Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Visualising uncertainty in maps

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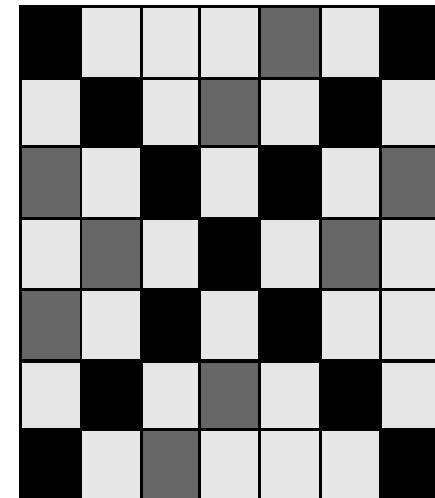
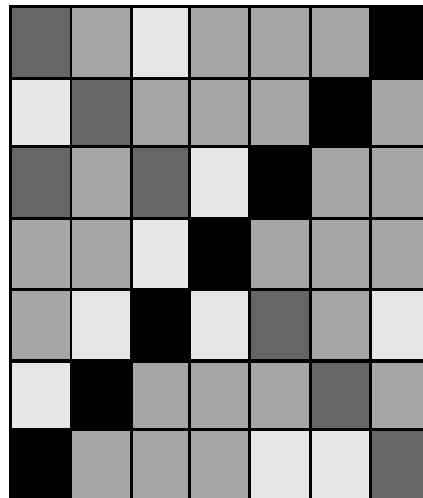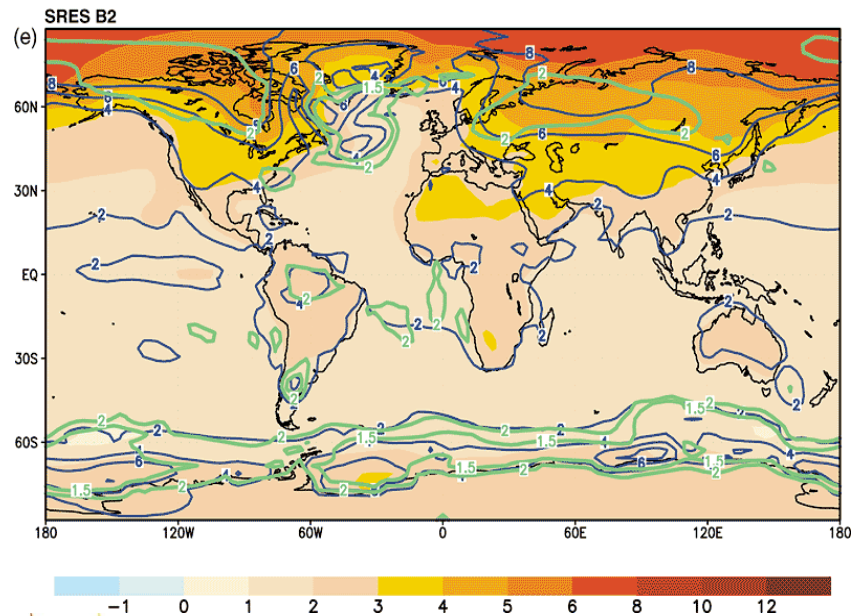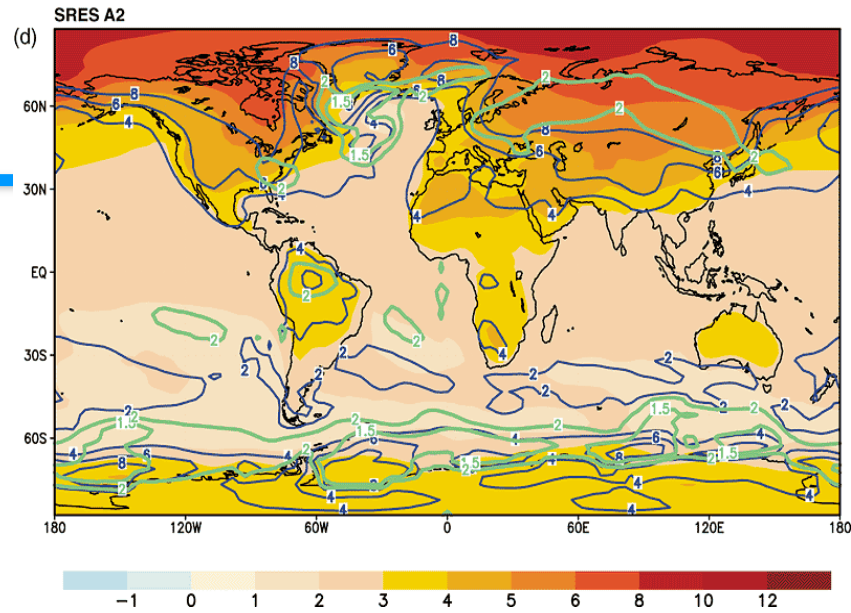# Once a map is drawn, people tend to accept it as reality

