

Introducing Anticipatory Action



A Feasibility Study for Malteser International

Abridged and Public Version

By Marie Wagner, Alexander Gaus, Julia Steets

Foreword by Malteser International

In today's dynamic landscape of humanitarian aid and disaster response, the notion of Anticipatory Action emerges as a beacon of innovative engagement. Anticipatory Action signifies a shift from reactive to proactive approaches, from crisis management to risk reduction, and from dependency to empowerment.

Malteser International embarked on a journey of exploration and inquiry into Anticipatory Action in 2023, commissioning the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study to determine if and how Malteser International can invest in Anticipatory Action. This abridged report presents the key insights from GPPi's extensive research and analysis. The study sheds light on the opportunities, challenges, and pathways for integrating Anticipatory Action into Malteser International's humanitarian work and confirms that Anticipatory Action is not just a theoretical strategy but a practical one that squarely fits the vision, mission, and strategic goals of our organization. It promotes timely intervention and preventive measures, aligning with Malteser International's commitment to health and dignity for all individuals, especially the most vulnerable. By contributing to existing frameworks and leveraging networks, Malteser International can maximize impact while minimizing upfront investments and avoiding duplications.

We have benefitted greatly from GPPi's research and hope that this version of the study and its findings may also be relevant for other organizations.

Executive Summary

This abridged report presents key findings of an internal feasibility study on Anticipatory Action commissioned by Malteser International (MI) in 2023. Four country case studies (Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda) and an organizational assessment structured the analysis. The objective is to clarify the conditions for effective Anticipatory Action by Malteser International as well as the associated opportunities and risks.

The feasibility study focused on:

1. Determining the need and opportunities for Anticipatory Action in the four country case studies, the most suitable approach to Anticipatory Action given the country context, and the specific conditions under which Anticipatory Action by MI can be successful;
2. Assessing the extent to which Anticipatory Action is relevant to MI's mission and strategic objectives (as defined by its MIndful 2025 strategy), as well as how coherently and effectively the organization enables Anticipatory Action through its systems, structures, policies, and procedures.

The research team conducted 216 interviews with staff from Malteser International, implementing partners, other NGOs, donors, UN agencies, and a range of Anticipatory Action experts; and reviewed internal documents, Anticipatory Action Frameworks, evaluations, and other relevant documents. Visits to all four countries provided the research team with an in-depth understanding of the context and opportunities for Anticipatory Action.

Anticipatory Action is relevant and sensible for Malteser International.

Anticipatory Action is defined here as taking pre-agreed actions drawing on pre-arranged resources once a trigger is reached. The practice is increasingly anchored within the humanitarian field for a number of reasons, all of which underline its relevance: (1) crises are increasingly predictable, making it technically feasible to act early; (2) evidence from a range of locations and crises shows that Anticipatory Action is not only effective and good value for money, but also a dignified manner of providing assistance; (3) donor funding to scale Anticipatory Action has increased considerably; and (4) Anticipatory Action is closely linked to other elements of disaster risk management, closing the gap between broader disaster risk reduction and preparedness activities and reactive post-disaster responses.

The feasibility study finds that the concept of Anticipatory Action closely aligns with MI's vision, priorities, experiences, and future direction, making it a sensible approach for the organization:

- **Anticipatory Action is a robust, dignified approach to addressing vulnerabilities and is consistent with Malteser International's vision.** MI strives for “a world where all individuals – particularly those in need and those who are displaced – live a life of health and dignity.” Anticipatory Action is a proven approach to protect people from the risks associated with hazards and reduce their dependence on emergency relief. It is also dignified since it does not wait for people to be harmed but acts early to prevent suffering and as such is a responsible course of action.

- **Anticipatory Action enables Malteser International to leverage key institutional strengths.** A number of elements important for doing Anticipatory Action well are already part of MI's way of working: experience operating at the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus; a focus on localization by collaborating with and implementing through trustworthy partners; close relationships with local communities; a strong background in disaster risk reduction and preparedness; and a strategic commitment to further advance these elements in the future.
- **Malteser International is strong in areas where Anticipatory Action still experiences gaps.** MI's past practice and expertise, as well as its MIndful 2025 strategy, have made health a sector priority and focused on working with displaced people and persons with disabilities. These are areas where Anticipatory Action is not yet extensively developed and MI can – through its own expertise and networks – make a significant contribution to filling the gaps.
- **Engaging in Anticipatory Action helps to sharpen Malteser International's humanitarian profile.** Anticipatory Action also has the potential to enable access to additional funding sources, which would help MI with its stated intention of diversifying its funding sources and sharpening its humanitarian profile.

Anticipatory Action is feasible for Malteser International but requires ownership, funding, cooperation, and capacity to do well.

Systematically introducing Anticipatory Action at Malteser International is feasible, since key factors to successfully do so are largely within the organization's control. MI needs to define its own approach – one that fits with the realities of the different contexts in which it works and the evolving Anticipatory Action ecosystem. It is also necessary for MI to foster broad ownership and develop capacity within its organization and among its partners since Anticipatory Action requires both a long-term commitment and technical expertise. To do all of this well requires investments and commitment from senior management. But it does not require substantial changes to the organization's strategic priorities, thematic and sectoral focus areas, decision-making processes, or the general division of labor between headquarters and country offices.

For practical implementation, seeking out new sources of funding is critical and Malteser International has a range of options. Concerns about having less funding available for other activities should be balanced by the prospects of mobilizing additional resources for Anticipatory Action. Adjusting existing programs and contingency funds would not entail direct competition over resources, although some unearmarked internal funding will be necessary to kick-start the process. Actual activations ahead of disasters usually require smaller sums compared to more traditional disaster response, making resource mobilization for Anticipatory Action generally manageable for MI.

To minimize up-front investments and maximize adding value, MI should contribute to existing Anticipatory Action Frameworks or similar plans rather than developing any of its own. Making this the guiding premise will make piloting relatively easy and enable Malteser International to gradually build up a track record that will help to mobilize resources long-term and broaden its Anticipatory Action footprint.

We recommend nine steps to introduce Anticipatory Action and a step-by-step guide to select pilot locations.

The feasibility study suggests nine steps to introduce Anticipatory Action at Malteser International:

1

Reflect on the feasibility study and its findings: Very simply, MI should use the feasibility study as a starting point to discuss and reflect on the opportunities and challenges involved in introducing Anticipatory Action. It should ensure that country teams can provide input.

2

Provide a general sense of direction on Anticipatory Action: Senior management – the Secretary General and his deputy, the Director of Programs and Operations, as well as the program heads – must define the way forward. This does not necessarily entail deciding on all the details, but rather providing a general sense of direction in terms of what MI wants to achieve with Anticipatory Action and how it intends to accomplish these goals.

3

Mobilize resources and decide how to fund anticipatory actions: MI is well placed to mobilize funding to build Anticipatory Action capacities, systems, and processes. MI needs to complement this resource-mobilization effort by deciding which options to pursue in financing the implementation of anticipatory actions.

4

Develop Anticipatory Action guideline: MI needs to spell out its approach in detail by creating Anticipatory Action guidelines to define its approaches, decision-making processes, and roles and responsibilities. These guidelines should establish minimum standards and good practices in how MI intends to implement Anticipatory Action projects, while also allowing sufficient flexibility to adapt to local circumstances.

5

Invest in targeted capacity-building and learning opportunities: Anticipatory Action requires investments in capacity building to ensure that everyone involved shares the same understanding and grasps the technical aspects of the approach. Enabling country-level staff to assess opportunities for Anticipatory Action and to represent MI in networks and partnerships is key. This should be done in coordination with other Anticipatory Action actors.

6

Select pilot locations: The research team has proposed a step-by-step guide to help determine where MI should engage in Anticipatory Action and what the various country teams should do, depending on how they answer the key questions contained in the guide (see below). The specific ways in which MI engages in Anticipatory Action hinge on various factors that must be considered jointly with the respective country team(s).

7

Network and seek partnerships at the international level: Anticipatory Action requires partnerships. MI can use well-established entry points and engage in global forums to follow current developments concerning the approach and to share its own experiences.

8

Establish an internal community of practice to reflect on experiences: Staff members who work on Anticipatory Action should have a platform where they can exchange their views and experiences. This can be as simple as an online forum. Whatever the format, this platform should also be given visibility throughout the organization.

9

Establish structures to report back on lessons learned: The results of monitoring and evaluating Anticipatory Action activities, as well as the general lessons learned by MI and its partners, should be shared regularly and in a coordinated way within the organization. This is critical for distilling good practices and avoiding mistakes in the future.

An additional step-by-step country selection guide simplifies the challenging task of selecting potential pilot locations. It follows the premise that Malteser International should not develop Anticipatory Action Frameworks or similar plans on its own, but only engage where it can contribute to existing Frameworks and plans. The first step is therefore to verify whether an Anticipatory Action Framework already exists in the target context. The next step is to check how MI's existing resources can contribute to this framework, and what else it could bring to the table. Following this is more detailed work at the country level to understand relevant details, to coordinate with other important stakeholders, and to refine MI's contribution.

If these various steps are taken seriously, Malteser International will become a credible Anticipatory Action stakeholder – capable of reducing the risks facing those most affected by disasters and contributing meaningfully to Anticipatory Action – while ensuring genuine buy-in from its most important resources: its staff, partners, and donors.



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List of Acronyms

CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
COP	UN Climate Change conferences
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DiDRRN	Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EAP	Early Action Protocol
EHF	European Humanitarian Forum
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FbA	Forecast-based Action
FbF	Forecast-based Financing
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
GPPi	Global Public Policy Institute
HNPW	Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KMD	Kenya Meteorological Department
MI	Malteser International
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières/Doctors without Borders
NDMU	National Disaster Management Unit
NDOC	National Disaster Operations Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHN	National Humanitarian Network (Pakistan)
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
P-FIM	People First Impact Method
RCRC	Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement
READY	Resilient Early Actions to Disaster Around the Year
REAP	Risk-informed Early Action Partnership
SFERA	FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities
SPI	Standardized Precipitation Index
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States (of America)
V20	Vulnerable Group of Twenty
WAHAFA	Welthungerhilfe Anticipatory Humanitarian Action Facility
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme
WHH	Welthungerhilfe

Introduction

Purpose

Over the past few years, the Anticipatory Action approach has gained considerable traction across the humanitarian system. Donors provide more funds for acting ahead of crises, and the number of actors engaged in building systems for delivering early and anticipatory action has increased significantly.

