

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Lesotho | Cold Wave

1 October 2024



Lesotho is impacted by Cold Wave events. This EAP will help Lesotho Red Cross act in advance of extreme Cold Wave events, protecting the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable. Photo credit: Matthew Tostevin

EAP №: EAP2023LS02	Early action lead time: 4 Days	Operation №: MDRLS
EAP approved: 01/10/2024	EAP timeframe: 5 Years	Operational timeframe: 3 Months

Budget: 550,000 CHF
To assist: 20,000 people

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL

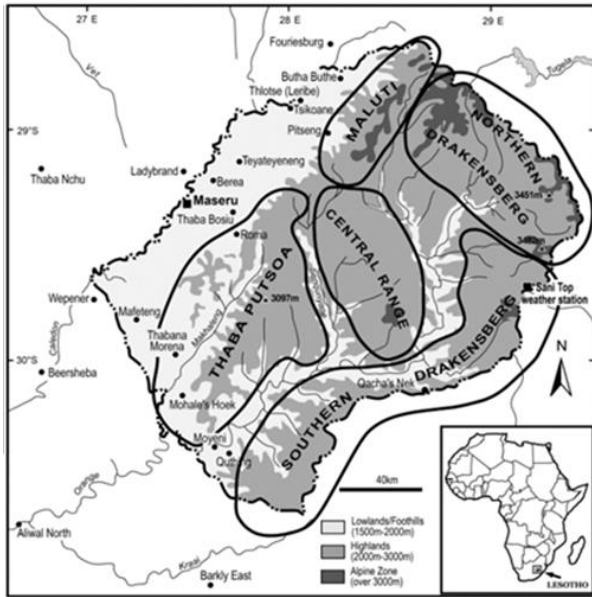


Figure 1: Topographic map of Lesotho indicating sub-regional mountain environments used for snow cover analysis through Landsat and MODIS imagery (Grab, Linde and De Lemos, 2017)

The IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) has approved a total of CHF 550,000 for the implementation of the Lesotho Red Cross Cold Wave EAP. The approved amount consists of an allocation of CHF 259,600 for readiness and CHF 83,480 for prepositioning and CHF 206,920 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 considered vulnerable to multiple climatic hazards such as drought, windstorms, extreme cold and snow. Between 1825-2012 heavy snowfall was the most frequent hazard, followed by severe frost, drought, floods, and strong winds in the highlands (Letsie 2015)¹. Lesotho receives snow in winter lasting several weeks, sometimes resulting in human and livestock fatalities (Mulder and Grab 2002, 2009; Grab and Nash 2010). Winters occur between May to September with the coldest months being

June and July. Increasingly infrequent and unpredictable cold wave and snowfall renders the population, particularly the youth, less prepared to cope as they may not have experienced a severe cold wave or snowfall event therefore fail to take protective measures. The Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) has chosen to prioritize extreme cold events due to the populations' lack of preparedness and coping capacity to respond to severe events, and severe impact on lives and livelihoods.

As part of the development of this EAP, LRCS has assessed the impact of snowfall events in Lesotho over the last 40 years, between 1982 and 2022. The impacts documented range from loss of life, loss of livelihoods (death of livestock, closure of mines, disruption of tourism and crop losses), as well as communities cut off due to snowfall (avalanches and road closures which limits access to collecting firewood and water) as well as damage to infrastructure.

The impact of heavy snow and prolonged snow cover as well as extreme cold waves mostly affects communities located in the highlands of Lesotho, particular vulnerable groups include elderly, orphans and vulnerable children, people living with disability, school aged children, herders. The 2021 Snow and Cold Waves scoping study revealed that school aged children, especially at primary level, are vulnerable as they are forced to walk beyond the recommended 10km with inadequate clothing during cold and snowy days due to the remoteness of settlements in the highlands. So, most families prefer their children not to attend school during those days. Heavy snow leaves communities isolated which limits their access to basic amenities such as food, fuel, and wood for heating, and essential services.

This EAP will address the priority impacts of severe colds including early warning messaging and unconditional cash grants to meet basic needs and ensure that children are safe and well and can engage in school. These impacts were identified through analysis of severe colds hazard, exposure (population and resources in severe colds prone areas) and vulnerability analysis through secondary data analysis and multi layered consultative processes involving communities and government ministries. Findings from consultative processes played a

¹ The country had seen drought episodes superseding other hazards on record for the country since 2012.

significant part in the prioritization process because there is limited documentation of severe cold impacts in the country despite its dire consequences on communities. For instance, little data exists on the precise numbers of human and animal morbidity and mortality due to cold waves. However, in almost every focused group discussion and key informant interview participants were seriously concerned about this hazard, requested to receive clearer early warning messages, and highlighted the vulnerability of herders and vulnerable schoolchildren.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

1. Who will implement the EAP - The National Society

The LRCS was created under parliamentary statute as an actor in the humanitarian sector in Lesotho and is a member of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement (RCRCM). Its formative mandate is to alleviate human suffering by promoting capacity in building resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Lesotho guided by seven Fundamental Principles.

