

## Summary

The purpose of this document is to present the case for anticipatory action (AA) in Nepal, identify the risks and challenges, list the deliverables, summarize the rollout phases, set out an indicative timeframe, and present the pilot team and working arrangements.

This document should be read in conjunction with OCHA's internal briefing 2-pager *Piloting Anticipatory Action: Country Frameworks & Approaches* (February 2021).

## OCHA's approach to anticipatory action

Today, we can predict with increasing confidence the occurrence and humanitarian impact of certain climate- and weather-related shocks. By combining different analytical approaches, out-of-the-ordinary weather events can not only be predicted, but their projected impact can proactively be mitigated based on pre-identified anticipatory actions. Building on growing evidence that acting prior to the onset of a predictable hazard is significantly more (cost-)effective than traditional humanitarian response, OCHA has facilitated the setup of multiple Anticipatory Action frameworks.

Each framework comprises 3 core elements, all of which are underpinned by a clear learning, monitoring and evaluation plan:

- A robust forecasting embedded in a clear decision-making process (the **model**).
- Pre-agreed action plans that can fundamentally alter the trajectory of the crisis (the **delivery**).
- Pre-arranged finance (the **money**).

Anticipatory action is still an innovative space, requiring "proof of concept". Thus, in addition to the 3 core elements, OCHA also invests in documenting evidence and learning from each framework.

In 2020, OCHA supported the development of 5 Anticipatory Action frameworks: Bangladesh (monsoon floods), Chad (emergency to be determined), Ethiopia (drought), Malawi (dry spells), and Somalia (drought). To date, three frameworks have been triggered: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Somalia.

In 2021, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) selected 6 additional countries: Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Nepal, Niger, the Philippines and South Sudan. Additionally, the ERC decided to initiate a second AA framework in Bangladesh, as well as a multi-country framework focused on cholera.

## The case for anticipatory action in Nepal

### Exposure

One of Nepal's three geographical zones, the flat plains of the Terai areas, are at the highest risk of flooding during the monsoon season. Monsoon rains typically lead to landslide damming, excessive erosion of hill slopes, and rock falls in the country's two other geographical zones: the Hill and Mountain areas.<sup>1</sup>

### Vulnerability

CERF-funded Anticipatory Action pilots should be needs-based. The pilots are encouraged to identify those groups that are especially vulnerable to the specific shock that is being anticipated, and should prioritize groups such as women, girls,

<sup>1</sup> UN, *Nepal: Monsoon Emergency Response Preparedness Plan 2020* (2020).

persons with disabilities, and persons in need of protection assistance, in line with the Emergency Relief Coordinators' priority areas.

## Humanitarian impact

In 2017, monsoon floods affected some 1.7 million people in the Terai, including 460,000 who were displaced. Economic losses were estimated at US\$705M. The flooding impacted 35 of the country's 75 districts, with the Ministry of Home Affairs reporting at the time that over 80 percent of the land in the Terai – Nepal's breadbasket – was inundated.

Since 2006 CERF has allocated US\$56.3M to Nepal, including US \$10.3M for rapid responses to floods.<sup>2</sup> The most recent CERF allocation to Nepal for monsoon floods was in 2017; CERF allocated \$4.8M to support 6 UN agencies across the health, WASH, food security, nutrition, shelter, livelihoods, protection and early recovery sectors.<sup>3</sup> According to the [final project report](#), the agencies provided life-saving assistance to one million people.

## Predictive capacity

Nepal is comprised of 6 major river basins (Karnali, Babai, West Rapti, Narayani, Bagmati and Koshi). According to IFRC's Climate Centre, there are two main forecasting models:

- The MIKE 11 hydrodynamic flood model (in collaboration with DHI) covering Koshi, West Rapti and Bagmati
- The HEC HMS model (in collaboration with RIMES) for Karnali, Narayani, and Babai.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the GLOFAS (Global Flood Awareness System) has been used for forecast-based financing initiatives in Nepal.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority recently launched an online disaster information management system (*BIPAD*). Efforts are underway to incorporate flood forecasts.

## Window of opportunity

Nepal's monsoon season occurs from June to September. Flood warning systems typically provide short windows of opportunity to act – ranging from 3 to 15 days – in advance of an impending flood.

## Implementation capacity

There is an established forecast-based financing working group in Nepal, comprising entities such as WFP, IFRC, the Nepal Red Cross, the Danish Red Cross, and Practical Action Consulting. Both WFP and the Red Cross have conducted small-scale pilots. There are interventions and a capacity to develop pre-agreed plans that can be implemented to reduce the impact of flooding on at-risk communities.

## Donor interest

To be determined.

## Learning from other pilots

Valuable lessons can be applied from the anticipatory action pilots that have already been activated, in particular the Bangladesh pilot which similarly targeted monsoon flooding. However, there are important contextual differences:

## Risks and challenges

- **Short window of opportunity:** It is likely that the trigger for this pilot may only provide agencies with 15 days of warning of impending floods. The Anticipatory Action framework will therefore need to prioritize activities that can be i) ready to go at a "moment's notice" and ii) implemented/distributed within a very short time period.

<sup>2</sup> CERF funded flood responses in 2008 (US\$3.6M), 2014 (US\$1.9M), and 2017 (US\$4.8M).

<sup>3</sup> In 2017, CERF provided funding to UNICEF (US\$1.7M), WFP (US\$1.5M), UNDP (US\$0.5M), IOM (US\$0.5M), FAO (US\$0.4M) and UNFPA (US\$0.2M).

<sup>4</sup> IFRC Climate Centre, *Nepal FbF Feasibility Study* (2018)

- The **COVID-19 pandemic**: We will take guidance from the RC for the specific impacts and constraints that may ensue in Nepal. In the current environment, we don't foresee any missions to Nepal to meet with the teams but will need to rely on conference calls.
- **Joint beneficiary targeting**: The Anticipatory Action pilot for monsoon floods in Bangladesh demonstrated both the importance but also the challenge of ensuring joint targeting by the agencies. This pilot will need to define the targeting criteria, identify the resources that are available to identify/register vulnerable households, and support inter-agency discussions on data-sharing.
- **Funding arrangements**: Practically, CERF can only disburse funds to UN agencies. However, CERF strongly encourages recipient agencies to sub-grant a portion of the funds to implementing partners, including international NGOs, national NGOs, and Red Cross/Crescent Societies.

## Deliverables

The objective of the pilot is to provide a collective, more effective, timely and dignified humanitarian response ahead of a severe monsoon flooding in Nepal to mitigate the humanitarian impact. Building on existing experience, structures and systems, the pilot will produce a collective, anticipatory action framework, comprising the following pre-agreed elements:

- A crisis **timeline** that outlines how a flood crisis would likely develop in Nepal
- A clear, simple **trigger** built on existing data sources coupled with a clear governance of the forecasts and triggers. For some pilots, particularly those with very short windows of opportunity (e.g. floods), the trigger may include more than one stage: a readiness trigger that will prompt the release of CERF funding, and an activation trigger that will prompt the distribution of humanitarian assistance.
- A collective, inter-agency, cross-sector anticipatory action **plan** with a concrete set of pre-agreed activities and geographic and vulnerability targeting.
- **Financing**, including a CERF commitment to release agreed funds on a no-regrets basis for pre-agreed activities as soon as the trigger is reached, and by crowding in of other funding sources. CERF project proposals will be part of the framework. This commitment is valid for 2 years from the endorsement of the framework.
- **Learning, evidence generation** and evaluation from the implementation of the anticipatory action framework once triggered

The framework must be endorsed by the participating agencies and the Resident Coordinator, and then pre-approved by the ERC ahead of the impending monsoon season.

## Rollout phases

Broadly the rollout for Nepal should follow the phases established at the global level for the rollout of anticipatory action frameworks. The pilot is initially time-bound to two years.

1. **Pre-inception**: The rollout team reaches out to key stakeholders to provide clarity on the pilot, conducts a desk review of available data and plans the work. It is crucial that the RC/HC is informed in a timely manner. The team will gain an understanding of the country context, and the existing humanitarian and development tools and processes (e.g. HPC, EHF, contingency planning, etc.) to ensure complementarity where possible.
2. **Inception**: The team interacts with interested parties in the country team to build understanding of the concept of anticipatory action supported by CERF and how it may apply to the specific country/shock context.
3. **Design**: The team supports the field and HQ partners to draft a complete anticipatory action framework document, outlining the trigger, defining which actions can be financed, and establishing a clear learning, monitoring and evaluation plan.
4. **Validation**: The anticipatory action framework is formally adopted by the relevant stakeholders.
5. **Trigger**: The framework is activated according to the pre-identified triggers, CERF releases the funding, and agencies deliver life-saving humanitarian assistance.

6. **Evaluation:** The team in collaboration with the implementing agencies and an independent entity (e.g. the Center for Disaster Protection), ensures that the results, impact and lessons of the activation are properly documented as per the learning, monitoring and evaluation plan.

## Indicative timeline

Action	Timeline
ERC announces Nepal's selection for a 2021 anticipatory action pilot	27 February 2021
Pre-inception phase	March 2021
Inception phase	March 2021
Design Phase	April 2021
Validation of the Anticipatory Action Framework for Nepal	May 2021
Monsoon season	June-September 2021
Monsoon season ( <i>in the event that the trigger is not reached in 2020</i> )	June-September 2022

## OCHA pilot team & working arrangements

The anticipatory action framework will build, as much as appropriate, on the previously-tested AA frameworks in other countries. The work on the anticipatory action framework will also build on existing structures, expertise and knowledge as much as possible. At country level, the RC/HC, HCT or equivalent body, and the OCHA country office or the regional office if there is no OCHA Office in country, will all play the lead role in developing the framework. Ideally, a core-group of willing, experienced and capable humanitarian agencies will build the framework facilitated by OCHA.

The members of the OCHA HQ support team bring different expertise, skills and experience, which will help to cover the different aspects of the development of the AA framework. Each team member covers an area of responsibility and in which they will substantially contribute to the success of the framework.

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## Key planning milestones

27 Feb	Announcement of Nepal's selection by ERC	Completed
11 Mar	1 <sup>st</sup> pilot team call	Completed
18 Mar	Pilot concept note developed	Completed
6 Apr	1 <sup>st</sup> briefing with heads of cluster lead agencies	Completed
31 May	Endorsement of the AA framework by the RC	
31 May	Endorsement of the projects/budgets by the RC	
4 June	Endorsement of the AA framework by the ERC	
4 June	Endorsement of the projects/budgets by the ERC	

## Schedule of standing meetings: Key asks

The following is a list of key steps that need to be accomplished by the key pilot stakeholders (UN implementing agencies, NGO partners, Red Cross, RCO + OCHA-HQ).

14 Apr	Present typical monsoon response targeting criteria by cluster Present initial thoughts on potential AA interventions
21 Apr	Finalize targeting criteria
28 Apr	Present further details on proposed interventions (criteria = agency needs to be able to carry out activities/distributions within 5 days of readiness trigger) Present initial proposals for beneficiary registration
5 May	Present initial proposal for trigger mechanism including overview of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- monitoring system (<i>who monitors the data?</i>)</li> <li>- threshold (<i>at what point do we sound the alarm?</i>)</li> <li>- probability (<i>how likely will the threshold be reached this year?</i>)</li> <li>- length of window of opportunity (<i>how much warning will we get?</i>)</li> <li>- activation protocol (<i>how do we alert CERF to release funds and alert agencies to begin distributions?</i>)</li> </ul> Outline "preparedness" measures, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do stakeholders need to do in the months/weeks before a potential trigger, so that they are fully ready to react as soon as the readiness trigger is reached</li> <li>- How will stakeholders fund these activities?</li> </ul>
12 May	Finalise strategy for beneficiary registration Present further details on proposed interventions, including geographic coverage Present ideas on how to conduct joint monitoring (process monitoring and post-distribution outcome monitoring)
19 May	Submit draft projects and budgets for review Finalise trigger mechanism
26 May	Dry-run table-top rehearsal (i.e. practical walk through of who does what when) Finalise projects and budget for endorsement by RC, then CERF, then ERC

