



GOVERNMENT OF THE
KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

GOVERNMENT
PERFORMANCE
REPORT FOR THE
PERIOD NOVEMBER
2023-SEPTEMBER 2024

**GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD
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1. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

1. **Construction of Maphiveni Primary School:** In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training, the Office constructed a primary school at Maphiveni to serve 200 children, who are mostly vulnerable and lack birth certificates to access education. The children to benefit are out of school due to a number of challenges such as long distance travelled to nearby schools which then result in children having to pay bus fare that parents cannot afford, thus improving access to school for the children. The Office also provided school supplies, including shoes and bags, for 156 children to improve their access to education. To ensure food security at the school, the Office also partnered with Lactalis (Parmalat) Eswatini, Unifoods and Ackerman's to provide food and clothing to the children.
2. **Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation;** The Office has developed costed short to medium long term Action Plans and Programmes based on Sibaya submission which were further used to inform the medium term budget framework for the Financial year 2024/25 – 2026/27.
3. **Development of National Social Registry:** The Deputy Prime Minister's Office is in the process of transforming the social safety net programmes (SSNP) by developing a National Dynamic Social Registry that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of poor and vulnerable EmaSwati. With the assistance of the World Bank,

the Office has developed a number of project documents which include the following: Project document, Project proposal for management information system, Communication strategy, Data collection instrument (questionnaire), Memorandum of Agreement with Royal Science Technology Park, Data collection protocol, Operational manual and Work plan.

4. **Community Assistance and Resource Distribution:** Conducted socio-economic needs assessments, reaching 175 beneficiaries with essential food parcels, including rice, cooking oil, and beans.
5. **Birth registration certificate:** The Office partnered with the Ministry of Home Affairs to address barriers to government services especially education through birth registration efforts, benefiting 172 children.
6. **Disability Support and Inclusion Initiatives:** With ESCCOM support, the Office facilitated the setup of a dedicated studio for Persons with Disabilities. Through the support from UN Agencies, the Office completed the National Disability Plan of Action (2024–2028) to mainstream disability inclusion across sectors.
7. **Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention and Awareness:** Commemorated 16 Days of Activism against GBV, November 2023, under the theme “Invest to Prevent Violence against Women & Girls.” The Office also conducted GBV law enforcement training focused on the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act of 2018 and its regulations and hosted a GBV symposium to address the rising cases of GBV, with a theme focused on understanding and addressing root causes. It also conducted public

GBV awareness campaigns in high-traffic areas and media channels, including community engagements and live discussions.

8. **National Outreach and Awareness Programmes:** The Office extended outreach efforts to families of deceased security force members affected by the 2021 unrest, ensuring school enrolment support for their children through the OVC education grant programme.
9. **Community Engagement Events:** The Office partnered with Mahamba Gorge for GBV awareness initiatives, reaching over 5,000 participants and attended the Bushfire Festival to discuss GBV issues in tertiary institutions and stakeholders, with outreach extending to hundreds of students and guardians. The Office also participated in Table tennis tournament to raise awareness on gender-based violence prevention and response mechanisms and reached out to 500 girls, boys and guardians. The event also promoted the participation of girls in table tennis.
10. **Disaster Response and Relief Efforts:** Through the National Disaster Management Agency, the Office expedited E32 million in supplementary funds for storm victims which has benefitted about 179 households this far. In response to Disasters, the Office provided temporary shelter and tarpaulins for 450 homes affected by recent storms.
11. **Job and Entrepreneurial Support for Persons with Disabilities:** The Office organised a Job and Entrepreneurship Expo awareness day on the 9th October 2024, with the theme **“Innovation for Inclusive Employment and Entrepreneurship”** targeting Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to enhance their career

opportunities in the job market, both in the public and private sector. The main objective was to provide an opportunity for Persons with Disabilities to market their academic professions, skills, connect with potential employers and also empower them with information on how to start income generating activities and venture into business to eliminate poverty and also contribute to the Eswatini inclusive economy.

- **Basic Sign Language Training and Services:** The Deputy Prime Minister Office conducted a basic literacy sign language training for parents of children enrolled at Siteki School for the deaf primary and Matsetsa School for the deaf High in the Lubombo region benefiting 140 parents/guardians. The main objective was to bridge the communication barrier between children from the schools for the deaf, who use structured sign language for communication, while their parents
- **Access to Assistive Devices:** The Office procured assistive devices (wheel chairs, crutches, walking frames. Walking sticks, white canes and sun screens) and were distributed in all regions.
- **Commemoration of the International Day for Persons with Albinism:** The Office commemorated the international Day for Persons with Albinism which was held on the 15th June, 2024 at the Manzini Millenium Park under the theme “**A Decade of Collective Progress**”.
- **Commemoration of the International Day for Sign Language:** The Deputy Prime Minister’s Office observed the international week of Deaf people through various awareness

activities which were build ups to the main event; public announcements were conducted, radio and television sensitizations, social media platforms and print media platforms. The International Day of Deaf people was commemorated on the 25th September 2024 at Siteki School for the Deaf Primary. This year's theme was "*Eswatini Sign up for Sign Language Rights*".

- **Commemoration of the International Day for White Cane Day:** The Office observed the Commemoration of the international White Cane Day for Persons with Visual Impairment which was held on the 18th October 2024 at Matsapha Town Board with the theme "*Promoting Inclusion, Celebrating Abilities and Advocating for Meaningful Access of Persons with Visual Impairment*".
- **Food and Agricultural Support for Vulnerable Households:** Distributed agricultural inputs, including maize, beans, fertilizers, and pesticides, to 62 child-headed households under the Child Headed Households programme. The Office also collaborated with the Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society to provide cash-based transfers and farming resources to over 7,500 households in Shiselweni and Lubombo.
- **Shelter Improvement Initiatives:** The Office continued to provide decent shelter to extremely vulnerable Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities in the four Regions of the country. Currently, 74 rehabilitated and 41 constructed houses.

- **Vulnerability Assessment and Policy Development:** Conducted the 2024 Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis (VAA) to monitor food security, nutrition, and health, providing data to inform policy and humanitarian response.
- **Child Welfare and Protection Legislation:** Developed and implemented standards for residential childcare facilities and neighbourhood care points to ensure a safe environment for children in Eswatini.

2. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Ministry of Education and Training thrives in providing quality education and enabling environment in the learning platform for learners countrywide. It also plays a pivotal role in shaping the nation’s educational landscape. In doing so, some remarkable achievements are being made whilst there are still challenges that need to be addressed.

The following are the achievements realized and challenges that need to be addressed for the Ministry to contribute to quality education. These Achievements and challenges start from November 2023 to date.

Major Achievements

a) School Feeding Enhancement.

The school feeding programme plays a vital role in promoting quality of education. In an effort to ensure that this programme is fortified, the Ministry convened the first of its kind School Feeding Programme INDABA. The theme of the INDABA was “Strengthening a multi-sectoral support for a more resilient and sustainable School Feeding Programme (SFP).” The outcomes of the INDABA were that the Education Portfolio Committee pledged to support in School Feeding policy reforms and

advocacy initiative. On the other hand, the FAO & WFP committed to support the review of the National Framework for Food Security in Schools.

Also, School Feeding INDABA Task Team comprising members from the Ministries of Education and Training, Agriculture and Health, stakeholders in Head teachers' union and UN Agencies' representatives was established and endorsed by the Ministry. This Team has a mandate to follow up on the pledges made during the INDABA in a bid to resource mobilise for the School Feeding Programme. It is envisaged that the implementation of the outcomes of the School Feeding Indaba will progressively improve the execution of the school feeding programme.

b) World Teachers Day Celebration and Awards Ceremony 2024

In an effort to comply to global calls and improving working relationships with educators, the Ministry hosted the inaugural World Teachers Day celebration and awards ceremony bringing together 600 delegates in a powerful tribute to educators. This event recognized the profound impact of teaching across all categories. A total of 163 dedicated teachers were celebrated for their outstanding achievements in various areas. This event brought together a diverse group of attendees including award-winning teachers, teachers' association representatives, members of parliament, representatives of UN agencies etc.

The event marked a significant milestone for the ministry, as it was the first time both unionized and non-unionized teachers were recognized for their contributions. This initiative reflects a broader trend in which UNESCO emphasizes the importance of educators worldwide through its annual themes and supporting seminars. Each year, UNESCO introduces a new theme and this year's theme was "Valuing Teachers' Voices: For a

New Social Contract for Education," a topic thoroughly explored by all speakers at the event.

To bring the theme to life, the ministry decided to organize World Teachers Day Celebration symposiums in each region of the country leading up to main event. These regional events provided teachers from rural, semi-urban, and urban schools with a platform to voice their concerns regarding education quality and their well-being to the ministry. These gatherings not only built momentum for the main event but also enabled greater participation from teachers in celebrating World Teachers' Day.

- c) Establishment of specialised committees to investigate key bottlenecks in the education sector.

Following a public outcry especially at Sibaya on the decreasing quality of education and non-employability of the graduands produced by local tertiary institutions, the Ministry was able to establish two key committees to assist in assessing key bottlenecks to the sector and make appropriate recommendations. This is in line with the World Bank sector analysis of 2021 which recommended that a transformation of the education system need to be undertaken.

The Minister for education and Training with the powers conferred to him by section 3 of the Commissions of Enquiry Act of 1963 issued the two notices cited as the Appointment of a Task Team to investigate the state of affairs at the University of Eswatini notice, 2024 and the Education, Training and Skills Development Committee Notice, 2024 to come up with recommendations for the transformation of the education system. The UNESWA Task Team is a 12-member team and the Education, Training

and Skills Development is an 18- member team and all these have been commissioned for 6 months ending in March 2025 where reports will be submitted thereon.

It is envisaged that these bodies will address the pertinent issue affecting the education sector, and the reports and recommendations, if implemented will ultimately transform the University of Eswatini and improve the quality of education and skills development in the kingdom of Eswatini.

d) Launch of the School/Staff/Student Education Management Information System (SEMIS)

The Ministry has for long time used questionnaires to collect data from schools to put together the Annual Education Census – a document that compiles important statistics on education. This approach proved to be inefficient in many ways including the fact that real time data could not be produced hence a method for digitalising the approach was initiated with support of education partners – a process that took some time to complete. Ultimately, the Ministry launched the SEMIS which is a real time web based system that is personal Identity Number (PIN) driven. The SEMIS captures and analyse data in real time making it easier for the education sector to access timely accurate data for evidence based Planning and programming. Moreover, the system allows for linkages with other Management information systems making it easier to track learners and provide them with holistic services thus improving their chances of accessing quality education. This system is a shift from the paper based education management information systems and it is in line with the government services digitisation aspirations.

e) Schools Infrastructure Improvement.

The Ministry has continued to improve access to education whilst also ensuring for adequate infrastructure in the schools. Despite this, there are still "pockets" of areas without schools and as such a lot of children do not attend school as expected. The Ministry collaborating with the DPM's office opened a new much needed primary school at Maphiveni which has helped a lot of learners who were previously not attending school from this highly poverty stricken area.

Also, the Ministry was able to timely fix two schools, among others, in the shortest time possible with minimum disruption in teaching and learning, at Ngculwini area that were completely destroyed by the heaviest storm ever experienced. On another note education partners have continued to play a vital role in supporting the education sector. The MTN Eswatini supported the renovation of four classrooms at Sitsatsaweni Primary, which was a very great achievement as during heavy rains, the classrooms could not be used because they would be flooded with water, and as result, teaching and learning would not continue. Lastly, the Ministry tasked with the biggest assignment to renovate Etjendlovu High School in preparation for its official opening was able to deliver massive infrastructure to the school within two months. The deliverables in this regard include a complete new Administration block, ICT laboratory, Agriculture laboratory, Design and Technology block, four classrooms (convertible to a school hall) and flushable toilets for both teachers and students.

It is expected that the above mentioned infrastructural delivery and others will go a long way not only in improving access but ensuring for quality education as well.

3. MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Revenue Performance and Tax Policy Summary

- 1. Tax Incentives Framework.** The Kingdom of Eswatini was awarded support under the SADC Support to Improving the Investment and Business Environment (SIBE) program and currently is developing the inception report which focuses on helping the Ministry of Finance to develop a framework for monitoring and evaluation of tax incentives. This framework seeks to contribute to creating an enabling business and investment environment by improving the administration of tax incentives and rationalization of the same. This framework aims to assist the country to realize the full impact of tax incentives and its maximum benefit to facilitating investment creation in the country. It further aims to help improve assessment of tax incentives on a broader development landscape.
- 2. Guidance on Tax Matters.** The Ministry provided guided on tax matters for World Vision Eswatini, and Lower Maguduza Hydro-project. Following the implementation of the New VAT Schedules in September 2022, there were some challenges associated with its application and mainly this included refunds for importation on electricity components and inputs. The Ministry, in collaboration with tax administration, designed guidelines for use by entities active in the generation of electricity. The guidelines provide clarity regarding the correct application of VAT with the aim of enhancing investment formation.
- 3. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) between the Governments of the Kingdom of Eswatini and United Arab Emirates.** The Ministry concluded and signed a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) between the Governments of the

Kingdom of Eswatini and United Arab Emirates. Following signature of this Agreement, a copy of the signed Agreement was sent to the Legal Advisor's Office for onward transmission to Attorney General's Office to facilitate entry in to force and publishing of the Agreement.

- 4. Review of Legislations through Tax Thursday Forum / Technical Tax Forum (TTF).** The Ministry established a Technical Tax Forum (TTF) which includes officials from the Directorate of Fiscal & Monetary Affairs and Eswatini Revenue Service. It meets on a weekly basis to discuss issues influencing tax policy and administration in the country. It was able to consider and finalize the Tax Administration Bill, 2023 which is in the process to reach Parliament, through all stages, for enactment into an Act. The Ministry concluded a scoping exercise which helped to identify key areas that require reinforcement in the Value Added Tax ("VAT") Legislation.
- 5. Chairing of the African Union's 7th Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration.** The Kingdom of Eswatini is currently the substantive First Vice-Chair and Acting Chair of the African Union (AU) 7th Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration. Currently there is no substantive Chair because of some disagreements in one of the eight (8) Regional Economic Communities of the African Union. Eswatini, through the Ministry of Finance, has successfully chaired the AU 7th Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration. The last meeting was

convened in Tunis, Tunisia, from 3 to 7 July 2024, under the overall theme: “Enhancing Macroeconomic and sectoral policies coordination in Africa: challenges, opportunities and policy priorities for inclusive growth and sustainable development”. Ministers, during their deliberations were invited to critically look at the issue of enhanced coordination between macroeconomic and sectoral policies in Africa. The 7th STC discussed and highlighted the challenges, opportunities and policy priorities for inclusive growth and sustainable development through enhanced coordination between macroeconomic and sectoral policies in Africa. The aim is to place each African country on a path of 7-10 percent annual GDP growth and to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty and ultimately achieve Agenda 2063.

Internal Audit Function

1. Establishment and launch of the first Audit Committee for Eswatini Government to assist in the implementation of audit recommendations. An Induction Workshop has been offered to the Committee by EIMPA
2. With the assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat, the office has developed an enterprise risk management manual that is used to coordinate the implementation of risk management in Government.
3. Established a unit responsible for coordinating Enterprise Risk Management through the assistance of Public Service.

Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing (AML/CFT)

1. **Money Laundering/Terrorism Financing(ML/TF) National Risk Assessment Report**

The Ministry has conducted a national risk assessment to understand the ML/TF risks in the country. The risk-based approach requires countries to identify and assess the Money Laundering/ Terrorist Financing (ML/TF) risks for the country, keep the risk assessments up-to-date and also have mechanisms to provide information on the results of the risk assessment(s) to all relevant competent authorities. Countries are expected to take commensurate action aimed at ensuring that the identified risks are mitigated effectively, including designating an authority to coordinate actions to assess risks and allocate resources efficiently for this purpose. The National Risk Assessment was approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

2. Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) National Policy

Countering the Financing of Terrorism and Proliferation National Policy (AML/CFT/CPF National Policy) which outlines a statement by the Government to set a clear direction for the effective implementation of AML/CFT/PF measures. Further, the policy is a response to the outcome of the 2023 Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (ML/TF) National Risk Assessment (NRA) and shall be implemented through the National AML/CFT Strategy. The Policy was approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

3. Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) National Strategy

The Ministry developed the AML/CFT Strategic Plan which builds on the lessons learnt in the implementation of the 2018– 2022 Strategic Plan. The 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan is designed to consolidate the successes achieved, broaden the inherited interventions and address

gaps in compliance supervision. The mission of the 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan is: to curb the use or concealment of proceeds of criminal activity, the provision of financial support for terrorist activities or for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by pre-empting, detecting, investigating and prosecuting them and recovering the proceeds. The Strategy was approved by Cabinet in July 2024.

Financial Inclusion

1. National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028

The Ministry developed and launched the National Financial Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028 which aims to increase access to financial services for individuals and businesses, especially those currently underserved or excluded from the formal financial system. By promoting financial literacy, expanding banking infrastructure and introducing innovative financial products and services, the strategy seeks to improve the financial inclusion rate and promote economic inclusion and development. Additionally, the strategy recognised the role of consumer protection ensuring that proper and responsive regulator frameworks, and partnerships between government agencies, financial institutions and other stakeholders are developed to meet the goals and objectives of the Strategy.

2. Financial Inclusion Cluster Development Project (FINCLUDE)

The implementation of the FINCLUDE Project has achieved the following:

- Improvement in business plan development with 155 business plans developed out of a target of 240

- Significant improvement has been observed in the facilitation of savings accounts since the revised definition of access to finance. A total of 1075 savings accounts have been opened by beneficiaries out of a target of 1500
- Increased participation of youth through the Youth Fund partnership to 1,241 with 735 accessing savings, 78 accessing credit, and 428 accessing markets.
- The developed Climate Finance Strategy is a key instrument developed by the project that has the function to leverage on climate-financing opportunities in the country.

Public Financial Management Reforms

1. The Reconstruction Fund

The Reconstruction Fund is now in process of finalising the compensation of the Businesses that were affected during the unrest in June 2021. On the same vein, the Committee has been developing a documentary where the beneficiaries of the fund got the chance to report on the service the Fund provided them This Documentary will be finalised before the end of November and submitted to the Minister of Finance.

2. Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS)

The Integrated Financial Management and Information System (IFMIS) is being implemented by the Ministry of Finance working with relevant Stakeholders. The stakeholders include the Ministry of ICT through the RSTP, the Ministry of Economic Planning, the Ministry of Public Service, the Treasury Department and the Internal Audit Department.

The Rwanda Cooperative Initiative is still on the ground developing and handholding all the relevant Stakeholders.

The first Release of the IFMIS, which is the General IFMIS Architecture, the Chart of Account and the Planning and Budgeting Modules has been completed. Presently there is an ongoing Training of Trainers (TOT) Workshop preparing the Government to use the system for this year's budget process.

Concurrently Release 2 of the IFMIS implementation has begun. This Release include four (4) Modules; Accounting Module, Debtor Management Module, Vendor Management Module and the Bank Reconciliation Module. The Ministry has identified different stakeholders which have been redeployed to the IFMIS Project Unit.

State Owned Entities (SOE)

1. Facilitated Scope meetings on Mondays where Scope Ministers meet and discuss issues on SOE including (appointments of External Auditors, Boards, Chief Executive Offices (CEOs), Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Strategies, performance reports, salary increments and any other issues of importance in driving these entities.
2. Facilitated Governance training for State Owned Enterprises Boards with the view to capacitate Directors, Management on their roles. We also facilitated the procurement of service providers for the training of SOE Middle Management on MDP Program through the Loan Guarantee Fund.
3. PEU continued with her monitoring function through the quarterly performance reports submitted by the SOEs. The reports have been consolidated and presented to SCOPE for approval. We also

participated in the presentation of Audited Financial Statements financials to appreciate how the entities have performed and their challenges so that we can advise SCOPE Ministers accordingly.

4. We organized Eswatini Public Enterprises Association where all the SOE CEOs and Board Chairpersons met with His Excellency the Prime Minister. We also met ESPEA to discuss the issue of Salary review exercise for all our SOEs. This followed a directive by Cabinet that all Entities should engage in a salary benchmarking exercise to ensure that all entities are properly classified and remunerated.
5. PEU has repackaged the SOE reforms agenda prioritising review of the PE Act of 1989, developing a performance management tool for reporting and development of a policy that will guide the establishment of a new entity which will be financed through the grant funding received from AfDB.
6. We issued 2 circulars (Circular on Major and a circular reviewing board fees for the SOEs).
7. PEU also attended strategy sessions conducted by SOEs and the intention is to provide the appropriate input and advice in line with government policies and their mandates.
8. Budget preparation for SOEs

Budget Management

1. The Ministry successfully delivered the 2024/2025 budget.

The 2024/2025 budget was delivered on record time under the theme “Nkwe for Growth”, meaning that the budget was aimed at

equipping the country to hit the ground running for economic growth and service delivery. The budget address social challenges, infrastructure development and Economic growth and also challenges related to poverty and unemployment and maintaining a path of sustainable economic growth whilst keeping an eye on our fiscal consolidation objective which we have been implementing over the previous years. The 2024/2025 budget had a fiscal deficit of 1.9% of GDP compared to a budget deficit of 2.2% of GDP for 2023/2024. Even though the 2024/2025 budget is an expansionary budget which increased from E24.4 billion in 2023/24 to E29.4 billion it still reflected a reduced deficit which conforms to our consolidation plan for the medium term.

2. Successfully hosted the IMF mission, African Development Bank and World Bank missions. The budget department has managed its international relations program with potential financiers over the 2024/2025 period and these engagements have resulted into acquiring financing for ongoing projects such as the Mkhondvo-Ngwavuma Water Project and the Eswatini Roads Integrated Improvement Program Phase I and other key grants for PPP reforms and SOE reforms and IFMIS rollout and others. Institutions like the IMF have taken time to deeply analyse our economy and provided advise on how best to steer it towards sustainable growth without exerting too much stress to the economy as we implement Government operations and this was during the Annual IMF Article IV mission which took place in July 2024.
3. The budget department in partnership with the Ministry of Tinkhundla and the Planning and Budgeting Committee has begun the preparations of the 2025/2026 budget by successfully

conducting an exercise on “taking the budget to the people” as a response to the call from the 2023 National Sibaya. This exercise has laid a critical foundation for formulating next year’s budget and the committee received pointers on how the budget should be structured in order to cover programs even at lower levels of our constituency.

Status of Arrears

1. Arrears reduced from E2.8 Billion to about E700 Million. Despite the cash flow problem, the Treasury Department was able to process and clear almost 75% of pending areas within the year for suppliers.

Accountancy Function

1. Professionalization of Accountancy cadre. The Treasury Department has developed a post graduate diploma in public sector accounting through partnering with the University of Eswatini (UNESWA) and African Professionalization Initiative (API).
2. Accurate and transparent Financial Reporting and improved Cash Management-In collaboration with Tanzania to adopt PFM reforms (International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), Treasury Single Account (TSA), Asset Management system.
3. Uniformity of accounts- Fully developed a multi – dimensional chart of account which is compliant with the GFM manual (2014).

Public Procurement

1. Electronic Government Procurement System.

The Government of Eswatini has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Government of Rwanda on the E-GP system implementation to handhold the Government over a period of 5

years. The Government of Rwanda has already conducted an assessment of the system development and submitted a report and shall assist in the establishment of a dedicated project management unit (PMU) as this requires full time staff to be a success.

There will be full time consultants from Rwanda to assist with the implementation of the system and ensure development and skills transfer to relevant and competent Officers in the Ministry, other Ministries and ESPPRA for full ownership by the Government of eSwatini. The tender was awarded; however, the contract agreement is still to be approved pending the review of the legislation (Procurement Act of 2011) for the smooth for implementation of the system.

