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LePIA Building a Stronger Structured Poultry Sector



Chickens at a poultry Farm in Lesotho

By Seahlolo Reporter

Lesotho's poultry industry is on the verge of a significant transformation with the creation of the Lesotho Poultry Industry Association (LePIA), a national apex body aimed at uniting all actors across the sector, improving coordination and driving sustainable growth.

The initiative was spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition through the Department of Livestock during a pivotal stakeholder engagement held earlier this month.

LePIA represents a milestone in implementing the Lesotho Poultry Development Policy, which envisions a poultry sector that contributes to national food and nutrition security, stimulates inclusive economic growth and attracts private sector investment.

The apex body will serve as the industry's central voice, advocating for members in policy discussions, lobbying for favourable legislation and promoting insurance schemes for farmers.

The association will play a central role in coordination and regulation across the poultry value chain, and this includes setting and enforcing production standards, encouraging self-regulation and controlling poultry imports to safeguard local producers.

Additionally, LePIA will support capacity building and knowledge sharing through training programs, technical assistance, research facilitation and data dissemination among members.

Economic development and partnerships will

also form a key part of LePIA's mandate.

The association plans to provide legal advisory services, foster collaboration with government agencies, banks, insurers and regional networks and create an enabling environment for poultry businesses. Moreover, it will monitor and evaluate sector performance, ensure compliance with standards and promote fair market access through standardised pricing and cross-border trade facilitation.

The stakeholder discussions, led by poultry consultant Alexander Stewart, emphasised that the association must represent the full spectrum of poultry actors and these include small, medium, and large-scale farmers, parent stock breeders, crop producers, feed millers, hatcheries, abattoirs, logistics providers, distributors, processors, retailers, veterinary and extension services, NGOs, training institutions and governance and regulatory bodies.

Stakeholders highlighted that the industry has faced multiple challenges over the years pointing at governance issues, political interference and rent-seeking behaviors as major factors that often undermined past associations.

The stakeholders indicated that members frequently joined organisations solely for funding access, with little awareness of mandates or commitment to sector growth.

Operational weaknesses, lack of skilled personnel, poor coordination of production cycles, inconsistent product quality and disputes arising from shared infrastructure have further hampered progress of past associations.

LePIA's formation directly supports the Lesotho Poultry Development Policy, which outlines a vi-

Ministry Brings Farming Support Closer to Farmers

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Farmers across Lesotho are preparing for summer cropping with a renewed sense of support and opportunity as the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition rolls out a decentralised programme designed to equip them with tools, trainings and access to new markets.

Speaking at a press conference, Minister Thabo Mofosi, revealed that services will be brought closer to farmers through the country's Resource Centres.

"We want farmers to have easier access to support and resources in their own communities," he said, adding they would be doing so under partnerships with manufacturers such as Kynoch and Bayer who would help capacitate farmers with the latest knowledge on fertilisers, seeds, and crop protection.

The services, he emphasised, are free and will begin in Maseru's Hoek on September 24, followed by Maseru and Leribe.

The Minister urged farmers to think beyond traditional reliance on government as their only market.

"Farming is one of the most profitable businesses. In this business, one can make a profit as high as 500 percent, even 1,000 percent. This is only possible when farmers also tap into other markets rather

than depending solely on selling to government," he said.

While only three regions are part of the pilot, Mofosi expressed confidence that the initiative will expand.

He also announced plans for 200 tractors to be purchased and made available to farmers through Post Bank under an arrangement where farmers pay 10 percent upfront and settle the rest in installments.

"This is about efficiency. If farmers fail to service their debt, the bank will repossess the tractors, but our aim is to ensure farmers have access to mechanisation to cultivate their land," he explained.

Thabo Sekhonyana, Director of Field Services, acknowledged current challenges with capacity, noting there are currently 68 Resource Centres and 124 Extension Workers across the country.

"There is a shortage, but our plan is to increase to at least 224 extension workers. This will ensure that all farmers who register at their local centres receive the necessary assistance," he said adding that farmers' needs will be captured and supported through the centres, with the Ministry also promising to add more computers to help extension workers measure fields accurately.

Weather forecasts from the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) have given further encour-

sion to create structured markets, developed value chains, modern production systems and a strong regulatory environment.

The policy identifies the lack of an inclusive umbrella body as a critical challenge, noting the need for coordinated value chain functions, advocacy, data management, and public-private dialogue.

Section 2.3.7 specifically underscores the importance of an apex body to perform these roles and calls on all poultry value chain players to join forces in its establishment.

From the meeting, a three-year steering committee was elected to guide LePIA's development. The committee represents a diverse mix of youth, women, and men from across the poultry value chain and is structured with a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Treasurer, Technical Advisor, and Public Relations Officer.

Its documented mission is "to establish an inclusive, self-sustaining, and well-governed National Poultry Representative Body that unites Lesotho's poultry value chain and advocates for the sector's growth."

Lekhoee Makhate, Director of Marketing in the Ministry of Agriculture, stressed the importance of unity saying, "the steering committee must maintain a strong relationship with the Ministry while safeguarding its independence. Unity is the main pillar to formalise this sector and achieve structured growth."

The committee's immediate priorities include mapping the poultry sector, conducting consultations with stakeholders, and collecting data to inform the apex body's framework.

The decision was that best practices from other industries, such as wool and mohair, will be reviewed for adaptation.

The committee was tasked to also analyse policy and legislative environments, assess financing models and develop strategies to ensure sustainability.

Funding is expected to come from annual or monthly member subscriptions, production or import levies, fundraising activities, cooperative savings (stokvels), grants, loans, donations and government support.

The association's long-term sustainability would rely on transparent governance, active membership participation, and effective coordination across the value chain.

The meeting projected that eight months after its inception, LePIA would be set for an official launch, bringing together government representatives, private sector actors and development partners.

At the launch, the committee would present the first-year work plan, begin membership registration and initiate priority projects such as market information systems, training manuals and negotiations with retailers.

Consultant Alexander Stewart highlighted critical targets for the association by the launch highlighting legal registration, a formal constitution, governance structure, membership systems, funding models, a national poultry development roadmap and an operational secretariat to coordinate activities.

agement to farmers. The 2025/26 season outlook predicts normal rainfall from October to December and wetter conditions in January and February. This aligns with hopes for a productive summer cropping season for maize, sorghum, beans, potatoes, and tomatoes.

The Ministry is also piloting agricultural insurance in partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP).

"Farm insurance, when fully implemented, will safeguard the livelihoods of farmers by providing financial protection against risks like crop failure and natural disasters," Mofosi explained.

The Minister revealed that infrastructure is being strengthened too.

"At Ha-Foso, construction is underway on a state-of-the-art storeroom that will link farmers directly with markets such as Lesotho Flour Mills. When farmers sell their produce at these facilities, they will be instantly paid, and a portion of the proceeds will be deducted for farming inputs. This is about planning for the future and ensuring farmers remain sustainable," the Minister said.

Director of Crop Services, 'Mamohoebi Mokuoane, praised the resilience of farmers, pointing to local self-sufficiency.

"Thanks to a bumper harvest, there will no longer be a need to import potato seedlings from abroad. Local production has reached sufficiency," she said.

Deputy Principal Secretary 'Malereko Molefi echoed the call for abundance. "Farmers should aim to produce in abundance," she said, underlining that Lesotho's agricultural sector has the potential not just to feed the nation but to drive its economic growth.



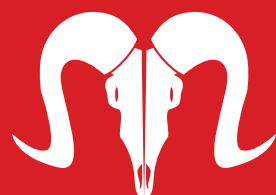
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ALLIANCE

Always there for Basotho

Agricultural Insurance, A Lifeline for Lesotho Farmers, Feasibility Study Shows

By Lerato Matheka

Lesotho's farmers may soon have the safety net they have long been waiting for. A newly completed feasibility study on agricultural insurance has revealed both the urgent need and the possibility of rolling out tailored insurance schemes to protect farmers against climate shocks, livestock disease, and market losses.

According to the Feasibility Study for Agricultural Insurance in Lesotho (June 2025), the country's farmers remain highly vulnerable to weather extremes, pests, and economic instability.

With most Basotho households depending on farming for food and income, risks such as prolonged drought, floods, or sudden livestock disease outbreaks can wipe out livelihoods in a single season.

The study makes clear that agricultural insurance could be transformative.

"Agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Lesotho, yet it is the sector most exposed to risk. Without safety nets, shocks translate directly into poverty and hunger," the report states.

The study highlights that Lesotho's geography and climate volatility increase farmers' exposure



Contrast of impacts of climate change

to loss.

It points to the 2015–2016 El Niño drought as an example, which devastated maize harvests, pushed food prices up, and left hundreds of thousands food insecure.

While insurance is widely used in other African countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Zambia, Lesotho lags behind. The feasibility study notes that

existing schemes are small and fragmented, often donor-driven, and not sustainable. Yet it also finds that farmers are aware of the need for protection.

In surveys conducted, a significant number of farmers expressed willingness to pay for crop or livestock insurance, provided premiums are affordable and payouts transparent.

However, challenges remain.

The study outlines low levels of financial literacy, limited trust in insurance providers, and the lack of reliable climate and production data as obstacles.

"Without data, it is difficult to design insurance products that respond accurately to farmer losses," the report warns.

Farmers also fear delayed or disputed claims, an issue that has undermined insurance uptake in neighboring countries.

Despite these hurdles, the study recommends piloting agricultural insurance in phases, starting with index-based weather insurance for maize and sorghum, and livestock cover for cattle and sheep.

Partnerships between government, private insurers, and development agencies would be key.

"Insurance should be embedded in broader agricultural development, linked with credit, extension, and input support," the report advises.

