LESOTHO

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

Lesotho is a unitary monarchy with a two-tiered subnational government structure with 10 district councils as the upper tier and 11 urban and 64 community councils as the lower tier. The capital Maseru has its own unique single-tier authority, the city council.[1]

Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).[2]

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

The second **National Strategic Development Plan 2018/19-2022/23 (NSDP II)** is aligned with the 2030 Agenda. 90% of the SDGs are integrated into the NSDP II which identifies four key priority areas geared toward job creation, inclusive growth, and further poverty reduction. NSDP II is also aligned with the 2063 African Union Agenda and the Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan.[3]

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The national coordination for SDG implementation relies on three main bodies. The **Oversight Committee on SDGs** is composed of parliamentary oversight and other oversight institutions. The **National SDGs Forum** aims to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to the implementation and communication of the SDGs. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes government officials, development partners, the private sector, academia, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society organizations. Finally, the **Policy Coordination Committee**, chaired by the Minister of Development Planning and the Minister of Finance, provides guidance and develops mechanisms to align the SDG implementation process with other national frameworks. It is supported by an SDG Steering Committee in which multiple stakeholders are involved, as well as a Technical Coordination Committee.

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The **Ministry of Development Planning** was mandated to coordinate the 2019 and 2022 VNR processes. A technical team was set up to collect all inputs for the 2019 VNR drafting. The **SDG Steering Committee** has overseen the 2022 VNR process, and consultants were recruited to draft technical papers. For both VNR processes, workshops were organized with participants from ministries, departments and agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, academia, persons with disability, youth groups and marginalized groups such as herd boys and women, to collect qualitative information on good practices and success stories. To complement the qualitative information on good practices and success stories, the drafting teams were given access to statistical data from the Bureau of Statistics to assess progress on each indicator.

1.3 MONITORING

The **Technical Coordination Committee** coordinates the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. **Technical Working Groups (TWG)** are responsible for overall monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the SDGs. Lesotho has selected 152 SDG indicators through a consultative process with stakeholders. The country is only able to report on 53% of the selected indicators due to the unavailability of data. However, the Bureau of Statistics developed the **National Strategy for Development of Statistics II** to strengthen the collection, analysis, and dissemination of development data. The strategy has a focus on gender mainstreaming and having well-coordinated National Statistical Systems.

1. UCLG Africa, Cities Alliance, 2021, "Assessing the Institutional Environment of Cities and Subnational Governments in Africa", https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/CitiesAlliance_Assessing%20Inst.%20Environment%20of%20Cities%20and%20Subnal.%20Govs%20in%20Africa_EN.pdf
2. See: https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2021/23777Lesotho_VNR_Report_2019_Final.pdf (2019); https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Lesotho%20Report.pdf (2022)
3. The country is also committed to other global frameworks including the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Istanbul Programme of Action, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR).

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

District SDGs Focal Persons were involved in the previous National Oversight and Advisory Committee. However, this coordination structure was amended after the 2019 VNR. The 2022 VNR states that LRGs play a key role in SDG implementation by addressing local challenges through service delivery as well as producing disaggregated data that feeds into the National Statistical databases. They work through the Technical Working Groups (TWGs). For example, the Communication and Popularisation TWG collaborates with LRGs and other stakeholders to create awareness about the relevance of the SDGs. To improve coordination for data at both national and subnational levels, **District SDG Working Groups** were established to spearhead the monitoring and reporting of SDG indicators.

District authorities participated in the National Conference for validation and ownership of the 2019 VNR, but there is no reference to LRG participation in the 2022 VNR elaboration process.
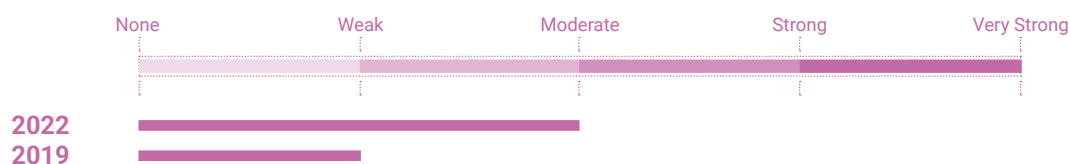
2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

▶ **In the VNR process**

| None | Weak | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong |

2022
2019

Comments: District authorities participated in the 2019 VNR process, but there is no reference to LRG participation in the 2022 VNR elaboration process.

▶ **In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation**

| None | Weak | Moderate | Strong | Very Strong |

2022
2019

Comments: District SDG Working Groups were created to improve coordination for data at both national and subnational levels.

This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNRs and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

There are some references to districts throughout the 2019 VNR. There are very few references to districts and urban and community councils in the 2022 VNR, and no examples of locally-led initiatives.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

▶ **Maseru** launched its 2050 urban plan in 2017 with the aim of revamping the city in line with the SDGs. The plan aims to ensure environmental rehabilitation, protection and resilience by 2050. There will be improved management of natural resources through the rehabilitation of wetland, river trails and restoration of deteriorating landscapes. Moreover, the government also promotes the clean-up of waste dumps and tree-planting programs for conservation and food production.[4]

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable. It is worth mentioning that the 2022 VNR stresses that "future VNRs should be preceded by Local Voluntary Reviews and include qualitative data from implementation efforts from districts and community councils" (see VNR, 2022, p. 67).

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Through their alignment with the NSDP, the SDGs are integrated into the national budget process. One of the challenges to financing SDG implementation is that the priorities in the Budget Strategy Paper, issued by the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with the Ministry of Development Planning, are often not aligned with the national priorities contained in the NSDP II. There is no information on SDG-related means of implementation at the local level.

4. See: https://www.gov.ls/maseru-2050-urban-plan/

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: In 2014, the government formulated and adopted the **National Decentralization Policy** with the purpose of enhancing citizen participation and strengthening the local government system, while maintaining effective functional links between central and local government entities.

It is worth noting that Lesotho´s priorities include building a peace architecture at the national and local levels, which includes peace and stability institutions and platforms at all levels. Local authorities also participate in the implementation of the ten-year Gender and Development Policy 2018-2028, along with other stakeholders.

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

The **Local Government Amendment Act** provides for gender equality in politics by increasing women's participation and representation in community councils/urban councils. It provides for the allocation of one-third of the seats in the municipal, urban and community councils to women. Following the local government elections of 2004, women were 58% of representative positions in 2005 and the share decreased to 49% in 2011, and 39% in 2017.

3.2 COVID 19

The 2022 VNR briefly summarizes the monetary and fiscal policy measures taken at the national level to mitigate the adverse effects of the mandated lockdown as well as the measures addressed to the most vulnerable social groups (see the VNR, 2022, p. 17). It doesn't mention initiatives led by local governments in response to the pandemic.

4. SDG INDICATORS[5]

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		39 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	**Urban**	78 (2020)
	Rural	9 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	**Urban**	39 (2020)
	Rural	51 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		53.6 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		20 (2006, Maseru)
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		24.5 (2016)
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		-