



1 **An integrated method for assessing vulnerability of buildings caused by debris flows**  
2 **in mountainous areas**

3 Chenchen Qiu<sup>1</sup>, Xueyu Geng<sup>1\*</sup>

4 <sup>1</sup>School of Engineering, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK

5 Xueyu Geng (**Corresponding Author**):

6 E-mail: [xueyu.geng@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:xueyu.geng@warwick.ac.uk)

7 School of Engineering, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AL, UK

8 **Abstract:** The vulnerability assessment of buildings in future scenarios is critical to decrease potential  
9 losses caused by debris flows in mountainous areas due to the complex topographical condition that  
10 could increase the environmental vulnerability to climate change. However, the lack of reliable methods  
11 limits the accurate estimation of physical damage and the associated economic loss. Therefore, an  
12 integrated method of physical vulnerability matrix and machine learning model was developed to benefit  
13 the estimation of damage degree of buildings caused by a future debris-flow event. By considering the  
14 building structures (reinforced-concrete (RC) frame and non-RC frame), spatial positions between  
15 buildings and the debris-flow channels (horizontal distance (*HD*) and vertical distance (*VD*)), and impact  
16 pressure (*P<sub>i</sub>*) to buildings, a physical vulnerability matrix was proposed to link physical damage with the  
17 four factors. In order to overcome the difficulty in estimating the possible impact pressure to buildings,  
18 an ensemble machine learning (ML) model (XGBoost) was developed with the involvement of  
19 geological factors. Additionally, the *HD* and *VD* were decided based on the satellite images. The  
20 Longxihe Basin, Sichuan, China was selected as a case study. The results show that the ML model can  
21 achieve a reliable impact pressure prediction because the mean absolute percentage error (MAPE), root  
22 mean squared error (RMSE), and mean absolute error (MAE) values are 9.53%, 3.78 kPa, and 2.47 kPa.  
23 Furthermore, 13.9% of buildings in the Longxihe Basin may suffer severe damage caused by a future



- 24 debris-flow event, and the highest economic loss is found in a residential building, reaching  $5.1 \times 10^5$  €.
- 25 Overall, our work can provide scientific support for the site selection of future constructions.
- 26 **Keywords:** Debris flow, geological factors, building, machine learning, vulnerability assessment



## 27 **1. Introduction**

28 Debris flows are among the most frequent and costly natural hazards due to climate change and  
29 difficulty in timely warning (Santi et al., 2011). These events can devastate entire settlements in their  
30 path and pose significant threat to natural environment (Immerzeel et al., 2020), causing destruction of  
31 aquatic biodiversity, along with damage to properties and finally leading to considerable economic  
32 losses worldwide each year (Qiu et al., 2022; Alene et al., 2024; Sridharan et al., 2024). In European  
33 Alps, this disaster claimed an economic loss of at least 5 € billion from 1988 to 2012 (Fuchs, 2009;  
34 Guzzetti et al., 2005). Moreover, a similar average annual loss is also found in China, approximately  
35 0.17 € billion of annual loss was recorded during the time period of 2005 and 2015 (Miao and Liu, 2020).  
36 In this case, a reliable estimation of the potential economic loss caused by debris flows is essential since  
37 it can provide guidance for decision-makers about where to place the infrastructures and buildings. The  
38 buildings are the most susceptible element to debris flows, and they are responsible for most of the  
39 economic loss (Fuchs, 2009; Wei et al., 2018). Therefore, in order to calculate the potential economic  
40 loss, it is critical to estimate the damage degree of the buildings since economic loss is linked to the  
41 physical vulnerability of a property and its economic value.

42 The physical vulnerability quantifies the damage degree of a property, and the methods that are used  
43 to decide the physical vulnerability include mechanical method (Ruggieri et al., 2023, 2022),  
44 vulnerability matrices, vulnerability curves, vulnerability indicators (Papathoma-Köhle et al., 2017). The  
45 mechanical methods derive the vulnerability functions of buildings based on numerical models, which  
46 may achieve relatively high evaluation accuracy but highly rely on controlled laboratory experiments to  
47 obtain input data. As a result, this method itself is time-consuming and costly for regional application  
48 (Paudel et al., 2021; Qiu et al., 2022). Three vulnerability curves were derived using numerical  
49 modelling to relate the vulnerability to debris-flow intensity, including flow height, flow velocity, and



50 kinematic viscosity (Quan Luna et al., 2011). Although these three curves can suggest the physical  
51 vulnerability of a building at risk but fail to consider the impacts of building structures on damage  
52 degree. Therefore, a brick structure and a reinforced-concrete frame were included in the development of  
53 vulnerability curves by Zhang et al. (2018). However, the involvement of limited building types restricts  
54 the application of the curves when the determination of physical vulnerabilities for different building  
55 types is required. Therefore, considering the limitations of vulnerability curves, different vulnerability  
56 matrixes of buildings have also been developed by many studies due its advantages in interaction  
57 understanding between the debris-flow process and elements at risk and easily readable by non-experts  
58 (Bründl et al., 2009; Kang and Kim, 2016; Zanchetta et al., 2004). In contrast, these developed matrixes  
59 ignored the spatial position (horizontal distance and vertical distance) between the buildings and the  
60 debris-flow channels, which would misestimate the damage degree of a building caused by a debris-flow  
61 event. As for the vulnerability indicators, this method considers the characteristics of buildings without  
62 relating the debris-flow process when evaluating the damage degrees (Fuchs et al., 2019). Therefore, it is  
63 crucial to establish a comprehensive assessment matrix that takes into account the structural types,  
64 spatial positions between buildings and the debris-flow channels, and debris-flow intensities to estimate  
65 the potential damages of the buildings. Additionally, the possible damage degree of the buildings in  
66 future scenarios was not considered by the past studies (Papathoma-Köhle et al., 2017). Therefore, this  
67 study focuses on conducting an assessment of the potential physical damage of a building due to a future  
68 debris-flow event.

69 Among the four factors in deciding the physical damage of buildings (building structure, spatial  
70 locations ( $HD$  and  $VD$ ), and impact pressure ( $P_t$ )), impact pressure remains an unsolved problem since  
71  $HD$  and  $VD$  can be determined based on the satellite images. In this case, a machine learning model was  
72 developed to predict the impact pressure to a building because this method can uncover intricate and

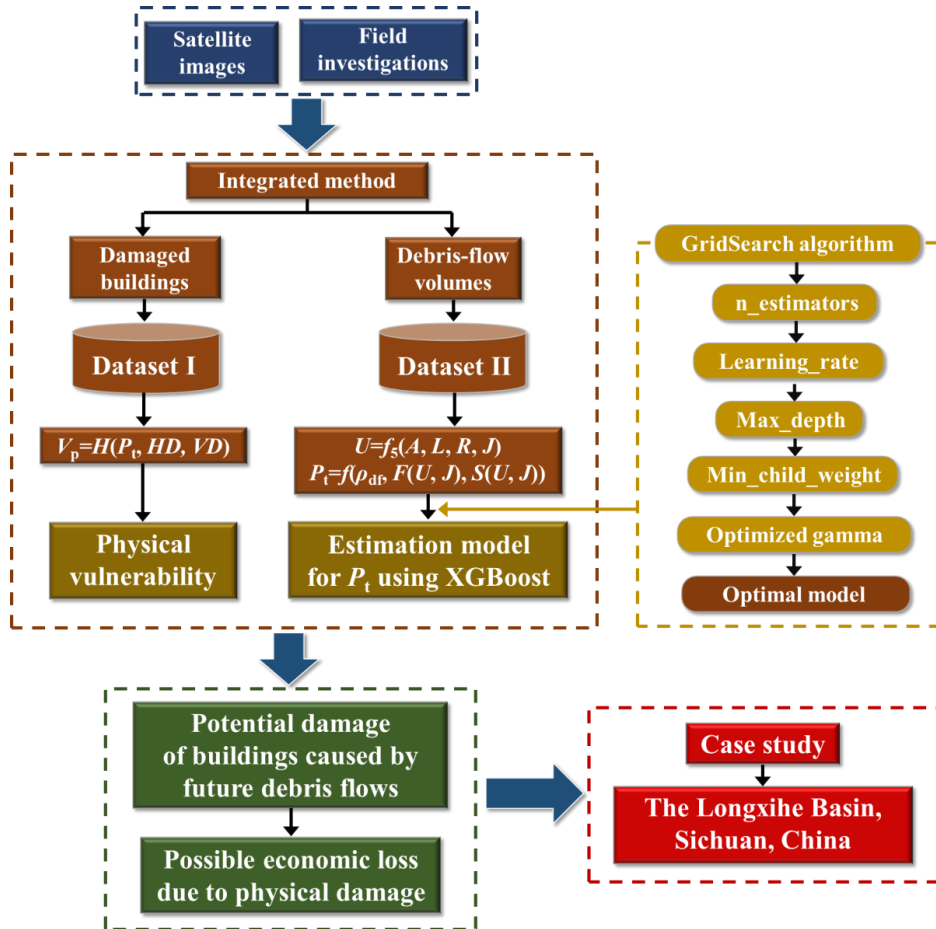


73 concealed relationships between various input variables and an output result (Khosravi et al., 2021; Jiang  
74 et al., 2023). To leverage the benefits of rapid processing and handling large-scale data, we employ an  
75 ensemble model, specifically extreme gradient boosting (XGBoost). This choice is made due to  
76 XGBoost's ability to partition data into smaller components, facilitating parallel computation and  
77 multithreading to enhance processing speed (Chen and Guestrin, 2016).

