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Lesotho and Botswana are looking to establish direct air connectivity between the two countries as their aviation authorities move to deepen cooperation.

The two countries have commenced negotiations for a Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA), while Lesotho's Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) is also benchmarking Botswana's aviation systems and practices.

The engagements took place in Gaborone and could pave the way for direct flights between Maseru and Botswana, potentially boosting travel, trade, tourism and investment.

According to a statement by the Civil Aviation Authority of Botswana (CAAB), head of the Lesotho delegation, Nnopi Linkonyane, expressed optimism about the BASA negotiations, highlighting the potential for direct air connectivity between Botswana and Lesotho and the opportunities this could unlock for business, trade and investment.

The BASA talks were held alongside a benchmarking engagement between the DCA and CAAB.

CAAB said the engagement provides an opportunity for the two countries to examine systems, structures and practices underpinning effective civil aviation administration.

"The BASA negotiations taking place alongside the benchmarking engagement add another important dimension to the relationship," CAAB said in a statement.

"An effective aviation sector is ultimately about more than aircraft and airports. Air connectivity is an economic enabler. Improved connectivity can facilitate tourism, trade, investment, business travel and people-to-people connections, while creating opportunities for airlines and other aviation-related businesses," it added.

Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Botswana's Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure,

Lesotho, Botswana eye direct flights



Johannes Tsimako, described the engagement as an important milestone in strengthening bilateral relations between Botswana and Lesotho.

Tsimako noted that the anticipated agreement has the potential to enhance air connectivity, stimulate economic growth, support the revitalisation of airline operations and create opportunities for increased trade and investment.

"For the Lesotho delegation, the potential benefits are equally significant. Head of Delegation, Ms Nnopi Linkonyane, expressed optimism about the BASA negotiations, high-

lighting the potential for direct air connectivity between Botswana and Lesotho and the opportunities this could unlock for business, trade and investment," CAAB said.

It indicated that the convergence of the two engagements, benchmarking and BASA negotiations, therefore illustrates the broader role that aviation institutions play in national and regional development.

"Building a safer and more connected region As African countries seek to strengthen intra-African connectivity and unlock the economic potential of greater movement across borders, the capacity of civil aviation authori-

ties becomes increasingly important."

The benchmarking exercise was the second regional engagement hosted by CAAB this year.

Earlier in 2026, CAAB hosted a delegation from the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe (CAAZ) for a two-day benchmarking exercise covering regulatory systems, organisational arrangements, technical oversight and other aspects of aviation administration.

Botswana's aviation sector has attracted regional attention following its performance in the 2024 International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) audit, where the country achieved an Effective Implementation score of 85.78 percent.

Botswana was subsequently recognised at the 42nd ICAO Assembly in 2025, receiving the ICAO Council President Certificate for its achievement in establishing an effective safety oversight system and improving implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices.

The latest engagement gives Lesotho an opportunity to study Botswana's transition from a government-led civil aviation model to an autonomous aviation authority.

The areas of interest include regulatory oversight, safety standards, air navigation services, airport management, personnel competency and stakeholder coordination.

The two countries are also looking at aviation as a potential driver of economic activity.

For Lesotho, direct air connectivity with Botswana could provide another regional travel option while strengthening links between the two economies.

The negotiations come as African countries seek to improve intra-African air connectivity and increase the contribution of aviation to trade, tourism and investment.

CAAB said the growing interest from regional aviation authorities also demonstrates increasing confidence in Botswana's aviation systems and expertise.

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One woman’s journey from abuse to advocacy

Ntsoaki Motaung

On a bright, hot day in Mokema, a small village on the outskirts of Maseru, scores of people gathered at the local clinic.

They had come together for a special event focused on gender-based violence (GBV), organised by Portia Benedict, a non-profit organisation seeking to create conversations around GBV and find ways to prevent it.

For many in the gathering, it was the first time they had heard such experiences of violence being shared publicly.

Sitting quietly among them was Limakatso (not her real name), a 26-year-old woman whose story of suffering and survival embodies both the pervasive crisis of GBV in Lesotho and the resilience of its survivors.

Her experience reflects the pain endured by many women in Lesotho, but also the extraordinary resilience required to survive years of abuse.

A childhood stolen

Limakatso’s life changed when she was still a child. She lost both her parents and went to live with her grandmother and two uncles.

Although her grandmother tried to care for her, Limakatso said she often felt alone and unprotected.

“I think the violence started when I was seven years old,” she said.

“Whenever I needed something for school, I would ask at home and my uncles would provide. But soon, they took advantage of that. I had to be violated before I got the money to go to school.”

She said one of her uncles sexually assaulted her by penetrating her with his fingers. As she grew older, she said, another uncle also began sexually abusing her, including raping her.

“It became normal to me,” she said.

The abuse continued for years, leaving Limakatso feeling isolated, frightened and depressed.

“It was very difficult for me because this whole thing took me into depression. I would not listen in class and was always thinking about what I had to go through at home, especially when we were told to bring something from home,” she said.

Even school, which should have provided a refuge from the abuse, became a source of anxiety.

“I was always worried about what I would have to go through if I asked for anything for school,” she said.

She became increasingly withdrawn and stopped enjoying life. Over time, Limakatso said, she lost hope that her circumstances could change.

The abuse finally ended in 2018, after she completed her school examinations.

By then, however, years of abuse had taken a heavy psychological toll. Limakatso was struggling with depression and found it difficult to concentrate while writing her Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) examinations.

Despite everything she had endured, she completed them.

After finishing school, Limakatso moved in with an aunt who had learned about the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her uncles.

Her aunt warned her against having a boyfriend, but Limakatso said years of sexual abuse had profoundly affected her understanding of relationships and intimacy.

“I think it was too late. The abuse from my uncles was normal and I always had the urge of having sex. So, a boyfriend was the only way I would fulfil the



Mamolibeli Ngakane, an officer in the Department of Gender, Youth and Social Development

urge. I continued with my boyfriend despite being told not to,” she recalled.

She soon became pregnant.

Limakatso left her aunt’s home and moved in with her boyfriend, hoping to build a happier life. Instead, she found herself trapped in another abusive relationship.

“He made me feel small because I told him about my past. He told me he was the only one who cared about me. He clouded my mind with that and I believed that he was the only person to take care of me,” she said.

As time passed, the situation deteriorated. Financial difficulties were accompanied by increasing violence.

