



SCHOOL HEALTH & NUTRITION FACILITY

Progress Report 2024 (August-December)



This public-facing report includes progress on the roll-out of the initiative from the moment of its approval, August 2024, until December 2024. It will be published on the GPE website covering the reporting period of the previous calendar year and will include:

1. How many work plans have been approved and from the approved work plans, how many are on track¹

	Country	Workplan approval date	Expected closing date	Workplan performance rating*			
				Jan 25	July 25	March 26	Sept 26
1	Lesotho	21 Nov 2024	August 2026	Satisfactory			
2	Kenya	January 2025 TBC	August 2026	Satisfactory			

2. Summary of activities at global and country level which have taken place in the previous calendar year cycle (see details below).

Global level:

- The Technical Assistance Facility (TAF) in Kenya, Lesotho, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Zambia has been recognized as the inception phase of the School Meals Impact Accelerator (SMIA), an initiative endorsed during the second ministerial meeting of the School Meals Coalition Global Task Force in Nairobi on October 29, 2024. At this meeting, member states and partners agreed that a priority for 2025 would be focusing efforts and engagement on providing technical assistance to governments to help them fulfil their national commitments, leading to the development of the SMIA. This initiative, to be launched in 2025, aims to design and scale sustainable, home-grown school meal programs, targeting an additional 100 million children and young people with nutritious meals by 2030.
- A Coordination Cell has been created for the inception phase of the SMIA initiative to ensure a more cohesive and supportive approach across the partners and countries involved. The Coordination Cell² is being chaired by WFP during the inception phase and membership includes key partners involved in providing technical assistance support to national school meal programs across the selected focus countries.
- Since its inaugural meeting in September 2024, the Coordination Cell has convened five additional times, meeting monthly to assess progress in Kenya and Lesotho and collectively shape the approach for Indonesia, the Philippines, and Zambia.
- The Coordination Cell has made significant progress in defining methodologies and approaches, capturing key learnings to streamline and support the scale-up of strategic technical assistance across a broader range of countries. The Cell has already begun developing an innovative partnership model that leverages the capacities, expertise, and networks of partners both within

¹ To assess the workplan performance rating please refer to the guidance below. If the workplan has been recently approved, and no activities have taken place (according to plan), then use "Satisfactory." Please provide below a short note if the latest rating for a workplan is moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, or highly unsatisfactory. Focus on what the key bottlenecks may be, and if there is something the Secretariat can do to support. If the work plan hasn't started implementation use N/A

² Coordination Cell partners may be expanded at a later stage to include other critical SMIA partners, including but not limited to the Rockefeller Foundation, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Sustainable Financing Initiative, Research Consortium, the Brazilian Center for Excellence against Hunger, the International Development Research Centre, WFP and GPE.

and beyond the Coordination Cell. This model is designed to effectively address governments' needs while enhancing the sustainability and impact of national school meal programs.

