

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ACTIVATION

Lesotho | Drought

Date: 9th September 2026



Fields in Mjanyane Moreneng, Quthing, @ LRCS

EAP №: EAP2022LS01	Operation №: MDRLS006	EAP approved: November 2022	EAP revised timeframe: 21/12/2022 - 31/12/2027
Trigger date: 04/09/2026	Early action lead time: 2 months		Early action timeframe: 6 months

Budget: 549,991 CHF
To assist: 5140 HHs (20 560 people)

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ACTIVATION

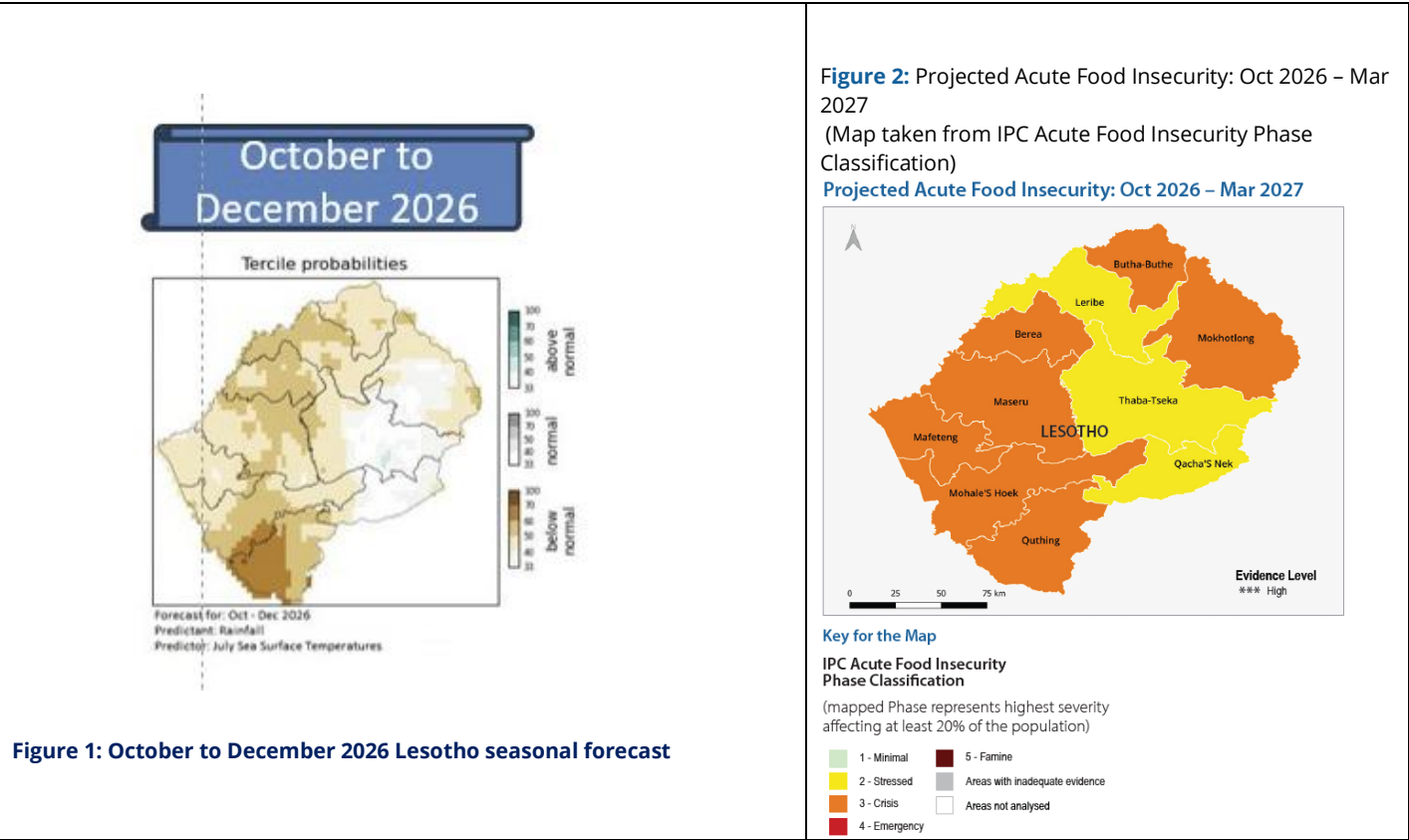


Figure 1: October to December 2026 Lesotho seasonal forecast

Activation Overview

The Lesotho Red Cross society has activated the Early Action Protocol for drought. This is based on the evolving El Niño conditions that will affect the 2026/2027 rainfall season, which is also a critical period for the country as it coincides with the main agricultural production season. The El Niño conditions are expected to influence rainfall patterns, with below-normal rainfall expected in Lesotho for the OND 2026 period (Figure 1), driven by a rapidly intensifying and very strong El Niño event. According to the Lesotho seasonal outlook issued on the 4th of September 2026, the current El Niño event is projected to peak between October 2026 and January/March 2027, coinciding critically with the planting and crop-growing season. The predicted below to normal seasonal rainfall will adversely affect agricultural production, water availability, food security and household livelihoods, particularly among vulnerable rural communities.

