OPEN BUDGET SURVEY 2025

Lesotho

Country Deep Dive and Advocacy Brief

An indicator-level analysis of Lesotho's Open Budget Survey 2025 results, setting out what each score means, why it was awarded, what would have to change in each budget document or practice to raise it, and which institution can make that change.

Pillar	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Global average 2025
Budget transparency	35	46	45
Public participation	9	22	17
Budget oversight	22	39	49
SAI oversight	33	39	60
Leg oversight	17	39	44

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Assessment period: Only documents published, and events that took place, through 31 December 2024 were assessed.

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What is in this brief?

ORIENTATION

How to read this brief

Lesotho's transparency score rose from 35 to 46 out of 100 between OBS 2023 and OBS 2025 — one of the larger two-year improvements in Sub-Saharan Africa. Participation more than doubled, from 9 to 22, and oversight rose from 22 to 39. Lesotho now scores above both the global average (45) and the Sub-Saharan African average (38) on transparency.

That progress is real and it was driven overwhelmingly by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Three documents that did not count at all in 2023 — the Citizens Budget, the In-Year Reports, and the Year-End Report — now count, because they were published online and on time. This is a publishing-discipline achievement, and it is worth naming as such.

The purpose of this brief is to answer the next question: **where exactly are the remaining points, and who has to move to get them?** The OBS is unusual among governance indices in that every point is traceable to a specific, named piece of information in a specific, named document — or to a specific institutional practice. Nothing in the score is a matter of judgement about intent.

How the scores are built

Pillar	Indicators	What one indicator is worth
Transparency	109	Each indicator carries 1/109 of the score. Moving one indicator from 0 to 100 adds 0.92 points; one step (e.g., 33 → 67) adds 0.31 points.
Public participation	18	Each indicator carries 1/18 of the score. Moving one indicator from 0 to 100 adds 5.6 points — six times the leverage of a transparency indicator.
Oversight	18 (12 legislative + 6 audit)	Each indicator carries 1/18 of the score, and adds 5.6 points to the composite oversight score.

Indicators are scored 100, 67, 33 or 0 (a, b, c, d), with a handful scored only 100 or 0. Throughout this brief, scores are shown as **green (61–100, adequate)**, **amber (41–60, limited)** and **red (0–40, weak)**.

THE PUBLIC AVAILABILITY RULE

A budget document only counts if it is published **online**, **free of charge**, and **within the OBS time window**. A document that is produced, and is eventually published — but published late — scores zero on every content question attached to it. This single rule explains most of Lesotho's remaining losses. It is also why several of the highest-value recommendations in this brief cost nothing: the document already exists.

The structure of this brief

- **Part I — Budget transparency**: the eight key budget documents in turn. For the Executive's Budget Proposal, the 53 content indicators are grouped into eight thematic clusters rather than listed one by one, because that is how the fixes are actually organised.
- **Part II — Public participation**: all 18 indicators (q125–q142), separated by actor — Ministry of Finance, line ministries, Parliament, and the Office of the Auditor-General — because each of the four has a different job to do.
- **Part III — Oversight**: legislative oversight (q107–q118) and audit oversight (q119–q124), with the legal, procedural and publication changes each would require.
- **Part IV — Priority action matrix**: every recommendation in the brief, ranked by modelled score impact, with lead institution and implementation difficulty.

A NOTE ON THE SCORE-IMPACT ESTIMATES

Score impacts in this brief are modelled by re-scoring the affected indicators against the published OBS 2025 answer options and recomputing the pillar averages. They assume the content requirement is met in full. Where a change would plausibly deliver a partial rather than a full move, the modelled figure uses the conservative option. They are planning estimates, not predictions: the OBS is re-researched independently each round and the next results will depend on the evidence available at that round's cut-off date.

SUMMARY

What matters most?

Six moves account for the great majority of the points available to Lesotho over the next two survey rounds. Four of them require no new analysis, no new system, and no new law — only publishing documents on time and online, documents the government already produces.

The six highest-value moves.

#	Action	Modelled impact	Lead	Difficulty
1	Publish the final Budget Estimates Book online within two weeks of the Appropriation Act being enacted, so it counts as part of the Enacted Budget.	**+3.4 transparency (EB doc 22 → ~83)**	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low — timing only
2	Publish the Fiscal Risks Statement at the same time as the Executive's Budget Proposal, not after the budget is approved.	**+0.6 timing; up to +5.8 with fuller content**	MoFDP — Macro Dept.	Low — sequencing
3	Publish the Report of the Auditor-General within 12-18 months of year-end, which requires the Accountant-General to submit consolidated financial statements on time.	**+2.8 transparency (AR doc 14 → ~57)**	Accountant-General + OAG	Medium
4	Add public participation dates to the published budget calendar in the Budget Call Circular, and publish the purpose, scope, timeline, and intended use of consultations before they happen.	**+9.3 participation**	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low — one page
5	Have Parliament debate the Budget Strategy Paper and adopt recommendations for the coming budget, before the Executive's Budget Proposal is tabled.	**+5.6 oversight**	National Assembly	Medium — Standing Orders
6	Complete the shift to programme-based budgeting with a COFOG-compatible functional classification, carried consistently through the Estimates, the quarterly bulletins, the Mid-Year Review, and year-end reporting.	**up to +12 transparency**	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	High — multi-year

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Lesotho is losing more points to **publication timing** than to missing information. The Fiscal Risks Statement 2024/25 was published on 13 February 2025 — after the budget it related to had been approved. The final Budget Estimates Book for FY 2024/25 was published after parliamentary approval. Two of the four Quarterly Debt Transparency Reports were published outside the three-month window. The FY 2022/23 Audit Report was published in November 2025, roughly 32 months after year-end. In every one of these cases the analytical work was done, the document is of reasonable quality, and it scored nothing. A publication calendar that locks each document to a date inside the OBS window is the cheapest transparency reform available to Lesotho.

What has changed since OBS 2023?

Forty-four indicators improved and eight declined. The improvements are concentrated in documents that became publicly available for the first time.

Document	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	What changed
Pre-Budget Statement	**61**	**61**	Stable. Better macro, revenue, and debt coverage (q54, q56, q57 each rose 33 → 67) was offset by the loss of the multi-year expenditure indicator (q58, 100 → 0): the MTFF table now stops at 2026/27 and no longer reaches the required horizon.
Executive's Budget Proposal	**44**	**52**	Functional classification recognised (q2, 0 → 100); policy-goal linkage now complete (q47, 33 → 100); programme, policy-impact, and transfer indicators each moved 0 → 33. Historical data slipped by classification (q22, 67 → 33).
Enacted Budget	**22**	**22**	No change. The Appropriation Act alone carries administrative totals and nothing else.
Citizens Budget	**0**	**42**	Published online and on time for the first time, and a second citizens' version was produced for the Mid-Year Review.

Document	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	What changed
In-Year Reports	0	48	Quarterly Budget Performance Bulletins published on the Budget Portal within three months of each quarter.
Mid-Year Review	59	67	Published nine weeks after the mid-point rather than later (MYR-2, 33 → 67) and a fuller explanation of expenditure revisions (q77, 67 → 100).
Year-End Report	0	29	The 2023/24 National Budget Brief was accepted as the Year-End Report, bringing execution and revenue-variance indicators into scope. However, the publication of the consolidated financial statements within 12 months of the year-end would support a much greater score.
Audit Report	48	14	Declined. The FY 2022/23 Audit Report was not publicly available within 18 months of year-end, so the report is recorded as “Published Late”, and its content indicators score zero.

TWO DECLINES THAT ARE RE-ASSESSMENTS, NOT DETERIORATION

q121 (who determines the SAI’s budget) fell from 100 to 0, and q99/q100 (audit coverage of extra-budgetary funds; audit report executive summary) fell to 0. Neither reflects a step backwards by an institution. q121 was revised after the Auditor-General stated publicly in 2024 that the Office had received “the same allocation we have been receiving for the last three years” and was auditing “only at about 15 to 17 percent of the coverage that we are supposed to audit.” q99 and q100 fell because they can only be answered from an Audit Report that is publicly available inside the OBS window, and none was. Both are worth explaining carefully to counterparts, who may otherwise read them as accusations.

PART I

Budget transparency, document by document

Lesotho publishes seven of the eight key budget documents in a form the OBS can count. Only the Audit Report is recorded as "Published Late." That is a strong platform: the remaining transparency gap is now almost entirely about **what is inside the documents**, not whether they exist.

The eight documents at a glance

Document	Lesotho's version	Availability	'23	'25	The headline gap
Pre-Budget Statement	Budget Strategy Paper 2025/26	Available	61	61	Medium-term expenditure table no longer reaches the required horizon; macro, revenue and debt sections are "core" but not complete.
Executive's Budget Proposal	Budget Speech + Draft Budget Estimates 2024/25	Available	44	52	Fiscal risk, liabilities, and off-budget activity; programme structure; COFOG-compatible functional classification.
Enacted Budget	Appropriation (2024/2025) Act	Available	22	22	The Act carries ministry totals only. The detailed Estimates Book exists but was published after approval.
Citizens Budget	Citizens' Guide 2024/25 (+ MYR guide)	Available	0	42	One dissemination channel only; no mechanism to ask the public what it wants explained.
In-Year Reports	Quarterly Budget Performance Bulletins	Available	0	48	No administrative or programme breakdown; no debt reporting; quarterly-within-three-months caps the timeliness indicator at 33.
Mid-Year Review	Mid-Term Budget Statement 2024/25	Available	59	67	No programme-level estimates; nominal GDP not updated; debt narrative thin.
Year-End Report	2023/24 National Budget Brief	Partially Available	0	29	No financial statements; no executed expenditure by classification in absolute terms; no forecast-versus-enacted-versus outturn comparison.
Audit Report	Report of the Auditor-General FY 2022/23	Published Late	48	14	Published November 2025 — roughly 32 months after year-end, against an 18-month threshold.

I.1 Pre-Budget Statement — Budget Strategy Paper 2025/26

Document score: 61 / 100 · Published 25 September 2024, more than four months before the budget year and more than a month before the Executive's Budget Proposal — full marks on timeliness.

The Budget Strategy Paper is Lesotho's strongest document relative to its peers, and it is the natural anchor for the Budget Framework Paper reforms now under way. Three of its five content indicators improved this round. The one indicator that fell is also the easiest to recover.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
PBS-2	When the PBS is published	100	100	Published 25 September 2024 for FY 2025/26 — at least four months before the budget year and at least one month before the EBP.	Already at full marks. Protect this date.
q54	Macroeconomic forecast	33	67	All core elements are present — nominal GDP in Annexes 1–2, inflation (p.7), real GDP growth (pp.6–7), interest rates in the monetary-policy and debt-service discussion (pp.8–9).	Add information beyond the core: sectoral decomposition of growth, the assumptions behind the forecast, and a comparison with the previous forecast.
q55	Expenditure policies and priorities	67	67	Core narrative and some cost estimates under the MTBF (pp.17–23, Figures 11–12) and in sector project narratives (pp.25–27).	Attach an estimate to every stated priority, and show how each priority maps to a ministry ceiling.
q56	Revenue policies and priorities	33	67	Revenue policy discussion on p.10 and revenue estimates on p.13.	Quantify the expected revenue effect of each proposed measure, and separate new measures from baseline.
q57	Borrowing and debt estimates	33	67	Two of three estimates: net lending/borrowing (p.13) and total debt burden at end of budget	Add one line: projected interest payments on debt for the budget year. This is a single figure and moves the indicator to 100.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
				year (p.14, financing table). Interest payments for 2025/26 are not shown.	
q58	Multi-year expenditure estimates	100	0	The MTFF in Annexes 1–2 shows 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. The indicator requires estimates extending further — projections for 2027/28 are absent, so a full multi-year presentation is not made.	Extend the MTFF table by one column (BY+2). The forward estimates already exist inside the MTEF process; this is a presentation change, not a forecasting change.

QUICK WIN — TWO CELLS IN ONE TABLE

Adding a projected interest-payments line (q57) and one further outer year to the MTFF table (q58) would take the Budget Strategy Paper from 61 to 84 out of 100, and add 1.2 transparency points. Both figures are produced inside the Ministry’s existing medium-term fiscal framework. Neither requires new analysis.

I.2 Executive’s Budget Proposal — Budget Speech and Draft Budget Estimates 2024/25

Document score: 52 / 100 · 54 indicators, close to half of the entire transparency score. Tabled and published 21 February 2024 for a budget year starting 1 April 2024 — less than two months in advance, which caps the timeliness indicator (EBP-2) at 33.

The Executive’s Budget Proposal is where Lesotho’s transparency score will be won or lost. It carries 54 of the 109 transparency indicators. It improved by more than seven points this round, and 19 of its 54 indicators still sit at 33 — the band where a modest, well-targeted addition converts directly into points.

The 53 content indicators are grouped below into eight clusters. The clusters are not an OBS construct; they are how the fixes actually organise themselves inside the Ministry — one cluster is a Budget Department task, another is a Macro Department task, another belongs to the Debt Management Unit.

Cluster	Inds.	Avg.	Where the points are
1. Expenditure classification and programme structure	6	72	Functional classification exists but is not COFOG-compatible; programme structure covers less than two-thirds of spending.
2. Multi-year (medium-term) projections	5	67	Forward estimates are strong on revenue, weaker on programmes and on the multi-year policy link.
3. Historical and prior-year data	14	74	BY-1 is well covered. BY-2 is thin: economic classification only, no programmes.
4. Budget-year revenue detail	2	100	Complete. No action needed.
5. Borrowing, debt, and macroeconomic assumptions	4	50	Aggregate debt is disclosed; composition, interest rates, maturity profile, and sensitivity analysis are not.
6. Fiscal risk, off-budget activity, and the balance sheet	12	11	The weakest cluster in the document and the single largest pool of available points. Eight of twelve indicators score zero.
7. Policy impact, performance, and pro-poor information	9	37	Narrative is rich; quantification is absent. No performance targets anywhere in the budget.
8. Process (budget timetable)	1	100	Completely, the Budget Call Circular is published.

