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GALA
DINNER
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PRIZES TO BE WON | FOOD | MUSIC | AWARDS

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AGRICULTURAL & EXCELLENCE
MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

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Farmers Pitso Awards Enter New Era

...as Seahlolo Unveils Ambitious Vision for Agriculture



Farmers Pitso Awards ceremony.

By Topollo Tlali and Lungile Maseela

What began as a platform for bringing farmers together to exchange ideas has grown into one of Lesotho's most ambitious agricultural initiatives.

This year, the Farmers Pitso Agricultural & Excellence Awards enter a new chapter under the stewardship of Seahlolo Newspaper, with organisers promising a broader platform that goes beyond recognising outstanding farmers to inspiring innovation, strengthening agricultural education and positioning agriculture at the centre of Lesotho's economic transformation. Launched in Maseru under the theme "Celebrating Excellence. Advancing Agriculture. Transforming Lives," the 2026 edition marks the beginning of a three-year management partnership between Farmers Pitso and Seahlolo Newspaper. It also introduces several firsts in the awards' history, including a two-day programme that combines school competitions, agricultural exhibitions, knowledge-sharing sessions, and the prestigious and exclusive black-tie His Majesty King Letsie's Honour Awards gala.

The launch attracted development partners, agricultural organisations, educators, farmers and members of the media, reflecting growing national interest in an initiative that organisers believe has evolved beyond an awards ceremony.

Speaking at the launch, Farmers Pitso co-founder Tlaba Mochebelele reflected on the organisation's journey and the decision to entrust Seahlolo with leading its next phase.

He explained that Farmers Pitso was built around three pillars: bringing farmers together through "lipitso" for discussion and knowledge exchange, exposing farmers to new ideas through field visits and exhibitions, and recognising excellence through annual awards.

"This year, Seahlolo has brought all three principles together into one programme," Mochebelele said.

"There will be learning, exhibitions, knowledge exchange and the awards themselves."

He said the decision to hand over management was driven by confidence in Seahlolo's long-standing commitment to agriculture.

"We trusted Seahlolo to take the awards to the next level. They have supported Farmers Pitso for many years and have consistently

demonstrated that agriculture deserves to be celebrated."

One of the most significant additions this year will be a dedicated schools programme, building on Seahlolo's previous support for agricultural education through school competitions.

For Project Director of the Farmers Pitso Agricultural & Excellence Awards and Managing Director of Newsday Media, Lerato Matheka, the 2026 launch represents far more than preparations for another annual ceremony.

"We are gathered here today not simply to announce an awards ceremony. We are launching a national movement that seeks to recognise excellence, celebrate innovation, inspire productivity and elevate agriculture to its rightful position as the engine of economic transformation in Lesotho," she said. She explained that the awards are founded on a simple conviction: that those who feed the nation deserve to be recognised by the nation they feed.

Every day, she noted, Basotho farmers rise before dawn to contend with drought, hailstorms, livestock diseases and uncertain markets, yet continue to produce food, create employment and sustain rural livelihoods. "Through these awards, we want to tell a different story, one that places farmers at the heart of national development."

Matheka traced Seahlolo's own agricultural journey back to four years ago, when the publication was still in its infancy.

Invited to sponsor a category at the Farmers Pitso Awards, Seahlolo chose to support the Broiler Farmer category, not because it had abundant resources, she said, but because she believed agriculture deserved champions.

That commitment later expanded to include support for school agriculture competitions and a range of farmer-centred development initiatives.

"Those early investments were not sponsorships," Matheka said. "They were statements of intent. They reflected our belief that agriculture must be celebrated, supported and elevated."

Today, she said, the Farmers Pitso Agricultural & Excellence Awards represent the natural progression of that commitment.

"The awards are not an isolated event. They are the culmination of years of investment in farmers, food systems and rural develop-

ment."

Looking beyond this year's event, Matheka outlined an ambitious vision for the 2026–2028 period: establishing the country's most influential agricultural recognition platform while demonstrating how the private sector can actively contribute to agricultural development.

"Instead of relying solely on government, these awards show how private organisations can pool resources, create opportunities, celebrate success and attract investment."

She challenged financial institutions, businesses, development agencies, schools and communities to view agriculture as everyone's responsibility.

"Agriculture is not merely about production. Agriculture is about education. Agriculture is about health. Agriculture is about dignity. Agriculture is about opportunity. Agriculture is about nation-building"

Her remarks echoed a broader philosophy that has shaped Seahlolo since its establishment, that journalism should not simply report development but actively contribute to it.

"We want your story," she told farmers. "Allow your journey to inspire others."

The launch also highlighted the growing emphasis on nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Secretary-General of the Lesotho Agricultural Teachers Association, Tsotang Pela, described agricultural education as one of the country's most important long-term investments.

While agriculture continues to underpin rural livelihoods and national food security, he warned that climate change, declining soil fertility, land degradation and youth unemployment threaten the sector's future.

"The most powerful response lies in strengthening agricultural education," Pela said.

He argued that agricultural studies should be firmly embedded within the education system, equipping learners with scientific knowledge, practical skills and entrepreneurial thinking needed for modern farming.

"If we introduce young people to agriculture early, we will build a generation that values food production and sees farming as a profession of opportunity rather than necessity."

International partners also welcomed the initiative.

Acting Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Lesotho, Sean Lawlor, said the awards recognise qualities essential to every successful agricultural nation.

"The Farmers Pitso Awards celebrate something profound, the ingenuity, resilience and hard work of Basotho farmers," Lawlor said.

"We want to see Lesotho's farmers not only feeding families, but feeding the nation and competing confidently in regional and international markets."

The expanded programme will begin on 11 September with school competitions, agricultural exhibitions and knowledge-sharing activities before culminating on 12 September with a day ceremony honouring outstanding farmers across the country and a Black-Tie gala dinner.



Four Decades On, Lesotho Dairy Dream Still Awaits Breakthrough

By Seahlolo Reporter

More than four decades after Lesotho embarked on an ambitious journey to build a self-sufficient dairy industry, the country still imports much of the milk and dairy products consumed by its people.

The infrastructure exists. Processing plants have been established. Farmers have been trained. Development partners have invested millions of Maloti over successive decades. Yet local milk production continues to fall, exposing a sector rich in potential but constrained by persistent structural challenges that have resisted decades of intervention.

That paradox dominated discussions during the Lesotho Dairy Industry Stakeholder Consultation Seminar held in Maseru on June 3, where government officials, dairy farmers, processors, researchers and development partners gathered to examine why an industry with such a long investment history continues to struggle to meet domestic demand.

Their conclusion was sobering: Lesotho possesses many of the ingredients required for a thriving dairy industry, but fragmented implementation, declining productivity and long-standing production constraints continue to undermine progress.

The country's dairy development journey began in the early 1980s through collaboration between the Government of Lesotho and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), culminating in the establishment of Lesotho Dairy Products (LDP) in 1983.

Over the years, the industry has expanded to include institutions such as the Lesotho National Dairy Board (LNDB), the Department of Livestock Services (DLS), the Lesotho National Farmers Union (LENAFU), Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM) and a range of development partners working to strengthen dairy production.

Those investments have built institutional capacity and laid the foundations for a modern dairy value chain. However, they have not translated into sufficient milk production.

Presenting an overview of the industry's performance, Lesotho National Dairy Board Technical Consultant Nchele Kuleile revealed that national

milk production has almost halved in recent years, declining from 5.5 million litres in the 2019/20 season to just 2.88 million litres in 2026.

The decline, he said, has widened the country's dependence on imported dairy products at a time when demand for fresh milk continues to grow, limiting opportunities for Basotho farmers while increasing the national import bill.

Kuleile attributed the decline to a combination of interconnected constraints rather than a single underlying problem.

"Challenges faced include feed shortages, breeding constraints, market limitations, quality issues and coordination gaps," he said.

He revealed that the sector remains dominated by smallholder farmers, most of whom keep between one and five dairy cows.

"While these farmers form the backbone of domestic milk production, many operate under conditions that make commercial expansion difficult. Feed availability remains perhaps the greatest obstacle," he said.

According to Kuleile, 74 per cent of dairy farmers lack adequate fodder reserves, while 62 per cent experience recurring feed shortages throughout the year.

"The result of that is reduced milk yields, poor animal condition and lower farm profitability."

He added, "Breeding presents another challenge. Although artificial insemination services have been introduced to improve herd genetics, access remains limited, preventing many farmers from improving productivity by adopting high-quality dairy breeds."

He further indicated that market access also continues to discourage expansion, particularly among small-scale producers who struggle to secure reliable buyers and competitive prices for their milk.

Opening the seminar, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Dr Khothatso Ts'oana, described dairy farming as one of the country's strategic agricultural subsectors, capable of improving rural livelihoods, strengthening food security and reducing dependence on imported dairy products.

He acknowledged, however, that progress will



Empowering dairy farmers

depend on stronger collaboration across government institutions, farmers, processors, researchers and development partners.

"Challenges farmers encounter include limited veterinary services, poor market infrastructure, lack of finance and low breeding capacity. The seminar today will work on creating a coordinated strategy, and we will have a project where we will all work together to transform our dairy sector," Ts'oana said.

He said strengthening policy implementation and institutional cooperation would create opportunities for farmers while encouraging broader participation by women and young people throughout the dairy value chain.

Dai Harvey from Dairy for Development at the Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society presented the organisation's concept, which he explained promotes knowledge sharing, technical support, and collaboration among countries facing similar agricultural challenges.

Harvey also stressed that successful dairy industries are built on more than just cattle. He stressed that long-term success depends on sustained farmer training, technical support, strong institutions and continuous knowledge exchange.