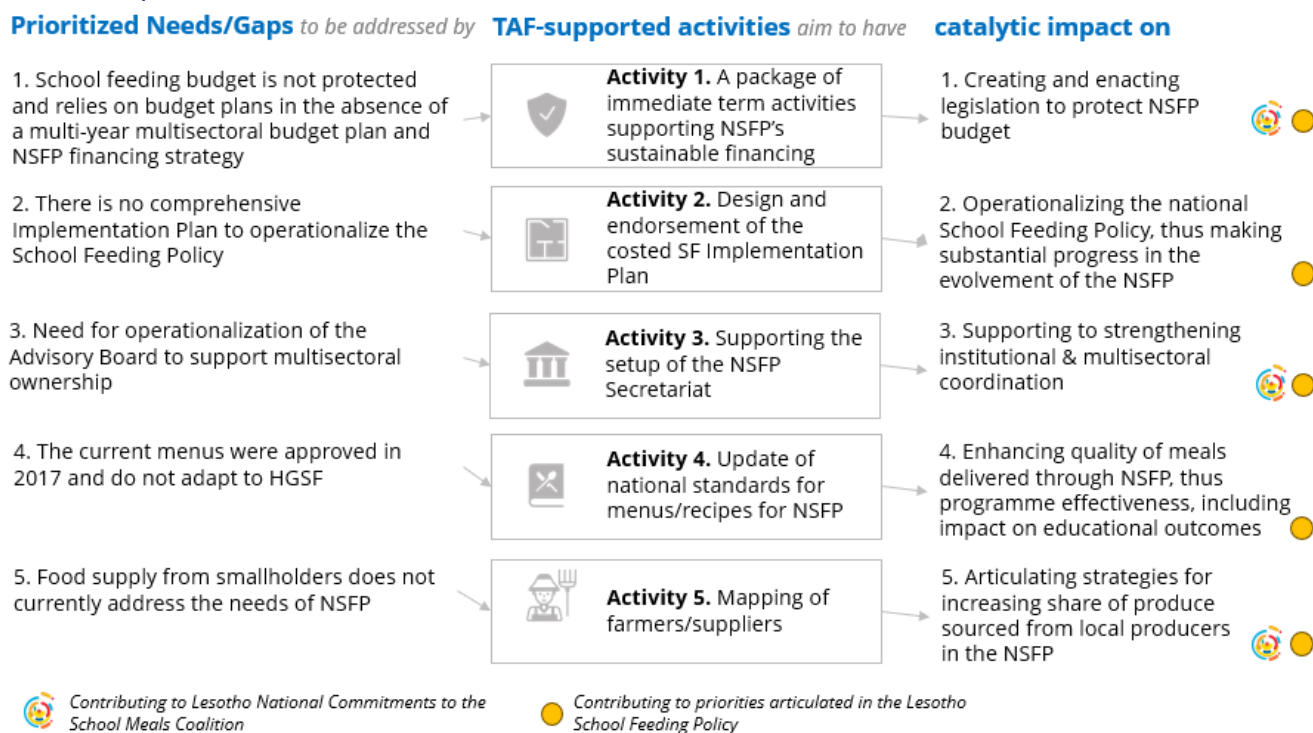
Lesotho

Sustained investment in education has positioned Lesotho with one of the highest literacy rates in the region, though this progress is currently on the decline. School feeding has become a key component of Lesotho's education agenda, with the 2016–2026 Education Sector Plan recognizing it as a crucial policy to attract all school-age children to basic education. Similarly, the Lesotho Compact (2024–2026), developed through an inclusive, government-led process that incorporated significant contributions from the local education group emphasizes enhancing primary and lower secondary education quality and efficiency to improve learning outcomes. Within this, one of the outcomes focuses on integrating school health and nutrition into national social protection programs, acknowledging that good nutrition is crucial for better learning.

The government of Lesotho understands the significant role that school meals play not only in advancing human capital, but also in promoting socio-economic progress, supporting sustainable food systems, and improving education, child nutrition, health, and gender equality. Acknowledging the challenges posed by malnutrition, the government is committed to tackling this issue through broad collaboration across various government agencies, public sector entities, and the private sector, particularly in the food, health, social protection, and education sectors. As a result, to support the Government's priority directions outlined in the 2023 School Feeding Policy, GPE and WFP are working on the School Health & Nutrition Technical Assistance Facility with activities that will strengthen the national school meals program and improve education outcomes

Lesotho's school feeding program faces critical challenges in securing sustainable financing, effective policy implementation, and ensuring high-quality, locally sourced meals. While government funding has increased, it remains unstable and insufficient, highlighting the need for immediate-term activities to support financial sustainability. A costed Implementation Plan is essential to translate the National School Feeding Policy into action, ensuring coordinated and systematic execution. Strengthening institutional structures, such as the creation of a multisectoral Advisory Board and an autonomous Secretariat, is key to improving governance and long-term program success. Additionally, updating national menu standards will enhance nutritional impact, considering Lesotho's triple burden of malnutrition. Given the country's commitment to sourcing 80% of food locally, a structured approach to mapping supply and demand is crucial. The activities prioritized for the current TAF work plan will be catalytic in addressing current educational gaps, ensuring financial stability, improving coordination, and enhancing the program's effectiveness in delivering nutritious meals to schoolchildren.

