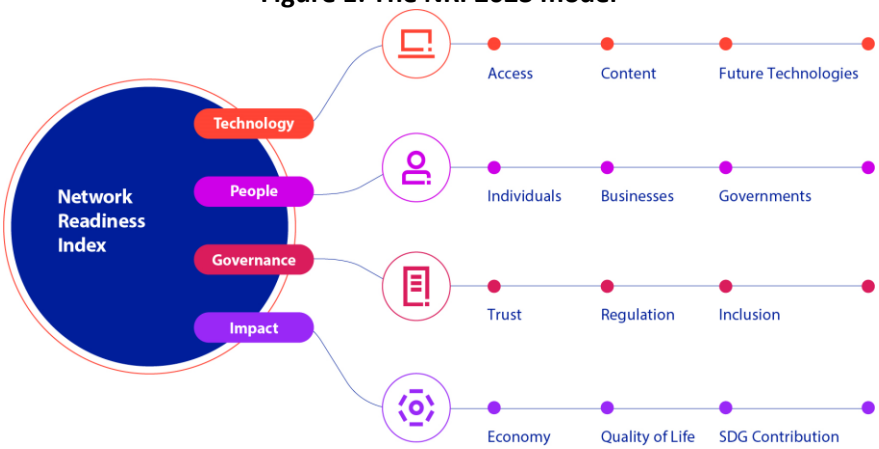
Lesotho

The Network Readiness Index (NRI) is one of the leading global indices on the application and impact of information and communication technology (ICT) in economies around the world. In its latest version of 2023 the NRI Report maps the network-based readiness landscape of 134 economies based on their performances in four different pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact. Each of these pillars is itself comprised of three sub-pillars (see Figure 1) that have been populated by a total of 58 variables.

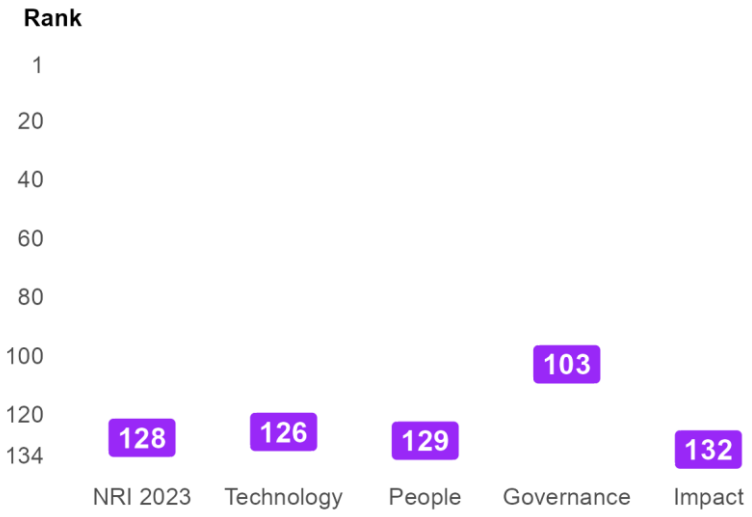
Figure 1: The NRI 2023 model



Global NRI position of Lesotho

Lesotho ranks 128th out of the 134 economies included in the NRI 2023 (Figure 2). Its main strength relates to Governance. The greatest scope for improvement, meanwhile, concerns Impact.

Figure 2: Lesotho global ranking, overall and by pillar



Performance at sub-pillar level

When it comes to sub-pillars, the strongest showings of Lesotho relate to Inclusion, Trust and Individuals, among others (Table 1). More could be done, though, to improve the economy's performances in the Quality of Life, Governments and Economy sub-pillars.

