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Evaluation of the project
“Increasing capacities
and scale for anticipatory
action including through
social protection systems”



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Evaluation of the project
“Increasing capacities and scale for
anticipatory action including through
social protection systems”

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Abstract

The final evaluation of the project "Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems" (the project) focuses on its three-year partnership between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). The project aimed to integrate anticipatory action with social protection systems in Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Building on previous initiatives, the project sought to enhance anticipatory action systems and share learnings, influence policy and harmonize strategies across regions.

The evaluation aimed to provide accountability and learning, offering recommendations for future work on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection. It assessed the alignment of the project's design with target group needs, its effectiveness in achieving results, the sustainability of its outcomes, and the effectiveness of management and partnerships.

The evaluation found that the project largely met its objectives by advancing anticipatory action integration into disaster risk management (DRM) frameworks at multiple levels. It contributed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s disaster management goals and developed ten national Anticipatory Action Protocols (AAPs). However, challenges included beneficiary targeting, government engagement and delays due to logistical issues. FAO's administrative processes and limited community participation hindered the effectiveness of anticipatory action activations, although beneficiaries preferred anticipatory over post-disaster aid.

Regarding sustainability, the project made progress in integrating anticipatory action into national social protection systems and influencing disaster risk financing frameworks. However, its focus on testing logistical mechanisms, rather than fully integrating anticipatory action and social protection into government systems, raised concerns about long-term sustainability. The project's partnership between FAO and DG ECHO was effective but faced challenges due to differing priorities, administrative bottlenecks and expertise gaps.

The evaluation concludes that the project laid a strong foundation for future initiatives, demonstrating anticipatory action's potential to reduce reliance on emergency aid and support policy change. It recommends focusing on learning and evidence gathering in future projects, adopting a holistic capacity-building strategy with community engagement, shifting to a programmatic approach to ensure long-term sustainability and establishing a joint FAO–DG ECHO coordination framework to enhance strategic partnerships.

The recommendations are the following: i) *Develop an advocacy strategy*: Future anticipatory action efforts should systematically capture financial, social impact, and national social protection systems integration evidence to demonstrate anticipatory action's value. ii) *Strengthen capacity building and community engagement*: Governments should be involved early, and community participation in beneficiary selection should be strengthened. iii) *Strengthen the programmatic approach and the humanitarian-development nexus for sustainable anticipatory action*: Shift from project-based efforts to sustain anticipatory action integration, leveraging humanitarian and development expertise to secure long-term funding. iv) *Establish a joint FAO-DG ECHO Coordination and Decision-Making Framework for programmatic partnership projects*: A structured partnership framework should improve communication, coordination and strategic decision-making.

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Abbreviations

AAP	Anticipatory Action Protocol
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DRM	disaster risk management
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	focus group discussion
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
KII	key informant interview
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PPP	Pilot Programmatic Partnership
REAP	Risk-informed Early Action Partnership
RIMES	Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia
TOC	theory of change
TOR	terms of reference
TWG	technical working group
TWGAA	Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action
VDDMA	Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

Introduction

1. This is the final evaluation of the project “Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems” (henceforth referred to as the project), which was a three-year pilot programmatic partnership (also referred to as the PPP project) between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). The project built on a previous DG ECHO-funded initiative (May 2019–September 2021) in Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam, which aimed to scale up forecast-based financing and shock responsive social protection. Key lessons from the previous initiative emphasized the need for more national involvement, capacity building and integrating anticipatory action with social protection systems. In response, DG ECHO and FAO launched a three-year PPP project to enhance anticipatory action systems and integrate them with social protection. The project targeted Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam, focusing on tailored approaches for each country, and aimed to share learnings, influence policy and harmonize strategies across regions.
2. The evaluation aims to provide accountability and learning, offering recommendations for FAO and DG ECHO’s future work on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection. It targets FAO and DG ECHO personnel for internal learning, while also helping country counterparts and wider PPP partners sustain project outcomes and collaborate on future initiatives.
3. The evaluation covers the three main project goals: i) standard setting and implementation; ii) institutionalization; and iii) partnerships, and the four project components and associated outcomes and activities, namely:
 - i. Setting up anticipatory action systems and protocols: Establishing anticipatory action systems and strengthening the capacity of national governments, humanitarian partners and local stakeholders to link early warnings to anticipatory action.
 - ii. Adapting social protection systems: Strengthening social protection systems to allow for anticipatory capacity, facilitating the linking of social assistance programmes with humanitarian mechanisms.
 - iii. Implementing anticipatory actions ahead of shocks: Enhancing the FAO and DG ECHO partnership to implement multirisk anticipatory action actions, including expanding or complementing national social protection systems to protect lives and livelihoods ahead of shocks.
 - iv. Learning and evidence for advocacy: Producing learning and advocacy products to improve future programming and promote a system-wide shift towards an anticipatory approach to disasters.
4. The evaluation addressed four evaluation questions (EQs):
 - i. EQ 1 examines how well the project design aligns with target group needs, incorporates lessons, and ensures coherence across goals;

- ii. EQ 2 evaluates the achievement of planned results, focusing on anticipatory action systems, early warning effectiveness and impact;
 - iii. EQ 3 assesses the sustainability of benefits through anticipatory action adoption in social protection systems and effective exit strategies; and
 - iv. EQ 4 looks at the effectiveness of project management and partnerships, focusing on coordination, collaboration and strategic links with relevant projects and policies.
5. The evaluation used a consultative, participatory and transparent approach, engaging both internal (Project Management Team [PMT]) and external (DG ECHO) stakeholders. It adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and followed the FAO Office of Evaluation Manual, procedures and guidelines. The Evaluation Team focused on outputs, results and partnerships at global, regional and national levels, using data triangulation for the analysis of evidence. Methods included a desk review of project documents, updating a theory of change (TOC), in-country data collection, and interviews with stakeholders, ensuring comprehensive findings. The desk review analysed key project materials, which were cross-referenced with interview and discussion data.

Main findings

6. The evaluation findings are presented by evaluation question.

EQ 1: To what extent did the project design align to the priorities and needs of the different target groups?

7. The project built on previous initiatives by standardizing anticipatory action terminology, improving coordination and strengthening government systems through Anticipatory Action Protocols (AAP) development. While it aligned with global best practices, challenges in beneficiary targeting, AAP scale, government engagement and community participation all indicate areas for improvement. Despite these, the project supported regional and national priorities, contributed to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s disaster management goals, and integrated anticipatory action into broader frameworks. Its goals of setting anticipatory action standards, fostering institutionalization and building partnerships were well-aligned across levels. However, challenges with partnership adaptability, capacity-objective discrepancy, and the limited three-year time frame suggest the need for a flexible, long-term strategy for sustained impact.

EQ 2: To what extent have the planned results been achieved?

8. The project made significant progress in integrating anticipatory action into disaster risk management (DRM) systems at local, national and regional levels. FAO's collaboration with ASEAN strengthened frameworks at the regional level, and national integration is ongoing, though challenges remain with official endorsements, coordination roles, and scaling anticipatory action. FAO and Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) successfully led the development of triggers, aligning them with government early warning systems and involving national forecasting agencies. However, this approach may have limited these agencies' ability to independently update triggers over time. While it is challenging to directly attribute the specific project's impact on global changes, the project exceeded targets for capturing lessons, expanding outreach and developing advocacy products to influence global agenda setting on anticipatory action.

9. The project exceeded its target of developing eight national AAPs, but earlier feasibility assessments in social protection could have improved project planning and advocacy. While the AAPs aligned with sector standards, challenges arose in balancing DG ECHO's humanitarian approach with FAO's dual development-humanitarian mandate, particularly around trigger thresholds and activation timing. The absence of a formal agreement on key anticipatory action concepts, like the no-regrets approach, and the principle that, once fully established, the AAP should serve as the primary reference and approval mechanism for responding to sudden-onset disasters, was also noted within the project framework. These elements should have been clearly defined and agreed upon from the outset of the project.
10. While the project has successfully implemented five AAP activations within the expected time frame, the activations also revealed bottlenecks in FAO's administrative and logistical processes, as well as in donor approval. These challenges highlighted potential limitations in FAO's ability to respond to sudden-onset disasters, while its climate-smart agriculture expertise is better suited for slow-onset disasters like droughts. Targeting beneficiaries for anticipatory action remained a challenge despite progress in methodology. Issues with data sharing agreement, data accuracy, lack of community participation and delays in aid distribution hindered effectiveness. Beneficiaries preferred anticipatory assistance over post-disaster responses but emphasized the need for better inclusion, engagement and communication. The project exceeded targets for capturing lessons, expanding outreach and developing advocacy products, though lesson aggregation mainly occurred at the end. AAP activations proved the feasibility of anticipatory action across different contexts, but the lack of a tailored evidence-gathering approach made it difficult to assess their impact on policy and institutionalization. As governments focus on long-term viability of programmes, including funding for promoting scalability and sustainability, structured evidence will be needed to demonstrate how anticipatory action can be integrated into national financial and governance frameworks, attract new funding, reduce reliance on emergency aid and enhance national resilience.

EQ 3: What are the sustainability prospects of the project benefits?

11. The project has contributed to advocating for the integration of anticipatory action into national social protection systems and influenced government frameworks for disaster risk financing (DRF). While the focus on testing logistical mechanisms for cash-based interventions in AAPs, rather than fully integrating these mechanisms into government social protection systems, may limit long-term sustainability, the project has opened avenues for future efforts.
12. For example, there is potential for closer collaboration with development donors to further enhance capacity-building in social protection, supporting long-term impact. While the potential for country-level sustainability is not uniform and depends on the country, the project has shown promising efforts to strengthen national capacity and integrate anticipatory action into government DRM programmes, through the adaptation of technical guidelines developed by the regional anticipatory action technical working group (TWG). However, long-term sustainability would require further investment in building government capacity to independently implement or expand AAPs for additional hazards. Progress is hindered by the absence of legal basis, resource limitations and the lack of dedicated domestic budget codes.

EQ 4: To what extent were the project management and partnership arrangements appropriate?

13. Positive factors affecting the coordination between DG ECHO and FAO include the strategic alignment and learning opportunities, the multiyear time frame, and FAO's structured engagement with the government. Both FAO and DG ECHO recognized the strategic importance of the project, fostering high levels of commitment. The project management and partnership arrangements were largely effective but faced challenges. FAO and DG ECHO's collaboration fostered innovation but struggled with differing priorities, administrative bottlenecks and expertise gaps in social protection. A better tailored partnership framework could have improved coordination and efficiency. At the regional level, the anticipatory action TWG harmonized approaches, and FAO successfully led technical standards development through inclusive consultations with regional stakeholders. Despite challenges like limited government representation in the regional anticipatory action TWG, corrective measures, such as formal terms of reference (TORs) and feedback processes, improved their engagement over time.
14. Within FAO, complex approval processes and unclear management hindered progress, but support from headquarters, delegating responsibilities at regional level and appointing the right expertise in the social protection component improved implementation over time.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. The project successfully advanced the integration of anticipatory action into DRM frameworks at local, national and regional levels. It built on previous initiatives by standardizing anticipatory action terminology, enhancing coordination and strengthening government systems through the development of AAPs. While the project contributed to ASEAN's disaster management goals and supported national priorities, challenges in beneficiary targeting, generating the evidence, AAP scale, and government engagement indicate areas for improvement.
16. The collaboration between FAO and DG ECHO was strategically important but faced challenges due to differing priorities, administrative bottlenecks and gaps in expertise. A more tailored partnership framework could have improved coordination and efficiency, and the limited three-year time frame emphasized the need for a flexible, long-term strategy to ensure sustained impact. Despite these challenges, the project made significant progress in institutionalizing anticipatory action at multiple levels, particularly through the anticipatory action TWG at the regional level and strong partnerships at the country and regional levels.
17. The project exceeded its target for developing AAPs and demonstrated the feasibility of anticipatory actions across different contexts. However, issues such as delays in donor approval, limitations in FAO's administrative and logistic systems, and challenges with beneficiary targeting and community participation pointed to areas needing improvement. Future efforts should focus on addressing these gaps and ensuring greater transparency and inclusiveness in targeting and communication.
18. While the project helped integrate anticipatory action into national social protection systems and influenced disaster risk financing frameworks, the sustainability of its benefits may be limited by the focus on testing logistical mechanisms rather than fully integrating these into government systems. Future efforts should prioritize closer collaboration with development donors to enhance capacity-building in social protection and ensure long-term sustainability.

19. Ultimately, the project's success lies in its ability to demonstrate the potential of anticipatory action to reduce reliance on emergency aid, support policy change and integrate into national systems. With a tailored structured evidence-gathering strategy, future projects could better assess which project components, or regional trends, impacted government policy, institutionalization, and influencing other key audiences, and ultimately secure broader support for scalability and sustainability.
20. Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the Evaluation Team propose four overarching recommendations. The two first recommendations aimed at project level, while Recommendation 3 calls for a more programmatic approach, and Recommendation 4 focuses on the FAO DG ECHO partnership and how it could be enhanced.

Recommendation 1. Develop an advocacy strategy. Future projects aimed at influencing government policies and shaping regional and global frameworks for anticipatory action and social protection should be specifically structured to prioritize learning and evidence gathering. This approach should involve i) engaging stakeholders to define learning objectives that align with their needs and promote policy adoption; ii) adapting project management tools to support evidence collection and influence key audiences; iii) focusing on systematically capturing financial, social impact and national social protection systems integration evidence to demonstrate anticipatory action's value; and iv) presenting evidence in tailored formats for different audiences, emphasizing anticipatory action's scalability and long-term sustainability.

Recommendation 2. Strengthen capacity building and enhance community engagement. To improve the effectiveness, scalability and sustainability of anticipatory action at the national, subnational and local level, capacity building for government agencies should cover all key sectors, with a strong focus on community engagement. This approach should include: i) engaging key government stakeholders (such as national forecasting agencies, social protection bodies and ministries of finance) from the start to support anticipatory action scaling and build long-term government capacity; ii) promoting government leadership (beyond the governmental DRM agencies), clarifying roles and improving coordination among stakeholders; iii) strengthening community engagement and ensuring clear communication in the beneficiary selection process to promote gender equality and inclusivity; and iv) integrating gender, disability and social inclusion considerations into risk assessments and anticipatory action design, ensuring inclusive access and leveraging Indigenous knowledge for early warning and response.

Recommendation 3. Strengthen the programmatic approach and the humanitarian-development nexus for sustainable anticipatory action. To ensure the long-term sustainability and institutionalization of anticipatory action at country level, a shift from short-term, project-based initiatives to a sustained, programmatic approach is essential. This requires bridging humanitarian, development and climate finance to secure continuous support for anticipatory action systems. FAO should continue to leverage its humanitarian and development expertise, along with strong government partnerships, to help national agencies access international climate and development financing (Green Climate Fund [GCF], Loss and Damage Fund, Directorate-General for International Partnerships [DG-INTPA]), advocating for the strategic use of these funds to scale anticipatory action and institutionalize it within national policies for long-term sustainability. FAO and DG ECHO should engage financial decision-makers, especially in ministries of finance, to address key barriers to institutionalization, and help national agencies access international funding from donors promoting adaptive social protection (World Bank, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH*). In addition, FAO and DG ECHO should strengthen country offices' capacity in anticipatory action and social protection by allocating resources, recruiting expertise

and focusing on countries with high potential for scaling anticipatory action within national social protection systems.

Recommendation 4. Establish a joint FAO-DG ECHO coordination and decision-making framework for programmatic partnership projects. Shifting from a traditional donor-implementer relationship to a strategic partnership, for future programmatic partnership projects on anticipatory action and social protection, FAO and DG ECHO should establish a structured coordination and decision-making framework to enhance communication, align expectations, and improve strategic and operational coordination. The framework should include an expectation-setting workshop at the project outset, followed by quarterly strategic dialogues to review progress and address challenges. A joint technical coordination mechanism should be established for trigger thresholds and activation timelines, alongside adaptive learning reviews to assess and refine project implementation based on lessons learned.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and intended users of the evaluation

1. This is the final evaluation of project “Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems” (project code: OSRO/GLO/113/EC). The project is a three-year pilot programmatic partnership (also referred to as the PPP project or PPP action) between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). This evaluation serves a dual purpose of accountability and learning. It provides recommendations to inform ongoing and future interventions by FAO and DG ECHO, particularly those focused on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection.
2. The primary audience and intended users of the evaluation findings are FAO and DG ECHO, both at headquarters and decentralized offices. These findings will serve for internal learning and as a tool to foster common understanding and enhance collaboration among stakeholders. Secondary users include country counterparts and other partners involved in the PPP action at national, regional and global levels. The evaluation aims to enhance their participation in sustaining project benefits and their potential collaboration in other ongoing or future anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection interventions.

1.2 Context of the project

3. The project is set within the global context of increasing frequency and severity of climate hazards, which present governments worldwide with significant challenges in expanding social protection and disaster response systems. Anticipatory action aims to reshape the humanitarian response system by shifting from reactive to proactive measures. It involves pre-emptive actions based on hazard forecasts to mitigate impacts before extreme events occur. These actions vary depending on organizational mandates, contexts and hazards, often using predefined triggers¹ based on forecasts and historical data (FAO, 2021b). In food security and agriculture, for example, anticipatory action includes providing cash transfers, animal feed, gardening kits and drought-resistant seeds, evacuation of boats and livestock, to protect livelihoods.
4. Studies (FAO, 2024I) suggest anticipatory action can enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian and development funding, despite challenges like forecast uncertainty, implementation capacity, targeting issues, political disagreements and bureaucratic delays. Advances in weather forecasting are facilitating the transition from post-shock to pre-shock interventions, supported by global policies from the G7 and the European Union advocating for anticipatory action scaling (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022).
5. In the risk-prone Asia-Pacific region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has introduced the ASEAN Framework on Adaptive Action in Disaster Management (ASEAN, 2022b), setting a benchmark for anticipatory action in Southeast Asia with a strategic roadmap up to 2025. The Asia-Pacific Regional Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action (TWGAA), co-led by FAO and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) supports ASEAN and the wider Asia-Pacific region in implementing these initiatives, including developing new technical standards and

¹ Defines specific thresholds (e.g., rainfall levels) that, when met, activate predefined early actions.

guidelines for anticipatory cash assistance (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action and Asia-Pacific Regional Cash Working Group, 2022).

6. Anticipatory action is part of the disaster risk management (DRM) cycle and can be channelled through humanitarian interventions and/or national social protection systems to deliver assistance and services in anticipation of a shock. Social protection addresses vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty, with shock-responsive social protection adjusting regular programmes to manage needs after large-scale shocks. Integrating anticipatory action with shock-responsive social protection leverages existing infrastructure to support vulnerable populations proactively, ensuring timely, cost-effective support and institutionalizing anticipatory action within national systems (FAO, 2023p).
7. The project builds on a previous DG ECHO-funded initiative (May 2019–September 2021) in the same region, which focused on "Scaling up Forecast-based Financing/Early Warning Early Action and Shock Responsive Social Protection" in Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Viet Nam (FAO, 2022a). This earlier project established the foundation for shock-responsive social protection implementation with country roadmaps and tools like scalability frameworks and ASEAN Guidelines for shock-responsive social protection. Key lessons highlighted the need for increased national counterpart involvement, capacity building, standardized technical tools, joint evidence gathering, and efforts to institutionalize anticipatory action and integrate it with social protection systems (the alignment between the PPP project and the recommendations of this previous initiative are further discussed under EQ 1) (FAO, 2022a).

1.3 Background of the project

8. Recognizing the importance of anticipatory action and its link to social protection, DG ECHO and FAO implemented this three-year Programmatic Partnership Project. Programmatic Partnerships (PPs) are a key instrument through which DG ECHO and its partners seek to operationalize the Grand Bargain 2.0 commitments with a multi-annual, strategic approach. Designed to move beyond short-term, project-based funding, PPs aim to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action by offering greater flexibility, more predictable funding, simplified reporting, stronger accountability to affected populations, and enhanced support for local actors (European Commission, n.d.a). They also aim to increase donor visibility and promote a coherent, outcome-driven model of engagement.
9. By establishing longer-term frameworks, PPs allow DG ECHO and its partners to pursue shared priorities, implement strategies requiring extended timelines, foster cross-country learning, and adapt programming to evolving needs. Since 2020, DG ECHO has piloted PPs with selected international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (ACTED, Concern, IRC, and Save the Children Denmark), followed by partnerships with United Nations (UN) agencies (UNICEF, FAO) and IFRC in 2021, and with ICRC and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2022 (European Commission, n.d.a).
10. Only one of these pilots focused exclusively on anticipatory action: FAO's multicountry initiative "Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems". This experience aims to provide a valuable opportunity to assess how PPs can support the development of anticipatory action systems, their integration into national social protection frameworks, and broader collaboration with governments and

- regional actors to strengthen institutional capacity and shared understanding of the anticipatory action approach.
11. FAO was chosen from over 20 potential partners for its expertise in humanitarian and development responses, particularly in shock-responsive social protection and anticipatory action. The initiative aimed to provide FAO with funding predictability through a trust-based, multiyear model, emphasizing key objectives and outputs at the country level rather than specific activities for greater implementation flexibility.
 12. The project's main goals were:
 - i. Standard setting and implementation, by establishing anticipatory action systems and test them with government counterparts and partners to gather lessons learned, identify gaps, and increase outreach efforts for capacity building and knowledge sharing.
 - ii. Institutionalization, by exploring opportunities to support governments in integrating anticipatory action into social protection systems.
 - iii. Partnerships, by working closely with governments, regional and global actors to build a collective understanding of the anticipatory action approach.
 13. The project targeted five countries in Asia: Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam, focusing on specific provinces and hazards to tailor the approach to each country's needs. It emphasized using social protection systems to deliver anticipatory action. Table 1 summarizes what hazards were targeted, what protocols were developed, and what simulations or activations² were implemented in which country.
 14. At regional level, the project focuses on sharing learnings, influencing policy and decision-making, setting minimum standards, and harmonizing approaches based on evidence from countries and context specificities. FAO has two primary work streams to work at the regional level: i) the Asia-Pacific Regional TWGAA that FAO is co-leading with IFRC; and ii) ASEAN.
 15. At the global level, the project mainly focussed on i) creating normative guidance; ii) global advocacy and planning; iii) partnerships; and iv) technical support. FAO is participating in several global anticipatory action platforms, such as the governing board of the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP). FAO is also producing guidelines and e-learning courses on anticipatory action and working through related partnership initiatives with, among others, Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and DG ECHO. The project mainly produced guidance notes, disseminated project results in global fora and contributed to FAO's

² In anticipatory action, a simulation is a scenario-based exercise used to model possible future events and test responses in a controlled environment. It helps build skills, identify gaps, and improve decision-making before a real crisis occurs. An activation, on the other hand, is the actual implementation of pre-planned actions in response to forecasted risks. It involves real-world deployment of resources and measures to reduce the impact of an imminent hazard. Activations are triggered when forecast thresholds are met, prompting the release of funding and implementation of pre-agreed actions to mitigate the anticipated impacts (Anticipation Hub, 2024a; CERF, 2021).

anticipatory action global strategy 2023–2025 and annual report and El Niño/La Niña planning.

16. Building on the key goals, the project is structured into four main components:
- i. *Setting up anticipatory action systems and protocols:* Establishing anticipatory action systems and strengthening the capacity of national governments, humanitarian partners and local stakeholders to link early warnings to anticipatory action.
 - ii. *Adapting social protection systems:* Strengthening social protection systems to allow for anticipatory capacity, facilitating the linking of social assistance programmes with humanitarian mechanisms.
 - iii. *Implementing anticipatory actions ahead of shocks:* Enhancing the FAO and DG ECHO partnership to implement multi-risk anticipatory action actions, including expanding or complementing national social protection systems to protect lives and livelihoods ahead of shocks.
 - iv. *Learning and evidence for advocacy:* Producing learning and advocacy products to improve future programming and promote a system-wide shift towards an anticipatory approach to disasters.

