End of Project Evaluation

for the

Lesotho Data for Sustainable Development Project

Final Evaluation Report

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
AS	Assistant Statistician
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing
CBL	Central Bank of Lesotho
CMS	Continuous Multipurpose Survey
CPD	Country Programme Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DM&E	Department of Monitoring and Evaluation
EU	European Union
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
IDM	Institute of Development Management
MCST	Ministry of Communications, Science, and Technology
MDA	Ministry Departments and Agencies
MDP	Ministry of Development Planning
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOJHRCS	Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, and Correctional Services
NMES	National Monitoring and Evaluation System
NSDP	Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan

NSDS	National Strategy for Development Statistics
NSS	National Statistical System
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NIP	National Indicative Programme
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NUL	National University of Lesotho
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SADC	South African Development Community
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

Introduction

Over the years, the quality, availability, and use of socio-economic data to inform policy, ensure tracking of development programmes as well as facilitate resource planning, prioritisation, allocation, and accountability, has been a major challenge in Lesotho. In order to mitigate the issue, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Lesotho, as part of its Country Programme Document (CPD) - 2013-2018[1], supported the Government of Lesotho in the implementation of the Lesotho Data for Sustainable Development (Lesotho Data) Project between November 2016 and June 2019. The European Union (EU) and the UNDP jointly funded the Project, with a total budget of USD 1,426,550 (€ 1,286,339).[2] The project was consistent with the EU – National Indicative Programme and the Lesotho United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).[3]

Evaluation Scope and Objectives

With the Project coming to an end in June 2019, UNDP commissioned an end-of-project evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Lesotho Data Project has met the intended objectives, provide evaluative evidence on the contribution of UNDP to fulfil its accountability requirements, and generate lessons to inform the planning of similar interventions to maximise achievements of development results. The evaluation covered the entire implementation period from November 2016 to June 2019.[4]

Approach and Methodology

Overall, the evaluation used a participatory and collaborative approach. The approach was results/outcome-oriented. The evaluation addressed the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in addition to partnership strategy. Key methods used to collect evidence included key informant interviews, focus group discussions, review of documents (>70), and semi-structured observations. Interviews with stakeholders were held during September 6-20, 2019, in Lesotho.[5] As part of the evaluation, diverse stakeholders were met for discussions (98 stakeholders – 50 women and 48 men), including representatives from UN agencies/EU, government officials (at various levels including field-level/clerical staff), training institutions, the private sector, and the project team.

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[1] https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Programme%20Documents/Lesotho%20CPD%202013-2017%20(en).pdf
[2] Project Document/ROM Report: - EU – € 1,071, 731 (USD 1,188, 550); and UNDP – USD 238, 000
[3] UNDP – Lesotho Data Project Document
[4] The evaluation was conducted between August and November 2019.
[5] With the exception of 2 interviews that were completed remotely by using Skype.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The Lesotho Data Project was **highly relevant to the need of Lesotho on data for development** and result-based management. With a lack of capacities and data weaknesses and gaps in Lesotho, combined with its obligations to report on SDGs, and regional commitments to SADC and Agenda 2063, the support by the Project proved to be highly relevant and timely.

Relevance

The Project was **consistent with the national policy framework and priorities** as defined by NSDP, UNDAF for Lesotho, and EU initiatives in Lesotho. The Project's method of delivery was appropriate as it chose to work with BOS and DM&E to address both statistics and M&E system issues that are interlinked. Both BOS and DM&E were seen as the most **appropriate partners**. The diagnostics study and the data gap and capacity assessments helped to further focus the Project implementation. The involvement of the Office of the Prime Minister by participating in the PSC meetings indicated the relevance of the Project and the data issues/needs in Lesotho. While the **Project design was** appropriate for the issues at large in Lesotho and to establish a national ecosystem for statistics and M&E, it **was ambitious for the time and resources that were available** to implement the Project.[6]

Effectiveness

The Lesotho Data Project was **moderately effective**, primarily due to its ambitious scope and objectives not matched with time and resources available. The **Project created awareness of the data gaps/weaknesses in Lesotho and also made the country take initial steps in addressing the gaps and in establishing the processes for an ecosystem for statistics and M&E**, although at very nascent stages. Project contributions within the limited time and resources have been appreciated. With delays in NSDP II development and thereby the development of the national M&E Framework and the World Bank taking the lead, it was appropriate for the Project to take up complementary and synergistic activities in assessing national needs and capacity to monitor SDGs and NSDP such as the diagnostic study and the data gap analysis in addition to preparing the capacity development plan. In support of building the national M&E Framework, **the Project was instrumental in developing critical foundational elements for Lesotho, such as the SDG customisation, SDG 2016 baseline report, and the VNR 2019 reporting.** Furthermore, the Project built capacities of 76 participants on RBM (5-day training) and 22 participants as trainers (3-day training). Additionally, eight officials were supported to attend training on public sector/outcome-based M&E in South Africa.

> **106 officials trained on RBM/M&E**

The **capacity development activities** such as the study tours and various training (RBM, Excel, SPSS, Basic Statistics, and Administrative Data) of the Project **laid the foundation to contribute towards improved use of data in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning in the**

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[6] The Project initially envisaged for a longer period; however, the objectives were not scaled down to match the funding and time available to implement.

future. The eight **study tours** and attendance at international conference/forums have led to **improved methodologies and processes in data collection and/data analysis** including use of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) in CMS, development of an application to collect price data, cell allocation planning and ability to highlight the contribution made by cell-mates, collection of data on production prices (for the first time) and adding additional modules in surveys. The **training on statistical software packages** (to 150 officials) has **helped trainees to help their respective MDAs in creation of databases** (from paper reports received from districts), **present data** (using charts and tables), **perform analysis using functions and formulas, and improve their work efficiency**. While several of these tasks were done for the first time in some of

> **450 officials trained on statistical packages and statistics/data**

MDAs, overall, the tasks were done better than before in all MDAs. The training on Basic statistics to 144 field and clerical staff of BOS has enlightened the staff on the data value chain and appreciation of their role in contributing to it. The **training on administrative data** to 157 officials across BOS, DM&E, and 10 pilot MDAs "*opened eyes*" **on data the ministries had at their disposal and how they could be used for decision-making and reporting** on SDGs, NSDP and regional commitments such as for SADC. The training on RBM although equipped various individuals it did not translate into application due to delay in development of M&E framework and no follow-up/roll-out of the training. However, a few MDAs reported on using the skill to develop indicators for the sectoral M&E framework.

While data awareness and dissemination activities were carried out by the Project, including supporting Africa Statistics Day and creating district profiles, **more could have been done to raise the profile of the Project** and what it could deliver for a better understanding in MDAs and to gain better support from development partners. The interactions/involvement with media on data were appreciated and should be done more. The development of the costed Communication, Advocacy, and Dissemination Strategy for BOS by the Project is valuable and will be of benefit if BOS implements it. The support by the Project to **update the National Data Portal** (software and content) **and ensure continuous accessibility** (through private sector internet provider) was another critical step in improving data dissemination in Lesotho. The focus on **sensitisation of senior officials was inadequate** to demand data and to ensure support to statistical activities, especially to those capacitated by the Project in the MDAs.

As part of the contribution to national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems, **a key highlight achievement by the Project has been the recruitment of six Assistant Statisticians** (AS) and ensuring that they were **absorbed permanently in the respective Ministries**. The Project also provided equipment and furniture to ensure the effective working of the Assistant Statisticians. The Assistant Statisticians have made key contributions in the Ministries, including collecting and using administrative data to report on SDGs, creating databases, modeling energy demand for up to 2055, helping develop gender-based violence data collection tool, in addition to being the go-to persons for data solutions.

The Project was not able to ensure functioning harmonised national coordination mechanism for M&E and statistics. There is no coordination unit in BOS but one person (the newly appointed assistant statistician). While a national platform was conceived for coordination and information

sharing, it was not functional. The **multi-stakeholder engagement was weak**. The Project did not create a functional multi-stakeholder coordination national mechanism overall nationally and with each sector. Establishing an effective functioning national coordination mechanism will require continued support and a longer period than envisaged by the Project.

The Project's **efficiency was moderately unsatisfactory**. The efficiency of the Project was affected by **long delays in recruiting project staff** and early ending of the contract of CTA, in addition to **conflicting priorities** and **slow government-UNDP processes**. Funding delays, especially at the beginning of each year, delayed implementation of activities. All these led to two no-cost extensions.[7] Fundamental inefficiency noted was the **last-minute invitations** sent to MDAs for Project events and activities (including training), which did have some negative effect on effectiveness and sustainability. However, project **activities were cost-efficient,** and financial resources were used efficiently. The Project had an adequate M&E system for tracking activities and was primarily output-oriented and hence did not track outcomes.

The **sustainability** of the Project was **modest** and is still a work in progress. Some of the aspects of the Project have potential **(most likely**) to be sustainable. **Capacities developed at an individual level will benefit institutions**, as individuals will continue to use the skills, where applicable; nevertheless, it is too early to talk about institutionalisation of the capacities. A key **hindering factor will be the enabling environment** on the MDAs, **as the Project had not sufficiently sensitised the senior officials on data and the need to support statistical and M&E activiti**es. Institutionalisation will also be affected by staff turnover, and also not conducting further refresher/follow-up training or no roll-out as in the case of RBM.

The **absorption of the assistant statisticians into respective Ministries is a strong positive factor for sustainability**. The Project produced **various manuals and tool-kits** to conduct various training, which has have been shared and **is available for future reference and training**. Additionally, the assessment reports on capacity needs and data gaps and SDG baseline will serve as reference documents in the near future for further work on strengthening ecosystem for statistics and M&E. **Institutions such as the NUL and IDM were capacitated** to conduct additional training if there are demand and funding available. The **National Data Portal has the potential to be sustainable.**

Lack of statisticians or statistical units in MDAs and/or lack of updated NSDS, M&E policy, and a revised Statistical Act does not bode well in creating an enabling environment for an effective ecosystem for statistics and M&E.

Although conceived as a multi-stakeholder initiative, **the Project did not build on the foundation of the UNDP-EU partnership**. Implementation partnership with BOS and DM&E was seen as a good practice. The Project complemented activities of the World Bank in developing NSDP II and the national M&E Framework; nevertheless, it did not leverage any further partnerships. Potential for partnerships with the private sector (in training) is evident but not

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[7] The Project was given a six-month extension (Addendum I) and a one-month extension (Addendum II).

tapped yet. Lack of coordination among UN agencies is prevalent and is a deterrent to creating a harmonised ecosystem for data and M&E in Lesotho.

The Project **did not mainstream gender; however, gender relevance was evident**. The Project advocated disaggregated data to enable gender analysis. The Project paid attention to ensure gender-balanced participation in all its events and activities.

Overall, the work on strengthening the ecosystem for statistics and M&E in Lesotho has made a good start due to the Lesotho Data Project. However, it is a work in progress and may require in addition to enabling environment, several years of continued and harmonised handholding from development partners.

Recommendations

These recommendations have been based on evidence gathered, conclusions, and lessons learned on the Lesotho Data Project. Support and handholding[8] from UNDP/UN RCO in collaboration with UN agencies and development partners would be required to carry out many of these recommendations, even though the primary responsibility will be that of the Government of Lesotho (more specifically BOS and DM&E).[9]

Recommendation 1: To ensure a sustainable national ecosystem, **an enabling environment supported by appropriate legal frameworks and policies** has to be put in place. This includes updated NSDS, a national M&E policy, revised Statistics Act. (BOS and DM&E).

Recommendation 2: Projects such as the Lesotho Data Project with an objective to develop a **functional national ecosystem for statistics and M&E should have a phased approach** and should be **developed as a multi-stakeholder initiative** with multiple stakeholders supporting different activities with resources.

- Depending on resources, the Project (programme) may **initially focus on a few selected ministries and then roll-out** instead of spreading thin. (BOS/DM&E; and UNDP and UN agencies/EU and other development partners)

Recommendation 3: **Sensitise top-level officials on data awareness and data literacy**. This would not only help in creating demand for data for decision-making and policy planning but also would enable them to appreciate and support work being done by the mid-level officials on statistics (who have received training from the project). BOS/DM&E; UNDP/UNRCO and development partners, including EU.

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[8] Sustainable capacity development is integral to these recommendations.
[9] The support by UNDP and other UN agencies/development partners could be for one or more of the recommendations but overall, should have coordinated approach.

Recommendation 4: Create a national data warehouse[10] to also act as a back-up of databases from MDAs in addition to ensuring wider accessibility based on security protocols as deemed essential. Currently, databases and analysed data are in desktops and laptops of officials with backups only on USB keys (jump drives). This does not enable even officials in the ministry to access data. Surveys collect data, and not all data is analysed and published; however data not published may be useful for other programme/project design and/or other decision-making. In the current situation this data is not available/accessible, as many are not aware of its location. (BOS & DM&E; UNDP and other UN agencies/EU and other development partners).

Recommendation 5: A **harmonised national coordination mechanism for statistics and M&**E should be established **with a strengthened role for the BOS as a coordinator**.

- It is important that the **work of M&E and statistics is synchronised**, and therefore, there should only be one national mechanism.
- The **national coordination structure should have clear mandates** with specific roles and responsibilities (backed by policies/legal frameworks) and could be multi-tiered. **BOS and DM&E should act as "agents of change"** in creating this mechanism. (BOS/DM&E; UNDP/UNRCO and UN agencies/EU and other development partners).

Recommendation 6: **UN support on data to the Government of Lesotho should be coordinated and harmonised to "deliver as one."**

- It could be a "**One Data Strategy for Lesotho**," wherein different agencies contribute technical and financial resources and work to achieve specific areas/results of the strategy. This not only avoids duplication but also saves costs to have a coherent approach and avoid confusion at the government's end.
- **When multiple agencies work with** or support the **same ministry** on data collection **there could be lead/co-leads**.
- UN agencies should also explore option of **"One Fund" mechanism** for the country or multi-donor trust fund to improve data and the ecosystem in Lesotho. Funding from bilateral donors (including EU) could be mobilised for improving data availability and improving ecosystem through this one basket fund. (UNDP/UN RCO and UN agencies).

Recommendation 7: **Coordination between BOS and DM&E to avoid conflicting priorities** and having **an advance calendar of events of the Project** activities shared with MDAs will help the MDAs to be informed and ensure them to be prepared to nominate appropriate and adequate delegates for participation. This should be done **in addition to invitations sent with adequate notice time** and not at a day or two before the event. (BOS/DM&E).

Recommendation 8: Continue to use a collaborative approach and modality with ministries to deliver/manage projects including having project coordinators in the ministry, housing the project team in the ministry while making focused efforts to leverage partnership and resources

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[10] The data warehouse should be an architectural construct of an information system which provides MDAs and users with current and historical decision support information (which is currently difficult to access and not present in Lesotho).

among UN agencies and development partners (including EU) for joint design and delivery of projects to enhance cohesive support in the country.

- **Building partnership with CSOs and private sector will bring added value**, complementary and synergistic skills and capacities including expertise on new tools and technologies. (UNDP).

1.   Introduction

UNDP commissioned this end-of-project evaluation for the Lesotho Data project to facilitate accountability and learning. A mid-term review was undertaken through the European Union Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) exercise in June 2018. The end-of-project evaluation carried out by an independent external evaluation team is expected to complement the findings of the ROM.

1.1   Project Context

Over the years, the quality, availability, and use of socio-economic data to inform policy, ensure tracking of development programmes as well as facilitate resource planning, prioritisation, allocation, and accountability, has been a major challenge in Lesotho. In recent years, several development partners, including the World Bank, the United Nations (UN) agencies, and the European Union (EU), have invested in development and generation of data within the Bureau of Statistics (BOS) in addition to key ministries. Despite these efforts, the National Statistical System (NSS) has remained weak, uncoordinated and at most, providing inconsistent results to users.

Furthermore, access to data remains a challenge, although BOS is mandated through the Statistics Act 2001 to produce national statistics in collaboration with other agencies and ministries within the NSS. Nevertheless, there are several institutions involved in data collection, analysis and management of statistics and this includes Bureau of Statistics (BOS), Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL), Ministry of Finance (MOF), Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E) in the Ministry of Development Planning (MDP), Departments and Agencies (MDAs) , National University of Lesotho (NUL), parastatals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) in addition to development partners.