2. Market Price Reference Catalogue

The market price reference catalogue for common use item was launched. The catalogue will standardise the pricing of regular items procured by Government & Government entities. The current challenges are: insufficient controls of Government spending due to inflated prices of such items, as Procurement spend takes about 60% of the country's budget. There is a need to adopt the United Nation Standard Products and Services Code to improve classification and standardisation of common use items. This exercise included the Statistics Department and Government Stores as they have a mandate for the distribution of common use items.

The catalogue will improve public finance management through the reduction of corruption, availability of audit trail, transparency and efficiency and open up local participation (Swazi Companies) as enshrined in the Public Procurement Act of 2021.

3. Appointment of the Eswatini Government Tender Board

The Eswatini Government Tender Board was established by Section 25 of the Procurement Act of 2011. It is the highest approval authority of Government of Eswatini in procurement. The Board was appointed on the 31st January 2024 for a duration of not more than three years. The Tender Board greatly assists the Ministries and Departments in controlling the issuance of tenders in meeting their mandates or obligations, a recent achievement was the completion of the Nhlanguano – Sicunusa Road done by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. Further the country had seen the upgrade of low volume roads which saw 42 km country wide road rehabilitation.

4. **PPP framework:** The Department has been in consultation with Consultants on the PPP Framework development as it seems an” ideal “model for capital projects as the country is faced with fiscal challenges.

Facilitating the procurement of debt financing

1. The Hon Minister has been able sign an amendment with Exim Bank – China supporting the construction of the International Convention Centre which is the additional loan of \$83 million wherein there has been a change in the name of the Interest base rate from LIBOR to SOFR. This loan has been disbursed into the project designated account.
2. In addition to these, two loans have been taken through the ratification process to both Houses of Parliament and now awaiting approval. Out of the three loan one has been approved. The loans awaiting approval’s details are as follows:

- a. **OPEC Fund** to support the Mkhondvo – Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Project (MNWAP), the Loan amount is twenty million Dollars (\$20,000,000) equivalent to three hundred and sixty million Emalangenzi (E360,000,000) using the prevailing exchange rate.

The purpose of the loan is for Secondary Distribution and On-Farm Development for Maloma 1 & 2 when fully implemented, MNWAP will create approximately 100,000 job opportunities.

Government is expected to do the following:

- A Front-end Fee equal to one quarter of one percent (0.25%) of the Loan (equal to E15 million);
- A Commitment Charge equal to one quarter of one percent (0.25%) per annum on the Undisbursed Loan Balance which shall accrue sixty (60) days after the Date of the Loan Agreement;
- An Interest Rate equal to the:
 - Floating Base Rate (a six month JIBAR – currently 8.40%);
 - Lending Margin;
 - Funding Cost margin; and
 - Payment Dates will be on the 01st May and 01st November in each year.

b. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (the “Fund” or “IFAD”) will support the Smallholder Agricultural Productivity Enhancement and Marketing Project

(“SAPEMP”/ “the Project”) and the loan amount is thirteen million five hundred and seventy thousand Dollars (\$13,570,000) equivalent to two hundred and forty-five million Emalangeneni using the prevailing exchange rate.

The goal of the Project is to contribute to the sustainable reduction of poverty in rural Eswatini by improving sustainable food and nutrition security among poor households, with a strong focus on youth, gender, nutrition, CC and environment.

The Project shall benefit about 19,600 smallholder households (HHs) equivalent to some 117,700 people.

Government is expected to do the following:

- A Front-end Fee equal to one quarter of one percent (0.25%) of the Loan; (equivalent to E0.6 million using prevailing exchange rates)
- A Commitment Charge equal to one quarter of one percent (0.25%) per annum on the Undisbursed Loan Balance which shall accrue sixty (90) days after the Date of the Loan Agreement;
- The Interest Rate, for any Interest Period, shall be the rate that is the sum of the Reference Rate determined by the Fund plus the Margin (currently at zero).

c. Implications on Debt Stock

Preliminary debt figures show that, as at 30th of September 2024, total public debt stood at E34.54 billion which is an equivalent of 39.79 percent

of GDP. This is composed of domestic debt amounting to E19.18 billion which is equivalent to 22.60 percent of GDP and external debt amounting to E15.36 billion which is equivalent to 17.70 percent of GDP. There are ten (13) external loans that will be fully repaid in the next five (5) years meaning that Government's obligations are reducing hence this new borrowing will not add too much pressure on the expenditure when repayments kick in.

3. On the other hand, the Ministry has successfully floated a 3-years bond with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange through the help of the Central Bank Eswatini. The amount received amounted to Four Hundred Million South African Rands (ZAR400, 000,000.00), at an interest rate of 11.75 percent per annum. This has been a great achievement as we are trying to increase our investor base as a country.
4. Through collaboration with Standard Bank Eswatini, Central Bank of Eswatini and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Ministry has been able to secure a 5 years' bond amounting to Five Hundred Million Emalangeni to finance the Government Fleet Management Vehicles.
5. One loan has been approved to finance the Mkhondvo-Ngwavuma Water Augmentation Program Phase 1B, this loan has been secured from the African Development Bank (AfDB). This loan amounted Two Billion Eighty- Four Million Two Hundred and Ninety Thousand South African Rands (ZAR 2, 084,290,000).
6. In September, the Debt Department managed to do a 10 days' workshop with the help of MEFMI to review the country's Medium Term Debt Strategy and the Borrowing plan. These documents are

now at a finalization stage and they will be presented to Cabinet for approval.

7. Moreover, the department has managed to meet its objective of servicing the country's obligations (domestic and external loans) on time as we have not defaulted in any loan, which makes the country to have a moderate risk premium when applying for loans. The Ministry has continuously managed to source funding for Government operations and we currently having negotiations with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank on Budget Support Loans.

4. MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Aid Coordination and Management:

- Signed a US\$80,909,509 (about E1,425,204,819.00) additional grant with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to extend support of the multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS from 31 March 2024 to 1 October 2026.
- Signed a JPY 1,613,000,000 (about E190,127,536) grant with the Government of Japan to finance the Improvement of Secondary Schools Project which will construct four (4) secondary schools at Ngwenyameni, New Thulwane, Maphungwane and Lavumisa.
- Facilitated US\$1,300,000 (about E22,899,240) grant contribution from the Government of Japan for the feeding of Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Neighbourhood Care Points (NCPs) through the WFP-Eswatini programme.

Population issues:

- Successfully Commemorated World Population Day on July 11, 2024 and launched the State of the World Population Report whose theme was "Embracing the Power of Inclusive Data Towards a Resilient Future for All".

Statistics Issues:

- The Central Statistical Office (CSO) continued with the production and dissemination of the country's key statistics. These include monthly statistical Consumer Price Index reports and the harmonised consumer price index which are submitted to COMESA and SADC Secretariats.

Poverty issues:

- Engaged stakeholders to validate the Multidimensional Child Poverty Analysis report which presents an analysis of how poverty affects children at different stages of their lives in terms of deprivations in nutrition, health, child protection, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, housing and information. The report shows that 46.5% of the children (0-17 years) in Eswatini are multidimensionally poor meaning that they are deprived in at least 3 of the dimensions of well-being.

Microprojects Programme Coordinating Unit (MPCU)

- Through the Microprojects Programme Coordinating Unit (MPCU) the ministry continues to contribute in improving access to social services, income, livelihoods and overall socioeconomic conditions for Emaswati through the delivery of infrastructure and Income Generating Projects (IGPs). MPCU has successfully delivered the following projects, some are complete while others are practically complete and functional:

- A veterinary office at Maphalaleni, 4 water supply schemes, 5 low-level crossings, 5 community centres and 7 suspended footbridges. These will benefit a population estimated at 70 338.
- Several structures were practically completed at Etjendlovu High School. These are a design and technology laboratory, computer laboratory, agriculture laboratory, administration block, a guard house, ablution block and 4 classrooms.
- Fire stations at eNgabezweni and Big Bend.
- A maternity ward at kaZondwako Clinic and a clinic at Nduyayithini.
- Police stations at Mafutseni, Malkerns and Siteki were rehabilitated.
- Reconstruction of Tinkhundla Centres at Ndzingeni, Ngudzeni and Lamgabhi.
- Reconstruction of Hlathikhulu factory shell and construction of Gamula factory shell.

International Convention Centre and Five Star Hotel Projects

- The works at the International Convention Centre has reached an overall completion rate is 84%, including the interior fit out. While works at the Five Star Hotel is continued, albeit at a slower rate.

5. MINISTRY OF HEALTH

1. Strengthening of emergency response

Procurement of 8 ambulances to ensure the transportation of critically ill patients who require continuous monitoring and medical support. The

ambulances facilitate transfers between healthcare facilities, ensuring that patients can access specialized care and treatments that may not be available in local health facilities.

The following is a distribution list for the 8 ambulances procured by the Ministry:

- Hlathikhulu Government Hospital
- Dvokolwako Health Centre
- Piggs Peak Government Hospital
- Mkhuzweni Health Centre
- Mankayane Government Hospital
- Matsanjeni Health Centre
- Nhlangano Health Centre
- Sithobela Health Centre

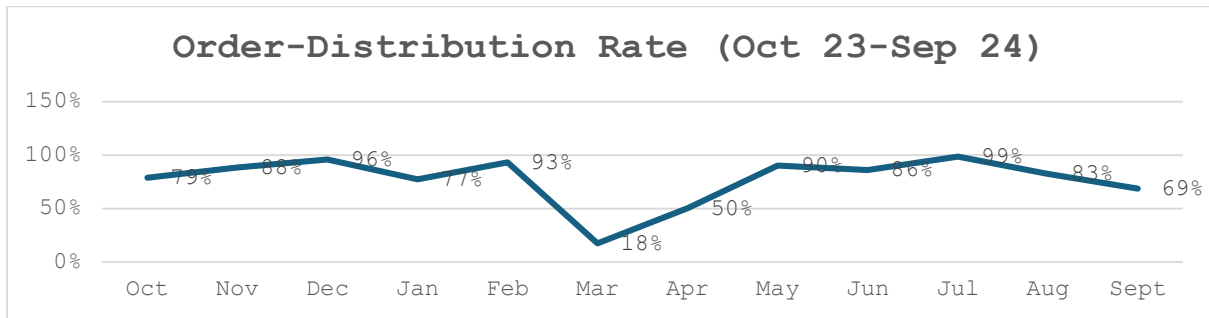
For early detection and treatment of cancer patients in the country, the Ministry has procured Cancer Screening truck and equipment to be used as an outreach in hard-to-reach areas. Furthermore, the Ministry is in the process of procuring 3 additional trucks to be used at regional level to ensure coverage for all the 4 regions of the country.