Table 1. Summary of project actions

Country	Hazards	AAPs developed	Simulations done	Activations done	Capacity development & learning	Integration of anticipatory action onto social protection
Bangladesh	Pre-monsoon flash flood	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Haor region Target: 6 800 households	One simulation Areas targeted: Netrokona, Sunamganj and Kishoreganj districts in Hoar region Beneficiaries reached: 200 households Date: November 2023 Exercise type: Early warning messages, multi-purpose cash, evacuation of vulnerable population and livestock, waterproof storage silos, livestock feed, village edges strengthening	One activation: Areas targeted: Haor region Beneficiaries reached: 6 800 households Date: June 2024 Action: Early warning messages, multi-purpose cash, evacuation of vulnerable population and livestock, waterproof storage silos, livestock feed, village edges strengthening	Series of training, workshops and simulation exercises where participants enhanced their capacity to act ahead of pre-monsoon flash flood. Capacity building and training on anticipatory action with the Government of Bangladesh and civil society partners. Training of volunteers on landslide risk evaluation in Cox's Bazar.	Feasibility study conducted to explore how anticipatory action could be integrated into the national social protection system, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as agricultural wage labourers in the Haor area. Series of coordination meetings with government departments and partners to identify relevant social protection programmes for potential use in anticipatory action interventions. Two government officials trained on the use of social protection in disaster risk management (DRM).
	Landslides	AAP not finalized: Early Warning System developed	No	No		
	Drought	AAP not finalized: triggers model developed	No	No		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Flood	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Savannakhet province (Champhone, Songkhone, and Xonbouly districts) Target: 3 990 households	One simulation Areas targeted: Savannakhet province Beneficiaries reached: 220 individuals Date: March 2024 Exercise type: Tabletop exercise, livestock evacuation, watertight drums	Under the DG ECHO-PPP timeframe, there was no official flood activation	Trainings on anticipatory action integration in DRM planning, and on the anticipatory action approach to drought, involving national and district-level government counterparts as well as humanitarian partners. Engagement across central, provincial, district and community levels through the Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action (TWGAA) meetings and coordination with INGO partners.	Operational Cash Feasibility Study for Anticipatory Cash Transfers conducted to understand the operational feasibility and modalities to deliver cash in anticipation in the project areas of the PPP, recognising the limitations of the social protection system in Lao People's Democratic Republic at that time. Collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the World Bank to pilot the use of the government's social registry for targeting anticipatory action beneficiaries in drought- and flood-prone communities. Five-year Disaster Management Plans developed in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang, contributing to the institutional anchoring of anticipatory action within broader risk management and social protection frameworks.
	Agricultural Drought	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Luang Prabang province (Pakxeng, Phonxay, Xieng Ngeun districts), Savannakhet province (Xonnabouly, Xayboury, Sepon districts), Oudomxay province (Xay, Beng, Pakbeng, Nga, Houn districts). Target: 6 000 households, >30 000 direct beneficiaries	One simulation Areas targeted: Luang Prabang province Beneficiaries reached: 1 000 individuals Date: May 2023 Exercise type: cash distribution	One activation in two target areas: Areas targeted: Luang Prabang and Savannakhet Beneficiaries reached: 1 811 households (rice seeds distribution), 2 076 people (training) Date: May 2024 Action: Early warning messages, cash, drought-resistant rice seeds distribution and community training Areas targeted: Oudomxay Beneficiaries reached: 3 721 households across 50 villages Date: August 2024 Action: Early warning messages and unconditional cash		
Pakistan	Drought	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Sindh province (harparkar, Umerkot and Dadu districts) Target: 4 000 households	One simulation Areas targeted: provincial, district, field Beneficiaries reached: 5 600 individuals Date: 10–14 April 2023 Exercise type: Livestock feed, Multipurpose cash	No activation	Capacity building on anticipatory action with national, provincial and district government institutions, civil society. Flood simulation exercise organized in Dadu District with participation of humanitarian partners and government agencies, alongside advocacy-focused sessions involving Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), UN agencies and sectoral departments.	Provincial social protection mapping exercise conducted in Sindh to support the newly established Sindh Social Protection Authority in identifying synergies with existing social safety net programmes. Engagement in the Global Shield Against Climate Risks initiative to support government efforts in developing adaptive social protection systems with anticipatory action components
	Flood	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Dadu district in Sindh province Target: 2 500 households	One simulation Areas targeted: Dadu district Beneficiaries reached: 330 individuals Date: September 2023 Exercise type: table-top simulation	No activation		

Evaluation of the project “Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems”

Country	Hazards	AAPs developed	Simulations done	Activations done	Capacity development & learning	Integration of anticipatory action onto social protection
Philippines	Drought	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Isabela province in Luzon and Cotabato province in Mindanao Target beneficiaries: 1 000 households	No	One activation: Areas targeted: Isabela province Beneficiaries reached: 989 households Date: February 2024 Action: Cash for critical irrigation, multipurpose cash	Contribution to national learning on how to design, implement and evaluate anticipatory action interventions. National advanced training on anticipatory action, including a session on the use of social protection for anticipatory assistance. Training with provincial government counterparts (Department of Agriculture, Philippines' Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Disaster Management Office) on anticipatory action for floods.	Technical notes developed on integrating anticipatory action within social protection and DRM, together with government partners through the TWG. Feasibility study to link the flood AAP to the national social protection system, including the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. B-SPARED pilot developed to connect anticipatory action with the social protection system using the government's poverty registry. Project activities supported efforts to improve the efficiency and equity of social protection by addressing inclusion and exclusion errors in beneficiary targeting.
	Typhoons	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Surigao del Norte Target: 3 600 households	One simulation Areas targeted: Mindanao Beneficiaries reached: 150 households Date: October 2023 Exercise type: Cash, boats evacuation	No activation		
	Flood	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Cotabato Target: 3 055 households	One simulation Areas targeted: Mindanao Beneficiaries reached: 150 households Date: October 2023 Exercise type: cash, watertight drums	No activation		
Viet Nam	Typhoon and tropical cyclone induced flood	AAP finalized Areas targeted: provinces of Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Ngai, Quang Nam, and Phu Yen Target: 5 500 poor or near poor households	Three simulations: Areas, exercise type, dates and beneficiaries reached: i) Quang Tri: food packages; watertight drums; livestock tents (185 people in August 2022) ii) Quang Nam: multi-purpose cash; watertight drums; house strengthening (105 households in June 2023) iii) Thua Thien Hue: coordination mechanisms and cash for AA using social protection system (40 households in May 2024)	One activation: Areas targeted: Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Phu Yen Beneficiaries reached: 1 535 people received water-tight drums, and 887 people received cash Date: November 2022 Action: Multipurpose cash, watertight drums for food stock and valuable assets protection	Regional and national consultation workshops conducted to present the AAP and define thresholds, triggers, and options for anticipatory actions. Representatives from the government and NGOs ¹ took part in consultation workshops and the community validation process for the implementation of the drought AAP. Training on AAP at province level, from May to June 2023.	Feasibility study carried out to explore how anticipatory action using cash transfers can be linked with national social assistance programmes. Operational guidelines drafted to support the implementation of anticipatory action through the social protection system, addressing delivery gaps and providing standard operating procedures for the government. Ongoing collaboration with the government and partners to institutionalize anticipatory action in disaster response through existing social assistance channels.
	Drought	AAP finalized Areas targeted: Provinces Gia Lai, Kien Giang, Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, Soc Trang, Ben Tre Target: 1 000 households for drought tolerant seeds voucher/ conditional cash; 1 200 for irrigation-expansion voucher/in-kind; 3 000 people cash for work	One simulation: Areas targeted: Kien Giang Beneficiaries reached: 50 households Dates: April 2024 Exercise type: Unconditional cash, 1 000 litres water tanks, efficiency water use knowledge	One activation: Areas targeted: Province of Ca Mau Beneficiaries reached: 3 306 people Date: March 2024 Action: Multipurpose cash, water management for consumption and agricultural production		

Note: ¹ Viet Nam Disaster and Dyke Management Authority (VDDMA, provincial governments, the Red Cross, the Women's Union, the Fatherland Front.

Source: Interviews and documents (FAO, 2022b, 2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2023g, 2023h, 2023i, 2023k, 2023l, 2023m, 2023n, 2023o, 2023p, 2024d, 2024e, 2024f, 2024g, 2024n, 2024o, 2024p, 2024q, 2024r; FAO & Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2024).

17. More detailed information on the exact project activities, indicators, sources and targets under each project result is provided in Annex 1 with the detailed logical framework. Table 2 provides a summary of the main features of the project.

Table 2. Basic project information

Project	Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems
Implemented by	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Resource partner	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)
Location of implementation	Global and Asia-Pacific region: Learning, advocacy and partnership activities Country activities in Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam.
Alignment of project approach with the 4 betters and SDGs	Better life BL3: Agriculture and food emergencies Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 (no poverty), SDG2 (zero hunger), SDG13 (climate action)
Start date	1 August 2021
End-date	31 August 2024
Project budget	Original project budget: EUR 4 522 260.50 at approval date (European Commission contribution of EUR 4 million). First amendment: EUR 9 253 916.18 – dated 25 July 2022 (EC contribution is EUR 8 million). Second amendment: EUR 13 918 071.00 dated 24 July 2023 (EC contribution of EUR 12 million). Third amendment: EUR 12 508 961.00 dated 3 July 2024 (EC contribution of EUR 10.5 million).

Source: FAO Field Programme Management Information System database and meeting with Project Task Force.

18. *Implementation arrangements:* The core FAO project team is based in headquarters, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the FAO Country Offices in the target countries. Headquarters mainly provides technical support and advice to the regional office and the country offices, ensuring alignment with FAO’s and global approaches, standards and methodologies. Furthermore, headquarters produces normative guidance products, advocacy pieces, trainings and representation in global fora, based on learning from the region and countries. The FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific leads the production of normative contents³ that contribute to anticipatory action strengthening across the region. They provide technical and backstopping support to the FAO country offices in ensuring methods and approaches are streamlined and implemented correctly. Furthermore, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific’s coordination role –through its direct communication with FAO in Rome and participation in regional meetings with country offices – contributes to fostering alignment and collaboration, while also

³ E.g. the mapping of anticipatory action progresses (2023, 2024) or the development of a minimum training package on anticipatory action.

supporting connections between Country Offices, partners and other agencies working on related topics. The country offices are responsible for the implementation of the project activities in the target countries.

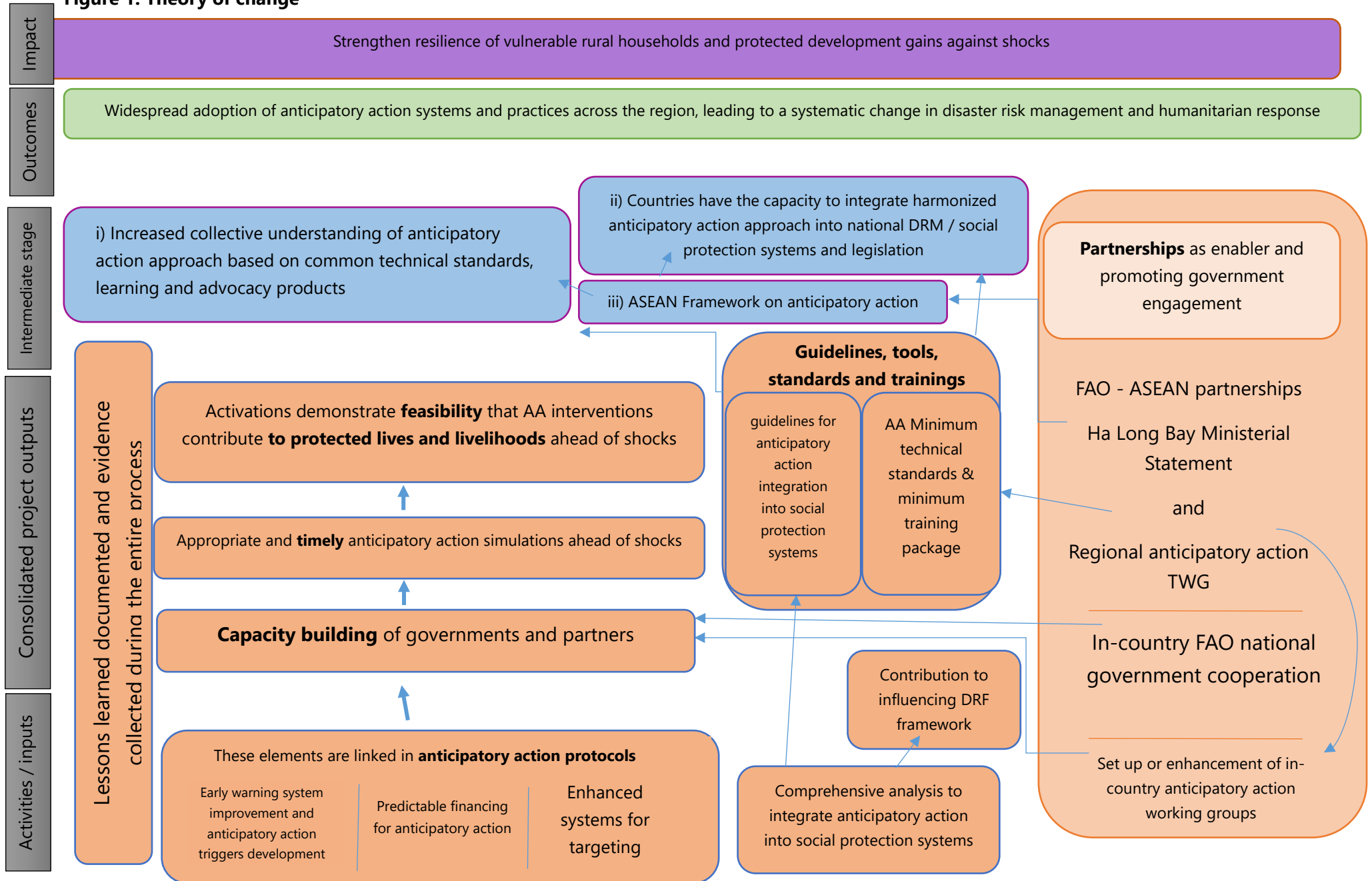
19. A Project Steering Committee is composed of FAO and DG ECHO Officers based in Rome, Brussels, Bangkok and the five target countries. At global level, FAO is participating in several global anticipatory action platforms, such as the governing board of the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, the anticipatory action Task Force, the Anticipation Hub and the Grand Bargain caucus to scale up anticipatory action. At regional level, FAO is co-leading with IFRC the Asia-Pacific Regional Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action (TWGAA) and engaging with ASEAN. Initially an organic project group with eight members in 2019, the TWGAA quickly evolved through strong partner involvement, becoming more structured by 2021 with formal terms of reference (TORs) and over 100 members.
20. FAO is leading national technical working groups (TWGs) on anticipatory action in Pakistan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In the Philippines, FAO co-leads the national anticipatory action TWG with the government, represented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development. In Bangladesh, FAO is a key contributor to the technical group hosted under the UN Resident Coordinator Office, and in Viet Nam, FAO is a key member of a small community of practice which was formed before the project start to enable exchanges.

1.4 Theory of change

21. The project did not have a theory of change (TOC) at its design stage. Therefore, an initial TOC was developed during the evaluation's inception phase (see Appendix 3), based on the project's intended impact and expected outcomes outlined in the project logical framework. This TOC also took into account the implicitly expected outcomes, which were gathered through a dedicated TOC workshop organized by the Evaluation Team with FAO's headquarters, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and in-country teams, and also reflected into insights from the lessons sharing event on anticipatory action co-hosted by DG ECHO and FAO. The purpose of this initial TOC was to develop a shared understanding of the project objectives and impact pathways. A more detailed version of the TOC, incorporating new insights gained during the data-collection and analysis phase of the evaluation, is presented below in Figure 1. It draws from the country-level TOCs of Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam (Appendices 4, 5 and 6). The TOC outlines how project activities generate outputs (shown in light orange boxes), which lead to intermediate outcomes (blue boxes), and ultimately contribute to longer-term outcomes (light green box) and the achievement of the project's overall impact (purple box).
22. Assumptions and drivers play a crucial role in shaping the progression from outputs to outcomes and ultimately achieving the desired impact. Assumptions represent external influences largely outside the project's sphere of control and influence, while drivers are typically within the project's sphere of control and can be influenced by project partners and stakeholders to enhance project outcomes.
23. The main project impact pathway can be described as follows:

- i. FAO in country teams and national partners, used funds (from DG ECHO), existing methodology in anticipatory action, and government systems for targeting beneficiaries, to enhance existing early warning systems and ultimately develop Anticipatory Action Protocols (AAPs) (including triggers) for selected hazards.
- ii. AAPs, simulations and activations demonstrate the feasibility of anticipatory action in different country contexts.
- iii. In parallel, opportunities to incorporate the anticipatory action approach into existing social protection systems have been investigated. Roadmaps, guidelines and tools to promote this incorporation were produced with (government) partners and entry points for mainstreaming anticipatory action into public DRF systems have been identified.
- iv. The enhanced capacity to integrate anticipatory action into national DRM and social protection systems and legislation at countries level is resulting from the experience gained from the AAPs activations (and to some extent the simulations) and from the strong collaboration FAO-government and trainings based on anticipatory action standards developed at regional level.
- v. The lessons and evidence have been monitored and documented during the entire process, and shared at national, regional and global level for learning, capacity building, normative guidance and strategic visioning.

Figure 1. Theory of change



1.5 Scope and objectives of the evaluation

24. *Scope:* The evaluation covers the period of implementation of the project from August 2021 to August 2024. It assesses the project’s outputs, results and likelihood to generate outcomes across all four project components. From the five project countries, the evaluation purposively selected three to conduct in-country data-collection, namely Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, that could produce lessons, good practices and insights in challenges. The scope was defined on the following criteria:
- i. Country status in anticipatory action and social protection: the Lao People’s Democratic Republic beginner, Viet Nam intermediate, Bangladesh advanced.
 - ii. Type of hazards: drought and floods (the Lao People’s Democratic Republic), typhoon and drought (Viet Nam), landslides and flash floods and drought (Bangladesh).
 - iii. FAO coordination role in anticipatory action: FAO is the coordination lead in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam while it is not in Bangladesh.
 - iv. Country with previous experience in anticipatory action activation: Viet Nam.
25. For the remaining two countries, the Philippines and Pakistan, and selected global and regional activities, the evaluation relied on face-to-face key interviews (in Bangkok during the final learning event in July 2024), remote key interviews and review of documentation. The Philippines country programme review conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation during the same period also collected information on the PPP project and informed this evaluation, to avoid overlap between the two exercises. The methodology is further explained in section 2.
26. *Objective:* This evaluation provides a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the project by answering four key evaluation questions (EQs) as presented in Box 1 (section 2). In particular, it evaluated the project design and extent to which the project implemented and achieved its objectives and intended results. It also identified significant changes that have been brought about by the project, the potential sustainability of the actions carried out, and assessed the project’s management and partnerships, focusing on coordination and collaboration.

1.6 Structure of the report

27. Following this introduction, section 2 presents the methodology for the evaluation. Section 3 presents the findings for each evaluation question, followed by conclusions and recommendations in section 4. The report is accompanied by a Bibliography and the following appendices:

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix

Appendix 3. Theory of change PPP project at the start of the evaluation

Appendix 4. Theory of change PPP project – the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

Appendix 5. Theory of change PPP project – Viet Nam

Appendix 6. Theory of change PPP project – Bangladesh

Appendix 7. Technical working groups, task force and other partnerships set-up and/or strengthened by the project

2. Methodology

28. The evaluation process adhered to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards and followed the FAO Office of Evaluation Manual. The methodological approach has been consultative, participatory and transparent with all internal and external stakeholders.

2.1 Questions

29. The evaluation is guided by the questions presented in Box 1 below. To avoid overlap and repetition in this report, the analysis related to the subquestion 4.2 on the project's progress in advancing strategic links with other relevant projects, policies and processes in the region is largely covered in the EQ 2, notably under the subquestion EQ 2.3.

Box 1. Key evaluation questions

EQ 1: To what extent did the project design align with the priorities and needs of the different target groups?

- 1.1 To what extent are the project activities aligned with the lessons learned and recommendations from the evaluation of the previous project?
- 1.2 Is the anticipatory action approach being promoted based on good practices?
- 1.3 To what extent is the project aligned with the needs, priorities and context of the regional, national and local authorities, the communities and partners?
- 1.4 How coherent are the three key goals (anticipatory action standard settings and implementation; institutionalization; partnerships) across the national-regional-global layers of the project?

EQ 2: To what extent have the planned results been achieved?

- 2.1 To what extent have effective anticipatory action systems, plans and protocols been developed and implemented (simulation or activation) for the identified hazards?
- 2.2 What can be learned about the performance of early warning system, appropriateness trigger threshold, timeliness of the payout, capacity of service providers and other actors, targeting through social protection system, and results at community level?
- 2.3 What are the most significant changes, for whom, and what was the contribution of the project to these changes? What were the most common issues/challenges?
- 2.4 To what extent have the lessons learned on anticipatory action and social protection provided relevant evidence for the key partners? Evidence for whom and for which purpose?

EQ3: What are the sustainability prospects of the project benefits?

- 3.1 What is the status of adoption and institutionalization of anticipatory action in local social protection systems in the target countries?
- 3.2 What are the exit strategies to ensure i) strengthened knowledge/capacity on anticipatory action among government counterparts and partners; ii) (further) integration of anticipatory action in social protection systems in the target countries; iii) harmonized anticipatory action standards and approaches across national, regional and global actors?

EQ4: To what extent were the project management and partnership arrangements appropriate?

- 4.1 What were the key factors affecting project management, in positive or negative ways?
- 4.2 To what extent has the project advanced strategic links with other relevant projects/policies/processes/advocacy platforms in the target countries or in the Asia and the Pacific region / globally?

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

2.2 Data sources and analyses

30. This multimethods evaluation relied on descriptive analyses of qualitative and quantitative data from the primary and secondary data sources described below. Findings from diverse analyses were consolidated and triangulated against the questions in the evaluation.
31. Data sources used in the analyses included the following:
 - i. *Project documents and external literature*: The desk review involved analysing various documents and data related to the project and selected external literature. This included design documents, progress reports, AAPs, post simulation and activation monitoring reports and dissemination products for all countries, reports on regional and global learning and partnerships, national and regional anticipatory action frameworks, sector specific manuals, platform publications and trigger database, and other relevant project documents/materials. This desk review provided the foundational understanding of the project's objectives, activities, progress and results. This information was cross-referenced with data from interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), and where relevant, complemented with an external literature review of data and evidence from platforms and organizations active in anticipatory action and/or shock-responsive social protection. An overview of consulted documents and references are listed in the Bibliography section.
 - ii. *Theory of change*: During the inception phase, based on the evaluation TORs, project documents and literature review and an initial stakeholder analysis, the Evaluation Team developed a theory of change (Appendix 3) with inputs from a TOC workshop with the project team at headquarters, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and the five country offices (12 July 2024, held online). This initial TOC served as a basis for the Evaluation Team to develop the evaluation matrix with additional sub-evaluation questions to assess the logic and relevance of the proposed pathway to reach the expected outcomes and impact and the assumptions as highlighted in the TOC. The evaluation matrix in Appendix 2 presents the full set of evaluation questions (Box 1) and develops corresponding indicators, data sources and the level targeted (global, regional, national, local, community). The TOC was further refined during data-collection and analysis and is further explained in section 2.1 of the report.
 - iii. *Interviews and FGDs*: The selection of the people interviewed at community, local, national, regional and global levels was based on their role in the project and the scope of the evaluation. The evaluation questions were designed for each group of stakeholders/partners and for the national and global/regional levels. At the global and regional levels, a total of 11 FAO personnel (from FAO headquarters and the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific), six DG ECHO staff (from headquarters and regional offices), and 11 external participants from organizations at global and regional levels have contributed to the evaluation, such as Anticipation Hub, ASEAN, IFRC, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES), OCHA and UN World Food Programme (WFP). The evaluation also conducted one FGD involving three DG ECHO staff from headquarters level. Adding also the in-country data-collection, a total of 251 participants (151 men and 100 women) took part in the evaluation, representing the five

implementation countries as well as regional and global levels. A full overview of the people interviewed is found in Appendix 1.

