Lesotho

Ministry of Environment and Forestry



NBSAP III
GENDER ACTION PLAN
2025 – 2030

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

UN environment programme

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Preface

The Kingdom of Lesotho stands at a crucial juncture in its pursuit of sustainable development, where the intersection of gender equality and biodiversity conservation must be recognized and acted upon as mutually reinforcing goals. The Gender Action Plan (GAP) to support the implementation of Lesotho's Third National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP III) for 2025–2030 is a testament to our commitment to inclusive environmental governance that empowers all citizens, particularly women and girls, to become central actors in biodiversity conservation.

This plan is grounded in the understanding that gender disparities, especially those affecting access to resources, participation in decision-making, and equitable benefit-sharing undermine the success of conservation efforts and the achievement of national development goals. Women and girls, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, hold invaluable knowledge and play indispensable roles in managing and safeguarding biodiversity. Yet, barriers continue to hinder their full participation and benefit.

Guided by the Convention on Biological Diversity's Gender Plan of Action, Lesotho's Gender and Development Policy, and other national, regional, and international commitments, this Gender Action Plan integrates gender-responsive strategies into every stage of biodiversity planning and implementation. It sets out clear objectives, actionable priorities, and measurable targets to ensure that gender equality is not only a principle but a practice in biodiversity conservation.

As we embark on this journey, we affirm our resolve to create an environment where women and men, girls and boys, can thrive equally and contribute meaningfully to the sustainable future of our natural heritage.



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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABS	Access and Benefit Sharing
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ASGM	Artisans and Small – scale Gold Mining
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Declaration on the Platform for Action 1995
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBOs	Community-Based Organisations
CCF	Community Conservation Forum
CCPR	Convention on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
COP	Conference of Parties
DLDD	Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought
ECOSOC	Convention on Economic, and Social and Cultural Rights
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
KM-GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
MAFSN	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MGYSD	Ministry of Gender, Youth, and

MLGCHAP	Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NSDP 2	National Strategic Development Plan 2 Extended
NGOs	Non-Government Organisations
PRAIS	Performance Review and Implementation System
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCCD	United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN-SWAP	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.
WNs	Women Networks

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Definition of Terms

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS)	A principle that ensures fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to these resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies.
Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining (ASGM)	A type of informal mining conducted by individuals or small groups using minimal technology. It is often associated with environmental and health concerns, including mercury pollution, and is addressed in the context of the Minamata Convention.
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial and other aquatic ecosystems, and all the ecological complexes they are part of. This included diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.
Gender	Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions, and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender-diverse people.
Bioprospecting	The exploration of biodiversity for new resources of social and commercial value, such as medicines, biochemical compounds, and genetic materials.
CBD	An international treaty adopted in 1992 that aims to conserve biological diversity, promote the sustainable use of its components, and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from genetic resources.
Community Conservation Forum (CCF)	A stakeholder group that brings together community members to discuss and participate in conservation efforts, ensuring that local voices are included in biodiversity governance.
Conservation	The sustainable management of natural resources to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. In the Convention on Biological Diversity context, it involves the maintenance of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity.
COP	The COP is the governing body of the CBD, composed of all member countries (Parties) to the Convention. It meets regularly (usually every two years) to Review national and global progress on

	biodiversity goals, set future priorities, and adopt decisions to strengthen implementation of the Convention.
Ecosystem	A dynamic complex of plant, animal, and microorganism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.
Gender Analysis	A systematic analytical process used to identify, understand, and describe gender differences and the relevance of gender roles and power dynamics in a specific context.
Gender and Development	An approach that emphasizes the fundamentally social nature of gender differences and introduces the concept of gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for analysing the relationship between women and men both within the public as well as the private spheres.
Gender Based Violence	All acts perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys based on their sex which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm, including the threat to take such acts, or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private of public life in peace time and during situations of armed or other forms of conflict.
Gender Disaggregated Data	Data that enable one to compare women and men, girls and boys, including from marginalized and vulnerable groups, in relation to gender related issues.
Gender Discrimination	The systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender or gender identity, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources.
Gender Disparity	Statistical differences in the possession, status and opportunities between men and women, including from marginalized and vulnerable groups.
Gender Equality	Gender equality means that women and men, girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities, and protections. It's the state in which access to these is unaffected by gender.
Gender Equity	Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men.
Gender Gap	The differences in access to and control over resources between women and men and marginalized groups, especially as reflected in political, intellectual, cultural or economic attainments and attitudes.
Gender Identity	The way somebody considers their own gender, i.e. whether they are male or female, which may or may not be different from their sex when born.

Gender mainstreaming	Strategy for achieving gender equality by ensuring that the perspectives and needs of all genders are considered in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.
Gender Responsive	Actively addressing the root causes of gender inequality and working to transform unequal gender relations.
Gender Sensitive	Being aware that gender influences individuals' opportunities and experiences in society.
Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)	An international framework adopted to guide actions globally through 2030, to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people. It includes 23 action-oriented global targets for urgent action over the decade.
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)	A principal instrument for implementing the CBD at the national level. NBSAPs reflect how a country intends to fulfil its obligations under the CBD and contribute to the global biodiversity framework.
Natural Resources	Naturally occurring substances that are considered valuable in their relatively unmodified (natural) form. In the CBD context, it often refers to biological resources like plants, animals, and microorganisms.
Sex	Refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define males, females, and intersex individuals.
Sex Disaggregated Data	Means an overall and thorough breakdown of all statistics relating to individuals by sex.
Sustainable Use	The use of components of biological diversity in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biodiversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.
Traditional Knowledge	The knowledge, innovations, and practices of local communities developed from experience gained over centuries and adapted to the local culture and environment.
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme	United Nations leading environmental authority, established in 1972 to coordinate global efforts on sustainability and environmental protection. It supports countries in implementing agreements like the

CBD and promotes gender equality and social inclusion in environmental governance and biodiversity conservation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Convention on Biological Diversity Gender Action Plan 2022–2030, adopted at the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), provides a comprehensive framework to integrate gender equality across biodiversity policy and implementation. It supports the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

Women frequently have less representation and influence in biodiversity policy and planning processes. According to United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), it is essential to involve both women and men equally in national biodiversity planning efforts, such as the revision of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), as they often bring distinct knowledge, experiences, needs, and priorities regarding biodiversity.

Gender is understood as the social, behavioural, and cultural attributes which lead to expectations and norms associated with being male or female. In order to address gender gaps, focus is required on socially determined gender inequalities, which are deeply rooted in attitudes, institutions, and market forces in any particular society. Males and females are not homogeneous groups but are stratified by race, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity, which, together with income level, geographic location, and migratory status, can lead to multiple overlapping layers of vulnerability and discrimination[1].

However, in many settings, women's and girls' participation in policy and planning remains lower than that of men. In some cases, societal norms openly discourage women's involvement in public decision-making. In others, insufficient focus on gender issues leads to unintended gender biases within policy frameworks like NBSAPs. For instance, land management programs may inadvertently exclude women, particularly in contexts where women have limited formal rights to land ownership and control.

