

Final lessons and recommendations

The methods and processes described above can assist you in identifying and selecting early actions. We conclude with a few key suggestions for you as you apply them to your context.

The identification and selection of early actions is an iterative process

- As indicated above, exploration of early actions is not a linear process. As you narrow in on the most promising actions, new questions may arise. Follow the gaps in your knowledge until you are confident in the actions you are selecting.

Keep an open mind

- The people within your organization may be attached to actions they are familiar with in a response context. Be sure to talk to as many experts and external stakeholders as possible to widen the possibilities.

Do not pick something just because you have to

- It may be that after completing this process there are few, if any, actions that can be properly executed. In such cases, it may be necessary to discuss a way forward with the project sponsors/donors or look for simple actions (such as reinforcing early warning) that can have an impact.

Be critical – develop theories of change and test them where possible

- Developing a clear theory of change will help you to really assess how your action will contribute to reducing the prioritized impact and whether it can truly be successfully executed given the lead-time available to you. Stakeholders may be overly optimistic (or pessimistic) about the feasibility or effectiveness of a proposed action. Simulations or small-scale pilots are valuable ways of testing your theory of change and operational capacity and will strengthen the quality of your Early Action Protocol Proposal.

One criteria is not enough

- As you can see from the process above, there are many factors to consider when selecting early actions. An action that has proven extremely effective in one place, for example, might be impossible in another because of political, logistical, or other constraints. You must therefore gather evidence for each of these criteria rather than being guided by a single one.

Look to existing early actions for inspiration

- There are a growing number of countries and partners implementing FbF for a range of hazards. Look to other FbF countries for guidance based on existing good practices.

Build your own evidence

- FbF is a new concept. This means that you may identify an action that has not been tested in your circumstances. If your innovative action has the potential to help people and there is sufficient support from the partners involved, it may be worthwhile to test the action and develop your own evidence. This evidence can eventually be shared with the broader FbF community, contributing to the Potential Early Action Database and helping others in the process of identifying and assessing early actions.

Involve experts

- Although community involvement is crucial in the selection of the actions, it is important to include sectoral experts in the brainstorming process to identify the best measures to reduce the prioritized impacts, as some solutions might be innovative that communities at risk might not yet be aware of.

Make sure early actions apply the principle of Do No Harm.