- iv. *In-country data collection*: The missions consisted of a desk review of country-specific documents and literature, interviews with project stakeholders at national and subnational levels, and FGDs with project beneficiaries, where possible.
32. In Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, where missions were fielded, a total of 30 semistructured key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted, including three with FAO personnel and 27 with external participants. Twenty-five FGDs were organized, comprising four internal FGDs with FAO country teams, ten FGDs with external stakeholders and 11 FGDs with community members, which included separate sessions for female beneficiaries (including the elderly and persons with disabilities), male beneficiaries (including the elderly and persons with disabilities) and non-beneficiaries within the communities visited (male, female, the elderly and persons with disabilities). This ensured equal opportunities for sharing feedback and to explore potential biases – whether real or perceived – in how the project is experienced or implemented. Additionally, the interview process at country level was completed with one joint online FGD with DG ECHO country offices from Bangladesh and the Philippines involving three DG ECHO staffs.
 33. The selection of project sites and activities in Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam considered criteria such as relevance, performance, accessibility and safety, and tried to have a good balance between hazards, prioritizing areas where activations were done:
 - i. In Bangladesh, three AAPs in development (flash floods, landslides and droughts), one simulation and one activation took place both for the flash floods AAP.
 - The data-collection mission took place from 11–29 September 2024 (local consultant).
 - The data collection at local and community level took place in Haor Province where the AAP was activated for flash flood. In Cox Bazar, only online interviews of local stakeholders took place to answer questions related to the development of AAP for landslides.
 - ii. In Viet Nam, two AAPs were developed, one for typhoon and Tropical Cyclone induced-floods and one for agricultural droughts. Four simulations took place: three simulations took place (for typhoon induced floods), and one for agricultural drought. Two activations occurred (one for typhoon induced floods in 2022 and one for drought 2024).
 - The data-collection mission took place from 29 July to 2 August 2024 (senior evaluation specialist) and from 29 July to 9 August 2024 (local consultant).
 - The data collection at local and community level took place in Thua Thien Hue Province and Quang Tri to answer questions related to the AAP on cyclone-induced floods.
 - iii. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, two AAPs were developed for droughts (originally covering Luang Prabang and Savannakhet with Oudomxay added during the activation), and for floods (Savannakhet) with two simulations taking place (one for each) and one activation for drought.

- The data-collection mission took place from 3–17 September 2024 (local consultant).
 - Luang Prabang province (AAP on drought), Savannakhet and Oudomxay provinces (AAPs on drought and flood) were selected for the data collection at local and community level. However, due to risk of flood occurrence during the field mission, data from those provinces (Savannakhet and Oudomxay) have been collected only through online key informants interviews with the head of villages and relevant local government representatives, and through two online FGDs with provincial and district technical officers from the Social Welfare Department and Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office in Savannakhet.
34. For the data-collection on the remaining two project countries, Pakistan and the Philippines, the senior evaluation specialist travelled to Bangkok to participate in the project’s final learning event (24–25 July 2024), where he conducted four in-person KIIs and two FGDs involving the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government unit representatives from the Philippines, as well as representatives from the meteorological department and provincial and national disaster management authorities from Pakistan. Additionally, respective FAO and DG ECHO Country Office personnel were interviewed remotely. For the Philippines, the evaluation also relied on the country programme review evaluation conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation in the same period, since i) it had a thematic focus on anticipatory action, in particular on the PPP project; and ii) to avoid overlap between the two exercises.

2.3 Limitations

35. First, there were delays in gathering documentation. For example, it was challenging to collect timely information on stakeholders, beneficiary data and project documentation. To address these challenges, the senior evaluation specialist engaged with project team members at headquarters, regional and country level during the project’s learning event in Bangkok on 24–25 July 2024. Despite the project team’s efforts to support the evaluation, critical documents – such as all developed AAPs and reporting documents to DG ECHO – were not made available until later in the evaluation process, as the project closing activities and verification of data was still ongoing, delaying the analysis. The Evaluation Team was able to gather a substantial volume of monitoring and evaluation documentation produced by FAO for this project; however, most of these materials were received only at the end of, or after, the data collection phase, limiting their integration into the evaluation process.
36. Second, there were delays in organizing interviews and data-collection missions as key informants were unavailable in August and early September due to holidays, contract breaks, staff turnover, and overlapping project closing activities such as internal assessments and missions. These activities coincided with the planned evaluation missions in Bangladesh and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, putting additional pressure on the country teams. Furthermore, both Bangladesh and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic experienced floods in September, and Bangladesh faced political instability. To mitigate these risks, the Evaluation Team coordinated closely with the country office teams to reschedule the missions. As a result, the missions in Bangladesh and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic were rescheduled for mid to late September. In Bangladesh, the Evaluation Team opted for remote data collection via selected online interviews regarding

the development of AAPs for landslides in Cox's Bazar, instead of fieldwork as planned in the Haor Province. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the floods required adjustments to the data collection approach. No FGDs were possible at the community level in the three targeted provinces, so the local consultant conducted KIIs by phone with village heads and relevant local partners.

37. Online meetings with key informants at regional and global levels had to be postponed until September and October, with careful coordination between FAO offices (headquarters, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Country Offices). However, some KIIs with DG ECHO at headquarters and country levels, as well as with an ASEAN representative, were rescheduled for November, with the last interview taking place on 15 November. As a result, data-collection and analysis could not be completed until mid-November. While efforts were made to minimize disruptions, the report drafting was carried into 2025.

3. Findings

38. Findings are analysed and presented according to the questions and subquestions laid out in the evaluation matrix (Appendix 2). The evaluation findings focus on the overall project performance and illustrate selective examples from the country, regional and global levels to support the evidence and arguments.

3.1 EQ 1: To what extent did the project design align with priorities and needs of the different target groups?

3.1.1 Subquestion 1.1: To what extent are the project activities aligned with the lessons learned and recommendations from the evaluation of the previous project?

Finding 1. The project's design and activities closely align with key evaluation recommendations from the previous initiative on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection in the ASEAN region.

39. The evaluation of DG ECHO-funded project implemented from May 2019–February 2021 (FAO, 2022a) highlights seven recommendations to which the PPP project design and activities closely align.
40. To achieve greater coordination and collaboration (Recommendation 1), anticipatory action TWGs have been formed or strengthened by the project with FAO ensuring a co-lead role at regional, country (the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam) or subnational (Bangladesh, Pakistan) levels. Appendix 7 presents the TWGs, task force, or partnerships set up and/or strengthened by the project.
41. The project prioritizes country-level implementation and the strengthening of government systems and capacities for anticipatory action and early warning, in line with Recommendations 2 and 4, as evidenced by the development of AAPs in all participating countries with active involvement from government agencies. In Viet Nam, consultation workshops with the Viet Nam Dyke and Disaster Management Authority (VDDMA) were instrumental in shaping project activities, ensuring alignment with the national DRM programme (Decree 1002 and its updated version Decree 553) (No. 553/QD-TTg, 2021). VDDMA also played a leading role in the development of AAPs. More examples of capacity building efforts are presented under Finding 3.
42. Supporting government budgeting and Public Financial Management reform for sustainable financing of anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection (aligned with Recommendation 3) have been less prioritized. However, initiatives illustrate emerging opportunities to embed anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection within government-led disaster risk financing systems, albeit at varying stages of development (this is further explained in the results section). For example, the Philippines published a Policy Brief and document on the *"Investment case for anticipatory action through adaptive and shock responsive social protection"*. This document aimed at providing the evidence on the design and financing of anticipatory action through adaptive and shock responsive social protection in the country. The main bottleneck was largely the absence of a legal basis and policy framework for anticipatory action.

43. The project put substantial emphasis on enhancing its monitoring and evaluation systems, evidence generation and knowledge-sharing strategies (aligned with Recommendation 5). In all countries, significant efforts have been undertaken to monitor and evaluate simulations and activations, although the evaluation has not been able to collect all the monitoring and evaluation data and reports produced by the project, within the data-collection period. For example, in Viet Nam, the impact evaluation of the AAP activation ahead of typhoon Noru in November 2022 includes a cost-benefit analysis of the anticipatory actions and an assessment of their return on investment (FAO, 2023d). These good practices in monitoring and evaluation have continued beyond the project's duration, as demonstrated in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in September 2024: FAO and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare conducted an impact evaluation review workshop after the activation of the Flood AAP in Savannakhet province following typhoon Yagi and increased flood risks from Tropical Cyclone 19W (FAO, 2024e). Efforts to disseminate lessons learned included, among others, FAO's contributions to organizing three national dialogue platforms on anticipatory action in the Philippines (May 2023), Bangladesh (September 2023), Pakistan (December 2023) and the 7th Asia-Pacific Dialogue Platform on anticipatory action, held in Kathmandu from 12–15 June 2023. Further reinforcing these efforts, a national learning summit on anticipatory action and DRRM in the Philippines, funded under the DG ECHO PPP, was held on 18 July 2024.
44. To address the need for unified terminology and approaches in anticipatory actions (Recommendation 6), the Asia-Pacific TWGAA has made it a priority in its 2022 workplan to develop technical standards on anticipatory action in Asia and the Pacific. This document, informed by the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action (ASEAN, 2022b) and lessons learned, was created through a consultative process involving over 60 members from 26 organizations across the region, running from November 2022 to March 2023 (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action, 2023). These technical standards were received positively by the members of the TWG, since they responded to their need and priority to harmonize the approach to and understanding of anticipatory action.
45. The technical standards on anticipatory action emphasize that Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) should be integrated into both the design process and the anticipatory activities themselves, aligning with Recommendation 7, which stresses the importance of inclusivity in the design of anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection. Additionally, FAO has supported ASEAN in creating a policy brief aimed at enhancing gender equality and social inclusion within these systems (ASEAN, 2022a). However, the evaluation found limited evidence to demonstrate that FAO systematically incorporates GESI into the development and implementation of AAPs. A review of all AAPs indicates that disability and gender considerations have been included in the beneficiary selection criteria for anticipatory action in Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam (Pakistan and the Philippines did not explicitly include these indicators).

3.1.2 Subquestion 1.2: Is the anticipatory action approach being promoted based on good practices?

Finding 2. The project aligned with the current global shock-responsive social protection practices which promote linking anticipatory action with social protection and with Global Network Against Food Crises' (GNAFC) policy and built on previous in-country anticipatory action initiatives.

However, ensuring precise identification and targeting those most in need remains challenging and the AAPs developed under the PPP project remain limited in scale.

46. Global shock-responsive social protection good practices emphasizes that establishing strategies and programmes before a shock is more effective than adapting social protection systems afterward, which can lead to mistargeting or inadequate transfer values (Pople *et al.*, 2024). Linking anticipatory action with social protection seeks to leverage existing systems to proactively support vulnerable populations ahead of forecasted shocks, ensuring accurate targeting of beneficiaries. However, in the PPP project, challenges arose in aligning the project with the goal of precise beneficiary targeting, which will be further elaborated in the section on results, under EQ 2.
47. The PPP project aligns with the Global Network Against Food Crises' emphasis on enhancing the capacity of international and national agencies to develop cohesive strategies for scaling up anticipatory action to safeguard livelihoods (Levine *et al.*, 2020). However, despite their integration into government systems and collaboration with national government counterparts as primary beneficiaries, the AAPs developed under the PPP project remain limited in scale with the number of potential beneficiaries of the anticipatory actions ranging from approximately 3 000 to 7 700 households per country.
48. In Bangladesh, insights from the 2020 anticipatory action pilot for monsoon floods on the Jamuna River, funded by OCHA's CERF, informed the PPP project. This pilot marked FAO's first collaboration with IFRC, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WFP, demonstrating the effectiveness of anticipatory actions in supporting vulnerable groups and highlighting the benefits of early action (FAO, 2021a). In Viet Nam, the project built on lessons from anticipatory actions initiatives dating back to 2017, which began with small drought-affected areas and expanded to new regions with sustained DG ECHO support. In the Philippines, prior anticipatory actions and shock-responsive social protection initiatives provided a strong foundation, allowing the country to advance quickly in implementing the PPP project (FAO, 2024h; UNDRR, 2019). In Pakistan, an advanced policy framework for DRM (the DM Act enacted in 2010), an existing social protection system that had been used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a number of agencies working on anticipatory action, all provided a base for the project; however, this integration of anticipatory action into DRM and social protection policies was, at the time, relatively limited (FAO, 2024n).
49. Conversely, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, while there were no direct anticipatory action projects, several initiatives already supported the approach and informed the project design (FAO, 2024o). The 2019 DM Law established a disaster risk information system, linking local and central databases for disaster information sharing. The Lao Climate Service for Agriculture System supported by the FAO project "Strengthening Agro-climatic Monitoring and Information System" provided forecasts to farmers in all provinces (through various channels, including social media). In addition, RIMES conducted an assessment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic National Multi-hazard Early Warning Systems. As for social protection system, the Lao People's Democratic Republic was at the initial stages. The social protection system was composed of various fragmented schemes implemented by a range of ministries, government bodies and international and local actors (FAO, 2021c).

3.1.3 Subquestion 1.3: To what extent is the project aligned to the needs, priorities and context of the regional, national and local authorities, the communities and partners?

Finding 3. Through its demand-driven implementation strategy, the project demonstrated strong relevance to regional needs and priorities. At the same time, the lack of a structured and formalized approach for evidence collection, limited opportunities for collective learning and advocacy.

50. At regional level, the project is closely aligned with and supports FAO's longstanding strategic partnership with ASEAN which focuses on disaster management, agriculture and food security, anchored in ASEAN's intersectoral structure spanning economic, sociocultural and governance pillars. FAO, with a specific memorandum of understanding (MOU), collaborates with key ASEAN entities, such as the ASEAN Disaster Management and Humanitarian Division and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, to strengthen disaster preparedness and emergency response capacities. (more on FAO contribution to ASEAN under EQ 2 on results).
51. The project's implementation strategy was demand-driven, directly addressing identified priorities. For instance, in response to priorities identified at the Asia-Pacific dialogue platform on anticipatory action held in Bangkok in November 2022, the TWGAA, co-led by FAO and IFRC, established a dedicated subgroup focused on training. This subgroup developed a standardized training package on anticipatory action designed for collective use or by individual agencies at the country level. Additionally, initial discussions at the Regional Dialogue Platform underscored the importance of coordination and harmonization to effectively scale up and integrate anticipatory action into existing disaster management systems. This need led to the establishment of the Regional Mapping of Anticipatory Action in Asia and the Pacific (Asia-Pacific Technical working group on Anticipatory Action, 2024a), an annual initiative of the TWGAA. However, some interviewees raised concerns about the absence of a structured approach and formalized method for evidence collection within the TWGAA, citing missed opportunities for collective learning and advocacy (also further discussed under EQ 2 on results).

Finding 4. Several country risk indexes and interviewees from government agencies across participating countries highlighted the strong relevance of the project, emphasizing its alignment with the needs and priorities of national and local stakeholders. However, uneven government engagement and limited community participation reduced opportunities for stronger ownership.

52. The project's relevance is first highlighted by the climate risk index of the countries involved. According to the Global Climate Risk Index (Germanwatch, 2021), Bangladesh, Pakistan, and the Philippines were among the top ten countries most affected by climate change from 2000 to 2019. The Philippines has the highest risk score globally, while Bangladesh ranks ninth and Pakistan tenth, as reported in the World Risk Report 2024 (Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft and Ruhr University Bochum – Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV), 2024).
53. The project strongly aligns with the countries' needs in anticipatory action integration by strengthening anticipatory action TWGs at national (the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines, Viet Nam) and subnational (Bangladesh, Pakistan) levels with FAO co-leading, by closely collaborating with government disaster management agencies, and by strengthening of early warning system and institutional capacity through dedicated task force.

54. In Viet Nam, the project's flexible design allowed it to adapt to the government needs based on the feasibility studies and local government feedback. Active consultations with national authorities like VDDMA and provincial governments facilitated the integration of project goals with DRM priorities. Coordination between FAO and VDDMA, supported by regular workshops and consultations, ensured continuous improvement through lessons learned. While collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs began later and was less robust, the ministry still found the project highly relevant, particularly in disaster preparedness planning aligned with Decrees 20 and 76/2024, which govern social protection assistance and emergency cash transfers. The Ministry of Labour – Invalids and Social Affairs also aims to link anticipatory action with social protection systems, leveraging the Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs database on vulnerable groups but recognizing gaps in historical disaster impact data. The limited engagement with the ministry, in contrast to FAO's collaboration with VDDMA, hindered coordination between the two government agencies (see Finding 17). Similarly, while the Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change (IMHEN) and Viet Nam's National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (NCHMF) deemed the project highly relevant as it aligned with their objectives to provide relevant forecasts for government DRM efforts, FAO and VDDMA led the trigger development process without directly involving IMHEN and NCHMF, missing an opportunity⁴ to enhance the technical capacity of national forecasting agencies in anticipatory action (see Finding 10).
55. In Bangladesh, the project addressed critical needs, including the development of deterministic early warning systems for pre-monsoon flash floods, droughts and landslides, as highlighted by the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre and Bangladesh Meteorological Department. It also strengthened coordination frameworks, such as the anticipatory action task force, and improved institutional capacity.
56. In Pakistan, collaboration with the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) ensured strong local engagement, while in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project focused on strengthening the technical capacity of meteorology offices and enhancing coordination through existing DRM committees. These efforts created a solid foundation for multistakeholder collaboration, though some government interviewees in the Lao People's Democratic Republic expressed feeling like technical service providers rather than true project partners due to differing views with FAO on cash transfer methods and selection criteria for anticipatory action beneficiaries (see Findings 12 and 20).
57. In the Philippines, FAO worked extensively with the government to build on existing policy frameworks, including at the national level with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the DA as well as at the local level, with the local government in Mindanao. As such, the project recorded significant progress in the institutionalization of anticipatory action by contributing, among others, to the Declaration of a State of

⁴ This missed opportunity can be explained by the logistical and regulatory challenges faced by IMHEN and NCHMF. IMHEN's fee-based forecasting services and limited access to disaster data made a sustainable partnership unfeasible, while NCHMF's government-imposed restrictions on forecasting flexibility hindered their ability to contribute effectively to the anticipatory action trigger development process. As a result, the project relied on free five-day forecasts from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts for early preparedness but missed the chance to strengthen the technical capacity of these key national forecasting agencies, which could have improved the integration and effectiveness of anticipatory action efforts.

Imminent disaster, which would allow for national and local resources to be used to act before a hazard strikes.

58. Communities responded positively to anticipatory action and viewed it as an effective approach to reduce post-disaster losses (see Finding 12). However, there was room for improvement in terms of inclusivity and community engagement. The evaluation found a lack of clear evidence that communities were involved in selecting anticipatory actions, which limited the relevance of some AAPs to the communities' needs and priorities (this issue is further discussed under Finding 12).

3.1.4 Subquestion 1.4: How coherent are the three key goals (anticipatory action standard settings and implementation; institutionalization; partnerships) across the national-regional-global layers of the project?

Findings 5. The initiative was strategically important for both FAO and DG ECHO, fostering close collaboration between the two organizations. Yet the absence of an adapted framework for partnership implementation created challenges in aligning expectations and priorities, complicating implementation.

59. The PPP mechanism was initially designed to establish strategic partnerships with select agencies, prioritizing sustainable, long-term outcomes over immediate results. With a strong focus on shock-responsive social protection, it used anticipatory action as a pilot to generate evidence and implementation insights. As mentioned in the background section, the initiative aimed to provide FAO with funding predictability through a trust-based, multiyear model, emphasizing key objectives and outputs at the country level rather than specific activities for greater implementation flexibility. Recognized as a strategic project for both FAO and DG ECHO, interviewees highlighted the commitment of both organizations in making it a success, with valuable learnings at national, regional and global levels.
60. DG ECHO played a crucial role in oversight and accountability throughout implementation. However, differences in priorities (such as the role of social protection within anticipatory action, and on the primary audience for evidence and learning), occasionally created challenges in balancing detailed oversight with broader strategic goals between DG ECHO and FAO, and between headquarters and field teams. The use of traditional project management tools, such as the logical framework and e-single⁵ form, was not well-suited to the initiative's flexible, multicountry, multilayer and learning-driven design, aiming at i) demonstrating the feasibility of anticipatory action in different country contexts; ii) investigating opportunities to incorporate the anticipatory action approach into existing social protection systems; iii) enhancing government partners' capacity; iv) through evidence documentation; and v) developing normative guidance and strategic vision for national, regional and global level. For a project focused on gathering learning and evidence to shape guidance and policies, a TOC approach would better describe the project's logic, outlining how activities generate outputs, lead to intermediate outcomes,

⁵ DG ECHO's Single Form (Annex 1 to the Model Grant Agreement) is a comprehensive tool that allows partners to submit proposals in response to crises, document field realities, anticipate risks and changes in project design and finally inform DG ECHO of achievements. It supports DG ECHO in making funding decisions, monitoring progress, analysing modifications, and liquidating agreements based on the final report. The form is used for initial requests, modification requests, interim and final reports, and is organized into 18 chapters covering every aspect of project implementation (DG ECHO, 2024).

and ultimately contribute to long-term outcomes and the achievement of the overall impact. A logical framework (and by extension, the e-single form) follows a more linear approach that fails to capture how a learning system operates or how various drivers influence project outcomes.

61. Adjustments were made during project implementation, such as allowing greater flexibility in activation funds to expand geographic and hazard coverage. However, negotiating project changes was complex, requiring individual discussions between the two organizations. A key discussion in November 2023 allowed to explore flexible options, though decisions continued to be made on a case-by-case basis (FAO, 2023c). Pakistan provides successful examples of flexibility in anticipatory action. Pre-trigger preparedness measures were approved, including the repositioning of equipment, before the hazard threshold had been met. Portable silos for seeds and grain were distributed to mitigate the extended impacts of drought during the lean period and to address potential flash droughts caused by the ongoing heatwave in Tharparkar, Umerkot and Dadu, Sindh, going beyond the scope of the usual anticipatory action practice of waiting until the trigger is met to act (FAO, 2024i). These examples highlight that progress was achieved through case-to case decisions, showing the potential of adaptability and the close collaboration between DG ECHO and FAO.

Finding 6. The coherence of the three key goals (anticipatory action, institutionalization and partnerships) is relatively strong at the national level, with significant strides made in aligning AAPs, institutionalizing practices within existing DRM frameworks and fostering partnerships. However, coherence varies across countries on the social protection component, due to ambitious objectives, expertise gaps, time limitation and certain countries selected.

62. The Evaluation Team and interviewees noted that the project design initially focused on anticipatory action but later expanded to include institutionalization and connections with government social protection systems, adding complexity. Its top-down design, with limited interaction between regional and country offices (FAO and DG ECHO) during formulation, resulted in misalignment between project design, headquarters expectations (FAO and DG ECHO), and the operational capacities of the offices. Country selection also appeared to be influenced by funding allocations from the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (European Commission, n.d.b) used for the PPP programme. While initially designed as a global programme, DG ECHO later adopted a regional focus to avoid administrative bottlenecks seen in other PPPs⁶ and to ensure a more manageable scope. Limited local and regional capacity during the design phase required technical experts to develop core components, which in turn reduced the project's adaptability to local contexts. For example, the underdeveloped social protection systems in both the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam hindered the project's goal of institutionalization in those countries, with an interviewee comparing the approach to "trying to run before you've even learned to walk". A more strategic approach to country selection – ensuring a minimum level of the maturity of social protection systems and government willingness to integrate disaster management and social protection, or an adaptation of the project goals to the countries' context – could have helped address these challenges.
63. In countries with more mature social protection systems, while a multiyear time frame has been well-received by both agencies, a three-year period was still deemed too short by

⁶ Not with FAO, nor in the Asia-Pacific Region.

various interviewees to integrate the anticipatory action approach into existing systems. Furthermore, ongoing recruitment challenges of FAO social protection specialists at regional level and in countries (except in the Philippines) strained project coordination, limiting effective engagement with finance ministries. The relevance of the feasibility assessments on leveraging national social assistance programmes for anticipatory action delivery varied across countries. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the underdeveloped social protection system rendered a feasibility study redundant, leading to a shift in focus towards a cash transfer feasibility assessment (in collaboration with WFP) to explore delivering anticipatory cash in the project areas (FAO, 2023b).