The benefits could be far-reaching. Farmers with insurance are more likely to invest in improved seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation, knowing that they are cushioned against total loss. This, in turn, can increase productivity and food security.

As one farmer interviewed during the study put it: "We are not afraid of hard work. But we need protection from things we cannot control — the weather, disease, or sudden disasters. Insurance would give us courage."

The feasibility study concludes with a call to action. It urges the Ministry of Agriculture, private sector, and partners to move quickly to design and test schemes before the next climate crisis strikes.

As the report emphasises, "Every season lost without risk protection is another season where farmers risk falling deeper into poverty."

By Molula Mofosi

Agriculture has long been seen as a male-dominated industry, but each year at the Farmers' Pitso Awards that perception is slowly changing.

This year, women were celebrated not only as participants but as leaders and innovators, walking away with some of the event's most notable awards.

Among them was Maneo Motopi, who stood tall with three trophies in her hands, capturing the imagination of many in Victory Hall.

The 41-year-old human resource specialist, a mother and wife, Motopi juggles multiple roles and still manages to command space in farming. She won first place in Potato Production, received an Honorary Award for the Cleanest Farm, and was recognised by the Potato Production Platform Association.

Motopi explained that women are not only present in potato farming but actually dominate the sector.

"In potato production, the number of women is higher than that of men. We are a more visible figure in this commodity, rounding to over 50 percent of women," she said.

Her words carried confidence, rejecting the idea that agriculture still belongs to men.

"We currently live in an era where opportunities are equally distributed to both genders, so these awards for me are proof that women are as hard workers as men. In fact, I do not necessarily compare myself to males; I focus on seeing what best I can do as an individual."

With her characteristic determination, Motopi reminded those listening that she sees no limits ahead.

"The confidence I have in myself is boosted by knowing that the sky is the limit and it belongs to nobody. It means I can do anything and everything. I also have solid support from my family as they are always by my side," she said.

In her farm, biosecurity and hygiene are her pride. Receiving an award for cleanliness, she explained that "while agriculture may seemingly look like a dirty job, personal hygiene and farm hygiene are essential."

"Usually, the majority of this work happens during harvest seasons where indeed I have to forget manicure and makeup. During soil preparation and planting season, it does not require much, but efficient management strategies."

She balances many identities — a mother, wife, friend, civil servant, church woman, yet finds

Women's Role in Agriculture Spotlighted at Farmers' Pitso



Maneo Motopi Receiving 1st place prize award on Potato Production

strength in faith.

"I strike a balance between all these hats which may seem like a lot for one person, however I draw my strength in believing God," she said.

Her choice of potatoes, she added, was strategic: "I am willing to produce this commodity for as long as I have energy. We eat potatoes in different servings. From chips to salads or served as a staple, a potato is always in demand and easily marketable."

She described her first year of production, which already brought recognition, as proof that she made the right financial decision.

"As I continue to focus on this production and grow my business through input collection, I foresee a good financial choice," she said.

Motopi admitted that potato farming is labour intensive, especially in harvesting and packaging, which pushes her to innovate. "I am currently trying to reduce labour cost and input costs, as these are the largest expenses on the farm. While it is true that

we want to create employment for Basotho, we also need to make profit," she explained.

And, while she works tirelessly, she also finds joy in the land she cultivates. "We live right at the farm, so gazing at the greenery with a glass of wine helps me relax. Watching the work of my hands is therapeutic, so I take time off to enjoy the sight," she said.

The impact of her farm extends beyond her household. In Sehlabeng, Baruting, her farm creates jobs and provides fresh food locally. "I use local human capital, and this has brought bread to families close to the farm. Further, there is now an option of fresher food within the community. Now people know they can get pork and potatoes on closer range," she said.

Her commitment to food security is personal as well.

"I champion producing what we eat, and my family and I live to the standard of food production, preserving our fruit and vegetable harvest to enjoy

through the year. My goal is to only have salt on my grocery list because it is the only thing I cannot produce," she said with laughter.

For her, recognition was unexpected but deeply affirming. "People usually say to me I make farming look interesting. I didn't know that the cleanliness of how I present myself as a farmer as well as clean surroundings would one day earn me an award," she reflected.

Motopi was not the only woman recognised. From Mafeteng, Maneo Ramatla was honoured in mohair production. She explained that her commitment is what sustains her farm.

"When my herd man is not present, I take the sheep to grazing on my own. I also make sure to produce food for them, so this is a full-time job or commitment for me," she said.

For Ramatla, wool and mohair require absolute dedication. "I believe what makes women less active in wool and mohair production is the amount of effort it requires. It is a hands-on commitment that will not succeed if the farmer is not on site," she said, pointing out that the best results come from total involvement.

Puleng Matebesi, co-founder of the Farmers' Pitso Awards and the only woman among the four founding members, said women's presence in all categories has become impossible to ignore.

"While we have not done a statistical analysis on the growing number of women in Farmers' Pitso Awards, the participation of women is visible," she said. She urged women to go beyond commodities already dominated by females and to step into large-scale grain production.

"Block farming is still commonly known to be dominated by men, and I urge women to tap into that category as well," she said.

Matebesi emphasised that inclusion remains a central mission of the organisation, saying, "It is our mission as an organisation to include Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in agriculture. Gender equality is beyond male and female. I had just attended a training workshop on gender issues, and I am intentional about the gender mainstreaming mandate in agriculture," she added.



SMARTD’s 11th Festival Rekindles Basotho’s Bond with the Land,

By Topollo Tlali

The small town of Ha-Sekake in the Qacha’s Nek district came alive with colour, sound, and hope.

Farmers, school children, conservationists, and academics marched through the streets, their banners dancing in the breeze, their Sesotho poems echoing ancestral wisdom.

They were not marching for politics or protest, but for seeds, the humble treasures that carry the story of Basotho survival.

This was the 11th Indigenous Seeds Festival, hosted by the Southern Mountain Association for Rural Transformation and Development (SMARTD) under the theme **“Discovering treasure of African indigenous seeds and food through agroecology.”**

For more than a decade, SMARTD has turned this gathering into a national symbol of pride, reminding Basotho that farming is not just survival, it is their truest identity.

Programme coordinator with SMARTD, Fako Faku, opened the festival with a challenge to all present: to see seeds not only as crops but as shields against hunger and climate change.

“The seed festival is an annual celebration and as SMARTD this is our 11th edition since 2014. The celebration aims to encourage the conservation of indigenous seed varieties which are open and resilient to climate change,” he told the cheering crowd.

He explained that these traditional varieties, nurtured in Lesotho’s rocky soils and unpredictable weather, carry resilience that imported hybrids cannot match.

Farmers did not just listen; they showcased. Stalls filled the festival grounds with jars of beans, lentils, maize, wheat, and potatoes, alongside traditional foods like nyekoe and sour porridge.

Each display was a lesson in agro-biodiversity, proof that Basotho farmers still hold keys to food sovereignty.

Among the most inspiring testimonies came from Malintle Thapo of Senqu and Senqunyane Nutrition Seeds.

Taking to the stage, she described how SMARTD’s trainings had changed her community’s outlook.

“After this organisation trained us on the importance of indigenous seeds, we went home

...Celebrates Seeds of Heritage



Farmers, school children, conservationists, and academics marched through the streets,



Programme coordinator with SMARTD, Fako Faku,

and united ourselves. Our association began in 2022, and today we are able to produce our own varieties of indigenous seeds because of SMARTD’s guidance,” she said.

Her words sparked loud applause as she shared their plans to create a hub where Basotho can access seeds proudly made in their own villages.



SMARTD director, Matlotliso Phooko,

For SMARTD director, Matlotliso Phooko, the day was more than a showcase. It was a celebration of food, nutrition, and dignity.

“This seeds festival is not only about seeds but also for acknowledging Basotho’s food. We prepare traditional food, we produce and eat, so in general we celebrate good nutrition,” she explained.

plained. She added that training farmers to save and reproduce seeds has not been easy, but it has empowered communities to become independent.

Collaborations with the National University of Lesotho and Lesotho Agricultural College she said have helped strengthen this mission, blending research with indigenous wisdom.

The voice of academia echoed through the words of Relebohile Mojaki, who represented the universities.

“Universities and schools of higher learning are not isolated bodies but are actual participants who work with farming communities in collaboration with SMARTD,” she said.

Mojaki stressed that the future of farming is not about choosing between modernity and tradition, but about blending the two.

“The future of agriculture in our southern African region is not by choosing between traditional seeds and modernity but by blending the two together to get the best yield.”

The festival also drew international partners who fund SMARTD’s efforts.

Mrs. Caecilia Theisinger from Brot für die Welt in Germany said she was touched by what she saw.

“I am really impressed by your work. I have seen various seeds and the community engagement and how people are really dedicated. When going back to Germany, I will present your good work to partners in order to have a prolonged healthy relationship with SMARTD.”

SMARTD chairperson, Sempe Nkuebe, brought the message home with a powerful reflection; “the seed cannot be separated from the soil, water, rangelands, animals and crops. Everything begins with a seed and farmers should rethink and conserve everything that partakes in food production.”

He reminded participants that even His Majesty King Letsie III is recognised as the African Union’s Nutrition Champion, underscoring the importance of food sovereignty for the nation.

The day closed with laughter, dances, and song.

Children entertained the crowds with traditional dances while civil societies explained their projects, weaving learning with celebration. For many, it was a day of rediscovering that agriculture is not just toil in the fields, but a rhythm of life, culture, and hope.



Traditional Seeds



Celebrations



Traditional Seeds

Counting the Hidden Deaths: Climate Change, Health and Food Crisis



Mafeteng Hospital

By Lerato Matheka

When Mafeteng Hospital ran out of water between November 2024 and March 2025, surgeries were postponed, wards went unwashed, and patients with open wounds left at risk of infection.