“One morning, he beat me so badly that I could not move,” Limakatso said.

“He used to beat me so much that I would lie on the floor, unable to move. When people came, he would tell them not to get involved because I was just an orphan he took in when I even wanted to kill myself.”

Even when she became seriously ill, she said, her boyfriend showed little concern. At times, he would bring other women into the house and have sex with them in her presence while she lay there in pain.

Eventually, a neighbour became concerned and asked Limakatso’s boyfriend about her whereabouts.

“He said I was sick inside the house,” she recalled.

The neighbour found Limakatso and learned what had been happening. She obtained the contact details of Limakatso’s aunt and called her.

Her aunt came and took her home, helping her recover.

But the cycle of abuse was not yet over.

A brush with death

After some time, Limakatso returned to her boyfriend.

“After I got back to him, he threatened me. He said if I left again, he would kill me. He continued to abuse me,” she said.

Then came what she describes as the worst incident of her ordeal.

Following an argument over food, her boyfriend allegedly attempted to kill her.

“He hanged me on the roof and left,” she said.

Fortunately, a neighbour’s child saw her through a window and alerted their mother. People broke

down the door and rescued her.

Limakatso reported the incident to the police, but said her boyfriend told officers that she had attempted to kill herself.

She said no action was taken.

A turning point

With nowhere else to go, Limakatso remained with him until she met another man. She eventually left the abusive relationship and tried to rebuild her life.

But another ordeal followed.

Not long after moving in with her new boyfriend, Limakatso was arrested for allegedly neglecting her child after leaving the child with the child’s father — the same man she said had previously abused her.

“He had told the police that he was the grandfather of the child and he got a call while at work that I had left the baby where he was staying. The police did not even investigate the matter further. They concluded that I had neglected the child,” she said.

While in police custody, Limakatso said she was severely beaten by police officers.

But one female officer listened to her story and intervened.

“One woman officer listened to my story. She promised to help me and later that day of the arrest I was told to go home and come back to the police station again the following day,” she said.

“I stayed at the police station the whole day until it was late and I was taken to sleep at the chief’s house. In the morning, I was called to the police station and sent to a safe house in Maseru.”

At the safe house, Limakatso received three months of counselling.

For the first time in years, she began to see herself and her future differently.

“I was now able to cherish the fact that I have a child and need to take care of them. It was like my mind was reset,” she said.

She was also assisted to return to school.

“Now, I am a student at a tertiary institution,” she said.

A community-wide crisis

Khauhelo Kamohi, a representative of Portia Benedict, explained that the organisation was established primarily to assist underprivileged high school learners to access education by securing sponsorships from individuals, companies and

organisations.

However, Kamohi said the organisation recognises GBV as one of the urgent challenges affecting women, children and other vulnerable people in Lesotho.

“Portia Benedict has also felt the impact of GBV when one of our beneficiaries was raped towards the end of May 2026. So, we share in the responsibility to fight and end it,” she said.

“Therefore, through this campaign, we aim to spark dialogue, strengthen partnerships and mobilise resources to create lasting protection and support systems in our communities.”

Mamolibeli Ngakane, an officer in the Department of Gender, Youth and Social Development, said Lesotho continues to record high levels of GBV, with sexual violence among the most prevalent forms.

Ngakane urged residents of Mokema to report GBV cases, stressing that reports can also be made anonymously.

“Violence has effects on the survivor, including depression, diseases and sometimes death, and that is why we need to work towards zero cases if we want a better future for our country,” she said.

She also stressed that women can be perpetrators of GBV, noting that the problem cannot simply be framed as men being perpetrators and women being victims.

Women Police Constable ‘Maseabonga Sekantši of the Child and Gender Protection Unit in Mazenod said more than 300 GBV cases were recorded in rural Maseru during August alone.

The rural Maseru policing area comprises 12 police stations.

“Of all the cases that were recorded, sexual assault cases were the most affecting children, women, as well as boys and men,” Sekantši said.

She also urged members of the public to report cases of GBV.

Sekantši cautioned survivors and members of the public against discussing details of ongoing cases publicly, particularly through the media and radio, saying this could interfere with police investigations.

Signs of progress, but violence remains widespread

The Mokema campaign comes against the backdrop of evidence suggesting that GBV prevalence in Lesotho has declined, although the levels remain deeply concerning.

According to a nationwide study conducted by Gender Links in partnership with the Bureau of Statistics and supported by the European Union, lifetime GBV prevalence among Basotho women declined from 86 percent in 2013 to 66.7 percent in 2025.

Lifetime intimate partner violence (IPV) also fell from 62 percent to 45.7 percent, while past-year IPV nearly halved, declining from 28 percent to 14.8 percent.

Despite the improvement, the figures mean that violence remains a pervasive reality for a significant proportion of women in Lesotho.

The country has several laws intended to protect people from GBV, including the Sexual Offences Act, 2003; the Children’s Protection and Welfare Act, 2011; and the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, 2022.

Lesotho has also committed itself to international and regional instruments aimed at protecting women and children from violence and discrimination. These include the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

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Ntsoaki Mofaung

"If a school is a place of safety, children will be able to reach their full potential," said Thabang Hloele, a facilitator on the Safe and Inclusive Schools intervention, echoing a conviction now fuelling an effort to transform Lesotho's schools into violence-free learning environments.

According to Hloele, in a country where the majority of children's time is spent in the classroom, the importance of school safety cannot be overstated. "Creating safe spaces is not only about physical security, but also about emotional well-being and the opportunity for every learner to flourish," he said.

That conviction now has the full weight of government and international backing behind it. Ministry of Education and Training, with support from UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), has launched the Safe and Inclusive Schools intervention, a programme targeting 300 primary schools and 52,695 learners across the country.

The initiative stems from a pressing reality that violence in and around schools, whether physical, emotional or sexual, continues to harm children, disrupt attendance and undermine learning outcomes.

The Minister of Education and Training, Ntoi Rapapa, said the programme goes beyond training and pamphlets, and is intended to rewire how schools function. "This intervention strengthens the institutional systems our schools require to identify, prevent and respond to violence against children, including clear safeguarding protocols, trained personnel and functional case-management processes. It thus strengthens the

Child Friendly Schools approach, which emphasises that schools need to be more welcoming, more child-centred, where all children are equally respected and valued," he said. "The Government's commitment is to ensure schools become safe, supportive and conducive areas for quality education. Therefore, across all 300 targeted schools, safeguarding becomes an embedded standard, not an isolated effort."

