



STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE THROUGH EARLY WARNING AND ANTICIPATORY ACTION:

The IFRC Network's Role and Value-Add

THE CLIMATE CRISIS DEMANDS URGENT, LOCALLY-LED ACTION

Year after year, the climate crisis continues to break new records, resulting in more frequent and extreme weather events, with the number of people affected by disasters increasing by 71 per cent decade-on-decade¹. These events disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, including in low- and

middle-income countries, informal urban areas and displacement camps and settings.

Early warning systems and anticipatory action have systematically proven to save lives, protect livelihoods and reduce disaster costs^{2,3} and are a critical solution for reducing disaster risk and adapting to climate change⁴.

¹ Global-status-of-multi-hazard-early-warning-systems-2024.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Evidence Database for Anticipatory Action - Anticipation Hub

⁴ IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf

IFRC'S ROLE IN DRIVING CHANGE

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is a global leader in advancing people-centred early warning and anticipatory action. With a network of 191 National Societies, 197,000 local branches and over 16 million volunteers, the IFRC network bridges the gap between communities and national early warning systems, ensuring warnings are actionable, reach people and people are equipped to act. National Societies are uniquely positioned to link governments and communities, leveraging their auxiliary role to authorities and their extensive long-term grassroots presence. IFRC enables National Societies to access funding automatically based on forecasts. This ensures they can act quickly with communities to protect lives and livelihoods before the impact hits. The system is locally owned, placing National Societies and communities at the centre of decision-making and action.

Building on decades of experience and feedback from communities and governments, the IFRC network's key objectives include:

- Ensure early warning and anticipatory action are effectively embedded within national and local disaster risk management (DRM) systems
- Ensure early warnings reach everyone and are trusted, understandable and actionable for all
- Ensure early warning leads to anticipatory action
- Promote people-centred approaches that prioritize locally led action and the most vulnerable

IFRC actively works to integrate its early warning and anticipatory action initiatives with longer-term disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation efforts, creating synergies across timescales that enhance community resilience and ensure sustainable outcomes.

IFRC seeks to ensure that people at risk of exclusion or harm, including women, girls, persons with disabilities, older people, and other marginalized groups, are meaningfully included in the design, targeting and delivery of early warning and anticipatory actions.



** IFRC uses the terms "early action" and "anticipatory action" synonymously, referring to actions taken based on forecasts or early warnings to prevent or reduce the impact of disasters before they occur.*

To learn more www.ifrc.org/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction

ENABLING EFFECTIVE ANTICIPATORY ACTION THROUGH THREE TRACKS

For early warning systems to effectively reduce disaster impacts, they must not only inform communities of impending hazards but also enable timely and effective anticipatory action. To ensure no one is left behind, redundancy is essential - IFRC works along three complementary tracks to achieve this:

1

Citizen-Led Approach – Empowering individuals and communities to act independently when early warnings are issued without relying on external assistance from actors such as the Red Cross and Red Crescent:

- Enhancing community preparedness and response capacities: Equip individuals and communities with the knowledge, skills, resources and tools they need to act ahead of hazards. This includes providing public education, training, timely alerts and practical guidance for life- and livelihood-saving measures.
- Strengthening engagement and building trust in early warnings: Engage individuals in co-developing community early warning systems to ensure they are trusted, understandable, culturally relevant and actionable.



This approach fosters agency and ownership, enabling communities to reduce their risks without relying solely on external support.

2

Humanitarian / Development Approach – Ensuring National Societies can support the most vulnerable individuals and communities who may lack the capacity to act on their own:

- Enhancing National Society preparedness and anticipatory action capacities: Strengthen the preparedness of National Societies to deliver timely and effective assistance to mitigate the impacts of predicted disasters.
- Promoting pre-agreed support: Ensure National Societies are equipped with pre-agreed protocols, tied to pre-approved financing, to provide resources like cash transfers, emergency kits, or temporary shelters to those unable to act independently due to financial, physical, or social barriers.



This approach ensures that those who cannot act alone receive the necessary support to stay safe and reduce disaster impacts.

3

Effective Disaster Risk Governance – Supporting public authorities to strengthen their legal and regulatory frameworks and disaster risk management systems which underpin effective early warning and anticipatory action.

- Advising public authorities in drafting strong domestic laws, policies and plans at the national and local levels.
- Supporting government officials in strengthening their knowledge of domestic legal and regulatory frameworks, and in implementing them in practice.



This approach ensures sustainable early warning and anticipatory action through strong, locally grounded legal and institutional frameworks.



To learn more

www.ifrc.org/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction

THE IFRC NETWORK'S COMPREHENSIVE ROLE IN EARLY WARNING AND ANTICIPATORY ACTION

The IFRC network plays a crucial role in strengthening and scaling people-centred, multi-hazard early warning systems, with efforts cutting across the four pillars of effective early warning systems:

1. Disaster Risk Knowledge:

- Supporting communities to conduct risk assessments that inform community action plans using the IFRC's enhanced Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (EVCA) methodology.
- Producing national and subnational risk analyses for all weather-related hazards including through the use of Montandon, the world's largest disaster database, and analyzing past impacts and risk data to set forecast thresholds that trigger anticipatory action.
- Undertaking risk perception studies to understand how communities perceive risks.

