



# MINISTRY OF TOURISM & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

## ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PARLIAMENT REPORT

# 2024/25



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## List of Acronyms

ACCF	Africa Climate Change Fund
AEWA	African-Eurasian Migratory Water Bird Agreement
AFDB	African Development Bank
ARS	Automatic Rain Sensors
AWS	Automatic Weather Stations
BTR	Biennial Transparency Report
BUR1	First Biennial Report
CAP	Common Alert Protocol
CAEP	Climate Action Enhancement Package
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
CBT	Community Based Tourism
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COD	Chemical Oxygen Demand
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COP	Conference of Parties
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease in 2019
CSE	Centre for Science and Environment
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CPIER	Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review
CSC	SADC-Climate Services Centre
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EBIS	Eswatini Broadcasting and information services
EEA	Eswatini Environment Authority
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
ENTC	Eswatini National Trust Commission
ESWACAA	Eswatini Civil Aviation Authority

ESWADE	Eswatini Water and Agricultural Development Enterprise
ESWAFCU	Eswatini Farmers Cooperative Union
ETA	Eswatini Tourism Authority
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FY	Financial Year
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
GRAF	Gaming Regulators Africa Forum
GRC	Global Research Council
GWP	Global Warming Potential
GWP	Global Water Partnership
HCFCs	Hydro chlorofluorocarbons
HPC	High- Performance Computer
HPMP	Hydro fluorocarbons Phase Out Management Plan
IAGR	International Association of Gaming Regulators
IAPS	Invasive Alien Plant Species
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
ITC	International Trade Centre
KSP	King Sobhuza II Park
LEAP	Law Enforcement Anti-Poaching Strategy
MEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MCO	Ministerial Committee for the Organ
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoPS	Ministry of Public Service

NACOF	National Climate Outlook Forum
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NBAC	National Biosafety Advisory Committee
NC4	Fourth National Communication
NDA	Nationally Designated Authority
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDMA	National Disaster Management Agency
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NMC	National Maize Corporation
NOU	National Ozone Unit
NWP	Numerical Weather Predictions
ODSs	Ozone Depleting Substances
PMU	Project Management Unit
RFM	Raleigh Fitkin Memorial
SADC	South African Development Community
SADC TFCA	Southern African Development Community TransFrontier Conservation Areas
SARCOF	Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum
SAWS	South African Weather Service
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEASL	Strengthening Eco-system-based Adaptation for Sustainable Livelihoods Within landscapes
SOER	State of the Environment Report
TA	Technical Assistance
TAVI	Taiwan African Vegetable Initiative
TFCAs	Trans-frontier Conservation Areas
TIFA	Tourism Investment Forum Africa
TORs	Terms of References



TRF	Trade Related Facility
UDP	UNEP DTU Partnership
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP-CCC	UNEP Copenhagen Climate Centre
UNESWA	University of Eswatini
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
V&A	Vulnerability and Adaptation
WMO	World Meteorology Organization
WTM	World Travel Market Africa

## **FOREWORD**

MADAM PRESIDENT

MR SPEAKER

It is my pleasure to be afforded the opportunity to present the End of Year Performance Report for the financial year 2024/2025 for the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

This report details the Ministry's performance as well as budget allocation and expenditure for this reporting period.

**JANE MKHONTA-SIMELANE**

**MINISTER OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**FEBRUARY 2025**

## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 MINISTER'S PREAMBLE

Members of the Portfolio Committee,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman

I am honoured Chairperson for this opportunity to present the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs end of year performance report for financial year 2024/25 before the Honourable Portfolio Committee members details of which are contained in the report.

Chairperson, this financial year, the Ministry was allocated a budget of E100 940 412 for Recurrent expenditure and E33 716 000 for Capital expenditure and the following key milestones were achieved.

The Ministry through Eswatini Tourism Authority continued to promote Destination Eswatini in various regional and international markets pursuing its target of E2 million visitors with a revenue of E2 billion by 2027. The Tourism sector continues to contribute positively to the economy of the Kingdom of Eswatini. International visitations to the Kingdom of Eswatini during the third quarter (October -December 2024) period increased by a notable boost of 14.4%, bringing the total to 259 099 visits. This presents a gain of 32 531 visits compared to the same quarter in 2023. This growth was primarily driven by strong demand from key regional markets, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique in particular.

The Ministry successfully facilitated for the King's Cup Golf Tournament, on its 20<sup>th</sup> offering, held at Ezulwini Golf and Country Club. This year's tournament included a professional-amateur format, allowing amateur golfers to play alongside professional players and experience the thrill of competitive golf. The event, was held on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August to 1<sup>st</sup> of September (Amateurs), to the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> of September (Professionals) respectively. This year's tournament winner's won cash prizes worth over E1 million.

The Pigg's Peak Hotel has made great strides under the new operator Transfrontier Parks Destinations, it is currently implementing its refurbishment programme where various upgrades of the facilities were undertaken including room facelifts, conferencing and video conferencing facilities, water supply and purification systems upgrades. This programme will continue in the 2025/26 financial year.

In addition, the Ministry is collaborating with other partners in the region to share knowledge on sustainable tourism. In this regard an information sharing meeting with the South African National Gaming Board and the Gauteng Gambling Board was undertaken where the participants shared their knowledge on licensing operators. Thus far the Ministry has been able to collect **E6 480 703.80** in gaming levies.

The Ministry successfully organized the Khabane Cave Explorer Walk on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> of September at Mlawula National Park. The Khabane Cave is a designated national monument site that holds great significance in the history and culture of Eswatini. It is intricately linked to the migration of the Dlamini clan to present-day Eswatini, making it an essential part of our cultural heritage. This year's event also marked the commemorated World Tourism Day theme is entitled "Tourism and peace", which was celebrated on the same day.

The Ministry launched the Eswatini Environment Fund Projects Grant for environmental rehabilitation and sustainability. The call for grants was announced on September 18, 2024 running for 6 weeks where 205 proposals were received marking a 51% increase from the previous year. This remarkable response highlights growing public confidence in the Fund's impact and its alignment with community needs. The rigorous application review process ensures that only the most strategic and high-impact initiatives receive support. The total grant available for this cycle is E2, 000,000.00

The Implementation of the 2021 Control of Plastic Bags Regulations has warranted the ban of plastic carrier bags by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, in this light the Ministry encourages business to venture into the manufacturing and usage of eco-friendly alternatives.

Lastly, Chairperson for the coming financial year, the Ministry is requesting approval for the total budget of **E122 029 271** where **E106 525 271** is for recurrent budget and **E15 504 000** for Capital Budget.

I thank you Honourable Chairperson.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs according to the Legal Notice 189 of 2015, is responsible for:

- Tourism development, promotion and regulation
- Regulation of gaming
- Flora and fauna conservation
- Wildlife conservation and management
- Forestry
- Environmental management
- Meteorology
- Climate change

The Ministry is further charged with the responsibility of overseeing the operations of the following Parastatals / Public Enterprises:

- Eswatini Environment Authority
- Eswatini National Trust Commission
- Eswatini Tourism Authority
- Pigg's Peak Hotel and Casino

### **1.3 VISION**

Significant contribution of the tourism industry, environment and ecosystems, gaming, wildlife and culture, forestry, meteorology and climate action towards sustainable Eswatini's economic growth and development by 2022 and beyond.

### **1.4 MISSION**

To establish policy and legislative frameworks and create an enabling environment for the tourism industry and environmental affairs.

### **1.5 CORE OBJECTIVES**

The Ministry has the following strategic objectives that govern its overall operations:

- i. To sustain the overall safeguard of the environmental sector through policy regulatory framework for the protection of life, sustainable growth and development of Eswatini.
- ii. To develop a legislative, regulatory leadership framework and guidance for the development, marketing and promotion of the tourism industry in Eswatini.
- iii. To create a strategic policy regulatory framework for climate change to enable Eswatini's socio-economic growth and development, as well as environmental protection practices to be undertaken in a low carbon development pathway and to ensure that resource mobilization mechanisms are established to support these efforts.
- iv. To develop a policy, legislative and regulatory framework that provides guidance for afforestation and reforestation to ensure core benefits from multiple forest products, as well as to foster sustainable management and sustainable utilization of the forest resources for the benefit of the present and future generation.
- v. To develop a policy regulatory guiding framework for preservation of wild life, cultural heritage and ecosystems for present and future generations.

## **1.6 POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES**

### **POLICIES**

National Environment Policy (1999);  
National Forest Policy (2002);  
National Tourism Policy (2019)  
National Climate Change Policy (2016)  
National Gaming (Gambling) Policy (2015)  
National Wildlife Management Policy (2015)  
Wetlands Policy (2024)

### **LEGISLATIONS**

Biosafety Act, 2012  
National Meteorological Service Act No. 11 of 1992  
Eswatini National Trust Commission Act No.9 of 1972  
Eswatini Tourism Authority Act, 2001  
Environment Management Act, 2002  
Flora Protection Act No.5 of 2001  
Registration of Accommodation Establishments Regulations, 2008  
Grading of Accommodation Establishment Regulations, 2012  
Biosafety (Amendment) Act  
Amendment of EIA Regulations  
Gaming Control Act, 2022  
Control of Plastic Bags Regulations

### **STRATEGIES**

National Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2012  
National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2016  
National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2003  
National Forestry Action Programme 2002

Nation Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2016

National Wetlands Strategic Action Plan 2021-2030

**POLICIES, LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES UNDER  
FORMULATION/AMENDMENT**

Draft forest Bill

Draft Eswatini Tourism Bill

Draft Climate Change Bill

Draft Chemicals Management and Waste Control Bill

Draft Radiation Safety Regulations

Eswatini National Trust Commission Amendment Bill

Gaming Control Regulations

Amendment to the Biosafety Act 2019

Nuclear and Radiation Safety Bill 2024

Ozone Depleting Substances and Hydro Fluorocarbons Regulations 2024



## **CHAPTER 2 FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **2.1 FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY**

The Ministry's recurrent budget allocation for the financial year 2024/2025 is E100, 940 412. To date E100, 940 384 has been released and expenditure inclusive of commitments amounts to E95,174,763.

In addition, E 33,716,000 was allocated for capital funding of four (4) projects this financial year. The allocations were as follows:

- E2,000,000.00 for Designs for Africa museum
- E 25,000,000.00 Big 5 National Park project for fencing and establishment of Project Management Unit(PMU)
- E 2,900,000 for the project on Rehabilitation of National Parks
- E 3,816,000 from the Republic of China (Taiwan) for the project on Rehabilitation of Ngwenya Mine Interpretation Centre for landscaping, restaurants and accessibility roads and trails master plan development.

### **2.2 RECURRENT EXPENDITURE BY CENTER**

The Ministry's recurrent budget allocation for the financial year 2024/2025 is E100,940,412. To date E100, 940 384 has been released and expenditure inclusive of commitments amounts to E95 174 763 showing a variance of E5 765 621, Implementation rate is at 94%. Subvention amounting to E61 004 628 was transferred to ETA, EEA AND ENTC.

**TABLE1. RECURRENT BUDGET SUMMARY BY CENTRE**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Budget</b>	<b>Released Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Expenditure &amp; Commitments</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance%</b>
10 Minister's Office	2,692,410	3,183,803	2,737,432	83,816	2,821,248	362,555	89%
11 Ministry Administration	70,991,171	72,121,066	68,919,892	1,297,424	70,217,316	1,903,750	97%
13 Environment	1,778,602	2,022,499	676,638	1,276,645	1,953,283	69,216	97%
14 Tourism, Gaming & Wildlife	5,709,581	4,487,378	2,417,969	868,235	3,286,204	1,201,174	73%
15 Forestry	6,886,794	6,883,789	4,772,217	1,247,206	6,019,423	864,366	87%
16 Meteorology	12,881,854	12,241,849	9,743,503	1,133,787	10,877,290	1,364,559	89%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100,940,412</b>	<b>100,940,384</b>	<b>89,267,651</b>	<b>5,907,112</b>	<b>95,174,763</b>	<b>5,765,621</b>	<b>94%</b>

## **2.2 RECURRENT EXPENDITURE BY CONTROL ITEM**

Financial Summary per Control Item

### **002 CTA CHARGES**

The Ministry was allocated a budget of **E2,870,687.00** for the financial year 2024/25. Out of this budget, **E15,66,685.00** was released and only **E597,530.00** was spent and that results on a 38% expenditure variance. The variance is due to the delay in CTA debits of petrol and vehicle maintenance bills.

### **01-PERSONNEL COSTS**

The total budget of **E23, 826,616.10** was allocated for the year 2024/2025 under this line item. Out of this amount **E23,943,536.00** has been released to date and **E21,045,625.00** is expended. The item shows that the ministry is sitting on 88% expenditure variance which is within and the remaining 12% will be cleared by the end of the financial year.

### **02- TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATION**

The total budget allocation for this item is **E1,913,992.00** for this financial year. Out of this budget, **E4,323,432.00** was released and **E3,670,538.00** was spent and committed, resulting to a variance of **E652,894.00**, which will be depleted by end of the year since payments for commuting allowances and communication bills are still in progress.

### **04-PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

The total budget allocation for this item is **E8,965,002.00** for financial year 2024/2025. Out of this, **E5,494,762.00** was released and **E5,133,290.00** has been spent and committed already hence the 93% variance.

### **06 CONSUMABLES**

This item was allocated a budget of **E1,235,917.00** for the financial year 2024/25. **E2,221,917.00** was released and **E2,087,605.00** is spent and committed, resulting in a 94% expenditure variance.

### **10 INTERNAL GRANTS**

This item was allocated a budget of **E61,004,631** and **E61,004,628.00** was released. The whole budget allocation was depleted, which means that all subventions were paid to the difference parastatals accordingly hence, the 100% expenditure variance.

### **11- EXTERNAL GRANTS**

The total budget allocation for the financial year 2024/2025 under this item is **E859,124.00** to date **E1, 741,124.00** has been released and **E1,150,366.00** spent. Payments of external partners are still on progress and we are expecting more invoices for some that usually submit at the end of March which will be the end of the financial year.

**TABLE 2. RECURRENT BUDGET SUMMARY BY CONTROL ITEM**

<b>Control Item Details</b>	<b>Estimated Budget</b>	<b>Released Budget</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Commitments</b>	<b>Expenditure &amp; Commitments</b>	<b>Variance</b>	<b>Variance%</b>
<b>00 CTA Charges</b>	2,870,687	1,566,685	597,530	0	597,530	969,155	38%
<b>01 Personnel cost</b>	24,081,059	23,943,536	21,045,625	0	21,045,625	2,897,911	88%
<b>02 Travel &amp;Comm</b>	1,913,992	4,323,432	2,876,165	794,373	3,670,538	652,894	85%
<b>03 Drugs</b>	0	0	3,505	0	3,505	-3,505	0%
<b>04 Prof Services</b>	8,965,002	5,494,762	2,137,280	2,996,010	5,133,290	361,472	93%
<b>06 Consumables</b>	1,235,917	2,221,917	388,333	1,699,272	2,087,605	134,312	94%
<b>07 Durables</b>	10,000	644,300	64,219	417,457	481,676	162,624	75%
<b>10 Internal Grants</b>	61,004,631	61,004,628	61,004,628	0	61,004,628	0	100%
<b>11 External Grants</b>	859,124	1,741,124	1,150,366	0	1,150,366	590,758	66%
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>100,940,412</b>	<b>100,940,384</b>	<b>89,267,651</b>	<b>5,907,112</b>	<b>95,174,763</b>	<b>5,765,621</b>	<b>94%</b>

## **2.3 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

The Ministry has been allocated a budget of E33,716,000 and E14 610,00 has been released for the implementation of the projects, whilst E22 000 000 was deferred for future years.

### **2.3.1 DESIGNS FOR AFRICA MUSEUM- R242/99**

The project aims to develop a national museum which will also showcase historic artifacts that will be repatriated from foreign lands. Discussions are ongoing with ENTC on the allocation of site for the project. Land has been earmarked for the museum site and going through approval process. The design for the museum is budgeted at E2 000 000.00 this financial year, however the project was deferred to future financial year.

### **2.3.2 REHABILITATION OF NATIONAL PARKS-R239/99**

The project involves the rehabilitation of the existing chalets and restaurant at Magadzavane and the rehabilitation of Khabane trail. The works at Magadzavane are at and the project is envisaged to be completed by the end of the financial year. The works for khabane trail have just began and Micro Project is working speedily to ensure that the major of the works is completed by the end of the financial. The budget allocation for rehabilitation this financial is E2 900 000.00

### **2.3.6 REHABILITATION OF NGWENYA MINE INTERPRETATION CENTRE- M366/70**

The old interpretation center was destroyed by a fire, this project aims to rebuild the structure and also to develop a holistic master plan on how to best make the current structure safe and cost effective; and to propose a full tourism product with facilities such as a Museum and Visitor's Centre, Camping site, zipline, geo-trail educational deck, a hiking trail, a pond café and hot air balloons within the Ngwenya mine vicinity. The Masterplan has been submitted by the consultants and approved by the Ministry. This phase of the project has been completed and all project funds amounting to E3 816 00.00 have been disbursed.

### **2.3.7 BIG FIVE PARK PROJECT-G636/99**

The project aims to improve Eswatini's tourism receipts and to increase the country's area under conservation. The project area covers 4 Tinkhundla namely Lugongolweni, Dvokodvweni, Lomahasha and Mhlume. The project is under these Tinkhundla that needs fencing is 11km of which 9km has been fenced, this exercise is on-going. The project has been allocated E25 000 000 which includes E5 000 000 for the formulation of the Project Management Unit (PMU). An amount of E16 500 000 of this project has been deferred to future financial year. The EIA scoping report was submitted to Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA) who will subsequently publish the report for the public to make their contributions. Project progress meetings were also held by UNDP who is a consultant on the project handling the bio-diversity aspect. To ensure the operationalization of the Big Five Project, the Ministry has started the process of establishing a Project Management Unit (PMU) and the recruitment process is ongoing wherein applications are now going through the shortlisting.