2. The delivery of medicines and medical supplies

The Ministry of Health's Central Medical Stores (CMS) is tasked with receiving, storage, and distribution of medicines and medical supplies to contribute to health care service delivery. The government of Eswatini has committed to improve the availability of essential medicines to ensure that Emaswati receive the quality health care. In the period under review the CMS has witnessed the following achievements:

a) [Key Performance Results One – Order Distribution to Facilities](#)

Figure 1: CMS Order-Distribution Rate



Based on the number of requisitions received from health facilities, CMS has managed to distribute 83% of those requisitions within the same month-excluding the month of March which was an annual stock take period. See figure 1 above. This shows that CMS is improving the servicing timely of facilities.

b) Key Performance Results Two – Product and Quantity Fill Rates

Figure 2: Percentage Order Fill Rate Trends (Oct 2023- Sep 2024)

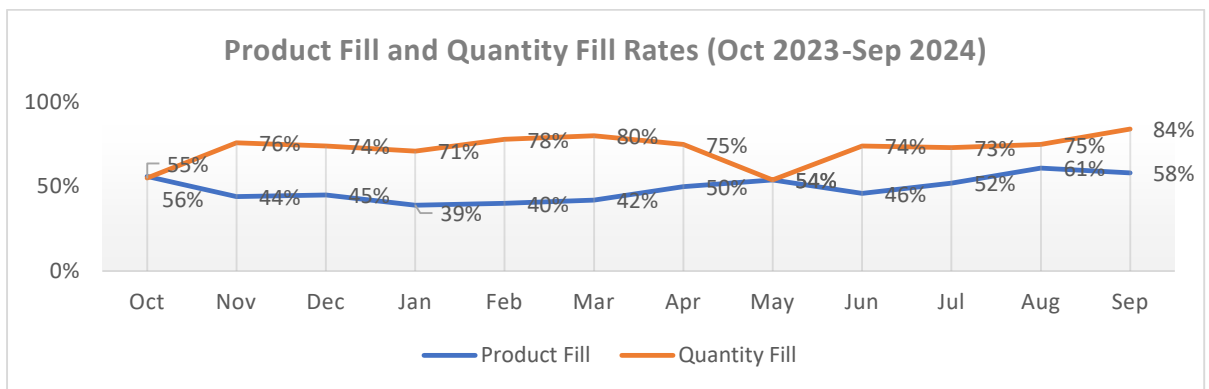


Figure 2 above shows the trends of product and quantity fill rates by CMS. Product fill rates indicate product availability at CMS, and the results show that CMS has been experiencing variances in the trends due to supplier performance challenges. In October 2023, product fill rate was at 56%, however CMS experienced a slump and recorded the lowest product fill rate at 39% in Jan 2024. Since Jan 2024 CMS recorded a 22% increase in supplies by end of Aug 2024, where a product fill rate of 61% was recorded. There has been a 3% slump from August to September 2024.

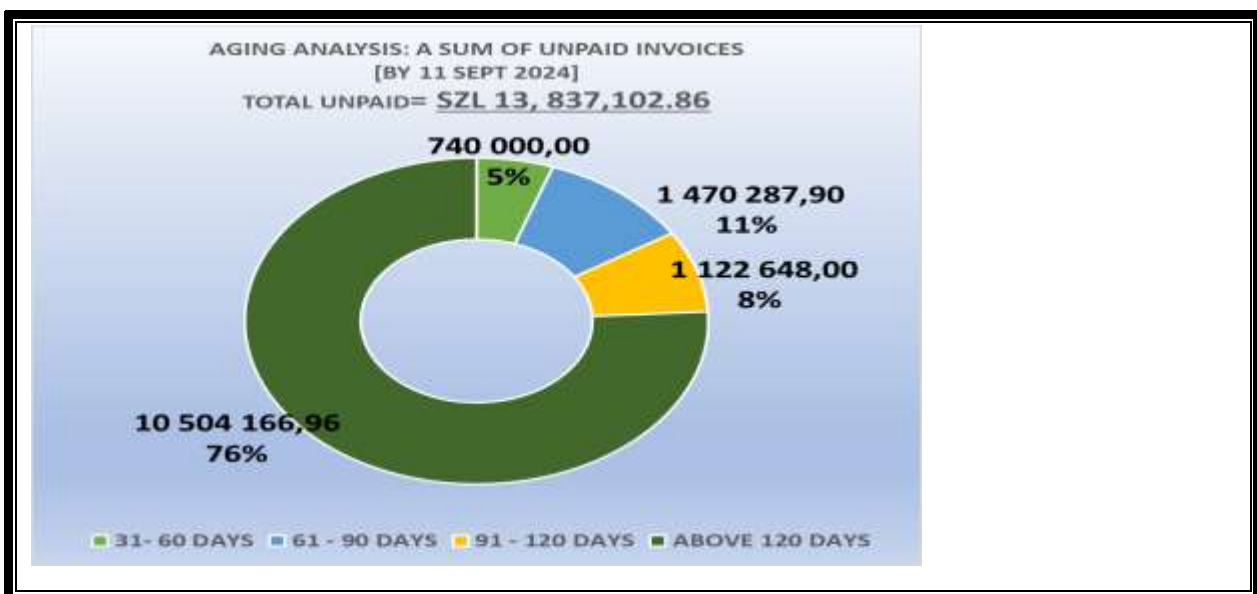
Quantity fill rate indicates the level at which each product is fulfilled for the available products. Quantity fill rates have improved from 55% in Oct 2023 to 84% by end of Sep 2024. Supplier management has been improved with frequent meetings to coordinate the needs of both parties.

c) **Key Performance Results Three – Laboratory Integration**

The CMS pharmaceutical warehouse has integrated the central laboratory to house all health commodities under one roof to ease the management, storage and delivery to health facilities and to ensure efficiency in deliveries to facilities.

d) **Key Performance Results Four – Payments to Suppliers**

Figure 3: Aging Report as at September 2024



The CMS has cleared outstanding debt with suppliers which dates back to three financial years with only 13 million outstanding. The Government (Ministry of Finance) has supported the MoH through prioritising health sector requests for payments.

e) **Key Performance Results Five– Warehouse Operations Improvements**

The CMS has implemented warehouse improvements initiatives supported by the USGSCP-PSM (Chemonics) to improve its operations and efficiency resulting in improved service delivery. These include “quick wins” like the daily planner, 5S strategy, support with equipment and other needs of the warehouse.

Opportunity

The implementation of the transition of the CMS to a semi-autonomous entity will ease the challenges and build on existing successes.

3. Operationalised theatres at the new Referral and Emergency Complex at Mbabane government Hospital

The referral and emergency theatres were opened on 22 August 2024. The first case was an orthopaedic case done by Dr. Ashih, orthopaedic surgeon from Taiwan Medical Mission. These operations are mainly emergencies across General surgery, gynaecology and orthopaedic. We have also an ongoing training for our staff, the latest in being in October 15 and 16, 2024. An expert on the anaesthesia medicine from South Africa was brought in by the service provider to train our staff.

4. Filling of vacant positions

There are 29 positions that were filled, and the recruitment process is ongoing with 34 vacancies advertised both externally and internally, and 69 to be employed and promoted.

- a) As at December 2023 there were 375 vacancies, and 227 were filled and the balance of 148 vacancies remaining to be filled were carried over to January 2024.
- b) As at October 2024 there are 82 vacancies which have been filled, and a balance of 66

vacancies remaining to be filled.

- c) There are additional 42 vacancies due to resignation, death, retirement and promotion.

The Balance of Total vacancies is $66 + 42 = 108$

5. Payment of arrears

In the last 12 months the Ministry of Health had arrears amounting to E208,927,303.21 (Two hundred and eight million nine hundred and twenty-seven thousand three hundred and three Emalangeneni twenty-one cents), which accumulated due to various challenges, amongst others being budget constraints, Inefficient financial management, bureaucratic delays and supplier's dependence.

However, the Ministry has been able to settle an amount of E77,209,308,64 leaving a balance of E131,717,994,57 to date. The liquidation of debts has been enhanced by the supplementary budget received last financial year 2023/2024, recurrent budget for financial year 2024/2025 and improved financial processes.

The Ministry will continue to settle arrears with availed funds.

6. Health facilities infrastructure

The Ministry has managed to complete 3 capital projects:

- a) **Construction of Ndunayithini Clinic:** The project entailed the construction of the main clinic building with outbuildings namely: a guard house, incinerator room, generator house, screening offices, wash hand bay, cough booth, and ash pits, maternity ward, waiting areas, receptions, toilets, counselling rooms, nurses' stations, and laundry rooms.

- b) **Construction of a Maternity Department at KaZondwako Clinic:** the project is cofounded by GoE and Usuthu Royal Trust.
- c) **Rehabilitation of Hlathikhulu Public Health Unit:** The project entailed rehabilitating the Public Health Unit and its offices and also adding offices such as the Health Inspector, Sister's Office, and Matron's office. It also entails the removal of asbestos roof sheets to lightweight steel and Chroma deck roof sheeting.

6. MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

In the reporting one-year period the Ministry attained the following:

- **Appointment of membership for four (4) statutory boards**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, through the office of the Honourable Minister, has appointed membership of four (4) statutory boards for the effective delivery of the mandate of ministry. The statutory boards include:

- **The Human Settlements Authority** - the statutory body responsible for advising the Honourable Minister on policy matters that regulate the development of human settlements, the provision of housing; and the consideration of proposals for township development and land subdivisions.
- **Sectional Titles Regulation Board** - The Board is responsible for advising the Honorable Minister on matters that deal with the development, administration, and regulation of sectional title schemes in Eswatini and policy matters that relate to the implementation of the Sectional Titles Act of 2003.

- **Sectional Titles Examinations Committee** - The function of the Sectional Titles Examinations Committee is to advise on matters relating to the examinations for sectional titles professionals in connection with the preparation of draft sectional plans.
- **Eswatini Housing Board (Board of Directors)** - to guide the operations of the Eswatini Housing Board in delivering its mandate.

- **Legislative Review**

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has initiated the review of specific pieces of legislation that will improve service delivery in the real estate and built environment sector, particularly the following:

- **The Town Planning Act of 1969**, to incorporate a three tier planning hierarchy in Eswatini at national, regional and local government levels to address spatial development and rapid urbanization matters in Eswatini
- **The Human Settlements Authority of 1988** - to include the formalization of informal settlements and matters relating to development finance of projects.
- **The Real Estate Agents Bill of 2024** - to regulate the practice of real estate agents in Eswatini and prevent money laundering practices in the real estate sector.
- **Building Act 1968** - the Building Bill 2024 has been developed for final Stakeholder input then submission to Cabinet. The Bill aims to address matters relating to contemporary building technologies and principles of green buildings

- **Approval of three (3) Town Planning Schemes**

The Town Planning Act 1961 sets out that all Local Authorities/towns should develop and have approved Town Planning Schemes to guide and

regulate land use and development within the urban area. In compliance with the legislation, the Minister working with the Town Planning Board processed and approved three town planning schemes for the following local authorities:

- Hlathikhulu Town Board
- Nhlangano Town Council
- Mankayane Town Board

- **Implementation of the Green Cities Project**

A project funded by the Green Climate Fund through the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization focusing on building green and sustainable cities in Eswatini by preparing for public and private investment on sustainable infrastructure, green open spaces and urban agriculture in urban communities as well as frameworks for sustainable urban development in Eswatini. The deliverables of the project include: a framework of indicators for sustainable cities, policy and incentives framework, inventories of interventions (infrastructure, green open spaces and urban agriculture) and development of project concept notes for possible funding. The project started in 2023 and will end in August 2025.

- **Technical assistance to Towns**

Staff seconded on joint appointments in the positions of Town Treasurer & Town Engineer in Ngwenya, Mankayane, Vuvulane, Lavumisa and Hlathikhulu. In addition, Board Administrators for Hlane and Buhleni local authorities appointed and engaged.

- **Governance and Administration**

- Approved budgets for 13 local authorities and external audits for same.
- The ministry has appointment of key officers (Town Clerks, Town Engineers, Town Treasurers) for various Towns including Mbabane, Manzini, Malkerns, Piggs Peak, Nhlangano, Ngwenya, Siteki, Matsapha, Ezulwini and Mankayane.
- Approved by laws for Matsapha and Nhlangano.
- Held Bye -elections to fill the vacant councillor post at NgwenyaTown Board.

- **Infrastructure Development**

The ministry is engaged in the construction of roads and road Infrastructure at Buhleni and Mhobodleni ; progresss is as follows:

- **Buhleni Town Council** – The Ministry constructed roads and infrastructure services at Buhleni Phase 1 for a distance of 200 metres to asphalt standard. Phase 2 of the project commenced also before the end of last financial year for the construction of the roads infrastructure services which covers a distance of 900 metres due to limited budget. The contractor managed to construct the roads and infrastructure services to the selected layers of gravel. The current financial year the Contractor (Roots Civils) will complete the remaining works of the project which include provision of storm water drainage, kerbing, provision of sleeves for under ground services, laying of asphalt layer, signage and road painting.
- **Upgrading of Mhobodleni Township – Urban Development Project (UDP)**- This project entails providing basic infrastructure services like water, sewer, roads, storm water drainage, electrification to this informal settlement. The project is divided

into six phases or zones. Currently the project is taking place on Phase 1 or Zone 1. From November last year to October; a total of 300 metres road construction and storm water drainage has been undertaken. The roads were upgraded to asphalt standard and including kerbing, retain walls asphalt, road painting and signage. It is worth to be noted that the terrain for Mhobodleni is bad, the land is sloppy and has underground water.

