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## STEP 5: MONITOR AND TRACK YOUR ENGAGEMENT

### WHAT CAN GO WRONG IN STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT?

## Step 5: Monitor and track your engagement

Once you have completed the above steps, it may be worthwhile to develop a plan for engaging key stakeholders. For example, you could use the table below to combine the key stakeholders from your stakeholder mapping with the engagement strategies above to plan and monitor your key actor engagement.

**Table: Planning and Monitoring Stakeholder engagement**

| From Stakeholder mapping |                            |                                                    |                             | Advocacy plan               |                                          |                                          |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Stakeholder              | What are they doing in AA? | What do you need from them? / Role in the project? | How important / influential | Key contacts (point people) | Engagement strategies (list from step 4) | Status of engagement/engagement tracking |
|                          |                            |                                                    |                             |                             |                                          |                                          |
|                          |                            |                                                    |                             |                             |                                          |                                          |

### What can go wrong in stakeholder engagement?

Despite our best efforts and intentions, stakeholder engagement does not always go as planned or as desired. Here are some challenges other National Societies have encountered when trying to engage stakeholders in anticipatory action as well as some initial thoughts on what they might do differently next time. Contact [Karen Dall](#) or [Sören Schneider](#) to share your experiences – positive and negative – and to discuss how you might overcome these challenges in the future.

#### A. Stakeholders do not understand anticipatory action

As anticipatory action is still a relatively new topic, it often takes time for DRM practitioners to understand the concept. It is therefore essential to prioritize education and outreach from the early stages of anticipatory action planning. In addition to workshops and dialogue platforms, regular meetings or forums (such as technical working groups) can be used to reiterate the basic principles and serve as a platform for people to engage more regularly with the topic. They may also help to address problems of staff turnover by inviting new staff or partners to learn and ask questions.

#### B. Obtaining commitment/engagement from key stakeholders

In some countries, National Societies have found it difficult to get responses or consistent engagement from key ministries or partner organizations. Consider the following strategies:

- **Involve the secretary general or National Society leadership:** Some National Societies have had more success reaching out to government partners and solidifying partnerships when the invitations come from National Society leadership. Invitations from leadership demonstrate a commitment beyond the scope of a single project and are essential to developing memorandums of understanding (MoUs).
- **Let the government lead outreach/invitations:** Forming a technical working group and / or letting national disaster risk management agencies take the lead on outreach may raise the profile of these meetings and encourage other agencies to dedicate time and resources.

#### C. Sustaining engagement considering competing priorities

Even if government, UN, and NGO stakeholders are enthusiastic about anticipatory action, in some contexts they may face barriers to regular engagement, such as limited funding and / or staffing, competing (political) priorities, travel or time constraints, or high

staff turnover. Other National Societies have overcome these challenges in the following ways:

- **MoUs / high-level buy-in:** Involve high-level officials in the process and securing their interest, commitment, and buy-in is essential to securing commitment from technicians and agency staff. Stakeholders must see engagement in AA as something relevant and important to their job descriptions rather than another meeting being added to their to-do list. It may take time for relevant officials to understand the concept and added value of anticipatory action; therefore, you may need to focus on education and outreach for some time. Once high-level interest is secured, it may be appropriate to designate a focal point (or focal team) and / or consider an MoU to formalize the cooperation.
- **Redundancy:** Involve several people or a team of focal points from key agencies. When communications and invitations are extended to several people within relevant ministries, it is less likely that no one will be available to attend key meetings or provide necessary feedback. However, this strategy must be weighed against the possibility of diluting responsibility for engaging with anticipatory action such that no one attends because they think it is someone else's responsibility. This strategy therefore works best if there is a formal team within each organization and each member understands and agrees to work together to provide feedback to the National Society, attend meetings, and update each other.
- **Flexibility:** Be flexible in your strategies and adapt your engagement strategies as necessary. If large group meetings are not working, follow-up with bilateral meetings. If a piecemeal approach to engagement is causing problems, consider setting up formal structures such as working groups. Monitoring your outreach and the involvement of key stakeholders (using Table 2.2 as a baseline, for example) is essential to identifying challenges in involving key stakeholders and adjusting strategies accordingly.

#### D. Living up to expectations

- In countries where other organizations or agencies are already working on anticipatory action, some National Societies have had difficulties engaging government stakeholders, as they do not have the financial resources to support staff time or capacity strengthening. In such cases, it may be beneficial to partner more closely with organizations that have established programmes or dedicated resources and / or build upon their models and programmes. It will also be important to manage expectations and explain why and how the Red Cross Red Crescent model differs from and meaningfully adds value to the potential support other partners are able to provide.

#### E. Considering sensitivities and power dynamics

- In some countries, particularly in contexts affected by fragility or conflict, relationships between stakeholders can be difficult and some topics may be (politically or otherwise) sensitive. If stakeholder engagement is not done in a conflict sensitive way, National Societies may miss important dynamics and may be perceived to take the side of one stakeholder over another, which can damage trust and reputation. Conducting a conflict sensitivity analysis and considering power dynamics as a part of stakeholder mapping reduce the risk of such unintended consequences.

Overall, effective stakeholder engagement lays the foundations for developing the pathway to anticipatory action most suited to your context. The following chapters build on this by outlining how anticipatory action systems can be developed and operationalized, with a particular focus on the development of an s/EAP.