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# AVALANCHE OF TROUBLE HITS AFRISKI — AGAIN

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*Afriski - (Picture Courtesy - Snow Report)*

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## Lekhetso Makhanya

After a brief period of calm following the resolution of a high-profile criminal case in early 2024, Afriski Mountain Resort, Lesotho's only ski facility, is once again facing legal turmoil.

This time, the challenge comes from within its own ranks: one of its key creditors and shareholders, South African businessman Oliver Roman Schwarnkhart, has filed a court application seeking to place the resort under judicial management.

Schwarnkhart, together with his company White Magnolia Holdings (PTY) Ltd, has lodged the application before the High Court's Northern Region Division in Tšifa li Mali, Leribe district.

In his filing, he cites mismanagement and financial irregularities at the mountain resort as grounds for the court to intervene and place the business under judicial supervision.

The fresh legal action comes just over two years after the resort appeared to have turned a corner. In January 2024, this publication reported that Afriski's Board of Directors had announced the resolution of a year-long police investigation and court case at the Magistrate Court of Botha-Bothe.

That earlier ordeal had seen director and legal representative Advocate Thabo Lerotholi, along with 14 employees, arrested on charges of property theft. However, the case was voluntarily withdrawn by the complainant following what the board described as "amicable discussions," paving the way for the resort to resume full operations.

"We are thrilled to share that preparations for the winter 2024 season are already underway, marking a promising comeback after challenges faced during the 2023 season," the board had stated at the time.

The resort had been forced to close its doors during the peak winter season in 2023 due to disputes exacerbated by load shedding from South Africa, resulting in limited operations. But with those legal matters resolved, the board had assured visitors of a vibrant and fully operational winter season in 2024, with all restaurant facilities functioning at their best.

Crucially, no staff or management were ever found guilty of theft, and the board had expressed unwavering support for its loyal and dedicated team, "many of whom have been with Afriski since its inception."

Now, barely two years later, the mountain resort finds itself back in legal crosshairs, this time from within its own shareholder ranks.

In his founding affidavit, Schwarnkhart alleges that Afriski's management has failed to provide audited annual financial reports to shareholders and the board of directors since 2021. He further claims the resort is struggling to pay its debts, including amounts owed to him personally as a creditor.

The legal action is brought under section 156 of the Companies Act No. 18 of 2011, which allows for judicial management when a company is unable to pay its debts due to mismanagement, and there exists a reasonable probability that judicial management could restore the company to financial health.

The Act states: "(a) By reason of mismanagement or for any other cause, the company is unable to pay its debts or is probably unable to meet its obligations, and has not become or is prevented from becoming a successful con-

# Avalanche of trouble hits Afriski — again



Afriski - (Picture Courtesy - Snow Report)

cern; and (b) there is a reasonable probability that, if placed under judicial management, the company will be able to pay its debts or meet its obligations and become a successful concern, the court may, if it is just and equitable, grant a judicial management order."

Schwarnkhart, described in court documents as a South African adult male from Morningside, Sandton, holds approximately 13.4 percent shareholding in Jala Holdings Limited and serves as a director and shareholder of White Magnolia Holdings. He is also a former director of the First Respondent, Jana Holdings Limited.

"I am a significant creditor of First and Fourth Respondents (Jala Holdings Limited and Afriski Mountain Resort), having advanced substantial working capital funding during the Covid-19 pandemic which remain unpaid despite demand," Schwarnkhart states in his affidavit.

The application names five respondents: Jala Holdings, Afriski and Leisure, Jala Investment Network, Afriski Mountain Resort, and Jala Utilities.

Schwarnkhart is seeking the court to appoint Phahlani Mkhombo as judicial manager in terms of Section 157(1) of the Companies Act.

In arguing against liquidation, Schwarnkhart emphasises the resort's national significance as a tourism asset, noting that it "enjoys the confidence of His Majesty King Letsie III."

The resort, situated at Mahlasela Pass in Botha-Bothe, employs over 150 people during peak winter months and generates more than 85 percent of its annual revenue during the three-month winter season when properly managed, according to court papers.

"The underlying business remains viable and profitable when Afriski is properly managed," Schwarnkhart contends, attributing the current distress to mismanagement and mala fides rather than inherent business failure.

He warns that liquidation would result in "catastrophic consequences for employees, creditors, the local community and the Lesotho tourism industry."

The application also provides historical context, noting that Afriski's origins trace back to the Maloti Ski Club founded near Mahlasela Pass in the 1960s. The resort was officially established in 2002 and has since built an international reputation as a premier alpine destination in Lesotho.

"The early pioneers of the Ski Club laid the foundation for what would become Afriski Mountain Resort," Schwarnkhart said. "Its reputation has been built on the back of its unique alpine experience, resort infrastructure, stunning mountain views combined with a range of winter and summer activities."

In many respects, he added, the resort has become "a brand that has become synonymous with tourism in Lesotho."

### Déjà Vu for Resort Management

The fresh legal battle echoes previous turbu-

lence at the resort. In October 2023, this publication had reported that the fight for ownership of Afriski took a nasty turn as director and legal representative Advocate Thabo Lerotholi and 14 resort employees appeared before the Botha-Bothe Magistrate Court charged with property theft.

Lerotholi, who had penned an explosive letter to the registrar of the High Court whistleblowing on possible corruption involving the Botha-Bothe police CID, accused the police at the time of unduly interfering in a civil claim they had no business in.

"I believe they are abusing their powers by being involved in what is supposed to be a civil matter between Afriski and Mr Bosman," he said then, warning that dragging the name of the resort into more legal issues would negatively affect the country's economy.

Those warnings now appear prophetic, though the nature of the legal threat has shifted from criminal proceedings to corporate governance concerns.

The applicants argue that judicial management is the appropriate remedy rather than liquidation, citing the resort's viability when properly managed and the severe economic consequences of closure.

Schwarnkhart asserts that his status as a shareholder entitles him to pose questions to the Board, particularly regarding "the lack of audited annual financial statements since 2021."

The High Court is expected to hear the matter on August 3, 2026.

**Newsday** (+266) 2231 4267 / 5945 8983

Carlton Centre  
3rd Floor  
Room 302  
Kingsway  
Maseru

MANAGING EDITOR  
Lerato Matheka  
managingeditor@newsdayonline.co.ls

NEWS EDITOR  
Kananelo Boloetse  
editor@newsdayonline.co.ls

PUBLISHER  
Newsday Media (Pty) (Ltd)  
Maseru

SUB EDITOR  
Bereng Mpaki

NEWS ROOM  
Ntsoaki Motaung  
Seabata Mahao  
Thoboloko Ntšonyane  
Lekhetso Makhanya

CONTRIBUTORS  
Theko Tlebere  
Motsamai Mokoljo

PRODUCTION  
Bataung Monaheng

VIDEOGRAPHER  
Tumelo Taole

DISTRIBUTION  
Lehlohonolo Mantsoe

MARKETING  
Tefah Sello  
Tumelo Ramotsoane  
marketing@newsdayonline.co.ls

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**Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

Advocate Fusi Sehapi has formally applied for the prestigious honour of King's Counsel (Silk), challenging the statutory 15-year waiting period as unconstitutional and discriminatory.

In an application dated July 1, 2026, addressed to the Chief Justice, Sehapi, argues that he has appeared in more than 20 high-profile matters before both the High Court, several of which have shaped Lesotho's legal jurisprudence.

He points to academic recognition of his work, including an article by constitutional law scholar Professor Hoolo 'Nyane analysing one of his cases.

He argues that the 15-year requirement violates constitutional protections against discrimination.

King's Counsel status is reserved for advocates who have distinguished themselves through exceptional legal practice, integrity, and contribution to the development of the law.

The most recent appointment was that of current Attorney-General Advocate Rapelang Motsieloa in July 2022.

Advocate Sehapi, who describes himself as holding "the highest leading record at least amongst my peers and/or even some seniors" in constitutional litigation, contends that waiting for the full 15-year period serves "no legitimate government purpose."

"Waiting for fifteen years o'clock to beat while one already qualifies for silk now is unjustified and serves no legitimate government purpose. On the other, it is purely punitive and demeaning to one's sense of self-worth (dignity)," Sehapi states in the application.

He points to South Africa as a comparator jurisdiction where the waiting period is only 10 years, and where exceptional practitioners like Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi SC were conferred the honour after just seven years as an "equitable exemption."

"The fact that foreign Advocates who are actually my peers and/or even juniors may be my seniors because they may or are actually conferred silk in ten years and/or lesser years as an exception to ten years unfairly subjects me to discriminatory cross-border legal practice in violation of my right to equal protection and benefit of the law," he argues.

Sehapi further submits that the discrimination subjects him to "unfair and unjustifiable discrimina-

# Sehapi applies for King's Counsel Status

## ... Challenges 15-year waiting period

tion based on birth or age of practice and national origin" and "indignity, unfair competition in trade, occupation and practice of my profession and provision of legal services."

The application lists an extensive portfolio of constitutional cases, including several that have shaped Lesotho's jurisprudence. Among them are matters involving the rights of acting teachers, the constitutionality of COVID-19 regulations, parliamentary procedures, and the recognition of class actions.

"I hold the highest leading record at least amongst my peers and/or even some seniors, of involvement in more than twenty (20) high profile constitutional cases. The said cases are of great importance in the shape and development of our jurisprudence in the High Court ordinary and in the High Court Constitutional," Sehapi writes.

Among the pending matters where Sehapi serves as applicant's counsel is Kananelo Boloetse and Another v. The Speaker of the National Assembly and Others, Constitutional Case No: 0023/2025, which he cites alongside other active constitutional challenges including Rastafarians v. Minister of Health and Christian Advocates and Others v. The Prime Minister of Lesotho.

Sehapi has also been involved in significant cases including Boloetse and Another v. The Speaker of the National Assembly and Others, Constitutional Case No: 14 of 2023, where he successfully argued that parliament cannot bind its successor and that bills not passed by a previous Parliament "die irretrievably" and cannot be resurrected by a subsequent Parliament. The Court upheld this argument, holding that all bills that had not been passed before the previous Parliament's life ended could not be

resurrected.

The applicant notes that he influenced class action proceedings even before they were finally recognised in the 10th Amendment to the Constitution in 2025.

Sehapi also says he has assisted pro deo in facilitating the admission of at least six lawyers in cross-border legal practice, including advocates from Lesotho and South Africa.

The advocate candidly acknowledges the personal toll of his practice.

"I have gone through a lot as a practitioner and have experienced serious moments of trauma, weakness, doubt, despair and a call to quit," he writes.

He cites his mentor, Advocate Zwelakhe Mda KC, as a source of encouragement, though noting that Mda did not initially support the idea of applying before the 15-year mark.

"I would really desire him and my mentor to witness me being conferred silk during their lifetime as my last parents after so many years of their mentorship and sacrifice of their time and resources providing for my livelihood, paying for my school fees and legal training," Sehapi writes.

The application also reveals personal challenges, including that the advocate lost his hearing after completing university.

"Upon completing my university I suffered a setback when I lost my hearing something which made my legal practice very hard as lawyers require five senses but in particular hearing and speech," he states.

He also shares that both his parents died "without witnessing my success in the legal practice."



**Advocate Fusi Sehapi**

This is not Sehapi's first attempt. In 2022, he challenged the constitutionality of the current KC appointment process and the 15-year post-admission requirement, describing it as discriminatory.

He also argued that the Law Society of Lesotho should play a formal role in identifying and forwarding suitable candidates to the King.

Sehapi, who has 13 years of practice and is only months short of the 15-year mark, maintains that his record already meets the standard expected of a King's Counsel.

His application is supported by a strong recommendation from K.J. Nthontho Attorneys, where he previously practised for three years.

"We had the opportunity to work closely with him and witness first-hand his exceptional legal ability, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to the highest standards of advocacy," the firm wrote.

The recommendation continues: "It is our considered opinion that Advocate Sehapi has demonstrated the distinction in advocacy, professional excellence, integrity and independence expected of those appointed as King's Counsel. We have no hesitation in offering our strongest and unqualified recommendation in support of his application."

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# Stitching Lesotho into the global economy

**How a small country used trade, discipline and the hard work of thousands of women to become one of Africa's top garment exporters**

**Lerato Matheka**  
Bird Story Agency

Every Wednesday morning at precisely 7:00, the Ministry of Trade and Industries' boardroom doors closed. Anyone arriving late stayed outside.

There were no lengthy speeches or bureaucratic excuses. Around the table sat the minister of trade, permanent secretary, directors, utility executives, immigration officials, bankers, factory owners and trade union representatives. For one hour every week, politics gave way to problem-solving with every discussion centred on one question: What was preventing Lesotho's factories from growing?

"There was one rule," recalls former Trade Minister Mpho Malie. "Once the meeting started, nobody was allowed in because they would disrupt us. That boardroom was a war room of intention to grow Lesotho's industries."

At the turn of the millennium, landlocked Lesotho had a small domestic market and an economy largely dependent on subsistence farming, remittances and government employment. Yet within a few years, its textile and apparel workforce grew from about 17,000 to around 54,000 workers, according to Malie, while garments became the country's largest private employer and one of its biggest export earners.

The catalyst was the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which granted qualifying African countries duty-free access to the United States market. But Malie argues AGOA alone did not transform Lesotho: "AGOA created the opportunity. We created the system."

That system changed the lives of thousands of Basotho women who had never heard of AGOA but whose livelihoods came to depend on it.

## The women behind the exports

Tokelo Thabane left her rural home in Botha-Bothe searching for work. Ten years later, she works at Global International, a garment factory producing denim for international and regional brands.

Like many factory workers, Thabane has worked in different departments and picked up many skills, making her one of the factory's most experienced employees. She smiles when she walks through shopping malls and spots Redbat jeans displayed on shelves.

"We manufacture Redbat," she says proudly.

"When I see those expensive brands in the shops, I always smile because I know those are the works of my hands and the people I work with."

Like many factory workers, she earns wages that support extended family members in the countryside. "The pay has never been enough," she says, "but I have learned how to budget well enough to support multiple families."

## Building an industry, not just factories

Malie says the government quickly realised that trade agreements alone would not attract investors. Factories also needed reliable electricity and water supplies, efficient immigration services, quick work permits, access to foreign currency, and responsive government institutions.

"Every Wednesday morning, each problem had someone responsible for it. We didn't want explanations; we wanted answers."

Trade unions, manufacturers and government officials were brought into the same



Nien Hsing Garments factory during knock off time. Cred. Lerato Matheka Bird Story Agency.

room. Many of the manufacturers were Taiwanese investors, who soon began recommending Lesotho to their international partners because government departments worked together and problems were resolved quickly.

One of the country's biggest successes was attracting a US\$100 million denim investment despite competition from neighbouring Eswatini.