78 In this paper, we proposed an integrated method of physical vulnerability matrix and machine  
79 learning model to estimate the physical damage of a building caused by a future debris-flow event,  
80 finally estimating the economic loss of this property. The buildings in the Longxihe Basin, Sichuan,  
81 Chian, were extracted to conduct a case study to test the efficiency and reliability of this method in  
82 physical damage estimation and corresponding economic loss. The formation of terrain in this area is  
83 affected by severe tectonic activities, which can produce abundant loose materials for potential debris  
84 flows.

## 85 **2. Methodology**

86 To estimate the economic loss of buildings caused by a future debris-flow event, several steps are  
87 comprised in this study (see Fig. 1):



88

89

Figure 1. Flow chart of this study

90

(1) The historical debris-flow events in Gyirong, Tibet Tibetan Autonomous Region, and the Sichuan Basin (Fig. 2) from the past ten years are investigated based on satellite images and field investigations to collect information regarding the debris-flow volumes and damaged buildings.

93

(2) We categorize the collected historical debris flows into two datasets (dataset I and dataset II) for the development of a physical vulnerability matrix and a prediction model, respectively.

95

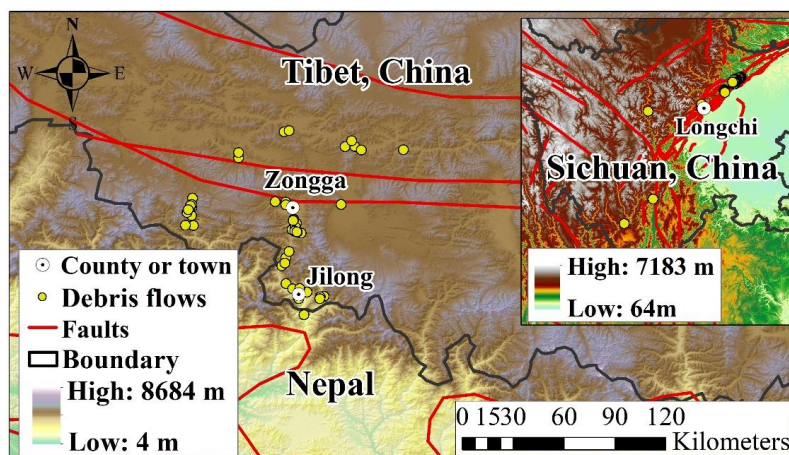
(3) The dataset I includes the debris-flow events that caused damages to the buildings. Therefore, this dataset is employed for the development of a physical vulnerability matrix.

97

(4) The dataset II is composed of the debris-flow events that occurred in areas without the



98 distribution of buildings, and, therefore, no property loss is caused by these events. Therefore, this  
99 dataset was used for model training and utilize this model to estimate the debris-flow intensity in future  
100 scenarios, such as debris-flow impact pressure to buildings. This dataset is shown in Table 6 of  
101 Appendix. A.



102

103 Figure 2. The collected historical debris flows in the Tibet Plateau and the Sichuan Basin

## 104 2.1 Physical vulnerability matrix

105 Vulnerability refers to the damage degree of a property when subjected to a hazard event, such as a  
106 landslide and a debris-flow event (Fell, 1994). Normally, a physical vulnerability was used to quantify  
107 the damage degree of a property. To obtain the future economic loss of a building at risk, a physical  
108 vulnerability matrix of the buildings was proposed. The determination of physical vulnerability relied on  
109 the impact pressure ( $P_t$ ) to buildings, the horizontal distance ( $HD$ ), and the vertical distance ( $VD$ )  
110 between the building and the nearest debris-flow channel, as indicated by Eq. (1). The determination  
111 details of the three parameters in Eq. (1) are demonstrated in the following sections.

$$112 \quad V_p = H(P_t, HD, VD) \quad (1)$$

### 113 2.1.1 Calculation of impact pressure

114 In order to propose a physical vulnerability matrix, the first step is to link the impact pressure to



115 damage degree. As suggested by (Jakob et al., 2012; Kang and Kim, 2016),  $P_t$  can effectively reflect the  
116 energy of debris flows and possible damage degree of buildings. However, past studies usually utilized  
117 debris-flow magnitude to decide the physical vulnerability since a greater magnitude may indicate a  
118 more significant impact force (Dai et al., 2002). This impact force cannot represent the actual damage of  
119 a building during a debris-flow event because the catchment with a potential large-scale debris-flow  
120 event may not cause severe damage to the buildings. The reason behind this uncertainty could be due to  
121 the moderate slope gradient and frictional resistance of a debris-flow channel, which could decrease the  
122 kinetic energy of the travelling mass. Consequently, only a slight or moderate damage to buildings could  
123 be caused. Therefore, impact pressure can better reflect the damage degree of buildings when subjected  
124 to different debris-flow magnitudes, which can be calculated through considering the dynamic  
125 overpressure and hydrostatic pressure (Eq. (2)) (Zanchetta et al., 2004):

$$126 \quad P_t = \frac{1}{2} \rho_{df} gh + \rho_{df} v^2 = f(\rho_{df}, h, v) \quad (2)$$

127 where  $P_t$  (kPa) represents the impact pressure to buildings, and  $g$  is the gravitational acceleration.  $v$  (m/s)  
128 represents the mean flow velocity, and  $\rho_{df}$  is the mean density of materials for a debris-flow event.  $h$  (m)  
129 is the flow depth. As for the debris-flow velocity ( $v$ ) at peak discharge, it can be calculated using the  
130 equation proposed by Rickenmann (1999). This equation considers the debris-flow datasets in different  
131 regions, such as Italy, China, Japan, U.S.A, and Columbia, which enables its feasibility to be used in  
132 wider and different areas.

$$133 \quad v = 2.1 Q_p^{0.33} J^{0.33} = f_1(Q_p, J) \quad (3)$$

134 This equation illustrates that the velocity can be decided by  $Q_p$  ( $m^3/s$ ) and channel gradient ( $J$ ) (Cui  
135 et al., 2013). The calculation of  $Q_p$  can be determined based on the equation (Eq. (4)):

$$136 \quad Q_p = (U / 152.97)^{1/1.266} = f_2(U) \quad (4)$$

137 Therefore, the  $Q_p$  can be calculated based on the estimated volume ( $U$  ( $m^3$ )) of historical debris





138 flows. However, the absence of flow depth ( $h$ ) also hampers the calculation of impact pressure.  
139 Therefore, an equation is used to calculate the flow depth (Koch, 1998). This formula has been proven to  
140 perform well in the numerical simulation of viscose debris flows (Eq. (5)):

$$141 \quad h = (v / C_1 J^{0.5})^{10/3} = f_3(v, C_1, J) = f_3(f_1(Q_p, J), C_1, J) \quad (5)$$

142 where  $C_1$  represents the dimensional empirical coefficient. This value of parameter is indicated by a  
143 semi-theoretical relationship (Eq. (6)) (Rickenmann, 1999):

$$144 \quad C_1 = 10Q_p^{2/25} = f_4(Q_p) = f_4(f_2(U)) \quad (6)$$

145 Therefore, the impact pressure can be described as a function of debris-flow volume and channel  
146 gradient, and the impact pressures of dataset I are calculated based on Eqs. (2)-(6) (see Table 1).

### 147 **2.1.2 Determination of $HD$ and $VD$ values**

148  $HD$  and  $VD$  values were also introduced here since the actual damage will be significant if a  
149 building stands close to the debris-flow channel (Sturm et al., 2018). They can be estimated through  
150 high-resolution satellite images, such as Gaofen, Ziyuan, WorldView, and GeoEye. In this study,  
151 Gaofen-2 satellite images are employed for determining the  $HD$  and  $VD$  values. This satellite can  
152 capture panchromatic (black and white) images with a spatial resolution reaching 0.8 m and  
153 multispectral (color) images with a spatial resolution up to 3.2 m. Therefore, the resolution of satellite  
154 images used for buildings identification is 0.8 m. As for the building clusters that are hard to be  
155 separated into individual buildings manually, a ‘fishnet’ tool in GIS was used to automatically divide  
156 these clusters into building segments. Furthermore, the rectangle segments were converted into points so  
157 that each point represents a building. As a result, the  $HD$  and  $VD$  values of a building can be decided.  
158 The damaged buildings are mainly distributed on the accumulation fans. Therefore, even though a large  
159  $HD$  is observed, the  $VD$  is small due to the mild slope and smooth topography of the alluvial fans  
160 (Marcato et al., 2012). By considering the impact pressure,  $HD$ , and  $VD$  values, a physical vulnerability



161 matrix can be established to evaluate the physical damage of a building caused by a debris-flow event.

## 162 **2.2 Economic loss of a building at risk**

163 The economic loss of a building caused by a debris-flow event can be estimated based on  
164 multiplication of its physical vulnerability and economic value.

$$165 \quad V_e = V_p \times M = H(P_t, HD, VD) \times M; M = P \times A \quad (7)$$

166 where,  $V_e$  and  $M$  represent the economic loss and the economic value of a building, respectively.  $P$  is the  
167 unit price of a building, and  $A$  represents the area of a building. Therefore, estimating  $V_p$  holds  
168 paramount importance in estimating economic loss. However,  $V_p(H(P_t, HD, VD))$  is represented by the  
169 proposed physical vulnerability matrix. In this context, determining  $P_t$  plays a critical role in economic  
170 loss estimation. Therefore, to forecast the possible economic loss caused by a future debris-flow event,  
171 we need to estimate the impact pressure to buildings caused by a future debris-flow event.