## **CHAPTER 3 DEPARTMENTAL PERFORMANCES**

### **3.1 TOURISM, GAMING AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT**

The department is mandated to provide strategic leadership for the development of the tourism, gaming & wildlife sectors. The department is responsible for amongst other things; developing, reviewing policies; monitor policy implementation; Enforce minimum standards in accommodation establishments in the country; enforce compliance of gaming operations to current legislations i.e. Casinos and Lotteries; authorizing all gaming promotions by registered companies. The department has undertaken the following activities in the period under review:

#### **3.1.1 GAMING REGULATIONS OR GAMING RULES**

The Gaming fees were submitted to Parliament and were adopted by the House of Senate.

#### **3.1.2 OPERATIONALIZATION OF ICC & FISH**

The department is continuing with the facilitation of operationalizing the above cited projects. Negotiations are ongoing with the potential operator and a Memorandum of Understanding will be signed which will lead to a development of a Hotel Management Agreement. The Ministry hosted the operator into the country in a mission to inspect the structure for the purposes of ensuring that it is functional and be able to meet their standards.

#### **3.1.3 INSPECTIONS FOR COMPLIANCE**

The department has engaged with the Ministry of Commerce for collaboration in the registration process and few agreements in working together were drawn up for seamless working as well enforcement of compliance.

##### **3.1.3.1 Accommodation Establishments**

To ensure compliance to minimum standards as enshrined in the Registration of Accommodation Establishments Regulations, 2008, the department was able to ensure that 51 establishments are inspected and registered. The department continues to encourage non-compliant accommodation establishments to register for the purposes to ensuring that visitors enjoy their stay in the accommodation facilities.

##### **3.1.2.2 Gaming Licenses, Levies and Inspections**

The Department collects gaming levies for Lottery licence holders, Bookmakers licence holders and short gaming promotions. A total of E 22 934 203 was collected as levies from gaming operations from April 2024 to December 2024.

The Department, through the Gaming Board conducted hearings for applications and two Bookmakers licenses were granted. One Bookmakers licence has been renewed for a 12-month period. A total of ten gaming operations were inspected.

##### **3.1.2.3 Short-Term Gaming Permits**

A total of eleven (42) short term Gaming permits were issued to companies like MTN, Spar, Lorjaf Pick and Pay and Coca Cola, etc. which conducted the marketing promotions regulated by the Gaming Control Act.

#### **3.1.2.4 Responsible Gambling**

As part of its drive to promote responsible gambling, the Department assisted 45 people to be who voluntary availed themselves to be excluded from casino for periods ranging from 12 months to two years.

#### **3.1.3 COLLABORATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

The department is continuously engaging with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that tourism development is occurring without leaving anyone behind. The stakeholders include, Hoteliers, local Governments, tour operators and government Ministries amongst others

### **3.2 FORESTRY DEPARTMENT**

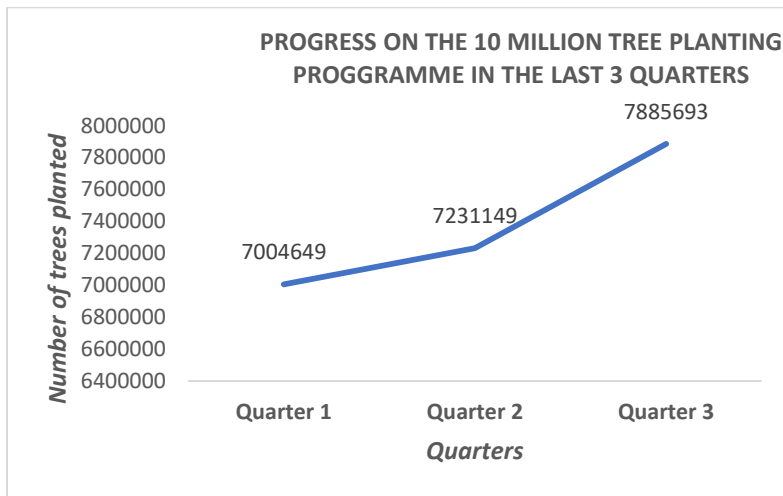
The Department of Forestry in Eswatini is committed to delivering extension services to all stakeholders, using trees as a catalyst for enhancing livelihoods and promoting sustainable development within the forest sector. Through strategic guidance, the department focuses on the sustainable management, utilization, and conservation of forest resources, while also encouraging environmental protection to support improved livelihoods and sustainable development. The report outlines the notable achievements made during the 2024/25 Financial Year.

#### **3.2.1 SEED AND SEEDLING PRODUCTION**

In the last 3 quarters, the six Government nurseries across the Kingdom of Eswatini have achieved commendable progress in seed and seedling production. The nurseries collectively collected and processed 27.4 kg of seeds, which were then planted in 39,406 pots that had been filled with soil media in preparation for seedling production. To support this endeavor, ten loads of river sand were coordinated and delivered to these nurseries. The efforts culminated in the successful raising and production of 168,840 tree seedlings across nurseries in Ntfontjeni, Ludzeludze, Malkerns Research, Luve, Southern RDA, and Mahlangatsha. These seedlings aim to control soil erosion and establish mini-forests and woodlots in local communities, promoting environmental sustainability and community development.

#### **3.2.2 AFFORESTATION AND REFORESTATION PROGRAMME**

Under the ongoing National Tree Planting Campaign, dubbed "Hlanyela Sihlahla, Wonge Imvelo," a total of 19,894 tree seedlings were donated and planted in various communities across the country, including schools, churches, NGO areas, and other government institutions. The planted trees comprise both indigenous and exotic species, contributing to the diverse forest cover. To date, the campaign has successfully planted 7,885,693 tree seedlings, reaching approximately 79% of the ambitious goal of ten million. Progress on the implementation of the 10 Million tree planting programme as shown in figure 1 below, indicates that more trees were planted in the third quarter and that can be attributed to the amount of rains received.



**Figure 1:** Progress on the Hlanyela Sihlahla, wonge Imvelo campaign

Additionally, the Department has identified new sites as shown below for planting trees during the last quarter of this financial year to ensure continuous progress and expansion of forested areas.

	<b>Areas Identified</b>
<b>Schools</b>	Sibuyeni High School, Dzanyana, Skhandzabantfu, Mbadlane Primary Duze primary, EBholi Primary, Mbadlane Primary
<b>Community Areas</b>	Mangcineni, Lundzi, Mzilikazi, Ntfungula, Mpaka Hlathikulu, Nyatsini, Bhokweni Primary, Mavovokati, Lusitini, Lamgabhi, Nkwene, Zombodze Emuva, Msumpe, Nkiliji, Mahebedla, Mashobeni, Mavovokati, Nkwene

### 3.2.3 FOREST EXTENSION

In an effort to educate Emaswati on essential forestry issues, a total of 31 radio programs were produced and aired under the "TEMAHLATSI" programme. These radio segments covered a wide range of topics including site preparation, tree planting, forest management, control of invasive alien species, agroforestry, the Flora Protection Act of 2001, and fire prevention and suppression. The goal of these broadcasts was to raise awareness and engage communities in sustainable forestry practices while highlighting the importance of protecting and managing forest resources effectively.

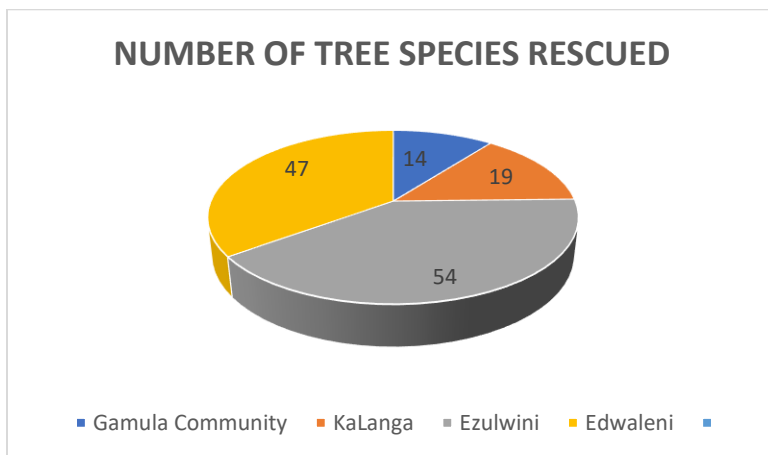
The Forestry Department undertook several forestry extension activities to engage and educate communities on forestry issues through community meetings. Seven (7) fire awareness campaigns were conducted in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Agency and private forest companies across four Tinkhundla Centres. Additionally, farmers and beekeepers from seven (7)



chiefdoms participated in a three-day workshop on fire prevention and management. A total of 81 communities and schools received training on land rehabilitation and forest activities, while a community group from Maphungwane visited the Malkerns Nursery for field training on tree seedling management. Efforts to combat timber theft led to the apprehension and sentencing of three individuals caught stealing timber from a government forest. The Forestry Department also took part in various local and international meetings and workshops organized by entities such as FAO and AUDA-NEPAD. Furthermore, over 230 small-scale wattle tree growers from Hhukwini, Nkhaba, Ntondozi, Siphocosini, Mhlambanyatsi, and Nhlangano were registered. The Department collaborated with ENTC on the implementation of a project in the Mbuluzi River Basin. Finally, partnerships with the University of Eswatini aimed at collecting and propagating endangered medicinal plants were established to preserve native medicinal flora. The species that were collected and propagated included sibhaha, mahlanganisa, umhlume, velabahleke and ingwavuma

### 3.2.4 HERBARIUM

The Herbarium Unit under the Department of Forestry, in collaboration with the Royal Eswatini Science Park, conducted a tree species rescue mission at KaLanga, focusing on various tree species and collecting seeds for planting in Forestry nurseries. The rescue efforts included species like *Rosideros xylon* (Emas elitfole) and *Appea capensis* (Liletsa). Further rescue missions took place in Gamula, Ezulwini, and Edwaleni under Manzini, resulting in the rescue of 134 species in total. These efforts ensure the conservation and propagation of valuable tree species while supporting the sustainability of Eswatini's diverse flora. The species breakdown with areas is as shown in figure 2 below:



**Figure 2:** Tree species rescued in various areas in Eswatini.

The Herbarium Unit achieved notable progress by collecting 236 specimens, identifying 132, and profiling 6 for the Herbarium. The unit also welcomed 17 university student visits primarily for research purposes and conducted 8 ethno-botanical surveys at Lukhetseni in Siteki. Furthermore, the unit sensitized 4 communities under Hosea Inkhundla about the Flora Protection Act of 2001. In collaboration with the Police at Mafutseni, the Herbarium Unit produced a report to address a case of illegal harvesting of protected species *Warbagia salutaris* (Sibhaha) and *Berhemia zeyheri*

(Umneyi) from a private farm, leading to sentences of 3 months to 1 year with an option of a fine for the offenders. Additionally, about 5 tons of illegally harvested indigenous timber were confiscated from the offenders and stored at Ngabezweni.

### **3.2.5 INTEGRATED FIRE MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

The Department of Forestry of Eswatini continued its efforts to raise awareness and provide training on fire management. A group of 65 community members participated in the training sessions, and 30 fire brigades were selected and trained as fighters from six communities within Kukhanyeni Inkhundla at Mangcineni, Kukhanyeni, Nkiliji, Ngwazini, Nyakeni, and Mahhonwane. Each of these communities was equipped with six fire pumps and six fire beaters to use in case of fires, ensuring they are well-prepared to manage and control fire-related incidents sustainably.

### **3.2.6 CONTROL OF INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAPS)**

The Department of Forestry, collaborating with various stakeholders, continues its efforts to identify and control Invasive Alien Plant Species (IAPS) across Eswatini, covering community areas, municipalities, and privately owned lands. The Department provides technical expertise to Municipal Councils to manage IAPS in their landscapes. Ongoing training sessions on IAPS control are being conducted in communities such as Luve, Malolotja, Shewula, Lomahasha, and Siyendle. The Ministry is also actively seeking funds to implement the strategy by writing and submitting project proposals to potential funders, ensuring sustainable management of IAPS within the country.

### **3.2.7 GREEN CITIES PROJECT**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Housing on the Green Cities project the department is working with cities and municipalities in enhancing green spaces within their areas and assist in tree planting within parks. This project is funded by the FAO with the GCF and the Ministry is coordinating the activities of the report. Municipalities that have benefited from the collaboration of two ministries include Manzini, Matsapha, Mankayane, Nhlangano, Ezulwini and Piggs Peak.

### **3.2.8 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

The Honourable Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs together with the Department of Forestry met with key stakeholders in the forestry sector, including private sector companies in Eswatini and small-scale timber growers, through two separate meetings. The discussions provided a platform for stakeholders to outline the areas where they need government support and collaboration to improve and advance the forestry sector.

### **3.2.9 COLLABORATIONS**

In collaboration with the Coalition for Rainforest Nations, the Department successfully re-submitted the Forest Reference Level report to the UNFCCC Secretariat for further review in June 2024, following the initial draft submission in March 2024. Additionally, the Department developed a REDD+ Technical report for submission with the Biennial Transparency Report (BTR) to the UNFCCC Secretariat. The Department has also formulated a comprehensive REDD+ Strategy for Eswatini, which is currently awaiting validation by various stakeholders. These efforts reflect the Ministry's commitment to sustainable forest management and climate action.

The Department of Forestry actively participated in negotiations under two significant conventions. The department was present during the 29th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Baku, Azerbaijan. Furthermore, they also took part in the 16th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. These engagements underscore the Department's commitment to addressing global climate challenges and desertification issues through active collaboration and negotiation at the international level.

The Department of Forestry organized a series of staff workshops aimed at reviewing the Forestry Bill and incorporating feedback from various stakeholders. These workshops were designed to ensure that the Forestry Bill reflects the diverse perspectives and concerns of all involved parties. The comprehensive discussions allowed the staff to address stakeholder comments thoroughly, preparing for the main stakeholder validation process. This collaborative approach underscores the Department's commitment to developing a well-rounded and inclusive Forestry Bill that aligns with the needs and aspirations of the community and stakeholders.

Lastly, the Department remains committed to the 10 Million Tree Planting Campaign, "Hlanyela Sihlahla, wonge Imvelo," by monitoring previously planted sites. In total, 36 sites were inspected, and the survival rate of the planted trees was found to be more than 70%, indicating significant success in the campaign's efforts.

### **3.3 METEOROLOGY DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Meteorology seeks to provide meteorological services in support of early warning systems for sustainable development and for the safety and well-being of the people of Eswatini; and to provide an enabling environment for low carbon development pathways and building resilience to climate change.

#### **3.3.1 WEATHER INFORMATION PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION**

The Meteorology Department has consistently prepared and disseminated daily public weather forecasts, including on weekends and public holidays. Warning messages were also issued as needed, utilizing the Common Alert Protocol (CAP) and other means such as emails, media (including radio) and social media. During the reporting period, a total of twenty-two (22) CAP alerts were issued to inform and safeguard the public against potential weather-related hazards. Despite the challenges faced by the unit, including the unserviceable Synergies system, the forecasts and warnings issued have remained highly accurate. The office participates in the preparation and planning of national events wherein at least one forecaster attends the meetings, providing weather updates and guidance as necessary. This includes police day, army day, fire day and opening of parliament. The department has also consistently supported the work done by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) by sending them early warning messages and participating in their radio programs. Aviation weather forecasts formerly referred to as terminal aerodrome forecasts (TAFs) are prepared and disseminated at least three times a day.

#### **3.3.2 MAINTENANCE OF METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATION NETWORK**

The Department operates a station network in seventy-two (72) locations around the country. Weather stations installed in the 72 locations comprises of thirty-four (34) fully automatic weather stations (AWS), 39 manual rainfall stations, 2 synoptic stations, and sixteen (16) climate stations. Most of the stations are owned and operated by the Department of Meteorology while a few are privately owned. The automatic weather stations increased from 33 to 34 following the installation of a station in Manzini with the support of Manzini Municipal Council.

Station consumables (wind monitors, Stephenson screens, sunshine cards, tipping bucket rain gauge reed switches, and pyrometers) for the upkeep of the observation station network were procured through Open Tender tendering method and tender number 228 of 2024/2025. Due to resource constraints, only 23 of the 34 automatic weather stations were inspected and/or serviced and 12 manual stations were visited for inspection and/or inspection.

#### **3.3.3 AVIATION METEOROLOGY**

The Meteorology Department has continued to provide operational meteorological data to the local and international aviation community and other stakeholders in collaboration with the head office in Mbabane at both Matsapha Airport and King Mswati III (KM III) International Airport. Matsapha Airport operates between 0730hrs to 1700hrs while KMIII Airport operates between 0530hrs to 2130hrs on daily basis including weekends and public holidays. In some instances, operations either start earlier or extend beyond the stipulated operational hours due to flight delays, army operations and special request by airlines and private flights. In this regard KM III

International Airport operated 103 hours outside its operation hours between April 2024 and January 2025 while Matsapha Airport operated an additional 32 hours during the same period.

