

LHWP promotes sustainable natural resources management and improved livelihoods in the highlands

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) falls within the Drakensberg Maloti highlands recognised in the region and internationally for their majesty and good quality water. Sustaining this water quality is a key component of the Project's environmental management programme.

Over the years, improper farming practices and over grazing have led to soil erosion significantly compromising the wetlands which are the main sources of water in the Project area and in other parts of Lesotho.

The LHDA's Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) programme which was launched in 2019 in the Phase II Project area, focuses on wetlands and rangelands rehabilitation.

Removing brush and alien invasive plants improves grazing, strengthens livelihoods



Brush control Motšeremeli, Mokhotlong

It entails protecting, conserving and restoring wetlands, conserving and promoting sustainable range management, preventing and controlling soil erosion and controlling pollution. The programme also promotes stakeholder participation and alternative sustainable livelihoods.

LHDA is partnering with grazing associations, community leaders and communities in the LHWP catchment areas to remove brush and other alien invasive plants as part of implementing

the ICM programme.

Grazing associations play a key role in promoting the adoption of sustainable rangelands use and in protection of rehabilitated and deferred rangelands. For example, in the Motšeremeli area, the Mofolaneng Grazing Association organises high density rotational grazing to enable regrowth and increase the productivity of pastures and it oversees adherence to set regulations and management of the area.

Rotational grazing improves grazing, protects wetlands

“Since we started practicing rotational grazing patterns through this initiative, we no longer have to buy or produce fodder for our

livestock as we graze on the much improved rangelands with better quality forage. We encourage other communities to embark on this practice which in the long run will benefit all,” Mr Telang Leleka, Chairperson of the Mofolaneng Grazing Association states.

Chief Relebohile Lethunya of Mofolaneng confirms that people are beginning to appreciate the rotational grazing methods. “Wetlands which had for years failed to accumulate run-off water from the surrounding mountain slopes and regulate release into our rivers and springs have been rehabilitated and our sources of water are able to retain water again. Our cattle in the past year produced more milk than they had in the recent past, thanks to this initiative,” Chief Lethunya confirms.

“The ICM initiative is being implemented to ensure that good quality water is available in the LHWP catchment areas, long term. We are integrating scientific methods with local communities’ knowledge of catchment management to reduce the human impact on the natural resources. By rehabilitating pastures we are also improving livelihoods of communities in the Project area. This is why the programme is being hailed as a success story,” Ntsoli Maiketso LHDA Divisional Manager for Phase II affirms.

1900 people employed
≥ 660 hectares rehabilitated
79 gabion structures built
M4.5m invested

The LHDA’s ICM initiative aligns with the Government of Lesotho’s **‘RE NOKA’ (WE ARE A RIVER)** ICM initiative intended to rehabilitate the degraded catchments across the country, launched in May 2021 by His Majesty King Letsie III.



Gabion structure Malubalube, Mokhotlong



Stone line construction Molalana, Mokhotlong