

## Step 4: Engage

### A. Request government focal point

If you have not already done so in the scoping (see [chapter 1](#)) and/or set-up phase ([chapter 3](#)), it may be appropriate to request focal points from the most relevant government agencies. Focal points can serve as liaisons between the national society and key agencies, providing guidance, accountability and ownership in the development of the FbF system and the EAP within their respective organizations. An effective focal point will have the authority and influence to drive change within the partner organization.

### B. Establish or join existing support systems

The development of EAPs and set-up of systems for their implementation requires a team of dedicated people with different skill sets. A Technical Working Group (TWG) can be an excellent way to bring people with the necessary skills together to support FbF. If an anticipatory action or relevant TWG for other relevant /related topics exists, check first to see if you can join it rather than creating a new structure.

If no relevant bodies exist, consider creating an anticipatory action TWG. The TWG should be recognized by the government and have a mandate to review, guide, and validate anticipatory action processes. Ideally, at least one representative of the National Disaster Management Agency should participate, but this is not mandatory (e.g. Bangladesh). Other members should include representatives of relevant government ministries, humanitarian organizations, and academia. Refer to your stakeholder mapping when deciding whom to invite. Consistent collaboration among TWG stakeholders can give legitimacy to anticipatory action systems, facilitate alignment of systems across organizations, and contribute to cross-organizational learning and scale up over the long-term.

Please find examples of ToRs for TWG groups below:

- [Bangladesh](#)
- [Somaliland](#)

## C. Exchange visits

There are already many countries implementing FbF for a range of hazards and contexts. Exploratory missions to consult with anticipatory action stakeholders in countries with established FbF systems—FbF “site visits”—can be an excellent way to foster relationships, learn from experience, and consider how to adapt existing FbF approaches to your context. Even after your program is more established, exchange with practitioners within and/or across regions can aid your National Society throughout all stages of FbF implementation.

## D. Dialogue Platforms & Workshops

FbF Stakeholders have been hosting [Global, Regional and National Dialogue Platforms](#) since 2014.

These Platforms have been instrumental in sparking interest and awareness for FbF. Among other things, these platforms bring stakeholders together (e.g. government agencies, scientists, UN agencies, NGOs and Red Cross Red Crescent Networks active or interested in FbF and EWEA) to exchange ideas and lessons learned, increase their technical understanding of anticipatory action, explore concrete examples and/or outline next steps for anticipatory action in their regions.

Whether to attend a Global, Regional, or Local Dialogue Platform will depend upon your resources and objectives. Attendance is limited for the Global Dialogue Platforms, but they can be an excellent way to introduce high-level officials to the topic if there has been little previous anticipatory action work in your country or region. Speak to your IFRC Country and/or Regional Office if you wish to extend an invitation to key stakeholders in your country. Regional Dialogue Platforms are an excellent way for stakeholder to engage with counterparts from neighboring countries and can foster regional solutions and problem-solving. Seeing how other governments already engage with anticipatory action/FbF can provide inspiration and increase interest and confidence in the feasibility of FbF programs.

Local/National Dialogue Platforms are more common once there is a critical mass of interest and experience with AA in your country. For example, after several years of working jointly on FbF/anticipatory action, the Bangladesh Red Crescent, the WFP country office, and the government

of Bangladesh organized a National Dialogue Platform to bring actors together to learn from each other and discuss National Strategies for advancing anticipatory action in Bangladesh.

National-level workshops are also an excellent way to foster collaboration. In Vietnam, for example, the Vietnam Red Cross launch workshop brought together a broad coalition of stakeholders including representatives from the Vietnamese government, United Nations agencies, international and non- governmental organizations and sister Red Cross Societies.

### **E. Involve stakeholders in EAP development**

The degree to which external stakeholders can participate in EAP development will depend on the time and resources they can commit. Ideally, key government and humanitarian stakeholders should be involved in every stage of the Early Action Protocol (EAP) development. Developing relationships with the following agencies is particularly critical: National Disaster Risk Management authorities and technical or scientific agencies such as Hydrometeorological services and/or research institutions. Engaging government in the development of the EAPs helps with data sharing, coordination, transparency and long-term planning. Such engagement can be achieved through regular bilateral meetings or through technical working groups. The potential for buy-in, integration with existing systems, and sign-off on the protocols will be much greater if you involve key stakeholders from the beginning rather than asking for sign-off once the EAP is complete.

