



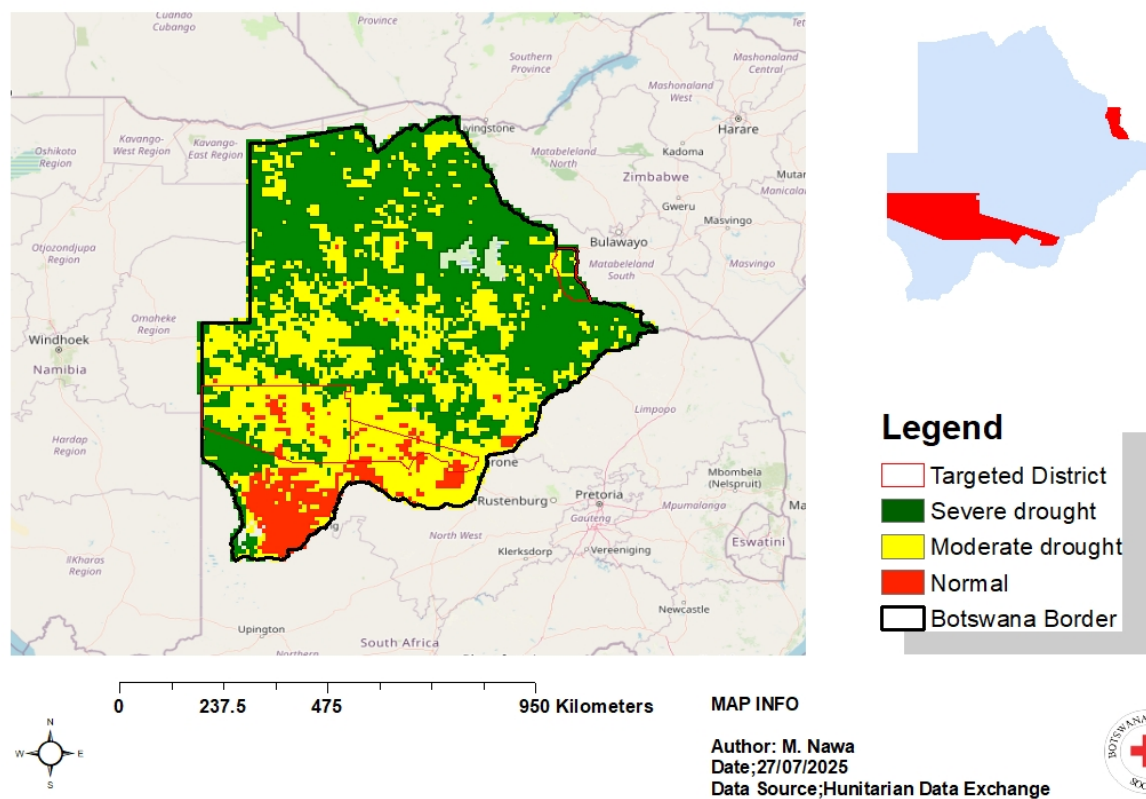
A picture of the state of water resources at the height of the drought crisis

Appeal: MDRBW005	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 499,471	Hazard: Drought	Crisis Category: Yellow
Glide Number: -	People at Risk: 37,000 people	People Targeted: 5,350 people	People Assisted: 10,238 people
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 10-06-2024	Operational End Date: -	Total Operating Timeframe: 8 months
Targeted Regions: Southern, North East			

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent

Description of the Event

Botswana Vegetation Index Anomaly Map



Vegetation Index Anomaly in DREF-Targeted Districts, Botswana – 2024

Date when the trigger was met

30-05-2024

What happened, where and when?

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and funded by the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF), undertook a critical drought response initiative. The National Society worked closely with public authorities at national, district, and local levels throughout the project implementation. Authorities facilitated project-related training and supported distribution activities. For example, in the North East District, the government provided transportation support. Additionally, private sector partners such as the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) assisted with the implementation of water infrastructure improvements. The Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) also supported the training of beneficiary households in poultry business management.

Since its launch until closure, the project successfully provided relief to 19 villages in Mabutsane, 14 in North East, and 14 in Hukuntsi, reaching a total of 47 villages. The operation was implemented from September 2024 to February 2025, and included the following interventions:

- Unconditional cash grants distributed to 549 beneficiaries, offering immediate financial relief for purchasing food and meeting essential needs.
- Livestock supplementary feeds provided to 200 livestock farmers (111 female, 89 male), supporting animal survival and reducing livelihood losses.
- Poultry asset transfer and training intended for 120 households; however, only 48 households ultimately received the poultry assets. All 120 were trained in poultry business management, with LEA providing technical training support.
- Food and hygiene packages distributed to 300 malnourished children under 5 (179 female, 121 male) for a duration of three months.
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene campaigns through weekly household visits, reaching 424 households.
- Water infrastructure improvements conducted in collaboration with WUC, including: Solarization of a borehole in Kutuku (Mabutsane District) to serve Itholoke, Khakhea, and Kutuku villages, Resuscitation of the Monong borehole in Hukuntsi, and installation of two water tanks in Matshelagabedi (North East District).



The 2023/2024 agricultural season was declared one of the most severe droughts in Botswana in the past decade. It was marked by prolonged dry spells and heatwaves, leading to widespread crop failure, livestock losses, and increased malnutrition. An estimated 72,135 individuals were affected across several districts.

In response, BRCS and IFRC launched the DREF operation on September 17, 2024, targeting Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and North-East Districts, which were identified in the 2024 Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Report as the most affected. The intervention focused on addressing food insecurity, water shortages, and disrupted livelihoods.



HH assessments and verification Betesankwe, Mabutsane District



A fully functional poultry business with Structure and layer pullets

Scope and Scale

Food security challenges intensified in the targeted regions of Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and the North East, where food shortages and livestock mortality rates were among the highest in the country. The April 2024 Department of Crop Production Report highlighted extensive crop damage, while the May 2024 Rural Development Secretariat Report revealed a 40% decline in total agricultural output compared to the previous year. This trend jeopardized the livelihoods of over 70% of rural households, most of whom depend on rain-fed agriculture. As the drought persisted, exacerbated by erratic rainfall and rising food prices Botswana, like many other Southern African countries, faced increasing difficulties in agricultural recovery and livelihood stability. Water scarcity further affected not only domestic use and farming but also livestock and wildlife survival, with over 9,000 drought-related cattle deaths reported across Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (OCHA, 2024).

The Disaster Response Emergency Fund-Drought Operation, implemented from September 2024 to February 2025, targeted communities in Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and North East Districts, where humanitarian needs were most acute. While the project initially aimed to reach 5,350 vulnerable beneficiaries (1,070 households), the successful scaling of interventions across sectors enabled the project to ultimately reach over 10,238 people with critical support. The operation focused on the sectors of food security, health, livelihoods, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), and cash assistance. Despite some implementation challenges, particularly with poultry and water infrastructure interventions, the project delivered meaningful impact. Delays in rainfall and the anticipated La Niña effects with potential for both excessive rain and flooding—had created time constraints for certain components. Nonetheless, the operation contributed significantly to drought mitigation and long-term community resilience.

Health Sector-Community consultations with District Health Management Teams (DHMTs), Village Development Committees (VDCs), and Social and Community Development (S&CD) structures revealed malnutrition as a growing crisis particularly in Mabutsane and Hukuntsi. In Inalegolo village, for example, 163 children were identified as malnourished. Despite these challenges, positive results were achieved in some areas. In Hukuntsi, direct feeding programs ensured that children received two balanced meals daily, resulting in weight gain and improved health outcomes. Similarly, in North East District, targeted interventions led to better child nutrition. However, in Mabutsane, socio-economic issues such as alcohol abuse contributed to child neglect in some households, underscoring the need for stronger community protection and more frequent monitoring visits. Across all three districts, the loss of crops and livestock eroded financial resilience. Many households were left dependent on humanitarian support and informal, part-time jobs. The 2024 operation marked the second consecutive drought, deepening household vulnerabilities and limiting their recovery capacity.

