

Lesotho, Africa | Drought-induced Food Insecurity




LRCS © Mjanyane Quthing

Appeal No: MDRLS008	To be assisted: 87,381 people	Appeal launched: 06/09/2024
Glide No: DR-2024-000071-LSO	DREF allocated: CHF 750,000	Disaster Categorisation: Orange
Operation Start date: 06/09/2024	Operation End date: 30/08/2025	

IFRC Secretariat Funding requirement: CHF 5 million
Federation-wide funding requirement: CHF 7 million

TIMELINE

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- November 2022:** The LRCS receives approval for the EAP to address drought conditions.
 - October 2023:** El Niño induced drought forecasting a humanitarian disaster.
 - October 2023 to March 2024:** Dissemination of drought early warning messages targets all affected communities.
 - May 2024:** Previous Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment (LVAC) results and increased price of staples leads to CHF 711, 000 being allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) for
 - April-May 2024:** The Government of Lesotho coordinates and publishes the LVAC.
 - 12 July 2024:** The government declares a state of National Food Insecurity Disaster due to the current drought situation.
 - August 2024:** National Emergency Response structure is established together with the development of national response plans.
 - September 2024:** The IFRC issues an Emergency Appeal for CHF 7 million to support 87,371 people affected by the severe drought.

DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

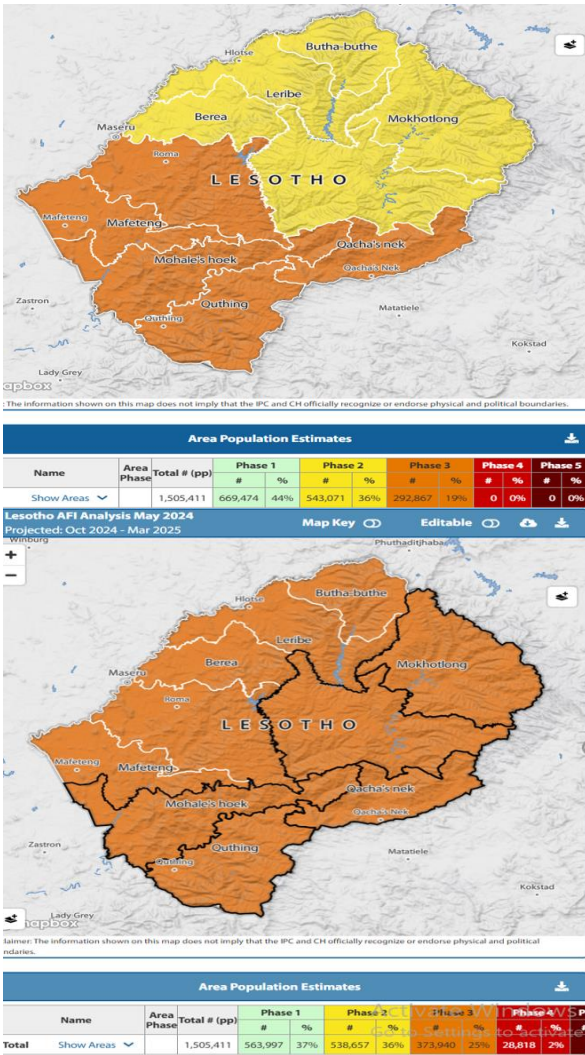


Figure 1: Current and projected food insecurity as per the IPC.

Lesotho is experiencing a severe drought and food insecurity due to consecutive La Niña and El Niño events from 2021 to 2023. The 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 rainfall seasons, marked by mild to moderate La Niña events, led to excessive rainfall and below-average crop production. The 2023/2024 El Niño further exacerbated the situation with dry conditions and heatwaves, significantly impacting crop yields. Despite increased planting efforts in 2023/2024, harvests remained below average, causing maize prices to rise and greater market dependency. This crisis has worsened into the 2024/2025 season, leaving an estimated 699,049 people facing food insecurity and in need of 59,549 tons of food, valued at LSL (Lesotho Lotti) 1,149,302,744.

The current El Niño phenomenon coincided with the country's rainy season and the start of the agricultural year, complicating the initiation of planting activities for the summer cropping season. In mid-December 2023, Lesotho experienced one of its first significant rainfalls of the season, which,

while providing much needed precipitation, also led to heavy rains and storms that caused waterlogging in some already planted crops. The effects of this event were particularly severe in various livelihood zones, with the Southern Lowlands and Senqu River Valley suffering the most.