The absence of institutional alignment leads to overlaps (duplication of efforts) and also contradictory information and data, thus hampering the access to and comparative use of data. Moreover, Lesotho's weak capacities in terms of human and technical resources limit the use of statistical evidence in national development processes. Despite the existence of a National Monitoring and Evaluation System (NMES), Lesotho's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) efforts are fragmented and heavily reliant on donors. The NSDP M&E Framework remains unutilised, and cannot be used to measure the impact of various programmes on national targets. At ministerial levels, there is limited micro-analysis in budgeting and resource performance, policy, and programme interventions. Furthermore, the rate of implementation of NSDS has generally been below expectations.[11]These issues, including delayed development of M&E framework,[12] capacity and financial challenges of Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, absence of functional statistical database,

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[11] Rapid Assessment of the Status of Implementation of and Future Support Needs to Implement the NSDS – Final Report – September 2013.
[12] Two years after the development of the NSDP I

have been highlighted in the review of the NSDP I and scoping of NSDP II Final report completed in December 2016.

At the same time, Lesotho has to track and report on the progress on the implementation of its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).[13] As well, Lesotho has the obligation to report on regional and international commitments, including for Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) regional plans, Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among others. All these required credible and consistent information in Lesotho, through standardised processes and data collection adhering to statistical norms and standards.
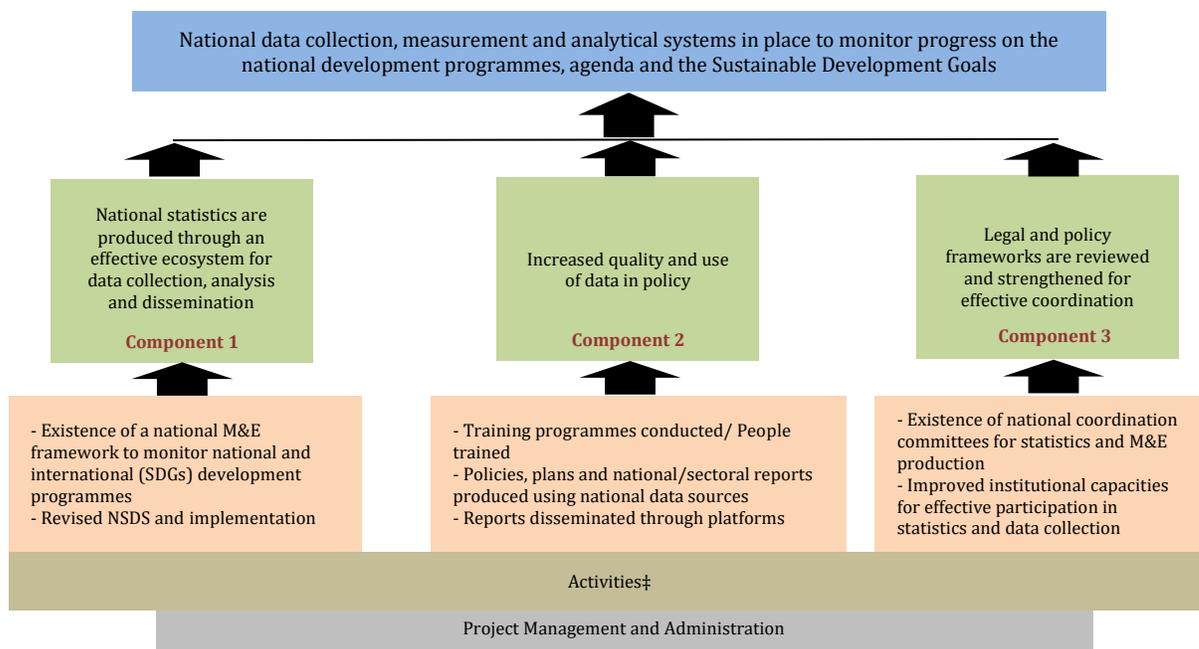
2.   Lesotho Data Project – Overview

The Lesotho Data Project aimed at assisting the Government of Lesotho with the collection, analysis, and dissemination of development data and building institutional and technical capacities for monitoring and evaluation of development programme and effective public management systems. The Ministry of Development Planning, through the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E) and Bureau of Statistics (BOS), executed the Project. The Project had three components:

- Development of a national ecosystem for statistics and data collection;
- Promotion of literacy and innovations for data collection, compilation, dissemination and use; and
- Strengthening national leadership, legal frameworks, and policy.

The results framework of Lesotho Data presents the following theory of change (Figure 1).

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[13] At the conception and the implementation of the Project (first two years) it was NSDP I (https://www.centralbank.org.ls/images/Financial_Stability/Financial_Inclusion/NSDP_Final_-_28.06.12.pdf); however, the development of NSDP II was delayed (see discussions in the findings section) and is in the process of finalisation (at the time of this evaluation).

Figure 1: Lesotho Data – Theory of Change

National data collection, measurement and analytical systems in place to monitor progress on the national development programmes, agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Component 1
National statistics are produced through an effective ecosystem for data collection, analysis and dissemination

Component 2
Increased quality and use of data in policy

Component 3
Legal and policy frameworks are reviewed and strengthened for effective coordination

- Existence of a national M&E framework to monitor national and international (SDGs) development programmes
- Revised NSDS and implementation

- Training programmes conducted/ People trained
- Policies, plans and national/sectoral reports produced using national data sources
- Reports disseminated through platforms

- Existence of national coordination committees for statistics and M&E production
- Improved institutional capacities for effective participation in statistics and data collection

Activities‡

Project Management and Administration

‡ Activities undertaken by each component include: Component 1 (national diagnostic study, development of national M&E framework, establishing national/sectoral and district databases and an online platform, analysis of use and demand of statistics; Component 2 (capacity building for data collection and literacy, developing capacity development programmes for MDA, supporting innovations for data awareness and dissemination awareness creation and advocacy for use of statistics and data; and Component 3 (support to improve coordination, legal and policy frameworks, for data and statistics, establishing coordinating mechanisms for M&E and statistics, and supporting learning and knowledge resources).

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was responsible for the overall direction and management of the project with responsibility and authority for the project. The PSC included the Ministry of Development Planning, Ministry of Finance, and the Office of the Prime Minister, in addition to BOS, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, and the World Bank.[14] A Project Manager was hired to ensure that the project activities were implemented successfully. The Project also had a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and had two Project Coordinators engaged through the Ministry of Development Planning.[15]

The Project was initially approved for 18 months[16] and subsequently extended to 31 months at no cost. At the time of the evaluation, the Project has spent EUR 1,125,077 (87.4%)[17] of the total budget of EUR 1,286,339. The Project spent 42 percent of the expenditure on capacity development (Component 2), and 30 percent was on project management and administration with 22 percent on national statistics and data collection ecosystem (Component 1). Only about

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[14] Lesotho Data - Annual Work Plan 2019
[15] The Project Coordinators were not paid by the Project.
[16] The Project was approved for 18 months as the Framework funding was ending in 18 months.
[17] Lesotho Data Evaluation TOR. With the end of the project the actual figures for 2019 will be obtained during the evaluation – by outcome/output.

0.1 percent was spent on coordination, legal, and policy frameworks (Component 3).[18] The project management fee accounts for seven percent (Table 1).

Table 1: Project Expenditure (November 2016 – June 2019)

Components Description of Activities	Expenditure 2017 (EUR)	Expenditure 2018 (EUR)	Expenditure 2019 (EUR)	Total Expenditure (EUR)
1. National statistics and data collection ecosystem	105,286.00	50,834.00	87,640.39	243,860.39
2. Capacity building for data collection, use and literacy	123,723.00	225,574.00	120,487.25	469,784.25
3. Coordination, legal and policy frameworks	-	-	1,382.03	1,382.03
4. Project management and administration	148,077.00	109,337.00	79,033.18	336,447.18
Total Project Cost (first 2 years)	377,086.00	385,845.00	288,542.84	1,051,473.84
Project Management Fee (7%)	26,396.00	27,009.00	20,198.00	73,603.00
Grand Total	403,482.00	412,854.00	308,740.84	1,125,076.84

Source: Draft End-of-Project Report, 2019

3.   Evaluation Scope and Objectives

3.1   Evaluation Objectives and Scope[19]

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Lesotho Data Project has met the intended objectives, provide evaluative evidence on the contribution of UNDP to meet its accountability requirements, and generate lessons to inform the planning of similar interventions to maximise achievements of development results.

The specific objectives of the evaluation included:

- Determining the extent to which outputs of the Lesotho Data have been achieved relative to the set objective of the project;
- Assessing and analysing the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Lesotho Data project and effectiveness of adopted implementation modalities and partnership strategies to achieving its objectives, outputs and results;
- Assessing factors affecting project outcomes and sustainability, including contributing factors and constraints;

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[18] Draft End-of-Project Report
[19] Terms of reference (TOR) for the End of Project Evaluation for the Lesotho Data for Sustainable Development Project

- Assessing the extent to which the project met its resource mobilisation objectives;
- Examining the extent to which gender, human rights, and other cross-cutting issues were considered in the project design, implementation and monitoring;
- Identifying lessons learned from the implementation of the project;
- Making recommendations for improving the design, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and mainstreaming of gender and other cross-cutting issues in future programming

The evaluation covered the entire implementation period from November 2016 to June 2019. It is expected that the results of the evaluation will be used by the Ministry of Development Planning, the Department of Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E), and the BOS, in addition to UNDP, EU and other development partners. The evaluation was conducted between August and November 2019.

4. Approach and Methodology

4.1 Approach

The evaluation used a participatory and collaborative approach. The evaluation team used a transparent and inclusive approach to ensure utilisation-focused evaluation findings and recommendations. Overall, the approach was results/outcome-oriented. The evaluation team was cognisant of the UNDP evaluation policy[20] and guidelines[21] and the UN norms and standards[22] for evaluation and ensured adherence. The evaluation addressed the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in addition to partnership strategy and the respective evaluation questions (as detailed in the TOR).

As part of the evaluation approach, the evaluation team reviewed the evaluation questions specified in the TOR and used them to prepare a detailed evaluation matrix (Annex 2). The evaluation matrix presents key and sub-questions for each evaluation criteria along with data sources, data collection methods, indicators of success, and method of data analysis. As part of the process in preparing the evaluation matrix, the evaluation questions identified in the TOR were reviewed, and minor revisions were made.

The evaluation approach was envisaged to determine the achievements of the Lesotho Data Project as against the intended objectives while also assessing the effectiveness of adopted implementation methodologies and partnerships. Furthermore, the overall approach looked at factors that contributed to and/or impeded the Project outcomes and sustainability and also identified lessons learned from the implementation of the Project.

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[20] UNDP Evaluation Policy (2016) - http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/policy/2016/Evaluation_policy_EN_2016.pdf
[21] UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019) -
http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/documents/PDF/UNDP_Evaluation_Guidelines.pdf
[22] UN Norms and Standards (2016) - http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914

The approach also examined the extent to which Lesotho Data Project's design, implementation, and monitoring addressed gender, human rights, and other cross-cutting issues. Overall, the approach was designed to facilitate the making of recommendations for improving design, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in addition to the mainstreaming of gender and other cross-cutting issues in future programming.

4.2   Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-method approach to collect data. The use of a mixed-method approach helped to triangulate the evidence being gathered and analysed. Data triangulation, methodological triangulation, and evaluator triangulation were used as a best practices.[23] However, it should be noted that different kinds of data yield somewhat different results because different types of inquiry are sensitive to different real-world nuances.[24]

The following methods were used to collect data and evidence (quantitative and qualitative).

1. Desk review – A comprehensive review of documents was undertaken.[25] The desk review started during the inception phase and continued into the data collection/analysis phase. Documents (more than 70) reviewed included (refer Annex 1 for the list):
    a. Lesotho Data project-related documents including Project Document, Project Agreement, and addendum, results framework, programme and project quality assurance framework, annual work plans, quarterly and annual reports, monitoring reports, minutes of project steering committee meetings, financial/audit reports, budget, ROM report, and management response;
    b. Project consultant reports on various outputs (including training and diagnosis);
    c. National Strategy and Policy documents (including NSDP I, NSDP Review Report, NSDS, M&E Framework for NSDP I);
    d. UNDP country and corporate documents (including CPD); and
    e. Other relevant documents.

2. Key informant interviews – In-person semi-structured interviews and consultations were carried out during the mission in Lesotho with diverse stakeholders/partners involved in the project (see Annex 2 – 63 stakeholders – 34 women/29 men). This included:
    a. Ministry of Development Planning;
        i. Bureau of Statistics (BOS); and

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[23] Data triangulation is collecting the same information from a variety of sources (e.g. government officials/stakeholders UN agencies, project team members, other development partners, etc.) increases accuracy of data. In methodological triangulation information is collected using different methods (e.g. interviews, focus groups, document review, etc.) In evaluator triangulation the discussions between international and national consultant will enhance the contextualization/interpretation of the evidence).

[24] A common misconception about triangulation is thinking that the purpose is to demonstrate that different sources or inquiry approaches yield essentially the same result. The point is to "test" for such consistency. In the real world there may be differences, and therefore, understanding inconsistencies in findings across different kinds of data can be illuminative and important. The finding of such inconsistencies should not be viewed as weakening of the credibility of results, but rather as offering opportunities for deeper insights. (Michael Patton, 2014, Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice, p 656-660)

[25] List of initial documents reviewed is provided in Annex 1

        ii.   Department of M&E (DM&E);
- b. Other key government ministries and counterparts;
- c. UN agencies and donors/ international development partners (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, the World Bank, EU);
- d. Training and other institutional partners;
  - i. National University of Lesotho (NUL);
  - ii. Institute of Development Management (IDM); and
  - iii. Project staff (Project manager, Chief Technical Advisor, National Consultant);
  - iv. Others, as relevant (civil societies and the private sector).

The list of stakeholders met is provided in Annex 2. Questions from the tools provided in Annex 4 were adapted according to the stakeholder. The in-depth interviews helped to gather diverse insights and perspectives on various aspects of the Lesotho Data Project, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and partnerships. The semi-structured interviews were 45- 60 minutes in length.

3. <u>Focus groups/Group interviews</u>– Focus groups helped to gather group perspectives. Focus groups/group interviews were held with (35 participants – 16 women/19 men):
   - a. Assistant statisticians (AS) absorbed by the Ministries as part of the Project – 5 (4 women/1 man);
   - b. Planners from Department of M&E – 5 (3 women/2men) and
   - c. Field staff data clerks of BOS – 25 (9 women/16 men).

4. <u>Observations</u> – Semi-structured observations to understand the changes (improvements, techniques, and/or methods) in data collection, analysis, and dissemination were made (as applicable) during site visits and also during meetings with BOS and DME and other pilot Ministries.

The evaluation team conducted appropriate and systematic qualitative and quantitative <u>data analysis</u>. The team used descriptive analysis and content analysis. Both inductive and deductive analysis[26] was used to build on the strengths of both kinds of analysis. The team synthesised data, as relevant. The evidence gathered was triangulated as part of the analysis in arriving at reliable and credible findings and conclusions. The analysis identified lessons learned in implementing the Project.

As part of the analysis and synthesis, and as required by the TOR, the evaluation used a rating scale to ensure a standardised assessment (refer to Annex 4).

Limitations

All reports did not present gender <u>disaggregated data</u> on participation. The evaluation team consulted with UNDP, BOS, and DM&E to gather missing information, where available. Gaps still remain.

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[26] Inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories in the data. Deductive analysis involves analysing data according to an existing framework such as the programme logic model.

