



Strengthening Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information Management in Lesotho:

FIVIMS Assessment Report

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV	Anti-Retro viral treatment
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CAA	Catholic Aids Action
CBO	Community-Based-Organization
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire Survey
DFID	Department for International Development
DMA	Disaster Management Authority (OPM)
DPPA	Department of Planning and Policy Analysis (MoAFS)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FBO	Faith-Based-Organization
FHI	Family Health Division
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity, Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems Initiative
FNCO	Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office
FSPU	Food Security Policy Unit (DPPA)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HBC	Home-based care programme
HIS	Health Information System
HPSU	Health Planning and Statistics Unit
HSA	Health Service Area
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
LMS	Lesotho Meteorological Services
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee
MoAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MITMC	Ministry of Industry, Trade, Marketing and Cooperatives
NEWU	National Early Warning System
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNSS	National Nutrition Surveillance System
NRSP	National Rural Sanitation Programme
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PLWA	People Living with AIDS
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RIACSO	UN Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office
RVAC	Regional Vulnerability Analysis Committee
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC FANR	SADC Directorate of Food, Agriculture and National Resources
SARCOF	Southern African Regional Climate Forum
TA	Technical Assistant
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WFP	World Food Programme

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Any errors and omissions are and will remain the responsibility of the author.

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INTRODUCTION

In late-2004 the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, requested assistance from FAO with the development of a so-called *national fivims*¹, particularly to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in meeting its reporting requirements with regard to targets set under the World Food Summit and the Millennium Development Project. FAO responded positively to this request, as it is and has been involved with a number of information-related activities in the country in the past. More specifically, FAO has been supporting the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (National VAC), has a history of support to the National Early Warning System (NEWS), and ongoing participation in Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions (CFSAMs).

FAO's Emergency Operations Service (TCEO) in Southern Africa is supporting the VAC process at the national and regional level. It has also had input into the development of a *national fivims* in South Africa. In light of the above, FAO-TCEO resources will be used for a consultancy to define and map out potential FIVIMS structure and linkages as provided by the Government of South Africa under OSRO/RAF/403/SAF.

The timing of this consultancy was opportune as it coincided with the formulation of the new Food Security Policy. This provided an opportunity for a broad exchange between the teams and made sure that the main findings and recommendations from the FIVIMS mission would be considered for incorporation into the relevant sections of the Policy document (i.e. Food Security Information System Activities). The consultant participated in the workshop of March 9th and 10th, to discuss the first draft of the new FS Policy to a large stakeholder meeting, will therefore also include findings of the FIVIMS mission.

¹ Written in italics to distinguish support to individual countries to strengthen ongoing national and sub-national food insecurity and vulnerability information activities from the Global FIVIMS initiative, driven by an Inter-Agency Working Group which is written in capital letters.

CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small mountainous country (30,000 sq. km) with an estimated population of 2.1 million (LDS: 2001) and is completely encircled by the Republic of South Africa. The GDP per capita is US\$415 with an average GDP/capita growth of 4.4 per cent between 1998-2000. Lesotho is ranked at 132 out of 173 on UNDP's Human Development Index (UNDP: 2000). The country can be divided into four agro-ecological zones – Lowlands, Foothills, Mountains and the Senqu River Valley. Lesotho has a semi-arid climate that faces severe weather variability. Drought, heavy rainfall, frost, snow and hailstorms are all common phenomena. Other important characteristics describing the socio-economic status of the Basotho are listed below. The table focuses on a number of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are relevant to people's food and nutrition security status.²

Table 1: Millennium Development Goals and Indicators relevant to Food and Nutrition Security in Lesotho

Goals	Target	Indicators for monitoring progress	
1. Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger	2. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	Share living below national poverty line	No official poverty line 1987: 59 (UNDP) 1995: 58 (UNDP)
		Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age	2001: 18 (EMICS)
		Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy supply	1990-2: 17 (FAO) 2000-2: 12 (FAO)
4. Reduce Child Mortality	5. Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate	Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 births)	2001: 132 (MoHSW)
		Infant mortality rate (per 1000 births)	1986: 85 (57) (UNDP) 2001: 80 (35) (UNDP)
		Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles*	?
5. Improve Maternal Health	6. Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio	Maternal mortality ratio (per 1000 live births)	1993: 282 (MoHSW) 2001: 419 (MoHSW)
		Proportion of births attended to by skilled health personnel	
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	7. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	HIV adult prevalence rate	1999: 24 (UNDP) 2002: 31 (UNDP)
		Number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS #	2001: 85 000 (MoHSW) 2003: 91 000 (MoHSW)
		Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis	?
	8. Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)	?
7. Ensure Environmental Sustainability	10. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water	Proportion of population with sustainable access to improved water sources, urban and rural	1993: 58 (u) 55 (r) BOS 2000: 88 (u) 74 (r) EMICS
		Proportion of urban population with access to improved sanitation #	2000: 87.8 (EMICS)
	11. By 2020, have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers		

Despite a number of improvements in above indicators, most notably access to improved water sources (Goal 7), there is a disturbing increase in Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) from and HIV adult prevalence rate from 24 to 31 per cent in recent years, notably among the highest in the world.

According to the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) report of 2004, Lesotho has made progress in bringing down the number of undernourished people as a percentage of its total population, from 17 per cent in 1990-2, 14 per cent by 1995-7, to only 12 per cent by 2000-2. As the overall numbers of undernourished are increasing in Sub-Saharan Africa, partly caused by the impact of a large country such as the Democratic Republic

² The Lesotho MDG Progress report is currently finalized by UNDP and will provide more detailed information on progress made by Lesotho towards these universally set development goals.

of Congo, Lesotho together with other countries in the Southern Africa region such as Angola, Malawi and Mozambique are seen to have made improvements in overall food supply at the national level.

On deeper investigation though, there is much to be worried about when assessing the food and nutrition security situation of Lesotho. For instance, due to acute shortage of arable land (0.2 hectares per person), the mountainous terrain, overgrazing, population pressure, severe soil erosion and declining fertility, national crop production has been on the decline. Maize yields have fallen from 1400 kg per hectare, in the mid 70s to a current 450-500 kg per hectare (LVAC Report: 2004). As it stands, national production of food staples represents only 30 per cent of the total needs, leaving 70 per cent to be covered mostly through purchases. Although it is difficult to assess how much money exactly enters the country as remittances, it is clear that formal and informal money transfers from relatives in South Africa form a substantial part of the provision to purchase food. As retrenchment from the mines has brought back many Basotho men (as a migrant group highly vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS), it is assumed that different and new livelihood strategies are tried to obtain income, such as farm work and housekeeping by women in SA.

For the past three years, Lesotho has been included in the WFP Regional Emergency Operations (EMOP) that targeted around 600 000 beneficiaries in total. Lesotho has also been included in WFP's new so-called Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRRO), which recognises that the recurrent food crises in Southern Africa are largely an outcome of growing poverty and vulnerability, compounded by an increasingly uncertain and complex economic environment. Moreover, it acknowledges that the reduced capability of national institutions to provide social services, erosion of household assets, reduced crop production and opportunities for off-farm employment (especially important for Lesotho) aggravated by the high HIV/AIDS prevalence have lowered the capacity of households to withstand natural (climatic), and economic shocks (RVAC: 2004). WFP, under this PRRO, has been tasked to work closely together with other agencies to supplement their food aid with community services that help overcome some of the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability.

1.1 LESOTHO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Government of Lesotho is committed to enhance the lives of its citizens and has been responsible for the development of an enabling policy framework to facilitate programming under the umbrella of the Vision 2020 (2001) and the newly approved PRS (2004). The most relevant policies and strategies regarding food insecurity and vulnerability are: Agricultural Sector Strategy (2003), Policy on Subsidies in the Agricultural Sector (2003), National Irrigation Policy (2002), Food Security (currently being finalised), National Strategy for Food Security and Agricultural Development, Horizon 2015 (2003), National Plan of Action on Nutrition (1997), National Population Policy for Sustainable Development (2003), Health Sector Strategy, Health Sector Policy, National Anti-HIV/AIDS Policy (2000) and National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (2002-2005), Policy on Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (draft), Food Aid Policy (2000), National Disaster Management Act (1997), Draft National Employment Policy (2002), Statistics Act (2001), Trade and Industries Policies, and the Local Government Act (1997).

1.1.1 PRSP

The Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was approved by Cabinet at the end of 2004 and has built on a three-year consultative and participatory process involving communities and stakeholders nationwide. It offers the overarching framework for development between 2004 and 2007 under the next development objective:

"To provide a broad based improvement in the standard of welfare for the current Basotho, without compromising opportunities for future generations." (MoFDP: 2004, p. Xiii)

The PRSP has listed key priorities in eight priority areas and two-cross-cutting issues:

1. Employment creation
2. Agricultural production and food security
3. Infrastructure development
4. Deepening of democracy, governance, safety and security
5. Health care and social welfare improvement
6. Human resource capacity development
7. Management and conservation of the environment
8. public service delivery improvement

9. Combating HIV/AIDS and
10. Gender, youth and children

1.1.1.1 Poverty monitoring

A number of documents have come out in the past couple of years providing design and details on a national poverty monitoring framework or as they prefer to call it in Lesotho, the Poverty Monitoring Master Plan under the leadership of the PRS Secretariat (MoFDP), which is responsible for the overall implementation of the PRS. The draft Master Plan will provide the basis for monitoring and reporting on progress towards achieving the National Vision targets and the MDGs as they are related to the PRS performance indicators.

Under the draft Master Plan, a Poverty Monitoring Unit will be established that will be responsible for the following functions:

- Census, surveys and routine data analysis and interpretation (in close collaboration with the BOS, sectoral and district statistics units, NGOs, parastatals, etc.)
- Research and analysis (with macro-economic planners, CBL, BOS, Academic and research institutes, civil society, etc.)
- Advocacy and dissemination (towards the development of annual reports)

Under the draft Master Plan, the BOS will be commissioned to process all relevant district level data produced at district and community-level. It will further coordinate all sectoral data gathered by line ministries and establish a common databank for all indicators. This puts the BOS at the centre of information management. A National Statistical Council is considered to become operational to provide guidance in the required harmonization and standardization of surveys, definitions, indicators used to allow comprehensive analysis to take place.

In my discussions with the PRS Secretariat, it was not clear if this unit would be established soon. It seems that the current thinking is more in favour of giving the MoFDP, the responsibility of the poverty monitoring *function*, moving away from the concept of a small dedicated unit, responsible for impact monitoring. In the latest draft of the document, the establishment of an autonomous agency for public policy research and analysis dealing with multi-dimensional topics is not considered at all. The consultant was told that the BOS and the individual line ministries would be given the core responsibility of the monitoring function, providing all the information required on the different levels of input, output, outcome and impact monitoring. This calls for a strengthening of the individual M&E functions within the relevant units (Policy & Planning) of line ministries.

