



EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL EAP UPDATE

Lesotho | Drought

Date 31st January 2024



Early warning messages dissemination to the Qacha's Nek community

EAP №: EAP2022LS01	Operation №: MDRLS006	EAP approved: November /2022
EAP timeframe: 5 years 01/01/2023 - 31st/12/2027	EAP triggered:	Period covered by this report: 01/01/2023 to 31/12/2023

Number of people reached: 8,700
Annual Budget: 61 344 CHF
EAP Budget: 549, 858 CHF

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



In November 2022, the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated CHF 549,991 to the Lesotho Red Cross Society for implementing early actions to reduce and mitigate the impact of drought in Lesotho. These early actions were pre-agreed with the National Society and are outlined in the Early Action Protocol [<https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/6470/details>].

The pre-activation trigger of the EAP was activated on October 19th, 2023. This update report offers an overview of activities and expenditures incurred in 2023.

SUMMARY OF ANNUAL PROGRESS BY PLANNED OPERATION

Lesotho Red Cross Society with the support from IFRC is implementing its first Early Action Protocol (EAP) for droughts. An Early Action Protocol is essentially a set of predefined and agreed-upon actions that are triggered by specific forecasts or early warning signals indicating the imminent occurrence of a disaster or crisis. The purpose of an Early Action Protocol is to enable a rapid and effective response to potential disasters based on early warnings and forecasts.

By having a predetermined plan in place, humanitarian actors can reduce the response time, minimize the impact of the disaster, and better protect the affected communities. This proactive approach is a key element of the broader goal of enhancing disaster risk reduction and building resilience in vulnerable regions. Alignment and integration of this approach with the Disaster Management contingency plan of the National Society has enhanced the reach and efficacy of the DM work.

In the current reporting period, which is also the first year of implementing Early Action Protocol for drought, LRCS launched the implementation of the readiness activities targeting the high and moderate drought prone areas. These activities were designed to enhance community's and organization's capacity to respond effectively and efficiently when faced with an impending threat or hazard particularly drought. The preparedness/ readiness initiatives focused on the following:

- Positioning mobile data collection tablets.
- EAP project launch and overall dissemination of the approach to LRCS key departments and other relevant stakeholders.
- Training and Capacity Building of Disaster Risk Reduction structures at district and community level on Early Warning Systems (EWS), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Cash and voucher assistance readiness, and Beneficiary Pre-targeting.
- Verification of public assistance waiting lists.
- Upon reaching the pre-activation trigger, supported the development and dissemination of Early Warning Messages.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

The primary goal of the EAP (Early Action Plan) is to proactively address drought by anticipating its occurrence, mitigating its impact whenever feasible, and minimizing human suffering and losses. Within this framework, the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) has identified two key priorities for early intervention. Firstly, enhancing access to early warning messages is crucial to empower communities with timely information, enabling informed

decisions and prompt actions. Secondly, providing unconditional cash transfers (UCT) to vulnerable households is essential to help them meet their basic food needs during drought periods.

To ensure preparedness, LRCS has conducted comprehensive training sessions. Specifically, refresher training sessions were organized for key Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) structures, focusing on both District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs) and Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) at the community level. Five DDMTs from the prioritized districts and eight VDMTs from Mafeteng, Quthing and Mohale's Hoek districts participated in these targeted trainings. These efforts aim to bolster local capacity and readiness to effectively respond to drought emergencies, thereby enhancing overall community resilience.

SUMMARY OF EAP IMPLEMENTATION

Host National Society

In March 2023, the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS), supported by IFRC, organized an EAP launch meeting to ensure that relevant stakeholders were well-informed about the Early Action Plan. The meeting targeted key stakeholders including the District Meteorological Authority (DMA), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Local Government, Lesotho Meteorology Services (LMS), and other significant partners. The primary objective of the EAP launch was to familiarize stakeholders with the project's scope, goals, and anticipated outcomes. Representatives from crucial departments such as DMA, LMS, Ministry of Local Government, Department of Social Development, and Ministry of Agriculture attended the event. These representatives were specifically from the five districts prioritized under the EAP: Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, and Thaba Tseka. The meeting served as a platform for stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the EAP framework. It aimed to foster collaboration and coordination among all involved parties to enhance preparedness and response efforts in the face of potential drought emergencies.