"Partnerships are important because they equip

farmers with the skills needed to improve productivity and grow their businesses," Harvey said.

He noted that Jersey cattle are particularly suited to Lesotho's production systems because they are fertile, efficient and capable of producing high-quality milk under relatively low-input conditions.

Beyond increasing milk supplies, Harvey argued that expanding domestic dairy production could improve household nutrition, generate employment, strengthen rural economies and reduce Lesotho's dependence on imported dairy products.

Throughout the seminar, discussions repeatedly returned to one central message: the country's dairy industry does not require a complete reinvention. Rather, it requires sustained implementation of interventions that address feed production, breeding, veterinary services, market development and institutional coordination in a coherent manner.

The seminar ended on a cautiously optimistic note. Stakeholders agreed that Lesotho already possesses the institutional framework, farming culture and technical knowledge needed to build a competitive dairy industry. What remains is the collective resolve to convert decades of investment into sustained production growth.

Diagnosis Leads to Training ...Dairy Sector Partners Equip Farmers to Boost Milk Production

By Lungile Maseela

Only weeks after dairy stakeholders concluded that Lesotho's biggest challenge is not the absence of institutions but low on-farm productivity, farmer support organisations have begun taking that conversation directly to producers.

At Maluti Maid's premises in Ha Leqele on 19 June, dairy farmers from across the country gathered for a practical training programme aimed at tackling some of the very constraints that continue to suppress milk production, poor feeding practices, limited access to finance, weak herd management and inconsistent milk quality.

The workshop, organised by Makhulo Farm Feeds under Lesotho Flour Mills (LFM) in partnership with Lesotho Dairy Products and Lesotho Post Bank, reflected a growing recognition that increasing national milk production will depend not only on policy discussions but also on strengthening farmers' technical and business capacity.

The training followed closely on the heels of the national dairy stakeholder consultation, where government, industry and development partners acknowledged that, despite decades of investment, Lesotho continues to produce far less milk than it consumes. Feed shortages, poor genetics, inadequate technical support, and limited access to markets were identified as principal obstacles preventing the industry from reaching its full potential.

For Makhulo Farm Feeds, improving nutrition remains the quickest route to increasing milk production. Addressing farmers, Teboho Khati said surveys conducted in the dairy sector show that many producers continue to record low milk yields, largely due to poor feeding practices rather than poor-quality animals alone.

"There was a survey conducted, and it shows that dairy producers produce very little, and this is also linked to the limited knowledge they have on feeding their cattle for better production," Khati said.

He acknowledged that quality feed remains expensive for many smallholder farmers, creating a cycle in which poor nutrition leads to low production and low income, making it even harder for farmers to invest in better feed.

"We have noticed that farmers do not make enough money to afford quality feed for their animals, and this results in low milk production," he said.

"We will train you on how to mix feed for your animals so that you can increase your production. Good production means good sales, and with good sales, you will be able to purchase high-quality feed."

Rather than relying entirely on commercially prepared feed, farmers were introduced to practical feed-formulation techniques using locally available ingredients to reduce costs and improve animal nutrition.

Khati said collaboration between institutions would be critical if Lesotho hopes to reverse the decline in milk production.

"We will be joining hands with the Ministry of Agriculture, Lesotho Post Bank and RSDA to help farmers produce better and achieve greater success in dairy farming."

Improving dairy breeds also emerged as a major priority.

Mampho Thulo of the Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA) said the organisation is returning to active dairy sector support after more than a decade, with renewed emphasis on improving herd genetics and farmer extension services.

"RSDA has been working with dairy farmers since 2005 until 2011, when we took a break. We are now back and hoping to be better than we were before and

to do even more for farmers."

She said the government has identified Jersey cattle as a strategic breed capable of improving productivity within Lesotho's production systems.

"The Ministry of Agriculture has decided to introduce the Royal Jersey and bring it into focus within the Lesotho dairy sector."

According to Thulo, the Africa Jersey Forum is preparing to work alongside Jersey South Africa to strengthen breeding programmes and improve access to quality bloodlines.

Improved genetics, she said, must go hand in hand with better management if farmers are to realise higher milk yields.

RSDA has already begun visiting dairy farms across the country to assess production systems and identify opportunities for improvement.

"We have visited farms in Mafeteng and will continue visiting others across the country."

She also encouraged greater competition within the dairy industry, arguing that recognising top-performing farmers could motivate wider improvements across the sector.

"One thing we need to implement is competition within the sector so that everyone strives to do better."

While knowledge improves productivity, access to finance determines whether farmers can apply that knowledge and Lebona Lleokaonke, representing Lesotho Post Bank, outlined several financial products designed specifically for agricultural enterprises.

"We have savings products, production loans, feed financing and livestock support packages intended to reduce barriers to expansion."

He also highlighted the government's subsidy programme, under which the Ministry of Agriculture contributes 30 per cent towards approved agricultural investments.

"The Ministry has decided to help farmers by contributing 30 per cent of the total cost of a product they want to purchase," he said.

Beyond production volumes, Lesotho Dairy Products stressed that milk quality remains equally important. Motselisi Thaele, Quality Controller at Lesotho Dairy Products, reminded farmers that poor hygiene can



Training Workshop

quickly undermine otherwise productive farms.

"Good hygiene is not only about looking clean. It is about making sure that when milking and handling cattle, you keep your nails trimmed, the containers you use are clean, and the place where you store the milk is free from contamination," she said.

She also emphasised careful milk handling, proper filtration and adherence to veterinary withdrawal periods following treatment.

"Farmers need to be cautious about the medication they give their animals and should not supply milk from medicated animals during the withdrawal period."

Milk produced during withdrawal periods, she warned, cannot be processed safely for human consumption, thus exposing both farmers and processors to financial losses.

Thaele urged farmers to make greater use of veterinary services, arguing that healthy animals remain the foundation of consistent milk production.



Nourishing families in Machache

By Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The Tzu Chi has supplied the essential rice to the residents of Machache the distribution that aims to ease hardship and support families with reliable food for the days ahead.

The families have expressed delight over this gesture amid the ever rising cost of living.

Tzu Chi volunteer Julie Chou said the families endured the cold weather and that she was happy to see them receive the rice from Taiwan. She said food parcels were delivered to 12 villages, reaching about 6,000 people.

She added that the community depended on farming and livestock for a living. Crop losses had reportedly made life much harder for the families. "This year, the villagers donated more than 1 000 kilograms of corn to Tzu Chi as a way of giving back. We are grateful for their generosity," she said.



Winter Rice Distribution in Lesotho

One of the recipients, 'Malehlohonolo Tšabeng said this donation has been helpful given that their crops had been destroyed by the rains.

"We wish to express our gratitude to Tzu Chi for this help," she said.

A non-profit making organization, the Tzu Chi has been helping Basotho over the years.

It has presence in five continents and has delivered relief aid to more than 100 countries and areas worldwide. Its work has

grown over time, extending beyond charity into medicine, education, humanistic culture, disaster relief, and environmental protection.

From the beginning, the charity has focused on the idea that people suffer not only from material hardship, but also from "spiritual poverty". As a result, Tzu Chi offers practical support while also encouraging compassion, altruism, and selfless giving through volunteering.

The other recipient, Sefali also appreciated the gesture saying the rice will go a long way in feeding the community.

He said some children go to school on empty stomachs and this help will address that lack. "So this is a great help to the people's lives."

Sefali said as they have abated hunger, they will not find themselves whereby they will be stealing the people's corns. According to the data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) food insecurity remains serious problem in Lesotho. It has been forecasted that 334,000 people will face high levels of acute food insecurity, a level that indicates crisis conditions.

Five Years, US\$70.5 Million Later

By Lerato Matheka

When the US\$70.5 million (approximately M1.3 billion) worth Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) was approved, it carried enormous expectations, promising to modernise smallholder agriculture, strengthen climate resilience, improve nutrition, expand irrigation, commercialise farming and create sustainable livelihoods for thousands of Basotho farming households.

Five years into implementation, an independent supervision mission by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank paints a more nuanced picture, one of meaningful achievements alongside serious implementation weaknesses that threaten the project's long-term impact.

The findings are contained in the IFAD Supervision Report following a mission conducted between 5 and 14 May 2025 across all ten districts of Lesotho.

The report assessed implementation progress, financial management, procurement, environmental safeguards, and project performance ahead of the project's scheduled completion. SADP II represents one of Lesotho's largest agricultural development investments.

According to the report, the programme has mobilised US\$70.5 million through financing from the World Bank's International Development Association, IFAD, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), the Government of Lesotho, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and beneficiary contributions.

The project seeks to increase the adoption of climate-smart agriculture, strengthen agricultural commercialisation, improve dietary diversity and build resilience among smallholder farmers.

Yet despite this substantial investment, the supervision mission classifies SADP II as a "Potential Problem" project, indicating that implementation challenges remain significant enough to threaten the achievement of development objectives if left unresolved.

The report acknowledges that implementation

has improved considerably compared to late 2023.

"At that time, disagreements between the Project Management Unit and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, together with the resignation of the Project Director, brought many project activities to a near standstill."

"Although implementation has since recovered, the mission concludes that progress remains slower than expected," the report notes. It indicated that several structural bottlenecks continue to delay delivery, "...prolonged procurement procedures, lengthy contracting processes for irrigation schemes, complex grant verification requirements and weak coordination between project management, district agricultural offices and ministry departments; these administrative challenges have limited the number of beneficiaries reached despite improvements in implementation over the past year."

