



EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Lesotho Drought EAP

Date: December 2022



EAP No:
EAP2022LS01

EAP timeframe:
5 Years

EAP approved:
November 2022

Early action timeframe:
6 months

Budget: **549,991 CHF**

To assist: **5140 HH (20 560 people) people**

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



LESOTHO RED CROSS SOCIETY

The IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) has approved a total of CHF 469, 480 for Lesotho Red Cross Society. The approved amount consists of an immediate allocation of CHF 189, 621 for readiness, CHF 4,121 for Pre-Positioning and CHF 275,738 automatically allocated to implement early actions once the defined triggers are met.

Allocations are made from the **Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF, under the DREF appeal code MDR00001.** Unearmarked contributions to the DREF are encouraged to guarantee enough funding is available for the Early Action Protocols being developed.

Lesotho is situated on the highest part of the Drakensberg escarpment of the eastern rim of the Southern African plateau between 1,500m and 3,482m above sea level and its agro-ecologically divided into Lowlands (southern and northern), Senqu River Valley, Foothills, and the Mountains regions. The Southern Lowlands is characterized by flat to gently rolling topography, rising gradually towards the foothills along the northeast. The soil is sandy with significant clay in places, relatively less fertile compared with the northern lowlands' soils and very fragile with high erodibility especially by wind and water. The Southern Lowlands are one of the driest and drought prone regions in Lesotho and normally experiences the least amount of rainfall compared to other agro-ecological zones, and erratic follow-up rains and uneven spread of rain through the season.

Lesotho experiences climate change impacts and shocks with drought being the most recurrent and impactful hazard over the last 100 years. Studies indicate that there is an increase in drought emergencies recorded over the 25-year period (1991/1992 - 2015/2016) in Lesotho and the most impactful drought events are agricultural and socio-economic in nature, as they deteriorate natural resource-based livelihoods along with reduced crop and livestock productivity undermining socio-economic assets bases and creating livelihood vulnerabilities. In the last 10 years, the country experienced three extreme drought episodes (2011/12, 2015/16, 2018/19). The major impact of these past episodes was food insecurity. The situation is exacerbated by continuous crop failures, low incomes, and high food prices, with 41% of rural families spending more than half of their income on food. These extreme drought conditions required prompt interventions to reduce human suffering and loss of their livelihoods. Therefore, LRCS through this Early Action Protocol (EAP) aims to mitigate drought impacts through anticipatory actions (AA) in the districts that are anticipated to observe worst drought impacts.

The EAP will be implemented by LRCS in coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders, members of the Climate Change and Adaptation technical working group, Disaster Management Authority, Lesotho Meteorological Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and Ministry of Forestry and with technical support from IFRC, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC) and German Red Cross Society (GRC). The pre-identified early actions target 5140 HH (20 560 people) vulnerable communities living in the southern lowlands and Senqu valley. Through the pre-identified early actions, the EAP will target 5140 HH (20 560 people) vulnerable communities living in the southern lowlands and Senqu valley as these regions are classified as high and moderate risk areas.

In developing this EAP, LRCS through the FbF program began with the process of an extensive scoping study on drought which included consultations with key stakeholders. The study was done jointly with the National University of Lesotho. The scoping study was informed by the feasibility study conducted by the GRCS in the year 2019. The subsequent in-house PER assessment was conducted for the LRCS to taper into the capacity and experience of the LRCS in drought impacts and priorities opted for and why. LRCS will use this EAP as a guiding tool to ensure timely and effective implementation of early actions based on impact-based forecasts. The EAP clearly defines what actions when, where, and with what funds actions will be taken.

