

**Building Capacity of Community
Councils in Lesotho to Integrate
Climate Change Adaptation into
Development Plans**

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Building Capacity of Community Councils in Lesotho to Integrate Climate Change Adaptation into Development Plans

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1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) commissioned a project aimed at increasing capacity to protect livelihoods through adapting to and mitigating the effects arising from climate change in Lesotho. The UNTFHS Project focused on empowering the people who have been most severely affected by climate change induced drought in 13 communities in three of the most vulnerable agro-ecological zones of Lesotho. These target areas are the Southern Lowlands, Senqu River Valley and Mountain Agro-Ecological Zone. The UNTFHS Project included a number of components and the fifth component, which is the focus of this report, was:

- ❖ Decision makers and project beneficiaries have increased capacity to protect beneficiaries' livelihoods through adapting to and mitigating the effects arising from climate change in the target areas

This report outlines the outcomes and results of the project undertaken by the Institute of Natural Resources NPC (INR) and Serumula Development Association (SDA) to address this fifth component of the UNTFHS Project. The objective of the project was to develop capacity among Community Councils to empower them to integrate climate change adaptation into local development plans. The project activities undertaken to achieve this included:

- Developing material for climate change awareness raising and capacity building activities
- Developing guidelines for integrating climate change adaptation into development plans
- Facilitating a series of awareness raising and capacity building events across the target areas.

The project focussed on three Districts Councils and thirteen Community Councils, namely:

- a) Maseru District Council
 - Ratau Community Council (A02)
 - Mohlakeng Community Council (A05)
 - Lilala Community Council (A07)
 - Makhoarane Community Council (A08)
 - 'Makhoalipana Community Council (A10)
- b) Mafeteng District Council
 - Metsi-Maholo Community Council (E01)
 - Lehlakanaeng Community Council (E04)
 - Tšana-Talana Community Council (E06)
 - Qibing Community Council (E07)
- c) Mohale's Hoek District Council
 - Khoelenya Community Council (F03)
 - Lithipeng Community Council (F04)
 - Qhoasing Community Council (F06)
 - Senqunyane Community Council (F07)

The capacity building programme and materials developed for this project were informed by material from a number of sources:

- International best practice and literature on development of the training material, guidelines and tools. Key sources of information have included:

- OECD Policy Guidance (Integrating climate change adaptation into development co-operation developed by GIZ and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
- Lesotho Highlands Climate Change Adaptation Project (Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the INR)
- Reference to relevant material and literature that has already been developed for climate change risks and adaptation in Lesotho including:
 - Brochures and posters developed by UNDP Lesotho/UNTFHS and Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS)
- Consultation with specialists on the development of this material
 - Consultation with other implementers of UNTFHS Programme components, for example FAO and WFP

These materials were revised and refined by the project team to align with the terms of reference for this project, and to reflect the context and requirements of the target areas in Lesotho.

An overview of the training approach and a summary of the training materials and guidelines are presented in this report. Insight into the adaptation plans developed by the target Community Councils are also presented in this report, together with a short conclusion and recommendation on future activities.

2 OVERVIEW OF CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH

A three phased approach was applied to develop the capacity of target Community Councils to integrate climate change adaptation into development plans:

- a) Provide an introduction to climate change in Lesotho and the need for adaptation
- b) Introduce the role of policy and development planning in adapting to climate change
- c) Present the 4-step guideline for integrating adaptation into district and community plans

The capacity building approach was participatory based and recognised that the local knowledge the stakeholders themselves have is central to understanding the climate related challenges, and to the identification of appropriate adaptation activities and interventions. This practice oriented capacity building therefore incorporate active participation of the Council representatives in working groups, that were guided in applying their local knowledge and expertise to their own local contexts to undertake the planning exercises.

The first phase of the training programme, the introduction to climate change, addressed the following key issues:

- Climate change and anticipated impacts
- What is adaptation?
 - What are adaptation options?
 - Who is responsible and how?
- Vulnerability and the need for adaptation

The second phase, on the role of policy and planning in adaptation, covered the following two aspects:

- Role of national policies and plans and role players
- Role of district and community plans, projects and role players

The third phase, the 4-step guideline to incorporating adaptation into development plans, comprised a number of guidelines and tools that the councillors and other key stakeholders were trained to apply. This process comprised a series of presentations and interactive exercises through which the participants had the opportunity to apply their own local expertise to assess the *status quo*, climate change risks, and priority adaptation options. The four steps are:

- Step 1: Assessing current conditions and the need for adaptation action
This step provides guidelines and tools for assessing the status quo, analysing potential impacts of climate change, and defining the vulnerability and the need for adaptation action
- Step 2: Identifying adaptation options and priorities
This step provides guidelines and tools for selecting priority climate change vulnerabilities, and identifying the possible adaptation options and the main role players that will be crucial to implement the devised options
- Step 3: Selecting adaptation priorities for the adaptation plan
This step provides guidelines and tools for evaluating adaptation options for inclusion in development planning, so that the adaptation options selected are:
 - complementary elements to the rest of the development plan
 - meaningfully reduce climate change risks
 - are coherent with the priorities and practical constraints in the context of each district and community council
- Step 4: Monitoring and evaluating adaptation impacts
This step guides the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework that is used in development planning to:
 - Identifying indicators to measure if the adaptation measures are being implemented and achieving their desired results
 - strengthen capacity and identify key processes, functions and outcomes
 - provide information that helps to prepare effective implementation
 - foster learning and is critical to adaptive management

All the capacity building events were conducted in Sesotho. The details of these training activities, guidelines, tools and materials are presented in Section 3 of this report.

3 SUMMARY OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS

The training approach included a combination of presentations and interactive working sessions, and was based on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques where participants applied their local knowledge and expertise to inform and conduct the tasks incorporated into the capacity building process. The approach followed three phases:

- 1) An introduction to climate change and the need for adaptation
- 2) Understanding the role of policy and planning in adaptation
- 3) Integrating adaptation in development planning and district and community council levels

3.1 An introduction to climate change

This session included an introduction to three concepts relating to climate change and adaptation, and then one interaction session where participants explored issues of climate change in their local contexts. These activities included:

a) What is climate change and what are the anticipated local impacts?

This first step is critical as it provides the foundation of the capacity building and presents an overview what climate change is and a summary of the climate change projections for Lesotho including, for example, impacts to rainfall, temperature, extreme events etc.

b) What is adaptation

i. What are adaptation options?

This session explained that adaptation is not just about grassroots activities but includes a range of issues and role players, e.g.:

- Policy - To improve regulations, adjust incentive system, enhance participation of affected communities
- Infrastructure - For example improve climate-resilient infrastructure
- Capacity development - Improve community based monitoring of impacts and improve adaptive management skills
- Monitoring - Monitoring for policy, climate-resilient breeds, appropriate technologies
- Sustainable land use and livelihood practices - For example soil conservation, improve agricultural yields, maintaining ecosystem functions

ii. Who is responsible for implementing adaptation and how?

