**INTRODUCTION**

Managing river floods, one of the most costly natural disasters, is becoming increasingly complex because of ongoing developments in floodplain areas and future uncertainties associated with climate change. The need to develop flood risk management strategies (fig. 1) instead of traditional preventive measures, is therefore increasing. This is also addressed by the new EU flood directive. For flood risk strategies the mapping of the hazard/risk is of vital importance. Already many governments, and other public and private institutions, have created flood maps for various purposes. Here we present an overview of what types of flood risk maps are currently available in Europe and how they are used at the moment.

**AVAILABILITY AND USE - Government**

Flood maps differ greatly among countries, varying from maps displaying waterways, dams or historical events to sophisticated maps based on hydrological/hydraulic model simulations showing inundation levels, and sometimes even include data on potential damage.

**AVAILABILITY AND USE - Insurance Industry**

Sophisticated maps are created by the insurance industry. In the case of the Czech Republic, there was close cooperation with the national government. In other cases, like in the UK and Switzerland, governments provide the insurance industry with flood maps. Potential damages are mainly included in mapping activities of the reinsurance industry, which provide the most advanced maps.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This research was carried out in the framework of the LANDS project of the Dutch National Research Programme “Climate change Spatial Planning”. We would like to thank Laurens Bouwer for his contributions on the insurance industry and Robert Jelinek and Maureen Wood for providing information on the new member states.

**SELECTED LITERATURE**