5. Findings

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Lesotho Needs Around Data for Development and Results-based Management

The context, described earlier in this report, defines the background and the need in which the Lesotho Data Project was conceived. Furthermore, earlier studies such as the 2013 assessment of the implementation of the National Strategy for Development Statistics (2013),[27] emphasises the need to strengthen coordination and capacity of BOS to provide technical support to Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Statistical and M&E assessments in Lesotho conducted by Irish Aid (2012),[28] BOS (2010), and DM&E (2009), the weak internal capacities, both human and technical resources which limit participation for data collection and usage has been highlighted. In addition to the weaknesses, there was also the risk of data duplication and results misrepresentation. As well, different surveys are often not comparable, making it difficult to set baselines or form long-term trend analysis or projections.[29] The recent (December 2016) review of the NSDP I highlighted the lack of quality data, poor M&E framework and lack of capacities and financial resources for implementing statistical and M&E systems.[30]

It was in this context that the Lesotho Data Project was conceived and was **highly relevant.** It was noted that the Lesotho Data Project was consistent with the national policy framework and priorities as defined by NSDP I[31] including Pillar 6 – "*Promote peace, democratic governance, and effective governance and effective institutions.*" It was also aligned to the EU – National Indicative Programme (NIP) – Lesotho, and the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) 2013-2017 Outcome 4 – "*By 2017, national and lower-level institutions make evidence-based policy decisions*" and UNDP Lesotho Country Programme Document (CPD) 2013-2017 Focus Area 3 – "*Good Governance and Accountable Institutions.*" In this focus area, as a separate but interlinked area on socio-economic data and analysis, performance and accountability were planned to be reinforced through support to the NSDS and the NMES. The Lesotho Data Project was aligned to UNDP's CPD as the programme was planned to expand the capabilities of the national statistical system and associated institutions for data collection, analysis, monitoring, and evaluation, generating information, among other things, on key disparities by gender and other socio-economic parameters. It was expected to support the adoption of practical and standardized methodologies for socio-economic analysis for evidence-based policy-making and planning.[32]

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[27] Rapid assessment of the status of the implementation of and future support needs to implement the NSDS – September 2013 (http://www.bos.gov.ls/316604%20Final%20Report%20-%20CDG_ATR.pdf)

[28] Report on the Rapid assessment of the M&E practices and capacities in Lesotho, Irish Aid 2012.

[29] The Project document – Lesotho Data Project

[30] Review of the NSDP and Scoping of the NSDP II – Final Report December 2016

[31] NSDP 2012/13 – 2016/2017 Growth and Development Strategic Framework, Government of Lesotho - June 2012

[32] Country programme document for Lesotho (2013-2017)

Furthermore, Lesotho had an obligation to report on SDGs, in addition to reporting to regional commitments such as SADC and African Union (AU) on Agenda 2063. With NSDP I coming to an end and the planning of NSDP II, it was essential to align SDGs to the new plan, and it's M&E Framework. With lack of adequate capacities and data weaknesses and concerns (discussed earlier), stakeholders highlighted that the support of Lesotho Data Project to the Government of Lesotho was highly relevant.

The Project and its activities continue to be highly relevant even after 2.5 years. The NSDP II Priority – "*Strengthening the national governance and accountability systems*" and UNDAF for Lesotho 2019 – 2023 Pillar 1: "*Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesions and Inclusion*" highlights the significance of quality data for evidence-based decision/policy making and national ecosystem for data. The Global SDG Index and Dashboard[33] reflect gaps in availability and relevance of data (see Table 2)

Table 2: SDG Index and Dashboard - Lesotho

Year	Rank	Index Score
2019	150/162	50.9
2018	135/156	51.5
2017	128/157	53.0
2016	113/149	45.9

Source: SDG Index & Dashboards/SDG

and show that Lesotho has to do more and better governance on data, as other countries are also improving their data governance.

5.1.2 Appropriate Method of Delivery to Lesotho Development Context

Discussions with key stakeholders in Lesotho and review of documents indicated that the method of delivery was appropriate to Lesotho's development context. A participatory process and inclusive approach were used in the implementation of the Project; however, it was highlighted that civil society organisations and private sector participation could have been engaged better.[34]

Both BOS and DM&E were appropriate and strong national partners. It was also noted that BOS and DM&E were also involved during initial consultations while designing the Project. The Project was appropriate, and discussions revealed that the Project components were directly relevant to BOS and their mandate. It was noted that BOS lacked resources, which constrained their ability to achieve their mandate; and the Project was a blessing in many ways to address some gaps.

Discussions with diverse stakeholders on project design confirmed that Component 1 (presented earlier in the report) was designed to help BOS and DM&E to do their work better in providing data for official statistics and data for NSDS, NSDP and SDG reporting. Similarly, Component 2 was appropriate to develop capacity to enhance the day to day work of BOS and DM&E and the ministries in Lesotho. Component 3 was about leadership in BOS, ministries and national statistical system (NSS), and it was more ambitious and needed more time than the project life.

The involvement and participation of the Office of the Prime Minister in the PSC, in addition to the participation of BOS and DM&E and active involvement in the implementation by the latter two

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[33] https://www.sdgindex.org/reports/

[34] As partners and in decision-making, as they are also data users and data producers in the ecosystem.

institutions, emphasises the centrality of national ownership. The BOS also provided office space to house the Project team. [35]

5.1.3 Appropriateness of Project Design

In terms of the Project design, all stakeholders interviewed remarked that the Project was too broad and ambitious.[36] It could have been planned for a phased-approach given the broad scope and dire needs of the country. Discussions at UNDP and EU revealed that the Project was initially planned for five years and reduced to three and later to 18 months. While resources and time framework were reduced to ensure availing the funds before the EDF cycle ended, the scope of activities to be carried out and outcomes to be achieved remained unchanged[37] The model of executing the project through UNDP with implementing partner, Ministry of Development Planning - was good. The implementation partnership of the Ministry of Development Planning (through BOS and DM&E) was considered not only appropriate but also strategic.

The Lesotho Data Project was a relatively well-developed intervention that had results framework with indicators, baselines, targets, sources, and means of verification for most results (outcomes and outputs).[38] However, the Project was ambitious and did not match the time and resources available to implement it.[39] It was noted during the discussions that while the Project was highly relevant and made efforts to respond to the needs in Lesotho; it did not have the budget and time to address comprehensively the ecosystem issues including capacity building and data issues (availability, access, and analysis).

The Lesotho Data Project conducted an assessment of the statistics user satisfaction (July 2017 report), a diagnostic study on the national needs and capacity for monitoring SDGs and NSDP (July 2017 report) and a data gap analysis (July 2017 report) to fine-tune Project activities for continued relevance of the Project throughout its lifecycle, as reported by stakeholders (see discussions in 5.1.1).

The Project also conducted a study on the ecosystem of statistics in Lesotho. These studies and assessments conducted as part of the Project gave more clarity, especially among the Government stakeholders on what and where the weaknesses are and what needs to be fixed, especially in terms of data collection, analysis, and dissemination in relation to NSDS monitoring and SDG reporting requirements. Discussions highlighted that the implementation of study/assessment results led to reprioritisation of the work plan addendum and approvals. The involvement of CSOs, NGOs, and the private sector remained weak in all stages of the Project.[40]

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[35] UNDP was the manager and BOS was the executor

[36] This is also evident from the Project Document description of its Components and activities to be completed within a short period using a limited budget.

[37] Which led stakeholders viewing the Project as ambitious

[38] The results framework had baseline for only 3 of the 7 output indicators.

[39] For example, Component 3: "Legal and policy frameworks are reviewed and strengthened for effective coordination" cannot be done within the short period of the Project, given the context in Lesotho.

[40] The fact, that the Project was enabling an ecosystem for sustainable data supporting of national development plans, and SDGs ensuring inclusiveness and "leave no one behind" was important.

5.2   Effectiveness

Overall, the Lesotho Data Project has been **moderately effective**, given its ambitious scope and objectives and short timeframe and a limited budget to implement it. The level of achievements and contribution to intended objectives varied among the three components. However, the stakeholders appreciated the overall contributions of the Project within a short time, given the tight budget and the context in Lesotho. Given the context, the Project has created awareness of the gaps/weakness in Lesotho. The Project has also supported the country to take the initial steps to address the gaps and establish the processes for an ecosystem. In addition to the Project design not matched with available time and resources, the effectiveness has been partly affected due to the delays in the development and the implementation of the NSDP II because some Project activities were tied to it.

5.2.1 Contribution towards an Effective National Ecosystem for Statistics and M&E

The Project, as part of its results framework, intended to ensure the existence of a national M&E framework to monitor national and international development programmes (specifically SDGs)[41] and also ensure a revised NSDS and its implementation.[42] With indicators inter-linked[43] the Project was not able to achieve the originally intended results due to the delay in the development of the NSDP II and thereby not achieve the Outcome-1 – "national statistics are produced through an effective ecosystem for data collection, analysis, and the dissemination."

At the time of this evaluation, the NSDP II zero draft (2018/19-2022/23)[44] has been completed with support from the World Bank. It was also noted that the World Bank was supporting the Government of Lesotho in developing the National M&E Framework, a work in progress, as reported by key officials in the Government of Lesotho. With the World Bank taking a major role in developing the NSDP II and the national M&E framework, as part of Public Financial Management reforms initiative, the Project took a complementary and synergistic role to avoid duplication and use the limited resources more efficiently. This led to the Project supporting SDG work – customisation of indicators; baseline; and Voluntary National Review (VNR) (see subsequent sections in the report). Discussions also revealed that in many ways this arrangement helped Lesotho, as the Government was also able to prepare the National Investment Plan,[45] due to the involvement of the World Bank in NSDP II.

Nevertheless, the Lesotho Data Project has undertaken various complementary activities contributing to an effective national ecosystem for statistics and M&E. As part of **the national needs assessment and capacity for monitoring SDGs and NSDP**, the Project developed two assessment reports – a diagnostic report and a data gap analysis report (see Box 1).

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[41] Output indicator 1.1
[42] Output indicator 1.2.Howver, it was noted that Addendum I excluded the revision of NSDS.
[43] For example, draft NSDP M&E framework (Output indicator 1.1)
[44] NSDP II Zero Draft (https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lesotho/docs/Reports/NSDP%20II%202019-2023.pdf)
[45] Linked to the NSDP

As part of preparing the <u>diagnostic report</u>, in addition to consultations, national workshops were organised, which were attended by 62 participants (41 women/21 men) representing 28 institutions/government ministries and agencies in addition to UNDP and UNICEF. The <u>Data Gap Analysis</u> assessed not only the data gaps and the availability of data to report on SDGs but also the capacity of and institutional development required to track and monitor NSDP and the SDGs. The data gap analysis and capacity assessment work of the Project was viewed as a key reference document for Lesotho by stakeholders.

In addition to the above studies, the Project also developed <u>a Capacity Building Plan</u> as part of its work on assessing national needs and capacity for monitoring SDGs and NSDP. While the diagnostic study and the data gap assessment reflected the gravity of the issues, "the capacity building plan" did not realistically reflect the capacity building required to bridge the gap for effective monitoring and reporting of SDGs, Agenda 2063 and the NSDP

> **Box 1: Complementary Activities for Ecosystem for Statistics and M&E**
>
> - Diagnostic Report on National Needs and Capacity for Monitoring SDGs and NSDP – July 2017.
> - Data Gap Analysis Report – July 2017.
> - Capacity Building Plan – July 2017
> - Statistics User Satisfaction Report – July 2017.
> - An Ecosystem of Statistics and M&E in Lesotho – June 2018.
> - Communication, Advocacy and Dissemination Strategy for BOS – May 2019.
> - SDG Customisation.
> - SDG 2016 Baseline Report
> - VNR Conference and Reporting – 2019
> - National Data Portal Training.
> - Statistical Year Book 2018 (draft).

and creating an ecosystem. The costing provided in the capacity development plan largely pertained to study tours, assistant statisticians, and training (planned and undertaken – see subsequent discussions in 5.2.2). Although relevant, it was viewed as a more scaled-down version as compared to the issues and the needs highlighted in the assessment reports.

The Project also produced a <u>statistics user report</u>. The report assessed sources of data available to users, frequency of data used by type, timeliness of data, relevance and data dissemination, and provided recommendations.

The **ecosystem study** (in 2018) highlighted and re-emphasised the need for enhanced capacities of ministries to exploit the evaluable administrative data, strengthened the user-producer linkage, strengthened coordination and leadership, and improved environment for better statistics and M&E system. The study also formed the basis for some of the training organised by the Project in addition to highlighting what is required to have an effective ecosystem for statistics and M&E.

In **support of building the national M&E framework** for NSDP II, [46] the project conducted the following activities:

- <u>SDG indicator customisation</u> – In order to address the immediate needs of SDGs, the Project conducted a workshop with 29 officials from DM&E, BOS, and Ministries and pursued further involving 54 staff of other MDAs. The customisation of SDGs was required

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[46] The M&E framework for NSDP I approved in 2014 required a lot of improvements including results chain (activities – outputs – outcomes) not being clear – Review of the NSDP and Scoping of the NSDP 2 – Final Report December 2016

to make it easily measurable by national standards and/or relevant to the national development context. Of the 152 nationalised prioritised indicators, 34 were customised[47] through a participatory and consultative process to ensure national ownership.

- SDG baseline report – The SDG indicator baseline report for 2016 for the Kingdom of Lesotho was prepared with the support of the Lesotho Data Project, which is a means to the M&E process in Lesotho. The report presents baselines for 82 indicators (54% of the 152 selected indicators).[48]
- VNR reporting 2019 – The Project supported the Government of Lesotho in funding teams in National University of Lesotho (NUL) to produce six analytical reports on six SDGs under review in addition to supporting to organise the VNR conference to validate the findings, before presentation to Cabinet for approval and subsequent presentation at the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York. It was reported that the process was participatory and inclusive, including all levels and sectors of government, the private sector, civil societies/NGOs, academia, and the media to ensure ownership and awareness creation toward SDGs and its reporting.[49] Discussions and review of initial Project Documents revealed that supporting VNR was not part of the original Project design.[50]
- In 2017, the Project conducted a 5-day training on results-based management (RBM) for 76 participants followed by a 3-day training of the trainers (TOT) for selected institutional representatives[51] (22), to build capacities in the development of the national M&E framework[52] (see additional discussions in 5.2.2).

During discussions, it was noted that BOS started its efforts to produce a Statistical Year Book for 2018 due to the support from the Project. The Statistical Yearbook, which is mandatory to be published each year, has not been produced since 2010 partly due to lack of staff capacity and largely due to financial resource constraints. At the time of the evaluation, it was reported that the draft version was now ready.[53]

5.2.2 Contribution towards Improved Use of Data in Decision-Making, Policy Formulation, and Planning

Discussions with various stakeholders and review of documents highlighted that the Project has led to the awakening that all ministries are providers and users of data. It was noted that this has been due to the various capacity building activities undertaken by the Project, including study

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[47] SDG 2016 baseline report
[48] SDG baseline report 2016 – Executive Summary
[49] Details of participating institutions/organisations/number of participants in the VNR conference was not made available to the evaluation team
[50] The original plan was to support a Data Conference in Lesotho in 2019. With progress not moving forward as desired, the decision was made to support VNR (in preparing the sections and also in organising the VNR conference). The support to VNR process and National Validation was included in the 2019 Annual Work Plan and covered under planned activities 2.4.1.2 (policy research for evidence generation).
[51] These institutional representatives had also attended the 5-day training on RBM
[52] Disaggregated data was not available
[53] However, continued yearly production of Statistical Yearbook is unlikely, if adequate financial resources are not budgeted by BOS and/or no development partner funding is available.

tours, training within and outside the country, and supporting attendance at international/regional events.

Study tours

The Project supported six study tours and two international events/forums (see Table 3). Discussions with stakeholders and review of study tour reports and Project documents revealed how the study tours have helped gain knowledge and understanding of practices and processes in other countries that would be useful in Lesotho.[54]

Examples of highlights/outcomes of the study tours include:

Table 3: Study Tours Supported by the Project

Study Tour	Duration	Participants
UN World Data Forum South Africa	January 15-18, 2017	3 women
Horticulture Production Survey study tour to National Bureau of Statistic, Tanzania	October 9 – 13, 2017	3 women/1 man
Study tour to Mauritius on Continuous Multi-purpose Survey/Labour Force Survey	October 15 – 21, 2017	4 women/2 men)
Participation in 28th International Population Conference, Cape Town, South Africa	October 29 – November 4, 2017	4 women
Study tour to EUROSTAT, Luxembourg	November 6 – 10, 2017	1 woman
Study tour by Lesotho Correctional Services to Uganda Prison Services and Uganda Bureau of Statistics	November 20-24, 2017	4 women/2 men)
Study tour to Uganda on CPI Compilation	November 20-24, 2017	2 women/2 men)
Study tour to Uganda on PPI compilation and methodology	November 20-24, 2017	2 men/2 women

- After the study tour to Mauritius, BOS has started using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) to collect information for Continuous Multipurpose Survey (CMS) and have started using the 20th ICLS[55] standards for data for the first time.
- During the Uganda tour, "*we learned about the CAPI more and the use of it to collect data on prices….now we have developed the application to collect prices.*" However, it was noted the bottleneck was that BOS does not have adequate devices to collect data.
- Correctional Services have started implementing two aspects that they learned during the study tour to Uganda – a) They learned about assessing the capacity of the cell and how many people can be put in one cell without overcrowding. Correctional services have already started implementing this concept (2m x 2m for sick people and 2m x 1.75 m for healthy people, excluding bathroom area), and it has helped address overcrowding issues.