Malteser International (MI) is interested in understanding opportunities for engaging in Anticipatory Action. To base its decisions about whether and how to approach Anticipatory Action as an organization on a solid foundation of evidence and lessons learned, MI commissioned the Global Public Policy Institute to conduct a feasibility study to clarify the conditions for effective Anticipatory Action as well as the associated opportunities and risks. The main purpose of this feasibility study is to clarify whether MI can play a constructive role in Anticipatory Action, to identify what the organization could do to engage effectively in Anticipatory Action, and to guide MI in its future approach on the issue.

GPPi conducted four country case studies and an organizational assessment for this feasibility study. These two components had the following specific objectives:

1. Through the country case studies, the first component, the research team analyzed the extent to and ways in which MI could pilot Anticipatory Action in Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda. These case studies focused on determining the need and opportunities for Anticipatory Action, the most suitable approach to Anticipatory Action given the country context, and the specific conditions under which Anticipatory Action by MI could be successful. This country-level analysis considered the capacities of both MI and its country offices, MI's multilevel support structures, its funding opportunities, as well as the national and local Anticipatory Action ecosystems (comprising governmental entities and other anticipatory humanitarian actors). It also captured lessons learned from (more or less advanced) approaches to Anticipatory Action. This component constitutes the larger part of the study in terms of allocated time, and its findings served as the basis for the second component.
2. Through the organizational assessment, the second component of the feasibility study, the research team assessed the extent to which Anticipatory Action is relevant to MI's mission and strategic objectives (as defined by its MIndful 2025 strategy), as well as how coherent and effective the organization's systems, structures, policies, and procedures are in enabling Anticipatory Action. This analysis included a review of institutional policies and strategies, operational priorities, as well as structures and practices.

Analytical Framework

The research team developed an analytical framework to guide the feasibility study. The country case studies covered four dimensions: *context*, *Anticipatory Action ecosystem*, *MI niche and strategic fit*, and *institutional enablers and obstacles*. The analysis of the country

context focused on the main hazards and risks per country, local and national capacities in Anticipatory Action, existing experiences in this field, and how conducive the context is for Anticipatory Action generally. The review of the *Anticipatory Action ecosystem* assessed which actors are currently engaging in Anticipatory Action, where gaps exist, what lessons can be learned from other organizations, and whether there is any evidence on the effectiveness and efficiency of Anticipatory Action in the respective countries. Analyzing *MI niche and strategic fit*, the country case studies covered the roles MI could potentially and usefully play in Anticipatory Action and how well such roles would fit with MI's strategy and capacity in this context. Lastly, the analysis of *institutional enablers and obstacles* focused on the strengths and resources MI could draw on to pilot Anticipatory Action in the respective countries, on opportunities that exist around adapting existing programs and approaches, on obstacles to piloting Anticipatory Action, and on the support country operations would need to get started. The four countries reviewed – Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda – were identified jointly by MI and GPPi as countries with a high potential to provide lessons learned from other Anticipatory Action actors and to enable MI pilot projects or project adaptations.

For the organizational assessment, the research team focused on assessing those aspects related to Anticipatory Action which are affected by general organizational priorities, structures, and processes. The overarching categories covered are the general *relevance* of Anticipatory Action for MI; its *coherence* with organizational strategies and thematic priorities; its *connectedness* in terms of programs, funding streams, and partnerships; and the investments and changes required to *efficiently* adopt a functional Anticipatory Action approach on a global organizational level.

Methodology

The feasibility study followed a mixed-methods approach to data collection, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data-collection methods included interviews with 216 individuals during the inception phase, the country visits, and the organizational assessment, as well as three focus-group discussions with Anticipatory Action networks and working groups at the country level. Interview partners at the country level included:

- MI country management and staff members working on themes and processes relevant to Anticipatory Action, including emergency response, finance, and resource mobilization; monitoring and evaluation; and policy and thematic advisors;
- Anticipatory Action champions at the country level, including NGOs, United Nations (UN) agencies, and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations that have already gained experience on Anticipatory Action;
- Governmental actors involved in disaster risk management (such as disaster management agencies, meteorological institutions, and relevant line ministries);
- Representatives and members of national-level networks or working groups related to Anticipatory Action;
- Donor representatives.

For the organizational assessment, the research team conducted interviews at the headquarters (HQ) level with MI senior management, as well as staff in programs and operations, organizational development, quality and knowledge management, and other relevant staff members. Moreover, GPPi conducted three interviews with peer organizations to capture their experiences in introducing Anticipatory Action.

The research team gathered secondary data via a structured and systematic literature review and document analysis. This included analyzing policy, planning, and operational documentation from MI (e.g., annual reports and plans as well as other working plans, both at the strategic/HQ level and the country level) as well as key documents from other organizations involved in Anticipatory Action. Documents specific to Anticipatory Action included feasibility studies; analyses of past extreme weather and climate events; vulnerability, exposure, and impact studies of disaster events; forecasts; capacity assessments of relevant actor types; program and project plans; reports and evaluations; stakeholder mappings; and policy documents related to disaster (risk) management at the national and local levels.

Limitations

Even though all the country case studies and the organizational assessment were conducted as planned, a few limitations remain.¹ First, by design, the study results are based on input from only four countries. This limits the evidence base, and relevant or potentially contradictory aspects from other countries cannot be considered. Second, each of the countries covered has a unique social, political, and cultural context, which limits the extent to which results can be transferred in considering how to concretely design anticipatory actions from one country context to another. While the analytical framework can be used in other contexts, the results do not constitute Anticipatory Action blueprints. Third, the research team had only limited direct engagement with affected populations, but also deliberately did not prioritize this. It will be essential for Malteser International to better understand the needs of the affected populations it seeks to support through Anticipatory Actions once it has concrete plans to engage in this area. Lastly, in order to formulate more broadly based benchmarks on organizational changes and to capture a greater variety of lessons learned, the feasibility study would have required a greater focus on interviews with external Anticipatory Action experts and peers from other organizations.

¹ In Uganda, unexpected humanitarian access and security concerns led to some deviations from the initial travel plans. Thus some interviews were conducted online, which impacted the quality of these conversations.

Finding 1:

Anticipatory Action is a relevant and effective approach to saving lives and protecting the health and dignity of people in need.

Anticipatory Action means taking pre-agreed actions drawing on pre-arranged resources once a trigger is reached.

As more actors are getting involved in acting early and ahead of disasters, it is important to specify what differentiates Anticipatory Action from other approaches and concepts. Many practitioners use the term loosely or in slightly different ways, adapting it to their priorities. When initially getting involved in the field, this can be confusing and can distract from the commonly agreed-upon objective: to reduce the potential impacts of a forecastable hazard by ensuring that anticipatory actions are taken based on early-warning information.

Nevertheless, a broadly accepted definition of “Anticipatory Action” has emerged. At its core, it is based on three elements: (1) a forecast or predictive analysis of a hazard with an agreed threshold that triggers action once it is reached; (2) an action plan with pre-agreed interventions that are implemented once the trigger threshold is reached, before the hazard occurs or before its impacts are felt; and (3) pre-arranged finance that enables the implementation of the various actions without delay. This report will use “Anticipatory Action” based on this understanding of the term.

This definition is similar to what the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RCRC) Movement introduced as “Forecast-based Financing” (FbF) or “Forecast-based Action” (FbA). However, most actors prefer “Anticipatory Action” as an umbrella term to acknowledge that anticipatory actions can take different forms. For example, triggers need not always be based on a scientific forecast but can also be based on expert judgment. In this understanding, FbF is one anticipatory approach which emphasizes the pre-agreed financing element.² Some actors in the (German) humanitarian community, including Malteser International, are also adding *humanitarian* between “anticipatory” and “action,” either to underline that they intend to concentrate on purely humanitarian objectives (or measures) and/or to distinguish the acronym from the German name for the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt).³ Those

2 There have been several attempts to clarify distinctions and commonalities in practitioners’ understanding. Some also use “Anticipatory Action” and “FbA” synonymously. For a more detailed discussion on these and other terms, see the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership’s (REAP) Glossary: REAP, “Glossary of Early Action Terms,” 2022, <https://www.early-action-reap.org/glossary-early-action-terms-2022-edition>. The following definitions are based on this glossary and on the Anticipation Hub’s definition: Anticipation Hub, “A Short Overview of Anticipatory Action,” 2023, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/Documents/Briefing/short-overview-of-anticipatory-action.pdf>.

3 Currently, MI internally uses the term “Anticipatory Humanitarian Action.” In accordance with international actors including REAP, the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the organization has a working definition and understands Anticipatory Humanitarian Action as: “any measure taken to act ahead of a hazard to prevent or reduce the potential humanitarian impact before they fully unfold. This includes the development and activation of a mechanism that triggers an early action based on official forecasting data and/or expert predictions. All activities that are regarded as anticipatory are implemented following a pre-determined protocol (contingency plan) in close coordination with relevant stakehold-

who avoid this addition believe it is confusing or argue that while Anticipatory Action aims to avoid purely humanitarian impacts, the actions themselves can be linked to neighboring fields and are therefore rarely purely humanitarian.

“Early action” is sometimes used synonymously with Anticipatory Action, and sometimes as a broader and more flexible term that encompasses Anticipatory Action. For some, the timeframe for early action is longer and not necessarily linked to one specific hazardous event: whereas anticipatory actions are only those implemented before a specific hazardous event takes place or its humanitarian impacts are felt, actions implemented after the hazard strikes can still be considered early action if they are implemented before the disaster reaches the peak. Early action is also less strict when it comes to the other defining features of Anticipatory Action: it need not necessarily involve a clear and pre-agreed trigger, but can also be based on early-warning information more generally; it not only involves pre-agreed actions outlined in a concrete plan, but can also include more spontaneously designed elements; and pre-arranged resources are not required for early action (which is one key reason why the frequently criticized gap between early warning and early action exists).