One of the project's strongest-performing areas, highlighted in the report, is climate-smart agriculture, with more than 102,000 farmers reached through these initiatives, exceeding the project's original target of 99,000.

"Training has been delivered through lead farmers, demonstration sites and Farmer Field Schools, with additional support from the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA)," the mission notes.

It added, "The project has also expanded its agro-weather advisory platform from just over 5,300 registered users to more than 13,381 farmers, although this remains well below the long-term target of 305,000 users."

The mission recommended expanding outreach through a multiplier approach in which trained farmers share weather information within their communities.

The report notes that irrigation infrastructure is absorbing a large share of project resources, but construction progress remains well behind schedule.

Only 324 hectares have been completed, representing approximately 32 per cent of planned

irrigation development, while only five of the intended fifteen Water User Associations have completed training.

The supervision mission attributes these delays primarily to weak procurement practices, fragmented contracting arrangements and insufficient supervision of contractors.

Although several irrigation schemes are nearing completion, others have experienced delays stretching back almost two years despite designs already being finalised.

The report recommends reviewing procurement practices and strengthening technical supervision to avoid similar delays during the remaining implementation period.

The report also recognises encouraging progress in establishing farmer commodity groups, with 66 commodity groups already formed under the project, and more than 560 commercial contracts reportedly signed between producer groups and off-takers.

However, the supervision mission concludes that many of these groups still require significant organisational development before they can function as sustainable commercial enterprises.

It recommends additional capacity building, stronger governance and clearer market strategies before large matching grants are awarded. Without this support, the report warns, grants alone are unlikely to generate lasting commercial success.

Matching grants remain one of the flagship interventions under SADP II.

The project is currently managing around 300 grants from earlier funding rounds, while a third call for proposals attracted more than 300 applications.

The report commends youth participation, noting that 795 young entrepreneurs have completed entrepreneurship training and 72 youth-led enterprises have already received grant support; however, supervision teams found that grant disbursement remains unnecessarily slow.

Some beneficiaries have already made their own financial contributions but are still waiting

for project verification before receiving subsequent funding.

The report urges project management to fast-track verification processes, accelerate milestone approvals and ensure all grants become operational before project closure.

Overall disbursement across financiers stood at just under 60 per cent, prompting concern that available resources may not be fully utilised before project closure.

The report also highlights delayed financial audits, procurement inefficiencies, weak contract administration, poor record management and delays in updating procurement systems.

It warns that continued weaknesses in financial reporting could expose the project to funding risks if corrective measures are not implemented quickly.

Among the strongest performing components is nutrition.

The report records that approximately 98 per cent of approved Nutrition Clubs have successfully completed planned activities, including irrigation installations, shade-net gardens and tree planting.

Nutrition awareness campaigns have progressed well, while the project is finalising national nutrition guidelines and educational materials, including a recipe book promoting food preservation.

The mission nevertheless cautions against concentrating repeated grants among the same beneficiary groups, recommending broader community outreach to maximise impact.

Gender inclusion has become one of the project's notable achievements; women now constitute 52 per cent of project beneficiaries, exceeding the project's original target of 50 per cent.

Youth participation, however, remains below expectations despite targeted grant programmes and entrepreneurship initiatives.

The report recommends greater mobilisation through schools, religious organisations and community leadership structures to attract more young people into climate-smart agriculture and agribusiness.



SADP II's Final Chance

...Farmers Demand Results as Government Races to Rescue Multi-Million-Dollar Agricultural Project

By Seahlolo Reporter

After years of investment, thousands of beneficiaries and one of the largest agricultural development budgets in Lesotho's recent history, the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) has reached a defining moment.

Designed to transform smallholder agriculture through climate-smart farming, irrigation, commercialisation and improved nutrition, the programme has mobilised approximately US\$70.5 million from the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), the Government of Lesotho, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and beneficiary contributions.

Yet with its original implementation period ending before many activities had been completed, the project has now been granted a one-year extension to May 2027, placing both government and beneficiaries under pressure to deliver on promises made nearly five years ago.

That pressure was evident during an emotionally charged stakeholder consultation in Maseru on 10 June, where farmers, service providers and beneficiaries openly confronted project officials over delayed payments, administrative bottlenecks, costly contractors and unfinished projects. For many in attendance, it was the first opportunity to directly challenge officials over problems they said had repeatedly undermined their farming businesses.

What emerged during the meeting was a picture of a project whose vision remains widely supported, but whose implementation has left many beneficiaries frustrated.

Launched to strengthen Lesotho's food systems, SADP II set out to increase the adoption of climate-smart agriculture, expand irrigation, strengthen agricultural commercialisation, improve nutrition and reduce poverty among smallholder farming households.

The programme sought to link farmers to markets, establish commodity groups, finance agribusinesses through matching grants, develop irrigation infrastructure and improve resilience against climate shocks.

Despite those ambitions, an IFAD and World Bank Supervision Mission conducted in May 2025 classified the project as a "potential problem", citing persistent implementation delays, procurement bottlenecks, weak coordination and lower-than-expected outreach despite improvements made over the previous year.

The mission noted that although implementation had recovered from a period of near paralysis following disagreements between the Project Management Unit (PMU) and the Ministry of Agriculture and the resignation of the former Project Director, several critical activities remained behind schedule.

According to the report, lengthy procurement processes, delayed irrigation contracts, cumbersome grant verification procedures and weak coordination between project management, district agricultural offices and ministry directorates continued slowing implementation. Low disbursement rates and weaknesses in beneficiary tracking further limited the project's ability to reach its intended targets.

Those findings closely mirrored the concerns later raised by beneficiaries during the June stakeholder meeting.

A beneficiary, Nthethe Kotele, argued that many farmers had not failed because of poor planning or lack of commitment, but because project systems repeatedly delayed implementation.

He explained that farming operates according to strict seasons and production cycles.

When project funds arrive months after they are



Hon Selibe Mochoboroane

expected, opportunities to purchase inputs, hire labour or complete infrastructure are often lost. "The biggest challenge has been delayed payments. When money comes late, you miss the farming season. Once that window closes, you cannot recover it," Kotele told the meeting. He also criticised the costs charged by some contractors appointed under the project, arguing that excessive prices left beneficiaries with fewer resources to invest in productive farming activities.

His concerns resonated across the room.

Several beneficiaries described similar experiences, pointing to slow administrative approvals, delayed procurement processes and difficulties accessing services that were intended to accelerate agricultural production.

At times the discussions became emotional as participants questioned why problems they had raised over several years had remained unresolved.

The frustrations expressed by farmers were not entirely new.

The joint IFAD-World Bank supervision mission had reached many of the same conclusions, reporting that overall implementation remained slower than expected, particularly in irrigation development and matching grants, because of prolonged contracting procedures, delayed procurement, complex verification requirements and coordination challenges between project management and implementing institutions.

The mission further warned that while project implementation had improved compared to previous years, beneficiary outreach remained below target and monitoring systems were not adequately capturing project performance.

The report further expressed concern over low disbursement rates across project financiers and urged project management to expedite payments to beneficiaries who had already completed implementation milestones.

Those recommendations echoed almost exactly what beneficiaries demanded during the June consultation.

Project Director Mpaki Makara acknowledged that while SADP II had delivered important gains, implementation had also experienced significant setbacks.

"There were successes, but there were also challenges experienced by farmers, service providers, beneficiaries and the project itself. The project ended without achieving all its intended targets,

and we are here to identify what went wrong and determine how we move forward," Makara acknowledged.

He said the consultation had been organised specifically to identify implementation bottlenecks and develop practical solutions before the project enters its final year.

Minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, Selibe Mochoboroane, delivered an equally candid assessment.

"As all of you know, the project ended on 31 May 2026 without completion.

"We realised how far behind implementation had fallen, and we were granted a one-year extension," Mochoboroane revealed.

He warned beneficiaries and project staff against treating the extension as additional breathing space.

"You had four years to complete your projects. An extension of one year means that work which previously took six months now has to be completed in two months."

He further revealed that both IFAD and the World Bank had questioned why the project had failed to achieve all its objectives within the original implementation period.

Given the scale of public and donor investment, he said, accountability could no longer be postponed.

Despite the criticism, the supervision report indicates that SADP II has recorded measurable achievements.

Women now account for 52 per cent of project beneficiaries, surpassing the project's target of 50 per cent.

More than 102,000 farmers have reportedly been reached through climate-smart agriculture initiatives, while 66 commodity groups have been established to strengthen farmer organisation and market participation.

The project has also supported 72 youth entrepreneurs through matching grants and created approximately 2,698 jobs, exceeding its employment target.

The report also highlights progress in nutrition interventions, with nearly all approved nutrition clubs completing planned activities and awareness campaigns reaching thousands of households.

Climate-smart agriculture training, rehabilitation of irrigation schemes and development of agro-weather advisory services have similarly recorded positive progress, although several com-



SADP II Project Director Mpaki Makara

ponents remain below target.

However, those achievements have been overshadowed by implementation delays affecting irrigation works, grant disbursements and commercialisation activities.

Following lengthy consultations, project management announced several measures intended to restore confidence among beneficiaries.

Makara committed that beneficiaries who had completed their work would receive outstanding payments within one week.

Applications relating to market allocation would be resolved within three days.

Administrative bottlenecks involving the finance department and Local Government Programme offices would be streamlined by centralising approval processes.

One of the most significant changes concerned contractor selection.

Rather than requiring beneficiaries to work with contractors assigned by the project, participants will now be allowed to choose from a list of approved service providers.

"The project will only provide a list of available contractors, and beneficiaries will be free to choose the contractor they wish to work with," Makara announced.