> *"Before the Government of Lesotho was saying we were only spending money. Now we are able to say how much we are contributing. Our bosses are overall happy about it"*

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[54] The participants of the Tanzania tour informed that although the tour was informative, it did add value to what they were doing in Lesotho

[55] International Conference for Labour Statisticians

b) Additionally, Correctional Services have been able to assess and report on the revenue contribution of the centre to the Government of Lesotho (after its tour to Uganda). Every produce (e.g., fruits, vegetables, etc.) by cellmates is assessed systematically for its monetary value before consuming and/or selling.

- Production prices were not collected before in Lesotho – "*now we are planning to start*" For production price index (PPI) BOS has now developed a new questionnaire for data collection - ("*we were not collecting/producing PPI before*").

- In addition to learning on the compilation of data for CPI, BOS is looking at adding additional survey/module to collect additional information at retail level as currently, it has only a survey at the household level.

- It was also noted that the peace and security module survey would be incorporated in 2020 Crime and Victimisation Survey (an outcome of Uganda tour).

Discussions at BOS revealed that although it has been enriched with knowledge and ideas due to the visit to EUROSTAT, it has not been translated yet into practice in Lesotho, largely due to the vast gap in capacities (human, financial, infrastructure and systems/processes) between BOS and EUROSTAT.

Training in Lesotho

The Project conducted training on Excel, SPSS, Basic statistics, and also administrative data in Lesotho for government staff at various levels with more than 450 attending them.

Excel Training

The Project trained 80 officials[56] from multiple MDAs in data management and analysis using Excel. It was a 5-day training. Discussion with stakeholders, including those who have attended the Excel training in various MDAs, highlighted that the training on Excel has made them (trainees) do the work better and more efficiently. During discussions, stakeholders who attended the Excel training emphasised that they are now able to use functions, do the formatting, sort/filter data, freeze panes, name worksheets, protect sheets, and export/import files, among others. Examples of remarks on the benefits of the Excel training (what they are doing differently) as highlighted by stakeholders[57] are presented in Box 2.

> **Box 2: Examples of Stakeholders Comments - Doing Differently due to Excel Training**
>
> - *"I am now able to do tables and charts and able to do better analysis. I help others as needed "* *(Agriculture)*
>   *"It was introductory but helped to some extent in doing demand analysis" (Energy)*
>
> - *"Excel is new to me still practising" (Police)*
>
> - *Able to do pivot tables, charts. I didn't know them before. Now I am able to present data better, and people are appreciative" (Police)*
>
> - *"Now I keep all records in Excel sheet – before I was not perfect, even though I tried" (Police)*

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[56] Gender disaggregated data was not available

[57] Does not include comments from Assistant Statisticians

- *"Helping HR in having employee data organised and produce reports. Helping them use Excel functions" (Gender)*
- *"Now better processing of data using Excel' (BOS)*
- *"Now use Excel for analysis and computing district profile" (BOS)*
- *"I had Excel on my computer before, but never used it – now I am able to do pie-charts, tables, and do calculations using formulas….work has become easier" (DCEO)*

During discussions with some trainees, a few of them remarked about the Excel training being more at an introductory level as they were already using it; however, they found it a good refresher. In many ministries, data comes from the field in paper and is then input into Excel spreadsheets at the headquarters. In some ministries it was reported that the information which came remained in papers before and now they store it in Excel spreadsheets.

Training on SPSS

The Project trained 70 statisticians[58] and M&E officers in data management and analysis using SPSS and exploring data. As remarked by some of the stakeholders who attended the SPSS training, they were able to– do pyramids, create profiles, compute variables, and filter data, statistical

Box 3: Doing Differently – Using SPSS

- *"I do coding now"*
- *"I am able to filter at different levels (before I did total and then went looking up in the spreadsheet)'*
- *"I can do pyramids now"*

analysis of data, and also use new functions (see Box 3). Some trained in SPSS noted that the skills and knowledge had not been applied, as it was more relevant to statisticians than to planners, although the training gave them knowledge to appreciate what statisticians can do with SPSS. As remarked by an official in a key Department – *"We are now using SPSS – most of my people are economists, and so it was helpful."*

Basic Statistics Training for BOS Clerical and Field Staff

The training was meant to equip BOS clerical and field staff on basic descriptive statistics as well as the production processes, use, and interpretation of basic official statistics and included a component on map reading. The training modules were prepared and delivered by NUL[59] in consultation with BOS and UNDP. A total of 144 of field and clerical staff (81% men and 18% women) were trained (representing all ten districts) in three batches of 5-day training between May 14 and July 13, 2018.[60]

Discussions with key stakeholders at the national level indicated the relevance of training and how it has increased awareness and knowledge of the data chain at the field level. While this was reflected in the training evaluation (89.3% strongly agree/agree "met their expectation" and 86.4% strongly agree/agree "applicability of what they learned") during focus group discussions,

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[58] Gender disaggregated data was not available
[59] Four of them were from Department of Statistics and Demography and the one from Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences
[60] Report of Basic Training for BOS staff – July 2018

with 22 field and clerical staff (representing 8 of 10 districts), at the time of this evaluation 33 percent (7/22) indicated that it was not relevant to their current work but relevant for the future. It was noted that field staff are primarily involved in the collection of data and sending it to BOS headquarters, where all the analysis was done. Additionally, statistical work was not directly relevant to clerical staff. This highlighted a key lesson of tailoring the training to different levels.

Administrative Data Training

The Project initially conducted a three-day workshop on administrative data in March 2018 (for 32 staff[61] of BOS and 10 MDAs), and this was followed by a series of one-day in-house training on administrative data for 10 pilot ministries[62] during April 2018. The in-house one-day training was attended by 85 participants (41 men/44 women) spread across 10 ministries. Subsequently, with feedback from the MDAs, the CTA was brought back[63] to conduct a 4-day training in two ministries (Ministry of Police and Public Safety – May 14-17, 2019; and Ministry of Justice and Correctional Service - May 20-23, 2019), attended by 40 participants (22 men/18 women). While the stakeholders were appreciative of administrative training and "*how it opened their eyes*" on data they had in their respective ministries, many felt that there is a need for more training on administrative data.

Some highlights of positive results due to Administrative Data Training include:

- Correctional services learned how to collect and use data on LGBTQ. It was noted that this information was important for them in allocating people in the cell (which otherwise could create a lot of issues)
- The administrative training has helped realise that the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and Correctional Services (MOJHRCS) had a lot of data – "*we didn't know how to use administrative data…..now we can organise and use the data.*"

  > "*I can use administrative data in my work to get information on police resources, police strengths, etc. I was not using it before but now I am using it*"

  The MOJHRCS reported that they now have a database for a number of indicators, and they are able to track indicators and were able to contribute to VNR. The Ministry also reported that they have made improvements on administrative data being collected at the district level after the training by the Project.
- The Police officials were able to use administrative data and analyse crime statistics using Excel.
- The Ministry of Forestry was able to use administrative data (which it was getting from various departments) - organise and use them provide periodic reports - for example, how many forests ("*we couldn't count before*"). BOS and Forestry had different classifications before.

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[61] Disaggregated information not available

[62] Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Culture, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Police, Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services, and Ministry of Trade and Industry

[63] The CTA's contract ended in July 2018 and was brought back as a consultant in 2019 for one month

<u>RBM Training</u>

As mentioned earlier, there were two levels of training –basic training and TOT. Even though there was no roll-out of RBM training as planned (due to lack of additional funding from government or other development partners), and there was delay in development of NSDP II and its M&E Framework, stakeholder who attended at the RBM training had positive response, not only about the training but also on how it helped them in their work. Discussions revealed that it helped many stakeholders in understanding the concepts of RBM, the results, and an understanding to develop appropriate indicators (see Box 4 for examples).

Box 4: Examples of Stakeholder Comments – Outcomes of RBM Training

- *"RBM is very important – benefitted a lot in designing indicators" (BOS, DCEO)*
- *"It was the first time we learned about RBM and results chain – we are able to differentiate various levels of results. After the training, we got involved in NSDP II and M&E framework for Agriculture Sector – it helped to define the indicators a bit – we were doing it for the first time" (MOA)*
- *"We are now developing an M&E framework as they (trainees) are able to understand RBM better. They are using some aspects from an earlier M&E Framework which was a good one but was not understood by many at that time in 2012" (Ministry of Water)*

Although the delays (in NSDP II and its M&E Framework) affected to some extent, the immediate use of knowledge gained, for some of them the training on RBM and its concepts were introduced for the first time. Delays in rolling out RBM training meant the trainers have also not practiced the skills for two years.

Training outside Lesotho

The Project supported eight key government officials from DM&E and BOS (3 women and 5 men) for two different 5-day training in South Africa as part of strengthening statistics and the M&E ecosystem in Lesotho (see Box 5).

Box 5: Training outside Lesotho

- Outcome-based M&E Implementation Training at Department of M&E, Pretoria – November 13-17, 2017 (1 woman/3 men)
- Public Sector M&E Training at University of Stellenbosch – November 20-24, 2017 (2 women/2 men)

Discussions at DM&E and BOS highlighted how the training equipped them with an understanding of how the M&E system works and how information flows at the national level and what gaps/weaknesses Lesotho is facing. It also created awareness and the need to have M&E units within each ministry in Lesotho, which has not been done yet by DM&E.

Data Awareness and Dissemination

As part of the Project, activities were undertaken to support increased awareness about data and also dissemination. These include:

- "Know Your National Statistical System" workshop conducted (November 13, 2017) to enhance appreciation of the user needs by data producers to ensure the production of demand-driven relevant data;

- Career guidance for students at Tsakhola High School in collaboration with Lesotho Young Statistician and Demographers Association (November 15, 2017);
- TV interview on the highlights of Lesotho Data Project by the Director of BOS and the Project Manager (November 15, 2017);
- Africa Statistics Day (an annual event organised by BOS in a selected district) supported in 2017 and 2018 to sensitise the public about the importance of statistics and to showcase BOS products. In 2017 the Africa Statistics Day was held at Tsakhola in Mafeteng while in 2018 it was held at Khukhune in Botha Bothe district. The event was attended by stakeholders from the Local Government structure at the district level, Principal Chiefs, Area Chiefs, Headmen, and public. It was noted that both events brought together about 1,100 attendees; and
- District profiles (with key statistics) produced for each district based on the 2016 Population and Housing Census. It was reported that 3,000 pamphlets were printed and distributed, in total.

The Project largely targeted mid-level officials for training and capacity building with no significant sensitisation at the senior level in creating an enabling environment to collect data and use it for decision making for policies. This requires a considerable amount of advocacy. Although not much was done during the Project lifecycle, a costed Communication, Advocacy, and Dissemination Plan was developed for BOS by the Project towards the end of the project life.

The Project as part of its mandate to improve data dissemination prepared a costed Communication, Advocacy, and Dissemination Strategy for BOS in 2019[64] to enhance the profile of BOS and restore stakeholder confidence, improve stakeholders' literacy and knowledge about the national statistical system and BOS' roles and responsibilities, and enhance internal communication with BOS. During discussions it was highlighted that the Project has, to some extent led to the enhanced profile of BOS and improved internal communications; however, the Strategy is yet to be implemented (with budget not allocated yet).

The Lesotho Data Project provided logistical assistance in updating the National Data Portal, and the technical assistance was provided by African Development Bank (AfDB) on the latest version of the software to ensure the updated portal to assure access to current data within the NSS.[65] A total of 60 officials were trained from various MDAs on the data portal. It was noted that over 25 reports have been uploaded and are accessible. Furthermore, the Project procured a server for BOS and also paid a one-year subscription for the BOS website to be hosted by a private service provider (EcoNet Lesotho). This ensured BOS to migrate from the central government server hosted by the Ministry of Communications, Science, and Technology (MCST) and be independent. This was reported to have contributed to an improved anytime access to the data portal and BOS website, which was not the case as the internet connection, was erratic while hosted by MCST. It was reported that the current version of the software (of the data portal) is also able to check for quality, which was not possible before. The evaluation team was not able to assess the increase in web traffic and uploads/downloads, as BOS was not maintaining such data. Discussions with BOS

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[64] As part of preparation of the strategy as Situation Analysis report was prepared
[65] The software is provided by AfDB, as part of the African Information Highway.

also revealed that it intends to pay for the private service provider's subscription as part of its commitment to better dissemination and access to data.

As part of the various capacity building activities, the Project has produced various manuals and knowledge products (e.g., RBM, Administrative Data, Basic Statistics, Excel Training, etc.). Additionally, the assessment reports such as SDG baseline, diagnostic, and data gap analysis provides good reference document for the BOS and future projects.[66]

5.2.3 Contribution to Strengthening National Leadership, Institutional, and Technical Capacity for Effective Coordination and Sectoral Engagement

The Project had initially envisaged taking up strengthening of national leadership, institutional and technical capacity for effective coordination and sectoral engagement through review of legal and institutional frameworks, policy, and establishment of a platform for continued learning and information dissemination in Lesotho. As could be seen from the project reports, expenditure (0.1%), and stakeholder discussions, the originally intended activities were not taken up on the National Strategy for Development Statistics (NSDS) and 2001 Statistical Act review and amendment, as PARIS21[67] intended to provide the technical assistance to BOS. This has been reflected in the expenditure for Component 3, with only three percent of the original budget and 12 percent of the revised budget spent.[68]

The Project was not able to establish a harmonised national coordination mechanism for M&E and statistics. Discussions with stakeholders revealed that a framework for a coordination mechanism has been developed; however, it has not been institutionalised or functioning. Based on discussions with stakeholders specifically at the ministries, the need for national coordination mechanism was highlighted. Discussions with BOS and DM&E also indicated that there are multiple mechanisms, and coordination is "*not so strong*."

- For statistics, there are technical working groups (even before the Project) with terms of references.
- There are also sector working groups that existed before.
- When NSDP work started, another structure was established to ensure broader consultations. So BOS and DM&E aligned with NSDP committees so that they can be used for both M&E and statistics; however, they do not have any terms for reference (nor are they formalised).

It was noted that the coordination is currently done by one person in BOS (the recently absorbed Assistant Statistician) and not a unit. Additionally, the donor coordination led by the Government of Lesotho has not been meeting as frequently as it should be. Many of the Ministries viewed that the national coordination mechanism (if there was one) has not improved due to the Project activities.

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[66] The Project also provided technical support to the Environment and Energy Statistics Division of BOS, towards the end in 2019. The work at the time was still a work in progress, as reported by the Division.

[67] Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (https://paris21.org/about-paris21)

[68] Based on Financials in Draft End of Project Report 2019

While there is bilateral communication between a ministry and BOS or with a donor, there is no overall coordination evident to get a big picture for more effective ecosystem. Some of the following examples, but not limited to (based on discussion with diverse stakeholders) highlight the lack of/inadequate coordination mechanism in Lesotho:

- Currently, the data from Police and Justice is not shared, and the databases do not talk to each other. Sharing of data between the two would enable them to see the big picture.
- In foreign trade – BOS, and Central Bank of Lesotho, produce different reports, and the figures do not tally.
- Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was recently completed, and the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) is going to start in Lesotho. Many indicators on MICS overlap with DHS. Both surveys are for the Ministry of Health and funded by donors.
- In the Ministry of Water, the same data is being collected by multiple departments, and there is no linkage between departments, and officers do not share data very easily.

The various databases created in each ministry are not backed up centrally which poses a big risk. For example, at the Department of Energy, it was reported that a computer crashed and all the data in it was lost. As discussed earlier, the Project supported the National Data Portal. While the portal now has the updated reports, the data coming from the districts (in papers) are entered (digitalised) into databases and are still with the ministries. Databases within ministries also do not interact with each other (as most of them are databases created in a spreadsheet and are present in desktop/laptop of the official).

Nevertheless, it was emphasised during discussions that the relation between BOS and DM&E and with other ministries has improved. The BOS interaction with DM&E is now seen important to ensure that they capture the new requirement through surveys conducted by the Ministries.[69] In the past, it was not so, and this is changing, and the coordination is improving; however, the staff at working or technical level view that there is scope to strengthen the coordination at their level. The ministries inform BOS about surveys they are doing and sometimes request to be allocated a focal person. This helps improve quality and ensure standards. It also helps BOS to include some questions, as appropriate, and this saves costs/resources and reduces time.