Figure 1. Why TAF-supported activities are considered to have catalytic effects on the needs prioritized by the Government and stakeholders.



To address these current gaps and based on evidence collected as part of the desk review (the country analysis), from 16–27 September, a joint WFP–GPE inception mission was conducted in Maseru, Lesotho. This marked the first phase of collaboration between the Government of Lesotho, WFP, and GPE in implementing the Facility. The work plan was developed based on evidence collected as part of the desk review (Context Analysis) and during the inception mission.

The mission was structured in two main phases:

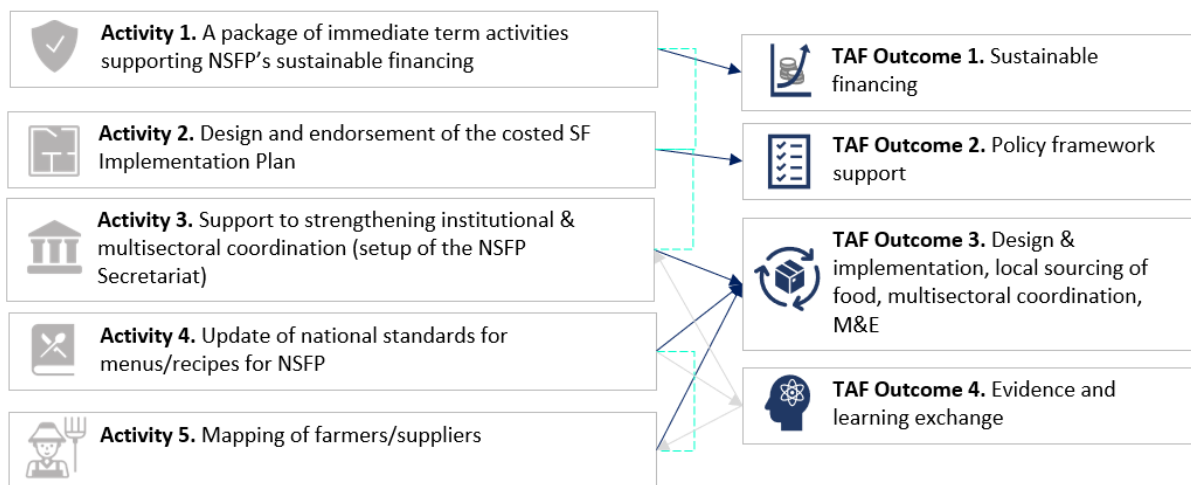
- **Phase 1. Stakeholder Engagement:** Meetings were held with government counterparts and key stakeholders to gather critical information and feedback on the country's priorities, achievements, challenges, and opportunities related to school health and nutrition.
- **Phase 2. Stakeholder Workplan Design and Prioritization Workshop:** Led by MOET in collaboration with WFP, the workshop engaged stakeholders from various sectors and entities to achieve consensus on opportunities and challenges and to identify priority activities for inclusion in the Facility Workplan. Group discussions resulted in a long list of opportunities and gaps, of which a selected list of top five priorities, presented in the Figure below, is now proposed for inclusion in the Facility for implementation to start in January 2025. [Three surveys](#) were circulated to participants: one at the beginning of day 1 to understand expectations, and two at the end of day 1 and day 2 to gather feedback. For a detailed analysis of the results, please refer to Annex VI. 97% of participants strongly agreed that the workshop, particularly the group discussions, helped build consensus on achievements, opportunities, challenges, and gaps in the National School Feeding Program. Additionally, 100% of participants reported being very satisfied or satisfied with the overall workshop, indicating it met its objectives and expectations.

