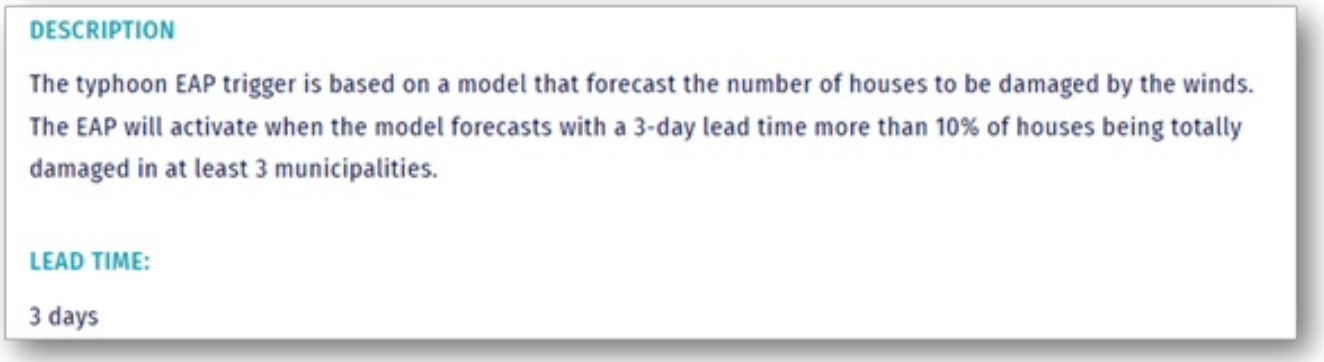
Step 10: Develop a trigger statement

The trigger statement is a key component of the full and simplified EAP (section 4.1 in the full EAP) and it should exactly state when your EAP will be triggered. The trigger statement should be clearly understood by all stakeholders involved in order to avoid confusion about when a trigger is reached. Please review the trigger data base on the anticipation hub for examples.

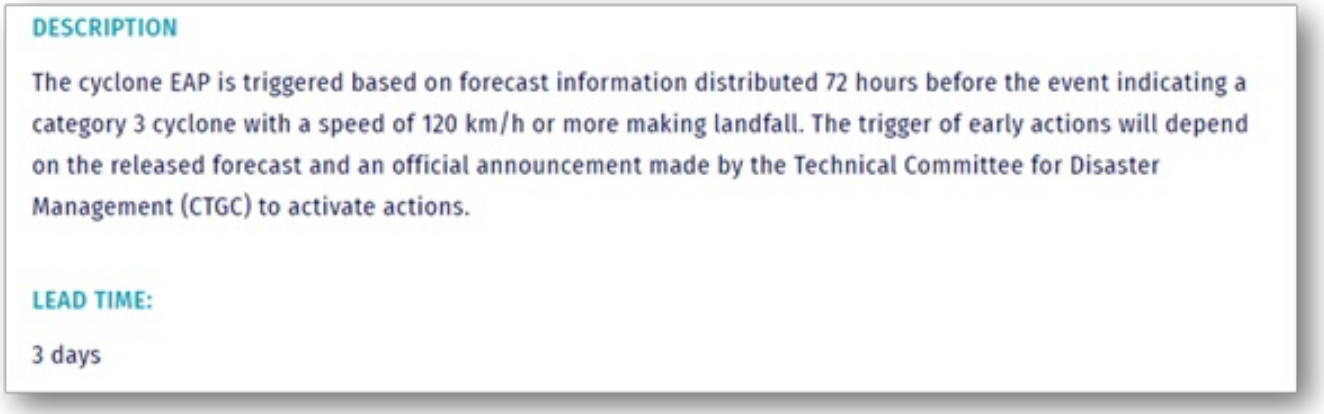
A trigger statement typically includes the following ingredients:

- Forecast used and forecast source: The forecast used and forecast source should clearly state which forecast, e.g. a certain rainfall forecast is being used and from what source, e.g. national meteorological service
- Variable: the variable should clearly state which variable of the forecast is being used. Hence, this should be an indicator such as Standardised Precipitation Index (SPI3) or heat index, or water levels at a specific station.
- Threshold of that parameter: Here you put the threshold that you have identified in the previous step. Make sure that your forecast provider is calculating this threshold (e.g. if the forecast is issued in mm of rainfall, but your trigger is in SPI, who will calculate the SPI?).
- Lead time: The lead time defines when the conditions must be met for the anticipatory action to be effective. This helps ensure that interventions are timely and proactive.
- Probability: If available, you should add the probability of the event to happen. For example, the trigger could be a forecasting showing 80% chance or greater of 30mm of rainfall or more.
- Stop mechanism: If your EAP has a stop mechanism it should be mentioned in the trigger statement
- Monitoring system: You need to decide how your forecasts are monitored and who is responsible for this. We will elaborate this further in chapter 8.

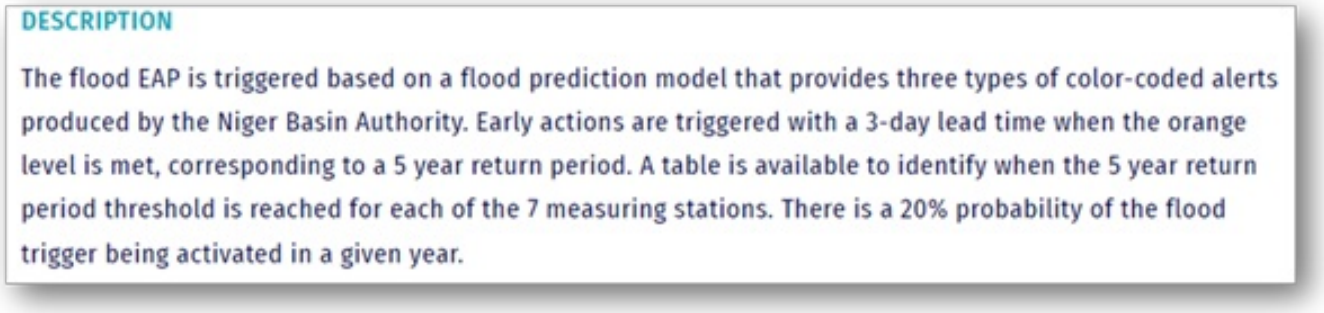
Examples of trigger statements



Philippines



Mozambique



Niger

A complete trigger statement can look like this:

When the *[Source of information]* forecasts *[Threshold of climate variable OR Threshold of impact]* at *[Lead time]* and with a *[measure of probability]*, actions will be taken. If *[stop mechanism]* occurs, activities will be paused. This system will be monitored closely by *[Monitor]* in the following way *[System]*.

Staggered or phased triggers

In order to win valuable time, some national societies have introduced phased or staggered triggers. That means that they have a pre-activation trigger and an activation trigger. The Bangladesh example above introduced a phased system to their flood EAP. They use a pre-activation trigger at day -10 to pre-register households and get some logistics ready, to then be ready to implement their actions, e.g. cash distributions at day -5. This gives them valuable time as without the readiness trigger, the actions could not be implemented in the short lead time.

Note that funds are only allocated from the IFRC once the activation trigger is met. If funds are needed during the phase between readiness or pre-activation trigger and activation trigger, the national society has to find them or need to account them in the annual readiness costs of the EAP.

Combination of forecasts for drought

In some cases, a combination of different forecasts and variables might be needed. As drought is a relatively new hazard for anticipatory action in the RCRC movement not much guidance existed at the beginning. In a validation committee meeting in 2023 the members suggested to combine different forecasts in drought triggers. The rationale is that rainfall forecasts alone will not suffice as they do not give any information on the impact (due to the time lag and also the timing of rainfall and its impacts on vegetation). Hence, rainfall forecasts should be complemented with measures of vegetation condition, food security or any other measure that reflects the prioritised impacts.