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Concept note: Viet Nam

Pilot Programmatic Partnership

Increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including
through social protection systems







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Abbreviations and acronyms

AA	Anticipatory action
AAP	Anticipatory action protocol
ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Center
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCNDPC	Central committee for natural disaster prevention and control
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
DMG	Disaster management group
DMWG	Disaster management working group
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRM	Disaster risk management
EAP	Early action protocol
EW	Early warning
EWS	Early warning systems
FbA	Forecast-based actions
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
GRC	German Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMHEN	Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NCHMF	National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting
NDPC	Natural disaster prevention and control
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PCNDPC	Provincial committee for natural disaster prevention and control
PPC	Provincial people's committee
SFERA	Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation
SRSP	Shock-responsive social protection
TWG	Technical working group
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDMA	Viet Nam disaster management authority
VDMS	Viet Nam disaster monitoring system
VNRC	Viet Nam Red Cross

About the Pilot Programmatic Partnership

Extreme weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity due to climate change, while conflicts are driving consistent and unsustainable increases in humanitarian needs. Combined, they are pushing acute hunger to new heights reaching a five-year high in 2020.

A strategic shift from responding to predictable shocks to anticipating their impacts has the potential to break the cycle of growing dependence on humanitarian aid. This approach, commonly known as anticipatory action, establishes risk-monitoring systems linked to flexible finance and standard operating procedures by delivering support to protect people's lives and livelihoods ahead of forecast shocks.

Anticipatory action can be delivered through a variety of modalities, including through national social protection systems. Social protection systems consist of policies and programmes designed to address economic,

environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Linking anticipatory action to social protection means making better use of existing infrastructure to reach and proactively support vulnerable populations ahead of forecast shocks.

Recognizing the clear effectiveness of this approach, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) established a three-year **Pilot Programmatic Partnership (PPP)** with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to explore and strengthen the critical link between these two approaches.

The partnership aims at scaling up anticipatory approaches to crises, with an initial focus on the Asia region including Bangladesh, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

Country risk profile at a glance

Viet Nam faces a wide range of hazards, including tropical cyclones and storm surges, droughts, floods, landslides or heatwaves. The primary hazard is flooding (including riverine, flash, and coastal flooding), followed by tropical cyclones and their associated hazards. Rather than focusing on all kinds of inherent risks, the government of Viet Nam (GoV) pays particular attention

to significant hazards that can cause considerable damage to people and property, as outlined in Table 1 below. Viet Nam's average annual disaster losses are estimated at USD 2.4 billion, almost 1.5 percent of gross domestic product. Figure 1 and Table 1 below highlight the geography of natural hazards in Viet Nam and their prioritization by region.

