



Sesotho Media & Development

Linakeng Street, House 15, Maseru East

P.O. Box 7080, Maseru 100

Lesotho

Telephone: +266 22321446

E-mail: info@sesothomedia.org

**Funded by
the European Union**

NDICI/2025/484490 - 001

Sesotho Media & Development (SM&D) is implementing the "**Transforming Gender Norms and Strengthening Domestic Violence Laws for Inclusive Protection Across Lesotho**" project, funded by the European Union (EU) under contract NDICI/2025/48490. This three-year initiative (2026 - 2028) aims to promote gender equality, protect vulnerable populations, and strengthen legal frameworks in Lesotho.

Sesotho Media & Development intends to award a service contract for a **Research Consultant**. The Contract is opened to citizens/residents from both Lesotho and South Africa. Tender documents and additional information should be requested between **17th October 2025 to 24th October 2025** from info@sesothomedia.org

Deadline: Submissions of applications is **06th November 2025**.

Terms of Reference for Research Consultancy

Research Study for "Transforming Gender Norms and Strengthening Domestic Violence Laws for Inclusive Protection Across Lesotho" Project

1. Background and Context

1.1 Programme Overview

Sesotho Media & Development (SM&D) is implementing the "Transforming Gender Norms and Strengthening Domestic Violence Laws for Inclusive Protection Across Lesotho" project, funded by the European Union (EU) under contract NDICI/2025/48490. This three-year initiative (2026-2028) aims to promote gender equality, protect vulnerable populations, and strengthen legal frameworks in Lesotho.

1.2 Project Rationale

Lesotho faces significant challenges in addressing gender-based violence and protecting women and children. Key 2025 data highlights the need for urgent intervention:

- **Gender Inequality Index:** Lesotho ranks 144 out of 162 countries, indicating severe disparities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic participation.
- **Global Gender Gap:** Ranked 87 out of 156 countries, reflecting inequalities in political empowerment, economic opportunity, education, and health.
- **Violence Prevalence:** 86% of women report experiencing lifetime physical and/or intimate partner violence, one of the highest rates globally.
- **Legal Implementation Gap:** Despite the Counter Domestic Violence Act, 2022, awareness and implementation remain critically low.

1.3 Project Focus Areas

The project targets hard-to-reach communities, including rural mountain districts, remote villages, and marginalized populations with limited access to legal services, law enforcement, and information. It aims to bridge the gap between legislative frameworks and practical protection through:

- Capacity building for duty bearers across multiple sectors.
- Community awareness campaigns using traditional and digital media.
- Strengthening reporting mechanisms and support services.
- Promoting behavioral change and challenging harmful gender norms.
- Enhancing coordination among law enforcement, justice, and social service sectors.

1.4 Purpose of the Consultancy

The research consultancy will conduct a comprehensive study within the first two months of the project (November-December 2025) to establish initial benchmarks and provide evidence-based insights to

inform project implementation. This study is not a baseline but a focused assessment to guide early project activities, resource allocation, and strategic decision-making.

2. Objectives

2.1 Primary Objective

To conduct a comprehensive research study within the first two months of the project (November-December 2025) to establish initial benchmarks and provide actionable recommendations to shape the implementation of the "Transforming Gender Norms and Strengthening Domestic Violence Laws for Inclusive Protection Across Lesotho" project.

2.2 Specific Objectives

2.2.1 Assessment of Duty Bearers

- Assess initial knowledge, attitudes, and practices among key duty bearers regarding the Counter Domestic Violence Act, 2022, including:
 - **Law Enforcement:** Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) officers at national, district, and community policing levels.
 - **Justice Sector:** Magistrates, prosecutors, public defenders, and court administrators.
 - **Social Services:** Social workers, child protection officers, and counselors.
 - **Local Government:** Chiefs, village leaders, community councils, and district administrators.
 - **Health Sector:** Medical personnel involved in forensic evidence collection and survivor care.
- Evaluate institutional capacity, resource availability, and systemic barriers to effective implementation.
- Identify training needs, gaps in understanding, and areas requiring technical support.