In the case of Lesotho, gender gaps are found to be most persistent in the economic opportunities domain thus creating constraints on; decent employment, women’s ownership and control of assets

[1] Lesotho Gender Assessment –April 2022

and, their role in decision-making structures. The Gender Action Plan is developed to support implementation of NBSAP III. It will contribute to improving the capacity of women to make decisions at the household, local, and national levels, thereby stimulating the drivers that promote more and better jobs for women and removing barriers to their ownership and control of assets. The Gender Action Plan is the first step required to bridge key gender gaps as they relate to improving outcomes for women, especially under the business and biodiversity related opportunities.

1.2 Gender Equality Markers

Gender Equality Marker (GEM) is a financial tracking tool used to classify and systematize the extent to which development interventions contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In 2009, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pioneered a modified version of this marker within the UN system, which was soon adopted by UNICEF and subsequently by other UN agencies. In 2012, the GEM became a mandatory standard for all UN entities through the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

GEM came because of a need for accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in tracking financial allocations and expenditures that contribute to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women's rights (GEWE). Integration of GEM at the early stage of development of the biodiversity conservation framework will enable the country to track their finances, with a focus on measuring various levels of commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women by the strategy. From the background of the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity Gender Action Plan 2022–2030, the tool contributes various benefits for the implementation of the Gender Action Plan including but not limited to the following:

- To make visible strategy outputs that contribute to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, including the budget spent.
- To promote a more gender mainstreamed response by the strategy so that development interventions are gender responsive.
- To serve as a financial tracking mechanism and as an accountability mechanism for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

- To enhance planning and programming processes for gender equality and the empowerment of women, and to improve the quality of interventions.
- To bring about a new and deeper perspective on who benefits, what can be achieved, and what kind of impact has resulted from the strategy or institutional interventions at country level by incorporating gender equality in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions, including in budget allocations.
- To establish an iterative process where planning and implementation are linked.
- To ensure that development interventions at a minimum do no harm.
- Track budget and expenditure for gender equality results.
- Monitor and analyse trends and outcomes in Lesotho.
- Identify gender gaps and adjust projects planning accordingly.
- Have more efficient planning and decision making.
- Improve overall reporting and accountability on gender equality.

The tool applies the four-points coding system that systematically is applied across the organisation or the programme/project/Framework budget inclusive of the core and non-core outputs, the points ranges from **0 (no contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women) to 3 (gender equality as the principal objective)**. It is also important to highlight the application of the tool is non discriminative of management or developmental issues and identifies all outputs related to advancement of gender equality.

1.3 Gender and Development Policy

The NBSAP gender action plan is mostly informed by the Gender and Development Policy of 2018 – 2030. The mission of the policy is to advance gender equity and equality as enshrined in international and regional human rights instruments that Lesotho is party to as well as Lesotho's national frameworks; the main goal is to promote and provide national guidelines for institutionalizing gender equity and equality as an integral component of social, economic and political development. The Gender and Development (GAD) policy has twelve priorities, and the priorities within the policy that have informed this gender action plan are:

1. **Gender and governance** call for measures to ensure that women and other marginalized groups have equal access and full participation alongside men in governance structures, leadership, and decision-making in all spheres

2. **Gender, education, and training** focuses on enhancing access for women, men, girls, boys, and other marginalized groups to gender-responsive quality education and training programs aimed at building a productive workforce that sustains the country's economy.

3. **Gender, productive resources, and employment** are essential for promoting full and equal access to and control over productive resources, opportunities, and the benefits of socio-economic growth and development for women, men, boys, girls, and other marginalized groups.

4. **Gender, climate change, sustainable development, and disaster risk management** are essential areas that require the equal participation of men, women, boys, girls, and other marginalized groups in addressing the interconnected challenges of gender and climate change, as well as sustainable development issues.

5. **Gender, water, and sanitation** promote equal representation and active participation of women, men, and other marginalized groups at all levels of the design, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of water management and administration programs.

The policy establishes a zero-tolerance environment for all forms of GBV and aligns with various national, regional, and international commitments, including the Lesotho Constitution, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Addressing GBV is crucial not only for protecting the rights and dignity of women and girls but also for fostering social cohesion and enabling full participation in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development initiatives. Therefore, the NBSAP gender action plan will support comprehensive measures for GBV prevention and response as an integral part of its implementation framework, ensuring that all activities promote safety, empowerment, and equal opportunities for everyone[2].

[2] Gender and Development Policy 2018 – 2030 of Lesotho

1.4 Objectives of Gender Action Plan

Objectives of the 2026-2030 Biodiversity Gender Action Plan to support implementation of NBSAP III are:

1. To ensure women and girl's rights and leadership in biodiversity conservation.
2. To promote fair access to and control over natural resources.
3. To strengthen gender-responsive biodiversity policy by integrating gender perspectives into biodiversity strategies, including National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
4. To support the full and effective participation of women in decision-making at all levels and empower women's organizations and networks to play a central role in biodiversity governance.
5. To generate, manage and share knowledge about gender dimension in biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing.
6. To integrate an effective monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III

2. Legal and Policy Framework Integration

There are strong connections between promoting gender equality and advancing sustainable and environmental management. These connections are firmly rooted in a global policy framework that supports women's empowerment and gender equality as integral to sustainable development and economic growth. The policy and legal framework underpinning the Gender Action Plan for the implementation of Lesotho's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan III (NBSAP III) is anchored in both national and international commitments to gender equality and biodiversity conservation.

Internationally, Lesotho is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, as well as the recently adopted post-2020 Gender Plan of Action, which collectively call for the integration of gender considerations into biodiversity policy and practice. These frameworks emphasize the need for gender-responsive approaches to realize the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

At the national level, Lesotho's Gender and Development Policy 2018–2030 provides a comprehensive mandate for mainstreaming gender across all sectors, including environmental management and biodiversity. This policy aligns with the Constitution of Lesotho and is reinforced by sectoral laws and strategies that promote gender equity, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

To operationalize these commitments, the Gender Action Plan leverages guidelines and best practices for mainstreaming gender into NBSAP processes, as outlined by the CBD and supporting agencies. This includes ensuring policy coherence and alignment between gender and biodiversity objectives, strengthening legal frameworks, and establishing coordination mechanisms that facilitate the active participation of women, local communities, and other marginalized groups throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring stages. The framework also promotes gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive decision-making, and the creation of grievance mechanisms to address gender-based barriers and safeguard the rights of all stakeholders. By embedding these principles into the NBSAP III, Lesotho aims to foster a more equitable, effective, and sustainable approach to biodiversity conservation and management.

2.1 Policy framework

Table 1: Policies relevant to gender and biodiversity.

Policy	**Objective/Principles**	**Recommended Actions**
The Environmental Policy 1998	To ensure integration of gender, youth and children's concerns in environmental policy planning and management.	Update the environmental policy which would, inter alia, consider environmental management by all sectors of society. Strengthen the network of women's groups. Promote environmental education targeted at various socio-economic groups in the Lesotho's society. Ratify various international conventions, including the Nairobi Forward Looking strategies, and the UN Convention on elimination of discrimination against women. Accord to women equal rights and access to credit facilities, pensions, and security of employment.

