



OUTCOME REPORT

Asia Pacific Regional Dialogue Platform

13–15 June 2017



Melia Hotel, Hanoi, Vietnam



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BACKGROUND

→ In June 2017, Hanoi welcomed the first **Regional Dialogue Platform in Asia on Forecast-based Financing**. This event gathered about 100 national and international practitioners in the field of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Experts came together for 3 days in order to share experiences and learn about an innovative humanitarian financing mechanism, which would allow for early actions based on improved forecast, early warning and standardised procedures in case of natural disasters.

Humanitarian finance normally becomes available when a disaster strikes and human suffering is almost guaranteed, but climate-related risks are rising worldwide and many humanitarian actions could be implemented in the window between a forecast and a disaster. This would help prevent suffering, contribute to a more efficient use of humanitarian funds, and strengthen community resilience. The question to governments, humanitarian actors and scientists is: Can we set up an automatic system that triggers and funds early actions before a disaster strikes when a credible warning arrives? The answer is Forecast-based Financing.

Thus the objectives of the Dialogue Platform were to

- 1 establish a network of Forecast-based Financing practitioners, governmental stakeholders and scientists in Asian High-Risk Countries;
- 2 discuss the existing methodology and develop a plan forward for the region;
- 3 help improve the FbF methodology currently under development by integrating Asian experiences;
- 4 get the interest and support of donor agencies and/or policy makers.

The conference was organised by the German Red Cross and convened by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with support of the German government under its Action Plan for Humanitarian Adaptation to Climate Change. It involved participants from the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement working in Asia, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, representatives from governments including the Government of Vietnam, WFP and other UN agencies, INGOs, scientific organisations and relevant donors.

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DAY ONE

Formal opening speech



Madame Tran Thi Hong An
Vice President, Vietnam Red Cross

Speaking on behalf of the Vietnam Red Cross, Madame An highlighted the challenge of the current state of humanitarian funding. While funds are released only after a disaster has struck, she reasoned that it is possible to set up a system to enable early action prior to a disaster based on scientific forecasts through Forecast-based Financing.



Since Vietnam is one of the top five countries severely affected by natural disasters and global climate change, she asserted that VNRC has identified disaster prevention and response as one of 7 key strategic missions. She concluded that investing in early action based on improved forecast, early warning and standardised procedures in case of natural disasters is key.

Opening statements



Pierre Kremer
Head of Partnerships, IFRC

Stating that there is an appetite for a mainstreaming of the concept of FbF, Pierre Kremer acknowledged that there is a need for consolidation and further cooperation among different initiatives and actors. To address climate change and increasing disasters all over the world “Forecast-based Financing as a mechanism should be seen as a part of the solution”. He stressed that the Vietnamese authorities are showing serious commitment by supporting and furthering FbF. The institutionalisation of FbF, Kremer emphasised, is crucial in this regard and will make the difference in the end.



Verena Kresin
Head of Asia Unit, GRC Headquarters

Verena Kresin recalled that climate change is a global challenge with direct humanitarian impacts all over the world. She affirmed that it is not only an important topic in the context of longer-term disaster risk management but also crucial as regards humanitarian assistance and the entire preparedness for response process. While acknowledging that addressing disaster risks and the effects of climate change is a major challenge for society, Kresin asserted that initiatives such as Forecast-based Financing are bearing fruit and can make a difference. “The Asia Regional Dialogue Platform will be crucial to further develop the FbF methodology and taking it to scale in Asia Pacific”, she stressed.



What is Forecast-based Financing (FbF)?

→ The session focused on the **rationale, methodology and policy of FbF**. It also provided an overview of the pilot projects supported by the German Federal Foreign Office's Action Plan for the Humanitarian Adaptation to Climate Change. To concretise the concept, the presenters explained the key aspects of the project using the case study of snowfall and cold waves experienced by communities in Puno, Peru.



Presenters:

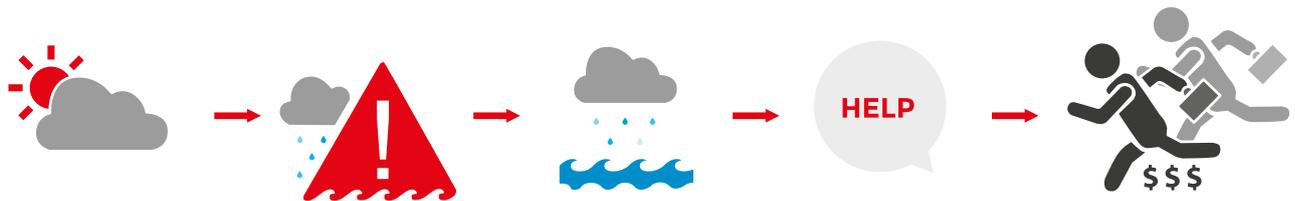
Alexandra R uth
German Red Cross

Stefanie Lux
German Red Cross,
Coordinator for
Pilot Projects

Andrew Kruczkiewicz
Red Cross Red Crescent Climate
Centre/International Research
Institute for Climate & Society,
Columbia University

THE CHALLENGE

Humanitarian finance is available when a disaster strikes and suffering is almost guaranteed. But climate-related risks are rising worldwide, and just waiting for disasters to happen is not an option:



THE OPPORTUNITY

Many humanitarian actions could be implemented in the window between a forecast and a disaster. Many climate-related hazards can be forecast; humanitarians get information about when and where extreme-weather events like storms, floods and droughts are expected.

Can we set up an automatic system that triggers and funds early actions before a disaster strikes when a credible warning arrives? If so, we could prevent suffering, use humanitarian funds more efficiently, and contribute to strengthened community resilience:



THE INNOVATION

Forecast-based Financing (FbF) releases humanitarian funding based on forecast information for pre-agreed activities which reduce risks, enhance preparedness and response, and make disaster risk management overall more effective.