Water Sector-Access to water remained a critical issue throughout the operation. Communities endured temperatures up to 43°C, further straining limited groundwater resources. While the government deployed water bowzers, demand often overwhelmed supply, leading to long queues and inequitable access particularly for households without direct water connections. Those with standpipes consumed a disproportionate share, leaving others to rely on costly vendors. Recognizing this, the operation prioritized the solarization of boreholes, resuscitation of disused water sources, and rehabilitation of storage infrastructure. However, the scale of need outpaced available

resources, indicating the urgent necessity for continued investment in borehole drilling and water supply infrastructure beyond the project period.

Livelihoods and Livestock-Distribution of livestock feed helped sustain animal populations during the worst phases of the drought, especially for 200 livestock farmers (111 female, 89 male). However, the absence of sufficient water posed a serious threat to long-term livestock viability. The poultry business intervention, aimed at strengthening household income sources, trained 120 households in poultry farming through technical support from the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA). However, due to logistical delays, only 48 households received poultry assets by the end of the project. This gap highlights the need for better planning and follow-up support in future livelihood recovery programs.

Cash Support-The provision of unconditional cash grants to 549 households offered short-term relief, allowing families to purchase food, pay debts, and meet basic needs. However, inflation especially in food prices eroded the value of these grants. Beneficiaries expressed a desire for extended financial assistance to allow for the establishment of small businesses, which could support long-term recovery. Prolonged economic support remains essential for these households to rebuild their independence and avoid falling back into dependency. Without continued assistance, many risk remaining trapped in the cycle of poverty, further increasing their vulnerability to future shocks.

Recommendations and Way Forward:

- While the Drought Emergency Operation successfully reached 5 350 vulnerable beneficiaries (1,070 HHs) directly, over 10,238 people were in overall supported with other critical support, the worsening conditions on the ground highlighted areas requiring urgent attention. Key recommendations include:
- Health Sector: Scale up feeding programs and monitoring visits, and strengthen community-based child protection efforts, especially in households experiencing neglect.
- Water Sector: Expand borehole drilling and rehabilitation to ensure equitable and sustainable access to water.
- Livelihoods: Ensure water availability to complement livestock feed programs and complete poultry asset distribution to all trained households.
- Cash Support: Extend the duration of cash grants and adjust amounts to account for inflation and support small-scale business development.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. BW Government Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/12HsehvtCYx/
2. Botswana Meteorological Services	https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/posts/pfbid02JE6TmrGaiBQ8BdbpzPjc1AtSwHb7ygiob6WT2nLH83BexVaYSEWJfgy2FhQ6m6Tel/
3. Botswana Meteorological Services	https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/posts/pfbid02LPu5oH4ke5aHr2sN6LHfM5v6q8TzP7K5ukPAvD5uuiqFaVer2Avk2h8ocTbUim5Yl/
4. Daily Maverick	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-05-09-explainer-el-ninos-impact-and-what-to-expect-from-la-nina/
5. OCHA	https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/malawi/southern-africa-el-nino-forecast-and-impact-august-2024
6. 2019 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme Report	https://reliefweb.int/report/botswana/botswana-vulnerability-assessment-committee-results-2019
7. Sundaystandard	https://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana-records-driest-february-in-40-years/
8. 2022 SADC Synthesis Report on the State of Food and Nutrition Security and Vulnerability in Southern Africa	https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/synthesis-report-state-food-and-nutrition-security-and-vulnerability-southern-africa-2022-enpt
9. FAO	https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/country/index.jsp?code=BWA



National Society Actions

Have the National Society conducted any intervention additionally to those part of this DREF Operation?	No
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IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was actively engaged in providing technical support to monitor the drought situation, provide early warning initiatives, disaster response efforts and strengthening community resilience with the aim of ensuring that communities are well-informed and prepared to respond effectively to evolving crises. This proactive approach was in line with the IFRC's mission to alleviate human suffering and promote the well-being of vulnerable populations globally.
Participating National Societies	Netherlands Red Cross Society provided support under the Water Management and Innovation Partnership by providing support to the Gweta Community Farm, specifically in relation to water conservation. Netherlands Red Cross Society continues to invest on capacity building and information management of BRCS.

ICRC Actions Related To The Current Event

There is no ICRC presence in country.

Other Actors Actions Related To The Current Event

Government has requested international assistance	Yes
National authorities	Botswana has a well-structured drought monitoring and early warning system which utilizes drought indices and socio-economic conditions to evaluate drought risk and vulnerability. Following the declaration of a state of emergency due to drought in July 2023, the government initiated various activities, including early actions. The early action interventions, such as information dissemination and awareness messaging, were being implemented by the government with the support of the National Society (NS). As a key early action, the Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Committee (BVAC) conducted annual livelihood vulnerability assessments to guide interventions during droughts. The government also launched response programs to assist the most vulnerable communities, including support for agricultural production, a nutrition program, and a comprehensive assessment. The National Drought Assessments provided insights into the needs of districts affected by drought. BRCS engaged with the National Disaster Management Office (Ministry for State President) and the Rural Development Council (Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs) to identify gaps in current food security initiatives, determine other needs, and address them in the districts most severely affected by the drought.
UN or other actors	BRCS has been working in partnership with Palms for Life to provide food security interventions in the Okavango and North-West Districts.
Are there major coordination mechanism in place?	



The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) actively participated in both national and district-level coordination platforms to ensure an effective, harmonized response and to avoid duplication of efforts.

At the national level, BRCS is a member of the National Disaster Management Technical Committee (NDMTC), which facilitates multi-sectoral coordination in disaster preparedness and response. At the onset of the project, BRCS held inception meetings with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and the Rural Development Council to present the project and align on priorities.

At the district level, BRCS collaborated closely with District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs) in the implementation areas. These committees included representatives from the Department of Crop Production, Department of Veterinary Services, Department of Social and Community Development, Water Utilities Corporation, and other relevant local entities. The collaboration involved joint assessments, regular information sharing, and coordinated planning.

At the village level, BRCS mobilized NS Volunteers based in project areas to ensure effective information flow and community engagement. BRCS also worked closely with village extension teams, which consisted of government stakeholders such as veterinary officers, social workers, and Village Development Committees (VDCs).

This structure reflected BRCS's auxiliary role to the Government, operating in alignment with Botswana's national disaster management structure and advising the NDMO on disaster-related issues.

Needs (Gaps) Identified



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

As of early 2025, despite critical interventions such as cash assistance, livestock feed distribution, and nutritional support, livelihood recovery needs remain acute due to the prolonged and worsening nature of the drought crisis. Since the onset of the operation, the situation has deteriorated further, marked by recurrent dry spells, record-high heatwaves reaching up to 46°C, and erratic rainfall patterns that have significantly undermined recovery efforts.

The situation has been further aggravated by heavy rains experienced at the end of 2024, which triggered flash floods and caused widespread infrastructure damage across several districts, including those targeted by the operation. Although this rainfall was anticipated to bring relief, its late timing and intensity instead led to soil erosion, damage to already stressed crop fields, and disruption of fragile recovery processes.

Rainfed agricultural activities, which were a key focus of this DREF operation, continue to face severe challenges due to:

Unpredictable weather patterns

Limited water access

The collapse of seasonal crop production

Many smallholder farmers—especially those relying solely on rainfed agriculture—remain unable to restore their income-generating activities. According to an April 2024 report by the Department of Crop Production, widespread crop failures was reported in Kgalagadi, North-East, and Central Districts.

Livestock remained a vital livelihood asset. However, water shortages, deteriorated grazing conditions, and the compounded effects of veld fires and flooding immediately following the drought season have posed significant challenges. In the implementation districts of Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and North-East, livestock feed support from the operation helped sustain surviving herds. This was complemented by improved water availability brought by rains in late 2024 and early 2025, despite the concurrent flood-related impacts.



