ICPAC

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Anticipatory Action Newsletter

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DEUTSCHE HUMANITÄRE HILFE

IGAD Regional Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action

Editorial Note

Dear Partners,
Every season brings new climate challenges to the Greater Horn of Africa—but it also brings new opportunities to act before those challenges become humanitarian crises. This edition of the ICPAC Anticipatory Action Newsletter is a testament to what is possible when governments, communities, humanitarian partners, and donors work together to transform early warnings into early action.

Over the first quarter of 2026, we witnessed encouraging progress across the region. Governments strengthened national systems and advanced policies that place anticipatory action at the heart of disaster risk management. Regional tools were refined through collaboration with practitioners, ensuring they are practical, accessible, and responsive to country needs. Most importantly, thousands of vulnerable families received timely support before drought conditions reached their peak—protecting livelihoods, safeguarding children's education, preserving critical assets, and reducing the need for costly emergency response.

These achievements are more than individual success stories; they demonstrate that anticipatory action is delivering measurable results. When investments are made in preparedness, climate information, and locally led action, communities are better equipped to withstand shocks with dignity and resilience.

None of this progress would be possible without the commitment of our partners and supporters. Your investment is helping to build stronger national systems, improve climate services, and ensure that early warnings trigger timely, life-saving interventions. Every contribution strengthens our collective ability to move from reacting to disasters to preventing their worst impacts.
As you read this edition, we invite you to see not only the milestones we have reached, but also the opportunity ahead. Together, we can scale proven approaches, expand anticipatory action to more countries and sectors, and ensure that vulnerable communities across the Greater Horn of Africa are protected before disasters strike.

Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Your partnership continues to make anticipation possible, resilience achievable, and hope tangible for millions across the region.

Regional Leadership and Coordination

From Forecasts to Decisions — GHACOF 72 Side Event Puts Anticipatory Action Tools to the Test

In January 2026, on the sidelines of the 72nd Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF 72) in Nairobi, a room of forecasters, disaster risk managers, humanitarian agencies, and policymakers confronted a question that sits at the heart of anticipatory action: when a forecast signals risk, how do decision-makers know when — and where — to act?

Convened by ICPAC in collaboration with regional and international partners, the side event on Mainstreaming Anticipatory Action (AA) within the GHACOF Process brought together representatives from eight countries — Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda — alongside agencies including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The agenda was focused and practical: review two critical regional tools still under development and sharpen them based on real-world user feedback.

The first tool on the table was the regional Triggers and Thresholds Dashboard — a system designed to translate climate forecasts into actionable decision thresholds for anticipatory interventions. Participants worked through drought indicators, probability thresholds, and map-based visualisations, surfacing important tensions: regional tools must be technically rigorous, but they must also be legible to the non-specialist decision-maker. The call for flexible, country-adjustable thresholds, clearer indicator explanations, and population exposure data layered into maps reflected a consensus that a tool unused is a tool wasted.

The second focus was the revamped regional Anticipatory Action website, introduced as a centralised knowledge hub for AA information across the Greater Horn. Participants welcomed the initiative but were direct about what it will take to make it valuable: regular updates, country-owned content, mobile accessibility, and design that demystifies — rather than reinforces — the technical complexity of climate risk concepts.

The session produced a concrete set of recommendations spanning both tools, including national-level training programmes, improved administrative boundary data, interactive guidance materials, and clearer data-sharing arrangements with national institutions.

> What the side event ultimately demonstrated is that the architecture for anticipatory action in the Greater Horn is maturing. The tools exist. The political will is growing. What the region now needs — and what GHACOF 72 helped move forward — is the sustained investment in usability, national ownership, and coordination that will make those tools drive action when it matters most.

Section 1: Regional Leadership & Coordination

Djibouti Charts the Season Ahead with a Unified Climate Outlook

When the rains come — or fail to come — the communities of Djibouti need decision-makers who are prepared. In early 2026, the National Meteorological Agency of Djibouti convened the National Climate Outlook Forum (NCOF) for the March–April–May (MAM) season, bringing together stakeholders from agriculture, disaster risk management, meteorology, women and family affairs, and research institutions, among others.

The forum served a dual purpose: to present the regional and national climate outlook for the MAM 2026 season, and to create a meaningful platform for dialogue between climatologists, policymakers, researchers, and development partners. Rather than simply presenting data, the NCOF was designed as a decision-enabling space — one where the implications of forecasts could be interrogated, debated, and translated into crisis management strategies.

