



WHH FbA Manual

Forecast-based Action in an NGO Setting

(Version: August 2022)

EARLY ACTION IDENTIFICATION AND EAP DEVELOPMENT

Step-by-Step Guidance

Who is involved?

Engagement of actors at all levels, from community members, community committees, to local and national governments and agencies (and if appropriate Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, other humanitarian and development organizations, research institutions, and the private sector or other relevant actors)

Level of Implementation:

Research for the selection of actions at the local level: consultations with communities on past impacts, needs and risk factors will need to be carried out with sample communities: community-level data can provide a sense of the type of impacts, risk factors and support needs that might apply to other communities in the larger area exposed to the hazard.

Methods:

Methods to use can include tools such as a review of historical (and current) data; a literature review; semi-structured, key informant interviews; focus group discussions; community visits; stakeholder workshops and community surveys (see more details under **Annex 1: Overview of Methods**). The tools and templates presented are based on Welthungerhilfe templates and other resources such as the [Red Cross FbF Manual](#) and are specifically adapted to an NGO context. Based on EAP Custodians' workplans an exemplary outline of this process will be described in the following.

Step 1: Work Plan Activities under general custodian activities

Work Plan Activities: *Inception Meeting, Stakeholder Workshops, Community Awareness, (EAP Custodian Meetings in case EAPs are developed in tandem or through local partner organisation)*

Step 1 will answer the following key questions before actual Early Action Identification and EAP Development takes place by creating a stable foundation for a very participatory and localized process:

- What is the basic idea behind Forecast-based Action?
- How is Welthungerhilfe's programme structured?
- What are the main tasks and responsibilities of EAP Custodians?
- How will stakeholders and communities be involved?
- What are stakeholders' and communities' expectations towards the project (for EAP Custodians and/or WHH)?

Overview of Sub-Steps (click to jump to section):

[Step 1.1: Inception Meeting](#)

[Step 1.2: Stakeholder Workshops](#)

[Step 1.3: Community Awareness Activities](#)

Step 1.1: Inception Meeting

An inception workshop is held in order to present the overall idea behind FbA, the EAP Custodian Approach for EAP Development and the overall steps to be taken to most relevant EAP development stakeholders (i.e. district governmental stakeholders and community leaders). It evaluates which and how stakeholders and communities will be included in the participatory process and what their expectations are. If it has not been done so far, the inception meeting should be used to identify wards (or similar divisional level) for the community assessments in a participatory process and agree on particular activities the project will implement in the course of the EAP development. Generally, the workshop is intended to create a buy-in by stakeholders into the overall process.

Deliverables: Inception Meeting Report and Overall Inception Report ([Template here](#) and *Annex 2 – Inception Report Template*)

Step 1.2: Stakeholder Workshops

In general, this activity should be an ongoing process. The EAP Custodian needs to maintain fluid communication with district stakeholders to keep them informed about the planned activities, progress, and results. Stakeholders need to be consulted and fully participate at every stage of the EAP development process. This includes stakeholder consultations and sensitization at provincial and district levels to evaluate on the process of the project on a deeper level.

This process includes agreeing on a joint workplan and the methodologies to be used, discussing modes and formats of communication and exchange, as well as roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and their expectations for the project.

Deliverables: Stakeholder Workshop Reports

Step 1.3: Community Awareness Activities

This activity in general is also an ongoing process. Communities need to be informed continually to keep them informed about the planned activities, progress, and results. Community members need to be consulted and fully participate at every stage of the EAP development process.

This process includes community awareness meetings attended by for instance councillors, village heads, village committee members, farmers' representatives, and other relevant stakeholders. Content presented should include the overall idea behind FbA, the EAP Custodian Approach for EAP Development and the overall steps to be taken, especially regarding participatory activities which will need communities' input. While evaluating on participatory processes of the project also consult participants for their input and expectations for the process.

Deliverables: Community Awareness Meeting Reports



Note: As part of programmatic learning, an ‘over-research’ or research fatigue of communities was observed. Therefore, it should be checked whether it might be feasible to merge community awareness activities from Step 1.3 with first community consultations in Step 2.1.