Multi purpose cash grants

Unconditional multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) reached 550 households with a transfer value of P750 (CHF 49), facilitated through Orange Botswana and Botswana Post. A post-distribution monitoring confirmed that this assistance helped cover essential needs and reduce vulnerability. However, rising food and input prices (especially for maize, sorghum, and mealie meal) have diminished the purchasing power of the grants. Consequently, the food basket value was revised from P1,000 to P1,500 (CHF 65 to CHF 97). Beneficiaries have called for the continuation and expansion of cash support, highlighting the need for longer-term livelihood support such as microenterprise development and poultry shelter reinforcement. These elements will now be prioritized in the recovery phase.





Health

Malnutrition continues to pose a serious risk, especially in drought-affected districts like Mabutsane and Hukuntsi. In villages such as Inalegolo, 163 children were identified as malnourished, emphasizing the need for scaled-up nutritional interventions. Targeted feeding programs in Hukuntsi and North East districts have shown positive health outcomes, while in Mabutsane, socio-economic issues like alcohol abuse have contributed to child neglect and worsening nutrition. Strengthened community-based protection and regular health monitoring remain essential. Despite these challenges, there have been noteworthy achievements. In Hukuntsi District, direct feeding programs ensured that children received two balanced meals daily, leading to significant weight gains and improved overall health. This close monitoring of food preparation has been instrumental in maintaining safety and nutritional standards. Similarly, in North East District, child health has shown improvement, attributed to targeted feeding interventions and community engagement. However, in Mabutsane, the situation is compounded by socio-economic challenges such as alcohol abuse, which resulted in child neglect in some households. Addressing these kind of issues requires intensified monitoring visits and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms and collaboration with key stakeholders, which was evident throughout the DREF implementation and BRCS continues to maintain these engagements.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Water scarcity remains one of the most critical and persistent challenges in the affected districts. While some improvement was achieved through project-led water supply interventions in villages such as Monong, Matshelagabedi, and Kutuku, many communities continue to struggle with inadequate and inequitable access to safe water.

Government water bowsering services remain overstretched, and households without direct access to standpipes are forced to rely on costly private water vendors. Although heavy rainfall at the end of 2024 brought some short-term relief, it did not significantly improve water availability due to:

Run-off loss from inadequate catchment infrastructure,

High evaporation rates, and the absence of sustainable water harvesting systems.

This underscores the urgent need for expanded borehole rehabilitation and new borehole drilling, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

In many regions, limited water availability forces households to prioritize cooking over hygiene, increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. The heavy rains at the end of 2024 further aggravated WASH conditions, especially where sanitation infrastructure was already weak. Across Botswana, extreme temperatures and reduced rainfall—intensified by El Niño conditions—have depleted both surface and groundwater sources.

As a semi-arid country, Botswana heavily relies on a limited number of dams, wells, and boreholes. The below-average dam and aquifer levels continue to cause intense competition for water between humans, livestock, and wildlife. This pressure is expected to worsen as the dry season extends through October, increasing the risk of total depletion in many water points.

A report by the Rural Development Secretariat notes progress in some areas, where major water supply projects improved access in previously water-stressed villages such as Metsimantsho, New Xanagas, Mahotshwane, Makobo, Jamakata, Natale, Makopong, Kokotsha, Grootlaagte, Draaihoek, Xhumo, Dimajwe, Itholoke, Ngwatle, Zutshwa, Dibete, Tewane, Toromoja, Betesankwe, and Good Hope. These communities have transitioned from critical shortages to relatively stable supply.

However, hygiene practices such as regular handwashing remain deprioritized due to water scarcity. This raises the risk of health issues such as diarrhea and skin infections, especially in children. There is therefore a critical need to strengthen hygiene education and behavior change communication across all target areas.

In all three intervention districts, access to water remains highly inequitable, especially amid continued heatwaves reaching up to 43°C. Many households rely on underground sources, but current capacity is insufficient to meet growing needs. Residents without standpipes wait in long queues, often unable to access even the minimum water required for drinking and cooking. Meanwhile, households with direct standpipe access disproportionately consume most of the available supply.

This inequity, combined with rising temperatures and growing water demand, calls for urgent action to scale up investments in water infrastructure specifically borehole rehabilitation and new drilling. Without timely intervention, water scarcity will continue to undermine both the health and resilience efforts of drought-affected communities.





Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Village leadership continues to be predominantly male, reinforcing the need for intentional efforts to promote gender equity. Community volunteer trainings and education campaigns on PGI were successfully implemented, and fully integrated with Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) approaches to ensure inclusive, safe, and equitable service delivery. Notably, most of the interventions under this operation were female-dominated across all three targeted districts, reflecting the operational strategy's prioritization of women as a means to address GBV and child neglect risks. The focus highlights a critical gap: while women are more represented in humanitarian programming, most economic opportunities remain male-dominated, limiting the broader impact of these interventions. Moving forward, there is a clear need for continuous design of more inclusive strategies that also empower men economically, to reduce household strain, promote shared responsibilities, and build more resilient and gender-balanced communities.



Education

Botswana Government has successfully managed to operate a school feeding programme that provides one meal a day and reaches all government schools. During the operation all primary schools were provided with breakfast and mid-day meal including a third meal for school going children in the remote areas; There are no needs identified in education services.



Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery

The compounding effects of drought and floods continue to degrade natural resources and livelihoods. Heavy rains at the end of 2024, while initially expected to bring relief, instead triggered flash floods and further land degradation in several regions. Therefore, emphasizing the need for:

- Climate-smart livelihoods
- Drought-resilient agriculture and livestock practices
- Tree planting and natural resource restoration
- Disaster preparedness and early warning systems

BRCS will scale up on Anticipatory Action and continue to engage with key stakeholders to ensure they pave the road to recovery for the communities that are continuously affected by these climatic shocks.



Community Engagement And Accountability

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) ensured meaningful community engagement and accountability throughout the operation by implementing several strategies. Efficient feedback and complaint mechanisms were established, and the data collected from communities was used to inform and adapt project planning and implementation. In collaboration with local authorities, public gatherings were supervised to identify and prioritize vulnerable individuals based on transparent and pre-defined selection criteria. Help desks were set up during all community interactions to facilitate two-way communication, enabling community members to voice concerns, ask questions, and provide feedback throughout the intervention cycle. This participatory approach promoted transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness, ensuring that assistance remained community-informed and contextually appropriate. It also helped prevent the exclusion of vulnerable groups and enhanced trust between BRCS and the affected communities. The feedback mechanisms played a key role in identifying emerging needs and adjusting the operational strategy accordingly.



Environment Sustainability

The drought in Botswana had severely affected agriculture, resulting in widespread crop failures, livestock losses, and food shortages. In response, it was crucial to support farmers in exploring alternative livelihood options to improve food security and build resilience to the changing climate conditions. Community resilience was strengthened through capacity building, education, and training in drought preparedness and emergency response strategies. This capacity building took the form of hands-on experience, which allowed households to gain practical skills while implementing activities. These efforts, supported by BRCS, not only helped beneficiaries understand sustainable techniques but also empowered them to apply the knowledge directly in their own communities, thereby improving their long-term adaptability and self-reliance.



Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The goal of this DREF request was to assist 5,350 individuals (1,070 households). To date, it has supported 10,238 individuals (3,106 households) in Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and the North-East District, who are facing challenges related to food insecurity, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and disruptions to their livelihoods. The assistance has been delivered through sustainable measures, including access to clean water, supplementary feeding for malnourished children, livestock feed, and multipurpose cash transfers. The operation has been extended to a total duration of eight months and incorporates emergency relief, medium-term recovery activities, and elements supporting a transition to resilience for the affected communities. The DREF allocation prioritized vulnerable and underserved populations, delivering sustainable interventions to address livelihood needs, combat malnutrition in children under five, improve access to clean water, provide multipurpose cash grants, and promote tree planting.

