

PermaNET – Permafrost Long-term Monitoring Network

Final Conference. June 28, 2011 – June 29, 2011

Centre de Congrès, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, France

Press release

Permafrost is defined as soil or rock that remains at or below 0°C for more than two years. Permafrost can - but does not need to – contain water or ice. Mountain permafrost is highly sensitive to climatic changes. During recent summers, an increased intensity and frequency of rockfalls and numerous debris flow events have been observed throughout the Alps. In part, this is related to permafrost and permafrost degradation. But, many questions regarding the relationship between permafrost, permafrost-related hazards and climate warming are not answered in detail.

The PermaNET project* aimed at contributing to the compaction of the knowledge about permafrost and natural hazards in high mountain areas. The main aim of the PermaNET project was to compile data and facts about permafrost distribution and the thermal evolution of permafrost in a changing climate, creating one knowledge base and objectifying discussions in this field.

After three years of work, now the PermaNET project is presenting the main results. From June 28, 2011 to June 29, 2011 is held the final conference of the project in Chamonix Mont-Blanc. In this conference, the institutions involved in the project will present the main products:

- the Alpine Space permafrost monitoring network,
- the inventory of permafrost evidence,
- the map of permafrost distribution in the Alps,
- guidelines for the consideration of permafrost in natural hazards management and water resources management.

The established permafrost monitoring network extends the existing databases of the thermal state of permafrost in the Alps and allows the monitoring of the future thermal response of permafrost to climate change. On one hand, this long-term monitoring network allows the ongoing signal of global warming to be recorded and on the other hand it provides fundamental data for assessing the consequences of climate changes to permafrost and related natural hazards.

The elaborated permafrost distribution datasets provide a decision base for interpreting observed changes in the landscape. For the planning sector, the permafrost inventory and the map provide a decision base for choosing adequate methods for detailed field investigations.

The elaborated handbooks for permafrost detection and permafrost monitoring could provide the basis for deciding what techniques should be used in case of planning activities in permafrost areas.

With these products, PermaNET contributed to optimizing the decision bases in territorial planning, natural hazard management and water resources management.

The media are cordially invited to report about the final conference and about the main results of the PermaNET project. After the press conference, there is time available for further questions and for interviews with noted scientists and experts.

Press conference: June 28, 11:00-12:00, Centre de Congrès, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, France, Salle Straton

Open conference: June 29, 14:00-17:30, Centre de Congrès, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, France, Salle Straton

Public evening speech: June 29, 20:00-21:30, Centre de Congrès, Chamonix Mont-Blanc, France, Salle Payot

*PermaNET is the synonym for the project “Permafrost long-term monitoring network”. The PermaNET project is part of the European Territorial Cooperation and co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the scope of the Alpine Space Programme www.alpine-space.eu.

Further details: www.permanet-alpinespace.eu

June 19, 2011