Cluster 1 — Expenditure classification and programme structure

This cluster is the technical heart of the programme-based budgeting reform, and its consequences run through four other documents. Lesotho presents expenditure under seven headings drawn from NSDP II — General Administration; Inclusive Growth and Private-Sector Job Creation; Human Capital; Enabling Infrastructure; National Governance and Accountability; Investment Climate and Financial Sector; Cross-Cutting Issues. The survey accepted these as a *functional* classification (q2 rose from 0 to 100). It did not accept them as *programmes*, and it did not accept them as COFOG-compatible.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q1	Expenditure by administrative unit	100	100	All MDAs presented, accounting for all expenditure (Estimates p.19, detail pp.23–41).	—
q2	Expenditure by functional classification	0	100	The seven NSDP II headings are used consistently and are described in the Budget Call Circular chart of accounts as “the overarching functions of government.”	—

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q3	Functional classification compatible with international standards	0	0	The seven headings do not map to COFOG. Several combine multiple sectors under one heading, and sub-functions are not defined or mapped to health, education, social protection and so on.	Publish a COFOG mapping table alongside the NSDP II presentation: the seven priority areas as rows, standard COFOG divisions beneath each, with totals. The consolidated functional view currently appears only in the year-end Budget Brief — bring it forward into the Estimates.
q4	Expenditure by economic classification	100	100	Budget Speech Annex 1 p.29; Estimates pp.20–22.	—
q5	Economic classification GFS-compatible	100	100	Compensation of employees, use of goods and services, interest, subsidies, grants, social benefits, other expenses.	—
q6	Expenditure by individual programme	0	33	Programmes cover less than two-thirds of expenditure. "Recurrent Estimates by Programme and Activity" (p.42) lists activities under the seven headings, but many entries — "Compensation of Employees" — are economic classifications, not programmes. Structures vary across ministries; capital projects (p.66) are not organised into programmes.	Move to 100 by: using programme headings that name operational service areas (primary health care, agricultural extension, rural roads); applying the same structure in every ministry; removing economic classifications from the programme level; attaching objectives and indicators to each programme; and adding a dedicated table of programme totals and sub-programmes.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE — THE BUDGET FRAMEWORK PAPER IS THE LEVER

The Ministry is revising the Budget Framework Papers and the programme-based budgeting framework. That work is worth more OBS points than everything else in this brief combined, because programme structure and functional classification are re-tested in five separate documents: the EBP (q6, q8, q20, q23, q49–q51), the Enacted Budget (q60), the In-Year Reports (q68, q69), the Mid-Year Review (q78, q79) and the Year-End Report (q85, q86, q92, q93). Fully implemented and carried consistently through all five, the modelled gain is roughly **+12 transparency points**.

Two design choices determine whether that value is realised. First, **a programme must be an operational service area, not a policy theme** — the seven NSDP II headings are already scored as functions, and relabelling them as programmes will not produce a programme score. Second, **the same programme code must appear in the Appropriation Act, the quarterly bulletins, the Mid-Year Review, and the year-end report**, not only in the Estimates. A programme classification that exists only at formulation stage is worth about +5 transparency points; one that runs through the whole cycle is worth more than twice that.

Cluster 2 — Multi-year (medium-term) projections

Forward estimates are among Lesotho's stronger features: revenue projections reach the required horizon in full detail. The gaps are on the expenditure side and in the link between the medium-term numbers and stated policy.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q7	Multi-year expenditure estimates by classification	67	67	Forward estimates for 2025/26 and 2026/27 by administrative unit (Estimates p.23 onward) and by economic classification (Budget Speech p.21) — two of three classifications. Functional is absent.	Add forward estimates by functional classification. If the COFOG mapping in q3 is produced, extend it across the outer years and this indicator moves to 100 at the same time.
q8	Multi-year estimates by programme	0	33	Activities (p.42) and capital projects (p.66) carry 2025/26 and 2026/27 projections, but at less than two-thirds of expenditure and inconsistently.	Follows q6 automatically once the programme structure is complete and forward estimates are attached to each programme.
q11	Multi-year revenue by category	100	100	Estimates pp.13–15 with forward years.	—
q12	Multi-year revenue by individual source	100	100	Income tax, VAT, customs, excise, grants, property income, sales of goods and services, all with forward years.	—
q48	Multi-year link to policy goals	33	33	The EBP links the budget year to NSDP II fully (q47 = 100), but it is not clear how goals stated in the Budget Speech are financed beyond the budget year.	For each NSDP II priority, show the medium-term resource envelope across BY, BY+1 and BY+2 and state the target for each year. This is the natural output of a Budget Framework Paper.

Cluster 3 — Historical and prior-year data

The comparison year immediately before the budget (BY-1) is well overseen, including the important detail that BY-1 figures are updated projections rather than stale enacted numbers. Two years back (BY-2) is where the document thins out — and it thinned further this round.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q19	BY-1 expenditure by classification	67	67	Economic (p.2) and administrative (pp.20–70) for 2023/24. Thematic groupings exist but the Ministry does not present them as a formal functional classification and no consolidated table of totals by function is given.	Publish a consolidated BY-1 table of totals by function. Same fix as q3.
q20	BY-1 expenditure by programme	0	33	Comparative 2023/24 figures appear at activity and capital-project level but cover less than two-thirds of spending. The more programme-oriented final Estimates Book was published too late to count.	Follows the programme structure fix — and publishing the final Estimates Book on time (see I.3) makes the existing detail usable.
q21	BY-1 estimates updated from enacted	100	100	“Projection 2023/24” in Annex I differs from the 2023/24 Appropriation Act and from Annex III, confirming they are updated.	—
q22	BY-2 and prior expenditure by classification	67	33	Declined. The only BY-2 (2022/23) figures are the economic-classification column “Actual 2022/23” in Budget Speech Annex I p.29. The Draft Estimates carry no 2022/23 figures at all.	Add a 2022/23 actuals column to the ministry tables in the Draft Estimates. The data exists in the accounting system; this is a column, not an exercise.
q23	BY-2 and prior expenditure by programme	0	0	No BY-2 expenditure by programme anywhere in the Draft Estimates.	Once programme codes are stable, carry two years of actuals against each programme.
q24	Most recent year of actual expenditure	100	100	BY-2 actuals presented (Annex I “Actual 2022/23”).	—
q25	BY-1 revenue by category	100	100	Budget Speech Annex 1 p.29; Estimates pp.3–18.	—
q26	BY-1 individual revenue sources	67	100	Improved. All sources presented for 2023/24; unidentified revenue is about 1% of “other revenue,” inside the 3% tolerance.	—
q27	BY-1 revenue updated from enacted	100	100	“Projection 2023/24” differs from the enacted figures.	—
q28	BY-2 revenue by category	100	100	Annex I “Actual 2022/23”.	—
q29	BY-2 individual revenue sources	67	67	Between two-thirds and all of BY-2 revenue is disaggregated in Annex I p.29.	Disaggregate the residual — chiefly minor non-tax lines — to the same level used for the budget year.
q30	Most recent year of actual revenue	100	100	BY-2 presented.	—
q31	BY-1 borrowing and debt	33	33	Budget Speech p.11 gives total debt stock at January 2024 (M22.9bn), external (M19.0bn) and domestic (M3.8bn), new external borrowing (M1.1bn) and estimated debt service (M3.4bn). Interest rates and maturity profile are absent.	Attach the debt bulletin tables — interest rates by instrument and a maturity profile — to the Budget Speech annexes. See Cluster 5.
q32	Most recent year of actual deficit/surplus	100	100	Annex I gives the 2022/23 cash deficit of M1,613.1m.	—

Cluster 4 — Budget-year revenue detail

q9 (individual sources of tax revenue) and q10 (individual sources of non-tax revenue) both score 100. Income tax, VAT, customs duties, excise duties, SACU, grants, and property income are all identified at the required level in Estimates pp.13–15 and Budget Speech pp.9–11. This cluster needs no action and is worth protecting through the classification reforms.

Cluster 5 — Borrowing, debt and macroeconomic assumptions

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q13	Three borrowing and debt estimates for BY	100	100	Deficit of M1,044.3m as net new borrowing and interest of M1.0bn (Budget Speech p.29); total debt outstanding under head 321 Public Debt (Estimates p.19, detail p.35).	—
q14	Composition of total debt outstanding	33	33	Estimates p.35 splits domestic and external interest and principal. Interest rates, maturity profile, and instrument detail are absent — only one core element is present.	Reproduce the Quarterly Debt Transparency Report tables in the EBP: creditor category, currency, fixed versus variable rate, and residual maturity. The data is already compiled by the Debt Management Unit.
q15	Macroeconomic forecast	33	33	Nominal GDP (Annex I), real growth 2.0%, inflation 5.5%. Interest rates are discussed narratively but no figure is given. The government reviewer argued that interest rates are covered; IBP re-checked and maintained the score because no numerical estimate is published.	Publish a numerical interest-rate assumption. This is the whole gap between 33 and 67 on this indicator — one number.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q16	Sensitivity analysis of macro assumptions	33	33	A Fiscal Risks Statement 2024/25 exists but was published on 13 February 2025 — after the budget was approved — so under OBS rules it cannot be used as EBP evidence. The Budget Speech gives assumptions but no analysis of how changes in inflation, growth or interest rates would affect revenue or debt.	Publish the Fiscal Risks Statement on the same day as the Budget Speech, and include a sensitivity table. See the callout below.

Cluster 6 — Fiscal risk, off-budget activity, and the balance sheet

This cluster averages **11 out of 100** and contains the largest single pool of recoverable points in the entire survey. Eight of its twelve indicators score zero. It is also the cluster where a document Lesotho already produces — the Fiscal Risks Statement — would do most of the work if it were published at the right moment.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q33	Extra-budgetary funds	0	0	The Ministry’s Private Sector Development and Financial Affairs Department identifies roughly 24 extra-budgetary units. No budget documents give their purpose, policy rationale, income, expenditure, or financing.	Publish an annex listing each extra-budgetary unit with its purpose and its income, expenditure, and financing for BY, BY-1 and BY-2. A list of 24 entities with three columns each moves from 0 to 100.
q34	Central government finances consolidated	0	0	Because extra-budgetary units sit outside the presentation, central government finances are not shown on a consolidated basis.	Add a consolidated central-government table (budgetary central government plus extra-budgetary units) with intra-government transfers eliminated. Follows directly from q33.
q35	Intergovernmental transfers	0	33	One lump-sum line — “Current Grants Paid to Local Governments” under the Ministry of Local Government (p.21). No comprehensive enumeration of transfers to councils.	Publish a schedule of transfers by council and by transfer type. Local government block grants are already computed to make the lump sum.
q37	Transfers to public corporations	0	33	A subvention to the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation is explicit; the rest sits inside lump-sum lines 471101 and 471111 (pp.21, 23). LNDC and BEDCO are discussed in the Budget Speech (pp.13–14) without identifiable transfer figures.	Publish a schedule of subsidies and capital transfers by named public corporation. The underlying allocations already exist; they are simply aggregated.
q38	Quasi-fiscal activities	33	33	Initiatives with quasi-fiscal characteristics are described narratively — MCA Lesotho anchor-farmer financing, carbon trading, special purpose vehicles, green bonds (pp.13–15) — but are not identified as quasi-fiscal, and their cost, terms, duration, and risk are not disclosed.	Name them as quasi-fiscal activities in the Fiscal Risks Statement and attach an estimated fiscal cost and risk assessment to each.
q39	Financial assets	33	33	Partial: acquisitions, returns from public corporations, property, and rental income (p.1). No complete listing or valuation, no balance sheet, no narrative.	Publish a schedule of financial assets by class with values, plus a short narrative on holdings and returns.
q40	Nonfinancial assets	0	0	No asset register or balance sheet. Capital expenditure is shown, but the indicator asks for the value of assets held — land, buildings, machinery — not acquisitions.	Publish the value of the government’s nonfinancial asset stock by category. This is the hardest item in the cluster and is properly an IPSAS/asset-register project.
q41	Expenditure arrears	0	0	Arrears repayments (the flow) are shown; the stock of unpaid obligations carried over is not.	Publish the closing stock of expenditure arrears by ministry and by age. The Treasury tracks this to authorise repayments — publishing the balance moves this indicator from 0 to 100.
q42	Contingent liabilities	0	0	No disclosure of guarantees, insurance programmes, or other contingent commitments, nor of their value or risk.	Publish the stock of government guarantees by beneficiary and the estimated exposure. The guaranteed register is maintained for debt-management purposes.
q43	Future liabilities and long-term sustainability	0	0	Medium-term projections and debt/deficit targets exist, but there are no long-horizon projections, no demographic assumptions, and no analysis of long-term liabilities.	Publish a long-term (10+) fiscal sustainability analysis — a ten-year debt path under stated demographic and growth assumptions. Ordinarily part of a Fiscal Risks Statement.
q45	Tax expenditures	0	0	No disclosure of revenue forgone, beneficiaries or the policy rationale for tax preferences.	Publish a tax expenditure statement — revenue forgone by measure. A first-pass estimate for the largest VAT and income-tax preferences is enough to move this to 67 or 100.
q46	Earmarked revenues	0	0	No indication of which revenue streams are reserved for specific purposes, or their value.	List earmarked revenue streams (the oil levy is an obvious candidate) with amounts and the purposes they finance.

QUICK WIN — PUBLISH THE FISCAL RISKS STATEMENT WITH THE BUDGET, NOT AFTER IT

Lesotho produced a Fiscal Risks Statement for 2024/25. It was published on 13 February 2025 — after Parliament had approved the budget it related to. Under OBS methodology a document released after budget approval cannot be used as evidence for any Executive's Budget Proposal question. The analysis was done and scored nothing.