The results were dramatic. Research by Anandita Dhaka of University College London found that textiles contributed about 19.2% of GDP by 2020, while during its strongest years, the industry accounted for roughly 60% of Lesotho's exports. The sector also dramatically expanded women's participation in formal employment.

Manufacturing remains the country's largest formal employer. According to the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), employment in assisted manufacturing companies fell from 51,325 workers in 2020 to 34,151 in 2024 following factory closures, weaker global demand and post-pandemic

restructuring.

LNDC Corporate Communications Manager Tiisetso Moremoholo says the country's next challenge is no longer simply attracting factories but building greater domestic value.

"Our role is to act as a catalyst for structural transformation by expanding exports, strengthening domestic productive capabilities, diversifying industry and helping Lesotho move up regional and global value chains," she says.

## A salary that changed everything

For workers such as Marethabile Qhooa, who left her rural home in Mafeteng believing Maseru offered possibilities unavailable in the countryside, employment brought dignity despite modest wages.

"As little as it was, it changed my life," she says. "There was dignity in knowing I could provide for my family."

Somafi Nyofane has spent seven years working as a quality controller.

"The factory changed my life," she says. "I can provide food for my family, but other daily needs remain difficult."



Workers Knocking off at Nien Hsing Garments Factory. Photo: Lerato Matheka, Bird Story Agency

Years on the production line have given her important technical experience, and she feels pride in her work: "Lesotho isn't recognised enough. Many people don't know that their jeans are assembled and stitched by the hands of Basotho women and men."

## When the machines fell silent

The COVID-19 pandemic marked the first major shock to an industry that had spent two decades expanding. Cancelled export orders, weaker consumer demand, higher shipping costs, and uncertainty around preferential trade arrangements such as AGOA forced factories to reduce shifts or close.

According to the Central Bank of Lesotho's 2025 Financial Stability Report, exports to the United States declined by 9.9%, more than 10,000 textile jobs were lost, and economic growth slowed to 1.3%.

US President Donald Trump's tariffs were another blow. First, an arbitrary 50% rate was applied, but this was then reduced to a 15% reciprocal tariff.

AGOA has been extended to December 2026, but the challenge remains. An analysis by the Overseas Development Institute argues that repeated short-term AGOA renewals create uncertainty for investors and disproportionately affect women, who make up most of Lesotho's garment workforce.

This sector of the workforce bears the greatest burden when production slows because women are often the primary earners supporting extended families.

Moremoholo argued that Lesotho's challenge is no longer simply to attract investment but to transform the structure of the economy by expanding exports, strengthening domestic productive capabilities, diversifying industry and moving up regional and global value chains.

"Our ambition comes against a difficult backdrop of the decline in employment. Our findings show employment in assisted manufacturing companies fell from 51,325 workers in 2020 to 34,151 in 2024, reflecting factory closures, weaker global demand, and the sector's ongoing adjustment after the pandemic. This challenge has informed the decision to turn LNDC into a catalyst for structural transformation rather than merely an investment facilitator."

Outside the factories, those pressures are visible.

After 17 years in the garment industry, Seloane Shemane recently lost her job. Every morning, she joins dozens of former workers waiting outside factory gates, hoping supervisors will call for workers with their skills.

"For seventeen years, this industry put bread on my table," she says, "today, many factories have closed, and we come here to queue and hope."

Economic Freedom Trade Union representative Tsepang Makakole says garment workers once sustained the wider economy.

"Factory workers with little education and low incomes carried Lesotho's economy on their shoulders," he says.

More than two decades after AGOA first opened the American market, Malie believes Africa's industrialisation debate still focuses too heavily on trade agreements rather than the institutions needed to support them.

"Investors wanted to know that if there was a problem with electricity, water, immigration or permits, someone would solve it," he says.

As African countries look to opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area, he argues that market access alone will not deliver industrialisation.

"A trade agreement opens the door," he says. "What matters is what you do after you walk through it."

Lesotho's garment industry may no longer be growing at the pace it once did, but its experience offers an enduring lesson: trade creates opportunity, while capable institutions and coordinated leadership turn opportunity into jobs, exports and economic transformation.

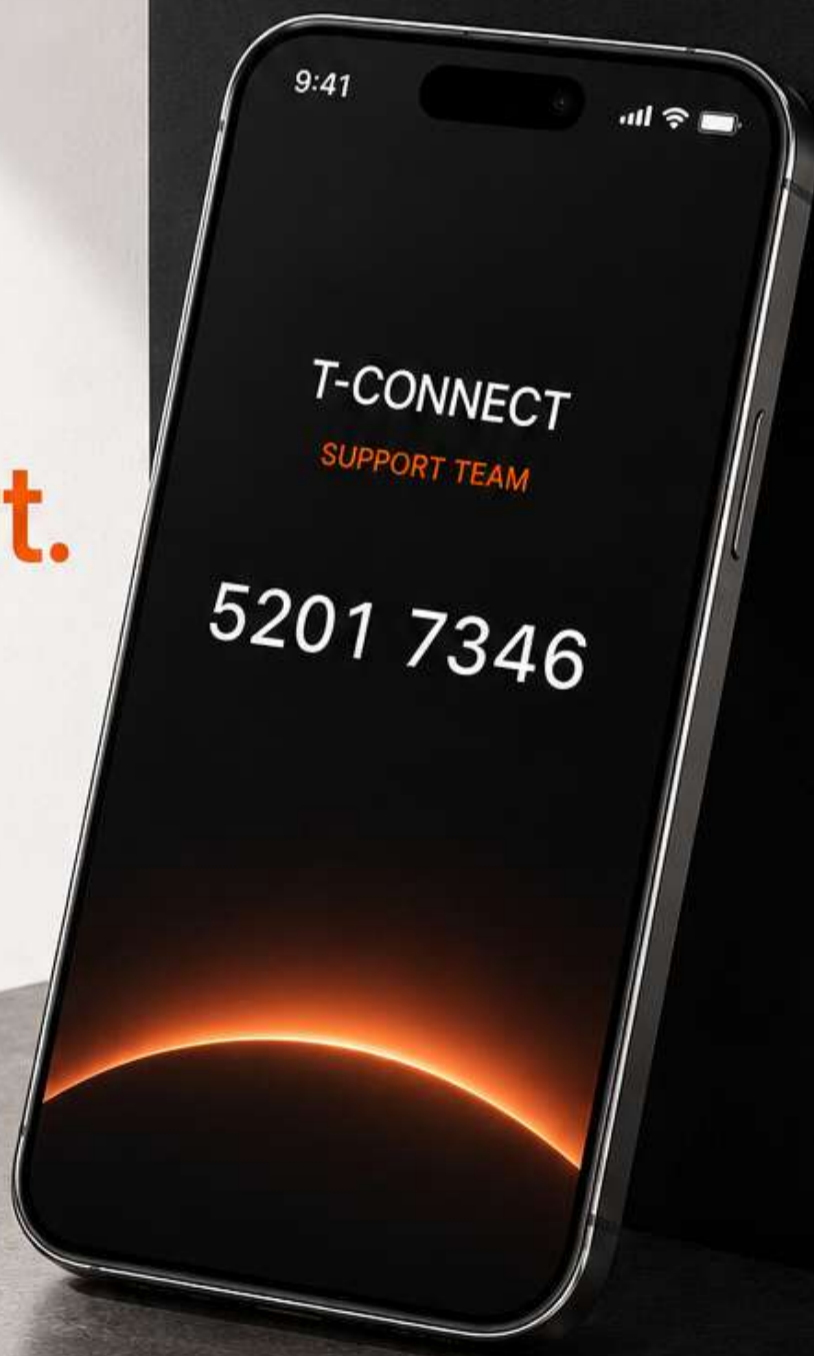
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# The flagship factory that was never built: Convalt's M17m US loan ends in settlement

**Sechaba Mokhethi**

Court records and public contracts from New York show that Convalt Energy's previous flagship manufacturing project never materialised despite receiving public funding and government support.

For nearly five years (2021 to 2026), Convalt Energy promoted plans to build a major solar panel manufacturing complex near Watertown International Airport in northern New York. Local authorities backed the venture with public land, development rights, infrastructure support and a \$1.05 million (about M17.4 million) loan.

But the factory was never built and the project ultimately ended in a loan default, a lawsuit against Convalt Energy and its founder, president and CEO Hari Achuthan, and a settlement requiring the company to repay public funds.

The failed solar manufacturing venture raises questions about Convalt's track record as it pursues what would be the largest foreign direct investment in Lesotho's history.

## A flagship manufacturing project

On 15 September 2021, Convalt Energy signed a Land Development Agreement with the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (JCIDA), a public economic development body in New York State.

The agreement gave Convalt rights to develop approximately 88 acres of publicly owned land near Watertown International Airport. According to the agreement, the company proposed a phased development of an "up to 500,000 square foot manufacturing facility" for solar panel manufacturing and solar power generation.

The plans included manufacturing buildings, energy-generation facilities, parking areas, stormwater systems and utility improvements.

As the project advanced, JCIDA granted Convalt an exclusive option to acquire the land, together with access rights for engineering studies and project planning. By November 2022, the agency had amended the agreement to allow preliminary site preparation work, including clearing, grading and other construction-related activities before the project formally closed.

The project was being promoted as a major manufacturing investment that would help establish a domestic solar supply chain in the United States.

## Public loan support

In July 2022, JCIDA provided Convalt with a US\$1.05 million loan to help finance the project.

A series of agreements signed on 12 July 2022, including a loan agreement and promissory note, required Convalt to repay the loan with interest at 3% per annum. The loan was due to mature on 12 May 2023, with monthly interest payments due before the principal became payable.

JCIDA did not rely solely on Convalt's promise to repay. Under a security agreement, it obtained a first-priority security interest over Convalt's assets, including equipment, inventory, accounts, intellectual property and future business assets.



JCIDA also required additional guarantees. Achuthan personally guaranteed the loan, while Convalt Manufacturing LLC and ACO Investment Group LLC signed unconditional guarantees undertaking to repay the debt if Convalt Energy failed to do so.

The extensive security arrangements suggest that JCIDA considered the loan significant enough to require both personal and corporate guarantees.

## The factory that never came

Despite the agreements, land access and public financing, the manufacturing facility never materialised. The project had originally envisaged construction of an approximately 300,000-square-foot factory on the Hounsfield site.

## Years later, it remained unbuilt.

According to a June 2026 report by the Watertown Daily Times, Convalt Energy ultimately defaulted on the JCIDA loan "after failing to build the 300,000-square-foot plant on the Route 12F site in the town of Hounsfield."

Instead of overseeing a completed manufacturing complex, local authorities found themselves pursuing repayment of public funds.

MNN asked Achuthan why the loan had not been repaid earlier and what led to the default.

He did not directly answer those questions, saying only that: "the project did not advance as planned due to state and county incentive commitments that were ultimately not delivered... circumstances outside Convalt's control".

The dispute soon escalated into formal legal action.

## Default notice

The breakdown of the relationship became public in October 2024.

On 3 October 2024, Justin S. Miller, an attorney acting for JCIDA, sent Achuthan a formal "Notice of Default, Expiration and Demand."

The agency informed Achuthan that Convalt had failed to make required payments for August, September and October 2024, totalling \$7,875. "Please also accept this letter as a notice of default and demand," JCIDA's attorneys wrote.

JCIDA warned that late charges would be imposed and that, unless the arrears and outstanding balances were paid, the loan would accelerate at a default interest rate of 10% until paid in full.

The agency also notified Convalt that

its rights under the land development agreement would expire on 1 November 2024.

## Lawsuit follows

Four months later, on 10 February 2025, JCIDA filed suit in New York Supreme Court against Convalt Energy, Convalt Manufacturing LLC, ACO Investment Group LLC and Hari Achuthan.

The complaint alleged that the defendants had failed to repay the public loan and sought recovery of outstanding amounts due under the various loan documents.

The lawsuit brought together the web of agreements executed in July 2022, including the promissory note, security agreement, guaranties and financing statements.

Convalt did not simply concede the claims.

In the defendants' May 2025 answer and counterclaims, the company and its co-defendants denied many of JCIDA's allegations and disputed aspects of the agency's claims.

Their attorneys repeatedly stated that documents referenced in the complaint "speak for themselves" and denied wrongdoing that could be inferred from the allegations.

The court filings show that the dispute remained active throughout much of 2025 and into 2026.

Despite the red flags, Achuthan has assured MNN that "this matter has no bearing whatsoever on our ability to finance or execute Project Kobong".

## Settlement negotiations

By March 2026, both parties were already informing the court that settlement discussions were underway.

In a settlement status letter to Justice William Ramseier dated 17 March 2026, Convalt's attorneys wrote that the parties had been "negotiating a settlement in good faith" and were reviewing a proposed settlement agreement.

A month later, on 15 April 2026, both sides told the court they were "close to resolving this matter" and requested additional time to finalise the deal.

The dispute ultimately resulted in a repayment arrangement.

According to the Watertown Daily Times, Convalt and JCIDA agreed a settlement package under which the company would repay the defaulted \$1.05 million loan. The paper reported

that JCIDA received an initial payment of \$125,000, with a second instalment due in November this year.

Responding to MNN, Achuthan said: "We reached an amicable settlement with JCIDA, have made our initial payment, and are fulfilling our remaining obligations on schedule."

Despite reports that the project never happened and the site remains "shovel-ready with a large pad to build on and sewer and water already available", Achuthan said Convalt invested more than \$5.5 million of its own capital into that site. MNN could not independently verify this claim.

## Case discontinued

On 8 June 2026, the parties formally ended the litigation, four days after signing an agreement with Lesotho.

A stipulation of discontinuance filed in Jefferson County Supreme Court states that the lawsuit was discontinued with prejudice and without costs to either party.

The filing indicates that the dispute was resolved, although the settlement terms themselves were not included in the court documents reviewed by MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Importantly, the discontinuance does not change the central facts documented by the case.

Convalt received public support, development rights and a \$1.05 million publicly backed loan to help advance a major solar manufacturing project. The planned factory was never built, the loan went into default, and local authorities ultimately sued to recover the money before reaching a settlement.

**This article is republished with permission from the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, where it was first published on July 2, 2026.**



# Questions over vetting process as Lesotho signs M98bn Kobong deal



## Sechaba Mokhehi

The company selected to develop what could become Lesotho's largest-ever foreign direct investment has a track record that raises important questions about the government's due diligence before signing a binding agreement with New York Convalt Energy.

The company denies wrongdoing, while the Lesotho government assures Basotho that proper checks were done before signing the deal.

The M98 billion (US\$6.2 billion) project, known as Project Kobong, promises 1,200 megawatts of hydropower generation and an integrated AI data centre that would position Lesotho as a regional energy exporter.