A key element of FbF is that the allocation of resources is agreed in advance. The relevant forecast thresholds that trigger the early actions that aim at reducing the humanitarian impact of the disaster, as well as roles and responsibilities of all involved in implementing the actions are defined in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Core element

Early Action Protocols (Standard Operating Procedures - SOPs)

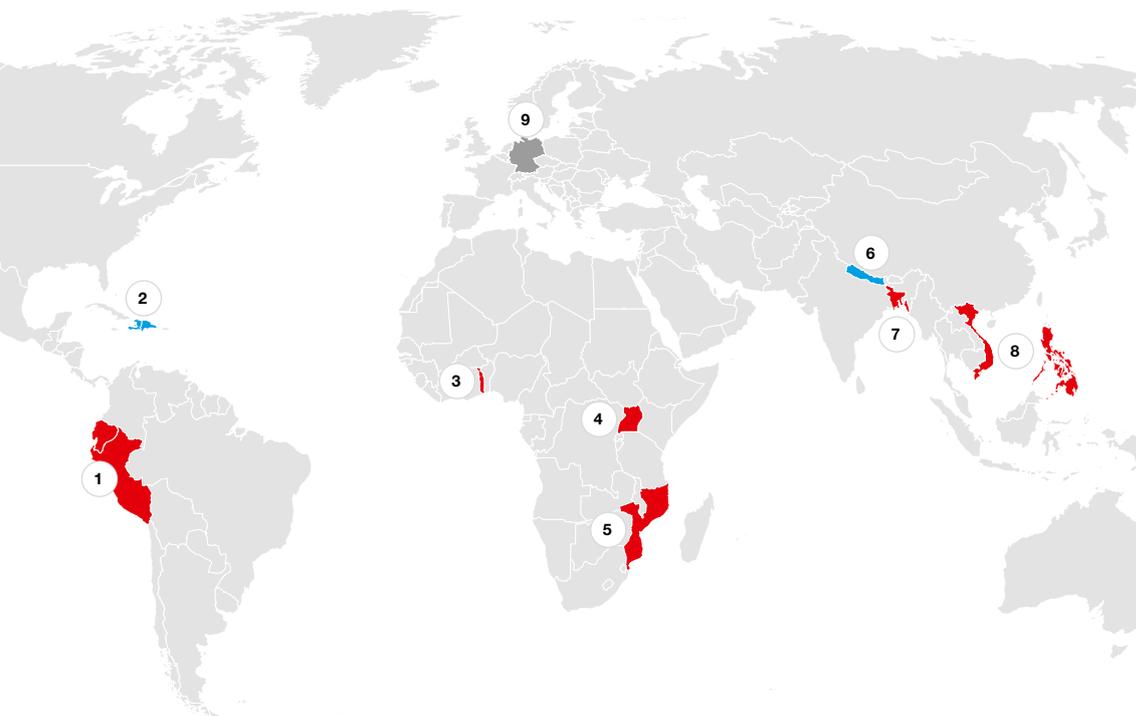


Pilot Projects supported by the German Federal Foreign Office's Action Plan for the Humanitarian Adaptation to Climate Change. More Partner National Societies are starting and/or planning to support FbF in more locations.

Project coordination

- UN World Food Programme
- German Red Cross

1. **Peru & Ecuador** ●
FbF pilot project for El Niño, flooding, cold waves since 2015
2. **Haiti & Dominican Republic** ●
FbF project since 2015
3. **Togo** ●
FbF 2013–2018
4. **Uganda** ●
FbF 2013–2018
5. **Mozambique** ●
FbF pilot projects for cyclones and flooding since 2015
6. **Nepal** ●
FbF project since 2015
7. **Bangladesh** ●
FbF pilot projects for flooding since 2015
8. **Vietnam & Philippines** ●
New FbF projects for 2017
9. **Germany** ●
International Dialogue Platform





The alpaca example from Peru

Peru focused on different hazards: cold waves and snowfall in the Peruvian high Andes, El Niño in northern Peru and flooding in the Amazon rainforest. In the high Andean regions, alpaca farming serves as the main incomes for most of the households. During cold waves, many families incur huge losses of livestock due to extreme temperatures and snow fall.

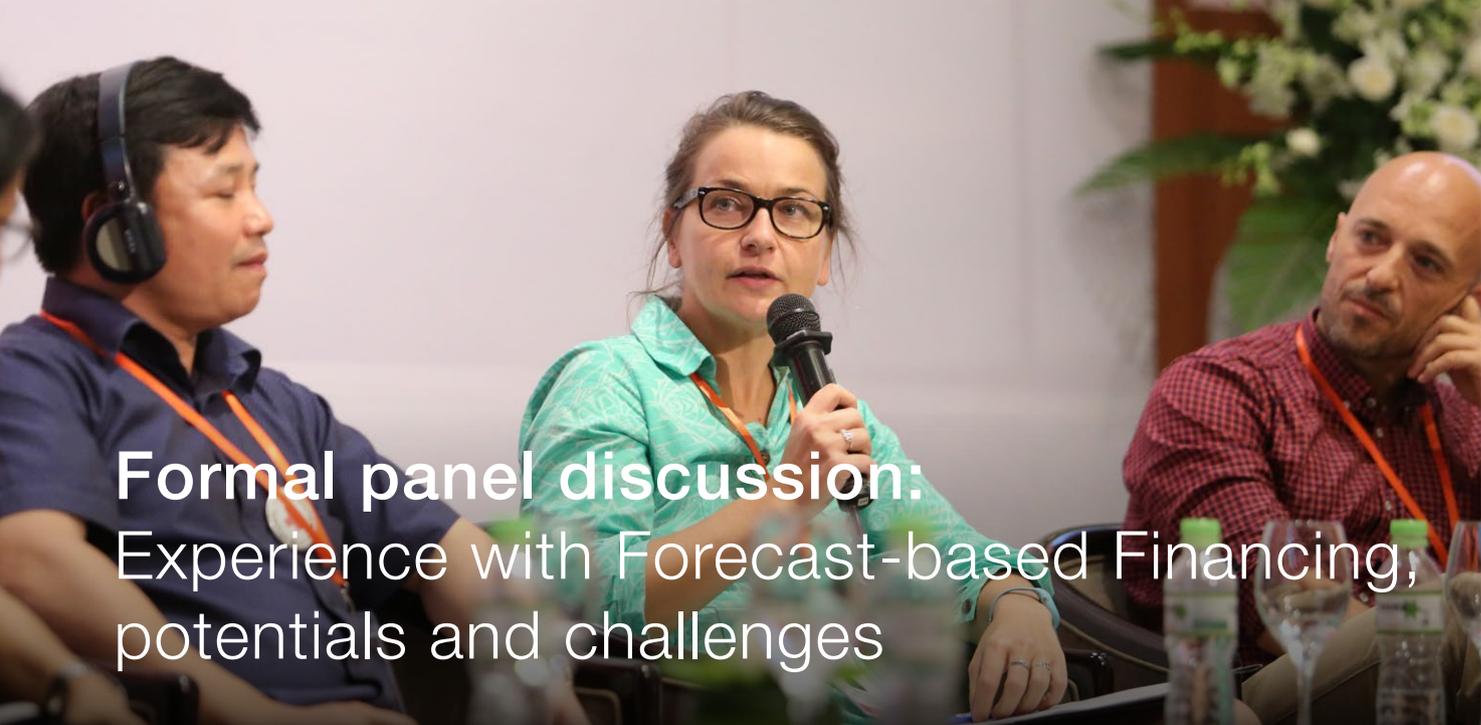
Since the alpacas are the most important asset of the families, men often go out in the cold to take care of the animals, even if that means putting their own health at risk. FbF actions identified in these regions therefore included distribution of family warm-up kits and protective winter gear to reduce pneumonia and other diseases occurring during cold waves, as well as veterinary and feeding kits for alpacas.