He further confirmed that advertisements of reopening commodity groups would be published before 29 June to enable additional farmers to participate.

Beyond project administration, stakeholders also highlighted the growing impact of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) on livestock production. The farmers pointed out that restrictions on animal movement have disrupted breeding programmes while limiting the sale of sheep and goats, placing additional financial pressure on livestock farmers.

Mochoboroane acknowledged the seriousness of the outbreak, saying the government continues working with South Africa and China to protect livestock development while maintaining market opportunities.

He also outlined the government's broader agricultural production strategy, identifying cabbage, spinach, tomatoes, potatoes, broiler chickens, eggs and pork as priority commodities for accelerated investment over the coming years.

"The aim is that by 2030 we have improved production across all these commodities," he said.

"To achieve that, we need to unite and work together."



MECHANIZATION PARTNER

FARMERS PITSO AWARDS

AGRICULTURAL & EXCELLENCE

'MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

Exhibition



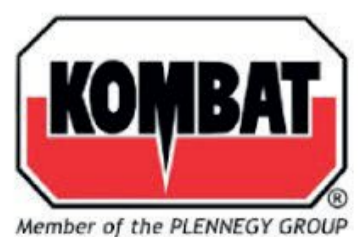
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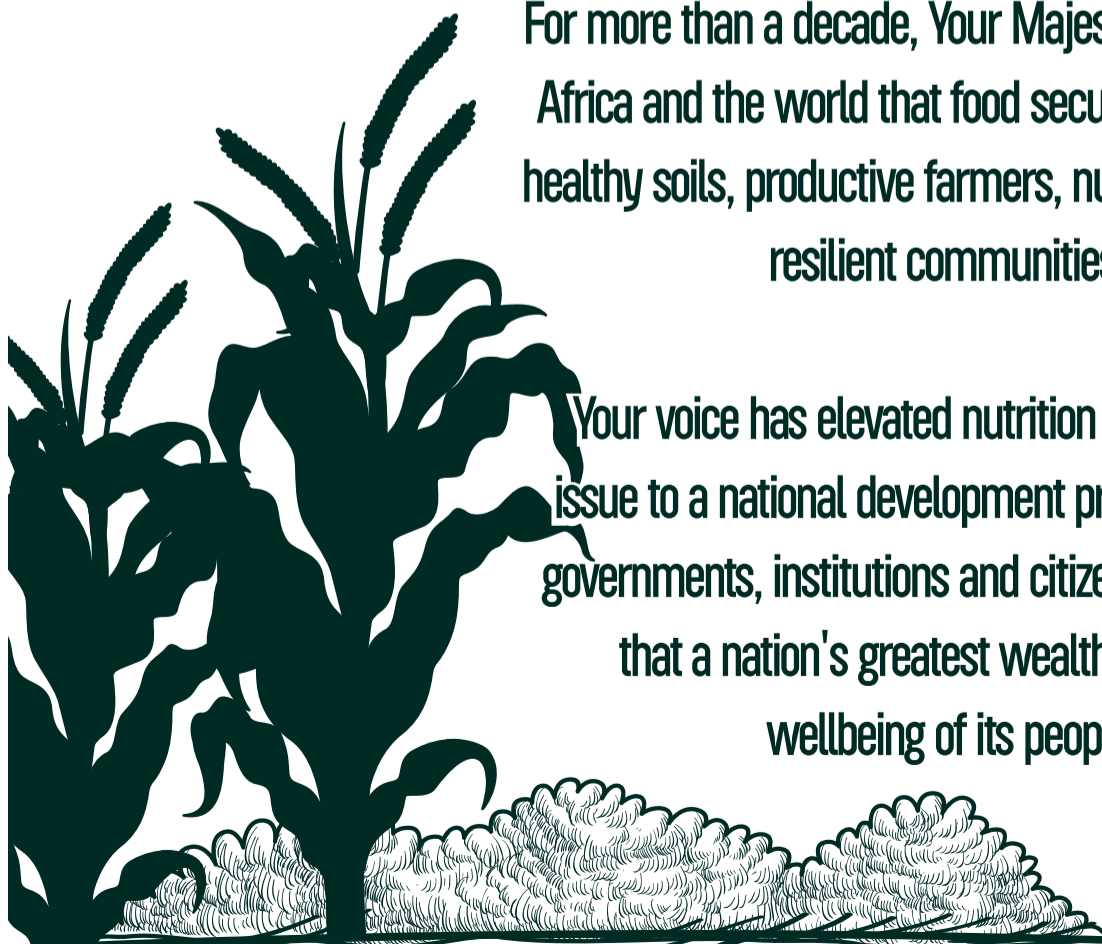
Your Majesty King Letsie III

Your Vision Continues to Inspire a Food-Secure Lesotho

As you celebrate another year of dedicated service to the Kingdom of Lesotho, we join the nation in honouring not only your birthday but also your unwavering commitment to agriculture, nutrition and the wellbeing of Basotho.

For more than a decade, Your Majesty has reminded Africa and the world that food security begins with healthy soils, productive farmers, nutritious food and resilient communities.

Your voice has elevated nutrition from a health issue to a national development priority, inspiring governments, institutions and citizens to recognise that a nation's greatest wealth lies in the wellbeing of its people.





Farmers Pitso Agriculture & Excellence Awards 2026 Categories

1. Primary Farming Excellence Categories

These categories form the foundation of the awards and recognise excellence in core agricultural production. They celebrate farmers who demonstrate productivity, innovation, resilience and leadership within crop and livestock farming.

CATEGORIES

Crop Production

- Smallholder Farmer of the Year
- Commercial Farmer of the Year
- Emerging Farmer of the Year
- Young Farmer of the Year
- Woman Farmer of the Year
- Best Horticulture Producer
- Best Grain Producer
- Best Organic Farmer
- Climate-Smart Farmer of the Year
- Conservation Agriculture Champion
- Best Potato Producer of the Year

Livestock

- Best Broiler Farmer
- Best Layer Farmer
- Best Free-Range Poultry Farmer
- Best Dairy Cattle Farmer
- Best Dairy Goat Farmer
- Best Wool Producer
- Best Mohair Producer
- Best Horse Breeding & Performance Farmer
- Best Pig Producer
- Best Aquaculture/Fish Farmer
- Animal Health Champion
- Best Bee-Keeper
- Best Rabbit Breeder/farmer

01

2. Innovation & Agribusiness Categories

This segment recognises businesses, entrepreneurs, and innovators contributing to agricultural transformation. It positions agriculture as an economic driver and encourages investment, technology adoption, and value addition.

CATEGORIES

- Agribusiness of the Year
- Agri-Tech Innovation Award
- Best Agro-Processing Enterprise
- Best Agricultural Start-Up
- Best Agricultural Cooperative
- Best Agri-Finance Support Institution
- Best Market Access Initiative
- Best Export-Oriented Agricultural Business

02

5. Media, Advocacy & Knowledge Sharing Categories

Agriculture cannot grow without communication, awareness, and information sharing. This segment recognises journalists, content creators, researchers, and educators advancing agricultural discourse.

CATEGORIES

- Best Agriculture Radio Programme
- Best Agriculture TV/Digital Content Creator
- Best Agriculture Newspaper
- Agricultural Photography Award
- Agricultural Storytelling Award
- Best Agriculture Influencer of the Year
- Best Research & Extension Excellence Award

05

3. Youth, Women & Inclusion Categories

These categories ensure the awards are socially inclusive and developmental. They highlight the contribution of women, youth, schools, and marginalised groups in strengthening food systems and rural livelihoods.

CATEGORIES

- Rural Youth Agripreneur of the Year
- Women in Agriculture Leadership Award
- Best Youth-Led Agribusiness
- Disability Inclusion in Agriculture Award
- Community Food Security Champion
- Best School Garden Initiative
- University/College Agricultural Innovation Award

03

6. Community & National Impact Categories

These categories celebrate individuals, institutions, and communities making a lasting contribution to national development, food security, and agricultural leadership.

CATEGORIES

- District Agricultural Excellence Award
- Community Farming Initiative of the Year
- Food Security Champion
- Agricultural Mentor of the Year
- Agricultural Leadership Award
- Traditional Leadership in Agriculture Award

06

4. Sustainability & Climate Categories

These awards recognise individuals and organisations implementing environmentally responsible and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

CATEGORIES

- Climate Resilience Award
- Water Conservation Champion
- Sustainable Land Management Award
- Indigenous Seed Preservation Award
- Renewable Energy in Agriculture Award
- Regenerative Farming Award
- Environmental Stewardship Award

04

Nominate or apply here:

<https://seahlolo.co.ls/farmers-pitso-agriculture-excellence-awards-2026/>





Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids Small Works
(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Name of Project: Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II)
Contract Title: Rehabilitation of Two (2) Irrigation schemes at Ha Mahlong, Thaba-Tseka (LOT 1)- & Waterfall, Qacha's Nek (LOT 2)

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: 64220
RFB Reference No.: LS-MAFS-554055-CW-RFB

1. The government of Lesotho is implementing the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) with financial support from The World Bank, Government of Japan and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project covers ten districts – Maseru, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, ThabaTseka and Mokhotlong. SADP is coordinated by the Project Management Unit based in Maseru. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract of rehabilitation of Two (2) Irrigation Schemes in Thaba-Tseka at Ha Mahlong (LOT 1) & Waterfall, Qacha's Nek (LOT 2).

2. The MAFSN through SADP II now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for rehabilitation of Irrigation Schemes in Thaba-Tseka at Ha Mahlong (LOT 1) & Waterfall, Qacha's Nek (LOT 2), for a period of 6 months for each LOT.