The section introduced the roles and responsibilities of key role players, e.g.:

- Public sector responsibilities - setting rules and regulations for communal assets, preventing conflict and managing resource allocation and budgeting
- Individual and community responsibilities - household preparedness, autonomous adaptation, cooperation and collaboration

iii. What is vulnerability?

The section provided a definition of vulnerability and explains how adaptation aims to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, for example household vulnerability is a function of a range of factors such as exposure, sensitivity, susceptibility and capacity. Adaptation therefore focuses on reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience by addressing a range of these factors.

TRAINING SESSION 1: UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE

Activities

Discuss the key climate-related dynamics in your district / community and use Participatory Rural Appraisal tools to deepen understanding of key dynamics.

- Facilitate breakaway groups to discuss and identify:
- What are the priority climate-related stresses in your community?
- In which ways is your community sensitive to climate variability and change?
- What is your community's coping and adaptive capacity?
- What is your community currently doing to cope / adapt to climate change?

TRAINING MATERIALS

A poster was developed to provide a summary explaining the following:

- Summary of predicted climate change impacts for selected parameters
- Definition of adaptation
- Introduction to vulnerability

This poster was supplemented with the climate change posters and brochures that had been produced by UNDP Lesotho and Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS).

3.2 Role of policy and planning in climate change adaptation

This component of the training programme explains why policy and planning are important in climate change adaptation. Successful adaptation links local, regional and national levels. Efforts at the national and district levels influence adaptation options at local level. National and district level policies and development plans should:

- Create enabling conditions for adaptation and the community level
- Help district and community council role players to understand the vulnerabilities, and actions to enhance resilience
- Empower local people to be pro-active and implement adaptation interventions
- Promote flexible and adaptable development processes that respond to changing conditions and needs

At a local level role players also have roles and responsibilities to incorporate adaptation into development planning:

- Local assessments and monitoring can guide action in communities
- Sharing of lessons and experiences with adaptation at the local level can provide insight and information to guide higher levels of decision-making
- Cooperation by local level institutions can help to activate adaptation and development-oriented actions on the ground e.g. participatory assessments, decision making and budgeting

TRAINING SESSION 2: UNDERSTANDING ROLE OF POLICY IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Activities

In your working groups discuss:

- Identify what policies and development **plans at national level** that influence district or community development plans and adaptation
 - Assess strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats of these to incorporating adaptation planning at district / community level
- Identify what **institutional structures** already exist at district community and village levels that can support adaptation
 - Assess strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats of these to incorporating adaptation planning at district / community level
- Identify what risk or disaster management plans already existing at policy levels at national district or community level and assess **strengths and weaknesses already exist**

TRAINING MATERIALS

A poster was developed that provides a summary of the roles and responsibilities of national and district policies and plans (top down) and the roles and responsibilities of communities and individuals (bottom up).

The same training materials used for Phase 1 we also applied in this Phase.

3.3 Integrating adaptation into development planning

This process follows a 4-step guideline during which the Community Council working groups were guided through an analysis of the *status quo* in their local Council areas, and the identification of adaptation options:

- Step 1 – Assessing current conditions and the need for adaptation action
- Step 2 – Identifying the range of local adaptation options and priorities
- Step 3 - Selecting adaptation priorities for the adaptation plan
- Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluating adaptation impacts

Step 1 – Assessing current conditions and the need for adaptation

This first step provides guidelines for assessing the *status quo*, analysing potential impacts of climate change, and defining the vulnerability and need for adaptation action locally.

TRAINING SESSION 3: INTEGRATING ADAPTATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Step 1: Assessing current conditions and the need for adaptation actions

Activities for working groups

- a) Draw a rich picture of the local context (district or community council level)
- b) Status quo assessment – Develop a matrix:
 - Column 1 - Identify the natural and social assets and stakeholders
 - Column 2 - list climatic changes already experienced
 - Column 3 - how the assets /stakeholders are currently sensitive to climate variability/risks
 - Column 4 - identify factors influencing the current adaptive capacity in the Community
- c) Assessing the future - need for action
 - Column 5 -identify the key climate change impacts likely to be experienced in future (based in understanding of climate change introduced in Phase 1 of training)
 - Column 6 - brainstorm the potential impacts to the natural environment / assets
 - Column 7 - brainstorm potential impacts to socio-economic environment / assets

Plenary - Groups report back on outcomes of exercises

TRAINING MATERIALS

A poster was developed to provide a summary explaining of the following:

- Steps for undertaking the *status quo* assessment
- Steps for undertaking the assessment of potential impacts of climate change

Pages from flip chats were used to develop a large matrix, which could be stuck up on a wall, with each flip chart page representing a column in the matrix. These columns in the matrix were populated by the participants with their own concepts identified in response to the tasks in each of the steps in the guideline. The training kits include paper, marking pens, stickers, etc.

Step 2 – Identify local adaptation options and priorities

The second step provided guidelines for selecting priority climate change vulnerabilities, and identifying the possible adaptation options and the main role players that will be crucial to implement the devised options.

TRAINING SESSION 4: INTEGRATING ADAPTATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Step 2: Identifying the range of local adaptation options and priorities

Activities for working groups

- Column 8 - Select the **priority** climate change vulnerabilities (natural and social) to be addressed in adaptation plan
- Column 9 - Develop list of **possible local adaptation** options to address priority vulnerabilities (Column 8)
- Column 10 – identify main **role players** crucial to implement the options adaptation options

Plenary - Groups report back on outcomes of exercises

TRAINING MATERIALS

Continuation with same training materials used for Step 1 above.

Step 3 – Selecting adaptation actions for the adaptation plan

This step provided guidelines for evaluating the range of adaptation options that were been identified in Step 2, to select those for inclusion into the adaptation plan. This step guided the selection of a final set of adaptation options that would be:

- Meaningfully reduce local climate change risks (i.e. be effective in addressing need)
- Aligned with the local development priorities and practical constraints (reflect other development planning components e.g. poverty alleviation).

In step 3 participants therefore evaluated adaptation options and came up with a set of deliberately chosen adaptation priorities. Criteria for evaluating adaptation options for inclusion in development plans included:

- Effectiveness
- Costs / alignment with funding requirements
- Feasibility
- Political and social acceptance
- Urgency / need
- Environmental sustainability

TRAINING SESSION 5: INTEGRATING ADAPTATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Step 3: Select adaptation priorities for the adaptation plan

Activity for working groups

Evaluate and select adaptation options use the matrix started in Step 1 and 2:

- Column 11 - identify set of selection criteria to evaluate adaptation options (e.g. feasibility/affordability/ social and political acceptability etc.)
- Column 12 –Rate the overall importance/viability of the adaptation options (from column 9) based on the outcome of the criteria rating (column 11) – Score each adaptation option using the set of selection criteria:
 - very important / effective (++)
 - moderate importance (+)
 - not very important (-)
 - not needed now (--)
- Column 13 – Re-check that the priority assets (Column 1) are being addressed through priority adaptation options (Column 12) – i.e. Compare priority adaptation actions (those scoring ++ and +) in column 12 with priority assets in column 1 to ID gaps / if any priority assets are not addressed
 - repeat Step 2 and 3 for the missing priority assets to ensure adaptation actions are identified for all priority assets

Plenary - Groups report back on outcomes of exercises

TRAINING MATERIALS

A poster was developed to provide a summary explaining of the following:

- Criteria for selecting the most important and meaningful adaptation options

Continuation with same training materials as used for Step 1 and 2.