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The relationship between Forecast-based Financing and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

FbF only seeks to supplement and not replace DRR and resilience measures. FbF aims to make use of a relatively small amount of money that would have otherwise been spent for humanitarian response after a disaster. FbF is not supported by funds designated for long-term DRR. It prepares the most vulnerable population with short term measures based on a concrete warning in areas where forecasts indicate high probability of an extreme event. DRR programs prepare the population through VCAs, trainings, awareness, small scale mitigation and other actions for possible events; however they normally do not include funding for early actions for one concrete event. In communities with a high level of preparedness and where extensive mitigation measures have been implemented, FbF will most likely not be as needed. There are important synergies between both; e.g. the work of FbF pilot projects in the preparatory phase, such as risk mapping, strengthening of EWS can be useful for DRR projects and vice-versa and also early actions can be carried out more rapidly in communities where some awareness on hazards and trained DRR structures exist.



Formal panel discussion: Experience with Forecast-based Financing, potentials and challenges

Donna Lagdameo on

Challenging and changing the current humanitarian discourse

Donna Lagdameo talked about the process of introducing an anticipatory humanitarian system and the RCRC movement attempts to influence the policy processes on the global, and regional and national levels. She highlighted that at the global level, FbF serves as a mechanism that will help realise (and integrate) the 2030 global agenda furthering a resilience approach. At the regional level, FbF is in line with the commitments of IFRC Asia-Pacific made to several regional organisations and working groups. Lagdameo concluded that FbF should be advocated by using an Integrated Risk Management (IRM) approach towards resilience building and be mainstreamed in policy, practice and investment through the Partners for Resilience (PfR) program.

Olaf Neussner on

Forecast-based Financing in action

Having worked as a project manager in the Forecast-based Financing pilot project in Bangladesh, Neussner shared his experience and lessons learned from the project. Working closely with Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), he stressed that this cooperation is crucial since interaction with the communities and the operationalisation of the approach is done by BDRCS staff and local volunteers. He also highlighted some difficulties, e.g. that working with localised triggers is challenging and requires considerable scientific effort, especially in an environment of limited data availability and that the crux in SOP activation is timely implementation. Neussner underlined that distributing aid with one day notice requires a lot of logistical preparations, and the personnel involved in the distribution should participate in regular refresher trainings.



Moderation:

Alexandra R  th

German Red Cross (GRC)

Panellists:

Donna Lagdameo

*Red Cross Red Crescent
Climate Centre (RCCC)*

Jesse Mason

World Food Programme (WFP)

Mr Pha

Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC)

Olaf Neussner

*German Red Cross (GRC)
Bangladesh*

Stephanie Zoll

*International Federation of Red
Cross Red Crescent Societies
(IFRC) Pacific*

Jesse Mason on

Key lessons from the field

Mason addressed the lessons of WFP's pilot projects. Currently, WFP is piloting FbF in five countries, three in Asia and two in the Caribbean. He highlighted that working at government level represents an important opportunity for WFP to integrate the FbF mechanism in the long-term country strategic plans for mitigating the impacts of disasters; also the cooperation at government level offers a national-level framework to support community-level actions. However, Mason noted, high re-assignment rates in both government and within the humanitarian community require a comprehensive effort to maintain forward momentum with new government and humanitarian stakeholders. He concluded that the greatest advantage of FbF is the potential to link science with humanitarian actions to improve the cost effectiveness and prioritisation of anticipatory actions, its linkages with traditional response mechanisms, resulting in an improved ability to save lives and livelihoods.

Stephanie Zoll on

Preparing for FbF in the Pacific

Although many initiatives have started in the region as regards EWEA, early action remains limited, even in contexts where sufficient early warning information is available. This is due to a lack of operational capacity, i.e. many NS lack core funds and have limited human resource and logistics capacity to undertake preparedness. Another reason is the lack of clear roles and responsibilities between key stakeholders in the countries, including met services, NDMOs and NS. Zoll presented first results of a scoping study conducted in 2016 that helped identifying these gaps.

Mr Pha on

Using cash for Forecast-based Financing

Pha presented the first reflections on a possible FbF programme in Vietnam. One area covered by FbF could be flooding in the Quang Binh province. As flooding often causes severe problems with drinking water supply and sanitation, and given VNRC's experience in cash transfer programming, Pha assumed that Early Actions selected for the Quang Binh province may include a WASH and a cash grant component. In this regard, Mr Pha pointed out that the existing Provincial Disaster Risk Teams (PDRT) could play an important role in SOP activations in the event of floods and droughts in Vietnam. He highlighted that FbF is in line with existing national policies and programs and with the VNRC mandate. According to Pha, VNRC sees FbF as a great opportunity to learn and to invest in a new way of working closely with scientific and finance partners for offering a better future for the most vulnerable.

Panellist
Donna Lagdameo





Second phase strategy

R uth summarised the second phase strategy of FbF that is built upon the four following areas of focus: further development of SOPs, building evidence by measuring what matters,

