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**MZANSI YOUNG
FARMERS
INDABA**
1-2 APRIL 2025
POWERED BY FOOD FOR MZANSI

Re itokisetsa

Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba

e hlophisoang ke Food for Mzansi,

se ke oa salla morao. Eba karolo ea lihoai tse tlo tsamaea le rona

Date: 1-2 April 2025

Venue: Lavender Kontrei Market,
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Agriculture Budget Unchanged Amid Lesotho's Food Security Crisis

By Lerato Matheka

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition has received an unchanged budget allocation despite a worsening food security crisis that threatens the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands.

Over 700,000 Basotho are reported to be food insecure, yet the national budget for agriculture has remained stagnant at M1.3 billion for the 2025/26 fiscal year, mirroring the previous year's allocation.

This allocation decision comes at a critical time when His Majesty King Letsie III recently reaffirmed Lesotho's commitment to eradicating malnutrition and increase food production during his address in Rome. However, the financial commitment needed to translate this promise into reality remains questionable.

The government's decision to maintain the same budget allocation has sparked critical conversations about the feasibility of achieving food self-sufficiency and combating malnutrition.

With agriculture forming a key pillar of Lesotho's economic transformation agenda, experts warn that failing to increase financial investment could further strain the sector, already burdened by climate change, rising input costs, and global supply chain disruptions.

Despite facing immense challenges in the previous financial year, including delayed agricultural input distribution, the government has opted not to adjust funding for the ministry. Smallholder farmers, who rely heavily on government subsidies for seeds, fertilisers, and mechanisation, have borne the brunt of these inefficiencies. The late arrival of inputs in the past season resulted in many farmers missing critical planting windows, leading to poor yields and worsening food shortages.

The unchanged 2025/26 budget continues to focus on four main areas; improving access to inputs and mechanisation for smallholder farmers, investing in irrigation schemes to mitigate climate change effects, enhancing extension services to provide technical support to farmers, and promoting agro-processing industries to add value to agricultural produce.

While these priorities remain crucial, the absence of additional financial resources raises concerns about whether past inefficiencies have been properly addressed and whether the ministry is adequately prepared to tackle emerging challenges.

In her budget speech, Finance Minister Dr. Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane highlighted that investments would be made in agriculture sector development and the expansion of value chains.

She further noted that to support the country's private sector, "we are implementing targeted fiscal incentives for small and medium enterprises. Our goal is to nurture domestic entrepreneurship and attract foreign direct investment, particularly in manufacturing, agriculture, digital economy, and tourism, which are identified as sectors with ample potential to create lasting jobs."

She indicated that in agriculture the government recognises the threat posed by climate change.

"We recognise that climate change poses significant risks to our fiscal stability; therefore, we are incorporating climate resilience into fiscal planning, including dedicated funding for climate adaptation projects and sustainable agriculture initiatives."

"The 2025/2026 Budget Speech focuses on inclusive growth and is aligned with the extended National Strategic Development Plan II (2023/24-2027/28), with priorities including boosting agriculture among other sectors. The agriculture sector, with an allocated budget of M1.3 billion, plays a vital role in ensuring food security, fostering rural development, and contributing to economic growth," she said.

Matlanyane stated that the budget would go towards enhancing effective farmers' support, as the government recognises the need for reliable data to inform such decisions.

"To this end, Government intends to establish Lesotho Integrated Agriculture Information Management System (LIAMIS), through which



farmers will be profiled accordingly. This system will serve as a robust and efficient tool for providing smart subsidies on agricultural inputs via e-vouchers and agricultural insurance, using a well-informed, digitalised farmers' database," she described.

In response to the escalating impacts of climate change that adversely affect agricultural output, Matlanyane said the government intends to commission two large irrigation schemes, covering 250 hectares in 'Tsikoane and 200 hectares in Seaka, Quthing.

"Additionally, through the Building Climate Resilience Livelihoods and Food Systems Project, the government will implement efficient land and water resource management in Setanteng, Hlotse, Seaka, and Maletsunyane sub-catchments."

To support the wool and mohair industry with sustainable financing, she noted that "the government will establish a wool and mohair fund under the Wool and Mohair Competitiveness Project (WaMCop). The government will also establish an Artificial Insemination Centre in Makhlong and an Angora goat stud in Maseru (Molimo-Nthuse) to supply farmers with improved breeds and improve the quality of wool and mohair in the country."

"To strengthen animal disease control and management, government will construct a Diagnostic Laboratory to support farmers," she added.

Furthermore, the government plans to facilitate access to finance by providing grants totalling M120 million.

"Lastly, to ensure sustainable poultry production, government will facilitate procurement of parent stock for fertile egg production and support the establishment of hatchery facilities through the private sector."

Minister of Agriculture, Thabo Mofosi, remains optimistic about the budget, stating that it aligns with the ministry's strategic plans. He emphasised that their primary focus is implementation, particularly in improving data collection on farmers. "The budget will enable us to develop a comprehensive database of all farmers in the country. We need to know who they are, where they are based, and what they produce. This information will enhance decision-making and allow us to respond effectively to farmers' needs."

He further highlighted plans to introduce stricter regulations on produce standards to ensure local and international markets receive high-quality agricultural products. He revealed that a storage facility is being constructed in Ha-Foso, Berea, and is expected to be operational before the upcoming harvesting season.

"The storage facility will allow farmers to store and package their produce efficiently. Addition-

ally, we continue to provide free storage at the national silo at Lesotho Flour Mills. We are also in negotiations with the World Food Programme (WFP) to expand storage access in our district storage units," he explained.

Economic expert Tlohelang Aumane weighed in on the issue, highlighting the need for the government to take a more proactive approach to agricultural investment. He noted that while efforts to cut costs by sourcing inputs locally had initially reduced prices, the initiative was marred by corruption and political interference, undermining its impact.

"Government's lack of preparedness and its failure to provide clear leadership in addressing internal corruption have deepened the food insecurity crisis. Basotho are demanding accountability for their hardships," Aumane stated.

He stressed the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of past policies and called for greater transparency in the government's decision-making process. "The government must be honest about the challenges it faces. Evidence-based decision-making, addressing corruption, and reducing bureaucratic red tape are fundamental to restoring confidence in agricultural policies."

Dr. Ratjomose Machema, an economics lecturer at the National University of Lesotho, emphasised the need for private sector involvement in agriculture.

"The government must actively engage with the private sector, particularly through the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), to develop sustainable agricultural value chains. Diversification and modernisation of both agriculture and manufacturing are key to long-term food security," Machema suggested.

While agriculture remains underfunded, several other ministries have received significant budget increases:

- Ministry of Public Works and Transport: Received an additional M400 million, bringing its total to M3.2 billion to support infrastructure projects.
- Ministry of Health: Saw an increase to M3.1 billion, addressing public health concerns, including malnutrition and food-related illnesses.
- Ministry of Education and Training: Received M3.3 billion to expand school feeding programs and improve educational facilities.

While these investments are crucial, the lack of additional funding for agriculture undermines efforts to address food insecurity and rural poverty. Experts argue that food security should be treated as a national priority, given its direct impact on health, education, and economic stability, especially with 700,000 Basotho facing food insecurity and 32% of children under five suffering from stunting.

Ethiopian Investor Eyes Coffee Production Opportunities in Lesotho

By Kabelo Masoabi

Lesotho is on the verge of a transformative agricultural venture as Afaw Girma Sahilegeberal, an Ethiopian entrepreneur representing J.OIL Coffee Import and Export PLC, explores the potential of launching a coffee production facility in the country.

Known for its rich coffee heritage, Ethiopia ranks among the world's top coffee exporters, and Sahilegeberal now aims to extend that expertise to Lesotho's fertile landscapes.

His proposal, currently under review by the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC), envisions establishing a state-of-the-art coffee processing plant capable of producing 75 to 130 tonnes of roasted, ground, and packaged coffee annually.

If realised, this project could reduce Lesotho's dependence on coffee imports, boost local agro-processing capabilities, and contribute to job creation and economic growth in the region.

Lesotho's annual coffee consumption is currently around 356 tonnes, with projections indicating growth to 378 tonnes by 2026 (Statista).

Despite this demand, Lesotho remains heavily reliant on imports to meet local consumption needs.

The proposed coffee facility would help close this supply gap, offering a local alternative while stimulating the broader agricultural sector.

The total projected investment for the coffee production venture is estimated at M5.93 million, with M1.15 million allocated for plant and machinery. The facility would not only cater to domestic demand but also position Lesotho to explore potential export markets within the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The initiative has been welcomed by Ntšiuoa Sekete, Lesotho's Ambassador to the African



Investor's move to grow coffee in Lesotho

Union, who views the growing interest from Ethiopian investors as a significant opportunity to strengthen economic ties between the two nations.

"This is more than just a business venture; it's a gateway to deeper trade relations and mutual growth," Sekete said.

She expressed optimism about the LNDC's ongoing due diligence process and emphasised the importance of such partnerships in advancing Lesotho's economic development.

Ambassador Sekete also encouraged Basotho entrepreneurs to explore investment opportunities in Ethiopia, noting that collaboration between the two countries could lead to meaningful economic integration across agriculture and agro-processing sectors.

While the investment focuses on coffee processing, a key question remains—can Lesotho

cultivate its own coffee beans?

Majalefa Mohapi, a researcher at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition, highlighted that there are currently no coffee farms in Lesotho.

He emphasised the need for comprehensive research to determine whether Lesotho's agro-climatic conditions can support coffee cultivation.

Globally, coffee thrives in the "Bean Belt"—a region along the equator that offers the right altitude, temperature, and rainfall patterns for optimal coffee production. Arabica coffee, known for its smooth flavor, requires cooler climates (19–22°C) and higher altitudes, while Robusta coffee prefers slightly warmer temperatures (22–26°C) and is more resilient to fluctuating conditions.

Lesotho's mountainous regions, with their higher elevations and temperate climate, could potentially support Arabica cultivation, but fur-

ther agro-climatic studies are essential before farmers can consider diversifying into coffee production.

"Introducing coffee farming could diversify Lesotho's agriculture and create long-term employment, but only if the environmental conditions are suitable," Mohapi noted.

The proposed coffee facility promises more than just economic returns. It has the potential to create numerous job opportunities, from plant operations and logistics to packaging and sales. Additionally, skill development programs tied to the project could train locals in agro-processing, quality control, and export logistics, strengthening Lesotho's capacity in the agro-industrial sector.

If coffee cultivation proves viable, it could further open doors for smallholder farmers to diversify their crops and tap into regional and international markets, creating a more resilient agricultural economy.

As global coffee consumption continues to rise—driven by specialty blends and consumer demand for ethically sourced beans—Lesotho has a chance to position itself within this growing market. With Ethiopia's expertise and Lesotho's strategic location within Southern Africa, the potential for coffee production and export is promising.

The success of this venture hinges on collaboration between investors, government bodies, and local communities. If realised, Lesotho could not only reduce its reliance on coffee imports but also carve out a niche in the regional coffee trade, driving growth and creating new economic opportunities for Basotho.

The LNDC's ongoing assessments and planned research into coffee cultivation will play a pivotal role in shaping this project's future. For now, Sahilegeberal's interest marks an exciting chapter for Lesotho's agricultural sector—one that could brew long-term prosperity for the nation.

Trade Invites Lease proposal to run an Egg Tray Machine Facility

By Lungile Maseela

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Business Development has purchased an egg tray manufacturing machine at the LNDC Factory Shell in Mohale's Hoek, marking a significant step towards reducing import dependency and boosting local production.

In a bid to ensure long-term efficiency and promote private sector participation, the ministry is now inviting proposals for leasing and operation of the facility.

This initiative aligns with the government's commitment to fostering economic growth, creating employment opportunities, and strengthening the poultry industry by ensuring a steady local supply of egg trays.