5.2.4 Contribution to National Data Collection, Measurement, and Analytical Systems

The initiative and support to introduce of Assistant Statisticians into six Ministries[70] was a key achievement of the Project to strengthen national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems to eventually facilitate monitoring progress of SDGs, NSDP, and other development agendas.[71] Three of the Ministries (Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and

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[69] During discussions it was noted that in the past, DM&E would develop indicators without consultations with BOS on data requirement. However, at the time of reporting DM&E will then request for data for BOS.

[70] Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Culture and BOS

[71] The Assistant Statisticians were provided orientation by DM&E and BOS (February 26 – March 31, 2018) before placing them in various ministries based on the pick (the name of the ministry) from a hat.

Culture, and Ministry of Water) did not have a statistician (at any level) neither in the organisation nor in the organogram. While Ministry of Energy had only one junior statistician (but on study leave), and the Ministry of Trade and Industry had a position for a statistician in its organogram but no statisticians. The Assistant Statisticians were absorbed in Grade F of the Public Service scale. Discussions with each of the six Ministries indicated high appreciation for the Project's initiative and their value to the Ministries (see Box 6). A key task for the Assistant Statisticians was to ensure that administrative data was available in their respective ministries and was used properly to address data gaps.

Box 6: Key Contributions by Assistant Statisticians in the Ministries

Ministry of Water
- Collecting administrative data from 4-5 departments within the Ministry and compiling them to reduce the data gap on SDG 6 indicators.

Ministry of Energy
- Involved in Energy Consumption Survey Phase I & II. For Phase I the AS contributed to the analysis and drafting of the report. In Phase II the AS is involved in data collection also. The AS is also involved in the team working on the modelling analysis up to 2055.

Ministry of Forestry
- Involved in organising and formatting the data to provide to BOS requests (before we are not able to provide information to BOS). The AS is also working with the IT team to create an online portal to collect data from different locations so that we can access them and assisted us in selecting tablets and survey software (ODK).

Ministry of Trade and Industry
- Developing an Excel database of national business registry (for One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre) by collecting data from the districts and also in Maseru. The current database had information only for Maseru and was also not updated.

Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, and Culture
- Involved in helping human resources in having the employee data organised and developing a youth business registry with BOS and other ministries. Also involved in developing a Gender-Based Violence tool.

Bureau of Statistics
- Coordination support.

The Project also provided the Assistant Statistician with laptops and office furniture (desks, chairs, and bookshelf) to effectively perform their tasks. This was crucial, as many MDAs talked about a shortage of computers.

As highlighted by certain ministries, the presence of Assistant Statistician has helped them to submit reports for the first time or improved reports. These include:

- Submitted data for the first time to SADC ("we did not have data before") – Ministry of Gender, Youth Sports and Culture;
- Gender report 2016 using population census data – Ministry of Gender; and

- Reported on SDGs.[72] For the first time, submitted a report to SADC with proper data". In the earlier reports the data was not adequate - Ministry of Water.

Discussions with officials at the Ministries and the Assistant Statisticians highlighted that the Project should have prepared the Ministries in a better manner with some guidelines[73] (although the need for a statistician was there) as some of the Ministries had not even planned for a statistician. This should be seen as a lesson for the future, although the integration into all the six Ministries has turned out well and positive (in different ways in each Ministry as figured out by the AS and the Ministry).

As pointed out earlier, Ministries have begun to enter the data that comes from the districts in papers into Excel spreadsheets (before it used to be kept as it is in paper). However, an observation noted was that the databases created at the Ministries are at desktop or laptop computers, and when backed up it was only on USB sticks. The loss of databases when the computer crashed and the need to have central backup systems was highlighted during discussions with the Ministry of Energy.

Overall, the process of recruitment of six Assistant Statisticians through Project funding, placing them in Ministries, and finally ensuring the absorption into the Ministries within 12 to 14 months was viewed as an innovative approach and much appreciated by all the stakeholders. The candidates were picked from the already existing roster of the Public Service and in consultation with BOS. The Assistant Statisticians were paid by the Project for 12 months, later extended to 14 months for five of them due to delays in absorption. Ministry of Trade absorbed the AS in February 2019 (on completion of the 12 month Project funding) as it had planned for a statistician in its organogram.

Overall, as mentioned earlier, the activities of capacity building (study tours, training on RBM, Excel, SPSS, Basic Statistics, and Administrative Data) and support to SDG customisation, baseline, and VNR reporting all contribute to improving national data collection, measurements, and analytical systems.

5.2.5 Factors that Contributed to/Impeded Lesotho Data Project Performance

Contributing Factors

The project documents and discussions with various stakeholders highlighted various factors that contributed to the achievements of the Lesotho Data Project. These included:

- BOS and DM&E were strong implementing partners and had ownership;
- The Project had Project Coordinators in BOS and DM&E in the Ministry of Development Planning, and this helped better day-to-day coordination and ownership;
- Having the Project Manager and the CTA housed in BOS;

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[72] We had some gaps but were able to address some of them through extrapolation with the help from AS.
[73] For example what the AS can do or capable of, what type of activities can they be engaged in, what kind of guidance is required for the AS, etc. This could be done as standard operating procedures for the Ministry and/or guiding tools for statisticians. It must be noted that in many Ministries, the supervisors (of Assistant Statisticians) are not statisticians and the young statisticians require guidance.

- Having a CTA to conduct various studies including diagnostic study, user study and data gap analysis ensured that activities were focused to address some of the key (if not all) issues;
- The Statistics Act 2001 (which is to be revised) mandates BOS to collect all statistics;
- Supportive PSC;
- All meetings/activities were well attended highlighting the demand, relevance and interest/need;
- Adaptive management of PSC and UNDP in taking up complementary activities when intended activities could not be undertaken;
- The application of the knowledge and skills acquired through the Project activities/training; and
- Assistant statisticians have been absorbed.

Hindering Factors

However, discussions with stakeholders also indicated factors that impeded Project achievements. These include:

- Ambitious project design not matched with timeframe and resources available and the context;
- Delayed recruitment of Project team members;
- Delays in the development of NSDP II affected implementation/carrying out of the Project activities associated with it including the development of the M&E framework, as initially planned;
- Delays in disbursement of funds affected the performance of some activities (e.g., administrative data training);
- Conflicting priorities/commitments of government (e.g., Basic Statistics training pushed from late 2017 to the second quarter of 2018 – almost losing the training partner NUL due to none conducive timing);
- Inadequate clarity of UNDP and/or Government processes (between the two) delayed activities, mainly due to one not being aware of other's processes and time requirements /communication lines; and
- Partnerships not harnessed and leveraged well as planned.

5.3 Efficiency

Overall, the approaches and conceptual framework were relevant to achieving the planned outcomes. However, the financial resources were not adequate for the project of this nature that focuses on the whole ecosystem. The project duration was also short for performing all activities on the results framework. For example, component three of the results framework focusing on the legal and policy framework was not addressed because it required more time than the duration of the Project. Additionally, delays beyond the Project assumption of the NSDP II development timeframe affected carrying out planned activities related the NSDP.

5.3.1 Governance and Management

The Project **governance and management structure was efficient** in achieving expected results. As mentioned earlier in the report, the Lesotho Data Project had a Steering Committee with responsibility for overall direction and management.

The PSC met six times (3 in 2017; 1 in 2018; and 2 in 2019) during the life of the Project. The PSC consisted of representatives from the European Commission - Lesotho, UNDP Lesotho, Ministry of Development Planning including BOS and the DM&E, Ministry of Finance (National Authorising Office), Office of the Prime Minister, UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Bank. The review of meeting minutes and discussions with PSC members revealed that although the PSC meetings could have met more frequently, the meetings were held when required and were well attended, including the regular participation by the World Bank representative virtually from Washington. The evaluation noted that PSC provided appropriate guidance, as required by the Project team, and made decisions and provided solutions and approvals to ensure that the Project moved forward well, in addition to reviewing progress made. The PSC members remarked that the PSC could have been more strategic in directing the Project.

The Project had a Project Manager and a Project Assistant in addition to a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). The Project Manager and the CTA were housed in BOS to ensure better coordination and support. Project Coordinators[74] were nominated by BOS and DM&E to ensure day-to-day coordination with the Project Manager. The CTA was mandated to conduct studies and look into technical aspects of the Project and the ecosystem development. The Project Manager was responsible for the overall coordination of the Project activities. It was noted that short-term national consultants were recruited to conduct and/or support studies/assessments conducted by the Project.[75] The Project Assistant supported administrative and financial matters using UNDP systems and was based in UNDP Lesotho. The Project also had a driver. The Project structure was noted to be lean and was implemented through existing government structures.

However, during various discussions, the delays in the recruitment of the various members of the Project team were highlighted. While the Project started in November 2016 and launched in February 2017, the CTA came on board in May 2017 (the first member of the Project team), the Project Manager joined in July 2017 and the Project Assistant joined in October 2017. It was noted that the CTA's contract expired in March 2018 and was given no-cost extension only until July 2018 (one year earlier than the Project closure in June 2019). The CTA was brought back for a month in 2019 for one-month as a consultant.[76] In many international development projects, delays of up to six months are seen for the recruitment of project staff; however, many stakeholders viewed the UNDP recruitment process as an area to improve for the future, as it took more than seven to twelve months to put the entire team together. The lower spending (70%) on human resources than budgeted was largely attributed to the delayed recruitment or early

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[74] Not paid by the Project, They were employees of Ministry of Development Planning
[75] A national consultant worked for three months in 2017 to support diagnostic study, capacity assessment, data gaps and user surveys. Towards the end of the Project a national consultant was hired to develop communication strategy for BOS. A third national consultant was hired to produce updated data costing plan and sustainability plan in 2019.
[76] To conduct Administrative Data training

contract ending (reflected in Table 4 – lower spend on project management and administration). It was also noted that the Project inception workshop was held before the Project team (CTA, Project Manager and the Project Assistant) were recruited.

In general, all stakeholders were of the opinion that the activities of the Project and **outputs produced were cost-efficient**, especially the training and support activities. Nevertheless, some stakeholders and review of documents highlighted limited time and budget to complete studies and assessments, even though they reported satisfaction with the outputs produced. Costing to address identified gaps would have made the reports (such as the diagnostic report) more comprehensive. Although a costing report on data gaps was produced only in 2019 towards the end of the Project, earlier availability of this information could have helped leverage additional resources to address data gaps.

Despite the extension of time, the resources committed and overall time required was considered inadequate to ensure the national statistical and M&E ecosystem envisaged by the Project. The Project was not able to leverage additional development partners, although it was conceived as a multi-stakeholder initiative. Similarly, national institutions, such as NUL, LIPAM, and IDM, trained to conduct training on RBM and M&E were not leveraged to roll-out the training either with funding from the Government or with additional funding support from other development partners.

5.3.2 Financial Resources

Financial resources have been **used efficiently**. Overall, the Project had spent a total of EUR 1,125,077 (87% of the revised budget) as of June 15, 2019. In the revised budget, while the budget remained almost the same for Component 1, the budget increased for Component 2 (by 25%) and decreased for Component 3 and 4 (by 71% and 13% respectively) to reflect actuals (Table 4). All changes in financials and spending on activities were approved by the PSC. It was noted that the rest of the amount was allocated for closing activities of the Project.

Table 4: Budget and Actual Expenditure by Component (June 15, 2019)

Component and Description	Initial Budget	Revised Budget as per Addendum I	Actual (June 15, 2019)	Percentage Spent (on the revised budget)
1. National statistics and data collection ecosystem	€247,971	€247,769	€243, 860	98%
2. Capacity building for data collection, use and literacy	€387,737	€485,906	€469,785	97%
3. Coordination, legal and policy frameworks	€ 39,675	€11,447	€1,382	12%
4. Project Management and Administration	€526,803	€457,065	€336,447	74%
Total Project Cost	€1,202,186	€1,202,187	€1,051,474	87%
Management Fee (7%)	*€84,153*	*€84,153*	*€73,603*	*87%*

Component and Description	Initial Budget	Revised Budget as per Addendum I	Actual (June 15, 2019)	Percentage Spent (on the revised budget)
Grand Total	**€1,286,339**	**€1,286,340**	**€1,125,077**	**87%**

Note: All figures have been rounded to the nearest Euro/percentage
Source: UNDP – Project Document; and Draft End of Project Report

5.3.3 Delays and Project Extension

The Project was **extended twice** – initially from November 2018 to May 15, 2019 (extension of 6 months) as per Addendum I to enable completing all activities planned. Subsequently, the Project was extended again until June 15, 2019 (extension of 1 month) as per Addendum II, as requested by the Government of Lesotho. Although the request was made by UNDP to extend until the end of December 2019, the current end-date was agreed upon as the European Development Fund (EDF) framework was coming to an end in June 2019.

Review of documents and discussion with stakeholders at various levels highlighted delays affecting the efficiency and implementation of Project activities. Key **challenges** noted in the execution of activities, **affecting efficiency**, included:

- The administrative processes and protocols of UNDP and the Ministry of Development Planning (including in BOS and DM&E) and the time required for these processes was not understood by each other.
- Invitations to Project events (including training workshops) were received by MDAs at the last minute and hence, at times led to not sending adequate or appropriate/relevant staff.
- Conflicting priorities meant the event had to be postponed (and at times more than once). This led to bunching up of Project activities and not adequate time to prepare and/or review reports and causing delays in having output/activity reports.
- Delays in activities especially during the first quarter of the year due to delay in receiving funds from the European Commission.[77] It was noted during discussions some activities were carried with UNDP providing stop-gap funding (see also discussion in 5.3.4)

Furthermore, the **delays in the preparation of NSDP II** resulted in many project activities not being conducted as intended and **affected efficiency**. This included not being directly involved in the development of the national M&E framework.[78] Project management did well to find complementary and/or alternate activities contributing to the overall objective. Additionally, due to **recruitment delays,** the Project was largely focused on conducting studies and assessments for the most part of the first year with study tours organised towards the end (October/November 2017 – 7 study tours and attendance at 2 training courses in South Africa).

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[77] It was noted that the funding in 2017 was received in March. In 2018 it came in March and in 2019 it came in April.
[78] National M&E framework is supported by the World Bank as it was involved in the development of the NSDP II. The national M&E framework is a work in progress, yet to be finalised.

5.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Project had an **adequate M&E system** for tracking the progress of the Project and its activities. Nevertheless, M&E system was largely activity/output-oriented, tracking implementation and completion of activities and hence did not track outcomes. The Project could have strived to ensure having disaggregated data in all its reporting.[79] The Project produced regular updates for reporting to PSC in addition to producing annual reports for submission to European Union. The annual reports were cleared by UNDP Brussels, before submission to EU, as part of the quality assurance mechanism.

The Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM)[80] was commissioned by the EU in July 2018. The review provided recommendations and identified areas to improve project results. As well, a financial audit was undertaken for the period January 1, 2017, to December 31, 2018, as per UNDP financial management procedures by an independent auditor. Furthermore, UNDP has also commissioned this final evaluation.

5.4   Sustainability

The sustainability of Lesotho Data Project interventions and benefits could be said to be modest and is still a work in progress. The Project intended to enable Lesotho to produce national statistics through an effective ecosystem for data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The establishment of the ecosystem was too ambitious and is still nascent and a work in progress to assess sustainability. However, it could be said that the initial steps towards the establishment of the ecosystem have been taken.

Capacity Development at Individual Level

There is potential for sustainability on some aspects of the Lesotho Data Project; however, it may require handholding. The **capacities have been strengthened at the individual level** (selected individuals) in the institutions; nevertheless, it is too early to talk about the institutionalisation of the capacities. While participants trained will continue to use the skills, where applicable, one of the key hindering factors will be the enabling environment within the ministries, as the Project had not largely focused on sensitisation of senior-level/top management government officials to support statistical and M&E activities and demand data for policy and decision-making. There have been instances of trainees who benefited from the Project sharing knowledge or helping others within their respective MDAs. Examples include:

- DM&E staff training within their department on RBM;
- DCEO staff made presentations to senior management staff on RBM learning;

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[79] Not all reports of the Project (including activity and progress reports) reported systematically on disaggregated data on participants/reach etc.
[80] The ROM is an external monitoring process of the EU aimed to enhance the accountability and management capacities of the EU-supported projects with a strong focus on results.

- Ministry of Police officials transferring knowledge to district-level officials on administrative data;[81] and
- Assistant Statisticians were seen as the go-to person for statistical/data solutions in the respective ministries.

