

Interactive comment on “Current systematic carbon cycle observations and needs for implementing a policy-relevant carbon observing system” by P. Ciais et al.

D. G. Feist

dfleist@bgc-jena.mpg.de

Received and published: 24 July 2013

Dear authors!

Thank you for picking up this important topic and producing a rather complete wrap-up of what is needed to make meaningful carbon cycle observations.

Coming from the ground-based remote sensing community (TCCON), I have some comments:

- TCCON and its significance are mentioned many times. Still, no-one from that community is actually on the author list.

C3727

Section 3.3.4:

- references Fig. 3c for the TCCON stations. In fact, it is Fig. 3b.

- the fact that ground-based FTS instruments can measure several trace gases at once should be more stressed. The current TCCON standard product already consists of XCO₂, XCH₄, XCO, XN₂O, XH₂O, XHCl, XHF, XHDO (all routinely submitted to TCCON data archive). More species are possible and could be retrieved from the already existing measured spectra. An extension of the TCCON wavelength range (instrument upgrade required and more costly logistics -> cooling) would allow measurements of XOCS, XC₂H₆ and many other species.

- the "vicarious" means are typically air-craft measurements with instruments that are commonly used for continuous in-situ measurements. The uncertainties are mostly due to parts of the atmosphere that are not easily accessible to in-situ measurements (stratosphere) but are seen by both ground-based and space borne remote sensing instruments. Both the calibration factors for XCO₂ and XCH₄ and their uncertainties have been well-established (Geibel et al. ACP 2012, Messerschmidt et al. ACP 2011, Wunch et al. AMT 2010).

Section 4.5.2:

- one should not only guarantee the continuity of TCCON but also its extension to regions that are crucial to carbon cycle science (e.g. tropics) as well as satellite validation (e.g. oceans, deserts). It should be mentioned (again) that a ground-based reference like TCCON is absolutely crucial for existing and future satellite missions. Besides, a TCCON station has a large footprint. Strategically placed, it could cover a large region that is otherwise difficult to reach with in-situ measurements.

- an important point that is missing: keep GOSAT running as long as possible to provide a maximum overlap with OCO-2, GOSAT-2, and other upcoming satellites. This might be obvious to the scientists but not necessarily to the GOSAT funding agencies.

C3728

C3729