

Interactive comment on “A framework for profiling the characteristics of risk governance in natural hazard contexts” by G. Walker et al.

G. Walker et al.

g.p.walker@lancaster.ac.uk

Received and published: 21 August 2013

We have reproduced sections of the reviewer's comments and added our response after **

'This paper is potentially very interesting, but at present further work is needed to tighten up the methodology, arguments made and clarify the rigour and significance of the framework presented.

1) The background sections could be tightened up and made more applicable to an academic audience, if that is the intended target. At the moment, it is not that technical or novel a discussion. Furthermore, the discussion is quite long, and not that well tied into the eventual development of the framework, although I presume that this is the

C952

role it plays. Some of the language at time can be a little un-technical and vague, in particular when discussion climate change, global warming and the apparent increase in hazards.'

** We made some alterations to the paper at the technical review stage to tighten up the background and to emphasise the connections between the background and the development of the risk governance profiling tool. We also edited the paper to address the above observations regarding un-technical and vague language.

'2) The description of the framework focusses more on the methods for developing it than a detailed description of what sits within the framework. While figures 1 & 2 help address this, I would like to see more about the criteria that sit beneath the detail in Figure 1 & 2 if possible. I would also like to see how the spectrum was developed, and where the background literature for that is. I also think it is possible to blend qualitative and quantitative techniques - to develop a clear numerical scale that still has qualitative criteria behind it. At present it is hard to understand how rigorous the application of the framework is.'

** The risk governance profiling characteristics that underpin the spectrum presented in the profiling tool emerge from the background and context presented in the early part of the paper (see above). The paper does not present results in a traditional way. It was not the intention to present a quantitative framework – in fact, we actively resisted doing this. It might be possible in theory to make it more quantitative but we feel that this would detract from its flexibility and ease of use in different contexts and by different stakeholders. We did not set out to conduct an analysis of the content of a rigorous survey of risk governance in different contexts; the three examples are presented to demonstrate how the risk governance framework can be used as part of a process of self-analysis and discussion.

'3) In general the paper is very descriptive and lacks clarity around what exactly is in the framework, how it is applied and a clear analysis of the different case studies explored

through it. What does this framework tell you about the effectiveness, accountability, transparency, efficiency etc. of these different governance regimes? The paper tends to be quite discursive and pensive, with less evidence, results and clear conclusions.'

** As explained in other parts of our response, the paper is putting forward a profiling framework to be used as part of contextualised processes of various forms. It is not a tool to be used primarily by researchers looking in at governance arrangements from the outside and assessing their 'effectiveness, accountability, transparency, efficiency'. Its purpose is to allow stakeholders to identify, in a descriptive way, current characteristics of governance arrangements and trends of change and to then make use of this profile in context. We agree that we do not present 'results' in a standard sense, but that was not and cannot be our intention. In revising the paper we will endeavour to make the purpose of the profiling tool even clearer.

'What is the point to the comparison? Just to have a comparison, or are there some useful conclusions that can be drawn out of the comparisons to inform natural hazard policy? Currently the conclusions are very general and not terribly insightful. The paper can also at times seem repetitive.'

** Comparisons can play a number of different roles as we briefly explain in the paper, but could do so at greater length. For example, comparisons between the judgements of different 'profilers' can reveal where there are similarities and differences in perspective, helping to structure debate and through discussion reveal the reasons why differences exist. Comparisons between hazards can promote questioning as to why governance arrangements are different from one hazard context to another and how appropriate those differences might be. We made some adjustments to the paper at the technical review stage to address the issue of repetition. We intend to develop the conclusions further in the final revision of the paper.

Interactive comment on Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 1, 2207, 2013.