



Management Response from the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) and WFP Lesotho Country Office to the recommendations of the Activity Evaluation of the Asset Creation and Public Works Activities in Lesotho from 2015 to 2019

1. This document, finalized in December 2022, presents the management response to the recommendations of the Activity Evaluation of Asset Creation and Public Works Activities in Lesotho.
2. The evaluation, which was jointly commissioned by the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) and WFP Lesotho Country Office (LCO) covers the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) (referred to as the “Pilot”) implemented by MFRSC and the WFP FFA activities implemented under the Country Programme (CP) 2013-2017, the Single Country Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO) June 2016-December 2017 and the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) January 2018-June 2019
3. The FFA activities were implemented in Mafeteng, Mochale’s Hoek and Quthing and the Pilot activities were implemented in; Maseru, Berea, and Butha-Buthe districts.
4. The evaluation serves the following purposes; (a) Accountability to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, performance and results of the FFA activities and the technical assistance provided by WFP to the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) implemented by MFRSC, (b) Learning which presents evidence-based findings to inform future decision-making regarding Public Works and FFA activities and (c) understanding how far FFA activities considered gender and human rights-related issues such as equity and discrimination.
5. The evaluation made 10 key recommendations with 30 actions. The matrix sets out whether WFP and MFRSC agrees, partially agrees or disagrees with the recommendations and sub-recommendations. It presents the planned actions, responsibilities and timelines.

Recommendations and related Sub-recommendations (Deadline)	Recommendation and Sub-Recommendation Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Management Response <i>[Is (sub-) recommendation Agreed, Partially agreed or Not agreed? If Partially agreed or Not agreed, provide a brief reason for this.]</i>	Actions to be taken <i>[Briefly state what action(s) will be taken to address each sub-recommendation – one action per row.]</i>	Action Lead (Supporting Offices/Divisions)	Action Deadline <i>[Month and year – not to exceed related (sub-) recommendation deadline.]</i>
Relevance and Design					
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 1 (Operational): Beneficiary vulnerability targeting: Introduce a control system to ensure that participants at the asset creation sites are selected based on vulnerability (and not “first come, first served”). The control system should build on the vulnerability targeting conducted at community level.</p> <p>(WFP: October 2022 – January 2023; MFRSC: at the design of the upscaling of the Pilot)</p>	<p>WFP Lesotho Country Office (LCO), (Programme Unit) and field offices</p> <p>MFRSC (upscaling of Pilot)</p>	<p>Partially Agreed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of Vulnerability as the only criterion to select beneficiaries encourages dependency syndrome as some beneficiaries do not actively participate in poverty alleviation projects to remain vulnerable. 2. Discourages graduation from poverty as indicated 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ministry of Forestry will update the existing vulnerability criteria to ensure that it looks beyond vulnerability as the only selection criteria. The people with disability, most vulnerable people and able bodied to equally participate in FFA activities 	<p>MFRSC (Information) (WFP LCO – Programme, Ministry of Social Development)</p>	<p>Already practicing it in the project areas e.g., WFP, IACOV¹, Min of Social Development.</p> <p><i>The Criteria is in place but needs to be developed further to include additional parameters like capacity, disability, and interest to participate on assets creation activities.</i></p>

¹ IACOV - Improving adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in Lesotho

		<p>in 1. Above. <i>Develop standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to guide how beneficiaries selection should be undertaken in partnership with other stakeholders or partners involved on public works or Food Assistance for Assets.</i></p> <p>3. There is a need to devise mechanism to graduate the vulnerable from their vulnerability status.</p>	<p>2. MFRSC will engage other partners to jointly develop inclusive criteria that consider different factors promoting active participation and eliminating inclusion and exclusion errors.</p>	<p>MFRSC (WFP LCO Programme Unit)</p>	<p>March 2023</p>
			<p>3. WFP will, in collaboration with other stakeholders, design an exit strategy and joint implementation plan to facilitate programme/project sustainability</p>	<p>WFP LCO - Programme (MFRSC, RB Programme – Social Protection, Resilience)</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
			<p>4. MFRSC will revive and capacitate its outreach section with support from WFP.</p>	<p>MFRSC with support from WFP LCO - Programme</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
<p>Priority: High Recommendation 2 (Operational): Community-based planning/ needs assessment. Ensure that beneficiaries are properly consulted about type of community assets selected, location of assets and the</p>	<p>WFP LCO, (Programme Unit) and field offices MFRSC (upscaling of Pilot)</p>	<p>Agreed: The community plans create and encourage sense of projects ownership</p>	<p>5. WFP will support MFRSC to strengthen the capacity of district and area based officers to carry joint community needs assessment, planning and projects prioritization with other partners.</p>	<p>WFP LCO Programme</p>	<p>June 2023</p>

