



A System to Anticipate and Address the Impacts of Drought in Zimbabwe

An overview of partnerships, capacity strengthening and activations



World Food Programme

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It is estimated that half of today's crises are somewhat predictable and 20 per cent are highly predictable, yet less than 1 per cent of the financing is prearranged. **In Zimbabwe, the World Food Programme (WFP) supports the development and mainstreaming of an anticipatory action system** with the aim of moving towards proactive risk management. It enhances the capacities of stakeholders to anticipate drought events through defined risk thresholds, anticipatory actions and prearranged financing.

PARTNERSHIPS TO PREDICT DROUGHTS

WFP collaborates with various government entities, including the Meteorological Services Department (MSD), the Climate Change Management Department (CCMD), provincial and district development coordinators, District Drought Relief Committees (DDRCs), and Civil Protection Units as well as other key stakeholders, such as the Red Cross and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), on the development of a robust drought anticipatory action system.

Funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) is complementing the support from the Green Climate Fund and previously from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to pilot and mainstream anticipatory action programmes across 12 districts. The districts were selected based on several criteria, including susceptibility to drought risk, alignment with existing WFP programs and level of local government engagement. **WFP supports districts in designing Anticipatory Action Plans (AAPs) for climate-related hazards and is developing an umbrella AAP at national level.** The MSD is a key partner at the central level in developing district-specific forecasts and identifying thresholds for severe weather forecasts.

In partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), **WFP also provides climate services by facilitating smallholders' access to skilful, timely and easy to understand information** to support decision making and help them enhance their agricultural production, as well as inform other livelihood decisions. This particular project links both United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) and WFP's Green Climate Fund-supported initiatives.

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Integrating Anticipatory Action within Climate Risk Management

Capacity strengthening of the MSD included the following activities:

- Supported the MSD in the development of downscaled forecasts and definition of triggers and thresholds.
- Helped the MSD to undertake a data rescue exercise to support the establishment of a national climate database. This resulted in digitizing and conducting quality control of 20-year of meteorological data that was recorded in paper format and hence previously unavailable for analysis of historical droughts and strategic decision making.
- Supported the adoption of a climatological database management system (ClimSoft) that was developed by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with the help of the UK Met Office and the University of Reading. While the MSD has used ClimSoft in previous versions, there is need to unify all their archives under a single most up-to-date version. WFP will facilitate the MSD staff participation in a training led by WMO for them to get acquainted with the latest version of Climsoft. This will further pave the way for the development of a national climatological database and allow for data entry to be carried out at source (station level) rather than waiting for data to be sent on paper records for transcription at the MSD headquarters in Harare.



District anticipatory action Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are the primary coordination mechanisms to develop anticipatory action solutions at the district level. With support from WFP, TWGs validate triggers for anticipatory action based on downscaled forecasts and drought risk, select anticipatory actions to be carried out before the disaster strikes, develop AAPs and activate when triggered.

Collaboration with district anticipatory action Technical Working Groups (TWGs) in the development of anticipatory action plans and implementation of anticipatory actions:

- Developed an anticipatory action repository in consultation with district TWGs comprising of technical representatives from the MSD, the Department of Civil Protection, District Drought Relief Committees, Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, and Rural Resettlement, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, research institutes and other development partners. The repository provides holistic guidance for the selection of appropriate anticipatory actions to mitigate impacts on at-risk communities.
- Developed AAPs, which are the standard protocols that link hazard thresholds and forecast triggers with anticipatory actions, timelines, location(s), costs and entities responsible for such actions to ensure that planned activities are successfully implemented in the window of time available between the given 'forecast trigger' and 'the event'. As part of this process, WFP also identifies readiness actions needed to implement the prioritised anticipatory actions and ensure all operational requirements are in place (i.e., targeting, delivery systems, contracts with cooperating partners.)
- Implemented selected anticipatory actions (provision of water and dissemination of climate information) in Mudzi district which triggered for mild to moderate drought in consultation with Mudzi AA TWG. The TWG, which is made up of District Development Coordinator, representatives from civil protection, Agritex, Rural District Council and the MSD, was consulted and informed about beneficiary targeting, endorsed the appropriateness of the anticipatory actions and oversaw implementation.

ACTIVATIONS SO FAR...

Last October 2021, the forecast Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) derived from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), predicted a mild to moderate drought in Mudzi district, in January and February 2022.

Therefore, in November 2021, the AAP for Mudzi district was activated to support communities in mitigating the predicted drought. The actions implemented from the TWG repository were the sustained provision installation of safe and adequate water for communities and livestock, the installation of boreholes and the dissemination of relevant, timely and simple climate information (through SMS) to farmers.

To activate the AAP, WFP coordinated with the MSD and carried out validation meetings with the Mashonaland East Provincial Civil Protection Committee and the Mudzi anticipatory action TWG. Seven water sites were selected by the community to drill solar-powered boreholes in the most vulnerable wards. This anticipatory action was implemented in partnership with World Vision, a cooperating partner that works on WFP's Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programme in the district. The provision of climate information was carried out by MSD, with support from Agritex and WFP.

LOOKING FORWARD

- Continue to strengthen MSD, the Department of Civil Protection and other relevant stakeholders' to provide high quality climate services, impact-based forecasting, and institutionalizing AA within the country disaster risk management plans.
- Assess the potential of sequencing climate risk management tools and financing mechanisms that can mitigate risks and contribute towards a Shock Responsive Social Protection system.
- Enhance inter-agency coordination by setting up a national-level TWG for anticipatory action with stakeholders, such as FAO and Red Cross, and national government partners.
- Scale-up humanitarian anticipatory action implementation at national level and gather robust evidence for the improvement of future activations.



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