

GIS Assists Recovery Efforts in Post-Tsunami Indonesia

The Spatial Information and Mapping Centre (SIM-Centre) of Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi (BRR) NAD-Nias in Aceh Province, Sumatra, Indonesia, is using ESRI GIS software to support the activities of humanitarian agencies rebuilding after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. SIM-Centre is actively building sustainable GIS capacity in the government through the creation of an online data catalog, training local personnel in GIS technology, and creating a SDI.

“Aceh Province will continue to develop [its GIS] well after the international aid community has left the area,” says Yakob Ishadamy, SIM-Centre manager, BRR. “GIS has a role to play by providing information to government officials and others to support their efforts.

The reconstruction, economic, and social factors involved all have a time and space component. GIS provides an invaluable framework for building an information base and providing the best decision support, communication, and collaboration possible.”

SIM-Centre has standardised with ESRI ArcGIS, an integrated collection of software products for building a complete GIS. ArcGIS enables users to deploy mapping and spatial analysis wherever it is needed—on desktops, on servers, in custom applications, over the Internet, and in the field.

SIM-Centre uses ArcCatalog to create metadata, which is then hosted on the online metadata catalogue (www.acehniascatalog.in), a free-of-charge service available to all cooperating agencies in the area. Not only does the metadata catalogue provide guidance and accessibility to necessary datasets, but it also establishes confidence in the quality of the data, something lacking in the area before the tsunami.

SIM-Centre has created and supports a GIS user group and GIS consortium to advance the use of GIS in the area. Currently, the GIS consortium is creating a customized training manual for ArcGIS written in Bahasa Indonesian and based on Aceh Province datasets.

Since the transfer of GIS capacity from United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator (UNORC) in early 2006, SIM-Centre has trained 115 people on the use of GIS and GPS in the region, filled approximately 750 client requests for GIS data, and printed more than 3,500 maps.

Source: ESRI