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FRENCH NATIONAL REPORT

SUMMARY : Natural mountain hazards: specific case of the Alps and French Pyrenees

The inter-ministerial policy of natural risk management in the high mountain regions is an integral part of the sustainable management of mountain terrains and forests. It contributes to the socioeconomic development of these territories presenting socioeconomic stakes to protect, and/or natural heritage to conserve.

The National Forests Office (ONF) and more precisely its specialized service - the Restoration of Mountain Terrains (RTM) - operate the State Policy: management of forest properties and risk protection of high mountain territories.

Three specific areas are targeted.

First, coordination and valuation of all data collected from “live natural events”. Listed since the end of the 19th century, they are evaluated within the framework of numerous studies: applied research, maps of natural hazard regions which are incorporated into documents on urbanism.

Then, the need to optimise the 5 yearly technical programme of maintenance and repair of RTM constructions (19 000) and regeneration of the RTM afforestation (200 000 ha), enable the Prefet of the department, in collaboration with the RTM services to set the priorities for annual interventions. An on-going study by ONF - IRSTEA, on the efficiency of the protections will supply a series of operational indicators by 2016.

Finally, in the absence of private and economically viable engineering, the very specific technical help provided by the RTM, free of charge to qualifying municipalities, in the form of global expertise, is still essential today.

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