Division into classes can be misleading

- indeling middelste kaart: [1] [2 3] [4 5] [6]
- indeling rechtse kaart: [1 2] [3 4] [5 6]

5	2	1	2	3	2	6
1	5	2	3	2	6	2
4	2	5	1	6	2	3
2	3	1	6	2	3	2
3	1	6	1	5	2	1
1	6	2	3	2	5	2
6	2	3	2	1	1	5

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Don't try to communicate everything in one figure

One good practice example

PM₁₀ concentrations and uncertainties

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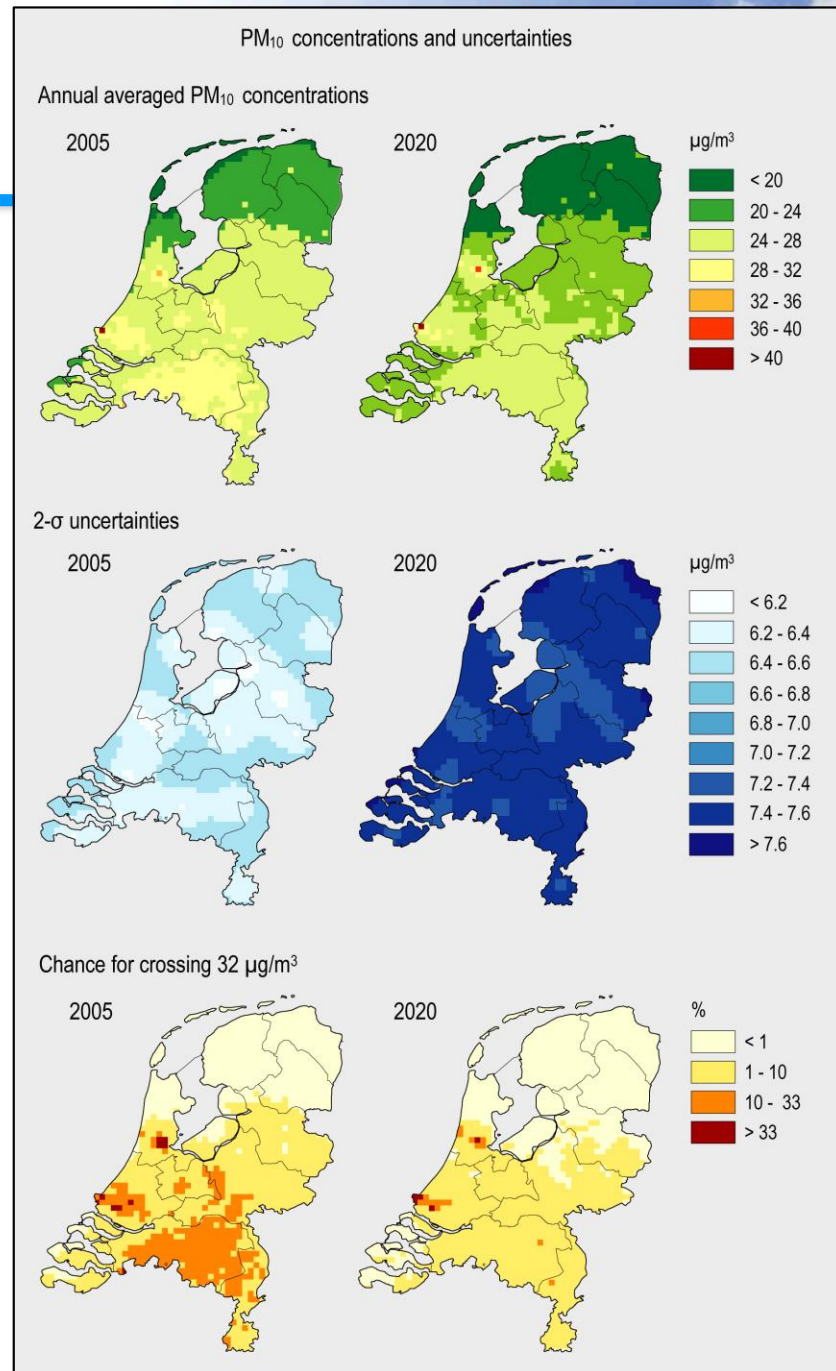
Some guiding conclusions

- Uncertainty in maps is just as important as uncertainty in numbers or time series

- Metadata is of essential importance

- There are several fundamental ways to represent uncertainty in maps. Choice depends on the application

- Preferably **don't** plot uncertainty in the map showing the mean

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