- **Infrastructure maintenance & development control**

- Re-gravelling of road infrastructure and drainage clearance, bush clearing and grass cutting services in various Towns and controlled areas.
- Refuse collection Services at Siteki, Nhlanguano, Malkerns, Manzini and Mhobodleni local authorities.
- Mobile unit support for national festivals, eg Buganu festivals at Buhleni and Hlane; Kings birthday celebrations and national fire celebrations.

- **The Fire, Rescue and Emergencies department achieved the following milestones:**

- Hosted the first FIRE DAY on the 11th of October 2024, after 48 years of the department's existence. The events sole purpose was to showcase all the department services provided to the public.
- Full operation of Mankayane, Big-Bend and Siphofaneni fire stations

- Engaged the Beraluse Government on formulation of the MOU on specialized equipment and appliances including capacity building for the Fire Service personnel
 - Completed the rehabilitation of Matsapha fire station which was in a highly dilapidated state, and officially commissioned by HMK
 - Issuance of 26 compliance fire safety occupational certificates to commercial structures
 - Procured four (4) ambulances which were dearly needed in the department
 - Procurement of staff protective clothing and uniform
- **Human Resource Matters**
 - Senior management of the Ministry has been enrolled into the Performance Management System
 - Filled key strategic positions in the departments
 - Undertook the recruitment, training and pass-out for 100 Fire Fighters
 - Developed the Ministry Strategic Plan
 - Revived the Institutional Housing Project which is currently awaiting funding

7. MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) overarching purpose is to ensure that the labour market is able to adequately meet the ever growing and diversifying demands of the socio-economic activities of the Kingdom of Eswatini. The Labour and Employment Sector is one of the key enablers towards achieving Eswatini's economic transformation

programme. To this end the MoLSS has refocused its Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives and aligned these to National Development Strategies.

The Ministry presently has seven (7) Departments namely: Administration; Labour; Social Security; National Human Resources Planning & Development; National Industrial and Vocational Training and the Pre-service Tertiary, Education and Training Department.

The following are key updates from the below departments from the Ministry;

VOCATIONAL TRAINING & REHABILITATION SERVICES

1. Increase in Budget:

The budget allocation for the 2024/25 financial year was slightly increased, particularly in key areas which cover feeding and training material.

2. Taiwan Grant:

Once again, the section received a grant of 2.8million as Phase 2 of the project of upgrading the Nhlangano VTRS. These funds are to facilitate the procurement of a customized kombi (to carry trainees on wheel-chairs) as well as other training equipment for the workshops.

3. Provision of funding for Capital Projects.

The section received funding amounting to E4 million from the government of Eswatini to complete Phase 2 of the renovations in Nhlangano and a further 5 million to commence renovations at Malkerns center.

4. Authority to fill vacant posts.

The section was granted an authority to fill in the vacant Lecturer positions and that of Centre Manager for the Nhlangano center. The section is in the process of filling the Lecturer positions as the one for the Centre Manager has been completed.

5. Transport Donations by ENPF.

The section received a donation of 2 vehicles from ENPF comprising of a kombi and a double cab van. This donation has brought much relief to the section as the absence of transport was greatly compromising the execution of operations.

MEASUREMENT AND TESTING UNIT ACHIEVEMENT -PTET DEPARTMENT

The Measurement and Testing Unit has successfully advanced its mission to promote skills development and alleviate unemployment.

Key achievements include:

1. Comprehensive Career Guidance: Over 20,502 learners from 181 schools were exposed to diverse career paths through a career expo featuring 58 exhibitors.
2. Enhanced Student Self-Awareness: 21,483 Form 3/ Grade 9 learners were assessed for aptitude, and 17,807 Form 5 learners (including 51 with disabilities) completed the Self-Directed Search (SDS) test online. These assessments helped students identify their strengths and potential career directions.
3. Facilitated Tertiary Admissions: The unit conducted mature entry scheme aptitude tests for 58 candidates seeking admission to the University of Eswatini, supporting their academic aspirations.

SOCIAL SECURITY DEPARTMENT; WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION SECTION

Governance architecture and operation of the Unemployment Benefit Scheme

a) An overview of an Expert Report and its conclusions was discussed and adopted by Government Senior Officials, Social partners and the Captains of Industry who were present. The Report stated that Eswatini National Provident Fund (ENPF) and the Public Service Pension Fund (PSPF) are pointed to as potential hosts of the Unemployment Benefit Scheme. In terms of existing competences and resources, the ENPF is the strongest potential operator of the UBS. Equally, the PSPF be amended and developed to fit the operational requirements. However, it may not seem rational to do so, as it will not offer tangible benefits, it will change its identity, and increase cost. Also, the required resources, and a strong starting point already exist with the ENPF.

b) UBS Participation and contributions in brief.

Contributory social insurance scheme financed from employer and employee contributions. The initial covering formal sector employees in relation to three identified social risks: Temporary income loss in relation to unemployment,

- Sickness and
- Maternity

c) Assumed UBS contribution rates:

II. Following the amendment of the Workmen Compensation Act, No,7 of 1983 which allowed to extend application of the members of the Umbutfo Defence Force, an education campaign

has been undertaken. This entailed visiting fourteen (14) army barracks, as the Defence Force has just been incorporated under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The objective was to sensitize the officers on issues of the Workmen's Compensation Act and the application of the Act in case of injuries at work. This was a crucial exercise whereby any misconceptions about injuries on duty were clarified.

DIVT ACHIEVEMENTS

Ushering apprentices (youth) into employment

The Directorate through the apprenticeship program has been able to usher completing apprentices who are mostly youth into fulltime employment at an average rate of over 80% over four quarters. This helped the country toward solving the conundrum of youth unemployment.

Development of Occupational Standards for the Hospitality and Tourism Trade

With the assistance of Taiwan Technical Vocational Education Technical Enhancement and Certification Project. The Directorate has been able to develop occupational standards for Hospitality & Tourism a key sector that employs a huge volume of Emaswati mostly woman. This will facilitate the certification of the individuals employed in this sector, since a lot of them have acquired skills through experience but they do not possess certificates.

Trade testing

The Trade Testing section within the Directorate was able to test one thousand four hundred and seventy (1470) candidates and out of the candidates tested one thousand one hundred and seventeen (1117) we

certified as competent (passed) in the various trades/occupations. This reflects a 76% pass rate in Trade Testing.

SCHOLARSHIP SECTION- PTET DEPARTMENT

In line with Sustainable Development goal on Quality Education, of ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education including university;

The scholarship unit under the Pre- Service Tertiary Education and Training (PTET) department achieved an increase in scholarships to be awarded Emaswati annually to study Diploma and Undergraduate Degree programs in local and external tertiary institutions.

Scholarship grants were increased from 3550 to 4550 awards a year making an addition of 1000 scholarships. The population benefiting scholarships rose from 13 932 to 14 435 enabling a greater number of emaSwati to access quality higher education.

Also the Unit has realized an increase in the recovery of study loans from past beneficiaries.

The unit improved its collections in the period, recovering E49 681 351.03 starting January- September 2024 compared to the same period in the previous year where E44 800 563.87 was collected. The improvement shows a 10.89 % increase in collections efforts thus far.

NHRPD DEPARTMENT

HRPD Department has finalised the;

- 1.National Human Resources Policy
2. Produced 2023 Labour Force Survey report

3. Thematic report on Youths Workers

LABOUR ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

1. Cabinet approved the long awaited Employment Bill of 2024 which is intended to replace the 1980 Employment Act. This Bill provides for the right of persons to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions and ensure that every worker is accorded rest and reasonable working hours and periods of holidays with pay. The Bill will be published shortly and tabled in Parliament for legislation by the Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security.

2. An Inception Assessment Study to ascertain the feasibility of introducing a National Minimum Wage was conducted and completed. This culminated to an adoption of a Roadmap by Government together with the social partners on how to take this very important exercise to the next level as it transpired that there is still more work to be done which will be carried out by a National Minimum Wage Board. The outcome of this process will address the concerns that were raised by the nation during Sibaya that people are earning a poverty wage in this country.

8. MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TRADE

DEPARTMENT:	REGULATORY	QUALITY	INFRASTRUCTURE
DEPARTMENT			
ACHIEVEMENT			

In 2023, several Quality Infrastructure bills were enacted, including the Technical Regulatory and Quality Infrastructure Act (No. 26), the Legal Metrology Act (No. 25), the Standards and Quality Act (No. 16), and the Standards Unit and Standards Measurement Act (No. 19). The implementation of these acts is anticipated to enhance the competitiveness of domestically produced goods, facilitating greater access to both regional and international markets. Additionally, these measures aim to improve human, animal, and plant health while protecting the environment.

The Department has successfully acquired metrology equipment, expanding its scope to include temperature calibration. Furthermore, a Fuel Testing Laboratory has achieved accreditation, ensuring the quality and safety of fuel consumed domestically. Notably, there has been a marked improvement in the application of quality standards within organizations, as evidenced by the successful participation of five Eswatini companies in the SADC Regional Quality Awards. These companies include Eswatini Railway, MA Dlamini consulting (PTY) Ltd, Nkonyeni Precast, Municipal Council of Manzini Laboratoty and Swazi Plastic Industries.

ACHIEVEMENT

Enhancing Educational Efficiency through the SHUNIFU System at NHTC

The SHUNIFU system has been implemented at NHTC to optimize student data management, facilitate online applications, and streamline administrative processes. Accessible through the NHTC SHUNIFU portal at <https://nhtc.shunifu.app>, this initiative is a collaboration with the Royal Science & Technology Park (RSTP) aimed at enhancing operational efficiency. The SHUNIFU school management system will improve the management of student data and report generation while simplifying administrative tasks. This system is expected to significantly enhance

efficiency in tracking student progress and facilitating online applications, ultimately improving the overall management of training programs.

Moreover, this initiative will align with the requirements of the Eswatini Higher Education Council and is expected to reduce application processing times, as applicants will no longer need to visit the institution in person. This shift is projected to generate cost savings for Emaswati and aligns with the principles of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), promoting a more efficient and accessible education system.

ACHIEVEMENT

Completion of the National Handicraft Sector Policy Formulation

The Handicraft Department of Eswatini has operated without a formal policy framework since its establishment in 1970, resulting in significant challenges for the sector. The absence of a dedicated handicraft policy has impeded the Department's ability to effectively address operational bottlenecks, limiting the growth potential of local handicraft businesses and undermining the social benefits that could accrue to Eswatini artisans.

The National Handicraft Sector Policy has now reached its final stage of formulation and is poised for launch by the Ministry. This policy aims to establish a comprehensive framework that fosters innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability within the handicraft sector. By creating an enabling environment, the policy seeks to stimulate growth and development across the handicraft industry, facilitating trade and ensuring the sector's vibrancy and competitiveness.

Moreover, the policy is designed to support the National Handicraft Training Centre in achieving accreditation from the Eswatini Higher Education Council

(ESHEC). Through these strategic initiatives, the National Handicraft Sector Policy represents a pivotal advancement for Eswatini's artisanal economy, aiming to harness the full potential of its creative sector while promoting social and economic benefits for its artisans.

ACHIEVEMENT

Establishment of the Secretariat of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Society:

The Secretariat of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Society has successfully completed the recruitment, induction, and training of personnel responsible for the daily administration of copyright licensing, as well as the computation, collection, and distribution of copyright royalties. This initiative is pivotal for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of copyright management within the Kingdom.

With training in Copyright Management Organization Administration now finalized, the Secretariat is poised to commence fee collections in the upcoming year from public commercial establishments and event licensing. This proactive measure is designed to ensure that the benefits derived from copyright activities directly support the Kingdom's content creators.

The establishment and operationalization of this Secretariat align with the mandates of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act of 2018, reinforcing the legal framework that protects intellectual property rights. Through these efforts, the Secretariat aims to create a sustainable revenue stream for artists and content creators, thereby fostering a vibrant creative economy in the Kingdom.

