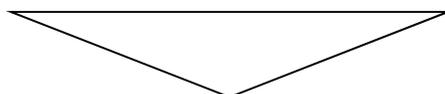




**LESOTHO TRANSITIONAL INTERIM COUNTRY
STRATEGIC PLAN
(YEAR 2018-2019)**

Duration	1 January 2018 – 30 June 2019
Total cost to WFP	USD 20 081 295
Gender and Age Marker Code *	2A



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WFP Lesotho has prepared a Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) covering the period from January 2018 to June 2019 in alignment with the upcoming National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the Lesotho UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which will be effective as of 2019. WFP's 18-month T-ICSP is based on: i) lessons learned and findings from the mid-term evaluation of WFP's ongoing Country Programme in Lesotho; ii) consultations with the Government, donors and partners; and iii) the initial findings of the UN Lesotho Common Country Analysis Report 2017 (CCA)¹.

Lesotho continues to struggle with a range of development challenges, including chronic poverty and food insecurity, unemployment, the second highest HIV prevalence in the world, and high levels of stunting. The 2015-2016 El Niño event has resulted in the worst drought in decades, triggering a sharp decline in food production and causing 491,000 people to require emergency food assistance.

The strategic approach proposed in this note is in line with the mid-term evaluation of WFP's ongoing Country Programme which reiterates WFP's crucial role in emergency response, though in ways that more carefully consider longer-term vulnerabilities, and recommends transitioning towards more technical assistance services over time.

WFP Lesotho's vision for 2018 and 2019 follows two complementary directions: 1) continue the longer-term efforts to improve resilience in the most disaster-prone districts; and 2) further the capacity strengthening and transition to national ownership processes in the areas of social protection, food security analysis, education and nutrition.

This T-ICSP supports the Government in achieving the following strategic outcomes:

- i) Households in chronically food insecure areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements throughout the year, including in times of shock.
- ii) School children in food insecure areas have access to nutritious food throughout the year.
- iii) Targeted populations in prioritized districts have improved nutritional status in line with national targets by 2023.

All strategic outcomes are in line with Lesotho's 2012-2017 NSDP and Vision 2020, documents which reflect the country's development aspirations, and are consistent with the CCA draft priorities (including reducing poverty, hunger and inequalities, and enhancing health and resilience).

WFP Lesotho will aim to significantly strengthen the capacity of the Government, its primary partner. Other main partners are the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and

¹ Draft version as of April 2017.

AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Scaling Up Nutrition initiative (SUN) and the World Bank (WB), in addition to local and international NGOs and private sector companies.

1. COUNTRY ANALYSIS

1.1 COUNTRY CONTEXT

1. Lesotho is a lower middle income country with a population of 1.9 million. It ranks 160 of 188 countries on the 2016 United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index.² With a Gini coefficient of 0.53 Lesotho is among the 10 most unequal countries in the world in terms of income distribution.³ The country continues to struggle with a range of persistent development challenges, including chronic poverty and high levels of unemployment. Food and nutrition insecurity is exacerbated by recurrent climatic shocks, chronic malnutrition and the world’s second highest HIV/AIDS prevalence. The recent El Niño event has resulted in the worst drought in decades, triggering a sharp decline in food production and leading 491,000 people to require emergency food assistance.⁴

1.2 PROGRESS TOWARDS SDG 2

2. Lesotho’s food and nutrition situation is classified as “serious” in the 2016 Global Hunger Index; it fell short of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 and there are significant challenges with regard to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.

Access to food

3. Poverty, low productivity, unemployment, recurrent weather shocks, political instability and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are the key factors that hinder household access to food.
4. Poverty is directly linked to access to food. Nearly 57 percent of the population lives below the poverty line,⁵ which translates into more than half of the people struggling to have access to a minimum food basket. Poverty has decreased in urban areas but has increased in rural areas where most of the population lives.⁶ The rural population, 61 percent of which is poor and one quarter is extremely poor, mostly depends on subsistence agriculture for its livelihoods.⁷ Poverty is closely linked to a lack of income and to unemployment (28%), as well as to severe land degradation and recurrent climate-related crises. The substantial drop in remittances from migrants has worsened rural poverty. Remittances shrank from about 60 percent of the GDP in the 1980s to about 20 percent in 2005.⁸
5. Climate-related disasters exacerbate food and nutrition insecurity. Lesotho is recurrently hit by extreme weather events such as drought, erratic rainfall, hailstorms and frost. The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon resulted in the worst drought experienced across much of southern Africa in 35 years. Since the beginning of 2015, more than 700,000 people in

² UNDP Human Development Report 2016.

³ World Bank, 2015.

⁴ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee Report (LVAC), 2016.

⁵ Lesotho Bureau of Statistics – Household Budget Survey, 2011.

⁶ World Bank Country Overview – Lesotho, 2016.

⁷ IFAD, Rural Poverty Portal, 2017.

⁸ Ibid.

Lesotho (some 30 percent of the country's population) became food insecure.⁹ The domestic cereal production dropped in 2016 by 66 percent, increasing imports and external food aid needs, and sharply increasing food prices.¹⁰ The FAO's Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) has categorized Lesotho as a country requiring external food assistance. The recovery from the impact of the 2016 drought on the agricultural sector and rural households' livelihoods is expected to require a few years.

End malnutrition

6. High levels of stunting (33 percent nationally) and micronutrient deficiencies among children aged 6 to 59 months (particularly iron deficiency anemia which stands at 51 percent) are adversely affecting food and nutrition security as well as the country's economy.¹¹ Over 27 percent of girls and women and 14 percent of boys and men in the 15-49 age range are also anemic.¹² Stunting is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas (35 percent vs 27 percent), and boys are more frequently affected (39 percent) compared to girls (28 percent).¹³ The highest stunting prevalence is in the mountainous areas (42 percent), followed by the foothills (41 percent) and the Senqu River Valley (34 percent).¹⁴ The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) remains low at 2.8 percent nationally.¹⁵

Smallholder productivity and incomes

7. The agricultural sector is the primary source of income for more than half of the population in rural Lesotho. According to IFAD's Rural Poverty Portal, only 10 percent of the total land in Lesotho is arable. The majority of smallholder farmers live on what they can produce from cultivating an average of less than 1.5 ha of land or from herding livestock on grazing land that is increasingly and severely degraded and hit by extreme weather events. Constraints related to domestic agricultural production include limited use of irrigation and technology, weak extension systems, sub-standard marketing infrastructure, poor access to markets for small producers, insecure land tenure and land degradation. It is estimated that 2 percent of the topsoil is lost every year.¹⁶ This set of constraints makes Lesotho a net food importer. In an average year, about two thirds of the cereal utilized is imported, leaving the economy highly susceptible to exogenous shocks and food price fluctuations.¹⁷
8. The most food insecure people include farmers who have less than 0.5 ha of land, people who are landless and households headed by women. Most smallholder farmers do not have capital or access to improved technologies and support services. These factors, in addition to severe land degradation and reliance on rainfed farming, therefore result in low agricultural yields.

