



Pilot phase Review: IFRC-DREF simplified Early Action Protocol 2022-2025

Desk Review and Qualitative Research Study by the IFRC-DREF and American Red Cross

Summary report, November 2025

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Executive summary

In 2022, the IFRC-DREF introduced the simplified early action protocol (sEAP) modality to offer a lighter and simpler way for National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies to access funding for anticipatory action. Since then, 46 sEAPs were submitted to the IFRC-DREF by 39 National Societies, and almost half, 21 sEAPs, had been approved by June 2025. Of these, 5 sEAPs activated during this period (Djibouti Floods, Kazakhstan Cold Wave, Greece Heatwave, Nigeria Floods and Nepal Floods).

After three years of pilot implementation, this review aims to gather evidence on sEAP performance, capture good practices and challenges, and support learning for future delivery. It considers the overall design of the sEAP modality, assessing its relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency. The review is largely based on qualitative methodology, including analysis of available sEAP documentation and collection and analysis of 36 semi-structured interviews with representatives of National Societies, Partner National Societies, IFRC headquarters, regional offices and delegations and the Climate Centre.

Relevance

The sEAP is a step forward in meeting funding needs of National Societies for anticipatory action. The option to include funding for readiness and prepositioning addresses a particular gap in the wider anticipatory action landscape and makes the sEAPs an attractive and accessible modality for many National Societies.

National Societies are generally satisfied with the performance of the sEAP from development through to approval, though there has been limited experience with activations and revalidations of sEAPs due to how recent the modality was introduced. The main points of discontent for National Societies include lengthy review periods, limited training, inconsistent feedback across development, review and approval stages, and insufficient technical support. The modality largely also aligns with the priorities of Partner National Societies who support anticipatory action.

While the primary focus of the sEAP modality has been on weather-related events, there is growing interest in adapting the sEAP to support anticipatory action for non-weather-related hazards. Simplified templates and less stringent forecasting and trigger requirements make the sEAP modality particularly attractive for piloting anticipatory action for such hazards and the IFRC-DREF have produced new guidance to enable this. However, issues around whether sEAPs for non-weather related hazards are eligible to the IFRC-DREF anticipatory pillar, given the often blurry lines between anticipation and response, will need to be resolved to ensure that the sEAPs can remain a relevant and flexible tool for National Societies to access anticipatory action funding in the future.

Effectiveness

Since its introduction in 2022, the sEAP has attracted an ever-increasing number of annual submissions from NS, reaching 17 new submissions in 2024. On average, 11 new sEAPs have been submitted each year between 2022 and 2024. Critically, this includes submissions from National Societies who had not previously tried to access funding from the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory Pillar. Nonetheless, there remain opportunities for further growth of the sEAP modality. Nearly three quarters of National Societies who have accessed any type of IFRC-DREF funding since 2018 never submitted an sEAP (and nearly 60% have never submitted any EAP, neither simplified nor full).

The increasing number of sEAP submissions has translated to a growing number of newly approved sEAPs, reaching a total of 16 in June 2025. This growth is not to the detriment of the number of newly approved full EAPs, which has largely remained steady over the past five years. The introduction of simplified procedures and templates has contributed to this progress, making the sEAP development and approval processes more accessible and enabling stronger ownership of the protocols for a wider range of National Societies. The most challenging part of the sEAP template for National Societies remains the historical impact analysis and trigger threshold setting, complicated by the absence of a commonly understood and applied minimum standard for sEAP triggers.

As of June 2025, five sEAPs had been activated (Kazakhstan Cold Wave, Nigeria Floods, Greece Heatwave, Nepal Floods, Djibouti Floods), but the hazard event only materialised in the first three cases. For two out of these three, the activation was much closer to the event than the planned lead time, resulting in missed opportunities to help protect people from imminent events. In total, the sEAP modality had reached at least 176,736 people with early action activities by June 2025. This includes 108,217 people informed by early warnings via social media and 68,519 people supported with other activities such as cash transfers (Nigeria floods), the provision of food and non-food household items (Kazakhstan cold wave) and health services (Greece heatwave). It was not possible (nor the objective of this review) to assess outcomes and impacts of these activities on people and their livelihoods. Doing so would require more specific impact evaluations.

Despite the growing number of sEAPs, the absolute amount of funding and the share of how much money is approved for the sEAP modality compared to other IFRC-DREF funding modalities for anticipatory action remains modest. The total sum of funding earmarked for those five sEAPs that have been activated to date amounts to nearly CHF 1.1 million, though not all of this was spent.