		Establish a bureau of gender affairs to address gender issues throughout society, especially raised concerning international cooperation; Environmental management, political participation; Education and training; Employment; Health and nutrition; The Family, Housing; Research; and the mass media
Lesotho Water and Sanitation Policy 2007	Women and girls continue to play a central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of portable water. The pivotal role of women as providers and users of water and as guardians of the living environment requires enabling policies and strategies to empower them to participate at different levels of decision making in water resources management and development and to share in the benefits of water utilisation on the bases of equity.	Adopt and prepare guidelines for participatory approach at different phases of development programmes and projects with focus on all, particularly women and girls. Adhere to Water Sector Gender Strategy 2024 on implementing development projects ORASECOM Gender Strategy 2023
Lesotho National Soil and Water Conservation Policy 2021	To ensure gender equality, participation of youth and vulnerable groups including people with disabilities in soil and water conservation. Cross cutting strategies	Develop guidelines that will ensure gender equality, participation of youth and vulnerable groups including people with disabilities
	To remove gendered barriers for functional gender neutrality in soil and water conservation works	To promote gender responsive employment in public works for soil and water conservation Capacity building for youth participation in soil and water conservation initiatives Removing barriers for participation of vulnerable groups
	To promote gender equality and equity in all soil and water conservation programmes and activities.	Advocate for equal access to soil and water conservation opportunities for both men and women in community settings particularly women and girls. Build the capacity of women and girls to effectively engage in soil and water conservation programmes.
	To integrate needs and concerns of women, youth and vulnerable groups and people living with disabilities into soil and water conservation programmes and activities	Undertake gender needs and capacity assessments for effective participation by all in soil and water conservation programs. Capacity building for marginalized and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities among various to engage in soil and water conservation programs.

		Develop community programmes for production through conservation programmes for all groups.
Energy Policy 2015 to 2025	Gender equality will be an integral part when energy programmes and activities are formulated and implemented	Update the Gender mainstreaming strategy for energy sector (2020-2024)
National Climate Change Policy 2017	To bridge the gap and provide gender sensitive guidelines and inclusive participation of youth and vulnerable groups. Promote development of gender-responsive policies and plans; and Increase climate change advocacy at all levels of society.	Mainstream climate change into youth, gender and vulnerable groups related policies, strategies and plans; Foster and empower youth, women, girls and all vulnerable groups to effectively participate in climate change issues; Promote use of climate friendly technologies to address the constraints faced by all particularly women and girls.
National Range Resources management Policy 2014	The Policy does not explicitly express gender considerations	Update the policy to integrate biodiversity and gender aspect
Lesotho Food and nutrition Policy 2016-2025	Gender sensitivity and responsiveness shall be applied in food and nutrition service planning and implementation. Special consideration shall be accorded to women due to their culturally constructed lower social status and their special role in reproduction. Where men have been disadvantaged, special efforts will be made to support them.	Update the policy to integrate biodiversity and gender aspects Update Lesotho Food and Nutrition Strategy and Costed Action Plan (2019-2023) to mainstreaming gender and biodiversity into Food and nutrition programmes
Minerals and Mining Policy 2015	Upholding Human Rights, Gender equality, environmental sustainability, safety, and occupational health standards.	Ensuring ASM's (artisan and small-scale miner) adherence to gender equality, sustainable standards of safety, occupational health and environmental protection
Research and Innovation Policy 2021	Recognise gender equality, child, woman, and man, through adoption of Africa agenda 2063	Update the Policy to outline issues of gender and biodiversity
Higher Education Policy 2013	Mainstreaming gender, HIV and AIDS into higher education curricula and activities	Update the Policy to integrate issues of gender and biodiversity

2.3 Legal framework

Lesotho has enacted a range of laws that address both environmental sustainability and the empowerment of women and marginalized groups, reflecting its commitment to integrating gender considerations into biodiversity governance. These legal instruments provide the foundation for promoting equitable access to natural resources, enhancing participation in decision-making processes, and safeguarding the rights of all citizens in the management and use of biodiversity. This section highlights key Lesotho laws that embody these biodiversity and gender linkages, illustrating how the legal framework supports the mainstreaming of gender in biodiversity-related sectors.

Table 2: Laws relevant to biodiversity and gender.

Act	**Section**	**Relevance**
Constitution of Lesotho	Sec. 36	Mandates the State to protect the natural and cultural environment for current and future generations, thus underpinning biodiversity conservation.
	Sec. 18 (1) (4)	Prohibits discriminatory laws, promoting gender equality in access to environmental benefits and participation in conservation.
	Sec. 26 (1)	Calls for policies promoting equality and justice support gender inclusion in environmental governance.
	Sec. 30	Ensures just and favourable work conditions for women, which supports gender equity in sectors linked to natural resource use.
Environment Act 2008		
The Labour Code 1992	Part VII, No.110 Water supply	Encourages sustainable water use to prevent labour disruptions; relevant for both biodiversity and gender due to women's role in water collection.
The Labour Code Wages (Amendment) Act 2012		Provides paid maternity leave in key sectors; improving gender equity can indirectly enhance environmental stewardship by supporting women's livelihoods.
Labour Act No. 3 of 2024		A male and female worker is entitled to equal remuneration for work of equal value.

National Assembly Electoral Act 2011	Section 47(2)(b) and (c)	Allocates 30% of proportional representation seats to women; increased female leadership supports inclusive biodiversity policymaking.
Sexual Offences Act 2003	Section 3	Criminalizes sexual violence and promotes bodily autonomy; crucial for gender justice, especially in rural areas linked to environmental marginalization.
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2011	Section 5	Penalizes exploitation, reducing vulnerability of people, especially women, to forced labour that may harm ecosystems.
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2021(Amendment)	No Environmental Focus	Strengthens measures against trafficking; while lacking direct environmental focus, it supports gender protection which can intersect with sustainable resource use.
Education Act 2010	Section .29 1(a)	Promotes environmental literacy and equal access to education for boys and girls, key to future biodiversity and gender equality.
Penal Code 2010	Section 32	Promotes equal rights and protection for all children, reinforcing gender equality as a foundation for equitable environmental engagement.
Land Act 2010	Section 10 (1), (2), (3)	Provides for land ownership and joint titling, critical for women's access to land and participation in sustainable land use.
The Harmonization of the Rights of Customary Widows with the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act No. 15 of 2022		Grants widows legal ownership and control over land and property, enhancing women's economic empowerment and stewardship of natural resources.
Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 21 of 2024		The Act advocates for equal inheritance rights for children regardless of whether or not they are born out of wedlock and regardless of whether their parents were married by customary law or not. It aims to address historical inequalities and promote fairness in inheritance. In terms of this Act, all children of gender can inherit from their parents.

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2.4 International Conventions and Protocols

Lesotho as a signatory to international and regional conventions and protocols commits to ensuring gender equality. The country has ratified several gender related international and regional instruments.

2.4.1 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD explicitly recognizes the importance of gender equality in achieving its goals. The recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework places even stronger emphasis on gender-responsive approaches, including Target 23, which calls for "gender equality and a gender-responsive approach" in all biodiversity activities. it embeds gender equality as a cross-cutting principle. Established Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) Working Group. CBD Gender Action Plan

2.4.2 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance

The Convention promotes inclusive participation of local communities, particularly women, in wetland management. Ramsar's Strategic Plan, 2016–2024 emphasize the need to mainstream gender in all wetland-related policies and practices.