64. In contrast, in the Philippines, a social protection specialist was recruited, and the country benefits from a well-established national social protection system supported by comprehensive legal and regulatory frameworks. As a result, the feasibility study seemed less critical at the time, given the government's ongoing efforts – such as the Roadmap for Establishing an Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection System, co-developed in 2021 by the Department of Social Welfare and Development with support from FAO under the previous project. Other key documents include the Guidelines for the Preparation of Social Protection and Development Report (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2023), the Enhanced Social Protection Operational Framework and the Social Security System Law (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2022) and the Social Protection Handbook (Department of Social Welfare and Development, 2014).
65. The coherence of the three key goals at the national level is however well reflected in the development of AAPs through multi-agency collaboration, linked to national DRM strategies (see Finding 10), and in progress made towards integrating anticipatory action into DRM systems, though full integration is still underway (see Finding 19).
66. Thus, despite difficulties on the social protection component, interviewees from DG ECHO and FAO agreed that the project's diverse country mix yielded valuable learning opportunities and facilitated comparative analyses of anticipatory action and social protection integration across varied contexts.

3.2 EQ 2: To what extent have the planned results been achieved?

3.2.1 Subquestion 2.1: To what extent have effective anticipatory action systems, plans and protocols been developed and implemented (simulation or activation) for the identified hazards?

Finding 7. The project developed ten national AAPs linked to national DRM strategies across five countries, exceeding the project target (eight). This achievement aligns with the standard practices of anticipation hub partners. The AAPs resulted in five activations, with four occurring in 2024, which is comparable to the number of AAPs activated by other agencies in the Asia-Pacific Region for the same period.

67. Of the five planned feasibility assessments on leveraging national social assistance programmes for anticipatory action delivery, only three were conducted. As highlighted previously (see Finding 6), in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the lack of a developed social protection system made a feasibility study unnecessary, meaning an alternate cash transfer feasibility assessment was carried out with WFP. In contrast, the Philippines has a well-established social protection framework and ongoing government initiatives, including the Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection Roadmap co-developed

with FAO under the previous project, made a separate study less relevant. Conducting these assessments earlier in the project would have provided a clearer understanding of social protection systems and facilitated better planning of work streams, particularly in advocacy and policy support as demonstrated in Viet Nam.

68. Indeed, based on the initial feasibility (FAO, 2023c) and lessons from implementing anticipatory action activities during typhoon Noru (2022) in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue in Viet Nam, FAO and the Department of Social Protection under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs collaborated to develop operational guidelines (FAO, 2024f). These guidelines are designed to assist local governments and officials in “uniformly, conveniently and effectively” integrating anticipatory action into social assistance systems for disaster response.
69. The project AAPs are geared towards protecting the agricultural sector from the impacts of floods (Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines), typhoons (the Philippines and Viet Nam), typhoon-induced floods (Viet Nam) and drought (the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Pakistan, Philippines, Viet Nam). The time to develop those protocols is aligned with the time usually required in standard practice which varies based on hazard complexity, institutional capacity and resource availability; there is no international standard for how long the development of such AAPs will take. As a point of comparison, for comprehensive early action protocols under IFRC, the process usually takes one and a half to two years (Anticipation Hub, 2024a).
70. The project activated 50 percent of all AAPs with a total of five activations: typhoon and typhoon-induced flood AAP in November 2022 in Viet Nam, pre-monsoon flash flood AAP in June 2024 in Bangladesh, drought AAP in February 2024 in the Philippines, in March 2014 in Viet Nam and in May and August 2024 in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. For comparison, the 2024 Regional Mapping on anticipatory action in Asia-Pacific reports 137 anticipatory action systems developed or in progress across the region, with 38 perfect having been activated in previous years (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action, 2024a). In addition to these activations, eight simulations were conducted, including three in Bangladesh (flash flood), two in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (flood and drought), two in Pakistan (flood, drought), two in the Philippines (typhoon and flood) and four in Viet Nam (typhoon-induced flood).

3.2.2 Subquestion 2.2: What can be learned about the performance of early warning systems, appropriateness trigger threshold, timeliness of the payout, capacity of service providers and other actors, targeting through social protection system, and results at community level?

Finding 8. The AAPs developed by the project are broadly aligned with the main parameters and good practices endorsed by most organizations active in anticipatory action, particularly in terms of objectives, decision-making processes, trigger development and action implementation time frames.

71. Anticipatory action is underpinned by three main principles: i) actions aim to save lives and livelihoods and reduce losses and suffering; ii) decisions to implement actions are based on forecasts or predictive analysis of when and where a hazard will occur; and iii) actions are implemented before the hazard’s impact, or before the peak humanitarian impacts are felt, with the objective of reducing these impacts (Anticipation Hub, n.d.a).

72. All AAPs have systematically considered historical impact data for the selection of hazards and the development of their triggers. They include a trigger mechanism or decision-making guidelines summarized in a trigger statement (not clearly mentioned for the Viet Nam AAP on drought and the flood AAP in the Lao People's Democratic Republic), and six out of ten AAPs include a stop mechanism – an important feature that ensures efficient resource allocation by preventing unnecessary activations if updated forecasts/information invalidate the original trigger. This avoids unnecessary expenditures and operational efforts if the anticipated hazard does not materialize as initially forecasted. This aligns with the principle of acting based on credible, dynamic evidence. For the drought AAPs, the triggers have all been developed based on Combined Drought Indicator which not only monitors meteorological drought but also forecasts agricultural drought. This is well adapted to AAPs geared towards protecting the agricultural sector and associated livelihoods.
73. In the project AAPs, the selected impact level for determining the trigger threshold corresponds to a return period of one-in-five-years to one-in-three years (when calculated), meaning it will activate once every three to five years. To judge the appropriateness of this return period for triggers, the AAPs aim to balance sensitivity and practicality. These thresholds are designed to capture significant events that justify anticipatory action while avoiding excessive strain on resources due to frequent activations. For instance, AAP for droughts often use a ten-year return period, as seen in Madagascar (Anticipation Hub, 2024b). AAPs for floods tend to vary between a five-year return period (e.g. Kenya, the Philippines, Uganda) and a ten-year return period (e.g. Bangladesh, Ethiopia) (Anticipation Hub, 2024b). This is slightly shorter than the return periods recommended in the practitioner manual for trigger development on the Anticipation Hub (Anticipation Hub, 2024a), which could put long-term sustainability at risk.

Finding 9. The AAP activations revealed diverging expectations between FAO and DG- ECHO regarding trigger thresholds, activation time frames and the application of key anticipatory action concepts such as the no-regrets approach.

74. The project logical framework (European Commission, 2021b) did not establish indicators or targets for the number of anticipatory action activations or simulations, trigger thresholds or activation timeliness. The only relevant indicator, Indicator 3.4 - "Number of people covered by FAO's anticipatory action implementation" – set a target of 87 850 people. The five AAP activations ultimately reached 25 228 households, which is conforming to the target (Indicators).⁷ Moreover, Findings 7 and 8 highlight that the number of AAPs activations is comparable to regional benchmarks for the same period, and that the AAPs developed by the project align with the main parameters agreed by most organizations active in this sector in terms of objectives, decision process, trigger development and time frame for actions implementation. FAO's structured engagement with national and local authorities, along with its commitment to aligning with government processes, contributed to strong government ownership of the AAPs and was aligned with

⁷ According to the United Nations' "Household Size and Composition" database, the average household size in each project country is as follows: Bangladesh: 4.3, the Lao People's Democratic Republic: 4.7, Pakistan: 6.8, the Philippines: 4.2 and Viet Nam: 3.4. Using these figures, the average household size across all five countries is 4.68 individuals per household. Based on this average, the estimated total number of people reached is 118 067, exceeding the project's target of 87 850 individuals (United Nations – Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2022).

the three project goals (standard setting and implementation, institutionalization, partnerships).

75. KIs indicate that DG ECHO expected FAO's structured collaboration with governments to create more opportunities for AAP activations. Since this expectation was not fully met, it reinforced DG ECHO's perception that FAO prioritized a process-driven approach to AAP development – typically requiring one and a half to two years (see Finding 7 – over rapid practical implementation). Additionally, informants from multiple agencies, including DG ECHO and FAO, cited FAO's complex financial and logistical procedures as a potential barrier to the rapid execution of anticipatory actions – confirmed by the Evaluation Team.
76. In response, DG ECHO advocated for a no-regret approach with lower trigger thresholds, FAO also proposed reducing trigger thresholds for activation – subject to government agreement – in a 2023 clarification note on the flexible use of the 40 percent activation budget. However, no consolidated agreement on operationalizing this proposal was found during the evaluation. FAO argued that lowering thresholds would facilitate evidence generation for anticipatory action in less extreme events, an area that remains underexplored. While this approach could increase activation frequency, FAO acknowledged the challenge of maintaining such an approach sustainably, especially given governments' potential reluctance to activate frequently within constrained budgets.
77. Furthermore, FAO's requests for post-disaster emergency funding for early response (e.g. in Bangladesh and the Philippines) reinforced DG ECHO's perception that FAO sought additional flexibility beyond anticipatory action, conflicting with DG ECHO's principles on anticipatory action.⁸ This misalignment became particularly evident in Viet Nam (November 2023), where FAO and VDDMA activated an AAP based on forecasts of additional rain, despite the trigger not being met at the time. DG ECHO did not approve the activation, as it was not in line with the principles, although the trigger threshold was reached the following day.
78. These diverging perspectives underline the need for a shared, formalized definition of key concepts such as the no-regrets⁹ approach and agreed standards for activation time frames within the project framework. Clearer alignment, through a shared definition, could improve mutual expectations on when anticipatory actions should be implemented –either before the hazard's impact or before the onset of acute humanitarian consequences – both of which are currently accepted within the anticipatory action framework (Anticipation Hub, n.d.a).

Finding 10. Although significant efforts were made to align triggers with government early warning systems and engage national forecasting agencies, the evaluation identified missed opportunities in Bangladesh and Viet Nam to fully empower these agencies to independently revise and update triggers over time.

⁸ DG ECHO guidance Note on Disaster Preparedness (2021) defines anticipatory actions and early response as such: anticipatory or early actions (anticipatory action and early action) are taken when a disaster is imminent (or, in the case of a slow onset disaster, when it is about to reach a peak). Early response refers to actions that are undertaken right after a disaster occurs. Anticipatory (or early) action is different from 'early response' insofar as the former begins before the hazard and/or threat strikes whereas the latter begins after it has struck.

⁹ DG ECHO does not have a formal definition of "No- regrets". The REAP glossary gives this definition: DRM actions taken in advance of a hazardous event that provide benefits to the receiving population irrespective of how or whether a disaster occurs (REAP, 2022)

79. While the project objectives did not explicitly include capacity building for forecasting agencies, result 1, activity 4 (Strengthening national and local capacity to develop, monitor, and implement anticipatory action systems) mentions that in Viet Nam, the project aimed to facilitate collaboration between hydrometeorological agencies and disaster management authorities to strengthen impact-based forecasting (Singe Form, 2021). Since anticipatory action relies on established early warning systems, reliable forecasting and decision-making frameworks, strengthening government capacity and ownership in anticipatory action requires close engagement with national forecasting agencies.
80. To this end, FAO led trigger development through regional collaboration with RIMES for Pakistan and the Philippines, while in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Bangladesh and Viet Nam, this process was conducted through country-specific engagement with RIMES.
81. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project made notable progress in capacity building, particularly given that anticipatory action was a new concept in the country before the project began. RIMES assessed the Lao People's Democratic Republic's national multihazard early warning system and contributed to Anticipatory Action Protocol development. Studies by WFP, RIMES and the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) reviewed drought thresholds and anticipatory action triggers, while FAO supported an early warning and anticipatory action trigger technical committee. Additionally, ADPC integrated the Combined Drought Index into the FAO-supported Lao Climate Service for Agriculture. The National Early Warning Centre and the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment continue to oversee forecasting and early warning efforts to mitigate disaster impacts.
82. In Bangladesh, FAO, in partnership with RIMES, developed and tested a pre-monsoon flash flood AAP, which was approved by the Disaster Management Directorate and is undergoing harmonization. As a result, flash flood forecasts for the Haor region are now available on the FFWC website (Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre, Bangladesh Water Development Board), with a successful test activation in Sylhet. However, FFWC was only involved in the development of the AAP but not in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes, missing a key opportunity to enhance its ownership of the trigger mechanism and strengthen its ability to revise and update it beyond the project's duration.
83. In Viet Nam, capacity-building efforts for national forecasting agencies were less evident. The triggers were developed using historical data from provincial NDPC and refined by RIMES. European forecasts informed the preparedness phase of the typhoon-induced floods AAP, while forecasts from Viet Nam's National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting were used for confirmation during the activation phase. However, as explained in Finding 4, FAO and VDDMA led the trigger development process without the direct involvement of the Viet Nam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change and Viet Nam's National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting. Strengthening the technical capacity and ownership of national forecasting agencies remains essential for the sustainability of anticipatory action systems and for the continuous refinement of triggers as predictive capacities evolve.

Finding 11. Despite commendable efforts to improve and test beneficiary targeting methodologies, challenges persist in achieving transparent, efficient and equitable beneficiary

selection for anticipatory action. Beneficiaries were often unaware of the criteria used for their selection.

84. In Viet Nam, FAO supported the VDDMA and the Disaster Management Policy and Technology Centre (DMPTC) in developing a risk mapping methodology integrated into the anticipatory action framework to enhance preparedness. Given data limitations within the commune-level social protection system, the PPP project introduced tools for community leaders and Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs authorities to refine beneficiary identification using exposure ranking and historical flood data. Using the INFORM RISK Index (Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre [DRMKC]), this commune risk mapping approach aims to strengthen data-driven disaster preparedness for VDDMA, DMPTC and local government staff. The FGDs at commune level show that AAP beneficiaries understood their eligibility for support based on vulnerability criteria such as poverty registration, being single elderly, and lowland residents. However, they were largely unaware of the specific selection process. The limited scale of intervention and targeting exacerbated the confusion. While support was directed to the most vulnerable, many community members were unclear about who was classified as beneficiaries. Both beneficiaries and government partners recommended scaling up the intervention, as it was challenging to prioritize recipients when 50 percent of the community shared similar classifications, but only 5–10 percent received support (FAO, 2023d).
85. In the Philippines, the project aimed to improve the efficiency and equity of aid distribution and social protection programmes by addressing inclusion and exclusion errors in beneficiary targeting. To this end, the PPP project leveraged existing government systems¹⁰ to test various designs and approaches for beneficiary targeting across municipalities, providing valuable insights (FAO, 2024h). Nevertheless, many beneficiaries remained unaware of the criteria for their selection (FAO, 2024h).
86. In Bangladesh, FAO's activation delays were partly attributed to the absence of an up-to-date, unbiased electronic database of social protection beneficiaries. Efforts to update and digitize the database were hindered by the short lead time for anticipatory action interventions. A feasibility assessment targeting small farmers with land and livestock excluded existing social protection beneficiaries due to narrow criteria. Conducted one and a half to two years before assistance, the survey failed to capture significant changes in household conditions, leading to inaccuracies. Some ineligible households (e.g. those who sold their livestock) still received aid, while eligible households with current livestock were omitted.
87. Similarly, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project relied on government disaster loss and damage data, along with social registry data from LECS 6 (2018–2019) (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2020). However, this information was poorly documented and lacked household-level details, resulting in inaccuracies in beneficiary targeting during the cash transfer activation.

¹⁰ the PPP project leveraged existing poverty registry, National Household Targeting System for Poverty Reduction (NHTS-PR) and entered into a Data Sharing Agreement with the Department of Social Welfare and Development to be able to access the list of poor households in geographically vulnerable and at-risk areas as part of pilot project "Building on Social Protection for Anticipatory Action in Response to Emergencies and Disasters (B-SPARED)

Finding 12. The simulations and activations demonstrated high levels of beneficiary satisfaction with the support received and preferred anticipatory assistance over responsive aid. However, inclusivity and community engagement could have been further enhanced, as the evaluation found no clear evidence of community participation in selecting anticipatory actions.

88. The review of all AAPs shows that while beneficiary selection criteria included social vulnerability factors, no clear strategy for fostering inclusivity was evident. Only the Philippines AAPs and the Viet Nam AAP for typhoon-induced floods explicitly documented community consultations to inform the selection of anticipatory actions. FGDs in Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam supported these findings, though revealing that beneficiaries were generally satisfied with the support they received and that they preferred anticipatory assistance over responsive aid.
89. In Bangladesh, FGDs highlighted that beneficiaries prefer receiving assistance before flash floods. Yet, during the pre-monsoon flash flood AAP activation in June 2024, assistance was distributed after the flash flood, with official trigger actions-initiated days later. Beneficiaries emphasized the importance of pre-flood assistance to enhance preparedness and assess protection.
90. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the project faced challenges with stakeholder consultation and communication. Key informants noted limited stakeholder involvement in developing AAPs, which remain incomplete and not widely shared. Flood simulation exercises introduced valuable disease prevention measures for displaced animals and were well-received, though better integration of local knowledge is needed. During the drought AAP activation, delays in distributing drought-resistant rice, limited training and unclear messaging resulted in some villages to equally distribute seeds among all households, diverging from the project’s focus on poor and marginalized families. Cash transfers during the pilot phase in Luang Prabang and Oudomxay provided immediate relief for food shortages, but concerns were raised on the selection criteria and suggested basing transfers on household size. Moreover, divergent opinions on the cash distribution mechanism remain unresolved between FAO and the government agencies who preferred a cash for work model, though this could exclude vulnerable families lacking workforces and favour well-off households.
91. In Viet Nam, FGDs confirmed the relevance of early actions during the 2022 typhoon-induced flood AAP. Beneficiaries received the expected cash amount two to three days before the typhoon arrived, which was used primarily for food, water and medicines. Recipients expressed satisfaction with the support, noting the usefulness of distributed water drums for storing water, important documents and food. FAO's cost–benefit analysis for typhoon Noru revealed that for every USD 1 invested in the waterproof drum component, beneficiaries avoided USD 0.46 in losses, though this figure excludes potential long-term benefits. Impact analysis showed that non-beneficiaries were more likely to adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing health expenses (53 percent of non-beneficiaries compared to 27 percent of beneficiaries) due to insufficient food or money (FAO, 2023d).
92. In the Philippines, according to the post-distribution monitoring report after the drought AAP activation in February 2024, beneficiaries agreed that the distribution was conducted according to their needs, with cash made available within reasonable distance from their residences, reasonable waiting times and that cash was their preferred modality over food

assistance or cash vouchers, with remarks only about the quantity received not being sufficient for basic needs and actions related to their livelihoods (FAO, 2024h).

Finding 13. Gaps in forecasting methods and the complexity of trigger systems continue to pose challenges for the replication of anticipatory action.

93. In Viet Nam, early warning systems for slow-onset hazards like drought are perceived as suitable for local replication by the VDDMA, however systems for quick-onset hazards need improvement for better accuracy. In Bangladesh, challenges remain in providing accurate early warnings and reliable trigger mechanisms for flash floods and landslides. A gap between pre-monsoon floods season (before 15 May) and the official monsoon season (starting 1 June) creates confusion in response coordination. In 2024, a pre-monsoon flood trigger fell within this gap, delaying anticipatory action and limiting its scope. Despite collaboration between FAO, CARE, RIMES and DG ECHO, timing misalignments reduced response effectiveness. In the Philippines, defining drought triggers required extensive validation, but local government units and donors find them too technical, while communities feel they are set too high. Triggers need to be reliable, practical and manageable for local government units. Anticipatory action for river floods relies on rainfall, river levels and hydrological forecasts, but flash floods and groundwater-driven flooding are often overlooked. Integrating data from urban drainage, real-time rainfall, coastal weather and infrastructure monitoring is essential for improving anticipatory action in complex flooding scenarios.

Finding 14. AAP activations have exposed systematic bottlenecks in administrative and procurement processes, and in donor approval procedures, leading to delays in the implementation of anticipatory action.

94. In Bangladesh, as seen under Finding 13, in 2024 a pre-monsoon flood trigger fell within the gap between the pre-monsoon floods season and the monsoon season, delaying anticipatory action and limiting its implementation to one union in Sylhet. While FAO, with DG ECHO's approval, began commodity distribution in early June, cash disbursement was not possible due to time-consuming budget reviews and the project was nearing its end. As a result, the funds were returned to DG ECHO.

95. In the Philippines, during the 2024 drought AAP activation in Isabela, delays in donor approval to include anticipatory action for drought as part of the pilot led to Trigger 1 for critical irrigation being activated too late, coinciding with Trigger 2. As a result, fewer farmers were eligible for cash assistance for irrigation (Trigger 1 activity) since one of the eligibility criteria was having standing crops, which, in some cases, had already perished due to the drought's impact. Additionally, the second instalment of assistance (multipurpose cash for basic needs) was released later than planned – originally designed to be distributed four weeks after the first instalment – which further reduced the potential benefits of the anticipatory action pilot (FAO, 2024h).

96. KII's emphasized the need for a more efficient donor approval mechanism and raised concerns about FAO's ability to effectively address both slow- and rapid-onset disasters. A recent evaluation in the Philippines found that "FAO's corporate system and approach [at the time of evaluation] were not sufficiently flexible (especially procurement) or agile enough to deliver cash at scale in a speedy fashion" (FAO, 2024h). Another institutional evaluation of FAO's cash and voucher assistance (FAO, 2024m) echoed these concerns, highlighting persistent procurement delays that continue to affect the timely delivery of

cash, vouchers and inputs under Cash+ approaches. Based on the evaluation recommendations, FAO has subsequently revised and published an updated version of FAO Manual Section 702, which includes the Organization’s rules and regulations when delivering cash assistance, to try to address these challenges on cash specifically. While anticipatory action is particularly relevant for FAO given the significant impact of sudden-onset disasters on the agricultural sector, the Organization's administrative systems may pose challenges for rapid emergency responses, such as the swift delivery of goods following floods or typhoons. In contrast, FAO’s technical expertise in climate-smart agriculture, water management and seed distribution positions it well to support slow-onset disasters like droughts, allowing for more sustainable and impactful interventions.

3.2.3 Subquestion 2.3: What are the most significant changes, for whom, and what was the contribution of the project to these changes? And what were the most common issues/challenges?

Finding 15. The project exceeded its targets for developing learning and advocacy products, informing policy processes and advocacy platforms, and engaging partnerships systematically. Significant milestones were reached by the regional anticipatory action TWG and the FAO-ASEAN collaboration. While it is difficult to directly link the project’s impact to global changes, and the aggregation of lessons primarily occurred towards the project’s conclusion, FAO’s leadership in advancing anticipatory action has been widely recognized by both global and regional partners.

97. This section will present the key contributions of the project for i) the regional TWG; ii) the FAO-ASEAN collaboration; and iii) global collaborations. The key contributions are highlighted in **bold**.

The Regional technical working group

98. The regional anticipatory action TWG, co-led by FAO and IFRC, has emerged as a key player in strengthening coordination on anticipatory action at the regional level, according to regional stakeholders. Over the past years, the TWGAA has experienced remarkable growth, now bringing together more than 80 members from 20 agencies. This expansion has fostered increased collaboration with other critical working groups, such as the Regional Cash Working Group (boasting over 300 members) and the Gender in Humanitarian Action group (with 100 members), both operating under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), of which the TWGAA is now an active member. FAO’s partnership with IFRC in the Asia-Pacific region underscores their joint leadership in driving the mainstreaming of anticipatory action.

