

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL OPERATIONS UPDATE

Ethiopia | Drought

Date 29/10/2025



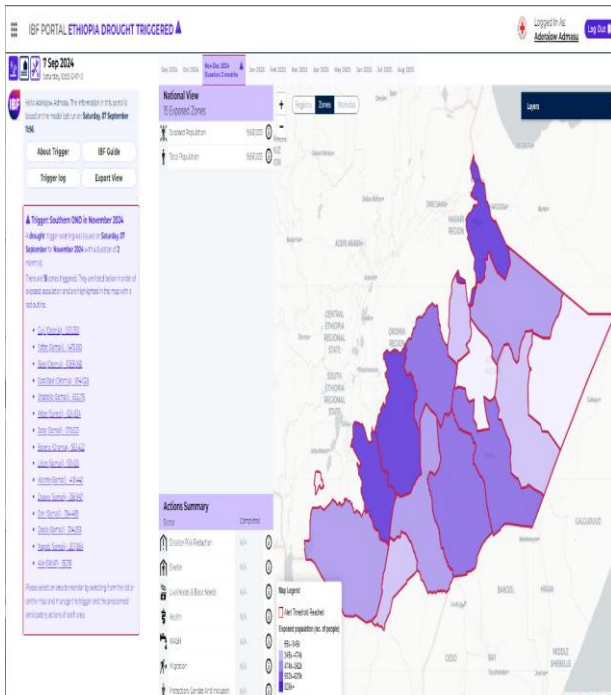
Short maturing Drought Resistance seed distribution in Sewena and Raytu woreda @ERCS

EAP №: EAP2022ET02	Operation №: MDRET033	EAP approved: 08/09/2023
Trigger date: 10/09/2024	Early action timeframe: 1 Months	Timeframe covered by this update: 08/09/2023 – 11/10/2024

Budget: 499,422 CHF
To assist: 70,000 people

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL

Summary of revisions to the operation



The Ethiopian Drought EAP was activated on 10 September 2024. The Ethiopian Red Cross Society implemented the first trigger activities within the one-month lead time. However, due to the second trigger not being met, the activation was halted in accordance with the plan.

Since a large portion of the EAP funds remained unutilized, primarily because the stop mechanism was triggered by monitoring data showing minimal vegetation stress, along with rainfall forecasts from the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI) indicating adequate rainfall for the target areas and considering the exchange rate gains resulting from the devaluation of the Ethiopian currency, ERCS has decided to proceed with an Operational Update.

The EAP will continue until the end of its original timeframe, with necessary budget readjustments made to align with expenditures from the first activation.

Summary Of Annual Progress by Planned Operation

Activities Conducted under Readiness

Coordination and integration with sectoral actors

ERCS successfully strengthened collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and its decentralized structures from the national to kebele levels, engaging Development Agents (DAs), animal health workers, and woreda agricultural offices to enhance the effective implementation of early actions. Additionally, early actions identified in the EAP were integrated into sectoral contingency plans for agriculture and livestock, ensuring alignment with national preparedness, AA and response mechanisms and promoting sustainability within government-led systems.

As part of readiness efforts, ERCS also integrated early actions for drinking water protection and treatment into the Health and WASH sector contingency plans to ensure coordinated implementation. Close collaboration was maintained with the Ministry of Health and WASH clusters at all levels, with particular focus on health extension workers and woreda health offices.

Resource Mobilization and Mapping:

ERCS, in collaboration with the national technical working group, organized a workshop to mobilize and map available resources among government and partner organizations involved in drought activation. The workshop identified key partners such as WFP and Save the Children, enabling geographic division of operational areas to avoid duplication. Government resources, including rangeland management tools and maintenance equipment for water points, were also identified.

Early Warning Materials and Media Engagement:

Discussions on early warning materials led to an agreement with Save the Children to jointly develop and disseminate localized materials, leveraging their resources for the 2024 activation. Materials were distributed across geographic areas covered by both IFRC and Save the Children AA initiatives in local languages. Local media outlets in East Bale and Somali Zones also committed to providing free airtime during activation, allowing funds initially allocated for communication to be redirected toward short-maturing seed procurement.

