In Numbers

10,795 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lesotho, including 320 deaths and 6,427 recoveries (18 May 2021)

US$ 13.2 m six months (May-October 2021) net funding requirements

208,611 people targeted in 2021

Operational Updates

COVID-19

- The country has moved to the blue level coding stage, allowing for social and economic activities to resume while adhering to COVID-19 risk and mitigation measures under the COVID-19 Risk Determination and Mitigation Framework.

Crisis Response

- The emergency response is ongoing in Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tsekana and Maseru districts, targeting rural and urban community councils using a combination of cash and commodity vouchers. Each household receives some USD 54 per month. The commodity voucher is distributed through a network of local retailers, while cash is transferred through Vodacom Mpesa mobile money platform. In April, a total of 26,755 people were assisted.

School Feeding

- Schools re-opened in April 2021 after a long closure since March 2020 due to COVID-19. Due to a funding shortfall of USD 938,440, about 15 percent of the planned school learners will not be receiving any support and of the targeted 50,000 pre-school learners, 750 pre-school learners will not be receiving any school meals. Plans are underway for WFP to further engage with the Ministry of Education and Training for the provision of technical assistance to the ministry.

Strengthening technical capacity on early warning systems

- WFP continues to support the Government through the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) in conducting various assessments including the recently launched Crop Assessment. The information collected is intended to support stakeholders in planning for appropriate interventions in the next three months. WFP is also supporting DMA in producing monthly food security monitoring reports.

Operational Context

More than half (57 percent) of Lesotho’s population live on less than one dollar per day. The gross national product stands at USD 2.3 billion while its national gross domestic income 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 percent 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 percent of people below the age of 35 are unemployed. The country is also characterized by an extremely high HIV prevalence rate (25.6 percent: 30.4 percent for women and 20.8 for men), with care needed 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 percent of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 80 percent of the population living in rural areas. WFP supports the Government’s efforts in building the resilience of communities frequently affected by climatic hazards, with the view to stimulating agricultural production.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1962.

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Further information: www.wfp.org/countries/Lesotho
WFP Country Strategy

Country Strategic Plan (July 2019–June 2024)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Requirements (in USD)</th>
<th>Allocated Contributions (in USD)</th>
<th>Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>118.3 m</td>
<td>42.5 m</td>
<td>13.2 m</td>
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**Strategic Result 01: Everyone has access to food**

**Strategic Outcome 1:** Shock-affected people in Lesotho are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during times of crisis.

**Focus Area:** Crisis Response

**Activities:**
- **Activity 1:** Provide cash and/or food transfers to populations affected by shocks.

**Strategic Result 02: Everyone has access to food**

**Strategic Outcome 2:** Vulnerable populations in Lesotho benefit from strengthened social protection systems that ensure access to adequate, safe and nutritious food all year round.

**Focus Area:** Root Causes

**Activities:**
- **Activity 2:** Support the Government in evidence-based planning, design, management and implementation of gender responsive social protection programmes, including by handing over the home-grown school meals programme.
- **Activity 3:** Strengthen technical capacity of the Government in early warning, food and nutrition security monitoring and vulnerability assessment and analysis through forecast-based financing approaches.

**Strategic Result 03: End Malnutrition**

**Strategic Outcome 3:** Vulnerable populations in Lesotho have improved nutritional status, at each stage of the lifecycle, in line with national targets by 2024.

**Focus Area:** Root Causes

**Activities:**
- **Activity 4:** Provide capacity strengthening to the Government and other actors with regard to multi-sectoral coordination, planning, evidence-building and implementation of equitable nutrition policies and programmes.

**Strategic Result 04: Sustainable Food Systems**

**Strategic Outcome 04:** Communities in targeted areas, especially women and youth, have resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems by 2024.

**Focus Area:** Resilience Building

**Activities:**
- **Activity 5:** Support the design and implementation of assets that are nutritionally relevant to improve and diversify the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households affected by climate change and land degradation.
- **Activity 6:** Provide technical support to smallholder farmers and other value chain actors, particularly women, in climate-smart agriculture, food quality and safety, marketing of nutritious foods and financial services.

Nutrition

- The implementation of all planned activities is ongoing, and these include implementation of the action plan to operationalize the National Food and Nutrition Strategy. Preparatory activities, including engagement of the consultants (international and local), are advanced ahead of the planned nutrition multi-sectoral mapping exercise in the ten districts. The exercise will identify core nutrition actions and promote mutual accountability among stakeholders. The exercise will be conducted using the UN Network (UNN) tool with support from REACH.

Resilience

- Planned activities are ongoing, and these include cash support to 1,800 vulnerable households affected by food insecurity and participated in the community asset-creation activities in Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Quthing districts. Other activities include provision of non-food items to 1,200 households and farmer groups to help them create homestead assets that increase their adaptive capacity and strengthen resilience to climatic shocks.

Technical Support to smallholder farmers

- In support of smallholder farmers, WFP is engaging other partners to ensure that surplus produced by smallholder farmers reach the available local markets in the targeted districts of Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Quthing. In collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, discussion have been launched for smallholder linkages to markets in the three northern districts of Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Quthing.

Monitoring

Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee Crop Assessment- March 2021

- Season 2020/21 received timely onset of rains that enabled agricultural activities except in the highlands.
- Livelihoods such as casual labour, remittances, formal salaries, brewing, and petty trade were below normal mainly due to movement restrictions and loss of employment related to COVID-19.
- Prices of maize meal increased by about 20 percent compared to last year. Prices of wheat flour increased by about 30 percent over the same period.
- About 553,000 people from rural areas and 108,000 people from the urban areas will be food insecure between April and June 2021.

Donors

Canada, China, ECHO, Japan, SRAC, USAID/FFP