Figure 1: Map of natural hazard zones in Viet Nam

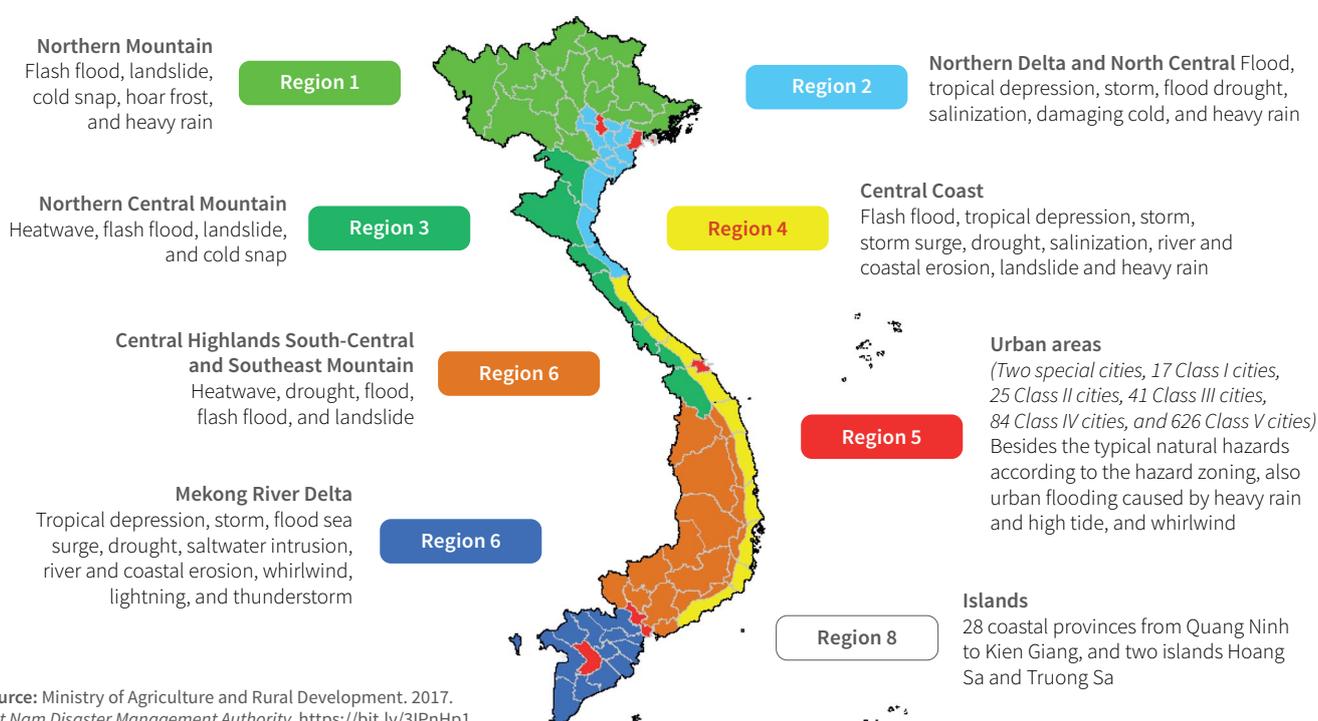


Table 1: Overview of regional exposure to natural hazards in Viet Nam

Hazard	Northwest mountains	Northeast mountains	Red River Delta	North Central Coast	South Central Coast	Central Highlands	Southeast	Mekong Delta
Storm	1	3	4	4	4	2	2	3
Flood	1	1	4	4	4	2	2	4
Saltwater intrusion	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	4
Sea-level rise	0	0	2	2	2	0	3	4
Landslide and flash flood	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	1
Drought	2	2	1	4	4	4	2	2

Note: Each indicator is ranked by relative importance in comparison with other regions, with 0 being lowest impact and 4 being highest.

Source: World Bank. 2021. Country: Viet Nam. <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/vietnam/vulnerability>

Review of national disaster preparedness, anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection systems

Disaster preparedness systems

Demonstrating its political commitment to strengthen the resilience of the country, the GoV has promulgated a comprehensive enabling legislative framework for disaster risk management (DRM). Key legislations and policies include, but are not limited to:

- The law on natural disaster prevention and control (NDPC), effective on January 2014, laid down necessary institutional arrangements, functionalities and mandatories covering essential functions of disaster preparedness and response. It was further complemented by the prime minister's decree 66/2021/ND-CP, signed on 6 July 2021, clarifying its implementation.
- The national programme for community awareness-