Agreements with Financial Service Providers (FSPs):

ERCS renewed agreements with the Commercial Bank of Ethiopia and Cooperative Bank of Oromia, both of which agreed to provide cash transfer services free of charge during activation. As a result, funds initially allocated for FSP service fees were reallocated to address the seed budget shortage.

Capacity Building:

Training sessions were conducted for volunteers and branch-level staff, including local sector office representatives, to strengthen their readiness for activation. A total of 23 participants (11 female and 12 male) attended the training. The National Society also utilized the 5% Programme Support Costs to cover administrative expenses and the salary of the FbF focal point as planned. Volunteer insurance was also procured, with cost savings achieved through negotiation of a lower premium, allowing the surplus to support seed procurement.

Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) were prioritized during readiness. Focal points provided training to branch staff and volunteers from drought-prone areas to ensure these principles were integrated into activation activities.

Activities Conducted under Prepositioning

During readiness, ERCS leveraged existing resources from the Save the Children AA project to preposition information and communication materials, which adequately covered both projects' target areas. Consequently, DREF funds allocated for this activity were preserved for future needs.

The procurement of masks and sanitizers for volunteers, initially planned under prepositioning, was cancelled following national COVID-19 guidance, which no longer recommended such items outside medical settings. Consequently, the budget was redirected to procure short-maturing seeds, addressing a shortage under the livelihood component.

Initial plans to preposition drought-resistant seeds were revised, as varying agro-ecological conditions across regions made advance prepositioning impractical. Instead, ERCS conducted assessments to determine the latest possible planting window and signed agreements with seed distributors to ensure timely supply of suitable seeds once forecasts identified activation areas. Since seeds were distributed immediately after activation, long-term storage was unnecessary, and the related budget was reallocated to procure additional short-maturing seeds for more vulnerable communities.

Existing visibility items at the branch level were utilized instead of procuring new ones, with the corresponding funds reallocated to cover the seed procurement gap.

In total, the National Society utilized CHF 171,895 for readiness and prepositioning activities, while the IFRC Cluster Office expended CHF 526 in technical and operational support.

Activities Conducted under Early Actions

The EAP was activated in Sewena and Rayitu districts of East Bale Zone. Due to the absence of available fodder within the lead time, ERCS and local authorities agreed to implement rangeland management and pasture closure through a cash-for-work approach. The intervention covered eight kebeles (approximately 12 hectares), directly benefiting an estimated 31,945 people through the deployment of 150 community members.

In Rayitu Woreda, maintenance, rehabilitation, demarcation, and preservation of four water points were conducted, benefiting 5,528 individuals across eight settlements. These activities were implemented in collaboration with the district water office using their technical resources and equipment.

Additionally, 15 health extension workers were trained and deployed alongside woreda health experts to raise community awareness on public health risks such as cholera and waterborne diseases expected during drought conditions. Development Agents, health workers, and local leaders were also trained and mobilized to promote water conservation and safe usage practices, reaching approximately 28,000 community members over ten days.

More than 30 staff and volunteers were mobilized to support the overall activation, while 2,800 farmers received drought-resistant teff seeds.

Given the nationwide scope of the EAP and diverse agro-ecological conditions, prepositioning was strategically delayed until forecasts confirmed activation areas. Based on Agreements with seed distributors rapid procurement and delivery of appropriate short-maturing seeds was enabled, ensuring timely planting and successful harvests. The government requested ERCS to increase the number of short maturing seed procurement stating the 3 reasons mentioned below based on forecasted impact, ERCS has increased the beneficiaries by 1300 increasing the total allocated budget for seed procurement from CHF 81,167 to CHF 138,297 due to:

1. The number of at-risk farmers being significantly higher than the initial target, as forecasts indicated widespread drought impact.
2. Local governments contributing to related activities (e.g., water point maintenance, community mobilization) and requesting expanded farmer coverage.
3. Reallocation of unutilized readiness and prepositioning funds (e.g., from storage materials and visibility budgets) and local cost-sharing to reach an additional 1,300 farmers.

