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Construction of geohazard inventory for public roads on the Faroe Islands

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The network of roads on the Faroe Islands has expanded rapidly, especially the past 30 years. As traffic has increased on roads in a complex, steep mountain terrain the frequency of reported geohazard events is steadily growing. Geohazard phenomena generally include rock falls, debris avalanches and slush flows (Dahl et al, 2010). In recent years the tolerance for minor geohazard events within the general public has decreased. Small geohazard events, which went by unnoticed a few years ago, now alerts the public and leads to frustration adding significant pressure on politicians and authorities for safer roads. The Office of Public Works (Landsverk) is responsible for public roads and their safety. In order to ensure that possible mitigation initiatives are based on facts and understanding of the geohazard processes in the Faroese environmental settings the Office of Public Works took the initiative three years ago to construct a geohazard inventory for public roads on the Faroe Islands. Data collection is carried out by local road workers in all the districts of the Faroe Islands. They have been systematically trained in geohazard registration. When a road is cleared or repaired following a geohazard event, the location, time, geohazard type, size and damage is recorded in a custom made registration scheme. Subsequently, the data is forwarded to the Faroese Earth and Energy Directorate (Jardfeingi) which is responsible for geostatistical tasks including data analysis and storage in a GIS-system. The new geohazard inventory provides short term data to the ongoing research on longterm geohazard risk assessment in Faroese settings. The geohazard inventory covers public roads all over the Faroe Islands turning it into a valuable contribution to the communication platform for authorities who want to strengthen an awareness based on facts in the public and political debate.

Reference

Dahl, M. P. J. et al (2010). ”A simple qualitative approach for mapping regional landslide susceptibility in the Faroe Islands.” Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences 10 (2): 159 – 170.