But has Convalt Energy, the company selected for the project, ever delivered a project like this?

MNN put questions to both Convalt and the Lesotho government about the company's track record, previous litigation and the safeguards protecting Lesotho should the project fail. Both rejected suggestions that the agreement exposes the country to undue risk.

Convalt founder and chief executive Hari Achuthan told MNN that the company's management team had structured and executed transactions worth more than US\$30 billion during their careers. He also said Convalt had "developed landmark renewable energy projects, including one of the largest solar projects in Southeast Asia."

When MNN asked whether he was referring to the Mandalay Solar Project, which is listed on Convalt's website as a US\$250 million investment in Southeast Asia, Achuthan did not respond. But his advisor, Victoria Harmon of VL Harmon Advisors, later confirmed that Achuthan referred to Mandalay.

MNN reviewed the ten power-generation projects listed on Convalt's website. Eight, including Kobong, are described as "under development", one as "operating" and one as "sold".

Convalt's legal history court documents filed in New York reveal that Convalt and its founder, president and CEO, Hari Achuthan, were previously named in a civil lawsuit alleging their involvement in a scheme involving stolen bitcoin miners and millions of dollars in cryptocurrency proceeds between 2020 and 2022.

The allegations were never tested in court. In January 2023, New York Supreme Court Judge Richard Mott dismissed the claims against Achuthan and his two companies,

Convalt and ACO Investment Group, after finding that the plaintiffs had failed to serve the court papers properly. As a result, the court never considered the evidence or ruled on whether the allegations were true.

Under Achuthan's leadership, Convalt Energy also defaulted on a \$1.05 million (M17.4 million) loan it took to finance a solar panel manufacturing plant near Watertown International Airport in northern New York. This plant was never built.

The lender sued. The case ended in a settlement under which Convalt agreed to pay US\$125,000, with a second payment due in November this year. Court papers filed by Convalt do not dispute that it defaulted on the loan.

### The litigation

The lawsuit was filed in 2022 by MinedMap Inc. and Serenity Alpha LLC, two bitcoin mining companies in Nevada.

The two companies alleged that Michael Maranda, a New York businessman, and several associates fraudulently obtained 2,380 bitcoin miners, misappropriated a \$462,000 (M7.6 million) deposit intended for electricity costs, and mined more than \$12.4 million (M205 million) worth of bitcoin.

The complaint alleged that Achuthan had a broader business relationship with Maranda than simply providing services. It claimed that the two men jointly owned or established several companies connected to the dispute, including Northway Mining, RPNY Holdings and Rouses Point Data Centre.

While denying that Achuthan or his companies were involved in any fraud, court paper filed by Conway Attorneys did not dispute that Achuthan had business dealings with Maranda. Conway argued that there is no evidence that Achuthan or his companies knowingly received stolen bitcoin or participated in a conspiracy. He said many of the allegations were disputed and should not be accepted as fact.

He argued that the plaintiffs had "frivolously named additional defendants" simply because they had "done business with Northway or Maranda in any capacity within the last few years".

Those allegations are significant considering that the company has signed a binding memorandum of agreement with Lesotho's Ministry of Energy for Project Kobong.

Achuthan told MNN that Lesotho faced little financial risk because Project Kobong would be privately financed without government guarantees.

"Convalt is assuming the project risk," he

said, adding that financing arrangements were being formalised and would be disclosed once the feasibility study had been completed.

### How the alleged scheme worked

The MinedMap and Serenity Alpha complaint repeatedly refers to data-centre entities that the plaintiffs alleged were used to host and conceal their bitcoin miners.

The complaint also cites evidence from a Coinmint supervisor who allegedly told a witness that Maranda's bitcoin miners were being hosted under a variety of company names, including Hudson Data Center and Oswego Data.

These entities were, according to the complaint, allegedly used to disguise the true ownership of those bitcoin miners.

In their court filing, MinedMap and Serenity Alpha alleged that Michael Maranda formed companies with no legitimate business purpose to conceal bitcoin miners they claimed had been fraudulently taken from them and other third parties.

### The allegations against Achuthan

They also alleged that Maranda transferred miners obtained from them to Achuthan and his companies, and that, between 2021 and the filing of the lawsuit, he transferred more than US\$100,000 to Achuthan, ACO Investment Group and Convalt. MinedMap and Serenity Alpha further alleged that Achuthan knew, or should have known, that Maranda's businesses were not legitimate.

Summarising the plaintiffs' case, Justice Richard Mott wrote that they alleged the Achuthan defendants had "received and profited from Plaintiffs' bitcoin which they knew had been fraudulently obtained by Settling Defendants under the guise of a bitcoin mining contract."

Justice Mott did not rule on the allegations. Instead, in January 2023, he dismissed the claims because the plaintiffs failed to serve the court papers within the required time.

As a result, the court never considered the evidence or decided whether the allegations were true.

Responding to MNN's questions, Achuthan said: "The claims against Convalt Energy and its affiliates were dismissed by the court, which correctly determined that our role was limited to that of a vendor and electrical service provider"

However, the judgment itself does not make that finding. It dismissed the claims on procedural grounds. It did not determine whether the allegations were true or false.

**A \$3.8 million settlement, but not for**

## Achuthan

In September 2022, MinedMap and Serenity Alpha settled their claims against Michael Maranda and several companies linked to him, including Northway Mining, Hudson Data Center, RPNY Holdings, Rouses Point Data Center and Oswego Data.

The settlement says the agreement was reached to avoid the cost and uncertainty of litigation and "shall not be deemed an admission of wrongdoing."

The agreement specifically excluded Achuthan, ACO Investment Group and Convalt Energy, allowing the lawsuit to continue against them. However, months later, Judge Richard Mott dismissed the claims against those three defendants on procedural grounds.

### Was Convalt Energy vetted properly for Lesotho project?

Principal Secretary Tankiso Phapano said government first engaged with Achuthan in Morocco last year before he submitted a proposal. This was scrutinised before Lesotho sent Convalt a letter of intent and later signed an agreement allowing the company to do feasibility studies.

Minister of Energy, Lejone Mpotjoane, told MNN that assessments of the proposed project extended beyond reviewing the written proposal.

According to the minister, Achuthan told government he had experience operating energy projects in Asia and was establishing solar panel manufacturing and a data centre in New Mexico. The minister said Lesotho's Chargé d'Affaires in Washington visited the New Mexico site to verify those claims.

Government was aware of the previous litigation against Convalt.

"Yes, we noted that Convalt was involved in some litigations in the USA. This is not abnormal in businesses, and we asked him. He explained what transpired and that the issue is now closed," said Mpotjoane who stressed that Lesotho was not putting any money into the Kobong project, which limits Lesotho's financial exposure.

Convalt, he added, has also been given milestones to meet and the memorandum of agreement would become "null and void" if those were not achieved. The minister added that construction would not begin before feasibility studies had been concluded and implementation agreements, including water-use plans, had been concluded.

Meanwhile, the United States Embassy spokesperson, Jessica Tosoriero, also confirmed that the embassy helped Convalt secure introductions to the Lesotho government.

Following MNN's meeting with the embassy, it posted on Facebook that Convalt had completed pre-feasibility studies, was accelerating work on the final feasibility study and was assembling a consortium of banks to finance the project.

It added: "Unlike others, U.S. companies build on solid foundations with proper research and planning. This is how U.S. companies deliver what they promise, and benefit the people and places where they operate."

MNN has since learned that the embassy only aimed to promote US business overseas. Due diligence was not their role.

**This article is republished with permission from the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism, where it was first published on July 2, 2026.**





## Seabata Mahao

The Bacha Entrepreneurship Project (BEP) has launched its 2026 edition with a reduced funding allocation of M1 million, down from the M1.4 million that was announced for the 2025 cohort, raising questions about the programme's financial trajectory despite its growing importance in addressing Lesotho's youth unemployment crisis.

The entrepreneurship initiative, jointly implemented by the Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO), Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) and Standard Lesotho Bank (SLB), officially opened applications on July 1, with organisers urging unemployed young Basotho to seize the opportunity to become job creators rather than job seekers.

Applications will close on August 28, 2026, with the programme targeting Basotho aged between 21 and 35 who have completed the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC), Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) or higher qualifications and are currently unemployed.

Although this year's funding has been reduced by approximately 29 percent from the previous year's allocation, the partners say the programme remains committed to nurturing viable businesses capable of contributing to Lesotho's economic growth.

A total of M1 million has been earmarked to finance successful business proposals, while an outreach campaign covering all ten districts will run from July 13 in Mafeteng to August 7 in Maseru to encourage applications from aspiring entrepreneurs.

The project, established in 2014 as a corporate social responsibility initiative, has become one of Lesotho's flagship youth enterprise development programmes.

According to the organisers, the initiative has invested approximately M10.4 million in seed capital over the past 12 years, supporting the establishment of 38 businesses across various sectors of the econ-

# Youth entrepreneurship fund slashed



**BEDCO Executive Head of Enterprise Development, Lemphane Lesoli**

omy. Those enterprises have created more than 200 jobs while maintaining a reported 71 percent business survival rate.

Speaking during the launch in Maseru, RSL Head of Strategic Partnerships and Public Relations PhelloMphana described the programme as an investment in people rather than simply funding businesses.

"At RSL, our mission is to mobilise revenue for national development. But revenue grows where innovation and entrepreneurship thrive," Mphana said.

He said the project seeks to remove barriers that prevent many young Basotho from accessing

finance, business skills and professional networks.

"Too many young Basotho are held back by a lack of access, whether to funding, skills or networks. With this project, we say: No more. We are investing in dreams."

He added that the three institutions intended to remain long-term partners in the entrepreneurs' growth journey.

"This is your moment. We are walking this journey with you, not just as sponsors, but as partners in purpose and progress."

BEDCO Executive Head of Enterprise Development, Lemphane Lesoli said the programme goes

beyond financial support by equipping entrepreneurs with practical business skills before funding decisions are made.

"We will be selecting 50 applicants for an intensive training programme. From these, the top five will receive financial support and three years of dedicated mentorship," Lesoli said.

He noted that applicants will undergo incubation training to refine their business concepts, business plans and pitching skills before final adjudication.

Lesoli stressed that commitment would be a decisive factor during selection.

"We have seen many good ideas fail due to a lack of genuine interest. We want to invest in those who are not only innovative but truly dedicated to growing their businesses."

The project is open to unemployed Basotho nationals and qualifying start-up businesses that have operated for less than three years and require expansion capital.

Business proposals will not be limited to specific sectors but will instead be assessed on innovation, commercial viability, sustainability and the strength of the overall business case.

Applicants are required to submit comprehensive business plans covering executive summaries, operational plans, market analysis, sales strategies, management structures and financial projections.

Submissions will be accepted exclusively through BEDCO's online application platform, with supporting documents emailed electronically. No physical applications will be considered.

The organisers say the project remains an important intervention at a time when youth unemployment continues to pose one of Lesotho's most pressing socio-economic challenges.

# Taxpayers warned over late filing

Press Club engagement hosted jointly by RSL and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Lesotho Chapter at the RSL Social Club.

The engagement brought together members of the media and key stakeholders to discuss tax compliance, review progress made during the filing season and highlight the importance of timely submission of annual income tax returns by individuals, businesses and sole proprietors.

Mohale Motenalapi, RSL's Senior Marketing and Client Education Officer reminded taxpayers that paying taxes is both a legal obligation and a vital contribution to Lesotho's social and economic development.

"We are urging all individuals, businesses and sole proprietors to immediately submit their Income Tax Returns and settle any outstanding balances to avoid severe financial penalties," said Motenalapi.

He said taxpayers should not wait until the last minute to fulfil their filing obligations, noting that

annual tax return submission is a statutory requirement that should be observed consistently.

Motenalapi warned that existing tax legislation provides for automatic penalties, interest and additional taxes on late submissions and outstanding payments, adding that such charges cannot be waived where negligence is involved.

He said RSL continues to strengthen taxpayer support services, including online platforms, to make filing more convenient and reduce the need for visits to physical offices.

"We advise everyone not to wait until the final hours on June 30. Filing early online ensures that any system bottlenecks or documentation errors can be resolved before additional taxes kick in," he said.

He added that taxpayers requiring assistance can access step-by-step filing guides, tax credit calculators and digital payment platforms through the official RSL website.

On her part, RSL's Public Relations Manager,

Tšepang Mncina, stressed that tax compliance is a shared national responsibility that directly supports government service delivery.

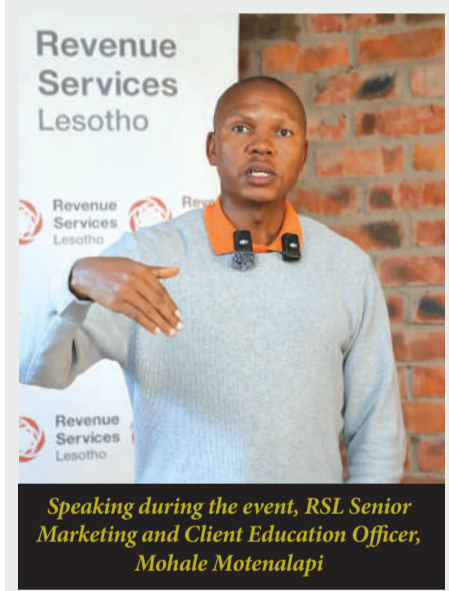
"Taxes collected by government support the delivery of essential public services, including health care, education, infrastructure development, security and social protection programmes," Mncina said.

She urged taxpayers to submit accurate returns and make payments on time to avoid penalties, additional taxes and unnecessary inconvenience.

Mncina also underscored the importance of voluntary tax compliance in creating a fair and sustainable tax system where every taxpayer contributes towards national development.

"As part of our ongoing commitment to improving service delivery, we continue to invest in digital transformation and taxpayer support services. We encourage taxpayers to make use of the available online platforms, offices and support channels for guidance and assistance throughout the filing season."

RSL said its ongoing taxpayer education campaign is intended to improve voluntary compliance by encouraging taxpayers to file accurate annual returns on time, utilise digital services and seek assistance where necessary, thereby avoiding unnecessary penalties and contributing to national development.



**Speaking during the event, RSL Senior Marketing and Client Education Officer, Mohale Motenalapi**

## Seabata Mahao

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL) is encouraging taxpayers to make annual income tax return filing a routine obligation, warning that failure to comply with tax laws attracts automatic penalties, interest charges and additional taxes.

This message was reinforced during a recent

### ESTATE NOTICE

#### ESTATE LATE UMPHILE KING MATELA B120/26

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 61(b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.21 of 2024, calling upon all creditors of the deceased to lodge their claims with the administrator of the deceased's estate within 30 days of this publication.