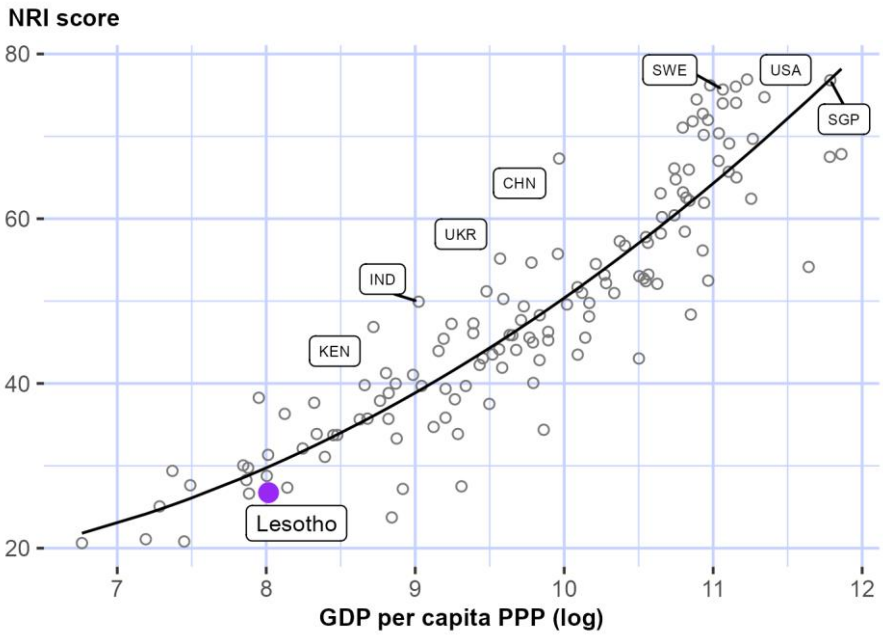
Table 1: Lesotho rankings by sub-pillar

Sub-pillar	Rank	Sub-pillar	Rank
Inclusion	67	Businesses	124
Trust	111	SDG Contribution	124
Individuals	118	Content	131
Future Technologies	119	Quality of Life	131
Regulation	119	Governments	132
Access	121	Economy	133

NRI score and income

Figure 3 shows the position of Lesotho in terms of both NRI score and GDP per capita (PPP). The trend line shows the expected NRI score given an economy's income level. As can be seen, Lesotho is well below the trend line, which suggests that it is underachieving and that one would expect it could raise its network readiness in view of its income level.

Figure 3: NRI score and GDP per capita PPP (log)



Note: USA = United States (rank: 1), SGP = Singapore (rank: 2), FIN = Finland (3), NLD = Netherlands (4), SWE = Sweden (5), CHN = China (20), IND = India (61). Lesotho belongs to the group of lower-middle-income countries, where the best performer is Ukraine (UKR). The top performer of its region-Africa-is Kenya (KEN).

Performance against its income group and region

Lower-middle-income countries

Lesotho is ranked 39th in the group of lower-middle-income countries (Figure 4, left panel). In terms of pillar performance, it has a score below the income group average in each of the four pillars. At the sub-pillar level, it outperforms lower-middle-income countries in one of the twelve sub-pillars: Inclusion.

Africa

Lesotho is ranked 26th within Africa (Figure 4, right panel). It has a score above the regional average in one of the four pillars: Governance. With regard to sub-pillars, it outperforms the average in Africa in one of the twelve sub-pillars: Inclusion.

Figure 4: Performance of Lesotho against its income group and region, overall and by pillar

