Terms of Reference

Lesotho GIS Financial Access Points Mapping Project – Phase 2

Consultancy Services for the Data Collection and Analytics

September 2026

Prepared by FinMark Trust

FinMark Trust | Block B West, First Floor, Central Park 400 16th Road, Randjespark, Midrand | P.O. Box 61674, Marshalltown, 2107, South Africa.

www.finmark.org.za, T +27 (0) 67 594 9291 F +27 (0) 86 518 3579

1. About FinMark Trust

FinMark Trust (FMT) is an independent trust whose purpose is to make financial markets work for the poor by promoting financial inclusion and regional financial integration. FMT does this by conducting research to identify the systemic constraints that prevents consumers from accessing financial markets, and by advocating for change based on research findings. Thus, FMT has a catalytic role, driven by its purpose to start processes of change that ultimately lead to the development of inclusive financial systems that can benefit all sectors.

2. Background and contextual information

Financial inclusion is a key pillar of Lesotho's development agenda under the National Strategic Development Plan and the Financial Sector Development Strategy. Under the Lesotho Scaling Inclusion through Mobile Money (SIMM) project, the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) and the UNDP, in partnership with FinMark Trust (FMT), implemented Phase 1 of the Financial Access Points Mapping Project (December 2017 – March 2018), which produced the country's first geo-referenced baseline of 5,597 financial access points.

Given developments in the financial sector since 2018, there is a need to implement Phase 2 to update and extend the database and to deepen the analytics. The GIS database is a key input to a financial market information system: it supports the CBL's regulatory data capabilities, the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2024–2028) monitoring and evaluation framework, and the Extended National Strategic Development Plan II (2023–2027), and it delivers commercial and operational value to financial service providers.

3. Objectives

The overall objective is to update the 2018 baseline into a complete, current, geo-referenced GIS database of all financial access points in Lesotho and to generate decision-ready analytics from it. The specific objectives are to:

1. Collect geo-referenced data on all financial access points across the country and produce a clean, validated dataset (Part A); and
2. Produce spatial analytics, indices and an interactive web-mapping facility from the dataset (Part B).

4. Scope of Work / Approach

The scope is divided into two parts. Bidders may submit a proposal for Part A only, Part B only, or both Part A and Part B. Bidders must set out their competencies for each part they bid for, and financial proposals must present the costs of Part A and Part B separately (see Section G).

Part A – Basic data collection

The service provider shall design and implement the field data collection to update the geo-referenced database of all financial access points, including:

- Designing and programming the survey tool/questionnaire on a GPS-enabled handheld/mobile platform, for approval and sign-off by FMT prior to fieldwork (length should be under 10 minutes to administer);
- Recruiting, training and managing enumerator teams, including a field pilot to test readiness, and route planning to ensure full geographic coverage across all ten districts;
- Visiting and geo-tagging every financial access point in the access-point universe, namely: mobile money agents, commercial bank branches, ATMs, POS terminals, microfinance institutions, insurers, post offices, postal agents, money lenders and merchants;

Capturing, for each access point:

  - GPS coordinates and a photograph;
  - Institution and touch-point type, and the provider (e.g. M-Pesa, EcoCash, bank, MFI);
  - Cash-in and/or cash-out (CICO) status and other financial services offered;
  - For merchants: business category and digital-payment acceptance channels (cash, card/POS, mobile money, QR-based payments, merchant wallets and other digital channels);
  - Approximate transaction volumes (e.g. deposits/withdrawals per week) and years in operation;

- Conducting in-field quality checks (penetration tests and back-checks) and ongoing data quality management;
- Submitting collected data in Excel to FMT on a weekly basis for validation, with a detailed fieldwork report; and
- Delivering a final, clean, validated, geo-referenced dataset ready for analysis.

Part B – Geospatial Analytics

The service provider shall produce spatial analytics from the dataset. The analytics below are grouped into broader dimensions, each with an illustrative research question and the policy it informs:

1. **Measuring access and coverage**

Research question: What share of adults live within 30 minutes of a financial access point, and where are the populated access gaps (covering rural and female populations)? **Policy relevance:** NFIS II Indicator 10 (Access) and its supply-side proxies; access points per 100,000 adults, disaggregated by urban/rural.

- Complete geo-mapping of all fintech agents, merchants and service points, and identification of underserved villages, growth corridors, border towns and commercial centres;
- Mapping of agent and merchant proximity and density relative to population, by district, village and business category;
- Development of indices of access for key items of interest, highlighting gaps in service provision and over-serviced areas; and

- Aggregation of results to areas of interest i.e., wards, villages and catchment areas (e.g. population within a five-minute drive/walk of an access point, and Voronoi service areas).