The common feature of these different approaches to and understandings of Anticipatory Action is that, as opposed to a traditional needs-based humanitarian response, anticipatory actions are implemented based on (potential) risks before hazards materialize, or at least before their humanitarian impacts are felt. This specific moment is easier to recognize in the case of a sudden-onset hazard, such as a tropical cyclone, which has a clearly defined starting point; it is somewhat more challenging to define the exact starting point of a slow-onset hazard, such as a drought, without agreeing on concrete indicators.

Anticipatory Action focuses on concrete, imminent, and highly contextualized risks.

Anticipatory Action is not a stand-alone approach, but rather part of the Disaster Risk Management Cycle. Rather than replacing existing efforts along the cycle, it provides an additional, very specific approach. Anticipatory Action seeks to contribute to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Projects under the “Disaster Risk Reduction” label, however, are typically longer-term and include mitigation measures, policy strengthening, and/or infrastructure projects seeking to reduce disaster risks generally. Anticipatory Action focuses on concrete, imminent, and highly contextualized risks – those that general DRR efforts have not yet managed to tackle.⁴ Shorter-term anticipatory actions can thus be considered an add-on, which relies and builds on existing DRR infrastructure.

The relationship between Anticipatory Action and “preparedness” is similar: both approaches are carried out within the context of disaster risk management, preparing for an impending shock. Preparing for Anticipatory Action by developing a framework, for example, complements and is part of preparedness. Some preparedness measures are not implemented in anticipation of and before a specific, predicted hazard.⁵ Moreover, preparedness measures often focus on cyclical hazards, such as annual rainy seasons, whereas Anticipatory Action would be triggered specifically for “out-of-the-ordinary” events, such as particularly extreme weather events.

The terminological debate continues when we consider the plans developed for Anticipatory Action. For example, the RCRC Movement and the NGO Welthungerhilfe (WHH) use the term “Early Action Protocol” (EAP), whereas the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and its Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) use “Anticipatory Action

ers, clear responsibilities, and pre-agreed trigger levels.”

⁴ Anticipation Hub, “A Short Overview of Anticipatory Action,” briefly explains the differences in more detail.

⁵ Ibid.

Framework.” While differences exist, these two terms broadly encompass the same types of analyses and information, such as pre-agreed triggers, pre-arranged actions, and finance. In 2022, at least 70 Anticipatory Action Frameworks were active in 35 countries.⁶ To illustrate this, we have provided an example of a drought EAP below, showing a typical approach with regards to activation length and funding volume.

Example: Early Action Protocol, Kenya Drought (2022)

Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAP timeframe: 5 years • To assist: 150,000 people in 23 arid and semi-arid counties
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed by the Kenya Red Cross Society, in collaboration with the National Forecast-based Financing Technical Working Group • Implementing organization: the Kenya Red Cross Society (volunteers and staff); in conjunction with national actors (incl. the National Disaster Operations Centre (NDOC), the National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU), the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD), and international actors (incl. World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization)
Preagreed Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframe: 7 months; lead time of up to 12 weeks • Includes pre-positioning activities (month 1 after activation) and early action activities (months 1–7) • Livelihoods (examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocate for improved post-harvest crop management to reduce post-harvest losses - Advocate for crop diversification - Procure, target, and distribute drought-tolerant seeds - Conduct market analysis - Provide fodder for priority stock and commodity vouchers • Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) (examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procure mass water-storage tanks (pre-positioning activity) - Provide cash for WASH - Activate water committees - Install mass water-storage tanks • Risk reduction, climate adaptation, and recovery (examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate early warning messages via 2 radio stations and SMS • Community engagement and accountability (examples): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deploy trained volunteers to engage communities
Trigger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenya Meteorological Department’s Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) forecast for October to December indicates below -0.98, with a ≥ 33% probability in at least 3 counties
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipatory pillar of the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) • Budget: CHF 499,199

Existing evidence suggests that Anticipatory Action is relevant and adds value.

While Anticipatory Action is still a new approach for many organizations, numerous signs indicate that the approach is relevant, serious, and here to stay. The ability to forecast hazards has improved significantly; a growing body of research and impact studies demonstrate the benefits of Anticipatory Action; an increasing number of Anticipatory Action policies anchor the approach in key humanitarian organizations, as well as in national and regional disaster

⁶ Anticipation Hub, “Anticipatory Action in 2022: A Global Overview,” Berlin: Anticipation Hub, 2023, https://www.anticipation-hub.org/Documents/Reports/Anticipatory_action_2022_-_Overview-Report_WEB.pdf.

risk management laws and policies; and funding commitments for Anticipatory Action, both from humanitarian donors and in neighboring fields, are consistently rising. Taken together, this suggests that Anticipatory Action is not a passing trend, but an additional and increasingly well-established way of effectively saving lives and protecting the health and dignity of people in need.

Crises are increasingly predictable, making it technically feasible to act early. An analysis of humanitarian and disaster risk financing by the Start Network and the Overseas Development Institute concluded that at least 55 percent of humanitarian crises are at least somewhat predictable.⁷ In many instances, droughts, floods, storms, hurricanes, and cyclones can be anticipated ahead of time. Research estimates that 20 percent of all disaster events are highly predictable, which means that – in theory – it is possible to know what will happen, when, and who will likely be affected.

Forecasts have been steadily improving:
data-gathering systems and forecasting models
to predict the likelihood of specific hazards have
improved year on year.

At the same time, forecasts have been steadily improving: data-gathering systems and forecasting models to predict the likelihood of specific hazards have improved year on year, and forecasting errors have decreased continuously and considerably.⁸ Lead times between a forecast and the actual event (such as a flood) have increased from a few days to a week, providing enough time for targeted anticipatory actions. Impact-based forecasts that aim to define who will be impacted by specific hazards are also on the rise. These allow for even better-targeted early actions and greater assurance about reaching those most in need. In addition, new types of hazards such as cold spells, heatwaves, and landslides are increasingly being researched with the intention of developing robust forecasting systems – even in hard-to-reach places, such as the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. The clear rise in forecasting efforts is likely to pick up more speed in the coming years, in part due to global initiatives such as Early Warnings for All, which aims to protect everyone on Earth from hazardous weather, water, or climate events through early warning systems by the end of 2027 and mobilizes funds to achieve this.

A growing number of studies highlight value for money, effectiveness, and the dignified manner of providing assistance as key benefits of Anticipatory Action. While most studies are highly context-specific, increasingly robust evidence⁹ shows the various benefits of Anticipatory Action. Most of this evidence is open access, and a growing collection of evaluations and other analyses is readily available in the Anticipation Hub’s evidence database.¹⁰

Several studies aim to calculate a cost-benefit ratio (“value for money” or “return on investment”) for Anticipatory Action. One key message of these studies is that Anticipatory Action is a cost-effective approach to mitigating disaster impacts and increasing resilience. For example, in its overview of “the evidence base on Anticipatory Action,” The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that investments in Anticipatory Action pay off significantly

7 Lena Weingärtner and Alexandra Spencer, “Analysing Gaps in the Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Financing Landscape,” Paper 02, ODI and Start Network, 2019, <https://start-network.app.box.com/s/2wx4fzmak3wzpk98fg8rzzhtlzkqiyxe>.

8 For hurricanes, see, for example, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, “NOAA Launches New Hurricane Forecast Model as Atlantic Season Starts Strong,” 2023, <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/noaa-launches-new-hurricane-forecast-model-as-atlantic-season-starts-strong>.

9 See, for example, FAO, “The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security 2023 – Avoiding and Reducing Losses through Investment in Resilience,” Rome, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc7900en>; Poole et al., “Anticipatory Action in Motion: Recapping the Most Recent Evidence and Illuminating a Pathway Forward,” Feinstein International Center Brief, 2022, <https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/11.14.22-AAinMotion.pdf>; WFP, “The Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action,” 2020, https://www.anticipation-hub.org/Documents/Reports/WFP-The_evidence_base_on_Anticipatory_Action.pdf.

10 See the Anticipation Hub website, accessed 20 December 2023, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/experience/evidence-database/evidence-list>.

in terms of the loss and suffering avoided (with a ratio of 1:3, meaning that 1 USD invested amounts to 3 USD in losses saved). Moreover, the study shows that Anticipatory Action had positive effects on the humanitarian system, including quicker access to required supplies and lower costs per person among those who received support.¹¹ A recent Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) study calculated that “risk-informed desert locust control interventions provide a return on investment of 1:15. This means that every USD 1 invested in the intervention averted an estimated USD 15 of losses in the greater Horn of Africa.”¹² Assessing the impacts of providing cash transfers to households in flood-prone communities in Northeast Nigeria in a randomized evaluation, the IRC found that those who received anticipatory cash reduced negative coping strategies, increased pre-emptive climate adaptive actions, and enhanced investments in productive assets compared to households that received cash after peak flooding had occurred.¹³

Research also shows that if done well, Anticipatory Action can be an effective way to support people at risk or in need: FAO conducted an analysis of its own projects and found that anticipatory actions can help to build long-term resilience (for example, by taking a people-centered approach when building an Early Action Protocol), strengthen capacities for disaster risk reduction (for example, through training conducted during Anticipatory Action interventions, which also raises general awareness of disaster risks), and protect development gains.¹⁴ In an impact assessment of Anticipatory Action on floods in South Sudan in 2022, an NGO consortium funded via the Start Network found that their interventions helped to avoid or reduce the damage and risks associated with flooding (including shelter and infrastructure damage as well as flood-related diseases, such as malaria) and to strengthen coping capacity (for example, cash-for-work in anticipatory and DRR interventions increased access to income).¹⁵ The “Impact Evaluation of Anticipatory Cash Transfers,” which the Centre for Disaster Protection conducted for WFP in Bangladesh, found that early cash transfers had a significant positive impact on child and adult food consumption, well-being, asset loss, cost of borrowing, and earning potential.¹⁶ On an even more basic level, providing tailored warnings about rapid-onset hazards – such as floods or tropical storms – is a key anticipatory action that has been shown to significantly reduce the number of deaths from extreme weather events in recent decades.