Improved access to early warning messages

As part of its readiness efforts, LRCS, in close partnership with the District Meteorological Authority (DMA), conducted comprehensive training programs for District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs) across five districts. These training sessions were specifically designed to enhance community preparedness and response capabilities in anticipation of potential disasters, particularly droughts. Additionally, LRCS aimed to strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) structures within local communities, focusing on strategies for risk reduction, dissemination and understanding of early warning messages for effective decision making.

Upon meeting the pre-activation trigger, which involved the release of seasonal outlooks, LRCS actively collaborated with DMA to disseminate early warning messages through public gatherings. The primary goal was to ensure that residents residing in high-risk areas had timely access to critical information. By facilitating this dissemination process, LRCS aimed to empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions and take proactive measures in response to potential hazards. These initiatives underscore LRCS's commitment to proactive disaster management and community resilience, emphasizing the importance of collaborative efforts in enhancing preparedness and mitigating the impact of natural disasters.

Unconditional Cash Transfers As part of its EAP operation, LRCS aimed to deliver cash transfers to 2,640 households once the EAP activation trigger was reached. In preparation for this initiative, LRCS collaborated with three major mobile services providers in Lesotho—Vodacom Lesotho, Econet Telecom Lesotho, and Chaperone—to establish pre-agreements, ensuring these financial service providers (FSPs) were ready to facilitate the cash transfers promptly. Furthermore, LRCS took proactive steps by training forty-five volunteers extensively in Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) techniques and mobile data collection methods. This training was crucial in enhancing LRCS's readiness to activate cash transfers swiftly and efficiently when needed. By aligning with mobile service providers and equipping volunteers with necessary skills, LRCS aimed to streamline the delivery of cash transfers to vulnerable households, thereby supporting them in meeting their essential needs during emergencies.

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) supports LRCS through its Cluster delegation located in Pretoria. IFRC provided technical support to LRCS.

Overview of non-Red Cross Red Crescent actors in country

The NS works closely with key stakeholders like the Disaster Management Authorities, Lesotho Meteorological Services, Dept of Social Development, Ministry of Local Government, District Disaster Management team to build the capacity of village Disaster management teams, register of vulnerable beneficiaries and dissemination of Early Warning Messages.

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Human Resources

The EAP encompassed two critical roles crucial for supporting its activation and its readiness: the Anticipatory Action Manager, funded at 100%, and the CVA Officer, funded at 50%, over a span of five years. Additionally, the initiative contributed towards covering insurance fees for volunteers engaged in the program. This strategic allocation of resources aimed to ensure sustained management and operational readiness for the EAP. By securing dedicated personnel such as the Anticipatory Action Manager and CVA Officer, to ensure the program's capacity to anticipate drought. Moreover, supporting volunteer insurance fees underscored LRCS's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of those involved in executing crucial humanitarian efforts.

Logistics and supply chain:

The NS already has a pre-agreement with Vodacom and Econet Lesotho as their FSP for the Multi cash and additionally the NS was able to procure data collection tools.

Information Technology

The procurement of digital data collection devices was undertaken to facilitate mobile data collection processes during both pre-registration and beneficiary verification stages. This initiative involved procuring smartphones and tools essential for data collection activities. The purpose was to enhance efficiency and accuracy in capturing and managing information related to beneficiaries. These devices were specifically tailored to meet the needs of field personnel conducting outreach and verification tasks, ensuring that data could be collected swiftly and securely.

By investing in digital data collection tools, LRCS aimed to embrace digital transformation and modernize its operational capabilities, enabling real-time data transmission and analysis. This approach not only supported the smooth implementation of pre-registration and verification procedures but also contributed to overall program effectiveness by improving data integrity and accessibility.