Sustainable food systems

9. Lesotho's main food crops production include maize, sorghum, and wheat. Currently, over 70 percent of the national cereal requirements are imported, mainly from South Africa, and the majority of the population purchases more than half of their food in a typical year.¹⁸ As

⁹ LVAC, 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ FAO, Lesotho National Adaptation Programme of Action, 2008.

¹⁷ FAO, Cereal Supply and Demand Balance for Sub-Saharan African Countries, 2016.

¹⁸ FEWSNET Desk Review, 2013.

a result, the national strategy for food security emphasizes the need to ensure adequate food imports to cover the deficit, and to introduce measures to increase household incomes.

10. National agricultural production and productivity are significantly lower now than in the late 1970s with a particularly marked decline observed since the early 2000s.¹⁹ There are several reasons for the declining production in the agriculture sector, particularly for maize. Maize seeds and fertilizer in Lesotho are all imported from South Africa, and therefore significantly more costly locally than in South Africa. This raises relative production costs and constitutes a disincentive to local production. The loss of manpower due to HIV/AIDS, population pressure on land size, and ineffective agricultural extension practices to manage environmental constraints represent additional underlying factors of the decline.

Macro-economic environment

11. Economic growth in Lesotho slowed to an estimated rate of 3.4 percent in 2015, down from 3.6 percent in 2014²⁰, and is projected to remain subdued at 2.6 percent in 2016 and 2.9 percent in 2017.²¹ Factors in 2015 included low implementation of the public investment budget, which weighed heavily on the construction sector and other inter-related sectors highly dependent on government spending. Growth was further hampered by slow growth in manufacturing and spillover effects from the South African economy. The service sector is the largest contributor to the GDP.²² Agriculture contributes around 5.7 percent to the GDP while it absorbs most of the labor force in the country.²³ In addition, the high rate of urbanisation has outpaced the ability of the authorities to provide necessary services, and the sustainability of living conditions for much of the urban population remains a critical challenge.

Key cross-sector linkages

12. Life expectancy is 48.9 years, maternal mortality is 1,143/100,000 live births and under-5 mortality is 100/1,000 births.²⁴ The literacy rate is 75.8 percent.²⁵ The fertility rate is 3.1 children per woman.²⁶ The urbanized population represents 28.3 percent.²⁷
13. Lesotho faces key health challenges such as very high prevalence of HIV/AIDS and of malnutrition. The country has the world's second highest HIV prevalence at 25 percent, with women more severely affected (30 percent among 15-49 year olds) than men (20 percent in the same age group).²⁸ As a consequence, life expectancy has declined in the last 25 years from 59 years in 1990 to 50 years in 2015.²⁹ The country has to provide care for more than 250,000 orphans, most of whom lost their parents to HIV/AIDS. HIV incidence remains high: 1.9 new infections per 100 person/year.³⁰
14. Gender inequality in Lesotho has been identified as one of the main contributing factors to poverty. With a value of 0.55, the country ranks 132 out of 159 in the Global Gender

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ African Development Bank, Lesotho Economic Outlook 2017.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, 2015.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lesotho Demographic Health Survey (LDHS), 2014.

²⁹ UNDP, Human Development Report 2016.

³⁰ LDHS, 2014.

Inequality Index (GII), a metric which considers three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity.³¹

15. The introduction of the free primary education policy in 2000, supported by the Education Act of 2010, made primary education not only free of cost but also compulsory. Hence, the majority of school-age children in Lesotho go to school, and the expected years of schooling have increased from 9.6 to 10.7 in the last 25 years.
16. However, there are still enrolment challenges, with early marriages affecting girls, and boys in grades 4 to 7 dropping out often to look after their siblings and animals and later becoming engaged in income-generating activities.

1.3 HUNGER GAPS AND CHALLENGES

17. The ongoing Government-led and WFP-supported Zero Hunger Country Strategic Review will provide by the end of 2017 a specific analysis of gaps and challenges in achieving SDG 2 by 2030. Meanwhile, the CCA 2017 has provided a preliminary overview of the main gaps and made the following recommendations with a view to achieving SDG 2:
 - i) The Government of Lesotho and development partners should develop sustained strategies and interventions to address food insecurity in Lesotho. Programmes that target those who are most food insecure among vulnerable communities should be given priority in the next planning cycle. The involvement of local government and the private sector in the formulation of policies and in the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes is a key factor for enabling the effectiveness of such interventions.
 - ii) The Government of Lesotho and partners have to develop sound, comprehensive and sustainable environmental management and resilience programmes, build household resilience to threats and shocks, and further strengthen early warning systems.
 - iii) It is important to promote the strengthening of the current national social protection programmes by enhancing national and local capacities to design, deliver, evaluate and finance such programmes. Improved coordination of social protection activities across government ministries and development partners is also key to the success of the process.
 - iv) The latest investments in the health system have not translated into improved health outcomes for the population. Access to and quality of health sector services should be strengthened. This should happen by finalizing the five-year health sector strategic plan, enhancing the skills of the health personnel, and establishing a robust surveillance system and contingency plan which will help prepare for, manage and respond to health emergencies.
 - v) The underlying vulnerabilities in Lesotho are multifactorial and include increased poverty and hunger, gender inequalities, HIV/AIDS, fragile ecosystems and natural disasters including droughts and flooding. About 63 percent of the households are headed by women compared to only 37 percent by men and women are likely to be poor, unemployed, face GBV and at higher risk of HIV and AIDS. The HIV

³¹ UNDP, Human Development Report, 2016.

prevalence is one of the highest in the world. With women at higher risk at 29.7 percent than men at 18.6 percent; with women aged 35 to 39 years having the highest prevalence of 46 percent. Among the vulnerable and at-risk populations, who are mostly women, the prevalence is higher. The Government and development partners must strategically and comprehensively plan to address the core areas development needs and priorities from the 2030 Agenda's perspective but based on the country's context and past performance.