It is widely recognised that the PRSP process offers a unique chance to incorporate chronic food insecurity and nutrition indicators as so-called poverty monitoring intermediate and/or final outcome indicators into the poverty monitoring framework. As the PRSP has just been approved by Cabinet, it is expected that these inter-linkages between poverty and food availability, stability, access and utilization will be readily analysed.

1.1.2 Food Security Policy

In October 2004, a four member consultancy team started with the preparations to formulate a Food Security Policy under the guidance of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. The team produced a Diagnostic Report in December that was discussed during a broad stakeholder consultation. This report identifies and discusses the problems, trends and responses to food and nutrition security in Lesotho. Based on these inputs the team has now almost finalised a first draft of the policy, which has been presented to a stakeholder consultation on 9 and 10 March. It is expected that the Policy will be used as a strong awareness building tool to convince stakeholders that food security encompasses more than just agriculture. The MoAFS was pleased that this Policy would give them the means to take their food security mandate seriously. It was encouraging to hear DPPA staff members talk about employment as a means of attaining food security. Again, accessibility is especially relevant to Lesotho, where only 30 per cent of food needs are covered by domestic crop production. Throughout the two missions, the consultant has worked closely with the Team, to develop a common understanding of what should be incorporated into the relevant sections of the policy. To be specific, the consultant has had inputs into the following relevant sections of the Policy:

- 3.4.1 Employment and Food Security
- 3.4.2.1 Assessments of Vulnerability to Food Insecurity

- 3.5.1 Food Security Information Systems
- 4.2 Institutional Framework: National Level
- 4.3 Institutional Framework: District Level (for more details, please read draft FS Policy)

Furthermore, the consultant facilitated the "Food Security Information System" working group during the first day of the workshop and discussed with stakeholders the most important data gaps, responsibility of the different sectoral information functions and the subsequent proposed changes to the institutional arrangements.

1.1.3 Decentralisation

As the first elections draw near for seats in Lesotho's district councils, it is evident that the decentralisation process has started in Lesotho. It receives important financial and technical support from GTZ, one of the larger donors in Lesotho. GTZ manages a 10 year (!) programme that has five components: coordination at national level, decentralisation and land, fiscal decentralization, community development and human resource management. In my interviews it has come across that effective decentralisation with actual budget responsibility for the districts and community councils is still a way away. Unfortunately, decentralization is not the strong vehicle for decentralised information management as is the case in some other countries (e.g. Malawi, Namibia, SA, etc.) This may become more important in about five years time from now.

It is against this background that the Government of Lesotho through its Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has asked for technical support in assessing its monitoring capacity and capability in the area of food insecurity and vulnerability to better inform its policy formulation and programming processes.

1.2 FIVIMS BACKGROUND

FIVIMS or "Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems" is an inter-agency initiative and an immediate follow-up to the World Food Summit in 1996 in support of the generation of more reliable information about geographic areas and particular population groups that suffer or are vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. The WFS Plan of Action (paragraph 4) states it as follows:

"It is necessary to target those people and areas suffering most from hunger and malnutrition and identify causes and take remedial action to improve the situation. A more complete, user-friendly source of information at all levels would enable this."³

Since 1997, the FIVIMS Secretariat has promoted the so-called FIVIMS initiative both globally and at country level. The Secretariat is housed in FAO (Rome), and works under the umbrella of an Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) constituting of UN agencies – e.g. WHO, UNICEF, UNDP; the World Bank; bilateral aid agencies and NGOs. The initiative has developed a set of principles that helps guide the collection, processing, storage, management, analysis, dissemination and utilization of data and information relevant to food insecurity and vulnerability. They apply universally and are promoted among government and non-government agencies alike, in order to promote the generation of well-analysed information that leads to evidence based decision-making. These FIVIMS principles can be summarized as follows:

- Identification and response to users' information needs
- Building on existing information systems and avoiding/reducing duplication
- Government ownership
- Emphasis on networking and information exchange
- Integration of household level analysis and gender disaggregated information into national and sub-national policy making and programming
- Recognition that needs differ across countries
- Promotion of institutional sustainability
- Promotion of cost effectiveness; and
- Appropriate use of new technologies⁴

An important goal of the FIVIMS initiative is to improve the monitoring of hunger and malnutrition indicators as a direct contribution to the goals set by the WFS and the Millennium Development Project. One of the most visible outputs produced under the FIVIMS umbrella is an annual report called "State of Food Insecurity in the World.

³ World Food Summit Plan of Action, 1996.

⁴ FIVIMS "Tips and Tools," Basic Concepts of FIVIMS, 2002

This FAO publication describes the annual progress made towards the WFS goals and also contains detailed country case studies, to provide interesting examples of programmes reducing under-nourishment and under-nutrition at national and sub-national level.

The FIVIMS Secretariat has been busiest in providing technical support to individual countries in order to improve the overall information management and strengthen the relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral components. So far, technical support has been provided to countries like Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam in Asia through the ASIA-FIVIMS project with financial support from the Government of Japan, and countries in Africa, such as Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mozambique, Kenya, Namibia and Senegal with financial assistance from the European Commission and the Government of the Royal Kingdom of the Netherlands (Verduijn: 2004).

It is worthwhile noting that in the Southern Africa region, FIVIMS IAWG partners in the region such as DFID, FEWS-NET, SCF-UK, WFP and FAO have provided support to the SADC Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR), and more specifically to the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC). The RVAC is seen as an excellent example taking these principles to heart and promoting them around the region, including Lesotho.

In a drive towards a fully operational management information system, a *national fivims* is broadly described as:

"A national fivims is based on national and sub-national information systems related to food insecurity and vulnerability already in existence, responds to the information needs of the different user groups within the country itself, and is operated and controlled by the country involved. It is country driven and user focused, designed in response to the needs of national decision-makers rather than imposed from outside."⁵

Moreover, the purpose of developing a comprehensive *national fivims* is to contribute to the reduction of food insecurity and vulnerability by increasing attention to food security issues, promoting better understanding of users' needs, improving data quality, helping to integrate and exchange information and promoting better use of information to improve action.⁶

The characteristics of a *national fivims* summarize very well the process that it calls for:

- It is supported by major public and private national and international stakeholders in the country.
- It provides answers to national food insecurity and vulnerability questions.
- It answers the basic questions of who is food insecure, where are they located, and why are they in this condition, in both chronic and transitory situations.
- It provides coordinated cross-sectoral coverage of all dimensions of nationally defined food insecurity and vulnerability problems.
- It produces "information products" that are used for action programmes to reduce food insecurity and vulnerability by providing useful information to those who decisions affecting resource allocation.
- It provides up-to-date information of sufficient quality to allow sufficient action to be taken at the appropriate time.
- It monitors progress towards meeting the goals of the World Food Summit and other national and international food security, poverty-reduction, or quality of life commitments⁷

In other words, the focus of the *national fivims* does not necessarily mean the creation of a large system or database incorporating all datasets available. It calls for a networking approach between key partners to assess the needs for, and bringing together data sets and information generated by information systems such as agriculture, health, land, water and climate, early warning, household food security and nutrition, markets, disaster management and mapping systems. Once these components are in place and operational the country can be said to be "FIVIMS-compliant".

⁵ FIVIMS Website (www.fivims.net)

⁶ FIVIMS "Tips and Tools," Basic Concepts of FIVIMS, 2002

⁷ *ibid.*

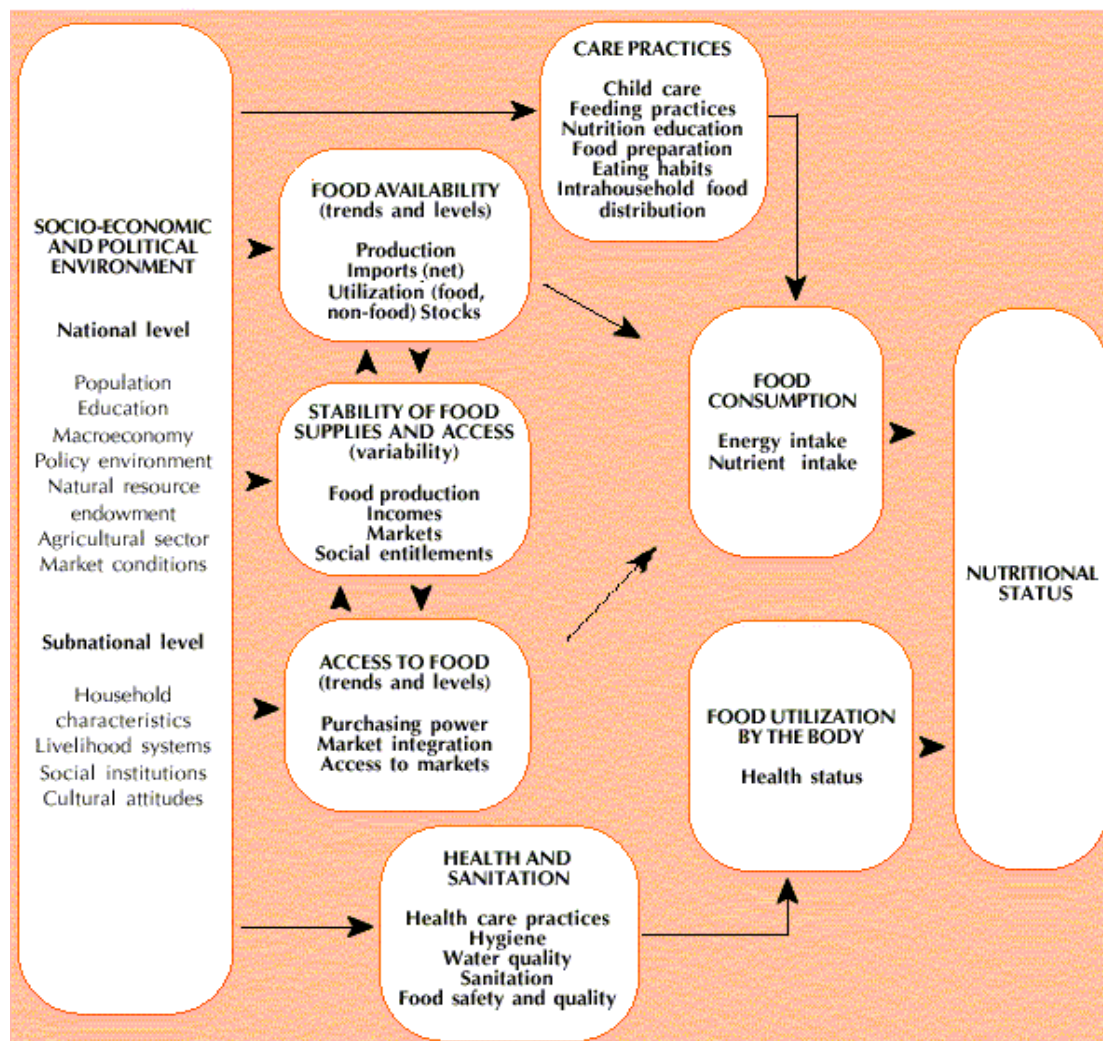
Based on its experience in assisting countries to strengthen their information management the following lessons have been learned:

- The analysis and utilization function of the information generated are generally weak. As a number of government and non-government agencies are active in collecting, processing, initial analysis (i.e. frequency tabulations) and vertical dissemination, there is often little time and resources to conduct more in-depth comparative analysis between different survey material.
- Little information about the characteristics of the most vulnerable population groups has so far been used in formulation of policies, strategies and action planning, as dissemination channels in use are considered as given. Other potential user groups to be considered would include the PRSP process, the UN System (Common Country Assessment and Database, and the UNDAF process), Parliament (annual budget reviews), the media and civil society.