For years, Hloele said, Lesotho's schools lacked a dedicated policy focused on addressing violence in schools. "The programme aims to make sure there are clear, child-friendly reporting mechanisms," he explained.

"Teachers and non-teaching staff are being trained on identification, prevention and response to school-based gender-based violence. But it is not only up to staff, learners themselves are expected to take an active role in preventing violence. This shift in responsibility aims to cultivate a culture where everyone in the school community is empowered and accountable.

"The intervention includes the development of Zero Tolerance Policy Guidelines, which will set out clear procedures for reporting and responding to incidents, and clarify standards of conduct for all adults on school premises. We want to popularise the Child Helpline, and we are printing tools to guide schools in addressing issues of violence," said Hloele.

He said most of the time, learners are at school and they should be there to learn, not to be violated. "When a teacher looks at a learner, they should see a learner, not a potential boyfriend or girlfriend, and vice versa," he said.

'No child should fear school'



“...We want to popularise the Child Helpline, and we are printing tools to guide schools in addressing issues of violence

— Thabang Hloele, a facilitator on the Safe and Inclusive Schools intervention

He emphasised, similarly, that a learner should see a teacher as a teacher, a parent and a protector.

For UNICEF, which is co-financing the intervention alongside GPE, the ambition is to make these safeguards permanent rather than another short-lived campaign. "Every child has the right to learn in an environment where they feel safe, respected and protected from violence. When children feel protected and know that their concerns will be heard and acted upon, they are better able to attend school regularly and focus on learning," said Dr Bob Muchabaiwa, Acting UNICEF Lesotho Representative. "Through this partnership with the Government of Lesotho and the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF remains committed to strengthening these systems and supporting schools to become safer, more inclusive and supportive spaces where every child can thrive and realise their full potential."

At the heart of the programme are intensive training workshops for teachers, principals and support staff. Mpheng Molapo, a facilitator from the Ministry's Learner Care and Welfare Support Unit, outlined the scope: "We have been in Mokhotlong and Mafeteng, and now we are training educators in Mahale's Hoek

and Quthing. The aim is to equip stakeholders on child protection and to eliminate violence in schools."

Molapo highlighted a stubborn problem, violence often goes unreported and is sometimes normalised, even by teachers. "Corporal punishment is still being used," she noted, "but we are training teachers in alternative discipline methods. There are also new referral mechanisms to support children who have been violated, whether that means healthcare or legal assistance. Our goal is to reduce dropout rates by making children feel safe in schools."

It is precisely this link between school-level reporting and the wider child-protection system that the Minister returned to. "Sustainable protection for children depends on functional, interlinked systems, prevention measures, trusted reporting channels and reliable referral pathways operating together," he said. "By strengthening these linkages between school-level mechanisms and national child protection structures, we ensure that concerns raised by and

affecting children are identified and addressed consistently, and that schools remain safe, stable environments where children learn and thrive."

Molapo added that the training will also improve the reliability of the data schools generate. "The training will help us get reliable statistics, because schools will use new tools for reporting incidents," she said.

For educators like Teboho Setumo of Phatlalla Primary in Mahale's Hoek, the training has been eye-opening. "We learned that some things we used to do, like corporal punishment, are not only harmful towards children, but could also get us into trouble. We are now expected to pass this information to colleagues, school boards and the whole school community so we can move away from harmful norms and promote child-friendly schools."

Setumo admitted that bullying and violence among learners was often addressed with more violence. "But we learned that beating does not solve the problem, it can hurt the learner and put the teacher at risk legally. Now, I under-

stand that talking to learners and making them comfortable can reveal the root causes, which may even come from home."

He also noted that while his school has not experienced cases of teacher-learner relationships, these situations have occurred elsewhere. "Getting into a relationship with a learner removes from the teacher that image of being a teacher, and learners see them as their peers, resulting in distorted relationships between a teacher and a learner. In such cases, a child may not perform well in school," Setumo explained, an awareness he said is part of the wider shift towards professional conduct and safeguarding standards.

'Marathabeng Nkhula, principal at Qhoqhoane Primary, is grateful for the practical tools and guidelines. "We have to change how we do things, prevent violence, and know how to report and refer cases, whether it is learner-to-learner, teacher-to-learner, or between teachers," she said. "The approach will help build trust, so learners feel safe and perform better."

She highlighted the importance of trust between learners and teachers. When learners feel safe, they are more likely to confide in adults about prob-

lems they may face, whether in school or at home, a sense of security she called fundamental to academic success and personal development.

District Education Manager 'Mahlompho Shabe, in Mafeteng, stressed that violence is pervasive and affects learning. "Where there is violence, learning does not take place. We are dealing with vulnerable learners, many of whom are self-raising because their parents are working in other countries. This intervention fills serious gaps, many teachers could not previously identify what violence really means or how to prevent it."

Shabe expected teachers and principals to share their new knowledge with school boards and communities, cascading the training's impact. "It's about getting rid of violence at all levels, and learners must be involved, like the saying that nothing for us, without us. Committees including even the youngest learners can be formed to give them a voice in their own protection."

She noted that violence can occur across all ages and backgrounds, and that the training has helped clarify definitions and approaches to gender-based violence. "We are not skilled, we are not technical in dealing with issues of violence. This workshop has given direction to principals, teachers, school boards and communities. Teachers need to escalate training sessions and disseminate information, starting with their peers and then moving to school boards and the community."

The scale of the problem is what makes the intervention urgent. UNICEF data show that 22 percent of girls aged 13-17 who experienced sexual violence in the past year identified classmates as

perpetrators, and more than a quarter said the incidents occurred on school premises.

More than 40 percent of adults surveyed agreed that corporal punishment is necessary, yet 82 percent of staff expressed willingness to attend violence-prevention training, a sign of readiness for change.

The Safe and Inclusive Schools intervention is designed to deliver lasting change. It will establish accessible, child-friendly reporting channels, align referrals with social welfare and police services, and disseminate prevention messages, including on the Child Helpline. Child protection committees and clubs will be set up or reactivated, giving children a meaningful voice in their own safety.

The intervention also includes efforts to raise awareness across families and communities. Parents, caregivers and community leaders will be equipped with information about preventing and reporting violence, so the support system for learners extends beyond the classroom, recognising that violence is not just a school issue, but a community concern.