The consultations revealed strong cross-sectoral support for school nutrition and a shared understanding from different Ministries that school feeding needs to be approached holistically, involving different stakeholders in the broader education and school health ecosystem. The meetings

helped clarify the objectives of the TAF and reaffirm its alignment with the goals of the National School Feeding Program (NSFP). Key information collected during the consultations contributed to the completion of the Context Analysis. Lastly, WFP’s role within the local education group was strengthened through meetings with both UNICEF and the Local Council of NGOs (LCN), the current and incoming GPE coordinating agencies for Lesotho. Both UNICEF and the LCN (an NGO umbrella organization) will play key roles in linking the implementation of TAF to larger and longer-term programs on the ground, both GPE-funded and funded by other donors. Beyond this, the nature of the incoming coordinating agency (LCN) will be key for advocacy, partner analysis, and the community participation aspect. The discussions also unveiled potential partnership opportunities related to SHN, aligned with TAF and the commitments of the School Meals Coalition.

The prioritized TAF activities will contribute in the short term to achieving TAF-defined outcomes as follows:

Figure 2. Correlation between Workplan Activities and Outcomes of the TAF



These priorities focus on supporting the National School Feeding Program’s sustainable financing, operationalizing the 2024 National School Feeding Policy, strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education and Training and multisectoral coordination among key Government entities and stakeholders, updating menus and recipes, and supporting evidence generation to link the local production to procurement for the program.

Terms of Reference (TORs) are being developed to clearly articulate the processes, capabilities, and resources required for the implementation of these prioritized activities. They will also outline the roles of national partners in the execution and ownership of outcomes, and the engagement of civil society networks, particularly the local education group and the coordinating agency, in all discussions and technical working groups. Support to existing coordination structures, including technical and advisory bodies, will be provided and focused activity implementation under the leadership of key ministries ensured.

Technical assistance in these 12–18 months will contribute to addressing immediate needs, however, the process has also produced mid-term and long-term priorities for the improvement of the program in the future.

Kenya

Kenya has a long-standing commitment to school meals, which has been a cornerstone of their education and food security efforts for decades. The initiation of school meal activities in 1980 in collaboration with partners marked a significant development, evolving into a pivotal intervention supporting the country's educational progress. Kenya adopted free primary education as a government policy in 2003, and building human capital through quality education is a central pillar of Vision 2030. The 2018 National Pre-primary Education Policy highlights the importance of providing meals to students and ensuring they learn in a child-friendly environment. The policy recognizes health and nutrition as critical factors in a child's holistic development and learning capabilities. Furthermore, findings from the National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement for Grade 3 and the Monitoring Learner Achievement for Form 2 (Grade 10) show that students who receive regular meals at school perform better academically than those who do not. Similarly, students who have regular meals at home (at least two or more) outperform those who have fewer meals.

However, despite significant progress in educational achievements, regional disparities still exist. Under President Ruto's leadership, school meals have become a top priority for advancing development, education, and environmental goals. The President has set an ambitious target to scale up the program, aiming to reach 10 million children by 2030 and achieve universal coverage.

The government's strategy goes beyond scaling up the coverage as Kenya has committed to making its school meal program environmentally sustainable and supportive of the local food system. Kenya's National School Meals Program is at a critical juncture, requiring strengthened governance, better coordination, and sustainable implementation strategies to support its scale-up. The National School Meals Coalition serves as the key platform for aligning efforts, but it needs a well-structured governance framework and a dedicated Secretariat to drive effective decision-making and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, a comprehensive mapping of school feeding initiatives could provide essential data to inform planning and ensure no child is left behind. Clean cooking solutions are another crucial component, as reliance on traditional cooking methods poses environmental, health, and efficiency challenges, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions.