2. **Measuring usage and liquidity**

Research question: Where are cash-in/cash-out services concentrated, which areas face liquidity shortfalls, and where is usage constrained by poor agent coverage? **Policy relevance**: NFIS II Indicator 6 (Usage: mobile-money cash-in/cash-out ratio and POS transactions):

- Visibility of cash-in/cash-out points across the country and identification of areas experiencing liquidity shortages;
- Enhanced network-coverage optimisation using actual uptake data (agent minutes or billing as a proxy) rather than theoretical line-of-sight coverage, and strengthening of coverage mapping using geotagged social-media data to reflect actual connectivity; and

3. **Competition and market structure**

Research question: How does each provider's coverage (MNOs, banks, MFIs, fintechs, etc.) compare across districts, and where does a single provider or channel dominate? **Policy relevance:** CBL market-conduct and competition oversight; the NFIS II interoperability and agent-network-sharing agenda.

- Comparative mapping of providers (M-Pesa against EcoCash, banks, MFIs and other providers) to benchmark relative coverage and expansion opportunities;

4. **Network optimisation and market development**

Research question: Where is there agent over-concentration versus underserved growth corridors, border towns and commercial centres, and what is the case for expansion? **Policy relevance:** NFIS II agency-banking expansion priority and the Extended NSDP II private-sector development and financial-service-expansion objectives.

- Identification of agent clustering / over-concentration to inform network optimisation and the strategic redistribution of agents to underserved locations;

5. **Data integration, management and hosting**

Research question: How should the GIS database and web-mapping facility be hosted, governed and kept current, and which contextual datasets add most value?

- Layering of additional contextual datasets to improve insights e.g., population density, transport (road & rail) networks, land cover and land use, night-time lights, an MSME density model, cellphone coverage (tower locations combined with terrain topology), terrain topology and building locations;
- Development and hosting of an interactive, open-source web-mapping facility (e.g. QGIS, R/Shiny, SAGA or GRASS) that combines the data layers and indices and allows users to zoom, pan and filter online.

5. Output/ Deliverables

The project is planned over an indicative ten (10) week period. Deliverables are set out by part below; all deliverables are submitted to FMT for review and stakeholder validation.

Part A deliverables

Deliverable	Indicative timing
Inception report: approach, survey tool, methodology and detailed work plan	Weeks 1–2
Trained field teams and piloted survey tool	Week 3
Weekly data submissions (Excel) and fieldwork reports	Weeks 3–8
Clean, validated, geo-referenced dataset	Weeks 7–9

Part B deliverables

Deliverable	Indicative timing
Analytics plan and data-acquisition approach (additional datasets)	Weeks 1–2
Spatial analytics, thematic maps and access indices	Weeks 9–10
Interactive web-mapping facility (hosted) and analytics report	Week 10
Presentation of findings at dissemination event	Week 10

6. Institutional arrangements

i. The service provider will be engaged by, and be directly responsible to, FMT, working closely with the FMT Project Manager on technical matters.
ii. The Project is governed by a Steering Committee co-chaired by the Central Bank of Lesotho and the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning; FMT provides coordination and technical oversight.
iii. The service provider is expected to consult, in person, the relevant government ministries, the Bureau of Statistics, the mobile network operators (Vodacom and Econet), financial service providers and other relevant stakeholders during implementation.
iv. The service provider will prepare reports for FMT review and facilitate stakeholder validation sessions at each stage; the FMT technical team approves the inception report and endorses subsequent reports for stakeholder validation.
v. The service provider shall comply with Lesotho data-protection requirements (in consultation with the Lesotho Communications Authority and the Ministry of Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation), including consent, data retention and geolocation-accuracy thresholds. The service provider shall be given additional datasets (e.g. geotagged coverage data of bank branches, ATMs, agents, etc.) which should be used only for the purposes of this project.

vi. The service provider shall provide its own computer equipment, internet access, staff and logistics.

7. Safeguarding

The selected service provider has the responsibility to consider and be aware of potential safeguarding issues and the project's potential to integrate gender dimensions and contribute to the advancement of gender equality in addressing the Terms of Reference and be able to demonstrate due diligence in relation to the protection and safeguarding of children and vulnerable groups as per strategies designed to support and manage ongoing risk and abuse, exploitation or neglect of participants in this research project.

8. Required skills and qualifications

Bidders must demonstrate the following competencies for each part they bid for.

Part A – Data collection

- Demonstrated experience conducting large-scale geo-referenced field data collection, census or survey work (financial access points, agents or merchants) in Lesotho or comparable settings;
- Proven capacity to recruit, train, deploy and manage large enumerator teams across all districts, including route planning and field logistics in challenging terrain;
- A GPS-enabled handheld/mobile data-collection platform with offline capability, geo-tagging and photo capture, and a secure central hosted database;
- Robust data-management and quality-assurance processes (back-checks, penetration tests, questionnaire verification) and data security;
- Familiarity with Lesotho context and languages (Sesotho); experience in financial-sector or digital financial services data collection is an advantage.

