

Resource Management: Lesotho Water Project

Lesotho is a **landlocked** country found in the south of Africa. It is surrounded by **South Africa**, which means that Lesotho relies on good political relations and trade with South Africa.

Key Facts about Lesotho:

Human Development Index Rank = **164**th out of 189

Life Expectancy = **51** years old

Topography = Mountainous

Employment = **51%** of the population have a job



Source: Geology.com

Lesotho is a **developing country** and there are several problems that limit the country's development:

1. The country faces frequent **dry spells**, which can lead to **droughts** and **food shortages**. This can lead to **famine**.
2. Lesotho's **government** and politics is still developing, which impacts the economy's growth. This makes Lesotho a developing country, not developed.
3. Lesotho is one of the **20%** worst countries in the world for **wealth inequality**. Some of the population profit from diamond mining, whereas others remain unemployed and in extreme poverty.

Therefore, in 2004, the government decided to trade **surplus water** with neighbouring South Africa to improve its economy and development.



Source: SABC News

Lesotho Highland Water Project

40% of the water from the **River Segou** will be transferred to the **Vaal River**, which supplies Johannesburg. The scheme involves large construction of: dams, reservoirs, pipelines, etc. It will take **30 years** to construct the transfer scheme, so Lesotho is yet to see the benefits of the scheme.



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Source: Construction Review Online

However, there are many **advantages** and **disadvantages** to the transfer scheme, when construction is complete, not just for Lesotho but for South Africa!

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Lesotho 	<p>😊 The project will be the largest transfer scheme in Africa, and boost Lesotho's economy by 75%</p> <p>😊 The dams can provide hydroelectric power, which Lesotho's towns can use.</p> <p>😊 Improved roads and infrastructure alongside pipelines.</p>	<p>😞 30,000 local residents have already been forced out of their home to build dams and reservoirs.</p> <p>😞 Wetlands have been destroyed to build the dam, which are part of Lesotho's natural water cycle. Will residents receive as much water now water storage has been destroyed?</p>
South Africa 	<p>😊 Water can be bought for Johannesburg's growing population, stopping any dehydration and improving sanitation.</p> <p>😊 Clean water is counteracting the pollution and sewage polluting the River Vaal, which could impact locals' health.</p>	<p>😞 South Africa has to pay for water, which is essential for life. Is it right to have to pay for clean water?</p> <p>😞 There could be inequality and corruption, meaning the poorest families may not afford clean water.</p>

Even though the Lesotho Highland Project is still under construction, plans for a **second transfer** scheme from **Lesotho to Botswana** have been agreed. This could see a rise in Lesotho's political power and economy in the next few decades.