Step 2: Identification, Prioritization and Validation of Early Actions

Work Plan Activities: *Stakeholder Workshops, Community Meetings, KI Interviews, Scenario planning workshops*

Step 2 will answer the following key questions:

- What are the main impacts that are caused by the hazard in question?
- Which harmful impacts can FbA reduce?
- What Early Actions will best reduce these impacts?
- Which of these Early Actions are currently feasible given the existing context and capacities?

 **Overview of Sub-Steps (click to jump to section):**

[Step 2.1: Identify and prioritize drought impacts and copings strategies](#)

[Step 2.2: Narrow and prioritize list of Early Actions](#)

[Step 2.3: Scenario Planning Workshops](#)

Step 2.1: Identify and prioritize drought impacts and coping strategies

As the goal of Early Actions in FbA is to prevent or reduce the humanitarian impact of extreme weather events, in our case drought, it is of crucial importance to understand the expected impact (how and to whom?). Therefore, the EAP Custodians should research on the following issues:

- Review of existing drought contingency plans, regular social safety, lean season, or other drought-related interventions and existing anticipatory action plans of other actors
- Identify how agricultural drought will impact livelihoods and food security
- Identify coping strategies and behavioural changes of people in case of an imminent drought
- Identify how different Early Action might steer these coping strategies and minimize impact of agricultural drought
- Identify *Window of Opportunity* for Early Action to answer “when an Early Action would be most effective”

Methods:

Stakeholder Participation: District Stakeholder Workshop + Key Informant interviews with stakeholder

District Stakeholder Workshop

- Presentation: Overview of the concept of FbA and update on the EAP development
- Review of research findings and impacts of drought
- Group Activity: Group Discussion asking stakeholder to rank impacts and coping strategies
- Presentation: Policy and practice review of DRM/Contingency plans etc. and [Early Action Database for Anticipatory Action - Anticipation Hub](#)
- Group Activity: brainstorming and prioritization of Early Actions that could be taken to address the priority impacts and (negative) coping strategies also reflecting on the potential window of opportunities for each Early Action

District Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews are a useful tool to incorporate the view of stakeholders in the EAP Development Process (see **Annex 3 - Stakeholder Semi-Structured Interview Guide**)

Potential Methodology:

Interviewing of at least one individual of each stakeholder group to reflect on stakeholder's view on drought impact, already present drought efforts (streamlining of efforts), community coping strategies, preferred/feasible Early Actions and challenges to look out for.

FGDs/Community Meetings and Ranking

In the context of a Focus Group Discussion/Community Meetings and an included community ranking, an exchange between a homogenous group (see example methodology below) can help to identify drought impacts, typical coping strategies and preferred Early Actions.

Example methodology:

In each community three FGDs could be organized (for more detail see **Annex 4 – Community Meetings and Ranking**):

1. **Community Leaders** (5-10 participants): e.g. Village leader, Members of the local disaster risk reduction committee, Representatives of women's groups
2. **Men** (6-10 participants): males from intervention communities, preferably from more highly impacted/ vulnerable households (consult community leader), homogenous group (regarding age, vulnerability but vary between communities to allow balanced participation across communities) to enable participants to speak freely
3. **Women** (6-10 participants): females from intervention communities, preferably from more highly impacted/vulnerable households (consult community leader), homogenous group (regarding age, vulnerability but vary between communities to allow balanced participation across communities) to enable participants to speak freely



Note: As part of programmatic learning, it became evident that communities can also identify Early Actions which are feasible to be self-implemented by communities without external funding. Hence, as part of the identification of Early Action for the Early Action Protocol implemented by EAP holders it might also make sense to reflect with communities which strategies they could make use of themselves to prepare for impending drought impacts autonomously.

