



EAP №: EAP2023SZ01	Operation №: MDRSZ005	EAP approved: 15/03/2024	EAP revised timeframe: 15/03/2024- 31/03/2029
Trigger date: 09/09/2026	Early action lead time: 3 months	Early action timeframe: 5 months (Sept - Feb)	

Early action protocol Activation

Activation Overview

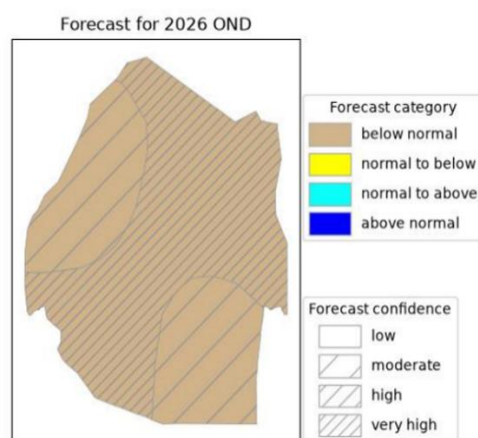


Figure 2 Seasonal forecast OND 2026

Baphalali Eswatini Red Cross Society (BERCS) has activated its Early Action Protocol for drought following National forecasts indicating a high probability of an El Niño-induced drought season in Eswatini. Seasonal outlooks and forecast monitoring conducted through the Anticipatory Action Technical Working Group (AATWG), National Meteorological Services and Regional climate information systems indicated an elevated likelihood of below-normal rainfall in the October to December season (Figure 1). This is expected to lead to reduced water availability and worsening food insecurity conditions across drought-prone areas, particularly in the Lubombo, parts of Lowveld, parts of the Highveld and Middleveld.

The trigger threshold in the Drought Early Action Protocol was reached when the OND forecast issued in

early September indicated below normal rainfall was expected. Early actions will be implemented before peak drought impacts occur during the January-March lean season.

Implementation will focus on vulnerable households who will potentially be exposed to food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and reduced access to water. Priority will be given to households headed by women, older persons, persons with disabilities, child-headed households, smallholder farmers, and households dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

Target geographical areas include drought-prone chiefdoms across the Lubombo and Shiselweni identified through EAP risk analysis, vulnerability assessments and drought monitoring systems.

Planned operations

The activation will focus only on priority early actions to reduce the anticipated drought impacts before they peak. The early action package includes cash for food, livelihoods-protection inputs, livestock support through animal-care kits and hay bales, delivery of water tanks, procurement and delivery of water, CVA post-distribution monitoring, an endline survey and a lessons-learned workshop. The approved Drought Early Action Protocol is approved under DREF appeal code MDRSZ005 with a total operational budget of CHF 539,143 to assist 10,800 people. Of this amount, CHF 103,232 is allocated for readiness and pre-positioning and CHF 435,910 for early actions once the defined triggers are met. The planned operation prioritizes multi-purpose cash assistance, livelihoods protection, water, sanitation and hygiene support, community engagement and accountability, coordination, IFRC technical support and National Society strengthening.

Under Livelihoods has an allocation The planned livelihoods, priority interventions have a budget of CHF 94,268 and will reach target 7,680 people, made up of comprising 4,608 females and 3,072 males. Priority early actions will focus on protecting household food production and livestock assets. Activities include distribution of include; cash support assistance for backyard-garden fencing material, distribution of cash for backyard-garden materials, fertilizer and pesticides, distribution of cash for animal-care kits, distribution of cash for and seeds, followed by; CVA post-distribution monitoring, and; procurement of hay bales; and distribution of hay bales to protect livestock assets before drought impacts peak.

Under multi-purpose cash, is component has the largest planned sector allocation at CHF 289,838 and targets 10,800 people, including comprising 6,480 females and 4,320 males. The priority early action is distribution of cash for food, supported by constituency and chiefdom sensitization, targeting, registration and verification. Priority early actions are distribution of cash for food, and CVA post-distribution monitoring. These activities will

support, supporting. This assistance is intended to help households to meet immediate food-security needs and reduce negative coping strategies during the drought period.