The initiative ties directly into Lesotho's National Prevention and Response Plan on Violence Against Children and Youth (2022), and advances priorities under the country's education system transformation agenda. By aligning with national policies and international best practice, Lesotho aims to ensure that the gains from this intervention are sustainable, and that progress is monitored, so that, as Hloele puts it, every school becomes a place where children go to learn, not to be violated.





Government of Lesotho

Invitation to Bidders

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The Ministry of Law and Justice (MLJ)

Government Printing

03rd September 2026

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- The bidding document which has been prepared in English may be purchased by interested bidders at 8(b) upon payment of a **non-refundable** fee of **One thousand Maloti only**. The method of payment will be cash payable at accounts office Government Printing and Stationery, from **8am-3:00pm only, from 03rd September to 08th October 2026**. The receipt must be presented to the **Procurement Unit Office Government Printing and Stationery**
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at 8(c) at or before 10:00 am, 08th October 2026. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 2% of their bid price, expressed as a fixed amount and not with decimal points. Bid security must be valid until 18th 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 given below at 8(d) at 10:30am, 08th October 2026.
- There **shall** be a pre-bid meeting/ site visit for **LOT 3 Bidders**.
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- Documents will be issued from: Government Printing and Stationery, Procurement office, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting Factory.
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 - Address of bid opening: Government Printing and Stationery, Conference Room, Maseru Industrial Area, Lioli Road, Opposite Hippo Knitting Factory.
 - The planned procurement Schedule (subject to changes) as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Publish bid notice	03rd September 2026
(b) Pre-bid meeting for LOT 3 Bidders	14th/September/2026 at 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08th October 2026
(d) Bid closing Time	10:00am
(e) Evaluation process	12th October 2026 to 23rd October 2026
(f) Display and communication of Notice of Tender	30th October 2026
(g) Contract signature	20th November 2026

10. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR CLARIFICATIONS

For additional information or request for clarifications on issues concerning the request should be in writing, please contact the following office:

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- Are passionate about our responsibilities (and purpose)
- Seek personal growth to be our best
- Engage and make a difference
- Embrace continuous improvement to deliver excellence

How to Apply

Be part of Lesotho Bakery (Premier) and help shape the future FMCG industry. Apply through our email: hr.lesotho@premierfmcg.com
Documents should be sent together (Application, CV, and qualifications) on one email.
Alternatively, applications can be delivered at Lesotho Bakery (Blue Ribbon), Thetsane Industrial, Maseru

Closing Date 11 September 2026

Should you not receive a reply within a month from your application, please treat as unsuccessful.

*Premier FMCG is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to Employment Equity and transformation. We encourage applications from all qualified individuals regardless of race, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability. By submitting your application, you consent to the processing of your personal information in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) of South Africa. We will only use your personal information for recruitment purposes and will keep it confidential in accordance with our privacy policy.



Internal & External Advertisement
Call Centre Agent

About Premier

We empower our people to strive for excellence, ensuring that our products and people make a difference in the everyday lives of our consumers. We are driven by innovation, collaboration and a high-performing growth.

Job Purpose

To ensure that the CALL-CENTRE system performs optimally by playing a vital role of being a strategic link to our customers' communication processes, committed to exceeding their expectations by managing customer information and processing of orders received from various sources.

Key Responsibilities

- Excellent customer:** Always maintain relations and have a professional attitude. Ensure excellent and professional customer service - first call resolution including effective soft skills, telephone and e-mail etiquette but not limited to business writing.
- Capturing of information:** Ensure accurate capturing of information received from various sources on the relevant systems daily.
- Communication & stakeholders Engagement:** Assist other departments as needed on order specifications, additional needs, or special requirements.
- Maintenance functions:** Perform regular daily order schedule maintenance functions such as customer sales order hold removal and obtaining official authorisation numbers from various buying groups.
- Verification Process:** Responsible for order entry and verification against customer order.
- Operating guidelines:** Obtain 100% call adherence to operating guidelines and standard procedure (quality, accuracy & behaviour)

Experience & Qualifications

- LGCSE
- Relevant Sales qualification will be advantageous.
- Basic Call Centre SOPs knowledge - desirable, understanding of FMCG Manufacturing basic GP2010 - desirable.
- 1-2 years of previous working experience dealing with customers (Essential)
- 1-2 years exposure to the Call Centre/Tele sales
- At least 1-2 years' experience in the FMCG industry with sound knowledge of bakery and confectionery products

Skills & Competencies

- Assertiveness
- Computer literacy - Strong Computer Skills - fast processing
- Pressurized environment (Accuracy and time pressures)
- Sense of urgency/ result orientated
- Communication skills (written and verbal)
- Accountability
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Respect

Working conditions

- 6-day position
- Required to work Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays.

Diversity & Inclusion

Premier FMCG is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applicants from all qualified individuals.

By applying, you consent to the processing of your personal information in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI Act) for recruitment purposes.



Invitation for Bids

Maseru, Lesotho
20 AUGUST 2026

Re: Procurement of Food Processing Equipment (Can Fruits)
- Ref No: LSO-2000002340-0230-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 in **Lesotho Times newspaper on the 23 April 2026, Public eye newspapers on 24 April 2026 and Informative Newspaper on the 29 April 2026.**
- The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the **Procurement of food Processing Equipment (Can Fruits)**. 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. 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 and complete the registration form available on the website

Attn: Procurement Manager ROLL Project
Ministry of Environment & Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281 Maseru 100
Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203

E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls and copy to 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 05 October 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 Maseru 100
Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 58757203

E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls





INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Laptops and Accessories

Procurement Reference: LNDC-CS-2026-10

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds for the supply and delivery of 42 laptops and accompanying accessories, divided into Lot 1 (17 laptops) and Lot 2 (25 laptops).
2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said services.
3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in the Table below, at Item 7(h) from the **21st August 2026 between 08:30am and 16:30pm**.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English *language is available free of charge in soft copy by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls*
6. Late bids shall be rejected.
7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for Bids	21 August 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	01 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	17 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	17 September 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	22 September- 30 September 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	01 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area



INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Office Furniture

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-11

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **office furniture**.
2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said goods.
3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 2026 between 08:30am and 16:30pm**.
5. 5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English language **is available free of charge in soft copy by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls**.
6. Late bids shall be rejected.
7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for Bids	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area



