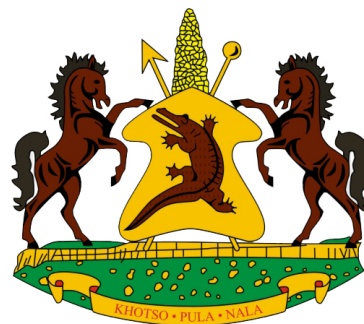


**FOURTH CAADP**  
**BIENNIAL REVIEW**  
**BRIEF**  
**LESOTHO**



**Africa Agriculture  
Transformation Scorecard:  
Performance and Lessons**

# Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard: Performance and Lessons

## Fourth CAADP Biennial Review Brief: Lesotho

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### About ReSAKSS

Established in 2006 under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) supports efforts to promote evidence- and outcome-based policy planning and implementation. In particular, ReSAKSS provides data and related analytical and knowledge products to facilitate CAADP benchmarking, review, and mutual learning processes.

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AKADEMIYA2063 or the Gates Foundation.

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# 1. Introduction

Addressing Africa's agricultural challenges has the potential to unlock inclusive economic growth, benefit smallholder farmers, boost food production, and end hunger. With this in mind, the Heads of State and Government of African Union (AU) Member States endorsed the Maputo Declaration of 2003, which legitimized the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) as the principal framework to foster agricultural investments and development in Africa. The CAADP aims to increase public investments in agriculture by allocating a minimum of 10 percent of national budgets to the sector and also targets annual agricultural productivity growth of 6 percent.

The 2014 Malabo Declaration outlines Africa's vision to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation on the continent by 2025 through seven broad commitments:

1. Upholding the principles and values of the CAADP
2. Enhancing investment finance in agriculture
3. Ending hunger in Africa by 2025
4. Halving poverty by 2025 through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation
5. Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services
6. Enhancing the resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and related risks
7. Ensuring mutual accountability for actions and results by conducting a continent-wide Biennial Review (BR) to monitor progress in achieving the seven Malabo Declaration commitments

As part of the seventh commitment on mutual accountability, African countries present a report to the AU every two years, detailing their progress toward agricultural transformation. In addition to gauging each country's progress toward achieving the seven Malabo Declaration commitments by 2025, the report also assesses the country's capacity for evidence-based policy and program design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), peer review, and mutual accountability. To date, AU Member States have submitted four cycles of BR reports. The inaugural BR (BR1) was compiled and presented in 2017 (AUC 2018), and the second (BR2) in 2019 (AUC 2020). The third BR (BR3) report of 2021 and the associated Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard were launched at the 35<sup>th</sup> AU Summit in February 2022 (AUC 2020). The fourth BR (BR4) of 2023 highlights the country's performance against the 46 indicators in BR1, BR2, and BR3, which have been further refined to track the progress toward comprehensive agricultural transformation. The fourth BR cycle had a total of 59 indicators (47 existing indicators and 12 new indicators) classified into 28 (24 old and 4 new) performance categories under 7 performance areas (7 commitments) to reflect the priorities of the Malabo Declaration endorsed in June 2014. Lesotho has consistently submitted its four BR reports.



The BR4 report built on the lessons learned from the three previous reviews, the efforts deployed to ensure data quality, and the use of the electronic Biennial Review (e-BR) system. Forty-nine (49) countries reported in this fourth BR cycle, down from the 51 countries that reported in the BR3 cycle and similar to the 49 countries in the BR2 cycle. This figure was still higher than the 43 countries which reported in the inaugural BR. Notably, the BR4 report recorded a departure from the progress reported during BR3 when one country was on track to achieve the Malabo commitments, and twenty-five had improved their overall score between 2019 and 2021. While no country is on track in the BR4 cycle, 26 countries have seen their scores improve since BR3. The BR4 report was endorsed by the assembly of African Heads of State and Government during the February 2024 Assembly (AUC 2023).

## 2. Main Findings

The following section presents the review findings and incorporates comments from the National Focal Points for Lesotho.

### 2.1 Progress in Achieving Commitments at Country Level

#### 2.1.1 General performance

Lesotho's general performance has varied over time. In BR1, the country had an overall score of 4.11 out of 10, against the benchmark of 3.94, and the country was rated as being on track to achieving the Malabo commitments. In BR2, Lesotho scored 3.41 against a benchmark of 6.66, while in BR3, Lesotho scored 4.08 against a benchmark of 7.28. In both instances, the country was rated as not on track. In BR4, Lesotho scored 4.16 out of 10 against the benchmark of 9.29. Even though Lesotho did not meet the BR4 benchmark, the country was rated as progressing well towards achieving the Malabo Declaration commitments.