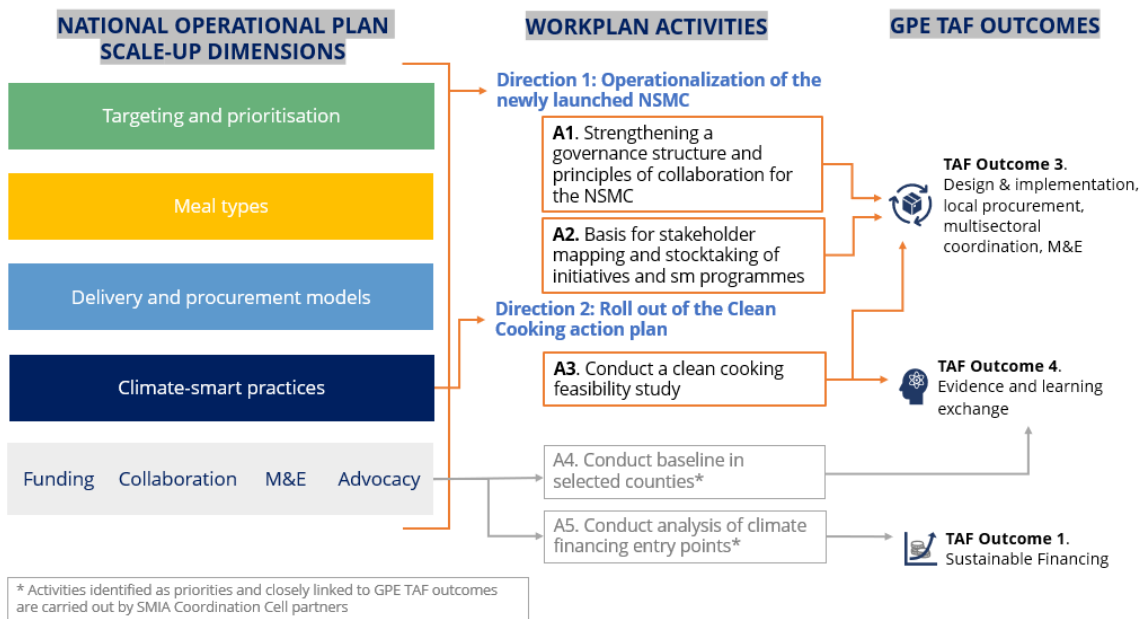
An Operational Plan for School Meal Programme Scale-up (2024–2030), developed by the government through a consultative process with contributions from various stakeholders and government sectors, provides a roadmap for achieving these goals in a planet-friendly manner. GPE is currently providing support to the Operational Plan through the School Health & Nutrition Technical Assistance Facility.

As part of the Facility roll-out, the identification of Country Priorities [Inception Phase] was grounded in the national Operational Plan and the design of the in-country inception mission (October 2024) was aligned with nationally significant events, leveraging the momentum to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. The mission aimed to identify which activities in the Operational Plan needed to be prioritized over the next 12–18 months. During the mission, the National School Meals Coalition was launched, providing a platform for further consultations with diverse stakeholders and capitalizing on the momentum to drive meaningful discussions and actions.

Based on clearly identified priorities by the government, a dedicated dialogue with the Clean Cooking Working Group and government representatives helped identify the **two directions and three (+2) activities included in this work plan.**

The activities prioritized in the short-term work plan are catalytic, addressing coordination gaps, improving data-driven decision-making, and ensuring the program's environmental and operational sustainability. They are also designed to contribute to the following TAF-defined outcomes

ACTIVITIES PRIORITIZED DURING NSMC Meeting (Oct'2024)



Two directions were identified to be included in the GPE TAF support:

- **Direction 1: Operationalization of the National School Meals Coalition (NSMC).** This Direction includes providing support to the Government in facilitating a consultative process to establish a robust governance structure and principles of collaboration for the NSMC. WFP as the Secretariat for the NSMC will be facilitating those consultations and assist in coordinating stakeholders, organizing meetings, and ensuring follow-up on key activities. These efforts aim to foster efficient decision-making and promote inclusive and collaborative stakeholder engagement.
- **Direction 2. Roll out of the Clean Cooking action plan:** Within the framework of the NSMC, the Clean Cooking Technical Working Group developed a 12-month Action Plan. Key activities from this plan include creating a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the suitability of various cooking technologies for school environments across Kenya. This study builds on a detailed compilation of existing research and an ongoing baseline study supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

During the consultation, two additional priority activities (Activities 4 and 5 in the graphic above) were identified to advance the Clean Cooking Action Plan. Activity 4 involves conducting a baseline study on the current state of clean cooking infrastructure nationwide. This activity, already underway, is being supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. Activity 5 focuses on analyzing climate financing entry points, with ongoing discussions with the Sustainable Financing Initiative to secure funding for its implementation.

Terms of Reference (TORs) are being developed to clearly articulate the processes, capabilities, and resources required for the implementation of the TAF prioritized activities.

3. Reporting on global results framework (aggregate of country results), including any specific results that mainstreamed or targeted gender. This may also

include any qualitative narrative reporting and analysis needed to unpack results.

In the previous calendar year, we strengthened stakeholder engagement and initiated the Technical Assistance Facility through activities in Kenya, Lesotho, as well as the global level. These efforts have targeted key outcomes such as sustainable financing, operationalization of policies, capacity building, and multisectoral coordination, which align with the TAF's global goals.

Global Level Results

- **Recognition of the Technical Assistance Facility as the inception phase of the SMIA:** At the global level, the official endorsement and recognition of the TAF in Kenya, Lesotho, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Zambia as the inception phase of the SMIA during the second ministerial meeting of the School Meals Coalition Global Task Force in Nairobi marked a key development in the effort to scale sustainable school meal programs.
- **Inception of the SMIA Coordination Cell:** A Coordination Cell was formed to streamline efforts and ensure cohesive support for countries receiving technical assistance. The Cell, chaired by WFP, has met monthly since September 2024 to function as an information-sharing, learning and coordination platform for the technical assistance facility in Kenya and Lesotho, while also planning interventions in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Zambia. The Coordination Cell is focusing on defining standardized methodologies and approaches for delivering technical assistance, ensuring the replication of successful models in various contexts.
- **WFP-HQ Implementation Team:** WFP has established an internal Implementation Team to facilitate the implementation of the TAF in focus countries and provide dedicated program and partnership coordination support to partners active in the inception phase.
- **Development of Methodologies and Approaches:** The inception phase in TAF countries was an opportunity to define the partnership dynamics, establish a standard operating procedure for information sharing and decision-making, and clarify roles and responsibilities. With strong support from the WFP-HQ Implementation team, template structures and guidance for creating and finalizing key documents, including baselines, government briefs, reports, and work plans essential for the approval and implementation of this project have been developed over the past few months. For a more detailed overview of the methodology and structure applied, please refer to *Annex IV*.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** The TAF has brought together stakeholders from the education, health, agriculture, nutrition, and climate sectors to foster a more integrated approach to school feeding.

Country level

Since the global Theory of Change (TOC) applies once the implementation phase begins, the inception phase focuses on selecting activities through a thorough consultation process while drafting country-specific TOCs. The global TOC is being adapted to each country's context, with country-specific results frameworks defined in the respective work plans. As the global TOC primarily addresses implementation, the groundwork laid during the inception phase is crucial for shaping future results and for the articulation of the expected outcomes. Currently, a draft TOC has been completed for Lesotho, and the process for Kenya is underway.

4. Challenges, successes or insight stories

During the mission, several key factors emerged as essential for the TAF to maximize opportunities arising from this collaboration in both countries. There is strong support and momentum for school

meals across multiple government sectors (education, agriculture, climate, and others) and among stakeholders and partners. This enthusiasm brings both opportunities and challenges, particularly the need for better coordination to ensure efforts are effective and not duplicated. Effective internal multisectoral coordination is critical to achieving the 2030 goals while securing sustainable financing remains a key priority for both countries.

