

FORECAST-BASED ACTION

Addressing drought induced food insecurity in Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Kenya

Project Funding: Financially supported by GFFO

Project Duration: March 2020 - December 2022

Project Countries: Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Kenya

Key Partners: National met agencies, disaster management agencies, Start Network members

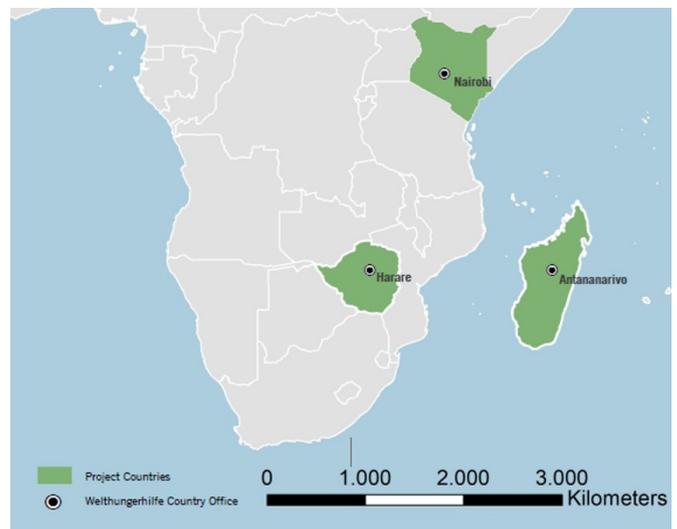
ACTING EARLY - A NEW ERA IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Today the humanitarian system is mainly reacting to crisis after they have occurred. Therefore, funding for humanitarian action is not available until it is too late. However, acting early in face of humanitarian crisis can save time, costs and, most importantly, lives. If we successfully predict extreme weather events and act early, we can mitigate their impact and prevent human suffering.

What is Forecast-based Action?

Forecast-based Action is a system that enables the allocation of financial resources in advance of disasters to enable action as soon as an early warning is issued: days, weeks or even months before a disaster hits.

Based on in-depth forecast information and extensive risk analyses, the release of funds and specific early actions are lined out and agreed upon in so-called Early Action Protocols (EAPs). These EAPs define which stakeholder does what, where and when. When a pre-agreed trigger (or danger level) is then reached, a warning is issued and early actions are implemented to limit the damage of the predicted disaster.



FORECAST-BASED ACTION AT WELTHUNGERHILFE

Welthungerhilfe started its first pilot project in Forecast-based Action (previously Forecast-based Financing) in 2017 addressing drought risk in Madagascar. Its objective was to develop a drought model and EAPs for 3 sub-regions of Madagascar. The processes, evidence and learning from these efforts have formed the basis of a manual which showcases best practice for adoption in other sub-regions of Madagascar, in other countries (in the first instance Zimbabwe and Kenya), and for other hazards further in the future.

AIM OF THE FBA PROGRAMME

The aim is to develop Forecast-based Action mechanisms for food security in the event of drought in Madagascar, Zimbabwe and Kenya. The Early Action Protocols (EAP) created as part of the project reduce the risks to the food security of vulnerable communities, prevent negative coping strategies and minimize the loss and damage to drought-affected households.

The Forecast-based Action mechanism will be developed and specifically adapted and set up to an international and national NGO environment. In order to ensure effective implementation, the system is developed in cooperation with universities, the Start Network, Start member organisations, local partners, national government institutions, local authorities and target group communities.

The project aims to avert or at least minimise the negative effects of a predicted drought on the food security of people at risk in selected geographical areas or communities. On the basis of historical analyses, this should take into account such drought events, which occur on average every 10 years.

EAP CUSTODIANSHIP PROCESS

Our vision is to strengthen FbA and anticipatory humanitarian initiatives among NGOs. Therefore, and to ensure a long-term sustainability, the ownership of local EAPs should be shared with other stakeholders. With this ambition in mind, we have partnered with the Start Network, at global level with its 50+ NGO members.

Start Network members in each country can thereby become ‘custodians’ of EAPs and as such will be involved in the development, approval, adaptation, and activation thereof. This process will be done under the guidance and facilitation of WHH.

THE START NETWORK PARTNERSHIP

The role of the Start Network is twofold: **technical** and **financial**.

Technical: The Start Network (global team) has extensive experience modelling drought for early action and developing contingency plans to this end. As such, Start Network will provide continuous technical guidance on the model development for all 3 countries of this FbA mechanism. The Start Network will also provide quality assurance on the EAPs developed by WHH and others in country.

Financial: When triggers are met, the Start Network will fund the EAP implementation. Putting the money behind these EAPs is one of the reasons behind Start’s quality assurance role in their development (cited above). This funding support is part of a wider Start Financing Facility (SFF), enables donor money to be deployed at scale in timely, predictable and efficient ways to frontline NGOs like WHH worldwide. The long-term goal is for the SFF to incorporate multiple funding mechanisms such as this one and the Start Fund, to better and more holistically protect communities at risk of predictable crises.

PROJECT PHASES OF WHH FBA APPROACH



The project is divided into five phases: **1) Project Planning and Coordination**, in which the further project processes are elaborated with partners, also meteorology and disaster management authorities are involved; **2) Understanding Risks and Vulnerabilities**, in which through comprehensive analyses scenarios are created and intervention priorities are established on the basis of calculated disaster impacts; **3) Development of a Scientific Monitoring and Triggering Mechanism** in which a reliable, open-data-based system is designed; **4) Development of Early Action Protocols**, in which suitable Early Actions are prioritized and contingency plans with clear roles and responsibilities are established; and **5) MEAL Conception**, in which comprehensive MEAL concepts are implemented throughout the project and a

LOOKING BACK: CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR FORECAST-BASED ACTION

	Challenges	Lesson learned
Visibility and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of the project was insufficient both at global and national level: few materials and no wider communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a programme-wide communication strategy for improved visibility
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of data in-country (specifically historical data or detailed vulnerability data that was comparable across sub-regions of the country) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling for more time in order to build a robust scientific model (or even consider to outsource) • Creation of Scientific Advisor position in each country of implementation to ensure preservation of knowledge and learnings (project documentation to be prioritised)
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of early action initiatives by members in-country proved to be a stumbling block in the early stages of the project • In the early days of this project, coordination between members was also limited due to a lack of information and understanding of the FbA approach as a whole. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling longer lead-in time (especially in new countries of implementation) to ensure proper introduction to concepts, capacity building and training, as well as the 'buy-in' of various stakeholders • Scheduling more time for coordination, scoping and understanding the lay of the land before programming started • Establishment of Programme Management Unit situated in WHH headquarters in Bonn was established to coordinate and monitor overall processes of the programme • Fostering of lively exchange and coordination between WHH internally but also with other stakeholders (such as Start Network and members, national government institutions and local authorities)
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to lack of documentation and staff turnover, project knowledge and learnings has not been captured and handed over as well as it could have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritization of production of Learning material (such as the manual for FbA in NGO settings) to ensure preservation of knowledge and learnings

FORECAST-BASED ACTION VISION

- A financing mechanism that allows for multiple donors to fund various levels of risk;
- A model designed with local needs and risks in mind;
- A flexible contingency planning approach;
- A continuum of risk financing - where different types of financing can be activated at different stages, depending on the type and timeline of a crisis.

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