**PRESS RELEASE**

**Launch of RASME initiative in Lesotho**

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in the Kingdom of Lesotho and the African Development Bank (AfDB) launched the Remote Appraisal, Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation (RASME) project in Maseru.

The RASME initiative’s objective is to transform operations regarding project data collection and analysis across AfDB’s member countries. RASME is an initiative for remote monitoring and evaluation of development projects. It utilizes the power of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to collect project data remotely in digital formats directly from the field. It is an innovative solution that is relevant everywhere but especially in zones with instability, insecurity, or logistical concerns.

RASME improves transparency in the monitoring and evaluation of operations projects and the accountability among the stakeholders.

The digital data gathering suite of tools being used for the RASME project are based on the Kobo Toolbox platform which is an open-source ICT solution developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. RASME is deployed through a collaborative implementation process with the government and other development partners. Currently, it has been successfully implemented in 34 countries across Africa with over 1,650 people trained resulting in over 6,100 submissions made.

During the launch, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning commended the initiative as it will: “*Ensure open and transparent reporting of the development initiatives, which is central and key to the government and the bank mission to use reliable data to improve decision-making at all levels. The Ministry alluded to the fact that we all recognise the importance of data, particularly reliable data that is accessible anywhere and at any time in ensuring effective and efficient project management and for the continuous improvement of the Bank’s operations”.*

The African Development Bank in delivering the remarks at the launch and kick-off meeting indicated that the bank looked forward to active participation in the training as *RASME reflects the bank’s collective commitment to strengthening the country's data ecosystem and ensuring that development projects are planned, implemented, and evaluated based on sound evidence. The African Development Bank therefore affirmed that the RAMSE initiative allows the bank to pool its resources, knowledge, and expertise.*

The deployment of RASME is driven by the AfDB’s Corporate IT department (TCIS) by leading the technical exchanges with the World Bank’s GEMS and Kobo Toolbox teams and conducting step by step deployment over the African countries.