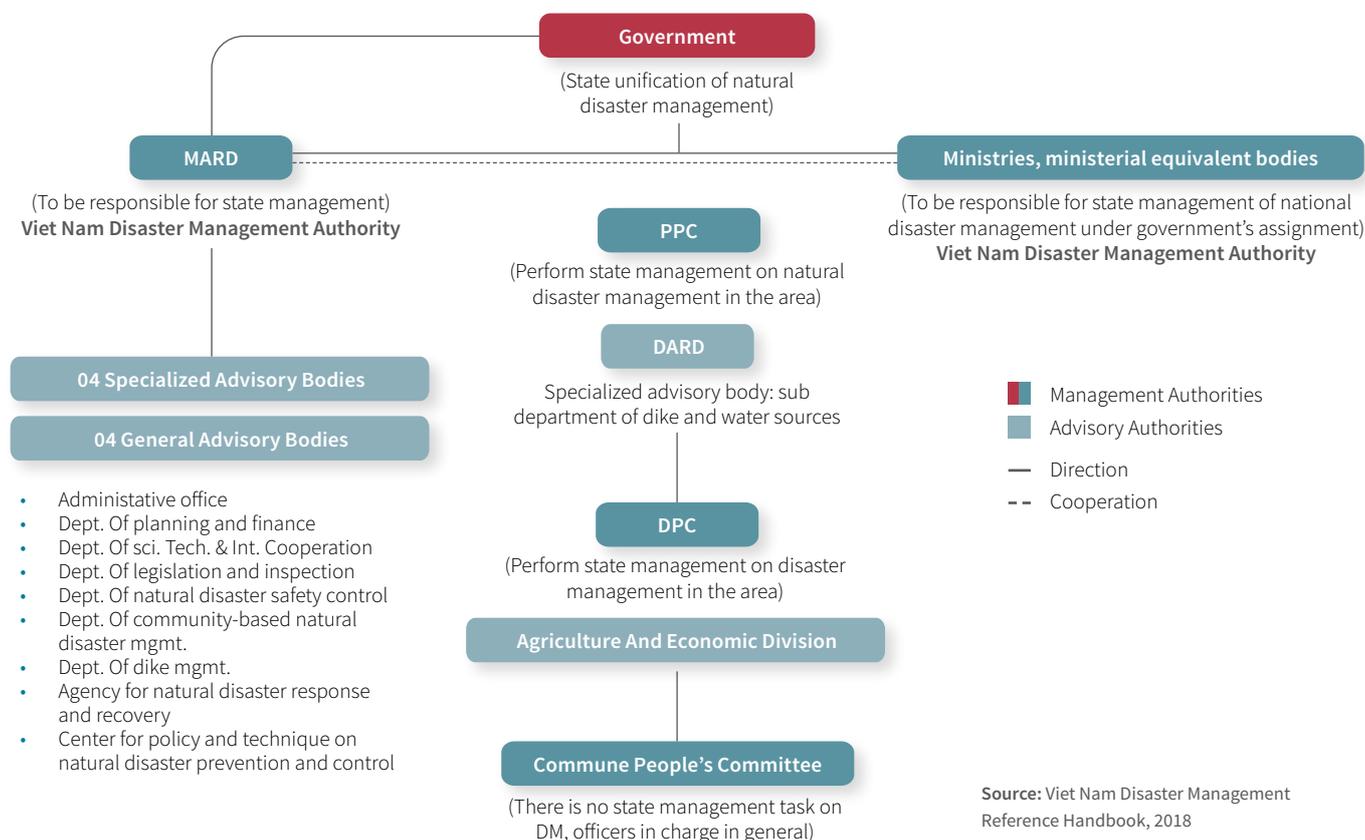
raising and community-based DRM from 2009, recently updated by the prime minister's decision No. 553/QĐ-TTg 6 dated April 2021.

- The prime minister's dDecree 78/2021/ND-CP, signed on 1 Aug 2021, on the establishment and management of disaster management fund, which can support preparedness and response, including evacuations.
- Decree 20/2021/ND/CP, guiding the design and implementation of regular social assistance, as well as emergency assistance during natural disasters.