Part B – Analytics

- Strong GIS and geospatial analytics capability (e.g. QGIS/ArcGIS) including spatial statistics: hot-spot analysis, Voronoi/catchment analysis, travel-time/network analysis and site-suitability modelling;
- Data-science skills (R and/or Python) for index construction, modelling and processing of large spatial datasets;
- Demonstrated ability to build and host interactive web-mapping facilities and dashboards using open-source tools (e.g. R/Shiny, Leaflet, GeoServer, QGIS Server);
- Experience integrating multiple datasets (population, transport, coverage, night-time lights, buildings, etc.) and deriving access indices;
- Domain knowledge of financial inclusion, digital financial services and agent-network economics.

9. Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on a combined technical and financial basis, with each part (A and B) evaluated on its own merits so that award may be made for one or both parts. Technical evaluation will consider relevant experience, methodology, team competencies and the quality of the proposed approach; financial evaluation will consider value for money against the separated Part A and Part B costs.

Contract selection criteria and award will be made based on the following scoring mechanism:

	Criteria	**Weighting**
1	Competence and previous experience	30%
2	Knowledge of geospatial mapping and analysis	30%
3	Local capacity	10%
4	Budget	30%
	Maximum score	**100%**

10. Bidding and costing criteria

Bidders should submit a technical proposal and a separate financial proposal (with Part A and Part B costs presented separately) to FinMark Trust by the deadline indicated in the accompanying request for proposals. Queries may be directed to the FMT Project Manager.

- Bidders may submit a proposal for Part A only, Part B only, or both Parts A and B. Where a bidder proposes both parts, the technical and financial proposals must still address each part separately.
- The technical proposal must set out the bidder's competencies, methodology and team for each part bid for (see Section E), together with relevant references.
- The financial proposal must present costs for Part A and Part B separately, using the pricing schedule below, and (where both are bid) a combined total. All costs shall be quoted in Maloti (M), inclusive of any applicable withholding tax, which shall be applied in accordance with prevailing Lesotho tax legislation.

Pricing schedule — Part A (data collection)

Cost item	Cost (M)
Survey tool design and programming	
Enumerator recruitment and training	
Handsets/devices, uniforms and field materials	
Fieldwork (staffing, travel, per diems, insurance)	
Data management and quality control	
Project management and overheads	
Subtotal – Part A	

Pricing schedule — Part B (analytics)

Cost item	Cost (M)
Geospatial analytics, indices and mapping	
Web-mapping facility development and hosting	
Analytics reporting and dashboards	
Project management and overheads	
Subtotal – Part B	

Summary

Summary	Cost (M)
Total Part A	
Total Part B	
Combined total (if bidding both)	

The selected consultant must be prepared to meet with FMT on a date to be announced, for a briefing. Once the selection process has been completed, FMT will issue a contract confirming the appointment of the consultant. Any queries relating to the preparation of the application should be referred electronically via email: Mr Obert Maposa | obertm@finmark.org.za and Ms Florence Mohasoa | florence@finmark.org.za.

In line with FMT's policy of transparency, answers to queries from one candidate will be circulated to all who indicated their intention to submit a proposal.

Guidance notes to bidders

FinMark Trust reserves the absolute right to use its discretion in the interpretation of these award criteria. The following notes are intended to provide broad guidance only on how proposals will be evaluated. Bidders may be required to clarify their proposals by way of a telephone call or presentation. *"Relevant, demonstrated competence of firm(s) in this area" - you should aim to demonstrate how the firm's collective past experience can be applied (or adapted) to address the specific brief set out in the terms of reference. You are welcome to describe the firm's general experience of financial sector development issues (e.g. in other geographies or topical areas) but the evaluation will focus particularly on the application of that experience for the specific task at hand.* *"Demonstrated expertise of key individuals to be involved in this project" – the evaluation places considerable emphasis on the role and demonstrated expertise (i.e. track record) of the key individuals to be involved on the project rather than on the expertise of the firm itself.* *"Use of local professional capacity (consulting, analysis, coordination etc.)" – FinMark Trust wishes to ensure that local capacity is used and developed. International firms are therefore encouraged to partner with local organisations.* *"Content, quality and originality of proposal" – proposals should address the brief set out in the terms of reference in a comprehensive manner. Bidders should aim for innovation as well as professional presentation. Whilst similar, relevant experience in other markets will be an advantage for a bidder, each market is different and so proposals need to reflect the particular characteristics of that market, as well as the challenge set by the terms of reference.* *"Fee basis" – value for money, as well as absolute cost, will be taken into account.*

11. Important to note

Submissions close at close of business on Friday, 25 September 2026. If no communication has been received from FMT within one month of your submission, please consider yourself unsuccessful.