



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Food  
Programme

# FAO-WFP Anticipatory Action Strategy

Scaling up anticipatory actions  
to prevent food crises

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# Purpose and objective

**Recognizing that the increasing number of food crises require resources and capacities far beyond the reach of any individual organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are partnering together to scale up the reach of Anticipatory Action.**

This means acting ahead of predicted hazards to mitigate acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. The two agencies are committed to further strengthening collaboration on selected strategic and technical areas that bring out their comparative strengths and maximize the benefit to communities at risk of shocks to their food security. By partnering on scaling up Anticipatory Action, WFP and FAO commit to:

1. jointly deliver a comprehensive set of Anticipatory Action measures to protect people's food security from shocks;
2. expand the geographic coverage and anticipation for different types of shocks, beyond hydrometeorological hazards, that can be predicted and affect agriculture and food security; and
3. jointly advocate for the mainstreaming of Anticipatory Action within key policies, processes and institutions, including disaster risk management, social protection and climate change adaptation to enable sustainability and greater cost efficiencies.

**This is particularly needed as today, global humanitarian – particularly food security – needs are at an all-time high and the situation is likely to deteriorate further.** This is mostly driven by conflict and fueled by climate shocks and economic downturns, like those caused by the increased import prices due to the war in Ukraine or the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Global Report on Food Crises* indicates that acute hunger affected over a quarter of a billion people in 58 food crisis countries/territories in 2022.<sup>1</sup> This marks the fourth consecutive year of rising numbers of acute food insecurity. Achieving the global goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 will not be possible without transformational change to curb acute hunger and prevent famine.

**The compound effect of climate change, conflict and economic shocks comes with high human and economic costs that cannot be absorbed by existing resources and capacities.** While humanitarian appeal requirements reached unprecedented levels in the last two years, international humanitarian assistance

cannot keep up with the increasingly required funds. For instance, the 2021 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report<sup>2</sup> estimates that humanitarian appeals grew by 27 percent in 2020, reaching a record USD 38.8 billion. Only 52 percent of these appeals were funded, resulting in the largest funding shortfall ever seen at USD 18.8 billion.

**These challenges highlight the need for more forward-looking approaches to prepare for more frequent and severe food security shocks and to help prevent and lessen the impact of predictable humanitarian emergencies.** Governments, development and humanitarian actors should manage risks rather than disasters. Today, this is possible due to the progress made in predicting the occurrence and the humanitarian impact of certain crises, especially climatic shocks. These early warnings can help facilitate the decision to release prearranged funds for pre-agreed anticipatory actions to protect food security and livelihoods before shocks occur.

**Anticipatory Action is a critical pillar of food crises prevention and of broader disaster risk management.**

It leverages and complements long-term investments in disaster risk reduction, resilience building and social protection that address the root causes of poverty, food insecurity and vulnerability to disaster risk. This is managed through protecting development gains and addressing some of the 'residual risks' that stay with communities and households in times of imminent crises. At the same time, by acting based on predictable risks rather than manifested needs, Anticipatory Action reduces unnecessary harm to communities and can lessen the need for subsequent and costlier emergency response. In this context, the humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus approach, which involves efforts to improve the coherence and complementarity between humanitarian action, longer-term development approaches and contributions to build and sustain peace, can be a critical enabling approach for the successful scale-up and implementation of Anticipatory Action.

Anticipatory Action saves lives and upholds the dignity of people. It also makes financial sense. Acting in anticipation of disasters allows communities and households to protect their livelihoods and preserve their food security and nutrition status. Being able to protect livelihoods instead of rebuilding them is always a preferred and more dignified strategy for

communities at risk. Anticipatory Action can mitigate the need to employ negative coping mechanisms such as selling land and productive assets, taking children out of school to support household chores, securing unfavourable loans, or skipping meals. Lessening the need for applying these practices can mitigate a continued dependence on humanitarian aid. At the same time, Anticipatory Action allows governments, humanitarian and development actors as well as the

donor community to reach more people at the right time and with less money. For example, FAO estimates that households can gain up to USD 7 in benefits and avoided losses for every USD 1 invested.<sup>3</sup> Evidence generated by WFP also confirms that Anticipatory Action not only saves a significant amount of money in the immediate response – up to USD 34 per United States dollar invested over a 20-year period – but it also further decreases long-term recovery needs and costs.<sup>4</sup>

**Anticipatory Action to protect food security and agricultural livelihoods**

Anticipatory Action is an approach that links early warning information with flexible funds to trigger actions that mitigate the impact of predictable shocks on the most vulnerable people. Anticipatory Action aims to:

1. safeguard lives and livelihoods from the immediate effects of hazards, thus reducing humanitarian needs and protecting development gains;
2. improve overall effectiveness of assistance and reduce the cost of humanitarian response;
3. allow vulnerable people to uphold their dignity during and after the shocks; and
4. improve the resilience of vulnerable communities to shocks over time.