1.4 KEY COUNTRY PRIORITIES

Government priorities

18. Lesotho's 2012-2017 NSDP and Vision 2020 recognise food and nutrition security as key to social and economic development. Thus, the Government has developed a range of policy frameworks to address national food and nutrition security challenges. These include a Food Security Policy (2005), the Food Security Action Plan (2007-2017), and the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2011). These focus on improving market infrastructure, remedying unsustainable land use practices, supporting smallholder farmers, and improving the resilience of the rural poor.
19. With the support of the United Nations, the Government is currently in the process of formulating its 2018-2022 National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP-II) which will be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As part of the NSDP-II design process, the Government will carry out a Zero Hunger Strategic Review which will provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges in achieving SDG 2 by 2030. This process is being supported by WFP and will inform the NSDP-II, the UNDAF, and WFP's Country Strategic Plan in Lesotho.
20. A national nutrition policy and a country-specific Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) study were released in 2016. This shows the commitment of the Government – and in particular of His Majesty the King Letsie III of Lesotho as the African Union Nutrition Champion – to addressing the effects of child undernutrition in Lesotho. Tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a government priority as laid out in the National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. Lesotho is part of the Fast Track 90-90-90 approach.
21. Lesotho has made significant investments in the area of social protection. The country spends about nine percent of its GDP or sixteen percent of the national budget on social protection programmes. This represents the highest proportion of GDP investment in social protection programmes in Africa.³² Safety nets implemented by the Government include a school feeding programme linked to free primary education and health care for all, an old age pension offered on a universal basis to all qualifying citizens, a child grants programme (CGP) for orphaned and vulnerable children, and public works programmes. This demonstrates a clear national commitment to a comprehensive, inclusive, life-cycle approach. The National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA), which was initially designed as a targeting tool for the CGP, is being progressively expanded and its quality enhanced for it to become a single registry for all social assistance (and social security) programmes.

³² World Bank, *Lesotho: A Safety Net to End Extreme Poverty*, 2010.

United Nations and other partners

22. The One UN team in Lesotho has extended its UNDAF by one year to align it with the Government's NSDP II. The CCA is currently being finalized. The priorities identified by the CCA include reduction of poverty, hunger, and inequalities, improvements in health, mainstreaming resilience and sustainable development, and strengthening social protection programmes, among others.
23. UNDAF 2019-2023 and the NSDP-II preparations are expected to be finalized in 2018.

2. STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR WFP

2.1 WFP'S EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED

24. The T-ICSP strategic direction is in line with the mid-term evaluation of WFP's ongoing Country Programme in Lesotho which reiterates WFP's crucial role in emergency response, though in ways that more carefully consider longer-term vulnerabilities, and recommends transitioning towards more technical assistance services over time. The evaluation recommendations are to: i) focus food and cash incentives on a pilot project to learn and demonstrate what resilience building in Lesotho could look like and develop a model approach; ii) significantly increase emphasis on capacity building at all levels with reference to the school feeding programme, and promote its sustainable handover to the Government; iii) strengthen the capacity of the health facility staff managing moderate acute malnutrition; iv) conduct research to assess the drivers of stunting; v) strengthen information collection, quality, management, and analysis across the Country Programme to build a much stronger evidence base to support both strategic planning and improve operational decision making and efficiency.
25. In addition, the 2015 Overseas Development Institute (ODI) evaluation of WFP's Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) cash-based programme in Lesotho emphasized the importance of creating long-term and higher quality assets that have the potential to support livelihoods and generate income as a means to enhance the resilience of chronically vulnerable communities vis-à-vis recurrent climatic shocks. It also highlighted the need to strengthen the operational and technical capacities of national actors and institutions in terms of preparedness, response and recovery.
26. Finally, the 2017 midterm review of the Trust Fund (TF) for the school feeding programme recommended to strengthen the Government's capacity to implement a home-grown school feeding programme and to support the Government to re-position the school feeding programme within the national social protection agenda.

2.2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR WFP

27. Based on internal consultations and lessons learned and in line with the outcome of the dialogue with the Government and partners, WFP will focus on the following priorities:
 - Continuing to lead in humanitarian responses when needed in times of crisis.
 - Supporting the Government to enhance its capacity to prepare for, respond to and recover from weather-related disasters. Significant support is required to encourage the Government and partners to invest in preparedness and response in terms of coordination and management of national hunger responses.
 - Assisting the Government to improve the effectiveness of some key social protection programmes and make them shock-responsive.

-
- Strengthening the capacity of the Government to effectively design and manage the school feeding programme and nutrition programmes.
 - Advancing gender equality for food and nutrition security outcomes through the pursuit of a gender-transformative approach.

2.3. STRATEGIC CHANGES

28. Based on lessons learned, government priorities, budget revisions, evaluations, and funding trends, the portfolio planned for in the T-ICSP differs from the ongoing projects in the following ways:
29. **Emergency response/resilience building:** WFP's assistance in times of crisis is likely to continue until effective social protection and climate resilience programmes reduce the frequency and severity of humanitarian needs. WFP will place stronger emphasis on assisting the Government in enhancing its preparedness and management capacity to provide timely and effective responses to crises. It will do so by supporting in particular the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation (MoFLR), the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), and the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) in developing robust resilience and food and nutrition security monitoring programmes and systems.
30. **Nutrition:** The food component under the Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) treatment programme for clients of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and tuberculosis directly observed therapy (TB DOT) will not be part of the T-ICSP as it has been taken over by the Government with Global Fund resources. However, the provision of food assistance to food insecure households hosting acutely malnourished people living with HIV (PLHIV) on ART/TB DOT treatment, as well as the prevention of stunting among moderately malnourished children 6-23 months and pregnant and lactating women and girls (PLW/G) will continue through the T-ICSP. Beyond these food-based programmes, WFP will increase its efforts to support the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Food and Security Nutrition Office (FNCO), and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MoAFS) to design and implement an integrated systems approach for stunting prevention in Lesotho taking into account multiple dimensions including food security, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and social and behavior change communication (SBCC).
31. **Capacity strengthening:** Stronger emphasis will be laid on this dimension through the T-ICSP in 2018 and 2019, and beyond. Capacity development is the longer term strategy of WFP Lesotho to support the Government to manage its social protection programmes, particularly school feeding, nutrition, emergency preparedness and response, resilience building, early warning as well as food and nutrition security monitoring and analysis.
32. **Supply chain:** WFP, the Government and partners are permanently affected by significant supply chain constraints, in particular transport and storage. WFP will assist the national Food Management Unit (FMU) to strengthen the sustainability of the supply chain by supporting transport management and fostering a stronger local food supply including home-grown school feeding.

