

## *July 11 Workshop Prereading*

### **BC Provincial Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (BC DRR Hub)**

During the July 11 workshop, we will begin to plan for a BC DRR Hub. This is partly in response to a repeated call<sup>1</sup> for a systemic and formal set-up to coordinate, strategize, and guide integration of risk information into EM and DRR policy, investments, and operations in BC.

“DRR governance and risk assessments tend to lack the necessary links and this fragmentation increases the price tag of each new risk assessment, keeps risk assessments within the scientific community and isolated from policy processes, and impedes the use of risk information in policy design, capability development and for shaping investments.”<sup>2</sup> A provincial platform for DRR, would ensure risk information is relevant in context and format, robust in scientific methodologies but also flexible in the approach to effectively meet the DRR user needs within the limitation of available resources.

A British Columbia provincial platform for DRR could have the following design:

- Hosted or co-hosted by provincial entities that have a DRR mandate
- Small secretariat to manage the day to day work
- Coordination mechanism that is inclusive and multi-sectoral
- Data management strategies and tools
- Risk communication strategy and an effective risk profiler
- Technical committees that provide guidance and advice on methodologies for risk analysis and linkage with ongoing policy development
- Sustainability plan for financial resources and operations

Support for a DRR provincial platform would allow expert entities to conduct risk assessments and produce risk information within the DRR governance system instead of in isolation, behind closed doors of research facilities.

*DRR Pathways project is dedicated to paving the way for creating a BC provincial platform for DRR through each of the project components and the opportunities for convening the key actors to talk, think, and take action towards creating such a platform.*

---

#### **Preparing for the July 11 Workshop**

Please take a moment in advance to consider your thoughts on the following questions, which will be a key focus of the July 11 workshop:

1. What are the key challenges to producing, accessing and using risk information in BC?
2. What services, tools and other changes will achieve the Hub’s goal?
3. Who might benefit from these changes, and in what ways?

---

<sup>1</sup> A key result of the 2017 & 2018 Understanding Risk+ conferences in BC.

<sup>2</sup> From “Understanding Risk System (URS): An essential foundation for implementing the Sendai Framework“, Safaie. S., Alfonso Santamaria. N., Houdijk, R., Onur. T., 2018

## **Summary of Understanding Risk System<sup>3</sup> (URS): An essential foundation for implementing the Sendai Framework**

Safaie. S., Alfonso Santamaria. N., Houdijk, R., Onur. T., (2018)

### **Challenge**

In almost every country, there is a persistent gap at national and sub-national level when it comes to understanding the risks, accessing the available risk information and using it to inform resilience policies. Available risk information is scattered and unorganized, and risk assessments are often conducted in an ad hoc manner. Hazard specific or sector specific studies tend to be carried out in isolation, missing the opportunity to benefit from existing work within and across various hazards and sectors. Risk assessments are conducted without sufficiently consulting with the end users and with a limited understanding of the specific policy and investments needs for risk information.

DRR governance and risk assessments tend to lack the necessary links and this fragmentation increases the price tag of each new risk assessment, keeps risk assessments within the scientific community and isolated from policy processes, and impedes the use of risk information in policy design, capability development and for shaping investments.

### **Opportunity**

A comprehensive Understanding Risk System (URS) is the proposed framework for tackling this challenge. By mirroring the DRR governance system at national and local level, an effective URS will enable countries to use risk information to support the DRR policy design process and its implementation. A comprehensive URS ensures such risk information is relevant in context and format, robust in scientific methodology, but also flexible in the approach to effectively meet the DRR users' needs within the limitation of available resources.

A URS would allow expert entities to conduct risk assessments and produce risk information within the DRR governance system instead of in isolation, behind closed doors of research facilities.

**URS is the supportive framework for conducting good risk assessments.** Its main output is the country's risk profile and its expected outcome is a better understanding of risk by all stakeholders within the DRR governance system.

### **Key Features of Understanding Risk System**

- URS allows cost savings in conducting new risk assessments by facilitating use of existing input data and analysis as well as coordination and communication with parties that own the necessary datasets
- URS acts as the central system that defines the path forward for long term advancement of understanding risk for the purpose of building long term resilience in the country, region, or locality

---

<sup>3</sup> The DRR-Pathways project is using the term BC DRR Hub to describe a provincial Understanding Risk System

- Any country with any level of existing risk information and capacities can embark on establishing its own URS at national and/or local level and gradually mature in understanding risk as presented in the maturity model
- URS creates the necessary environment for scientific bodies and policy makers to co-design and co-develop the risk assessments and to ensure risk information is usable and used in DRR policies and investments

### Components of an Understanding Risk System

The ultimate objective of establishing and sustaining a URS is to improve understanding risk among stakeholders and integrate that understanding into development and risk reduction policies and investments.

URS consists of interlinked components related to its governance, technical aspects, and supporting policies and capacities.