1.2.1 FIVIMS Conceptual model and definitions

Since 1996, IAWG members have met once or twice a year to review the progress made by the initiative, to provide guidance to the Secretariat, and discuss a common conceptual model, bringing together different perceptions around concepts of food security and nutrition, to be used in promoting the initiative worldwide. Although this proved difficult, the following model presents the FIVIMS conceptual model (Figure 1) as agreed to by all IAWG members.

Figure 1: FIVIMS Conceptual model; a common understanding of possible causes of low food consumption and poor nutritional status.

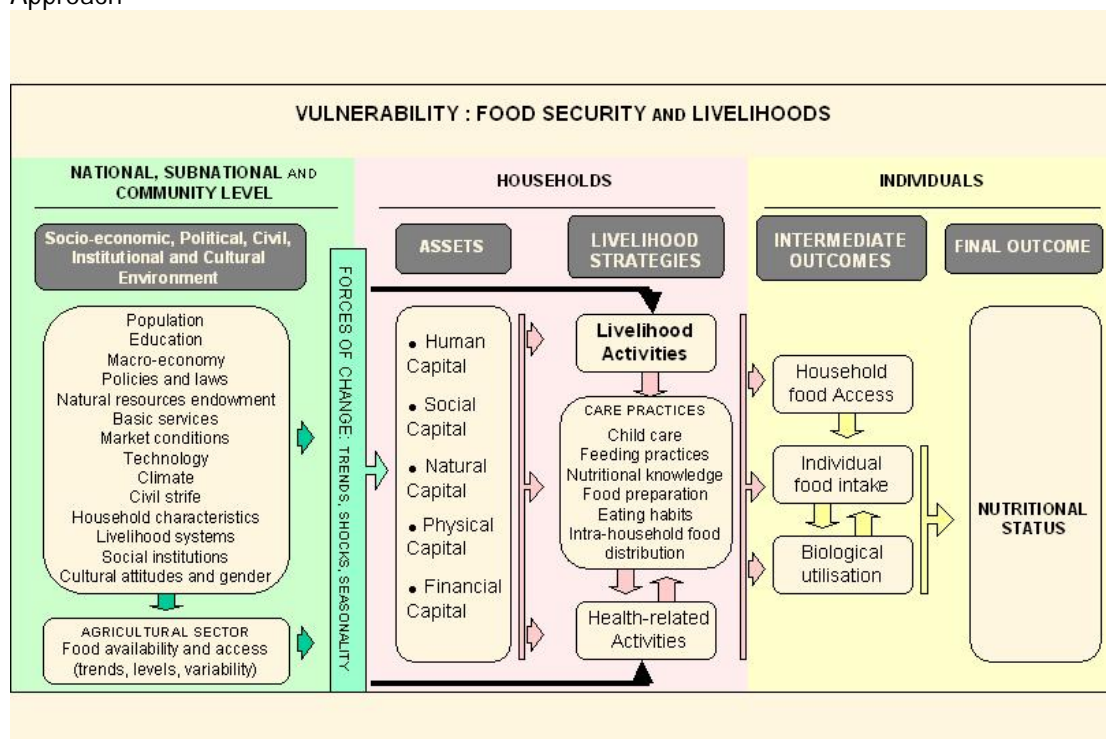


It presents food insecurity as a complex phenomenon, attributable to a range of factors that vary in importance across regions, countries and social groups, as well as over time. These factors can be grouped in four clusters representing potential vulnerability in the areas of the socio-economic and political environment; the performance of the food economy; care practices; and health and sanitation. Most importantly, it shows a common understanding of possible causes of low food consumption and poor nutritional status.

The FIVIMS conceptual framework covers both what is now often referred to *food security* and *nutrition security*. For instance, in the new Food Security Policy covers only part of the "utilisation" function (it stops short when safe and nutritious food reaches the mouth). It is expected that the newly proposed "Integrated Nutrition Policy" will focus on the second part, that is the actual utilization by the body.

Another conceptual framework that has been discussed at IAWG meetings incorporates the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) and is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Conceptual Model - incorporating Vulnerability, Food Security and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach



Source: FIVIMS IAWG Report 6, 2002

As organizations and agencies also use different definitions for food insecurity and vulnerability, the next definitions adopted by the IAWG on FIVIMS are presented below for your information and possible use.

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept at the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern.⁸

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and/or inadequate food utilization. Food-insecure people are those individuals whose food intake falls below their minimum calorie (energy) requirements, as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from an inadequate or unbalanced diet or from the body's inability to use food

⁸ FIVIMS Website www.fivims.net

effectively because of infection or disease. An alternative view would define the concept of food insecurity as referring only to the consequence of inadequate consumption of nutritious food, considering the physiological utilization of food by the body as being within the domain of nutrition and health.⁹

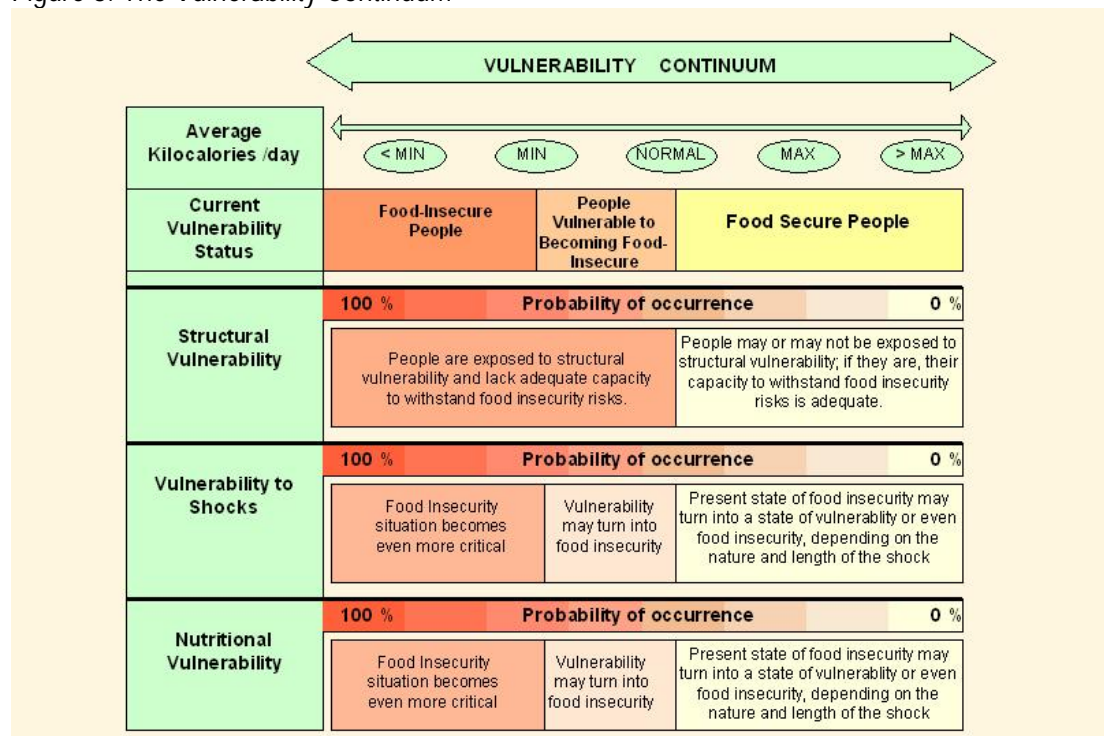
Nutrition security may be defined as a situation where all people at all times are able to utilise sufficient nutrients to live an active life. Food security is a necessary but not sufficient condition for nutrition security. This is because other factors, chiefly individual health, the levels of hygiene in the environment and the quality of care can interfere with the translation of food security into nutrition security (Marsland:2004).

Vulnerability to food insecurity refers to the full range of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure. The degree of vulnerability of individuals, households or groups of people is determined by their exposure to risk factors, and their ability to cope with or withstand stressful situations.¹⁰ Most agencies make a further distinction between structural vulnerability (long-term) and transitory or current vulnerability (short-term) to distinguish the different time dimensions involved.

Or in short: $Vulnerability = f [Risk\ exposure, Capacity\ to\ cope]$

As the divide between people who are food insecure and others who are vulnerable to become food insecure is not clear cut, the literature often speaks of the "vulnerability continuum" as presented in figure 3. The model should help stakeholders in Lesotho to provide an understanding of the differences between structural or chronic vulnerability and transitory or acute vulnerability. Already, this distinction points to different information components, and emphasize that monitoring vulnerability to shocks, as carried out by national early warning units or disaster management groups only provides one end of the continuum. This model is not complete as one would like to add obesity as a problem under the heading ">>MAX" Average Kilocalories/ day at the top right.

Figure 3: The Vulnerability Continuum



Source: IAWG Meeting 6, 2002

⁹ ibid
¹⁰ ibid.