Finally, Anticipatory Action can strengthen community engagement and participation, and encourage affected communities to take action themselves, thus providing a more dignified way of helping those in need. One key aspect of Anticipatory Action is supporting communities in using early-warning information themselves. In Nepal, an assessment of the NGO Practical Action found that their people-centered early-warning system significantly improved the psycho-social welfare and resilience of more than two-thirds of the respondents (as self-reported).¹⁷ Moreover, Anticipatory Action can be designed in a more participatory way. Preparing in advance usually leaves more time to consult and engage with affected communities throughout the development of the process, which enables sincere and

11 WFP, “The Evidence Base on Anticipatory Action.”

12 FAO, “The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security 2023.”

13 IRC and IFPRI, “Acting Before Disaster Strikes: The Impacts of Anticipatory Cash Transfers on Climate Resilience in North-east Nigeria,” Research Brief, New York, 2023.

14 For more concrete examples, see FAO, “The Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security 2023,” p. 92.

15 Start Network, “Impact Assessment of Anticipatory Action on flooding in Sudan,” 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/71917c94-64bf-4307-93ea-9d1f44fb305e/Impact%20assessment%20of%20anticipatory%20action%20on%20flooding%20in%20Sudan.pdf>.

16 WFP and Center for Disaster Protection, “Generating Evidence on the Impact of WFP’s Anticipatory Cash Transfers Ahead of Severe River Floods in Bangladesh,” 2021, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/news/generating-evidence-on-the-impact-of-wfps-anticipatory-cash-transfers-ahead-of-severe-river-floods-in-bangladesh>.

17 Practical Action, “Towards Effective Early Warning Systems: Impact and Lessons from Nepal and Peru,” Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3362/11284-000004>.

meaningful participation. For example, communities can share their experiences concerning the impacts of past events, risk factors, and anticipated need.¹⁸ One of the key findings of the impact assessment of Anticipatory Action on floods in South Sudan (mentioned earlier) emphasized that communities welcomed their high level of engagement with the project.¹⁹

The available evidence on Anticipatory Action suggests that it is a relevant and effective way of addressing risks.

Altogether, the available evidence on Anticipatory Action suggests that it is a relevant and effective way of addressing risks that complements the more traditional humanitarian approach of responding to needs. Some government donors and other actors, however, fear that Anticipatory Action may entail the risk of acting on a forecast that proves to be wrong, thus squandering scarce resources. Most anticipatory actors address this concern by adopting a “no-regrets approach” and designing actions in such a way that they deliver benefits even if the hazard does not materialize in the end. This can involve addressing those people who are most in need of support with activities that will have positive impacts even without the additional hazard, or planning low-cost interventions such as increasing nutritional or disease surveillance, harvesting early, distributing mosquito nets, disseminating early-warning messages, or sharing other types of information to raise awareness and to reinforce existing early-warning systems. In these scenarios, Anticipatory Action is valuable even if a forecasted hazard does not fully emerge.

Anticipatory Action is increasingly anchored in the humanitarian field. Anticipatory Action is already a mainstream topic among key humanitarian organizations, specifically within the RCRC Movement; at the UN, via OCHA and CERF as well as several agencies, such as WFP and FAO; and also in the NGO sector (see below). The number of Early Action Protocols and Anticipatory Action Frameworks has been rising constantly, and in 2022 at least 70 frameworks were active in 35 countries.²⁰

In recent years, Anticipatory Action has also become an indispensable part of every humanitarian platform (for example, the Humanitarian Networks & Partnerships Week (HNPW)²¹, the European Humanitarian Forum (EHF)²², and the ongoing Grand Bargain 3.0 discussions), and the growing number of members taking part in Anticipatory Action networks and partnerships – where participants share experiences and good practices, and seek out partnerships – is another indicator that the approach resonates: the Anticipation Hub, the main global Anticipatory Action coordination platform with a humanitarian focus, has seen its membership grow from around 50 partners three years ago to more than 110 partners at the end of 2023.²³ The Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), another global network that connects development, climate, and humanitarian actors on early warning and early action more broadly, has grown from 34 partners at its launch in 2019 to 84 partners in November 2023.²⁴ Lastly, at the national, sub-national, and regional levels, an

18 Julia Burakowski and Dominik Semet, “Localised Anticipatory Humanitarian Action to Minimize Effects of Climate Change and Reduce the Risk of Food Insecurity,” Voice out Loud, 2022, <https://voiceeu.org/publications/localised-anticipatory-humanitarian-action-to-minimise-effects-of-climate-change-and-reduce-the-risk-of-food-insecurity-welthungerhilfe.pdf>.

19 Start Network, “Impact Assessment of Anticipatory Action on Flooding in Sudan,” 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/71917c94-64bf-4307-93ea-9d1f44fb305e/Impact%20assessment%20of%20anticipatory%20action%20on%20flooding%20in%20Sudan.pdf>.

20 Anticipation Hub, “Anticipatory Action in 2022: A Global Overview.”

21 Anticipation Hub, “Anticipatory action events at HNPW 2023,” 2023, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/events/list-of-anticipatory-action-sessions-at-hnpw-2023>

22 European Humanitarian Forum, “Co-Hosts Summary by the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU. New global realities – Shaping humanitarian action together,” 2023, <https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-03/EHF%20-%20Co-Hosts%20Summary%20by%20the%20European%20Commission%20and%20the%20Swedish%20Presidency%20of%20the%20Council%20of%20the%20EU%20-%20March%202023.pdf>

23 Anticipation Hub, “Anticipatory Action in 2022: A Global Overview.”

24 Wagner/REAP, “Early Action: The State of Play 2023,” Geneva: Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, forthcoming, <https://www.early-action-reap.org/early-action-state-play-2023>.

increasing number of laws, policies, and guidelines on disaster risk management have been created or revised to include Anticipatory Action.²⁵

Some NGOs have successfully integrated Anticipatory Action into their ongoing programs. While Anticipatory Action is heavily driven by the RCRC Movement and the UN, several NGOs have also successfully integrated Anticipatory Action into their ongoing programs. These NGOs often bring to the table ways of working that are crucial for successful Anticipatory Action, particularly with regard to localization. Unlike the RCRC Movement, NGOs can choose their local partners and co-develop approaches with communities and their representatives. For this study, interview partners at the global level suggested that one particularly valuable aspect of working with NGOs is that they can contribute to the system by focusing on the local level and providing a more accurate, people-centered gap analysis than bigger international actors are able to do.

NGOs: Getting Involved in Anticipatory Action

As part of the analysis, the research team spoke to peers at other NGOs that are at different stages of developing their organizations' Anticipatory Action approaches. While this benchmarking exercise did not go into detail, it shows how other NGOs have gone about integrating Anticipatory Action into their ongoing programs. Key steps include (i) developing organizational guidelines and frameworks to create a common understanding throughout the organization; (ii) developing internal funding mechanisms and creating dedicated units (or posts); and (iii) investing time and resources in building or strengthening Anticipatory Action partnerships.

Drafting organizational guidelines and frameworks:

Policy documents help to define an organization's understanding of and objectives for Anticipatory Action. Save the Children, for instance, published its Anticipatory Action Framework in 2022.²⁶ This provides guidance to all the organization's country offices and aims "to create a common understanding of Anticipatory Action across Save the Children." The framework explains that Save the Children plans to engage in Anticipatory Action in order to prevent and reduce the impact of foreseeable crises on children. Moreover, Save the Children developed sector-specific guidance on how to carry out Anticipatory Action in the area of education.²⁷

Developing internal funding mechanisms and units:

Welthungerhilfe is among the pioneers of Anticipatory Action and contributed to initial attempts to develop trigger-based systems as early as 2016. In addition to its internal Emergency Fund for rapid emergency response, WHH established a dedicated Anticipation and Preparedness Fund about two years ago, which allows the organization's country offices to fund anticipation and preparedness activities (such as capacity building, staff costs, pre-positioning, or purely anticipatory actions) if no other financial means are available. Similarly, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe is currently working to set up an emergency fund which aims to finance rapid needs assessment, first interventions, and/or Anticipatory Action. WHH and Save the Children have also established small, dedicated internal Anticipatory Action units at the international/headquarters' level to provide technical advice and quality assurance: at Save the Children International, the team sits within the crisis anticipation and response unit; at WHH, it sits in the Humanitarian Directorate. Both organizations also have regional and national technical focal points on Anticipatory Action in selected locations.

Investing time and resources in partnerships:

WHH actively engages in bringing forward the Anticipatory Action approach jointly with other NGOs. This includes its involvement in the Start Network's Pakistan chapter and the READY Hub, as well as the recent launch of the Welthungerhilfe Anticipatory Humanitarian Action Facility (WAHAFa). Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe is developing its approach in close collaboration with a dedicated working group at ACT Alliance, a network of faith-based organizations. The ACT Alliance is considering setting up a joint funding mechanism as well.

25 For more information, see, e.g., Marie Wagner, "Early Action: The State of Play 2022," Geneva: Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, 2023, https://www.early-action-reap.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/20230214_REAP_StateofPlay_FINAL.pdf and <https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/disaster-law-database>.

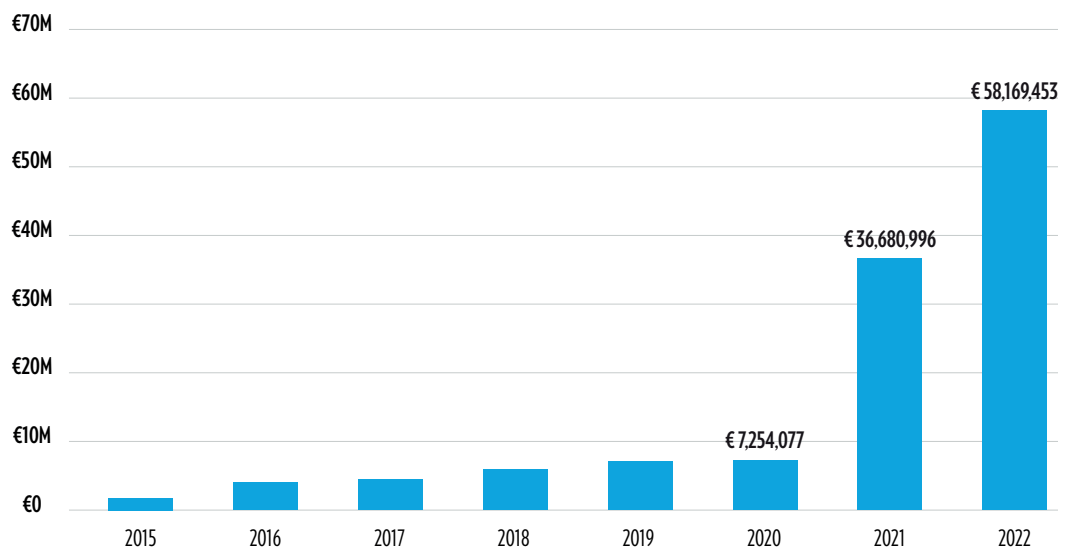
26 Save the Children, "Save the Children's Framework for Anticipatory Action," 2022, https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Save-the-Children_Framework-for-Anticipatory-Action_2022.pdf/.