Publishing the same document on the day the Budget Speech is delivered, and extending it to cover contingent liabilities, arrears, tax expenditures, extra-budgetary units and a sensitivity table, would plausibly move q16, q33, q34, q38, q41, q42, q43 and q45 — up to **+5.8 transparency points** from a single sequencing decision plus incremental content. The sequencing change alone, with the statement as currently written, is worth about +0.6 points.

Cluster 7 — Policy impact, performance, and pro-poor information

Lesotho's budget documents are unusually rich in narrative about what government intends to do. The consistent failure is that the narrative is not quantified, and that new policy is not separated from continuing policy. Every indicator in this cluster turns on that distinction.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q17	Impact of new policy on expenditure	0	33	New measures are described — salary adjustment, notch increases, tax credit and bracket changes, old-age pension increase (Budget Speech p.27) — and some costs can be reconstructed by cross-referencing the Estimates. But new policy is not systematically distinguished from existing policy, and projects appear to be reclassified across sectors between years, making it unclear what is genuinely new.	Publish a new-policy table: measure, description, cost in BY, BY+1, BY+2, and the budget line it lands in. Keep classification stable between years so that reclassification is not mistaken for new spending.
q18	Impact of new policy on revenue	0	33	Tax credit and bracket adjustments (p.27), digitisation of tax administration, revision of fees and charges, the medium-term revenue strategy and oil levy revisions (pp.8–9) are described without quantified revenue effects.	Add an expected revenue-effect column to the same table. This is standard practice in a medium-term revenue strategy, and the estimates are prepared for the fiscal framework.
q36	Alternative displays of expenditure	33	33	Capital Estimates by Ministry and Location (pp.58–60) give a geographic breakdown, which counts. Gender, youth, poverty, and climate appear as sub-topics inside ministerial programmes (pp.42–57), which does not count — the OBS requires a consolidated cross-budget analysis, not references inside individual votes.	Publish consolidated cross-budget annexes: a gender budget statement and a child-focused or climate budget statement showing total allocations across all ministries. A single consolidated table per theme converts existing tagging into points.
q44	Donor assistance	67	67	Detailed estimates of financial and in-kind donor support with sources identified (Estimates p.65). No narrative on purpose and expected outcomes.	Add a short narrative for each major donor-funded programme — purpose, expected results, duration.
q47	Link to policy goals (budget year)	33	100	Improved to full marks. Budget Speech pp.7–8 set out economic priorities, and the Estimates categorise expenditure under the NSDP II priority areas.	—
q49	Nonfinancial data on inputs	33	33	Quantified inputs appear for some programmes (pp.42–57) — trees to be planted, officers to be trained, passport booklets to be procured, water systems to be rehabilitated — but not systematically across administrative units or by function.	Require every programme in the Estimates to carry input indicators, using a standard template in the Budget Call Circular.
q50	Nonfinancial data on results	0	0	Results figures exist — households to be connected, jobs to be created, megawatts to be added — but they sit in narrative sections, are not programme-specific, and are inconsistent across ministries.	Move results indicators out of narrative into a standard table attached to each programme. The data are already being collected; the failure is one of presentation.
q51	Performance targets	0	0	No formal performance targets linked to indicators, baselines or a monitoring framework, and no consistent distinction between outputs, outcomes, and aspirations.	Attach a baseline and a target to each results indicator. q50 and q51 together are worth 1.8 transparency points and are the natural output of programme-based budgeting.
q52	Pro-poor policies	33	33	Initiatives benefiting poor households are scattered across sector discussions (p.11) with no centralised estimate or performance framework.	Publish a consolidated social-protection and pro-poor annex: every programme intended to benefit poor households, with its allocation and its target beneficiary numbers.

RELEVANT TO UNICEF'S INTEREST

q36 (alternative expenditure displays) and q52 (pro-poor policies) are the two indicators most directly connected to social-sector advocacy, and both currently score 33. Both are gated on the same thing: the analysis exists in ministerial narratives but is never consolidated into a single cross-budget table. A child-focused budget statement, or a consolidated social-protection annex showing allocations across all ministries with beneficiary targets, would move q36, q52 and — if it carried targets and baselines — contribute to q50 and q51. Sector budget briefs of exactly this type are already produced at year-end; bringing that format forward into the Executive's Budget Proposal is the change.

I.3 Enacted Budget — Appropriation (2024/2025) Act

Document score: **22 / 100** · Unchanged since 2023, and the weakest content score of any publicly available Lesotho budget document. It is also the easiest to fix.

The Appropriation Act was enacted on 25 March 2024 and published on 2 April 2024 — eight days after enactment, and two days into the fiscal year. That is comfortably inside the two-week window, so timeliness scores full marks. But the Act itself contains only Schedule A (recurrent) and Schedule B (capital) ministry totals. The Ministry of Health receives M2,227,761,869 recurrent and M1,166,542,694 capital, and the Act says nothing more. There is no economic or functional breakdown, no programme detail, no revenue, no debt.

Lesotho does produce a document with all of that: the final Budget Estimates Book for FY 2024/25. It was published after parliamentary approval, and so was recorded as published too late to serve as supporting documentation for the Enacted Budget.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
EB-2	When the Enacted Budget is published	100	100	Enacted 25 March 2024 (confirmed by Hansard — see the scoring note below), gazetted and published online 2 April 2024, within two weeks.	—
q59	Expenditure by classification	33	33	Administrative only (Schedules A and B, pp.3–4). No economic or functional breakdown.	Publish the final Estimates Book with the Act. It carries economic classification, which takes this to 67; a COFOG table takes it to 100.
q60	Expenditure by programme	0	0	Ministry totals only. No breakdown into programmes, projects, or sub-activities.	Publish the final Estimates Book with the Act; then complete the programme structure (see Cluster 1) to reach 100.
q61	Revenue by category	0	0	Only the total revenue figure appears in the Act.	The Estimates Book presents revenue by tax and non-tax category. Publishing it on time takes this to 100.
q62	Individual sources of revenue	0	0	Not provided in the Act.	The Estimates Book lists income tax, VAT, customs, excise, SACU, grants, and property income. Publishing it on time takes this to 100.
q63	Borrowing and debt estimates	0	0	No debt information in the Act.	The Estimates Book carries head 321 Public Debt with interest and principal. Publishing it on time takes this to 100.

QUICK WIN — THE SINGLE HIGHEST-VALUE PUBLICATION DECISION AVAILABLE

Publish the final Budget Estimates Book online within two weeks of the Appropriation Act being enacted, and treat it formally as part of the Enacted Budget.

Modelled effect: the Enacted Budget document score rises from **22 to roughly 83**, adding about **+3.4 transparency points** — more than any other single action in this brief. It requires no new analysis, no new system, and no legal change. The document is already written, only its release date moves. In FY 2024/25 the Estimates Book was published on the Budget Portal after Parliament had approved the budget, which is why four of the five content indicators scored zero.

Practically, this means the Budget Department should treat the post-approval reconciliation of the Estimates Book as a two-week task with a hard publication deadline, rather than as work that continues into the fiscal year.

SCORING NOTE — AN IBP REVISION IN LESOTHO'S FAVOUR

The researcher originally recorded the Enacted Budget as approved on 2 April 2024, the Gazette date, which would have placed approval after the start of the fiscal year. IBP reviewed the Hansard of 25 March 2024 and confirmed the Appropriation (2024/2025) Bill was read a third time and agreed to on that date — before the fiscal year began. The

> response to eb-1b was revised, and q109 (when the legislature approves the budget) was revised from "c" to "b," worth 1.9 oversight points. This is a useful precedent: parliamentary records, not only the Gazette, are accepted as evidence of the approval date.

I.4 Citizens Budget — Citizens' Guide 2024/25

Document score: 42 / 100 · Up from zero. Published 4 March 2024, before the budget was approved, and therefore counted for the first time. A second citizens' version was produced for the Mid-Term Budget Review and published on 27 November 2024.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q64	Information provided	0	67	Core information is present: macroeconomic assumptions including growth and inflation (p.3); revenue and expenditure strategy and sector priorities (pp.4, 7–11); revenue and expenditure totals in graphical form (p.6); contact information (p.13). The researcher notes the graphics allow totals to be inferred but do not label monetary values.	Label the monetary totals on the charts, and add information beyond the core — a comparison with the previous year, and what the budget means for a typical household.
q65	Dissemination	0	33	Distributed through the Budget Portal only — a single channel.	Use at least three channels. Radio in Sesotho, printed copies through district administration and community councils, social media, and SMS or WhatsApp summaries would each count. This moves 33 → 100 for the cost of a dissemination plan.
q66	Mechanism to identify public information needs	0	0	No mechanism exists to ask the public what it wants explained in the Citizens Budget.	Add three questions to the pre-budget consultation instrument or a survey to the CB itself asking what people want the Citizens Budget to cover, and publish the answers. This is a zero-cost addition to an existing process and moves the indicator from 0 to 100.
q67	Citizen's versions across the cycle	0	67	Two of four stages covered: formulation (Citizens' Guide to the EBP) and execution (Citizens' Guide to the Mid-Term Budget Review).	Add a citizens' version of the Enacted Budget and a citizens' summary of the Audit Report. The second requires the Auditor-General's cooperation and is a natural joint product.

> **QUICK WIN — THE CITIZENS BUDGET IS THE CHEAPEST DOCUMENT TO IMPROVE**
>
> Three changes — a multi-channel dissemination plan (q65), three questions in the consultation instrument about what people want explained (q66), and citizens' versions for the enacted and audit stages (q67) — take the Citizens Budget from 42 to 92 out of 100 and add about **+1.8 transparency points**. None of them requires new fiscal analysis. This is also the document with the strongest read-across to public participation: q66 in particular is the transparency-side mirror of the feedback-loop weakness identified in Part II.

I.5 In-Year Reports — Quarterly Budget Performance Bulletins

Document score: 48 / 100 · Up from zero. Four bulletins were assessed — Q3 and Q4 of FY 2023/24 and Q1 and Q2 of FY 2024/25 — all published on the Budget Portal within three months of the period covered.

This is one of the two headline improvements of the round and reflects sustained work by the Ministry. The remaining gaps are of two kinds: the bulletins report by economic classification only, and they say nothing about debt.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
IYRs-2	When In-Year Reports are published	0	33	Published at least quarterly and within three months of the period covered. Under OBS 2025 this is the third of four options; the higher options require more frequent reporting or a shorter lag.	Publish monthly bulletins, or shorten the quarterly lag to one month. A monthly one-page execution table would be sufficient; the Treasury already closes monthly.
q68	Actual expenditure by classification	0	33	Economic classification only (Q3 2023/24 pp.6–8; Q4 pp.6–11; Q1 and Q2 2024/25 pp.6–8). No breakdown by ministry.	Add a table of actual expenditure by ministry. This takes the indicator to 67, and a functional table takes it to 100. The IFMIS produces this view.
q69	Actual expenditure by programme	0	33	Programme areas are described narratively — rural water supply, road construction, electrification — but there is no structured table of actual expenditure by programme.	Follows the programme classification reform. Once programme codes exist in the chart of accounts, quarterly execution by programme is a report, not a project.
q70	Comparison with original/revised estimates	0	100	Q2 2024/25 Table 4 (p.8) shows approved budget, revised budget, quarterly expenditure,	—

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
				and cumulative expenditure. The same structure appears in the other bulletins.	
q71	Actual revenue by category	0	100	Q2 2024/25 pp.4–5 presents revenue by tax and non-tax category.	—
q72	Individual sources of actual revenue	0	33	Q2 2024/25 Table 2 (p.7) breaks down collections by item, but the items shown cover only about 29% of revenue collected in the quarter.	Extend Table 2 to cover all revenue sources — chiefly by including SACU receipts and the remaining non-tax lines — to reach two-thirds (67) or full coverage (100).
q73	Comparison of actual with estimated revenue	0	100	Quarterly actual collections compared with the approved budget and with cumulative collections.	—
q74	Actual borrowing and debt	0	0	The Budget Performance Bulletins present no borrowing or debt estimates.	See the callout below — Lesotho already produces the report that answers this.
q75	Composition of actual debt outstanding	0	0	No information on fixed versus variable interest, currency, creditor profile, or risk.	Same fix as q74.

QUICK WIN — THE DEBT REPORTS EXIST; TWO OF FOUR WERE PUBLISHED LATE

Lesotho introduced Quarterly Debt Transparency Reports during this assessment period, and the survey explicitly acknowledges the Ministry’s effort. Three of the four assessed reports — Q3 2023/24, Q4 2023/24 and Q1 2024/25 — were all uploaded on 16 August 2024. That meant Q3 2023/24 was published more than seven months after the period it covered, and Q4 2023/24 about six weeks past its deadline. On that basis the researcher concluded that the debt report series could not be used as supplemental evidence for the In-Year Reports, and q74 and q75 both score zero.

Publishing each Quarterly Debt Transparency Report within three months of quarter-end — or simply merging its tables into the Budget Performance Bulletin, which already meets the deadline — moves q74 and q75 from 0 to 100 and adds **+1.8 transparency points**. Merging is the more robust option, because it removes the possibility of one report slipping and disqualifying the series.