The successful applicant would be responsible for the machine's operation, maintenance, and management, while also ensuring production targets outlined in the lease agreement are met, the ministry said in its notice invitation.

"Additionally, the lessee will be required to report to the ministry on operational performance and adherence to industry standards."

Beyond machine operations, the selected entity would also be tasked with marketing and distributing the egg trays, thereby expanding market opportunities and driving business growth.

"This dual responsibility makes the project ideal for entrepreneurs and companies with hands-

on experience in both manufacturing and sales," the ministry stated.

To qualify for this opportunity, applicants must be either legally registered companies or individuals based in Lesotho or abroad, with a proven track record in manufacturing and packaging.

They should demonstrate the necessary technical skills to efficiently operate the egg tray manufacturing machine and must submit a comprehensive business plan outlining their operational strategy, market reach, and sustainability plans.

Additionally, applicants must show financial stability to support the machine's continuous operation, ensuring smooth and uninterrupted production.

"The evaluation process will focus on experience in operating similar machinery, business strategy, financial capacity, and adherence to legal, environmental, and industry standards."

The ministry noted that the lease agreement would cover a period of 10 years, with the possibility of renewal based on satisfactory performance.

"Lease payment terms will be negotiated as part of the agreement. The lessee will bear responsibility for routine maintenance, repairs, and insurance coverage.

"Quarterly reports on machine performance, production output, and market activities must also be submitted to the ministry to ensure compliance and efficiency," the notice outlined.



Egg Tray Manufacturing Machine

It indicated that a compulsory site inspection of the Mohale's Hoek Factory Shell is scheduled for March 14, 2025, for all interested parties.

"This visit will provide potential lessees with an opportunity to assess the facility, gather critical project details, and gain insights into operational

expectations. Participation in the site inspection is a prerequisite for submitting a lease proposal. The event is designed to foster transparency and collaboration, ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed before moving forward with the project," the notice said.

M950m bumper to Boosts Horticulture Sector through CAFI

By Kabelo Masoabi

Horticulture has long been recognised as a potential driver of economic growth and poverty reduction in Lesotho.

With its ability to meet growing food demands and provide income-generating opportunities, the sector holds significant promise, however, despite its potential, smallholder farmers—who form the backbone of Lesotho’s agriculture—face substantial challenges, including limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted market access.

Recognising these challenges and opportunities, the Government of Lesotho has made a major investment in horticulture through the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project, aiming to transform the sector into a viable engine for economic growth and food security.

CAFI: Strengthening Lesotho’s Agricultural Backbone

The CAFI initiative is a six-year project launched in 2022 by the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Business Development, and Tourism, funded through a USD45 million (M820 million) loan from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank and an additional USD7.5 million (M130 million) grant, bringing the total investment to \$52.5 million (M950 million).

The project’s core goal is to improve access to business support services and financial products for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), with a focus on women and youth.

A specific component of the project targets the horticulture sector, with an additional \$950,000 allocated from the India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA) Fund to further strengthen horticultural development.

According to Chaba Mukuku, CAFI Project Manager, the initiative is set to scale up horticultural farming in Lesotho, transitioning it into a formal industry.

“Our goal is to expand from the existing three commercial fruit farms in Mahobong, Leribe, to at least 18 fully operational farms over the next five to six years,” Mukuku revealed.

Creating a National Hub for Horticultural Excellence

To support this ambitious expansion, CAFI has partnered with the National University of Lesotho (NUL) to establish the Lesotho Horticulture Incubation and Training Centre (LHITC) at Mahobong.

The facility, Mukuku said serves as an incubation hub and training centre, helping farmers adopt best practices and climate-smart farming techniques.

“NUL will collaborate with Stellenbosch Uni-

versity—a leader in horticulture education with over a century of expertise—to design and implement training programs. This partnership aims to bridge knowledge gaps, enhance agricultural practices, and introduce modern techniques to local farmers,” he said.

“The LHITC focuses on empowering farmers through skills development, business incubation, and access to extension services. We are currently nurturing our first cohort of seven deciduous fruit farmers and two vegetable farmers, with plans to expand to more participants in the coming months,” Mukuku added.

He revealed that farmers interested in joining the second cohort are invited to apply, with the program aiming to develop a skilled pool of horticulturists capable of running commercial-scale operations.

Unlocking Export Potential and Reducing Import Dependence

“Lesotho’s reliance on imported fruits and vegetables has long posed challenges for both consumers and local farmers, with imported goods often coming at a higher cost and are less reliable in terms of supply,” Mukuku said, noting that CAFI aims to change that by boosting domestic production and tapping into export markets.

He explained that the focus of the horticulture initiative is on deciduous fruit farming, particularly apples, which are well-suited to Lesotho’s climate and can be competitive in regional markets.

“Initial pilot farms funded under the first and second World Bank-funded Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification projects have already proven the commercial viability of deciduous fruit farming in Lesotho, attracting significant investor interest, so, by scaling up production, we can reduce reliance on imports, create jobs, and position Lesotho as a key player in regional fruit markets,” Mukuku stated.

Infrastructure and Land: The Building Blocks for Success

Despite the project’s promising outlook, significant challenges remain, particularly around land access and infrastructure. One of the key obstacles facing commercial horticulture in Lesotho is the availability of suitable land for large-scale farming.

To address this, CAFI is working with local authorities to improve land administration systems, ensuring that farmers have access to adequate land parcels with long-term leasing options.

Transparent leasing frameworks are being developed to facilitate land acquisition for commercial purposes.

Infrastructure investments are also critical to the project’s success. The government is focusing on building and upgrading:



The expansion of orchard production set to take place on a national scale

- Irrigation systems to ensure year-round water supply
- Electricity networks to power modern farming equipment
- Road networks to improve market access
- Pack-houses and grading facilities for post-harvest processing
- Phytosanitary inspection systems to meet export requirements

“These infrastructure improvements will make it easier for farmers to operate at a commercial scale and compete in both domestic and international markets,” Mukuku added.

Youth Participation and Community Concerns

While CAFI presents vast opportunities, concerns have emerged regarding the accessibility of the program for young farmers.

The requirements for participation in the horticulture incubation program—including access to at least five hectares of land with proper irrigation, proximity to reliable power sources, and accessible roads—have been criticised as restrictive, particularly for recent graduates and young entrepreneurs.

Matli Semela, a recent agriculture graduate from Leribe, voiced concerns that the land ownership and infrastructure requirements make it difficult for young people to enter the program.

“Most young people don’t have access to large plots of land or the resources needed to meet these requirements,” he explained.

In response, Mukuku clarified that while the criteria may seem stringent, they are essential for ensuring the long-term viability of commercial horticulture ventures.

“We’re not just looking for hobby farms. We aim to create a scalable industry that can contribute significantly to the national economy,” he said.

Mukuku encouraged young farmers to consid-

er forming cooperatives or joining existing farmer groups to pool resources and meet the land and infrastructure requirements. He also emphasised that future project phases may include more accessible entry points for youth and smallholder farmers.

A Sustainable Future for Lesotho’s Agriculture

CAFI’s approach aligns with Lesotho’s broader goal of creating climate-resilient food systems. The project promotes climate-smart agriculture, incorporating techniques that reduce water usage, improve soil health, and increase crop yields despite changing weather patterns.

By introducing modern irrigation systems, advanced farming techniques, and post-harvest technologies, the project aims to maximise productivity while minimising environmental impact.

“Our vision is to make Lesotho a regional leader in horticulture,” Mukuku stated.

Adding, “This project not only addresses food security but also contributes to job creation, rural development, and economic diversification.”

Pathway to Growth and Food Security

As the CAFI initiative gains momentum, its impact on Lesotho’s agricultural landscape is expected to be transformative. By providing farmers with access to modern technologies, training, and financing, Mukuku stressed the project is laying the foundation for a thriving horticulture sector capable of meeting both domestic needs and export demands.

“For many Basotho farmers, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to shift from subsistence farming to commercial agriculture, with the potential to improve livelihoods, reduce poverty, and ensure food security for generations to come. This is more than just a farming initiative—it’s an economic revolution for Lesotho’s agriculture sector.”

Meat Retailers Strengthen Food Safety and Business Skills

By Lungile Maseela

Local butchers, farmers, and food processors are set to elevate their operations after participating in a comprehensive food safety and business management workshop hosted by the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project II (SADP II).

The three-day training, held in Mohalalotse, Maseru, aimed to improve hygiene practices, enhance food safety standards, and strengthen business management in Lesotho’s meat industry.

The workshop brought together key stakeholders from the meat supply chain, focusing on equipping participants with practical skills to meet stringent health regulations while promoting consumer safety and improving business efficiency.

The training covered critical areas such as meat hygiene, proper storage and transportation, temperature control, and quality assurance—all aimed at reducing the risk of contamination and foodborne

illnesses.

With increasing concerns over food safety, particularly in rural communities, the workshop sought to ensure that meat products reaching consumers meet the highest safety standards.

Lehlohonolo Morahanye, an environment and safeguard specialist with SADP II, emphasised the importance of food safety in building consumer trust and protecting public health.

“This workshop is the first in a series aimed at strengthening food safety practices while also empowering small-scale farmers and butchers to improve their livelihoods,” he said.

Morahanye highlighted that proper hygiene, temperature control, and regular quality checks are essential not only for safeguarding public health but also for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the meat industry.

Facilitated by experts from the Department of Livestock Services, Veterinary Services Division,

Ministry of Health, and the Department of Environmental Health, the workshop combined theory with hands-on training, giving participants real-world skills they could immediately apply.

Attendees were trained on best practices in meat hygiene and sanitation, safe storage and transportation methods, proper packaging techniques to extend shelf life and business management strategies for small-scale processors.

The interactive sessions encouraged collaboration, with participants engaging in group discussions and brainstorming innovative food safety solutions tailored to their businesses.

The workshop concluded with an exercise where attendees pitched their ideas to a panel of industry experts, fostering creativity and practical problem-solving.

For many participants, the workshop was a game-changer; Nthabiseng Makeoane, a butchery owner from Qacha’s Nek, shared how the training transformed her approach to food safety and business management.

“I came here wanting to improve my skills and offer better services to my clients, and this training

far exceeded my expectations. Learning about proper food handling, packaging, and hygiene has given me the tools to expand my business and build trust with my customers,” she said.

Makeoane encouraged other farmers and butchers to participate in future sessions, emphasising that the skills gained are essential for business growth and sustainability.

Morahanye indicated that SADP II aims to continue offering similar workshops across Lesotho, focusing on equipping more farmers and butchers with food safety knowledge and business management skills.

“By fostering best practices, the project hopes to strengthen the entire meat value chain—from production to processing and retail—ultimately contributing to food security and economic growth.

“Improving food safety isn’t just about compliance; it’s about creating a healthier, more resilient agricultural sector,” Morahanye explained.

He added, “By empowering meat retailers and processors, we’re building stronger businesses and ensuring that consumers have access to safe, high-quality products.”



Government of Lesotho

Department of Marketing



Market oriented production

WHO WE ARE



OBJECTIVES:

The overall objective of the department is to provide a marketing policy environment that promotes competitiveness, private sector participation, market oriented production and diversified output in accordance with comparative/competitive advantage and the development of marketing systems.

MANDATE:

The Department is mandated to facilitate market development for agricultural products and to promote agricultural commercialization, value-adding, absorption of local products into global markets

and development of efficient marketing systems with an ultimate goal of attaining national goals of employment creation, food security and poverty alleviation.

DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS

- Conduction of marketing research and provision of market information.
- Market development through establishment of marketing infrastructure and farmer's capacity building.
- Facilitation of market access for agricultural products in global markets,
- Regulation of agricultural trade through issuance of licenses and permits for imports and exports.

