

COVID-19 RELIEF PROGRESS

Following the declaration of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a global pandemic, the Government of Lesotho responded to the World Health Organization's outcry for control of the virus spread by announcing a nationwide lockdown that unfortunately adversely affected the private sector.

Covid-19 Relief Fund

To mitigate the adverse effect of the national lockdown, the GoL launched the Private Sector Covid-19 Relief Fund through the Lesotho Enterprise Assistance Program (LEAP) within the Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification Project (PSCEDP). The fund has been allocated a total of M 50 000 000.00 (M 50 million) with initial M 20 000 000.00 (M 20 million) released to the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

To date, a total of M 7,565,000.00 has been disbursed to 772 formal sector businesses for all districts with additional 248 applications of the formal sector amounting to M 1,240,000.00 in progress. A total of M3,239,000.00 has been disbursed to 6 478 informal sector businesses covering the districts of Maseru, Berea and Butha-Buthe. The data for Leribe and Qacha's Nek is being processed while data for the remaining districts of Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing, Mophale's Hoek, and Mafeteng has not been received from Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing for processing.

Food Distribution Packages

The government further initiated the food distribution package program through the Food Management Unit (FMU). With a fund of M15 000 000.00 released from government, food packages comprising 12.5kg of mealie-meal and 5kg of beans have reached 19,252 recipients across all districts in Lesotho in the first phase of these initiative. Purchases of these food (maize and beans) was done specifically from local farmers, with the total amount of payment to Basotho farmers summing up to M4, 158, 785.15 to date, and payment to 12 farmers amounting

to M208, 816.40 still in progress. Purchases of maize (and its grinding) and beans from local farmers continues in order to continue with the second phase of this program. Total payments made from this fund sum up to M5, 950, 826.82 with a total of M458, 296.15 committed.