# Disaster Loss Data

## (DATA Working Group)

## Introduction

The disaster data landscape is complex and the community that is dealing with loss data is a rapidly growing one. When human, monetary or environmental losses occur as a result of a disaster, extensive loss data are collected and stored by different organisations, but the thoroughness and accuracy of the data vary from country to country and even among local entities. Government agencies, private companies and other organisations may collect and manage data related to their own areas of interest using their own standards and procedures, without significant collaboration with other groups. This result in gaps in the data, inconsistent overlaps, and biases that ultimately affect the quality of research conducted and policies made based on the data.

The Disaster Loss Data (DATA) project, under the umbrella of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) programme, brings together stakeholders from different disciplines and sectors to study issues related to the collection, storage, and dissemination of disaster loss data. The aim is to establish an overall framework for disaster loss data for all providers, to establish nodes and networks for databases, and to conduct sensitivity testing among databases to ensure some level of comparability. This is in furtherance of Goal 2 (characterisation of hazards, vulnerability and risk) in IRDR's **Strategic Plan (2013-2017)**, to which DATA's activities are aligned.

## Objectives

The DATA working group has identified the following specific project objectives:

1. Bring together loss data stakeholders and develop and utilise synergies.
2. Identify the quality of existing data and what data are needed to improve disaster risk management.
3. Develop recognised standards or protocols to reduce uncertainty in the data.
4. Define "losses" and create transparent methodologies for assessing them.
5. Advocate an increased downscaling of loss data to sub-national geographical levels for policy makers.
6. Educate users regarding data interpretation and data biases.

IRDR IPO, c/o RADI/CAS, Room B713, No.9 Dengzhuang South Rd., Haidian District, Beijing China 100094
Tel/Fax:+86 8217 8917 Email:connect@irdrinternational.org Website: www.irdrinternational.org

1

## Research Priorities

DATA has identified the following research priorities to accomplish the above objectives:

- *An annotated bibliography:* To begin the process, a small team will be coordinated to produce a bibliography on the present state of knowledge on methodologies for measuring economic impacts specifically, and disaster impact assessment more broadly.
- *A framework for peril classification:* Existing peril hazard terminology and hierarchy established by the following worldwide databases on disaster impacts will be evaluated: EMDAT (CRED/University of Louvain), DesInventar (LaRed/UNDP/UNISDR), NatCatSERVICE (Munich Re), Sigma (Swiss Re), and the GLIDEnumber database (ADRC/CRED/Reliefweb/LaRed). The required modifications to these databases will be presented in an overall framework for peril classification for use by major data compilers.
- *A requirements document for an enhanced GLIDEnumber database:* DATA has also taken into consideration the current limitations of the GLIDEnumber database, which attaches a unique identifier number for a disaster to facilitate linkages between records in diverse disaster databases. However, there are issues concerning its unique identifier numbering system, and whether GLIDE should be a database, an informational source or just a cataloguing system. DATA has some ideas on how to improve the GLIDEnumber database and how it could serve as a platform for linking other data on specific disasters.
- *Assess methodologies for human and economic impacts:* There are inconsistencies in how human impact is measured, and some new opportunities for assessing the number of people affected by disasters. DATA will explore these in more detail and develop an action-oriented agenda on measurements for both human impact and economic loss assessment methodologies.

## Expected Outcomes:

The major outcomes from the DATA project include:

- Unified standards on disaster loss assessment.
- An integrated methodology for disaster loss assessment.
- New information and knowledge on disaster loss data.

For more information about DATA visit the IRDR's website, www.irdrinternational.org/, or contact the IRDR IPO via email at connect@irdrinternational.org.