3. WFP STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

3.1 DIRECTION, FOCUS AND INTENDED IMPACTS

33. WFP's aim is to support the Government on the design and management of long-term resilience, education and nutrition programmes to address the underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition.
34. WFP Lesotho's vision for 2018 and 2019 follows two complementary directions: 1) continue the longer-term efforts to improve resilience in the most disaster-prone districts; and 2) further the capacity strengthening and transition to national ownership processes in the areas of social protection, food security analysis, education and nutrition.
35. Gender and protection analyses and the "do no harm" concept will inform programme design and implementation throughout the portfolio. Based on the Lesotho Gender Action Plan 2016-2020, in its programme design and targeting of beneficiaries WFP will work with the Ministry of Gender and Development (MoGD) to analyse and address the particular needs and interests of women, men, girls and boys throughout the programme cycle and will include frameworks for accountability to affected populations with feedback and community consultation mechanisms. This will be in line with the WFP Strategic Plan (2017-2021), Gender Policy (2015-2020) and corporate Gender Action Plan which emphasize the need to integrate gender equality throughout development, implementation and monitoring of the T-ICSP, to ensure "gender-transformative programmes and policies for a world free of hunger". WFP will thus ensure the sex- and age-disaggregation of all person-related data; the embedding of gender equality analysis in all assessments, research, technical assistance, knowledge, information management and related work; the mainstreaming of gender equality across policy and capacity-strengthening initiatives particularly in the areas of nutrition and resilience; the setting up of feedback mechanisms for all programmes; and the engagement of women, men, girls and boys (and their organizations) in a manner that is empowering and fosters equitable outcomes.
36. With reference to the capacity strengthening areas mentioned above, it will be fundamental to enhance the capacity of the Country Office (CO) to effectively deliver, show evidence and demonstrate results. To this end, the assistance of the Regional Bureau (RB) and Headquarters (HQ) will play a crucial role, particularly within the framework of a regional approach to assist COs in providing the necessary capacity strengthening assistance to governments.
37. Renewed emphasis will be laid by the CO on the formulation of a communications strategy and on ensuring that the key WFP stakeholders including the Government are involved in all phases of the Country Strategic Review and Plan processes.

3.2. STRATEGIC OUTCOMES, FOCUS AREAS, EXPECTED OUTPUTS AND KEY ACTIVITIES

Strategic Outcome 1: Households in chronically food insecure areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements throughout the year, including in times of shock.

Outcome description

38. Lesotho suffers from chronic food insecurity affecting mostly the rural communities as a result of erratic rainfalls, poor agricultural production and massive land degradation. Fragile livelihoods, as a consequence of a poor asset base, increase the vulnerability of subsistence smallholder farmers, thus exacerbating the impact of shocks. WFP's support aims to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities facing climatic shocks, by developing and protecting key assets.
39. At the same time, the capacity of MoFLR, MoSD, DMA and other relevant entities to design and implement effective programmes in the areas of social protection, food and nutrition security monitoring, assessment and analysis, and early warning and risk management will be strengthened.
40. Strategic outcome 1 contributes to SDG target 2.1 and WFP Strategic Result 1.

Focus areas

41. The outcome focuses on resilience building of chronically food insecure communities through FFA interventions. This component aims to promote recovery and build longer-term resilience in areas recurrently affected by shocks by rehabilitating and creating productive assets that will gradually offset the need for food assistance during annual lean seasons.

Expected outputs

42. The outcome will be achieved through the following two outputs:
- i) Targeted food insecure communities (tier 2) benefit from creation and/or rehabilitation of nutrition-sensitive assets and skills development (category D) that improve food security (SR1) and build resilience to natural shocks and climate change (SR3).
 - ii) People in shock-prone areas (tier 3) benefit from the Government's strengthened capacity to plan and prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks (category C) in order to meet their basic needs in times of crisis (SR1).

Key activities

Activity 1.1 Strengthen the resilience of communities in shock-prone areas (category 2; modality: CBT, CS).

43. In exchange for work, a monthly cash entitlement will be provided through banks to an estimated 10,000 food insecure beneficiaries participating in the asset creation and restoration activities. This component will focus on long-term assets that contribute to water source development, environmentally friendly and climate-smart technologies to improve crop/livestock productivity, income generation, and natural resource management.

Participants will be engaged in work schemes for longer periods³³ than FFA programmes implemented in Lesotho in the past in order to ensure the creation of high-quality assets that have a long-lasting impact on resilience. Assets are intended to improve the long-term food security status of the targeted communities. The selection of assets will be done through a community based participatory planning approach whereby communities will identify the appropriate types of assets that will address the root causes of the local food security challenges. This process as well as the implementation of the activities will be conducted in partnership with several stakeholders under the coordination of the MoFLR that will provide technical guidance as well as construction materials.

44. WFP will continue providing technical assistance to strengthen the operational and technical capacities of national actors and institutions, and support the Government's national public works programme to become more centred on meeting longer-term needs through resilience-strengthening asset creation rather than short-term needs through a food or cash transfer. This component will initially be implemented on a pilot basis, with a view to scaling up and replicating as feasible and appropriate, as part of a longer-term shift towards strengthening government capacities to respond to chronic and acute food insecurity in Lesotho. This will also feed into WFP's support to the DMA on the formulation of the national resilience framework. Furthermore, during the T-ICSP period WFP will work with the DMA, MoAFS, FNCO, the Meteorological Services (MS) and the Bureau of Statistics (BoS) to develop programmes for food and nutrition security monitoring including mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM), assessments and vulnerability analysis (VAC), early warning, and risk management.

Strategic Outcome 2: School children in food insecure areas have access to nutritious food throughout the year.

Outcome description

45. Since 1965 WFP has been supporting education in Lesotho through direct implementation of a school feeding programme. Starting from the 1990s, a gradual handover of the programme to the Government began. Currently the Government has assumed the financial ownership of the primary-level school feeding programme while WFP plays the implementation role for both the pre- and primary programmes. During the T-ICSP timeframe, WFP will support operationally a total of 190,000 learners in 900 primary schools of Lesotho in ten districts; and both operationally and financially 50,000 preschool children in government registered Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centers. WFP will also provide technical support to the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in the implementation and management of the national school feeding programme, in view of handing over the programme to MoET by 2020.
46. Strategic outcome 2 contributes to SDG target 2.1 and WFP Strategic Result 1. It also contributes to SDG 4.

Focus areas

47. The focus of this outcome is on addressing root causes, as it aims to ensure that the Government has the right capacity in place to effectively manage a SF programme that allows children in food insecure areas to have regular access to nutritious foods.

³³ For six months.

Expected outputs

48. The outcome will be achieved through two outputs:

- i) Targeted school children (tier 1) receive a nutritious meal every day they attend school (output category A2) in order to meet basic food and nutrition needs (SR1) and increase access to education (SDG4).
- ii) School children targeted by the national school feeding programme (tier 3) benefit from improved design, finance and implementation capacity of the Government (category C) that helps meet their basic food and nutrition needs (SR1) and increase access to education (SDG4).