2.4.3 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Convention

Gender considerations within the implementation of the CITES Convention have gained growing attention, recognizing that women and men often play different roles along the wildlife trade chain, from harvesting to consumption. Female participation in wildlife management and anti-trafficking initiatives has been shown to enhance conservation outcomes, while trade restrictions can have gender-differentiated impacts on livelihoods. Traditional ecological knowledge, which informs the sustainable use of CITES-listed species, often varies by gender, and women remain significantly underrepresented in wildlife ranger forces. In response, the CITES Gender Action Plan was developed to mainstream gender across all implementation activities. Female leadership, particularly in rural communities, contributes to improved compliance with wildlife trade regulations. Incorporating gender analysis has proven valuable in identifying different motivations and patterns in wildlife trafficking, as well as consumer behavior that frequently exhibits gender-specific trends. Historically, CITES decision-making bodies lacked gender balance, though capacity-building programs are increasingly integrating gender perspectives. Intersectional approaches are also being recognized for their role in addressing how gender interacts with other social factors in shaping wildlife trade dynamics.

2.4.4 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification** recognizes that Desertification, Land Degradation, and Drought (DLDD) have differentiated impacts on women and men, and that gender equality is essential for the effective implementation of its goals. The UNCCD formally integrated gender concerns through the adoption of the **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** in 2017. This plan provides a **framework for integrating gender** into the implementation of the Convention, including national action plans, capacity-building, and monitoring.

2.4.5 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recognizes the critical interlinkage between climate change and gender issues. The Parties adopted the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan at UNFCCC COP23, to increase women's participation in all UNFCCC processes, promote gender-responsive climate policy, and strengthen gender integration in adaptation, mitigation, capacity-building, and finance.

2.4.6 Minamata Convention on Mercury

Mercury exposure has gender-differentiated health impacts, particularly affecting women of childbearing age and pregnant women due to the risks of neurological damage to developing foetuses from methylmercury. Children, especially breastfed infants, are also vulnerable when mothers are exposed. In artisanal and small-scale gold mining, exposure varies by gender: men often handle mercury directly during amalgamation, while women are exposed through burning amalgam or environmental contamination. Gendered occupational roles contribute to differing exposure levels, with women engaged in panning, transporting mercury, or domestic tasks near contaminated sites. Additionally, women may face mercury exposure in healthcare and household settings through products like skin-lightening creams or thermometers. Compounding these risks, women often lack access to critical information, education, and healthcare related to mercury, and they are underrepresented in environmental decision-making, despite being disproportionately affected.

Recognizing these disparities, emerging approaches to mercury management increasingly incorporate gender considerations. Some countries and NGOs are mainstreaming gender into National Action Plans for ASGM, guided by UNEP and other organizations promoting sex-disaggregated data collection, targeted education, and women’s empowerment in policy processes. To effectively integrate gender into the Minamata Convention framework, it is recommended to prioritize gender-sensitive planning in National Action Plans, collect relevant data, implement culturally appropriate awareness campaigns, support alternative livelihoods for women, and enhance their participation in treaty implementation and environmental governance.

2.4.7 Basel Convention

The Basel Convention, which regulates transboundary hazardous waste movement, originally contained minimal gender-specific provisions. However, gender considerations have increasingly been incorporated into its implementation framework:

- Different exposure patterns exist between genders due to occupational roles and biological factors.
- Women in informal waste sectors face heightened risks from direct toxin exposure.
- Gender mainstreaming now features in technical assistance programs
- The joint Gender Action Plan across chemical conventions addresses representation gaps
- Implementation increasingly connects with SDG 5 (Gender Equality)
- Women's participation in waste management policy development is recognized as essential
- Gender-responsive approaches are now considered necessary for effective hazardous waste management

2.4.8 The African Union's Agenda 2063

The African Union's strategic framework for inclusive and sustainable development, Agenda 2063, explicitly integrates gender equality and women's empowerment as a core priority. The African Union strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) 2018-2028, is based on an inclusive and multisectoral approach. It is transformational in that its outcomes aim to mitigate, if not eliminate the major constraints hindering gender equality and women's empowerment, so that women and girls may participate fully in economic activities, political affairs and social endeavours.

2.4.9 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development 2008

The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008) is a legally binding document adopted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. It provides a comprehensive framework to address gender inequality and promote gender equity in the region. The Protocol mandates the achievement of gender equality through constitutional and legal reforms, addressing systemic discrimination in legal, political, and economic systems that marginalize women and girls.

2.4.10 UN Charter

This is the first international treaty to recognize the equal rights of men and women, marking a major milestone in international law and the global gender equality agenda. The Charter promotes and encourages respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. The Charter laid the groundwork for later, more gender-specific instruments, such as:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979)
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)

2.4.11 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

Article two of the CEDAW strongly condemns discrimination against women in all forms and embodies the principle of equality for men and women. The Convention mandates Member States to adopt appropriate measures through legislation, policies, or programmes to prohibit and address all forms of discrimination against women. Article 14 further mandates State Parties to take into account the challenges faced by rural women and their significant role in the local informal economy for their families and put relevant measures in place to ensure that women equitably participate in and benefit from rural development. These provisions made in the CEDAW strongly advocate for the equal participation of women in the economy generated through the environment sector, and empowerment is key to develop their capacity to contribute meaningfully.

2.4.12 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

The Platform for Action reaffirms that as the human rights of women and children were an integral, inalienable and indivisible part of the Platform, State Parties shall seek to develop measures to protect and promote the full enjoyment of all human rights and freedom for women. Lesotho is committed to the Global Framework outlined in the Beijing Platform that recognises that the continuing environmental degradation had more direct impact on women, particularly women in rural areas.

Poverty and environmental degradation were identified as closely related, and the Platform agreed that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in the environment will further cause environmental deterioration (Beijing Platform, 1995). It was agreed at the Beijing Conference that it is critical to drive the advancement of women and achievement of gender equality as a requirement for the achievement of political, socio-economic, cultural and environmental security for all. These provisions in the Beijing platform for action reveal the crucial and integral role that women can play in the management of the environment, and in driving economic sustainability, especially for women in rural areas, and the advocacy for equitable access to resource for both women and men (Beijing Platform, 1995)

2.4.13 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5 on gender equality

In 2015, recognizing the global nature of challenges like poverty, inequality and climate change, UN Member states universally adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Resolving to meet these matters head on, the international community set forth an ambitious vision for the future. The agenda encompasses three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. Together, these interconnected principles form the basis of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a blueprint for progress across all areas of life. Gender is woven throughout the SDGs as it sits at the intersection of economic, social and environmental issues. It has its own Goal, SDG 5 with the ambition of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and is mentioned explicitly in 10 of the other Goals.

3. Stakeholder Consultations

Gender Action Plan is being developed as a key component of NBSAP III. This plan aims to address the specific roles, knowledge, needs and contributions of all women and girls on biodiversity conservation. It also seeks to remove structural and cultural barriers that limit the full participation of women and marginalized groups in biodiversity-related decision-making and resource access.

Stakeholder consultations are essential to facilitate the process of gathering the perspectives, priorities and needs of all groups especially women, girls and marginalized communities, which are to be incorporated in the design of gender-responsive biodiversity strategies. These consultations provide a platform for voices from various stakeholders inclusive of government institutions, Members of Parliament, traditional leaders, local authorities, civil society, women's organizations, and community representatives to shape a Gender Action Plan that reflects national priorities.