Nurses whispered their frustration as families were told to fetch buckets of water from tanker trucks, and doctors lamented that they could not wash their hands between patients. This was not merely an inconvenience. It was a matter of life and death.

The newly released State of Africa's Environment 2025 report by Centre of Science and Environment shines a light on invisible casualties of climate change: deaths that are not counted as "heat deaths" or "drought deaths," but manifest in strokes, kidney failure, hunger, water-borne disease, and untreated infections.

As the report warns, "Heat threatens health, food security, labour productivity and migration, making Africa one of the most vulnerable continents to climate-linked mortality."

In 2024 alone, the report estimates, 300 million Africans were exposed to life-threatening heat stress, three out of every four cases worldwide.

"Every heatwave that occurs today is made more intense, more frequent and longer-lasting due to climate change," it states. Yet, it continues that few of these deaths are recorded as climate deaths. They appear instead as heart attacks, kidney failure, malnutrition, or pneumonia triggered by dehydration and heat.

The World Meteorological Organization puts the scale in perspective: "Every third death in the world from extreme weather, climate or water stress in the past 50 years occurred in Africa."

Most of these deaths, the agency notes, were not caused by cyclones or wildfires, but by slow-burning droughts and silent heatwaves.

For Southern Africa, the agency says the outlook is dire.

The report further projects that the region could

face temperature rises of up to 6°C in some areas by the end of the century, with more frequent and intense heatwaves.

The report notes that night-time temperatures



are climbing fast, meaning no respite

for exhausted bodies.

The World Health Organization Health (WHO) experts warn this will push up deaths from cardiovascular strain, kidney disease, and heat stroke.

Lesotho is no exception, the World Bank's Climate Knowledge Portal confirms that the country is already experiencing more frequent droughts and erratic rainfall, while the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee reported in 2023 that over 500,000 Basotho faced acute food insecurity.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said, in its 'addressing Lesotho's climate and environmental challenges' report, Lesotho is highly exposed to recurrent natural disasters, particularly droughts, floods, and storms.

"The frequency and severity of these disasters have increased significantly in the past decade. With over two-thirds of the population dependent on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, the share of the population directly exposed to natural disasters ranks fourth among sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries, well above the SSA and world average.

And in the absence of augmentation measures such as increased bulk water supply, these frequent changes in precipitation exacerbate unmet demand for industrial and household uses."

As one Mafeteng resident said, "We are dying slowly, not from bullets, but from thirst." The report itself puts it plainly: "Climate hazards are no longer distant threats but present-day killers that strike hardest at the poor, the young, the old, and the sick."

The health burden of climate change according to the report extends beyond heat. It notes that rising temperatures expand the range of malaria and dengue, diseases once confined to tropical zones.

The report warns of 775,000 additional deaths in Africa by 2050 from malaria alone if adaptation fails.

Food insecurity, too, is a killer: according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 16 of the 19 global hunger hot-spots in 2025 were in Africa, with over 115 million people in Eastern and Southern Africa facing acute food shortages.

"Malnutrition, especially among children, magnifies mortality rates by lowering resistance to infections. Water scarcity adds another layer," the convention said adding that Fourteen African countries are already water-stressed, with 11 more expected to join by the end of 2025.

The report warns that nearly half of Africa's 1.45 billion people could face severe water stress by mid-decade. This is the hidden death toll: where climate change is not written on the death certificate, but where its fingerprints are everywhere.

The solutions are not mysterious. The report calls for Heat Action Plans that go beyond cooling to tackle vulnerability and resilience: reliable water, expanded green spaces in cities, retrofitted housing, and health systems that can respond to heat-related illnesses.

Galvanising integrated water management within SADC

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Sustainable management of the water resources, energy, food and ecosystems this week came under the sharp focus during the 11th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Multi-Stakeholder Water Dialogue in Maseru that spanned two days.

Convened under the theme "Water Security, Innovation and Nexus Action: Watering and Enabling Regional Economic Development Corridors for Transformation in SADC" the dialogue had brought together experts in water, development partners, representatives from the multilateral institutions, civil society actors, civil servants and lawmakers.

This dialogue builds on the outcome of the 44th SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government where a call for the sustained economic growth and development were made.

SADC region is home to river basins such as the Okavango, spanning three countries Angola, Botswana and Namibia and Orange-Senqu traversing four countries, Lesotho, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

During the dialogue, representatives from the region emphasised that water is an invaluable resource that not only facilitates agricultural production but also serves as a catalyst for economic development.

On behalf of the SADC Secretariat Director Infrastructure Mapolao Mokoena, Senior Programme Officer for Water at the SADC Secretariat Dr Patrice Kabeya highlighted that the outcomes of the dialogue are expected to inform the regional water programme in support of the delivery of the new regional initiative of smart regional economic corridors recently endorsed by the SADC Council of Ministers in August this year. This he noted have been adopted in the SADC Vision 2050, Industrialisation Strategy and Roadmap 2015-2063 and the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2020-2030.

"The 11th Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue particularly seeks to explore how the water sector, functioning with the ambit of the Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus framework, can contribute effectively to support the delivery of the new regional initiative of smart regional economic corridors."

SADC acknowledge water as key factor in enabling the regional stability and spurring the shared growth within the region as it is the lifeblood of communities, economies and ecosystems.

European Union Lesotho's Head of Cooperation, Anna Rieni pointed out that restoration and protection of headwaters will play a crucial role for climate adaptation, while economic development corridors depend on secure and sustainable water resources. She underscored that sustainable water security in region can be realized through action and coordination at all levels.

Andrew Takawira from the Global Water Partnership noted paradox facing the region reminding the participants that the economies are under pressure owing to climate variabilities, water scarcity and growing demands of food and energy systems. This he said is manifest during a time when the region is advancing bold ambitions including industrialization, agricultural transformation and energy transition.

Meanwhile, there have been challenges in the region on the ease of goods and people between countries and this has been an elephant in the room for many Member States. Mohlomi Moleko, Minister of Natural Resources also touched on the need for open borders and corporation for success.

He noted that some countries which exhibit xenophobic tendencies make it hard for mutual exchanges among the sister countries. The Minister said it is easier to buy wheat from Europe and import from China that it is to trade within the SADC Member States.

"Water is indispensable to every link in the region value chain from agriculture and energy to trade and industrial processing," said Moleko. He added: "Without water, there can be no inclusive growth, no food and energy security, and no sustainable industrial transformation. Therefore application of adaptive and inclusive WEFE Nexus approaches is key."

Africa's Warming Crisis: The State of the Environment Report Rings the Alarm

...Lesotho's Wake-Up Call and The Lessons of Mafeteng's Water Crisis

By Lerato Matheka

Between November 2024 and March 2025, Mafeteng district in Lesotho lived through one of its harshest crises in memory, a reality that Africa is no longer waiting for climate change, it is living it.

Prolonged drought and blistering heat left dams in Mafeteng nearly empty, taps running dry and families queuing for scarce water.

Hospitals rationed what little remained, schools cut back and entire villages were reduced to waiting for tanker trucks.

For many Basotho, this was the first tangible experience of what scientists had been warning for decades: climate change is not tomorrow's threat, it is today's reality.

The State of Africa's Environment 2025 report and Africa Too Hot To Cool study, both by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), released last week, confirms what Basotho lived through: Africa is warming 1.5 times faster than the global average with wide-ranging consequences on agriculture, water and public health.

The reports reveal Africa is warming at +0.3°C per decade, compared to the global +0.2°C.

“In 2024, the continent's average temperature anomaly was +0.87°C above the 1991–2020 baseline,” the State of Africa's Environment 2025 report noted, citing the Southern Africa region, including Lesotho, is among the fastest warming regions, already brushing against the 1°C mark.

Without urgent action, the report's projections suggest 3–6°C warming by century's end in some areas.

The report further warns that the impacts will not be evenly spread but will devastate all regions. It notes that “nearly 35 African cities can experience more than 150 days of 40°C plus temperatures annually,” while West Africa could see 17–40 million climate-related migrants by 2050.

In Southern Africa, the report says ‘clear rises in heatwave frequency, intensity and duration’ are already visible, with projections of temperature increases of up to 6°C in interior regions.

The report outlines how different regions are affected in varied but equally alarming ways;

“In West Africa, heatwaves are projected to rise by 3–6°C by mid-century, threatening livelihoods and potentially displacing up to 40 million people by 2050.”

“East Africa, historically cooler, is expected to warm by between 1.5 and 5.4°C with rising extremes that could devastate both crops and pastorate systems.”

“Southern Africa faces more frequent and intense heatwaves, while Central Africa,



Citizens forced to drink dirty water due to drought.



The State of Africa's Environment 2025 report Launch

where dense forests once acted as buffers, will see nearly the entire population regularly exposed to dangerous heat once global warming reaches 2°C.”

The report indicates that the human cost of these rising temperatures is already visible with an estimated 300 million Africans exposed to life-threatening heat stress in 2024, representing 75 percent of global exposure to this risk.

The report further noted that by late 21st century, heat exposure could rise 12-fold with 10–30% more dangerous hot days and 6–20% greater intensity in West, Central & North East Africa.

The toll is not only measured in heatstroke cases but in cascading impacts: higher incidences of heart and kidney disease, food insecurity as yields decline, reduced labour productivity and growing migration pressures.

“Over the past 60 years, Africa has recorded a warming trend that has generally been more rapid than the global average... the climate has changed at rates unprecedented in at least 2,000 years.” State of Africa's Environment 2025 report noted.