### **3.3.4 SEASONAL FORECAST**

The Department, having participated in the Southern Africa Regional Forum, hosted a National Climate Outlook Forum, which was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and attended by participants from different sectors including agriculture, energy, water, disaster management, etc. The participants were appraised of last rainfall season's performance, the current weather outlook and the seasonal forecast for the coming rainfall season. In particular, the seasonal forecast indicates that a normal to above normal rainfall season was to be expected throughout the country. Stakeholders observed with concern that the rainfall distribution is becoming increasingly unfavourable for farming activities in the country. They also wondered why the department was not issuing seasonal temperature forecast, wherein the department indicated that this is an improvement that was being worked on at seasonal level. The observed trend, however, is that temperatures are remaining above normal as most years, including 2023, tend to break the temperature record.

The Department further attended to regional seasonal forecast dissemination workshops hosted by the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), where contingency planning for different sectors was undertaken as part of preparedness planning.

Regional dissemination workshops to agricultural extension workers are being planned the beginning of the third quarter in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

### **3.3.5 CLIMATE SERVICES**

The Department continued to collect meteorological data from observations stations across the country. However, some challenges are being experienced as some stations not manned by meteorological personnel are no longer observing, while for some of these stations the quality of the observation has declined such that the data is no longer usable. The data, along with data received from the country's 34 Automatic Weather Stations was quality controlled and archived. Data from the some of the AWSs (stations installed before 2020) is currently being migrated to another database system (ClimSoft) for more efficient data management.

Forty-one (41) data requests were received and processed during the first three quarters of the year. These were mainly from the private sector, mostly environmental consultancies, the construction industry and insurance companies), with some of the requests requiring long term data (up to 50 years).

Twenty-one (21) schools visited the department on educational tours during the first three quarters of the year, resulting in a revenue of E3, 700, wherein a cost recovery fee of E100 per group of up to 50 students is levied. Most of the school visits were received during the second quarter, coinciding with the second school term.

### **3.3.6 DONOR FUNDED PROJECTS**

The Department of Meteorology is implementing a number of donor funded projects, mostly under the climate change programme. Some of these projects are implemented with other Government Ministries/Department, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

#### **3.3.6.1 Capacity Building for Transparency Initiative for climate action transparency**

In the reporting period, the project has been able to hold an in-person validation workshop on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024 for some of its deliverables including:

- A report on gaps and capacity needs regarding institutional arrangements for planning and implementing climate actions
- Implementation plan for efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements, including for each sector
- Legal and Regulatory Framework design and drafts of Memorandum of Understanding or Cooperation Agreements for efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements
- A report assessing needs, constraints and gaps of existing technological and institutional capacity for the development of an online data platform
- A gap analysis of current tools, templates and guidelines used in Eswatini's MRV system

#### **3.3.6.2 National Communication and Biennial Reports**

- **NC4/BUR1:** In the period under review, the BUR has been reviewed internally and externally by the UNEP reviewers and finally submitted to the UNFCCC. The Fourth National Communication has also been reviewed and will be submitted during the last quarter of the 2024/25 Financial Year.
- **BTR1-NC5/BTR2:** In the period under review, the Department has been working on the First Biennial Transparency Report, a requirement from the Paris Agreement that was due by 31 December 2024. This has been achieved through a number of working sessions held by the Climate Change Unit team with technical support from the CBIT-GSP. The department also held a one-week in-country workshop technically supported by CBIT-GSP, for the preparation of the BTR which was eventually submitted on the 30th December 2024. However, the report was not complete, hence there is still on-going work done to ensure its finalization and resubmission to the UNFCCC.

#### **3.3.6.3 Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT)**

The ICAT Eswatini Phase II Project concluded with a validation workshop on 29 November 2024. Key achievements included the development of a Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) Implementation Framework, along with Data Collection Templates and guidance documents to track adaptation actions in the health and water sectors, supporting Eswatini's reporting to the UNFCCC. The project also established a Bioenergy Task Force and drafted a National Bioenergy Policy, which aims to guide the biomass energy sector and create a favorable environment for the development and investment in renewable biomass energy in Eswatini.

#### **3.3.6.4 Capacity Building for Transparency Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (CBIT)**

The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) is providing support for Eswatini to build capacity for the Enhanced Transparency Framework. An international consultancy firm was recruited to develop a system that will be used to collect and archive all the data and information needed for Enhanced Transparency. The firm has developed the system and presented it to the team working on transparency within the Meteorology Department and is currently working on improvements in preparation for the scheduled trainings to be held during the final quarter of the year. A stakeholder validation workshop was held in December 2024 where the following deliverables were considered:

- **Deliverable 1** – A report on gaps and capacity needs regarding institutional arrangements for planning and implementing climate actions
- **Deliverable 2** – Implementation plan for efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements, including for each sector
- **Deliverable 3** – Legal and Regulatory Framework design and drafts of Memorandum of Understanding or Cooperation Agreements for efficient and coordinated institutional arrangements
- **Deliverable 16** – A report assessing needs, constraints and gaps of existing technological and institutional capacity for the development of an online data platform
- **Deliverable 20** – A gap analysis of current tools, templates and guidelines used in Eswatini’s MRV system

#### **3.3.6.5 Initiative for Climate Action Transparency (ICAT)**

The ICAT Eswatini Phase II Project concluded with a validation workshop on 29 November 2024. Key achievements included the development of a Measurement, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) Implementation Framework, along with Data Collection Templates and guidance documents to track adaptation actions in the health and water sectors, supporting Eswatini's reporting to the UNFCCC. The project also established a Bioenergy Task Force and drafted a National Bioenergy Policy, which aims to guide the biomass energy sector and create a favorable environment for the development and investment in renewable biomass energy in Eswatini.

#### **3.3.6.6 National Adaptation Plan (NAP)**

The National Adaptation Plan project has continued work towards delivering the country’s NAP by the end of 2025. International consultants have been engaged to work with ESERPAC in developing, among other things a prioritization of various sectoral adaptation action, including through the use of a cost-benefit analysis. An agreement is being finalized with ESERPAC in this regard, while a separate agreement is being prepared with the University of Eswatini’s Centre for Climate Change and Sustainability Research (C3SR) to facilitate research for climate change adaptation in the country. There have been delays due to the pending no-cost extension with Green Climate Fund.

### **3.3.7 NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT**

The review of the Key Performance Indicators (NDC) for the 2021 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 2.0) was advanced and the performance indicators were reduced from 270 to 170 to simplify monitoring and evaluation. This was done in a manner that does not take away from the committed implementation. The budget for implementation was reviewed from USD 1,272,917,373 to USD 2,419,509,748. The plan is now publicly available on the NDC Partnership webpage.

- **Greening the Central Bank**

The work on greening the Central Bank of Eswatini (CBE) has advanced with the consultancy teams having developed two reports which are the Diagnostic Study report and Green Finance Taxonomy report. The project has now advanced to the final stages of implementation which include conducting capacity building training and other national stakeholder validation workshops. It is expected that the project will be finalized and completed in the final quarter of the financial year

- **NDC Review**

During the reporting period, the NDA prioritise putting in place/reviving the NDC Technical Advisory Group (TAG) who will work on guiding the review and implementation of the NDC 3.0. Ten members from priority and crosscutting sectors have been identified for this process from key government Ministries including Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (MNRE), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Department of Water Affairs (DWA) and others. The TAG team has already convened two meetings to guide the upcoming NDC 3.0 revision process. Further to this, a stakeholder mapping exercise for priority sector teams is yet to take place with guidance from the NDA.

Continued engagements with UNDP were held during the reporting period regarding NDC 3.0 update. Eswatini has received support for the NDC revision process through UNDP Climate Promise funds. For the revision process, four TORs have been developed which includes an international firm, two national firms (mitigation and adaptation) and one national individual consultant (cross cutting areas). The TORs have been finalized and currently undergoing UNDP processing for advertisement.

Having UNDP coordinating the UN agencies on supporting the NDCs, several agencies have shown interest in supporting Eswatini's NDC 3.0 update, however most of the support is technical assistance with limited budgets committed to support the process. UNDP has mobilized about USD 250 000 to support the revision process, however further engagement meetings with others agencies are yet to finalize commitment support including UNICEF.

Through UNDP Climate Promise support, the engagement of a consultancy firm to support the development of national inventory process has been finalized and work in developing the inventory is being advanced. The inventory will inform both the NDC 3.0 revision process and LT-LEDS.



- **NDC Coordinator**

Following the resignation of the NDC Coordinator, the NDC Partnership has undertaken a recruitment process for the replacement and a candidate has been identified and is to assume the position at the beginning of the third quarter

### **3.3.8 GREEN CLIMATE FUND READINESS PROGRAMME**

#### **3.3.8.1 Strengthening The NDA's Institutional and Technical Capacity to Mobilize Gender-Responsive Climate Finance for Eswatini**

The project was completed in June 2024, wherein the Honourable Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs launched the project deliverables, namely:

- Private Sector Engagement Roadmap;
- Gender Action Framework;
- Financing Strategy for prioritized water related climate technologies;
- Two policy briefs; and
- Three project concepts, namely:
  - Climate Information and Early Warning Services (CIEWS)
  - Water, Energy, Food and Environment (WEFE) Nexus
  - Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

#### **3.3.8.2 Accelerating the Financing and Implementation of Low-Carbon & Climate-Resilient Priorities in Agriculture and Energy for Agriculture-EY-GCF Multi-Country Readiness project.**

The project is almost complete pending the finalization across all participating countries. The project outputs, namely the project concepts have been disseminated to stakeholders through a workshop held in November 2024. In particular, the project developed 10 project idea notes which will be grouped into thematic concept notes focusing on cropping, water management, energy integration, and ecosystem restoration.

Phase 2 of the project is anticipated to develop high level concept notes to enhance the country's access to climate finance and build local capacity. Below are recommended additional activities:

- Integration of Climate Change into Agricultural Policies
- Explore Public Private Partnership opportunities to leverage more climate finance
- equipping stakeholders with the technical and managerial skills required for implementing climate-resilient projects.
- Identification of funding sources. The primary target is the GCF but other funding mechanisms can be identified and innovative financing models should be developed to attract funding.
- Targeted capacity-building programs to empower women and youth, and community-based adaptation to strengthen local ownership.

### **3.3.8.3 Strengthening National Fiduciary Capacity for GCF Accreditation of Eswatini Environment Authority (Environment Fund) and Eswatini Development**

Following the approval of USD 650,000 and the preparation of the project work plan, development terms of reference for consultancies and adoption project coordination structures, the first disbursement was received by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), who is the implementing partner, from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). An international consultant on GCF Accreditation before a project inception was held, followed by an inception workshop for the work of the GCF Accreditation Specialist.

### **3.3.8.4 Africa Union Multi-Country Program to Accelerate Readiness for Water and Climate Resilience Investments**

The African Union formally launched this project during COP 29, wherein the project seeks to strengthen AU Member States' capacity for climate-resilient water investment planning and project preparation, and covers 15 countries across the continent. The Global Water Partnership (GWP), who serves as the implementation partner, received the first disbursement from the Green Climate Fund and a Project Management Team for Eswatini contracted. The Ministry is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Department of Water Affairs (DWA) who is also hosting the project management team. Eswatini held an project inception workshop in November 2024 followed by a multi-country project kick-off workshop that was held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2024. The local project management team is currently working towards a national workshop to train stakeholders on investment plan development guidelines.

#### **3.3.1.1 Preparing for Public and Private Investment in Sustainable Green Infrastructure, Green Open Spaces and Urban Agriculture for Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change in Urban and Peri-Urban Communities In Eswatini**

The project had been reviewed in consultation with the lead ministry, which is the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. This included the revision of the project work plan. Subsequently, a project inception workshop was held with relevant stakeholders and consultants were procured. Project consultants were engaged as follows:

- Green Cities Specialist who is the lead consultant and is responsible for developing green city indicators for Eswatini
- Three consultants to undertake situational analysis for each three identified areas and make recommendations for greening which will feed into the lead consultant's work. The identified areas are urban Open Spaces, urban Infrastructure and urban Agriculture.
- Green Cities Coordination and Resource Mobilization Policies consultant, who is currently developing an operational document (draft policy documents) for the Eswatini Local Government Association (ELGA)

### **3.3.10 ITALIAN COOPERATION**

#### **3.3.10.1 Greening of the RFM Hospital**

The project implementation is near completion, following the completion of the energy efficiency component of the project. In particular, air conditioners were replaced with energy efficient air conditioners (heat pump) which also meet the Kigali Amendment requirements; replaced coal-fired water heater and boiler and efficient lighting installed. Negotiations are on-going with the power utility for feeding in some of the generated power to the grid. The team is now working on (1) disposing off old equipment in an environmentally friendly way while keeping with the hospital's policies; (2) the project handover.

#### **3.3.10.2 Strengthening of Early Warning System and Climate Services**

During the financial year 6 members of the Meteorology team were trained on climate modelling and the model installed in the department's high performance computer. And the team is currently training the model and initiating its use for the country's seasonal forecasting.

### **3.3.11 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FUND**

- **Eswatini Food Systems Child Project, Catalyzing Transformation to Sustainable Food Systems in Eswatini.**

The Catalyzing Transformation to Sustainable Food Systems project is a project to be implemented in 32 countries across the globe, including Eswatini. The project was endorsed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and to be implemented with IFAD and FAO. A project preparatory grant was received from the GEF and a project team established. As part of the project preparatory work base line data and other relevant information collected. A draft project document was submitted to FAO who provided comments that are being worked on to improve the quality of the document.

### **3.4 ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

The Department is mandated to provide a coordination role in environmental matters. The department is responsible for, amongst other matters; developing and reviewing policies; coordinating the domestication of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) through development of environmental legislation as appropriate as well as ensuring that the country's reporting obligations are met. The department has further assumed another role of ensuring the regulation of Nuclear Radiation Safety. The department has undertaken the following activities in the period under review:

#### **3.4.1 NUCLEAR RADIATION SAFETY REGULATION**

##### **3.4.1.1 Establishment of Radiation Safety Regulatory Body**

The Department has facilitated readiness for the implementation of its Regulatory function in this new mandate and vigorously carried out the following tasks:

- Facilitated training of personnel from relevant public institutions on their roles for implementation the radiation safety programme. Trainings were undertaken by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for technical and legal professionals on development of regulations and implementation of technical regulatory activities. These include;
  - 10 Officers from the Royal Eswatini Police Service
  - 12 comprising legal and technical Officers from the Ministries of Health, Natural Resources and Energy, Public Works and Transport, Agriculture and Tourism and Environmental Affairs.
  - 4 Officers from Eswatini Environment Authority
  - 2 Officers from Eswatini Revenue Services
  - Scheduled training for 2 Officers from the National Disaster Management Agency and 2 Officers from Eswatini National Fire and Emergency Services.
  
- A 3-year Financial and Technical Support Plan has been submitted and approved by the IAEA for further support.

##### **3.4.1.2 Development of Eswatini Nuclear Radiation Sources Inventory**

The Department finalized the assessment of available radiation sources in order to produce a National Inventory of such sources. The exercise is being implemented in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in the key institutions that may have such sources. A national stakeholder's review workshop was held with support by the IAEA. A draft inventory has been developed and awaits final approval.

##### **3.4.1.3 Development of Integrated Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan**

During the use of sources of radiation, there is need to ensure their security as well as preparedness for incident eventualities. The Department, in collaboration with all relevant department developed and submitted to the IAEA the First Eswatini Integrated Nuclear Security Sustainability Plan (INSSP).

The Plan presents the roles and responsibilities of each of the key institutions and their readiness for oversight of security as well as response measures on the use of radioactive sources including their theft for malicious use. The Royal Eswatini Police Service has been designated to lead this activity with the support of other enforcement and emergency agencies.

The Department has facilitated the development of an Implementation Plan that will ensure the mobilization of funding for procuring equipment for undertaking their role.

#### **3.4.1.4 Hosting of the IAEA High Level Mission**

The Department hosted a Delegation from the IAEA whose mandate was sensitization of High Level Officials and the country's Policy Makers with the purpose of preparing Eswatini for regulating nuclear radiation safety and security. The Delegation conducted sensitization workshops for the Portfolio Committees of the Ministries of Tourism and Environmental Affairs as well as Ministry of Health, Principal Secretaries, the Attorney General's Office as well the Royal Eswatini Police Service and His Majesty's Correctional Services.

#### **3.4.1.5 Development of Nuclear and Radiation Safety Bill**

The Ministry tabled the Bill to the House and to Senate. The Ministry further facilitated discussions on the Bill by the House of Assembly (Portfolio Committee). The Ministry further held discussions with Senate Portfolio Committee. The Bill awaits the final enactment process.

### **3.4.2 CHEMICALS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT BILL**

The Ministry engaged stakeholders to ascertain areas for developing of specific policy and legislation on the chemicals and waste cluster. The Ministry has engaged UNEP and submitted a project proposal on various mediums for policy and regulatory attendance. Discussions are still being pursued and there will be a finally agreed areas necessary for the development of policy.

The Ministry is working with the Attorney General's office to provide technical support in the final drafting modalities will be commenced once a lead facilitator is procured to advance the work.

### **3.4.3 WETLANDS POLICY**

The Draft Wetlands Policy, 2024 was presented and approved by Cabinet together with its Strategy and Action Plan. The Eswatini National Trust Commission will be implementing the Strategy.

### **3.4.4 MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

Eswatini is a Party to a number of environmental Conventions and Treaties. The treaties presents benefits and obligations. One of the Obligations of the country is to pay annual subscriptions to the various Secretariats of these Conventions. The Ministry has paid in full all subscriptions for the Environmental Agreements which the country is a party to.

The Ministry further ensured timeous submission of reports on the status of their implementation to all the Secretariats.

#### **3.4.4.1 Memorandum of Agreement on Cooperation between The Kingdom of Eswatini and the Italian Government on Environmental and Climate Change Programmes.**

The Kingdom of Eswatini is funded by the Italian Government through a donor partnership to enhance Eswatini's programmes on the Environment Sector and mitigation of the impacts of climate change. The First cycle of the donor funds received was E75 Million and was utilized to provide solar energy for the RFM Hospital as well as improve the efficiency of early warning weather systems. These two projects have been finalized and await official opening.