A highlight of the forum was the production of a consensus seasonal forecast, developed through a rigorous multi-model dynamic ensemble approach supported by three statistical calibration methods and a probabilistic framework. This methodology ensures that the forecast is not only technically robust but also actionable for the diverse sectors that depend on it.

Stakeholders gathered at the National Climate Outlook Forum (NCOF) convened by the National Meteorological Agency of Djibouti.

In February 2026, Ethiopia took a decisive step toward reducing the human and economic cost of disasters by advancing its National Anticipatory Action (AA) Roadmap — an initiative that is already demonstrating measurable impact and strong return on investment for humanitarian and development partners.

Convened in Bishoftu from 24–26 February, the National Technical Review Workshop brought together over 45 stakeholders, including government ministries, technical agencies, and international partners, under the leadership of the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission with support from IGAD. The objective: to refine and operationalise a roadmap that shifts Ethiopia from costly, reactive crisis response to timely, data-driven early action.

Section 2: Policy, Roadmaps and Frameworks

Investing in Early Action: Ethiopia Strengthens National Systems to Protect Lives Before

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Participants at the National Technical Review Workshop in Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

Ethiopia remains highly vulnerable to climate shocks, with recurrent droughts, floods, and landslides affecting millions each year. Recent drought episodes across Tigray, Afar, and Oromia have driven acute food insecurity, while sudden-onset disasters such as landslides have resulted in significant loss of life. These crises are becoming more frequent and complex — placing increasing pressure on humanitarian resources.

Anticipatory action offers a proven solution. By using early warning data to trigger pre-agreed interventions, it enables partners to act before disasters escalate. Evidence from Ethiopia already shows the value of this approach: in late 2025, anticipatory interventions reached approximately 35,000 people, delivering timely support including cash transfers, livestock protection, and WASH services. These early actions helped safeguard livelihoods, reduce emergency response costs, and prevent further deterioration into crisis.

National Technical Review Workshop plenary session in Bishoftu, Ethiopia

The workshop outcomes position Ethiopia to scale these gains nationally. Participants agreed on priority pillars for implementation, including strengthening early warning–early action linkages, establishing predictable financing mechanisms, and enhancing coordination across sectors. The revised roadmap also aligns with national systems and regional frameworks, ensuring sustainability and government ownership.

For donors, this represents a strategic investment opportunity. Supporting the rollout of Ethiopia's AA Roadmap will not only save lives but also maximise efficiency by reducing the need for large-scale emergency responses. Every dollar invested in early action has the potential to deliver significantly higher returns through avoided losses and reduced humanitarian burden.

With a clear implementation plan and strong multi-stakeholder commitment, Ethiopia is ready to scale anticipatory action. Targeted donor support at this stage can accelerate impact, strengthen resilience, and position Ethiopia as a model for proactive disaster risk management across the region.

Section 3: Partner Activations & Impact

Forecasts into Action — Save the Children Protects over 108,000 People in Drought-Hit Ethiopia

When ICPAC and the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI) issued forecasts projecting above-normal temperatures and deteriorating water conditions for the January–February–March (JFM) 2026 season, Save the Children Ethiopia did not wait. Armed with this early warning, Save the Children activated its anticipatory action protocols in Shabelle Zone before the full impact of the drought set in.

The interventions were deliberately multi-sectoral. Households received WASH services, livelihoods support, child protection programming, and early warning communication — all sequenced to protect the assets and well-being of pastoralist communities most exposed to prolonged dry conditions. Government offices covering disaster risk management, agriculture and livestock, water and energy, women and children's affairs, and education were all engaged as key implementation partners.

Fozia Ali, feeding concentrated animal feed for core breeds at the time of the drought.

The result: vulnerable households protected their livestock — a critical livelihood asset in pastoralist contexts — and food security was maintained during a season that could easily have tipped into crisis. The early actions prevented what might otherwise have been a reactive, more costly, and less effective humanitarian response.

This activation is a compelling example of forecast-based financing working as intended. The trigger was scientifically grounded, the action was pre-agreed, and the speed of response gave communities a buffer that post-disaster aid rarely provides. It also underscores ICPAC's role not just as a regional climate authority but as a direct enabler of anticipatory action — its outlooks forming the evidentiary backbone of life-saving interventions on the ground.