The following components are required for the implementation of Anticipatory Action:

1. an **early warning system or a risk analysis with triggers**, indicating the timing to implement Anticipatory Action (i.e. within the timeframe when a forecast indicates probability of hazard and the actual occurrence of the event or its impacts);
2. **pre-agreed action plans** and ideally an operational implementation plan to ensure timely delivery; and

3. **pre-allocated finance** that can be released immediately once a trigger has been reached.

Anticipating and mitigating a hazard’s impacts on food security and livelihoods is fundamental in food crisis contexts where large segments of the population are already facing chronic and acute hunger. In these situations where a new hazard is forecast to further aggravate the situation, it is a lifesaving approach to protect and sustain livelihoods, which are rural people’s greatest defense against hunger and malnutrition. The adoption of Anticipatory Action in protracted crisis situations with widespread humanitarian needs – and where humanitarian response plans are already under implementation – must have solid early warning evidence that a well-defined new hazard or shock will further impact agricultural livelihoods and food security. The new element of risk should not be associated with the continuation of observed trends, as those should be addressed by the ongoing response activities already planned. Furthermore, both FAO and WFP are committed to collaborate with partners to further define how and under which conditions Anticipatory Action can be implemented in protracted crises contexts, as already outlined in this Strategy.



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**FAO's and WFP's partnership on scaling up Anticipatory Action will contribute to the achievement of some of the major international commitments made in recent years.**

First, joint efforts towards scaled-up Anticipatory Action align to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as by protecting the agricultural livelihoods and food security of the most vulnerable from predictable shocks, Anticipatory Action contributes towards reaching Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger by 2030, for example. Second, the partnership will support the implementation of measures called for by the Food Systems Summit and the Paris Agreement to transform food systems and

accelerate climate action. For example, by enhancing early warning and facilitating action linked to those warnings, Anticipatory Action has the potential to mitigate food crises and contributes directly to adaptation priorities outlined by most countries under their Nationally Determined Contributions. Finally, it will operationalize the commitments made by the G7 famine prevention and humanitarian crises compact,<sup>5</sup> as well as those of making one billion people safer from disasters under the Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP),<sup>6</sup> and those aiming to ensure that everybody on Earth is protected by early warning systems by 2027 under the Early Warnings for All initiative.<sup>7</sup>

## Existing collaboration and comparative advantages

**WFP and FAO are among the organizations that have been spearheading efforts to protect more people against shocks through Anticipatory Action since 2015.** They work in close coordination with other pioneering organizations, including the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Start Network, among others. To date, FAO and WFP are supporting Anticipatory Action programmes in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, providing anticipatory assistance to many vulnerable families ahead of shocks.

**FAO and WFP have been strongly supporting global advocacy,** including through REAP, the Anticipatory Action Task Force (AATF) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee’s Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness Group. The two agencies have engaged in extensive knowledge sharing events together with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other partners, including global and regional dialogue platforms on anticipatory humanitarian action. These joint global advocacy efforts have been instrumental in promoting Anticipatory Action as a key topic in the humanitarian and development agenda, prompting recent global commitments at the highest levels and initiating a consequent transition in humanitarian/development financing to more forward-looking and anticipatory risk management.

**The mainstreaming of Anticipatory Action within the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is an encouraging development.** Indeed, participation in the interagency Anticipatory Action frameworks facilitated by OCHA and funded by CERF remains the most prominent example of collaboration between WFP and FAO as well as other partners at country level. For example, the collaboration between FAO and WFP – together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) – in the interagency Anticipatory Action frameworks for floods in Bangladesh provided a great opportunity to respond to a variety of community needs ahead of the 2020 floods. Partners

took care to avoid overlap in their beneficiary lists, thus being able to reach a wider group of people in the same area.<sup>8</sup> These interagency frameworks are a strategic opportunity for reaching scale and further mainstreaming Anticipatory Action in humanitarian response frameworks.

**Despite the progress made in recent years, a more structured, systematic and strategic approach to joint Anticipatory Action between the two agencies is needed to move towards a system-wide shift from reaction to anticipation of food crises.** Moving forward, WFP and FAO will build on each other’s strengths and expertise and jointly advocate to achieve Anticipatory Action at scale. This includes leveraging FAO’s technical expertise on monitoring of agricultural and food security impacts such as crop yields, food prices, pests, livestock and animal disease monitoring, as well as technical, programmatic and operational assistance to agricultural and livelihood emergency interventions in partnership with government, humanitarian and development partners. It also means leveraging WFP’s deep field presence, its knowledge of local contexts and expertise working at scale in food-insecure settings to help governments and the international humanitarian system drive a systemic shift from reactive crisis management to more forward-looking risk management.

