



WFP EVALUATION



**World Food
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Final Evaluation of the “Improving adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food insecure populations in Lesotho” project, from 2020 to 2025

**Decentralized evaluation report – FINAL
WFP Lesotho**

**DE/LSCO/2020/045
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Executive summary

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the findings from the decentralized evaluation of the 'Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACOV)' project, covering the implementation period from October 2020 to August 2025. This independent evaluation provides an end-of-project assessment of activities across three components - institutional strengthening, climate change awareness, and community resilience - focusing on national levels and the southern districts of Mafeteng, Mphahle's Hoek and Quthing. The evaluation served both accountability and learning objectives, with a priority on learning to inform the design of IACOV Phase 2 and future climate resilience programming under the Lesotho Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2019-2024. It assessed the project against eight evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, sustainability, scalability and adaptive management), utilizing a mixed-methods approach. The evaluation was conducted by The KonTerra Group. The expected users include the donor (Adaptation Fund), the WFP Lesotho Country Office, Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), and Headquarters, alongside the Government of Lesotho, specifically the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS), Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF), Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN).

Context and Subject of the Evaluation

2. In Lesotho, high climate vulnerability and recurring natural hazards, particularly drought, frost and erratic rainfall, are key factors driving food insecurity and land degradation. As a lower-middle-income country with a predominantly rain-fed agricultural system, Lesotho faces significant challenges, with nearly 50 per cent of the population living below the poverty line and 36 per cent of children under five suffering from stunting. Historically, agriculture supported the livelihoods of over 60 per cent of the population, but structural shifts and climate-induced shocks, such as the 2023-2024 El Niño event, have led to a 17 per cent increase in food insecurity. WFP has long partnered with the Government of Lesotho to address these bottlenecks, transitioning from direct food assistance toward nationally-owned systems under the Country Strategic Plan (CSP).

3. The IACOV project, funded by the Adaptation Fund (AF), was a pilot initiative designed to strengthen the adaptive capacity and resilience of vulnerable, food-insecure populations in the southern districts of Mafeteng, Mphahle's Hoek and Quthing. The project focused on three core components: strengthening institutional technical capacity for climate forecasting and risk management (Component 1), raising national awareness on climate change impacts (Component 2), and building community resilience through asset creation, livelihood diversification, and climate services (Component 3). IACOV targeted 128,000 direct beneficiaries, with a specific focus on women's empowerment, ensuring they comprised 52 per cent of participants, and the integration of climate risk management into national systems like the school curriculum and social protection. The project also addressed emerging humanitarian concerns by innovating through anticipatory action planning and forecast-based financing to offset the impacts of extreme climate events.

Methodology

4. A theory-based mixed methods approach was used, combining an extensive document review, a quantitative survey of 271 direct beneficiaries, and qualitative evidence gathered through key informant interviews, most significant change stories, and focus group discussions. Data collection was conducted in late 2025 using a participatory and gender-responsive framework. For the qualitative component, the evaluation team visited four project sites across the three southern districts, selecting locations based on diverse ecological zones and project performance. In addition to field visits, direct observations were used to verify the condition and usage of project-supported assets. The evaluation was conducted by an independent four-member team committed to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical standards, disability inclusion, and gender equality.

5. To ensure a robust evidence base, the team utilized source, method, and investigator triangulation, with quantitative data weighted to ensure statistical precision. While the study faced limitations, including

the lack of an original project Theory of Change and gaps in early monitoring data, these were successfully mitigated through the reconstruction of the project logic and the use of primary survey data. Other constraints, such as limited physical access to mountain sites and herder populations, were addressed through purposive sampling and remote data collection methods, as well as efforts to gather data relating to herders from KIIs and document review. Overall, the application of these mitigation measures meant that the limitations did not threaten the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings.

Findings

6. **EQ 1. Relevance: How relevant were the intended project outcomes to the climate adaptation needs of the target communities and groups?**

- *Finding 1.1 The IACOV project is well aligned with and directly addresses community-identified climate adaptation needs, though outcomes and practical approaches related to community resilience did not sufficiently incorporate aspects related to social dimensions, local knowledge and governance.*

The IACOV project is strategically relevant to the climate adaptation needs of Lesotho and provides a vital mechanism for strengthening the resilience and food-insecure populations against escalating shocks. The project addresses critical gaps in the national enabling environment while delivering community-level interventions that align with the Government of Lesotho's (GoL) shift toward proactive risk management. The project's framework is based on high-quality contextual and vulnerability analysis, ensuring that its outcomes respond directly to identified barriers such as inadequate climate forecasting tools and the lack of diversified livelihoods. Geographically targeting correctly focused on high-risk southern districts facing drought, frost, windstorms and climate variability, and remote, hard-to-reach communities that were frequently excluded from other development initiatives. The selection of beneficiaries ensured resources reached areas with the highest vulnerability, while beneficiary targeting used inclusive, participatory processes, including the national social registry (NISSA), to prioritize women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The participatory design successfully identified and addressed the disparate needs of multiple stakeholders, though project documentation and KIIs suggested that social dimensions, local knowledge and governance were insufficiently incorporated into the project's approach to building community-level resilience. To address the evolving landscape of climate risk, the project demonstrated strong adaptive relevance by integrating Anticipatory Action (AA) and forecast-based financing in response to the 2024 El Niño drought. This successfully shifted the intervention modality from reactive emergency response to proactive, risk-informed programming. While highly relevant in addressing core shocks like drought and frost, there was less consistency in tackling emerging threats such as integrated pest management.

7. **EQ 2. Coherence: How consistent is the project with the climate adaptation policies, strategies, priorities, requirements and expectations of the Government of Lesotho, as well as other interventions in Lesotho implemented by the Government, WFP and other stakeholders operating within the same context?**

- *Finding 2.1 IACOV demonstrated strong alignment with GoL priorities and effective synergies with other programmes, despite some operational challenges in applying integrated catchment management.*
- *Finding 2.2 Internal coherence with the policies and programmes of WFP Lesotho is illustrated through IACOV's alignment with WFP Lesotho CSPs*

IACOV was highly consistent with over ten national policies, directly operationalizing the National Anticipatory Action Plan and the Climate Change Communication Strategy. It also integrated gender-rights education into its asset-building activities to align with national development and equity goals. By sharing a steering committee with the UNEP-GEF EWS II project, IACOV avoided duplication and improved efficiency through joint procurement. It further enhanced coherence by scaling existing climate-smart manuals and aligning nutrition clubs with national government models. While project planning resonated with national extension systems, administrative boundaries occasionally conflicted with Integrated Catchment Management watershed logic, affecting some conservation results. However, the project successfully modernized district-level monitoring through digital tool training and multi-ministry collaboration.

8. **EQ 3. Effectiveness: To what extent did the project achieve its intended goal in terms of improving adaptive capacity and household resilience?**

- *Finding 3.1 Sixty percent of survey respondents reported good understanding and application of forecast and EW information. However, some VDMTs indicated that messages were not always sufficiently timely, locally contextualised, or actionable to support onward dissemination and community-level decision-making.*
- *Finding 3.2 IACOV monitoring data show a clear improvement in household food security among the most vulnerable households. Resilience Capacity Scores (RCS) indicate challenges to long-term resilience building,*
- *Finding 3.3 A key factor that positively influenced effectiveness was IACOV's inclusive and needs-based approach. Key negative factors included: operational and coordination challenges that led to frequent delays, eroding community trust and engagement; insufficient attention to technical requirements, inadequate monitoring, and dependency on cash based transfers that affected the implementation, quality, and maintenance of some community-level soil and water conservation (SWC) assets; and inconsistent group management capacity that hampered community-level assets and activities.*
- *Finding 3.4 Weaknesses were observed in the project M&E system, including a lack of clarity in some outcome indicators and measurement tools. The effectiveness of different communication channels used under Component 2 was not measured. Project monitoring results and recommendations were rarely used in project management decisions.*

Achievement rates largely met project targets, with notable success in strengthening national technical capacities for climate forecasting. Although implementation faced early challenges due to the pandemic and subsequent procurement delays, there has been a notable increase in the operationalization of anticipatory action (AA) since the mid-term evaluation. Achievement rates are highest for indicators related to seasonal forecast accuracy and community preparedness, with 91 per cent of surveyed beneficiaries perceiving improved community readiness. The overall coverage of climate services has been successful, with the LMS and DMA meeting targets for developing Standard Operating Procedures and trigger-monitoring dashboards that have effectively shifted disaster management from a reactive to a proactive modality.

Table 1: Targets and achievement for key outcome indicators

Indicator	Target	Achievement	Data source
Use of seasonal forecasts in decision-making	60%	60% overall 57% women 68% men	ET Household Survey, November 2025
Knowledge, attitudes and practice of adaptation actions	70%	71% overall 72% women 69% men	ET Household Survey, November 2025
Livelihood Coping Strategies Index - Crisis & emergency coping strategies	Under 20%	16% overall 19% women 12% men	IACOV Monitoring Survey, March 2025

9. The components related to community-level adaptation show positive behavioural changes, particularly in low-cost strategies such as adjusting planting dates and crop diversification. IACOV monitoring data indicate a clear improvement in household food security, with a reduction in crisis and emergency coping strategies from 31 per cent at baseline to 16 per cent. However, the implementation of more capital-intensive or technical intervention, such as soil and water conservation (SWC) assets and irrigation, is less advanced. These activities were frequently hampered by insufficient technical assessments, poor monitoring, and a dependency on cash-for-work that affected long-term maintenance.

10. Institutional capacity strengthening is most evident at the national level through the integration of LMS and DMA functions, which reduced historical 'silo' practices. However, consistent information flow to the district and village levels remains a challenge, with some local structures (VDMTs) reporting a lack of clear, actionable messaging. While the project successfully integrated WFP's environmental and social standards, the primary factors contributing to implementation gaps included frequent procurement bottlenecks,

external changes in Central Bank electronic transfer policies that delayed cash payments, and structural barriers such as poor market linkages and road infrastructure. These factors limited the project's ability to achieve higher transformative capacity scores (61.4 per cent as compared to 74.5 per cent for anticipatory capacity), which require broader economic, infrastructural and gender-related shifts.

11. EQ 4. Efficiency: To what extent were Adaptation Fund project activities implemented in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and what opportunities exist for improved efficiency in future programming?

- *Finding 4.1. Timeliness was an issue throughout implementation at all implementation levels.*
- *Finding 4.2 The project utilised significant cost-sharing arrangements, especially at the national level, creating a greater sense of government ownership.*

Full budget utilization was achieved via no-cost extension after pandemic-related underspending in the first two years (70 per cent and 62 per cent). While spending accelerated to 129% by Year 4, persistent procedural delays in WFP procurement and finance caused 'missed windows' for seasonal activities. This resulted in avoidable losses, such as tree seedlings and livestock arriving outside optimal periods, compounded by restrictive cash advance limits, that delayed district-level work. Significant value was realized through institutional synergies and an estimated 70 per cent government contribution in staffing and infrastructure. Strategic partnerships with initiatives like the NAP and SADP II enabled shared training and joint planning resources. Despite high logistical cost due to the remoteness of target sites, the project prioritized reaching the most climate-vulnerable populations, emphasizing depth of impact over scale.

12. EQ 5. Equity: To what extent did the project cater to the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, minorities and other potentially marginalized groups, in the target communities?

- *Finding 5.1 Inclusive processes led to high participation rates for women but these did not translate into equitable outcomes.*
- *Finding 5.2 While participatory planning and targeted activities were a source of autonomy and empowerment for women, they were perceived by many men as a source of social friction and disempowerment and led to a decline in male participation and undermined community cohesion.*

IACOV prioritized women, youth and 2,161 people with disabilities (PwDs) using the NISSA registry and community self-targeting, supported by exemplary sex-and age-disaggregated data. However, the lack of field-based gender analysis limited the project's ability to address cultural attitudes and customary laws, resulting in a focus on practical material needs rather than long term structural transformation. While 223 nutrition clubs and gardening directly addressed the gender-nutrition nexus and provided women with financial autonomy, structural inequalities persisted. FGDs revealed that high-value assets like large shade nets inadvertently favoured men due to customary land tenure, and women's leadership roles remained largely tokenistic. Implementation by WFP and other generalist staff without the capacity to navigate complex gender dynamics, rather than the Ministry of Gender, hindered the institutionalisation of gender-responsive strategies. Focus on women caused unintended social friction, with men reporting a 'loss of status' that discouraged their participation and threatened cohesion. Similarly, FGD participants reported that youth and herders faced engagement gaps because recruitment via public gatherings and a lack of start-up capital failed to accommodate their specific livelihood constraints, limiting the project's overall transformative impact.

13. EQ 6. Sustainability: Did the project consider the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions for the various beneficiaries?

- *Finding 6.1 While institutional ownership and technical capacity are relatively robust, ongoing sustainability is limited by dependence on external funding, a limited pool of technical experts, and staff turnover. At the community level, resilience practices rooted in local knowledge, skills, and behavioural change show strong sustainability.*
- *Finding 6.2 The long-term sustainability of asset-intensive and incentive-driven interventions remained fragile, with participation and maintenance often declining once external support was withdrawn.*

IACOV shifted climate risk management from isolated activities to routine functions by formalising the

National Anticipatory Action Plan, a national communication strategy, and through school curricula. The LMS-DMA 'data-driven model' for proactive response is a key success, though it remains vulnerable to high staff turnover and a reliance on external financing for on-going technical upgrades and associated staff training. Sustainability is highest for knowledge-based changes, such as climate-informed planting and food preservation, which require minimal external input. Conversely, asset-intensive and collective interventions, like rangeland restoration, showed fragility: maintenance often declined once Cash for Work (CFW) incentives ended, indicating a lack of intrinsic ownership. While women lead in sustaining resilience through nutrition clubs, youth and PwDs face barriers from limited capital and support. The reliance on CFW created food security but introduced dependency risks due to a lack of clear exit strategies. Weak cooperative governance and limited government extension budgets further threaten the long-term quality of collective adaptation measures.

14. EQ 7. Scalability: Which resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities show the most and the least promise for replication or expansion, and why?

- *Finding 7.1. System-level demonstrate strong scalability potential due to institutional embedding, policy alignment, and low marginal costs.*
- *Finding 7.2. Livelihood and market-oriented interventions show conditional scalability; they can be replicated in contexts where enabling conditions exist.*
- *Finding 7.3. Infrastructure-intensive and incentive-dependent interventions do not scale sustainably in their current form.*

KII evidence indicated that the system-level interventions (including the Anticipatory Action framework, early warning/climate services, and operational tools such as map rooms) were designed to be embedded within existing national institutions and standard operating procedures, enabling replication beyond the three districts with relatively low marginal costs once systems were in place. In the education sector, KIIs indicated that teacher training and climate change education were initiated, but also noted that curriculum-level institutionalization and follow-up through district education inspection structures was uneven, which affected the pace and consistency of scale-up. FGD evidence confirmed strong community demand for practical CSA interventions such as keyhole gardens, soil and water conservation practices, and conservation agriculture, with participants describing adoption and behavioral changes. However, FGDs and district KIIs consistently describe "conditional scalability" for these livelihood interventions, as replication depends on reliable water access (including irrigation/water-harvesting solutions), viable market linkages, and sustained support and follow-up from extension services. On this basis, the ET assesses that system-level interventions have the strongest scalability potential, while household-level CSA practices can scale where enabling conditions and institutional support are in place.

15. EQ 8. Adaptive management: How, and how quickly, did the project implement operational changes and/or innovative methods or tools to enhance outcomes, processes and activities in response to feedback on its performance and potential unforeseen challenges?

Finding 8.1. IACOV implemented incremental adaptations to operational challenges such as COVID-19 restrictions, enabling continuity of planned outputs.

Finding 8.2. More strategic adaptive management was demonstrated through IACOV's support innovative Anticipatory Action mechanisms, illustrating the project's ability to overcome high-level political challenges. However, there was limited responsiveness to monitoring feedback and recommendations at the local level.

Evidence from KIIs showed that IACOV maintained momentum through pragmatic, incremental changes during external shocks. During COVID-19, for example, it successfully shifted to virtual training and utilized existing personnel when recruitment stalled. It also displayed flexibility by advancing rangeland rehabilitation when mobility restrictions halted household activities. The ET considers that these efforts were primarily reactive, focusing on output preservation rather than structural innovation. In contrast, multiple KIIs confirmed that the project's most significant innovation was designing and operationalizing AA within the national Disaster Risk Reduction cycle. This required overcoming various challenges at different levels, involving cross-sectoral collaboration at district level to generate the AA Plan itself, as well as successfully navigating high-level political sensitivities to ensure that the AA response was implemented when needed,

prior to the official disaster declaration. FGDs and KIs suggested that adaptive management was somewhat slower and less effective in responding to challenges at the community level. Informants confirmed that structured feedback mechanisms successfully identified technical hurdles (e.g., SIM-card/mobile-money access issues), but these issues took time to resolve. District KIs indicated that routine monitoring and follow-up was constrained by staffing and logistics limitations, which affected systematic closure of issues and continuous improvement at the operational level. KIs also noted that feedback and recommendations from IACOV's monitoring reports were not systematically followed up or acted upon, limiting the ability of the project to make adjustments and improvements at the operational level.

Conclusions

16. **Relevance (Satisfactory):** The project successfully aligned with local climate needs but failed to explicitly distinguish between community and household resilience, leading to conceptual and measurement clarity issues. (Finding 1.1)
17. **Coherence (Highly Satisfactory):** IACOV demonstrated excellent policy alignment and national synergy, although practical field challenges arose with project boundaries conflicting with government-defined watershed areas. (Finding 2.1)
18. **Effectiveness (Satisfactory):** Beneficiaries successfully adopted low-cost adaptive practices like crop timing, yet 'last-mile' dissemination weaknesses and structural barriers, such as weak market linkages and limited long-term resilience gains. (Findings 3.1, 3.2)
19. **Efficiency (Moderately Unsatisfactory):** While the budget was fully utilized, persistent administrative, procurement, and financial delays frequently conflicted with time-sensitive seasonal windows and limited overall project coverage. (Findings 4.1, 4.2)
20. **Equity (Moderately Satisfactory):** The project boosted women's economic participation but failed to address underlying power structures, leaving female-headed households more vulnerable than male-headed households and missing key engagement opportunities with men and youth. (Findings 5.1, 5.2)
21. **Sustainability (Moderately Unsatisfactory):** Institutional embedding was successful, but the long-term viability of community interventions remains fragile for asset-heavy or incentive-driven activities compared to those rooted in behaviour change. (Finding 6.1, 6.2)
22. **Scalability (Satisfactory):** System-level frameworks and household-level climate-smart practices show strong potential for expansion, whereas resource-intensive or market-dependent models face significant replication hurdles in remote areas. (Findings 7.1, 7.2)
23. **Adaptative Management (Satisfactory):** The project effectively navigated high-level strategic shifts like AA, but operational adjustments were often reactive and hindered by a monitoring system that wasn't sufficiently linked to decision-making structures. (Findings 8.1, 8.2)

Lessons

24. **Resilience Differentiation:** Clarity between household and community resilience prevents blurred implementation and improves the ability to measure results meaningfully.
25. **Operational vs. Policy Alignment:** Policy coherence only succeeds when project units, such as site boundaries, align with the practical watershed or administrative scales used by government agencies. This practical alignment is essential to avoid technical compromises and logistical inefficiencies.
26. **Addressing structural barriers:** Knowledge and capacity building provide short-term gains but cannot deliver long-term resilience if structural barriers such as weak market access and limited livelihood options persist. Effectiveness requires pairing information with feasible economic pathways and enabling conditions.
27. **Partners Coordination and seasonal alignment:** Efficiency depends on synchronizing multi-stakeholder approvals and procurement with rigid seasonal agricultural calendars. Procedural delays that miss these time-sensitive windows result in avoidable losses and significantly reduces project impact.

28. **Targeted Equity Measures:** Inclusive participation alone does not ensure equity if deeper structural constraints and unequal decision-making power remain unaddressed. Targeted, transformative measures are necessary to move beyond simple participation toward sustained equity gains.

29. **Knowledge-based sustainability:** Interventions rooted in knowledge and behaviour change are more sustainable than asset-intensive or incentive-driven approaches that require external inputs. Long-term viability for collective assets requires realistic maintenance plans and strong institutional linkages.

30. **Scalability through simplicity:** Low-cost, simple interventions that fit existing institutional mandates and community practices scale more effectively than technically complex or infrastructure-heavy activities. Institutional fit is a more powerful driver of replication than technical sophistication.

31. **Active Risk Management:** Risk management frameworks enhance adaptive capacity only when treated as living management tools, rather than static compliance instruments. Identifying and revisiting risks early allows for more coherent responses to unforeseen shocks like pandemics or procurement bottlenecks.

Recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1.** Clarify and operationalise the strategic focus of IACOV 2 based on a deeper understanding of community-level resilience so that the synergies between household-level resilience and community-level resilience can be maximized. (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Finding 3.2, Finding 3.3, Finding 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.2)
- **Recommendation 2.** Improve the reach and effectiveness of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging by strengthening institutional linkages, and clear and actionable messages. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1)
- **Recommendation 3.** Identify and agree on lessons learned from Component 2 on effective awareness-raising and communication approaches for different target audiences, and apply these lessons to strengthen last-mile communication and awareness-raising for all three Component activities. (Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1 and 3.4)
- **Recommendation 4.** Enhance IACOV's M&E systems by revising the Project Results Framework, incorporating explicit learning activities, and ensuring that M&E results and recommendations feed into adaptive management structures. (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1, 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.1; Conclusion 8, Finding 8.2)
- **Recommendation 5.** Gender: Move beyond counting women and men to promoting and measuring genuine empowerment outcomes, including changes in decision-making power, control over resources, agency, and transformation of harmful¹ gender norms in ways that actively engage men and boys as allies. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.2; Conclusion 5, Findings 5.1, 5.2; Conclusion 6, Finding 6.2)
- **Recommendation 6.** Improve efficiency by addressing structural planning, approval and financial management bottlenecks. (Conclusion 4, Finding 4.2)
- **Recommendation 7.** Strengthen government ownership and financing pathways for greater sustainability. (Conclusion 6, Finding 6.1)
- **Recommendation 8.** Address household-level financial dependency through institutionalised support to Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1; Conclusion 6, Findings 6.1, 6.2; Conclusion 7, Finding 7.2)
- **Recommendation 9.** Address the sustainability risks associated with cash-for-work modalities through clearer transition pathways and, where feasible, alignment with longer-term social protection mechanisms. (Conclusion 6, Finding 6.2)
- **Recommendation 10.** Enhance adaptive management through the consistent integration of M&E findings and recommendations into decision-making processes for more effective activity design

¹ Some gender norms such as *letsema* (a traditional practice of working together), shared rangeland management, and viewing men as community protectors can support social cohesion. Harmful norms arise where customary structures restrict agency, including positioning men as sole decision-makers over land, livestock, and climate-related livelihood decisions.

and implementation. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.1; Conclusion 8, Finding 8.2)

1. Introduction

1. This report presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP) Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations (IACOV) project in Lesotho from 2020 to 2025. The report represents the last part of a process that began in July 2025 with an inception phase (until mid-November 2025). The final report is based on several rounds of quality assurance and comments by WFP and external stakeholders.

1.1. Evaluation features

2. This decentralized evaluation was commissioned by WFP Lesotho. The evaluation scope covers all IACOV activities relating to: (i) strengthening the institutions and systems for improved adaptation and management of climate change impacts (Component 1); (ii) awareness raising for climate change impacts and adaptation (Component 2); and (iii) building community resilience through adaptation measures and improved food systems (Component 3). The temporal scope covers the full implementation period from October 2020 to August 2025. Geographically, the evaluation covers both national and local levels, with a specific focus on the three southern districts of Mafeteng, Mahale's Hoek and Quthing for the local-level activities. The evaluation is timely because some of the recommendations are expected to inform the implementation of IACOV Phase 2.

3. The evaluation addresses the dual and mutually reinforcing objectives of accountability and learning with greater weight given to learning. Evaluation objectives are to:

- Assess and report on performance and results of the project. The evaluation will inform WFP, the donor, the Government, other key stakeholders, and the wider community about how well the program is meeting its goals and objectives and the relevance towards addressing climate change impact challenges faced in Lesotho. **[Accountability]**
- Assess initiatives aimed at improving the adaptive capacity of vulnerable and food insecure populations in Lesotho and provide actionable insights for future food security and climate change projects. The evaluation will examine whether the project's implementation aligned with planned strategies, investigate factors affecting outcomes, and identify intended and unintended results (both positive and negative, e.g. increased resilience, decreased vulnerability, improved cost-effectiveness). **[Learning]**

4. As defined in the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR, see Annex 1) the evaluation is specifically commissioned to:

- Inform the design and implementation of the second phase of the IACOV project.
- Improve the implementation of future programming, equip project management teams, delivery partners and other stakeholders with insights needed to achieve expected outcomes.
- Inform the implementation of the Lesotho Country Strategic Plan (CSP) in which climate resilience building is at the centre of its integration strategy. The evaluation findings will provide an opportunity to inform necessary adjustments to the programme implementation.
- Inform the design of new activities or the introduction of similar activities in other contexts for adaptive capacity and resilience in Lesotho.
- Demonstrate accountability for the funding received from the Adaptation Fund (AF).

5. The main stakeholders and users of the evaluation are WFP Management and Programme staff, plus IACOV project staff. Findings are also expected to be used by the WFP Evaluation Office, and the headquarters (HQ)-based Climate & Resilience Service within the Programme, Policy & Guidance Division (PPGR). External stakeholders that are expected to benefit from evaluation findings include the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF); Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS); Disaster Management Authority (DMA); the District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs); the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFSN);

Ministry of Education and Training (MoET); National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA); and the Ministry of Gender, Youth & Social Development (MoGYSD). The evaluation is expected to inform both the policies and strategic directions of these ministries /institutions. More specifically, members of the IACOV Project Management Unit and the Project Steering Committee will benefit, particularly in the design and implementation of Phase 2. Rights holders, particularly women and other groups facing discrimination, will also be primary users of the evaluation.

6. The evaluation was conducted by The KonTerra Group with an evaluation team (ET) comprising four members. Data collection was conducted in the latter half of November 2025 through in-person and remote methods (see Evaluation Timeline, Annex 2, and Field work agenda, Annex 3).

1.2. Context

7. **General overview:** Lesotho is a landlocked country, with more than 80 percent of the country above 1,800 meters in altitude and only 9-10 percent (approximately 279,773 hectares) classified as arable land.² The country is divided into ten districts, and ecologically into four agro-ecological zones: the Senqu River Valley (with a surface area of approximately 9 percent), Lowlands (17 percent), Foothills (15 percent), and Highlands (57 percent).³ The lowlands have a population share of 60.9 percent and contribute 76.5 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP), with Maseru city alone accounting for 62 percent. The highland zone is characterized by rugged terrain prone to snow during winter and contributes 23.5 percent of GDP. The country is highly exposed to climate variability and natural hazards, described further below.

8. The total population of Lesotho is estimated at 2,116,427 (51.2% women), with around 60.2 percent residing in rural areas, 32.9 percent in urban areas and 6.8 percent in peri-urban areas.⁴ The population is notably youthful, with more than 37.8 percent aged below 15 years, and 39.6 percent falling within the national youth definition of 15–35 years.⁵ Life expectancy at birth in Lesotho was 57 years in 2023, with women (60 years) living longer than men (55 years).⁶ The prevalence of disability in Lesotho is estimated at 2.9 percent, which is equivalent to 54,036 persons aged five years and above.⁷ At the household level, 8.5 percent (48,496 out of 569,631 households) have at least one member with a disability.

9. **Basic macro-economic indicators:** Lesotho is a lower-middle-income country, with a GDP per capita of USD 1,107 in 2024.⁸ The structure of Lesotho's GDP remains dominated by services (50% of GDP in 2022), followed by manufacturing and mining (22%), and agriculture (6.1%).⁹ The private sector, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), plays a growing role in job creation, accounting for over 255,000 jobs in 2023, up from 118,000 in 2016.¹⁰ The economy is heavily reliant on Southern African Customs

² FAO Family Farming Knowledge Platform. Retrieved August 29, 2025, from <https://www.fao.org/family-farming/countries/lso/en/>

³ Lucantoni, D., Thulo, M., Makhoebe, L.M., Mottet, A., Bicksler, A., Sy., M.R. 2022. Report on the use of the Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) in Lesotho in the context of the Restoration of Landscape and Livelihoods Project (ROLL). Results and analysis. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome.

⁴ Bureau of Statistics. (2025). 2024 Labour Force Survey (LFS) Report. Statistical Report No. 20 of 2025.

⁵ Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Population Dynamics Analytical Report: 2021 Lesotho Demographic Survey. Government of Lesotho.

⁶ World Bank Open Data. Retrieved August 29, 2025, from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?end=2023&locations=LS&start=2013>. The five-year gender gap in survival is due to higher male mortality caused by factors such as tuberculosis, occupational hazards, interpersonal violence, and lower health-seeking behaviour.

⁷ Bureau of Statistics. (2022). 2021 Lesotho Demographic Survey: Volume IIIA – Population Dynamics Analytical Report.

⁸ World Bank. (2025, March 31). The World Bank in Lesotho: Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lesotho/overview>

⁹ Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Annual National Accounts: Lesotho 2012–2022

¹⁰ FinMark Trust. (2025). FinScope MSME Lesotho 2023 survey report.

Union (SACU) transfers, which surged to 27.8 percent of GDP in 2024, up from 14.4 percent in 2022.¹¹ In 2023, the economy grew slightly by 1.8 percent, largely due to public investment in infrastructure. The economy is expected to slow to a growth rate of 1.1 percent in 2025, attributed to the implementation of United States (US) tariffs, the withdrawal of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact II, and reductions in health sector assistance.¹²

10. **Agriculture:** While its contribution to GDP declined to approximately 10 percent in 2024, agriculture still directly supports the livelihoods of over 60 percent of the population, particularly smallholder and subsistence farmers.¹³ Agriculture accounted for over 80 percent of GDP in the 1960s, underscoring a long-term structural shift towards other sectors, especially services and remittance-led consumption. An estimated 85 percent of farming households are smallholders, typically cultivating less than two hectares of land. Lesotho's agriculture is predominantly rain-fed; only about 20 percent of farmers are equipped for irrigation, despite an estimated 112,500 hectares of potential irrigable land. This makes agriculture highly vulnerable to droughts, erratic rainfall, and late planting seasons. The 2023–24 lean season, for instance, was marked by below-normal rainfall and higher-than-average temperatures, contributing to a 19 percent decline in maize production and a 43 percent drop in sorghum output compared to 2023.¹⁴ The main cereal crops grown include maize, sorghum and wheat, all highly susceptible to weather shocks.¹⁵ Livestock rearing remains an integral component of rural livelihoods, with most households raising cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

11. **Vulnerability to climate-change related shocks:** Lesotho is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in Southern Africa. Its geographic and ecological characteristics make it highly susceptible to drought, frost, erratic rainfall, and land degradation. The 2024 Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) report and the National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)¹⁶ confirmed increasing frequency and intensity of climate shocks, particularly in the highlands. Table 2 shows the frequency of natural disasters from 1900–2020. Between 2019 and 2022, the country experienced severe droughts that affected over 500,000 people annually, leading to crop failures, income losses, and food insecurity.¹⁷

12. Lesotho ranks 137th out of 181 countries in the 2023 Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN) Index.¹⁸ It has a composite ND-GAIN score of 39.9, indicating high climate vulnerability and low readiness to adapt. The vulnerability score is 0.472 reflects sensitivity to climate change across sectors such as food, water, health and infrastructure. The readiness score is 0.269, indicating the country's limited ability to leverage investments and convert them to adaptation actions through governance, social and economic factors.

13. The 2015–2016 El Niño-induced drought resulted in widespread crop failures, significant livestock losses, and water shortages. In 2018 and 2019, consecutive dry spells severely affected both crop and

¹¹ Central Bank of Lesotho. (2025, June). Lesotho Macroeconomic Outlook, 2025 - 2027: June 2025.

¹² Central Bank of Lesotho. (2025, June). Lesotho Macroeconomic Outlook, 2025 - 2027: June 2025.

¹³ International Trade Administration. (2023). Lesotho - Agricultural sector. U.S. Department of Commerce. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/lesotho-agricultural-sector>

¹⁴ World Food Programme. (2024). Lesotho: Operational Update #4 – MDRLS008. World Food Programme. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/lesotho/lesotho-drought-induced-food-insecurity-no-mdrls008-operation-update-4>

¹⁵ In 2025, maize production was forecast at 45,780 metric tonnes, a decline from 56,472 mt in 2024, despite an increase in the area cultivated. Maize yields fell to 0.42 mt/ha in 2025, down from 0.63 mt/ha in the previous year, signalling ongoing challenges in productivity. Sorghum production dropped to 3,616 mt, while wheat production rose by 17% to 4,874 mt, suggesting some resilience in specific sub-sectors. Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC). (2024). Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Report 2024. Maseru: Disaster Management Authority (DMA).

¹⁶ Ministry of Energy and Meteorology (2020). National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA II).

¹⁷ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) (2023). Annual Vulnerability and Food Security Assessment.

¹⁸ The ND-GAIN Index ranks 181 countries using a score which calculates a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges, as well as its readiness to improve resilience. The more vulnerable a country is, the lower its score, while the more ready a country is to improve its resilience, the higher it will be.

livestock production, particularly in southern districts such as Quthing and Mphahle's Hoek, worsening food insecurity for rural households dependent on subsistence farming. Most recently, the 2023–2024 lean season, characterized by below-normal rainfall, high temperatures, and delayed planting, resulted in declining agricultural yields, leading to a surge in emergency food assistance needs across multiple districts.

Table 2. Natural Disasters in Lesotho, 1900–2020

Natural Hazard	Subtype	Events Count	Total Deaths	Total Affected
Drought	Drought	8	0	4,148,015 ¹⁹
Epidemic	Bacterial Disease	2	28	2,334
Flood	Riverine Flood	4	48	85,000
Storm	Convective Storm	2	0	7,100

Source: Climate Risk Profile: Lesotho (2021): The World Bank Group

14. **Poverty:** As of 2023, 49.7 percent of Basotho live below the national poverty line, and 24.1 percent are in extreme poverty. Poverty is disproportionately concentrated in rural areas due to limited access to infrastructure and services,²⁰ where 61 percent of the population is poor, compared to 28 percent in urban areas.²¹ The burden of poverty is also gendered, with female-headed households experiencing higher poverty rates (54 percent) than their male-headed counterparts (45 percent), reflecting structural inequalities in access to economic opportunities and resources.²²

15. Lesotho ranks low on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), with 19.6 percent of the population being multidimensionally poor, equivalent to roughly 447,000 people. Child poverty in Lesotho is a significant problem, with almost half (45.5 percent) of all children multidimensionally poor in 2021.²³ Multidimensional poverty means these populations face overlapping deprivations in education, health and living standards. An additional 28.6 percent of the population is considered vulnerable to multidimensional poverty, i.e. at risk of falling into poverty due to minor shocks.²⁴

16. **Education:** Lesotho's adult literacy rate (ages 15 and above) stands at 87.4 percent, with notably higher literacy among women (91.1 percent) compared to men (83.4 percent). The Secondary Net Enrolment Rate is significantly lower at 43.3 percent, also reflecting a gender gap favouring girls (49.3 percent) over boys (37.1 percent). The National School Feeding Programme supports approximately 80 percent of primary students and 30 percent of children in early childhood care centres.²⁵

17. **Food Security and Nutrition:** The cost of a healthy diet has steadily increased, rising from 3.52 USD per person per day in 2017 to 4.68 USD in 2022. As food costs have increased, so too has the proportion of the population unable to afford a healthy diet, reaching 76.3 percent in both 2021 and 2022.²⁶ The total number of people estimated to be food insecure in Lesotho for the 2024/25 consumption year stands at 699,049, representing 33.7 percent of the national population. This marks a 17 percent increase from the

¹⁹ Given that the population of Lesotho is approximately 2,400,000 ([World Population Review, 2026](#)), this figure does not represent unique individuals but includes those who were affected more than once by the droughts.

²⁰ Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Population Dynamics Analytical Report: 2021 Lesotho Demographic Survey. Government of Lesotho.

²¹ World Bank. (2023). Lesotho Poverty Assessment: Progress and Challenges in Reducing Poverty

²² United Nations. (2024). Lesotho Common Country Analysis (CCA) update: November 2024. Maseru

²³ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2021). Lesotho: Multidimensional Child Poverty – Policy Brief 2. Maseru:

²⁴ Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). (2023). Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023: Briefing note for countries on the 2023 Multidimensional Poverty Index - Lesotho. Human Development Report Office.

²⁵ Ministry of Education and Training. (2022). *Lesotho Education Sector Report 2022*. Maseru: Government of Lesotho.

²⁶ United Nations. (2024). Lesotho Common Country Analysis (CCA) update: November 2024. Maseru

2023/2024 season, which recorded 581,730 food-insecure individuals. This surge in food insecurity is primarily attributed to rising unemployment, climate-related shocks, and persistent food price inflation. The rural population accounts for the majority of food insecure populations, accounting for 403,000 individuals (100,750 households) compared to 296,049 individuals (74,012 households) in urban areas.²⁷

18. There is a lack of dietary diversity regardless of socioeconomic status. This is evidenced by nutritional data across wealth quintiles showing a strong dependence on cereals (89 percent); vegetables (45 percent), legumes (22 percent), and dairy (20 percent) are consumed less frequently, and only 10 percent of children eat animal protein such as eggs or meat. The prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) is 2.9 percent nationally, with rates reaching 3.9 percent in Maseru and Molepolole. According to the 2023/24 Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey (LDHS),²⁸ 1.7 percent of children were acutely malnourished, with 0.3 percent experiencing severe wasting. Stunting prevalence among children under five stands at 36 percent, wasting at 2 percent, and underweight at 13 percent.²⁹ Stunting is more prevalent among boys (38.3 percent) than girls (32.6 percent) and among rural children (38.8 percent) than urban children (29.1 percent)³⁰. Only 16.7 percent of children aged 6–23 months meet minimum dietary diversity requirements, indicating widespread nutritional deprivation.

19. **Gender, equity and social inclusion:** Lesotho faces persistent gender disparities that significantly impact food security, nutrition and resilience outcomes. Lesotho ranks 122 out of 191 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) and 103 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The GII stands at 0.548, driven by a maternal mortality rate of 566 per 100,000 live births, low levels of female political participation (11.6 percent of parliamentary seats), and gender gaps in asset ownership and economic participation.³¹ The Gender Development Index (GDI) of 0.943 further illustrates that women lag behind men across most human development dimensions, despite outperformance in education indicators such as adult literacy.³² High adolescent fertility rates and gender-based violence (GBV) further compound these challenges, limiting women's ability to fully participate in and benefit from development interventions.

20. Women play a pivotal role in supporting households and communities to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, often more actively than men. For instance, women are primarily responsible for securing water, fuel, and food – resources that are increasingly affected by climate variability. They also lead community-based initiatives such as home gardening and soil conservation practices. Despite these contributions, women remain under-represented in decision-making processes related to environmental management, responses to environmental hazards, and the shaping of cultural practices and attitudes concerning access to and control over land. This is evident in the limited participation of women in local land committees and environmental governance structures.

21. **National policies and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** Lesotho has institutionalized the 2030 Agenda through its National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024–28, which jointly identify poverty, food insecurity and weak resilience as development bottlenecks. Lesotho continues to face major challenges in achieving SDG 2 (zero hunger). The prevalence of stunting, for example, declined from 39 percent in 2009 to 33 percent in

²⁷ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC). (2024). Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Report 2024. Maseru: Disaster Management Authority (DMA).

²⁸ Ministry of Health [Lesotho] and ICF. 2024. Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2023–24: Final Report. Maseru, Lesotho, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Ministry of Health and ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR391/FR391.pdf>

²⁹ Ministry of Health [Lesotho] and ICF. 2024. Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2023–24: Final Report. Maseru, Lesotho, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Ministry of Health and ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR391/FR391.pdf>

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ UNDP. (2024). Lesotho National Human Development Report 2024: Leaving No One Behind. UNDP Lesotho.

³² *Ibid.*

2014 but has since risen to 36 percent in 2023/24.³³ Lesotho is moderately improving on SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals), but financing and institutional bottlenecks persist.

22. **Policies and institutions relating to climate change:** Lesotho has a comprehensive policy and institutional framework for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including the National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy, National Climate Change Policy (2017–2027), and the National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030). These frameworks call for mainstreaming risk reduction into planning, strengthening early warning systems, and enhancing community preparedness. However, policy gaps persist, including weak land-use planning enforcement, limited disaster data, and inadequate capacities for climate information generation and local-level contingency planning.

23. **Gender-related policies:** Lesotho is signatory to international and regional conventions and protocols that promote gender equality.³⁴ However, Lesotho uses a dual legal system in which international law and domestic law are viewed as two separate legal systems, requiring that ratified international instruments are incorporated into domestic law to render them enforceable. This results in inconsistency and conflicting interests in upholding human rights, especially for women and other marginalized groups. Lesotho has thus established a comprehensive gender policy framework that supports the integration of gender, equality and social inclusion into development programming. The Gender and Development Policy, for example, has a thematic area on gender, agriculture and food security and an objective to promote equitable access and increase food and nutrition for women, men, boys and girls and marginalized groups.

24. **Migration:** Lesotho is a predominantly migrant-sending country; it has one of the highest emigration rates in Southern Africa, with an estimated 18 percent of its population living abroad, primarily in South Africa. Labour migration, particularly of men to South Africa's mining and agricultural sectors, has been a long-standing feature of Lesotho's economic structure and household livelihood strategies.³⁵ According to the 2021 Lesotho Population and Housing Census, approximately 180,000 Basotho are international migrants, with over 90 percent residing in South Africa. Most migrants are aged between 25 and 44, and their remittances remain a vital lifeline for rural households. In 2023, remittances contributed 17.5 percent of GDP, helping to smooth consumption and offset food insecurity for many households.

25. Internal migration has also increased, driven by urbanization, climatic pressures, and economic opportunity-seeking behaviour. Migration from rural mountain areas to urban and peri-urban centres like Maseru, Maputsoe, and Mafeteng is common, especially among youth and women. Climate-induced mobility is rising; recurrent droughts and lean seasons have led to the seasonal or permanent relocation of vulnerable households. Lesotho does not host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the traditional sense. However, climate-related displacement is emerging as a critical humanitarian concern. Droughts, floods and agricultural failure have resulted in the temporary displacement of households, often to urban centres or lower-altitude areas.

26. **International assistance:** Levels of Official Development Assistance in Lesotho have fluctuated significantly in the past decade, peaking in 2013 at \$320.67 million and declining to \$153.29 million by 2022, with a subsequent drop to \$169.05 million in 2021 (in 2020 prices).³⁶ These fluctuations are influenced by both global trends and the specific needs of the country, which has historically relied on foreign aid for development. Key multilateral donors include the World Bank, European Union, Global Fund, and the United

³³ Ministry of Health [Lesotho] and ICF. 2024. Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2023–24: Final Report. Maseru, Lesotho, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: Ministry of Health and ICF. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR391/FR391.pdf>

³⁴ For example, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), the International Bill of Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its twin covenant the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

³⁵ United Nations Development Programme. (2024). Lesotho National Human Development Report 2024: Human Mobility and Resilience. Maseru: UNDP Lesotho.

³⁶ World Bank data, as reported by [CEIC](#), accessed 17 September 2025.

Nations (UN). The United States has historically been a significant bilateral donor, though recent diplomatic tensions led to a suspension of funding in early 2025. The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2024–2028), which is aligned with the NSDP II, identifies three key outcomes: human capital development, inclusive and sustainable economic transformation, and accountable governance.³⁷

27. **WFP in Lesotho:** WFP in Lesotho implements food and nutrition security, climate resilience, school feeding, and supply chain support initiatives under its CSP.³⁸ The current CSP (2024–28) reflects a gradual shift from direct food assistance to government-led, nationally owned systems and builds on long-standing partnerships with the Government of Lesotho (GoL). The CSP is valued at USD 94.9 million, with the Government of Lesotho contributing USD 2.8 million (3 percent of total needs) and international donors such as Japan, Monaco, and UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) providing targeted support.

1.3. Subject being evaluated

28. The subject of this evaluation is the IACOV project, a climate change adaptation initiative financed by the AF. WFP is designated as the Implementing Entity, and the Government of Lesotho is the Executing Partner.³⁹ The IACOV project seeks to strengthen the adaptive capacity and resilience of food-insecure and climate-vulnerable populations across 21 Community Councils in the southern districts of Mafeteng, Mphahle's Hoek, and Quthing (Figure 1). Awareness and advocacy activities extend to all ten districts nationally.⁴⁰ The three target districts were selected due to their high vulnerability to climate-induced risks.⁴¹ This four-year project officially started in October 2020 and was scheduled to conclude in April 2025, but a no-cost extension⁴² extended the total duration of four and a half years with activities ending in 8th August 2025.⁴³

29. The overall outcome of the project is 'enhanced resilience to climate shocks and reduced food and nutrition insecurity due to resilience building and adaptation measures'.⁴⁴ This outcome is delivered through three project components contributing to four project outcomes. Outcomes are supported by a number of activities spanning national to community level and across government ministries. The project logic is summarised in Table 3 below. Although a results framework was established, no Theory of Change (ToC) was articulated for the IACOV project. The ET therefore drafted a reconstructed ToC, drawing on project documents (Project Proposal, Results Framework, Mid-Term Review [MTR], Progress Updates) and reviewed by the Project Coordinator.

30. The reconstructed ToC (Annex 4) illustrates how IACOV activities at national, district and community levels were expected to contribute to improved adaptive capacity and resilience in the three target districts, while also influencing policy, coordination and awareness at national level. Within the ToC, the successful realization of the IACOV project's outcomes is contingent upon a set of critical assumptions, including causal assumptions (internal to the project's logic) and contextual assumptions (external factors). Some of the key causal assumptions are that: (i) Awareness-raising, training and capacity-building initiatives translate into tangible changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices among government staff, committees, communities, and other stakeholders; (ii) Improved coordination and policy frameworks, together with increases in knowledge and capacity are sufficient to promote institutional change; and (iii) Community-level leaders and

³⁷ United Nations (UN). (2023). Lesotho United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024–2028. United Nations Lesotho.

³⁸ United Nations World Food Programme. (2019). Lesotho Country Strategic Plan (2019–2024)

³⁹ IACOV Project Document, Adaptation Fund Proposal (2019)

⁴⁰ IACOV Project Document; Results Framework.

