



PHILIPPINES

Calm Before the Storm:

Anticipatory Action Strengthens Disaster Risk Management in the Philippines

A combination of floods, droughts, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes, coupled with limited coping and adaptive capacities, led the Philippines to be ranked as the most risk-vulnerable country in the world by the [World Risk Report 2022](#).

Since 1990, the country has faced 565 such disasters, killing an estimated 70,000 and costing USD 23 billion in damages. Recent decades have also seen increasingly heavy rain and tropical cyclone activity, a trend that is expected to continue under a changing climate.

Anticipatory action (AA), also known as [forecast-based financing](#), is a mechanism for triggering pre-approved contingency plans and funding based on early warnings of potentially disastrous extreme weather events, such as typhoons. By providing timely assistance to communities and helping them prepare for predictable natural hazards, AA enhances disaster preparedness and

response, reduces risks and mitigates impacts – thereby protecting people's lives, livelihoods and incomes.

For the Philippines, the value of AA has become increasingly apparent. Since 2015, the World Food Programme (WFP) has provided capacity-strengthening support to the Government of the Philippines and other partners to implement AA systems and policies at national and local levels. This case study provides an overview of this collaboration since 2015, from initial pilot activities and the development of models and standard operating procedures, through to the establishment of a United Nations inter-agency AA framework in 2021 and ongoing efforts to strengthen government capacity. The case study aims to highlight major achievements of this work and set out the next steps required for the operationalization of innovative AA systems to enhance climate and disaster risk management in the Philippines.



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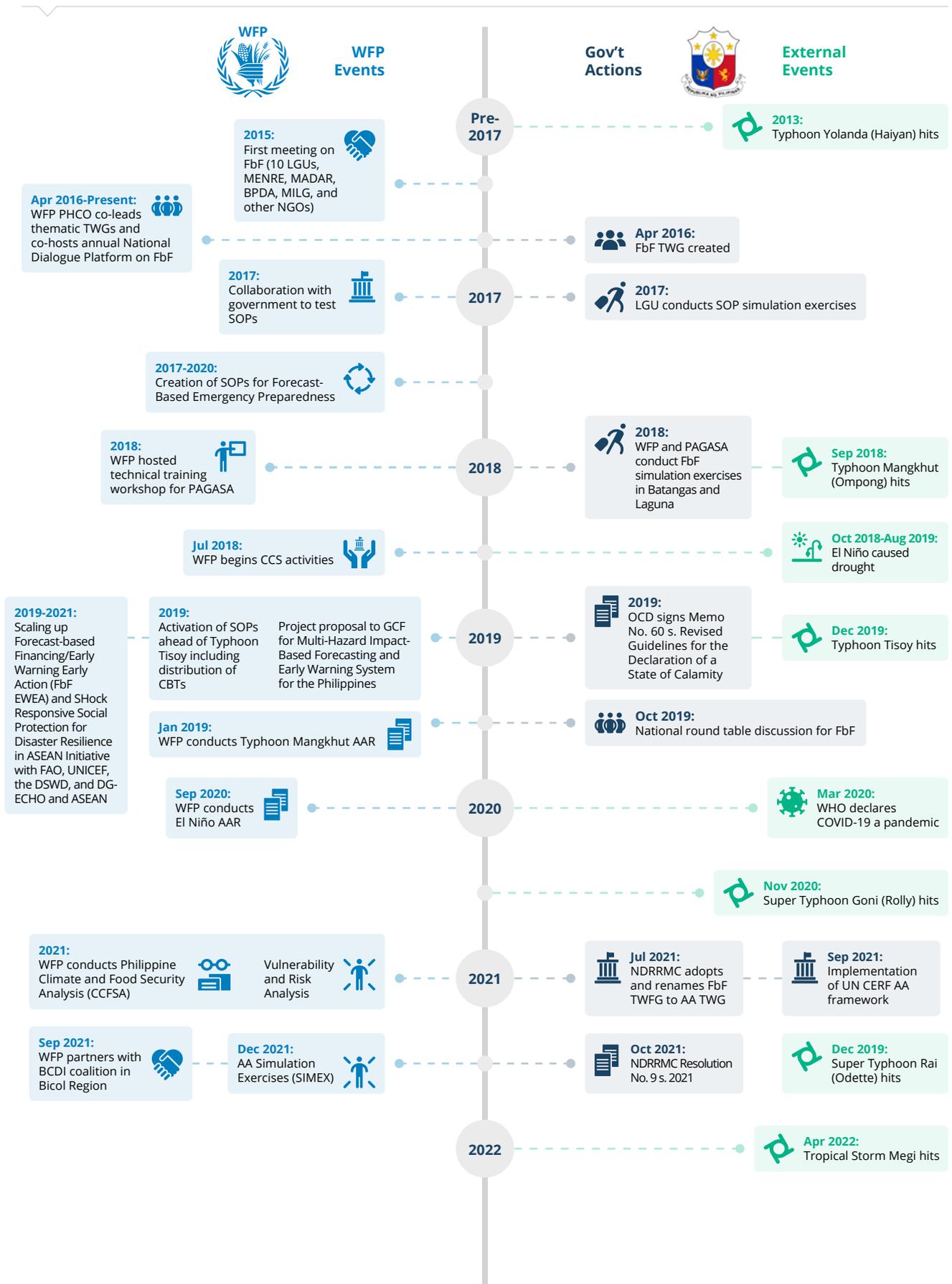


1 Introducing AA to the Philippines

WFP first introduced the concept of AA in 2015, when it facilitated capacity-strengthening training and activities on the subject for 10 of the Philippines' provinces. This led to the formation of the national Forecast-based Financing Technical Working Group (TWG) in 2016, established with the support of WFP, the German Red

Cross and the Philippine Red Cross. Renamed the AA TWG in 2021, this body brings together 31 government and non-government stakeholders to serve as the national coordination structure for AA in the Philippines and is one of the primary platforms offering technical expertise and collaboration opportunities for AA implementors.

Figure 1: Timeline of anticipatory action and climate risk management in the Philippines (2017–2022).





2 Pre-planning boosts life-saving disaster preparedness

An important part of the work of WFP in the Philippines has been to develop and implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) – detailed protocols to ensure that timely, appropriate, effective and coordinated preparations are in place to protect lives, secure food supplies and maintain nutrition and health in the event of a disaster. In 2017, as part of developing these SOPs, WFP ran an exercise with 10 pilot local government units (LGUs) to better understand the most significant hazards they faced, the vulnerabilities of their local communities and the steps needed to strengthen their disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention. As a result of these activities, some partner LGUs institutionalized a 72-hour assessment as part of the LGU Pre-Disaster Needs Assessment; incorporated AA protocols in the Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plan; and allocated part of their Local Disaster Risk Reduction

and Management Funds for anticipatory actions. Also in 2017, WFP also worked with local and national stakeholders to test and refine these SOPs with a series of simulation exercises.

Some SOPs have since been activated. In anticipation of Typhoon Tisoy's landfall in December 2019, for example, anticipatory cash-based transfers were activated in the Province of Sorsogon, allowing local communities to protect animal cages, harvest early and prepare food stocks before the storm hit. A [2020 assessment by WFP](#) found that SOP activation, together with other preparations, had increased the proportion of people with acceptable food consumption in Sorsogon from 88.9 per cent to 96.2 per cent, and lowered the proportion of people with borderline or poor food consumption from 11.1 per cent to 3.8 per cent.



3 Testing AA at scale with a pilot framework

In 2021, WFP worked with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other partners to help develop the pilot **AA framework** for the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. The pilot framework, which was based on findings generated in the Philippines by WFP, the German Red Cross and the Philippine Red Cross, was implemented in 2021 in Bicol and Eastern Visayas, covering the most vulnerable communities in eight provinces and aiming to reach 25,000 households. In 2022, the geographical reach of the framework was expanded to include the provinces of Southern Leyte and Surigao Del Norte, increasing the number of households covered to 45,000.

As part of this AA framework, since 2021 WFP has partnered with the Bicol Consortium for Development

Initiatives, a coalition of 10 social development organizations. Together, they conducted community sensitization to AA, validated beneficiary lists generated by LGUs and distributed cash transfers, among other initiatives. WFP also partnered with Community and Family Services International as the scope of the work expanded in 2022.

One of the principal benefits of the pilot AA framework to date is that it has allowed the AA model to be tested at scale and with the coordinated involvement of all key United Nations agencies. This has generated robust proof of concept for the mainstreaming of AA within the United Nations and government disaster risk management systems.

Figure 2: Anticipatory Action by the numbers.





4 Government takes increasing ownership

Over the course of its collaboration with WFP, the Government has taken increasing ownership of AA in the Philippines. In 2019, the Government, with WFP support, successfully applied for funding from the Green Climate Fund to implement a multi-hazard, impact-based forecasting and early warning system for the Philippines. Begun in 2022, this five-year project is led by the Government, with WFP as an implementing partner. It will further strengthen national capacity for implementing and mainstreaming the AA approach within the national disaster risk management framework. It will also extend these systems to urban areas where LGUs are highly vulnerable to climate hazards.

A further indication of the Government's strengthening capacity also came in 2022, when the Office of Civil Defense signed a draft policy, 'An Act Institutionalizing the Declaration of a State of Imminent Disaster.' This policy, once it comes into effect, will allow LGUs to access disaster risk management funding to implement AA based on forecast triggers. Its formulation is the result of multi-year advocacy by WFP and partners, as well as government engagement through the AA TWG. The draft

policy is currently being reviewed by the AA TWG and is expected to be presented to the Congress in 2023. WFP, as co-lead of the Policy, Financing and Institutionalization Technical Sub-Group of the AA TWG, will work closely with Office of Civil Defense and other TWG partners to provide technical support to the Government on the policy's development.

This case study was developed under the 2022 Decentralised Evaluation on Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) Activities in the Philippines. To access the full report [click here](#) or contact wfp.philippines@wfp.org