



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lesotho Country Brief December 2018



Operational Context

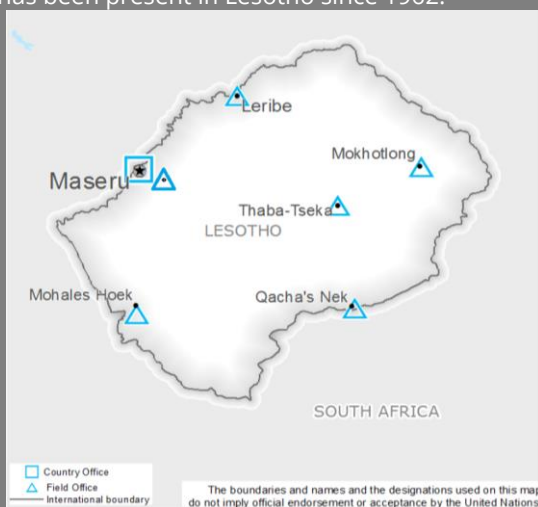
More than half (57%) of Lesotho's population live on less than one dollar per day. GDP stands at USD 2.3 billion while its national GDI per capita is USD 1,270 (World Bank). Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget. The Government allocates 7% of its national budget to social protection programmes such as school meals, pension for the elderly, child grants and public works.

The population's high vulnerability is exacerbated by recurring climatic hazards, including droughts, early frost and a low performing economy. Twenty-nine % of people below the age of 35 are unemployed. The country is also characterized by an extremely high HIV prevalence rate (24.6 %) and should provide care for more than 250,000 orphaned children, most of whom lost their parents to AIDS. Life expectancy stands at 49 years.

Agriculture, which contributes 7% of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80% of the population living in rural areas.

WFP supports the Government's efforts to build the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulate agricultural production.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1962.



Population: **2.1 million**

2017 Human Development Index: **159 out of 189**

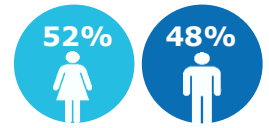
Income Level: **Lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **33% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

US\$ 8 m six months (January – June 2019) net funding requirements, representing 29% of total

276,250 people targeted in 2018



Operational Updates

- WFP successfully launched Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) in Mochales Hoek district. The event held on 2-5 December was attended by government departments, WFP and NGOs. A seasonal calendar identifying typical and poor years, as well as appropriate interventions was developed. Mochales Hoek is one of the districts experiencing chronic food security challenges. The SLP aims to assist district authorities and communities to identify shocks, and plan and coordinate appropriate interventions that address challenges affecting livelihoods. The next step is to conduct a validation workshop with heads of departments in the district.
- WFP in Lesotho, as the lead convener of the UNAIDS Social Protection Unit, provided technical and financial support to the Government of Lesotho to assess HIV sensitivity of social protection programmes. The findings, which will be shared in 2019, will be used to inform the planning and implementation of the new National Strategic Plan for HIV. Moreover, the assessment will make recommendations on how to increase the country's capacity towards meeting the 2016 Political Declaration target and fast-track commitment on social protection.
- WFP in Lesotho, supported by the climate change department in WFP Headquarters, launched an adaptation fund (AF) proposal under the auspices of the Lesotho Meteorological Service (LMS). The overarching objective of the intended AF programme is to strengthen adaptive capacity of the Government of Lesotho and targeted communities to effectively respond to climate change related shocks. The proposal will be submitted to the AF board in the first week of January 2019. It is envisaged that AF programme activities will start in April 2019 following the approval of the proposal.

Interim Country Strategic Plan (Jan 2018- June 2019)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
19.9 m	8.4 m	8m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

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

Focus area: Resilience Building

Activities:

- Strengthen the resilience of communities in shock prone areas

Strategic Result 2: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Children in food insecure areas have access to nutritious food throughout the year

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide capacity strengthening and implementation support to governmental bodies responsible for the national school meals programme

Strategic Result 3: End Malnutrition

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

Focus area: Root causes

Activities:

- Provide chronic malnutrition prevention services to at risk populations in targeted areas
- Provide cash and/or food transfers to households of malnourished ART and TB DOT clients

- WFP provided technical assistance to the Government for the formulation and finalization of Lesotho's Food and Nutrition Strategy Costed Action Plan. A five-day workshop was organized in Butha Buthe district for the costing exercise. It was attended by 30 participants from government, UN agencies and NGOs who technically supported the exercise.
- As of December 2018, WFP had purchased a total of 5,716 metric tonnes of locally produced food (5,315 mt of maize meal and 401 mt of beans). The maize meal was procured through Lesotho Flour Mills and was processed from locally produced maize by local farmers and the beans from farmer organizations and traders. Local purchase has resulted in overall savings on commodity costs and on internal transport, and has allowed WFP to provide more food to those in need. This initiative started in 2017 in Butha Buthe, Leribe and Berea districts, and WFP is working to expand to other districts and has started with Maseru. WFP conducted readiness assessments in Maseru and identified 11 farmers' organizations. Five of these were issued with WFP vendor registration application forms for consideration as WFP vendors.

Monitoring

- The country is experiencing very hot and dry weather conditions with temperatures above average. Isolated and scattered rains were received in December, however the moisture soon dried which discouraged farmers from planting. The southern districts (Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng) are suffering the most from the lack of rain, and monitoring in Mohale's Hoek district showed low water levels which will negatively impact people and animals. There are also reports of an outbreak of waterborne disease with symptoms of diarrhoea.

Challenges

- The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) results indicate that more than 320,000 people - almost 20% of the country's population - will require lifesaving humanitarian assistance over the lean season, a situation that is being further exacerbated by ongoing dry weather that is resulting in late/irregular planting, poor pastures and limited access to water. With more than 90% likelihood of another El Niño induced drought, United Nations agencies in Lesotho have submitted a request for the UN to release Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) resources to support rapid multisectoral response and immediate lifesaving assistance aimed at the most affected populations in the southern districts and Maseru. Planned interventions include emergency food and cash assistance aimed to save lives, reduce morbidity and mortality, protect livelihoods, and prevent and respond to immediate protection risks.
- WFP is preparing a budget revision to its Transitional-Interim Country Strategy Plan to incorporate crisis response planned to start in January and end in June 2019. The objective of the response is to save lives and reduce the impact of another El Niño-induced drought during the 2018/2019 cropping season, for which the probability is currently 90%.

Donors

- For 2018, the Government of Lesotho was WFP's main donor for the primary school meals programme.