The Ministry has successfully facilitated another cycle of funding over similar conditions through a Memorandum of Agreement. The MOU has since been endorsed by Cabinet and ready for implementation.

### **3.5 ADMINISTRATION**

The Department continued to play the supportive and coordination role of all the activities above and ensured that staff is capacitated, procurement plans are developed and accounting services are provided.

The Ministry partnered with SNG Thornton and other partners in hosting an annual green indaba under the theme "Building a resilient and sustainable future for Eswatini and Africa. Leveraging partnerships, innovation, and policy mechanisms.

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) held COP Bureau meeting and its second meeting of AD Hoc Open-ended working group on benefit-sharing from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources held in Montreal, Canada. The Kingdom of Eswatini stands to gain significantly from the operationalization of a multilateral mechanism, including a global fund for DSI benefit-sharing. This mechanism, to be discussed and potentially finalized at COP 16, will provide financial and technical support to our conservation efforts. It will also facilitate the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, enhancing our capacity to conserve biodiversity and sustainably use genetic resources.

Administration participates in the project steering committee for the UNEP/GEF project on restoration of ecosystem integrated natural resource management and promotion of SLM in the Mbuluzi river basin. The main aim of the project is to improve food security and natural resource management in landscape and contribute to rural livelihood.

The Ministry participated in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change held the 29<sup>th</sup> Conference of parties held at Baku, Azerbaijan to unite the world towards agreement on bold, practical and ambitious solutions to the most pressing global challenge of our time. The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would be present dangerous anthropogenic (human induced) interference with the climate system. The objectives of this conference are to advance the goals of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, including efforts to limit global warming, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and mobilize financing for these activities. The primary focus will be to finalize the first enhanced transparency framework, advance

negotiations on the carbon markets mechanism and establish a new collective quantified goal on finance, among other critical issues.

The Ministry successfully coordinated the Ministry's participation in the Eswatini International Trade fair, where all the department and parastatals exhibited showcasing their products and services.

In the period under review there were three cross transfers, 8 promotions, 1 retirement and the process of recruiting officers for the PMU (Project Manager, Community Officer, Environment, Legal, driver, secretary) where 6 posts were advertised. The Ministry received 3 new vehicles from CTA and 1 vehicle was replaced from the old fleet.

## **4 PARASTATALS PERFORMANCES**

### **4.1 ESWATINI TOURISM AUTHORITY**

Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) is a Public Enterprise established through the Tourism Authority Act of 2001. The organization's objectives are to:

- Develop the tourism sector as a national priority in an environmentally sustainable and culturally acceptable manner;
- Coordinate and facilitate the implementation of Government policies and strategies on tourism;
- Market Eswatini as a tourism destination through the provision of a platform for tourism industry stakeholders;
- Encourage, facilitate and promote local and foreign investment in the tourism industry
- Ensure the contribution of tourism to the social-economic development and continued improvement of the quality of life in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

ETA's functions are mainly informed by the National Tourism Policy 2019, National Development Strategy, and Strategic Road Map 2019-2023 and crystalized through the ETA Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 that guides the programmes and activities of the organization. The targets are to;

- Increase tourism receipts from E781 million in 2019 to at least E2 billion by 2027.
- Increase the average length of stay for tourists from 3 days to 5 days by 2027.
- Increase tourism receipts by 10% annually for the period from 2022 to 2027.

#### **4.1.1 QUARTERLY OVERVIEW**

International visitations to the Kingdom of Eswatini during the last quarter of the year (October - December 2024) period increased by a notable boost of 14.4%, bringing the total to 259 099 visits. This represents a gain of 32 531 visits compared to the quarter in 2023. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region remained the leading source for international visitors, with South Africa (160 207), Mozambique (40 539) and Zimbabwe (16 615) accounting for the topmost visitations in the region. This growth in visitor numbers was primarily driven by demand from key regional markets, including Africa (+16.4%) and the Americas (+20.3%). On the contrary, other long-haul regions registered declines during this period, with some performing better in one month than the other. The Middle East region underperformed by a significant 26.6%, while inbound from the Eurozone and Australasian region dropped by 1.8% and 3.4%, respectively during the period.

In October 2024, overseas travelers consumed fewer trips to Eswatini, marking a sharp contrast to the positive growth trend experienced in earlier months of the year. Eswatini's arrival figures show that arrivals fell by 12.6% year-on-year for the month of October, to register 75 243. Significant declines were noted from all world regions with the exception of strong showings from the Americas.

During the month of November 2024, the Kingdom welcomed a total of 72 685 international visitors, reflecting a 7.9% increase in international arrivals compared to the same period in 2023.



The rising costs of international travel deterred some European tourists, while some other key source markets held national elections during the month of October and November these comprising of USA, Mozambique and Botswana.

In the last month of 2024, the Kingdom welcomed a total of 111 171 international visitors, marking an impressive 40.5% increase in comparison to December 2023. This notable increase in numbers closed the year on a high note. Contributing to this increase in visitor numbers was the yearly hosted Incwala ceremony, school holidays and boosted incomes from bonuses, which provided travelers with greater flexibility for visitation during the festive period. Thus, these arrival figures were the highest of the year, followed by September (90 128 visitors) and January (84 708 visitors) and the highest since the hit of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, highlighting Eswatini's strong recovery and growing appeal as a premier travel destination.

#### **4.1.2 INSIDE THE REGIONS**

##### **▪ Africa**

Visitations from the region increased by a noticeable 16.4 percent rise, boosted by strong numbers from South Africa (160 207) and Mozambique (40 539). While a large portion of arrivals to Eswatini emanate from the two neighboring countries, Mozambique recorded an incline of 8.5% in arrivals, whilst South Africa noted a noteworthy surge of 13.0%. An eagerness to visit Eswatini was also noted from other African markets, these comprising of Malawi (+153.9%), Botswana (+108.1%), Lesotho (+89.8%), Kenya (+85.2%) and Zimbabwe (+64.3%).

##### **▪ Americas**

Visitor arrivals from the Americas region saw a solid and commendable 20.3% increase, driven by significant improvements from key markets in the region, particularly Brazil (+62.1%), Canada (+24.5%), and the USA (+17.2%). Remarkably, despite the national elections held in the USA in November 2024, the destination maintained steady tourism inflows, demonstrating resilience against political factors.

##### **▪ Middle East**

Leisure travel from the region experienced a considerable reduction (-26.6%) during the quarter, owing to the major declines experienced in October (-35.1%) and December (-29.6%). Israel, the main contributor to visitor numbers in the region, saw an acute 62.1% slump during this period. This sharp decline was largely influenced by the 15 months' travel ban enforced in October 2023, which despite being lifted, has led to fluctuating results in terms of recovery. Despite the latter development, a positive growth was noted in November with a remarkable 63.2% increase. This impressive monthly performance exceeds the positive growth figures recorded in February (+14.3%) and March (+1.1%) of the current year.

▪ **Australasia**

Visitations from Asia, Australia and The Pacific registered a decrease of 3.4%, with Pakistan and India, the main source markets in the region, recording declines of 20.4% and 1.6%, respectively. On a positive note, travel demand from South Korea (+34.4%), Australia (+28.5%), China (+6.9%), Taiwan (+6.8%) and Philippines (+2.3%) registered upsurges.

▪ **Europe**

European visitor arrivals to the Kingdom of Eswatini contrasted by a modest 1.8% during the three months review period. Demand from the region was weak, with arrivals from Germany (-14.7%), the Netherlands (-9.1%) and Belgium (-9.1%) all posting negative returns. The rising costs of international travel have been noted to dissuade European tourists from taking long-haul travel. Despite these challenges, travel from Italy (+23.2%), France (+10.1%) and the UK (+1.7%) posted positive results.

**4.1.3 Eswatini Tourism Statistics 2024 Arrivals by Country Residence**

<b>Inbound Tourism</b>	<b>OCTOBER-DECEMBER</b>			
<b>COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
<b>AFRICA</b>	<b>197 877</b>	<b>230 260</b>	<b>32 383</b>	<b>16,4%</b>
Botswana	903	1 879	976	108,1%
Kenya	440	815	375	85,2%
Lesotho	995	1 889	894	89,8%
Malawi	964	2 449	1 484	153,9%
Mozambique	37 364	40 539	3 175	8,5%
Nigeria	455	460	5	1,1%
RSA	141 779	160 207	18 428	13,0%
Tanzania	1 181	1 446	265	22,4%
Zambia	860	1 007	148	17,2%
Zimbabwe	10 115	16 615	6 501	64,3%
Other Africa	2 819	2 953	134	4,7%
<b>NORTH &amp; SOUTH AMERICA</b>	<b>3 632</b>	<b>4 369</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>20,3%</b>
Brazil	99	160	61	62,1%
Canada	1 151	1 433	282	24,5%
USA	2 264	2 592	328	14,5%
Other America	119	184	65	55,2%
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>-47</b>	<b>-26,6%</b>

Kuwait	0	1	1	-
Iran	19	24	5	25,7%
Israel	72	32	-40	-55,7%
Saudi Arabia	2	0	-2	-
UAE	2	3	1	-
Other Mid East	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	-11	-14,2%
<b>ASIA &amp; AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>5 664</b>	<b>5 473</b>	<b>-191</b>	<b>-3,4%</b>
Australia	228	293	65	28,5%
China	669	715	46	6,9%
India	1 896	1 867	-30	-1,6%
Pakistan	1 381	1 099	-282	-20,4%
Philippines	109	112	3	2,3%
South Korea	293	393	101	34,4%
Taiwan	273	291	19	6,8%
Other Asia	815	703	-111	-13,7%
<b>EUROPE</b>	<b>19 219</b>	<b>18 867</b>	<b>-352</b>	<b>-1,8%</b>
Belgium	1 127	1 024	-103	-9,1%
France	4 322	4 757	435	10,1%
Germany	3 665	3 127	-538	-14,7%
Italy	299	368	69	23,2%
Netherlands	4 538	4 123	-415	-9,1%
Norway	104	123	19	18,7%
Portugal	562	513	-49	-8,7%
Sweden	193	183	-10	-5,3%
Switzerland	599	515	-84	-14,1%
UK	1 795	1 825	31	1,7%
Other Europe	2 016	2 309	293	14,5%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>226 568</b>	<b>259 099</b>	<b>32 531</b>	<b>14,4%</b>

**Source:** ETA in collaboration with the Department of Immigration( Entry/Departure cards)

#### **4.1.4 MARKETING INITIATIVES**

During the reporting period, ETA participated in the following marketing activities:

##### **4.1.4.1 Trade and Consumer Shows**

The ETA attended the below local and regional marketing platforms to increase brand awareness and promote destination Eswatini as a preferred destination of choice in Africa.

##### **4.1.4.2 Local Exhibitions**

- **ISSA Conference**

The ETA attended the ISSA Technical Seminar held at Happy Valley Conference Centre. The ISSA Seminar that was hosted by the Eswatini National Provident Fund focused on preventing fraud, strengthening compliance and improving contribution collection. The ETA officers were invited to promote the Kingdom of Eswatini to all delegates that attended the Seminar. Country representatives in attendance were from Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and other African countries. We had a few guests coming through to our desk, enquiring about the things they could do close by. It was imperative to sensitize visitors to the beautiful Kingdom of Eswatini.

- **Makoti Festival**

The Makoti Festival, organized by New Life Entertainment in partnership with the Illa Penboy Foundation, aims to promote Eswatini culture and celebrate modern women. Whether married or unmarried, the festival embraces all women and young girls who aspire to be proud makotis in the future. This year's celebration took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 at Malkerns Country Club. The Makoti Festival celebrates the essence of tradition, unity, and love within the African community. Makoti, a term in several African cultures meaning "new bride" or "newlywed wife," symbolizes the spirit of new beginnings, cultural heritage, and the strength of family bonds. It is also an attempt to join hands to empower women and eradicate gender based violence (GBV). This festival serves as a platform to showcase the beauty of African traditions, from intricate ceremonies to colorful attire, vibrant music, and delectable cuisine. It's a celebration that not only honors the past but also embraces the present and looks towards the future with optimism and pride

- **Post Indaba Education**

The ETA hosted 8 Tour Operators for post Indaba Educational from the 17<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024. Some of the tour operators had travelled to Durban to attend Africa's Travel Indaba and some came from Johannesburg. The ETA partnered with Eswatini Air and Tourism Industry captains who offered complimentary accommodation and activities.

Below are the profiles of the Tour Operators that were hosted;

<i>Abacus Touristik</i>	250	Tour Operator based in Germany which specializes in selling tours to small groups of between 2-4 people.
<i>Worldia</i>	80 000	Worldia is a tour operator offering tailor-made holidays around the world. Their services include accommodation, air and ground transportation, car rentals, activities and suggested tours. We have two core services, a BtB service with over 4000 travel agency partners, and a BtC service with various brands and corporate partners
<i>Shadows of Africa</i>	600	Specializes in tailor making tours to ensure you get the perfect safari itinerary to your tastes and budget.
<i>African Ample Assistance</i>	116 000	AAA Travel (African Ample Assistance) is an independent Destination Management Company based in Cape Town – South Africa focusing purely on B2B model of operation.
<i>Thula Seats</i>	100 000	Thula Seats specialises in point to point shuttling for individuals and groups between the uniquely African-styled Kruger International Airport (KMIA), the Hoedspruit Airport and the lush sub-tropical farming town of Hazyview to private game reserves in the area. They also offer inter-reserve transfers between these reputable wildlife sanctuaries. These include the likes of Timbavati, Sabi Sands and Thornybush, to name a few. They offer affordable daily shuttle services between these three areas as well as tailormade, personalised tours for those wanting to experience true African bush exclusivity.
<i>ATC African Travel Concept</i>	10 000	They are luxury travel experts passionate about Southern Africa. They are intimately familiar with the top sites to see, the luxury accommodation available and use our inimitable knowledge to create bespoke vacations that create lifelong memories.
<i>Private Safaris</i>	10 000	They are your destination specialists for Southern Africa. They create tailor-made itineraries for FIT, groups & MICE travellers. They manage

		all manner of ground handling and logistics, from touch down to departure. Their offices are in Capetown, and Namibia – Windhoek.
<i>Zilko Tours &amp; Travel</i>	2000	They are an acknowledged experts in domestic & international travel taking its clients to all points of the compass in style and comfort. The company ensures that all its customers are given the best personalised & unappalled professional service offering over 50 holidays to more than 25 countries in only the beginning for us.

**Tourist sites visited during the tour;**

<i>Day 1</i>	Happy Valley Hotel	Accommodation provided by Happy Valley Hotel on B&B
<i>Day 2</i>	Mantenga Lodge, PiggsPeak Hotel, Phophonyane Lodge & Nature Reserve, Ngwenya Glass Factory	Mantenga Lodge Complimentary stay, PiggsPeak Hotel offered lunch and Phophonyane Lodge waived entry to the nature reserve and short hike
<i>Day 3</i>	Lobamba Walk, half-day trip, Foresters Arm's	Allout Africa sponsored a guided Lobamba Walk, Time Travel sponsored with a half day tour and forester's Arms with accommodation.
<i>Day 4</i>	Swazi Candles, Wide Horizon Mount Retreat, Old Stone Church Museum, Manzini Market, The George Hotel	Wide Horizon Mount Retreat sponsored with a Sculpture Trail hike, free entry to the Old Stone Church Museum and The George hotel gave a complimentary stay.
<i>Day 5</i>	Hlane Royal National Park, KaMsholo Bushveld Safaris	Complimentary rhino drive by Hlane Royal National Park and complimentary stay by KaMsholo Bushveld Safaris.

- **Bushfire Festival**

The MTN Bushfire Festival is one of Africa's largest multicultural gatherings, illuminating the transformational power of the arts through the call to action for positive social and environmental change, **#BRINGYOURFIRE**. A diverse, inclusive and family-friendly music and arts festival set in a fantasy-scape of the imagination. The festival attracts participants from all over Africa and the world and it was the biggest Bushfire event that had been held in the history of Bushfire.

The ETA attended the MTN Bushfire Festival 2024 and exhibited on a 7m x 7m exhibition space. We created a mini Swati Village and partnered with Sibebe Cultural Troupe to perform during the Festival. The ETA was in attendance for information dissemination purposes and to offer packages to tourists who attended the festival. The ETA stand became a hive of activity with performances the Cultural Troupe. Additionally, the ETA ran a competition on the stand wherein visitors who came to the stand were asked a few questions about Eswatini, those who answered correctly stood a chance to win Eswatini branded merchandise. Various promotional materials such as the Explorer Maps, Eswatini Discovery were distributed during the festival.

The Tourism Hub was a hive of activity with Tourism Organizations who exhibited during the festival such as Durban Tourism, KwaZulu Natal Tourism, Ushaka Marine, Mpumalanga Tourism, Summerfield Resort, Mountain View Hotel and Happy Valley Hotel.

- **Eswatini International Trade Fair**

The Eswatini Tourism Authority Exhibited at the Eswatini International Trade Fair. The Trade Fair presented an opportunity for public enterprises, the private sector as well as the general public to showcase their wares and attracts exhibitors from outside the country. The Trade Fair takes place annually on the last week of August over a period of 10 days and always coincides with the Annual Reed Dance Ceremony. The show attracted over 20 000 visitors to the Mavuso Exhibition and Trade Center in Manzini with a number of SMMEs, Government Parastatals and other companies. There were exhibitors coming from the region such as Lesotho, Zambia, Botswana to name a few. This year the Trade Fair was officially opened by His Majesty the King Mswati III as well as Emakhosikati, Emazinyane, Cabinet Ministers and the public at large. The ETA had an 18sqm stand which was decorated with Swati themed pictures depicting destination Eswatini ranging from Culture to Wildlife, Cuisine, Scenery, Landscape, Accommodation, Nature Reserves, and Activities Themes etc. The ETA attended the show for the purposes of information dissemination purposes as well as to encourage and promote domestic tourism within the Kingdom.