Managing expectations between ministries, particularly when engaging with multiple stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, presents a significant challenge. Ensuring that all relevant ministries remain engaged, even when their specific contributions may not be prioritized, is essential for fostering inter-ministerial ownership and a sense of joint action. The key is to create a collaborative environment where each ministry feels involved in the process while recognizing that the Ministry of Education may ultimately make final decisions. The ability to balance these dynamics will be important to managing potential tensions and ensuring a cohesive approach to decision-making.

In Kenya, the government has developed a robust national operational plan with clear priorities for scaling up the program. Translating these priorities into actionable steps for effective implementation is essential. To this end, the government has established the National School Meals Coalition (NSMC), chaired by the Ministry of Education and comprising a wide range of partners from various sectors, ensuring expertise from education, agriculture, health, and finance is effectively supporting the implementation of the operational plan. WFP acts as the secretariat of the NSMC. Through the NSMC, partners can contribute their unique expertise and assistance in a coordinated manner.

The first draft of the 2025 work plan of the NSMC has already been developed, identifying priority workstreams and the leading organizations responsible for each activity. The activities supported through the GPE TAF have been integrated into this plan, ensuring alignment and providing opportunities to leverage those for further impact. Over the next month, concrete timelines and actions will be developed by each workstream lead.

However, Kenya's commitment goes beyond scaling up the program; it also emphasizes ensuring that this growth is environmentally sustainable and beneficial to local food systems. Kenya has pledged to incorporate planet-friendly practices into its school meal program, minimizing its environmental footprint. With this approach, Kenya has the potential to serve as a model for other countries in the region and beyond, seeking to improve their programs. This will require strong baselines and learning frameworks to ensure the process, and the successes can be measured.

In Lesotho, beyond identifying alternative funding sources, it is crucial to assess current spending, set realistic goals, and leverage insights from partners like the World Bank. The TAF also presents significant potential to unlock resources from initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund and the GPE System Transformation Grant, while also fostering opportunities for private sector collaboration.

In Lesotho, a success factor has been the high level of technical collaboration between Government stakeholders and local and international development partners. Through the School Feeding Coordinating Body, a number of stakeholders meet to discuss school feeding issues and challenges at the technical level and provide joint solutions and develop joint initiatives. This level of deep collaboration and partnership should be fostered and incentivised, and activities under TAF are designed to feed into the established and institutionalised coordination mechanisms, to enhance sustainability.

Furthermore, the national school feeding program in Lesotho has a long history (established in 1965), and has, in one way or another, been a part of the life of every Basotho. The program is recognised as an important part of the education offered in Lesotho at all levels, and this greatly benefits activities under TAF.

5. Lessons learned and adaptations to date

The Technical Assistance Facility is the backbone of the SMIA initiative, making it crucial to capture the process, learnings, and approach taken during the piloting phase in Lesotho and Kenya. A series of lessons learned have been identified also in discussion with GPE, especially around optimizing mission planning; enhancing field visit effectiveness; leveraging the baseline review for collaboration; strengthening pre-mission engagement with GPE coordinating agencies/grant agents; and reflecting on Coordination Cell members' contributions and governance considerations.

