



LESOTHO

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



TRAVEL & INVESTOR GUIDE



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ABOUT LESOTHO

Standing among the Kingdom in the Sky's mountains, travelers are always overwhelmed by the scale and power of these mountains because for the longest time the mountains have shaped the lives of Basotho. In recent history, Lesotho started shaping the mountains to meet the humanity's ever-growing needs for clean water, power land and trade. This has led to Lesotho being the hub for a range of activities on land, on the snow and in the water.

Lesotho is famous for its spectacular scenic beauty branded by breath-taking mountain ranges, towering peaks, a rich variety of flora and fauna, crystal clear streams, surging waterfalls, diverse culture and a snow blanket seen high in the mountains in winter across the country and these features attract travel and exploration.

The mountains, landscape and high altitude lure bikers, 4X4 riders and hikers to explore, in search for adrenaline teasing challenges and adventure. As they traverse the country, they are spoiled for choice from a variety of crafts that are handmade by Basotho.

The itinerary for any visitor to Lesotho usually includes exploration of a wide variety of flora and fauna (some of which have never been found elsewhere in the world), beautiful rock formations and ancient rock paintings, bird watching an ancient creatures' footprints like the dinosaurs.

Create memories that will live with you forever by exploring routes on foot and enjoy the simple charms of traditional hospitality, local culture and stories told by the local guides and native Basotho men or women. The waters of Lesotho allow for canoeing, boating and fishing among a hive of other water-based activities. Do not miss out on the adventure that awaits in Lesotho.



THE ENGINEERING EXPLOITS

MOHALE DAM

Mohale dam is located almost 100km east of Maseru along a dramatic A3 road from Maseru that ranks as one of the country's most scenic roads which traverses a series of majestic slopes swathed in mane-like tufts of "moseea" thatching grass as it switchbacks through a trio of evocatively named mountain passes: the 2,263-metre Bushman's Pass, the 2,281 Molimo Nthuse ('God Help Me') Pass and the 2,633m Thaba Putsoa ('Blue Mountain') Pass.

Quick Facts:

- The tallest rock-fill concrete-face dam in Africa.
- 145-metre-high and was to impound the Senqunyane River, an important tributary of the Senqu (Orange), below its confluence with the Likalaneng.
- It was designed to divert water via a 32km-long subterranean tunnel to the more northeasterly Katse Dam. This one should be crowd puller, because the tunnel's uniqueness is that it operates as an automatic pressure tunnel, allowing water to flow to to Katse to augment the water level of Katse Dam

Mohale Travel Tips

Sleeping:

There are lodges, quest houses and hotels along the A3 route that offers comfortable en-suite and standard rooms for sleep overs including one located at Mohale which sits at a scenic location close to the Senqunyane River as it flows towards the dam

Tours/Activities:

Motor boating with excursions to the Thaba-Chitja Island

Paddle boating

There's also a kids' corner where they can keep busy with jumping castle, trampoline and mini pool.

A trip to Mohale Dam Is not complete without a horse ride





KATSE DAM

One of the most ambitious engineering projects ever undertaken in Southern Africa, Katse is the continent's second-largest double-curvature arch dam. It impounds a deep, squiggly, multi-tendrilled reservoir that extends back more than 30km along the Malibamat'so River.

Quick Facts:

- Katse Dam boasts an elegant 185m high double-curvature concrete arch wall with a 710m long crest.
- Has a total surface area of 38.5 square kilometres.
- Water from Katse is funnelled through an 82km underground tunnel into the Ash River near Clarens, South Africa, from where it flows along a succession of natural waterways into the Vaal Dam
- Katse Dam is home to the one and only commercial trout fish Production Company that exports one of the world's finest "Made in Africa" trout to Japan and South Africa.

Katse Travel Tips

Sleeping:

There are accommodation facilities in Katse area which offer affordable and comfortable accommodation. Katse Lodge is currently being revamped and will be in operation soonest.