In terms of institutional structure:

- The NDPC in Viet Nam is the responsibility of the Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority (VNDMA) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

Figure 2: Flow chart on national DM set up



Source: Viet Nam Disaster Management Reference Handbook, 2018

- Inter-sectoral cooperation between ministries at the national and subnational levels is coordinated through the Central Committees for Natural Disaster Prevention and Control (CCNDPC). The deputy prime minister is the chair of the CCNDPC, for which the VDMA acts as the standing office of the central steering committee.
- The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE), which hosts the National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecasting (NCHMF) and the Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change (IMHEN), is responsible for hazard monitoring and forecasting for floods and storms. The NCHMF is mandated to carry out hydro-meteorological forecasting and the issuance of official forecasts and early warning (EW) for the whole country. The IMHEN is a public scientific research institute specialized in hydro-meteorological forecasting and climate change and also mandated by the government to carry out and issue seasonal climatic forecasts. The two agencies are collaborating to run hydro-meteorological forecasting in parallel that are then triangulated to improve the accuracy and reliability of the final forecasting information.
- The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Assistance (MOLISA) is responsible for formulating and implementing different social assistance schemes in regular and emergency contexts.
- The provincial people's committees (PPC) coordinate the emergency response through the provincial committee for natural disaster prevention and control (PCNDPC). The same set-up exists at the district and commune levels.

Coordination amongst DRM international and national agencies (non-governmental organizations [NGOs], United Nations [UN] and VDMA) is channeled through the disaster management working group (DMWG) which meets on a bi-monthly basis. The Oxfam (for 6 months) currently chairs it. Ad-hoc meetings can also be called during an emergency.

A disaster management group (DMG) was also established in 2018 and is co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and Chair of DMWG. It includes members from the government (CCNDPC, VDMA), UN agencies, Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC), and INGOs at the heads of agency or country director level. Development partners (Asian Development Bank [ADB], bilateral, World Bank, etc.) and the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM) are observers of the DMG. Whenever requested by the GoV, the DMG operates in support and in coordination with national and local authorities.

- In 2018, joint government, NGO, UN contingency plans for both sudden and slow-onset events were developed and endorsed by DMG. The contingency plans provide standard operating procedures and articulate clearly prioritized activities in each sector for preparedness and response.

Anticipatory action systems

The anticipatory action (AA) work of FAO in Viet Nam began in 2017 with a strong collective approach among the community of practice, to enhance the awareness of the GoV as well as of the broader humanitarian community, and to advocate for the government's support of the approach through a number of technical discussions or meetings and national FbF platform. An **AA technical working group (TWG)** was established by FAO and VNRC in early 2018 and has met on an ad-hoc basis.

The VDMA has paid great attention to this new initiative and provided its commitment and support to the development of AA in Viet Nam. It is worth noting that VDMA developed the Viet Nam Disaster monitoring system (VDMS), which provides impact data that would be useful in the future to support impact-based forecasting. The VDMS is connected with a socio-economic database that includes data on agriculture production (aquaculture, crop, irrigation, livestock), vulnerability (demographic, houses, poverty, water, etc.), and other infrastructure. The VDMA is working to complete the socio-economic database for the whole country.

The first FAO AA pilots in Viet Nam had a focus on **drought hazard**:

- A joint drought anticipatory action protocol (AAP) was initiated by an ECHO-funded consortium (FAO, Save the Children, UN Women), taking stock of the impacts of the 2016 extreme drought event, and focusing on four communes in Ca Mau and Gia Lai provinces.
- FAO is now finalizing an updated AAP for drought, focusing on six provinces in the Mekong River Delta and Central Highlands, which can be triggered if an extreme drought is forecasted with AA that can be funded by the Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation (SFERA) AA window (usually up to USD 600 000). The trigger methodology relies on several indices and forecasts, provided by either national actors (IMHEN), or global institutions (Copernicus, FAO, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]). The proposed

triggers prioritize a phased approach with indicators that are used in the chain of events from meteorological to agricultural drought forecasts and observations (rain, soil moisture, surface water and vegetation). The AAP will be presented to partners and the government who will be encouraged to review and collaborate on the approach.