- **Umhlanga Reed Dance 2024**

Umhlanga Reed Dance, a symbol of Eswatini culture and identity, is a traditional ceremony held in August or September, when thousands of unmarried Swati girls dance before His Majesty the King. The dance is a celebration of Swazi culture, heritage and womanhood. This event has over the years drawn a number of visitors who flock to Ludzidzini Royal Residence to witness this iconic scene. The number of spectators who witness the Umhlanga Reed Dance annually varies, but it is estimated to be around 100,000 people. The dance was held over a period of eight days, and the number of spectators tends to increase on the final day, which is known as the main day. The official Umhlanga Reed Dance is on 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024.

- **Durban Ricksha Bus City Tours**

The Eswatini Tourism Authority welcomed Durban Tourism, KwaZulu Natal Tourism and Ushaka Marine World officials into the country at Lavumisa border post. Tourism KwaZulu-Natal in partnership with Durban Tourism and UShaka Marine World, in partnership with Eswatini Tourism promoted Durban-KwaZulu-Natal as a holiday destination at this year's MTN Bushfire Music Festival in Malkerns Valley, Eswatini. Durban's famous double-decker bus- 'The Durban Rickshaw Bus', travelled through Eswatini where it visited three of the country's cities. The tour around the cities started with a meet and greet with the officials from the different Municipalities; namely Mbabane Municipal Council, Ezulwini Town Board and Manzini Municipality. This gave local stakeholders a chance to ride on the famous Ricksha bus, as they toured Mbabane, Ezulwini and Manzini on Friday.

- **Eswatini Career Expo**

The Eswatini Tourism Authority took part in Expo held at Mavuso Trade Centre in Manzini. The Eswatini Career Expo is a national event that addresses entrepreneurial skills and the employment information gap, in particular between the in, and out-of-school, as well as the marginalized youth as they prepare to explore their career options and the possible opportunities available to them in the job market. Hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Trade (MCIT), Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MICT), Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs (MSCY), the Career Expo is one of the most important events in the Kingdom of Eswatini as it seeks to connect potential employees, employers and funders, as well as equip the next era of businessmen and businesswomen. Our objective as ETA is to educate and encourage the young people on the different career paths they can venture into in the Tourism Industry.



- **Ministry of Labour and Social Security Career Fair**

The Ministry of Labour and Social Security hosted series of career expos in all regions of the Kingdom. The Eswatini National Career Expos commenced at King Sobhuza II Stadium in Nhlanguano where the youth and school-attending pupils were in attendance to engage with field experts and explore the various career paths they may undertake for employability. The youth were also educated on entrepreneurial paths available. The career expos were hosted in KaLanga Technical Centre (Siteki), Mavuso Trade Centre (Manzini), Mankayane Town Council Sports Ground, Killarney Stadium (Piggs Peak) and Prince of Wales Stadium (Mbabane). ETA was part of the Manzini and Mbabane hosted career expos.

- **Waterford Kamhlaba Career Fair**

This event is referred to as a Waterford Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) project, organised by IB2 students and sponsored by Old Mutual Eswatini. The career expo brings together high school students and young people from around Eswatini with the objective of assisting them in accessing career information from a number of institutions of higher learning, companies or organisations so that they are able to choose their career path from an informed position. The career expo has grown in size over the years and numerous students participate in the event in which many organizations come to exhibit.

- **Lubombo Central High School Visit**

ETA had young visitors from Lubombo Central High School. The 30 Geography pupils were on an excursion and made a request for a session at the ETA Headquarter on what the tourism industry had to offer for school leavers. The pupils were welcomed by the Tourism Information Office, and insights were shared on ETA's role in tourism, ETA's integrated departmental role in marketing the Kingdom as a preferred destination and tourism's role to the country's GDP. The aim was to paint a clear picture of a young person's role in pursuing a tourism related career, from research, entrepreneurial, to marketing and even partaking in community-based tourism initiatives.

- **Umhlanga Reed Dance 2024 International Media hostings**

The Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) has a mandate of promoting Destination Eswatini locally, regionally and internationally. As part of the marketing activities outlined in ETA's Marketing Strategy, ETA hosts members of the international media with the aim of educating, informing and also showcasing what Destination Eswatini has to offer to the world.

The aim of the international media familiarization trip is to ensure that they experience the country firsthand and write about their own experiences. This was a perfect time to host the media since the month of September is Eswatini's tourism peak season and there were many activities and

events such as the Umhlanga Reed Dance, International Trade Fair, the Swazi Rally to name a few that take place.

- **The Swazi Rally 30<sup>th</sup> August**

Swazi Rally is an annual motor biking event which draws crowds of bikers from all over the continent. The rally was founded in 1993 with the vision of creating a seamless event for the biking community of Southern Africa. It is one of the oldest and biggest rallies in Eswatini and has made quite a name for itself. The event which was first held at the Somhlolo National Stadium with just a few hundred bikers, has grown tremendously over years attracting bikers and non-bikers alike. Each year over 10,000 bikers make the much-anticipated pilgrimage to Eswatini to engage in a community built on brotherhood and a longstanding history of giving back. This year's Swazi Rally's was packed with exciting activities including live music performances, car spinning shows and camping. Throngs of motorcycle enthusiasts from Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and around the world had a fun-filled weekend with biker friends and made new long-lasting relationships. The celebration of 31 years of existence, took the rally to greater heights with its philanthropic efforts by going beyond the 3-day event. The ETA exhibited with a 3mx3m gazebo with the aim of disseminating information on what Eswatini has to offer to the returning and new bikers. Most bikers were returning tourists and the ones who were attending for the first time were so excited to be a part of the biker's event which attracted throngs of tourists.

- **Festive Season Campaign**

This was a half day outdoor event that was held at Olive Country Lodge in Kholwane. The event was graced by the Eswatini Tourism CEO-Vusi Dlamini together with ETA staff and invited guests which were sponsors (Big Game Parks, Eswatini Secrets, Tribe Studio, and Olive Country Lodge amongst others), HOTEAS, Member of Parliament and Indlakhulu and the Ministry of Tourism – Tourism Department. The launch unveiled its #SummerSplash and #PholaEswatini, then after the speeches a site inspection was made, visiting of exhibition stands and lunch was served at the lodge.

The campaign objectives manifested through the call to action, *“Eswatini Summer Splash/Eswatini Has More”*. Eswatini invited Emaswati to experience a vibrant festive season filled with color, water sports, a commitment to environmental cleanliness and responsible travel. By combining these elements, the Eswatini Summer Splash campaign effectively promoted the country as a vibrant and exciting destination for the festive season, while also raising awareness about water sports and environmental conservation. This *“Eswatini Summer Splash/Eswatini Has More”* call to action doubled up as the official campaign name and further constituted the official festive season campaign hashtag. For domestic tourism focus of the campaign, the campaign also adopted the hashtag, *#PholaEswatini*. Radio and Television adverts flighted on targeted radio stations whose listenership complement Eswatini's source markets and target audience. Targeted areas included South Africa- Mpumalanga, Gauteng and KZN (Ligwalagwala FM, Ukhozi FM and Radio 2000) and local media stations (EBIS, VOC, Eswatini TV and Movie Zone).

- **Mbabane Fun Day**

The Mbabane Fun Day and Half-Marathon is an annual event which aimed at providing a platform for all participants to compete and partake in recreational activities provided on the Day. It also allowed participants to mingle and share ideas while enjoying the beautiful scenery and landscapes of Mbabane. The Half-Marathon attracted so many participants who eagerly ran the race. There were 3 categories under the race, namely 5km, 10km, 21km and later a boot camp activity. During the day there was entertainment and activities such as: soccer, fashion show, kiddie's corner, performances and many more. The ETA officers working on the day provided the visitors with general information, asked a few questions and gave them promotional material. The event went quite well and it was spectacular compared to last year's event.

- **Festive Season Road Safety Awareness Launch**

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport launched the Festive season safety campaign at the Mbabane Bus Rank. The campaign was launched to inform drivers about the rules of the road and the importance of good choices, wearing seatbelts, not texting while driving and avoiding alcohol or medications that affect awareness and to enforce traffic laws and provide a visible police presence to deter unsafe driving behavior. As Eswatini tourism Authority our aim was to do a swift promotion about the Kingdom Eswatini and to give out promotional material and encourage Emaswati to visit their own country. On the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December we were part of the road safety campaign activations at Nhlanguano and Lonhlupheko respectively.

- **The Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs Festive Season Address**

The Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honorable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane delivered her festive season message today at Malolotja Nature Reserve. The event also saw the presence of the ETA CEO, Mr. Vusie Dlamini, Eswatini National Trust Commission Executive, management and staff and various tourism stakeholders. The Honorable Minister emphasized on the importance of responsible tourism and environmental conservation. The Minister highlighted Eswatini's commitment to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for tourists, urging visitors to adhere to local laws and regulations, particularly those regarding road safety. The festive season message also focused on the need to protect Eswatini's natural resources and wildlife. The Eswatini Destination visitors were encouraged to respect the environment, minimize their impact and support sustainable tourism initiatives. The Honorable Minister also had a guided tour of the nature reserve. She then extended her best wishes to Emaswati tourist alike for a peaceful and joyous festive season, urging everyone to prioritize safety, peace and environmental consciousness.

- **Incwala Main Day**

The Minister for Tourism & Environmental Affairs Honorable Jane Mkhonta-Simelane, along with the ETA CEO Vusie Dlamini and some members of parliament welcomed tourists from various countries who attended the Incwala Ceremony. ETA and Eswatini National Trust Commission staff members also oriented the tourists on the event, assisting with information on places to visit in the Kingdom and helping with the Eswatini cultural attire at the tourism information center situated at the Ludzidzini Royal Residence. Clad in traditional regalia, Emaswati and visitors came through in their numbers to partake in the colorful event.

- **World Tourism Month**

On the World Tourism weekend, the ETA Team set out and explored the hidden wonders of Khabane Cave! The walk was an active collaborative effort by ENTC and the Rotary Club of Matsapha. Khabane Cave is a designated national monument site that holds great significance in the history and culture of Eswatini. It is intricately linked to the migration of the Dlamini clan to present-day Eswatini, making it an essential part of our cultural heritage. The cave, situated within the Mlawula Nature Reserve, is nestled in the picturesque Lubombo Mountains, the cave is a treasure trove of historical and cultural importance, with evidence of human occupation dating back to the Middle Stone Age.

Beyond its cultural and heritage value, the Khabane Cave is a breath-taking natural wonder, boasting stunning rock formations and offering panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. It has the potential to become a premier tourist destination, where visitors can marvel at its beauty and immerse themselves in the rich history and culture of Eswatini. The cave is a valuable resource in the region, showcasing unique plant species and natural rock formations that make it ideal for eco-tourism. Currently, access to the cave is limited to hiking trails, adding to its allure as a hidden gem waiting to be explored. ETA staff members partook in the two-day event which included an overnight camp and a 6km, 12km and 21km options walk through the caves.

#### **4.1.4.3 Regional and International Shows**

- **Fikani Show- Mozambique**

Fikani is an annual event to promote tourism in the region and in the world. It involves travel sector professionals from all over the world. The four-day event allows visitors to discover the diverse tourist offerings of African countries from cultural, historical and natural destinations to leisure, adventure and business options. The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Ferias International de Turismo was officially opened in Maputo bringing together over 200 exhibitors including national, provincial and international participants on the The Opening and Triland stand was graced by the president of Republic of Mozambique His Excellency Filipe Nyusi, South African National Minister for Tourism Honourable Patricia de Lille, Mozambique Prime Minister His Excellency Adriano Alfons Malelane, Mozambique Minister of Culture and Tourism Her Excellency Eldevina Materula and her vice Minister His Excellency Mr Fredson Bacar and the public at large. The Expo

attracted 34 exhibitors, 14 hosted buyers and 11 media. In the past two years, the event has created awareness about many tourism products and attractions that are available for both leisure and business visitors. All event partners and stakeholders have benefited from the media publicity received through coverage of the event and other platforms. The Eswatini Tourism Authority was represented by two Information officers Mbali Tsabedze and Phumelele Kunene together with the Chief Executive Officer Mr Vusi Dlamini. The Acting Product Development Manager was also present with representative from Shewula Mountain Camp and Mhlumeni Bush Camp.

The show is targeted at an industry and people involved or interested in tourism, therefore offer a great way to advertise to a target market and awareness. It is open to a large and a diverse range of audiences. This provides Eswatini tourism in collaboration with Mpumalanga and Mozambique with a platform to promote the three countries product and services to a broader group that may have little or no knowledge of the countries, products and services. It also provides the ETA with an opportunity for market testing to gain industry or general opinion about our offering. Being involved in Fikani provides the ETA with opportunities to branch out to business-to-business

- **WTM Africa Show- Cape Town South Africa**

World Travel Market (WTM) Africa is considered as one of the leading global events for the travel industry. Launched in 2014, WTM Africa offers the tourism industry within the Sub Sahara Africa region the benefits and opportunities of access to global industry expertise and travel professionals. Visitors can gather information about the most exciting and mind-refreshing tourist spots and can establish contacts with various travel agencies from all across the world. WTM Africa attracted over 100 exhibitors, 176 speakers, 9503 pre-scheduled meetings and had more than 80 hours of content. There were also various stages wherein content was shared across the three days such as the Global Stage, Future Theatre, Inspire Theatre, Spotlight Theatre and Brain Box.

The Eswatini Tourism Authority attended the show alongside nine (9) Industry players such as Big Game Parks, Forester's Arms Hotel, MTN Bushfire Festival, Mantenga Lodge, Piggs Peak Hotel, Eswatini Air, Nkonyeni Golf Estate and Lodge, The Royal Villas Hotel and Happy Valley Hotel and Casino in promoting Eswatini as a destination of choice to be visited in Africa. The highlight was on the last day when the MTN Bushfire Festival was launched at the Eswatini stand to promote and encourage the travel professionals to also make use of Eswatini Air as a means of transport to Eswatini.

The Eswatini destination literature was used to provide information and paint a better picture of the destination to all stand visitors. Each visitor was given Eswatini Explorer Map and Industry brochures throughout the 3 days of the show. Eswatini Discovery QR code, Eswatini videos were also used to promote the destination during the show.

- **Tourism Investment Forum Africa (TIFA)**

The WTM Africa Ministerial Roundtable 2024 provided a truly practical platform for tourism Ministers, sector leaders and top thinkers to share best practices and explore investment opportunities. Eswatini was represented by the Hon. Minister for Tourism and Environmental Affairs Jane Mkhonta-Simelane. TIFA aimed to promote tourism and related sectors investment, finance solutions and opportunities between African countries and the rest of the World. As the investment conference predicated on the philosophy of “a global platform for local action”.

TIFA aimed to position and profile host locations and other participating African destinations as attractive investment locations and tourism destinations, thereby contributing to the achievement of their economic development and growth ambitions. By creating a platform for access to capital, networks and exchange of insights, the forum also aimed to facilitate the development of start-ups and growth of emerging and established businesses in the tourism and related sectors.

- **Africa’s Travel Indaba-Durban South Africa**

Destination marketing is a proven driver of economic development and is particularly important due to the unique characteristics of the tourism sector and the global travel market. The mission of Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA) is to encourage increased international and regional visitation to the Kingdom of Eswatini and to grow the Kingdom’s share of the global travel market. The ETA is a public-enterprise marketing entity that was created in 2001 to work in close partnership with the travel industry to maximize the economic and social benefits of travel in communities around the country. Through its call-to-action "Chose Eswatini," the ETA encourages and inspire travelers to choose and explore Eswatini’s boundless possibilities.

Through its brand encapsulated in “Eswatini, A royal experience,” the brand was designed to capture the spirit of Emaswati hospitality and leisure through creating a fresh new brand identity that welcomes the world to come experience the boundless possibilities in the Kingdom of Eswatini. Indaba is one of the largest tourism marketing events on the African calendar and one of the top three ‘must visit’ events of its kind in the global calendar. Africa’s Travel Indaba 2024 was rebranded to fully reflect the ownership of the trade show by the entire African travel industry and re-emphasize South Africa’s commitment to furthering tourism and economic development in the continent. Minister of Tourism Patricia de Lille officially opened the trade floor on the 14th of May 2024, effectively putting into motion no less than twenty for thousand (24, 000) meetings between exhibitors and buyers. Additionally, the event featured over one thousand two hundred (1,200) exhibitors who displayed an impressive array of African tourism products and experiences from 26 countries.

Eswatini Tourism Authority has a long-term strategy for using the trade and consumer shows as a marketing platform. These shows provide access to trade, such as tour operators and marketing agencies which act as mediators between the destination and source markets in selling and brokering holiday deals. The value sum of the shows is that it does not only enable the ETA to access tourists on behalf of the Kingdom's tourism industry, but it also gives the organization an opportunity to see and learn what its competition is doing and figure out the latest trends in tourism marketing and development and also strengthen relationships with existing partners and forge new partnerships to work in the promotion of the destination. Eswatini Tourism Authority together with the Ministry, media and 18 participants attended the show, these included; Foresters Arms Hotel, Mountain View Hotel, Mantenga Lodge, Big Game Parks, The George Hotel, Eswatini Air, Royal Villas Hotel, Mantenga Lodge, Bushfire, SibaneSami Hotel, Hilton Garden Inn, All out Africa, Wide Horizon Mountain Retreat, Happy Valley Hotel, All Out Africa and Nkonyeni Golf Lodge, Eswatini National Trust Commission, Global Village Guest House and Sibebe Resort.

