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## APPROACHES FOR NATIONAL SOCIETIES TO IMPLEMENT ANTICIPATORY ACTION

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# Approaches for National Societies to implement anticipatory action

## Summary

This chapter outlines the main approaches through which a National Society can implement anticipatory action and presents four common entry points: the development of a full or simplified Early Action Protocol (s/EAP), the use of a Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation for an imminent event or crisis (also known as an imminent DREF), embedding anticipatory action within community-based disaster risk reduction, and supporting governments at national and local levels in the auxiliary role.

Each approach is described according to core characteristics, such as activation and trigger mechanisms, funding modalities, risk assessment requirements, intervention area, and capacity considerations. While the following chapters focus in detail on the development of a full or simplified Early Action Protocol as the most formalized and comprehensive anticipatory action mechanism within the Movement, the other pathways presented in this chapter may also offer flexible or incremental entry points depending on context. Specific guidance on some of these pathways can also be found at the end of this manual.

## Introduction

There are several ways to implement anticipatory action for a National Society which are dependent on the level of planning, access to funding, existing governmental systems for anticipatory action, the scale and level of implementation and the capacity of the National Society.

The following chapter gives an overview of the different approaches that a National Society can use to implement anticipatory action – all with their very good reasons to be used depending on the context.

Each approach will be briefly outlined and described along the same factors, e.g. activation and trigger or funding.

## Early Action Protocols

An EAP consists of three main components: trigger, actions and funding mechanism. The EAP delineates roles and responsibilities for quick action when a trigger is reached and constitutes the Red Cross Red Crescent's approach to formalized anticipatory action frameworks. National societies can access IFRC-DREF funds with a

- full EAP
- simplified EAP

Details on the differences between full and simplified EAPs as well as templates and guidance on EAPs can be found in [chapter 4](#) of the Manual's main body.

The focus of this Manual is the development of a full EAP, as it represents the most comprehensive and formalized approach to anticipatory action within the Movement. The simplified EAP is a lighter-touch version of the full EAP and is thus covered inherently.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activation and trigger | s/EAPs have a pre agreed threshold at which the EAP is activated and actions are implemented. There is no need to go through any additional approval processes for funds to be released once a threshold is met, thereby gaining valuable time to reduce the impact of a disaster. |
| Funding                | Once approved, funding is guaranteed through the Anticipatory Pillar of the DREF.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Selection of actions   | Actions are pre-agreed and are in many cases tested before in a simulation and / or an imminent DREF (see below).                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Intervention area      | Communities are not pre-selected but the hazard forecast in combination with vulnerability information will indicate where anticipatory action is needed most.                                                                                                                     |
| Risk                   | The development of an s/EAP usually allows for a more rigorous analysis of the historical impacts and vulnerability of the population leading to a assessment more targeted and potentially effective intervention.                                                                |
| Capacity               | National Societies can access readiness funds through the EAP. However, the development is often (but doesn't have to!) done in a project with a partner.                                                                                                                          |

## Imminent DREF

Imminent DREFs are a low-threshold opportunity for National Societies to take proactive action for sudden onset disasters. It can be used in the context where a disaster has not yet unfolded or where impacts have not yet peaked, but where a formal EAP is not in place or, for whatever reason, cannot be activated. National Societies can hence request a DREF for early action and early response based on a forecast or other prediction of an imminent disaster. Imminent DREFs are therefore an excellent opportunity for a National Society to implement anticipatory action without an EAP or to test early actions for an EAP which is not finalized.



### Top tip

You can have pre-filled imminent DREF request in the drawer to be used once a trigger is reached.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activation and trigger | The imminent DREF can be requested at earliest one month before and latest three days before the expected disaster impact, or once a forecast or other prediction is issued, with evidence of a high likelihood of the event materialising. Hence, this limits the time for planning, approval and implementation of the anticipatory actions. |
| Funding                | Funding is disbursed based on technical review on a case by case basis. These requests should be approved or declined within 24 hours. By applying for an imminent DREF, National Societies can access up to 75,000 CHF to implement early actions.                                                                                            |
| Selection of actions   | Actions need to be planned and budgeted for in an Emergency Plan of Action. The National Society should rely on actions which they are already familiar with.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Intervention area      | The intervention area is defined through the forecast but has not been preselected.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Risk assessment        | No in-depth risk assessment is required or feasible in this short time frame.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Capacity               | DREF for imminent event needs to be planned based on the existing capacity and experience of the National Society, due to the limited timeline.                                                                                                                                                                                                |



Guidance and specific considerations on the use of the imminent DREF for anticipatory action can be found in the [later chapters of this Manual](#).

## Anticipatory action as part of community-based disaster risk reduction

Community work is at the core of all National Societies as volunteers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are deeply embedded in their respective community structures. One central guiding framework of the RCRC Movement in CBDRR is the Roadmap to Community Resilience (R2CR) via the enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA). It is a participatory community risk assessment process which enables communities, with the support of Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies when needed, to assess and analyse the risks they face, explore where these risks come from, which members of the community are most exposed, what coping capacities are available, and what initiatives can be undertaken to strengthen coping capacities and reduce the risks. As part of the R2CR via EVCA process, a Plan of Action is developed which elaborates risk reduction measures. This comprehensive community plan could contain the development of an anticipatory action plan, bridging longer-term mitigation and preparedness measures to immediate early actions for prioritized risks

As you can see in the table below, embedding anticipatory action in community-based disaster risk reduction can take many different forms. Which pathway is feasible and most effective varies highly, depending on factors like local context, needs, institutional setup or available resources.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activation and trigger | The National Society and the community can implement anticipatory action in a pre-defined or non-defined manner. To trigger anticipatory action, community-based early warning systems or national warnings can be used, either defined in an anticipatory action plan, as part of a more vast contingency plan or needs-based, only when a forecast indicates an imminent disaster. |
| Funding                | There is no global funding mechanism for anticipatory action at the community level. However, low cost or no cost actions could be explored or other local funds could be obtained, e.g. through a written anticipatory action plan with a budget and making the case for anticipatory action.                                                                                       |
| Selection of actions   | Actions could be planned prior to the hazard in an anticipatory action plan for the community. Ideally, these actions are really tailored to the community and build on the EVCA, where available.                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Intervention area      | As the focus is on a particular community the intervention will take place in that specific community once a forecast indicates an imminent disaster.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Risk assessment        | The EVCA is an in-depth risk assessment which allows a thorough impact analysis which could serve as a basis for the selection of anticipatory actions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Capacity               | The implementation of actions is dependent on the community, ideally incorporated in the key roles and responsibilities of the Community Resilience Committees, and their resources to invest in the community action plan and the anticipatory action plan accordingly, if applicable.                                                                                              |



Guidance and specific considerations on the use of the community based approaches for anticipatory action can be found in the latter chapters of this Manual.

## Auxiliary role and support to the government

The auxiliary role of a National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society is a unique, legally recognized partnership where the National Society supports public authorities in the humanitarian field – covering health, disaster, and social welfare – while remaining independent. As outlined above, National Societies can implement anticipatory action in different ways, yet in order to reach scale and sustainability government ownership of anticipatory action is essential. National Societies can support their government in making the shift to more pro-active and risk informed disaster management, in embedding anticipatory action into existing structures for disaster risk management, and also in the implementation of anticipatory action. This support can happen on national level or also on subnational and municipal levels.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Activation and trigger | If a national or local government anticipatory action framework is available, triggers could be pre agreed in that plan or the government calls for anticipatory action after an early warning has been issued.                                                                                                                |
| Funding                | Funding could be made accessible through the government.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Selection of actions   | Actions could be outlined in the government framework or planned only when the disaster is imminent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Intervention area      | The anticipatory action would take place in the area forecasted to be affected. In addition, coordination mechanisms might exist that ensure implementing partners complement each other geographically within the affected areas.                                                                                             |
| Risk assessment        | Depending on the availability of the government anticipatory action framework, thorough risk assessments might exist. Governments might also be able to draw on more extensive data from social protection registries or other government-owned sources that might substantiate or complement ongoing risk assessment efforts. |
| Capacity               | The development and implementation of actions is dependent on the existing staff of the National Society and capacities made available by the government. Often, the valuable experiences National Societies bring in (proactive) disaster risk management, can help reinforce capacities in a targeted way, where needed.     |

## Complementary and evolving pathways

The approaches outlined above represent the most common entry points for National Societies to engage in anticipatory action. However, in practice, these approaches are neither mutually exclusive nor rigidly distinct.

For many contexts, elements from different approaches overlap or reinforce each other. For example, a government-owned anticipatory action framework with nationally defined triggers may be closely linked to a formalized EAP developed by the National Society, allowing for coordinated activation and complementary activation. Similarly, a municipal anticipatory action plan developed with the support of a National Society may build directly on years of community-based disaster risk reduction work, including EVCA processes and volunteer networks. An imminent DREF may also serve as a stepping stone toward the development of an EAP, or as a testing ground for early actions later formalized in a more structured framework. National Societies are therefore encouraged to view these approaches not as isolated models, but as entry points and adaptable components within broader anticipatory action ecosystems.

Importantly, the approaches presented in this chapter are not exhaustive and additional pathways may exist depending on the operational, institutional and donor landscape. For instance, anticipatory elements can be integrated into longer-term programmes through crisis modifiers: A crisis modifier refers to an agreed adjustment to a pre-existing project or intervention that allows funds to be (re-)allocated or activities to be adapted in anticipation of an imminent shock. The feasibility and design of crisis modifiers, however, depend heavily on donor agreements, project configurations and flexibility, and therefore vary significantly across contexts. Beyond crisis modifiers, some National Societies have also established own pooled or contingency funds to finance anticipatory action independently or in advance of international support.

## Moving from awareness to exploration

This chapter introduced the main approaches through which National Societies can engage in anticipatory action. As outlined, these pathways differ in terms of formality, funding mechanisms, scale, and institutional integration. They are not mutually exclusive and may evolve or be combined over time as capacities, partnerships and opportunities develop. Hence, at this stage, the aim is not yet to decide on a specific pathway, but to become familiar with the range of possible entry points and understand how anticipatory action can be embedded in different operational and institutional contexts.

Building on this overview, the next chapter moves from orientation to exploration: It guides National Societies through the process of assessing whether and how anticipatory action could be feasible and valuable in their specific contexts. This includes scoping opportunities and capacities, identifying potential hazards and partners, and determining whether to pursue a more formalized anticipatory action system such as an Early Action Protocol.

In general, the following chapters focus in detail on the development of a full or simplified Early Action Protocol (s/EAP). As the most comprehensive, institutionalized and formalized approach to anticipatory action within the Movement, an s/EAP provides access to pre-agreed funding for a defined multi-year period and establishes clear and predefined triggers and actions. However, as outlined above, it represents only one pathway among several, and may be pursued progressively as capacities and institutional readiness evolve. Specific guidance on other pathways can be found at the end of this manual.