



Kanyawoti Sunar, a tenant farmer from the Banke district in Nepal, bought rice and other essential supplies with the cash assistance she received prior to an anticipated flood in 2020.

"I USED THE USD 30 RECEIVED FROM WFP TO BUY FOOD—SALT, CHILLIES, TURMERIC POWDER, AS WELL AS SOAP."

—KANYAWOTI

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CASH-BASED TRANSFERS & ANTICIPATORY ACTION COLLABORATION



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Anticipatory Cash Technical Guidance

February 2024

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Introduction

Predicting climate-related disasters allows WFP to act early, save lives, and protect livelihoods by providing cash (and other) assistance ahead of a crisis. Anticipatory Action (AA) is an innovative response approach and an integral part of the climate risk management agenda. Cash is a preferred modality to assist people ahead of an emergency¹—particularly if delivered digitally, it is the fastest and most effective and efficient way to support people prepare themselves.

Cash before a crisis can significantly mitigate the effects of a disaster and safeguard lives and livelihoods. Cash gives flexibility to people to use it according to their specific needs, is portable if they are on the move, and can be spent in any shop or market that is most convenient. Supported households can use the cash to get out of harm's way, purchase food or other essentials in bulk to weather a storm, avoid selling productive assets when a period of drought hits, or buy a stock of feed for their livestock before a disaster strikes. Providing anticipatory cash transfers combined with additional anticipatory measures (such as dissemination of early warning information prior to a crisis) can be a game changer for assisting at-risk populations.

Scope & purpose

This technical note supports Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) and AA staff in WFP Country Offices (CO) to design and implement anticipatory cash transfers for both sudden and slow onset climate shocks. It does not substitute or duplicate existing AA² or CBT³ tools and guidance, instead it complements these and identifies key elements and important considerations when designing and delivering anticipatory cash transfers.

Anticipatory Action (AA) basics

For the moment, WFP considers AA to cover only climate-related shocks that can be forecasted. The essential components of an AA system are: (i) forecast triggers and thresholds, (ii) pre-agreed Anticipatory Action Plans (AAP), and (iii) pre-arranged financing. For further information, see Figure 1 on page 5 and visit WFP's AA [website](#).

Anticipatory Action (AA) refers to acting ahead of predicted hazards to prevent or reduce acute humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. They are pre-defined interventions in the form of assistance to households or communities, taken ahead of a forecasted extreme weather event to reduce its impact on vulnerable populations, save lives and protect livelihoods.

¹ Cash and in kind are 'material' modalities, in that they provide physical assistance to people. Anticipatory Action has various non-material assistance elements, including information provision, early warning alerts, and other similar interventions.

² [Chapter 4. Anticipatory Action for Climate Shocks \(wfp.org\)](#)

³ [Cash-based Transfers \(wfp.org\)](#)

Distinguishing anticipatory actions from other types of activities

GENERAL CRISIS PREVENTION & PREPAREDNESS

NON-ANTICIPATORY ACTION

- Disaster risk reduction
- Prevention
- Preparedness

In distinction to anticipatory actions, which are initiated in anticipation of a specific, imminent shock, these measures are typically taken to reduce vulnerability to disaster risks that are expected to manifest at an unspecified point in the future.



FORECAST TRIGGER



POST FORECAST / PRE EMERGENCY

ANTICIPATORY ACTION

- Forecast-based action
- Forecast-based finance
- Early warning early action

Anticipatory actions are initiated based on imminent shock and specific forecast triggers being met. Their aim is to prevent or mitigate predictable humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold.

FOR SUDDEN-ONSET HAZARDS (e.g. floods & cyclones)

- EW based on impact-based forecasts
- Unconditional cash transfers/ social protection payouts
- Reinforcement of vulnerable housing structures/schools
- Distribution of WASH items to prevent spread of waterborne disease

FOR SLOW-ONSET HAZARDS (e.g. droughts)

- Conditional/unconditional cash transfers/ social protection payouts
- Borehole construction or rehabilitation
- Distribution of drought-tolerant inputs to improve crop production in drought years



SHOCK/CRISIS ONSET



CRISIS RESPONSE & RECOVERY

NON-ANTICIPATORY ACTION

- Life-saving humanitarian action
- (Early) response
- Reconstruction
- Recovery

In distinction to anticipatory action, these measures typically take place after the onset of a crisis and are aimed at responding to needs that have resulted from a shock.

