

Radio Maria Lesotho's Application for Renewal of Sound Broadcasting Licence



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1 Introduction

Radio Maria Lesotho (**RML**) is not a traditional radio, with journalists and editors producing daily content, but rather gives voice to the Church in its charism of prayer, proclamation, evangelization, and witness. It airs all the charisms that the Holy Spirit arouses in our days, in our local and universal Church. **RML** pays special attention to those suffering in body and spirit, the lonely, the elderly, the poor, and the imprisoned. With respect for all people, Radio Maria courageously witness to God's love and the hope of eternal life. **RML** accompanies every person thirsting for God in their lives.

The mission of RML is to assist the Church in the evangelisation under protective intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary, and by producing relevant programs based on the teaching of the church so as to foster Catholic doctrine in the whole nation of Lesotho. Its vision is to assist the Church in Lesotho to strive to excellent level of communication and capability of spreading Good News, prayer, peace, love, oneness and all those values that would make humanity grow through the intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary.

Radio Maria Lesotho mission and vision is made possible by the irreplaceable contribution of volunteers. The main themes of RML's programming are:

- prayer;
- the call to conversion;
- evangelization;
- human and social formation;
- news from Church and society

Responsibility for what is broadcasted lies with the Priest Director. **RML** has no commercial advertising, our sustenance and expansion in the world are entrusted to Divine Providence.

This document outlines RML's past performance and future plans in order to solicit renewal of its sound broadcasting license from Lesotho Communication Authority.

2. Operational performance including professional and technical training

2.1. Radio Maria Lesotho Organizational Structure and functions

RML requires some core capacity to enable it to be functional and operationally solid and this is the mandate of the management team. The management team, which is inclusive of the station's Director, Coordinator, Administrator, Editorial Officer and Presenters' Volunteers amongst others, covers most of these functions and key areas. It is this core capacity team that ensures effective training and skills transfer to the station's volunteers and staff of **RML**. It is important that **RML** continues to grow, building from the previous developments and the management team enables this to happen.

It is important to ensure that there are clear lines of accountability. The management team is accountable to the Executive Committee (**ExCom**) for daily operational of the station, while **ExCom** is accountable and answerable to the board. The ExCom is made up of the President, Director and the Coordinator. The board measures productivity, and ensure that performance targets are met and that strategic plans are implemented. There is disciplinary policy that has recently been introduced, which dictates how to deal with non-performing members of the team. In an effort to provide direction for the station and devise strategies to take RML closer to its destination, while boosting its profile and attracting potential investors and/or supporters, RML is developing its strategic plan as another tool to measure performance and ensure appropriate controls are in place.

As the representative of the trustees, the board is ultimately responsible for recruitment and appointment of the management team. However, the board usually delegates the appointment of the rest of the management team to the station director and **ExCom** and such appointments are subject to the ratification of the board.

For the sake of transparency, if a vacancy is available, the recruitment and appointment process is set up, where position is advertised and qualifying applicants and called for interviews. Following these interviews, successful candidates are then engaged.

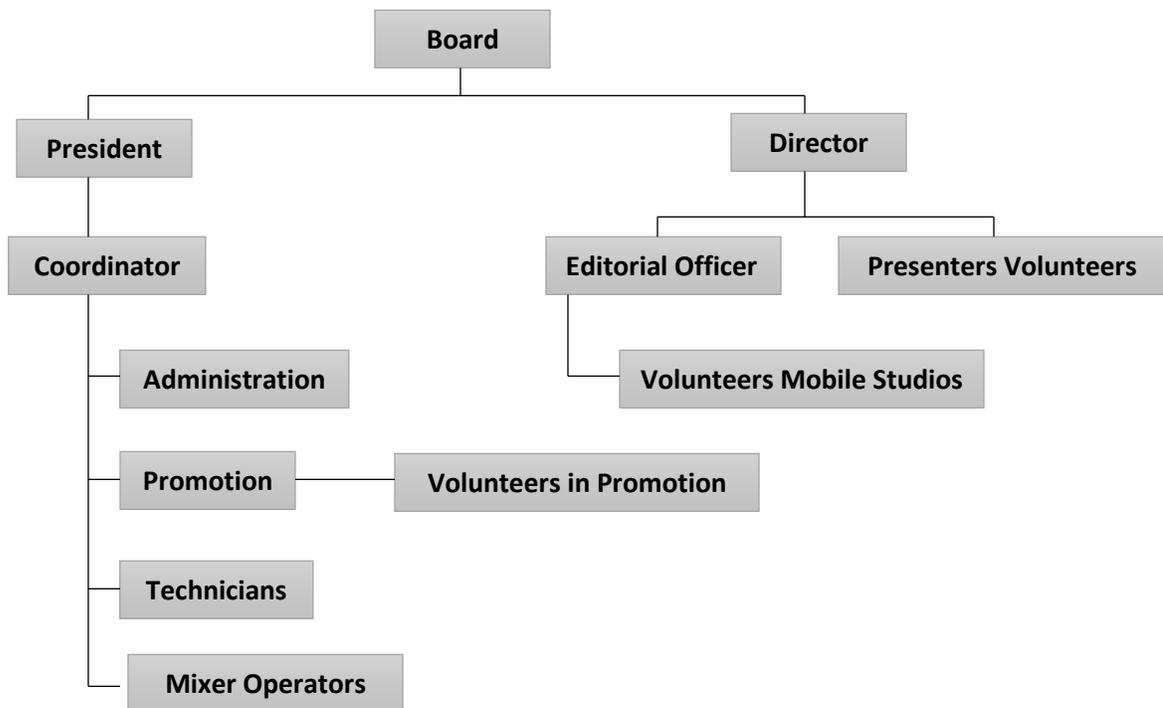
The director is ultimately responsible for the effective management of the entire station with the assistant of the coordinator. He ensures that the station is a