⁴¹ IACOV Project Document; National Adaptation Programme of Action

⁴² According to the Mid-Term Review (2023), implementation delays due to COVID-19 restrictions and procurement bottlenecks necessitated a recommended six-month no-cost extension beyond the original October 2024 end date to complete capacity-building activities and sustain ongoing intervention.

⁴³ IACOV Project Document (2020).

⁴⁴ IACOV Project Results Framework

project support are effectively able to organize and incentivize community members to implement the Community Adaptation Plans. Other assumptions are listed in Annex 4.

Table 3 Summarised project logic

Component 1. Strengthening institutions and systems for improved adaptation and climate risk management
Outcome 1.1: Increased knowledge and technical capacity at national and district levels to forecast, plan and anticipate responses to climate change impacts
Outcome 1.2: Strengthened access to tailored climate services by vulnerable communities to improve decision making for food security and livelihoods
IACOV reinforces institutional capacity of the Lesotho Meteorological Services and the Disaster Management Authority to generate and apply climate information, improve early warning, and strengthen risk management. ⁴⁵ The project's capacity strengthening support extends to other key sectors, including agriculture, soil and water conservation, education, and social protection, through the integration of climate risk management and resilience approaches across their respective systems and programmes, including the school curriculum.
Component 2: Raise awareness on climate change and adaptation
Outcome 2.1: Strengthened awareness of climate change impact on food security amongst vulnerable communities and youth and knowledge of adaptation actions
Work with schools alongside national-level awareness-raising campaigns, including youth-targeted activities. Includes the development of the National Climate Change Communication Strategy
Component 3: Build community resilience through asset creation, livelihood diversification, and climate services.
Outcome 3.1: Increased adaptive capacity of communities and households to respond to droughts and water-related hazards'
Intervention activities included participatory adaptation planning, asset rehabilitation, livelihood diversification, and market linkages. Beneficiaries who received CBTs or other inputs were selected according to their vulnerability and food security status, with a target of 60 percent female and 40 percent male beneficiaries.

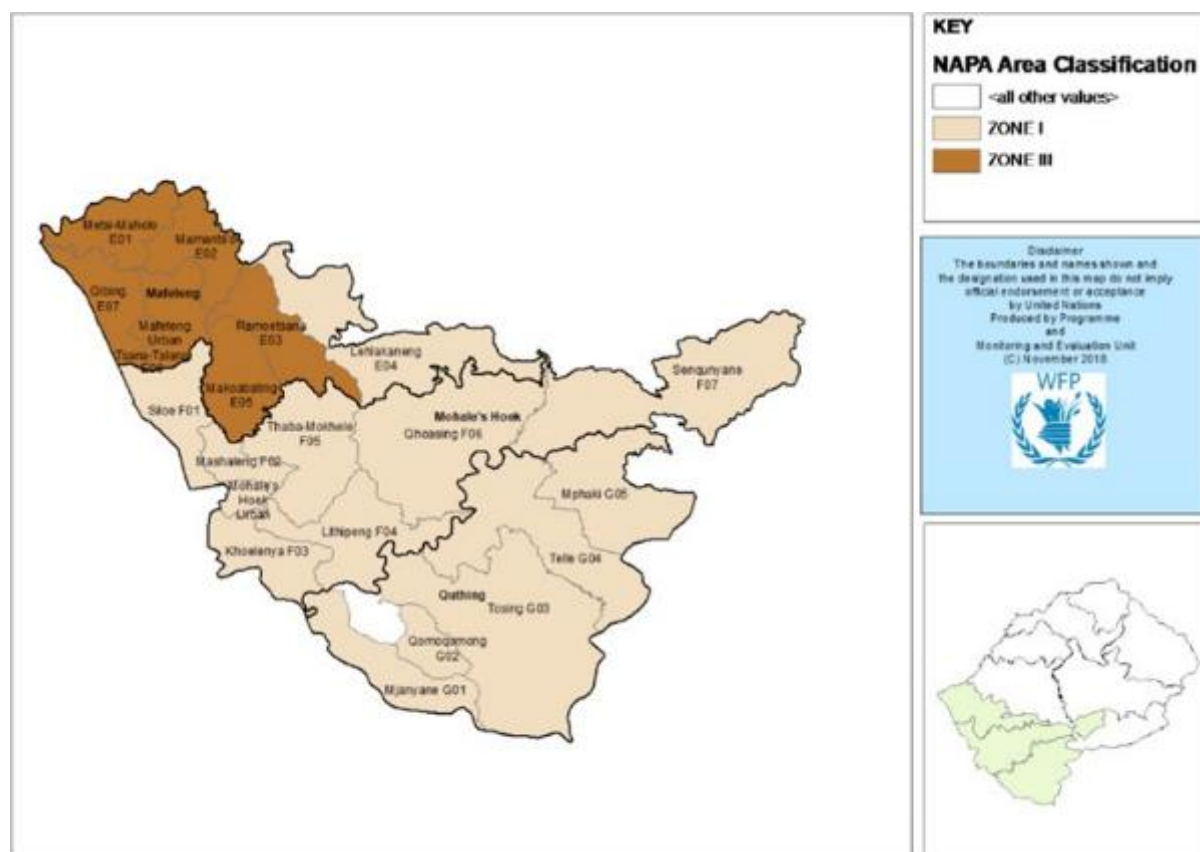
Source: ET based on project documents and ToC

31. The IACOV project operates within a broader landscape of national and international initiatives on climate change, resilience, and social protection in Lesotho. Many of the activities at the community level are incorporated into the day-to-day work of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. The project runs concurrently with WFP's shock-responsive cash and food transfers, nutrition-sensitive public works, and the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme linked to smallholder production, as well as with donor-funded programmes such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) climate-smart agriculture and the International Fund for Agricultural Development's (IFAD) rural development projects.⁴⁶ IACOV was designed to complement the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)- Global Environment Facility (GEF) Early Warning Systems Phase II (EWS II) project, with which it shares the same Project Steering Committee (see Paragraph 69).

⁴⁵ IACOV Results Framework; Mid-Term Review (2023). WFP Lesotho CSP 2019–2024; WFP Lesotho CSP 2024–2029.

⁴⁶ WFP Lesotho CSP 2019–2024; WFP Lesotho CSP 2024–2029.

Figure 1. Areas of intervention and NAPA zones



Source: Evaluation ToR

32. **Consultations and analytical work:** The IACOV Project was formulated based on a series of consultations at national, district and community levels. The process and quality of contextual and vulnerability analysis is discussed in EQ1.1 (see section 2.1). A desk-based gender assessment was conducted at the design stage (see EQ5.1, paragraph 118).

33. The MTR (2023) serves as a key reference for this evaluation.⁴⁷ It recommended a no-cost extension, which was later adopted. The MTR offers the most recent analytical input, identifying coordination gaps, weak complementarity across components, procurement delays, and sustainability concerns. These challenges echo findings of the earlier WFP Lesotho Country Capacity Strengthening Evaluation (2019–2023), which highlighted systemic coordination and capacity gaps affecting implementation of resilience programmes.⁴⁸

34. **Project adaptations:** While the IACOV project did not involve any major redesign, several adaptive adjustments were introduced during implementation to address shocks such as COVID-19 and recurrent droughts. The incorporation of anticipatory action planning and associated forecast-based financing within the IACOV Project is a noteworthy innovation that was prompted by the 2024 El Niño-induced crisis (see EQ1.2, paragraph 65). The project's adaptive management capacities are discussed in EQ8 (see section 2.8).

35. **Partnerships:** The IACOV project was implemented through a multi-stakeholder partnership model that combined government leadership, WFP technical assistance, and local/community engagement. As the

⁴⁷ Mid-Term Review of IACOV Project (2023).

⁴⁸ WFP Lesotho Country Capacity Strengthening Evaluation (2019–2023).

Implementing Entity for the AF, WFP Lesotho provided fiduciary management, technical backstopping, and monitoring while leveraging linkages with other WFP programmes (nutrition, early warning, and social protection). At the start of the project, the main national partners were the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) and the Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, acting through the LMS, who served as executing entities for resilience and climate services. These two ministries have since merged to form the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MEF). The DMA provided coordination and oversight as the national counterpart. The MAFSN and the MoET were also key implementing partners.

36. At the district and community levels, the project worked with District Administrators, the DDMTs and Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs), Community Councils, and Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs) to ensure participatory planning and ownership. Lesotho Red Cross Society and World Vision Lesotho contributed to community mobilization and training.

37. **Resourcing:** The initial approved budget of the IACOV project was USD 9.9 million at inception (2019).⁴⁹ Subsequent budget revisions were introduced in 2021 and 2023 to reallocate funds between components in response to COVID-19 disruptions and procurement delays, though the total envelope remained unchanged.⁵⁰ The AF funds were supplemented by WFP's technical assistance and in-kind contributions from government and local partners. Parallel financing also came through related WFP country portfolio activities (e.g., nutrition clubs, climate services) funded by other bilateral donors, though these were not part of the IACOV budget.

38. **Gender, equity and inclusion considerations:** The Gender and Age Marker (GAM)⁵¹ scores for the different CSP activities to which the IACOV project was mapped are shown in Table 4, which includes the scores at the start of the IACOV project (2020) and in 2024, when the CSP ended. Table 4 shows that initial GAM scores for the CSP activities in 2020 were relatively low (score 1), signifying partial integration of gender and age considerations. By 2024, most CSP activities demonstrated significant improvement, achieving scores of 3 or 4. However, some inconsistencies remained in CSP Activities 5 and 6 due to incomplete reporting.

Table 4. Gender and Age Marker Scores for relevant CSP activities, 2020 & 2024

CSP (2019-24) Activity	GAM Monitoring Score 2020	GAM Monitoring Score 2024
Activity 1 – Cash & Food Assistance	1 Partially integrates gender and age	4 Fully integrates gender and age
Activity 3 – Early Warning Systems	1 Partially integrates gender and age	3 Fully integrates gender
Activity 4 – Nutrition Policies & Advocacy	1 Partially integrates gender and age	4 Fully integrates gender and age
Activity 5 – Resilience-building	1 Partially integrates gender and age	1 Partially integrates gender and age
Activity 6 – Climate Smart Agriculture	1 Partially integrates gender and age	1 Partially integrates gender and age

Source: WFP Lesotho Country Office: GAM database, 2020 and 2024 (accessed September 2025)

39. Gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) was explicitly embedded within IACOV's design and results framework with a desk-based gender analysis conducted during design stage. Findings on equity are discussed in EQ5 (see section 2.5).

⁴⁹ Adaptation Fund Project Document (2019).

⁵⁰ Mid-Term Review of IACOV Project (2023).

⁵¹ GAM is a corporate WFP tool that codes the extent to which gender and age are integrated into the design and monitoring of WFP's Country Strategic Plan (CSP). Each CSP Activity is scored on a yearly basis using a scale of 0 (Does not integrate gender and age) to 4 (Fully integrates gender and age). Table 3 includes the CSP Activities to which the IACOV project contributes – see Paragraph 33 above.

40. **Beneficiaries:** At the community levels, IACOV distinguishes four categories of primary beneficiaries, as shown in Table 5. Categories A, B, and C are direct beneficiaries; Category D is indirect beneficiaries, including political leaders and traditional authorities. Secondary beneficiaries are the institutions and private sector organizations supported through capacity strengthening.

Table 5. Primary beneficiary categories and planned numbers⁵²

Category	Receiving benefits from:	No. of people	Total beneficiaries
A	Cash transfers, inputs, tools and technical assistance (the most vulnerable)	42,840	Total number direct beneficiaries in 3 districts = 86,000
B	Inputs, tools and technical assistance (food insecure but less vulnerable people)	43,160	
C	Community assets, climate services & awareness raising	215,000	Total number direct beneficiaries in 3 districts = 215,000
D	National-level awareness raising strategy	800,000	Total number indirect beneficiaries nationally = 800,000

Source: IACOV Project Proposal to the Adaptation Fund [Phase I], April 2019

41. The IACOV Phase I Project Completion Report (August 2025) states that a total of 350,000 direct beneficiaries (60 percent female; 40 percent male; 24 percent youth) were reached through the project, receiving a combination of cash assistance, agricultural inputs, and technical support. Based on Table 4, the planned total of Category A, B and C beneficiaries was 301,000, suggesting that the project exceeded its target by 49,000 or 14 percent.⁵³

42. **Transfers:** The IACOV project included CBTs to support community asset creation and livelihood activities for Category A beneficiaries. Food was provided through school feeding and fortified maize distributions. Cash transfers were implemented with a gender-responsive approach, ensuring that a majority of recipients were female-headed households.⁵⁴ The activation of the Anticipatory Action Plan in 2023/24 brought emergency cash support to nearly 11,000 households affected by El Niño-induced drought.⁵⁵

43. **Performance against plan:** Performance of the IACOV project was assessed against planned outputs using data from WFP's ACRs, project performance reports, and the Phase I progress update. Table 6 presents achievement rates against planned targets.

Table 6. IACOV Project planned versus achieved outputs

Indicator	Year 1 % achieved	YEAR 2 % achieved	YEAR 3 % achieved	YEAR 4 % achieved	Notes	Source
Community members reached with climate adaptation awareness	95% (Green)	105% (Dark Green)	120% (Dark Green)	98% (Green)	Targets consistently met/exceeded through radio, dialogues, schools.	ACRs 2021–2024
Households receiving CBT	0% (Orange)	65% (Yellow)	85% (Green)	102% (Dark Green)	Delayed in Y1–2 due to COVID and mobile registration; strong recovery in Y4 via Anticipatory Action Plan.	Year 3 & 4 Performance Reports (2023 & 2024)

⁵² The project planned to target 60 percent female and 40 percent male beneficiaries for categories A and B. Category C beneficiaries represent the total population of the three southern districts of 215,000, of which 52 percent are women/girls; 48 percent are men/boys; and 24 percent are youth (IACOV Project Proposal to the Adaptation Fund [Phase I], April 2019).

⁵³ It is not entirely clear how the beneficiary numbers were recorded or calculated by the project; it seems likely that some beneficiaries may have been double counted from one year to the next.

⁵⁴ IACOV Phase I Progress Update – August 2024; Lesotho Annual Country Report (2024).

⁵⁵ Year 4 Project Performance Report – IACOV (2024).

Hectares of rangeland rehabilitated	80% (Green)	92% (Green)	110% (Dark Green)	115% (Dark Green)	Targets exceeded due to strong community uptake and multi-year support.	ACRs; Progress Update 2024
Farmers trained in climate-smart practices	70% (Yellow)	88% (Green)	101% (Dark Green)	95% (Green)	Year 1 lagged due to restrictions; subsequent catch-up.	ACRs (2021-2024); Y3 Report (2023)
Households supported with gardens and orchards	60% (Yellow)	75% (Green)	96% (Green)	120% (Dark Green)	Delays in Y1-2 from input procurement; scale-up in Y3-4.	Year 2-4 Reports (2022, 2023, 2024)
Nutrition clubs established	—	55% (Yellow)	95% (Green)	108% (Dark Green)	Clubs grew rapidly by Y4, promoting dietary diversity and gender equality.	Progress Update 2024
Persons with disabilities reached	—	40% (Orange)	65% (Yellow)	85% (Green)	Reporting improved only in Y3-4; data still partial.	ACR 2023; Progress Update 2024
Map rooms installed/operational at LMS	50% (Orange)	70% (Yellow)	90% (Green)	90% (Green)	Delays due to sustainability issues with International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI); Map rooms have yet to be migrated to Python.	Y2-4 Reports (2022, 2023, 2024), KI feedback

Sources: as listed in last column of table. Key: **Dark Green**: ≥100% of plan; **Green**: 75%-99% of plan; **Yellow**: 74%-50% of target; **Orange**: <50% of target; **grey**: no target. ---- no value reported

44. **Cross-cutting results:** The IACOV project design and reporting frameworks incorporated several cross-cutting themes, aligned with WFP's corporate commitments and national priorities. Table 7 summarizes the main indicators and progress reported in various documents.

Table 7. Summary of progress on cross-cutting themes

Cross-Cutting Theme	Indicator / Evidence	Reported Progress	Source Document
GEWE	% of female-headed households receiving cash-based transfers	7,643 out of 11,759 CBT households were female-headed (~65%)	Progress Update 2024; ACR 2024
	Women in leadership roles (FBOs, nutrition clubs, VSLAs)	Documented participation, with >50% women across most structures	Progress Update 2024
	Share of women among direct beneficiaries	~51% of ~175,000 direct beneficiaries	Y3-Y4 Reports (2023, 2024)
Accountability to Affected Populations	Feedback mechanisms established	Community meetings, radio, help desks during CBTs - not systematically monitored	Progress Update 2024
	Community participation in planning	District authorities and councils involved in asset/rangeland planning	ACRs 2022-2024
Protection	% of households reporting joint decision-making on CBT use	67% reported joint decision-making (male/female)	Mid-Term Review 2023
	Risk reduction activities (e.g., stoves, woodlots)	Fuel-efficient stoves and woodlots reduced firewood collection burden on women	Y3 Report (2023)
Environment & Climate	Hectares (ha) of rangeland rehabilitated	62,411 ha rehabilitated by 2024	Progress Update 2024

	Climate services strengthened	Map rooms ⁵⁶ installed at LMS; seasonal forecasts used for anticipatory action	Y2–Y4 Reports (2022, 2023, 2024)
Inclusion	Persons with disabilities reached	2,161 reported among direct beneficiaries	ACR 2023; Progress Update 2024

Sources: as listed in last column of table

1.4. Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

45. The evaluation sought to answer the evaluation questions (EQs) presented in Table 8, defined in the evaluation ToR and refined during the inception phase. During inception, the ET completed an evaluability assessment highlighting potential issues and mitigation measures put in place (see Annex 5). The EQs are organised according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, plus the additional AF criteria of equity, scalability and adaptive management. Impact was not included in the ToR because WFP considered that the period of implementation was too short for significant impacts to have been achieved, especially given the constraints relating to the COVID pandemic. No particular criteria were prioritized, though specific attention was given to sustainability, as noted in the ToR and highlighted by the inception consultations. Human rights and gender equality were considered as standalone criteria, addressed by EQ5 (equity).

Table 8 Evaluation questions

Relevance
EQ1: How relevant were the intended project outcomes to the climate adaptation needs of the target communities and groups?
1.1 To what extent and how was the Adaptation Fund project and intended outcomes relevant to the needs and priorities of the targeted communities including target vulnerable groups?
1.2 How relevant is the programme framework in addressing current and evolving climate shocks?
Coherence
EQ2: How consistent is the project with the climate adaptation policies, strategies, priorities, requirements and expectations of the Government of Lesotho, as well as other interventions in Lesotho implemented by the Government, WFP and other stakeholders operating within the same context
Effectiveness
EQ3: To what extent did the project achieve its intended goal in terms of improving adaptive capacity and household resilience?
3.1 To what extent and how did the programme achieve its intended objectives (based on the outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework) and contribute to changes in community practices or behaviours that indicate improved resilience in the short, medium and long term?
3.2 What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement and non-achievement of the Adaptation Fund project objectives, and how did these factors play a role?
3.3 To what extent did the project adhere to WFP's environmental and social standards?
Efficiency
EQ4: To what extent were Adaptation Fund project activities implemented in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and what opportunities exist for improved efficiency in future programming?

⁵⁶ Map rooms refer to web-based climate information platforms hosted by LMS that visualise and analyse forecast and historical weather data. The IACOV project supported map-room functionality based on IRI Data Library architecture and later transitioned to Python-based tools for sustainability. These platforms support monitoring of forecast thresholds used in anticipatory action.

Equity
EQ5: To what extent did the project cater to the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, minorities and other potentially marginalized groups, in the target communities?
5.1 To what extent have the intended outputs, outcomes, and strategic results of the project been achieved equitably across all target demographics, including women, vulnerable and marginalized populations?
5.2 How were women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups engaged during the planning and implementation phases of the project, and to what extent were their viewpoints adopted?
Sustainability
EQ6: How well did the project consider the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions for the various beneficiaries?
6.1 What mechanisms were established to support the continuation of the project by the government after completion, and how likely are they to ensure the continuation of both the project and its benefits?
6.2 To what extent and how were target groups provided with skills, knowledge or resources to maintain the resilience-building and adaptation interventions independently, and how likely are they to ensure sustainability?
Scalability
EQ7: Which resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities show the most and the least promise for replication or expansion, and why?
Adaptive Management
EQ8: How, and how quickly, did the project implement operational changes and/or innovative methods or tools to enhance outcomes, processes and activities in response to feedback on its performance and potential unforeseen challenges?

46. The EQs form the evaluation's overarching analytical framework. They were disaggregated into indicators in the evaluation matrix (Annex 6). This matrix formed the basis for the data collection and analysis and traces a path from question to answer, providing sources of information and data collection methods. All tools and methodologies were based on this evaluation matrix.

47. The evaluation used a mixed methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data sources allowing for systematic triangulation of evidence through different data sources and collection methods. Data collection and analysis were participatory and gender responsive (see next paragraph). A theory-based approach⁵⁷ was applied using primary and secondary data to validate the ToC with empirical evidence of implementation in relation to its context and outcomes and to assess the extent to which critical assumptions were upheld, thus drawing conclusions regarding the effectiveness of programme as well as identifying areas that need further strengthening. A theory-based approach is particularly relevant to generating a nuanced understanding of effectiveness and equity.

48. **Gender, equity and inclusion:** The evaluation considers gender, equity and inclusion through the inclusion of Equity as a standalone criteria (EQ5) as well as disaggregating analysis by gender (both gender of household head and gender of beneficiary), age, marital status, disability and HIV status where data was available. Although the phone survey was designed for these types of disaggregation, the existing monitoring data had limited disaggregation, particularly in the early part of the project (Annex 5). To ensure inclusive representation the ET adopted a purposeful and inclusive sampling approach. Where possible, the ET assessed how intersecting identities shaped experiences of vulnerability, access and empowerment. This included examining barriers to inclusion, such as cultural norms, physical accessibility, and outreach

⁵⁷ Theory-based evaluation is an approach to evaluation (i.e., a conceptual analytical model) and not a specific method or technique. It is a way of structuring and undertaking analysis in an evaluation. A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results.

limitations, as well as identifying any unintended consequences of project activities. The analysis also considered whether the project contributed to increased agency, voice, and leadership opportunities for marginalized populations, while ensuring that interventions upheld the principles of equity, intersectionality, and the “do no harm” principle.

49. The evaluation applied the Office of Evaluation (OEV) Technical Notes on integrating gender and disability in WFP evaluations, the Evaluation Performance Indicator (EPI) of the UN System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) Indicator 10 to mainstream gender and disability throughout the evaluation.

50. **Data collection methods:** The evaluation team used five different and complementary data collection methods to answer the EQs, as summarised in Table 9 below. These methods covered the diversity of stakeholders involved in the IACOV Project. The ET systematically explored unanticipated effects through all data collection methods. Each of the data collection methods is described in Annex 5; data collection tools are available in Annex 7.

Table 9 Summary of data collection tools and purpose

Tool	Stakeholders	Geographic scope	Purpose	Sample size (% women)
Desk review ⁵⁸	All	n/a	To provide evidence relevant to all EQs and sub-EQs about the project itself and the broader context, including relevant policies and strategies	n/a
Survey	Category A beneficiaries	10 selected project sites from target districts	To capture quantitative, differentiated insights from beneficiaries that complement qualitative findings and strengthen triangulation, especially in relation to EQs 3 and 5.	271 (71%)
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), including Most Significant Change (MSC) Stories ⁵⁹	Selected stakeholders from WFP, GoL, UN agencies, NGOs, media, schools, and beneficiary communities.	International, regional, national (Maseru), target districts, and selected project sites	To gather insights from all types of stakeholders to compile evidence relating to all EQs and sub-EQs. MSC stories aimed to capture outcome-level narratives that reflect how IACOV influenced the lives of individuals	81 (64%)
FGDs ⁶⁰	Primary beneficiaries	4 selected project sites across 3 districts	To capture beneficiaries' perspectives on the project and explore gendered and age-specific dimensions of project inclusivity, the sources and uptake of climate information, and resilience	158 (70%)
Direct observation	Primary and secondary	4 selected project sites	To verify the existence, condition, and usage of project-supported assets	n/a

⁵⁸ List of documents reviewed is provided in 0

⁵⁹ Key informants' overview is provided in Annex 9

⁶⁰ FGD overview is provided in Annex 9

	beneficiaries (Categories A-D) at community level	across 3 districts, plus Agricultural Resource Centres (ARCs) and schools	and the adoption of climate-resilient practices	
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51. **Sampling:** Sampling strategies are summarised in Table 10 below. Further details are provided in Annex 5. Together, the sampling strategies ensured representation of the diversity of types of stakeholders, activities and contexts being evaluated. As noted in Tables 10 and 11, the relatively small sample size is sufficient for a light-touch perception survey, particularly where the purpose is triangulation rather than impact attribution, and allows for meaningful geographic and demographic representation across the three target districts.

Table 10 Summarised sampling strategies

Method	Sampling strategy
KIIs and FGDs	Following the stakeholder mapping exercise, key informants (KIs) were selected through a purposive sampling approach to ensure a diversity of institutional roles, levels of engagement, and geographic representation. Among the beneficiaries, the sampling approach was designed to ensure the inclusion of women, men and youth, including the vulnerable and persons with disabilities where possible.
Survey	A two-stage sampling design was used to select the beneficiaries to participate in the phone survey combining purposive selection of 10 sites (first stage) with random selection of Category A beneficiary households. Results provide findings at a 95% confidence level and $\pm 6.2\%$ margin of error, a level of precision is generally acceptable for light-touch perception surveys in similar contexts.
Site visits	The ET visited the district headquarters in each of the three districts. Within the three districts, four project sites were visited. Selection criteria for the project sites included ecology (highland, foothills, lowland, river valley), accessibility, and the diversity and performance of project activities.

52. **Data analysis:** For the quantitative data, to correct for introduced sampling errors due to the deviation from the initial allocation of the quantitative sample across project sites, the evaluation applied post-stratification weights based on the target number of interviews per site, h . All descriptive statistics and analytical tables in this report therefore use these target-based design weights. Qualitative data analysis relied largely on content and comparative analysis, supported by the use of artificial intelligence (AI)⁶¹ to list, compare and synthesize KII and FGD transcripts and notes for specified themes or topics. All AI-generated results were carefully checked for accuracy. Human-led inquiry was used for more nuanced analysis relating to gender, equity and social inclusion.

53. **Triangulation** was a vital tool for validating and analysing findings to ensure quality and avoid bias. Triangulation included a) source triangulation – comparing information from different sources; b) method triangulation – comparing information collected by different methods; and c) investigator triangulation – involving more than one evaluator to assess the same issues. Qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated in the analysis of each topic (notably EQs 3 and 5) and combined in the presentation of evidence and findings in this evaluation report.

⁶¹ Different AI platforms and models were tested by members of the ET, and the main ones used were: (i) Gemini on KonTerra's dedicated ET Workspace; and (ii) GPT4All v.3.10.0 with Reasoner v.1. See Paragraph 54 for ethical and data protection safeguards.

54. **Stakeholder engagement:** Data collection utilized an inclusive and participatory methodology and sampling processes to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations were integrated into the evaluation. The ET presented and discussed preliminary findings with key stakeholders at a Fieldwork Debriefing Workshop in Maseru on 1st December 2025 (including remote participants). Additionally, a remote Learning and Validation Workshop was held during the report review process on 1st April, 2026.

55. **Quality assurance and ethical issues:** WFP decentralized evaluations must conform to WFP and UNEG ethical standards and norms. The ET was responsible for safeguarding and ensuring ethics during the conduct of the evaluation. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation results in no harm to participants or their communities. During data analysis, the ET ensured that the perceptions and priorities of women, men and persons with disabilities were represented in the findings. Gender, equity and wider inclusion issues were considered in findings, conclusions and recommendations, including exploration of unanticipated effects. The use of AI for data analysis was agreed with the Evaluation Managers and followed the latest WFP guidance.⁶²

56. **Limitations:** Limitations and mitigation strategies applied during the evaluation are described in Table 11 below. The first three points were identified by the initial evaluability assessment (Annex 5). The other points became apparent during the data collection phase. Overall, none of the limitations described here are considered to have had any major effect on the evaluation findings.

Table 11. Limitations and mitigation measures

Limitation	Mitigation measure	Effect on evaluation
Lack of a project theory of change	The ET drafted a reconstructed ToC to support the evaluation	No effect
Weaknesses in documentation and monitoring data	The use of mixed methods helped address limitations in particular sources. Where feasible, the phone survey was designed to fill existing data gaps ⁶³	No major effect
Limited number of sites visited by the ET; inability to visit to any mountain sites.	Site selection for qualitative data collection was designed to be as representative as possible. The use of mixed methods allowed for quantitative data and insights to be gathered for mountain sites.	No major effect
Inability to meet with herders	Particular efforts were made to gather data relating to herders from KIIs and the document review	No major effect
Limited number of FGDs with men and youth	Particular efforts were made to triangulate primary data collected from men and youth	No major effect
Limited number of MSC stories	Efforts were made to collect MSC stories from a range of different beneficiary types in those sites where MSC stories were collected	No major effect
Large number of failed calls in	Prior sensitisation among project beneficiaries	No effect

⁶² WFP Info Brief: Ethical Use of AI in WFP Evaluations

⁶³ The data collected by the phone survey included disaggregated data (by sex, age, and vulnerability); percentage of targeted community members receiving key messages on climate change adaptation, food security and nutrition; self-reported climate adaptation practices; perceptions of household and community resilience; as well as use of climate forecasts and early warning messages. See Annex 7 for survey questionnaire.

implementing phone survey	about survey; enumerators made up to three calls at different times of day before recording a failed call. Although the number of respondents in some sites was either above or below the planned target for the site, this was mitigated by weighting the results at the analysis stage, as described above (Paragraph 52).	
Recall bias for some survey respondents	Since some of the survey respondents had been involved in the IACOV cash for public works activities some two or three years previously, some had difficulty in remembering the details required to complete the survey questions. In these cases, enumerators had to probe to elicit responses.	No major effect
The survey sample was not designed to draw comparisons among groups within a specific district or ecology.	Most comparisons are drawn across the sample as a whole. Where relevant, confidence intervals and p-values have been included in the presentation of the data results.	No major effect

2. Evaluation findings

2.1. Evaluation question 1: Relevance

How relevant were the intended project outcomes to the climate adaptation needs of the target communities and groups?

Summary box

Finding 1.1 The IACOV project is well aligned with and directly addresses community-identified climate adaptation needs through strong analysis, inclusive and well-focused geographical targeting, and adaptive design. However, project outcomes and approaches related to community resilience did not sufficiently incorporate in practice aspects related to social and cultural dimensions, local knowledge, and governance and local leadership capacity.

EQ 1.1 To what extent and how was the Adaptation Fund project and intended outcomes relevant to the needs and priorities of the targeted communities including target vulnerable groups?

57. **The IACOV Project Proposal contains a high-quality contextual and vulnerability analysis.** It draws on evidence from documented sources relating to environmental and agro-ecological conditions, socio-economic characteristics, and climate change vulnerabilities, impacts and risks. The analysis assesses the current and future impacts of climate change on livelihoods, food security and nutrition, and considers the factors that limit adaptive capacity and exacerbate vulnerability to climate change, including the ways in which gender inequalities contribute to vulnerability.

58. **Extensive consultations were undertaken at national, district and community levels as part of the IACOV design process.**⁶⁴ A series of meetings were held with senior administrative and technical officials from the relevant ministries, CBOs, academia, NGOs, UN Agencies and the Delegation of the EU to ensure alignment with national policies and strategies, discuss lessons learned, and identify synergies with ongoing initiatives. Two scoping missions took place to the three districts in July 2017 and June 2018, involving consultations at the district and community levels. At the district level, meetings with DDMTs gathered insights on local challenges, needs and priorities, and ensured alignment with district development plans. Community-level consultations were conducted in 16 community councils across the three southern districts at the project design stages. These consultations included large, inclusive community gatherings, FGDs, and a household survey questionnaire in which vulnerable groups such as women, youth, elderly, people with disabilities, and people living with HIV/AIDS were represented, with an overall gender balance of 60 percent women and 40 percent men.⁶⁵ In January 2018, WFP conducted Community Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) sessions in five Community Councils to develop Community Action Plans (CAPs) based on local challenges and priorities. CBPP exercises were subsequently organized at each project site, involving diverse community representation. Chiefs and councillors endorsed the CAPs, forming a basis for IACOV as well as interventions by other projects. CAPs included activities to build resilience at both community and household levels, though activities were not differentiated as such. Focus group participants highlighted the participatory and inclusive nature of the CBPP process.

59. **The IACOV strategies were justified in relation to local and government needs.** The aforementioned analysis and consultations enabled identification of barriers to climate change adaptation

⁶⁴ These are described in the IACOV Project Document, with notes and key points from the various consultations presented in Annex 6 of the Project Document. The same annex also includes summaries of the community consultations and results from the household survey.

⁶⁵ IACOV Project Proposal to the Adaptation Fund [Phase I], April 2019.

at district and community levels, summarized in Box 1. IACOV project approach and outcomes respond directly to the needs and priorities identified by targeted and vulnerable groups at the community level. FGDs confirmed that project participants were affected by changes in weather patterns; for example, male participants said that:

Drought is now every year. The river dries even before Christmas. Frost kills everything we plant early.

IACOV project outcomes addressed barriers identified in the project proposal at the government and community level (Table 12).

Table 12 Barriers to climate change adaptation and identified project outcomes to address

Identified Risk / Barrier	Relevant Outcome(s)
Government level	
Lack of tools linking climate trends and future climate forecasts	1.1, 1.2
Safety nets not shock-adaptive nor shock-responsive	3.1
Lack of technical capacities and resources at district level	1.1, 1.2
Lack of interconnectedness of climate interventions due to a project-based approach	1.1, 1.2
Slow or limited integration of climate information into national programmes and policies	1.1, 1.2
Inadequate cross-sectoral coordination, with limited participation of women in decision-making	1.1, 1.2
Community level	
Lack of awareness and knowledge of climate change and its impacts on livelihoods	2.1
Mismanagement of natural resources and lack of awareness of unsustainable practices	2.1, 3.1
Superstitious beliefs overriding scientific information	2.1, 3.1
Lack of adaptation options and practices to reduce vulnerability and strengthen preparedness	3.1
Non-diversified livelihoods increasing vulnerability to climate impacts	3.1
Lack of access to information and knowledge to manage climate variability and shocks	1.2, 2.1
Cultural practices limiting women's participation in adaptation decision-making	2.1, 3.1

Source: ET judgement and IACOV Project Proposal to the Adaptation Fund [Phase I], April 2019

60. **Project documentation and KIIs suggested that the project outcomes and approaches related to community resilience did not sufficiently incorporate in practice aspects related to social and cultural dimensions, local knowledge, and governance and local leadership capacity.** Whilst the focus of the project was on adaptive capacity, the project goal also included resilience-building. Component 3 specifically referred to resilience at community level, with emphasis on the community-based resilience and adaptation plans (CAPs). Project documentation highlighted the importance of a gender-transformative approach, yet – as elaborated in Section 2.5 – this was inadequately implemented in practice and inadvertently led to reduced community cohesion. Social capital, trust and community cohesion are essential aspects of community resilience,⁶⁶ though these aspects were perhaps not adequately considered in IACOV's approach. In some instances, for example, KIIs appeared to imply that the implementation of communal activities and the presence of communal assets equated to community resilience, suggesting a somewhat narrow understanding of the deeper levels at which social capital, trust and community cohesion operate. Similarly, although IACOV recognized the importance of understanding traditional or local knowledge relating to climate change, the project was unable to apply this understanding in practice. As highlighted in Section 2.3, weaknesses in the VDMTs and the leadership capacities of farmer groups suggest that the project

⁶⁶ Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030): Building a Resilient and Prosperous Nation, September, 2019.

underestimated the importance of these structures to community-level resilience.

61. **The geographic targeting strategy appropriately targeted high-risk southern districts and vulnerable communities facing drought, frost, windstorms and increasing climate variability and avoided duplication.** Within each district, key informants confirmed that project sites were purposefully selected according to their vulnerability to climate change, avoiding areas that were already receiving on-going support from other projects, including various NGO projects and a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Project providing similar support.⁶⁷ Efforts were made to target hard-to-reach locations that were typically left out of other projects and lacked services. Whilst these geographical criteria clearly targeted those communities most in need of external support, it also meant access to some of the project sites was particularly challenging; implementing staff reported that they had to travel by horseback to reach the most remote sites. In the case of Lithakaling (Mohale's Hoek District) and Ha Mohlakoana (Quthing District) sites, the IACOV project followed on from earlier development efforts,⁶⁸ providing much-needed continuity and offering an advantageous starting point for IACOV activities.

62. **Within the selected sites, the targeting of Category A and B beneficiaries was purposefully inclusive and based largely on self-selection to ensure that the most vulnerable were targeted.** All those who came to the initial community gathering were invited to register, and efforts were made to ensure representation from all sectors of the community, including women, men, youth, the elderly, and PwDs. In smaller communities, it was reported that all households were registered, and – over the course of time – all registered households participated in the cash for public works programme.⁶⁹ In larger communities, it was reported that a participatory process was used to categorise households according to vulnerability/wealth status to ensure that the most vulnerable were included. Under the IACOV Anticipatory Action (AA) response (see Paragraph 65 [EQ 1.2]), beneficiary targeting was based on existing lists that had been developed earlier by the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA).⁷⁰ Where such lists did not exist, or needed updating, a community participatory process was used to categorise households according to their vulnerability status so that the most vulnerable could then be targeted for AA assistance.

EQ 1.2. How relevant is the programme framework in addressing current and evolving climate shocks?

63. **The IACOV programme framework was formulated based on a good understanding of current and evolving climate shocks.** Drawing on data provided by the LMS, the IACOV project proposal details recent and evolving climate trends and future projections. It describes the projected climate change scenarios for Lesotho for 2030, 2050 and 2080, including increasing temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns, decreasing summer precipitation, increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as drought, heavy rainfall, hailstorms, prolonged mid-season dry spells, and late start and early end of the rainy season. The project proposal further describes how recurrent droughts and increasing climate hazards are already eroding rural livelihoods and coping capacities, leaving vulnerable communities with insufficient time to recover between events. The 2016 El Niño drought left nearly half of rural Lesotho needing emergency support, worsening food insecurity and income loss, particularly for vulnerable subsistence farming households headed by widows or those with few assets and employment opportunities. The 2016 drought provides evidence of the occurrence and impacts of climate-related shocks, highlighting the need for increased adaptive capacity among vulnerable farming households. Similarly, the El Niño drought of 2024

⁶⁷ 'Reducing vulnerability to climate change in the lowlands and the Senqu River Valley' (RVCC)

⁶⁸ Lithakaling had previously received support from the RVCC Project. In Mohlakoana, it was reported that the community themselves had earlier formed a group, with facilitation from a previous community councillor, but no external support.

⁶⁹ The cash for public works programme was implemented seasonally over the course of three months in each of the first three years of the IACOV project. The programme involved different types of public works activities for which participants received a cash payment. The overall length of the working period per participant varied across different sites (30 days in some cases; or three months in other cases), depending on the number of beneficiaries and the type of activity.

⁷⁰ NISSA is a national database and social registry, developed to help coordinate social protection programs, reduce inefficiencies, and better target aid to vulnerable households by collecting comprehensive socio-economic data.

further reinforced the urgency of effective strategies and support to farmers in coping with recurrent shocks.

64. Community members in the sites visited confirmed that the types of climate-related shocks and hazards that they experienced (i.e. drought and the rapid loss of soil moisture/rapid drying out of rivers and streams, changing rain patterns, strong winds, hail, flooding, heatwaves, early or late frosts) were addressed by the project. Whilst IACOV was designed to respond primarily to drought and water-related hazards, in practice, the advice provided to farmers appeared to cover a broad range of climate-related shocks and hazards. However, there was less consistency regarding the extent to which the project addressed shocks related to pests. The IACOV project document clearly recognises that current climatic trends are associated with increasing incidence of pests and diseases and proposes the promotion of integrated pest management (IPM) to address this. The problem of pests was evidenced in data collection with women, men and youth farmers in three out of the four sites visited by the ET reported that they had experienced recurrent problems with pests. However, pest-related training/advice had only been provided in one of these sites. Limited coverage of pest-related training/advice is also confirmed in IACOV Process Monitoring Reporting. The May 2023 Report found that – out of respondents who received support from extension officers – less than a quarter (23 percent) received pest control advice.⁷¹ Farmers expressed the need for additional support in relation to pests, including birds, fall army worm and porcupines.

65. **Appropriate design adaptations were made in response to the severity of the El Niño drought of 2024.** The 2024 drought led to the declaration of a national food insecurity disaster in July 2024, which was subsequently extended through to March 2025. This shock reinforced the urgency of effective forecasting and climate change adaptation measures and prompted the integration of AA planning and associated forecast-based financing within the IACOV Project. As such, seasonal forecasts provided by the LMS were able to trigger early cash transfers to vulnerable households ahead of drought conditions. This effectively shifts emergency interventions from reactive – and often late – responses to proactive, risk-informed programming.⁷² The integration of AA support within the IACOV Project provides an example of an appropriate project design adaptation in response to evolving climate shocks during the project implementation period. On the ground, the activation of AA mechanisms in July 2023 led to the scaling-up of CBTs, rescheduling of community asset activities, and intensified early-warning and climate information dissemination.⁷³

2.2. Evaluation question 2: Coherence

How consistent is the project with the climate adaptation policies, strategies, priorities, requirements and expectations of the Government of Lesotho, as well as other interventions in Lesotho implemented by the Government, WFP and other stakeholders operating within the same context?

Summary box

Finding 2.1 IACOV demonstrated strong alignment with GoL priorities through close national and district engagement; alignment and contribution to policies, strategies and approaches; technically consistent interventions; and effective synergies with other programmes, despite some operational challenges in

⁷¹ Just 52% of HHS interviewed acknowledged that they received any support at all from extension officers.

⁷² IACOV Phase I Progress Update – August 2024.

⁷³ Although the ET had hoped to explore the outcomes of AA activities at the household and community levels, it proved impossible to distinguish AA activities from similar activities implemented under IACOV outside the AA response. This was because the AA activities were broadly the same as other IACOV activities (e.g. dissemination of early warning messages; provision of agricultural inputs; cash-based transfers) and differed only in timing.

applying integrated catchment management.

Finding 2.2 Internal coherence with the policies and programmes of WFP Lesotho is illustrated through IACOV's alignment with both the previous and the current WFP Lesotho CSPs (2019–24 and 2024–29), as well as practical linkages with the WFP school feeding programme.

66. **Government officials at both national and district levels were heavily involved in design phase consultations, ensuring synergies and coordination with government policies and other projects.** This involvement occurred both during the development of the concept note and also during bi-weekly technical meetings and/or monthly meetings throughout the project proposal formulation period. Those consulted at the national level came from ten different ministry departments or offices.⁷⁴ Those consulted at the district level included the District Administrator and members of the DDMTs in each district, representing all relevant Heads of Departments.⁷⁵

67. **The IACOV proposal details the ways in which the project is coherent with over ten different national plans, policies and strategies.** Policies with which IACOV was aligned included the National Strategic Development Plan II (2019), the National Climate Change Policy (2017–2027), and the National Adaptation Programme of Action (2015). More specifically, IACOV Project Component 2 contributes directly to the achievement of Policy Statement 19 of the National Climate Change Policy: 'Implement education, training, public awareness and communication programmes'.⁷⁶ Component 3 was designed in accordance with the National School Feeding Policy by linking smallholder producers with buyers involved in the GoL nationally funded school meals programme. Also under Component 3, IACOV's asset building approach was designed to be consistent with the National Gender and Development Policy (2015) by ensuring that the assets created respond to various gender roles and contribute to the reduction of workload for women, enhance women's and youth access to income generating activities, and facilitate their active participation in markets.⁷⁷ Asset creation activities were planned to be used as a pathway to disseminate information about gender and GBV issues, and to increase the knowledge of women on their rights, including the Lesotho Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 9 (2006), and the Lesotho Land Act 8 (2010), so that household-level created assets are protected.⁷⁸ These different linkages were confirmed by KIIs and FGDs undertaken by the ET.

68. **The IACOV Project built on, complemented and/or strengthened other interventions operating in the same context.** The project proposal details 12 other projects that it planned to complement (provided in Annex 10). KII's confirmed eight of these projects⁷⁹ who described various types of complementarities (or potential complementarity) with IACOV. The RVCC Project, for example had developed and piloted climate-smart agriculture manuals, training and practices that were used and scaled up by IACOV's school-based activities, along with lessons learned from the RVCC experience (see paragraph 60). In addition to the projects listed in Annex 10, KIIs also referred to synergies with the national school feeding programme in relation to strengthening market linkages and nutrition; one female beneficiary stated that:

Kids get food at school and the local purchase of produce for school feeding supports the cooperative and local farmers.

An additional project mentioned by the KIIs but not included in the IACOV Project Proposal was the Agricultural

⁷⁴ These are listed in the IACOV Project Proposal and include: LMS; DMA; MoAFS (Department of Crops, Department of Livestock, Department of Research); MFRSC (Department of Rangeland Conservation, Department Soil & Water Conservation); Ministry of Water; Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs; and the National Curriculum Development Centre (MoET).

⁷⁵ IACOV Project Proposal to AF [Phase I], April 2019

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

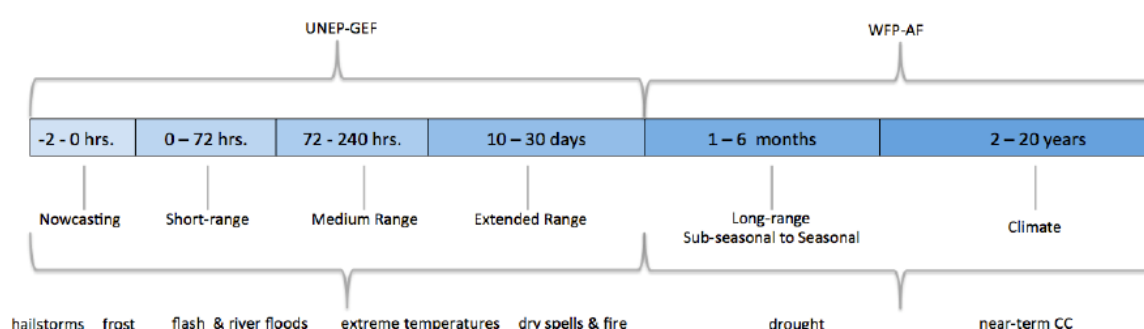
⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Listed in the same order as they appear in Annex 10, these were: WAMP; EWS Phases I and II; the EU/BMZ ICM project (ReNOKA); RVCC; NISSA (developed under the ECHO/WFP/FAO/GoL DRR Project); SADP; and NAP.

