



Wilton Park



A woman plants sorghum seeds in a field in Muzurabani Province in Zimbabwe, as the rainy season approaches following a drought.
Image: Victor Lacken, IFRC

Report

Risk-informed Early Action Partnership: from commitment to action

Tuesday 11 May 2021 | WP1931V

In collaboration with:





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In collaboration with Risk-informed Early Action Partnership

Launched at the UN Climate Action Summit (UNCAS) in September 2019, the Risk-informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) brings together an unprecedented range of stakeholders across the climate, humanitarian and development communities with the aim to make 1 billion people safer from disaster by 2025.

Building on the REAP Framework for Action and prior engagement of senior stakeholders, this high-level dialogue “The Risk-informed Early Action: from Commitment to Action”, co-hosted with the Wilton Park and with co-sponsorship from the Governments of the United Kingdom and Saint Lucia, brought together existing and prospective country partners to prepare and discuss commitments towards achieving REAP’s ambitious targets in the run-up to UNFCCC COP26.



Target 1

50 countries have reviewed and integrated their crisis/disaster risk management and climate adaptation laws, policies and/or plans to ensure that they reduce climate change impacts and exposure on people and the environment.



Target 2

1 billion more people are covered by financing and delivery mechanisms connected to effective early action plans, ensuring they can act ahead of predicted disasters and crises.



Target 3

\$500 million invested in early warning system infrastructure and institutions to target early action in ‘last/first mile’ communities, building on existing initiatives.



Target 4

1 billion more people are covered by new or improved early warning systems, including heatwave early warning, connected to longer-term risk management systems, and supported by effective risk communication and public stakeholder dialogue to prompt informed action.



Ministerial discussion: progress across Partnership

1. Opening remarks stressed the urgency for scaling up Early Action that has been proved as one of the most efficient ways to save lives and protect livelihoods yet pointing out that “one in three people across the world are still not adequately covered by early warning systems”. But Small Island Developing States like Saint Lucia do not need to be told that climate change is real - they have been living on the front lines of the devastating effects of the changing climate for decades, we need to build on the momentum and to secure a commitment from existing and prospective partners to help REAP reach its goal of making 1 billion people safer from climate

disasters by 2025.

2. Risk-informed early action should be mainstreamed into policy and planning, with risk-informed action becoming the default and a change in the way we manage risk with climate and environment risk assessment in all programming. The UK's continued support and commitment to advancing progress on REAP targets was demonstrated by its *partnership with the Start Fund, vital for reaching REAP's goal of making 1 billion people safer from disasters by 2025.*
3. As the Ministerial segment continued, representatives of some of the most climate-vulnerable countries called for more adaptation investment due to the critical economic impacts of disaster on affected people and communities – as in the case of Antigua and Barbuda. Being risk-informed has enabled Antigua and Barbuda to change its land use plan, others noted existing support from funding mechanisms such as Global Climate Fund (GCF) and the UK Met Office as well as improvements in the Early Warning Systems (EWS) through longer range weather radars and the Common Alerting Protocol - as in the case of Jamaica.
4. Countries also reiterated their commitment to continue making progress on the Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) agenda through increased awareness-raising, mainstreaming and incorporating EWS, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Disaster Risk Management (DRM), and Adaptation into local and national policies. Bangladesh, one of the most disaster-prone countries, has developed a strong EWS through the Cyclone Preparedness programme, its 74,000 volunteers and 5,000 shelters. Bangladesh incorporated Anticipatory Action (AA) into the Standing Orders on Disaster Risk Management in 2019 and under its 2021 – 2025 National Plan for Disaster Management intends to modernise weather radar and forecasting services. Malawi is prioritising weather and climate services as strategic, it will finalise national protocols for early warning by the end of the year and has established a coordination mechanism between different departments – Department of DRM, Department of Water, and Department of Climate Services - and continues to strengthen linkages between district and village committees to ensure early warning messages are disseminated at every level.
5. Donor countries remain strongly committed to improving access to EWS through different mechanisms, such as the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) Initiative – currently chaired by France - which to date has reached 140 million people making them safer from a range of weather-related hazards; the InsuResilience Global Partnership (IGP) supported by the Government of Germany is currently active in 140 countries and to-date has reached 100+ million people with their activities, 70% of which are focused on AA with Germany contributions to the IGP counting towards REAP target 2; and the Asia-Pacific Climate Change Adaptation Information Platform (AP-PLAT) launched by Japan to share climate risk information and support adaptation measures by providing advanced scientific climate risk information. Finland also noted an investment of 7.4 million euros for improving meteorological observation infrastructure in Ethiopia and 5 million euros to CREWS as part of the country's scaled-up commitment to climate change adaptation that also counts towards the REAP targets.
6. The ministerial segment highlighted the urgency of action, joint efforts, welcomed existing commitments and encouraged more partners to join and current partners to increase their commitments against REAP's 4 ambitious targets.