Communications and Information

LRCS utilized its website and various social media platforms to showcase its efforts towards the EAP and disseminate information about project-related interventions. In 2023, LRCS engaged with local radio stations as part of its outreach strategy, ensuring broader community awareness and engagement. LRCS participated in discussions on four radio stations, including Lesotho National Radio during the "Ho tloha Tele ho ea Mechechane" program, MXL, and Souru News radio stations. These platforms provided LRCS with opportunities to communicate directly with communities, sharing detailed information about the project and providing updates on its progress.

By leveraging both digital and traditional media channels, LRCS aimed to foster transparency, enhance public understanding, and encourage community involvement in its humanitarian initiatives. This integrated approach emphasized LRCS's commitment to effective communication and engagement, ensuring that stakeholders and the public were well-informed about the EAP and its impact on local communities.

Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER)

The collaborative effort of LRCS and LMS involves actively monitoring trigger points that would prompt intervention under the EAP. Concurrently, DMA and other partners play a crucial role in coordinating activities and ensuring effective monitoring across all phases of the project. Through consistently monitoring triggers and maintaining strong coordination among stakeholders, LRCS and its partners aim to enhance the responsiveness and effectiveness of the EAP.

Administration and Finance

LRCS received a total of 563,033.82 LSL (61 344 CHF) to fund its readiness operations for the first year. This financial support was allocated to strengthen LRCS's preparedness activities, ensuring the organization's capability to effectively respond to potential emergencies and disasters. The funding facilitated various readiness initiatives, including training programs, procurement of necessary equipment and supplies, and the implementation of community outreach and awareness campaigns.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 <p>Multi-purpose Cash (Unconditional Cash transfers)</p>	Budget CHF 299,569	Actual: CHF 11,402
	People Targeted: 10 560	People reached: 8700
	Female: 6,667	Female: 4,725
	Male: 3,862	Male: 3,915

Indicator: # of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard.

Readiness Activities:

- 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:

- 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.

Narrative description of achievement of outstanding activities

The remaining tasks, such as establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), were not finalized as initially planned. The ministry clarified that formal MoUs were unnecessary, opting instead for agreements to be put in place. However, by December 2023, this process remained incomplete. Furthermore, certain activities scheduled for implementation upon reaching the second trigger did not proceed as anticipated.

Relevant staff and volunteers have been oriented on their various roles under the EAP to ensure smooth implementation of the project and promote ownership of the project amongst the staff and volunteers.

Most of the groundwork for multi-purpose cash has been covered which includes having a pre-agreement with Vodacom and Econet Lesotho as their FSP.

Data collection tablets have been procured to help with beneficiary registration.

In the context of Cash Readiness, Community-Based Cash Community of Practice (CoP) groups were formed in the districts. These groups received specialized training in Cash and Voucher Assistance, emphasizing the basics of CVA, CEA in Cash, and Cash in Anticipatory Action. Additionally, the groups were trained in Mobile Data Collection specifically designed for enumerators. A total of 75 volunteers were trained, comprising 37 males and 38 females.



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery

Budget CHF 17, 491

Actual: CHF 54, 419

People Targeted: 10,560 (direct)

People reached: 8,700

Female: 6,667

Female: 4,725

Male: 3,862

Male: 3,915

Indicator: # of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard.

Readiness Activities:

- 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.

Early Actions:

- EWM dissemination refreshing training for volunteers.
- Dissemination of EWM through public gatherings, Radios, TV, social media platforms, bulk messaging.

Narrative description of achievement of outstanding activities

Training and Capacity Building of Disaster Risk Reduction structures at district and community level on Early Warning Systems (EWS), Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Cash and voucher assistance readiness, and Beneficiary Pre-targeting.

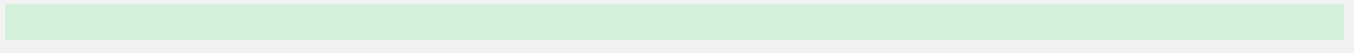
Recognizing that the two prioritized early actions are the dissemination of early warning messages and cash transfers, LRCS invested in the capacity building of organizational structures and supported Disaster Risk Reduction and Management structure to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to meaningfully support the execution of the early actions within the set lead time. District Disaster Management Teams (DDMT) in the five districts of Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, and Thaba-Tseka participated in a week-long training on DRR facilitated by the Disaster Management Authority. A total of **225 DDMT (103 males, 122 females) members** were trained. The modules covered in the training are as follows:


- Policy Guidelines on the establishment of Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs).
- Understanding Disaster Management Terminology.
- Risk Profiling and community contingency planning.
- Early Warning Systems.

