

Accelerated Support Window Operational Procedures

Note No. 4

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Accelerated Support Window – Operational Procedures

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1. Introduction

1. The CREWS Steering Committee, at its 12th meeting, approved the *CREWS Operational Plan 2021-2025 – Delivering At Scale*, including the Accelerated Support Window¹, and requested that the Secretariat develop streamlined and simplified operational procedures and reporting templates, and a funding allocation decision process, for the Accelerated Support Window.
2. The Accelerated Support Window Operational Procedures were approved by the Steering Committee on following an inter-sessional meeting on 30 November 2021 and a no objection approval on 21 January 2022. Amendments were reviewed and approved during the 18th CREWS Steering Committee meeting on 25 January 2024.
3. These Operational Procedures are consistent with the CREWS Governance Document and the Operational Procedures for Programming and Project Development and Monitoring and Evaluation that apply for CREWS projects.
4. These Operational Procedures ensure that the Accelerated Support Window is aligned with the UNFCCC Santiago Network² and, as appropriate, other mechanisms that provide knowledge and advisory services to LDCs and SIDS.

¹ The Accelerated Support Window was originally called the Strategic Support Window.

² Per Decision 2 taken at the 14th Steering Committee Meeting, “the Steering Committee expressed its interest in the CREWS Initiative joining the Santiago Network established as part of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism and invites the Secretariat to contact the UNFCCC Secretariat in this regard.” The vision of the Santiago Network is to catalyze the technical assistance of relevant organizations, bodies, networks and experts, for the implementation of relevant approaches for averting, minimize and addressing L&D at the local, national and regional level, in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change (Decision 2/CMA.2, para 43).

2. Accelerated Support Window Background and Overview

5. With a view to increase the effectiveness of its country operations and to adapt to the demand of Partner Countries and development partners, the Operational Plan 2021-2025 introduced an additional operational modality to further accelerate the availability of life saving-early warning systems in LDCs and SIDS.
6. The Accelerated Support Window supports the implementation of Actions in ODA-eligible LDCs and SIDS (Partner Countries) by Implementing Partners that are short-term, targeted (i.e., Continued Assistance, Analyses and Assessment, and Advisory Services), and small-scale (US\$50,000-250,000) that aim to strengthen elements of early warning systems and the associated enabling conditions required for their sustainability and effectiveness.
7. The Accelerated Support Window aims to initiate support via one of the Implementing Partners within four to six weeks of receiving a request (i.e., Action Presentation Note), enabling CREWS to be responsive to the time sensitive needs of its Partner Countries.
8. The Accelerated Support Window:
 - a. Contributes to the achievement of the overarching CREWS objective to substantially reduce disaster mortality by 2030 by significantly increasing access to early warnings and risk information in LDCs and SIDS; and
 - b. Supports realization of the CREWS Outcomes and Outputs, especially at the national level.

3. Accelerated Support Window Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria

9. The Accelerated Support Window receives requests (i.e., Action Presentation Notes) for country and regional Actions from Partner Countries and Implementing Partners on a rolling basis (i.e., at any time).
10. The allocation of Accelerated Support Window funding is guided by Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria. The Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria can be revised at any time by the Steering Committee.
11. Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria:
 - a. ODA-eligible LDCs and SIDS.^{3,4}
 - b. Actions must contribute to CREWS' overarching objective to substantially reduce disaster mortality by 2030 by significantly increasing access to early warnings and risk information in LDCs and SIDS.
 - c. Actions must align with and support, as relevant, the overarching CREWS programming principles/value propositions – people-centered early warnings, gender-responsiveness, promotes coherence, multiplier/leverage, private sector engagement – as articulated in the CREWS Operational Procedures.
 - d. Actions must be 12 months or less in duration unless Action provides support to and needs to align with a longer duration project.
 - e. Actions are expected not to exceed the ~~a~~ maximum budget of US\$150,000, including the Implementing Partner fees.
 - f. Actions must fall under one or several of the three categories, namely (i) Analyses and Assessments to inform an EWS project, (ii) Advisory services for EWS projects, (iii) Continued assistance following the closure of a CREWS project or (iv) support to CREWS proposal preparation for those in the

³ This includes LDCs and SIDS included on the current DAC List of ODA Recipients. For 2021:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2021-flows.pdf>

⁴ For regional Actions, all countries must be ODA-eligible.

