



# WFP Lesotho Country Brief September 2021

World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
CHANGING LIVES



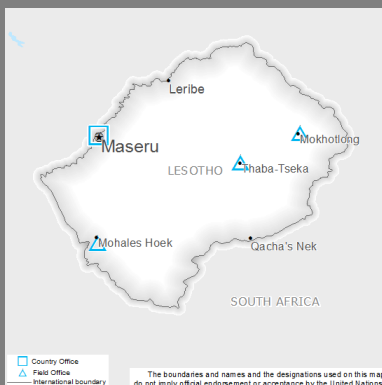
## Country Context

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 seven 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 seven 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.



Population: **2.2 million**

Chronic Malnutrition: **33% of children aged 6-59 months**

2019 Human Development Index: **165 out of 189 countries**

HIV Prevalence: **25.6% of people aged 15-49 years**

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## In Numbers

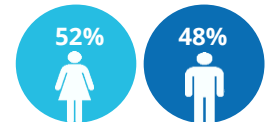
21,530 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lesotho, including 655 deaths and 11,997 recoveries (16 October 2021)

44,000 people targeted for the lean season crisis response assistance

5,000 people assisted with cash in September through participation in homestead and community assets creation

**US\$ 12 million** six months (October 2021 - March 2022) net funding requirements

**343,410 people** targeted in 2021



## Operational Updates

### Activity 1: Crisis Response

- WFP received USD 1 million from the Government of Germany and USD 1 million from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). This will enable the country office to launch the lean season assistance from October-March 2022 targeting 44,000 people in Mokhotlong, Thaba-tseka, Maseru and Qacha's districts. The targeting and verification exercises are ongoing to make sure that the assistance is directed to the most vulnerable people.

### Activity 2: School Feeding

- WFP continues to provide financial support for the provision of school meals at pre-primary level to 50,000 pre-school children. Preparations are ongoing for fourth quarter deliveries of fortified maize meal and canned fish to 2,000 pre-primary schools across the country.
- As part of technical assistance, WFP initiated a virtual tour of the Brazil home-grown school feeding programme which took place in late September 2021. In addition, WFP is providing financial and technical support for the review of the private sector implemented school feeding programme and the report on the review is expected by mid-November 2021.

### Activity 3: Strengthening technical capacity on early warning systems

- WFP continues to support the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee with the development of a dashboard that will provide real-time data for evidence-based decision making for food security and nutrition interventions.
- WFP is also supporting the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) develop the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee strategy and to carry-out capacity needs mapping which will enable development of the country strategic plan and prioritise immediate actions to ensure that DMA enhances coordination of disaster risk reduction interventions.

Photo: Food for Assets beneficiaries constructing a keyhole garden that will contribute to improving dietary diversity at the household level. © WFP/Washi Mokati

## Country Strategic Plan (July 2019–June 2024)

| Total Requirements<br>(in USD) | Allocated Contributions<br>(in USD) | Six-Month Net Funding<br>Requirements<br>(in USD) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>118.3 m</b>                 | <b>44.6</b>                         | <b>12 m</b>                                       |

### 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 3: 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 4: 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.

#### Activity 4: Nutrition

- In collaboration with the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, WFP conducted food fortification trainings across all the ten districts of the country and

key stakeholders reached include government sectors in nutrition, health, law enforcement, health inspectors, education and local government.

- In addition, the development of the nutrition dashboard is underway as a graphical and interactive information management system to facilitate reporting of SBCC related engagements done by various partners.

#### Activity 5: Resilience

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation, WFP assisted 5,150 people in the three northern districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing) through engagement of community and household assets creation activities. This contributes to food production, preservation, and encourages local savings culture to finance income generating activities that build resilience and support adaptive capacity of communities to shocks.
- People benefitting under emergency response assistance in Thaba tseka, Mokhotlong, Maseru and Qachas'nek will be targeted with assets building skills to boost their resilience and adaptive capacity to future shocks.

#### Activity 6: Technical Support to smallholder farmers-

- In liaison with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security WFP, held a four-day market linkages forum for buyers and sellers. This is an initiative towards supporting the Government's efforts to ensure that smallholder farmers have access to markets. Following the market linkages forum, markets aggregation will be established through formal groups to serve different buyers according to different requirements.

#### Monitoring

##### Annual Vulnerability Assessment Report- July 2021

- Lesotho Meteorological Services has predicted that normal to above normal rains are expected from October 2021 to March 2022.
- Normal rains are likely to improve agricultural labour related opportunities especially for poorer households
- Prices have remained higher than the five-year average and higher than last year.
- Lockdown measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have caused a reduction in remittances, reducing purchasing power of remittance dependent households.
- According to the results of the latest IPC Acute Food Insecurity analysis, 312,000 people from rural areas and 158,000 people from urban areas are food insecure until March 2022.

#### Donors

ECHO, Germany, Japan