

Problem setting

Decisions in the area of so called “traditional” risks like flooding are normally based on probabilities because they are past-oriented and informed by statistics. Climate change related effects on temperature and precipitation, however, will certainly leads to new uncertainties, because past events might be not representative anymore. Here, the perspective changes from probabilities to just possibilities. Moreover, measures, based on mandatory decisions of public administration as well as measures which are in the responsibility of private stakeholders need to be accepted widely for their implementation. This is clearly visible when looking at evacuation orders, building protection measures to be taken by private households, risk awareness etc.

Having these facts in mind, the “active involvement”, propagated by the Floods Directive, has to be seen as crucial for the success of the Directive’s main objective, the reduction of flood risks.

The main research questions characterising the IMRA project are:

- What is the relationship between true flood risk and the public’s risk perception? Which factors determine this relationship? What are the implications for flood risk management (FRM) policies?
- How can public participation in FRM be increased through better risk communication and greater risk awareness?
- How can participation in the establishment of FRM plans be encouraged and improved as a feature of “good governance”?
- What can institutions learn from improved understanding of risk communication approaches, tools and techniques? How can this learning be applied to improve the effectiveness of communications to the public (across a range of FRM activities, e.g. mapping, planning, event management etc.)?