The sEAP modality increases direct access for National Societies to some funding for anticipatory action, but on its own is insufficient to meet funding needs for more extreme events and for larger National Societies with strong capacity to deliver anticipatory action. This is in part due to the current universal CHF 220,00 budget cap for sEAPs. Beyond the funding available through the IFRC-DREF, the sEAPs have in some cases generated increased visibility, external collaboration and fundraising potential for National Societies and IFRC regional and country delegations.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the sEAP depends on both financial and operational factors. Key considerations for financial sustainability include increasing demands for sEAPs in a changing donor environment, risks related to (false) activation rates, balancing the cost of sEAP development with early action amounts, financial efficiency, and absorption capacity and prioritisation amongst National Societies. Adjusting or removing current limitations on the sEAPs, especially the CHF 200,000 budget cap and the maximum sEAP duration of 2 years, could enable National Societies to scale up their anticipatory actions and better address local needs where transition towards a full EAP is not possible, but it would also require careful consideration of the Fund's overall financial capacity to ensure long-term viability.

Looking beyond finances, ensuring the sustainability of the sEAP also involves strengthening the systems, partnerships and knowledge-sharing needed for anticipatory action. As the sEAP continues to evolve, expanding its scope to support different types of hazards and encouraging greater innovation will be important steps. Concrete considerations for institutional sustainability of the sEAP modality include how to retain preparedness capacity within National Societies, a continued need for sEAP specific learning and capacity strengthening, maintaining trust with communities and partners especially in case of false activation, pathways from pilots to scaled protocols, ensuring appropriate sEAP operational periods and revalidation processes and the sEAPs level of localisation and ownership of National Societies over processes and protocols.

Efficiency

The institutional and organisational set-up of the sEAP has generally helped to achieve the IFRC-DREF's original objectives for anticipatory action. The introduction of simplified procedures and templates has made the development and approval processes much easier to navigate, allowing more National Societies to take ownership and participate.

Development timeframes of sEAPs varied widely, ranging from one month to two years or longer with most requiring 6-12 months to develop. This is about twice as fast than the standard development timeframe for full EAPs, but still a significant time considering the smaller amount of anticipatory action funding available under sEAPs. The current sEAP templates are relatively simple and can be filled in quickly. What takes National Societies most time during the sEAP development is establishing collaborations with external partners, securing data access, undertaking historical impact analysis and identifying trigger thresholds. There are some indications from National Societies with several s/EAPs that timeframes for sEAP development reduce as experience builds over time.

Despite sEAPs being shorter and taking less time to develop, the average total time between submission and final approval is similar to full EAPs (205 days for sEAPs, compared to 191 days for full EAPs). For the majority of the time between initial submission to approval, the sEAPs are with the National Society for review and resubmission. The IFRC-DREF recently introduced a maximum time period of 3 months for National Society revisions before the draft sEAP would be

cancelled. How this influences overall timelines from submission to IFRC-DREF Appeal Manager approval, and whether it drives up cancellation rates, will need to be monitored going forward.

As experience with activation and revalidation processes is still limited, further adjustments may be needed in these stages beyond the pilot phase to address operational bottlenecks and to ensure the approach works smoothly for a wider variety of hazards.

Recommendations and conclusion

The sEAP modality has demonstrated considerable promise in expanding access to anticipatory action funding for National Societies, and in fostering anticipatory action innovation within and beyond the Movement. Continued IFRC-DREF commitment to learn and adapt over time will be vital to ensure the sEAP's long-term relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability in meeting the evolving needs of National Societies and the communities they serve.

The following tables summarises the recommendations from this review across four themes:

Purpose and objectives of the sEAP modality

- 1. Provide greater clarity to National Societies and other stakeholders on the intended purpose, applicability and complementarity of the sEAP vis-à-vis other IFRC-DREF tools.** This should include clearly outlining the advantages, disadvantages and requirements of each tool, such as the types of events they are trying to address, at what severity and frequency, what they can (and cannot) fund, how long they take to develop, how quickly funding becomes available, etc; in line with the new IFRC-DREF guidelines. Greater clarity on what types of events (in terms of severity and frequency) the sEAP is meant to address would also be useful to help National Societies assess their anticipatory action funding options. Concrete (real or hypothetical) use cases could help demonstrate considerations and trade-offs to National Societies who are thinking about accessing funding for anticipatory action. Simple practical decision support tools, such as decision trees, may also be useful to help National Societies decide which funding tool may be most appropriate to match their risk profile and capacities.
- 2. Explore options to expand National Societies' reliable access to funding for readiness and pre-positioning in combination with pre-agreed financing for early response.** This is particularly important for non-weather related hazards like population movement or epidemics but can also be relevant for other slow-onset events like droughts or food insecurity, where the progression between anticipatory action and early response windows are more fluid and options for NS are currently limited. Potential options to explore could include:
 - (1) incorporating early response for slow onset and non-weather related hazards more explicitly within the scope of the s/EAP modality, on the premise that they are "anticipatory" in the sense of being triggered by information pointing to a future peak humanitarian impact;
 - (2) expanding the s/EAP coverage across disaster management phases or establishing a new IFRC-DREF modality that is modelled on s/EAPs but aims to fund and enable joint planning across anticipatory action and early response;

(3) deepening links between contingency plans and response IFRC-DREF, where having a contingency plan in place for a certain hazard could unlock funding for readiness and pre-positioning and further fast track access to IFRC-DREF response funds in case of emergency.

- 3. Continue to encourage piloting and innovation in anticipatory action and early response through the sEAP modality, particularly for non-weather related hazards, while managing expectations around complexity and timelines.** There is a clear interest of National Societies in using sEAPs for non-weather-related hazards and some early learning about the key challenges in applying the existing procedures and templates in this context. While sEAPs for non-weather related hazards may not be the most efficient option to help the IFRC-DREF scale up funding for anticipatory action in the short term, these protocols address a critical need in many countries.

Scope and scale of sEAPs

- 4. Revise the current limitations on the duration of sEAPs to 5 years, to align the time period with the full EAP.** This would allow greater flexibility in timelines and enable more effective use of the sEAP modality for piloting anticipatory action. It would also help with consistency across the modalities. In case of an sEAP activation during the 5-year operational period, revalidation based on learning from the activation may still be desired, but there should be more immediate and targeted follow up with National Society by the IFRC and partners, and light and efficient processes for revalidation with the primary objective of having a protocol established again quickly (and before the onset of the subsequent hazard season for types of hazards with clear seasonality).
- 5. Explore options to increase the sEAP budget beyond the current CHF 220,000 cap for protocols that have demonstrated successful activation and implementation, without requiring transition to full EAP trigger requirements.** This scalable approach allows National Societies to revalidate and expand effective sEAPs, addressing a gap for those who do not wish, or are unable, to move towards a full EAP but still require greater resources for anticipatory action. Such flexibility aligns with a “test then invest” philosophy, enabling National Societies to build on proven approaches, fostering a culture of learning and iterative improvement, and supporting the ambition of scaling up the IFRC-DREF Anticipatory Pillar.
- 6. Consider transitioning from a static funding cap for sEAPs across all National Societies towards adaptive funding caps that take factors such as country size, characteristics of the hazard, National Society capacity and cost of living into account.** This could help allocate anticipatory action funding in a more cost-effective and equitable way in contexts where the current CHF 220,000 budget cap is insufficient to address anticipatory action funding needs, but a full EAP is not a feasible option. However, such changes may also introduce some trade-offs that should be considered in designing adaptive funding caps. Such potential trade-offs include a risk of making procedures more complex and of underfunding anticipatory action in contexts with less National Society capacity that may have the most to benefit from sEAP development support and the readiness and pre-positioning activities they can include in their sEAPs.

Procedures and templates

- 7. Consider expanding guidance and examples in the sEAP template to help National Societies more clearly articulate the impact pathway and logic of their proposed early actions.** The sEAP template already includes a section asking National Societies to describe selected early actions and explain how these will address the risks and lead to intended outcomes. However, the missing link between the prioritised risks and selected early actions remains a major impediment to the quality of sEAPs. Such revisions should also be informed by learnings and best practices from the Theory of Change sections in full EAPs. Additions should support National Societies to outline not only what actions they intend to implement, but also what outcomes they expect, why these actions are appropriate to support intended objectives and to be implemented during the anticipatory action window of opportunity, and potentially whether there is evidence, historical or contextual, that such measures have previously led to the desired impact.
- 8. Revise procedures and templates to encourage greater coordination of the various actors that support the development and implementation of an sEAP, led by National Societies and including Partner National Societies and IFRC delegations.** This will be critical to leverage relevant technical, operational and sectoral expertise that may be available through Partner National Societies or at the regional level. It will also help ensure implementation requirements of the National Society and IFRC delegation are addressed in the development. Very concretely, the sEAP templates could include prompts for the National Society to consult their delegation in parts of the sEAPs that are later led or supported by the delegation during the implementation stage. It could also suggest consulting regional experts in delegations or regional offices, Partner National Societies or Climate Centre support in relevant sections of the template, e.g. related to triggers and early action activities.
- 9. Clarify the level of flexibility that is available for sEAP activation in all guidance materials and templates (brochure, sEAP template, checklist, etc.) and in communication with National Societies, delegations and the Validation Committee.** In particular, the trigger section of the sEAP template could be revised to clarify what types of triggers or decision-making criteria are considered as “good enough” to activate an sEAP for different hazards, reflecting the recent steer from the IFRC-DREF to increase flexibility. It should also clarify whether, and under which conditions, the sEAP may be activated even if any “formal” trigger defined in the sEAP has not been met. For instance, the guidance could explain who has the authority to take activation decisions, as well as what are the process and minimum information requirement for declaring an activation in such cases.
- 10. Explore options to strengthen alignment of the sEAPs with broader preparedness initiatives such as the Preparedness for Effective Response (PER).** A very simple first step could be to include a section in the sEAP template to ask how the sEAP links with PER and other preparedness initiatives that the National Society may undertake.

Capacity and learning

- 11. Extend promotion and outreach of the sEAP modality beyond the confines of specific grant funding for s/EAP development.** By raising awareness of the sEAP modality through targeted communication and engagement activities, National Societies can better understand

the available options for IFRC-DREF anticipatory action funding and their respective criteria. This would help strengthen the foundations for increased National Society ownership and informed uptake. Promotion efforts should align with any changes that may be introduced to the sEAP modality in the future.

- 12. Expand the capacity strengthening offer on sEAPs for National Societies through structured training opportunities, tailored introductory sessions at the outset of sEAP development, and peer learning webinars.** As highlighted by the operational framework evaluation, such capacity strengthening should be coupled with opportunities for practical application and implementation to maximise impact. Some structured training on anticipatory action concepts is already available (e.g. via the Anticipation Hub and through an eLearning course on anticipatory action foundations on the IFRC Learning Platform), so in this case connecting National Society staff with existing opportunities and ensuring their accessibility (e.g. language or funding to participate in trainings) and practical applicability would be a low hanging fruit. In addition, structured online or in-person training materials could be developed and rolled out – in line with the new IFRC-DREF guidelines– to strengthen the sEAP-specific capacity (e.g. how to develop the sEAP step by step, what are the sEAP reporting requirements and operational implications, key learnings for effective implementation,...). Complementary training should also be considered for IFRC delegations to address gaps in sEAP specific operational details and technical knowledge at that level, and to facilitate peer to peer learning between delegations (see 13.).
- 13. Enhance the capacity of IFRC delegations to engage in sEAP development, especially where this relates to later sEAP implementation responsibilities of the delegation, and to coordinate technical backstopping from the delegation and regional office as and when required by the National Society.** This is critical to support enhanced coordination and a more streamlined approval process once the sEAP has been submitted. It would entail ensuring sufficient human resourcing dedicated to anticipatory action coordination within the regional delegation. A more comprehensive training offer for delegations (covering anticipatory action concepts, the sEAP modality's specific processes and templates, and the particular practical responsibilities of the delegation in development and implementation of sEAPs), would further strengthen the capacity of IFRC regional delegations. This would be particularly critical to roll out for new delegation staff and when new National Societies start engaging in sEAP development processes.
- 14. Monitor rejection and cancellation rates alongside reasons for rejections and cancellations of sEAPs, as more protocols are submitted and undergoing review, and integrate learning into technical and financial support.** There are initial indications from this review that cancellation and rejection is particularly high amongst sEAPs targeting epidemics, and amongst those that National Societies developed with IFRC support through the Italian government grant in several African countries (though so few sEAPs have been closed without being validated or cancelled that it is still difficult to identify clear patterns). Monitoring and assessing the reasons for rejection and cancellation in these cases in more detail could help improve the IFRC's sEAP support going forward.

15. Undertake targeted learning and timely post-activation review of sEAP trigger design and performance that focuses on both the quality and practical feasibility of triggers, alongside monitoring challenges encountered in implementation. While the technical validity of triggers has been an essential principle underpinning the credibility of s/EAP funding allocation, recent experience from sEAP activations highlights that some trigger parameters and lead times may not be operationally realistic or effective in practice. Furthermore, the sEAP modality has already started piloting some contextual triggers, e.g. for population movement. A focused review of sEAP trigger performance post-activation should be conducted by experts who can understand the detailed technical aspects as well as the practical contextual and operational constraints of the National Societies. The aim of such a review should be to inform learning and adaptation within the specific sEAPs, as well as to help refine guidance and inform future template revisions on range of trigger options that can be eligible for sEAPs (thus informing recommendation 9.).

Conclusion

This review was undertaken to learn from the three-year sEAP pilot phase. For this purpose, it assessed the overall design of the sEAP modality in terms of relevance, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness. It also aimed at gathering evidence on sEAP performance during the pilot phase and at capturing data on good practices and challenges to inform and improve future delivery.

There is broad agreement across stakeholders that the sEAP modality offers a quicker, more flexible and lighter approach than full EAPs to access anticipatory action funding from the IFRC-DREF. This has incentivised many National Societies and Partner National Societies to use sEAPs as pilots to test triggers, early action activities and operational procedures, especially for non-weather related hazards and National Societies with no prior s/EAP experience. Overall, National Societies with sEAP experience are relatively satisfied with the performance of the IFRC-DREF. Lengthy review and revision periods, limited training opportunities, inconsistent feedback, and insufficient technical support throughout sEAP development and revision remain their main points of dissatisfaction. It is still too early to comprehensively assess satisfaction with the performance of the fund in activation and revalidation, as there have been few successful activations, no revalidations and only one transition from sEAP to full EAP to date.

Interest from National Societies in the sEAP modality is growing overall, as indicated by the steadily rising number of protocol submissions. However, just over one fourth of National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies which have accessed any type of IFRC-DREF funding since 2018 have submitted sEAPs to the IFRC-DREF. This indicates opportunities for further growth, which would require targeted outreach to National Societies that are not already engaged in anticipatory action programmes or supported by Partner National Societies.

The introduction of the sEAP modality has contributed considerably to the number of National Societies which are accessing anticipatory action funding from the IFRC-DREF. There are also indications of growing National Society ownership and ease of access to IFRC-DREF anticipatory action funding as a result of the sEAP modality. Beyond IFRC-DREF funding, some National Societies have leveraged the sEAPs to increase their external visibility and fundraising

potential. However, pre-arranged funding for early response that is linked to contingency planning and resources for readiness and pre-positioning remains a gap for National Societies and there is currently no clear steer to what extent this can be covered by the sEAP modality.

There is a large and growing number of people covered by s/EAPs in theory, but the five activations to date imply that the sEAPs are not always a good indication of how many people are actually reached by sEAP activations in practice. Additional challenges included that the hazard event only materialised in three out of the five activations. For two out of these three, the activation was closer to the event than the planned lead time, resulting in missed opportunities to protect people from imminent events. There is no systematic monitoring and evaluation plan in place to assess the outcomes and impacts of sEAPs on people and their livelihoods.

While quicker than full EAPs, sEAPs can still take a significant amount of time to develop and approve. The simplicity of sEAP templates facilitates the potential for quick write up of the protocols, but establishing collaborations with external partners, securing data access, undertaking historical impact analysis and identifying trigger thresholds still take time. Despite sEAPs being shorter and taking less time to develop, there is not actually less back and forth during the review and revision period compared to full EAPs. Major bottlenecks include insufficient human resources, limited technical capacity, inefficiencies in technical backstopping and inconsistent feedback during sEAP development and revision. Significant delays also persist in the financial procedures underpinning the sEAP modality, which means National Societies often receive early action funds too late.

The ongoing revision of the IFRC-DREF's five-year Strategic Ambition presents critical risks and opportunities for scaling up the sEAP modality in the areas of partnerships, funding, capacity strengthening, innovation and localisation. As the sEAP modality grows, it also poses increasing demands on ensuring financial and institutional sustainability to the IFRC-DREF. Relevant considerations for financial sustainability include (false) activation rates, a need to balance the cost of sEAP development with the early action amounts the modality can avail, financial efficiency concerns and questions around how many sEAPs the IFRC-DREF can handle, and how to prioritise. Beyond financial sustainability, the continued need to strengthen and retain National Society capacity, maintaining trust with communities and partners, operational periods and revalidation processes, the evolving purpose and objectives of sEAPs and National Society ownership are key considerations that can influence the institutional sustainability of the sEAP modality going forward.

In summary, the sEAP modality has demonstrated considerable promise in expanding access to anticipatory action funding for National Societies, and in fostering anticipatory action innovation within and beyond the Movement. Continued IFRC-DREF commitment to learn and adapt over time will be vital to ensure the sEAP's long-term relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability in meeting the evolving needs of National Societies and the communities they serve.

National Society Experiences

Piloting and gradual scaling of anticipatory action capacity and funding access in Malawi

The experience of Malawi illustrates how gradual engagement with anticipatory action modalities can build funding access and NS capacity for anticipatory action over time. For several years, the Malawi Red Cross, supported by the Danish Red Cross, worked closely with national meteorological, hydrological and disaster management authorities to establish a small-scale, practical anticipatory action system. This system relied on the development of simple triggers and basic action protocols, which were repeatedly tested and activated using modest funds sourced from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, private foundations, and enterprises. Although the system operated outside the formal structure of the s/EAP modality, it provided the Malawi Red Cross with valuable experience in the design and delivery of anticipatory action.

Despite these successes, the Malawi Red Cross was initially reluctant to develop a full EAP, as they perceived the EAP modality as too time consuming, complex and resource intensive. Instead, the National Society found it more feasible to continue with the existing, lighter system. This approach persisted for several years, offering continuity and space for the Malawi Red Cross to gain practical experience, forge key partnerships, and gradually cultivate government engagement. This eventually led to the establishment of a national dialogue platform on anticipatory action.

The Introduction of the sEAP modality marked a turning point in the Malawi Red Cross's access to IFRC-DREF anticipatory action funding. Building on several years of hands-on practice and partnership development, the Malawi Red Cross was well-placed to take ownership of the sEAP process and develop its own flood sEAP. The lighter requirements and reduced technical burden of the sEAP made it a much more accessible proposition for the National Society, bridging the gap between informal anticipatory action and the more demanding full EAP and reflecting a progressive and locally driven strengthening of anticipatory action capacity and funding access.

Ensuring continued coverage during the transition from sEAP to full EAP in Pakistan

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society's flood sEAP was approved in July 2023 and was originally set to expire at the end of July 2025, coinciding with the height of the monsoon season in Pakistan. The National Society had been working on a full EAP for floods to follow on from the sEAP, but this was not yet finalised and approved at the beginning of the 2025 monsoon season. Recognising the continued threat posed by seasonal floods and the importance of maintaining preparedness, the National Society ensured that all necessary readiness measures were completed prior to the sEAP expiry. In light of the possibility of flooding during the monsoon season, the National Society also submitted a formal request to the IFRC-DREF to extend the operational timeframe of the sEAP until after the end of the monsoon season. This request was granted through the provision of a no cost extension until 31 October 2025.

During the extension period, the National Society maintained monitoring on the Kabul River basin, the area covered by the sEAP. Thus, the extension allowed critical readiness capacity to be preserved while efforts to secure approval for the full flood EAP continued. The full EAP was finally approved by the IFRC at the end of September 2025, ensuring the transition from the simplified to the full EAP without any lapse in coverage or operational readiness. This approach safeguarded

vulnerable communities during a high-risk period and demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of the sEAP modality. The integration of the sEAP within the new full EAP provided seamless continuity and enhanced the overall effectiveness of disaster readiness and early action capacity of the National Society.

In September 2025, Pakistan was affected by severe flooding. The National Society had been closely monitoring the sEAP thresholds throughout the monsoon season, but the predefined activation threshold was not met, and therefore the sEAP was not activated. In part, this was related to the nature of the flood and its localised impacts. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), which was heavily affected, the flooding primarily resulted from cloudburst and flash flood events in certain localities which were outside of the selected intervention areas defined under the sEAP. The EAP received technical approval in August, but final approval from the IFRC-DREF Appeals Manager was still pending when the flooding approached. During the same period, two trigger sections were met on 29 August along the Chenab River from Trimmu to Panjnad and on 31 August along the Indus River from Panjnad to Guddu. As the EAP was not yet formally approved at the time, it could not be activated as a IFRC-DREF funded interventions. However, the activations could be funded by German Red Cross and GFFO.