Productivity Programme for Southern Africa (APPSA). Although there was no direct overlap or formal coordination between APPSA and IACOV, APPSA's demonstrations and trials with lead farmers could potentially inform IACOV's interventions.

69. **Particular efforts were made to ensure complementarity between the IACOV Project Proposal and the LMS/UNEP GEF EWS Phase II project.** Overlaps and duplication were avoided by an agreement that IACOV would focus on a specialised sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) precipitation and temperature forecasting system while EWS Phase II focus is on shorter-range hazards (flooding, frost, extreme temperatures etc.) (Figure 2). The projects were working in different districts but Ministry and project staff shared their experiences and collaborated for the development of early warning products and standard operating procedures (SOP) on drought early action. Effective coordination was supported by having the same Project Steering Committee (PSC) for both projects. This arrangement allowed for cooperation, for example, around the procurement of Automated Weather Stations (AWS) and High-Performance Computing System (HPC).⁸⁰ This cooperation came at the cost of additional coordination efforts required at the District and local levels to ensure that the AWS provided by the different projects were installed in appropriate and complementary locations.

Figure 2. Differential forecast range supported by the UNEP-GEF and WFP-AF IACOV projects



Source: IACOV Project Proposal to AF [Phase I], April 2019.

70. **IACOV was able to complement and enhance the work of the MAFSN, though the MEF staff faced technical challenges in some cases.** Broadly-speaking, IACOV applied approaches consistent with those applied by relevant ministries, for example in relation to soil and water conservation, rangeland management, climate smart agriculture, nutrition, livelihood diversification, marketing, etc. For example, the CPBB approach, for example, resonates well with MAFSN Unified Extension System; IACOV's support for Nutrition Clubs is consistent with the nutrition club model being implemented nationwide by the Department of Nutrition. Although the IACOV Project Proposal states that MEF's Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) approach would be applied, one KI reported challenges in reconciling IACOV's project sites (based on administrative boundaries) with the sub-catchments that form the basis of the ICM approach whereby some community councils reportedly resisted participation unless the entire sub-catchment was included. This led to delays in initiating soil conservation activities in some areas, and some conservation interventions implemented in the lower part of a catchment area proved to be ineffective because upstream issues relating to erosion and poor water management had not first been addressed.

⁸⁰ IACOV Project Completion Report to AF

Figure 3 Example of soil conservation by planting in gulleys



Source: Evaluation Team, November 2025

71. As described above (Paragraph 60), geographical targeting of the IACOV project sites at the district level was determined according to vulnerability to climate change, focusing on areas that were not in receipt of on-going support from similar projects, including more remote areas that the Ministries would otherwise find it difficult to reach. Selected Ministry staff were involved in the monitoring of the IACOV project, collecting data on a monthly and quarterly basis, and allowing those involved to enhance their monitoring capacity through the use of tools such as Kobo and ODK. In Mphahle's Hoek, it was reported that a multi-ministry District Monitoring Team that was trained to monitor all IACOV activities using standard tools is being considered for institutionalization under the District Project Implementation Team (PIT).

72. **The IACOV Project supported the development of government strategies and plans.** These included the National Climate Change Communication Strategy (NCCCS)⁸¹ and the National Anticipatory Action Plan.⁸² IACOV communication activities implemented under Component 2 were developed and implemented to directly support the NCCCS (August 2021), which provides targeted, sector-specific messages in English and Sesotho, suitable for dissemination through a range of appropriate media channels, to raise climate change awareness and encourage adaptive behaviours among vulnerable stakeholders. IACOV's support to the development of the National Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) is considered by the ET to be an important and innovative aspect of the project, actively enhancing its coherence with government priorities. Climate change priorities were also incorporated into the revised National Strategic Development Plan and The Rangeland Management Bill.⁸³

⁸¹ The earlier Communication Strategy on Climate Change in Lesotho (2012) had been drafted by the LMS with support from UNDP's Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP). The 2021 strategy addresses the gaps of the earlier strategy by highlighting the link between climate change and food security and nutrition, and by refining messages to be more relevant to the current context.

⁸² Lesotho Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP), June, 2023

⁸³ IACOV Project Completion Report

73. **Internal coherence with the policies and programmes of WFP Lesotho is illustrated through IACOV's alignment with both the previous and the current WFP Lesotho CSPs (2019–24 and 2024–29).** IACOV contributed directly to the former CSP Strategic Outcome (SO) 3 on community resilience to climate shocks and SO 4 on strengthened national institutions for disaster risk management, and indirectly supported SO 2 on improved nutrition through livelihood diversification and food access.⁸⁴ IACOV component 1 contributed to CSP Activity 3 (to strengthen government capacity for early warning systems)⁸⁵ and Activity 1 (cash and food assistance);⁸⁶ Component 2 contributed to Activities 4 (in relation to advocacy) and 6 (climate smart agriculture), and Component 3 contributed to Activities 5 (resilience-building) and 6 (climate smart agriculture).⁸⁷ Under the new CSP (2024–29), the project remains highly aligned, contributing to SO 3: 'Populations at risk benefit from strengthened, climate-resilient food systems and sustainable livelihoods'. At the community level, key informants explained how IACOV was linked to the WFP school feeding programme, both in terms of the CSA practices applied in school gardens and through strengthening market linkages by connecting local farmers with traders contracted to supply food to local schools.

2.3. Evaluation question 3: Effectiveness

To what extent did the project achieve its intended goal in terms of improving adaptive capacity and household resilience?

Summary box

Finding 3.1 Despite institutional and operational weaknesses in the dissemination of seasonal forecasts and early warning information provided by LMS, approximately 60 percent of sampled IACOV beneficiaries used this information to enhance their resilience. Survey respondents reported good understanding and application of forecast and EW information, but some VDMTs indicated that messages were not always sufficiently timely, locally contextualised, or actionable to support onward dissemination and community-level decision-making.

Finding 3.2 IACOV monitoring data show a reduction in crisis and emergency coping strategies indicating a clear improvement in household food security among the most vulnerable households, meeting the target level related to Livelihood Coping Strategies (LCS). Resilience Capacity Scores (RCS) illustrate the challenges in long-term resilience building, such as limited livelihood options, market linkage challenges, and structural gender-related constraints. Resilience strategies differed among women and men; for example, men reported making decisions to save money, but women did not.

Finding 3.3 A key factor that positively influenced effectiveness was IACOV's inclusive and needs-based approach. Negative factors included: operational and coordination challenges that led to frequent delays, eroding community trust and engagement; insufficient attention to technical requirements, inadequate monitoring, and dependency on cash-for-work that affected the implementation, quality, and maintenance of some community-level soil and water conservation (SWC) assets; and inconsistent group management capacity that hampered community-level assets and activities.

⁸⁴WFP Lesotho CSP 2019–2024: SO2: "Vulnerable populations in Lesotho benefit from strengthened social protection systems that ensure access to adequate, safe and nutritious food all year round." SO3: "Vulnerable populations in Lesotho have improved nutritional status at each stage of the lifecycle, in line with national targets by 2024"; SO4: "Communities in targeted areas, especially women and young people, have resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems by 2024."

⁸⁵ Activity 3: Strengthen technical capacity of the Government in early warning, food and nutrition security monitoring and vulnerability assessment and analysis through forecast-based financing approaches'

⁸⁶ The cash assistance was provided as part of an Anticipatory Action response, hence why it is included under Component 1.

⁸⁷ Activity 5: Support the design and implementation of assets that are nutrition-sensitive and that improve and diversify the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households affected by climate change and land degradation

Finding 3.4 Weaknesses were observed in the project M&E system: some outcome indicators and measurement tools were unclear; the effectiveness of different communication channels was not measured; and the implementation of CAPS was not monitored. In general, project monitoring systems gathered large amounts of data for reporting purposes, but this information was rarely used in project management decisions or by implementing Ministries. As a result, issues and recommendations from monitoring were often ignored.

EQ 3.1 To what extent and how did the Project achieve its intended objectives (based on the outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework) and contribute to changes in community practices or behaviours that indicate improved resilience in the short, medium and long term?

74. This sub-EQ describes and explains the results for each of the four outcomes, including reflection on the IACOV Project Results Framework outcome indicator achievements where feasible. The ET faced challenges in fully assessing achievements for Outcomes 2.1 and 3.1 due to problematic indicator formulation and measurement and a lack of consistency in the available outcome monitoring results. This sub-EQ also explores existing data on Resilience Capacity Scores to assess capacities relating to resilience in the short, medium and long term.

Outcome 1.1: Increased knowledge and technical capacity at national and district levels to forecast, plan and anticipate responses to climate change impacts

75. **The IACOV project, in close collaboration with EWS Phase II, contributed to substantial strengthening of LMS technical capacity and the knowledge of LMS forecasters and climate experts.**⁸⁸

Technical and knowledge gains were particularly notable in seasonal forecasting, trigger-setting, and integration of climate information into anticipatory action planning. LMS's capacity to produce tailored sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts was strengthened through targeted training and technical backstopping from the International Research Institute (IRI). In 2023, for example, LMS staff received specialised training on the NextGen forecasting approach, enabling the combination of multiple global seasonal forecasting models to generate context-specific seasonal outlooks for Lesotho. LMS forecasters and climate experts also gained knowledge and technical expertise in modelling and the use of Pi-CPT (the latest version of Python). This knowledge and technical capacity allowed LMS to operationalise a Forecast-based Financing (FbF) decision-making tool, including a trigger-monitoring dashboard and map room, which presents seasonal forecasts by district and severity level for the December–January–February rainfall season. FGDs with farmers in the project sites visited by the ET confirmed the accuracy of these forecasts.

76. Standard Operating Procedures for drought were developed in the form of the National Anticipatory Action Plan, along with district-level plans for four districts: Mofale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Quthing, and Thaba-Tseka. These anticipatory action plans effectively transform disaster management from a reactive process to a proactive, evidence- and needs-based approach, enhancing Lesotho's readiness and resilience to climate hazards. The plans detail forecast thresholds and triggers, and outline clear, actionable steps⁸⁹ to be taken by specified partners within certain costing limits in the event of the plan's activation being triggered by a forecasted risk.

77. The improved working relationship between the LMS and DMAs has been pivotal in the development and operationalisation of anticipatory action in Lesotho. The process of developing Lesotho's anticipatory action plans was unique and provides a model for other countries to follow. It involved collaborative, multi-sectoral analysis at the district level undertaken by members of the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee and the DDMTs that was then consolidated and synthesized information at the national level.

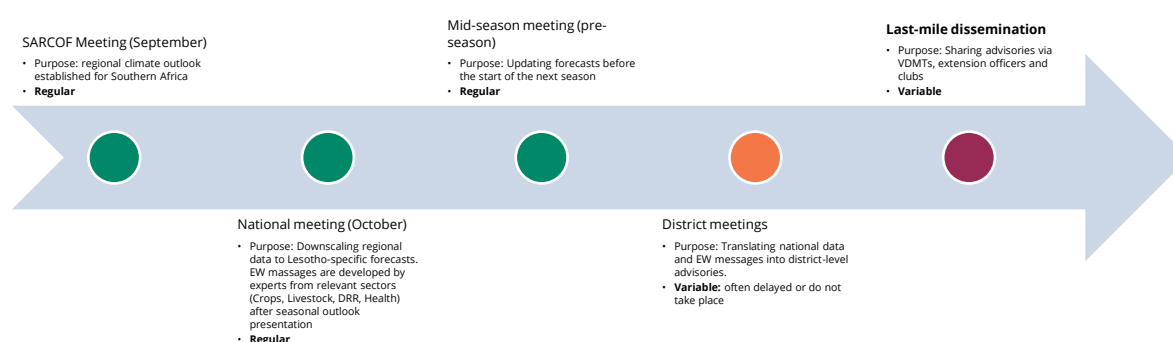
⁸⁸ KIs and project documentation review

⁸⁹ The actions include (i) the dissemination of early warning messages; (ii) the provision of agricultural inputs; (iii) the distribution of cash-based social protection transfers; and (iv) ensuring access to safe water.

Participants at the national-level workshop were trained to link forecast lead times, severity of below-average rainfall, and forecast certainty with predefined anticipatory actions (earlier identified at the district-level workshops). This process enhanced collaboration between LMS and DMA, which effectively reduced the historical “silo” practices that previously hindered their work.

78. **Despite the aforementioned gains in the national capacity to produce forecasts and early warnings, KIIs highlighted remaining challenges in the timely and actionable transmission of information from the national level to the district levels, and from the district level to the community or village level.** Both seasonal and weekly forecasts⁹⁰ are regularly disseminated nationally by radio, television, SMS, WhatsApp and social media (Facebook). Forecast information is regularly received by many farmers in the project sites visited by the ET (62 percent of female farmers and 71 percent of male farmers).⁹¹ In addition to these forms of dissemination, it is expected that the seasonal forecast information is presented, discussed and tailored by key stakeholders at a series of regional-, national- and district-level climate outlook meetings (Figure 4). While information flows at the regional and national levels generally proceed according to plan, ensuring consistent information flows from district-level downwards is increasingly difficult.

Figure 4 Seasonal forecast information flow



Source: ET, based on information from KIIs, November 2025

Outcome 1.2: Strengthened access to tailored climate services by vulnerable communities to improve decision-making for food security and livelihoods

79. **The project exceeded outcome targets with a majority of surveyed IACOV beneficiary⁹² households reporting to use seasonal climate forecasts to inform resilient livelihood and agricultural decisions.** Household Survey findings shows that 60 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries (57 percent female, 68 percent male) used seasonal forecasts in decision-making, achieving the outcome target of at least 50 percent.⁹³ Although male respondents exhibited a higher percentage of use of seasonal forecasts relative

⁹⁰ Daily forecasts are also aired on national radio and private radio stations.

⁹¹ Based on data from the Household Survey conducted by the ET, these figures are for the receipt of seasonal forecasts or EW information in the past 12 months, via any communication channel.

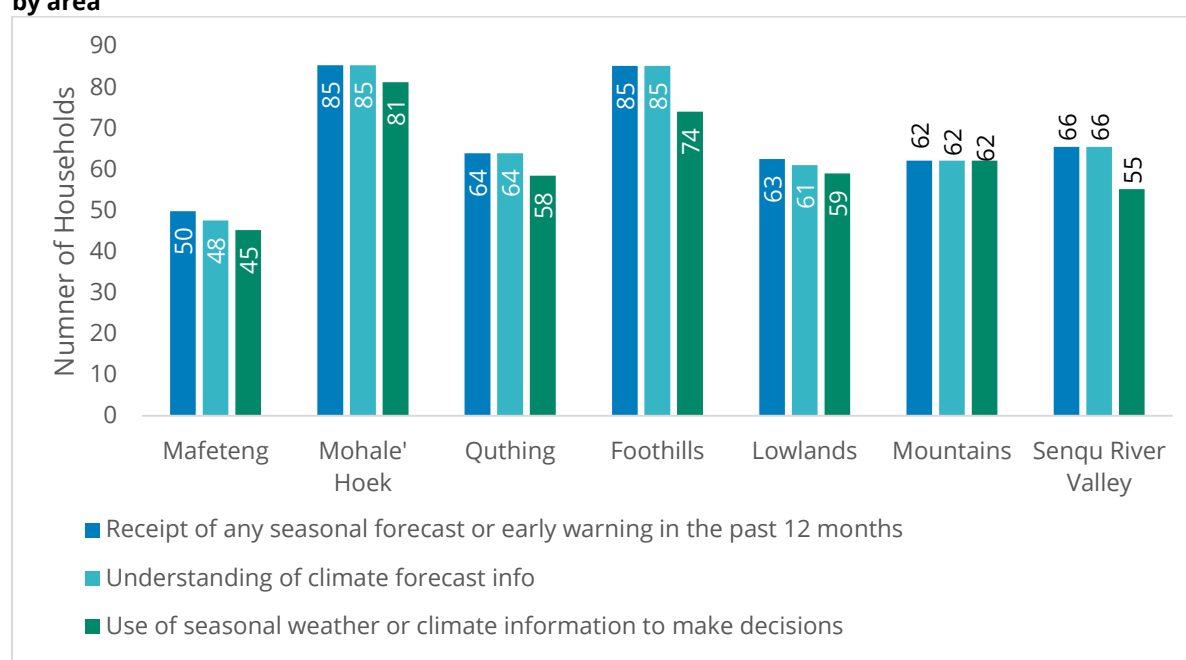
⁹² References to IACOV beneficiaries in relation to the Household Survey refer to Category A beneficiaries only, i.e. those who participated in the IACOV Cash-for-Work activities and received inputs such as shade nets, seeds, seedlings, livestock, etc. See Annex 11 for a profile of the household survey respondents.

⁹³ Overall, the Household Survey results are somewhat lower than the results from the 2024 IACOV monitoring survey, which found that 75.1percent of households accessed climate information, and 77.1 percent used it for livelihood adaptation.

to females, the estimated difference (0.11034) is not statistically significant at conventional levels ($p=0.103$). The survey asked whether respondents had: (a) received seasonal forecast or EW information in the past year; (b) whether they had understood the information; and (c) if they used the information in decision-making. The similarity in the percent that understood and used the information indicates that messaging is generally well formulated and actionable. These findings were consistent with qualitative data from the FGDs with beneficiaries: seasonal forecasts were generally received by radio or via mobile phones (SMS or Facebook), and in one of the project sites visited by the ET, someone from the DMA came in person to inform the community about the seasonal forecast. The types of decisions made by women and men based on the forecast information are presented in Table 13.

80. **Results varied substantially across ecological zones and districts.** Results varied across locations (Figure 5) indicating differences in the effectiveness of forecast dissemination and receptivity of beneficiaries across districts and ecologies. These variations are not solely attributable to differences in dissemination (e.g. in-person dissemination by the DMA, as reported by the FGDs in one district) but are also likely to be influenced by ecological factors and their direct impact on vulnerability and the feasibility of adaptation options. For instance, foothills are inherently more prone to soil erosion, and areas like Mohale's Hoek are characterized by rocky, arable land highly susceptible to erosion (Table 25, Annex 11). Such ecological specificities mean that communities in these areas may experience different levels of climate risk exposure, possess varying traditional coping mechanisms, and have access to a diverse range of viable adaptation strategies, all of which may influence their engagement with and application of seasonal forecasts.

Figure 5 Percentage of households receiving, understanding and using forecasts for decision-making by area



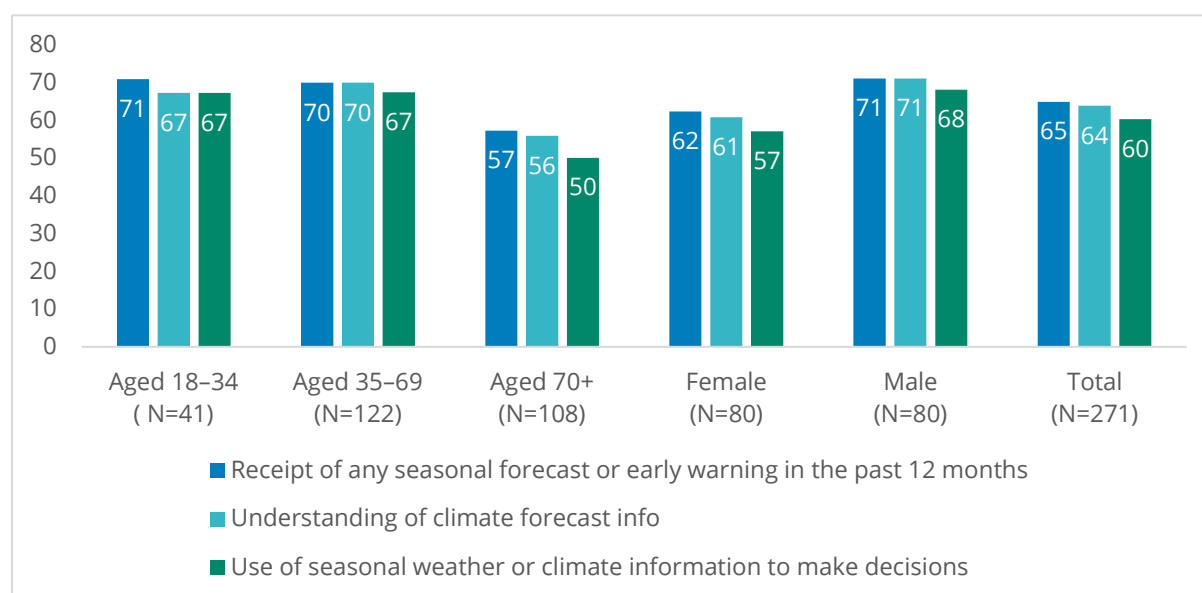
Note: Values represent percentage of households who received, understood, and applied the forecast information to at least one livelihood decision.

Source: ET Household Survey, November 2025

81. **Differences across respondent groups (Figure 6) were minimal, indicating project effectiveness for different population demographics.** The differences in the receipt of seasonal forecasts ($p=0.105$) and understanding of the climate forecasts ($p=0.090$) are statistically insignificant at 5% level of

significance⁹⁴ across the age groups, meaning that access to and understanding of climate forecasts does not vary systematically with age. However, age exerts a statistically significant effect ($p=0.021$) on use of the seasonal forecasts.⁹⁵ Statistical tests indicate that the differences between females and males are not statistically significant for receipt of messages ($p=0.188$), understanding of messages ($p=0.124$), or reported use of the information ($p=0.103$).⁹⁶ Table 13 illustrates some of the different ways in which women and men used the forecast and EW information for decision-making. Strategies differed among women and men and appeared to be consistent with gender-based responsibilities at the household level; for example, women made various decisions relating to water conservation and protection of assets, whereas men made decisions related to financial planning. Men reported making decisions to save money, but women did not, suggesting opportunities for enhancing financial savings practices among women.

Figure 6 Percentage of households receiving, understanding and using forecasts for decision-making by age and sex



Note: Values represent percentages of households who received, understood, and applied the forecast information to at least one livelihood decision.

Source: ET Household Survey, November 2025

Table 13 Examples of decisions made by women and men based on forecast and EW information

Decision area	Women	Men
Planting and crop	Adjusted planting dates (e.g. planted sorghum in Oct/Nov/Dec instead of	Delayed planting to in response to unreliable early rains or to protect

⁹⁴ Estimates are obtained from weighted ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions of each outcome variable (receipt, understanding, and use of seasonal forecasts) on age group dummy variables. F-statistics for the differences in the receipt of seasonal forecasts ($F(2,250) = 2.27$) and understanding of the climate forecasts ($F(2,250) = 2.43$, correspond to joint tests of the null hypothesis that coefficients on age categories are equal to zero relative to the omitted reference group.

⁹⁵ ($F(2,250) = 3.91$)

⁹⁶ The 95% confidence intervals for the estimated female coefficients are $[-0.217, 0.043]$ for receipt of messages, $[-0.233, 0.028]$ for self-reported understanding, and $[-0.243, 0.022]$ for use of the information. The female coefficients were obtained by regressing each outcome variable, receipt of messages, self-reported understanding of messages, and use of the information, on a binary indicator for female respondents using weighted OLS, where the coefficient captures the mean difference between female and male respondents, with males as the reference category. All intervals include zero, indicating that the null hypothesis of no gender difference cannot be rejected at the 5% significance level.

management	- September, and beans in Jan/Feb instead of December) - Planted drought-tolerant crops, e.g. sorghum - Planted vegetable seed earlier in keyhole gardens. - Used shade nets to protect vegetables and crops from heavy hail, frost, and strong winds.	- against predicted frost. - Chose drought-tolerant crop varieties.
Livestock management	- Constructed safe kraals for animals. - Planted grass for animals to provide fodder during drought.	- Purchased feed early during predicted dry seasons. - Changed herding routes.
Asset protection and water conservation	- Made furrows around the house, garden, and plots to reduce soil erosion and protect against heavy rains/flooding. - Used rainwater harvesting (e.g., filling tanks/drums) to save water. - Adopted water-efficient irrigation systems (e.g., drip irrigation). - Protected house roofs against strong winds and hailstones.	[none mentioned]
Financial planning	[none mentioned]	Made decisions to save money

Source: ET Focus Group Discussions, November 2025

Outcome 2.1 Strengthened awareness of climate change impact on food security amongst vulnerable communities and youth and knowledge of adaptation actions

82. **The results for the 'receipt of key messages' indicator are considered by the ET to be unreliable due to the ways in which these data were collected – both by the IACOV monitoring surveys and by the ET Household Survey.**⁹⁷ The IACOV monitoring surveys collected data for this indicator by asking 'Have you ever attended a consultations/meeting on climate change where you received key information about climate change adaptation / food security / nutrition' (asked as three separate questions). This assumes that all messages were communicated via meetings or consultations, and therefore fails to include the range of different communication channels used by the project. It is not clear how IACOV survey results for the source of messaging were collected, raising further questions about the validity of the results for this indicator. For example, it is not clear how 'IACOV' can be described as a distinct source, as presented in IACOV Survey Reports for November 2024 and March 2025.

83. **Household Survey results indicate achievement of outcome target related to increased knowledge, attitude and practice of adaptation actions overall.** HHS respondents recorded a relatively high level of combined knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) related to climate adaptation among targeted communities with 71 percent of respondents meeting the combined criteria of awareness, positive attitude, and at least one climate adaptation action.⁹⁸ HHS results are slightly less positive than IACOV survey results

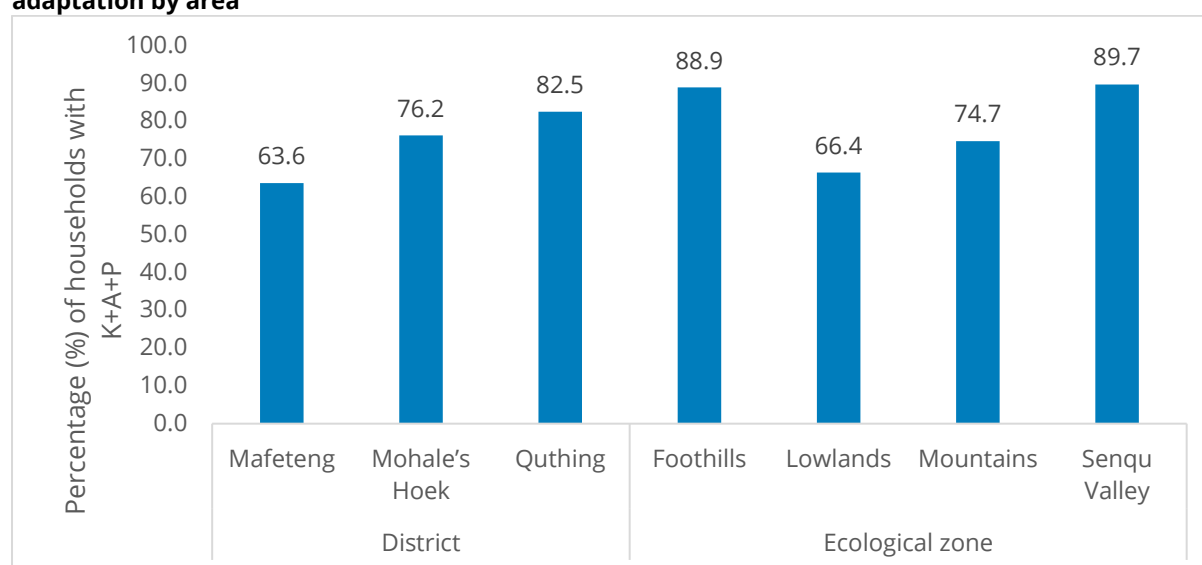
⁹⁷ It is assumed by the ET that the 'key messages' referred to by this indicator should have been those elaborated by the Climate Change Communication Strategy, yet this only became apparent after the Household Survey had been conducted. Consequently, the way in which the survey question was asked was not sufficiently specific.

⁹⁸ The KAP indicator is a composite binary measure developed by the ET in which a household is coded as '1' if it simultaneously demonstrates: (i) knowledge/awareness of climate risks, measured by having observed at least one climate-related risk or impact; (ii) a positive attitude towards adaptation, defined as agreeing or strongly agreeing that adopting improved practices is worth the effort; and (iii) practice, defined as having taken at least one concrete climate adaptation

for 2024 and 2025.⁹⁹ This relatively high level of KAP was confirmed by the FGDs with beneficiaries; overall, the attitudes were of pragmatic action and a desire for self-reliance, with a strong belief in the value of learned skills. As elaborated elsewhere in the report, however, gender-related dynamics and dependency on cash-based incentives undermined some people's willingness to participate fully in IACOV-supported activities.

84. **Results varied across districts and ecologies, with some areas below the target of 70 percent** (Figure 7). Quthing has the highest KAP rate (83 percent), and Mafeteng has the lowest (64 percent). The uneven results across districts is thought to be due mainly to differences in planning, coordination and implementation among stakeholders at the district level, which affected households' levels of access to training/knowledge and their willingness/capacity to adopt climate adaptation practices. KIs at the district level revealed differences in the coordination structures (Project Implementation Team; Heads of Department Committee) and the prominence of the DDMT across the three districts visited by the ET. As discussed above (paragraph 80), ecological zones show a pattern where the difference between the highest and lowest performance exceeds 23 percentage points, reflecting significant ecological variation in the vulnerability to climate change (affecting community members awareness/experience and attitudes towards climate change) and the range of appropriate adaptation options available to resource-poor farmers.

Figure 7 Percentage of households reporting combined knowledge, attitude, and practice on climate adaptation by area



Source: ET Household Survey, November 2025

Note: The KAP indicator is a composite binary measure developed by the ET in which a household is coded as '1' if it simultaneously demonstrates: (i) knowledge/awareness of climate risks, measured by having observed at least one climate-related risk or impact; (ii) a positive attitude towards adaptation, defined as agreeing or strongly agreeing that adopting improved practices is worth the effort; and (iii) practice, defined as having taken at least one concrete climate adaptation action.

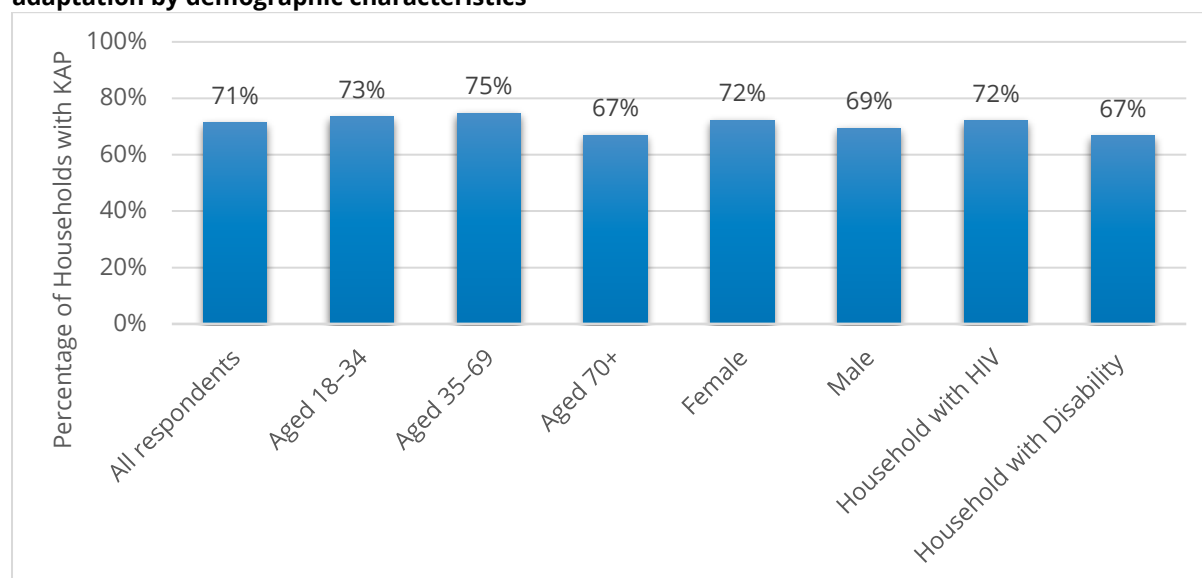
85. The similarity of findings across demographic groups suggests that all groups have the capacity to adapt to climate change (Figure 8). Tests of differences in the composite indicator of households reporting combined knowledge, attitude, and practice on climate adaptation show no statistically significant variation across respondent characteristics. The joint test for age categories ($p = 0.4297$) indicates no systematic

action.

⁹⁹ IACOV Outcome Monitoring Survey Report, November 2024 showed that 89 percent of households both understood and applied climate adaptation measures. IACOV Outcome Monitoring Survey Report, March 2025 showed 98 percent of surveyed households reported adopting such measures, and 96 percent reported to understand climate change.

differences across age groups. Similarly, there are no significant differences by gender ($p = 0.6532$), HIV status ($p = 0.7814$), or disability status ($p = 0.5593$). Overall, the results suggest that variation in the composite climate adaptation indicator is not statistically associated with age, gender, HIV status, or disability status within the sample.

Figure 8 Percentage of households reporting combined knowledge, attitude, and practice on climate adaptation by demographic characteristics



Source: ET Household Survey, November 2025

Note: The bars show the percentage of respondents who simultaneously met the knowledge/awareness, positive attitude, and practice criteria.

86. A challenge observed by the ET in measuring effectiveness is the apparent similarity of indicators for Outcomes 1.2 and 2.1 on the use / application of seasonal forecasts, and the lack of clarity in the indicator regarding the receipt of key messages. The indicators used for Component 2 fail to measure the comparative effectiveness of the different communications channels applied by the project. KIs and project documentation suggest that the implementation of the Community Action Plans was not tracked or monitored.

Figure 9 IACOV billboard used to communicate key messages



Source: Evaluation Team, November 2025

Outcome 3.1 Increased adaptive capacity of communities and households to respond to droughts and water-related hazards

87. **IACOV monitoring data indicate a reduction in crisis and emergency coping strategies from 31 percent at baseline to 16 percent at endline, meeting the target of under 20 percent.**¹⁰⁰ Figure 10 compares LCS results¹⁰¹ from the IACOV baseline (February 2021)¹⁰² and the IACOV endline (March 2025), indicating a clear improvement in household food security. Those not adopting coping strategies increased from 27 percent at baseline to 43 percent at endline. Despite these gains, stress coping strategies remained widespread (42 percent in 2021; 41 percent in 2025), though the reduction in crisis and emergency coping strategies indicates food security improvements among the most vulnerable. However, female-headed

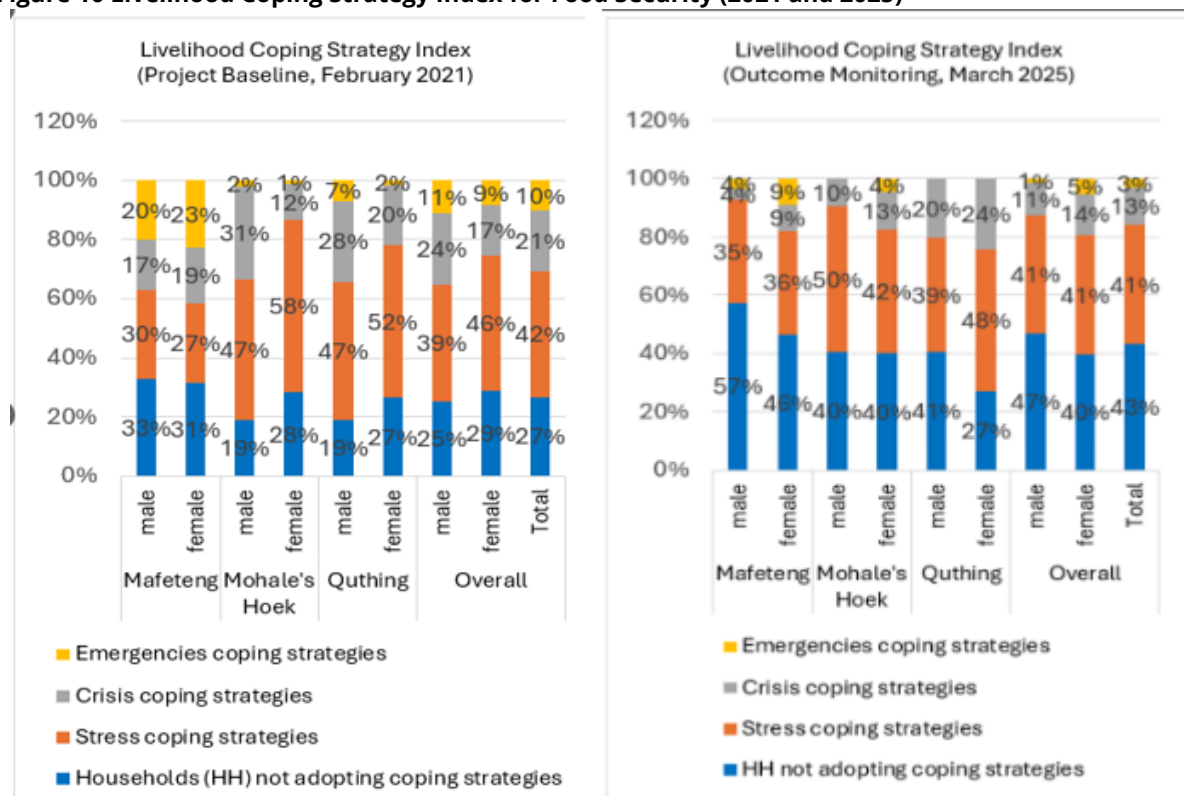
¹⁰⁰ Note that there appears to be a typo on the Project Results Framework which refers to 'stress, crisis and emergency' coping strategies instead of 'crisis and emergency' coping strategies.

¹⁰¹ LCS results are used instead of rCSI because LCS was collected at baseline and endline. rCSI was collected at baseline, but not at endline. The Livelihood Coping Strategy Index measures the severity of food insecurity based on the strategies households use to respond to food shortages. It is classified into four tiers: households not adopting coping strategies; stress coping strategies (e.g. buying food on credit); crisis coping strategies (e.g. consuming seeds); and emergency coping strategies (e.g. selling female animals) (IACOV Baseline Survey Report, February 2021).

¹⁰² The IACOV baseline report used comparative LVAC results from the three southern districts to validate the IACOV data. Compared to the IACOV data, the LVAC LCS results showed higher levels of food security (i.e. no coping strategies) and lower crisis and emergency coping strategies in 2021. This may have been due to differences in sampling or the specific way in which questions were asked.

households, particularly in Quthing, continued to rely more on negative coping strategies compared to male-headed households across districts, pointing to persistent vulnerability.

Figure 10 Livelihood Coping Strategy Index for Food Security (2021 and 2025)



Source: IACOV Outcome Monitoring Survey, March 2025

88. **Perceived improvements in the capacity of communities¹⁰³ to respond to climate shocks and risks were profound and widespread.** The Household Survey indicates that 91 percent of respondents perceive improved community preparedness, with uniformly high results across the ecological zones and districts surveyed. Overall feedback from KILs and FGDs at the community level was consistent with this finding. Perceived preparedness levels were lowest in the Lowlands (90 percent) and Mafeteng (89 percent), and highest in Senqu River Valley (100 percent) and Quthing (93 percent).

89. **Developing CAPs through community-based, participatory exercises and accompanying training activities had important benefits, but the implementation of the CAPs does not appear to have been tracked or monitored.** The process of developing CAPs promoted local ownership and engagement. The CBPP exercise was also accompanied by training activities, contributing to improved awareness and application of climate-resilient practices.¹⁰⁴ Although it was never the intention of the IACOV Project alone to implement all the activities detailed in CAPs, the ET was unable to verify whether or not CAP activities implemented with IACOV support were tracked at the level of the CAPs. CAP documents were readily

¹⁰³ The Project Results Framework suggests that this indicator should be measured according to the perceived capacity of community councils to manage climate shocks and risks, and included a target of 80 percent of community councils. The HHS sample frame was not designed to be representative at the level of the community councils, so it was not possible to use the HHS to assess the target level achievement. The ET was unable to find project outcome monitoring results for this indicator.

¹⁰⁴ IACOV Project Performance Reports (PPRs)

available for just two of the four sites visited.¹⁰⁵ The expectation was that those activities included in the CAPs that did not fall under the mandate of IACOV would be supported through other project interventions, though this had not yet been realised in the communities visited by the ET.

90. Some of the CAP activities that were successfully achieved through community mobilisation and coordinated actions across district-level government ministries included: support for the development of bylaws to manage shared natural resources and reduce environmental degradation; the construction of sand dams (Figure 11) and the installation of solar-powered boreholes to improve access to water; and household- and community-level interventions such as tree planting, water-harvesting structures, household gardening, rangeland management, and wetland protection.¹⁰⁶ In terms of the quality and effectiveness of the community assets and CAP activities supported by IACOV, challenges were reported in the design and implementation of some soil and water conservation activities (e.g. terraces, diversions, silt traps, stone lines, check dams), both in terms of design and the quality of implementation. Many of the challenges reportedly stemmed from inadequate technical assessments and follow-up monitoring, and limited training for the community-based supervisors (see Paragraph 101).

Figure 11 A sand dam constructed with IACOV support



91. **Community members are adopting various measures to reduce vulnerability to climate change with a clear preference for strategies requiring lower opportunity costs.** In the HHS, overall, the most widely adopted strategy was adjusting planting dates, reported by 74 percent of households (Figure 13).¹⁰⁷ Changing planting dates depends directly on climate information, making it the clearest indication that forecast information is being used in practice. The second most common strategy was crop diversification, which was also widely cited by both women and men in the FGDs. Soil and water conservation practices (reported by 24 percent of surveyed households)¹⁰⁸ included, for example, using trenches and pits for soil

¹⁰⁵ In the other sites, the ET asked about the CAP document and although informants recalled very well the CAP process, it was not possible to locate the document itself at the community level.

¹⁰⁶ This list comes from KIIs, FGDs, ET observations and IACOV Project Performance Reports (PPRs).

¹⁰⁷ Note that the adaptation strategies discussed here include some of the measures described above in response to climate forecasts and EW messaging. The response measures above tend to be short-term responses in relation to the forthcoming season, whereas adaptation strategies are generally applied over multiple seasons.

¹⁰⁸ These results are broadly consistent with the findings of the March 2025 Outcome Monitoring Survey Report, in which

moisture retention and practising water harvesting techniques both on-field and at household level, as mentioned by men FGD participants in Makoabating (Mafeteng District) and Draaihoek (Mohale's Hoek). Income diversification was reported by fewer respondents (21 percent), mainly women. In the FGDs, women described examples of income generation, e.g. through the sale of eggs, vegetables and fruit (both fresh and preserved), not only enhancing their household resilience, but also increasing their food security and nutrition (Figure 12). Adoption of livestock-related adaptation measures (13 percent) and saving or precautionary financial behaviour (14 percent) remained relatively low. More capital-intensive options showed the weakest uptake: only 11 percent of households reported irrigation-related adaptation, and migration as an adaptation strategy was noted by just 2 percent of households. These trends also reflect a higher preference/capacity to adopt strategies with little or no cash or asset investment over those strategies requiring higher labour, time, and upfront investments needed. In the view of the ET, the uptake of adaptation measures could have been higher if households had had access to cash investment through VSLAs.

Figure 12 Household poultry to support income generation through sale of eggs

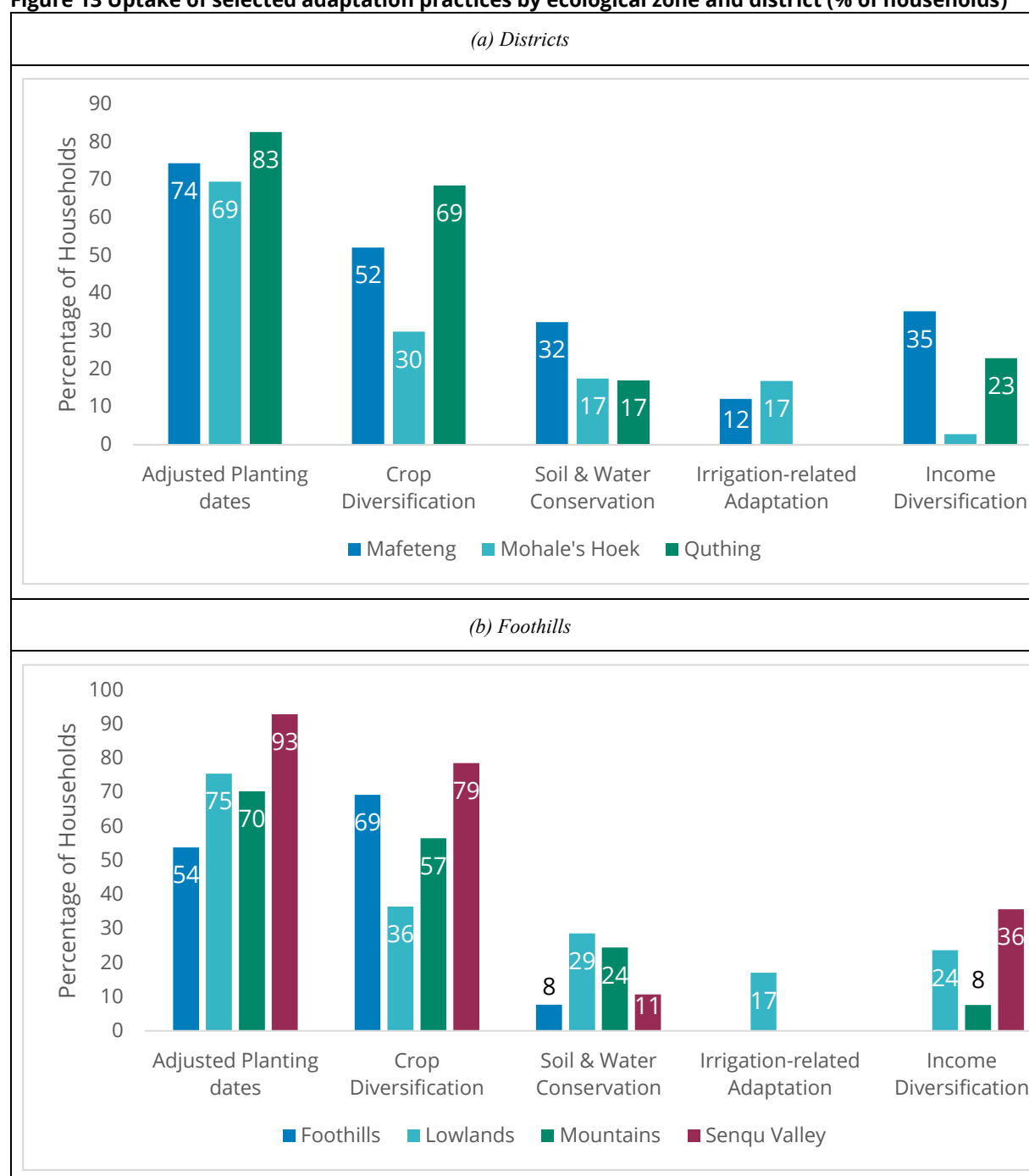


92. **While district and ecological zones generally followed the overall trends, there was some notable deviation.** This variation is captured in the HHS findings (Figure 13). Households across most ecologies and districts were most likely to report responding to climate risks by adjusting planting dates and diversifying crops, reflecting a preference for low-cost, forecast-responsive strategies. The highest rates of planting date adjustment were in the Senqu River Valley (93 percent) and Lowlands (75 percent), while lower rates were observed in the Foothills (54 percent). Crop diversification was the second-most prevalent strategy, with notably lower adoption in the Lowlands (37 percent) and Mohale's Hoek (30 percent) compared to other ecological zones and districts (all above 50 percent). Soil and water conservation and irrigation-related adaptations were mainly concentrated in the Lowlands, whereas income diversification was most apparent in the Senqu River Valley. Across all zones, very few households reported savings (14 percent), livestock-related adaptation (13 percent) and migration (2 percent).¹⁰⁹ The figure for savings would have been considerably higher with the implementation of VSLAs; although VSLAs were included in the project document, the ET found no evidence that they had been implemented.

the most frequently reported strategy was planting drought-resistant crops (34 percent), followed by water conservation methods such as rainwater harvesting (29 percent).