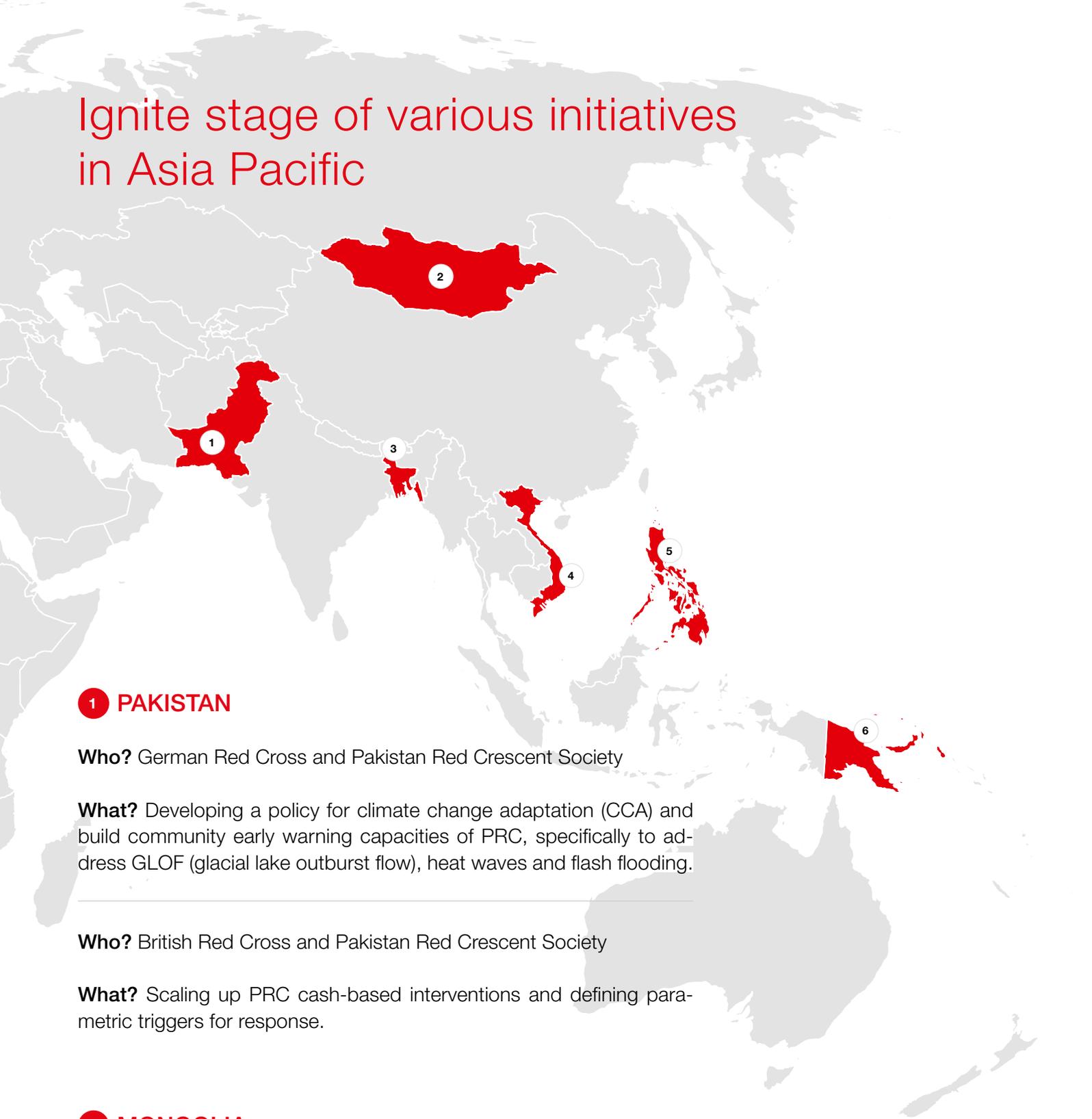
strengthening capacities and assuring linkages to existing tools and approaches. In terms of processes, she explained that GRC, the RC/RC Climate Centre and IFRC will continue to build an alliance for action, promote regional and international exchanges; and be actively engaged in relevant global processes. In order to scale up FbF, the establishment of a financing mechanism will be a main priority.



Presenter:

Alexandra R uth
German Red Cross (GRC)

Ignite stage of various initiatives in Asia Pacific



1 PAKISTAN

Who? German Red Cross and Pakistan Red Crescent Society

What? Developing a policy for climate change adaptation (CCA) and build community early warning capacities of PRC, specifically to address GLOF (glacial lake outburst flow), heat waves and flash flooding.

Who? British Red Cross and Pakistan Red Crescent Society

What? Scaling up PRC cash-based interventions and defining parametric triggers for response.

2 MONGOLIA

Who? Mongolian Red Cross Society and British Red Cross

What? Two-year project to define triggers and SOPs for Dzud, the extreme conditions characterised by the deterioration of weather conditions in winter and spring leading to shortage of pasture and water for livestock, and can cause significant losses of livestock, which particularly affects the nomadic population.

3 BANGLADESH

Who? Bangladesh Red Crescent Society and German Red Cross

What? Testing and improving SOPs by adapting triggers for slow onset floods; collecting of lessons learned to produce evidence; successfully testing SOPs for cyclones; testing how to scale up FbF and be able to apply SOPs in a more flexible way in a wider area and how to deliver aid faster.

Who? World Food Programme (WFP)

What? Piloting of a Forecast-based Financing model to support efficient cash distribution; Capacity building of the local government institutions on planning and implementation of FbF; set-up of a technical advisory committee (TAC) for FbF implementation and creation of a national FbF platform.

4 VIETNAM

Who? German Red Cross and Vietnam Red Cross

What? Developing FbF to reduce the humanitarian impact of heat waves in Hanoi and floods in Quang Binh Province.

Who? Consortium of UN Women, Save the Children, FAO

What? Piloting FbF for drought in two provinces of Vietnam: Gia Lai (Central Highlands) and Ca Mau (Mekong Delta), this project will link early warning analysis with pre-defined early actions at community level in the areas of food security/livelihood, WASH, and gender and inclusion.



5 PHILIPPINES

Who? Philippine Red Cross and German Red Cross

What? Together with other Red Cross Societies and WFP, PRC is advocating for FbF inclusion in policies and legislation. PRC is piloting SOP development and testing at community, municipality (RC) and provincial level (WFP) in order to produce evidence. The identification of a funding mechanism is also a priority and pursued through the governmental early action system or within the PRC response system.

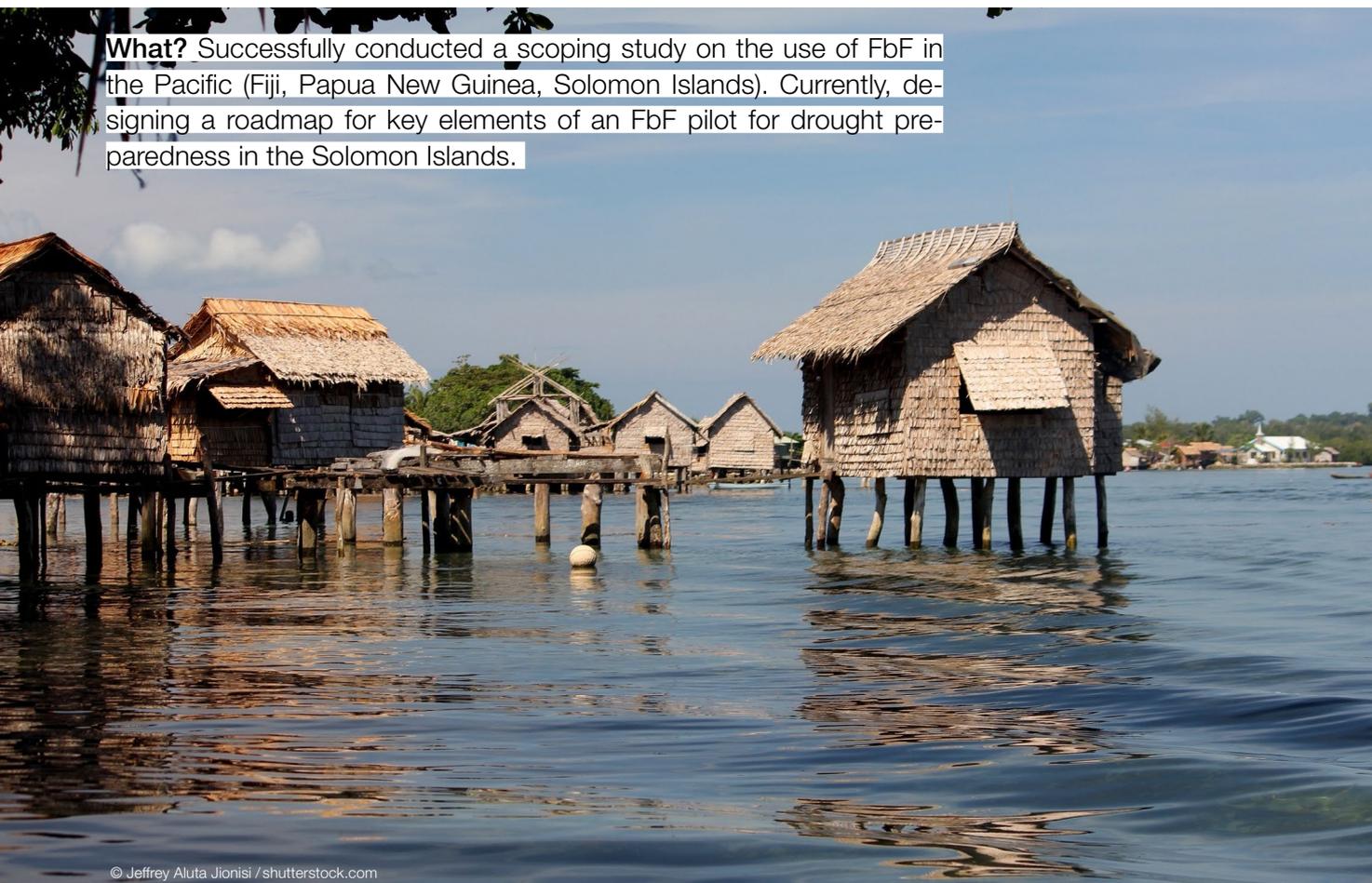
Who? World Food Program (WFP)

What? Enhancing SOPs developed between 2016-2017 in ten disaster-prone provinces; advocating for a shift of policies and mind-sets from preparedness for response to preparedness for risk reduction and mitigation; increasing climate and early warning literacy.

6 PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES

Who? Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, IFRC, Australian Red Cross, Food and Agricultural Organisation, Solomon Islands Red Cross

What? Successfully conducted a scoping study on the use of FbF in the Pacific (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands). Currently, designing a roadmap for key elements of an FbF pilot for drought preparedness in the Solomon Islands.



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Moderation:

Kara Siahaan
IFRC Geneva

Sanna Salmela Eckstein
IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office

Potential application of FbF in the Asia Pacific region: Different actors and their experiences



Salesa Nihmei
*Meteorology and Climate Officer,
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environmental Program (SPREP)*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

SPREP provides environment-related support to 26 countries in the Pacific region. It has a MoU with IFRC to work together in reaching out to the population in the framework of a community-based early warning system.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

There are several barriers: the island geography of the Pacific Islands, the many languages and difficulty to coordinate the numerous government initiatives. A cost-benefit analysis was performed when the programme began.

Recommendations

Pro-activeness is important. Identification of priorities is needed before engaging with partners and donors. When relevant and possible, include FbF into all discussions with government and authorities. Identify existing national institutions that could integrate FbF and engage them at an early stage. To ensure all priorities are captured in the project, a roadmap is required.



Michael Annear
*Asia Pacific Manager,
Australian Red Cross*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

Australian Red Cross developed a new strategy which focuses on the localisation of humanitarian action and on enhancing the capacity of action in the movement. In this regard, FbF is a key initiative to bridge the gap between CCA and DRR work.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

Awareness on climate change across the Pacific is not a problem, but understanding and interpreting the climate science is a challenge. Traditional approaches do not necessarily contribute to early action and capacities in-country are often limited on the side of the RC/RC, but also with governments and their institutions.

Recommendations

Despite of its potential, it is important to acknowledge that FbF does not provide a solution to all our problems.



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

Philippe Martins

*Regional Pacific Food Security
Cluster Coordinator, Food and
Agriculture Organisation (FAO)*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

For FAO, one strategic objective is resilience. This is achieved by increasing the capacities of families and communities to deal with disasters. FAO uses information from worldwide early warning systems related to food and nutrition and applies risk vulnerability reduction measures to respond to early warnings. Working with satellite pictures to prove the relevance of early warning early action systems, FAO is currently planning to develop two plans for droughts and cyclones, the two biggest environmental threats in the Pacific.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

The geographical context is probably more important than cultural contexts. In the Pacific, the methodology of action is different compared to the rest of Asia because big players are less present there. Thus, national capacities need to be strengthened more. There is a lack of data (e.g. hydrology) in the Pacific States and the mind-set of donors and stakeholders is more oriented towards response than to early action.



Ana Villa Mariquina

*Unit Head for Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction,
Philippine Red Cross*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

The concept is very much in line with the PRC motto “always first, always ready, always there” and PRC’s mandate.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

Philippine DRM legislation, including government support, is a favourable legal base and ideal precondition to enable PRC to take action. There are several funding mechanisms available that could be used for FbF but need to be examined in order to rationalise how FbF could help in achieving these mechanisms’ objectives. As part of PRC’s work on preparedness for response, FbF is not replacing other activities but complementing them. It will need to be seen to what extent FbF can be absorbed by the government and how the concept will be taken up or continued in the long run.



Finnish Red Cross

Sonja Björklund

*Asia Regional Representative,
Finnish Red Cross*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

Finnish RC wants to be in a position to be able to bridge the gap between development and humanitarian action. To increase the rapid implementation of action, a change is needed for our way of working. DRR and preparedness are some of the biggest topics in the Asia Pacific region. Finnish RC works in the region with its partners, embedding Early Warning Early Action and CCA capacity building in their work.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

The core benefits from building up FbF are working with local actors and the detailed analysis of risks and impacts that is carried out. There are many stakeholders and governments in Asia that are interested in FbF; it is important that they coordinate among each other. Finnish >

RC has the opportunity to advocate for FbF in Finland: the meteorological department is committed to work with other national MET departments to improve forecasts. They are now working on single hazards but are looking at the question of whether it will be possible to do FbF in multi-hazard situations. Can SOPs be created that are applicable to regional or even national contexts? Can FbF make a difference in large scale events? We have to convey our expressed commitments into actions!



Sumit Dugar
*Research Associate,
Practical Action*

Relevance of FbF to the organisation

Practical Action has been working on community-based early warning systems for more than 10 years.

Potentials/challenges in applying FbF in the region

How can we use scientific information - how do we put it into practice? Do users of the information have the capacity to make real use of it? Are countries sharing weather information that is required for the forecasts? What is the difference between triggers and threshold, and predictions and forecasts? And are we able to sell the concept?



Highlights

- ! FbF should be integrated into disaster law and be institutionalised but we need separate mechanisms and funds for FbF
- ! National and local actors are in the driving seat
- ! FbF is a solution with lots of potential: an ambitious and advanced method of EWEA

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DAY TWO

Short Manual presentation

The digital guide was developed by GRC and RCCC to provide technical guidance for the design of Forecast-based Financing interventions. It continuously includes the lessons and experiences of several on-going pilot projects, making this manual a living document that will be updated on a regular basis. Samples of communication materials from FbF pilot projects are made available to share experiences, methodologies and lessons learned from the implementation of these projects. Please visit <http://fbf.drk.de>



Presenter:
Alexandra R uth
German Red Cross (GRC)

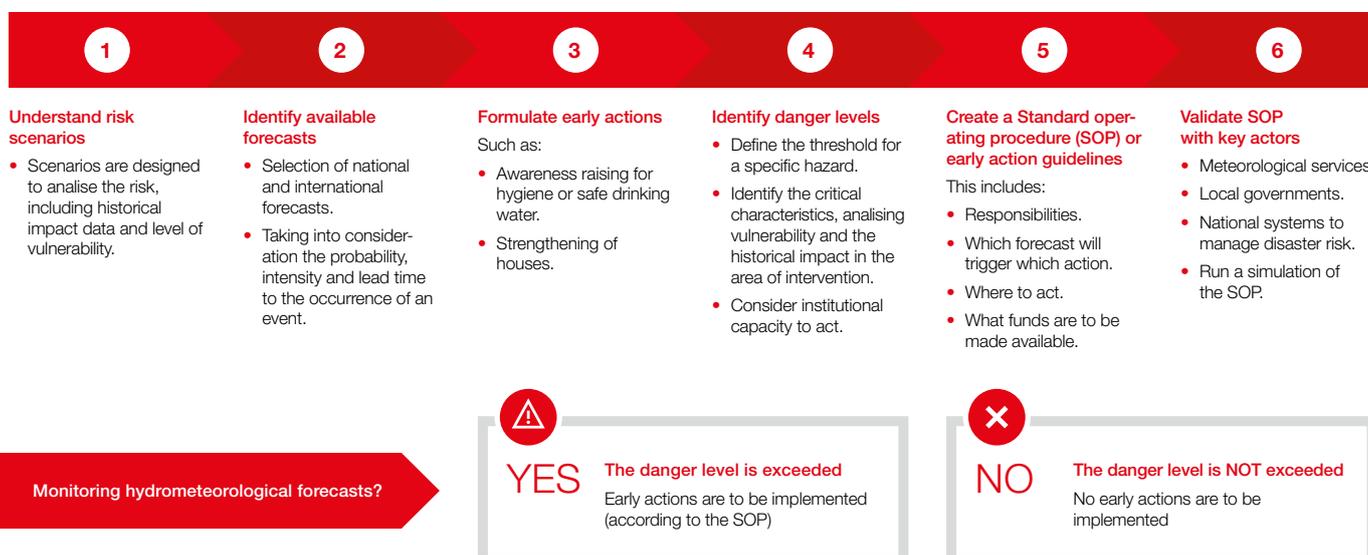
How does an Early Action Protocol / Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) look like?

Lux summed up the most important questions that need to be addressed in an SOP: when to act, where to act, what actions to carry out, with whom and how? She provided examples of which elements are important when answering these questions. Lux also presented the mechanism for developing SOPs that includes developing a risk scenario, identifying available forecasts, identifying danger levels, selecting early actions, developing the Early Action Protocol (SOP), validating the protocol with key actors and monitoring hydro-meteorological forecasts. Experiences of SOP development from Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines were presented by practitioners. Clemens Gros highlighted that it is a prerequisite to appoint an M&E focal point to ensure that measurement is consistently embedded, data on process and results is generated, and learning and course corrections are enabled.



Presenter:
Stefanie Lux
German Red Cross (GRC)

Clemens Gros
*Red Cross Red Crescent
Climate Centre*



Main discussion points

- SOP may also be referred to as an Early Action Protocol; they define who does what and where and when, including names, role and responsibilities and the chain of communication/chain of command.
- SOP shall include financial & human resources needed as well as assumptions and a plan B
- FbF SOPs shall be linked to or included in existing contingency plans and overall Early Warning Early Action approaches
- Contingency plans (e.g. of local governments) including SOPs need annual reviews involving all partners
- The FbF approach should not create separate or parallel procedures but reinforce the existing ones
- National Societies need to work on FbF with their governments using their mandates
- FbF funding so far is project-based (e.g. German FFO); funding sources should be diversified and in the longer run FbF should be integrated in government systems
- Institutionalisation of SOPs with governments takes time (e.g. up to 1 year and longer)
- SOPs must be tested: table top exercises and drills are needed to identify gaps



Highlights

- ! Building monitoring & evaluation mechanism into the FbF process
- ! Involvement of governments into the SOP development
- ! There is no blueprint for an SOP. SOPs are always specific about the **area** (country/region), **hazard** and **organisation(s)** involved

The science of FbF: How to develop triggers/danger level?

Kruczkiewicz defined a trigger as a forecast that is issued, which exceeds both the danger level and the probability threshold, leading to the initiation of pre-defined actions. He presented the example of flooding in Iquitos, Peru, to illustrate the steps taken from forecast threshold – a function of hazard, lead time and probability – to action.



Presenter:

Andrew Kruczkiewicz

Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre / International Research Institute for Climate & Society, Columbia University

Olaf Neussner

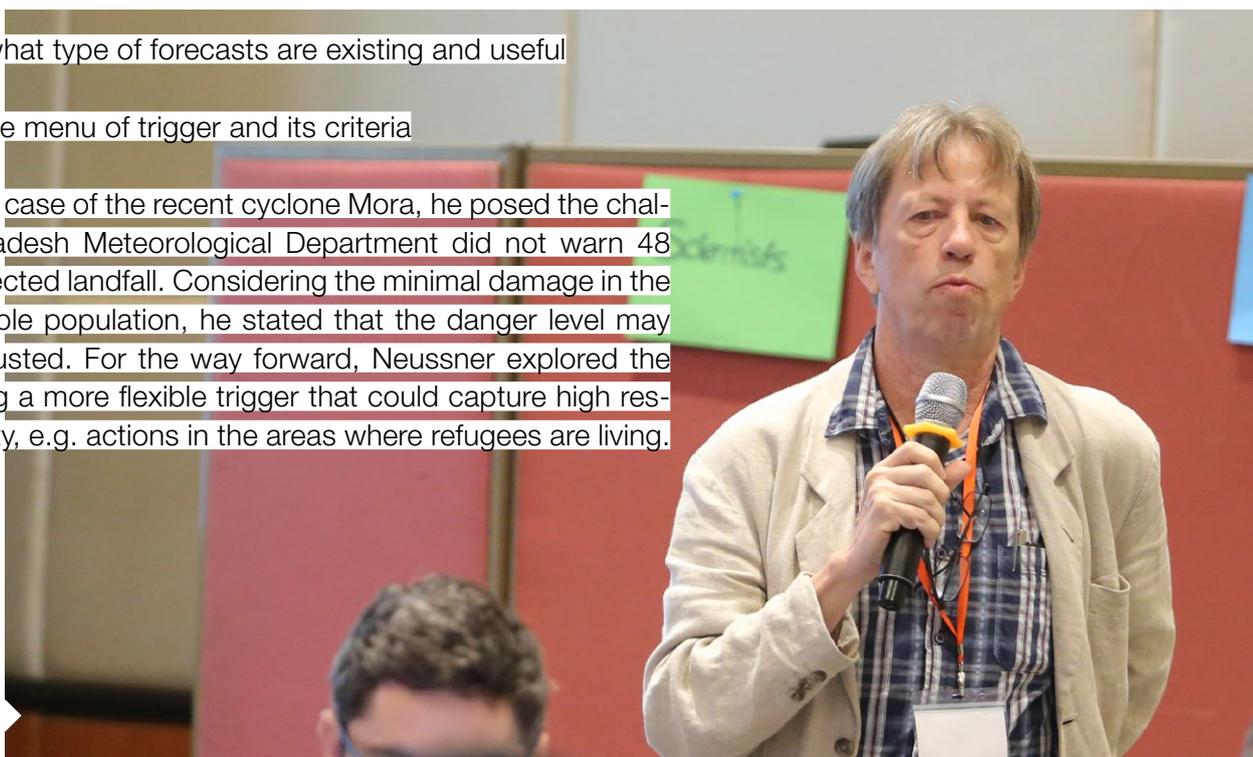
GRC FbF Delegate, Bangladesh

” A trigger is a **forecast** that is issued, which exceeds both the **danger level** and the **probability threshold**, leading to the initiation of pre-defined **actions**. ”

Neussner subsequently shared the experience of designing FbF triggers in Bangladesh by elaborating on the following steps:

- 1 Consultation with the community to identify what amounted to a disaster for them
- 2 Verify with other sources of information on impact of past events as well as using information submitted to IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for crosschecking
- 3 Survey what type of forecasts are existing and useful
- 4 Define the menu of trigger and its criteria

Learning from the case of the recent cyclone Mora, he posed the challenge that Bangladesh Meteorological Department did not warn 48 hours before expected landfall. Considering the minimal damage in the area with vulnerable population, he stated that the danger level may need to be readjusted. For the way forward, Neussner explored the idea of developing a more flexible trigger that could capture high resolution vulnerability, e.g. actions in the areas where refugees are living.



Disaster profile and assessments of weather forecast and early warning system for heavy rains and floods in Quang Binh Province

Trong explained the climate and characteristics of heavy rain in Quang Binh. He provided analysis and evaluation of floods and inundation. He concluded that the current weather forecasts available for Quang Binh are relatively good, but their communication could still be improved. Some research has been done to propose an improved system of forecasting weather and floods.



Presenter:

Tran Dinh Trong

*Vietnam Institute of Meteorology
Hydrology and Climate Change*



Global Framework for Climate Services

Nhat provided an overview of the impacts of climate change in Vietnam through examining the Climate Change Vulnerability Index and predicted impacts and losses from climate extremes. The Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), he asserted, is key in helping decision makers in relevant sectors to use climate information for managing current and future climate risks. Among the key gaps, Nhat emphasised the need to use tools that help professionals and communities access climate related information and to collaborate in an interdisciplinary manner (policy, practice and research). He positioned FbF as one of the tools that could potentially support the objective of GFCS in Vietnam.



Presenter:

Le Minh Nhat PhD

*Director of Climate Change Adaptation,
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)*



Roundtable: Actions for FbF

Experience of UNWomen in Vietnam on extreme drought

Anh highlighted that livelihood is the sector that is most hit by drought, particularly in the Central Highlands and Mekong Delta. Women are most affected because of traditional gender roles. They stay in the villages to look after the household while more men are migrating to the cities. In the current project UNWomen would like to focus on the multi-stakeholder involvement of government, civil society organisations such as the Red Cross and community groups.

GRC-VNRC work on heatwave

Faucet referred to a study of the Ministry of Health on the increased rates of hospitalisation and respiratory diseases during heatwave in the North of Vietnam. He explained that a temperature of minimum 35°C for more than three consecutive days constitutes a heatwave and that the temperature has exceeded this level for 175 days. FbF, he emphasised, needs to target especially elderly people and those with outdoor jobs.

Dzud: a unique extreme weather phenomenon in Mongolia

Baasansure explained that the frequency of dzud has increased over the years. While it used to happen every 12 years, he said Mongolia is now visited by dzud almost once every three years with an increasing level of severity. All layers (provincial, district and household) need to be involved in the early warning systems and to distribute cash effectively. Other types of action he identified are road safety measures e.g. reinforcing the icy roads with sands, improvement of health and education services and protection of livestock.



Moderation:

Stefanie Lux
German Red Cross

Panellists:

Tran Thuy Anh
*Program Officer,
UNWomen Vietnam*

Isabelle Lacson
*Senior Program Associate,
World Food Programme
Philippines*

Dr. Davaajargal Baasansure
*Disaster Management Program
Leader, Mongolian Red Cross
Society*

Jerome Faucet
*Program Coordinator FbF,
German Red Cross, Vietnam*

Olaf Neussner
*Delegate, German Red Cross,
Bangladesh*



Using cash in FbF – The case of Bangladesh

Neussner shared the result of the discussions of the FbF team with communities regarding traditional coping strategies. Based on these discussions, transportation needs for evacuation, cost of health services, food for families and fodder for animals were identified to be the priority needs in a disaster situation. Compared to the distribution of NFIs, cash was considered superior as it gave communities the option to buy in advance what was needed, he added. In the course of a social study done at the beginning of the project, communities shared that negative coping strategies such as selling assets are sometimes used due to the lack of options. During the last cyclone Mora, it was confirmed that the above-mentioned costs (evacuation, health, food and fodder) were the main expenses. According to Neussner, it is very important to act fast in order to have early action carried out in time.

Maintaining access to food during typhoons and flooding in the Philippines: WFP perspective

Lacson shared her experience in conducting consultations with communities, provinces and national governments as decision makers. Evacuating livestock, vaccinations, capacity building before disasters, search and rescue trainings are all examples she provided on possible actions. Lacson emphasised that typhoons have very short lead time compared to drought. Therefore, she concluded that it is important to identify possible actions together with the communities well in advance.

