CERF AT THE FOREFRONT OF ANTICIPATORY ACTION

Beyond ensuring swift and strategic funding in response to sudden onset, escalating and protracted crises, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is also a leading global humanitarian funding tool for Anticipatory Action (AA). Starting with the establishment of the first Anticipatory Action framework in Somalia in 2019, CERF has been at the forefront of advancing Anticipatory Action and is today the largest contributor to Anticipatory Action frameworks globally, supplying about 50 per cent of all pre-arranged funding for Anticipatory Action in 2024.[1] CERF-funded Anticipatory Action frameworks cover both climate-related shocks (droughts, floods, and storms) and disease outbreaks, primarily cholera. In November 2025, CERF's level of commitment to Anticipatory Action reached $ 124.7 million in funding pre-committed for Anticipatory Action frameworks, compared to $48 million in 2020.

What is Anticipatory Action?

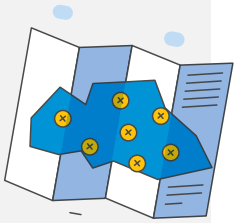
Anticipatory Action enables humanitarian organizations to act ahead of a predicted hazardous event. In doing so, they can provide critical assistance to people before the shock strikes, prevent or lessen the humanitarian impact of the event, and mitigate needs before they escalate. Anticipatory Action enables vulnerable families to help themselves through a crisis. This can take the form of one-off cash transfers ahead of a tropical cyclone or climate-smart farming packages ahead of drought. Anticipatory Action can also contribute to resilience, for example, outfitting boreholes with solar power will enable communities to access water during a predicted upcoming drought, but also during future shocks.

$147M
million disbursed by CERF for Anticipatory Action frameworks between 2020 and 2025 to

15 countries reaching **6.1M people** [2]

$124.7
committed by CERF in pre-arranged funding for AA frameworks, covering over

5.6M people in **20 countries** [3]



25 AA frameworks
in **20 countries.**

Of this, 11 frameworks in 8 countries are active, 5 frameworks in 4 countries are under development and 9 frameworks in 9 countries are being revised.

In 2024,

42% of all the AA allocations were for cash-based assistance that went to people directly

Cholera Outbreak Control in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

A UNICEF-supported decontamination agent disinfects the site of disused latrines at a former displacement camp.
Photo credit: UNOCHA/Wassy Kambale

In 2025, there were three cholera activations in the DRC: North Kivu in March, Maniema and Tshopo in May, and Kinshasa in July. The first activation occurred in an endemic province, while the latter two took place in non-endemic provinces, reflecting both the persistence of cholera in long-affected areas and the growing risk of spread into new areas. CERF allocated $750,000 for each activation, totaling $2,250,000 and reaching over 400,000 people.

UNICEF and WHO implemented life-saving health, water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions. WHO focused on strengthening case management in cholera treatment centers, deploying rapid response teams, and conducting household disinfection and water chlorination to curb transmission. UNICEF applied its Case Area Targeted Intervention (CATI) approach to rapidly detect and respond to suspected cases, provide clean water, and promote hygiene practices at the community level.

In Kinshasa, CERF funding enabled the swift setup of chlorination points and large-scale hygiene promotion in high-density neighborhoods, demonstrating how early, coordinated action can help contain outbreaks.

According to Bruno Lemarquis, the UN's top humanitarian official in DRC, reducing humanitarian needs is even more critical in a resource-constrained environment. He emphasized that "anticipatory action is a vital part of the humanitarian toolbox. For example, it can help prevent a large-scale cholera outbreak before it escalates — saving lives and significantly reducing emergency response costs."

Read more about the impact of the Pooled Funds on StoryHub

1 Anticipatory Action in 2024 (Anticipation Hub, 2025)
2 Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cuba, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, The Philippines, Somalia (no longer active), South Sudan (ad-hoc allocation for floods in 2022, no longer active).
3 Total funding currently endorsed by the ERC for active frameworks, pre-approved funding for frameworks under development and planning figures for frameworks under revision/up for extension.