#### 2.1.2 Country performance by thematic area

This sub-section presents a detailed examination of the seven Malabo commitments where the country was rated as not on track. The BR4 results indicate that Lesotho underperformed in all thematic areas. While the country was on track on four of the seven themes (Themes 1, 4, 5, and 7) in BR1, it was not on track on any of the seven CAADP commitments in BR2. In BR3, Lesotho was on track on Theme 6. However, for BR4, the country saw a notable improvement in two of the seven themes (Theme 2 on Agricultural finance and Theme 7 on Mutual Accountability) compared to the previous BRs, in addition to improving its overall score.

The overall weak performance in BR4 can be attributed to the following thematic areas, which were rated as not on track: (Theme 1) Recommitment to CAADP; (Theme 3) Ending hunger; (Theme 4) Halving poverty through agriculture; (Theme 5) Enhancing intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services; (Theme 6) Enhancing resilience to climate change; as well as the performance on all commitments (Table 1).



**Table 1: Summary of Lesotho's BR scores by Malabo commitment**

Malabo Commitments	BR1 (2017)			BR2 (2019)			BR3 (2021)			BR4 (2023)			% Changes 4th BR to 3rd BR
	Score	Bench-mark	Progress	Score	Bench-mark	Progress	Score	Bench-mark	Progress	Score	Bench-mark	Progress	
1. Recommitment to CAADP	4.79	3.33	On track	4.26	10.00	Not on track	6.43	10.00	Not on track	4.76	10.00	Not on track	-26.03
2. Enhancing agricultural finance	4.16	6.67	Not on track	4.48	10.00	Not on track	2.47	7.50	Not on track	7.67	9.50	Not on track	210.39
3. Ending hunger by 2025	2.65	3.71	Not on track	1.47	5.04	Not on track	2.90	6.32	Not on track	1.08	9.26	Not on track	-62.64
4. Halving poverty through agriculture	3.13	2.06	On track	0.55	3.94	Not on track	0.47	5.81	Not on track	1.24	8.94	Not on track	164.15
5. Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services	3.85	1.00	On track	1.90	3.00	Not on track	3.50	5.00	Not on track	3.09	9.00	Not on track	-11.61
6. Enhancing resilience to climate change	4.01	6.00	Not on track	5.83	7.00	Not on track	8.33	8.00	On track	4.40	9.75	Not on track	-47.21
7. Mutual accountability	6.16	4.78	On track	5.10	7.67	Not on track	4.94	8.33	Not on track	6.90	8.60	Not on track	39.60
All commitments	4.11	3.94	On track	3.41	6.66	Not on track	4.08	7.28	Not on track	4.16	9.29	Not on track	2.01

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on country BR scores (2023).

As **Figure 1** shows, there has been a consistent positive trend in the performance of **Commitment 1 (Recommitment to CAADP)**, although this has been below the respective benchmark for each BR cycle. This positive trend is largely due to improvements in creating an enabling policy environment. However, the country's positive performance has been undermined by lack of evidence-based policies, supportive institutions, and corresponding human resources.

Lesotho has performed poorly under **Commitment 2 (Enhancing agricultural finance)** over the three BRs, although there was a slight improvement in BR 4. Various limitations still affect the performance of this commitment, including low government agricultural expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure and low disbursements of official development assistance for agriculture as a percentage of pledged funds. There was also a low proportion of men and women engaged in agriculture with access to financial services, low fertilizer consumption per hectare of arable land, slow increases in the size of irrigated areas, and the supply of quality agricultural inputs in comparison to the total input requirements for agricultural commodities. Ownership or access to secured land for farmers has also been a problem.

**Commitment 3 (Ending hunger by 2025)** has seen a general decline from BR 1 to BR 4. Challenges under this commitment include a slow increase in agricultural value added per hectare of arable land; slow increase in yields for the country's priority agricultural commodities; inadequate reduction of post-harvest losses for national agricultural commodities; and slow response in government budget allocations to spending needs as part of the protections for vulnerable social groups. There was also a high prevalence of stunting and underweight among children under 5 years old; the prevalence of undernourishment; low growth rates in the proportion of Minimum Dietary Diversity for women and children under 23 months; high proportion of moderate and severe food insecurity in the population based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale; and low SPS Health Index (SHI) scores.