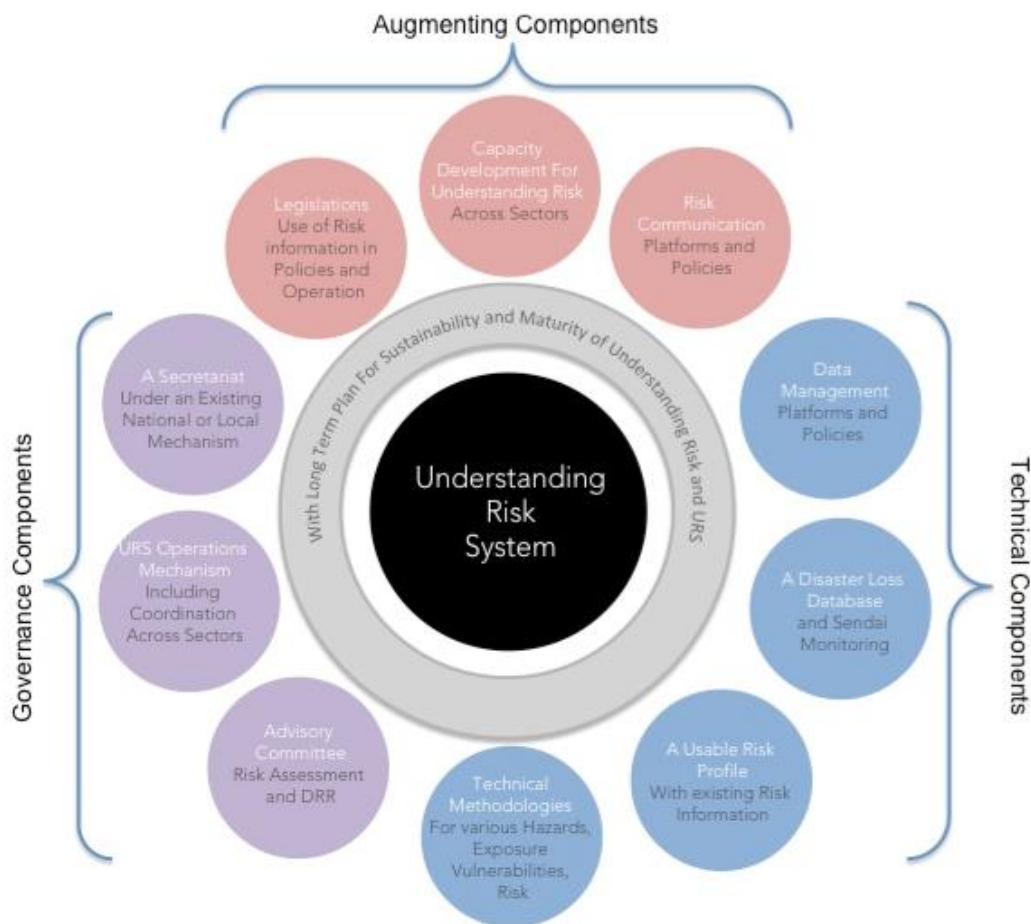


Figure 1: The ten components of an Understanding Risk System (URS) support good risk assessments for enhancing understanding risk

## 10 Components of an Understanding Risk System<sup>4</sup>

### Augmenting Components

- A. Legislation** Legal framework in place that requires hazard and risk assessments to be conducted, the results communicated and used to inform certain key policies and investments.
- B. Capacity development** Development of a multi-stakeholder coordination and cooperation mechanism. Development of technical capacities including education and training to institutionalize knowledge, expertise and skills for the various steps and methods of disaster risk assessment.
- C. Risk communication** Mechanism to ensure up-to-date scientific, evidence-based risk communication is reaching a wide range of stakeholders in an inclusive manner, responsive to purpose and audience.

### Technical Components

- D. Data management** Strategy to efficiently organize, manage, and reuse the data as they become available, which will reduce the cost of risk assessments. Such a strategy governs the process by which data are gathered from participating entities, the technical and quality standards to which new data will be produced, how data will be maintained during the risk assessment, and the means by which the output data will be shared and secured.
- E. Technical methodologies** Process to ensure transparency on the limitations of the methods employed to gather risk information, and their implications for decision making.
- F. The historical disaster loss database** A database of damage and loss from past disasters, collected systematically over a reasonably long period of time to provide a valuable understanding of extensive risks. Required for monitoring progress of Sendai Framework implementation.
- G. The Risk Profile** Gather and compare information about all types of hazards, exposed assets, vulnerabilities, and risks side by side to provide the big picture and be the first place to start for understanding risk.

### Governance Components

- H. Secretariat** Clear and dedicated administrative capacity, with a lead agency assigned to maintain a ‘secretariat’. This secretariat leads the consultative process within the cross-sector cooperation mechanism. It designs the technical process of disaster risk assessment with clear and achievable goals and milestones, and guides the process from start to finish.
- I. URS operations mechanism** Establish URS goals and objectives, work plan, budgeting and timeline, decision making process, communication approach, and modalities of coordination and collaboration.
- J. Governing Board & Advisory Committee** Governing Board provides senior level oversight. Advisory committee/s allow specialists with scientific and technical expertise on risk assessment and DRR to provide separate, but coordinated, input and guide URS operations.

---

<sup>4</sup> The DRR-Pathways project is using the term BC DRR Hub to describe a provincial Understanding Risk System