Developing CERF Anticipatory Action

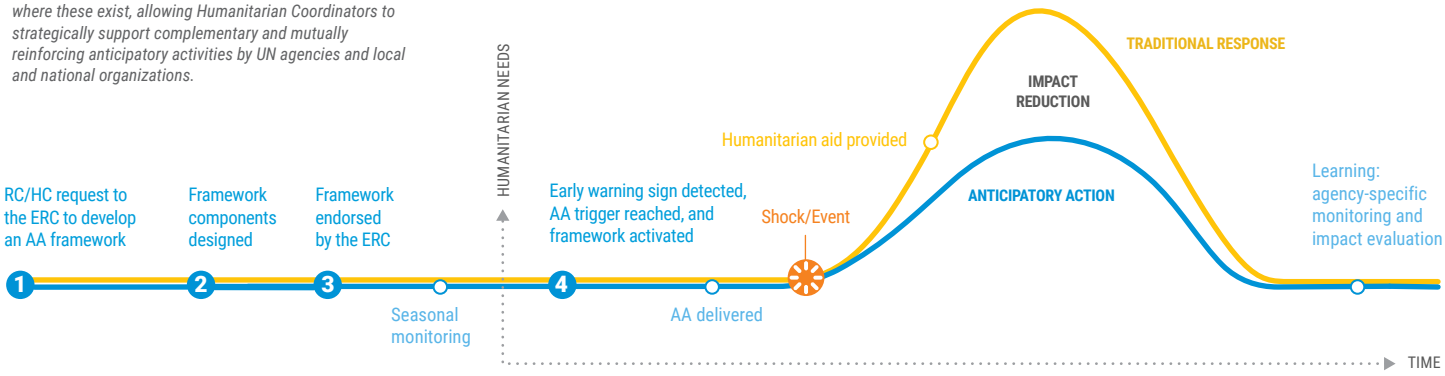
1 The establishment of an Anticipatory Action framework begins with a request from the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). The ERC reviews the requests with support from OCHA's Anticipatory Action Working Group.

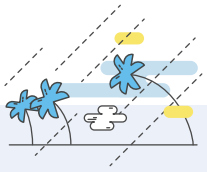
2 Following ERC request approval, the RC/HC leads the development of the framework, in collaboration with OCHA, the Humanitarian Country Team, government entities, and key partner organizations that jointly develop four essential components of the Anticipatory Action framework: First, a **pre-agreed trigger** is established, consisting of specific thresholds and reliable forecasts. Second, **pre-planned activities** are designed, detailing feasible actions to be rapidly implemented between the trigger moment and the full impact of a shock. Third, **pre-arranged financing** is secured by CERF and other donors, guaranteeing the immediate release of funds once the trigger is activated. In countries with OCHA Country Funds, these will typically co-finance frameworks, with focus on supporting national and local partners.* **Finally, a learning approach is agreed upon** to assess the framework's effectiveness and improve future responses.

3 Once all four components are agreed upon, the ERC endorses the framework, initially for a period of two years.

4 When a trigger is reached, an automated allocation process is activated, and CERF funds are quickly disbursed against the pre-approved projects.

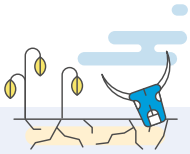
** Since 2024, all new CERF-supported AA frameworks have been developed with co-financing from OCHA Country Funds where these exist, allowing Humanitarian Coordinators to strategically support complementary and mutually reinforcing anticipatory activities by UN agencies and local and national organizations.*





Storm framework triggers use meteorological data from global, regional, and national forecast centers to trigger activation when specific thresholds, such as wind speed, rainfall intensity, or storm proximity; are met. The Haiti framework activates when NOAA[4] NHC and CHIRPS-GEFS[5] predict rainfall above 42 mm in 48 hours and winds of at least 64 knots within 230 km of Haiti. It also includes an observational trigger, activating if NASA IMERG[6] data show rainfall above 70 mm and winds exceeding 50 knots, ensuring that people are still assisted even when severe impacts are not captured by forecasts. The framework was activated for hurricane Melissa on 21 October 2025, leading to the disbursement of $4 million to support more than 100,000 people.

Flood framework triggers utilize hydrological forecasts and rely on real-time river monitoring to predict rising water levels and confirm flood risks. In Nigeria, the riverine flooding framework is activated when CEMS GloFAS[7] predicts a discharge of at least 3,132 m³/s at Wuroboki or when Google Flood Forecasting predicts 1,195 m³/s at Kangli along the Benue River in Adamawa state. The combined use of these two sources provides optimal accuracy and longer lead times of 14–25 days, while offering redundancy to mitigate disruptions from either data source. These conditions were met in July 2025, leading to an activation of the framework, where $5 million from CERF and $2 million from the Nigerian Humanitarian Fund were allocated.



Drought framework triggers rely on seasonal precipitation forecasts and real-time observations. In Afghanistan, the framework activates when either of two triggers, Window A or Window B, is met. The forecast-based trigger (Window A) is activated if the February ECMWF SEAS5 forecast predicts March–May rainfall below a 1-in-4.2-year threshold in at least one of the three target provinces: Faryab, Sar-e-Pul, or Takhar. The observation and forecast-based trigger (Window B) activates if the April composite drought indicator exceeds a 1-in-5.2-year threshold in any of these provinces. The Window B conditions were met in April 2025, prompting the activation of the framework where $6.7 million was disbursed to assist about 200,000 people.

Cholera framework triggers are activated by changes in epidemiological data or external shocks, such as floods or displacement, which disrupt access to clean water and sanitation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the framework can trigger under two independent scenarios: heightened risk of a large cholera outbreak in endemic provinces, like North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut-Lomami, and Haut-Katanga, or heightened risk in non-endemic provinces (the rest of the country). For both scenarios, risk is continuously monitored using suspected case counts, deaths, and incidence; the framework is activated if any of these indicators exceed their predefined thresholds over a three-week period in a given health zone. In 2025, the cholera framework activated three times in North Kivu, Maniema and Tshopo, and Kinshasa.

4 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). National Hurricane Center (NHC)

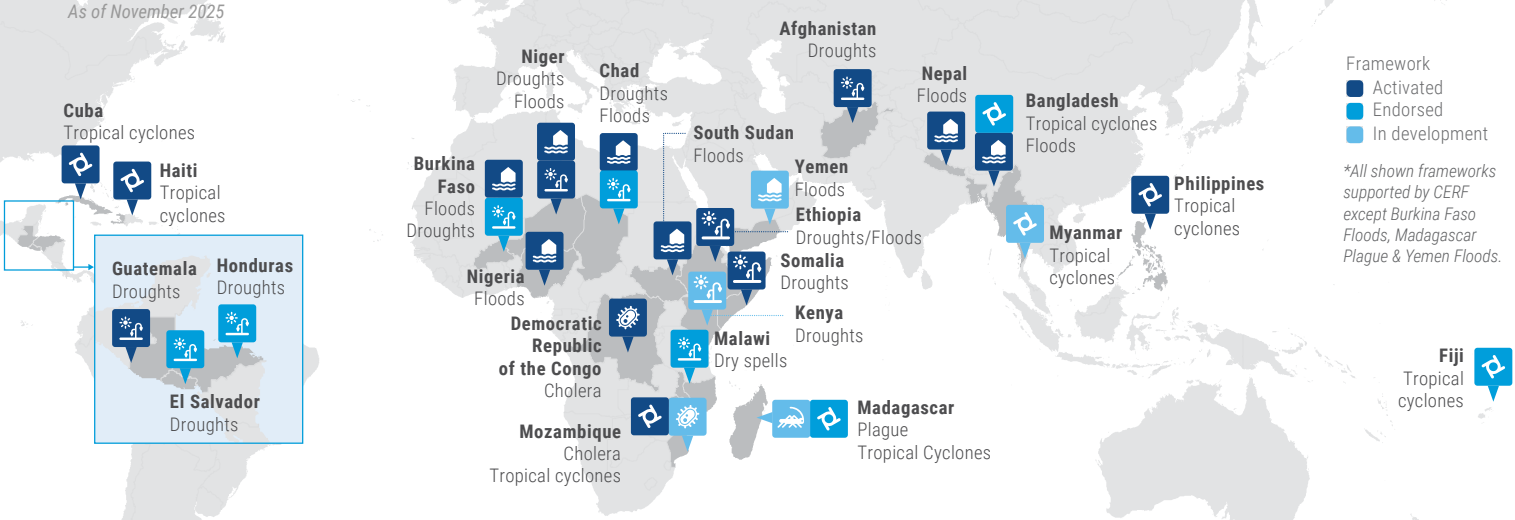
5 Climate Hazards InfraRed Precipitation with Stations (CHIRPS) - Global Ensemble Forecast System (GEFS)

6 National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - Integrated Multi-satellitE Retrievals for GPM (IMERG)

7 Copernicus Emergency Management Service (CEMS). Global Flood Awareness System (GloFAS)

OCHA-facilitated and CERF-funded* Anticipatory Action Frameworks

As of November 2025



2025 framework activations

As of November 2025

In October, **$4M** was allocated to **Cuba** within four minutes to mitigate the humanitarian impacts of Hurricane Melissa.

Additionally, **$4M** and **$6M** were allocated to **Haiti** (October) and **Mozambique** (March), respectively, to help communities prepare in advance of severe tropical cyclones.

The Philippines also received **$6M** within two minutes of early warning alerts to enable AA support ahead of a super typhoon in November.

$6.7M was allocated to **Afghanistan** in April to mitigate the impacts of drought, while **Guatemala** received $4 million in July to get ahead of anticipated drought conditions.

$5M million allocated to support people at-risk in **Nigeria**, preparing for severe riverine flooding in September.

The **DRC** received a total of **$2.3M** through 3 activations in March, May & July to proactively control the spread of cholera.

Drought Response in Afghanistan

In April 2025, as devastating drought took hold in Afghanistan, the Anticipatory Action framework was activated, with CERF allocating $6.7 million to support anticipatory action by UN agencies in the provinces of Faryab, Sar-e-Pul, Takhar and Badakhshan, complemented by $7.5 million from the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund (AHF) in support of local and international NGOs. This was the first time CERF and a country fund like AHF coordinated in pre-arranging funding under a unified framework, ensuring a faster and more coordinated response.

With CERF's support, UNICEF, FAO, UNFPA, WFP, and UN Women, along with international NGOs and Afghan organizations, delivered early cash assistance, livestock protection packages, and WASH services to about 200,000 people. For most families, this support served as a lifeline as they were preparing for the most severe impacts of the drought.

Abdul Rahim, a resident of Dawlat Abad District shared, "I feared I couldn't feed my children, but the day I received the cash I could breathe again. It wasn't just survival; it gave us the strength to believe in tomorrow. *"

"Every dollar we invest now saves more dollars and more lives down the line," said Indrika Ratwatte, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan. "This is a wholly data-driven initiative which will give families a fighting chance to safeguard their livelihoods before the worst hits."

Afghanistan is the sixth most vulnerable country and the least prepared to address climate change impacts globally, according to the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index. Afghanistan is the second largest recipient of CERF funds in 2025, having received $41.6 million to-date, including a dedicated $1 million allocation for climate-smart humanitarian action made possible by the CERF Climate Action Account.

Anticipatory Action and the CERF Climate Action Account

To reach more people and scale action in response to increasingly frequent and severe climate challenges, OCHA launched the CERF Climate Action Account at COP28 in December 2023. Contributions to the Account are exclusively used to boost humanitarian responses to climate-related disasters and scale Anticipatory Action for predictable climate shocks. As of November 2025, the Climate Action Account has facilitated an additional $20 million in CERF-funded life-saving climate action that would otherwise not have been possible**.

CERF aims to further expand and sustain its support for Anticipatory Action and continue delivering timely, dignified, and cost-effective humanitarian responses. Given the decline of CERF's annual income, the need for additional contributions is critical to sustain these efforts.

Donate to CERF

Donate to the Climate Action Account

*https://www.unocha.org/news/it-gave-us-strength-believe-to-morow-how-anticipatory-cash-helps-families-prepare-disaster

** More information on the Climate Action Account is available here.