Key activities

Activity 2.1: Provide capacity strengthening and implementation support to government bodies responsible for the national school feeding programme (category 4; modality: food/CBT, CS, SD).

49. Through government funding, WFP will procure and supply all required commodities to the selected schools on a quarterly basis. WFP and the Government will monitor the activities including performance, output and outcome indicators.

50. The capacity strengthening activities of the MoET and other relevant stakeholders will be aligned with the national school feeding policy and the school feeding policy guidelines. Particular emphasis along this process will be given to the local production dimension which constitutes one of the key pillars of the national school feeding policy. In order to advance gender equality, gender will be integrated in the capacity strengthening activities.

51. WFP will partner with the World Bank (WB), FAO, the MoAFS, the Ministry of Small Businesses Cooperatives and Marketing (MoSBCM), and the farmers associations with a view to linking local farmers to the school feeding programme; and with UNICEF and UNFPA on gender equality related issues. WFP will work closely with the Government to ensure links with the national poverty reduction agenda, enabling the Government to better position school feeding within its social protection agenda. An impact study of the programme from the poverty angle planned in 2017 will be instrumental in achieving this goal. WFP will continue to identify and broker relevant South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities.

Strategic Outcome 3: Targeted populations in prioritized districts have improved nutritional status in line with national targets by 2023.

Outcome description

52. In line with the 2016 national Nutrition Policy, WFP will support the Government to reduce stunting and to improve the nutritional status of ART/TB DOT acutely malnourished patients. It will do so through food-based programmes and by strengthening the capacity of the Government to develop and implement effective nutrition programmes.

53. Strategic outcome 3 contributes to SDG target 2.2 and WFP Strategic Result 2.

Focus areas

54. The focus of this strategic outcome is on root causes with the long-term perspective of supporting the Government in addressing chronic undernutrition and providing nutritional care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS and TB.

Expected outputs

55. The outcome will be achieved through three outputs:

- i) Children and pregnant and lactating women (tier 1) receive specialized nutritious food transfers and complementary inputs (category B) in order to prevent stunting (SR2).
- ii) At risk populations (tier 3) benefit from the Government's improved ability to coordinate, design and implement nutrition services (category C) in order to address nutritional requirements (SR2) and enhance access to health services (SDG 3).
- iii) Households of acutely malnourished ART, TB-DOT clients (tier 1) receive cash and/or food transfers (category A2) in order to meet their basic food and nutrition requirements (SR1) and in support of national health protocols (SDG3).

Key activities

Activity 3.1 Provide chronic malnutrition prevention services to at risk populations in targeted areas (category 6; modality: food, CS).

56. WFP will support the Government of Lesotho in reducing chronic malnutrition (stunting) among children aged 6-23 months and PLW/G (6 months postpartum) focusing on the first 1,000 days of life.

57. Beneficiaries will receive specialized nutritious foods and other health and nutrition services. The programme will be implemented in two districts (Mokhotlong and Thaba Tseka) with the highest stunting prevalence. The activities will take place at health facility and community levels through the MoH and the MoAFS structures.

58. WFP will work closely with the MoH, the MoAFS and partners providing complementary activities aimed at reducing chronic malnutrition. WFP will collaborate with other UN agencies such as UNICEF, WHO and FAO on nutrition awareness raising, using IEC and social marketing strategies. This will include messages on infant and young child nutrition, maternal nutrition, dietary diversity, water sanitation and hygiene and involvement of men in nutrition activities. These complementary interventions will be tailored to the various "clients" in order to promote a shared responsibility for nutrition and avoid reinforcing discriminatory gender roles.

59. WFP will continue to advocate and provide technical assistance to strengthen the implementation of the national food and nutrition policy, and strategy and programmes supporting the scale-up of nutrition interventions aimed at reducing chronic malnutrition. WFP with other partners will support research into the causes of chronic malnutrition to provide evidence to the Government for nutrition programming. It will also contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the prevention of chronic and acute malnutrition as part of the food and nutrition security surveillance systems.

Activity 3.2: Provide cash and/or food transfers to households of acutely malnourished ART and TB DOT clients (category 1; modality: food/CBT, CS).

60. WFP will continue to support food insecure households hosting acutely malnourished PLHIV on ART/TB DOT treatment in the high HIV prevalence districts (Berea, Leribe, Maseru, Mohales Hoek and Mafeteng) through the provision of household food assistance for a period of six months. In collaboration with MoAFS and FAO and by integrating a gender perspective in the programme, WFP will promote dietary diversification and livelihoods through homestead vegetables and fruits production by linking this activity to the resilience component. WFP in collaboration with other UN agencies will support the Government with technical and financial assistance with the aim to strengthen policy and programmes implementation supporting nutrition treatment, care and support for people living with HIV and AIDS.

3.3. TRANSITION AND EXIT STRATEGIES

61. WFP’s approach to supporting a gradual transition to national ownership is as follows:

- Capacity strengthening and technical assistance underly all three strategic outcomes. WFP will aim at enhancing government systems, institutions and programmes that sustainably address hunger and undernutrition. It will do so by also advancing gender equality as a requirement for sustained food and nutrition security.
- Evidence-based engagement. WFP will apply its analytical expertise to identify the underlying causes of hunger and vulnerability as the basis for sound policy and programme development and management.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 BENEFICIARY ANALYSIS

TABLE 1: FOOD & CASH TRANSFER BENEFICIARIES BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME & ACTIVITY				
Strategic Outcome	Activities	Female	Male	Total
Strategic Outcome 1	Strengthen the resilience of communities in shock-prone areas	9 600	6 400	16 000
Strategic Outcome 2	Provide capacity strengthening and implementation support to government bodies responsible for the national school feeding programme	122 400	117 600	240 000
Strategic Outcome 3	Provide chronic malnutrition prevention services to at risk populations in targeted areas	6 600	3 650	10 250
	Provide cash and/or food transfers to households of acutely malnourished ART and TB DOT clients	6 720	5 280	12 000
TOTAL		145 320	132 930	278 250

