

Frequently Asked Questions

What is INFORM?

INFORM is a way to measure the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters, and how the conditions that lead to them affect sustainable development. It is a risk index that identifies where crises or disasters requiring international assistance may occur and analyses that risk so it can be better managed by everyone.

Why do we need INFORM?

Many different actors are involved in crisis and disaster prevention, preparedness and response – from Governments to international agencies, development partners, civil society and the private sector. Together, they will be more effective if they have a common and shared way to help understand crisis and disaster risk.

What is special about INFORM?

INFORM is the first global, objective and transparent tool for understanding the risk of humanitarian crises and disasters. INFORM is open to everyone and supported by many major organisations. It is based on risk concepts published in scientific literature. The INFORM methodology is flexible. It can be adapted according to your organisation's focus or geographical footprint.

What can INFORM be used for?

INFORM is a tool to help understand and measure crisis and disaster risk. It can be used to support decisions about prevention, preparedness and response. Specifically, it can inform the development of shared priorities and objective allocation of resources, as well as to monitor risk trends over time. INFORM can be integrated into your organisation's planning and decision making processes.

Can INFORM be used at the regional and national level?

Yes. The methodology of INFORM can be adapted for use at the region or country level. Regional or national models include sub-national level data and the indicator selection is tailored to take account of local risks and data availability. From 2016, guidance and support will be available to regional and national actors wishing to develop and maintain their own INFORM models. For more information see the INFORM website.

Who can use INFORM?

Anyone can use INFORM. The more people that use INFORM, the more effective it will be in reducing and managing the risk of future crises and disasters. Openness, transparency and objectivity are at the core of INFORM. That is why INFORM is publically available.

Where does the data in INFORM come from?

The data that is used in INFORM is publically available, consistently updated and has global coverage. It comes from a variety of international organisations and academic institutes and is considered to be the most reliable available. INFORM works directly with source organisations to ensure quality and appropriate use.

How is INFORM calculated?

INFORM is a way to simplify a lot of information about crisis and disaster risk. It combines around 50 different indicators that measure hazards (events that could occur), vulnerability (the susceptibility of communities to those hazards) and capacity (resources available that can alleviate the impact). INFORM covers 191 countries and includes both natural and human hazards. All the individual indicators, index components and calculations are open and transparent.

What are the limitations of INFORM?

Any model of the world is a simplification. There are limitations both in the data that is used to create INFORM, as well as the method it uses. INFORM is simply one tool. Use of INFORM alongside other inputs will support better decisions. Furthermore, it provides a common evidence-base and promotes discussion and understanding of crisis and disaster risk, which can lead to better preventative action.

Who develops and publishes INFORM?

INFORM is a collaboration of partners led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience and the European Commission. The initiative is guided by a steering group of major humanitarian, development and DRR agencies and donors. Many organisations are involved and other partners are welcome. Technical work on INFORM is led by the European Commission Joint Research Centre. The latest results of INFORM can be found at www.inform-index.org.

Does INFORM rank countries?

Ranking countries is not the purpose of INFORM. Rather it is to provide an objective and transparent analysis of risk. INFORM results are published in alphabetical order. Users of INFORM can order countries by their score for the overall index and its components according to their intended use.

Can INFORM predict crises?

INFORM measures the risk of a crisis or disaster occurring, based on past events and present conditions. It can be considered to indicate risk over the next 3 years. INFORM cannot predict individual emergencies. However, it can be used in conjunction with other early warning tools that cover shorter timeframes.

What is the relationship between INFORM and other risk indices?

INFORM is the only open, global risk index for humanitarian crises. It is a successor to the European Commission's Global Needs Assessment with Forgotten Crisis Index and OCHA's Global Focus Model. INFORM is a common index for all organisations and institutions. They may, however, choose to adapt INFORM to make their own specific tool for internal use.

Get the results and participate

INFORM is a collaboration of partners led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience and the European Commission. For more information about INFORM and the latest results, go to www.inform-index.org