CREWS pipeline approved by the Steering Committee for full proposal development. See Table 1 for an illustrative, non-exhaustive list of potential actions.

Table 1. Accelerated Support Window Illustrative Actions

Continued Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted expert support and capacity building following the end of a CREWS project in order to enhance its sustainability.
Analyses and Assess.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of institutional arrangements and technical capacities of beneficiary agencies (e.g., DRM, NMHSs) and recommendations for improvement. Analysis to inform the development of larger scale early warning system investments, including CREWS projects (i.e., for CREWS pipeline countries). Design and implementation support for large scale and/or strategic investments directed to EWS improvement. Compatibility assessments of actions for more synergies between CREWS-backed EWS and ESW projects from other institution (e.g., supported by NGOs or development agencies).
Advisory Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and support for large scale and/or strategic investments directed to EWS improvement, including: (i) Short-term assistance on selected or specific elements of early warning system, and (ii) Recommendations for technical specifications. Translating global products into nationally-relevant products. Support for the development of disaster risk financing products (e.g., technical input to the design of parametric insurance products).
Support to CREWS project preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support project preparation for countries and regions approved by the Steering Committee for full proposal development Consultations to engage more stakeholders in the countries and regions during CREWS project preparation stage. Engagement of additional technical support (i.e. external expert) to support CREWS Implementing Partners in preparing CREWS project proposals.

- g. The Action must align with and be supportive the Partner Country's broader early warning system efforts and commitments (e.g., as articulated in their Nationally Determine Contribution (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), efforts to implement the Sendai Framework, etc.)
- h. The Action to give special attention to the application of innovative tools and people-centered/early action activities.
- i. Partner Countries, via a relevant government institution, or Implementing Partners can submit the Action Presentation Note.
 - i. Submissions by Implementing Partners must include a Partner Country Endorsement Letter or similar⁵ from relevant government entity or entities (e.g., National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS), National Disaster Response Agency, etc.).
- j. Implementing Partners will implement the Action, drawing on external expertise as required (e.g.,

⁵ This can include existing Letters or Frameworks in place between the Implementing Partner and Partner Country or Countries in the event that the scope of engagement includes the specific early warning system Action being requested. For Regional Action requests, the Endorsement Letter or similar existing Letter or Framework can originate from relevant regional institutions.

National Met Services) and will closely collaborate with the Partner Country in implementation.

k. Prioritization will be given to actions that:

- i. Support a previous CREWS Partner Country (i.e., Continued Assistance).
- ii. Support a CREWS Pipeline Country (i.e., Analyses and Assessments, Advisory Services).
- iii. Support a country with an emerging strategic/investment opportunity that can be influenced by CREWS (i.e., Analyses and Assessments, Advisory Services).
- iv. Target people-centered and gender-responsive approaches (e.g., informing or strengthening Early Action Plans and other efforts to facilitate early action).

4. Accelerated Support Window Roles and Responsibilities

12. The roles and responsibilities of, respectively, the Steering Committee, the Implementing Partners, the Secretariat and the Trustee, regarding programming and project development are found in the CREWS Governance Document initially adopted by the Steering Committee on 12 September 2016 and later revised.
13. Aligned with the CREWS Governance Document, the following summarizes the roles and responsibilities related to the Accelerated Support Window:

a. **Steering Committee**

- Approves Accelerated Support Window Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria;
- Reviews and approves Accelerated Support Window Action Presentation Notes; and
- Reviews Accelerated Support Window Action Interim and Final Reports, and recommends corrective actions as necessary.

b. **Implementing Partners**

- Develops and submits Action Presentation Notes to the Secretariat in consultation with and at the request of relevant Partner Country institutions, securing Partner Country support via an Endorsement Letter or similar;
- Receives from the Secretariat, confirms interest to support and finalizes Action Presentation Notes submitted directly by Partner Countries;
- Implements Action within timeframe outlined in the Action Presentation Note, coordinating closely with the Partner Country;
- Submits Interim and Final Reports to the Secretariat, as relevant, making sure to always secure Partner Country input; and
- Submits Financial Reports to the Trustee.