3. Bidders are eligible to bid for both Lots but only One (1) Bidder will be allocated/awarded one (1) Irrigation scheme (LOT) at a time.

4. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" 2025("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security -Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADPII) Situated at Department of Livestock Services Moshoeshe II

Maseru. Procurement Manager at procurement@sadpii.org.ls or at 22312578 and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours.

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained by interested eligible bidders at the following address: Procurement unit, Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II, Department of Livestock Services Moshoeshe II Maseru or SADP II Website: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/> and also via Email: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

7. Bids must be delivered to the address at the end of the Bid Document /RFB on or before 30th June 2026 at 1400 hours. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the *at the end of this RFB* on 30th June 2026 at 14:30 hours.

8. All Bids must be accompanied by the following :

Bid Security of LSL 90,000.00 (Ninety-thousand Maloti) LOT 1-Mahlong at ThabaTseka and or **Bid Security of LSL 90,000.00 (Ninety-thousand Maloti) LOT 2- Waterfall, Qacha's Nek**

9. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

10. The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Procurement Office
 Moshoeshe II
 Livestock
 P.O. Box 24 Maseru 100
 Lesotho

Tell: 22312578

Email: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

Website: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>



Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids Small Works
(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Name of Project: Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II)
Contract Title: Rehabilitation of Two (2) Irrigation Schemes at Ha Potsane (Lot 1) and Mootsinyane (Lot 2) in Mohale's Hoek

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: 64220
RFB Reference No.: LS-MAFS-554060-CW-RFB

1. The government of Lesotho is implementing the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) with financial support from The World Bank, Government of Japan and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The project covers ten districts – Maseru, Leribe, Butha-Buthe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, ThabaTseka and Mokhotlong. SADP is coordinated by the Project Management Unit based in Maseru. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract of rehabilitation of Two (2) Irrigation Schemes in Mohale's Hoek at Ha Potsane (Lot 1) and Mootsinyane (Lot 2),

2. The MAFSN through SADP II now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for rehabilitation of two (2) Irrigation Schemes in Mohale's Hoek at Ha Potsane and Mootsinyane, for a period of 4 months each scheme.

3. Bidders are eligible to bid for both Lots but only One (1) Bidder will be allocated/awarded one (1) Irrigation scheme (LOT) at a time.

4. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" 2025("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition -Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADPII) Situated at Department of Livestock Services Moshoeshe II Maseru. Procurement Manager at procurement@sadpii.org.ls

[sadpii.org.ls](mailto:procurement@sadpii.org.ls) or at 22312578 and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 0900 to 1600 hours

6. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained by interested eligible bidders at the following address: Procurement unit, Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II, Department of Livestock Services Moshoeshe II Maseru or SADP II Website: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/> and also via Email: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

7. Bids must be delivered to the address at the end of the Bid Document /RFB on or before 30th June 2026 at 1400 hours. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the *at the end of this RFB* on 30th June 2026 at 14:30 hours.

8. All Bids must be accompanied by the following:

Bid Security of LSL 90,000.00 (Ninety-thousand Maloti) LOT 1- Ha Potsane at Mohale's Hoek and or **Bid Security of LSL 90,000.00 (Ninety-thousand Maloti) LOT 2- Mootsinyane, Mohale's Hoek**

9. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

10. The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Procurement Office
 Moshoeshe II
 Livestock
 P.O. Box 24
 Maseru 100
 Lesotho

Tell: 22312578

Email: procurement@sadpii.org.ls

Website: <https://www.sadpii.org.ls/procurement/>



Invitation for Bids

ROLL Project -Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials to Support Vulnerable HHS - LSO-200002340-0241-G-NCB

Maseru, Lesotho
 05 JUNE 2026

Re: Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials To Support Vulnerable HHS-LSO-200002340-0241-G-NCB

The Government of Lesotho has received financing from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Global Environment Facility (GEF), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) and intends to apply a part of the proceeds of the financing to this purchase. The use of any IFAD financing shall be subject to IFAD's approval, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the financing agreement, as well as IFAD's rules, policies and procedures. IFAD and its officials, agents and employees shall be held harmless from and against all suits, proceedings, claims, demands, losses and liability of any kind or nature brought by any party in connection with Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods.

- The Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods includes rehabilitation of sixteen identified landscapes in Lesotho and improvement of the livelihoods of the people in the rural areas, within a period of eight years.
- This invitation for bids (IFB) follows the general procurement notice that appeared on IFAD website on the **21st April 2026**, Lesotho Times newspaper on the **23rd April 2026** and Public eye newspaper on **24th April 2026**
- The purchaser now invites sealed bids from eligible entities (bidders) for the **Procurement and Distribution of Apiculture Tools and Materials To Support Vulnerable HHS** More details on these goods and related services are provided in the schedule of requirements in this bidding document.
- This IFB is open to all eligible bidders who wish to respond. Subject to restrictions noted in the bidding document, eligible entities may associate with other bidders to enhance their capacity to successfully carry out the procurement.
- Bidding will be conducted using the **National Competitive Bidding (NCB)** method, the evaluation procedure for which is described in this bidding document, in accordance with the IFAD Procurement Handbook which is provided at www.ifad.org/project-procurement. The NCB process, as described, will include a review and verification of qualifications and past

performance, including a reference check, prior to the contract award.

- Please note that a pre-bid conference **will not be** held as described in the bid data sheet (BDS), Section III of the bidding document.
 - Bidders interested in submitting a bid shall download the bidding document from the following website: www.rollproject.gov.ls and complete the registration form available on the website
- Attn: Procurement Manager ROLL Project**
Ministry of Environment & Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot no. 12281-609, Near Ministry of Forestry, Maseru 100 Lesotho
Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203
E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls and copy to morakanyane.mafatle@gov.ls
- Bids must be delivered to the address and in the manner specified in the bid data sheet – instructions to bidders 23.2, no later than **10:00** local time on the **06 July 2026**.
 - Bidders shall be aware that late bids will not be accepted under any circumstance and will be returned unopened at the written request and cost of the bidder. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security or bid-securing declaration (as required) in the manner and amount specified in the bid data sheet.
 - Please note that electronic bids **shall not** be accepted.

Yours sincerely,

Procurement Manager

Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods Project Ministry of Environment and Forestry
Industrial Area, Plot No. 12281-609, Near Ministry of Forestry, Maseru 100
Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 5873 0763/ (+266) 5875 7203

E-mail: procurement.roll@gov.ls





Specific Procurement Notice

Request for Bids

(One-Envelope Bidding Process)

Country: Kingdom of Lesotho
Name of Project: Department of Rural Water Supply
Contract Title: DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027

RFB Reference No.: DRWS/M/ GOL2/2026-2027

- The Ministry of Natural Resources has received financing from the Government of Lesotho(GOL) toward the cost of the Rural Water Supply Projects and intends to apply the proceeds toward payments under the contract for **DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027**
- The Ministry of **Natural Resources** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders of DRWS category **B, C and D** to submit tenders for **DRW, System Maintenance Programme, 2026-2027**
- Bidding will be conducted through Open National competitive Tender as specified in Public Procurement Act of 2023.
- Interested eligible Bidders may inspect the Bidding document during office hours; **09:00 hours to 16:00 hours** at the **Department of Rural Water Supply Railway station, Railway Station, Next to WASCO Offices.**
- The bidding documents in **English, will be collected from Department of Rural Water supply, Railway Station, next to WASCO Offices,**

Maseru from Friday 26 June 2026 to 05 August 2026, at the non-refundable fee of M1 500.00. Payment shall be made to Accounts Office DRWS Maseru, Bidders must produce the receipt obtained from accounts office to procurement Unit in order to receive the bidding documents.

- Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **05, August, 2026, at 10:00 am.** Electronic Bidding will **not be** permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below:
**Procurement Unit
DRWS Office Khubetsoana, Resource Centre, Next to Appropriate Technology Services (ATS)
Maseru**
- All Bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security of M20,000** in the form of a Bank Guarantee.
- A Compulsory Pretender meeting shall be held on **Monday 13 July, 2026 at 10:00 am** at the DRWS Khubetsoana Resources Centre, Maseru.
- All questions and clarifications relating to this tender should be directed to The Procurement Unit, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suit, Old Christie House, Orpen Road, and Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru. Tel: 27325160.



Road Fund

INVITATION FOR BIDS

TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF ICT EQUIPMENT
(IFB Number: RF/2026/G02)

1. Background and requirements:

The Road Fund Secretariat invites bids from suitably qualified local companies with the capacity to supply Core IP-PBX Platform and computers. The specifications are provided in Table 1 below:

Table 1:

Item Number	Item description	Quantity	Lot number
1.	Core IP-PBX Platform	1	1
2.	14-inch Notebook Next Gen AI PC	5	2
3.	G5 23.8-inch FHD All-in-One PC	14	
4.	14-inch WUXGA AI Mobile Workstation	8	

Bidders are at liberty to bid for any lot or all lots. Bidders who choose to bid for lot 2 shall bid for all the 3 items under lot 2.

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 date of receiving the official purchase order;
- All bids must be accompanied by bid security of 2% of the 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 **9th July 2026**.

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

Submission:

Sealed bids clearly marked "**Supply and delivery of ICT equipment IFB No.: RF/2026/G02**" 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, 24th July 2026 at 10:00 hrs.** Public tender opening will be held on the same day at **10:30 hrs.**

4. The address referred to in clause 3 above for bid submission and opening is:

Road Fund Secretariat,
Former Department of Rural Roads Building,
Corner Moshoeshoe & Senate Roads,
Industrial Area, Maseru.