Tours/Activities:

The highlight of a trip to Katse includes:

Tour of Katse Botanical Garden

A guided tour of the dam

Ensure you have a good camera because this route has a myriad of beautiful spot to take pictures of yourself and travel mates or those of iconic beautiful natural structures.

A trip to Katse also allows a visit to Bokong Nature Reserve, which flanks the A25 between Leribe and Katse.

Access: Katse Dam lies about 225km from Maseru. To get there follow the A1 northeast as far as Leribe, then turn southeast onto the A25 to Katse. Allow up to four hours for the direct drive. Regular public transport runs between Maseru and Katse via Leribe.

EXPERIENCE THE FLORAL SPLENDOR

Bokong, Sehonghong, Katse, Sehlabathebe Sani Top

Tyson's euryops (Sehlokoakoana se senyenyane)



Did you know?

Flora and fauna is one of the many significant reasons people visit Lesotho and move around the country, be it for academic research or for general knowledge of indigenous plants found here in Lesotho.

This is simply because Lesotho is the Eden of beautiful and rare plants with spectacular flowers, if you like you may call Lesotho a world of botanical opulence

In the right season, which is now until the fall of April, you can step out into any of this floral wonderland- and find yourself lured and enchanted by the treasures that awaits in the highlands of the Kingdom in the Sky.

Fact

16% of plants and/or flowers found in Lesotho cannot be found elsewhere in the world, (according to Maluti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project, 2007)

Know your Zones

- The Montane Zone – Sits at 1300 to 1800m above sealevel, usually warmer with high rainfall and lush vegetation.
- The Sub-Alpine Zone – sit at 1800 to 2800m above sealevel with cooler temperatures. Mainly grasslands, no forests, many bulbous plants flower each spring season at this areas.
- The Alpine Zone – sits at 2800 to 3482m above sealevel with low rainfall and cold temperatures. Usually no trees, grass is short and tough. Here you will find numerous remarkable rare flowers.

Gladiolus longicollis
photo by Cameron McMaster



Key Attractions to visit for floral splendor experience

- With a driver who is prepared to make lots of stops, in a 4x4 vehicle, Sani top is the ideal place. As you cross through the different altitude zones, you will get to see and learn about a rich range of plant species including wonderful alpine specials on top of the Black mountain found in the area.
- If you proceed on the road to Mokhotlong, winding down into the Sehonghong Valley, the scenery, plants and birds will reward your time
- Bokong Nature reserve being one of the highest nature reserves in Africa is entirely in the alpine zone and is home to endemic plant species. It is also the source (mohloli) of Bokong River and Lepaqa stream, with its spectacular waterfall that can be viewed from the visitor center. A small museum at the center also round the visit.
- Katse Botanical Gardens is home to the unique collection of flora, the place where most of Lesotho's ecosystems are represented. Here you can find a variety of plants and rare flowers from unique areas such as the Rock Garden, Aquatic Garden and the Medicinal Garden.

Gladiolus Saundersii (Mokhabebe)





ADVENTURE TOURISM

Abseiling

Enjoy abseiling at 'Maletsunyane waterfall. This majestic waterfall is the highest commercial abseil facility in the world, at 204 metres. The waterfall is also the highest single drop waterfall in Southern Africa. It plunges into a deep gorge, creating a spectacle of water smoke, of which witnessing its spray is priceless and fulfilling. Complete your experience by visiting the the Manong restaurant for a hearty meal and a spectacular view of the waterfall. This spot is a perfect one for a few shots of the fall for those memories to take back home.



Hiking

From short rambles to overnight hikes, leisurely walks to strenuous high-altitude treks, the allure of hiking at different parts of Lesotho lies in the soul-building scenery of towering peaks, deep valleys, surging waterfalls and crystal clear waters that will leave your body and soul recharged and rejuvenated. In your quest to escape the city buzz, go hiking in the kingdom and experience awe-inspiring natural beauty

Horse Riding

Embark on a community-driven adventure and explore the rural countryside of Lesotho on horseback. In this type of adventure you will be treated to the local stories on Basotho's way of living and their cultural values while you experience the beauty of the mountains and connect with nature in a local fashion.