<p>timing of the asset creation work in future community-based planning and needs assessments. It is important that WFP and MFRSC are transparent about the type of assets available for selection.</p> <p>(WFP: October 2022 - February 2023; MFRSC: at the design of the upscaling of the Pilot)</p>		<p>Promotes sustainability of established assets.</p>	<p>6. MFRSC will strengthen the capacity of district and area based MFRSC officers to carry joint community needs assessments, planning and projects prioritization in partnership with stakeholders and community based groups.</p>	<p>MFRSC Technical Directors for Departments of:</p> <p>1) Soil and Water Conservation;</p> <p>2) Range.</p> <p>MFRSC - Deputy Principal Secretary (WFP LCO Programme)</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 3 (Operational): Livelihood programming. Modify the livelihood component so it is based on voluntary participation. Conduct market and feasibility assessments and beneficiary training to ensure effective and sustainable livelihood activities.</p> <p>(October 2022 – June 2023)</p>	<p>WFP LCO (Programme Unit) and field offices</p>	<p>Agreed:</p> <p>All interventions should bring positive change to people’s livelihoods.</p> <p>Capacitate people to be self-reliant so that they see their incentive as a capital for their projects.</p>	<p>7. MFRSC will introduce competitions for best practices to promote care and responsible use of natural resources e.g., water, soil and or rangelands, Forestry by project beneficiaries.</p>	<p>MFRSC and MAFS (WFP LCO)</p>	<p>August 2023 _ It is an ongoing process aimed to go beyond WFP support.</p>
			<p>8. Give incentives such as added technical support, needs based training, provide Inputs or non-food items that improve project’s activities that show potential continuity or sustainability.</p>	<p>MFRSC, MAFS & (WFP LCO)</p>	<p>September 2023</p>
<p>Effectiveness/Impact</p>					

<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 4 (Operational): Monitoring. Ensure that monitoring systems of asset creation and livelihood activities include additional gender-sensitive indicators, disability indicators, livelihood indicators and indicators on environmental outcomes/ impact (for example proxy environmental indicators). Indicators should be sex-disaggregated when relevant. To measure gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) it would be relevant to include an indicator focusing on division of labour at household level. Indicators should be monitored at the same time of the year to ensure data reliability (baseline/endpoint). LCO is recommended to consult the HQ and RB regarding available indicators.</p> <p>(October 2022 - May 2023)</p>	<p>WFP LCO (VAM and M&E Unit)</p> <p>[WFP HQ, Research, Assessment and Monitoring Division (RAM)</p> <p>WFP RB for Southern Africa (VAM and M&E unit)]</p>	<p>Agreed:</p> <p>All people should have ownership of the assets in the community.</p> <p>Interventions are for everybody, regardless of gender, age or abilities/disabilities</p>	9. WFP CO will develop a clear Public Works (FFA) monitoring framework.	WFP LCO M&E in collaboration with Programme (Resilience) and MFRSC	August 2023
			10. WFP CO will strengthen the capacity of the MFRSC officers in basic monitoring and evaluation of FFA activities.	WFP LCO M&E in collaboration with Programme (Resilience) and MFRSC	Started, to be completed by May 2023
			11. WFP CO will train MFRSC Field Officers and project managers on the development of monitoring tools.	WFP LCO M&E (LCO Programme Unit)	Started, to be completed by May 2023
<p>Priority: Medium</p> <p>Recommendation 5 (Operational): GEWE and inclusion of vulnerable groups. Mainstream GEWE and inclusivity into all asset creation and livelihood projects/activities by:</p> <p>1) Conducting gender analysis of vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, before project design;</p>	<p>WFP LCO (Programme Unit, including gender focal person) and field offices</p> <p>[WFP HQ, Gender Office (GEN)</p> <p>WFP RB for Southern Africa,</p>	<p>Agreed</p>	12. Work together with WFP Gender focal person to develop framework and incorporate gender mainstreaming on Public Works/FFA implementation.	WFP LCO - Activity 5 Manager, Activity 3 Managers & MFRSC Technical Directors	September 2023
			13. Seek guidance from RB with support from CO gender focal officer to undertake gender analysis for vulnerable groups	WFP LCO Activity 5 Manager	September 2023

