MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Version 2.0 / 2024



REAP Risk-informed Early Action Partnership

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ABBREVIATIONS

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EWEA	Early warning early action
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
F4A	REAP Framework for Action
IA	Input/activity
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent Societies
IO	Intermediary outcome
IRS	Indicator reference sheet
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning
O	Output
OCHA	The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
REAP	Risk-informed Early Action Partnership
SN	Start Network
ToC	Theory of change
VfM	Value for money
UNDRR	United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction
WFP	The World Food Programme

GLOSSARY

Assumptions	These are the pre-conditions that must be in place to make the theory work. Assumptions explain the logic behind the causal links in the theory.
Causal pathway	A backwards mapping from the REAP goal through all the long and Intermediary outcomes to the outputs needed to achieve it, identifying a logical arrangement of causal links between these.
'First mile' community	Reaching the community-level is often seen as the 'last mile'. In the context of early warning early action, there is a concerted effort to shift this discourse to reflect the need for disaster planning and emergency preparedness to start at the point of community resilience, thus the 'first mile'.
Inputs/activities	This is a catch-all term for all the actions coordinated by the REAP Secretariat, which are essentially within the sphere of its control.
Outputs	These are the immediate results the REAP Secretariat seeks to influence, associated with the inputs/activities.
Outcomes	These are the flow-on effects expected as a result of the outputs interacting with other things happening in the wider world; these may be short to long-term. In complex initiatives like REAP, instead of there being one linear step from outputs to outcomes, there are often multiple steps or intermediate outcomes, which can be unpredictable and non-linear.



INTRODUCTION

The Risk-Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP) Partnership brings together stakeholders across the climate, development, and humanitarian communities with the aim of making one billion people safer from disaster by 2025. Recognising that disasters are increasingly multidimensional, severe, and frequent with many countries experiencing multiple overlapping crises, with climate change accelerating risks of poverty, food insecurity, disease, conflict, migration and forced displacement, REAP determines that interconnected risks require interconnected action.

Waiting for disasters to happen is no longer an option, particularly when there is unprecedented access to risk and forecast information that informs when disasters are imminent. Despite considerable progress in developing and implementing early action approaches, significant barriers persist, which REAP aims to address. These include challenges relating to decision-making and ownership of early warning early action approaches; gaps in enabling policies and frameworks; insufficient or insufficiently flexible and timely financing; gaps in early warning system coverage and design; and a lack of coordination and siloed approaches.

REAP will deliver on its goal through four interconnected aims

In its conceptualisation, REAP was premised on catalysing partnership and engagement towards four key targets, as depicted in Figure 1 overleaf.

Chad: People depend on farming and livestock for their livelihoods, but agriculture is challenging as the El Niño weather phenomenon is making rainy seasons unpredictable. © Giulio d'Adamo WFP

Figure 1: REAP Targets

Target 1



50 countries have reviewed and integrated their crisis/disaster risk management, 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.

Three main drivers of change would enable REAP to achieve its goal

1. Global commitment on policy and practice to scale-up risk-informed early action.
2. Country and local level ownership of early action programmes. Under the leadership of partner countries, REAP will work to enable interventions by partners that are designed to work within and in support of national systems and local capacities, with a fundamental focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.
3. Scale up of existing efforts on early warning early action by diverse actors through greater collaboration. REAP both convenes actors and offers a space to match needs with offers for support from REAP Partners.

REAP's MEL Framework will support accountability to its stakeholders

This document describes key facets required for the effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) of REAP's approach and performance towards its targets and beyond. The monitoring function refers to the continuous process of performance reporting and includes the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of REAP implementation as well as reporting against some impacts, which are longer term in scope. The evaluation function assesses the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in REAP achievements[1]. In doing so, the evaluations also assess governance and management systems, including the monitoring function itself.

The two central building blocks upon which the REAP MEL Framework rests are its Theory of Change (ToC) and Results Framework, which together provide a strategic overview of REAP:

1. The REAP ToC provides the conceptual framework that explains how and why REAP is expected to achieve its intended outcomes and impact goal, based on the key causal pathways arising from REAP's activities and outputs and the assumptions underlying these causal connections and
2. The REAP Results Framework presents the indicators REAP will track. To provide for a stronger and more holistic understanding of REAP's progress, the indicators are directly linked to the result areas described in its ToC.

1 It is relevant to consider that the information garnered during monitoring will eventually feed into an evaluation. Therefore, these evaluation criteria proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCED), Development Assistance Committee (DAC) play a role for monitoring and evaluation activities (OCED, 2019).

How the MEL Framework was developed and updated

The MEL Framework was developed through a systematic review and analysis of REAP Secretariat reports, Partner programme documents as well as early warning early action literature; interviews with REAP Secretariat and Partners; and two workshops with the REAP Secretariat.

Interviews with the REAP Partners were semi-structured and explored their journey to date, including the value they are creating, the barriers they have encountered, their current or planned approach to early warning early action, scaling up into new locations or to different hazards, and models for sustainability. The workshops with the REAP Secretariat explored the different elements of REAP and how they fit together and engaged with the proposed REAP ToC and Results Framework.