DIVISIONS CROPS MARKETING DIVISION

- Field crops marketing section.
- Horticulture and Floriculture marketing section



LIVESTOCK MARKETING DIVISION

- Wool and Mohair marketing section
- Poultry marketing section
- Red meat and Livestock auctioning
- Piggery market section
- Dairy market section
- Fisheries marketing section
- Hides and skins marketing section

MARKET FACILITATION DIVISION

- Controls and Regulation section
- Statistics section
- Market Information section
- Contract farming section



LNDC Strengthens Food Processing to Boost Jobs and Support Farmers



Basotho cannery

Lungile Maseela

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has unveiled plans to integrate Litholoana tsa Basotho canners with the Maluti Fresh Produce Market in a strategic move to enhance food processing, generate employment, and support local farmers by improving market access and reducing post-harvest losses.

The Corporation is set to invest in, operate, and manage both facilities, ensuring a seamless link be-

tween fresh produce supply and food processing.

This initiative, it explains aims to address critical challenges in the agricultural sector, such as inconsistent supply of quality produce, limited market access, and inadequate post-harvest infrastructure.

By merging these two facilities, LNDC said is working to establish a more stable and efficient agricultural value chain.

Tisetso Moremoholo, Corporate Communication Manager with the LNDC, emphasised that mitigating post-harvest losses is a key driver behind

the integration.

“Many smallholder farmers face significant spoilage issues due to market and transport limitations. Through this initiative, we aim to safeguard fresh produce by processing it into canned goods, extending its shelf life, and ensuring farmers have a reliable market,” she explained.

She indicated the facility would process a variety of crops, including peaches, tomatoes, beans, carrots, peppers, chilies, onions, and asparagus.

“These products are well-suited for canning, drying, freezing, and conversion into sauces or pastes, adding value to the agricultural sector while promoting food security.

“By processing surplus and seasonal produce, the canning facility will help stabilise supply throughout the year, benefiting both farmers and consumers, and farmers will gain a consistent market for their goods, while consumers will enjoy increased access to locally produced, high-quality food products,” she said.

A major advantage of this integration Moremoholo pointed out is the direct impact on smallholder farmers.

“The canning facility will provide farmers with a more stable and predictable market, reducing the uncertainty of demand fluctuations and post-harvest losses, and with improved market access and enhanced processing capabilities, farmers will be able to maximise their earnings and expand their

production capacity.”

This initiative she noted aligns with the government’s broader economic and agricultural goals, reinforcing the role of food processing in national development.

“LNDC will play a crucial role in balancing public interests, regulatory compliance, and project management.”

“The project is expected to create over 1,023 jobs for Basotho, significantly boosting employment in the agricultural sector.”

“With a total investment of M50 million, LNDC plans to secure funding by partnering with a technical expert or investor,” she revealed.

As the sole shareholder in both facilities, she indicated that LNDC would focus on securing an experienced technical partner to optimise operations and ensure long-term sustainability.

“While retaining ownership, LNDC will transition into an oversight role, establishing a governance structure and facilitating high-level stakeholder engagement to ensure the project’s seamless implementation.”

With this bold initiative, LNDC is positioning itself as a key player in transforming Lesotho’s agricultural landscape. By fostering food processing, enhancing market access, and creating sustainable employment, the corporation is reinforcing the country’s path toward self-sufficiency and economic resilience.

‘Investing in Rural Communities is A Path to Global Stability and Growth’ Leaders say



His Majesty King Letsie III addressing the IFAD 48th Governing Council

By Lerato Matheka

As the world faces growing economic uncertainty and the devastating impacts of climate change, global leaders gathered at the 48th Governing Council of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on 12 February 2025, emphasised the urgent need to invest in rural communities to achieve food security, economic stability, and long-term growth.

With nearly half of the world’s 8.2 billion people living in rural areas of developing countries—many of whom struggle with hunger and poverty—leaders stressed that the key to reducing global inequality lies in supporting the smallholder farmers who produce 70% of the food consumed in low- and middle-income nations.

“Stabilising rural communities through investments in their productivity and economies is a major step toward achieving food security and economic growth,” said Alvaro Lario, President of IFAD, during his opening remarks, noting at the core of their work is the recognition that small farmers are business owners who need better technology, working capital, and access to markets, just like any other enterprise.

The High Cost of Malnutrition: Lesotho’s King

Urges Political Will

In his keynote address, His Majesty King Letsie III—the African Union’s Champion for Nutrition—highlighted the staggering social and economic costs of malnutrition, calling it a long-term drain on both developing and developed countries.

He revealed that African nations lose between 1.9% and 16.5% of their annual GDP due to child undernutrition alone.

“The overarching purpose of these investments should be to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and malnutrition and to create sustainable food systems that provide healthy diets,” the King emphasised, urging countries to allocate a greater share of their national budgets to nutrition.

His call to action resonates deeply with Lesotho’s challenges, where smallholder farmers form the backbone of the agricultural sector but remain vulnerable to climate shocks and economic instability.

He emphasised that investing in rural areas not only builds resilience but also drives economic growth, ensuring that communities can thrive despite mounting challenges.

The ‘First Mile’ Approach: Agriculture as a Catalyst for Poverty Reduction

Leaders at the council repeatedly emphasised the

importance of focusing on the “first mile”—the starting point of food production—when designing agricultural investments.

Studies show that economic growth in agriculture is up to three times more effective at reducing poverty compared to growth in other sectors, and this figure climbs to 11 times in sub-Saharan Africa.

“Rural economies are the backbone of Sierra Leone’s economy, yet they are the most affected by climate change and economic shocks,” Julius Maada Wonie Bio, President of Sierra Leone shared.

Adding, “But with the right support, rural communities have the potential to sustain themselves and drive national growth.”

Similarly, Giancarlo Giorgetti, Italy’s Minister for Economy and Finance, commended IFAD’s focus on rural communities citing, “IFAD’s commitment to the ‘first mile’ is critical. It’s where real change can be made—by empowering those who grow our food and protect our ecosystems.”

The Climate Crisis and Its Impact on Rural Communities

Climate change remains a looming threat to food security, particularly in regions like Africa where smallholder farmers depend directly on the land. Droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather patterns continue to erode farming communities’ resilience, making climate-smart investments more critical than ever, Muhammad Al Jasser, President of the Islamic Development Bank said, calling for innovative financing solutions to support rural development.

“To scale impact, we must deepen collaboration and mobilise concessional financing to de-risk rural investments and attract private sector participation,” he stated.

He noted that the reality is stark; “without urgent action, climate change could push millions more into poverty and hunger.”

Leaders stressed the importance of scaling up climate-resilient agriculture and empowering farmers with tools and knowledge to adapt.

Global Alliances for Food Security and Poverty Reduction

The IFAD Governing Council also hosted a special session featuring the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, highlighting the power of partnerships in tackling food insecurity.

Janja Lula da Silva, First Lady of Brazil, praised the alliance’s collaborative approach.

“We can put together knowledge, policies, and funding to create transformative solutions. By working together, we can fight hunger, reduce poverty, and strengthen resilience,” she affirmed.

This collective spirit was echoed throughout the council, with leaders calling for stronger international cooperation and a commitment to align policies, financing, and action toward shared goals.

Lesotho’s Role in the Global Nutrition Agenda

Lesotho, under King Letsie III’s leadership, has been at the forefront of promoting nutrition as a cornerstone of sustainable development. As a landlocked country vulnerable to climate extremes, Lesotho’s focus on building resilient food systems is not only a national priority but also a regional imperative.

The King emphasised that nutrition investments go beyond feeding communities—“they’re about building strong, stable economies.”

“Every dollar spent on nutrition generates a return of USD23 in improved health, education, and economic productivity,” he noted, citing global studies.

Lesotho’s partnership with organisations like IFAD has enabled the country to implement climate-smart agricultural practices, improve smallholder productivity, and strengthen food security—all while promoting community-led development.

A Global Path Forward: Investing in the Foundations of Stability

The message from the 48th IFAD Governing Council was clear: rural communities are at the heart of global food security, poverty reduction, and economic growth. Investing in smallholder farmers—who feed billions globally—offers one of the most effective pathways to reducing inequality, stabilizing economies, and building climate resilience.

However, the leaders stressed that achieving this requires bold political will, innovative financing, and strong partnerships that span governments, multi-lateral organizations, and the private sector.

As King Letsie III aptly stated, “Ending hunger and malnutrition is not just a moral obligation—it is an economic imperative. If we invest in our rural communities today, we build a more stable, prosperous world for generations to come.”

His Majesty Calls for Urgent Action on Nutrition and Climate Resilience

...Says more than 600 million people may face hunger in 2030

By Lerato Matheka

His Majesty King Letsie III delivered a compelling call to action during the 48th Session of the IFAD Governing Council on February 12, 2025, emphasising the urgent need for global investments in nutrition, climate resilience, and sustainable food systems.

Addressing world leaders in his dual capacity as the African Union's Champion for Nutrition and FAO (Food and Agricultural Organization) Special Ambassador on Nutrition, the King outlined the interconnected crises of hunger, malnutrition, climate change, and economic instability, which continue to threaten global food security.

Speaking at both the Governing Council's keynote session and the Leaders' Dialogue on Investing in Nutrition, he urged nations to take decisive action, warning that failure to invest in nutrition and food systems would have dire social and economic consequences, particularly for developing nations like Lesotho.

The Global Nutrition Crisis: A Call to Action

King Letsie III painted a stark picture of the global nutrition crisis, citing alarming statistics:

- Over 2 billion people lack regular access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food.
- By 2030, more than 600 million people are projected to face hunger.
- 22% of children worldwide suffer from stunted growth due to chronic malnutrition.
- 30.7% of children under five in Africa are stunted, and 13.7% of infants are born with low birth weight.

"These figures are not just numbers; they represent millions of lives unfulfilled, dreams deferred, and potential squandered. We cannot allow this crisis to persist," he remarked.

The King emphasised that malnutrition is not just a health issue but an economic one, costing African economies between 1.9% and 16.5% of their annual GDP due to child undernutrition.

The economic burden of malnutrition worldwide is projected to reach a staggering USD3.5 trillion annually if urgent action is not taken.

Investing at the First Mile: A Moral and Economic Imperative

At the Leaders' Dialogue on Investing in Nutrition, His Majesty stressed the importance of 'catalysing investment at the first mile', where food systems begin and where the most vulnerable populations bear the brunt of hunger and malnutrition.

He called on governments, development agencies, and the private sector to bridge financing gaps and prioritise funding for grassroots-level interventions that strengthen local food systems.

"Investing in nutrition is not merely an expenditure; it is an investment in the future. Every dollar spent on nutrition generates at least USD23 in returns through increased health, education, and economic productivity," he stated.

The King outlined key strategies for tackling malnutrition, including:

- **Expanding National Budget Allocations for Nutrition** – He urged African governments to integrate nutrition into national development policies and commit greater resources to food security.
- **Innovative Financing Solutions** – He highlighted the role of blended finance and public-private partnerships in scaling up investments in nutrition and food security.
- **Empowering Small-Scale Farmers and Rural Communities** – Supporting local food production systems is crucial for ensuring access to affordable, diverse, and nutritious diets.
- **Strengthening Resilience in Fragile Contexts** – Climate change is disproportionately affecting food systems in Africa, making it vital to invest in climate-resilient agricultural practices.
- **Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Sustainable Food Systems**

His Majesty underscored the interconnectedness of nutrition, climate change, and biodiversity, warning that Africa's food systems are under severe threat due to droughts, floods, land degradation, and biodiversity loss.

He urged governments and international organisations to scale up climate-resilient agricultural in-

vestments, ensuring that food production systems can withstand environmental shocks.

"Biodiversity is foundational to food security. Protecting it ensures the availability of nutrient-rich foods and strengthens our food systems against climate disruptions," he stated.

He commended IFAD, FAO, and the World Bank for their support in restoring degraded lands and enhancing biodiversity conservation, which has benefitted rural communities in Lesotho.

However, he stressed the need for greater collaboration to expand sustainable food production initiatives across Africa.

The Role of the Private Sector in Ending Malnutrition

Acknowledging the transformative power of the private sector, the King called for corporate investments in smallholder farmers and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that produce and distribute nutritious foods.

"The private sector has the capacity to innovate, scale, and sustain impactful solutions. By investing in small-scale farmers, we unlock economic opportunities while addressing food security," he declared.

He encouraged companies to engage in nutrition-focused business models, supporting food fortification, sustainable agricultural practices, and market access for local producers.

A Roadmap to the Nutrition for Growth Summit in Paris

As the Nutrition for Growth Summit approaches in March 2025, His Majesty urged world leaders to commit to bold, sustainable funding strategies for nutrition.

He stressed that the time for rhetoric has passed, and the global community must take concrete steps to: increase long-term investments in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, develop resilient food supply chains that withstand climate shocks and ensure inclusive, gender-sensitive, and culturally appropriate nutrition policies.

"The cost of inaction is too high because malnutrition weakens nations. It hinders economic growth, stifles potential, and contributes to 45% of child mortality worldwide. We must act now," he charged

Lesotho's Commitment to Eradicating Malnutrition

Reaffirming Lesotho's national commitment to food security and nutrition, the King acknowledged the challenges his country faces in tackling food insecurity, poverty, and climate-induced agricultural disruptions.

Despite recent economic growth, he noted that Lesotho still relies heavily on agriculture, which is increasingly vulnerable to prolonged droughts, extreme weather, and biodiversity loss.

To address these challenges, He announced that the Lesotho government has pledged to accelerate efforts to combat child malnutrition and achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2.2—ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030.

The government is implementing strategic, multi-sectoral frameworks that bring together agriculture, health, and education sectors to promote food and nutrition security.

The King Lesotho's successful partnerships with IFAD, FAO, and development agencies, which have helped introduce climate adaptation measures, restore degraded lands, and protect biodiversity. However, he stressed that more needs to be done to scale up nutrition-sensitive, climate-smart food systems.

A Lasting Legacy of Advocacy for Nutrition and Food Security

As he concluded his addresses, King Letsie III reaffirmed his commitment as the African Union's Champion for Nutrition and FAO Special Ambassador on Nutrition, pledging to continue advocating for food security and investment in nutrition across the world.

"This is not just an idealistic dream—it is an achievable reality. We need integrated action, strong political will, and sustainable investments to break the cycle of malnutrition and poverty," he affirmed.

He called on governments, civil society, private sector leaders, and development partners to work together to create inclusive, sustainable food systems that guarantee affordable, diverse, and nutritious diets for all.

"Investing in nutrition is investing in our collective future, the well-being, prosperity, and potential of our communities depend on it," he concluded.

Lesotho Continue to Strengthens Ties with FAO in the Fight Against Hunger and Malnutrition

By Lerato Matheka

In a continued effort to strengthen global partnerships for food security, His Majesty King Letsie III held a high-level bilateral meeting with FAO Director-General QU Dongyu on 11 February 2025 at the FAO Headquarters in Rome.

The meeting reaffirmed the strong collaboration between Lesotho and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and emphasised the shared commitment to eradicating hunger, malnutrition, and poverty.

The FAO Director-General warmly welcomed King Letsie III, expressing appreciation for the positive and ongoing partnership with Lesotho.

Reflecting on their previous meeting just four months ago during the World Food Forum, QU Dongyu highlighted Lesotho's steady progress in food security and expressed optimism that the country would continue to make significant strides under the King's leadership.

"Lesotho has shown strong political will in tackling hunger and malnutrition and the leadership of His Majesty is instrumental in advancing agri-food systems transformation, not only in Lesotho but across Africa," said the Director-Gen-

eral.

A Shared Commitment to Nutrition and Food Security

The King, who also serves as the FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition, expressed deep gratitude for the continued partnership with FAO.

He emphasised his personal commitment to fighting malnutrition and poverty, both in Lesotho and globally.

"While my primary mission in Rome is to address the IFAD Governing Council, I found it necessary to meet with the Director-General once again to express my heartfelt thanks for his support and for FAO's unwavering commitment to Lesotho," said King Letsie III.

He commended the Director-General for his dedication to transforming global agri-food systems and applauded FAO's efforts in addressing hunger and malnutrition through meaningful, community-driven initiatives.

USD5 Million Boost for Food Security Projects in Lesotho

A major highlight of the meeting was the discussion around the recent USD 5 million FAO funding allocated to support food security projects in Lesotho.

His Majesty acknowledged the recent mission by the FAO team to Lesotho, which kick-started the implementation of these projects, aimed at improving agricultural productivity, strengthening climate resilience, and addressing malnutrition at the grassroots level.

"Lesotho is fully committed to ensuring that these projects are effectively implemented. We are on track, and under my leadership, I am determined that we will meet our goals of hunger relief, malnutrition reduction, and poverty alleviation," His Majesty declared.

The Director-General commended the King's hands-on approach and reassured him of FAO's continued support in achieving these goals.

He further emphasised FAO's commitment to mobilising global resources to assist Lesotho and amplify its impact across Africa.

A Broader Vision: Agri-food Systems Transformation

Both leaders echoed the importance of agri-food systems transformation as a pathway to achieving the Four Betters: Better Production, Better Nutrition, a Better Environment, and a Better Life.

Director-General QU Dongyu highlighted that smallholder farmers remain the backbone of Lesotho's agriculture and that empowering them through modern farming techniques, market access, and climate-smart practices is essential to

driving long-term growth.

King Letsie III reaffirmed his vision for Lesotho to become a model for sustainable food systems in the region, emphasising the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration and strategic investments in agriculture.

"Investing in nutrition and rural development is not just about feeding people—it's about creating opportunities, lifting communities out of poverty, and building resilient economies," His Majesty concluded.

Looking Ahead

As Lesotho continues its journey toward achieving food and nutrition security, partnerships with global institutions like FAO remain critical. The USD 5 million investment in food security projects, combined with Lesotho's strong political commitment, signals a new chapter in the country's fight against hunger and malnutrition.

Through his role as FAO Special Goodwill Ambassador for Nutrition, King Letsie III continues to be a global voice for the most vulnerable, advocating for policies and investments that not only address immediate food needs but also build sustainable solutions for future generations.

With FAO's continued backing and His Majesty's steadfast leadership, Lesotho is set to strengthen its position in the fight against hunger, contributing to broader efforts toward global food security and economic stability.



The fiscal budget for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition has remained unchanged from the previous year. With climate change intensifying challenges such as prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall,

and soil degradation, the agricultural sector faces mounting pressure to adapt and innovate. Farmers, agribusinesses, and policymakers are tasked with ensuring food security, increasing productivity, and enhancing resilience—all within the constraints of a static budget.

Given these realities, can an unadjusted budget effectively drive sustainable agricultural development? Does it allow for necessary investments in climate-smart technologies, irrigation infrastructure, and farmer support programs? Or does it risk stagnating progress in

an industry crucial to Lesotho's economy and livelihoods? Seahlolo took to the fields to hear directly from farmers. How do they perceive the impact of this unchanged budget on their businesses and the nation's food security?

Given the ongoing challenges posed by climate change, is it possible for a static budget to effectively contribute to the development of the agriculture industry?



Lithebe Sekoabatlane

“ Absolutely not. Until the government steps up with real, tangible solutions for the climate challenges devastating our vegetable farming, I cannot support this budget. It must go beyond mere policy statements and directly address the struggles we face—providing accessible mitigation strategies like subsidized inputs and protective structures such as greenhouses. Farmers shouldn't be left shouldering these costs alone while food security remains a national priority.”



Relebohile Mahlale

“ I have to say no. As a young entrepreneur in dry food processing, I constantly struggle with limited resources, especially in branding and marketing—critical aspects of growing my business. The budget should be intentionally structured to uplift young farmers because we are the future of this industry. Without investment in our success, how can we sustain and scale up Lesotho's agricultural sector?”



Matumane Matela

“ Yes! My farm has benefited significantly from government-backed initiatives for emerging farmers, particularly in marketing our poultry products. The ministry's funding has helped us refine our skills, but as an ambitious farmer, I believe there's always more ground to cover. Agriculture is evolving, and our needs keep expanding. While I appreciate the support, I hope for increased investment in areas like processing and value addition.”



'Matente Khethisa

“ Absolutely! The ministry has demonstrated strong support for commercial farmers like myself. Through past budgets, I received expert guidance on onion cultivation from researchers, which was crucial for my pilot project's success. Climate change is a shared challenge, but the ministry has been proactive in educating farmers about resilient crop varieties and sustainable inputs. This level of commitment is encouraging for long-term food security.”



Nthiba Thamae

“ I remain uncertain. Some new farmers receive grants while others don't, and the selection process is unclear. Perhaps we, as farmers, need to be more proactive in seeking information, but transparency is key. What I really want to see is the budget ensuring fair market access. Right now, large-scale horticulture producers dominate the sector, leaving small-scale farmers struggling to compete.”



Jeremane Joki

“ Yes, I have little to complain about! I trust that the ministry conducted thorough research before keeping the budget unchanged. Many farmers nationwide now have access to shednets, irrigation systems, and other vital tools to combat climate change. These successes wouldn't have been possible without previous budget allocations, so I see this as a continuation of progress rather than stagnation.”



Liphapang Tjaoane

“ Definitely yes! The ministry's commitment to shifting farmers from subsistence to commercial farming is evident. Extension officers are actively training farmers on climate-smart practices, and intensive programs are equipping us with the knowledge needed to adapt. I've personally benefited from this investment, and I see real transformation happening in the sector.”



Bokang 'Molai

“ No way! This budget will do little for youth in agriculture as long as the barriers to accessing grants remain so high. The potential among young farmers is immense, yet funding opportunities are scarce and difficult to qualify for. If the government truly wants to boost agricultural innovation, a more substantial and accessible budget is necessary.”



Rankakala Tebatso

“ Yes! The consistency of the budget signals that the ministry is following a solid strategic direction. As a layer chicken farmer, I was thrilled by the ban on imported eggs, which has created new opportunities for local producers. With the ministry's logistical support, we are now able to supply eggs to businesses nationwide. This level of intervention is exactly what the industry needs.”



Mapoloko Sejaki

“ Unfortunately, I have to say no. Beekeeping remains overlooked in the budget, despite its resilience against climate change and its potential as a profitable agribusiness. Hive boxes are costly, and there is little government support to help us scale production. If the ministry is serious about promoting diversified farming, it must start investing in neglected sectors like ours.”



Re itokisetsa

Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba e hlophisoang ke Food for Mzansi, se ke oa salla morao. Eba karolo ea lihoai tse tlo tsamaea le Seahlolo

Date: 1-2 April 2025

Venue: Lavender Kontrei Market, Pretoria North, Gauteng.



8%
Discount
before End
of February

Package 1: 6000 **Package 2: 10 400**

Includes:

- Event Entry
- Transport
- 3 x nights
- 50+ Exhibitions
- 6 + Masterclasses
- Funding Opportunities
- Entry and Exhibition
- Limited to **ONLY 5 farmers.**
- NO perishable goods will be allowed**
- A table on the Exhibition floor
- Transport
- 3 x nights
- 6 + Masterclasses
- Funding Opportunities
- 50+ Exhibitions

Food is NOT included

Non-Refundable registration: M500



Why Attend?

Gain insights from agricultural experts and leaders. Network with like-minded farmers and agripreneurs from across Africa. Access opportunities to connect with funders and investors. Discover new ways to grow your farming business.

Speaker Announcements

Some of Indaba's incredible speakers. More exciting announcements coming in the weeks leading up to the event.



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Speakers



Ivor Karan
CEO and founder of Karan Beef
Ivor Karan is the CEO and founder of Karan Beef, Africa's largest beef producer, renowned for its Hetselberg, Cautney feeder, which houses 21 000 head of cattle. Widely regarded as the most powerful figure in South Africa's meat industry, Karan's journey began in 1976 when, at just 20 years old, he transformed a dairy farm inherited from his grandfather into a powerhouse of the beef sector.



Chantelle de Bruyn
Founder of Buttercup Farmhouse
Chantelle de Bruyn is a dynamic agripreneur shaking up the food and beverage industry with her innovative ventures, Buttercup Farmhouse. Her flagship product, butternut coffee, is now available at retailers like Woolworths and Food Lovers Market. De Bruyn's unique approach to agricultural entrepreneurship has not only driven local demand but has also attracted global recognition.



Leona Archary
CEO of the Agricultural Development Agency (AGDA)
Leona Archary is the CEO of the Agricultural Development Agency (AGDA) with nearly three decades of experience in public sector leadership. Holding a Master's degree in Management, she has led key rural development programmes, including serving as Acting Director General at the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. At AGDA, she focuses on value chain integration, building partnerships for sustainable agriculture, and supporting the growth of new-era farmers.



Richard Manzini
CEO of Daybreak Foods
Richard Manzini is the CEO of Daybreak Foods, one of South Africa's largest poultry producers, processing over a million chickens weekly and managing the entire value chain. With decades of private equity experience spanning Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, he has a proven track record in revitalising businesses, driving market expansion, and delivering socio-economic impact.



Thabo Mavundza
Managing Director of Africa operations at Westfalia Fruit
Thabo Mavundza is the Managing Director of Africa operations at Westfalia Fruit, a leading producer of avocados. Born in Havelank Village, Limpopo, his career began as an engineer at the Agricultural Research Council, and today he leads 3 500 colleagues, managing assets worth between R3 billion and R5 billion. Deeply influenced by his grandmother's wisdom and mentor Steve Mngqulu, Mavundza is committed to giving back through philanthropy and mentoring.



Loyiso Manga
Founder of Ubuntu Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
Loyiso Manga, founder of Ubuntu Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO), transformed his passion for olive oil into a thriving business, overcoming the challenges of unemployment to become a trailblazer in South Africa's olive oil industry. As the mastermind behind the country's first black-owned olive oil farming enterprise, he has not only earned national recognition with his products now on Woolworths shelves but also secured a Gold Award at the prestigious World Olive Oil Competition. His commitment to quality and sustainability has led him to pursue Halal certification, further elevating Ubuntu EVOO's standing.



Johann Kotzé
CEO of Agri SA
Johann Kotzé is the CEO of Agri SA, a 120-year-old organisation promoting the interests of farmers in South Africa. With extensive experience in agriculture, banking, and business leadership, Kotzé steers Agri SA as it faces critical challenges such as climate change, rural safety, and policy uncertainty. A proud product of a farming background, he holds an MBA, and has led prominent organisations like the South African Pig Producers' Organisation (SAPPO) and served in top roles at Absa and FNB.



Dr Tobias Doyer
CEO of Grain SA
Dr Tobias Doyer is the CEO of Grain SA, a leading industry organisation providing strategic support and services to grain and oilseed producers. With extensive experience in agriculture, insurance, and academia, he has a proven track record of driving innovation and growth. He previously played a pivotal role in realigning Agbiz, positioning it as a key player in national agricultural and economic discussions. Doyer holds a PhD in agricultural economics from the University of Pretoria.



Dr Siyabonga Madlala
Executive chair of the SA Farmers' Development Association (SAFDA)
Dr Siyabonga Madlala is the executive chair of the SA Farmers' Development Association (SAFDA), dedicated to transforming the sugar industry and empowering black sugar cane farmers. Since its formation in 2015, Safda has championed small-scale and land reform farmers through targeted interventions, addressing financial challenges and promoting sustainability. Under Madlala's leadership, the organisation drives meaningful participation, diversification, and innovative solutions to create a more equitable agricultural sector.



Nigel Jacobs
Co-founder of Jacobs Jam
Nigel Jacobs is the co-founder of Jacobs Jam, a rapidly growing agri-business based in the Ceres Valley, Western Cape. Combining his FMCG marketing background with his wife Christynn's expertise as a food technologist, they launched Jacobs Jam in 2016. Despite a challenging start, the business secured a breakthrough deal with the Sheppie Group in 2022, expanding their reach to 20 Checkers stores in under six months. Known for preservative-free jams, including the world's only pomegranate jam, Jacobs Jam now supplies nearly 400 independent outlets and exports to Zambia.





THUPELO KA LERUO LA LIKHOHO TSA FREE RANGE FACILITATORS

Dr. Puleng Matebesi-Ranthimo





Saturday 01 MARCH 2025
9:00am - 4.00pm
Venue : Metcash building Room 139D

Lintlha-kholo

- ✓ Tseba tse hlokaahalang ho qala leruo
- ✓ Thibelo ea ho shoa hoa likhoho
- ✓ Phepo e nepahetseng.
- ✓ Liphoso tse lokelang ho qojoa
- ✓ Meriana sebakeng sa likhoho.
- ✓ Nako e nepahetseng ea thekiso
- ✓ Le tseling tsa bohlokoa.

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THUPELO KA LERUO LA LIKHOHO TSA NAMA FACILITATORS

Dr. Puleng Matebesi-Ranthimo





Saturday 08 MARCH 2025
9:00am - 4.00pm
Venue : Metcash building Room 139D

Lintlha-kholo

- ✓ Tseba tse hlokaahalang ho qala leruo
- ✓ Thibelo ea ho shoa hoa likhoho
- ✓ Phepo e nepahetseng.
- ✓ Liphoso tse lokelang ho qojoa
- ✓ Meriana sebakeng sa likhoho.
- ✓ Nako e nepahetseng ea thekiso
- ✓ Le tseling tsa bohlokoa.

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MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY, AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR THE LEASE OF AN EGG TRAY MANUFACTURING MACHINE

RFP Reference Number: MTIBD/RFP/01

Introduction

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Business Development has procured an egg tray manufacturing machine located at the LNDC factory shell in Mohale's Hoek. The purpose of this initiative is to promote private sector development and industrialization in Lesotho, specifically in the packaging sector for poultry farming.

The Ministry is inviting qualified private sector entities to submit proposals to lease and operate the egg tray manufacturing machine. The objective is to encourage the efficient utilization of this asset while stimulating entrepreneurship and local production capacity.

Objective of the Lease

The lease of the egg tray manufacturing machine aims to:

- ▶ Promote private sector growth in packaging for the poultry industry.
- ▶ Increase domestic production of egg trays, reducing reliance on imports.
- ▶ Contribute to job creation and economic development in Mohale's Hoek.
- ▶ Ensure the long-term maintenance and operational efficiency of the machine.

Scope of Services

The successful Applicant will be responsible for:

- ▶ Operating, maintaining, and managing the egg tray manufacturing machine.
- ▶ Achieving production targets as agreed in the lease.
- ▶ Ensuring compliance with all industry standards, particularly in relation to product quality and safety.
- ▶ Regular maintenance and reporting to the Ministry on operational performance.
- ▶ Marketing and distributing the manufactured egg trays.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- ▶ Be a legally registered company or individual in Lesotho or internationally.
- ▶ Have demonstrated experience in manufacturing, packaging, or a related sector, ideally in egg tray or packaging production.
- ▶ Financial capacity to operate and maintain the machine.
- ▶ A clear business plan for operating the machine and reaching the market.

Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested Applicants must provide the following documents:

- ▶ Company Profile: Overview of the Applicant's business, including past experience in manufacturing or related industries.
- ▶ Business Plan: A detailed plan on how the egg tray manufacturing machine will be utilized, including target production, marketing strategies, and distribution plans.
- ▶ Financial Capacity: Audited financial statements for the past 3 years (if applicable) or evidence of financial resources.
- ▶ Proof of Registration: Copies of business registration certificates and tax clearance.
- ▶ References: References from previous or current clients, particularly in similar industries.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- ▶ Experience: Relevant experience in manufacturing and operating similar machines.
- ▶ Business Plan Quality: The feasibility, sustainability, and financial strength of the proposed business plan.
- ▶ Financial Capacity: Demonstration of the Applicant's ability to sustain operational costs.
- ▶ Compliance: Ability to meet legal, environmental, and industry standards.

Lease Terms and Conditions

The lease agreement will include the following terms:

- ▶ Lease Duration: The proposed lease period is 10 years, with a possible renewal based on satisfactory performance.
- ▶ Lease Payments: Payments will be made quarterly/annually, with the amount to be negotiated as part of the lease agreement.
- ▶ Maintenance Responsibility: Routine maintenance and repairs are the responsibility of the lessee. Major repairs, including part replacement, may be addressed by the Ministry.
- ▶ Insurance: The lessee is required to secure adequate insurance coverage for the machine and related operations.
- ▶ Performance Reporting: The lessee will provide quarterly reports on machine performance, production output, and market activities to the Ministry.

Site Inspection

A compulsory site visit will be conducted on the **14th March 2025**. All interested parties are expected to assemble at **12.00 midday at LNDC Factory Shell at Mohales Hoek**.

Submission Deadline and Process

Proposals must be submitted in a written form and be deposited in the Tender Box located at the foyer of Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development 2nd floor, LNDC Building, Kingsway Street no later than **14.30 hours on the 21st March 2025**. Late submissions will not be considered.

Contact Information

For more details, please contact:

Mr. Qhoase Morakabi
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development
qhoase.morakabi@gov.ls

Reservation of Rights

The Ministry reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time without prior notice, reject any or all proposals, based on the Ministry's discretion and or negotiate with selected applicants for a more favourable arrangement, if necessary.

Suggested Lease Length and Terms

Lease Length: 10 years, with an option for renewal depending on performance and mutual agreement.

Payment Terms: Lease payments should be negotiated and could be structured quarterly or annually.

Maintenance Terms: The lessee is responsible for regular maintenance, while the Ministry may cover major repairs or upgrades.

Insurance: The lessee must insure the machine, and any liabilities associated with its operation.



Government of Lesotho

LESOTHO COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT (LESOTHO HORTICULTURAL INCUBATION & TRAINING CENTRE)

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR INCUBATION OF LESOTHO FRUIT FARMERS

The Lesotho government, through the World Bank financed Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project, is supporting the establishment of a Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre (LHITC), located at Mahobong in Leribe district, with the objective of scaling and replicating existing deciduous fruit commercial orchards and attracting new investments into the horticulture sector. The pilot farms established under the first and second World Bank financed Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification projects (PSCEDP) have successfully demonstrated the commercial potential to produce deciduous fruits in Lesotho for both the domestic and export markets, and there is already significant interest from investors in commercial horticulture. However, these investments can only be realized with a coordinated effort to address land administration challenges including the availability of land parcels of adequate size for commercial scale production and adopting a transparent leasing system to achieve a credible land ownership. There is also a need for coordinated infrastructure investments in irrigation, electricity, roads, packhouses, phytosanitary inspection systems and grading, and private-public partnerships to deliver effective training and skills, and impactful extension services. It is against this background that the Government of Lesotho has established the Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre.

The LHITC is located in an existing facility which is owned by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and it is adjacent to the existing pilot commercial farms. The Centre will be operated in partnership with the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

The objective of LHITC is to provide support for scaling commercial horticulture farming in Lesotho, building on the experience of the current pilot commercial farms and addressing gaps in the value chain, access to suitable land, infrastructure, extension services, skills, finance, and markets while promoting climate smart agricultural practices.

The LHITC is currently incubating the first cohort of 7 deciduous fruit farmers and 2 vegetables farmers.

The CAFI Project Management Unit, now invites farmers and farmers groups to indicate their interest to participate in the second cohort of the full horticultural incubation program. Interested farmers should provide information demonstrating that they meet eligibility criteria below.

The selection criteria will be based on the following key requirements:

Applicants (individual farmers or farmers groups) must have:

1. Access to suitable land of **the minimum size of 5 ha** (owned or rented), for at least a period of 30 years if rented, **with a proof of land ownership documents in the name of the Applicant.** The required acceptable documents are Form Cs, Leases or subleases (if the land is rented).
2. The site close to a good source of quality irrigation water that will provide adequate water to irrigate an orchard of at least 5ha.

3. Access road linking the site with the main road and should be in a good condition.
4. The site that is close to electricity supply or other sustainable sources of power for irrigation and other functions of the orchard.

Note:

In the case of farmers groups, they must have proof of an existing legal entity (Cooperative or Company), or they must provide letter of intent to form a company or Cooperative signed by all group members. However, all members of the group must have Land Ownership Documents stated in (1) above. Experience in commercial farming will be an added advantage.

Format of EOI submissions

The applicants should include at least the following information in their submissions to enable objective assessment of the expressions of interest:

- Applicant information including name, address, cell phone, working e-mail, website (if any), names of a Project Manager (if different from applicant).
- Certified copies of land ownership documents.
- Proof of acreage from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.
- Description of the location of the site where the orchard is intended to be established.

Further information and suitability maps can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 16h30 local time].

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled "Incubation of Lesotho Fruit Farmers" to the address below in person or by e-mail on or before **Friday, 04th April 2025 at 16h30.** E-mail submissions should be sent to procurement@cafi.org.ls with a copy to nsupu@cafi.org.ls as a single attachment.

Managing Director
Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
1st Floor 'Matanki House
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel.: (+266) 22 315 100

NB: This call for expression of interest is open to all Basotho farmers, including those who participated in the first and second cohort pre-incubation program.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TO INVEST, OPERATE AND MANAGE LITHOLOANA
TSA BASOTHO CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE
MARKET CENTRE

1.0 LNDC BACKGROUND

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has the core mandate to "initiate, promote and facilitate the development of manufacturing and processing industries, mining, and commerce in a manner calculated to raise the level of income and employment in Lesotho." This mandate stems from the LNDC Act No. 20 of 1967, as amended by LNDC Act No. 13 of 1990 and LNDC Act No. 7 of 2000.

2.0 THE PROJECT

LNDC seeks to integrate Litholoana Tsa Basotho (the former Basotho Fruits and Vegetables Cannery) with the Maluti Fresh Produce Market through private-sector investment. This project is expected to enhance food processing, create jobs, and boost Lesotho's agricultural sector by supporting local farmers and leveraging existing market structures.

A feasibility study and business plan have been completed, and **LNDC invites proposals from qualified domestic investors to invest, operate and/or manage the integrated Fresh Produce Market Centre and Cannery.**

3.0 MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to:

- Establish a sustainable and profitable fruit and vegetable processing facility.
- Create value addition for local agricultural produce.
- Enhance market access for local farmers and cooperatives.
- Facilitate regional and international exports of processed food products.
- Generate employment and contribute to economic development.

The following are the envisaged business activities of the integrated companies backed with full feasibility studies and business plan:

- a) Vegetables farming
- b) Vegetables and Fruits processing
- c) Vegetables and Fruits Canning
- d) Contract Canning of vegetables and fruits for local processors
- e) Sale and distribution of fresh produce to local and international markets
- f) Marketing and distribution to local and international markets

4.0 SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals must demonstrate the ability to do one or more of the following:

- **Invest:** Provide evidence of funding capacity (minimum M5 million Maloti) through bank statements or financing letters.
- **Invest and Operate:** Provide evidence of funding and showcase experience in agribusiness, food processing, or supply chain management.
- **Invest and Manage:** Provide evidence of funding and demonstrate experience in implementing efficient processing systems and strategies for local and international market penetration.
- **Invest, Operate and Manage:** Provide evidence of funding and showcase experience in agribusiness, food processing, or supply chain management with demonstrable experience in implementing efficient processing systems and strategies for local and international market penetration.

LESOTHO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Block A, Development House
Kingsway Road
Private Bag A96
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls

5.0 BIDDER REQUIREMENTS - Mandatory Documentation:

- Company profile.
- Certified copies of company registration certificates.
- Contactable details of at least three references.
- Valid tax clearance certificate.
- Certified copy of trader's license.
- Latest audited financial statements (balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement).
- Proof of past project implementation (if applicable).

6.0 INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

- **Physical Submissions:** Must be in a sealed envelope labelled "LNDC CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE INVESTMENT" and delivered to LNDC Reception, Level 1 Block A Development House, **by 12:00 PM on March 7th, 2025.**
- **Electronic Submissions:** Send proposals in PDF format to tenders@lndc.org.ls with the subject "LNDC CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE INVESTMENT" by 12:00 PM on **March 7th, 2025.**

Proposals will be opened on **March 7th, 2025, at 12:05 PM** in the Audio-Visual Room, Level 7. Attendance is encouraged but not mandatory.

A non-mandatory site visit to the facilities will take place on Friday 14th February at 9:00am and Friday 21st February at 9:00am.

7.0 NOTICE OF PRESENTATIONS

Shortlisted bidders will be invited for presentations as part of the evaluation process. Negotiations will follow for final selection. No commitments will be binding until a formal contract is signed.

Feasibility studies and business plans will be shared with shortlisted bidders upon signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

8.0 DISCLAIMER

LNDC reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without obligation to disclose reasons. A debriefing meeting may be arranged upon request but is not automatic.

For any enquiries, or to request the full RFP document with selection criteria and Key Performance Areas, contact petlane@lndc.org.ls (Deadline for enquiries: **February 25, 2025**). The RFP is also available on our website - www.lndc.org.ls.

Number of food-insecure Basotho drops by 68,000

... But challenges persist, food subsidy recommended

By Staff Reporters

The number of Basotho facing severe food insecurity has decreased by 68,000, from 403,000 to 335,000, between May 2024 and the projected period of January-March 2025, according to the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis.

The report, published this week, highlights that the lean season, which runs from October 2024 to March 2025, coincides with this analysis period.

The improved food security situation, compared to the May 2024 assessment, is largely attributed to ongoing humanitarian support, including cash and food transfers from the government, humanitarian organisations, and the United Nations (UN) agencies.

These efforts have significantly reduced food gaps.

The report notes that while the number of food-insecure people has decreased, around 335,000 people, or 22 percent of the rural population, will still be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) during the January-March 2025 period.

All ten districts remain classified under this phase. Several challenges remain during this period.

Key hazards expected include heavy rainfall, with a forecast of normal to above-normal rainfall across

all districts, along with high temperatures. Declining income sources, such as lower livestock sales due to market competition and restrictions on livestock movement to South Africa, are also a concern.

Additionally, persistent high prices for food, fuel, and electricity continue to erode the purchasing power of vulnerable households.

The report also notes that “humanitarian assistance has had a significant impact on food security”. For example, in Berea, 29 percent of the population received support, covering 67 percent of their caloric needs.

“In Butha-Buthe and Leribe, the assistance covered 72 percent and 65 percent of caloric needs, respectively, while in Qacha’s Nek, 27 percent of the population received aid, meeting 83% of their energy requirements.”

Despite these efforts, food access remains a key challenge for many districts, compounded by high food and non-food prices.

These factors are likely to continue limiting food access, though food availability is expected to remain stable, as markets in Lesotho are functioning well with supplies from local, regional, and international sources.

The report recommends the continuation and expansion of conditional and unconditional hu-

manitarian assistance.

“To effectively support households facing crisis food Insecurity, it is critical to continue and expand both conditional and unconditional humanitarian assistance.”

It further recommends the reduction of food consumption gaps by improving access to food, through appropriate modalities such as food subsidy.

“The National Strategic Resilience framework should be fully operational to ensure that households diversify their livelihoods to withstand future shocks.

“Intensify Nutrition education with more emphasis of feeding practices, exclusive breastfeeding and recommended duration of breastfeeding. Immediately update the Baseline Profiles to increase relevant data sources for IPC analysis as well as incorporating new emerging issues.”

Lastly, it recommends the scaling up of anticipatory actions to mitigate the impact of anticipated hazards.

On July 12, 2024, Prime Minister Ntsokoane Matekane declared a state of National Food Insecurity Disaster after a historic drought, triggered by El Niño, led to the lowest crop yields since the 2018/19 agricultural season

According to the government, about a third of the population, approximately 700,000 people, would face hunger through March 2025. In rural areas, more than 400,000 people were expected to experience crisis levels of acute hunger through March 2025.

Vulnerability assessments predicted that an additional 296,049 people in urban areas would become food insecure. The drought had also led to severe water shortages, with wells running dry.

USAID, now suspended by the new United States president Donald Trump, said last year that climatic shocks, diseases, and socioeconomic conditions would continue to drive high levels of acute food insecurity in Lesotho.

In particular, El Niño-induced conditions, including erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged dry spells, have resulted in the lowest crop yields since 2018/19, increasing reliance on markets and depleting household food stocks prematurely.

“Drought conditions have also reduced water levels in reservoirs and rivers, resulting in widespread livestock losses as of October,” said USAID. “An estimated 80 percent of Lesotho’s population depends on the agricultural sector for food and income, making households more vulnerable to climatic shocks,” USAID said.

In response to these challenges, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) supported World Vision Lesotho in providing unconditional food assistance through cash-based transfers to vulnerable individuals across nine community councils in Mafeteng, Mochale’s Hoek, and Quthing.

These transfers, it was said, would help increase access to local markets, supporting the local economy and improving food security for drought-affected populations.

Agricultural Insurance Program to Shield Farmers from Natural Disasters



Stakeholders gain insights into the proposed Agriculture Insurance Program

By Kabelo Masoabi

In a strategic move to safeguard farmers against the growing risks posed by natural disasters, the Government of Lesotho is set to roll out an Agricultural Insurance Program under the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II).

The initiative, backed by the World Bank, the Government of Japan, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), aims to provide smallholder farmers with the tools and financial protection they need to sustain productivity in the face of unpredictable climatic events.

The program, which aligns with SADP II’s Sub-Component 2.4, focuses on promoting smart subsidies and agricultural insurance as part of a broader strategy to encourage sustainable agricultural investment.

The pilot phase would focus on crop insurance, offering farmers a financial safety net against climate-related losses such as droughts, floods, storms, and other natural disasters.

Why Agricultural Insurance Matters

Lesotho’s agricultural sector has long been vulnerable to climate shocks, with extreme weather events increasingly disrupting food production. According to reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), disasters like droughts, floods, and storms have intensified in frequency and severity, resulting in substantial economic losses and

threatening food security.

Nancy Chawawa, a Resilience Specialist consultant from the World Food Programme (WFP), highlighted the importance of agricultural insurance during an implementation strategy meeting held at Avani Maseru.

“Agriculture insurance helps farmers manage unpredictable challenges, especially as extreme weather events become more common due to climate change. It offers a financial cushion that promotes stability and encourages growth in the agricultural sector,” she noted.

Insurance does more than just protect crops—it empowers farmers to invest in their businesses, she said, adding that with coverage in place, farmers are more likely to access credit, invest in better technology, and expand their operations, leading to long-term gains in productivity and sustainability.

The Pilot Program: How It Will Work

The agricultural insurance initiative will be piloted for one year, focusing primarily on crop insurance. The pilot will use an index-based insurance system, including tools like the:

- **Area Yield Index** – measures average yield in specific regions to assess losses.
- **Weather Index** – tracks climatic conditions like rainfall deficits or excesses to determine pay-outs.

- **Indemnity Insurance** – offers traditional coverage for direct losses to crops or inputs.

This approach allows for quicker claim settlements and reduces administrative costs, ensuring that farmers receive timely compensation in the event of crop failure.

The pilot would initially target commercial farmers focusing on cereal crops grown in open fields. However, considerations such as soil type, field size, and climate conditions would also influence coverage eligibility.

Chawawa emphasised the program’s long-term vision; “We aim to create a sustainable model that can be scaled nationally. This isn’t just a short-term fix—it’s about transforming how we manage risk in agriculture.”

