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POLICY BRIEF

Navigating the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

A Diagnostic Framework for Lesotho's Business Research Landscape (2000–2026)

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ABSTRACT

The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lesotho remains under-researched, hindering evidence-based policy formulation. While regional studies exist, a systematic analysis of the nation's business research output, its thematic focus, and its alignment with developmental needs is absent, creating a significant knowledge gap for stakeholders. This policy brief aims to diagnose the state and trajectory of business and entrepreneurship research in Lesotho. Its objectives are to map the thematic evolution of this research landscape, assess its alignment with national economic priorities, and identify critical structural gaps in knowledge production. A systematic scoping review and bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed literature, grey literature, and policy documents was conducted. The diagnostic framework synthesises dimensions of research volume, thematic focus, methodological rigour, and policy relevance. Analysis reveals a pronounced thematic skew, with over 60% of identified studies focusing on SME challenges and agriculture, while high-growth potential sectors like technology and tourism are markedly under-represented. Research is largely descriptive, with a notable deficit in longitudinal and impact evaluation studies. The business research landscape is fragmented and misaligned with strategic economic diversification goals. This constrains the development of nuanced, evidence-driven policies needed to stimulate a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. Policymakers and funders should establish a targeted research agenda prioritising under-studied sectors. Capacity building for advanced research methods is urgent. A centralised repository for business research should be created to improve accessibility and inform policy cycles. entrepreneurial ecosystem, research policy, diagnostic framework, bibliometrics, knowledge gap, Lesotho This brief provides the first integrated diagnostic framework to systematically evaluate the alignment between business research output and national economic policy needs in Lesotho, offering a replicable model for similar analyses in other developing contexts.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial ecosystem, Business research, Sub-Saharan Africa, Policy formulation, Diagnostic framework, Knowledge economy, Research capacity*

Article Highlights

- Over 60% of studies focus on SMEs and agriculture, leaving high-growth sectors under-researched.

Core Recommendation

Establish a targeted national research agenda and centralised repository to directly align studies with economic

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A notable deficit exists in longitudinal studies and impact evaluations.• Research output is fragmented and misaligned with national economic priorities.• The framework offers a replicable model for diagnosing research-policy gaps.	<p>diversification goals.</p> <p><i>This brief provides the first integrated diagnostic framework for Lesotho's business research landscape.</i></p>
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ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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