The first draft of the MEL Framework was reviewed by selected REAP Partners and the members of the REAP Board and this final draft integrates the feedback received.

In 2023, after two years of MEL implementation, the REAP Secretariat met a number of times to discuss and review the MEL Framework's ToC and Results Framework. These reviews were initiated by the co-development - with REAP Partners and other relevant stakeholders - of workplans for each of the Targets, which set out the activities that the Partnership expected to undertake until 2025. The focus areas of these workplans made it clear that revisions were required to the Theory of Change to bring it in line with what the Partnership had identified as the key causal pathways to change.

REAP's Technical Advisory Group were consulted on the proposed amendments in November 2023, and this MEL Framework has been updated based on feedback received.



Pakistan: Abdul Jabbar and his son Muhammad Hashim walk across flood water after their home was devastated in one of the worst-hit areas due to recent monsoon floods. © Saiyna Bashir WFP



Philippines: Affected people in Bato, Catanduanes have already started to rebuild their houses after Typhoon Goni. The main source of livelihoods on the island, Abaca plants were wiped out. © Philippine Red Cross Society

REAP THEORY OF CHANGE

THE PROBLEM

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance due to climate-related disasters alone could double by 2050 to 200 million a year, yet with concerted [early] action could decrease by as much as 90% to 10 million. In a global context of growing climate risk, where hazards are increasingly forecastable and loss of life and livelihoods is therefore not inevitable, it is imperative that systems adjust and adapt, moving from reactive to proactive, anticipatory approaches (REAP, 2021a: p9)

The hypothesis of change

If REAP (Secretariat and Partners) through its inputs/activities convenes a broad spectrum of countries alongside humanitarian, development and climate actors towards greater connection, cooperation, and collaboration in people-centred[2] early warning early action across national systems and local capacities; builds momentum for systemic improvements in the quantity and quality of finance for early warning and early action mechanisms; and advances the body of evidence on people-centred early warning early action.

Critical assumptions of how and why change may happen at the input/activity level include:

1. REAP Secretariat has adequate resources and technical capacity.
2. Partners are willing to invest time in REAP engagements, events and activities.
3. REAP performs functions that are not found elsewhere.

2 Solutions and approaches that are led and managed by those who are most at risk of climate-related crises. Whilst pro-poor principles are central, attention would also be paid to inclusion and other vulnerable factors, such as gender, age, and disability.

In the short-term

The ToC expects that REAP Partners will:

- Commit and mobilise towards REAP outcomes;
- Actively participate in the Partnership including sharing information, experience, and learning;
- Seek coherence and alignment of existing programmes/initiatives between climate, development and humanitarian Partners and identify new programmes/initiatives; and
- Advance the body of evidence on people-centred early action.

Critical assumptions of how and why change may happen at the output level include:

1. REAP Secretariat identifies Partners that are often excluded from such networks.
2. The Partnership advances the narrative of risk-informed early action.
3. Partners and Stakeholders see the necessity for greater coherence, complementarity and alignment across the full spectrum of people-centred early warning early action activities.
4. The Partnership is able to mobilise a range of actors to invest (money, time, capacity) in the full spectrum of people-centred early warning early action activities.

In the medium-term

The ToC expects that the programming and funding shifts towards early warning early action across humanitarian, development, and climate partners as well as at national and local levels would lead to: more countries actively aligning their CCA/DRM policies, systems, and practices; more people covered by financing and delivery mechanisms that enable them to act ahead of a disaster; institutional changes linking forecasting with social protection and other relevant sectors to develop financing and delivery mechanisms; political prioritisation and implementation capacity to scale up/implement existing and/or new approaches through government systems; more investments made in early warning systems that reach the 'first mile' communities; and that through appropriate public awareness campaigns that are linked to longer-term risk management systems more people are connected to new or improved early warning systems.

Critical assumptions of how and why change may happen at the intermediary outcome level include:

1. Governments value integration of their climate change adaptation and disaster risk management policies, systems, and processes.
2. Investments in early warning systems can be influenced to be more people centred, cultural and gender specific.
3. Sufficient funding in early warning early action is made available.
4. The Partnership evidences stories of change as a leverage for continued support and engagement with REAP objectives.
5. Donors see value for money for their investments.

It is in the medium-term that REAP strives to meet its four targets, and these are presented in the ToC as intermediate outcomes.

In the long-term

The ToC expects that governments continuously test and strengthen their integrated policy, planning and delivery systems down to the local level; all investments in early warning systems are coupled with investment in the capacity and agency of national social protection mechanisms and 'first mile' communities to take action ahead of disaster; and where warnings are triggered the appropriate financing (as well as other protection support) are delivered through efficient and effective channels that reach the people most at-risk.

Critical assumptions of how and why change may happen at the long-term outcome level include:

1. Challenges associated with early warning systems in terms of maintenance and reaching 'first mile' communities are overcome.
2. Integration of early warning early action results in continuous coordination between and across government structures and its citizens, including 'first mile' communities.
3. Political incentives exist to utilise early warning systems and prioritise resources (people and finances) for early action.
4. Early warning early action is cost effective at scale.
5. Investment in early warning early action is sustained.