Since the use of anticipatory cash was introduced, growing evidence has shown that people are better able to manage climate shocks and crises. In Nepal, WFP found that people who received anticipatory cash had higher food consumption and lower coping strategy index scores than recipients of post-shock cash transfers.⁴ In Bangladesh, we found that even three months after significant flooding, households that had received anticipatory transfers reported significantly higher child and adult food consumption and overall wellbeing. People also experienced lower asset loss, engaged in less borrowing, and reported higher earnings potential.⁵ In Ethiopia, anticipatory cash and early warning information has a strong positive impact on livelihood-based coping strategies and dietary diversity.⁶

4 Joint Post Distribution Monitoring for Forecast-based Anticipatory Action Project (FbAA) in Nepal- 2022. A WFP commissioned evaluation of a jointly implemented (WFP, UNFPA and UN Women) project funded by UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) and German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and coordinated by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office - Nepal

5 [Acting Before a Flood to Protect the Most Vulnerable: An Independent Review of WFP's Anticipatory Cash Transfers in Bangladesh | World Food Programme](#)

6 [Anticipatory Action for climate shocks | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)



Pictured: Cash distribution in Bukoyar village as part of the integrated early warning program to help manage the risks posed by climate hazards to food security. Photo © WFP/Michael Tewelde

Links to WFP corporate priorities

WFP 2022–2025 Strategic Plan

Through its [2022–2025 Strategic Plan](#)⁷, WFP has recognized that AA contributes significantly to a proactive and forward-looking approach to preventing rising food insecurity and addressing the impacts of climate change. AA is also a way to increase the efficiency of our operations, by preventing the loss of development gains and enabling people to protect themselves from the worst effects of shocks and disasters.

WFP Cash policy

The [WFP Cash policy](#)⁸ emphasizes the transformative potential of cash for those we assist and puts people at the centre of assistance provision. In Outcome 1, WFP commits to ensuring people have access to cash when they need it most, including anticipatory cash before a crisis. It recognises that money before a shock will enable people to protect themselves, their livelihoods, and reduce suffering during disasters—while also contributing to faster recovery and potentially even limiting the cost and duration of the humanitarian response.⁹

Immediate Response Account (IRA)

AA has also been included in the [Immediate Response Account](#) (IRA) to ensure eligible COs can access financing for AA interventions, in addition to resources from the Hunger and Climate Change Trust Fund managed by HQ.

Climate change policy and emergency preparedness and response policy

AA is an integral part of the [WFP Climate Change policy](#)¹⁰ and the [Emergency Preparedness Policy](#)¹¹, recognising the importance of strengthening and using early warning systems for WFP to act before hazards occur, to prevent their impacts and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency response.

Partnerships

WFP recognizes that to truly reach scale on AA, partnerships are crucial. As such, WFP and FAO have designed a joint [Anticipatory Action Strategy](#)¹² and are partnering with other relevant actors to scale up AA at the global and local levels.

⁷ [2022–2025 Strategic Plan](#)

⁸ [WFP Cash Policy | WFPgo](#)

⁹ Forecast-based Financing in Nepal: [A Return on Investment Study](#), May 2019 (wfp.org)

¹⁰ [2017 - WFP's Policy on Climate Change | World Food Programme](#)

¹¹ [Emergency Preparedness Policy | WFPgo](#)

¹² [FAO-WFP Anticipatory Action Strategy | World Food Programme](#)

Designing and delivering anticipatory cash

Key considerations

We strongly encourage AA and CBT teams to work together from the outset of AA programming. Even in the feasibility and design stage, when the AA team is still determining which hazards they will focus on, assume CBT will be a key activity and get CBT teams involved to ensure they understand the programmatic approach and start supporting the cash operational design.

ONCE DESIGN HAS BEGUN, THE FOLLOWING ARE PRECONDITIONS FOR DELIVERING ANTICIPATORY CASH TRANSFERS:

- 1. Engagement with the people you will be assisting, understand their needs and preferences, and any vulnerabilities or barriers they may face accessing assistance.** AA is grounded in supporting people to protect themselves from hazards and harm—we need to make sure they are at the centre of the programme design from the beginning, have been consulted throughout the process, and understand how the intervention will work if it is triggered. See the CBT technical note on ‘People-Centred Cash Programmes’ (forthcoming) for more advice on how to develop programmes with the people we assist.



Pictured above: Milgo yassin Muhmed, 35 a mother of 5 and residence of Bukoyar village a place where highly affected by a drought for five consecutive rainy seasons, received a cash as part of the anticipatory action in Somali region of Ethiopia for October, November, and December 2022. © WFP/Michael Tewelde

- 2. The WFP CO has a coordinated Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) that has been approved by all stakeholders.** AAPs should be designed with and accepted by the people we plan to assist and their communities, national and local governments, and the donors who will fund activation. The key stakeholders with which to engage will depend on the context but should include key government ministries (National Meteorological Institution, Disaster Risk Management, Finance, Social Protection), the climate scientist community and development and humanitarian actors from civil society and the UN (National Cash Working Groups, Clusters etc.). Including AA within existing coordination and decision-making platforms is preferred than creating separate structures to ensure AA is mainstreamed in a sustainable way.
- 3. WFP COs should also assess whether they and their partners have sufficient capacity and resources to undertake the actions and tasks set out in the AAP.**¹³ The AAP should also be approved internally by management at CO, RB, and HQ level, as per corporate guidelines.¹⁴
- 4. COs must have undertaken the necessary CBT set-up processes** to identify the best transfer mechanisms, technical requirements for sending money, and transfer value(s). See the AA CBT Checklist Annex for more details.
- 5. For AAs to be implemented, an activation trigger must be reached** and validated.¹⁵ Anticipatory cash relies on a forecasted climate shock that can be monitored and an identifiable trigger that tells us when it is time to send money to those most in need.

¹³ For further detail on the Anticipatory Cash Transfer checklist refer to Annex 1

¹⁴ [4.3 AA Programme Design \(wfp.org\)](#)

¹⁵ By the technical member of the AA team.

ANTICIPATORY ACTION PLANS (AAPs)

AAPs generally include a two-stage trigger process, to ensure that governments, WFP, and other implementing partners are ready to act, upon a trigger being met.

- I. FIRST, A READINESS TRIGGER** is reached further away from the event—days, weeks, or months in advance, if the forecast model permits. For example, when a certain amount of rain has fallen that is likely to trigger a flood—or there has been no rainfall, likely to trigger a drought. This trigger indicates you should undertake the final preparations needed for assistance to reach people before the shock hits. This will vary depending on the hazard, the operational context and complexity, and WFP and/or partner experience with each anticipatory action (e.g., signing or activating Field Level Agreements [FLA], Memorandums Of Understanding [MOU], and contracts with cooperating partners and financial service providers; community visits; increasing surge capacity; and logistical preparations to be ready to act). Actions here are usually low-cost and no-regrets considering there will still be a level of uncertainty that the event will occur.
- II. AN ACTIVATION TRIGGER** is reached closer to time of the event and indicates you should actually implement the assistance (e.g., cash payments, early warning information dissemination, etc.). For example, a rising river level might indicate a flood is imminent in a certain area or no rains meaning crops will definitely fail completely.

- 6. Pre-arranged activation funds** are available to deliver AA ahead of the shock. With AA, there is no time to request donor funding when the shock is imminent—so COs need to ensure that funds are pre-positioned and available at readiness trigger stage. These funds can come from the Hunger and Climate Change Trust Fund managed by HQ, from donors like Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) through the inter-agency AA frameworks developed, and also from internal funds identified at country level. In case of internal allocations from the Trust Fund, COs with approved AAPs will be informed at the beginning of every year how much has been pre-arranged for them depending on the seasonal outlook, available resources and AAP needs. This will ensure that COs can invest in readiness activities appropriate to the maximum scale of a possible activation for that year. The amount of activation funds that COs can access from the Trust Fund will be in the range between the minimum and maximum resource needs indicated in the AAP.¹⁶
- 7.** Opportunities for **integrated programming** should be identified during the design phase and included in the CO Anticipatory Action Plans to maximise efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of anticipatory actions. WFP COs should work with other partners, the government, and cash or other relevant humanitarian working groups to identify synergies in existing cash assistance going to the disaster-prone areas targeted for AA. For example, if WFP or the government have existing cash assistance or social protection schemes, the AA interventions should be aimed at filling gaps of increased needs created by the anticipated disaster. Any temporary changes to existing cash assistance as result of sudden or slow onset disasters should be clearly communicated to the community to avoid misunderstanding and confusion when that support is withdrawn after the disaster has passed.¹⁷

¹⁶ [4.4 AA Implementation and Activation \(wfp.org\)](#)

¹⁷ [Integrating Anticipatory Action and Social Protection | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)





“ I HAD TO LEAVE MY HOUSE DUE TO FLOODS AND MOVE TO MY IN-LAW’S HOUSE. A VOLUNTEER CAME AND TOLD US ABOUT THE INCOMING FLOODS AND SAID WE WILL RECEIVE MONEY ON OUR MOBILE WALLET. WE HAVE RECEIVED MONEY BEFORE THE FLOOD CAME AND IT WAS VERY HELPFUL. I WAS ABLE TO BUY POLYTHENE, DRY FOOD, MEDICINE, AND ALSO KEPT SOME MONEY ASIDE. ”

–MINARA, BANGLADESH

Key steps

This section details the key steps for COs to take when designing and implementing anticipatory cash for both sudden and slow onset hazards.

1. WHERE: HAZARD & LOCATION

The first step is to prioritise the extreme weather event you want to address through the AA intervention (in terms of humanitarian impact and recurrence) and determine the geographic locations most exposed to that hazard. This requires a risk analysis, which is based on historical hazard occurrence and impact data. WFP COs use the Integrated Context Analysis¹⁸ or CLEAR approach, but other government or external resources may be available for this purpose.

We recommend starting with one hazard in a CO, to concentrate resources and achieve tangible results, learn lessons, and then scale up to other hazards or locations. This might mean that the cash response is tailored to one area in the beginning, with Financial Service Providers (FSP) and transfer values specific to that location. These will need to be reconsidered and adjusted when identifying other hazards in different areas of the country, assisting different people.

A challenge COs are sometimes faced with when prioritising target locations is how to reconcile hazard exposure/vulnerability and their operational reach—or where we are and where we need to be in a country facing numerous crises. It might be that the CO is working in areas where people are displaced that are further away from the most significant climate crises facing the country. In these cases, it may be advisable to focus on areas where WFP has demonstrated experience first. CBT colleagues may provide some inputs on what the operational and cost implications would be of reaching new or more locations that can be factored in what is feasible in the immediate or longer-term. Once the CO has experience delivering anticipatory cash in a region where it is present, it can look to scale up in non-presence areas.

All of the above should be part of a feasibility assessment done together by CBT and AA colleagues to have a clear understanding of the implications (operational and budgetary) of implementing anticipatory cash in different locations.

¹⁸ [Resilience and Food Systems Programme Analysis \(wfp.org\)](https://www.wfp.org/publications/resilience-and-food-systems-programme-analysis)

2. WHO: TARGETING & REGISTRATION

The second step is to determine which groups of people are vulnerable to the targeted hazard and determine how to prioritize people in case WFP cannot apply a blanket targeting approach. These groups should include everyone—the elderly, indigenous communities, people with disabilities, among others—and usually we should use either a categorical or community-based targeting approach. Targeting decisions should also be made in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the government, other humanitarian actors, and at-risk communities.

Targeting should factor in that different people will behave and be impacted differently by disasters. For instance, evidence demonstrates the importance of the ‘gendered’ impacts of a disaster, which of course vary between contexts. In some cases of sudden onset disasters, men tend to stay behind to protect homes and farmland while women and children may move to safer places (or the other way around, women stay behind to take care of children and elderly who cannot flee). In either case, it is critical to ensure those most in need have access to anticipatory cash. Consider options like ensuring women have access to their own accounts to receive money (see more guidance on this in the CBT guidance on [‘Prioritising Women’](#)).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TARGETING & REGISTRATION

It is important to note a key difference between targeting and registration processes for sudden and slow onset hazards. Due to the short lead times for any type of sudden onset hazard, WFP will need to invest in updating the targeting and pre-register every eligible household before the hazard season (preferably annually)—collecting the information critical for targeting and transferring cash, such as any relevant information required by the FSP you are using. This needs to be done regardless of the likelihood of a potential trigger because otherwise there is not enough time to conduct verification or new registration exercises before the sudden onset event—even when managing existing or small caseloads. In the case of slow onset hazards, which can be forecasted months in advance, COs can wait until the first readiness trigger is reached to start doing the registration for a potential activation. In both cases, communities should be involved and adequately informed to manage expectations with the programme. Remember that climate hazards may also be a key driver of movement and migration which split households, so it is important to have alternate recipients in vulnerable families.

Both sudden and slow onset hazards exacerbate the vulnerability of poor households in risk prone areas. Therefore, in addition to geographical targeting of the risk prone areas, you can use other targeting criteria to understand population groups most at risk (for instance, poverty indicators), the anticipated impact of the hazard, and the availability of resources to implement AA for that disaster.

3. WHAT: DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES

The principal goal of WFP's anticipatory cash is to provide communities and households with the resources they need to protect themselves from forecasted climate shocks while avoiding negative coping strategies. However, the assistance package and the transfer value will adjust based on programme objectives, available resources, and lead times.

For instance, objectives may differ depending on the nature of the hazard. In the case of sudden onset hazards, actions must be very quick to facilitate evacuation and cover the costs of basic needs in the first days or weeks following the shock. For droughts and dry spells, the objective of anticipatory cash is more about people having money to weather the impacts over a longer term, such as livestock feed, resistant seeds, and other agricultural inputs to protect their food production. These cash programmes will need complementary and supporting interventions—such as early warning message dissemination, and other nudges to encourage cash to be spent in a way that preserves life and livelihoods.

Ethiopia's experience is a good example on how the combination of cash and early warning messages contributed to protecting communities' food security and livelihoods ahead of the forecasted poor rains during the March-May rainy season in 2021. The Coping Strategy Index (CSI), which assesses the extent to which households use harmful coping strategies when they do not have enough food or enough money to buy food, was 20.25% lower for beneficiaries who received cash transfers and early warning information compared to the control group. Food Consumption Scores (FCS), which measures the frequency and variety of different food groups consumed by a household, remained at an 'acceptable level' for 91% of those receiving both anticipatory cash and early warning information. In contrast, only 70% of the people who received cash alone remained at the same 'acceptable level'. Regarding food stocks, 23% of the beneficiaries who received anticipatory cash and early warning information confirmed having food stocks to last them through the season, compared to only 5% of the beneficiaries who received cash alone.¹⁹

¹⁹ Anticipatory Cash Transfers and Early Warning Information Ahead of Drought in Ethiopia | World Food Programme (wfp.org)

WHEN DESIGNING THE ANTICIPATORY CASH TRANSFERS, COs SHOULD ASK THE FOLLOWING:

- Is the cash intervention adequate in terms of reaching all the most-at risk/targeted people? Can people get what they need in the local market, quickly, before the shock hits?
- Is the cash intervention appropriate to the hazard impact we are trying to anticipate for the targeted groups (for example, loss of lives, loss of assets, decreased food consumption, decreased water access, etc)?
- Is the cash intervention feasible given the forecast lead time? Will people have time to spend their money on means to protect themselves from the impact of the shock?

4. HOW MUCH: THE TRANSFER VALUE

CALCULATING THE TRANSFER VALUE: UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

A transfer value is the amount WFP transfers to people we assist through CBT modalities (unrestricted cash or value vouchers). However, people's needs ahead of a crisis vary significantly from their normal monthly costs—so using the usual monthly minimum expenditure basket (MEB) approach might not always be the right option for AA. People might need to buy protective items for themselves, their home, or food (such as plastic sheeting or window protection) or they might need to stockpile fuel, food, or medicine which they wouldn't normally buy. In these cases, transfer value setting should consider the cost of these items and respond to the programme objectives. This may require putting together a specific expenditure basket for the hazard and how people respond to it—then using the corporate guidance to determine how much people can contribute and how much additional money they need. In all cases, ensure you have spoken to people, communities, and governments about their needs and associated costs during a crisis to inform your transfer value calculations.

The corporate guidance on how to set transfer values in CBT operations can still be useful, using the following approaches adapted to the needs of AA. First, establish the cost of people's needs ahead of a crisis (similar to calculating the [MEB](#)), which in this case will be what people would need to weather the specific hazard the anticipatory cash is designed for. Next, determine the gap between what it will cost to prepare for the shock and household's economic capacity—this amount is your ideal transfer value. Finally, incorporate other design parameters (such as frequency of transfers for slow onset, one-off lumpsums for sudden onset, and adjustments for household size, among others).²⁰

Of course, sometimes there are other factors that drive how we calculate transfer values—for instance, if a common transfer value is already in use by all humanitarian actors, it might be better to stick to that so as not to confuse communities and to maintain a harmonised amount. Or you might use one that has been determined by the Government, for the same reason—governments often request we use a specific transfer value to ensure the principles of equity and fairness are also given equal weight. These factors can influence significantly the final amount transferred, but we should still know what the 'ideal' transfer value was—using the methods outlined above.

To ensure your transfer value adequately responds to people's needs, it must be set with people we assist, local communities, and governments. Once determined, it is very important to explain and communicate the transfer value and confirm it is understood by communities.

²⁰ [Transfer Value Guidance | WFPgo](#)

WHEN DETERMINING YOUR TRANSFER VALUE, IT IS IMPORTANT HOUSEHOLDS CAN COVER THE COSTS OF PREPARATORY & PREVENTIVE ACTIONS. THESE COSTS COULD INCLUDE:

1. SUDDEN ONSET:

- Food, water, medicine, and other essentials to human life.
- Shelter: protection or reinforcement of the house.
- Transport or evacuation costs.
- Hygiene and/or sanitizing products.
- Livelihood and asset protection: support early harvest and storage where suitable, provide storage facilities to protect agricultural assets, evacuate livestock, protect fishing boats and gear, etc.
- Other non-food items: blankets, stoves, cooking materials, candles/ lighting.

2. SLOW ONSET:

- Food, water, medicine, and other essentials to human life.
- School fees to avoid people taking their children out of school.
- Livelihood and asset protection: water harvesting, fodder production, livestock vaccination.
- Cropping: provision of agricultural inputs including drought tolerant and early maturing crop seed varieties and where feasible small-scale irrigation.

CONDITIONALITY AND RESTRICTIONS

For anticipatory action, **unconditional transfers are recommended** because they (i) meet the objectives of preventing and/or reducing the impact of extreme weather events on people's food security and livelihoods and (ii) they are more straightforward to implement within anticipatory action timeframes. Conditions and restrictions are more costly and cumbersome to work with, so particularly for rapid onset hazards they impede people focusing on their own needs through preparedness and mitigation actions—and take too much time. For slow-onset events, the window of opportunity for AA often coincides with periods when people are most vulnerable (for example, during lean season affected by the previous rainfall season performance) or when communities and households are engaged in agricultural activities. As such, it is not recommended to penalise people for prioritising these essential activities by creating conditions for receiving anticipatory cash.

We also recommend considering using unrestricted cash rather than restricted value vouchers—although of course you should always make this decision based on people's preferences and needs,

context, and programme objectives. Cash enables households to decide how to spend their money to address their immediate needs, prepare for events, and increase their household resiliency before a crisis. Cash is portable for families that need to get on the move and get away from danger. Even the best planning processes, pre-crisis surveys, consultations with target communities, and evidence-based assumptions cannot identify the variety of needs that different households will face. It is better—and in line with the overarching objective of anticipatory action—to let people decide what is best for them and to make purchases accordingly with cash rather than vouchers.

In short—conditions and restrictions add unnecessary hindrances to effective anticipatory cash interventions. We suggest you keep your AA programme free of both.

ADVOCACY FOR UNCONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFERS

Some Governments are reluctant to use unconditional, unrestricted cash transfers before a shock. Because AA happens before a crisis occurs and before an emergency has been declared, advocacy on unconditional anticipatory cash transfers is particularly important to meet the objectives of the programme. It is important for AA and CBT teams to work together on advocacy strategies that CO management can communicate to the Government to ensure they understand the advantages and benefits of condition-free cash ahead of crises.

5. WHEN: FREQUENCY & TIMING

Understanding when to implement anticipatory cash—in terms of both frequency of transfers and their timing—is essential. As always, it is important you get the perspectives of people you will be assisting, as they are the best advisors on when they will need support. Each context will need to decide the timing of transfers based on a balance between the forecast accuracy (that improves closer to the impact of the shock) and the lead time (the time needed to implement the anticipatory cash and allow people time to spend them). For instance, a one-off lumpsum payment might be the best way to send money to people—so they can make bulk, large purchases in preparation for a crisis. Or perhaps it will be preferable to give several payments, based on timing of planting and harvests.

For sudden onset hazards, from a practical perspective only one anticipatory cash transfer is possible—usually distributed as soon as the activation trigger is met and with sometimes only a day or two (or a few hours) available for people to spend their money. However, for slow onset disasters things are a bit more complex. Droughts and dry spells are meteorological events with hydrological and agricultural implications—so it can be more difficult to determine the optimal time or frequency for deploying anticipatory actions.

Further, as previously mentioned, drought impacts are felt over longer periods, therefore cash assistance should be designed to prevent or mitigate the primary impact. This will most likely require higher transfer values compared to sudden onset. While generally a large lump sum is preferable to help people make better decisions on how to cope with looming drought, multiple transfers may be required to address safety and access issues. You will need to work with communities and partners

to make sure the option you choose contributes to supporting people to mitigate the impact of slow onset hazards while also being safe for communities.

Cash can also be complemented with other initiatives that might impact decision making on frequency and timing to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, drought-resistant seeds can be distributed to people to plant well before the lean season will hit, then followed by a cash transfer closer to the time when needs linked to food scarcity peaks—allowing people to buy food and other essential needs rather than harvest early or sell their belongings. Plan with all relevant teams and stakeholders to ensure timing and sequencing of cash and other material assistance has maximum impact for the people we assist.



“WE PREFER MOBILE MONEY BECAUSE YOU CAN USE IT FOR MANY PURPOSES. WE BUY CLOTHES AND SCHOOL UNIFORMS AND FOOD, VEGETABLES AND MEAT AND ANYTHING YOU WISH. WE ARE VERY HAPPY THAT THE MOBILE MONEY ACCOUNTS BELONG TO US, WE CONTROL THEM.”

**—MALYUN,
SOMALIA**

6. WHAT WORKS?

M&E AND EVIDENCE GENERATION

There is a growing body of evidence on the benefits of AA as a more impactful, dignified, and rights-based approach.²¹ Initial reviews and evaluations are finding that anticipatory cash is an effective way to support people ahead of a crisis, but more evidence on where to invest scarce resources is needed to prove the case for scalability and sustainability.²² We need to document evidence on how it works, what we learn, and how to do it better. Is anticipatory cash more impactful and effective than traditional post-shock emergency cash? Does anticipatory cash meet the needs of everyone—including women and girls, people with disabilities, the elderly, and all other groups—to mitigate the impacts of shocks? How much money should we give? When is the best time to give it? Are Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM) set up in a way that works for anticipatory cash?

Just like with transfer values—timing is everything. The CO needs to ensure that the M&E plan and evidence generation is built around the type of hazard and the length of time it will take to see the intended outcomes of the anticipatory cash. Monitoring and measuring our interventions and any unintended results is just as important as the implementation of AA—so that we can continue to develop this aspect of our programme portfolio in an impactful, scalable, and sustainable way. In Annex 4 you will find a list of minimum indicators for COs to choose from to measure the impact at household level taken from our AA M&E guidance.²³

²¹ [Evidence Database for Anticipatory Action - Anticipation Hub \(anticipation-hub.org\)](https://anticipation-hub.org/)

²² [The Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](https://www.wfp.org/publications/evidence-base-anticipatory-action)

²³ [Monitoring and evaluation of anticipatory actions for fast and slow-onset hazards: Guidance and tools for Forecast-based Financing | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](https://www.wfp.org/publications/monitoring-and-evaluation-anticipatory-actions-fast-and-slow-onset-hazards)

FOR SUPPORT IMPLEMENTING THIS GUIDANCE:

If you think your Government or WFP cash operation could support people before a crisis, get in touch with your CBT and Climate programme advisors in HQ or your Regional Bureau.

Send us an email at global.cbtsupport@wfp.org & jesse.mason@wfp.org

Annexes

ANNEX 1:
[Anticipatory Action CBT Checklist](#)

ANNEX 2:
[Cash Inputs for Anticipatory Action Plans](#)

ANNEX 3:
[Anticipatory Cash, M&E, and Corporate Reporting](#)

Pictured below: A WFP staffer talks to Kanyawoti Sunar, a tenant farmer, her husband pawan, a casual labourer in Duduwa village in Banke district. The village was completely submerged by the Rapti river in the 2017 floods.



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