Under WASH, priority early actions will focus on improving emergency access to water in at-risk communities through delivery of water tanks to communities and procurement and delivery of water. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene has an allocation of CHF 48,935 and targets 10,800 people (estimated 6,480 females and 4,320 males).

Community Engagement and Accountability has no priority early actions listed in the EAP planned operations section. Enabling activities that approach priority early actions are categorized as preparedness or readiness are excluded from this activation summary. Limited to National Society Strengthening retains only, which includes the endline survey and lessons-learned workshop. Community Engagement and Accountability is budgeted at CHF 1,304 and reaches the same 10,800 people, including 6,480 females and 4,320 males. Activities focus on drought awareness and training on fodder production, drought-tolerant crops, destocking and animal-care kits, alongside training communities to interpret weather and drought forecasts. Enabling approaches include Coordination and Partnerships budgeted at CHF 3,834; Secretariat Services budgeted at CHF 52,091; and National Society Strengthening budgeted at CHF 48,874, covering TWG and. Coordination activities include review meetings, Technical Working Group meetings, internal coordination, and issuing drought alerts, including development of Common Alerting Protocol messages, Secretariat Services cover IFRC monitoring visits, while National Society Strengthening covers office costs, HQ monitoring visits, vehicle rental and mileage, staff cost contributions, for the Project Coordinator, Finance and Disaster Management Officer, plus an endline survey and lessons-learned workshop.

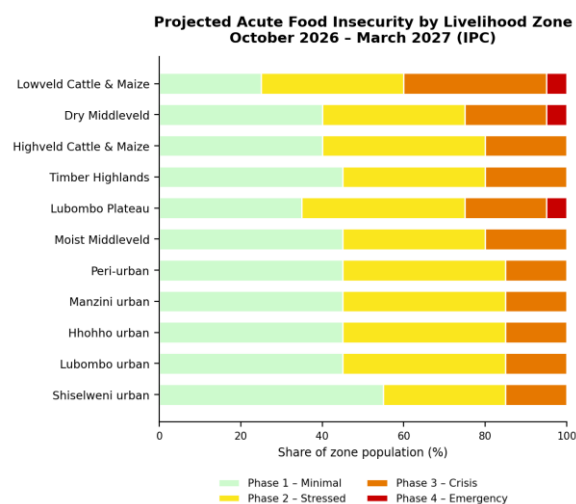
Geographical Areas for Early Action

Implementation will focus on vulnerable households exposed to food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and reduced access to water. Priority will be given to households headed by women, older persons, persons with disabilities, child-headed households, smallholder farmers, and households dependent on rain-fed agriculture.

Geographic prioritisation is narrowed to two constituencies in Lubombo Region Mhlume and Lomahasha instead of the 6 highlighted in the EAP for maximized support. The two constituencies are prioritised because of their exposure to recurrent drought and water stress, food-security vulnerability and comparatively limited household coping capacity. According to the Integrated Phase classification on food security IPC, the October 2026 to March 2027 period, approximately 286,000 people (23% of the population) are expected to face IPC Phase 3 or above, comprising 264,000 people in Phase 3 (Crisis) and 22,000 people in Phase 4 (Emergency) an 11% increase compared with the same period last year (Figure 3 below).

The Lowveld Cattle and Maize zone remains the most affected, with an estimated 97,893 people (40% of the zone population) projected to be in Phase 3 or above, followed by the Dry Middleveld and Lubombo Plateau zones (each approximately 25%) as impacted by the confirmed El Niño-induced below-normal rainfall and higher temperatures, persistently high food and fuel price hikes, and the ongoing Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak, which continues to reduce livestock productivity and household income. Timely early actions will be required to protect food consumption and livelihoods, particularly for poorer and vulnerable households in the Lowveld and Dry Middleveld zones.

Final beneficiary selection within the two constituencies will be confirmed through community-level targeting, verification and protection criteria.