The following are the two prioritized early actions:

- **Dissemination of early warning messages to 20,560 people:** This will allow communities to take measure that will help them to reduce the impact of drought.
- **Unconditional cash transfer to 2640 vulnerable households:** This will enable beneficiaries to purchase basic food prior to price increase. During a normal year, this is the time when green harvest is expected and failure to plant in September-December due to insufficient moisture will lead to green harvest failure.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

1. Who will implement the EAP - The National Society

The LRCS is a creature of parliamentary statute as an actor in the humanitarian sector in Lesotho and pursuant to domesticating the ICRC / Red Crescent Movement. Its formative mandate is to alleviate human suffering by promoting capacity in building resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Lesotho guided by 7 fundamental principles. To achieve its mandate LRCS works in collaboration with various government entities (MAFS, MFRSC, MoSD, LMS, DMA), other NGOs and humanitarian agencies (World Vision, CRS, RSDA), UN agencies (WFP, FAO), academia (NUL) independent consultants and volunteers to reach the most vulnerable communities with humanitarian actions such as community education, capacity building for preparedness and response.

LRCS's has a strong structure which allows coordination and cooperation at national and local level using the existing coordination structures, institutions, and facilities during the implementation of early actions. LRCS has presence in all the 10 districts through its volunteers and 10 offices and the Disaster Management department housed within the LRCS headquarters which is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this EAP. Furthermore, LRCS is the first organization to adopt and implement FbF in Lesotho. During the project implementation and readiness phase staff and volunteers were capacitated. However, triggering FbF early actions for drought has never happened but a simulation exercise will be conducted to allowing LRCS to learn from. In the past years, LRCS has demonstrated its capacity to conduct cash transfers and strengthen early warning community systems.

In establishing the FbF mechanism and developing the EAP, LRCS worked closely with the Disaster Management authority (DMA), Lesotho Meteorological service (LMS), Ministry of social development (MoSD), National University of Lesotho, IFRC and Red Cross Climate Centre. During the EAP implementation the following roles and responsibilities have been assigned to key stakeholders.

Prime Minister's Office-Disaster Management Authority (DMA): The DMA as the custodian and as the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management coordinator is mandated to manage and coordinate national responses to emergencies. The DMA structure stems from the national level and branches out to district (District Disaster Management Teams) and local level (Village Disaster Management Teams). These local level structures are mandated to ensure local level coordinated responses; thus, participating organizations should work in close cooperation with them. Furthermore, DMA has established an early warning technical working group that helps to effectively coordinate, communicate, develop, and disseminate information on the prevailing situation. During the EAP activation DMA will communicate the once the trigger is reached and support the activation of the early actions once the trigger is activated.

Ministry of Energy and Meteorology-Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS): LMS is identified as the leading agency in the observation, analysis and dissemination of weather and climate information required for policy formation and decision making with the aim of protecting people's lives and their livelihoods. The LMS as the country's main scientific authority in climate and weather-related issues provided scientific support in conducting risk and weather and climate forecasting skills assessment as well as defining thresholds for drought. During the EAP activation process, LMS will support by providing drought forecast and monitoring data and should the trigger be reached, LMS will support in early warning activities as a member of the Technical Working Group.

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD): The MoSD is responsible for coordination of all social protection interventions and policy formation, with a focus on consolidating social protection programs and improving their efficiency and coverage. MoSD hosts the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) which hosts all of Lesotho's approximately 540,000HH and which the LRCS have committed to using to support the targeting, pre-registration, and verification of beneficiaries once the trigger is activated. The MoSD Social Workers are key stakeholders at district and community levels and play a crucial role in verifying and validating social grant beneficiaries.

National University of Lesotho

NUL is an academic institution and a technical research partner to LRCS supporting research activities inclusive of risk assessments as well as focusing on strengthening the capacity of LRCS staff and volunteers. By the activation of EAP, NUL will support the LRCS PMER unit in conducting monitoring and evaluation.

