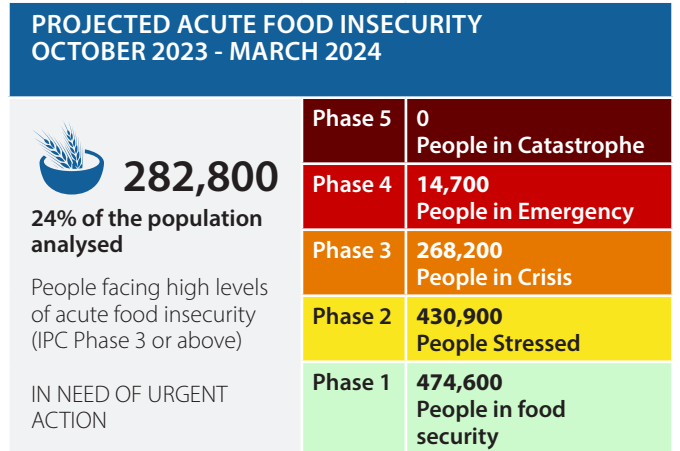
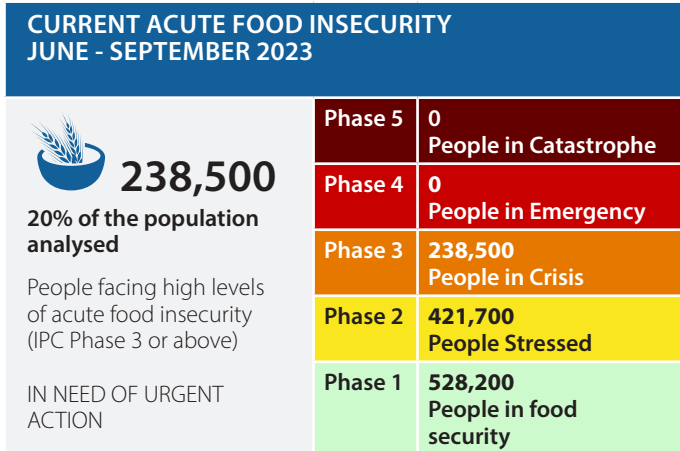




# ESWATINI

**RISING INFLATION, CLIMATE-RELATED SHOCKS AND GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS DRIVE HIGH LEVELS OF ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY**

**IPC ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY ANALYSIS**  
JUNE 2023 - MARCH 2024  
Published in August 17, 2023



## Overview

Through June to September, 238,500 people (20% of the population) are estimated to be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) in the current period (June to September 2023). For the projected period (October 2023 to March 2024) an estimated 268,000 people are classified in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis), and nearly 15,000 in IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The Dry Middleveld (DMV) and the Lowveld Cattle and Maize (LCM) have the highest proportion of the population (30%) classified in IPC Phase 3 indicative of high food insecurity levels in the zones in the current period. During the projected period, these zones will see an increase of 5% of their population in IPC Phase 3 or above, 49,000 from 42,000 for DMV and 80,000 from 69,000 for LCM, the latter having the highest number of people in IPC Phase 3 or above for both periods of the analysis. The Lubombo Plateau will also see 10% of its population falling to worse phases increasing the population in IPC Phase 3 or above to 35% (16,000 from 11,000).

The country is still recovering from high food insecurity levels as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by the impact of the Russia/Ukraine conflict resulting in increases in key commodity prices leading to price shocks, loss of income and employment which constituted major shocks faced by households during the reporting period under analysis. Prolonged dry-spells and flooding form part of the drivers of food insecurity in Eswatini. The situation in the current period of analysis (June to September 2023) has significantly worsened from the IPC findings of the June to September 2022 period of the previous analysis.

## Key Drivers



### Loss of purchasing power

Households' purchasing power has declined as a result of limited economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, increased commodity prices and job losses.



### Irregular rainfall patterns

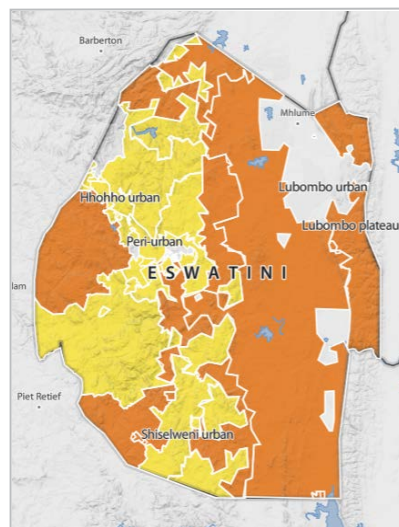
Prolonged dry spells were experienced in the month of January and excessive rainfall followed in February (resulting in flooding in the Lubombo region) thereby causing a reduction in crop production.