Institutionalisation

Institutionalisation was also affected by staff turnover in some instances; although, it could be said the capacity remains within Lesotho, as pointed out by some stakeholders. Some lessons noted that could affect sustainability include – when a Ministry/institution sends only one person (as in the case of Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management moves to the private sector), or the Ministry sends a volunteer (instead of a staff), as in the case of Ministry of Gender, Youth and Sports. Furthermore, institutionalisation has also been hindered if the appropriate person was not sent to the training, or there were no opportunities/equipment (e.g., computers or software) to use the skills. Additionally, delay in the NSDP II development and the M&E Framework has to some extent affected the use of knowledge of RBM training. The non-rolling out of the RBM training has also affected institutionalisation.

The **absorption of assistant statisticians** into respective ministries they were posted during the Project was **a positive factor for sustainability**. During discussions in the ministries and with various stakeholders, it was noted that many ministries do not have a statistical unit or even a statistician. Some of the ministries (e.g., Ministry of Gender, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Forestry) in which the assistant statisticians, at Grade F (lowest level in the hierarchy), have been placed indicated that they (the Assistant Statisticians) were the first statistician in the ministry. With the exception of absorbing the Assistant Statisticians, many ministries do not even have a statistician (in the current and/or future organogram); this does not bode well for ensuring an enabling environment. Additionally, how these Assistant Statisticians will be supported professionally and career-wise was not clear with the exception of a couple of Ministries which were thinking about it. While the Assistant Statisticians have been the go-to for any statistical or research-related issues (as indicated by them and their respective ministries), they require additional training on several aspects, and this has not been envisaged yet.

The Project has **produced various manuals for the training course** conducted during the implementation – RBM (training manual, tool kit for data collection and trainer resource guide), Basic Statistics (training manual), Administrative Data (practical guides to Management of Admin Data and Integrating Admin Data as Official Statistics, workshop handouts), and Excel (intermediate level training manual, advanced training manual) which are **available for future reference and training**. Additionally, assessment reports on capacity needs and data gaps and SDG baseline will serve as a reference for future work on data in Lesotho. The Project also handed over the project vehicle, laptops, and furniture to identified MDAs.

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[81] In Ministry of Police, the official has been able to work with officer in the 11 police districts (when they come to the headquarters) and tell them how to look at missing variables and doing pivot tables and the importance of data quality. While some of them are able to do it, others are hindered by inadequate computers at the district level.

Working with NUL staff in developing Basic Statistics training materials and involving them to provide training to the BOS field staff has built capacity in the country. This has the potential to be sustainable and continued provided there is demand from the Government of Lesotho/BOS for similar training and budget is allocated by the Government for training. Discussions with NUL indicated interest to offer the same or modified training to BOS and other MDA staff (even for project managers and policymakers). However, the issue is demand and resources from BOS and the Government of Lesotho to continue training.

The RBM training was conducted in 2017 which was followed by a Training of the Trainer. Many of those who attended the training indicated that it was useful, and several of them have used some aspects of it (see discussions earlier), and for some, it was the first time for such training. However, with no follow-up training and no direct application of the knowledge and skills by some of the trainees in their day-to-day work (as indicated by a sample of trainees met), it is likely that the capacity built is unlikely to be sustainable, especially with the delay in M&E Framework development.

Discussion with IDM (trained by the Project) revealed that they have used the RBM manuals to design a one-week training with some modifications. At the time of the evaluation, IDM has offered the one-week RBM training in August and September 2019 and plans to continue depending on the demand. Most of the participants have been from NGOs or CSOs. IDM reported that although the Government showed interest to send people for each of the training, it withdrew at the last minute indicating a lack of funds. IDM charges LSL 2,500 per person for the one-week training. This is an indication of the national capacity developed to offer training on RBM when the DM&E is ready to roll-out. The NUL also indicated that it plans to develop an RBM training course, based on the training by the Project; however, timelines were not indicated as it was not the top of the priority. It was noted that DM&E is having discussions with other donors/UN agencies for funding the roll-out.

The support to **National Data Portal has the potential to be sustainable** as long as the updates are done periodically, and BOS pays the subscription to maintain the internet connection through the private service provider. Keeping the data portal updated is crucial as not only useful for MDAs organisations and public within Lesotho but also for donor agencies as they access it for preparing programmes/projects for Lesotho.

The Project has developed a **Sustainability Plan**; however, it was not evident how the plan would be implemented, and there was a lack of awareness of such a plan even among some PSC members. The ownership and buy-in/commitment to the actions by responsible parties was not evident.

Enabling Environment

While the Project focussed, primarily at mid-level officials producing and analysing data/statistics, all discussions in the MDAs (during the evaluation), stressed the need to sensitise the senior management and top-level officials to create awareness about statistics and to create demand. The importance of the sensitisation of senior management was emphasised, as the support of the top-level officials was crucial for the sustained production of good quality statistics and data. Stakeholders including DM&E staff also highlighted the lack of M&E Policy in Lesotho, which constraints the implementation of the M&E Framework when finalised.

As mentioned earlier, still many MDAs do not have any statistician or have only one (including the Assistant Statistician). During discussions with Ministries, it was noted that some of them have already taken steps in building additional capacity for the Assistant Statisticians (see Box 7). It was also noted in addition to Ministry to Trade and Industry which had statisticians planned in its organogram, DCEO was planning to recruit a statistician (Grade G), and the Ministry of Social Development also has now proposed to bring three statisticians,[82] realising the need for statistics. These decisions may not be directly attributable to the Project; however, they highlight the changing trend and the direction to a positive enabling environment/ecosystem.

Box 7: Additional Capacity Development to Assistant Statisticians by Ministries

- Ministry of Energy sent the AS to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) training on Energy modeling in Austria (model on analysis for energy demand.
- Ministry of Water sent AS to the African Conference on Water Resource Management in Botswana (first time Ministry of Water was represented at such a conference).

The partnership of UNDP and EU was expected to continue depending on funding for the next version (phase) of Data Project and/or other projects. In general, as pointed by various stakeholders, no further partnerships were built on the foundation of UNDP-EU partnership, for data literacy and coordination to build an ecosystem for statistics and M&E in Lesotho. This was viewed as a missed opportunity for this phase of the Project. See findings on partnership in the next section for further discussions.

Overall, it was noted during various discussions and review of documents that given the context, time frame, and resources, Lesotho Data Project was not able to establish a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism with a common understanding and purpose nationally and within each sector. Establishing a coordination mechanism may require a longer period of time and further handholding and continued support from the development partners, including EU and UNDP (and should be a project-based approach).

5.5   Partnerships

Discussions with stakeholders (during the evaluation) indicated that although the Project was envisaged as a multi-stakeholder initiative, it did not build further on the foundation of EU-UNDP partnership, and this has been well documented in several Project documents. Engaging with BOS and DM&E of the Ministry of Development Planning for implementation of the project was seen as a good practice and proved positive. While discussions revealed that there has been some coordination, it was noted that ministries still work in silos, and there is no integrated planning on statistics with all stakeholders to the desired extent. While the senior officials of BOS and DM&E reported improved relationships between the two institutions, the mid-level managers did not endorse the view strongly and indicated that further work is required.

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[82] Three levels - a chief statistician, statistician, and an assistant statistician. The statistician has recently joined from BOS.

Representatives of UNFPA, UNICEF, and the World Bank were part of PSC; however it did not materialise into institutional partnership. Other UN agencies did not get involved in the Project. Similarly, while individuals from institutions (e.g., National University of Lesotho) were involved in completing Project activities (such as in designing/delivering training and preparing VNR report sections), the opportunity was not used to build partnership with NUL (even though the contract was with NUL). Stakeholders emphasised the need for UN agencies to collaborate in the country, where feasible, even though they have their respective organisational mandates. Similarly, while activities of the Lesotho Data Project were complementary to the support provided by the World Bank in the development of NSDP II and the M&E Framework, there was no partnership.

Some examples of how development partners (specifically UN agencies) could have worked together (or could have been better coordinated) in connection with improving data situation/needs and strengthening the ecosystem in Lesotho:

- VNR Report – UN RCO provided an international consultant to DM&E to support the process (not part of the Project).[83] The Project supported the developing of six SDG sections and also organising of the VNR conference. Overall, it benefitted the country, although the actions were carried out independently.
- NSDP II and M&E framework – Due to delays in the development, and the World Bank taking the lead, the Project took a complementary role by supporting SDG indicator customisation and baseline and providing logistical support. At the same time, UNFPA independently provided a consultant to ensure gender was mainstreamed in NSDP II. These could have been better coordinated.
- Data Portal – The Project supported the updating of the existing National Data Portal (private internet service provider, and along with AfDB updated software/content and training). At the same time, UNICEF was independently developing community portals at the district level. While the intention and concept were considered good, the community portals were not linked to the national data portal. UNICEF could have discussed with BOS and the Project and could have used the national portal software to develop community portals, which could have had better interlinkages and better use (and value for money).
- Most UN agencies work with different ministries and work through BOS in terms of supporting data collection. Ministries also collect data. All these are still not coordinated, and there is a lot of overlap. For example, the Ministry of Health is supported by UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and IOM/WFP. The coordination among these agencies was not explicit (even as remarked by UN agencies). Similarly, there could be more coordination in the support (for data collection/use) by UNICEF and UNESCO to the Ministry of Education.[84]
- MICS was recently completed with the support from UNICEF (funding gap bridged by the Project). However, DHS funded by USAID is expected to start soon. MICS and DHS have many overlapping indicators, and there is no harmonisation on these indicators. Although

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[83] It was noted that international consultant provided technical assistance to NUL team preparing the SDG sections.
[84] Based on discussions with BOS and UN agencies

the Project contributed USD 40,000 to the MICS after discussions at the PSC, stakeholders acknowledge it as a deviation from the original Project intention.[85] However, it contributed to national data collection.

- RBM Training roll-out – Agencies that had resources could have supported the roll-out complementary to the Project and in time for the development of the M&E framework. However, this did not happen.

The above examples indicated the lack of coordination and harmonisation among agencies to achieve the common goal to improve the data ecosystem in the country. Coordination and good working relationships between BOS and DME through the Project Coordinators proved to be useful and facilitated progress towards achieving the project results. However, the Project did not leverage external partnerships to strengthen the ecosystem of statistics and M&E in Lesotho.

Furthermore, there is no clear evidence to say that the Lesotho Data Project has been effective in partnering with civil society and the private sector to improve the functionality of the NSS and the National M&E system in Lesotho.[86]

The project had working relationships with teams with NUL, which was involved in the Basic Statistics training and developing sections for the VNR, as reported earlier. The NUL reported that it was not used to offering short courses; however, this Project acted as an eye-opener to them. NUL showed a keen interest in developing short courses on statistics and RBM for other organisations and institutions, depending on their needs/demands. Nevertheless, the commitment or engagement at the corporate level (in NUL) has not been established as yet. The engagement was at operational level, for example between UNDP/BOS and the Department of Statistics. The process of involving NUL in developing and delivering Basic Training was reported to have strengthened relationship between BOS and NUL.

The roll-out of RBM training (if funding had been mobilised) could have ensured potential partnership with IDM, a private sector organisation, to conduct training to government officials at various levels. Media reporters were also involved in the project, but to a limited extent. This was seen as a good practice to build upon.

5.6 Cross-cutting Issues

With the exception of the CTA, the rest of the Project team, and the national consultants engaged by the Project were all women. The UNDP focal person for the Project, the Directors of BOS and DM&E and the Project coordinators nominated in both the institutions were also women.

As indicated by stakeholders there was no gender mainstreaming in the Project; however, it advocated disaggregated data to enable gender analysis. The Project paid attention to ensure gender-balanced participation in all its events and activities. Although the results framework of

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[85] It was not evident if the Projects financial contribution would be acknowledged on MICS report. As per the Project Document the Project was expected to facilitate a coordinated and harmonised National Statistical System in addition to a functional and integrated M&E system; this included enhancing capacities for data collection but not funding data collection.
[86] This could be for training, new technology for data collection and tools for analysis/dissemination, among others.

the Project did not indicate the collection of disaggregated data for the events and activities, most activities had reported on disaggregated data.

By design the project did not integrate gender equity and women's empowerment; it just focused on the data. However, looking at Lesotho demographics and participants in the Project stakeholder meetings, it seems more women than men participated in the Project. The participant list attached to some training reports also has participants disaggregated by gender and they seemed balanced.

As remarked by a key stakeholder, "*we can have many women and disaggregated data – but doesn't mean gender issues are part of the priorities.*"

In terms of human rights, only Correctional Services highlighted the collection and use of administrative data on LGBTQ for cell allocations. BOS & DM&E informed although disabled people attended Project events (including VNR preparation), there was no data gathered about their participation.

6.   Conclusions

The conclusions are based on the findings presented based on discussions with diverse stakeholders at various levels, review of documents, and observation in Lesotho.

The Lesotho Data Project was **highly relevant to the need of Lesotho on data for development** and result-based management. With a lack of capacities and data weaknesses and gaps in Lesotho, combined with its obligations to report on SDGs, and regional commitments to SADC and Agenda 2063, the support by the Project proved to be highly relevant and timely.

The Project was **consistent with the national policy framework and priorities** as defined by NSDP, UNDAF for Lesotho, and EU initiatives in Lesotho. The Project's method of delivery was appropriate as it chose to work with BOS and DM&E to address both statistics and M&E system issues that are interlinked. Both BOS and DM&E were seen as the most **appropriate partners**. The involvement of

Relevance: Highly relevant

the Office of the Prime Minister by participating in the PSC meetings indicated the relevance of the Project and the data issues/needs in Lesotho. While the **Project design was** appropriate for the issues at large in Lesotho and to establish a national ecosystem for statistics and M&E, it **was ambitious for the time and resources that were available** to implement the Project. The diagnostics study and the data gaps and capacity assessments helped to further focus the Project implementation.

The Lesotho Data Project was **moderately effective**, primarily due to its ambitious scope and objectives not matched with time and resources available. The **Project created awareness of the data gaps/weaknesses in Lesotho and also made the country take initial steps in addressing the gaps and in establishing the processes for an ecosystem for statistics and M&E**,

Effectiveness: Moderately satisfactory

although at very nascent stages. Project contributions within the limited time and resources have been appreciated. With delays in NSDP II development and thereby the development of the

national M&E Framework and the World Bank taking the lead, it was appropriate for the Project to take up complementary and synergistic activities in assessing national needs and capacity to monitor SDGs and NSDP such as the diagnostic study and the data gap analysis in addition to preparing the capacity development plan. In support of building the national M&E Framework, **the Project was instrumental in developing critical foundational elements for Lesotho, such as the SDG customisation, SDG 2016 baseline report, and the VNR 2019 reporting.** Furthermore, the Project built capacities of 76 participants on RBM (5-day training) and 22 participants as trainers (3-day training). Additionally, eight officials were supported to attend training on public sector/outcome-based M&E in South Africa.

The **capacity development activities** such as the study tours and various training (RBM, Excel, SPSS, Basic Statistics, and Administrative Data) of the Project **laid the foundation to contribute towards improved use of data use in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning in the future**. The eight **study tours** and attendance at international conference/forums have led to **improved methodologies and processes in data collection and/data analysis** including use of CAPI in CMS, development of an application to collect price data, cell allocation planning and ability to highlight the contribution made by cell-mates, collection of data on production prices (for the first time) and adding additional modules in surveys. The **training on statistical software packages** (to 150 officials) has **helped trainees to help their respective MDAs in creation of databases** (from paper reports received from districts), **present data** (using charts and tables), **perform analysis using functions and formulas, and improve their work efficiency**. While several of these tasks were done for the first time in some of MDAs, overall, the tasks were done better than before in all MDAs. The training on Basic statistics to 144 field and clerical staff of BOS has enlightened the staff on the data value chain and appreciation of their role in contributing to it. The **training on administrative data** to 157 officials across BOS, DM&E, and 10 pilot MDAs "*opened eyes*" **on data the ministries had at their disposal and how they could be used for decision-making and reporting** on SDGs, NSDP and regional commitments such as for SADC. The training on RBM although equipped various individuals it did not translate into application due to delay in the development of M&E framework and no follow-up and roll-out of the training. However, few MDAs reported on using the skill to develop indicators for the sectoral M&E framework.