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

ADDRESS: MATEBELLO HILDA MATELA MAKHUNOANE  
BOTHABOTHE CONTACT 266 63403519

### ESTATE NOTICE

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

#### ESTATE LATE MAMOTHIBELI JEANET MOKHESENG E753/2026

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: P.O.Box 499 MAZENOD 160 UPPER QEME HA MPO  
MASERU CELL NO. (+266) 58808856  
NAME: MOTHIBELI JOEL MOKHESENG ADMINISTRATOR

### ESTATE NOTICE

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

#### ESTATE LATE MASECHABA MARIA LITABE E710/2026

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: HA-MABOTE MASERU 100  
CELL NO. (+266) 59462641  
NAME: LITABE LITABE ADMINISTRATOR

### ESTATE NOTICE

ESTATE LATE MOTHIBELI ELIA MALATALIANA

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: LD NTSOERENG CHAMBERS CARLTON CENTER ROOM 302, 3RD FLOOR  
CELL NO. (+266) 51606998  
NAME: THATO M MATHEKA  
ADMINISTRATOR

# Letshego revamps Mohale's Hoek branch operations

## Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Letshego has reopened its revamped Mohale's Hoek branch as part of its ongoing investment in improving customer service and expanding access to its financial and insurance products across Lesotho.

The upgraded branch is designed to provide customers with a more efficient and seamless service experience, whether they are reviewing existing policies, opening new accounts or exploring the company's growing range of financial solutions.

Chief Executive Officer Selloane Tsike said the refurbished branch will operate in line with Letshego's other branches nationwide, offering a full suite of services aimed at meeting customers' evolving financial needs.

Branch Manager Seetsa Matlama thanked customers for their continued loyalty and support, saying the branch's growth had been made possible by the confidence the community has placed in the company over the years.

He said the upgraded facilities reflect Letshego's commitment to delivering faster, more convenient and customer-focused services to clients in Mohale's Hoek and surrounding areas.

Matlama also encouraged customers to use credit responsibly, stressing that debt should be taken only for worthwhile purposes that improve people's livelihoods and financial well-being.



Sales and Distribution Manager Thabang Mapena said the reopening demonstrates Letshego's continued commitment to serving Basotho through innovative financial solutions.

He noted that since entering the Lesotho market, the company has expanded its portfolio to include four product offerings spanning insurance and banking services, giving customers greater access to financial products tailored to their needs.

The area chief of Phamong, Makhaola Theko, welcomed the branch upgrade, saying it would improve access to financial services and contribute to the socio-economic devel-

opment of Mohale's Hoek.

Beyond its commercial activities, Letshego also reaffirmed its commitment to corporate social responsibility through a donation to the local correctional facility.

The company donated cosmetics, hygiene products and washing soap to inmates after Matlama visited the facility and learned about the challenges faced by those incarcerated.

The donation aims to improve hygiene, dignity and everyday living conditions for inmates by providing essential items identified during the visit.

Letshego has continued to strengthen its

position in Lesotho's financial sector. In August 2025, it became the country's first and only licensed Tier 1 deposit-taking micro-finance institution after receiving approval from the Central Bank of Lesotho. The licence allows the company to accept customer deposits and broaden its savings and investment offerings, which were launched in June 2026.

The company now operates five branches across Lesotho, located in Maseru, Leribe, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Botha-Bothe, as it continues to expand its national footprint and improve access to financial services.

## Seabata Mahao

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL) has expanded its digital inclusion programme by donating information and communication technology (ICT) equipment and internet connectivity to Starlight Oasis of Hope Hospice, a move aimed at improving the facility's operations and strengthening the delivery of palliative care services.

The donation forms part of the company's broader corporate social investment strategy of using technology to support institutions that provide essential community services.

The equipment, handed over by ETL's Acting General Manager for Communications and Customer Experience, Puleng 'Mathabo Masoabi, includes laptops, desktop computers, a projector, a conference monitor and a printer.

ETL has also committed to providing internet connectivity to the hospice to improve communication, access to digital resources and coordination of patient care.

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Masoabi said technology plays a vital role in strengthening institutions that serve vulnerable communities.

"We believe meaningful connectivity goes beyond providing communication services. It should create lasting social impact by empowering institutions that transform lives," she said.

"Today's handover reflects our shared commitment to equipping organisations such as Starlight Oasis of Hope Hospice with the tools they need to continue delivering hope, comfort and dignity to some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

"At ETL, we recognise the extraordinary work being led by the hospice's founder, Tebello 'Malichaba Lepheane, and her dedicated team. Through technology and reliable internet connectivity, we are proud to support their mission and strengthen their ability to reach

# Econet boosts hospice care with digital technology donation



*Econet expands digital inclusion drive with technology donation to Lesotho's first hospice*

and serve even more Basotho."

The hospice expects the donation to improve administrative efficiency, record management and communication with healthcare professionals, patients and partner organisations.

Founder Tebello 'Malichaba Lepheane said the support comes at an important stage in the organisation's growth.

"This support from ETL and our valued

partners comes at a pivotal moment for our organisation. The digital equipment and internet connectivity will significantly improve our administrative efficiency, strengthen communication and enable our team to better coordinate the care and support we provide to those who depend on our services," she said.

The initiative was welcomed by the Acting Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Health, 'Malitsoanelo Monyobi, who commended ETL

for supporting healthcare delivery through public-private collaboration and reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to expanding access to quality palliative care.

The handover also marked the completion of Phase I of the hospice project, following nearly two years of fundraising, construction and collaboration between public, private and non-profit partners.

Located at Maqhaka in Berea, about 16.9 kilometres north of Maseru, Starlight Oasis of Hope Hospice is Lesotho's first dedicated palliative and hospice care facility. It provides specialised care for patients living with life-limiting illnesses, including cancer, HIV and other chronic conditions, focusing on pain management, emotional support and holistic care.

Founded by Mosotho palliative care nurse Tebello 'Malichaba Lepheane, who returned home after more than 20 years of practice in the United Kingdom, the hospice was established as a non-governmental organisation in Lesotho in 2017.

It is also registered in the United Kingdom with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and operates under governance structures in both countries.



## Thaba Tseka youth speak out: "Our parents are selling us"



Youth in Thaba Tseka Blame Parents' Lack of Information for Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence..

### Ntsoaki Motaung

In a candid and at times heated meeting, young people in Thaba Tseka district sharply criticised parents for their role in perpetuating child marriage and gender-based violence (GBV), saying outdated mindsets and economic pressures continue to endanger girls' futures.

The inter-ministerial meeting, held on Wednesday evening and attended by government officials, police, development partners including UNFPA, and youth representatives, gave young voices a direct platform to confront those in positions of power.

#### "Our parents are still stuck in the past"

Youth representative Likabo Lekhanya was uncompromising in her assessment. She placed much of the blame on parents who, she said, have failed to adapt to modern realities and the challenges facing today's youth.

"Our parents are still stuck in the past and have not been moving with generations to understand the current time and the challenges that face youth in this generation," Lekhanya said.

She painted a troubling picture of how some parents, often unknowingly, allow or even facilitate child marriages.

"Our parents sell us. In other times they are not even aware that they are selling us. This happens because in the district we live with many illegal miners who have a lot of money, and when such a man comes into their home and requests to marry a girl in the family, without even asking their age, they accept a huge sum of money. Just like that, they have sold their young girl to marriage without even thinking that it is illegal," she explained.

Lekhanya added that many girls are married off to much older men they neither know nor are attracted to.

#### Girls' own vulnerabilities

While holding parents accountable, Lekhanya acknowledged that girls also contribute to the problem.

"We as girls also contribute because in some cases we allow that to happen due to lack of self-esteem and also not standing for what we really want."

Poverty, she said, is another reason why girls accept early marriage. "By getting married, girls believe they will live the life they envy from other people or even their peers who got married before them."

Lekhanya shared that it is not only illegal miners who prey on girls. "We do not only become victims of violence because of illegal miners, but also our teachers, taxi drivers, and police engage in intimate relationships with us, and we agree because we want to afford what our friends can. These are some of the things that increase cases of early and unintended pregnancies," she said.

#### Nightclubs and parental oversight

Another youth representative, Likopo Raliforo, highlighted the dangers of underage children frequenting nightclubs.

"Nightclubs have become a major problem. Underage children go there, meet older men, and end up in sexual activities in exchange for money. GBV is very high in the district, and a lot happens at night," she warned.

Amohelang Mosiuoa, also speaking for the youth, called for collective responsibility. She urged stakeholders to educate parents, community leaders, and perpetrators, while emphasising that girls must build confidence to reject exploitative advances.

"When an older man proposes, we must say a firm no and be ready to report him," Mosiuoa said. She described how many men abandon girls after pregnancies, leaving them

depressed, fearful of telling their parents, and at risk of unsafe abortions.

#### Alarming statistics

National data from the Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) supports the young people's concerns. Nationally, 19 percent of women aged 20–24 were married before age 18. In Thaba Tseka, the figure rises to approximately 23 percent, among the highest in the country.

Similarly, while 18 percent of women aged 15–19 nationally have begun childbearing, the rate in Thaba Tseka stands at 22 percent.

#### Rural areas even more at risk

According to 'Mamanello Holomo, Member of Parliament (MP) for Thaba Tseka, the problem is even worse in hard-to-reach areas where information is scarce. "The most problem is in hard-to-reach areas where lack of information is still an issue. Dialogues like these should not only be held in town but must also reach youth in remote areas. Because if not, those people in hard-to-reach areas keep being left behind," she said.

#### "Move from Point A to Point B"

District Administrator Tlali Mphafi challenged everyone in the room to take ownership of the district's transformation. "If you are uncomfortable at the state that you are in, it is your sole responsibility to change your state. No one is going to move you. Now, we are gathered here today because we want to move our district from point A to point B, maybe to point C," he said, sharing a story of a woman who succeeded with limited resources to underscore the importance of initiative.

'Maseretse Ratiea from UNFPA placed the focus squarely on the youth. "You need to know that you are the core and you should be the one speaking more than any other person in this room. This discussion is about how to

empower young people, how to prevent gender-based violence, how to prevent early and unintended pregnancies, and new HIV infections among young people in Thaba Tseka district," she said.

#### Police frustration: arrest, bail, repeat

The Deputy Station Commander for Thaba Tseka Police Station voiced the frustration of law enforcement, highlighting the risks girls face after leaving nightclubs and the revolving door of justice.

"It is very painful to travel harsh terrains to go and arrest a perpetrator only for them to get free bail after they have wronged and violated a child or woman. After that bail, they go back to the same village, house, and continue with the same thing," he said.

#### "The internet is a horrible teacher"

UNFPA Representative John Kennedy Mosoti urged parents to break the silence on sensitive topics rather than leave their children to learn from the internet.

"If we are the grown-ups who are in this space and we can't talk about this, either amongst ourselves or with our children, then definitely we will not do well with our children or the people we plan to provide this information to," he said.

Mosoti shared his personal experience of talking to his daughters about sex from age 10 and giving them condoms at age 14.

"Change has to start from us. If we can't talk about this, then it's difficult for me to talk to somebody else about it. If you do not tell your children, they will land on the internet. And the internet is a horrible teacher," he warned.

#### What the Law Says

Lesotho has legislative frameworks in place to address GBV, child marriage, and the protection of young people's health and rights.

**The Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2011** sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 18. Any marriage involving a person under 18 is illegal and void unless authorized by a court in exceptional circumstances.

**The Sexual Offences Act of 2003** criminalizes rape, sexual assault, and other forms of sexual violence, introducing stiffer penalties for offences against children.

While there is no specific law solely focused on early and unintended pregnancy, Lesotho's legal framework, including the Penal Code and the Children's Protection and Welfare Act, provides protections for children's rights, access to health care, and criminalizes sexual relations with minors.

Internationally, Lesotho is a signatory to **the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, requiring states to protect children from all forms of abuse and exploitation, including child marriage.

**The country is also signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, committing countries to eliminate discrimination against women and girls, including harmful practices like child marriage and GBV.

**It is also signatory to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, which sets 18 as the minimum age for marriage and calls for the protection of children from harmful practices.

The meeting concluded with a unified call for collaboration between government, communities, parents, and youth to educate, empower, and protect young people. The message from Thaba Tseka's youth was clear: parents must evolve, and everyone must act decisively to end child marriage and gender-based violence.



### Ntsoaki Motaung

A comprehensive study published in Scientific Reports has uncovered devastating spatial disparities in perinatal mortality across Lesotho, with the national rate standing at 46.1 deaths per 1,000 births, significantly higher than regional and global averages.

The research, which analysed data from the 2023/24 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey, found that perinatal mortality is “significantly clustered,” with hotspots concentrated in the western parts of Leribe, Berea, and Maseru, as well as northern Botha-Bothe District.

“The overall prevalence of perinatal mortality in Lesotho was 46.1 per 1000 (95 percent CI: 35, 53), which varies from district to district, with the highest prevalence shown in Botha-Bothe (74.24 per 1000), whereas the lowest was in the Berea district (25.97 per 1000),” the authors reported.

The study paints a grim picture of pregnancy outcomes in the small Southern African nation, where approximately 60,000 babies are born annually, about 200 per day, including roughly three stillbirths and six neonatal deaths daily.

“Perinatal mortality is a major public health challenge in many developing countries and has profound social, economic, and health implications for families and broader society,” the researchers wrote.

The mortality rate exceeds that of Ethiopia (33 per 1,000) and Nigeria (42 per 1,000), and stands in stark contrast to developed nations like the Netherlands (4.6/1,000) and North America (7/1,000).

Dr. Kassaw Chekole Adane, the lead author from Wollo University in Ethiopia, and colleagues identified several modifiable risk factors with strong spatial associations: advanced maternal age (35-49), cigarette smoking, history of terminated pregnancy, childbearing before age 18, and male household headship.

The study found that older mothers face significantly elevated risks, particularly in Leribe, Berea, Maseru, and Mafeteng districts. The researchers explained that “as maternal age increases, the risk of adverse pregnancy conditions such as pregnancy-induced hypertension, antepartum hemorrhage, cesarean delivery, preterm delivery, low birth weight, and premature rupture of membranes also rises.”

Cigarette smoking emerged as a powerful predictor, strongly increasing perinatal mortality risk in Botha-Bothe, Leribe, and Berea districts. “Smoking cigarettes leads to low birth weight, preterm delivery, spontaneous abortion, stillbirth, fetal death, and sudden infant death syndrome,” the study notes.