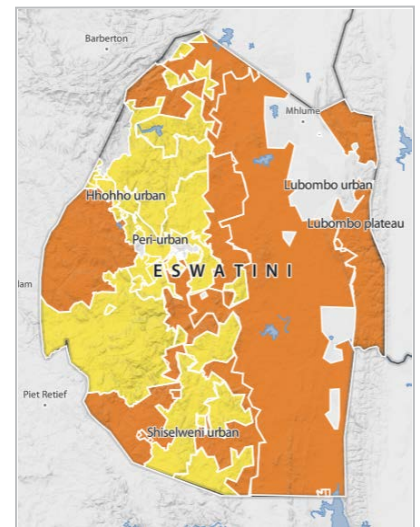
### High commodity prices

The prices of inputs have increased way above the five-year average as a result of the continued war in Ukraine which has affected the supply chain of fuel in global markets.

Current June - Sept 2023



Projection Oct 2023 - Mar 2024



### Key for the Map

#### IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

- |               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 - Minimal   | 5 - Famine            |
| 2 - Stressed  | Areas not analysed    |
| 3 - Crisis    | <b>Evidence level</b> |
| 4 - Emergency | *** High              |

## CURRENT SITUATION OVERVIEW (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2023)

The overall food insecurity situation can be attributed to an array of shocks, including climate-induced natural disasters (flooding and prolonged dry spells), the after effects of COVID-19, the compounding impacts of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the South Africa Electricity crisis resulting in load shedding. In 2023, like most economies, Eswatini's domestic economy grappled with rising inflation, tightening monetary policy and the re-emergence of supply disruptions resulting from the escalation of global geopolitical tensions. The high cost of inputs negatively impacted production, especially for poor households. The elevated inflationary pressures were transmitted into the domestic economy through hikes in the prices of food, input prices (fertilizer, chemicals, and seeds), and fuel. This situation resulted in dampened household spending owing to strained real wages and eroded consumers' purchasing power thus weighing heavily on the performance of demand-driven sectors such as "wholesale and retail" and the Agricultural sector. On the other hand, the high inflation environment resulted in a sharp increase in the cost of production.

Significant rains were received from late October and gradually intensified, with some hailstorms until early January, wherein dry spells persisted for the better part of the month. Excessive rains were experienced in February 2023, especially the first dekad where much above long-term average rainfall was observed. A reduction in rainfall was observed in the better part of March with normal rains received in the last dekad. The dry spells in January and excessive rainfall in February had a negative impact on crop production. Maize production decreased by 33.1% from 127,315.43 MT in 2021/22 to 85,201.60 MT in 2022/23. There is a significant observed decrease in the production of other crops as sweet potatoes by -85%; Sorghum by -32%; Legumes/pulses beans decreased by -82%; groundnuts by -4% and cowpeas by -48%.

Given the drop in production, available cereal from production will be less than the national requirement of 188,570 MT where imports are expected to fill the identified gap. This represents the significant role markets will play in meeting household food needs for the current period. 29.1% of households have indicated to have food stocks that will last less than two months, 24.9% lasting between two to three months, 21% lasting for 4 -5 months and only 21% lasting for more than 6 months. This indicated that by the end of the current period, 54% of households will have depleted their food stocks and are solely dependent on purchases for the source of food. Irregular rainfall patterns (prolonged dry spells) accounted for 26% of shocks experienced by households, unusually high food prices account for 26%, illnesses or accident of another member 28%, reduced income 19%, 3% experienced loss of a breadwinner, 3% experience loss of employment and further 3% experienced unusual high prices of agricultural input.

High fuel prices continue to impact household food security negatively as unusual high prices for petrol, paraffin and diesel were reported. The current situation is further aggravated by other complexities of households hosting HIV members where 30% of households indicated hosting an HIV member in the current period. In terms of household coping, the Lubombo Plateau has the highest levels of coping as 14.9% of the households are employing coping strategies, followed by the Lowveld Cattle and maize (10.8%), Moist Middle veld (9.5%), Dry Middle Veld (6.5%) Peri-urban (2.5%), Timber Highlands (2.4%) and High Veld Cattle and Maize at 1.2%. 14% engage in stress food-based coping strategies ( $rCSI \geq 19$ ), 30.2% engage in moderate coping (Phase 2 ( $rCSI \geq 4-18$ )), and 55.7% did not engage in no food-based coping strategies (Phase 1 ( $rCSI \geq 0-3$ )). The Livelihood Change situation indicates that 3.4% of households are employing emergency coping strategies, 15.1% are employing crisis coping strategies, and 26.6% of households employ stress coping strategies. At least 54.9% of households have not adopted any coping strategies. The Food Consumption situation indicates that 4% of households have poor consumption (in IPC Phase 4), 23% borderline (IPC Phase 3), and 71% with Acceptable consumption (IPC Phase 1 & 2). Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) remains good as 74% of households have high HDDS (5-12), 23% medium (3-4), and only 3% of households have poor HDDS (0-2). Food Consumption indicators Household Hunger Score show that 25.9% of households are faced with Severe Hunger (Phase 3 or more), 11.1% are faced with Medium Hunger (Phase 2), and 63% have no hunger. In terms of food utilization in the current period, 71% of households have access to improved water sources and only 28.1% have access to un-improved water sources. The situation is dire with regards to access to safe sanitation. 68 % of households have access to unimproved sanitation facilities.

The Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) situation remains the same as compared to the previous year, 84.7% of children are in the normal level, 12.8% are moderately malnourished, and 2.5% of children are severely malnourished. However, malnutrition indicators remain inconclusive as GAM and SAM data could not be collected for the period.

**The Highveld Cattle and Maize** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 2 in the current period with 15% of the population (23, 169) in IPC Phase 3, Phase 2 (61, 785), Phase 1 (69,588). The Food Consumption Score is indicative of IPC Phase 2 as 81% of households have acceptable consumption. Household Dietary Diversity Score is indicative of IPC Phase 1 as 88% have high food diversity. However, the  $rCSI$  and HHS indicators are indicative of Phase 2 or 3+. This is indicative of increased households using stressed or emergency coping strategies and have HHS scores indicating a potential for Phase 3. Livelihood change points to IPC Phase 2 with 0.7 % of households engaged in emergency coping, 12% engaged in crisis coping and 29% in stress coping.

**Lowveld Cattle and Maize** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 3 in the current period with 30% of the population (68, 342) in IPC Phase 3, 35% of the population in IPC Phase 2 (79,966), and 35% of the population in phase 1 (79,966). The overall phase classification for Lowveld Cattle and Maize is phase 3 as most of the direct evidence indicates that 20% and above are marginally able to meet minimum food needs but only by depleting essential livelihood assets or through crisis-coping strategies. The zone is facing a challenge of unemployment (62%) which affects purchasing power as 19.2% also lost employment yet the zone is less productive in terms of crop production while it has been affected by irregular rains as dry spells were experienced in the second week of January which negatively impacted crops and the excessive rains that followed in February worsened the situation on crop production.



Unusual livestock death affected 21% of the households which had a negative impact on livestock production. The zone has high food gaps as only 56% of households have acceptable consumption patterns (IPC Phase 1&2) with 35% borderline (IPC Phase 3) and 8% with poor consumption, indicative of overall IPC Phase 3. Households indicative of IPC Phase 3, with 33% of households faced with severe hunger. rCSI indicative of IPC Phase 3 as 21% of households engaged in crisis food-based coping strategies, also Livelihood coping indicators point to IPC Phase 3 where 23% of households engaged in crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies.

**Lubombo Plateau** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 3 or above in the current period with 25% of the population (11,372) in IPC Phase 3, 40% of the population in IPC Phase 2 (18,196), and 35% of the population in phase 1 (15, 921). Most households in this livelihood zone purchase food, and the increase in the prices of staple commodities and fuel will negatively affect food access. Food stocks are adequate to meet short-term consumption as 43 % of households have food stocks lasting for over 4 months. Food consumption remains a bigger challenge for households as FCS points to IPC Phase 3 with 35% of households with borderline consumption patterns. Households' Dietary Diversity is indicative of IPC Phase 3 with 49% of households with medium and poor food diversity. Improved sanitation also is a big problem in this zone even though 57 % of households have access to improved water sources. 71% of households in this region do not meet the IPC water requirement threshold making food utilization and stability a minor limiting factor.

**Moist Middleveld** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 2 in the current period with 20% of the population (27,342) in IPC Phase 3, 40% of the population in IPC Phase 2 (54,684), and 40% of the population in phase 1 (54,684). Most of the households in this zone have acceptable levels of FCS and only 11.2% of households in this zone have poor FCS, while 32% have borderline consumption patterns. HDDS is also at an acceptable level as 69% of households have acceptable HDDS levels. 51.3 % of households are not implementing any coping strategies. Moreover, most households are not implementing any livelihood change strategies (42.8%), 24% are engaged in crisis livelihood strategies, 5.3% are engaged in emergency strategies, and only 28.3% are engaged in stressed strategies. 2.7% of children are wasted which is within the acceptable levels although 5.51% of children are underweight. 24% of households indicated having food stocks that will last more than 6 months subsequent to the growing season that had normal to above normal rainfall. The continuous increase in fuel costs (petrol) and food prices has impacted negatively on the purchasing power and thus resulting in challenges of food access in the zone although 46% of households travel less than 30 minutes to a nearby market. Access to safe sanitation is also severely compromised as only 19.1% of households have access to safe sanitation facilities which may result in an increase in waterborne diseases.

**Timber Highlands** livelihood zone is classified under phase 3 or above in the current period with 20% of the population (18, 241) in Phase 3 facing food security issues between June and September 2023. 30% of the population classified in IPC Phase 2 (18, 241), and 45% of the population in Phase 1 (41, 041). The increase in food prices compromises households purchasing power and access to food. Loss of employment and income has worsened the situation. Even if food is available in the markets, the compromised purchasing power will restrict households' access to food. Excessive rains have contributed to crop failure and damage of infrastructure, further exacerbating households' vulnerability. Food consumption indicators are indicative of Phase 3 with 35% of households with borderline and poor consumption patterns. HDDS is indicative of IPC Phase 3 with 28% of the population with medium (23%) and poor (5%) food diversity patterns, overall indicative of IPC Phase 3.