## 172 **2.3 Prediction model development**

173 To predict the future impact pressure to buildings when a debris-flow event occurs, determining  
174 factors is essential. Therefore, we further developed Eq. (5) by integrating Eq. (4) and Eq. (6) to this  
175 equation:

$$176 \quad h = f_3(f_1(f_2(U), J), f_4(f_2(U)), J) = F(U, J) \quad (8)$$

177 Additionally, Eq. (3) can be rewritten as:

$$178 \quad v = f_1(Q_p, J) = f_1(f_2(U), J) = S(U, J) \quad (9)$$

179 Therefore, the determination of impact pressure relies on  $U$  and  $J$ :

$$180 \quad P_t = f(\rho_{df}, F(U, J), S(U, J)) \quad (10)$$

181 However, the debris-flow volume is closely related to a set of geomorphic factors, as suggested by  
182 Huang et al. (2020). They are catchment area ( $A$ ), channel length ( $L$ ), topographic relief ( $R$ ), and mean  
183 slope of the main channel ( $J$ ). The catchment area can reflect the debris availability and capacity of



184 generating and containing the volume of loose materials for a debris-flow catchment. As for the channel  
185 length, it is related to the entrained and transported sediment volume (Marchi et al., 2019). Therefore,  
186 this parameter can also impact the final volume of a debris-flow event.  $R$  is defined as the terrain  
187 fluctuation and roughness of a catchment. To calculate this value, we need to first decide the optimal  
188 statistical unit in this area using the change-point model. Then, the subtraction value between the  
189 maximum value and minimum values of an optimal statistical unit is calculated. Finally, we utilized the  
190 maximum subtraction value to represent the  $R$  value of a catchment.  $J$  is defined as the ratio of the  
191 elevation difference of the main channel and channel length. A longer distance could be achieved for a  
192 debris-flow event if a steep channel exists in a catchment (de Haas and Densmore, 2019). In this case,  $U$   
193 can be described as a function of  $A$ ,  $L$ ,  $R$ , and  $J$ :

$$194 \quad U = f_5(A, L, R, J) \quad (11)$$

195 Furthermore, substituting Eq. (11) to Eq. (10):

$$196 \quad P_t = f(\rho_{df}, F(f_5(A, L, R, J), J), S(f_5(A, L, R, J), J)) \quad (12)$$

197 Therefore,  $P_t$  can be described as a complex function of geomorphology-related factors, including  $A$ ,  
198  $L$ ,  $R$ , and  $J$ . To find the complicated correlations among them, an ensemble machine learning model  
199 (extreme gradient boosting (XGBoost)) was employed here to establish the relationship and then utilize  
200 this relationship to estimate the potential impact pressure to buildings when a future debris-flow event  
201 occurs. The basic mechanism of XGBoost is to constantly develop a new decision tree which acts as a  
202 weak learner and fits the residual error of the last prediction. After the training of a total of  $k$  trees, the  
203 final prediction result is the sum of the score of each leaf node in each developed tree. Overall, the target  
204 function of regression is placed in Appendix. A. Additionally, the database II that is used for impact  
205 pressure prediction is presented in Table 6 of Appendix. A.

## 206 **2.4 Model assessment**



207 After the impact pressure prediction, three assessment indexes were used to evaluate the prediction  
208 performance, including MAPE (Mean Absolute Percentage Error), RMSE (Root Mean Square Error),  
209 and MAE (Mean Absolute Error):

$$210 \quad MAPE = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m \frac{|y_i - y_{ipre}|}{y_i} \quad (13)$$

$$211 \quad RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m (y_i - y_{ipre})^2} \quad (14)$$

$$212 \quad MAE = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=1}^m |y_i - y_{ipre}| \quad (15)$$

213 where  $y_i$  is the actual value, and  $y_{ire}$  represents the prediction value.  $m$  is the number of prediction values.

### 214 3. Result analysis

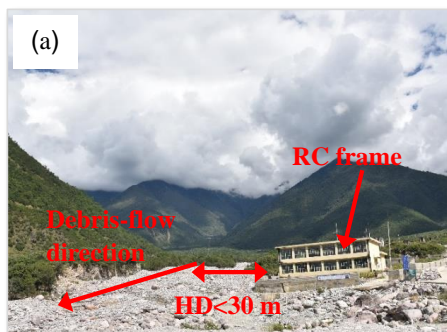
#### 215 3.1 The relationship between the damage degree and $P_t$

216 Fig. 3 shows the different damage degrees of buildings in dataset I. The buildings were classified  
217 into two types, including RC-frame (reinforced concrete) and non-RC frame (masonry, wooden structure,  
218 and light steel frame). As indicated in Figs. 3(e)-(f), The masonry buildings suffer severe damage, and  
219 the light steel frame buildings and wooden structure buildings are destroyed (Figs. 3(g)-(h)) even though  
220 the impact pressure to buildings was estimated to be less than 30 kPa. However, the main structure of  
221 the reinforced concrete building can stay undamaged (Fig. 3(b)) when severe damage is found on the  
222 masonry structure (see a dashed circle in Fig. 3(b)) during the same debris-flow event. This resistance  
223 ability difference indicates the difference in physical vulnerabilities between the RC and the non-RC  
224 frames, which can also be seen in Fig. 3(a). Moreover, moderate damage to the RC frame with  
225 unreinforced masonry infill walls is found in Fig. 3(c) when a small-scale debris-flow event occurs.  
226 Additionally, the RC frame suffers extensive damage when the impact pressure exceeds 100 kPa based  
227 on the estimated debris-flow volume. Therefore, the identifications of different damage degrees for  
228 buildings provide us with access to proposing a classification standard for the physical vulnerability of

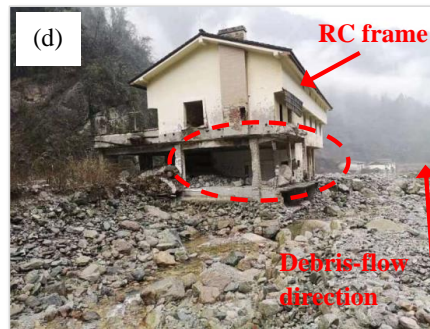


229 buildings.

230



231



232



233



234 Figure 3. Photographs of the damaged residential buildings caused by debris flows during the field

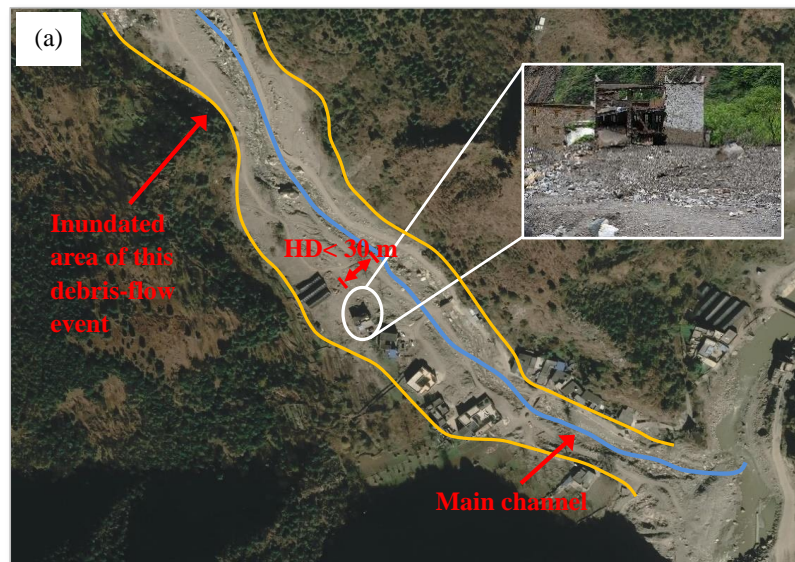




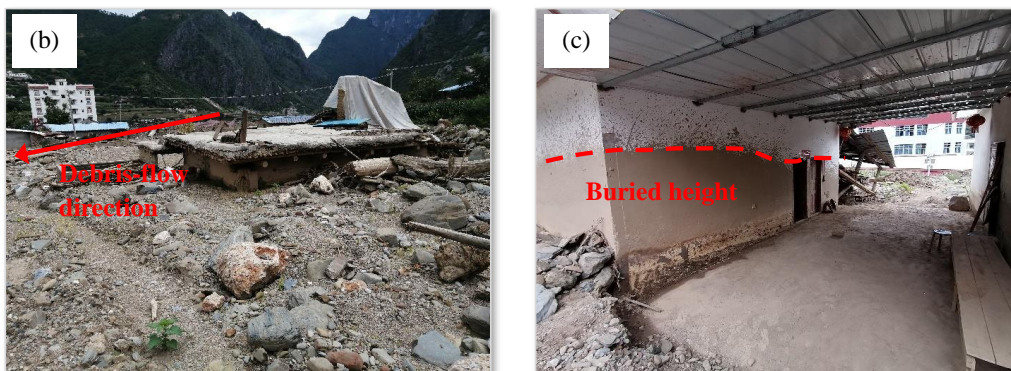
235 investigations on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau

### 236 3.2 Determination of *HD* and *VD* thresholds

237 The field investigations and statistical results show that the non-RC frame buildings are destroyed or  
238 suffer structural damage when the *HD* is less than 30 m (Fig. 4(a)). The damaged buildings cannot be  
239 repaired, and reconstruction is required. In consistent with the conclusion of past study (Wei et al., 2022),  
240 the residential buildings, such as brick structures (Fig. 4(b)) and the RC frame buildings (Fig. 4(c)), are  
241 partially buried by the debris-flow sediments without structural damage when the *HD* is greater than 100  
242 m but less than 160 m. Therefore, 160 m is another *HD* threshold to classify the inundated and slightly  
243 affected areas. The upper limit of *HD* value for the historical debris flows during the field investigations  
244 is 230 m because almost 94% of *HD* values are less than 230 m (see Table 1).