c. **Secretariat**

- Receives Action Presentation Notes from Partner Countries and Implementing Partners and, in the case of the former, reviews and puts the Partner Countries in touch with the most relevant Implementing Partner;
- Reviews Action Presentation Notes to ensure eligibility criteria are met, communicating with Implementing Partners if further information is required;
- Shares eligible Action Presentation Notes with Steering Committee via email;
- Once Steering Committee approves Accelerated Support Window Actions, communicates with the Implementing Partners, Partner Countries and the Trustee;
- Keeps the Trustee informed to enable the Trustee to carry out its responsibilities; and
- Receives and consolidates all Interim and Final Reports from the Implementing Partners and share with the Steering Committee

d. **Trustee**

- Issues Letter of Commitment to the Implementing Partners;

- Makes cash transfer to the Implementing Partners; and
- Receives Financial Reports from the Implementing Partners and informs the Steering Committee through its quarterly reports on the financial status of the CREWS Trust Fund.

14. Partner Countries can submit Action Presentation Notes directly to the Secretariat or can work with one of the Implementing Partners to develop the Action Presentation Note. In the case of working with the Implementing Partner, the Partner Country must include an Endorsement Letter or similar to formalize their interest. If the Action Presentation Note is approved, the Implementing Partner will coordinate closely with the Partner Country/Countries to enable successful Action delivery. At the conclusion of the Action, the Partner Country/Countries will input to the Final Report, especially on how the supported Action contributed to the country's broader early warning system efforts and commitments (e.g., as articulated in their Nationally Determine Contribution (NDC), National Adaptation Plan (NAP), efforts to implement the Sendai Framework, etc.)

5. Action Development and Approval Stages

15. Accelerated Support Window Action Development and Approval spans three stages: (1) Submission of Action Presentation Note; (2) Eligibility Screening; and (3) Selection Process.

16. Stage One: Submission of Action Presentation Note

- a. On a rolling basis:
 - i. Partner Countries can develop and submit Action Presentation Notes to the Secretariat.
 - ii. Implementing Partners can develop and submit Action Presentation Notes to the Secretariat in consultation with and at the request of relevant Partner Country institutions. An Endorsement Letter or similar⁶ from the Partner Country must be attached to the Action Presentation Note.

17. Stage Two: Eligibility Screening and Action Presentation Note Finalization

- a. Partner Country Submission
 - i. The Secretariat screens the Action Presentation Notes to ensure that the Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria are met and identifies most relevant Implementing Partner based on the nature of the request. Timeline: 1 week.
 - ii. The Implementing Partner, if it chooses to support the Action Presentation Note, reviews, refines, and finalizes the Action Presentation Note in consultation with the Partner Country. Timeline: 2-3 weeks.
- b. Implementing Partner Submission
 - i. The Secretariat screens the Action Presentation Notes to ensure that the Eligibility and Funding Prioritization Criteria are met. As necessary, the Secretariat will submit clarifying questions to the Implementing Partner. Timeline: 1 week.
 - ii. Implementing Partners will amend Action Presentation Note based on feedback from Secretariat, if necessary. Timeline: 1 week.

18. Stage Three: Selection and Approval Process

- a. The Secretariat will review and quality appraise the Action Presentation Notes using the enhanced quality review process put in place.
 - Tier 1: Approved – The Secretariat will share the approved Action Presentation Notes with the Steering Committee.

⁶ This can include existing Letters or Frameworks in place between the Implementing Partner and Partner Country in the event that the scope of engagement includes the specific early warning system Action being requested. For Regional Action requests, the Endorsement Letter or similar existing Letter or Framework can originate from relevant regional institutions.

- Tier 2: Returned for review or forwarded for additional expert review.
- Tier 3: Returned to requesting entity.

b. Action Presentation Notes that have been appraised as Tier 1 would be shared with the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will review the Action Presentation Notes and provide feedback or approval on a virtual, no objection basis. Timeline: 2 weeks, or longer should the Steering Committee ask for additional information.

- i. At the request of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat will secure additional information from the Implementing Partner.
- c. The Secretariat will inform the Partner Country and Implementing Partner of the Steering Committee decision, and the Trustee of approved Action Presentation Notes.

