

purchasing power, risks), the action will leverage all financing mechanisms in the EU cooperation toolbox to de-risk investments in the energy sector and direct activities, through results-based financing, to the most vulnerable. Important synergies have also been established with social protection support which will link the provision of cash transfers with access to energy services. In addition, sector coordination activities will continue to involve civil society actors such as the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of Disabled (LNFOD) and Technologies for Economic Development (TED). The Action will respect the 5 HRBA principles: respect to all human rights, participation, accountability, transparency, and accountability. In addition, the action will implement the principles of no one left behind, do not harm and will encourage the private sector to respect the guiding principles on Business and Human Rights.

### **Disability**

As per OECD Disability DAC codes identified in section 1.1, this action is labelled as D1. This implies that a more equitable access to energy services for persons with disabilities is a significant objective. The use biomass fuels to meet the basic needs of cooking and space heating is prevalent in Lesotho, especially in rural areas. These energy needs require increased mobility (collecting wood and biomass) which often represents a barrier for persons with disabilities. In addition, persons with disabilities tend to have higher energy needs due to longer time spent at home, which makes them also more vulnerable to indoor air pollution. According to the World Health Organization, indoor air pollution contributes to 4.2 million deaths annually and is associated with chronic diseases. By reducing indoor air pollution through cleaner and more efficient cook stoves, this action can contribute to reducing the prevalence of such health issues and improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Energy efficiency activities, especially related to solar water heating, can also help prevent chronic diseases. Research has demonstrated that using cold water for laundry and dish washing is the main cause for the extremely common incidence of rheumatoid arthritis suffering, particularly among women.

### **Democracy**

The action aims to remove the socio-economic barriers that prevent a large section of the population in Lesotho from fully enjoying their formal rights. By ensuring that energy services reach the most marginalised people, this action will contribute to reinforcing people's trust in the institutions of democratic governance and prevent the rise of populist or authoritarian tendencies. In 2020, a survey among Basotho showed that 66% of respondents favoured the abolishment of elective democracy. Access to electricity is also an enabler for digitalisation, connectivity and access to information.

### **Conflict sensitivity, peace and resilience**

More equitable access to energy services and improved livelihoods will help address inequalities in Lesotho, one of the most unequal countries in the world, and reduce the gap between urban and rural areas. This will contribute to mitigating the risks of social conflict and improve resilience.

### **Disaster Risk Reduction**

Improved energy services, especially more efficient energy efficiency and thermal energy solutions have the potential of reducing biomass and wood consumption thus supporting soil erosion efforts. This improves resilience against disasters, as well as food production. In addition, off-grid energy solutions are associated with a more distributed generation, creating a profusion of electricity sources and a greater ability to localise and buffer disruptions. It is foreseen to include a Crisis Modifier in the contracts that will be drafted in support of the energy fund. The Crisis modifier will allow the implementing partner to respond quickly and expand horizontally and vertically in cases of both minor and major crisis. Such an expansion can be activated based on agreed emergency triggers.

### **Other considerations if relevant**

Access to clean energy services have a significant impact on economic activities and education, especially for women and young girls in rural areas, by reducing the time spent on collecting wood for cooking and heating and reducing health hazards related to indoor air pollution. Access to electricity increases connectivity and allows children to study outside daytime hours. In addition, in a country with very low forest coverage and severely affected by soil erosion, the transition to cleaner energy and with more efficient wood and biomass use will also have a positive impact on land management as well as biodiversity.