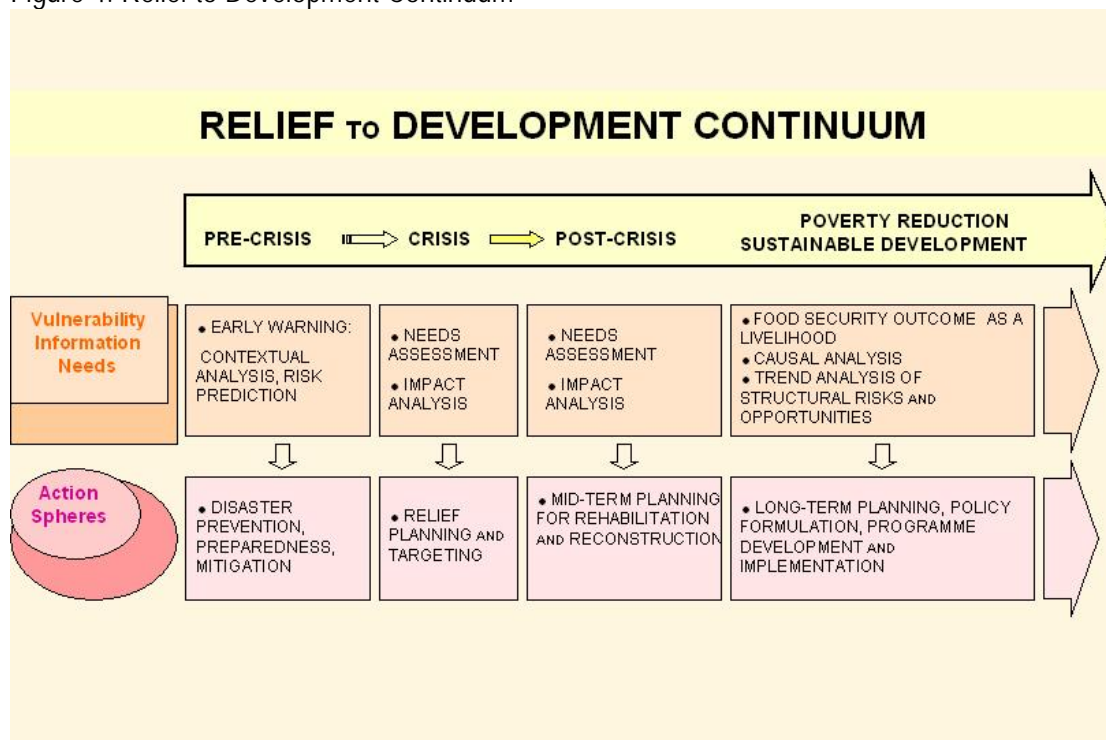
1.2.2 Development of a comprehensive national fivims in Lesotho

The development of a comprehensive *national fivims* in Lesotho would be based on the concepts presented above. Moreover, specific user requirements need to be identified which could include answers to the following questions. The following user requirements have been identified by the Department of Agriculture in South Africa as part of developing their *national fivims*:

- Who are the food insecure and where do they live?
 - What is the nature, frequency and degree of their food insecurity?
 - What is the nature of their livelihood systems and what kinds of constraints are they experiencing?
 - Who are the vulnerable and where are they are located?
 - What is the nature and degree of the risks that they face?
 - What is the nature of their coping strategies in response to these risks and how effective are they?
- (Drimie & Verduijn: 2004)

The list of requirements expressed above would require a two-pronged approach. First, a baseline would be needed, through expansion of existing relevant (spatial) databases. The information generated by the FIVIMS baseline would identify structural causes of vulnerability such as agro-ecological constraints for farming in rural areas or lack of assets and job opportunities in urban areas. The baseline would include food security and nutrition indicators which helps the country to monitor levels of food insecurity and malnutrition over time (including for PRS, MDGs, etc.). Secondly, one would need to review the existing early warning system run by the DMA-NEWU, LVAC, MoAFS, MET, etc., that focuses on recurrent climatic shocks, but include monitoring of economic shocks as well, i.e. oil price increases, international currency fluctuations, etc. that strongly impact on the markets on which most of the Basotho depend. These different functions can be easily identified in the "Relief to Development Continuum," as presented in Figure 4, which has been in use by practitioners since the early 1980s, when analysing the food crisis in Eastern Africa and formulating a comprehensive response to vulnerability (Verduijn: 2004).

Figure 4: Relief to Development Continuum



Source: FAO

From a regional perspective, between 2002 and 2003 the focus of vulnerability information needs have almost solely focused on the needs of the international humanitarian community to organize their relief planning and targeting of beneficiaries. This has meant that far less energy has been dedicated to the identification of chronic or structural problems with food insecurity and vulnerability. There is a large gap in the information management that needs attention if one wants to understand its underlying causes. It is expected that once both information components are in place, the GoL would have the proper mechanism to develop well-targeted interventions for specific geographic areas and vulnerable population groups.

The development of a baseline would help also help the GoL to monitor so-called output and impact-level monitoring indicators of one of the new policies, currently under formulation, i.e. the Food Security Policy. This baseline would also provide the foundation for monitoring progress of policies over time and indicators could be included that would help with international reporting duties as stipulated by the World Food Summit, Millennium Development Project (MDGs) and the SADC-Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP).

In short, the following tools can be identified as essential to develop:

- a structural/chronic food insecurity and vulnerability baseline.
- a comprehensive early warning monitoring system that covers all areas of food availability, access, stability and utilization.

CHAPTER 2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In short, this report is the result from the conduct of a so-called FIVIMS Assessment in Lesotho. The study has the following objectives:

- Develop a baseline assessment of relevant information and users. This includes stakeholder and participant mapping with regard to potential FIVIMS structure, linkages and activities, drawing on existing systems;
- Identify priority activities and needed resources;
- Ensure compatibility with the Lesotho policy framework, especially the PRSP and the new FS Policy.

The main outputs produced are:

- A preliminary report after the first part of the mission, which has been distributed to stakeholders for review. Comments were received from MoAFS and FAO;
- As the consultancy was closely linked to the Food Security Policy formulation process, the results from the FIVIMS mission were presented in the large stakeholder consultation where the draft Policy was presented and reviewed. More specifically, the results from the consultancy were presented to the relevant partners in one of the working groups dedicated to discuss food security information management.
- A final, revised report, that has incorporated the results from the discussions and meetings.
- Most importantly, recommendations to use LVAC as a local champion of *national fivims* in Lesotho have been incorporated into the FS Policy. In short, the proposed establishment of a separate FS Policy unit in the MoAFS, which will include a new established post for the LVAC chair, would make the monitoring of the Policy implementation, country-wide monitoring of the food insecurity and vulnerability situation, and conduct of special studies a much more viable and realistic exercise.

2.1 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Over a period of three weeks, the consultant collected quantitative and qualitative data from key informants in government and non-government agencies in Maseru, among others the MoAFS, MoHSW, MoFDP, FNCO, DMA, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, WB, DFID, GTZ, DCI, and CARE.

In more detail, the consultancy was divided into two parts (part 1: 2 weeks and part 2: 1 week with one week in between at home station). The first part was used for the assessment of relevant partners, policy framework, information system activities, and institutional structures and the write-up of a preliminary report. It must be noted that the consultant spent considerable time together with the Food Security Policy formulation team in order to harmonize the proposed actions under the information management function. In between missions, the consultant finalized the preliminary report, sent to relevant stakeholders for review and comments and further reviewed the relevant parts of the draft Food Security Policy. The second part of the mission concentrated almost fully on the large stakeholder meeting scheduled for 9-10 March, where the new FS Policy was presented and reviewed. The consultant contributed to sections that dealt with country wide food insecurity and vulnerability monitoring function and the function to monitoring progress made by the implementation of the Policy. Results from the FIVIMS mission were presented in a dedicated working group. Results of the mission and implications for the future were discussed during debriefing meetings between the consultant and the FAOR and MoAFS (DPPA). Upon return, the consultant incorporated newly received comments and suggestions from the workshop and debriefing into the final version of this report distributed the report to the FAO Representative in Lesotho for review and clearance.

The limitations of this study include the difficulty to reach a number of senior stakeholders in a relatively short period of two to three weeks, although full collaboration was given by most. Secondly, as the implications of assessing food insecurity and vulnerability information system activities are wide, it is almost impossible to spend sufficient time on each of the sectoral components (i.e. health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, agriculture, land, livestock, agro-met, etc.) and the constraints faced in collection, processing, analysing, dissemination and utilization, both at national and sub-national level. The mission was able to draw upon a report entitled "Assessment of Information System Activities relevant to Vulnerability Analysis in Lesotho" which was prepared by Mokhantso G. Makoae for the Lesotho VAC in June 2004, under the so-called "three-step consultation process" supported by the Regional VAC and funded by DFID. As the main elements of an inventory of relevant information systems were provided in this document, this report will focus on practical steps to help the implementation of its recommendations.

2.2 DEFINITIONS

As this study concerns itself with food and nutrition security and chronic and acute vulnerability the following definitions should clarify the main terminology used in the report.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity exists when people are undernourished as a result of the physical unavailability of food, their lack of social or economic access to adequate food, and/or inadequate food utilization. Food-insecure people are those individuals whose food intake falls below their minimum calorie (energy) requirements, as well as those who exhibit physical symptoms caused by energy and nutrient deficiencies resulting from an inadequate or unbalanced diet or from the body's inability to use food effectively because of infection or disease (FIVIMS Website: 2004).

Transitory versus Chronic food insecurity

Transitory food insecurity is temporary or seasonal and occurs during periods before harvest. It includes periods of shortfall resulting from natural disasters or other negative shocks. Chronic food insecurity is associated with long-term conditions such as poverty or complex emergencies like the current emergency "triple threat" in Southern Africa.

So, when we consider OVC, both concepts of food insecurity apply. First, long-term factors are in place because families with OVC are characterized by few or no productive assets, reduced consumption patterns, low dietary diversity and few or no seed stocks (as erosion of household assets is likely to continue).

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is the extent to which people are affected by adverse events and processes. Vulnerability is often misunderstood in terms of events rather than consequences of adverse events. People living in drought-prone areas are vulnerable not to drought as such, but to hunger induced by drought.

In general, there are three ways to address vulnerability:

- Reduce exposure to *adverse* events
- Reduce the *impact* to adverse event
- Reduce the harmful *consequences* of these events (WFP: 1995)

Vulnerability to food insecurity refers to the full range of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure. The degree of vulnerability of individuals, households or groups of people is determined by their exposure to risk factors, and their ability to cope with or withstand stressful situations. Further distinction can be drawn between structural vulnerability (long-term) and transitory or current vulnerability (short-term) to distinguish the different time dimensions involved (FIVIMS Website).

CHAPTER 3 DESCRIPTION OF MOST RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS

3.0 INTRODUCTION.

Most of the information generated in Lesotho relevant to the *fivims process* can be divided in a number of ways, namely national household surveys conducted by the BOS often supported by UN agencies and a number of donors, information generated through Line Ministries, governmental administrative information and sub-national household surveys in specific districts and locations, conducted by non-government agencies.