¹⁰⁹ These figures are not presented in Figure 13 due to the low number of responses

Figure 13 Uptake of selected adaptation practices by ecological zone and district (% of households)



Source: ET Household Survey, November 2025

Note: The bars represent the percentage of households that reported using each adaptation practice.

Understanding resilience in the short, medium and long term

93. **IACOV activities have contributed to resilience in the short, medium and long term.** Table 14 provides examples of the types of capacity strengthening and institutional support provided by IACOV that contribute to enhanced resilience in the long term. This table is based on the Lesotho National Strategic

Resilience Framework (NSRF)¹¹⁰ which offers a useful framework to distinguish the ways in which various IACOV activities contribute (or have the potential to contribute) to enhance resilience in the short, medium and long term (Annex 12). Based on the four categories of capacity that contribute to household resilience defined in the NSRF,¹¹¹ anticipatory capacity contributes to enhancing short-term resilience; adaptive and absorptive capacity contribute to medium-term resilience; and transformative capacity contributes to long-term resilience.

Table 14 IACOV activities contributing to resilience in the short, medium and long term

Short term resilience	Medium term resilience	Long term resilience
Capacity building support to develop Anticipatory Action Plan and AA operationalization structures / processes Anticipatory action / early action responses, i.e. dissemination of early warning messages; provision of agricultural inputs; distribution of cash-based social protection transfers; ensuring access to safe water.	Access to actionable seasonal forecasts and EW messaging Climate change adaptation measures, including: Climate smart agriculture Protected agriculture Water harvesting Soil and water conservation Improved rangeland management Access to markets Access to micro-finance services (little evidence of implementation) Livelihood diversification	Government capacity strengthening and institutional development, e.g. support to LMS Strengthened capacity and coordination at district levels (more is needed here) Strengthened capacity and coordination at community levels (more is needed here) Gender transformative approach (more is needed here) Addressing structural barriers to livelihood diversification (more is needed here) Addressing structural barriers for access to markets (more is needed here)

Source: Evaluation Team, based on information from FGDs and KIIs, November 2025

94. **Resilience Capacity Scores illustrate the challenges in building transformative capacity for long-term resilience at the household level.** The RCS is a new WFP indicator that measures households' perception of their resilience capacities (anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive, transformative) to generic or country-specific shocks and stressors.¹¹² It is measured according to the degree to which respondents agree or disagree with a series of statements¹¹³ that are read out to them by an enumerator as part of a survey. Results from the 2024 IACOV Project Monitoring Survey (Table 15) show comparatively high perceived anticipatory resilience and low transformative resilience. These results are broadly similar across the three districts. It is important to note that RCS was not measured at baseline, so changes in resilience cannot be

¹¹⁰ Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030): Building a Resilient and Prosperous Nation, September, 2019

¹¹¹ Short-term capacity is based on strengthening prevention/preparedness and strengthening absorptive capacity

¹¹² WFP Indicator Compendium (2022-2025), June, 2024.

¹¹³ The statements relating to each type of resilience capacity are: (1) Anticipatory: 'Your household is fully prepared for any future climate event/shock/stressor that may occur in your area.' (2) Absorptive: 'Your household is able to bounce back from any climatic event/shock/stressor affecting your livelihoods or incomes.' (3) Adaptive: 'If threatening climatic variability shocks/stressors became more frequent and intense, your household would still find a way to get by.' (4) Transformative: 'If affected by a climatic event/shock/stressor, your household can change or adapt its primary income or source of livelihood without major difficulties.'

evidenced using this indicator or attributed to IACOV. Though IACOV recognizes the importance of enhancing capacities of households to change or adapt their primary income with the inclusion of livelihood activities, lower scores in transformative capacity reflect overarching structural barriers that IACOV alone cannot be expected to fully address in this regard, such as the lack of rural employment opportunities and poor infrastructure for market linkages.¹¹⁴ However, the project's inclusion of gender transformative approaches and focus on including vulnerable populations could plausibly address some of the structural barriers to income/livelihoods relating to gender, empowerment and social inclusivity. Interestingly, the NSRF places gender empowerment under absorptive capacity, yet includes 'governance functions including... customary institutions' under transformative capacity.¹¹⁵

Table 15 Resilience Capacity Scores (High Capacity), by District (%)

Resilience dimension	Mafeteng	Mohale's Hoek	Quthing	Total
Anticipatory capacity	73.2	74.3	72.5	74.5
Adaptive capacity	70.9	71.3	71.3	71.0
Absorptive capacity	71.2	71.4	68.7	70.5
Transformative capacity	61.1	58.7	58.2	61.4

Source: IACOV Outcome Monitoring Survey (November–December 2024)

Note: The values indicate the share of households classified as having high capacity in each resilience dimension. The Resilience Capacity Score (RCS) assesses households' capacity to absorb, adapt to, and transform in the face of climatic and socio-economic challenges.

EQ 3.2 What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement and non-achievement of the Adaptation Fund project objectives, and how did these factors play a role?

Design-related factors

95. **The inclusive, participatory and needs-based design used in developing the initial concept and project proposal were essential to the successful uptake of adaptive practices among famers.** The extensive consultations conducted at the design stage meaningfully engaged participants, adapting the response to their needs and suggestions at every level (national, district and community). This engagement improved project effectiveness by: 1) ensuring the project addressed real needs (relevance); 2) enhancing impact by promoting coherence with other projects and approaches; and 3) creating a sense of ownership that encouraged stakeholders to fully engage (sustainability).

96. **Gaps in the validity of ToC outcome pathways and assumptions reduced programme effectiveness.** As a result, some IACOV interventions and strategies were misaligned with actual conditions, constraining the likelihood that intended outcomes could be achieved. The main gaps and resulting detraction from outcomes are presented in Table 16 further detail is presented in Annex 4.

Table 16 Gaps in ToC outcome pathways and project effectiveness

Gap in ToC outcome pathway/assumption	Effect on the project
Seasonal forecasting information (C1) and comms/awareness raising (C1, C2) lacked sufficiently actionable messages and was insufficiently disseminated from national to local levels	Limited the abilities of HHs and communities to respond to droughts and water-related hazards (Outcome 3.1)

¹¹⁴ The RCS measures transformative capacity according to whether a household can change or adapt its primary income or source of livelihood.

¹¹⁵ Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030): Building a Resilient and Prosperous Nation, September, 2019

Local actors (Chiefs, Councillors, VDMTs) did not consistently have the capacity or willingness to convey messages related to EW, seasonal forecasts, climate change adaptation, etc. (A4).	VDMTs and DDMTs were rarely activated, despite being statutory DRR structures, showing weak downward coherence. The strongest coherence was observed in Quthing, where district offices shared forecasts via PIT meetings, but weaker in Mohale's Hoek where DRR structures remained passive.
Market demand was not sufficient to enable diversified or increased income (A9); marketing outside the local area was a challenge due to poor roads and limited transport options.	Limited capacity for transformational change (impact)
Limited complementarity with IACOV activities taking place in schools	Reduced potential impact and internal coherence
There appears to be a mismatch between IACOV's focus on poor, vulnerable farmers with the expectation that these same farmers would then be able to form effective and sustainable cooperatives and generate income through group production and marketing. These farmers are the least able to make the contributions (whether in cash or in labour time) needed to establish and sustain a cooperative.	Cooperatives do not operate effectively due to gaps in leadership and financial capacity. This challenge was observed in all project sites visited by the ET.
The cooperative approach to communal production may not be appropriate, whether for vegetables, fruit, or livestock (poultry, pigs, rabbits)	Group-based production lacks sustainability.

Source: Evaluation Team, based on data from FGDs and KIIs, November 2025

97. **The design of seasonal forecasts and early warning messages could be improved to enhance actionability, enhancing the range of responses and the adaptive capacity of communities.** In cases where dissemination was effective and community members had received the forecasts over several seasons, they reported that the climate information provided had proved to be accurate and relevant, but some community members (notably VDMT members) felt that the early warning component remained largely informational rather than operational. For example, one male KI said that:

The radio tells us about the season, but we need someone to explain what to do here in Makoabating.

As illustrated by the survey results, the range of adaptation measures described by the survey respondents was comparatively limited, yet FGDs found that a much broader range of responses was possible, both at the household and community levels. Messages lacked clarity in that there were no triggers, no colour-coded system, no SOPs for VDMT activation, and no hazard-based action checklists, preventing community members from being able to make full use of the information provided (Table 17). Whilst IACOV supported meaningful progress, national impact-based forecasting remains a work in progress, as sector-specific impact thresholds depend on data and validation from the relevant sector ministries. Similarly, the anticipatory action protocol developed under IACOV was focused primarily on drought rather than constituting a fully developed multi-hazard protocol.

Table 17 Examples of gaps in EW messaging

Gap	Examples of Messaging	Impact of Gap
Messages lacked clarity (Coding Problem)	Communities received "Cold weather expected" instead of a clear frost warning with specific actions. Seasonal forecast messages repeated phrases such as "below normal rainfall expected" without indicating specific actions to take in response, e.g. what crops to plant; when to plant; what assets to protect.	People did not know what to do in response.
No triggers	LMS issued temperature drops or strong wind advisories, but no	Communities

(Activation Problem)	clear “if this, then do that” trigger message existed. No rule such as: “If minimum temperature forecast < 0°C, farmers must cover seedlings within 24 hours.”	reacted differently or too late.
No colour-coded system (Decoding Problem)	Communities were not told whether a warning was minor, moderate, or severe; there was no Green, Yellow, Orange, Red alert system.	Warnings were often underestimated or misinterpreted as normal weather updates.
No SOPs for VDMT activation (Institutional Problem)	VDMTs reported that when EW messages came, they were not sure who should convene meetings, check vulnerable households, or supervise asset protection. There were no district instructions.	VDMTs remained passive, despite being the formal DRR structures.
No hazard-specific action checklists (Operational Problem)	There were no community action sheets like: Frost Action Checklist (mulch, cover seedlings, move trays indoors); Windstorm Checklist (secure fencing, reinforce shade nets, protect hives); Drought Checklist (adjust planting, protect water points, manage livestock).	Households used experience-based tactics rather than project-guided anticipatory action.

Source: Evaluation Team, based on data from KIIs and FGDs, November 2025

Positive and negative operational and implementation factors (Internal Factors)

98. **Frequent procurement and approval delays reduced trust and engagement.** These delays were reported to be frequent causing late implementation of activities or even cancelation (see EQ 4). In addition to the direct impact on output achievements (e.g. delays in completion due to late delivery of materials and/or work stoppages due to lack of wages for contractors), such delays also led to communities' loss of trust and – in some cases – disengagement from the project.

99. **District-level coordination challenges reduced effectiveness.** Coordination challenges were reported for all three districts and varied in terms of type and intensity. Challenges in the allocation of the IACOV Project vehicle for different activities were somewhat reduced (though not completely resolved) by organising combined visits to the same project site by staff from different Ministries and departments. The effectiveness of the existing coordination structures – whether Project Implementation Team (PIT) or Heads of Department (HoDs) Committee or DDMT – varied across districts and were highly dependent on the capacity and presence of key senior officers. In all districts, there were weak links between district structures and staff based in the Agricultural Resource Centres.

100. **Partnerships with government presented both enabling and constraining factors for the achievement of project objectives.** On the positive side, designing IACOV's approach to align with existing Ministry approaches (e.g. Unified Extension System approach, use of Nutrition Clubs), meant that many of the necessary institutional, organisational, staffing and coordination aspects were already in place increasing project efficiency. This allowed Ministry staff to implement activities alongside their normal work duties, with the IACOV logistics (transport and travel allowances) providing the means to reach areas that they would otherwise not be able to reach. However, some staff sought to take advantage of this, necessitating the careful review of all activities plans and requests which subsequently led to delays in some cases (see above). The dependency on project funds for what ought to be considered as 'normal' work duties also has implications for sustainability (EQ6). Finally, the ET also observed limited engagement by some Ministry staff, particularly those at higher levels with heavy workloads who were expected to oversee many different donor-funded projects.

101. **Insufficient time was allocated for adequate monitoring and the technical assessment of CAPs by district-level Ministry staff, particularly in relation to soil and water conservation activities.**

The necessary feasibility studies could not be undertaken in time to feed into the budgeted Activity Plans, meaning that the SWC activities were poorly planned. Because resource and procurement plans were based on the Activity Plan, some necessary materials and tools (e.g., wires for gabions) were not included in the procurement plan, which resulted in subsequent problems and delays when plans had to be revised. Similarly, KIs reported that soil testing – which is necessary for the implementation of SWC activities and tree planting – was not done at the start of the project and therefore could not usefully inform the appropriate design / planning of some soil and water conservation / agricultural / forestry activities. Insufficient time was also allocated to allow for adequate monitoring and follow up at community level. Consequently, some of the structures were of poor quality, particularly considering the limited training provided to the community-based foremen/supervisors. KIs noted that although the quality of the structures was sufficient, many would require regular maintenance to continue to serve their purpose effectively, a condition difficult to attain given gaps in the project ToC discussed above.

102. **The project M&E and reporting systems were designed to support real time changes to improve effectiveness; actioning changes was undermined by the volume of data and the lack of systematic and institutionalised feedback loops.** A wide range of monitoring data was collected on a regular basis following the baseline survey report (February 2021). Process and output monitoring data (both quantitative and qualitative) were collected monthly and quarterly¹¹⁶ using tablets and structured tools, and quantitative outcome monitoring surveys were conducted twice a year.¹¹⁷ These data were collected by Ministry staff, both from HQ and district levels, with district staff collecting quarterly data from districts other than their own. Data analysis and report-writing were primarily undertaken by IACOV staff. In addition to regular visits by the Component Managers, the IACOV M&E Associate organised quarterly monitoring workshops or themed oversight visits, with the final quarterly workshop/visit providing an annual review opportunity.¹¹⁸ This wealth of information provided relevant findings to enable programme adaptation. The M&E reports reviewed by the ET contained clear recommendations for improved programming and implementation.

103. However, there were gaps in the use of this M&E data. Some of the challenges noted by KIs included: delays in data collection and subsequent reporting due to delays in approval process; the need for repeated training for district staff due to frequent turnover; and challenges in reporting and follow-up. Reasons given for this included the suggestion by KIs that reports were not read properly by district-level decision-makers, and that Ministries often lack dedicated M&E units, leading to gaps in ownership and integration of findings into their plans. As a result, KIs reported that not all monitoring recommendations were implemented, leading to recurring issues that remained unresolved.

External factors

104. **Changes in Central Bank policies caused delays and reduced the effectiveness of cash transfers to beneficiaries.** In 2021, the Central Bank of Lesotho introduced a new policy on electronic cash transfers which meant that telecoms companies could no longer facilitate cash transfers via mobile money platforms such as M-Pesa. The main telecoms company covering the southern districts established a new company (VCL Financial Services) so that it could continue to provide mobile money services. WFP procurement policies, however, are such that a new company cannot be contracted as a financial service provider. Despite the involvement of WFP's legal unit, it was necessary to find alternative cash transfer arrangements. WFP contracted Standard Bank to manage the transfers using Unayo, a digital financial platform that provides mobile-based transfers. However, the Unayo system incurred significant delays in the money transfers, and also created major challenges to beneficiaries because it lacked an effective network

¹¹⁶ Some monitoring data collection exercises were cancelled for operational reasons (i.e. delays with approvals; challenges with procurement or cash advances / bank transfers), as described under EQ4.

¹¹⁷ Outcome monitoring reports were available for late 2022, 2023 and 2024 (Oct / Nov / Dec), and also early 2025 (March).

¹¹⁸ Quarterly workshops were undertaken in the early years of the project, with themed visits taking place in later years.

of mobile banking agents, and the nearest bank branches are far from many villages.

105. **Market challenges.** FGD participants and KIs reported that market demand (ToC Assumption 9) in the project sites visited by the ET was generally low. Marketing outside the local area was a challenge due to poor roads and limited transport options (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Example of poor roads leading to the project sites



Source: Evaluation Team, November 2025

EQ 3.3 To what extent did the project adhere to WFP's environmental and social standards?

106. **IACOV integrated WFP's environmental and social standards at all stages; a comprehensive risk management and monitoring plan enabled the tracking and mitigation of both initial and emerging environmental and social risks throughout the project's lifecycle.** WFP's Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework consists of a set of principles, standards and tools created to increase WFP's environmental and social sustainability and to limit the potentially negative impacts WFP may have on people, communities or the natural environment.¹¹⁹ WFP's eight Environmental and Social Standards support the inclusion of WFP safeguards in proposals to donors such as the AF and provide the benchmark for what constitutes environmental and social sustainability in WFP.

107. **The initial Environment and Social Risk screening exercise undertaken at the project formulation stage categorized IACOV as Category B (medium risk), and relevant mitigation measures were identified and incorporated in the IACOV Project Proposal.** The IACOV Environmental and Social Management and Monitoring Plan subsequently tracked both the identified risks as well as new risks, to help ensure that they were properly monitored, evaluated, and reported. Drought was the main climate-related risk identified at the start of the project, but unexpected heavy rainfall and flooding in the first two years necessitated a review of the safeguards and reinforcement of environmental mitigation measures to address flooding risks¹²⁰. Some project activities were also revised to remain relevant and in line with environmental protocols.

108. Although IACOV developed a procedure to screen each of the Community Action Plans prior to

¹¹⁹ WFP Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework, 2021.

¹²⁰ IACOV Project Completion Report

approval, with mitigation measures to be identified at community level, the programme faced challenges in implementing these assessments, both in relation to social and environmental aspects.¹²¹ The reports reviewed by the ET did not specify what these challenges were, or how they were resolved.

109. IACOV's Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) was independently managed by the National University of Lesotho. It was based on a dedicated toll-free number for community members to call and anonymously report their grievances in adherence to confidentiality and dignity principles. Grievances could also be reported to the WFP Field Officers via in-person communication with area chiefs, foremen, and councillors.

2.4. Evaluation question 4: Efficiency

To what extent were Adaptation Fund project activities implemented in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and what opportunities exist for improved efficiency in future programming?

Summary box

Finding 4.1. A no cost extension enabled full fund utilisation by project completion, despite substantial delays during the first two years. Timeliness was an issue throughout implementation at all implementation levels; delays in delivering time-sensitive inputs reduced effectiveness. WFP's complex and lengthy procedures were a recurring source of frustration in the context of a multi-level project with many different actors involved.

Finding 4.2 The project utilised significant cost-sharing arrangements, especially at the national level, creating a greater sense of government ownership. Opportunities for improved efficiency include: reducing the size of the PSC; greater synergy at district level between Annual Workplans, Concept Note approvals, and procurement plans; alternatives to cash advances for activities at district and community levels; comparisons across the three districts to identify coordination improvements.

110. **Fund utilisation was slower during the first two years due to COVID-19 related restrictions delaying or altering activity implementation; the budget was fully utilised through a no cost extension.** The project underspent in Year 1 (70 percent of the planned first-year allocation) and Year 2 (62 percent of the second-year allocation, Table 18). This underspend was mainly due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions that prevented some activities from taking place and causing others to be altered or delayed. There was no variance in the third year and overspend in the fourth year (129 percent actual vs planned expenditure). The no cost extension enabled full budget utilisation albeit over a longer period than originally planned.

Table 18. IACOV Resource Performance (Planned vs. Actual Expenditure, USD)

Year (reporting period)	Planned (USD)	Revised (USD)	Actual Expenditure (USD)	Actual vs Planned (%age)
Year 1 (Oct 2020–Oct 2021)	3,274,057	No revision	2,275,605	70%
Year 2 (Nov 2021–Oct 2022)	3,489,894	No revision	2,151,033	62%
Year 3 (Nov 2022–Oct 2023)	2,028,669	No revision	2,054,952	101%
Year 4 (Nov 2023–Oct 2024)	1,282,075	No revision	1,658,825	129%
Extension (Nov 2024–August 2025)	0	n/a	1,859,479	n/a
TOTAL	9,999,894		9,999,894	100%

Source: Adapted from IACOV Project Completion Report, August 2025 (Section B: Project expenditure).

¹²¹ IACOV Project Completion Report

111. **COVID, specific procurement challenges and strategic transitions delayed implementation.** COVID-related delays in the first year affected procurement processes for goods and services, the recruitment of project management staff, as well as planned workshops and meetings across the three components.¹²² In the second year, the procurement of specific items (e.g. High Power Computing system, Automated Weather Stations, development of Media Press Kits) was delayed due to limited suppliers in the country, requiring support from the Regional Office (RBJ) to fast track the process.¹²³ In the fourth year, the project encountered significant delays due to the transition from WFP Lesotho's first-generation Country Strategic Plan (CSP, 2019-2024) to the second generation CSP (2024-2029). This transition involved adjustments in WFP operational systems, causing delays in procurement and fund disbursement, resulting in setbacks to the project timeline for that year.¹²⁴

112. **Timeliness was an issue throughout implementation at all implementation levels, particularly in relation to slow approval and procurement processes.** In some cases, delays were linked to short-notice planning, where requests for funds or procurement were submitted late despite existing requirements for advance notice. More broadly, WFP systems and procedures were perceived by government counterparts at both national and district levels as lengthy and insufficiently responsive to time-sensitive, seasonal activities. These delays frequently conflicted with critical agricultural and natural resource management (NRM) windows, notably for tree planting and small livestock distribution. As a result, several time-sensitive inputs were delivered late, leading to reduced effectiveness and avoidable losses. For example, tree seedlings were procured and distributed outside the optimal planting season in some districts, resulting in a high proportion of seedling losses. Similarly, delays in the procurement and delivery of chicks meant that they arrived when communities were unprepared or environmental conditions were unsuitable, leading in at least one case to the loss of all distributed chicks. These instances illustrate how procedural delays translated into inefficiencies and reduced value for money at community level.

113. At the level of the PSC, slow approvals were partly attributed to the large size of the committee, which constrained timely decision-making. In response, WFP organised awareness sessions and presentations for partners and staff to improve planning and understanding of financial and procurement procedures, helping to enhance compliance and reduce friction. Within WFP, procurement performance improved following targeted support from regional and headquarters offices, including the temporary deployment of a procurement specialist from Zambia.

114. Delays at district levels primarily stemmed from WFP's activity approval and financial management procedures, as exemplified by the following quote from a KI:

Operational advances were a major bottleneck. New advances could not be issued until previous ones were cleared.

Cash advance limits and the requirement to clear previous advances before issuing new ones proved particularly challenging when multiple ministries or departments were involved; the complexity of planning multiple activities that are implemented by different government counterparts cannot be underestimated. In addition, specific cases highlighted further delays, such as disagreements over the involvement of school inspectors in teacher training in Mafeteng District, and major delays in cash transfers to beneficiaries following a switch to Standard Bank's digital platform (see paragraph 104, EQ3.2), which was slower and less convenient than previous systems, underscoring the importance of effective collaboration, planning, and communication for timely implementation.

115. **Key informants identified several measures that contributed to improved efficiency over the course of implementation.** These included cost-sharing arrangements with government institutions, such

¹²² IACOV Project Performance Report, Year 1

¹²³ IACOV Project Performance Report, Year 2

¹²⁴ IACOV Project Performance Report, Year 4

as the provision of staff time, office space, technical inputs and logistics, as well as synergies with related initiatives, notably collaboration between the IACOV and NAP projects through joint planning, shared training and communication resources, and cost-splitting for events. At district and community levels, efficiencies were also achieved through collaboration with other programmes, such as SADP II in the implementation of Nutrition Clubs. Within WFP, procurement efficiency improved over time following targeted support from regional and headquarters offices, including the temporary deployment of a procurement specialist. Looking forward, key informants highlighted the need for stronger alignment between participatory planning processes and annual workplans, earlier procurement planning for time-sensitive activities, and clearer coordination mechanisms at district level to reduce delays and improve responsiveness

116. **In relation to overall project costs, several key informants commented on the comparatively limited project coverage, both in terms of the number of sites and beneficiaries reached.** This was largely attributed to the remoteness of some project locations and the difficult terrain, which increased logistical complexity, travel time, and delivery costs. These contextual factors constrained the scale at which activities could be implemented within the available budget and timeframes. At the same time, stakeholders noted that the project's focus on hard-to-reach and climate-vulnerable areas required more intensive engagement and support per site, representing a trade-off between scale and depth that has implications for efficiency assessments. While the Final Project Report refers to a cost-benefit analysis of assets created at community level, the evaluation team did not have access to the underlying data or analysis and was therefore unable to independently assess or validate these findings.

117. **Opportunities for improved efficiency** include: (i) reducing the size of the PSC for fast decision-making; (ii) more timely integration of community-prioritised activities into workplans and procurement plans at the district level; (iii) alternatives to cash advances for activities at district and community levels; (iv) identify the identification of district-level coordination improvements by comparing experiences across the three districts; and (v) applying the overall lessons learned to date (as above).

2.5. Evaluation question 5: Equity

To what extent did the project cater to the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, minorities and other potentially marginalized groups, in the target communities?

Summary box

Finding 5.1 The project successfully integrated inclusive processes and gender-responsive M&E systems, leading to high participation rates for women and the collection of disaggregated data. However, these procedural strengths did not translate into equitable outcomes because of two critical gaps: (1) the absence of a field-based gender analysis, which prevented the project from addressing deep-rooted structural barriers; and (2) the weak institutionalization of M&E systems, which limited the use of data for adaptive management. Consequently, while the project provided tangible economic benefits, it failed to achieve transformative change, as evidenced by worse outcomes for female-headed households.

Finding 5.2 The project's narrow focus on women's inclusion, without a corresponding strategy for engaging men, created significant unintended social consequences. While participatory planning and targeted activities were a source of autonomy and empowerment for women, they were perceived by many men as a source of social friction and disempowerment. This led to a decline in male participation and undermined community cohesion, ultimately limiting the project's potential for fostering shared household responsibility and collective action.

EQ 5.1 To what extent have the intended outputs, outcomes, and strategic results of the project been achieved equitably across all target demographics, including women, vulnerable and marginalized populations?

118. **The quality of gender and vulnerability assessments and reporting was moderately strong;**

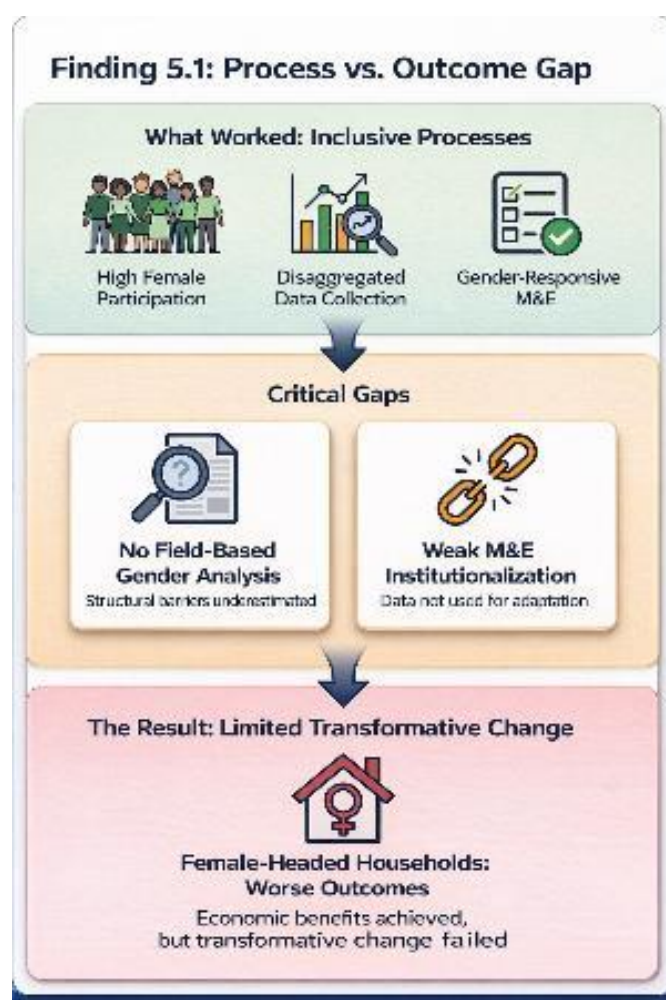
the absence of a field-based gender analysis constrained the project's ability to pursue transformative outcomes. A comprehensive, desk-based gender assessment was conducted at the design stage, supplemented by community consultations and stakeholder engagement. The gender assessment reviewed national systems, policies, and stakeholder capacities, and identified significant gaps between policy intentions and implementation, particularly where customary laws subordinate the rights of women. However, the MTR affirmed that, without field-based gender analysis, it failed to unpack the lived realities of rural women in the project areas or convey an understanding of community-specific structural barriers and power dynamics, thus constraining the project's ability to pursue transformative outcomes.¹²⁵ Intersectional analysis remains underdeveloped, with no examination of how multiple identities (e.g., young women with disabilities, elderly female-headed households) create compounded vulnerabilities. Additionally, collaboration with responsible entities such as the Ministry of Gender and women's organizations such as Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) was described as fragmented and informal rather than systematic.

119. **Monitoring and reporting demonstrated exemplary disaggregation of data by sex and age but initial gaps in monitoring/reporting of disabilities.** The gender assessment directly guided the integration of a gender-responsive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, which mandated the systematic disaggregation of all beneficiary data by sex and age. The project demonstrates exemplary practices in the systematic collection and reporting of sex- and age-disaggregated data across all activities, modalities, and reporting periods, with consistent application of the WFP Gender and Age Marker and reporting to the UN Gender Working Group. Gender-targeted actions were designed with adjustments made to activity modalities to reflect the specific needs, interests, and capacities of women, men, girls, and boys. The activities were planned to respond to gender-related risks. While PwDs were explicitly recognized in project documentation, there were challenges in systematically collecting disability data,¹²⁶ though this improved in the latter years of the project. Indicators sought to capture both participation (beneficiary tracking) as well as WFP's cross-cutting indicators on gender: (89% of FFA participants reported joint decision-making) and women's leadership representation (34% of foremen elected were women). Critically, KII revealed that gender data collected is primarily for WFP reporting rather than being owned and utilized by government partners to inform national policies and programmes, indicating weak institutionalization of gender-responsive monitoring systems.

¹²⁵ IACOV Mid Term Review (2023)

¹²⁶ IACOV Mid Term Review (2023)

Figure 15: Process versus outcome gap in women's inclusion



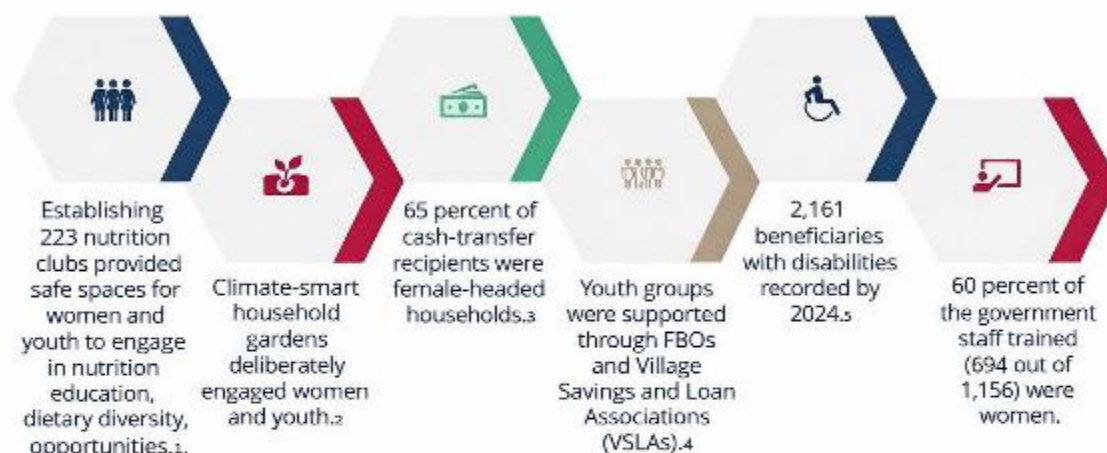
Source: Evaluation team based on the collected evidence

120. **Integration of vulnerable groups was largely operationalized through inclusive targeting; the implementation included gender-responsive measures to encourage women's participation but were inconsistently implemented.** The project included specific activities which prioritised the participation of youth, women, and other vulnerable populations, as evidenced by the following quote from a discussion with young women:

Training in agriculture means that we [young women] can plant and sell the produce... otherwise we would have no work or income.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) were explicitly recognized in project documentation. This focus on meeting immediate material needs (e.g., Cash-for-Work, homestead gardening training) resulted in the inclusion of vulnerable populations, as illustrated by Figure 16.

Figure 16 Examples of gender and social inclusion



1, 2: J-MCOV Phase II Progress Update – August 2024.

3: WFP Lesotho Annual Country Report (2024), Government of Lesotho, National Gender and Development Policy (2018–2030); National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030).

4: WFP Lesotho Annual Country Report (2024), Government of Lesotho, National Gender and Development Policy (2018–2030); National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030). Indicating that the ET was unable to determine the extent to which VSLAs were implemented.

5: WFP Lesotho Annual Country Report (2024), Government of Lesotho, National Gender and Development Policy (2018–2030); National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030).

121. The project demonstrated a strong commitment to gender-responsive measures, which included flexible work schedules, childcare-sensitive planning, and advocacy for women's participation in governance committees. However, the application of childcare-sensitive planning was reported to be fragmented across project areas. While the successful implementation of woodlots and water access initiatives in some sites served as a positive mechanism to reduce the time burden on women and girls, the overall approach was inconsistent.

122. **The project successfully delivered economic empowerment at the individual and household level through encouraging women's participation in activities, but did not seek to dismantle the systemic barriers that limit women's influence over high-value assets and decision-making.** The project generated economic gains for women. These gains were evidenced by quotes from women's FGD's such as:

The money that I have is now used for other things since I have vegetables in the gardens.

Despite these evidenced gains, unequal access to major resources meant that they were excluded from larger, tangible benefits of the project. This is powerfully illustrated by reporting from one FGD where women reported that big shade nets were given to bigger plots owned by men. Furthermore, women received training in activities such as making clay pots and wonder bags, which align with traditional gender roles. In several cases, expectations regarding the provision of equipment and start-up capital were not fully met, which may have limited the extent to which these activities translated into sustained or transformative economic opportunities. The Department of Range mandated equal representation of women, men, and youth in Grazing Associations, thereby demonstrating a mechanism for structural inclusion in governance. However, women often had invisible roles in rangeland management and limited influence on key decisions. Additionally, gender inequality in livestock ownership reinforced male dominance. Consequently, women's

participation in committees was often tokenistic, serving mainly to meet representation quotas rather than genuinely shaping decisions. Finally, gender integration often remained fragmented across all program stages, limiting its transformative impact. A more integrated approach is needed to embed gender and social considerations comprehensively into objectives, budgets, indicators, and governance, moving beyond mere representation to genuine influence.

123. **The feminization of nutrition clubs prevented effective engagement by men.** Women in the FGDs reported that the nutrition clubs were very effective in disseminating both health and nutrition information, but they were characterized by limited male involvement. This was reinforced by cultural cues, such as the use of feminine names like "Tsohang Basali" (Wake up Women) and gendered titles for officers like "Mmamphehi" (Woman Cooking), creating a perception that this domain was exclusively female. Consequently, men were effectively excluded from the main channel of health information dissemination. Furthermore, the clubs focused on activities like sewing wonder bags and clay pots, which are typically associated with women's unpaid workload and may have further discouraged men's participation. This outcome underscores the necessity for more inclusive strategies to foster shared household responsibility and ensure equitable engagement across all genders within the gender-nutrition nexus. To address this, the project has begun encouraging the use of gender-neutral names, such as "Lerato Nutrition Club," to foster a more inclusive environment where men feel they belong and can receive vital health and nutrition information.

124. **The project had gaps in inclusion of youth and other vulnerable populations, despite efforts to promote youth in leadership roles and engage them in training.** Youth participation gaps were repeatedly noted in KIIs and FGDs. Youth participating in the evaluation FGDs attributed these gaps to the perception that activities such as rangeland restoration are considered "adult work," which limited their participation. Additionally, information and interest gaps arose from recruitment primarily via public gatherings, which proved insufficient in effectively engaging younger demographics. A notable gap in social inclusion also emerged from the inconsistent application of childminder provisions, which inadvertently caused exclusion in some areas. Finally, structural barriers such as the timing of meetings meant that herders missed meetings due to their daily work routines, indicating that the engagement mechanisms did not fully accommodate the livelihood constraints of all marginalized male subgroups.

125. **The subsequent implementation of more robust strategies directly contributed to key gender, equity and social inclusion results (Table 19).** These included: (i) a consistent share of more than 50 percent female direct beneficiaries; (ii) joint household decision-making on cash use reported in 67 percent of households; and (iii) leadership roles assumed by women and youth in FBOs and VSLAs.¹²⁷

Table 19 Gender, equity and inclusion in the IACOV Project

GEWE and protection considerations	
	Promoted female and youth representation within FBO leadership positions.
	Supported skilled young farmers as Community Youth Champions (CYCs) to coach and inspire their peers.
	Sought to minimize protection risks to participants collecting entitlements by conducting most transactions electronically; when not possible, provided direct cash in secure locations with security oversight

¹²⁷ IACOV Phase I Progress Update – August 2024. WFP Lesotho Annual Country Report (2024); Government of Lesotho, National Gender and Development Policy (2018–2030); National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030), Mid-Term Review of IACOV Project (2023). Note that the ET was unable to determine the extent to which VSLAs were implemented.

GEWE and protection considerations



Catalysed socio-economic empowerment of women and youth through trainings in improved production methods (orchards, apiary, nutrition clubs).



Increased financial inclusion of women through training farmer organizations on VSLAs.

Source: IACOV Progress Update 2024, ACR 2024, MTR 2023, IACOV Progress Update 2024. ACR 2024

EQ 5.2 How were women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups engaged during the planning and implementation phases of the project, and to what extent were their viewpoints adopted?

126. **While women and vulnerable/marginalized individuals were included in the planning stage, there was no distinction between needs at the community level and needs at the household level, resulting in fragmented resilience outcomes and missed opportunities for targeted household transformation.** As discussed in EQ1.1, the IACOV project design was informed through a participatory process that engaged community members at multiple stages of development. However, community-level needs were not distinguished from household-level needs, which led to a "one-size-fits-all" approach in resource allocation that did not always align with the specific socio-economic realities of individual households. For instance, while the project successfully established communal assets like dams and rangeland restoration, the transition to household-level resilience was often hindered by a lack of tailored support. The dual approach of working four hours communally and four hours on household plots was widely considered to be a strong concept, but the returns on communal efforts were often perceived as less impactful than individual household gains. Participants expressed a preference for individual assets because the collective returns were diluted among many, whereas household-level interventions like keyhole gardens provided immediate and tangible food security. By failing to distinguish these needs during the planning phase, the project struggled to ensure that the communal assets created were effectively complemented by the specific inputs and infrastructure required to sustain individual household resilience after the cessation of cash transfers. This lack of distinction ultimately limited the project's ability to move beyond practical material support toward the strategic, long-term transformation of the most vulnerable households.

127. **Targeting prioritized the most vulnerable, with adaptations to improve inclusivity.** Targeting mechanisms were primarily based on the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) lists, supplemented by community self-targeting and verification by local authorities (chiefs and councils). This system prioritized vulnerable households, including those with changing vulnerability status, and female-headed households. An adaptive measure was the revision of Food-for-Assets (FFA) guidelines to include pregnant and breastfeeding women, who were initially excluded, demonstrating a responsive mechanism to address specific vulnerability within the female demographic. Furthermore, the exclusion of the elderly receiving pensions was conditional, allowing their inclusion if they were sole providers for large households or caring for grandchildren, ensuring a mechanism for the most vulnerable elderly.

128. **Participatory planning processes ensured that the voices of diverse vulnerable groups were integrated into the design of local interventions.** During large public gatherings, communities selected representatives to form Community Action Plan committees, typically consisting of 15 to 20 people. These committees were deliberately structured to represent various socio-economic groups, ensuring that the needs and priorities of the most marginalized were captured in the development of community adaptation plans. This bottom-up approach fostered community ownership and helped to ensure that the assets created were relevant to the specific vulnerabilities of each target site. Although the participatory nature of the CAP process was a strength in identifying community priorities, the actual intervention choices that were subsequently implemented in practice, including the asset types and their technical design, were strongly influenced by technical staff from the relevant ministries.

129. **Perceptions of fairness regarding resource allocation were mixed,** revealing a tension between the project's inclusive, participatory approach and the application of technical criteria. The participatory

approach, which engaged community members in decision-making, ensured that "decisions were made in meetings where we attended as both women and men." However, the actual distribution of high-value assets exposed underlying inequities. For instance, although all participants received small shade nets, these were often described as being of "low quality" and prone to damage. In contrast, larger, higher-quality shade nets were allocated based on technical criteria such as "performance" and the size of individual plots (Figure 17). Because men typically have greater access to larger land parcels due to customary land tenure norms, this criteria effectively favoured them; as noted in one of the FGDs, "the three bigger [nets] are owned by men" while "most women did not get to that stage." This suggests that while the participatory approach successfully provided a platform for inclusive discussion, the technical criteria used for resource allocation inadvertently reinforced existing gender disparities in asset ownership, thereby limiting the transformative potential of the participatory process.

Figure 17 Small and large shade nets provided with IACOV support



130. These dynamics suggest that the project, while promoting participation, encountered structural barriers related to land ownership and follow-through on commitments that affected women's perception of fairness and inclusivity in certain aspects. The project was perceived through distinctly gendered lenses. Adult women overwhelmingly viewed the project as highly impactful and fair, focusing on the tangible economic empowerment and increased household resilience derived from cash transfers and training, which addressed their Practical Gender Needs. For example, one female beneficiary commented that:

When we earn money ourselves, we are able to make decisions for our households.

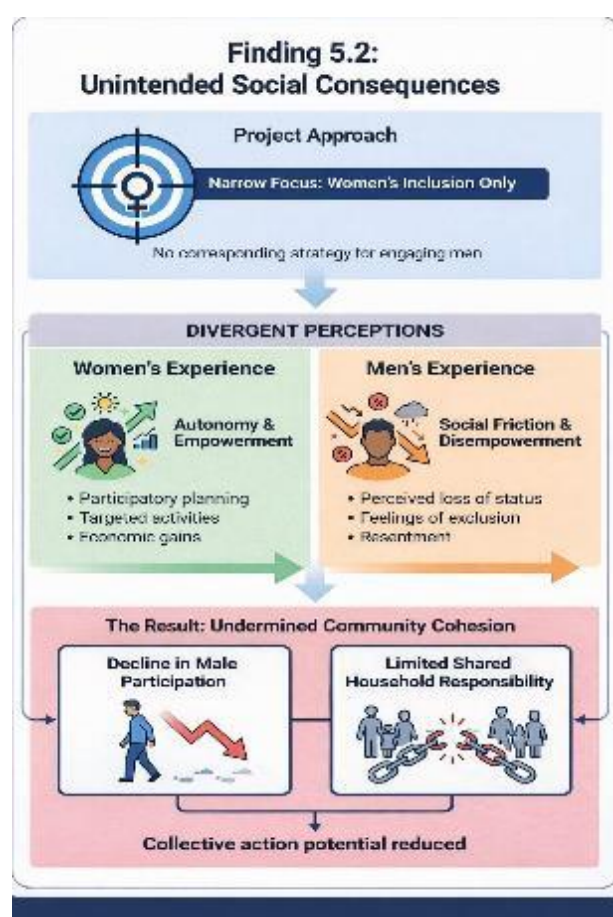
In stark contrast, men's perception was characterized by a tension between the value of the technical training (particularly in climate change) and the negative social dynamics within the project space. Men reported a significant decline in participation due to perceived disrespect and a challenge to their traditional roles, leading to a sense of social exclusion that overshadowed the project's technical benefits. Thus, for women, the project was a source of autonomy and empowerment, while for many men, it became a site of social friction and perceived loss of status.

131. **The project's focus on the inclusion of women created a significant barrier to sustained male participation and community cohesion.** In two out of the four communities visited, men expressed feelings

of exclusion. In two of the sites, it was not possible to conduct FGDs with men because they did not come to the planned meeting, suggesting a lack of engagement with the project. The project's economic empowerment strategies were not implemented holistically, as they focused on the Practical Gender Needs of women without addressing the Strategic Gender Interests of the community as a whole. While both men and women were included in technical training, the project's Cash-for-Work (CFW) activities tended to have considerably larger participation from women. This created a fragmented experience where women gained independent income and financial autonomy, but men were largely excluded from the direct economic benefits. Moreover, men felt insulted by what they regarded as culturally inappropriate language and disrespect expressed by women when they were together working on the CFW activities.

