



The devastating impact of drought on livestock in October 2024.

Appeal: MDRBW005	Total DREF Allocation: CHF 499,471	Crisis Category: Yellow	Hazard: Drought
Glide Number: -	People Affected: 37,000 people	People Targeted: 5,350 people	
Event Onset: Slow	Operation Start Date: 10-06-2024	New Operational End Date: 28-02-2025	Total Operating Timeframe: 8 months
Reporting Timeframe Start Date: 10-06-2024		Reporting Timeframe End Date: 31-10-2024	
Additional Allocation Requested: 0		Targeted Areas: Southern, North East	

Description of the Event

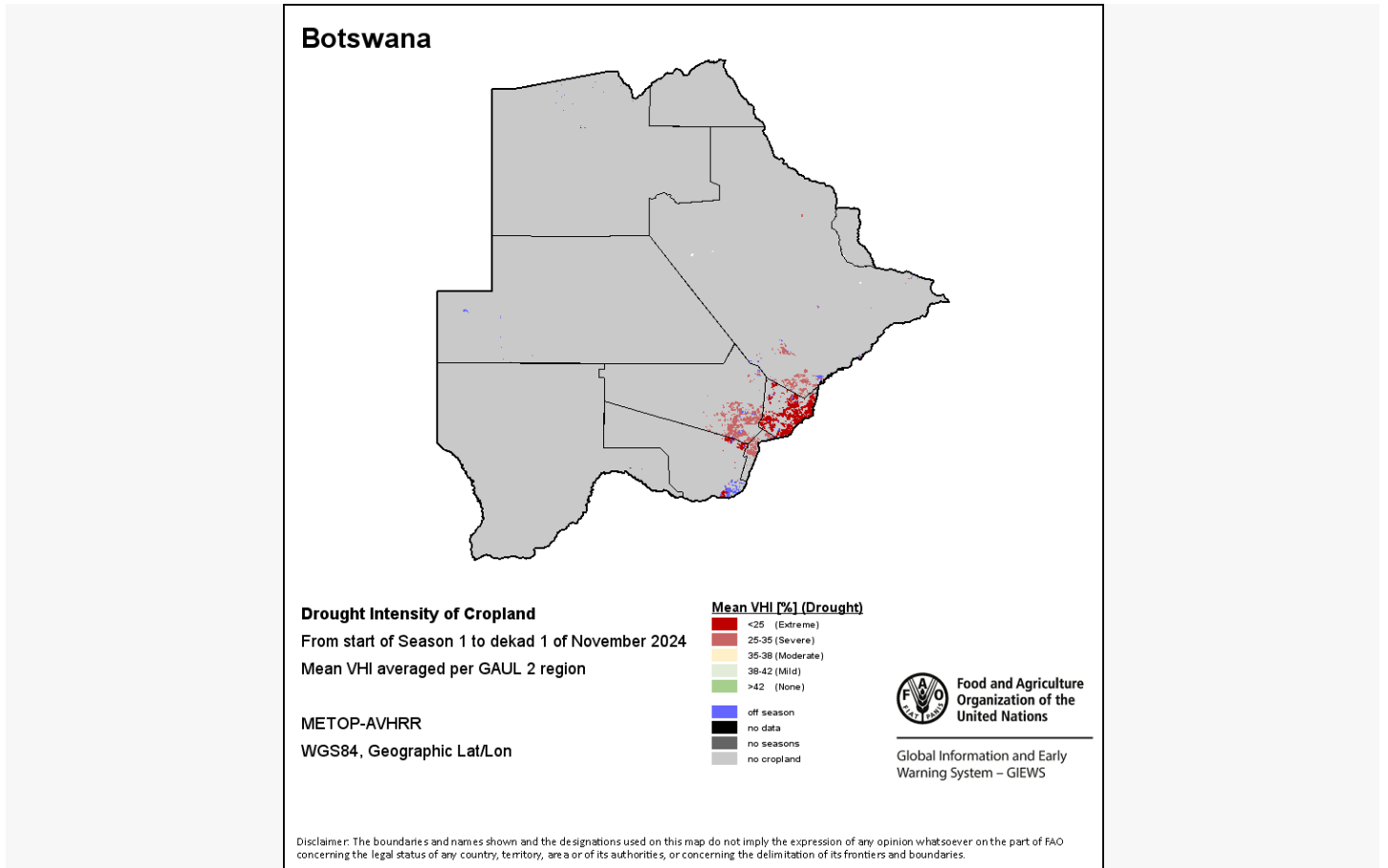


Figure 1: Agricultural drought conditions in Botswana as of Dekad 1, November 2024,(Source: <https://www.fao.org/gIEWS/earthobservation/country/index.jsp?code=BWA>).

Date when the trigger was met

30-05-2024

What happened, where and when?

In response to the severe drought conditions declared by the Government of Botswana for the 2023/2024 agricultural season, the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS), in partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), launched a Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) intervention on September 17, 2024. This intervention focuses on addressing challenges in Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and the Northeast districts, identified as the hardest hit by drought according to the Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Report of 2024. Over 72,125 people in these regions face chronic food insecurity, water shortages, and livelihood disruptions due to long dry spells, erratic rainfall, and prolonged heat waves that have devastated agricultural production and water resources.

Since the project's launch, BRCS has conducted project interventions, which includes distribution of food relief packages, disbursement cash vouchers and provision of livestock feed supplements to 885 beneficiaries, These efforts aim to mitigate the devastating impact of the ongoing drought, which has left rural economies vulnerable and dependent on urgent humanitarian support.

Following the results of the drought assessments conducted in Hukuntsi, North East, and Mabutsane districts, Botswana launched a targeted Drought DREF Operation valued at 499,471.19 CHF. This intervention aims to address the urgent needs of 5,350 vulnerable households severely impacted by the ongoing drought. Grounded in robust needs assessments and extensive Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) processes, the operation prioritizes impactful, community-driven interventions. These include providing food packages to 300 malnourished children under five, distributing livestock feed to 200 farmers to safeguard livelihoods, and rehabilitating three critical boreholes to ensure access to safe water for communities and their livestock. Additionally, the initiative will deliver unconditional cash grants to 550 households to restore dignity and agency while supporting immediate household needs.

To build resilience and promote long-term recovery, the operation incorporates layered interventions such as the distribution of layer chicken packages, including chicks, structures, and necessary amenities, for 120 households, alongside comprehensive training in poultry farming, nutrition, and hygiene. A handwashing campaign and hygiene kit distribution targeting 850 households will reinforce public health, while volunteers, staff, and community gatekeepers will be equipped with CEA, Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), and Psychological First Aid (PFA) training to enhance response effectiveness and inclusivity. These initiatives collectively aim to mitigate the immediate impacts of the drought while fostering sustainable practices that empower communities to navigate future climate challenges with resilience.

This operation has been extended to February 2025 due to delays by the suppliers, specifically for the livestock feeds and poultry project. Furthermore, the needs continue to intensify with food insecurity and water scarcity being the main issues of concern. This is exacerbated by prolonged heat waves. In this month of December, Botswana has been experiencing heat waves since the 02nd of December.



Household assessments and beneficiary verification in Betesankwe, Mabutsane District, (Fieldwork,2024).



Distribution of food packages in Mabutsane

Scope and Scale

Food security challenges have intensified in targeted regions Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and the North East, where food shortages and livestock mortality rates are highest. The April 2024 Department of Crop Production report underscored severe crop damage, while the May 2024 Rural Development Secretariat report revealed a 40% drop in total agricultural production from the previous year. This trend jeopardizes the livelihoods of over 70% of rural households, who rely on rain-fed farming. As drought persists, compounded by erratic rainfall and rising food prices, Botswana faces just like other southern African countries faces challenges to agricultural recovery and livelihood stability as water scarcity has also impacted livestock and wildlife. Over 9,000 drought-related cattle deaths have been reported in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (OCHA,2024).

With the prolonged drought and uncertainties surrounding climate variability, the operational phase of the DREF drought relief project faces time constraints, particularly in lagging interventions such as poultry farming and water infrastructure development. This challenge is compounded by the delayed onset of rains and the anticipated La Niña effects, which pose dual risks of flooding and excessive rainfall, potentially disrupting grain production—a staple for many Batswana. The likelihood of waterlogging and crop failures necessitates the urgency of advancing livelihood recovery projects like poultry farming and water supply development, which can diversify income sources and reduce reliance on vulnerable grain crops. These interventions, integral to the DREF project, aim to build community resilience, stabilize food security, restore livelihoods, and prepare communities for future climate shocks.

Botswana is currently in the midst of an 8-month Emergency Drought Operation targeting 5,350 households across Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and North East Districts. This operation, initiated in response to the worsening drought conditions, aims to address critical needs in sectors such as health, water, livelihoods, and cash support. While significant achievements have been made, assessments reveal a deteriorating situation on the ground, necessitating escalated and sustained humanitarian support. The drought has not only deepened vulnerabilities but also exposed systemic challenges in food security, water access, and livelihoods, calling for an urgent scale-up of interventions to prevent further deterioration.

Health Sector: Malnutrition and Child Welfare

Engagements with beneficiaries, District Health Management Teams (DHMT), Village Development Committees (VDC), and Social and Community Development (S&CD) structures have highlighted malnutrition as a growing crisis, particularly in Mabutsane and Hukuntsi.