- Crop performance:** National maize production decreased by about 52 per cent from the previous year, with current yields expected to last only three months in most regions. This decline caused food prices to rise, worsening food access challenges, especially for vulnerable households. Additionally, substitute food commodities like sorghum production have also declined by over 86 per cent in the 2023/24 period, further intensifying food insecurity and making it harder for households to find alternative options.
- Price shocks:** The persistently high prices of staple foods compared to the previous year have impacted household purchasing power. According to the Lesotho Flour Mills update, the price of maize meal has increased by 42 per cent from March to May 2024, making it increasingly difficult for poor households to afford essential foods and to meet their other basic needs.
- Livestock Disease Outbreak:** From January to March 2024, an outbreak of blue tongue (livestock disease), caused by high temperatures and insufficient rainfall, significantly harmed livestock health and productivity. This further strained household resources and livelihoods in the country.

Severity of humanitarian conditions

The ongoing food insecurity crisis has forced many families to resort to negative coping mechanisms to ensure their survival. According to recent reports, 49 per cent of households have resorted to negative coping strategies in response to food shortages. These negative coping mechanisms are being adopted primarily among rural households where many reduce the frequency of their meals per day, opting for less expensive foods and decreased portion sizes in order to meet the needs of their families.

Furthermore, in terms of livelihood coping mechanisms, the data reveals that 42 per cent resorted to stress coping strategies, while 7 per cent

found themselves in crisis situations, and 4 per cent took emergency measures.

Among the most prevalent stress coping strategies were borrowing money to purchase food or acquiring food on credit. Additionally, some families made the difficult decision to withdraw their children from school, prioritising immediate food needs over education. In a desperate attempt to mitigate food shortages, certain households resorted to consuming their seed stocks, which jeopardises their future agricultural productivity. For those in even more severe situations, emergency coping strategies were employed; some households reported selling their last female livestock, a critical resource that poses a significant threat to the sustainability of their livelihoods.

Chronic malnutrition remains a significant issue, with a stunting rate of 33.2 per cent among children under five and widespread micronutrient deficiencies, including high anaemia rates. Access to clean water is also a major challenge, particularly in rural areas, where about 28 per cent of the population lacks reliable water sources. Urban areas are slightly better, with 14 per cent facing similar issues. Although most households have access to safe drinking water through protected sources, 13 per cent of households in Mokhotlong and 10 per cent in Thaba-Tseka still rely on unprotected water sources, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and compromising hygiene and health.

CAPACITIES AND RESPONSE

1. National Society response capacity

1.1 National Society capacity and ongoing response

The Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) is a statutory entity established by parliamentary legislation, playing a crucial role in humanitarian efforts in Lesotho. Its mission is to alleviate human suffering and strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities while upholding the seven fundamental principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The LRCS works closely with government agencies, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, the Ministry of Forestry, Range, and Soil Conservation, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Disaster Management Authority. It also collaborates with other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), humanitarian organisations, and volunteers to provide essential assistance. Through the Disaster Management department, based in the LRCS headquarters, the LRCS has the capacity to oversee project implementation at the district level while providing technical expertise and monitoring supervision.

As part of in-house support structures, the LRCS has 62 staff members across various departments, including Finance and Administration, Disaster Management, First Aid, Communications, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER), Health and Social Services, and Senior Management, to support overall project implementation and provide technical assistance if there is need to do so. Furthermore, in each district, the LRCS has one branch manager and over 200 volunteers with extensive experience in managing both rapid and slow-onset crises through in-kind aid and cash and voucher assistance (CVA). The LRCS is well represented at both the national and district levels being part of the national and community disaster management teams responsible for overseeing and implementing disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions.

Following the release of the seasonal outlook in October 2023, predicting normal-below rainfall from October to March, the LRCS, through the Early Action Protocol, supported the Government of Lesotho in the development and dissemination of drought related early warning messages reaching 8,700 households in the four affected districts.

Furthermore, as part of readiness activities, 15 village disaster management teams were trained in understanding and the disseminating of messages. A further fifteen volunteers were also trained on CVA and mobile data collection. Additionally, following the storm surge experienced in December 2024, the LRCS launched a response in Quthing and Maseru to address immediate food needs and the provision of temporary shelter and financial support for families severely affected by heavy rains. In June 2024, based on a food security assessment, the LRCS also launched a DREF for the food security response in five districts: Maseru, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek targeting 2,500 households to address food insecurity, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) issues. Before the transition into the Emergency Appeal, the DREF also supported the training of 50 volunteers on CVA and community engagement and accountability (CEA) to support the interventions.

1.2 Capacity and response at the national level

The LRCS is an active member of the National Emergency Operation Centre, managed by the Disaster Management Authority (DMA). This collaborative platform is essential for discussing and planning interventions to address crises. During these meetings, the government requested support from all humanitarian actors to tackle food security issues due to the ongoing drought. The LRCS also participates in the newly formed El Niño Coordination Response Technical Working Group and Cash Transfers National Groups, which focuses on El Niño-induced drought response projects and CVA programming. To enhance its emergency operations, the LRCS set up an internal Cash Technical Working Group (TWG) that includes departments such as Health, Disaster Management, PMER, Finance, CEA, and Logistics. The LRCS is committed to safeguarding the targeted population and supporting their mental well-being, with strict policies in place to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse.