2.2.2 Community Awareness Assessment

- Measure initial awareness levels regarding domestic violence legislation, survivor rights, and available support services across target communities, disaggregated by:
 - **Gender:** Male, female, and non-binary individuals.
 - **Age Groups:** Youth (15-24), adults (25-59), elderly (60+).
 - **Geographic Location:** Urban centers, peri-urban areas, rural villages, mountain communities.
 - **Socioeconomic Status:** Income levels, education attainment, employment status.
 - **Vulnerability Factors:** Disability, HIV status, single-parent households, displaced populations.
- Assess the reach and penetration of existing information channels (mass media, digital platforms, traditional communication).

2.2.3 Data Collection for Initial Indicators

- Establish initial measurements for key performance indicators:
 - **Legal Framework Indicators:**
 - Percentage of duty bearers demonstrating comprehensive knowledge of the Counter Domestic Violence Act, 2022 (starting point: 0% in 2025).
 - Number of trained law enforcement officers, magistrates, and social workers.
 - **Reporting and Response Indicators:**
 - Reported domestic violence cases to LMPS (disaggregated by district, type of violence, survivor demographics).
 - Arrest rates, investigation completion rates, and quality of evidence collection.
 - Court case completions, conviction rates, and protection order issuances.
 - **Community Engagement Indicators:**
 - Reach of existing mass media (radio, television, print) and social media channels.
 - Attendance at community gatherings and awareness sessions.
 - **Survivor Support Indicators:**
 - Availability and accessibility of support services (shelters, counseling, legal aid).
 - Functionality of referral pathways.

2.2.4 Evidence-Based Recommendations

- Provide actionable, context-specific recommendations to enhance:
 - Capacity building strategies for duty bearers.
 - Awareness campaign design, messaging, and channel selection.
 - Policy enforcement mechanisms and accountability frameworks.
 - Resource allocation priorities.
 - Community engagement approaches that respect cultural sensitivities.

3. Scope of Work

3.1 Methodology Development

3.1.1 Research Design

The consultant will design a mixed-methods research approach, including:

- **Quantitative Component:**
 - Structured household surveys in target communities.
 - Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) surveys for duty bearers.
 - Analysis of administrative data from LMPS, courts, social services, and health facilities.
- **Qualitative Component:**
 - In-depth interviews with key informants (20-25 interviews) including policymakers, NGO representatives, traditional leaders, and service providers.
 - Focus group discussions (3-5 FGDs) with community members, survivors (with ethical safeguards), youth groups, and men's groups.
 - Observational research of service delivery points and community meetings.

3.1.2 Sampling Strategy

- Develop a stratified sampling approach ensuring representation across:
 - All 3 regions (Northern, Central, Southern) of Lesotho, with oversampling in hard-to-reach areas.
 - Urban-rural distribution reflecting national demographics.
 - Gender, age, and socioeconomic diversity.
- Use a cross-sectional survey design to capture initial status.

3.1.3 Data Collection Tools

- Design culturally appropriate, trauma-informed data collection instruments in English and Sesotho.
- Develop survey questionnaires, interview guides, FGD protocols, and observation checklists.
- Pilot test all instruments with diverse respondent groups and refine based on feedback.
- Ensure tools align with WHO ethical guidelines for GBV research.

3.1.4 Ethical Considerations

- Obtain ethical clearance from relevant authorities in Lesotho.
- Develop informed consent procedures with protections for vulnerable populations.
- Establish safety protocols for researchers and participants, including referral pathways for survivors.
- Ensure data confidentiality, anonymity, and secure storage in compliance with EU GDPR.

3.2 Data Collection Phase

3.2.1 Research Phase (Months 1-2, November-December 2025)

- **Secondary Data Review:**
 - Review UN Women Gender Inequality Index, World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap reports, Lesotho DHS, LMPS crime statistics, court records, and relevant NGO/academic literature.
- **Primary Data Collection:**
 - **Household Surveys:** Conduct face-to-face surveys in selected communities with trained enumerators.
 - **Duty Bearer Assessments:** Administer KAP surveys and conduct interviews with representatives from LMPS, judiciary, ministries, local government, and traditional councils.
 - **Community Focus Groups:** Facilitate discussions on perceptions of domestic violence, legal protections, barriers to justice, and cultural factors.
 - **Media Landscape Mapping:** Assess current information channels (radio, television, social media, community meetings).

3.3 Analysis and Reporting

3.3.1 Data Processing and Management

- Clean and validate quantitative data using statistical software (SPSS, STATA, or R).
- Transcribe, translate (if necessary), and code qualitative data using thematic analysis software (NVivo or Atlas.ti).
- Ensure data quality through systematic checks and triangulation.

