LESOTHO ELECTRICITY SUPPLY PROJECT-Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

a) Brief description of the project and key environmental and social components

This project consists of the following physical components:

- Installation of 200 home solar systems as part of Mphaki Pilot Project.
- Construction of Substations: Maseru (33/11kV 2x10 MVA) and Hlotse (33/11kV 10 MVA).
- Construction of 30 pole mounted substations at Mphaki comprising 27 of 33/0.4 kV 50 kVA and 3 of 33/0.4 kV 100kVA.
- Construction of 33kV Distribution Lines: 131km linking Quthing and Mphaki and 43km linking Maseru and Hlotse substations.
- Construction of 12km of 11kV lines, 4km of 11kV underground cables and 60km 0.4 kV lines at Mphaki.
- Refurbishment of 2 MW Mantšonyane mini hydropower station.

b) Major environmental and social impacts

**Adverse Impacts:** Distribution network systems extension can be expected to have minor direct and indirect impacts on villages and hamlets where the proposed lines pass. The potential for negative direct impacts might be in any social and cultural interaction between the contractor’s workers and local populations. There may also be minor effects on agriculture, if there would be a restriction on land use in the right of way to the areas where distribution lines pass, and, in any involuntary resettlement requirement. Issues addressed in the ESMP include tree cutting, local land degradation and soil erosion, aesthetics and visual impact and ecological issues. The sites for the sub-stations have been procured already by Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) and are fenced of. No negative environmental impact is expected.

**Positive Impacts:** The benefits of the project for domestic supply and use in small-scale businesses and in access to electric power for schools and public services are evident. Potential beneficiary enterprises affected by and contributing to regional socio-economic transformation will be small industries like saw mills and joineries, grain mills and other agricultural processing and storage businesses. Data management with computers is enabled along with communication facilities such as the internet and charging of mobile phones. Electric lighting adds to security at night and enables extended opportunities for work and study. As a consequence the quality of life and extent of economic opportunity will be transformed.

Through the Mpaki Pilot project a locally management Association will empower local people in managing the electricity distribution network.

The rehabilitation of the Mantšonyane hydro plant will reduce the power shortages in the country during peak times and reduce the number / duration of load shedding. Reduced load shedding will limit the use of private diesel powered generators and provide more secured electricity provision to those not able to afford back up generators.

c) Enhancement and mitigation program

Limited if any impacts are anticipated as planning and management for the project follows detailed frameworks developed for the project. Most distribution lines will follow road corridors and there should be very limited compensation requirements. Lines following roads adjacent to
conservation areas will accommodate wildlife movement in their design and mitigate visual landscape intrusion and avoid unnecessary tree cutting or displacement of people.

Limited if any significant impacts on conservation, pollution control, plans to mitigate aids transmission risk and accidents, together with management of land loss and compensation arrangements.

d) Monitoring program and complementary initiatives

The standard LEC procedures will be used for monitoring the implementation of the Environmental and Social Management Plan.

e) Institutional arrangements and capacity building requirements

LEC will ensure implementation of the project ESMP with the support of its environmental staff. Contractors will be held to account for implementation of their responsibilities in the Project Management Matrix.

f) Public consultations and disclosure requirements

Public consultations have been held with local population in the project area by the Department of Energy (DOE) and LEC while preparing the ESMP. Furthermore, the standard procedures will be followed for disclosure in line with guidelines of the National Environmental Secretariat.

g) Estimated costs

The estimated cost of the Environmental and Social Management Plan is UA 46,827 (M 500,000).

h) Implementation schedule and reporting

The implementation will be rolled out as required for each project component in line with the construction timetable and frameworks established for surveying and consultation, management and monitoring. LEC will have responsibility for social and environmental aspects of the projects. Supervision undertaken by AfDB will also cover these aspects.