INVITATION TO TENDER

Supply and Delivery of Promotional Material

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-12

1. The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has allocated funds to be used for Supply and delivery of **Promotional Material**
2. The LNDC invites sealed bids from **eligible local service providers** for provision of the above said goods.
3. Bidding & bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Open National Competitive Bidding procedures prescribed in the Public Procurement Act, 2023 and the Regulations made under the Act.
4. Interested and eligible bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given in Table below, at Item 7 (h) from the **04 September 2026 between 08:30am and 16:30pm**.
5. The bidding document which has been prepared in the English language **is available free of charge in soft copy by emailing procurement@lndc.org.ls**.
6. Late bids shall be rejected.
7. The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for Bids	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	15 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	08 October 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	08 October 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	12 - 16 October 2026
(f) Display and communication of best evaluated bidder notice	14 October 2026
(g) Contract Signature	30 November 2026
(h) Address	LNDC Development House, Block A, Reception Area



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SECURITY SERVICE PROVIDERS
FOR THE PROVISION OF AD-HOC SECURITY SERVICES

Procurement Reference: LNDC-LAS-2026-13

1. **Background and Objective:** The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) intends to prequalify competent security service providers for the provision of reliable and responsive security services on an ad-hoc, on-call basis at its properties and designated locations in Lesotho. Interested providers must demonstrate professional competence, integrity, qualified personnel, adequate resources, regulatory compliance, and the capacity to deliver quality services.
2. Bidding and bidder eligibility shall be conducted in accordance with the Lesotho Public Procurement Act, 2023, and its Regulations.
3. **The Properties:** The LNDC intends to enter into an Open Framework Agreement for the provision of security services on an ad-hoc basis across selected LNDC properties in Lesotho. Interested locally registered security service providers may express interest in providing services at one or more of the properties, as detailed in the Expression of Interest (EOI) document.
4. **The planned Procurement schedule (subject to changes) is as follows:**

Activity	Date
(a) Issue of Request for EOI	04 September 2026
(b) Non-compulsory pre-bid meeting	09 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(c) Bid closing date	16 September 2026 @ 10:00 am
(d) Public Opening	16 September 2026 @ 10:15 am
(e) Evaluation process	17-18 September 2026
(f) Commencement	1st October 2026
(g) Address for submission	LNDC Development House, Block A, Level 1 Reception Area, Tender Box
(h) Email to request a detailed tender document	Procurement@lndc.org.ls



A just transition cannot be built on women's land, labour and bodies

Dr Melania Chiponda

The 46th Ordinary Summit of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government held in Durban on 17 August 2026 and has placed critical minerals, infrastructure and industrialisation firmly at the centre of the region's development ambitions. Its theme — *"Resilient, Sustainable, and Inclusive Industrialisation through Infrastructure Development, Agricultural and Critical Minerals Transformation in Pursuit of a Just World"* — is ambitious and, on the surface, compelling.

I welcome the recognition that critical minerals, agriculture and infrastructure will shape the region's economic future. I also welcome the communiqué's commitments to women's leadership, gender-based violence prevention, climate preparedness and inclusive development.

But as an ecofeminist, I am compelled to ask a more uncomfortable question: just industrialisation for whom, and at whose cost?

This is not a rejection of SADC's industrialisation ambitions. It is a challenge to make the promise of a "just world" real for the women, girls and communities whose land, labour and natural resources are increasingly being drawn into the region's new extractive economy.

Critical minerals are not just an economic opportunity

SADC's communiqué identifies critical minerals as key drivers of industrialisation and competitiveness. The Summit also identifies critical minerals and just energy transition among the high-impact priorities for the region's development strategy.

There is an obvious economic logic to this. Southern Africa possesses mineral resources that are increasingly important to the global energy transition.

But minerals do not exist in a vacuum.

They exist under land where people farm, collect water, raise families and sustain communities. They exist in landscapes where women's livelihoods are often intimately connected to forests, rivers, agricultural land and other natural resources.

My concern is that the current language of industrialisation can make the mineral itself visible while making the people living around it invisible.

We talk about lithium, cobalt, graphite, copper and rare earth minerals as strategic resources. We talk about investment,

value addition, industrialisation and regional competitiveness. But we must also ask: whose land is being transformed, whose livelihoods are being disrupted, who makes the decisions, who benefits and who carries the risks?

An industrialisation strategy cannot genuinely be inclusive if the costs are systematically transferred to women, girls and rural communities.

We cannot separate extraction from gender justice

My work on the SADC Model Law on Eradicating Child Marriage has led me to a conclusion that deserves much greater attention in regional policy discussions: child marriage is not simply a problem of culture, tradition or household poverty.

It is also a political-economic issue.

The loss of land, water and subsistence livelihoods can undermine the economic foundations that allow girls to remain in school and delay marriage. The region is now experiencing a critical-minerals rush at precisely the same time as climate shocks are eroding household resilience.

This creates a dangerous convergence.

When drought destroys harvests, when water sources recede, when families lose access to productive land or when communities are displaced by mining, households become more economically vulnerable. Girls can bear a disproportionate share of the consequences.

In such circumstances, marriage can become a coping strategy. My analysis identifies drought, failed harvests, displacement and water insecurity as pathways through which climate change can heighten the risk of child marriage.

This means that a mining policy can have implications for child protection even when it says nothing about children.

A climate policy can have implications for child marriage even when it says nothing about marriage.

And an energy-transition policy can have profound implications for women's rights even when it speaks primarily about jobs, investment and carbon reduction.

These issues are connected.

A "just transition" can still be gender-blind

SADC's commitment to a just transition is welcome. But we must be honest about what current just-transition conversations often leave out.

They tend to focus on jobs, skills, industrial policy, energy systems, critical-mineral supply chains, investment and financing.

What is often missing are the gender-differentiated impacts of mining expansion, the risks of gender-based violence and child marriage in extractive areas, community consent, women's land rights and the protection of girls. This is the contradiction we must confront.

We cannot call a transition "just" simply because it moves us from one energy source to another.

A transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy can still be unjust if the minerals required for renewable technologies are extracted through land dispossession, environmental degradation, inadequate consultation and the exclusion of women from decision-making.

A transition is not just merely because it is green.

Justice requires us to ask how the transition is produced, who controls it and who benefits from it.