I.6 Mid-Year Review — Mid-Term Budget Statement 2024/25

Document score: 67 / 100 · Lesotho’s highest-scoring document. Presented to Parliament on 27 November 2024, nine weeks after the mid-point — one week outside the top band.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
MYR-2	When the Mid-Year Review is published	33	67	Nine weeks after the 30 September mid-point. Six weeks or less would score 100.	Move presentation forward by three weeks, to mid-November. This is a scheduling decision worth 0.3 transparency points.
q76	Updated macroeconomic forecast	67	67	Real GDP growth and inflation are updated with explanation (pp.5–7, table p.39). Nominal GDP is not updated.	Add an updated nominal GDP figure and explain all differences from the original forecast. One line moves this to 100.
q77	Updated expenditure estimates	67	100	Improved. Recurrent budget revised from M21.3bn to M22.0bn with reasons (p.14) and detailed comparison tables (pp.37–46).	—
q78	Expenditure by classification	67	67	Administrative and economic (pp.41–44) with approved and revised figures. Functional is absent.	Add a functional table. Same COFOG fix as the EBP.
q79	Expenditure by programme	0	0	No programme-level information in the Mid-Term Budget Statement.	Follows the programme classification reform.
q80	Updated revenue estimates	67	67	Updated estimates on p.37 with partial explanation (pp.13–14): strong SACU performance, weak domestic tax collection due to low diamond activity and subdued VAT, water royalties revised upward after treaty negotiations. The government reviewer argued revenue estimates were not updated; IBP maintained the score, confirming that projected-outturn figures constitute updated estimates.	Explain the difference for every revenue category, not only the three highlighted, to reach 100.
q81	Revenue by category	100	100	Budget reconciliation (p.27), receipts (p.30) and the p.37 table by tax and non-tax with projected outturn. The government reviewer disagreed; IBP maintained the score.	—
q82	Individual sources of revenue	67	67	Income taxes, VAT, SACU receipts, grants, royalties, sales of goods and services, property income and fines are updated (p.37), covering more than two-thirds. Fourth-level	Update the revenue table at the same level of disaggregation used in the approved budget — in particular, individual, and corporate income tax, and excise.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
				income tax components are not updated, about 10% of “other revenue” is not disaggregated, and about 18% of taxes on goods and services (e.g., excise) is not updated.	
q83	Updated borrowing and debt	67	67	Updated public debt information including interest and repayments (p.43) and projected net borrowing (p.37). The narrative is thin — the only substantive explanation is a note on p.16 that part of the surplus will service interest.	Add a short section explaining every change in the debt position against the original estimates.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE — THE MID-YEAR REVIEW IS CLOSE TO “ADEQUATE”

Six indicators — MYR-2, q76, q78, q80, q82 and q83 — sit exactly one step below full marks, and each needs a modest addition: presentation three weeks earlier, an updated nominal GDP figure, a functional expenditure table, explanations for all revenue variances rather than three, revenue disaggregated to the level used in the approved budget, and a fuller debt narrative. Together these take the Mid-Year Review from 67 to roughly 89 and add about +1.8 transparency points — and they make it the first Lesotho document to reach the “adequate” band on its own.

I.7 Year-End Report — 2023/24 National Budget Brief

Document score: 29 / 100 · Up from zero, because the National Budget Brief was accepted as Lesotho’s Year-End Report. Publication date recorded as 18 October 2024 from document metadata, between six and nine months after the end of FY 2023/24.

This is the most consequential judgement call in the Lesotho questionnaire. Lesotho does not publish a conventional Year-End Report. The researcher assessed the 2023/24 National Budget Brief — with its Social, Governance, and Infrastructure sector companions — as the closest equivalent, and IBP accepted it. That decision brought three indicators from zero to full marks — q84, q87 and q88 — and is the reason the document scores 29 rather than 0.

But a budget brief is not a set of accounts, and the indicators that require accounts all score zero. Five of them were revised downward during IBP’s consistency review, which is worth understanding before this section is discussed with the Ministry.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
YER-2	When the Year-End Report is published	0	67	Metadata creation dated 18 October 2024, between six and nine months after year-end. The portal lists 16 August 2024; the researcher used the metadata data as more reliable.	Publish within six months of year-end (by 30 September) for full marks.
q84	Enacted versus actual expenditure	0	100	Budget Execution and Credibility section, p.17, covers all expenditure with narrative.	—
q85	Expenditure by classification	0	0	Revised down by IBP. Economic (pp.11–12, Figure 11) and administrative (pp.10–11, Figure 12) information exists, but is presented as percentage distributions rather than executed absolute values, and identifiable absolute figures cover only about 71% of spending without being linked to execution data.	Publish an executed-expenditure table in — approved, revised and actual — by administrative, economic, and functional classification. Percentages alone do not satisfy the indicator.
q86	Expenditure by programme	0	0	Revised down from “a” to “d.” The categories on pp.12–13 and 18–19 — Human Capital, Infrastructure, Governance — are the NSDP II functional headings, not operational programmes, consistent with how they were treated in the EBP.	Follows the programme classification reform, with execution data reported against the same programme codes.
q87	Enacted versus actual revenue	0	100	pp.6–7 present actual against approved revenue for all sources with a narrative explaining the shortfall.	—
q88	Revenue by category	0	100	p.7 separates tax revenue, SACU receipts, and other revenue, plus asset disposals.	—
q89	Individual sources of revenue	0	0	Revised down from “c” to “d.” Categories are highly aggregated — “Taxes,” “Other Revenue,” “SACU Receipts.” Tax revenue is not broken into tax types, and “other revenue” is not disaggregated.	Report actuals at the same level of detail used in the budget: individual and corporate income tax, VAT, customs, excise, and the components of other revenue.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q90	Original versus actual borrowing and debt	0	33	Original versus actual debt stock (M23.6bn estimated against M23.1bn actual) with composition and narrative on maturing domestic debt, exchange-rate movements, and lower-than-expected borrowing (pp.6–8). Net new borrowing and interest payments are not compared.	Add new net borrowing and interest payments to the same comparison, referenced explicitly to the EBP estimates.
q91	Original versus actual macroeconomic forecast	0	0	Revised down from “c” to “d.” Actual GDP growth and inflation outcomes are given (pp.4–5), but they are not compared with the original forecasts for the same year.	Add a forecast-versus-outturn table: nominal GDP, real growth, inflation and interest rates, forecast against actual, with a narrative on deviations. This is one table and moves the indicator from 0 to 100.
q92	Original versus actual nonfinancial inputs	0	0	Not presented.	Depends on q49 — inputs must be planned before variance can be reported.
q93	Original versus actual nonfinancial results	0	0	Not presented.	Depends on q50 and q51 — targets must be set before achievement can be reported.
q94	Enacted versus actual pro-poor spending	0	0	Revised down from “a” to “d.” The Social Sector Budget Brief describes child grants, pensions and public assistance and gives sector-level allocations and some aggregate execution rates, but does not present approved against executed spending at programme level.	Report approved against executed expenditure for each named social protection programme. The Social Sector Budget Brief is the right vehicle; it needs an execution column.
q95	Original versus actual extra-budgetary funds	0	0	No mention of extra-budgetary operations.	Follows q33 — funds must be budgeted before outturn can be reported.
q96	Financial statement	0	0	The National Budget Brief contains no financial statement.	Publish the Consolidated Annual Financial Statements as a standalone, publicly available document within nine months of year-end, without waiting for the audit to conclude.

THE STRUCTURAL FIX — SEPARATE THE ACCOUNTS FROM THE AUDIT

Lesotho’s Consolidated Annual Financial Statements are currently visible to the public only after the Auditor-General has reported on them. Because the audit runs years late, the accounts are effectively unpublished. The Accountant-General submitted the FY 2022/23 consolidated statements for external audit on 16 June 2024 — about fifteen months after year-end — and the audit report followed in November 2025.

Publishing the unaudited Consolidated Annual Financial Statements as a standalone Year-End Report, on a fixed date within nine months of year-end, breaks that dependency. Modelled effect: q96 moves to 100 and, because financial statements carry executed expenditure by classification and individual revenue sources, q85 and q89 move with it. Adding a forecast-versus-outturn table (q91) and pushing publication inside six months (YER-2) takes the Year-End Report from **29 to roughly 60** and adds about **+4.0 transparency points**. It would also remove the single most common criticism of Lesotho’s fiscal reporting: that there is no authoritative statement of what was actually spent.

I.8 Audit Report of the Auditor-General FY 2022/23

Document score: 14 / 100 · Down from 48. Recorded as **Published Late**: the FY 2022/23 report was published on the Auditor-General’s website on 18 November 2025, approximately 32 months after the end of the fiscal year, against an 18-month threshold.

This is the only decline among Lesotho’s eight documents, and it is the clearest illustration in the whole survey of how publication timing dominates content. The audits were performed. The report contains an executive summary. The Auditor-General conducts financial, compliance and performance audits. None of it could be scored.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
AR-2	When audited expenditure is released	33	0	Published more than 18 months after year-end. The FY 2021/22 report was tabled in Parliament on 22 May 2024, roughly two years late; the FY 2022/23 report followed in November 2025.	Publish within 12 months of year-end (score 67) or six months (score 100). Within 18 months scores 33.
q97	Types of audits conducted	33	67	The FY 2021/22 Audit Report, published during the assessment window in 2024, includes compliance and performance audit work, and OBS rules allow these to count even where the financial audit report was late. The financial audit component cannot be credited.	Publish the financial audit report inside the window and all three audit types count — these moves to 100.
q98	Share of expenditure audited	100	0	No publicly available Audit Report inside the window for the assessed year, so no	Recovered entirely by publishing on time.

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
				expenditure can be recorded as audited. The government reviewer stated all expenditure within the mandate is audited; IBP could not credit it.	
q99	Share of extra-budgetary funds audited	67	0	Extra-budgetary entities are explicitly excluded from the Consolidated Financial Statements, and the limited information on statutory bodies sits in the late-published audit report.	Publish on time and report audit coverage of extra-budgetary entities explicitly, ideally as a coverage table in the report.
q100	Executive summary in the Audit Report	100	0	The report does contain an executive summary — IBP acknowledged this — but the report was outside the window.	Recovered entirely by publishing on time.
q101	Executive reports on follow-up to audit findings	0	33	The 2023/24 Governance Sector Brief notes that “only 60 percent of audit recommendations were implemented, despite 12 completed audits” — enough for partial credit, but with no breakdown of which recommendations were implemented and no systematic update across entities.	Publish an audit-recommendation tracker: each recommendation, the responsible entity, status, and date. This moves 33 → 100 and is a Ministry of Finance / Accountant-General product, not an OAG one.
q102	SAI or legislature reports on executive follow-up	0	0	Neither the Office of the Auditor-General nor Parliament reports publicly on actions taken by the executive to address audit findings.	Either institution publishing a follow-up report closes this. The Public Accounts Committee is the natural author.

WHERE THE AUDIT DELAY ACTUALLY ORIGINATES

The binding constraint is upstream of the Auditor-General. In May 2024, Parliament and the Office of the Auditor-General acknowledged that the FY 2021/22 Audit Report had been released roughly two years late because of delays in submitting and auditing the consolidated annual financial statements. The Accountant-General submitted the FY 2022/23 consolidated statements for external audit on 16 June 2024 — approximately fifteen months after the end of that fiscal year.

The Auditor-General cannot audit accounts she has not received. Compressing the closing and submission timetable is therefore a **Ministry of Finance and Accountant-General** responsibility, and it is the precondition for recovering the 2.8 transparency points lost on the Audit Report. A statutory or administrative deadline requiring submission of consolidated financial statements within six months of year-end, paired with an OAG commitment to report within a further six, would place Lesotho inside the 12-month band.

This is separate from, and additive to, the resourcing problem identified in Part III: the Auditor-General stated in 2024 that the Office audits “only at about 15 to 17 percent of the coverage that we are supposed to audit.”

PART II

Public participation

Lesotho scores **22 out of 100** on public participation — up from 9 in 2023, above the global average of 17 and the Sub-Saharan African average of 16, and the second-highest score in the region after South Africa. Most of the increase comes from one place: the Ministry of Finance's district-level pre-budget consultations were recognised, for the first time, as a genuinely open participation mechanism.

That recognition accounts for about three-quarters of the rise; smaller gains came from line ministries (q135) and Parliament (q136). It also means the country's participation profile is unusually lopsided. Of the four stages the OBS measures, one scores 60 and three score 11 or zero.

Stage	Institution	Score	Status
Budget formulation	Executive (MoFDP)	60	Limited — the strongest participation stage in Lesotho and close to the "adequate" threshold of 61.
Budget approval	Legislature	11	Few opportunities. Hearings are open to attend; the public cannot testify.
Budget implementation	Executive (MoFDP)	0	No opportunities. No mechanism of any kind exists.
Audit	Office of the Auditor-General	0	No opportunities. No mechanism of any kind exists.

THE SHAPE OF THE PROBLEM

Lesotho has built a good front door and no other doors. Citizens are consulted before the budget is written and then have no formal route back in — not while the money is being spent, not when Parliament debates it, and not when it is audited. Because each of the 18 participation indicators is worth 5.6 points, the three under-served stages hold about 59 points of the 78 Lesotho is missing.

II.1 The executive at formulation — Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

Stage score: 60 / 100 · Indicators q125, q126, q127, q132, q134 (with q131 spanning formulation and implementation).

The 2024/25 pre-budget consultations were held across all ten administrative districts between 6 June and 3 July 2023, followed by a national forum at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre' on 25 August 2023 and a written submissions window closing 20 July. The Ministry published an agenda, the Minister's opening remarks, an analysis of public submissions and a consolidated consultations report. Participants included youth, students, media, NGOs, civil society, and local councils; the report records Berea district calling for disability grants regardless of severity and early pension access, and Quthing district advocating for Sephuthi, Xhosa and Setebele in public services.