Systemic change

The cumulative effect of the long-term outcomes is expected to lead to systemic and behavioural change, whereby early warning early action becomes the norm rather than the exception; decision-makers at all levels have the information, plans and resources to take protective or preventative action in advance of a hazard becoming a disaster; and warning information disseminated to the people and places most affected by these risks are reliable, understandable, and actionable.



In 2016 a woman in the flooded town of Nadi wades through floodwater after two days of heavy rain caused flash flooding. © Fiji Red Cross Society



Bangladesh: Abdus Samad Sarker and his grandson stand on a raft in front of his submerged house. During the flood, Abdus had to take shelter in his neighbour's house. © Sayed Asif Mahmud WFP

Critical assumptions of how and why long-term changes may happen include:

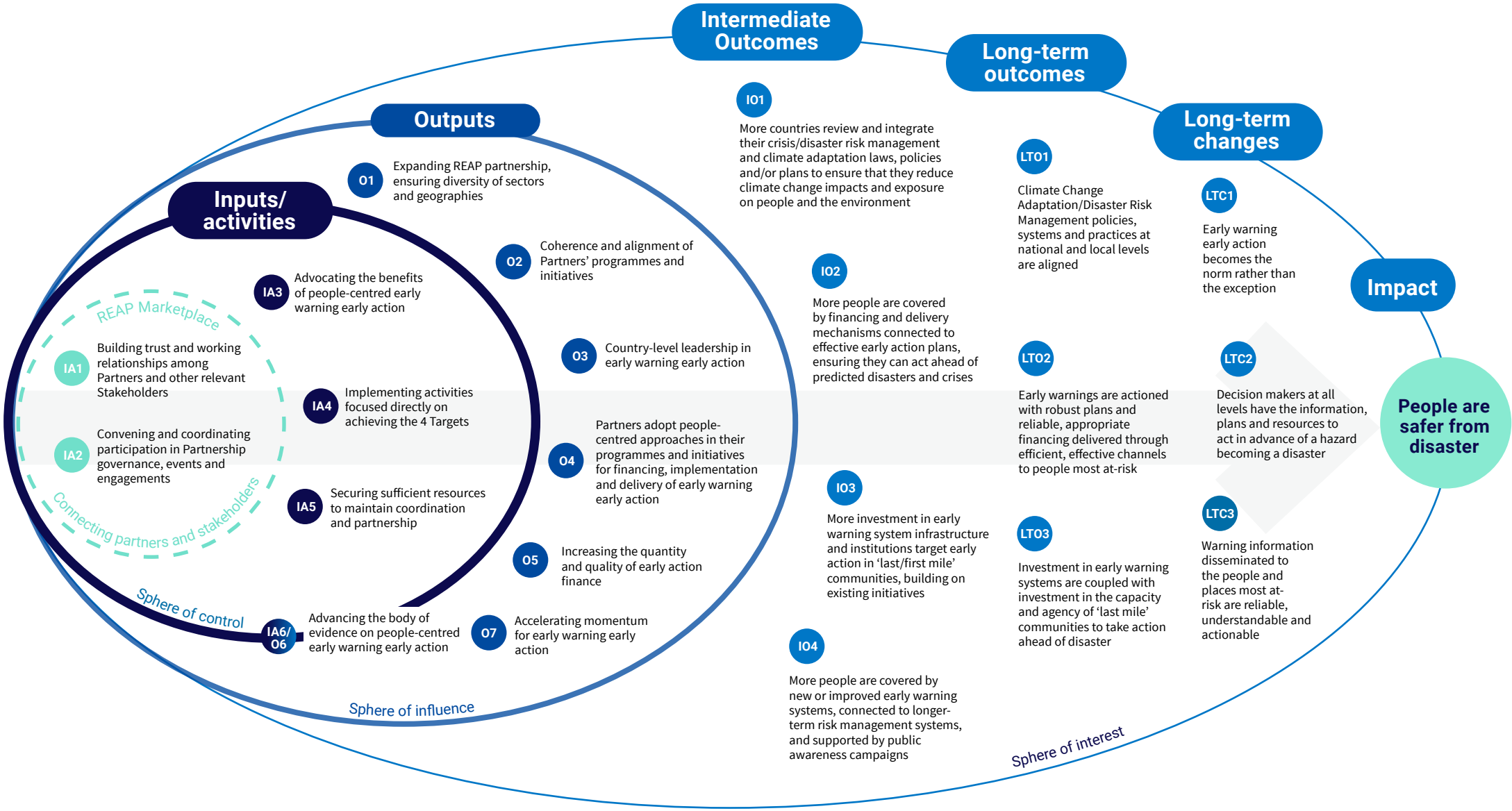
1. Decision makers at all levels have the right forecast and analysis information and resources, ahead of hazards, in order to activate effective early action mechanisms.
2. Early warning early action is proven to work – disasters can be forecasted and people at all levels have the agency and resources to act.
3. Early warning early action mechanisms and capacity are embedded into development, humanitarian and climate strategies and programmes.

In order to achieve the overall objective of REAP, specific interventions are required. The logic of these interventions and how they lead to the achievement of broader objectives is graphically represented in the REAP Theory of Change, which breaks down the underlying result chain from the activities facilitated by REAP to the overall impact of REAP.

