one another has been incredible.”

Beyond the rehearsals and technical preparations, Allegro sees the concert as a major milestone in the growth of his brand. He acknowledges that entrepreneurship in the creative industry often demands patience and a willingness to prioritise long-term value over immediate profit.

“The journey of an entrepreneur involves delivering beautiful solutions to the market, sometimes at zero profit or even at a loss,” he explains. “Not because

the business model is wrong, but because the business is still growing.”

His main focus has been building a strong brand and creating memorable experiences. “So far, I am happy with the way people have received my music and the experiences we have created. As an artist and creative, it will always be my responsibility to produce art and create vibes.”

Importantly, Allegro hopes the concert will inspire broader innovation within Lesotho’s entertainment industry. He believes local artists, promoters, and producers must be willing to take risks if the sector is to reach its full potential.

“I hope this concept sparks a light or ignites a fire in the souls of everyone

involved in the music industry,” he says. “Sometimes the direction you want to take is exactly what the industry needs, but you hesitate because you think it won’t work. We need to move beyond the ordinary if we want this industry to become extraordinary.”

For Allegro, the ambition is both artistic and economic. He wants to see a music industry that creates sustainable opportunities and supports future gen-

erations of creatives.

“We are making history here,” he says. “Not for Allegro Africa alone, but for Lesotho. Let the world hear us. Let them see us. Let us experience high standards in our own country.”

“People must come and witness musicians coming together to create an extraordinary experience,” he adds. “And besides, this might be the first and only Allegro Africa In Concert. Who knows?”

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# Six days to FIFA World Cup 2026

...Africa ready for football's biggest stage



## Seabata Mahao

The countdown to the FIFA World Cup 2026 has entered its final stretch, with the tournament set to kick off in just six days in North America.

For Africa, this is more than a football festival. It is a platform to showcase the continent's rising influence and competitiveness, with a record 10 nations preparing to compete in the expanded showpiece.

The 2026 edition, co-hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico, will be the largest in history. For the first time, 48 teams will participate, up from 32, offering greater

opportunities across confederations.

Africa stands as one of the biggest beneficiaries, qualifying a historic 10 sides: Morocco, Senegal, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Cape Verde, South Africa and DR Congo. Nine booked their spots directly, while DR Congo secured the final berth via the intercontinental play-offs.

The new format gives African teams their strongest chance yet to advance deep. Competition will unfold in 12 groups of four, with the top two from each group and the eight best third-placed teams progressing to

the Round of 32.

### South Africa returns to the global stage

For fans across Southern Africa, Bafana Bafana's return is among the most exciting narratives.

South Africa will appear at the World Cup for the first time since hosting in 2010. After years of qualification heartache, the team has reclaimed its place among the elite.

Under Belgian coach Hugo Broos, Bafana have rebuilt steadily, blending seasoned internationals with promising talent from the domestic league. A significant core hails

from Mamelodi Sundowns and Orlando Pirates, whose strong performances in African club competitions have boosted national confidence.

Drawn in Group A with hosts Mexico, South Korea and the Czech Republic, South Africa face a tough opener but will eye progress in the expanded format, which offers more routes for third-placed teams. Mexico are favourites to top the group, yet Bafana believe they can compete.

Captain Ronwen Williams will provide leadership in goal, while striker Lyle Foster carries attacking hopes and veteran midfielder Themba Zwane adds vital experience. The goal: reach the knockout stages for the first time.

### Morocco leads Africa's charge

Morocco enter as one of the continent's strongest contenders. Their run to the 2022 semi-finals, the first by an African nation, changed global perceptions. The Atlas Lions dominated qualification and arrive with genuine title ambitions and a formidable defence.

Senegal, Egypt, Algeria and Côte d'Ivoire are also expected to push deep, while Cape Verde's debut highlights the depth and rising standard of African football. The islanders' qualification is one of the tournament's most inspiring underdog tales.

### Inspiration for Lesotho

Though Lesotho will not feature, the Mountain Kingdom's football community will follow events closely. Likueua came close in a tough qualifying group that included South Africa and Nigeria. While the dream is deferred, Bafana's success offers powerful motivation for football development in the region.

The tournament also presents opportunities for Southern African players to catch the eye of scouts, earn moves abroad and raise the profile of local leagues.

