

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Zambia | Drought

March 2025

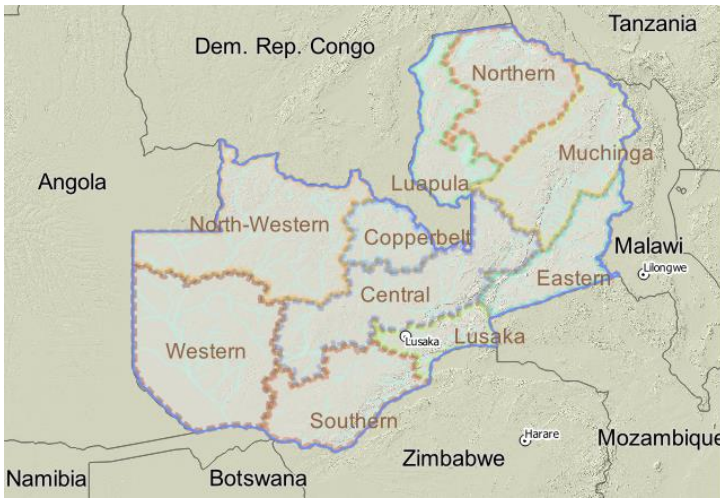


Dried maize filled – Mazabuka – 2024 - Johannes Chinchilla

EAP №: EAP2024ZM02	Early action lead time: 3 months	Operation №: MDRZM025
EAP approved: 27/03/2025	EAP timeframe: 5 Years	Operational timeframe: 3 Months

Budget: 541,853 CHF
To assist: 22,530 people

SUMMARY OF THE EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL



The IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) has approved a total of CHF **541,853** for the implementation of the **Zambia Red Cross Society Drought EAP**. The approved amount consists of an allocation of **CHF 145,700** for readiness and prepositioning and **CHF 396,172** allocated to pre-stocks and implementing early actions once the defined triggers are met.

Allocations are made from the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF, under the DREF appeal code MDRZM025. Unearmarked contributions to the DREF are encouraged to guarantee enough funding is available for the Early Action Protocols being

developed.

The Early Action Protocol (EAP) for the Zambia Red Cross Society is a tool to guide the timely and effective implementation of anticipatory actions based on specific weather or climate forecasts predicting events that if they materialise and no proper actions are in place have a high likelihood of generating high impacts and consequent humanitarian crisis. These crises could be avoided or minimised by the joint and timely actions of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, communities at risk and stakeholders.

General Context of Zambia and droughts

Zambia is prone to climate-related hazards, particularly droughts and floods. While floods occur annually, droughts have become increasingly severe, leading to significant economic losses and food insecurity. The most affected areas include the southern and western regions, where dry spells have impacted agriculture and water availability. Historically, droughts have caused food shortages, malnutrition, loss of livestock, and increased reliance on negative coping mechanisms such as prostitution, early marriage, school drop out and sales of productive assets by vulnerable community members.

How the EAP Was Developed

The Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) led the development of this EAP with technical support from the Netherlands Red Cross, RCRC Climate Center, the IFRC and the financial support from ECHO (EU Humanitarian Aid) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The process involved collaboration with government entities such as the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD), the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Livestock and the Ministry of Agriculture. Historical drought data and impact assessments were analyzed to determine probabilistic thresholds and triggers.

Target Population and impacts

The EAP aims to support 3,755 households (approximately 22,530 people) across multiple sectors, including food security, WASH, Protection Gender and Inclusion. The selection process prioritizes the most vulnerable groups, such as child-headed households, elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and subsistence farmers facing crop failure.

The EAP aims at reducing the impact of prolonged drought for vulnerable households on food insecurity, malnutrition, waterborne diseases, and economic hardship. Primary interventions focus on cash transfers, distribution of drought-resistant seeds, and ensuring the access to safe drinking water.

Forecast Used and Lead Time

The EAP relies on seasonal precipitation forecasts from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) as well as measurements made by Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) and Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

Trigger 0. When the ECMWF issues in July an NDJ average forecast of a [Nino3.4 index](#) $\geq 0.5K$, the pre-trigger is reached and the pre-actions will be started.

Trigger 1. When the [ECMWF SEAS5 seasonal forecast](#) issued in October forecasts a below average precipitation (with 45% and above probability of the 'below average' tercile), the first trigger is reached and the first set of funded early actions will be implemented in anticipation of a failed rainy season.