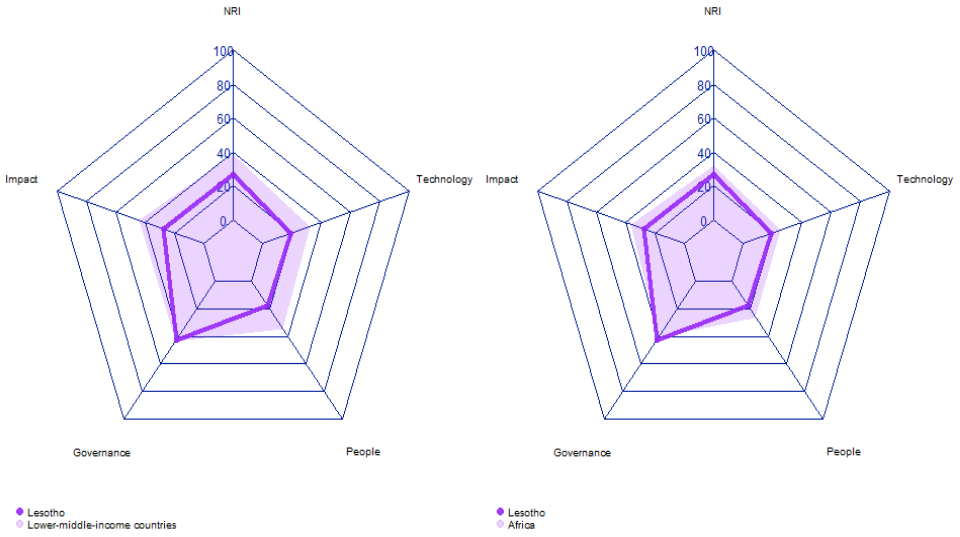


Table 2: Lesotho scores vs. averages of its income group and region, overall and by pillar

Dimension	Lesotho	Lower-middle-income countries	Africa
NRI	26.74	38.41	32.14
Technology	19.38	32.12	25.14
People	17.63	34.38	26.19
Governance	42.57	43.27	40.44
Impact	27.38	43.89	36.77

Strongest and weakest indicators

The indicators where Lesotho performs particularly well include 3.3.4 Gender gap in Internet use, 3.3.5 Rural gap in use of digital payments, and 3.2.5 Privacy protection by law content (Table 3). By contrast, the economy's weakest indicators include 4.1.4 Domestic market size, 4.2.4 Healthy life expectancy at birth, and 1.1.5 International Internet bandwidth.

Table 3: Highlight of Strengths and Opportunities for Lesotho

Strongest indicators	Rank	Weakest indicators	Rank
3.3.4 Gender gap in Internet use	1	4.1.3 PCT patent applications	99
3.3.5 Rural gap in use of digital payments	38	1.3.1 Adoption of emerging technologies	127
3.2.5 Privacy protection by law content	53	3.1.2 Cybersecurity	129
3.3.2 Socioeconomic gap in use of digital payments	58	4.1.2 High-tech exports	131
3.1.3 Online access to financial account	60	1.1.5 International Internet bandwidth	132
3.1.4 Internet shopping	68	4.1.4 Domestic market size	133
1.3.2 Investment in emerging technologies	79	4.2.4 Healthy life expectancy at birth	133
4.1.5 Prevalence of gig economy	88		
1.1.4 Population covered by at least a 3G mobile network	93		
4.3.3 SDG 5: Women's economic opportunity	93		

Note: For the full list of strengths and weaknesses, see At-A-Glance table.

NRI 2023 At-A-Glance: Lesotho

Network Readiness Index Rank: 128 (out of 134) Score: 26.74

Pillar/sub-pillar	Rank	Score
A. Technology pillar	126	19.38
1st sub-pillar: Access	121	39.86
2nd sub-pillar: Content	131	0.41
3rd sub-pillar: Future Technologies	119	17.88
B. People pillar	129	17.63
1st sub-pillar: Individuals	118	21.24
2nd sub-pillar: Businesses	124	22.17
3rd sub-pillar: Governments	132	9.49

Pillar/sub-pillar	Rank	Score
C. Governance pillar	103	42.57
1st sub-pillar: Trust	111	23.11
2nd sub-pillar: Regulation	119	42.90
3rd sub-pillar: Inclusion	67	61.72
D. Impact pillar	132	27.38
1st sub-pillar: Economy	133	8.86
2nd sub-pillar: Quality of Life	131	30.98
3rd sub-pillar: SDG Contribution	124	42.31

