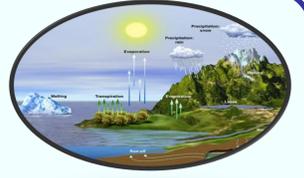


Accurately measuring sea level change from space: an ESA Climate Change Initiative for MSL closure budget studies

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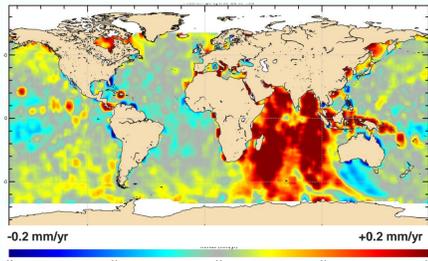
I - The sea level Climate Change Initiative (CCI) project overview

Sea Level (SL) is a very sensitive index of climate change and variability. It has been selected as an Essential Climate Variables (ECV) by the European Space Agency (ESA) which has initiated the Climate Change Initiative (CCI) program, including 13 ECV projects. It aims at providing accurate long-term satellite-based products for climate applications. It provides a unique opportunity to set up dialogue and cooperation between Earth Observation and Climate Research communities. The first version of the Sea Level ECV has been produced during the 1st phase of the project (2011-2013) and the 2nd phase has started in 2014 for the following 3 years, including a European consortium of 13 partners.

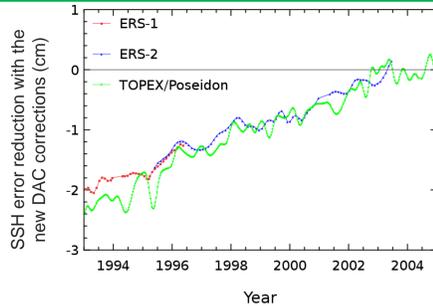
II – Main achievements in the 1st Sea Level CCI release

Many altimeters corrections have been developed, tested and applied to more than 50 years of cumulated altimeter measurements. A formal validation protocol has been developed to select the best standards for climate applications. The most important evolutions are associated with:

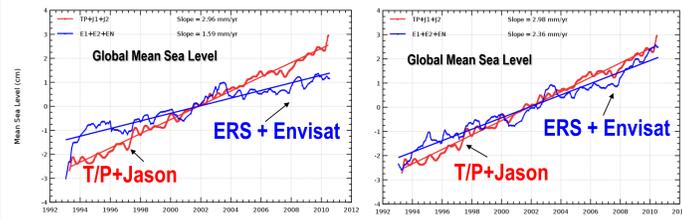
New wet troposphere corrections, based on the GNSS path delays, with a strong impact on the regional sea level trends (see figure).



Impact of the new GPD correction on the MSL trends for T/P (1993-2005)



New atmospheric corrections computed with the ERA-Interim reanalysis lead to a strong SL error reduction (see figure) and strong improvement of the regional MSL trends over the early altimetry years.



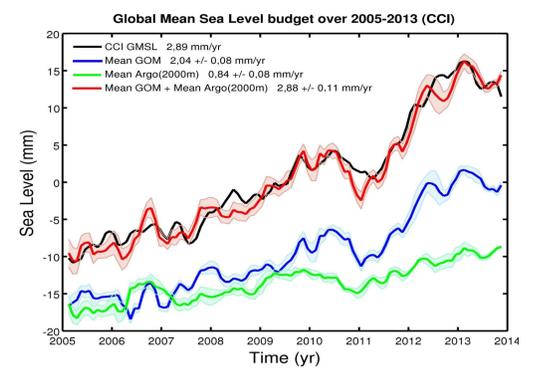
New instrumental correction for Envisat contributes to make more homogeneous the global Mean Sea Level trend and inter annual signals derived from ERS-1 & 2 and Envisat with the signals from other altimeter missions.

Error Characterization of Sea-Level ECV

The sea level ECV products error budget has been determined at climate scales (see table) through the analysis of each source of error. The comparison with the user requirements (defined in the CCI project and the last GCOS report) allows us to define the level of altimetry errors at climate scale: null, low or strong.