Operation strategy rationale

Following three consecutive years of drought, the Government of Botswana declared a drought state of emergency in July 2023. As with previous drought crises, the National Society (NS) was actively engaged with in-country resources and ECHO support to strengthen early warning systems, support food access, and conduct assessments. With the declaration of the emergency, the NS launched this DREF operation based on government assessments of the drought's impact as of July 2024 and IPC analysis.

The DREF strategy initially approved in 2023 recognized that the government was already supporting agriculture and that other humanitarian actors were operational in the country. The revised strategy incorporated updated mapping of partner engagements and focused on addressing the drought and food insecurity through a two-pronged approach: (1) emergency and medium-term assistance, and (2) a transition from emergency to early recovery with greater focus on sustainable solutions.

1) Emergency Assistance

The emergency and medium-term activities were integrated within the strategy and extended to cover a period of eight months, from June 2024 to February 2025. The emergency response was informed by the Government of Botswana's Rural Development Secretariat report dated 24 May 2024.

The operation aimed to support communities in IPC Phase 3+ who were severely affected by food insecurity and the drought's impact on livelihoods, water, and overall well-being. The intervention targeted Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and the North-East Districts, delivering immediate relief while awaiting detailed assessments from NS/IFRC.

Livelihood assistance focused on two main components:

- a) Support to 120 poultry farmers with structures, chicks, and related inputs to restart poultry production. Each household was to receive 50 chicks, poultry structures, layer cages, point-of-lay pullets, water systems, feed, egg trays, medicines, and transport. This intervention aimed to provide food and income security through rapid production.
- b) Livestock feed distribution for 200 farmers, based on findings from needs assessments and in consultation with the Department of Veterinary Services. This addressed widespread livestock loss due to pasture shortages and aimed to help farmers preserve remaining animals.

Through the extension, the NS faced significant challenges in fully implementing the poultry component. While beneficiaries received training, only 48 out of the targeted 120 farmers received the full poultry package. The shortfall was due to unfavorable market conditions and delays that limited the timely procurement of required inputs despite the extended timeline. As a result, the NS encountered funding constraints and was unable to complete this component. Stakeholder consultations will be held to inform the affected beneficiaries and mobilize additional resources to complete the activity should market conditions improve. The unutilized funds allocated for this activity will be returned to the DREF pot in accordance with financial procedures.

Despite this, the NS successfully distributed livestock feed to 200 farmers and rehabilitated three water sources—two boreholes and one water tank—contributing significantly to long-term drought recovery and resilience-building efforts.

Other completed emergency activities include:

- Training on Poultry business farmers and community leaders to promote less rain fed agricultural activities, and drought adaptation.
- Multipurpose cash assistance (MPC) was provided to 549 families to meet immediate food and basic needs over a three-month period. This was one household short of the 550 initially targeted, due to the beneficiary list provided by the authorities containing only 549 eligible households. The shortfall could not be resolved within the project timeline, and identifying and verifying an additional beneficiary at that late stage would have resulted in payment occurring outside the project's operational window.
- WASH support including the provision of hygiene materials to 300 households, installation of four water tanks, and dissemination of hygiene promotion messages covering safe water handling and handwashing.
- Health interventions that included nutrition support for 300 families, focusing on children under 5 and vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant, and lactating women. Supplement distribution and safe nutrition education were also provided.
- Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) and Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) were mainstreamed into all activities, leveraging previous NS capacity to promote inclusive and participatory implementation.

2) Transition to Early Recovery

The strategy aimed to blend the completion of emergency activities with a phased transition to early recovery, focusing on sustainability.



The NS acknowledged the seasonal overlap with ploughing and rainfall periods, which while signaling hope for agriculture did not resolve chronic drought effects.

Although the poultry support component was only partially completed, its associated training and the continued focus on water infrastructure projects remain vital to drought recovery as they:

- Offer longer-term income and food security solutions beyond seasonal dependence.
- Promote alternative livelihoods such as poultry farming, which are less water-intensive.
- Strengthen community resilience and reduce future aid dependency.
- Equip communities with practical skills for future drought preparedness.

Path for Transition and Long-Term Solutions

- The Botswana Red Cross Society is part of the Pretoria Cluster Program under the Southern Africa Climate Resilience and Food Security Solution Portfolio, which supports transitioning from emergency response to long-term resilience. This program promotes integrated, climate-smart solutions, especially for smallholder farmers, women, and youth.
- The NS aligns with the Government's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) plan by promoting long-term tree planting initiatives and is advocating for greater visibility and awareness through seasonal communication campaigns.
- The NS has actively engaged media and stakeholders to raise awareness about drought impacts and humanitarian actions. These efforts support visibility, credibility, and future resource mobilization.
- Data from post-distribution monitoring (PDM) and community feedback informed the adaptation of implementation strategies and will guide future programming. Lessons learned from this DREF operation are being used to strengthen the NS emergency teams and inform the development of the Early Action Protocol (EAP) for Drought.
- Consultations with Community-Based Organizations and cooperatives were conducted to ensure locally led approaches and improve sustainability.
- Collaboration with government departments, NGOs, and community networks remains central to ensuring sustainability beyond the DREF timeline.

Targeting Strategy

Who was targeted by this operation?

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) adopted a multi-tiered consultative approach to ensure the effectiveness and inclusivity of its planned drought intervention, targeting the most vulnerable households (subsistence farmers, elderly, child-headed HH, minority groups,) in Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and North East districts. Volunteers were deployed to conduct assessment, registration, and verification and the beneficiary list was validated by the village leadership and Village Development Committee.

Based on their input, BRCS assessed households for eligibility of the nominated families and considered: the following criteria:

- Children under 5 years diagnosed with malnutrition received supplementary feeding for 6 months.
- Children under 5 years who were had shown signs of improvement were discharged from the Supplementary Feeding Programme but they still received supplementary feeding for 6 months.
- Lactating mothers with infants under 6 months showing early signs of malnutrition received supplementary feeding for 6 months.
- Few exceptional cases were considered after careful consultations and engagements (eg, a woman had 6 malnourished children).

The selection criteria was carefully chosen to ensure that the most vulnerable populations were prioritized and that interventions were tailored to the unique needs of each community. Though everyone was in dire need, communities that had already received other forms of support were not prioritized to prevent duplication of efforts and to ensure everyone received some sort of support.

Ministry of Health facilitated all Nutrition activities, including the selection process. For farming and multipurpose cash (MPC) activities, priority was given to households experiencing heightened vulnerabilities and those whose farming activities were impacted by the drought, especially the dry spell since late 2023/2024 and as per the findings of the assessment report released.

Households meeting the social vulnerabilities listed above were prioritized, and further selection was considered on economic vulnerabilities. The economic vulnerabilities that were considered for the 550 households targeted for the MPC included families with low- or no-income generating activities, household ownership of dwellings, assets, and livestock, and the primary source of income being linked to climate performance and the frequency of existing income activities.

Additional economic vulnerabilities considered for farming assistance included farmers whose households relied on farming as their main or only subsistence activity, farmers whose livestock died in the dry spells witnessed since February 2024, etc.

Explain the selection criteria for the targeted population

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) utilized community-based targeting strategies to identify individuals eligible for assistance, ensuring active involvement of community members, local leaders, and stakeholders. Prior to initiating the targeting process, comprehensive selection criteria was discussed and collectively endorsed by community members to ensure transparency and mutual agreement.

This participatory approach empowered communities to rank households based on their susceptibility to food insecurity, ensuring that



aid was directed to those most in need. By fostering transparency and community ownership, this inclusive methodology enabled precise beneficiary identification tailored to the unique circumstances and requirements of each locality.

To ensure continuous community involvement, the National Society (NS) held regular community engagements throughout the implementation of this operation. These sessions provided a platform for community members to voice their concerns, offer feedback, and participate actively in decision-making processes.