3.3.2 Statistical Analysis

- Conduct descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means).
- Calculate disaggregated results by gender, age, location, and other variables.

3.3.3 Qualitative Analysis

- Employ thematic analysis to identify patterns and narratives.
- Use qualitative data to provide contextual understanding of quantitative findings.

3.3.4 Alignment with International Frameworks

- Map findings to:
 - EU Global Europe Indicators (e.g., #2.12: Individuals benefiting from GBV interventions).
 - EU Gender Action Plan III (indicator 5.2 on combating GBV).
 - SDGs 5 (Gender Equality) and 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

4. Deliverables

4.1 Inception Report

- **Timeline:** Within 1 week of contract signing (November 2025).
- **Page Length:** 10-15 pages (excluding annexes).
- **Contents:**
 - Executive summary of the consultancy approach.
 - Detailed research methodology and justification.
 - Work plan with timelines and milestones for November-December 2025.
 - Sampling strategy with sample size calculations.
 - Draft data collection tools (questionnaires, interview guides, FGD protocols).
 - Ethical considerations and risk mitigation strategies.
 - Stakeholder engagement plan.
 - Annexes: Literature review summary, informed consent templates, field team training agenda.

4.2 Final Assessment Report

- **Timeline:** End of December 2025.
- **Page Length:** 50-70 pages (excluding annexes).

- **Contents:**
 - Executive summary of key findings.
 - Introduction contextualizing the study.
 - Methodology detailing implementation, sample achieved, and limitations.
 - Findings organized by research objectives:
 - Duty bearer knowledge, attitudes, and practices.
 - Community awareness levels.
 - Initial indicator measurements with disaggregation.
 - Capacity assessment results by sector.
 - Media and communication landscape analysis.
 - Data tables, charts, and visual representations.
 - Recommendations for project implementation.
 - Proposed benchmarks for 2025-2028.
 - Annexes: Data tables, qualitative excerpts, bibliography, fieldwork documentation.

4.3 Data Sets

- **Timeline:** Submitted with Final Assessment Report (December 2025).
- **Format:** Excel (.xlsx) or SPSS/STATA with codebook.
- **Contents:**
 - Clean, anonymized quantitative data.
 - Variable labels and codebook.
 - Metadata on sampling, data collection dates, and quality issues.
 - Compliance with EU GDPR and Lesotho data protection regulations.

4.4 Stakeholder Presentation

- **Timeline:** Early January 2026.
- **Duration:** 1-hour presentation plus 30-minute Q&A.
- **Format:** In-person in Maseru (with hybrid option).
- **Contents:**
 - PowerPoint (20-25 slides) covering study objectives, methodology, key findings, and recommendations.
 - Handout with executive summary and infographic.
 - Facilitated discussion on findings and implications.
- **Audience:** SM&D team, EU Delegation, government officials, civil society, community representatives.

5. Duration and Timeline

- **Total Duration:** 2 months (November-December 2026).
- **Phased Timeline:**
 - **Week 1:** Contract finalization, inception activities, stakeholder meetings, submission of Inception Report.

- **Weeks 2-3:** Secondary data review, tool finalization, ethical clearance, field team recruitment, training, and pilot testing.
- **Weeks 4-7:** Data collection (surveys, interviews, FGDs, observations).
- **Week 8:** Data analysis, report writing, submission of Final Assessment Report.
- **Early January 2026:** Stakeholder presentation.

6. Qualifications and Requirements

6.1 Academic Qualifications

- Advanced degree (Master's or PhD) in gender studies, social sciences, law, public health, or related field.
- Specialization in GBV, human rights law, or social research methodologies.

6.2 Professional Experience

- Minimum 7 years in GBV research, policy analysis, or program evaluation.
- Experience in sub-Saharan Africa, preferably Lesotho or Southern Africa.
- Proven track record in mixed-methods research and working with vulnerable populations.

6.3 Technical Skills

- Master of laws (LLM) or higher in Human Rights or any related field.
- Expertise in research design, quantitative analysis (SPSS, STATA, or R), qualitative analysis (NVivo or Atlas.ti), report writing, and data visualization.
- Understanding of M&E frameworks and indicator development.