The community must have a voice before the mine arrives

This is why Free, Prior and Informed Consent must become more than a technical phrase in policy documents.

If SADC is serious about inclusive industrialisation, affected communities must have meaningful participation in decisions concerning mining, land, displacement, compensation and environmental impacts. And that participation must be gender-responsive.

Women cannot be invited into a consultation simply to demonstrate that a consultation was held. They must have the information, power and institutional space to influence decisions affecting their land, livelihoods and futures.

Women cannot remain an afterthought

The SADC communiqué rightly calls on Member States to accelerate women's participation in leadership and decision-making and to strengthen policies addressing gender-based violence and human rights.

But women's participation cannot be confined to political leadership.

Women must also have decision-making power over the economic transformations taking place in their communities.

A woman whose land is acquired for mining is not simply a "beneficiary" of development. She is a rights-holder.

A girl whose school closes or whose family loses its livelihood because of displacement is not an unfortunate statistic. She is part of the development equation.

And a community environmental defender is not an obstacle to progress. They may be protecting the very social and ecological foundations upon which sustainable development depends.

SADC has an opportunity to get this right

I do not believe that the answer is to abandon industrialisation or reject the development of critical-mineral value chains.

The opportunity before SADC is much more important: to create a different model of industrialisation. One that does not simply extract minerals from the region and export their value.

The Summit has already created an important political opening. Its language of resilience, sustainability, inclusion and justice provides a foundation upon which civil society, governments and communities can build.

But words must now become safeguards, laws, budgets and accountability mechanisms.

The critical-minerals agenda should therefore be linked explicitly to gender justice, child protection, climate resilience and community land rights.

Extractive companies and investors must have clear obligations to communities. Gender-responsive FPIC should be strengthened. Environmental defenders must be protected. And the social consequences of mining and climate change must become part of how SADC measures development.

The real test of a just world

The success of SADC's industrialisation agenda should not ultimately be measured only by the amount of investment attracted, minerals extracted, roads constructed or factories established.

The deeper test is whether ordinary people experience greater security, dignity and control over their futures.

No transition is truly just while women and girls are expected to subsidise it with their land, labour, livelihoods or bodies. SADC has an opportunity to demonstrate that Africa's energy and industrial transition can be different. Let us make it a transition that is not only green, but genuinely just, feminist, community-centred and accountable.

END

The writer is a climate activist and executive director, Shine Collab, a global feminist network advancing women-led energy access, climate justice, and community power across Africa and the Global South.



DJ Bootz's remarkable 20-year legacy on air

Chris Theko

For two decades, Bafokeng "DJ Bootz" Ramoseeli has been a familiar voice on the airwaves of People's Choice FM (PC FM), building a career that has endured changing audiences, evolving technology and the rise of social media.

What began as a weekend night radio slot has grown into a 20-year journey that has seen Bootz become the host of Mansion Afternoon Drive, one of the country's most listened-to afternoon programmes.

Yet, looking back, he says he never imagined his journey with PC FM would last this long.

"Honestly, I didn't think I would still be with PC FM two decades later. It is by God's grace," he says.

If there is one thing he remembers clearly from the beginning, however, it is the hunger he had for radio.

"One thing I remember is the hunger I had for what I do. I still have it today."

That hunger, coupled with a commitment to learning, has been central to his longevity.

"The never-stop-learning attitude played an important role because of that my career grew," Bootz says.

Bootz began his PC FM journey as a weekend night presenter, using the opportunity to develop his voice, understand his audience and sharpen

his craft.

Over the years, he progressed through different programmes and eventually found himself behind the microphone of Mansion Afternoon Drive.

The transition from weekend nights to one of the station's prominent drive-time slots reflects both his growth as a broadcaster and his ability to remain relevant in a rapidly changing industry.

For Bootz, the foundation of that longevity is simple: passion.

"The love and passion for what I do played an important role because I breathe, eat and everything with me is radio."

But passion alone has not been enough.

Radio today operates in a vastly different environment from the one Bootz entered two decades ago. Smartphones, streaming platforms and social media have transformed the way audiences consume entertainment and information.

Bootz says competing with social media has been among the biggest challenges of his career, particularly the need to convince audiences that traditional radio still has a place in their lives.

"Having to compete with social media has been one of the hardest. Having to influence people that radio is still important."

His continued presence on air is, perhaps, evidence that radio still has the power to adapt and



remain relevant.

Bootz's journey has also been shaped by people who recognised his potential before he had established himself. Among them is Tello Leballo, popularly known as Dallas T.

The two first crossed paths about 24 years ago, when Bootz was pursuing his first radio opportunity at Harvest FM.

At the time, he knew little about the technical side of broadcasting. He had heard of radio jingles but had no idea how to produce one. Someone directed him to Dallas T.

Although they did not know each other, Dallas T welcomed him and produced his first-ever radio jingle.

More significantly, he promised to follow his journey and help him grow. Bootz says that promise has endured.

"He has continued to do that all these years, supported me, even now he still plays a huge role and I'm forever grateful to him."

Another important figure was the late DJ Thabie, whom Bootz credits with taking a chance on him at PC FM.

"He sacrificed by putting me on air at PC FM despite the risks and challenges of his actions," Bootz recalls.

DJ Thabie helped mould him as a presenter, sometimes putting him on air even when he was not scheduled, and later played a role in helping him begin his career as a DJ.

Although DJ Thabie has since passed away, Bootz says his influence remains part of his story.

As he celebrates 20 years at PC FM, and 24 years connected to radio, Bootz says he is proud not only of his longevity but also of the people and opportunities that have shaped his career.

"I am so proud to have achieved this beautiful 20 years at PC FM with extra four on radio. I am proud to have rubbed shoulders with the best in the game."

He also sees his career as a contribution to Lesotho's cultural landscape.

"I have also contributed in putting my country on the map and my name will surely be written in the history books of this country."

For someone who entered radio with little more than hunger and determination, the journey has become a testament to what consistency can produce.

His advice to young people hoping to follow a similar path is straightforward.

"Be passionate. Love and respect your job. It will return the favour. Always be humble."

Twenty years after taking his place behind the microphone at PC FM, DJ Bootz's story is no longer simply about a radio career.

It is a story of passion sustained by consistency, growth driven by learning, and a legacy built one broadcast at a time.

And after two decades, the hunger that brought him to the microphone remains. The microphone is still on.