**The advantages of pooling resources, expertise and influence at global, regional and country levels include:**

- maximizing efficiencies by leveraging differences in geographical coverage, field presence and operational capacities;
- capitalizing on the diversity of traditional partners and government entry points for complementary Anticipatory Action at different levels;
- combining the agencies’ different tools and instruments to develop a common approach to integrated, impact-based and user-centric early warning systems; and
- bringing more coherence and synergies despite unpredictable or inflexible funding and difference in programmatic timeframes.

# Strategic approach to a joint scale-up of Anticipatory Action

## Guiding principles for joint action

This Strategy follows the guiding principles on collaboration agreed to by the three Rome-based agencies in 2009. These are:

- i. partnerships are an integral part of the mandates of the three agencies;
- ii. partnership is not an end in itself; rather it is a means for greater synergy, effectiveness and efficiency;
- iii. a proactive approach is taken in learning from experiences in partnerships;
- iv. collaboration is pursued in the context of United Nations (UN) System-wide Coherence; and
- v. collaboration is driven by country-level processes.<sup>9</sup>

Specific guiding principles for the joint FAO-WFP Strategy on Anticipatory Action include:

- **Put vulnerable at-risk people at the centre**, encouraging inclusion and community engagement in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Anticipatory Action so it can be optimized as a truly people-centred approach that builds on the needs, capacities and coping strategies of affected and at-risk people and communities.
- **Speak with one voice** about the common definition of Anticipatory Action for different hazards and crisis contexts, as well as the achievements, challenges and priorities for scaling up Anticipatory Action as a critical approach for food crisis prevention.
- **Strive for impact and efficiency**, ensuring that any joint activity is planned and implemented with the goal of rapidly delivering the most appropriate form of support to the vulnerable people at risk.
- **Support government ownership and institutionalization** of the anticipatory approach, including by building on existing governance structures, early warning systems and delivery mechanisms for Anticipatory Action to ensure sustainability and promote the integration into existing disaster risk management and climate change adaptation policies and frameworks.
- **Build on existing coordination structures at all levels**, including the AATF, the Food Security Cluster and any existing strategy and partnership on Anticipatory Action of which both organizations are part.

- **Contribute to the achievement of global targets**, including Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Grand Bargain commitments, among others.
- **Ensure transparency and accountability** by defining clear processes for collaboration and information sharing, including for joint advocacy and resource mobilization.
- **Promote evidence and learning** on the successes and challenges of anticipating food crises with a view at reinforcing joint evidence-based programming.

## Key entry points for joint action

Meaningful and effective joint action on Anticipatory Action requires collaboration and complementarity in every step of the process, including early warning system and trigger setup; Anticipatory Action selection and implementation; research, learning and impact analysis; and advocacy and finance (Figure 1).

This joint Strategy does not aim to provide detailed guidance on the roles of the two agencies in the design and implementation of Anticipatory Action programmes. Instead, it acknowledges the varied contexts in which FAO and WFP operate, and it encourages the capturing of all available synergies and complementarities on a case-by-case basis, and the avoidance of overlaps towards the common goal of anticipating and preventing food crises wherever they are forecast.

