

# Summary Evaluation Report

*Decentralized evaluation for evidence-based decision making*



## Evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme in Lesotho, in consultation with the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (2007- 2017)

### INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents a summary of the findings and recommendations from an evaluation of the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) in Lesotho. The evaluation was commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) Lesotho country office in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). The evaluation was conducted by JaRco Consulting and data collection took place from February to March 2018, covering the period between 2007 and 2017. The evaluation was timed to inform the development of a transition strategy to a fully government-implemented programme in 2019.

### SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

2. The school feeding programme (SFP) was designed to contribute to the 2005-2015 Education Sector Strategic Plan's aim of providing free and compulsory primary education to all children, including girls from underprivileged backgrounds and children from ethnic minorities. Between 2007 and 2017, WFP focused on equitable primary school access through its development projects, including the 2015-19 Trust Fund (TF 200771) which coincided with the launch of the Lesotho National School Feeding Policy (NSFP). Before the NSFP, WFP supported the Government with direct implementation of the SFP for primary schools since 1965. The introduction of self-reliance projects in schools in the 1990s resulted in a gradual phase-out of WFP school feeding and handover of schools in the lowlands and foothills. Between 1990 and 2012, the Government gradually took over, while both the MOET and WFP school feeding models were concurrently operational.

3. Under the NSFP, the MOET broadened its SFP ambitions to promote the development of children, farmers, and communities throughout Lesotho by ensuring that school feeding is a multi-sector programme that receives support from and provides benefits to multiple sectors and actors, including the Government, communities, private sector, and civil society.

4. The SFP was implemented using the three delivery approaches: **the Caterers, WFP and NMA models** (Box 1).

### STAKEHOLDERS AND USERS OF THE EVALUATION

5. The users of the evaluation included WFP country office, Regional Bureau Johannesburg, and Headquarters in Rome; the MOET, the Primary Education Inspectorate and School Self-Reliance and Feeding Unit (SSRFU), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOH), Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS), Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing (MSBD), the private sector, service providers, National Management Agents (NMAs), United Nations (UN) agencies, civil society organizations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and donors.

### EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

6. The evaluation scope comprised Lesotho's 1,427 public primary schools and 2,289 Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) centres where school meals were provided. The evaluation addressed both learning and accountability objectives with a focus on drawing out lessons to inform future decision-making. The primary aim of the evaluation was to build a common understanding of:

- a) The contribution of school feeding to development objectives including social protection, employment creation and poverty reduction.
- b) The comparative costs incurred by the Government and communities in implementing school feeding programmes through three models.
- c) The design adjustments that the Government and its partners should make to integrate school feeding into its national social protection agenda.
- d) The most appropriate and efficient institutional arrangements for managing and implementing an efficient NSFP in future.
- e) The most appropriate approach WFP and the Government should take to develop a transition strategy towards a fully government-funded and implemented SFP in future.

### APPROACH AND METHODS

7. The evaluation team adopted a three-fold methodology: (i) a national cost assessment (ii) a quantitative school and household survey (SHHS) of parent households and school staff and (iii) key informant

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interviews and focus group discussions with national and district stakeholders. A stratified random sampling strategy was used for the SHHS. The evaluation questions responded to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

## KEY FINDINGS

The main evaluation findings are summarised below according to evaluation criteria.

### RELEVANCE

8. **The SFP's primary objective of supporting national education enrolment, retention and transition was strongly relevant to national policies.** Strengths were also reported in the complementarity of WFP gender policies in promoting equal access to education for boys and girls. Furthermore, Lesotho's policy frameworks for social protection, agriculture and food security, and small enterprise development were coherent with the NSFP ambitions and the SFP provided an effective social protection instrument.