In total, CHF 33,549 was utilized from the activation budget to implement the above Early Action activities.

Why the operation stopped/Second trigger Analysis

There were no projected yield reduction, rather enhanced moisture and green coverage were recorded hence the second trigger was not met. Thus, the stop mechanism for drought EAP activation was triggered.

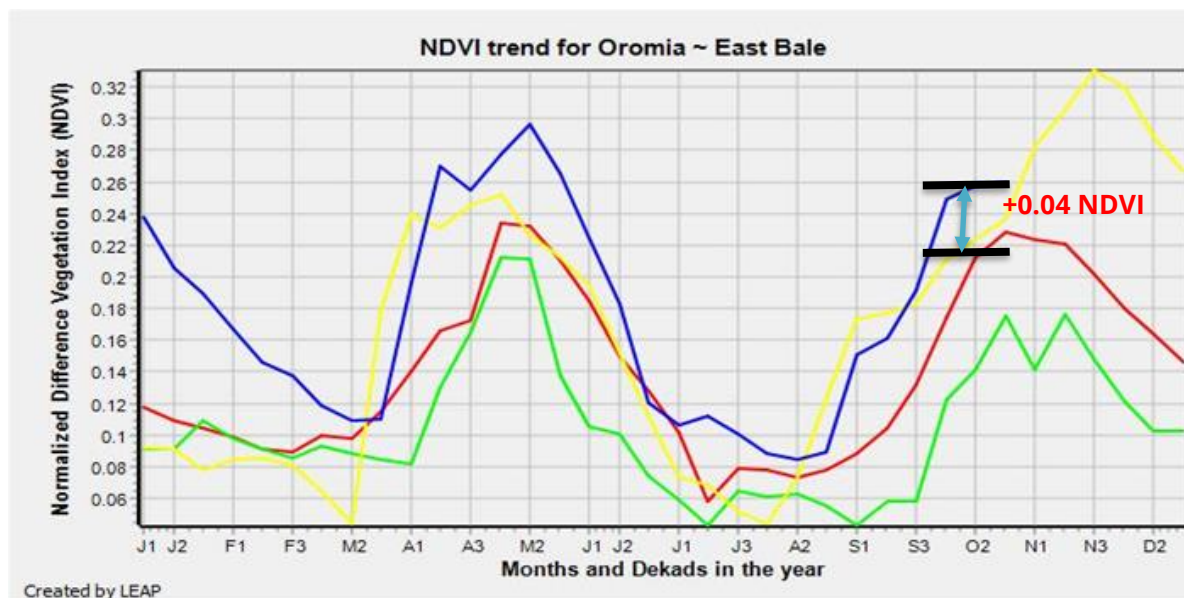
Trigger Statement

The second Early actions will be triggered if the crop yield reduction is predicted to be more than 50% after one month since the start of the season based on LEAP index

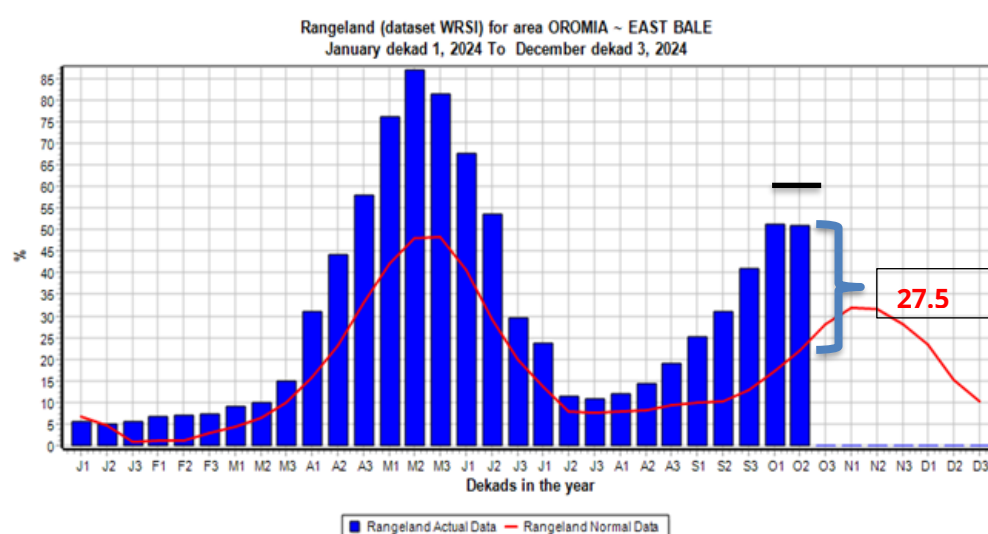
Drought Assessment Indexes:

One-month Green coverage reduction index (NDVI): The Current NDVI (Blue Line) East Bale zone shows above normal green coverage with respect to the Normal years (Red line) in figure below.

A positive green coverage index of +0.04 has been recorded over east Bale zone.

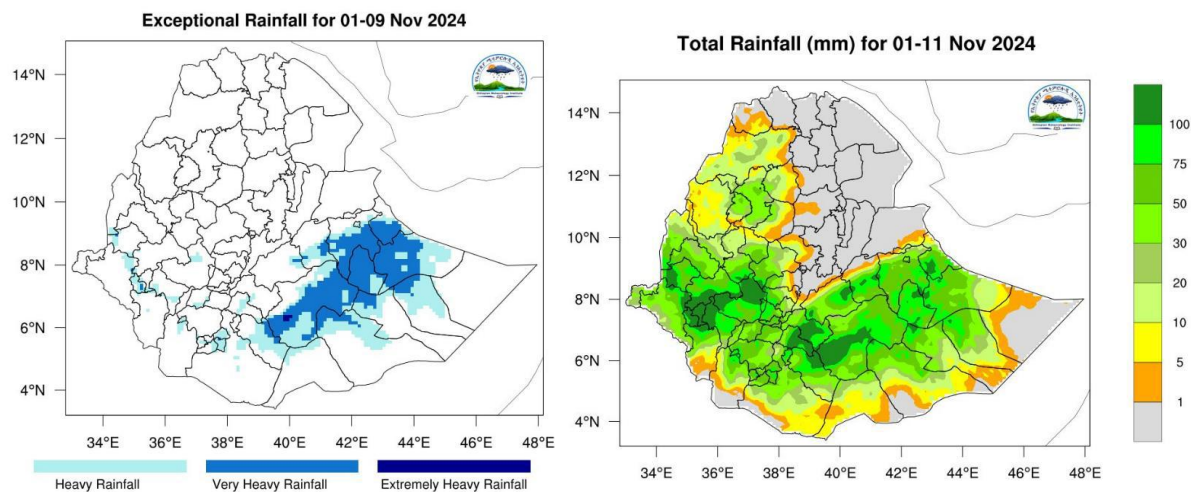


One-month Water Requirement Satisfaction Index (Rangeland WRSI in %): The current index (Blue Bare Chart) to evaluate the crop water requirement that contributes the yield reduction compared with the normal water requirement (red Line) shows that positive satisfaction index as shown below. *27.5% increased satisfaction index recorded, i.e., enough water availability was recorded.*



The Multiple indexes of LEAP monitoring information shows that over East bale and adjoining Bega (OND) season benefiting areas have a positive impact on yield increment rather than yield reduction.

On top of the monitoring information, the forecast of EMI for the coming November month (critical moisture use month of the season) shows that a high probability of continues rainfall with some exceptional heavy fall is expected to be recorded Figure Below.



Budget

ERCS has utilized CHF 205,444 (41%), leaving a remaining balance of CHF 293,452 (including cluster utilization of CHF 526) from the total allocation of CHF 499,422 to be utilized in the remaining operation periods. All expenditure budget amounts mentioned here include PSSR.

Contact information

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

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Reference



Click here for:

- EAP summary and budget
- Early Action Notification