This document details the IFRC’s support in areas agreed upon with the relevant National Society. The IFRC seeks resources to carry out this country/cluster plan listed here as funding requirements.
Lesotho is a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa, with a population of 2.1 million people. The agricultural sector, which accounts for 8.6% of the country's GDP, is the main source of income for the majority of the rural population – however, crop production is predominately rain-fed and is therefore prone to the adverse impacts of climate change.

The El-Niño induced drought has caused a major food security crisis for people in Lesotho, further impacted by successive years of crop failures, low incomes and high food prices that force 41% of families to spend over half their income on food.

The pressure on Lesotho's economy has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with border closures with its main trading partner, South Africa, and national lockdowns severely affecting the livelihoods of vulnerable communities. Many goods and services imported internationally into Lesotho have either increased in price or are no longer available.

People in Lesotho typically have a life expectancy of 56 years, with the Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2014 stating that the percentage of people with stunted growth is 33 per cent, while 10 per cent of people are considered to be underweight. The mortality rate remained at 85 deaths per 1000 live births. HIV is a particular health concern for Lesotho, with a prevalence rate of 25 per cent, placing pressure on both the public health and economic sectors.

Water scarcity is another major concern for people in Lesotho, with water sources often impacted by climate changes which result in drought and other crises. Despite abundant resources such as the Sengu, Mohokare and Makhaleng rivers, Lesotho still faces constraints in the availability of safe drinking water, with 17 per cent of people regularly using unprotected water sources and 70 per cent of the population unable to access proper sanitation services. This serves to exacerbate sanitation issues, contributing to the spread of diarrheal diseases that affect nearly 500 children under five years old every year.

With the threat of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of other diseases due to poor sanitation and hygiene practices, the right to access clean water for people in Lesotho must be prioritised.
The Lesotho Red Cross Society was established on 9 November 1967 as a voluntary aid auxiliary to health authorities. The National Society was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on 7 September 1971 and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) on 7 October 1971. Its headquarters is in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, with ten branches serving ten districts.

The National Society delivers two main programmes to provide humanitarian aid to vulnerable communities. The Disaster Management programme aims to improve the capacity of communities’ resilience to hazards, while Health and Social Services aim to reduce illnesses, deaths and the impact from disease outbreaks and public health emergencies, through the provision of primary healthcare services and first aid training. These services also improve the quality of life of people living with HIV and AIDS and other chronic illnesses.

The National Society operates in all ten districts of Lesotho and engages approximately 10,000 volunteers who carry out almost 90 per cent of its humanitarian work. Through this network of volunteers, the National Society has excelled in providing first aid and training for volunteers, staff and the public and caring for vulnerable communities through its health centres. These centres also serve as HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) centres and Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) sites. In delivering Disaster Management activities, the National Society is following its 2018 to 2022 strategic plan on strengthening and enhancing disaster and environmental management systems.
The IFRC, ICRC and Southern Africa Cluster Office support the National Society in Lesotho in its programmes. Communication is maintained through the IFRC in Pretoria. The National Society also receives support from partner National Societies, listed below:

- **Belgian Red Cross** assists the National Society with first aid capacity development in schools
- **British Red Cross** supports the delivery of livelihood initiatives
- **German Red Cross** is piloting the Forecast-based Financing project
- **Australian Red Cross** is collaborating with the National Society on livelihoods and child protection

The IFRC and Southern Africa Cluster Office are also supporting the National Society to deliver an HIV and AIDS mitigation project for orphaned and vulnerable children. In terms of disaster response, the IFRC is currently supporting a food security emergency appeal operation in Lesotho to combat the effects of the 2018/19 drought, as well as a COVID-19 emergency appeal to support those affected. Through ICRC support, the National Society is implementing the Restoring Family Links project.