27 Save the Children, "Guidance on AA in Education," 2023, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Guidance-on-AA-In-Education.pdf/>.

Funding for Anticipatory Action has increased considerably. While only a small share of all crisis financing is pre-arranged and anticipatory (between 1 percent and 3 percent in 2021²⁸), the overall amounts earmarked for Anticipatory Action have increased significantly since the first Anticipatory Action pilots began over a decade ago. More and more donors are allocating funds for Anticipatory Action, and specific Anticipatory Action funding instruments have been set up and have seen continued budget increases for the most part. This has broadened opportunities to secure funding for Anticipatory Action.

Notably, both the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) are channeling more money to Anticipatory Action and have committed to continue doing so in the coming years. Germany is currently the biggest and most vocal donor pushing for more Anticipatory Action (see Figure 1), and it reconfirmed its goal to spend 5 percent of its humanitarian budget on scaling up Anticipatory Action as of 2023.²⁹ Germany further emphasized its engagement by announcing that Anticipatory Action will be part of its upcoming humanitarian strategy (2024–2027).³⁰

Figure 1: GFFO Spending on Anticipatory Action, 2015–2022³¹



DG ECHO has also become an important Anticipatory Action donor. In 2021, the European Commission outlined its vision of the EU’s humanitarian action, emphasizing that a stronger focus on climate impacts and environmental factors is necessary, and that the EU will “scale up” the use of anticipatory actions.³² As part of DG ECHO’s Disaster Preparedness Budget Line, DG ECHO funds preparation for and implementation of anticipatory actions, as well

28 Zoë Scott, “Finance for Early Action: Tracking Commitments, Trends, Challenges & Opportunities,” Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, 2023, https://www.early-action-reap.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/20220613_Finance%20for%20Early%20Action_FINAL.pdf.

29 Deutsche Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Fraktion der CDU/CSU – Drucksache 20/7636 – Humanitäre Hilfe,” Drucksache 20/7957, August 1, 2023, <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/079/2007957.pdf>.

30 See the recording of an event from the Centre for Humanitarian Action (CHA) in July 2023: “Erwartungen & Forderungen der Zivilgesellschaft an die neue deutsche humanitäre Strategie,” www.chaberlin.org/event/out-of-the-box-strategy/

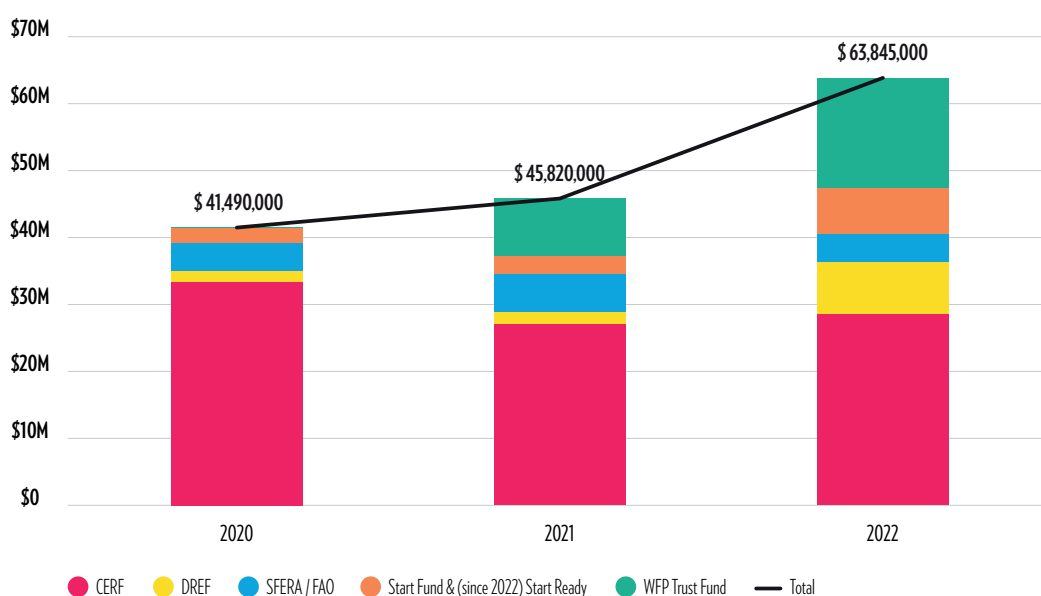
31 Deutsche Bundesregierung, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Fraktion der CDU/CSU – Drucksache 20/7636 – Humanitäre Hilfe,” Drucksache 20/7957, August 1, 2023, <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/079/2007957.pdf>.

32 European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU’s Humanitarian Action: New Challenges, Same Principles,” COM (2021) 110 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0110>.

as a range of activities broadly related to early action. This includes strengthening early warning systems, developing and testing contingency plans, and advocacy and awareness-raising concerning risks and the importance of preparedness. In addition, DG ECHO has established an Enhanced Response Capacity budget line “to support innovative and forward-looking initiatives that seek to increase the capacity of the humanitarian community to respond to crises in the most effective and efficient manner.” As part of this budget line, DG ECHO funded a Danish Refugee Council pilot project for anticipatory response to climate-induced disaster in 2021.³³ In 2023, DG ECHO allocated €2 million³⁴ to pilot Anticipatory Action approaches through the Start Network, with Save the Children Germany as the grant custodian.

Beyond the GFFO and DG ECHO, other donors are also increasingly funding Anticipatory Action. The G7 Foreign Ministers released a statement on strengthening Anticipatory Action in humanitarian assistance in 2022, which was reconfirmed in 2023, affirming the need to scale up and systematically mainstream Anticipatory Action in the humanitarian system.³⁵ The G7 countries also committed to developing a common methodology to report funding for Anticipatory Action (an effort which is still ongoing). Belgium, Canada, Norway, and Sweden are contributing to FAO’s Anticipatory Action Funding Window.³⁶ Apart from Germany and the EU, several other countries – including Norway, Denmark, Ireland, and the US – contributed to WFP’s scale-up of Anticipatory Action plans.³⁷

Figure 2: Disbursements from the Five Largest Humanitarian Anticipatory Action Funds, 2020–2022



33 European Commission, “Enhanced Response Capacity Funded projects between 2017 – 2021,” https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/ERC_Funded_projects.pdf.

34 European Commission, “Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) Enhanced Response Capacity,” Ref. Ares (2023) 4870842 Version 2, 2023, https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2023/echo_erc_bud_2023_91000_v2.pdf.

35 G7, “G7 Foreign Ministers’ Statement on Strengthening Anticipatory Action in Humanitarian Assistance,” May 13, 2022, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/g7-anticipatory-action/2531236>.

36 FAO, “Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities (SFERA): Annual Report 2022,” 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/7af409d3-a902-4658-be74-b69064375660/cc5195en.pdf>.

37 WFP, “Scaling Up Anticipatory Actions for Food Security: Anticipatory Action Year in Focus 2022,” 2023, <https://www.wfp.org/publications/scaling-anticipatory-actions-food-security-anticipatory-action-year-focus-2022>.

This growth in donor funding translates into a growth in the number of funding mechanisms and increasing disbursements for Anticipatory Action. For instance, the five largest humanitarian funds have increased their Anticipatory Action windows from almost US\$41.5 million in 2020 to over US\$63.8 million in 2022 (see Figure 2).³⁸

Neighboring fields increasingly recognize Anticipatory Action’s relevance. As part of the broader Disaster Risk Management Cycle, the idea of acting ahead of foreseeable crises is not only picking up speed among humanitarian organizations, but is increasingly linked to several neighboring fields, most significantly the development, climate, and disaster risk management sectors. The UN Climate Change conferences (COP)³⁹ and various climate finance initiatives, such as the G7 and Vulnerable Group of Twenty (V20) Global Shield Against Climate Risks⁴⁰ or the Loss and Damage Fund,⁴¹ all emphasize the relevance of early-warning capacity and the importance of trying to mitigate disasters before their worst impacts unfold. While climate finance is set to strengthen climate-change adaptation and mitigation activities in at-risk countries more generally, new climate-finance programs clearly link to Anticipatory Action – and efforts to coordinate and collaborate closely across sectors are ongoing. For example, the Global Shield Against Climate Risks will support strengthening the systems required for Anticipatory Action to be successful. This includes increasing the amount of pre-arranged financing available (including financing for Anticipatory Action) and specifically funding activities to strengthen early warning systems, coping mechanisms to improve people’s protection from climate-related risks, and social protection mechanisms. Climate and development finance is also increasingly being set up to expand the coverage of (parametric) insurance mechanisms in disaster- and risk-prone countries, providing communities with payouts once a hazard condition is met rather than waiting for damage claims. Furthermore, humanitarian organizations such as WFP are working to link these financing instruments.⁴²

It is also important to acknowledge that donors often view Anticipatory Action as an approach that spans different fields. While Germany is an outlier in which the responsibilities for development cooperation and humanitarian action are split between two ministries, in other donor countries – such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (US), or Sweden – policies and decisions that are important for financing Anticipatory Action are often developed under the same roof, and opportunities to link development funding to anticipatory actions are increasingly being explored.

38 Wagner/REAP, “Early Action: The State of Play 2023.”

39 Anticipation Hub, “Anticipatory Action Events at COP27,” 2023, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/events/list-of-anticipatory-action-sessions-at-cop27>.