### Argentina defends its crown

Argentina head into the tournament as defending champions after their dramatic 2022 victory over France in Qatar. They will chase back-to-back titles, a rare feat in World Cup history.

### New rules to shape the tournament

As teams finalise preparations, football's lawmakers have introduced changes aimed at improving discipline, curbing time-wasting and enhancing match flow.

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) has approved stricter sanctions for misconduct. Players covering their mouths during confrontations or walking off the pitch in protest risk immediate red cards. Teams abandoning matches will forfeit automatically.

VAR's role expands significantly. Officials can now review wrongly awarded second yellow cards, mistaken identity cases and incorrect corner-kick decisions.

To reduce delays, referees will use visible five-second countdowns for throw-ins and goal-kicks. Substituted players must leave the field within 10 seconds.

These measures should deliver a faster, more disciplined and entertaining spectacle for the 48-team tournament.

### Looking beyond 2026

The FIFA World Cup 2026 opens on 11 June and concludes with the final on 19 July.

Attention is already shifting to 2030, awarded to a joint Morocco-Spain-Portugal bid, with centenary commemorative matches planned in Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay.

With record African representation, more matches and new rules, this promises to be a landmark edition. For the continent, the aim is clear: move from participation to contending for the ultimate prize.

For South Africa, and by extension the region, the mission is to honour the 2010 legacy and prove Bafana Bafana belong among the world's best.

# Matlama, MCC locked in long-running Pitso Ground ownership dispute

## Seabata Mahao

One of Lesotho's oldest and most successful football clubs, Matlama FC, remains locked in a protracted dispute with the Maseru City Council (MCC) over the ownership and future of the historic Pitso Ground.

The club, which has occupied the site since shortly after Lesotho's independence in 1966, argues that the MCC's 1994 lease was obtained unlawfully and that it is the rightful owner. The MCC currently controls the lease.

Founded in 1932, Matlama previously played at Aston Flats, an area now transformed into a commercial hub with shopping complexes. Club officials say authorities relocated them to Pitso Ground after independence without a formal written agreement, leaving the legal status of the arrangement unclear.

Matlama president Moeketsi Khojane said resolving the matter became a priority when he took office. "We have held several meetings with the municipality to try and resolve the matter, but little progress has been made," Khojane said.

The club is now seeking compensation in the form of alternative land where it can build its own permanent home and modern football facilities that meet FIFA and CAF standards.

Matlama points to the precedent set with rivals Lioli FC, which received a larger piece of land after vacating its former ground in Teya-Teyaneng for a bus terminus. Government has already completed earthworks at Lioli's new site.

"We understand this is a monument; we are just asking to be compensated like other teams," Khojane said.

Disruption to club operations

The ongoing dispute has affected Matlama's day-to-day activities. Municipal operations at the ground frequently interrupt training sessions, with club officials reporting incidents of soil being dumped on the playing surface while players were training.

"There was an agreement that we would use the facility on a 50/50 basis, but recently we have seen that our team is suffering, and at some stages we even struggle to train," Khojane added.

The club says it would accept either full ownership of Pitso Ground or suitable alternative land.

Legal and historical arguments

Matlama secretary-general Thabang Letsie maintains that the club's claim is backed by historical occupation and legal principles. He argues that the process used to grant the lease to the MCC requires scrutiny, citing provisions of the 1966 Constitution (on long-term occupation) and the 1979 Land Act.

"When we were ordered to leave our ground we could not say no; it was an imposed swap deal. We have been at the ground for more than 35 years," Letsie said.

While litigation remains a last resort, the club has warned it may approach the courts if negotiations continue to stall.

Political support

The dispute has drawn political attention. Stadium Area MP 'Mampho Tjabane has backed the club and tabled a parliamentary question on the matter. The response was deferred to allow further consultations involving all stakeholders, including the Town Clerk and the Minister of Sports, Tourism, Arts and Culture.



Matlama president Moeketsi Khojane

Tjabane described it as unfortunate that a club of Matlama's stature still lacks its own home ground. She noted that the heritage value of Pitso Ground, which hosted independence celebrations on 4 October 1966, will be considered in ongoing talks.

MCC response

MCC Public Relations Officer Lintle Bless confirmed that discussions with Matlama are continuing.