CULTURE & HERITAGE

Morija Museum & Archives

Morija Museum & Archives hosts the oldest surviving museum and archives in the Kingdom of Lesotho. For those who love ancient and modern history, contemporary issues and trends, dinosaurs, or living culture, Morija Museum is an Oasis of learning. Located in Morija, a historic town in Lesotho, the Museum works closely with the community to preserve the area's heritage. The Morija area also offers well mapped walking and biking trails for those who wish to explore Morija fully. A range of accommodation facilities are also available in the precinct.



Dinosaur Foot prints

Traversing across the Kingdom in the sky presents an opportunity to experience Lesotho's heritage because along the different routes visitors will come across the dinosaur footprints of different species embedded in the sandstone slabs in the streams or on the rocks. Some of the foot prints like those found in Subeng river were discovered in 1955. To experience these visit Subeng and Tsikoane in Leribe, Quthing to mention a few.

Kome Cave Dwelling

situated at Pulane area in Berea district. The caves were a hideout for the Basia and one Bataung clans during the Lifaqane Wars and cannibalism. The cave is still inhabited by their descendants to this day. There are also faded San paintings in the cave which indicates that the San also occupied the cave some time prior to their arrival albeit briefly. This spot offers a variety of cultural activities ranging from scotch cart rides, traditional performances and a guided tour to the cave dwelling.



INVESTMENT

Tourism has been identified as a key strategic sector for the growth of the economy and upliftment of livelihoods in Lesotho. This focus on tourism is a recent development and owes to three special attributes of the sector. These being:

GROWTH POTENTIAL

Unlike most other major economic sectors in Lesotho, tourism is at an early stage of development and has a tremendous potential for growth.

DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

Since tourism attractions and places of interest to tourists are spread over the country and are particularly found in rural areas, tourism has potential to "reach out" to rural communities and thus contribute to poverty reduction objectives of the government.

SPIN-OFF FACTOR

Growth in tourism can induce growth in many other sectors, and thus have a huge knock-on effect on the broader economy.

STRENGTHS OF LESOTHO BOTH AS TOURIST DESTINATION AND TOURISM INVESTMENT DESTINATION LIE IN HER:

SCENIC BEAUTY: Bestowed with enchanting mountains and crisscrossed by powerful rivers and crystal-clear streams, rich in endemic and unique species, Lesotho is one of the most pristine and unspoiled natural environments in the region.

WATER TABLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA: Lesotho's land is almost 70% highlands with a massive coverage of wetlands, especially in northern and eastern highlands of the country where most of the river's sources are located. The rivers that flow into South Africa and Namibia. The dams constructed under the Lesotho Highlands Water Project areas enhanced the scenery and experience of the central highlands of Lesotho. This created a vast opportunity for developing facilities meant to support the tourism industry within the area.

UNIQUE HIGH ALTITUDE: Lesotho is known as the only country in Africa with the highest altitude and hence referred to as the Roof of Africa. With its distinct four seasons in a year, Lesotho has very cold winter months with high mountain ranges capped in snow, making us the home to skiing in Southern Africa. The unexpected high altitude in Southern Africa gives the traveler a unique opportunity for clean air, clear skies and tranquility that has remained a rich habitat for large bird life species and many visitors enjoy start gazing at night.

AFRICAN WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE: Lesotho is an ideal destination for the discerning traveler and true adventurer – for those tired of commercial holidays and are looking for "something different". Lesotho is a largely preserved African wilderness that offers tranquility, rich biodiversity and untouched landscapes that encourage hiking, mountaineering, ultra-trail running, abseil, rock climbing river rafting etc. for the young at heart and adrenalin adventure enthusiasts.