Food Security Situation and Expected Impact

Furthermore, according to the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC), which was published on the 03 August 2026, approximately 310,766, people (approximately 20% of the total population) is projected to experience food insecurity from October 2026 to March 2027. Of the ten analysed districts, seven are projected to be in Phase 3, while Leribe, Thaba-Tseka, and Qacha's Nek are expected to remain in Phase 2 (*as shown in Figure 2 above*). Timely interventions will be required to protect food consumption and livelihoods, particularly for poorer and vulnerable households.

Trigger Monitoring and Trigger Status

Following the regional seasonal climate outlook process, the Government of Lesotho, through the Minister of Environment and Forestry (Lesotho Meteorological Services department), officially released the seasonal outlook on 4th September 2026. The outlook indicates that normal **to below-normal** rainfall is expected for October - December 2026 season, providing an important basis for strengthening preparedness and implementing

anticipatory actions. Furthermore, during January-March 2026, **normal to above normal** rainfall is expected (Figure 3). Following the National Climate Outlook Forum (NACOF), on the 7th of September the national early warning technical working group developed early warning messages and started downscaling the climate outlook and early warning messages at district to community level. Based on the National Climate Outlook Forum (NACOF), held on 4th and 7th September 2026 the National Early Warning Technical Working Group developed key early warning messages based on the seasonal climate outlook. The group subsequently initiated the downscaling of the climate outlook and early warnings messages from the national level to district and community levels on the 8th of September 2026, to ensure that communities act based on the current seasonal outlook.

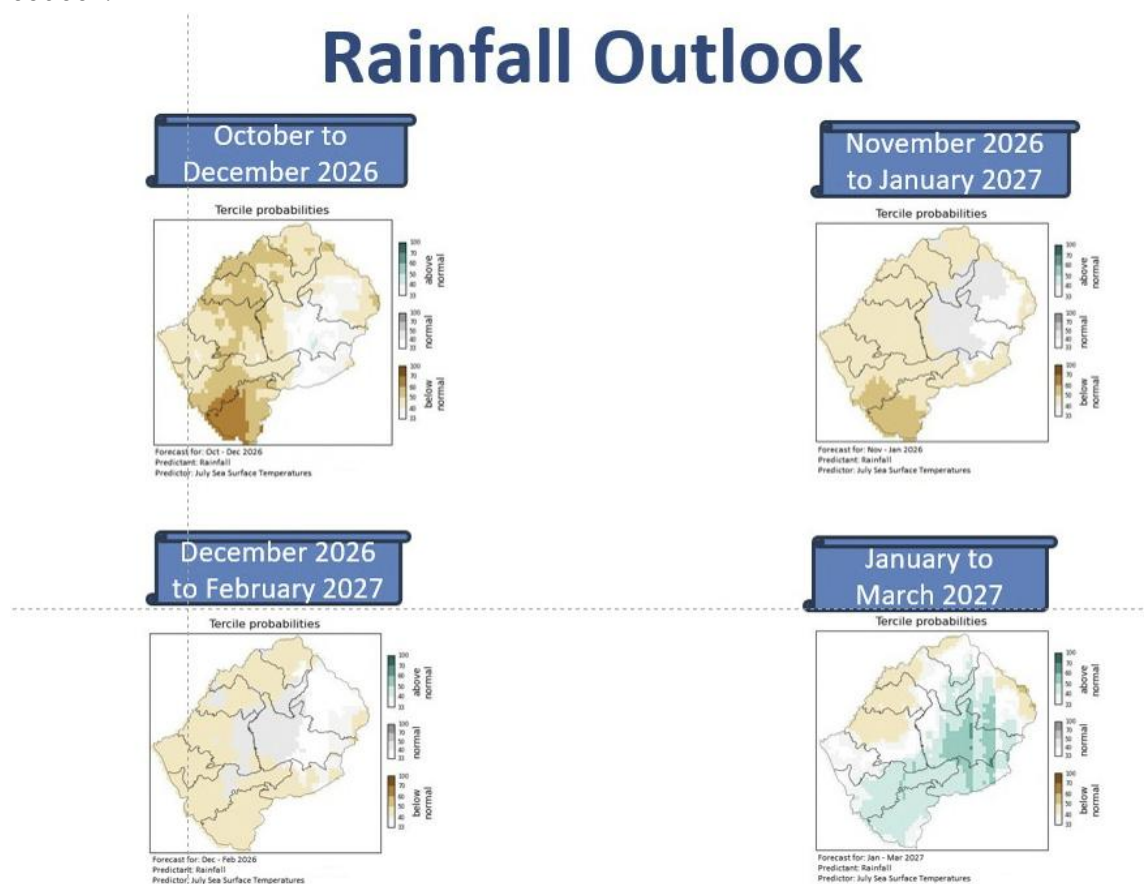


Figure 3: LMS: Rainfall Outlook snapshot

Given the above evolving and expected conditions, the September to November 2026 period has been identified as the critical timeframe by the Government of Lesotho for implementing anticipatory actions before the expected impacts of reduced rainfall become more severe. Additionally, though the LRCS Drought EAP activation trigger was set for January, the activation trigger that was indicated in the EAP has been reached as the national seasonal rainfall outlook indicates normal to below-normal rainfall is expected and the projected food insecurity vulnerability identified through LVAC analysis indicates that twenty percent (20%) of the population is in IPC 3 and IPC 4. These indicators provide sufficient evidence for Lesotho Red Cross to activate the drought EAP.