132. This exclusion, combined with the rapid shift in traditional gender roles, created an unintended "disrespect barrier." As reported in one of the men's FGD, men experienced psychological strain and social tension, feeling "disrespected" and suffering a "loss of social value" within project spaces. Because the project did not include mindset-transforming programming or psychosocial support to help the community navigate these shifting dynamics, the empowerment of women was perceived by many men as a zero-sum game. This social friction discouraged male participation and undermined community cohesion, ultimately explaining why men's engagement dropped off in areas perceived as "feminized," such as Health and Nutrition, while remaining high in technical areas like Climate Change where they felt their traditional roles as "knowledge holders" were still respected.

Figure 18: Unintended social consequences of GEWE focus



Source: Evaluation team based on the evaluation evidence collected

133. **Implementation challenges related to institutional coordination may have further limited the project's transformative potential.** The project's potential for deep, structural gender transformation was significantly hampered by a lack of systematic engagement with the national "Gender Machinery" and a reliance on direct implementation by WFP staff. While the project design was informed by consultations with the Ministry of Gender and organizations like WLSA, the implementation phase saw a shift toward WFP staff directly conducting gender-sensitive activities, such as sensitizing herders on gender-related issues. This approach was criticized by one KII, who noted that:

WFP staff should not be implementing, rather they should coordinate with government staff who are already there.

A consistent finding, triangulated across multiple key informant interviews, was that the project's direct implementation model often bypassed the expertise of the Gender Department. It was frequently reported that the Department was only invited to activities when the WFP Gender Focal Point was personally present, indicating that engagement was not systematically institutionalized. By assuming that generalist staff possessed the specialized capacity to navigate complex gender dynamics, the project missed opportunities to build the capacity of local institutional structures. This less-than-systematic approach to coordination, as evidenced by the ad-hoc nature of engagement with the Gender Department, resulted in a fragmented and informal relationship with gender-focused government entities. This limited the project's ability to move beyond operational inclusion toward the structural and institutional changes required for truly transformative gender equality. Consequently, the "gender transformation" remained largely localized and project-dependent rather than being anchored in the national systems designed to sustain it.

134. **The depth and quality of engagement by vulnerable groups as perceived by the groups themselves is characterized by a significant divide between technical success and social inclusion.** For women, engagement was perceived as high quality, driven by the transformative economic empowerment of cash transfers and the acquisition of "lifetime knowledge," though this was tempered by perceptions of tokenism in asset allocation. Conversely, men's engagement was bifurcated: while they highly valued the technical training that allowed one participant to proudly state, "I am at home with my family," their social participation was undermined by perceived disrespect and gender-related tensions, leading to self-exclusion. Youth engagement, while valued, was fragile, with the quality limited by a critical gap between training and the provision of sustainable resources, forcing one young man to attribute 70% of his success to his own initiative. Collectively, these findings indicate that the project successfully engaged vulnerable groups on an operational level, delivering technical skills and material benefits, but struggled to achieve a sustained, high-quality engagement due to unaddressed social friction and structural barriers to equitable resource access.

2.6. Evaluation question 6: Sustainability

Did the project consider the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions for the various beneficiaries?

Summary box

Finding 6.1 IACOV established a range of sustainability mechanisms at government and community levels, including strengthened coordination structures, development of systems and strategies (e.g. AA frameworks, EW systems), and integration of climate content into the education curriculum. While institutional ownership and technical capacity are relatively robust, ongoing sustainability is limited by dependence on external funding, a limited pool of technical experts, and staff turnover. At the community level, resilience practices rooted in local knowledge, skills, and behavioural change show strong potential to persist beyond project support.

Finding 6.2 While women played a crucial role in sustaining resilience outcomes through group leadership roles and diversified livelihood activities, the long-term sustainability of asset-intensive and incentive-driven interventions (e.g. communal shade nets, cash-for-work initiatives, and cooperative assets) remained fragile, with participation and maintenance often declining once external support was withdrawn. This fragility was

heightened by dependency risks where transition and exit strategies were lacking, and youth, PwDs and other vulnerable individuals continued to face significant barriers to ongoing engagement due to limited resources and systemic constraints.

EQ 6.1 What mechanisms were established to support the continuation of the project by the government after completion, and how likely are they to ensure the continuation of both the project and its benefits?

135. **Strengthened institutional linkages and embedded practices create a strong foundation for the continuation of project gains by the government.** Stakeholders expressed confidence that these mechanisms provide a credible foundation for sustaining climate risk management functions going forward. Together, these mechanisms shift resilience-building from project-based activities to routine institutional and community practices, increasing the likelihood that key functions—such as early warning dissemination, preparedness planning, and environmental stewardship—will continue beyond external funding. Notable examples of these mechanisms that were highlighted by multiple KIs include:

- The strengthened functional collaboration between LMS and the Disaster Management Authority (DMA), has clarified complementary roles in forecasting, early warning dissemination, and preparedness planning. This improved institutional relationship is critical for the durability of early warning and anticipatory systems which require collaborative, coordinated, system-wide responses.
- The development and adoption of government-owned national-level frameworks and strategies such as the Climate Change Communication Strategy, which provides a structured approach for disseminating climate information across sectors and population groups, and the Anticipatory Action Plan, which establishes pre-agreed triggers, roles, and response options for drought preparedness and early action.
- The development and enforcement of community by-laws linked to natural resource management, rangeland protection, and asset safeguarding

136. Evidence of government willingness to sustain IACOV-supported approaches is reflected in the continued use of early warning information, coordination platforms, and climate communication practices within routine institutional operations. These developments represent concrete government adaptations to incorporate IACOV-supported approaches into existing systems rather than maintaining them as stand-alone project activities.

137. **Capacity building within government institutions further underpins the sustainability of IACOV-supported interventions, though sustaining these gains is vulnerable to concentration of expertise, high staff turnover and needed ongoing technical support.** The LMS benefited from technical inputs and training to strengthen the generation and interpretation of seasonal and sub-seasonal forecasts, as well as the development of drought preparedness and anticipatory action protocols. Technical support from Columbia University included the Climate Predictability Tool (CPT),¹²⁸ the Data Library,¹²⁹ and ENACTS.¹³⁰ Government stakeholders consistently expressed confidence in their technical and institutional capacity to continue early warning dissemination, anticipatory action planning, and climate coordination functions.

138. Government stakeholders acknowledged constraints related to financing and staff retention. These constraints reduce government capacity to independently manage the necessary software modifications and retraining required due to software updates and evolving forecast techniques. Without these updates, the methods used by LMS will become outdated. Additionally, concentration of expertise in a few individuals means that much of the technical workload falls on a very small staff, who are often overstretched and caught between national and international demands.

¹²⁸ CPT is a public domain software widely used for seasonal forecasting in developing countries.

¹²⁹ This is a GIS and data analysis platform that manages and processes climate data.

¹³⁰ This blends local rain gauge data with satellite observations to create accurate, gridded rainfall datasets for the country.

139. **Limited government capacity at decentralised levels poses a significant constraint to the long-term sustainability of community-level climate change adaptation interventions.** Across districts, line ministries reported persistent challenges related to inadequate staffing, high staff turnover, and limited logistical resources, including transport and operational budgets, which restrict their ability to provide regular follow-up, provide technical backstopping, and monitor community-led adaptation practices.

140. **In particular, the absence of consistent extension support risks weakening the quality, maintenance, and continued uptake of adaptation measures over time.** While communities have acquired knowledge and skills introduced under IACOV, both farmers and government stakeholders across the three districts highlighted the need for routine follow-up visits, refresher trainings, and on-going mentoring from extension officers. Such support is limited by the government's weak capacity for extension services; Lesotho has a comparatively high ratio of farmers to extension officers¹³¹ and limited transport to allow extension officers to visit the communities. KIs with extension officers revealed varying frequencies of visits to IACOV project sites during the implementation period, from one to four visits per month, though more frequent visits have not been sustained since the project ended. One of the factors that contributed to a higher frequency of visits was complementary across multiple projects, including NGO projects. It was up to the extension agents themselves to coordinate their visits across different projects.

141. **On a positive note, the capacity for cross-sectoral collaboration required for the development of anticipatory action plans has been well illustrated.** The technical process of running forecast models is relatively straightforward in comparison to the more challenging technical decision-making process of associating forecasts with actionable interventions. This involves engineering a suite of actions on varying timelines, based on forecasts that are inherently uncertain, and building consensus among experts from different fields, to make difficult decisions with potentially costly consequences. With IACOV support, a unique, collaborative and data-driven approach successfully integrated local experience, expert knowledge, humanitarian input, and technical analysis to inform anticipatory action. The Lesotho experience remains an exciting and instructive example for similar work elsewhere.

142. However, the dashboard developed to support this process is currently hosted by IRI. The goal is to eventually transfer management to local authorities, provided there is a stable team with expertise in both server management and climate data analysis. Finding and retaining individuals with this combination of skills is challenging.

143. **There have been both positive and negative unintended impacts beyond the project lifetime.** Beyond intended outcomes, IACOV has generated positive unintended effects including strengthened inter-institutional coordination and increased normalization of anticipatory approaches. The project has also revealed risks of dependency on external financing and individual technical expertise that could affect sustainability over time. At the individual and household levels, VSLAs were intended to generate financial resources that could be invested in the adoption of adaptation actions. However, the ET did not find any evidence that VSLAs had been successfully established; the reasons for this are not clear.

EQ 6.2 To what extent and how were target groups provided with skills, knowledge or resources to maintain the resilience-building and adaptation interventions independently, and how likely are they to ensure sustainability?

144. **Participatory design processes generated strong ownership but long-term effectiveness is constrained by lack of follow-up support for implementation.** The CBPP process contributed positively to community ownership and sustainability by enabling communities to identify priorities and develop CAPs

¹³¹ The agricultural extension staff-to-farmer ratio in Lesotho is approximately 1:750, which is significantly higher than the recommended 1:200–300 range, highlighting a substantial shortage of extension personnel in the country. Mojaki, R. A., & Keregero, K. J. B. (2019). Turning challenges into opportunity: Potential for adoption of e-extension in Lesotho. *Journal of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*, 11(11), 184-191.

aligned with local risks and capacities. However, there was limited evidence of other projects or institutions providing follow-on support to implement or sustain the CAPs in the four sites visited, constraining their longer-term effectiveness.

145. **Training provided to farmers under IACOV constitutes a key sustainability pathway, particularly for adaptation practices that rely on knowledge, skills, and decision-making rather than continuous external inputs.** Across sites, farmers received training on climate-smart agriculture, soil and water conservation techniques, crop diversification, food preservation, use and interpretation of seasonal forecasts, and basic anticipatory actions linked to drought and other climate risks. This training was delivered through a combination of community demonstrations, extension support, peer learning, and integration with CBPP processes. FGDs with both women and men highlighted the sustainable value of IACOV's technical training; men in Draaihoek, for example, described it as "lifetime knowledge".

146. **Knowledge, skills, and behaviour changes are maintained over time; the sustainability of collective, asset-based interventions is more fragile.** At community and household level, sustainability prospects are strongest for interventions based on knowledge, skills, and behaviour change. Across sites, beneficiaries demonstrated sustained application of climate-informed decision-making, soil and water conservation, diversified cropping, food preservation, and household-level preparedness practices. In contrast, the sustainability of asset-intensive, collective, and incentive-driven interventions is more fragile.

Figure 19 Household orchard provides an example of diversified cropping



Source: Evaluation Team, November 2025

147. **CFW introduced risks of dependency that undermine longer-term sustainability.** CFW played an important role in supporting short-term coping, enabling participation in project activities, and facilitating the creation of community and household assets under IACOV. However, KIs at district and community levels reported that, in most communities, participation levels and maintenance of collective assets declined once CFW payments ended. Collective activities such as soil and water conservation and natural resources management ceased immediately after the CFW payments ended. KIs and FGDs explained that group membership declined once the payments ended, and youth, in particular, left the groups. In one site, the youth reported that the loss of income from CFW meant that they could not afford to replace group assets such as chickens that died or were stolen, rendering the group inactive. These experiences suggest that incentives, rather than intrinsic ownership were, in some cases, the primary driver of engagement. This finding highlights that, while CFW was effective as a time-bound mechanism to address immediate vulnerability and catalyse initial action, its sustainability value was weaker in the absence of clearly articulated

transition and exit strategies,

148. **The sustainability of group-based and collective interventions under IACOV was further shaped by limited capacity for group management, leadership, and internal governance, as well reliance on CFW for financial contributions.** Evidence from KIIs and FGDs indicates that while many community groups and cooperatives were formed and initially functioned during the project period, their longer-term viability was uneven and highly dependent on external facilitation and incentives. In several cases, group-level savings or cash contributions made by individual members were derived directly from cash-for-work payments received during project implementation. While these contributions created an early impression of financial commitment and group cohesion, they did not always reflect sustainable income generation or genuine surplus at household level. Once cash-for-work payments ended, many members were no longer able to continue regular contributions, leading to reduced group activity, weakened collective action, and, in some instances, the gradual dissolution of groups.

149. Weak leadership and governance further compounded these challenges. KIIs revealed that groups often lacked clear role definitions, succession planning, conflict resolution mechanisms, and basic financial management skills, limiting their ability to manage resources transparently and adapt to changing circumstances. One government officer noted that the absence of clear exit strategies and delays in delivering equipment (e.g. solar driers) raised doubts about the long-term ownership and maintenance of group assets. Where leadership capacity was weak or contested, trust within groups eroded quickly once external oversight diminished; in two cases, the whole leadership committee was reported by KIIs to have been sacked and replaced. Conversely, groups that demonstrated stronger leadership, clearer governance arrangements, and diversified income sources showed greater resilience, even when project support ended. Among the sites visited, the most successful group had, in fact, been established approximately five years before the start of the IACOV project.

2.7. Evaluation question 7: Scalability

Which resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities show the most and the least promise for replication or expansion, and why?

Summary box

Finding 7.1. System-level interventions supported under IACOV, particularly anticipatory action frameworks, early warning systems, climate information services, and the integration of climate change into the national education curriculum, demonstrate strong scalability potential in Lesotho due to institutional embedding, policy alignment, and low marginal costs once systems are established

Finding 7.2. Livelihood and market-oriented interventions show conditional scalability; they can be replicated in contexts where enabling conditions exist, including initial investment capital (e.g. through VSLAs) access to water, market proximity, beneficiary clustering, aggregation infrastructure, and adequate institutional support at district level.

Finding 7.3. Infrastructure-intensive and incentive-dependent interventions, such as soil and water conservation infrastructure and cash-for-assets activities, do not scale sustainably in their current form due to high unit costs, procurement delays, land tenure uncertainties, and limited maintenance capacity, particularly in structurally constrained districts.

150. **Key facilitators of scalability included strong coordination and ownership among national institutions, clarity of roles and mandates, and relatively low marginal costs once systems were established.** The use of existing structures—such as schools, district coordination mechanisms, and national early warning platforms—reduced the need for parallel systems and enabled wider coverage. National actors highlighted that interventions integrated into formal systems (e.g. education curricula, early warning dissemination structures, and anticipatory action frameworks) were easier to expand and sustain. District stakeholders similarly noted that activities perceived as extensions of existing government mandates or

community practices were more readily adopted, while those viewed as externally driven or project-specific faced greater challenges in scaling. In locations where infrastructure, water access, and market proximity were favourable, clustering of beneficiaries further facilitated replication of selected livelihood interventions. These enabling conditions were most evident in the fieldwork districts of Mafeteng (Makoabating project site), Mohale's Hoek (Lithakaling and Draaihoek) and Quthing (Mohlakoana), where stakeholders also noted that trained personnel and prior exposure to similar initiatives supported scale-up.

151. **System-level interventions supported under IACOV demonstrated the strongest scalability potential.** Anticipatory action mechanisms, early warning systems, climate information services, and the integration of climate change into the national education curriculum were either expanded geographically or embedded within existing institutional systems, enabling replication beyond the original project locations without proportional increases in cost or staffing. At sub-national level, selected livelihood practices—such as keyhole gardens, conservation agriculture techniques, and small-scale horticulture—also showed more limited scalability potential within and across communities where enabling conditions were present.

152. The scalability of Anticipatory Action is illustrated by the development of a national Anticipatory Action framework and plan, which provides a clear methodology for risk analysis, trigger setting, and pre-agreed response actions, alongside defined institutional roles and mandates. Stakeholders noted that the existence of a nationally endorsed framework, combined with established technical capacity within institutions such as the Lesotho Meteorological Services and the Disaster Management Authority, enables the replication of Anticipatory Action planning at district level without the need to design new systems from scratch. Demand for anticipatory approaches was also evident among national and district stakeholders, who viewed Anticipatory Action as a practical mechanism to shift from reactive to proactive risk management, further supporting its potential for replication and expansion beyond the initial project scope.

153. **Demand for continued or expanded support did not always align with activities with the strongest promise for replication or expansion.** Demand was strongest for interventions perceived to deliver immediate and tangible benefits at household and community level. Demand was particularly high for climate-smart agricultural practices, small-scale horticulture, and access to timely climate information. Community members and local stakeholders expressed interest in scaling these activities where resources and support allowed. However, demand alone was insufficient to drive scalability in the absence of enabling institutional, financial, and logistical conditions, underscoring the importance of system readiness alongside beneficiary interest.

154. **Infrastructure-intensive and incentive-dependent activities, including soil and water conservation structures and cash-for-assets schemes, were widely viewed as difficult to replicate due to high unit costs, procurement delays, land tenure uncertainties, and limited maintenance capacity.** District-level evidence further pointed to challenges related to dispersed settlements, difficult terrain, labour migration, and capacity constraints within local institutions. These factors collectively reduced the feasibility of expanding such interventions without on-going technical and financial inputs and continued incentives.

2.8. Evaluation question 8: Adaptive management

How, and how quickly, did the project implement operational changes and/or innovative methods or tools to enhance outcomes, processes and activities in response to feedback on its performance and potential unforeseen challenges?

Summary box

Finding 8.1. IACOV implemented incremental adaptations to operational challenges, especially COVID-19 restrictions and responses to procurement and operational bottlenecks. These adaptations enabled continuity of planned outputs.

Finding 8.2. More strategic adaptive management was demonstrated through IACOV's support to the

development and operationalisation of innovative Anticipatory Action mechanisms. IACOV support successfully contributed to overcoming high-level political challenges, but local-level dissemination approaches remained largely unchanged despite feedback from community and district structures indicating limitations in responsiveness to monitoring feedback and recommendations.

155. **IACOV implemented a number of operational adaptations to enable continuity of planned outputs; procedural delays had efficiency implications.** Project documentation reveals that adaptations were particularly notable related to COVID-19 related restrictions.¹³² The pandemic disrupted sequencing in Years 1–2, with awareness campaigns and rangeland rehabilitation advancing ahead of household-level activities such as planting orchards and gardens. When recruitment of project management staff was delayed, the project used existing WFP staff and Ministry staff to lead execution processes. Changes were also made to activity modalities, sequencing, and delivery approaches to allow implementation to continue under mobility and gathering constraints. Most meetings and workshops were conducted through virtual platforms to ensure that planning and training activities for implementing staff could go ahead where possible.

156. The project also undertook adaptive responses to procurement and cash-based transfer challenges, which emerged as significant operational bottlenecks during implementation as a result of COVID, the change of CBT provider and limited suppliers for specific items. Operational challenges were observed in Year 3 when some payments initially “bounced back” due to unregistered phones; these issues were resolved after mobile registration support by field staff.¹³³ To address delays on procurement processes during COVID, WFP used some suppliers with long term agreements (LTA) with WFP and other UN agencies in efforts to minimise lengthy procurement protocols. Other efforts included escalation of procurement issues within WFP systems, adjustments to activity timelines, the use of no-cost extensions, and modifications to cash delivery arrangements involving service providers. However, these responses were often procedurally slow and reactive, with extended timeframes required to stabilise delivery modalities. As a result, while learning did occur, the speed at which operational adjustments could be implemented was limited by institutional processes and external dependencies. These issues are discussed further under EQ4, given their implications for timeliness and efficiency. While these changes enabled continuity of operations, they were largely incremental and focused on maintaining planned outputs rather than introducing fundamentally new delivery models, reflecting a pragmatic but constrained approach to adaptive management.

157. **Adaptive management to adjust activity design to improve project effectiveness was more variable.** At a strategic level, IACOV's support to the development and integration of Anticipatory Action mechanisms represented a substantive innovation within the project improving project relevance and effectiveness. This shift strengthened forward-looking risk management and system-level preparedness by embedding anticipatory approaches within national frameworks.¹³⁴ In contrast, responsiveness to local feedback on early warning dissemination was more limited. Despite requests from community and district structures for clearer and more actionable messaging, dissemination formats largely remained unchanged, indicating constraints in adapting established systems to incorporate user feedback. This issue is further explored under EQ3 (Effectiveness), in relation to the usability of early warning information at community level. In general, feedback and recommendations from IACOV's monitoring reports were not systematically followed up or acted upon, limiting the ability of the project to make adjustments and improvements at the operational level.

¹³² IACOV Project Performance Reports, 2021 and 2022.

¹³³ Year 3 Project Performance Report – IACOV (2023).

¹³⁴ In Lesotho, the statutory authority to declare a state of disaster rests with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), a mechanism typically reserved for situations requiring extraordinary response measures and national relief mobilization. Anticipatory Action (AA), however, was deliberately positioned outside this declaration-dependent response space. Under the IACOV project, AA was embedded within the preparedness and risk reduction phase of the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) cycle, thereby aligning with existing institutional mandates without challenging statutory authority.

3. Conclusions, lessons and recommendations

3.1. Conclusions and criteria ratings

158. Conclusions are provided below grouped by evaluation criteria. Criteria are rated according to the Adaptation Fund's Evaluation Criteria Rating Scales in line with the Evaluation Policy of the Adaptation Fund.

Conclusion 1. RELEVANCE – Satisfactory

159. The intended project outcomes closely aligned with the climate adaptation needs of the target communities and groups, reflecting sound analysis and understanding of the drought-related shocks and hazards experienced in the project area and how these are evolving. Notably, the wording of Outcome 3.1, refers to the 'adaptive capacity of *communities and households* to respond....' (emphasis added), implying that both the needs and the respective responses of these entities are different. Whilst this difference was largely implicit in IACOV project documentation and activities, the distinction was not made explicitly. Project outcomes and approaches related to community resilience did not sufficiently incorporate in practice aspects related to social and cultural dimensions, local knowledge, and governance and local leadership capacity. This narrow definition of community resilience reduced understanding of how resilience should be understood and addressed differently at community and household levels. Without clear conceptual and practical understandings of the distinction and overlaps between community resilience and household resilience, the respective intervention approaches, as well as the indicators and the means for measurement also lack clarity. (Finding 1.1)

Conclusion 2. COHERENCE - Highly satisfactory

160. There was a high degree of consistency between the IACOV project and the climate adaptation policies, strategies, and priorities of the GoL. IACOV's collaborative approach during design, policy contributions, and efforts to ensure complementarity with other projects underscore its responsiveness to both the requirements and expectations of the Government. IACOV actively coordinated with other ongoing projects to enhance synergies at the national level and to maximise the collective impact of climate adaptation actions among stakeholders operating in the same context at the district level. Whilst its implementation approaches were broadly consistent with those implemented by government ministries and departments, some practical challenges were encountered. The misalignment between IACOV project site boundaries and the relevant watershed sub-catchment areas used by the MEF, for example, created challenges for effective planning and implementation of soil and water conservation activities. (Finding 2.1)

Conclusion 3. EFFECTIVENESS – Satisfactory

161. The project made significant strides in enhancing adaptive capacity and household resilience. A significant proportion of beneficiaries was able to use information from seasonal forecasts and early warning messages to take adaptive measures such as adjusting planting dates and growing more drought-tolerant crops and varieties. Institutional and operational weaknesses in the last-mile dissemination of seasonal forecast information, however, limited the receipt of this information by farmers. Additionally, gaps in the quality of messaging content limited the ability of beneficiaries and communities to maximise the potential benefits of climate services. The adaptation measures most commonly practised by beneficiary households were those that required little or no cash investment. IACOV activities contributed to short- and medium-term resilience, whereas efforts to promote long-term resilience at the household level are more challenging due to persistent barriers such as limited livelihood options, weak market linkages, and structural gender-related constraints. Outcomes and outcome indicators across Components 2 and 3 in the Results Framework were inadequately matched to the actual activities implemented under each of these components. (Findings

3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

Conclusion 4. EFFICIENCY – Moderately unsatisfactory

162. IACoV achieved full budget utilisation and demonstrated adaptive responses to implementation challenges. However, efficiency was undermined by persistent delays in activity approval, procurement, and financial management processes, particularly where these conflicted with seasonal and time-sensitive activities. Financial management procedures and coordination challenges at district level contributed to inefficiencies and implementation delays, particularly where multiple activities were implemented concurrently by different government counterparts. Project coverage was limited, both in terms of the number of sites and number of beneficiaries targeted by IACOV. (Findings 4.1, 4.2)

Conclusion 5. EQUITY - Moderately satisfactory

163. IACOV's approach to gender integration and social inclusion focused on inclusion and participation, rather than addressing underlying power relations and structural barriers relating to inequalities. Although notable progress was achieved in including women as beneficiaries and economic empowerment, the project design did not understand or address the structural inequalities that make women and other marginalised groups more vulnerable to climate change impacts. As a result, female-headed households continued to experience comparatively greater food insecurity and lower effective use of climate information than male-headed households. Furthermore, failure to engage men effectively reinforced some gender inequalities and created social issues. Youth participation gaps were noted but not adequately analysed or addressed, indicating a mismatch between project design and youth needs and aspirations. Gender- and inclusivity-related data were collected primarily for WFP reporting, but were not owned or utilized by government partners, limiting the integration of findings into government activities. (Findings 5.1, 5.2)

Conclusion 6. SUSTAINABILITY - Moderately unsatisfactory

164. The project took positive steps to ensure the sustainability of resilience-building and adaptation interventions, particularly through institutional embedding and capacity building. The sustainability of community- and household-level adaptation interventions varied by intervention type, with stronger prospects for practices rooted in knowledge, skills, and behaviour change than for asset-intensive, collective, or incentive-dependent interventions. The sustainability of community-led plans and collective actions remains conditional on continued capacity-strengthening, institutional and financial support. (Findings 6.1, 6.2)

Conclusion 7. SCALABILITY - Satisfactory

165. System-level interventions anchored in policy and institutional frameworks (e.g. anticipatory action frameworks, early warning systems, climate information services) are most promising for replication or expansion due to their integration with existing structures which encouraged sustainability and cost-effectiveness. Tried-and-tested climate smart agricultural practices that can be applied with minimal investment on individual, household-level smallholdings also show promise for expansion within the specific agro-ecologies to which they are appropriate. Examples include adjusted planting dates, drought-tolerant crops and varieties, and protected agriculture (for individual households, not groups). Livelihood and market-oriented approaches can be scaled under the right enabling conditions (e.g. reliable access to water, proximity to markets, transport infrastructure, and business management skills) though – in practice – these conditions are not commonly found in the locations targeted by IACOV. Resource-intensive, incentive-driven activities (e.g. soil and water conservation infrastructure and cash-for-work activities) are least likely to be sustainably replicated without substantial, ongoing support and structural improvements. Although not all intervention activities are scalable, the ET has provided a 'Satisfactory' rating for this criterion because there are a number of scalable interventions at both system and community levels. (Findings 7.1, 7.2, 7.3)

Conclusion 8. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT – Satisfactory

166. Operational changes were made but were largely reactive rather than systematized. IACOV demonstrated the ability to adjust implementation in response to COVID-19, procurement delays, and cash

delivery challenges. These adaptations were not consistently guided by formal adaptive management frameworks or documented decision-making processes. Adaptive management was stronger at strategic than operational levels due to the effective ability of the project to work with high-level government decision-makers. While adaptive intent was evident in design-level shifts (e.g. Anticipatory Action integration), feedback on community- and district-level challenges did not consistently translate into timely operational adjustments. Whilst the monitoring system collected large volumes of data, it was not sufficiently linked to decision-making processes within the management structures of the project or the implementing entities. Challenges (especially at community and district levels) were either not captured, or were captured but recommendations were not followed up. This limited the capacity for adaptive management. (Findings 8.1, 8.2)

3.2. Lessons

167. **Lesson 1. A good understanding of the synergies and interactions between household-level and community-level resilience is essential for coherent design and measurement.** Under IACoV, the distinction between household and community resilience was often implicit rather than explicit, which complicated targeting decisions, the design of collective interventions, and the selection of appropriate indicators.

168. **Lesson 2. Policy coherence does not automatically translate into operational alignment at implementation level.** Although IACoV was well aligned with national policies, strategies, and coordination frameworks, implementation challenges emerged where project planning units (e.g. sites and boundaries) did not align with how government institutions plan and manage resources in practice (e.g. watershed or sub-catchment planning for soil and water conservation).

169. **Lesson 3. Effectiveness is greatest when resilience-building interventions are paired with feasible livelihood pathways and enabling conditions that allow households to convert knowledge and information into sustained adaptive outcomes.** Improvements in knowledge and capacity are necessary but insufficient to deliver long-term resilience outcomes where structural constraints persist. Longer-term resilience gains were constrained by persistent structural barriers, including limited livelihood options, weak market access, and gender-related constraints. There is the potential to address these barriers through VSLAs (to provide the capital needed for individuals and households to invest in income-generating activities), continuing to link farmers to buyers / traders (including those supplying the school feeding programmes), and a more effective gender transformative approach.

170. **Lesson 4. Efficiency in climate adaptation programming requires effective coordination across multiple stakeholders and is highly sensitive to timing and seasonal alignment.** Multiple stakeholders must necessarily work together to implement the cross-sectoral range of activities involved in resilience and climate adaptation programming. Delays in approvals, procurement, and financial management procedures that conflict with seasonal agricultural and natural resource management windows can significantly reduce effectiveness and lead to avoidable losses of time-sensitive inputs. More specific lessons were also identified.¹³⁵

171. **Lesson 5. Participation alone does not guarantee equity outcomes without deliberate attention to alleviate structural barriers.** The project achieved meaningful participation of women and vulnerable groups and supported women's economic activities in particular. However, equity outcomes remained uneven where deeper structural constraints were not explicitly addressed., e.g. unequal decision-

¹³⁵ Specific lessons identified from IACOV's experience described in Section 2.4 include: planning for anticipated delays relating to internal systems upgrades; creating greater understanding about WFP's internal procedures among project staff and partners; ensuring that procurement systems and staff recognize the significance of seasonality; seeking targeted support from WFP regional and HQ offices; maintaining transparent relationships with key partners; coordination and cost-sharing with partners and other projects; and undertaking cost-benefit analysis.

making power, differential access to resources and climate information, and persistent vulnerabilities among female-headed households.

172. **Lesson 6. Sustainability is strongest for knowledge- and behaviour-based interventions and weakest for asset-intensive or incentive-driven approaches without follow-on support.** Evidence from IACoV indicates that practices rooted in knowledge, skills, and behaviour change are more likely to be sustained beyond project support, particularly where households can apply them independently. In contrast, collective, asset-intensive, or incentive-driven interventions (e.g. some community assets and cash-for-work-supported activities) were more fragile once external inputs ceased. Sustainability was further constrained by limited government extension capacity and follow-on resourcing.

173. **Lesson 7. Simplicity and institutional fit proved to be stronger drivers of scalability than technical sophistication.** Where interventions fit comfortably within existing institutional mandates, community capacities, and resource constraints, they were more easily replicated and adapted. In contrast, activities requiring specialised inputs, high maintenance, or sustained external support faced greater barriers to scale, even when technically sound.

174. **Lesson 8. Risk management processes supported adaptive responses where they were used as active management tools rather than compliance instruments.** The Environmental and Social Policy (ESP) Risk Management Strategy provided a useful framework for anticipating and responding to risks, but its contribution to adaptive management varied depending on whether it was treated as a living management tool or primarily as a compliance requirement.

3.3. Recommendations

175. The following recommendations are derived from the conclusions which flow logically from the evaluation findings (Annex 113) These recommendations were developed by the ET and reviewed, validated, revised and expanded through the Stakeholder Validation and Learning Workshop held on 1st April 2026. Additional details are provided in Table 20, including specific activities for the implementation of each recommendation. The lead entities, other contributing entities, priority level and date of completion for each sub-recommendation were identified by the stakeholders.

176. **Recommendation 1. Clarify and operationalise the strategic focus of IACOV 2 based on a deeper understanding of community-level resilience so that the synergies between household-level resilience and community-level resilience can be maximized.** IACOV 2 should incorporate a deeper understanding of how social capital, trust and community cohesion (including gender-based cohesion) contribute to community-level resilience, and ensure that these aspects are supported in practice, e.g. through VSLAs (Recommendation 8), gender-transformative approaches (Recommendation 5), etc. IACOV 2 should also ensure that local governance structures (VDMTs) and local leadership capacity are strengthened, and should consider how an understanding of local knowledge about climate change can be applied to further enhance community-level resilience. An understanding of community resilience that goes beyond the management of communal and/or public assets (e.g. rangelands, soil, water, crop diversity) to include local knowledge, institutions and cultural norms (including community cohesion, governance, leadership, gender-based norms) can then be used to help prioritise activities that maximise resilience gains by building on synergies between community- and household-level resilience. Clearer, more integrated pathways can then be established for community and household resilience, supported by appropriate institutional roles, resourcing, and indicators. (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Finding 3.2, Finding 3.3, Finding 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.2)

177. **Recommendation 2. Improve the reach and effectiveness of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging.** Improving the last-mile reach of forecast and EW messaging requires more effective communication channels (see below) and stronger institutional linkages between national, district, and community structures responsible for the dissemination of seasonal forecasts, notably LMS, DMA and MFSN (especially extension workers), and also including the DDMTs and VDMTs. Strengthening these linkages might include efforts to: (a) provide more effective awareness-raising among district-level leaders and stakeholders;

(b) enhance LMS capacity at the district level (beyond technical assistants) for more effective collaboration between senior LMS, DMA and MFSN officers at district level; (c) ensure that DDMT meeting takes place in a timely manner following the national climate outlook forum; (d) enhance the capacity of DMA to engage with VDMTS and local leaders; (d) ensure that extension agents are actively engaged in capacity-building support and information dissemination for VDMTs and local leaders.

178. Improving the effectiveness of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging will require modifications to the messages and accompanying advisories, such that they are clearly coded, easily actionable and contextualized at the local level. This should include: (a) the introduction of simple, standardised alert formats; (b) the translation of seasonal forecasts into plain-language advisories linked to concrete decisions; and (c) clearer institutional role differentiation for the stakeholders involved. For more effective communication channels there is the opportunity to learn from experience of Component 2 and apply or adapt those dissemination modalities that are considered to be most appropriate to the information type and the intended audience. See Recommendation 3. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1)

179. **Recommendation 3. Identify and agree on lessons learned from Component 2 on effective awareness-raising and communication approaches for different target audiences, and apply these lessons to strengthen last-mile communication and awareness-raising for all three Component activities.** An assessment is needed to address the current lack of data regarding the relative effectiveness of the different communication channels and awareness-raising methods implemented among different target groups under Component 2, particularly at the community level. Such an assessment can then be used to generate consensus among stakeholders regarding which approaches and methods can effectively enhance the last-mile reach of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging to support Components 1 and 3, including support to Extension Services, links between schools and MAFSN approaches, and youth-responsive strategies.¹³⁶ Such an assessment could also usefully help to prioritise communication and awareness-raising activities implemented under Component 2, particularly in ways that are more directly linked to Components 1 and 3. (Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1 and 3.4)

180. **Recommendation 4. Enhance IACOV's M&E systems by revising the Project Results Framework, incorporating explicit learning activities, and ensuring that M&E results and recommendations feed into adaptive management structures.** More appropriate and measurable outcome indicators are needed for Components 2 and 3, including indicators to measure community resilience as distinct from household resilience, and appropriate gender indicators (see sub-recommendation 5.3). Any similarities or overlaps in the indicators used to measure household decision-making (Outcome 1.2), climate adaptation practices (Outcome 2.1), and adaptive capacity (Outcome 3.1) should be clarified. The implementation of Community Action Plans should be tracked or monitored; if CAPs are to be institutionalized, then monitoring should be done both at the community level and also through the appropriate Ministry or structure at the District level. Overall M&E systems should be streamlined and simplified, ensuring that manageable and realistic levels of data collection and reporting effectively feed into adaptive management structures (see Recommendation 10). The development of a Theory of Change, with annual review / learning workshops, can enhance adaptive management at the strategic level. Learning should be incorporated into the M&E system through the identification and agreement of high-level learning questions at the start of Phase 2, ensuring that the data needed to address these questions are collected through the M&E system and planned Participatory Action Learning processes. (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1, 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.1; Conclusion 8, Finding 8.2)

181. **Recommendation 5. Gender: Move beyond counting women and men to promoting and measuring genuine empowerment outcomes, including changes in decision-making power, control**

¹³⁶ Youth-responsive strategies with young people might include integrating digital roles, entrepreneurship opportunities, and livelihood pathways that align with youth aspirations while maintaining climate adaptation objectives.

over resources, agency, and transformation of harmful¹³⁷ gender norms in ways that actively engage men and boys as allies. Field-based gender and social inclusion analyses are needed to understand community-specific power dynamics and structural barriers (e.g. addressing women's land tenure insecurity and ensuring equitable access to climate-smart technologies and resources), as well as the psychological strains and social tensions among men. This understanding will help to identify ways in which to integrate gender-transformative approaches in all activities, such as promoting shared responsibility in nutrition programs, challenging the division of labour that burdens women, and addressing GBV through prevention rather than response alone. A gender transformative approach involves actively engaging men and boys as allies in challenging harmful gender norms and promoting equitable household dynamics. Gender and social inclusion considerations must be integrated from the outset in project objectives, budgets, activities and indicators, systematizing disability-disaggregated data collection, and developing intersectional analysis frameworks that examine how multiple identities create compounded vulnerabilities. The M&E system should include gender empowerment indicators that capture qualitative shifts in gender relations (links with sub-recommendation 4.1).

182. While promoting gender-transformative outcomes is essential, it is important to recognise that some recommended actions such as shifting deeply rooted social norms and transforming masculinities require systemic and long-term engagement. These changes often extend beyond the timeframe and scope of a single project, but project-based interventions can lay the foundation for broader transformation, and ensure strategic partnerships are secured to sustain progress. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.2; Conclusion 5, Findings 5.1, 5.2; Conclusion 6, Finding 6.2)

183. **Recommendation 6. Improve efficiency by addressing structural planning, approval, and financial management bottlenecks.** IACOV Phase 2 should prioritise efficiency gains by addressing coordination challenges and the structural factors that repeatedly delayed implementation and reduced value for money in Phase 1, particularly for time-sensitive and seasonal activities. These are elaborated in Table 20. (Conclusion 4, Findings 3.3 and 4.2)

184. **Recommendation 7. Strengthen government ownership and financing pathways for greater sustainability.** This should include: (i) the gradual integration of core anticipatory action, early warning, and climate coordination functions into the recurrent mandates and operational budgets of key institutions (notably LMS and DMA); (ii) planned and resourced transfer of responsibility for the hosting, maintenance, and updating of forecasting dashboards and data platforms, accompanied by investments in server capacity, bandwidth, software upgrades and associated staff training, and staff retention; (iii) strengthened linkages between community-level planning instruments (e.g. Community Action Plans) and district development and land-use planning processes, to enhance institutional follow-up and reduce dependence on short-term project facilitation; and (iv) prioritisation of sustainability pathways that emphasise institutional depth, simplicity, and alignment with existing government systems, recognising fiscal constraints and the limited scope for sustaining technically complex or resource-intensive arrangements without long-term financing commitments. Given the limited government resources for extension services, ways of bolstering extension through collaboration with NGOs should be explored where possible.

185. These measures reflect evidence that while institutional ownership of IACoV-supported approaches is relatively strong, sustainability remains conditional on addressing financing gaps, concentration of technical expertise in a small number of individuals, and limited extension and operational capacity at district level. This is particularly so in scenarios where Ministries do not consider projects as mechanisms that support the Ministry to achieve its long-term development agenda. Stakeholders participating in the

¹³⁷ Some gender norms such as *letsema* (a traditional practice of working together), shared rangeland management, and viewing men as community protectors can support social cohesion. Harmful norms arise where customary structures restrict agency, including positioning men as sole decision-makers over land, livestock, and climate-related livelihood decisions.

Validation and Learning Workshop felt that Ministries should include projects in their budgeting processes, planning, implementation and M&E, thereby taking full ownership of the projects; beyond the project lifespan, the Ministry should actively continue implementing interventions that were supported through the project. In this way, elements of sustainability remain entrenched in the mandate of the Ministry. Monitoring of project-initiated assets should also be continued beyond the projects by the government. (Conclusion 6, Finding 6.1)

186. **Recommendation 8. Address household-level financial dependency through institutionalised support to Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs).** VSLAs and similar community-based savings groups such as Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC) have achieved considerable success in Lesotho and elsewhere in building household resilience and empowering women.¹³⁸ Although included in the original Project Proposal, VSLAs were not implemented consistently under IACOV Phase 1, yet the value of savings and financial management skills in allowing households (and particularly women) to purchase agricultural inputs (including drought-tolerant seeds and other CSA inputs) and to diversify their livelihoods was recognized.¹³⁹ If implemented well, VSLAs have the potential to make significant contributions to the overall goal of enhancing the adaptive capacity of vulnerable households to the effects of climate change on food security. During community development interventions e.g. lean season, where cash-based transfers are used to mitigate effects of food insecurity or development initiatives, it is pivotal to introduce VSLA's modality to build community ownership, sustainability and programme scalability while eliminating/reducing dependency on project support. VSLA is an approach aimed at orienting all community livelihoods groups on voluntary savings, financial literacy, record keeping, and lending. This can be introduced during CBPP or any other community planning platform. Communities have to be capacitated on household budgeting so VSLAs can be used as a vehicle. It is recommended that IACOV seeks further advice or partners with NGOs to implement and institutionalise support to the establishment of VSLAs. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1; Conclusion 6, Findings 6.1, 6.2; Conclusion 7, Finding 7.2)

187. **Recommendation 9. Address the sustainability risks associated with cash-for-work modalities through clearer transition pathways and, where feasible, alignment with longer-term social protection mechanisms.** Two alternative but non-mutually exclusive options should be considered: Option A: Redesign CFW within resilience programming to include clear and realistic transition and exit strategies. This could involve time-bound use of CFW for initial asset creation or shock response, combined with planned progression towards livelihood diversification, skills development, savings mechanisms, or market-oriented activities that do not rely on continued transfers. In this scenario, it is important to distinguish between beneficiary categories (targeting) while emphasizing on the progressive steps involved in the graduation process to ensure sustainability. Option B: Explore alignment of CFW-type interventions with longer-term social protection or public works schemes, where feasible, focusing on technically sound and well-monitored natural resource management (NRM) and soil and water conservation (SWC) activities (similar to the model provided by Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme). Given that Lesotho does not currently operate a comparable, nationally financed scheme at scale, any move towards institutionalisation would therefore require clear government policy direction, sustainable financing commitments, and capacity to manage such a programme over the long term. The choice between these options should be guided by government appetite, fiscal space, and institutional capacity.

188. **Recommendation 10. Enhance adaptive management through the consistent integration of M&E findings and recommendations into decision-making processes for more effective activity design and implementation.** IACOV Phase II should implement robust structures at national and district levels for

¹³⁸ See, for example, C. Ksoll et al (2016) 'Impact of Village Savings and Loan Associations: Evidence from a cluster randomized trial' [Journal of Development Economics](#) 120 (2016) 70–85. 'Effect of Village Savings and Loans Associations on rural women's livelihoods in the Kassenana Nankana Municipality' (2025) [African Journal of Emerging Issues](#), 7(17), pp. 1–17; CARE (2025) 'From Savings to Shaping Markets: The VSLA Economy' [VSLA 2025 Annual Report](#).