The National Society is known for the capacities of its first responders, who act in coordination with the government’s Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and District Disaster Management Teams (DDMT), UN agencies and non-governmental organisations, such as World Vision. The National Society also continues to build relations with corporate partners like Coca Cola Company, Lesotho Standard Bank, TEBA Bank. The SHOKEN Fund supports the National Society’s adolescence health facilities and the Government of Wales supports WASH and Hygiene promotion in schools. As a result of its work and wide-ranging partnerships, the National Society has earned the trust of the communities that it serves, enabling its continued access to these environments and particularly, its ability to reach vulnerable people. The National Society works with local authorities and other humanitarian partners in line with the Movement Fundamental Principles.
Recurrent drought events in Lesotho are among the main causes of food insecurity, affecting crop production, food prices, livestock prices. They also have a serious impact on child nutrition and health. Crop production between 2019-20 reduced by 30 per cent compared to the previous year, mainly due to erratic rainfall, above average temperatures, late planting and early harvesting by some farmers to avoid frost damage, the late onset of seasonal rains, and limited access to agricultural inputs.

In some mountainous districts such as Mokhotlong and Thaba Tseka, the reduced harvest was caused by poor germination due to low moisture levels. COVID-19 containment measures also resulted in the poorer access to inputs and machinery, further undermining the agricultural sector and making winter cropping almost non-existent.

Beside the weather events affecting the agricultural sector, Lesotho is experiencing serious macroeconomic and social challenges aggravated by political instability that decelerate economic growth. COVID-19 containment measures have further exacerbated the economic situation, increasing unemployment and reducing remittances, income and purchasing power.

Lesotho is also currently responding to the 2018/19 drought which has led to food insecurity, a shortage of clean and safe drinking water for both animals and human beings, high levels of malnutrition, energy deficit and livestock diseases that have caused a large number of deaths. The devastating effects of prolonged dry spells on agriculture production, coupled with the late onset of the rainy season, resulted in reduced access to and availability of food, thus contributing to acute food insecurity conditions across the country.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train staff and volunteers on climate change issues, skilled community-based organisations on hunger safety net strategies, finance literacy and cash education, and volunteers on Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to establish and monitor child and youth led DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) strategies
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to Train Community Based Disaster Response Teams (CBDRT) on disaster risk reduction
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to organise dialogues and advocacy on disaster preparedness issues
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train staff and volunteers, in-school and out-of-school youth and people living with disability on climate change and environmental issues

**380,000 people facing high food insecurity**

**Funding requirement in Swiss francs** 600,000
**People to be reached** 10,000
Disasters are predicted to become more common, more costly and more complex in Lesotho, with vulnerable communities in the highlands the most likely to suffer severe impacts as a result of crises. Currently, due to prevailing drought conditions, Lesotho is in the midst of an acute food insecurity crisis that is affecting a large proportion of the rural population.

The National Society is working closely with the Government and other NGOs to combat the ongoing food insecurity situation, providing cash transfers and seed distributions to ultra-poor households and people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. This project will complement ongoing food insecurity activities to ensure that the National Society reaches more vulnerable households.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to develop community multi-hazard contingency and response plans that map hazards and actions, informed by early warning/early action plans
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train Community Based Disaster Management Teams (CBDRT) to generate and document multi-hazard early warning information, and affected people on Smart Agriculture, Business Management and Marketing
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to set up community-based early warning systems
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to provide cash-based support to vulnerable households affected by rapid-onset shocks
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to assess needs of people affected by crises during disaster response operations
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to ensure there is enough technical support and staff to implement successful projects
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to establish relationships with the private sector, reference centres and research institutions

603,000 people affected by drought each year from 1990-2018.
GROWING GAPS IN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

During disasters, vulnerable communities are prone to food insecurities that can, in turn, lead to disease outbreaks. Water shortages exacerbate this issue, with primary healthcare initiatives also far less accessible as staff and volunteers focus on responding to the immediate hazard. Tuberculosis, HIV and other outreach initiatives are also limited due to disaster response.

Community health workers are often left feeling demotivated to carry out their duties due to inconsistent financial incentives and supplies, and during crises, work overload can compromise quality of work and limit community involvement. Health centres also become overwhelmed with the increase in patients following disasters, with many facilities lacking the space to be able to distance patients from one another to prevent the transmission of disease.

