CONTENT

HOW CAN NATIONAL SOCIETIES ENGAGE IN INTEGRATION OF ANTICIPATORY ACTION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION?

How can National Societies engage in integration of anticipatory action and social protection?

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and the National Societies in particular, have a long history of engaging with national social protection systems (see the two example boxes below). Additional information on these examples can also be found in the toolbox.

Supporting the Integration of Anticipatory Action into National Social Protection Systems in Kenya

The Kenya Red Cross Society been actively engaged in reviewing the National Social Protection Policy, and in developing the harmonized household registration tool for registering households into the Enhanced Single Registry (ESR). Most recently, KRCS has supported people to access social protection via the ESR in Taita Taveta County, Kenya. In the case of KRCS, just like many other National Societies, its established auxiliary role, long-standing relationships with government actors, and community relationships uniquely position it to support the integration of anticipatory action and social protection systems.

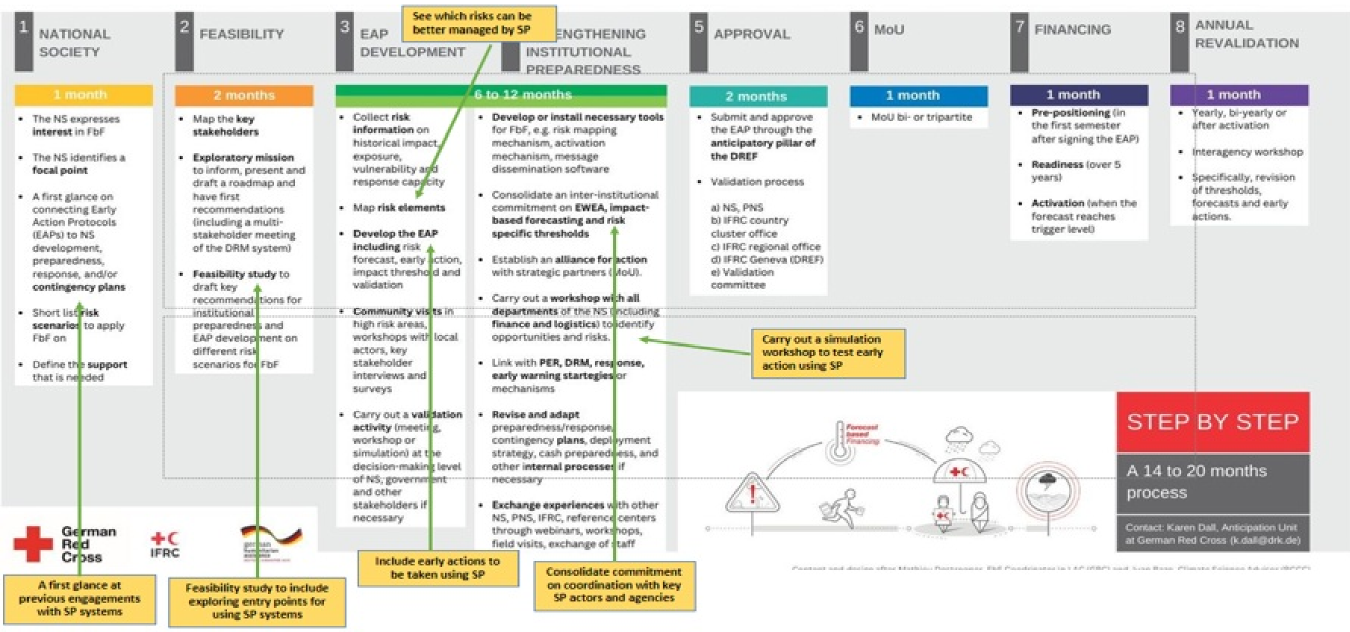
Using Social Protection Systems to Deliver Anticipatory Cash Assistance in Nepal

Another example is from 2021, when the Danish Red Cross transferred emergency funds to the Nepal Red Cross Society and supported the delivery of multi-purpose cash assistance to vulnerable groups within a month of peak floods. This was accomplished by utilizing Nepal's Social Security Allowance (SSA) program, leveraging beneficiary lists to target households. Cash was directly disbursed to SSA bank accounts, addressing essential needs and aiding the early recovery of individuals prior to the visible effects of the flood. This experience demonstrated the efficacy of utilizing the government's social protection system to efficiently and cost-effectively provide cash assistance on a large scale before or after a disaster. For more information, see the toolbox.

Depending on the technical and financial capacity of the country, different opportunities for engaging with anticipatory action exist. In general, there are some common ways by which National Societies can leverage social protection systems, irrespective of the instrument type. This includes:

- Aligning anticipatory cash transfer amounts with existing social protection program's benefit levels
- Using the same targeting strategy for a new group of beneficiaries or new geographic area
- Using already existing social protection payment channels/banks accounts
- Using existing social protection databases/social registries/community lists of vulnerable people and previously affected groups to identify vulnerable groups
- Using the same communication channels and trusted means of information dissemination

Concretely, to take this agenda forward, National Societies will need to work together with relevant sectors, such as social protection practitioners, disaster risk managers, climate and social science scientists and align with ongoing priorities and initiatives. In the infographic below, the key points where National Societies could seek to engage and integrate with social protection system within the Early Action Protocol development process has been identified.



Step 1: Understand the context

First, it will be important to understand the existing national social protection policy and program context to identify entry points and feasibility of leveraging existing systems. Apart from leveraging existing programs, a scoping can be done to determine if any new social protection policies are being drafted or an old one is being updated/reformed, and to explore opportunities to ensure that a future social protection program is anticipatory by design.

Step 2: In-depth technical analysis

As part of the design of an anticipatory action programme, it is important to understand how hazards impact people's lives and livelihoods. When linking with social protection mechanisms, it will be key to conduct robust technical analysis that show where and how climate vulnerabilities and exposure overlap with existing social protection programme beneficaries and delivery channels (e.g. bank account coverage), so that anticipatory action using such systems can reach those affected wherever, whenever. In this regard, it will be important to understand what data is available with whom, how it relates to climate-related vulnerabilities, how frequently it is updated, etc.

Step 3: Advocate linkages between anticipatory action and social protection programs and systems

When social protection programs already exist and there is a common interest in making them scalable by integrating anticipatory action, it will be important to jointly advocate and collaborate to agree on the specific actions that can be taken through such programmes; and for this, capacity and resources are key. As part of the anticipatory action scoping study and advocacy strategy, it is essential to identify and agree on who is doing what and where in terms of social protection (past, present and planned interventions). If studies show that social protection programs might not be ready to take anticipatory action, there might still be opportunities to use components of systems, like beneficiary registries and payments/communications channels.

Step 4: Prioritize dialogue and understanding

It is key to promote dialogue and understanding across sectors and establish a process that aims to align and converge objectives of social protection and anticipatory action interventions at policy and program level. This needs to be anchored by coordination platforms/working groups that allow for continued dialogue and exchange.

Step 5: Start simple, build commitment

Depending on the local situation, anticipatory action could be introduced in phases, first targeting the most predictable hazards with relatively simple and affordable anticipatory actions using common social protection instruments (e.g. cash transfers), and then expanding to more complex actions or less predictable events. It will be important that donors and governments commit to fund this and assess the outcomes of their social protection investments to look at whether anticipatory actions have been taken and what difference they have made.