Furthermore, the trained DDMT's in the five districts trained the Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs) in the drought-prone communities on similar concepts. Community-based trainings took a

participatory and learn-by-doing approach to ensure that members, despite their diverse experiences and knowledge all were provided with the guidance, knowledge, and skills to execute risk management responsibilities effectively. Eight Village Disaster Management Teams (VDMTs), comprising **102 individuals**, were trained. Additionally, 16 villages and over **1,500 community members indirectly** benefited from these trainings.

Upon reaching the pre-activation trigger, on the 19th October 2023, LRCS supported the development and dissemination of Early Warning Messages (EWM) in the three targeted districts; Qacha's Nek and Mohale's Hoek. EWM's were disseminated through public gatherings targeting youth, adults, and elderly. Messages included defining Anticipatory Action (AA), agriculture and food security, water and sanitation and importance of children under five vaccine campaigns. Messages were disseminated to more than **5,000 people** through public gatherings, VDMTs and local radio stations in Qacha's Nek.

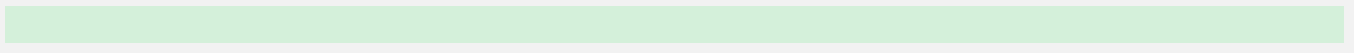


 <p>Community Engagement and Accountability</p>	Budget	CHF 20,715.93
	Actual	CHF 30,666.11

Narrative description of achievement of outstanding activities

Verification of public assistance waiting lists

Through the support of DMA, department of social protection and members of the District Disaster Management Teams (DDMTs), LRCS conducted the verification exercise public assistance waiting list beneficiaries using community gatherings approach. The exercise even went further during the activation of the pre-activation trigger.




 <p>Secretariat Services</p>	Budget: CHF 25, 879	Actual: CHF 13, 675
	People Targeted:	People reached:
	Female:	Female:
	Male:	Male:

Objective: Strengthen Secretariat Service to provide technical and operational EAP implementation support to the Lesotho Red Cross Society

Readiness Activities:

- IFRC EAP Preparedness & Operations Officer (15%).
- IFRC Finance officer (5%).
- Bank Charges.
- Field monitoring.
- 5. Activations and operations.

The AA Advisor Delegate and other IFRC colleagues attended the official project launch of the EAP in March 2023.

 National Society Strengthening	Budget: CHF 68, 970	Actual: CHF 26, 782
	People Targeted: 2	People reached: 2
	Female >18:	Female <18:
	Male > 18:	Male <18:
Indicator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased capacity for the NS to respond timely to drought. # of people covered (Human resource costs). 		
Readiness Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAP manager (100%). Cash and readiness officer (50%). Procurement of stationery 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. 		
Narrative description of achievement of outstanding activities <p>Prepositioning of data collection devices</p> <p>LRCS purchased 10 mobile data collection devices (10 tablets). The devices will be used during verification and registration processes.</p> Staff Salaries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAP Manager (100%). CVA officer (50%). Communication, visibility materials. 		

CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED, PROPOSED AJUSTMENTS

The NS faced delays in activating the EAP using the pre-activation trigger. Unlike previous years, the Lesotho Meteorological service issued a press release in July 2023 predicting normal to below normal rainfall for a period of October, November, and December, however a trigger was not activated as initially the press release did not form part of the trigger.

In addition, the seasonal outlook was published mid – October which again delayed the dissemination of EWMS. As a lesson learnt, there is a need for the harmonization of triggers amongst for all key stakeholders like WFP to avoid confusion and disgruntlement from communities as other stakeholders have reached their triggers and have started responding yet for Red Cross, we would not have reached our trigger yet.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The financial report should have been generated through Business Object (BO) in the standard template and validated by finance. In addition to the financial report, please provide a brief explanation if there any variances in operating budget vs expenditure.