While data awareness and dissemination activities were carried out by the Project, including supporting Africa Statistics Day and creating district profiles, **more could have been done to raise the profile of the Project** and what it could deliver for a better understanding in MDAs and to gain better support from development partners. The interactions/involvement with media on data were appreciated and should be done more. The development of the costed Communication, Advocacy, and Dissemination Strategy for BOS by the Project is valuable and will be of benefit if BOS implements it. The support by the Project to **update the National Data Portal** (software and content) **and ensure continuous accessibility** (through private sector internet provider) was another key step in improving data dissemination in Lesotho. The focus on **sensitisation of senior officials was inadequate** to demand data and to ensure support to statistical activities, especially to those capacitated by the Project in the MDAs.

As part of the contribution to national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems, **a key highlight achievement by the Project has been the recruitment of six Assistant Statisticians**

and ensuring that they were **absorbed permanently in the respective Ministries**. The Project also provided equipment and furniture to ensure the effective working of the Assistant Statisticians. The Assistant Statisticians have made key contributions in the Ministries, including collecting and using administrative data to report on SDGs, creating databases, modeling energy demand for up to 2055, helping develop gender-based violence data collection tool, in addition to being the go-to persons for data solutions.

The Project was not able to ensure functioning harmonised national coordination mechanism for M&E and statistics. There is no coordination unit in BOS but one person (the newly appointed Assistant Statistician). While a national platform was conceived for coordination and information sharing, it was not functional. The **multi-stakeholder engagement was weak**. The Project did not create a functional multi-stakeholder coordination national mechanism overall nationally and with each sector. Establishing an effective functioning national coordination mechanism will require continued support and a longer period than envisaged by the Project.

The Project's **efficiency was moderately unsatisfactory**. The efficiency of the Project was affected by **long delays in recruiting project staff** and early ending of the contract of CTA, in addition to **conflicting priorities** and **slow government-UNDP processes**. Funding delays, especially at the beginning of each year, delayed implementation of activities. All these led to two no-cost extensions. Fundamental inefficiency noted was the **last-minute invitations** sent to MDAs for Project events and activities (including training), which did have some negative effect on effectiveness and sustainability. However, project **activities were cost-efficient,** and financial resources were used efficiently. The Project had an adequate M&E system for tracking activities and was primarily output-oriented and hence did not track outcomes.

> **Efficiency:**
> **Moderately unsatisfactory**

The sustainability of the Project was modest and is still a work in progress. Some of the aspects of the Project have potential (most likely) to be sustainable. **Capacities developed at an individual level will benefit institutions**, as individuals will continue to use the skills, where applicable; nevertheless, it is too early to talk about institutionalisation of the capacities. A key **hindering factor will be the enabling environment** on the MDAs, **as the Project had not sufficiently sensitised the senior officials on data and then need to support statistical and M&E activities**. Institutionalisation will also be affected by staff turnover, training of not appropriate staff, and also not conducting further refresher/follow-up training or no roll-out as in the case of RBM.

The **absorption of the assistant statisticians into respective Ministries is a strong positive factor for sustainability**. The Project produced **various manuals and tool-kits** from conducting several training, which have been shared and **is available for future reference and training**. Additionally, the assessment reports on capacity needs and data gaps and SDG baseline will serve as reference documents in the near future for further work on strengthening ecosystem for statistics and M&E. **Institutions such as the NUL and IDM were capacitated** to conduct additional training if there is demand and funding available. The **National Data Portal has the potential to be sustainable.**

> **Sustainability:**
> **Moderately satisfactory**

Lack of statisticians or statistical units in MDAs and/or lack of updated NSDS, M&E policy, and a revised Statistical Act does not bode well in creating an enabling environment for an effective ecosystem for statistics and M&E.

Although conceived as a multi-stakeholder initiative, **the Project did not build on the foundation of the UNDP-EU partnership**. Implementing partnership with BOS and DM&E was seen as a good practice. The Project complemented activities of the World

**Partnerships:
Unsatisfactory**

Bank in developing NSDP II and the national M&E Framework; nevertheless, it did not leverage any further partnerships. Potential for partnerships with the private sector (in training) is evident but not tapped yet. Lack of coordination among UN agencies is prevalent and is a deterrent to create a harmonised ecosystem for data and M&E in Lesotho.

The Project **did not mainstream gender; however, gender relevance is evident**. The Project advocated disaggregated

Gender score: Zero

data to enable gender analysis. The Project paid attention to ensure gender-balanced participation in all its events and activities.

Overall, the work on strengthening the ecosystem for statistics and M&E in Lesotho has made a good start due to the Lesotho Data Project. However, it is a work in progress and may require in addition to enabling environment, several years of continued and harmonised handholding from development partners.

7.   Lessons Learned

Key lessons learned from Lesotho Data Project implementation for future programming on data related and other initiatives include:

- Project design should match resources and time available to implement to be effective and efficient. If the objective of the Project, like in Lesotho Data, is to change an ecosystem, it takes a longer time and hence should be planned for a phased-approach.

- The consultative and inclusive processes adopted by the Project were important to building ownership among national stakeholders.

- Sending invitations for the project events/activities, including training at the last minute affected effective attendance and led to a "not so" appropriate staff attending the events, which affected the effectiveness and also sustainability.

- Postponing of project events due to conflicting priorities leads to "bunching up" of events, eventually contributing to inefficiencies and affecting effectiveness. This included delays in preparing reports for the concluded event and rushed preparation for the next event.

- Sensitising senior officials is important to garner support at the working level for statistical and M&E activities.

- Tailoring training to the appropriate level of staff is essential for better appreciation and better understanding.

- Enlightening each other (Government and UNDP) of their respective established processes and time requirements will help a more realistic event/activity planning or approvals and healthier working partnership.

- While posting Assistant Statisticians, there was not enough briefing on what they should be doing or what the Ministries can expect of them or what support should be given. A proper briefing/orientation and/or guidelines should be given for better integration (although, in this case, it turned out well eventually).

- The participation of agencies in meetings may not necessarily translate into partnerships or coordinated activities.

8. Recommendations

These recommendations have been based on evidence gathered, conclusions, and lessons learned on the Lesotho Data Project. The primary focus of the recommendations has been to ensure continued support to various aspects required for a sustainable ecosystem, and the work started with Lesotho Data Project.

Support and handholding from UNDP/UN RCO in collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners would be required to carry out many of the recommendations, even though the primary responsibility would be of the Government of Lesotho (more specifically BOS and DM&E). The support by UNDP and other UN agencies/EU and other development partners could be for one or more of the recommendations but, overall, should have a coordinated approach.

Recommendation 1: To ensure a sustainable national ecosystem, **an enabling environment supported by appropriate legal frameworks and policies** has to be put in place. This includes updated NSDS, a national M&E policy, revised Statistics Act. (BOS and DM&E).

Recommendation 2: Projects such as the Lesotho Data Project with an objective to develop a **functional national ecosystem for statistics and M&E should have a phased approach** and should be **developed as a multi-stakeholder initiative** with multiple stakeholders supporting different activities with resources.

- Depending on resources, the Project (programme) may **initially focus on a few selected ministries and then roll-out** instead of spreading thin. (BOS/DM&E; and UNDP and UN agencies/EU and other development partners)

Recommendation 3: **Sensitise top-level officials on data awareness and data literacy**. This would not only help in creating demand for data for decision-making and policy planning but also would enable them to appreciate and support work being done by the mid-level officials on statistics (who have received training from the project). BOS/DM&E; UNDP/UNRCO and development partners including EU.

Recommendation 4: Create a national data warehouse[87] to also act as a back-up of databases from MDAs in addition to ensuring wider accessibility based on security protocols as deemed essential. Currently, databases and analysed data are in desktops and laptops of officials with backups only on USB keys (jump drives). This does not enable even officials in the ministry to access data. Surveys collect data, and not all data is analysed and published; however data not published may be useful for other programme/project design and/or other decision-making. In the current situation this data is not available/accessible, as many are not aware of its location. (BOS & DM&E; UNDP and other UN agencies/EU and other development partners).

Recommendation 5: A **harmonised national coordination mechanism for statistics and M&**E should be established **with a strengthened role for the BOS as a coordinator**.

- It is important that the **work of M&E and statistics is synchronised**, and therefore, there should only be one national mechanism.
- The **national coordination structure should have clear mandates** with specific roles and responsibilities (backed by policies/legal frameworks) and could be multi-tiered. **BOS and DM&E should act as "agents of change"** in creating this mechanism. (BOS/DM&E; UNDP/UNRCO and UN agencies/EU and other development partners).

Recommendation 6: **UN support on data to the Government of Lesotho should be coordinated and harmonised to "deliver as one."**

- It could be a "**One Data Strategy for Lesotho**," wherein different agencies contribute technical and financial resources and work to achieve specific areas/results of the strategy. This not only avoids duplication but also saves costs to have a coherent approach and avoid confusion at the government's end.
- **When multiple agencies work with** or support the **same ministry** on data collection **there could be lead/co-leads**.
- UN agencies should also explore option of **"One Fund" mechanism** for the country or multi-donor trust fund to improve data and the ecosystem in Lesotho. Funding from bilateral donors (including EU) could be mobilised for improving data availability and improving ecosystem through this one basket fund. (UNDP/UN RCO and UN agencies).

Recommendation 7: **Coordination between BOS and DM&E to avoid conflicting priorities** and having **an advance calendar of events of the Project** activities shared with MDAs will help the MDAs to be informed and ensure them to be prepared to nominate appropriate and adequate delegates for participation. This should be done **in addition to invitations sent with adequate notice time** and not at a day or two before the event. (BOS/DM&E).

Recommendation 8: Continue to use a collaborative approach and modality with ministries to deliver/manage projects including having project coordinators in the ministry, housing the project team in the ministry while making focused efforts to leverage partnership and resources

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[87] The data warehouse should be an architectural construct of an information system which provides MDAs and users with current and historical decision support information (which is currently difficult to access and not present in Lesotho).

among UN agencies and development partners (including EU) for joint design and delivery of projects to enhance cohesive support in the country.

- **Building partnership with CSOs and private sector will bring added value**, complementary and synergistic skills and capacities including expertise on new tools and technologies. (UNDP).

Annexes

Annex 1: List of Documents Reviewed

Project Documents

1. Lesotho Data – Project Document
2. Addendum No. 1 to Delegation Agreement FED 2016-377-529 – May 2018
3. Annual Progress Report 2018
4. Annual Progress Report 2017
5. ROM Report – August 2018
6. ROM Management Responses and Plan – August 2018
7. Project multi-year plan
8. Project Communication and Visibility Plan – August 2016
9. Annual Work Plan 2019
10. Annual Work Plan 2018
11. Annual Work Plan 2017
12. Project Financial Audit Report – April 2019
13. Back to office Report of EUROSTAT, Luxembourg tour – December 2017
14. Study Tour Report on Correctional Services Statistics to Uganda – November 2017
15. Study Tour Report on Consumer Price Index to Uganda – November 2017
16. Report of 28th International Population Conference, Cape Town, South Africa – November 2017
17. Public Sector M&E Training Report, University of Stellenbosch – November 2017
18. Study Tour on Produce Price Indices – Compilation and Methodology to Uganda – November 2017
19. Report on Outcome-based M&E Implementation Training at Department of National M&E, Pretoria, South Africa – November 2017
20. CMS Study Tour to Mauritius – Report – October 2017
21. Horticulture Production Survey Study Tour to Tanzania – October 2017
22. Project Steering Committee Meeting Minutes (April 2017, September 2017, December 2017, August 2018, February 2019 and August 2019)

Consultant Reports

23. Environmental Statistics – Deliverable 4 vii – Exit Report - August 2019
24. Situation Analysis Report – July 2019
25. Sustainability Plan – Statistics and Data Costing – July 2019
26. Updated Data Gaps Report and Statistics and Data Financing Plan – July 2019
27. Exit Report – Statistics and Data Costing – July 2019
28. Exit Report of CTA (as consultant) – May 2019
29. Administrative Data Training Report – May 2019
30. Guidelines to Integrating Administrative Data as Official Statistics – May 2019
31. Guidelines for Management of Administrative Data – May 2019
32. Communication, Advocacy and Dissemination Strategy for BOS – May 2019
33. Data Management Plan (2019-23) for Ministry of Correctional Service
34. Data Management Plan (2019-23) for Ministry of Police and Public Safety
35. Report on Training of BOS Staff on Basic Statistics and Production Processes of Basic Official Statistics – July 2018

36. Drat Report – Ecosystem of Statistics and M&E in Lesotho – June 2018
37. In-house Training of Pilot Ministries on Data – April 2018
38. Capacity Building Plan – National Needs and Capacity for Monitoring SDGs and NSDP
39. Excel Training Report – 2018
40. Advanced Excel Training Manual – 2018
41. Intermediate Excel Training Manual - 2018
42. Quality Report on RBM Training – 2017
43. Quality Report of RBM TOT Training 2017
44. M&E for Results Training – Participant Booklet - 2017
45. RBM – Trainer Resource Guide – 2017
46. Toolkit for Data Collection - 2017
47. Diagnostic Report – National Needs and Capacity for Monitoring SDGs and NSDP – August 2017
48. Data Gap Analysis Report – August 2017
49. Statistics User Report – July 2017
50. Cross-sectional Assessment of Data Management for Selected Ministries –2017
51. Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) Exit Report - 2018
52. National Consultant Exit Report – April 2017
53. Lessons Learned Log
54. Documentation of Success Stories

National/Country/Corporate Documents

55. NSDP 2012/13 – 2016/17 – Government of Lesotho, 2012
56. Rapid Assessment of the Statius of Implementation of and Future Support Needs to Implement NSDS – Final Report – September 2013
57. Review of the NSDP and Scoping of the NSDP 2, December 2016
58. SDG Indicator Baseline Report - 2016
59. NSDS 2006/07 – 2015/16 – Bureau of Statistics
60. UNDAF 2013-2018 Evaluation Report
61. Draft Country Programme Document (CPD) for Lesotho 2013-2017
62. UNDP Evaluation Policy 2016
63. Lesotho Country Analysis Working Document – Final Draft – September 2017
64. UNDP Evaluation Guidelines 2019
65. UNDP Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021
66. UNDP Lesotho CPD – 2019 - 2023
67. UNDAF for Lesotho – 2019-2023
68. VNR report for Lesotho 2019
69. 2019 – Lesotho Key Messages Report – VNR (provided by UN RCO)
70. NSDP II 2018/19 – 2022/23 – Zero Draft not for Referencing

Annex 2: List of Stakeholders Met

A) UN Agencies/EU Representatives and Project Team - KIIs

Mr. Tomas Pallas	Programme Officer, EU Delegation - Lesotho
Mr. Jyrki Torni	Former Operations Manager EU Delegation - Lesotho
Ms. Christy Ahenkora	DRR, UNDP
Ms. 'Mabulara Tsuene	Programme Specialist, Strategy & Policy Unit, UNDP
Ms. Tsoamathe Maseribane	Project Manager, UNDP
Ms. 'Masoai Dennis	National Consultant, UNDP
Ms. Liepollo Ramaqabe	Project Assistant, UNDP
Mr. Niciholas Jonga	Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP
Mr. Tohlang Ngakana	Coordinator, UNFPA
Ms. Asel Abdurahmanova	Coordination Specialist, UN RCO
Ms. Pepukai Chikukwa	Strategic Information Adviser, UNAIDS
Mr. Lekeli Motsomi	M&E Officer, WFP

B) Government Officials - KIIs

Ms. 'Malehloa Molato	Director, Bureau of Statistics (BOS)
Ms. Nyefolo Seboka	Senior Statistician and Project Coordinator, BOS
Ms. 'Malefu Khanyapa	Director, Department of M&E
Ms. Palesa Mashoai	Chief Economic Planner, Department of M&E
Ms. 'Malineo Sehobai	Chief Economic Planner/Coordinator, Department of M&E
Mr. Sebothama Moshoeshoe	Chief Economic Planner, Department of M&E
Ms. Lerato Makana	Chief Statistician, BOS
Ms. 'Matlhoeko Thaisi	Senior Statistician, BOS
Ms. Tsepiso Thabane	Chief Statistician, BOS
Ms. 'Mathato Masemene	Chief Statistician, BOS
Mr. Emisang Tsosane	Chief Statistician, BOS
Mr. Tseliso Phafoli	Chief Statistician, BOS
Ms. 'Mabahlakoana Tsolo	Senior Statistician, BOS
Mr. Ntsolo Mochekele	Economic Planner, LIPAM
Mr. 'Muso Raliselo	Head of Planning Unit, Ministry of Energy
Ms. 'Marorisang Makututsa	Statistician, Ministry of Energy
Ms. Keketso Jobo	Energy Planner, Ministry of Energy
Mr. Malefetsane Ratsoane	Senior Statistician, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MOAFS)
Mr. Refiloe Hlabisi	Assistant Economic Planner, MOAFS
Mr. Mothibeli Mojaje	Economic Planner, MOAFS