<p>2) On basis of this analysis, develop a GEWE strategy/ strategy for vulnerable groups;</p> <p>3) Prepare and roll-out GEWE/vulnerable groups programming tools/guidelines to field office and community levels, e.g., foremen;</p> <p>4) Conduct training in GEWE and inclusion of vulnerable groups for MFRSC, LCO, field office staff, community staff/leaders and beneficiaries. For gender, it is crucial that not only gender equality but also gender equity is considered (e.g., how the double work of women can be mitigated to ensure gender equality). This might require a study as input to the strategy. It is recommended that the LCO make use of corporate and regional tools, guidelines, training modules, etc. (if available) and amend these if needed. Only if not available, should LCO develop their own tools.</p> <p>(October 2022 - September 2023)</p>	Regional Gender Advisor]		and training thereof community and district Officers.	(LCO Gender Focal Point and RB Gender)	
			14. Will seek guidance from CO Gender focal point on the use of corporate and regional tools or guidelines available for use when implementing Public Works/FFA programme and amend them if needed or develop a new one based on local needs.	WFP LCO GEWE focal point (LCO Programme Unit)	September 2023
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 6 (Operational): Asset creation. Ensure that forest and fruit tree plantations are</p>	WFP LCO (Programme Unit) and field offices	<p>Partially Agreed</p> <p>Trees require water to survive hence they should be planted</p>	15. Conduct land suitability assessment before any tree planting project is undertaken.	MFRSC Department of Forestry and Department of Conservation	May 2023: Ongoing activity

discouraged in areas with no water access and prioritize forest and fruit tree plantations in locations near beneficiaries' homesteads. (October 2022 - January 2023)	MFRSC (Upscaling of Pilot, and PAP)	where there is water for watering, close or far from home states Should also include land suitability			
			16. Engage relevant departments e.g., Water, Soil conservation, range management, environment and have their inputs on the suitability of selected tree planting area.	MFRSC Department of Forestry and Department of Conservation	May 2023: Ongoing activity
Sustainability and Scalability					
Priority: High Recommendation 7 (Operational): Capacity development: Ensure that all types of capacity development targeting WFP staff, the Government and communities are planned and implemented including the following elements: 1) Capacity needs assessment evaluation; 2) Strategy and plan based on the needs assessment. When training of trainers is included, a plan for	WFP LCO (Programme Unit) and field offices [WFP HQ, Technical Assistance and Country Capacity Strengthening Service (PROT);	Agreed: Capacity gaps will be filled. Dynamic technology developments. Cost effective technologies.	17. WFP will facilitate the training of MFRSC relevant staff, field offices and all programme staff using the 3-pronged approach. This approach is critical as the basis for the effective implementation of new and FFA or Public Works pilot programmes.	WFP LCO Programme Unit (RB Programme Unit and HQ Programme Division)	June 2023
			18. WFP will ensure the proper use and application of corporate tools on all WFP programmes.	WFP CO Programme (WFP RB Programme and HQ monitoring and evaluation unit)	May 2023

<p>cascading learning should be prepared;</p> <p>3) Training modules and tools;</p> <p>4) Training evaluation focusing both on the quality of the training and its impact. It is recommended that the LCO apply corporate and regional tools, guidelines, training modules, etc. (if available) and amend these if needed. Development of own tools is only recommended if not available elsewhere.</p> <p>(October 2022 – September 2023)</p>	<p>WFP RB for Southern Africa]</p>		<p>19. Assess existing training materials or tools for relevance and quality.</p>	<p>WFP CO Programme (WFP RB Programme and HQ monitoring and evaluation unit)</p>	<p>May 2023</p>
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 8 (Strategic): Sustainability. Ensure that all WFP activities are designed and implemented based on sustainability considerations. For asset creation and livelihood activities, this includes:</p> <p>1) Selecting environmentally suitable, low-cost, low maintenance/low-input assets and livelihood activities;</p> <p>2) Developing systems for community-led management and maintenance (e.g., water committees for water points);</p>	<p>WFP LCO (Programme Unit) [MFRSC; WFP HQ, Livelihoods, Asset Creation and Resilience Unit (PRORL); WFP RB for Southern Africa]</p>	<p>Agreed:</p> <p>The programme activities should be properly managed and continue beyond WFP funding support. Suggested actions are part of activities established during community based participatory planning sessions.</p>	<p>20. Update existing community based participatory planning (CBPP) to make a practical plan to address underlying food insecurity and undernutrition; monitoring and evaluation of programme activities.</p>	<p>WFP LCO - Programme Unit MFRSC, RB Programme, WFP HQ Programme division</p>	<p>All the three recommended activities are part of the CBPP implementation process and done during community planning sessions.</p> <p>July 2023.</p>
			<p>21. Strengthen medium term livelihood resilience through CBPP process and support voluntary community initiatives to maintain existing community assets.</p>	<p>WFP LCO - Programme Unit (MFRSC, RB Programme)</p>	<p>July 2023</p>