For the children of Shabelle Zone, early action made the difference between crisis and continuity.

Following the Forecast

IRC Delivers Early Cash and Services to 2,125 Households in Somalia

When forecast-based early warning signals pointed to worsening drought conditions in Somalia in late 2025, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) activated its Follow the Forecast approach — delivering assistance before peak crisis conditions arrived.

The triggers for activation drew on a combination of long-range seasonal forecasts from IRI/Columbia University Climate School, FEWS NET regional monitoring, and ICPAC's Seasonal Outlook — a multi-source approach that increases confidence in activation decisions and reduces the risk of false triggers.

Funded by Google.org and the Coca-Cola Foundation, the response delivered multi-purpose cash assistance, WASH interventions, and nutrition support — giving households the resources and services they needed to protect themselves ahead of the worst conditions.

The response, which began in December 2025 and remains ongoing, was coordinated with the Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) and the Cash Working Group, ensuring alignment with the broader humanitarian architecture in Somalia and minimising duplication.

Dahir is feeding his goats after receiving AA cash assistance in Hoboyo- Galcayo

IRC's Follow the Forecast model represents a disciplined operationalisation of anticipatory action: pre-agreed trigger thresholds, pre-positioned resources, and a team ready to move when forecasts signal risk. The result is faster, more efficient, and ultimately more dignified assistance — households receive support when they can still use it to make meaningful decisions, not after they have exhausted their coping mechanisms.

This Somalia activation is also building a body of evidence. IRC's response contributes directly to demonstrating that forecast-based action is not an experimental concept, but a proven and scalable model for climate hazard response.

Protecting Children's Right to Learn

Somalia's First AA Activation in Education in Emergencies

When drought forecasts began signalling deteriorating conditions in South West State of Somalia, Rural Education and Agriculture Development Organization (READO) moved to protect one of the most easily disrupted — yet rarely prioritised — dimensions of humanitarian response: children's education.

Launched on 1 February 2026 and running through June 2026, the anticipatory action pilot is supported by funding and frameworks from the ECW Drought Anticipatory Action Pilot Project. The triggers for activation drew on a layered evidence base: ICPAC seasonal forecasts, the ICPAC East Africa Drought Watch, the Combined Drought Index (CDI), Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM) drought declaration, and Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) projections.

Workshop held to safeguard continuity of education for drought-affected children in Wanleweyn District, Somalia, through timely anticipatory action interventions.

The response package is designed to address the economic and access barriers that drive school dropout during drought. Conditional cash transfers support household income, enabling families to keep children in school rather than pulling them into survival strategies.

Teacher retention incentives — with a deliberate focus on female teachers — protect instructional continuity. Emergency school feeding, safe drinking water provision, and strengthened child protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) referral systems ensure that learning environments remain safe and functional even as surrounding conditions worsen.

As a pilot, this intervention carries significance beyond its immediate impact. It is generating evidence for whether and how anticipatory action can protect learning outcomes in crisis-prone contexts — a question that has rarely been rigorously tested. If successful, the model has strong potential for replication across Somalia and the broader IGAD region, establishing education as a legitimate and fundable sector within forecast-based financing frameworks.

In a region where school dropout during drought is often irreversible, acting early is not just timely — it is transformative.

Section 4: Community Strengthening

From Forecast to Plan — READO Develops a Community-Owned AAP in South West Somalia

Drought forecasts mean little if communities don't trust them, can't act on them, or find them irrelevant to their local realities. This is the gap that Rural Education and Agriculture Development Organization (READO), supported by the Welthungerhilfe Anticipatory Humanitarian Action Facility (WAHAFA), set out to close in Baidoa and Hudur Districts between May 2025 and February 2026.

Over the nine-month initiative, 1,104 participants (704 men, 400 women) engaged in a structured, participatory process of stakeholder mapping, community consultation, scenario planning, and multi-stakeholder validation. Scientific early warning inputs from ICPAC, Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), and Somalia Water and Land Information Management (SWALIM) were systematically integrated with community-based signals — including local observations on rainfall, water availability, livestock conditions, and market trends — recognising that frontline knowledge is as essential as satellite data.

Workshop by Somalia government officials and partners to co-develop, validate, and operationalize an Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) for drought-prone communities in Baidoa and Hudur.