In addition to these strategies, the NS collaborated with local leaders and stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the targeting process. This collaboration adapted and refined the approach as necessary, ensuring that interventions remained relevant and effective in addressing the specific needs of the communities.

Through this comprehensive and inclusive approach, the Botswana Red Cross Society aimed to continue building stronger and more resilient communities capable of responding to and recover from the impacts of food insecurity and other related challenges.

Age Distribution:

Botswana has a youthful population, with a higher percentage in younger age groups compared to older age groups. The age group 0-4 years had the highest share of the population, followed by subsequent age groups, with the age group of 100 years and above having the lowest share. The age distribution, particularly the presence of vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly in rural and remote areas, was considered in the selection process. Based on observations and studies, these demographic segments are considered more susceptible to the adverse effects of drought, including food insecurity, malnutrition, and health-related issues.

Gender Dynamics:

Gender dynamics play a crucial role in determining vulnerability to drought. Women and girls often bear the brunt of drought impacts, as they are primarily responsible for household water and food security. By targeting districts with a significant female population, the aim was to address gender disparities in access to relief assistance and promote gender-sensitive interventions.

Socio-Economic Activities:

Livelihood Dependence:

The livelihoods of communities in the Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and North-East Districts are predominantly based on agriculture, livestock farming, and traditional pastoralism. These socio-economic activities are highly susceptible to fluctuations in rainfall and are therefore severely impacted by drought conditions. By targeting districts where agriculture and livestock rearing are central to livelihoods, the aim is to address the immediate needs of vulnerable households facing food and income insecurity.

Income Levels:

Socio-economic indicators such as household income levels and access to employment opportunities were considered in the selection process. Communities with lower income levels and limited employment opportunities, especially women and youth, are more likely to experience heightened vulnerability during drought periods, as they may lack the financial resources to cope with the impacts of crop failure and livestock losses.

Landscape Vulnerabilities:

Environmental Degradation:

The Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and North-East Districts are characterized by semi-arid landscapes with fragile ecosystems that are particularly susceptible to environmental degradation and desertification. Drought exacerbates these vulnerabilities, leading to land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and reduced ecosystem services. By targeting districts with vulnerable landscapes, the aim was to mitigate the environmental impacts of drought and promote sustainable land management practices.

Water Scarcity:

Access to water is a critical issue in arid and semi-arid regions like the Kgalagadi and Central Districts. These areas often face chronic water scarcity, which is exacerbated during drought periods. By focusing on districts where water scarcity is a pressing concern, the aim is to prioritize interventions that address immediate water needs, such as the rehabilitation of water sources and the provision of water-saving technologies.

Within these three districts, BRCS collaborates closely with the Social and Community Development (S&CD) Offices and Health Centres to select specific villages and communities (households) eligible for either cash transfers or food packages. This response employed the eligibility criteria used by the S&CDs for various social protection systems provided by the government, including the Vulnerable Group Feeding programme, the Orphan Care programme, and the Destitute Persons programme.



Total Assisted Population

Assisted Women	6,735	Rural	100%
Assisted Girls (under 18)	176	Urban	0%
Assisted Men	3,216	People with disabilities (estimated)	10%
Assisted Boys (under 18)	111		
Total Population Assisted	10,238		
Total Targeted Population	5,350		

Risk and Security Considerations (including "management")

Does your National Society have anti-fraud and corruption policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy?	No
Does your National Society have child protection/child safeguarding policy?	No
Does your National Society have whistleblower protection policy?	Yes
Does your National Society have anti-sexual harassment policy?	No

Please analyse and indicate potential risks for this operation, its root causes and mitigation actions.

Risk	Mitigation action
Gender Based Violence & Child Protection issue.	NS integrated PGI across all activities. Awareness sessions and capacity-building on SGBV and child protection were conducted. NS teams were trained to observe protection minimum standards and refer cases as needed.
Delays in cash transfers- Inaccurate beneficiary data and technical limitations in mobile payment coverage in remote areas	Beneficiary information was pre-verified before transfers. In areas where mobile money or digital payments were not feasible, the NS adopted alternative delivery methods such as cash-in-hand distributions through secure and monitored setups. These ensured timely access to assistance despite infrastructure gaps.
Market and limited supply affecting poultry support- Fluctuating prices and poor availability of poultry materials due to supplier constraints and inconsistent market performance	NS adjusted timelines and delivered to 48 beneficiaries out of 120 targeted. Remaining funds for this component are being returned to the DREF. NS will engage stakeholders and pursue future funding if markets stabilize.
Seasonal risks: Early and heavy rains (late 2024 – early 2025)	The extension of the project enabled the NS to adjust timelines and respond flexibly. It also allowed the NS to extend support to drought-affected households who began experiencing flood impacts, contributing to dual-shock resilience
Change of Government- Transition in national leadership and potential shifts in priorities	NS maintained ongoing coordination and aligned activities with national humanitarian and development frameworks.

	Relationships were built with relevant government departments to ensure operational continuity.
Beneficiary security.	NS used CEA tools to sensitize communities ahead of distributions, coordinated with local leadership, and ensured clear distribution protocols.
Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation: There were no security concerns.	
Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?	Yes

Implementation



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 201,802

Targeted Persons: 1,100

Assisted Persons: 248

Targeted Male: 96

Targeted Female: 152

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of households to receive support to farming activities - focusing on poultry support.	120	48
# of farmers to receive livestock feeds.	100	200
PDM survey covering the livelihood support.	1	1
# of farmers selected for support with chicken layers package	120	48
# of farmers selected for support with feeding supplements for livestock	100	200

Narrative description of achievements

Under the Livelihoods and Basic Needs sector, the operation aimed to support 200 farmers through livestock feed distribution and 120 beneficiaries through a poultry project initiative.

- **Livestock Feed Support**

All 200 targeted farmers received livestock feed, which included lucerne, mineral blocks, and beef finisher. Beneficiaries reported noticeable improvements in livestock health and physical condition, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention in mitigating the impact of prolonged drought on household livelihoods.

However, despite this success, limited access to water during the dry season remained a significant constraint to sustaining livestock health. This insight has informed future planning around integrated livestock and water support.

- **Poultry Project Implementation**

The poultry initiative was designed as a long-term livelihood solution, aimed at reducing reliance on rain-fed agriculture, improving food security, and offering sustainable income opportunities.

All 120 beneficiaries were successfully identified and trained on poultry production and small business management. The Northeast District saw notable progress, with 48 of the planned 48 coops constructed in that area.

However, across the wider project, only 48 out of 120 poultry shelters were completed. The shortfall was attributed to:

- o Supplier stock shortages, particularly for chicken housing materials.



- o Severe flooding between January and February 2025, which disrupted supply chain.
- Impact of Natural Disasters.

Lessons Learnt

- A key lesson from this operation was the importance of proactive planning and supplier engagement to ensure timely availability of resources. Establishing long-term agreements and securing commitments in advance which can help mitigate stock shortages and supply chain delays.
- Implementing policies to allow early procurement, particularly for critical inputs such as poultry pullets and livestock feed, is crucial in preventing disruptions due to market fluctuations to counteract against late transfer of funds from donors.
- The interventions under this component provided a diversified income source for beneficiaries, reducing reliance on rain-fed agriculture. Furthermore, active community involvement fostered a sense of ownership and ensured sustainability, while adaptive implementation strategies enabled timely adjustments in response to unforeseen challenges.
- Strengthening logistics and distribution networks, including working with multiple suppliers and decentralizing storage to counteract transportation logistical constraints.

Challenges

As with any large-scale intervention, logistical constraints, supply chain delays, and market conditions presented challenges in implementation. Some delays in feed distribution occurred due to supplier stock shortages.