3.1 BUREAU OF STATISTICS (BOS)

Under the Statistics Act, enacted in 2001, the BOS plays a central role in Lesotho's National Statistical System, and is responsible for a programme of data management that include the Census (the fourth decennial population census of 1996, a new one scheduled for 2006; and a number of household surveys covering the main sectors including:

- the End Decade Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey or EMICS (2000) - supported by UNICEF;
- the Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (2002) - sponsored by the WB;
- the Demographic Survey (2001) - financed by UNFPA
- the Reproductive Health Survey (2002) – supported by UNFPA.

Other "home grown" surveys include the Annual Household Budget Survey (held in 1994 and 2002/3) and the Agricultural Production Surveys (held annually). To date no data from a comprehensive Demographic Health Survey or DHS is available for Lesotho. The first results from a recently conducted DHS-survey (2004) are expected to be published in 2005. Finally, a Labour Survey is scheduled for 2007, after earlier ones have been conducted in 1997, 1999 and 2001.

The BOS is responsible for the Agricultural Production Survey (APS) that collects agricultural variables that are subject to frequent and seasonal changes. Data collected each year include:

- Crop and area: area planted during two seasons, area harvested and production through randomly selected sample surveys. Additional information (e.g. use of seeds, fertilizer) is collected through interviews.
- Livestock: Information covers number of cattle, goats, etc.

All the appropriate information is included in the annual Agricultural Situation Report, which is put together by the BOS and the Department of Livestock Services and the Department of Crops of MoAFS.

In close collaboration with MoAFS and NEWU, the BOS also conducts a crop forecasting survey in April and estimates final production figures in June when crops are ready to harvest.

It has been discussed by a number of stakeholders that the BOS should take a central interest in the design a comprehensive national survey framework, which would centre around a core national socio-economic household

survey, which would be conducted regularly, to which individual sectoral components could be added based upon request. This would harmonize the current infrequent collection dates and allow for conduct of proper time series for key socio-economic data. This activity has received even further significance with the central role assigned to the BOS to supervise the poverty monitoring functions under the Lesotho PRS. The GoL receives support from the UN Country Team (UNCT), in this respect after receiving a request from the Minister of Finance and Development Planning to assist the BOS and other components of the National Statistical System with the establishment of a Poverty Monitoring System (Letsela: 2002). More specifically, under the PRSP framework, a subcommittee has been established called the "Poverty Monitoring sub-group," consisting of government, development partners, private and parastatal members that:

- supports standardization of statistical systems functions in the country
- advise on technical matters concerning the implementation of the PRSP
- support the establishment of the Poverty Monitoring Unit

It must be noted that capacity is critical for this expanded mandate for the BOS. Although a number of donors (e.g. EU) have stepped in to improve capacity in BOS, the attractive salary climate in South Africa is an important pull factor for skilled Basotho personnel.

3.2 MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE (MOHSW)

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare plays an important part in the generation of data sets/ analysed information to be used in the *fivims* process as a person needs a healthy body to digest and utilise all the food that goes through the mouth. The Ministry is responsible for the monitoring of diseases and under-five growth monitoring through monthly reports submitted by all health facilities in the country. Data on HIV/AIDS is collected at a few sentinel sites only. The current Lesotho health management information system (HMIS) does not produce timely and reliable data. The EU is currently involved to improve to the system. Weaknesses identified include:

- data collected is only from health facilities, no household monitoring is conducted at present.
- too many indicators are collected, making the work a burden for facilities, reducing quality of information collected.
- all forms from health posts, district hospitals, health service areas are sent to HQ for processing and analysis, which creates a vast backlog for the few staff at the Statistics unit. This prevents regular reporting at central level and almost as important, prevents proper feed-back to the lower levels.
- There is little attention to conduct intra- and inter-sectoral analysis for a proper understanding of health issues (e.g. links to income, medical services used by Basotho in SA, etc.).

Under the National Plan of Action for Nutrition, the Ministry has aimed at improving nutritional status of vulnerable groups, targeting of most vulnerable members of society (young children, pregnant and lactating women, PLWHA, etc.) at the household level. MoHSW works under the coordination of the FNCO on issues related to nutrition.

The MOHSS is also responsible for the HIV Sentinel Surveillance System in Lesotho. Monitoring is carried out in 6 out of 18 Health Service Areas (HAS) and therefore does not yet provide a comprehensive picture of the problems found around the country. Moreover, the sample size used is low, which also prevents a solid base for analysis. Finally, there are information gaps due to disruptions in surveillance from 1997-1999 (Makoe:2004).

3.3 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY (MOAFS)

Most of the annual agricultural surveys are conducted together with the BOS, who takes responsibility of most activities. As stated earlier, findings on from the Agricultural Production Surveys and other sources are fed into a annual Agricultural Situation Report. MoAFS extension workers usually play an important role in the collection of data. Various sources have mentioned that monitoring the agricultural and livestock situation is not a priority for them due to limited technical capacity and resources that restrict movements and conduct of proper assessments. Moreover, the main focus of the crop monitoring is still on staple foods, rather than cash crops and legumes and livestock.

The Department of Marketing would be asked to monitor price development of animal sales and show price trends of livestock and feed/fodder. Another deficiency is the lack of monitoring livestock diseases, which seems crucial in a country where livestock plays such a vital role, as provider of food and cash and as a cultural status

symbol. As livestock falls under the traditional leadership, local chiefs maintain records on livestock death rates and sales in their areas. This so-called *mabeis* is not utilised at present and could fill an important gap in monitoring the status of livestock, and the people who depend on it for their livelihoods.

In the past year there has also been confusion of the projected crop estimates in Lesotho. As different methodologies were used in crop estimates by MoAFS, BOS, LVAC and CFSAM (FAO/WFP) this has confused the users to some great extent. Work has been ongoing to rectify this, especially between estimates used by LVAC and CFSAM.

The MoAFS hosts the remains of another interesting project, called SADC FANR Food Security Data Management and Analytical project that recently ended. With support from this project based in Harare, the Statistics unit in DPPA still maintains a more or less operational database containing the following basic indicators: crops, livestock, agronomic data, crop management and phenological calendar, prices, agro-meteorology and hydrology, agro systems and environmental hazards, and nutrition indicators. The crop management and phenological calendar are produced by the Department of Crops. Usually, this project is run by the NEWU but as the NEWU sits under DMA, the project has been located in DPPA.

3.4 FOOD AND NUTRITION COORDINATION OFFICE (FNCO) - OPM

FNCO is responsible for the coordinated implementation of the National Nutrition Surveillance System (NNSS). It chairs the Nutrition Surveillance Task Force that includes MoHSW-HPSU, MoHSW-FHD, MoAFS-Nutrition, WHO, BOS, Ireland AID, MOE-School Feeding Unit, MOE-ECCD, World Vision, NHTC-General Nursing and Meteorology, WFP and DMA. The NNSS receives major technical and financial support from UNICEF. It started as a new impetus was received to strengthen household food security and nutrition monitoring in Lesotho with the famine of 2002. By the end of 2002, a national malnutrition prevalence study was undertaken in all 10 districts to provide a statistically representative sample of children under the age of 5 years old. This served as a baseline for the phased introduction of a new national surveillance system, starting with the most vulnerable districts. The NNSS covers 4 districts and is anticipated to cover another 6 districts by end of 2005 to provide national coverage. The NNSS should generate quarterly reports called "Food and Nutrition Bulletin" that present the following indicators: rainfall patterns, retail prices of basic commodities, school attendance at sentinel sites, measles immunization coverage, incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, growth monitoring (underweight), admissions and deaths to malnutrition and incidence of low birth weight. So far one quarterly report has been published. Reasons provided by those involved are mostly related to capacity problems.

3.5 DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY Trade and Marketing (Agricultural produce)

The Market Information Service contributes to the national early warning function under NEWU and LVAC. Coverage include the following topics:

- Economic indicators - Central Bank of Lesotho (exchange rate, inflation, etc.)
- Cereal imports and export volumes – Lesotho Flour Mills
- Local cereal producer prices and import parities - Maseru Roller Mills
- Wholesale meat prices – Maluti Abattoir
- Production, producer prices and import and export volumes of dairy

The above information is disseminated through the production of:

- A quarterly bulletin: trends in prices of agricultural products and economic indicators
- Two-weekly newsletter on main horticultural crops and meat prices
- A bi-annual Marketing Agricultural Statistics Report: advise on the business of changes in price, production, etc.
- Radio programmes, twice - weekly prices major products.

3.6 DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (DMA) - OPM

Within the DMA there are two units that are crucial to the development of a comprehensive *national fivims* in NEWU and the LVAC.

The NEWU coordinates the National Early Warning System (NEWS) in Lesotho. This includes:

- NEWU, as the main coordinating section under DMA: prepares regular and ad-hoc reports. Currently no regular monthly reports are produced that provide updates on the crop situation.
- Agro-meteorological section (Agro-met), located in the Lesotho Meteorological Department: collection, provides weather and climate services, including advice on agro-meteorological forecasts for crop stage and condition.
- Agricultural statistics section (Agrostat) located in the Bureau of Statistics of the MoFDP: provides planted area estimates, data on availability and utilization of cereals at the household level, carries out the cob-measurement exercise for crop production forecasts and final estimates of cereal harvest.

As a number of experienced staff members have left, the NEWU is left with new staff that needs training to undertake their tasks assigned to them. General capacity is low and the consultant was informed by a number of key informants that the NEWU under the umbrella of the DMA, did not have readily access to the MoAFS extension workers who should play a major role in monitoring the agricultural and livestock situation. It is anticipated that the arrival of FEWS-NET and anticipated support the NEWU in Lesotho should provide at least a lifeline for the unit to undertake their basic functions.

3.7 LESOTHO VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (LVAC)

The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee is a multi stakeholder cross-sectoral committee, informally placed under the wings of DMA as a result of the food crisis, that has gained importance over the past years as it addressed substantial existing data gaps on food needs in the country. Its annual Vulnerability Assessment provide details on the food deficit (in kilocalories) perceived by the "poor", "middle" and "better-off" households in six "food economy" or livelihood zones in the country. The LVAC uses the Household Economy Approach (HEA) and its associated software package Risk Map. The approach seeks to identify the main sources of food and income, and the main categories of expenditure for each of the wealth groups in a "normal" year which are quantified (food in terms of kilocalories, income and expenditure in cash terms). Then, the impact of shocks, taking into account coping mechanisms and capacity to withstand the shocks are calculated on food access (Marsland: 2004). It is an important change from the earlier focus on food production and central to the reality that the majority of the Basotho, especially the poorer segments of the population, purchase food rather than grow it themselves.