The result is a context-specific Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) built around a hybrid trigger model that combines IPC classifications, drought indices, seasonal forecasts, and community early warning signals. The plan defines a prioritised, multi-sectoral package of anticipatory actions across WASH, education, protection, and cash, along with clear activation thresholds, coordination structures, and operational procedures. It was formally validated with communities and endorsed at district level — meaning it carries the trust and legitimacy needed for rapid activation.

What makes this AAP distinctive is its deliberate movement away from dependence on top-down global indices. By anchoring triggers in local evidence and community reality, READO has built a system that communities and authorities will use — one that is sustainable, locally owned, and actionable ahead of the next shock.

This is what the next generation of anticipatory action looks like: not imported and imposed, but co-created and locally trusted.

Communities Lead the Way

EAP Development and Simulation Exercise in Ethiopia

On 6 and 7 March 2026, 80 people — 50 adults and 30 children — gathered in Ethiopia's Somali Region to do something that rarely happens in disaster preparedness: plan together, with children at the table.
The two-day activity, convened by Save the Children in partnership with regional and local DRM authorities, Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI), school directors, teachers, early warning committees, and religious leaders, had three interlinked goals: to communicate the GU/March–April–May (MAM) 2026 seasonal climate outlook to key local stakeholders; to co-develop a community-led, child-centred Multi-Hazard Early Action Protocol (EAP); and to test that protocol through a live simulation exercise focused on flooding scenarios.

Children and adults in Gode, Ethiopia, participating in Seasonal Climate Outlook Dissemination and the design of a community-led, child-centred Multi-Hazard Early Action Protocol (EAP).

The participatory process meant that the resulting EAP was not a top-down document handed to communities — it was built by them, incorporating local knowledge, lived experience, and child-specific vulnerabilities that often go unaddressed in standard humanitarian planning. Children and youth were not passive participants; they were active contributors, lending their perspectives on how disasters affect school attendance, safety, and daily life.

The simulation exercise brought the EAP to life, identifying gaps, testing coordination mechanisms, and building the muscle memory that communities need to respond quickly and confidently when a real trigger is activated. This initiative strengthened localised anticipatory action at multiple levels simultaneously: improved climate literacy among community members, clearer coordination pathways among local institutions, and a documented, validated EAP ready for activation. It is a model of how climate science and community agency can reinforce each other — making early action both technically grounded and locally owned.

Weather Stations in Schools

Raising a Climate-Resilient Generation in Ethiopia

In Shabelle Zone, Ethiopia, five new weather stations now stand on school grounds — not as props, but as working instruments of learning, community resilience, and early warning awareness.

Installed by Save the Children in collaboration with the Ethiopian Meteorological Institute (EMI), the Disaster Risk Management office, and the Education Office, these conventional weather stations bring real-time climate observation directly into the lives of students. Children are no longer just recipients of climate information — they are participants in generating it.

> Five new weather stations now stand on school grounds

Left Photo: Educational visit for AA school clubs to EMI weather station, Gode City, Shabelle Zone.
Right Photo: Briefing for students on Installed weather station at Digno Primary & Secondary School of Shabelle Zone.

Complementing the station installations, Save the Children organised an educational field visit to the EMI Weather Station in Gode for 40 participants, including 16 children and youth from Anticipatory Action (AA) School Clubs, teachers and school directors, Woreda Education and DRM representatives, and EMI technical staff. For many students, the visit was their first direct encounter with professional meteorological equipment and climate data systems — an experience that demystified the science of forecasting and made climate risk communication personally relevant.

The broader significance of these initiatives lies in a long-term vision: that today's schoolchildren, equipped with climate literacy and an understanding of early warning systems, will be better prepared to lead community responses to climate shocks in the future. Children and youth are not just vulnerable to climate change — they are also among its most powerful agents of adaptation.

By embedding climate education within schools and connecting it to the professional meteorological infrastructure of EMI, these initiatives foster a generation that is climate-informed, risk-aware, and empowered to act. In a region regularly affected by drought and flooding, this investment in human capacity is among the most durable forms of anticipatory action.