During the response implementation phase, the LRCS works closely with key stakeholders, including the DMA, the Department of Local Government and Chieftainship, and the Department of Social Development. The focus will be on identifying the most vulnerable households in need of assistance. Deliberate action will be taken to identify response capacities through ongoing assessments to address urgent needs during the Emergency Appeal timeframe and Operational Strategy. The LRCS is dedicated to building strong partnerships with local authorities, community-based organisations (CBOs), and existing mobile service providers to ensure a well-coordinated and effective response to the urgent needs of affected communities.

2. International capacity and response

2.1 Red Cross Red Crescent Movement capacity and response

IFRC membership

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the LRCS will work closely together to coordinate the operation, aiming for efficient implementation. This collaboration is designed to streamline operations, optimise resource allocation, and amplify the initiative's overall effectiveness. By prioritising coordination, both organisations intend to leverage their respective strengths and capacities, promoting a cohesive approach to achieving the project's objectives. For technical guidance, the Disaster Management (DM) coordinator from the IFRC cluster office will provide crucial technical support to ensure the project's success. This includes offering expertise and guidance across all phases of the project, from initial planning and execution, through to monitoring and evaluation. By leveraging their specialised knowledge in disaster management, the coordinator aims to enhance operational efficiency and maximise the project's impact.

The LRCS is working with two Participating National Societies (PNSs), the British Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross (through their 510 initiative). These partners are assisting in the development and implementation of safeguarding approaches and ensuring alignment with early warning systems as part of the Anticipatory Action Plan for Drought. The Netherlands 510 is also assisting in the finalisation of the Anticipatory Action Plan for cold waves, enhancing the LRCS's preparedness and response strategies for climatic events.

ICRC

The ICRC offers remote assistance to the LRCS in restoring family links (RFL) and mobilising resources. This support includes the training of staff and volunteers on resource mobilisation and RFL programming, along with providing opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. In light of the current emergency, which may lead to migration, the LRCS will collaborate closely with the ICRC in managing the situation with the highest level of care and respect. This partnership is designed to meet the needs of individuals affected by migration, ensuring they receive the necessary support and protection. The IFRC is providing support through the operation's coordination involving the ICRC, LRCS, and other in-country partners to ensure a unified and effective operation. In addition, the IFRC continues to provide technical guidance and development of the operation's plans for the Emergency Appeal.

2.2 International Humanitarian Stakeholder capacity and response

In collaboration with UN agencies such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, the LRCS, under the auspices of OCHA, is actively involved in the NGO and UN El Niño Response Working Group, focusing on resource mobilisation. Development partners, such as USAID and the IFRC, have conducted visits to Lesotho to assess and observe the impact of the drought on food security. These visits are aimed at understanding the challenges and

effects of the drought, which will guide resource mobilisation efforts to support the Government of Lesotho. Prior to the food security declaration, WFP, through its Anticipatory Action initiative, played a critical role in distributing early warning messages and providing climate-smart agriculture inputs to affected households in the targeted districts. The early warning and early action approach were designed to mitigate the effects of the drought and support communities in effectively managing its impacts, with the government launching a Cash for Work initiative to tackle the current situation. This programme is being implemented across all 10 districts, where community members are engaged in small-scale asset creation and the development activities in their local areas.

Other UN agencies and NGOs are already mobilised on the ground to respond with different activities, such as cash transfers, WASH (UNICEF), food distributions (World Vision International and the Government of Lesotho), with the UN (WFP, cash transfers, and school feeding) and Catholic Relief Services involved in school feeding to complement efforts of the Government of Lesotho. Under the coordination of the DMA, authorities will designate a range of actors to the different areas to avoid any duplication of efforts.

3. Gaps in the response

According to the National Drought Response Plan of July 2024, the identified urgent humanitarian requirements include both short and long-term needs.

Short-term:

- Addressing the food gap of 59,549 tons of food, valued at LSL 1,149,302,744 through the urgent provision of both conditional and unconditional humanitarian aid to all households classified under IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in rural areas and assistance to households in urban areas that fall below the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB).
- Enhancing water supply and overall WASH initiatives.

Medium to long-term:

- Timely supply of climate smart agriculture inputs to facilitate prompt planting, thereby supporting agricultural productivity and resilience against adverse environmental conditions.
- This includes intensifying integrated Catchment Management initiatives to improve rangelands and protect water sources together with vaccination campaigns to prevent seasonal livestock diseases.

OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Food insecurity in Lesotho continues to be a pressing issue, worsened by recent increases in food prices and poor harvests. The decline in crop production has significantly impacted food security and household dietary diversity, placing additional strain on already vulnerable families who are struggling to cope with the crisis.

The outlook for the coming months is worrying, with approximately 403,000 people (27 per cent of the total population) in rural areas expected to face a Crisis level of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) from October 2024 to March 2025. All ten districts are expected to be in a crisis situation making it difficult for the Government of Lesotho to support more people. In addition to food insecurity, challenges with limited access to clean water are exacerbating the situation. The scarcity of clean water affects not only irrigation and domestic use, but also impacts overall food handling and adherence to WASH prevention measures. This multifaceted crisis underscores the urgent need for comprehensive solutions to address both immediate and long-term needs in the affected communities.

FEDERATION-WIDE APPROACH

The Emergency Appeal is part of a **Federation-wide approach**, based on the response priorities of the Operating National Society and in consultation with all Federation members contributing to the response. The approach, reflected in this Operational Strategy, will ensure linkages between all response activities (including bilateral activities and activities funded domestically), and assist in leveraging the capacities of all members of the IFRC network in the country to maximise the collective humanitarian impact.

The Federation-wide funding requirement for this Emergency Appeal comprises all support and funding to be channelled to the Operating National Society in the response to the emergency event. This includes the Operating National Society's domestic fundraising ask, the fundraising ask of supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, and the funding ask of the IFRC secretariat.

The Operational Strategy is designed to align with the government's national El Niño response plans, which comprehensively detail the humanitarian needs and response strategy. The LRCS will closely collaborate with the regional IFRC cluster office, PNSs, and other humanitarian organisations to enhance programmes addressing both immediate and long-term needs. This includes providing unconditional cash transfers to meet food and other essential needs, distributing seeds, and offering training in climate-smart agriculture to improve household food security and dietary diversity.

Additionally, the LRCS aims to ensure access to clean and sufficient water to mitigate the risk of waterborne diseases and better prepare for future shocks. Building relationships with potential partners and donors is recognised as a gradual process. Therefore, the LRCS and IFRC are considering a participatory approach in implementing the Operational Strategy to align with the ongoing and anticipated funding. Continuous engagement with government ministries and other stakeholders is crucial in demonstrating the strong humanitarian advocacy of the LRCS, supported by the IFRC. Maintaining high visibility among international stakeholders is essential to highlight the unique role of the LRCS in accessing affected communities and maintaining trust with both the public and authorities. With the anticipated support of PNSs and development partners, providing their expertise and resources, the current Operational Strategy is expected to evolve into a Federation-wide response plan.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Vision

This Emergency Appeal aims to support 87,381 individuals (17,473 households) affected by food insecurity, WASH challenges, and disruptions to their livelihoods. The current Emergency Appeal aims to scale-up the existing drought response that was launched in May 2024. This intervention is part of a broader sub-regional scale-up initiative planned by the IFRC in response to the deteriorating humanitarian and environmental conditions in southern Africa. This comprehensive effort aims to address the escalating challenges by integrating sustainable practices and enhancing community resilience. By doing so, it will significantly contribute to the IFRC's pan-African Zero Hunger Initiative, which seeks to eradicate hunger and ensure food security across the continent through innovative and sustainable solutions.

In the response, the LRCS prioritised interventions on food security through the distribution of seeds and cash distributions targeting 2,500 vulnerable households. In addition, complementary activities included WASH and PGI, while training sessions on climate smart agriculture and food preservation were also prioritised.

Following the Government of Lesotho's declaration of a state of emergency¹ in July 2024, there was a call for support from development partners and NGOs to assist in scaling-up these vital interventions. The collaborative efforts aim to address both immediate needs and long-term sustainability, promoting a comprehensive response to the challenges posed by the ongoing drought. Thus, the Emergency Appeal will provide sustainable interventions such as increased access to clean water, crop production support, and multipurpose cash transfers while also integrating protection, community engagement, and accountability initiatives.

The response has been designed to extend beyond immediate crisis response, offering continuous assistance as communities move into the winter and subsequent planting seasons. This approach seeks to strengthen resilience against adverse climatic conditions and ensure ongoing support during critical periods for effective recovery and adaptation.

- **Multi-purpose Cash:** A total of 5,000 vulnerable households, representing approximately 25,500 individuals, will be selected from the seven target districts identified as being in IPC Phase 3. Each of these households will receive unconditional cash assistance amounting to LSL 1,500 per month for a duration of three months. This cash transfer value, determined by the Livelihoods and Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC), is based on the estimated survival deficit. The funds are intended to help these households cover essential food and basic needs during this period.
- **Food Security and Livelihoods:** In addition to receiving cash transfers, the 5,000 selected vulnerable households will also be provided with agricultural vegetable seeds to enhance their nutrition and dietary diversity. Before the upcoming planting season, an assessment will be conducted to identify an additional 5,000 households eligible for agricultural inputs, primarily field crops. This distribution will enable these households to effectively participate in the planting season. Furthermore, training sessions on climate-

¹ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/lesotho/lesotho-receives-un-support-people-affected-drought>

smart agriculture and food preservation will be organised for 17,473 households. These trainings will commence immediately after the first harvest and will be carried out in close collaboration with lead farmers, extension workers, and the Ministry of Agriculture. The aim is to equip households with essential skills and knowledge to improve agricultural practices and food management.

- **Health and Nutrition:** A total of 17,473 individuals will benefit from educational campaigns focused on nutrition and food handling. In addition to these general campaigns, specialised training sessions will be conducted specifically for caregivers of children under the age of five. These targeted trainings will address the unique nutritional needs and food safety practices essential for the health and development of young children. The aim is to provide caregivers with practical skills and knowledge to ensure they can effectively meet the dietary needs of their young children and maintain safe food handling practices.
- **Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH):** To complement the existing Government of Lesotho and World Food Programme school feeding initiative, a total of 3,000 of the most vulnerable school-aged children, both boys and girls, will receive hygiene packages to support their well-being and encourage school attendance. These packages are designed to promote personal hygiene and ensure that children from vulnerable families have the necessary supplies to feel comfortable and confident in their school environment. Each package will include essential items such as bath soap, sanitary towels, toothpaste, a toothbrush, and laundry soap, among other hygiene products. By providing these resources, the initiative aims to enhance children's health, reduce absenteeism, and contribute to a more equitable learning experience. Furthermore, the LRCS will support the government and communities through the reparation of wells, installation of rain-harvesting systems, and implementation of efficient irrigation systems, such as drip irrigation.
- **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Protection Information:** A total of 17,473 individuals will be reached through the dissemination of early warning messages based on the seasonal outlook. This proactive approach ensures that communities receive timely information to prompt early actions and better prepare for potential risks. These messages will be communicated through a range of channels, including local radio, newspapers, and public gatherings, to maximise their reach and impact. In addition to early warning communications, protection campaigns will be carried out to raise awareness about gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection, particularly during disaster situations. These campaigns will educate communities on how to safeguard vulnerable individuals and effectively respond in crisis scenarios. The LRCS will collaborate closely with key stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Police, the Child Protection Unit (CPU), local government officials, and trained LRCS volunteers, to ensure the campaigns are comprehensive and impactful.
- **Community Engagement Accountability (CEA):** To support effective communication and feedback, the LRCS will also focus on establishing and strengthening community feedback mechanisms. This will involve enhancing existing systems to better capture community input, address concerns, and improve overall engagement between the LRCS and the communities it serves. To prepare for future shocks, the LRCS will revive and train 14 community-based response teams (CBRTs). Other initiatives to be promoted as part of strengthening the operation include:
 - **Establish community committees:** Form representative committees including elders, women, youth, and marginalised groups and ensure that these committees are involved in decision-making processes and intervention planning.
 - **Regular dialogue and community consultation** (the LRCS facilitates bi-weekly and monthly meetings with communities): Maintain ongoing dialogue with the community to understand their evolving needs and perceptions and regular consultations to adapt the intervention based on community feedback and changing circumstances.
 - **Support local solutions:** Encourage and support community-driven solutions to drought-related challenges, providing resources and technical assistance where needed, while validating and incorporating traditional knowledge and practices into the intervention.
 - **Joint after-action reviews or evaluations:** Conduct evaluations with the participation of community members to assess the impact and effectiveness of the intervention and use findings to inform and guide future interventions and strategies.

Table 1: Summary of households targeted per intervention

District	Households covered per intervention						CEA and protection education/campaigns
	Multi-purpose cash transfers	Food security and livelihoods	WASH Education, rehabilitation, and construction of water sources	Distribution of dignity kits targeting school children	Health and nutrition	DRR: Early warning messages	
Quthing	1,000	1,000	3,400	500	3,400	3,400	3,400
Mohale's Hoek	500	500	1,700	500	1,700	1,700	1,700
Mafeteng	1,000	1,000	3,400	500	3,400	3,400	3,400
Maseru Rural	1,000	1,000	3,400	500	3,400	3,400	3,400
Qacha's Nek							
Thaba-Tseka	750	750	2,721	500	2,721	2,721	2,721
Mokhotlong	750	750	2,852	500	2,852	2,852	2,852
Total Households	5,000	5,000	17,473	3,000	17,473	17,473	17,473

Anticipated climate-related risks and adjustments in the operation

According to the preliminary forecast from SARCOF, the 2024/2025 weather outlook for Lesotho is expected to be influenced by mild La Niña conditions. This suggests that similar to other countries in southern Africa, the rainy season in Lesotho may be wetter than usual, with potential storms and flooding affecting various areas. These weather patterns could impact the timing of activities, as some communities may need to cross rivers to attend workshops, and waterlogging could threaten crop production. To address these challenges, the LRCS plans to integrate the dissemination of weather and early warning messages to better prepare communities for the expected conditions. This will help inform them about the necessary measures to mitigate the effects of heavy rainfall. Additionally, there is a risk of livestock diseases, such as "Blue Tongue", which are associated with wetter weather conditions in Lesotho. To manage this risk, the LRCS will collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and extension workers to provide communities and farmers with guidance on how to respond to potential outbreaks. Therefore, the LRCS will ensure that weather forecasts are considered when planning workshops and other activities to minimise the risks to the targeted population and ensure their safety.

People to be assisted

The LRCS will prioritise all affected districts, particularly focusing on foothills and hard-to-reach mountainous community councils (mountainous and foothills) where humanitarian interventions have been limited or non-existent during previous response efforts. This targeted approach aims to address the urgent needs of populations currently experiencing severe food insecurity. The selected districts have been identified as among the hardest hit by the ongoing drought, exacerbating food shortages and threatening the livelihoods of residents. Therefore, through this Emergency Appeal, the LRCS aims to prioritise and support 87,381 individuals (17,473 households) in five districts targeted under the ongoing response (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Mafeteng, and Qacha's Nek) with expansion to another five districts projected to be in IPC 3 by the end of September 2024 (Thaba Tseka, Mokhotlong). These individuals are facing acute food insecurity and require immediate intervention to mitigate the severe impacts of the drought. The LRCS seeks to ensure that these communities receive essential support to sustain their livelihoods and enhance their resilience during this challenging period. The geographical targeting will follow the criteria below:

Considerations for protection, gender, and inclusion and community engagement and accountability

To enhance CEA, the LRCS will set up a help desk with volunteers, the targeted population, and local leaders to encourage active community participation and facilitate two-way feedback. The LRCS will also use a toll-free hotline and suggestion boxes to ensure community input is incorporated into programme planning and implementation. These measures aim to improve transparency, inclusivity, and communication. In the targeting and verification processes, the LRCS will use a community-based approach to involve local members in selecting eligible households for assistance. This approach leverages community knowledge to ensure the selection process is inclusive, transparent, and aligned with local needs.

Furthermore, in addressing protection, gender, age, disability, and accountability to affected populations and social inclusion issues, the LRCS will prioritise identifying and registering vulnerable households and ensure the

prioritization of the most vulnerable groups, including the chronically ill, physically challenged, orphan headed households, and the elderly. In addition, in response to the protection issues highlighted by the LVAC 2024 assessment, the LRCS will initiate campaigns focused on GBV and child protection. These campaigns are designed to mitigate the impact of such issues within communities, aiming to raise awareness, provide support services, and promote preventive measures.


PLANNED OPERATIONS


Following an assessment conducted by the LRCS with support from key stakeholders such as the DMA and the Ministry of Agriculture across various parts of the country in March 2024, and based on the triangulated IPC analysis projections for January to March 2024, the districts of Quthing, Maseru, Mafeteng, Qacha’s Nek, and Mohale’s Hoek were identified as being in a crisis situation. The assessment revealed a critical need for humanitarian assistance in the areas of WASH, Food Security, and Health and Nutrition. In response to these findings, the LRCS launched the DREF Response in May 2024 to support 2,500 households (approximately 12,500 individuals) in the affected areas, focusing on these critical areas.

Concurrently, during the launch process, the LVAC conducted the Vulnerability Assessment Analysis (VAA). The latest LVAC findings underscored the necessity of scaling-up humanitarian assistance in the five crisis-affected districts (Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek, Quthing, Maseru, and Qacha’s Nek), as well as in those projected to reach a similar crisis phase by the end of September 2024. Consequently, the LRCS submitted an appeal to expand their interventions.

Thus, through this Emergency Appeal, the IFRC aims to support the LRCS in addressing the impacts of the ongoing drought resulting from the persistent El Niño. The Emergency Appeal will focus on the following pillars:


RESPONSE PILLAR 1: FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS

 Food Security and Livelihoods	Female > 18: 11,700	Female < 18: 15,600	CHF 968,000
	Male > 18: 8,400	Male < 18: 14,300	Total target: 50,000 (10,000 households)
Objective:	Affected communities restore and improve their livelihoods		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train communities ahead of the upcoming rainy season on understanding early warning messages to inform early actions. - Disseminate weather-related early warning messages ahead of the planting season using public gatherings, radio programmes and televisions. - Distribute agricultural inputs (field crops, fruit trees, and vegetable seeds). - Train communities on climate smart agriculture, food preservation and handling. 		


 Multi-purpose Cash	Female > 18: 5,850	Female < 18: 7,800	CHF 1,229,000
	Male > 18: 4,200	Male < 18: 7,150	Total target: 25,000 (5,000 households)
Objective:	Improve household food security and the provision of immediate relief to affected families.		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct detailed household assessments, targeting, and verification of the most vulnerable households according to the LVAC. 		

- Register selected households.
- Conduct market assessments and continue monitoring of the targeted areas.
- Sensitise financial service providers (FSPs) to the operational areas and designs of the intervention with the selection of delivery mechanisms.
- Develop community engagement materials and establish community feedback mechanisms.
- Provide MPC assistance to selected and verified households through FSPs, aligned with the recommendations from the LVAC.
- Conduct post-distribution, price, and market monitoring.
- Capacity building for both volunteers and staff on CVA.

RESPONSE PILLAR 2: HEALTH AND NUTRITION

 Health and Nutrition	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 119,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Improve household dietary diversity while also improving behavioural WASH practices.		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training sessions on food perseveration and handling. - Intensify nutrition campaigns targeting under five caregivers. - Screening and referrals of malnourished children. - Promote infant and young children feeding practices as per recommended protocols. - Awareness raising on health promotion and disease prevention. 		

RESPONSE PILLAR 3: WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE


 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 636,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Improve access to clean water for domestic and agricultural use and behavioural changes related to hygiene.		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Map and identify eligible water sources. - Rehabilitation and maintenance of water sources. - Identification, planning, and construction of water supply systems. - Water preservation – rainwater harvesting systems. - Install drip irrigation systems. - WASH campaigns in schools. - Distribute hygiene packages in schools. 		

- WASH campaigns in communities.


CROSS-CUTTING SECTORS


PROTECTION, GENDER, AND INCLUSION (PGI), COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CEA), RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE ADAPTATION, RESILIENCE, AND RECOVERY

 Protection, Gender, and Inclusion	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 39,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Ensure the participation of each community member regardless of their vulnerability		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - During targeting, the LRCS will ensure that the most vulnerable households are targeted. - Prior to CVA transfers, assessments will be conducted for households to decide who should be given cash in the household. - Selection of project meetings and training venues will be selected based on accessibility, especially to ensure that all people can access such sites. - Conduct campaigns on gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection. 		
 Community Engagement and Accountability	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 34,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Enhance community involvement throughout all phases of the response.		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish community feedback mechanisms (help desk, toll free number). The help desk will include representatives of the targeted population, local leaders, and people living with disabilities to ensure that PGI is mainstreamed. This is being done to scale-up the already existing government CEA structures that include local leaders such as chiefs, local counsellors, and the district administration offices. - Monitor and report on feedback using public gatherings. - Train volunteers on CEA. 		

 Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation, and Recovery	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 101,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Empowering communities to prepare for future shocks.		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct training sessions on climate-smart agriculture techniques and food preservation methods. - Identify suitable locations for tree planting initiatives. - Integrate the dissemination of early warning messages as guided by the upcoming seasonal outlook. 		

Enabling approaches

 National Society Strengthening	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 1,230,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Scale-up the National Society's capacity to respond to shocks		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support volunteers with insurance, incentives, visibility, and branding (banners, t-shirts, caps, etc.). - Procure IT equipment for LRCS branches (laptops and printers). - Contribute to the technical development of LRCS teams, particularly in regard to drought response. - Revival and training sessions of national level disaster response training (NDRT) and CBRTs. - Procure a vehicle for the programme. 		

 Coordination and Partnerships	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 24,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	Enhance effective coordination measures during the response		
Priority Actions:	<p>Membership Coordination</p> <p>The IFRC and LRCS are collaborating to efficiently coordinate their response efforts. This partnership aims to streamline operations, optimise resource use, and boost overall effectiveness. The IFRC's Disaster Management, Food Security and Resilience, WASH, PGI, and CEA teams will offer technical support throughout all phases of the response.</p> <p>Additionally, the British Red Cross and Netherlands Red Cross are helping the LRCS with safeguarding measures and aligning early warning systems as part of the Anticipatory Action Plan for Drought. The Netherlands Red Cross is also assisting in finalising the</p>		


Anticipatory Action Plan for cold waves, enhancing the LRCS's strategies for climate-related events.

The regular coordination activities will specifically cover the following objectives:

- Harmonised planning, monitoring, and reporting among IFRC members, with the LRCS taking the lead and coordinated by the IFRC.
- Regular coordination with partners supporting the operation both within and outside the country.
- Strengthening membership coordination by consolidating and harmonising the multilateral and various bilateral support provided to the LRCS through the Federation-wide coordinated approach.

Engagement with external partners

- Conduct the stakeholder's drought response mapping exercise.
- As a member of the current response technical working group, the LRCS will be actively involved in these operations.
- Project induction targeting/launch involving key stakeholders such as the DMA and Department of Forestry, which will oversee tree planting initiatives. The Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition, and Food Security and other stakeholders are mandated to coordinate all DRR initiatives.
- Put in place effective external reporting mechanisms (quarterly or monthly).
- The LRCS will actively participate in resource mobilisation, supporting fundraising and securing resources.

 IFRC Secretariat Services	Female > 18: 20,045	Female<18: 26,725	CHF 620,000
	Male > 18: 16,105	Male < 18: 24,495	Total target: 87,370 (17,474 households)
Objective:	To support the LRCS to attain the best quality standards in regard to technical solutions, risk management and accountability		
Priority Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The IFRC team will ensure technical and operational support to the LRCS in all domains required, including short and long-term plans. - The IFRC will deploy two surge staff in Lesotho to support the launch of the operation – an OPS Manager and Finance Coordinator. - Ensure support with the preparation and implementation of mob-tables, procurement plans and processes, and supply chains. - Support and strengthen financial management, reporting, risk management and accountability. - Support the establishment of a strong PMER framework. - Support the communications plan and visibility of the crisis, as well as external engagement with media and partners. 		

- The IFRC's security plans will apply to all IFRC staff throughout the operation. Area specific Security Risk Assessments will be conducted for any operational area should any IFRC personnel deploy there.
- All IFRC personnel must, and Red Cross and Red Crescent staff and volunteers are encouraged, to complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses, i.e. Stay Safe 2.0 Global edition Levels 1-3.

Risk management

Below are some of the risks that were identified at the initial stage. A more detailed risk management framework will be developed with the National Society which can be made available to partners and donors.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Security risk	Low	High	The LRCS will use mobile FSPs for cash transfers.
Inadequate targeting and duplication of efforts	Medium	High	The intense verification exercise will be conducted working closely with relevant stakeholders.
Inflation and impact on markets	Low	Medium	A market assessment will be conducted.
Fraud and corruption	Low	High	The LRCS will implement measures to allow transparency in all its procurement processes. The LRCS will continuously review the suppliers register and conduct background checks on suppliers and service contractors.

Quality and accountability

The LRCS will adopt and tailor the IFRC's comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and accountability framework to monitor this project intervention. Monitoring will be conducted in an integrated and participatory manner, involving LRCS project management – comprised of senior management, the Project Manager, PMER unit, and key external project stakeholders, including the DMA, Ministry of Agriculture, and Rural Water Supply. Joint monitoring efforts will be carried out across all project sites, including onsite inspections, routine reviews, and mid-terms evaluations to better understand project performance. Monitoring activities will be based on the work plan and Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP), and the information collected will be used to update the action progress matrix. Key monitoring activities include:

- **Output monitoring:** Output level indicators will be tracked on a monthly basis using the Indicator Tracking Table. Regular site visits will be conducted, and progress will be shared during monthly coordination meetings and stakeholder committee meetings.
- **Story gathering:** A continuous story gathering process will run throughout the project lifecycle, with a final follow-up in the last months of the project. Selected stories will be featured in quarterly reports where feasible.
- **Lesson learning event:** A lesson learning event will be organised to share good practices and lessons learned during project implementation, in collaboration with communities and stakeholders such as Lesotho Meteorology Services, the DMA, councillors, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, and the Ministry of Social Development.

FUNDING REQUIREMENT

Federation-wide funding requirement*

Federation-wide Funding Requirement including the National Society domestic target, IFRC Secretariat, and the Participating National Society's funding requirements CHF7million	IFRC Secretariat Funding Requirement in support of the Federation-wide funding ask CHF5million
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**For more information on the Federation-wide funding requirement, refer to section: Federation-wide Approach*

Breakdown of the IFRC secretariat funding requirement

**EL Nino
Induced
Food
Insecurity**

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Planned Operations	3,126,000
Livelihoods	968,000
Multi-purpose Cash	1,229,000
Health	119,000
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	636,000
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	39,000
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	101,000
Community Engagement and Accountability	34,000
Enabling Approaches	1,874,000
Coordination and Partnerships	24,000
Secretariat Services	620,000
National Society Strengthening	1,230,000
TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS	5,000,000

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)

Contact information

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

At the Lesotho National Society:

- **Secretary General (or equivalent):** Sechaba Mokhameleli; email: smokhameleli@redcross.org.ls, phone: +266 58861206
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At the IFRC:

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- **For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting enquiries) Regional Head of PMER & QA** Beatrice Atieno OKEYO, beatrice.okeyo@ifrc.org, Phone: +254732 40402

Reference



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