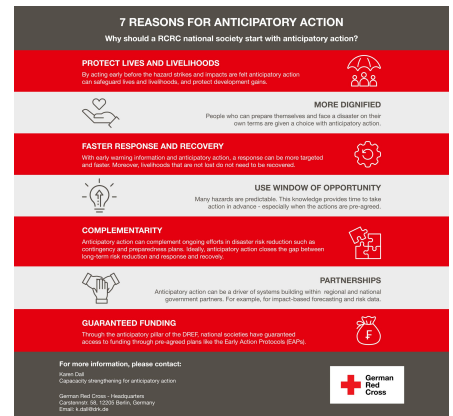


CONTENT

STEP 3: BUILD YOUR MESSAGE(S)

Step 3: Build your message(s)

Stakeholders – both within the National Society and in the broader DRM system – must believe in the benefits of anticipatory action if they are to be receptive to your invitations to engage in development and implementation and sustain their involvement and support. This section details a variety of approaches or strategies for peaking and sustaining interest in anticipatory action to be selected and employed as appropriate to your context. These benefits may apply or appeal to National Societies as well as external partners / actors. It is important to strike the right balance between generating “excitement” for the new and innovative approach and creating expectations that anticipatory action cannot meet.



A. Showcase effectiveness/benefits:

One of the easiest ways to convince stakeholders of the value of anticipatory action is by pointing to evidence of its effectiveness. Evidence increasingly demonstrates that anticipatory action is an effective and dignified approach to humanitarian action. In 2025, different agencies compiled meta-analyses of existing evidence across their programmes. The full metastudies can be found in the toolbox. As summarized in a [blogpost](#) on the Anticipation Hub, their main findings demonstrate across agencies and contexts that...

- Anticipatory action improves food security and reduces harmful coping strategies: Acting ahead of crises improves household food access and reduces reliance on harmful coping strategies, meaning families are less likely to sell productive assets, withdraw children from school, or take other damaging measures during shocks.
- Anticipatory action can achieve stronger outcomes through combined support: Anticipatory interventions are most effective when cash- and voucher-based assistance is paired with early warnings, clear communication, and complementary in-kind support, enabling households to prepare earlier and make better-informed decisions.
- Anticipatory action can be more cost-effective than reactive response: Acting before crises generally delivers higher returns than post-shock response by lowering procurement and delivery costs and preventing losses, although comparisons across programmes remain difficult due to varying calculation methods.
- Anticipatory action yields better results with strong local ownership: Interventions designed and implemented with local actors and informed by community knowledge tend to be more trusted, timely, and aligned with local realities. Within the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, EAPs are owned by the National Societies as auxiliaries to national governments, and implementation is driven by branches and their volunteers, embedded in the very communities at risk. This locally rooted structure strengthens legitimacy and ownership at national and local levels.



More sample evidence

A 2022 [Policy Brief by the Anticipatory Action Task Force](#) also summarized earlier evidence, including specific examples from the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement:

- In Mongolia, livestock keepers who received animal care kits from the [Mongolian Red Cross](#) and [FAO](#) as well as cash before severe winter cold saw fewer of their animals die.
- In Bangladesh, multiple activations by different actors ([BDRCS](#), [UNOCHA](#), [WFP](#)) have shown that at-risk communities who received anticipatory cash before floods peaked were more likely to evacuate, more likely to save livestock, essential agricultural and fishing equipment, and less likely to borrow money to cope with the aftermath of a flood.
- [The World Bank](#) estimates that upgrading early warning systems to support early action capacity in all developing countries can save an average of 23,000 lives per year and avoid losses worth between USD 300 million and USD 2 billion per year.
- In Senegal in 2019, the number of households reporting going a whole day without eating was reduced by 19 per cent during a six-month anticipatory project for drought funded by the [Start Network](#).

Furthermore, experience from previous programmes suggests that these have a positive impact on National Society capacities and systems (e.g. logistics, procurement, and preparedness) leading to faster more proactive operations and improved response overall (for more information, see [Tozier de la Poterie et al. 2023](#)). For more information on evidence and learning around anticipatory action, visit the chapter on [Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning \(MEAL\)](#).

B. Show concrete examples of how anticipatory action can help

You can enhance the case for anticipatory action by combining general evidence from anticipatory action projects (see A) with anecdotal examples from communities. As the goal of anticipatory action is to prevent and reduce suffering for recipients of early action, who better to speak to the effectiveness of anticipatory action than those who participate? Media stories can also be an effective tool for generating interest. See for example video from Honduras explaining what anticipatory action is and how it helped people before tropical storm Julia in 2022.



Practical Example: Bangladesh

Statement: (Write a simple statement.)

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

Impact: (Give an example of humanitarian impact.)

It is ranked by the Climate Change Vulnerability Index as the country most at risk globally. This is also a result of its geophysical features. Just under 70 per cent of the country is vulnerable to flooding, and cyclones hit coastal areas almost every year. Evacuation can last up to four weeks, and farmers or daily labourers receive little to no income during that period. They must often sell assets or take up high interest loans to evacuate, plus pay for food, and health expenses during evacuation and after.

Example: (Use an example or personal story from your own/assisted person's experience.)

Alefa Katun (40) works as a daily worker in the fields in Bogra. During flood events she loses all income as fields are inundated and cannot be worked on, and her cows can no longer graze.

Action: (Now put your message into action.)

In 2017, the anticipatory action pilot community of Bogra received an SMS alerting those in need of impending cash distribution. Recipients then needed to show up at the various distribution points to collect the money.

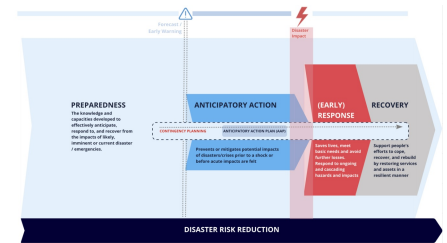
According to Alefa, "[t]hanks to the timely forecasts and EAP activation, we were able to receive cash three to seven days in advance of the flood peak. I am so grateful for the cash. I bought fodder for my cows and could evacuate them. Without the cash, I would have had to sell them, but they are good cows, they deliver good milk and are very healthy."

Evidence: (Present findings of impact evaluation following the activation)

Studies by GRC, BDRCS and RCCC following the activation found that families who received anticipatory assistance had to take out less high-interest loans to cover their needs, that they suffered from fewer stress, and had better access to nutrition.

C. Promote anticipatory action as complementary to contingency plans, EWEA and DRR:

Another way to make the case for anticipatory action is to highlight how it can complement and fortify existing disaster risk management frameworks and plans. When anticipatory action is promoted as a “new” or “innovative solution” some government actors may worry that it undermines their existing work in DRR and EWEA. Be clear about where anticipatory action fits in the disaster risk management continuum, and stress that it does not or should not replace DRR. Instead, emphasize that despite existing DRR efforts, there are many communities where DRR has not been implemented, and not all risks can be reduced by long-term prevention and mitigation measures. Anticipatory action is therefore a valuable tool for managing residual risk (see figure on the right). Furthermore, anticipatory action can provide access to funding for early actions that is often lacking in existing contingency plans or early warning systems. Therefore, rather than creating parallel systems or replacing existing efforts, anticipatory action can fill gaps in existing structures.



Anticipatory action within the disaster risk management continuum
Source: IFRC