ACHIEVEMENT

Empowering Communities: MCIT Portfolio Committees' Engaging

Study Tour of Cooperatives: A notable achievement during this period was the local study tour undertaken by Members of the Ministerial Portfolio Committee from both the House of Assembly and the Senate, who visited cooperatives in the Kingdom of Eswatini. This two-day event encompassed visits to ten cooperatives, specifically focusing on Savings and Credit and Multi-Purpose Cooperatives in the Manzini and Hhohho regions.

The primary objective of this initiative was to facilitate direct engagement between Parliamentarians and cooperative members, thereby enhancing understanding of the cooperative sector. This engagement is particularly significant as the Department is currently working on reviewing policies and regulations governing cooperatives.

The study tour encompassed both urban and rural cooperatives, highlighting their critical role in the socio-economic development of Eswatini across various Tinkhundla Centres. Parliamentarians observed firsthand how cooperatives serve as vital vehicles for livelihood development in the country. Over the past 12 months, 131 new cooperative societies have been registered, benefiting more than 70,000 Eswatini by providing decent work opportunities. The cooperative sector has demonstrated substantial economic value, currently estimated at over 3.5 billion Emalangeni, and has distributed more than 100 million Emalangeni in dividends to its members. This underscores the significant impact of cooperatives on the economic landscape and the livelihoods of Eswatini.

ACHIEVEMENT

Completion of Factory Shell:

The Ministry has successfully managed the construction of an 6 750-square-meter factory shell in Hlathikhulu, which was previously damaged during the riots. This facility reached practical completion in January 2024 and is now occupied by Infinity Knits, currently employing 170 individuals.

Additionally, the Gamula factory shell was completed in October 2023. This project encompasses a 7,392-square-meter facility featuring two production areas, administrative offices, a clinic, external locker rooms, a canteen, external ablutions, a guard house, and associated external works.

ACHIEVEMENT

Enhancing Eswatini's Industrial Competitiveness: A Strategic Vision for Investment and Growth (2023-2033):

Eswatini's investment landscape is bolstered by a comprehensive Industrial Policy for 2023-2033 and a review of the National Investment Policy from 2009, both aimed at enhancing competitiveness in industrial development. As highlighted in the International Yearbook of Industrial Statistics 2023 (UNIDO), Eswatini ranks sixth in manufacturing across Africa. The newly adopted Industrial Policy emphasizes several key objectives: maximizing domestic benefits through strengthened value chains and increased production capacities, promoting value addition in resource sectors for inclusive industrialization, enhancing economic resilience via market diversification, supporting decent wage sectors, and advancing green industrialization through initiatives focused on circular economy, waste management, and renewable energy.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade is finalizing the updated National Investment Policy, pending Cabinet approval. This policy

aims to create a transparent and attractive environment for both domestic and foreign investors. Its objectives include fostering inclusive economic growth and decent job creation through sustainable investments, improving national and international coordination on investment issues, encouraging exports and developing local enterprises to leverage agreements like the AfCFTA, and promoting linkages between foreign direct investment and local businesses to eliminate distortive policies and facilitate upgrades for local firms. Together, these policies aim to position Eswatini as a competitive player in the global industrial landscape.

ACHIEVEMENT

The establishment of the Citizen Economic Empowerment (CEE) Council in July 2024 marks a significant step in the implementation of the Citizen Economic Empowerment Bill. The Council is being equipped to effectively fulfill its mandate and will collaborate with development partners such as UNDP to undertake a benchmarking mission to Botswana's Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency. This mission aims to gain insights into the implementation of empowerment programs, particularly in areas like preferential procurement and foreign direct investment (FDI). The Council's three-year term will enable a focused approach to economic development and empowerment.

ACHIEVEMENT

The 56th Eswatini International Trade Fair was highly successful, with over 250 exhibitors and 54 vendors participating. The introduction of the EITF app streamlined application and payment processes, receiving positive feedback. A post-event survey indicated 98% satisfaction among exhibitors, many of whom plan to return for the 2025 fair. This year's event also included soccer matches, adding to its appeal. The Ministry expressed gratitude to the sponsors for their vital support.

ACHIEVEMENT

Tremendous progress has been made in the implementation of the National Trade Facilitation Programme. The launch of the Ngwenya-Oshoek border end-to-end Time Release Study (TRS) in April 2024 for the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of South Africa marks a significant milestone and collective efforts to enhance Trade Facilitation and improve efficiency border management processes between the two countries. This has culminated to the establishment of a bilateral coordinated Working Group between South Africa and the Republic of South Africa which assist to address the bottlenecks and inefficiencies at the border. A commercial lane has also been established to facilitate and fast-track the clearance of commercial goods (imports) at the Ngwenya border.

9. MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Digitalisation of Government Services

The Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology has developed a strategy for the full digitalization of Government Services, termed “Government in your Hand”, to bring Government services closer to emaSwati through various platforms and in the comfort of their homes including Tinkhundla centres.

2. Bridging the Digital Divide

To properly harness the digital economy and bridge the digital divide, the Ministry has trained 447 emaSwati on basic computer and digital skills to ensure digital inclusion and universal access to services. Furthermore, Ministry established a UNESWA Resource Centre for the Disabled which

was commissioned by His Majesty the King Mswati III, thus enhancing digital inclusion of People Living with Disabilities.

In a bid to empower young women and bridge the gender gap in technology, the Ministry through the Eswatini Communications Commission (ESCCOM) awarded sponsorship for girls pursuing studies in Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Increased reliance on digital technology unfortunately increases opportunities for cyber threats. Hence, the Ministry is continuously raising awareness on cyber security and data protection to inculcate a cyber-hygiene culture.

3. Infrastructure Development

In response to the prevalent copper cable theft and vandalism, the Ministry is deploying the Fibre to the x (home, business, etc.), facilitating faster connectivity for users. Optic fibre deployments currently cover 8500 home passes with 1 000 end users already connected to the fixed wireless access (FWA). To further enhance the reliability and robustness of broadband, the Ministry is installing an alternative feeder line for the internet connected to the East Coast submarine cables. This project is at 90% completion.

In the execution of our mandate to improve access to information, the Ministry has rehabilitated key radio and television transmitter sites, including installation of additional gap fillers. This has restored coverage of radio and television by 10%.

4. Government Corporate Identity and Email System

The Ministry has developed a Government Corporate Identity Manual which aims to harmonise and standardise government branding, mail and

documents ecosystem, which will enhance government's corporate visibility. Furthermore, the government email system has been revamped offering 300Gb capacity per user and ability to access anytime, anywhere and from any device.

5. Start Ups

In a bid to curb unemployment, The Ministry continues to incubate start-up companies through the Royal Science and Technology Park (RSTP). Seven new companies graduated from the incubation centre.

10. MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

1. The Enactment of the National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Act of 2023.

It was a big step forward in the ministry's efforts to modernise the civil registration procedure. This new legislation seeks to guarantee that all citizens, regardless of background or geography, have access to a dependable, efficient, and inclusive civil registration system. The Act prioritises accuracy, speed, and data protection while simplifying procedures, lowering administrative costs, and safeguarding all persons' privacy and dignity.

In line with Sustainable Development Goal 16.9, the Act aspires to give legal identification to all by 2030, ensuring access to basic services like healthcare, education, and social protection. By making birth registration more accessible and counting every individual, the government is taking tangible efforts to guarantee no one is left behind, especially in marginalised and neglected regions. It also allows fathers the right to register their children where proof of paternity is sufficient. Steep administrative fines have been

introduced for officers that disclose or transfer information without authority.

2. Mopping Exercise Hhohho and Manzini regions

The roll out of the mopping in the Hhohho and Manzini regions has been a tremendous success for the Civil Registration Department, particularly because it provides important services directly to individuals at no cost. This effort expands into poor and isolated locations, guaranteeing that even the most marginalised communities can get legal identification without financial or logistical restrictions.

By providing mobile registration services in remote areas, the department significantly decreased discrepancies in registration coverage, overcoming barriers such as distance, lack of knowledge, and poverty that frequently prevent access to such services. This community-based strategy not only increased the inclusivity of the civil registration system, but it also promoted social fairness by allowing every person to be formally recognised, so protecting their rights to school, healthcare, and social security.

Since the exercise started in May 2024 in the Hhohho and Manzini regions below are the statistics of each service provided to date.

MANZINI REGION

Births	Marriages	Converts	Deaths	Total
5019	1403	2900	88	9410

HHOHHO REGION

Births	Marriages	Converts	Deaths	Total
6706	519	1716	118	9059

Additional there Current Births and Deaths registration are on-going at the RFM Hospital, Mbabane Government Hospital, Piggs Peak Government Hospital, Hlatikulu Government Hospital and Nhlangano Health Centre under the ‘closing of the tap’ programme. Below are the statistics of the births and deaths registered per health facility.

Name of Health Facility	Births	Deaths	Total
Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital (RFM)	454	21	475
Mbabane Government Hospital	380	19	399
Piggs Peak Hospital	235	20	255
Hlatikhulu Hospital	404	74	478
Nhlangano Health Centre	184	0	184

3. 56th birthday celebration of His Majesty

The nation gathered at Mankayane to to celebrate the 56th birthday of His majesty. This event was characterized by visible excitement and huge turnout of well-wishers “labekete kutewukotsa Lilanga” thereby, rendering the venue too small to contain them.

4. Implementation of durable solutions for Refugees

In line with best practice and international obligations under the Refugee law; we have, together with assistance from our partners

UNHCR and World Vision voluntarily repatriated a total of 15 refugees (5 families) and resettled one family to Germany on medical grounds. Furthermore, 17 refugees and their families were granted citizenship most of whom had been in the country for more than 15 years.

5. Ndzevane Project

There has been significant progress on the implementation of the Ndzevane Project which seeks for the economic inclusion of refugees and the host communities through agricultural activities. In May, UNHCR, posted an officer to Eswatini to work on the Project on a full time basis for a period of 6 months. Further, a contract has been signed between World Vision and EWADE who will undertake soil testing, irrigation system design, farm planning and the development of the business case. Renovations of a part of the old settlement are underway.

The lack of funds and resources has also contributed to the slow implementation of the Ndzevane Project.

6. Issuance of citizenship

Following approval from the relevant authorities 95 citizenship applicants were found worthy of being accorded the Eswatini citizenship by the Citizenship Board. Notably, 17 of these initially came into the kingdom as Asylum seekers who were then granted status as refugees. This is in alignment with the international instruments that the kingdom is signatory to.

11. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

- 1. Provision of Legal Aid Services:** The office has assisted walk-in clients with various legal issues, including civil, criminal, labour, and administrative matters by ensuring that they receive the necessary support pending representation in court. A total of 240 walk in clients have been attended broken down as follows: 126 from Hhohho Region, 83 from Manzini Region, 14 from Lubombo Region and 17 from Shiselweni Region.
- 2. Anti- Corruption Commission (ACC) and tripartite task team undertaking corruption investigations:** The ACC and the Tripartite Task Team that was set up by His Excellency, the Right Honourable Prime Minister are hard at work investigating over 250 cases. Results are beginning to show as the country has witnessed some arrests after a long time. In a bid to mitigate the few number of Investigators at the ACC, Cabinet has approved the secondment of ten (10) Police Officers to the ACC to assist in dealing with the backlog. Logistics are underway to get the Police Officers on board.
- 3. National Mechanism for Report writing and Follow-up:** Submitted the country's initial report on the implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in June 2024. The country acceded to this treaty in March 2004. Accession to the treaty came with obligations to report within a year on how the country is giving effect to the provisions of the treaty. The report has to indicate the legislative, administrative, judicial measures that have been undertaken to ensure citizens enjoy the rights and freedoms provided by the treaty as well as challenges faced.