¹³⁹ IACOV Project Completion Report

ensuring that M&E is a dynamic tool for adaptive management at both strategic and operational levels. Such structures might include: (i) Formalized Review Cycles; (ii) Decision-Making Matrix; (iii) Interactive M&E Dashboards; (iv) Knowledge Management Systems; and/or (v) Capacity Building for Data Utilization. These are further described in Table 20. (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.1; Conclusion 8, Finding 8.2)

Table 20 Recommendation details

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Recommendation 1. Clarify and operationalise the strategic focus of IACOV 2 based on a deeper understanding of community-level resilience so that the synergies between household-level resilience and community-level resilience can be maximized. [Project design & planning] (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Findings 3.2, 3.3, 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.2)				
Sub-recommendation 1.1 Review IACOV 2 proposal / draft workplan / results framework in relation to community-level resilience and associated activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators (see also Recommendation 4) to ensure a common, deeper understanding of community resilience that includes local knowledge, institutions and cultural norms (including social capital, community cohesion, governance, leadership, and gender-based norms). Establish a common understanding of the interactions and synergies between community resilience and household resilience.	Planning Unit (M&E Team/ DPU)	DMA as the coordinator on resilience issues in the country	high	Q1 of Yr.1 implementation
Sub-recommendation 1.2 Apply these understandings by integrating the project results framework into the annual planning process and making use of monitoring data results to maximize community and household resilience impacts.	Planning Unit (M&E Team/ DPU)	DMA as the coordinator on resilience issues in the country	high	Q1 of Yr.1 implementation and throughout project lifespan
Recommendation 2. Improve the reach and effectiveness of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging. [Project design & planning] (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1)				
Sub-recommendation 2.1 Contribute to strengthening institutional linkages between national, district, and community structures responsible for the dissemination of seasonal forecasts.	LMS and DMA	IACoV and other climate change EW projects within MEF and MAFSN	high	A month before the start of every season. Eg, July before summer cropping and March before winter cropping

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 2.2 Modify the messages and accompanying advisories, such that they are clearly coded, easily actionable and contextualized at the local level. Where relevant, ensure that pest management advice and additional extension support is included.	DMA (DDMT)	IACoV, NCCC, and line Ministries	High	Immediately after the dissemination at the national level
Recommendation 3. Identify and agree on lessons learned from Component 2 on effective awareness-raising and communication approaches for different target audiences, and apply these lessons to strengthen last-mile communication and awareness-raising for all three Component activities. [Project design & planning] (Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1 and 3.4)				
Sub-recommendation 3.1 Conduct an assessment of the relative effectiveness of the different communication and awareness-raising methods implemented under Component 2.	MEF/MAFSN	IACOV M&E	High	Q2
Sub-recommendation 3.2 Organise district-level workshops to share the findings of the assessment and generate innovative plans for enhanced dissemination of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging.	MEF/MAFSN	IACOV M&E & Component 1,2,3	Medium	Q3
Recommendation 4. Enhance IACOV's monitoring and evaluation systems by revising the Project Results Framework, incorporating explicit learning activities, and ensuring that M&E results and recommendations are embedded in the management and technical decision-making structures of both the project and the implementing organisations. [Project design & planning] (Conclusion 1, Finding 1.1; Conclusion 3, Findings 3.1, 3.4; Conclusion 5, Finding 5.1; Conclusion 8, Finding 8.2)				
Sub-recommendation 4.1 Revise the Project Results Framework to include more appropriate and measurable outcome indicators.	IACOV M&E	MEF & MAFSN	High	Q1
Sub-recommendation 4.2 Identify and implement an institutionalized system for monitoring the implementation of the Community Action Plans.	MEF & MAFSN	IACOV M&E, Component 2	High	Q1, 2 & 3

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 4.3 Incorporate learning into the M&E system through the identification and agreement of high-level learning questions at the start of Phase 2, ensuring that the data needed to address these questions is collected through the M&E system and planned Participatory Action Learning processes.	MEF & MAFSN	IACOV M&E and Knowledge Management	High	Q2 and throughout project lifespan
Recommendation 5. Gender: Move beyond counting women and men to promoting and measuring genuine empowerment outcomes, including changes in decision-making power, control over resources, agency, and transformation of harmful gender norms in ways that actively engage men and boys as allies. [Project design & planning] (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.2; Conclusion 5, Findings 5.1, 5.2; Conclusion 6, Finding 6.2)				
Sub-recommendation 5.1 Conduct field-based gender and social inclusion analyses to understand community-specific power dynamics and structural barriers related to climate change adaptation.	Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development	Women's organizations Community based structures Other organizations representing vulnerable groups Gender Officers from MEF and MAFSN	High	Q1
Sub-recommendation 5.2 Integrate gender-transformative approaches in all activities and actively engage men and boys as allies in challenging gender-based violence, and supporting women's empowerment, thereby reducing the burden of rigid expectations that contribute to psychological distress. Interventions should be designed to foster positive masculinities, encouraging men to critically reflect on traditional gender roles and embrace more equitable and supportive behaviours.	IACOV Programme unit	M&E unit MGYS MenEngage groups Traditional leaders Gender Officers from MEF and MAFSN Gender Officers from MEF and MAFSN	High	Q1 & throughout project implementation

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 5.3 Ensure that gender and social inclusion considerations are integrated into project objectives, budgets, activities, and M&E systems. Develop and track empowerment indicators that capture qualitative shifts in gender relations, as perceived by both women and men (see M&E Recommendation).	IACOV Programme unit	M&E Unit MGYSD Gender Officers from MEF and MAFSN	High	Q1 & throughout project implementation
Recommendation 6. Improve effectiveness and efficiency by addressing coordination challenges, structural planning, approval, and financial management bottlenecks. [Project design & planning – Financial & Procurement Systems] (Conclusion 4, Findings 3.3, 4.2)				
Sub-recommendation 6.1 Review the effectiveness of different district-level coordination structures (PIT, HoD Committee, DDMT) and mechanisms, agree on improvements, and implement agreed improvements in each district.	IACoV	Planning Unit	high	Q1 and throughout project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 6.2 Advocate for speedy planning and approval mechanisms for stronger alignment between CAPs, annual Component workplans, and procurement plans.	IACoV	Line Ministries & WFP	high	Throughout project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 6.3 Ensure that planning process includes sufficient technical support (for feasibility assessments, design and training of local supervisors) and follow-up monitoring at the local level, by both technical experts and extension staff. See also sub-recommendation 7.5.	IACoV & WFP	Line Ministries	medium	Quarterly
Sub-recommendation 6.4 Facilitate prioritization of district-level approval and financial management procedures and expand alternative financing and payment modalities where feasible (e.g. direct transfers, framework contracts, in-kind provisioning).	IACoV & WFP	Line Ministries	high	Throughout project lifespan

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 6.5 Consider establishing a smaller financial sub-committee of the PSC for routine financial and operational approvals.	IACOV PSC	WFP	medium	Q1
Sub-recommendation 6.6 Institutionalise efficiency-enhancing practices that proved effective during implementation (see Para 115)	IACoV & WFP	Line Ministries	medium	Throughout project lifespan
Recommendation 7. Strengthen government ownership and financing pathways for greater sustainability. [Project design & planning - Sustainability] (Conclusion 6, Finding 6.1)				
Sub-recommendation 7.1 Contribute to gradual integration of core anticipatory action, early warning, and climate coordination functions into the recurrent mandates and operational budgets of key institutions, notably LMS and DMA.	DMA	LMS, UN Agencies, Line Ministries	medium	Through project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 7.2 Planned and resourced transfer of responsibility for the hosting, maintenance, and updating of forecasting dashboards and data platforms, accompanied by investments in server capacity, bandwidth, software upgrades and associated staff training, and staff retention.	LMS	DMA	high	Through project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 7.3 Strengthen linkages between CAPs and district development and land-use planning processes	Planning Unit (M&E Team/DPU)	Other line Ministries	high	Through project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 7.4 Prioritize sustainability pathways that emphasise institutional depth, simplicity, and alignment with existing government systems.	IACoV	Line Ministries	high	Through project lifespan
Sub-recommendation 7.5 Work with MAFSN and MEF at all levels to explore ways in which extension services can be boosted through sustainable institutional linkages with NGOs, CSOs, academia, research institutions, and private sector.	IACoV	UN Agencies	high	Q1 and throughout project lifespan

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Recommendation 8. Address household-level financial dependency through institutionalised support to Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). [Project design & planning – Sustainability] (Conclusion 3, Finding 3.1; Conclusion 6, Findings 6.1, 6.2; Conclusion 7, Finding 7.2)				
Sub-recommendation 8.1 Compile IACOV's experiences with VSLAs to determine successes and challenges.	WFP RAM	MAFSN Planning, Department of Cooperatives, Caritas, CRS, WVI, & Care for Basotho	High	September 2026
Sub-recommendation 8.2 Partner with NGOs with experience of implementing VSLAs in Lesotho and elsewhere.	IACOV Component 3/WFP Activity 5	MAFSN-DONHE, Department of Cooperatives, Caritas, CRS, WVI & CARE for Basotho	High	Jan 2027
Sub-recommendation 8.3 Incorporate VSLAs into IACOV Phase 2 planning processes to implement VSLAs in all targeted communities in alignment with Govt strategies.	IACOV Component 3/WFP Activity 5	MAFSN, Department of Cooperatives, Caritas, CRS, WVI & CARE for Basotho	High	Jan 2028
Recommendation 9. Address the sustainability risks associated with cash-for-work modalities through clearer transition pathways and, where feasible, alignment with longer-term social protection mechanisms. [Project design & planning – Sustainability] (Conclusion 6, Finding 6.2)				

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 9.1 Undertake high-level consultations with relevant GoL Ministries and Officials to determine government's appetite, fiscal space, and institutional capacity relating to: (A) CFW transition and exit strategies; and (B) longer-term social protection or public works schemes. Note that the value of soil and water conservation infrastructure for community-level resilience (as part of CFW or public works programmes) must be taken into consideration in such consultations.	IACoV	MAFSN, MEF	high	Q1 and periodically (i.e. symposiums) across project lifespan
Recommendation 10. Enhance adaptive management through the consistent integration of M&E findings and recommendations into decision-making processes for more effective activity design and implementation. [Project design & planning]				

Recommendation [& Recommendation theme]	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: high or medium	By when
Sub-recommendation 10.1 Consider and agree on how M&E findings and recommendations can be feasibly and effectively used for adaptive management. Structures that might be considered at district and national levels include: - Formalized Review Cycles: regular (e.g., quarterly) M&E review meetings involving project management, technical leads, and key stakeholders to interpret M&E data, identify emerging trends, discuss challenges, and collectively formulate adaptive actions. Minutes and action points from these meetings should be formally documented and tracked. - Decision-Making Matrix: this matrix should specify which M&E outputs (e.g., performance reports, annual outcome monitoring results, Theory of Change review) correspond to which decision points (e.g., operational processes, activity modification, policy advocacy, budget reallocation), and outline responsibilities and triggers for action based on M&E findings. - Interactive M&E Dashboards: user-friendly, interactive dashboards that visualize key performance indicators, indicator targets and evaluation findings in real-time. These dashboards should be accessible to all relevant staff and stakeholders, enabling quick identification of progress, bottlenecks, and areas requiring attention. Training should be provided on how to use these tools. - Knowledge Management Systems: M&E findings and recommendations should be inputted and tracked in existing Knowledge Management Systems Capacity Building in Data Utilization: investment should be made in building the capacity of project staff and partners in data analysis, interpretation, and evidence-based decision-making, e.g. workshops on critical thinking, problem-solving using M&E data, and communication of findings to diverse audiences	Programme Management Unit (Activity Managers WFP) Planning Units GoL	M&E, KM	high	End of Year 1
Sub-recommendation 10.2 Work with the M&E Team and relevant stakeholders in designing and implementing the agreed structures.	PMU, Planning Units GoL	IACoV	high	Q2, Year 2

Annexes

Annex 1. Summary Terms of Reference

Full Terms of Reference are available at [WFP.ORG](https://www.wfp.org)

Introduction

The World Food Programme (WFP) Lesotho Country Office commissioned a decentralized evaluation of the IACOV project, covering the period 2020–2025. The evaluation will assess the project's design, implementation, and effectiveness in enhancing adaptive capacity and resilience of vulnerable and food-insecure populations in Lesotho. Evidence generated will inform future programming, sustainability strategies, and policy alignment. Results will be shared with stakeholders and donors for accountability and learning.

Subject and focus of the evaluation

The IACOV project, funded by the Adaptation Fund (USD 9,999,894), aims to strengthen climate resilience and adaptive capacity among vulnerable households. The project targeted three southern districts: Mafeteng, Mophale's Hoek, and Quthing, reaching an estimated 42,840 direct beneficiaries. The project focuses on three components:

- **Component 1:** strengthening the institutions and systems for improved adaptation and management of climate change impacts .
- **Component 2:** Awareness raising for climate change impacts and adaptation.
- **Component 3:** Building community resilience through adaptation measures and improved food systems.

Evaluation Objectives and Stakeholders

The evaluation serves dual objectives of accountability and learning:

- **Accountability** – Assess and report on project performance and results of the project.
- **Learning** – Generate insights to inform the design and implementation of future climate adaptation and food security projects.

The stakeholders include WFP Lesotho CO, Regional Bureau, WFP HQ, beneficiaries, government ministries, UN agencies, NGOs, donors (Adaptation Fund), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies.

Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation will apply UNEG and OECD/DAC criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability) and address the following questions:

1. How relevant were the project outcomes to the climate adaptation needs of the Government of Lesotho, communities, and target groups? (Relevance)
2. To what extent does the project complement other government and WFP interventions, and produce results that are mutually reinforcing to these interventions? (Coherence)

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3. To what extent did the project achieve its intended outcomes in terms of improving adaptive capacity and household resilience? (Effectiveness)
4. How efficiently were resources utilized to achieve the project's objectives, and are there opportunities for improved efficiency in future programming? (Efficiency)
5. To what extent did the project cater to the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, minorities and other potentially marginalized groups, in the target communities? (Equity)
6. Did the project consider the sustainability of the intervention programmes being implemented for the various beneficiaries? (Sustainability)
7. Were any of the intervention activities able to be scaled up to include more beneficiaries or more areas? (Scalability)
8. To what extent did the project adapt to lessons learned during project implementation and what role did innovation play in organisational improvements? (Adaptive Management)

Methodology and ethical considerations

The evaluation will adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative, qualitative, and participatory techniques. It will be theory-informed, utilization-focused, and gender-responsive. Primary and secondary data will be triangulated, with explicit strategies to capture perspectives of women, men, youth, and marginalized groups. Ethical standards per UNEG guidelines will be upheld.

Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation Committee (EC) Chair: The evaluation will be chaired by Elliot Vhurumuku, the Country Director and EC Chair. The EC Chair nominates the evaluation managers, approves all evaluation deliverables, ensures the independence and impartiality of the evaluation at all stages, participates in discussions with the evaluation team, oversees the dissemination and follow-up process, including the management response.

Evaluation Managers: The evaluation will be managed by Mokotla Ntela and Anja Selmer. The Evaluation Managers will be the main interlocutors between the evaluation team, represented by the team leader, and WFP counterparts to ensure a smooth implementation process and compliance with quality standards for process and content. The Regional Evaluation Office will provide oversight and support throughout the evaluation process.

Evaluation Reference Group (ERG): The ERG comprises a cross-section of WFP and external stakeholders from relevant business areas. It provides advice and feedback on key components of the evaluation process. The ERG is guided by the principles of transparency, ownership, use, and accuracy. It is composed of:

Internal ERG Members

1. Elliot Vhurumuku, Country Director (Chair of the Evaluation Committee)
2. Emily Doe, Deputy Country Director (Head of Programme).
3. Mokotla Ntela, Evaluation Managers (Evaluation Committee Secretariat).
4. Anja Selmer Evaluation Manager (Evaluation Committee Secretariat).
5. Napo Ntlou, National Policy Officer, Activity 1
6. Likeleli Phoolo, National Policy Officer, Activity 2.
7. Makhauta Mokhethi, National Policy Officer, Activity 4.
8. Ntebaleng Thetsane, National Policy Officer, Activity 5.
9. Chama Kambobe, Head of Supply Chain
10. Tanki Sekalaka, Budgeting and Programming Officer.
11. Morongoe Masilo, Communications Advocacy and Marketing Officer.
12. Jean Providence Nzabonimpa, Regional Evaluation Officer.
13. Caterina Kireeva, Regional Monitoring Advisor
14. Ashraful Amin, Programme Policy Officer – Resilience.
15. Justin Vanrooyen, Regional Gender Adviser
16. Sandra Hakim, Regional Advisor on Environmental and Social Safeguards
17. Alessia Vittorangeli, PPGR Project Design & Management focal point.

18. Pablo Arnal, PPGR Evidence and Learning Officer.

External ERG Members

19. Nkuebe Leretholi, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Range and Soil Conservation – Director Conservation).
20. Charles Tšeoale, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Lesotho Meteorological Services – Senior Meteorologist).
21. Reginah Mating, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Range Management – Director Range).
22. Makamohelo Semuli, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (Department of Nutrition – Director).
23. Bataung Kuenene, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (Department of Research – Chief Research Officer).
24. Jubilee Ntloana, Ministry of Education and Training (School Feeding Coordinator).
25. Sechaba Mokhameleli, Lesotho Red Cross Society (Programme Director).
26. Mampho Thulo, Rural Self-Help Development Association (Director).
27. Khotso Lepheana, Lesotho National Farmers Union (Chief Executive Officer)
28. Daniel Essey, United Nations Environment Programme.
29. Mokitinyane Nthimo, Food and Agriculture Organisation.

Timing and key milestones

- **Inception:** August – November 2025.
- **Data collection:** November 2025.
- **Reporting & Analysis:** December 2025 - April 2026.
- **Dissemination:** April – May 2026.

Annex 2. Timeline

Table 21 Timeline of evaluation phases, tasks and deliverables

Main phases	Timeline	Tasks and deliverables
Inception	30 July 2025 - 11 November 2025	Document review Inception consultations (remote) Inception report Inception briefing (remote)
Data collection	17 November 2025 - 1 December 2025	Fieldwork Exit debriefing
Data analysis and reporting	2 December 2025 - 17 March 2026	Data analysis and report drafting Comments process Learning workshop Final evaluation report Preparation of Management Response
Review of ER by Adaptation Fund	17 March 2026 - 13 May 2026	Adaptation Fund reviews the report
Dissemination and follow-up	21 May 2026 - 28 May 2026	Dissemination of the evaluation report

Annex 3. Fieldwork agenda

Table 22 Fieldwork agenda

Day	Date	Location / Travel	Evaluation Team (ET) Activity
Monday	17 Nov 2025	Maseru	Introductory briefing with WFP Country Director and Evaluation Manager, KIIs with WFP staff
Tuesday	18 Nov 2025	Maseru	National-level KIIs: LMS, MEF, DMA, MET, MoGYSR.
Wednesday	19 Nov 2025	Maseru	National-level KIIs: MAFS, World Vision, Lesotho Red Cross, Rural Self-Help Development Association, Lesotho National Farmers Union, UN agencies.
Thursday	20 Nov 2025	Travel to Mafeteng District	Introductory meeting with District Administrator & DDMT; KIIs with other district stakeholders (MEF, MAFS, MET, MoGYSR, NGOs, etc)
Friday	21 Nov 2025	Mafeteng – Makoabating	Introductory meeting with Chief & Community Councillors; FGDs with women, men & youth; KIIs with ARC officers, teachers, community leaders, and selected beneficiaries. Observation of community assets, etc
Saturday– Sunday	22–23 Nov 2025	Travel to Mohale’s Hoek	Review data collection tools & note-taking formats; compare & triangulate findings
Monday	24 Nov 2025	Mohale’s Hoek District	Introductory meeting with District Administrator & DDMT; KIIs with other district stakeholders (MEF, MAFS, MET, MoGYSR, NGOs, etc)
Tuesday	25 Nov 2025	Mohale’s Hoek – Draaihoek	Introductory meeting with Chief & Community Councillors; FGDs with women, men & youth; KIIs with ARC officers, teachers, community

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			leaders, and selected beneficiaries. Observation of community assets, etc
Wednesday	26 Nov 2025	Mohale's Hoek – Lithakaling	Introductory meeting with Chief & Community Councillors; FGDs with women, men & youth; KIIs with ARC officers, teachers, community leaders, and selected beneficiaries. Observation of community assets, etc
Thursday	27 Nov 2025	Travel to Quthing District	Introductory meeting with District Administrator & DDMT; KIIs with other district stakeholders (MEF, MAFS, MET, MoGYSR, NGOs, etc)
Friday	28 Nov 2025	Quthing – Mohlakoana	Introductory meeting with Chief & Community Councillors; FGDs with women, men & youth; KIIs with ARC officers, teachers, community leaders, and selected beneficiaries. Observation of community assets, etc
Saturday– Sunday	29–30 Nov 2025	Travel back to Maseru	Review field notes and do preliminary data analysis; compare & triangulate findings
Monday	1 Dec 2025	Maseru	Endline Debrief: Presentation of preliminary findings to WFP CO, DMA, LMS, MEF and partners. Planning for report drafting and follow-up actions.

Annex 4. Reconstructed Theory of Change and Assumptions Tested by the Evaluation

The ToC elaborated below was drafted by the ET at the Inception Phase. The ToC illustrates the outcome pathways leading to impact. Outcomes are the changes generated by the activities supported by the project, in combination with other factors or conditions (assumptions) that exist within the wider system. An outcomes pathway is the chain of connected outcomes that leads to impact. The various different outcomes and their pathways towards the intended impact provide the key building blocks for measuring change.

Contribution analysis was used to determine the strength of evidence along the various outcome pathways. The assessment of contribution involves the consideration of four minimum conditions that must be met for a contribution story to be plausible: (1) that the activities were executed as per the ToC; (2) that assumptions were kept; (3) that outcomes were materialized; and (4) that there is evidence of linkages between the activities and the outcomes.

The three nested ToC diagrams below illustrate the different project activities implemented at national, district and community levels, and how these various activities and their intermediate outcomes are thought to combine across levels and project components to generate change. By structuring the ToC according to national, district and community levels (instead of the three project components), the ways in which the different components are interlinked, as well as the effectiveness of these linkages in contributing towards the achievement of project outcomes, can be identified and explained (see EQ 3.2).

Assumptions linking activities to outcomes

The successful realization of the IACOV project's outcomes is contingent upon a set of critical assumptions. Assumptions are the conditions, norms and values that underpin the theory of change and explain the 'theory' behind the different elements and how they connect. The ET categorized two types of assumptions: (i) causal assumptions (internal to the project's logic); and (ii) contextual assumptions (external factors).

Table 23 Assessment of causal and contextual assumptions linking activities to outcomes to impact

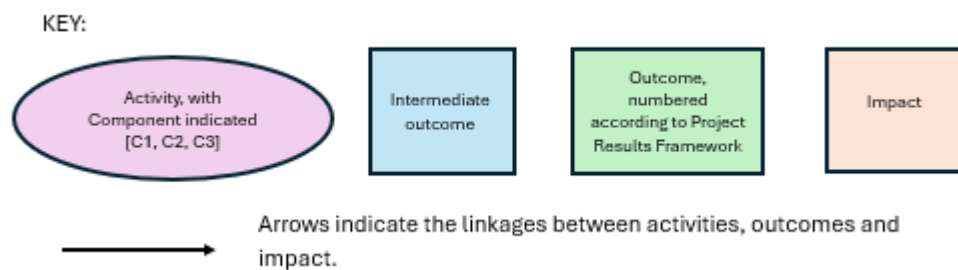
	<i>Causal assumptions linking activities to outcomes to impact:</i>	Most relevant EQ(s)	ET Comments	ET Assessment
A1	Awareness-raising, training and capacity-building initiatives translate into tangible changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices among government staff, committees, communities, and other stakeholders	3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2	Training initiatives under C3 effectively translated into tangible KAP changes at community level in the 3 districts. Data was not collected at national level to determine effectiveness of awareness-raising under C2.	Partially held true; insufficient data for full validation
A2	Improved coordination and policy frameworks, together with increases in knowledge and capacity are sufficient to promote institutional change	6.1, 6.2		Partially held true
A3	Media editorial policy places importance on climate change reporting	EQ2	Editors not available for interview, only reporters	Unable to verify
A4	Religious leaders participate in conveying the messages <i>Community leaders (Chiefs, Councillors, Religious Leaders, etc), VDMTs, Nutrition Clubs and other relevant groups participate in conveying messages related to EW, seasonal forecasts, climate change adaptation, etc</i>	3.1, 3.2	Assumption revised on basis of data collected at community level:	True to some extent in some communities
A5	Community-level leaders and project support are effectively able to organize and incentivize community members to implement the Community Adaptation Plans	3.1, 3.2	Cash payment was the main incentive; without cash, community members were unwilling to provide the labour needed to undertake communal activities	Partially held true
A6	Early warning systems and climate information are effectively communicated, disseminated and understood by target communities, leading to informed decision-making and early action (i.e. demand for adaptive	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2	Difficult to assess because each of the different assumptions within this statement needs to be considered separately, and additional assumptions are also needed: (a) community members understand about climate change and adaptation measures (see above, A1); (b) seasonal forecasts and early	Partially held true

	strategies among communities)		warning messages are disseminated effectively to community members; (c) the messages are supported and reinforced by local leaders and VDMTs (see above, A4); (d) community members understand the messages; (e) they trust the accuracy of the seasonal forecasts; and (e) the messages themselves are locally appropriate and clearly actionable.	
A7	IACOV's understanding of resilience and adaptive capacity is sufficiently integrated with community-level understandings about these concepts	1.1, EQ2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2	Although IACOV had undertaken a study of indigenous knowledge, the results of the study had not yet been integrated or applied into IACOV-supported activities	Did not hold true
A8	Community assets created through the project are effectively maintained and utilized by beneficiaries to serve the purpose for which they are intended (rather than being viewed merely as CFW safety net programme)	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2	Without CFW, beneficiaries were unwilling or unable to contribute to maintenance of community assets, particularly those related to NRM. Large shade net structures had broken and could not be repaired by communities alone.	Did not hold true
A9	Farmers are motivated to increase production to meet market demand	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2	The level of market demand in the project sites visited by the ET was generally low; marketing outside the local area was a challenge	Did not hold true
	<i>Contextual assumptions linking activities to outcomes to impact:</i>	Most relevant EQ(s)		
A10	Infrastructural services such as reliable electricity and network access are sufficient to support the effective functioning of the Automatic Weather Stations and High Performance Computer	EQ4, 6.1		
A11	National authorities are committed to strengthening their capacities for inter-sectoral drought forecasting and related responses	EQ2, 6.1	Illustrated by the policy and institutional embeddedness of drought forecasting, early warning, anticipatory action, disaster risk reduction measures, and climate change	True

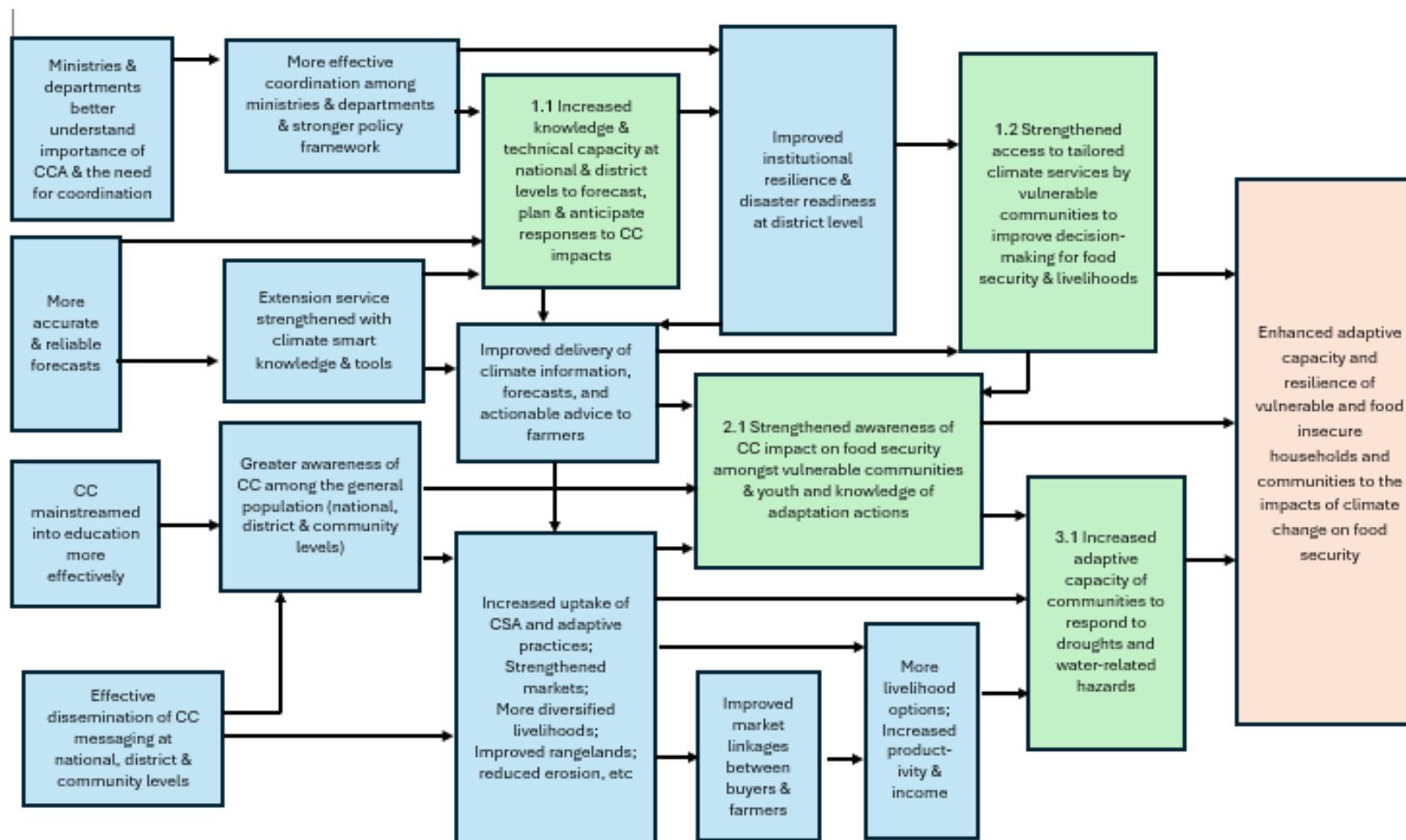
			adaptation.	
A12	Continuity of WFP and government personnel allows for capacity and expertise to be retained for the life of the project and beyond	6.1	Key WFP staff (e.g. Coordinator and Component Managers) remained either since the start or the first year or two of the project. Government personnel lacked continuity, especially at District level.	Partially held true
A13	Partnerships, working relationships and trust within and among implementing entities and governance structures (WFP, LMS, MFRSC/MEF, Project Steering Committee and Project Implementation Teams) and other stakeholders remain strong and effective, allowing for effective collaboration and coordination	3,2, EQ4, 6.1, EQ8	Working relationships and trust appeared to be stronger at national level than district level, though some Ministry staff at national level appeared to lack engagement without incentives.	Partially held true
A14	A stable political and economic environment prevails in Lesotho, free from conflicts or large-scale shocks that could disrupt project implementation	3.2, EQ8	IACOV was conceived and planned during a time of political/economic instability, and was subsequently affected by the COVID crisis. Steps were taken to design and adapt the project to ensure implementation (see EQ6)	Did not hold true, but steps were taken to adapt the project
A15	Climatic conditions, while variable, do not present extreme events that completely overwhelm adaptive capacities developed by the project	3.2, EQ8	Unexpected flooding occurred in the first two years of the project, followed by drought. IACOV revised its risk assessment but was not overwhelmed by these events	True
A16	No major pest / disease outbreaks occur to undermine agricultural productivity and food security	3.2, EQ8	Apart from COVID, there were no major new pest / disease outbreaks, only the continuation of the earlier Fall Army Worm infestation	Partially held true
A17	Systems and mechanisms exist for effective CFW payments to farmers	3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2	CFW payments were disrupted by new government policy regarding M-Pesa and inability of WFP to contract the newly established M-Pesa provider	Did not hold true
A18	Cultural beliefs and norms do not prevent community members, especially women, from taking part in project	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1,		True

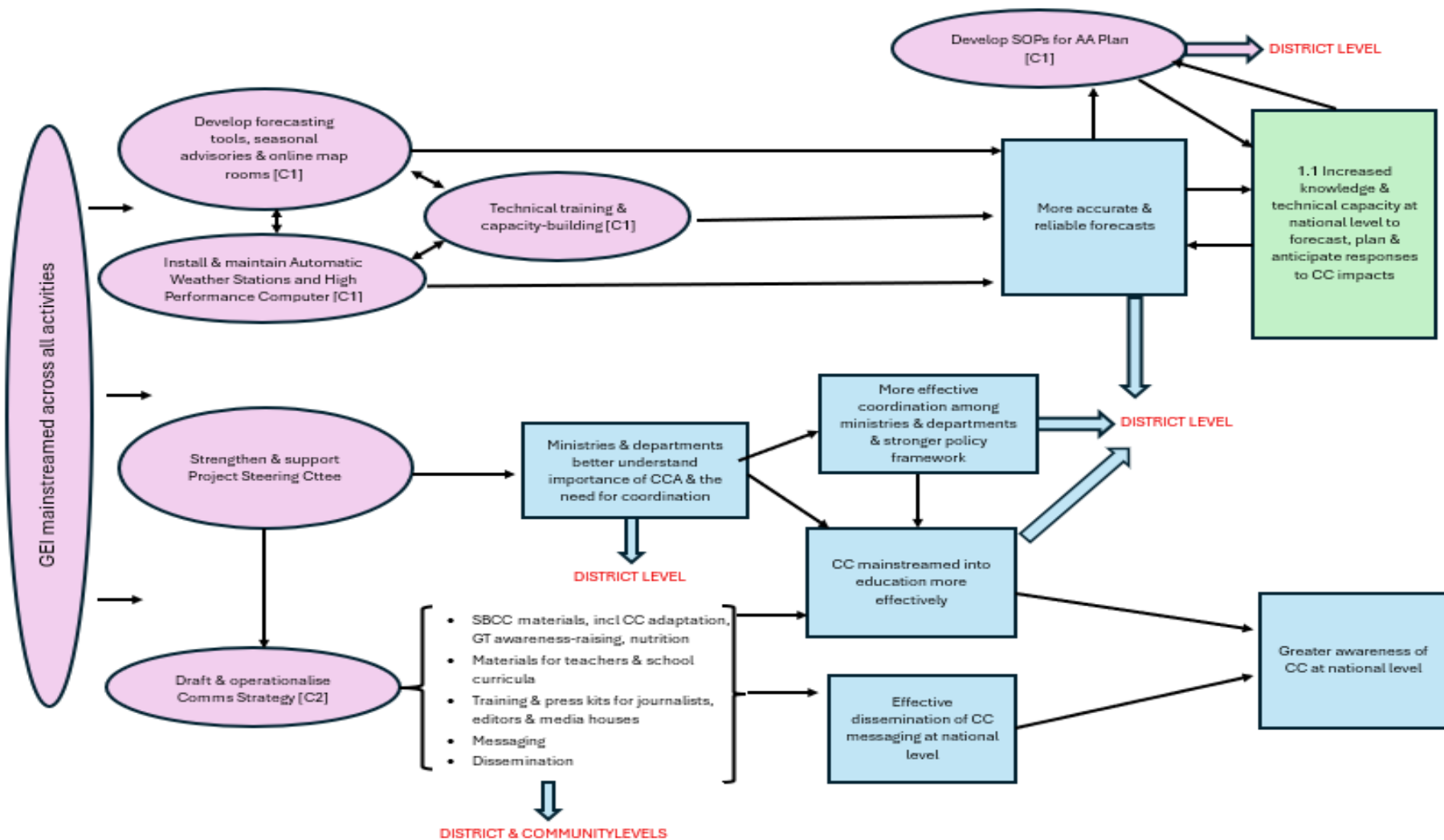
	activities and adopting climate-smart practices	5.2		
A19	Communities are open to producing indigenous vegetables and are able to source appropriate seeds	1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2	A wide range of vegetables were observed in the project sites visited.	True
A20	Continued donor commitment and financial support for climate change adaptation initiatives in Lesotho, particularly for those initiatives that are linked with IACOV	1.2, EQ2, 6.1		True
A21	Political will of the government remains supportive of the project's objectives	EQ2, 6.1		True

KEY TO TOC DIAGRAMS:

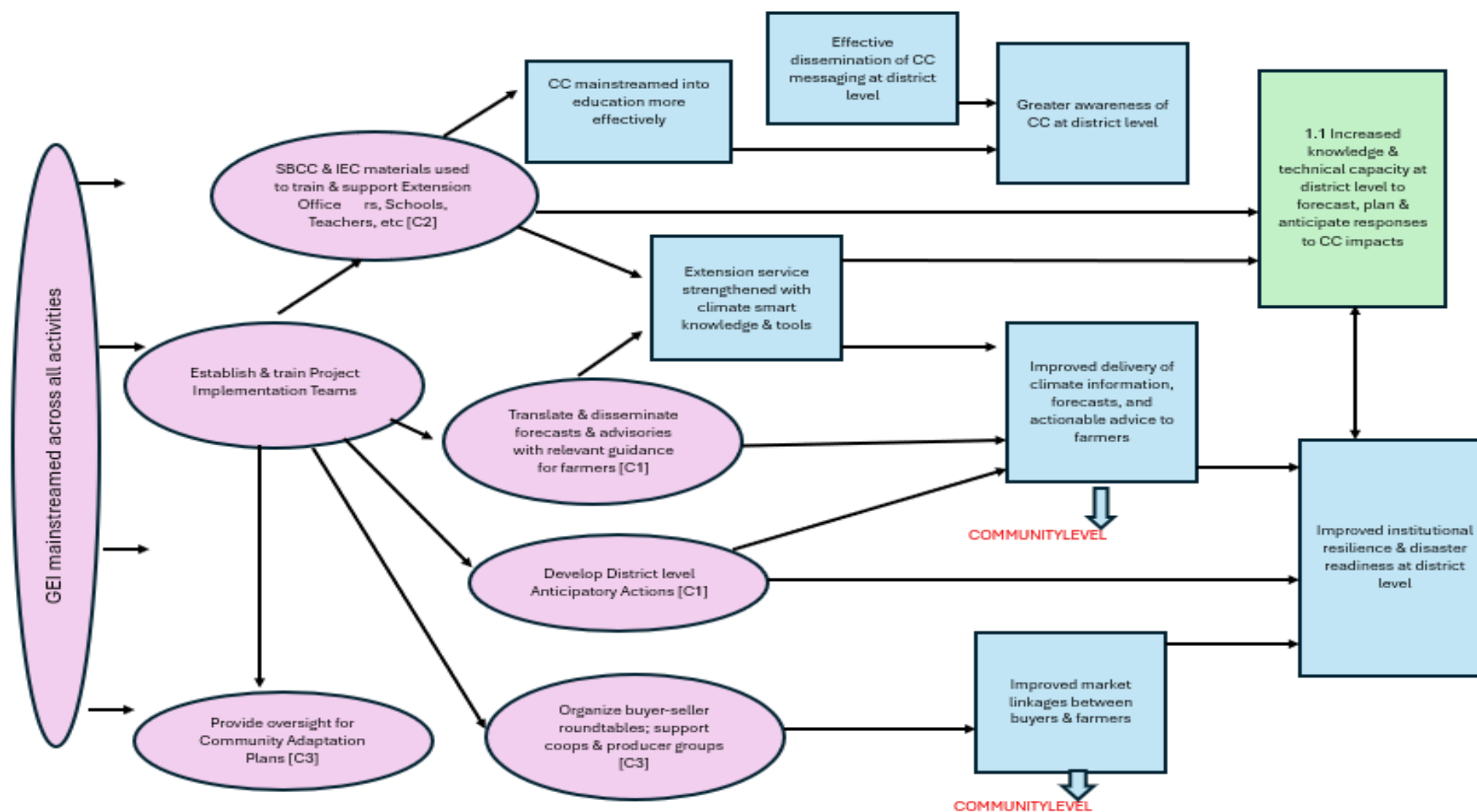


OUTCOME PATHWAYS

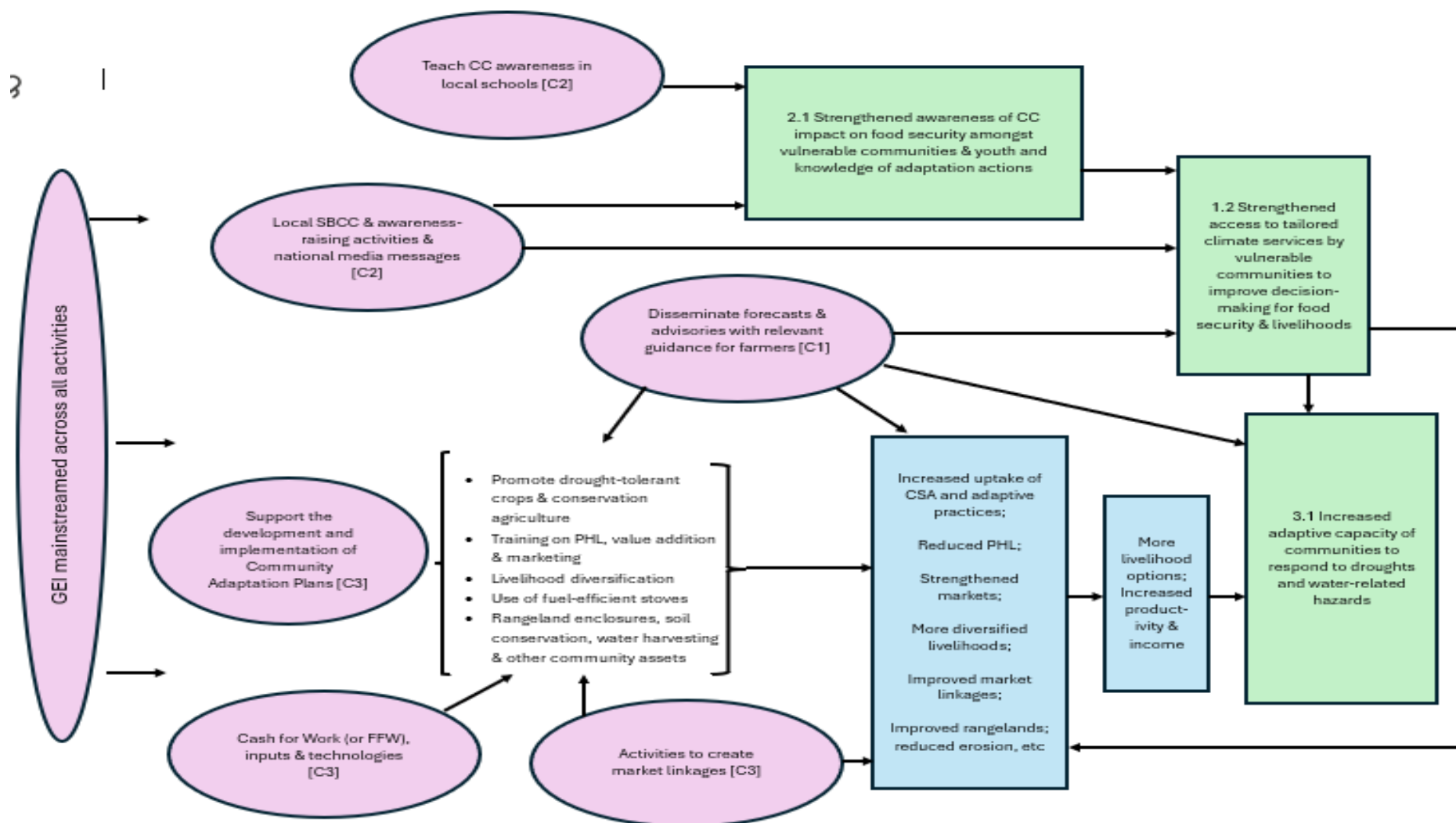




District-level Theory of Change



Community-level Theory of Change



Annex 5. Methodology

Evaluability assessment

189. The ET conducted an evaluability assessment during the evaluation's inception phase based on a detailed review of the evaluation ToR, the availability of documentation and data, stakeholder consultations, and the ET's familiarity with the project districts. This evaluability assessment process ensured that the scope and rationale of the evaluation was clear and that all data needs were appropriately addressed. Evaluability issues and mitigation measures related to the four facets of evaluability¹⁴⁰ are summarized in Table 24. The evaluability of gender and human rights is included in line with UN SWAP guidelines. Apart from the lack of a ToC, some weaknesses in the monitoring and reporting, and physical challenges in accessing project sites located in the mountain ecology, no major limitations were identified. Having designed the methodology to mitigate these challenges, the ET considered the evaluation feasible to conduct.

190. The use of mixed methods overcame specific challenges with any one data collection method or data source. For example, weaknesses in the documentation were compensated by stakeholder KIIs; e.g. if the PSC meeting minutes were not available, then relevant information was instead gathered through KIIs with PSC members. Similarly, data gaps or a lack of gender differentiation in existing outcome monitoring results was addressed through insights generated by the quantitative survey. The use of mixed methods also allowed for triangulation across different methods and data sources, strengthening the validity of the findings.

191. The use of a theory-based approach allowed the ET to overcome project design limitations. The reconstructed Theory of Change supports a clearer understanding of the intervention logic, causal pathways, and assumptions underpinning project design and implementation. The ToC articulates the linkages between project inputs, activities, and outputs to intended outcomes related to various dimensions, such as adaptive capacity, resilience, and institutional strengthening.

Table 24 Evaluability considerations

Evaluability issue	Mitigation Measures	EQs/criteria affected	Evaluability rating
Information availability: In general, the project appears to be well-documented (see Annex 3). The MTR reported some weaknesses in monitoring and reporting. There are some data gaps for specific indicators (e.g. percentage of targeted community members (disaggregated by gender and age) receiving key messages on climate change adaptation, food security and nutrition), with limited disaggregation in the early years of the project. Some project indicators for gender and resilience appear to be	The use of mixed methods helped address limitations in particular sources. Where feasible, the phone survey was designed to fill existing data gaps ¹⁴¹	EQ 3.2	Moderate evaluability

¹⁴⁰ Austrian Development Agency. 2022. Evaluability Assessments in Austrian development cooperation. Guidance Document.

¹⁴¹ The data to be collected by the phone survey include disaggregated data (by sex, age, and vulnerability); percentage of targeted community members receiving key messages on climate change adaptation, food security and nutrition; self-reported climate adaptation practices; perceptions of household and community resilience; as well as use of climate forecasts and early warning messages. See Annex 7 for draft survey.

weak (see GESI section below).			
Design: There is a project results framework, but no Theory of Change (ToC). Explicit assumptions are included in the results framework. Causal pathways or interactions between the different project components are not clearly articulated in the project proposal.	The ET drafted a reconstructed ToC to support the evaluation	EQ3	Good evaluability
Stakeholder demand: Based on those consulted during the inception phase, there is strong demand for the evaluation, and the key organizations and stakeholders are open to learning and willing to participate	No mitigation needed ¹⁴²	n/a	Good evaluability
Institutional and physical context: Resources are available to achieve the evaluation objectives, though there will be limited time for data collection, limiting the number of sites to be visited by the ET. Accessibility challenges will prevent visits to any mountain sites. The required stakeholders are available, despite high levels of staff turnover among government entities. The evaluation is taking place at the right time.	Site selection for qualitative data collection was designed to be as representative as possible. The use of mixed methods allowed for quantitative data and insights to be gathered for mountain sites.	All EQs that rely on community-level data	Good evaluability
Gender, equity and social inclusion (GESI): Some GEI analysis is available within the documentation. Apart from HIV status, none of the existing monitoring data has been disaggregated by disability status. Gender disaggregation of data improved during the course of the project. Output indicator 2.1.1 in the Project Results Framework measures gender-transformative awareness-raising materials but not whether these have reached their intended audience. Outputs 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 have women-specific indicators though appear to rely on perceptions of improvement / increase. Stakeholders with gender expertise and marginalized stakeholders are available for the evaluation.	Phone survey results were disaggregated by gender and the household's disability status (i.e. whether any household member has disabilities and/or is living with HIV).	EQ1, EQ3, EQ5, EQ6	Moderate evaluability

Key: **Green**: good evaluability; **Yellow**: moderate evaluability; **Red**: poor evaluability; **Grey**: uncertain

¹⁴² An inception briefing for the Evaluation Committee will be organized to help encourage continued levels of engagement.

Data collection methods

192. The evaluation applied a mixed methods approach, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative sources. Qualitative data - collected through document review, direct observation, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIs), including Most Significant Change (MSC) stories - provided context-specific insights and enabled a deeper understanding of outcomes, perceptions and barriers. Quantitative data, collected through a light-touch phone survey, validated some of the results from earlier monitoring surveys, filled a gap in existing monitoring data, and complemented qualitative insights by quantifying outcome-level changes across key demographic groups. Data were collected across the three target districts of Mafeteng, Mphahle's Hoek, and Quthing, using a representative sample size and sampling approach (see below). Data collection tools and checklists are provided in Annex 7.

