



Seismic microzonation in Latin America and the Caribbean: social, cultural, economic and political aspects

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The lack of success, not to say failure, of seismic microzonation projects in the Latin America and Caribbean nations-and for that matter elsewhere in the world-should not be attributed to the lack of technical and scientific expertise of our engineers and scientists as there exists in our continent sufficient knowledge and information about the techniques and procedures that have been successfully used elsewhere in the world in the implementation of seismic microzonation projects.

The main constrains to the implementation of seismic microzonation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean are of an economic, social, political, and cultural aspects rather than the purely scientific and engineering aspects. Another very important factor contributing to this lack of success has been the apparent failure of the scientific and technical community to convince decision makers (both official and private) that the sound implementation of seismic microzonation projects are a valid instrument to mitigate the negative effects that earthquakes have on the population, on the physical infrastructure and on the environment.

An attempt will be made in this paper to analyze these “non technical” aspects and try to arrive at some conclusions as well as to some possible lines of action for the successful implementation of seismic microzonation projects in the seismic risk prone Latin American and Caribbean nations.