19. A standard template will be used for the Action Presentation Note. The Template can be revised at any time by the Steering Committee. The Action Presentation Note Template is included as Annex 1 of this document.

6. Action Implementation and Reporting

20. The official start date of the Action is the date of Steering Committee approval. Actual start date may vary depending on the date of receipt of funds by the Implementing Partner. This information is to be recorded by the Implementing Partners in their Reports. The end date will be specified in the Action Presentation Note.
21. The Implementing Partner has to complete Annex D of the Financial Procedures Agreement and submit it together with the Cash Transfer Request to the Trustee for funds release to be processed. The Implementing Partner must clearly state that the request relates to the Accelerated Support Window.
22. CREWS Actions are implemented and administered in accordance with the guidelines of the Implementing Partners. Implementing Partners will apply their own approval procedures, procurement, and financial management procedures.
23. **Action Progress and Final Report:** Actions are required to submit a Final Report to the Secretariat latest 3 months after the completion date. No new funding decisions for Implementing Partners with delayed reports. The Secretariat will include these reports in the Portfolio Status Summary Reports.
24. **Action Financial Report:** Financial reports should be provided in accordance with the templates attached as Annexes to the Financial Procedures Agreement signed between the Trustee and the Implementing Partner.
25. A standard template will be used for the Action Final Report. The Templates can be revised at any time by the Steering Committee. The Template is included as Annex 2 of this document.

7. Action Timeline and Roles and Responsibilities

26. The details for each stage, as well as the timeline and roles and responsibilities, are summarized in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1. Accelerated Support Window Action Timeline