The government reviewer initially disagreed with the researcher's score of "b" and argued for "a." IBP agreed with the government, and q125 was revised upward from 67 to 100. It is worth noting this: the Ministry successfully argued its own case in the survey process, and the record supported it.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q125	Open mechanism for public input at formulation	33	100	District-level pre-budget consultations across all ten districts, plus a national forum and a written submissions window. Structured dialogue between officials and citizens, open to all — not invitation-only. Revised upward from "b" to "a" at the government reviewer's request.	—
q126	Concrete steps to include vulnerable and under-represented groups	0	100	Consultation report records participation by youth, students, media, NGOs, civil society, and local councils; UNICEF raised children's participation; district submissions covered disability grants and linguistic minorities. District Youth Councils exist in all ten districts.	—
q127	Topics covered	67	67	Three of six OBS topics are clearly covered: social spending policies, public investment projects, and public services. Macroeconomic	Add the three missing topics to the consultation agenda. A short "state of the economy and the fiscal position" session at

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
				issues, revenue forecasts and policies, deficit and debt levels are not systematically put to citizens.	each district consultation — growth, inflation, where revenue comes from, how much debt Lesotho carries and what it costs to service — moves this from 67 to 100.
q131	Comprehensive prior information (both phases)	0	33	Information exists but was largely published after the events. The Pre-Budget Consultation Speech and the August forum agenda were uploaded to the Budget Portal after those events took place. The only clear advance notice concerns written submissions, posted on 7 July with a deadline of 20 July. For the district consultations there is no accessible evidence of when or how citizens were told, through what channels, or what they were told.	Publish a consultation notice at least three weeks before each engagement covering at least three of: purpose, scope, constraints, intended outcomes, and process and timeline. See the model below.
q132	Feedback on how inputs were used	67	33	Declined. The 2024/25 report records what citizens said — roads and bridges, electricity expansion, agriculture, water and sanitation, job creation — but does not explain how those inputs shaped the Executive's Budget Proposal. Its recommendations are high-level policy observations (district development plans, decentralisation, monitoring, and evaluation) rather than a link between inputs and decisions.	Add a "how your input was used" section: each significant input, whether it was taken up, and if not, why. Summary level moves this to 67; input-by-input detail moves it to 100.
q134	Participation in the published budget timetable	0	0	The budget calendar in the Budget Call Circular contains no dates for public participation activities. Lesotho publishes a detailed budget timetable and scores full marks for it on the transparency side (q53) — the calendar simply omits the consultations.	Add the consultation dates to the budget calendar already published in the Budget Call Circular. This is the cheapest 5.6 points in the entire survey.

QUICK WIN — THREE ROWS IN A TABLE THE MINISTRY ALREADY PUBLISHES

q134 asks only whether participation mechanisms are shown in the published timetable for formulating the Executive's Budget Proposal. Lesotho publishes that timetable in the Budget Call Circular. Adding three rows — district pre-budget consultations, national pre-budget forum, written submissions window — with their dates moves the indicator and can add **+5.6 participation points**. There is no cheaper point in the survey.

Prior information: what the notice should contain

q131 is the indicator where Lesotho is closest to a full recovery and where the fix is most easily standardised. The requirement is that comprehensive information be published *before* the engagement, covering at least three of five elements. A single-page notice, published on the Budget Portal and circulated through district administration and radio three weeks ahead of each round, satisfies it. The five elements, with what each means in Lesotho's context:

Element	What it means	What the Lesotho notice should say
Purpose	Why the engagement is happening and what decision it feeds.	"To gather district priorities for the 2026/27–2028/29 Budget Strategy Paper and the Budget Framework Papers."
Scope	What is on the table and what is not.	"Recurrent and capital priorities for the coming three years, across all sectors. Individual procurement decisions and personnel matters are outside scope."
Constraints	The fiscal envelope and the limits within which choices must be made.	"Total expenditure is projected at M25.3 billion. Roughly 60% are already committed to wages, debt service, and statutory transfers. Approximately M X billion is discretionary." Publishing the constraint is what turns consultation into prioritisation.
Intended outcomes	What the government will do with what it hears.	"Submissions will be analysed and reflected in the district priority annex of the Budget Strategy Paper. A response report will be published by 30 September."
Process and timeline	Where, when, how to take part, and what happens next.	"Ten district sessions between 6 June and 3 July; national forum 25 August; written submissions open until 20 July via the Budget Portal, email and district offices; report published by 30 September; Budget Strategy Paper published by 30 September."

Reporting guidelines: closing the loop after the sessions

q132 fell this round, from 67 to 33, and it is the indicator most often raised by civil society in Lesotho: people are consulted and never hear what happened. The consultation report currently records inputs but stops short of explaining their use. The OBS grades this in three steps, and the difference between them is a matter of reporting discipline rather than resources.

Score	Standard	What the report must contain	What this looks like in practice
33	Current	Either a list of inputs received, or a report on how they were used — not both.	The 2024/25 Pre-Budget Consultations Report: district priorities are recorded; their use is not explained.
67	Next step	The list of inputs received AND a summary of how they were used.	Add a closing chapter: "Of the 14 recurring priorities raised across districts, 6 are reflected in the 2026/27 ceilings as follows… 5 are deferred to the outer years because… 3 fall outside central government responsibility and have been referred to…"
100	Full marks	The list of inputs received AND a detailed report of how each was used.	A response matrix: input, district, government response, budget line or reason for rejection, responsible ministry. One row per significant input.

A STANDING REPORTING GUIDELINE FOR CONSULTATIONS

The most durable version of this fix is a short guideline issued with the Budget Call Circular, binding on every consultation the Ministry runs, requiring that each round produces three published outputs on fixed dates:

1. A **consultation notice** published at least three weeks before the first session, covering purpose, scope, constraints, intended outcomes, and process and timeline. (Satisfies q131.)
2. A **consultation record** published within six weeks of the last session, listing inputs by district and by theme. (Half of q132; already produced.)
3. A **response report** published with or before the Budget Strategy Paper, matching each significant input to a government response and a budget consequence. (Completes q132.)

Together these move q131 from 33 to 100 and q132 from 33 to 100, worth **+7.4 participation points**. Extending the same guideline to implementation-stage engagement (see II.2) would also satisfy q133.

II.2 The executive at implementation — the empty stage

Stage score: 0 / 100 · Indicators q128, q129, q130, q133 — four indicators, all zero, worth 22.2 participation points.

There is no specific mechanism through which the public can provide input on how the budget is being executed. The researcher found some discussion of implementation inside the pre-budget consultations, but noted that they are not structured for it: the questions put to citizens are formulation questions — priorities, sustainability, financing choices — not questions about service delivery, execution problems or in-year outcomes.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q128	Open mechanism for monitoring implementation	0	0	No dedicated mechanism. Implementation surfaces incidentally in pre-budget consultations but there is no formal process for collecting submissions on execution and no structured follow-up specific to monitoring.	Establish an implementation-stage engagement. See the callout below.
q129	Concrete steps to include vulnerable groups at implementation	0	0	No mechanism exists, so no inclusion steps can be recorded.	Follows q128 — the same district structure that reached youth, disability and linguistic-minority voices at formulation can be used.
q130	Topics covered at implementation	0	0	No engagement, so no topics.	Follows q128. Cover at least three of: changes in macroeconomic circumstances, delivery of public services, revenue collection, implementation of social spending, changes in deficit and debt, implementation of public investment projects.
q133	Feedback on how implementation inputs were used	0	0	No inputs, so no feedback.	Follows q128, using the same reporting guideline set out in II.1.

QUICK WIN — ATTACH IMPLEMENTATION ENGAGEMENT TO WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

Lesotho already publishes Quarterly Budget Performance Bulletins, already publishes a Mid-Term Budget Statement, already publishes a citizens' guide to that statement, and already convenes citizens in all ten districts once a year. The missing element is a structured occasion to discuss execution.

The lowest-cost design: hold a second, shorter round of district sessions in **November or December**, timed to the publication of the Mid-Term Budget Statement and its citizens' guide. Put the Q1 and Q2 execution figures in front of the same audience that set the priorities, ask what is and is not being delivered, publish a record and a response report using the same guideline.

Modelled effect: q128 to 100, q129 to 100, q130 to 67 or 100, q133 to 67 or 100 — between **+18.6 and +22.2 participation points**, taking Lesotho's participation score from 22 to between 41 and 44 and making it comfortably the strongest performer in Sub-Saharan Africa. No other single action in this brief moves any pillar score that far.

II.3 Line ministries

Indicator q135 · Score 33 / 100, up from 0.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q135	Line ministry participation mechanisms	0	33	Recognised for the first time. The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development ran a Youth Strategic Plan workshop (31 July–2 August 2024) and supported the National Children's Parliament Simulation (19 July 2024), where young participants raised concerns directly with ministers. These count, but as ad hoc and selective — participants are invited rather than participation being open — and they are not framed as mechanisms for input into the annual budget.	Convert one of these into a standing, open budget engagement: officially announced, open to anyone who wishes to attend or submit, explicitly, the ministry's budget allocations and service delivery, held at the same point in the cycle each year. Open participation with an exchange of views moves this from 33 to 100.

DIRECTLY RELEVANT TO UNICEF

The two engagements that earned Lesotho this score are both child- and youth-focused, and one of them — the National Children's Parliament Simulation — is a UNICEF-supported activity. The survey's judgement is not that these are unimportant; it is that they are **invitational and not budget-framed.** Two adjustments would change the score: announce the engagement publicly in advance and accept written submissions from anyone (making it open rather than invitational), and structure at least one session explicitly around the ministry's budget — what was allocated, what was spent, what is proposed. The Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development, or the Ministry of Education and Training, are the obvious candidates, and either would also strengthen the case for a child-focused budget statement under q36.

II.4 The legislature

Stage score (approval): 11 / 100. Indicators q136, q137 and q138. q139 — public input on the Audit Report — is scored under the audit stage but is a legislative practice, and is dealt with here.

Parliament's position is distinctive: the legal basis for public participation already exists and is not being used. Standing Order 76(b) requires the National Assembly and its committees to facilitate public participation by conducting public hearings "as and when necessary," and Standing Order 68(3) authorises committees to invite contributions from experts, stakeholders, or the public on the budget estimates. Hearings are open except on national security or similarly sensitive matters. The Hansard of 8 March 2024 explicitly thanks civil society organisations for attending the tabling of the budget reports.

What is missing is testimony. Citizens and civil society organisations can watch; they cannot speak, and there is no written submissions channel during budget deliberations. That is the whole gap between 11 and a score in the sixties.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q136	Public hearings and input mechanisms at approval	0	33	Improved. Hearings are held and are open to the public; committee hearings after the Minister's presentation were publicly documented. But no testimony from the public is provided, and there is no alternative mechanism such as written submissions. Specific individuals — development partners, sector experts — are occasionally invited.	Allow any member of the public or any CSO to testify at budget hearings (score 100), or open a written submissions channel during committee scrutiny (score 67). Both are already permitted by Standing Orders 68(3) and 76(b).

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q137	Topics on which the legislature seeks input	0	0	Because the public does not formally engage with Parliament on the budget, no topics are covered.	Follows q136. Once submissions are accepted, cover at least three of the six topics — the Portfolio Committee on the Economic and Development Cluster already examines macroeconomic issues, revenue, social spending, debt, and public investment.
q138	Feedback on how public inputs were used	0	0	No input is received, so no feedback is given.	Follows q136. The Consolidated Report the Committee already publishes is the natural vehicle: add a section listing public submissions and the Committee's response to each.
q139	Public input on the Audit Report	0	0	Revised down from "c" to "d" on consistency review. Public Accounts Committee hearings on audit reports are open to the public, but participation is by invitation — the Auditor-General's Office to explain findings, audited entities to respond. There is no evidence that citizens or CSOs testify, and no alternative mechanism for public input. This matches the 2023 assessment.	Allow CSOs and members of the public to testify at PAC hearings on the Audit Report, or accept written submissions on audit findings. The PAC is already publicly active — its 2024 hearings on the Lesotho Electricity Company, the Mothae Mine proceeds and the Central Bank were widely covered.

FOR PARLIAMENT — THE AUTHORITY IS ALREADY THERE

Nothing in Part II asks Parliament for a legal change. Standing Orders 68(3) and 76(b) already authorise committees to invite public contributions and to hold public hearings. What is needed is a procedural decision, ideally recorded in a committee resolution, that during budget scrutiny and PAC hearings on the Audit Report:

- public notice of hearings is issued at least two weeks in advance, with the date, subject and how to apply to speak or submit in writing.
- any member of the public or CSO may submit in writing, and a set number of slots at each hearing are reserved for public testimony.
- the Committee's published report lists submissions received and the Committee's response to each.

Modelled effect: q136 to 100, q137 to 67, q138 to 67, q139 to 100 — approximately **+16.7 participation points**, taking the approval-stage score from 11 to about 78 and lifting Lesotho's overall participation score by about three-quarters of its current level.

II.5 The Office of the Auditor-General

Stage score (audit): 0 / 100 · Indicators q140, q141, q142.

The Office of the Auditor-General maintains no formal mechanism through which the public can suggest audit topics or contribute to audit investigations. The Auditor-General's report describes the mandate, scope and methodology, and adherence to ISSAI standards, but contains no reference to a public-facing channel for audit suggestions, no structured process for considering public input in audit planning, and no consultation with citizens or civil society on topic selection. Audit planning is driven by internal risk assessment and statutory obligation.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q140	Mechanism for the public to suggest audit topics	0	0	No website form, hotline, consultation, or other channel; no process for collecting or considering public input in the audit programme.	Publish a simple audit-suggestion form on the OAG website and accept submissions by post and telephone, with a stated annual window ahead of audit planning. This is a page on an existing website and moves the indicator from 0 to 100.
q141	Feedback on how public suggestions shaped the audit programme	0	0	No mechanism, so no written record of inputs or of their use.	Publish, with the annual audit plan, a list of suggestions received and a note on which were taken up and why. Summary level scores 67; detail scores 100.
q142	Mechanism for the public to contribute to investigations	0	0	No structured process for citizens or CSOs to function as respondents, witnesses, or informants; no public hearings, interviews, or feedback systems within audits.	Establish a protected channel for citizens to provide evidence to ongoing audits, with published guidance on how it works and how information is handled. Performance audits of service delivery are the natural entry point.

FOR THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL — HIGH LEVERAGE, LOW COST

These three indicators are worth **+16.7 participation points** — three-quarters of Lesotho's entire current participation score — and none of them requires legislation, staff, or budget beyond a page on the OAG website and a paragraph in the annual audit plan. Given that the Office has explicitly stated it audits only 15 to 17 percent of the coverage it is mandated to audit, citizen intelligence on where problems lie is also of practical value to audit planning, not merely a compliance exercise.