**Dry Middleveld** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 3 in the current period with 30% of the population (42,000) in IPC Phase 3, phase 2 (42,000), IPC Phase 1 (56,000). Above-normal rainfall was evenly distributed across the livelihood zone which meant households were able to cultivate. The erratic rainfall patterns experienced in January (prolonged dry spell) and excessive rains received in February had a negative effect on the crops since it was around the harvesting period. The level of shocks experienced in the region negatively impacted overall food production in the zone. 70% of households in the zone did indicate not being faced with any unusual situation over the reporting period, while 30% experienced various situations impacting their livelihoods. Most of the households in the zone did not plant (33.8%), while 13.8% planted less area than they did the previous year. The combination of these factors aggravated by other underlying factors will lead to reduced food availability at the household level in the zone. 28% of the households will have food stocks lasting less than two months and about 7% will not harvest which means these households will suffer from food and nutrition insecurity for most parts of the season. The sharp increase in food prices will result in households in the zone facing challenges accessing food from the markets. The direct food security indicators are indicative of an IPC Phase 3.

The **Peri-urban** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 2 (Stressed) in the current period with 10% of the population (11,000) in IPC Phase 3, 54,000 in Phase 2 (50%) and 43,000 (40%) in IPC Phase 1. 89% of households have acceptable consumption levels indicative of IPC Phase 1, consumption of diversified food was high in the Zone as 89% of households reported to be consuming 5-12 food groups indicative of IPC Phase 1. Households faced with severe hunger at 16%, and moderate hunger at 10% indicative of IPC Phase 2 as 75% of households indicated to have been faced with hunger over the reporting analysis period. Shocks experienced by the households include loss of income (87%), loss of assets (16%), reduced income (38%) and employment (25%), high prices of food, drought, 11% hailstorms, 7% death of a breadwinner, high cost of agriculture inputs and death, with HIV prevalence higher in women than in men among the age groups evaluated. The area has significantly less access to arable land, with only 7% having access, resulting in low production and implying low availability of food from own production. Additionally, low-planted areas were reported since 60% of those with access to arable land did not cultivate their land. 11% of the households in IPC Phase 3 engaged in crisis livelihood coping strategies. The adoption of urban livelihood patterns presents a new dynamic in understanding the food security situation of Peri-Urban zones.

**Hhohho urban**, livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 2 in the current period with 10% (8,000) of the population in IPC Phase 3, 30% (25,000) in IPC Phase 2 and 60% (50,000) in IPC Phase 1. Food consumption patterns are at acceptable levels as 90% of

households have Acceptable FCS indicative of IPC Phase 1&2, HDDS indicative of IPC Phase 1 as 18% of households consuming less than 4 food groups with the rest 82% consuming 5- 12 food groups. The use of coping strategies is relatively low in the zone as the CSI at 1.68 compared to the national average of 5.9, indicative of a lesser extent of challenges for households meeting their food and livelihood needs. However, the use of food-based coping strategies is indicative of IPC Phase 2 as 21% of households engaged in stress strategies, while 3% in crisis. Livelihood change also points to IPC Phase 2 as 25% of households engaged in stress strategies with 9% engaged in crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies. Key drivers of food insecurity in the zone include high commodity prices, loss of income and loss of employment which will affect purchasing power and access for households to food requirements.

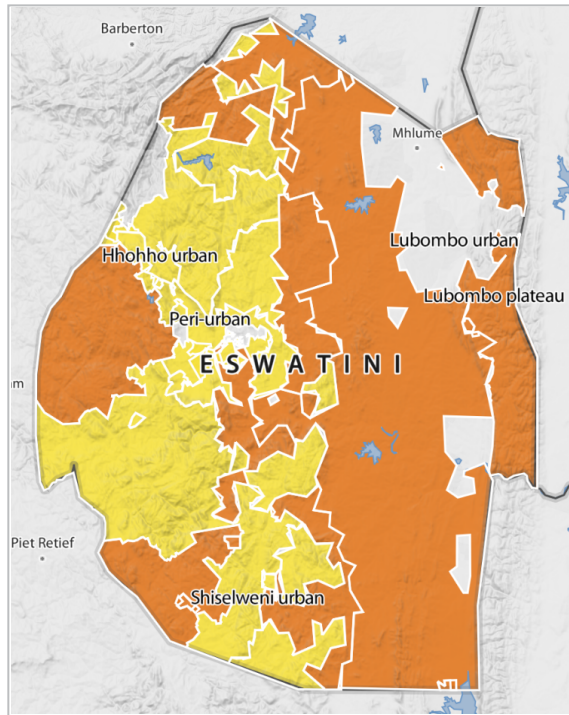
**Manzini urban** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 2 in the current period with 5% of the population (5,000) in IPC Phase 3, 14,000 in IPC Phase 2 (15%) and 75,000 (40%) in IPC Phase 1. The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is 91% acceptable level (indicative of IPC Phase 1&2), the Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is 89.2% as households eat 5-12 food groups (indicative of IPC Phase 1&2), no households indicated to be experiencing hunger. 25% of the households experienced unusual shocks that affected their ability to provide for themselves, their eating habits and their assets owned. 4.3% of households in the zone experienced the loss of a household breadwinner whilst 13% loss of a household member, 21% unusually high food prices, and 39% loss or reduced employment among others. Food supply is expected to be sufficient for the current consumption needs, however prices of essential commodities such as maize meal, rice, and vegetable oil expected to continue to increase. The cost of living in the Manzini urban area has been affected by the rising prices of fuel and staple food. These factors have a significant impact on the livelihoods of the households in the zone, 20% of household heads are not employed, 15% are casual workers, 35% are in formal employment, and 30% are self-employed. Food utilization is a minor issue since 98 % of households can access improved water sources. However, 48% of the household do not have access to improved sanitation therefore their health is slightly compromised.

**Shiselweni urban** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 3 in the current period with 20% of the population (10,000) in IPC Phase 3, 21,000 in IPC Phase 2 (40%) and 21,000 (40%) in IPC Phase 1. The Shiselweni Urban is characterized by diverse shocks which include loss and/or reduced household income, coupled with employment losses. The high prevalence of diseases such as HIV and AIDS compounds the food security situation in the region. Poor households are particularly vulnerable and engage in negative coping strategies which include selling of livelihood assets in order to meet minimum food needs. Although food utilization in the region is not a major challenge, food availability, on the other hand, is the major limiting factor, compounded by increasing food prices which compromises the availability of food at the household level. The food consumption pattern and HDDS of the region point to Phase 3, with FCS and rCSI reflecting a somewhat mild food security condition (Phase 2). Generally, almost all the households in the region meet their minimum accepted food diversity, mainly for children and the meal frequency in the region reflects a mild condition. The livelihood change in the region is indicative of IPC Phase 3, with the region's nutritional status indicating a Phase 2 classification.

The **Lubombo urban** livelihood zone is classified under IPC Phase 3 in the current period with 25% of the population (14,000) in IPC Phase 3, 20,000 in IPC Phase 2 (35%) and 22,000 (40%) in IPC Phase 1. Most households are faced with higher food gaps as 50% of households have a borderline FCS and 50% have medium HDDS (consuming 3-4 food groups) all indicative of IPC Phase 3. Shocks experienced include the loss of income (75%) and assets (50%) which contributes to the poor consumption patterns experienced in the urban zone. Also, 62.5% of the households experienced unusual shocks which included dry spells (25.3%), invasive plant species (12.3%), death of a household breadwinner and or household member (16.5%). About 38.3% which is over half of the households who experienced shocks are depending on borrowing as a mechanism to cope and manage the shocks. Lubombo urban has a 54% food gap which places purchases as a major source of food for households and with the food prices high, households are likely to be faced with challenges in meeting their food needs. The unemployment rate is currently at 62% and is a cause for concern in this area as only 25% are in formal employment. This means only a small proportion of the population has sustainable means of accessing food. Due to the loss of income and assets, casual labour opportunities stand to be affected, and households who provide such might be forced to restrict such opportunities and save for food purchases.



## CURRENT SITUATION AND POPULATION TABLE (JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2023)



### Key for the Map IPC Acute Food Insecurity Phase Classification

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Area not analysed

**Evidence Level**  
\*\*\* High

Region	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Dry middleveld	138,826	55,530	40	41,648	30	41,648	30	0	0	0	0	3	41,648	30
Hhohho urban	83,949	50,369	60	25,185	30	8,395	10	0	0	0	0	2	8,395	10
Highveld cattle and maize	154,462	69,508	45	61,785	40	23,169	15	0	0	0	0	2	23,169	15
Lowveld cattle and maize	228,473	79,966	35	79,966	35	68,542	30	0	0	0	0	3	68,542	30
Lubombo plateau	45,489	15,921	35	18,196	40	11,372	25	0	0	0	0	3	11,372	25
Lubombo urban	55,852	22,341	40	19,548	35	13,963	25	0	0	0	0	3	13,963	25
Manzini urban	93,581	74,865	80	14,037	15	4,679	5	0	0	0	0	2	4,679	5
Moist middleveld	136,706	54,684	40	54,684	40	27,342	20	0	0	0	0	2	27,342	20
Peri-urban	108,270	43,308	40	54,135	50	10,827	10	0	0	0	0	2	10,827	10
Shiselweni urban	51,577	20,631	40	20,631	40	10,315	20	0	0	0	0	3	10,315	20
Timber highlands	91,203	41,041	45	31,921	35	18,241	20	0	0	0	0	3	18,241	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,188,391</b>	<b>528,164</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>421,734</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>238,493</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>238,493</b>	<b>20</b>

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

## PROJECTED SITUATION OVERVIEW (OCTOBER 2023 - MARCH 2024)

This projected situation is based on the following assumptions: the prices of agricultural inputs, especially fertilizer is expected to increase further because of the Russia-Ukraine war. The persistent load shedding will influence price trends; The general increases in the price level (inflation) will compromise the buying power of many households because wages are low. The weakening of the Rand will reduce the purchasing power; the Forecast for rainfall suggests normal and above-normal rainfall until October, thereafter we anticipate the El Niño event to be fully established which will result in normal to below normal rainfall for the incoming rainfall season. This will affect agricultural production at the beginning of the next farming season; The current stock is expected to last 4 -6 months and thereafter, rural households might start depending on markets. Food production will be compromised by the escalating prices of agricultural inputs which negatively impacts the level of agricultural production. The effects of climate change manifesting in erratic rainfall patterns will continue to negatively impact rainfed agricultural production; The global supply of fuel has been compromised by the continued Russia-Ukraine war, resulting in increases in the price of fuel which subsequently increase the costs of production which are transferred to the final consumer through higher prices.

The number of people that will be highly food insecure is likely to increase to 283,000 (24% of the population). The analysis shows all the livelihood zones will remain in the same phase classification with increased population in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) and IPC Phase 4 (Emergency).

During the projected lean season, the **Highveld Cattle and Maize** zone in Eswatini is likely to experience food insecurity. The food consumption phase is projected to be in Phase 2 (35%), and this situation is expected to deteriorate, leading to some households moving to Phase 3 (20%), primarily due to assumed challenges in food access, prices directly affecting purchasing power, seasonal trends, and fuel price hikes. In the Lowveld Cattle and Maize zone, the overall phase classification is projected to remain in Phase 3 but the population in this phase will increase to 80,000 food insecure population. In the projected period, food availability will be a challenge in **Lowveld Cattle and Maize** as most of the households will have depleted their food stocks and thereafter, households will start depending on markets. In the **Lubombo Plateau**, the population in IPC Phase 3 will increase to 14,000 and there will be a shift of 5% (2 300) of the population to IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). The continued increase in prices of commodities as well as fuel prices will likely limit the ability of households to obtain food resulting in an increase in the population requiring intervention. Food access will slightly deteriorate as a result of these increases. Area planted is expected to decline as a result of the increase in the prices of farm inputs together with the increasing levels of unemployment. The anticipated impacts of the El Niño event also expected to have a negative impact on food production hence availability.

The **Moist Middleveld** will also remain in the same phase classification with an increase in the population in IPC Phase 3 to 27,000 (20%). The situation is going to be worsened by the ongoing effects of dry spells and flooding. The zone has also been affected by a number of shocks significantly such as loss of income (79.6%), loss of assets (38.5%), loss of household breadwinner (6.1%), invasive species (8.7%) and significant increase of livestock deaths (22%). The zone also has households hosting an HIV member (40.1%). Significant resources are needed to meet the increasing needs and to prevent further deterioration of the food security situation in the Moist Middleveld of Eswatini. The **Timber Highlands** livelihood zone will remain in Phase 3 with 5% of the population shifting. About 23, 000 people will be in a crisis situation (IPC Phase 3). The increase in food prices compromises households' purchasing power and access to food. Loss of employment and income will worsen the situation. Even if food will be available in the markets, the compromised purchasing power will restrict households' access to food. Excessive rains have contributed to crop failure and damage of infrastructure, further exacerbating households' vulnerability. In the **Dry Middleveld**, more people have shifted to Phase 3 or above (35%), which equals 49,000 people. **Peri-urban** will experience an increase of 20% of the population in IPC Phase 3 (11,000) and a shift of 5% (more than 5,000) to IPC Phase 4 (Emergency). Market prices and availability of food in markets will be the determinant for food and nutrition security in the peri-urban areas. The livelihood zone will face food access challenges and when coupled with price shocks due to rising food prices will decrease their access.

**Manzini urban** in this projection is expected to worsen to 9,360 population in IPC Phase 3. This urban area mainly depends on markets for accessing food, the increase in commodity prices will reduce the purchasing power of many households. In the projected period. **Hhohho urban** will also experience an increase in population in IPC Phase 3 which will rise to 15% (13,000) of the population. **Shiselweni urban** will remain in IPC phase 3, with a 5% shift in population. About 12,900 people are expected to experience large food gaps and employ negative coping strategies to meet their food and non-food needs. **Lubombo urban** will remain in IPC Phase 3, with 14,000 households in crisis (IPC Phase 3). A shift of 5% population from Phase 1 to Phase 2 in the projected period, due to the loss of income and assets, casual labour opportunities stand to be affected, households who provide casual labour

### Key Assumptions:

**High input prices:** Food commodities are likely to be impacted negatively due to the macro-economic instability affecting the inflation, cost of living and services. The weakening of the South African Rand will reduce the purchasing power.

**Seasonal performance:** El Niño probability is normal to below normal rainfall. The country is likely to experience El- Niño-induced dry weather in the projected period which is likely to negatively impact the agricultural activities.

**War in Ukraine;** the conflict will continue to disrupt the global supply chain resulting in high cost of agricultural inputs, fuel, cooking oil and wheat products. Hence increasing the cost of production for the irrigated crops during the next agricultural season.

**Labour wage and opportunities:** labour opportunities will likely be normal with increased labour rates, however the rates will have less value due to increased prices and devaluation of the currency.

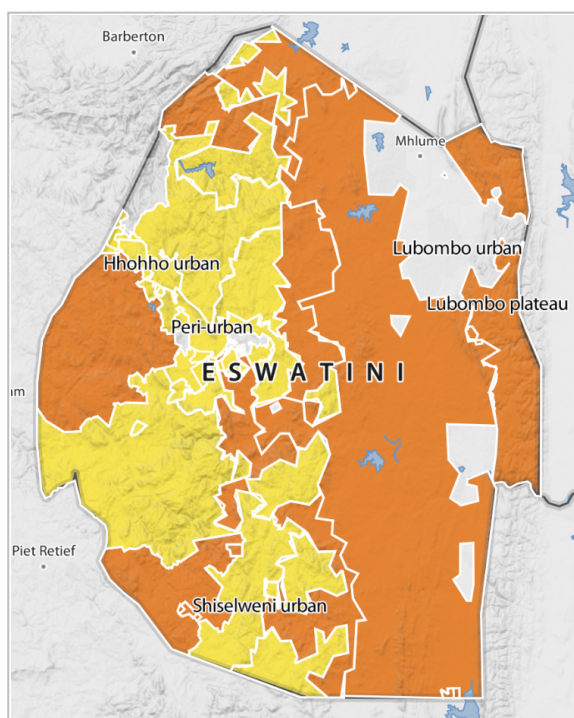
**Food stocks:** Food stocks at household level will be depleted in 4-6 months and are expected thereafter to be available only on local markets at high prices. This is likely to be affected by high transportation costs resulting from the high fuel prices being experienced within the region and beyond the borders.

opportunities might be forced to restrict them and save for food purchases.

**Key linkages and comparisons exist between this year’s acute food insecurity classification and the chronic food insecurity results**

During the period under review, key linkages and comparisons were noted between the 2023 acute food insecurity classification and the chronic food insecurity results. Lowveld, cattle and Maize livelihood Zone, Dry Middleveld as well as Lubombo Plateau continued to show similarities in terms of severity. All three livelihood zones have been classified Phase 3 (Crisis) or worse by the 2023 IPC analysis process. In the Chronic Food Insecurity analysis, same livelihood zones are classified in Level 3 (Moderate) and have the highest proportion (35%) of the population in Moderate (Level 3) and Severe (Level 4) Chronic Food Insecurity (64,000). This similarity reflects the persistence and severity of food insecurity in the plateau and lowveld areas that are cutting across three out of four regions of the country.

**PROJECTED SITUATION AND POPULATION TABLE (OCTOBER 2023 - MARCH 2024)**



**Key for the Map  
IPC Acute Food Insecurity  
Phase Classification**

(mapped Phase represents highest severity affecting at least 20% of the population)

- 1 - Minimal
- 2 - Stressed
- 3 - Crisis
- 4 - Emergency
- 5 - Famine
- Area not analysed

**Evidence Level**

\*\*\* High

Region	Total population analysed	Phase 1		Phase 2		Phase 3		Phase 4		Phase 5		Area Phase	Phase 3+	
		#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%	#people	%		#people	%
Dry middleveld	138,826	48,589	35	41,648	30	41,648	30	6,941	5	0	0	3	48,589	35
Hhohho urban	83,949	41,975	50	29,382	35	12,592	15	0	0	0	0	2	12,592	15
Highveld cattle and maize	154,462	61,785	40	69,508	45	23,169	15	0	0	0	0	2	23,169	15
Lowveld cattle and maize	228,473	68,542	30	79,966	35	79,966	35	0	0	0	0	3	79,966	35
Lubombo plateau	45,489	13,647	30	15,921	35	13,647	30	2,274	5	0	0	3	15,921	35
Lubombo urban	55,852	19,548	35	22,341	40	13,963	25	0	0	0	0	3	13,963	25
Manzini urban	93,581	74,865	80	9,358	10	9,358	10	0	0	0	0	2	9,358	10
Moist middleveld	136,709	47,848	35	61,519	45	27,342	20	0	0	0	0	2	27,342	20
Peri-urban	108,270	43,308	40	48,722	45	10,827	10	5,414	5	0	0	2	16,241	15
Shiselweni urban	51,577	18,052	35	20,631	40	12,894	25	0	0	0	0	3	12,894	25
Timber highlands	91,203	36,481	40	31,921	35	22,801	25	0	0	0	0	3	22,801	25
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,188,391</b>	<b>474,639</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>430,916</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>268,207</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14,629</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>282,836</b>	<b>24</b>

Note: A population in Phase 3+ does not necessarily reflect the full population in need of urgent action. This is because some households may be in Phase 2 or even 1 but only because of receipt of assistance, and thus, they may be in need of continued action.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

### Response priorities

1. Immediate humanitarian assistance be provided to the most vulnerable households in IPC Phase 3+, prioritizing Orphaned and Vulnerable Children, child-headed households, the elderly and people living with HIV and disabilities
2. Shock responsive social protection programs, accommodative of basic needs for both elderly and persons with disability
3. Promote livelihood asset-building programmes to build vulnerable groups resilience to current shocks while in the same time building their ability to cope with future shocks
4. Strengthen innovative and cost-effective ways to improve food diversification, including small-scale backyard gardens to address low household diversity score especially in the rural areas
5. Build capacity and provide support to smallholder farmers on the management practices of harvested crops to reduce post-harvest losses
6. Awareness raising on addressing the impact of El Nino
7. Promotion of climate smart agricultural practices and subsidising these technologies
8. Encourage sustainable water management practices such as reducing water usage
9. Strengthening of the health system for preparedness, surveillance, and response to emerging pandemics, including Cholera
10. Scale up programs aimed at Increasing access and use of improved sanitation facilities
11. Strengthening the resilience of smallholder farmers to climate shocks and market fluctuations by providing them with improved seeds, water harvesting and irrigation strategies, extension services, and access to credit and insurance.
12. Address underlying factors such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to essential services, including healthcare, to ensure long-term improvements in livelihoods and food security in the zone.
13. Conduct hygiene education campaigns: Conduct intensive hygiene education campaigns to improve awareness about the importance of sanitation and hygiene.

### Situation monitoring and update

In view of the envisaged developments in the increase of commodity prices, loss of income as an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the looming El Nino event it will be necessary to carry out an update of the current analysis. This will be done in early November 2023 to give a situation update up to the end of March 2024. This will be an opportunity to review the impact of the high cost of food and non-food at Household level, market functionality, transport and trade across districts/regions, the impact on household food requirements, and availability of labour opportunities, among other key issues.

### Risk factors to monitor

- i. Market functionality,
- ii. The impact on household food requirements,
- iii. Price of staples, and availability of labour opportunities,
- iv. Looming El Nino conditions,
- v. Climatic forecast of the next rain season SARCOF



## PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

A range of multi-sectoral consultative technical meetings were held through the overall management and coordination provided by the Deputy Prime Minister’s Office, Disaster Management Department. The IPC process started in early 2022 by preparing a detailed implementation plan and establishing timelines for activities, including an inventory of available information, identification of data gaps and needs for new data required for the analysis. Training of enumerators preceded the actual collection of data (both primary and secondary data). The IPC analysis was conducted from 5 - 13 June and covered seven rural livelihood zones of the country and urban areas in the Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo and Shiselweni regions. The regional experts managed to provide virtual remote technical support based on IPC Version 3.1 protocols. The evidence level of the analysis is assessed as High (\*\*\*) for each area.

### Sources

The Eswatini VAC data included direct evidence for food consumption (Food Consumption Score, Household Dietary Diversity Score, Household Hunger Score, HEA, and food-related Coping Strategies) as well as Livelihood Coping Strategies. The Eswatini VAC assessments were designed according to the global standards, using WFP’s/FAO’s corporate-level technical protocols, taking special consideration of data requirements for the IPC analysis. Market-related data was also provided by WFP. Other reports from various sectors such as WASH and existing knowledge/ expertise from the analysis team contributed to the IPC analysis and classification of the various regions using the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Protocols Version 3.1.

### Limitations of the analysis

The 2023 IPC Acute Analysis was well organized and fully supported by several development partners and relevant stakeholders including the IPC technical working and the vulnerability assessment committee. Overall, no major limitations were observed throughout the analysis period.

### What is the IPC and IPC Acute Food Insecurity?

The IPC is a set of tools and procedures to classify the severity and characteristics of acute food and nutrition crises as well as chronic food insecurity based on international standards. The IPC consists of four mutually reinforcing functions, each with a set of specific protocols (tools and procedures). The core IPC parameters include consensus building, convergence of evidence, accountability, transparency and comparability. The IPC analysis aims at informing emergency response as well as medium and long-term food security policy and programming.

For the IPC, Acute Food Insecurity is defined as any manifestation of food insecurity found in a specified area at a specific point in time of a severity that threatens lives or livelihoods, or both, regardless of the causes, context or duration. It is highly susceptible to change and can occur and manifest in a population within a short amount of time, as a result of sudden changes or shocks that negatively impact on the determinants of food insecurity.

### Contact for further Information

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#### IPC Global Support Unit

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This analysis has been conducted under the patronage of the Eswatini Vulnerability and Analysis Committee under the Deputy Prime Minister Office. It has benefited from the technical and financial support of the UN (WFP, UNICEF, WHO and FAO), the University of Eswatini, NGOs (EBSRC, World Vision)

Classification of food insecurity was conducted using the IPC protocols, which are developed and implemented worldwide by the IPC Global Partnership - Action Against Hunger, CARE, CILSS, EC-JRC, FAO, FEWS NET, Global Food Security Cluster, Global Nutrition Cluster, IGAD, Oxfam, PROGRESAN-SICA, SADC, Save the Children, UNICEF and WFP.

### IPC Analysis Partners:

