

# Standard operating procedure: small emergency fund mechanism for early action

## Locally Led Anticipatory Action Toolkit

### Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to set out an example of a standard operating procedure (SOP) that organisations could use to manage a small emergency fund mechanism.

### Guidance

Based on learning from the 'Local leadership for global impact' project, this SOP was developed by Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH) to manage a 'Small Emergency Fund for Early Action' they set up to improve their support to locally led anticipation action. It should be amended to fit the context of other organisations wishing to implement the same.

SOPs should be considered as 'live' documents and updated according to learning, in line with SOP approval processes within an organisation.

## Standard operating procedure (SOP): Small emergency fund mechanism for early action

### Background

Acting early to mitigate the humanitarian impacts, including those resulting from climate change, is critical – not only to save lives and livelihoods but also to protect development gains. Partners are encouraged to use the DKH Small Emergency Fund to manage humanitarian risks proactively instead of waiting until a crisis occurs to respond. This mechanism places emphasis on enabling locally led early action by communities and local actors.

There may be considerable uncertainty in choosing when to trigger an alert and what activities might be appropriate. For instance, how do we know when things are tipping out of their 'normal' state, especially in contexts prone to recurrent or seasonal crises? It is normal for there to be a level of uncertainty when acting based on a forecast. We are learning by doing. This will require partners, along with DKH offices, to analyse and act upon risks which are not yet certain to materialise. Given these complexities, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has initiated the Small Emergency Fund Mechanism for Early Action with an allocation of up to 10,000 Euro (up to EUR 5000 can be approved by DKH Office in Mozambique, above EUR 5,000 requires DKH Berlin approval).

The ability of partners to manage humanitarian risks proactively, instead of waiting until a crisis occurs to respond is dependent upon:

- The functionality of national and local forecasting and early warning systems.
- The availability of anticipatory action frameworks, models, or early action protocols and triggers already established by other agencies.
- The reliability of forecasts, models and especially the triggers applied
- Local coordination mechanisms, and their connection with technical forecasting experts
- The level of stakeholder awareness, knowledge, and motivation to engage in anticipatory action, and especially the appreciation of uncertainty when acting based on forecasts.
- The disaster management policy environment and willingness of disaster management agencies to engage in a learning process to create a shift from reactive response actions to proactive timely implementation of early actions.

## Steps

### I. Early Action Protocols (EAPs) – optional

The development of at least one EAP by partners is beneficial for establishing the knowledge and institutional practices needed to develop successful Alert Notes. EAPs are developed by partners through a participatory process drawing on information gathered from community contingency planning processes, and meetings and workshops with local and national level stakeholders and experts.

### II. Early Action Alert Note

Any partner can raise an alert for a crisis to the DKH Small Emergency Fund by submitting an alert note (linked to an early action protocol if available). It should concisely highlight the needs that could arise from the forecast crisis and the appropriateness of the DKH Small Emergency Fund to support proactive action (i.e., utilising Microgrants). As a reminder, the alert note is not a project proposal, but it is a means to inform DKH of the crisis so that Fund decisions can be made. Timeliness should be a key consideration in raising an alert. The Fund is designed to respond in the very early stages of a crisis, and every day an alert is not raised, the Fund's ability to reach the affected population in the timeliest manner diminishes. We are currently trialling a three-day period between anticipation alert and project selection.

### III. Approval, and Proposal submission – optional

Proposal submission exemption: If a pre-approved EAP with a clear trigger threshold is in place, then no proposal is needed as the EAP provides all the necessary information. Removing the need for proposal development is how we enable the action to be rapidly conducted prior to hazard impact.

The DKH Small emergency Fund for Early Action is designed to enable proactive timely early action for a range of small crisis types and contexts. Whether an activation of the Small Emergency Fund for Early Action is appropriate, both from an operational and a strategic perspective, is open to the judgement of the respective DKH Office in consultation with relevant DKH Advisors. A set of core considerations and critical questions are outlined in the Approval Questions for Early Action Alerts form (these questions are linked to the EAP alert note template).

### IV. Early Action Review

The Early Action Review consists of three aspects:

- a) Monitoring the activation: Monitoring should start right with EAP / Alert Note activation to ensure the team will learn whether it was successful in acting early and as planned.

- b) Assess impact: Collecting the data to respond to the questions / elements through surveys, discussions, interviews etc. Some actions will show impact at different times. Depending on the prioritized impact to be reduced by each action and when the outcome would be visible, data might need to be collected at different times (if feasible).
- c) Evaluation of the trigger: Each activation provides an opportunity to assess whether the trigger was defined appropriately, and if and how it could be improved. The evaluation of the triggers should be conducted with relevant stakeholders either through interviews or in a workshop.

### Tools applied

EA Tool	Early Action Mechanism Resources, and how they are to be applied	When and to whom to apply
<b>EA1</b>	<p><b>Early Action Protocol (EAP) – options for application:</b></p> <p>a) The development of EAPs is optional but is essential for rapid onset disasters and crises to ensure that the anticipatory window of opportunity to respond prior to impact is not missed. If an EAP is in place, the partner monitors the forecasting and early warning systems outlined in the EAP and activates the process when the trigger threshold is reached.</p> <p>b) If no EAP is developed or in place for a foreseen hazard or crisis, an Alert Note (EA#2) needs to be rapidly developed so as not to miss the anticipatory window of opportunity for early action.</p>	Step 1 Partners (optional)
<b>EA2</b>	<p><b>Early Action Alert Note – options for application:</b></p> <p>a) If an EAP is not in place, then a fully completed Alert Note is required.</p> <p>b) If an EAP is in place but the trigger is based on a predictive analysis of contextual information, then specific sections of the Alert Note need to be completed to provide an analysis of the forecasting information. This is needed to reach a consensus on the analysis of available forecasting or risk analysis information.</p> <p>c) If an EAP is in place, and uses a scientific trigger with a defined threshold, then no Alert Note is required. Only the information on the trigger threshold being reached needs to be communicated.</p>	Step 2 Partners
<b>EA3</b>	<p><b>Approval Questions for Early Action Alerts</b></p> <p>The questions are used by the DKH office, in consultation with the DKH DRR Advisor, to assess early action Alert Notes. These questions can also be useful when applying a subsequent proposal.</p>	Step 3 DKH

EA Tool	Early Action Mechanism Resources, and how they are to be applied	When and to whom to apply
<b>EA4</b>	<p><a href="#">Proposal for Early Action</a></p> <p>The proposal is developed and submitted immediately following approval of the Alert Note (same day or latest the next day), which is then approved, and funds transferred. Options for prefinancing by partners are also discussed (i.e., from ongoing project funds).</p>	Step 3 Partners
<b>EA5</b>	<p><a href="#">Early Action Review</a></p> <p>The early action review can be conducted by a partner but needs to be completed in consultation with the respective DKH office. This is needed as the review includes an evaluation of the DKH Small Emergency Fund Early Action Mechanism.</p>	Step 4 Partners and DKH

## Acknowledgement

The [Locally Led Anticipatory Action Guide and Toolkit](#) was authored by Chris Ball, Director of [Bounce Back Resilience Ltd](#) and Humanitarian Advisor DRR and Climate Change for Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. It was developed based on learning from the Local Leadership for Global Impact project implemented in partnership between [Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe](#), [CARD](#), [CEDES](#), [SAF/FJKM](#) and [GNDR](#); and supported by funds of the Federal Republic of Germany through the [Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development](#) (BMZ).