3.1 Purpose of Stakeholder Consultation

3.1.1 Main Objective

To gather diverse perspectives on gender, gender roles and barriers in biodiversity conservation, ensuring the voices of women, girls, and marginalized groups are heard. This fosters collaboration and informs the integration of gender equality into biodiversity planning for sustainable development.

3.1.2 Specific Objectives

- To gather perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders on gender roles, challenges, and opportunities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- To understand the specific barriers and inequalities faced by women, girls, and other marginalized groups in accessing, managing, and benefiting from biodiversity resources.
- To enhance understanding of how gender equality contributes to effective biodiversity conservation, sustainable development outcomes and improve access to resources, technologies, services, and benefit sharing mechanisms.

- To strengthen collaboration among stakeholders across sectors and governance levels for the effective integration of gender in biodiversity planning, implementation, and monitoring.

3.2 Key Stakeholders Consulted

3.2.1 Government Entities:

- Ministry of Environment and Forestry
- Decision makers: Members of the Parliament -Portfolio committee for natural resources, senators,
- Local government representatives (councillors and chiefs)
- Relevant government institutions

3.2.2 Civil Society & NGOs:

- Women's rights organizations
- Environmental and climate advocacy groups
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)//Women's Networks (WN)
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)
- Community Conservation Forum (CCF)

3.2.3 Academia and Research Institutions:

- Gender and Biodiversity researchers
- Universities and Research Institutions

3.2.4 Private Sector

- Agribusinesses (Farmers organisations)
- Financial institutions
- Street vendors
- Bio-Traders

3.2.5 Development Partners & Donors:

- UN agencies (e.g., UNDP, UN Women)
- Regional gender initiatives (e.g., SADC on Gender and Development)

3.2.5 Local Communities:

- Rural women and girls
- Rural men and boys

- Youth-led households
- Disabled persons

3.3 Consultation Activities

- Inception Workshops: Introduce the stakeholder consultation process, objectives, and timeline.
- Focus Group Discussions: Disaggregated by gender, age, vulnerable groups and region to understand local experiences and priorities.
- Sectoral Working Sessions: Thematic groups (e.g., agriculture, energy, water, disaster risk reduction) identify sector-specific gender and biodiversity linkages.
- Community Dialogues e.g. public gatherings
- Validation Workshop: Stakeholders review and validate the draft gender action plan.

3.4 Key Issues Identified

3.4.1 Unequal Access to Natural Resources

Even though there is legislature in place such as the Land Act 2010 allowing women in Lesotho to have access to productive resources, women in Lesotho often face barriers in terms of access to land, water and other natural resources due to patriarchal norms and customary laws that privilege men in land ownership and decision-making. This restricts women's ability to engage fully in biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, and natural resource management.

3.4.2 Gendered Impacts of Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation including deforestation, soil erosion, and water scarcity disproportionately affects women and girls. According to the World Bank Lesotho Gender Assessment Report 2022, women and girls in Lesotho are typically responsible for water and firewood collection and household food security. This means that when ecosystems are stressed, women and girls have to travel longer distances for basic needs, in turn increasing their workloads and reducing their time for other productive activities. The long distance that women and girls travel to collect water and firewood makes them vulnerable to Gender Based Violence (GBV).

3.4.3 Underrepresentation in Decision-Making

Women and vulnerable groups are often underrepresented in environmental governance and biodiversity planning at community, district and national levels. This is due to the cultural norms and the multiple roles that women and girls have to play on a daily basis impacting their time –

use becoming a barrier for women to fully engage in environmental governance. This exclusion limits their voice in shaping policies that affect ecosystems they depend on.

3.4.4 Economic Inequality and Livelihood Vulnerability

Women frequently have lower economic participation and asset ownership (e.g., land, livestock, financial services), due to cultural norms, patriarchy and gender based legal restrictions. In turn affecting women's ability to adopt sustainable land and resource management practices and adapt to environmental change

4. Gender Action Plan for NBSAP III

The Gender Action Plan for NBSAP III (2026–2030) is designed to integrate gender mainstreaming into biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing in Lesotho. It ensures equal representation and participation, particularly focusing on women and girls, in biodiversity planning, implementation, and decision-making. The plan is structured around four key components. The implementation timeline is set from 2026 to 2030, with key actors including government ministries, development partners, civil society organizations, the private sector, and academia. Progress will be tracked using Gender Equality Markers (GEM 0-3) and specific indicators.

4.1 Components and Key Interventions

4.1.1 Component 1: Equal Opportunities and Capacity Building

Objective: Ensure equal opportunities for all people, particularly women and girls, to contribute to NBSAPs (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans).

Key interventions to promote gender equity in biodiversity conservation include compiling baseline data on the interplay between conservation and women's land and resource rights, thereby supporting women's ownership and control over natural assets. Efforts to empower women in natural resource management involve assessing gender roles in biodiversity-based supply chains, enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities through skills development, and implementing outreach programs to raise awareness. Gender perspectives should be systematically integrated into Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) instruments through tailored methodologies. Additionally, addressing

gender-based violence is crucial, requiring the development of tools to understand its links to biodiversity and the implementation of strategies to eliminate, prevent, and respond to gender-based discrimination within this context.

4.1.2 Component 2: Inclusive Biodiversity Policy, Planning and Decision Making

Objective: Ensure that biodiversity programs equally represent the perspectives, interests, and needs of all people with special emphasis on women and girls.

Key interventions to enhance women's leadership and integrate gender equality in biodiversity efforts include establishing a group of women experts on biodiversity and gender, alongside developing guidelines to eliminate disparities in participation and leadership. To ensure the integration of gender considerations in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), the formation of gender expert groups across government ministries, civil society organizations, development partners, the private sector, and academia is essential. Additionally, creating knowledge exchange platforms will facilitate the sharing of experiences and best practices, further strengthening gender-responsive biodiversity planning and implementation.

4.1.3 Component 3: Knowledge Generation and Sharing

Objective: Generate, manage, and share knowledge about gender dimensions in biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and benefit-sharing.

Key interventions to strengthen gender-responsive biodiversity action include building the capacity of national statistical offices to collect and monitor sex- and gender-disaggregated data, supported by relevant indicators and shared best practices. Evidence-based analysis is essential, particularly in understanding gender-differentiated impacts of implementing NBSAP III, including the role of traditional knowledge. Capacity building for women’s organizations through targeted workshops and the development of gender integration guidelines will enhance their role in biodiversity programming. Effective coordination mechanisms should link women’s organizations with ministries responsible for gender and environment. Gender-responsive reporting will be reinforced through the identification of best practices, use of gender-specific indicators, and documentation of women’s contributions to conservation. Finally, raising awareness about funding

opportunities and establishing dedicated budget lines will ensure sustainable resource allocation for gender-responsive biodiversity initiatives.

4.1.4 Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Objective: Integrate an effective monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III.

Key interventions to enhance gender accountability in biodiversity initiatives include developing a gender-disaggregated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system that tracks and reports outcomes for women and girls, ensuring that implementation reports consistently reflect gender-disaggregated information. Terminal evaluations should document key gender-specific interventions and lessons learned to inform future programming. Additionally, integrating gender-responsive budgeting and financial tracking mechanisms into biodiversity programs will support equitable resource allocation and strengthen the overall impact of gender-focused efforts.