245



246

247

Figure 4. Examples of the determination of the *HD* thresholds

248

**Table 1.** Dataset I for physical vulnerability matrix.

No.	Year	Lon (°)	Lat (°)	Number of damaged buildings	Impact pressure $P_t$ (kPa)	Maximum <i>HD</i> (m)	Maximum <i>VD</i> (m)
1	2006	85.3278	28.3735	21	16.1	162	12
2	2007	85.5683	29.1875	13	40.6	141	12
3	2007	85.5528	28.8717	7	37.5	13	7
4	2008	85.6241	29.1869	21	41.0	119	3
5	2010	86.0872	29.1625	11	35.5	54	2
6	2013	85.3112	28.7649	53	24.1	284	29
7	2015	85.2928	28.4174	9	117.4	160	2
8	2015	85.3608	28.4074	22	31.1	131	107
9	2015	85.3542	28.7159	7	17.5	82	13
10	2015	84.7653	28.7559	38	132	74	15
11	2015	85.4566	28.3868	3	5.1	32	10
12	2015	85.4413	28.3827	1	32.7	17	6
13	2015	85.0105	29.1208	3	5.2	133	2
14	2015	85.2579	29.2603	9	9.8	146	2
15	2015	85.2759	29.2652	6	14.8	228	10
16	2015	85.0083	29.1493	4	14.6	171	3

249

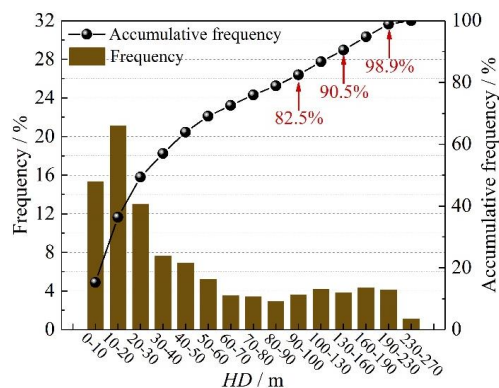
In order to support the thresholds determination of *HD*, we further analyzed the frequencies of *HD*

250

values for the damaged buildings, as depicted in Table 1, through dividing the *HD* values into several

251

intervals. The frequency and accumulative frequency results are shown in Fig. 5.



252

253 Figure 5. The frequency and accumulative frequency distributions of the 228 damaged buildings.

254 As depicted in Fig. 5, the highest proportion occurs in the range of 10 to 20 m, accounting for 20.1%,

255 followed by a 15% percentage of *HD* values falling between 20 to 30 m. Therefore, the proportion

256 falling within the range of 0 to 30 m is 49.4%, and approximately 82.5% of the *HD* values is measured

257 under 100 m. Following the suggestion of Liu et al. (2020), a probability of 50% is considered a

258 threshold for debris-flow warning, which implies that 30 m in this study can serve as a threshold.

259 Moreover, the accumulative frequency of 80% is selected as another threshold based on Wei et al. (2018),

260 corresponding to the *HD* value of 100 m. Furthermore, 90.5% of the damaged buildings have *HD* value

261 less than 160 m, and nearly 98.9% of the damaged buildings fall within the *HD* range of 0 to 230 m. As

262 a result, 160 m and 230 m are selected as additional two thresholds. In addition to the determination of

263 *HD* threshold values, the maximum flow depth (*h*) in the debris-flow channel is used as a reference to

264 decide the *VD* thresholds since the buildings are mostly situated along the channels (Fig. 4(a) and Fig. 6).

265 Therefore, calculating the elevation difference between the buildings and the nearest debris-flow

266 channel is critical to evaluate the safety of the buildings. For example, both the masonry buildings in Fig.

267 4(a) and Fig. 6 are close to the debris-flow channel. However, no severe damage is observed for the

268 building in Fig. 6 because it has a considerable vertical distance from the main channel. To decide the

269 *VD* thresholds, the *h* values of the historical debris flows are presented in Table 6 of Appendix. A. The





270 average depth of the debris flows is 2.6 m, and nearly all the  $VD$  values are less than 4 m. Therefore, 4 m  
271 serves as the first threshold, suggesting that the most severe damage to the buildings may be caused  
272 when the  $VD$  is less than 4 m. Whilst a debris-flow depth value of as high as 10 m is suggested (Xie et  
273 al., 2013), which can be found in curved channels. Consequently, we utilize 10 m to indicate the  
274 moderate damage of buildings when the  $VD$  is less than 10 m but greater than 4 m. Moreover, a vertical  
275 distance of 14 m above the river level is considered to record the river gauging on the Iowa River using a  
276 digital video camera (Creutin et al., 2003), which indicates a safe  $VD$  value to avoid damage caused by  
277 the river discharge. Therefore, 15 m is used as the upper limit of the  $VD$  values in this paper.



278

279

Figure 6. Example of the determination of the  $VD$  threshold

### 280 3.3 Physical vulnerability matrix ( $h(P_i, HD, VD)$ )

281 The proposed physical vulnerabilities of residential buildings are listed in Table 2. Extensive  
282 damage or even complete damage may occur when a non-RC building is located near the debris-flow  
283 channel with  $HD$  less than 30 m and  $VD$  less than 4 m. However, a significant improvement in resistance  
284 ability can be observed when the non-RC frame is replaced by the RC frame considering the same  
285 impact pressure,  $HD$  and  $VD$  values. In general, the buildings hardly suffer damage when the  $VD$  is



286 greater than 10 m. Therefore, the economic loss of a building can be calculated based on the proposed  
 287 physical vulnerabilities and economic values.

288 Table 2. Physical vulnerability matrix

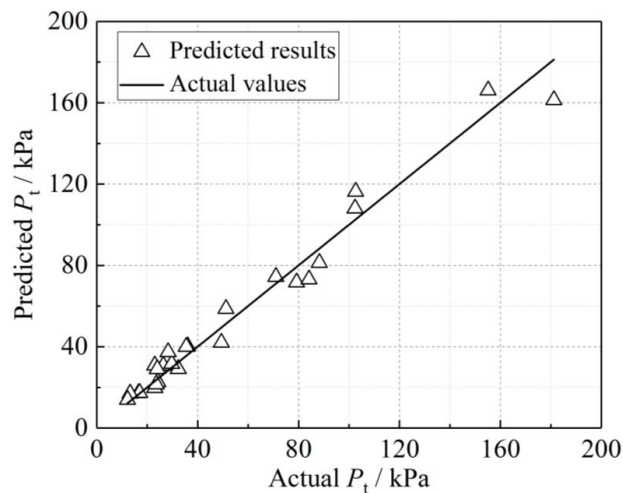
$P_t$ (kPa)	Building structure	$HD < 30$ m			$30 < HD < 100$ m		
		$4 < VD < 10$	$4 < VD < 10$	$10 < VD < 15$	$4 < VD < 10$	$4 < VD < 10$	$10 < VD < 15$
<30	RC frame	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	/
	Non-RC frame	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.4
30-70	RC frame	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2
	Non-RC frame	1	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.6
70-100	RC frame	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3
	Non-RC frame	1	1	0.9	1	0.9	0.7
>100	RC frame	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.4
	Non-RC frame	1	1	0.9	1	1	0.8
$P_t$ (kPa)	Building structure	$100 < HD < 160$ m			$160 < HD < 230$ m		
		$4 < VD < 10$	$4 < VD < 10$	$10 < VD < 15$	$4 < VD < 10$	$4 < VD < 10$	$10 < VD < 15$
<30	RC frame	0.1	/	/	/	/	/
	Non-RC frame	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.1	/
30-70	RC frame	0.4	0.2	/	0.2	/	/
	Non-RC frame	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.3	/
70-100	RC frame	0.5	0.3	/	0.3	/	/
	Non-RC frame	0.9	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.4	/
>100	RC frame	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.1	/
	Non-RC frame	1	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.1

### 289 3.4 Prediction model development and assessment

290 The debris flows in Table 6 (see Appendix. A) were divided into a training set and a validation set,  
 291 and the training set is used to train the prediction model. The validation results are plotted in Fig. 7.  
 292 Additionally, the performance of the developed model is assessed using the three indexes (Eqs. (14)-  
 293 (16)). As indicated in Fig. 7, the prediction results show minor errors to the actual values, and the MAPE,  
 294 RMSE and MAE values are 9.70%, 3.98 kPa and 2.74 kPa, respectively. RMSE value can reflect the  
 295 extreme errors, and the calculated RMSE value can indicate that there are no extreme values observed in



296 the prediction results. Additionally, MAPE reflects the error percentage between the measured and  
297 predicted values, and the model is more reliable if the MAPE is closer to 0. Therefore, it can be  
298 concluded that this model performed well in predicting the volume of a future debris-flow event.



299

300

Figure 7. Plotted results of the prediction results

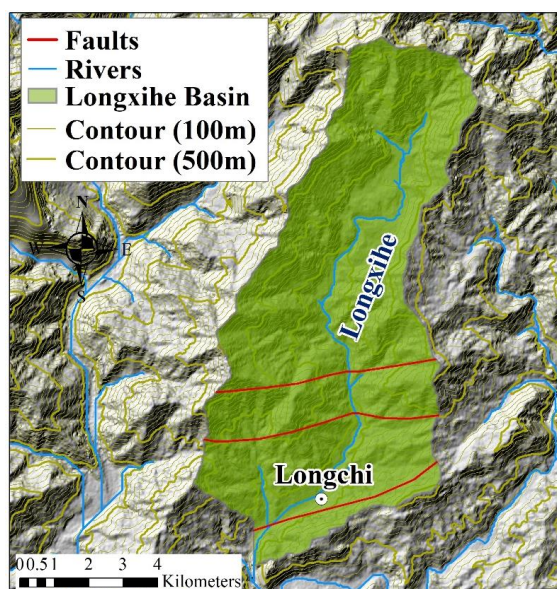
## 301 4 Case study

### 302 4.1 Geological setting

303 We selected the Longxihe Basin (Fig. 8) in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province, to conduct a case study  
304 (see Fig. 1 about the geographic location of this area), which is 15 km away from the epicenter of the  
305 2008 Wenchuan earthquake. There are three faults crossing this area, namely the Southern Branch of the  
306 Yingxiu-Beichuan Fault, the Northern Branch of the Yingxiu-Beichuan Fault, and the Feilailong  
307 Structure. These faults and structures cause the incised valleys and uplifting of the land surface, resulting  
308 in large areas of exposed rocks. Additionally, this study area belongs to the subtropical monsoon climate,  
309 with annual precipitation reaching 1134.8 mm. Over 80 % of the annual rainfall occurs from May to  
310 September. Consequently, the abundant rainfall and complex geological structure give birth to frequent  
311 debris flows. It was reported that 13 debris-flow events occurred in this basin on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 24<sup>th</sup> June,  
312 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008, and 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009. In particular, 45 debris-flow events were recorded on 13<sup>th</sup>



313 August 2010 due to a high-intense rainfall event, causing severe damage to 233 buildings and resulting  
314 in the entire economic loss of  $7.2 \times 10^7$  €. There are one town and two villages distributed in this basin.  
315 The impacts of the Wenchuan earthquake still pose threats to the local people since a time period of at  
316 least 20 years is required if the occurrence frequency of debris flows before the earthquake is expected  
317 (Yu et al., 2014).