Senior Officials' Dialogue

Exploring examples

7. The discussion continued within the Senior Officials' Dialogue where countries and other key partners discussed their progress to date illustrated with examples, including how coherence, alignment, and complementarity on early warning-early

action are being driven or planned to be driven.

8. Participants described several examples where REAP partners have benefitted from the partnership and contributed to achieving REAP targets. IFRC, the host of REAP's Secretariat, through the convening power, connections and leveraging ability of the Partnership, has been engaged in conversations with the GCF, UNDP, UNEP, and others on collaborating to bring a greater focus on community-level early action in early warning system projects. Through the REAP Marketplace, Liechtenstein was matched with the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre on local adaptive mechanisms to inform EWEA in the Pacific that aims to shift standards towards how timely actionable climate information was used. Liechtenstein finances priority areas of exploration with local institutions before the larger GCF programme is initiated. Another example where partners have benefitted from REAP was provided by UNDP which partnered with WFP and IFRC to scale up an EWS project by moving from developing at a country level to developing at a multi-country or regional level. As many countries share links through natural resources or regional governmental entities, this approach enables partners to reach a wider range of people and communities. Through REAP and CREWS initiatives, WMO is now exploring how to scale-up investment in observation systems through the Systematic Observation Financing Facility (SOFF) across LDCs and SIDS, as well as working together with the Government of the UK on advancing the visibility and goals of REAP. The Insurance Development Forum mentioned the 2019 [announcement](#) of 5 billion USD being made available by the re/insurance sector as part of a programme with UNDP, the UK and Germany through the InsuResilience Global Partnership to develop risk finance solutions and provide technical assistance to 20 countries that count towards REAP's goal. For Bangladesh, where 76% of the population are exposed to multi-hazard risks, Early Warning is a prerequisite for Early Action and the country has already significantly improved its system ensuring community response. In Bangladesh, several REAP partners have also been working on a pilot project to establish forecast-based financing early action as a delivery mechanism for REAP Target 2, while the Bangladesh government has worked on modernization of its Meteorological systems, contributing towards REAP Target 3, all with support from the GCF.
9. During the discussion, several challenges were raised that delay or prevent the advancement of EWS in disaster-prone countries and therefore delay anticipatory action taking place in advance of climate-related hazards. Working across sectors often entails different "languages", different ways of operating, and contractual matters that are difficult to solve when it comes to making progress in scaling up the work. Affected countries, like Small Island States, often struggle with multiple challenges simultaneously and a lack of understanding of the data and scientific methods of the EWS among political actors sometimes lead to the shift in focusing available climate risk finances on development opportunities rather than on disaster risk reduction and early action. The need for availability and a repository of data would allow such countries to identify risks at a local level and design insurance based on the real risks of coastal and community levels that would further allow for understanding among diverse local authorities.
10. It was also stressed that the current crisis response funding is too slow. The Centre for Disaster Protection gave an example of drought in East Africa when it took 2 months for just 11% of the required funding to reach affected areas. This prevents any kind of rapid or early action that can help to mitigate the impact of a hazard and reduce costs. A shift from reactive to pro-active funding available ahead of crisis would greatly support serious planning for disasters.
11. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) supports many of the REAP partners in achieving REAP targets where it is most needed. It has invested 1.8 billion USD, the total funding amount including co-financing being 2.2 billion across the globe for the Early Warning climate information systems, among which 94% of funds go directly to

support work on the ground and 21% to modernizing HydroMet services.