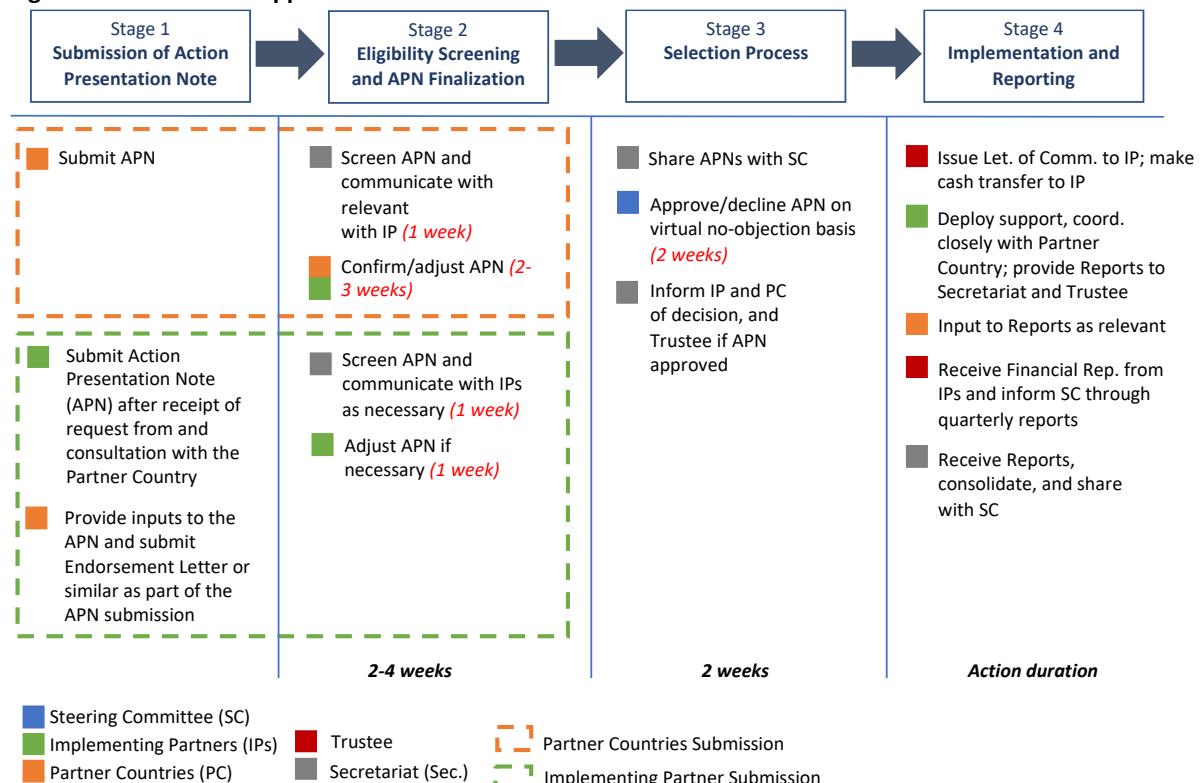
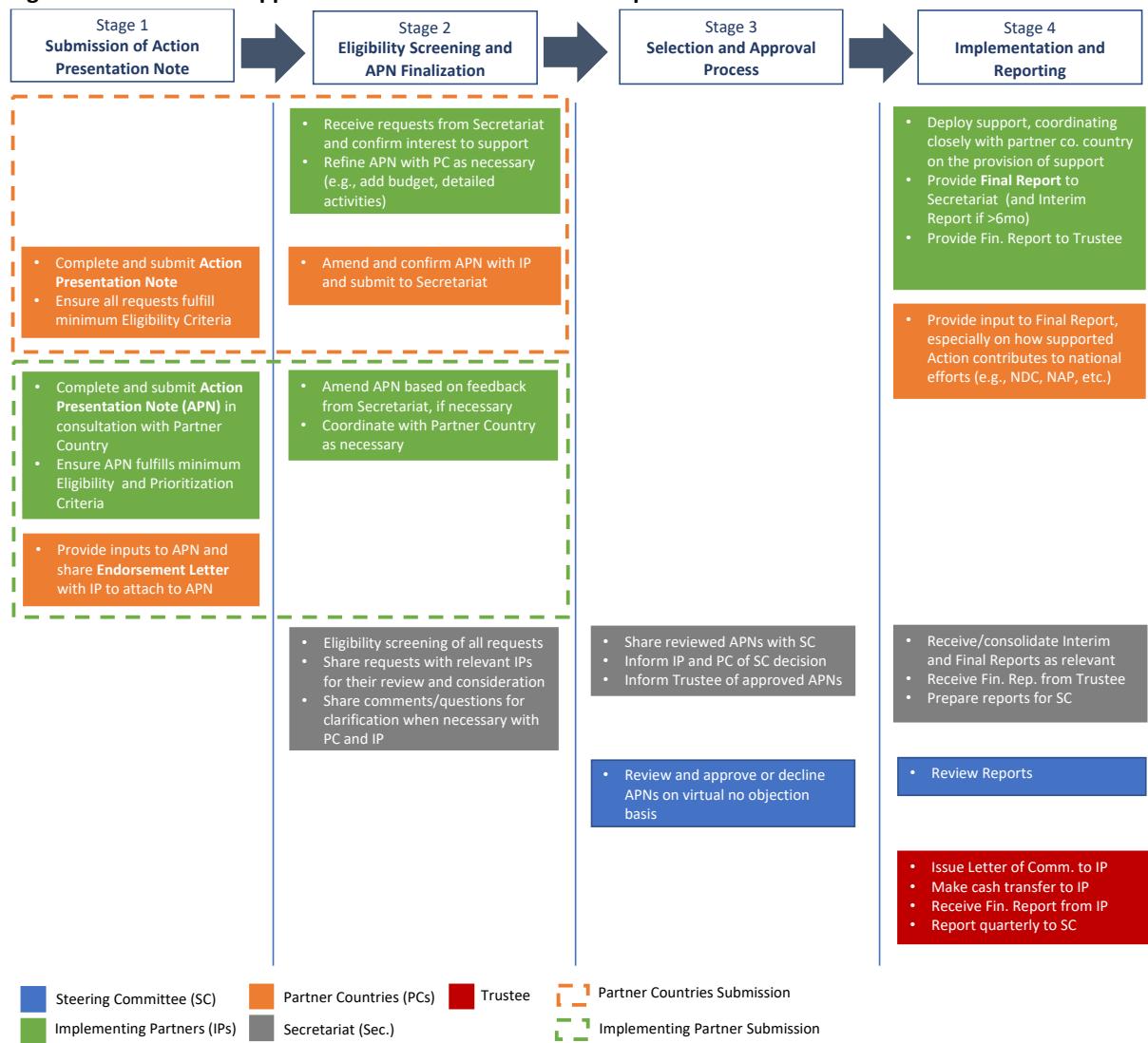