The VNRC developed its first early action protocol (EAP), with support of the German Red Cross (GRC), focusing on **heatwaves**. This EAP was approved by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in March 2021, and covers the cities of Danang, Hai Phong and Hanoi, and can be activated with a lead-time of six days, based on the forecasts provided by IMHEN. The proposed AA are the installation of cooling centers for outdoor workers (builders, motorbike taxis, shippers, and street vendors) and slum dwellers. The EAP is funded by the forecast-based action (FbA) by DREF (for a total budget of CHF 225 286).

Moreover, the most frequent and impactful hazard in Viet Nam is **flooding** for which several actors are currently planning to develop AAP:

- The VNRC, with the technical support of GRC and RCCC, is currently working on the risk of typhoon-induced flooding in central Viet Nam, and the trigger methodology is being developed with the support of IMHEN.
- In consortium with Plan International and World Vision, CARE is also planning to develop an AAP for floods induced by typhoons in central Viet Nam and one for drought in the South.

Shock-responsive social protection systems

As for shock-responsive social protection (SRSP), the approach has not yet been put into practice in Viet Nam, though recent studies have identified feasible options for cash transfer in response to extreme natural events, and have recommended practical steps forward:

- Viet Nam's social protection (SP) and DRM system mapping report.
- More recently, a Feasibility study on the delivery of Cash assistance in emergencies was implemented under the ECHO-supported project *Developing options for risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection: phase II*.

Key gaps and opportunities

Coordination and institutionalization

Overall, Viet Nam's comprehensive DRM legislative system follows a sectoral approach to address risk reduction, which makes the system cumbersome and sometimes overlapping. Furthermore, guidelines for implementation at times lack consistency and are developed slowly. While these challenges exist and concepts of AA and SRSP are relatively new in Viet Nam, the interest is high among national DRM actors, and opportunities to link AA and SRSP to existing legislations have already emerged:

- The VDMA advocated for the inclusion of a specific article that would enable the implementation of AA in the newly promulgated prime minister's decree 66/2021/ND-CP, signed on 6 July 2021, detailing the Implementation of the law on natural disaster prevention and control. Despite VDMA advocacy, the Ministries of Planning, and Investment (MPI) and of Finance (MoF) noted that the approach still requires more evidence and that the proposed article would have direct effects on state budgeting requiring thorough review of other related policies (such as decree 78 on DM fund) - hence the inclusion of the article was not pushed through.
- As per UNICEF feasibility study on cash assistance in emergencies, Decree 20 should be improved to address the needs of vulnerable groups and broaden the use of cash more sensitively.

Through TWG on AA, the FAO can mobilize the community of practice in (i) standardizing the AA approach; (ii) collectively implementing and generating evidence for AA; (iii) jointly advocating for the promotion of AA in Viet Nam; and (iv) exploring the feasibility of linking AA to SRSP. The development of terms of references and a roadmap for TWG can be an opportunity to solidify and pave the way towards these objectives, while ensuring VDMA's coordinating role in the TWG meetings. Integration of AA into DMG contingency plans for rapid and slow onset events will also be ensured.

Geographic and hazard scope

While FAO will continue its drought AA activities in the Mekong Delta Region and the Central Highlands, the PPP will build upon this first experience to work

with the AA community of practice on the planning of AA for typhoons/floods in central Viet Nam. This is an opportunity to collect more evidence on AA, as those hazards are more frequent and will mobilize more actors in the testing of the approach. It is also possible in the future to scale up AA in northern Viet Nam as the Red River Delta is at high risk of flood and storms, and the North Central coast of drought, flash flood, and landslides (see Table 1). This further expansion requires preliminary feasibility studies that can be coordinated with TWG on AA, once the drought and the typhoon AAP are completed and operational.

Triggers

One challenge faced when developing AA trigger mechanisms is the lack of detailed loss data for historical disasters in the country. Without such data, it is difficult to correlate the recorded intensity of a hazard (for example the wind-speed of a storm) to a certain level of impact (i.e., the percentage of losses of a crop yield). Drought emergencies are declared at provincial level based on the severity of the hazard (a certain deviation of rainfall from the average for a certain number of months), but not based on a recorded impact. The observations gathered in the PPP will allow FAO and its partners to contribute to the development of a database on loss and damages, and to link it to impact-based forecasting and the development of AA triggers.