Step 4 – Monitoring and evaluating adaptation impacts

This final step guides the development of a framework to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the adaptation actions. This helps to highlight any revisions that might be needed to increase the effectiveness of the adaptation plan. This involved:

- Identify what the desired outcomes and results should be from each of the adaptation actions
- Identify indicators to measure the success or achievement of the desired results
- Clarify who is accountable for each action in terms of implementation and monitoring impact and success
- Identify existing capacity constraints and additional requirements for effective implementation
- Gathering and reporting information that helps effective implementation
- Foster learning that is critical to adaptive management

This monitoring and evaluation framework aims help to guide the stakeholders (including the Councillors) in management, by tracking the delivery of results and increasing their response by learning from the activities carried out. The outputs of the monitoring and evaluation are used to inform an adaptive management approach to implementing the adaptation plan and a pro-active adaptation process that:

- Strengthens project management (i.e. adaptation projects)
- Generates timely and informative reporting for adaptive management
- Tracks integration and impacts of adaptation across the district or community council

TRAINING SESSION 6: INTEGRATING ADAPTATION INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Step 4: Monitoring and evaluating adaptation impacts

Activities for working groups

- a) Indicators to **measure if the adaptation measures are being implemented and achieving their desired results** and long term effects.
- Column 14 - select/extract the core set of priority adaptation actions from column 13
 - Column 15 - identify what the desired outcomes / results should be from each of the adaptation actions (e.g. reduced soil erosion / improved food security)
 - Column 16 - identify indicators to ensure success/ achievement of the desired results (Column 15) each priority option (who needs to do what and how) to monitor achievement / effectiveness of adaptation actions
- b) Requirements for **institutional capacity** for effectiveness and accountability
- Column 17 – review what Council is **currently doing** to carry out key functions contributing to priority options for adaptation (integrate adaptation actions with existing development activities)
 - Column 18 – Identify new **short-/medium** term activities needed to integrate adaptation priorities into Council's work
 - Column 19 – Identify what, if any, new capacity requirements needed to implement the new activities by Council (human and budget)
 - Column 20 – Identify requirements to incorporate adaptation priorities and actions into **long term** management development and planning

Plenary - Groups report back on outcomes of exercises

TRAINING MATERIALS

Posters were developed to provide a summary explaining of the following:

- Guidelines on indicators to monitor and evaluate of adaptation is achieving desired result
- Criteria for assessing institutional capacity

Continuation with the same training materials as used for Step 1, 2 and 3 above.

4 INVENTORY OF CAPACITY BUILDING EVENTS HELD

The series of awareness raising and capacity building events that were held include:

- a) National stakeholder workshops - Two workshops were held with national stakeholders in Maseru. The purpose of these workshops was to present the project and capacity building materials to stakeholders for comment and input. The second workshop was held to present the outcomes to stakeholders.
- b) District Council Workshops – 1-day workshops were held with each of the three target District Councils. The purpose of these workshops was to introduce the project and the intended target Community Councils in each of the Districts. Permission was thus gained to engage the Community Councils. The capacity building materials and approach were also presented to the District Councils.
- c) Community Council Capacity Building Workshops – A series of three workshops were held with each of the thirteen Community Councils. The first round of workshops was two-day training workshops. These were followed with two rounds of 1-day follow up workshops with each of the Community Councils.

The details of these events are outlined in the sections below.

4.1 National Stakeholder Workshops

A workshop was held for national stakeholders from key line ministries to present the draft training material and approach for comment. The workshop was held in Maseru on 31 January 2013 (Table 1). Comments from stakeholders were incorporated into the revised training materials that were then taken into the capacity building workshops.

A follow up workshop was held with national stakeholders on 15 August 2013 (Table 1) to report back on the outcomes of the training. The District and Community Council representatives were also invited to participate in the second national stakeholder workshop, to provide first hand feedback.

Table 1: National stakeholder workshops

Date	Event	Meeting venue	Number of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
31/01/2013	1 st National Stakeholder Workshop	Lehakoe Club – Maseru	10	7	17
15/08/2013	2 nd National Stakeholder Workshop	Lehakoe Club – Maseru	25	16	41
Total			35	23	58

4.2 District Council Workshops

Workshops were held in Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale’s Hoek District Councils were held with each of the three target District Councils. The purpose of these workshops was to introduce the project and the capacity building materials and approach. Permission was thus gained to engage the Community Councils. The participants in these training events comprised mainly the Councillors, but also included some other Government Officials, mostly representatives from the Ministry of Local

Government and Chieftainship in the districts. Representatives from the Lesotho Meteorological Services were also present in these training, and provided support to the project team.

Table 2: District Council trainings conducted between February and March 2013.

Date	Name of District Council	Meeting venue	Number of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
11-Feb-2013	Mafeteng	Mafeteng Hotel	15	10	25
11-Feb-2013	Mohale's Hoek	IEMS Mohale's Hoek	15	20	35
20-Mar-2013	Maseru	Khali Hotel, Maseru	14	11	25
TOTAL			44	41	85

The events at Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek District Councils were run in parallel in order to try to meet the tight time challenges faced in the project. The third District Council workshop, Maseru, was held following these. The details of each of these trainings are reflected in Table 2 below. These events were organised through the District Council offices.

4.3 Community Council Capacity Building Workshops

a) Two-day Capacity Building Events

Capacity building events (two day workshops) were conducted in all thirteen target Community Councils (Table 3). These events were organised through the Community Councils' offices, and the same procedures usually undertaken by the Councils for their monthly Council meetings were followed, i.e. travel, accommodation and meals for the Councillors were covered by the project in order to make it possible for the Councillors to travel to the Council Offices to participate.

Table 3: Community Council capacity building workshops

Date	Name of Community Council	Meeting venue	Number of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
12 - 13 Feb	Khoelenya (F03)	Council office Mekaling	8	9	17
14 - 15 Feb	Lithipeng (F04)	Council office Phamong	11	8	19
13 - 15 Feb	Qibing (E07) & Metsi-Maholo (E01)	Qibing Council office – Ha Ralintši	13	14	27
04 - 05 Apr	Makhoarane(A08)	Mophatooa Morija Hall- Morija	9	6	15
17 - 18 Apr	Qhoasing (F06)	Ketane Ha Nohana – Council Office	18	17	35
18 - 19 Apr	Tšana-Talana (E06)	Tšana-Talana Council Office- Ha Ramohapi	8	9	17
22 - 23 Apr	'Makhoalipana (A10)	'Makhoalipana Council Office-Semonkong	7	8	15
24 - 25 Apr	Senqunyane (F07)	Senqunyane Council Office-	11	10	21
02 - 03 May	Ratau (A02)	Ratau Council Office Nazareth	7	8	15
03 - 04 May	Lehlananeng (E04)	Lehlananeng Council Office- Ha Mosala	10	12	22
06 - 07 May	Mohlakeng (A05)	Mohlakeng Council Office- Mazenod	8	7	15
14 - 15 May	Lilala (A07)	Lilala Council Office- Rothe	6	14	20
TOTAL			116	122	238

Due to the difficulty of securing dates within the project timeframes to conduct the capacity building with Qibing and Metsi-Maholo Community Councils in Mafeteng, the project team in consultation with the two Councils agreed to hold a joint training workshop for both Councils. The training workshop was extended to run over three days instead of the usual two days, to accommodate for the greater number of participants and to ensure that there was adequate time to address all the issues raised by the Councillors.