This theory of change diagram (see Figure 2 below) illustrates how, based on REAP inputs/activities, REAP expects to deliver shorter term results that together create the underlying enabling environment that is necessary to lead to higher outcomes, which ultimately contribute to its impact of making more people safer from disaster.

Monitoring, evaluating, and sharing lessons learned will be key tools in potentially influencing other actors, programmes, or countries to adopt successful interventions for early warning early action or to avoid identified challenges.

Figure 2: REAP Theory of Change





Somalia: 30-year-old Sacdiya Mohamed Noor sits with her one-year-old son in her makeshift kitchen in Kabasa IDP camp. With her seven children, sister and newphew, Sacdiya moved from her home near Bardhere to escape the drought © Georgina Goodwin WFP

REAP RESULTS FRAMEWORK

This section presents the monitoring indicators that REAP seeks to track. This is key to gaining a comprehensive overview of how REAP is performing, its progress towards its Targets, and what decisions need to be made to improve results, review the causal assumptions laid out in the ToC and where to adjust the ToC accordingly.

Table 1 below sets out the selected indicators, cross-referenced to the relevant ToC result area, that REAP seeks to monitor. At the input/activity and output levels, these indicators are primarily quantitative and routine. At the intermediate outcome level, whilst some quantitative indicators have been proposed, these will also be measured with evaluations, as will the long-term outcomes, longer-term changes, and impact.

Table 1: REAP Results Framework

TOC LEVEL	RESULT	INDICATOR
IA1	Building trust and working relationships among Partners and other relevant Stakeholders	Number of events and engagements related to REAP's work, facilitated by the REAP Secretariat or REAP Partners.
IA2	Convening and coordinating participation in Partnership governance, events, and engagements	Level of participation by REAP Partners in events and engagements related to REAP's work.
IA3	Advocating the benefits of people-centred early warning early action	None: embedded in all inputs/activities.
IA4	Implementing activities focused directly on achieving the 4 Targets	Percentage of completion of Target-based workplan activities.

TOC LEVEL	RESULT	INDICATOR
IA5	Securing sufficient resources to maintain coordination and partnership	Percentage of funding allocation used. Technical and operational capacity provided to the Secretariat.
IA6	Advancing the body of evidence on people-centred early action	Number of organisations providing input to or consulted during the development of knowledge products created by REAP.
O1	Expanding REAP partnership, ensuring diversity of sectors and geographies	Increase in number and diversity of profile of REAP Partners.
O2	Coherence and alignment of Partners' programmes and initiatives	Number of documented instances of collaboration among two or more Partners.
O3	Country-level leadership in early warning early action	Number of governments that are coordinating across early warning early action partners and stakeholders.
O4	Partners adopt people-centred approaches in their programmes and initiatives for financing, implementation and delivery of early warning early action	Number of instances in which Partners evidence implementation of people-centred approaches to early warning early action.
O5	Increasing the quantity and quality of early action finance	Number of documented instances of Partners and other stakeholders adapting their crisis finance so that it arrives earlier and is arranged in advance. Number and type of funding sources for early action.
O6	Advancing the body of evidence on people-centred early action	Number of knowledge products developed and disseminated by Partners.

TOC LEVEL	RESULT	INDICATOR
O7	Accelerating momentum for early warning early action	Number and diversity of profile of Partners and other stakeholders integrating early warning early action into strategic and policy documents.
IO1	More countries have reviewed and integrated their crisis/disaster risk management and climate adaptation laws, policies, national frameworks for climate services and/or plans to ensure that they reduce climate change impacts and exposure on people and the environment	Number of countries that have reviewed and integrated their crisis/disaster risk management and climate adaptation laws, policies, and national frameworks.
IO2	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.	Number of people covered by financing and delivery mechanisms connected to early action plans.
		Number of countries receiving support to develop capacity and capability to act ahead of disaster.
IO3	More investment in early warning system infrastructure and institutions target early action in 'last/first mile' communities, building on existing initiatives	Number and value of new investments in people-centred early warning infrastructure and institutions.
IO4	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 public dialogue and initiatives to raise awareness of all stakeholders	Number of people covered by new/improved early warning systems.

REAP APPROACH TO MEL

In developing the REAP approach to MEL, the need for the MEL function to meet the following requirements was considered:

- **Accountability requirements** – to enable reporting on progress and performance, to demonstrate if interventions are leading to outcomes and impact, to verify results, and to validate that funding has been used in a way which offers value for money (VfM).
- **Evaluation requirements** – to verify and test hypotheses and result claims, to review the strength of evidence underpinning these claims, to understand why and how outcomes and impact have been achieved or not, and to identify what worked, why, how, when and for who; and to inform decisions on replication and scalability.
- **Learning requirements** – to understand what works and what not, to improve what is done and how it is done both in real time and in the design of future programmes, with the aim of increasing impact, sustainability and VfM.
- **Knowledge sharing and communication requirements** – to share lessons and reflections across REAP, as well as with the wider early warning early action community to leverage investment in this large scale and innovative initiative, and to communicate results to stakeholders.