functional and sustainable broadcaster, driven by a common vision and mission of **RML**.

Under the broadcasting license issued by the **Lesotho Communication Authority (LCA)**, given to **RML** in the past eight years, **RML** management staff and presenters underwent an intensive training. All the management was trained locally and internationally by the help of Radio Maria World Family so that they understand the requirements of their daily work and the license conditions offered to it by **LCA**.

Most of **RML** broadcasters have done broadcasting and Journalism in the institutes of higher learning such as **Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Lerotholi Polytechnic** and **National University of Lesotho (NUL)** through **Institute of Extra Mural Studies**. In addition, **RML** ensures that twice a year they are trained in a form of a workshop by an outside person. Furthermore, the station takes into consideration the workshops that are offered by **LCA, Non-Governmental Organizations** and government of Lesotho departments and makes sure that the presenters attend them to enhance their knowledge.

2.1.1. RML’s organogram



2.2. Technical Standards

Technically, **RML** has taken upon itself that it gives training to all the technicians, sound editors and presenters as well because radio is nothing apart from broadcasting machines. Recently, **RML technician** and **sound editor** underwent an intensive online training offered by **Radio Maria World Family** technicians. This is because all the broadcasting machines at RML are manufactured and purchased from Italy and other countries such as China, therefore there was a need for RML technicians to be trained to acquire a clear knowledge on how to operate the machines.

2.2.1 Mission

The management of the station should understand the mission, vision and objectives of Radio Maria clearly as well as the broad purpose of the station.

2.2.2 Management & Staffing

The management of the station and the staff are critical to the success of Radio Maria. They deal with capacity building initiatives for staff and ensuring implementation of daily routines, policies, fundraising activities, collection of databases and other work-related issues.

2.2.3 Infrastructure and Finances

Focus is put on studios, transmission and other relevant infrastructure, as well as financial health, which includes income, promotion and financial forecasting, planning and management.

2.2.4 Community Involvement

The depth of community involvement in the station is important. Their participation and contribution is respected and taken into consideration.

All the management staff holding keys positions in Radio Maria Lesotho are trained locally and from time to time are also provided training online.

More often than not, the Director of **RML** and the Coordinator attends training in either Africa or Italy in Rome so as to make sure that they act professionally and in accordance with Radio Maria World Family.

RML believes on quality management, meaning technical infrastructure concerning broadcasting, also administrative and accounting software's required to run the station effectively. As mentioned above our management team receives training

from time to time to monitor each section and ensure that appropriate follow-ups are done frequently.

2.3. Achievements by the Radio station

Under the broadcasting license issued by the Lesotho Communications Authority, (LCA) eight years ago to Radio Maria-Lesotho has attained the following achievements:

2.3.1. The station has managed to go national

This indicates that the station is now covering the whole country. It even goes beyond the borders of Lesotho through utilization of the internet.

- RML's website is active and for that people in the diaspora and abroad access it. www.radiomaria.co.ls
- The frequencies that are currently active are **103.3** that covers **Maseru, Berea**, and other neighboring districts,
- **104.3** that covers **Leribe**
- **Butha-Buthe, 89.7** that covers **Mokhotlong** and other parts of **Thaba-Tseka**,
- **106.9** that covers **Thaba-Tseka**, including **Mantšonyane**,
- **91.2** that covers the whole area of Qacha'sNek,
- **92.3** that covers **Quthing**,
- **93.9** that covers the districts of **Mohale'sHoek** and **Mafeteng**.