Lesotho Highlands Water Project – Phase II



RE-ADVERTISEMENT FOR

LOT 1: CONTRACT 3005G1 THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS: BRIDGES AND QUARRIES

Specific Procurement Notice

Khubelu Joint Venture requests Quotations from Geotechnical Investigation Contractors, for **Lot 1 Geotechnical Investigations for Bridges and Quarries** under Contract: 3005: The Design and Construction Supervision of Feeder Roads and Bridges. The Scope of Permanent Works includes five (5), 3m wide Pedestrian Bridges and six (6), 10m wide Vehicle Bridges. The lengths of the Pedestrian Bridges range from 200m to 700m, and the Vehicle Bridge lengths range from 30m to 432m.

The Request for Quotations (RFQ) documents will be available from **19 June 2026**. Interested Tenderers may obtain the documents free of charge via email upon request, or purchase a hard copy for a non-refundable fee of M1,000.00. Requests for the RFQ documents should be directed to: procurement@pemahn.com.

Quotations must be submitted in sealed envelopes, labelled "QUOTATION FOR LOT 1: C3005G1 GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS FOR BRIDGES AND QUARRIES UNDER CONTRACT LHDA NO. 3005: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION OF FEEDER ROADS AND BRIDGES". Original quotes should be hand-delivered to the physical address below:

Khubelu Joint Venture,
No. 6 Manong Road,
Hills View, Maseru, Lesotho.

The meeting place for clarifications will be at the **Polihali Operations Branch, Polihali Operations Centre, Polihali, Mokhotlong, on 01 July 2026 at 09h00**, followed by compulsory site visits on **01 and 02 July 2026**.

Quotations shall be submitted no later than the closing date and time: **20 July 2026 at 11h00**.

For Queries: E-mail: procurement@pemahn.com with subject heading "Lot 1: C3005G1 Geotechnical Investigations for Bridges and Quarries".

RE-ADVERTISEMENT FOR

LOT 2: CONTRACT 3005G2 THE GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS: ROADS AND MATERIALS

Specific Procurement Notice

Khubelu Joint Venture requests Quotations from Geotechnical Investigation Contractors, for **Lot 2: Geotechnical Investigations for Roads and Materials** under Contract: 3005: The Design and Construction Supervision of Feeder Roads and Bridges. The Scope of the invitation includes: 96km of roads and eight (8) to ten (10) borrow pits.

The Request for Quotations (RFQ) documents will be available from **19 June 2026**. Interested Tenderers may obtain the documents free of charge via email upon request, or purchase a hard copy for a non-refundable fee of M1,000.00. Requests for the RFQ documents should be directed to: procurement@pemahn.com

Quotations must be submitted in sealed envelopes, labelled "QUOTATION FOR LOT 2: C3005G2 GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATIONS FOR ROADS AND MATERIALS UNDER CONTRACT LHDA NO. 3005: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION OF FEEDER ROADS AND BRIDGES". Original quotes should be hand-delivered to the physical address below:

Khubelu Joint Venture,
No. 6 Manong Road,
Hills View, Maseru, Lesotho.

The meeting place for clarifications will be at the **Polihali Operations Branch, Polihali Operations Centre, Polihali, Mokhotlong, on 01 July 2026 at 09h00**, followed by compulsory site visits on **01 and 02 July 2026**.

Quotations shall be submitted no later than the closing date and time: **20 July 2026 at 11h00**.

For Queries: E-mail: procurement@pemahn.com with subject heading "Lot 2: C3005G2 Geotechnical Investigations for Roads and Materials".



Berea Farmers Turns Dual-Purpose Chickens into Prosperity

By Topollo Tlali

The aroma of freshly grilled chicken drifted across Teyateyaneng as groups of people moved from one cooking station to another, eager to taste recipes they had never imagined could come from an ordinary village chicken.

There was laughter, conversation and curiosity.

Some discussed spices. Others compared cooking techniques. Around them stood poultry farmers, chefs, development practitioners and community members, all united by a simple but powerful idea—that one bird could help transform household nutrition, create businesses and restore pride in local food production.

The cooking demonstration quickly turned into a celebration of how agriculture is changing lives.

Organised by the Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA), the event brought together members of the Berea Business Forum to showcase the growing success of dual-purpose chicken production, a venture that is steadily changing how many families in the district view farming. For many participants, the event represented the journey from subsistence to entrepreneurship.

“Our lives are no longer the same.” Standing before fellow farmers, Mamoratuoa Ntsekhe did not speak like someone describing a project.

She spoke like someone describing a transformation.

“As Berea Business Forum members, our lives have been different since RSDA mentored us to look into the commercial world of dual-purpose chicken farming,” she said, revealing that today, members of the forum are producing birds not only for household consumption but also for commercial sales, generating income from both eggs and meat.

“The mentorship helped us to have good production in a good environment and with a clear vision.”

She explained that the forum now operates through different business sections, with agriculture becoming one of its strongest pillars.

“Our farming section now produces dual-purpose chickens in large numbers, while our hospitality section has been trained to prepare the chickens using different recipes, something that brought transformation.”

As guests sampled grilled, roasted, and traditionally prepared dishes, forum members demonstrated that dual-purpose chickens are not merely a source of protein but also a foundation for new business ventures for their members.

“With the help of RSDA, we are now able to sell eggs and meat, earn an income and afford our essential needs,” Ntsekhe said.

“There are no employment opportunities sitting openly in Berea, so we decided to create opportunities for ourselves,” Ntsekhe said.

Today, she believes dual-purpose chicken production has the potential to stimulate the district’s local economy if production continues to grow.

“Our work is to produce more so that we can be found in the market.”

She pointed to street food vendors around Teyateyaneng who already rely on locally produced chickens and expressed hope that more families would begin raising birds for



Mampho Thulo managing director of RSDA addressing berea farmers



dual-purpose chicken meat

both household consumption and commercial supply.

“The doors are open for anyone who wants to join us,” she added, quickly noting, “... we met many challenges along the way, but RSDA taught us that there is no problem without a solution.”

District Agricultural Officer, ‘Malerato Lekhooa, believes the greatest transformation towards agricultural development is taking place in people’s minds.

“For years, many farmers overlooked indigenous and dual-purpose chickens, preferring fast-growing commercial broilers. Today, that attitude is beginning to change. As the world changes, people are beginning to realise how healthy these birds are.”

Beyond their nutritional value, she described dual-purpose chickens as representing an important economic opportunity.

“They can play a significant role in improving household incomes while contributing to broader economic growth.”

The DAO also noted that strengthening local poultry production reduces dependence on imported chicken products, particularly during disease outbreaks that disrupt international supply chains.

For RSDA, Managing Director, Mampho Thulo, promoting dual-purpose chickens is about far more than poultry production. It is about building healthier communities.

“Today we are gathered here to celebrate, talk about and eat dual-purpose chickens that are produced locally,” she said.

“Our intention is to promote these birds and educate people about their true value.” She challenged smallholder farmers to move beyond viewing poultry as a backyard

activity.

“Dual-purpose chickens should be seen as a business. Because the birds provide both eggs and meat, they offer households two independent income streams while simultaneously improving family nutrition. The meat and skin are highly nutritious and contain important nutrients that benefit the body,” she explained.

At a time when Lesotho continues to battle malnutrition and childhood stunting, Thulo believes wider adoption of dual-purpose chickens could strengthen both household health and rural incomes.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) believes initiatives such as the Berea Business Forum demonstrate what community-led agricultural development can achieve.

Representing FAO, Pulane Thulo encouraged more households to embrace dual-purpose chicken production.

“These chickens contribute to better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life.”

She said empowering communities to produce their own food remains more sustainable than relying indefinitely on external assistance.

“Self-reliance is the only true path to sustainable development.”

According to Thulo, the Berea Business Forum shows that when farmers receive practical skills, appropriate technologies, and high-quality poultry breeds, they can transform their own livelihoods.

Perhaps no one appreciated the birds’ commercial value more enthusiastically than Chef Skamotho Moteane.

As she prepared different dishes before an eager audience, she challenged the long-held belief that local chickens belong only on rural dinner tables.

“Dual-purpose chicken has no competition in high-end hotels and professional kitchens when prepared properly.”

Using organic herbs and traditional cooking techniques, she demonstrated recipes that drew crowds throughout the day.

“We must protect our local recipes and cooking methods because they are healthy.”

Looking at the farmers gathered before her, she made a simple request.

“I wish producers could increase production so that people like us can buy enough birds to run our businesses.”

Among those watching the demonstrations was community member Mokete Mokhothu.

Her relationship with chickens began as a child.

She remembers being called away from games to feed them, a chore she disliked so much that, as an adult, she never wanted to keep chickens again.

“I felt like chickens had stolen my childhood,” she laughed, “But after watching the day’s demonstrations, tasting the dishes and hearing the success stories, my perspective changed completely.”

“Today I am going home inspired.”

“I want to rear my own chickens and feed my children.”

She also discovered new ways of preparing local poultry.

“I never knew herbs could be used like this. From today, I will be using these recipes in my own kitchen.”



WE ARE TURNING





NUL Scientists Develop Award-Winning Porridge to Combat Malnutrition

By **Thoboloko Ntšonyane**

A humble bowl of lesheleshele, the soft sorghum porridge that has nourished Basotho families for generations, has become the foundation of an innovation attracting international recognition.

This development could significantly strengthen Lesotho's fight against malnutrition according to researchers from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) who have developed a soybean-fortified sorghum porridge.