318

319 Figure 8. The Longxihe Basin, Dujiangyan, China

## 320 4.2 Estimation of economic loss of buildings

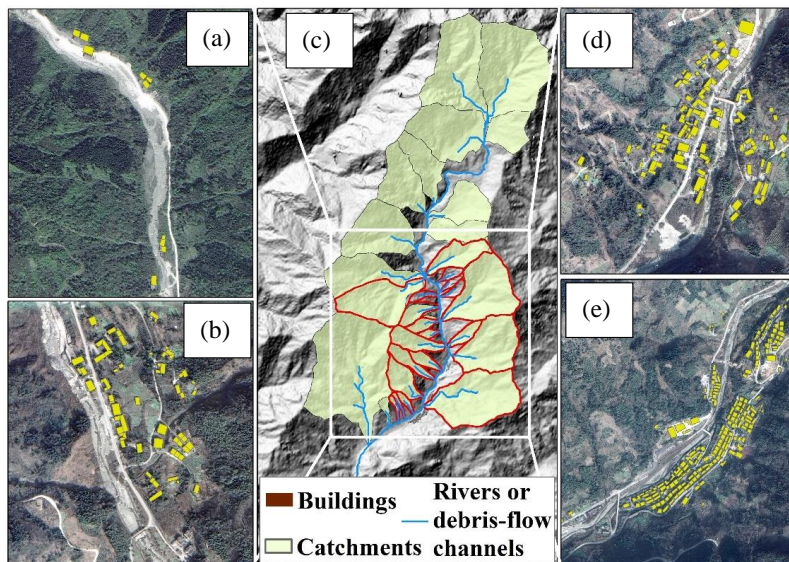
### 321 4.2.1 Determination of physical vulnerability

322 To estimate the potential physical damage of the buildings in the Longxihe Basin, the developed  
323 prediction model was applied to predict the potential impact pressure to buildings. As illustrated in Fig.  
324 9(c), the debris-flow catchments within this basin were generated since we mainly focus on the regions  
325 with the distribution of buildings and estimate the possible economic loss of the buildings when debris  
326 flows occur. Therefore, we extracted a total of 386 buildings in three regions based on the satellite  
327 images (Fig. 9(a), Fig. 9(b), Fig. 9(d), and Fig. 9(e)). After that, we selected the catchments that are the





328 nearest to the buildings to conduct analysis (see highlighted catchments with red lines in Fig. 9(c)). The  
 329 input information of these catchments for impact pressure prediction and the predicted results are all  
 330 listed in Table 3.



331

332

Figure 9. The debris-flow catchments and residential buildings in this area

333

Table 3. Prediction results using developed prediction model

No.	$A / \text{km}^2$	$L / \text{km}$	$R / \text{m}$	$J$	Predicted $P_t$ (kPa)
1	0.4226	0.70	116	0.3024	22.0
2	0.8849	1.00	123	0.3503	26.7
3	0.1447	0.25	113	0.4055	18.0
4	2.9068	0.91	145	0.1668	22.1
5	0.3637	0.58	125	0.2998	19.2
6	0.9317	0.88	130	0.2551	20.9
7	4.1780	1.84	141	0.0751	16.0
8	0.1632	0.61	117	0.3419	19.3
9	0.0932	0.69	112	0.3622	17.3
10	0.1087	0.69	112	0.3542	17.5
11	0.2355	0.73	159	0.6828	16.5
12	1.3027	1.46	145	0.3944	25.2
13	2.8095	1.30	158	0.2466	26.5
14	0.3802	0.89	129	0.4299	19.2
15	0.2177	0.70	136	0.5690	15.8
16	0.1529	0.84	162	0.6821	14.4
17	3.5789	2.23	153	0.3047	33.6
18	0.3179	0.69	127	0.5400	17.4
19	0.1970	0.74	96	0.4056	15.0
20	0.2201	0.90	110	0.4599	13.0



334 In addition to the predicted impact pressures to the buildings by the potential debris flows, the  
 335 horizontal and vertical distances between each building and the nearest debris-flow channel were  
 336 measured using GIS. As a result, the physical vulnerabilities of the buildings in Longxihe Basin can be  
 337 decided based on the proposed physical vulnerability matrix, and the results are shown in Figs. 10(a)-(d).

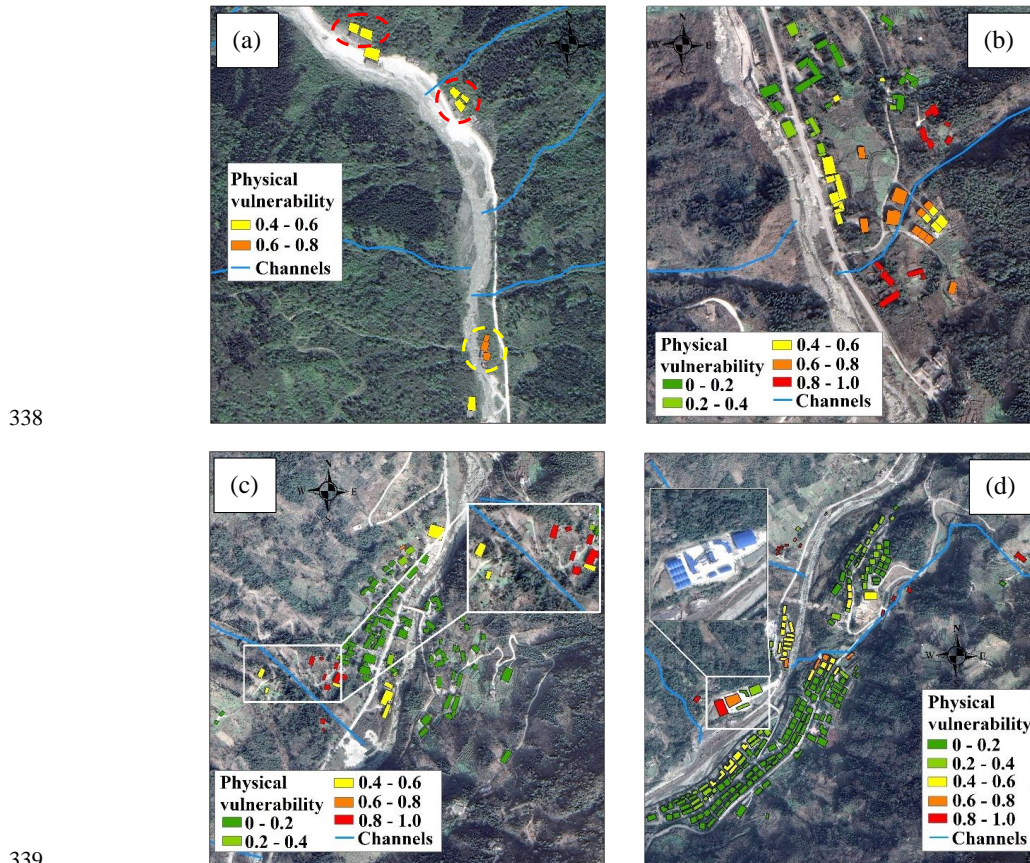


Figure 10. Physical vulnerabilities of the buildings in the Longchi Basin

Table 4. Statistical results of the buildings with different physical vulnerabilities

341

	0 - 0.2	0.2 - 0.4	0.4 - 0.6	0.6 - 0.8	0.8 - 1.0
Number	237	52	45	18	34
Percentage	61.4%	13.5%	11.6%	4.7%	8.8%

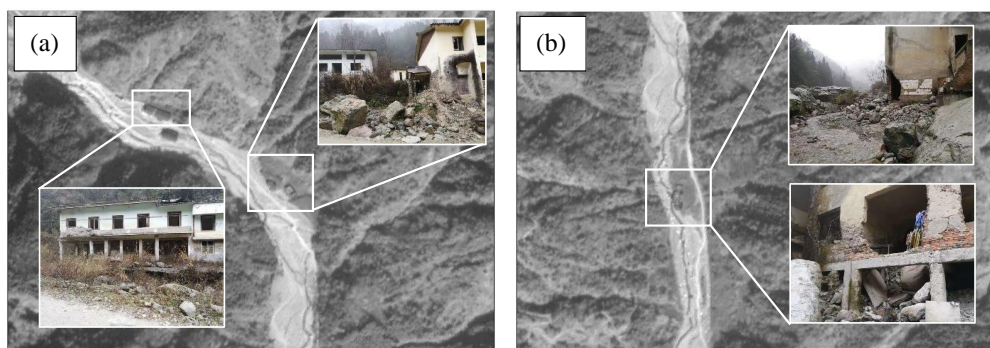
342 The statistical results in Table 4 illustrate that most buildings nearly suffer no damage when a  
 343 debris-flow event occurs. This is because these buildings are RC-frame structures, which allow them to  
 344 stay undamaged or only suffer slight damage even though they are close to the debris-flow channels.



