The determination of the frequency and, based on that, the recurrence intervals of natural disasters relies on a detailed record of such events. However, in many parts of the Pacific the time depth of such records is shallow compared to Europe or the USA. While oral traditions mention disastrous typhoons, little detail and actual chronological information exists. Even when such events occurred during colonial times, records are often limited.

This project compiled all evidence for typhoons during the German colonial period in Micronesia (1886–1914 in the Marshalls and 1898–1914 in the Carolines, Palau and the Marianas). Where possible, the strength, forward speed and impact of typhoons were hindcast based on an analysis of archival documents, contemporary private letters and photographic evidence.

Hindcasting the tracks and effects of typhoons can be achieved through an analysis of the wind directions and strengths over time before, during and after a typhoon event, as well as based on an assessment of the nature and extent of damage caused at a given location. By piecing together data garnered for various localities, the track and forward speed of the typhoon can be reconstructed.

These data then permit correlating the typhoon events with other known climatic phenomena. For the Marshall Islands, for example, a correlation between El Niño years and typhoons could be determined.