193. **Document review** started during the inception phase and continued during the data collection phase. Document review primarily relied on the project proposal and its annexes; annual Project Performance Reports (including financial reports and gender-related reporting); the Mid-Term Review report; monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports; back-to-office reports; meeting minutes (according to availability); IACOV studies, assessments, strategies, guidelines and SOPs (e.g. the indigenous knowledge study and the National Climate Change Awareness Raising and Communication Strategy); and climate adaptation-related policy and strategic documents issued by the Government of Lesotho and WFP. 0 provides the list of documents reviewed. Evidence from these documents contributes to answering all EQs and sub-EQs. As noted above, although the project has been well-documented, limitations included a lack of detail in some reports, and some data gaps and limited disaggregation in the monitoring reports.

194. **KIs:** The KIs were one of the primary qualitative tools to gather insights from all types of stakeholders involved in or affected by the IACOV project. KIs were used to compile evidence relating to all EQs and sub-EQs to help explore perspectives on project relevance, design, implementation, coordination, and perceived results, as well as challenges, enablers, and sustainability prospects. The ET ensured that the qualitative data collected was objective and systematic by utilizing semi-structured tools based on the evaluation criteria and indicators. KI guides were adapted for each class of stakeholder. KIs were conducted primarily in person, and remote KIs took place when necessary, mainly for regional or global stakeholders, but also including some in-country stakeholders.

195. **FGDs:** FGDs were used to capture diverse perspectives from community-level beneficiaries and explored gendered and age-specific dimensions of resilience, the uptake of climate information, access to project benefits, and inclusion in planning processes. Although it had been planned to conduct a total of 12 separate discussion groups for women, men, and youth across the four different project sites, it was only possible to conduct 7 FGDs (4 with women, 2 with men, 1 with youth). Despite advance planning by the WFP Focal Persons and prior phone calls with the IACOV Foreman in each site, the availability of male and youth FGD participants in some of the sites was limited by their level of engagement with the project.

196. **Beneficiary KIs using Most Significant Change (MSC) stories:** Where possible, individual interviews with selected beneficiaries were undertaken, aimed at capturing compelling, outcome-level narratives that reflect how the IACOV project influenced the lives of individuals and targeted groups. Where possible, selected beneficiaries were invited to share personal accounts of the most significant changes they had experienced as a result of the project, particularly related to behaviour change, livelihoods, decision-making, inclusion, and climate preparedness. One or two individuals were purposively selected by the ET from among the FGD participants to share their stories. Due to time constraints, it was only possible to collect seven MSC stories in two sites (4 women, 1 man, 2 youth).

197. **Direct observations:** Direct observations within the selected project sites were conducted to verify the existence, condition, and usage of project-supported assets and to assess the visible integration of climate-resilient practices at the community level. The observations focused on elements such as physical infrastructure (e.g. soil conservation structures, irrigation or water harvesting assets), information sources (e.g. signboards, billboards), as well as evidence of climate adaptation practices (e.g. use of fuel-efficient stoves, shade nets, etc) and livelihood diversification strategies (e.g. gardens, cottage industries).

198. **Light-Touch Phone-Based Perception Survey:** To complement qualitative findings and strengthen triangulation, a 15-minute phone-based perception survey was administered to 271 randomly selected Category A beneficiaries,¹⁴³ stratified by district, gender, age and disability status, and proportional to the beneficiary distribution across the three target districts. The survey captured insights on participants' awareness of climate risks, the use and perceived usefulness of the climate information, access to project-supported services or assets, and self-reported changes in resilience, decision-making, or practices. Quantitative data collected through the survey were particularly relevant to EQs 3 and 5.

199. For the phone survey, a total of six enumerators were recruited by KonTerra's partner, Keystone Global Analytics (KGA), based on gender, language fluency, and prior experience in telephone-based data collection. Particular attention was given to ensuring that female enumerators were available to conduct interviews with female respondents, in line with the evaluation's gender-sensitive approach. Prior to data collection, the enumerators underwent a three-day training facilitated jointly by the ET's Data Analyst and KGA. The training covered an overview of the IACOV project and evaluation objectives, survey instrument content and logic, ethical research protocols, gender- and disability-sensitive interviewing techniques, and mock interviews. The perception survey tool was piloted on the second day of the enumerator training, with a structured feedback and reflection session on the third day.

Selection of project sites for data collection

200. **Identification of selection criteria:** The criteria used for the selection of sites were identified through discussion with the IACOV Component Managers and the Evaluation Team's (ET's) understanding of the project from their review of project documents. The criteria were:

- Ecology: The NAPA classifies the country into three main vulnerability zones,¹⁴⁴ and within these zones, the impacts of climate change are understood to vary according to ecology. The sites were selected to ensure representativeness across the different ecologies (Senqu River Valley; Lowlands; Foothills; Mountains).
- Number & diversity of IACOV project activities implemented: Different activities and different community assets were supported across the sites, and the ET wanted to ensure that sites were selected to represent the full range project activities, both those implemented at the individual household or group levels, as well as those at the community level, and including support for market linkages.
- Presence of trained Extension Officer / functional Agricultural Resource Centre (ARC): It was thought that the level of success of the project might partly depend on the presence of an Extension Officer trained by the project and a functional, fully-staffed ARC.
- Performance of the community assets: IACOV staff explained that there were varying levels of functionality of the community assets across sites.
- Accessibility & Mobile phone network: These were important logistical considerations, to allow the ET to visit the selected sites and also to conduct the phone-based survey.

201. **Site Scoring Methodology:** Each project site was characterised according to the criteria above, including three criteria to determine the diversity and range of different types of project activities, as listed below. For each site, a score was assigned based on performance in the following key areas:

¹⁴³ The survey must necessarily be restricted to Category A beneficiaries because complete lists of telephone numbers are not available for other beneficiary categories.

¹⁴⁴ Zone I (Southern Lowlands across the Senqu River Valley), Zone II (Mountains) and Zone III (Lowlands and Foothills). Owing to their socio-economic and biophysical parameters, Zones I and III are most vulnerable to climate-induced risks.

- Household/Group Activities: Assessment of the number and diversity of household or group-level interventions supported by IACOV. Sites were rated as Low (1), Average (2), or High (3).
- Community Assets: Evaluation of the number and variety of community-level assets established through the project. Scores were assigned as Low (1), Average (2), or High (3).
- Market Linkages: Determination of whether the site benefitted from IACOV support to access markets or value chains. This criterion was scored as No (0) or Yes (1).
- Presence of ARC and Extension Officers: Consideration of the presence and staffing of Agricultural Resource Centres (ARCs) and the availability of IACOV-trained extension officers. Sites received a score of None (1), Partial (2), or Fully Staffed (3).
- Accessibility: Evaluation of the ease of access for evaluation and support visits, with sites rated as Not easily accessible (0) or Good accessibility (1).
- Asset Performance: Assessment of the functionality and use of project-supported community assets, based on observations or field reports by project staff and partners. Scoring was Poor (0) or Good (1).
- Mobile Connectivity: Review of the availability of mobile phone signal for communication and conducting phone-based surveys, with scores of Not available (0) or Available (1).

The total score for each site was calculated as the sum of scores across these seven criteria, resulting in a maximum possible score of 13. Higher scores were taken to indicate stronger implementation and levels of IACOV support, greater availability of services, and better operational feasibility at the site.

202. **Selection of sites for qualitative data collection:** The sites for data collection were selected from among 28 project sites, as listed in project databases. Four sites were selected for qualitative data collection, since this was the maximum number of sites that could reasonably be visited by the ET in the time available. For the qualitative data collection, one site per district was selected each for Mafeteng and Quthing Districts, with two sites selected for Mphahle's Hoek, which has more sites than the other districts. In addition to the overall scores, the primary consideration for selection was the diversity of project activities, including different types of community assets created, and different group- or household-based activities, including market support. The secondary consideration was the ecology of the site, ensuring that the different ecologies were represented as far as possible, both in terms of the overall number of sites, and the numbers of beneficiaries across the different ecologies. Due to accessibility limitations, however, it was not possible to select a mountain site for qualitative data collection. Sites selected for qualitative data collection: Makoabating (Mafeteng District), Lithakaling and Draaihoek (Mphahle's Hoek District), and Mphlakoana (Quthing District).

203. **Selection of sites for quantitative data collection (phone survey):** A total of 10 sites were selected for quantitative data collection; this is over 30% of the total sites and therefore broadly representative. The four sites selected for qualitative data collection were automatically included to allow for triangulation between the qualitative and quantitative data from the same sites. An additional two sites were selected in each district, one with a high overall score, and one with a lower overall score, also ensuring that each site had good mobile phone connectivity and that the overall sample was broadly representative of the four ecologies. In the case of Quthing, two mountain sites with roughly average scores were selected to ensure sufficient representation of this ecology. Sites selected for quantitative data collection (phone-based survey) are shown in Table 25. Among the sites selected, an Anticipatory Action response was implemented in the following: Motsekuoa, Ramokoatsi, Makoabating, Mphlakoana, Siloe, and Tlaling / Ha Makoe.

Table 25. Sites selected for quantitative data collection

Mafeteng District	Mphahle's Hoek District	Quthing District
Motsekuoa	Draaihoek	Mahlomola
Ramokoatsi	Lithakaling	Mphlakoana
Makoabating	Siloe	Potso

	Tlaling / Ha Makoae	
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204. **Data analysis:** Due to the high number of failed calls, the realised phone survey sample deviated from the initial allocation across project sites, with some sites substantially over-sampled (e.g. Potso, Mohlakoana) and others under-sampled (Motsekuoa, Ramokoatsi, Makoabating). Given that the original design targeted 250 beneficiaries, later increased to 270 to mitigate anticipated non-response, the evaluation applied post-stratification weights based on the target number of interviews per site, h . Each respondent receives a weight equal to the ratio of the planned sample size (T_h) to the achieved number of completed interviews in their site (n_h). That is, the weight each respondent gets is given as $w_h = \frac{T_h}{n_h}$. This procedure restores the intended proportional representation of sites in the analysis and prevents sites with high oversampling (e.g., Potso, Mohlakoana) from disproportionately influencing estimates.

Annex 6. Evaluation matrix

Table 26 Evaluation matrix

Evaluation Question				
Subquestions	Indicators/measures	Data collection methods & sources of data/information	Data analysis methods/ triangulation	Availability / validity
EQ1. How relevant were the intended project outcomes to the climate adaptation needs of the target communities and groups? (RELEVANCE)				
1.1 To what extent and how was the Adaptation Fund project and intended outcomes relevant to the needs and priorities of the targeted communities including target vulnerable groups?	• Evidence and quality of needs assessment / situational analysis / gender assessment conducted and use of the findings in the design and selection of target groups • Degree to which IACOV strategies were justified in programming documents in relation to diversified local needs. • Appropriateness of geographical and beneficiary targeting criteria in relation to susceptibility and vulnerability to climate shock impacts, including gender and disability considerations. • Level of involvement/ consultation of communities in targeting and design/ adaptation.	<i>Document review:</i> • Contextual info, e.g. LVAC reports, etc • Project proposal, incl. gender assessment, consultation reports, etc • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Project performance reports • PSC meeting minutes • Back-to-office reports and other	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Gender Analysis Matrix to assess impacts of a project on gender roles, access to resources and	Strong

		qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>KIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Disaster Management Authority (DMA) • Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) • Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) • Community Councils • District and Village Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs/VDMTs) • Community leaders • Beneficiaries (women, men,	cultural norms and perceptions Validation of Assumptions A6-9 and A18-19 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
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Report number

		youth, people with disabilities, vulnerable groups)		
1.2 How relevant is the programme framework in addressing current and evolving climate shocks?	• Evidence of inclusion of current and evolving climate shocks in project documents • Evidence of alignment with climate-related risks and shocks at the time of the design and during implementation • Evidence of project adaptations in response to evolving climate shocks.	<i>Document review:</i> • Info relating to climate shocks, e.g. from LMS, LVAC, DMA, and project-specific studies • Project proposal • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • LMS Forecasts <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) • Disaster Management Authority	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Validation of Assumption A20 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different evaluators	Strong

Report number

		- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFS) - National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) & National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) focal points		
EQ2. How consistent is the project with the climate adaptation policies, strategies, priorities, requirements and expectations of the Government of Lesotho, as well as other interventions in Lesotho implemented by the Government, WFP and other stakeholders operating within the same context?(COHERENCE)				
EQ2. How consistent is the project with the climate adaptation policies, strategies, priorities, requirements and expectations of the Government of Lesotho, as well as other interventions in Lesotho implemented by the Government, WFP and other stakeholders operating within the same context?	- Degree to which Government was involved in IACOV design - Extent of explicit cross-reference between IACOV objectives and activities and those expressed in national policies and strategies - Evidence of formal or informal agreements with government and key stakeholders about coordinated targeting, coverage, scope, implementation arrangements or monitoring activities - Evidence of WFP, government or other stakeholders adapting programmes, policies or	<i>Document review:</i> - Relevant GoL policy / strategy documents - Project proposal - Inception consultation reports - MTR - Project performance reports - PSC meeting minutes <i>KIIs with:</i> - WFP staff at CO and FO levels	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII notes, including AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation	Strong

Report number

	strategies in response to agreements /discussions • Number and types of complementarity / linkages / synergy with other interventions operating in the same context	• Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Disaster Management Authority • Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation (MFRSC) • Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFS) • National Climate Change Committee (NCCC) & NAPA focal points • United Nations Country Team agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNEP) • Non-Governmental Organizations: World Vision Lesotho, Lesotho Red Cross Society, Rural Self-Help Development Association, Lesotho National Farmers Union,	Validation of Assumptions A3, A7, A11, A20, A21 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different evaluators	
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Report number

		Christian Relief Services (CRS), Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)		
EQ3. To what extent did the project achieve its intended goal in terms of improving adaptive capacity and household resilience? (EFFECTIVENESS)				
3.1 To what extent and how did the achieve its intended objectives (based on the outcome indicators in the Project Results Framework) and contribute to changes in community practices or behaviours that indicate improved resilience in the short, medium and long term?	• Range (diversity), , types and perceptions about changes in community practices or behaviours [Survey, KII, FGD, MSC] • Extent to which community-based resilience and adaptation plans have been implemented [KII, PPR] • Capacity of LMS to produce sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts, issue sector specific EW, develop drought preparedness protocols & respond accordingly [KII, PPR] • % of households using seasonal forecast in resilient decision making on agricultural / livelihood strategy [Phone, PPR] • % of targeted community members (M/F/MY/FY) receiving key messages on climate change adaptation,	<i>Document review:</i> • Contextual info • Project proposal, incl. gender assessment, consultation reports, etc • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Project performance reports • Back-to-office reports and other qualitative / process monitoring reports	Content analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Gender Roles Framework, to assess gendered division of labour and who benefited from project outcomes Contribution analysis (see	Moderate

Report number

	food security and nutrition [Phone] • % of people having knowledge/ awareness, attitude and practice on climate adaptation initiatives (Outcome 2.1) [Survey, PPR] • % targeted communities where there is evidence of improved capacity to manage climate shocks and risks [PPR] • Coping Strategy Index [PPR] • Number and types of interlinkages / synergies among IACOV activities / components and causal pathways [ToC, KII, FGD, PPR] – the assessment of causal pathways will additionally require the following indicators: • improvement in CCA coordination, as perceived by government officials • effective District Disaster Response Plans • incorporation of CC into school curricula • practical Knowledge of CSA among extension workers	<i>Light Touch Phone Survey</i> <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>Story collection template with female and male beneficiaries of different ages and disability status for MSCS approach</i> <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives • Community leaders • Non-Governmental Organizations implementing resilience work	ToC Annex) Validation of assumptions A1, A4-9, A17-19 In-depth analysis of MSC stories Descriptive statistics for quantitative data Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
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Report number

	increased crop/product sales, as perceived by farmers	(World Vision, Red Cross) <i>Observation of changes at community level</i>		
3.2 What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement and non-achievement of the Adaptation Fund project objectives, and how did these factors play a role?	- types and strength of complementarity across components - Perceived quality of project implementation in relation to achievements, i.e. institutional arrangements; administrative and financial management; M&E and reporting systems; capacities of staff (including gender, protection, inclusion and human rights capacities);. - Validity of ToC outcome pathways and assumptions - Range and effectiveness of approaches/mechanisms to address challenges relating to the above indicators	<i>Document review:</i> - PSC meeting minutes - MTR - Indigenous knowledge study - Project performance reports - Outcome monitoring survey reports - Back-to-office reports and other qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>Story collection template with female and male beneficiaries</i>	Content / comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Contribution analysis (see ToC annex) Validation of Assumptions A1, A4-9 and A13-19 Triangulation across:	Strong

Report number

		<i>of different ages and disability status for MSC approach</i> <i>KIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Lesotho Meteorological Service • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives • Community leaders • Disaster Management Authority (DMA)	• Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
3.3 To what extent did the project adhere to WFP's environmental and social standards?	• Number and types of alignment with WFP's environmental and social standards	<i>Document review:</i> • WFP environmental and social standards documents • Project proposal • MTR	Content / comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation	Strong

Report number

		• Project performance reports <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Ministry of Environment and Forestry	Thematic analysis of KII notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different evaluators	
EQ4. To what extent were Adaptation Fund project activities implemented in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and what opportunities exist for improved efficiency in future programming? (EFFICIENCY)				
EQ4 To what extent were Adaptation Fund project activities implemented in a cost-efficient and timely manner, and what opportunities exist for improved efficiency in future programming?	• % of annual budget executed vs planned. • % of planned activities completed on schedule • Plausibility and range of reasons for delays or deviations from plans • Evidence of cost sharing between donor/government/UN and private resources. • Examples of measures taken by WFP or partners to save costs	<i>Document review:</i> • CBA report • Project proposal • MTR • Annual workplans & budgets] • Project performance reports • Budget expenditure reports • Back-to-office reports and other	Content / comparative analysis of documents and budget / expenditure figures Thematic analysis of KII notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation	Strong

Report number

	• Perception of stakeholders on cost-efficiency and timeliness • Average time from procurement request to delivery • Average time or delay between cash disbursement instruction and receipt by beneficiary. • Number of FSP contract issues and amendments	qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels, incl programme, finance, supply chain • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Lesotho Meteorological Service • Disaster Management Authority (DMA) • Private Sector: Vodacom Lesotho (M-Pesa), Standard Lesotho Bank (Unayo), local traders/value chain actors	Validation of Assumptions A10, A13 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different evaluators	
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EQ5. To what extent did the project cater to the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, minorities and other potentially marginalized groups, in the target communities? (EQUITY)

5.1 To what extent have the intended outputs, outcomes, and strategic results of the project been achieved equitably across all target demographics, including women, vulnerable and marginalized populations?	• See above for indicators listed under EQ 3.1 – the results will be disaggregated and analysed according to age, gender and disability status • Quality of gender and other vulnerability assessments and reporting (as perceived by ET) • % of female/youth/PWD/PLHIV receiving key messages on climate adaptation, food security and nutrition” (RF 3.2) • % targeted communities with improved capacity to manage climate shocks and risks (Gender-disaggregated RCS, CSS, CSI scores) • Perceived fairness/inclusivity	<i>Document review:</i> • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Project performance reports • Outcome monitoring survey reports • Back-to-office reports and other qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>Light Touch Phone Survey</i> <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>Story collection template with female and male beneficiaries of different ages and disability status for MSC approach</i>	Content / comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation A combination of gender analysis frameworks Statistical, disaggregated analysis of quantitative survey data Validation of Assumptions A1, A6-9, and A17-19 Triangulation across: • Document types	Moderate
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Report number

		<i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels, incl gender & protection focal points • Lesotho Meteorological Service • Disaster Management Authority (DMA) • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives • Community Leaders • Beneficiaries (women, men, youth, people with disabilities, HIV-affected households, vulnerable subgroups)	• Primary / secondary info • Quantitative / qualitative data • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
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Report number

		• NGOs with equity focus: Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), CRS, Lesotho Red Cross, World Vision Lesotho		
5.2 How were women and other vulnerable or marginalized groups engaged during the planning and implementation phases of the project, and to what extent were their viewpoints adopted?	<i>Note that this question will expand on 1.1</i> • Number and range of planned and/or implemented mechanisms to address different vulnerable groups in target communities • Depth and quality of engagement by vulnerable or marginalized groups (as perceived by the groups themselves)	<i>Document review:</i> • Contextual info, e.g. LVAC reports, etc • Project proposal, incl. gender assessment, consultation reports, etc • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Project performance reports, incl gender issues and social safeguard measures • PSC meeting minutes • Back-to-office reports and other	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation A combination of gender analysis frameworks to assess how vulnerable and marginalized groups are impacted and identification of barriers to equitable access and participation across demographics.	Strong

Report number

		qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>KIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives • Community leaders, incl leaders / informal spokespersons of marginalized groups • Non-Governmental Organizations supporting inclusion	Validation of Assumptions A1, A6-9, and A17-19 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
EQ6. Did the project consider the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions for the various beneficiaries? (SUSTAINABILITY)				
6.1 What mechanisms were established to support the continuation of the project by the government after completion, and how likely are they to ensure the	• Number and types of mechanisms identified to promote sustainability of project benefits at the	<i>Document review:</i> • Project proposal	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI	Strong

Report number

continuation of both the project and its benefits?	government level, e.g. human and physical capacity-building measures; strategies, systems and procedures; linkages; etc • Level of plausibility / potential effectiveness of sustainability mechanisms identified (as perceived by ET) • Perception of government stakeholders about capacity to sustain • Evidence of government willingness to sustain • Evidence of government adaptations to incorporate project activities • Evidence of positive or negative unintended impacts beyond the project lifetime	• Inception consultation reports • MTR • Project performance reports • PSC meeting minutes • Relevant GoL strategy documents and initiatives <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at CO levels • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Disaster Management Authority • National Climate Change Committee • National Adaptation Programme of Action • Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFS)	interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Validation of Assumptions A2, A10-13, A20-21. Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants Different evaluators	
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Report number

6.2 To what extent and how were target groups provided with skills, knowledge or resources to maintain the resilience-building and adaptation interventions independently, and how likely are they to ensure sustainability??	• Number and types of human (e.g. training) / physical / financial capacity-building mechanisms (e.g., savings groups, cooperatives, community contributions) to promote the sustainability of resilience-building and adaptation interventions • Levels of local investment and local ownership over resilience-building and adaptation interventions, as perceived by communities and VC actors • Evidence of positive or negative unintended impacts beyond the project lifetime	<i>Document review:</i> • Project proposal • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Community Action Plans • Project performance reports • Back-to-office reports and other qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>KIs with:</i> • WFP staff at FO levels • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Validation of Assumptions A1-2 and A6-9 Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	Strong
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Report number

		• Community leaders • Key Value Chain actors (farmer associations, cooperatives, private sector) • Universities (National University of Lesotho, Columbia IRI – curricula, technical training roles)		
EQ7. Which resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities show the most and the least promise for replication or expansion, and why? (SCALABILITY)				
EQ7. Which resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities show the most and the least promise for replication or expansion, and why?	• Examples of activities that were scaled up (disaggregated by activity type) • Perception of stakeholders about reasons for scalability • Observed facilitators for scalability • Evidence of factors that prevent scalability Evidence of strong demand of specific activities by potential beneficiaries	<i>Document review:</i> • Project proposal • Inception consultation reports • Baseline report • MTR • Indigenous knowledge study • Community Action Plans • Project performance reports • Back-to-office reports and other	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII and FGD notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation	Strong

		qualitative / process monitoring reports <i>FGDs with female and male beneficiaries</i> <i>KIIs with:</i> • WFP staff at FO levels • Disaster Management Authority (DMA) • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition (MAFS) • Community Councils • DDMT/VDMT representatives • Community leaders • Non-Governmental Organizations (World Vision Lesotho, Lesotho)	Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different communities / locations • Different FGDs • Different evaluators	
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Report number

		Red Cross, Farmers Union) • Private Sector actors (financial service providers, traders, farmer cooperatives) <i>Observation of intervention activities at community level</i>		
EQ8. How, and how quickly, did the project implement operational changes and/or innovative methods or tools to enhance outcomes, processes and activities in response to feedback on its performance and potential unforeseen challenges?(ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT)				
EQ8 How, and how quickly, did the project implement operational changes and/or innovative methods or tools to enhance outcomes, processes and activities in response to feedback on its performance and potential unforeseen challenges?	• Number, types and timing of operational or strategic changes and/or innovative methods or tools • and the reasons that prompted these • Evidence of adaptive management informed by feedback loops and examples of innovation relevant to IACOV (anticipatory action, seasonal forecasts, community radio messaging)	<i>Document review:</i> • Project proposal • MTR • Project performance reports • Back-to-office reports and other qualitative / process monitoring reports • PSC meeting minutes <i>KIIs with:</i>	Content & comparative analysis of documents, incl (where feasible) AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation Thematic analysis of KII notes, incl AI interrogation using Gemini and Copilot to generate key points and syntheses, with human validation	Strong

Report number

		• WFP staff at CO and FO levels • Ministry of Environment and Forestry • Disaster Management Authority • Lesotho Meteorological Service • Community Councils & Leaders • NGOs piloting innovative practices (World Vision Lesotho, CRS, Lesotho Red Cross, Rural Self-Help Development Association) • Universities (National University of Lesotho) • Media houses & reporters (MISA Lesotho, local radio stations)	Validation of Assumptions A13-16. Triangulation across: • Document types • Primary / secondary info • Different informants • Different eva	
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Report number

Annex 7. Data collection tools

Consent protocols

Consent protocols were adapted from standard text below.

Introduction (Beginning of Interview)

Who are we: We are part of an independent evaluation team commissioned by the World Food Programme (WFP) to assess the “Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food-Insecure Populations in Lesotho (IACOV)” project, which has been implemented in partnership with the Government of Lesotho and local communities since 2020. The evaluation aims to understand how the project has supported communities to better prepare for and respond to droughts, floods, and other climate-related challenges.

The evaluation: The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the progress, results, lessons learned and to generate recommendations for future improvement of WFP’s support via IACOV. We are asking you to participate in the evaluation because you are in a position to contribute a relevant and valuable perspective on the operations of this function so far. If you decide to participate, the interview may last an hour.

Participation is voluntary: Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You can withdraw from the interview after it has begun, for any reason, with no penalty.

Risks and benefits: This evaluation is designed to help improve future WFP programming in the IACOV project by learning from the perspectives of everyone involved. You may not benefit personally from being in this evaluation. You should report any problems to WFP.

Confidentiality: The evaluation team will use findings from this and the other meetings. We will collect and summarize the views and opinions of participants without connecting them to specific individuals and without using names at any time. Any report of this research will be presented in a way that makes it as difficult as possible for anyone to determine the identity of individuals participating in the evaluation.

If you have any questions, now or at any time in the future, you may contact the WFP Evaluation Officer.

Are you willing to be part of this interview? (Verbal response only requested)

Table 27 Key informant interview questions – national level

KII type	Interview Questions (to be applied according to each individual KI’s role)
WFP staff	- What is your current position, and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project? What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how? Project design: - How were the targeted sites and community-level beneficiaries selected? [1.1] Were gender concerns reflected in the criteria to select beneficiaries? If so, how? How did IACOV ensure that the project design reflected the needs of women, youth and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities? [5.2] - Were any adjustments made to the targeting strategy during implementation based on feedback or new data? [1.1] - In your opinion, does the IACOV project adequately address the current and evolving climate shocks in these sites? Please explain. [1.2] Have there been any changes in the design of the project in response to recent or future (anticipated) climate shocks? [1.2; 8.1] - What were the gender-related objective/s relating to gender equality and/or women’s empowerment? - How gender-balanced was the composition of the project management team, the Steering Committee, experts and consultants? (EQ5)

	• Please can you describe how IACOV aligns with WFP's environmental and social standards. [3.3] Sustainability, Scale-up and Adaptive Management: • What approaches, mechanisms or activities were implemented to promote sustainability? [6.1] • Are there risks to sustaining benefits after project closure? [6.1] • Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? [EQ7] • Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? [EQ7] • Can you share examples of adaptive management during IACOV implementation? [EQ8] • Were any innovative tools or methods introduced? How effective were they? [EQ8] M&E & Gender: • What indicators or feedback mechanisms were used to assess changes in resilience? [EQ8?] • Which components of IACOV were most effective in driving behavioural change? [EQ7] • Were target beneficiaries clearly identified and disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and socio-economic group? [EQ5.] • Have women and men benefited equally from the project's interventions? Do the results affect women and men differently? If so, why and how? How are the results likely to affect gender relations (e.g. division of labour, decision-making authority) • How did the project monitor, assess and report on its gender-related objective/s relating to gender equality and/or women's empowerment? To what extent has the project achieved these objective/s? To what extent are gender equality-related results likely to endure after project completion? • How have the gender-related results contributed to the overall results of the project? Financial management: • Can you describe the budgeting and fund transfer process for IACOV? [EQ4] • Were there any delays in fund disbursement or procurement? What were the reasons for these delays? How were these resolved? [EQ4]
LMS	• What is your current position, and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project? • What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.: How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how • How did LMS contribute to the project design? How did LMS data or insights shape the selection of project interventions or target groups? How did LMS contribute to integrating local knowledge and context into the project's design framework? [1.2] • In your opinion, does the IACOV project adequately address current and evolving climate shocks? Please explain. [1.2] • Have there been any changes in the design of the project in response to recent or expected climate shocks? [1.2; 8.1] • What technical or operational support did LMS receive from IACOV, and how has this support contributed to improving LMS's capacity to produce forecasts or issue early warnings? [3.1] • In your opinion, have the IACOV support and capacity-building measures been sufficient to ensure the effective continuation of the LMS forecasting, early warning and anticipatory action forecasting or early warning systems? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1] • From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2] • What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2] • Did the project try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1]

	• Were project activities implemented on time and within budget from your perspective? [EQ4] • Can you share examples of cost-saving or resource-sharing practices? [EQ4] • Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? [EQ7] • Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? [EQ7]
MEF, DMA, MAFSN, NCCC ¹⁴⁵ , NAPA	• What is your current position, and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project? • What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.: How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how? • How were your ministry's priorities reflected in the design of IACOV, and which national strategies or policies did the project support? [2.1] • Were communities consulted during the planning phase? If so, how was their input incorporated? [1.1] • Are there any other projects or interventions at the national level that are linked with or complementary to IACOV? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1] • Were there any formal agreements or coordination platforms established for IACOV implementation? How well are interventions aimed at improving food security and climate resilience coordinated, regulated, and monitored across sectors or regions? [3.2] • In your opinion, does the IACOV project adequately address current and evolving climate shocks? Please explain. [1.2] Have recent climate shocks influenced any changes in project activities? [1.2, EQ8] • How does the IACOV Project address gender and vulnerability considerations in climate adaptation strategies? [EQ5] • How has the IACOV project enhanced the capacity of your organization / department / unit in relation to DRR and EWS? [3.1] • What do you consider to be the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2] • What were the main challenges in achieving project goals? What were the reasons for these challenges? How were they addressed? [3.2] • Were project activities implemented on time and within budget from your perspective? [EQ4] • Can you share examples of cost-saving or resource-sharing practices? [EQ4] • Were any population groups or sites harder to reach or engage? What strategies were used to overcome these barriers? [5.2] • Can you share examples of inclusive practices or challenges? [5.2] • What steps has your ministry taken to sustain IACOV-supported systems or practices? [6.1] Are these measures sufficient to ensure long-term continuation? [6.1] • Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? [7.1] • Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? [7.1] • What lessons from IACOV could inform future national climate adaptation initiatives?
MoET	• What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.: How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how? • From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2] Are there other

¹⁴⁵ For NCCC, refer also to Interview Notes from Inception Phase

	key factors or conditions that made these achievements possible (leadership, timing, collaboration)? [3.2, ToC] • How have the results from different components (education, early warning, agriculture, social protection) reinforce one another? [ToC linkages] • How have issues relating to gender, equity and inclusion approaches influenced performance or outcomes? [5.1, ToC] • In general, were the IACOV activities that you were involved in implemented on time, according to the workplan and the school calendar (if relevant)? • If not, what were the reasons for any delays; what were the knock-on effects; and was it possible to rectify? [4.1] • Do you think the project used its money and resources wisely? Please explain. [4.1] • What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2] Did the project try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1] • Can you recall any examples of adaptive management, i.e. where the project changed its approach / methods / tools to overcome a challenge, or to respond to a change in the context, or take advantage of an opportunity for improvement? Please describe, including what prompted the change(s). [8.1; see also 3.2 to avoid repetition] • In your opinion, to what extent have the IACOV approach and activities successfully mainstreamed learning about climate change into the education system in this district? Please explain, with examples. [1.2] • How does teaching climate change in schools contribute to promoting changes in community practices or behaviours relating to climate adaptation and resilience? [3.1] • What do you think are the different factors that have contributed to these changes? [3.1] • [If not already asked above] In what ways was the project able to reach girls, women, vulnerable and marginalised populations? Please provide examples. [5.2] • From your experience, are there any positive or negative lessons in mainstreaming learning about climate change that can be usefully applied to other districts? [7.1] • For those involved in design / targeting: • How were the targeted sites / schools selected? [1.1] • Are there any other projects or interventions in this district that are linked with or complementary to IACOV? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1] • In relation to sustainability... [refer to response to earlier question about training / capacity building]: Please describe any capacity-building measures; strategies, systems, procedures; linkages; etc that the project has supported within your organization / department / unit to ensure the continuation of the project and its benefits? [6.1] • In your opinion, are these measures sufficient to ensure your organization's / department's / unit's continued role in Phase 2 of the IACOV project? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1] • At the school level, what measures / mechanisms were implemented to support the sustainability of teaching climate change? (e.g. through development of skills, knowledge or resources) [6.2] [Refer to response from above] • What lessons from IACOV could inform future similar initiatives?
MGYSD	• What is your current position, and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project? What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.: ○ How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how? ○ Are you a member of the Project Steering Committee? If not, is your organization / department / unit represented on the PIT? ○ Did you receive any training in relation to the IACOV project? Pls describe if so.

	○ Were you involved in the design of the project or specific activities / interventions? ○ Were you involved in targeting or the selection of project sites? ● Was the project in line with national policies on gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please describe. ● Did the project design adequately consider the gender dimensions in its interventions? If so, how? [EQ5] ● Were adequate resources (e.g. funds, staff time, methodology, experts) allocated to address gender concerns? [EQ5] ● To what extent were the needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men reflected in the design? [EQ5] Was your ministry involved in the gender analysis conducted during the formulation or implementation of the IACOV project? If so, in what capacity? ● Since the project is people-centred, were target beneficiaries clearly identified and disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and socio-economic group? ● Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? [7.1] Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? [7.1] What lessons from IACOV could inform future national climate adaptation initiatives?
UN agencies	● Please describe any links or collaboration / complementarity between your agency and the IACOV Project? [2.1] Are there any specific issues or gaps in relation to community needs and/or national priorities around climate change that your organization has tried to address? [1.2; 2.1] ● Were there any overlaps or synergies with other climate adaptation projects? [2.1] ● What do you consider the most impactful outcomes of IACOV? [3.2] ● Are you aware of any unintended consequences or missed opportunities? [3.2] ● Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? [7.1] ● Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? [7.1] ● What lessons from IACOV could inform future national climate adaptation initiatives?
NGOs	● How did your organization's work complement IACOV activities? ● Were there any overlaps or synergies with other climate adaptation projects? ● Which IACOV interventions have the strongest potential for scale-up? Why? ● Are there any interventions that should not be scaled up? What are the limitations? ● What capacity-building efforts or other types of initiatives were implemented to promote sustainability? ● Are there risks to sustaining benefits after project closure? ● Did your institution or community partners suggest changes that were adopted? ● How responsive was the project to emerging challenges or feedback?
Media Houses/journalists/LENA	● How does your organization report on climate change and adaptation issues? Are gender and vulnerability aspects included? ● Please describe how you / your organization worked with IACOV. ● How are the impacts of your work with IACOV measures or monitored? ● What were the main successes from your work with IACOV? What were the factors that contributed to these successes? ● What were the main challenges, what were the reasons for these challenges, and how were they overcome? ● Have you collaborated with other government or NGOs on climate adaptation campaigns? If so, what worked well? ● In general, what challenges do you face in communicating climate-related risks and adaptation measures to the public? ● In future, what role do you see for media in raising awareness about climate shocks and resilience strategies?

University	• What Climate Change-related research is going on currently, and whether / how IACOV is relevant? • How has academic research contributed to the IACOV project design / activities and/or made specific policy recommendations? • Has your institution contributed to gender or vulnerability assessments for climate adaptation? • What opportunities exist for integrating climate adaptation and resilience into curricula or research agendas?
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Key informant interview-District level

Questions for DA and Senior-level line ministry staff

1. From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project in xx District? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? Are there other key factors or conditions that made these achievements possible (leadership, timing, collaboration)? [3.2, ToC]
2. How have the activities and results from different sectors (education, early warning, agriculture, social protection) reinforced one another? [ToC linkages]
3. How were issues relating to gender, equity and inclusivity addressed by IACOV? How did this contribute to overall outcomes? [5.1, ToC]
4. What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2]
5. How have district-level coordination mechanisms helped align IACOV with other interventions (or align other interventions with IACOV)? [ToC]
6. In your opinion, have IACOV's capacity building measures been sufficient to ensure your Ministry's / department's continued role in Phase 2 of the IACOV project? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1]
7. What lessons from IACOV could inform future climate adaptation initiatives?

Questions for Technical Staff from DMA, MAFSN, MER, NGOs & WFP:

1. What is your current position [this may have already been stated in the introductions], and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project?
2. What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.:
 - a. How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how?
 - b. Are you a member of the Project Implementation Team? If not, is your organization / department / unit represented on the PIT?
 - c. Is your organization / department / unit represented on the National Project Steering Committee?
 - d. Did you receive any training in relation to the IACOV project? Pls describe if so.
 - e. Were you involved in the design of the project or specific activities / interventions?
 - f. Were you involved in targeting or the selection of project sites?
 - g. Have you done any monitoring of IACOV activities / interventions or visits to project sites? If so, how often / how many times have you visited the project sites? [This is important in relation to their familiarity with the community-level activities / changes]
3. How has the IACOV project enhanced your capacity and/or the capacity of your organization / department / unit in relation to DRR and EWS? [3.1]
4. From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? Are there other key factors or conditions that made these achievements possible (leadership, timing, collaboration)? [3.2, ToC]
5. How have the results from different components (education, early warning, agriculture, social protection) reinforce one another? [ToC linkages]

6. How were issues relating to gender, equity and inclusivity addressed by IACOV? How did this contribute to overall outcomes? [5.1, ToC]
7. In general, were the IACOV activities that you were involved in implemented on time, according to the workplan and seasonal calendar (if relevant)? If not, what were the reasons for any delays; what were the knock-on effects; and was it possible to rectify? [4.1]
8. Do you think the project used its money and resources wisely to achieve its objectives? Please explain. [4.1]
9. What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2]
10. Did the project try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1]
11. Can you recall any examples of adaptive management, i.e. where the project changed its approach / methods / tools to overcome a challenge, or to respond to a change in the context, or take advantage of an opportunity for improvement? Please describe, including what prompted the change(s). [8.1; see also 3.2 to avoid repetition]
12. In your opinion, do the activities / interventions adequately address the climate-related shocks experienced in this district? Please explain, with examples. [1.2]
13. What are some of the changes in community practices or behaviours relating to climate adaptation and resilience that you're aware of? [3.1] Probe to make sure that these changes have actually occurred in practice
 - a. Have you actually seen xxx [the specific change(s)] for yourself? In which communities?
 - b. How widespread is [the change(s)]?
 - c. Do you think xxxx [the change(s)] will last into the future? [this relates to sustainability and the response can be referred to under Qu.20]
14. What do you think has contributed to these changes? [3.1, ToC]
 - a. Apart from the IACOV project activities, are there other factors that have contributed to change? [ToC]
15. [If not already asked above] In what ways was the project able to reach women, vulnerable and marginalised populations? Please provide examples. [5.2]
16. From your perspective, are there any resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities that were supported by the project that have the potential to be scaled up (to more beneficiaries and/or more areas)? Are there any that are not appropriate for scaling? Please describe why / why not. [7.1]
17. For those involved in design / targeting:
 - a. How were the targeted sites selected? [1.1]
 - b. What are the different types of beneficiaries at the community level, and how were they selected? [1.1]
 - c. In what ways was the project able to reach women, vulnerable and marginalised populations? Please provide examples. [5.2] [If not already answered above]
 - d. Were the community members involved in targeting and design in any way? Please describe. [1.1]
18. Are there any other projects or interventions in this district that are linked with or complementary to IACOV? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1]
19. How have district-level coordination mechanisms helped align IACOV with other interventions? [ToC]
20. In relation to sustainability... [refer to response to earlier question about training / capacity building]: Please describe any capacity-building measures; strategies, systems, procedures; linkages; etc that the project has supported within your organization / department / unit to ensure the continuation of the project and its benefits? [6.1]
21. In your opinion, are these measures sufficient to ensure your organization's / department's / unit's continued role in Phase 2 of the IACOV project? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1]
22. At the community level, what measures / mechanisms were implemented to support the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions? (e.g. through development of skills, knowledge or resources) [6.2] [Refer to response from Qu.12]
23. What lessons from IACOV could inform future climate adaptation initiatives?

Questions for Ministry of Education & Training:

1. What is your current position [this may have already been stated in the introductions], and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project?
2. What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / department / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.:
 - a. How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how?
 - b. Are you a member of the Project Implementation Team? If not, is your organization / department / unit represented on the PIT?
 - c. Is your organization / department / unit represented on the National Project Steering Committee?
 - d. Did you receive any training in relation to the IACOV project? Pls describe if so.
 - e. Were you involved in the design of the project or specific activities / interventions?
 - f. Were you involved in targeting or the selection of project sites / schools / teachers?
3. Have you done any monitoring of IACOV activities / interventions or visits to project sites / schools? If so, how often / how many times have you visited the project sites / schools? [This is important in relation to their familiarity with the community-level activities / changes] How has the IACOV project enhanced your capacity and/or the capacity of your organization / department / unit in relation to DRR and EWS? [3.1]
4. From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2] Are there other key factors or conditions that made these achievements possible (leadership, timing, collaboration)? [3.2, ToC]
5. How have the results from different components (education, early warning, agriculture, social protection) reinforce one another? [ToC linkages]
6. How have inclusive approaches influenced district performance or outcomes? [5.1, ToC]
7. In general, were the IACOV activities that you were involved in implemented on time, according to the workplan and the school calendar (if relevant)?
8. If not, what were the reasons for any delays; what were the knock-on effects; and was it possible to rectify? [4.1]
9. Do you think the project used its money and resources wisely? Please explain. [4.1]
10. What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2]
11. Did the project try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1]
12. Can you recall any examples of adaptive management, i.e. where the project changed its approach / methods / tools to overcome a challenge, or to respond to a change in the context, or take advantage of an opportunity for improvement? Please describe, including what prompted the change(s). [8.1; see also 3.2 to avoid repetition]
13. In your opinion, to what extent have the IACOV approach and activities successfully mainstreamed learning about climate change into the education system in this district? Please explain, with examples. [1.2]
14. How does teaching climate change in schools contribute to promoting changes in community practices or behaviours relating to climate adaptation and resilience? [3.1]
15. Can you share any examples of changes in community practices or behaviours that you're aware of? Probe to make sure that these changes have actually occurred in practice
 - a. Have you actually seen xxx [the specific change(s)] for yourself? In which communities?
 - b. How widespread is [the change(s)]?
 - c. Do you think xxxx [the change(s)] will last into the future? [this relates to sustainability and the response can be referred to under Qu.20]
16. What do you think are the different factors that have contributed to these changes? [3.1]
 - a. Apart from the climate change teaching and IACOV project activities, are there other factors or conditions that have contributed to change?

17. [If not already asked above] In what ways was the project able to reach girls, women, vulnerable and marginalised populations? Please provide examples. [5.2]
18. From your experience, are there any positive or negative lessons in mainstreaming learning about climate change that can be usefully applied to other districts? [7.1]
19. For those involved in design / targeting:
 - a. How were the targeted sites / schools selected? [1.1]
20. Are there any other projects or interventions in this district that are linked with or complementary to IACOV? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1]
21. In relation to sustainability... [refer to response to earlier question about training / capacity building]: Please describe any capacity-building measures; strategies, systems, procedures; linkages; etc that the project has supported within your organization / department / unit to ensure the continuation of the project and its benefits? [6.1]
22. In your opinion, are these measures sufficient to ensure your organization's / department's / unit's continued role in Phase 2 of the IACOV project? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1]
23. At the school level, what measures / mechanisms were implemented to support the sustainability of teaching climate change? (e.g. through development of skills, knowledge or resources) [6.2]
[Refer to response from Qu.12]
24. What lessons from IACOV could inform future similar initiatives?

Questions for LENA Reporters:

1. What is your current position [this may have already been stated in the introductions], and since when have you been involved in the IACOV project?
2. What is / have been your role(s) in the IACOV project? [It might be necessary to clarify both the role of their organization / unit as well as their own individual role.] Probe for additional details, as appropriate, e.g.:
 - a. How did you fulfill this role, i.e. what did you actually do to support IACOV and how?
 - b. Are you a member of the Project Implementation Team? If not, is your organization / unit represented on the PIT?
 - c. Is your organization represented on the National Project Steering Committee?
 - d. If not already mentioned: are you familiar with the National Climate Change Awareness Raising and Communication Strategy (NCCARCS)? What is your role in relation to this Strategy?
 - e. Did you receive any training or comms materials / messaging in relation to the IACOV project / NCCARCS? Pls describe if so.
 - f. Were you involved in the design of any specific IACOV / NCCARCS activities or comms approaches? Pls describe if so.
 - g. Have you done any monitoring of IACOV or NCCARCS activities / interventions or visits to project sites? If so, how often / how many times have you visited the project sites? [This is important in relation to their familiarity with the community-level activities / changes]
3. How has the IACOV project / NCCARCS enhanced your capacity and/or the capacity of your organization / department / unit in relation to DRR and EWS? [3.1]
4. From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project / NCCARCS? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2] Are there other key factors or conditions that made these achievements possible (leadership, timing, collaboration)? [3.2, ToC]
5. How have the results from different components (education, early warning, agriculture, social protection) reinforce one another? [ToC linkages]
6. How have inclusive approaches influenced district performance or outcomes? [5.1, ToC]
7. In general, were the IACOV or NCCARCS activities that you were involved in implemented on time, according to the workplan and seasonal calendar (if relevant)?