The German Red Cross (GRC): The GRC Cross is a technical partner for the LRCS and supports the development and implementation of the EAP. GRC provides an FbF Southern Africa Project Delegate, who in close collaboration with the LRCS FbF Project Manager, facilitates partnerships and alliances within the RCRCM but also with other humanitarian and governmental partners, ensuring that regional linkages are established and maintained for peer-to-peer learning and broader policy alignment. GRC, through the FbF-SAP, is supporting LRCS to develop this EAP. GRC will continue supporting LRCS in testing this EAP and strengthening their capacity to activate this EAP.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (RCCC): As the Climate Change and Adaptation expertise within the Red Cross Movement, the RCCC provided technical assistance during the development of EAP by conducting scientific assessments necessary for the development of trigger mechanism and the activation process.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): Aside from its global strategic role in FbA, the IFRC generally supports the preparation of an EAP activation via coordination and capacity-building, such as support to cash preparedness (i.e., Framework Agreement preparation). The IFRC coordinates the FbA by the DREF to ensure that funds are available for potential activation. During the implementation of the EAP, the IFRC will provide support and guidance for the procurement, financial and PMER processes.

2. How the EAP will be activated – The Trigger

LRCS will activate a two-tiered trigger. The pre-activation trigger is reached when LMS issues the seasonal outlook in September with below normal rainfall and this will initiate the dissemination of early warning messaging (EWM), and preparedness and monitoring measures of the upcoming conditions. The second trigger is reached when all following three conditions are met:

- (i) the first trigger was activated in September,
- (ii) the October, November, December (OND) rainfall was indeed below normal
- (iii) the Vulnerability Assessment Analysis report (by LVAC) issued in January projects 20% of the population in drought-induced IPC Phase 3 and 4 in January in anticipation of the March/April main harvests for the next six months.

The second will trigger the unconditional cash transfers. Upon reaching both the two the triggers, the EAP manager and LMS will send the signal / information to DMA indicating that the trigger has been reached. The stoppage of the activation will be initiated by the EAP Manager who, upon assessing and confirmation of the

changes, will recommend concurrently to the Programme Director and Pall for the latter to order the activation stoppage.

Selection of target groups

The selection of beneficiaries for cash transfer will be done using the government's Public Assistance (PA) programmes waiting lists. The PA waiting lists contain people already assessed as vulnerable by government social workers and not yet in receipt of any cash support due to budget constraints, therefore already struggling to cope pre-drought and highly unlikely to cope with droughts' impacts. The lists will be pre-screened and prepared annually ahead of drought. Then, once the threshold is reached the same lists will be verified and validated by relevant stakeholders. The collation of a waiting list will be done annually in collaboration with MoSD and DMA. The early warning messages will target the recipients of unconditional cash transfers and other community members.

How the EAP will reduce the impact on the population – The Early Actions

The prioritized impact for this EAP is food insecurity resulting primarily from crop failure, reduced household disposable income and lack of access to early warning messages. The impacts of food security were deemed to spread out to most of the population and its impacts felt at different magnitudes by different wealth groups. The poor and very poor groups supported by governmental social assistance programmes were identified as the most affected by communities and local and district level stakeholders like.

The Early Actions were selected based on:

- Consultations and validation exercises with multi-stakeholders at national, district and community levels, to address the prioritized impacts of drought on food security. Via a drought scoping study, data was collected on risk, vulnerability, coping mechanism/adaptation, weather forecasting, EWM and prioritization of EA.
- A research cell investigated the links between cash-based shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) and AA for drought in Lesotho.

Stakeholders brainstormed potential early actions that would address the prioritized drought impacts. The actions were chosen based on their extent of bringing about the positive change through anticipatory action in Lesotho. Early actions were prioritized using priority ranking depicting Maximum, Medium and Low priority. It is also important to highlight that "Maximum priority" was given to the early actions that would directly address the prioritized impacts and fit in line with the criterion that appears under the FbF manual. Policy Fit, alignment with the LRCS mandate and priorities, social acceptability, Feasibility (especially with lead-time), Capacity of implementation (LRCS staff and volunteers, stakeholders), Budgetary constraints regarding prepositioning, Action lifetime and do no harm. The following early actions were prioritized:

- **Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) to vulnerable households to enable them to meet their basic food needs.** Upon reaching the second trigger, LRCS will make cash transfers to 2640 most vulnerable households from the national Public Assistance (PA) Programme using mobile cash transfers for a period of two months.
- **Dissemination of early warning messages to the communities at risk:** This early action will target 5,140 HHs (20,560 people) and activated based on the pre-trigger (Seasonal outlook indicating below normal rainfall). The LRCS (staff and Volunteers) will be in the forefront during the dissemination of the EWM, and that will be done with strong partnership and collaboration with the district disaster management teams (DDMT). Representatives from the community-based organizations (CBOs) will be trained in the dissemination of EWM to scale up the coverage of the warnings. Modality for the dissemination will include public gatherings and media channels such as (TVs, radio, and social media). SMSs from the telecommunications will be sent to the target populations, especially those that will benefit from the UCT.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 Multi-purpose Cash (unconditional Cash transfers) (Female > 18: 6336	Female < 18: 2100	285, 121.27 CHF
	Male > 18: 4224	Male < 18: 1560	AP Code: 081
Objective	Beneficiaries can meet their basic needs and avoid negative coping strategies.		
Indicator:	Number of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of agreements with DMA, MoSD (Public Assistance, NISSA) • Work with MoSD and DMA and social workers in drought prone areas to identify waiting list and sensitizing communities about Early Actions (Annual pre-registration /benefit identification with the PA Programme to create drought-sensitive “waiting lists”) • Training for volunteers/staff on cash transfers and EWM • Annual market assessment of the at-risk communities • Annual training of volunteers on mobile data collection • Orientation to LRCS NHQ, divisions on EAP and their role in EAP (training of staff) • Pre-sign contract/MoU’s with FSP and telecom SPs (SMS) & review annually • Procurement of CEA equipment • Procurement of visibility materials & EWI information • Procurement of data collection tablets. 		
Priority Early Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with key stakeholders to confirm UCT areas of intervention & roll out of early actions • Refresher training to FSPs and workshop to explain processes • Refresher training of volunteers on mobile data collection • Verification and registration of beneficiaries’ assessment • Transfer the cash • Monitoring, PDM and lessons learned workshops • Gap analysis with key stakeholders to prepare for potential DREF • Outcome and impact evaluation 		

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	Female > 18: 18, 336	Female < 18: 1500	20, 715.93CHF
	Male > 18: 12, 224	Male < 18: 1200	AP Code: 101, 103, 105,106
Objective	Increased access to early warning information to 7640HH (30 560 people) through public gatherings, radio, TV, social media platforms .		
Indicator:	Number of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard.		
Readiness Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of communities (VDMTs, Local authorities) on DRR and Climate Smart Agriculture; dissemination of EW messages when seasonal outlook forecasts below normal rainfall Sign EWM agreements, and dissemination of EWM, with media, telecoms, TVs and radio stations. Annual training for volunteers/staff on protocols for delivery of EWM. 		
Priority Early Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EWM dissemination refreshing training for volunteers Dissemination of EWM through public gatherings, Radios, TV, social media platforms, bulk messaging 		

 Secretariat Services	Female > 18:	Female < 18:	49,995CHF
	Male > 18:	Male < 18:	AP Code: 122
Objective:	Strengthen Secretariat Service to provide technical and operational EAP implementation support to the Lesotho Red Cross Society		
Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> IFRC EAP Preparedness & Operations Officer (15%) IFRC Finance officer (5%) Bank Charges Field monitoring Activations and operations 		

 National Society Strengthening	Female > 18: 1350	Female < 18: 200	163,642.61 CHF
	Male > 18: 1200	Male < 18: 120	AP Code: 124,125,126
Objective:	Increased capacity for the NS to respond timely to drought		
Indicator	Number of people covered (Human resource costs)		
Readiness Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAP manager (100%) • Cash and readiness officer (50%) • Procurement of stationary and communication. 		
Priority Early Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer insurance to cover 30 volunteers • Lessons learnt workshop • Post Distribution Monitoring • Post activation 		

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