345 However, non-RC frame buildings may always suffer severe damage during a debris-flow event if their  
346 locations are near the channels. As indicated in Figs. 10(a)-(d), the buildings with high and very-high  
347 physical vulnerabilities are mainly brick and light steel structures. The difference in resistance ability  
348 allows a greater possibility for RC-frame buildings to keep structures undamaged during the same  
349 debris-flow event when compared to a non-RC building, which is consistent with the field investigation  
350 results in Fig. 3(b). Moreover, a non-RC frame building can also avoid damage even though it is close to  
351 the debris-flow channel. This is because a higher vertical distance to the debris-flow channel can allow  
352 this non-RC building to suffer no damage or light damage. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis by  
353 considering the structure type, spatial distances to debris-flow channel, and potential impact pressure is  
354 significant to establish a reliable physical vulnerability matrix to benefit the determination of the  
355 potential damage degree of buildings.

356 In order to validate the efficiency and accuracy of our method in estimating the physical damages of  
357 buildings, the damaged buildings caused by debris flows on 13th August 2010 are employed here to  
358 assess the reliability of this method. As depicted in Fig. 11(a), the RC-frame buildings suffer a moderate  
359 damage (see red dashed circles in Fig. 10(a)) because there are no obvious damages of external or  
360 internal walls observed during the field investigations based on the HAZUS building classification  
361 scheme (Rojahn, 1988). However, the debris-flow event caused an extensive damage (see yellow dashed  
362 circles in Fig. 10(a)) to the brick structures due to the partly destroyed external or internal walls. As a  
363 result, evacuation of people is necessary and reconstruction is required. Overall, our proposed method  
364 can provide a reliable evaluation of physical vulnerability of buildings caused by a debris-flow event  
365 and therefore benefit their estimation of economic loss.





366

367

Figure 11. The damaged buildings caused by the debris-flow events.

#### 368 4.2.2 Economic loss

369 Based on the estimated physical damage, we can further provide a reliable estimation of the  
 370 economic loss. Six categories of buildings were identified in this study area based on the field  
 371 investigations. They are residential buildings, factory buildings, office buildings, and livestock houses.

372

Table 5. Unit price ( $P$ ) of a building in this area

Element	Categories	Unit price	Value based on
Buildings	Residential buildings (RC-frame)	1050.44 €/m <sup>2</sup>	Average market price
	Residential buildings (Brick structure)	158.38 €/m <sup>2</sup>	Construction cost
	Business buildings (RC-frame)	1371.47 €/m <sup>2</sup>	Average market price
	Office buildings (RC-frame)	1050.44 €/m <sup>2</sup>	\
	Factory buildings (Light steel structure)	237.57 €/m <sup>2</sup>	Construction cost
	Livestock houses (Brick structure)	7.92 €/m <sup>2</sup>	Restoration and reconstruction cost

373

374

375

376

377

378

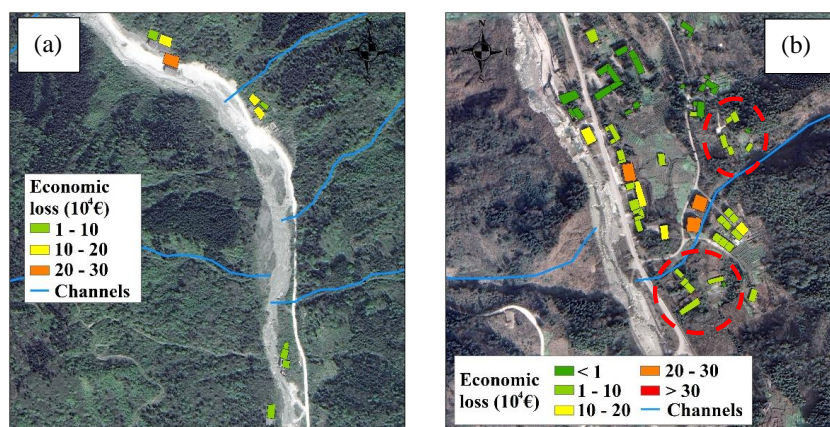
The economic value of a residential building in this area is based on the market price, which is provided by the Housing and Urban-rural Construction Agency. As for the unit price of a business building, we refer to the price ratio of a residential building and a business building in the city center of Dujiangyan. The unit price of a business building is normally 30% higher than a residential building. An office building belongs to the national assets, which cannot be rented or sold. However, possible damage still cannot be avoided if a debris-flow event occurs, which therefore requires restoration or

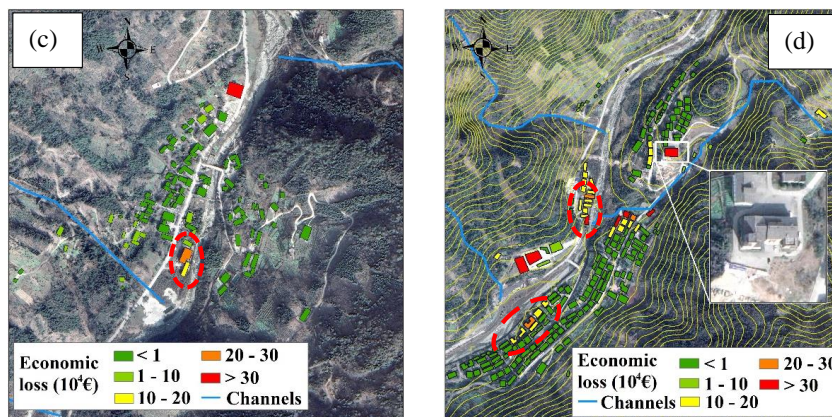




379 reconstruction. Therefore, we refer to the unit price of a residential building to estimate the economic  
380 loss of an office building. Unlike the high construction cost and business value of a residential building  
381 and a business building, the construction cost of a factory building is low because of its light steel  
382 structure. Meanwhile, this kind of building is normally situated at a distance from the city center and  
383 residential areas, primarily to mitigate effects of noise and environmental pollution. Most importantly, a  
384 factory building invariably occupies a large area, potentially raising the construction cost when situated  
385 in the city center due to the exorbitant land prices. Considering the average market price of a factory  
386 building, we decide the unit price as 237.57 €/m<sup>2</sup>. Finally, the livestock house is still considered here  
387 since two villages are included in the analysis, and the livestock house is built for sheep and cattle.  
388 Therefore, the unit price of a livestock building is low (see Table 5). The economic loss of the buildings  
389 in the Longxihe Basin are presented in Fig. 12.

390





391

392

Figure 12. Economic loss of the residential buildings in the Longxihe Basin

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

The distribution characteristics of economic loss are different from physical vulnerability. For example, Figs. 10(a) illustrates that the buildings are more likely to suffer severe damage if they are close to the debris-flow channel, especially the non-RC frame structures. However, these non-RC frame buildings require lower reconstruction or restoration costs when compared to the RC-frame buildings (see Fig. 12(a)). In this case, the economic loss is low since it relies on the multiplication of physical vulnerability and economic value of a building (see red dashes in Fig. 12(b)). As indicated in Fig. 12(d), the factory buildings (see Fig. 10(d) and Fig. 12(d)) may suffer an economic loss of  $3.2 \times 10^5$  €. As for the reason why a low unit price of a factory building (see Table 5) results in a high economic loss may be due to the large area of this factory building. Therefore, the site selection of a factory building is significant. Although the location of the factory buildings in mountainous areas can avoid noise pollution in urban development and decrease construction costs, the possible economic loss caused by natural hazards cannot be neglected. Additionally, the residential building should not be built on the outlet of the debris-flow catchment directly opposite (see red dash circles in Fig. 12(d)), especially when the foundation of the residential buildings is only slightly higher than the riverway (see yellow contours in Fig. 12(d)). For example, the highest economic loss is found in a residential building (see the image in Fig. 12(d)), reaching  $5.1 \times 10^5$  €. Therefore, at least a 4 m of residential building (RC frame) foundation



409 is essential if the buildings are close to the debris-flow channel based on Table 2. Overall, the analysis of  
410 economic loss for buildings in mountainous areas can provide decision-makers with guidance about  
411 urban planning.

## 412 **5. Discussion**

413 The proposed integrated method has been applied for the determination of the damage degree for  
414 buildings in the Longxihe Basin, Sichuan, China. The involvement of debris-flow intensities, building  
415 attributes, and spatial position between the buildings and debris-flow channel can help to suggest a more  
416 reasonable damage degree value caused by debris flows. Specifically, the debris-flow intensity is  
417 expressed in impact pressure here, which can indicate the possible consequence of a building if the  
418 flowing materials strike the building directly. However, an overestimation of the damage degree may be  
419 caused since the spatial positions between the building and debris-flow channel is not a one-dimensional  
420 problem. In general, the elevation of a building is greater than that of the debris-flow channel in the  
421 horizontal direction. This is because the long-term water flow and historical debris flows move the soils  
422 and rocks, causing erosion of the channel bottom and therefore decreasing its elevation. As a result, the  
423 elevation difference between the buildings and the debris-flow channel could cause a loss of impact  
424 pressure. Therefore, simply utilizing impact pressure is not enough to reflect the actual damage to a  
425 building. In contrast, the introduction of *HD* and *VD* is an effective supplement to improve the  
426 estimation of physical damage that the buildings may suffer. Furthermore, the damage degree may vary  
427 when subjected to different building structures. In this case, two major types of buildings are considered  
428 in this study to distinguish the impact resistance capacities of different building types. Overall, this  
429 developed matrix comprehensively describes the factors impacting the damage degree of buildings  
430 caused by debris flows.