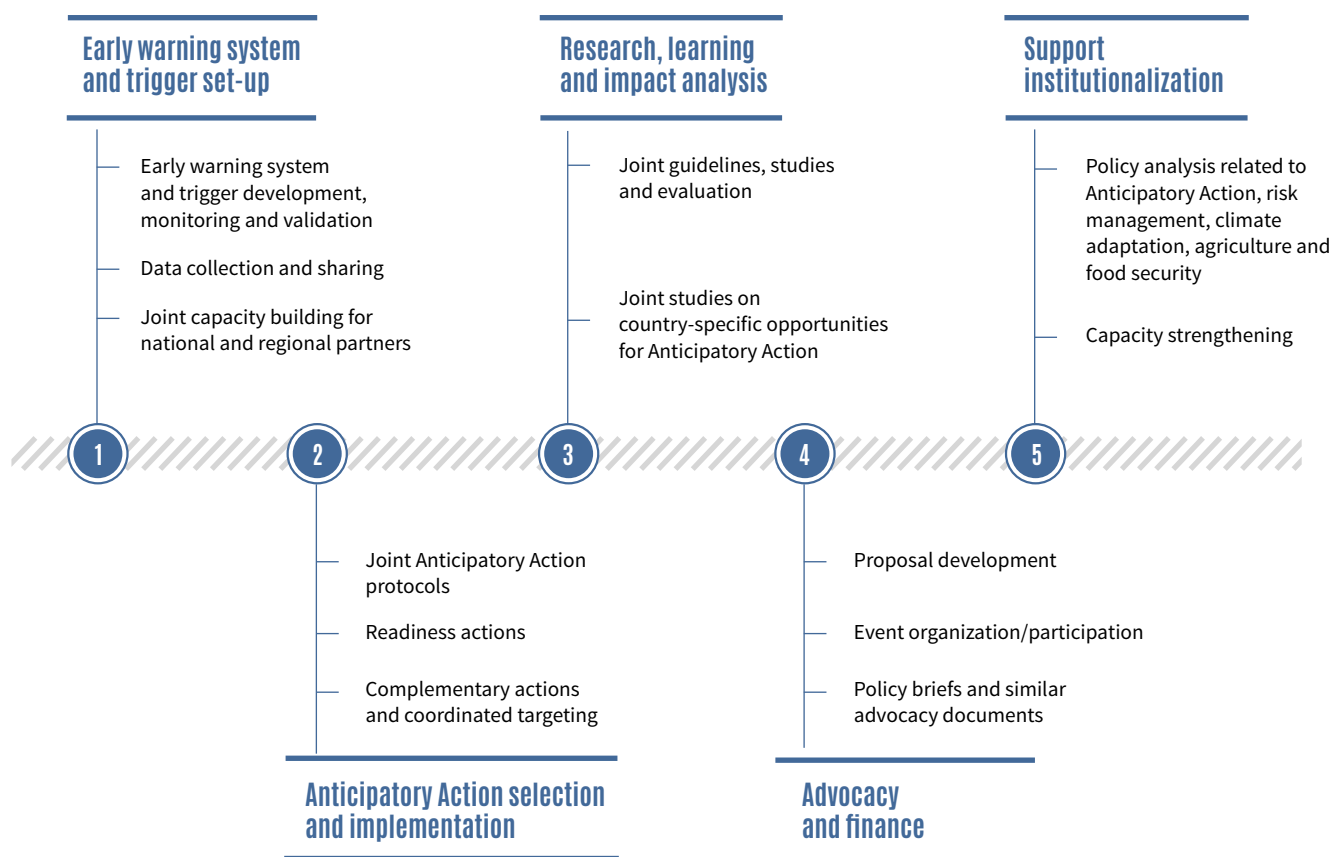
In any context where FAO and WFP operate on matters related to Anticipatory Action, the two agencies should closely collaborate in all the activities required to protect agricultural livelihoods and food security from impending shocks. Practical collaborative solutions will be identified and prioritized to maximize efficiency, leveraging the expertise and strengths of each organization in different contexts.

Some general guidance on collaboration across the various steps of the Anticipatory Action process is provided hereafter. Importantly, although the guidance refers to collaboration between FAO and WFP, it is based on

the understanding that overall coordination should be pursued within the broader UN system as well as with all

other actors involved in Anticipatory Action, and under the leadership of governments and local authorities.

**Figure 1. Key entry points and examples of activities and outputs for joint FAO-WFP action for scaling up an anticipatory approach to food crises**



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### Entry point 1: early warning system, trigger setup and windows of opportunity for Anticipatory Action

Adapting an existing, or setting up a new early warning system with suitable indicators, pre-agreed thresholds and timely triggers is a prerequisite to inform Anticipatory Action. Ideally, this should build on existing information and risk management processes at country/subnational level when possible. The objectives are to know where shocks are likely to occur, what impact is expected and who is going to be affected most. Pre-identified risk thresholds can trigger Anticipatory Action once they are surpassed.

How this early warning system setup should be achieved depends on the hazard type (e.g. slow- or rapid-onset hazard), the anticipation of a hydrometeorological event or a human-induced one with conflict-related impacts such as displacement, and other factors. If there

is a trigger mechanism for Anticipatory Action already established or endorsed by one of the two agencies in a given country/area and for a given hazard, the other agency should strive to use the same trigger mechanism, proposing adjustments where/if required. The use of different trigger mechanisms for the same hazard in the same area should be avoided.

Where no Anticipatory Action trigger mechanism exists, several activities and outputs that FAO and WFP can jointly lead together with relevant national stakeholders remain the same. Examples include:

- assess **feasibility** to build on existing national early warning systems and forecasting capacities;
- develop a **crisis timeline**, outlining high-risk periods, forecasting and monitoring phases and windows of opportunity;
- **set up joint data collection**, sharing and trend analysis to inform early warning where feasible;
- define methodology on **impact-based forecasting**



- and develop tailored projections once early warning signs emerge to have the most accurate understanding possible of where the shock will occur and what sector and livelihood groups will likely be most affected;
- select and agree on key hazard, food security and livelihood **indicators** to be monitored if no existing early warning system is in place;
  - identify **thresholds** to trigger Anticipatory Action, for example based on historic data analysis and expert advice;
  - **set up capacity building** for relevant national stakeholders to be able to monitor and act upon risk signs, further supporting institutionalization of the Anticipatory Action system;
  - establish/continue a **working group**, regularly discussing forecasts and early warning signs with a focus on potential impacts on food security; and
  - jointly with national stakeholders, develop and share **bulletins** with early warning information and tailored agricultural advice. This includes joint early warning messaging on projections around the season, potential impacts and suggested priority mitigation actions based on existing co-design and delivery structures (e.g. national climate services frameworks, dissemination through extension workers, SMS, radio, etc.).

## CASE EXAMPLE

### Joint trigger mechanism for drought in the Niger

In 2020, USD 140 million from CERF were allocated to support Anticipatory Action interventions in Asia and Africa. This included a pilot project in the Niger to demonstrate how collective anticipatory humanitarian action can reduce the impact of drought on risk-exposed people through a package of multisector activities. Facilitated by OCHA, FAO and WFP provided technical advice to support the development of an Anticipatory Action Framework for drought in six sectors: food security, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and protection, including gender-based violence with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA, and the World Health Organization.

The overall aim of the Anticipatory Action Framework is to mitigate the impact of a forecast drought on vulnerable households by targeting populations most at risk. The targeting of Anticipatory Action can therefore be risk-informed, focusing on anticipated needs and vulnerabilities rather than only on existing needs.

To ensure an appropriate package of activities was applicable across the incipient timeline of a developing drought, which is shown in more detail in the Niger Anticipatory Action Framework,<sup>10</sup> activities are defined based on their trigger months:

- The January–March package of interventions primarily focuses on crop/agricultural support, water storage and vegetable gardens to make the most of the predicted rainfall deficits.
- The April–June and July–August package of interventions directly targets the most vulnerable with activities that support cattle management, vegetable gardens, promotion of good health/ agricultural practices, early warning messaging, cash and other complimentary activities.

To ensure a sustainable process towards triggering multisectoral anticipatory actions, WFP in partnership with the International Research Institute for Climate and Society at Columbia University, AGRHYMET Regional Centre, the Direction de la Météorologie National and the Dispositif national de prévention et de gestion des crises alimentaires (DNP-GCA), developed a nationally owned forecast tool to monitor drought across the rainfall season and trigger anticipatory actions between January and June. Based on lessons learned from the application of the model in 2021, FAO and DNP-GCA proposed to take into account forecasts of rainfall distribution in addition to cumulative rainfall, and extended the potential triggering period to the months of July and August, when a combination of observational and forecast indicators could also be used to detect the risk of a developing drought. Joint learning and continued interagency technical discussions are crucial to calibrate trigger mechanisms and ensure these reflect a consensus among all concerned parties.

## Entry point 2: Anticipatory Action selection and implementation

Co-design and joint implementation of a context-specific set of anticipatory actions are critical to avoid unnecessary duplication and be effective to protect the lives and livelihoods of those communities likely to be affected most from an impending shock. WFP and FAO can work together to jointly identify priority areas and hazard impacts to be addressed by Anticipatory Action, combine interventions in a context-specific and innovative manner, and ensure an inclusive approach that can prevent or mitigate a variety of negative impacts from food security-related shocks within a particular context.

In countries and areas where FAO and WFP are working or will be working on Anticipatory Action, they should agree on prioritized anticipatory actions to protect lives and agricultural livelihoods and prevent the deterioration of food security ahead of shocks. Selection of complementary anticipatory actions will depend on each agency's existing operational presence, ongoing programmes, partnerships and capacities. Joint planning is crucial to maximize efficiency, reduce duplications and leverage the strengths of each organization.

When undertaking joint Anticipatory Action planning, FAO and WFP should also agree on the roles of each agency in delivering planned assistance to vulnerable populations ahead of shocks. The division of roles should be based on several criteria including, among others:

- previous work and division of roles in that area;
- technical expertise available in that area;
- existing partnerships and relationships with local authorities and communities; and
- priority given to complementary activities that provide a comprehensive package of assistance to the same target population.

The following steps can be taken to facilitate coordination and harmonization of Anticipatory Action design and implementation at country-level:

- **Prioritizing the expected hazard impacts to be addressed by Anticipatory Action**, building on joint crisis timelines and agreed windows of opportunity.
- **Joint targeting** by implementing actions in the same geographic areas and ensuring different segments of a population can be protected from the impacts of food security shocks and/or delivering a comprehensive package of anticipatory actions to the same households or people to maximize protection of those most at risk.
- **Developing joint repositories of hazard-specific anticipatory actions and/or a common approach or methodology to identify, layer and sequence anticipatory actions with stakeholders**, leveraging each agency's comparative advantage in addressing specific impacts across precise moments throughout the crisis timeline. This is particularly relevant for slow-onset shocks such as drought where impacts can be felt several months after a below-average rainfall season. WFP and FAO can sequence interventions, starting with anticipatory actions that minimize impacts on production (e.g. scaling up asset rehabilitation, distribution of agricultural inputs) and moving into livelihood protection (e.g. scaling up safety nets, destocking, livestock treatment, etc.).
- **Formulating joint readiness plans and actions**, including joint simulation exercises to develop a shared understanding of operational requirements and timelines, number of cooperating partners involved and availability of operational agreements, procurement and supply chain requirements as well as existing beneficiary registration and delivery systems that can be utilized in case of activations.

## CASE EXAMPLE

**Joint beneficiary targeting and early warning messages in Bangladesh**

As a result of the 2020 lessons learned, an update to the CERF-funded Anticipatory Action pilot in Bangladesh in 2021 allowed a joint beneficiary targeting exercise among the participating agencies, including FAO, WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA. This entailed the establishment of a common database of around 130 000 pre-verified, vulnerable households from 140 of the most flood-prone unions in the pilot's geographic target area. This common database was prepared with the support of secondary lists from various sources – local government, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, a list of households assisted under various social safety net programmes and relief operations – and with necessary verifications. The common database will be used to ensure combined Anticipatory Action packages are provided to the same beneficiary households, where suitable.

A lack of a coordinated and timely early warning mechanism and messaging, especially to reach the most flood-prone unions, has been identified as a major challenge in 2020. For 2021, the Anticipatory Action pilot focused on improving the reach of early warning messages and aligning their content in collaboration with government partners. The content was prepared jointly with participating agencies' inputs, and the messages were tested through focus group discussions with communities and will be further tailored once a trigger is reached. For their dissemination, WFP will complement the government's existing flood early warning system which reaches up to union level through community or 'last-mile' dissemination to remote villages to

raise awareness of possible impacts of floods on life and livelihoods in advance. This 'last-mile' early warning system may use community volunteers, announcements from local mosques, community radio or local TV cable network, including text messaging. In addition, FAO will use interactive voice responses and SMS blasts to warn some 100 000 households with targeted early warning messaging on agriculture, which also incorporates WASH and sexual and gender-based violence-related messaging provided by UNFPA and UNICEF.

**Joint action to protect vulnerable households from drought impacts in the Niger**

To protect the agriculture-based livelihoods of the most vulnerable before a predicted drought, WFP and FAO worked together to develop complementary activities, ensuring households and communities are provided with a comprehensive support package to protect their food security and livelihoods from drought impacts. The support package includes information and awareness on drought risk, support on rehabilitation of degraded lands by collecting runoff water, implementation/rehabilitation of water supply structures for market gardening, protection of agricultural inputs (cash+ awareness on good agricultural practices), improved living conditions of farmers and stock breeders, distribution of seeds to communities involved in the recovery of degraded land including short cycle seed and other alternative crops where applicable, the safeguarding and scale-up of vegetable production through the implementation of innovative actions for water management, provision of vegetable seeds, awareness on strategic destocking, firebreaks (cash for work), and safeguarding of livestock conditions.

**Entry point 3: impact analysis and learning**

Analysing the effectiveness of Anticipatory Action and its impact on the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable people is essential to continuously refine the programmatic and operational aspects of this growing area of work. FAO and WFP have already conducted several studies to assess the extent to which Anticipatory Action saves lives and livelihoods, prevents food security deterioration and provides more effective and dignified assistance to people. Increasing collaboration and coordination on anticipating

food crises also requires more efforts to conduct joint analyses and meta-analyses in order to measure joint achievements, draw learnings and derive common evidence-based messages.

Joint learning and impact analysis should be encouraged in every context where the two agencies are collaborating on Anticipatory Action. The roles and responsibilities in conducting joint analyses will be decided case by case, based on the available capacities and analytical strengths and complementarities.

The following priorities should be pursued to facilitate coordination and collaboration on research, learning and impact analysis on Anticipatory Action:

- **Common analytical frameworks.** This entails further harmonizing analytical frameworks to evaluate the effectiveness of Anticipatory Action in protecting agricultural livelihoods, safeguarding food security and preventing food crises. Common frameworks would allow deriving more general and strategic learnings to guide the future direction of the Anticipatory Action agenda.
- **Joint design and implementation of impact analyses.** Coordinating and collaborating in all stages of impact analyses on joint Anticipatory Action projects includes the design of the analysis, the development of plans and tools for data collection, and the analysis itself. Whenever possible, these studies should be conducted in collaboration with independent research entities.
- **Joint messaging on successes and challenges.** This means further increasing the frequency of joint evidence-based messages about the benefits of Anticipatory Action, and on the shortcomings that still need to be addressed to make a system-wide shift towards anticipating food crises. The capacity to deliver such common messages is strictly linked to the level of collaboration and coordination across all stages of the Anticipatory Action process.
- **Integration into Country Office Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) processes.** Analytical frameworks, approaches and tools to analyse the impacts of Anticipatory Action should be integrated into MEAL processes within Country Offices to ensure these activities are conducted systematically and adapted to the different country contexts.

## CASE EXAMPLE

### Evidence generation in Bangladesh

Following a collective CERF-funded Anticipatory Action activation ahead of floods in Bangladesh in 2020, OCHA engaged the independent impact measurement company 60 Decibels to measure the impact of anticipatory actions delivered by WFP, FAO and UNFPA. The analysis included two rounds of phone surveys: the baseline in October 2020 with 965 beneficiaries and the follow-up in January 2021 with 785 beneficiaries, using proprietary and standardized survey tools to compare results across time.

WFP provided unconditional cash and, as a result, 56 percent of beneficiaries reported being able to buy food and 41 percent stated being able to cope with job loss and depleting finances. FAO delivered waterproof silos to protect valuables and agricultural assets as well as livestock feed at evacuation points.

Sixty percent of beneficiaries reported improved health of their livestock and 21 percent reported increased storage space for food/water/other items in their household. Many beneficiaries only received one or two of these anticipatory actions or those of partners, therefore the percentage is not representative of beneficiaries receiving each action. Findings were used to inform the adaptation of the Anticipatory Action framework for the following 2021 season.<sup>11</sup> While many of the selected anticipatory actions from the agencies remained similar following the positive beneficiary feedback, enhancements for coordination were made by establishing a common database of around 130 000 pre-verified, vulnerable households from 140 of the most flood-prone unions in the geographic target areas (see more details under entry point 2). This allows swift action and the planned combination of anticipatory actions provided by different agencies to the same households where applicable.

## Entry point 4: advocacy and finance to prevent food crises

In addition to setting up Anticipatory Action systems, implementing actions and evaluating them, flexible and pre-arranged finance is critical for effective and timely Anticipatory Action. Likewise, awareness raising and advocacy to drive a system-wide shift from reaction to anticipation of shocks is urgently needed to mitigate impacts on food security and agriculture.

Building on shared planning and division of roles in each context, FAO and WFP should jointly mobilize resources for Anticipatory Action and allocate funds based on the pre-agreed roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, whenever one of the two agencies decides to mobilize internal resources to provide anticipatory assistance to vulnerable communities, it is good practice to inform the other agency to discuss possibilities for complementary funding.

Together, FAO and WFP will capitalize on their comparative advantages in terms of advocacy and fundraising with the aim to support institutionalization of the Anticipatory Action approach. To achieve this, action points combined with activities highlighted under entry points 1–3 and focused on coordination and knowledge sharing include:

- leverage **existing partnerships**, such as the Anticipatory Action Task Force (FAO, WFP, OCHA, Red Cross/IFRC, Start Network) and REAP for advocacy and collaboration at country and regional levels;
- organize **joint events**, such as regional and global dialogue platforms on Anticipatory Action as well as relevant (sub)national workshops and conferences;
- conduct joint **fundraising and proposal writing** to scale up Anticipatory Action capacities and implementation;
- conduct **feasibility assessments** exploring new Anticipatory Action finance and risk transfer support, depending on the context including integration of Anticipatory Action into the humanitarian programme cycle, climate finance and private sector engagement; and
- co-author publications and **policy briefs** and share lessons learned and recommendations with Anticipatory Action practitioners and governments.



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CASE EXAMPLE

**Regional Anticipatory Action roadmap in southern Africa**

In southern Africa, FAO, IFRC and WFP established a Regional Anticipatory Action Working Group (RAAWG) with the aim to address the stated gaps and promote a regional approach and platform for knowledge sharing, cooperation and peer-to-peer learning on Anticipatory Action in the region, as well as build one cohesive humanitarian anticipation community that operates in strong alignment. The creation of the RAAWG stems from the increased, joint awareness that aligned action is an imperative and the responsibility of the humanitarian anticipation community in southern Africa. This aims to assure resources are allocated to maximum efficiency, ongoing and upcoming Anticipatory Action initiatives operate in alignment and harmony, and to join forces in upscaling Anticipatory Action moving forward.

To ensure this, the RAAWG developed an interagency roadmap<sup>12</sup> in 2021 that describes the technical and strategic partnerships that are necessary to scale up Anticipatory Action in the region. Rather than taking a fragmented approach to Anticipatory Action, partners in the RAAWG will aim to increase coverage

to vulnerable populations in all high-priority/high-risk countries, with the aim of reaching the first mile before the hazard occurs or before it reaches its peak impact.

The interagency roadmap is based on four, guiding pillars:

1. robust multi-actor and multisectoral coordination frameworks for Anticipatory Action;
2. harmonization of triggers or Anticipatory Action protocols;
3. aligning and coordinating financing; and
4. evidence-based advocacy and awareness-raising.

In 2022, the RAAWG was able to secure joint multiyear funding from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations to support the implementation of the interagency roadmap in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Parallel to regional-level activities, Mozambique and Zimbabwe will pilot the innovative tools and guidance documents to produce immediate operational learnings and serve as case studies for further SADC member states to follow in their path of Anticipatory Action implementation.



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## Entry point 5: support institutionalization of Anticipatory Action

Scaling up Anticipatory Action and ensuring the sustainability of the approach depends on government ownership and sovereign decision-making. FAO and WFP are supporting regional organizations, national governments and local authorities with identifying entry points for reforming policies and processes to achieve a systemic shift from reactive to preventive approaches to predictable crises.

Some of the actions that FAO and WFP together with partners can take to support institutionalization at the local, country and regional level include:

- **Policy analysis**, including climate, disaster and agriculture policies, and identification of national

entry points to support institutionalization of the Anticipatory Action approach – including how the early warning system can be embedded in national and subnational risk management structures and Anticipatory Action financing into government disaster risk financing systems.

- **Feasibility assessments** depending on the context, including for example exploring an allocation within disaster contingency funds for Anticipatory Action, Anticipatory Action informed by and delivered through social protection systems, and risk- and index-based insurance.
- **Continuous capacity building support** on improving early warning capacities, risk-informed planning and operational readiness tailored to government and local actors' needs.

### CASE EXAMPLE

Regional and national policies on Anticipatory Action

- **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management:** Launched at the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2022, the Framework provides an opportunity for ASEAN countries to converge on the topic of Anticipatory Action through aligning on a definition and key building blocks. Importantly, it maps out the way forward and provides guidance on how to link the approach to existing processes. Adopting and scaling up Anticipatory Action through this Framework represents a significant shift to how ASEAN plans to address natural hazards in the coming years.<sup>13</sup>
- **The Niger DNP-GCA – Strategy for food crises prevention and management 2021–2025:** The Niger's DNP-GCA has mainstreamed Anticipatory Action in its 2021–2025 strategy.

The strategy aims to “contribute to improving the resilience and early recovery of vulnerable populations through the anticipation, prevention, mitigation and management of food, pastoral and nutritional insecurity affecting them”.<sup>14</sup>

- **Mozambique National Contingency Plan and Action Plan for Adaptive Social Protection:** District-level drought anticipatory actions were included in the national contingency plan approved by the Council of Ministers in 2021. An action plan for adaptive social protection was approved by the Government of Mozambique, which includes commitments to scale up social protection informed by drought forecast triggers as an Anticipatory Action. Finally, the government's Financial Protection Plan against Disasters includes Anticipatory Action and forecast-based financing as one of the financial instruments to support disaster resilience.<sup>15</sup>

# Conclusion

Action to curb current food security trends and the all-time high of global humanitarian needs is urgently needed. Anticipatory Action is one of the approaches that can avert a further deterioration in acute hunger in the face of multiple threats and shocks, thus breaking the vicious cycle of continuously responding to increasing humanitarian needs.

FAO and WFP are among the pioneering organizations working on Anticipatory Action with a common goal

and mandate to prevent food crises. Anticipatory Action is placed at the intersection between resilience and emergency response; as such, it represents a concrete opportunity to operationalize the HDP nexus, and to further strengthen the collaboration between the two agencies. Working together on the strategic and technical areas outlined in this Strategy's entry points will build on the two agencies' comparative strengths and contribute to the required scale-up of protecting communities at risk.

## Notes

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