Figure 2. Accelerated Support Window Action Roles and Responsibilities



8. Risk Management

27. CREWS will support Actions in ODA-eligible LDCs and SIDS, including in fragile states. Risks may exist or arise due to global conditions (e.g., Covid-19), country-specific issues, or to the Action itself (e.g., consultant movement restrictions).
28. Overall risk management of CREWS Actions adhere to the risk management system, policy and procedures of the Implementing Partners. See the Updated CREWS Risk Management Approach document approved at the 6th Meeting of the Steering Committee.

9. Action Completion and Closure

29. Implementing Partners need to ensure that at the Action end date, all activities are completed, and no more additional obligations are to be incurred. Extensions will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.
30. A Final Report will be submitted to the Secretariat not later than three months after the completion of all activities. A template for the Final Report is prepared and provided by the Secretariat and to be used by the Implementing Partners. The Final Report will be completed with inputs from the partner country and certified

by an authorized representative from the Implementing Partner. No new funding decisions for Implementing Partners with delayed reports.

31. Financial reporting to the Trustee should be provided in accordance with the templates attached as Annexes to the Financial Procedures Agreement signed between the Trustee and the Implementing Partner.
32. Following completion of activities, unused funds are to be reported by the Implementing Partners to the Trustee via Annex F of the Financial Procedures Agreement (semi-annual report on unused funds for projects and administrative fees), clearly stating that the funds to be returned are under the Accelerated Support Window. Once the report for unused funds is submitted to and received by the Trustee, an invoice to the Implementing Partner will be issued by the Trustee including instructions and bank account details for the return of the unused funds.
33. The Implementing Partners are highly encouraged to consult with the Secretariat on any performance/operational reporting requirements.

Annex 1 – Template for CREWS Action Presentation Note

Action Title	[Name of the Action]
Country(ies)	[Country or countries, in the case of a regional Action]
Partner Country Entity / Entities	[Ministry/Agency/Entity within Partner Country/ies; main point(s) of contact and contact details]
Implementing Partner (if submission by Implementing Partner)	[Implementing partner, including main point(s) of contact and contact details]
Implementing Partner Requested (if submission by Partner Country)	<p>Select at least 1:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> World Bank/GFDRR <input type="checkbox"/> WMO <input type="checkbox"/> UNDRR <input type="checkbox"/> No preference</p> <p>[Please note that the requested Implementing Partner is not guaranteed; the Secretariat will review the nature of the Action and determine the most appropriate Implementing Partner, and the Implementing Partner will also need to confirm interest and availability to proceed with the Action Presentation Note in partnership with the Partner Country]</p>
Action Type	<p>Select at least 1:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continued Assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Analyses and Assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Services <input type="checkbox"/> Support to <u>CREWS</u> Project Preparation</p>
Early Warning System Element(s) Supported	<p>Select at least 1:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, detection, analysis and forecasting of hydro-meteorological hazards providing lead-times for action. <input type="checkbox"/> Dissemination of timely and authoritative warnings <input type="checkbox"/> Preparedness and response plans triggered by warnings and weather and climate predictions. <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster risk knowledge based on the systematic collection of data and disaster risk assessment.</p> <p>[Optional: provide additional information as relevant]</p>
Contributions to CREWS Programming Principles and Results Framework	<p>CREWS Programming Principles addressed: Select all relevant:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> People-centered <input type="checkbox"/> Gender-responsive <input type="checkbox"/> Promotes Coherence <input type="checkbox"/> Leverage <input type="checkbox"/> Disability-inclusive</p> <p>CREWS Results Framework Outputs to which the Action is expected to contribute to: Select at least one:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A country and/or region has developed or strengthened legislative and/or institutional frameworks to support and sustain multi-hazard early warning systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-hazard needs, gaps and priority assessments, analyses, and related investment plans for early warning systems in a country or region are driven by CREWS financing. <input type="checkbox"/> Partnerships and cooperation frameworks developed for financing and scaling up support to multi-hazard early warning systems. <input type="checkbox"/> Risk information and tools generated by countries to enable the delivery of impact-based</p>