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Cityzeen Ls takes Basotho culture beyond borders with 'Moshana Lihlabeng'

Chris Theko

Local artist Cityzeen LS is looking beyond the country's borders with his latest musical offering, an eight-track extended play (EP) titled *Moshana Lihlabeng*, set for release today (4 September, 2026).

More than a collection of songs, Cityzeen says the project is driven by a broader ambition, to take the Basotho identity, language and culture to audiences beyond Africa.

The title *Moshana Lihlabeng* is rooted in his reflections on the Basotho experience and what he sees as a limitation in the country's international reach.

"The title name comes from what I have learned from us as Basotho, which is that we hardly travel and break beyond the SADC region," he says.

The EP is part of a personal dream for Cityzen to change that narrative through music.

"I have a dream to go beyond and sell Sesotho and Basotho through our music; to sell us and our culture beyond the continent."

The project, which Cityzeen began working on in 2025, took close to a year and a half to complete. Rather than following one storyline, the songs explore different aspects of his journey, from his beginnings in music to where he is now and where he hopes to go next.

Among the tracks is *Jere*, featuring Qhomane, which Cityzeen describes as a song intended to give listeners hope that difficult circumstances can eventually improve.

While the songs address different subjects, he says the central message remains the promotion of Basotho identity.

"The core of the project is to sell who we are as Basotho."

That vision also influenced his decision to bring together several established names in Lesotho's music industry.

The EP features collaborations with artists including Qhomane, Phoka ea Boroa, Ati Zee, Ntate Stunna, Litshepe LR and Omali Themba, alongside producers such as Master Dalton, Trinity Tunez, Risky Beatz, Vibeboy Beatz, King Speedy and Flash Cortez.

Cityzeen says the collaborations were deliberately designed to make the project feel bigger than an individual release.

"I worked with some of the well-established artists to say this EP is not about me but Basotho and our culture."

His original vision was even more ambitious. He had hoped to bring together a larger number of prominent Basotho artists so that listeners could find several of their favourites on one project.

However, scheduling conflicts and other commitments meant that not everyone he approached could participate.

"I wanted a big project that has a collaborative spirit," he explains. "My aim was that people find their favourite artists in one project."

Of the collaborations that eventually made it onto the EP, Jere holds a special place for Cityzeen, particularly because of Qhomane's contribution and the message contained in his verse.

The collaboration with Ntate Stunna also stands out, not only because of the final song but because of the journey from requesting the feature to developing the creative direction of the track.

For Cityzeen, however, the release is not necessarily about outperforming everything he has done before.

Instead, his immediate goal is to build on the relationship he has established with his audience.

"The goal is not necessarily to surpass my previous work but to grow my fan base and the love that my fans have for me," he says.

As Moshana Lihlabeng prepares to enter the digital music space, Cityzeen is asking listeners not to rush through the project.

His wish is for audiences to give the EP the attention required to experience each song on its own terms.

"I wish that people give themselves time to listen to the EP thoroughly."

He is also setting his sights high when it comes to the project's commercial performance, believing every song has the potential to reach a million streams across digital platforms.

"I believe each song has the capability and deserves a million streams on all digital platforms," he says, while acknowledging that ultimately, "you never know."

Moshana Lihlabeng therefore represents more than a new chapter in Cityzeen LS's music career. It is an attempt to use music as a vehicle for cultural export, taking Sesotho beyond familiar geographical boundaries and introducing wider audiences to the people, language and culture of Lesotho.



Seabata Mahao

Matlama FC are fast becoming the team every rival in the 2026/27 Vodacom Premier League will be desperate to avoid, and Sunday’s emphatic 4-1 demolition of Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) at Bambatha Stadium only strengthened the case that the Blues are the outfit to beat this season.

After two matches into the new campaign, Matlama sit top of the log with a maximum six points, having brushed aside their opening opponents with the kind of ruthless efficiency that suggests their form is no fluke.

It is a continuation of the electric run that saw them close out last season on a high, an upturn in fortunes that coincided directly with the return of coach Thabile Secker, the same man who has previously guided Tse Putsoa to league glory.

Against LMPS, Matlama needed just seven minutes to open the scoring through Molefi Kulehile, teed up by an inspired Litšepe Marabe, who would go on to complete a sensational hat-trick and walk away with the man-of-the-match award.

Sanele Phantše’s reply for LMPS proved nothing more than a consolation as Matlama cruised to victory without ever looking troubled. Even Secker felt his side left points on the pitch.

“We played very well in the first half. We should have won this game based on that first-half performance alone, but we did not,” Secker said, praising his defence for staying composed whenever LMPS threatened to find a way back into the contest.

That kind of clinical, front-foot football under Secker is precisely what has rival coaches worried. LMPS boss Motlatsi Letsie, for one, was left to rue his own side’s inability to match the Blues’ composure in the final third.

“My players played well, but there are mistakes that we have been trying to correct since our first match. When they are supposed to release the ball, they do not do so, and that is

Who will stop Matlama?

• Tse Putsoa on a roll as Secker’s men set early pace



killing us as LMPS,” Letsie admitted.

With momentum firmly behind them, Matlama will fancy their chances of extending their perfect start this coming weekend when they face a Lifofane FC side in complete disarray, both on and off the pitch.

Lifofane arrive at the fixture off the back of a chastening 4-0 hammering at the hands of Manonyane FC, a result that laid bare the Botha Bothe side’s defensive fragility and lack of composure under pressure. Coach Nkosana Mabena did not hide his frustration afterwards, admitting his players had failed to stick to the game plan.

“We expected Manonyane to come at us, but we did not expect them to come with the confidence that they had. The team did not follow our game plans coming into the game. We planned to attack them and block their

transitions, but the team lacked appetite,” Mabena said.

That heavy defeat followed an underwhelming 1-1 draw against a struggling Limkokwing University side in their season opener, meaning Lifofane head into their meeting with Matlama still searching for their first win of the campaign, and short on confidence.

To make matters worse, Lifofane’s troubles extend well beyond results on the field. The club finds itself embroiled in a bitter boardroom battle to retain the services of star player Sello Japhta, who has made no secret of his desire to join Lioli FC.

The Players Status Committee initially ruled in Lifofane’s favour, determining that Japhta remained contractually bound to the Botha Bothe side. However, the player

successfully appealed that decision and now appears poised to seal his move away from the club, a transfer saga that threatens to further destabilise a Lifofane side already under significant pressure.