40 Global Shield, “The Global Shield Against Climate Risks,” 2023, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Presentation_Global_Shield_SJA_TC_Workshop.pdf.

41 UNFCCC, “Operationalization of the New Funding Arrangements, Including the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage Referred to in Paragraphs 2–3 of Decisions 2/CP.27 and 2/CMA.4,” Advance version, FCCC/CP/2023/L.1–FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/L.1, https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cp2023_LL_cma2023_LL.pdf.

42 WFP, “2022 Climate Risk Insurance Annual Report,” 2023, <https://www.wfp.org/publications/2022-climate-risk-insurance-annual-report>.

Finding 2:

Anticipatory Action aligns with Malteser International's vision, priorities, experiences, and future direction.

Both the country case studies and the organizational assessment demonstrate that Anticipatory Action fits well with MI's vision and strategy. When investing in Anticipatory Action, Malteser International will be able to draw on some of its institutional strengths, such as its strong position in the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus and its experiences with disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Due to its focus on health and working with displaced populations and people with disabilities, Malteser International would also be able to address critical gaps in the way Anticipatory Action is currently being implemented, thus adding value. In addition, Anticipatory Action could help to sharpen MI's humanitarian profile.

Anticipatory Action is a dignified approach to addressing vulnerabilities and is consistent with MI's vision. Malteser International's vision is "a world where all individuals – particularly those in need and those who are displaced – live a life of health and dignity." As discussed above, Anticipatory Action has been proven as an effective, cost-efficient, and dignified approach to protecting people from the risks associated with hazards and reducing their dependence on emergency relief. Anticipatory Action is therefore a suitable tool to help MI achieve its vision. Anticipatory Action also reacts to a moral imperative: when information on impending disasters and proven ways to reduce their impact is available, it is not only sensible to act in anticipation – it is also the responsible course of action since this helps to prevent suffering.

Anticipatory Action would enable MI to leverage key institutional strengths. MI has already established important operational principles and approaches that are critical for Anticipatory Action: it has invested in the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus for many years; it is committed to advancing the localization agenda; some of its country offices are strongly invested in disaster risk reduction and preparedness; and certain incipient practices moving in the direction of Anticipatory Action are already in place. Building on these strengths, MI could achieve better outcomes for affected populations by making some adjustments to engage in Anticipatory Action more fully.

As part of the MIndful 2025 strategy, MI has identified its continued engagement in the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus and strengthening its expertise in this area as a strategic priority. At the country level, immediate humanitarian and longer-term development goals are often linked, and particularly in displacement contexts (including in Uganda and Pakistan), MI is also involved in projects on peace and social cohesion. Having both development and humanitarian experience, the organization is well positioned to engage in Anticipatory Action – which requires a longer-term presence in a particular context, as well as a focus on the (potential) humanitarian impacts of different hazards, often on a much shorter timescale. Due to its engagement along the Nexus, MI has already established close relationships with communities and local partners, which are necessary to identify suitable

anticipatory actions in the event that hazards materialize and also to implement these actions when the early-warning data reaches the agreed trigger threshold.

In addition, MI can also build on its experiences with participatory approaches as well as its partner approach, which supports the localization of the response. Community engagement and people-centered approaches are both a result of and a requirement for effective contingency planning, including the development of appropriate Anticipatory Action Protocols. In general, due to their mandate and expertise, NGOs are often better positioned than larger UN agencies (for example) to work closely with communities and to engage in capacity-sharing activities. MI strongly supports putting people at the center of humanitarian assistance in order to promote dignity, such as by following the People First Impact Method (P-FIM) in different countries, including Bangladesh, Kenya, and Uganda,⁴³

Similarly, Anticipatory Action can help to advance the localization agenda, and localized approaches are also often necessary to implement anticipatory actions successfully. MI has adopted a partner approach to project implementation in order to support localization. It therefore has relevant expertise in this area, as well as relevant networks of local partners who could support the implementation of anticipatory actions and who already have experience with Anticipatory Action in some cases.

Anticipatory Action is part of the broader Disaster Risk Management Cycle and contributes to Disaster Risk Reduction. Many humanitarian financing instruments make funding for Anticipatory Action contingent on having basic DRR infrastructure in place.⁴⁴ Likewise, aid organizations are more suited to engaging in Anticipatory Action if they have an understanding of DRR, and ideally some experience in preparedness as well. MI brings this to the table, as several country offices have experience in DRR and preparedness, and partners and peers recognize them as important actors in the field.

MI is strong in areas where Anticipatory Action still experiences gaps. MI's past practice and expertise, as well as its MIndful 2025 strategy, focus on health as a sector priority as well as on working with displaced people and persons with disabilities. In the country case studies, these areas emerged as important gaps in the current Anticipatory Action ecosystem. This means that MI is well placed to find its niche and to make a distinct contribution to the Anticipatory Action landscape.

A general understanding of the importance of linking health risks and Anticipatory Action, and related engagement at the international level, have been increasing. For example, the Anticipation Hub hosts two working groups on Anticipatory Action and health: one for the RCRC Movement only, and one multi-agency working group co-chaired by the RCRC Climate Centre and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF).⁴⁵ The topics discussed include approaches to predicting health outcomes, linking early warnings to early action, and ensuring community engagement. Nevertheless, Anticipatory Action champions in Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda have confirmed that health is still often omitted in existing Anticipatory Action approaches, both in terms of health activities linked to other climate-related hazards as well as preventing health emergencies by means of anticipatory public health actions. In all four countries, other stakeholders strongly associate MI with health. Focusing on the health effects of other hazards as well as potentially helping to develop Anticipatory Action Frameworks

43 Malteser International, "Putting People at the Center of Our Humanitarian Aid," accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.malteser-international.org/en/about-us/how-we-work/standards.html>.

44 Juan Chaves-Gonzalez et al., "Anticipatory Action: Lessons for the Future," *Frontiers in Climate* 4 (2022), <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fclim.2022.932336>.

45 For more information, see Anticipation Hub, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.anticipation-hub.org/exchange/working-groups/on-anticipatory-action-and-health>.

for health emergencies could therefore be a good starting point for MI's engagement in Anticipatory Action.

When it comes to the focus on supporting displaced populations, organizations engaged in Anticipatory Action in each country confirmed that they would benefit from MI's experience to apply more conflict-sensitive approaches. The organization is already active in addressing emergencies in regions with displaced populations and its footprint is recognized as important. This includes program operations in all four case-study countries. Linking Anticipatory Action and displacement due to weather and climate-related hazards, conflict, or violence is an emerging topic in the Anticipatory Action community that would benefit from more experienced actors driving the agenda forward. MI could help to fill this gap in existing Anticipatory Action Protocols – for example, by targeting displaced populations or by expanding Anticipatory Action Protocols to regions with high numbers of displaced people.

Another important priority for MI is its focus on inclusion, and especially on working with persons with disabilities. Country offices aim to place special emphasis on supporting persons with disabilities, including when moving toward Anticipatory Action. As a member of the Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction Network (DiDRRN), that MI initiated more than ten years ago, the organization is engaged in an ongoing multi-year project⁴⁶ on strengthening the capacities of persons with disabilities in the context of disaster risk reduction. While the fact that marginalized groups might have specific vulnerabilities is generally widely recognized and undisputed in humanitarian action, this does not automatically translate into enhancing inclusion in new and ongoing programs – and the global Anticipatory Action ecosystem is no exception to this.

Engaging in Anticipatory Action would help Malteser International to sharpen its profile as a humanitarian actor and would support the implementation of the MIndful 2025 strategy:

- Anticipatory Action works best when it is grounded in national and local leadership, supporting existing efforts led by government and civil society organizations. It is therefore an important approach in strengthening localization. Since systems and structures for Anticipatory Action are currently being built, this is a unique opportunity to establish them in a way that enables local leadership from the very beginning.
- Planning for Anticipatory Action takes place before a hazard strikes. This allows more time to consult and involve affected people and makes it possible to design actions in a more people-centered way than is the case with reactive humanitarian relief interventions, which are typically designed and implemented in the heat of the moment.
- Anticipatory Action requires engagement from development and humanitarian as well as climate and peacebuilding actors. Therefore, such action has the potential both to build on and to strengthen the HDP-Nexus approach that is already a priority for Malteser International.

Overall, active engagement at this moment in time would enable Malteser International to expand its networks and partnerships with peers and to increase its visibility in the humanitarian sector. A greater focus on Anticipatory Action also has the potential to enable access to additional funding sources.

⁴⁶ Malteser International, "Inclusive Humanitarian Disaster Risk Reduction," accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.malteser-international.org/en/our-work/africa/uganda/inclusive-disaster-risk-reduction.html>.

A Roadmap to Introduce Anticipatory Action at Malteser International

Systematically introducing Anticipatory Action at Malteser International is a sensible way forward for various reasons: it responds to a moral imperative to reduce the humanitarian impacts of imminent forecasted hazards and has proven to be an effective way of doing so; MI is well placed to fill gaps in the current Anticipatory Action landscape and can add value in ways others cannot; and it is a timely moment for MI to get involved in Anticipatory Action, as MI seeks to develop a clearer humanitarian profile.

MI is well placed to fill gaps in the current Anticipatory Action landscape and can add value in ways others cannot.

Systematically introducing Anticipatory Action at Malteser International is also feasible, since key factors are largely within the organization's control. To do so, MI needs to define its own approach – one that fits with the realities of the different contexts, the organization's capacity, and the evolving Anticipatory Action ecosystem. For practical implementation, seeking out new sources of funding is as necessary as developing broad ownership and capacity within MI and among its partners. These and other conditions for successfully introducing and scaling Anticipatory Action at MI require various levels of effort and investment, but no substantial changes to the organization's strategic priorities, thematic and sectoral focus areas, decision-making processes, or the general division of labor between headquarters and the country offices. In short, increasing MI's engagement in Anticipatory Action does not require a revolution within the organization, but rather promises more positive impacts as a result of comparatively minor changes to operations and structures.

We recommend nine steps Malteser International should take to get started with Anticipatory Action.

