Pilot programmatic partnership

Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems

Context

Extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change, while conflicts are driving consistent and unsustainable increases in humanitarian needs. Combined they are pushing acute hunger to new heights, reaching a five-year high in 2020.

A strategic shift from responding to predictable shocks to anticipating their impacts has the potential to break the cycle of growing dependence on humanitarian aid. This approach – commonly known as anticipatory action – establishes risk monitoring systems linked to flexible finance and standard operating procedures by delivering support to protect people’s lives and livelihoods ahead of forecast shocks. Evidence shows that anticipating crises can curb food insecurity and increase resilience of vulnerable communities, while providing a more efficient and more dignified approach to managing crises.

Anticipatory action can be delivered through a variety of modalities, including through national social protection systems. Social protection systems consist of policies and programmes designed to address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Linking anticipatory action to social protection means making better use of existing infrastructure to reach and proactively support vulnerable populations ahead of forecast shocks. For instance, climate risk indicators can inform vulnerability analysis to pre-select potential beneficiaries at risk from a forecast hazard by leveraging social protection information management systems. Early warning information and triggers can be embedded into social protection programmes to ensure they are ready to act quickly when needed. When anticipatory action is triggered, existing social protection schemes can be scaled up to deliver assistance to pre-identified groups.

Integrating these two approaches has the potential to facilitate collaboration across sectors, protect development gains, strengthen coordination between humanitarian and development actors and national governments, and enhance the capacity of national stakeholders.

Recognizing the clear effectiveness of this approach, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) of the European Commission updated its disaster preparedness guidance note in 2021 to mainstream anticipatory action and social protection for risk-informed programming. Against this background, DG ECHO launched a Pilot Programmatic Partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as the leading agency on anticipatory action for agricultural livelihood protection, to explore and strengthen the critical link between these two approaches in a strategic manner.
Objectives

To promote a mutual strategic priority, scale up anticipatory action and support its institutionalisation, DG ECHO and FAO established a three-year Pilot Programmatic Partnership. In Year 1, the focus is on five countries in Asia with regional and global components. The partnership will focus on four objectives:

1. **Setting up anticipatory action systems and protocols**: identifying early warning triggers, suitable actions, pre-identified finance sources and the definition of clear roles and responsibilities to be able to act quickly ahead of a shock.

2. **Identifying suitable anticipatory action linkages to social protection systems**: exploring options for delivering anticipatory action through national social protection systems.

3. **Implementing anticipatory actions ahead of shocks**: protecting the most vulnerable through the implementation of anticipatory action by delivering cash, inputs, agro-advisory messages and training, including through national social protection systems.

4. **Strengthening the evidence-base and advancing learning**: improving anticipatory action programming and informing global advocacy.

This partnership builds on ongoing work and partnerships at the global, regional and local levels. For example, at the regional level, it will support the implementation of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response Work Programme**. At the global and regional levels, progress and results will be shared and discussed with humanitarian and development partners, such as the **Anticipatory Action Task Force** members (FAO, the World Food Programme, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Start Network, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), the **Risk-informed Early Action Partnership**, the **Anticipation Hub** and the regional technical working groups on anticipatory action, among others.

**Geographic coverage**

**Bangladesh, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam** with regional and global components (with potential expansion to other geographic areas and hazards during 2022)

**Planned duration**

**August 2021 to July 2024 approximately**

(depending on yearly review)

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