- **Spotlight Maputo**

The Spotlight on Africa Travel Expo has been held in Mozambique for 14 years now. It is a show that brings corporates, travel agencies, tour operators and product owners from Mpumalanga, Mozambique and Eswatini to the Radisson Blu Hotel in Maputo for a speed-networking session. Product owners have a chance to talk directly with travel agents, corporates and tour operators and thereby create those relationships that will see their products being consumed by these. Mozambique has been one of the fastest developing countries in Africa with many large industrial and infrastructure projects on the go including oil, gas and mineral explorations. Maputo remains a hive of commercial, diplomatic and development activity generating considerable corporate and leisure travel. Several airlines fly into Maputo; Airlink , SAA, LAM, Kenya Airways, Qatar, Ethiopian, TAP, TAAG . Mozambique Airlines (a subsidiary of Ethiopian Airlines) and Fastjet have started operating regular daily flights to other cities in Mozambique and this will considerably benefit leisure and business travel within the country.

- **Mpumalanga Tourism Expo**

The Mpumalanga Tourism Expo is an annual tourism exhibition event usually held in September in the picturesque Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. This event serves as a platform to fervently promote domestic tourism, with a particular focus on celebrating Tourism Month and fostering regional integration. The tourism expo was initiated in 2021 at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The exhibition served as a platform for promoting various tourism products and services. Additionally, the event offered an opportunity for provincial tourism students to engage with exhibitors, enhancing their understanding of tourism and providing a firsthand experience of 'tourism in action'.

- **Triland Excursion**

Triland is a tourism initiative between the Governments of Eswatini, Mozambique and South Africa-Mpumalanga Province that seeks to promote joint cooperation on the positioning of Triland as a preferred tourism, trade and investment destination. This collaboration was cemented through signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA), Mozambique Tourism Authority (INATUR) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Board (MTPA) during Africa's Travel Indaba in May 2022.

- **World Travel Market London**

World Travel Market is a leading tourism, travel and exhibition show which attracts thousands of travel tourism professionals. The organisers of WTM published a figure of over 46,000 participants for the show, which is now firmly established as a 3-day show, having previously been over 4 days. That figure is only slightly up on last year after a big jump between 2022 and 2023. It is getting back towards the 50,000 achieved in 2019.

Pre-show efforts put into publicizing Eswatini's presence at WTM and fixing appointments yielded great dividends this year. We started the show with 39 appointments (trade, media and others), fixed across the 3 days. With most people avoiding making appointments on the Wednesday afternoon, this represented an almost completely full diary. Last year we started with 30, which was itself higher than any previous year.

We had meetings throughout the duration of the show and we completed 40 meetings on the Eswatini stand across the 3 days of the show, of which 25 were trade buyers. These are the most ever achieved for Eswatini at WTM.

#### **4.1.5 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT**

The Tourism Authority (ETA) has successfully utilized print and radio channels to promote tourism products and community-based tourism establishments (CBTEs). Advertisements in national and regional newspapers showcasing tourism products, including community-based offerings. Regularly scheduled programs spotlighting CBTEs, emphasizing their contribution to sustainable tourism.

The following benefits were achieved through this intervention:

- **Increased Exposure:** the publication is distributed across six border posts: Mahamba, Ngwenya, Matsamo, Mhlumeni, Lomasha, and Mananga, providing widespread visibility for community-based tourism products.
- **Extended Advertising:** Complimentary advertisements, including tourism products and community establishments content and images, were secured for placement in The Times of Eswatini, What's Happening in Eswatini and ETA Eswatini Observer Column
- **Supplementary Promotions:** Promotional supplements were featured in the Sunday Times edition, extending the campaign's reach



#### **4.1.5.1 Development of Community Based tourism activities**

The quarter under review, ETA successfully facilitated the restoration of Mhlumeni Tented Camp. This critical intervention followed significant damage caused by strong winds in October 2024. An assessment conducted by ETA management in November 2024 identified extensive damage to the tented structures, necessitating urgent repairs to restore the facility to full functionality. Mbuluzi Game Reserve provided structural repair assistance as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The restoration was completed, and the camp re-opened to visitors on November 20, 2024. Mhlumeni Tented Camp has resumed operations.

#### **4.1.5.2 Matsamo Recreational Park – Operational Challenges and Resolution Efforts**

ETA facilitated discussions to address operational challenges affecting the Matsamo Community Restaurant. The restaurant, managed under a lease agreement between the Matsamo Trust and Bithu Group of Companies, faced delays and financial concerns impacting its functionality. ETA will oversee the drafting and approval of the revised lease agreement. Continued guidance will be provided to the Matsamo Community Restaurant to ensure operations resume before the end of March 2025.

#### **4.1.5.3 Industry Training and Capacity Building**

The Product Development Department was tasked with facilitating customer care training for thirty-five (35) Eswatini Royal Police traffic officers. The training was successfully conducted, equipping participants with enhanced customer care skills to improve their engagement with the public, contributing to a positive tourism experience.

#### **4.1.5.4 Mapping and Declaration of National Monuments in Eswatini**

The Department of Tourism, Gaming, and Wildlife, in collaboration with the Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC), Eswatini Tourism Authority (ETA), Eswatini Environmental Authority (EEA), and the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), is advancing efforts to map and declare national monuments across the country. These monuments are expected to attract both domestic and international tourists with a keen interest in heritage, driving economic growth, fostering job creation, and attracting foreign investment

### **4.1.6 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE**

#### **4.1.6.1 Income and Expenditure**

Eswatini Tourism Authority received a subvention allocation of E18 741 020 of which E15 617 517 has been received from the Government of Eswatini for the period ending January 2025. An amount of E2 538 156 was collected from bed levies during the reporting period. Other income received was E404 429 being interest and private participation in fairs. The total expenditure for period up to January 2025 is E14 150 648. Commitments made for the remaining two months (February and March) include participation in Caravan show, Meetings Africa, ITB Berlin Easter campaign roll out, videography and photography services, billboards at point of entry, training of community board of trustees and customer care or front-line officers.

**Table 5: Revenue and Expenditure**

	E
REVENUE	18 560 102
LESS OPERATING EXPENSES:	
Advertising & promotions	241 301
Board fees	254 778
Bank charges	47 455
Electricity & water	61 487
Corporate strategy development	0
Computer expenses	68 646
Corporate Affairs	247 712
Insurance	91 804
International Representation	805 442
Internet and communication	253 781
Motor vehicle expenses	415 641
Printing & stationery	96 319
Repairs and maintenance	
Recruitment	135 392
Product Development	292 331
Rent	1 063 761
Salaries & wages	7 139 632
Staff welfare	205 660
Telephone, internet and postage	53 727
Trade shows	760 585
Marketing collateral	782 729
Triland excursion	308 034
Research survey	234 281
Training	188 743

Travelling & subsistence allowance	228 815
Loss on exchange rate	172 592
Total expenditure	
Surplus	4 409 454

## **4.2 ESWATINI NATIONAL TRUST COMMISSION.**

The Eswatini National Trust Commission (ENTC) is a parastatal responsible for the conservation of the Kingdom of Eswatini's natural and cultural heritage as mandated through the Eswatini National Trust Commission Act No. 9 of 1972 (as amended by the King's Order-in-Council No.22 of 1973).

The ENTC carries out its mandate through proclamation and management of national parks and reserves, national museums and monuments. The organization also has mandated responsibility for the National Environment Education Programme. Ecotourism is an important component of the ENTC's function under which the organization generates revenue through its tourism and leisure facilities.

The Organization comprises four key departments: The Department of National Parks and Nature Conservation, The Department of Cultural Heritage, the Department of Business Development and the Department of Administration and Finance.

### **4.2.1 NATURE CONSERVATION**

For the attainment of the strategic objectives, the following activities were undertaken;

#### **4.2.1.1 Law Enforcement**

There were 640 patrols undertaken within the three (3) ENTC managed nature reserves; Malolotja, Mlawula and Mantenga Nature Reserve resulting in about 91% average coverage. The major threats posed by poachers in all the parks included; Poaching, Trespassing, Illegal fishing, and Problem animal control.

#### **4.2.1.2 Ecological Research and Monitoring**

- **Malolotja Nature Reserve.**

The surveillance and monitoring with the Spatial Monitoring Reporting Tool (SMART) of game population species numbers indicated a continued increase in common game species populations with improved distribution, sightings within the PA.

- **Mlawula Nature Reserve**

The game population numbers showed an increase in terms of sightings recorded by the SMART law enforcement system. Excellent game visibility especially in the bush encroached control areas, Impala / Aepyceros melampus, Chacma Baboons/ Papio hamadryas, and Blue Wildebeests/ Chonochaetes gnou. Other interesting game; Samango monkeys, Klipspringers, and Side-striped jackals.

- **Mantenga Nature Reserve**

The game population species numbers showed a slight increase as per the patrol efforts and monitoring programme. The overall SMART observations record sightings of small increases in population numbers as follows; Velvet monkey, Chacma Baboon, Nyala –and Red duiker).

- **Community Outreach and Environmental Programme**

Ten (10) Community and stakeholder engagements (ENTC Parks, namely Malolotja and Mlawula PAs, the TFCA Programme, Man and Biosphere Programme), The Imvelo Yakitsi Radio programme developed and published twelve (12) programmes, Natural Resources use and Access Permits (The Malolotja, Mlawula and Mantenga Nature Reserves collectively issued 193 permits to 647 holders/ community members).

#### **4.2.1.3 National Parks Projects**

- **Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**

Early Action Support (EAS) Project on the Rapid Review of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework. During this reporting period, the project achieved validation of the 23 Biodiversity Plan targets alignment to the Eswatini NBSAP 2. The monitoring and action of the targets was also reviewed as yet to be finalized in a stakeholder validation workshop. Components 3 (Policy Review) and 4 (Biodiversity Finance) are under implementation following engagement of the consultants.

- **GEF- Mbuluzi Restoration of Ecosystems, Integrated Natural Resource Management and Promotion of SLM in the River Basin of Eswatini**

Project goal is to improve food security and natural resource management in the Mbuluzi landscape and contribute to rural livelihoods, national, regional, and global environmental benefits. The project objective is to enhance the conservation of an eco-resilient and highly productive Mbuluzi River landscape and effectively manage protected areas that offer critical ecosystem goods and services. Community engagements were done under the “Training of Trainers” project to prepare them for the start of the project in particular Nkhaba, Luve Mbelebeleni, Shewula and Lomahasha communities. Progress activities were stalled due to audit processes to support the release of funds.

#### **4.2.1.4 Cultural Heritage**

The various sections under the Cultural Heritage Department undertook the under listed activities;

- **Educational Programme**

The National Museum Education Section attended to ten primary schools and nine pre-schools who came for educational tours during this quarter. Three schools were visited under the Culture

schools' syllabus outreach programme. This quarter the King Sobhuza II Park received 15 schools that visited the park for educational tours.

- **Research and Documentation**

The ENTC undertook an initiative to document cultural ceremonies, the first being Umtsimba in the four regions of the Kingdom. Umtsimba ceremonies were captured in the Hhohho and Manzini region for preservation and updating the videos footages in the Museum permanent exhibition. Documentation in the form of pictures of the Umhlanga and Incwala ceremonies were done both at Ludzidzini and Mbangweni Royal Residences. The Ndinda and Ngculwini communities were visited for an initiation of the Emakhandzambili Clan Cluster Recording Project.

- **National Monuments**

The ENTC continued the mapping of declared National Monuments and other heritage sites in the Kingdom using the epicollect app. A total of 45 sites have been added in the app since the exercise was initiated. These sites include; the Evangelical Church at Bethel between Mhlosheni and Sihlutse, the Mhlosheni Evangelical Church, the Mahamba Church National Monument, Nhlangano National Monument, Little Flower Chapel, Manzini Cathedral and St George's Anglican Church. Several Rock Art sites were identified in various locations in the Kingdom. These include; Lubuyane and Zabeni under the Nkhamba Chiefdom, and Mzaceni. The ENTC held a meeting with the local Chief's Council (Bandlancane) of eKuthuleni Umphakatsi, Bucopho and the Member of Parliament in the Mangcongco Inkhundla, Make Dlamini on the protection of the Sandlane Rock Art site.

- **San-Bushman Display**

Funding for the completion of the San-Bushman Display at the National Museum was received from the Federal Republic of Germany Embassy in Pretoria. This display will be launched in March 2025.

- **Public Awareness on Culture**

The ENTC displayed temporal exhibitions at National Incwala Ceremony at the Ludzidzini Royal Residence and Mbabane Day Commemoration at the Prince of Wales Stadium to promote cultural heritage preservation and to market the ENTC's products to the public.

- **Planet Africa Exhibition**

The ENTC and German Archaeological Institute (DAI), signed a contract for the Planet Africa exhibition on African archaeology. The National Museum has been selected to house the exhibition which will be showcased in four other African countries; Mozambique, Kenya, Morocco and Ghana.

- **UNESCO Memory of the World**

The ENTC has initiated the creation of an international inventory of cultural property after discovering 174 artefacts at the Ethnological Museum in Berlin, Germany from the Kingdom of

Eswatini from as early as 1888. Some artefacts were located through a network of museum professionals at the Pitt Rivers Museum and British Museum in the United Kingdom. The ENTC is currently conducting research to identify more museums possessing some cultural objects from Eswatini in their storages. A national legislation on restitutions and repatriations currently does not exist in the Kingdom, thus the ENTC will be initiating a process of developing it based on the UNESCO model law from April 2025 after a comprehensive mapping of all national stakeholders to be involved.

- **Mkhuzweni Rock Art Community Project**

Community guides have been trained in Bushman rock art and a ten-page reference booklet with facts and figures has been produced. In November fencing of the site was completed with two locked gates. The project opened 24 December 2024 when road signs were erected.

### **Philani Maswati Partnership**

The ENTC has partnered with Philani Maswati Charity organization on several cultural preservation initiatives. The first project is the development of the Lunkuntu Caves into a tourist attraction for the benefit of the community. The ENTC, Lutfo Dlamini (Philani Maswati), Lubombo MP Futhi Ngcamphalala, the Senator Chief Mvimbi Matse visited the site. The caves have a great potential in terms of development of tourist activities.

### **4.2.3 HUMAN RESOURCES.**

The ENTC employee register currently reflects a work force of 151 employees' permanent staff and on fixed term contracts. Critical positions filled during the year are: Human Resources & Administration Manager; Business Development & Marketing Manager; Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

The organization procured and deployed a Human Resources Information System, a strategic move to improve people manage processes and to manage revenue leakages. The institution also engaged short-term engagement of graduate trainees in different ENTC departments that enabled timely targets achievement and creating a talent pool.

### **4.2.5 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE**

The ENTC has managed to generate a total revenue of E 28,569,604 from all the facilities which include Nature Conservation, Cultural Heritage and the Business Units. An amount of E 17,420,993 was received from the Government as a subvention. Total expenditure in the quarter under review amounts to E 21,735,698 including the capital project expenses. To note, in the quarter under review the Commission has liabilities with suppliers amounted to E1.4million. Major debt is with EPTC amounting to E1.07million, the balance E0.39millin relates to other few creditors. The Institution is paying E50 000 per month towards the EPTC debt and we are engaged with the other suppliers about the balance due to them.

**Table 6: Revenue and Expenditure**

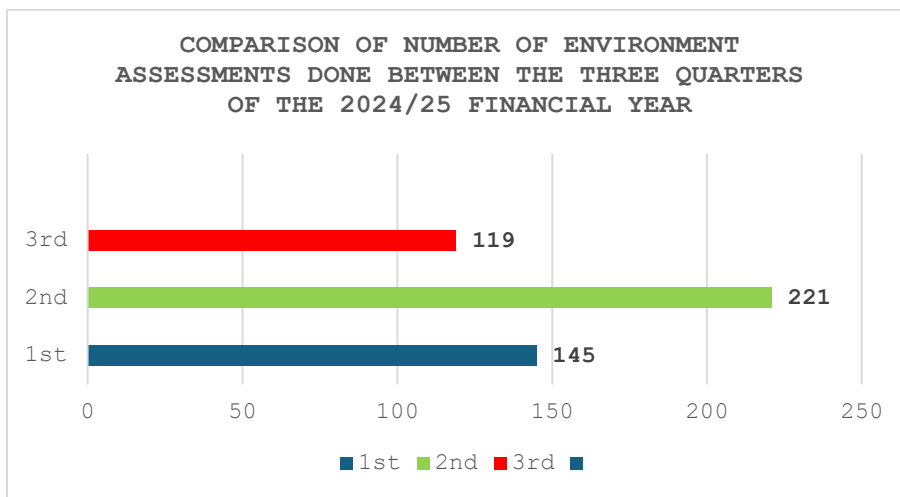
Description	Quarter 3- Actual	Quarter 3- Budget	% variance	Year to Date- Actual 31. Dec.2024	Year to Date-Budget 31.Dec 2024	% variance
<b>INCOME</b>						
Revenue from Sales	1 981 574	3,681,981	-46%	11 996 880	11,045,943	8%
Total Other Income	5,788,710	5,915,534	-2%	17,420,993	17,746,602	-2%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>7 770 284</b>	<b>9 597 515</b>	<b>-71%</b>	<b>28,569,604</b>	<b>28,792,545</b>	<b>0%</b>
Personnel Cost	5,003,477	5,297,531	6%	14,201,597	15,892,593	-11%
Administrative Expenses	581,479	424,94	-37%	1,688,283	1,274,820	32%
Operational Costs	2,170,876.13	1,668,735	-30%	5,845,818	5,006,205	17%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>7 755 833</b>	<b>7 391206</b>		<b>21,735,698</b>	<b>22,173,618</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b>14451</b>	<b>2,206,309</b>		<b>7 682 175</b>	<b>6,618,927</b>	<b>0%</b>

### 4.3 ESWATINI ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

The Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA) is responsible for regulating and promoting sustainable environmental management across the country. It oversees environmental compliance through application assessments, inspections, and the issuance of licenses for various environmental activities. The EEA plays a crucial role in addressing environmental challenges, including air and water quality monitoring, waste management, and pollution control. It engages stakeholders through training, awareness campaigns, and partnerships to enhance compliance with environmental laws and policies. Additionally, the EEA facilitates biosafety and biotechnology advancements, strengthens environmental law enforcement through collaborations, and implements multilateral agreements on climate action and biodiversity conservation. Through proactive initiatives, policy enforcement, and stakeholder engagement, the EEA ensures a cleaner, safer, and more sustainable Eswatini. The functions of EEA as stipulated in the Environmental Management Act 2002 are to provide for and promote the protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources.