For a Matlama team riding the crest of a wave, a Lifofane side distracted by contractual drama and low on morale represents precisely the kind of opponent they will look to punish. Should Secker’s men make it three wins from three, they will not only extend their perfect start but send an unmistakable message to the rest of the league.

The early signs are ominous for the chasing pack. With a settled squad, a proven title-winning coach at the helm, and rivals like Lifofane seemingly distracted, the question being asked around the league is who will stop Matlama this season?

I could not be more proud — McKirdy hails Ramakongoana

Seabata Mahao

Long-distance star Tebello Ramakongoana capped a remarkable run at the recent Sydney Marathon with a third-place finish — but it was his coach James McKirdy’s glowing words afterwards that captured just how far the Olympian has come.

McKirdy could barely contain his pride when reflecting on the performance, calling it “astounding” and praising not just the result, but the character behind it.

“Tebello’s placement was astounding! He’s developed so well to run such a fast time considering the challenging course,” McKirdy said.

“This was one of the deepest fields in the world this year and to finish 3rd is a testament to his growth.”

Ramakongoana clocked 2:04:57 to secure a World Major medal, facing one of the toughest fields of his career on Sydney’s notoriously punishing, unaided course. He arrived with a personal best of 2:04:18 set in Boston, but for McKirdy, the Sydney run tells a bigger story.

“2:04:18 in Boston is a national best time but 2:04:57 in Sydney, to me, is the more impressive mark,” he said.

The coaching team built Ramakongoana’s preparation specifically around the demands of the course.

“Sydney’s course can make a 2:03-2:04 marathoner run 2:07-2:09. We see it every year. So we focused on the ability to handle speed over the hills,” McKirdy explained.

The plan was never simply to make up the numbers. Ramakongoana went to Sydney



intent on contending for a podium finish against the best in the world, including defending world champion Alphonse Simbu , and McKirdy pinpointed the moment his athlete believed he belonged among them.

“I think at the 30km mark was his moment to say, ‘I am here today... I can do this,’” he said.

What makes the achievement even more remarkable, McKirdy revealed, is that Ramakongoana fell ill just a day before the race.

“He got pretty sick the day before with a strong fever... but it faded as quickly as it came. I think it faded fully during the race to be honest,” he said.

That resilience, McKirdy says, is a hallmark of who Ramakongoana is, on top of eleven weeks of uninterrupted, high-quality training in the build-up.

“I could not be more proud. Tebello consistently shows up for himself. He shows no fear and places no internal pressure that’s unwarranted. He continues to grow emotionally as well as physically.”

Looking ahead, McKirdy sees Sydney as another step on the road to an even bigger prize.

“This was a step forward towards crossing the finish line in first. But any time you earn a world major medal is truly a special moment in an athlete’s career. We won’t take that for granted.”

Focus will now shift to recovery, with another marathon on the horizon once Ramakongoana has fully rested. McKirdy’s parting words carried a message that went beyond the track.

“Not just in him, but in yourselves that you can rise up and accomplish greatness for yourselves. Take ownership of your life and work hard,” he said.



Lungile Maseela

The Roof of Africa Rally is set to begin earlier this year as it enters a new chapter in the international hard enduro championship calendar, bringing some of the world's top off-road riders to Lesotho.

Unlike its usual November slot, the 2026 edition of the renowned motorcycle competition will run from 23-26 September, hosted by the Lesotho Off Road Association (LORA) in collaboration with the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC).

Speaking at the launch of the event, LORA Public Relations Officer Ntaote Bereng said the rally's inclusion in the international championship would raise its profile and give riders the chance to compete for valuable championship points.

He said this year's change in dates was necessitated by the event's new status on the international calendar, as the Roof of Africa now has to take place before another championship race scheduled in Spain.

Bereng said several highly ranked international riders are expected to participate, with more competitors to be announced as the event approaches. He described the Roof of Africa as among the world's oldest and most challenging hard enduro motorcycle events, noting that it continues to draw leading off-road riders from around the globe.

"Roof of Africa is more than a motorcycle competition," Bereng said, adding that this year's event coincides with Lesotho's celebration of 60 years of independence.

He said the country's rugged mountains, rivers, steep terrain, rocky landscapes and unpredictable weather provide an ideal setting for hard enduro racing, and that the competition has grown into an internationally recognised event that attracts riders, teams and spectators from across the world.

He added that the rally's continued success depends largely on the cooperation and support of communities and landowners whose land is used during the race, and that LORA remains committed to ensuring these communities benefit from their involvement.

The association, he said, would continue supporting corporate social investment and community development initiatives linked to the event.

Meanwhile, LTDC Chief Executive Officer Mamello Morojele said the competition also presents significant opportunities for the country's tourism sector. She said the Roof of Africa draws riders, support teams, officials, spectators and other visitors who spend money on accommodation, food, transport

Roof roars earlier under new era



2022 Roof of Africa action

and other services, spending that creates opportunities for businesses across the tourism value chain.

Morojele said Lesotho's mountains, rivers, rocky landscapes and challenging terrain not only provide a unique backdrop for the competition but also strengthen the country's appeal as an adventure tourism destination.

The event, she said, gives Lesotho a platform to showcase its tourism offering to an international audience and to encourage visitors to extend their stay and explore other parts of the country. She encouraged visitors attending the rally to explore local tourism attractions, experience Basotho

culture and sample local cuisine.

Bereng said the 2025 Roof of Africa generated significant economic activity through spending by international and local riders, support teams, spectators, sponsors and event organisers, benefiting sectors including accommodation and hospitality, restaurants and catering, fuel and vehicle services, local suppliers, temporary employment and other event-related businesses. He put the event's estimated economic contribution at M56.7 million.

Meanwhile, LesRock Director Limpho Nkune said the company had partnered with stakeholders to add entertainment activities to the Roof of Africa programme.

She said several activities would be held in Roma during the Roof of Africa period, including performances by artists and DJs, aimed at giving Basotho more opportunities to participate in and enjoy the event.

She said the organisation had also asked LORA to support communities through the initiative, with food to be prepared and distributed to people living on the streets and clothing donations to be made on September 13.

Another activity is scheduled for September 19, when motorcycles will take part in a parade to give members of the public a taste of the excitement surrounding the competition, ending at Maseru Mall.



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