

Step 3: Build your message(s)

Stakeholders—both within the national society and in the broader DRM system—must believe in the benefits of anticipatory action if they are to be receptive to your invitations to engage in development and implementation and sustain their involvement and support. This section details a variety of approaches or strategies for peaking and sustaining interest in anticipatory action and FbF to be selected and employed as appropriate to your context. These benefits may apply or appeal to national societies as well as external partners/actors. It is important to strike the right balance between generating “excitement” for the new and innovative approach and not creating expectations that FbF cannot meet.

7 REASONS FOR ANTICIPATORY ACTION

Why should a RCRC national society start with anticipatory action?

PROTECT LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

By acting early before the hazard strikes and impacts are felt anticipatory action can safeguard lives and livelihoods, and protect development gains.



MORE DIGNIFIED

People who can prepare themselves and face a disaster on their own terms are given a choice with anticipatory action.

FASTER RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

With early warning information and anticipatory action, a response can be more targeted and faster. Moreover, livelihoods that are not lost do not need to be recovered.



USE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Many hazards are predictable. This knowledge provides time to take action in advance - especially when the actions are pre-agreed.

COMPLEMENTARITY

Anticipatory action can complement ongoing efforts in disaster risk reduction such as contingency and preparedness plans. Ideally, anticipatory action closes the gap between long-term risk reduction and response and recovery.



PARTNERSHIPS

Anticipatory action can be a driver of systems building within regional and national government partners. For example, for impact-based forecasting and risk data.

GUARANTEED FUNDING

Through the anticipatory pillar of the DREF, national societies have guaranteed access to funding through pre-agreed plans like the Early Action Protocols (EAPs).



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A. Showcase effectiveness/benefits:

One of the easiest ways to convince stakeholders of the value of FbF/AA is by pointing to evidence of its effectiveness. As outlined in a 2022 [Policy Brief by the Anticipatory Action Task Force](#) the bullets below, evidence increasingly demonstrates that anticipatory action is an effective and dignified approach to humanitarian action.



Sample Evidence

(as summarized by the [Anticipatory Action Task Force](#)):

- In Mongolia, livestock keepers who received animal care kits from the [Mongolian Red Cross](#) and [FAO](#) and cash before severe winter cold saw fewer of their animals die.
- In Bangladesh, multiple activations by different actors ([BDRCS](#), [UNOCHA](#), [WFP](#)) have shown that at-risk communities who received anticipatory cash before floods peaked were more likely to evacuate, more likely to save livestock, essential agricultural and fishing equipment, and were less likely to borrow money to cope with the aftermath of a flood.
- [The World Bank](#) estimates that upgrading early warning systems to support early action capacity in all developing countries can save an average of 23,000 lives per year and avoid losses worth between USD 300 million and USD 2 billion per year.
- In Senegal in 2019, the number of households reporting going a whole day without eating was reduced by 19% during a six-month anticipatory project for drought funded by the [Start Network](#).

Aside from the above examples, the evidence for anticipatory action is regularly evolving. The [evidence database](#) on the Anticipation Hub is updated as new quantitative studies on the impact of anticipatory action across organizations are published. It can therefore help you to locate and summarize the evidence most relevant to you.

Furthermore, experience from previous FbF programs suggests that FbF programs have a positive impact on national society capacities and systems (e.g. logistics, procurement, and preparedness) leading to faster

more proactive operations and improved response overall (for more information, see [Tozier de la Poterie et al, 2023](#)).

B. Show concrete examples of how FbF can help

You can enhance the case for FbF by combining general evidence from FbF projects (See A) with anecdotal examples from communities. As the goal of FbF is to prevent and reduce suffering for recipients of early action, who better to speak to the effectiveness of FbF than those who participate? Media stories can also be an effective tool for generating interest. See for example video from Honduras explaining what anticipatory action is and how it helped people before tropical storm Julia in 2022.



Practical Example: Bangladesh

Statement: (Write a simple statement.)

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

Impact: (Give an example of humanitarian impact.)

It's ranked by the Climate Change Vulnerability Index as the country most at risk globally. This is also a result of its geophysical features. Just under 70% of the country is vulnerable to flooding, and cyclones hit coastal areas almost every year. Evacuation can last up to four weeks, and farmers or daily laborers; receive little to no income during that period. They must often sell assets or take up high interest loans to evacuate, plus pay for food, and health expenses during evacuation and after.

Example: (Use an example or personal story from your own/assisted person's experience.)

Alefa Katun (40) works as a daily worker in the fields in Bogra. During flood events she loses all income as fields are inundated and cannot be worked on, and her cows can no longer graze.

Action: (Now put your message into action.)

In 2017, the FbF pilot community of Bogra received an SMS alerting those in need of impending cash distribution. They then needed to show up at the various distribution points to receive the support.