Coordinating sEAP development under a national anticipatory action framework in Fiji

In Fiji, OCHA coordinated the development of a national anticipatory action framework that united around several UN agencies with the national disaster management agency. Fiji Red Cross was a key partner under the framework, establishing formal agreements with agencies such as FAO and IOM to serve as their operational presence on the ground. At the same time, Fiji Red Cross also developed its own simplified EAP, enabling it to contribute funding and capacity for readiness and pre-positioning. This approach allowed all partners to work from a shared set of activation criteria, reducing duplication and improving coordination. Fiji Red Cross was recognised as a core partner, and OCHA supported collaboration and information sharing.

It is important to note that anticipatory action remains in its early stages in Fiji. The government is still becoming familiar with the concept, and it has yet to be fully understood or embedded within national systems. In this context, the joined-up approach of the national anticipatory action framework was particularly valuable to the Fijian Government, as it benefited from a unified strategy, avoiding the confusion and inefficiency that might arise if numerous agencies approached it with multiple uncoordinated anticipatory action initiatives.

Anticipatory action coordination and institutionalisation in Nepal

The Nepal Red Cross Society's flood sEAP covers floods prone areas in western Nepal. This complements a WFP anticipatory action initiative also focused on western Nepal and the CERF anticipatory action framework that spans 9 flood prone municipalities in eastern Nepal. At the same time, Nepal Red Cross supports the implementation of early actions as an implementing partner for UNFPA under the CERF's framework by deploying its volunteers to promote sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services in case of an activation.

Following the introduction of its flood sEAP, the Nepal Red Cross has seen government interest in anticipatory action grow considerably, particularly among local authorities. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority also took note of the tool's potential, incorporating sEAPs into its training modules and recognising it as a key funding mechanism for anticipatory

action. At the local level, the sEAP modality has played a pivotal role in supporting municipalities to embed anticipatory action into their disaster management and response plans.

Challenges in setting and monitoring triggers for forced displacement in Colombia

The first sEAP on population movement was approved in March 2025 and developed by the Colombia Red Cross. This sEAP focuses on forced displacement due to armed conflict. Unlike hydrometeorological events, where technological tools and established thresholds allow for relatively reliable forecasting and trigger setting, internal displacement in Colombia is driven by factors that are difficult to anticipate or quantify. As a result, the National Society struggled to define activation thresholds, given the lack of clear reference points and the complexity of the local context. Extensive analysis of displacement trends and registry gaps over several years, supported by the German Red Cross, was required to establish even tentative benchmarks.

Official documents that ended up being included as triggers, such as minutes from the Transitional Justice Committee, are sometimes delayed or suppressed due to the influence and actions of armed actors. In other cases, such documents are not generally publicly available and collaboration around data exchange – for instance with the ICRC – proved challenging.

The Colombia population movement sEAP aims to initiate early actions within 72 hours, but reliance on external triggers, which might not be issued promptly or at all, has posed a risk to the protocol's effectiveness. These issues are compounded by the unique characteristics of displacement in Colombia, where, unlike in other contexts, affected people often seek to return home as soon as conditions permit, a nuance not always appreciated by external reviewers.

This experience illustrates the need for flexible, context-specific approaches to anticipatory action and early response in complex crises. It also underscores the importance of building trusted relationships and open data-sharing mechanisms between humanitarian actors. While sEAPs can be adapted for non-weather related hazards, significant conceptual and operational hurdles remain, particularly in settings actively influenced by conflict.

Timelines for sEAP activation and implementation in Greece and Djibouti

Djibouti flood sEAP: The trigger for activation was reached on 14 November 2023, with the official notification issued the following day, on 15 November. Although IFRC-DREF funds only arrived seven days post-notification, preparations to implement early actions commenced immediately after the notification was issued making use of quickly disbursed own funds of the National Society. Early action activities were carried out from 16 to 23 November, spanning seven days. Notably, the anticipated peak of the flood did not actually happen in this case, as the forecasts did not materialise.

Greece heatwave sEAP: The activation occurred on 8 June 2024, with a planned early action lead time set at five days. Following rapid approval from IFRC later that same day, preparatory work began on the following day, 9 June 2024. Early action activities were implemented starting 10 June and lasted for five days. Following the sEAP implementation period, the National Society extended its activities due to the persistent and severe heatwave, which lasted for approximately ten days. Elevated temperatures, including high night-time readings, persisted throughout this period.

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