<p>3) Ensuring that handing over and sustainability arrangements are in place from project start. LCO is recommended to consult the HQ and RB regarding best practices of other countries.</p> <p>(October 2022 - September 2023)</p>			<p>22. Use CBPP process to establish community action plans and identify community-based savings and income generation groups and support community and interest groups coherence with training to continue with asset building activities beyond WFP funding.</p>	<p>WFP LCO - Programme Unit (MFRSC, RB Programme)</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 9 (Strategic): WFP's support to the Government of Lesotho (GoL). Ensure that all support provided to the Government (e.g., in relation to the handing over process) includes the following elements:</p> <p>1) Agreement, which details the area for support (e.g., technical assistance);</p> <p>2) Strategy and plan (including timeline) for how the support should be provided; and</p> <p>3) Logical Framework/ Results Framework and an associated simple monitoring system. LCO is recommended to consult RB regarding best practices of other countries.</p>	<p>WFP LCO (Programme Unit) [MFRSC and other relevant government offices; WFP RB for Southern Africa]</p>	<p>Agreed:</p> <p>This is critical to ensure sustainability of the Public Works/FFA projects.</p> <p>It is also important to bridge the gaps where the government may have shortages in achieving some targets.</p> <p>Should be transparent on the kind, area and time of interventions needed been implemented.</p>	<p>23. Carry capacity needs mapping to identify types of training needed to support the government on the best FFA/Public works programme implementation.</p>	<p>WFP LCO - Programme Unit, (RB Programme Unit for advice and best practices from other countries and MFRSC Principal Secretary (PS) and Directors.</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
			<p>24. Train CO and government officers on development of logical and results framework that will spill over to support government counterparts.</p>	<p>WFP LCO Head of Programme and M&E Unit (RB Programme Unit)</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
			<p>25. MFRSC will develop strategies to motivate field-based government staff to support FFA/public works programme with resources within the scope of the government e.g., study tours and/ exchange visits.</p>	<p>MFRSC PS and Directors</p>	<p>June 2023</p>

(October 2022 - September 2023)			26. WFP Lesotho will develop and implement the handover strategic framework	WFP LCO Programme Unit (RB Programme Unit)	June 2023
<p>Priority: High</p> <p>Recommendation 10 (Strategic): Scale-up of Pilot. There is a need for developing simpler, less resource-demanding, and “lighter” approaches/models for upscaling than the approaches and activities implemented by WFP. Based on this evaluation, lessons learned from the IACOV project and a brief feasibility study, WFP in collaboration with MFRSC should refine selected parts of the Pilot (vulnerability targeting, selection of right assets with improved quality and functionality, 3-months enrolment, and enhanced M&E) with the aim of up-scaling in PAP. This might involve contracting a consultant for support. LCO is recommended to consult WFP headquarters and RB regarding principles and best practices for scalable WFP models related to the selected parts of the Pilot.</p> <p>(October 2022 - September 2023)</p>	<p>WFP LCO (Programme Unit)</p> <p>MFRSC</p> <p>[WFP HQ; WFP RB for Southern Africa]</p>	<p>Agreed:</p> <p>Development of less resource demanding FFA models for the government so that it covers other areas without assistance from development partners.</p> <p>Support and build capacity of MFRSC on development of the public works M&E framework.</p>	27. Develop clear guidelines and implementation package when establishing new or pilot FFA sites.	WFP LCO Programme Unit & MFRSC (WFP HQ Programme Division and WFP RB Programme Unit)	June 2023
			28. Facilitate FFA pilot project/s implementation using Public Works guidelines.	WFP LCO Programme Unit & MFRSC (RB Programme Unit)	August 2023
			29. Engage a consultant to assist with development and refining of proper assets selection, targeting and beneficiary engagement interval.	WFP LCO Programme Unit & MFRSC (RB Programme Unit)	August 2023
			30. Provide MFRSC with capacity to develop functioning M&E framework.	WFP LCO M&E (WFP CO Programme Unit, RB Monitoring and RB Evaluation)	August 2023