4. Commemoration of the International Women’s Day: In May 2023, the Commission commemorated the International Women’s day at the Mawelawela Correctional facility with the female inmates. The Commission raised awareness on the international, regional and domestic instruments that promote and protect the rights of women. The Commission also conducted a competition for the inmates to get their level of understanding of human rights and awarded prizes for the winners. On the other hand, the inmates conducted a number of activities including dances, art, poems and many more to showcase their talent and skills acquired while serving their terms in correctional centres.

5. Tabling of the Legal Aid Bill in Parliament: The purpose of the Legal Bill, 2024 is intended to among other things to provide for the following:

- Establishment of a Legal Aid Office responsible for promotion of access to justice by providing affordable, accessible and accountable legal aid services to indigent persons;
- Provide for appointment and outline of the functions of Director of Legal Aid Office;
- Outline powers, functions and responsibilities of the legal aid providers;
- Provide for a means and merits test;
- Establish the Legal Aid Fund; and cover any other incidental matters relating to the Legal Aid

12. MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT

- The Ministry successfully completed the Nhlangano-Sicunusa road (MR13) and has been officially opened to traffic. This is a 43Km road which has improved connectivity with the Shiselweni region.
- Upgrading of three (3) roads namely: D12, Ndlalane to Godolodlwayini in the Lubombo Region; D78, Sigangeni to Mvambi in the Hhohho Region and D70, Thunzini –Zombodze-Hhotela in the Shiselweni Region. These roads have been upgraded from gravel to bituminous standard covering a total of 30Km.
- Construction of several river crossings and bridges to improve all weather accessibility of some areas in areas such as Zandondo, Ndabazezwe, Mkhwakhweni, Mzinsangu, Mangcongco, Hhukwini, Mampembeni, Mtindzeko , Dwaleni and Mampembeni.
- Rehabilitation of teachers' quarters in Lavundlamanti, Nyamane and Vuvulane shools, thus improving the living conditions of the occupants. A total of 26 houses were attended.
- In a bid to improve the construction industry landscape, the Ministry launched the review and development of the Eswatini Construction Industry Policy, review of the Construction Industry Council Act of 2013 and the review of the Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Allied Professionals Act no. 14 of 2013. This is done to ensure that the impact of the construction industry in economic growth is supported and fully exploited.
- Completed the first phase of the relocation of properties along the proposed Eswatini Rail Link Project connecting to the Republic of South Africa. A total of 98 homesteads were completed and handed over to beneficiaries. This development is aimed at creating

clearance for the construction of a 98 Km line on the Eswatini side and 57 Km on the South African side. This will ease the movement of bulk commodities to the ports of Maputo in Mozambique, Richards bay and Durban in the Republic of South Africa.

13. MINISTRY OF SPORTS, CULTURE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

1. MIND-SET CHANGE PROGRAMME

Increased knowledge and attitude change towards sustainable livelihoods and job creation for over 400 young people across the country.

The training covered the following topics;

- The power of the mind/thoughts,
- It outlines thinking traps and how to avoid them
- It assures that everyone is born for a purpose
- It takes the youth through Career paths and strategies to break barriers
- It defines hope and how one can cultivate hopeful thinking or attitude
- It defines change and how to manage change
- It introduces a business approach model
- It encourages the youth to think like an entrepreneur

ACCELERATOR AND BUSINESS INCUBATION SUPPORT

201 young people were trained on business management and entrepreneurship. Thereafter the youth were supported with grant funding amounting over E1 million to start and/or grow their enterprises. The majority of the beneficiaries were in agriculture production. This support enabled the young people to create livelihoods and employ others.

REGION LEVEL OF SUPPORT NO. OF BENEFICIARIES

MANZINI	E295 174	61
HHOHHO	E243 472	47

LUBOMBO E231 873 53




SHISELWENI E229 449 40

SUPPORT FOR TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL GRADUATES

90 graduates from Technical and Vocational Training Institutions were supported with start-up tool kits to start and/or grow their enterprises. This support enabled the beneficiaries to employ other people. The beneficiaries were doing different businesses such as carpentry, welding, sewing, motor mechanic, plumbing and wiring.

ESTABLISHMENT OF 4 REGIONAL ARTS CENTRES

Establishment of Art centres and offices in all the regions to decentralize services

-  Lubombo arts centre at Siteki Offices
-  Shiselweni arts centre in Nhlangano Offices
-  Hhohho arts centre in Pigg'sPeak Offices

In pursuant of the government vision to decentralize services, the Council has formally established the regional arts centres to provide arts and culture services to Emaswati in and across the kingdom. The art centres, located in Siteki, Pigg'sPeak, Nhlangano and Mbabane, are running various arts and culture programs including talent search, talent development, talent placement and promotion. The centres have fully automate administrative offices with officers who coordinate the programs in the regions.

The Validation of the National Arts and Culture Policy 2023-2028

The policy promotes artistic innovation, encouraging individuals, collectives and communities the right to imagine, create, distribute, produce and consume cultural content. For this reason, developing a

cultural and creative ecosystem that dignifies the lives of artists and cultural practitioners is essential to the wellbeing of our societies. The key enabler for such achievement is the quality of an arts and culture policy; updated with emerging issues.

ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL ARTS FESTIVALS

The Ministry strategy for the creative sector as per the National Development Plan entails creating opportunities for our novice and upcoming artists in the regions to display and exhibit their talent through regional festivals. The Ministry established partnerships with institutions and municipalities to launch inaugural festivals in the regions'

- **Inaugural Mahamba gorge festival:** Nhlanguano arts and culture centres partnered with Mahamba gorge for the first ever annual Mahamba gorge festival
- **Inaugural Limuva arts festival in pigs-peak** – Hhohho arts centre partnered with Mnation and pure classic for the first ever Limuva arts festival
- **The Mlawula camp fire** – the Lubombo arts centre partnered with ENTC to establish a Lubombo arts festival at Mlawula hiking camp program.

ESWATINI ANNUAL ARTS SUMMIT 2023

The Ministry organized a one-day Arts Summit 2023 to probe and share ideas on the state of Music Business in Eswatini and around the world. The exercise attended by representatives of the various arts and culture bodies, institutions and private companies in the music space was led by a university lecturer and Researcher on Events Management, Ms Annelies de Bruine from Netherlands.

Rehabilitation of Somhlolo National Stadium

Revamping of the Somhlolo National Stadium to meet FIFA/CAF minimum standards. That the exercise is now in its final phase. Required improvements projected to be complete by this December 2024 with the CAF assessment expected early next year. The stadium should be in use by Feb/March next year.

Talent Search

The successful delivery of the first national talent search competition for athletics (cross country) and football. Some of the talent spotted is already part of the premier league/NFD teams as contracted players. Equally the talent from the athletics cross country national tournament shall form the pool of athletes to receive high level training for the 2028 Olympic games.

Podium Finishes

Ndoniyamanzi Luhlanga outstanding/silver medal achievement at the world dance championships at the Prague/ Czech Republic on 27 June 2024.

Amendments on Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund Regulations

One key development is the amendment of the Youth Enterprise Revolving Fund Regulations to make them favorable to our youth instead of being stringent. The proposed amendments to the Regulations have undergone thorough review by the Attorney General.

Reduced time to complete the loan process

Furthermore, the Fund has noted a significant improvement in the time it takes to complete the loan process. This improvement signifies a positive step in facilitating access to funding for youth entrepreneurs. The time it takes to review and complete the loan process has been drastically

reduced from an average of nine (9) months to just 60 days. The target goal is to further decrease this time frame to **30 days**. This significant improvement has facilitated a more efficient and streamlined process for aspiring young entrepreneurs seeking financial assistance, enabling the young people to commence their business ventures timeously.

Increase in loan uptake: one key factor contributing to the increase in loan applications submitted by aspiring young entrepreneurs is the decentralization of services. Regional Fund offices and satellite offices have been strategically opened in various locations to provide easier access to loan opportunities. This initiative has made it convenient for individuals from different regions to apply for loans, thereby encouraging more young entrepreneurs to take advantage of the financial support available to them.

Business plans and cash flow forecasts trainings

Training programs have been introduced to educate aspiring young entrepreneurs on how to prepare comprehensive business plans and cash flow forecasts. This training equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to present a clear and realistic outline of their business goals and financial projections. By providing guidance and support in these areas, the loan application process becomes more manageable for aspiring entrepreneurs, increasing their chances of securing financial support.

Loan Uptake

- 543 total loan applications valued at approximately E24 million have received from 1st November 2023 to 30th September 2024.
- 62 total loan amounting to E2,789,164 have been approved to date.

- At 30th September 2024, closed with a pipeline of 216 application amounting to E9,331,446 awaiting technical assessments by the financial intermediary.

14. MINISTRY OF TINKHUNDLA ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Induction of Tinkhundla elected of Politicians

The Ministry conducted an induction of all Tinkhundla elected Politicians (i.e. Members of Parliament, Tindvuna TeTinkhundla and Bucopho) and Tinkhundla Secretaries in all the four Regions on the Ministry's operations, their roles and responsibilities in order to enhance service delivery.

2. Session with Portfolio Committees

The Ministry met the Portfolio Committees from both the House of Assembly and Senate to acquaint the Committee Members on the operations of the Ministry; from its Institutional arrangements, mandate and departmental activities. During the meeting, ways of strengthening the working relationship between the Ministry and the Committee were discussed.

3. Tinkhundla Local Government Bill development initiated:

The Ministry commenced internal preparations on the Tinkhundla Local Government Bill and received guidance and technical assistance from the Attorney General's Office.

Following the Ministry's Cabinet Paper and presentation to Cabinet, a Cabinet Sub-Committee was appointed to oversee the operationalization of Chapter XIII of the Constitution of the Kingdom

of Eswatini of 2005. An Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee was appointed to work on the draft of the Legislation and benchmark exercise conducted with Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and Ghana, countries that have undertaken similar work.

The Tinkhundla Local Government Bill draft has been developed and is currently subjected to stakeholder consultations. The stakeholders consulted thus far include:

- House of Assembly Portfolio Committees (Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development and Ministry of Housing and Urban Development)
- Elections and Boundaries Commission (EBC)
- Planning and Budgetary Committee (PBC)
- Bantfwabenhosi and Chiefs in the four (4) regions
- Advisory Committees (Emabandla ekweluleka).

Note: To ensure the Bill aligns with current policy, the Ministry has reviewed the Decentralisation Policy of 2005. The Policy is awaiting approval by relevant authorities.

4. Regional Development Fund

Nationally, eighty four (84) projects were completed during the period under review, of which fourteen (14) are Income Generating Projects (IGP) and seventy one (71) are infrastructure. The completed projects are worth E42 112 785.42, benefitting 10 348 Emaswati directly and creating 557 jobs.

Handover of Projects funded by Regional Development Fund

The Ministry handed over twenty two (22) completed projects to beneficiaries in all the four Regions; three (3) from the Hhohho

Region (16 seater bus, sugarcane slew and tractor with implements); five (5) from Manzini Region (2 x 65 seater buses, 2 mini buses, TLB and horse and trailer truck); eleven (11) from the Lubombo Region (3 x TLB trucks, 3 x tractors with implements, a Tipper Truck, 2 x Quantums, 2 x Goats Feedlots and Chicken Shed with stock, feed and vaccines) and three (3) from Shiselweni Region (Horse and Trailer Truck, Refrigerated Truck and Farm inputs, 4 Ton Truck and fencing).

5. Tour of Service Centres, Tinkhundla and Imiphakatsi

The Right Honorable Prime Minister conducted a tour of the Lobamba Inkhundla to appreciate the operations of a service centre and the services provided. His Excellency also commissioned the Siphofaneni Sub-Regional Offices and officially opened the Kwaluseni Inkhundla.

Ministry toured the Mayiwane, Ndzingeni, Lamgabhi, Kwaluseni, Hosea Tinkhundla Centres and Gege Service Centre to ensure that services are provided efficiently closer to communities. As part of the tour, the Honorable Minister also toured the Police Station under construction at Buhleni, the Mayiwane Rural Development Area, and Meteorology Offices.

The Honorable Minister together with the Community Development Department also visited and sensitized the Ngoloweni and Hlutse Chiefdoms on development issues and available funding opportunities.