Mr. Leeto Semethe	Economic Planner, MOAFS
Mr. Phera Lepati	Director Planning, Ministry of Trade
Ms. 'Mapaballo Matseletsele	Inspector, Ministry of Police and Public Safety
Ms. Ntsoaki Thaane	Sergeant, Ministry of Police and Public Safety
Ms. Itumeleng Monane	Constable, Ministry of Police and Public Safety
Ms. Matlotlo Seeisa	Senior Economic Planner, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Culture
Mr. Neo Ramonyatsi	Assistant Statistician, Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Culture
Ms. Malerato Tsilo	Senior Economic Planner, Directorate of Corruption and Economic Offence (DCEO)
Ms. Maseabata Makhetha	Senior Procurement Officer, DCEO
Mr. Seoaholimo Phorisi	Senior Economic Planner, Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services
Mr. Retsepile Lepetla	Chief Officer, Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services
Mr. Mating Nkakala	Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Justice and Correctional Services
Mr. Mohlalefi Sethunya	Senior Forestry Officer, Ministry of Forestry Range and Soil Conservation
Ms. 'Makhalane Mofolo	Economic Planner, Ministry of Forestry Range and Soil Conservation
Mr. Tholang Mohlalisi	Assistant Economic Planner, Ministry of Forestry Range and Soil Conservation
Ms. M.N. 'Mokose	Director Planning, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Ms. Lerato Sello	Chief Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Mr. Teboho Monaphathi	Senior Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Ms. 'Mamamello Komota	Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Ms. Mohlalefi Letsapo	Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Ms. Sehlabo Morai	Senior Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Mr. Moipone Lebaka	Assistant Economic Planner, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
Mr. Lisema Lekhoana	Chief Economic Planner, Ministry of Water Affairs
Mr. Paseka Mohanoe	District Manager, Ministry of Home Affairs
Mr. Khauta Monyobi	District Manager, Ministry of Home Affairs
Ms. Mamotheo Marumo	Chief Economic Planner, Office of the Prime Minister
Mr. Tlali Mohapinyane	M&E Officer, Ministry of Social Development
Mr. Teboho Putsoane	Senior Statistician, Ministry of Social Development

| Mr. Thabang Ramoeti | Assistant Economic Planner, Ministry of Social Development |

C) Other Institutions - KIIs

Dr Dikokole Maqutu	Manager – Research, Lesotho Communications Authority
Dr Makhala Khoeli	Head of Statistics Department, National University of Lesotho
Ms. 'Mampoi Lebakeng	Senior Consultant, Institute of Development Management

D) Focus Groups and Group Interviews

<u>Assistant Statisticians</u>

Ms. Tsukulu Mantutle	Bureau of Statistics
Ms. 'Mankoebe Nkoebe	Ministry of Energy
Ms. Ntsutheleng Noko	Ministry of Forestry
Mr. Lemohang Mateyisi	Ministry of Water Affairs
Ms. Moliehi Motsatse	Ministry of Trade

<u>Department of M&E - Planners</u>

Ms. 'Mamotseoa Makhethe	Senior Economic Planner
Mr. Moeketsi Matia	Economic Planner
Ms. 'Mamolibetsane Mafethe	Economic Planner
Ms. 'Masimollang Motheane	Economic Planner
Mr. Maoala Mpiti	Assistant Economic Planner

<u>BOS Field and Clerical Staff</u>

Ms. 'Makatheho Borotho	Assistant Statistician
Ms. Tsukulu Mantutle	Assistant Statistician
Mr. Tsepo Mosoea	Statistician
Ms. Zwai Tuoane	Statistician
Mr. Thuto Mokhitli	Statistician
Ms. Katoloso Khobotle	Statistician
Ms. Refiloe Mokala	Statistician
Ms. Matumisang Liphapang	Statistician
Ms. Mamoeketsi Loke	Statistician
Ms. Lesiamo Lenono	Senior Field Officer
Mr. Mohlaka Mohapi	Field Assistant
Mr. Lebohang Lephoi	Senior Field Officer
Mr. Joshua Ramotsekoa	Senior Field Officer
Mr. Mahlomola Rakauoane	Senior Field Officer
Mr. Setlokoane Nkhemi	Statistician

Mr. Phakiso Mohlakeng   Senior Field Officer
Mr. Motsoanakaba Leburu   Senior Field Officer
Mr. Mofeli Ntseli   Chief Statistician
Mr. Motheo Phafa   Senior Field Officer
Ms. Lerato Ratsiu   Senior Field Officer
Mr, Lebamang Motheo   Senior Statistician
Mr. Mochesane T   Field Officer
Mr. Motlalepula Fako   Senior Field Officer
Mr. Mamphafane Matsela   Statistician
Mr. Motoba Kaoakoa   Statistician

Annex 3: Rating Scale

Rating Scale for Relevance	
4. Highly Relevant	Explicit and full alignment of all aspects
3. Relevant	Explicit and full alignment on some and partial alignment and partial considerations on some
2. Moderately Relevant	Partial alignment and partial considerations
1. Not Relevant	Lack of alignment and minimal considerations

Rating Scale for Effectiveness, Efficiency and Overall Project Outcome and Partnerships	
6. Highly Satisfactory	No shortcomings
5. Satisfactory	Minor shortcomings
4. Moderately Satisfactory	Moderate shortcomings
3. Moderately Unsatisfactory	Significant shortcomings
2. Unsatisfactory	Major shortcomings
1. Highly Unsatisfactory	Severe shortcomings

Rating Scale for Sustainability	
4. Likely	Negligible risks to sustainability
3. Moderately Likely	Moderate risks to sustainability
2. Moderately Unlikely	Significant risks to sustainability
1. Unlikely	Severe risks to sustainability

Rating Scale for Gender	
6. Highly Satisfactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in context, log frame and budget and strong gender considerations in project implementation or improvement in gender score.
5. Satisfactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in context, log frame and budget and moderate gender considerations in project implementation or consistently reflects score of 2a or 2b
4. Moderately Satisfactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in context, log frame and budget and weak gender considerations in project implementation
3. Moderately Unsatisfactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in context, log frame and budget and no gender considerations in project implementation
2.Unsatifactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in two of three (context, log frame and budget) and no gender considerations in project implementation

Rating Scale for Gender	
1. Highly Unsatisfactory	Evidence suggests gender considerations in one of three (context, log frame and budget) and no gender considerations in project implementation

Note: Gender Score – 0 – gender blind (gender relevance is evident but not at all reflected in the project document; 1 – gender partially mainstreamed (gender is reflected in the context, implementation, log frame or the budget); 2a – gender well mainstreamed throughout (gender is reflected in the context, implementation, log frame and the budget); 2b – targeted action on gender to advance gender equality (the principle purpose of the project is to advance gender equality; and n/a – gender is not considered applicable (a gender analysis reveals that the project does not have direct interactions with and/or impacts on people, therefore gender is not applicable)

Annex 4: Data Collection Tools

Introduction to be used for various guides

Thank you for your time to meet with us for this interview/focus group discussion which is being conducted as part of the Evaluation of the Lesotho Data Project. As you are aware, the Lesotho Data Project has come to an end, and UNDP is undertaking this evaluation for accountability and learning purposes and has contracted an independent evaluation team to conduct the evaluation.

As a key stakeholder in Lesotho, involved in the project, we would appreciate your insights and perspectives on the project in relation to its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability in addition to partnerships. Your participation is valuable and your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence by the evaluation team.

A) Interview Guide for Government Stakeholders and Partners (to be adapted accordingly)

1. How have you been involved in the Lesotho Data Project and since when?
2. Was the Lesotho Data Project relevant to the needs of Lesotho in terms of data for development and results-based management? Why or why not? How was it directly relevant (related) to your work?
3. In your opinion, was the method of delivery of the Project appropriate to Lesotho's development context? What worked? What could have been done differently?
4. Were the indicator and targets SMART? Were they in line with SDGs? What changes need to be done?
5. What are the highlight contributions/achievements of the Lesotho Data Project? (*Probe as required with sub-questions below*)
   a. What evidence is there that the Project contributed towards:
      i. an effective national system for statistics and M&E by developing processes and plans for data collection, statistical production and reporting quality management and disaggregation in Lesotho
      ii. improved use of available data for evidence in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning
      iii. strengthening national leadership, institutional and technical capacities for effective coordination and sectoral engagement through review of legal and institutional frameworks, policy and establishment of platforms for continued learning and information dissemination in Lesotho
6. To what extent has the Lesotho Data Project helped the national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems to facilitate monitoring progress of SDGs and NSDP, including other developmental agendas?
7. Has the Project utilised innovative techniques and best practices in its design and implementation? What are they?
8. Overall, what factors contributed to or impeded the achievement of results/implementation of the Project?
9. Did the Project's approaches, resources, models, and conceptual framework contribute to efficiency in achieving intended results?

10. In your opinion, was the Project management structure efficient? What could have been done better?
11. Do you think Project activities were cost-efficient? What were the challenges? What could have been done differently?
12. Were the Project funds and activities delivered on time? What were the challenges?
13. Did the Project have a monitoring and evaluation system in place? What worked and did not work? What can be improved?
14. What is the likelihood that the Lesotho Data project interventions/benefits are sustainable? What are the challenges and contributing factors?
15. What mechanisms have been put in place to support the Government of Lesotho to sustain improvement made through the interventions of Lesotho Data project?
16. If the project were to continue, how can the Project be improved to support central authorities, local communities, and civil societies in better service delivery?
17. What changes should be made in the current partnerships to promote long-term sustainability? Are there any complementarities or overlaps (current or potential) with existing national partner programmes?
18. How have partnerships or lack of affected the progress towards achieving the outputs?
19. In your opinion, how has the Lesotho Data Project worked effectively (to improve the functionality of the NSS and the National M&E systems) with:
    a. Other UN Agencies
    b. Other international and national delivery partners
    c. Civil societies
    d. Private Sector
20. Do you think gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) and human rights aspects considered/integrated into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Why or why not? What could have been done better?
21. Any other comments or and suggestions (for improving design, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability or partnerships and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues)

Thank you for the time

B) Interview guide for the Project staff

1. When did you join the Lesotho Data Project? What were your roles and responsibilities?
2. In your opinion, was the method of delivery of the Project appropriate to Lesotho's development context? What worked? What could have been done differently?
3. Were the indicator and targets SMART? What were the challenges? What changes were done what could have been different?
4. What are the highlight contributions/achievements of the Lesotho Data Project? (*Probe as required with sub-questions below for evidence on*)
    a. an effective national system for statistics and M&E by developing processes and plans for data collection, statistical production and reporting quality management and disaggregation in Lesotho
    b. improved use of available data for evidence in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning

    c. strengthened national leadership, institutional and technical capacities for effective coordination and sectoral engagement through review of legal and institutional frameworks, policy and establishment of platforms for continued learning and information dissemination in Lesotho

5. Do you think that the Lesotho Data Project helped the national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems to facilitate monitoring progress of SDGs and NSDP, including other developmental agendas? To what extent? What are the issues?

6. Has the Project utilised innovative techniques and best practices in its design and implementation? What are they?

7. Overall, what factors contributed to or impeded the achievement of results/implementation of the Project?

8. Did the Project's approaches, resources, models, and conceptual framework contribute to efficiency in achieving intended results?
    a. In your opinion, was the Project management structure efficient? What could have been done better?
    b. Do you think Project activities were cost-efficient? What were the challenges? What could have been done differently?
    c. Were the Project funds and activities delivered on time? What were the challenges?
    d. Were resources mobilised on time? Did they meet mobilisation objectives?
    e. What were the key implementation challenges? What challenges were addressed, and what remained?

9. Did the Project have a monitoring and evaluation system in place? What worked and did not work? What can be improved?

10. What is the likelihood that the Lesotho Data project interventions/benefits are sustainable? What are the challenges and contributing factors?
    a. What mechanisms have been put in place to support the Government of Lesotho to sustain improvement made through the interventions of Lesotho Data project?
    b. If the project were to continue, how can the Project be improved to support central authorities, local communities, and civil societies in better service delivery?

11. What changes should be made in the current partnerships to promote long-term sustainability? Are there any complementarities or overlaps (current or potential) with existing national partner programmes?
    a. How have partnerships or lack of affected the progress towards achieving the outputs?

12. In your opinion, how has the Lesotho Data Project worked effectively (to improve the functionality of the NSS and the National M&E systems) with:
    a. Other UN Agencies
    b. Other international and national delivery partners
    c. Civil societies
    d. Private Sector

13. Do you think gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWS) and human rights aspects considered/integrated into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Why or why not? What could have been done better?

14. Overall, what were lessons learned?
15. Any other comments or and suggestions (for improving design, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability or partnerships and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues)

Thank you for the time.

C) UNDP/EU and Development Partners

1. How have you been involved in the Lesotho Data Project and since when?
2. Was the Lesotho Data Project relevant to the needs of Lesotho in terms of data for development and results-based management? Why or why not? How was it directly relevant (related) to your organisation's/institution's work/mandate (in Lesotho)?
3. In your opinion, was the method of delivery of the Project appropriate to Lesotho's development context? What worked? What could have been done differently?
4. Were the indicator and targets SMART? What were the challenges? What changes were done what could have been different?
5. What are the highlight contributions/achievements of the Lesotho Data Project? (*Probe as required with sub-questions below for evidence on*)
    a. an effective national system for statistics and M&E by developing processes and plans for data collection, statistical production and reporting quality management and disaggregation in Lesotho
    b. improved use of available data for evidence in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning
    c. strengthened national leadership, institutional and technical capacities for effective coordination and sectoral engagement through review of legal and institutional frameworks, policy and establishment of platforms for continued learning and information dissemination in Lesotho
6. Do you think that the Lesotho Data Project helped the national data collection, measurement, and analytical systems to facilitate monitoring progress of SDGs and NSDP, including other developmental agendas? To what extent? What are the issues?
7. Has the Project utilised innovative techniques and best practices in its design and implementation? What are they?
8. Overall, what factors contributed to or impeded the achievement of results/implementation of the Project?
9. Did the Project's approaches, resources, models, and conceptual framework contribute to efficiency in achieving intended results?
    a. In your opinion, was the Project management structure efficient? What could have been done better?
    b. Do you think Project activities were cost-efficient? What were the challenges? What could have been done differently?
    c. Were the Project funds and activities delivered on time? What were the challenges?
10. Did the Project have a monitoring and evaluation system in place? What worked and did not work? What can be improved?

11. What is the likelihood that the Lesotho Data project interventions/benefits are sustainable? What are the challenges and contributing factors?
    a. What mechanisms have been put in place to support the Government of Lesotho to sustain improvement made through the interventions of Lesotho Data project?
    b. If the project were to continue, how can the Project be improved to support central authorities, local communities, and civil societies in better service delivery?
12. How can UNDP/Lesotho Data Project leverage/improve partnerships promote long-term sustainability? Are there any complementarities or overlaps (current or potential) with existing national partner/your programmes?
    a. How have partnerships or lack of affected the progress towards achieving the outputs?
13. In your opinion, how has the Lesotho Data Project worked effectively (to improve the functionality of the NSS and the National M&E systems) with:
    a. Other UN Agencies
    b. Other international and national delivery partners
    c. Civil societies
    d. Private Sector
14. Do you think gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWS) and human rights aspects considered/integrated into the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Project? Why or why not? What could have been done better?
15. Overall, what were lessons learned?
16. Any other comments or and suggestions (for improving design, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability or partnerships and mainstreaming cross-cutting issues)

Thank you for the time.

D) Focus group guide

1. What capacity building/training/technical support activities of the Lesotho Data Project did you participate?
2. How was it relevant to your work and your organisation/institution?
3. How have you benefitted from the capacity building/training/technical support activities of the Lesotho Data Project?
4. Could you explain what precisely are you doing differently/better than before?
5. Do you think Lesotho Data Project has helped to strengthen your organisational capacities in data collection, processing, analysis, monitoring, and reporting?
6. Is there organisational support in continuing to do what you learned? What are the challenges?
7. Any comments/suggestions for improving the Project

Thank you.

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