431 By utilizing the proposed matrix, we can estimate the damage degree of a building. However, the



432 possible damage in future scenarios is still unclear due to the change in debris-flow magnitude.  
433 Therefore, an ensemble machine learning (ML) model is used to predict the volume of a future debris-  
434 flow event so that the debris-flow intensities can be calculated based on the empirical relationships. This  
435 ML method can effectively avoid over-fitting when training prediction models due to the existence of a  
436 regular term. Most importantly, the strong ability in establishing a reliable relationship between a group  
437 of independent variables and a dependent variable enables a wider application of ML methods when  
438 compared to empirical and regression methods. Therefore, a precise prediction can be expected based on  
439 the established relationship using the ML method to indicate the potential damage to buildings caused by  
440 a future debris-flow event. However, we are also aware that the current sample size may not support a  
441 robustness performance in estimating impact pressure to buildings. For broader applications, continuous  
442 input of debris-flow data globally is essential, which may be beyond the scope of this study. However,  
443 further improvement can also be achieved if the floors of buildings are considered when developing the  
444 physical vulnerability matrix. This is because the degree of loss presents a negative correlation with the  
445 number of floors (Fuchs et al., 2019). Nevertheless, the limitation cannot alter the fact that our work can  
446 benefit the subdivision of buildings in different vulnerability levels and provide suggestions about the  
447 site selection of future residential areas.

## 448 **6. Conclusion**

449 In this paper, an integrated method for vulnerability assessment of buildings caused by future debris  
450 flows was proposed. This method includes a physical matrix and a machine learning model, in which  
451 this matrix was developed by considering the debris-flow process, building structure, and spatial  
452 positions between the buildings and debris-flow channels. To be more specific, the debris-flow process  
453 is represented by impact pressure ( $P_I$ ), which can be estimated based on the debris-flow volume through  
454 field investigations. As for the definition of spatial positions,  $HD$  and  $VD$  are used to describe the



455 position relation between the buildings and the debris-flow channel. By combining the three parameters,  
456 the actual impact pressure on the buildings can be decided. However, the damage degree may vary for  
457 different building structures. Therefore, the building structure is further considered to provide a precise  
458 estimation of the buildings, including the RC frame and non-RC frame (brick structure, light steel  
459 structure, and masonry structure). Therefore, a total of six types of buildings are included in this study.  
460 They are residential buildings (RC frame and brick structure), business buildings (RC frame), office  
461 buildings (RC frame), factory buildings (light steel structure), and livestock houses (brick structure). At  
462 the same time, an ML model (XGBoost) was developed to predict the impact pressure to buildings  
463 caused by future debris flows. On the basis of the proposed physical vulnerability matrix and machine  
464 learning model, we selected the Longxihe Basin, Sichuan, China, to conduct a case study. The results  
465 show that the non-RC buildings may be more likely to suffer severe damage if they are close to the  
466 debris-flow channels. The buildings with high and very-high physical vulnerabilities are mainly brick  
467 and light steel structures. Consequently, the factory buildings occupy the highest economic loss,  
468 reaching  $2.41 \times 10^5$  € due to their large area. In addition, the buildings may suffer severe economic loss if  
469 they are located the directly opposite of the outlet of the debris-flow catchment. Overall, our studies can  
470 achieve a reliable assessment of the physical damage and corresponding economic loss of buildings and  
471 therefore provide suggestions and scientific support for the future construction planning of buildings.

#### 472 **CRedit authorship contribution statement**

473 **Chenchen Qiu:** Methodology, Software, Data curation, Writing - Original draft preparation. **Xueyu**  
474 **Geng:** Conceptualization, Visualization, Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

#### 475 **Declaration of competing interest**

476 The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships  
477 that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

#### 478 **Acknowledgement**

479 This work is financially supported by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation  
480 program Marie Skłodowska–Curie Actions Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) under grant



481 agreement [grant number 778360].

482 For the purpose of open access, the author has applied a Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY)  
483 licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from the submission.

#### 484 **References**

485 Alene, G.H., Irshad, S., Moraru, A., Depina, I., Bruland, O., Perkis, A. and Thakur, V., 2024. Virtual  
486 reality visualization of geophysical flows: A framework. *Environmental Modelling & Software*, 177,  
487 p.106063.

488 Bründl, M., Romang, H.E., Bischof, N., Rheinberger, C.M., 2009. The risk concept and its application in  
489 natural hazard risk management in Switzerland. *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.* 9, 801–813.

490 Chen, T., Guestrin, C., 2016. XGBoost: A scalable tree boosting system. *Proc. ACM SIGKDD Int. Conf.*  
491 *Knowl. Discov. Data Min.* 13-17-Aug, 785–794. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2939672.2939785>

492 Creutin, J.D., Muste, M., Bradley, A.A., Kim, S.C., Kruger, A., 2003. River gauging using PIV  
493 techniques: A proof of concept experiment on the Iowa River. *J. Hydrol.* 277, 182–194.  
494 [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1694\(03\)00081-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-1694(03)00081-7)

495 Cui, P., Xiang, L.Z., Zou, Q., 2013. Risk assessment of highways affected by debris flows in Wenchuan  
496 earthquake area. *J. Mt. Sci.* 10, 173–189. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11629-013-2575-y>

497 Dai, F.C., Lee, C.F., Ngai, Y.Y., 2002. Landslide risk assessment and management: An overview. *Eng.*  
498 *Geol.* 64, 65–87. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0013-7952\(01\)00093-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0013-7952(01)00093-X)

499 Fell, R., 1994. Landslide risk assessment and acceptable risk. *Can. Geotech. J.* 31, 261–272.

500 Fuchs, S., 2009. Susceptibility versus resilience to mountain hazards in Austria-paradigms of  
501 vulnerability revisited. *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.* 9, 337–352.

502 Fuchs, S., Keiler, M., Ortlepp, R., Schinke, R., Papathoma-Köhle, M., 2019. Recent advances in  
503 vulnerability assessment for the built environment exposed to torrential hazards: Challenges and the  
504 way forward. *J. Hydrol.* 575, 587–595.





- 505 Guzzetti, F., Stark, C.P., Salvati, P., 2005. Evaluation of flood and landslide risk to the population of  
506 Italy. *Environ. Manage.* 36, 15–36.
- 507 Huang, J., Hales, T.C., Huang, R., Ju, N., Li, Q., Huang, Y., 2020. A hybrid machine-learning model to  
508 estimate potential debris-flow volumes. *Geomorphology* 367, 107333.  
509 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geomorph.2020.107333>
- 510 Immerzeel, W.W., Lutz, A.F., Andrade, M., Bahl, A., Biemans, H., Bolch, T., Hyde, S., Brumby, S.,  
511 Davies, B.J., Elmore, A.C. and Emmer, A., 2020. Importance and vulnerability of the world’s water  
512 towers. *Nature*, 577(7790), pp.364-369.
- 513 Jakob, M., Stein, D., Ulmi, M., 2012. Vulnerability of buildings to debris flow impact. *Nat. Hazards* 60,  
514 241–261. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-011-0007-2>
- 515 Jiang, H., Zou, Q., Zhu, Y., Li, Y., Zhou, B., Zhou, W., Yao, S., Dai, X., Yao, H. and Chen, S., 2024.  
516 Deep Learning Prediction of Rainfall-driven Debris Flows Considering the Similar Critical  
517 Thresholds within Comparable Background Conditions. *Environmental Modelling & Software*,  
518 p.106130.
- 519 Kang, H. sub, Kim, Y. tae, 2016. The physical vulnerability of different types of building structure to  
520 debris flow events. *Nat. Hazards* 80, 1475–1493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11069-015-2032-z>
- 521 Khosravi, K., Khozani, Z.S., Mao, L., 2021. A comparison between advanced hybrid machine learning  
522 algorithms and empirical equations applied to abutment scour depth prediction. *J. Hydrol.* 596,  
523 126100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2021.126100>
- 524 Koch, T., 1998. Testing various constitutive equations for debris flow modelling. *IAHS-AISH Publ.*  
525 249–257.
- 526 Liu, S., Wei, L., Hu, K., 2020. Topographical and geological variation of effective rainfall for debris-  
527 flow occurrence from a large-scale perspective. *Geomorphology* 358, 107134.



- 528 Marcato, G., Bossi, G., Rivelli, F., Borgatti, L., 2012. Debris flood hazard documentation and mitigation  
529 on the Tilcara alluvial fan (Quebrada de Humahuaca, Jujuy province, North-West Argentina). *Nat.*  
530 *Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.* 12, 1873–1882. <https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-12-1873-2012>
- 531 Miao, C., Liu, X., 2020. Characterization of acceptable risk for debris flows in China: Comparison in  
532 debris-flow prone areas and nonprone areas. *Int. J. disaster risk Reduct.* 42, 101405.
- 533 Papathoma-Köhle, M., Gems, B., Sturm, M., Fuchs, S., 2017. Matrices, curves and indicators: A review  
534 of approaches to assess physical vulnerability to debris flows. *Earth-Science Rev.* 171, 272–288.
- 535 Paudel, B., Fall, M., Daneshfar, B., 2021. Gis-Based Assessment of Debris Flow Runout in Kulekhani  
536 Watershed, Nepal. *Geotech. Geol. Eng.* 39, 2755–2775. [https://doi.org/10.1007/s10706-020-01655-](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10706-020-01655-1)  
537 1
- 538 Qiu, C., Su, L., Zou, Q., Geng, X., 2022. A hybrid machine-learning model to map glacier-related debris  
539 flow susceptibility along Gyirong Zangbo watershed under the changing climate. *Sci. Total Environ.*  
540 818, 151752. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.151752>
- 541 Quan Luna, B., Blahut, J., Van Westen, C.J., Sterlacchini, S., Van Asch, T.W.J., Akbas, S.O., 2011. The  
542 application of numerical debris flow modelling for the generation of physical vulnerability curves.  
543 *Nat. Hazards Earth Syst. Sci.* 11, 2047–2060. <https://doi.org/10.5194/nhess-11-2047-2011>
- 544 Rickenmann, D., 1999. Empirical relationships for debris flows. *Nat. Hazards* 19, 47–77.  
545 <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008064220727>
- 546 Rojahn, C., 1988. Rapid visual screening of buildings for potential seismic hazards: A handbook.  
547 Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- 548 Ruggieri, S., Calò, M., Cardellicchio, A., Uva, G., 2022. Analytical-mechanical based framework for  
549 seismic overall fragility analysis of existing RC buildings in town compartments. *Bull. Earthq. Eng.*  
550 20, 8179–8216.