The structure of the LRCS allows effective preparedness and response in any humanitarian disaster. To achieve its mandate of reducing human suffering, 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 and volunteers, to reach the most vulnerable communities with humanitarian action, i.e. community education, capacity building for preparedness and response. During the activation process, the LRCS Disaster Management department will oversee the implementation and monitoring of this EAP and is supported by members of the climate change TWG.

2. How the EAP will be activated – The Trigger

The EAP is activated when the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) issues a forecast of 2°C maximum day temperature or less in the highlands for at least two consecutive days with a maximum lead time of four days to the onset.

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

Based on LRCS's significant experience with cash transfers and early warning, pulling together such actions' ex ante can be completed within the lead time. Furthermore, LRCS's strong coordination and cooperation will allow the organization to leverage national and local level coordination structures, institutions, and facilities during the implementation of early actions.

Dissemination of last mile early warning information (EWI) and early warning messages (EWM)

To expand reach, a combination of outdoor mass notification systems such as the use of megaphones and flags will be adopted in communities. Outdoor mass notifications have the potential of reaching large parts of the population, also in more isolated areas including those with limited access to other warning devices like telephones, mobile phones or commercial TV and radio. The already existing Community Early Warning System (CEWS) will be supported, strengthened, and used as well. Moreover, leveraging on the now popular online communication platforms (WhatsApp group chats, Facebook groups), EWM will be targeted to the specific groups such as taxi associations, health clinics, schools, farmer and livestock associations, and businesses.

Distribution of clothing to herders

Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is not possible for this early action, given the short lead time, the remote location of herders in winter, and absence of nearby markets. Therefore, these items must be pre-positioned and delivered alongside the EWI. Under this intervention, 500 most vulnerable herders selected through community targeting and farmers association groups will receive winter clothing packs.

Unconditional Cash Transfers for families with school aged children

The scoping study indicating that school aged children from very low income households suffer disproportionately in extreme cold weather due to their lack of appropriate shoes and clothing, often resulting in the children skipping school and contracting cold induced illness.

Unconditional cash transfers will ultimately allow very low-income households the choice in how to prioritize their needs. However, the in line with the overwhelming request from the FGD and KII, targeting will be toward vulnerable school aged children and messaging alongside the early warning will clearly explain why this household has been prioritized in order to meet the clothing needs of children ahead of a forecasted extreme cold wave event.


The distribution of vouchers was considered however it would reduce the flexibility for the targeted household.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 Multi-purpose Cash	Female:	975	220,095 CHF
	Male:	975	AP Code: 081
Indicator:	1,950 people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pre contract of financial service provider 2. Targeting, pre-registration and verification of beneficiaries 3. Awareness campaigns on the use of cash 4. CVA refresher training for volunteers 		
Prepositioning Activities:	None		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness campaigns on the intended use of cash and verification of beneficiaries 2. Cash transfers 3. Post Distribution Monitoring 4. Case study and lessons learned 		
 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	Female:	10,000	165,634 CHF
	Male:	10,000	AP Code: 101, 103, 105,106
Indicator:	20,000 people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity building of communities (VDMTs, Local authorities) on DRR and dissemination of EW information 2. MoUs with service providers (telecommunication and media) 3. Annual training for volunteers/staff on protocols for delivery of EWM 4. Warehouse maintenance and inventory 		


Prepositioning Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Snow barrows, snow chains and protective clothing 2. Tools and hardware (flags, whistle, megaphones)
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dissemination of EWM through public gatherings, radio, TV, social media platforms, bulk messaging 2. Post Distribution Monitoring 3. Case study and lessons learned

Enabling approaches

 Secretariat Services			49,903 CHF
			AP Code: 122
Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salary contribution (Accountant 50%) 2. Administration costs 3. Operational support costs (fuel) 		
Prepositioning Activities:	None		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Volunteer insurance (30 volunteers) 		

 National Society Strengthening			114,368 CHF
			AP Code: 124,125,126
Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Field monitoring visits 2. Salary contribution for EAP preparedness and operations officer 		
Prepositioning activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. None 		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support for activation 		

Budget

 Early Action Protocol Summary				
EAPcode - Lesotho Red Cross Extreme Cold Waves (Snow & coldwaves)				
<u>Operating Budget</u>	Readiness	Pre-Pos Stoc	Early Action	TOTAL
Planned Operations	133,965	83,480	168,284	385,729
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0	0	0	0
Livelihoods	0	0	0	0
Multi-purpose Cash	45,185	16,563	158,346	220,095
Health	0	0	0	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0	0	0	0
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	0	0	0	0
Education	0	0	0	0
Migration	0	0	0	0
Risk Red., Climate Adapt. and Recovery	88,780	66,916	9,938	165,634
Community Engagement and Accountabili	0	0	0	0
Environmental Sustainability	0	0	0	0
Enabling Approaches	125,636	0	38,636	164,271
Coordination and Partnerships	0	0	0	0
Secretariat Services	39,253	0	10,650	49,903
National Society Strengthening	86,383	0	27,986	114,368
TOTAL BUDGET	259,600	83,480	206,920	550,000

Contact information.

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

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