Trigger 2. When the Ministry of Agriculture CFSI in March-April projects 40% and above losses in the current season and ZMD calculates more than 21 days of no rain higher than 1mm during the period DJFM, the second set of funded early actions will be implemented in anticipation of declining food and economic security.

Note that there is no dependency between trigger 0 (ENSO) and trigger 1 (SEAS5). This means that even if there's no clear ENSO signal in June-July, the seasonal forecast in October can lead to activation. The EAP can also be activated in cases where Trigger 0 and Trigger 1 are not met whereas Trigger 2 is reached. In these cases, only the second set of early actions are implemented.

Assumptions

The EAP assumes that:

- Climate forecasts will provide sufficient accuracy to trigger early actions.
- Vulnerable communities will be effectively identified and reached within the available lead time.
- Coordination with government and humanitarian partners will ensure effective implementation.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

1. Who will implement the EAP – Zambia Red Cross Society

The Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) has a well-structured disaster response system with operational, thematic, and administrative capacity to implement Early Action Protocols (EAPs). It has extensive experience responding to hazards, including droughts, floods, cholera outbreaks, and COVID-19. ZRCS has previously implemented similar early actions such as hygiene promotion, cash and voucher assistance (CVA), and livelihoods support. ZRCS has an extensive network of volunteers, including National Disaster Response Teams, and branches in drought-prone areas. It coordinates closely with local stakeholders, including district authorities, ensuring timely response to drought impacts.

ZRCS has implemented numerous emergency responses, including:

- Successful drought responses in 2018/2019 and 2023/2024, reaching respectively 4,000 and 25,000 households with cash assistance and livelihoods support.
- WASH interventions in response to population movements and cholera outbreaks.
- Participation in the Response Preparedness Project (RP II) with the Netherlands Red Cross, enhancing disaster response capacity.

Key readiness activities include:

1. **Training** – Capacity building for volunteers in FbF, community engagement, protection, and CVA.
2. **Pre-positioning of Supplies** – Stocking of WASH kits, drought-resistant seeds, and essential non-food items.
3. **Data Preparedness** – Updating vulnerability maps and social protection databases.
4. **Awareness Campaigns** – Dissemination of early warning messages in at-risk communities.

Roles & Responsibilities and Partner National Society (PNS) Support

The Netherlands Red Cross (NLRC) has provided technical and financial support to ZRCS, particularly in cash preparedness and disaster response training.

- **ZRCS:** Leads EAP implementation, mobilizes volunteers, and coordinates with government agencies.
- **PNSs (e.g., NLRC):** Provides funding, technical assistance, and capacity-building support.
- **IFRC:** Facilitates funding through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), provides guidance, and supports coordination.

2. How the EAP will be activated – The Trigger

The Early Action Protocol (EAP) will be activated based on the following triggers:

- **Pre-trigger (July):** Issued when the ECMWF NDJ average Niño3.4 index is $\geq 0.5K$.
- **Trigger 1 (October):** Activated when ECMWF SEAS5 forecasts below-average precipitation with at least a 45% probability.
- **Trigger 2 (March-April):** Activated if the Ministry of Agriculture Crop Forecast Survey Index (CFSI) projects $\geq 40\%$ crop losses or if the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD) records more than 21 consecutive days of no rain ($>1\text{mm}$) during DJFM.

Analysis of past droughts indicates that the EAP would have been activated 10 times in the last 40 years, representing a **4-year return period**. Past droughts of similar intensity (e.g., 1992, 2001, 2015) caused significant food insecurity, water shortages, and agricultural losses.

Responsibility for Activation

- The **ZMD and Ministry of Agriculture** provide forecast and monitor the triggers.
- The **Anticipatory Action Technical Working Group (AA TWG)** oversees activation, with Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS) serving as the secretariat.
- The **Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU)** convenes the TWG to verify triggers and confirm activation.

Stop Mechanism

- If the forecast shows a declining risk (e.g., probability drops below 40% by day 10 of the 25-day lead time), an **Emergency Operations Meeting** will be convened by the **ZRCS Disaster Management Manager** to recommend stopping the activation.
- If stopped, pre-purchased **non-food items (NFIs)** will be stored for future activations, while planned activities for later phases (e.g., cash transfers) will be canceled.

