



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES

WFP Lesotho Country Brief May 2023



Operational Context

Lesotho is a lower-middle-income country with a population size of about 2 million. Lesotho remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. Poverty is widespread, persistent, and deep, especially in rural areas. Almost half of the population of Lesotho is poor (49.7 percent) and almost one quarter (24.1 percent) is extremely poor, living below the food poverty line.

The country is vulnerable to floods, drought, food insecurity and disease outbreaks. Low agricultural productivity, poverty, malnutrition, and the impact of HIV aggravate vulnerability to natural hazards. HIV/AIDS prevalence is high among adults at 22.7 percent, with the rate higher among women at 27.4 percent than among men at 17.8 percent. The country is also experiencing a triple burden of malnutrition – high levels of stunting, micronutrient deficiencies and overweight across all age groups. Agriculture, which contributes seven percent of GDP, is a major source of livelihood for 70 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.

WFP has been present in Lesotho since 1962.



Population: **2 million**

2021 Human Development Index: **168 out of 191**

Income Level: **Lower middle**

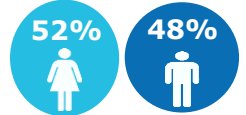
Chronic malnutrition: **34.8% of children between 6-59 months**

In Numbers

US\$ 12.5 m six months (June 2023-November 2023) net funding requirements, representing 67% of total requirements.

50,000 learners received nutritious school meals in April.

1,422 households received cash transfers.



Operational Updates

Activity 1: Crisis response

- WFP's food assistance support is on hold and will resume in October 2023 when the lean season starts. Under this activity, WFP targets women, men, girls and boys affected by shocks to save lives and reduce the impact of shocks by protecting livelihoods through the delivery of food and cash-based assistance to people identified as severely food insecure. The activities are implemented only when the scale of the crisis exceeds the capacity of the Government to respond. WFP will launch the lean season support (October 2023-March 2024) based on results of the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee report which will be available in July 2023.

Activity 2: School Feeding

- WFP provided school meals to 50,000 pre-primary school learners in 2,400 schools across the ten districts of the country, ensuring that learners receive an adequate and nutritious meal every school day in order to increase attendance.
- WFP trained 28 officials from Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Food and Nutrition Coordination Office, Food Management Unit, and Catholic Relief Services on the use of School Menu Planner (SMP) PLUS to design school menus taking into consideration local food availability, nutritional requirements, seasonality, student's preferences, and local sourcing. SMP PLUS is a WFP online global school menu creation platform that allows the creation of more affordable, nutritious and local meals.
- WFP continues to scale up the home-grown school feeding programme to improve the nutrition of schoolchildren and boost local economies by linking smallholder farmers to the school feeding programme.

Activity 3: Strengthening technical capacity of the Government on early warning systems

- The Government of Lesotho, in partnership with WFP, launched an innovative geospatial platform for territorial planning. This initiative, which is valued at US\$ 1.1 million, aims to boost decision-making and enhance overall governance. The platform will enhance the Government's capacity in facilitating relevant interventions, monitoring programme implementation, and evaluating outcomes. As part of the initiative, WFP has provided training to 56 geographic information system (GIS) experts and government officials from various line ministries to equip users with skills to operate the platform. WFP engaged Tech4All (a local company) to facilitate the platform's rollout across all ministries.

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Photo: Presentation of the Lesotho Geospatial platform. ©WFP/Nkululeko Mazibuko

Country Strategic Plan (July 2019-June 2024)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
168 m	59.5 m	12.5 m

Strategic Result 1: Everyone has access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Shock affected people in Lesotho are able to meet their 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 2: 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 4: 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

- WFP conducted monitoring and evaluation training for 18 people from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition as part of the planned activities under the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (a national project that support smallholder farmers to exploit opportunities to increase their productivity and diversify into market-oriented agriculture; WFP is implementing the nutrition sub-component of this project). The aim was to

strengthen the capacity of the ministry's staff on the monitoring and evaluation to facilitate successful implementation of nutrition interventions, scale up a nutrition-sensitive portfolio and improve the reporting of all activities executed under the project.

- WFP participated in the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II mid-term review workshop to review progress on project implementation and identify new opportunities for nutrition integration.
- WFP provided financial support to the National AIDS Commission (NAC) for the finalization of the National HIV & AIDS Strategic Plan (2023- 2028) which aims to enhance multi-sectoral cooperation and national response to HIV and AIDS while reinforcing NAC's responsibility to coordinate the country's multi-sector response. The strategic plan was developed through collaborative efforts from various government sectors, civil society organisations, and UN agencies.

Activity 5: Resilience

- In efforts to promote productive opportunities and build resilience and adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities over the longer term, WFP expanded the Food Assistance for Assets creation (FFA) intervention to Mokhotlong district, targeting 1,422 households that received humanitarian food assistance during the lean season (November 2022 to March 2023). Due to limited funding, this intervention is planned for three months (May to July 2023). The activities being implemented include water conservation for irrigation and household use, brush control to improve rangeland for livestock production, homestead gardening to diversify diet, and road maintenance to enable access to markets. WFP partnered with Standard Lesotho Bank to provide cash to the value of LSL 1,200 (approximately US\$ 65) to FFA participants.

Activity 6: smallholder farmers

- WFP through the Adaptation Fund project provided value chain technical support to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, by facilitating a scoping mission to identify priority value chains that the project could support. The mission, in collaboration with the ministry, conducted a profiling activity that analysed the value chain development work that government and its partners, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), are engaged in. It is anticipated that the mission report will recommend suitable value chain commodities that will transform the lives of vulnerable communities already affected by changes in climate patterns.

Climate change Adaptation

- Through the Adaptation Fund project, WFP sensitized 332 herd boys in Mokhotlong district on climate change threats and impacts on food security, nutrition, and livelihoods. The sessions focused on the impacts of fire on rangelands, fire management, proper herding, pasture rest, and wetland conservation. The sensitization was a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and the Lesotho Climate Change Committee as part of the initiative to raise awareness of communities, women, youth, people living with HIV, and other vulnerable groups on the impacts of climate change, the importance of adaptation, and the use of climate information for seasonal planning and climate risk management.

Donors

Adaptation Fund, ECHO, Germany, Government of Lesotho, Japan.