Step 2.2: Narrow and validate prioritized list of Early Actions

- Use evidence from activities above, determine which actions are most promising to reduce suffering and losses → assess and rank Early Actions
- Develop Theories of Change for different Early Actions

Prioritization of Early Actions

Use prioritization feedback from communities and stakeholders to integrate in a merged prioritization of Early Action and assess against objective criteria. The following objective criteria below should be considered during the selection process (see [Red Cross FbA Manual - Chapter Select Early Action under Step 4 Narrow and Prioritize Early Actions](#) for more explanation of criteria):

- Policy Fit
- Evidence of Effectiveness
- Scale
- Feasibility
- Social Acceptability
- Capacity of Implementation
- Value for Money/Efficiency
- Alignment with organizational mandate and priorities
- Timing
- Action lifetime
- Benefit of acting early
- No regret actions
- Do no harm / avoid generating new risks
- Lifetime of prepositioned relief items
- Budgetary constraints regarding prepositioning

Theory of Change Development

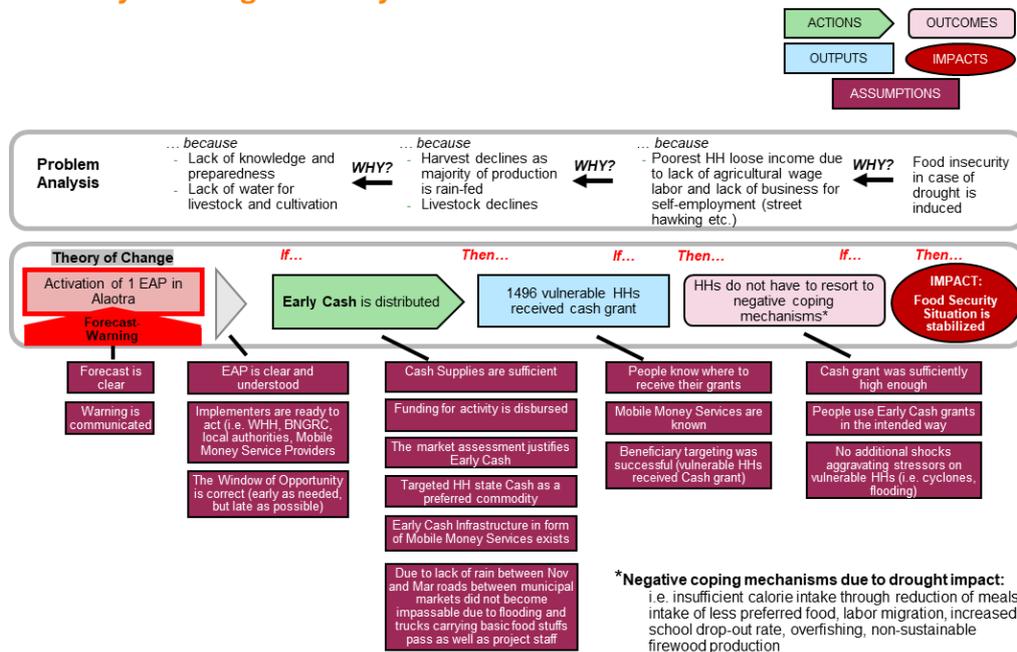
One essential step of planning for an identified and prioritized Early Action is to test the logic behind the selected Early Action. This can be done by developing a Theories of Change (ToC) which lays out how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. Overall, it is an illustration of a step-by-step outline how and why the desired outcome will be reached by implementing an Early Action.

While it helps you to see if an Early Action is actually able to prevent the forecasted impact of a drought it can also be used as a basis for developing a logframe and monitoring and evaluation framework.

All Early Actions which are considered after prioritization should be translated into a ToC, giving you an overview which Early Action is able to tackle which impact, have which outcome, and should therefore be included in your Early Action Protocol. If feasible, seek feedback from stakeholders.

Exemplary ToC (Template Theory of Change) :

Theory of Change for Early Cash



Step 2.3: Scenario Planning

Planning activity to prepare for different severities of food insecurity, numbers, and groups of beneficiaries, expected needs per scenario as well as corresponding scale of Early Actions

- Identify different livelihood groups to be assisted based on vulnerability assessment (also in relation to targeting criteria)
- Identify and quantify potential needs per hazard severity (medium and severe). Refer to expected household needs & coping strategies, quantify if possible
- Assess selected Early Action in regard to possibility to scale, organizational feasibility and costs per scenario
- Develop respective budget for the two scenarios (severe and moderate) in regard to expected assisted households and number of people

Method

Desk review, include outcomes in overall stakeholder workshop for validation if necessary



Note: As part of programmatic learning, a meeting fatigue of stakeholders was observed. Therefore, it should be checked whether it might be feasible to merge Step 2.2 and 2.3 (prioritization of identified Early Actions and scenario planning) to cut down needed stakeholder consultations and make exchanges as effective and valuable as possible for EAP developer and consulted stakeholders.

