

The Department of Science and Technology is set to put into place a nationwide disaster mitigation system that will help key agencies and personalities make informed decisions to save lives and properties.

Called NOAH or the National Operational Assessment of Hazards and Risks, the program is designed to serve as sentinel that will address the serious challenges brought by extreme hazard events.

“The NOAH Project will enable the government to address the serious challenges brought by extreme hazard events,” DOST Secretary Mario Montejo said. “We will apply advanced S&T tools, such as enhanced vulnerability maps and a shortened six-hour monitoring and warning system for communication along the major river basins.”

NOAH will have seven components that will address major needs in various disaster situations. These include Hydromet sensors development, DREAM-Lidar, FloodNET, Hazards information media, Landslide hazards mapping, Doppler system development, and Storm surge inundation mapping.

With the DOST on the lead, NOAH brings together experts from 21 institutions in close collaboration, including DOST's PAGASA, PHIVOLCS, Advanced Science and technology Institute, and Science and Technology Information Institute; Department of Interior and Local Government; University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences and Department and College of Geodetic Engineering; Smart Communications, Sun Cellular, and Globe Telecommunications.

In a country frequently visited by typhoons, tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, some of them highly-destructive, the NOAH project comes as helpful as Noah's ark in biblical times. Natural hazards inflict loss of lives and costly damage to property, with economic losses amounting to billions of pesos each year. Moreover, the continued development in the lowlands and the rapid growth of the population contribute to the damage to infrastructure and human losses.

"This project is so far the most advanced measure implemented by the government in disaster mitigation," added Sec. Montejo. **(Framelia V. Anonas, S&T Media Service)**