8. If not, what were the reasons for any delays; what were the knock-on effects; and was it possible to rectify? [4.1]
9. Do you think the project or NCCARCS used its money and resources wisely to achieve its objectives? Please explain. [4.1]
10. What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2]
11. Did the project or the Strategy try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1]
12. Can you recall any examples of adaptive management, i.e. where the project or Strategy changed its approach / methods / tools to overcome a challenge, or to respond to a change in the context, or take advantage of an opportunity for improvement? Please describe, including what prompted the change(s). [8.1; see also 3.2 to avoid repetition]
13. In your opinion, do the IACOV or NCCARCS activities adequately address the climate-related shocks experienced in this district? Please explain, with examples. [1.2]
14. Are you aware of any changes in community practices or behaviours relating to climate adaptation and resilience that may have been prompted by the NCCARCS strategy / media messages [3.1]
Probe to make sure that these changes have actually occurred in practice
 - a. Have you actually seen xxx [the specific change(s)] for yourself? In which communities?
 - b. How widespread is [the change(s)]?
 - c. Do you think xxxx [the change(s)] will last into the future? [this relates to sustainability and the response can be referred to under Qu.20]
15. What do you think has contributed to these changes? [3.1]
 - a. Apart from the IACOV project activities or the NCCARCS strategy / media messages, are there other factors that have contributed to change?
16. [If not already asked above] In what ways has the NCCARCS strategy / media messages been able to reach women, vulnerable and marginalised populations? Please provide examples. [5.2]
17. From your perspective, are there any communication activities that were supported by the project / Strategy that have the potential to be scaled up (to more beneficiaries and/or more areas)? Are there any that are not appropriate for scaling? Please describe why / why not. [7.1]
18. Are there any other projects or interventions in this district that are linked with or complementary to IACOV / the Comms Strategy? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1]
19. In relation to sustainability... [refer to response to earlier question about training / capacity building]: Please describe any capacity-building measures; strategies, systems, procedures; linkages; etc that the project has supported within your organization / unit to ensure the continuation of the project / Strategy implementation and its benefits? [6.1]
20. In your opinion, are these measures sufficient to ensure your organization's / unit's continued role in Phase 2 of the IACOV project? If not, what additional measures are needed? [6.1]
21. At the community level, what measures / mechanisms were implemented to support the sustainability of communications and knowledge-sharing for resilience-building and adaptation? (e.g. through development of skills, knowledge or resources) [6.2] [Refer to response from Qu.12]

Key informant interview-Community level

Key Informant Interview Guides for Community Level

Table 28 KII Guide for Local Chief(s) and Community Councillors

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	Do you know why your village / community was selected to be involved in the IACOV project?	[1.1]
Qn 2	What are the different types of beneficiaries at the community level, and how were they selected? [1.1] Were you and/or members of the communities involved in	[1.1]

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
	targeting and design in any way? Please describe. [1.1]	
Qn 3	What are the different types of IACOV activities / interventions implemented in this site? What are the climate events that affect this area most (drought, heavy rain, frost, wind, pests, livestock disease)? In your opinion, do the IACOV interventions adequately address the climate-related shocks experienced in this area? Please explain, with examples. [1.2]	[1.2]
Qn 4	Are there any other projects or interventions in this area that are linked with or complementary to IACOV? Please describe, incl name of project and implementing agency. [2.1]	[2.1]
Qn 5	What are some of the changes in community practices or behaviours relating to climate adaptation and resilience that you've seen in this community? [3.1] What are some of the factors that have helped to achieve these changes (e.g. leadership, collaboration, learning, funding)? [ToC]	[3.1]
Qn 6	How were women, youth, and vulnerable groups involved in IACOV activities? Did the project address the specific needs of these groups? Describe, with examples.	[5.1]
Qn 7	Within your community, how has the project supported the sustainability of the resilience-building and adaptation interventions? (e.g. through development of skills, knowledge or resources to ensure their maintenance / continuation) [6.2] In your opinion, are these sufficient to ensure the continuation of the resilience-building and adaptation assets / measures without external support? If not, what else is needed to ensure sustainability? [6.2] What has helped your community continue using what was learned from IACOV? [6.2]	[6.2]
Qn 8	From your perspective, are there any resilience-building and adaptation intervention activities that were supported by the project that have the potential to be scaled up (to more beneficiaries and/or more areas)? Are there any that are not appropriate for scaling? Please describe why / why not. [7.1]	[7.1]
Qn 9	From your perspective, what have been the main achievements or successes of the IACOV project in this community? What has contributed to these achievements / successes? [3.2]	[3.2]
Qn 10	What have been the main challenges? What have been the reasons for these challenges? [3.2] Did you / the project try to address any of these challenges? Please describe if so. [3.2; 8.1]	[3.2; 8.1]
Qn 12	What lessons or innovations emerged during IACOV implementation?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

Councillors and Chiefs play central roles in community governance, planning, and resource allocation. Their perspectives reflect community trust, leadership effectiveness, and project alignment with local structures.

Table 29 KII Guide for Community Action Plan (CAP) Committee Members

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	How was your CAP Committee formed, and what is its main role under IACOV?	[1.1]
Qn 2	What key priorities or risks did your CAP identify during planning?	[1.2]
Qn 3	How were activities prioritised and approved for implementation? Please explain how these activities strengthen the resilience of the community in relation to climate change.	[2.1]
Qn 4	Were IACOV activities implemented as planned in your CAP?	[4.1]
Qn 5	Which IACOV interventions were most successful in your area? What were the factors that contributed to their success?	[3.3]
Qn 6	Which activities faced the biggest challenges or delays? What were the reasons for the challenges? How did you try to address the challenges?	[3.3]
Qn 7	How were women, youth, and vulnerable groups involved in CAP decisions and benefits?	[5.1]
Qn 8	Did the project address the specific needs of these groups? How?	[5.2]
Qn 9	Is your CAP Committee still active and meeting regularly?	[6.1]
Qn 10	How do you coordinate with the council, VDMT, or NGOs?	[2.1]
Qn 11	What plans exist to sustain or expand CAP activities?	[6.2]
Qn 12	What lessons or innovations emerged during IACOV implementation?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

CAP Committees lead community planning for resilience and adaptation. Their perspectives show how bottom-up priorities, inclusion, and ownership drive implementation and sustainability.

Table 30 KII Guide for Village Disaster Management Team (VDMT) Leaders

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	
Qn 1	When was the VDMT established, and what are its key responsibilities under IACOV?	[1.1]
Qn 2	How often does your team meet, and what issues are discussed?	[6.1]
Qn 3	What are the most common hazards in your area, and how does your team prepare for them?	[1.2]
Qn 4	What key activities or actions has the VDMT implemented under IACOV?	[3.3]

Qn 5	Have these activities helped the community respond better to shocks? Please explain how these activities have strengthened the resilience of the community in relation to climate change.	[3.2]
Qn 6	What challenges do you face in carrying out your duties? What are the reasons for these challenges? How have you tried to overcome them?	[4.1]
Qn 7	Are women, youth, and people with disabilities represented in the VDMT?	[5.1]
Qn 8	How do you ensure that warnings and messages reach everyone in the community?	[5.2]
Qn 9	What resources or support does the VDMT currently receive?	[6.1]
Qn 10	What happens when a disaster warning is issued now?	[6.2]
Qn 11	What improvements could make the VDMT more effective in future?	[8.1]

Interviewer

Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) are the first line of local preparedness and response. Their functionality, inclusivity, and coordination determine how quickly communities act when early warnings are issued.

Reference:

Table 31 KII Guide for Water Asset Management Committee Leader(s)

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	How was the Water Asset Management Committee formed, and what are its main responsibilities under IACOV?	[1.1]
Qn 2	Which community assets were created or rehabilitated under IACOV?	[3.1]
Qn 3	How were locations for these assets decided?	[1.2]
Qn 4	How have the water assets benefited the community? How have they contributed to strengthening the resilience of the community in relation to climate change?	[3.2]
Qn 5	What major challenges have you faced in maintaining or managing these assets? What were the reasons for the challenges? How were they overcome?	[4.1]
Qn 6	How does your committee coordinate with local councils or DDMT on asset management?	[2.1]
Qn 7	Are women and youth represented in your committee?	[5.1]
Qn 8	Who benefits most from these water assets?	[5.2]
Qn 9	How do you ensure the assets are maintained and operational?	[6.1]

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 10	Has your committee received any refresher training or follow-up support?	[6.2]
Qn 11	What lessons or improvements could make water asset management stronger in the future?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

Water Asset Management Committees oversee local infrastructure such as dams, tanks, or irrigation systems. Their effectiveness depends on technical capacity, community ownership, inclusive governance, and coordination with district institutions.

Table 32 KII Guide for Women / Youth Group Leaders

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	Were women and youth involved in planning or deciding which IACOV activities took place in your community? How do these activities help to strengthen resilience?	[1.1]
Qn 2	What roles did women and youth play during implementation?	[3.1]
Qn 3	What benefits have women or youth gained from IACOV activities?	[3.2]
Qn 4	What challenges did women and youth face in accessing project benefits?	[4.1]
Qn 5	How did the project ensure that women and youth could participate fully and safely?	[5.1]
Qn 6	Are there any social or cultural factors that made participation difficult?	[5.2]
Qn 7	Are women/youth groups still active after IACOV ended?	[6.1]
Qn 8	What lasting changes have occurred in gender or youth leadership since IACOV? What were the factors that contributed to these changes?	[6.2]
Qn 9	Which IACOV activities should be scaled up for women or youth in other areas?	[7.1]
Qn 10	Did the project adapt or improve its approach based on feedback from women or youth?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

Women and youth are essential actors in resilience-building. Their experiences highlight empowerment, inclusion, and behavioural change outcomes that determine long-term community adaptation.

Table 33 KII Guide for Lead Farmers

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	How did you become a lead farmer under IACOV?	[1.1]
Qn 2	What training or technical support did you receive from IACOV?	[3.1]
Qn 3	How did you support other farmers in your area?	[2.1]
Qn 4	What changes or results have you observed from the practices introduced? How do these help to strengthen resilience in the face of climate change? What are some of the factors that contributed to these results?	[3.2]
Qn 5	What challenges did you face in demonstrating or promoting these practices?	[4.1]
Qn 6	How did you share lessons or communicate feedback to extension officers?	[8.1]
Qn 7	Were women, youth, or vulnerable farmers also supported through your demonstrations?	[5.1]
Qn 8	What efforts were made to include marginalised or resource-poor farmers?	[5.2]
Qn 9	Are the practices you learned still being used by you and others?	[6.1]
Qn 10	Are other farmers replicating or adapting your methods independently?	[6.2]
Qn 11	Which practices or models could be scaled up across other areas?	[7.1]
Qn 12	Did the project or extension officers adapt approaches during training?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

Lead Farmers serve as champions of innovation in climate-smart agriculture. Their experiences show how new practices are tested, transferred, and sustained at community level through peer learning.

Table 34 KII Guide for NGO Implementing Partner (if present)

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	What was your organisation's main role in implementing IACOV activities?	[1.1]
Qn 2	How did your organisation coordinate with DMA, DDMT, and local councils?	[2.1]
Qn 3	How were target sites or beneficiaries selected?	[1.1]
Qn 4	What are the key achievements or positive results of IACOV from your perspective? What were the factors that contributed to these?	[3.3]
Qn 5	What were the main challenges faced during implementation?	[4.1]

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 6	Were activities completed on schedule and within budget?	[4.1]
Qn 7	How did you ensure inclusion of women, youth, and people with disabilities?	[5.1]
Qn 8	Were there any challenges ensuring equal participation?	[5.2]
Qn 9	Are project benefits and community structures still functioning post-IACOV?	[6.1]
Qn 10	Which approaches could be scaled up or replicated elsewhere?	[7.1]
Qn 11	Did your organisation adapt its approaches based on feedback or challenges?	[8.1]

Interviewer Reference:

NGO Implementing Partners deliver activities directly at community level and play a vital role in coordination, learning, and innovation. Their insights highlight operational effectiveness and the strength of partnerships within IACOV.

Table 35 KII Guide for School Teacher / Principal

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	What was your involvement with IACOV activities at the school?	[1.1]
Qn 2	What topics or practices were introduced to students under IACOV?	[3.1]
Qn 3	What changes have you observed among students or teachers because of IACOV?	[3.3]
Qn 4	Were there challenges in maintaining school-based DRR or adaptation activities?	[4.1]
Qn 5	How did IACOV ensure equal participation of boys, girls, and learners with disabilities?	[5.1]
Qn 6	Are climate-related clubs or practices still active?	[6.1]
Qn 7	What more could help sustain or scale up school climate-education work?	[7.1]

Interviewer Reference:

School Teachers/Principals are front-line change agents in promoting climate-adaptation knowledge, influencing young people's behaviour and community preparedness through curriculum and extracurricular activities.

Agricultural Extension Officer

Qn No.	Indicative KII Question	EQ Reference
Qn 1	What is your role in supporting farmers under IACOV?	[1.1]
Qn 2	How were farmer groups or lead farmers identified?	[1.1]
Qn 3	What technical practices were promoted through IACOV?	[3.1]
Qn 4	How often do you visit or follow up with farmers?	[2.1]
Qn 5	What major results have you observed from IACOV agriculture activities? What were the factors that contributed to these results?	[3.2]
Qn 6	What challenges have farmers or officers faced during implementation?	[4.1]
Qn 7	How do you capture lessons or share reports from your work?	[8.1]
Qn 8	How were women and youth included in agricultural trainings?	[5.1]
Qn 9	What barriers still limit vulnerable farmers' participation?	[5.2]
Qn 10	How can climate-smart practices continue after IACOV ends?	[6.1]
Qn 11	Are there farmers replicating IACOV techniques on their own?	[7.1]

Interviewer Reference:

Agricultural Extension Officers serve as technical bridges between communities and district structures, guiding implementation of climate-smart agriculture, and ensuring that knowledge, tools, and feedback circulate effectively.

Beneficiary KI – Most Significant Change Stories

This template integrates a gender and inclusion lens to ensure diverse voices are captured, especially those of women, youth, older persons, and other marginalized groups.

1. Participant Information

Name (Use anonymous for those who prefer not to say):

Sex:

Age:

Location (Village/District):

Does anyone in your HH have a disability or chronic illness? (Y/N)

2. Domain of Change: Please select the domain that best describes the area of change:

- Empowerment and Decision-Making
- Food Security and Nutrition
- Climate Resilience and Risk Management
- Access to Resources and Services
- Social Behavioral Change
- Gender equality and Social Inclusion
- Other: _____

This can be ticked after hearing the story

3. Story of Change: Looking back, what has been the most impactful change that you have made to increase your / your household's resilience, over the past five years?

4. How does this change increase your resilience to climate change? Why was this important to you?

5. How did the project contribute to this change? Describe how specific project activities, support, or interactions helped bring about this change.

6. Additional Reflections: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience or other changes you've made?

Focus group discussion

A. Introductions & purpose of the discussion

B. Consent protocols

C. Questions:

- 1) What have you learned about climate change since the start of the project? [3.1]
 - i. How / through what means of communication did you learn these things?
- 2) Has the community worked together to implement any activities and/or made any changes to increase its resilience to climate change / climate shocks? List and briefly describe each (i.e. how it contributes to resilience). [3.1]
 - i. Were community members involved in the decision to implement these particular activities? Please describe how the decision was made, and how the activities were designed. [1.1]
- 3) Have any of you (as a household or individual) changed the way you do things so that you / your household has greater resilience to climate change / climate shocks? Please give examples. (To be listed / described) [3.1]
 - i. Were you (as a household or individual) involved in the decision to implement these particular activities? Please describe how the decision was made, and how the activities were designed. [1.1]
- 4) Do any of you know what the current seasonal forecast is? How do you know this? (i.e. where / how do you receive this information) [3.2]
- 5) How have you used this information? Have any of you made any changes to your plans because of the current seasonal forecast? Can any of you provide any other examples from previous years where you've changed your plans due to seasonal forecasts? [3.2]
- 6) In your opinion, how effective has the project been in providing information and promoting change for greater resilience? What have been the challenges? [3.3]
- 7) Is there anyone or any types of people/households in the community that have not benefitted from the project as much as others? Who? Why? [5.1]
- 8) Did the project take any particular measures to address the needs of different vulnerable groups / households in this community? Describe if so. [5.2]
- 9) What types of training and/or resources / initiatives did the project provide to help the community / households / individuals to ensure the sustainability of the resilience-building measures that have been implemented? [6.2]
- 10) In what ways has the community contributed to the adaptation / resilience-building measures / interventions / activities? [6.2]
- 11) In what ways have individuals / households contributed to the adaptation / resilience-building measures / interventions / activities? [6.2]
- 12) Ranking exercise: [7.1]
 - i. Review list of community-level interventions / activities (Qu.2) and rank in order of replicability / scalability, with advantages and/or disadvantages for each intervention / activity.

- ii. Review list of household / individual-level interventions / activities (Qu.3) and rank in order of replicability / scalability, with advantages and/or disadvantages for each intervention / activity.

Phone survey

Identification & Consent

Enumerator name/ID

- ☐ Matseliso Fako
- ☐ Realeboha Mokoane (Quthing)
- ☐ Matobako Makhabane (Mafeteng)
- ☐ Mabohlokoa Letsie
- ☐ Makopano Lesia
- ☐ Morongoe Mokemane
- ☐ Jacob (Field Supervisor)

Phone number dialled



Region

(Urban/Rural)

- ☐ Urban Rural
- ☐ District

- ☐ Mafeteng
- ☐ Mohale's Hoek Quthing
- ☐ **Community Council (CC)**

Project site

Enter date and time of first call attempt

yyyy-mm-dd

hh:mm

What was the outcome of the first call attempt?

- ☐ Successful – respondent reached
- ☐ Unsuccessful – no answer / not reachable
- ☐ Number is unavailable
- ☐ Number does not exist
- ☐ Call ended / respondent cuts the call
- ☐ Other (specify)

Respondent could not be reached 1st attempt. End the survey.

Enter date and time of second call attempt (if any)

yyyy-mm-dd

hh:mm

What was the outcome of the second call attempt?

- ☐ Successful – respondent reached
- ☐ Unsuccessful – no answer / not reachable
- ☐ Number is unavailable
- ☐ Number does not exist
- ☐ Call ended / respondent cuts the call
- ☐ Other (specify)

Respondent could not be reached two attempts. End the survey.

Enter date and time of third call attempt (if any)

yyyy-mm-dd

hh:mm

What was the outcome of the third call attempt?

- ☐ Successful – respondent reached
- ☐ Unsuccessful – no answer / not reachable
- ☐ Number is unavailable
- ☐ Number does not exist
- ☐ Call ended / respondent cuts the call
- ☐ Other (specify)

Respondent could not be reached after three attempts. End the survey.

Consent: We are conducting a short phone survey for the IACOV evaluation (2020–2025). Participation is voluntary and confidential. The interview takes ~15 minutes. Do you agree to participate? (Read aloud verbatim; if 'No', end the interview)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Consent not granted. End the interview and thank the respondent.

Demographic and Household Characteristics

What is your age in completed years?



What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

What is your current marital status?

- ☐ Married or living together
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced or separated
- ☐ Never married

Do you and your spouse/partner share decision-making in the household?

- ☐ Yes, jointly
- ☐ I mainly decide
- ☐ My spouse mainly decides
- ☐ Others decide Don't know
- ☐

What is your relationship to the head of household?

- ☐ Self
- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Son/Daughter Other



What is the sex of the household head?



Male



Female

What is the age of the household head?



Is anyone in your household living with a disability?



Yes



No



Don't know

Is anyone in your household living with HIV/AIDS?



Yes



No



Don't know

What is the marital status of the household head?

- ☐ Married or living together
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Divorced or separated
- ☐ Never married

What is the current employment status of the household head?

- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Farmer
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Casual labour
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other

Which of the following types of support did your household receive from IACOV?

(Enumerator: select all that apply.)

- ☐ Cash transfer
- ☐ Inputs (shade nets, seeds, pallets)
- ☐ Training or capacity building
- ☐ Early warning or climate information
- ☐ None
- ☐ Don't know

Component 1: Access and Use of Climate Information

In the last 12 months, have you received any seasonal forecast or early-warning information?

(Read aloud)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

My household use the seasonal weather or climate information to make decisions on crops, livestock, or livelihoods.

(Ask only if 'Yes' to Q1)

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Don't know

In the past 12 months, what are examples of how your household used the seasonal forecast?

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify) (Enumerator: This question refers ONLY to use of forecast information — NOT adaptation actions.)

- ☐ Dam construction
- ☐ Keyhole gardens
- ☐ Income-generating activities (chickens, vegetables, piggery etc.)
- ☐ Water harvesting
- ☐ Drought-resistant crops (sorghum, wheat etc.)
- ☐ Other (specify)

Specify other example of how forecast was used

Do you understand the information you receive about weather or climate forecasts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Where do you usually get this information?

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify)

- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Online / Internet
- ☐ Friends / Family
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Other (specify) **Specify other source**

Which of the following climate-related risks or impacts have you observed in your area in the last 5 years?

(Enumerator: Do NOT read options aloud. Allow spontaneous responses, then probe.) More frequent or severe droughts

- ☐ Flooding becoming more frequent/severe
 - ☐ Crop failure or reduced yields
 - ☐ Loss of livestock due to climate events
 - ☐ Water scarcity
 - ☐ More very hot days or heatwaves
 - ☐ Soil erosion or land degradation
 - ☐ Strong winds or storms damaging houses/fields
 - ☐ Other (specify) Don't know
 - ☐ **Specify other climate-related risk or impact**
-

Component 2: Outreach and Awareness (Key Messages)

In the past 12 months, have you received any messages (information, advice, or training) on the following topics?

(Select all that apply; if 'None', select only that)

- ☐ Climate change adaptation
- ☐ Food security
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ None
- ☐ Don't know

Did other members of your household (particularly women, youth, or vulnerable groups) receive any messages on the following topics?

(Select all that apply; if 'None', select only that)

- ☐ Climate change adaptation
- ☐ Food security
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ None
- ☐ Don't know

How did you or other members of your household receive these messages (information, advice, or training)?

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify)

- ☐ Government extension officer(s)
- ☐ Community training / workshops / gatherings
- ☐ Radio programmes
- ☐ School-based activities
- ☐ Social media or online resources
- ☐ WFP / IACOV
- ☐ Other (specify) Don't know
- ☐

Specify other source

Which of these messages did you find most useful?

(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Climate change adaptation
- ☐ Food security
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ None
- ☐ Don't know

Component 3: Resilience and Adaptation Practices

Trying new or improved practices is worth the effort and cost if they reduce future climate risks.

(Read aloud)

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Don't know

Have you or your household taken any actions to adapt or cope with climate change? (If 'No', skip Q12–Q13)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

What have you or anyone in your household done to adapt to or cope with climate change?

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify) (Enumerator: This question refers to ACTUAL actions taken to cope or adapt — NOT use of forecast information.)

- ☐ Planted trees
- ☐ Maintained trees and vegetation
- ☐ Built wells and/or other water resources
- ☐ Turn off lights when not in use
- ☐ Turn off water tap/pipe when not using it
- ☐ Built or helped to build green spaces (parks/gardens)
- ☐ Walk or cycle instead of using a car/bus
- ☐ Do not litter even when bins are not available
- ☐ Nothing
- ☐ Other (specify)

Specify other adaptation action

Who in your household was involved in planning or implementing these actions?

(Select all that apply)

- ☐ Respondent
- ☐ Spouse/Partner
- ☐ Male youth (15–35)
- ☐ Female youth (15–35)
- ☐ Older member (60 +)
- ☐ Person with disability Other (specify)
- ☐

Do you feel more or less able to cope with climate-related shocks compared to two years ago?

- ☐ Much worse
- ☐ Somewhat worse No change
- ☐ Somewhat better
- ☐ Much better
- ☐ Don't know

Is your community better prepared to respond to climate-related shocks now compared to two years ago?

- ☐ Much worse
- ☐ Somewhat worse No change
- ☐ Somewhat better
- ☐ Much better Don't know

☐ **What has helped improve your community's ability to manage shocks?**

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify)

- ☐ Access to climate information
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Physical assets
- ☐ Government / NGO support
- ☐ Committees
- ☐ Social cohesion Other (specify)
- ☐

Specify other factor

How satisfied are you with the support received from IACOV?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied Don't know
- ☐

Component 4: Gender and Inclusion

Were women, youth, and vulnerable groups able to participate meaningfully in the project activities?

(Read aloud)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

What were the main reasons some groups may not have participated fully?

(Select all that apply; if 'Other', specify) Time constraints

☐

Cultural norms

☐

Care-giving responsibilities

☐

Lack of information

☐

Other (specify) Don't know

☐☐

Specify other reason for non-participation

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Annex 9. Data collection overview

Table 36 Inception phase people interviewed

Organization	Number of Informants		
	Women	Men	Total
WFP - CO		2	2
National Climate Change Committee		1	1
Department of Soil & Water Conservation, MEF	4	1	5
Ministry of Agriculture		1	1
GEF EWS Phase 2 Project (MEF)		1	1
WFP - HQ	1		1
Grand Total	5	6	11

Table 37 Data collection phase people interviewed

Organization	Number of Informants		
	Men	Women	Total
WFP	5	7	12
National and subnational institutions	11	30	41
NGOs, media, academia, private sector	5	4	9
UN agencies	1	0	1
Community leaders, members, councilors	5	7	12
Beneficiaries (Most Significant Change Stories)	2	4	6
Grand Total	29	52	81

Table 38 Beneficiaries involved in FGDs

FGDs with beneficiaries				
Location	Men	Women	Youth	Total number
Makoabating	7	11	13	31
Lithakaling	0	23	0	23
Draihoeck	21	57	5	83
Mohlakoane	1	20	0	21
Total number beneficiaries	29	111	18	158

Annex 10. Alignment with ongoing projects

Table 39 Other projects with which IACOV was aligned

Project Title	Funding	Dates	Project focus and complementarities with AF
Wool and Mohair Promotion Project (WAMPP)	IFAD, ASAP, OFID, LWMGA, GoL	2013 – ongoing (7 years)	The focus of WAMPP is on climate-smart rangeland management, including climate services; improved livestock production and marketing. Components 1 and 2 of the AF project will build on the Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) approach - WAMPP has already trained all extension officers (agriculture & forestry, plus District DMA and LMS staff) in all the districts on PICSA. The AF project will extend this training to cover the enhanced seasonal forecasting that it will support, in the 3 targeted districts, and further skill the extension officers to facilitate communities to use S2S, together with longer-term climate projections, during the participatory planning approach. Component 2 and 3 of the AF project will also build on lessons learnt by WAMPP on livelihoods and income generation activities in common locations. The AF project will build on WAMPP's use of the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF) for biophysical monitoring, thus also helping to develop a common approach across government departments.
Strengthening climate services in Lesotho for climate resilient development and adaptation to climate change (EWS Phase II)	GEF LDCF / UNEP/ LMS	Concept Note Approved . Project Proposal under review.	Component I will develop a sub-seasonal to seasonal (S2S) forecasting system at LMS to reduce the workload of and complement EW Phase II. The national forecast will be further refined (bias correction, calibration, etc.) for the three southern districts. Further refinements of the national forecast for the UNEP priority districts would still fall under the UNEP work, and be fed back into the national level forecasts to improve their skill, resulting in a collaborative approach to the national S2S forecast. The two projects will closely collaborate for the development of early warning products and SOP on drought early action so that the methodology can be exported by both project teams to other non-common districts. The two projects will also plan joint awareness raising activities, in the framework of the National Climate Change Awareness Raising and Communication Strategy (NCCAR&CS). The projects will share experiences on the improved use of generated climate information, working in different districts, to inform community adaptation planning and actions. The AF focus is on the drought response system, while EWS Phase II focus is on shorter-range hazards (flooding, frost, extreme temperatures etc.). No overlap in targeted project areas.
Improved EWS to reduce impacts of CC (EW Phase I)	GEF LDCF /UNEP / LMS	2011 - 2015	Component I of the proposed project will ensure that existing Early Warning Systems are built upon for generation of triggers and use of forecast. The project will develop an enhanced sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasting capacity in LMS, together with early action SOPs for drought, which will constitute an important strengthened element of the national EWS.

Strengthening capacity for CC adaptation through support to IWM	GEF/FAO	2015 – ongoing	The AF project will adopt an IWM approach to the soil and water conservation work carried out under Component 3, and will actively look for synergies with both the FAO and the EU IWM projects. Where locations are similar Component 3 will build upon the work done by FAO in soil and water management under an IWM approach, as well as livelihood diversification activities.
Support to Integrated Catchment Management in Lesotho	EU/ BMZ/ GoL	In final stages of design; expected to run until 2023	The project will institutionalise and fully implement ICM across Lesotho, based on gender equality and climate adaptation principles, through support to the Department of Water Affairs. There is thus great synergy between the EU and the AF projects. The resilience building activities under Component 3 of the AF project will be implemented within the ICM approach, through strong collaboration with the DWA, which will sit on the AF PSC, as well as through the decentralised project management and implementation. It is not yet clear in which priority sub-catchments the ICM programme will begin to work.
Reducing vulnerability to CC in Foothills, Lowlands & Lower Senqu River Basin	GEF/ LDCF/ UNDP/ GoL	2015–2020	Component 2 will scale up climate-smart agriculture manuals, training and implementation piloted by RVCC into other districts. Further lessons learned from RVCC will be fed into the AF project at inception.
Strengthening Disaster Preparedness and Response Systems in Lesotho	ECHO/ WFP/ FAO/ GoL	2017-2020	Will enhance the capacity of the GoL in EW/EA and shock responsive social protection system. The AF project will build on the activities of the ECHO project, including updating National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA), Land Cover and Hazard Mapping to provide a platform for timely, prevention-oriented and resilience-focused interventions. The AF project will develop SOPs for EW/EA on drought; the ECHO project will develop EW/EA capabilities more generally.
Smallholder Agriculture Development Programme (SADP)	IFAD/ GEF LDCF/ MoA/ World Bank	2011 - 2019	Supports smallholder farmers to increase their productivity and diversify into market-oriented agriculture. AF implementation will draw on valuable lessons on identifying commercially viable activities that can be replicated and successfully scaled up, in the one overlapping district (Mafeteng).
Lesotho – Adaptation of Small-scale Agriculture (LASAP)	IFAD/ GEF LDCF/	Initially to start in 2014, but has been delayed.	LASAP will build LMS's capacity to develop downscaled climate scenarios relevant for district-level agricultural use; establish an agro-meteorological function in MAFS linked to LMS; and do ToT of Resource Centre extension staff on CI, managing climate risks, and adapting agricultural advice for training frontline AEOs at sub-centre level, for effective translation of climate bulletins into production-relevant advice at farm levels. Only 1 district of overlap (Mafeteng), different community councils selected, common execution through LMS will ensure complementarity.

Climate Change Adaptation for Sustainable Rural Water Supply in Lowlands	AfDB/ LDCF GEF	2015 - 2019	To improve livelihoods of communities in SW lowlands facing CC challenges through better water resource management; in parallel with Lowlands Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project (LRWSSP), which consists in Berea and Maseru districts along routes of Metolong Dam Water Supply Project of basic rural water and sanitation infrastructure, environmental health support, plus capacity building. Climate risk information generated under AfDB project will feed into risk estimation models that will underpin development of EW messaging for the AF project & overall EW/EA systems.
'Strengthening Lesotho's capacity to advance National Adaptation Planning'	GCF/ UNEP/ GoL (GCF Readiness project)	Under development	Encompasses strengthening institutional capacity for adaptation planning; enhancing CC information generation, analysis and dissemination; etc. The AF research activities will contribute to the GCF long-term CC research and study programme (plus a scholarship programme). AF project training of LMS staff is very specific to drought and S2S forecasting and will not overlap with GCF training to LMS. The AF will assist LMS to develop a coherent national CC awareness raising strategy and action plan, which will be the umbrella under which the GCF's awareness raising activities should be conducted.
Mountain Communities Government Dialogue	Global Mountain Partnership	CSO-GoL dialogue ongoing	Lessons learned will inform and complement Component 3 of the proposed project in relation to in-depth understanding of building resilience, establishing long-lasting processes and policies that strengthen the resilience of mountain communities and environments and ensuring sustainable development.

Source: IACOV Project Proposal to AF [Phase I], April 2019

Annex 11. Profile of sample beneficiary households across districts and ecologies

Table 40 Sample household characteristics

Variable	Sample	Mafeteng	Mohale' Hoek	Quthing
Age	53	54	51	57
Aged 18–34	15%	14%	19%	8%
Aged 35–59	44%	44%	45%	44%
Aged 69+	41%	41%	36%	49%
Female	71%	73%	36%	79%
Divorced or separated	11%	16%	4%	10%
Married or living together	42%	34%	49%	48%
Never married	8%	7%	7%	13%
Widowed	39%	42%	40%	29%
Household Head Characteristics				
Age	54	54	52	57
Aged 18–34	4%	2%	6%	5%
Aged 35–59	21%	16%	24%	28%
Aged 60+	75%	82%	70%	67%
Self	70%	74%	69%	62%
Son/Daughter	3%	4%	1%	3%
Spouse/Partner	27%	22%	30%	35%
Female	55%	50%	38%	47%
Divorced or separated	11%	16%	4%	8%
Married or living together	43%	37%	49%	50%
Never married	6%	3%	6%	11%

Widowed	41%	44%	41%	31%
Casual labour	16%	17%	17%	10%
Employed	7%	10%	1%	12%
Farmer	37%	26%	53%	34%
Other	2%	4%	1%	1%
Retired	3%	1%	2%	9%
Self-employed	10%	15%	5%	4%
Unemployed	25%	27%	21%	30%
Household Characteristics				
Hh has Person with Disability	12%	12%	9%	16%
Hh has Person with HIV	51%	50%	47%	63%

Source: IACOV Endline Household Survey

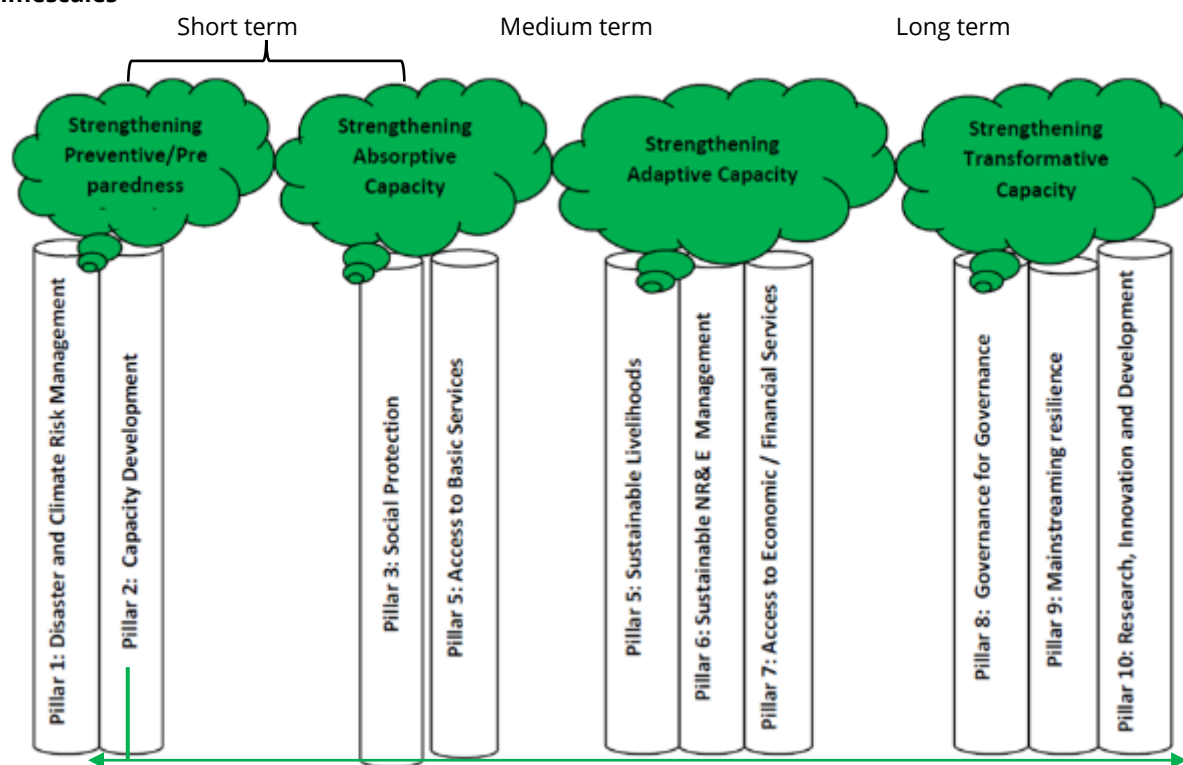
Table 41 Surveyed households by district and ecological zone

District		Foothills	Lowlands	Mountains	Senqu River Valley	Total
Mafeteng	Number	0	94	0	0	94
	Row %	0	100	0	0	100
	Column %	0	58	0	0	35
Mohale's Hoek	Number	27	68	18	0	113
	Row %	24	60	16	0	100
	Column %	100	42	34	0	42
Quthing	Number	0	0	35	29	64
	Row %	0	0	55	45	100
	Column %	0	0	66	100	24
Total	Number	27	162	53	29	271
	Row %	10	60	20	11	100
	Column %	100	100	100	100	100

Annex 12. Resilience capacities in relation to short, medium and long term

205. The Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework (NSRF)¹⁴⁶ is structured around ten resilience programme pillars placed under four capacity areas required to build resilience at household, community and institutional levels. The four critical resilience capacity areas are: (i) preparedness¹⁴⁷; (ii) absorptive capacity (disaster risk management); (iii) adaptive capacity (longer-term livelihood investments); and (iv) transformative capacity (improved governance and enabling conditions). These different capacity types broadly correspond to the programming approaches and timeframes required to promote improved resilience in the short, medium and long term, as illustrated by Figure 20.

Figure 20 The Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework in relation to resilience capacities and timescales



Source: Modified from the National Resilience Strategy Framework (2019)

206. **IACOV strengthened resilience in the short term through its support to Anticipatory Action, DRR (Pillar 1) and cash-based public works (Pillar 3).** As one of the key activities that form an Anticipatory Action response, emergency access to clean and potable water (Pillar 4) also supports short term resilience. Based on the NSRF, capacity development (Pillar 2) is categorised as a cross-cutting pillar, implying that IACOV's extensive capacity-strengthening efforts (at national, district and community levels) also contributed

¹⁴⁶ Lesotho National Strategic Resilience Framework (2019–2030): Building a Resilient and Prosperous Nation, September, 2019

¹⁴⁷ Preparedness can be considered to include anticipatory capacity.

to building short-term resilience capacity. Support to LMS's forecasting capacity, for example, combined with the development of the AAP allowed for the dissemination of early warning information and clear guidance on the types of support to be provided in the event of a disaster being triggered, as occurred in July 2023.

207. **Medium term resilience** was improved by strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities and households through activities relating to: livelihood diversification and climate smart agriculture (Pillar 5); water harvesting, soil and water conservation, and improved rangeland management (Pillar 6); and access to markets and value addition (e.g. food processing and preservation) (Pillar 7). Access to micro-finance services is also a key programming approach under NSRF Pillar 7; although the IACOV Project Proposal included plans to implement VSLAs, the ET could not find any evidence of this in the project sites visited. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of IACOV's strategies to enhance adaptive capacity has been illustrated above by the relatively high rates of adoption of climate change adaptation measures.

208. KIs and FGDs reported various different contributing factors that helped make these changes in community practices and behaviour possible. The IACOV Project itself supported farmer training that was delivered by Ministry staff, and also provided the inputs required (e.g. shade nets, livestock, tree seedling, drought-tolerant seeds, water harvesting tanks and pipes, etc). Ministry staff at the district levels commented on the importance of IACOV Project funding in allowing them to scale up their normal activities to cover more locations and more activities, and beneficiaries particularly appreciated the knowledge that they had gained. Nutrition Clubs were highlighted as being important in spreading climate-smart knowledge and practices. The use of the CBPP approach helped to ensure that activities were based on local needs, rather than being imposed, and also encouraged effective community engagement. The Cash for Work (CFW) scheme brought people together to work, which created a foundation for cooperation, and the CFW strategy of setting aside a portion of the payments for collective saving and future investment reportedly reinforced a sense of community ownership.

209. **Long-term resilience building** through transformative capacity development was supported through governance-related activities (Pillar 8), particularly at the national level, e.g. the revision of the Climate Change Communication Strategy and the development of the Anticipatory Action Plan. A closer working relationship between LMS and DMA is regarded as a very positive change. The effectiveness of governance and coordination efforts at the district level varied across the three districts. In the view of the ET, more could have been done to mainstream DRR and resilience (Pillar 9) within development planning and coordination structures, particularly at district and community levels, e.g. through the DDMT and VDMTs. On a positive note, there were good linkages between IACOV and the Vulnerability Assessment Committee for risk assessments at the district level in the preparation of the AAP. Although IACOV undertook various studies and had planned to undertake participatory action research, the ET did not find any evidence of how the studies were applied for innovative or new approaches (Pillar 10). For example, the findings of the indigenous knowledge study have yet to be incorporated into IACOV-supported programming activities.

210. An important aspect of long-term, transformative change that is not included in the NSRF is gender-related attitudes, norms and practices that often constrain the ability of women to contribute fully to community- and household-level decision-making processes related to environmental management and climate change adaptation. As highlighted in Section 1, women are instrumental in helping households and communities cope with and adapt to the challenges posed by climate change, yet they continue to be under-represented when it comes to making decisions about environmental management and responses to climate-related threats. Gender transformative approaches are thus an essential aspect of transformative capacity development for resilience building in the long term. The extent to which IACOV incorporated gender transformative approaches into its programming is explored more fully under EQ.5 (Equity).

Annex 13. Findings, conclusions and recommendations mapping

Table 42 Mapping of findings, conclusions and recommendations

Recommendation <i>[in numerical order]</i>	Conclusions <i>[by number(s) of conclusion]</i>	Findings <i>[by number of finding]</i>
Recommendation 1: Clarify and operationalise the strategic focus of IACOV 2 based on a deeper understanding of community-level resilience.	Conclusion 1	1.1
	Conclusion 3	3.2, 3.3, 3.4
	Conclusion 5	5.2
Recommendation 2: Improve the reach and effectiveness of seasonal forecasting and early warning messaging.	Conclusion 3	3.1
Recommendation 3: Identify and agree on lessons learned from Component 2, and apply these lessons to strengthen last-mile communication and awareness-raising for all three Component activities.	Conclusion 3	3.1, 3.4
Recommendation 4: Enhance IACOV's monitoring and evaluation systems by revising the Project Results Framework, incorporating explicit learning activities, and ensuring that M&E results and recommendations feed into adaptive management structures.	Conclusion 1	1.1
	Conclusion 3	3.1, 3.4
	Conclusion 5	5.1
	Conclusion 8	8.2
Recommendation 5. Gender: Move beyond counting women and men to promoting and measuring genuine empowerment outcomes, including changes in decision-making power, control over resources, agency, and transformation of harmful gender norms in ways that actively engage men and boys as allies.	Conclusion 3	3.2
	Conclusion 5	5.1, 5.2
	Conclusion 6	6.2
Recommendation 6. Improve efficiency by addressing structural planning, approval and financial management bottlenecks.	Conclusion 4	4.2
Recommendation 7. Strengthen government ownership and financing pathways for greater sustainability.	Conclusion 6	6.1
Recommendation 8. Address household-level financial	Conclusion 3	3.1

Recommendation <i>[in numerical order]</i>	Conclusions <i>[by number(s) of conclusion]</i>	Findings <i>[by number of finding]</i>
dependency through institutionalised support to Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs).	Conclusion 6	6.1, 6.2
	Conclusion 7	7.2
Recommendation 9. Address the sustainability risks associated with cash-for-work modalities through clearer transition pathways and/or alignment with longer-term social protection mechanisms.	Conclusion 6	6.2
Recommendation 10. Enhance adaptive management through the consistent integration of M&E findings and recommendations into decision-making processes for more effective activity design and implementation.	Conclusion 3	3.4
	Conclusion 5	5.1
	Conclusion 8	8.2

Annex 14. Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ACR	Annual Country Report.
AF	Adaptation Fund
AFS	Agriculture & Food Security
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
AIMS	Asset monitoring from space
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
ARC	Agricultural Resource Centres
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CBPP	Community-based participatory planning
CBT	cash-based transfers
CC	Community Council
CERF	United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund
CO	Country Office
COMP	Country Operations Management Plan.
CPB	Community based participatory
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSI	Coping Strategy Index
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
CSS	Country's Strategy for Support to Social Protection
CYC	Community Youth Champions
DAC	Development Assistance Commission
DAP	Disaster Adaptation Plan
DDMT	District Disaster Management Teams
DE	Decentralized Evaluation

DEQAS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
DEQS	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Support Service
DMA	Disaster Management Authority
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EB	Executive Board
EC	Evaluation Committee
EM	Evaluation Manager
EPI	Evaluation Performance Indicator
EQ	Evaluation Question
ER	Evaluation Report
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ET	Evaluation Team
EW	Early Warning
EWS	Early Warning System,
FBO	Faith Based Organization
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
FLA	Field-level Agreement
FO	Field Officer
FSP	Financial Services Providers
FY	Financial Year
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEI	Gender, equity and inclusion
GEWE	Gender Equality & Women Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index

HDI	Human Development Index
HH	Household
HQ	Headquarters
IACOV	Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food Insecure Populations
IDP	internally displaced person
IE	Independent Evaluation
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification
IR	Inception Report
IRI	International Research Institute for Climate and Society
KGA	Keystone Global Analytics
KI	Key Informant
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMS	Lesotho Meteorological Services
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee
MAFSN	Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MEF	Ministry of Environment and Forestry
MEM	Ministry of Energy & Metereology
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MFRSC	Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation
MoGYSD	Ministry of Gender, Youth & Social Development
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MR	Management Response
MSC	Most Significant Change
MSME	micro, small, and medium enterprises
MTR	Mid Term Review
MY	Make Youth

NA	Not Applicable
NAPA	National Adaptation Programme of Action
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
ND-GAIN	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative
NFR	Note for the record
NGO	Nongovernmental Organizations
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
OEV	Office of Evaluation
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
PPGR	Programme, Policy & Guidance Division
PPR	Periodic Program Review
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PWD	People With Disability
RB	Regional Bureau
RCS	Resilience Capacity Score
REU	Regional Evaluation Unit
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SO	Strategic Objective
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan
TL	Team Leader
ToR	Terms of References
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team.
UNDIS	UN Disability Inclusion Strategy

UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group.
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
USD	United States Dollars
VC	Value chain
VDMT	Village Disaster Management Team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Associations
WFP	World Food Programme
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa

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