For example, in villages such as Inalegolo, 163 children are malnourished, underscoring the urgency of expanding support to additional households. Despite these challenges, there have been noteworthy achievements. In Hukuntsi District, direct feeding programs have ensured that children receive 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 has resulted in child neglect in some households. Addressing this issue requires intensified monitoring visits and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms. Across these districts, the lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities and the loss of livestock and crop production have left many households entirely dependent on part-time jobs and humanitarian aid. This is the second consecutive drought, further eroding the financial resilience of affected communities and increasing their reliance on external assistance.

Water Sector: Access and Challenges

Access to water remains a critical issue in all three districts, exacerbated by Botswana's ongoing heat waves, with temperatures soaring up to 43 degrees Celsius. These communities rely primarily on underground water sources, but the current capacity is insufficient. Government-supported water bowsering services are overwhelmed, often leaving residents waiting in long queues without access to adequate water for their basic needs. Households with standpipes disproportionately consume the available supply, leaving others to rely on unaffordable water vendors. This inequity highlights the urgent need to expand support in the water sector by increasing the budget for borehole rehabilitation and drilling. Without immediate intervention, water scarcity will continue to undermine the health and livelihoods of these communities.

Livelihoods and Livestock:

Livestock feed distribution has been a significant success, supporting the survival of livestock in drought-stricken areas. However, the lack of water poses a major threat to the sustainability of this progress. Livestock cannot thrive without adequate water resources, making it imperative to address the water crisis alongside ongoing feed support. Furthermore, the collapse of crop farming due to consecutive droughts has left many households unable to generate income or secure food, compounding their economic vulnerabilities.

Cash Support: Addressing Inflation and Financial Recovery:

The provision of unconditional cash grants has allowed households to buy food and pay off debts, offering a lifeline to many families. However, inflation, particularly in food prices, has diminished the purchasing power of these grants, with beneficiaries calling for an extension of the project to allow for the establishment of small businesses. Prolonged financial support is critical to help these households to recover economically and regain their independence. Without it, the cycle of poverty and dependency is likely to persist, further straining limited resources and prolonging the recovery process.

Recommendations and Way Forward:

While the Emergency Drought Operation has achieved notable successes across all targeted sectors, the worsening conditions on the ground demand a recalibration of support. Key recommendations include:

Health Sector: Scale up feeding programs, expand coverage to additional households, and intensify monitoring visits to address issues of neglect and malnutrition through the support of the DHMT and S&CD.

Water Sector: Increase the number of boreholes to ensure equitable access, particularly for underserved households.

Livelihoods: Strengthen livestock support by ensuring access to water.

Cash Support: Extend the duration of cash grants and adjust amounts to account for inflation, enabling households to meet their basic needs and recover financially.

The drought in Botswana is not just an environmental crisis but a profound humanitarian challenge that threatens the health, livelihoods, and dignity of vulnerable populations. While the current operation has delivered meaningful impacts, escalating needs on the ground require bold and sustained action. By addressing the gaps and expanding the scope of interventions, this operation can provide a pathway to resilience for communities grappling with the devastating effects of consecutive droughts.

Source Information

Source Name	Source Link
1. 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
2. FAO	https://www.fao.org/giews/earthobservation/country/index.jsp?code=BWA
3. BW Government Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/share/v/12HsehvtCYx/



4. Botswana Meteorological Services	https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/post/s/pfbid02JE6TmrGaiBQ8BdbpzPjc1AtSwHb7ygiob6WT2nLH83BexVaYSEwjfgy2FhQ6m6Tel/
5. Botswana Meteorological Services	https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/post/s/pfbid02LPU5oH4ke5aHr2sN6LHfM5v6q8TzP7K5ukPAvD5uuiqFaVer2Avk2h8ocTbUim5Yl/
6. Daily Maverick	https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-05-09-explainer-el-ninos-impact-and-what-to-expect-from-la-nina/
7. OCHA	https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/malawi/southern-africa-el-nino-forecast-and-impact-august-2024
8. 2019 Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme Report	https://reliefweb.int/report/botswana/botswana-vulnerability-assessment-committee-results-2019
9. Sundaystandard	https://www.sundaystandard.info/botswana-records-driest-february-in-40-years/

Summary of Changes

Are you changing the timeframe of the operation	Yes
Are you changing the operational strategy	No
Are you changing the target population of the operation	No
Are you changing the geographical location	No
Are you making changes to the budget	No
Is this a request for a second allocation	No
Has the forecasted event materialize?	No

Please explain the summary of changes and justification:

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) is informing the stakeholders of an extension of two-month for the the DREF for drought. The extension will ensure quality and consistency in implementing activities across Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and North-East districts, mitigating unforeseen challenges and aligning with seasonal demands. This extension ensures that the NS is able to accommodate delays caused by late funding disbursement, logistical disruptions during the electoral campaign and general elections, and challenges in securing necessary supplies and stakeholder engagement for effective delivery of some activities.

Among the activities delayed, are:

- Support to the poultry for 120 farmers which include the construction of Poultry Structures (the farm structure, layer cage, 50 point of lay pullets, water system, feed, egg collection trays), provision of 50 Chicks, medicine, transport and installation at the site.
- Provision of feed for livestock for 200 farmers.
- Provision of 4 water tank in most in need villages and ensuring borehole rehabilitation to increase access to water.

The initial plan and unachieved activities of the National Society (NS) remain relevant, as the impact of the drought on food insecurity persists, despite the onset of the rainy season. Consequently, the NS has developed a new calendar with an acceleration plan to facilitate the swift completion of activities. Additionally, this extension will allow continued engagement with stakeholders and enhanced coordination to develop sustainable solutions to the drought and food insecurity challenges in the country. These efforts were previously constrained by the election period to mitigate reputational risks and address competing priorities effectively at the time.

As of December 2024, the vulnerabilities of the targeted communities and the humanitarian impacts of the drought on livelihoods and



food security persisted. This conclusion is supported by several key observations, including:

- o Limited availability of livestock supplementary feeds in agricultural stores in Hukuntsi and surrounding areas. While the cost of supplementary feeding is high for poorer households, there is no access to feed during times when the households have savings.
 - o Water access is limited in villages where water is supplied through bowsers primarily for domestic use. In other areas, like Zutshwa, the water infrastructure does not provide adequate pressure to reach all households. The cost of purchasing water for livestock, including transportation expenses, is high across all the assessed villages. In the rainy season, the water conservation through water tank and all efforts to increase access to water is critical for life and livelihood saving.
 - o Limited shelter infrastructure for households which also limits food preservation particularly during hot temperatures.
 - o While the severity of food insecurity has reduced for households benefiting from different drought relief projects including the Botswana Red Cross Society, the positive improvements observed will disappear without extended support.
- o Late onset of the 2024/2025 rain season and the increasing frequency of heatwaves has negatively impacted the start of the ploughing season with crop losses already observed. The October and November rains had resulted in regrowth of pasture, but this process has also been impaired by the heatwaves. Temperatures were ranging from 37 to 45 degrees Celsius during the heatwave episodes.

Current National Society Actions

Start date of National Society actions

12-08-2024



A Volunteer conducting assessment for beneficiary selection in North East

Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The drought has severely impacted livelihoods in the project districts, leading to increased malnutrition, hunger, limited access to clean water, and reduced livelihood diversification due to reliance on rain-fed agriculture.

Since the start of the project implementation, the project has provided food and hygiene packages to curb malnutrition and hunger, initiated a poultry farming project in the North-East to offer a sustainable, income-generating, and less water-demanding

	<p>livelihood option, and embarked on water infrastructure rehabilitation to improve access to clean water. These efforts are helping communities meet their basic needs while fostering resilience and hope for sustainable livelihoods.</p>
Health	<p>In this project, the National Society is implementing a Drought Relief initiative with a food security component in Mabutsane, North-East, and Hukuntsi, targeting malnourished children under five years old, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and other vulnerable groups. The initiative provides food packages over three months, with the second distribution completed and the third and final distribution scheduled for mid-December 2024. Additionally, nutritional education is being provided alongside the food relief packages to empower beneficiaries with knowledge to improve their dietary practices and long-term well-being.</p>
Water, Sanitation And Hygiene	<p>Through the ongoing DREF Drought Project, the National Society (NS) is addressing the specific needs (through the rehabilitation of 3 water points and 4 tanks) of affected communities in the three project districts. The Water Utilities Corporation (WUC) and the Department of Water Affairs have played a significant role in preparation for the implementation of this project, particularly informing the implementation process as per the needs of our communities.</p> <p>It is important to note that access to water remains a critical issue in all three districts, exacerbated by Botswana's ongoing heat waves, with temperatures soaring up to 43 degrees Celsius. These communities rely primarily on underground water sources, but the current capacity is insufficient. Government-supported water bowsering services are overwhelmed, often leaving residents waiting in long queues without access to adequate water for their basic needs. Households with standpipes disproportionately consume the available supply, leaving others to rely on unaffordable water vendors. This inequity highlights the urgent need to expand support in the water sector by increasing the budget for borehole rehabilitation and drilling. Without immediate intervention, water scarcity will continue to undermine the health and livelihoods of these communities.</p>
Protection, Gender And Inclusion	<p>In partnership with IFRC (CBF), the Botswana Red Cross Society is implementing a Protection, Gender, and Inclusion project in three districts: Chobe, North East, and Palapye, scheduled to conclude in mid-July 2024. The project utilizes various strategies, including Social and Behavior Change Communication, capacity building, and research. Although the project is being implemented in different districts, the National Society has developed some capacity at the headquarters level and for some members of the National Disaster Response Team (NDRT). This capacity will be beneficial in the implementation of the Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI) approach in this intervention, particularly regarding the delivery of key messages on PGI, capacity building for staff and volunteers, and research on the root causes of sexual and gender-based violence. These skills will be employed as needed for the intervention.</p>
Education	<p>With the support of the government, the BRCS continues to provide educational, rehabilitation, and stimulation services to children living with disabilities in three key areas across Botswana: The Sefhare Stimulation Center in Sefhare, the Tshimologo Stimulation Center in Francistown, and the Tlamelong Rehabilitation Center in Tlokweng. In 2024, 101 children with disabilities were enrolled across these three centers. The Tlamelong Rehabilitation Center has enrolled 39 trainees with disabilities, specializing in horticulture and textiles. These centers also provide meals to the learners, ensuring they are well-nourished, particularly those from disadvantaged families. Additionally, the Tlamelong Rehabilitation Center offers horticultural training, enabling some learners to establish their own gardens and poultry farms.</p>
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation And Recovery	<p>The NS hosted a Regional Disaster Risk Management Symposium on the 25th-27th March 2024 under the topic "Promoting innovation, integration, and collaboration in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in the Southern African Development Community (SADC Region). It was a highly energetic interaction of DRM practitioners with the researchers, students, key government sectors, NGOs and DM leads from 8 NS's in the SADC region. The DM Officer participated in the Regional DRR/CCA 2nd annual learning retreat and now sits on the steering committee. The learning retreat convened 23Africa National Societies (ANSs) and branches, 2 Partner National Societies (PNSs), Youth branch leaders,</p>