The analysis revealed that mothers who gave birth

# Lesotho’s perinatal mortality hotspots exposed

**New research reveals alarming geographic disparities in pregnancy-related deaths, with some districts showing nearly three times the mortality rate of others.**



Picture Courtesy - Gettyimages

before age 18 face significantly higher risks, with the strongest effects observed in Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng, and Mohale-Hoek districts. “Adolescent mothers are more likely to have premature and low birth weight babies, which are an important cause or contributor to perinatal mortality,” the authors explained.

Perhaps unexpectedly, the study found that male-headed households showed a negative association with perinatal mortality in some districts, a finding the researchers suggest may reflect cultural barriers to healthcare access.

“In many societies, male household heads were the primary decision makers regarding the use of contraceptives, emergency obstetric services, antenatal care, and delivery care, which results in a delay seeking care due to a need to obtain permission

and funding from him,” the study states.

The researchers employed sophisticated Multi-scale Geographically Weighted Regression (MGWR) analysis, which explained 54.73 percent of the spatial variation in perinatal mortality, a method allowing each risk factor to operate at its own geographic scale.

“The presence of multiple bandwidths in MGWR allowed the model to account for an optimal number of neighbours to estimate each parameter, which allowed better estimation of the correlation of the independent and dependent variables,” the authors noted.

Lead investigator Adane’s team emphasises that spatial clustering requires geographically focused solutions rather than blanket national approaches.

“Due to the spatial clustering of perinatal deaths,

targeted, geographically focused interventions are crucial, especially in hotspot areas like Leribe, Berea, Maseru, and the northern parts of Botha-Bothe District, to lower perinatal mortality and promote equitable health outcomes,” the researchers concluded.

The study offers specific recommendations for policymakers. Prioritise genetic counseling, improve access to tertiary care for delivery, and raise awareness of risks, especially for older mothers in Maseru, Mafeteng, Berea, Mohale-Hoek, and Leribe districts.

The authors urge “governments and development partners” to implement taxation and behaviour change communication to prevent smoking during pregnancy, improve access to sexual education and contraception to prevent adolescent pregnancy, and reduce unsafe terminations.

“Empowering women economically and socially, along with involving male partners in maternal health education, are crucial for areas where the predictors of the MGWR coefficient show a strong association with reducing perinatal mortality rates,” the study recommends.

The researchers acknowledge several limitations, including geographic coordinates shifted by up to 5 kilometers in rural areas and 2 kilometers in urban areas to protect privacy, which may affect precise location identification.

“Some important possible predictors that could affect perinatal mortality, such as fetal growth, maternal anemia, obstetric complications like breech delivery, and birth asphyxia, were not included in the dataset,” the authors noted.

Despite these constraints, the study provides compelling evidence that Lesotho’s perinatal mortality crisis demands urgent, geographically tailored action, a matter of life and death for hundreds of families each year.

# Lesotho battles rising drug abuse as experts urge stronger support

### Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho is grappling with a growing drug and substance abuse crisis, prompting urgent calls from health experts for immediate action and better resourced rehabilitation services.

Dr Thabo Mokhothu, Acting Director of Mental Health at the Ministry of Health, warned that the country has reached a critical stage in the fight against drug addiction. He was speaking at an event to mark International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on June 26.

A major challenge, according to Dr Mokhothu, is the closure of the Blue Cross Rehabilitation Centre, which has left Mohlomi Hospital as the primary public facility for treating addiction. However, the hospital is severely overstretched and lacks sufficient trained specialists to cope with the rising demand.

While the government plans to construct a new rehabilitation centre, Dr Mokhothu emphasised the need to urgently strengthen services at Mohlomi Hospital by recruiting more skilled personnel. In the absence of adequate state-run facilities, several private organisations have established their own rehabilitation centres.

To ensure quality care, the Ministry of Health has developed guidelines for these private providers.



Despite the difficulties, Dr Mokhothu expressed optimism, noting that several new proposals are in the pipeline to improve rehabilitation services nationwide. He called for a shift in approach: “Addiction should not be treated only as a crime, but as a health problem that requires support,

treatment, and recovery,” he said.

“Addiction is a call to rebuild and restore the nation.”

Other speakers at the event echoed the need for collective action. Mphonyane Mofokeng of the Anti-Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho (ADAAL)

stressed that drug addiction affects society as a whole and urged stronger collaboration between government, civil society, and communities. She highlighted Parliament’s role in coordinating efforts and plans to involve local leaders in rehabilitation initiatives.

Pontšo Tumisi, Public Relations Officer for Mokhosi oa ‘Má Ngoana, raised concerns about rising drug abuse in areas such as Khubetsoana and Ha Matala, describing the latter as a hotspot for drug abuse, sex trafficking, and other crimes. Her organisation is working with police and partners to protect vulnerable residents.

Lance Sergeant Tšepo Manosa of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service said police are engaging communities in the fight against drugs but are sometimes hampered by a lack of timely information. He identified dagga (marijuana) as the most commonly abused substance, followed by cocaine and crystal methamphetamine.

This year’s International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking emphasised treating drug addiction as a public health issue rather than solely a criminal justice matter. The campaign also highlighted the links between drug abuse, organised crime, and social instability, and called on governments and communities to strengthen prevention and rehabilitation efforts.



# 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
- Best Rabbit Breeder/farmer

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/>





Kingdom of Lesotho

Ministry of Health

### Invitation for Bids

#### Supply, delivery and lease of Medical Equipment (IFB No.: GoL/MOH/G001/2026/27)

- The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho intends to utilize its funds (2026/2027 Recurrent Budget) towards the cost of Procurement of medical equipment (Automated tissue processor (1), coagulation analyzers (1) and Anaesthesia workstation machine (1) for the Ministry of Health.
- The Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Health now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the **Supply delivery and lease of medical equipment for the Ministry of Health.**

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the bidding documents at:

Procurement Unit  
Health Headquarters Building  
Ground Floor – Left Wing  
Maseru 100, Lesotho.

Attention: [motsukunyanemolise@gmail.com](mailto:motsukunyanemolise@gmail.com)

- Bids must be delivered to the address above on or before **July 23rd, 2026** on/ before 11:00 a.m. Late bids will be rejected. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **1.5% (1.5 percent) of the bid amount** in the form of Insurance Bond, or a bank draft, and or a bank guarantee from a reputable financial institution valid for thirty (30) days beyond the validity of the bid.
- A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders at the above address and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of **(M500.00) five hundred Maloti only**. The method of payment will be cash payable at:

**Accounts Revenue Collection**  
**Health Headquarters, First Floor**  
**Corner Constitution & Linare Roads,**  
**Maseru 100,**  
**Lesotho.**

- It is mandatory for bidders to submit the following valid documents: (a) Tax Clearance Certificates; (b) Trader's License (c) Bid security, (d) Valid manufacture authorization letter, (e) power of attorney and bonafide certificate signed and stamped. These documents shall either be originals or certified copies from the source. **Non- compliance with this requirement shall invalidate a bid.**

The full information on supply, delivery and lease of medical equipment details will be viewed from the tender document for further qualification details but below are some of the specifications:

#### Specification: Automated Tissue Processor

##### 1. General Requirements

- Fully automated enclosed tissue processors for histopathology applications.
- Suitable for routine surgical pathology, biopsies, and large tissue specimens.
- Microprocessor-controlled operation with programmable processing schedules.
- Vacuum-assisted tissue processing technology.

##### 2. Capacity

- Minimum processing capacity: **300–400 standard tissue cassettes per run.**
- Multiple basket system accommodating standard histology cassettes.
- Capability to process various tissue sizes **and** specimen types.

##### 3. Processing Features

- Vacuum and pressure infiltration system.
- Automated reagent transfer.
- Programmable agitation of reagents.
- Multiple user-defined and pre-installed processing protocols.
- Delayed start and automatic completion functions.
- Continuous overnight operation capability.

##### 4. Reagent Stations

- Minimum of 12 reagent stations.
- Minimum of 3 paraffin stations.
- Minimum of 2 cleaning stations.
- Reagent containers resistant to formalin, alcohol, xylene, and xylene substitutes.
- Automatic reagent level monitoring.

##### 5. Temperature Control

- Heated paraffin stations with adjustable temperature settings.
- Paraffin temperature range of approximately 55–70°C.
- Reagent temperature monitoring and control.
- Over-temperature protection system.

##### 6. User Interface

- Color touch-screen display.
- Intuitive graphical user interface.
- Real-time monitoring of processing status.
- Storage of at least 50 programmable protocols.
- Password-protected user access.

##### 7. Safety Features

- Enclosed system to minimize exposure to hazardous fumes.
- Activated carbon filtration and/or external exhaust connection.
- Leak detection system.
- Audible and visual alarm system.
- Power failure protection with automatic recovery.
- Emergency stop function.

##### 8. Quality Assurance

- Continuous monitoring of:
  - Temperature
  - Vacuum levels
  - Reagent status
  - Processing times
- Automatic error detection and reporting.
- Electronic processing log and audit trail.

##### 9. Connectivity

- USB port for data export.
- Ethernet/LAN connectivity.
- Compatibility with Laboratory Information Systems (LIS) preferred.
- Remote diagnostics capability preferred.

##### 10. Utilities

- Power supply: 220–240 VAC, 50/60 Hz.
- Built-in UPS backup for safe completion or recovery of processing cycles preferred.

##### 11. Accessories

- Tissue baskets and cassette racks sufficient for maximum stated capacity.
- Reagent containers.
- Maintenance kit.
- User manuals and service manuals.

##### 12. Regulatory Requirements

- CE marked and/or FDA-approved.
- Manufacturer certified to ISO 13485.
- Compliance with applicable IEC electrical safety standards.

##### 13. Physical Specifications

###### Dimensions

- Width: 100 cm
- Depth: 100 cm
- Height: 200 cm

###### Preferred specification for tender:

The tissue processor shall be floor-standing with dimensions not exceeding 100 cm (W) × 100 cm (D) × 200 cm (H).

###### Weight

- Net weight: 250–500 kg
- Shipping weight: 300–650 kg

- Qualifications requirements for award include amongst others: **(a) business experience of not less than five years in similar jobs, (b) successful completion of similar contracts of not less than M5,000 000.00 in the past five years.** Additional details are provided in the Bidding Documents.
- Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday **July 23rd, 2026** at the address given below:

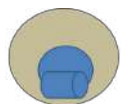
**Procurement Unit**  
**Ministry of Health**  
**Health Headquarters, Ground Floor**  
**Corner Constitution & Linare Roads,**  
**Maseru 100, Lesotho.**

Bidders shall ensure that the envelopes containing their bids are properly addressed as indicated under 2 above and are clearly marked **“Supply, delivery and lease of medical equipment for the Ministry of Health-- IFB No.: GoL/MOH/G001/2026/27”**.

###### Disclaimer:

The Ministry also reserves the right to cancel the tenders before the submission or opening of tenders, postpone the tender submission/opening date and to accept or reject any or all tenders. The Ministry is not bound to award the lowest or any bid. Being the lowest bidder does not guarantee an award.

**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY (Act.) ('Mats'oanelo Monyobi)**  
**MINISTRY OF HEALTH**



**AHEAD TECHNOLOGIES (PTY) LTD**  
 Ahead Technologies (Pty) Ltd  
 P.O. Box 0490  
 Registration Number: U2012/004

### REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS (RFQ)

#### PROVISION OF OUTSOURCED BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

Ahead Technologies (Pty) Ltd invites suitably qualified and experienced service providers to submit quotations for the provision of outsourced Business Support Services.

Interested service providers must demonstrate:

- Registration as a legal entity in Lesotho;
- At least three (3) years' relevant experience in providing business support, administration, human resources, payroll, accounting or governance services;
- Availability of qualified personnel;
- Capacity to provide payroll and accounting systems;
- Good standing with statutory and regulatory authorities.

#### 1. Background

Ahead Technologies (Pty) Ltd is seeking to engage a competent service provider to provide integrated business support services aimed at strengthening the Company's administrative, human resources, payroll, finance, tax compliance and governance functions.

#### 2. Scope of Services

The successful service provider shall be expected to provide the following services:

##### Administration Services

- Office administration support;
- Records and document management;
- Meeting coordination and minute taking;
- Correspondence management;
- General administrative support.

##### Human Resources Administration

- Employee records management;
- Leave administration;
- Recruitment support;
- Performance management administration;
- Human resources compliance support.

##### Payroll Administration

- Payroll processing;
- Salary administration;
- PAYE administration;
- Statutory deductions administration.

##### Finance and Accounting Support

- Financial records administration;
- Accounts payable and receivable administration;
- Financial reporting support;
- Bank reconciliation support.

##### Tax Compliance Support

- VAT administration and filing support;
- PAYE compliance administration;
- Tax filing support;
- Liaison with the Lesotho Revenue Authority.

#### 3. Minimum Requirements

#### 4. Submission Requirements

Interested service providers shall submit:

- Company profile;
- Certificate of incorporation;
- Tax clearance certificate;
- Detailed proposal outlining methodology and approach;
- Relevant experience and references;
- Proposed fee structure;
- Curriculum vitae of key personnel.

#### 5. Evaluation Criteria

Submissions shall be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Relevant experience and references – 25%
- Technical capacity and methodology – 25%
- Qualifications and experience of key personnel – 15%
- Systems, tools and support infrastructure – 15%
- Financial proposal – 20%

#### 6. Submission Deadline

Interested service providers must submit their quotations on or before **30th June 2026 at 1200hrs (Midday)**.

Submissions should be hand delivered at:

Ahead Technologies Office  
 Fahhida Building  
 Room GF13  
 Seputana,  
 Maseru.

#### 7. Reservation of Rights

Ahead Technologies reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation, to cancel the procurement process, or to negotiate with the preferred bidder.

Only shortlisted bidders may be contacted.



### Specific Procurement Notice

#### Request for Bids

(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

**Country:** Kingdom of Lesotho  
**Name of Project:** Department of Rural Water Supply  
**Contract Title:** DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027

**RFB Reference No.:** DRWS/M/ GOL2/2026-2027

- The Ministry of Natural Resources has received financing from the Government of Lesotho (GOL) toward the cost of the Rural Water Supply Projects and intends to apply the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027**
- The Ministry of Natural Resources now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders of DRWS category **B, C and D** to submit tenders for **DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027**
- Bidding will be conducted through Open National competitive Tender as specified in Public Procurement Act of 2023.
- Interested eligible Bidders may inspect the Bidding document during office hours; **09:00 hours to 16:00 hours** at the **Department of Rural Water Supply Railway station, Railway Station, Next to WASCO Offices**.
- The bidding documents in **English, will be collected from Department of Rural Water supply, Railway Station, next to WASCO Offices,**

**Maseru from Friday 26 June 2026 to 05 August 2026, at the non-refundable fee of M1 500.00. Payment shall be made to Accounts Office DRWS Maseru, Bidders must produce the receipt obtained from accounts office to procurement Unit in order to receive the bidding documents.**

- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **05, August, 2026, at 10:00 am**. 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:

#### Procurement Unit

**DRWS Office Khubetsoana, Resource Centre, Next to Appropriate Technology Services (ATS) Maseru**

- All Bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security of M20,000** in the form of a Bank Guarantee.
- A Compulsory Pretender meeting shall be held on **Monday 13 July, 2026 at 10:00 am** at the DRWS Khubetsoana Resources Centre, Maseru.
- All questions and clarifications relating to this tender should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Old Christie House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160.