2. Detection, Monitoring and Forecasting:

- Through Community Early Warning Systems, supporting communities in monitoring hazards and collaborating with meteorological and hydrological agencies to ensure two-way sharing of information.

- Empowering communities to collect local data and share vulnerability and exposure data with NMHS.

3. Warning Dissemination and Communication:

- Ensuring alerts reach the 'last mile' by amplifying their distribution through trusted channels, including to people in vulnerable situations or who aren't digitally connected, and making sure alerts are understood.
- Working with authorities and communities to contextualize IFRC's standard messages on how to respond to warnings, ensuring clear and practical guidance for effective public action.
- Making these messages widely accessible via IFRC's What Now National Society Preparedness Messages Platform so that they can be integrated into official alerts and enabling broader distribution through online media, including Google, to drive timely public response.
- Advocating for the use of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) to standardize alerts, including by leveraging IFRC's Alert Hub.

4. Preparedness to Respond to Warnings:

- Undertaking public awareness and public education campaigns to ensure people know what action to take in response to warnings.



To learn more www.ifrc.org/climate-smart-disaster-risk-reduction

- National Societies identify and implement preparedness and readiness actions using the IFRC's Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) approach.
- Supporting the development of pre-approved financing systems, such as Early Action Protocols (EAP) and pre-positioning resources to enable National Societies' rapid response following alerts based on community needs, with pre-approved funding from the IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) anticipatory pillar.
- Organizing, training and testing community response teams, including through simulations and drills.
- In countries advancing EW4All, supporting national Pillar 4 leads to coordinate Pillar 4 activities and stakeholders.

5. Cross-cutting areas

- Supporting and systematizing Community Early Warning Systems (CEWS) to equip at-risk communities with the knowledge, skills and tools to monitor hazards and take anticipatory action, particularly in remote, underserved or marginalized areas, and ensuring they complement national systems with information flowing in both directions.
- As auxiliaries to their public authorities, supporting the strengthening of disaster risk governance and advocating for the integration of early warning and anticipatory action into disaster risk management laws, policies, operational plans and funding mechanisms at all levels.
- Establishing feedback mechanisms on how community members use alerts – for instance whether they are received, trusted, understood and whether they led to action.

ADVANCING THE VISION OF EARLY WARNINGS FOR ALL (EW4ALL)

As the global lead for Pillar 4: Preparedness to Respond to Warnings under the UN-led EW4All initiative, the IFRC is committed to ensuring that early warnings translate into anticipatory action by and for the most vulnerable communities. In addition to its Pillar 4 lead role, IFRC is actively engaged in pillars 1 and 3 and working to ensure the connections across the early warning system value chain. Importantly, the IFRC network is the only lead agency with a permanent presence and access at the local level, placing communities at the centre of action.

Through EW4All, the IFRC:

- Promotes public awareness and education to ensure individuals know how to respond when warnings are issued.
- Supports authorities in strengthening disaster risk governance and anticipatory action through strong legal and regulatory frameworks
- Promotes preparedness/anticipatory action plans, empowering local responders and communities to act effectively on early warnings.
- Strengthens the connection between national systems and local actors to ensure early warnings lead to anticipatory action.



Collaborating with the other EW4All Pillar leads (UNDRR, WMO and ITU) and a range of partners, IFRC promotes a country-led, multi-stakeholder and people-centred approach to EWS to foster sustainability, reach and lasting impact.

NETWORK OF EXPERTISE

The IFRC network draws on expertise across its global reach:

- 191 National Societies, 197,000 local branches and over 16 million volunteers
- The Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre provides expertise on climate science required for the development of robust anticipatory action plans.
- The Anticipation Hub fosters learning and knowledge exchange related to anticipatory action.
- The Global Disaster Preparedness Centre (GDPC) supports innovation and learning in disaster preparedness, including early warning and early action.
- 510 supports the development of anticipatory action plans through data services and digital tools.
- IFRC hosts and is a member of the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) to strengthen collaboration between development, climate and humanitarian stakeholders.

BE PART OF THE CHANGE

Collaborate

Partner with the IFRC network to test, implement and scale early warning and anticipatory action approaches.

Contribute

Bring your expertise, data, or tools to strengthen anticipatory systems that are inclusive, evidence-based and sustainable.

Connect

Join our community of practice to share lessons, innovations, and best practices across the IFRC network and beyond.

IFRC's Global Climate Resilience Platform aims to channel CHF 1 billion into locally led climate action that protects the most vulnerable — with early warning and anticipatory action at its core.

Even modest contributions can go far: CHF 100,000 can support early warning and anticipatory action efforts for over 3,000 people.

Join us in scaling up these transformative solutions. Together, we can empower communities to act ahead of crises and thrive in the face of climate challenges.



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>> www.ifrc.org/early-warning-early-action
>> *Early Warning and Anticipatory Action Resource Hub*