II.6 Participation at a glance — who does what

Actor	Inds.	Available	The single most valuable action
Ministry of Finance — formulation	6	**+14.8**	Publish a consultation notice before each round and a response report after it (q131, q132); add consultation dates to the budget calendar (q134); add macro, revenue, and debt to the agenda (q127).
Ministry of Finance — implementation	4	**+22.2**	Hold a second district round in November–December alongside the Mid-Term Budget Statement and its citizens' guide (q128–q130, q133).
Line ministries	1	**+3.7**	Convert one existing youth or social-sector engagement into a standing, officially announced, budget-framed forum (q135).
Parliament	4	**+20.4**	Permit public and CSO testimony at budget and PAC hearings under existing Standing Orders, and record submissions in committee reports (q136–q139).
Office of the Auditor-General	3	**+16.7**	Publish an audit-suggestion channel and report annually on how suggestions were used (q140–q142).

PART III

Budget oversight

Lesotho's composite oversight score rose from 22 to **39 out of 100** — still in the "weak" band, but a substantial improvement. Legislative oversight and audit oversight score identically at 39, for very different reasons.

Parliament's problem is one of *sequence and publication*: the National Assembly does serious budget work, and the survey recognised it this round — two indicators moved from 33 to 100 — but that work begins only after the budget is tabled, and the reports of some committees are never published. The Auditor-General's problem is one of *independence and resourcing*: the Office has full legal discretion over what it audits and testifies frequently before Parliament, but the executive appoints its head, can remove its head, and sets its budget at a level the Auditor-General has publicly described as insufficient.

Component	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Character of the gap
Legislative oversight (q107–q118)	17	39	Strong at approval, absent before tabling, weak during execution, unpublished at audit.
Audit oversight (q119–q124)	33	39	Strong mandate, weak institutional independence, and inadequate funding.
Composite oversight	22	39	Weak (0–40).

III.1 Legislative oversight — the National Assembly

Score: 39 / 100 · Twelve indicators. Four are at or near full marks; three are at zero for the same underlying reason.

What does Parliament do well

The Portfolio Committee on the Economic and Development Cluster received the Executive's Budget Proposal on 21 February 2024 and published its Consolidated Report on 8 March 2024, more than three weeks before the fiscal year began, containing analysis of budget performance, review of national priorities, observations, recommendations, proposed amendments. Four sector committees — Social Cluster; Law and Public Safety; Natural Resources, Tourism and Land; and Prime Ministries, Governance, Foreign Relations, and Information — annexed their own reports. Some of those amendments, including adjustments to consultancy allocations, were reflected in the Appropriation Act. Three indicators reward this: q111 and q112 both moved from 33 to 100, and q113 from 33 to 67.

Where the points are

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q107	Debate on budget policy before the EBP is tabled	0	0	No pre-tabling debate. The Portfolio Committee reviews the estimates only after the Minister presents them on 21 February; the Estimates are then referred to committee under Standing Order 67. Nothing happens before tabling.	Refer the Budget Strategy Paper to the Portfolio Committee when it is published in September, debate it, and have the House adopt recommendations for the coming budget. See the callout below.
q108	How far in advance the legislature receives the EBP	33	33	Tabled 21 February 2024 for a year beginning 1 April — about 5.5 weeks, more than one month but less than two.	Table by 1 February for a score of 67, or by 1 January for 100. This is the same constraint that caps EBP-2 on the side of the transparency, so one calendar change earns points twice.
q109	When the legislature approves the budget	0	67	Improved substantially. The Appropriation Bill was read a third time and agreed on 25 March 2024 — before the fiscal year began. IBP revised this from "c" to "b" on the strength of the Hansard record after the government reviewer disagreed with the researcher.	Approve at least one month before the start of the budget year — i.e., by 28 February — for full marks. Requires earlier tabling (q108).
q110	Legal authority to amend the EBP	33	33	Standing Orders allow the Committee of Supply and portfolio committees to propose and debate amendments (Standing Orders pp.54, 1702, s.95(1)(d)), but neither the Constitution nor the Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011 gives the full legislature explicit statutory authority to amend the budget. Authority therefore rests on practice and Standing Orders — "very limited."	Amend the PFMA 2011 to state the legislature's amendment powers explicitly, with any limits (for example, offsetting requirements) defined in law. Explicit authority with defined limits scores 67; unlimited authority scores 100.
q111	Whether amendments were used and adopted	33	100	The Consolidated Report of 8 March 2024 proposed amendments including reallocation across ministries and adjustments to consultancy allocations, and some were reflected in the Appropriation Act.	—

Ind.	What it asks	’23	’25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q112	Specialised committee scrutiny	33	100	The Portfolio Committee on the Economic and Development Cluster had from 21 February to 8 March and published a report with findings and recommendations before adoption.	—
q113	Sector committee scrutiny	33	67	Four sector committees invited ministries to justify allocations, reviewed sector spending, and annexed reports to the Consolidated Report — but had about 15 days, less than the month required for full marks.	Give sector committees at least one month. This follows automatically from tabling the EBP earlier (q108), which is why the tabling date is the highest-leverage single change on the legislative side.
q114	Committee examination of in-year implementation	0	33	Improved. Line ministries present quarterly and mid-year performance reports to portfolio committees under the medium-term budget framework, and in February 2024 committees reviewed Q2 and Q3 progress reports for ministries including Education and Health. But no committee published a report with findings and recommendations.	Publish a short committee report after each in-year review. Three published reviews in a fiscal year scores 100; one scores 67. The reviews already happen — only the report is missing.
q115	Approval before shifting funds between administrative units	0	0	PFMA 2011 s.15 permits the executive to reallocate between administrative units without prior legislative approval. The Constitution s.112(3) and PFMA Chapters 15–16 set general rules for virements and supplementary budgets but do not define criteria, limits, or timing. In practice, supplementary appropriations are often approved retroactively.	Amend the PFMA to require prior legislative approval for virements above a defined threshold, and observe it in practice. Both the legal requirement and the practice are needed for full marks.
q116	Approval before spending excess revenue	0	0	Scored “d” on the basis of practice. The legal position described in the questionnaire is stronger than the score suggests: PFMA 2011 ss.14, 16 and 18 and Constitution ss.110 and 112(1)– (2) require excess revenue to be appropriated by Parliament through a Supplementary Appropriation Bill, and Standing Orders 67–74 set out the procedure.	This is an evidence gap as much as a legal one. If the executive can document that it seeks parliamentary approval before spending excess revenue — dated Supplementary Appropriation Bills preceding the expenditure — the indicator could move from 0 to 100 without any legal change. See the callout below.
q117	Approval before cutting spending below enacted levels	0	0	Neither the PFMA nor the Constitution contains any provision on who approves reductions below enacted levels in response to revenue shortfalls.	Amend the PFMA to require prior legislative approval for in-year expenditure reductions above a threshold. This is a genuine legislative gap, not an evidence gap.
q118	Committee examination of the Audit Report	33	33	The Public Accounts Committee exists under Standing Orders (p.1705, s.5) and is active: the FY 2021/22 Auditor-General’s report was tabled on 22 May 2024, and in July 2024 the PAC held hearings with the Ministry of Natural Resources on M175 million missing from the Mothae Diamond Mine sale. But the PAC publishes no report on its examination.	Publish the PAC’s report with findings and recommendations. Within three months of the Audit Report becoming available scores 100; within six months scores 67. The Committee already does the work.

QUICK WIN — LET PARLIAMENT DEBATE THE BUDGET STRATEGY PAPER

q107 asks whether the legislature debates budget policy *before* the Executive’s Budget Proposal is tabled and approves recommendations for the coming budget. Lesotho scores zero, and yet it publishes a Budget Strategy Paper every September — four to five months before the budget is tabled — containing the medium-term fiscal framework, expenditure ceilings, and sector priorities. It is precisely the document a pre-budget debate is meant to be about.

The change required is procedural: on publication of the Budget Strategy Paper, the Speaker refers it to the Portfolio Committee on the Economic and Development Cluster; the Committee reports; the House debates and adopts recommendations for the coming budget. Modelled effect: **q107 from 0 to 100, +5.6 oversight points**, taking legislative oversight from 39 to 47.

The secondary benefit is larger than the score. A pre-budget debate is the only point in Lesotho’s cycle at which Parliament could influence ceilings rather than react to allocations, and it would give the Budget Framework Paper reform a parliamentary counterpart.

AN EVIDENCE GAP WORTH TESTING BEFORE THE NEXT ROUND

q116 is the one indicator in the Lesotho questionnaire where the recorded score and the narrative evidence sit uneasily together. The researcher’s own comment sets out a legal framework that appears to require prior parliamentary approval for spending excess revenue — PFMA ss.14, 16, 18; Constitution ss.110, 112 — yet the response selected is “d,” which asserts that no such law exists *and* that the executive spends before approval.

The likely explanation is that practice drove the answer: supplementary appropriations in Lesotho are frequently retroactive. But if the Ministry of Finance and the National Assembly can jointly document the sequence — Supplementary Appropriation Bills dated before the associated expenditure, for the most recent two fiscal years — the indicator could move from 0 to 67 or 100 in OBS 2027 with no change in law at all. This is worth **up to +5.6 oversight points** and costs nothing but a records exercise. It is the kind of point that is routinely lost because no one assembles the evidence or makes it publicly available before the research window closes.

III.2 Audit oversight — the Office of the Auditor-General

Score: 39 / 100 · Six indicators. Two at full marks, one partial, three at zero.

The Office of the Auditor-General is legally well equipped and institutionally exposed. Section 117(3) of the Constitution, the PFMA and the Audit Act 2016 give it access to all books, records and government property and full discretion over what to audit — a "100" on q122, maintained by IBP against the government reviewer's own suggestion that discretion is limited. The Auditor-General or senior staff testified before parliamentary committees at least five times in the assessment year, on the Central Bank, the Mothae Mine proceeds, the Government Assets Recovery Task Team, the Lesotho Electricity Company, and LNDC — a "100" on q124, up from zero.

What the Office lacks is protection from the executive and the money to do its job.

Ind.	What it asks	'23	'25	Why it scores what it scores	What would raise it
q119	Independence of the appointment process	0	0	Under Constitution s.142(1) and the Audit Act 2016, the Auditor-General is appointed by the King acting on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Chief Justice administers the oath, but this is ceremonial. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary must consent.	Amend the Constitution or the Audit Act so that appointments require the final consent of the National Assembly or the judiciary — for example, confirmation by a two-thirds majority on the recommendation of an independent panel. This is the only route to a score above zero on this indicator.
q120	Independence of the removal process	0	0	The Audit Act 2016 (p.5) provides that the executive removes the head of the SAI following a tribunal recommendation under Constitution s.142(4)– (6). The tribunal advises; final consent does not rest with the legislature or judiciary.	Amend the removal provision so that the legislature or judiciary gives final consent, not merely a recommending tribunal. Best paired with the appointment reform in q119.
q121	Who determines the SAI's budget	100	0	Revised by IBP from "b" to "d." Audit Act s.37 has the Auditor-General submit an annual operational plan and detailed budget to the Minister for presentation to Parliament, so the executive determines the funding level. IBP found strong evidence that funding is inadequate: in 2024 the Auditor-General stated that despite preparing the plan and budget requested by the Ministry, "we just got the same allocation we have been receiving for the last three years," and that the Office is "only at about 15 to 17 percent of the coverage that we are supposed to audit."	A score of 100 requires either that the Office determine its own budget, or that the legislature or judiciary determine it — for example as a first charge on the Consolidated Fund, as in several regional peers — at a level broadly consistent with its mandate. If the executive continues to determine the budget but funds the Office at the level its operational plan requires, the indicator scores 67.
q122	Legal discretion over which audits to undertake	100	100	Constitution s.117(3), the PFMA and the Audit Act give broad authority and access. The government reviewer suggested "b" (significant discretion with some limitations); IBP maintained "a," finding that delays by audited entities in submitting records are operational rather than legal constraints.	—
q123	Independent review of audit processes	0	33	AFROSAI-E conducted a quality assurance review of the Office in August 2022, following an earlier review in 2017, covering ISSAI compliance, audit methodology, stakeholder engagement, and institutional capacity, with a team from SAI Zimbabwe, Ghana, South Africa, and the AFROSAI-E Secretariat. No review report has been published. IBP revised the score from "b" to "c" for cross-country consistency because publication is required for "b."	Publish the AFROSAI-E review report. The review has already been conducted and paid for; publishing it moves the indicator from 33 to 67. An annual published review would score 100.
q124	SAI testimony before legislative committees	0	100	Improved to full marks. Five or more appearances in the past 12 months, documented across PAC hearings on the Central Bank (July 2024), the Mothae Mine (mid-2024), GASERTT (September 2024), the Lesotho Electricity Company and LNDC.	—

QUICK WIN — PUBLISH A REVIEW THAT ALREADY EXISTS

AFROSAI-E reviewed the Office of the Auditor-General's audit processes in August 2022 against ISSAI standards, with a peer team from four supreme audit institutions. Because the review report was never published, the indicator scores 33 rather than 67. Publishing it — with or without a management response — is worth **+1.9 oversight points** and costs nothing. It would also give the Office an independent, external statement of its capacity constraints to put alongside its budget submission.

READING THE Q121 DECLINE CORRECTLY

q121 fell from 100 to 0 — a full 100-point drop, and the largest kind of movement the survey records. It is important to be precise about what happened because the raw movement invites misreading.

Nothing changed in the law, and nothing changed in the Ministry's conduct. In 2023 the indicator was scored on the basis that the Audit Act gives the Auditor-General a role in preparing her own budget. In 2025 IBP re-examined it against the second half of the test — whether the funding level is broadly consistent with the resources the SAI needs — and the Auditor-General's own public statements in 2024 settled it: a flat allocation for three consecutive years, and audit coverage of 15 to 17 percent of the mandate. The revision reflects a fuller reading of the same institutional arrangement, not a deterioration.

For advocacy purposes this matters: the recommendation is not that the Ministry stopped doing something it used to do. It is that the Office is under-resourced against its mandate, on the Auditor-General's own evidence, and that this now shows up in Lesotho's international score.