Section 5: Evidence & Learning

Measuring What Works — IRC's Resilience Research Informs Drought Programming in Oromia

In the drought-prone lowlands of East Hararge, a critical question has long been under-examined: do resilience-building programmes actually work, and for whom? IRC commissioned a Household Economy Analysis (HEA)-based Resilience Analysis to answer it — examining how integrated livelihood interventions have translated into measurable improvements in food security and household well-being under moderate drought conditions. Conducted between December 2025 and January 2026 by FEG Consulting, in collaboration with Action Against Hunger (ACF), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC), the study focused on Kersa and Fedis Woredas under the Food Security and Climate Resiliency in Disaster-Affected Households and Communities Project. It assessed the effectiveness of livestock support, irrigation, savings groups, and beekeeping interventions across different household wealth groups.

Highlights HEA data collection with VSLA groups in Oromia.

The findings carry significance for how resilience programming is designed, funded, and scaled. The research demonstrates that combined, well-sequenced livelihood interventions deliver stronger resilience outcomes than stand-alone activities — particularly for the most vulnerable households. It shows that IRC's integrated approach is moving households toward greater self-sufficiency in the face of recurrent drought, a finding that speaks directly to questions of cost-effectiveness and sustainability that donors and policymakers are increasingly asking.

For anticipatory action to fulfil its potential, it must be paired with resilience investments that reduce vulnerability over time. Evidence that specific intervention packages work — and under what conditions — is therefore foundational. This study provides that evidence for the Oromia lowlands and contributes to a growing knowledge base for climate-adaptive programming across the wider IGAD region. When the next drought arrives, policymakers and programme designers in Ethiopia will have better answers about what to do — and for whom to prioritise action.

Impact Metrics

At a Glance

The first quarter of 2026 demonstrated significant progress in the regional AA agenda, with measurable outcomes across multiple dimensions:

Policy Integration & Framework Advancements:

- 1 National AA Roadmap advanced and refined through technical review in Ethiopia.
- 1 National AA Roadmap in Uganda confirmed for Q2 2026 launch.
- 1 Disaster Risk Management Policy in South Sudan scheduled for validation in Q2 2026.
- 1 Regional Triggers and Thresholds Dashboard refined through practitioner feedback.
- 1 Regional AA Website reviewed and enhanced with user-driven recommendations.

Anticipatory Action Activations & Reach:

01

108,000+ people reached through Save the Children's drought activation in Shabelle Zone, Ethiopia.

02

2,125 households reached through IRC's "Follow the Forecast" activation in Somalia.

03

1 education-focused AA pilot launched in South West State, Somalia (February--June 2026).

04

1 Community-Owned Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) developed and validated in Baidoa and Hudur Districts, Somalia.

