



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lesotho Country Brief January 2019



Operational Context

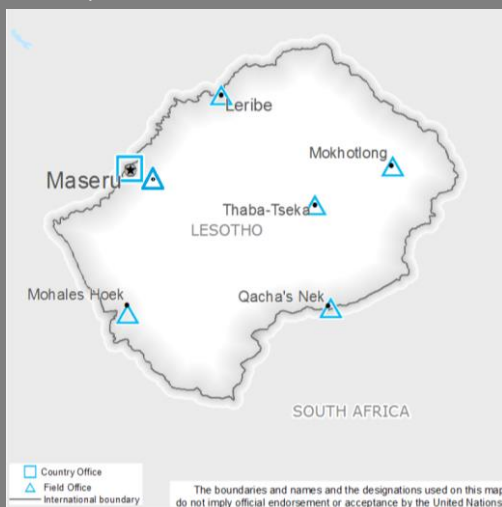
More than half (57%) of Lesotho's population live on less than one dollar per day. GDP stands at USD 2.3 billion while its national GDI per capita is USD 1,270 (World Bank). Revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) contributes a significant proportion to Lesotho's national budget. The Government 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**

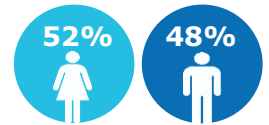
Income Level: **Lower middle**

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

In Numbers

US\$ 7.8 m six months (February – July 2019) net funding requirements, representing 29% of total

278,250 people targeted in 2019



Operational Updates

- WFP Lesotho is presently scaling up operations to meet the most pressing needs of vulnerable communities during the lean season. In January, WFP started preparations such as targeting, collecting baseline data, external consultations, contracting, and a retailer market assessment for assistance to be implemented through a joint UN rapid response targeting orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), and an expansion of the Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activity in Mochales Hoek and Quthing districts targeting 3,000 households. In the two districts, WFP, with funding from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), will assist a total of 9,816 OVC households with unconditional transfers using a hybrid of cash and vouchers through retailers/merchants. WFP will collaborate with Vodacom using a mobile cash delivery mechanism until June 2019. The entry point for targeting OVC's are primary schools and Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres where WFP is assisting. For verification and to avoid duplication, the lists are confirmed with the Ministry of Social Development, the custodian ministry for OVCs.
- Part of the lean season assistance, Food Assistance for Asset activities resumed in four out of 11 project sites that were suspended in April 2018 as a result of a resourcing shortfall. In these project sites (two in Mochales hoek and two in Quthing district), communities are creating soil and water conservation assets that address land degradation to improve their livelihoods. The Ministry of Forestry provides technical supervision in the implementation of quality assets while WFP provides cash transfers, non-food items and technical assistance on targeting, quality assurance in the creation of assets as well as monitoring and evaluation. The FFA activities are funded until June via a WFP internal mechanism aimed to minimize the impact of funding fluctuations, as decided by the Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC). FFA participants will receive immediate cash transfers through a bank.

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Interim Country Strategic Plan (Feb 2018 - July 2019)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
20.1 m	12.3 m	7.8m

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
- To promote evidence-based nutrition programming and the demand for diversified diets, WFP has raised funds to support the Government to conduct Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis, identifying context-specific solutions to improve nutrition across systems. The process has been initiated, and data collection and compilation are currently being undertaken. The analysis will be completed early 2019.
- First quarter food deliveries to schools started in January to be completed in February. WFP's school feeding targets a total of 178,208 learners from 910 primary school. Cooks for the year were contracted for all schools.
- Preparations are ongoing for the registration of local farmers as WFP vendors. WFP has drafted an annual report on local purchase achievements. The report will be shared with the Minister of Education and Training and other stakeholders.
- The local purchase guidelines for the government for the training of stakeholders by WFP were also revised. Vodacom has been engaged to discuss the possibility of a partnership on a market information system proposed by a student from the National University of Lesotho.

Monitoring

- According to the Lesotho Meteorological Services, in the first 10 days of January, most parts of the country (Berea, Mafeteng, Butha-Buthe and Leribe) received significant rainfall ranging from 118 percent to 300 percent compared to normal. Temperatures ranged between 17.7 and 28.5 degrees Celsius. The remaining districts received below normal rainfall. No rains were received for the rest of the month and conditions were very hot and dry, with drought conditions prevailing. January marked the end of the planting season.

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 further exacerbated by ongoing dry weather that is resulting in late/irregular planting, poor pastures and limited access to water. With a significant risk of another El Niño induced drought, UN agencies in Lesotho have requested and received Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) support for 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 which started in January to 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.

Donors

- WFP Lesotho has received USD2.7m from CERF for lean season response
- The People's republic of China gave WFP USD1.4m to support pre-primary school feeding.
- WFP Lesotho received USD1.3m from WFP's Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC). The funds will be used for cash distributions to Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) participants during the January to June 2019 lean season.