

# Gateway, Bridge and Facilitator

The role of geospatial technology in supporting disaster management has been defined, demonstrated and continues to expand. With an ever growing number of technologies, both geo and non-geo, designed for this purpose, it is important to remember the simple yet critical axiom that effective disaster management is 'all about data and people'.

It is in this spirit that I wish to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER). The programme is officially mandated for the use of space-based information and technology in disaster management, with a mission to 'Ensure that all countries and international and regional organisations have access to and develop the capacity to use all types of space-based information to support the full disaster management cycle'. It is thus focused on people and connecting them; transferring data, knowledge, space-based information and technology, and translating all into tangible practice by functioning as a gateway, bridge and facilitator. It's Knowledge Portal is a gateway to space information in support of disaster management. International workshops of participants from government, NGOs and academia demonstrate it's functioning as a bridge connecting space and disaster-management communities. Technical advisory missions to developing nations evidence its role as facilitator for institutional strengthening and capacity building.

The programme focuses on all phases of the disaster cycle, not simply providing one-time assistance in disaster response by producing satellite maps. The aim is rather to create, foster and maintain relevant networks of people with access to and understanding of how space-based information, data and technology can support disaster management. For example, the UN-SPIDER programme's officially nominated National Focal Points (NFPs) and the network of Regional Support Offices (RSOs) are actively involved in keeping people trained, connected and engaged, whether for rapid response to flood, learning about disaster management policies or attending local risk-reduction workshops.

Other disaster-management programmes can learn from the success of UN-SPIDER in developing sustainable disaster management practices that persist as geospatial and other technologies change and evolve.

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