"We are still in talks with the club regarding the issues surrounding the ground," Bless said. "Everyone is giving their version of how they understand the issues... so we are talking to them to find a solution."

Bless emphasised the site's national importance: "The history of that ground is significant. It is a historical monument, and that automatically makes it a national asset which must be preserved."

# Mozambique crush Lesotho by 110 runs in Eswatini T20 Tri-Series

## Kananelo Boloetse

Lesotho's national cricket team suffered a heavy 110-run defeat to Mozambique in the second match of the Eswatini T20 Tri-Series at Malkerns Country Club Oval on Tuesday.

Mozambique posted a formidable 217/6 in 20 overs after Lesotho won the toss and elected to field first. In reply, Lesotho were bowled out for 107 in just 15.3 overs.

Joao Hou was the star of the match, smashing a blistering 126 off only 55 balls (10 fours and 11 sixes) to earn Player of the Match honours. His explosive knock powered Mozambique to a total that proved far beyond Lesotho's reach.

Lourenco Solomone provided solid support with 28 off 14.

Lesotho's bowlers struggled to contain the Mozambique batters on a batting-friendly surface. Malei Khauta and Lefulere Monanthane picked up two wickets each, but leaked runs at over 8 and 11 runs per

over respectively.

In their chase, Lesotho never recovered from a shaky start. Top scorer Lebona Leokaoko made 17 off 16, while Maaz Khan (16 off 7) and Gladwin Thamae (17 off 15) provided brief resistance. Captain Yahya Jakda scored 8 before the innings folded quickly.

Mozambique's bowlers shared the spoils effectively, with Jose Bulele claiming 3/23 in four overs and Egas Ndzeute taking 2/17. Joao Hou also contributed with the ball, picking up 1/12.

The result left Lesotho with two losses from two matches in the series and a challenging net run rate. Mozambique earned two crucial points from the victory.

Lesotho will look to bounce back when they face Eswatini later in the tri-series as they continue building experience in regional T20 competitions.

### Match Summary

- Mozambique 217/6 (20 overs) - Joao Hou 126
- Lesotho 107 (15.3 overs)
- Result: Mozambique won by 110 runs

The heavy defeat leaves Lesotho searching for improvements as the tri-series continues in Eswatini.

The tournament features hosts Eswatini, Lesotho and Mozambique in a round-robin format, with the top two teams progressing to the final scheduled for June 8.





# Likuena settle for 1-1 draw against Kenya in first friendly



### Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's senior national team, Likuena, fought back to earn a 1-1 draw against Kenya's Harambee Stars in the first of two international friendlies at Lucas Moripe Stadium in Gauteng, South Africa, on Thursday.

The match formed part of both teams' preparations for the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 qualifiers. It gave coaches Bob Atang Mafoso and Benni McCarthy a valuable chance to test their squads against competitive opposition.

Kenya took the lead through Frank Odhiambo, but Likuena responded with

an equaliser from Thabo Makhele in an entertaining contest.

The game also marked a proud milestone for young goalkeeper Leluma Mofoka, who made his senior debut for Likuena and delivered a composed performance between the posts.

The two sides will meet again in the second leg on Sunday, 7 June, at the same venue.

### Tough preparations for AFCON qualifiers

The friendlies come at a crucial time for Likuena as they prepare for a difficult Group A in the AFCON 2027 qualifiers, alongside World Cup-bound Morocco, Gabon and Niger. Mafoso's men intensified training this week ahead of the Kenyan double-header. Speaking

before the team's departure to South Africa, the coach acknowledged the higher-than-expected challenge.

"The challenge ahead is stronger than what we had initially prepared for," Mafoso said. "However, these matches will provide our players with an opportunity to test themselves at a higher level and help the team continue growing and adapting."

Thursday's encounter was only Mafoso's third official match in charge. The former African Stars coach took over the national team with a strong reputation from his successful spell in Namibia.

### Tactical battle of young coaches

On the opposite side stood Benni McCarthy, one of South Africa's football legends and a former strikers' coach at Manchester United. The clash pitted two of COSAFA's youngest national team coaches against each other in an intriguing tactical battle.

Despite the draw, both teams will be eager to claim bragging rights in Sunday's decisive second leg.

For Likuena, the focus remains on building momentum, correcting mistakes and laying a solid foundation ahead of the demanding AFCON 2027 qualifying campaign later this year.



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