The research team suggests nine concrete steps Malteser International – with headquarters in the lead - should take in its initial engagement with Anticipatory Action:

- 1 Reflect on the feasibility study and its findings:** Very simply, MI should use the feasibility study as a starting point to discuss and reflect on the opportunities and challenges involved in introducing Anticipatory Action. It should ensure that country teams can provide input.
- 2 Provide a general sense of direction on Anticipatory Action:** Senior management – the Secretary General and his deputy, the Director of Programs and Operations, as well as the program heads – must define the way forward. This does not necessarily entail deciding on all the details, but rather providing a general sense of direction in terms of what MI wants to achieve with Anticipatory Action and how it intends to accomplish these goals.
- 3 Mobilize resources and decide how to fund anticipatory actions:** MI is well placed to mobilize funding to build Anticipatory Action capacities, systems, and processes. MI needs to complement this resource-mobilization effort by deciding which options to pursue in financing the implementation of anticipatory actions.

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- 4** **Develop Anticipatory Action guideline:** MI needs to spell out its approach in detail by creating Anticipatory Action guidelines to define its approaches, decision-making processes, and roles and responsibilities. These guidelines should establish minimum standards and good practices in how MI intends to implement Anticipatory Action projects, while also allowing sufficient flexibility to adapt to local circumstances.

 - 5** **Invest in targeted capacity-building and learning opportunities:** Anticipatory Action requires investments in capacity building to ensure that everyone involved shares the same understanding and grasps the technical aspects of the approach. Enabling country-level staff to assess opportunities for Anticipatory Action and to represent MI in networks and partnerships is key. This should be done in coordination with other Anticipatory Action actors.

 - 6** **Select pilot locations:** The research team has proposed a step-by-step guide to help determine where MI should engage in Anticipatory Action and what the various country teams should do, depending on how they answer the key questions contained in the guide (see below). The specific ways in which MI engages in Anticipatory Action hinge on various factors that must be considered jointly with the respective country team(s).

 - 7** **Network and seek partnerships at the international level:** Anticipatory Action requires partnerships. MI can use well-established entry points and engage in global forums to follow current developments concerning the approach and to share its own experiences.

 - 8** **Establish an internal community of practice to reflect on experiences:** Staff members who work on Anticipatory Action should have a platform where they can exchange their views and experiences. This can be as simple as an online forum. Whatever the format, this platform should also be given visibility throughout the organization.

 - 9** **Establish structures to report back on lessons learned:** The results of monitoring and evaluating Anticipatory Action activities, as well as the general lessons learned by MI and its partners, should be shared regularly and in a coordinated way within the organization. This is critical for distilling good practices and avoiding mistakes in the future.
-

We recommend a step-by-step country selection guide to deciding where to start engaging in Anticipatory Action - and what to do.

A range of criteria influences how sensible it is for MI to pilot Anticipatory Action in a given location. We have developed a step-by-step guide to make it easier for MI staff to determine where Anticipatory Action could be piloted relatively easily and with limited up-front investments. MI's approach should initially focus on only a few locations and a few hazards; this will allow time for organizational change to take place and will also enable MI to gradually build up a track record that will help to mobilize resources. Pilot locations should therefore be chosen carefully.

We start from the premise that MI should contribute to existing Anticipatory Action Frameworks or similar plans rather than developing any of its own. The first step is therefore to verify whether an Anticipatory Action Framework already exists in the target context. The next step is to check how MI's existing resources can contribute to this framework, and what else it could bring to the table.



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List of Interviews

Inception Interviews

Matthias Amling, Team Lead Anticipatory Humanitarian Action and Networking, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe

Rebekka Goeke, Program Manager Emergency Relief, Malteser International

Stefanie Lux, Anticipatory Action Lead, German Red Cross

Malteser International Bangladesh team: Safia Sarmin (MEAL Coordinator), Matin Shardar (Program and Partner coordinator), Arif Dewan (Senior Coordinator MEAL), Rajan Ghimire (Country Representative), Maren Paech (Program Manager ToGETHER!)

Malteser International Colombia team: Tom Vincent (former Country Coordinator), Carlos Ruiz (Country Coordinator), Jelena Kaifenheim (Team Leader Americas), Steve Ginther (Program Manager Americas), Helen Hayford (Program Manager Americas)

Malteser International Kenya team: Martin Schömburg (Country Coordinator), Daniel Bergfeld (Program Manager Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda)

Malteser International Pakistan team: Fayyaz Shah (Country Coordinator), Markus Haake (Project Manager for Pakistan and Afghanistan), Simon Schmid (former Program Officer)

Malteser International Uganda team: Daniela Krings (Program Manager Uganda), Amandine Desaunay (Country Coordinator)

Organizational Assessment

Albert Gisore, Regional WASH Advisor, Malteser International

Clemens Graf von Mirbach-Harff, Secretary General, Malteser International

Cordula Wasser, Team Leader Asia, Malteser International

Janine Lietmeyer, Director of Programs and Operations, Malteser International

Jelena Kaifenheim, Team Leader Americas, Malteser International

Kai Pohlmann, Team Leader Organizational Development, Quality und Knowledge Management, Malteser International

Kathrin Münker, Team Leader Communications, Malteser International

Ludmila Lobkowicz, Global Health Advisor, Malteser International

Maren Paech, Regional Program Coordinator ToGETHER!, Malteser International

Matthias Witt, Strategic Lead, Business Development, Malteser International

Oliver Hochedez, Head of Emergency Relief Team, Malteser International

Roland Hansen, Head of Regional Group Africa, Malteser International

Sandra Schäfer, Head of Finance & Administration, Malteser International

Sophia Löwenstein, Director of Impact, Malteser International

Thomas Weiß, Team Leader Middle East, Malteser International

Yahya Abu-Yahya, Team Leader Program Operations, Malteser International

Bangladesh (October 7-20, 2023)

Abdul Hays Sarkar, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO)

Abdur Razzaque Khan, Medical Coordinator, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)

Abu Murshed Chowdhury, Director, PHALS

Ahmadul Haque, Deputy Secretary, Director, Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP), Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Atika Khan, Advocacy, Policy & Communication Officer, SUFAL Project, Humanitarian and Climate Action Program, CARE Bangladesh

Atwar Rahman, Head of Humanitarian Action and Disaster Resilience, Oxfam

Emamul Haque, Head of Program, BRAC Bangladesh

Iqbal Hossein, CONCERN Worldwide
Iqbal Hossein, CONCERN Worldwide
Kaiser Rejve, Director, Humanitarian & Climate Action Program, CARE Bangladesh
Lutfar Rahman, Chilmari Distressed Development Foundation (CDDF)
Matiur Rahaman, Project Coordinator, Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK)
Md. Shahjahan (Saju), Assistant Director & Project Coordinator, FBF Project, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS)
Mohammad Shamsuzzaman, Christian Aid
Mohammad, Sharif Khan, Senior Officer Livelihood, Disaster Preparedness and Anticipatory Action, IFRC
Mohammed Sohel, National Consultant, UNFPA
Monowar Hossain, Project Manager, Mohideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS)
Nazmul Bari, Director, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)
Niger Dilnaha, World Food Programm
Pankaj Kumar, Country Director Welthungerhilfe
Rashaidul Hasan, Upazilla Nirbahi Officer (UNO)
Sarder Udoy Raihan, Executive Engineer (C.C.), Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, Bangladesh Water Development Board
Sayda Yesmin, Association for Alternative Development, Executive Director, AFAD
Sazzad Ansari, Programme Coordinator, Disaster Risk Management, American Red Cross/IFRC
Shiful Islam, Project Manager SD/DRR Project, CARE Bangladesh
Shofiul Alam, Program Coordinator, Start Fund Bangladesh
Tanjimul Alam Arif, Disaster Response Management Officer, ISCG/FAO
Tapan Kumar Chakraborty, Deputy Country Director, Programs, Action Against Hunger
Uday Shankar Dey, Finance and Administration Officer, Japanese Red Cross/IFRC
(Focus) group discussion with 8+ adolescents in Kurigram
(Focus) group discussion with representatives from eight different women organizations operating in Kurigram

Kenya (November 08-17, 2023)

Ahmed Amdihun, Regional Programme Manager - DRM/DRR, Climate Resilience, Geospatial data & analysis, Environmental systems modeling, ICPAC / IGAD
Bakari Mwachakure, Assistant Director, NDMA
Beatrice Tora, Programme Officer Nutrition, PACIDA
Brenda Lazarus, Food Security and Early Warning Economist,, FAO
Camilla Schynoll, Development Economist, Expert Programmes, WHH
Chris Mabonga, County WASH Extender, Unicef/MOH
Darare Gonche, Partnerships & Technical Advisor, IREMO
Dida Ali, Nawiri Programme, CRS
Eric Muhia, Regional Project Lead, Sign of Hope / Hoffnungszeichen
Festus Yambu, Project Coordinator -Forecast-based Action, WHH
Florence Mwangi, Partner Project Coordinator, Malteser International
Franciscar Rionokou, Program Associate, Anticipatory Action Operational Support Officer, WFP
Janeth Ahatho, County Director, Environment and Natural Ressources Management
Joy China, Health Programme Manager, Malteser International
Julius Gitu, County Director, Agriculture Department
Jurg Wilbrink, AA Coordinator Africa, IFRC
Kennedy Lagat, Coordinator Marsabit / Isiolo, FAO
Kim Kristensen, AA on conflict-sensitive programmes and displacement, FAO

Kristine Hansen, WASH Sector Coordinator and WASH specialist, UNICEF
 Lokho Abduba, Executive Director, IREMO
 Mark Arango, Anticipatory Action Specialist, WFP
 Martin Schoenburg, Country Coordinator, Malteser International
 Patrick Elliott, Operations Manager, IFRC
 Patrick Katelo, Director, PACIDA
 Robert Osborne, East Africa Representative, Sign of Hope / Hoffnungszeichen
 Samwel Lentoror, Programmes Coordinator, PACIDA
 Sergio Innocente, Early Warning Early Actions, Preparedness and Response Advisor, FAO

Pakistan (November 6-16, 2023)

