



The Research Training Group “Natural Disasters” (DFG-GRK 450/3)

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The Research Training Group, established in 1998, is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG-GRK 450/3), the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg and the Universität Karlsruhe (TH). The programme is currently supported by a total of 12 institutes of the Universität Karlsruhe (TH): the Department of Civil Engineering, Geo- and Environmental Sciences, the Department of Physics, the Department of Informatics and the Department of Economics and Business Engineering. It is structured in three periods of always three years funding whereas the last one started in 2004.

The main focus of the programme is the scientific training of postgraduates from different fields with the aim of developing adequate methods to meet the rising demand for problem-oriented know-how and solutions in the field of natural disaster research. Therefore a study programme was additionally installed to the research part. In addition to the improvement of special knowledge for the research projects the study programme helps to learn basics, principles, methods and nomenclatures in an interdisciplinary way. Thus, the communication between the participants is supported. It consists of a series of lectures by the supervisors, an individual programme based on the lectures of the university, seminars and workshops with invited experts (e.g. rhetoric and presentation, layout and technical writing, project management, etc.) and excursions. Furthermore, a postgraduate seminar is held twice a year where the junior scientists and supervisors report and discuss the project states and results. Within this framework 15 doctoral students will be provided with scholarships and funds currently as well as the opportunity to work and prepare their PhD theses. This is to endow the participants with the ability to understand and evaluate the relevant relationships of natural disasters and to propose and implement adequate solutions needed for an optimal disaster management.

The Research Training Group's key objectives are 1) to investigate the entire chain of effects of natural disasters, 2) to analyse and characterise the different types of natural hazards, 3) to develop, apply and validate modern methods of mathematics and informatics and 4) to improve the rescue and recovery machinery.

In September 2007 the programme ends. That's why a symposium (in German) is held on 24 and 25 July this year (<http://www.gknk.uni-karlsruhe.de> for more information) where the necessity of the interdisciplinary approach for understanding, precaution and management of natural disasters will be demonstrated. Therefore research results of the programs third funding period will be presented. Furthermore researchers and representatives of companies, authorities, relief organisations and associations will give challenges, experiences and tools of their natural disaster work. Each presenter contribute a paper to the symposium proceeding.