## QUEEN 'MAMOHATO MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Private bag A114, Maseru 100 Tel: +266 2222 0000

Bots'abelo, Maseru, Lesotho

### Invitation to Bidders

#### BID NOTICE UNDER OPEN COMPETITIVE TENDERING

01st July 2026

#### Supply, Installation, Commissioning of Medical Liquid Oxygen Storage and Distribution System - QMMH/ITT 1 of 2026/2027

- The *Ministry of Health* has allocated/received funds to QMMH to be used for the Supply, Installation, and Commissioning of Medical Oxygen Storage and Distribution System.
- The Entity invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the provision of the above supplies.
- Bidding will be conducted in accordance with the open **International bidding** method contained in the Public Procurement Act and is open to all bidders.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below at 8(a) from **9 a.m to 4 p.m** of working days.
- The Bidding document in English may be obtained by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below at 8(b).
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before **02nd September 2026, 2:00 p.m**. All bids must be accompanied by a **bid security** of Fifty Thousand Maloti (**M50,000.00**). Bid securities must be valid until 30th December 2026. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 8(d) at **02nd September 2026, 2:15 p.m**.
- There shall be a **mandatory** pre – bid meeting/ site inspection visit on the **15th, July 2026 at 09:00 a.m** at Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital. Attendance is mandatory for all prospective bidders
- The documentation required to provide evidence of eligibility shall be: -
  - Valid Trader's License
  - Valid Tax Clearance
  - Audited Financial Statements for the period of 3 years to the current financial year
  - a declaration in the Bid Submission Sheet of nationality of the Bidder.
  - a declaration in the Bid Submission Sheet that the Bidder is not under debarment by the authority
  - Company Extract and Certificate of incorporation

- (a) Documents may be issued and inspected at :

*Procurement Unit*  
 Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital  
 Bot'sabelo, Ha Leqele  
 Contact: Masekoati Mot'set'sero  
 Tel: +266 2222 0000 Ext 388  
 Mailto: procurementqmmh@gmail.com

- Documents will be issued from and delivered: Address mentioned above in 9 (a)

- Bids must be delivered and opened at :

*Procurement Unit*  
 Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital  
 Bot'sabelo, Ha Leqele

- The planned procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Publish bid notice	01st July 2026
b. Pre-bid/site visit meeting where applicable	15th July 2026 at 09:00 hrs
c. Bid closing date	02nd September 2026 - 14:00hrs
d. Bid Opening	02nd September 2026 - 14:15hrs
e. Evaluation process	03rd September 2026- 10th September 2026
f. Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	22nd September 2026
g. Contract signature	29th September 2026



## Lesotho Highlands Water Project – Phase II



## RE-ADVERTISEMENT FOR

**LOT 1: CONTRACT 3005G1 THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS: BRIDGES AND QUARRIES**
**Specific Procurement Notice**

Khubelu Joint Venture requests Quotations from Geotechnical Investigation Contractors, for **Lot 1 Geotechnical Investigations for Bridges and Quarries** under Contract: 3005: The Design and Construction Supervision of Feeder Roads and Bridges. The Scope of Permanent Works includes five (5), 3m wide Pedestrian Bridges and six (6), 10m wide Vehicle Bridges. The lengths of the Pedestrian Bridges range from 200m to 700m, and the Vehicle Bridge lengths range from 30m to 432m.

The Request for Quotations (RFQ) documents will be available from **19 June 2026**. Interested Tenderers may obtain the documents free of charge via email upon request, or purchase a hard copy for a non-refundable fee of M1,000.00. Requests for the RFQ documents should be directed to: [procurement@pemahn.com](mailto:procurement@pemahn.com).

Quotations must be submitted in sealed envelopes, labelled "QUOTATION FOR LOT 1: C3005G1 GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS FOR BRIDGES AND QUARRIES UNDER CONTRACT LHDA NO. 3005: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION OF FEEDER ROADS AND BRIDGES". Original quotes should be hand-delivered to the physical address below:

**Khubelu Joint Venture,**  
No. 6 Manong Road,  
Hills View, Maseru, Lesotho.

The meeting place for clarifications will be at the **Polihali Operations Branch, Polihali Operations Centre, Polihali, Mokhotlong, on 01 July 2026 at 09h00**, followed by compulsory site visits on **01 and 02 July 2026**.

Quotations shall be submitted no later than the closing date and time: **20 July 2026 at 11h00**.

**For Queries:** E-mail: [procurement@pemahn.com](mailto:procurement@pemahn.com) with subject heading "Lot 1: C3005G1 Geotechnical Investigations for Bridges and Quarries".

## RE-ADVERTISEMENT FOR

**LOT 2: CONTRACT 3005G2 THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS: ROADS AND MATERIALS**
**Specific Procurement Notice**

Khubelu Joint Venture requests Quotations from Geotechnical Investigation Contractors, for **Lot 2: Geotechnical Investigations for Roads and Materials** under Contract: 3005: The Design and Construction Supervision of Feeder Roads and Bridges. The Scope of the invitation includes: 96km of roads and eight (8) to ten (10) borrow pits.

The Request for Quotations (RFQ) documents will be available from **19 June 2026**. Interested Tenderers may obtain the documents free of charge via email upon request, or purchase a hard copy for a non-refundable fee of M1,000.00. Requests for the RFQ documents should be directed to: [procurement@pemahn.com](mailto:procurement@pemahn.com)

Quotations must be submitted in sealed envelopes, labelled "QUOTATION FOR LOT 2: C3005G2 GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS FOR ROADS AND MATERIALS UNDER CONTRACT LHDA NO. 3005: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION OF FEEDER ROADS AND BRIDGES". Original quotes should be hand-delivered to the physical address below:

**Khubelu Joint Venture,**  
No. 6 Manong Road,  
Hills View, Maseru, Lesotho.

The meeting place for clarifications will be at the **Polihali Operations Branch, Polihali Operations Centre, Polihali, Mokhotlong, on 01 July 2026 at 09h00**, followed by compulsory site visits on **01 and 02 July 2026**.

Quotations shall be submitted no later than the closing date and time: **20 July 2026 at 11h00**.

**For Queries:** E-mail: [procurement@pemahn.com](mailto:procurement@pemahn.com) with subject heading "Lot 2: C3005G2 Geotechnical Investigations for Roads and Materials".


**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

**Attn: Procurement Manager ROLL Project**  
**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**  
**E-mail: [procurement.roll@gov.ls](mailto:procurement.roll@gov.ls)**





# Road Fund

INVITATION FOR BIDS

TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF ICT EQUIPMENT  
(IFB Number: RF/2026/G02)

**1. Background and requirements:**  
The Road Fund Secretariat invites bids from suitably qualified local companies with the capacity to supply Core IP-PBX Platform and computers. The specifications are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1:

Item Number	Item description	Quantity	Lot number
1.	Core IP-PBX Platform	1	1
2.	14-inch Notebook Next Gen AI PC	5	2
3.	G5 23.8-inch FHD All-in-One PC	14	
4.	14-inch WUXGA AI Mobile Workstation	8	

Bidders are at liberty to bid for any lot or all lots. Bidders who choose to bid for lot 2 shall bid for all the 3 items under lot 2.

**Requirements:**

- Bidders must be compliant with their tax and licensing obligations; hence a valid and relevant company Tax Clearance and a valid and relevant Trader's License/Business Identity card must be submitted;
- Bidders are expected to deliver within a maximum period of **Four (4) weeks** from date of receiving the official purchase order;
- All bids must be accompanied by bid security of 2% of the bidder's own bid amount and must be in the form of a bank guarantee.


**2. Request for Clarifications:** Request for clarifications may be send in writing to [procurement@roadfund.org.ls](mailto:procurement@roadfund.org.ls) on or before 9<sup>th</sup> July 2026.

**3.** Detailed tender document is available at the Road Fund website [www.roadfund.org.ls](http://www.roadfund.org.ls)

**Submission:**  
Sealed bids clearly marked "Supply and delivery of ICT equipment IFB No.: RF/2026/G02" bearing no identification of the bidder should be deposited in the tender box located at the reception area at the address in clause 4 below; on or before **Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2026 at 10:00 hrs**. Public tender opening will be held on the same day at **10:30 hrs**.

**4. The address referred to in clause 3 above for bid submission and opening is:**

Road Fund Secretariat,  
Former Department of Rural Roads Building,  
Corner Moshoeshoe & Senate Roads,  
Industrial Area, Maseru.



## NATIONAL DRUG SERVICE ORGANISATION

P.O.Box 1167  
Mafeteng 900  
Lesotho  
Tel: (+266) 2270 0232  
Fax: (+266) 2270 1340

INVITATION TO BID

Tender No. NDSO/PROMOTIONAL/2026/06

The National Drug Service Organisation (NDSO) invites eligible bidders to submit bids for the:

**SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL**  
The procurement includes, among others:

- A5 Renaissance Soft Notebooks
- Women's Jackets
- Men's Jackets
- Jumbo Poster Calendars
- Ball Pens
- Desk Planners
- Stylus Ball Pens

Bidding will be conducted through **National Competitive Tendering procedures** in accordance with the **Public Procurement Act, 2023**. Physical samples are required for specified items.

**Bid Closing Date:** 30 July 2026 at 14:00 hrs  
**Bid Opening:** 30 July 2026 at 14:30 hrs

**Bid Security:** 2% of the Total Bid Price

Bidding documents may be obtained from NDSO upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **LSL 1,000.00** or downloaded free of charge from the NDSO website.

**For further information, collection and submission of bids contact:**

The Procurement Manager  
National Drug Service Organisation (NDSO)  
Procurement Building, Next to Golden Hotel  
Mafeteng 900, Lesotho  
Tel: +266 2221 5300  
Email: [tenders@ndso.org.ls](mailto:tenders@ndso.org.ls)  
Website: [www.ndso.org.ls](http://www.ndso.org.ls)

NDSO reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid.




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## SA SUPREME COURT OF APPEAL CRUSHES THOLO

Once a rising star Moroahe now stands on the brink of ruin  
 His reputation in tatters and his business empire apparently crumbling

**Page 2**

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# Kasi2Kasi is reimagining Lesotho's creative future

## Chris Theko

Before the music, the media interviews and the growing recognition across Southern Africa, there was something much simpler: service.

Long before it became a movement attracting young artists, entrepreneurs and creatives from across Maseru and beyond, Kasi2Kasi was quietly supporting schools and reaching out to vulnerable families.

Those early community initiatives laid the foundation for what has quickly become one of Lesotho's fastest-growing youth-led movements.

Just two months after its official launch, Kasi2Kasi is emerging as more than an entertainment platform. It is positioning itself as a community where young people are encouraged to create, collaborate and build sustainable futures together.

For its founders, the movement was born from a conviction that communities should be served before recognition is sought.

"Our journey began with school support initiatives and community outreach programmes for vulnerable families," explains founder and Board Chairperson Khethisi Motsiba.

"Those early acts of service shaped the values that continue to define our movement today."

As they engaged with young people, the founders began identifying recurring challenges facing Lesotho's creative industry. Many talented young artists struggled to find platforms to showcase their work.

Collaboration between creatives remained limited, while aspiring entrepreneurs often lacked mentorship and practical guidance to transform their talents into sustainable careers. Instead of accepting those realities, they decided to build something different.

The movement's vision was also shaped by Motsiba's upbringing in an environment deeply connected to the arts and entertainment industry.

Through family involvement and professional experience, he witnessed the organisation of international performances featuring renowned African and global artists, contributed to initiatives such as the Morija Arts & Cultural Festival, facilitated artist exchanges at MACUFE in Bloemfontein and supported the historic visit of the FIFA World Cup Trophy to Lesotho.

Those experiences planted the idea that Lesotho's young creatives deserved opportunities without gatekeeping.

"Our vision is to replace gatekeeping with opportunity, competition with collaboration and exclusion with mentorship," Motsiba said.

That vision is captured in the movement's slogan: "From the Kasi. For the Kasi. To the World." Unlike many youth initiatives where young people simply participate, Kasi2Kasi places them at the centre of leadership.

Its philosophy, "By the Youth, For the Youth", means that while experienced professionals provide mentorship and strategic guidance, young people themselves lead projects, make decisions and shape the movement's future.

This philosophy extends beyond creative arts. Members receive exposure to entrepreneurship, digital content creation, agriculture, branding, business development and online broadcasting. The movement also uses youth-friendly platforms such as comics, music and digital media to educate and inspire.

The approach recognises that creativity alone is not enough. Sustainable careers require practical skills, business knowledge and supportive networks.

Perhaps that explains why so many young people have embraced the initiative within such a short period. According to Motsiba, the movement's rapid growth stems from its authenticity.

Rather than beginning with high-profile events, Kasi2Kasi first invested in communities through outreach programmes and school support initiatives, earning trust before seeking visibility.

Regional exposure has also helped

strengthen confidence in the movement. Within weeks of its launch, Kasi2Kasi secured interviews on Botswana's RB2 Radio and Botswana Television, demonstrating that opportunities for Basotho creatives can extend beyond national borders. Equally significant has been the sense of belonging created among members.

"Young creatives are looking for belonging, opportunity and purpose," says Motsiba. "Kasi2Kasi offers all three."

While public events remain an important part of its identity, the movement's ambitions extend far beyond organising performances.

Among its long-term initiatives is the development of a national talent database that will connect creatives from every district of Lesotho with opportunities across the region.

Through its Young Creators Desk, members receive free practical training in entrepreneurship, content creation, branding, agriculture and business development. The movement also promotes skills transfer by encouraging creatives to learn complementary disciplines such as music production, video editing, engineering, digital marketing and media production.

Media partnerships are equally central to the strategy. By leveraging platforms such as PMR FM and digital channels, Kasi2Kasi hopes to increase exposure for emerging artists while fostering cross-border collaborations throughout the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Recognising the economic realities facing many young people, the movement also encourages agriculture as an additional source of income and food security, reinforcing its broader commitment to holistic youth development. Although only months old, Kasi2Kasi has already celebrated several milestones.

Its community outreach programmes continue to remind members that service must remain at the heart of the movement. National media coverage, including interviews on SABC Leseli and several Lesotho radio stations, has amplified its message, while recognition from broadcasters in Botswana has demonstrated growing regional interest.