Step 3: EAP Development, Validation and Operationalisation

Work Plan Activities: *Community feedback meetings, Development of detailed EAPs, EAP validation workshops*

EAPs are contingency plans which define which stakeholder does what, where and when in case the scientific drought monitoring model provided by WHH is triggered. As soon as a certain trigger level is then reached, a warning is issued, and Early Actions are implemented.

Step 3 will answer the following key questions:

- Who will do what and when?
- Does the EAP reflect the reality?
- How can an EAP be operationalized? Are we EAP implementation ready?

 **Overview of Sub-Steps (click to jump to section):**

[Step 3.1: Community Feedback Meetings](#)

[Step 3.2: Operationalization of EAP](#)

[Step 3.3: Final Validation](#)

Step 3.1: Community Feedback Meetings

After having finalized the prioritization of Early Actions a final feedback mechanism with the community allows to integrate last concerns and input from people affected. While presenting outcomes of previous community and stakeholder involvement in the identification, prioritization and validation of Early Actions incl. finally prioritized Early Actions, these meetings allow to verify the outcomes and receive further input on prioritized Early Action on, for instance window of opportunity, preferences etc.

Methodology Feedback Meeting:

Participants: e.g. Community Leaders (e.g. Village leader, Members of the local disaster risk reduction committee, Representatives of women's groups)

- Presentation: Outcomes from Step 1: identification, prioritization and validation of Early Action incl. Window of Opportunities of Early Action and Scenarios
- Group Activity: Group Discussion asking participants for feedback on prioritization of Early Actions and ToC (discuss assumptions etc.), as well as verification of identified Window of Opportunities and scenarios
- After Meeting: Integrate results from meeting in further development of EAP

Step 3.2: Operationalization of EAP

This step aims to plan and ensure the organizational preparedness and operationalization of the EAP. Methods of the respective steps should be in line with your organizational response and emergency preparedness planning

- Operational Planning
 - o Develop specific ToRs and tasks for all staff involved in the implementation of the EAP in an operational plan
 - o Check existing or develop framework agreements with service providers, financial institutions, or other suppliers
- Draft Budget for the EAP
 - o considering different scenarios & numbers and beneficiaries
 - o Include all operational costs (staff, transport, logistics, goods & services, communications etc.)
 - o Start Template to be provided
- Admin Planning
 - o Ensure internal project approval processes are followed in advance
 - o All organizational authorization processes should be followed in advance if possible
 - o Create checklist for approval and grand management
- Draft Start Finance Facility Proposal Document (EAP)

Step 3.3: Final Validation

After compiling the first version of the EAP, the EAP stakeholder should receive the chance to review the document and give feedback, e.g. through a workshop.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Overview of Methods

Excerpt from [Red Cross FbA Manual - Chapter Select Early Actions](#)

Review of historical (and current) data

When available, historical and current data from the government and national ministries are a valuable source of information regarding the impacts of past events and current exposure and vulnerability of populations at risk.

The following ministries may have relevant information regarding general or sector-specific disaster impacts and risk factors:

- National Disaster Management Agency (Disaster Risk Management Agency)/Department of Civil Protection
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Transportation
- Ministry of Climate/Energy
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry responsible for infrastructure/land use and/or housing
- Ministry for water and sanitation
- Agency responsible for national statistics
- Department of welfare
- National Research Institutions

In addition to government entities listed above, the following international databases offer comprehensive country-specific impact data:

- [DesInventar](#)
- [EM-DAT](#)

For data on risk factors, these information management sources may also be useful:

- [INFORM index](#)
- [ThinkHazard – GFDRR](#)
- [HDX](#)
- [OpenStreetMap](#)
- [ALNAP](#)

Literature review

A literature review allows you to gather relevant information from existing work (such as reports, studies, policies, and other documents) to identify impacts and potential early actions. Systematic reviews of international disaster response and risk reduction literature can also identify relevant actions that have been tested in other humanitarian settings and to gather evidence about whether, when, why, and how such interventions are effective in preventing or addressing disaster impacts relevant to your context. When reading through contingency plans, policy documents, studies, or reports on past disasters, consider the following:

- How have people prepared and responded to this hazard in the past?
- Could any of these responses be implemented before the event occurred in order to reduce later impacts?
- Could these preparedness actions be reinforced or improved with FbA?
- What evidence is there that this action will work?

