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Integrating a national risk assessment into a disaster risk management system: process and practice

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Abstract:

The national risk assessment (NRA) has recently become a very important component in a country's disaster risk management (DRM) system. The NRA aims to identify threats and hazards that could affect the entire country, and assess their potential likelihood and impacts from a national perspective. Compared to other DRM activities, NRA work is comparatively new, and is often a response to an external demand. For instance, in the European Union (EU), most member states initiated their NRA process in response to a EU directive. This article investigates how the requirement to conduct a NRA has influenced an existing DRM system, taking the case of Sweden as a study case. Specifically, it examines how the NRA process has been integrated into the multi-stakeholder, multi-level, bottom-up Swedish DRM system. Empirical data were collected through 21 semi-structured interviews with representatives from 13 national authorities, supplemented by Swedish and EU documentation. The results were analyzed following the ISO 31000 risk assessment process. The findings provide an indication of how NRA work has been integrated into ongoing DRM activities, and the level of integration. The results also indicate the extent of stakeholder involvement in the NRA process, the quality of DRM information communication among stakeholders, how the NRA has been implemented in the Swedish context, and the potential to expand the NRA worldwide.

Keywords: disaster risk management (DRM), national risk assessment (NRA), risk and vulnerability assessment (RVA), national risk and capability assessment (NRCA), integration, communication

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