#### 4.3.1 ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

The EEA processed 485 environmental assessment applications in this reporting period. About 119 in the third quarter, 221 second quarter and 145 in the first quarter. These assessments ensure that large-scale developments including mining, infrastructure, and industrial projects adhere to stringent environmental regulations. The third quarter received the lowest number of applications because of the construction industry is almost non-operational in December. The following graph shows the number of applications received and processed this far.





- **Green Chert Mining Project**

The public hearing reviewed Michael Lee Enterprises' proposed Green Chert Mining Project in Malolotja Nature Reserve, Eswatini. Over a 10-day period, the Tribunal examined the Environmental Impact Assessment and Comprehensive Mitigation Plan, along with testimony from stakeholders, followed by a 20-day report writing process. The proponent highlighted economic benefits which include 3,500 jobs, while objectors raised concerns about environmental damage to sensitive ecosystems. The Tribunal ultimately recommended the project proceed, conditional on addressing gaps in environmental planning, concluding that mining and conservation could coexist with proper safeguards.

#### **4.3.2 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

During the third quarter, the Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA) conducted multiple (29) environmental inspections across major infrastructure projects, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations. Key projects included the Mpakeni Dam Construction, Network Reinforcement and Access Project (NRAP), and various industrial and commercial developments. The inspections revealed several recurring issues, such as poor waste management, inadequate site access controls, improper drainage, erosion risks, and non-compliance with health and safety standards. Projects like the Mpakeni Dam, Lomati Mine, and Manzini Region Water Supply and Sanitation Project highlighted recurring issues with waste segregation, safety protocols, and inadequate rehabilitation efforts. Actions taken included directing proponents to reinforce perimeter fencing, improve chemical storage, rectify signage errors, enforce designated smoking areas, and enhance worker welfare. In several cases, compliance improved following previous recommendations, demonstrating the impact of EEA's oversight. These inspections play a crucial role in ensuring that Eswatini's development remains environmentally sustainable by mitigating ecological harm, protecting public health, and enforcing regulatory compliance. By addressing environmental risks proactively, the EEA helps safeguard the nation's natural resources and ensures that development aligns with sustainable growth principles.

##### **4.3.2.1 POLLUTION CONTROL (AIR AND WATER MONITORING)**

The Authority's air pollution monitoring efforts have revealed concerning trends in industrial and urban areas, with PM10 levels reaching 800  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , far exceeding the WHO's recommended limit of 50  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The lack of stringent emission controls in some industries contributes to deteriorating air quality, impacting public health and increasing cases of respiratory illnesses.

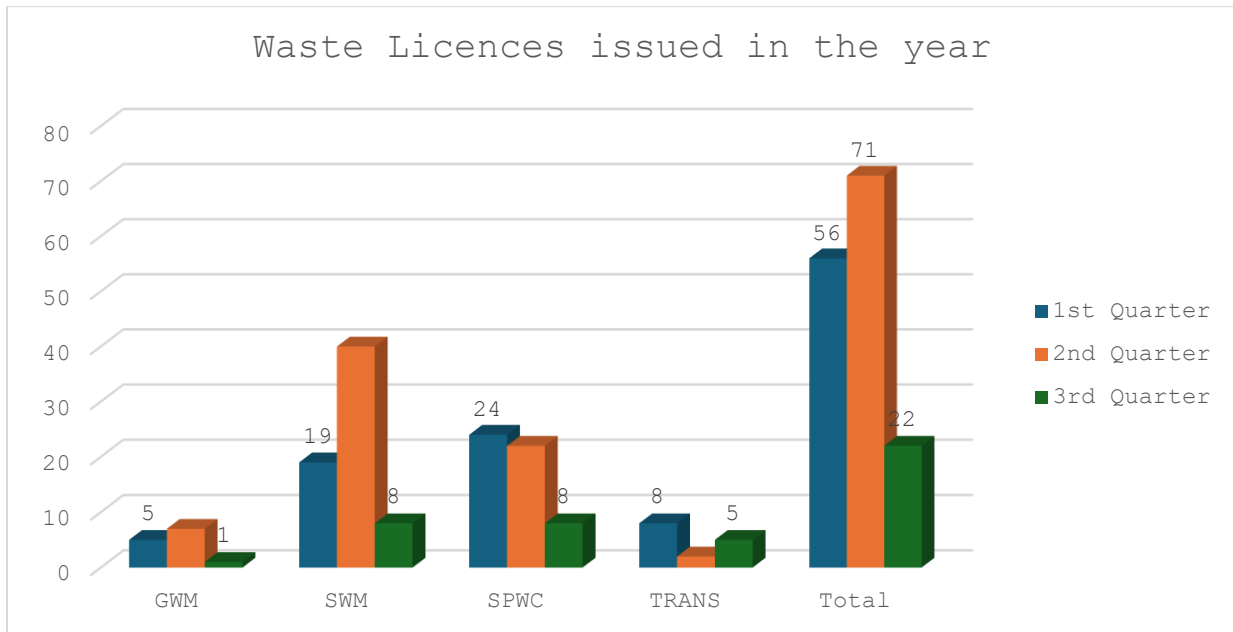
The Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), under the Water Pollution Control Regulations of 2010, monitors key water bodies to ensure compliance with environmental standards and safeguard public health. Assessments of the Mkhondvo River at Gege and Mawelawela revealed improved water quality, with all parameters within legal limits except for faecal coliforms (9–19 counts/100ml against a limit of 0). In the realm of water pollution, findings from the USA Distillers Groundwater Monitoring Programme highlighted the severe effects of vinasse discharge on local water bodies. The high organic load of vinasse contributes to oxygen depletion, affecting aquatic

ecosystems. The EEA has issued directives for improved wastewater treatment and is working closely with industries to implement best practices in effluent management.

### 4.3.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

- **Licensing**

The graph showcases the waste licenses issued over three quarters of the year across four categories: General Waste Management (GWM), Special Waste Management (SWM), Special Waste Carrier (SPWC), and Transboundary Waste (TRANS). GWM licenses saw the lowest numbers, with just 5 issued in the 1st quarter, 1 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and none in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. SWM licenses peaked in the 2nd quarter with 40 issued, compared to 19 in the 1st and 8 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, reflecting significant seasonal demand or regulatory enforcement during this period. SPWC licenses followed a similar trend, with 24 issued in the 1st quarter, 8 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 8 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. TRANS licenses remained consistent, with 8 issued in the 1st quarter, 5 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 5 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Overall, a total of 71 licenses were issued in the 1st quarter, 56 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 22 in the 3<sup>rd</sup>, indicating a downward trend over the year. This may reflect the cyclical nature of waste management needs or the impact of evolving regulations. This licensing activity directly supports the strategic objectives of ensuring a clean and safe Eswatini and improving pollution control by establishing formal oversight of waste handling operations. The Figure below indicates the types of waste licenses issued in the quarter under review.



- **Water Inspections and cleanup campaigns**

The Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA) undertook several activities in the year to ensure a clean and safe environment. In solid waste management, 54 inspections were conducted nationwide, addressing issues such as illegal dumping, unapproved activities, and improper waste disposal. These inspections resulted in fines, corrective actions, and advisory measures to enforce compliance. The EEA also supported 30 community clean-up campaigns, which fostered collaboration and public awareness about sustainable waste management practices. These initiatives are vital in promoting accountability, reducing environmental degradation, and encouraging proper waste disposal.

- **Waste Control Areas**

The Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA) made significant strides in promoting sustainable waste management through initiatives such as the designation of Waste Control Areas and the revival of solid waste management projects. The Kwaluseni Solid Waste Management Project was revived following consultations that addressed its prior failures, primarily attributed to financial mismanagement. Plans included integrating private waste collectors, zoning for efficient service delivery, and limiting political interference in daily operations. Similarly, the Siphofaneni Solid Waste Management Project focused on rehabilitating communal waste disposal facilities and engaging local chiefdoms to allocate land for sustainable waste management infrastructure.

- **Promoting the Circular Economy Approach in Waste Management**

- a) **Global Forum of Cities for Circular Economy (GFCCE) in Solid Waste Management**

On the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024, the Authority joined Ezulwini Royal Kraal and the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in a meeting to discuss how the waste management scenario may be improved within the jurisdiction of Ezulwini Royal Kraal. It was agreed that the CSE will do baseline studies on the waste management status quo in the community before devising initiatives for improving the state of waste management.

- b) **Diaper Management project**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024, the organization and the UNDP Accelerator Lab co-facilitated a collective intelligence workshop to share lessons from an experiment to test a transition from single-use diapers to reusable alternatives as well as to map and co-design solutions to the diaper waste challenge in the country. The workshop was attended by different Government ministries and offices, and the private sector.

- c) **Adoption of an Extended Producer Responsibility framework**

Following a number of bilateral meetings between EEA and Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) on one hand and EEA and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on the other; the organization, on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, held a virtual meeting aimed at assisting the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini leapfrog from the experiences of the Republic of South Africa in the issues of waste management and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) – and other issues of environmental concern. Key amongst the discussions was that the DFFE and CSIR are willing to assist Eswatini in the development of an Extended Producer Responsibility legal framework.

- **National Events: Incwala and Umhlanga**

The annual national cultural events, the Incwala and Umhlanga gather Emaswati for unified national activities which generate significant waste due to the large number of attendees. To address this, the Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA) implemented a litter-picking intervention involving paid volunteers and scouts. This initiative successfully mitigated the environmental impact of the event by ensuring that the festival grounds and surrounding areas were kept clean and free of litter. However, challenges were encountered, as many Emaswati were reluctant to change their behavior and continued to litter indiscriminately. Additionally, small businesses operating at the events exacerbated the situation by contributing to waste through their activities. Despite these obstacles, the effort not only enhanced the aesthetics of the site but also promoted environmental awareness among participants and the broader community. By engaging volunteers and scouts, the program fostered a sense of responsibility and collaboration, demonstrating the positive impact of collective action in preserving the environment during large cultural gatherings.

#### **4.3.3.3 Implementation of the Control of Plastic Bags Regulations, 2021**

Eswatini continues to make significant progress in implementing the 2021 Control of Plastic Bags Regulations, aiming to reduce plastic pollution by regulating production, importation, and usage while promoting recycling. A key milestone is the ban on plastic carrier bags set for 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025, allowing businesses time to transition to sustainable alternatives. Compliance monitoring is conducted through the Plastic Levy Returns Filing System, with 128 businesses registered and six valid import licenses issued. Stakeholder engagements have facilitated discussions on eco-friendly alternatives, while awareness campaigns, supported by the UNDP, educate the public on the ban. This initiative aligns Eswatini with global efforts to combat plastic pollution and promote sustainability.

#### **4.3.4 EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT**

Public engagement remains a cornerstone of the Eswatini Environment Authority's (EEA) strategy, emphasizing the critical role of education and awareness in fostering a clean and safe Eswatini. During this reporting period, 55 major education and awareness programs were conducted, reaching thousands of citizens across four regions of the country. These programs underscored the importance of equipping communities with knowledge and tools to make environmentally conscious decisions.

The Education, Awareness, and Stakeholder Engagement portfolio undertook various initiatives throughout the year to promote environmental sustainability and community participation. Key activities included the Green Schools Initiative at Motshane Primary, which emphasized sustainable practices like smart agriculture gardens and dairy farming to address nutrition, education, and environmental awareness among students. Community engagements like the Kukhanyeni Beekeepers Association training educated 31 beekeepers on sustainable environmental practices, while the Nsingizini Chiefdom Development Plan Workshop equipped 40 community leaders with knowledge on integrating sustainable practices into local economic strategies. Environmental journalism was enhanced through the Environmental Journalist Forum, which trained 20 journalists on climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, fostering better public understanding of environmental issues.

Notable awareness campaigns included World Environment Day celebrations, which drew over 350 participants to discuss land restoration and drought resilience, and the Education and Climate Action Dialogue, which engaged 150 stakeholders on fostering sustainable mindsets through education. Youth engagement programs, such as the Sithobelweni Environmental Business Workshop for 49 participants, focused on equipping young people with skills to create eco-friendly businesses. Large-scale outreach efforts like the Eswatini Career Expo reached nearly 10,000 learners, promoting environmental career opportunities and sustainable practices. Additionally, collaborations at events like the Bushfire Festival and the Eswatini International Trade Fair amplified public engagement on topics such as plastic pollution and climate resilience, demonstrating the power of education and stakeholder involvement in driving environmental change.

The education, Awareness, and Stakeholder Engagement portfolio also prioritized addressing plastic pollution through targeted campaigns and engagements. The Control of Plastic Bags Regulations, 2021 formed the cornerstone of these efforts, with roadshows in Kwaluseni and Mankayane raising awareness about the imminent ban on single-use plastic bags and promoting eco-friendly alternatives. During the Eswatini International Trade Fair, the organization held an activation competition on the effects of plastic pollution, engaging over 41,000 people online through social media influencers and directly interacting with 274 participants at the stand.

Additionally, the Mhlaleni Litter Awareness Campaign and other roadshows informed the public about the environmental impact of plastic waste and encouraged the adoption of reusable shopping bags, aligning with the nationwide clean-up initiative. These efforts were complemented by training workshops for customs officials on plastic bag regulations, equipping them with skills to identify and manage restricted items. Through these campaigns, the portfolio reinforced its commitment to reducing plastic waste and fostering a culture of sustainable consumption and environmental responsibility across communities.

Through strategic public engagement, education, and strong stakeholder relationships, the EEA continues to drive the Nation toward achieving its environmental goals. These efforts not only

enhance public understanding of environmental challenges but also empower communities to take active roles in preserving Eswatini's natural heritage.

#### **4.3.5 BIOSAFETY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY**

The Biosafety Unit reported significant activities focusing on the regulation and monitoring of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Key applications included the environmental release and market placement of genetically modified cotton varieties (MON 15985, MON 88913, and MON 15985 x MON 88913) by Bayer South Africa. These varieties, which are herbicide-tolerant and insect-resistant, were approved for cultivation in collaboration with the Eswatini Cotton Board. Risk assessments revealed no significant ecological or dietary risks, with expectations of increased cotton production and reduced farming costs. Public engagement processes, including risk communication and transparency, were emphasized during the review. For this financial year permits for food, feed, and processing allowed the importation of 180,000 metric tons of GMO white maize by the National Maize Corporation for milling and distribution. Additionally, yellow maize imports, mainly for animal feed, totalled over 69 900 metric tons, supplied by millers such as Arrow Feeds, Ngwane Mills, and others. These imports ensured consistent feed supply and supported the livestock sector.

Illegal GMO transboundary movement was also monitored, with two cases reported. One case involved 1,000 kg of GMO yellow maize at Ngwenya Border, which was later cleared upon obtaining proper documentation. The second case at Sicunusa Border involved 10 kg of GM maize seeds, which were impounded and destroyed due to the lack of permits for environmental release. These cases highlight the continued vigilance required to enforce GMO regulations. Overall, the unit's efforts contributed to enhanced biosafety oversight, regulatory compliance, and the facilitation of agricultural biotechnology to meet local demands while safeguarding environmental and public health.

#### **4.3.6 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FUND**

The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF), established under the Environment Management Act of 2002, continues to play a pivotal role in advancing environmental sustainability across the Kingdom of Eswatini. With strategic oversight from the Eswatini Environment Authority (EEA), the Fund pursues three core objectives: expanding its financial base, enhancing workflow integration with the EEA, and maximizing the reach and impact of its projects in communities. This report highlights key initiatives undertaken in the third quarter of 2024/25, showcasing the strategic importance and tangible benefits of the Fund's activities.

One of the flagship programs supported by the Fund is the VSO-funded Resilient Livelihoods for Smallholder Farmers in Fragile Spaces Project. This initiative emphasizes youth empowerment in agriculture by fostering partnerships with organizations such as PELUM Eswatini. Through the affiliation of Hlumisa with PELUM, the project enhances the structural capacity of youth-led agricultural groups, amplifying their reach and access to funding. This partnership underscores the

Fund's strategic focus on building capacity and fostering youth inclusion in agricultural and environmental decision-making.

- **Open Call for Applications for Grants**

The Fund also demonstrated its commitment to transparency and community involvement through its call for grant applications. The call for grants was announced on September 18, 2024, by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Ms. Jane Mkhonta-Simelane. It ran for six weeks and it generated an unprecedented 205 submissions, a 51% increase from the previous year. This remarkable response highlights growing public confidence in the Fund's impact and its alignment with community needs. The rigorous application review process ensures that only the most strategic and high-impact initiatives receive support, further cementing the Fund's reputation as a catalyst for environmental stewardship.