99. By adopting a need-based approach (as detailed under EQ 1), the development of anticipatory action technical standards (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action in Asia and the Pacific, 2023) and a standardized minimum training package has enabled consistent and harmonized messaging across stakeholders at both regional and country levels. A training of trainers event in April 2024, with participants from various countries, and the subsequent publication of the technical standards and training package on the Anticipation Hub in July 2024, which has since been downloaded over 1 000 times by October 2024,¹¹ are also pivotal in ensuring the widespread adoption of anticipatory action standards. In addition, the annual Regional Mapping of Anticipatory Action in Asia and the Pacific provides insights into the progression of anticipatory action

¹¹ Sources Anticipation Hub: Overall downloads: 1- 263.

across the region and identifies priority areas for sustainable growth. Following a first regional mapping conducted from April to June 2023 (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action; 2024b), a second iteration was completed between May and July 2024 (Asia-Pacific Technical working group on Anticipatory Action, 2024a), further strengthening the lessons sharing and regional coordination efforts. The development of the Regional Roadmap 2023–2027 (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action, 2024c) is another remarkable achievement. This document outlines the five-year vision and roadmap for anticipatory action (2023–2027) by the Asia-Pacific TWGAA. It builds on the TWGAA's Technical Standards and was developed through consultations, including a survey of organizations in 14 countries. Additional input came from the 7th Asia-Pacific Dialogue Platform in Nepal (13–15 June 2023) and online discussions with TWGAA members, co-leads, and trigger subgroups.

The FAO-ASEAN collaboration

100. The ASEAN Regional Framework on Anticipatory Action for Disaster Management (ASEAN, 2022b), developed with FAO's support, has been described by various interviewees as a significant outcome of the FAO-ASEAN collaboration. FAO's activities adhere to a rigorous approval process to ensure alignment with ASEAN priorities. Concept notes are reviewed by the ASEAN Secretariat, endorsed by the Prevention and Mitigation Working Group, and approved by the ACDM, requiring unanimous agreement from all ten Member States. These initiatives are part of Priority Programme 2 under ASEAN's 2021–2025 work programme, coordinated by the Prevention and Mitigation Working Group. The ASEAN Regional Framework on Anticipatory Action for Disaster Management has been endorsed by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management in 2022. Other key documents that FAO has supported ASEAN on include the Guidelines for Disaster-Responsive Social Protection (ASEAN, 2021a), which were released in 2021, Strengthening gender equality and social inclusion in disaster responsive social protection and anticipatory action in ASEAN (ASEAN, 2022a), and the Ha Long Bay Ministerial Statement on Anticipatory Action (ASEAN, 2023) which marked a tipping point in ASEAN members engagement in anticipatory action. In 2023, FAO in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and World Meteorological Organization has also held a workshop in Bangkok "Bracing for El Niño: Getting Ready for Dry Years in ASEAN with Enhanced Early Warnings and Anticipatory Action" (FAO, 2023e). Over 50 experts, including government representatives, the ASEAN Secretariat, and members of the Asia-Pacific TWGAA, participated. The workshop focused on enhancing regional preparedness, improving early warning systems and strengthening anticipatory action. The discussions also centred around linking regional frameworks – such as the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for Adaptation to Drought (ASEAN, 2021b) and the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management (AFAADM) (ASEAN, 2022b)- as well as a global initiative, the UN Early Warnings for All initiative (UNDRR, 2022).

Global collaborations

101. The project exceeded targets for capturing lessons, expanding outreach and developing advocacy products, though lesson aggregation mainly occurred at the end. While it is challenging to directly attribute the specific project's impact on global changes, **FAO's role in driving change has been widely acknowledged by key partners at both global and regional levels.** Key informants generally agree that FAO, through its proactive approach and leadership, has been **instrumental in driving a positive shift in the perception of anticipatory action.** Examples include dissemination of findings and lessons learned to

other FAO regional and country offices about to engage in DG ECHO-funded anticipatory action projects and the generalization of lessons into global normative guidance and evidence pieces, among others. This role is further reinforced by FAO's contributions to key partnerships, including the Anticipation Hub (Anticipation Hub, Our partners), Global Network Against Food Crises, Anticipatory Action Task Force (IFRC, FAO, WFP, OCHA and Start Network, 2021) Risk-informed Early Action Partnership, The Grand Bargain (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) and the Global Shield against Climate Risks.

102. **Global collaboration with WFP** resulted in the creation of **a joint FAO-WFP anticipatory action strategy** (FAO, 2023f) aimed at scaling up anticipatory actions to prevent food crises. While the strategy does not explicitly reference the PPP project, it mentions anticipatory action in Bangladesh and the ASEAN Framework on Anticipatory Action in Disaster Management. The framework is highlighted for its role in providing ASEAN countries with an opportunity to align on the topic of anticipatory action by agreeing on a common definition, key building blocks and outlining the way forward with guidance on integrating the approach into existing processes.

Finding 16. All countries are working to integrate anticipatory action into their DRM systems at national or local levels, although full integration is still in progress with gaps in official endorsements and contextualization.

103. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project achieved a significant milestone by institutionalizing anticipatory action into the five-year DRM plans in Savannakhet and Luang Prabang. However, progress at the national and subnational levels remains less tangible.
104. In Viet Nam, FAO is actively integrating anticipatory action into the governmental DRM system, focusing on standardizing AAPs. Alignment with the updated 1002 programme (now renamed 553) and local government engagement – through feasibility assessments and training – demonstrate concrete implementation steps. Pilot training in Quang Tri and Ca Mau highlights practical application, though nationwide scaling remains uncertain. Institutionalization efforts are evident in FAO's collaboration with the government to embed anticipatory action within existing DRM and Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) frameworks. The development of training materials, despite lacking formal endorsement, reflects progress in mainstreaming anticipatory action. However, full institutionalization remains incomplete due to the absence of official approval and uncertainties around broader replication.
105. Similarly in Pakistan, although attributing the project's impact to national achievements is challenging, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has made progress in integrating anticipatory action into its frameworks. The concept is featured on the NDMA website and in presentations at events, reflecting official recognition (NDMA). A draft national implementation framework for anticipatory action has been developed, though it needs refinement to better suit Pakistan's context. This document serves as a foundation for a unified strategy across different governance levels. A compendium consolidating materials on anticipatory action has been created for guidance at provincial and district offices, though concerns about inadequate contextualization remain. In addition, the establishment of a dedicated anticipatory action manager role signals NDMA's growing commitment to this approach.

106. Significant progress on institutionalization was noted in the Philippines. However, this progress cannot be solely attributed to the PPP project, as it is a continuation of the broader and longer-term involvement of FAO in anticipatory action in the country. Additionally, anticipatory action in the Philippines is a collaborative effort involving various actors, including 11 government agencies, 32 implementing partners (such as UN organizations, international NGOs, community-based organizations, and the private sector), as well as members of the National Anticipatory Action Working Group under the Humanitarian Country Team (OCHA) (FAO, 2024h). Through its work during the country programme (2018–2024), FAO Philippines (the) has made significant contributions to strengthening the country's capacity for anticipatory action, aimed at supporting communities potentially impacted by disasters before they occur (FAO, 2024h). Notably, FAO and other humanitarian organizations supported the development of the "Imminent Disaster Act", known as House Bill 9935, currently under consideration. The bill is a significant step towards institutionalizing anticipatory action; for local governments, it will also ensure the incorporation of essential measures into their Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management plans, and the National DRRM plan for relevant national government agencies. The Bill's provisions recognize the need to make funds available for early actions prior to natural disasters such as cash grants for essential supplies and reinforcing evacuation centres, based on predictive modelling and risk assessments.

Finding 17. All project countries have made efforts to establish or strengthen multi-agency collaboration mechanisms to develop AAPs and frameworks, with government bodies increasing their engagement in coordinating these activities and engaging with various stakeholders. However, the role of national disaster management agencies as the lead coordinator still needs to be strengthened to ensure effective ownership.

107. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the project has established the national TWGAA, co-chaired by FAO and the government. The national TWG AA has developed a two-year anticipatory action plan (2024–2025) focusing on five key areas: i) risk analysis, forecasts and triggers; ii) planning, operations and delivery of anticipatory actions; iii) pre-arranged financing, iv) evidence and learning; and v) policy, institutionalization and coordination (FAO, 2024d). The plan aims to influence the national disaster risk reduction action plan for 2026–2030. The government does understand the positives of inserting anticipatory action into the DRM system, but main barriers relate to capacity and financial constraints. The concept of anticipatory action is still a very new concept even for the DRM staff, and the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology struggle with producing the accurate predictions needed for the development of triggers.
108. In Viet Nam, strong partnerships support FAO's approach, including its role in the anticipatory action working group and collaboration with VDDMA, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, and provincial authorities. The establishment of the anticipatory action global working group and TWG with structured roles and action plans further reinforces this. Efforts to strengthen links between VDDMA and the AA TWG, alongside engagement with NDPC, Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs and the Post Office, illustrate a comprehensive strategy. Nonetheless, ensuring coherent coordination is an ongoing challenge, particularly between VDDMA and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. Communication between the two agencies is minimal, with VDDMA seen as the lead agency for PPP implementation and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs at the national level being less involved from the project start. While Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs has genuine interest in anticipatory action,

the connection between the two agencies remains weak. Additionally, as they belong to different ministries, collaboration is challenging unless top-level officials prioritize it.

109. In Bangladesh, although attributing the project’s impact to national achievements is challenging, key informants have observed that the government has become more active and responsive: particularly within the Anticipatory Action Task Force established in 2019 under the Standing Orders on Disaster. The Disaster Management Directorate has become more proactive, swiftly coordinating support during landslides and engaging humanitarian actors (for workshops) – unprecedented three years ago. In shock-responsive social protection, it now informs stakeholders and encourages contributions. In 2024, a Ministry of Disaster Management’s consultation workshop with key agencies marked a shift towards collaboration, though political unrest disrupted the process (Caritas Bangladesh, 2024). Previously, agencies worked in isolation; now, joint efforts, such as a multi-agency core committee for the flood Anticipatory Action Protocol, are standard. However, interviewees noted unclear roles among agencies, recommending the development of a standard operating procedure to prevent overlaps.
110. Challenges related to the complexity of coordinating multiple stakeholders and potential resource competition were similarly identified in the Philippines. Several actors (more than 30 implementing partners), including FAO and various donors, are coordinating multiple coexisting anticipatory action pilots in the Philippines to test and refine strategies across different contexts (more than 100 local government units involved) (FAO, 2024h). This approach enhances understanding of effective disaster risk reduction methods and fosters innovation by sharing insights and best practices. However, challenges include complex coordination among stakeholders, potential resource competition, and difficulties in harmonizing triggers, data collection and evaluation standards. Additionally, too many simultaneous pilots could cause community fatigue, reducing participation and potentially confusing local authorities and residents (FAO, 2024h).
111. In this context, FAO has played a key role in promoting collaboration and harmonization. As co-lead of the national anticipatory action TWG with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, FAO supported the organization of the 6th national dialogue platform on anticipatory action (May 2023), contributed to the advocacy around the adoption of the new bill (9935) on accessing DRM funds in a state of “imminent disaster”, and initiated a discussion on the harmonization of the various trigger methods for floods, typhoon and drought, with the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and key partners such as the DG ECHO-funded international NGO consortium's project ACCESS.

3.2.4 Subquestion 2.4: To what extent have the lessons learned on anticipatory action and social protection provided relevant evidence for the key partners? Evidence for whom and for which purpose?

Finding 18. The project lacked a tailored evidence-gathering approach designed to address specific audiences or objectives. While the AAP activations demonstrated the feasibility of anticipatory action within the contexts of different countries, their influence on shaping government policies remains challenging to substantiate.

112. The proposed project theory of change, focused on three goals, assumes that strengthening early warning systems, developing triggers and AAPs, and testing them through simulations or activations provide evidence to advocate for anticipatory action

institutionalization. These efforts also serve as case studies to standardize approaches and develop guidelines, ultimately shaping regional and global anticipatory action and social protection policies. To support this, simulation exercises and activations were systematically monitored and evaluated with many case studies and evaluation reports produced: *Scaling up Anticipatory Action across Southeast Asia ahead of El Niño-induced drought* (FAO, 2024k), *Impact evaluation of the no-regret activation for floods in the Lao People's Democratic Republic* (FAO, 2024e). However, this logic prompts the question of for whom and which purposes this evidence was developed and whether this evidence influences the intended targets.

113. Kils from disaster management government agencies highlight that FAO's technical expertise, particularly in developing triggers and collaborating with disaster management agencies to co-create protocols, has been instrumental in encouraging governments to adopt anticipatory action, although this is an ongoing process for some. Countries with more advanced anticipatory action systems, such as the Philippines, Bangladesh and, to some extent, Viet Nam, have also benefited from prior experiences with other agencies. In this context, since most activations took place in 2024, it remains too early to fully assess their impact on further influencing governments and persuading other stakeholders. However, the activations proved the feasibility of anticipatory action, with simulations and interventions serving a dual purpose: testing the approach while directly benefiting communities. This process fostered meaningful engagement with local authorities. For many local officials, it marked their first opportunity to collaborate closely with provincial or national counterparts, establishing new communication channels and breaking down longstanding barriers.
114. In Viet Nam, VDDMA recognizes the relevance and necessity of anticipatory action. However, they view the project's activations as too limited in scale – covering only a few communes and focusing on just two hazards – to significantly influence policy. They emphasize the need for more extensive pilots supported by longer-term projects to generate robust evidence, while prioritizing targeted communication with heads of ministries. While acting before disasters is not a new concept for VDDMA, it has not traditionally included cash distribution. To persuade the government to adopt cash-based anticipatory action, larger-scale tests with positive outcomes are essential. For VDDMA, while acknowledging the importance of a reliable trigger, the decision to act prior to an extreme event hinges on striking a balance between providing timely support to vulnerable communities – whether or not the event occurs – and the need for prudent resource allocation by the government. This is exemplified by VDDMA's (and FAO's) decision to activate in November 2023 during the flood event in Thua Thien Hue, despite the trigger threshold not yet being reached, as highlighted in Finding 9.
115. The importance of targeted communication to raise policymakers' awareness is also a key lesson from Bangladesh as the utility of early warning systems is often viewed too narrowly. Emphasizing socioeconomic factors is crucial, with FAO aiming to integrate anticipatory action into social protection programmes – a responsibility that should extend beyond the Department of Disaster Management. This also aligns with recommendations from Pakistan to clearly communicate whether a project is a learning initiative or a pilot programme, helping to manage stakeholder expectations and paving the way for future scaling. Similarly, the FAO internal evaluation in the Philippines (FAO, 2024h) highlights the need for better coordination and dissemination of lessons learned, as governments currently lack the evidence to justify investment in anticipatory action and shock-

responsive social protection. A more robust knowledge management system is needed to report evidence, increase visibility, foster policy dialogue, engage donors and shape the long-term programmatic vision.

Finding 19. While monetary evidence, such as cost savings and return on investment, appears crucial for gaining support from ministries of finance, aligning anticipatory action with government priorities and considering long-term financial sustainability may be equally important for its integration into national disaster response systems.

116. Although the project did not directly engage with ministries of finance, KIs at the country and regional levels suggest the types of evidence needed to influence their adoption of anticipatory action in policy. Two general trends emerge. First, there is a clear recognition that monetary evidence is crucial for gaining support from ministries of finance. Studies quantifying savings in response costs, such as the cost-benefit analysis and return on investment during the Noru activation in Viet Nam (FAO, 2023d), has provided tangible proof of anticipatory action’s financial benefits. These studies demonstrate how early interventions save both human and financial resources, bridging the gap between policy intentions and financially viable solutions, making anticipatory action more appealing to decision-makers.
117. Second, the evaluation reveals growing recognition of the need to align evidence and activities with government priorities. This reflects a shift towards focusing on financial sustainability, long-term funding sources, and the future of donor support, which impact the scalability of anticipatory action initiatives. Governments are more concerned with the long-term viability of programmes, including funding sustainability, than with the immediate effects of activations. Therefore, evidence should not only highlight the success of specific activations but also show how anticipatory action can integrate into national financial and governance frameworks, attract new funding, reduce dependency on emergency aid and contribute to national resilience.
118. Therefore, broadening the focus from activation timing to financial sustainability and alignment with government priorities can strengthen political and institutional support for anticipatory action, helping it become a permanent part of national disaster response systems. Integrating monetary evidence with strategic planning and considering future funding and policy alignment could make anticipatory action more appealing to both ministries of finance and development stakeholders.
119. Tangible evidence of government engagement with anticipatory action influenced by the project are already visible. This includes, for example:
 - i. The Ha Long Ministerial Statement on Strengthening ASEAN anticipatory action in DRM (ASEAN, 2023) which serves as a significant regional endorsement, demonstrating the commitment of national DRM agencies and other ministries, to incorporate anticipatory action into broader strategies.
 - ii. In Viet Nam, a five-year implementation plan (2025–2030) to operationalize the Ha Long Ministerial Statement (NSCNDPC, 2024) (see more under Finding 22), and the integration of anticipatory action into the governmental DRM programme 1002 (now 553) (see Finding 16). In addition, outside the limits of this project, the governments are no strangers to investments in anticipatory action. For instance, in both Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue provinces during the

flood AAP activation during typhoon Noru in 2023, government authorities put in place activities such as communities' evacuations and early warning messaging.

- iii. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the key step made by the government in adopting anticipatory action was by incorporating it into the five-year DRM plans for Savannakhet and Luang Prabang (see Finding 22).
- iv. In the Philippines, alongside the "Imminent Disaster Bill" (Finding 16), a significant national advancement for which tracing the specific contributions of PPP projects remains challenging, a five-year Food Security and Nutrition Plan (BFSNP) for 2023–2028 has been launched (FAO, 2024h). The plan is designed to guide responsible agencies in implementing strategies outlined in the food security and nutrition Roadmap, previously developed with FAO's support to the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.¹² The piloting of the BFSNP through anticipatory action interventions has fostered a more proactive stance among authorities in supporting communities. Initially, local authorities expressed hesitation, particularly about allocating resources for events that had not yet occurred, but over time they came to understand and appreciate the rationale and long-term benefits of this forward-looking approach.

3.3 EQ 3: What are the sustainability prospects of the project benefits?

3.3.1 Subquestion 3.1: What is the status of adoption and institutionalization of anticipatory action in local social protection systems in the target countries?

Finding 20. While the project helped to build understanding of the role of cash in anticipatory action, it often focused on testing logistical mechanisms to support anticipatory action activations and simulations, rather than fostering meaningful systemic integration of anticipatory action approaches within national social protection systems.

120. As discussed in Findings 4 and 6, the use of a standardized strategy across countries with very different social protection systems and institutional capacities limited the project's relevance. Moreover, delays in the social protection component may reflect its lower prioritization during the project design phase. These delays were likely compounded by limited social protection expertise within FAO at both regional and country levels, particularly during the project's first two years, as well as limited specific technical support from DG ECHO. Additionally, differing perspectives between FAO's broader approach to social protection¹³ and DG ECHO's primary focus on shock response and cash-based

¹² Introduced in 2020 through collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform, the Bangsamoro Planning and Development Authority and international partners such as FAO and WFP, the roadmap sets out a ten-year vision to build a self-reliant, food-secure and resilient region. It also incorporates anticipatory action measures to address food insecurity and promote sustainable agriculture.

¹³ FAO defines social protection as the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, particularly the most vulnerable groups (FAO, 2024m).

assistance¹⁴ may have constrained opportunities to fully explore social protection’s potential to influence national policy development.

121. Nevertheless, the project contributed to building stronger understanding on anticipatory action-linked cash modalities, through the selection of unconditional cash transfers (in Bangladesh, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Pakistan) or Multi-Purpose Cash transfer (in the Philippines and Viet Nam) as anticipatory actions for slow and rapid onset. Through collaboration between the Asia-Pacific Regional Cash Working Group and the Asia-Pacific TWGAA co-led by FAO, the project also contributed to two practitioners’ notes for field testing for anticipatory action and cash transfers for slow and rapid onset hazards (Asia-Pacific Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action and Asia-Pacific Regional Cash Working Group, 2022, 2024d).
122. In the Philippines, integration efforts were the most advanced. Prior to the PPP project, a national roadmap – co-developed by FAO and key government departments, international NGOs and UN stakeholders – set to institutionalize adaptive and shock-responsive social protection, outlining short-, medium- and long-term implementation steps. This roadmap played a crucial role in securing government approval to integrate anticipatory action with disaster risk reduction and social protection. Key agencies, including Department of Social Welfare and Development, endorsed the roadmap, and by 2020, the government adopted its principles, incorporating anticipatory action into its social protection plan and forming TWGs for coordination. PPP emerged as a central component, shaping objectives and pilot projects aimed at scaling up the anticipatory action approach. FAO has been successful in implementing anticipatory action interventions while strengthening existing national social protection and government systems, in line with agreements from the national anticipatory action technical group and focusing on replicable designs for future scaling. FAO’s contributions to national learning include insights on designing, implementing and evaluating anticipatory action interventions (FAO, 2024h). For example, the project generated valuable lessons on preferred mechanisms for cash distribution, such as bank transfers, mobile phones and remittance centres. During a pilot activation in Isabela, FAO demonstrated its readiness to deploy cash-based interventions quickly in response to emergencies, crucial for anticipatory action. Both authorities and the population recognized the importance of triggers, trigger definitions and payment modalities (FAO, 2024h). However, despite technical capacities within the government, the financial system is not yet fully equipped to support anticipatory action as effectively as post-disaster interventions, and there is no legal framework for funding pre-disaster anticipatory action measures, especially cash transfers. Additionally, the use of different cash values and triggers by various stakeholders in anticipatory action interventions could lead to confusion and inequality among the population, highlighting the need for the government to set clear standards (FAO, 2024h).
123. In Viet Nam, the reliance on the Viet Nam Post Office for cash distribution aimed to mirror the government’s approach for its social protection programme. However, the fund transfer during typhoon Noru activation from VDDMA to the Viet Nam Post Office failed due to

¹⁴ DG ECHO envisions social protection as a developmental responsibility but recognizes a significant role for the humanitarian community and donor in complementing these efforts when aligned with humanitarian principles. Cash-based assistance, widely used in humanitarian responses, aligns naturally with safety nets and broader social protection approaches, and this perspective emphasizes synergy between humanitarian aid and social protection systems to enhance effectiveness and resilience (European Commission, 2021a).

internal challenges within VDDMA's process. Despite FAO facilitating a contract and transferring funds to VDDMA, the government's mechanism for third-party transfers did not work. As a result, the Viet Nam Post Office advanced the funds and directly distributed cash to beneficiaries. FAO's cooperation with the Viet Nam Post Office resulted in a MOU between VDDMA and the Post Office for future disaster response cash distribution (Permanent Office of the National Steering Committee on Natural Disaster Prevention and Control and The Viet Nam Post Corporation, 2023). However, this alignment highlights certain gaps, such as weaker coordination between the Ministry of Labour – Invalids and Social Affairs and FAO in Viet Nam, marked by only a few meetings, compared to the stronger collaboration with VDDMA.

124. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, some government representatives feel more like technical service providers than true project partners, a sentiment driven by differing views on the cash transfer modality. FAO advocates for engaging the *Banque Pour Le Commerce Exterieur Lao Public* to handle cash distribution, emphasizing its financial expertise, while the government favours transferring funds to the social welfare account for distribution by social welfare staff.

Finding 21. The project's input to technical guidelines and concept notes have contributed to influencing government social protection and disaster risk financing frameworks, establishing a foundation for future initiatives and pointing out the opportunity for closer collaboration with donors supporting broader capacity-building efforts in social protection.