- **Optimizing mission planning and execution:** Additional planning time is crucial for successful mission execution, ensuring meetings are confirmed and information is available. As the number of TAF countries grows, flexibility in scheduling will allow for prioritizing the convenience of ministries, GPE, and WFP Country Offices. Although everything was successfully managed and completed, the short planning period in Lesotho highlighted the need for more thoughtful timing and preparation in future missions.
- **Enhancing field visit effectiveness:** While initial plans were made to gather extensive logistics information on school meal programs, discussions with stakeholders were sometimes ad hoc³. In the future, before visiting schools, engaging with the school feeding coordinator beforehand would allow for more focused visits and better information gathering. School visits were highly valuable and continuing them in a non-disruptive manner should be maintained to maximize their effectiveness.
- **Leveraging the baseline review for collaboration:** The baseline review has proven to be a valuable tool for both GPE and WFP, not only for mission planning but also as a potential means of engaging other Coordination Cell members and SMIA partners. Emphasizing the review as a vehicle for collaboration can reinforce its utility in planning missions and identifying key stakeholders to engage with during the inception phase.
- **Strengthening pre-mission engagement with GPE coordinating agencies/grant agents:** Achieving synergy between GPE's work and TAF will require ongoing dialogue and updates between WFP and GPE coordinating agencies and grant agents. Looking ahead, it may be beneficial to establish stronger pre-mission engagement with these key counterparts to gain a better understanding of active and planned GPE grants in the country and activities in the education sector. This relationship-building effort could facilitate smoother collaboration before the mission begins. While the functionality of the local education groups and the responsiveness of coordinating agencies may vary, tailoring this approach for each country could reinforce coordination and strengthen partnerships.
- **Coordination Cell contributions:** As the TAF expands to other countries, it is crucial to increase the involvement of key partners to showcase how parallel efforts are coordinated with the facility's work. Currently, the coordination on the main technical and operational steps of the TAF takes place

3. Especially in Lesotho, discussions with stakeholders sometimes involved individuals who may not have been best positioned to provide the needed details on the gaps schools, teachers and children are facing. In the future, it may be beneficial to engage with the school feeding coordinator at the ministry beforehand to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the operations prior to visiting schools. This approach would allow for more focused field visits and effective information gathering through a combination of direct observation and ministry insights.

between GPE and WFP, but the potential for broader partner contributions should be explored as we scale the approach in Indonesia, the Philippines and Zambia. A growing interest is being observed among various Coordination Cell members in organizing country-focused meetings to coordinate and leverage the capacities of the Cell members in designing this project. This is especially true for countries like Indonesia and the Philippines, where partner presence and support activities are already more substantial.

For a more expanded overview of the lessons identified on the methodology and approach of the Inception Phase in the GPE TAF countries please refer to *Annex V. Lessons Learned*.

Surveys will be conducted with WFP TAF country offices to collect feedback on the coordination efforts and progress to date, as well as to inform the development of future work plans and the next steps in the project.

6. Risk management and reporting

A risk assessment, along with corresponding mitigation measures, was developed during the proposal stage for Kenya and Lesotho. Risks are continuously monitored throughout the project. As the project is currently in the inception phase, with implementation about to begin following the approval of country work plans, no significant risks have been identified thus far.

To address the in-country need for targeted capacity to ensure the sustainability and impact of the technical assistance facility project, dedicated Technical Assistance Lead/Facilitators are being hired in Lesotho. The in-country capacity in Kenya is higher, and the hiring of a Facilitator will be reviewed in Q2. So far the activities envisioned in the workplan are being carried out with available capacity. In close coordination with the GPE team and HQ-SMIA Implementation Team, these facilitators will oversee the design, coordination, and consolidation of strategic technical support to the governments, helping them achieve their vision for school meals. Additionally, they will assist the WFP Country Offices with high-level engagement with the government and key stakeholders in school health and nutrition.

The TA Lead/Coordinator will collaborate closely with the HQ-based TAF Implementation Team to ensure alignment with the overall approach and coordination with global partners. The role, its level, and the terms of reference are currently under discussion with the respective Country Office teams.

7. Budget expenditures (and the balance remaining on expenditures)

The following outlines a funds consumption report, allocating all current expenditures to the inception phase. *Actuals* represent expenditures that have already been incurred.

Budget Item	Amount	Actuals	Available
Total Project Cost	\$ 999,999.86	\$ 119,629.62	\$880,370.24



Photo caption and credit, Poppins Regular, 10 pts,
Students in class at the Nyamachaki Primary School,
Nyeri County

Credit; GPE/Kelley Lynch