The LVAC, chaired by a civil servant from the MoAFS, and supported by a full-time Technical Assistant (TA) operates under the overall umbrella of the SADC-FANR Regional VAC and receives technical support from the collaborating partners (SADC-FANR, FAO, FEWS-NET, SCF and WFP) and receives its main source of funding from DFID. The Regional VAC was established in 1999 by the SADC-FANR Development Unit Director and is comprised of regional and international professionals working at the regional level to enhance food security and livelihood conditions within SADC member states (RVAC: 2003).

In discussions with different stakeholders, including the UN agencies, it became clear that the results from LVAC's annual VA reports have played a vital role in the budget allocation for emergency support to the most vulnerable groups in the country. As donors and UN agencies are also primary users of the information produced, it is expected that they will part-fund future LVAC activities as well. Important success was achieved in 2004 when the WFP/FAO Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission (CFSAM) started using information on food deficits generated by the LVAC, which stopped the confusion of earlier year by publishing conflicting results. Despite these successes, the LVAC has weaknesses as well. The biggest one seems to be the informal nature of the committee which does not provide time assigned to all civil servants involved. This prevents necessary time available to undertake comprehensive analysis of the data sets, and most of all, the generation of regular monthly bulletins, that provide a summary of the food insecurity situation in the country. Once the LVAC would become a formal committee, with the established post for its chair, it is expected that the LVAC could play a crucial role in the information management of food insecurity and vulnerability.

An indication of the broad use of information generated by the LVAC is that they have been granted to participate in one of the PRS working groups, i.e. the poverty monitoring sub-group, to contribute to a better understanding

of poverty and contribute to further in-depth sub-national information/ indicators that can be used in the poverty monitoring master plan.

3.8 WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

WFP is an important stakeholder as it is involved in data collection, processing and analysis and at the same time is one of the biggest users of the information generated to help with targeting of large number of food aid beneficiaries. WFP conducts three main surveys for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The first is the monitoring of the outputs and provides an immediate answer to the question if the food has reached the intended beneficiaries. The second one is the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM), which is a light monitoring system to assess the quality of targeting of households, problems with access to food, patterns in use of the food (e.g. intra-household distribution) and satisfaction with the type and quality of food received (WFP: 2003). Information is mainly collected through focus group discussions. In contrast to the PDM, the Community and Household Survey (CHS) also quantifies the outcomes of the food aid intervention. The CHS will be closely linked to the results from the VAC –assessments in the 6 EMOP countries. CHS indicators are a sub-set of the VAC and are designed to monitor if adverse livelihood status identified by the VAC have been reversed by the WFP intervention (WFP:2003).

As WFP has two staff members involved in the field of food insecurity and vulnerability (one in charge of the CHS, the other as VAM focal point) it is expected that WFP will play a substantial supportive role in the strengthening of the food insecurity and vulnerability function in Lesotho.

3.9 FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO)

The FAO Country Office in Maseru is not directly engaged in the generation of new information. It is nevertheless an important user of information to guide the targeting of their emergency programme to provide much needed agricultural inputs to assist vulnerable rural population groups in the country. At regional level, FAO is active on two levels, one that is responsible to coordinate emergency support to affected countries (RIACSO Johannesburg) and the other through regular technical support programmes coordinated from the FAO Sub-Regional Office in Harare. As one of the two parties involved with the Crop Food Supply Assessment Missions, FAO is in an excellent position to build on its annual experience gained during these assessments and provide technical assistance in the field of agricultural statistics, including crop and livestock assessments and the agricultural census. In this capacity, FAO has been one of the initiators of the NEWU several years ago. Finally, FAO is also involved with assisting individual countries with strengthening existing information system activities at national and sub-national level to better understand the nature and causes of chronic and acute food insecurity and vulnerability, as the Secretariat to the inter-agency working group on FIVIMS is based in FAO's HQ (Rome).

3.10 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

As chair of the UNCT it is one of UNDP's main priorities to strengthen partnerships between Government, Development Partners and Civil Society. UNDP also plays an important role in the poverty information management process, which closely relates to food insecurity and vulnerability monitoring. For one, UNDP is responsible to guide and monitor the implementation of a common UN Development Framework or UNDAF, which holds together various (joint-) activities by the individual Agencies and Programmes. The UNDAF is based on a situation analysis or Common Country Analysis (CCA), which is updated every three to five years. Within this framework, one of the priorities identified is the monitoring of the MDGs set by the GoL and assisting the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning with the development of a national poverty monitoring framework. The latter mainly to overcome constraints that prevail in national capacities and improve existing policies, monitor progress of the Policy itself and improve targeting of interventions (UNDP: 2002). It is under this overall umbrella that the implementation of national programmes and projects will be monitored, including the ones related to food insecurity and vulnerability. An important ongoing UNDP project is entitled: "Institutional Capacity Building for Poverty Monitoring in Lesotho", which started in 2002 and will end in 2005. A follow-up project is envisaged as the objectives were not fully met, as there were delays in approving the PRS by Cabinet. The main project activities include the establishment of a poverty monitoring system, finalization of a MDG Progress Report for Lesotho (to be published in March 2005), and preparation of a comprehensive household based survey as one of the core monitoring tools for the PMS. It is within the context that UNDP provides important inputs to the Poverty Monitoring Sub-Group, one of the working groups established under the PRS Secretariat (MoFDP).

UNDP has also taken the lead in a UN joint-programme towards the establishment of a common country database, together with other UN agencies based on contributions from BOS. Once established under the guardianship of BOS, this core socio-economic database, accessible to all through a website portal, should greatly improve the accessibility to this important information by different user groups ranging from ministries, NGOs, researchers, CBOs, etc. UNICEF and WB have already made a start with the creation of such a comprehensive data repository as they have financially supported some of the major national household surveys (e.g. MICS and CWIQ). It is expected that relevant data sets on food production, access, stability and utilization would be incorporated under the headings of the relevant MDG Goals, therefore creating a more valuable resource for sub-national data. The key indicators selected for monitoring the MDGs would certainly make a good start for such a common country database. It is anticipated that this will form a key source for analysis on food insecurity and vulnerability in future.

Finally, another interesting project related to the above is a project designed to build technical capacity of community structures and District Planning Units (MoLG and MoFDP). It is anticipated that the trend to decentralise important parts of decision-making to district and possibly village level will give an new impetus to the strengthening of information management, with information being collected, processed, analysed AND used at the local level. Large capacity building programmes like these will be needed to make this a reality.

3.11 UNICEF

UNICEF has supported the MOHSS and FNCO to improve the health and nutrition data management especially relevant to children and women. UNICEF further supported the 1996 Population Census, the 1996 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and the End-Decade Multiple Cluster Survey (EMICS) in 2000.

3.12 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

WHO is responsible for support to the MOHSS and FNCO in monitoring communicable and non-communicable diseases at the service providing health care facilities. These include among others Tuberculosis, Dysentery, Typhoid, Typhus, Protein Energy Malnutrition, Maternal Diseases and HIV/AIDS.

WHO also supports the National Rural Sanitation Programme (NRSP), that has made a lot of progress in the past years (see Table 1: Millennium Development Goals and Indicators relevant to Food and Nutrition Security in Lesotho). The NRSP has helped communities and schools construct ventilated improved pit latrines. It also conducts regular checks on the water quality.

3.13 FAMINE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM – NETWORK (FEWS-NET)

FEWS-Net are among the most important programmes involved in Africa to support National Early Warning Systems. In many countries, where the government-owned NEWU has resource limitations, FEWS-NET officers provide support and take part- responsibility in producing regular early warning bulletins. From a predominantly focus on monitoring of main staple crops, this has been diversified and focus now around a comprehensive approach that include food access, including a in-depth of acute and chronic vulnerability in rural and urban areas. Recently, the programme has recruited an officer that deals with Lesotho on a part-time basis. It is expected that FEWS-NET will provide a much needed impetus to the LVAC process, and in particular to the NEWU, under the DMA.

3.14 CARE

As one of the few active international NGOs in Lesotho, CARE plays a major role in addressing vulnerability to rural livelihoods. CARE is an innovator in the sense that they have enhanced the understanding of livelihoods and the complex interaction between micro (community), meso (local government) and macro (national and regional) using an action/research approach. This is emphasized through the research component established under the Livelihoods Recovery through Agriculture Programme (LRAP). LRAP is a member of the LVAC. It must be noted that CARE commissions substantial parts of work to Sechaba Consultants.

3.15 SECHABA CONSULTANTS

Well-established consultancy firm involved with socio-economic research in the areas of poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability and livelihoods research. One of the main outputs from Sechaba include the time series on national poverty analysis and livelihoods (1993, ..., 1999/2000).

In 2002, CARE asked Sechaba to prepare a user-friendly collection of SPSS system files on household surveys, conducted in Lesotho and relevant to the agricultural sector. Dr John Gray collected data from 23 sources dating back to 1975, and include surveys from Sechaba Consultants, BOS, UNICEF, CARE, Catholic Relief Services and the Ministry of Agriculture. This data source can be used for analysis of longitudinal time-series. Sechaba has made this data set public and no charge will be asked for access to it.

3.16 NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Relevant sections are Research Institute, Schools of Agriculture, Health Sciences, Sociology, Social Work & Development Studies. At the moment, only a few of these are involved with the analysis of the multidimensional aspects of food insecurity and vulnerability. Only a few university staff are members of the LVAC.

The University could play a critical role in raising the generally low analytical capacity to analyse food insecurity and vulnerability problems in the country. They could develop new and tailor-made curricula that would fill the technical needs in the field. Currently, the school of agriculture focus mostly on skill training in agricultural early warning. This needs to be complimented by other programmes/ curricula that bring in the broader perspectives around the multidimensional aspects of food insecurity and vulnerability, not focusing on climate shocks alone but to economic ones as well that affect accessibility or affordability.¹¹ A large impetus from the university staff and students is possibly too much to ask for in the short term as few Masters' students are taught in the university, who would have the skills for instance to use quantitative methods to focus more in-depth on particular topics.

3.17 DISCUSSION

From the assessment above, it follows that most of the monitoring functions performed in the area of food insecurity and vulnerability have a short-term focus. Little is done under the longer-term focus where food security and nutrition are monitored as an outcome indicator of poverty. The same can be said for the middle ground or "heart land" which should guide the analysis for the root causes of food insecurity and vulnerability, whether it is availability, access, stability and/or utilisation. These underlying factors would be essential to improve the current design of appropriate interventions. This type of monitoring falls clearly under the responsibility of the MoAFS, but is not yet fully exploited. This is further highlighted in the following table.