On the use of cash

Neussner affirmed that he prefers cash distribution because it allows people to assess what they want and need in the specific context and circumstances. Nevertheless, he warned, there are valid reasons why some actors are against cash distribution; such as temporary inflations or the major need for very particular items. Anh added that in some cases, cash distribution may reinforce gender inequalities.



Competition: Best FbF actions

- Participants were asked to discuss possible FbF actions based on an assigned scenario and perform a 3-minute pitch in front of a four-person jury. They decided on the best action based on the completeness of information and rationale of intervention. The competition was won by the Vietnam Red Cross.



Asia Pacific Regional
Dialogue Platform

DAY THREE

Measuring what matters?

Common understanding of evidence

→ In measuring what matters, Gros prioritised the following questions: What does success of FbF look like? How do we measure it? For whom are we measuring and why are we measuring?



Moderation:

Clemens Gros

Red Cross Red Crescent

Climate Centre



Policy

FbF is embedded in institutional structures to ensure coordination and sustainability



People

Prevent suffering:
Increase preparedness and resilience



Mechanics/SOP

Science: risk scenarios, danger levels, forecasts;
SOPs: development, implementation = action;
Cost efficiency (CBS)

Policy

In terms of policy and integration of FbF into national systems, it is becoming more important to track whether people are talking about FbF and if the international agreements are mentioning it, Gros asserted. Most importantly, success means that resources should be allocated to FbF.

People

In determining whether people in FbF assisted communities are better prepared for impact and experience less suffering, Gros stated that it is necessary to use data from a comparison and an intervention group. However, it is difficult to randomise FbF since the communities we are working in are scattered over a large area and possess different characteristics. FbF, he warned, is not a statistical exercise but a real-time intervention and the problem of bias of data remains. The surveys, he affirmed, must be as short as possible but as long as necessary. Interviewer bias, e.g. wearing a Red Cross vest might influence the answers, since this might raise expectation about forthcoming aid. Ideally, the interviewers are independent and as incognito as possible/as impartial as possible to avoid expectations.

Mechanics SOP

The science and SOPS are the mechanics to operationalise the policy and people elements. Here, it is important to consider several questions, such as whether risk scenarios & danger levels were correctly assessed and forecasts were accurate, and regarding SOPs development, were the best actions chosen and the right actions taken, at the right time, in the right place, in the right amount.

Project level: Next steps per country

→ Participants are grouped by country to answer “what does FbF success look like in your country”, “who are the most important partners to work with” and “how do we ensure that practical FbF project are implemented and connected to policies”.



Interviewer:
Michael Annear
Australian Red Cross

Below are the answers from Nepal, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Pacific and Indonesia, shared in a TV interview format.

- SOPs for different types of disasters have been developed and successfully tested
- SOPs have been triggered and adapted
- FbF has been mainstreamed and incorporated into national disaster legislation
- M&E process for FbF actions is in place
- See all FbF actions bearing fruit
- Effective capacity building: people know which action to take when a warning is issued
- A fund for FbF has been developed
- There has been a change in mind-set from acting post-disaster to ex ante
- National and local governments, ministries, organisations and communities are working hand in hand



An Asia Pacific strategy: Brainstorming on the regional approach



Moderators:

Thomaz Carlson
IFRC Asia Pacific

Jerome Faucet
GRC Vietnam

→ In building a joint success story at the regional level, Faucet asked participants to brainstorm on the following questions: Who should be involved? How do we work together? How do we ensure an efficient feedback system of the results and learnings from country to regional to global levels in the strategy and tools development of FbF?

Who should be involved?

- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre (AHA-Centre)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
- Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific
- Global Flood Awareness System (GLOFAS)
- Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)
- International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Mekong River Commission (MRC)
- One Billion Coalition
- Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
- Pacific Met Council
- Pacific Platform for Disaster
- Partnership for Resilience (PfR)
- Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia
- SIMED
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)
- START Network
- UNOCHA
- World Bank
- World Meteorological Organisations (WMO)
- Types of organisations: Academia, (Regional) Met Offices, insurance companies

How do we work together?

- Some activities could be carried out jointly such as joint publications
- Having a help desk or knowledge centre that harbours all initiatives where we can write to: desk either answers or refers them in the region
- Exchange the SOPs for feedback with other organisations
- Designate a focal person for FbF within organisations: having a spokesperson
- Consolidated version: website should be for all orgs to upload all experience and reports: more interactive website
- Exchange visits for knowledge sharing
- Use existing methods better, put FbF better on the agenda of various relevant coordination meetings while also build on existing structures
- World Bank influences governments to invest and support capacity building in Early Warning Early Action – FbF should be linked
- Mekong River Commission should build Met Office capacity plus access to global technology
- Develop a specific agreement on the roles and responsibilities of each organisation working in FbF – e.g. framework on cooperation
- Use existing working groups for regular exchange
- Create sectoral working groups with regular meetings for exchange of info and experience
- Joint activities, publications, research supported by different pilots
- Exchange feedback on SOPs

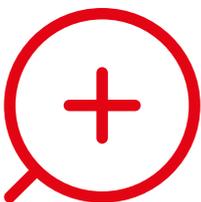
How to ensure an efficient feedback system of the results and learnings from the countries level to the regional and global level for FbF strategy and tools development?

- Communication is key and we often do not engage with communication people from the beginning and develop a common strategy
- Document our learning and organise a sharing workshop
- It is inefficient to only have statements to impress the donor without providing clarity about the actual results
- One of effective ways of sharing and learning is inviting partners and stakeholders to the field

For Asia Pacific, it is important for RC/RC FbF partners to be knowledgeable about the plans and commitments made by “Asia Pacific National Society DRM Strategy Towards Community Resilience” to assure programming coherency.



CHALLENGES



OPPORTUNITIES



Closing remarks Madame An (Vice President VNRC)

- In her closing remarks, Madame An stressed that the first Regional Dialogue Platform has been a great success and expressed her sincere gratitude to IFRC and GRC. VNRC, Madame An affirmed, is now ready to roll out the FbF pilot project and looks forward to developing the FbF system and SOPs to prepare for floods and heat waves in Vietnam. She also highlighted that VNRC will advocate at the Vietnamese government to allocate parts of the budget towards the FbF implementation. Finally, she called for continued support so that FbF can be rolled out in Vietnam successfully.



IMPRESSIONS



LINKS TO DOCUMENTS

Presentations and photos from the FbF Asia Pacific Regional Platform

Click the icons to visit the websites.



Presentations



Photos

For more information about the FbF projects of GRC and the setting up of an FbF project, please visit our website and the FbF online manual:



Information



FbF Manual

Publisher

Deutsches Rotes Kreuz e.V.

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International Cooperation Department

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Special thanks to all the
note takers for their input.

Layout and typesetting

STÜRMER & DRÄNGER GmbH
www.stuermer-draenger.de

Credits

German Red Cross
Flaticon
Striped Candy LLC (Maps)



#FbFASIA17