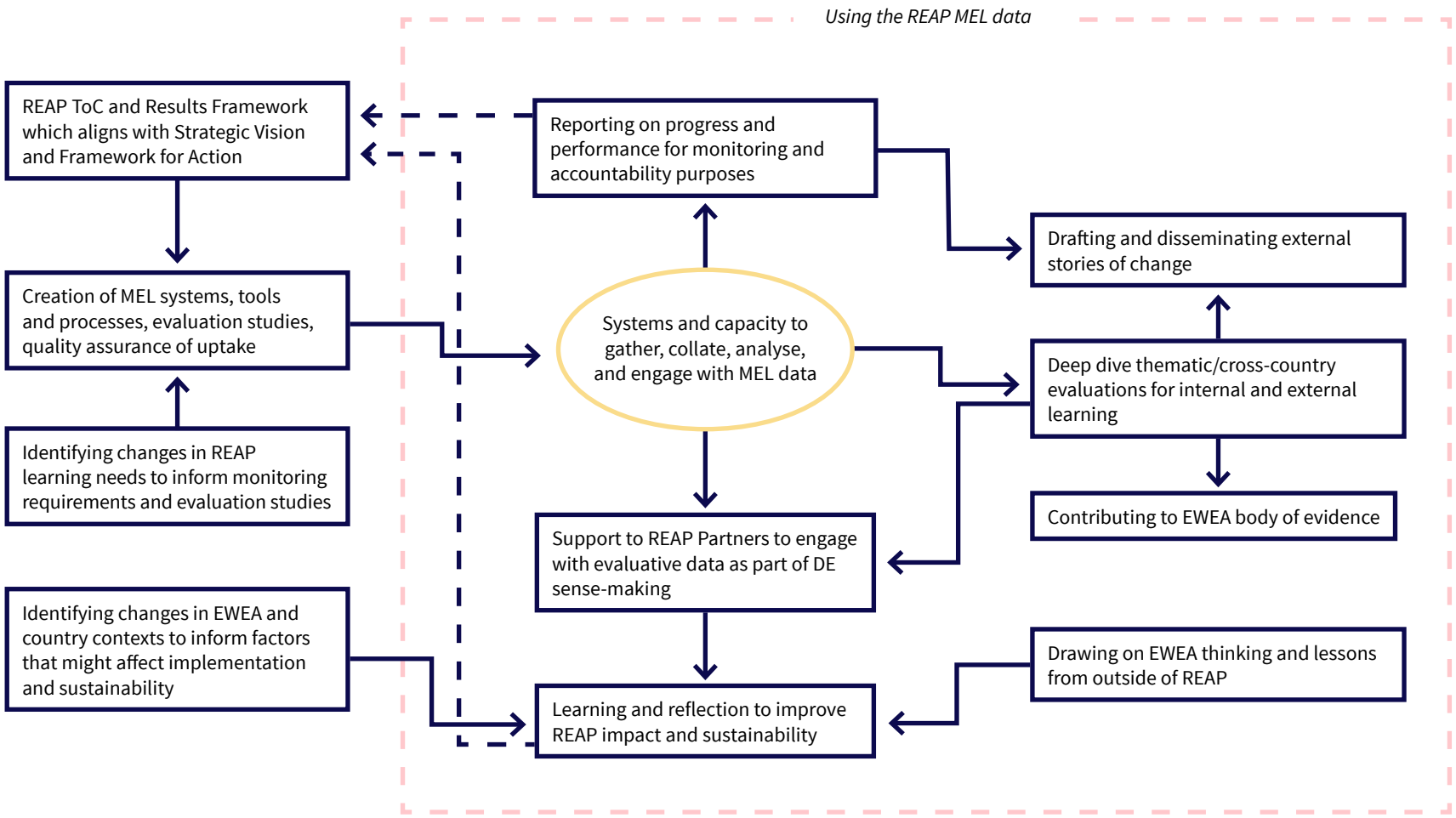
The REAP approach to MEL is illustrated in Figure 3 below; it is derived from the ToC and Results Framework and addresses the key functions detailed above. The individual elements of REAP monitoring, evaluation and learning are further detailed thereafter.

As Figure 3 below presents, REAP MEL planning also includes the ongoing review of learning needs so as provide inputs into the evaluation study design requirements as well as the regular review of the ToC and Results Framework. In addition, ongoing contextual analyses of both the early warning early action[3] and country[4] contexts will assist REAP in better understanding how change occurs in a given environment and which actors facilitated this change based on structural and/or institutional conditions.

3 A 'State of Play' analysis of the early warning early action context, commissioned by the REAP Secretariat, provides the foundation upon which future 'horizon scanning' is undertaken in order to remain aware of the changes to or emerging issues, trends, opportunities and potential threats and risks.

4 An in-depth study of 10 country contexts, commissioned by the REAP Secretariat, should be regularly reviewed/updated, and expanded to new country contexts in order to better understand REAP progress (or lack of) against the localised enablers and/or barriers to early warning early action.

Figure 3: REAP Approach to MEL



Monitoring

REAP MEL will track results and performance with regular reporting against the Results Framework indicators (see Table 1 above). Monitoring the progress of REAP is a continuing function that aims to provide early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results.

Monitoring helps REAP track achievements through the regular collection of information to assist timely decision making, ensure accountability, and provide the basis for evaluation and learning. This information will be useful for the management of REAP and to inform Partners of progress.