In some contexts, it will be possible for the National Society and government officials to co-produce all or parts of the EAP. This might entail jointly setting the triggers with disaster management officials and forecasting agencies, selecting early actions with disaster management officials, and/or allocating funds and selecting recipients in collaboration with local governments or UN agencies.

In countries where anticipatory action/FbF are not yet a priority, National Societies should invite stakeholders to participate and aim to increase their interest and engagement over time. Regardless of the level of interest from potential partners, it is important to involve government stakeholders as much as possible. Results and learnings from simulations, drills, and most importantly activations, should be shared with all the stakeholders engaged in FbF collaboration for more effective joint impact.

## **F. Work with hydrometeorological agencies to develop triggers**

In most cases, strong involvement of a NHMS counterpart is essential to ensure the long-term sustainability of FbF trigger. Where possible, ask NHMS to provide data, assist with analyses, and develop triggers rather than bringing in external consultants. This collaboration will strengthen intra-national collaborations and capacities to maintain the system in the long run. In an ideal scenario, Hydromet services will “own” the trigger, integrating it into their own forecast monitoring systems and alerting your national society and other actors when the trigger is reached. For more on how to engage Hydromet services, see these [guidelines](#).

## **G. Work with universities on studies / research**

Working with National Universities on risk analysis and/or the identification of early actions can build or strengthen interdisciplinary alliances while developing in-country knowledge and expertise for FbF that can be useful for future research, monitoring and evaluation, or other collaborations.



### **Lesotho: joining forces with the university**

The drought EAP of the Lesotho Red Cross was backed up by scientific research conducted by the University. For example, Lesotho University conducted a [study which investigated the links between cash-based shock-responsive social protection and anticipatory actions for drought in Lesotho](#).

Later, Lesotho University joined the [Academic Alliance for Anticipatory Action \(4As\)](#), a global consortium of universities that sought to increase the evidence base for anticipatory action. The consortium collaborated with humanitarian agencies that are implementing anticipatory action, including the Red Cross, WFP, OCHA, and START Network.



Photo credit: Lesotho Red Cross

## H. Build on existing products/programs

Wherever possible, it is preferable to build on existing forecasting products, early warning systems, or DRM programs. These should be identified during your scoping study or stakeholder analysis. The examples below demonstrate how building on existing products or systems can strengthen FbF in the long-run.



### **Mongolia: utilizing the government impact-based forecasting product for dzud**

As a result of the feasibility study in Mongolia, it was decided that the government-led Impact based forecasting product (dzud map),

developed by the Mongolia Met Service and Nagoya University of Japan, was adequate to trigger early action for dzud. By engaging the Government agencies from the beginning of the FbF set-up process, the FbF system of Mongolia Red Cross is one of the most sustainable cases for FbF, given the fact that their trigger system is the basis of early actions of different humanitarian actors in-country.



Photo credit: IFRC

### **Bangladesh: Tapping into preparedness programs**

The Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) is a joint Government and Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) program that provides a robust early warning system and evacuation facilities for the coastal population. The Cyclone EAP was built upon existing CPP capacities, and early actions for cash-based assistance and livestock evacuations were jointly developed through discussions with BDRCS, RCCC, and the Department of Disaster Management (DDM).



Photo credit: BDRCS

## H. Include stakeholders in simulations/drills

Including government authorities in simulations and drills is crucial to jointly testing the effectiveness of plans, protocols, guidelines, and the capacity of those responsible for carrying out early actions.

Please see two examples below.



### **Vietnam: Fostering support after doing**

Heatwaves are not a new phenomenon in Vietnam; however, not much is known about their impact and anticipatory action to prevent this impact did not yet exist. The government of Vietnam was initially supportive but not convinced of the effectiveness of early action. Testing FbF early actions in response to two heatwaves in July and August of 2019, allowed the government to see the impact of early actions firsthand. Cooling centres and cooling vans, offering first-aid, water and resting opportunities served over 3,000 visitors.



Photo credit: GRC

### **Peru and Ecuador: Strengthening collaboration through doing**

In Peru and Ecuador, simulations and drills were integral to ensuring the National Hydromet Services (NHMS) and DRM agencies understood how FbF could support their DRM work and how they could support national society FbF. The drills showed governments concrete examples of actions that can be taken before extreme events to reduce losses. They also tested that all agencies involved in the EAP activation knew their roles and responsibilities for each

point in time during the activation.