	<p>early warnings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, analysis and forecasting of hazards that threaten the country/region are improved and sustained by the countries.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Warnings are communicated by the countries based on common alerting protocols under agreed standard operational procedures (SOPs)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Warnings are received, understood and acted upon based on co-produced preparedness and response plans by the countries.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> People of different backgrounds, gender, youth, older persons, persons with disability, poor, marginalized, displaced and non-native, as well as related institutions have co-produced climate and weather information products tailored to their needs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Private sector is engaged to foster innovation and sustainability in delivery of early warning services.</p> <p>CREWS Programme Indicators to which the Action is expected to contribute to:</p> <p><i>Select at least one:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Forecasting and warning capacity</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Access to early warning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use of risk information</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity to disseminate warnings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Capacity to prepare for and respond to warnings.</p>
<i>[Optional: provide additional information as relevant]</i>	
Specific Action and Objectives	<i>[Max. 250 words describing the requested Action and the Objectives]</i>
Need and Rationale	<i>[Max. 250 words articulating why the Action is needed and how it contributes to the country's early warning system efforts; if Cont. Ass., how it builds on CREWS Project]</i>
Alignment	<i>[Max. 250 words articulating the alignment between the requested Action and existing/ongoing projects, programs, plans and commitments (e.g., EWS projects supported by bilateral or multilateral funds, NAP, NDC, efforts within the Santiago Network)]</i>
Timeframe	<i>[Projected duration, in months; must be less than 12 months or include justification for longer duration (e.g., if linked to another project that extends beyond 12 months)]</i>
Action Cost (To be completed by Implementing Partner)	<i>[Action amount requested in USD, including Implementing Partner fees]</i>
Attachments	<p><i>[Country Endorsement Letter or similar⁷ if submission by Implementing Partner]</i></p> <p><i>[Detailed Activity List to be provided by Implementing Partner]</i></p> <p><i>[Detailed Budget to be provided by Implementing Partner]</i></p>

⁷ This can include existing Letters or Frameworks in place between the Implementing Partner and Partner Country or Countries in the event that the scope of engagement includes the specific early warning system Action being requested. For Regional Action requests, the Endorsement Letter or similar existing Letter or Framework can originate from relevant regional institutions.

Annex 2 – Template for CREWS Action Final Report

1. Action Title		2. Action Reference	
3. Implementing Partner		4. Other Partners (i.e., Sub-contracted)	
5. SC Approved Action Duration / End Date		6. Actual Action Duration / End Date	
7. SC Approved Action Budget (in USD; incl. IP fees)		8. Actual Action Expenditure (in USD; incl. IP fees)	
9. Reporting Focal Point(s)			
10. Action Type	[Pulled from Action Presentation Note]		
11. Early Warning System Element(s) Supported	[Pulled from Action Presentation Note]		
12. SC Approved Action	[Pulled from Action Presentation Note]		
13. Summary of Actual Action	[Narrative of what was achieved]		
14. Contributions to CREWS Programming Principles and Results Framework	[Briefly explain the contributions to relevant CREWS programming principles and outputs and indicators, referring to those selected in the Action Presentation Note]		
15. Contributions to Partner Country Plans and Commitments	[Briefly explain the contributions to relevant existing/ongoing projects, programs, plans and commitments (e.g., EWS projects supported by bilateral or multilateral funds, NAP, NDC), referring to those selected in the Action Presentation Note]		
16. Lessons Learned	[Briefly note important lessons learned from the action, including the factors that hindered or enabled successful action implementation]		
17. Visibility Products and Supporting Documents	[Insert links to press releases, videos, or communication items and/or social media links, and list and attach to the report any documents providing details on action activities such as review reports, reports of training sessions, technical assessment reports, etc.]		

This is to certify that the report is accurate.

Impl. Partner Representative:	
Position Title/Name of Organization:	
Date and Signature:	

This is to certify that the resources allocated are used for their intended purpose. All parties are in compliance with the financial rules, regulations and procedures of the Implementing Partners.

Impl. Partner Representative:	
Position Title/Name of Organization:	
Date and Signature:	