For the founders, these achievements reinforce a larger lesson: meaningful youth initiatives can inspire cooperation beyond national boundaries.

Looking ahead, Kasi2Kasi has outlined an ambitious vision for the period between 2026 and 2029.

The movement aims to establish active chapters throughout the SADC region, host an annual Kasi2Kasi SADC Summit focused on youth development and investment, expand community outreach programmes across Southern Africa and transform its educational platforms, including Kasi2Kasi Comics and PMR TV, into resources capable of reaching more than one million young people.

One of its most anticipated milestones will be the inaugural Kasi2Kasi Fill-Up at Setsoto Stadium in December 2026, commemorating Ultimate's 20th anniversary while supporting national World AIDS Day activities through arts, culture and youth engagement.

Yet despite these ambitions, the founders insist they remain grounded in the principles that inspired the movement.

"We did not begin with fame. We began by serving communities," Motsiba reflected.

For Lesotho's young creatives, that message may be the movement's greatest appeal. In an industry often defined by competition, Kasi2Kasi is attempting to build something different: a culture where collaboration is celebrated, mentorship is accessible and opportunities are created collectively.

Only two months into its journey, the movement is still writing its story. But if its early momentum is any indication, Kasi2Kasi is already becoming more than a platform for creatives.

It is becoming a movement built on service, driven by young people and determined to show that Lesotho's talent can reach far beyond its borders.



# Gospel Explosion set for biggest edition yet

Chris Theko

What started as a modest end-of-year celebration for clients and business partners has grown into one of Lesotho's most anticipated gospel music events.

On Tuesday morning, that journey reached another milestone as Jam Sessions and LNIG Hollard officially launched the fifth edition of Gospel Explosion during an exclusive stakeholder and media breakfast at Avani Maseru, unveiling ambitious plans for what organisers hope will be their biggest gathering yet.

Scheduled for 7 November 2026 at Mmelesi Lodge, this year's event will be held under the theme "Relentless Praise" a message organisers say reflects unwavering faith regardless of life's circumstances.

Speaking during the launch, LNIG Hollard Chief Executive Officer Mpho Vumbukani said the decision to announce the event months in advance was deliberate.

"We are looking forward to November so that we can come together and celebrate," Vumbukani said.

"We intentionally hosted this launch early so that people have enough time to prepare themselves and plan ahead."

He explained that the theme serves as a reminder that praise should not be dictated by seasons of prosperity or hardship, but by confidence in God's goodness and faithfulness.

The timing of the launch also signals the organisers' growing ambitions. Having attracted more than 5,000 people in 2025, Gospel Explosion is now aiming to welcome at least 6,000 worshippers this year, a target that would make it the largest edition since the event's inception.

For Jam Sessions Chief Executive Officer Lereko Mohale, however, the success of Gospel Explosion cannot simply be measured by attendance figures. Its story, he says, began with gratitude.



Nthabeleng Mokitimi - Jam Sessions

Mohale recalled that before Gospel Explosion existed, Jam Sessions hosted an annual Christmas celebration for clients and partners as a way of expressing appreciation for the support the company had received throughout the year. Over time, the event outgrew its original purpose.

"Initially we used to have a Christmas party where we invited our clients and partners to celebrate the end of the year. But the event started getting out of control because more and more people wanted to attend."

Rather than limiting access, the company decided to embrace the growing interest.

"We realised that we needed a much bigger venue that could accommodate everyone because we wanted to thank Basotho and Basotho companies who have made us who we are today."

That decision gave birth to Gospel Explosion, an event that has since evolved into a national celebration of faith, music and thanksgiving.

Mohale said another driving force behind the festival was Jam Sessions' long-standing invest-

ment in Lesotho's creative industry.

"We realised that we had worked really hard to invest in the growth of the creative industry in Lesotho. We wanted to have something through which we could give thanks, and that is how Gospel Explosion came about."

Today, the festival has become much more than a gospel concert. It has established itself as a platform where churches, families, young people, corporate organisations and artists come together in an atmosphere of worship and celebration.

It has also become an important economic platform, creating opportunities for local vendors, event suppliers, technical crews and small busi-

nesses that benefit from the thousands of people who attend each year.

The launch also served as an invitation to new corporate partners and brands to join headline sponsor LNIG Hollard in supporting the event's continued growth. Despite its success, Mohale believes Gospel Explosion is still evolving.

"We are not yet where we want to be in terms of the kind of experience and production level we want to give to our people," he said. "Every year we challenge ourselves to improve and deliver something bigger and better."

This year's programme reflects those ambitions. The international lineup features some of Southern Africa's most celebrated gospel artists, including South Africa's Dumi Mkokstad, Siphon Makhabane, Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors, Ntando Hlophe, Omega Khunou and Khethang Konese.

They will perform alongside a strong local lineup featuring Rorisang Motsamai, Minister Spokes, Masecilia a St Paul and Khahliso Mphophoka, highlighting the organisers' continued commitment to showcasing Lesotho's gospel talent on the same stage as internationally renowned performers.

For gospel music lovers, the event promises a full day of worship, praise and entertainment. For the organisers, however, the festival represents something even greater.

Five years after its inception, Gospel Explosion has become a symbol of gratitude, partnership and the growing potential of Lesotho's events industry. Each edition has built on the last, attracting larger audiences, stronger partnerships and increasingly sophisticated production.

With four months remaining before thousands gather at Mmelesi Lodge, preparations are already underway to ensure that the fifth edition delivers an experience worthy of its milestone anniversary.

If the organisers achieve their vision, Gospel Explosion 2026 will not simply celebrate five years of worship, it will mark another chapter in the evolution of an event that has firmly established itself as one of Lesotho's premier gospel and lifestyle experiences.

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# New India Consul deepens ties with Lesotho

**Seabata Mahao**

India has restored its diplomatic representation in Lesotho with the appointment of Dr Biju Abraham Korah as the country's new Honorary Consul, ending a six-year vacancy and signaling renewed efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and people-to-people relations.

Dr Korah was officially inaugurated in Maseru on Friday during a ceremony attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Limpho Tau, India's High Commissioner to Lesotho and South Africa, Prabhat Kumar, members of the diplomatic corps, government officials and business leaders.

The position had remained vacant since the death of former Honorary Consul, Man Mohan Bakaya, who served from 2014 until 2020.

Speaking at the inauguration, Tau described the appointment as the beginning of a new chapter in the long-standing friendship between Lesotho and India, whose diplomatic relations date back to 1971.

"It is a great pleasure and honour for me to join you this evening on the special occasion of inaugurating Dr Biju Abraham Korah as the new Honorary Consul of the Republic of India to the Kingdom of Lesotho," Tau said.

He said Lesotho highly values its bilateral relationship with India, noting that cooperation has expanded beyond diplomacy to include education, healthcare, agriculture, information technology, skills development and capacity building.

"The relationship between our two countries



India has restored its diplomatic representation in Lesotho with the appointment of Dr Biju Abraham Korah as the country's new Honorary Consul

continues to grow from strength to strength because it is built on mutual trust and shared aspirations for development," he said.

Tau also highlighted India's contribution to Lesotho's human capital development through scholarships and professional training programmes that have benefited many Basotho students and civil servants.

He expressed confidence that Dr Korah's appointment would unlock fresh opportunities in trade, tourism, investment and cultural cooperation.

"The Government of Lesotho is confident that under your stewardship, Dr Korah, relations between our two countries will continue to flourish for the mutual benefit of our peoples," Tau added.

India's High Commissioner, Prabhat Kumar, said the appointment restores an important diplomatic office that had remained vacant for six years.

"We once again have an Honorary Consul after six years, and we believe Dr Korah will serve as an important bridge between our two countries and help unlock new opportunities for cooperation," Kumar said.

He noted that Honorary Consuls play a vital role in promoting commercial relations, assisting citizens, facilitating official visits and encouraging cultural exchanges.

Kumar also welcomed the opening of Lesotho's embassy in New Delhi, describing it as a demonstration of both countries' commitment to strengthening diplomatic engagement.

Accepting the appointment, Dr Korah thanked the Government of India for the confidence placed in him.

"I am deeply humbled by this appointment and the responsibility that comes with representing the interests of India in Lesotho," he said.

He pledged to strengthen economic cooperation by promoting investment, expanding trade and facilitating partnerships between businesses in Lesotho and India.

Dr Korah identified manufacturing, agriculture, renewable energy, technology and healthcare as sectors offering significant potential for collaboration.

"There is enormous potential for both countries to work together in areas that create jobs, stimulate economic growth and improve livelihoods," he said.

He also committed to promoting tourism and strengthening educational ties by encouraging more Basotho students to take advantage of scholarship opportunities offered by the Indian government.

In addition, Dr Korah pledged to foster cultural exchanges through sporting activities, business forums, academic partnerships and arts programmes.

"Diplomacy is ultimately about people. It is about building friendships, understanding different cultures and creating opportunities that improve lives," he said.

The restoration of the Honorary Consul's office is expected to enhance communication between institutions in both countries while providing local representation for India's diplomatic and commercial interests in Lesotho.

India remains one of Lesotho's key development partners through technical assistance programmes, professional training initiatives and scholarship schemes. Hundreds of Basotho have benefited from the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and other educational opportunities in engineering, medicine, agriculture, information technology and public administration.

Business leaders attending the ceremony welcomed the appointment, saying stronger economic cooperation could open new opportunities in manufacturing, technology transfer, agriculture and infrastructure development.

## Media engaged on new statistical bill

**Ntsoaki Motaung**

The Bureau of Statistics (BOS) and the Equitable Lesotho: Strengthening Statistical Systems Project have held an awareness workshop for local journalists to introduce a proposed new Statistical Bill aimed at reforming the country's National Statistical System (NSS).

The workshop positioned the media as an important partner in communicating official data to the public and building trust in national statistics.

The proposed legislation seeks to give the BOS greater operational independence, allowing it to set its own priorities and define clearer roles for other government institutions. It also aims to improve data security, introduce modern IT systems, and strengthen confidentiality protections to encourage public participation in data collection.

The initiative is supported by a €1.8 million grant from the European Union over 36 months. Speaking at the workshop, Marcella Veneziani, Programme Manager for the EU Delegation, said quality statistics form the foundation for sound policymaking, transparency, accountability, and

public trust.

The project is implemented by Expertise France in partnership with France's national statistics institute (INSEE) and Lesotho's Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. It focuses on producing better and more inclusive data, particularly on women, youth, and vulnerable groups.

Philippe Gafishi, Deputy Head of PARIS21, noted that the new bill will support journalists by guaranteeing access to data and establishing predictable release calendars for key economic and social indicators.

Workshop participants were also reminded of the media's responsibility to report statistics accurately. Organisers warned that misinterpreting data or publishing unverified figures can spread misinformation and erode public confidence. They emphasised the need to provide proper context when covering topics such as health, unemployment, inflation, and budget outcomes.

The BOS and project partners hope the engagement with journalists will help ordinary citizens better understand official data and hold government accountable.



Marcella Veneziani, the Programme Manager for the European Union Delegation

**Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

Visually impaired people in Lesotho say they often experience a lack of privacy and sensitivity during medical consultations, with healthcare workers failing to ask whether they want their guides present in the room.

The patients argue that this practice violates their right to confidential and dignified healthcare. They are calling on health facilities to first consult them on whether their guide or assistant should remain during examinations.

Kellello Fanane, Programmes Coordinator at the Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP), said privacy and confidentiality are frequently compromised.

"Health professionals do not always ask whether the person would feel comfortable with their guide in the consultation room," Fanane said. "In some cases, they discuss the patient's health in the presence of the guide without checking what the patient prefers."

Fanane noted that visually impaired women also face difficulties accessing contraceptives. She highlighted additional challenges such as inadequate menstrual hygiene support in some schools, which leads girls to miss classes, and the problem of sexual

## Visually impaired people demand privacy, respect in healthcare



From left, Mpeo Khrehloa and Mamello Seeiso

violence, where victims struggle to identify suspects in court.

Mpeo Khrehloa, a visually impaired person, said

she has experienced gender-based violence and receives unwanted attention, including marriage proposals from strangers on public transport.

She added that some health workers ask them overly curious and insensitive questions during consultations.

Mamello Seeiso echoed these concerns, saying health professionals often speak to guides instead of addressing the visually impaired patient directly.

"They exclude you as though this is not your own case," Seeiso said.

She also criticised health education sessions, noting that demonstrations, such as condom use, are done visually without proper verbal explanations for those who cannot see.

Nthabiseng Khalane, who acquired visual impairment later in life, complained about disrespectful attitudes from some service providers, including teachers who speak about visually impaired students in a demeaning manner.

LNLVIP Chairperson Kopano Tšilonyane called for greater inclusion and what he termed "positive discrimination" for people with disabilities.

"People with disabilities should not be made to stand in the queue like everyone else when accessing services," Tšilonyane said.

He urged organisations to explicitly state in job advertisements that they are seeking candidates with disabilities and emphasised the need to address both legislative and attitudinal barriers through awareness.

# Football stars shine on magical night

## Seabata Mahao

Matlama FC teenage goalkeeper Leluma Mofoka has become the first player in Vodacom Premier League (VPL) history to win the Young Player of the Season award in back-to-back seasons.

The 19-year-old completed the historic feat after retaining the accolade at the 2025/26 Vodacom Premier League Awards held at Avani Maseru on Friday night. To crown a memorable season, Mofoka also scooped the Goalkeeper of the Season award following a stellar campaign in which he kept 13 clean sheets.

The double triumph underlined the remarkable rise of the young goalkeeper, who has cemented his place as Matlama's first-choice shot-stopper and one of the country's brightest football prospects.

Having also won the Young Player of the Season award in 2024/25, Mofoka has now set a new benchmark in Lesotho football by becoming the first player to retain the honour.

Speaking after receiving the awards, Mofoka said the recognition reflected the hard work of everyone who had contributed to his development.

"The coaches who have worked with me played a huge role in my development. I feel incredibly proud to have won both the Young Player of the Season and Goalkeeper of the Season awards this year," he said.

The Likuena goalkeeper admitted he never expected to finish the season among the league's biggest winners after a slow start.

"In the first round, I managed only three clean sheets and thought that was how the season would end. But in the second round, I came back stronger and kept ten clean sheets."

Mofoka also paid tribute to his parents for their unwavering support.

"Without them, I would not be where I am today," he said.

His childhood teammate, Mpania Pitiri, described Mofoka as a disciplined and hardworking footballer whose potential had always been evident.

"It was clear from an early age that he would achieve great things. We are proud to see him succeeding in his career," Pitiri said.

At just 19, Mofoka has already broken into the senior national team, Likuena,

and continues to establish himself as one of the country's most promising young footballers.