**TARGET 1**
Provide first aid training to 20,000 people

**TARGET 2**
Reach 10,000 people with mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services

**ACTIVITIES**
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to develop a Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) strategic plan and specific procedures and referrals for comprehensive and holistic care for survivors of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to provide training on health promotion, basic first aid, management of chronic illness, detection, prevention and response to infectious disease outbreaks, mental health and psychosocial needs, and the construction of safe water and sanitation facilities
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to procure first aid supplies and PPE to combat COVID-19
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to develop Information, Education and Communications (IEC) material on health issues, providing appropriate sexual, reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health services
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to provide PSS services to frontline workers, ensuring that they are in a better position to support the community
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to install safe, clean water and sanitation facilities within communities

Funding requirement in Swiss francs: 250,000
People to be reached: 15,000
Migration, both internal and external, continues to be a dominant livelihood strategy for people in Lesotho, with almost half of households reporting at least one member living away from home. The majority of Basotho migrants in South Africa work in the mining industry, with the bulk of remittances sent to Lesotho coming from these migrants. Recent trends show that increasing numbers of migrants are working in other sectors, including domestic and service-based sectors. Internal movements of the population from rural to urban areas, including women taking up employment in textile industries and domestic services, are vital for socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 situation in South Africa has resulted in 15,000 mineworkers travelling back to Lesotho, with many still waiting to see if they can return to South Africa for their employment. Another 5,000 farm workers from Ceres came back to Lesotho as their farms are closed, and others came back to avoid the COVID-19 pandemic in Western Cape province.

The ongoing effects of drought have left more people prone to food insecurity, forcing many to leave their homes in search for work. In particular, girls and women are frequently leaving their rural homes in search of work in urban areas or South Africa, mostly to trade sex for money or food. In addition, women, men, boys and girls are all vulnerable to human trafficking as a result of irregular and illegal migration.

**ACTIVITIES**

- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to strengthen Restoring Family links (RFL) activities
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to provide repatriation packages to those in need
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to advocate for protection issues
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train staff and volunteers on how to engage in sensitive topics that pertain to migrants and displaced persons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding requirement in Swiss francs</th>
<th>People to be reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The National Society in Lesotho will expand its humanitarian education programmes, focusing on values and promoting a culture of peace and inclusion, as well as improving access for people whose education has been disrupted by disaster or displacement. These education programmes will focus on initiatives that help foster and promote the Fundamental Principles, incorporating sustainability, equality and inclusion, and the agency of local communities to lead their own change.

The National Society will also expand its work on diversity and inclusion to become more intersectional, particularly in its support of women, girls and other gender identities. Women’s leadership will also be a focal point across all levels of the organisation moving forward.

### ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train young people in leadership and the application of humanitarian values and fundamental principles
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to build capacity of youth and volunteers on humanitarian CEA accountability standards
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to make tools available that promote youth programming
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to provide specialised PGI and PSS in emergencies training or sessions to combat SGBV
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to coordinate and partner with local women’s organisations and ensure SGBV referral and response mechanisms are informed by their work
- The IFRC will support the Nation Society to ensure data collection and analysis tools are developed that provide disaggregated data in terms of age, gender and disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding requirement in Swiss francs</th>
<th>People to be reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The youth unemployment rate in Lesotho is 32.8%.

© IFRC / Benoit Matsha-Carpentier
ENABLER 1
ENGAGED WITH RENEWED INFLUENCE, INNOVATIVE AND DIGITALLY TRANSFORMED WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs

250,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in Lesotho to strengthen its engagement with partners within and outside the network in order to work collectively on the key challenges facing communities.

In order to increase visibility, engagement and resources, the IFRC will support the National Society to widen its involvement in, and leadership of, civil society and other coalitions at national and local levels.

The National Society will participate in coordination meetings with other stakeholders, keeping relevant organisations well informed about the work of the IFRC and the National Society in Lesotho.

The IFRC will support the National Society to improve skills, data literacy and strategy development within its staff and volunteer teams, guided by governance-approved priorities.

The National Society will ensure that its programming and communication is aimed at public behaviour change and is based on science and data-informed approaches, in line with Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) initiatives. The National Society will encourage community participation across all projects.

ACTIVITIES

• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to develop country level planning
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to connect with other National Societies, network with external partners on key themes at regional and global levels for improved visibility, and participate in coordination meetings with other stakeholders
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to improve staff and volunteer skills, including data literacy and strategy development
• The IFRC will support the National Society to connect with other National Societies to collaborate and share knowledge on changing approaches and encourage peer to peer support.
ENABLER 2
ACCOUNTABLE WITH AN AGILE MANAGEMENT AND A RENEWED FINANCING MODEL WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
100,000

The IFRC will support the National Society in Lesotho to ensure that financial resources are safeguarded and managed effectively, efficiently and transparently, providing training to staff and volunteers on financial management and engaging HR resources to prevent corruption and fraud. The National Society will also digitise its financial management system.

The IFRC will support the National Society by providing training on risk management, ensuring compliance with its global strategy. It will support the National Society to put a plan of action in place to mitigate the risk of fraud and corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Gender and diversity policies and child protection and safeguarding policies will also be implemented.

The IFRC is expanding the provision of resources to National Societies to invest in National Society Development (NSD), through mechanisms such as the National Society Investment Alliance, the Capacity Building Fund, the Empress Shōken Fund and other innovative approaches. The National Society will develop a resource mobilisation strategy and, with the support of the IFRC, develop innovative fundraising methods by conducting a donor mapping assessment and engaging with individuals, governments and private sectors for funding.

ACTIVITIES
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to train staff and volunteers on financial management and prevention of fraud and corruption
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to digitise financial management system
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to develop a resource mobilisation strategy and a plan of action to address fraud, corruption, sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to implement policies on gender and diversity and child safeguarding
• The IFRC will support the Nation Society to conduct donor mapping assessment and seek out funding opportunities
ENABLER 3
TRUSTED BY COMMUNITIES, OWNED AND VALUED BY THE MEMBERSHIP WITH GREATER EMPHASIS ON NATIONAL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

Funding requirement in Swiss francs
50,000

With the support of the IFRC, the National Society will assess its development needs and develop strategic plans to better address the sustainability of its services. It will also increase the diversity of its membership and expanding reach.

The National Society will improve its branches and enhance robustness, encouraging community members and non-members to participate in its activities in line with the principles set out by the IFRC. The National Society will also invest in building an infrastructure for long-term resource mobilisation, including strengthening partnerships with potential local funders and developing annual community traditions to raise money.

The National Society will develop and implement policies and tools to address several institutional issues, including fraud and corruption, Prevention and Response to Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), discrimination, harassment and child safeguarding. The National Society will also establish or participate in national networks with other humanitarian agencies on child safeguarding issues.

The IFRC prioritises volunteer development and youth action as critical catalysts of behavioural change and local action, ensuring access to young people of all backgrounds and nurturing trust in these environments. The National Society will promote youth and volunteer contribution to decision-making and innovation, as well as document and share good practice and highlight challenges relating to institutional diversity.

The National Society will conduct a Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) assessment, including an analysis of inclusive recruitment and retention practices for volunteers. Mechanisms will be implemented to protect volunteers, promote psychosocial wellbeing and provide greater support to those killed or injured in the line of duty, and their families.

The National Society will develop and implement SGBV preventative activities and modules, such as psychosocial support groups for men and boys in emergency operations.

ACTIVITIES

- The IFRC will support the National Society to become the trusted partner of choice for local humanitarian action, with the capabilities to act in the global network.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to assess development needs and develop strategic sustainability plans.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to invest in an infrastructure to support long-term resource mobilisation.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to address fraud and corruption, exploitation, abuse, discrimination, harassment and child safeguarding, and SGBV.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to strengthen its Community Engagement and analyse inclusive recruitment and retention practices and to support and protect volunteers.
- The IFRC will support the National Society to take an active role in regional activities, strengthening coordination and partnership with other National Societies.
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian network, with 192 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and around 14 million volunteers. Our volunteers are present in communities before, during and after a crisis or disaster. We work in the most hard to reach and complex settings in the world, saving lives and promoting human dignity. We support communities to become stronger and more resilient places where people can live safe and healthy lives, and have opportunities to thrive.

Contact Information

Louise Daintrey
Head of Partnerships and Resource Development
T +254 110 843978
louise.daintrey@ifrc.org

Hlubi Sebongile
PMER Lesotho
T +266 5801 4081
shlubi@redcross.org