III.3 A note on independent fiscal institutions

Lesotho has no independent fiscal institution. Indicators q103–q106 record this, and they are collected but **not scored** in the Open Budget Survey — establishing an IFI would not change Lesotho's oversight score. It is included here because it appears in the published country summary and is sometimes misread as a scored gap. An IFI is a reasonable medium-term ambition on its own merits, particularly as a counterweight in the macroeconomic forecasting that q15 and q16 also touch, but it should not compete for attention with the changes in this Part.

PART IV

Priority action matrix

Every recommendation in this brief is consolidated below, ranked within each pillar by modelled score impact. Impacts are **not comparable across pillars**: a transparency indicator is worth 0.92 points and a participation or oversight indicator is worth 5.56, because the pillars have 109 and 18 indicators, respectively. A one-point transparency gain is harder-won than a one-point participation gain, and both matters.

Difficulty definitions

Rating	What it means
Low	Achievable within one budget cycle by administrative decision. No new law, no new system, no new analytical products. In most cases the document or data already exists and only its content, format, or publication date changes.
Medium	Achievable within one to two cycles. Requires a new recurring process, a procedural decision by a committee or board, a new published product built from existing data, or coordination between two institutions.
High	Requires legislation, constitutional amendment, a new information system, or a multi-year reform programme.

IV.1 Transparency actions

Current score **is 46**. Sufficiency threshold **61**. Each indicator is worth 0.92 points.

Ind.	Action	Impact	Doc / stage	Lead institution	Difficulty
q33, q34, q41, q42, q43, q45	Extending the Fiscal Risks Statement to cover extra-budgetary funds, consolidated central government finances, the stock of expenditure arrears, contingent liabilities and guarantees, long-term fiscal sustainability, and tax expenditures — and publish it with the budget.	+5.2	EBP	MoFDP — Macro & Debt	Medium
q49, q50, q51, q92, q93	Attach input indicators, results indicators, baselines, and targets to every programme in the Estimates, and report achievement against them at year-end.	+4.3	EBP, YER	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	High
q60, q68, q69, q79, q86	Carry programme codes through the Appropriation Act, the quarterly bulletins, the Mid-Year Review, and year-end reporting, with execution data reported against them.	+3.7	EB, IYR, MYR, YER	MoFDP + Accountant-General	High
q59, q60, q61, q62, q63	Publish the final Budget Estimates Book online within two weeks of the Appropriation Act being enacted, and treat it as part of the Enacted Budget.	+3.4	EB	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low
q85, q89, q96	Publish the unaudited Consolidated Annual Financial Statements as a standalone Year-End Report within nine months of year-end, without waiting for the audit.	+2.8	YER	Accountant-General	Medium
AR-2, q97, q98, q100	Publish the Report of the Auditor-General within 12 months of year-end, enabled by submitting consolidated financial statements for audit within six months.	+2.8	AR	Accountant-General + OAG	Medium
q6, q8, q20, q23	Complete the programme structure in the Executive's Budget Proposal: operational service areas, consistent across ministries, with objectives, indicators, and a table of programme totals.	+2.8	EBP	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	High
q64, q65, q66, q67	Improve the Citizens Budget: label monetary totals, disseminate through at least three channels, ask the public what it wants explained, and produce citizens' versions for the enacted and audit stages.	+2.1	CB	MoFDP + OAG	Low
q3, q7, q19, q78	Publish a COFOG-compatible functional classification table — priority areas mapped to standard functions with totals — in the Estimates, forward years, prior years, and the Mid-Year Review.	+1.8	EBP, MYR	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Medium
q74, q75	Merge the Quarterly Debt Transparency Report tables into the Budget Performance Bulletin, or	+1.8	IYR	MoFDP — Debt Mgmt Unit	Low

Ind.	Action	Impact	Doc / stage	Lead institution	Difficulty
	publish each debt report within three months of quarter-end.				
q39, q40	Publish a schedule of financial assets with values, and the value of the nonfinancial asset stock by category.	+1.5	EBP	Accountant-General	High
MYR-2, q76, q80, q82, q83	Present the Mid-Term Budget Statement within six weeks of the mid-point; update nominal GDP; explain all revenue variances; disaggregate revenue to budget level; expand the debt narrative.	+1.5	MYR	MoFDP — Macro & Budget	Low
q57, q58	Add projected interest payments and one further outer year to the medium-term fiscal framework in the Budget Strategy Paper.	+1.2	PBS	MoFDP — Macro Dept.	Low
q14, q31	Reproduce the debt bulletin tables — creditor category, currency, fixed/variable rate, maturity profile — in the Executive's Budget Proposal for the budget year and BY-1.	+1.2	EBP	MoFDP — Debt Mgmt Unit	Low
q17, q18	Publish a new-policy table: each new measure, its cost, and its revenue effect across BY, BY+1 and BY+2, and the budget line it lands in.	+1.2	EBP	MoFDP — Budget & Tax Policy	Medium
q36, q52	Publish consolidated cross-budget annexes — a gender or child-focused budget statement, and a social-protection and pro-poor annex with beneficiary targets.	+1.2	EBP	MoFDP + line ministries	Medium
q35, q37	Publish schedules of intergovernmental transfers by council, and of subsidies and capital transfers by named public corporation.	+1.2	EBP	MoFDP — Budget & PSD&FA	Low
q46	List earmarked revenue streams with amounts and the purposes they finance.	+0.9	EBP	MoFDP — Tax Policy	Low
q22, q29	Add a BY-2 actuals column to the ministry tables in the Draft Estimates, and disaggregate residual BY-2 revenue lines.	+0.9	EBP	MoFDP + Accountant-General	Low
q91	Add a forecast-versus-outturn table to the Year-End Report: nominal GDP, real growth, inflation and interest rates, forecast against actual, with narrative.	+0.9	YER	MoFDP — Macro Dept.	Low
q68, q72	Add a table of actual expenditure by ministry to the quarterly bulletins, and extend the revenue-by-item table to cover all revenue rather than 29%.	+0.9	IYR	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low
q102	Publish a report by the Public Accounts Committee or the Auditor-General on steps the executive has taken to address audit recommendations.	+0.9	AR	PAC or OAG	Low
q16, q38	Publish the Fiscal Risks Statement as currently drafted on the day of the Budget Speech (sequencing change only), and add a sensitivity table.	+0.6	EBP	MoFDP — Macro Dept.	Low
IYRs-2	Publish monthly execution bulletins, or shorten the quarterly publication lag to one month.	+0.6	IYR	MoFDP + Accountant-General	Medium
q101	Publish an audit-recommendation tracker: each recommendation, responsible entity, status, and date.	+0.6	AR	MoFDP / Accountant-General	Low
q15	Publish a numerical interest-rate assumption in the macroeconomic forecast in the Executive's Budget Proposal.	+0.3	EBP	MoFDP — Macro Dept.	Low
q44	Add a short narrative on purpose and expected outcomes for each major donor-funded programme.	+0.3	EBP	MoFDP — Aid Coordination	Low
YER-2	Publish the Year-End Report within six months of year-end rather than between six and nine.	+0.3	YER	Accountant-General	Medium
EBP-2	Table and publish the Executive's Budget Proposal at least two months before the start of the budget year (by 1 February).	+0.3	EBP	Cabinet / MoFDP	Medium

IV.2 Public participation actions

Current score **22**. Each indicator is worth 5.56 points.

Ind.	Action	Impact	Doc / stage	Lead institution	Difficulty
q128, q129, q130, q133	Establish an implementation-stage engagement: a second district round in November–December timed to the Mid-Term Budget Statement and its citizens' guide, with inclusion of vulnerable groups, at least three execution topics, and a published response report.	+18.6	Implementation	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Medium
q136, q137, q138	Permit any member of the public or CSO to testify at budget hearings, or open a written submissions channel; cover at least three of the six key topics; record submissions and responses in the committee report.	+11.2	Approval	National Assembly	Medium
q134	Add public participation dates to the budget calendar already published in the Budget Call Circular.	+5.6	Formulation	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low
q139	Permit public and CSO testimony, or written submissions, at Public Accounts Committee hearings on the Audit Report.	+5.6	Audit	National Assembly — PAC	Medium
q140	Publish an audit-suggestion channel on the Auditor-General's website with a stated annual window ahead of audit planning.	+5.6	Audit	OAG	Low
q141	Publish, with the annual audit plan, the suggestions received and which were taken up and why.	+5.6	Audit	OAG	Low
q142	Establish a protected channel for citizens to provide evidence to ongoing audits, with published guidance and handling protocols.	+5.6	Audit	OAG	Medium
q131	Publish a consultation notice at least three weeks before each engagement covering purpose, scope, constraints, intended outcomes, and process and timeline.	+3.7	Formulation	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low
q132	Publish a response report matching each significant input to a government response and a budget consequence, with or before the Budget Strategy Paper.	+3.7	Formulation	MoFDP — Budget Dept.	Low
q135	Convert one existing line-ministry engagement into a standing, publicly announced, open, budget-framed forum held at a fixed point in the cycle.	+3.7	Formulation	MGYSD or MoET	Low
q127	Add macroeconomic issues, revenue forecasts and policies, and deficit and debt levels to the pre-budget consultation agenda.	+1.8	Formulation	MoFDP — Budget & Macro	Low

IV.3 Oversight actions

Current score **is 39**. Each indicator is worth 5.56 points.

Ind.	Action	Impact	Doc / stage	Lead institution	Difficulty
q107	Refer the Budget Strategy Paper to the Portfolio Committee on publication in September, debate it in the House, and adopt recommendations for the coming budget.	+5.6	Legislature	National Assembly	Medium
q116	Document that Supplementary Appropriation Bills for excess revenue precede the associated expenditure, for the last two fiscal years, and place the record on the public file.	+5.6	Legislature	MoFDP + National Assembly	Low
q121	Fund the Office of the Auditor-General at the level its operational plan requires, or make its budget a determination of the legislature.	+5.6	SAI	MoFDP / National Assembly	Medium
q115	Amend the PFMA 2011 to require prior legislative approval for virements between administrative units above a defined threshold, and observe it.	+5.6	Legislature	MoFDP (bill) + Parliament	High
q117	Amend the PFMA 2011 to require prior legislative approval for in-year expenditure reductions below enacted levels above a threshold.	+5.6	Legislature	MoFDP (bill) + Parliament	High
q119	Amend the Constitution or the Audit Act so that appointment of the Auditor-General requires the final consent of the National Assembly or the judiciary.	+5.6	SAI	Government + Parliament	High
q120	Amend the removal provision so that final consent rests with the legislature or judiciary rather than the executive on a tribunal recommendation.	+5.6	SAI	Government + Parliament	High

Ind.	Action	Impact	Doc / stage	Lead institution	Difficulty
q108, q109, q113	Table the Executive's Budget Proposal at least two months before the budget year, giving sector committees a full month and enabling approval a month in advance.	+5.5	Legislature	Cabinet / MoFDP	Medium
q114	Publish a short committee report with findings and recommendations after each in-year implementation review — three per year for full marks.	+3.7	Legislature	National Assembly committees	Low
q118	Publish the Public Accounts Committee's report on the Audit Report within three months of the report becoming available.	+3.7	Legislature	National Assembly — PAC	Low
q110	Amend the PFMA 2011 to state the legislature's authority to amend the Executive's Budget Proposal explicitly, with any limits defined in law.	+1.9 to +3.7	Legislature	MoFDP (bill) + Parliament	High
q123	Publish the AFROSAI-E quality assurance review of the Office of the Auditor-General.	+1.9	SAI	OAG + AFROSAI-E	Low

IV.4 The first twelve months

The shortlist below contains only actions rated **Low** difficulty — no legislation, no new system, no new analytical product. Every one of them is a decision about what to publish, when to publish it, or what to add to a document that is already being written.

#	Action	Impact	Trigger point in the cycle
1	Publish the final Budget Estimates Book within two weeks of enactment.	T +3.4	April, immediately after the Appropriation Act.
2	Improve and disseminate the Citizens Budget through at least three channels; ask the public what it wants explained.	T +2.1	March, with the Citizens' Guide.
3	Merge the Quarterly Debt Transparency Report tables into the Budget Performance Bulletin.	T +1.8	Next quarterly bulletin.
4	Bring the Mid-Term Budget Statement forward to six weeks after the mid-point and complete its revenue and debt explanations.	T +1.5	November.
5	Add projected interest payments and one further outer year to the Budget Strategy Paper's fiscal framework.	T +1.2	September, with the BSP.
6	Publish debt composition tables and a BY-2 actuals column in the Executive's Budget Proposal.	T +2.1	February, with the Estimates.
7	Publish the Fiscal Risks Statement on the day of the Budget Speech.	T +0.6	February, with the Budget Speech.
8	Add public participation dates to the published budget calendar.	P +5.6	December, with the Budget Call Circular.
9	Publish a consultation notice three weeks before each engagement, and a response report afterwards.	P +7.4	May and September.
10	Open an audit-suggestion channel on the OAG website and report on it in the annual audit plan.	P +11.2	Any time; ahead of the audit planning cycle.
11	Publish committee reports after in-year implementation reviews, and the PAC's report on the Audit Report.	O +7.4	After each review; within three months of the AR.
12	Publish the AFROSAI-E quality assurance review, and assemble the excess-revenue approval record.	O +7.5	Any time before the next research window.

WHAT THIS SHORTLIST ALONE WOULD ACHIEVE

Taken together — and adding the remaining low-difficulty transparency items in IV.1 — these actions model to:

- **Transparency: 46 → approximately 64**. This crosses the OBS sufficiency threshold of 61, which no country in Lesotho's region except South Africa and Zimbabwe currently meets.
- **Public participation: 22 → approximately 52**, the highest score in Sub-Saharan Africa by a wide margin, without the implementation-stage mechanism.
- **Oversight: 39 → approximately 54**, without any amendment to the PFMA, the Audit Act or the Constitution.

No legislation is required for any of them. The binding constraint is not legal authority, capacity, or data — it is publication discipline and the decision to write down things the government already knows.