volunteers, RCRC Climate Centre, IFRC Cluster Delegates, regional office staffs, external partners and stakeholders between 20-24th March in Nairobi, Kenya with the aiming to empower, equip and inspire NS to be able Co-design and Co-create DRR and Climate Action programming with key stakeholders that will create a lasting change and eventually the realization of a scale up of DRR and Climate Action.

The DM officer also attended the 2nd Southern Africa Dialogue platform on Anticipatory Humanitarian action, and discussions were centred around El Nino insights: Southern Africa Anticipation After Action Review, 14 member states were in attendance together with multiple agencies including the ECHO, Anticipation hub, WFP, IFRC, FAO, OCHA, German Red Cross and representatives from the National Societies in the region. The primary goal of the regional after-action review was to provide a moment of reflection on drought anticipatory action activations implemented across six SADC member states in anticipation of El Niño impact in the 2023-24 rainy season.

Additionally:

The Netherlands Red Cross Society (NLRCs) has signed a two-year contract with the BRCS following extensive engagement in water management and innovation in Botswana.

BRCS participated in the IFRC Solferino Academy Global Innovation Summit Conference, where they co-hosted a session with the NLRCs on building active participatory partnerships in the humanitarian sector. This session highlighted the BRCS/NLRCs Water Management and Innovation Partnership project as a case study.

Community Engagement And Accountability

The BRCS has over 13,000 volunteers nationwide. These volunteers received capacity-building mentorship and were provided with sufficient resources to engage with their communities effectively. Before the implementation of the project, the volunteers were trained to ensure they communicate project details clearly and facilitate community feedback.

The National Society has deployed 50 volunteers across the districts and coordinated with relevant stakeholders (e.g Village Leaders, Village Development Committee, Social Welfare Office) throughout all phases of project implementation. It remains in continuous liaison with village leadership and village development committees to ensure effective collaboration and community engagement.

BRCS promotes behavioral and social change across all its programs by using television, radio, newspapers, and social media to disseminate information on public health issues, first aid, SGBV, climate change, and livelihoods.

Building on the foundational consultations at the national and district levels, BRCS conducted extensive Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) activities with village chiefs, Village Development Committees (VDCs), and the broader community. These engagements served as platforms to discuss the socio-economic impacts of the drought on daily lives and identify the most appropriate interventions to mitigate these challenges. Communities voiced their concerns regarding food insecurity, water scarcity, and the loss of livelihoods, which informed the prioritization of interventions such as food packages for malnourished children under 5 years, livestock feed distribution, and unconditional cash grants. The participatory approach ensured that the interventions resonated with the lived experiences of the affected populations and fostered a sense of ownership among community members. Village chiefs and VDCs played a crucial role in bridging the gap between BRCS and the community, facilitating open dialogue and building trust.

Society (BRCS) has been actively engaging with various media outlets to raise awareness about its humanitarian efforts and the challenges faced by vulnerable communities in the country. To date they have made appearances on various media platforms including national tv, print media, radio and social media platforms.

Environment Sustainability

BRCS has been conducting training sessions for farmers in Gweta village on climate-smart agriculture and water conservation. Consequently, the National Society is well-equipped to extend these training programs to other districts across Botswana.

In alignment with BRCS's climate change mitigation measures, the Department of Forestry and Range Resources donated 202 fruit trees to Sefhare Rehabilitation Centre.



	<p>This forms part of the BRCS Tree Planting Initiative, which continues to gain momentum in building environmental resilience.</p>
<p>Coordination</p>	<p>The National Society collaborates closely with several government departments, notably the Ministry for State President - National Disaster Management Office and the Ministry of Local Government and Traditional Affairs. These departments are key stakeholders in addressing vulnerability, enhancing community resilience, and ensuring food security nationwide.</p> <p>Recognizing the need for strategic alignment and cross-sectoral collaboration, BRCS engaged relevant ministries at a high level to secure their buy-in and leverage their expertise. These consultations included the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, the Ministry of Water Affairs and Sanitation, and other key stakeholders with mandates in agriculture, health, and community development. Through these discussions, best practices were identified to optimize the intervention's impact and ensure its success.</p> <p>The high-level engagements established a shared understanding of the drought's socio-economic implications and the urgent need for a coordinated response. Ministries contributed valuable insights on resource allocation, regulatory compliance, and sector-specific expertise, which were integrated into the intervention's design. For instance, the Ministry of Water Affairs and Sanitation emphasized the importance of equitable water distribution and proposed strategies for sustainable borehole rehabilitation, while the Ministry of Agriculture highlighted measures to safeguard livestock and enhance food security. These inputs ensured that the planned interventions were both contextually relevant and technically sound.</p> <p>The National Society has a multisectoral partnership with government ministries and departments such as the Ministry of Health and Wellness, Office of the President, National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Botswana Council for the Disabled, and UN agencies (FAO and UNDP) and the private sector.</p> <p>In this particular project, the BRCS has ensured coordination with relevant government agencies and private entities, particularly the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC), which has been instrumental in preparing for the water infrastructure development component of the project.</p> <p>District-Level Coordination and Sectoral Input</p> <p>Following the high-level consultations, BRCS engaged District Commissioners (DCs) to facilitate the trickle-down of information to district-level departments and ensure localized ownership of the project. The DCs convened representatives from critical departments, including the District Health Management Teams (DHMT), Social and Community Development (S&CD), Veterinary Services, and Crop Production, to align the intervention with district-specific needs and capacities. Committees were established at the district level to guide the selection of beneficiary households and ensure the transparency and fairness of the process. Terms of Reference (TORs) were jointly developed and agreed upon by all stakeholders, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, and criteria for household selection. This collaborative framework fostered accountability and promoted inclusive decision-making, ensuring that the intervention targeted the most vulnerable communities.</p>
<p>National Society Readiness</p>	<p>Over the past three consecutive years of drought in Botswana (since 2020/2021), the National Society (NS) has undertaken projects supported by various donors, positioning it to effectively implement the current drought response initiative. These efforts have significantly enhanced the NS's readiness and capacity in key areas of expertise.</p> <p>Despite limited resources, the NS has consistently supported the government in early warning and assessment activities, ensuring seamless coordination. A detailed report from May 25 identified gaps and areas where support was needed, enabling the NS to develop a comprehensive plan to complement government efforts and scale up actions for the 2023/2024 drought. This groundwork has been instrumental in ensuring the project's implementation readiness.</p>



In terms of cash readiness, the NS leveraged its established agreements with financial service providers through the ECHO project (2020–2021), gaining valuable lessons and expertise. This project successfully improved food and nutrition security for drought-affected, food-insecure households in Ngamiland, Central, and South East Districts, laying a solid foundation for current interventions.

BRCS staff and volunteers are well-prepared, having received extensive training on disaster response, Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA), and Protection, Gender, and Inclusion (PGI), all of which are critical for the successful rollout of the ongoing DREF project.

The NS's collaboration with the Netherlands Red Cross Society further bolstered its capacity building and information management capabilities. Additionally, training and experience in IFRC emergency operations and cash assistance organized by IFRC has equipped the team with the necessary tools and expertise to implement the current project effectively.

The groundwork laid over recent years has ensured that the current drought relief initiative is well-prepared and already underway.

Assessment

Since the declaration of drought in 2023, continuous assessments have been conducted to monitor the situation. An updated national assessment report was released on May 24, 2024, which informed the development and submission of this project proposal intervention. Subsequently, the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) conducted comprehensive drought assessments in July 2024 in the Boteti, Bobirwa, and Northwest districts to complement the national assessment report published in June 2024. These assessments further underscored the need to extend drought interventions to other severely affected districts. The focus was on gathering community-level and household-level data to evaluate the multifaceted impacts of the ongoing drought, including its effects on water resources, livestock, crops, nutrition, livelihoods, and human-wildlife conflict.

In preparation for the implementation of the Botswana Drought Relief Project, an assessment in the districts of Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and the North-East was done in September 2024 to assess the effects of the prolonged drought. The key insights of the assessment highlighted that there is persistent water shortages across all the districts, and the North East district is the highly affected as villagers and farmers have to incur transportation cost of the water from one village to the other which are approximately 20km apart just to ensure the minimum provision of water for their livestock. In Zutshwa and itholoke they source water from Ngwatle and Kutuku respectively, who also rely mostly on water supplied by water bowsers.

One notable observation was that many crop farmers had low yields due to the persistent long dry spells and heatwaves with very high temperatures reaching 46 degrees. The community depended on rainfed activities and as a result, they were hardest hit by the drought, most of the community members have to resort to community work (ipelegeng) a program by the social community development, which has low quotas and the government also had to increase quotas to accommodate the number of people seeking employment to diversity their livelihoods which were hard hit by the drought.

IFRC Network Actions Related To The Current Event

Secretariat

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is actively engaged in providing technical support to monitor the current situation. Working closely with the National Society, the IFRC remains vigilant in monitoring developments. This technical assistance highlights the IFRC's commitment to supporting disaster response efforts and strengthening community resilience. By participating in early warning initiatives and maintaining continuous monitoring, the IFRC aims to ensure that communities are well-informed and prepared to respond effectively to evolving crises.



	This proactive approach is 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 provides 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 is also investing 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	<p>Botswana has established a well-structured drought monitoring and early warning system, supported by some capacity. This system 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. Currently, these early action interventions, such as information dissemination and awareness messaging, are being implemented by the government with the support of the National Society (NS). As a key early action, the Botswana Vulnerability Assessment Committee (BVAC) conducts annual livelihood vulnerability assessments to guide interventions during droughts.</p> <p>The government has 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 will provide insights into the needs of districts affected by drought. Although this report is scheduled for release around June or July 2024, initial highlights have already been disseminated by the government to encourage action from partners.</p> <p>BRCS has been in discussions with the National Disaster Management Office (Ministry for State President) and the Rural Development Council (Ministry of Local and Rural Development) to identify gaps in current food security initiatives, determine other needs, and address them in the districts most severely affected by the drought.</p>
UN or other actors	BRCS has been working in partnership with Palms for Life to provide food security interventions in the Okavango District.

Are there major coordination mechanism in place?

The National Society participates in coordination mechanisms within the National Disaster Management Technical Committee (NDMTC) and District Disaster Management Committees (DDMC).

BRCS collaborates closely with DDMCs, which include the Department of Crop Production, Veterinary Services, Social and Community Development, and Water Utilities Corporation, among others. This collaboration involves sharing information on the drought situation and working together to conduct assessments.



Needs (Gaps) Identified



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

The economical activities for small gardening that were targeted under this DREF remained in need due to the long and consecutive effect of drought over the recent 3 years. The severe drought has severely impacted the primary sources of income for both arable and livestock farmers, significantly affecting their livelihoods and ability to meet basic needs. Livestock farmers are facing acute water and forage shortages, leading to weakened animals and decreased milk production, reducing the value of livestock and forcing farmers to sell their animals to recover funds already invested. Agricultural losses contribute to decreased food production, rising food prices, and increased food insecurity. Below are key elements that typically comprise a livelihood calendar for Botswana:

Agricultural Seasons

- Planting Season: Generally, occurs from November to December, coinciding with the onset of the rainy season.
- Growing Season: Extends from January to March, where crops are nurtured until harvest.
- Harvest Season: Typically, from April to June, when crops such as maize and sorghum are collected.

Economic Activities:

- Livestock Management: Activities related to cattle herding and management occur year-round but peak during the rainy season when pastures are abundant.
- Fishing: Fishing activities are more prevalent during the rainy season in areas near rivers and lakes.
- Craft Production: Handicrafts and traditional crafts are often produced year-round but may see increased demand during cultural festivals.

While rains will give opportunity for agriculture, the support to small farmers who mainly rely on poultry will remain in needs. This is even more relevant to support the poultry and shared construction to ensure their activities are protected against the weather.

A report from the Department of Crop Production in April 2024 highlighted severe damage to crops across the country, especially in the Kgalagadi (Hukuntsi and Mabutsane), North East, and Central Districts, which are the hottest regions.

In the past years of consecutive drought, the grazing situation has significantly deteriorated, with poor conditions reported in areas such as Serowe, Lethakeng, Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and Mahalapye. Veld fires have further exacerbated the problem. Livestock production is a significant activity in both urban and rural areas and is a major industry in the country. Cattle farming is widespread, with cattle outnumbering people by two to one. While this remains a priority activity, it is crucial to note that the drought's impact on cattle activities is significant for small farmers and families who depend on it as a primary source of income or food. The drought, coupled with water scarcity in some areas and inflation of food and input prices, poses challenges for the most vulnerable families and small-scale farmers, potentially worsening their food security. Rangelands, covering over 60% of the country and vital for the cattle industry, are severely affected by the drought. Many livestock farmers had to sell their livestock as a coping strategy to reduce mortality which is now affecting them as they have sold most of their livestock and the drought is still persisting characterized by the heatwave and the anticipated La Nina. The country is experiencing sporadic rainfall that causes destruction and does not nourish the crops or improve water supply, therefore farmers are unable to recover from the drought.

<https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/posts/pfbid02JE6TmrGaiBQ8BdbpzPjc1AtSwHb7ygiob6WT2nLH83BexVaYSEWJfgy2FhQ6m6TeI/>

<https://www.facebook.com/100068861604125/posts/pfbid02LPU5oH4ke5aHr2sN6LHfM5v6q8TzP7K5ukPAvD5uuiqFaVer2Avk2h8ocTbUim5YI/>

Livestock feed distribution has been a significant success, supporting the survival of livestock in drought-stricken areas. However, the lack of water poses a major threat to the sustainability of this progress. Livestock cannot thrive without adequate water resources, making it imperative to address the water crisis alongside ongoing feed support. Furthermore, the collapse of crop farming due to the current heatwave reaching (up to 46 degrees) has left many households unable to generate income or secure food, compounding their economic vulnerabilities.

Across these districts, the lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities and the loss of livestock and crop production have left many households entirely dependent on part-time jobs and humanitarian aid. This is the second consecutive drought, further eroding the financial resilience of affected communities and increasing their reliance on external assistance.



Multi purpose cash grants

Unconditional multipurpose cash grants offer immediate financial relief to families and farmers, enabling them to purchase food, essential goods, and meet basic needs, ultimately improving food self-sufficiency. The MPC was targeting 550HH at the value of 750 Pula (CHF 49). Through this operation, the BRCS appointed two financial service providers (Orange Botswana and Botswana Post) for the cash distributions.

These funds were able to support the families to cover most of their essential needs, invest in productive assets, and stabilize their



livelihoods during challenging times. Volunteers were deployed to conduct assessments, beneficiary registration and verification in the three districts. BRCS Officers were heavily involved in the post-distribution monitoring and assessments. The last payment will be done in January 2025.

The provision of unconditional cash grants has allowed households to buy food and pay off debts, offering a lifeline to many families. However, inflation, particularly in food prices (sorghum, mealie meal and maize have increased making it difficult to afford), has diminished the purchasing power of these grants, with beneficiaries calling for an extension of the project to allow for the establishment of small businesses. This has led to the review of the food market price from 1000 Pula to 1500 Pula (from 65 CHF to 97 CHF). Prolonged financial support is critical to help these households recover economically and regain their independence. Without it, the cycle of poverty and dependency is likely to persist, further straining limited resources and prolonging the recovery process.



Health

The NS was able to conduct a needs assessment from the 9th to the 15th of September 2024, based on these several engagements with beneficiaries, District Health Management Teams (DHMT), Village Development Committees (VDC), and Social and Community Development (S&CD), malnutrition was highlighted as a growing crisis, particularly in Mabutsane and Hukunsi. For example, in villages such as Inalegolo, 163 children are malnourished, underscoring the urgency of expanding support to additional households. Despite these challenges, there have been noteworthy achievements. In Hukunsi District, direct feeding programs have ensured that children receive 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 has resulted in child neglect in some households. Addressing this issue requires intensified monitoring visits and strengthened community-based protection mechanisms.



Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Most regions in Botswana have experienced extreme temperatures and minimal rainfall, leading to water scarcity. The prolonged droughts have reduced the frequency of rainfall, resulting in the depletion of surface and groundwater sources.

Being a semi-desert country, Botswana relies heavily on limited surface water supplies, with most villages depending on wells, boreholes, and dams for water. The lack of rainfall, exacerbated by El Niño conditions, has led to below-average levels in dams and wells, leaving vulnerable communities with limited access to safe drinking water. This situation has created competition for water resources among humans, livestock, and wildlife, with the likely consequence of wells, boreholes, and dams drying up during the dry season, which extends until October.

The Rural Development Secretariat's report highlights that major water supply projects have significantly improved water access in several villages that previously faced acute shortages. 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 have transitioned from inadequate to stable water supply.

Due to limited water sources, priority is given to water for cooking rather than for good hygiene practices like handwashing. The lack of proper hand hygiene can lead to health issues such as diarrhea. Therefore, there is a need to promote and educate communities about the importance of hygiene practices.

Access to water remains a critical issue in all three districts, exacerbated by Botswana's ongoing heat waves, with temperatures soaring up to 43 degrees Celsius. These communities rely primarily on underground water sources, but the current capacity is insufficient. Government-supported water bowsering services are overwhelmed, often leaving residents waiting in long queues without access to adequate water for their basic needs. Households with standpipes disproportionately consume the available supply, leaving others to rely on unaffordable water vendors. This inequity highlights the urgent need to expand support in the water sector by increasing the budget for borehole rehabilitation and drilling. Without immediate intervention, water scarcity will continue to undermine the health and livelihoods of these communities.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

In the context of drought and limited resources, concerns regarding protection, gender, and inclusion become more pronounced, especially for vulnerable populations such as women and children.



It is crucial to enhance protection services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, which tends to increase during operations that provide support in the form of cash.

Currently, village leadership is predominantly male, highlighting the importance of ensuring gender equity by considering the specific needs of women and ensuring that aid distribution is fair and inclusive.

Continued community education on protection, gender, and inclusion (PGI) is still necessary, along with training for community volunteers who are involved in assessments and distributions. PGI trainings are continuously integrated with Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) trainings to ensure mainstreaming of gender inclusion and protection issues are addressed along with all other community needs, incorporate community feedback, and ensure that all planned interventions are inclusive and do not harm vulnerable communities.



Education

Botswana Government has successfully managed to operate a school feeding programme that provides one meal a day and reaches all government schools. Currently all primary schools are 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

1. Dry spells and associated disasters in Botswana:

Botswana, a semi-arid country, faces deforestation challenges, particularly in fragile ecosystems like its dry land forests. The indiscriminate harvesting of both woody and non-woody forest components leads to land degradation. According to a report from the Rural Development Secretariat under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, twenty-six districts experienced wildland fire outbreaks since the beginning of the fire season, worsening from August to October 2023. Factors such as extremely dry fuel load, high temperatures, and windy conditions exacerbated the situation, resulting in a total burnt area of 777,750 hectares (Ha) since April 2023. The Ghanzi District recorded the highest area burnt at 313,661.2 Ha, followed by the Okavango and North East Districts with 121,273.9 and 113,109.9 Ha, respectively.

Tree planting is a significant nature-based solution that can help offset greenhouse gas emissions, promote biodiversity conservation, enhance water retention, and create socio-economic benefits. However, in 2010, Botswana had approximately 4.58 square kilometers of tree cover, covering less than 0.1% of its land area. By 2022, it lost 2 hectares of tree cover, equivalent to 1.70 kilotons of CO₂ emissions. From 2001 to 2022, Botswana lost 11 Ha of tree cover to fires and 499 Ha to all other drivers of loss. While tree planting can restore degraded landscapes and enhance ecosystem resilience, it is a long-term solution. Immediate and transitional perspectives need to be assessed and prioritized for the upcoming season.

2. Rainfall forecasts:

Since the last quarter of 2023, the agricultural season has experienced rainfall failures. According to a Drought Update report dated May 24, 2024, from the Rural Development Secretariat under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Botswana's rainfall season typically starts in October. Forecasts for the first half of the season (October to December 2023) predict normal to below-normal rainfall in the northern and western regions (Ngamiland, Chobe, Ghanzi, and Kgalagadi). Meanwhile, the eastern regions (Northeast, Central, Southeast, Kgatleng, Kweneng, and Southern Districts) are expected to receive below-normal rainfall, with above-normal temperatures expected nationwide. From January to March 2024, most of the country (Ngamiland, North Central, Chobe, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Southern, Southeast, Kgatleng, and Kweneng) is forecasted to experience normal to below-normal rainfall. The extreme eastern regions are expected to see below-normal rainfall, indicating ongoing challenges with water availability and agricultural productivity. As a result, the season is classified as a meteorological drought year. The report also notes that water supply, especially in rural areas, is inadequate, with water levels in major rivers at their lowest. Grazing conditions for livestock have significantly deteriorated and are now rated as poor, exacerbated by veldt fires. Some districts are experiencing water scarcity and cases of child malnutrition. The Botswana Meteorological Services predict cold temperatures in June to August, with little to no rain, making July and August mostly dry.



Community Engagement And Accountability

The Botswana Red Cross Society will ensure community engagement and accountability through several strategies, including establishing efficient feedback mechanisms and using the collected data to guide projects. Local authorities will supervise public gatherings to identify vulnerable individuals based on established selection criteria. Help desks will be established during all community interactions to facilitate two-way communication and gather feedback. This approach seeks to promote transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness in delivering assistance and services.





The drought in Botswana has severely affected agriculture, resulting in crop failures, livestock losses, and food shortages. It is crucial to assist farmers in exploring alternative livelihood options to improve food security and resilience to changing climate conditions. Community resilience can be strengthened through capacity building, education, and training in drought preparedness and emergency response strategies. Empowering local communities to adapt to environmental changes is essential for reducing the impact of drought on livelihoods and overall well-being.

Any identified gaps/limitations in the assessment

Drought declarations are not uncommon in Botswana, yet the 2023/2024 agricultural season has been officially recognized as an extreme agricultural drought year by His Excellency the President of Botswana. This year marks the worst drought experienced in the last decade, characterized by dry spells and heat waves that have severely impacted food supplies for both humans and animals, leading to significant losses in livelihoods. An estimated 72175 vulnerable communities have been affected by the drought and are facing challenges which include food insufficiency, malnutrition, human-wildlife conflict, and a range of health and socio-economic issues. This is an increment from 37000 vulnerable communities that were affected in the 2022/2023 season.

Situation Report

Meteorological Situation:

The season has been marked by consecutive heatwaves and dry spells, with temperatures exceeding normal levels. Rainfall across the country ranged from 30mm to 159.5mm, classifying this season as extremely dry. The harsh climatic conditions have led to a more pronounced deterioration of vegetation in 2024 compared to the previous year.

Crops:

Late rains affected the ploughing season, resulting in a 36% decrease in the total area planted compared to the previous season. Approximately 73% of the planted area, equivalent to 83,287 hectares, has been damaged by extreme temperatures, pests, weeds, and wildlife. The total yield for this season is 23,748 tons, a significant drop from the previous season's 89,173 tons. Cereal production stands at 17,693 tons, meeting only 6% of the national demand of 300,000 tons. Notably, the majority of farmers this season were female (16,082) compared to male farmers (10,491), posing a significant challenge to household food security.

Malnutrition:

Malnutrition among children under five has increased, with the number of malnutrition hotspots rising from seven to twelve districts, including Tonota, Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, Boteti, Charleshill, and Ghanzi. These areas represent the rural and vulnerable populations of Botswana. The ongoing drought is expected to exacerbate malnutrition among these vulnerable groups.

Wildfires:

Prolonged dry periods have increased the incidence of wildfires, with 1,170 fire outbreaks reported this season compared to 1,095 in the previous season, causing property damage valued at approximately P29,393,897.30.

Water:

Water sources in districts such as Good Hope, Tutume, Serowe, Mabutsane, and Letlhakeng are below capacity or completely dried up. The multiple heatwaves and low rainfall have severely affected grass availability, resulting in poor grazing land ratings, with Central District scoring 1 (poor) and North East and Hukuntsi scoring 2(fair).

Wildlife:

Water scarcity has forced wild animals to travel long distances in search of water, leading to ten reported deaths and nineteen injuries, a substantial increase from previous years. Livestock mortality rates have reached 16,000, leading to long waiting lists for livestock sales as farmers attempt to mitigate drought-related losses.

Human Impact:

There have been significant increases in food prices, and this has exacerbated food insecurity across the country. As a result, the number of people in need of support to access essential food items is estimated to increase by 14 404 (20%) nationwide. The hardest-hit districts are Boteti, Goodhope, Mabutsane, Serowe, and North East.

Discussions at the Southern Africa summit emphasized the importance of ongoing annual drought assessments to understand and project the effects of drought on key economic sectors. This assessment may complement the analysis of food insecurity caused by drought in the country.



Operational Strategy

Overall objective of the operation

The goal of this DREF request is to assist 5,350 individuals (1,070 households) in Hukuntsi, Mabutsane, and the North-East District who are facing challenges related to food insecurity, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as disruptions to their livelihoods.

This assistance has used an approach of sustainable measures, including access to clean water, supplementary feeding for malnourished children, livestock feed, and multipurpose cash transfers. This operation is extended to a lifespan of 8 months and incorporate: emergency, medium term transition activities and consideration of transition to resilience for the assisted communities. The DREF allocation so far has been focused on supporting vulnerable and underserved communities with sustainable interventions to address their livelihood needs, combat malnutrition in children under 5 years old, improve access to clean water, provide multipurpose cash grants, and promote tree planting. This will continue for the rest of the planning.

Operation strategy rationale

Following 3 consecutive years of drought in the country, the drought state of emergency was declared by Government on July 2023. Similar for the past years of drought crisis, the NS has been engaged with in-country resources and ECHO support to strengthen the early warning, support food access and conduct assessments. With the state of emergency, NS launched this DREF operation which was based on Government assessment of the drought impact as of July 2024 and IPC information.

The DREF strategy initially approved in 2023 considered that Government is already covering the support to agriculture and that other partners are active in country. On this revision, an updated mapping of ongoing participations and engagement around the drought impact and food insecurity is also considered. This intervention specific objective are outlined around 2 main stage of assistance: the emergency and medium term activities ; 2) the transition out of the emergency operation with more effort in supporting the early recovery and engagement for sustainable initiatives.

1) Emergency assistance

The emergency phase and medium term impact activities were embedded together through the initial strategy and were intended to last for 6 months from June to December 2024. The emergency assistance was based on the needs and gaps identified in the Government report released on the 24 May 2024 by Rural Development Secretariat under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development. The objective was to reach the communities already in IPC3+, facing food insecurity and drought effects on their livelihood, food and water access but also general wellbeing. Focusing in the localities of Hukuntsi, Mabutsane and the North-East district with immediate humanitarian relief. The strategy of the NS was essentially to focus on emergency and medium term activities while waiting for detailed assessment and complementary information on vulnerabilities and sustainable priorities to be completed by NS/IFRC. See more details on the initial response plan in the application published on GO. Strategy planned to be implemented by the NS was as follows:

- Livelihood assistance was articulated around two main activities:
 - a) Support of 120 poultry farmers with poultry structure, chicks and necessary resources to relaunch their activities. The poultry support aimed to include per households the procurement of 50 chicks, the farm structure, layer cage, 50 point of lay pullets, water system, feed, egg collection trays, medicine, transport and installation at the site. The support to this activity considered immediate production for consumption and sales.
 - b) The provision of feeding for livestock for 200 farmers. Following needs assessments that indicated the severity of the loss of livestock due to lack of adequate pasture, the NS consulted with the Department of Veterinary Services to create a budget that would allow for the addition of 100 farmers, hence increasing the number of beneficiaries for livestock feed to 200. A Poultry farming (layers) intervention was proposed based on the main activities among farmers and as a priority of reducing dependency on rain-fed agriculture and adapt to the changing environmental conditions.
- Skills development on climate smart agriculture is planned to contribute to communities' self-resilience. Having seen the positive impact that climate smart agriculture and water conservation activities have had in improving the soil quality and agricultural outputs in Gweta, the NS intends to conduct similar trainings in Mabutsane, Hukuntsi and North-East Districts. This is an effort to educate the community farmers on sustainable farming practices that save water, are not harmful to the soil and will help mitigate impacts of future droughts and other climate change related risks. These trainings target smallholder farmers, pastoralists, community-based organizations, farmer cooperatives and village leadership to foster self-reliance, long term sustainability and adapt to the current climatic challenges.
- MPC planned to cover the immediate need for food and basic needs for 550 IPC3+ families for 3 months.
- WASH was integrated to contribute on increasing access to safe water for communities through 4 water tanks and rehabilitation of water sources that can sustain them, and livelihoods gardening activities in communities with small farming productions. The operation has enhanced hygiene for 300 families with access to hygiene material while a wider range of population have been reached with WASH targeted messages. The priority messages are inclusive of hand washing practices, especially before meals and after using the toilet.
- Health was included to mitigate any risk associated to outbreaks that could worsen the vulnerability to food insecurity and support nutrition program for 300 families already facing food insecurity and/or having nutrition challenges. The intervention covers supplement



distribution for families with children under 5 and teaching sessions on safe nutrition to various vulnerable groups, especially for families with health vulnerability criteria such as age groups with specific nutrition consideration, elderly, Pregnant and Lactation women etc.

- CEA and PGI capacity built from previous projects in-country was leveraged to ensure protection and community engagement standard are integrated to the assessments, target selections and implementation of the operation. It also facilitates the training of the response team to the minimum standards that they must apply while deployed. NS also ensured adequate representation of the vulnerable groups in decision making, strengthening the ownership of the communities in this intervention.

Through this extension, NS will complete the initially planned activities not fully achieved due to delays encountered in the implementation and reinforce the work that has been initiated on the long-term strategies and resource mobilization. Among the activities delayed, there are: Construction of Poultry Structures and Procurement; Delivery of Chickens; distribution of feeding supplement for livestock to 200 farmers; borehole rehabilitation. The proposed extension will allow to finalize these activities complete the learning exercise while scaling-up the activities designed under the transition out of the DREF.

2) The transition to early recovery:

As indicated above, the NS above strategy were aiming at supporting the affected communities during the emergency phase and to set the path for transition out of the emergency and transition to early recovery. In the new timeline of this DREF, NS will have to blend the completion of the emergency response activities and the work on transitioning out of the DREF operation by ensuring sustainable solution and long-term alternatives are sought for this slow onset. Therefore, a comprehensive and complementary approach is needed between the activities remaining and the transition out of the DREF.

As for the activities maintained and that need to be completed, the National society (NS) recognizes the importance of change of seasons in this operation, for it may overlap with the rain and ploughing seasons. Although the onset of rains signals the agricultural season and people will focus on ploughing, it does not necessarily alleviate the drought crisis. Therefore, the extended timeline ensures that the delayed interventions contribute meaningfully to community resilience despite the rains. The poultry and water infrastructure projects are critical for livelihood sustainability and drought recovery, as they:

- Provide long-term solutions for income generation and food security, irrespective of seasonal rainfall that will not erase the needs raised by the drought effect.
- Enhance community resilience by offering alternative livelihoods, such as poultry farming, which require less water and generates income.
- Support water access infrastructure to address the chronic challenges posed by the drought, even during rainy seasons when water shortages persist in some areas.
- By engaging in the selected poultry activities, the community gains valuable skills and resources that can support them during future droughts, reducing their dependence on external aid and enhancing their medium-term resilience.

Path for transitional plan and long-term solutions:

- The Botswana Red Cross Society is part of the Pretoria Cluster Program, which aligns with the Southern Africa Climate Resilience and Food Security Solution Portfolio. This initiative serves as a transition framework for BRCS to address food insecurity and ensure sustainability beyond the implementation of the DREF. The Southern Africa Climate Resilience and Food Security Solution Portfolio initiative aims to facilitate the transition from short-term disaster relief to long-term resilience-strengthening strategies. The portfolio focuses on strengthening the climate resilience of small-scale farmers, particularly women and youth, in the countries. The approach emphasizes integrated and innovative programming that can respond to immediate needs while also contributing to longer-term and systemic change. This involves co-designing programs with local and national actors and communities, forming new partnerships, and implementing dynamic management strategies. The ultimate goal is to achieve sustained food security among drought-affected communities in the sub-region.

- The NS is also aligned with the DRR plan of the Government by prioritizing the tree planting initiatives in the long term. This is something that is beyond the scope of the DREF and NS has a plan to advocate for it by scaling-up the communications and messages on the tree planning, especially during the rainy season.

- The NS is actively engaging media and stakeholders to raise awareness about the drought situation in the country, its humanitarian efforts and response. That initiative helps to increase the visibility of BRCS's work and impact and serve as an important leverage for resource mobilization.

- DREF resources are also contributing to the continuous data collection and learnings that will support any future planning. Data collected through PDM, community feedback along the DREF operation will guide the definition of future plans. In the similar approach, learnings from this operation will be integrated to strengthen NS emergency team on the management of the drought EAP.

- The NS is working on how to strengthen existing local institutions such as Community Based Organizations and horticultural cooperatives by conducting the necessary consultation and inception meetings to give the community an opportunity to have an input in the implementation roll out.

- Botswana Red Cross Society will also ensure Community Engagement and Accountability as a leverage to build sustainable change and advocate for good and safe practices, smart and sustainable agricultural practices, climate considerations and disaster management etc. There will be effort during this intervention to bring key community opinion leaders among the farmers, economical stakeholders, key actors in the context to exchange and engage on the sustainable initiatives that community can agreed on and contribute to increase the impact of this DREF.

- Collaborative efforts involving government agencies, non-governmental organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders



are essential to effectively address the complex challenges faced by farmers and communities affected by the drought. This will also contribute to the project sustainability beyond the funding.

As a strategy to recovery, while strengthening community preparedness and resilience, the NS has developed an Early Action Protocol for Drought so that they can further support the vulnerable communities prepare and mitigate the persistent drought impacts due to climate change.

Targeting Strategy

Who will be targeted through 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 discharged from the Supplementary Feeding Programme but still at risk received supplementary feeding for 6 months.
- Lactating mothers with infants under 6 months showing early signs of malnutrition received supplementary feeding for 6 months.
- There were few exceptional cases 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 is in dire need, communities that have already received other forms of support were not prioritized to prevent duplication of efforts and to ensure everyone receives some sort of support.

For the nutrition activities, the selection was coordinated with the Ministry of Health. 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 is 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 aims 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 has 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. These demographic segments are 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 Targeted Population

Women	2,100	Rural	100%
Girls (under 18)	1,230	Urban	0%
Men	1,200	People with disabilities (estimated)	10%
Boys (under 18)	820		
Total targeted population	5,350		

Risk and Security Considerations

Please indicate about potential operation risk for this operations and mitigation actions

Risk	Mitigation action
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Delays in cash transfers.	Ensure that the beneficiary information is verified and vetted to check accuracy before commencing cash transfers.
Change of Government	Maintain good relations with the new government and ensure continued support for ongoing humanitarian initiatives, the National Society (NS) can proactively engage with the new administration by introducing its mission, projects, and alignment with national priorities.
Beneficiary security.	Communities are informed of the operation through CEA engagement. The NS also engages leaders and gate keepers prior to cash distribution and distribution of supplements while ensuring accountability and ensuring the beneficiaries do not miss the distribution days.
Gender Based Violence & Child Protection issue.	Capacity building engagements on SGBV are continuously conducted by NS.

Please indicate any security and safety concerns for this operation

There are no security concerns.

Has the child safeguarding risk analysis assessment been completed?

Yes

Planned Intervention



Livelihoods And Basic Needs

Budget: CHF 201,802

Targeted Persons: 1,100

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of households to receive support to farming activities - focusing on poultry support.	120	120
# 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	120
# of farmers selected for support with feeding supplements for livestock	100	200

Progress Towards Outcome

Under the livelihoods and basic needs sector, the operation targeted 200 farmers for livestock feed distribution, a goal that has been successfully achieved. Beneficiaries have reported significant improvements in the health and appearance of their livestock, with the provision of high-quality feed types such as lucerne, mineral block and beef finisher receiving widespread approval. The positive



feedback highlights the operation's effectiveness in mitigating the impacts of drought on household livelihoods. However, limited access to water remains a critical barrier to the sustainability of livestock health during this dry season. Challenges in November and December arose when the supplier experienced stock shortages, leading to delayed feed distribution across all the districts for the second and third phase, with only 155 livestock farmers having received their livestock feeds on the first distribution and second distribution. The final round of livestock feed distribution is still ongoing and will depend on the availability of stock from suppliers. These supplier issues have been a major driver for requesting a no-cost extension, which has resulted in the operation being extended to February 2024, allowing for the completion of all planned activities. Households assessment were conducted in the districts targeted for the operation. 200 farmers are selected for feeding supplements for livestock and 120 selected for chicken layers package/ poultry activities.

Upon identifying the critical need to mitigate the severe loss of livestock due to inadequate pasture, as revealed through needs assessments and consultations with the Department of Veterinary Services, the targeted number of beneficiaries had to be expanded for the poultry layer pullet's intervention. This expansion proved necessary as poultry farming offers a long-term livelihood solution, promoting sustainable livelihoods by reducing dependence on rain-fed agriculture, addressing food security, and providing farmers with a reliable source of income.

Therefore all 120 targeted beneficiaries under the poultry project element have been identified, and significant progress has been made in constructing chicken coops. In the Northeast District, 36 out of 48 allocated coops for the North East district have been completed, with ongoing construction delayed due to the supplier's transport challenges. The National Society is actively engaging the supplier to expedite the process and ensure timely delivery. Recognizing the nationwide pullet shortage, orders for chicks were placed 4 to 5 months in advance, with delivery expected on second week of January 2024. This proactive approach reflects the National Society's commitment to ensuring that beneficiaries can begin poultry farming with minimal delay, enabling them to build sustainable livelihoods and enhance household food security.



Multi Purpose Cash

Budget: CHF 90,231

Targeted Persons: 550

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of households who successfully received cash for basic needs after being identified and processed for transfer.	550	550
% 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	550

Progress Towards Outcome

- The financial service Providers agreement has been activated. Two service providers namely: Orange Botswana and Botswana Post were appointed across all districts to distribute cash to beneficiaries.
- The National Society successfully identified and reached 550 cash voucher beneficiaries across three districts: Hukuntsi, North-East, and Mabutsane. Cash distributions have progressed to the third disbursement phase in Mabutsane and the North-East, while the first disbursement in Hukuntsi experienced delays due to beneficiaries not having national identity cards and mobile phones which are a requirement for the financial service providers being Poso Money and Orange Money. The NS therefore had to engage with Orange Botswana and request that they assist with providing sim-cards for the beneficiaries and registering them for Orange Money. The social workers based in the different villages, specifically in Mabutsane and Hukuntsi Districts was also engaged to assist in locating the beneficiaries as they did not have mobile phones and could not be reached. In recognition that some beneficiaries lack identification to register for mobile financial services, the NS is considering distribution of physical cash for these beneficiaries. These beneficiaries will be verified through affidavits authenticated by the village chief.

The first and Second disbursement were processed in October and November and the final disbursement, originally planned for December, is yet to be completed. The extended timeline ensures that all cash and voucher assistance (CVA) is distributed effectively, with all disbursements expected to be finalized by the end of January



The reported figure for household's capacity to meet basic needs is a proxy figure derived from the household survey conducted post the second distribution. Beneficiaries were asked on their satisfaction with the amount of the cash transfer of which 100% of the respondents indicated satisfaction with the amount.



Budget: CHF 55,607

Targeted Persons: 1,500

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	4,714
Support vulnerable groups and malnourished people with food supplement	15	15

Progress Towards Outcome

Distribution of food packages has concluded as the last distribution was on December 11th 2024 as initially planned. In contrast to suppliers for the other interventions, the supplier for the food items consistently provided all the necessary food items and also supported with delivery to the villages. This good relationship ensured that the NS met all deadlines and no delays were incurred. Additionally, the beneficiaries and health authorities have given positive feedback on the food packages as having made an impact on the health of the children and in most cases resulting in weight gain. However, the beneficiaries lamented the quantities and recommended that they be revised to ensure that the food package lasts for the duration of the intended 4 weeks.

- Volunteers were briefed on the importance of nutrition activities and messages on the Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices.
- BRCS also contribute to the Inclusion of epidemic prevention messages to the community awareness, especially on recurrent diseases that could further affect the vulnerabilities of the population. For this activity, volunteers and caregivers educated on preventative measures against diarrheal diseases, which have been a concern across Botswana.
- Assessment was conducted and 300 children under 5, meeting the criteria of selection registered for supplementary feeding. Lists of beneficiaries were gathered from various health posts in these districts, resulting in the identification of 285 malnourished children and 15 individuals from other vulnerable groups such as female headed households, persons with disabilities, the elderly totaling 300 beneficiaries. Among the 15 beneficiaries groups are 2 expectant mothers with nutrition deficiency.
- The messages on feeding practices were emphasized through different platforms and approaches to reach the maximum of people exposed to malnutrition risk. Targeted groups were identified based on community health workers data based, community representatives. The messages were delivered directly to the communities by trained volunteers during the households visits on a weekly basis or during the distribution. These messages were further emphasized for women at risk and mothers with children under 5. So far only the 300 beneficiaries have been receiving the direct messages but social media has been used to extend the reach. For instance, the highest post in Facebook reached 4414 social media users in October 2024. Additional approach to reach them were put in place through women group discussions or through monthly visits with CWC in the local health facilities.

Using these various channels, guidance were provided on preparing nutritious meals for children, emphasizing that the food packages are primarily intended for malnourished children identified during assessments; sensitizing on the importance of Optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices; safe hygiene practice. There were also messages on diarrheal diseases as a consequence to water and hygiene gaps.





Water, Sanitation And Hygiene

Budget: CHF 41,270

Targeted Persons: 4,250

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of water tanks to be procured and installation in the two Districts.	4	0
Mapping or Assessments conducted for villages with water scarcity.	2	3
# of awareness raising on community water management.	2	0
#of people reached through Door-to-Door WASH campaigns	850	424
# of boreholes rehabilitated.	3	0

Progress Towards Outcome

Three assessments for water sources across the targeted districts have been completed, with engagement planned with the Water Utilities Corporation (WUC), which manages water resources in Botswana. Through the partnership between the National Society (NS) and WUC, villages with critical water needs have been identified, mapped, and assessed in the three districts of Mabutsane, Hukuntsi, and North-East. A total of 424 people were reached through door-to-door WaSH campaigns.

The assessments and consultations revealed the following priorities:

- In Kutuku, Mabutsane district, a borehole should be solarized to improve water supply to the villages of Itholoke, Khakhea, and Kutuku itself.
- In Hukuntsi, the borehole in Monong has been identified for resuscitation.
- In the North-East district, a dam in Butale has been marked for rehabilitation, while Matselagabedi will be facilitated with two water tanks to enhance storage capacity.

Considering the acute water needs and budgetary constraints, WUC has selected two boreholes for immediate attention. The NS WASH activities plan will be adjusted based on the strategic needs identified in the WUC-BRCS partnership. As a result, four water tanks are planned for installation in rural areas, and three water sources (a dam and two boreholes) are scheduled for refurbishment, though the infrastructure development has not yet commenced.

Progress so far includes the identification and assessment of villages where the project will be implemented. Relevant authorities at WUC have provided guidance to the NS regarding the equipment needed for the water development projects across all districts. Additionally, procurement processes are ongoing, with quotations for materials and equipment currently being sourced from potential suppliers.



Protection, Gender And Inclusion

Budget: CHF 7,317

Targeted Persons: 210

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of volunteers and staff trained.	50	50



# of community leaders and community influencers trained.	150	26
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Progress Towards Outcome

- A total of 50 volunteers and 26 community leaders and influencers were trained on PGI.
- Community leaders and influencers were trained together with the volunteers on the 9th to the 10th of September 2024 and the second training of community leaders and influencers is scheduled to be done on the second week of January 2025.



Community Engagement And Accountability

Budget: CHF 7,665

Targeted Persons: 5,350

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of people engaged and reached with CEA activities.	5,350	350
# 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

Progress Towards Outcome

- 50 volunteers engaged were trained on CEA.
- To kick start the project, Botswana Red Cross Society conducted stakeholders' engagement and village leadership consultations. The activity began with a national announcement by the Secretary General/CEO of the Botswana Red Cross Society through various media outlets to raise awareness about the drought response project. 23 consultative meetings were held including courtesy visits were conducted to several ministries to introduce the project including the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism; the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services; the Ministry of Agricultural Development and Food Security; and the National Disaster Management Office under the Ministry for State President. Consultations were also conducted with the Rural Development Council at the national level to lay the groundwork for stakeholder consultations at the district level, enhancing coordination among stakeholders
- BRCS conducted stakeholder consultations at the district level, focusing on coordinating interventions such as poultry farming, livestock feed supplementation, food distribution, and cash voucher feeding programs. The goal was to engage village leaders and relevant authorities, ensuring coordinated efforts between the government and BRCS to address food insecurity, malnutrition, disrupted livelihoods, and sanitation and hygiene challenges. These include the Council Secretary, District Commissioner, Social Welfare department, department of water utilities; Department of Wildlife and national parks, Department of Crop production, Department of Animal Production, Department of forestry, Veterinary Service, District Health Management Team (DHMT) and Tribal Administration, Local Chief and Community. This activity helped create a vital village leadership network, build rapport with stakeholders, and pave the way for the project execution. A list of beneficiaries and targeted villages was also compiled by the District Disaster Management Committee (DDMC) across the three districts.
- Feedback was gathered essentially during the collection of relief packages. Due to the vastness of the areas covered, feedback has so far been collected informally and treated through conversations with a small sample of beneficiaries. This accounts for 72% of total feedback collected and treated. All 300 beneficiaries have successfully collected their food and hygiene packages across the three districts. However, detailed feedback analysis will be more comprehensive after the third distribution round, which will provide figures on how many children have shown improvements through the targeted village health stations.

CEA focus group discussions were conducted before the operation to establish the needs of the community and identify interventions that would be most suitable to the context and relevant to the way of life. This information was incorporated into the DREF application



and informed the interventions that the NS is implementing. Additionally, during post distribution monitoring, beneficiaries and community gatekeepers were engaged through CEA to gain feedback on the perceptions of the drought operation and received recommendations on where the operation requires improvement. There was high beneficiary satisfaction and approval of the operation. The community lamented the end of the project calling for an extension so that they can have more time to look for alternative livelihood sources while still receiving support from the NS. The village leadership indicated that the needs due to drought are visible in almost all households, therefore, they were requesting that the support be extended to more community members as they were seeing the positive impacts the drought operation on the lives of the current beneficiaries. A total of 350 people have been reached with CEA interventions.



Secretariat Services

Budget: CHF 14,633

Targeted Persons: 46

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of monitoring visits conducted and reported.	4	2

Progress Towards Outcome

- The Project was kickstarted with an inception meeting for the different teams engaged for project introduction.
- Two IFRC monitoring visits were conducted on the 11th and 12th of December 2024 in the Hukuntsi and Mabutsane districts, respectively.



National Society Strengthening

Budget: CHF 80,947

Targeted Persons: 5,350

Indicators

Title	Target	Actual
# of meeting for technical and supervision.	4	9
# of Lessons learnt workshop.	1	0
# of monitoring visits reported.	9	2
# of Post distribution monitoring.	1	1
#of volunteers insured	36	50

Progress Towards Outcome

Resource mobilization: The NS seeks to expand support to affected people and as such is actively engaged in mobilizing resources domestically and internationally for this support. The BRCS is also developing a resource mobilization strategy and leveraging the power of social media to enhance its resource mobilization capacity.

NS is working on the transition out of this DREF operation and way to maintain the support to the communities, scaling-up the Feeding Practices, hygiene measures, and outreach to ensure community ownership and awareness can trigger preventive measures and



resilience. To bridge the gaps identified in previous feeding programs, the current project has incorporated feeding practices and hygiene education into its activities. Volunteers disseminate these messages in clinics, kgotlas, and public notice boards to maximize reach and impact.

- **Media engagement and coverage.** An active engagement of the NS with various media outlets to raise awareness about its humanitarian efforts and the challenges faced by vulnerable communities in the country. These media engagements have also helped to increase the visibility of BRCS's work and the impact it has on the lives of vulnerable individuals in Botswana.

Here are some key highlights from their recent media activities:

- **BRCS engaged with Daily News** for an interview with the Secretary General on Anticipate Drought. The article was published on July 18, 2024.
- **Social Media Presence:** BRCS was featured in a post on the IFRC Africa X page, further expanding its social media reach.
- **Radio Interviews:** During the week of July 22-26, 2024, BRCS representatives appeared on various radio platforms, including RB1 News, RB1 Tatediso Ya Dikgang, RB2 News, RB2 Morning Show, and Gabz FM News, to discuss the organization's activities and the challenges faced by the communities it serves.
- **Television Coverage:** BRCS was featured on BTV, the national television station, on July 24, 2024.
- **Print Media:** BRCS also received coverage in the Mid-Week Sun and Gazette newspapers on July 24, 2024.
- Some international visibility was also gained through EU Humanitarian Aid Coverage publication on their support to drought in Botswana through the DREF.

In its Unified Plan for 2025 and beyond, the National Society has set objectives to enhance its capacity for sourcing forecast data from relevant authorities to establish accurate triggers through reliable early warning systems. This will strengthen its Early Action Protocols (EAPs), focusing on mitigating the impacts of predictable hazards such as droughts by initiating preparedness activities and implementing community-based interventions. Through long-term planning, these efforts aim to inform actions for upcoming seasons, strengthen community resilience to recurring climate risks, and ensure the capacity of communities to adapt to changing climatic conditions. Interventions include distributing drought-resistant seeds, establishing water storage facilities, and providing livestock feed to prevent losses, thereby facilitating access to financial, in-kind, and technical resources for small-holder farmers to promote the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices. The recurrence of drought in the country over the years emphasizes the need for the National Society to implement interventions with long-term impacts.

Monitoring and evaluation:

The first post-distribution monitoring and feedback took place following the second distribution which was done on the week of 2nd December 2024. A Post distribution Monitoring visit was done by the NS reaching 94 persons through household interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) in the districts of Mabutsane and Hukunsi. The household interviews covered 11 cash transfer beneficiaries, 23 food and hygiene package recipients, and 18 recipients of livestock feed supplementation whereas the FGD reached a total of 42 people (35 female, 7 male) comprising of a diverse groups were including men, women, representatives from various socio-economic backgrounds and stakeholders making a 4 focus groups in total. This marks the conclusion of the three-month intervention, which includes food packages for the malnourished, livestock feed support, and cash transfer elements.

Duty of care

- Operation technical, operational and Supervision team received briefings on the intervention requirement and planning.
- Branding items have been procured and made available to 50 volunteers and staff engaged in the operation. All the 50 volunteers engaged in this operation are insured.

About Support Services

How many staff and volunteers will be involved in this operation. Briefly describe their role.

Fifty (50) volunteers have been enlisted for Community Volunteer Assistant (CVA) interventions, distributions, and project monitoring. They were deployed to assist in conducting household assessments, registration and verification of beneficiaries, post-distribution monitoring, surveys, and key messaging dissemination workshops. All volunteers underwent training in Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA), Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI), livelihoods, and water management. Additionally, all volunteers have actively participated in community health activities.

Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) staff members have been spearheading this initiative throughout the operation. Most of the staff members are from the BRCS headquarters, while two staff members are based in the districts where the operation is taking place. These field-based staff members possess extensive knowledge of the area, its inhabitants, and their needs. BRCS ensured that the 10 HQ staff members are fully dedicated to the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the intervention. This team includes the Secretary General/CEO, Head of programmes and Social services, Head of Finance, Senior Finance Officer, the Branch development coordinator,



two Disaster Management Officers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Program officer , Finance Officer and the procurement committee. Given their essential roles, they are indispensable throughout the operation. Therefore, recognizing the National Society's staffing constraints, support for their salaries is included in the planning and implementation of this initiative.

If there is procurement, will it be done by National Society or IFRC?

National Society has conducted the procurements at National level following the established standards and existing National law and Government standards established. The cash support has been provided through mobile money and NS has already a valid contract with two FSPs.

How will this operation be monitored?

The Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) has an operational Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting (PMER) unit responsible for overseeing and reporting on its operations. The PMER has been supporting the NS in this particular by crafting monitoring and evaluation tools and coordination monitoring process from the drought relief project. The PMER has been working hand in hand with the Disaster Management (DM) in the implementation of projects while maintaining accountability to stakeholders and donors. This was accomplished through project planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting processes.

A monitoring framework with specific timeframes has been developed with support from the IFRC. This tool provides technical support, track implementation progress, identify challenges, and manage risks that could delay timely implementation, allowing for remedial actions throughout the project phase. Additionally, IFRC has been conducted a monitoring visit to provide the NS with technical assistance.

Please briefly explain the National Societies communication strategy for this operation

The National Society (NS)'s Communications Department worked closely with the DM team to disseminate information about the project on social media platforms and mainstream media. This initiative aimed to ensure broad visibility and provide up-to-date information to the public and stakeholders. Furthermore, the team gathered success stories during the operation, demonstrating the positive effects of the interventions and the resilience of the supported communities. Through these narratives, the NS raised awareness, promoted transparency and encouraged additional support for its endeavors.



Budget Overview



DREF OPERATION

- Botswana Red Cross Society
Drought Relief

Operating Budget

Planned Operations	403 891
Shelter and Basic Household Items	0
Livelihoods	201 802
Multi-purpose Cash	90 231
Health	55 607
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	41 270
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	7 317
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	0
Community Engagement and Accountability	7 665
Environmental Sustainability	0
Enabling Approaches	95 580
Coordination and Partnerships	0
Secretariat Services	14 633
National Society Strengthening	80 947
TOTAL BUDGET	499 471

all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)

[Click here to download the budget file](#)



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