Moreover, to develop the triggers, not all forecasts and indices are accessible in-country in a user-friendly format, or with the appropriate skill level. One opportunity for developing robust triggers for AA when the indices or forecasts are not easily available in-country, could be to rely on regional models like the SERVIR-Mekong project (USAID funded and implemented by ADPC). The SERVIR provides a number of indicators relevant to drought and flood in geographic information systems-friendly formats and with this, the indicators can be overlaid with crop layers to prioritize high-risk areas for AA implementation. Additionally, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) is providing flood and drought early warning (EW) information on its website.¹

One opportunity for improving the capacities of national forecasting agencies in developing triggers for AA, based

on impact based forecasts, is the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System's study recently commissioned by FAO, which will review the existing typhoon forecasts and recommend a trigger methodology as well as a set of actions that can address existing gaps (including training needs), and reinforce the role of IMHEN and NCHMF in providing EW information needed for triggering AA.

Anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection delivery

Based on the experience acquired in past years, there is a need to enhance the readiness activities to implement the existing AAP – fast-tracking procedures and pre-approval of the financing should be considered to allow a timely intervention when a trigger is met. Collaboration with the national and subnational partners to effectively deliver the anticipatory assistance will be reinforced through the development of appropriate IEC and training material and the implementation of joint simulation exercises.

Moreover, when working on rapid onset events, pre-identification of beneficiaries (the most vulnerable households) will become a priority. The UNICEF SRSP Feasibility Study points to the lack of a unified registry of potential beneficiaries for the SP system, hence more data will need to be collected and verified ahead of a crisis. The PPP can be instrumental in piloting in a given geographic area the development of a unified registry of beneficiaries, with the provincial government, MOLISA and VNRC, to support cash distribution via the national SP system in anticipation of a shock (such as a drought). Practical learnings on the development and updating of such beneficiaries' registry, as well as on the delivery modalities of a financial aid ahead of a shock, will be collected and shared with national partners.

Financing

As pointed out by several ministries in the past years, if government agencies are to use their budget for implementing AA, several provisions must be added to existing policies. Besides, the GoV's budget for disaster management is limited and priority is often given to infrastructure. Discussions with GoV should be ongoing to continue exploring how AA can be worked into national systems to meet their needs, but also consider the challenges it presents. When possible, the MoF and MPI will be invited to join national consultation workshops as well as lessons learnt presentations.

As for the international community, sources of funding for AA remain limited (Red Cross FbA by DREF and FAO SFERA AA window are the main sources of funds for AA). The Start Network introduced the AA financing window to its members in Viet Nam (CARE, Plan International, Save the Children, World Vision, among others) and an alert was raised for drought in early 2020 but this AA was not pushed through.

Collection of evidence

Building an evidence base is needed to advocate for GoV to engage in and financially support AA and SRSP. This will require increased coordinated work between AA stakeholders. There is currently no evidence available on the effectiveness of AA in Viet Nam and efforts to capture how it compares to humanitarian response should be made. In addition, efforts to capture effective AA design and delivery should further be prioritized.

Expected results: year 1

Against this background, DG ECHO and FAO launched the PPP on ‘increasing capacities and scale for anticipatory action including through social protection systems’.

Below are the expected results of year 1 activities in Viet Nam.