Table 2: Vulnerability and corresponding monitoring functions and institutional set up

Vulnerability focus	<i>Acute/ Short-term</i>	<i>"Heartland"</i>	<i>Chronic/ Long-term</i>
Monitoring Function	Early Warning	FIV monitoring	Poverty Monitoring
Units responsible	BOS, NEWU, MET, LVAC	LVAC	PMU
Type of vulnerability	Vulnerability to different shocks (natural/ man-made) forecast of implications on FS situation	Vulnerability to Food Insecurity under broad definition (incl. food access, livelihoods, etc.)	Broad definition: human vulnerability (incl. food insecurity health, poverty, physical insecurity, violence, etc.)
Institutional set up	DMA	MoAFS	MoFDP

¹¹ FIVIMS-ZA Consortium:

As a consortium of universities and research institutes are involved with a pilot project developing a comprehensive *national fivims* in South Africa, it is a possibility that when the need arises Lesotho could use the expertise available next door for assistance in the comprehensive analysis of data sets and/or training of students and junior and senior government staff members in the identified and prioritised technical areas of deficiency.

The Food Security Policy formulation process has provided an excellent opportunity for the MoAFS to take serious its food security mandate, and focus on all three dimensions. Once these dimensions are more completely covered by the MoAFS and its partners, the whole exercise to improve the networking of functional sectoral information components into a comprehensive *national fivims* in Lesotho would have made substantial progress. Again, recommendations have been made in the Policy as to how to capacitate the MoAFS and the LVAC in this regard.

CHAPTER 4 DATA GAPS

In the identified data sources, the following data gaps have been identified¹². Note that most of the gaps are focussing on early warning.

Vulnerability

- Lack of understanding of chronic food insecurity and vulnerability
- Although predictive function of future vulnerability to food insecurity is monitored through LVAC members, no regular comprehensive monthly bulletin is produced.

Crops

- ratio of arable land cultivated each year is missing.
- MoAFS and BOS give at times conflicting data at district level.
- Monitoring falls short at district level due to lack of financial resources and training of staff.
- Inconsistency of information from different sources (FAO, Crops Department - MoAFS and BOS) using different methodologies.

Livestock

- Gaps in livestock assessments, no information on livestock and livestock fodder prices
- Gaps in monitoring livestock production, including disease surveillance, range conditions, and market prices vis-à-vis RSA

Marketing

- Sales data considered are from auctions only, rather than include village sales (chiefs accounts)
- Price trends are not available for all agricultural inputs, cash crops, foods etc.

Health

- Bulletins are not available, new bulletin is too technical
- Information is outdated upon publication
- Reporting lines between levels are not functional.

HIV/AIDS

- HIV/AIDS surveillance is conducted in six districts only and at few sentinel sites.

Nutrition

- nutrition surveillance is conducted in four districts only and has no national coverage.

In general, few of the sub-national sectoral monitoring systems seem to be fully operational in Lesotho, that is providing timely and quality information and has a substantive national coverage. One major consideration is the lack of coordination and communication between the different levels, i.e. the central role played by the national ministries in processing and analysing data versus the data collection at (sub-) district level. There is a clear lack of results due to lack of financial resources for transport and technical know-how among government staff members.

¹² Please note that this report has drawn from an LVAC stakeholders' consultation organized on 31 March 2004 in Maseru, prepared by Mokhantso Makoae.

CHAPTER 5 FIVIMS BASELINE

For establishing a food insecurity and vulnerability baseline one should include indicators from the following surveys:

Population:

- Census (1996)
- Demographic Survey (2001)

Macro-economy

- Annual Reports Central Bank of Lesotho

Socio-economic status:

- Household Income and Expenditure Survey (1994/5)
- Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (2002)
- Livelihood Based Vulnerability Baseline (2003)

Health-HIV/AIDS

- Demographic Health Survey (to be completed in 2005)
- HIV Sentinel Survey (2003)
- Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (2000)
- Reproductive Health Survey (2002)

Nutrition

- Demographic Health Survey (2005)

Agriculture

- Decennial Agricultural Census (1999/2000)

Although the surveys are not conveniently bundled around a common one or two year time period, a baseline could be established nonetheless. It is possible that a substantial update of the baseline can be expected in 2006 when results from the first comprehensive DHS will be available and when the next population census will be held. It would be favourable if another HIES or CWIQ would be conducted around the same year, to allow access to full array of socio-economic data under the baseline. This would provide the best possible base from which to monitor the impact and progress made by the action programmes derived from the PRS and the FS Policy.

Some agencies have already made a start with the building of a comprehensive national socio-economic baseline. One example constitutes UNICEF that has plans to build one on the basis of the Census of 1996, data derived from the two rounds of MICS and from the Demographic Survey (Letsela, a.o: 2002). Other initiatives include the "Live Database" sponsored by the WB, which was seen as a key starting point for the BOS (Letsela, a.o: 2002). It is expected that the UN Country Team (UNCT) will draw upon these initiatives to build a so-called "Common Country Database" based on "Dev-Info" software very similar to the "Child-Info" software in use by UNICEF. This CCD would improve the public's access to information keeping track of its progress made towards the implementation of the PRS, improve joint programming between UNCT members and would also be the right vehicle for a central repository for monitoring the MDGs.

Finally, possibly the biggest compounded data base, with household surveys extending from 1975 to 2001 is the has been built by John Gray for Sechaba Consultants. Indicators to be considered for such a comprehensive baseline are included in the following table 3.

Table 3: Data Requirement for the creation of a Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Baseline

Category of Information	Data Required	Data Sources and Availability	Comments
Background Information <i>National Level</i>	Population (numbers, growth rate, rural/urban split, etc.)	National Censuses,	
	GNP (per annum and per caput)	National accounts, National Bank of Lesotho, WB/IMF.	
	Macro-economy (structure and performance over time)	National & international economic reports, WB/IMF, including remittances	
	Natural Resources	Resource Surveys, Remote Sensing	
	Agricultural sector (structure, production, farming systems, employment)	Ag Census, Annual Agricultural Production Surveys, live	Data insufficient
	Other formal employment	national economic reports, etc.	
Background Information Sub-national level	Household Characteristics (size, structure, dependency ratio, fertility rates)	Censuses, Lesotho Demographic Survey, DHS, MICS,	
	Prevalent livelihood systems (by incidence, age and gender)	Censuses, HFEA studies, Livelihoods baselines, CARE studies, Household Budget Survey, Labour surveys, etc.	
Food Economy <i>National level</i>	Production (levels/trends by commodity, usage of commodities, annual surplus or deficit)	APS, Annual Agricultural Report	
	Trade (food imports/exports by commodity, inter-national food prices, foreign exchange earnings)	Agric. Stats., Trade Statistics	
	Food Aid	Food Aid Statistics	
	Food Consumption (food intake levels, expenditure on food, per caput food available)	DHS, EMICS?	Data Insufficient
	Food Security and Nutrition relevant Policies and Strategies	GoL Policy Documents	
Food Economy <i>Sub-national level</i>	Production by farming systems (levels and trends, percent consumed on farms)	AG Census, Ag Surveys, Ag. project reports (WB), FAO, livelihood baselines	Data Insufficient
	Food Markets (food market dependency, density of food markets)	?	Data Insufficient
	Food Consumption (composition of diet, by farming system, food use practices/expenditure)	Individual surveys	Data Insufficient

	Access to information (extent of agric./health/ education extension workers; access to modern communications systems)	Ministerial Records	
Nutrition and Health <i>National level</i>	Maternal mother and child health (Anthropometric indicators, immunization, mortality rates, malaria control, breastfeeding, diseases caused by micro-nutrient deficiencies, etc.)	DHS, HMIS, EMICS, Demographic Supplementary Survey	
	HIV/AIDS prevalence (by gender, age group)	DHS, the Lesotho Demographic Supplementary Survey	Data insufficient
	Water & sanitation and hygiene (Access to improved water and good sanitation)	EMICS	
	Care practises (child care, feeding practises, food preparation, eating habits)	Project studies ?	Data insufficient
Nutrition and Health <i>Sub-National level</i>	Maternal mother and child health (Anthropometric indicators, immunization, mortality rates, malaria control, breastfeeding, diseases caused by micro-nutrient deficiencies, etc)	DHS	Data insufficient
	HIV prevalence including knowledge of, use of contraceptives, incidence of STDs, etc)	the Lesotho Demographic Supplementary Survey and special studies	Data insufficient
	Water & sanitation and hygiene (Availability of safe water, latrines at school s and homes)	CHILD baseline and end-of project report, UNICEF baseline	
	Care practises (child care, feeding practises, food preparation, eating habits, intra-household distribution, etc)	special surveys UNICEF	Data insufficient
Food and Nutrition Early warning <i>National Level</i>	Prevalence and depth of under-nutrition (energy deficiency, food intake, micro-nutrient deficiency)	SOFI, DHS, NNSS	Data insufficient
	Nutritional status of Mother and Child (Vitamin-A deficiency, Weight for age and Anaemia)	HMIS, NNSS,	Data insufficient
	Production (level and instability)	Agricultural and Livestock statistics	Data insufficient
	Food stocks (national food security reserve policies)	National Statistics, Trade statistics	
	Food import dependency (food imports, Including aid as proportion of total imports, trends over time)	Trade Statistics, Import & Export	
	Purchasing Power (incomes and prices)	CPI, CWIQ	
Food and Nutrition Early warning <i>Sub-national Level</i>	Prevalence and depth of under-nutrition (energy deficiency, micro-nutrient deficiency, food intake)	EMICS, NNSS	Data Insufficient
	Prevalence and depth of under-nutrition (energy deficiency, food intake, micro-nutrient deficiency)	HMIS	
	Food consumption (food intake levels, conservation, food intake practices)	DHS, Food Needs surveys, nutrition studies	Data Insufficient
	Food production	Agricultural Survey, crop assessments, UNHS	Data insufficient

Livestock production, including disease surveillance, range conditions, and market prices vis-à-vis RSA	Livestock diseases surveillance in the region (SADC) records on livestock death rates and sales (<i>mabeis</i>)	Data insufficient
Rainfall level and variability	Weather Bulletin, Agro-MET	
Carrying capacity of land	Agro-ecological Zones and Environmental Profiles	
Condition of natural resource base	Environmental Profiles, Remote Sensing Data	
Incidence and severity of drought	Early Warning Bulletins	Data insufficient
Incidence and severity of pests	Early Warning Bulletins,	
Food self-sufficiency (proportion of food consumption from own production, gathering etc	DHS, HHBS	
Food storage (self-provisioning capacity, by food type and storage method)	?	Insufficient Data
Purchasing power (incomes and prices)	BOS, Consumer Price Index, CWIQ	Insufficient Data
Access to productive assets (land, credit) disaggregated by gender	Census, UNHS Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data
Household asset structure (durable and liquefiable assets)	Census, HHBS, CWIQ,	
Ownership of livestock (numbers/trends) by gender	Agricultural survey, Ag census,	Insufficient Data
Structure, conduct and performance of input and output markets, including prices	Market surveys	Insufficient Data

CHAPTER 6 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Although a number of inter-agency committees exist with a mandate covering different parts of food and nutrition insecurity and vulnerability (e.g. poverty, health and nutrition monitoring), the LVAC is so far the only one that has shown the potential to cover all monitoring functions (See table 2) through their livelihood-based analysis, bridging the short-term early warning function with the longer-term function to determine underlying causes. The LVAC is widely recognized as key to operationalize the poverty concept through its membership of the poverty monitoring sub-group. As the LVAC is eager to enter into the affiliated areas of health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS and analyse their relationship with food security, it is clear that the LVAC would be the “champion” in developing a comprehensive *national fivims* in Lesotho.