While Mofoka made history, Lijabatho FC midfielder Jane Thabantšo walked away with the biggest individual honours of the evening after being named both Player of the Season and Players' Player of the Season.

The midfield maestro pocketed M15 000 for Player of the Season and a further M12 000 for Players' Player of the Season after inspiring Lijabatho to their maiden Premier League title.

His achievements came just months after making a surprise January switch from Matlama, where he had spent his entire senior career since 2010.

"Being the best is all about working hard, putting in extra effort, believing in yourself and maintaining discipline," he said.

He also thanked his teammates and technical team for helping him settle quickly at his new club.

"It was not difficult moving from Matlama to Lijabatho because everyone welcomed me warmly. I also appreciate the many coaches in the country who have advised me throughout my career. Players should know that learning does not only come from their club coaches."

Premier League champions Lijabatho dominated the awards after striker Tumelo Khutlang claimed the Golden Boot with 18 league goals, earning M13 500.

Coach James Madidilane was named Coach of the Season after guiding the club to its first-ever league championship before leaving to join South African outfit Golden Arrows as an assistant coach.

Defender Rethabile Mokokoane added another accolade for the champions after being named Defender of the Season.

Lifofane's South African midfielder Sello Japhta won the Midfielder of the Season award in his debut campaign, while the club collected the Most Improved Club award after finishing runners-up.

Match officials were also recognised, with Kemuel Matete named Referee of the Season and Lesupi Putla taking the Assistant Referee of the Season accolade.

The Premier League Management Committee (PLMC) Chairman's Awards honoured outstanding contributors off the field.

Matlama supporter Mancholu Leepo



Jane Thabantsho at the VPL Awards



Leluma Mofoka at the VPL awards

was named Supporter of the Season, Sports Gallery journalist Thabo Rakhomo won the Journalist of the Year award, Bantu general manager Poosela Pule

received the Compliant Administrator of the Year accolade, while Lioli midfielder Jerry Kamela was recognised as the Longest Serving Player.

# Lijabatho set for CAF Champions League bow

## Seabata Mahao

A new chapter in Lesotho football is about to unfold as newly crowned Vodacom Premier League (VPL) champions Lijabatho FC prepare for their historic debut in the 2026/27 TotalEnergies CAF Champions League.

The Morija-based outfit will soon discover their preliminary-round opponents after the Confederation of African Football (CAF) officially unveiled the match calendar for the 2026/27 TotalEnergies CAF Champions League and TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup.

CAF confirmed that the first preliminary-round matches will be played between 4 and 6 September 2026, with the return legs scheduled for September 11 to 13, 2026. The governing body is expected to announce the draw dates for the preliminary round in the coming days.

For Lijabatho, the announcement marks another significant milestone following a remarkable campaign that saw the club clinch its first-ever top flight title in May.

The championship victory secured the club's maiden qualification for Africa's premier club competition, giving them the opportunity to represent Lesotho against some of the continent's biggest football clubs.



Lijabatho FC squad during the 2025-2026 season

Lijabatho's league triumph was built on consistency throughout the season, combining defensive discipline with clinical attacking performances to finish ahead of their domestic rivals. Their impressive run saw them secure the title with matches still remaining, underlining their dominance in the 2025/26 campaign.

Now, attention shifts from domestic success

to the continental stage, where the club faces a new challenge against Africa's elite.

CAF's calendar shows that clubs advancing beyond the preliminary rounds will enter the group stage, which begins at the end of November 2026.

The group-stage fixtures have been scheduled as follows: match-day one: November 27-29, 2026, match-day two:

December 4-6, 2026, match-day three: December 18-20, 2026, match-day four: January 8-10, 2027, match-day five: January 15-17, 2027, and match-day six: January 22-24, 2027.

The knockout phase will begin with the quarterfinals in late February 2027, followed by the semifinals in April, while the finals of both the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederation Cup will be played between May 9 to 31, 2027.

CAF has also maintained the lucrative prize money structure, with the winners of the TotalEnergies CAF Champions League set to receive M 97,314,000.00 (USD 6 million), while the CAF Confederation Cup champions will pocket M 64,910,800.00 (USD 4 million).

For Lesotho football, Lijabatho FC's participation represents more than just another continental campaign. It is an opportunity for the country's newest champions to showcase the quality of local football on Africa's biggest club stage.

The club's continental debut is expected to elevate its profile beyond Lesotho's borders while providing invaluable experience for its players against top-level opposition. Strong performances could also boost the reputation of the VPL and inspire other local clubs to compete for continental places

## Seabata Mahao

For many children growing up in Ha-Thamae, football is a game played in the dusty streets after school.

For 23-year-old Seeiso Monyane, it became the starting point of a journey that has taken him from a community football team to a career at Kick4Life.

Today, Monyane is an assistant football coach, referee, hospitality professional and long-distance runner, with football continuing to shape his personal and professional development.

His football journey began at the age of 12 after his childhood friend, Teboho Mophethe, encouraged him to join local side Thamae FC, which was coached by current Kick4Life Senior Women's Assistant Coach Teboho Takisi.

"It was just another football team in the community," Monyane recalls. "I never imagined that joining it would shape the course of my life."

His breakthrough came in 2014 when Kick4Life Development Coach Molefi Katane invited Thamae FC to take part in a FIFA World Cup-themed youth tournament at the Football for Hope Centre in Maseru. Each participating team represented one of the countries competing at the FIFA World Cup in Brazil.

Monyane impressed during the tournament and was invited to attend Kick4Life's development trials, where he secured a place in the academy.

He spent the next three years developing as a player before his progress was interrupted in 2017 when his parents advised him to focus on his studies after becoming concerned that football was affecting his academic performance.

Although he stepped away from the game, football remained an important part of his life.

In 2019, he returned to Kick4Life determined to continue his football development. However, another setback followed in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic brought organised football to a halt.

When football resumed in 2021, Monyane rejoined the Under-17 team but suffered a serious knee injury that ruled him out of

# Monyane's football journey comes full circle



playing.

Instead of leaving the sport, he looked for other ways to contribute.

He qualified as a referee through the Lesotho Football Association and began officiating B-Division matches, including games involving Kick4Life's development side, Juventude.

His commitment and willingness to learn earned the attention of Juventude Head Coach Mukete Mboh. Following the club's successful 2022/23 season, which ended with promotion to the A-Division, Mboh appointed Monyane as his assistant coach.

"He's going to go far because he's always

learning," Mboh said.

"He asks the right questions, thinks carefully before acting, and is willing to take on new challenges."

The appointment also opened another opportunity when Kick4Life nominated him to attend a Maseru District Football Association coaching course, where he obtained a Confederation of African Football (CAF) D Licence.

Alongside his coaching duties with Juventude, Monyane also volunteers in Kick4Life's Soccer School programme, helping to develop children from the age of four

through football, education and life skills.

His involvement with the organisation later led to full-time employment after he was appointed Duty Officer at Kick4Life's Hokahanya Inn and Conference Centre.

His line manager, Busisiwe Potiane, says he has grown significantly in the role.

"We've seen a huge improvement in his communication skills and professionalism," she said.

"He interacts exceptionally well with guests and always creates a welcoming environment."

Beyond football, Monyane has also established himself as a long-distance runner after joining Kick4Life's weekly Community Run4YourLife programme.

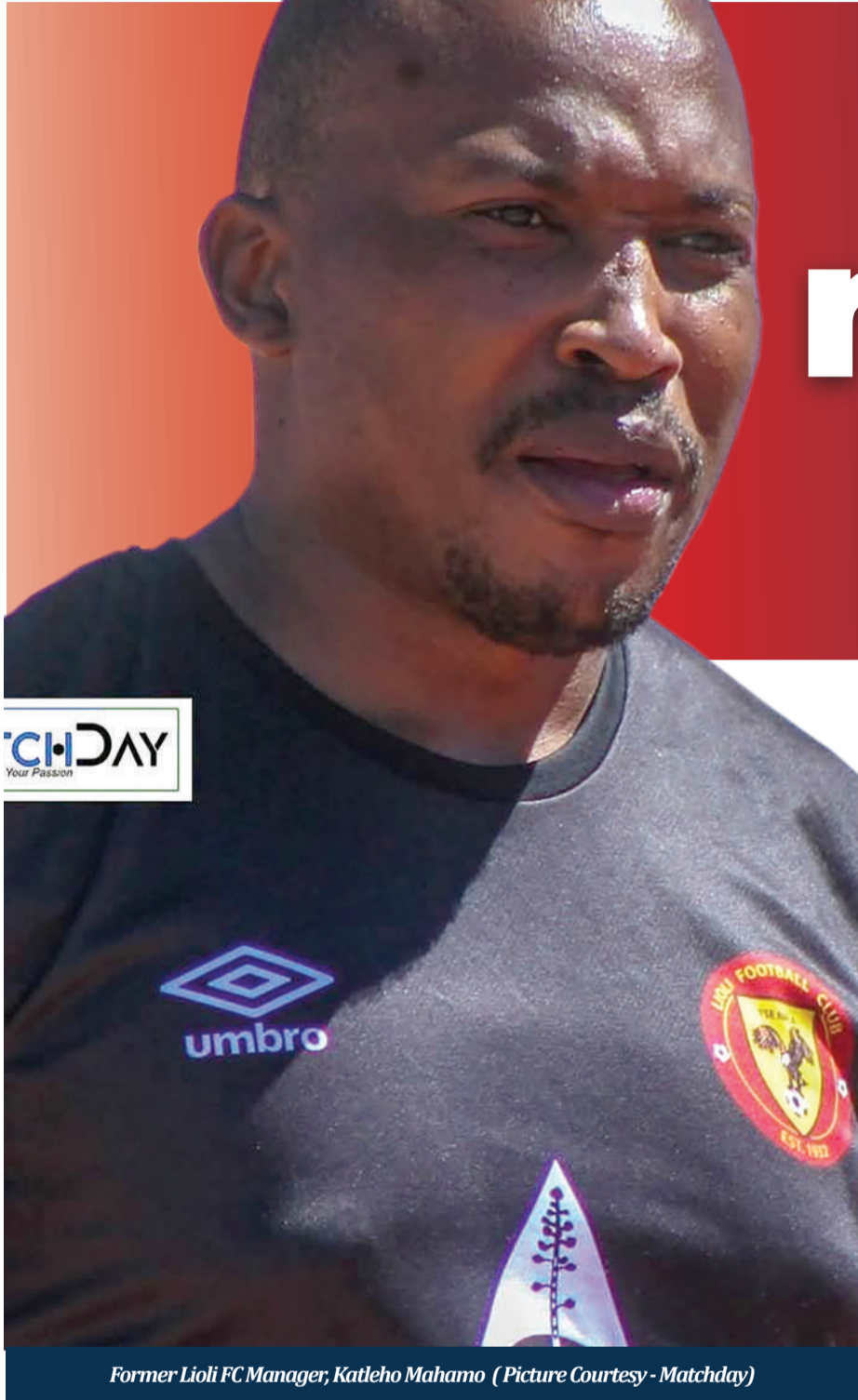
His progress was rewarded on 9 May this year when he won the 21-kilometre race at the Alliance Hillbusterz Last Long Run Marathon, one of Lesotho's leading distance-running events.

Despite the milestones he has achieved, Monyane says he is focused on continuing to learn.

"I would like to thank Kick4Life for the opportunities it has given me," he said.

"From coaching certification and football-related training to safeguarding in sport, social and emotional competencies, customer service and hospitality training, the skills I am acquiring are shaping me into a well-rounded, employable individual. I can already see my life changing, and I look forward to the future."

At 23, Monyane's journey with Kick4Life has taken him from academy player to referee, assistant coach, CAF-qualified coach, hospitality professional and marathon winner, demonstrating how opportunities in football can open doors beyond the game itself.



**Matchday**  
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# Lioli manager resigns

Former Lioli FC Manager, Katleho Mahamo (Picture Courtesy - Matchday)

**Seabata Mahao**

Lioli Football Club General Manager Kamohelo Mahamo has stepped from his position after serving the Teyateyaneng-based giants for four just months, bringing an end to a brief but eventful tenure marked by key developments both on and off the field.

In a statement released on July 2, Mahamo announced his decision to step down, expressing gratitude to everyone who supported him during his time at one of Lesotho's most successful football clubs.

"Today, I officially step down from my

role as General Manager of Lioli Football Club," Mahamo said.

"Serving this great institution has been one of the greatest honours of my life. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our President, the Executive Committee, the technical team, administrative staff, players, supporters, sponsors, and everyone who gave me the opportunity to serve this historic club."

Reflecting on his tenure, Mahamo highlighted several milestones achieved under his leadership. Among them were Lioli's People's Cup triumph, the successful mobilisation of supporters that

secured the club's qualification for the competition through public voting, the completion of the Lioli Fitness Centre, and the groundwork for the construction of a new Lioli Football Ground.

He also credited the club's recruitment drive, saying the new signings had strengthened the squad ahead of the upcoming season.

"Most importantly, we assembled a competitive squad by signing quality players who, I firmly believe, have what it takes to compete for and win major club competitions in Lesotho," he said.

Mahamo was quick to emphasise that the achievements were the result of collective effort rather than individual leadership.

"These achievements were never mine alone; they were the result of teamwork, commitment, and the unwavering belief that Lioli deserves nothing but excellence."

Although leaving his executive role, Mahamo said his bond with the club remains strong.

"I will continue to support and cheer for the team from the stands, believing in the players, the technical team, and the leadership to take the club to even greater heights."

He concluded by wishing the club continued success.

"May Lioli continue to grow from strength to strength and bring more trophies home. Thank you for allowing me to serve you."

Speaking after his announcement, Mahamo revealed that his resignation had been submitted in May, nearly a month before it became official.

"I lodged my resignation in May. This comes at a critical time for the club, but I have more pressing matters that need my full attention. I have worked closely with the new club manager, and he will serve the club well," he explained.

Mahamo's departure comes as Lioli undergoes significant restructuring ahead of the new season.

The club has strengthened its playing squad with the arrival of six new players, including Swithbert Kum, Kamohelo Moroane from Maroala FC, MphaleMphalaole from Kick4Life FC, youth product Motlalentoa, Neo Billet, and another promising player promoted from the club's development structures.

At the same time, Lioli has parted ways with Tieho Ntulo, Sello Sekike and Matlabe as the club reshapes its squad.

Changes have also extended to the technical bench, with the previous coaching team having departed. The club is currently searching for a new head coach as preparations for the new campaign gather momentum.

Mahamo leaves Lioli at a pivotal moment, with a refreshed squad, ongoing infrastructure projects and a new technical direction expected to shape the club's ambitions of returning to the summit of Lesotho football.



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