

Gheorghe

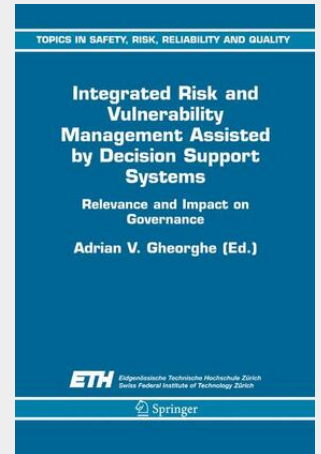
# Integrated Risk and Vulnerability Management Assisted by Decision Support Systems

Relevance and Impact on Governance

**Introduction** This book includes terms of reference and offers an augmented volume of relevant work initiated within the comprehensive concept of "Knowledge Management and Risk Governance". The latter stood for the initial title of an ad-hoc meeting held in Ascona, Switzerland, organized by the Technological Risk Management Unit of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) and the KOVERS Centre of Excellence in Risk and Safety Sciences of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, ETH Zurich. Background Risk governance, in addition to the continuous interest of researchers, has recently attracted the attention of policy-makers and the media and the concern of the public. New and emerging risks in various fields and a number of risk-related issues increased the public interest and prompted for a new framework in dealing with risks. The Conference on Science and Governance organized by the European Commission in October 2000 is one of the international forums addressing this issue. Other recent events such as the establishment of the International Risk Governance Council outline the importance of the governance concept in relation to that of risk management (see [www.irgc.org](http://www.irgc.org)). At the same time noticeable progress has been made in Information Technologies and Decision Support, passing from the process of information

**PREFACE** xvi to the process of knowledge. In this context new tools and methods became available, whose application in risk management may be beneficial.

The purpose of the present volume is to bridge the gap between risk sciences and decision support tools, in view of a better performance in governance. In particular, the main objectives are: to define the knowledge management methods and tools applicable in risk governance; to bring experience from the application of methods and tools available in various disciplines to other fields of risk governance; to determine the present and future needs for knowledge management tools in risk governance; and to promote the development and dissemination of such tools in a problem-solving context and for educational purposes. This collection of papers addresses questions, and provides tentative answers to issues such as: 'do adequate tools for risk governance exist'; 'are they available to decision-makers'; 'what are the needs of the various stakeholders (i.e. planners, regulators, industry, public) for an effective risk management'; 'what new tools have to be developed in order to cover these needs', and 'what features should they have'. The range of applications and associated decision support tools to address aspects of integrated risk and vulnerability management by use of decision support systems cover numerous disciplines and fields of application including process industry, transportation, natural disasters, emerging risks, critical infrastructures, insurance, and national security related aspects.



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