RML has two remaining frequencies that are currently inactive, and these are:

- **103.2** at **Mokhele** in **Mohale'sHoek**,
- **90.8** in **Qholaqhoe, Butha-Buthe**.

All the frequencies except **103.3** are connected to the **Lesotho National Broadcasting Services (LNBS)**.

2.3.2. Support for career guidance for high school students

RML visits high schools to encourage young learners to focus to their studies with the purpose of improving their results for further studies. This program has been successful because a number of schools were covered namely from the south, north and central parts of the country e.g. Makaota H.S, Bokoro H.S, Holy Gross H.S, St. Patrick's, Hlalele H.S, 'Mampota H.S, Holy Names H.S, St. Joseph's H.S, Mapetla H.S, Mabathoana H.S, St Mary's H.S, Cenez H.S, Paray H.S, St Rodriguez

H.S, St Dennis H.S, St Charles H.S, St. James H.S (Mokhotlong) and many more. Covid -19 interfered with the process, therefore **RML** had to stop for the time being although the demand was high.

2.3.3. RML involvement with other marginalized populations

RML empowered and celebrated life with shepherds, single mothers, under privileged or marginalized and the sick. Each year **RML** identifies a group which decides to empower. The response has been positive and successful.

2.3.4. Transition of RML from Radio Spes Nostra

RML has managed to transit from **Radio Spes Nostra**, hence there was a change of the name. This transition has been crucial to **RML** because the mission, the vision and objectives were restructured. Again, it has helped **RML** to network with other international radio stations. Those international radio stations sometimes donate an up-to-date broadcasting equipment so that the transmission of the daily programs run smoothly and clear. In the congress that was held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2020, **RML** was recognized as the fastest growing radio station and was given awards in the form of certificates (*see attached*).

2.4. Challenges encountered which hinder progress

2.4.1. Weather challenges

Challenges are everywhere, however, bad weather is unavoidable and tops the list. Since radio utilizes frequencies and waves to reach the consumer, when the weather is not friendly, it affects the broadcasting sometimes because of the power cuts (electricity). Where there is no electricity, it simply means there is no broadcasting going on especially in situations where there is no supporting generator.

2.4.2. Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The other challenging factor has been due to **COVID-19** restrictions especially for the past two years. This is a challenge to **RML** as is a challenge globally, because fundraising activities could not be organized as well as visits to the high schools. As a Christian Catholic radio station, **RML** could not even make visitations to the parishes or villages to spread the good news of the **Gospel**. Activities like music concerts, school visits and gala dinner were canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions and these affected fundraising initiatives.

2.4.3. Financial Constraints

Lack of financial resources to employ full time staff has resulted in the station mostly being served by volunteers. This is its nature. Although these volunteers are very helpful to the station, it is not easy to retain these potential volunteers, they come and go for better pastures.

2.5. Submission of audited financial statements

2.5.1. The station's financial management

RML believes that growth depends on the ability of the station to balance its books, to generate enough revenue and support its operations. **RML** tries to generate income while controlling its spending. To attain this, **RML** is guided by the financial policy of the Lesotho Catholic Bishops' Conference which outlines the following, control measures:

- a person who requests is different from the person who approves and authorizes the payments.
- the stock ordered is checked by a different person who ordered and also who files the receipts.
- financial records are kept safe e.g. quotations, invoices, cash slips are recorded and stored.

The listeners of **RML** as our major donors get a report at least twice a year, in which case, they are given a platform to ask questions to seek clarity. The listeners of **RML** are considered major donors of station.

Management also gets a report to help them to keep an eye on the growth of the station performance. The monthly and annual budget is discussed with the management team. The financial report is presented to the Board of Radio Maria Lesotho every year. The annual budget is approved by the members of the Association of Radio Maria then presented to the World Family of Radio Maria.

Financially, **RML** is not stable but every day **RML** management makes sure that operations of the radio are not hindered in anyway. The attachment of **RML** audited financial statements will be given to **LCA**.