- Delays in distribution of the complete supplementary livestock feed package.
- The Project completed 48 out of the targeted 120 chicken projects due to supplier stock shortages and frequent floods that disrupted supply chains.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 90,231

Targeted Persons: 550

Assisted Persons: 549

Targeted Male: 125

Targeted Female: 424

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of households who successfully received cash for basic needs after being identified and processed for transfer.	550	549
% of households who report being able to meet the basic needs of their households, according to their priorities (Min Exp Basket)	100	85
# of households assessed and registered for cash	550	549

Narrative description of achievements

To address the severe impact of ongoing drought on rain-fed livelihoods, the BRCS launched a targeted MPCA initiative across Hukuntsi, North-East, and Mabutsane. The program aimed to empower vulnerable households to meet their basic needs—especially food, water, and hygiene—through flexible cash grants.

Collaborative Delivery

In partnership with Orange Botswana and Botswana Post, beneficiaries were given the freedom to choose their preferred financial service provider, ensuring accessibility and dignity in aid delivery, thereby ensuring a successful cash disbursement with all beneficiaries receiving their cash

Reach and Satisfaction



549 households successfully received cash assistance, the initial target was 550 HHs, but upon consultations, verification and registration 549 HHs were eventually selected to be direct beneficiaries of the project. Beneficiaries overwhelmingly appreciated the timeliness of the transfers. Regarding the transfer amount (P750):

- 6 were very satisfied
- 4 were satisfied
- 1 was somewhat satisfied

Use of Cash Transfers

Findings from Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) revealed that for 85% of the HH, the cash was primarily used to cover immediate needs, with potential for future investment in productive assets.

Top spending categories:

Food: 91% of households used the cash to secure daily meals.

Hygiene items: 82% prioritized sanitation and personal care.

Clothing: 55% addressed household and personal needs.

Additional uses included:

Debt repayment (2 households)

Medical expenses, Education costs, Shelter improvements (1 household each)

Sharing with relatives or friends (1 household)

This initiative not only helped families cope with immediate hardships, but also laid the groundwork for longer-term recovery and resilience.

Lessons Learnt

- The initiative demonstrated the effectiveness of cash-based interventions in enhancing community resilience, offering dignified and flexible support to households affected by extreme drought conditions.
- The post-distribution survey, reported 100% satisfaction among beneficiaries, it emphasized the effectiveness of cash assistance in enabling households to meet their basic needs during crises.
- Future interventions should integrate stronger pre-identification mechanisms, alternative verification methods, and community-based financial literacy initiatives to further enhance efficiency and impact.

Challenges

- Some beneficiaries lacked national identification cards and mobile phones posed a challenge on disbursements of funds hence adaptive measures employed , included engaging village chiefs for verification and providing SIM cards for mobile money registration, ensured inclusive of all persons in need.



Budget: CHF 55,607

Targeted Persons: 1,500

Assisted Persons: 10,238

Targeted Male: 3,327

Targeted Female: 6,911

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of households to be assessed and enrolled with children under 5 malnourished	300	300
Support under 5 children malnourished with food.	300	300
# of people reached with messages on feeding practices, includes parents, mothers, women and families head.	1,500	10,238



Support vulnerable groups and malnourished people with food supplement	15	15
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Narrative description of achievements

The Health & Care component aimed to address malnutrition stemming from food insecurity caused by drought hardships, specifically targeting children under the age of five to improve their health status. Food and nutrition packages were successfully distributed to 300 households, focusing on malnourished children under 5, as per the set target. The supplier provided consistent and timely deliveries, ensuring smooth distribution with no delays. Beneficiaries and health authorities expressed satisfaction with the food packages, reporting improvements in children's health, particularly in terms of weight gain. In addition to food distribution, volunteers were trained and engaged in nutrition education, emphasizing Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices. The program also expanded its scope by including epidemic prevention messages, particularly related to malnutrition and diarrheal diseases, to mitigate health risks in vulnerable communities. The health component of the operation focused on improving the nutritional status and overall well-being of vulnerable children and other at-risk groups. Significant achievements were recorded, particularly in supplementary feeding and disease prevention, as outlined below:

- Completion of Supplementary Feeding Distribution: The distribution of food packages was successfully concluded on 11 December 2024, as initially planned. Unlike other interventions that experienced procurement delays, the supplier for food items consistently delivered the full packages on time and even supported last-mile delivery to villages. This strong supplier relationship enabled the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) to meet all deadlines without delay.
- Positive Health Impact: Feedback from beneficiaries and local health authorities confirmed that the food packages contributed to noticeable improvements in children’s health. Most caregivers reported weight gain in children under 5, demonstrating the effectiveness of the intervention. However, beneficiaries highlighted that the quantity of food should be increased to cover the full intended 4-week period and maximize impact.
- Beneficiary Identification and Registration:Based on data from community health workers and health facilities, 300 vulnerable individuals were registered for the intervention. This included 285 malnourished children under 5, 15 vulnerable individuals from groups such as female-headed households, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and 2 pregnant women with nutritional deficiencies.
- Nutrition Messaging and Education:Volunteers were briefed on nutrition and tasked with delivering messages on Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices (OIYCFP).These messages were disseminated weekly during household visits and food distributions.Special focus was placed on mothers of children under 5 and at-risk women, including pregnant and lactating women.Community women’s groups, Child Welfare Clinics (CWCs), and monthly health facility visits were also used to extend the reach.
- Use of Digital and Community Channels for Health Messaging:
- In addition to in-person communication, social media platforms such as Facebook were used to disseminate key nutrition and health messages. By end of the DREF operation, the top-performing post reached 10, 238 users, significantly increasing visibility on optimal infant and young child feeding practices.

Specific to feeding practices, 4 714 parents were reached in person, especially mothers and heads of HH were reached with key information to ensure children and families are health and eating nutritious food.

- Additionally, 424 individuals were reached through door-to-door campaigns conducted by trained volunteers, which covered drought-related topics, including WASH and feeding practices. These efforts were reported under both the Health and WASH sectors due to their cross-cutting nature, however, to avoid double counting, these individuals are not counted twice in the total number of people reached across the operation.
- Disease Prevention Awareness: Volunteers and caregivers were trained to incorporate epidemic prevention messaging, focusing particularly on diarrheal diseases, which have been recurrent in drought-affected communities. These messages were integrated with hygiene promotion activities to reinforce the link between nutrition, clean water, and health.
- In overall, the intervention supported 10 238 people through health messaging in collaboration with WASH.

Lessons Learnt

- For future interventions with regular monitoring of food supply needs, along with adjustments to the quantities based on community feedback, will be crucial.
- Community-based approaches were particularly effective, as demonstrated by the engagement of trained volunteers and local representatives, which facilitated direct communication with beneficiaries.
- Integrating nutrition education with epidemic prevention messages provided a comprehensive health response that addressed both immediate and long-term health concerns, such as malnutrition and disease prevention.
- Direct feeding at health posts or by community groups helped to achieve the objective of improving the health status of children, especially by addressing issues like child neglect and gender-based violence (GBV).



Challenges

- The program also faced difficulties in ensuring full participation from vulnerable groups, such as expectant mothers and elderly individuals who were identified for supplementary feeding.
- Health professionals in a post-distribution monitoring survey revealed that issues like child neglect contributed to some children not showing improvements in their health and well-being.
- Malnutrition in children is a multi-dimensional issue that may be caused by other factors such as child negligence, alcohol and substance abuse. Mobile populations in areas such as Sese also make it difficult to follow-up and monitor children's progress.
- Food packages were not sufficient for communal household settings.
- Delays in collection of packages by some households necessitating a need for warehouse. In Sese, kgotla facilities were utilized as a warehouse.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 41,270

Targeted Persons: 4,250

Assisted Persons: 10,238

Targeted Male: 3,327

Targeted Female: 6,911

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of water tanks to be procured and installation in the two Districts.	4	2
Mapping or Assessments conducted for villages with water scarcity.	2	3
# of awareness raising on community water management.	2	3
#of people reached through Door-to-Door WASH campaigns	850	424
# of boreholes rehabilitated.	3	2

Narrative description of achievements

• The WASH sector made significant strides in improving water access and sanitation across the target districts of Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and North-East as a result 10,238 people were reached with various WASH messaging and through campaigns. Three comprehensive assessments of water sources were completed in the 3 districts, leading to a collaborative effort with the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC). The partnership between BRCS and WUC enabled the identification and mapping of critical water needs, directly benefiting vulnerable communities as a result 2 boreholes could be rehabilitated instead of 3 because the planned third one needed to be reinstalled and 2 water tanks instead of 4 could be procured to support the vulnerable communities, additionally budgetary constraints led to the prioritization of the 2 boreholes instead of 3 for immediate rehabilitation and 2 water tanks instead of 4 which hugely impacted the broader scope of the planned infrastructure developments.