To enable a more complete and synergistic utilisation of data, monitoring tools will draw on the appropriate data collection method(s), use rigorous procedures in collecting and analysing data appropriate for each method's tradition and, where possible, seek to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Where possible, data collection will be linked to and/or draw from existing data collection processes that Partners lead on, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015 – 2030)[5].

Operationalising monitoring

To ensure data quality and consistency, a compendium of indicator reference sheets (IRS) will be developed. These detail vital information for each indicator, including its definition, unit of measure, sources of data, frequency of data collection, any baseline and targets, analysis process and reporting. The IRSs will also assist in developing a MEL calendar illustrating when data collection and analysis would take place and key internal and external reporting events of progress, such as future climate change conferences.

In addition, an appropriate and secure system will be established to enable REAP to collate, store, and retrieve data informing each indicator. Standard protocols will be established for naming, sharing, and storing REAP monitoring, evaluation, and other Partner data and evidence.

Some elements of REAP's work are critical to learn from but do not easily lend themselves to monitoring. For example, the quality, usefulness, effectiveness, and longer-term sustainability of partnerships is a critical aspect of REAP's success. Given the crucial importance of partnerships as a means to achieve outcomes, it will be important to assess how well they are working. This more in-depth analysis of partnerships would be included in evaluation rather than in monitoring activities, as the latter would be limited to a 'light touch' activity.

5 Implemented by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the Sendai Framework focuses on the adoption of measures which address dimensions of disaster risk in order to prevent the creation of new risk, reduce existing risk and increase resilience.

Evaluation

Given the complexity of REAP, the MEL system needs to offer a way to evaluate engagement in a wide range of technical areas, ideally on an ongoing basis to enable adaptive working practices in response to REAP's dynamic nature.

A traditional evaluation approach, whereby performance is verified and evaluated periodically (usually mid-term and end of programme/initiative) and compared with a baseline is not deemed suitable to meet REAP needs. Although it would provide REAP with insight into what has been achieved and how, it would not do this in a timely fashion, nor generate learning frequently enough to inform the delivery of REAP. The output of a conventional evaluation approach would also not adequately address the learning needs of REAP, which requires a range of investigations that have yet to be determined, which would likely be of different length and depth, into diverse elements and at different times. In light of these needs, REAP MEL will draw on a Developmental Evaluation (DE) approach.

Developmental evaluation (DE) as a methodological framework

Grounded in systems thinking[6], DE is an evaluation framework which is particularly appropriate when initiatives and interventions, like REAP, are not clearly defined from the start and/or continue to evolve. Pioneered by Patton (2011), DE can be defined as:

Long-term, partnering relationships between evaluators and those engaged in innovative initiatives and development. Developmental evaluation processes include asking evaluative questions and gathering information to provide feedback and support developmental decision-making and course corrections along the emergent path (Dozois et al, 2010:14).

Like formative and summative evaluations, DE is an evaluation approach which combines the rigour of evaluation (objective and evidence-based) with the role of development (flexible, change orientated and imaginative) and is context-specific (with no single prescribed methodology). However, DE differs from traditional formative and summative evaluation in the following ways:

- DE focuses on understanding a programme/initiative in the context in which it is delivered and explores how both the intervention/initiative and context evolve and interact over time;
- DE is specifically designed to generate findings in parallel to delivery, which can help REAP improve implementation;
- DE supports timely decision-making in a way that performance monitoring, and later-stage evaluation cannot; and
- Well-executed DE uses a participatory approach that helps build relationships which allows the effective sharing of information between REAP and evaluators and vice versa, and which ensures that evaluation meets REAP's needs.

In other words, DE aims to influence programme implementers to review what they do while they do it, so that learning happens simultaneously with implementation. Through these 'quick feedback loops', learning is shared on an ongoing basis and informs actions. DE is not simply about undertaking periodic review, rather the aim is to provide robust evaluative data at the time when it is of most use to those who can make most use of it, to support evidence-based and purposeful change to improve delivery and ultimately increase sustainability and impact.

6 *Systems thinking is a disciplined approach aimed at broadening understanding and thinking of problems in new and different ways in order to provide leverage and insight into what could be done differently.*

Operationalising DE

When applying an adaptive approach to implementation, the DE approach will provide an opportunity to introduce 'quick feedback loops', which generate evidence, learning and recommendations in 'real time' – thereby enabling reflection on what is working and what not, and offering evidence which can be used by REAP Partners to adapt what is done and why, with the aim of improving impact and sustainability.

By investigating a range of evaluation avenues, DE also offers the ability to meet diverse learning and assurance needs; this approach is captured in Figure 4 below.

Key to Figure 4



Continuous and collaborative engagement is undertaken to identify areas of investigation and an evaluation framework is developed. Centred on the REAP ToC, the framework would detail the rationale for the focal area(s) that would be evaluated, the key lines of enquiry, and the evaluation methods that would be utilised.

As stated above DE does not prescribe any particular data collection method. Each evaluation study should be situationally appropriate and take into account the nature of what is being evaluated, the evaluation questions the study seeks to address as well as the available resources.

