Abstract

The EM-DAT Database

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Base note

Title of Initiative	EM-DAT: The International Disaster Database
URL	www.em-dat.net
Paste logo mark if available	
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Description of the initiative

The EM-DAT database has been developed in 1988 and is maintained by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). It contains core data on the occurrence and impact of over 16,000 natural and technological disasters in the world from 1900 to present. Its main objective is to provide an evidence-base to humanitarian and development actors at national and international levels. EM-DAT is the unique public global reference database providing through its website free access to disaster data through country and disaster profile and an advanced data-search interface.

Abstract of presentation

The **EM-DAT database was created** in 1988 and is maintained by the WHO collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), at the Catholic University of Louvain in Brussels, Belgium. **The aim** was to provide rapid and accurate information to serve the humanitarian community. Formal collaborations were established in 1999 with USAID-OFDA and in 2002 with the Climate Information Project of US-NOAA, which led to the development of the EM-DAT website (www.em-dat.net).

The EM-DAT database **contains** core data on the occurrence and effects of over 16,000 disasters from 1900 to present including natural and technological disasters. The database is compiled from various sources, including UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, insurance companies, research institutes and the media. EM-DAT has four main criteria for the inclusion of a disaster into the database:
- 10 or more people killed
- 100 or more people affected
- A declaration of a state of emergency
- A call for international assistance

For **each disaster that is entered** into the database, additional information is also provided, including dates, disaster sub-type, country, region, the number of people reported killed, injured, homeless and affected, as well as estimates of infrastructure and economic damages.

The **website provides** free access to the disaster data on occurrence and impact through a country and disaster profile section and an advanced data-search interface. Also available on the website are various analyses, trends, maps and related documents.

The **EM-DAT database is used** by CRED and numerous other organizations to analyze disaster occurrence and impact, identify high-risk areas or populations, and highlight priorities for disaster preparedness, mitigation

and prevention (i.e. Natural Disaster Hotspots, World Bank; Living with Risk, UN-ISDR, etc. …). The EM-DAT team also produces several products from EM-DAT : A regular newsletter entitled "CRED Crunch", the Annual Statistical Review presenting on a yearly bases an in depth analysis of the preceding year disaster figures.

The EM-DAT database **ensures comparability** of its data through the consistent use of common definition and scientific terminology across countries and time. The methodology for data capture, validation and cross checking has been developed over two decades and approved by an international group of experts.
The most recent experience is the methodology developed for drought and famine data with the International Research Institute of Climate and Society   In addition, more recently, CRED and MünichRe agreed on a standardized terminology of disaster classification.

The **specific features** of EM-DAT lies in its credibility:
- Long experience in data collection and management
- Use of normative rules and clear definition
- Clearly-stated methodology
- Development and use of validation methods and tools
- Automatisation of data entry and outputs
- Comparability of its data over time and space

The EM-DAT Database **acts** as a reference point for global analysis of disaster occurrence and impact and as a unique basis for policy papers on disaster reduction and risk.