In the case of literature reviews of existing FbA examples:

- Are the early actions and lessons learned identified in the literature review transferable to the context of the EAP that is in the process of being developed?

Semi-structured, key informant interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conversations using a guide or a list of questions that need answering but that allow for the conversation to unfold more naturally. They differ from structured interviews or surveys (in which questions are asked in specific way and answers are often pre-determined) in their open-ended nature.

Especially in contexts where little literature or data on past impacts is available, semi-structured interviews with government and disaster management officials, community leaders, staff and volunteers of response agencies and Red Cross and civil society can help you gather information on priority impacts. After identifying the key impacts and risk factors, semi-structured interviews with sector-specific experts are extremely valuable to probe deeper into potential early actions

Focus group discussions

A focus group is a guided discussion, preferably conducted with a relatively homogenous group of individuals. You can conduct focus groups at various levels, including with national stakeholders, provincial or district officials, community leaders, or groups of practitioners.

(Post-disaster) Community visits

Walking through a community with leaders or representatives can be a valuable way to contextualize and deepen understanding gained through interviews and focus groups. Both structured transect walks (see VCA) or less formal tours of a community allow the team to observe local conditions first hand, hear stories, and ask questions that might not arise in a more formal setting. Although visits shortly after an extreme event allow for direct observation of impacts, walking through disaster-prone communities can provide valuable insights at any time.

It is always important to be respectful in the timing of your focus group or visit and consult local leaders- representatives beforehand. For example, when visiting Nampula, Mozambique shortly after a tropical depression, local officials requested a walk through the village with local leaders rather than conduct a focus group (as planned) so as not to raise expectations of assistance.

Stakeholder workshops

Stakeholder workshops are valuable to elicit opinions and ideas while reinforcing the concept of FbA and their engagement in the EAP process. They can be used to identify which are the priority impacts that can be tackled by the FbA system and also to prioritize early actions, revise theories of change (see M&E guideline) and discuss how to operationalize early actions.

Surveys

Unlike qualitative interviews and focus groups, surveys can allow your team to obtain quantifiable data and reach a larger number of respondents. This can be useful when asking people to prioritize impacts and early actions to be addressed by your EAP.

Annex 2 – Inception Report Template:

(Sections marked in green need to be adapted to context)

REPORT TITLE: Inception Report – Development of Early Action Protocols in **District**

DATE: **xx.xx.2022**

Background:

EAP Custodian und Partner organization (if applicable) and Welthungerhilfe are developing a Forecast-based Action mechanism (FbA), addressing drought induced food security in different parts of **CountryXXX**. The Early Action Protocols (EAP) created as part of the programme will reduce the risks to the food security of vulnerable communities, prevent negative coping strategies and minimize the loss and damage to drought-affected households.

This inception report gives an overview on the project setting in **district XXX** and a preliminary outline of the process and proceeding to develop the EAP

Introduction:

- *EAP Custodian & short overview of district (geographic & climatic conditions, population size, main income source etc.)*

Inception Workshop (Step 1.1):

- *Goal and outcomes of the workshop*
- *Evaluating on timing/time frames, stakeholders included, objectives, content, results*
- *Description of identified wards*
- ...

Advocacy and sensibilization activities (Step 1.2 and 1.3):

- *Short overview of already conducted or planned activities*
- *Short description of already received feedback from stakeholders and communities*
- ...

Planning Process Design/Proceedings:

Step 2: Identification, prioritization, and validation of Early Actions → Activities, methods and stakeholders included

- *What activities are planned*
- *Outlined timetable*
- ...

Step 3: EAP Development, Validation and Operationalization

- *Already planned activities and preliminary timetable*
- ...