Figure 1: Beneficiaries participating in the capacity building events at ‘Makhoalipane Community Council (Maseru District)

A number of the Community Councils extended invitations to stakeholders other than the Councillors themselves to participate in the capacity building workshops. This aim was to involve as many on-site stakeholders as possible in the adaptation planning process. Therefore a number of capacity building events, such as the Qhoasing Community Council, included representatives from Ministry of Local Government & Chieftainship (Councillors and Planners); Lesotho Mounted Police Services (Public Safety and Security); NGOs (e.g. Catholic Relief Services & Caritas), Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (Department of Livestock Services, Nutrition, Irrigation, Horticulture and Field Crops); Ministry of Justice (Ketane Local Court). The contributions of these stakeholders are reflected in the adaptation plans.

The participatory approach was well received at all the Councils. This approach encouraged beneficiaries to engage and actively contribute to the adaptation planning process, as opposed to a passive approach that would only have involved them commenting on adaptation plans developed by outsiders and presented to them. In the participatory approach adopted in the capacity building activities undertaken in this project, the Council stakeholders were divided into smaller working groups so that everybody got a chance to fully engage in the exercises. The resultant outcome was a high level of ownership in the plans by the Councillors and stakeholders. Furthermore, the adaptation plans that were developed reflected real local understanding and concerns about the

impacts of climate change and the associated risks and vulnerabilities. The adaptation responses also reflect local knowledge and insight into locally appropriate solutions and consider key success factors such as local capacity, socio-political acceptability, affordability etc.



Figure 2: Stakeholders actively participating in the working group activities to develop the adaptation plans

Every Community Council managed to develop a draft adaptation plan during the course of the two-day events. The Councils then continued to work on the details of their draft plans after the initial two-day capacity building workshops.

b) Follow-Up Mentorship Events

Two rounds of follow up meetings were held with the Community Councils:

- The first follow up was to assist the Councils to address any problems they experienced while working on the plans themselves (subsequent to the initial training)
- The second follow up was to wrap up the plan and hand over a copy of the adaptation plan developed, which the Council can then continue to update and revise as needed. (This copy included a folder containing a copy of the presentations on an introduction to climate change, an introduction to the training programme, and a copy of the development and adaptation matrix prepared by the Councils themselves during the training event).

The details of the two rounds of follow up events held in 2013 are outlined in Table 4 and 5 below.

Table 4: First round of follow-up workshops held with Community Councils

Date	Name of Community Council	Meeting venue	Number of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
16 April	Qibing (E07)	Council Office Ha Ramohapi	13	14	27
16 April	Lithipeng (F04)	Lithipeng Council Office- Phamong	9	6	15
17 April	Metsi-Maholo (E01)	Council Office Tšakholo	6	10	16
30 April	Makhoarane (A08)	Council Office Morija	9	6	15
07 May	Khoelenya (F03)	Khoelenya Council Office – Mekaling	4	6	10
26 June	'Makhoalipana (A10)	Council Office Semonkong	6	5	11
23 July	Mohlakeng (A05)	Council Office Mazenod	7	1	8
31 July	Lehlakaneng (E04)	Council Office Ha Mosala	4	8	12
01 August	Lilala (A07)	Council Office Rothe	7	10	17
01 August	Qhoasing (F06)	Council Office Ha Nohana	15	11	26
02 August	Tšana-Talana (E06)	Council Office Ha Ramohapi	9	5	14
07 August	Senqunyane (F07)	Council Office Ha Phafoli	5	6	11
12 August	Ratau (A02)	Council Office Nazareth	7	11	18
TOTAL			101	99	200



Figure 3: Stakeholders discuss and plan adaptation priorities for inclusion in the Council's plans

Table 5: Second round of follow-up workshops held with Community Councils

Date	Name of Community Council	Meeting venue	Number of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
28 May	Lithipeng (F04)	Lithipeng Council Office- Phamong	7	7	14
29 May	Khoelenya (F03)	Khoelenya Council Office – Mekaling	5	9	14
05 July	Makhoarane (A08)	Council office – Morija	4	3	7
12 July	‘Makhoalipana (A10)	Council office - Semonkong	5	3	8
15 July	Qibing (E07)	Council office – Ha Ralintši	2	2	4
16 July	Metsi-Maholo (E01)	Council office Tšakholo	2	2	4
19 August	Lilala (A07)	Council Office Rothe	7	9	16
20 August	Lehlakeng (E04)	Council Office Ha Mosala	9	11	20
21 August	Mohlakeng (A05)	Council Office Mazenod	9	6	15
21 August	Ratau (F02)	Council Office Nazareth	6	9	15
22 August	Tšana-Talana (E06)	Council Office Ha Ramohapi	7	7	14
22 August	Qhoasing (F06)	Council Office Ha Nohana	17	13	30
23 August	Senqunyane (F07)	Council Office Ha Phafoli	8	6	14
TOTAL			88	87	175

The two rounds of follow-up workshops provided the opportunity to assist the Councils to resolve any challenges or uncertainties they experienced during their on-going work on their adaptation plans after their initial two-day capacity building workshop. At the final follow-up event the copies of the Councils’ adaptation plans that had been captured by the project team were handed over.



Figure 4: A copy of the adaptation plan developed by the ‘Makhoalipana Community Council (A10) (Maseru District) is handed over by a representative of the Lesotho Meteorological Services and Serumula Development Association

5 INSIGHT INTO THE ADAPTATION PLANS DEVELOPED BY THE COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The extracts presented are summaries of the adaptation plans developed by the thirteen target Community Councils in the Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek Districts. These highlight some of the impacts of climate variability and change that are already being experienced locally, and the vulnerabilities and adaptation priorities that have been identified by the beneficiaries during the capacity building programme.

5.1 Community Councils in the Maseru District

1. Ratau Community Council (A02)

- The communities within the Ratau Community Council have experienced serious challenges associated with drought and late onset of Spring rains.
 - Drought has resulted in drying of water sources and a scarcity of water for domestic consumption, which has also brought about an increase in incidence of illnesses and diseases, particularly water-borne illnesses.
 - Drought severely affects the condition of rangelands and the availability of grazing for livestock, which affects livestock condition, production and health.
 - Scarcity of water has also negatively affected agricultural production and yields, with most of the fields being left fallow or where the planting starts late the crops fail to reach maturity before being hit by frosts.
 - Yields of products from livestock such as wool, mohair, meat and milk also decrease during droughts, and reproduction rates are also negatively affected.
- The Council's adaptation plan therefore focusses on activities that address:
 - water conservation and harvesting such as construction of small dams for irrigation
 - fodder production for supplementary feeding of livestock
 - promoting the innovative farming systems encouraged by the relevant departments within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- The plan recognises the important responsibility that the Council has to play a role in liaising with the Lesotho Meteorological Services to find ways of providing weather information on forecasted weather events to the general public.
- The plan also highlights the role that the Council has to play in land use planning and responsible land allocation for human settlement.
- Finally, the adaptation plan establishes that the Community Council will promote tourism within the Council as part of a resilient development strategy, and together with the communities and relevant structures, protect places of tourist attraction.

2. Mohlakeng Community Council (A05)

- The Mohlakeng Community Council is challenged by severe droughts, which are driving rangeland degradation, declining agricultural production, and threaten local biodiversity.
- Unseasonal cold spells are also widely experienced and create serious challenges.
 - In some instances early and unexpected low temperatures, accompanied by frost or snowfall, result in crop damage and subsequently in poor yields or even entire crop loss.
 - Unseasonal cold fronts also result in increased livestock mortality rates and in extreme cases, the deaths of large numbers of livestock particularly cattle.
- Flash floods and/or erratic rainfalls as well as extremely high temperatures in summer have also been experienced, and are accelerating problems such as soil erosion.
- The Mohlakeng Community Council has therefore incorporated activities into its adaptation plan that deal directly with control of soil erosion; improving agricultural production; water resources protection (including water harvesting techniques); and protection and propagation of indigenous tree species.
 - Soil erosion control includes activities such as stabilization of erosion dongas and construction of retaining dams.
 - Catchment rehabilitation and management activities such as planting of trees and grasses, and terracing.
 - Improvement of agricultural production through activities such as promotion of affordable irrigation techniques, and use of organic fertilizers.
 - Activities aimed at improving agricultural production also include exploring post harvesting technologies such as food preservation technologies (e.g. solar drying) to minimise post-harvest losses and to enhance the availability of food to households even in seasons that are normally marked by food shortages.
 - Protection of water resources focuses on taking steps towards ensuring that water sources that have not yet dried up are protected to ensure their sustainability.
 - The Council's plan also recognizes that water recycling such as the use of grey water for irrigating keyhole gardens for production of vegetables is an important adaptation intervention that needs to be promoted in order to reduce demand on fresh water and increase the efficiency of the use of water resources.
- Finally, the adaptation plan has proposed the protection and propagation of indigenous tree and shrub species as an important adaptation strategy to address rangeland degradation and enhance resilience of the environment.

3. Lilala Community Council (A07)

- Severe droughts, flash floods, hailstorms, strong winds, extreme temperatures (cold winters and hot summers) are major climate related challenges experienced in the Lilala Community Council.
 - The main consequences of these extreme weather events are increased soil erosion, desertification due to loss of ground cover and biodiversity, reduced agricultural production (both crops and livestock), and the associated threats to livelihoods.
 - Climate change has also eroded important social assets and cohesion with members of families having migrated to towns, such as Maseru in search of employment to try to improve the livelihood security of the family. Other social assets, such as community based associations that enable people to unite, are also collapsing and this is leaving communities more vulnerable and less able to render assistance to those facing serious survival challenges.
- The adaptation plan incorporates protection of water sources; managing rangelands; controlling soil erosion; improving agricultural production, and strengthening community based associations that support and bring the communities together.
- Protection of water resources focuses particularly on protecting wetlands and other water sources through grazing controls and fencing off such areas where necessary.
- Water harvesting techniques, such as construction of small retention dams and rain water harvesting from roofs, are also been incorporated into the plan to enhance the security of water supply.
- The Community Council recognises the particular importance of addressing control of soil erosion by strengthening the on-going local catchment management initiatives by the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation. The initiative includes activities such as:
 - stone packing across dongas
 - clearing of shrub species such as *Chrysocoma* and to re-establish grassy biomass on the rangelands
 - planting trees and grasses to stabilise eroded areas
- The Council also plans to improve agricultural production by paying particular attention to both crops and livestock farmers. This involves liaising with the relevant Ministry to educate farmers in appropriate farming systems.
 - Enhancing of crop production includes promoting conservation agriculture and extensive use of keyhole gardening for production of vegetables.
 - Livestock improvement involves promoting fodder production by livestock owners for supplementary feeding to improve the condition of livestock particularly during dry times.
- The Council's plan also considers road construction as a way to promote local business which in turn creates opportunities to diversify local livelihood strategies and reduce the trend of urban migration.

4. Makhoarane Community Council (A08)

- Severe drought, strong winds, extremely high summer temperatures and heavy rains are some of the climate related challenges that the Makhoarane communities experience regularly.
 - Drought is affecting water supplies and contributing to water shortages.
 - Drought has caused a decline in crop production and increasing incidence of food shortages for families dependent on agriculture.
 - Food insecurity and increased poverty have been linked to an increase in criminal activities in the area.
- The Community Council has therefore developed an adaptation plan that includes activities to identify and protect important water resources such as wetlands and springs.
- Promotion of water harvesting and storage to improve and secure the local water supply for villages are adaptation activities planned to address the very real challenge of water shortages.
- The adaptation plan also promotes planting of trees and grasses as a strategy to address erosion and rangeland degradation. Proper range management and grazing control is planned as an important activity in combination with soil erosion control activities.
- Improving agricultural production is also a key strategy in the plan, and activities in this regard aim to improve production of field crops (e.g. maize) and vegetables.
 - The plan highlights the need to work closely with the Department of Agricultural Research and the Department of Crops to find ways of encouraging farmers to plant varieties that are fast to mature and are high yielding.
 - Households will be encouraged to diversify agricultural production and explore projects such as poultry production so as to enhance food security.
- Conservation of biodiversity and natural resources is also included in the adaptation plan, and the Community Council aims to work closely with the relevant line Ministries to map activities that would best help to conserve and protect natural resources.
- The plan further highlights the importance of educating the communities about climate change, its impacts, and the need for adaptation through local public gatherings.

5. 'Makhoalipana Community Council (A10)

- The 'Makhoalipana Community Council is located deep in the mountains of Lesotho, and has always experienced severe climatic conditions such as very cold winters and strong winds. Recently however, changes in the climate are being experienced such as an increase in the incidence in unseasonal snowfall and early frosts, and extended Winter conditions. Examples of climate variability include heavy snowfalls in some years, while in other years there is very little, or only light, snowfall.
 - The unpredictable weather patterns have increased the vulnerability of people, because it affects people's ability to traditionally plan for agricultural and livelihood activities.
 - Livestock production, especially wool and mohair production has always been the mainstay of local economic development for 'Makhoalipana. However, the changing weather pattern has threatened this important livelihood activity.
 - The dry conditions have contributed to drying up of water sources and degradation of range resources. The grazing areas have become bare and some sources of drinking water for livestock have also disappeared, leading to increased mortalities among livestock. The condition of livestock has deteriorated and their productivity has decreased.
 - There has been an increase desertification with a decrease in vegetation cover and an increase in erosion, which is being driven by an increase in the frequency of the incidence of droughts and heavy rains that rapidly erode the soils.
- The Council has therefore developed an adaptation plan that aims to encourage livestock farmers undertake livestock improvement (i.e. improve the genetic quality of the stock) and produce fodder crops for supplementary feeding of livestock.
 - The Council hopes this strategy to raise awareness among farmers that it is more profitable to keep fewer but highly productive animals and therefore reduce the livestock numbers on the rangelands.
 - The plan also involves working closely with the Department of Livestock Services to assist farmers to undertake culling and selection of animals.
- The adaptation plan proposes establishing Grazing Associations promote improved management and the protection of wetlands and other water sources in the rangelands.
- Improvement of crop production includes promoting conservation agriculture and liaising with the Department of Agricultural Research and the Department of Crops to promote high yielding and drought resistant seed varieties.
- The adaptation plan also addresses soil erosion control such as donga rehabilitation, grass reseeded and planting of trees, which leverage on-going initiatives by the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation.
- Finally, the Council plans to liaise with the Ministry of Health and The Ministry of Social Welfare to strengthen the support offered by community-based structures such as Community Health Workers and the Support Groups as well as Care Givers. This is seen as an important strategy to builds social resilience within the communities.

5.2 Community Councils in the Mafeteng District

6. Metsi-Maholo Community Council (E01)

- Metsi-Maholo has from time to time been hit by long spells of drought accompanied by high temperatures in summer and below average precipitation in winter. There have however also been incidences of extremely heavy rainfalls following the dry spells.
 - The extreme weather events have led to a decline in agricultural production, which in turn threatens the livelihood security of the local communities.
 - Severe water shortages are experienced across most parts of the Council. But no effective water harvesting or storage systems are in place to distribute water from areas where it is relatively abundant.
 - Heavy rainfall events intensify problems of soil erosion and drive rangeland degradation.
- The Council's adaptation plan therefore outlines activities that interweave environment protection and securing livelihoods. The plan has activities that aim to:
 - Control soil erosion through tree planting, reseeding grasses on bare and eroded areas, and stone packing across dongas.
 - Introduce biodiversity conservation activities are aimed at protecting and restoring the rangelands for a resilient environment.
 - Promote improved range management practices with the aim of promoting two levels of benefits:
 - Firstly, to protect important natural resources and habitats such as wetlands.
 - Secondly, for improving livestock production, which is also an important source of livelihood security.
 - Introduce and encourage the use of alternative technologies by households to meet domestic energy and service needs such as solar energy and rainwater harvesting.
 - Enhance agricultural production and application of appropriate technologies and systems including:
 - Activities involving water harvesting and storage for small scale irrigation.
 - Promoting conservation agriculture.
 - Finally, the adaptation plan also addresses protection of water sources such as wetlands, and effective approaches to water harvesting and distribution to secure a supply to meet domestic needs.

7. Lehlakaneng Community Council (E04)

- Lehlakaneng has experienced periods of severe droughts as a result of erratic rainfalls and high summer temperatures. Heavy rainfall events, very low temperatures, and unseasonal cold fronts are also experienced in this area.
 - These extreme weather events have led to drying up of important water sources such as springs and wetlands.
 - Farming has also been negatively and there have been years when yields have been very poor leaving many families vulnerable to food shortages.
 - Rangeland resources have also been on the decline due to poor management practices exacerbated by extreme weather events such as floods and droughts.
- The Council's adaptation plan therefore includes measures to protect water and range resources, improve crop production, and improve livestock production.
 - The plan addresses the importance of protecting valuable water sources, and highlights the important role of the livestock herders in protecting water sources from damage by livestock. The plan addresses awareness raising among the community in general but targets to the role of herders in particular because the herders utilise many of these areas the most and therefore have the greatest impact on their condition.
 - The plan further takes on-board activities that aim at improving crop production. These include educating the farming community on effective ways of tilling the land to avoid soil erosion and to conserve soil moisture.
 - Livestock improvement and range management priorities involve educating farmers about the benefits of improving the quality of livestock, reducing herd and flock sizes and producing fodder crops to supplementary feed as approaches to increase productivity of the animals and reduce pressure on the rangelands.
- The plan proposes that these activities will be carried out under guidance of the relevant line Ministries as they require expertise beyond what the Council currently has internally.

8. Tšana-Talana Community Council (E06)

- This area has continuously experienced severe droughts, frequent hail storms, high temperatures in summer, and strong wind. Torrential rain events are also sometimes experienced.
 - Recurrent droughts have led to drastic decline in agricultural production, drying up of natural water sources, and degradation of rangeland resources.
 - Heavy rainfall exacerbates the problem of soil erosion in the area where desertification (i.e. a loss of vegetation cover and soil erosion) is already a widespread threat.
- In integrating climate change adaptation into the Council's development plan, Tšana-Talana Community Council has identified protection of water sources such as wetlands as one of the most important adaptation measures.
- The Council has planned to work with the relevant government departments to implement relevant legislation and demarcate and protect all important natural areas within the Community Council.
- The plan highlights rangeland management activities as vital adaptation interventions.
 - In particular activities such as removal of invasive species and reseedling of exposed areas with grasses are integrated with rangeland management practices to be carried out.
 - Promoting production of fodder crops by livestock farmers to provide supplementary feed is promoted as a strategy to reduce livestock pressure on grazing areas.
 - Measures to control soil erosion, such as planting grasses and trees, construction of small retaining dams and terraces, implementing rehabilitation initiatives such as stone packing, and planting indigenous grasses are some of the activities highlighted in the plan.
 - The Council also recognises that it has a vital role to play in planning and coordinating developments in the area, such as road constructions and allocation of land for housing, to avoid negative environmental consequences such as erosion or degradation of water courses.
- The plan explores opportunities to enhance the resilience of livelihoods for example through improvement of livestock and food production.
 - The plan encourages farmers to improve the genetic quality of small stock such as sheep and goats, which will improve the quality and quantity of wool and mohair production.
 - The plan includes actions to promote conservation agriculture, terracing in fields in order to avoid further loss of agricultural soil.
- The Council plans to maintain close ties with the extension services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to ensure that information to guide farmers is received timeously so that they are in a position to respond appropriately.
- Finally, the Council has embraced the importance of maintaining the social fabric and/or social assets intact by planning to strengthen the different forms of associations found within the Council.

9. Qibing Community Council (E07)

- Challenges associated with climate variability and change that are being experienced locally include long and recurrent spells of drought, extreme temperatures (i.e. very high temperatures in summer and very low temperatures in winter), unseasonal snowfall, and erratic rainfalls.
- In response to these challenges the Qibing Community Council has developed a plan that aims to address environmental problems and strengthen livelihood strategies for the communities.
- Projects identified include:
 - Soil erosion control
 - Improvement of agricultural production
 - Diversification of livelihood strategies
 - Education of communities on issues of climate change
 - Protection of wetlands and other important water sources
- The Council has recognised that soil erosion has worsened in recent times due to very heavy rainfall. The Council's adaptation plan therefore includes expanding the catchment management initiatives through planting trees and grasses, and donga rehabilitation through construction of silt traps.
- The adaptation plan maps activities that aim at protecting wetlands and other water sources, for example by developing grazing plans that will ensure grazing in wetlands areas is avoided or controlled.
- Water scarcity is one of the greatest challenges in this Council. Simple and affordable water harvesting techniques such as rain water harvesting from roofs are therefore to be widely promoted across the area.
- Improvement of agricultural production to improve food security focusses on promotion of conservation agriculture and use of keyhole gardening for vegetable production.
- The adaptation plan recognizes the importance of diversifying livelihood strategies not only to mitigate the risks involved in farming, but also taking into account that not all households are able to farm and meet their food security needs.
- Finally, the Council recognises the need to liaise with the relevant Government Departments and Civil Society Organizations to educate the communities about the impacts of climate change and adaptation opportunities.

5.3 Community Councils in Mohale's Hoek District

10. Khoelenya Community Council (F03)

- The Community Council has experienced challenges associated with frequent and severe drought, wind storms and extreme cold especially in winter.
 - Unseasonal cold conditions are sometimes experienced, even during the summer months, and can bring early frosts. This contributes to crop failure and high mortality rates among livestock, which increase the level of food insecurity and poverty in the communities.
 - Food insecurity and poverty in turn threaten social peace and security because it has been linked to increased incidences of theft as people struggle to feed their families. This in turn negatively affects local economic development within the Community Council.
 - Furthermore food insecurity and poverty increase the prevalence of illness and diseases and increased mortality rates, which compounds problems associated with orphaned and vulnerable children.
- The Community Council has compiled an adaptation plan that prioritises addressing the problems of food insecurity, soil erosion and water scarcity.
 - Food insecurity is tackled through improvement of crops production such as promotion of conservation agriculture and the use of organic fertilizers such as compost.
 - Promotion of fruit tree production is also aimed at improving food security, while the trees could also potentially act as wind breaks around houses to reduce the incidences of damage to houses from strong winds.
 - Control of soil erosion involves activities such as tree planting, construction of diversion furrows and terracing around the fields.
 - Finally, the Community Council proposes to harvest and store water through the construction of small dams and weirs for the purposes of securing water supply to the communities during dry or drought conditions.

11. Lithipeng Community Council (F04)

- Located in the Senqu River Valley, some of the common extreme weather events experienced by the communities include very high temperatures and dry conditions in summer, heavy and erratic rainfalls, unseasonal snowfall bringing cold conditions and frost.
 - The high temperatures in summer lead to high mortalities in livestock especially small stock such as sheep.
 - In addition, when temperatures are very high and it is too hot, cattle do not produce enough milk.
 - Dry weather conditions in summer or winter worsen the drying up of wetlands and other important water sources such as springs and wells.
 - Heavy rainfall events reduce infiltration of water into the soils and increase run-off, which increases soil erosion particularly in areas that are already bare due to loss of vegetative from overgrazing and other land use practices.
 - Unseasonal cold in summer destroys crops and also results in the deaths of large numbers of livestock.
- The Lithipeng Community Council's adaptation plan therefore prioritises activities such as tree planting (both indigenous trees and shrubs as well as fruit trees), which help to control soil erosion while at the same time promoting food security.
- Control of soil erosion is also addressed through plans to strengthen the local initiatives for donga reclamation by constructing stone lines across dongas and constructing diversion furrows on the top of the fields.
 - The Council has also recognized the importance of educating the communities about soil erosion and ways of controlling it so that efforts geared towards control of soil erosion are well understood and supported by the communities.
- The poor condition of range resources within the Community Council's boundaries is a significant threat to livestock production as well as environmental sustainability which threatens other benefits such as water resources. The Community Council plans to work closely with the relevant line ministry to ensure that grazing is properly planned and there are adequate control measures in place.
- Protection of wetlands from overgrazing grazing is one of the activities that the Community Council plans to prioritize as an approach to securing water supplies and other benefits obtained from wetlands.
- Finally, the Council believes that there needs to be improved general awareness in the communities about climate change and the impacts thereof.

12. Qhoasing Community Council (F06)

- The Qhoasing Community Council has seen challenges brought about by extremely dry conditions, heavy rainfalls following dry spells, strong winds, and unseasonal cold weather.
 - The drought has exacerbated the problem of rangeland degradation and an associated decrease in the condition of livestock.
 - There are also increasing incidences of illness and diseases associated with drought conditions. These are predominantly water-borne illnesses and diseases linked to the impact that drought has on water quality and quantity. Local healthcare facilities find it difficult to cope with the influx of people requiring care and treatment during times of drought.
 - Drought also results in poor agricultural yields, or even crop failure. During these times families struggle to feed themselves and meet their food security needs, contributing further to illness and malnutrition.
 - Heavy rainfall events escalate soil erosion, washing away top soil and creating dongas, which cause environmental degradation and reduce agricultural production.
 - Heavy rains and floods also damage infrastructure such as roads and buildings, and sometimes cause landslides, particularly around villages that are located around rocky outcrops.
- The Community Council has developed an adaptation plan that includes activities that address:
 - soil erosion through catchment management;
 - range management;
 - water and sanitation projects;
 - improvement of crop production through conservation agriculture;
 - biodiversity conservation through establishment of botanical gardens and;
 - improvement of road infrastructure through construction of roads and bridges that can withstand storms.
- The plan also includes activities aimed at increasing social responsibility towards public safety by engaging the communities to form self-policing groups as a way of dealing with internal socio-economic challenges.
- Finally, the Community Council's plan aims to increase the number of well-trained village health workers and other support groups to address health and well-being and reduce the incidence of the untimely death of people.

13. Senqunyane Community Council (F07)

- Senqunyane Community Council has highlighted incidences of drought, unseasonal cold fronts and snowfall, frequent hailstorms and strong winds as key climate challenges.
 - These extreme weather events have led to poor agricultural yields or even complete crop failure in some years.
 - Drought deters farmers, and during dry periods it has become common to find fields that have not even been ploughed.
 - In years when unseasonal cold fronts sweep through the area, they bring early frosts that destroy crops before they reach maturity.
 - Livestock production is also being affected, because extremely unseasonal cold fronts result in high mortalities of livestock as they are often still in the 'A' grazing areas, where it really gets very cold and there is little shelter.
 - In addition, rangeland degradation means that the livestock become emaciated and cannot produce good quality products such as wool, mohair, milk or meat. The degradation of range resources results in a scarcity of grazing and a decrease in the condition of livestock, which weakens the livestock and results in them dying in large numbers during extreme events such as cold or droughts.
 - Erratic rainfalls have also contributed to water shortages in many areas across the Council
 - Strong winds have damaged or destroyed houses, leaving many families without shelter and having to spend large sums of money to repair the damage.
- The Community Council has therefore compiled a plan that focuses on adaptation activities that address:
 - Protection of water sources and wetlands restoration
 - Water harvesting for irrigation purposes
 - Soil erosion control
 - Improvement of agricultural production to ensure food security and income generation
 - Rangeland rehabilitation and management
- The adaptation plan also considers improving infrastructure and services, including construction of feeder roads and bringing health services closer to the communities.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The capacity building programme has been well received by the District and Community Councils. The beneficiaries engaged enthusiastically in the process, and indicated their desire to learn as much as possible from these capacity building opportunities. This positive response is reflected by a number of exciting local level developments reported by the Councillors, for example:

- The Councillors in a number of the Community Councils have started to organise public gatherings to locally raise awareness about climate change and the need for adaptation. These events led by the Councillors have included engaging local schools and community based organisations, such as the caregivers to Orphaned & Vulnerable Children in Senqunyane. They have also distributed the awareness raising materials provided during the project to schools in their respective Electoral Divisions (EDs).
- A number of the Community Councils had not yet developed their formal Community Action Plans (CAPs). The project however helped them to start this planning process and they also recognise that the adaptation plans they have developed through the project components of their CAPS and are very important in informing the Councils to carry out their development planning functions.
- The capacity building at Tšana-Talana Community Council assisted three members of the Council who had been nominated to represent the Council in a regional SADC Gender Protocol Summit in Johannesburg from 22nd to 25th April 2013. The summit in Johannesburg followed the first ever Lesotho SADC Gender protocol Summit held at the Lesotho Sun Hotel from the 18th to 19th March 2013, where Tšana-Talana Community Council received three awards for best Centre of Excellence (COE), including the award for the climate change category. The three Councils members who participated in the Lesotho summit unanimously agreed that their understanding of climate change had been greatly enhanced after participating in the capacity building workshop conducted by the project at Tšana-Talana Community Council.
- Councillors have widely reported that the capacity building programme, and the adaptation plans that they have developed as a result, now positions them well to try to leverage resources to address a number of the development and adaptation challenges faced in their Councils. The chairman of Tšana-Talana Community Council has already prepared a concept note, developed from their adaptation plan, which he presented to Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Program (GEF-SGP). The concept involves biodiversity conservation activities planned as part of the adaptation strategy for the Council. A number of other Community Councils have also indicated that they intend using their adaptation plans to highlight adaptations priorities and potential projects in their areas, and to use these as proposals for funding.

Significant issues that have been highlighted during the capacity building process include:

- ❖ While securing production from agriculture remains a critical adaptation priority across all the Councils' plans, diversification of livelihood strategies has emerged as a strong factor in many of the plans. The capacity building process contributed to a thorough assessment of livelihood resilience by the Councillors and the realization that absolute dependence on agriculture is not ideal, owing to the risks associated with the sector, particularly in the light of threats posed by climate change.

- ❖ A number of adaptation priorities are common across the adaptation plans of all the Community Councils. Topping this list of priorities is (i) protection of water resources such as wetlands, (ii) improvement of agricultural production including both crops and livestock, and (iii) rangeland rehabilitation. A number of the plans also include promoting the uptake of alternative technologies to secure domestic energy and service needs, for example solar energy and rain water harvesting. These common priorities reflect the wide recognition by the Councils of the diversity of the challenges associated with climate change that need to be addressed through responsible development planning.
- ❖ Some of the adaptation activities identified by the Community Councils cannot be implemented without additional capacity and resources to support the Councils. The Councils recognise that they need to strategically engage other role players to try to secure this support, and that they need to assume a coordination role for all developments implemented at Council level. They recognise that the Councils need to be gateways through which role players engage, and in this way ensure that support and resources are effectively distributed to address priorities across the Council, and avoid a duplication of efforts and resources in any areas.
- ❖ Many of Councils also recognise the important role of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in climate change adaptation. They recognised that since CBOs are independent and self-governing, they can provide effective conduits for outside support (e.g. donor funding) in the implementation of priority activities identified in their adaptation plans. In this way, the CBOs could help to overcome some of the decentralisation and financing challenges currently being experienced by the Councils, while long term solutions are being negotiated with Central Government.
- ❖ Some Community Councils have developed Community Action Plans (CAPs) while others have not yet been able to develop these CAPs. CAPs are documented development plans that each Council should have upon assuming its term of office (five years). During the course of the capacity building programme a number of challenges being experienced by the Councils in relation to these CAPs were highlighted:
 - i. There is a level of uncertainty amongst Councillors on the validity or relevance of their CAPs in situations where two or more Council have merged and two or more CAPs now exist for the same Council (e.g. Qhoasing (F06) which is a merger between the former Qobong, Seroto and Qhobeng Community Councils). This highlights the importance of the transition process from one Council to the next and the need for a responsible and effective hand over processes.
 - ii. Secondly the issue of reviewing and updating the CAPs to capture new needs and priorities, or the expanded planning priorities across new Council boundaries was also highlighted as important. This was particularly expressed by Ratau (A02) and Khoelenya (F03) Community Councils.
 - iii. Community Councils that do not have well developed CAPs cited the fact that they had not received training and capacity building, and budget cuts from the central government, as the key limitations to developing CAPs.

- iv. The most recent demarcation of new Council boundaries has increased the geographic size of the Community Councils, and in many cases resulted in the merging two or more Councils from the previous demarcation process. Fewer Councillors now operate over expanded constituencies or Electoral Divisions (EDs). Accessibility of some of these Councils is very challenging owing to poor road networks infrastructure. This makes it quite challenging for the Councils to hold meetings, both in terms of associated costs and logistics, which affects efficiency and effectiveness in developing and implementing development and adaptation plans.

These issues highlighted the value of the capacity building process provided through this project, as it has addressed a number of development planning challenges and constraints that were being experienced by the Councils.

- ❖ The Community Councils' implementation potential is limited by capacity constraints, both skills and financial. Funding (to secure the technical and resource support required) will therefore be essential for the adaptation priorities identified by the Councils to be implemented, and the resilience of the communities to the impact of climate change strengthened.
- ❖ Given the multi-disciplinary nature of the adaptation plans, the Councils have highlighted the need for wide collaboration with line ministries and co-operation with other role-players active in the area to implement the full spectrum of adaptation actions needed to address vulnerability and improve resilience of communities to the impacts of climate change.

In conclusion, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID/Southern Africa) is currently funding an initiative to identify and support the uptake of climate change adaptation strategies at a number of pilot villages across three Districts in the Lesotho Highlands (i.e. Botha Bothe, Leribe and Taba Tseka). This project is being implemented by the INR and SDA (in collaboration with another local NGO). The UNTFHS capacity building programme also has relevance to the USAID funded climate change adaptation initiative, and as a result, this capacity building programme developed through the UNTFHS project is now also being rolled out in three Community Councils in the Botha Bothe, Leribe and Taba Tseka Districts. The first capacity building workshop was held in July 2013 in the Matsoku Community Council (C01) (Leribe District). The capacity building workshops in the Nqoe Community Council (B03) (Botha Bothe District) and Tenesolo Community Council (K01) (Thaba Tseka District) are scheduled for September 2013.