Table 3: Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Indicative Actions	Possible deliverables	Proposed timelines	NBSAP target	Gender makers (GEM 0-3)	Progress Indicator	Responsible actor s	Budget
Component 1: Equal opportunities and Capacity building Objective: To ensure equal opportunities for all people, particularly women and girls, to contribute to NBSAPs								
1. Increase access and control to all on use of natural resources.	Compile baseline data and research on the relationship between conservation interventions and sustainable use for all, particularly women and girls' rights to ownership and control over land and access to natural resources and to water, and prepare guidance for national-level action	• Baseline data • Research Findings on women and girls' rights to ownership and control in the context of biodiversity conservation.	2026	23 and 22	2	• Number of Title deeds to lands, particularly of Women and girls. • Number of gaps/barriers identified	DoE MGYSD DRRM MNR, BOS Ministry of Energy (ME) and relevant actors	M704,000.00
1.2 Promote women's empowerment and capacity development in natural resource management sectors.	Conduct assessment on gender roles across biodiversity-based supply chain sectors.	Assessment reports shared with stakeholders	2026	20, 22, 23,	3	• Number of assessments undertaken	MEF - DoE MGYSD BOS, GIZ Development partners and relevant actors	M841,000.00
	Promote and provide skills for women's entrepreneurial opportunities in biodiversity.	Trainings on skills development and Entrepreneurship.	2026-2030	23,22, 20,19 and 21	3	• Number of trainings. • Percentage of women and girls trained on entrepreneurial opportunities in biodiversity conservation	MEF - DoE MGYSD, MTISB Development partners and relevant actors	M3,100,000.00
	Promote awareness, advocacy and education programmes	Outreach programmes	2026-2030	23,22 and 21	2	Number of awareness campaigns, workshops, radio	MEF - DoE MGYSD	M2,300,000.00

						programmes and IEC materials developed.	Development partners, CSOs and relevant actors	
1.3 Ensure gender equity access in ABS instruments.	Develop, test, and promote relevant methodologies to mainstream gender perspectives in ABS instruments.	Clear Guidelines on mainstreaming gender into ABS instruments.	2026-2030	23,22 and 13	2	• Number of inclusive and accessible ABS Instruments including policies, prior informed consent forms, mutually agreed terms etc • Number of women and girls accessing ABS instruments	MEF – DoE, DRRM, MGYSD Development partners and relevant actors	M150,000.00
1.4 Identify, eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence in particular to control, ownership and access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.	Develop and share data, tools and strategies, to understand and address gender-based violence and biodiversity linkages.	Data and/or knowledge products, campaigns, tools, webinars, workshops on the links between gender-based violence and biodiversity, produced and made available to stakeholders	2026-2030	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of knowledge products, campaigns, tools, webinars, on the links between gender-based violence and biodiversity, produced	MLGCHP, MEF – DoE, BOS MGYSD Development partners and relevant actors	M150,000.00
	Effective measures are taken to eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence in particular to control, ownership and access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity	Reports are compiled and shared on implementing measures to eliminate, prevent and respond to all forms of gender-based discrimination and violence related to control, ownership, and access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.	2026-2030	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of programmes aimed to eliminate Gender based violence incidences and discrimination in relation to biodiversity • Perception of change in gender discrimination	MLGCHP, MEF – DoE, BOS MGYSD, MLGCHAP Development partners and relevant actors	M540,000.00
Component2: Inclusive Biodiversity policy, planning and decision making **Objective 2**: Ensure that biodiversity programmes equally represent the perspectives, interests and needs of all people with special emphasis on women and girls								
2.1 Increase opportunities and strengthen the meaningful and effective	Establish a group of women experts on biodiversity and gender	Established experts' group with clear ToRs and workplan	2026-2030	22, 23	3	• Number of women experts	MEF – DoE,	M1,300,000.00

participation and leadership of women at all levels of action, engagement and decision-making	to develop guidelines and recommendations aimed at eliminating gender-based disparities in the participation and leadership of women in decision making					identified and invited to the group • Number of opportunities created for women empowerment	MGYSD, MLGCHAP Development partners and relevant actors	
	Develop and implement guidelines and recommendations to ensure women's informed and effective participation and equal leadership in governance bodies at all levels	Guidelines and recommendations developed and implemented	2026-2030	22, 23	3	• Numbers of Guidelines and recommendations developed and implemented • Proportion of women in leadership positions in governance bodies at all levels • Number of institutions implementing guidelines in women's participation and equal leadership in governance bodies at all levels	MEF – DoE, MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSO Development partners and relevant actors	M1,200,000.00
2.2 Integrate human rights and gender equality considerations into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs)	Establish NBSAP gender experts group consisting of line ministries, CSOs, Development Partners, private sector and the academia to support knowledge exchange, sharing experiences and best practices, peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and coaching	NBSAP gender experts group established	2026	22, 23	2	• Number of human rights and gender equality considerations integrated into NBSAPs • Number of knowledge exchange platforms in place	MEF – DoE, MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M902,000.00
Component 3: Knowledge generation and sharing **Objective 3**: Generate, manage and share knowledge about gender dimension in biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and benefit sharing								

3.1 Develop national capacity to produce and use gender and biodiversity data, including relevant data disaggregation (e.g. sex, age and other demographic factors)	Build knowledge and capacity of Bureau of Statistics (BOS) to ensure the systematic collection of sex and gender disaggregated biodiversity data and the development and use of relevant gender-specific indicators	National database on sex and gender disaggregated biodiversity data developed	2028	20, 21, 22, 23	2	• Number of BOS officers trained on collection of sex and gender disaggregated biodiversity data • Degree at which database reflects sex and gender disaggregated biodiversity data in place • Percentage of biodiversity related data disaggregated by sex and gender reflected in the report	BOS, MEF – DoE, MGYSD	M587,000.00
	Develop, validate and share indicators and relevant guidance on developing and monitoring data disaggregated by sex, gender and other demographic factors per sector	Capacity development support provided, training manuals developed, and available data disaggregated by sex and gender	2028	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of indicators produced and shared • Number of training manuals developed and shared • Number of BOS officers trained on data disaggregation by sex, gender and other demographic factors per sector	BOS, MEF, MGYSD	M360,000.00
	Document and share best practices, standards and protocols and relevant guidance on developing and monitoring data disaggregated by sex and gender and other demographic factors, per sector	Compiled reports highlighting best practices shared through: Online platforms Webinars workshops	2028	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of best practices documented and shared • Number of BOS officers trained on data disaggregated by sex and gender • Quality of monitoring data disaggregated by sex	BOS, MEF – DoE, MGYSD NBSAP III PSC	M150,000.00