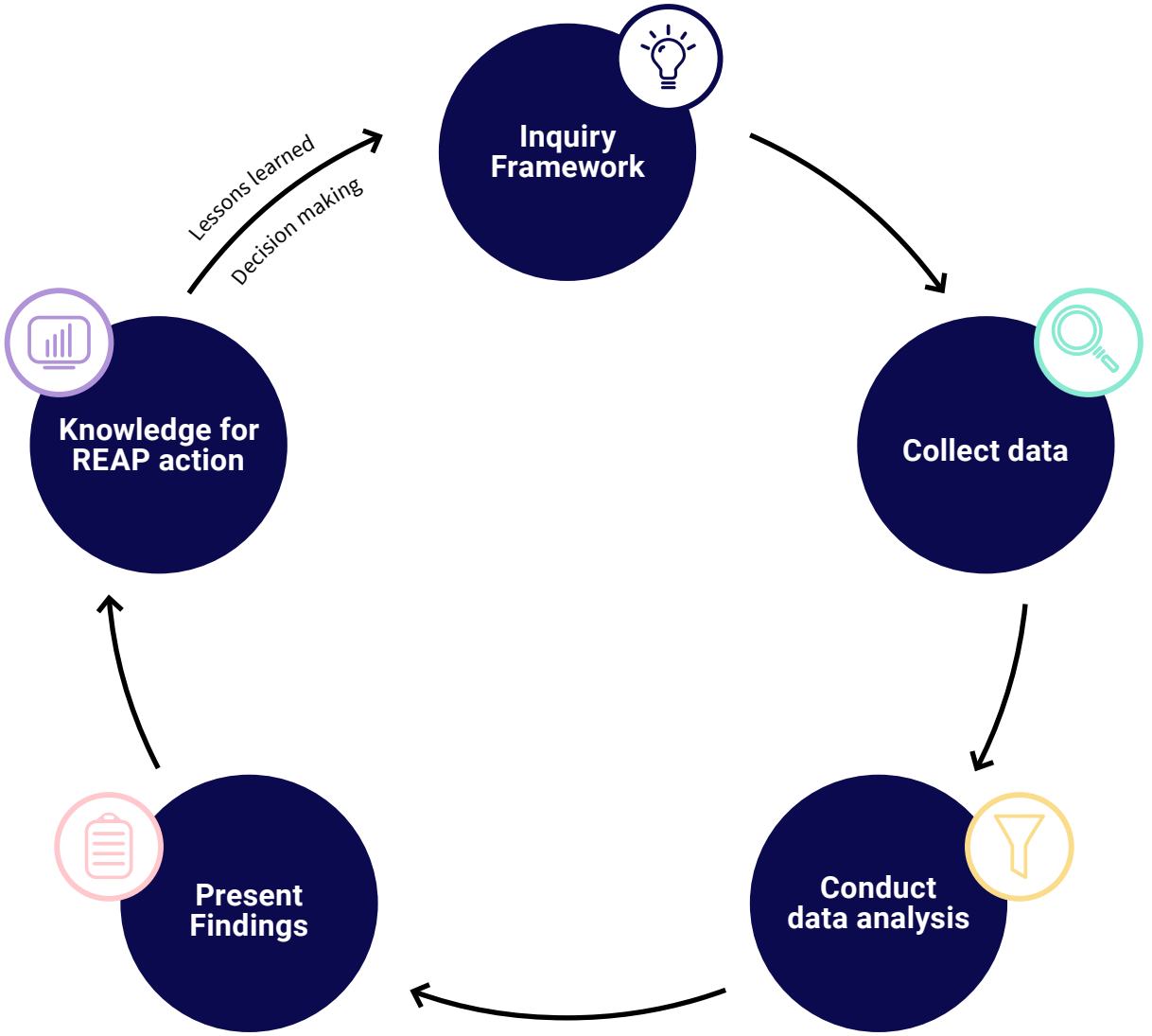
Data is analysed, triangulated, interpreted, and written up. Where appropriate, software applications that support quantitative/qualitative data analysis would be utilised.

Sense-making workshops led by the REAP MEL Coordinator and involving the REAP Secretariat and relevant REAP Partners provide a platform for validation of evaluation data analysis and findings, identification of lessons learned and an opportunity to discuss recommendations for adaptation.



The loop is closed by undertaking adaptation, where required - as necessary, future investigation can be undertaken to understand the impact of adaptation actions implemented.

Figure 4: DE in practice



A REAP DE Working Group, with representation from across the different categories of Partners, would serve as the forum to discuss and agree areas for investigation, taking into account:

- The strength of the evidence base – investigation where the evidence base is weak or absent should be prioritised.
- The likely scale of the results – more in-depth investigation should be considered where result claims are likely to be significant.
- If an opportunity to document learning and reflections exists.

Different DE evaluation activities could focus to a lesser or greater extent on measuring impact; performance and process; on documenting learning; and on contributing to the evidence base. The need to demonstrate contribution versus unpacking what worked or didn't and why as well as opportunities to understand if the hypothesis underpinning the ToC components and interventions held true, and the extent to which failure to meet targets was as a result of theoretical or implementation weaknesses, should also not be ignored.