125. In Viet Nam, operational guidelines have been drafted and provide a framework for linking anticipatory actions with the existing social assistance system for disaster response. It extensively draws on the practical experience and evaluation of the activation of the AAP for flood before typhoon Noru in Quang Tri and Thua Thien Hue (Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and FAO, 2023). The guidelines aim to ensure uniform and effective implementation of anticipatory actions, particularly through cash assistance, aligned with governmental social protection systems. It applies to beneficiaries within programme/project scopes and regular social assistance recipients as defined by Article 5 of Decree No. 20/2021/ND-CP. The guidelines also serve as a reference for developing anticipatory action processes and social protection policies for other target groups. The intended users include the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Department of Social Protection), policymakers and emergency assistance management agencies and organizations.
126. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, efforts focused on integrating sovereign insurance into disaster risk financing strategies, particularly through the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility. The project explored incorporating anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection into this insurance model. A concept was developed for using early warning systems to trigger insurance payouts in drought scenarios, enabling the funding of anticipatory actions (FAO, 2024c). This approach demonstrates innovative thinking in aligning disaster risk financing with anticipatory measures, and at the time of writing this report, the concept has successfully attracted funding by the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for implementation of an anticipatory sovereign drought insurance pilot (GCF, 2025).
127. In Bangladesh, a disaster risk reduction financing strategy has been developed with input from PPP project through coordinated efforts, facilitated by the regional country office in bringing together UN entities (United Nations Development Programme, FAO, WFP) and

international financial institutions (International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Asian Development Bank). The strategy includes a dedicated chapter on anticipatory action led by the Ministry of Finance and reflecting insights gained through collaboration with the national task force and TWG (FAO, 2024a).

128. In Pakistan, a technical paper has been developed by the project based on consultations at both provincial and national levels (Toepper, Dizon and Iqbal, 2024) and contributed to the national stocktake for the Climate Shield Initiative. It identifies entry points for mainstreaming anticipatory action into public disaster risk financing systems, leveraging policies like the National Disaster Management Act (2010) and ongoing disaster risk financing reforms. Elements of build finance are already included in annual development budgets, with potential for scaling. The analysis, including a Sindh case study, highlights opportunities for integrating anticipatory action into national and provincial system (Toepper, Dizon and Iqbal, 2024).

3.3.2 Subquestion 3.2: What are the exit strategies to ensure i) strengthened knowledge/capacity on anticipatory action among government counterparts and partners; ii) (further) integration of anticipatory action in social protection systems in the target countries; iii) harmonized anticipatory action standards and approaches across national, regional and global actors?

Finding 22. While the project has made important strides in promoting government ownership and capacity for anticipatory action, demonstrating growing commitment to institutionalizing anticipatory action, the long-term sustainability of these efforts will require further investment in building government capacity to independently implement or expand anticipatory action plans for additional hazards. Progress is still challenged by resource limitations, reliance on development partners and the absence of dedicated domestic budget codes. Addressing these gaps presents a significant opportunity to establish sustainable financing mechanisms that ensure the project’s benefits endure over time.

129. FAO has implemented a sustainability strategy by promoting government ownership of AAPs linked to their national DRM strategies (Finding 7), and by prioritizing multi-agency collaboration with government bodies becoming more proactive in engaging with various stakeholders (Findings 17).
130. At the national level, in Viet Nam, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development chaired a dialogue on integrating anticipatory action into the country’s DRM system through the ASEAN anticipatory action framework, engaging 36 agencies, including ministries, UN agencies and NGOs. Following this, VDDMA/Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development developed a five-year implementation plan (2025–2030) to operationalize the Ha Long Ministerial Statement (NSCNDPC, 2024). In this plan, the National Steering Committee for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control coordinates with its Standing Office and ministries to ensure effective anticipatory action implementation, while the Standing Office leads sectoral integration, financial planning and international collaboration. The Provincial People’s Committees focus on building community awareness, local risk information, early warning systems and resource mobilization for anticipatory action activation.
131. Sustainability efforts in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic include integrating the anticipatory action approach into a provincial DRM strategy in Luang Prabang and six

district DRM action plans in Luang Prabang and Savannakhet. Since 2022, capacity-building efforts have supported this process, starting with anticipatory action orientation training for FAO the Lao People's Democratic Republic and government partners (FAO, 2022b), followed by provincial and district-level trainings and mentoring visits (Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2024). Insights from the regional training of trainers (April 2024) informed the development of a contextualized anticipatory action training package, leading to a national training in August 2024, co-led by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, FAO and WFP (FAO, 2024d).

132. The efforts to build the capacity of government staff¹⁵ across all countries contribute to the sustainability of anticipatory action programmes. However, this must be viewed in the context of varying levels of engagement with government partners, which differ between countries and even among different government agencies (Finding 4). Additionally, the technical leadership of FAO and RIMES in trigger development may have limited opportunities for capacity building among government counterparts (Finding 10). Furthermore, the role of government disaster management agencies as primary coordinators still requires significant strengthening (Finding 17).
133. As a result, the evaluation cannot definitively conclude whether governments currently have the capacity to implement AAPs independently or to develop AAPs for other hazards without external support.
134. KIs at country level reveal that while governments are committed to institutionalizing anticipatory action, progress has been hindered by resource constraints and a heavy dependence on development partners such as FAO. The potential withdrawal of support from these partners poses a significant risk to the finalization and sustainability of anticipatory action initiatives. A major challenge remains in securing sustainable financing for anticipatory action, which will require stronger integration with domestic funding mechanisms, such as GCF and other local financial resources (Dalabajan, 2024). In Bangladesh, for instance, the absence of dedicated budget codes for disaster risk reduction in key ministries, such as the Department of Livestock Services and the Department of Agricultural Extension, highlights a critical funding gap that undermines effective disaster response. Without clear financial commitments and integration into national budgets, the scalability and long-term success of anticipatory action remain uncertain. This underscores the pressing need to advocate for the Ministry of Finance to establish dedicated budget codes, ensuring a sustainable and consistent flow of funding for disaster preparedness and early action. This raises an important strategic question: instead of advocating for rigid, earmarked budget lines for anticipatory action, which risk being underfunded and inflexible, should there be a focus shift towards promoting greater flexibility within existing DRM budgets? Embedding anticipatory action within national and local DRM systems, as proposed in the Philippines' Imminent Disaster Bill, offers a promising model. This includes integrating anticipatory action into agency plans and budgets, allocating local DRM funds for anticipatory action, and tapping the National DRM Fund.

Finding 23. FAO's regional strategy for sustaining anticipatory action outcomes has focused on the development of technical standards and training through the regional anticipatory action TWG. Building on its strong relationship with ASEAN, FAO is revising its approach to prioritize long-term,

¹⁵ 2 138 stakeholders trained with 152 stakeholders trained on operationalization of SRSP and cash programming as anticipatory action exceed the target (respectively 529 and 100) as per final draft report.

national strategies, positioning anticipatory action as a sustainable investment rather than solely a humanitarian intervention.

135. FAO's sustainability strategy is also implemented by co-leading the development of technical standards and training packages through the regional anticipatory action TWG and by their sharing with regional and global stakeholders for replication. This strategy is also embedded in FAO's longstanding relationship with and support to ASEAN, extending beyond the project's time frame and scale. Moreover, according to KII with FAO personnel, the Organization does not intend to shift its current thematic focus, but is revising its strategy to further prioritize national, long-term approaches, repositioning anticipatory action as a sustainable investment rather than just a humanitarian intervention.
136. Key informants noted that the TWG is gaining credibility and traction beyond FAO's direct leadership, with some partners expressing confidence in its ability to sustain operations independently. Nevertheless, concerns remain about the potential loss of momentum if FAO's presence and leadership were to diminish. The long-term FAO-ASEAN partnership provides a strong foundation for sustaining the project's outcomes, as the initiative has been closely aligned with and supports this strategic collaboration. FAO's deliberate decision to adopt a low-profile approach, reducing its visibility to foster more genuine engagement from partners and governments, has been instrumental in building trust with ASEAN. A key sustainability pathway for the project outcomes is FAO's ongoing support for the implementation of the ASEAN framework on disaster management. (FAO and ASEAN, 2023).
137. ASEAN's pioneering role in adopting an anticipatory action framework for disaster management (ASEAN, 2022b) highlights a key element of sustainability, fostering intersectoral collaboration and encouraging Member States to embrace innovative approaches to disaster management at both regional and country levels. The Ha Long Ministerial Statement (ASEAN, 2023), signed by all ASEAN countries, further solidifies this commitment, providing a strong foundation for sustainability initiatives.

3.4 EQ 4: To what extent were the project management and partnership arrangements appropriate?

3.4.1 Subquestion 4.1: What were the key factors affecting project management in positive or negative ways?

Finding 24. The collaboration between FAO and DG ECHO was strategically important, reflecting a shared commitment to success and fostering valuable learning opportunities at national, regional, and global levels. Positive factors included the innovative nature of the initiative, alignment with government processes, and the multi-year timeframe which supported gradual capacity-building. Challenges such as differing priorities, differing approaches to social protection, administrative bottlenecks, and limited expertise underscore the need for an adaptive partnership framework and better alignment of approaches to enhance coordination, efficiency and overall effectiveness.

138. The collaboration between FAO and DG ECHO was strategically significant (Finding 5), reflecting a shared commitment to the project's success. Coordination was primarily led at the regional level by both DG ECHO and FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. However, overlapping coordination efforts between FAO and DG ECHO headquarters and at the country level added complexity to the management and coordination setup. Several

- key factors – both positive and negative – shaped the project’s management, coordination and dialogue.
139. Key informants highlighted the innovative nature of the PPP initiative and recognized the inherent challenges it brought. The project was described as a valuable "learning by doing" experience, which required balancing country-specific adaptations with standardized reporting requirements and goals. While it was sometimes seen as a pilot for refining administrative processes rather than a vehicle for strategic learning, this approach provided an opportunity to test systems and identify areas for improvement. Key project management tools, such as the e-single form and logframe, were acknowledged as needing better alignment with the project’s unique objectives. Although opportunities for meaningful information-sharing and problem-solving through quarterly steering committee meetings were perceived as limited, these gaps were mitigated by more frequent ad hoc and issues-specific in-country and regional coordination meetings, as well as regular exchanges through email, which facilitated ongoing collaboration and communication.
140. The positive factors affecting the coordination between DG ECHO and FAO include the strategic alignment and learning opportunities, the multi-year timeframe (Finding 6), and FAO’s structured engagement with the government. Both FAO and DG ECHO recognized the strategic importance of the project (Finding 5), fostering high levels of commitment. This led to valuable lessons across national, regional and global levels, and comparative analyses of anticipatory action and social protection integration across diverse contexts. The three-year timeline was well-received as it allowed greater alignment with government processes and provided a framework for gradual capacity-building. Moreover, FAO’s alignment with national and local authorities, and its adherence to government processes, demonstrated its commitment to institutionalization and coordination.
141. On the other hand, several challenges were identified that highlighted areas for improvement, including the need for a more adaptive partnership framework, capacity alignment with ambitious objectives (Finding 6), differing approaches to social protection (Finding 20) and administrative bottlenecks (Finding 6). The absence of a tailored partnership framework between DG ECHO and FAO complicated mutual understanding and execution. Differences in priorities – DG ECHO’s oversight-focused approach and FAO’s process-driven methodology – as well as some staff transitions in both agencies led to some tensions and delays in implementation.
142. At the country level, limited expertise in social protection (both agencies), recruitment challenges, and the project’s top-down design added complexity to coordination and stakeholder engagement. While FAO’s broader focus on social protection and DG ECHO’s prioritization of shock response and cash-based assistance reflected their respective strengths, this misalignment limited opportunities to fully influence national policy development. Perceptions of FAO cumbersome financial and logistical procedures, coupled with donor approval processes, further impacted timely activations. Additionally, variations in evidence requirements added complexity to implementation (as detailed in Finding 18).
143. The project’s underspending can be explained by several interconnected factors. A key issue was the absence of a consolidated agreement on anticipatory action concepts, particularly the no-regret approach and activation thresholds, which limited the number of activations and therefore reduced opportunities to spend the activation budget. While a

clarification note on the flexible use of the 40 percent activation budget was developed by FAO, no consolidated agreement on operationalizing this proposal was found during the evaluation.

144. Administrative complexity also played a role, as the project's multi-level coordination structure across FAO headquarters, the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and country teams created slow and time-consuming approval processes for budgets which delayed the implementation of activities. Conceptual and operational misalignments between DG ECHO's humanitarian mandate and FAO's dual mandate compounded these difficulties, with disagreements over activation timing and scope creating uncertainty about when funds could be used. Persistent procurement delays also constrained timely disbursement of cash and vouchers, further contributing to underspending. Finally, coordination challenges, overlapping responsibilities, and differing evidence and capacity requirements created operational friction, which reduced agility and slowed spending.
145. Despite these challenges, they underscore opportunities to better align capacities, approaches, and systems to enhance coherence, efficiency, and overall effectiveness in future efforts. The collaboration between a dual mandate¹⁶ agency and a humanitarian donor is both logical and highly relevant in the context of addressing climate change. While DG ECHO's specific humanitarian mandate presents some challenges, these dynamics can serve as a catalyst for progress, offering valuable opportunities to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development approaches and to foster more integrated, sustainable, and impactful solutions.

Finding 25. At regional level, key factors affecting project management, coordination, and collaboration included the anticipatory action TWG's strong role in harmonizing approaches across the region, FAO's leadership in co-developing technical standards, and the inclusive nature of consultations that fostered shared understanding. While challenges such as minimal government representation at working group meetings and evolving partner involvement were noted, corrective measures like the development of formal TORs for the anticipatory action TWG, the implementation of a feedback process, and ongoing FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific coordination efforts helped improve collaboration and engagement over time.

146. Key informants praised the Asia-Pacific TWGAA for its crucial role in coordinating and setting technical standards, effectively harmonizing approaches across the region. The project's implementation strategy was demand-driven, addressing identified priorities, such as the establishment of a sub-group focused on training. FAO was recognized for co-leading the anticipatory action TWG, funding the development of technical standards, and ensuring broad visibility of its outcomes, fostering shared understanding and ownership. The development of these standards was a collaborative effort led by FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, with inclusive consultations through Asia-Pacific Dialogue platforms and online.
147. Initially an organic project group in 2019 with eight members, the anticipatory action TWG quickly evolved through strong partner involvement, becoming more structured by 2021 with formal TORs and over one hundred members. The anticipatory action TWG holds monthly meetings, with no government representatives in the working group itself, though national working groups include government representation. Quarterly All-in-Meetings with the regional TWG involve national anticipatory action TWG representatives, but

¹⁶ FAO has a humanitarian and development focus.

government participation remains minimal, allowing for open and fluid discussions. A two-step feedback process is used for all anticipatory action TWG products, ensuring partner engagement and ownership, including the use of the anticipatory action TWG logo for all the documents jointly developed by the anticipatory action TWG.

148. Under the PPP, the anticipatory action TWG joined the IASC working groups and now reports quarterly to the executive directors of the IASC members; ASEAN also participates in this TWG. The respondent praised the advanced collaboration and documentation produced by the anticipatory action TWG on anticipatory action, noting it as a model for other regions, reflecting the strong cooperation and high level of understanding between FAO and IFRC in Asia.

Finding 26. Internally within FAO, the management of this multi-country, multi-level project faced challenges, including complex approval processes, gaps in social protection expertise, and unclear line management, which caused delays and coordination difficulties. However, delegating responsibilities to the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, appointing the right expertise for social protection, and the dedication of project staff ultimately improved communication, alignment, and overall project implementation.

149. The interviews highlighted the complexities of managing a multi-country, multi-level project. Initially, the coordination structure, encompassing FAO headquarters, the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and country teams, posed challenges for decision-making, particularly in the approval of budgets and activities. The approval processes at both FAO headquarters and the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific led to delays during the early stages, as submitting annual country specific concept notes and TORs for approval proved time-consuming. While this multilayered structure provided thorough oversight, it also added complexity to project management. Although team members generally had a clear understanding of their roles, the approval process emphasized the need for more streamlined decision-making to enable timely implementation. Delegating coordination responsibilities to the regional office improved communication with FAO in Rome, and regular regional meetings with all five countries strengthened alignment and collaboration.
150. A significant challenge emerged in the area of social protection due to the absence of dedicated expertise. DRM experts were initially tasked with overseeing social protection, leading to gaps in understanding and implementation. Finding personnel with the required expertise proved difficult, and progress was further delayed by disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting in the project's second year, social protection colleagues from FAO headquarters, in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, provided support remotely and through missions. In the past year FAO further addressed this issue by appointing dedicated personnel with the necessary expertise at regional level to lead the social protection agenda, which enhanced learning and provided essential support to the country teams. Additionally, gaps in staffing contracts, with many personnel recruited on a consultancy basis, presented challenges to maintaining communication continuity, especially between the FAO social protection team and anticipatory action colleagues. A lack of clarity in line management and communication between the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and FAO headquarters further complicated coordination, as these roles were not clearly outlined in the organizational structure (FAO, 2024m). Those gaps contributed to hinder optimal progress on integrating social protection into AAPs. Despite these challenges, the dedication and commitment of

project staff, ensured that internal coordination within FAO remained effective, with technical inputs flowing efficiently between the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Country Offices and headquarters.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

151. Overall, the project has been successful, despite its complexity, breadth and ambition. The conclusions presented below are related to each category of evaluation questions and cross-referenced to the evaluation key findings.

Conclusion 1. Strong alignment with prior initiatives on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection but limited scale, challenges in targeting and government engagement provide areas for improvement. (Findings 1, 2, 3, 4, 11 and 17)

152. Project activities, including its coordination architecture and collaborative strategy, are strongly aligned with the needs, priorities and contexts of regional, national and local authorities, as well as partners. The project aligns closely with recommendations from the previous initiative on anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection, emphasizing coordination through TWGs, government-led AAPs and capacity building for early warning systems, knowledge-sharing, as well as in the development of regional technical standards. It contributed to ASEAN's disaster management goals, and integrated anticipatory action into broader regional and national frameworks.
153. Moreover, the project has effectively leveraged country-specific lessons from prior initiatives in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Viet Nam to design tailored and relevant interventions. The project built on previous initiatives by standardizing anticipatory action terminology, improving coordination and strengthening government systems through AAP development. While it aligned with global best practices, there are challenges in government engagement, and ensuring precise targeting of those most in need, and the AAPs developed under the project are limited in scale, reaching small numbers of beneficiaries. Beneficiaries expressed overall satisfaction with the anticipatory assistance, but better (gender) inclusion, community consultation and communication on the selection process could enhance the process further.

Conclusion 2. The project exceeded its AAPs targets and aligned well with sector standards, but activations highlighted the absence of a shared understanding of key concepts like the no-regrets approach. Implementation was delayed by administrative, procurement and donor approval bottlenecks, with FAO's expertise proving more effective for slow-onset disasters than for sudden-onset events due to logistical and procedural limitations. (Findings 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14)

154. The project exceeded its targets in developing AAPs, which were well-aligned with the key parameters commonly agreed upon by organizations in this sector, including objectives, decision-making processes, trigger development and timelines for implementation.
155. However, activations of these protocols revealed significant conceptual and operational misalignments. Challenges arose in balancing DG ECHO's humanitarian approach with FAO's dual mandate, particularly around trigger thresholds and activation timing. To support more activations, DG ECHO advocated for a no-regret approach with lower trigger thresholds, while FAO acknowledged the difficulty in sustaining such an approach long-term due to government budget limitations. Additionally, FAO's requests for post-disaster emergency funding for early response (e.g. in Bangladesh and the Philippines) contributed to DG ECHO's concern that FAO was seeking greater flexibility beyond anticipatory action, which conflicted with DG ECHO's principles. These differing perspectives underscore the

need for better alignment on key concepts, especially the no-regret approach and its practical application within the project framework. A shared formal understanding between DG ECHO and FAO could have helped clarify time frames for implementing actions, whether before a hazard's impact or before its most severe humanitarian effects are felt – both of which are currently accepted practices in the anticipatory action framework.

156. The report highlights the need for more efficient donor approval mechanisms and FAO administrative processes. In addition, key informants raised concerns about FAO's ability to manage rapid-onset disasters. Different evaluations identified persistent procurement delays that hinder timely cash and voucher disbursement. While anticipatory action is critical for FAO's support to the agricultural sector in sudden-onset disasters, the Organization's administrative processes may struggle with rapid emergency responses. On the other hand, FAO's strengths in climate-smart agriculture and water management and seed distribution positions enable effective support for slow-onset disasters like droughts.

Conclusion 3. The project advanced the integration of anticipatory action into DRM and social protection systems across national and regional levels, notably through FAO's collaboration with ASEAN and the development of technical guidelines. While full institutionalization is still underway and sustainability is constrained by a focus on logistical pilots over systemic integration, the initiative laid a solid foundation for embedding anticipatory action as a long-term, nationally owned investment. (Findings 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22 and 23)

157. At regional level, the regional TWGAA's collaboration, especially between FAO and IFRC, was praised as a model for other regions. Project management and collaboration benefited from the TWGAA's role in harmonizing approaches, FAO's leadership in developing technical standards, and inclusive consultations with partners effectively harmonizing approaches across the region. The ASEAN Regional Framework on Anticipatory Action for Disaster Management, developed with FAO's support and endorsed in 2022, is a key achievement of the FAO-ASEAN collaboration. Other key documents that FAO has supported ASEAN on include the Guidelines for Disaster-Responsive Social Protection which were released in 2021, and the Ha Long Bay Ministerial Statement on Anticipatory Action which marked a tipping point in ASEAN members' engagement in anticipatory action.
158. At national level, FAO has helped integrate anticipatory action into DRM in all countries, with significant milestones like national action plans and TWGs. However, while integration into DRM advanced, the project placed less emphasis on embedding anticipatory action into national social protection systems. This limited the sustainability of anticipatory action-social protection linkages and was compounded by design-phase delays, initial lack of dedicated social protection expertise, and diverging priorities between FAO's broader social protection approach and DG ECHO's focus on shock response and cash-based assistance. While choosing countries with more advanced social protection systems might have reduced these obstacles, it would have limited the project's capacity to generate valuable comparative insights and learning. The project facilitated important learning on cash transfer mechanisms in anticipatory action, supported by regional working groups. Country-specific experiences – such as distribution modality debates in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and operational challenges in Viet Nam – offered practical insights into cash-based anticipatory action interventions.
159. Complementing these efforts, FAO and RIMES led the technical development of triggers, aligning them with government early warning systems and involving national

meteorological and forecasting agencies. Although this built institutional capacity, it sometimes constrained national ownership by not fully empowering these agencies to independently manage and adapt trigger systems.

160. Collectively, these activities contributed to a set of technical guidelines and concept notes that can influence both social protection and disaster risk financing frameworks. Through continued collaboration with ASEAN and the TWGAA, FAO is repositioning its approach to prioritize long-term, nationally driven strategies – helping to reframe anticipatory action not only as a humanitarian tool but as a sustainable public investment aligned with broader development agendas.

Conclusion 4. The project's AAP activations have demonstrated the feasibility of anticipatory action across different country contexts. However, the lack of a tailored evidence-gathering approach has made it challenging to assess the activations' direct impact on government policy, institutionalization and other key audiences. As governments increasingly focus on financial sustainability, long-term funding and scalability, securing broader support will require structured evidence that goes beyond cost savings to show how anticipatory action can be integrated into national systems, attract new funding and reduce reliance on emergency aid. (Finding 15, 18, 19, 20 and 22)

161. The project has placed significant emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and knowledge-sharing. However, the absence of a tailored evidence-gathering approach has made it difficult to assess the project's impact on influencing specific target audiences. While it is clear that the project contributed, assessments have not been able to determine whether government buy-in for anticipatory action and its institutionalization stemmed primarily from the project's AAP development and activation, FAO's technical influence, or broader regional trends where FAO's role – though significant – is harder to isolate. More likely, government adoption of anticipatory action has been driven by a combination of factors. While lessons learned from AAP activations have provided valuable insights into anticipatory action's feasibility across different national contexts and have encouraged local authority engagement, their direct influence on shaping government policies remains difficult to substantiate.
162. For instance, government stakeholders require evidence to navigate the challenge of providing timely support to vulnerable communities – whether or not an extreme event occurs – while ensuring responsible and proportionate resource allocation. Ministries of finance, in particular, need compelling monetary evidence, such as cost savings and return on investment, to support anticipatory action adoption. Furthermore, as governments increasingly focus on financial sustainability, long-term funding and scalability, evidence must demonstrate how anticipatory action can be integrated into national systems, attract new funding sources, and reduce reliance on emergency aid to gain broader support.

