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Canada's tsunami reconstruction efforts: One year later

One year after an earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of South and Southeast Asia, Canadian companies continue to contribute to reconstruction efforts in the region—bringing expertise, creativity and innovative technologies.

One such company is Intermap Technologies Inc. of Alberta, which has created digital elevation models that will be used to rebuild drainage and rice paddies, as well as identify locations for proper shelter construction. Intermap recently received funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to expand its technology transfer to Indonesia by training Indonesian GIS technicians to use radar data for the construction of topographic line maps.

Canadian companies have contributed 10 wood-frame homes to the Labui Eco-Village in Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

"This is truly a great success for CIDA, the Canadian government and Canadian industry," says David Hisdal, Intermap's director for Southeast Asia and Australia. "We have created more than 75 high-tech jobs in Indonesia over the past 15 months. In addition, 50 to 100 positions with other Indonesian companies are also being created to take our data and turn it into topographic line maps."

A major benefit of this project was the mapping of the local ground water chemistry to ensure that future drilling would find safe drinking water. This data will help UNICEF coordinate the water supply and sanitation activities in the reconstruction of Aceh.

Canada's wood industry has also been looking at how it can contribute to reconstruction efforts. Ten wood-frame homes have been supplied by British Columbia's Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd., with the support of Forintek Vancouver, to demonstrate Canadian construction technology and the suitability of B.C. wood products to tsunami relief efforts in Indonesia. The homes, designed by B.C. firms Britco Structures, Winton Global, Simon & Co. and Chateau Building Products, are located in the Labui Eco-Village near Banda Aceh.

To complement this project, the Canadian Embassy in Jakarta, Forintek Vancouver and the British Columbia Institute of Technology hosted two seminars in late September to demonstrate that Canadian-style wood-frame construction is safe and durable.

Innovative Canadian housing technology is also being introduced in Sri Lanka through LGS Steelhouse Canada. LGS produces low-cost, high-quality pre-engineered houses made of lightweight concrete blocks and galvanized steel channels. The houses have received the approval of the Sri Lankan Urban Development

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