REAP Partners and stakeholders will be drawn upon to provide technical and implementation support for undertaking evaluation studies. For example, the Academic Alliance for Anticipatory Action (4As)[7], the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA)[8], the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)[9] and the MEAL Practitioners Group[10].

By way of example, potential areas for evaluation, based on the ToC, could include:

TYPE OF EVALUATION	POTENTIAL EVALUATION STUDY
Impact	A robust attempt to consider REAP's progress to mid-level impact, that is, to unpack the contribution REAP can claim towards making 1 billion people safer from disaster.
Performance, learning	REAP's contribution to developing the enabling environment for early action.
Performance, learning	The hypothesis that investments in early warning systems can be influenced to be more people-centred, cultural and gender-specific could be tested through a theory-based evaluation involving a set of in-depth case studies
Process, learning	Assessing the work of the REAP in creating coherence and alignment of Partners' existing programmes and initiatives.

7 The 4As is a consortium of universities from around the world that seeks to build the evidence base on early action through real time and impact evaluation studies in partnership with humanitarian actors.
8 The ARA undertakes action-orientated research, which REAP Partners could contribute to through identifying knowledge gaps and learning needs so as to ensure research is utilisation-focused.
9 As part of its 2021–2025 strategy, ODI seeks to expand its research and convening to influence global debates and address challenges facing rich and poor countries alike; ODI has committed to contribute towards expanding and sharing the evidence base for risk informed early action.
10 Emanating from the Anticipation Action Task Force – a collaboration between the IFRC, Start Network (SN), The UN World Food Programme (WFP), The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) – the group meet monthly to share learning, undertake collaborative research, and provide peer-to-peer support. Whilst the terms of engagement for the group do not extend to external engagement, IFRC, SN, WFP, FAO and OCHA are all members of REAP.

Learning

A defining feature of REAP is its potential to add value through the synergy of joint working and a transformational learning process whereby Partners learn from each other and alter their own strategies, approaches, and ways of working accordingly.

Thus, a central feature of REAP's learning activities is to ensure that the results stemming from its monitoring and evaluation work are captured and proactively shared across the REAP Partners and more widely to inform learning and adaptive management of both REAP and Partners' early warning early action programmes and initiatives. In addition, the continuous review of learning needs, both in terms of the Results Framework and as part of identifying evaluation studies ensures that findings are linked to learning priorities and that MEL activities are timed in such a way that REAP Partners have the information they need, when they need it. Documentation and dissemination of evidence, knowledge and learning to other relevant audiences would support external learning and evidence uptake and feed into the global evidence base for early warning early action.

REAP would utilise several channels for internal and external learning built around the concept of co-creation and timeliness[11]:

1. Monthly Partnership meetings, which provide an opportunity to remain updated on recent developments.
2. Working Groups, which advance specific thematic areas of work.
3. Sense-making workshops, where evaluation study data analysis and emerging findings are shared, providing a platform for validation and identification of lessons as well an opportunity to discuss recommendations for adapting strategies and interventions.
4. Dialogue events, which take stock of the coherence, alignment, and complementarity of efforts on early warning early action.
5. Publications, which could include stories of change, practical guidance/tools for early warning early action, and evaluation research findings and lessons learned.

Operationalising learning

As REAP continues to expand the Partnership, considerations for a defined knowledge management approach which would enhance knowledge sharing, enable easy access to knowledge products and facilitate exchange with Partners and other relevant stakeholders are now underway.

An effective knowledge management approach can give Partners a larger platform to build on each other's knowledge and expertise and can assist in cultivating a culture that helps Partners recognise that sharing their knowledge makes them more relevant.

To nurture the REAP network, communications and knowledge management are seen as interdependent, whereby knowledge management informs 'smarter' communications and in turn knowledge management can benefit from the expertise of communications to reach different internal and external groups more effectively – offline and online.

11 Co-creation of knowledge and insights and the timely availability of monitoring and evaluation insights for decision-making both increases the use and usability of data and lends to progress towards outcomes.



After Tropical Storm Yagi in the Philippines, a man gathers plastic and scrap metal. He will sell it by the kilo and use the profits for his day-to-day expenses. © Patrick Mongaya / Philippine Red Cross

CONCLUSION

Early warning early action is neither linear nor straightforward, but rather complex, uncertain, and context-specific. In the context of REAP, adaptive programming recognises the dynamic contexts and interconnectedness of humanitarian, development and climate issues and enables REAP to work in a more demand driven way; addressing issues and exploiting opportunities that arise.

Moreover, in the context of MEL, there is a growing need to assess learning and evaluation from both a summative perspective (looking at what was achieved, and what worked or not) and formative perspective (focussing on learning to inform what is done) with the aim of increasing impact and sustainability. In addition to measuring progress and performance, the scope of evaluation often includes generating iterative analysis and supporting reflection to inform adaptation. New approaches, like DE, have emerged to enable evaluators to do this. Drawing on systems thinking, and recognising that programmes are often evolving, DE is a methodological framework which combines the rigour of evaluation with the role of adaptation and is context specific.

Ongoing review and, where necessary, adaptation of the REAP MEL Framework will ensure it remains relevant to the needs of REAP Partners and its management and governance functions. REAP Partners will be invited to take an active role both in the review process and in adjusting the monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities.

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