The porridge development won the Innovation Award at the International Southern African Association for Food Science and Technology (SAAFoST) Conference in Hartbeespoort, South Africa, in March this year.

This award-winning innovation is part of a research project titled "Soybean Introduction and Utilisation Technologies to Enhance Nutrition and Income Generation in Lesotho." The project was undertaken by Dr Pulane Nkhabutlane, Dr Moleboheng Lekota, and Professor Motlatsi Morojele, all affiliated with the National University of Lesotho.

According to Dr Nkhabutlane, the project was inspired by the Agricultural Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA), which promotes agricultural innovation across the region.

For Dr Nkhabutlane, the idea was both simple and deeply rooted in Basotho culture.

She explained that instead of introducing unfamiliar foods, the research team chose to improve a food commodity that households already know and enjoy.

"We wanted to develop tasty, nutritious soybean-based foods that local people would enjoy, while helping to address protein deficiencies, especially among vulnerable groups such as children," she said.

Traditionally, lesheleshele is prepared using sorghum or maize flour. While both grains provide valuable carbohydrates and energy, they contain relatively low levels of some essential amino acids required for healthy growth and development.



Therefore, the research team fortified sorghum flour with soybean flour to create a more nutritionally balanced product.

"The recipe is based on Lesheleshele, a traditional food in Lesotho. To improve its nutritional quality, we fortified sorghum flour with soybean flour," Dr Nkhabutlane explained.

She noted that despite being one of the richest plant sources of high-quality protein, soybeans remain underutilised in many parts of Lesotho.

"Soybeans are an excellent source of high-quality protein containing essential amino acids that are often lacking in cereal-based diets. They also contain healthy polyunsaturated fats that contribute to heart health," Dr

Nkhabutlane said.

She added that the fortified porridge was specifically designed as a nutritious weaning food for infants and as a healthier breakfast option for families seeking balanced diets.

Beyond their nutritional value, Dr Nkhabutlane highlighted that soybeans also offer important environmental benefits and contribute to

climate-smart agriculture.

"They naturally fix nitrogen in the soil, reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers and improving soil fertility."

She further explained that integrating soybeans into existing farming systems can also reduce production risks associated with climate variability.

"Our research emphasises the use of locally available crops and value-addition technologies that improve food security, nutrition, and household incomes. By combining nutrition-sensitive agriculture with sustainable farming practices, we aim to develop food systems that are both resilient and beneficial to communities in the face of climate change," she said.

The project, therefore, supports more than household nutrition, promoting crop diversification, healthier soils and more resilient farming systems.

For Dr Nkhabutlane, receiving the Innovation Award was recognition not only of the research team but also of Lesotho's growing scientific contribution to solving African food security challenges.

"Winning the award was both a humbling and rewarding experience," she said.

"I am grateful to God for the opportunity and strength to represent Lesotho and the National University of Lesotho on an international platform."

She believes the recognition demonstrates that solutions developed in Lesotho can compete internationally.

"The award was not only a personal achievement but also recognition of the important work being done by researchers in Lesotho to address food and nutrition challenges. I always take pride in seeing Lesotho represented positively at international gatherings. Such recognition demonstrates that our research and innovations can compete globally and contribute meaningful solutions to societal challenges."

Although the product has successfully undergone nutritional analysis and consumer acceptability testing, it is not yet commercially available. The research team is now looking beyond the laboratory towards partnerships capable of bringing the innovation into schools, health facilities, shops and households across Lesotho.

"At this stage, the product has undergone nutritional analysis and consumer acceptability testing with very promising results," she explained.

She added, "We are hopeful that future partnerships and investments will support its production and wider distribution so that more Basotho can benefit from this nutritious product. If that happens, an ordinary bowl of lesheleshele could become much more than a traditional breakfast. It could become an example of how local science, local agriculture, and local food traditions can work together to improve nutrition, strengthen farmers' incomes, and build a healthier future for Basotho families."

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P700, a table, a gazebo and the courage to begin.

...How a Botswana agripreneur is building markets, creating wealth, and transforming Africa's perception of farming.



By Lerato Matheka

When Mosimanegape Motsumi lost his job in 2006, he found himself at a crossroads familiar to many Africans. Employment had vanished, opportunities were scarce, and the future seemed uncertain. However, rather than viewing unemployment as an endpoint, he drew on lessons instilled in him years earlier by his grandparents.

These lessons, learned reluctantly as a child while tending fields and completing endless farming chores, would eventually form the bedrock of one of Botswana's most remarkable agribusiness success stories.

"I wasn't born a farmer, but I was raised by natural farmers — my grandparents," Motsumi recalls.

"Growing up, farming chores weren't a choice; they were a responsibility. Farming was integral to our way of life, our contribution, and how we were taught discipline. We were constantly reminded that farming is one of the greatest gifts God gave to mankind."

Like many young people, he admits he didn't appreciate these lessons at the time.

"Back then, I didn't enjoy it. Like many young people, I didn't fully grasp the value of what I was being taught. But every lesson, every chore, and every experience was deeply embedded in my mind."

Years later, with no other options, those forgotten lessons resurfaced.

His mother owned a small plot of unused land designated for fruit and vegetable production. Rather than letting it lie fallow, Motsumi decided to venture into farming.

He began modestly, cultivating just half a hectare of land with spinach and rape — crops he could afford and that were widely consumed within the community.

"What had once felt like a childhood responsibility became the place where I started anew."

"Farming became more than physical work; it became a way to rebuild, to utilise available resources, and to create value from the land," he says.

The subsequent years taught him patience, resilience, and the realities of farming. Yet, after more than a decade in production, he reached a conclusion that would completely redefine his business: production alone was not the answer.

"The real problem wasn't production," he says.

"It was the market."

For Motsumi, that became the pivotal question

that changed everything.

Farmers across Africa work tirelessly to produce quality crops, yet too often struggle to secure consistent buyers. They understand soils, rainfall, and planting calendars, but many remain disconnected from reliable markets that can reward their efforts and turn production into profit.

"Farmers can produce good crops; they can work hard, care for the land, and harvest quality produce. But if there's no proper market, no reliable distribution, and no clear pathway to customers, profitability becomes very difficult," he explains.

Rather than waiting for someone else to solve that challenge, he and his wife built the solution themselves.

That decision gave birth to Yamikani Foods.

At the time, Botswana's fresh produce industry was largely dominated by supermarkets. Consumers had become accustomed to believing that quality fruit and vegetables could only be purchased inside refrigerated retail stores.

Motsumi challenged that belief.

"We asked ourselves an important question. How can we change the mindset that high-value fresh produce can only be found in supermarkets?" he recalls.

Armed with only P700, a table, and a gazebo, the couple began selling directly to customers.

It was a gamble that paid off.

"The response was massive," he says.

"People were ready for another way to access fresh produce. They were ready to buy outside of the supermarket system. They were ready to connect more directly with the source of their food."

For him, the experience reinforced an important lesson:

"Fresh produce does not begin on a supermarket shelf. It begins on the farm. It comes from the soil, from water, from weather, from risk, from long days, and from the vigilant care of the farmer."

The roadside stall grew steadily through consistency, quality products, and personal relationships with customers.

"We delivered quality at a quality price and offered one-to-one customer service that customers could not get from supermarkets."

Within four years, what had begun with a folding table and a gazebo had evolved into a business generating more than P20 million in annual turnover, while creating opportunities for many other small enterprises along the value chain. The growth confirmed his belief that agriculture can create wealth, not just produce crops.

For Motsumi, that growth confirmed something he now passionately shares across Africa.

"Agriculture is not just about survival," he says.

"It is business. It is an opportunity. It is economic transformation."

"It is one of the few industries truly connected to human existence because every person needs food. For that reason, we must take agriculture seriously."

His experience also changed the way he understands farming itself.

"Harvest is only one stage.

"The next question is: how does this produce reach people, how does it create income, and how does it build a stronger business for the farmer?" he explains.

He believes too many producers continue to measure success by tonnes harvested rather than by markets secured.

"...Instead, farmers should understand customers, pricing, consistency, quality standards, and relationships just as well as they understand planting seasons.

His vision now extends far beyond growing vegetables.

Named after his son, Yamikani Foods reflects his belief in creating businesses that outlive their founders.

"It is the name of my son," he explains.

"As a believer in generational wealth creation, I wanted the business to encourage him one day to continue what we have built."

His ambition is to transform Yamikani Foods into a fully integrated agribusiness operating across the entire agricultural value chain.

"Our vision is to strengthen everything from production right through to market access and distribution. We want to become industry dominant, from the soil to the table."

Yet perhaps his greatest passion lies in inspiring young Africans to rethink agriculture.

He believes governments must begin teaching agriculture differently.

"In many schools, farming is still taught only as production for consumption.

We must begin teaching young people the business side of agriculture; the numbers, opportunities, value chains, markets and wealth creation potential behind it."

Only then, he argues, will more young Africans begin viewing agriculture as an exciting profession rather than a last resort.

"Once agriculture becomes attractive to the youth, we will see greater participation, innovation and growth across the continent."

His advice to aspiring agripreneurs reflects the same practical optimism that has shaped his own journey.

"Start with what you have. Understand your market, build relationships, be consistent, learn from failure, and do not see agriculture only as work for survival. See it as a serious business with the power to create income, dignity and transformation."

He also challenges entrepreneurs not to wait for government support before acting.

"Start until the government approaches you," he says with a smile.

"Even the banks should offer you facilities."

Instead of relying entirely on systems created by others, he believes African entrepreneurs must create their own markets.

"As entrepreneurs, we must think outside the box, identify gaps in the market and build practical solutions around them."

