

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

While commonly discussed together as MEAL—and grouped under Result-based Management (RBM) and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER), among others—each component of these acronyms refers to distinct phases of or processes in programme management cycle. Table 2 defines each of these terms broadly and outlines their connection to processes of developing or implementing anticipatory action initiatives, programmes and protocols and how (if at all) they are covered in this guide.

The steps and resources that follow provide an overview of what is required as part of your s/EAP and links to guidance related to required elements. For National Societies or other actors exploring more in-depth evaluations, it also provides an overview of approaches and links to resources for a variety of other methods that have been used or could be adapted to evaluate anticipatory action programs. Especially this “menu of options” can be relevant, if your National Society is working on anticipatory action through approaches other than formalized plans or Early Action Protocols, such as community-based initiatives, support to national governments or the use of an imminent DREF.

Term	Definition	Specifics for anticipatory action	What you will find in this chapter
System planning / design	The planning or design phase is when you decide what will be done, which results you want to achieve, how to monitor and evaluate them, and which indicators you will use for this. Ideally, this will incorporate learning from any previous and relevant programs.	In anticipatory action, planning and design will occur when setting up a broader anticipatory action initiative or programme and/or when specific actions and protocols are being established for specific hazards and contexts. Planning and design will also be important when incorporating lessons and revalidating your s/EAP.	How to research and plan the development of an s/EAP is covered in chapters 1-8 and 10-12 of the manual.
Monitoring	Monitoring tracks the performance of the implementing actors vis-a-vis their agreed and planned roles and responsibilities.	In anticipatory action this may refer to monitoring of the project or programme to set up the anticipatory action system in your country, monitoring of readiness and prepositioning activities, or monitoring of the activation after a trigger is reached.	This guide focuses on monitoring of s/EAP implementation, which begins when the EAP is triggered and extends after the activation until data collection and analysis are complete. Monitoring data will help you to reconstruct events and eventually identify and evaluate any shortcomings, constraints, or bottlenecks that need to be addressed before the next activation.
Evaluation	Evaluation refers to attempts to capture lessons and impacts (see the info box further below for definitions) resulting from programme setup or implementation.	Evaluations of anticipatory action may seek to evaluate system capacity building, activation processes, or outcomes and impacts (see Table below).	This guide includes resources for evaluating the activation process as well as outcomes and impacts.
Accountability	IFRC defines accountability as “the obligation to demonstrate to stakeholders to what extent results have been achieved according to established plans. This definition guides [IFRC’s] accountability principles as set out in Strategy 2020: explicit standard setting; pen monitoring and reporting; transparent information sharing; meaningful beneficiary participation; effective and efficient use of resources; systems for learning and responding to concerns and complaints” (IFRC M&E guidance 2021).	Humanitarians must be accountable to the populations they work with (at-risk populations), partners, and donors. Given the added layer of uncertainty associated with anticipatory action, it is important to verify that early actions are reaching the right people, meeting their needs, and therefore constitute an wise investment of resources. Post-activation evaluations can help to verify accountability to affected populations, but as suggested by the definition, accountability to stakeholders should be integrated throughout the design and implementation process.	This guide links to existing IFRC guidance on CEA.
Learning	Learning refers to the acquisition and integration of knowledge and skills gained through experience. Gathering information and lessons from the previous steps without applying or acting upon that information should not be considered learning. Learning only takes place to the extent that lessons or knowledge from previous design, monitoring, evaluation and accountability activities are incorporated into new plans and protocols.	In anticipatory action, when working through formalized plans, the revalidation of s/EAPs is a critical moment for ensuring that lessons identified during monitoring, evaluation, and accountability processes are actually learned by adjusting new versions of the s/EAP to overcome identified weaknesses and build upon identified strengths.	How to incorporate learning and resubmit your s/EAP is covered in chapter 13 of the manual.