12. Many participants noted the importance of intersectoral collaboration as the key to achieve REAP targets and reach as many people as possible. FAO suggested looking beyond Anticipatory Action on nexus perspectives, connecting short-term assistance with long-term goals, tailoring solutions to the specific context, and collecting evidence. Donor countries themselves should be pushing agencies to work together and in close coordination with local governments. Collective actions, such as sharing of good practices at all levels would also benefit scaling up the efforts in DRR and climate change adaptation. Insurance Development Forum (IDF) - representing the private sector - noted how existing insurance capital would also benefit through more collaboration with the public sector to help transfer the EWEA projects to wider communities and deliver at the “last mile”.
13. Some participants also noted their efforts in scaling up EWEA that were not reflected in the REAP Framework for Action, such as development of metrics to measure progress against REAP targets, exploring further collaboration between the private sectors/insurance industry and public sector to integrate EWEA aspects in developing DRFI, further progress on working with International Finance Institutions (IFIs), better engagement with vulnerable communities, as well as working on the development of anticipatory insurance policies.

Exploring priorities

14. In this session, the countries spoke about priorities, challenges, and gaps related to anticipating climate hazards that REAP and its partners could help to address.
15. Participants noted several existing gaps when it comes to reaching goals and targets, especially in areas of inclusivity – communities in low population areas, disabled or rural populations, as well as lack of gender lens are often insufficient in Early Warning System planning. Building on this, Mozambique shared an example of an approach called “one district, one early warning”, which aims at ensuring that district-level meteorological stations deliver early warning tailored to local needs, incl. district-specific local languages. India stressed the need for better understanding and earlier warning of the impacts of weather events on critical infrastructure and communities and also recognize the cascading effect that can occur after the initial disaster and that this is often overlooked. Also, a geographical lens needs to be applied to identify vulnerable but less populated locations so ‘no *place* is left behind’ Nepal also noted the use of traditional knowledge in weather and climate forecasting as part of pro-active governance and systems to help community-based as well as gender-responsive adaptation.
16. Once again, the REAP Marketplace was noted as a priority for further action on building existing structures and frameworks as well as better collaboration with research entities, stronger focus on actions on the ground, and more targeted and tailored interventions. Investment in measuring and metrics improvements to calculate the success of reaching REAP targets was strongly stressed during the discussion as the existing challenge and a priority area for action.
17. Given the value of REAP in convening a diverse range of stakeholders, a multi-sectoral, inter-disciplinary approach was highlighted as a way to achieve results and bring new ways of thinking as well as knowledge sharing to help replicate success.
18. Participants also listed several priorities, opportunities, and challenges for scaling up early action that the Partnership should focus on, such as more engagement with the IFIs and private sector, capacity building for national DRM agencies, a shift to pre-arranged funding from the international finance systems.

Closing remarks

19. As the event drew to a close, concluding remarks recapped the rich discussion stressing the sense of urgency of the EWEA agenda, noting that the existing evidence base for the early warning early action approach demonstrates it is cheaper, more efficient, and more dignified for the affected population, yet with 1 in 3 people still not covered by EWS and only a limited percentage of the required humanitarian financing being prearranged.
20. Affected countries shared ideas on the potential of using climate-related data for early action interventions; they have also stressed the need for people-centred and inclusive EWEA interventions and the need to go beyond the conventional early warning towards impact-based forecasting.
21. Donor countries expressed their strongest support to the EWEA agenda and to disaster risk financing, as well as the need to continue shifting to anticipating disasters rather than being reactive.
22. Many also called for more unified standards, joint protocols, and better coordination and collaboration among different sectors and actors to allow the scale-up of anticipatory action approaches.
23. The discussion had shown that there are many initiatives of interest, new approaches, innovations, and best practices available, yet the challenge remains how to transform these actions into early action at scale and early action being the default setting. Stressing the importance of champions, the challenge is an uphill struggle that – once it reaches a fulcrum or tipping point – will quickly gain downhill momentum and traction across the board.
24. As a partnership, REAP now has an opportunity to advocate for EWEA during the G7 meetings and the road to COP26. As a partnership, partners need to maintain the momentum and energy, building on the foundation of the partnership that has been set in place and capitalising upon every opportunity to profile and further the REAP agenda.

Next steps

25. The REAP Secretariat thanked all participants for their attendance, stressed its role to listen to all partners, to support them and to facilitate the partners' platform. The Secretariat plans to follow-up with attendees of the event bilaterally and invited participants that are not yet REAP partners to sign the Letter of Intent to become formal partners. The Secretariat also stressed the importance of turning ambition into solid commitments and commitments into action on the ground.
26. The REAP Secretariat would continue to keep the momentum and increase it in the run-up to COP26 in November, being a major platform for encouraging additional partners to join and invited all the participants to consider themselves as REAP Ambassadors and to catalyse action from all of the opportunities discussed and highlighted during the event.

Alima Arbudu (REAP Secretariat)

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