“Between 2021–2025, Africa saw about 221.57 million people affected by extreme weather and deaths related to disasters

jumped to about 28,759, over three times the number in 2016–2020.”

According to Afrobarometer (2024), 91% of Basotho say drought has worsened in their region over the past ten years, and 87% say crop failures have become more severe, while the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee's 2024 report shows a 32% decrease in area planted in the 2023/24 season compared to 2022/23 due to El Niño-induced dry spells, with Maize production dropping by 52% in 2024 compared to the previous season.

While global warming and climate change are primary drivers of the local impacts, the Too Hot to Cool report broadens the lens, showing that Africa's crisis is no longer confined to rural fields but is expanding into cities.

Urban growth, paved surfaces and shrinking green spaces, it says have created ‘urban heat islands’ that trap dangerous temperatures.

“In Lagos, built-up areas expanded by 70 percent in under a decade, cutting green cover to 13.8 percent. Johannesburg recorded land surface temperatures soaring to 45–51°C in extreme heat zones.”

“Urban areas are emerging as epicentres of this crisis,” the report points to the Urban

Heat Island (UHI) effect as a critical factor, with urban areas experiencing significantly higher temperatures due to impervious surfaces, dense buildings and reduced green cover.

“...wet-bulb temperature is particularly dangerous in humid African cities where the body's natural cooling through sweating is compromised,” the report says, warning that energy demand is also expected to spiral.

“Household electricity demand [in Africa] is projected to more than double from 160 TWh to 350 TWh by 2030” yet, most households remain energy poor.

To make matters worse, “...the continent is becoming a dumping ground for old and second-hand air conditioners that are more energy-inefficient... consuming two to three times more electricity than new models. These are cheaper upfront but consume significantly more electricity.

The authors of the reports stress that Africa cannot afford to limit its response to cooling alone.

“African countries are beginning to combat this through regulations, import bans and the adoption of Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS). Ghana for example has taken the lead to ban import of old and used air conditioners. Several African countries have or are developing building codes, standards and labelling for appliances to improve energy efficiency and are at different level of progress,” the report notes citing nearly 40 countries have adopted national cooling action plans or strategies in Africa.

“These largely align with the objectives of the Montreal Protocol to phase out ozone depleting refrigerants and improve energy efficiency of the appliances and cooling systems. Depending on the scope and design of these plans, some of these have recommended adoption of climate-responsive building architecture, passive cooling designs along with improvement in energy efficiency performance.”

“However, it is now necessary to do more than energy efficiency to address vulnerability, equity and heat resilience at building and city level. Countries need heat management plans and action,” they says, noting currently, Sierra Leone is the only African country with a dedicated Heat Action Plan.

“The call is for others to follow with strategies that expand green and blue spaces, retrofit informal housing, strengthen healthcare systems, and implement early warning systems for heatwaves.

The World Health Organisation echoes this urgency, noting that heat waves account for substantial fatalities and illness worldwide while their frequency, duration, and intensity are climbing sharply, saying for Africa, the cost of inaction could be catastrophic. “Heat threatens not only human health but also the very systems that sustain life: food production, water supply, and economic productivity.”



Climate Debt: Africa Pays the Price for a Crisis It Did Not Create



By Lerato Matheka

Africa is standing as the epicenter of a climate emergency that it did not create. This was the resounding message from the launch of the State of Africa’s Environment 2025 Report in Addis Ababa a fortnight ago, where leaders, scientists, Journalists and international representatives gathered to lay bare the economic and social costs of climate change on the continent.

The Director of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) Addis Liaison Office, Dr. Rita Bissoonauth, captured the essence of the crisis: “Africa is on the

front-line of a climate emergency it did not create. Climate hazards are causing significant economic losses across the continent, with estimated average direct losses of \$1.18 billion per year in Northern Africa and \$1.25 billion per year in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is not just an environmental crisis; it is a profound inequality.”

The report confirms that climate change is a debt Africa did not sign up for but is paying daily. With warming at 0.3°C per decade, faster than the global average, African economies and societies are being battered by droughts, floods, cyclones, and extreme heat. These events have already slashed crop yields, destroyed infrastructure, and left millions displaced.

Water scarcity has become a recurring emergency: according to the report, 14 African countries are already facing chronic shortages and another 11 are projected to join them by the end of 2025, a crisis that could place nearly half of the continent’s 1.45 billion people at risk of severe water stress.

This is not just science on paper. Across the continent, the human face of climate debt is everywhere. Farmers in Lesotho struggling through prolonged droughts, informal settlement dwellers in Nairobi enduring record-breaking heat, and rural families in Malawi rebuilding after devastating floods all bear witness to the same truth: Africa is paying a high price for emissions released far beyond its borders.

Ethiopia’s Environment Protection Authority chief, Lelise Neme, was emphatic: “Discussing and working on issues of climate and environmental protection is not extravagance, it is a matter of existence and way of life.”

He pointed to sobering United Nations Framework Convention on Climate (UNFCCC) data showing that 16 of the 19 global hunger hot-spots in 2025 are in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Sahel.

“In South Sudan and Sudan, over 56 percent of the population is already affected by acute food insecurity. In total, more than 115 million Africans faced acute hunger in 2025, directly linked to environmental shocks exacerbated by conflict. Yet, even in the face of this burden, Africa is showing pathways of resilience.

Ethiopia’s Green Legacy Initiative, launched by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, has become a continental symbol of adaptation. In July 2025, the country planted a record-breaking 714.7 million seedlings in a single day, as part of a five-year target to plant 54 billion trees by 2026. The program is designed not only to capture carbon but to restore degraded landscapes, protect watersheds, and create jobs.

As Neme told the Addis gathering, “This is an African model of climate adaptation.”

But adaptation has limits without justice. Dr. Bissoonauth reminded journalists that climate justice cannot be separated from historical justice.

She pointed to the AU’s 2025 theme on Reparations, stressing that climate debt requires new forms of financing, fair partnerships, and global solidarity.

“Climate justice is inseparable from historical

justice. This is a call to action, through innovative financing and public-private collaboration, to scale investment where it counts.”

The report itself details the economic weight of climate change. In addition to the billion-dollar direct losses cited for North and Sub-Saharan Africa, the report notes that the rising demand for cooling, infrastructure repair, and health responses will drive hidden costs far higher.

It continues noting that outdoor labour productivity losses in West Africa alone could amount to nine million jobs by 2030, while the World Bank estimates climate change could shave off 2–4 percent of Africa’s annual GDP by 2050 if unchecked.

For Lesotho, these figures translate into familiar struggles. When drought gripped Mafeteng between November 2024 and March 2025, farmers lost crops, livestock weakened, and hospitals rationed water. It was a reminder that the climate debt is not abstract, it is lived in empty fields, dry taps, and lost incomes.

According to the Lesotho National Adaptation Plan, droughts alone have been estimated to reduce total GDP by 1-4%, while soil erosion knocks off another 2-3% of agricultural GDP (which translates to around 1% of total GDP).

The International Monetary Fund also note that the Lesotho disaster relief costs are high, noting that during a significant El Niño-induced drought in 2015,2016, and flooding in 2010, 2011, relief costs amounted to USD 38 million and USD 67 million, representing 1.7% and 3.2% of GDP, respectively.

“Repeated exposure to natural disasters affects fiscal and macro-financial stability, with severe consequences for food security of low-income households. Natural disasters severely disrupt agriculture and livelihoods, increase net food imports, and ultimately worsen the fiscal stance.

“Based on data available for the two extreme disasters, the cost of disaster relief for the El Niño-induced drought in FY15/16 and the floods in FY10/11 was estimated at US\$38 million (LSL584 million, 1.7 percent of GDP) and US\$67 million (LSL462.7 million, 3.2 percent of GDP), respectively. The average annual cost of disaster relief is about US\$19.3 million (1 percent of GDP in FY19/20), most of which is borne by the government with limited donor support that was provided only for extreme disasters,” IMF said.

UNESCO’s Bissoonauth challenged African journalists to play their part in telling these stories: “Reports don’t change the world; people do, especially those who turn complex evidence into public understanding and demand for action. Report through a human lens: humanise the science and scientific the human story.”

Africa’s Future Lies in Bioeconomy, Says Scientist

By Lerato Matheka

Africa must not resign itself to being a victim of climate change but instead turn its natural resources into a powerful driver of sustainable development through a bioeconomy.

This was the message delivered by Professor Kassahun Tesfaye, Director-General of the Bio and Emerging Technology Institute, during the launch of The State of Africa’s Environment 2025 report in Addis Ababa a fortnight ago.

“Africa, which has contributed the least to global greenhouse gas emissions, is suffering the most from its consequences, but our fate is not to remain victims. Science does not just diagnose problems, it forges solutions. And our greatest liability, our natural resources and land, can become our most powerful asset to build a sustainable bioeconomy,” Professor Tesfaye said,

He described the bioeconomy as a system that uses renewable biological resources including; crops, forests, animals and micro-organisms to produce food, materials, and energy in a way that regenerates rather than depletes the environment.

“It is a circular economy, where waste is not an endpoint but a new beginning,” he explained.

To illustrate, Professor Tesfaye pointed to the sugar industry as a sector ripe for transformation noting that the old model views sugarcane only as a



PROFESSOR Tesfaye

source of crystalline sugar.

“...but in a bioeconomy, the sugar industry becomes an integrated biorefinery where every part of the plant is utilised to create a range of valuable bio-products. This is not just an upgrade, it is a transformation from a single-output system into a zero-waste powerhouse that can generate wealth while helping us reduce dependency on fossil fuels.”

Professor Tesfaye argued that Africa must re-imagine its agriculture, not as a contributor to deforestation and emissions, but as a global carbon sink.

“By adopting climate-smart practices such as agroforestry, integrating trees like enset and coffee into cropping systems and cultivating drought-resistant, nutrient-rich indigenous crops, we can restore soil health, sequester carbon and build resilience into our food systems,” he said.

Turning to waste, Professor Tesfaye called it “misplaced value.”

He explained that agricultural residues, from coffee husks to teff, rice and wheat straw, can be transformed into bioenergy for clean cooking and to power rural industries.

“Organic municipal waste can become compost or be converted into biogas. This is not just environmental management, it is job creation and enterprise development at the local level.”

Protecting biodiversity, he stressed, must also underpin Africa’s bioeconomy.

“Africa is home to a quarter of the world’s biodiversity. This genetic library is a treasure trove of solutions to improve agriculture, develop drugs and create new materials for industry,” he explained.

He stressed that a strong bioeconomy strategy invests in bioprospecting, guided by strict ethical principles of access and benefit-sharing, to ensure that the value of Africa’s genetic resources benefits its people.

Professor Tesfaye outlined three key pillars for implementing Africa’s bioeconomy strategy: investment in science, supportive policies and strong partnerships.

“We need homegrown research and empowered institutions like our national agricultural research systems and universities to drive bio-innovation. Governments must create enabling environments and policies that incentivise green investments, set standards for bio-based products and protect intellectual property rights. And above all, we need partnerships between public and private sectors, between farmers’ cooperatives and scientists. No single entity can do this alone.”

He indicated that to have the three pillars possible, there is a need for financial backing to begin and a strong political will from governments.

He concluded with a stark reminder that the choices Africa makes now will determine its future.

“The State of Africa’s Environment Report holds up a mirror. It shows us a continent under threat, but also one with huge potential. Do we continue on a path of vulnerability, or do we pioneer a new path of vitality? Let us choose the path of the bioeconomy. Let us build a future where Africa is not defined by the climate crisis it suffers, but by the climate solutions it creates,” he said.



Evergreen Excellence, How SADP II turned a Small Dream Grew Into Year-Round Abundance



By Topollo Tlali

Rows of greenery stretch confidently beneath shade nets. Tomatoes ripen even in winter. At Foles Evergreen Farm, consistent vegetable production is the order of the day.

What began with four tiny plots feeding office colleagues has become a farm that feeds schools, supermarkets, and street vendors all year round.

Led by Mrs Mamafole Rakuba of Ha Potsane in Mophale's Hoek, Evergreen Farm paints a story of persistence, learning, and support and proof that with the right backing, farmers in Lesotho can defy the seasons.

Rakuba recounts how her journey began not on the land, but in the corridors of Nedbank Lesotho, where she works as an accountant.

During lunch breaks recalls how she would rush to the street vendors nearby, not just to buy but to observe.

"I wanted to learn what customers need, how they buy and how vendors survive," she says.

"It was an unusual classroom, but it taught me lessons no textbook could: that relationships matter, that customers must be listened to and that agriculture was not just about planting, but about people," Rakuba says.

Her earliest harvests were modest, green peppers and a few vegetables sold to colleagues.

But demand grew, and so did her courage.

Soon her baskets were not enough, and she began to expand, balancing ledgers by day and planting by evening.

"Selling on the street may look low to others but it gave me insights on customers, their purchasing styles and the challenges of being a vendor," she notes.

The turning point came when she heard whispers about SADP II, a programme designed to help farmers adopt climate-smart agriculture and grow beyond survival.

At first, she was told it was not for people with jobs and discouragement almost made her give up, but a client at the bank urged her to try again, insisting SADP worked with everyone committed to farming.

This time, she walked into their offices, asked relevant questions to be informed, she applied.

The result was the breakthrough she had been waiting for, her application succeeded.

"The SADP II brought more than funding. It brought tools that turned my vision into



reality. They bought boreholes to ensure water supply was consistent. They helped me procure shade nets to protect crops and provided me with technical support that transformed mistakes into mastery.

"Irrigation specialists came to help me insert drips properly," she recalls noting, "without them, this quality of production would not be possible."

From that moment, Evergreen Farm began to change. Tomatoes, once confined to Lesotho's short summers, now thrived under frost blankets in winter too.

Winter yields reached over 100 boxes, while summer harvests soared beyond 500.

The farm supplies Shoprite, schools, vendors, and the surrounding community.

For the first time, it was possible to imagine tomatoes in Lesotho as a year-round crop.

The story is not just about crops, but about people. Four permanent workers keep the farm alive and up to twenty more are employed during peak times.

One student, after working there, was inspired

to apply to the National University of Lesotho to study agriculture she says.

"I am proud to create jobs and food at the same time. Helping a young person to see the future in farming is a milestone for Evergreen Farm."

Visitors at the recent field day saw more than tunnels and rows of vegetables. They saw resilience. They saw a model of what Lesotho's agriculture could become.

Officials, students, and farmers walked through the plots as the farmer explained differences between tunnels, shade nets, and open fields.

Hygiene was highlighted as part of farm management.

"As people we also carry infections that can affect crops. Hygiene is not only for hospitals, but for farms too," she reminded them.

For SADP II, Evergreen Farm is a demonstration of what the programme stands for.

The Ministry of Finance's Masebekane Makhabeli praised the farm for breaking Lesotho's dependence on imports. "This farm proves that agriculture is not only about survival, but about growth and resilience in the face of climate change," she said.

But even with success, the Rakuba insists no one walks alone.

Associations and unions, she explained, have been central to her journey.

"As a farmer if you walk alone, you cannot find success because agriculture has many challenges that need one to have supportive colleagues or else one may give up." "Associations became more than groups, they became my safety nets, places of encouragement, and sources of shared knowledge," she describes.

"The significance of Fole Evergreen Farm reaches beyond Ha Potsane. It represents a shift in mindset. It shows that Lesotho does not have to wait for imported vegetables when local production can thrive with the right systems."

"This journey demonstrates that farming is not punishment but opportunity, not seasonal, but sustainable. It proves that agriculture, when treated as a business, can yield profits of 500% or more, as the Minister of Agriculture himself often reminds," Lereko Masupha from the Agriculture Information Office said.

As the sun set over the field day, Masupha summed up the meaning of the farm.

"This is the answer to food security for the whole nation," he says, stressing that every green row at Evergreen tells that story.





From Support to Success: Village Fresh Shows the Power of SADP II



By Seahlolo Reporter

In the quiet village of St. Monicas on the outskirts of Hlotse in the Leribe district, a farm that once began with nothing but vegetables on borrowed soil has grown into a thriving agribusiness that produces vegetables, grains, and meat all year round.

Village Fresh Veggies & Meat, founded by farmer and entrepreneur, Mamasoabi Horoto, is now a living example of what persistence, innovation and the right support can achieve.

The farm’s journey began humbly in the year 2000, long before land ownership was secured. Vegetables were planted wherever space was available, and income was barely enough to sustain the work.

“My farming year began very early before I could even have land. In 2005 I finally had land and produced vegetables for sale. In 2015 the government of Lesotho aided me with a small shade net. That was the very beginning of my real journey.”

Like many farmers, Mamasoabi faced years of rejection and disappointment.

She first applied under SADP I, but her application did not succeed. Still, she did not give up.

The resilience to keep planting, learning, and growing became her anchor and when SADP II opened its doors, she tried again — this time with success.

The grant she received through SADP II was transformative.



Village Fresh Veggies & Meat was equipped with boreholes, tanks, and greenhouses spanning 30 by 60 metres.

A farm that once relied on roof gutters for water was suddenly secured with a reliable bore-hole and pump generator.

“Before, we collected water from roof gutters but with SADP II, we were granted a bore-hole with two tanks and a pump. That changed everything,” she said.

Training accompanied the grant, and with it came knowledge that would shape the farm’s resilience.

“SADP II introduced workshops on seedling production, pest management, irrigation techniques, and general horticulture. These were not abstract lessons — they were practical solutions to everyday challenges. In vegetable production, I had pest challenges and the workshops provided valuable techniques and information on how to manage them. During heavy rainfalls, the shade nets protected us from both hail and rapid rain,” she explained.

The results were visible.

Where once there was struggle, now there is consistency. Village Fresh Veggies & Meat supplies vegetables and meat under contract farming arrangements with suppliers.

Markets that once felt distant are now within reach, supported further by her commitment to digital marketing.

“We do not struggle with the market at all. Through SADP II assistance, the farm created profits that even afforded the purchase of a car for logistics, making stock supply easy,” she said with pride.

“The car is more than a convenience; it is a symbol of how far the farm has come. In the past, money drained away in transport costs, eroding profits and slowing growth. Today, logistics are managed strategically, ensuring that earnings go back into building the farm,” she said.

She noted that structures for layer and broiler chickens were built, expanding production beyond vegetables into meat.

Five acres of maize are harvested, ensuring not just profit but also feed for poultry and an affordable supply for small-scale farmers in the area.

For Mamasoabi, farming is about more than income. It is about creating opportunities and inspiring the next generation.

Village Fresh Veggies & Meat now employs three permanent workers and mentors seven young farmers.

“The workshops paired with experience have made me knowledgeable and I focus on climate change sensitisation and climate-smart agriculture. It is visible that the youth are steadfast in pursuing agriculture,” she said.

Her mentorship reflects a deep belief in farming as a national solution: “It is important that farmers believe in themselves. Agriculture does not only require passion but courage as well. With patience, hope and persistence, I promise you will eventually defeat hunger.”

The impact of SADP II shines through her story and beyond grants and training, it has given farmers like Mamasoabi a chance to transform farming from hand-to-mouth survival into sustainable business.

“It is my plea for the government to continue the SADP II initiative. The agricultural industry continues to need the impact of SADP II. I am where I am because of SADP II and it is my wish for every farmer to benefit from it,” she said.

Yet even with success, challenges remain. Farming is never without risk and climate change, pests, and water management remain constant

threats. But, Village Fresh Veggies & Meat stands as proof that with resilience and the right support, farmers can rise above these challenges.





SADP II Opens Doors for a Rising Poultry Visionary

By Seahlolo Reporter

Greenek Pty Ltd, founded by the determined and visionary Mamohase Rasekhetho Leribe, in the village of Ha Mo-japela, is more than a poultry farm. It is a story of grit, resilience and the transformative impact of support through SADP II.

When the farm opened its doors in 2017, it began with just 200 chickens. It was a modest start, rooted more in determination than resources. But as the years unfolded, Greenek Farm weathered challenge after challenge, growing into a thriving enterprise that now houses more than 1,000 layers and has ambitions that stretch far beyond the cages.

Like many farmers, Mamohase’s path into agriculture was not laid out for her.

She admits with honesty that, at the beginning, she knew nothing about egg production.

“I knew nothing about an egg and that was the first challenge— not having enough information about the type of business I was about to run,” she recalls.

Yet what she lacked in knowledge, she made up for in determination. She observed, asked questions, and learned from other farmers. From a distance, she could see poultry farming’s potential and she decided she would not just admire it, but would join it.

Her motivation was deeply personal. She was seeking stability, a way to overcome the uncertainty of job insecurity and to carve out her place in agribusiness.

“I love farming and agribusiness. I was naturally drawn to poultry production, both as a practice and because of the quality of life egg farmers had. Now I realise that with commitment, there is indeed life in poultry farming,” she says.

But commitment alone was not enough. The farm faced repeated obstacles; access to water was limited, and layers require an immense amount of water. Extreme heat further disrupted egg production and the lack of proper infrastructure, such as cages with ventilation and enough space for movement, hampered growth.

Feed costs and climate unpredictability weighed heavily on the farm’s ability to remain profitable.

“All these challenges were overwhelming, especially because I did not know anything about



the agricultural extension services provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition,” she recounts.

Her fortunes began to shift when, through conversations with other farmers, she was introduced to SADP II.

For Greenek Farm, the grant was a turning point.

With its support, the farm was awarded 1,500 chickens, water tanks for storage and a poultry structure that expanded operations.

“SADP II granted us with water tanks, chick-

ens, and a proper structure. This was not just an addition, it was a rebirth for the farm, an olive brunch to excel,” says Mamohase.

Today, Greenek Farm is a model of progress, functioning with more than 1,000 chickens and supplying eggs to supermarkets, including larger outlets run by foreign retailers.

She indicated that the quality of eggs has improved through SADP II’s training workshops, which taught farmers how to handle and manage layer chickens, eggs, and overall farm efficiency.

“Our eggs now arrive at the market in good

condition and with valuable quality,” she explains.

But the dream does not stop at supplying eggs. For Mamohase, the future lies in value addition.

Her next big step is to establish a mayonnaise manufacturing plant, ensuring that the eggs produced at Greenek Farm extend further down the value chain.

“I have a bigger vision for the farm. The SADP II grant has brought me closer to my goal of manufacturing mayonnaise and becoming a large-scale egg producer,” she shares.

Already in the research phase, she envisions a future where her farm’s products sit on supermarket shelves not just as eggs, but as packaged mayonnaise made in Lesotho.

The journey has not only changed her life but has also created opportunities for others with Greenek Farm employing two full-time workers and provides mentorship to aspiring farmers.

“I have mentees under my wing who want to learn from me about egg production. Men and women, some younger than me, some my age, and others older. I guide them from start to finish,” she explains.

To her, mentorship is an act of responsibility ensuring that her success becomes a doorway for others.

The impact of SADP II has stretched beyond infrastructure and chickens. It has instilled confidence, provided knowledge, and built a network of farmers who now work collectively to tackle challenges.

“One of the most pressing issues for poultry farmers in Leribe has been pricing. Unscrupulous buyers often manipulate prices by comparing quality eggs with cheaper, poorly produced ones and in response, poultry farmers in Leribe, including myself came together to form an association that will regulate egg prices. Farmers will prioritise an agreement of one price that applies to every poultry farmer in Lesotho,” she says with pride.

Her story speaks directly to young people searching for opportunities. As a young woman herself, she encourages her peers not to overlook farming.

“There is life in poultry farming as long as there is genuine interest and commitment to the practice. Chickens require patience and willingness to learn and with these qualities, a farmer will overcome challenges,” she advises.





LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER COMMISSION

TENDER NOTICE

PROVISION OF ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES FOR THREE FINANCIAL YEARS (2025/26, 2026/27, and 2027/28)

The Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC), established under the 1986 Treaty between the Governments of Lesotho and South Africa, is responsible for overseeing the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), advising both governments, and serving as a communication channel beyond the LHWP. LHWC invites bids from reputable firms registered in Lesotho and South Africa for the provision of Annual External Audit Services for three consecutive financial years ending **31st March 2026, 31st March 2027, and 31st March 2028**.

Submission of Bids

Sealed bids, clearly marked “**Tender for the Provision of LHWC Annual External Audit Services (2026–2028)**”, with no identifying details of the bidder on the envelope, should be delivered to:

Commission Secretary

Lesotho Highlands Water Commission
5th Floor, Standard Lesotho Bank Tower
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Bidders from South Africa should courier their bids to the above address.
Submission Deadline: 30th September 2025, no later than noon (local time).

Eligibility and Requirements

Interested bidders must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be a registered and accredited auditing firm in Lesotho or South Africa.
- Demonstrate experience in conducting external audits for similar organizations.
- Comply with relevant international auditing and accounting standards.
- Provide company registration documents, professional certifications, and three (3) references from previous clients.

Enquiries

For further information or clarifications, please contact: sec@lhwc.org.ls



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) invites registered companies and interested individuals for short term hire of vehicles. The database of vehicles will be used for the period of **three (3) years**.

BIDDING DOCUMENT

Document is obtainable from Procurement Unit Second Floor Election House during working hours from 09:00am to 4:00pm.

SPECIFICATIONS OF REQUIRED VEHICLES

1. Double Cab 4*4
2. Double Cab 4*2
3. SUV's
4. Quantum
5. 22-seater buses
6. 60-70 seater buses/coaches
7. Drop-side trucks 10 Tons
8. Box truck 10 Tons
9. Double Cab 4*4 (Mamokoto)

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Provided Individual/ Company details form should be filled.
- Attach valid **relevant** Trading License.
- Attach valid copy of Tax Clearance (Both companies & individuals).
- Companies intending to work with individuals must provide an agreement signed by both parties together with the vehicle's documents. (**APPLIES TO FLEET COMPANY**)
- Attach a certified copy of National ID and IEC Registration Card/Number of the Owner or Company owners.
- All vehicles should have a fire extinguisher.
- Attach certified copies of registration certificates/blue cards of vehicles.
- Attach certified copies of insurance certificates from insurance companies registered with Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) not insurance brokers, for all categories of vehicles (insured with passenger liability).
- The vehicle will be replaced on the condition that it is involved in accident and declared ride-off. The replacement vehicle must of the same model and features.
- Vehicle Owners must specify one district desired for work (application for more than one district will result in disqualification).

NB:

- All required documents must be submitted

- The owner has to fuel the vehicle and provide a driver.
- IEC has a right to deploy vehicles to any district if need arises
- IEC uses Government of Lesotho Rates
- Vehicles will be hired on a monthly basis.
- Vehicle must be roadworthy
- Vehicle must have the following:
 - Canopy
 - Valid Fitness
 - Valid permits
 - First Aid
 - Tools (Wheel spanner and Jack, triangle*2, spare wheel)
- The tyres must in good conditions
- Provide the envelope clearing marked “**TYPE OF VEHICLE AND NAME OF DISTRICT**” containing Original and four copies.

Important information to companies or individuals in the Districts level:

- The envelopes for Expression of Interest can be delivered at all IEC District Offices.
- The closing date at District level is on **Wednesday 25th September 2025 at 16:00pm**.
- The envelopes from District Offices, should reach **Head Quarters Maseru before 12:00pm on Friday 26th September 2025**.

Sealed documents bearing no identification of the companies/ individuals should be deposited in the tender box at the Election House, Ground Floor, Corner Maluti and Caledon Road Maseru West **On or before 12:00 pm Friday 25th September 2025** and will be opened on the same date at **14:00hours**. Envelopes should be clearly marked: “**Type of vehicle (e.g. 4x4 Double Cab) and name of district (e.g. Maseru)**”.

For further information, relating to the above information please contact,

The Procurement Unit

Independent Electoral Commission
Election House
2nd Floor
Corner Maluti and Caledon Road
Maseru West
Tel: +266 – 22 314991/59019086
Email: tenders@iec.org.ls

The Independent Electoral Commission reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders



THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (MOE)

INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT)

FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY, AND INSTALLATION OF HEAVY-DUTY PHOTOCOPIER MACHINE

ITT NO: MOE/ADMIN/1-2025/2026

DATE:4 SEPTEMBER,2025

1. The Ministry of Energy hereby invites tenders from eligible and qualified Bidders for the supply and delivery of one Heavy Duty Photocopier Machine. The specifications are provided in the bidding document.

2. A complete set of bidding documents, in English, may be purchased on the submission of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand (2000.00)** Maloti or its equivalent in any convertible currency, net of all bank charges from the **Procurement Unit, Ministry of Energy (MOE) Government Complex, Africa House 3rd Floor**. The method of payment will be by bank transfer/deposit only, payable at Central Bank of Lesotho, Account Name Main Revenue Epicor 10, Account Number 0101403715016, Reference Ministry of Energy sale of Tender document. The proof of payment must be taken to MOE Accounts Office at **Sekhametsi Building, 2nd Floor, Kingsway Maseru** where a receipt will be issued. The receipt should then be submitted to the Procurement Office where the bidding documents shall be obtained.

The Tender documents will be obtainable from the **15th September 2025 to 9th October, 2025**

3. Mandatory Documents

- Copy of valid Tax Clearance Certificate (certified at source).
- Copy of Value Added Tax (VAT) Registration Certificate (certified at source).

- Copy of valid Trader's License.
- Company/Business Profile.
- Reference letters from recent institutions served in the past two (2years)
- Bid Security
- Minimum experience of contracts of a similar nature and magnitude executed within the last two (2) years) support with one (1) copy of contract or purchase order).
- Evidence of financial capacity (credit line from registered financial institution and audited accounts statement from registered Institution)
- Completed certificate of bona fide tendering.

4. Sealed tenders bearing no identification of the tenderers and marked as follows “**SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF HEAVY-DUTY PHOTOCOPIER MACHINE**” must be deposited in the tender box situated at the Foyer at the Ministry's Head Quarters, Government Complex, Africa House 3rd Floor. The closing date for submission of tenders is on/or before the **23rd October 2025**. Electronic bidding shall not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected.

5. Tenders will be opened in the presence of the tenderers' representatives who may choose to attend in person on the **23th October,2025 at 14:30hrs**. Tenders shall be submitted in one **(1) original and four (4) copies** in a sealed envelope.



TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF
2026 PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS
Tender Reference Number: RF/2025/G04

1. Background and requirements:
The Road Fund Secretariat invites proposals from suitably qualified companies with the capacity to design, supply and deliver 2026 Calendars, Diaries and Notebooks. The specifications are provided in table 1 below:

Table 1:

Item Number	Item description	Quantity	Lot number
1.	A2 Desk Planner Calendar	400	1
2.	A5 Desk Tent Calendar	400	1
3.	A2 Wall Calendar	2000	1
4.	A4 Customised Diaries	250	2
5.	A5 Customised Notebooks	250	2

Bidders are liberty to bid for any lot or both lots.

Other requirements:

- Bidders must be compliant with their tax and licensing obligations; hence a valid and relevant company Tax Clearance and a valid and relevant Trader's License/Business Identity card must be submitted;
- Bidders are expected to deliver within a maximum period of **Four (4) weeks** from receiving the official purchase order;
- All bids must be accompanied by bid security of 2% of bidder's own bid amount and must be in the form of a bank guarantee.

2. Request for Clarifications: Request for clarifications may be send in writing to procurement@roadfund.org.ls on or before **26th September 2025**.

3. Detailed tender document is available at the Road Fund website www.roadfund.org.ls

Submission:
Sealed bids clearly marked “**Supply and deliver 2026 promotional materials Ref: RF/2025/G04**” bearing no identification of the bidder should be deposited in the tender box located at the reception area at the address in clause 4 below; on or before **Friday, 3rd October 2025 at 15:00 hrs**. Public tender opening will be held on the same day at **15:15 hrs**. The address referred to for submission and opening of bids is as indicated in clause 4 below.

4.The address referred to in clause 3 above for bid submission and opening is:
Road Fund offices located at Former Department of Rural Roads Building,
Corner Moshoeshoe & Senate Roads,
Industrial Area, Maseru.



TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF
WALL MOUNT BANNER
Tender Reference Number: RF/2025/G03

1. Background and requirements:
The Road Fund Secretariat invites proposals from suitably qualified companies with the capacity to supply and install a Wall Mount Banner. The Banner is to be used to cover a building, the specification is provided below:

Table 1:

Item Number	Item description	Quantity
1	Wall Mount Banner (30m x 12m)	1

Other requirements:

- Bidders must be compliant with their tax and licensing obligations; hence a valid and relevant company Tax Clearance and a valid and relevant Trader's License/Business Identity card must be submitted;
- Bidders are expected to deliver within a maximum period of **Four (4) weeks** from receiving the official purchase order;
- All bids must be accompanied by bid security of 2% of bidder's own bid amount and must be in the form of a bank guarantee.

2. Mandatory site visit and bidders' conference: A combined mandatory site visit and bidders' conference will be held at **11:00am on the 11th September 2025** at Road Fund offices located at Former Department of Rural Roads Building, Corner Moshoeshoe & Senate Roads, Industrial Area, Maseru.

3. Request for Clarifications: Request for clarifications may be send in writing to procurement@roadfund.org.ls on or before **26th September 2025**.

4. Detailed tender document is available at the Road Fund website www.roadfund.org.ls

Submission:
Sealed bids clearly marked “**Supply and installation of Wall Mount Banner Ref: RF/2025/G03**” bearing no identification of the bidder should be deposited in the tender box located at the reception area at the address in clause 5 below; on or before **Friday, 3rd October 2025 at 15:00 hrs**. Public tender opening will be held on the same day at **15:15 hrs**. The address referred to for submission and opening of bids is as indicated in clause 2.



LESOTHO COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION (CAFI) PROJECT

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

“ADVERTISEMENT”

CONSULTING SERVICES - INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT (IC) SELECTION

Country : Lesotho
Project Name : Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project
Credit No. : 7169-LS
Assignment Title: Internal Auditor
Reference No.: CAFI-WB-0086

The Government of Lesotho has received credit from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank to implement the Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project and intends to aply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry and Business Development through the CAFI PMU, now invites interested individuals to indicate their interest in the assignment. Interested individuals should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience for the assignment.

The selection criteria will be based on the following information, inter alia:

- ▶ A relevant degree in accounting, finance, business administration, or a related field.
- ▶ Professional certification is highly desirable.
- ▶ A minimum of 5 years of experience in internal auditing, with a preference for experience in donor-funded projects.
- ▶ Strong knowledge of financial management practices, internal control frameworks, and risk assessment methodologies.
- ▶ Excellent analytical, communication, and interpersonal skills.
- ▶ Ability to work independently and collaboratively within a team environment.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be obtained

at the address given below and at the following website: www.cafi.org.ls. Interested candidates are required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) and Curriculum Vitae (CV) together with educational certificates to the address below.

The attention of interested candidates is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" February 2025 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

A candidate will be selected in accordance with the Individual Consultant Selection method set out in Procurement Regulations.

**Further information can be obtained at the address below during of-
fice hours [08h00 to 16h30 local time].**

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled “ **Internal Auditor**” to the address below in person or by e-mail on or before **Friday, 26 September 2025 at 14h00**. E-mail submissions should be sent to tmohejane@cafi.org.ls cc nleutsoa@cafi.org.ls and ltsoinyane@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: Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



By Topollo Tlali

Farmers, government officials, exhibitors, and sponsors gathered at Victory Hall in Maseru to celebrate those making strides in agriculture during the Farmers Pitso Awards. The atmosphere was one of unity and hope, as the farming community came together to applaud excellence and inspire a future where Lesotho can feed itself.

The ceremony was officially opened by Health Minister Selibe Mochoboroane, speaking on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security. He praised the initiative, describing it as an important motivator for farmers to continue producing and excelling in their fields. “It is with this spirit that Lesotho’s agricultural sector can grow,” he said, noting that farmers themselves are the ones who give the ministry direction on what the country’s food production should look like.

He challenged those in attendance to take collective responsibility for shaping Lesotho’s agricultural destiny. “If you unite yourself like this and then tell the government that in different districts you want to plant certain cereal, maize in Mafeteng for instance and in another district different cereals, and every district produces a specific crop, that will drive the government to pay attention and supports you, Lesotho cannot import food at all. Instead we can export and make profit,” he said.

The ceremony struck a celebratory mood under the guidance of comedian Makhubelu, who served as master of ceremonies. His humor created an atmosphere of ease and joy as the winners prepared to receive recognition in their various categories. The awards, organisers explained, were not just about trophies but about appreciation, encouragement and showing the younger generation that agriculture is not punishment but a path to economic growth and financial stability. Before the winners were announced, organiser Thabiso Matsoele reflected on the journey of Farmers Pitso, which began as a gathering for farmers to share ideas.

Farmers Pitso Honors Excellence in Farming



Health/ Farmer Selibe Mochoboroane and Former PM/ Farmer Moeketsi Majoro

“We started with the Pitsos (public gatherings), then the study tours where we visited farms, then exhibitions, and now awards. We even added a gala dinner this year,” he said. He explained that the awards were funded through sponsorships and support from farmers themselves, with social media used for voting. Categories covered nearly every corner of farming life: fish production, rabbit production, broilers, tomatoes, innovation and technology,

potatoes, piggery, cereals, food processing, dog breeding, sheep and goats, best school in agriculture, and mixed farming. Each category honored three winners and was backed by one or two sponsors who handed over the awards. Among the notable awardees were the Lesotho Mounted Police, recognised for their work against livestock theft, and former Prime Minister Dr. Moeketsi Majoro. This year also saw the introduction of a new category, horse breeding and management,

which added another layer of recognition for diverse agricultural practices. The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Thabo Mofosi, announced during the event that government is ready to invest in tractors to strengthen farming across the country. He urged farmers to stay united and resilient. “Without you, the country can be in hunger,” he said, underlining the vital role farmers play in the nation’s survival. The event was not only about recognition but also about showcasing, as farmers displayed their products in gazebos. Once the awards were handed over, farmers exchanged ideas, bought from one another, and built stronger networks. In an interview with Seahlole, Matsoele admitted that the 2025 awards saw some differences from the 2024 edition, particularly in attendance. “People are looking forward to the gala dinner and that has affected the day celebration,” he said. Still, the event ended on a high note with exhibitors making profits and farmers deepening their relationships. Students in attendance expressed their inspiration, with many announcing how motivated they were to see farming as a career worth pursuing. The sight of farmers in their green, brown, and camouflage outfits symbolized the pride of the land and the resilience of the people who work it. For many in attendance, it was a reminder that Lesotho’s agricultural future depends not only on government support but also on the passion, collaboration, and commitment of its farmers. As one student said, “We see farming now as opportunity, not punishment.”

By Ntsoaki Motaung

The annual Farmers’ Pitso Awards has been celebrated as more than just an agricultural gathering, with leaders and farmers alike recognising it as a model for gender equality and social inclusion. At the gala dinner that followed the awards ceremony, Dr. Mamoeletsi Ntho, a gender equality specialist, praised the initiative for transforming farming culture “not just through productivity, but through dignity, equity and recognition.” Delivering her speech to farmers, exhibitors and officials, Ntho described the event as having grown from a simple meeting of farmers into a movement that carries the seeds of systemic change in agriculture. She highlighted how the awards themselves offered a powerful picture of inclusion, with winners drawn from women, youth, and diverse backgrounds. “The awards ceremony itself served as a powerful testament to this commitment. Recipients included women, youth, and a diverse range of individuals from across the agriculture sector, demonstrating the initiative’s success in closing the gender gap and promoting youth involvement,” she said. Ntho noted how the initiative has helped women move beyond subsistence farming to become active players in the market. She applauded those who have built small economies around their work, creating livelihoods for themselves and their communities. “Recognition alone is not enough. Recognition is important if it leads to empowerment,” she stressed, arguing that the Farmers’ Pitso has gone beyond applause to empower women and youth in spaces that once excluded them.

Farmers’ Pitso Hailed as a Model for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion



Attendees of Farmers Pitso Awards

The event also spotlighted young farmers who are increasingly seen not as passive beneficiaries but as innovators and leaders. According to Ntho, many youth are digitising, modernising, and redefining farming to meet local challenges. New award categories focusing on innovation have strengthened this shift, encouraging young people to bring creativity into farming. Their participation is changing the story of agriculture from survival to opportunity. Framing the Farmers’ Pitso as more than just an event, Ntho urged stakeholders to see it as a strategic tool for national development. She said the model aligns with Lesotho’s priorities under the National Strategic Development Plan II and with the national gender development policy that emphasises access and equality. “When we recognise women, when we recognise youth farmers, we do not just celebrate crops or animals. We cultivate equity, dignity, and transformation,” she concluded.



Farmers Pitso Awards Introduces a New Category

By Molula Mofosi

For generations, horses in Lesotho have been more than animals. They were once indispensable for transport and farm labour but while machinery has replaced many of their traditional roles, horses are now finding new life in sports, recreation, and cultural heritage.

At this year's Farmers Pitso Awards, that legacy was formally honoured with the introduction of a new category, Equine Production.

Members of the Equestrian Association of Lesotho (EAL) received recognition in this newly launched segment, which covers all aspects of equine husbandry, from breeding and raising to management of horses for work, sport, and companionship.

Founded in 1982, the Equestrian Association of Lesotho has been raising standards in breeding and sporting.

Seeing the need for recognition, the association approached Farmers Pitso organisers, believing the platform was perfect for appreciating a small but resilient industry.

EAL president Elliot Lehora explained, "The legislation of the association prioritises education of which breeds are best to keep and how to breed them. We do have all breeds of horses in the country, but we usually prioritise Trotters and Thread Race, which are good for racing. While breeds that are commonly for horse show jumping are not bred."

Lehora emphasised that while horses remain vital to Basotho culture and identity, the industry is increasingly focusing on high-standard breeding and management for racing.

"We still have horses that are solely for farming, which is typically the Basotho Pony. However, equine production in Lesotho is now focusing on breeds that are for racing," he said.

Recognised by the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, Arts, Culture, and Social Development as well as the Lesotho National Olympic Committee, the EAL has members in all ten districts, with committees overseeing equestrian activities across the country. Yet the sector has not been without challenges.

According to the association's chairman secretary, Lebohang Phachela, the industry has declined in recent years due to logistical and financial barriers.

"The import and export red tape has become harder and more expensive at our borders, making the horse farmers run losses in logistics," he said.

He also pointed out that "the race horse feed is expensive and the feed voucher we have just received from the sponsor is for basic feeding of a horse. A race horse has a different diet, resulting in farmers buying food from South Africa."

He indicated that the financial demands of equine husbandry have limited youth participation.

"A foal can cost anywhere between M10,000 and M300,000, making entry into the industry daunting..." Still, Phachela remains optimistic, "we have a countable number of young farmers carrying equine husbandry with passion."

He stressed that persistence and commitment would yield success, as horses are assets that will benefit a farmer in the long run.

For the organisers of Farmers Pitso, this new category is not only about honouring tradition but

also creating space for inclusion.

"We advocate for equal participation of women in agriculture and the addition of this category at the Farmers Pitso Awards will encourage gender balance in this niche," said co-founder Thabiso Matsoele.

He explained that unlike other categories, Equine Production will remain an honorary award.

"The industry is fully established and there are two big horse racing events in the country. We are therefore going to honour players and breeders based on their performance. Since Equine Production is an established industry, the EAL will hand

us the best players or breeders to honour on behalf of the industry itself. There will never be a time the general public votes," he said.

This model, he added, is now permanent from the 2025 awards onwards.

For some, the category has already ignited ambition. Businesswoman and aspiring horse breeder Nkhakile Letuma said the recognition had encouraged her to push further.

"I can already just think of myself being awarded the Equine Production Award. It would be an honour as this validates the participation of women in this niche," she said.

Though equine husbandry has long been male-dominated, Letuma said she was inspired by other Basotho women succeeding in the field.

"What began as a hobby for me has now become a financial goal, and I am hoping to have a stable of my own in three years," she said.

For her, the Farmers Pitso recognition is not just an award but "a sign of victory."



Members of the Equestrian Association of Lesotho (EAL) received recognition

Seahlolo Newspaper Honors Best Schools in Agriculture at Farmers' Pitso Awards

By Topollo Tlali

Seahlolo Newspaper once again demonstrated its commitment to building the future of Lesotho's farming by honoring schools that excel in agriculture during the Farmers' Pitso Awards earlier this month.

A total of M10,000 was awarded to support school gardening tools, with Qhomane High School taking first prize, Mophale's Hoek High School second, and Ratsoeu High School third.

This was not the first time Seahlolo put schools at the center of agricultural transformation. At the 2024 Farmers' Pitso Awards, the newspaper invested in schools by supporting irrigation systems, proving that for Seahlolo, recognition is never just symbolic.

As the newspaper Managing Editor, Lera-to Matheka, put it, "Recognising best schools in farming is not just a prize giving. It is about investing in the next generation of agric-leaders and sending a clear message: effort is seen, excellence is rewarded."

"If agriculture can be seen and taken serious by the country, Lesotho will not have a reason to be ranking amongst hungry nations, thus we are the change we want to see hence our support of schools in agriculture," Matheka stressed.

The impact of this recognition was most visible at Qhomane High School where Agriculture teacher Matsepo Keketsi could hardly contain her excitement as she described the moment their name was called.

"When I heard my school being called on stage as the first prize winner, I was overwhelmed with excitement and joy. It was proof of the hard work and dedication of me and other teachers of Qhomane High School," she said.

The victory, she explained, was not just for the staff but for the students whose joy made her



Qhomane High School Agriculture teacher Matsepo Keketsi

proud.

"What made me happy was when my students were also happy. I was proud to see them in that mood, it was really a moment of great pride for our school."

Keketsi emphasised that the award was the result of teamwork, determination, and genuine student interest in agriculture.

"Teachers' support and guidance encouraged students to participate in the competition, and students also have a genuine interest in agriculture," she said.

The school's agriculture programshe revealed includes crop science, animal science, agribusiness, and agricultural engineering.

"The main focus is to create a platform for students who would like to pursue their careers in the agriculture industry," she added.

Receiving the prize, she explained, will go directly into strengthening the school garden, with students participating in its maintenance and management.

She stressed that the school has agriculture as one of its core subject.

"We work hard to make students see farming as a career, not as punishment and we have stopped that hobby of punishing students with farm work. The school integrates classroom learning with practical exposure by organising educational trips to observe and learn from professionals in the

farming industry.

"Teachers also engage students in planting, harvesting, and caring for animals, ensuring they gain real skills alongside academic knowledge."

Keketsi admitted that winning was not easy because the competition was based on voting. She said the school mobilised students and their families to take part.

"Teachers familiarised students with voting rules and procedures to be followed, and students were so excited and promised to recommend their parents to vote for their school. This award is for all who participated in voting," she explained.

For her, the recognition represents not only an achievement but also a legacy for Qhomane's agricultural program.

"This recognition will be among the greatest achievements the school has ever had. The award will motivate students to work harder and it will also bring recognition to the agricultural program, attracting more students."

The vision behind Seahlolo Newspaper's investment in schools according to Matheka is 'to build a generation of young Basotho who see farming as a career of dignity and opportunity.'

"By nurturing youth with tools, knowledge, and opportunities, Seahlolo is helping to prepare leaders who will one day address Lesotho's food insecurity and redefine farming as an admired career path," she said.

She added, "When young people are nurtured and encouraged, they grow into confident, skilled individuals capable of making meaningful contributions to society. Prioritising this investment in youth becomes the foundation upon which a resilient, dynamic, and thriving Lesotho can be built."

"By honoring schools at the Farmers' Pitso Awards, we are not only telling the stories of the nation but actively shaping them," Matheka said.



Farmers Pitso Awards

In Pictures