-
62. The geographical targeting for activity 1 (FFA) will be informed by the results of the 2015 Integrated Context Analysis (ICA) which identifies areas that experience chronic food security challenges. At community level the activity will target vulnerable able-bodied household members who can participate in the asset creation and restoration works and will directly benefit from such assets. Institutions benefiting from WFP's capacity strengthening include the MoFLR, MoAFS, DMA, decentralized government entities, and the community authorities.
 63. In line with the national school feeding policy, WFP will provide school meals to all primary school learners in public primary schools of Lesotho in all ten districts and to pre-school children in government-registered ECCD centers. The MoET's staff and other relevant partners will be trained to manage and implement the school feeding programme in line with the national school feeding policy and with a view to hand over the programme to the Government in 2020. Smallholders farmers will indirectly benefit from the linkage of the school feeding programme to the local agricultural production.
 64. The stunting prevention programme will cover the districts with the highest stunting prevalence as informed by the 2014 Lesotho Demographic Health Survey (LDHS) report. Targeting will take place through the health facilities and at community level. This programme will assist 7,300 children aged 6-23 months and 2,950 pregnant and lactating women (six months postpartum) focusing on the first 1,000 days of life.
 65. The household support for food insecure households hosting acutely malnourished PLHIV on ART/TB DOT treatment will target 12,000 beneficiaries in the five priority districts with high HIV prevalence. A questionnaire assessing household vulnerability will be administered to the identified acutely malnourished clients to determine their household's eligibility for the support.

4.2. TRANSFERS

Food and cash-based transfers

66. The selection of transfer modality for FFA has been informed by the results of the 2016 Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) Market Assessment, which proposed district councils in which cash or in-kind distributions would be most appropriate based on market functionality and capacity. The choice is also in line with the transfer modality used in the national public works programme which sets the transfer value at USD78 (1,100 Maluti) and will be informed by participatory gender analyses and complemented by beneficiary sensitization. All transfers will equally benefit women and men.
67. The school feeding activity will continue to have an in-kind ration in line with the national school feeding policy. The primary school ration will provide 778 kcal/day, while the pre-school one will provide 893 kcal/day. The pre-school children ration will include "super cereal plus" consistent with the new Codex international food safety standard.
68. Targeted beneficiaries for the prevention of stunting programme will be provided with a monthly take-home ration. Each child will receive 200 g of Super Cereal Plus per day for the entire year. Pregnant and lactating women will receive 250 g of Super Cereal per person per day for the entire year. Targeted beneficiaries for the household support programme will be provided with a monthly take-home ration of 200 g of maize meal, 60 g of pulses and 20 g of vegetable oil for 30 days per person for four family members; this support will last six months.

TABLE 2: FOOD RATION (g/person/day) or CASH-BASED TRANSFER VALUE (USD/person/day) BY STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND ACTIVITY

Strategic Outcome	Strategic Outcome 1	Strategic Outcome 2		Strategic Outcome 3		
Activity	Activity 1	Activity 2		Activity 3		Activity 4
Beneficiary type	Chronically food insecure	Pre-school children (ECCD)	Primary School children	Children 6-23 months	PLW/G	Vulnerable households of ART & TB DOT clients
Modality	Cash	Food in kind	Food in kind	Food in kind	Food in kind	Food in kind
Cereals		120	150			200
Pulses		25	30			60
Oil		15	10			20
Salt			3			
Sugar			10			
Supercereal					250	
Supercereal plus		60		200		
Micronutrient powder						
Total kcal/day		893	778	787	950	1113
% kcal from protein		11.4	9.9	16.6	14.0	10.9
Cash (USD/person/day)	0.52					
Number of feeding days	180	180	180	360	360	360

TABLE 3: TOTAL FOOD/CASH-BASED TRANSFER REQUIREMENTS & VALUE

Food type / cash-based transfer	Total (mt)	Total (USD)
Cereals	10 058	3 889 235
Pulses	2 069	1 235 555
Oil and fats	783	711 338
Mixed and blended foods	2 024	1 703 834
Other	689	318 325
TOTAL (food)	15 621	7 858 287
Cash-based transfers (USD)		2 246 400
TOTAL (food and CBT value – USD)	15 621	10 104 687

4.2 CAPACITY STRENGTHENING INCLUDING SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

69. WFP will increase its focus on strengthening capacities in government systems, institutions and programmes. Continuing to identify and broker relevant South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities will be part of this process.

4.3. SUPPLY CHAIN

70. During the ICSP period, WFP plans to increase the local procurement share up to 20%. The balance will be imported from the region and internationally. Together with FAO, IFAD and the WB, WFP is also looking at supporting the MoET to design and implement a local purchase SF model which will supply part of the programme's food requirements from local farmers, including local retailers.
71. The internationally procured food is currently imported through Maseru Bridge and stored at the 200-mt-capacity transshipment warehouse in Maseru which is entirely managed by WFP. The warehouse is structured as the first entry point for commodity accounting and tracking through LESS-WINGS system. From there, food is delivered to all ten district warehouses. The transport is done by the WFP-contracted primary transporters. All district warehouses are managed by the national Food Management Unit (FMU). In line with the current Memorandum of Understanding between FMU and WFP, the Government covers part of the costs of storage and secondary transport.
72. WFP as the lead logistics agency in the country will continue to maintain a strong partnership with the Government, through the Joint Logistics Cluster and FMU with a view to improve country supply chain systems. As part of this strategy WFP will support FMU to assess and develop FMU's capacity, and will increase its focus on strengthening cash-based transfers by assessing and identifying potential opportunities in Lesotho.

4.4. COUNTRY OFFICE CAPACITY AND PROFILE

73. To implement the T-ICSP, particularly in its capacity strengthening dimension, it will be fundamental to enhance the capacity of the CO to effectively deliver, show evidence and demonstrate results. To this end, the assistance of the Regional Bureau and HQ will play a key role, particularly within the framework of a regional approach to assist COs in providing the necessary capacity strengthening assistance to governments.

4.5. PARTNERSHIPS

74. WFP will work with the MoFLR and the MoSD, DMA, FAO, UNICEF and the WB within the social protection space. Furthermore, WFP will work with DMA, the MoAFS, FNCO, MS and BoS to develop programmes for food and nutrition security monitoring, assessments and analysis, early warning, and risk management.
75. As for the education and nutrition areas, WFP will increase its focus on strengthening cooperation with the MoET, the MoH, and the MoAFS with a view towards building the government capacity to design and manage effective programmes. FAO and UNICEF will be part of this process particularly with regard to the school feeding local purchase model and the setting up of an integrated prevention of stunting programme respectively.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION

5.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION ARRANGEMENTS

76. WFP will measure performance against the strategic outcomes and performance indicators in line with the WFP Corporate Monitoring Normative Framework and Regional

Monitoring Strategy. This will be in continuity with the previous monitoring procedures, including the collection of data for baselines. Outcome, output and process indicators will be disaggregated by sex, age and transfer modality. Crosscutting results will be tracked to measure whether gender, protection and accountability measures are abided by during programme implementation. WFP will use individual, household and community based interviews through structured questionnaires and focus group discussions during monitoring surveys. To the extent possible, WFP will increase the use of real-time data collection technologies for timely reporting. Baseline surveys will be conducted and targets set for all outcome indicators within the first three months of the T-ICSP implementation. Subsequent monitoring results will be compared to the baselines to measure progress, inform implementation and design future programmes. Monitoring findings will be used to diagnose technical and implementation challenges and will inform responses to improve execution and design of future programmes.