**Figure 3: Projected Acute Food Insecurity, October 2026–
March 2027**

(Chart derived from IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis, Eswatini, published 31 July 2026)

 Livelihoods	Female:	4,608	CHF 94,268
	Male:	3,072	AP Code: 007
Indicator:	# of people reached with livelihoods interventions before the peak of the hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Distribution of cash for backyard gardens fencing material (trigger 1) 2. Distribution of cash for backyard gardens fertilizer and pesticides (trigger 1) 3. Distribution of cash for animal care kits (Trigger 1) 4. Distribution of cash for seeds (Trigger 1) 5. Constituency and chiefdom sensitizations 6. Targeting, registration and verification 7. CVA post-distribution monitoring 8. Procurement and distribution of hay bales (trigger 2)		
	Priority early actions only: Target: 7,680 people. Activities include cash support for backyard-garden fencing material; cash for backyard-garden materials, fertilizer and pesticides; cash for animal-care kits; cash for and seeds; CVA post-distribution monitoring; procurement and distribution of hay bales.		

 Multi-purpose Cash	Female:	6,480	CHF 289,838
	Male:	4,320	AP Code: 081
Indicator:	# of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard (10,800)		

Priority Early Actions:	1. Distribution of 3 rounds Cash for food (Trigger 1 and 2) 2. CVA post-distribution monitoring
	Target: 10,800 people. Priority early actions only: include distribution of cash for food and CVA post-distribution monitoring,, supported by constituency and chiefdom sensitization, targeting, registration and verification.

 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Female:	6,480	CHF 48,935
	Male:	4,320	AP Code: 110, 111
Indicator:	# of people reached with WASH interventions in advance of a hazard (10,800)		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Delivery of water tanks at communities (Trigger 1) 2. Procurement and delivery of water (Trigger 1 and 2) NS will monitor the situation and deliver water to specific communities in the Lubombo region for this period.		
	Priority early actions only: delivery of water tanks to communities and procurement and delivery of water. Target: 10,800 people.		

Enabling approaches

 Secretariat Services	CHF 52,091
	AP Code: 122
Objective:	The IFRC supports implementation of readiness and early actions activities.
Priority Early Actions:	1. Monitoring visits by IFRC

 National Society Strengthening		CHF 48,874
		AP Code: 124,125,126
Objective:	The National Society has the capacity to implement all planned activities on time.	
Priority Early Actions:	1. Endline survey 2. Lessons learnt workshop 3. Vehicle rental and mileage charge Readiness activities include office costs, HQ monitoring visits, vehicle rental and mileage, and staff cost contributions for the Project Coordinator, Finance and Disaster Management Officer. Priority early actions only: include an end-up-hour survey and lessons-learnt workshop.	

Contact information

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

In the BAPHALALI ESWATINI RED CROSS SOCIETY (National Society)

Operational coordination: Siphelele Mkhonta, Disaster Risk Management Coordinator,
dmcoordinator@redcross.org.sz , +268 76449151

Programmes Manager (or equivalent); Elliot Jele, jele@redcross.org.sz , +268 76088546

In the IFRC

IFRC Country Pretoria Cluster Delegation: Bongeka Mpinke Senior DM Officer +27 (0) 74 792 0279

bongeka.mpinke@ifrc.org

Tawonga Dalikeni PMER & Anticipatory Action Officer +27 (0) 664242562 tawonga.dalikeni@ifrc.org

IFRC Regional Office: Emmah Mwangi, Coordinator: Regional Anticipatory Action: Africa - Disaster and Climate Crises; Emmah.mwangi@ifrc.org , +254 720 966 680

IFRC Geneva DREF Team: Malike Noisette, DREF Anticipatory Action Senior Officer: malika.noisette@ifrc.org , +41 076 317 50 67

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

Beatrice Okeyo, Regional Head PMER, and Quality Assurance; email: beatrice.okeyo@ifrc.org. Phone: +254 732 404022

Reference



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EAP Summary and budget

Annual reports from previous years