Geographical Areas for Early Action and Operational changes

The Drought Early Action Plan (EAP) targeted 2,640 households with a cash transfer of M744 per household for two months. In August 2026, as per the National multi-stakeholders Cash and Voucher Technical Working Group chaired by the Department of Social Development and co-chaired by Disaster Management Authority recommended the transfer value of M1500.00 as advised by the LVAC market analysis findings. The revision of the transfer value to M1,500 per household using the existing budget can only support approximately 1,640 households instead of the 2, 640 households that was initially planned under the current Drought EAP. This

situation is likely to force LRCS to reduce the geographical coverage from the initially planned five districts (Mafeteng, Maseru, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek) to two priority districts, selected based on vulnerability, anticipated drought impacts, food insecurity, and other relevant risk and needs assessments. This adjustment will ensure that the available resources are concentrated on the most vulnerable households while maintaining a meaningful cash transfer value and keeping the EAP financially and operationally feasible.

Timing and Duration of Early Actions

The Lesotho anticipatory action window will run from September to November 2026, allowing actions to be implemented before and during the period when the impacts of below-normal rainfall are expected to become more pronounced. The decision to activate anticipatory action is supported by the combination of:

- **Dissemination of Early Warning:** Forecast El Niño conditions forecasting normal to below normal rainfall as highlighted by the national seasonal outlook issued on 4th September 2026, forecasting normal to below-normal rainfall during October to December 2026. Further activating readiness activities and strengthening the dissemination of Early Warning.
- **Activation trigger:** The LVAC food security projections, indicating that 23% of population is already in IPC 3 and IPC 4.

Early Action Overview

PLANNED OPERATIONS

 Multi-purpose Cash (unconditional Cash transfers)	Female:	8,436	269, 989.41 CHF
	Male:	5, 784	AP Code: 081
Objective	Beneficiaries can meet their basic needs and avoid negative coping strategies.		
Indicator:	# of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	• Meet with key stakeholders to confirm UCT areas of intervention and 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 as per agreed transfer value • Monitoring, Post Distribution Monitoring 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:	19, 836	20, 715.93 CHF
	Male:	13, 424	AP Code: 101, 103, 105,106
Objective	Increased access to early warning information to 7640HH (30 560 people) through public gatherings, community radio- stations, social media platforms and community-based structures		
Indicator:	# of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	Early Warning Messages dissemination refreshing training for volunteers and community structures. Dissemination of last mile Early Warning Messages through public gatherings, community structures, community radios stations and social media platforms.		

Enabling approaches

 Secretariat Services			659.43 CHF
			AP Code: 122
Objective:	Strengthen Secretariat Service to provide technical and operational EAP implementation support to the Lesotho Red Cross Society.		
Priority Early Actions:	• Bank charges • Activation support travel		

 National Society Strengthening			6,245.88 CHF
			AP Code: 124,125,126
Objective:	Increased capacity for the NS to respond timely to drought		
Priority Early Actions:	• Volunteer insurance to cover 30 volunteers • Lessons learnt workshop • Post Distribution Monitoring • Post Activation.		

Contact information

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

In the Lesotho National Society

- **Secretary General** (or equivalent); Sechaba Mokhameleli, smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls, +266 58861206
- **Operational coordination:** Sebongile Hlubi, Operations and Disaster Management Manager, shlubi@redcross.org.ls, +266 58014081

In the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation

- **IFRC Country Cluster Delegation:** Mercy Laker, Head of Delegation, Pretoria Cluster; mercy.laker@ifrc.org, +27762387976
- **Tawonga Dalikeni**, AA Officer, tawonga.dalikeni@ifrc.org +27664242562

In the IFRC Country Cluster Delegation

- **IFRC Regional Office for AA coordinator:** Emmah Mwangi, AA Africa Coordinator, Emmah.mwangi@ifrc.org

IFRC in Geneva

- **IFRC Geneva DREF Team:** Malika Noisette, DREF Anticipatory Action Senior Officer, malika.noisette@ifrc.org

IFRC Resource Mobilization and Pledge support:

- **IFRC Regional Office for Africa:** Franciscah Kilel, Ag. Head of Strategic Partnerships & Resource Management, franciscah.kilel@ifrc.org, +254 712 867 699

For In-Kind donations and Mobilization table support:

- IFRC Africa Regional Office for Logistics Unit: Nicolas Boyrie, Head, Global Humanitarian Services & Supply Chain Management, Africa Region, DREF Lead, nicolas.boyrie@ifrc.org, +41 79 152 5147

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, Phone: +254 732 404022

Reference



Click here for:

- EAP Summary and budget: [EAP Summary](#)
- Annual reports from previous years: [EAP Update 1](#)
- [EAP Update 2](#)