



Lesotho and FAO

Building resilience and sustainable food and nutrition security

Lesotho joined the Organization in 1966 and has enjoyed close cooperation with FAO since the establishment of the country office in 1983. The main areas of assistance have focused on the formulation of policies, programmes and projects aimed at improving agricultural output, natural resources management and food and nutrition security. More recently, important features of cooperation have included responses to agricultural emergencies and resilience building, climate change adaptation and promotion of sustainable land management principles and practices.

Responding to recurrent agricultural emergencies

The El-Niño-induced drought of 2015-16 threatened the livelihoods and food security of more than 35 percent of Lesotho's population. In response to this emergency, FAO mobilized donor resources totalling US\$9.1 million. FAO designed an emergency and resilience programme to promote climate-smart agricultural technologies throughout Lesotho. Between 2016 and 2017, the programme reached 24 000 vulnerable farming households, promoting climate-smart technologies such as conservation agriculture and keyhole gardens, and establishing water harvesting structures for communities and schools. Over 1 300 stakeholders received training on water harvesting techniques and climate smart technologies.



Matching FAO's expertise to Lesotho's development priorities

In line with the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), FAO assistance in Lesotho is shaped by the 2013-2017 Country Programming Framework (CPF). The 2013-2017 CPF has been extended until December 2018 and development of a new plan is currently underway. FAO's country programme centres on four priority areas:

- **Sustainable food and nutrition security**, with a focus on strengthening national institutions and farmer organizations to effectively respond to food and nutrition security challenges.
- **Ensuring an environment for sustainable agri-business development**, through strengthening the capacity of key government institutions and other relevant stakeholders to formulate, facilitate and execute agricultural investment plans.
- **Sustainable management of natural resources**, a priority which recognizes land degradation and unsustainable utilization of natural resources as the leading sources of food insecurity and declining agricultural productivity.
- **Strengthening capacity for agricultural service delivery**, with a view to improving farming communities' access to agricultural advisory services.

CONTACTS

Patrick Kormawa

Subregional Coordinator and FAO Representative a.i. in Lesotho
FAO Representation
UN House, 13 UN Road
Maseru, Lesotho
Tel.: +266 58845647
FAO-LS@fao.org



Combining social protection with agriculture

The Government of Lesotho continues to prioritize social protection, with around 9 percent of its GDP going towards various social protection programmes, including: old-age pensions; cash grants for orphans and vulnerable children; agricultural subsidies and partial grants for tertiary education. Over the years, FAO has demonstrated that greater complementarity and linkages between social protection programmes, notably cash transfers, and other agricultural and rural development interventions play a fundamental role in addressing constraints faced by households, promoting productive investments and stimulating sustainable poverty reduction. Within this framework, FAO continues to provide labour constrained beneficiaries with home gardening kits, including vegetable seeds, and shade nets as well as training on appropriate labour-saving and climate smart agriculture techniques.

Promoting natural resource management

Traditional farming techniques and overgrazing have been identified as major causes of land degradation in Lesotho. In an attempt to halt land degradation, restore biodiversity and promote sustainable use of natural resources, FAO and local communities have implemented various interventions ranging from brush control, restoration and establishment of new grazing associations, stone-line construction, high-density grazing technology, re-seeding of rangelands and the protection of water sources through the construction of animal drinking points. Up to 50 portable solar fences have also been erected to address overgrazing and the spread of invasive plant species while encouraging the growth of more environmentally friendly local species. In areas where these movable kraals have been installed, rangelands have shown significant recovery. Combined efforts at promoting conservation, agriculture and sustainable land management are beginning to reduce the rate of land degradation.

Climate change programming and natural resource management are of crucial importance for increasing the productivity and general well-being of the broader agriculture sector. With this in mind, a number of complementary projects have been developed with a focus on the environment, natural resource management and climate change adaptation. One of the important outputs of these projects is the land cover atlas which will include applications such as a 'crop portal' showing historic crop data across all agro-ecological zones and linking them with rainfall patterns and other climate variables.

Protection of livestock assets

Livestock constitute an important sector of Lesotho's economy, contributing to about 60 percent of agricultural GDP. One of the major challenges facing the sector is disease outbreaks. Diseases of particular importance for Lesotho include sheep scabies, black quarter and anthrax. Some of these diseases are not only detrimental to the productivity of the animals but also have a direct impact on the country's ability to trade in animals and animal products. For instance, the failure to control anthrax can easily lead to trade embargos on animal products, for example wool and mohair. In 2017-18 over 350 000 animals were vaccinated against anthrax, black quarter and sheep scabies.

"Agriculture and food security are the entry points for growth and development strategies in many countries."

José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

In addition to the vaccination campaigns, FAO is working towards strengthening animal disease surveillance.

Looking ahead

FAO and the Government of Lesotho enjoy a close working relationship. The Organization is currently supporting the drafting of the National Agricultural Investment Plan and has also been requested to provide technical leadership for the comprehensive review of the country's agricultural policies. These initiatives provide a foundation for future resource mobilization.