Selection of Target Groups

- **Target:** 3,755 households (~22,530 people) in high-risk areas.
- Households will be identified through:
 - **Social Protection Database** (for chronically vulnerable persons).
 - **Community Selection Process**, prioritizing:
 - Child-headed households
 - Elderly and chronically ill persons
 - People with disabilities
 - Female-headed households
 - Subsistence farmers with wilting crops.

Risk Map and Intervention Area

The **intervention area** is determined based on hazard exposure, vulnerability data (e.g., Zambia Vulnerability Assessment Committee reports), and population density. Areas historically prone to drought, such as **Southern, Western, Lusaka, and Eastern Provinces**, will be prioritized.

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

Justification for the Selection of Early Actions

The early actions were selected based on:

- Their **relevance to food security, health, and livelihoods** of communities exposed to drought.
- The **capacity of the Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS)** to implement them effectively.
- Their **potential to reduce humanitarian impacts** and improve resilience.
- Their **usefulness even if the drought does not occur**, ensuring long-term benefits.

The selection process involved multiple steps, including:

- **Consultations** with key stakeholders such as the Zambia Meteorological Department (ZMD), Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), and Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Technical validation** by the Anticipatory Action Technical Working Group.
- **Community feedback** through focus group discussions to ensure social acceptability.

Verification of Feasibility

- The **ZRCS has prior experience** implementing similar interventions, including cash transfers and WASH interventions.
- A **drought feasibility study (2021)** confirmed the **logistical and operational viability** of the selected actions.
- **Past emergency responses** (e.g., 2018/2019 and 2023/2024 drought response) demonstrated ZRCS's ability to execute similar activities.

The EAP aligns with international standards, including:


- **SPHERE Standards** (WASH, Food Security, Shelter)
- **LEGS Standards** (Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards)
- **IFRC Minimum Standards for Protection, Gender, and Inclusion in Emergencies.**

Below, an overview of early actions and their expected impact:

Early Action	Description	Impact Addressed
Awareness Raising & Early Warning Messaging	Dissemination of drought early warning messages to at-risk communities through radio, and community meetings.	Increases preparedness and helps communities take preventive measures.
Rehabilitation of Boreholes	Repair and maintenance of community boreholes in drought-prone areas.	Ensures continued access to safe drinking water, reducing waterborne diseases and the burden on women and children.
Distribution of Drought-Resistant Seeds	Providing farmers with drought-tolerant maize, sorghum, and millet varieties.	Improves agricultural productivity and household food security.
Distribution of WASH Kits	Providing chlorine, jerry cans, soap, and menstrual hygiene products.	Enhances hygiene and reduces the risk of disease outbreaks.
Unconditional Cash Transfers	Providing direct cash assistance to vulnerable households.	Helps families meet urgent food and livelihood needs, reducing negative coping mechanisms like asset depletion and child labor.


These actions are structured to ensure a rapid, effective response to drought while also contributing to long-term community resilience.

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 Livelihoods	Female:	2,496	92,813
	Male:	2,304	AP Code: 007
Indicator:	4,800 people (800 HH) reached with farming inputs in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities	1. Update suppliers list to include agricultural input suppliers		

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Access to Ministry of Agriculture climate smart agriculture training materials 3. Train Agricultural Extension officers in climate smart agriculture (refresher) 4. Train farmers in climate smart agriculture 	
Prepositioning Activities:			
Priority Early Actions:		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drought tolerant seed procurement 2. Validate and register beneficiaries farming inputs 3. Warehouse Rentals (short term) 4. Seed transportation 5. Conduct Seed Distribution 	
 Multi-purpose Cash	Female:	12,166	243,425CHF
	Male:	10,364	AP Code: 081
Indicator:	22,530 people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct training of members of staff, volunteers and key stakeholders in cash distribution 2. Identify people on Social Cash Transfer list in high-risk districts 3. Identify Financial Service Provider 4. Monitor commodity prices in high-risk districts 		
Prepositioning Activities:	1. Procurement of Financial Service Provider		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transfer cash to Financial Service Provider 2. Conduct Market Assessment in intervention areas 3. Select and validate vulnerable people in intervention areas using gender, age and disability criteria 4. Distribute unconditional cash to selected people 		
 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Female:	12,166	84,464 CHF
	Male:	10,364	AP Code: 110, 111
Indicator:	22,530 people reached with WASH interventions in advance of a hazard		
Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of Red Cross volunteers on water testing and hygiene promotion 2. Formation and training of WASH committees in high-risk areas 3. Identification of borehole kit providers 		
Prepositioning Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Procurement of WASH items (Jerry cans, multipurpose soap) and solar hand lights 2. Procurement of Borehole repair Kit (standard) 3. Procurement of Disposable menstrual hygiene pads 		

Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification and mapping of potential borehole rehabilitation sites 2. Identification of households for WASH items distribution 3. Procurement of WASH item (Chlorine) and distribution 4. Community borehole rehabilitation
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 Protection, Gender and Inclusion	Female:	12,166	2946 CHF
	Male:	10,364	AP Code: 114, 116, 117

Indicator:	22,530 people reached with PGI interventions in advance of a hazard
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Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training of the staff and volunteers of the Code of Conduct and PSEA policy and on community feedback and complaints mechanisms (CFCM) 2. Update list of service providers/organization that offer specialized protection services (child protection, SGBV) to support a referral
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Prepositioning Activities:	
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Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification of the most neglected and vulnerable groups to inform selection criteria (for cash, wash, and seeds distribution) 2. Data collection tools are disaggregated by sex, age and disability 3. Sensitize community members to use established referral points
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 Community Engagement and Accountability	Female:	12,166	2455 CHF
	Male:	10,364	AP Code: 129

Indicator:	22,530 people reached with CEA interventions in advance of a hazard
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Readiness Activities:	
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Prepositioning Activities:	
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Priority Early Actions:	1. Awareness raising for communities on CFCM and reporting channels and integrity commitment of the ZRC (CoC)
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 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	Female:	12,166	10348 CHF
	Male:	10,364	AP Code: 101, 103, 105, 106


Indicator:	22,530 people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard
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Readiness Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update vulnerability data based on the latest ZVAC report 2. Review of country-wide awareness campaign materials 3. Update supply list to include agricultural input suppliers 4. Access to Ministry of Agriculture training materials 5. Training of agricultural extension officers
Prepositioning Activities:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development and translation of country-wide awareness campaign materials (WASH and Hygiene; Livestock diseases and vaccination; Drought tolerant crops, climate-smart agriculture, hydroponics; Water preservation; Drop out Schooling messages and other negative coping strategies; PSEA) 2. Printing of IEC materials in different languages
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dissemination of early warning messages in intervention areas 2. Drought tolerant seed procurement 3. Warehouse Rentals (short term) 4. Conduct seed distribution

Enabling approaches

 Coordination and Partnerships			5565 CHF
			AP Code: 118, 119, 127, 128
Readiness Activities:	1. National Technical Working Group meetings and coordination		
Prepositioning Activities	1.		
Priority Early Actions:	1.		

 Secretariat Services			44,851 CHF
			AP Code: 122
Readiness Activities:	1. Financial Charges		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Contribution to Human resources to support sustainability of EAP		

 National Society Strengthening	Female:		54984 CHF
	Male:		AP Code: 124, 125, 126

Readiness Activities:	1. Administrative cost 2. Contribution to audit 3. Contribution to accounting software
Priority Early Actions:	1. Contribution to Human resources to support sustainability of EAP

Budget



Early Action Protocol Summary

EAPcode - Zambia Red Cross Society
Zambia Drought

<u>Operating Budget</u>	Readiness	Pre-Pos Stock	Early Action	TOTAL
Planned Operations	58,438	30,446	347,568	436,452
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0	0	0	0
Livelihoods	13,095	0	79,717	92,813
Multi-purpose Cash	1,637	0	241,788	243,425
Health	0	0	0	0
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	40,923	30,446	13,095	84,464
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	2,783	0	164	2,946
Education	0	0	0	0
Migration	0	0	0	0
Risk Red., Climate Adapt. and Recovery	0	0	10,348	10,348
Community Engagement and Accountability	0	0	2,455	2,455
Environmental Sustainability	0	0	0	0
Enabling Approaches	56,816	0	48,584	105,401
Coordination and Partnerships	5,565	0	0	5,565
Secretariat Services	1,146	0	43,705	44,851
National Society Strengthening	50,105	0	4,879	54,984
TOTAL BUDGET	115,254	30,446	396,152	541,853

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)

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

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