### **Projects Progress Update**

- **The Snake Education and Community Rescue Project**

This project is a key milestone in ecological awareness. The newly launched snake education center in Siphocosini serves as an essential resource for promoting snake conservation and educating communities about their ecological significance. It also provides first-aid training for snakebites, addressing misconceptions and fostering coexistence between communities and wildlife. Active community engagement in this initiative ensures a deeper understanding of snakes and their role in the environment, aligning with broader goals of harmony between humans and nature. The facility was officially opened by the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Environmental Affairs in an event attended by the Hhohho Regional Administrator, the Chief of Siphocosini, and the Honourable Minister of Health, Mr. Matsebula, who also serves as the Member of Parliament for Siphocosini.

- **Nkambeni Donga Rehabilitation Project and the Sigcaweni Emachibini Donga Rehabilitation Project.**

Significant strides have also been made in ecosystem restoration through projects such as the The Nkambeni project successfully stabilized a degraded area in the Lubombo region by installing gabion cages with the active participation of local communities. Similarly, the Sigcaweni project preserved a critical earth dam while securing water resources for human and livestock use. Community members contributed to fencing and planting vetiver grass, showcasing the importance of grassroots involvement in ensuring sustainability. These projects highlight the strategic focus on combining environmental restoration with sustainable resource management.

- **Ka-Vuma Dam Rehabilitation Project and the Thembelihle High School Water Harvesting Initiative**

Water management has been a critical focus for the Fund, with initiatives like the Ka-Vuma Dam Rehabilitation Project and the Thembelihle High School Water Harvesting Initiative addressing water scarcity. The Ka-Vuma project involved securing the dam boundary to regulate access and enhance safety, while the Thembelihle project introduced a water harvesting system to support school gardens. Both projects relied on local participation to manage resources effectively and promote sustainable water use, improving resilience to climate variability while enhancing community livelihoods.

- **The Ngomane and Sifundzani High School Greening Initiatives**

This initiative further underscores the role of education in environmental stewardship. At Ngomane, the construction of greenhouses provided a space for students to practice sustainable agricultural methods. Meanwhile, at Sifundzani, a tree planting campaign aimed at creating a biodiversity hotspot engaged students and educators in conservation efforts. These initiatives not only restore biodiversity but also instil environmental responsibility among youth, ensuring long-term benefits for the community and the environment.

Community participation has been a cornerstone of these projects, ensuring their success and long-term sustainability. By involving local stakeholders in planning, implementation, and education, the Fund fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. This strategic approach not only empowers communities to manage their resources but also aligns with Eswatini's national development goals and global sustainability objectives.

#### **4.3.7 MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS**

Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are international agreements that are intended to promote international cooperation to address global environmental challenges that the world is facing today like climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste. The Authority plays a major role in the domestication and implementation of the country's commitment to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The following actions were taken under some of these MEAs in this reporting period:

- **Montreal Protocol Implementation**

The Ozone Unit's activities across the first three quarters of the year reflect a strong commitment to implementing the Montreal Protocol and transitioning to sustainable cooling solutions. In the first quarter, the unit processed nine ODS import licenses, ensuring compliance with country allocations, and advanced the revision of ODS and HFC regulations to align with the Kigali Amendment. Significant funding approvals were obtained for key initiatives, including the Kigali Implementation Plan and the Hydrochloro fluorocarbon Phase-out Management Plan. The unit hosted the World Refrigeration Day Cooling Summit, which brought together 400 participants to discuss sustainable cooling and highlighted Eswatini's endorsement of the Global Cooling Pledge.



The event showcased local innovations and emphasized reducing cooling-related emissions by 68% by 2050.

In subsequent quarters, the unit focused on capacity building and stakeholder engagement. Training workshops for customs officers, held in July, enhanced the control of transboundary movement of environmentally sensitive commodities. The unit also conducted a scoping mission in South Africa to inform the establishment of refrigerant recovery and recycling centers. Collaborative inspections with customs and police departments uncovered improper handling of ODS and HFCs, emphasizing the need for robust enforcement. Regional workshops and public awareness roadshows promoted the adoption of energy-efficient, low-GWP refrigerants. The submission of proposals, including a national inventory for unwanted controlled substances, further underlined the unit's proactive approach to ozone layer protection and climate action. These efforts demonstrate the unit's dedication to phasing out harmful substances, enhancing regulatory compliance, and promoting sustainable cooling solutions in line with global environmental commitments.

- **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing**

The implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in Eswatini involved significant progress on several projects. The University of Eswatini (UNESWA) advanced its SADC project on developing HIV/AIDS-supportive medicine using traditional resources. Key steps included securing Free Prior Informed Consent, Materials Transfer Agreements, and Mutually Agreed Terms with the Emkhuzweni and Hhelehhele communities, alongside obtaining access permits from the Competent National Authority (EEA). Consultations with the Lomshiyo community were ongoing to finalize the process. The Ministry of Agriculture collaborated with the Taiwan Africa Vegetable Initiative (TAVI) to conserve and sustainably use traditional vegetables. While the project aimed to share local wild vegetable germplasm, it required formalizing the application process and adhering to ABS guidelines. Efforts to map bio-traders in the country are also underway, with results expected in the coming months.

During the third quarter, Eswatini participated in the 16th Biodiversity Conference of Parties (COP-16), engaging in discussions on synthetic biology, gene drives, and living modified organisms (LMOs). The conference produced voluntary guidance on LMO risk assessments, though critical decisions were deferred to February 2025 due to quorum issues. These activities emphasize Eswatini's commitment to aligning its national ABS efforts with global biodiversity and biosafety standards while fostering sustainable resource use and community benefit-sharing.

- **Stockholm Convention**

The project under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants implemented several impactful activities. Buy-back centres were established and operationalized, within the Kwaluseni Inkhundla and Siteki and are actively collecting recyclable materials from both waste pickers and local communities. These centres play a critical role in promoting a circular economy, reducing waste through recycling, and fostering a cleaner and safer Eswatini. They provide income opportunities for waste pickers, enhance community engagement in sustainable practices, and

reduce environmental degradation from open waste burning. However, challenges like weight manipulation of recyclables and fluctuating prices underscore the need for additional incentives for waste collectors.

The University of Eswatini (UNESWA) Chemistry Laboratory received significant support through equipment and upgrades worth SZL 2.5 million, enhancing its capacity to analyze Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). This included Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) equipment, sample processing tools, and laboratory modifications. These upgrades align Eswatini with global scientific standards, enabling critical research into pollutants, which can inform national policies on chemical management and environmental health. The milestone strengthens local scientific capabilities, ensuring Eswatini can independently address environmental challenges, fostering innovation, and providing opportunities for academic and practical advancements in environmental science.

- **Coordination of the GEF-OFP Portfolio**

The EEA advanced its coordination role under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) portfolio by securing Council approval for the Program Framework Document (PFD) for the global phasing out of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs). Eswatini is one of seven countries involved in this initiative, with the EEA leading the implementation of the \$825,000 PCB Use Elimination Project. Additional funding requests were endorsed for enabling activities related to reporting obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing. These efforts emphasize the EEA's proactive role in mobilizing international resources and strengthening the country's capacity to meet global environmental commitments. Through these actions, Eswatini reinforces its position as a key player in the global effort to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

### 4.3.7 Financial Performance

Category	Reports	Update	Action Plan	Responsible Officer
<b>Financial Reporting</b>	<b>1. Statement of Comprehensive Income</b>			ED/CFO
	1.2 Expenditure	Total expenditure increased by 48% to E19.368m (2023: E19.866m) and was almost in line with the budget showing a negative variance of 5%.  <b>Comments:</b> The increase from the previous year is mainly due to the following: 1. Cost of living adjustment, merit awards and filling of vacant positions increased salaries by 30%. 2. Waste management expenses increased by 313% due to tractor repairs for Kwaluseni community and clean up campaigns. 3. Travel and accommodation increase by 95% mainly because there were more trips than the previous year. Telephone costs have also increased due to an increase in staff on MTN contracts. 4. Protective clothing and uniforms were bought for all staff members and a 50% payment for staff uniforms was made. 5. PEU subscriptions were paid during the quarter. 6. An increase in public awareness due to WED commemoration, Trade Fair Exhibition Stand, HMK birthday and awareness campaigns	Implement cost control measure to reduce spending across all departments and closely monitor all expenditure lines.	
	1.3 Surplus	The surplus reported was E1.055m (2023: Surplus E1.467m) against a budget surplus of E519k. This position is mainly due to the growth in Environmental Fees.		

Category	Reports	Update	Action Plan	Responsible Officer
<b>Financial Reporting</b>	<b>2. Statement of Financial Position</b>			CFO  CFO  CFO  ED/CFO  CFO
	2.1 Non Current Assets	Non current assets increased by 79% to E5.300m (2023: E2.966m). The increase was due to the acquisition of motor vehicles and computer equipment.	Seek the Board's approval for the disposal of assets that have reached their useful lives.	
	2.2 Current Assets	Current assets increased by 55% to E10.010m (2023: E6.473m) mainly due to the increase in cash and cash equivalents by 42% and an increase in receivables by 127% from the previous year.	Follow up on accounts receivables and invest funds that are not due for utilisation..	
	2.3 Equity	Equity was E6.917m (2023: E3.876m) which represents an increase of 78% from the previous year mainly because of the increase in accumulated funds as a result of the surplus position.	Closely monitor the bottom line to avoid negative accumulated funds which will affect the going concern of the EEA.	
	2.4 Non Current Liabilities	Non current liabilities decreased by 4% to E1.555m (2023: E1.617m) due to funds that were utilised for projects.	Mobilise for more funds from donors for new and existing programmes.	
	2.5 Current Liabilities	Current liabilities increased by 73% to E6.837m (2023: E3.947m) from the previous year. The increase is due to an increase in the provision for severance pay, PEU subscriptions, EA fees due to EEF and trade and other payables.	Pay all payables: - PEU subscriptions - Creditors - Payroll deductions - EA fees to EEF	
<b>Finan</b>		<p>4. Plastic levy share from EEF increased by 11% to E730k (2023: E658k) against a budget of E849k reflecting a 15% below budget. This is due to an increase in the number of registration for plastic levy remittances.</p> <p>5. There was also an increase in designated funds to E1.230m due to new projects like LTLEDs.</p>	<p>Follow up on the drafting of regulations for the other plastic polymers. After the ban of plastic bags, plastic levy will no longer be collected. Promote sustainable alternative such as cloth bags or biodegradable bags.</p> <p>Engage private sector to fund environmental initiatives. Strengthen grant and donor relations.</p>	CFO

#### **4.4 PIGGS PEAK HOTEL AND CASINO**

The Piggs Peak Hotel and Casino (Propriety) Limited is a company wholly owned by the Government of Eswatini and accordingly registered in terms of the company laws of Eswatini since 1986. It is also a category A Public Enterprise under the Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

##### **4.4.1 MANAGEMENT OPERATOR**

TFPD (Transfrontier Parks Destinations) commenced as Management & Marketing Operator on 1 April 2023. A new General Manager, Mr. Rainold Petersen was appointed from 20 November 2023. The Hotel's revised trading name and logo "PIGGS PEAK HOTEL" has been well received by the market as has its positioning as a conference and leisure destination.

##### **4.4.2 REFURBISHMENT PROGRAM**

The hotel's refurbishment program is on-going. Improvements continued during first quarter 2024/25 include:

- New furniture in the executive guest rooms.
- On-going upgrades and repairs to all other guest rooms. The ground floor rooms being the focus of attention in the fourth quarter.
- Reupholster of furniture in the dining room and bar and introducing new decor to improve the look of the public areas.
- Reupholster of the replaced furniture from the executive rooms for the new "Phola Lounge" being created in the casino area.
- Redecorating of the old "poker room" to create a banqueting and events room that can accommodate +-200 guests.
- Refurbishment of the water supply and purification system to the hotel.
- Kitchen equipment and refrigeration upgrades.
- Conferencing: installation of audio equipment and virtual conferencing facilities

Feedback from clients is positive with appreciation being expressed for the improvements to the accommodation, conferencing and general facilities of the hotel. The refurbishment programme will continue through the 2024/25 financial year.

##### **4.4.3 MARKETING**

The international tour-bus market is recovering well. This is evidenced by an increase from 86 coaches visiting and staying overnight at the hotel in 2023/24 to bookings for around 220 coaches in the 2024/25 year. This growth is continuing with 300 coaches provisionally booked for the 2025/26 year.

Pigg's Peak Hotel exhibited with ETA at ITB (Berlin in March), WTM Africa (Cape Town in April), and Indaba (Durban in May). The objective was to build on existing client relationships and identifying new client and the benefits of this face-to-face interaction continue to be seen in the growth in tourist guests.

In support of its long-term growth strategy of increasing tourists “length of stay” Piggs Peak Hotel hosted three very successful two- and three-day events in the July/August period:

- “Travelling Voices” a choir group of 50 participants for a two-night stay from Cologne, Germany. Their visit was coordinated by TFPD and Piggs Peak Hotel in collaboration with the Piggs Peak Town Council. The choir presented a free concert in the Piggs Peak Community Hall together with choirs from two local schools as well as the Bulembu and Correctional Services choirs.
- The result of the success of this visit is that the international tour operator is already negotiating for a 2026/2027 visit by another German choir group. Kurash All Africa Judo Championship (100 participants – three-night stay)
- Dual-Bike Adventure Event (120 participants – three-night stay). This second annual event had 50% more biker participants than the previous year. Discussions are underway for a third-year event. A further spin-off is that at least five smaller groups have visited the hotel during the year to ride the off-road routes in the vicinity.

#### **4.4.4 RESPONSIBLE TOURISM SUMMIT**

Piggs Peak Hotel hosted the first Eswatini Responsible Tourism Summit in April 2024. This event, organized by TFPD and Piggs Peak Hotel, in collaboration with Professor Harold Goodwin, an internationally recognized authority on Responsible Tourism, attracted around ninety high level delegates from Government, the tourism, and associated sectors. As a consequence of the success of this event the second Eswatini Responsible Tourism Summit will be held at Piggs Peak Hotel on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025.

The first conference titled: “Responsible Tourism Matters” was held on April 17, 2024 and explored practical strategies for tourism to benefit local communities. Applying the idea of growing the cake by creating shared value to give the industry ways to enrich local communities and the local tourism experience.

An important outcome of the conference has been the collaboration between Piggs Peak Hotel and the Piggs Peak Town Council. The two Parties have agreed an MOU to develop and collaborate on implementing a strategy to position Piggs Peak Town as a “Responsible Tourism, Tourist Friendly Destination.” The MOU will be signed on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at Piggs Peak Hotel.

The second conference will provide a platform to explore the achievements of the past year, discuss further innovative ideas and plans for implementation.

Panel discussions with industry experts on sustainable practices, community involvement, and moving from dialogue to actionable strategies in responsible tourism. Panel members will include award-winning expert practitioners from Eswatini, South Africa and abroad. Topics will cover:

- Explorations into creating shared value with best-practice practical examples.

- Debates on environmental sustainability, social cohesion, and the role of the tourism sector in fostering a sustainable future.
- Environmentally focused and sustainable architecture
- Moving from talk to action meant that delegates left with actionable strategies.
- An opportunity to network with like-minded professionals, businesses, and enthusiasts dedicated to making tourism a catalyst for positive change.

#### **4.4.5 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE**

The revenue for the hotel continues to thrive in this quarter reflecting a 44% increase when compared with the quarter ended September 2024. This revenue growth is 37% above the budgeted revenue for the quarter. The total revenue in this quarter is E9, 596,133. This revenue growth is 42% when compared with the revenue in the same period in 2023. This revenue reflects a 54%(E1,534,975) growth in room revenue, 39%(E25,758) growth in other services and a 36%(E1,354,318) growth in food and beverages. The hotel has achieved 82% of the budgeted revenue for the year 2024/2025. In this quarter the hotel has made a profit of E1, 334,899)

**PIGGS PEAK HOTEL AND CASINO (PTY) LTD**  
**Income statement**  
*for three months ending 30 December 2024*

PERFORMANCE	Notes	December	December		September		December	
		2024 Actual	2024 budget	A/B	2024 Actual	A/C	2023 actual	
		A	B		C		D	
		E	E	%	E	%	E	%
<b>INCOME</b>								
Hotel	1	9,539,983	6,955,128	37%	6,624,932	44%	6,630,865	44%
Sundry Income		56,150	65,373	-14%	40,730	38%	114,530	-51%
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>9,596,133</b>	<b>7,020,501</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>6,665,662</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>6,745,395</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Cost of Sales</b>	2	1,830,121	1,368,381	34%	1,301,414	41%	1,043,230	75.4%
<b>Gross Profit</b>		7,766,012	5,652,120	37%	5,364,248	45%	5,702,164	36%
<b>Expenditure</b>		<b>6,307,923</b>	<b>5,030,811</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>5,288,068</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>5,702,164</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
	3	6,307,923	5,030,811	25%	5,288,068	19%	5,187,534	22%
Profit/loss before interest		1,458,089	621,309	-	76,180	0	514,631	
Interest		184,276	245,336	-25%	187,863	-2%	241,785	-24%
<b>Profit/(Loss )</b>		<b>1,642,365</b>	<b>866,645</b>		<b>264,043</b>		<b>756,416</b>	
Extra ordinary expenses					(567,413)		-	
Depreciation		(307,486)	(276,054)	-	(309,095)		(246,860)	
	4							
Gross Profit/loss		1,334,879	590,591	-	(612,465)	-	509,556	