"Nearly two decades after unemployment forced me back onto a small piece of family land, I believe my achievements are inspirational and can inspire anyone with passion," he said.



When the Rain Stops, She Wants Livestock to Keep Eating

By Topollo Tlali

For most livestock farmers, drought begins with worry, the grass grows shorter, streams begin to dry up, and the mountains slowly lose their green colour.

Then comes the difficult question every livestock owner dreads: How will I feed my animals?

For Moipone Ndlovu, the answer may not be found on the mountains at all.

It is found growing inside a small enclosed structure where sunlight, water and carefully sprouted seed produce lush green animal feed in less than ten days.

This development of Moipone is an idea that many Basotho farmers have never seen before.

Some dismiss it as impossible, while others call it too modern for Lesotho, but she simply calls it necessary.

“If we continue waiting for rain to feed our livestock, climate change will continue making that decision for us,” she says.

Standing at Botle Farm in Sehlabeng sa Thathathe, the social and environmental sustainability consultant speaks less like someone promoting a technology and more like someone determined to solve a national problem.

She has watched Lesotho’s grazing lands struggle under the combined pressure of prolonged droughts, shrinking rainfall, degraded communal rangelands and growing livestock numbers.

Each winter, she says, the story repeats itself. “Animals lose condition, milk production declines, wool and mohair quality suffers, while farmers spend thousands of maloti buying imported feed simply to keep their livestock alive.”

“Lesotho’s livestock sector depends heavily on natural grazing, but the grazing base is under pressure. Farmers are facing drought, unreliable rainfall, winter feed shortages, water stress and degraded communal rangelands,” she explains.

For decades, Lesotho has invested in restoring rangelands.

“Communities have built stone lines, planted grasses and introduced better grazing practices; all those efforts remain important, but I believe restoration alone is no longer enough.

“Rangelands need rest to properly recover; however, farmers cannot reduce grazing pressure unless they have another reliable source of feed.”

That belief has led her to one of agriculture’s fastest-growing innovations, hydroponic fodder.

Inside a controlled growing system, barley, maize or sorghum seed is transformed into fresh green livestock feed within seven to ten days using remarkably little land and water.

Unlike conventional fodder production, it does not wait for the rainy season.

It does not depend on fertile fields.

And it continues to produce even when surrounding pastures have already turned brown.

Moipone is pioneering a pilot system capable of producing between 300 and 500 kilograms of fresh fodder every day.

For her, however, the numbers matter less than what they represent.

“Hydroponic fodder offers a practical re-

sponse because we produce fresh green feed in seven to ten days using a compact, controlled system,” she says.

She is careful not to oversell the idea.

“Hydroponic fodder is not a miracle feed. It must be combined with roughage and validated for different livestock systems.”

That honesty reflects her scientific approach.

Rather than asking farmers to adopt the technology immediately, she is proposing a 120-day validation programme to assess its performance under Lesotho’s environmental conditions.

The study, she says, will examine production reliability, fodder quality, water efficiency, farmer adoption and commercial viability.

“The technology pathway already exists; what we need now is to validate it for Lesotho.”

If successful, the implications could extend far beyond animal nutrition.

Because hydroponic systems require relatively little land, Moipone believes they could create opportunities for women, young farmers, and emerging livestock producers who lack access to extensive grazing areas.

“Hydroponic fodder production requires limited land, thus can open opportunities for women, youth and smallholder farmers. It is not only about feeding livestock but also about expanding participation in climate-smart livestock enterprises.”

Her vision also addresses one of Lesotho’s hidden agricultural costs.

Research from Lesotho’s own Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation has noted that excessive livestock grazing has caused extensive land degradation and soil erosion, thereby threatening people’s livelihoods and increasing grazing pressure on communal rangelands in Lesotho, which has led to massive amounts of soil being eroded each year causing a big loss in biological diversity and ecosystem goods and making animal grazing lands poor and causing farmers to buy fodder.

Further, the country’s trade reports of 2024 revealed that Lesotho roughly imports \$ 7.6 million USD worth of animal fodder feed preparations and food industry residues annually. The fodder directly comes from South Africa; the commercial shipments from South Africa frequently cross in to the country in bulk quantities ranging from 10,000 kg to over 30,000kg.

Those imports expose farmers to rising transport costs, volatile prices and supply disruptions.

Moipone believes producing more feed locally would strengthen both food security and the livestock economy.

Climate change has already forced farmers to rethink crop production, and she believes livestock farming must now evolve as well.

Hydroponic fodder, she argues, could become one of the tools that allow those landscapes to breathe again.

“It will never replace Lesotho’s iconic mountain pastures, and it is not even meant to, instead, it as an insurance policy against increasingly uncertain seasons. A way to keep animals productive while allowing damaged rangelands time to recover,” she stresses.

Lesotho Puts Pastoralists at the Heart of Rangeland Restoration

By Topollo Tlali

Restored grasslands across the green hills of Sebetia in Berea now sway where bare, eroded soil once struggled to support life.

Streams that had gradually disappeared are flowing again, vegetation has returned, and communities are beginning to harvest grasses and other natural resources that were once lost to land degradation.

For many gathered at Sebetia to commemorate Desertification and Drought Day 2026, the recovering landscape stood as living proof that restoring nature is possible, but this year’s message reached beyond rehabilitating land.

It focused on restoring the value of the people who care for it.

Celebrated under the global theme, “Recognise, Respect and Restore Rangelands,” the government, development partners, and communities called for pastoralists and herd boys to be recognised not simply as livestock keepers but as frontline custodians of Lesotho’s fragile mountain ecosystems.

In a country where livestock remains one of the most important rural assets, speakers argued that protecting grazing land cannot happen without protecting the people who manage it every day.

Representing the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Tankiso Letsopha said caring for rangelands and supporting pastoralists are inseparable responsibilities.

“Protecting rangelands and the environment helps maintain fertile land, while supporting herd boys and pastoralists enables them to take care of livestock and natural resources,” he said.

He reminded communities that nature remains the foundation of food production, livelihoods and human wellbeing.

“Nature plays an important role in our lives, and as human beings, we must protect nature so that it can protect us in return.”

Letsopha warned that desertification and prolonged drought continue to threaten communities whose livelihoods depend on healthy soils, productive grazing land and reliable water sources.

“Awareness of Desertification and Drought Day is important because when people understand the effects of desertification, they are better prepared to protect their environment.”

He added that young herdboy and pastoralist communities have a critical responsibility to safeguard Lesotho’s natural resources for future generations.

For Berea District Commissioner Senior Superintendent, Kabelo Halahala, investing in pastoralists is ultimately an investment in livestock production itself.

“Taking care of pastoralists means they are able to perform their duties effectively. This contributes to proper livestock management, prevents harmful practices such as overgrazing and promotes the well-being of animals.”

He urged livestock owners to recognise the dignity of those entrusted with caring for their animals.

“Pastoralists are essential in livestock care, and when they are supported, the whole system of animal production and rangeland management benefits.”

He further cautioned against exploiting herdboys and other livestock workers.

“Livestock owners must not exploit workers because such practices are unlawful and undermine the dignity and welfare of the people who care for their animals.”

The day’s discussions also highlighted the scale of Lesotho’s environmental challenge.

According to Palesa Leoaneka from the Depart-

ment of Soil and Water Conservation, Lesotho joins 197 countries every year in commemorating Desertification and Drought Day as part of global efforts to combat land degradation.

She explained that overgrazing remains one of the major contributors to the deterioration of rangelands.

“Overgrazing contributes significantly to land degradation, and this challenge continues to affect the health of our rangelands.”

Climate change, she added, is making recovery even more difficult.

“Climate change has worsened the situation by reducing the soil’s ability to retain water, which has accelerated desertification.”

International concern over declining rangelands continues to grow.

According to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), around half of the world’s rangelands are now degraded, resulting in declining vegetation cover, shrinking biodiversity, soil compaction and reduced productivity. In many dryland regions, climate change is further reducing rainfall, making grazing systems increasingly vulnerable.

Against that backdrop, Letsopha Sebetia pointed out that it offered an encouraging example of what sustained restoration can achieve.

Visitors toured rehabilitated sites where healthier vegetation has returned, water now flows more freely, and restored grasslands are beginning to generate additional household income through the harvesting and sale of plant materials.

The restoration work, Letsopha said, demonstrated that repairing degraded landscapes is not only about protecting the environment but also about strengthening livelihoods, improving livestock production, and creating new economic opportunities for rural communities.

Several organisations working in natural resource management, including ReNOKA, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) and the Rehabilitating and Restoring Landscapes (ROLL) programme, used the event to showcase technologies and community-based approaches supporting environmental restoration across the country.

Traditional songs, poetry and cultural performances added colour to the commemoration, reinforcing the deep cultural connection between Basotho communities, livestock and the land they depend upon.

Closing the event, Minister of Environment and Forestry Hon. Thabo Mofosi challenged Basotho to ensure that this year’s global theme becomes more than a slogan.

“The 2026 theme must be practised and applied in our daily lives by caring for both our rangelands and our pastoralists. Our lives begin with nature, and we must respect it, protect it and live in harmony with it.”

The Minister linked environmental protection directly to national food security and public health.

“If the environment is protected, there will be good food production, and the nation will be better able to fight stunting and malnutrition affecting many communities.”

He also pledged to strengthen the country’s legal framework to support sustainable rangeland management.

“I will continue working to ensure that laws protecting rangelands, pastoralists and good environmental governance are strengthened through Parliament.”

His commitment reflects a growing understanding that restoring Lesotho’s landscapes requires more than planting grass or constructing erosion-control structures.