9. **School meals functioned as a universal social protection instrument, providing school children with a regular meal and incentivizing primary school attendance.** Despite the strong complementarity with national policies for social protection, nutrition, food security and poverty reduction, **a lack of cross-sectoral coordination hindered the integration of school feeding into national development plans and programmes.**

10. While the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) questioned whether education performance could be better promoted by direct cash transfers to poor households than by school meals, **stakeholders consistently believed that the removal of school meals would reduce the participation of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and poorer households in education.** However, there was no inclination among local, district or national actors to develop an alternative vulnerability-based school meals strategy.

11. **Complementary SFP actions are required to improve links to social protection programmes,** such as breakfast for OVCs, the grants programme, improved nutrition screening and investments in school water and sanitation infrastructure. In addition, **clear compliance standards are also needed for ECCDs** to ensure informal providers are given effective oversight.

12. Stakeholders contended that **national budgetary commitments to SFP and child cash grants should be converted by the MOET and MSD into common strategies to support vulnerable children.** This could be

achieved by using teachers to raise awareness of social protection entitlements, providing school referrals for registration on the MSD National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) database for cash grants, and improving coordination and oversight of SFP and cash grant coverage in schools.

13. **School feeding was not used as a shock-responsive social protection instrument for children and families during the 2016 El Niño event.** Although school meals were consistently provided and not integrated into drought response efforts, the El Niño event caused minor disruptions in the delivery of the SFP. Some adjustments were made to meal compositions, to rely on food items with less water requirements and longer shelf life. Teachers cited instances of boys dropping out of school to herd animals, and girls being absent or arriving late due to walking long distances to fetch water. Additionally, at the school level, children often received meals late because cooks and caterers travelled long distances to fetch water.

14. **Design adjustments were suggested for the SFP to support enhanced contributions to Lesotho's shock-responsive capacity** while piggy-backing the NMA logistics capacities to support the rapid scaling up and down of future crisis response interventions, including but not limited to:

- **Vertical expansion:** increasing the value or duration of the transfer
- **Horizontal expansion:** increasing the number of beneficiaries during crises.
- **Piggybacking:** using existing infrastructure to scale up interventions
- **Refocusing:** reprioritising existing resources to other interventions

15. These adjustments require a robust risk-based analysis and support to private sector NMAs and/or caterers who are most likely impacted by drought since they typically plan school supplies based on full enrolment, normal-year commodity costs and adequate access to water.

### EFFECTIVENESS

16. **School meals provided a food security safety net to vulnerable children.** Parents, guardians, children, and teachers were unanimously positive about the contributions of school meals to immediate food needs regardless of the delivery model. Children reported that access to a meal provided them with a reason to attend school, while parents and guardians needed not to worry about what their children eat. **Relief from hunger was highlighted as a**

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**major factor that encouraged OVCs to attend school.** Thus, school meals provided a backstop for the wider community during times of food insecurity.

17. **School meals helped sustain primary school enrolment, attendance and concentration.** Teachers reported that school meals improved the concentration of school learners, especially after the first meal. These findings were consistent with several studies whose results showed the positive impact of school meals on enrolment, attendance, completion, and higher learning scores in cognitive, language and mathematical tests.

18. **The SHHS analysis of the contribution of school feeding on households did not reveal any clear contribution to overall food consumption, income substitution, or linkages to household food security.** A significant portion of households (58 percent) reported that the provision of a school meal did not affect their budget, while 36 percent indicated that it led to additional household expenses, such as supplementing the school meal or providing utensils.

19. **Links between child nutrition status and education performance were identified** in Lesotho's 2016 Cost of Hunger study which analysed how school repetitions and dropouts were linked to under-five nutrition. This aligned with reports from peer-reviewed journal papers which identified positive effects of school feeding on protein energy intake, micronutrient status, and the enrolment and attendance of children in primary schools. However, the positive impacts of school feeding on growth, cognition, and academic achievement were less conclusive.

20. **Lesotho's nutrition strategies included limited initiatives to support catch-up growth strategies to mitigate moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among children in ECCD centres and primary schools.** A broad cross-section of stakeholders expressed that school meals can contribute to mitigating MAM and potentially support catch-up if provided as an integrated package of complementary interventions including social behavioural change communication (SBCC).

21. **A good level of dietary diversity for children in line with the menu designed by government nutritionists was provided by the Cater model** (Box 1). However, there were periods when the menu could not be provided in some localities due to the seasonality and production capacities of Lesotho's agroecological zones. Despite the provision of the same menu, the WFP procurement and testing protocols ensured the food provided was fortified.

**Box 1: Lesotho Primary School Menu** (Source: Main Evaluation Report, Page 10)

#### Box 1: Lesotho Primary School Menu

##### Caterers Delivery Model:

Monday: 150g papa (maize porridge), 100g moroho (vegetables);  
Tuesday: 1/4 loaf of bread, 200ml of bean soup;  
Wednesday: 150g papa, 100g moroho, 1 egg;  
Thursday: 150g samp (boiled maize kernels), 150g beans;  
Friday: 150g papa, 250ml milk.

##### WFP Delivery Model:

A daily breakfast of 30g of maize meal porridge with 10g sugar;  
A lunch of 120g maize meal, 30g beans/peas with 10g of vegetable oil and 3g of iodised salt.<sup>1</sup>

##### NMA Delivery Model:

Provision of the daily WFP breakfast alongside the Caterer's menu.

22. **A modest contribution to dietary diversity was also provided by gardens,** which was appreciated by teachers and learners. The gardens were especially important for WFP schools where the same meals were served every day. However, two-thirds of the gardens were without fencing leading to theft and animal damage.

23. **Programmes on child stunting and wasting should not only address child access to food through school feeding but also infrastructural, socio-cultural, and behavioural dimensions.** This was supported by research data which showed the influence of multiple factors such as water quality, sanitation, child health, family size and child feeding behaviours on malnutrition. However, measures to address these factors were only limited to teacher training in food hygiene and SBCC outreach while water and sanitation facilities in most schools were in poor condition.

24. **The ECCD programme faced significant capacity gaps within MOET, to standardize centres and provide effective monitoring and supervision.** The absence of targeting and lack of clarity on the scale of ECCD enrolment and attendance resulted in many disadvantaged and food-insecure children being excluded. This gap led to the setting up of informal ECCDs in urban areas to provide childcare for factory workers. **With ECCD caregivers untrained and unsupervised, many children were placed at risk due to poor understanding of nutrition practices among ECCD caregivers,** coupled with lack of clean water, poor status of classrooms, and water and sanitation infrastructure.

25. **The low levels of education development spending impacted the availability of school infrastructure such as kitchens, washing and storage facilities and dedicated feeding areas.** As a result, cooks and caterers prepared food at home without supervision/formal oversight and transported it to schools, thus increasing the risk of contamination. In addition, the lack of access to water, and the poor state of toilet facilities and sanitation in some schools led to open defecation and

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increased the risk of food contamination. Although the MOET provided a school utility grant for school services and a kitchen improvement grant to WFP, it was inadequate to address the poor state of water, sanitation, kitchen, and storage infrastructure.

26. **There was no system for the governance and monitoring of NMA delivery and no contingency planning was undertaken to mitigate the risks of NMA.** Although NMA service level agreements were agreed upon with MOET, there was little evidence that the selection process included an audit of accounts or performance across related businesses.

27. **The NMA2 contract with the MOET was cancelled due to a prolonged failure to provide services.** Although the launch of NMA1 was largely successful, NMA2 food deliveries failed due to the absence of a committed investor. In addition, delivery and accounts reports were not submitted. It was estimated that at least 275 cooks received no payments from NMA2, and many were pushed into debt due to the programme's failure to ensure effective standards, oversight, and risk-based contingencies. Furthermore, over 35,000 children did not receive the allocated food. To mitigate these challenges, NMA1 rapidly scaled up and absorbed NMA2 schools. Despite these shortcomings, schools and district officials remained largely positive about the shift to NMA service providers.

28. **The requirement for cooks and caterers to have up-front resources to procure food, transport, water, and fuel, and cater for food preparation costs led to an increased risk of debt and excluded some community members from applying.** Cooks and caterers were expected to ensure children were fed despite the late payment and the decline in the relative value of the static transfers.

29. **A combination of factors led to declining employment benefits for cooks and caterers and increased risks of debt.** These include:

- Lack of financial planning and business management skills.
- Declining relative purchasing power due to static MOET payments.
- Historical late payments by SSRFU leading to cashflow problems and interest rate losses.
- Direct contracting of cooks by NMA1 at rate levels below those set by the SSRFU.
- The failure of NMA2 to pay cooks for 2 to 4 months during 2017.
- Lack of mechanisms to reclaim lost income.

## EFFICIENCY

30. Below is the cost of school feeding per child for each delivery model. While the WFP delivery model was the most expensive at M 662.76 (US\$49.75) per child per year, WFP costs include several elements that were not covered under the Caterers or NMA delivery models.

**Table 1: Cost of school feeding per delivery model**

School feeding costs	WFP + Cooks	Caterers	NMA
Per child per year (in Maloti)	M 662.76	M 420.86	M 493.97
Per child per year (in US\$)	US\$ 49.75	US\$ 31.59	US\$ 37.08
Per child per day (in Maloti)	M 3.68	M 2.34	M 2.74
Per child per day (in US\$)	US\$ 0.28	US\$ 0.18	US\$ 0.21

31. **National benchmarks from the studies of school feeding costs in the region showed that direct costs to the Government of Lesotho were almost three times more per child per year** than for Zambia, and 25 percent more than in Namibia. Lesotho's rates were nevertheless significantly below Botswana's<sup>1</sup>. Namibia and Zambia had a simpler and cheaper menu than Lesotho, while the high relative costs of meals in Botswana were carried by a menu that included beef stew, bread, jam and peanut butter.

32. **Studies on the Lesotho school feeding costs and opportunities for savings identified that commodity, and management and administration costs were high compared to other countries in the region<sup>2</sup>.** This was attributed to the high food costs, and the limited ability of caterers to negotiate prices with producers. Management and administration costs in other countries were lower due to a combination of community engagements in overseeing procurement, food preparation, recruitment of volunteer cooks and decentralized budgets. **Stronger support systems from SSRFU and District Nutrition Team (DNT) staff, bridging local capacity gaps and the gaps between schools and the surrounding communities is, therefore, key to reducing management costs in Lesotho.**

33. Figure 1 disaggregates cost drivers by delivery model. Commodity costs were the highest under the Caterers' model because they purchased more expensive menu items and procured food from local traders in relatively small quantities. **High comparative capital costs in Lesotho were carried primarily for infrastructure**

<sup>1</sup> [Lesotho National School Feeding Evaluation](#), Page 26, Table 10: School feeding direct costs to government by country

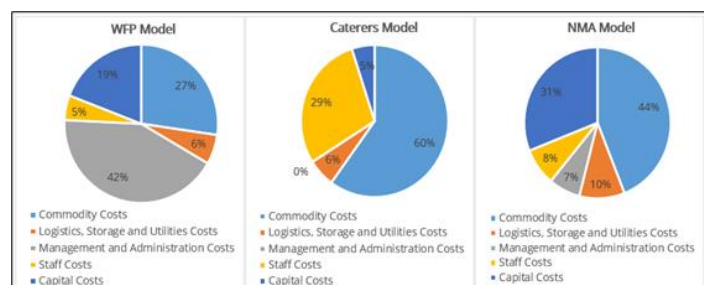
<sup>2</sup> [Lesotho National School Feeding Evaluation](#) Page 25, Figure 9: Summary of cost drivers across delivery models.

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**expenditures** including investments in office and warehousing infrastructure, under the WFP model. This budget line was not considered an area where cost savings could be made.

**Figure 1: Cost distributions of the different school feeding delivery models** (Source: Main Evaluation Report, Page 26)



34. Management costs covered capacity strengthening through workshops and training for schools and participants across all delivery models. Given the major capacity gaps in coordinating and monitoring the SFP at all levels, **increased investment in capacity strengthening would ensure the effective delivery of the future SFP.** Gradually transitioning from the WFP to the NMA models would allow WFP management costs to be redirected towards capacity strengthening initiatives.

35. **Management and staff cost savings in all models could be made by adapting payment arrangements for cooks and caterers,** for example, providing schools with budgets to recruit cooks directly from local communities at locally agreed rates. This approach is likely to be more appropriate in rural schools if effective monitoring, accountability, and support systems are in place. Conversely, in densely populated urban councils and Maseru municipality, caterers supported an alternative approach to recruit caterer businesses to provide meals to a cluster of schools while the NMA functions as the commodity supplier.

36. **The ability of NMAs to build efficiencies into their commodity, logistics and management costs was limited by the allocation of individual community councils distributed across districts and agroecological zones.** Greater efficiencies could have been achieved by introducing effective competition among NMAs, the consolidation of school meal services across entire districts, and through three-year district tenders that include the purchase of local perishables.

37. **The shift to NMAs although positively recognized, had shortcomings in that the system did not support local producers and placed some caterers at risk of debt.** Therefore, outsourcing was considered a potentially more effective instrument for contractually

based supply arrangements between Lesotho's food producers and the school meals programme, leading to stronger opportunities for collective price negotiations and sustainability.

38. **Maximising opportunities for the bulk purchase of fortified meals and oil from national and international markets through the gradual expansion of the NMA delivery model presents an opportunity to reduce overall commodity costs.** Caterers often found themselves in a weak position when negotiating prices with producers and suppliers who sometimes inflated prices. Conversely, WFP and the NMAs procured large quantities of non-perishable food items from national and international suppliers at negotiable prices, therefore, leveraging economies of scale and lower commodity costs.

39. **Perishable items represented the most viable opportunity for local purchases.** Therefore, designing a flexible, seasonal menu that incorporates perishable food items readily available at the district level could enhance cost efficiency. With effective management, this approach could provide a platform to support farmers in local food production and engagement in the market, while involving the MAFS and MSBD program staff.

40. **The substitution of the Cater menu for the WFP menu led to a decrease in purchases from local producers and left many rural producers without economic and income-earning opportunities.** As a result, caterers became increasingly concentrated in urban and lowland areas where commodity prices were lower. In addition, the absence of caterers in highland areas emanated from challenges with local food sourcing, commodity, transport, and fuel costs compared to the flat-rate transfers received. **Thus, the static transfer value and rising food costs also contributed to a decrease in the number of caterers and the multiplier effects of school meal cash injections.**

41. **There were no significant opportunities for cost savings through changes to logistics, storage, and utility arrangements.** However, allowing private delivery agents, the flexibility to negotiate warehousing and transport arrangements directly with suppliers would enable the system to maintain competitive rates in the future.

## IMPACT

42. **There were limited examples of schools that had fuel-efficient stoves and caterers that cooked on gas.** The mainstreaming of cooking on more energy-efficient stoves or gas in rural and urban areas requires investments into a comprehensive cost-benefit and supply chain analysis

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covering equipment, fuel, and credit access arrangements if more sustainable cooking practices are to be adopted.

43. **Well-designed education programmes contribute to reduced poverty and inequality in the long term.** An analysis of surveys and studies from other countries revealed that individual educational attainment can lead to increased income and long-term economic opportunities. These macroeconomic findings were further substantiated by the 2016 Cost of Hunger conducted in Lesotho.

44. Stakeholders at all levels believed that **school feeding played a key role in maintaining the enrolment and attendance of both boys and girls in primary school.** This assertion was supported by anecdotal reports from schools under the failed NMA2, which indicated a decline in attendance in 2017 during a prolonged period without school meals.

45. **SFP made a positive contribution to reducing child labour,** given that most children left school to find work. However, strengthening the link between education and child labour did not appear to be a priority for primary schools. While over half of schools responded to absenteeism by sensitising parents about the importance of education, these efforts were primarily reactive. Additionally, 45 percent of schools did not provide examples of how they aimed to improve enrolment or help mitigate child labour. Only a few schools conducted child labour awareness campaigns to support enrolment or prevent absenteeism and dropouts.

46. **Women's economic empowerment:** Community members from livelihood zones contended that the only evident advantage of the SFP was the direct employment opportunities it provided to cooks and caterers. Throughout the 10-year evaluation period, the SFP injected over US\$ 150 million through the employment of 12,000 cooks and 18,000 caterers and at the household level. Notable over 90 percent of these were women for whom SFP provided a significant employment opportunity. Insights from the caterer focus group discussion indicated that the **SFP transfer values enabled them to generate incomes used for investments in livestock, household assets and small businesses.**

47. **A combination of Government, WFP and NMA initiatives led to the emergence of more systematic and organized purchase arrangements through national value chains.** These were expected to provide SFP delivery agents and farmers with a more dependable market compared to the caterers model. However, it would be essential for market monitoring systems to track the impacts of SFP purchases on national commodity markets, aggregators, and local farmers in Lesotho.

48. **Limited evidence was found suggesting that local purchases for school feeding had a significant impact on the livelihood opportunities and incomes of men and women food producers in rural areas.** This observation contrasts with the positive developments involving the adoption of a system-based approach to increase access to nutritional foods, the establishment of food fortification standards and testing protocols and national procurement that had the potential to integrate the SFP with national food systems.

49. **The substitution of the Caterer menu with the WFP menu in areas where caterers had previously been active resulted in a decrease in purchases from local producers.** Caterers started to concentrate more in urban and lowland areas where commodity prices were lower, and they could easily purchase foodstuffs from traders. With the 40 percent decline in the relative value of payments over the evaluation period, caterers sought to establish small catering businesses for 3 years instead of taking the risks of providing school meals for one year.

50. **The need for more effective leadership and capacity strengthening, including stronger coordination across sectors was widely recognised and documented.** A welcome process to develop a national SFP monitoring framework was underway. To ensure its effectiveness, the framework requires a thorough review and stakeholder engagement across the entire school feeding value chain aligning with the objectives of the NSFP. The evaluation team advised that the framework should consider establishing an independent call centre, modelled after the National University of Lesotho (NUL). Its purpose would be to facilitate school and community feedback for enhancing accountability and monitoring SFP performance across all delivery models.

51. **Government, civil society, and UN agency staff unanimously supported the use of the SFP as a common platform for education, economic development, and social protection.** While these aspirations were in line with policy and supported at all levels, there was limited evidence of institutional support for the design, coordination or monitoring of a multi-sectoral approach that used school feeding as a platform for broader interventions or integrated the SFP within sector-led improvement agendas. The centralisation of the primary education system was the major hurdle, with education resource decisions being increasingly made by government officers in Maseru, resulting in the loss of local accountability.

## SUSTAINABILITY

52. **Lesotho has made significant progress in meeting the policy and budgetary requirements for a sustainable NSFP.** Despite strong policy alignment and

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coherence across ministries, sustainability was hampered by the lack of institutional harmonization. **The key challenges identified included:**

- Absence of joint coordination, monitoring or outreach efforts from national to district level through District Nutrition Teams (DNTs).
- Insufficient SFP resources allocated to schools to facilitate local monitoring and oversight.
- Gaps in integrating the SFP with social protection programmes such as the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) and child grants.
- Lack of support to smallholder farmers to help them understand and meet the timelines, quantity, and quality requirements of SFP buyers.
- Lack of basic small business training and support to cooks and caterers involved in the programme.
- Weak links to national health and nutrition programmes including nutrition screening.
- Under-investment in primary school water, sanitation, and hygiene infrastructure.