Harnessing Technology for Efficiency

A significant feature of the program is its reliance on digital platforms to streamline transactions.

Khauta Faku, an Information Technology Officer at WFP, explained that participating farmers would use an electronic voucher system to pay for subsidised insurance premiums and agricultural inputs.

“Farmers will be able to use commercial mobile payment platforms like M-Pesa, EcoCash, and C-Pay to purchase insurance and inputs. This makes the process accessible even to farmers in remote areas,” Faku noted.

Agro-dealers participating in the program would serve as access points where farmers can purchase inputs and pay premiums.

“These dealers will then reconcile their records with insurance providers to ensure accuracy. The government and WFP will oversee the processing of disaster-related claims, using data provided by insurance companies to expedite payments,” Faku explained.

He stressed the importance of educating farmers on how the system works.

“For the program to succeed, farmers need to understand the process—from paying premiums to filing claims. We’re rolling out training programs to ensure everyone is well-prepared.”

Expanding Access and Awareness

While the pilot program focuses on crop insurance, there are plans to expand coverage to include livestock insurance and other agricultural sectors if

the initial phase proves successful.

To maximise the program’s impact, efforts would be made to raise awareness among farmers, particularly smallholder farmers who are often the most vulnerable to climate shocks.

Chawawa pointed out that local partnerships would be critical.

“We need to work with cooperatives, agro-dealers, and extension services to spread the word and make sure farmers fully understand the benefits of agricultural insurance,” she said.

The program also aims to integrate agricultural insurance into broader climate-smart agriculture strategies, helping farmers adopt sustainable practices that reduce vulnerability to climate risks.

Learning from Regional Successes

Lesotho’s initiative follows the example of neighbouring countries like Kenya, which successfully introduced an agricultural insurance program in 2016.

Kenya’s government-subsidised plan offers farmers coverage against droughts, floods, and pest infestations, significantly reducing financial risks and stabilising food production.

The Lesotho pilot draws on Kenya’s model but adapts it to the country’s unique agricultural landscape, focusing on index-based insurance and leveraging technology for efficiency.

A Path Toward Resilience and Food Security

For Lesotho, the agricultural insurance program represents a significant step toward building climate resilience and ensuring long-term food security. By protecting farmers from the financial fallout of natural disasters, the government is empowering them to take calculated risks, invest in their farms, and improve productivity.

Malefetsane Raliengoane, SADP II’s Communications Specialist, underscored the transformative potential of the initiative; “This is about more than just protecting crops—it’s about protecting livelihoods, strengthening communities, and building a more resilient agricultural sector.”

He indicated that the pilot’s success would depend on how well it addresses farmers’ needs and adapts to on-the-ground realities.

“Following the one-year trial period, a thorough evaluation will determine whether the program can be scaled up to benefit the broader farming community,” he said.

SMARTD Leads Wetlands Conservation Efforts in Quthing

By Lungile Maseela

The Southern Mountains Association for Rural Transformation and Development (SMARTD) recently commemorated World Wetlands Day at Ha Tlhaku, Quthing, bringing attention to the critical role wetlands play in environmental sustainability and community livelihoods. The event not only celebrated wetlands' ecological value but also reinforced the community's commitment to conservation, a

commitment that has gained national and regional recognition.

Wetlands: Lifelines for Communities and Ecosystems

During the event, Fako Fako, SMARTD's programme manager, emphasised the importance of wetlands in improving water quality, supporting biodiversity, and mitigating climate change.

"Wetlands are natural filters and water reservoirs that sustain life—not just for humans but for the entire ecosystem," Fako highlighted.

He also spoke of SMARTD's ongoing community education programs aimed at promoting sustainable wetland practices.

Wetlands are essential for water regulation, acting as natural sponges that absorb excess rain during wet seasons and slowly release it during dry spells, preventing floods and maintaining steady river flows, he described, noting their capacity to store carbon also plays a crucial role in climate change mitigation.

In Lesotho, he noted that wetlands are vital for

agriculture, livestock, and water security, especially as the country serves as a major water source for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

Ha Tlhaku's Commitment to Conservation

Sempe Nkoebe, chairman of SMARTD, urged the Ha Tlhaku community to prioritise wetland protection, stating, "To punish any living thing, all you need is to starve them of water—wetlands included."

Nkoebe stressed the importance of collective action, calling on neighbouring communities to join the fight against wetland degradation.

The community's commitment to conservation has earned it widespread recognition. Since partnering with the Serumula Development Association in 2015, Ha Tlhaku has spearheaded numerous wetland preservation initiatives. This dedication culminated in the community receiving the prestigious Flagship Project Award, outshining projects from South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana.

Bonang Mosiuoa from Serumula praised Ha Tlhaku's residents for their proactive stance.

"Your dedication to wetland conservation has set a national standard. You have demonstrated that community-led efforts can make a lasting impact," she said.

National Efforts to Protect Lesotho's Wetlands

Lesotho has seen a significant shift toward sustainable water management, driven by initiatives like the ReNOKA program, which focuses on the restoration and protection of critical water sources.

Community-driven projects, such as the Semonkong Wetlands Restoration, have further engaged local populations in conservation efforts, demonstrating that grassroots involvement is key to successful wetland preservation.

Moselantja Rahlao from the Regeneration of Landscape and Livelihoods (ROLL) initiative emphasised the broader implications of wetland conservation.

"Lesotho plays a pivotal role in supplying water to the SADC region. Protecting our wetlands is not just a local issue—it's a regional responsibility," Rahlao noted.

She also highlighted the direct benefits to local communities, including improved water quality, enhanced climate resilience, and increased biodiversity.

The Role of Education and Community Participation

The event also focused on the importance of education in conservation. Ramatsoku Rampai from ReNOKA explained how wetlands act as natural water reservoirs, reducing the risk of floods and ensuring rivers don't dry out during droughts. He pointed out the presence of native plant species like Qabo and Khoari, which thrive in Ha Tlhaku's wetlands and contribute to local biodiversity.

"Community education is crucial. When people understand the value of wetlands, they become their strongest defenders," Rampai emphasised.

In addition to educational programs, the ReNOKA initiative has hosted events across communities, including Koro-koro and Tšenekeng, to raise awareness about the environmental and social importance of wetlands.

A Model for Community-Driven Conservation

The success of Ha Tlhaku's conservation efforts demonstrates the power of community-led initiatives. Through partnerships with NGOs like SMARTD and Serumula, and national programs like ReNOKA, the community has become a shining example of how local action can have a regional impact.

As climate change continues to threaten natural ecosystems, Ha Tlhaku's efforts in wetland preservation serve as a blueprint for other communities.

"The health of our wetlands is directly linked to the health of our people. By protecting these vital ecosystems, we are safeguarding our future," Nkoebe reminded the crowd.



Introducing "Kopano: The Battle for the Mountains" – A Tale of Transformation and Resilience

Once, in a land of breathtaking beauty and rich fertility, vibrant landscapes thrived under the sun. This was the Kingdom of Lesotho—a place where lush fields flourished, and communities lived in harmony with nature.

Over time, this paradise is faced with a number of daunting challenges: land and wetlands degradation, soil erosion, invasion of alien plant species, and climate change adding to these challenges is affecting the natural resources in Lesotho.

Lesotho, considered the “Water Tower of Southern Africa” contributes 42% of run-off water to the Orange-Senqu basin, benefitting around 16 million people within the basin. The Lesotho Land Cover Atlas indicates that between 2017 and 2021, Mokhotlong experienced a 0.98% degradation of wetlands, transitioning into grasslands and shrublands. This shows how crucial it is to protect the land and water resources in Lesotho and raise awareness to as wide an audience as possible.

ReNOKA is excited to launch a comic series, targeting a younger audience to pass the message of protection, conservation and restoration of our natural resources. Retelling the story of Kholumolumo, the 9 part animation series introduces the villain to the environment, Kholumolumo, who’s devastating actions lead to donga formations, burnt rangelands and dried up wetlands. Amidst the struggles, a young heroine named Lerato emerges. Inspired by the teachings of her wise

grandfather, Koena, Lerato embodies hope and resilience. Grandfather Koena often spoke of the deep connection between people and the land, imparting lessons on stewardship and respect for nature. Armed with this knowledge, Lerato decides to rally her community to reclaim their environment.

Lerato’s determination shines as she leads her friends, family and community to sustainable practices, demonstrating the power of unity in restoring their environment. The journey illustrates how one person can spark change, inspiring others to join the fight against environmental degradation.

Follow this captivating nine-episode story brought to you by ReNOKA. **If you are between the ages of 7 and 15, don’t miss the chance to participate in our exciting competition by simply answering 2 easy questions Dial 21219956 \ +266 59956 ONLY on PC FM every Saturday at 09h30.**

Join us as we reinforce the message that together, we can combat the environmental challenges Lesotho and the world are faced with and #reimagine Lesotho together.

For more information visit our social media pages @ReNOKA Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Access the Story on:

Newspapers: The Post, Newsday, The Reporter, Public Eye

Website: www.renoka.org

Facebook: ReNOKA

Instagram: renoka_movement



Illustrated by Sekantši Mokhohlane, a locally based Mosotho artist whose work has reached the international stage.



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
WamCoP
P.O. Box 24
Maseru 100



LESOTHO WOOL AND MOHAIR VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Consulting Firms)

Assignment Title: Baseline Survey

Reference No: IFAD/WAMCOP/C01/2024-2025

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition has received a financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) towards the cost of Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the recruitment of consulting services.

The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project.

The consulting services ("the services") include the baseline study which is expected to provide quantitative baseline data of the IFAD core outcome indicators as per the mandatory IFAD COI guidelines and methodologies. The baseline study is also expected provide an assessment of additional aspects of the project relating to current/existing knowledge, strategies, practices and perceptions in terms of nutrition and gender issues. The study must produce information that will be used to direct and guide project implementation processes. In addition, lessons from past and existing IFAD-funded projects/programmes will be a key resource for review and use in this assignment.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition ("the client") now invites eligible consulting firms ("consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the services. Interested firms should submit their expressions of interest to the address indicated below.

The attention of interested consultants is drawn to IFAD's Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy and the Revised IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption its Activities and Operations. The latter sets forth IFAD's provisions on prohibited practices. IFAD further strives to ensure a safe working environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and free of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in its activities and operations as detailed in its IFAD Policy to Preventing and Responding to Sexual Harassment, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. By entering in this document, you certify to have read, understood, and agreed to be bound by the Privacy Policy of IFAD. The consultant shall not have any actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest. A consultant with an actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest shall be disqualified unless otherwise explicitly approved by the Fund. A consultant including their respective personnel and affiliates are considered to have a conflict of interest if they a) have a relationship that provides them with undue or undisclosed information about or influence over the selection process and the execution of the contract, b) participate in more than one EOI under this procurement action, c) have a business or family relationship with a member of the Purchaser's board of directors or its personnel, the Fund or its personnel, or any other individual that was, has been or might reasonably be directly or indirectly involved in any part of

- i. the preparation of this REOI,
- ii. the shortlisting or selection process for this procurement, or
- iii. (execution of the contract. The consultant has an ongoing obligation to disclose any situation of actual, potential or reasonably perceived conflict of interest during preparation of the EOI, the selection process or the contract execution. Failure to properly disclose any of said situations may lead to appropriate actions, including the disqualification of the consultant, the termination of the contract and any other as appropriate under the IFAD Policy on Preventing Fraud and Corruption in its Projects and Operations.

The following conflict of interest rules shall apply with respect to recruitment of government/client staff within the consultant's proposed team:

- D. No member of the client's board of directors or current employees of the client (whether part time, or full time, paid or unpaid, in leave status, etc.) shall be proposed or work as, or on behalf of, any consultant.
- E. Except as provided in sub-clause 8.6(d), no current employees of the government shall work as consult-

ants or as personnel under their own ministries, departments or agencies.

F. Recruiting former client or government employees to perform services for their former ministries, departments or agencies is acceptable provided no conflict of interest exists.