Aamir Kalim, Director Emergency, Care International
 Abbas Ali, Field Officer, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
 Adil Sheraz, Country Director, Care International
 Aisha Jamshed, Country Director, Welthungerhilfe
 Ali Akbar Panhwar, Chief Executive Officer, Ghorak Foundation
 Amir Malik, Head of Programs, Concern Worldwide
 Ammar Saleem, Finance and Grants Coordinator, Malteser International
 Amna Khan, HR Coordinator, Malteser International
 Ana Dizon, Early Warning and Anticipatory Action Specialist, FAO
 Ashfaq Akbhar Khaskhaili, Project Coordinator, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
 Asif Ali Sherazi, Country Director, Islamic Relief
 Asif Aman Khan, Head of Office, German Red Cross
 Asim Zia, Professor of Public Policy & Computer Science, University of Vermont
 Badar-ul-Nisa, Community Manager, Ghorak Foundation
 Bahar Ali, Sector Advisor Humanitarian, Welthungerhilfe
 Bashir Ahmed, Project Coordinator, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
 Bilal Anwar, CEO, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF)
 Burhan Ullah, Coordinator WASH, Pakistan Medical Corps
 Chris Ball, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
 Col .R. Raza Iqbal, Director Implementatiotn (DRR), NDMA
 Ekram Memon, M&E Officer, Ghorak Foundation
 Falak Nawaz, Chief Executive Officer, Pakistan Network of Disaster Management Practitioners (NDMP)
 Farhan A. Khan, Country Director, CESVI
 Farida Kasuyo, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA
 Fayyaz Shah, Country Coordinator, Malteser International
 Ghulam Sughra Solangi, Chief Executive Officer, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
 Gulam Raza Narejo, Deputy Country Director, Islamic Relief
 Gulshan Rasheed, Area Coordinator/Health Coordinator, Malteser International
 Habib Wardeg, Advisor Food, Security and Livelihoods and Cash and Voucher Assistance, Save the Children
 Haris Bin Riaz, Project Coordinator, Welthungerhilfe
 Hazrat Rehman, Deputy Director FbF, Pakistan Red Crescent Society
 Imran Sharif, Fund Manager a.i. CBPF, OCHA
 Isabel Bogorinsky, Head of Programmes, Welthungerhilfe
 Jamil Ansari, IDSR consultant (Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response) , World Health Organization (WHO)

Jamil Butt, Operations Coordinator, Malteser International
Kamal Ali, Consultant NDRMF, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF)
Kamran Majeed Khan, Area Manager Sindh, Malteser International
Khadija Abid, Programme Policy Officer, Anticipatory Action, World Food Programme (WFP)
Mahr Sahibzad Khan, Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD)
Mohammad Kazim, Project Coordinator, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Mubashir Hassan, DP-DRR Expert Sindh, Welthungerhilfe
Muhammad Abrar, MEAL Coordinator, Malteser International
Muhammad Amad, Chairperson National Humanitarian Network Pakistan; Executive Director Initiative for Development and Empowerment Axis (IDEA), READY Pakistan
Muhammad Atif Khan, FbF Project Manager, German Red Cross
Muhammad Fawad Hayat, Deputy General Manager, Head – Climate Change, National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF)
Muhammad Jan Odhano, Chief Executive Officer, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Muhammad Qaswar Abbas, Program Delegate, German Red Cross
Musa Rahim, National Professional Officer (NPO), Diseases surveillance and response section, World Health Organization (WHO)
Nabeela Sikander, Head of DRR & Emergency, Action Against Hunger
Naeem Iqbal, Social Protection, Resilience and Cash Transfer Expert, FAO
Naimatullah Sawand, Manager Monitoring, Evaluation & Research; Project Focal Person Malteser International, Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO)
Niaz Ahmed, Program Officer, Ghorak Foundation
Rabia Sanam, MHPSS Officer/ Psychologist, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
Saba Saqlain, Deputy Director, Programmes, German Red Cross
Sajjad Ali, Project Coordinator, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Saleem Hussain, Project Officer DRR, ACTED
Salem Tanussi, Community Member, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Salman Ali, Manager Programs, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
Sana Zulfiqar, Project Coordinator, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)
Sayed Suhaib, Training Officer, ACTED
Shabir Ahmed Pechuho, Program Manager, Community Development Foundation (CDF)
Shahzada Adnan, Deputy Director, Senior Meteorologist, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD)
Shahzaib Hussain, Senior Manager Admin & Logistics, Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO)
Shireen Fatima, Field Officer, Marvi Rural Development Organization (MRDO)
Syed Shahid Kazmi, Country Coordinator, Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF)
Syed Sulaiman, Senior Emergency and DRR advisor, Concern Worldwide
Waheed Shah, Country Director Pakistan, Solidarités International
Wasim Durrani, Business Development, Care International
Zaki Ullah, Chief Executive Officer, GLOW Consultants
Zohaib Durrani, SFDRR Specialist, NDMA
Zulaih Khan, Project Coordinator, Community Development Foundation (CDF)

Uganda (October 16-26, 2023)

Aceng Linda, Project Field Officer, Kulika
Adongi Naume, Field Assistant, Malteser International
Alitia Elia, Executive Director, The Victim Relief Alliance (TVRA)
Alokore Aziz, Biostatistician, acting Planner, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Amandine Desaunay, Country Coordinator, Malteser International

Ambrose Naturinda, Project Officer, Emergency Medical Services, Malteser International

Amen Emmanuel, Project Manager, Kulika

Anita Acon, Communications Manager, Malteser International

Arumadri Eric, District Water Officer, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Asedri Lilian Ayikorou, Acting Commercial Officer, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Asubo Lawrence, Field Assistant, Malteser International

Atibumi Festur, Senior Project Officer, ZOA

Ayumi YASUDA, Coordination Analyst, UNRCO

Baluku Calvin, Community Development Officer, Kasese District Local Government

Baluku Peter, Coordinator, Kasese District Association of Persons with Disabilities (KADUPEDI)

Bekir Yildiz, Associate Information Management Officer, UNHCR

Bogere Robert, Senior Hydrologist, Directorate of Water Resources Management (Ministry of Water and Environment)

Brian Bilal M. Kanaahe, Director for Disaster Risk Management, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS)

Cédric Quint, Project Manager, Malteser International

David Kataratambi, Senior Water Officer, Directorate of Water Resources Management (Ministry of Water and Environment)

Deus Manyana, Director Applied Meteorology, Data and Climate Services, Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA)

Dominique Reumkens, Programme Specialist, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Dr. Angupale George Okoboa, Acting District Health Officer, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Dr. John Baptist Waniaye Nambohe, Commissioner Health Services / Emergency Medical Services, Ministry of Health

Emmanuela Gore, Project Manager, Malteser International

Enima Christopher, District Production Officer, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Ezaruku Kazimiro, CAO, Chief Administrative Officer, Chair of DDMC, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo

Faith Kirungi, Assistant Information Management Officer, UNHCR

Fenahasi Egua, Project Officer, Kulika

Finnah Arinda, ECHO

Francis Iwa, Executive Director, CAFOMI

Gboghah Matthew Tarr, Country Operations Coordinator, Malteser International

George Aribo, Programme Coordinator, Emergency preparedness focal person, Welthungerhilfe

Harriet Aber, Makerere University School of Public Health (MaSPH)

Irene Amuron, Anticipatory Action Lead, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre

Irene Gimbo, Programme Assistant, Welthungerhilfe

James Bataze, Principal Meteorologist, Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA)

James Terjanian, Food Security and Livelihood Coordinator, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Jimmy Idere, Project Officer, Malteser International

Jimmy Ogwang, Senior Disaster Management Officer, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

Joseph Buga, Field Assistant, Malteser International

Joseph Wandera, National Emergency Preparedness and Response Manager, Save the Children

Josephat Muhindo, Executive Director, Karambi Group Of People with Disabilities

Julius Kijali, Partner Project Manager, Malteser International

Kajimu Athmah, Senior Water Officer, Directorate of Water Resources Management (Ministry of Water and Environment)

Kintu Khalid, Assistant Settlement Commander, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
Kooli Augustine, Senior Environment Officer, Kasese District Local Government
Leonie Stamm, Project Assistant, Malteser International
Magnus Bruun Rasmussen, Head of Partnerships Development, WFP
Marx Leku, Programme Manager, The Victim Relief Alliance (TVRA)
Michael Milton Waiswa, Director at Directorate of Weather and Climate, Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA)
Mike Bruce, Forum Director, HINGO
Morris Ayikanying, Programmes Coordinator, CAFOMI
Nelson Aditia, Seed Effect Uganda
Nkundizana Abbas Isma, Senior Hydrogeologist, Directorate of Water Resources Management (Ministry of Water and Environment)
Onzima William, District Natural Resources Officer, District Disaster Management Committee Madi Okollo
Otude Joseph Anthony, Project Manager, Welthungerhilfe
Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach, Head, Department of Community Health and Behavioural Sciences, Makerere University School of Public Health (MaSPH)
Annet Babirye, Project Officer, Malteser International
Queen Asiimwe, Community Development Officer, Kasese District Local Government
Rekha Shrestha, Partnership / Development Finance Officer, UNRCO
Robert Komakech, MEAL Coordinator, Malteser International
Robinah Letiru, Field Assistant, Malteser International
Ronald Kanyerezi, Branch Manager, Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS)
Shammah Arinaitwe, Project Coordinator, BRAC
Solomon Osakan, Senior Settlement Officer + Refugee Desk Officer, Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)
Stella Nagujja, WFP
Stephen Lumumba, Area Coordinator, West Nile, Malteser International
Tom Bazanye Kyobe, President, Association of Ambulance Professionals Uganda (AAPU)
Victoria Ojakoru, Field Assistant, Malteser International

Acknowledgments

The research team expresses gratitude to Rebekka Goeke and Fabian Halfpap from Malteser International for their essential support during the study, along with numerous colleagues from Bangladesh, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda who provided assistance during the country visits. We extend our thanks to all interviewees who participated in the study, generously sharing their insights with us.

Special appreciation is also extended to the Malteser International country offices and headquarters for their helpful comments on earlier drafts. We would like to acknowledge the outstanding editing by Alissa Jones Nelson and the valuable contributions from GPPi colleagues Katharina Nachbar, Marc Shkurovich and Sonya Sugrobova.

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Reinhardtstr. 7, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Phone +49 30 275 959 75-0

gppi@gppi.net

gppi.net