• Key developments include:

Rehabilitation of 2 boreholes in Kutuku and Monong.

• Kutuku (Mabutsane District): The solarization of the borehole improved water supply to the villages of Itholoke, Khakhea, and Kutuku. This project directly served 3,439 people.

• Monong (Hukuntsi District): The rehabilitation of the Monong borehole provided a sustainable water supply to over 1,800 residents in the village.

• North-East District (Butale and Matshelagabedi districts) benefited from two 5,000-litre Jojo tanks, which served the village's population of 3,986. The tanks improved water storage capacity and availability, especially during times of system breakdowns, 3 community awareness campaigns were done to support and emphasize on the importance of water management.

• During the drought awareness campaigns, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) messaging played a crucial role in promoting safe practices and minimizing health risks. Messages on WASH covering topics like Water Conservation, Water storage, Hygiene promotion,



Waste management, Disease Prevention and Community Resilience were distributed through posters in the three districts, and volunteers conducted awareness sessions on the same topics in public places such as clinics and Traditional meeting places.

- 424 people were directly reached with door-to-door WASH campaigns instead of 850 due to availability of people when volunteers were doing the door-to-door campaigns, however the WASH messaging vis sms, through posters and with support from community leaders ensured that everyone in the community had access to the information.

Lessons Learnt

- Engaging local communities early in the assessment and planning phases ensures the interventions are aligned with their needs and enhances the effectiveness of the interventions.
- Given the constraints, it is essential to remain flexible in the allocation of resources and adjust the activities based on priority needs as they evolve. This has been particularly useful in optimizing the impact of available funds.
- Long-term success depends on ensuring that the infrastructure is not only functional but also resistant to future shocks. The rehabilitation of existing water systems in this project exemplifies this approach.
- The collaboration with WUC has been instrumental in identifying and addressing the most pressing water issues in the targeted districts. Future projects should prioritize such partnerships to ensure the sustainability of water supply solutions.

Challenges

- Despite the identified needs, budgetary constraints led to the prioritization of 2 boreholes instead of 3 for immediate rehabilitation and 2 water tanks instead of 4 which hugely impacted the broader scope of the planned infrastructure developments.
- There were some delays in the procurement of materials and equipment, which have slowed the implementation of water infrastructure improvements.
- In remote areas, it remains a challenge to deliver WASH education and infrastructure in a timely manner due to geographical and logistical factors.
- The planned rehabilitation of the Butale Dam which would make 3 water sources resuscitated as per the indicators could not be implemented due to financial constraints. During technical assessment, it was established that the cost of rehabilitating the dam far exceeded the available budget under this DREF operation. The maintenance and rehabilitation needs were more extensive than initially anticipated, requiring structural repairs and engineering works that were beyond the scope of the allocated resources.

Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 7,317
Targeted Persons: 210
Assisted Persons: 10,238
Targeted Male: 3,327
Targeted Female: 6,911

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers and staff trained.	50	50
# of community leaders and community influencers trained.	150	26

Narrative description of achievements

Overall, the DREF intervention supported 10,238 people because there were very strong PGI considerations throughout the implementation of the DREF. For community support 50 volunteers and 26 community leaders and influencers were trained on Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) from the 9th to the 10th of September 2024. Unfortunately the 150 target for Influencers and community leaders was not reached due to the unavailability of the targeted community leaders and community influencers. The training aimed to sensitize and equip frontline actors with the knowledge to recognize and respond to the distinct needs of vulnerable groups especially women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly during the drought response. Among community influencers, were traditional leaders and public authorities who were equipped to challenge stigma, identify protection risks, and champion inclusive practices in their communities. Most of the interventions under this operation were female-



dominated across all three target districts, reflecting the operational strategy's prioritization of women as a means to address GBV and child neglect risks.

Lessons Learnt

- This led to the important lesson that future interventions must allocate dedicated time and resources to PGI capacity building especially at the community leadership level to deepen impact and meet training targets.

Challenges

- Despite success implementation, a key challenge was the limited time allocated for the training. Conducting only one combined session due to project constraints limited the depth of engagement and restricted wider community influencer participation.
- The underachievement of some PGI indicators is primarily due to the cross-cutting nature of Protection, Gender, and Inclusion, which is typically mainstreamed across other sectors rather than implemented as a standalone component. In this operation, PGI was integrated into the broader humanitarian response activities such as livelihoods, health, and cash assistance. This approach, while promoting inclusivity and dignity, made it difficult to isolate and directly implement certain PGI activities due to time constraints and the high volume of multi-sectoral interventions.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 7,665

Targeted Persons: 5,350

Assisted Persons: 6,005

Targeted Male: 2,001

Targeted Female: 4,004

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people engaged and reached with CEA activities.	5,350	6,005
# of consultation meetings.	6	23
% of feedback collected that are successfully treated or responded to.	100	72
# of needs assessment which includes information gathered from affected people.	2	2

Narrative description of achievements

- The initiative was launched with high visibility, spearheaded by a national announcement by the Secretary General/CEO through various media platforms to raise awareness and foster transparency.
- 50 volunteers were trained in Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), enhancing the capacity of the Botswana Red Cross Society to implement inclusive and people-centred drought response interventions. These volunteers, most of whom are from the project sites, played a pivotal role in ensuring community participation and trust throughout the project.
- 154 key stakeholders including government departments (Crop Production, Veterinary Services, Social Development), local authorities, community leaders, and village development committees were continually engaged across all phases of the project, ensuring coordinated efforts, local ownership, and the smooth implementation of project activities., including government departments (Crop Production, Veterinary Services, Social Development), local authorities, community leaders, and village development committees—were engaged across all phases of the project.
- Significant effort was placed on stakeholder and district leadership engagement, with 23 consultative meetings held across key stakeholders and local authorities. These efforts facilitated multisectoral coordination and led to the identification and prioritization of intervention areas in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Committees (DDMCs). This early engagement laid the foundation for successful project implementation by fostering trust and a shared understanding of project goals.
- Feedback mechanisms were initiated during the distribution of relief packages, with informal but meaningful engagements capturing



community concerns and suggestions. While a more systematic feedback mechanism was planned for the lesson learnt workshop, the feedback yielded from post distribution monitoring (72% of responses) has already been acknowledged and addressed. Community satisfaction was notably high, with leaders and residents requesting the extension and expansion of the intervention due to its visible positive impacts as per the PDM report.

- CEA-led focus group discussions before project launch ensured that interventions were contextually appropriate and aligned with community needs and lifestyles. Post-distribution monitoring also used CEA tools to gather actionable feedback, resulting in iterative learning and operational refinement.
- Overall 6,005 people were reached with CEA activities.

Lessons Learnt

- For future interventions, its important to strengthen community engagement through conducting Kgotla meetings to increase awareness on the project and manage community perceptions because it helped during the implementation of this project.
- There is need for continued physical engagement with key stakeholders including joint activities such as joint distribution and monitoring visits with the relevant district level authorities for improved ownership and accountability.
- Enhance reporting through linkages to district or national reporting systems.