6. Reconstruction of Tinkhundla Centres

The Ministry completed the construction of Kwaluseni, Lamgabhi, Ndzingeni and Sandleni Tinkhundla Centres. The Right Honorable Prime Minister officially opened the Kwaluseni Inkhundla.

The reconstruction of Ngudzeni, Kukhanyeni, Timphisini and Hosea has commenced and nearing completion. A site handover has been undertaken for the reconstruction of Somntongo Inkhundla.

15. MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

GEOLOGY AND MINING SECTOR

GEOLOGY

The Multi-Disciplinary Geoscience Mapping project (airborne electromagnetic, radiometric and magnetic survey) for the Shiselweni and Lubombo Regions has been successfully completed, and the report has been submitted to the Ministry for onward transmission to the Highest Authority of the Land.

A geological and mining information system (GMIS), an electronic document management system, has been successfully developed for the ease and improved geoscientific data and information dissemination to mining investors.

MINING SECTOR

The Ministry, in close collaboration with the Minerals Management Board (MMB), continues to work towards ensuring that there is increased economic activities to boost employment opportunities through the sustainable exploitation of the vast mineral reserves that the country. With the 12th Parliament's government aim to increase mining contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the current 0.02% to 5% the country has seen the successful establishment of a second coal mining

company. More mining investments have been authorized and further economic activities are expected from the sector.

WATER SECTOR

The Department received a drilling rig and accessories from the Japanese Government and so far, three (3) boreholes have been drilled using the new rig.

Four (4) Rural Water Supply Schemes have been converted to use both power from the national electricity grid and solar for pumping. The conversion is meant to assist the rural communities by reducing overhead costs for operating the water supply projects thereby, improving the sustainability of the projects. These Water Supply Schemes are as follows:

- Dvokolwako (Phase 1) Rural Water Supply Scheme – Manzini Region.
- Phonjwane Rural Water Supply Scheme – Lubombo Region.
- KaMfishane Rural Water Supply Scheme – Shiselweni Region.
- Gege Formline Rural Water Supply Scheme – Shiselweni Region

Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the Mananga River Gauging weir in the Komati River has been completed which measures trans- boundary flow into the Republic of South Africa to assist in improving the monitoring of the trans boundary water and adherence obligations. The gauging station was rehabilitated in partnership with the Komati Basin Water Authority (KOBWA) with a grant funding from CRIDF (Climate Resilience Infrastructure Development Fund) amounting to E28 Million.

ENERGY SECTOR

The Government continues to work towards increasing power generation and energy access in the country through a number of programs as follows:

POWER GENERATION

POWER PROJECT PROCUREMENT BY ESERA: ESERA awarded contracts for projects under the **75 MW First Tranche Solar PV procurement** with projects now advancing to financial close and the earliest date for financial close is expected by June of 2025. A conditional award has been issued for a **20 MW project under the Second Tranche Biomass procurement** and tariff negotiations are ongoing. Financial close for this project is expected by July 2025 and construction is set to begin two months thereafter. The procurement of 80 MW of biomass generation capacity from existing co-generation facilities in the sugar industry has been evaluated and award (conditional subject to tariff negotiations) is expected in November 2024, with financial close also scheduled for July 2025.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY EEC: EEC in partnership with Kenya Generation Company (KenGen) continued with the geoscientific studies for geothermal generation potential in Eswatini. There are three (3) potential sites that are shortlisted for further studies and the sites are:

1. Mvutshini – Lobamba springs and surrounding areas
2. Mkhoba springs and surrounding areas
3. Lebombo plateau zone and Siteki areas

The 13.5 MW Lower Maguduza Hydro power station Independent Power Producer (IPP) negotiations with the EPC contractors were concluded and signing of agreements concluded in May 2024. A notice to continue and

commence with construction was issued to the civils contractor on 1st October, 2024.

The Maguga 10 MW expansion power project is currently at adjudication stage and site will be handed over to the contractor at the end of November 2024.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION: The World Bank loan funded Network Reinforcement & Access Project (NRAP) for the Shiselweni Region is progressing well, with construction of substations at 58% and the transmission line at 72%. The total number of households electrified through NRAP and the Rural Electrification Access Fund currently stands at 4227 of which 887 rural households had ready boards installed for them as they were unable to wire their structures.

16. MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

ACTIVITY	PERIOD	COMMENT
Introduction Of The Performance Management System	4 th April 2024	Achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Honourable Minister Mabulala Maseko launched the introduction Performance Management System (PMS) at the Hilton Garden Inn, on the 4th April 2024. • The system replaces the manual appraisal system which has limitations in terms of providing an objective method of assessing performance. • The system is aimed at improving performance and excellence in the public service.

Commissioning Of Salary Review Exercise:	3 rd of July 2024	Achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The salary Review exercise was commissioned by the Minister on the 3rd of July 2024. • The Job profiling exercise resumed on the 28th August 2024 and almost 80% of the Ministries and departments have been covered.
Cost Of Living Adjustment (Cola) For Public Servants	5 th of July 2024.	Achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government timeously concluded the CoLA negotiations with public sector unions demonstrating cooperation between both parties • Through Circular No. 2 of 2024, the Ministry endorsed the approval of 4% CoLA for Public Servants on the 5th of July 2024. • The COLA was with effect from the 1st April 2024
Conversion Of Temporary Teachers	26 th June 2024	Achievements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government set aside a budget of E65 million to accommodate the conversion of 364 temporary teachers into permanent positions and the employment of Early Childhood Care and Development teachers.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To date all the aforementioned positions have been converted.
In-service training	November 2023 to date	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Customized Short Group Trainings for enhancing productivity and performance for public service employees across various Ministries and Departments were conducted. These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft of Policy Formulation, Implementation and Monitoring. Ministries and Departments Labour Law Enforcement and Management Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness course Training on Logistics and Procurement The Grievance and Discipline

17. MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

1. The Ministry of Agriculture successfully hosted an Agricultural Investment Forum in an effort to mobilize resources for implementing the Eswatini National Agricultural Investment Plan. The response was impressive and participants included International Development Partners, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, among many others. Some pledges were made to ongoing and planned programmes, however, the plan still needs more financial resources and the Ministry continues to engage local and international investors and developmental partners for more funds. The Ministry is planning another

Investment Forum that will bring together local investors with those from Italy and Serbia.

2. The Ministry has fully embraced the “Nkwe” mantra and adjusted its mode of operations to fast-track implementation of programmes and responses to the needs of the sector. During the year under review, a programme called “taking the Ministry to the people” has been undertaken. Eight Tinkhundla centres were visited under this initiative which is still ongoing. The aim is to engage with the people to assess their specific needs and find ways to improve service delivery. This also gives the Ministry an opportunity to disseminate information on its programmes and services to the communities.
3. Fish is an important source of protein in the human diet and it creates dietary diversity with health benefits as well. The Ministry is on a drive to promote aquaculture since we are a land-locked country. In this regard, a fisheries and aquaculture research and production centre has been constructed in Malkerns. The objective is to facilitate availability of fingerlings to support in-land fish producers in the country. The project has been completed with financial and technical assistance from Taiwan and it is ready to be launched.
4. In an effort to improve the country’s water security status, the Ministry completed and launched irrigation schemes under the Water Harvesting, Small and Medium Dams Project which was funded by the European Union. There are other dams that are funded by the government that are currently under construction and rehabilitated in various Chieftdoms such as KaNdzangu, Lubhuku,

Maplotini and Dinabanye. This is an important programme in the process of adapting to climate change.

5. The Ministry continues to provide input subsidies to smallholder farmers for grain production. This is part of the drive to achieve “Food Sovereignty” in the country. The Horticulture Revolving Fund has been extended to include grains to improve the production of maize and beans. This on top of other initiatives like the “Hamba Ubuye” revolving fund, the Agricultural Development Fund, the Export Guarantee Scheme and many more.
6. The Ministry appreciates the assistance of Parliament in passing two loan bills intended to bring finance in the country to assist the agriculture sector. These are the OPEC loan bill for the continuation of the Mpakeni project and the SAPEMP loan bill for vegetable and grain farming project.

18. MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

- 1.A total of E11, 217 403 was collected as levies from the gaming operations from October 2023 to October 2024. As a means to promote responsible gambling, the Department granted 20 self-exclusion requests to individuals in April to June. The Department also assisted people who applied to be included in the self-exclusion list, a total of 16 applied to be excluded from casinos for periods ranging from 12 months to two years.
2. The Ministry Affairs issued a Legal Notice No.59 of 2024 for Declaration of nine (9) National Monuments on May 2024. Khabane Cave, Iron

Wood, Mkhuzweni Rock Art, Nsangwini Rock Art, DPM Offices, Old Library Building, Lion Cavern, KwaMagogo, Old Stone Church.

3. The number of tourists coming into the country saw international arrivals reaching 77.5% of COVID-19 pandemic levels with a total of 705 262 by end of September 2024. These numbers are driven predominantly through partnerships between the Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) with the Hospitality and Tourism Association of Eswatini (HOTAES); a private sector led entity which works with various stakeholders in tourism. Through this collaboration the country managed to host various international tour operators and foreign media who package and profile Eswatini as a destination of choice. These operators and media are from various countries such Germany, France, the Netherlands, South Africa and many others. Other initiatives such as the Tri-land- a collaborative agreement between Mozambique and Mpumalanga (South Africa) has been implemented and this contributed positively to the increase in the number of tourists coming from these countries as the two major source markets for the country. An increase of tourist arrivals at 1.8% and 70% for Mozambique and South Africa respectively compared to 2019 (Pre-COVID19 pandemic) was witnessed up to September 2024.
4. The Ministry has continued National Tree Planting programme countrywide and a total of E2 542,834 indigenous trees were planted throughout the country to restore degraded areas and reduce the impacts of Climate Change. The Department of Forestry submitted its first Forest Reference Level report to the UNFCCC with a view of accessing results-based payments for reducing emissions from deforestation, forest degradation and the role in

sustainable forest management and enhancement of forest carbon stocks. The Department also issued two (3) Flora harvesting and export permits under the Flora Protection Act of 2001 to three institutions namely University of Eswatini and SANBI for research purposes and Big Game Parks for germplasm conservation.

19. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

1. Establishment of new bilateral diplomatic relations with Belarus and Kyrgyzstan:

2. Removal from the Troika Special paragraph. [SEP] The Kingdom also participated in the 44th SADC Summit held in Harare, Zimbabwe, where significant progress regarding the political and security situation in Eswatini was exhaustively deliberated upon. The Summit endorsed the Government of the Kingdom's request to be removed from the agenda of the Organ Troika, in recognition of the positive developments presented.

3. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs):

In March 2024

* Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Türkiye Maarif Foundation

* Signed Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Protocol between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye

In April 2024

* Signed General Co-operation Agreement between the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on the Establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission on Co-operation
In May 2024

- Signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the Central Bank of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Central Bank of the Republic of China (Taiwan)
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) regarding the Eswatini Business Digitalization Project

In July 2024

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of the Republic of Uganda and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Kingdom of Eswatini in the Agricultural Field
- Signed General Co-operation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of Uganda on the Establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission on Co-operation
- Signed Framework Agreement on the establishment of the International Big Cat^[1]_{SEP} Alliance

In August 2024

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of Uganda on Trade and Investment Cooperation
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Republic of Rwanda on Cooperation in the field of Correctional Services

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Royal Eswatini Police Service and the Rwanda National Police on Police Cooperation
- Signed Memorandum Of Understanding Between the Ministry of National Defence and Security of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Rwanda on Defence and Security Cooperation
- Signed General Co-operation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on the Establishment of a Joint Permanent Commission on Co-operation
- Signed Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini on Visa Exemption for holders of Diplomatic or Service passports

In September 2024

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Information Communication and Technology of the Kingdom of Eswatini on Cooperation in the field of Communications and Information Technology
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding in the field of Tourism between the Ministry of Tourism and Youth of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs of the Kingdom of Eswatini

- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of Serbia
- Signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini and the Government of the Republic of Serbia on Trade and Investment Cooperation