77. The monitoring plan will specify the frequency and methodology for data collection for each indicator in the logframe. Standard project reporting will be complemented by bi-annual and annual monitoring reports and the use of the Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Tool. WFP's strategic outcomes describe short- and medium-term progress towards national SDG 2 and SDG 17 targets. Monitoring of national SDG indicators is the responsibility of the national authorities, with assistance from the UN. WFP will therefore endeavour to use available national statistics whilst at the same time ensure the participation of key government stakeholders in undertaking monitoring of WFP-supported activities.
78. There was a mid-term evaluation of the country programme in 2015, the findings of which have informed the T-ICSP. In 2017 WFP, in close consultation with the Government, is commissioning an impact evaluation of the school feeding from a social protection/poverty reduction perspective. As such, there will be no evaluation planned during the T-ICSP period.

5.2. RISK MANAGEMENT

Contextual risks

79. Change in the Government represents a risk as its materialization could disrupt the continuity of the T-ICSP strategy and activities. In 2017, at the time of the formulation of the T-ICSP, the country experienced a significant deterioration of the political climate and led to a turnover in government and the announcement of new elections in June 2017. The new Government – which will start its mandate as of the second semester of 2017 – may question the current food and nutrition policies. WFP will work closely with the technical authorities, such as the Principal Secretaries and Directors, to ensure continuity of WFP's main strategies and programmes.
80. The limited government capacity to implement its food safety nets and programmes, particularly those supported by WFP, constitutes to be a risk. WFP is incorporating capacity strengthening into all T-ICSP activities to ensure effective implementation as well as monitoring, reporting and assessing the food and nutrition security.
81. WFP Lesotho is experiencing a declining trend in donor contributions, which is challenging the implementation of the programmes. The Country Office will update its resource mobilisation strategy and place increased emphasis on innovative financing including climate adaptation financing. It will also ensure that a communications strategy is formulated to involve key stakeholders including the Government in all phases of project design and implementation.

82. Slow progress towards gender equality is an area of risk as it impacts achieving zero hunger. Gender-transformative design, programming, monitoring and evaluation will address this risk.

83. Most of WFP Lesotho commodities are imported either regionally or internationally. As a consequence, procurement and delivery processes take a long and sometimes unpredictable time. The CO will ensure timely procurement plans are in place and will also escalate issues that hinder timely procurement of food. WFP will also support the local supply of commodities.

Insitutional risks

84. Finally, non-compliance with contractual obligations is a risk that can lead to the mismanagement of funds. WFP has therefore embarked on a CO budget and resource management strengthening process to ensure stricter compliance with corporate procedures, set up adequate controls, and regularly monitor and report on the CO’s financial status.

6. RESOURCES FOR RESULTS

6.1 COUNTRY PORTFOLIO BUDGET

COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN INDICATIVE ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT			
<i>(USD)</i>			
Result	Year 1 2018	Year 2 2019	Total
Strategic Outcome 1	\$2 630 710	\$1 283 714	\$3 914 424
Strategic Outcome 2	\$8 634 115	\$4 646 657	\$13 280 772
Strategic Outcome 3	\$1 953 465	\$932 634	\$2 886 099
TOTAL	\$13 218 291	\$6 863 005	\$20 081 295

85. Strategic outcome 1 ensures access to food for chronically food insecure households. The budget allocated to this outcome is USD 3,914,424 which represent 20 percent of the total T-ICSP requirements.

86. Strategic outcome 2 ensure access to food for school children in food insecure areas. The budget allocated for this outcome is USD 13,280,772 which accounts for 66 percent of the resources required for the T-ICSP. The number of targeted school children remains stable during the T-ICSP implementation.

87. Strategic outcome 3 provides nutritious food to 6-23 months children and PLW/G for malnutrition prevention and ensures access to food for HIV/TB affected households. The budget allocated for this outcome is USD 2,886,099 which accounts for 14 percent of the total T-ICSP budget.

88. In line with the corporate commitment, 15 percent of all project funds will be allocated to gender equality activities.

6.2 RESOURCING OUTLOOK

89. The forecast for the T-ICSP is based on the traditional donors, including the Government, that have funded WFP activities in Lesotho over the last five years, specifically for the school feeding programme and nutrition activities. The CO will explore new funding streams for the resilience based activities, which are still facing resource constraints.

6.3 RESOURCE MOBILIZATION STRATEGY

90. The overall funding landscape in Lesotho keeps changing due to political and security volatility. However, WFP's role in both humanitarian and development dimensions is acknowledged by the Government and the wider development partners. The resource mobilization strategy—which will be formulated in line with that of the Regional Bureau—will capitalize on increased documentation and communication of results with the current donors, while expanding opportunities to attract new donors.