The country's performance in **Commitment 4 (Halving poverty through agriculture)** has been poor across the four BR cycles. This can be attributed to slow growth rates in agriculture value-added; low reduction rates in the poverty headcount ratio at both national and international poverty lines; and low youth engagement in new job opportunities within agricultural value chains.

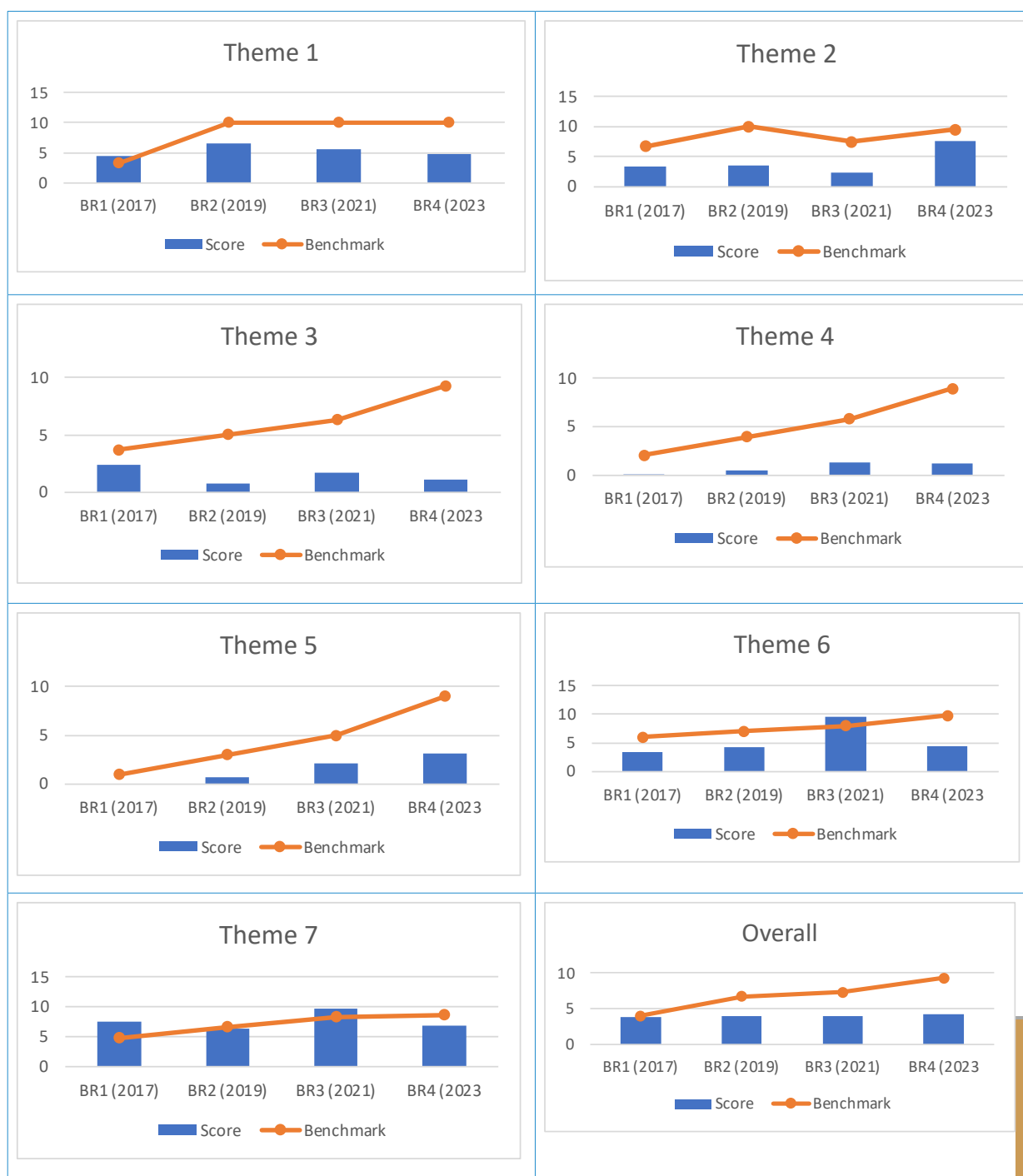
**Commitment 5 (Intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services)** is one of the thematic areas where the country has consistently performed poorly across the four BRs. However, there was a slight improvement in BR 4. The country's performance under this commitment is characterized by a low growth rate in the trade value of agricultural commodities and services within Africa. The rate of reduction in the gap between wholesale and farm-gate prices has been low, while the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in agricultural commodity value chains with strong linkages to smallholder agriculture has been problematic.