						and gender and other demographic factors, per sector		
3.2 Strengthen the evidence based understanding and analysis of the gender-related impacts of the implementation throughout the NBSAPIII cycle: the role of all women and girls as agents of change in achieving its goals and targets, including insights from traditional knowledge of all women and girls from local communities	Undertake research on gender differentiated impacts of implementing NBSAP III including traditional knowledge	Publications, database, reports and compiled documents	2026-2030	22, 23	3	Number of publications, available database, reports and compiled documents	Academia and other institutions. MEF, DRRM, BOS, MAFSN, MGYSD	M587,000.00
3.3 Support access to information and public participation of women and girls' organizations, networks, leaders and gender experts in the resourcing, implementation, monitoring and reporting throughout the NBSAP III cycle	Organize capacity-building and development workshops. Prepare guidelines to enhance the capacity of women and girls' organizations, networks and gender experts to support planning, implementation and reporting throughout the NBSAP III cycle related activities, including integration of gender considerations into all biodiversity programming at all levels	Capacity-building and development workshops undertaken, and guidelines prepared Reporting on capacity-building and development initiatives and engagement of women's organizations, networks and gender experts included in national reports under the NBSAP III cycle	2026-2030	22, 23	3	• Number of capacity building and development workshops undertaken • Number of reports on capacity building and development Compiled • Number of guidelines to enhance capacity of women and girls' organizations developed	MEF – DoE, MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M587,000.00
3.4 Ensure coherent gender responsive	Promote gender-biodiversity linkages in	Capacity building, awareness campaigns and	2026-2030	22, 23	2	• Number of Capacity building,	MEF – DoE,	M1,560,000.00

implementation of the NBSAP III	policy and legal framework, information and activities of the NBSAP III	platforms on gender-biodiversity linkages established				awareness campaigns conducted • Number of gender biodiversity linkages policy and legal framework, information and activities of the NBSAP III promoted	MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	
	Establish coordination mechanisms among women and girls' organizations/networks, ministries or other institutions responsible for gender and those responsible for the environment	National-level gender biodiversity/environment working groups/coordination mechanisms established	2026-2030	22, 23	3	•Number of institutions relevant to gender, environment and women/girls' organizations coordinated •Number of established coordination mechanisms among women and girls' organizations/networks	MEF – DoE, MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M1,300,000.00
3.5 Ensure that national reports and submissions to the CBD Secretariat provide information on the implementation of the gender plan of action and gender responsive implementation of NBSAP III	Identify and compile best practices, lessons learned and gaps in gender responsive implementation, monitoring and reporting, with the engagement of women's organizations and networks, and gender experts	Best practices and lessons learned shared in the national reporting	2026, 2028, 2030	22, 23	2	Number of best practices shared in the national reporting	MEF – DoE, MGYSD, MLGCHAP, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M820,000.00
	Use gender-specific indicators and data disaggregated by sex and gender in reporting on progress towards implementation of NBSAP III and Gender Action Plan	The 7th,8th and 9th National report to the CBD Secretariat includes progress on implementation of the gender plan of action and gender-specific indicators and sex and gender disaggregated data	2026, 2028, 2030	21, 22, 23	2	• Percentage of NBSAP III targets with specific gender responsive indicators achieved • Availability of gender-specific statistics in national reporting	MEF, Line Ministries, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M1,020,000.00

						• Inclusion of gender specialists in NBSAP III monitoring and reporting teams		
	Integrate into national reporting, women and girls' contribution to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity	National reports under the Convention on Biological Diversity include reporting on women and girl's contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and on the mainstreaming of gender considerations into NBSAP III	2026, 2028, 2030	21, 22, 23	3	• National reports that explicitly document women and girls' roles in biodiversity conservation • Existence of gender-mainstreaming framework within national reporting • Proportion of women involved in decision making processes related to NBSAP III • Degree to which NBSAP III reports inform national gender and biodiversity policies	MEF, Line Ministries, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M900,000.00
3.6 Allocate human and financial resources to support implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III	Raise awareness on the available funding opportunities for implementation of NBSAP III (Global Biodiversity Framework Fund)	IEC material, online platforms, meetings and workshops	2026-2030	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of proposals from relevant stakeholders and Biodiversity Women organizations/networks	MEF, Line Ministries, CSOs Development partners and relevant actors	M1,500,000.00
	Establish budget lines to support implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III and Gender Action Plan	Budget lines to support the implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III	2026-2030	21, 22, 23	2	• Number of budget lines for gender and biodiversity created		M1,200,000.00
Component 4: Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) **Objective 4: To integrate an effective monitoring and evaluation system for implementation of gender responsive NBSAP III**								

4.1 To track and report project results for women and girls to ensure fair participation and benefit sharing.	Develop gender disaggregated M&E system	Project gender-disaggregated M&E system developed	2026	22, 23	2	• Number of monitoring and evaluation data collection tools/forms revised to include gender disaggregation • Level of stakeholder satisfaction with the gender responsiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system	MEF (Planning Unit), Independent Consultant	M550,000.00
4.2 To monitor progress, identify challenges and recommend improvements for effective implementation of NBSAP III Plan of Action	Compile NBSAP III Gender Action Plan implementation reports outlining gender disaggregated information	Mid-Term Review Report	2028	22, 23	2	• Completion of NBSAP III Gender Action Plan implementation review report with recommendations validated by stakeholders • Number of NBSAP III Gender Action Plan implementation reports compiled and submitted	MEF (Planning Unit), PSC, Independent Consultant	M300,000.00
4.3 To document key gender specific interventions, highlight achievements, capture lessons learned and provide recommendations to ensure lasting impact and sustainability	Compile Terminal Evaluation outlining key gender specific interventions and lessons learned.	Terminal Evaluation report	2030	22, 23	2	•Level of stakeholder agreement on the relevance and usefulness of gender related findings from the terminal evaluation •Number of gender specific interventions and lessons learned documented in the	MEF (Planning Unit), PSC, Independent Consultant	M385,000.00

						terminal evaluation report		
4.4 To assess NBSAP III Gender Action Plan achievements aligned with gender equality principles and identify areas of improvement	Ensure that NBSAP III Gender Action Plan adheres to gender equality principles by conducting endline survey.	NBSAP III Gender Action plan Endline Survey report	2030	22, 23	2	• Number of best practices identified • NBSAP III Endline Survey conducted • Endline Survey on NBSAP III Gender Action Plan completed and submitted by 2031 • Level of stakeholder satisfaction with gender mainstreaming in NBSAP III	MEF (Planning Unit), PSC, Independent Consultant	M323,000.00
4.5 To establish and operationalize the system for transparent monitoring of gender equitable biodiversity financing and ensure fair access to funding for women and girls across all sectors.	Integrate gender responsive budgeting and financial tracking mechanisms into biodiversity programmes to ensure equitable access to funding for women and girls	Gender responsive biodiversity financed tracking system established and operationalized	2026-2030	19, 22, 23	3	• Percentage of biodiversity funding directed towards gender inclusive initiatives • Proportion of women led or equitable projects receiving biodiversity funding • Number of proposals approved for funding	MEF (Planning Unit), PSC, Independent Consultant	M470,000.00

Annexures

5. Questionnaires for stakeholders

5.1 Government Entities

5.1.1 Decision makers (Members of the Parliament Portfolio committee for natural resources and Senators)

- What is the current level of attention given to gender issues in biodiversity and environmental governance?
- How is gender equity currently reflected in legislation or policy frameworks related to biodiversity conservation or sustainable development?
- Are Parliamentarians /Senators committees equipped with the capacity and knowledge to advance gender equity in biodiversity planning and decision-making?
- What actions can Parliamentarians/Senators take to ensure women and girls have greater opportunities to engage in biodiversity conservation?
- Are there any provisions in national or sectoral budgets to support capacity building for women and girls in biodiversity conservation and natural resources management?
- What strategy should Parliamentarians/Senators use to build stronger partnerships with civil society, academia and the private sector to promote gender equity in biodiversity conservation?
- How can Parliamentarians/Senators advocate for increased investment in gender-responsive biodiversity actions under NBSAP III?