As there seems almost no limitations to the opportunities to the LVAC, it must be stated that the LVAC only conducts one annual survey to date. These annual vulnerability assessments depend much on the voluntary participation of its members, including the chair and the only incentive for its members are the daily allowances when conducting field work.

Therefore, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities, (i.e. improving country-wide monitoring of food availability, access, stability and utilisation; strengthening the monitoring of the PRS and FS Policy implementation) depends on finding an formal institutional home for the LVAC and its Chair, to allow monitoring to become a daily activity rather than an annual event. The LVAC currently resides under the DMA umbrella, but

with no official mandate. There are in essence three options for the placement of the LVAC, namely DMA-OPM, MoAFS and MoFDP. For a detailed analysis of the pro's and con's involved see next table.

Table 4: Options for the institutional placement of the LVAC

1. LVAC under DPPA	Pro's: (strengths and opportunities)	Con's: (weaknesses and constraints)
2. LVAC under MoFDP LVAC closely associated with PMU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LVAC's mandate corresponds well with the broadened mandate of the MoAFS, as expressed under the new FS Policy. - Together with the FSPU this forms a strong and exciting package to strengthen the DPPA in MoAFS, in particular strengthening the link between policy formulation, programming and M&E. The Ministry could use the established LVAC as a channel to access necessary data sets from other ministries/ agencies and NGOs to monitor the implementation of its FSP. - This would be in line with the ideas from the PRSP Secretariat to strengthen M&E sections in individual Line Ministries. - The Food Security Policy is a great opportunity for the Ministry to redirect some focus away from agriculture to broader FS issues. DPPA should be able to guide the LVAC should to provide a more comprehensive understanding of issues related to chronic and acute food insecurity and vulnerability, including special studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the Ministry is mostly focused on agriculture rather than FS, the focus of the policy may fail, as it encompasses much more than attention for agricultural production.
3. LVAC under DMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LVAC would be in a good position to work across sectors, easy to access cross-sectoral data sets with support from overarching ministry. - Easy access to senior policy/ decision makers. - LVAC would be under the same Ministry as BOS, giving it better access to data sets, and would be bale to set the larger agenda for data harmonization, etc. - Better coordination with BOS on broader harmonization of Statistical system in Lesotho 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role LVAC is really vulnerability to food insecurity rather than poverty monitoring for the long-term. This means an 180 degrees turn away from early warning orientation under DMA. - So far, LVAC has little to show for under umbrella on chronic food insecurity and vulnerability analysis. - Keeping the LVAC under MoFDP would prevent a formal linkage with the new Food Security Policy, not allowing a precious link between food security policy and monitoring its multiple dimensions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informally, LVAC already works under DMA - LVAC would continue to lead the work on short-term monitoring function (early warning) with close linkages to emergency support (FMU/WFP). - LVAC could be supportive of the NEWU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DMA is only concerned with early warning functions rather than with core monitoring and in-depth studies. - Keeping LVAC to DMA would prevent proper attention for broad focus on chronic food insecurity and vulnerability issues. - Keeping the LVAC under DMA would prevent a formal linkage with the new Food Security Policy, not allowing a precious link between food security policy and monitoring its multiple dimensions. - DMA has reduced access to senior government staff in non-emergency situations.

Once the LVAC would have been formalized, with an established post for the LVAC chair, and a TA for technical support the following can be expected:

- The LVAC Secretariat would be in apposition to become the champion of the *fivims* "process" in Lesotho

- The LVAC Secretariat could be given the responsibility for monitoring of/ reporting on relevant long-term goals as described in the Vision 2020, PRSP, MDGs, WFS, etc.
- In particular, the LVAC chair would be critical in linking chronic and acute food insecurity and vulnerability information to policy formulation processes and operationalization of the Policy into action plans, etc.
- Linkages between agencies under the LVAC for collaboration could further be formalized, including support to early warning function under DMA and poverty monitoring function under MoFDP (poverty monitoring sub-group).
- The Secretariat would become key in harnessing other LVAC members, including BOS, UNDP and others to improve ways to exchange data, harmonization of data sets, standardization of definitions, borders used in surveys, etc.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy framework

1. The new PRS framework forms the overall national coordination framework for poverty monitoring, harmonization and standardization of statistics in Lesotho. This sets the borders for food insecurity and vulnerability monitoring in Lesotho.
2. The Food Security Policy is expected to provide explicit guidelines for improvements to food insecurity and vulnerability information system activities in Lesotho, as it has incorporated main priority actions identified by this FIVIMS mission.

Data availability

3. There is sufficient information in Lesotho to develop a food insecurity and vulnerability baseline, although depth and quality of data is perceived as far from perfect.
4. Current information system activities focus on early warning functions only, and produce information used for emergency interventions.
5. Information system activities focussing on the underlying causes of food insecurity and vulnerability are only starting in Lesotho and can be captured under a so-called "livelihoods" umbrella or approach.
6. Priority should be given to the establishment of a food insecurity and vulnerability baseline to assist monitoring chronic food insecurity and vulnerability. The UN is expected to play a major role in building a comprehensive UN Common Country Database (monitoring MDG goals).
7. Further support along this line should be given to the BOS to establish a comprehensive socio-economic household survey repository that will provide the basis for poverty monitoring in the country. CARE/ Sechaba, holders of the John Gray data repository should be able to assist in populating this database.
8. As the quality of information produced by the relevant sectoral information components (e.g. crop forecasting, livestock (diseases) monitoring, labour statistics, market information systems, HMIS, HIV/AIDS surveillance and NNSS is far from perfect, a plan is needed to make substantial improvements in data management under the leadership and coordination of the BOS, together with the responsible line ministries supported by UN agencies and donors. It must be said that without quality information provided by the individual components, in-depth cross-sectoral analysis as aspired under the FIVIMS Initiative is impossible.

9. Institutional frameworkThe Lesotho VAC is central to the broadened scope of analysis of vulnerability to food insecurity and links to other relevant areas such as poverty, nutrition, health, HIV/AIDS, employment, etc.
10. It is therefore proposed that the LVAC finds a proper home in a government institution, with an expanded mandate which includes both early warning and longer-term monitoring (baseline), with a proper focus on livelihoods, conduct of special studies (links between poverty and food insecurity, role of remittances, etc.).
11. The formulation of the Food Security Policy provides a unique opportunity for the LVAC to become closely associated with the implementation and monitoring of a key government policy document. This would provide the much sought after formal existence and would allow for its focus to expand from early warning into more general monitoring functions.
12. There are three options to house the LVAC, namely within DMA, MoFDP or MoAFS. Initial discussions would imply the MoAFS as the preferred option, as it will firmly link the LVAC monitoring function information to the actual implementation of the FS policy. This would also strengthen the analytical capacity of the DPPA in MoAFS, which would allow a better response to information needs requested by the PRS Secretariat under the poverty monitoring master plan.
13. Altogether, when above considerations have been taken on board, the GoL will have made great strides towards establishing a comprehensive *national fivims* or in other words becoming "FIVIMS-compliant".

The above conclusions and recommendations have lead to the formulation of the next table that focuses on the operationalization of propositions made in this report. They include follow-up actions, timing and key stakeholders identified expected to take the lead in this activity.

Table 5: Follow-up actions proposed at the end of this consultancy

Follow-up Actions Proposed	Responsibility for Implementation	Timing
<p>1. Wide distribution of the report to build awareness of pertinence of problems with information on poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability in Lesotho</p>	<p>FAOR within Lesotho TCEO within region (e.g. RVAC and prospective donors such as EU, USAID, DFID, etc.</p>	<p>End of March 2005</p>
<p>2. Adoption of the Food Security Policy, with establishment of a Policy Unit responsible for the implementation of the Policy, with the creation of a post for the LVAC Chair.</p>	<p>MoAFS and other relevant Ministries.</p>	<p>June 2005</p>
<p>3. Establishment of the UN Common Country Database, starting with MDGs using Dev-Info software.</p>	<p>FAOR Lesotho at UNCT level, in close collaboration with UNDP who leads this process. TCEO/FIVIMS Secretariat/ESS seeking resources for technical support - 3 weeks consultancy, if possible locally recruited</p>	<p>Could start immediately, as this activity is part of the work plan of the UNCT.</p>
<p>4. Organization of a 2-day technical user-producer workshop on existing data gaps, missing links in information management, covering multiple sectors including poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability (agriculture, livestock, employment, markets, health, nutrition, water and sanitation). The workshop would start prioritising user needs in Lesotho.</p>	<p>FAOR Lesotho to follow-up with: - Poverty Monitoring Sub-group - PRS Secretariat - BOS - Donors</p> <p>The consultant should present findings of his consultancy</p>	<p>Timing is auspicious as the PRS Secretariat wants to make good progress with the adoption of the PM Master Plan. Tentative date mid-2005.</p>
<p>5. Adoption of the Poverty Monitoring Master Plan, setting out in detail monitoring responsibilities for BOS, Line Ministries and others</p>	<p>PRS Secretariat Poverty Monitoring sub-group (Line Ministries)</p>	<p>September 2005</p>
<p>6. Build repository of relevant data sets in MoAFS, to be used by LVAC. Consider using the SADC FANR Database Project dbase as the basis. Preferred data sets have been specified in table 3 in this document.</p>	<p>MoAFS, with two weeks support from consultant, possibly same as proposed under Action number 3.</p>	<p>Mid-2005</p>

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