For **Commitment 6 (Enhancing resilience to climate change)**, the country has consistently improved across the four BR cycles, but the scores still fell short of the respective benchmarks. The percentage of farm, pastoral, and fisher households that are resilient to climate and weather-related shocks remains low, while the share of agricultural land under sustainable land and water management, including climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices, is similarly low.

Lesotho performed well in **Commitment 7 (Mutual accountability for actions and results)** during BR1 and BR2 but did not meet the benchmarks in BR3 and BR4. Key challenges under this commitment are related to the country's low submission of BR data and the inadequate use of the country's BR results (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Trends in Lesotho's performance across the four BRs**



Source: AUC 2023.

### 2.1.3 Regional comparison

Turning to the regional comparison, Table 2 shows that Lesotho performed worse than the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) as a whole in BR4. All SADC countries submitted their reports, representing a 100 percent submission rate. The region's overall average score was 4.26, which was higher than Lesotho's score of 4.16. Neither Lesotho nor the region were on track to meet the CAADP Malabo commitments when assessed against the BR4 benchmark of 9.29.

Lesotho performed better than the SADC region in Themes 2 and 5, but worse in Themes 1, 3, 4, 6, and 7, as well as its overall performance. Only Lesotho and Eswatini performed well on Commitment 2 (Enhancing agricultural investment finance). None of the 12 SADC countries was on track overall, indicating no change in the region's performance for BR1 (2017), BR2 (2019), and BR3 (2021). However, the region has made considerable efforts to achieve half of the required milestones for Commitment 1 (Recommitment to CAADP Processes) and Commitment 7 (Mutual Accountability for Actions and Results).

**Table 2: Lesotho's performance relative to SADC Region by theme during BR4**

Theme	Benchmark	SADC Region	Lesotho	Lesotho's Progress
1. Recommitment to CAADP	10.0	7.59	4.76	Not on track
2. Enhancing agricultural finance	9.5	3.05	7.67	Not on track
3. Ending hunger by 2025	9.26	3.19	1.08	Not on track
4. Halving poverty through agriculture	8.94	2.17	1.24	Not on track
5. Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services	9.00	2.14	3.09	Not on track
6. Enhancing resilience to climate change	9.75	4.65	4.40	Not on track
7. Mutual accountability for actions and results	8.60	7.03	6.90	Not on track
All commitments	9.29	4.26	4.16	Not on track
Progress on all commitments	Not on track	Not on track	Not on track	

Source: AUC 2023.

### 3. Challenges and Lessons Learned from BR4

The assessment of Lesotho's performance in BR4 was not without its challenges in terms of both the process followed and the data used in the review.

**Process challenges and lessons learned:** The process of developing Lesotho's BR4 report was significantly disrupted by the Russia-Ukraine War, which commenced in February 2022 and has had devastating impacts on agricultural input supply chains in Africa. The disrupted production and distribution of inputs, such as fertilizers and agricultural chemicals, has resulted in higher prices, making farming more costly for African farmers. However, BR4 had fewer significant challenges than the previous three BRs, as the cumulative lessons learned from BR1 to BR3 were used to improve BR4. In addition, coordination for BR4 was better than what was observed in the previous BR cycles because of the establishment of inclusive multistakeholder mutual accountability mechanisms. This resulted in improved scores for



some of the commitments between BR3 and BR4. Moreover, the use of the electronic Biennial Review (e-BR) platform in BR4 removed the burden of manually calculating BR indicators at country level; also, it simplified the process of checking for missing data or outlier cases.

The SADC Secretariat hosted a validation workshop during BR4, which improved Lesotho's data quality, as well as that of other SADC Member States. After Lesotho reported on its performance, the SADC Secretariat worked with ReSAKSS to conduct a BR validation exercise at the regional level. This involved subjecting the Lesotho country report to close assessment and review alongside the BR reports from other SADC countries. Lesotho received feedback on its report, which the country BR team was to address. This was followed by a writing workshop to further improve the reported data by identifying gaps in the physical data and the e-BR platform. These processes uncovered several data challenges, many of which were addressed.