Contact information.

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

In the Lesotho National Society

- **Secretary General** (or equivalent); Sechaba Mokhameleli, Secretary General, smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls ,
- **Operational coordination:** Sebongile Hlubi , EAP Manager, shlubi@redcross.org.ls

At the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation:

- Kopano Masilo, Head of Delegation, Pretoria Cluster Delegation; Country Cluster Delegation, kopano.masilo@ifrc.org
- Jurg Wilbrink, Regional FbF & DRR Advisor, Southern Africa, jurg.wilbrink@ifrc.org , +27 657 433 822

IFRC Africa Region Office:

- Rui Alberto Oliveira, Health, Disaster Crisis Prevention, Response and Recovery Department, Nairobi, Kenya; phone +351914758832; email: rui.oliveira@ifrc.org

IFRC in Geneva:

- Programme and Operations focal point: Nazira Lacayo, Senior Officer DREF, Forecast-based Action, nazira.lacayo@ifrc.org Contact: +41 (0)22 730 4944

For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- Louise Daintrey-Hall, Head of Partnership and Resource Development, phone: +254 110 843 978; email: louise.daintrey@ifrc.org

For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation Table support:

- Manager, Global Humanitarian Services and Supply Chain Management, Allan Kilaka Masavah, allan.masavah@ifrc.org ; +254 (0) 113 834 921

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting enquiries):

- IFRC Africa Regional Office: Beatrice Okeyo, Regional Head PMER, and Quality Assurance; email: beatrice.okeyo@ifrc.org

Reference



Click here for:

- EAP summary
<https://go.ifrc.org/emergencies/6470/details>

FBAF Early Actions

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/1-2024/5	Operation	PLS029
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 18/Jul/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRLS006 - Lesotho - Drought (EAP2022LS01) / EAP2022LS01

Early Actions Timeframe: 21 Dec 2022 to 31 Dec 2027

I. Summary

Opening Balance	549,991
Expenditure	-106,279
Closing Balance	443,712

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	17,491	54,419	-36,928
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	299,569	11,402	288,166
AOF4 - Health			0
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene			0
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion			0
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	317,060	65,821	251,238
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	68,970	26,782	42,188
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management			0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	25,879	13,675	12,204
Strategy for implementation Total	94,849	40,457	54,392
Grand Total	411,908	106,279	305,630

FBAF Early Actions

INTERIM FINANCIAL REPORT

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	2023/1-2024/5	Operation	PLS029
Budget Timeframe	2023-2024	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 18/Jul/2024

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

MDRLS006 - Lesotho - Drought (EAP2022LS01) / EAP2022LS01

Early Actions Timeframe: 21 Dec 2022 to 31 Dec 2027

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
Relief items, Construction, Supplies	1,321		1,321
Clothing & Textiles	1,321		1,321
Land, vehicles & equipment	1,866	3,453	-1,587
Computers & Telecom		614	-614
Others Machinery & Equipment	1,866	2,840	-973
Logistics, Transport & Storage	8,647		8,647
Distribution & Monitoring	8,647		8,647
Personnel	79,784	29,572	50,212
National Staff	22,240	5,361	16,879
National Society Staff	57,544	24,147	33,397
Volunteers		64	-64
Workshops & Training	12,774	12,053	721
Workshops & Training	12,774	12,053	721
General Expenditure	12,386	10,330	2,056
Travel	5,848	3,151	2,696
Information & Public Relations	4,355	1,678	2,677
Office Costs	778	837	-59
Communications	840	334	506
Financial Charges	566	1,740	-1,174
Shared Office and Services Costs		2,590	-2,590
Contributions & Transfers	269,989	44,384	225,606
Cash Transfers National Societies	269,989		269,989
National Society Expenses		44,384	-44,384
Indirect Costs	25,140	6,486	18,653
Programme & Services Support Recover	25,140	6,486	18,653
Grand Total	411,908	106,279	305,630