- 551 Ruggieri, S., Liguori, F.S., Leggieri, V., Bilotta, A., Madeo, A., Casolo, S., Uva, G., 2023. An  
552 archetype-based automated procedure to derive global-local seismic fragility of masonry building  
553 aggregates: META-FORMA-XL. *Int. J. disaster risk Reduct.* 95, 103903.
- 554 Santi, P.M., Hewitt, K., VanDine, D.F., Barillas Cruz, E., 2011. Debris-flow impact, vulnerability, and  
555 response. *Nat. hazards* 56, 371–402.
- 556 Sridharan, A., Gutjahr, G. and Gopalan, S., 2024. Markov–Switching Spatio–Temporal Generalized  
557 Additive Model for Landslide Susceptibility. *Environmental Modelling & Software*, 173, p.105892.
- 558 Sturm, M., Gems, B., Keller, F., Mazzorana, B., Fuchs, S., Papatoma-Köhle, M., Aufleger, M., 2018.  
559 Understanding impact dynamics on buildings caused by fluvial sediment transport.  
560 *Geomorphology* 321, 45–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geomorph.2018.08.016>
- 561 Wei, L., Hu, K., Hu, X., 2018. Rainfall occurrence and its relation to flood damage in China from 2000  
562 to 2015. *J. Mt. Sci.* 15, 2492–2504.
- 563 Wei, L., Hu, K., Liu, J., 2022. Automatic identification of buildings vulnerable to debris flows in  
564 Sichuan Province, China, by GIS analysis and Deep Encoding Network methods. *J. Flood Risk*  
565 *Manag.* 15, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jfr3.12830>
- 566 Xie, H., Liu, W., Zhao, J., Hu, K., 2013. Characteristics of Tangjiagou debris flow in Shimian of  
567 Sichuan in July 14, 2012. *J. Earth Sci. Environ.* 35, 90–97.
- 568 Yu, B., Wu, Y., Chu, S., 2014. Preliminary study of the effect of earthquakes on the rainfall threshold of  
569 debris flows. *Eng. Geol.* 182, 130–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enggeo.2014.04.007>
- 570 Zanchetta, G., Sulpizio, R., Pareschi, M.T., Leoni, F.M., Santacroce, R., 2004. Characteristics of May 5–  
571 6, 1998 volcanoclastic debris flows in the Sarno area (Campania, southern Italy): relationships to  
572 structural damage and hazard zonation. *J. Volcanol. Geotherm. Res.* 133, 377–393.
- 573 Zhang, S., Zhang, L., Li, X., Xu, Q., 2018. Physical vulnerability models for assessing building damage



574 by debris flows. Eng. Geol. 247, 145–158.

575



576 **Appendix. A**

577 1. Mechanism of XGBoost

578 The mechanism of XGBoost is to constantly develop a new decision tree which acts as a weak  
 579 learner and fits the residual error of the last prediction. After the training of a total of  $k$  trees, the final  
 580 prediction result is the sum of the score of each leaf node in each developed tree. The target function of  
 581 regression in XGBoost is:

582 
$$L(\phi) = \sum_{i=1}^m l(y_i, y_i) + \sum_{k=1}^t \Omega(f_k) \quad (10)$$

583 where  $\sum_{i=1}^m l(y_i, y_i)$  represents the loss function, and  $\sum_{k=1}^t \Omega(f_k)$  is the regularisation term.  $y_i$  and  $y_i$   
 584 are prediction value and true value, respectively.  $m$  is the number of samples.  $f_k$  is the  $k$ th tree model. As  
 585 mentioned above, the newly generated tree needs to fit the residual error of the last prediction, and  
 586 therefore the prediction result can be presented as:

587 
$$y_i^t = y_i^{(t-1)} + f_t(x_i) \quad (11)$$

588 Substitute the Eq. (12) into Eq. (11) to rewrite the objective function as:

589 
$$L(\phi) = \sum_{i=1}^m l\left(y_i, y_i^{(t-1)} + f_t(x_i)\right) + \sum_{k=1}^t \Omega(f_k) \quad (12)$$

590 Furthermore, Taylor's second order expansion is introduced to find  $f_k$  to minimize the objective  
 591 function:

592 
$$L(\phi) = \sum_{i=1}^m \left[ l\left(y_i, y_i^{(t-1)}\right) + g_i f_t(x_i) + \frac{1}{2} h_i f_t^2(x_i) \right] + \sum_{k=1}^t \Omega(f_k) + constant \quad (13)$$

593 where  $g_i$  is the first derivation, and the  $h_i$  represents the second derivation

594 2. Calculation results of impact pressure  $P_t$

595 Table 6. Dataset II for developing the impact pressure prediction model

No.	$A$ (km <sup>2</sup> )	$L$ (km)	$R$ (m)	$J$	$P_t$ (kPa)	No.	$A$ (km <sup>2</sup> )	$L$ (km)	$R$ (m)	$J$	$P_t$ (kPa)
1	8.55	3.13	269	0.1051	40.9	42	0.05	0.18	85	0.1908	10.3
2	4.68	1.41	126	0.2162	47.4	43	0.06	0.23	81	0.3038	14.2



3	12.88	4.16	269	0.1246	56.0	44	0.33	0.50	162	0.2792	18.4
4	0.29	0.50	95	0.1638	13.2	45	0.05	0.20	107	0.2661	12.2
5	0.29	0.29	200	0.4122	23.0	46	1.37	1.11	160	0.1763	34.1
6	5.73	0.71	260	0.1175	49.4	47	4.83	1.96	277	0.2071	35.5
7	0.56	0.62	195	0.2475	29.3	48	1.33	0.50	258	0.5117	35.7
8	2.15	0.73	250	0.2736	24.2	49	0.17	0.62	231	0.4727	21.0
9	0.32	0.46	276	0.5452	23.0	50	12.47	3.61	366	0.1853	67.9
10	1.67	0.95	161	0.3699	32.3	51	0.46	0.88	189	0.3819	26.4
11	11.21	1.93	360	0.1512	34.1	52	1.63	1.98	148	0.3115	28.9
12	2.85	1.57	232	0.2568	28.3	53	1.34	1.00	158	0.1727	18.7
13	2.29	1.84	189	0.3581	46.6	54	0.24	0.43	151	0.2867	16.6
14	0.08	0.42	240	0.3561	16.6	55	0.39	0.75	120	0.1745	15.6
15	0.18	0.48	366	0.6976	13.0	56	0.02	0.1	132	0.5295	18.0
16	0.53	0.81	170	0.2943	22.5	57	2.56	1.23	127	0.0998	16.7
17	0.71	1.74	151	0.6494	166.9	58	1.62	0.71	229	0.1673	19.7
18	0.49	1.64	162	0.6494	181.2	59	0.49	1.41	182	0.3000	24.0
19	0.60	1.52	155	0.6469	155.1	60	0.21	0.66	215	0.5384	40.6
20	0.36	1.15	261	0.8214	127.6	61	0.29	1.31	133	0.5184	64.1
21	2.73	2.57	190	0.6771	88.2	62	0.85	1.75	163	0.4578	36.0
22	2.02	2.59	198	0.7028	94.9	63	1.71	2.06	145	0.3879	68.5
23	0.43	1.30	198	0.7729	94.7	64	1.27	2.16	183	0.3522	84.1
24	0.19	1.09	181	0.6873	79.2	65	0.89	2.07	127	0.3385	68.1
25	1.03	2.02	232	0.4369	51.2	66	0.49	1.20	168	0.5681	141.0
26	3.99	3.78	134	0.4061	36.8	67	0.75	1.58	327	0.5566	165.7
27	2.88	2.40	313	0.7107	66.5	68	0.37	0.52	199	0.3404	23.6
28	0.34	1.14	163	0.8571	102.6	69	0.77	0.76	115	0.1566	17.0
29	2.81	2.84	253	0.5250	80.8	70	0.31	0.87	178	0.1317	25.9
30	7.18	4.82	400	0.5139	102.4	71	0.36	0.35	261	0.4578	20.6
31	24.42	9.47	337	0.3153	20.2	72	2.62	1.39	321	0.3482	33.8
32	2.81	1.74	205	0.3191	31.8	73	0.84	1.39	199	0.4899	14.9
33	0.43	1.30	200	0.8012	47.5	74	2.72	2.56	528	0.1069	31.2
34	7.06	4.41	275	0.4473	84.1	75	5.85	0.86	365	0.2962	31.5
35	1.07	2.05	225	0.4431	71.0	76	2.61	1.28	388	0.5317	44.0
36	0.86	2.17	149	0.3979	70.6	77	5.45	2.82	261	0.5228	112.0
37	6.51	2.92	252	0.5029	110.7	78	3.51	0.99	227	0.3839	38.2
38	0.42	1.64	151	0.4813	149.0	79	7.09	2.29	293	0.1962	52.6
39	0.51	1.43	153	0.4899	153.1	80	0.02	0.21	110	0.4390	17.8
40	0.20	0.76	130	0.5520	51.6	81	2.06	1.92	160	0.3211	29.7
41	0.34	1.25	130	0.4942	56.5						

596

597