The support from the SADC Secretariat and ReSAKSS was key to improving Lesotho's reporting rates and data quality in BR4. At a continental level, the AUC trained one or two experts from each country involved in BR4. However, the demand for better data requires that more people in each country be trained for future BRs. Lesotho should therefore expand its BR team to meet these demands effectively.

**Data challenges and lessons:** Challenges around the availability and quality of data continue to affect the BR process in Lesotho. Many indicators had missing data, including total agricultural research spending; private sector investment in agriculture; intra-African trade policies and institutions, border administration, and commodity-specific trade volumes and values; resilience to climate variability; and post-harvest losses, food security and nutrition, and food safety. Lesotho also struggles with implementing data standards and the collection protocols required to improve data accuracy, tracing, and verification. However, the use of the digital e-BR platform in data capture eased data cleaning and verification in BR4.

## 4. Policy and Programmatic Changes

Even though Lesotho did not meet the BR4 benchmark for overall performance in making progress toward achieving the Malabo commitments by 2025, the country made several important policy and programmatic changes between BR3 and BR4 that resulted in some improved scores. These changes could provide lessons for the SADC region.

In the run-up to BR4, Lesotho enhanced the capacity of its BR teams to enable the country to report better based on the experience from previous reviews.

Lesotho also invited the AUDA-NEPAD mission to undertake the Lesotho Instrument Based National Agriculture Investment Plan (L-IBNAIP) from July 18 to 22, 2023.

An Independent Technical Review to assess alignment between the L-IBNAIP and Country Food Systems Transformation priorities and pathways is one way of ensuring that the country has a robust agricultural transformation framework.

As part of Lesotho's CAADP process, the country has undertaken analytical and value chain studies to provide evidence for the design of its National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP). Government expenditure on agriculture as a percentage of total government expenditure has increased in recent years due to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security implementing two new projects that started in 2019/2020. The two projects are the Agricultural Productivity Program of Southern Africa (APPSA) and the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II).

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture subsidized farmers' procurement of inputs under the Intensive Crop Production Programme. The Government of Lesotho hosted several forums to mobilize domestic and foreign investment in the agricultural sector. The SADP II project also completed an Irrigation Master Plan, which has a component focused on drought resilience as part of the commitment to enhance resilience to climate change. To further improve farmers'



access to agricultural finance, the SADP II project has a grants program through which it provides credit to smallholder farmers countrywide. In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture signed a contract with the Lesotho Post Bank enabling it to act as a credit guarantor for farmers.

The Ministry of Agriculture developed the Comprehensive National Agriculture Policy (CNAP), which is aligned with the country's NAIP. The CNAP was inspired by the need to develop an overarching agricultural sector policy that would provide strategic direction to all agricultural sub-sectors and ensure the design of programs relevant to agriculture, regardless of the implementing ministry. The CNAP provides a framework for coordinating efforts within the agricultural sector as envisioned in Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan II, 2018/19-2022/23. The CNAP also incorporates many of the smart policy instruments for country CAADP implementation under the Malabo Declaration.

In 2023, the allocation of an additional 11.2 million Maloti (around ) to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition, as well as the implementation of the ROLL (Regeneration of Landscape and Livelihoods) program, helped increase government agricultural expenditure.

## 5. Recommendations to Ensure Achievement of the Malabo Declaration Commitments by 2025

At the conclusion of BR4, Lesotho was not on track to meet any of the Malabo Declaration commitments by 2025, although the country has made good progress on several commitments. Several issues require specific attention if the country is to achieve all seven commitments by 2025. Lesotho should therefore implement the following steps:

- Strengthen data systems tracking CAADP Process Completion Index parameters, as well as general agricultural performance data
- Enhance government agricultural expenditure as a share of total public expenditure
- Ensure that local people have secure access to land for farming

Lesotho should also focus on poverty eradication through agriculture by developing inclusive PPPs for commodity value chains and strengthening support for women's participation in agriculture.

The country should revisit its approach to spending, expenditures, and investments. This would entail increasing government spending on protections for vulnerable social groups.

Lesotho can enhance its intra-African Trade in agricultural commodities and services by focusing on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and identifying critical commodities to prioritize in trade.

Going forward, the country needs to increase its efforts toward meeting all the Malabo Declaration and CAADP commitments. Expanded investments in agriculture can be achieved by increasing the share of the national budget committed to agriculture, creating a conducive environment to attract domestic and foreign private sector investments, as well as agricultural PPPs. This would have ripple effects on efforts to end hunger, eradicate poverty, promote intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services, and achieve resilience to climate variability.

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