5.1.2 Local government representatives

- Are local environmental projects gender responsive?
- How are traditional knowledge systems of women and girls being integrated into local biodiversity planning?
- What role do local chiefs and councillor play in ensuring that women and girls are included in community conservation initiatives?

- Are customary laws or practices creating barriers to women's participation in biodiversity efforts? If so, how can they be addressed?
- What efforts are made to involve women's groups in local planning committees on biodiversity conservation?
- How do you ensure that women from rural or disadvantaged backgrounds are reached and supported?
- How are traditional institutions adapting to ensure they are inclusive of women and girl in environmental decision-making?
- How is indigenous and traditional knowledge, especially from women and girls, being preserved and shared within your community?
- How is the council supporting or implementing gender-sensitive monitoring of biodiversity conservation activities at the local level?

5.1.3 Relevant government institutions

- What role does your institution currently play in biodiversity conservation and natural resources management?
- Does your institution have policies or strategies that promote gender equity in biodiversity-related activities?
- Are there any measures to ensure gender balance in working groups, advisory panels, or steering committees linked to biodiversity conservation activities?
- How does your institution collaborate with women's organizations or gender experts in policy design and review that are related to biodiversity conservation?
- How does your institution ensure that biodiversity programmes address the specific needs and priorities of women and girls?
- What efforts are being made by your institution to collect gender-disaggregated data in biodiversity conservation programmes?

5.1.4 Parks Staff

- What is the gender balance within your park staff or community conservation forums especially in leadership or technical roles relating to biodiversity conservation?
- What outreach methods have been most effective in involving women in conservation work?

- Do women and girls in your community have equal access to conservation jobs, income-generating activities, or resource rights linked to biodiversity?
- What actions should NBSAP III include to ensure that parks and community conservation forums provide equal opportunities for women and girls?
- What partnerships or resources would help strengthen your capacity to support gender equity in biodiversity conservation?

5.2 CSOs & NGOs:

- Do you have any policies or strategies focused on building women's and girls' capacity in biodiversity conservation?
- Does your organization currently promote gender equity in biodiversity or environmental management programs?
- How does your organization ensure women and marginalized groups are included in the design and implementation of biodiversity conservation programs?
- What role can CSOs and NGOs play in supporting government to make biodiversity policy processes more inclusive?
- What are the main barriers preventing women and girls from participating in biodiversity conservation?
- In your view, do think the current national biodiversity policies or plans reflect the needs and priorities of women and girls? If yes/no, support your answer
- What kind of resources or technical support do you need to better mainstream gender issues in biodiversity advocacy or planning?
- What type of gender-related biodiversity knowledge are currently being generated or collected by your organization?
- Are there any community-based approaches or participatory tools used to track gender impacts in your biodiversity conservation activities?
- What specific actions should be prioritized in NBSAP III to strengthen gender equality and capacity building?

5.3 Academia and Research Institutions:

- Does your institution have policies or programs aimed at promoting gender equity in environmental or biodiversity-related research?

- How is gender mainstreamed into your curricula, research agendas or institutional practices?
- What is the level of participation of women and girls in biodiversity-related academic programs or research initiatives?
- Are there any specific programs or opportunities (e.g., scholarships, mentorship, training) aimed at supporting women and girls in biodiversity conservation programs or research?
- What barriers do women face in entering and advancing in biodiversity science and research fields?
- What actions should NBSAP III prioritize to strengthen gender equity in biodiversity-related research, education and leadership?
- How can NBSAP III better engage academic institutions in building the capacity of women and girls in biodiversity conservation fields?

5.4 Private Sector

- What measures has your company or organization taken to promote gender equity in biodiversity-related roles?
- Are there initiatives in place to promote women-led or women-owned biodiversity enterprises in your value chains?
- Does your company partner with women's groups, NGOs, or government to advance gender equity in biodiversity conservation or sustainable use?
- What role should the government play in enabling or encouraging private sector participation in gender equity efforts in biodiversity?
- Do you collect gender-disaggregated data in your biodiversity-related programs or community engagements?
- How do you assess the impact of your company's biodiversity initiatives on women's livelihoods and capacities?
- How can the private sector meaningfully contribute to achieving the goals of a gender responsive NBSAP III?

5.5 Development Partners & Donors

- Does your organization have a gender policy or strategy that guides your work in the biodiversity conservation?
- How do your biodiversity or environment-related funding programs integrate gender equity and women's empowerment?
- What types of gender-responsive and capacity-building initiatives do you currently fund in biodiversity or natural resources management sectors?
- What mechanisms are in place to ensure funded partners are accountable for promoting equal opportunities in biodiversity-related projects?
- What role do you see development partners playing in influencing national policies or strategies to advance gender equity in the biodiversity conservation sector?
- Do you support the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data or gender indicators in biodiversity conservation programs? If Yes, how do you monitor and evaluate the gender outcomes of the projects you support?
- What actions should NBSAP III include to better align with donor priorities and support gender-equitable outcomes?
- How can NBSAP III strengthen coordination with development partners to scale up investment in gender-responsive biodiversity conservation actions?

5.6 Vulnerable and Affected Communities:

- What kind of biodiversity or natural resources management activities take place in your community? List them
- Are women and girls currently involved in biodiversity conservation or natural resources management activities ?
- What challenges prevent women and girls in your community from fully participating in biodiversity conservation programs?
- Are there any cultural, financial or knowledge-related barriers that limit women's ability to take part in biodiversity conservation activities?
- Do women and girls benefit equally from biodiversity-related resources or projects in your area?

- Are women represented in local committees or community groups that make decisions on biodiversity conservation? If so, how?
- What changes or support would you like to see in future programs to ensure women and girls have equal opportunities in biodiversity conservation activities?
- How can the government and development partners better support your community in promoting gender equity in biodiversity conservation and resources use?

6. Conclusion

Integrating gender equality into biodiversity conservation is not only a matter of social justice but a strategic necessity for achieving the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity Gender Action Plan 2022–2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Persistent gender gaps, particularly in Lesotho's economic and decision-making spheres, limit women's full participation and influence in biodiversity policy, planning, and resource management. Given that women and men possess distinct knowledge, experiences, and priorities regarding biodiversity, their equal involvement is essential for effective and inclusive implementation of NBSAP III. The introduction of the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) further strengthens this approach by providing a structured and accountable mechanism to track financial commitments, monitor gender-responsive outcomes, and ensure that biodiversity interventions contribute meaningfully to the empowerment of women and girls while avoiding unintended gender biases.

7. Recommendation

It is recommended that Lesotho fully institutionalise gender mainstreaming across all biodiversity planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting processes under NBSAP III by operationalising the Gender Action Plan alongside the Gender Equality Marker (GEM). This should include strengthening women's participation in decision-making structures at household, community, and national levels; ensuring equitable access to land, resources, and biodiversity-based economic opportunities; and allocating dedicated, trackable budgets for gender-responsive interventions. Capacity-building initiatives for government institutions, local authorities, and communities should be prioritized to address deeply rooted gender inequalities and social norms that hinder women's engagement. Regular monitoring and evaluation using GEM should be

conducted to identify gender gaps, inform adaptive planning, enhance accountability, and ultimately ensure that biodiversity conservation efforts contribute to inclusive, sustainable development outcomes for all Basotho.