IV.5 The role of the Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is the lead institution or co-lead for **24 of the 29 transparency actions** and **5 of the 11 participation actions** in this matrix, and it is a co-lead on several oversight items. It is worth being explicit about the different kinds of role the Ministry plays because they call for different things.

Role	Where it applies	What it requires of the Ministry
Author	The Budget Strategy Paper, the Executive's Budget Proposal, the Budget Performance Bulletins, the Mid-Term Budget Statement, the Citizens Budget, the Fiscal Risks Statement.	Direct control. The content of these documents is a Ministry decision. More than 20 transparency points sit here and require nothing but drafting choices and a publication calendar.
Publisher	The Budget Portal, on which every one of Lesotho's documents is assessed.	Lock every document to a publication date inside the OBS window, and record that date visibly on the page. Four of Lesotho's largest losses this round were timing failures on documents that already existed.
Convenor	Pre-budget consultations; the proposed implementation-stage engagement; the participation guideline issued with the Budget Call Circular.	Standardise. A short guideline binding on every consultation — notice, record, response report — converts an existing practice into roughly 13 participation points and makes the practice durable across changes of personnel.
Standard-setter	The Budget Call Circular, the chart of accounts, the Budget Framework Paper template, the programme classification.	This is where the largest and slowest gains are. The programme and functional classification decisions taken in the Budget Framework Paper reform determine roughly 12 transparency points across five documents. They should be taken with the execution and reporting chain in mind, not only formulation.
Enabler	The Accountant-General's closing timetable; the Office of the Auditor-General's budget; the record of supplementary appropriations.	The Ministry does not control the Auditor-General's output, but it controls two of its preconditions: when consolidated financial statements are submitted for audit, and how much the Office is funded. Both currently limit Lesotho's score more than anything the OAG itself does.
Counterpart	Parliamentary scrutiny; the tabling date of the Executive's Budget Proposal.	Tabling the budget by 1 February rather than 21 February gives sector committees a full month and lets Parliament approve a month in advance — worth about 5.5 oversight points and 0.3 transparency points. This is a Cabinet scheduling decision that the Ministry is best placed to propose.

THREE THINGS TO SAY TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

1. **The 2025 result is your result.** Three documents that scored zero in 2023 now count. That happened because the Ministry published the Citizens Budget, the quarterly bulletins, and a year-end brief online and on time.
2. **The cheapest points left are timing, not content.** The Estimates Book, the Fiscal Risks Statement, the debt reports, and the consolidated financial statements were all produced. Publishing them inside the window is worth roughly 8 transparency points and requires no new work.
3. **The Budget Framework Paper and programme-budgeting reform is the largest single opportunity in the survey** — around 12 transparency points — but only if programmes are defined as operational service areas and the same codes are carried into the Appropriation Act, the quarterly bulletins, the Mid-Year Review, and year-end reporting. Designed for formulation alone — programme structure and performance information in the Estimates only — the same reform is worth about +5 points, under half of that.

ANNEX

Full indicator scores, OBS 2023 and OBS 2025

All 142 indicators, with 2023 and 2025 scores and the change between rounds. Indicators q103–q106 (independent fiscal institutions) are collected but not scored. Document availability and timeliness indicators (PBS-2, EBP-2, EB-2, IYRs-2, MYR-2, YER-2, AR-2) are shown separately below.

Document availability and timeliness.

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
PBS-2	When the Pre-Budget Statement is made available to the public	100	100	—
EBP-2	When the Executive's Budget Proposal is made available to the public	33	33	—
EB-2	When the Enacted Budget is made available to the public	100	100	—
IYRs-2	When In-Year Reports are made available to the public	0*	33	▲ +33
MYR-2	How long after the mid-point the Mid-Year Review is published	33*	67	▲ +34
YER-2	How long after year-end the Year-End Report is published	0*	67	▲ +67
AR-2	How long after year-end audited expenditure is released	33*	0	▼ −33

** Derived from the published OBS 2023 document scores, which fix these values arithmetically. In OBS 2023 the In-Year Reports, the Year-End Report and the Citizens Budget were not publicly available; the Audit Report was, but late; and the Mid-Year Review was published more than nine weeks after mid-point.*

Executive's Budget Proposal — content (q1–q53)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q1	EBP: expenditure by administrative unit	100	100	—
q2	EBP: expenditure by functional classification	0	100	▲ +100
q3	EBP: functional classification meets international standards	0	0	—
q4	EBP: expenditure by economic classification	100	100	—
q5	EBP: economic classification meets international standards	100	100	—
q6	EBP: expenditure by individual programme	0	33	▲ +33
q7	EBP: multi-year expenditure by classification	67	67	—
q8	EBP: multi-year expenditure by programme	0	33	▲ +33
q9	EBP: individual sources of tax revenue	100	100	—
q10	EBP: individual sources of non-tax revenue	100	100	—
q11	EBP: multi-year revenue by category	100	100	—
q12	EBP: multi-year revenue by individual source	100	100	—
q13	EBP: three borrowing and debt estimates	100	100	—
q14	EBP: composition of total debt outstanding	33	33	—
q15	EBP: macroeconomic forecast	33	33	—
q16	EBP: sensitivity analysis of macro assumptions	33	33	—
q17	EBP: effect of new policy on expenditure	0	33	▲ +33
q18	EBP: effect of new policy on revenue	0	33	▲ +33
q19	EBP: BY-1 expenditure by classification	67	67	—
q20	EBP: BY-1 expenditure by programme	0	33	▲ +33
q21	EBP: BY-1 estimates updated from enacted	100	100	—
q22	EBP: BY-2 expenditure by classification	67	33	▼ -34
q23	EBP: BY-2 expenditure by programme	0	0	—
q24	EBP: most recent year of actual expenditure	100	100	—
q25	EBP: BY-1 revenue by category	100	100	—
q26	EBP: BY-1 individual revenue sources	67	100	▲ +33

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q27	EBP: BY-1 revenue updated from enacted	100	100	—
q28	EBP: BY-2 revenue by category	100	100	—
q29	EBP: BY-2 individual revenue sources	67	67	—
q30	EBP: most recent year of actual revenue	100	100	—
q31	EBP: BY-1 borrowing and debt	33	33	—
q32	EBP: most recent year of actual deficit/surplus	100	100	—
q33	EBP: extra-budgetary funds	0	0	—
q34	EBP: consolidated central government finances	0	0	—
q35	EBP: intergovernmental transfers	0	33	▲ +33
q36	EBP: alternative displays of expenditure	33	33	—
q37	EBP: transfers to public corporations	0	33	▲ +33
q38	EBP: quasi-fiscal activities	33	33	—
q39	EBP: financial assets	33	33	—
q40	EBP: nonfinancial assets	0	0	—
q41	EBP: expenditure arrears	0	0	—
q42	EBP: contingent liabilities	0	0	—
q43	EBP: future liabilities and long-term sustainability	0	0	—
q44	EBP: donor assistance	67	67	—
q45	EBP: tax expenditures	0	0	—
q46	EBP: earmarked revenues	0	0	—
q47	EBP: link to policy goals (budget year)	33	100	▲ +67
q48	EBP: link to policy goals (multi-year)	33	33	—
q49	EBP: nonfinancial data on inputs	33	33	—
q50	EBP: nonfinancial data on results	0	0	—
q51	EBP: performance targets	0	0	—
q52	EBP: pro-poor policies	33	33	—
q53	EBP: published budget formulation timetable	100	100	—

Pre-Budget Statement — content (q54–q58)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q54	PBS: macroeconomic forecast	33	67	▲ +34
q55	PBS: expenditure policies and priorities	67	67	—
q56	PBS: revenue policies and priorities	33	67	▲ +34
q57	PBS: borrowing and debt estimates	33	67	▲ +34
q58	PBS: multi-year expenditure estimates	100	0	▼ -100

Enacted Budget — content (q59–q63)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q59	EB: expenditure by classification	33	33	—
q60	EB: expenditure by programme	0	0	—
q61	EB: revenue by category	0	0	—
q62	EB: individual revenue sources	0	0	—
q63	EB: borrowing and debt estimates	0	0	—

Citizens Budget — content (q64–q67)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q64	CB: information provided	0	67	▲ +67
q65	CB: dissemination	0	33	▲ +33
q66	CB: mechanism to identify public information needs	0	0	—
q67	CB: citizens versions across the cycle	0	67	▲ +67

In-Year Reports — content (q68–q75)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q68	IYR: actual expenditure by classification	0	33	▲ +33
q69	IYR: actual expenditure by programme	0	33	▲ +33
q70	IYR: comparison with estimates (expenditure)	0	100	▲ +100
q71	IYR: actual revenue by category	0	100	▲ +100
q72	IYR: individual sources of actual revenue	0	33	▲ +33
q73	IYR: comparison with estimates (revenue)	0	100	▲ +100
q74	IYR: actual borrowing and debt	0	0	—
q75	IYR: composition of actual debt outstanding	0	0	—

Mid-Year Review — content (q76–q83)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q76	MYR: updated macroeconomic forecast	67	67	—
q77	MYR: updated expenditure estimates	67	100	▲ +33
q78	MYR: expenditure by classification	67	67	—
q79	MYR: expenditure by programme	0	0	—
q80	MYR: updated revenue estimates	67	67	—
q81	MYR: revenue by category	100	100	—
q82	MYR: individual sources of revenue	67	67	—
q83	MYR: updated borrowing and debt	67	67	—

Year-End Report — content (q84–q96)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q84	YER: enacted versus actual expenditure	0	100	▲ +100
q85	YER: expenditure by classification	0	0	—
q86	YER: expenditure by programme	0	0	—
q87	YER: enacted versus actual revenue	0	100	▲ +100
q88	YER: revenue by category	0	100	▲ +100
q89	YER: individual sources of revenue	0	0	—
q90	YER: original versus actual borrowing and debt	0	33	▲ +33
q91	YER: original versus actual macroeconomic forecast	0	0	—
q92	YER: original versus actual nonfinancial inputs	0	0	—
q93	YER: original versus actual nonfinancial results	0	0	—
q94	YER: enacted versus actual pro-poor spending	0	0	—
q95	YER: original versus actual extra-budgetary funds	0	0	—
q96	YER: financial statement	0	0	—

Audit Report — content (q97–q102)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q97	AR: types of audits conducted	33	67	▲ +34
q98	AR: share of expenditure audited	100	0	▼ -100
q99	AR: share of extra-budgetary funds audited	67	0	▼ -67
q100	AR: executive summary in the Audit Report	100	0	▼ -100
q101	AR: executive reports on follow-up to audit findings	0	33	▲ +33
q102	AR: SAI or legislature reports on executive follow-up	0	0	—

Independent fiscal institution (q103–q106) — collected, not scored.

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q103	IFI: existence of an independent fiscal institution	0	0	—
q104	IFI: publishes forecasts or commentary	0	0	—
q105	IFI: publishes costings of policy proposals	0	0	—
q106	IFI: testimony before the legislature	0	0	—

Legislative oversight (q107–q118)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q107	LEG: debate on budget policy before the EBP is tabled	0	0	—
q108	LEG: how far in advance the EBP is received	33	33	—
q109	LEG: when the budget is approved	0	67	▲ +67
q110	LEG: legal authority to amend the EBP	33	33	—
q111	LEG: amendments used and adopted	33	100	▲ +67
q112	LEG: specialised committee scrutiny	33	100	▲ +67
q113	LEG: sector committee scrutiny	33	67	▲ +34
q114	LEG: examination of in-year implementation	0	33	▲ +33
q115	LEG: approval before shifting funds between units	0	0	—
q116	LEG: approval before spending excess revenue	0	0	—
q117	LEG: approval before cutting spending	0	0	—
q118	LEG: examination of the Audit Report	33	33	—

Audit oversight (q119–q124)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q119	SAI: independence of the appointment process	0	0	—
q120	SAI: independence of the removal process	0	0	—
q121	SAI: who determines the SAI budget	100	0	▼ -100
q122	SAI: legal discretion over audits	100	100	—
q123	SAI: independent review of audit processes	0	33	▲ +33
q124	SAI: testimony before legislative committees	0	100	▲ +100

Public participation (q125–q142)

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q125	PP: executive mechanism at formulation	33	100	▲ +67
q126	PP: inclusion of vulnerable groups at formulation	0	100	▲ +100

Ind.	Indicator	OBS 2023	OBS 2025	Change
q127	PP: topics covered at formulation	67	67	—
q128	PP: executive mechanism at implementation	0	0	—
q129	PP: inclusion of vulnerable groups at implementation	0	0	—
q130	PP: topics covered at implementation	0	0	—
q131	PP: comprehensive prior information	0	33	▲ +33
q132	PP: feedback on formulation inputs	67	33	▼ -34
q133	PP: feedback on implementation inputs	0	0	—
q134	PP: participation in the published budget timetable	0	0	—
q135	PP: line ministry mechanisms	0	33	▲ +33
q136	PP: legislature hearings and input at approval	0	33	▲ +33
q137	PP: topics on which the legislature seeks input	0	0	—
q138	PP: legislature feedback on public inputs	0	0	—
q139	PP: public input on the Audit Report	0	0	—
q140	PP: SAI mechanism to suggest audit topics	0	0	—
q141	PP: SAI feedback on suggestions	0	0	—
q142	PP: SAI mechanism to contribute to investigations	0	0	—

Sources

- Open Budget Survey 2025 — Lesotho country summary, International Budget Partnership.
- Open Budget Survey 2025 — Lesotho full questionnaire with researcher comments, government reviewer opinions and IBP scoring decisions (158 pp.).
- Lesotho Raw Scores and Comment workbook: Sheet 1 (indicator scores, 2023 and 2025), Sheet 2 (2025 responses, sources, researcher comments, government reviewer suggested answers, researcher responses, and IBP comments).
- Documents cited throughout are those recorded in the questionnaire source fields and are available on the Lesotho Budget Portal (budgetportal.gov.ls), the Office of the Auditor-General website (auditorgeneral.org.ls) and the National Assembly website (nationalassembly.parliament.ls).