53. **Improving the overall sustainability of the SFP in Lesotho relies on closer integration and harmonization of different government institutions in the delivery and support of school meal services.** This also involves improving cost efficiency by expanding NMA services, decentralizing delivery and fostering ownership and engagement at the district, school and community levels. Furthermore, any expansion would require incremental review, and efforts to introduce greater competition among NMAs, capacity strengthening in line with clear standards, effective coordination and monitoring oversight at the school, district and national levels.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **1. Activate national governance and management arrangements and extend resource mobilisation efforts.**

MOET with WFP support should strengthen the SSRFU's capacity to function as a School Feeding Secretariat (SFS) and bring together senior Ministry, United Nations and NMA representatives to activate the Multi-Sector Advisory Board (AB) and mobilize resources to support institutional harmonization as envisioned in the NSF policy.

### **2. Design and expand NMA services on a district-by-district basis reaching national coverage in 2023.**

The SFS, with WFP and MSBD support, should complete an NMA risk analysis. Based on this analysis, the SFS should publish rules and standards for registering NMAs before introducing competitive district-level tenders and awarding NMA contracts.

**3. Reduce menu costs while maintaining nutrition standards.** The SFS, with WFP, FNCO and MAFS support, should simplify the menu to include daily breakfast and

lunch. The menu can consist of fortified cereals, pulses, oil, and iodized salt (following the WFP menu). Incorporating locally purchased seasonal fruit and vegetables at agreed minimum levels will ensure dietary diversity. In addition, it is essential to undertake a nutrient gap analysis of the menus to ensure children receive adequate dietary intake.

**4. Realign the role of cooks and caterers and their payment arrangements.** In line with the district-by-district rollout of NMAs from 2019 to 2023, MOET, supported by WFP, NMA and MSBD, should transition to a decentralized payment model overseen by schools in rural areas, including the contracting of catering businesses by NMAs and/or MOET to service multiple schools, especially in urban areas.

**5. Strengthen the capacity of SFS and DNT staff to oversee and monitor the decentralised school feeding.** MOET should collaborate with WFP and Advisory Board members to develop strategies for capacity strengthening focusing on national and district SFS officers to effectively plan, oversee, and support the future programme. Implementation of each component of the plan should commence on a district-by-district basis during 2019-2020 in line with NMA roll-out across districts.

**6. Introduce a national monitoring and accountability framework.** The SFS, with the support of WFP and Advisory Board members, should finalize a comprehensive sex-disaggregated national school feeding monitoring and accountability framework that covers the entire SFP value chain in line with the NSFP ambitions. The framework should include consumption of school meals; employment and payment of cooks and caterers; child nutrition screening; school infrastructure; NMA performance; national and local procurement, aggregation, and logistics provisions. For feedback and accountability to beneficiaries, the framework should include an independent call centre using the NUL example. The SFS and Advisory Board members should define responsibilities for each component of the monitoring framework.

**7. Ensure adequate school water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructure.** MOET, with the support of Advisory Board members, WFP, MOH, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and relevant NGOs, should agree on investment arrangements and implementation strategies with the Ministry of Finance and donors to improve school kitchens, storage, and water and sanitation facilities.

**8. Integrate school feeding with cross-ministry development initiatives.** MOET-SFS, in partnership with Advisory Board members, UNICEF and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), should establish common strategies and plans. The strategies and plans should leverage the use of school feeding as a platform to integrate and harmonize the SFP with sector-led programmes for nutrition, social protection, food security, and small business development, which are led by partner ministries.

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## ACRONYMS

DNT	District Nutrition Teams
ECCD	Early Childhood Care and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMU	Food Management Unit
FNCO	Food and Nutrition Coordination Office
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOH	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MSBD	Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing
MSD	Ministry of Social Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NISSA	National Information System for Social Assistance
NMA	National Management Agent
NSFP	National School Feeding Programme
NUL	National University of Lesotho
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
SBCC	Social and Behavioural Change Communication
SFP	School Feeding Programme
SFS	School Feeding Secretariat
SHHS	School and household survey
SSRFU	School Self-Reliance and Feeding Unit
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme

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