Workplan (updated)

Concluding remarks

Annex 3 - Stakeholder Semi-Structured Interview Guide:

(Sections marked in green need to be adapted to context)

Interviewee Name and Title: _____

Organization: _____

Date, Time: _____

Location: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Introduction Interviewer, explaining of methodology and process

QUESTIONS

Do you have any questions regarding the purpose of this research?

Do I have your permission to record this interview? (If applicable) a) Yes b) No

Background

To begin, please tell me more about your role in your organization, specifically regarding early warning and disaster response.

Were you involved in previous drought responses in **Insert District**?

Drought Impacts and Community Coping Strategies

What are the primary impacts of drought in **Insert District** in the past?

How did the community cope? Which coping strategies did they use?

Early Warning & Response

Did you or anyone in your organization receive information, forecasts, or early warnings for drought in **Insert District** in the past? If not, skip to Section **Closing** below.

How long before a drought do you usually receive a warning? (usual lead-time for drought)

From whom did you usually receive the warning in **Insert District**?

What actions did you or your organization take after receiving the warning? To whom did you communicate the warnings usually?

Drought Warning Implementation/Early Actions:

Which actions do you as an organization usually take before a drought?

In your opinion, what would be the most appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of drought on the community in **Insert District** by the Forecast-based Action initiative?

What do you think will be the primary challenges of FbA in **Insert District**?

Closing

Is there anything else related to the design or implementation of FbA activities (Early Actions and EAP Development) we have not discussed that you think is important for us to understand?

Anyone else in your organization or other organizations who should be involved with the implementation of FbA and EAP Development that you recommend I speak to?

Do you have any questions for me?

Annex 4 – Community Meetings and Ranking

*(Sections marked in **green** need to be adapted to context)*

Need to draft FDG Script (Welcome/Purpose/Ground Rules/Confidentiality/Data Collection Method e.g. recording)

FGD Protocol

Date: _____

Community name: _____

Focus Group moderator names:

1. _____

2. _____

Group type:

Men / Women / Community Leaders

Group composition: The group is composed of *(check all that apply or note down any other relevant properties of the group)*:

Single-headed female household

Elderly

Physically disabled

Other: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

Discussion start time: _____

Questions *(do not read out loud):*

Icebreaker question (5-10 minutes):

Come up with something creative

(Ask a volunteer to start, then go around the group and make sure everyone speaks.)

(Keep answers brief.)

(Core questions (50-70 minutes) :)

Tell us about the last drought that hit your community.

- a) When was it?
- b) What happened?
- c) What were the impacts?

Before the drought occurred, did you learn in advance that it was coming?

- a) (Probe whether an early warning was received?)
- b) (Probe who provided the early warning?)
- c) (When was information / warning received? How many weeks/months in advance?)
- d) (Were people warned earlier / later than usual? Did this make a difference?)
- e) (How was weather or warning information obtained? Through which channels? From whom?)

Did you take any actions to prepare and protect yourself, your livestock, or your farms against the impact of the drought?

(Probe - and note whether actions were taken BEFORE or DURING the drought:)

- a) Before it happened? What did you do?
- b) During the drought what did you do?

Did you receive any outside assistance before the drought occurred?

(Probe - in case participants do not bring this up during the discussion:)

- a) (What type of assistance was received? Was it different from what you usually receive?)
- b) (What was the assistance used for?)
- c) (Who provided the assistance?)
- d) (When was assistance received? Was it early enough?)
- e) (Was assistance received earlier / later than usual? Did this make a difference?)

If a drought like that were to happen again in the future, what type of assistance would be most helpful for you to reduce drought impacts?

(Probe - let participants respond on their own. Do not provide any suggestions)

a) (depending on the type of assistance (Early Action), when would this be best timed? *(Window of Opportunity)*)

b) (depending on the type of assistance (Early Action), which one would you prefer most and when? *(Ranking also considering Window of Opportunity and feasibility)*) → NOTE RANKING BELOW

Closing question (5-10 minutes):

Is there anything else you would like to share with us regarding your experiences with past droughts?

Closing

Thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions with us. You have been very helpful, and we appreciate you taking the time to speak with us.

Discussion end time: _____

Total duration: _____ minutes

RAKING OF EARLY ACTIONS

RANKING	TIMING (MONTHS OF IMPLEMENTATION)