The decision to introduce direct feeding in local health facilities in Mabutsane and to integrate it into the existing direct feeding programme in Hukuntsi helped to extend the project for children with persistent malnutrition such that these children will continue to get support even after the completion of this project.

- There is need to explore alternative livelihood strategies that have lower climate vulnerability.
 - Expand the supplementary livestock feed package to include other aspect of livestock health such as provision of livestock vaccines and training on animal production.
- The NS acknowledges the importance of early, multisectoral stakeholder engagement and they will ensure it is done for all future projects.
- Village leadership played a significant role in mobilizing communities and working in collaboration with them helped to ensure smooth implementation.
 - There is dire need for systematic feedback systems to supplement informal methods.

Challenges

- Vastness of the geographical coverage, which limited structured feedback collection, and the strong community desire for prolonged assistance due to widespread drought impacts.



Budget: CHF 14,633
Targeted Persons: 46
Assisted Persons: 46
Targeted Male: 20
Targeted Female: 26

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits conducted and reported.	4	4

Narrative description of achievements

- The Project was kick started with an internal inception meeting for all the different teams that were involved in the project implementation.
- In December 2024, separate IFRC and Red Cross monitoring visits totalling to (4) were carried out in North-East, Hukuntsi and Mabutsane districts, engaging the same target communities.
- The Delegation had monthly coordination calls with the BRCS to ensure support was made available, considering the drought response was multi-sectorial the IFRC delegation was giving support from the different departments to ensure that all areas of implementation were given priority and expert opinion.



Lessons Learnt

There was good collaboration between the IFRC and BRCS which enabled smooth implementation and this is well encouraged.

Challenges

- There were no challenges were encountered.



Budget: CHF 80,947
Targeted Persons: 5,350
Assisted Persons: 10,238
Targeted Male: 3,327
Targeted Female: 6,911

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of meeting for technical and supervision.	4	9
# of Lessons learnt workshop.	1	0
# of monitoring visits reported.	9	9
# of Post distribution monitoring.	1	1
#of volunteers insured	36	50

Narrative description of achievements

The DREF was a success, reaching a total of 10,238 vulnerable people across all the different interventions. Throughout the operation, nine (9) internal multi-departmental meetings were held. These meetings facilitated project alignment, updates and, and ensured that every step of the project was well-coordinated and thoughtfully executed which offered us a chance to hear directly from the communities we served. Their honest feedback gave us meaningful insights that will help us improve future responses. In addition to the internal meetings, 9 monitoring visits were conducted to ensure smooth operation on the ground, translating what would have been discussed in the departmental meetings. The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) leveraged this DREF operation to strengthen its institutional capacity, visibility, and community engagement. Below are the key achievements under National Society Development:

- Community Awareness & Sustainability Initiatives; The operation scaled up nutrition and hygiene messaging to ensure community ownership and trigger preventive action. Volunteers delivered messages in clinics, kgotlas, and on public notice boards, helping communities adopt improved feeding practices and hygiene behaviors. These efforts helped to address previous gaps in nutrition interventions and contributed to community-level resilience.

- Media Engagement and Visibility

To increase awareness and visibility of its humanitarian actions, BRCS actively engaged with national media through various media platforms: Print Media: Featured in Daily News, Midweek Sun, and The Gazette, Television: Aired on BTV (Botswana Television) on 24 July 2024, Radio: Participated in multiple radio interviews between 22–26 July 2024, including on RB1, RB2, and Gabz FM, Social Media: Gained continental reach through a feature on the IFRC Africa X page and International Exposure: Gained recognition through the EU Humanitarian Aid platform, highlighting DREF-supported drought interventions in Botswana.

- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

A Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) was conducted in December 2024, following the second distribution.

The M&E covered: 94 persons reached via household interviews and FGDs,11 cash transfer beneficiaries,23 food and hygiene package recipients,18 livestock feed beneficiaries,42 FGD participants (35 women, 7 men) from diverse socio-economic backgrounds across 4 focus groups in Mabutsane and Hukuntsi. The findings informed final learning and accountability measures at the close of the three-month distribution cycle.

- Duty of Care and Operational Support



Operational, technical, and supervision teams received briefings on intervention requirements and planning. Volunteers were insured and additionally, 50 branding materials (50 units) for the volunteers and staff were procured and distributed to ensure visibility and safety during fieldwork.

Lessons Learnt

- The voices of our community's matter. Their feedback helps us not only see what worked but also where we can do better. Building these feedback loops into every operation strengthens both trust and impact.

Challenges

Botswana experienced widespread floods from 19–21 February 2025, just days before the scheduled Lesson Learned Workshop (20–21 February) and the project closure date (28 February 2025). As a result, the workshop was cancelled, and several final activities were disrupted.

These unforeseen events, combined with market volatility and logistical constraints, led to a partial implementation of the poultry component and contributed to expenditure falling below 90% of the allocated budget.

One key indicator that was not achieved was the Lessons Learnt Workshop, which had a target of 1 but recorded 0. The underachievement was due to time, logistical constraints and other concerns mentioned and the risk and consideration section towards the close of the implementation period. However, the budget allocated for this activity was not utilized and will be returned to the DREF pot, in line with financial accountability and IFRC DREF procedures.



Financial Report

Please explain variances (if any)

AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction had a 98% variance due to PSSR charges that were budgeted here. But the actual PSSR costs were charged to the different output codes.

AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs had a 24% variance because the DREF completed 48 out of the targeted 120 chicken projects due to supplier stock shortages and frequent floods that disrupted supply chains. Additionally, the planned Lesson Learnt Workshop (planned for 20-21 February 2025) was cancelled because of severe nationwide floods on 19,20 and 21 February 2025, close to the project's closure date on 28 February 2025. Despite the NCE, some activities could not be done due to severe floods.

SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC had a 68% variance because the planned lessons learnt workshop was cancelled due to severe floods in the country. Some functions were unable to join the monitoring visits.

By the end operation, a balance of CHF 95,485 will be returned to the DREF pot.



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

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[Click here for reference](#)



DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRBW005 - Botswana - Drought

Operating Timeframe: 10 Jun 2024 to 28 Feb 2025

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRBW005
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 04/Aug/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Summary

Opening Balance	0
Funds & Other Income	499,471
DREF Response Pillar	499,471
Expenditure	-403,986
Closing Balance	95,485

II. Expenditure by area of focus / strategies for implementation

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
AOF1 - Disaster risk reduction	30,484	467	30,017
AOF2 - Shelter			0
AOF3 - Livelihoods and basic needs	274,209	206,310	67,899
AOF4 - Health	52,213	55,607	-3,394
AOF5 - Water, sanitation and hygiene	38,751	41,270	-2,519
AOF6 - Protection, Gender & Inclusion	6,870	7,317	-447
AOF7 - Migration			0
Area of focus Total	402,527	310,971	91,556
SFI1 - Strengthen National Societies	83,204	88,633	-5,430
SFI2 - Effective international disaster management			0
SFI3 - Influence others as leading strategic partners			0
SFI4 - Ensure a strong IFRC	13,740	4,382	9,358
Strategy for implementation Total	96,944	93,015	3,929
Grand Total	499,471	403,986	95,485

DREF Operation

FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT

MDRBW005 - Botswana - Drought

Operating Timeframe: 10 Jun 2024 to 28 Feb 2025

Selected Parameters			
Reporting Timeframe	*	Operation	MDRBW005
Budget Timeframe	*	Budget	APPROVED

Prepared on 04/Aug/2025

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Expenditure by budget category & group

Description	Budget	Expenditure	Variance
General Expenditure	13,740	4,553	9,187
Travel	13,086	4,553	8,533
Financial Charges	654		654
Contributions & Transfers	455,247	374,777	80,470
Cash Transfers National Societies	455,247	374,777	80,470
Indirect Costs	30,484	24,656	5,828
Programme & Services Support Recover	30,484	24,656	5,828
Grand Total	499,471	403,986	95,485