05

1 Multi-Hazard Early Action Protocol (EAP) co-developed and simulation-tested in Ethiopia's Somali Region.

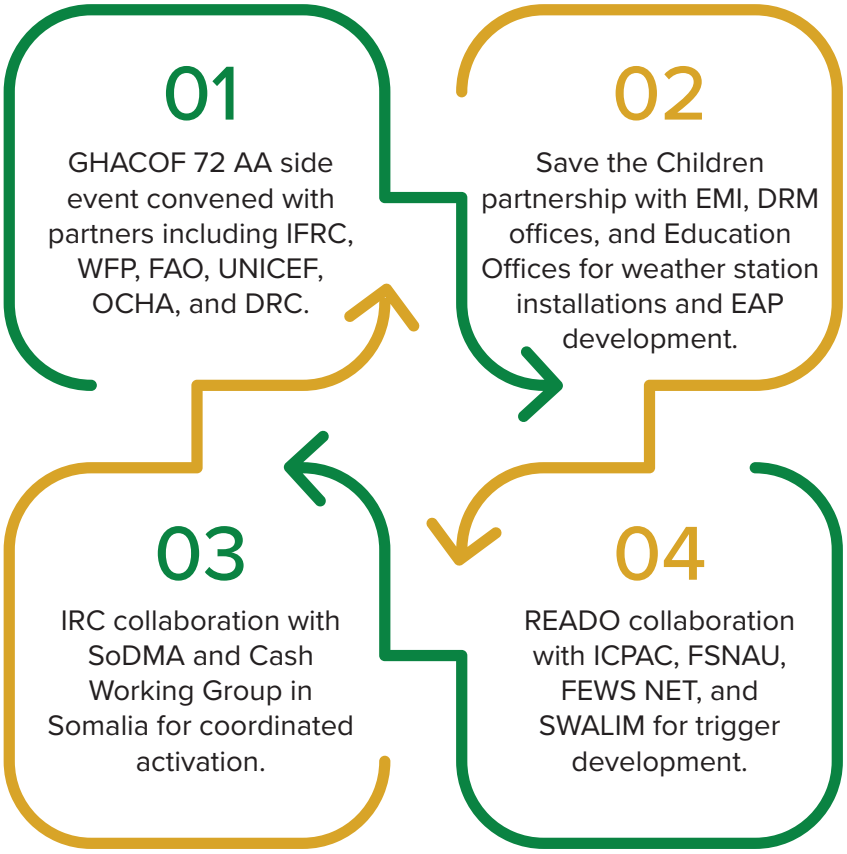
Systems Strengthening

5 new weather stations installed in schools across Shabelle Zone, Ethiopia.

1 school-based AA club system expanded with educational field visits and climate literacy programming.

1 consensus seasonal forecast produced through Djibouti's NCOF, with sector-specific crisis management strategies developed.

Partnership & Coordination



Systems Strengthening

01

1 Household Economy Analysis (HEA)-based Resilience Study completed in Oromia, Ethiopia, demonstrating effectiveness of integrated livelihood interventions.

02

1 child-centred AA pilot launched, generating evidence on education outcomes in crisis contexts.

03

1 community-owned AAP developed, demonstrating shift from top-down to locally-led AA systems.

Knowledge Products:

01

Child-centred Multi-Hazard EAP co-developed in Ethiopia.

02

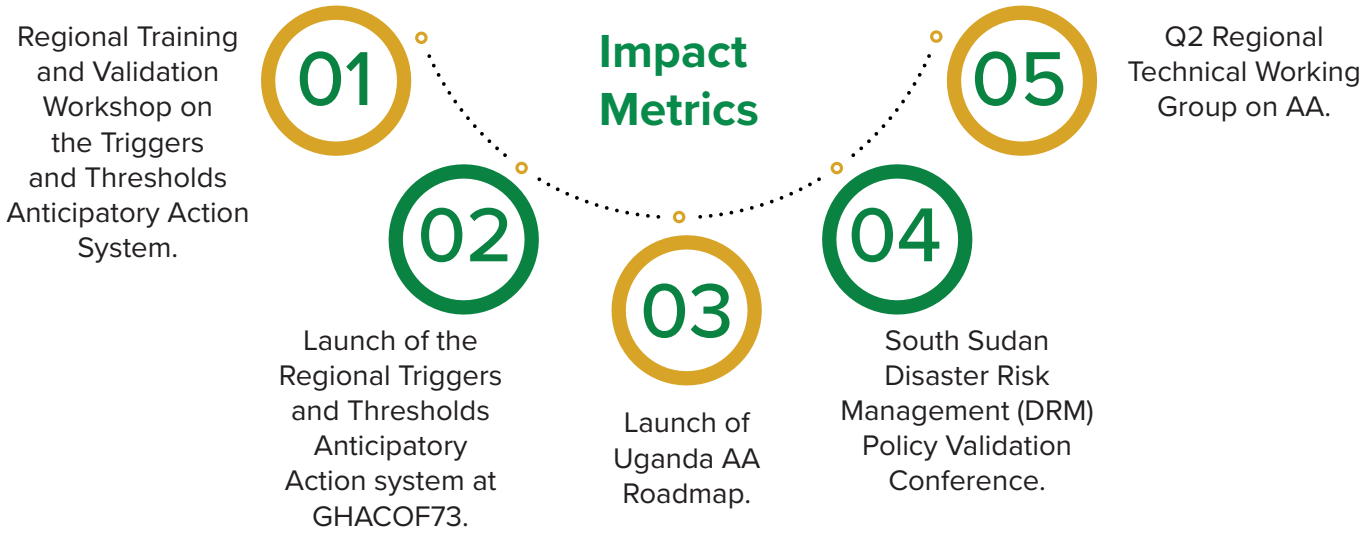
Child-centred Multi-Hazard EAP co-developed in Ethiopia.

03

1 community-owned AAP developed, demonstrating shift from top-down to locally-led AA systems.

Impact Metrics

In Q2 of 2026, the AA community in the region continues to build on the foundations laid during this quarter. Key milestones on the horizon include:



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