Conclusion 5. The project effectively aligned its goals of standard-setting, institutionalization and partnership-building across levels, with strong strategic collaboration between FAO and DG ECHO that fostered innovation and learning. However, operational challenges – including differing priorities, limited expertise and coordination bottlenecks – highlighted the need for a more tailored partnership framework to match the project's complexity and ambition. (Finding 5,6,20,24, 25,26)

163. The project achieved strong coherence at the national level by aligning AAPs, institutionalizing practices within DRM frameworks, and fostering partnerships. The project also strengthened regional collaboration, supported anticipatory action TWGs and

collaborated with government disaster management agencies to enhance early warning systems and institutional capacity.

164. Both FAO and DG ECHO viewed the project as strategic, with strong organizational commitment and valuable learnings at national, regional and global levels. At the same time, coordination across the project's multilevel structure added complexity, and differences in priorities occasionally created tensions between detailed oversight and broader strategic goals. Overlapping efforts between FAO headquarters, regional offices and country teams affected operational agility. While the project benefitted from FAO's strong engagement with national authorities, it also highlighted the need for a more adaptive partnership framework that could respond to evolving field-level realities. Challenges included differing evidence requirements, capacity mismatches and contrasting approaches to social protection, which sometimes caused delays and operational friction. The top-down design, compounded by unclear line management and administrative bottlenecks, also affected budget and activity approval processes. These difficulties pointed to the need for a more streamlined decision-making framework.
165. Despite these constraints, corrective steps were taken and implementation improved over time, fostering close collaboration between both agencies. Progress was achieved through case-by-case decisions, showcasing the commitment and dedication of project personnel, the potential of adaptability and creating a foundation for more integrated and sustainable solutions in future efforts.

4.2 Recommendations

166. Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the Evaluation Team proposes four recommendations. Recommendations 1 and 2 concern the project level, while Recommendation 3 calls for a more programmatic approach, and Recommendation 4 focuses on the FAO-DG ECHO partnership.

Recommendation 1. Develop an advocacy strategy.

This recommendation emerges from Conclusions 2 and 4.

Rationale: For future projects aimed at influencing government policies and systems and contributing to shaping regional and global frameworks in anticipatory action and social protection, it is essential to adopt a project design specifically tailored to learning and evidence gathering for advocacy purposes.

To implement this recommendation, the following action points could be considered:

167. Define stakeholder-driven learning objectives: Define learning objectives through active engagement with key stakeholders, such as ministries of finance, disaster management authorities, social protection programmes and other relevant national and regional institutions. This process will ensure that evidence gathered is aligned with stakeholders' priority needs, driving policy adoption and informed decision-making. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with national/regional stakeholders).*
168. Align project management tools to learning objectives: Revise project management tools (such as the e-single form and logframe) to better align with evidence-gathering goals. This will improve planning, monitoring and reporting, ensuring these tools support the project's broader objectives. Additionally, extend the theory of change, which is considered

best practice for AAP design, to the overall project to outline clear pathways for influencing key audiences, and to define relevant project indicators. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and donor involvement for the revision of management tools).*

169. Adopt a multi-dimensional evidence framework, to be part of the M&E system: Develop a comprehensive evidence framework to capture diverse evidence types (as already partially done in the PPP project) including: i) monetary evidence showcasing anticipatory action's financial value, such as ROI and cost savings; ii) social impact metrics demonstrating anticipatory action's contribution to community resilience; and iii) systems integration evidence highlighting how anticipatory action can be embedded into national systems for scalability and sustainability. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).*
170. Tailor communication of evidence to target: Disseminate evidence in formats targeting specific audiences (e.g. policy briefs for government officials, financial reports for donors, community narratives for local stakeholders). Ensure that the evidence clearly illustrates the potential for scaling anticipatory action and integrating it into national and regional systems, highlighting its long-term viability and impact. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).*

Recommendation 2. Adopt a more holistic capacity building strategy and enhance community engagement

This recommendation is based on Conclusions 1 and 3.

Rationale: To strengthen the effectiveness, scalability and sustainability of anticipatory action at national, subnational and local level, capacity building for government agencies should cover all critical sectors and the project should prioritize increased participatory community engagement.

To implement this recommendation, the following action points could be considered:

171. Continue and strengthen close engagement with *all* relevant sectors for anticipatory action replication and scaling up from project outset, including national forecasting agencies, social protection bodies, and ministries of finance. Capacity building should aim to empower governments to independently develop and sustain anticipatory action systems over the long term. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Countries Offices).*
172. Support government leadership and ownership in project implementation beyond the governmental DRM agencies and in driving the sustainability of anticipatory action, by recognizing the centrality of their role and responding to their specific needs. Clarify roles for government stakeholders and enhance coordination among them throughout the project. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Country Offices).*
173. Strengthen community engagement in the selection of AAs, promote gender equality and social inclusion in vulnerability criteria for beneficiaries' targeting, and improve communication around the beneficiary selection process. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Countries Offices).*
174. Integrate gender, disability and social inclusion considerations into risk assessments and anticipatory action design, ensuring inclusive access and leveraging Indigenous knowledge

for early warning and response. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Country Offices)*

Recommendation 3. Strengthen the programmatic approach and the humanitarian-development nexus for sustainable anticipatory action.

This recommendation is based on Conclusions 3 and 5 and builds on Recommendations 1 and 2.

Rationale: To ensure the long-term sustainability and institutionalization of anticipatory action at country level, a shift from short-term, project-based initiatives to a sustained, programmatic approach is essential. This requires bridging humanitarian, development and climate finance to secure continuous support for anticipatory action systems.

To implement this recommendation, the following action points could be considered:

175. Continue to leverage Development and climate finance for anticipatory action scaling: FAO should actively leverage its dual humanitarian and development expertise, along with its strong government partnerships, to help national agencies access international development and climate financing mechanisms, such as the Green Climate Fund, the Loss and Damage Fund, and DG INTPA funds. FAO's accreditation as a GCF partner since 2016 presents a significant opportunity to further scale anticipatory action as part of broader climate adaptation efforts. While humanitarian funding remains essential for activation, FAO and DG ECHO could jointly advocate for the strategic use of development and climate finance to build resilient systems and institutionalize anticipatory action within national policies – ensuring long-term sustainability, scaling and impact. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO Project Support Division and FAO Country Offices in collaboration with DG ECHO).*
176. Engage financial decision-makers to institutionalize anticipatory action in national systems: FAO and DG ECHO should prioritize engagement with financial decision-makers, particularly at the ministry of finance level, to address key barriers to the institutionalization of anticipatory action. This includes advocating for the integration of shock-responsive social protection mechanisms and promoting innovative approaches that go beyond traditional humanitarian models. For example, a dual approach could be pursued: enabling flexible use of DRM funds for anticipatory action, while encouraging specific funding targets within broader budgets. This would allow anticipatory action to be scaled more sustainably and avoid creating isolated, underutilized funding streams. To support efforts, FAO and DG ECHO should assist national agencies in accessing international funding from donors promoting adaptive social protection, such as the World Bank and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH. This will help ensure the long-term sustainability and scaling of anticipatory action within national systems. *(To the FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO Country Offices in collaboration with DG ECHO).*
177. Strengthen donors and FAO's capacity in anticipatory action and social protection at the country level: To ensure sustained and effective support for government agencies, FAO and donors should develop a strategic plan to strengthen the capacity of country offices in anticipatory action and social protection. This includes identifying priority initiatives, allocating resources for implementation, recruiting specialized expertise, rolling out existing training programmes, and focusing on countries with high potential for scaling up anticipatory action within national social protection systems. *(To the FAO Office of*

Emergencies and Resilience, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, FAO and DG ECHO Countries Offices).

Recommendation 4. Establish a joint coordination and decision-making framework for programmatic partnership projects.

This recommendation is based on Conclusions 2 and 5 and builds on recommendation 3.

Rationale: Shifting from a traditional donor-implementer relationship to a strategic partnership, for future programmatic partnership projects on anticipatory action and social protection, FAO and DG ECHO, but possibly also other partners in the future, should establish a structured coordination and decision-making framework to enhance communication, align expectations, and improve strategic and operational coordination.

To implement this recommendation, the following action points could be considered:

178. Expectation-setting workshop: At the project outset, convene high-level sessions to clarify project scope, define roles and responsibilities, ensure flexibility within funding mechanisms, and align humanitarian and development approaches. *(To DG ECHO and FAO headquarters with involvement of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Country Offices for alignment of expectations and countries' contexts).*
179. Regular strategic dialogues: Hold quarterly high-level meetings to review progress, address administrative and operational challenges, and refine partnership modalities to enhance efficiency and impact. *(DG ECHO and FAO headquarters with involvement of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Country Offices for alignment of expectations and countries' contexts).*
180. Technical coordination mechanism: Establish a joint TWG with anticipatory action and social protection specialists from both agencies to agree on trigger thresholds, activation timelines and implementation processes. This includes developing a decision-making roadmap outlining key milestones, evidence requirements, and approval timelines to streamline activation and funding disbursement. *(To DG ECHO and FAO technical experts in anticipatory action and social protection).*
181. Adaptive learning reviews: Conduct periodic reviews to assess project implementation, identify challenges and adjust coordination mechanisms based on lessons learned and evolving contexts. *(To DG ECHO and FAO headquarters with involvement of the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and Country Offices).*

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Appendix 1. People interviewed

People interviewed from DG ECHO

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
Aquino	Arlynn	DG ECHO	Programme Officer DG ECHO - Philippines
Garcia De Diego	Sergio	DG ECHO headquarters	Disaster preparedness officer
Larosa	Massimo	DG ECHO	Shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) expert
Licomati	Simone	DG ECHO	Former focal point headquarters level
Mokit	Billah	DG ECHO	Programme Officer DG ECHO - Bangladesh
Orlandini	Anna	DG ECHO	Programme Officer DG ECHO - Bangladesh
Perez Aparicio	Francisco Javier	DG ECHO headquarters	Team leader disaster preparedness, programming and disaster preparedness policy
Romero Ruiz	Sandra	DG ECHO headquarters	Disaster preparedness, programming and disaster preparedness policy Officer
Zappa	Davide	DG ECHO	Thematic Expert – Disaster Preparedness, Project focal point in Bangkok

People interviewed from FAO (headquarters, FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Country Offices)

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
FAO headquarters			
Gameel	Ashraf	FAO headquarters	Operation officer overseeing the budget
Herranz	Magali	FAO Liaison Office with the European Union and Belgium	FAO – DG ECHO Liaison Officer
Johnson	Mark	FAO –headquarters – Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division	Social Protection and Cash Transfer Specialist
Lombardi	Niccolo	FAO headquarters	FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience anticipatory action
Mellucci	Chiara	FAO headquarters	FAO Office of Emergencies and Resilience anticipatory action
Spano	Federico	FAO headquarters – Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division	Social Policy Officer
FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific			
HangThiThanh	Pham	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Senior resilience officer
Jones	Catherine	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Disaster Resilience Officer, anticipatory action Specialist
Riquet	Damien	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific P	Regional Anticipatory Actions Specialist

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
Singh	Digvijay	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Social Protection and Resilience Specialist
Toepper	Janek	FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific	Climate Change & Disaster Risk Finance Specialist
Bangladesh Country Office			
Azzizun Nahar	Tania	FAO Bangladesh	Assistant Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Specialist
Bhaskar	Goswami	FAO Bangladesh	Food Security Programme Specialist
Kumas Das	Anil	FAO Bangladesh	Senior National Programme Specialist
Fauzia Mashkura	Nishat	FAO Bangladesh	Junior Program Support Assistant
Imtiaz	Ahmad	FAO Bangladesh	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Specialist
Khan	Anamik	FAO (Cox’s Bazar Landslide team)	National Landslide Specialist
Khan	David	FAO Bangladesh	Administrative Associate
Sarker	Babul	FAO Bangladesh	Field Facilitator
Tumtumi	Nuzaba Tahreen Rahman	FAO Bangladesh	Project coordination Assistant (Social protection and cash transfer)
Md	Salauddin	FAO Bangladesh	Project Coordination Specialist (Resilience)
The Lao People’s Democratic Republic Country Office			
Chanthalath	Pongmala	FAO Lao People’s Democratic Republic (the) - social protection	Assistant to FAOR
Choumpahomvong	Nioulaong	FAO Lao People’s Democratic Republic (the)	Focal Person in Savannakhet
Panyada	Phetvilay	FAO Lao People’s Democratic Republic (the)	National project coordinator – anticipatory action focal point
Soukkaseum	Phonexay	FAO country personnel	National Programme Specialist (Disaster Risk Management and Social Protection Focal Point)
Pakistan Country Office			
Dizon	Ana Marie	FAO Pakistan	Early Warning and anticipatory action specialist
Naeem	Iqbal	FAO Pakistan	Social Protection and Cash Transfer Specialist/Project Coordinator
Philippines Country Office			
Honkulada-Georget	Ruth	FAO PHP	Social Policy and Programme Coordinator
Viet Nam Country Office			
Ha	Thi Lan Anh	FAO Viet Nam	Operations specialist
Nguyen	Song Ha	FAO Viet Nam	FAOR Assistant (Program)
Nguyen	Thai Anh	FAO Viet Nam	anticipatory action Program Technical Specialist
Nguyen	Van	FAO Viet Nam	DRM Technical Specialist
Tran	Yen	FAO Viet Nam	DRR anticipatory action Specialist

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First name	Institution/Agency	Role
Nguyen	Song Ha	FAO Viet Nam	FAOR Assistant (Program)

People interviewed in Viet Nam (not including FAO personnel)

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Cao	Van Thanh	Hydromet Quang Tri	Director of Quang Tri Province Hydrometeorological Station
Commune People Committee	12 persons	Phong Son CPC	Representatives of CPC
Commune People Committee	12 persons	Trieu Do CPC	Representatives of CPC
Commune People Committee	11 persons	Hue Province	Representatives of CPC
Dao	Thi Ha Thanh	VDDMA	Expert/ - International Cooperation and Science and Technology Department
Dam	Thi Tuyet Nga	VDDMA	Head of International Cooperation and Science and Technology Department- VDDMA
Doan	Quang Tri	Red Cross, Thua Thien Hue Province	Head of social work Department
Female beneficiaries	10 women	Commune Phong Son female group - Phong Son CPC	
Female beneficiaries	10 women	Commune Phong Son female group - Trieu Do CPC	
Ho	Van Thanh	NDPC Quang Tri	Director of irrigation Department Quang Tri
Hoang	Ngoc Hieu	NDPC Quang Tri	Project Officer
Le	Chi Cong	NDPC Quang Tri	Deputy Head of Irrigation Departme
Le	Dien Minh	DDMA, Thua Thien Hue Province	Head of Irrigation Department
Le	Mai Minh Tam	NDPC Thua Thien Hue province	Expert of Irrigation Department
Le	Van Duong	World Vision	DRR country Coordinator
Male beneficiaries	10 men	Commune Phong Son male group - Trieu Do CPC - Phong Son CPC	
Male beneficiaries	10 men	Commune Phong Son male group	
Nguyen	Ba Thanh	VDDMA - DMPTC	Technical Lead DMPTC
Nguyen	Chi Hung	World Vision	Humanitarian Emergency Affair and Disaster Risk Reduction Specialist
Nguyen	Ha	Red Cross Quang Tri	Vice chairman RC Quang Tri
Nguyen	Hien Thi	CRS	Senior Program Manager CRS
Nguyen	The Hau	Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs, Quang Tri Province	Head of Children's Social Protection Department -Quang Tri Province Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs
Nguyen	Thi Lan Phuong	Viet Nam Post Quang Tri	Staff – Quang Tri VN Post

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Nguyen	Thi Thanh Van	Plan	Project Coordinator
None-beneficiaries	10 persons	Trieu Do CPC	
None-beneficiaries	10 persons	Phong Son CPC	
Pham	Xuan Sang	Department of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs, Thua Thien Hue Province	Specialist of Department of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs
Phung	Thi Hien Thao	Viet Nam Post Hanoi	Staff of Postal Financial Services Department, Viet Nam Post
Thai	Thi Khanh Chi	VDDMA	Expert - International Cooperation and Science and Technology Department
Tran	Quang Dai	VDDMA	Expert - International Cooperation and Science and Technology Department
Tran	Thi Hai Yen	VDDMA	Expert - International Cooperation and Science and Technology Department
Tran	Trung Kien	DMPTC	Technical Specialist -DMPTC
Van	Hoang Nhung	Hydromet Office, Thua Thien Hue Province	Specialist-Hue Hydrometeorological Station
Vu	Quynh Huong	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs	Expert Hanoi Department of Social Protection- under Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
Vu	Thien Huong	Post Office, Thua Thien Hue Province	Technical staff

People interviewed in the Philippines (not including FAO personnel)

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Lomogdang	Minerva	Local Government Unit – Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office Bacuag	Municipal Social Welfare and Devt Officer
Jordon M.Justo	Anthony	Local Government Unit -Isabella - Agriculture Office	In charge of Office

People interviewed in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (not including FAO personnel)

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Atsaphangthong	Thathevan	Department of Agricultural Land Management of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Department of Land Management (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry)
Bounpheng	Onephachanh	Social Welfare Office Oudomxay	Acting Division Director
Bounthanh		Social Welfare Office Nga District	Director
Chanthasone	Louansipaseuth	World Vision	Climate Change and Adaptation Specialist

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Choummaly		Provincial Focal Person and Representative of the Provincial Disaster Risk Management Secretariat (Luang Prabang)	Director of the Social Protection Division LP
Homvilay	Sayabouthsi	PLSW	Head of Social Welfare Division
Keo Oudone	Souligna	Social Welfare Department and Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office	Head of Agriculture Division
Khamla	Sinthavong	Upland Agriculture Center LP	Director
Khampasong		DLSW	Technical staff
Khampasong		DAFO	Agriculture Technical staff
Khamsing		Nongkham Village, Pakeng district LP	Village Headman
Khamsouk		DAFO Xonnabouly	Head of DAFO
Khampasong		DLSWF Xonnabouly	Head of DLSWF
Khampasong	Xonabouly	DAFO Xonnabouly	Technical Staff
Louangsisongkham	Lathdaphone	BCOME section/Cash Simulation Distribution	Deputy Chief
Maninoud		Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) - Hydrology and Meteorology department	Technical Staff
Manivong	Viengxay	MONRE - Department of Meteorology and Hydrology	Deputy Director
Phavanh	Boualuanglath	PLSW	Head of PLSW Savannakhet
Phommahaxay	Sonekham	Division of Social Protection (MoLSW)	Deputy Director
Phoxay	Khaykhamphithoun	Thakhamleuam Village	Village Headman
Peto		MONRE - Hydrology and Meteorology department	Technical Staff
Sengthong		NAFRI - Rice Research Center	Deputy
Simmala	Kanha	National Animal Feed Laboratory – Livestock and Fishery Department- MAF	Acting Director
Somchay		Ban Ahor Village	Village Headman
Soulikone	Dethvongsa	PLSW	Deputy Head of Social Welfare Division
Vongthasone	Vilaythong	World Bank - Social Registry	Specialist

People interviewed in Bangladesh (not including FAO personnel)

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Akter	Tania	Cox's landslide Team	Coordinator GRC
Ame	Kazi Rabeya	CARE	Consortium Coordinator, SUFAL
Bhuiyan	Shameem Hassan	Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD)	Deputy Director
Hasanul	Amin	CPP (Cox's Bazar Landslide Team)	Deputy Director CPP
Hossain	Shahadat	DLS	Upazila Livestock Officer
Khalilur	Rahman	POPI	Deputy Director
Khan	Anamik	FAO (Cox's Bazar Landslide team)	National Landslide Specialist
Male beneficiaries	10 men	Boliaghat Village	
Male beneficiaries	10 men	Islampur, Ward No.5 Village	
Netai	Dey Sarker	Disaster Management Directorate	Director
Raihan	Sarder Uday	FFWC	Executive Director
Shahjahan		Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRC)	Leading Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action (TWGAA)
Women beneficiaries	10 women	Islampur, Ward No.5 Village	
Women beneficiaries	10 women	Boliaghat Village	
Women non-beneficiaries	10 women	Islampur, Ward No.5 Village	
Zomo	Shakil Arvin	DAE	Deputy Director

People interviewed in Pakistan (not including FAO personnel)

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Deveti	Dubai	Pakistan Metrological Department (PMD)	Regional director of northern areas of Pakistan
Kumar	Ajai	Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh	Assistant Director (Operations)
Mehsud	Idrees	NDMA	Senior Member DRR at NDMA.