The Network Readiness Index in detail

Indicator	Rank	Score	
A. Technology pillar	126	19.38	
1st sub-pillar: Access	121	39.86	
1.1.1 Mobile tariffs	121	19.86	
1.1.2 Handset prices	114	26.85	
1.1.3 FTTH/building Internet subscriptions	110	7.62	
1.1.4 Population covered by at least a 3G mobile network	93	98.31	●
1.1.5 International Internet bandwidth	132	46.67	○
1.1.6 Internet access in schools	NA	NA	
2nd sub-pillar: Content	131	0.41	
1.2.1 GitHub commits	121	0.53	
1.2.2 Internet domain registrations	113	0.34	
1.2.3 Mobile apps development	NA	NA	
1.2.4 AI scientific publications	119	0.37	
3rd sub-pillar: Future Technologies	119	17.88	
1.3.1 Adoption of emerging technologies	127	0.00	○
1.3.2 Investment in emerging technologies	79	35.75	●
1.3.3 Robot density	NA	NA	

Indicator	Rank	Score	
C. Governance pillar	103	42.57	
1st sub-pillar: Trust	111	23.11	
3.1.1 Secure Internet servers	110	33.47	
3.1.2 Cybersecurity	129	7.48	○
3.1.3 Online access to financial account	60	30.94	●
3.1.4 Internet shopping	68	20.57	●
2nd sub-pillar: Regulation	119	42.90	
3.2.1 Regulatory quality	112	32.95	
3.2.2 ICT regulatory environment	102	66.82	
3.2.3 Regulation of emerging technologies	109	10.39	
3.2.4 E-commerce legislation	121	33.33	
3.2.5 Privacy protection by law content	53	70.98	●
3rd sub-pillar: Inclusion	67	61.72	
3.3.1 E-Participation	104	29.07	
3.3.2 Socioeconomic gap in use of digital payments	58	80.15	●
3.3.3 Availability of local online content	118	26.44	
3.3.4 Gender gap in Internet use	1	100.00	●

Indicator	Rank	Score	
1.3.4 Computer software spending	NA	NA	
B. People pillar	129	17.63	
1st sub-pillar: Individuals	118	21.24	
2.1.1 Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country	120	0.15	
2.1.2 ICT skills in the education system	105	8.92	
2.1.3 Use of virtual social networks	107	17.99	
2.1.4 Tertiary enrollment	112	5.04	
2.1.5 Adult literacy rate	80	74.09	
2.1.6 AI talent concentration	NA	NA	
2nd sub-pillar: Businesses	124	22.17	
2.2.1 Firms with website	111	6.24	
2.2.2 GERD financed by business enterprise	94	0.97	
2.2.3 Knowledge intensive employment	99	15.32	
2.2.4 Annual investment in telecommunication services	118	66.15	
2.2.5 GERD performed by business enterprise	NA	NA	
3rd sub-pillar: Governments	132	9.49	
2.3.1 Government online services	123	27.67	
2.3.2 Publication and use of open data	NA	NA	
2.3.3 Government promotion of investment in emerging tech	125	0.05	
2.3.4 R&D expenditure by governments and higher education	112	0.74	

Indicator	Rank	Score	
3.3.5 Rural gap in use of digital payments	38	72.92	●
D. Impact pillar	132	27.38	
1st sub-pillar: Economy	133	8.86	
4.1.1 High-tech and medium-high-tech manufacturing	NA	NA	
4.1.2 High-tech exports	131	0.00	○
4.1.3 PCT patent applications	99	0.00	○
4.1.4 Domestic market size	133	9.16	○
4.1.5 Prevalence of gig economy	88	33.43	●
4.1.6 ICT services exports	119	1.71	
2nd sub-pillar: Quality of Life	131	30.98	
4.2.1 Happiness	122	21.56	
4.2.2 Freedom to make life choices	102	56.88	
4.2.3 Income inequality	96	45.48	
4.2.4 Healthy life expectancy at birth	133	0.00	○
3rd sub-pillar: SDG Contribution	124	42.31	
4.3.1 SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being	114	32.54	
4.3.2 SDG 4: Quality Education	NA	NA	
4.3.3 SDG 5: Women's economic opportunity	93	69.03	●
4.3.4 SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	124	41.91	
4.3.5 SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	127	25.76	

NOTE: ● a strength and ○ a weakness.

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