Result	Activities	Deliverables
1. Anticipatory action systems are established and the capacity of national governments, humanitarian partners and local stakeholders to link early warnings to AAs is strengthened.	1.1 Identify end-user needs regarding how EW information can inform site-specific AA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One revised AAP for drought • One AAP for typhoon • 25 partners trained on the AAPs • 1800 people participating in the activities
	1.2 Assess risk and humanitarian needs, prioritise hazards and vulnerable target populations. Identify or develop EWS and related anticipatory action triggers.	
	1.3 Develop national and local Anticipatory Action Plans (AAP) including clear risk monitoring, trigger mechanisms, protocols and responsibilities, as well as pre-allocated flexible financial resources.	
	1.4 Strengthen national and local capacity to develop, monitor and implement AA systems.	
2. Social protection systems are strengthened in terms of anticipatory capacity to allow national governments, humanitarian partners and local stakeholders to link social assistance programmes with humanitarian cash and cash+ mechanisms.	2.1 Assess national social protection systems (policy, programmes and operational mechanisms) related to national policies to manage risk (this will include looking at disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction strategies) and link with humanitarian plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One feasibility study with a set of recommendations on the pilot-testing of SRSP • 50 partners trained • One case study
	2.2 Define suitable options to strengthen anticipatory capacity of national social protection and/or humanitarian cash programmes.	
	2.3 Organize national capacity development events on shock-responsive social protection and cash programming to channel anticipatory action.	
3. FAO and DG ECHO partnership is enhanced so that multi-risk anticipatory actions are implemented, including via expanding or complementing national social protection systems, to protect lives and livelihoods ahead of a shock.	3.1 Write the country PPP concept note, jointly with DG ECHO.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One concept note and corresponding work plan • Readiness plans for drought and typhoon AAP • Activation report (if any trigger is reached)
	3.2 Regularly update the PPP steering committee on the progresses.	
	3.3 Carry out preparedness/readiness activities to ensure the timeliness and effectiveness of AA.	
	3.4 If pre-defined EW triggers are reached, implement AA by expanding and / or complementing SRSP mechanisms.	
4. Learning and advocacy products are produced to improve future programming and accelerate a system-wide shift towards an anticipatory approach to disasters.	4.1 In case of activation, conduct impact analysis of the AA implemented and review year 1 implementation progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One impact analysis • One learning and advocacy product
	4.2 Develop communication material to raise awareness of the AA approach.	
	4.3 Support global and regional advocacy and policy engagement to bolster evidence-based decision making and uptake of anticipatory action and shock-responsive social protection by national and intergovernmental entities.	

Way forward

Although Viet Nam has now acquired some experience in AA (for heatwave in major cities, or for drought in a few communes), the approach remains quite small-scale, focusing on hazards that are less frequent and have more localized impacts (in comparison to those from typhoons and flood), with limited financial options. While the GoV has demonstrated its interest with the approach, **more evidence is needed** on the feasibility of a scaled AA and SRSP intervention in the country.

Several opportunities to develop the approaches further (and collect more learnings) have been identified: The VNRC and CARE consortium, as well as the PPP, will explore the use of AA for typhoons and flood in Central Viet Nam, while progresses in SRSP can be expected based on the recommendations provided by the UNICEF feasibility study for using cash in emergencies and pilot testing the concept in a given geographic area, for drought or typhoon hazard.

The PPP will ensure that a **common approach** in AA and SRSP is used by the different stakeholders through the regular meetings of TWG on AA, and the support of DMG. Lessons learned on the coordination of AA with the GoV (in particular for its integration in legal documents) might be a good practice to share with other countries.

It is also expected that Viet Nam can support the development and the approval of the ASEAN AA framework. Through the efforts of the PPP, it is envisioned that **Viet Nam could become a champion** for the AA and SRSP agenda over the coming years. It is foreseeable that evidence collected will add to the global body of knowledge on the AA and SRSP topic and further define not only the effectiveness of the approach in the context of Viet Nam, but how the system is set up and managed in a sustainable manner.

Notes

¹ **Mekong River Commission**. 2022. *Flood and Drought Forecasting*. Viet Nam. <https://www.mrcmekong.org/our-work/functions/flood-and-drought-forecasting>

FAO's Anticipatory Action approach uses risk analysis and forecasts to trigger interventions before a crisis escalates into a humanitarian emergency.

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