PROXIMITY TO SOUTH AFRICA: Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa. This situation presents a significant opportunity for growth and development of tourism in Lesotho. South Africa is the biggest destination (in terms of number of visitors) in Sub-Saharan Africa, in this way, Lesotho has a unique opportunity to tap into the strength of its neighbor and position itself as an add-on destination for international tourists visiting South Africa. Moreover, South Africa is the biggest source of international travelers in Africa, thus Lesotho has a huge tourist source market on its "door step".

WELCOMING AND HOSPITABLE PEOPLE: People of Lesotho (Basotho) are renowned for their hospitality, warmth and friendliness. Thus, tourists are made to feel welcome and "at home" in Lesotho. **CULTURE:** Basotho have a rich and unique cultural and heritage, which is interesting and intriguing to visitors; and can actually be explored through our famous village tours and rural homestay accommodation. The most unique aspect is harmonious co-existence of four tribes within Lesotho that were brought together by King Moshoeshoe I to form the Basotho nation.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The above attributes give life to the following opportunities in Lesotho:

ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES

The country is under-supplied with accommodation facilities of appropriate standards particularly at key and strategic tourism nodes.

Inadequate and improper accommodation is a major challenge posing our sector, hence a lost source of revenue from tourism in Lesotho. Drove of tourists from South Africa cross into Lesotho for the day, only to go back and sleepover in South Africa; yet there is a lot to explore and experience overnight. This therefore indicates a pressing need for the development of accommodation.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESORTS

Lesotho has a number of attributes that can be leveraged to position the country as a health and wellness destination. These are:

- High altitude
- Clean mountain air
- Abundance of naturally clean water
- Distinct seasons of the year
- Endemic medicinal plants
- Hot springs
- Exclusiveness

Thus, health spars and wellness resorts are one other area with great potential which we will be promoting robustly.

WATER SPORTS AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTRES

Existing and prospective Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) dams pose a notable opportunity for initiating water-based sporting and recreational activities. The dams are suited to leisure cruise boats and extreme sporting events. Already the Corporation (LTDC) is operating a small cruise boat on one of the dams (Mohale dam). The existing Mohale and Katse dams present many un-numbered opportunities for further developments by private investors.

We are eager to have these type of activity on both the Katse and Mohale dams. In addition to these two dams there are further developments in the pipeline, such as phase 2 of the LHWP project (Polihali dam) that is being constructed in the northern highlands of the country, in Mokhotlong district. Metolong dam (about 30kms from Maseru CBD) and Maqalika dam (in the periphery of Maseru CBD) are available for recreational activities and development of a mixed-use development. More similar dams in the lowlands meant to supply the lowlands water reservoirs are yet to be developed under the Lowlands Water Supply Programme which has already commenced.

HIGH ALTITUDE TRAINING FACILITIES

One major unique feature of the country is altitude. Lesotho is the only country in the world which lies entirely above 1000m above sea level. In fact, the lowest point in Lesotho is 1400m above sea level.

Thus, Lesotho is an ideal location for high altitude sports training facilities. A high class, integrated facility is envisaged that would feature among other things:

- Out-door Adventure
- Indoor sports arenas
- Accommodation
- Wellness spar(s)
- Sports treatment/medi-centre

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Besides the broad sector opportunities highlighted in the foregoing paragraphs, there are a few specific investment projects that have been identified and promoted. These include:

PROJECT TITLE: Letsa-La-Letsie Eco Lodge

Construction of an eco-lodge with campsite and picnic site offering a minimum of 2 Star eco-rustic lodge with ancillary services

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Greenfield

COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment

ESTIMATED CAPEX: S 6-8 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

Letsa-la-Letsie is a Ramsar site located on the South-eastern highlands of Lesotho at 30°20'S 028°12'E. The site covers about 434ha, though not protected but it has been designated as a component for conserving biodiversity. Approximately 110 bird species were recorded in this area, including the Wattles and Blue Cranes, the Lesser Kestrel, the Bald Ibis and bearded vulture and eagles.

An investment site of approximately 5,000metres square has been earmarked in the periphery overlooking this Ramsar site. The area is popularly sought after by extreme 4x4 enthusiasts, bird watchers and hiking enthusiasts. The visiting tourists mostly come from Eastern Cape Province in South Africa, higher learning institutions who are studying the subjects related to Afro-alpine vegetation and/or bird species of interest, especially those that are considered endangered species; as well as international tourists seeking eco-touristic experiences. The highlands adjacent to the lake are high cliffs that have remained home for the endangered bearded vultures and eagles. It is home for more than three colonies with a minimum of 100 nests within each; there is also.

Based on the topography and the biodiversity in the area within high altitude, clear skies, clean air, clean water and tranquility; the place is attractive for outdoor adventure seekers. Therefore, the numbers of tourist footprint in the area supports a small accommodation establishment that can support community beneficiation.

INVESTMENT PROJECT COMPONENTS:

An investment for development of an accommodation facility of a minimum of 2 Star grades:

- 6 self-catering chalets for 30 people
- Camping site with communal ablution block and
- Communal kitchen
- Craft market outlet and Community tourist information Centre



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT TITLE : Sanitop Equestrian Village

STATUS OF THE PROJECT : Greenfield
COLLABORATION SOUGHT : Private Sector Investment
ESTIMATED CAPEX : S15 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The proposed site at Sanitop is in the east of Lesotho in the Maluti Mountains southeast of the Senqu River Valley and falls within the Maluti - Drakensberg Transfrontier Project area. The Maluti mountain range is home to the highest peak in Southern Africa, Thabana Ntlenyana, which means 'beautiful little mountain,' and has an altitude of 3482 meters and the proposed location is near the start of a trail to the peak.

The area is mountainous with the Sani River and its tributaries running through the low-lying areas where wetlands are scattered throughout. There are dramatic and panoramic views of the landscape.

INVESTMENT PROJECT COMPONENTS: Built an extremely adventure ski resort offering rustic accommodation (about 60 beds) that will go along with the environment, using mainly locally sourced raw materials. Some other ancillaries may be the following, to support full project profitability:

- Ski lifts and snow makers
- Suspension bridges
- Bird hides
- Picnic and camping grounds; etc.
- Horse racetrack with stables

PROJECT TITLE : Mohale Water Park

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Brownfield
COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment
ESTIMATED CAPEX: S 2 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The project is within one of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) dams – a concrete faced rock-filled dam. The dam falls under the Phase 1B of the series of dams and is located at 29°27'24.20"S; 28°05'45.18"E. The dam is 147meters (476ft) high with a length of 700 meters (2,300ft) and volume of 7,500,000m³.

INVESTMENT PROJECT COMPONENTS: There is need for development of a water leisure park, with cruise boat (200 people), community outdoor center and fly-fishing lodge at the area. This is one of the highly visited tourist attractions in Lesotho, and this is due to its proximity to Maseru CBD – the major city; as it is about 92kilometers from Maseru.



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT TITLE: Katse Luxury Cruise boat (not studied)

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Greenfield

COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment

ESTIMATED CAPEX: \$3 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND: The project is within one of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) dams – a concrete arch dam on the Malibamatšo River – the second largest double-curvature arch dam after the Tekeze dam in Ethiopia. The Katse dam is located below the confluence of the Bokong River, which forms the western arm of the Katse reservoir at 29°20'13"S; 28°30'22"E. The dam is 185 meters (607ft) high with a length of 710 meters (2,329ft) and total capacity of 1,950km³.

INVESTMENT PROJECT COMPONENTS: A luxury cruise boat is to surf the Katse dam reservoir on a 50km long dam from Lejone to Katse dam wall and vice-versa. The dam gives the traveler an experience of the scenic mountains at an altitude of 1,993 m above sea level. The dam offers many more opportunities for water-based adventure activities that can be done whilst ensuring minimal impact on the quality of the water fish life in the water. A medium to large passenger boat that will offer high end experience with a variety of amenities and services such as:

- Restaurants (fine dine and a-la-carte) and beverages
- Jacuzzis and an infinity pool
- Entertainment area
- Lounge
- Sunbathing deck
- Observation deck, etc.

An upmarket restaurants with waiting areas and flexible quality launch pad/jetty near Katse dam wall and Lejone camp.



Picture by Motebong Lodge

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT TITLE: Maletsunyane Gorge Adventure Precinct (not studied)

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Greenfield

COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment

ESTIMATED CAPEX: \$5million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The proposed project lies within the Maletsunyane waterfall, which is a 192 meter-high (630ft) single drop waterfall; thunderously cascading down from the heights of the Thaba-Putsoa Mountains near the quaint village of Semonkong. The attraction is in the heart of Lesotho's central highlands, and it boasts with several extraordinary geological and natural landscapes that are concentrated with gorges, canyons, escarpments, valleys and vast highland plains. There are planned construction projects geared towards developing accommodation at and around this pristine location, hence the importance for additional investment in adventure activities as currently there is limited/no activities for tourists to partake during their visit.

INVESTMENT PROJECT COMPONENTS: Construction of adventure activities in a gorge that is 185m deep, a pool of clean water and Lesotho's majestic single drop waterfall – 'Maletsunyane Waterfall and a river flowing with clean water offering several water-based adventure activities can be explored. The most profitable ventures to explore are gorge elevators, lifts, suspension bridges, ziplines, cable cars, etc. along the iconic panoramic route.

UPCOMING INVESTMENT PROJECTS

Not yet Studied

PROJECT TITLE: Polihali Mountain Resort

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Greenfield
COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment
ESTIMATED CAPEX: S 1 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The Polihali Dam is a concrete-faced rock-fill dam under construction in Lesotho as part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). It is located in the district of Mokhotlong, downstream of the confluence of the Khubelu and Senqu rivers. The dam's height will be 145 meters, with capacity of 165 m³. The key features of the dam will be spillway, compensation outlet structure, and small hydropower station. The estimated project completion date is in 2028. Currently this part of Lesotho is the second highly visited attraction by international tourists.

PROJECT TITLE: Qiloane Game Reserve

STATUS OF THE PROJECT: Greenfield
COLLABORATION SOUGHT: Private Sector Investment
ESTIMATED CAPEX: S 20 million

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

The site is located in Maseru district, in the peri-urban area about 63kms from Maseru CBD. It is known for the wide fan of water flowing into pools below, some compare it to a bridal veil pouring over the rocks. One of the most beautiful places in the world with breathtaking views. The site size is 4,854,819sqm; and can be used for development of an upmarket game reserve in the mountainous clean air and clear waters of the kingdom in the sky.





FACTS ABOUT LESOTHO

1

Lesotho is known as the “Kingdom in the Sky” due to its high altitude. It is the constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of government. It gained independence from Britain in 1966.

2

Lesotho is entirely landlocked, surrounded by South Africa on all sides. It is also one of only three independent states in the world that are entirely enclaved within the territory of another country.

3

Thaba Bosiu is a sandstone plateau that served as the stronghold of King Moshoeshoe I, the founder of Basotho. It is a place of great historical significance and is considered the birthplace of the Basotho nation.

4

The Kingdom in the Sky is renowned for its breathtaking mountain scenery and one of the best ways to explore the rugged terrain is on horseback. Pony trekking is popular activity for visitors, offering an immersive experience in Lesotho's natural beauty.

5

Basotho are known for their distinctive traditional blankets, often worn as cloaks. These blankets have cultural significance and are also worn on special occasions and ceremonies.

6

Depending on your preferences, being Lesotho offers a variety of activities to engage in on land, water and snow including hiking, skiing, horse riding, mountain biking, 4x4 trekking, pony trekking and cultural experiences.



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