Ablain et al, 2012, OSTST, Venice 2012

Spatial Scales	Temporal Scales	Altimetry errors	User Requirements
Global Mean Sea Level (10-day averaging)	Long-term evolution (> 10 years)	< 0.5 mm/yr	0.3 mm/yr
	Inter annual signals (< 5 years)	< 2 mm over 1 year	0.5 mm over 1 year
	Periodic signals (Annual, 60-days,...)	Annual < 1 mm 60-day < 5 mm	Not defined
Regional Mean Sea Level (2x2 deg boxes and 10-day averaging)	Long-term evolution (trend)	< 3 mm/yr	1 mm/yr
	Inter annual signals (> 1 year)	Not evaluated	Not Defined
	Periodic signals (Annual, 60-days,...)	Annual < 1mm 60-day < 5 mm	Not Defined



The validation and user assessment of the SL-CCI products has been performed through:

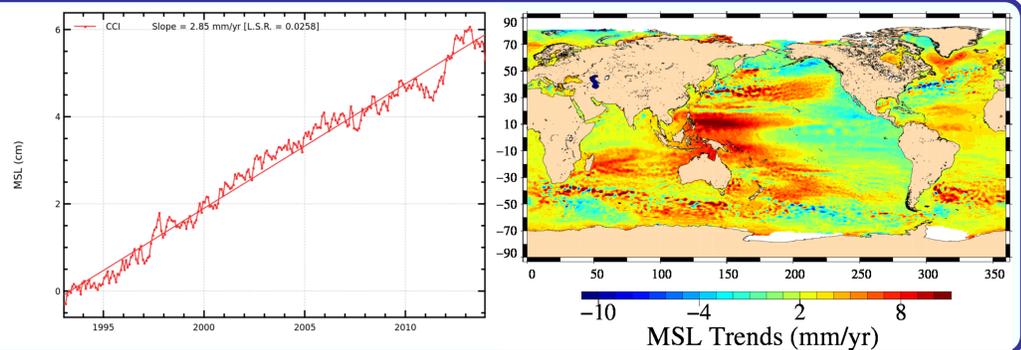
- Internal consistency check and comparison with in-situ data.
- Comparison with ocean model assimilation experiments, by quantifying changes of the model performances.
- Sea level closure budget approach by comparison with the steric (Argo) and mass (GRACE) contributions (see right figure) but also from the glaciers, ice sheets and land waters.

III - The Sea-Level ECV products

The SL-CCI ECV maps of the sea level have been generated from 1993 to 2013 and will be extended to 2014 by the end of 2015. They are available on request at info-sealevel@esa-sealevel-cci.org. The Product User Guide and Specification Document can be found on the website project: www.esa-sealevel-cci.org

Associated Climate Sea-Level indicators are also available for users. They concern:

- The global mean Sea level evolution and its trend (left figure)
- The map of regional MSL trends (right figure)
- The amplitude and phase of the annual cycle of the sea level



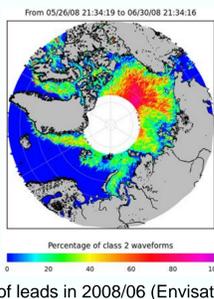
IV – Future plans: phase II of the CCI project

The phase II of the SL-CCI program has started in 2014 for the next 3 years. The aim is to better answer the user requirements and improve the altimeter corrections that most affect the altimeter error budget at climate scales:

- Refine the altimetry error characterization (GMSL confidence envelope, see left figure)
- Enhance all the altimeter and radiometer accuracy
- Provide the best homogeneous orbit solutions
- Improve the atmospheric corrections with new meteorological reanalyses
- Increase the data quality and coverage in the Arctic ocean (see figure)
- Improve the altimeter measurements in coastal areas



Estimation of the confidence envelope of the Global Mean Sea Level from Jason-1 & 2



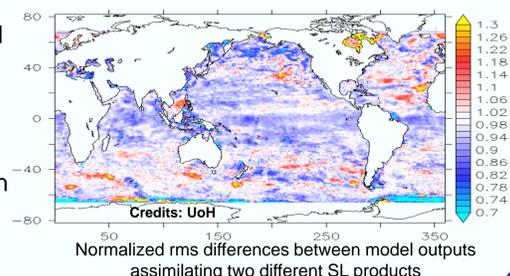
% of leads in 2008/06 (Envisat)

Phase II gives the opportunity to increase the synergy between the altimeter experts and the atmosphere and sea ice communities.

As required for climate studies, the temporal coverage of the time series is extended to present days with yearly update of the sea level ECV.

The ECV products will be fully reprocessed in 2016, leading to a v2.0 dataset, covering the 1993-2014 period and distributed on request to users. It will include the integration of new altimeter missions (CryoSat-2, Saral-AltiKa).

In addition of internal validation and comparison with in-situ data, the assessment of the SL ECV will be performed by the climate research group with a focus on the error characterization and the comparison with datasets from other groups.



Normalized rms differences between model outputs assimilating two different SL products

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V – Links

<http://www.esa-sealevel-cci.org> The Sea Level CCI project website
<http://www.esa-cci.org> The ESA Climate Change initiative portal
<http://www.avisio.altimetry.fr/en> The CNES/CLS altimetry portal
<http://www.altimetry.info> Radar Altimetry Tutorial and Basic Radar Altimetry Toolbox