3. Confirmation of compliance with license conditions, laws, and regulatory directives

Conditions	Compliance	Note
Payment fees (License)	Yes	RML makes sure that it pays its broadcasting license annually without a mistake. It is paid once and for all.
Complaints management	Yes	RML understands that if there are any complaints, it replies to the complainants at the same time, on the same slot. In addition, the regulator's jingle about its expectations to RML , is played daily in between the programs.
Submission of the Audited Financial statements	Yes	RML makes sure that it submits the audited financial statements every end of financial year
Submissions of recordings	Yes	RML's programs are recorded everyday whenever there is broadcasting going on, either in studio or outside studios. The reason for this is that in the case where recordings are needed, they should be easily accessible.
Content standards	Yes	The content that RML delivers on air, is very well monitored. The presenters are trained regularly so that they become aware that RML is not only the Christian radio but also public broadcaster and therefore what it delivers on air should not go against what is expected by the regulator.
Programming- (schedule/format)	yes	RML's programing is designed in such a way that it does not harm all the members of the public in anyway. It is a must for RML's presenters to submit script a day before going on air so that the producer would make sure that no harm to the public is done.

Free Services	Yes	RML is not a commercial station and therefore free services is the daily bread. Notices of LCA, DMA, POLICE and other entities are broadcasted free of charge. Sometimes even the members of the public are given an opportunity to promote their businesses free of charge.
Technical Standards	Yes	The Machines of RML are up to standard and therefore training is given to the technical team to avoid interference with other radio stations.
Shareholding	Not applicable	Its non-applicable to RML since it is owned by the Lesotho Catholic Bishops' Conference .
Service Outage	Yes	RML utilizes its social media platforms to report service outages.

3.1. Programming

This structure deals with what is actually put out on air, including the suitability of the schedule, technical and content quality, news, the balance of talk and music and approaches to language.

3.2. Schedules and policies

Through programming, every editorial product, and all our activities, Radio Maria is expected to be a radio of prayer and evangelization with a strong Marian imprint and a call to conversion. Our programs are designed to draw in as many listeners as possible. Listeners are helped to know when to tune in even though many of listeners tuned to Radio Maria Lesotho 24 hours. As indicated earlier Radio Maria engages its listeners. Our programs are well researched especially those with hard news. Holy Mass is done every day at least twice a day and recitation of the holy rosary four times per day.

3.3. Programme Types

Most of our radio programs are successful because they respond to the spiritual thirst of our audience. The station has a range of programs which are loved by listeners, these include:

- **Church and the parliament:** current affairs program.
- **Morning breakfast show:** current affairs program
- **Litaba tsa kereke:** Church news and activities within the church
- **Likhalala:** afternoon show which combine music and prayer
- **Pastoral and Catechesis:** assist with the deepening of faith
- **News Bulletin:** Only Catholic Church news is covered local and international.
- **Bana ke lipalesa:** a program which deals and entertains children.

4. Contribution to socio-economic development of the nation

4.1. Giving back to the community

RML has got an obligation to give back to the community and the nation of Basotho at large. Among other things, **RML** has offered many opportunities to young Basotho to be part of it, either in the administration, technical department or on air.

4.2. Celebration of Christmas before Christmas

There are noble events that **RML** hold annually such as (Christmas before Christmas) where donations such as wheel-chairs, clothes, food parcels and many other things are being donated.

4.3. Business Expo for RML

There are times also when **RML** promotes the businesses of Basotho free of charge quarterly in a year on air. That is called Business Expo of **RML**.

4.4. Spiritual support for the community

RML also pays attention to those who are experiencing spiritual dryness through its motivational, uplifting programs, prayers and the celebration of Mass. Although it is the Christian catholic station, **RML** does not discriminate against other religions. It caters for all Basotho through the programs it airs every day.

4.5. Raising awareness on caring for creation

With the earth as our common home, **RML** is raising awareness every day in each program in relation to caring for creation among Basotho and other nations.

5. Corporate Social Investments

Radio Maria Lesotho 's sustainability is influenced by the of market and audience it serves. There are fewer resources in our community, yet the audience of Radio Maria Lesotho, regardless of these limited resources, their love, support and understand that survival of this radio station is their responsibility, is unquestionable. In many districts or dioceses, listenership forms an important income stream for Radio Maria.

Radio Maria Lesotho serves mostly elderly, sick, disadvantaged members of the community and they take pride in their radio. Radio Maria is valued as a source of local identity and pride and as a communication platform for supporters.

Every year, **RML** collaborates with different institutes of higher learning in Lesotho whereby students from these institutes are given an internship program.

Credit should be given to **RML** as it has a value as a training ground and opportunity for employment, for an internship and a volunteer position represents a step towards a formal job for many and the station has proven to be an equal opportunity firm.

6. Future plans and Projections inclusive of coverage

At the moment, **RML** covers the whole country but it is a fact that due to our country geographical nature, there are places where **RML** is not accessible. And therefore, future plans are:

- 6.1. **RML** should be accessible to every Mosotho regardless of the place and region or districts.
- 6.2. To erect up to standard building where there is a parking, chapel and the offices of the administration.
- 6.3. **RML** is working very hard to get the back-up generator at Hilton, near Lesotho Parliament, where the main transmitter is placed.
- 6.4. To give a strong support to its right wing this is association of RML and other groups which includes clubs and permanent donors.
- 6.5. To involve more priests in our daily programs to give social teaching of the church.

7. Conclusion

The station believes that when managed well, it can be strong in achieving social sustainability. Radio Maria has a stable audience which looks at itself as family of Mary. Its audience plays an active role in the station, their participation and interaction of the audience is alive with respect of the young and old.

Radio Maria creates a variety of events that take place through its coverage area. The main aim of these events is to promote the station and encourage participation of the community in its activities. The main objective is evangelization and call people to conversion.

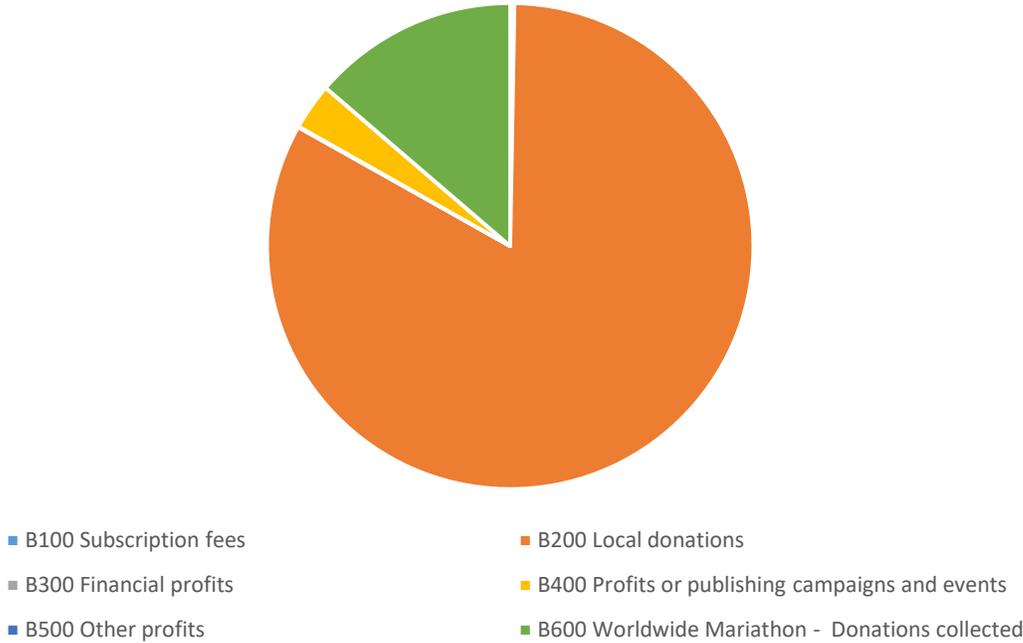
Projected income and expenditure

FY	Maloti	
	2022/23	2023/24
Operating Income		
B100 Subscription fees	8500,00	11050,00
B200 Local donations	2538900,00	3300570,00
B300 Financial profits	1585,00	2060,50
B400 Profits or publishing campaigns and events	95020,00	123526,00
B500 Other profits	0,00	0,00
B600 Worldwide Mariathon - Donations collected	420000,00	546000,00
Total Income	3064005,00	3983206,50
Operating Cost		
C110 Stations electricity supply	36000,00	46800,00
C120 Stations lease	244000,00	317200,00
C200 Salaries and wages	360568,32	468738,82
C201 Contributions on salaries and social security	37806,00	49147,80
C202 Travel expences reimbursement (developing countries)	173280,00	225264,00
C203 Administrative services performed by third parties	12000,00	15600,00
C204 IT services performed by third parties	73886,28	96052,16
C208 Insurance policies	11000,00	14300,00
C212 Bank charges	9234,00	12004,20
C214 Promotional material	104540,00	135902,00
C216 Low frequency material	24200,00	31460,00
C217 Canteen costs	22800,00	29640,00
C218 Other recurring expenses	224300,00	291590,00
C219 Fix fee for WF	7395,00	9613,50
Total Cost	1341009,60	1743312,48
Surplus/(shortfall)	1722995,40	2239894,02

NB: Please note that C120, termed Station Lease, is basically the amount of money that Radio Maria-Lesotho pay annually to Lesotho Communications Authority, and

then the amount of money that Radio Maria-Lesotho pay to the Lesotho Broadcasting services every month.

2022/23 Income Analysis



2022/23 Expenditure Analysis

