



## MINISTRY OF FINANCE

### PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS COVID-19 GUIDELINES

#### **A. Background:**

This document outlines measures to be put in place by the Government of Lesotho to facilitate the strict application of social distancing and other key COVID-19 spread prevention measures during the 10 pre-budget consultations with citizens in 10 districts of Lesotho. There will be 3 face-to-face pre-budget consultations in the districts of Berea, Thaba-Tseka, and Maseru, and 7 virtual pre-budget consultations in the remaining districts. With UNICEF support, the Government has identified three critical actors who will be directly involved in this activity, requiring effective sensitization and personnel protection equipment (PPE) such as masks, sanitizers and thermometers. There is budget for these elements and their implementation will be pre-tested to ensure maximum protection against COVID-19 spread during the discussions.

Budget consultations and / or hearings have become a key step in the preparation and execution of the budget in Lesotho since 2018/19 whereby the country held its first sector level budget discussions in Maseru. Last year, 5 pre-consultations were held in 5 distinct districts with support from UNICEF. For the preparation of the 2021/22 budget, the Ministry of Finance has prioritized the organization of pre-budget consultations in 10 districts ahead of time so that the findings and orientations of citizens be properly reflected in this budget. These 10 pre-budget consultations will be held during the month of July-August 2020, the findings of which will be reported and published in the Ministry of Finance's website.

#### **B. General Principles/Measures to Apply for COVID-19 Spread Prevention:**

Face-to-face meetings have been minimized for pre-budget consultations, and their criticality and size considered, in line with the permitted size of meetings. But virtual meetings will require that participants be in their own space, home office or otherwise and each one will be reimbursed data of 4G for their participation.

**a. Guidelines to the supplier / organizer of room and entrance controls:**

- Sanitize all participants upon entry and reinforce key prevention messages routinely to all participants entering the room.
- Temperature test all persons coming into the building / room or using a no contact infrared thermometer – anyone with temperature of over 37.6 C will be requested to go back home.
- Handwashing – anyone entering the building must wash hands first if there is a facility available; if not, they should sanitize their hands.
- No participant should enter the premises without a mask, which will be given at the entry.
- Provide a seating arrangement of at least 1.5m apart up to 2m.
- Food catering services will be organized to ensure appropriate cleaning and distancing with provision of packed lunch for participants.
- Bottles of hand sanitizer with 75 per cent alcohol should be prepositioned at room entrances
- Regularly clean with soap and water/sanitize the surfaces.
- If coffee or tea is provided during meetings, participants must bring their own mug and take responsibility for cleaning it afterwards, to extent possible.
- Consider removing chairs from meeting rooms and other measures to reduce occupancy.
- Remind participants to have a plan of what to do if they become ill after the meeting and where to go for health cares for COVID-19 in the council / district.
- Meeting rooms should be cleaned and surfaces (door handles, desk/table tops etc) disinfected both before and after each meeting.
- Take a register (name and email address) of all persons participating physically, in a face-to-face meeting so that contact tracing can be done should anyone fall ill.
- Office space, desks and chairs should be organized to ensure one to two meters between users.
- Floors in all rooms will be marked (paint or adhesive tape) to maintain distance (Signal: This space contains maximum 50 participants + 10 officials).
- All windows will be opened 30 minutes before the start of meetings and kept open for ventilation during the day, where possible.

**b. Guidelines to the MoF**

There should be a maximum of 10 officials in each pre-budget consultations session, with X from the Ministry of Finance, X from other line Ministries, and



X from the District Administrations. These specific measures, in addition to the measures applied by the suppliers, should be strictly followed as well:

- Ensure social distancing upon entry and during the meeting, no shaking of hands
- Provide masks and sanitizers
- Ensure that the gathering does not exceed 50 people in a hall
- The meeting should not last for more than 2 hours
- Make sure that all participants are registered including contact number, residential address and workplace for tracking purposes
- Provide platform for virtual consultation to the extent possible

**c. Guidelines to the participants:**

The Ministry of Finance estimates that a maximum of 50 participants, with a minimum of 40% women, from stakeholders and citizens, will attend each pre-budget consultation. A total of 500 persons will then need adequate numbers of masks, sanitizers and thermometers. The measures the Government intends to implement follow:

- Always wear your mask
- Maintain a social distance of at least 1.5m apart from each other
- Do not be in a meeting for more than 2 hours
- Sanitize or wash hands with running water and soap before and after touching any surface
- Take packed lunch and eat alone

**POSITION: BUDGET CONTROLLER**

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