According to Alefa, "Thanks to the timely forecasts and EAP

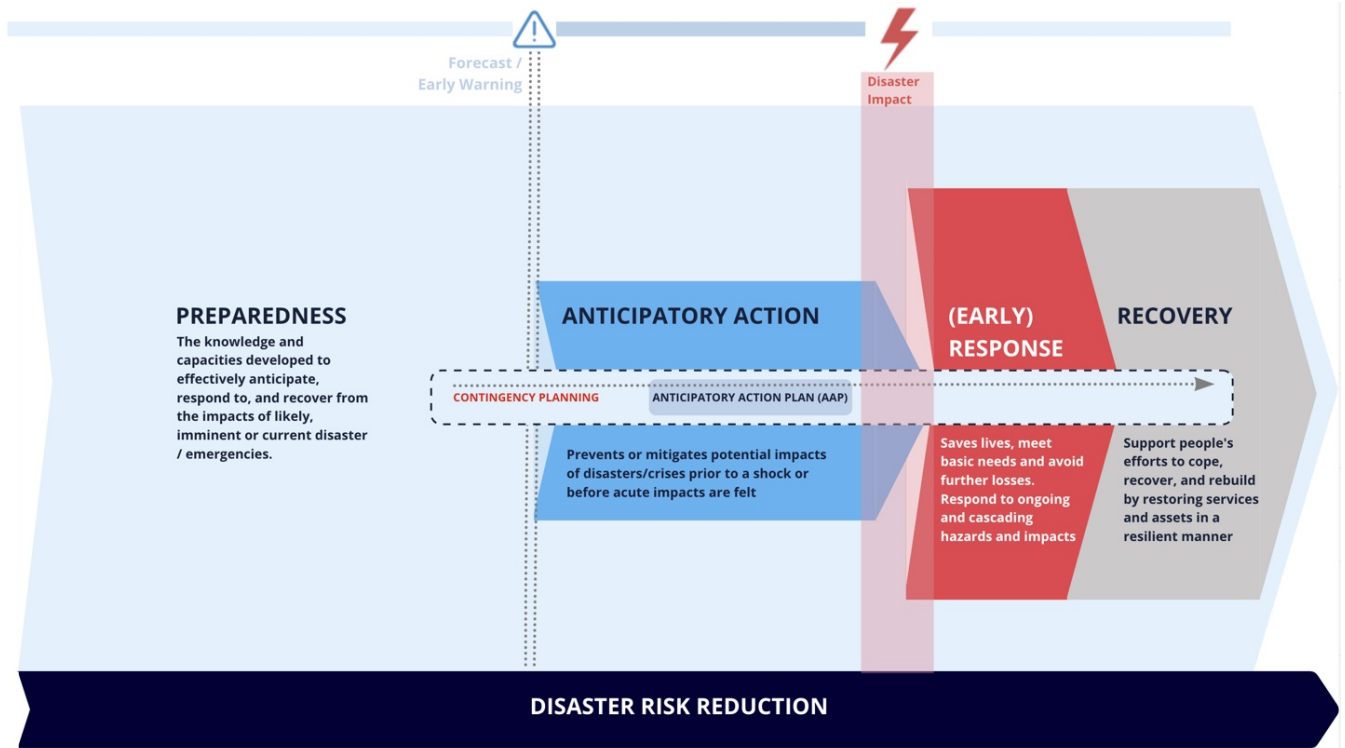
activation, we were able to receive cash 3 – 7 days in advance of the flood peak. I am so grateful for the cash. I bought fodder for my cows and could evacuate them. Without the cash, I would have had to sell them, but they are good cows, they deliver good milk and are very healthy.”

Evidence: (Present findings of impact evaluation following the activation)

Studies by GRC, BDRCS and RCCC following the activation found that families who received FbF assistance had to take out less high-interest loans to cover their needs, that they suffered from fewer stress, and had better access to nutrition.

C. Promote FbF as complementary to contingency plans, EWEA and DRR:

Another way to make the case for FbF is to highlight how it can complement and fortify existing Disaster Risk Management frameworks and plans. When FbF is promoted as a “new” or “innovative solution” some government actors may worry that it undermines their existing work in DRR and EWEA. Be clear about where FbF fits in the Disaster Risk Management continuum, and stress that it does not or should not replace DRR. Instead, emphasize that despite existing DRR efforts, there are many communities where DRR has not been implemented, and not all risks can be reduced by long-term prevention and mitigation measures. FbF is therefore a valuable tool for managing residual risk (see figure on the right). Furthermore, FbF can provide access to funding for early actions that is often lacking in existing contingency plans or early warning systems. Therefore, rather than creating parallel systems or replacing existing efforts, FbF can fill gaps in existing structures.



Anticipatory Action within the Disaster Risk Management Continuum

Source: IFRC