G. If a consultant proposes any government employee as personnel in their technical proposal, such personnel must have written certification from the government confirming that: (i) they will be on leave without pay from the time of their official proposal submission and will remain on leave without pay until the end of their assignment with the consultant and they are allowed to work full-time outside of their previous official position; or (ii) they will resign or retire

- 8. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/41942012>.
- 9. The policy is accessible at www.ifad.org/anticorruption_policy.
- 10. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/document-detail/asset/40738506>.
- 11. The policy is accessible at <https://www.ifad.org/en/privacy>.

from government employment on or prior to the contract award date. Under no circumstances shall any individuals described in (i) and (ii) be responsible for approving the implementation of this contract. Such certification shall be provided to the client by the consultant as part of its technical proposal.

L. In the case where a consultant seeks to engage the services of any person falling under ITC sub-clauses 8.6(a) – 8.6(d), who may have left the client within a period of less than twelve (12) months of the date of this RFP, it must obtain a written "no-objection" from the client for the inclusion of such a person, prior to the consultant's submission of its proposal.

A consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in IFAD project procurement handbook that can be accessed via the IFAD website at www.ifad.org/project-procurement.

The shortlisting criteria are:

Criteria #	Description	Allocated Marks
1	General Experience of Firm/Company	30
2	Specific Experience of a Firm in Similar Assignment	30
3	Key Experts	20
4	Financial Capacity	20

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

Any request for clarification on this REOI should be sent via e-mail to the address below no later than 16:00hrs, 5 March 2025, Lesotho time. The client will provide responses to all clarification requests by 16:00hrs, 10th March 2025, Lesotho time.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in written form using the forms provided for this purpose. EOIs shall be submitted to the address below no later than 12:00hrs, 14 March 2025, Lesotho time.

Wool and Mohair Value Chain Competitiveness Project

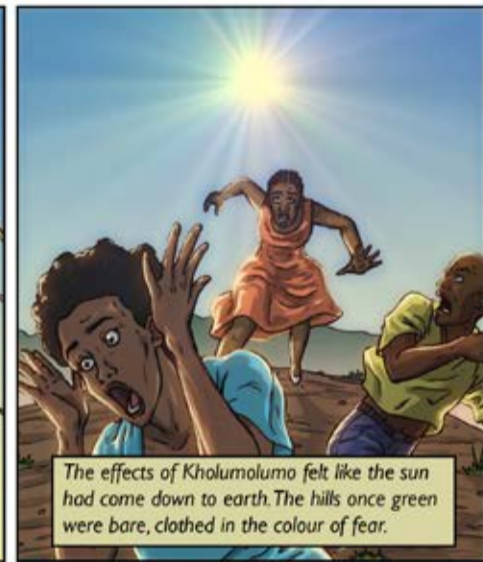
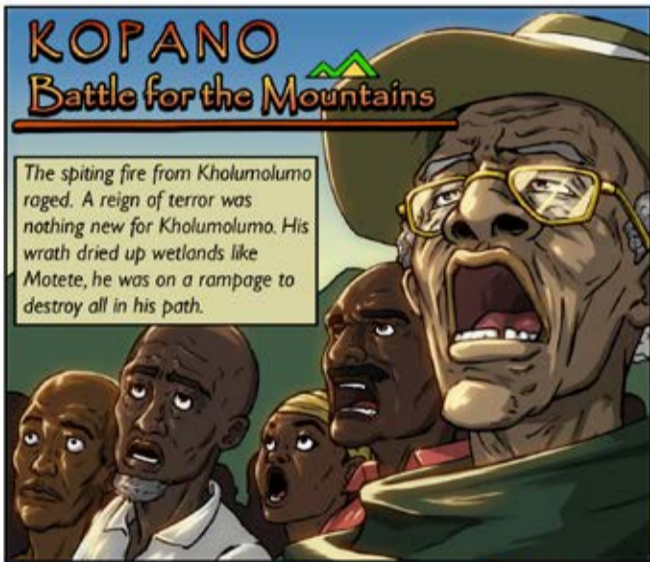
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National Market Day Ignites Hope for Lesotho's Agribusiness Future



By Lungile Maseela

Avibrant fusion of colour, energy, and agricultural excellence filled Pitso Ground in Maseru as farmers from across Lesotho gathered to showcase their home-grown produce and innovative agribusinesses.

Hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition in collaboration with the Smallholder Agricultural Development Project II (SADP II), the National Market Day was more than just a trading platform—it was a bold declaration of Lesotho's potential to feed itself and thrive through agripreneurship.

From crisp vegetables and juicy fruits to premium livestock products, the market pulsed with excitement as consumers eagerly explored the rich variety of local goods on display. Each stall told a story of resilience, determination, and the unwavering spirit of Basotho farmers determined to transform agriculture into a thriving, competitive industry.

Beyond commerce, the event served as a bridge connecting farmers to consumers, fostering relationships, and strengthening agribusiness networks.

It was a space where innovation met opportunity, and where small-scale farmers found new paths to grow their businesses.

The buzz of conversation and deal-making echoed the optimism that Lesotho's agricultural sector is entering a new era of progress and self-sufficiency.

Addressing the enthusiastic crowd, Thabo Mofosi, Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, praised the event's success and emphasised the need for Lesotho to prioritise local production.

"...most importantly, as a country, we need to see to it that we feed our nation with products produced locally," he stated,

underscoring the government's commitment to strengthening domestic food systems.

Minister Mofosi also announced plans to introduce monthly markets in Maseru—a game-changer that will provide farmers with regular access to buyers, new business opportunities, and long-term sustainability in the agribusiness sector.

This move he said is expected to create ripple effects, expanding economic growth while fostering food security across the nation.

The event's resounding success was made possible through the collaboration of dedicated organisers, sponsors, and partners, all working tirelessly to empow-

ered, underscoring the government's commitment to strengthening domestic food systems.

ture highlighted the exceptional turnout, noting that this year's participation far exceeded expectations.

"The energy here is unmatched. Compared to last year, we have seen significant growth in both exhibitors and consumers," she said, reinforcing the event's growing reputation as a must-attend for the agricultural community.

The National Market Day, held annually, is complemented by monthly district-based markets that provide ongoing business exposure and networking opportunities for farmers across the country.

These initiatives are crucial in ensuring that locally produced goods reach a broader consumer base, solidifying Leso-

tho's agribusiness sector. Farmers left inspired, consumers left satisfied, and the nation took one step closer to an agriculture-driven economic transformation.

As the sun set on an exhilarating day of trade, networking, and celebration, one thing was clear—Lesotho's agricultural sector is not just surviving; it is thriving. With initiatives like the National Market Day and continued investment in agribusiness, the dream of a self-sufficient, food-secure Lesotho is closer than ever.



er local farmers. Among the key contributors were: Newsday Media through Seahlolo Newspaper and Newsday Newspaper, Lerotholi Polytechnic, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, World Food Programme (WFP) and SADP II.

Mathapelo Ntsoele from the Marketing Department of the Ministry of Agricul-

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noting that this year's participation far exceeded expectations. One of the standout success stories from this year's market was that of Masiu Ramoema, an agripreneur whose business has flourished through the Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) project.

Specialising in fruit cultivation in the

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National Market Day



Machobane Farming System: A Homegrown Solution for Boosting Productivity in Lesotho



By Lerato Matheka

For decades, Basotho farmers have faced immense challenges that continue to threaten the country's agricultural productivity.

From declining soil fertility, erratic rainfall, and limited arable land to labour shortages due to migration and the effects of poverty and food security has remained elusive for many households.

But, there is a home-grown solution that has been quietly transforming lives — the Machobane Farming System (MFS).

A System Born from Basotho Wisdom

Developed in the 1950s by Dr. Joseph J. Machobane, the system, known locally as Mantsa Tlala (the expeller of hunger), blends traditional Basotho farming knowledge with scientific principles.

This low-cost, high-impact approach focuses on intercropping, organic fertilisation, and year-round farming, offering a way for even the smallest-scale farmers to maximize their land.

Since its re-introduction in the 1990s, more than 5,500 farmers across Lesotho have adopted MFS, tripling their productivity compared to conventional mono-cropping.

How MFS Works

Unlike traditional mono-cropping, where fields often lie idle post-harvest, MFS promotes continuous cropping.

In lowland areas, farmers plant winter-resilient crops—wheat, peas, and potatoes—between April and May, harvesting them between January and March. In summer, they intercrop maize, beans, pumpkins, and groundnuts, ensuring a year-round supply of food and income.

It encourages the use of organic fertilisation using ash and manure improves soil fertility while enhancing resilience against drought and pests. Livestock plays a dual role, providing manure and serving as a source of milk, eggs, and meat.

Why the Machobane Farming System Works

- **Year-Round Food Production**

Unlike traditional farming, where fields often lie fallow after harvest, MFS encourages continuous cropping. In the lowlands, farmers plant winter-resilient crops like wheat, peas, and potatoes between April and May, which are harvested from January to March. During summer, fields are intercropped with maize, beans, pumpkins, sorghum, and groundnuts, harvested in late November and December. This approach ensures food availability throughout the year.

- **Soil Health Through Organic Fertilisation**

The system relies on readily available resources — farmyard manure and ash — to replenish soil nutrients. Ash improves soil pH and adds potassium, while manure enhances soil structure and provides essential nutrients. Farmers are encouraged to keep at least one animal for manure production, which also supports the household with milk, eggs, or meat.

- **Drought Resilience**

Intercropping and relay cropping — planting different crops together or one after another — create a natural living mulch, helping to retain soil moisture and reduce erosion. This makes MFS fields more resilient to the unpredictable rainfall patterns that have devastated many farms in recent years.

- **Higher Yields, Smaller Land Needs**

One of the most transformative aspects of MFS is its impact on land productivity. While traditional mono-cropping requires about 1.2 hectares to feed a family, MFS achieves the same food security on less than half a hectare. Studies show that maize yields increased by 14%, sorghum by 63%, beans by 61%, and potatoes — a cash crop in the system — by an astounding 294% under MFS.

- **Nutritional Diversity and Income**

Generation

By intercropping cereals with legumes and vegetables, families benefit from a diverse, nutrient-rich diet. Legumes fix nitrogen in the soil, improving fertility naturally while also offering protein-rich food. The inclusion of potatoes and groundnuts provides an income stream, helping farmers cover household expenses.

Empowering Farmers, Especially Women

Over half of the farmers practicing MFS are women, many of whom head their households. The system's reliance on local resources and its emphasis on self-reliance have made it especially accessible to resource-poor families. The farmer-to-farmer training model has been key to spreading MFS across Lesotho, fostering a community of shared knowledge and support.

One of MFS's greatest strengths lies in its community-centred approach. Farmers pass down knowledge through peer-to-peer training, fostering self-reliance and reducing dependency on external aid. The system's simplicity—using mostly hand tools or basic ox-drawn equipment—makes it accessible to even the poorest households.

Scaling Up for National Impact

Since the 1990s, more than 5,500 farmers have adopted MFS, covering thousands of hectares across Lesotho. Initiatives like the Sustainable Agricultural Development Programme for the Mountain Areas (SADPMA) and NGOs such as the Serumula Development Association and Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA) have played pivotal roles in expanding its reach.

Challenges and Moving Forward

While the benefits of MFS are clear, its adoption isn't without challenges. Labour demands are higher, especially during planting and weeding seasons, and access to livestock for manure production can be limited. However, with support from government programs and local NGOs like Serumula Development Association and RSDA, more farmers are overcoming these hurdles.

A Call to Action for Basotho Farmers

The success of the Machobane Farming System highlights the power of local solutions in tackling global challenges like food insecurity and climate change. As Lesotho continues to grapple with agricultural sustainability, expanding MFS could play a pivotal role in improving livelihoods, restoring soil health, and strengthening food security.

For more information on the Machobane Farming System, visit the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA).