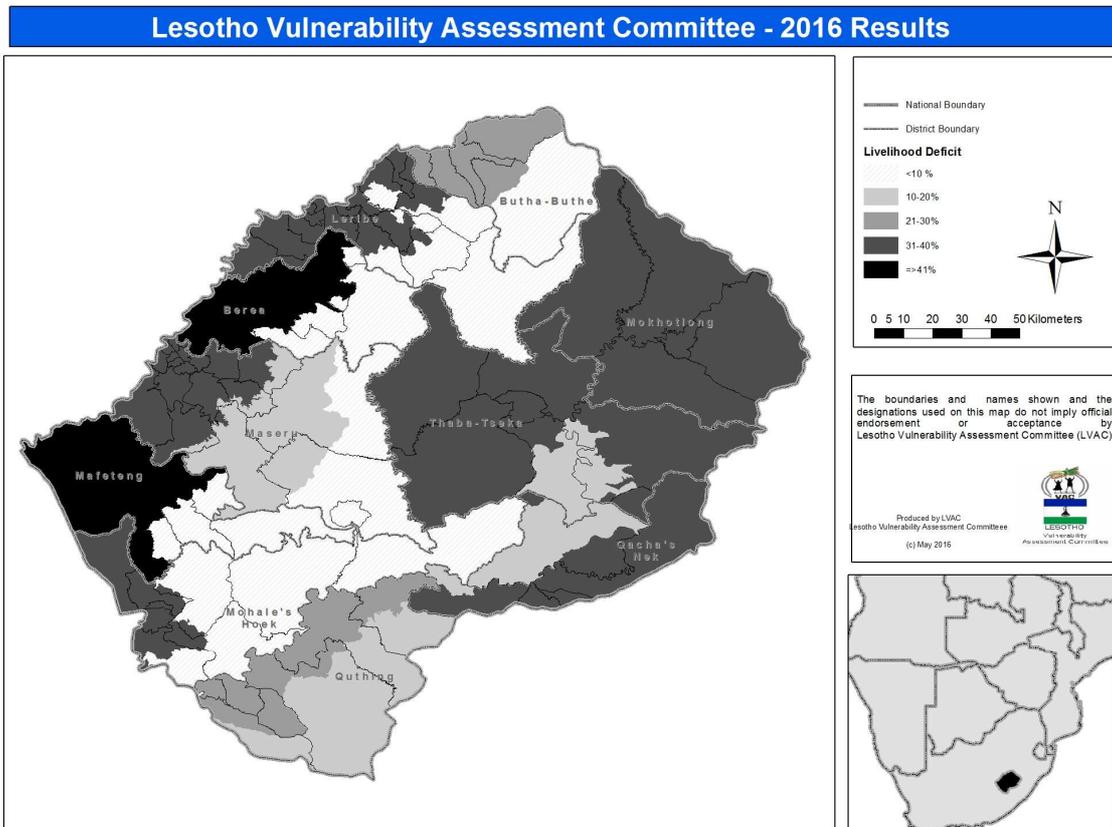
**ANNEX I: SUMMARY OF LOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF LESOTHO
(TRANSITIONAL) INTERIM COUNTRY STRATEGIC PLAN (YEAR
2018-2019)**

See Comet version.

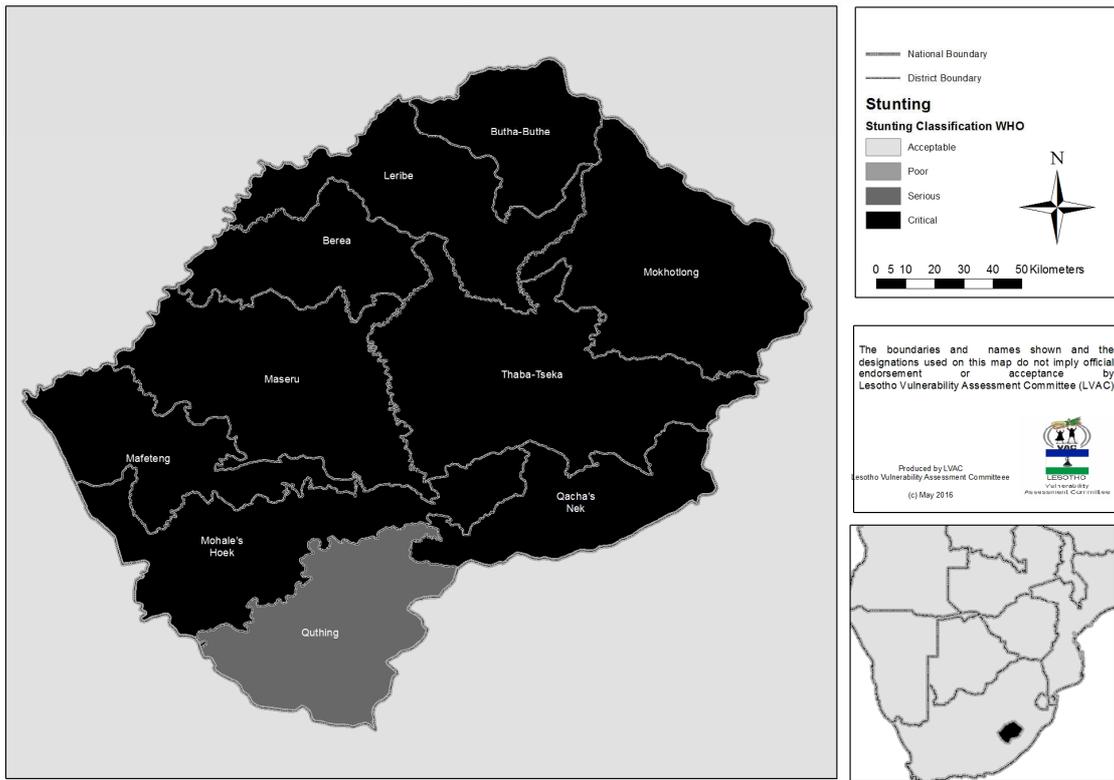
ANNEX II: INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN

INDICATIVE COST BREAKDOWN ALONG STRATEGIC OUTCOME (USD)				
WFP Strategic Results / SDG Targets	SR 1, SDG 2.1	SR 1, SDG 2.1	SR 2, SDG 2.2	
WFP Strategic Outcomes	Strategic Outcome 1	Strategic Outcome 2	Strategic Outcome 3	Total
Transfer	\$2 970 889	\$10 583 252	\$2,072,971	\$15 627 113
Implementation	\$356 608	\$705 865	\$380,403	\$1 442 876
Adjusted DSC (%)	\$330 844	\$1 122 819	\$243,914	\$1 697 577
Sub-total	\$3 658 341	\$12 411 936	\$2,697,289	\$18 767 566
ISC (7%)	\$256 084	\$868 836	\$188,810	\$1 313 730
TOTAL	\$3 914 424	\$13 280 772	\$2,886,099	\$20 081 295

ANNEX III: MAPS



Lesotho Stunting Classification - DHS Results



ANNEX IV: ACRONYMS

ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
BoS	Bureau of Statistics
CCA	Country Context Analysis
CGP	Child Grant Programme
CO	Country Office
COHA	Cost of Hunger Analysis
DMA	Disaster Management Authority
DOT	Directly Observed Therapy
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FMU	Food Management Unit
GGI	Global Gender Inequality Index
GIEWS	Global Information and Early Warning System
HQ	Headquarters
ICA	Integrated Context Analysis
T-ICSP	Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan
MAM	Moderate and Acute Malnutrition
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoFLR	Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation
MoGD	Ministry of Gender and Development
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MoSBCM	Ministry of Small Businesses Cooperatives and Marketing
MS	Meteorological Services
NISSA	National Information System for Social Development
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PLW/G	Pregnant and Lactating Women and Girls
RBJ	WFP Regional Bureau in Johannesburg for Southern Africa
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition Initiative
TB	Tuberculosis
TF	Trust Fund
UNAIDS	Joint UN Programme of HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAC	Vulnerability Assessment Committee
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank