

This **internal briefing note on anticipatory action (AA)** intends to answer the following questions: what is AA?, why is AA important?, what is OCHA's role in AA?, how is AA practically rolled out?, and what are the key steps for AA implementation. It is a practical document which can function as a reference document for OCHA colleagues involved in the implementation of AA pilots. Notably, the focus of this note is on the AA frameworks, which guide the pilot work by OCHA.

What is Anticipatory Action?

OCHA considers AA as actions taken in response to a trigger, but before an emergency, which are intended to mitigate the impact of a foreseen hazard. The key defining feature is to take action before the manifestation of humanitarian need, in response to a warning or trigger, and thereby, contribute to mitigating the impact of the hazard and avoiding large-scale crises. Hazards that can be addressed through AA include drought, floods, and cyclones, among others.

Why AA?

Acting prior to the onset of a predictable hazard to safeguard lives and livelihoods, as well as to reduce human suffering, losses and damages is a faster, more efficient, and more dignified response. There is a growing consensus that given the increasing availability of risk and forecasting information, it is unacceptable to continue to wait for hazards to impact communities instead of acting before humanitarian needs manifest. In addition, as humanitarian need outstrips the finance that is available, AA can help make available humanitarian finance go farther by addressing risks, before they eventually materialize into large-scale emergencies.

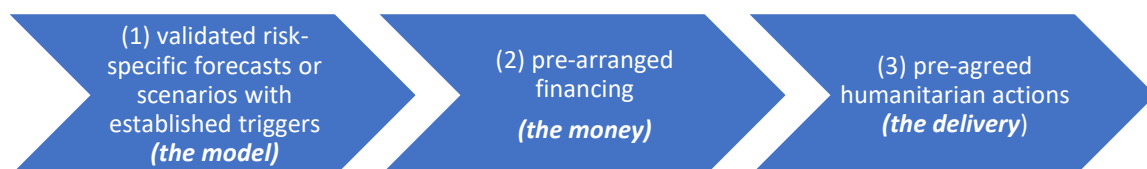
What is OCHA's role in AA?

Various humanitarian actors have already adopted an AA approach, like WFP, FAO, IFRC and Start Network NGOs. Leveraging OCHA's mandate, OCHA plays a key role in convening these partners and efforts to take AA to scale. This combines OCHA's expertise and work on humanitarian data and predictive analytics, the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) process at country level, the coordination of humanitarian response, and its position as manager of humanitarian pooled funds (CERF and country based pooled funds (CBPFs)).

How can AA be practically rolled out?

OCHA has already facilitated the design and implementation of AA by humanitarian partners in 3 pilot countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Somalia) through AA frameworks that use CERF funding to support faster collective action on predictable problems like drought and floods.

AA frameworks establish when and on what basis a humanitarian action will be triggered for a specific event; what activities the funding will be used for; how much funding will go to each agency. Accordingly, every framework must have three interconnected components:



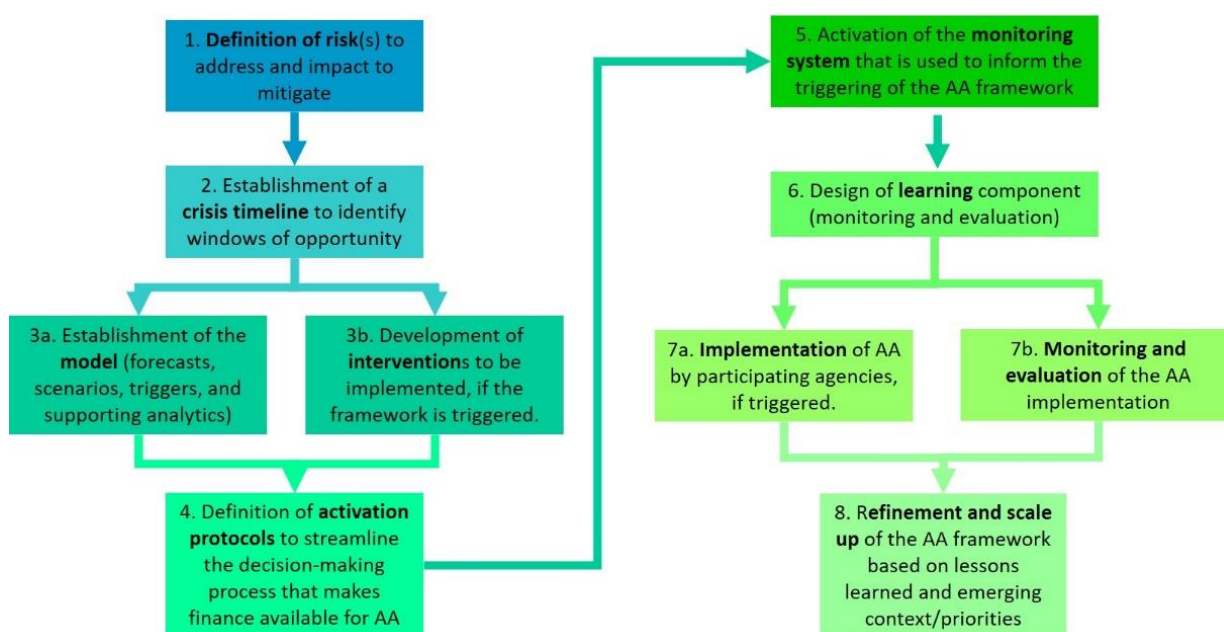
The AA frameworks are developed and implemented in a consultative and participatory manner, whereby the RC/HC (supported by OCHA/RCO) convenes, leads, and facilitates this process from planning, design, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation. OCHA headquarters and global-level partners support this process.

What are the key steps of setting up an AA framework?

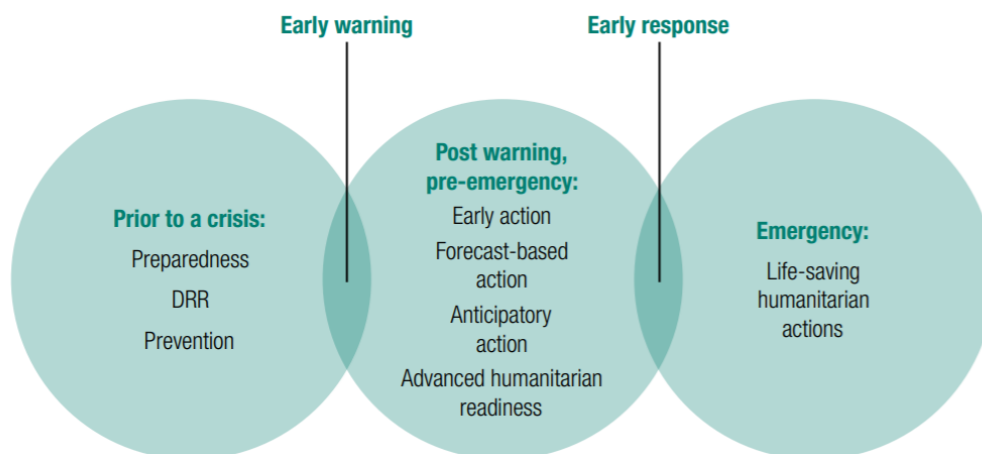
The implementation of an AA framework has two general phases. The first phase (the pilot) is focused on the design and testing (through activations) of the AA framework and contributes to growing evidence that multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral AA at scale helps reach vulnerable people quicker, better and more efficiently. This pilot phase is designed to reveal the programmatic, process, coordination and policy issues that need to be addressed to effectively scale up anticipatory action. During a second phase, the focus is on the sustainable scale up of the approach through national systems.

Notably, during the pilot, the design phase can take from 3 to 6 months, while the implementation can take place in a few weeks, or up to 9 months (depending on the hazard). Monitoring and learning activities are mainstreamed throughout the project cycle. The illustration below shows the key milestones of the AA pilot in its initial phase. This is to be contextualized into the local context, in relation to the seasonal cycles of shocks (e.g. rainy period, lean season, etc.)¹.

At every step of the way, OCHA technical teams at the regional and global levels are available to support. As needed, external expertise is brought in to further support the technical work.



Additional Guidance: The illustration below shows how AA is different to preparedness and prevention, as well as early response.



¹ Please note that steps 3-5 often run concurrently.