Global partners

Last Name	First Name	Institution/Agency	Role
Gantulga	Gana	IFRC Geneva	Head of anticipatory action Team
Gilman	Daniel	OCHA	Head of financing and strategy for the OCHA Regional Office for Asia-Pacific
Gilotta	Alessandra	Anticipation Hub	Head of the partnership
Kabir	Sumaiya	UN Woman and WFP	Independent consultant
Khallil F. Ferrer	Peter	RIMES	Capacity Development Specialist
Pfister	Daniel	OCHA	Humanitarian Financing Strategy and Analysis
Raihanul Haque	Khan	RIMES	Country Programme Lead - Bangladesh
Riyanti	Djalante	DMHA Division ASEAN	Assistant Director of Sustainable Development and head of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (DMHA) Division
Uprety	Madhab	Red Cross Climate Centre	Senior Technical Adviser and Asia-Pacific Focal Point
Secades	Urbe	UN WFP	Leading connections with social protection, cash, and evidence, and managing regional portfolios in Asia-Pacific and Latin America
Zingg	Raymond	IFRC	Regional Anticipatory Action Coordinator for Asia-Pacific

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix: Evaluation questions, indicators, respondents and data sources

Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
RELEVANCE	EQ1. To what extent did the project design align to priorities and needs of the different target groups?								
	1.1 To what extent are the project activities aligned with the lessons learned and recommendations from the evaluation of the previous project?	accountability	Level of project alignment with recommendations and lessons learned from previous evaluation/existing knowledge about anticipatory action and social protection	Project documentations, ME reports, FGDs & KIIs with FAO Project Team Anticipation Hub or other relevant learning/standard setting organizations such as CALP	x	x	x	x	x
	1.2 Is the anticipatory action approach being promoted based on good practices and innovations?								
	1.3 To what extent are the project activities (incl. coordination architecture and collaborative strategy and evidence/ lessons learned gathering strategy) and expected outputs aligned to the needs, priorities and context of the regional, national and local authorities, the communities and partners?	accountability & Learning	Needs and capacity assessment conducted. Key partners participation and perception about their ability to influence project design, coordination and implementation. Quantity and type of information shared between organizations. Adjustments of activities based on partners inputs,	Project documentations, MEAL reports, coordination/ Working Group meetings minutes, outputs from WGs, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (regional, national, local/community) including DG		x	x	x	x

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix: Evaluation questions, indicators, respondents and data sources

Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
			Quality of the lessons learned gathering/sharing strategy and methodology; case studies, lessons learned reports/presentations;	ECHO representatives, Anticipation Hub or other relevant learning/standard setting organizations such as CALP					
	1.4 How coherent are the three key goals (anticipatory action standard settings & implementation; institutionalization; partnerships) across the national-regional-global layers of the project? (For example, to what extent has the project supported coherence among national and regional systems reducing risk of fragmentation of the approach? (both coordination and technical alignment/ standardization)	accountability & Learning	<p>Perception of FAO teams, TOC endorsed/confirmed through the evaluation with evidence of causal links between 3 goals and 3 spheres (control, influence, interest)</p> <p>Evidence of national/regional collective undertaking/discussions about anticipatory action and social protection (minutes of meeting, resolution, etc.)</p>	<p>FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team (global, regional, in country)</p> <p>Decrees/policies, meetings minutes, outputs from WGs, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (regional, national) including DG ECHO representatives</p>	x	x	x	x	

Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
RESULTS	EQ2. To what extent have the planned results been achieved?								
	2.1 To what extent have effective anticipatory action systems, plans and protocols been developed and implemented (simulation or activation) for the identified hazards?	accountability	Number of anticipatory action plans developed, tested and/or activated	AAPs, Post Distribution Reports, Impacts Analysis/evaluation			x	x	x
	2.2 What can be learned about the performance of early warning systems, appropriateness trigger threshold, timeliness of the payout, capacity of service providers and other actors, targeting through social protection system, results at community level, mitigation of negative risks (Do No Harm approach) such as the sense of false security, etc.?	accountability & Learning	Triggers 'thresholds combining forecast data and impact/exposure/vulnerability data; pre-agreed stakeholders' roles in anticipatory action implementation, pre-agreed process for areas and beneficiaries selection, pre-agreed financing mechanism, False alarm ratio and fail to act ratio for the different triggers, number of anticipatory action implemented as planned, Satisfaction rate of beneficiaries, cash/goods used for the intended purpose	AAPs, Post Distribution Report, Impacts Analysis/evaluative, Risk mitigation strategy, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, national partners, provincial partners and community members			x	x	x

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix: Evaluation questions, indicators, respondents and data sources

Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
			Risk mitigation strategy developed Other early warning systems developed/maintained						
	2.3 What are the most significant changes at local, national, regional and global level, for whom, and what was the contribution of the project to these changes? And what were the most common issues/challenges?	accountability & Learning	anticipatory action standards developed and integrated into national/regional/global DRM policies/strategies; evidence of enhanced capacity of key partners, Evidence of national/regional/global collective undertaking/discussions and increased capacity about anticipatory action and social protection and related normative guidance (minutes of meeting, resolution, etc.)	Training, policy dialogue, dedicated platforms reports; Decrees/policies, meetings minutes, outputs from WGs, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (regional, national) including DG ECHO representatives	x	x	x	x	

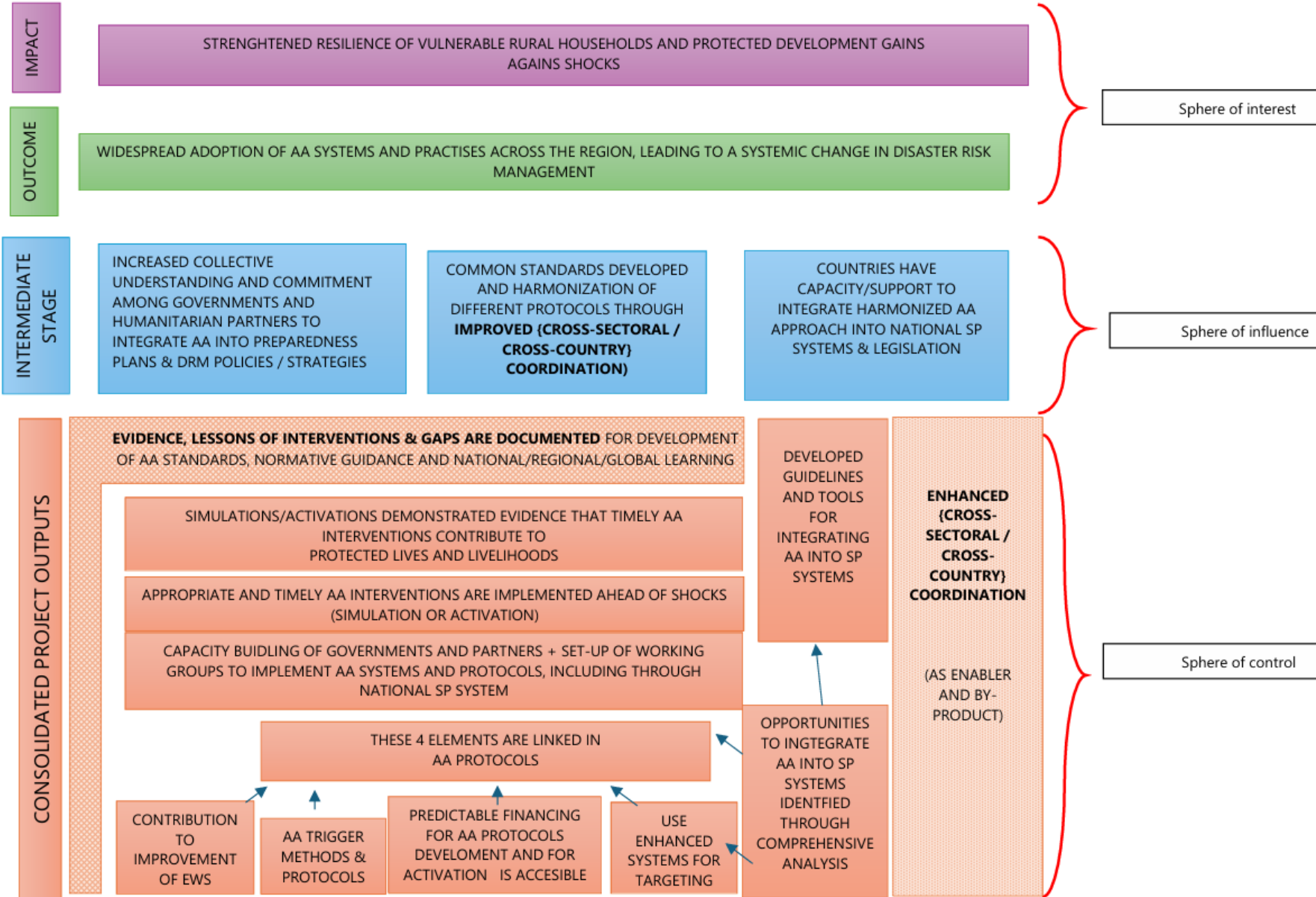
Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
	2.4 To what extent have the lessons learned on anticipatory action and social protection provided relevant evidence for the key partners? Evidence for whom and for which purpose?	accountability & Learning	Degree of involvement of key partners in evidence building; key partners perception about expected objectives/outputs/outcomes; key partners perspective on the applicability/pertinence/strength of the evidence. Potential evidence gaps identified. Demonstration of national/regional partners undertaking/discussions about anticipatory action and social protection (decrees / policies, minutes of meeting, resolution, etc.) developed based on project evidence	Decrees/policies, meetings minutes, outputs from WGs, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (regional, national) including DG ECHO representatives	x	x	x	x	x

Appendix 2. Evaluation matrix: Evaluation questions, indicators, respondents and data sources

Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
	EQ3. What are the sustainability prospects of the project benefits?								
SUSTAINABILITY	3.1 What is the status of adoption and institutionalization of anticipatory action in local social protection systems in the target countries?	accountability	Number of anticipatory action institutionalized into social protection systems	Project documentations, ME reports, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (national, local)			x	x	
	3.2 What are the exit strategies to ensure (i) strengthened knowledge/capacity on anticipatory action among government counterparts and partners; (ii) (further) integration of anticipatory action in social protection systems in the target countries; (iii) harmonized anticipatory action standards and approaches across national, regional and global actors?	accountability & Learning	In-country, regional and global exit strategy National uptake strategies	Project documentations, ME reports, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (national, local)	x	x	x	x	
	EQ4. To what extent were the project management and partnership arrangements appropriate?								

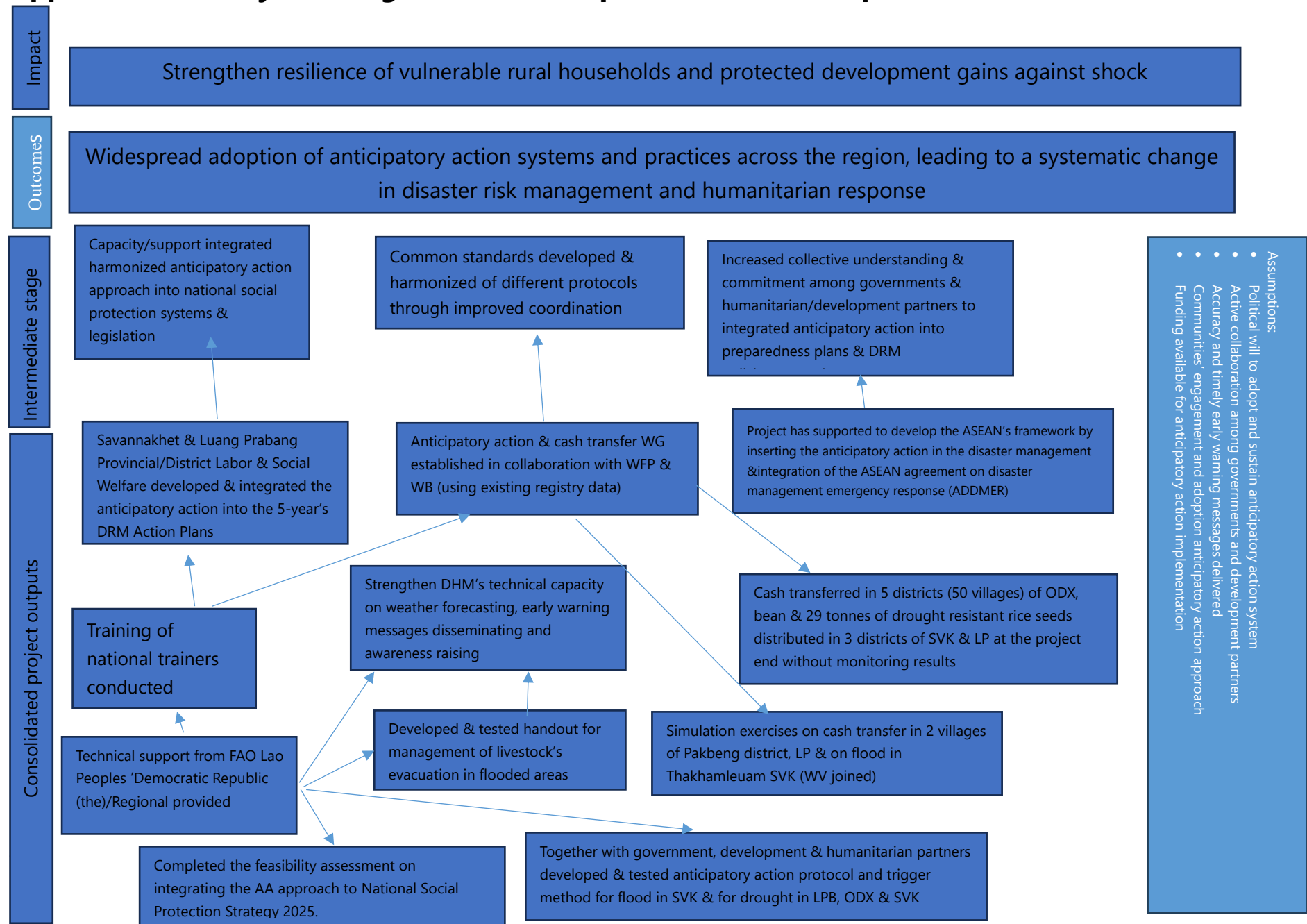
Criteria / Topic	Evaluation questions	Purpose (accountability / Learning)	Indicators	Data Sources	Level targeted				
					Global	Regional	National	Local authorities	Community
PROJECT MANAGEMENT & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	4.1 What have been the key factors affecting project management, (cross-country) coordination, collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders and partners at all levels in positive or negative ways? Were corrective measures identified and implemented when required to improve the intervention over time?	accountability & Learning	Perception of key partners, documentation of changes in intervention / corrective measures based on learnings and feedback, documentation dissemination of results and learning MEAL tools and methods	Project documentations, ME reports and methodology, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, MEAL team, key partners (national, local)	x	x	x	x	x
	4.2 To what extent has the project advanced strategic links with other relevant projects/policies/processes/ advocacy platforms in the target countries or in the Asia and the Pacific region / globally?	accountability	Analysis of the sectoral initiatives; Partners perception about the added value of the action and its link with other relevant projects/policies/processes/advocacy platforms	Secondary sources; existing evaluation; Project documentations, ME reports, FGDs and KIIs with FAO Project Team, key partners (global, regional, national), including DG ECHO representatives, Anticipation Hub or other relevant learning/standard setting organizations such as CALP	x	x	x		

Appendix 3. Theory of change at the start of the evaluation



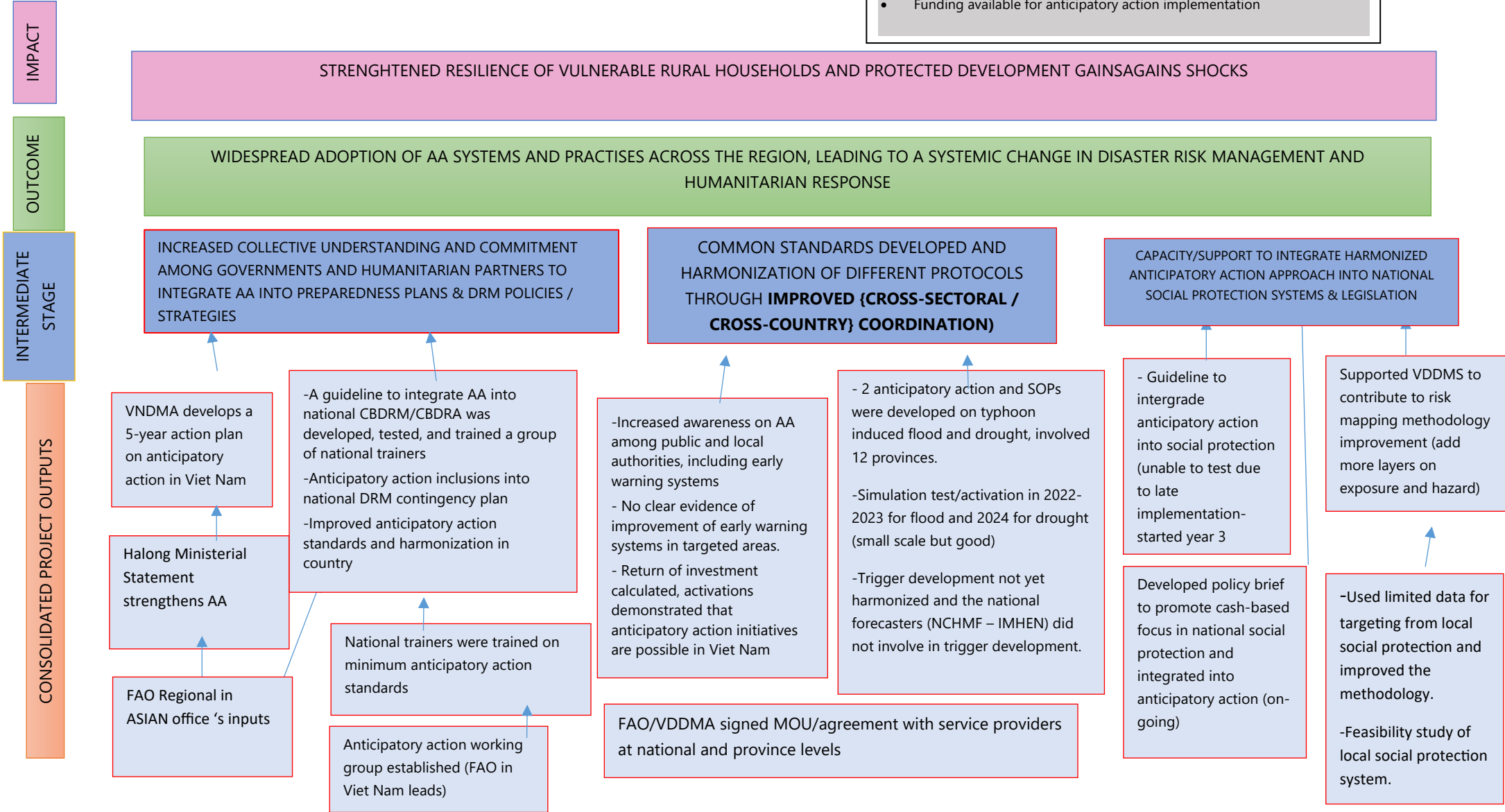
- In-country, project outputs and defined end-goals are clear to everyone and realistically based on the preparedness of each country (AA/SP status of the country: beginner/ intermediate/ advanced).
- Regional/global outputs, partnerships & end-goals are clear to everyone and linked to this project.
- AA outputs and SRSP outputs receive equal attention (not fragmented). Partners collaborate and don't compete.
- Different Government ministries agencies and mandates are receptive to anticipatory action approach
- Government registry/SP system is usable and Government regulation / legal docs as well as long-term financing are available to support implementation
- Good coordination between the different early warning system and anticipatory action protocols for various hazards in a country
- It is clear what type of evidence is needed for whom to inform policies, strategies and decision-making at national, regional, global level
- Evidence from pilot simulations/activations is solid enough to achieve the intermediate stages
- There is a monitoring/learning strategy as well as robust M&E and KM systems to capture and disseminate lessons and foster cross-country learning across the region.
- In-country, there is a clear exit strategy and pool of experts/partnerships in place to continue the anticipatory action /SRSP efforts post-project.

Appendix 4. Theory of change – the Lao People’s Democratic Republic

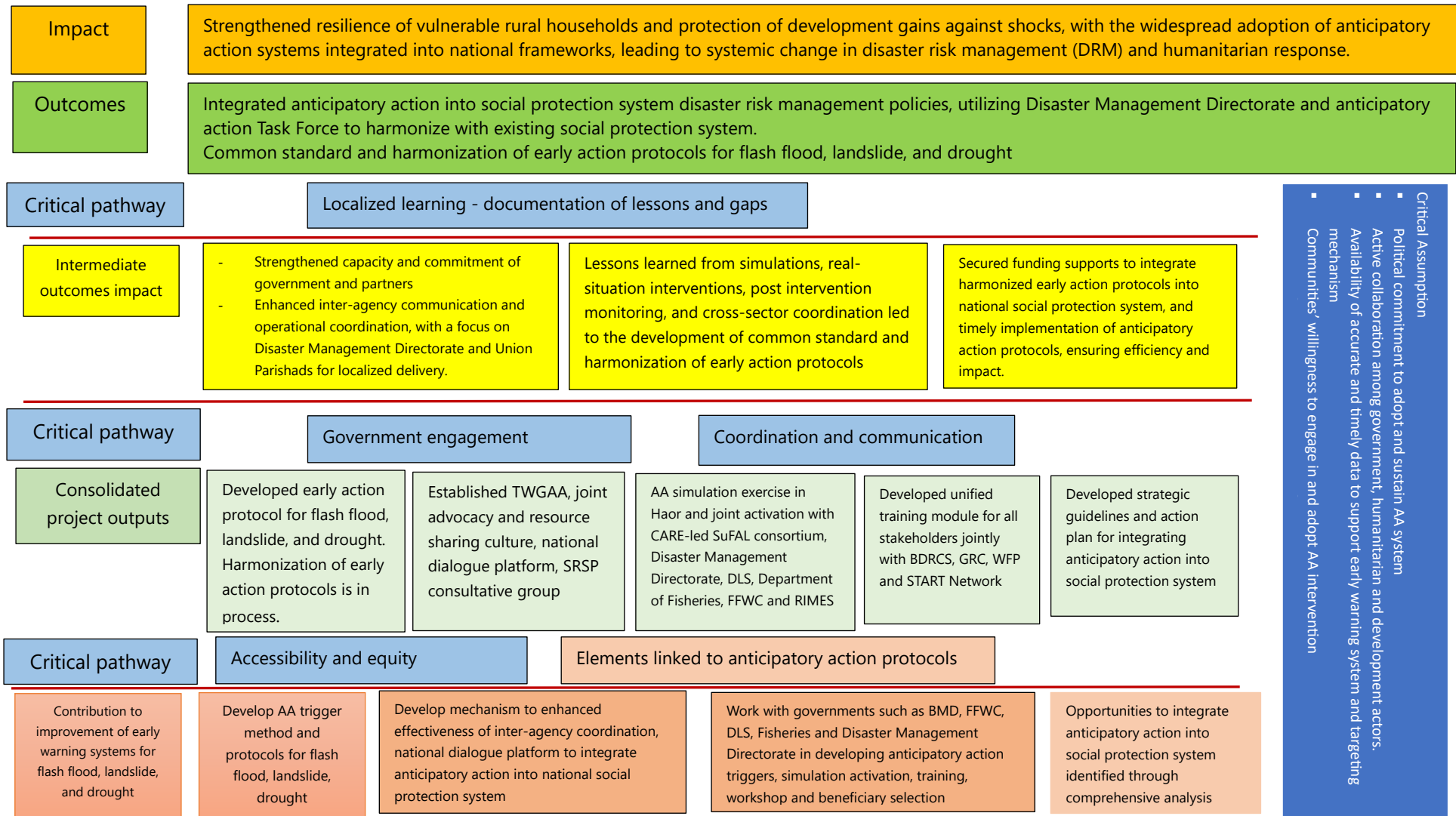


Appendix 5. Theory of change – Viet Nam

- Assumptions:
- Political will to adopt and sustain anticipatory action system
 - Active collaboration among governments & development partners
 - Accuracy and timely early warning messages delivered
 - Communities' engagement and adoption anticipatory action approach
 - Funding available for anticipatory action implementation



Appendix 6. Theory of change – Bangladesh



Critical Assumption

- Political commitment to adopt and sustain AA system
- Active collaboration among government, humanitarian and development actors.
- Availability of accurate and timely data to support early warning system and targeting mechanism
- Communities' willingness to engage in and adopt AA intervention

Appendix 7. Technical working groups, task force and other partnerships set up and/or strengthened by the project

Technical working groups (TWG), task force, partnerships set up and/or strengthened by the project. In red working groups developed or strengthened by the project	
Regional level	Anticipatory action TWG co-led by FAO and IFRC
Bangladesh	Anticipatory Action Task Force created in 2019 under the revised Standing Orders on Disaster Forecast Based Financing/Action (FbF/A) TWG FbF/A task force
The Lao People's Democratic Republic	National Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action (TWGAA) established by the project and functioning with FAO and government as co-chairs.
Pakistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TWGAA now established as the National Coordination Forum on anticipatory action led by national disaster management authority. - TWGs on drought (province and three districts levels of Dadu, Tharparkar and Umerkot), and on flood (Province and District level of Dadu only). - TWG at subnational levels (Sindh): FAO takes the lead in running and coordinating this TWG in Sindh on a regular basis (once a month). - Cash WG (CWG): FAO as co-lead with WFP and ACTED has been actively anchoring the CWG, and putting Anticipatory Cash in the WG agenda. A learning session on Anticipatory Cash for Rapid and Slow-onset Emergencies was organized by FAO under pillar 3 (Learning and Evidence) to inform Pak CWG members of the latest guidelines on Cash for Rapid and Slow-onset Emergencies and Anticipatory Cash SOP. - Food Security and Agriculture WG (FSAWG): FAO is a co-lead with WFP and organizes meetings by inviting technical agencies to deliver presentations.
The Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TWGAA co-led by FAO and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (and four thematic subworking groups: triggers, anticipatory action, policy/financing/institutionalization/learning and evidence/national dialogue platform on anticipatory action). - Inter-ministry AA TWG. - Cash WG. - Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao anticipatory action TWG.
Viet Nam	<p><u>Technical groups:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disaster Management WG (DMWG): includes INGOs, UN agencies, government agencies. . TWGAA co-led by FAO and CRS under DMWG. Cash WG under DMWG -UNDRM team (only UN agencies). <p><u>Policymaking:</u></p> <p>DMG: consists of high-level representatives from government, United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), UN agencies and international NGOs.</p> <p>DRR partnership (DRRP): led by government/ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and international agencies on a rotating basis.</p>

Annex

Annex 1. Project logical framework

http://www.fao.org/3/cd8508en/OSRO_GLO_113_EC_Annex_1.pdf

Office of Evaluation
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www.fao.org/evaluation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy