

Final answer to the reviews of the manuscript

“Natural and anthropogenic methane fluxes in Eurasia: a meso-scale quantification by generalized atmospheric inversion”

**Berchet A.^{1,*}, Pison I.¹, Chevallier F.¹, Paris J.-D.¹, Bousquet P.¹, Bonne J.-L.¹,
Arshinov M. Yu.², Belan B. D.², Cressot C.¹, Davydov D. K.², Dlugokencky E. J.³,
Fofonov A. V.², Galanin A.⁴, Lavrič J.⁵, Machida T.⁶, Parker R.⁷, Sasakawa M.⁶,
Spahni R.⁸, Stocker B. D.⁸ and Winderlich J.⁹**

¹Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement, CEA-CNRS-UVSQ, IPSL,
Gif-sur-Yvette, France.

²V. E. Zuev Institute of Atmospheric Optics, SB-RAS, Tomsk, Russia.

³NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory, Boulder, Colorado, USA.

⁴P. E. Melnikov Permafrost Institute SB-RAS, Yakutsk, Russia.

⁵Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry, Jena, Germany.

⁶Center for Global Environmental Research, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Tsukuba,
Japan.

⁷University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom.

⁸Climate and Environmental Physics, Physics Institute, and Oeschger Centre for Climate Change
Research, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland.

⁹Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Mainz, Germany.

*Now at Laboratory for Air Pollution/Environmental Technology, Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology, Empa, Dübendorf, Switzerland.

Correspondence to: A. Berchet (antoine.berchet@empa.ch)

1 Introductory replies

First we would like to sincerely thank the two reviewers for their efforts in reading and understanding our relatively long manuscript. We thank them for their fruitful comments and reviews.

Following their recommendations, in order to highlight the outcomes of our work and make our method more readable, we have modified and enhanced the structure of the manuscript. We rearranged the sub-part order in the method section, added milestones and refined the general structure. Now, the reader can follow our point from the subsection titles only.

The new manuscript structure is as follows:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Marginalized inversion framework
 - 2.1. Motivations towards marginalizing
 - 2.2. Method outline
 - 2.2.1. Network efficiency
 - 2.2.2. Solved spatial and temporal scales
 - 2.2.3. Posterior flux analysis
 - 2.3. Output analysis
 - 2.4. Problem size reduction and filters
 - 2.4.1. Observation sampling
 - 2.4.2. Flux aggregation and constraints
 - 2.4.3. Plume filtering

- 3. Set up for an Eurasian domain
 - 3.1. The observation network: \mathbf{y}^o
 - 3.2. Estimates of the network footprints
 - 3.3. Prior fluxes and state vector: \mathbf{x}^b
 - 3.4. The observation operator: \mathbf{H}
 - 3.5. Independent observations for evaluation
- 4. Diagnostics of the marginalized inversion
 - 4.1. Observation weight in the inversion
 - 4.1.1. Temporal monitoring constraints
 - 4.1.2. Network range of constraints
 - 4.2. Constrained regions
 - 4.3. Solved time and space resolution
- 5. Results of the marginalized inversion
 - 5.1. Inverted fluxes
 - 5.2. Siberian Lowland CH_4 budget
 - 5.2.1. Seasonal cycle and yearly emissions
 - 5.2.2. Wildfire influence
- 6. Evaluation of the inversion

- 6.1. Performance on filtered out data
 - 6.2. GOSAT evaluation
 - 6.3. Toward using satellite measurements in regional frameworks
- 7. Conclusions

We have also included more physical discussion regarding the improved understanding of the emissions in the region of interest. The new version of the manuscript is attached to this document, with major modifications highlighted in red.

Every single comment from the reviewers is answered here. Comments on lexical or formulation issue are only succinctly answered.

Comments by referee #1 (resp. referee #2) are written in blue (resp. green).

2 General comments

1. I like the attempt at an objective quantification of uncertainty. Although I admit I struggled to understand the discussion of the marginalized Bayesian inversion. Reading the prior publications in this series (Berchet et al. ACP 2013 and Berchet et al. GMDD 2014) certainly helped although I think some effort could be paid to increasing the clarity of the presentation of the technique to those not previously familiar with the enhancements they have developed. Because so many steps are required in this technique, I would suggest incorporating a flow chart into the paper to give the reader something to hang onto and chart progress as they read their way through the convoluted steps required in pre-processing and actual inversion. As they are laid out now it is easy to get lost.

The marginalized Bayesian inversion has been developed to dampen some possibly important flaws in regional inversion, recognized by the community. The idea behind it is rather simple: it is bound to incorporate the uncertainties in the uncertainties within

the inversion computation. As it has been noted by both reviewers, the required steps to implement this basic idea are numerous. We admit that the submitted manuscript lacked some clear insights into the method to be clearly understood. In the new version of the manuscript, we have included enough details, so the reader does not need to go into the prior literature.

2. One area I am a bit concerned about is the thresholds for 'hot spots' and ill-defined plumes (while understanding that their inclusion can be problematic). They are never defined beyond vague language and the exact thresholds could make their exclusion either relatively inconsequential or result in the loss of important information that could bias the estimates. I never got the sense that there was any attempt to understand how much impact the removal of hotspots and thin plumes has on the overall budget. Is it minor, major? This makes me wonder about how much improvement we gain from the inversion (with its approach that avoids poorly quantifying uncertainties) if we don't also attempt to quantify how important was the information excluded.

Hot spots and ill-defined plumes are critical in the inversion for two main reasons: 1) our representation of the atmospheric transport can generate temporal and spatial mismatches; 2) the time and location of hot spots generating plumes is not always exactly known (especially in Siberia where methane hot spots come from oil or gas leaks and from under-documented wetlands). These mismatches related to plumes causes very strong differences between simulated and observed methane concentrations. These high differences lead to unrealistic corrections in the flux after inversion.

Avoiding such unrealistic increments in the emissions motivates our filter of the plumes. The definition of these plumes can be complicated, as a strong hot-spot can be very well represented by the transport model if observed far enough away of the source. This is why the threshold we choose to define ill-defined plumes is representative of transport errors. All observations with a diagnosed transport error (after the maximum

likelihood optimization) above a defined threshold (in our case 20 ppb) are excluded from the inversion.

We have clarified this point in the new version of the manuscript.

Besides, the impact of removing plume observations is only in terms of flux constraints. The more plume-like air masses and hot-spots are to be considered by our system, the less information we can deduce on the state of the emissions; and then the higher the posterior uncertainties.

3. Lastly, it appears that very few of the discrete samples are discarded (Figure 2 sites like SDZ, TAP, UUM) as compared to the continuous measurements. Does this demonstrate that the system is placing too much confidence in these samples? Considering how many samples are removed from the more continuous time series this seems strange. I wonder if this is a sampling bias and how will it influence the inversion.

Numerous continuous measurements are indeed excluded from our inversion. This is a critical point as a lot of resources is deployed to maintain the Siberian network. However, this feature can be explained and should not be considered as a sampling bias.

Flask sampling site locations were selected to monitor large-scale gradients and long-term trends. These locations are then mostly far away from the main sources, hence limiting the 'plume' effect. In contrast, the West-Siberian network was design to closely monitor wetland emissions and oil/gas ones.

As a consequence, Siberian sites are very often illuminated by close hot-spots and our regional transport model does not always reproduce the plume structure well. Studying the region with all the available in-situ observations would require a transport

model with a higher spatial resolution, which we could not afford with our numerical resources.

Nevertheless, the system that we have developed deals with reduced number of observations as filtered out observations only cause the decrease of the network influence and the increase of the overall posterior uncertainties. This was tested in the prior literature with OSSEs.

A few comments have been added to clarify this point in the new version of the manuscript.

4. It is not clear why the minimum measured value per day is used as data filtering method. To exclude night time data, and take PBL height as selection criterion is fine. Something like an afternoon averaged value has been proposed in earlier studies. However, to select a minimum measured value will almost certainly bias the inversion towards too low emissions. A low-resolution model averages high frequency variability, not only the highs, but also the lows. In the model, the grid box where the measurement site is situated will almost certainly have emissions. Because of this, the simulation will not just represent to undisturbed background, but also local emissions.

Indeed, the main objective of our filtering method is to avoid biases toward too low emissions. However, as the mean operator is linear, averaging over the afternoon will conserve outliers representative of the local sources.

On the opposite, we notice that keeping the minimum observed concentration of the afternoon is somehow equivalent to detecting the time when the PBL is at its maximum, hence when the atmospheric model is the less biased. This reasoning is only valid for methane and trace gases with almost only sources. For example, for CO₂ in summer when photosynthesis consumes high amounts of CO₂ in the afternoon, the

averaging would probably be the best approach.

We slightly develop this point in the new version of the manuscript:

” Here we try to reduce the dimension of the observation space. At the regional scale, considering the spatial resolution of our transport model, only the synoptic variability of the observed signal is relevant. We then decide to keep only one piece of information per site and per day as it is commonly done at the global and continental scales. In addition, simulated vertical mixing close to the surface where observations are carried out is known to be flawed when the planetary boundary layer (PBL) is shallow (typically at night and in winter in Siberia). We then sample the observations during the afternoon when the PBL is higher than 500 m as suggested by prior studies (e.g., ?) and we pick the observed and simulated mixing ratios at the time when the observations are minimum.

As surface emissions dominate on surface sinks for CH_4 , keeping the minimum observed mixing ratio by afternoon is equivalent to detecting the time when the PBL is at its maximum, hence when the atmospheric model is the more accurate. This criterion filters out outliers generated by local influences which cannot be reproduced by an atmospheric transport model with a resolution larger than 25 km, and which only add noise to the system. ”

5. Besides the comparison with independent data it would be useful to know how well the inversions reproduce the measurements that are used in the inversion. The risk of the rigorous sampling that is applied is that the measurement coverage becomes very irregular. How realistic are the optimized seasonal cycles at sites with only few data points? This will be hard to judge from the limited data themselves, but nevertheless this cycle should look plausible, and not too much perturbed at times when data are available. Such comparisons could also serve as an evaluation of the data selection procedure. How poor or how well is the agreement between the model and data that were filtered out?

We agree with the reviewer for this point. Our filtering algorithm makes it difficult to compare prior and posterior concentrations. Nonetheless, digging into this direction for the validation of our model should have been done.

We have included a small discussion regarding this comment in the new manuscript: " We can also use the data points which have been filtered out by our system in order to evaluate the inversion results. As the number of filtered out observations is high, sampling biases may be expected from the filtering procedures. In addition, as only a few data points are assimilated, unrealistic fluxes could have been inferred by the inversion to fit the assimilated data leading to a flawed reproduction of the remaining observations. As one can see in Tab. ??, the marginalized inversion significantly improves the simulated mixing ratios at the sites where data is used as expected. As a proof on realistic flux prescription despite the filter on the observations, for all the remaining data, the model results are also well improved for unused data. This confirms that our method does not create sampling biases despite the high number of filtered data points. It also confirms that the increments on the fluxes are realistic from the point of view of our network. "

6. Among the poorly quantified criteria that I mentioned earlier are the following: What are the criteria is used for,
 - Aggregating fluxes.
 - Aggregation of the boundary conditions.
 - Plumes that can or cannot be resolved by the transport model.
 - The rejection of unconstrained regions?
 - The rejection of regions that are influence by the boundary condition.
 - The statement that the observations constrain fluxes within a radius of 500 km.
 - Separation between natural and anthropogenic fluxes.

All this pieces of information are essential as outcomes of our manuscript. They should be more clearly presented. Most of them are somehow included in the submitted manuscript, but mixed with other information.

We have modified the structure of the new manuscript, so the main outcome of our work are better highlighted.

- Aggregating fluxes → when $|r_{i,j}| = |\mathbf{P}_{i,j}^a| > 0.5$. Sect. 2.3.2
- Aggregation of the boundary conditions → Sect. 2.3.2
- Plumes that can or cannot be resolved by the transport model → $(\mathbf{R})_{\max}^{i,i} > 20$ ppb. Sect. 2.4.3.
- The rejection of unconstrained regions → $(\mathbf{K}_{\max} \mathbf{H})_i^a < 0.5$. Sect. 2.4.2.
- The rejection of regions that are influence by the boundary condition → Sect. 2.3.2.
- The statement that the observations constrain fluxes within a radius of 500 km → rough estimate from Fig. 3.
- Separation between natural and anthropogenic fluxes → According to region grouping. Sect. 2.3.2. If only one type of emissions is included within a group, we consider that this type of emission is well separated for the related period and region.

3 Specific comments

1. [p. 14591 line 26: total production of?](#)

The production of natural gas. Clarified in the new version of the manuscript.

2. p. 14591 line 29: absolute concentration? atmospheric mixing ratio?

The atmospheric composition in terms of mixing ratios and isotopic composition.

3. p. 14592 | 11: Didn't Winderlich also use 3 other towers besides ZOTTO? (Demyanskoe, Igrim, & Karasevov)

Winderlich (2012) indeed uses 3 other tower sites. This statement has been corrected in the new manuscript. However, Winderlich mainly focused on the analysis of the ZOTTO signal and from the point of view of CO₂.

4. p. 14592 | 29: Add in the acronym CTM here since it is referenced later but never defined (that I could see).

Acronyms are now defined before being used.

5. In the manuscript, 'tuple' is used. Is this naming convention coming from programming?

This term is indeed a bad habit from programming. We corrected all the occurrences of this term by 'couple of matrices'

6. p. 14595 | 29: How many Monte Carlo runs were performed?

60000 Monte-Carlo runs are performed to get a good approximation of the posterior uncertainties. This is what makes our work unique in a sense. Most other studies inquiring into the impact of ill-designed uncertainties only rely on a few Monte-Carlo draws.

7. It wasn't clear to me if the marginalized approach still has to assume a Gaussian distribution of uncertainties or not. If so, does the Gaussian assumption hold when you

are forced to remove consideration of hotspots of methane?

The Gaussian assumption is indeed one of the flaws in most atmospheric inversions. We also rely on this assumption (this statement is clarified in the new manuscript). This assumption still needs to be generalized in our inversion system, as it has been done by some groups with non-marginalized inversion systems.

8. [p. 14606 l. 7: Thin plumes in what respect?](#)

The definition of what we call plume indeed needs to be clarified. This is done in the new version of the manuscript and in the reply to General comment nb. 2.

9. [p. 14607 l. 21: Why is it possible to invert the accidental release plume at Elgin \(Berchet et al. 2013 ACP\) but not here? The scale?](#)

Actually, the accidental case of Elgin was not really inverted. As it was commented in Berchet et al. (2013), the system we used at that time did not include the uncertainties on the uncertainty matrices.

The plume was not filtered out at that time because the transport in Europe was pretty well reproduced by our model and because the point source was sufficiently distant from most observation sites (but still influenced observations).

10. [p. 14611 l. 26: Indeed, this is where a study like this has great utility – Pointing out where observation sites would be ideally located.](#)

Our method main outcome is unfortunately not significant new insights about methane regional emissions, but about how to better design a monitoring network. This is more emphasized in the new manuscript.

11. p. 14613 l.15: But the hotspots are removed so how is it possible that the inversion is seeing 'punctual leaks and purging releases of gas'?

Hot spots are not always filtered out, has we developed in the reply to General comment nb. 2. It happens that plumes can be assimilated in the inversion systems. In particular, in summer when the PBL is well mixed, CTMs do better in simulating transport. That is why some conditions can favour the detection of plumes.

12. p. 14614 l2: 'a not negligible' - confusing. Try 'some' or 'a small' or 'a significant' whichever best fits.

We corrected this in the new manuscript.

13. Fig 3: To make it easier to read, make the outlines of the stars white. Also a scale is needed for the size of the markers. As it is now they vary in size but the reader has no information about what a big one means vs. a small. Also add labels to the colour bars so we know which is which.

This will indeed greatly increase the readability of the figure. We recomposed a new figure.

14. Fig 7: Please add in bigger numbers and some sort of colourbar label.

Added in the new manuscript.

15. P14590, line 3: Methane influences OH also directly (thus not only via O3)

We modified our statement to avoid such ambiguity.

16. P14591, line 26: What is meant by the 'absolute composition in CH4'?

This statement was misleading. We meant the atmospheric composition of methane (including mixing ratios and isotopic composition)

17. P14592, line 7: What is meant by ‘relative contributions to the fluxes’?

We mean the relative contribution of a specific type of fluxes (e.g., wetland) to the total regional fluxes. This is now clarified.

18. P14592, line 14: What is meant by the ‘data assimilation Bayesian theory’?

There are different ways of assimilating data. We use the Bayesian inference to do so.

19. P14592, line 17: ‘the likely under-estimation... some inventories’’: a reference is needed here

Winderlich (2012) used NitroEurope emission data, which included EDGAR v4.1 anthropogenic fluxes.

20. P14592, line 18: ‘However, atmospheric... local constraints surface fluxes’: This depends on the kind of site and is not true for example for a station like South Pole.

Indeed, at the very beginning of the use of data assimilation to infer surface fluxes, most atmospheric inversions were computed at the global scale to deduce year-to-year global budgets. We have to precise that we are implicitly referring to regional inversions.

21. P14593 line 1: It is kind of obvious that uncertainties in reproducing transport come from transport errors.

This sentence indeed sounds weird. We slightly modified the introduction to make our point more accurate.

22. P14594 line 8: 'To do so, we look for the pdf of the state of the system with some knowledge about the atmospheric composition and on the state distribution.': What are we supposed to learn from this sentence?

Same as above, we have reformulated the introduction to the method and now mostly explain what is new in our method.

23. P14599, line 27: How can the method account for sampling bias. I didn't find that information back in section 2.1

Sampling biases can never be totally accounted for. However, the method as we define it reflects missing values directly into increased uncertainties and decreased influence. We have clarified this point.

24. P14601, line 13: A version number and reference is required for GFED.

OK.

25. P14603, line 15: 'state vector' i.o. 'observation operator'.

OK.

26. P14603, line 19: What matters is not the mean residence time of the air, but the amount of methane that is oxidized within the domain. This could easily be a few Tg/yr. If it cannot be assigned to an atmospheric sink, then it will be accounted for as a reduced source. I understand that you don't want to optimize the sink, but I don't think that the sink can be completely ignored.

The OH sink is indeed a critical point in methane atmospheric inversions. However, regional inversions mostly analyze the synoptic signal, which is caused by regional

sources. The atmospheric sink is responsible for very large scale gradients. In our configuration, large gradients are mostly attributed to the prescribed boundary conditions. The regional inversion is then more likely to modify boundary conditions in relation to the atmospheric sink, rather than the regional inversions.

This was another reason for filtering out the regions that cannot be separated from the boundary conditions.

27. P14604, line 14: The statement that GOSAT is the only remaining source of data seems incorrect. For example, NIES has also an aircraft program in Siberia.

This is correct. NIES, which is the main provider of observations for our work, also carries out aircraft profiles above the city of Surgut. LSCE, with the help of the Institute of Atmospheric Optics (Tomsk), also has an aircraft long-term monitoring program over Siberia.

However, in the context of regional inversions, using aircraft flask samples would have been a difficult exercise. As the posterior flux uncertainties are high, as much as the uncertainties in CTM vertical transport, comparing observed and simulated concentration vertical distribution would not lead to clear insights. This is why we decided not to use these data sets.

GOSAT was then the only remaining data set covering high latitude with a satisfactory accuracy.

28. P14604, line 27: 'and associated to... priori profiles' What is meant here?

The full data set is described in Parker et al. (2011) and in Cressot et al. (2014). The retrieval algorithm needs CO₂ vertical profiles and prescribed averaging kernels to compute CH₄ total columns. We have reformulated the paragraph to make it clearer.

29. P14609, line 15: ‘Then, amongst... from each other’. What criterion is used to make this distinction?

The description of the method is to be clarified, so that all the criteria are properly defined. This is done in the new version of the manuscript.

30. P14610, line 10: ‘indicating that... anthropogenic from wetland emissions’. What is the criterion for deciding that fluxes can or cannot be separated?

Same as above. All the criteria are clarified now.

31. P14610, line 22: ‘to the real fluxes’. I guess you mean to the inversion-estimated fluxes?

We mean the actual flux we are trying to find out. Actually, we first carried out our inversions with out-of-date EDGAR emissions which were significantly underestimating oil and gas industry emissions. In this configuration, the inversion was finding posterior fluxes in the range of those we find now.

We do not show this kind of tests as we extensively tested our method on OSSEs in a previous method paper.

32. P14611, line 10: which co-located emissions? And how do you know that the regional flux estimates are accurate?

Accurate was ill-chosen. Actually, as we tested our method on various OSSEs, we are confident about the posterior uncertainties of our inversion. The main point we clarify in the new version of the manuscript is that our system provides consistent posterior uncertainties, while classical inversions tend to dramatically under-estimate their posterior uncertainties.

33. P14612, line 8: How are ‘significantly constrained’ fluxes extrapolated.

We should have added a simple formula to clarify this. We consider that, whenever the portion of constrained fluxes is larger than 20% of the total fluxes, the regional budget is constrained overall. When this proportion is below 20% we consider the inversion does not provide valuable information on the regional budget. The 20% can be discussed but taking higher values would prevent doing much extrapolations.

For constrained period, we simply apply the average correction factor for constrained fluxes to unconstrained fluxes.

34. P14613, line 17: ‘This could explain... August’ I think it is worth checking how well the inversion resolves anthropogenic and natural sources for this month using posterior covariances.

The anthropogenic leaks are one hypothesis. Wildfires are another one. Isotopic measurements could really help for separating emission sources. However, using covariances, we notice that Lowland emissions are correlated with West Russian emissions (where numerous wildfires occur in August 2010), with a noticeable increase in the emissions.

35. P14614, line 3: How is the 27TgCH_4 derived?

This number is derived from EDGAR database v4.2 (year 2010) for OECD European countries, and Central European ones. This is now specified.

36. P14615, line 10: 'We observe a mean shift...' But the GOSAT data were corrected for a mean offset with the model. Therefore it depends on which model estimate you take for this correction whether the shift that is discussed here leads to an improved agreement with GOSAT or not.

This point was not clear in the previous version of the manuscript. GOSAT retrievals are indeed corrected with the model used to compute the total columns. However, this bias is corrected at the global scale. It is possible that GOSAT measurements suffer biases depending on the latitude (Cressot et al. 2014). This is why we do not discuss GOSAT in terms of absolute value, but only compare differences in total columns.

In the end, the average increment produced by the inversion is very low and cannot be interpreted.

37. P14615, line 11: A mean shift cannot be compared with a single column retrieval precision.

This is true. This statement is incorrect. We should take the number of observations into account when computing observational uncertainties on the shift. Actually, the standard deviation on the posterior minus prior shift itself proves that GOSAT is not sufficient for a regional use.

We clarified this statement in the new version of the manuscript.

38. P14617, line 1: But the MERLIN mission doesn't yield measurements at high spatial resolutions (only a narrow line ~50 km length per aggregated sample).

MERLIN resolution can indeed be seen as pretty low. However, from our point of view, for Siberia, such a resolution, with a good coverage and precision will drastically im-

prove the number of usable observations for the region.

We have slightly modified our statement to make this idea clearer.

39. P14590, line 2: 'climate forcing' (without 's')

OK.

40. P14591, line 26: 'literature' (remove a 't')

OK.

41. P14591, line 26: 'composition <of> CH4'

OK.

42. P14592, line 1: 'variation' (without 's')

OK.

43. P14593, line 13: 'in-/out-coming to/from': What?

The side observation sites are used to constrained the global air masses which enter the domain or get out of it. Doing so, the total mass balance for the whole domain is improved.

We have reformulated the sentence.

44. P14593, line 19: 'The maximum likelihood criterion'

We mis-used some phrases in the manuscript. The maximum likelihood criterion is the basics of our estimation. The maximum likelihood is found with a quasi-Newtonian descent method. This has been corrected throughout the new version of the manuscript.

45. P14600, line 2: 'AT night or WHEN the PBL is thiNner than'

OK.

46. P14603, line 11, 'hot spotS'

OK.

47. Figure 3, caption: 'On the left column, ... boundary conditions" This sentence is broken, and needs revision.

We have reformulated this sentence.

48. Figure 4: This figure needs resizing. Right now it is difficult to see what they are supposed to represent.

The resizing will be done during the proof-reading process before publication in the two-column journal format. We think this figure should be displayed on a plain page.

Natural and anthropogenic methane fluxes in Eurasia: a meso-scale quantification by generalized atmospheric inversion

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¹Laboratoire des Sciences du Climat et de l'Environnement, CEA-CNRS-UVSQ, IPSL, Gif-sur-Yvette, France.

²V. E. Zuev Institute of Atmospheric Optics, SB-RAS, Tomsk, Russia.

³NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory, Boulder, Colorado, USA.

⁴P. E. Melnikov Permafrost Institute SB-RAS, Yakutsk, Russia.

⁵Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry, Jena, Germany.

⁶Center for Global Environmental Research, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Tsukuba, Japan.

⁷University of Leicester, Leicester, United Kingdom.

⁸Climate and Environmental Physics, Physics Institute, and Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research, University of Bern, Bern, Switzerland.

⁹Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Mainz, Germany.

*Now at Laboratory for Air Pollution/Environmental Technology, Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology, Empa, Dübendorf, Switzerland.

Correspondence to: A. Berchet (antoine.berchet@empa.ch)

Abstract. Eight surface observation sites providing quasi-continuous measurements of atmospheric methane mixing ratios have been operated since the mid-2000's in Siberia. For the first time in a single work, we assimilate all of these in-situ data in an atmospheric inversion. Our objective is to quantify methane surface fluxes from anthropogenic and wetland sources at the meso-scale in the Siberian Lowlands for the year 2010. To do so, we first inquire into the way the inversion uses the observations and **the way** the fluxes are constrained by the observation sites. As atmospheric inversions at the meso-scale suffer from mis-quantified sources of uncertainties, we follow recent innovations in inversion techniques and use a new inversion approach which quantifies the uncertainties more objectively than the previous inversions. We find that, due to errors in the representation of the atmospheric transport and redundant pieces of information, only one observation every few days is found valuable by the inversion. The remaining high-resolution **quasi-continuous** signal is representative of very local emission patterns. An analysis of the use of information by the inversion also reveals that the observation sites constrain methane emissions within a radius of 500 km. More observation sites **than the ones currently in operation** are **then** necessary to constrain the whole Siberian Lowlands. Still, the fluxes within the constrained areas are quantified with objectified uncertainties. At the end, the tolerance intervals for posterior methane fluxes are of roughly 20% (resp. 50%) of the fluxes for anthropogenic (resp. wetland) sources. About 50–70% of emissions are constrained by the

inversion on average on an annual basis. Extrapolating the figures on the constrained areas to the whole Siberian Lowlands, we find a regional methane budget of 5–28 TgCH₄ for the year 2010, i.e. 1–5% of the global methane emissions. As very few in-situ observations are available in the region of interest, observations of methane total columns from the Greenhouse Gas Observing SATellite (GOSAT) are used for the evaluation of the inversion results, but they exhibit marginal signal from the fluxes within the region of interest.

1 Introduction

Methane (CH₄) in the atmosphere contributes to climate forcing as a greenhouse gas and is involved in the atmospheric oxidizing capacity (Forster et al., 2007). Characterizing the variability of the atmospheric CH₄ composition requires accurate understanding of the methane biogeochemical cycle, in particular of the surface-atmosphere fluxes, of their spatial distribution and of their temporal variability. The quantification of these contributions to the methane cycle still experiences high uncertainties (Kirschke et al., 2013). The global surface to atmosphere CH₄ fluxes range between 500 and 600 TgCH₄.y⁻¹ (1 Tg = 10¹² g). Two of the main contributors to the global CH₄ budget are natural emissions from inundated areas and anthropogenic sources from coal, oil and gas extraction and distribution. Inundated areas are responsible for 145–260 TgCH₄.y⁻¹, i.e. 25–50% of total emissions with a very high heterogeneous spatial distribution and year-to-year variability (e.g., Bousquet et al., 2006; Dlugokencky et al., 2009; Bergamaschi et al., 2009). The anthropogenic sources from fossil fuel burning and leaks account for 100–150 TgCH₄.y⁻¹, i.e. 20–30% of total emissions, according to the EDGAR inventory (depending on the year and the version of the inventory; <http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu>).

The West Siberian plain concentrates significant sources of CH₄ of both wetland and anthropogenic types (Lechtenböhrer et al., 2005; Spahni et al., 2011). On one side, with 50–70% of its area covered by peatlands (Peregon et al., 2009), about 13% of global wetlands are located in the West Siberian plain. On the other side, Russia produces 20% of the natural gas in the world, mostly extracted in Siberia; and 0.1 to 10% (i.e. 0.5–40 TgCH₄.y⁻¹) of this gas are estimated to leak into the atmosphere (e.g., Hayhoe et al., 2002). Large amounts of methane are also released during the oil welling, of which Russia is also a major producer (~10–15% of the global production), with 1–2% of the oil production leaked into the atmosphere as methane (e.g., Agency, 2011). Documenting the emissions of methane in the West Siberian plain is thus critical to reduce the uncertainties on the global methane budget.

However, accurately quantifying the wetland and anthropogenic emissions in the West Siberian plain is challenging. On the one hand, wetland emissions at high latitudes like in Siberia exhibit a clear year-to-year variability (Bergamaschi et al., 2013) and a distinct seasonality (e.g., Pickett-Heaps et al., 2011) due to high sensitivity to the soil temperature and humidity, to the water table

depth and to the total inundated surface which can vary up to 25% from year to year (Ringeval et al., 2010). This high sensitivity to the local meteorological parameters could cause still unobserved
55 drastic increases of CH₄ emissions from boreal wetlands with climate change (Bohn et al., 2007). On the other hand, anthropogenic sources are mainly related to uncontrolled leakage which is difficult to estimate. Quantifying these leaks raises many issues: pipelines with tiny leaks from chemical permeability span over thousands of kilometres, single leaks range on a spectrum of several orders of magnitude (from the lower with pipeline permeability leaks, to the higher during the welling), and
60 leaks can appear (and disappear when detected and repaired) very quickly.

Despite the importance of quantifying and understanding the contribution of the West Siberian plain to the global CH₄ budget, few studies have been dedicated to this region. Glagolev et al. (2011) carried out extensive field measurements of local wetland CH₄ emissions in order to characterize the emission patterns of each different environment. They upscaled their results to the whole region using wetland distribution maps. However, considering the discrepancies on the wetland distribution (Peregon et al., 2009; Frey and Smith, 2007) and their extension variability (Ringeval et al., 2010), numerous hard-to-quantify uncertainty sources are expected from this approach. For the quantification of the anthropogenic sources, for instance, Dedikov et al. (1999) measured mixing ratios of methane close to gas lines and gas facilities to deduce emission factors. They upscaled their figures
70 to the Russian territory and got an emission factor for CH₄ lower than 1% of the total production of natural gas. Reshetnikov et al. (2000) reviewed the existing literature about Siberia and found emission factors from 0.4 to 14% of the total production. Another approach is the analysis at different places and dates of the local variations of the atmospheric composition (mixing ratios and isotopic fraction) in CH₄ (and related species). The variations of the atmospheric composition provides information on the relative contribution of the different local processes in the Siberian budget.
75 Such analysis has been carried out using observations from mobile platforms, such as aircraft profiles (Yamada et al., 2005; Umezawa et al., 2012) or train and ship measurements (Tarasova et al., 2006), and fixed stations (Sasakawa et al., 2012). Nevertheless, these studies are not systematic and comprehensive: they give local instantaneous information and only knowledge about the relative
80 contributions of particular processes to the total regional fluxes. High spatial and temporal resolutions, absolute and consistent quantification and separation of the different main sources is essential to better characterizing and estimating the contribution of Siberian emissions to the global methane budget.

A first step towards this goal was done by Winderlich (2012). In this work, a systematic analysis
85 of the variability of the atmospheric composition at the ZOTTO tall tower (described in Winderlich et al., 2010) and at a small set of auxiliary sites was carried out. Their approach relied on atmospheric inversion techniques based on the data assimilation Bayesian theory (Enting et al., 2012; Tarantola, 1987) and in principle allows an objective use of the information (here the variability of the atmospheric composition). This provided insights on, e.g., the likely under-estimation of the local

90 anthropogenic sources from gas leak in some inventories (EDGAR v4.1 in Winderlich, 2012). However, regional atmospheric inversions with **only a few** sites give only local constraints on the surface fluxes. More critically, a regional inversion **with a small number of observations** experiences difficulties in identifying and separating the different contributions to CH₄ emissions. This mis-separation can be related to mis-quantified sources of errors in the atmospheric inversion in addition to the lack
95 of information. This issue is dominant in the West-Siberian plain because of the co-located wetland and anthropogenic emissions. The objective of quantifying and separating the regional Siberian sources requires an inversion based on numerous observation sites, with a comprehensive approach of quantification of the uncertainties.

Recent literature highlights the need for precisely and objectively quantifying all errors in the
100 inversion (transport, representation, flux distribution, etc.) in order to evaluate their impact on the inversion results (Lauvaux et al., 2009; Winiarek et al., 2012; Berchet et al., 2013b; Ganesan et al., 2014). In Berchet et al. (2014), we proposed a general method in order to objectively quantify most of the critical sources of errors in the inversion. This improved algorithm is based on a Monte Carlo approach superimposed to maximum likelihood estimators (Chapnik et al., 2004; Michalak and Kitanidis, 2005).
105

For the first time in Eurasia, we use this improved algorithm on a network of 8 surface sites (Sasakawa et al., 2010; Winderlich et al., 2010) covering a large part of the Siberian lowlands and of 5 remote sites **that constrain the air masses coming into the domain and getting out of it**. These sites, which have been operated since the mid-2000's, are implemented into the inversion system
110 with objectified uncertainty quantification from Berchet et al. (2014). **Here**, our goal is to deduce an accurate quantification of the fluxes at the meso-scale with a temporal resolution of a few days from the variability of the atmospheric CH₄ composition at the 8+5 observation sites.

We explain the theoretical **background** used in our study in Sect. 2. In Sect. 3, the datasets and models used in the inversion are introduced. We then present the results on the fluxes and the limitations of the inversion in Sect. 4 and Sect. 5. Our inversion is then evaluated in Sect. 6 by using in-situ
115 measurements and independent satellite observations, as the very few available surface observations do not allow to keep enough for evaluation.

2 Marginalized inversion framework

2.1 Motivations towards marginalizing

120 As the atmosphere mixes irreversibly air masses from different CH₄ sources, using the atmospheric signal as in an atmospheric inversion cannot lead to a deterministic characterization of the surface fluxes. In the classical Bayesian framework (Tarantola, 1987), the objective of the inversion is to inquire into the probability density function (*pdf*) of the surface fluxes, or more generally of the

state of the system, with some knowledge about the atmospheric composition and on the prior state
 125 distribution. The *sought pdf* can be written: $p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{y}^o - H(\mathbf{x}^b), \mathbf{x}^b)$.

In this formula, the vector \mathbf{y}^o gathers all the available observations; H is the observation operator
 converting the information in the state vector to the observation space; the vector \mathbf{x} depicts the state
 of the system (mainly CH_4 surface fluxes in our case) and \mathbf{x}^b is the background vector including
 the prior knowledge on the state \mathbf{x} of the system. H typically represents the discretization of the
 130 problem to be computed numerically and the atmospheric transport from the emission areas to the
 observation sites. In the following, we consider H linear and associate it to its Jacobian matrix \mathbf{H} .
 In our case, we simulate the atmospheric transport only on a domain of limited area as detailed in
 Sect. 3.3 and 3.4. Additional information about the atmospheric composition at the boundaries of the
 domain of interest is then necessary to compare observed with simulated atmospheric composition.
 135 Therefore, the state vector \mathbf{x} encompasses the surface fluxes, but also the lateral boundary conditions
 related to the observed baselines at each observation site.

Thus, the inversion computes the pieces of information contained within the observations, the
 prior state and the representation of the transport with their associated uncertainties (e.g., measure-
 ment errors, uncertainties in the flux inventories, etc.). With the usual Gaussian assumption, all the
 140 uncertainties are considered as normal *pdfs* and can be described with modes and uncertainty co-
 variance matrices. The inversion then deduces an optimal posterior state vector $\hat{\mathbf{x}}^a$ and posterior
 uncertainties \mathbf{P}^a . Within the Gaussian assumption, the posterior state vector and uncertainty matrix
 can thus be explicitly defined:

$$\begin{cases} \hat{\mathbf{x}}^a &= \mathbf{x}^b + \mathbf{K}(\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b) \\ \mathbf{P}^a &= \mathbf{B} - \mathbf{K}\mathbf{H}\mathbf{B} \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

145 In Eq. 1, the matrix $\mathbf{K} = \mathbf{B}\mathbf{H}^T(\mathbf{R} + \mathbf{H}\mathbf{B}\mathbf{H}^T)^{-1}$ is the Kalman gain matrix. The matrices \mathbf{R} and
 \mathbf{B} are the covariance matrices describing the observation and background uncertainties. Observation
 uncertainties encompass measurement, discretization and transport errors. Background uncertainties
 include the uncertainties in the spatial distribution of the fluxes, in their temporal variability and in
 their absolute value.

150 As long as these uncertainty matrices are known, the inversion only faces technical issues (e.g.,
 matrix inverses and products in large dimension problems) for numerical implementation. However,
 only the uncertainties in the measurements are objectively quantified during the calibration process.
 The errors in the transport or in the prior fluxes are not perfectly known and, in most case, they are
 built relying on some expert knowledge about the system. But this subjective knowledge can lead
 155 to ill-specified matrices, which have a dramatic impact on the inversion results (e.g., Cressot et al.,
 2014). Recent studies inquired into objectified ways of specifying these matrices (e.g., Michalak
 and Kitanidis, 2005; Winiarek et al., 2012; Berchet et al., 2013b). The approach in these papers
 was to find optimal uncertainty matrices \mathbf{R} and \mathbf{B} along an objective statistical criterion: the maxi-

160 mum likelihood. The implementation of the method gave encouraging results, but the impact of the uncertainties within the maximum likelihood **computation** were complicated to evaluate.

Berchet et al. (2014) used a general marginalization approach in order to quantify objectively all the uncertainties impacting on the posterior fluxes. In the following, we summarize this approach.

2.2 Method outline

The marginalization consists in computing the **complete pdf** $p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{x}^b)$ as a **weighted** sum of the Gaussian *pdfs* $p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{R}, \mathbf{B})$ calculated for each possible uncertainty matrices \mathbf{R} and \mathbf{B} . **This can be written as follows:**

$$\begin{aligned}
 & p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{x}^b) \\
 &= \int_{(\mathbf{R}, \mathbf{B})} p(\mathbf{x}|\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{R}, \mathbf{B}) \\
 & \quad \times p(\mathbf{R}, \mathbf{B}|\mathbf{y}^o - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}^b, \mathbf{x}^b) \quad d(\mathbf{R}, \mathbf{B})
 \end{aligned} \tag{2}$$

To compute the marginalized integral in Eq. 2, a large number (60 000 in our case) of posterior vectors $\hat{\mathbf{x}}^a$ and posterior uncertainty matrices $\hat{\mathbf{P}}^a$ is computed through individual inversions as in Eq. 1 with different uncertainty matrices $\hat{\mathbf{R}}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{B}}$. **This Monte Carlo sampling is carried out based on an estimate of the pdfs of the uncertainty matrices, $p(\mathbf{R})$ and $p(\mathbf{B})$. This estimate is deduced from the objectified maximum likelihood approach.**

Posterior uncertainties and correlations are in the end computed from the ensemble of 60 000 computed individual inversion results as follows:

$$\begin{cases}
 \mathbf{x}^a &= \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1..N} \hat{\mathbf{x}}^a{}^i \\
 \mathbf{P}^a &= \frac{1}{N-1} \sum_{i=1..N} \left(\hat{\mathbf{x}}^a{}^i - \mathbf{x}^a \right) \left(\hat{\mathbf{x}}^a{}^i - \mathbf{x}^a \right)^T
 \end{cases} \tag{3}$$

with N the number of Monte Carlo draws.

As detailed in Sect. 2.1, the main motivation for marginalizing the classical inversion framework is to use the available information (in-situ observations, flux inventory, transport model) in a way which is as objective as possible. The marginalized inversion gives an explicit and objectified access to pieces of information (described in details in Sect. 2.3) required:

1. to evaluate the efficiency of the observation network for constraining regional emissions and to give guidelines for improving monitoring deployment;
2. to inquire into atmospheric inversion skills in terms of resolved temporal and spatial resolution and of emission process separation, and to deduce observation and modeling requirements for future better inversions; and
3. to assess the robustness of emission inventories and process-based surface-atmosphere exchange models

These three key points are further discussed in Sect. 4.

190 One of the main drawbacks in our method we use is its numerical cost. Computing 60 000 individual inversions is cumbersome and requires extensive amounts of memory. Smartly chosen filtering criteria, observation sampling and flux aggregation patterns must be carried out before the marginalized inversion in order to reduce its complexity without degrading the inversion optimality. As recent efforts have been made to reduce the subjectivity in the inversion, we rely on objective criteria (though not computed in an exact manner due to computational limitations) to complete the
195 observation sampling, flux aggregation and filtering. These criteria are shortly developed in Sect. 2.4 and detailed in Berchet et al. (2014).

2.3 Output analysis

As described above, the marginalized regional inversion as we compute it answers three main questions. Below are given details on how these questions are treated.

200 2.3.1 Network efficiency

The evaluation of the network coverage is carried out through the explicit computation at the maximum likelihood of the influence $\mathbf{K}_{\max}\mathbf{H}$ and sensitivity matrices $\mathbf{H}\mathbf{K}_{\max}$ following Cardinali et al. (2004). With these two matrices, we can compute the weight ω of each observation site in the inversion and the unconstrained emissions ϵ as follows:

$$205 \quad \omega_i = \sum_{j \text{ at } i} (\mathbf{H}\mathbf{K}_{\max})_{j,j} \text{ for each site } i \quad (4a)$$

$$\epsilon_i = (1 - \mathbf{K}_{\max}\mathbf{H}) \times \phi_i \text{ for each emission pixel } i \quad (4b)$$

with ϕ_i the emissions at the pixel i .

In Eq. 4a, the higher the score ω_i the more the inversion uses the site i . Observation sites downwind emissions will have a strong impact on the inversion, but observations constraining air masses
210 coming into the domain of interest are also key stones for regional inversions. Eq. 4b depicts emitted CH_4 that is not seen or constrained by the inversion. Regions with the highest ϵ_i are unseen areas with strong emissions (as considered by inventories), where additional observation sites would be required.

2.3.2 Solved spatial and temporal scales

215 The spatial and temporal resolutions that the inversion can solve are described by posterior error covariances. Mis-separated regions are usually detected through so-called flux dipoles (e.g., Rödenbeck et al., 2003). In our case, as we explicitly and objectively compute the posterior matrix \mathbf{P}^a from the Monte Carlo ensemble ($\hat{\mathbf{x}}^a$), posterior correlations are used for post-processing groups of

ill-separated regions (these regions are defined through a dynamically-chosen aggregation pattern prior to the inversion; see Sect. 2.4.2). Both strongly positive and negative correlations $r_{i,j}$ point to ill-separated regions i and j . Following Observing System Simulation Experiments (OSSEs) carried out in Berchet et al. (2014), we group two posterior flux regions i and j when:

$$|r_{i,j}| = |\mathbf{P}_{i,j}^a| > 0.5 \quad (5)$$

For instance, some neighbouring emissions or successive ones could be mixed in the atmospheric signal and then be not separated from the inversion point of view. This post-processing makes it possible to group posterior fluxes in order to avoid dipoles and reduce uncertainties on bigger regions. Thus, it is also possible to filter out regional fluxes that are not separated from the boundary conditions. Every group of correlated regions including some contribution from the boundary conditions are excluded from the analysis of inversion results. Indeed, errors on the lateral boundary conditions can mis-lead the inversion about the regional fluxes.

Through this post-grouping, we can assess the typical size of aggregated regions that the inversion can constrain with our set-up (observations and transport model resolution). The typical time-scale that the inversion can detect for a change in emission can also be assessed with this post-processing. As we want to separate contributions from anthropogenic and wetland emissions, the post-grouping may group or not co-located emissions from different processes and then give insights into the separation ability of our regional inversion.

2.3.3 Posterior flux analysis

Ideally, an atmospheric inversion provides insights about emissions. From the correlation grouping applied to the Monte Carlo ensemble of posterior fluxes, we can compute tolerance intervals of posterior fluxes so that 68.27% of the ensemble is within the interval. The number 68.27% makes the tolerance intervals equivalent to the $\pm\sigma$ interval in the Gaussian framework, as the Monte Carlo posterior ensemble does not necessarily a Gaussian distribution. The inversion thus indicates that the fluxes we are inquiring into are very likely in the defined posterior tolerance interval. **Deviating posterior tolerance intervals compared to prior fluxes point to required updates in the used prior database. Below we present our visualization approach to control posterior fluxes.**

Figure 5 synthesizes the inverted methane fluxes for Siberian lowlands (hatched domain in Fig. 1). As detailed in Sect. 2.3.2, anthropogenic emissions (inverted at a monthly scale) can be grouped with wetland emissions (considered at the weekly scale). So, the lowest common multiple on which the fluxes can be analysed is the monthly scale. Then, for the Siberian Lowlands, for each month, we define the proportion of the fluxes that are within regions constrained through the inversion (written on the left of each pie chart in Fig. 5). The proportions of anthropogenic and wetland emissions that are constrained, mixed with another type of emission or unseen by the observation network are represented in the pie charts in Fig. 5. Finally, within the proportion of constrained regions, we

analyse the inversion correction on anthropogenic, wetland and mixed emissions (bar plots in Fig. 5).

255 For each type of emission (anthropogenic, wetland and mixed), we present in the bar diagrams of Fig. 5 the tolerance intervals of posterior fluxes and the prior uncertainties as calculated by the maximum likelihood algorithm (that is to say \mathbf{B}_{\max} ; see Sect. 2.2). For each month, the tolerance intervals on the total prior and posterior methane budget in the Siberian Lowlands is also given in TgCH_4 .

260 **2.4 Size reduction and filters**

As suggested in Sect. 2.2, the marginalized inversion requires some filtering, observation sampling and flux aggregation, so it can be numerically computed. Below, we explain how we carry out these pre-processing in a way that do not dampen the advantages of the marginalization.

2.4.1 **Observation sampling**

265 Here we try to reduce the dimension of the observation space. At the regional scale, considering the spatial resolution of our transport model, only the synoptic variability of the observed signal is relevant. We then decide to keep only one piece of information per site and per day as it is commonly done at the global and continental scales. In addition, simulated vertical mixing close to the surface where observations are carried out is known to be flawed when the planetary boundary layer (PBL) is shallow (typically at night and in winter in Siberia). We then sample the observations during the afternoon when the PBL is higher than 500 m as suggested by prior studies (e.g., Berchet et al., 2013b) and we pick the observed and simulated mixing ratios at the time when the observations are minimum.

270 As surface emissions dominate on surface sinks for CH_4 , keeping the minimum observed mixing ratio by afternoon is equivalent to detecting the time when the PBL is at its maximum, hence when the atmospheric model is the more accurate. This criterion filters out outliers generated by local influences which cannot be reproduced by an atmospheric transport model with a resolution larger than 25 km, and which only add noise to the system.

280 For our case study, out of 127000 hourly measurements available in 2010, 30000 pass through the PBL height and night filters (see black dots in Fig. 2). Out of these 30000 data points, about 2000 daily aggregates are selected. Details by observation site are given in Tab. 2.

2.4.2 **Flux aggregation and constraints**

285 The following procedures are bound to decrease the state space dimension. To define aggregation pattern, we divide our domain into 35 physical regions for each emission process (according to vegetation types, demography, industrial activity, etc.) as a basic pattern. This basic pattern is chosen so that the mesh gets finer closer to the observation network. The resolution of the transport representation is also chosen finer close to the observation network. To further reduce the number of

aggregated regions, under-constrained regions are grouped together. This is carried out by analysing the observation network footprints estimated with a Lagrangian model (Sect. 3.2) which offers an efficient way to compute them.

In addition to the footprint aggregation, the influence matrix $\mathbf{K}_{\max}\mathbf{H}$ makes it possible to quantify observational constraints on the fluxes. Below a given threshold of constraint for a flux (related to the flux contribution to the atmospheric signal), the inversion cannot deduce any valid information on the flux. For this reason, we also filter out a region i with very low constraints from the marginalization if:

$$(\mathbf{K}_{\max}\mathbf{H})_i^a < 0.5 \quad (6)$$

2.4.3 Plume filtering

It is known that atmospheric transport models suffer from temporal and spatial mismatches when simulating air masses with strong mixing ratio gradients (e.g., for plumes well-delimited from the background air masses). When a plume is transported to the wrong place and time, as we sample air masses at a given point location, the differences between simulated and observed mixing ratios can reach unrealistic values. Such strong model-observation differences have a significant impact on inversion corrections on fluxes.

To dampen such undesirable effects, we introduce a procedure to filter out plume-like air masses from the inversion input. As explained in Sect. 2.2, a maximum likelihood estimation is computed prior to the marginalization. We take advantage of the maximum likelihood computation to detect air masses critically ill-reproduced by the transport model. As the maximum likelihood estimation computes optimal uncertainty matrices \mathbf{R}_{\max} and \mathbf{B}_{\max} , we filter out observations with a too high computed uncertainty. That is to say, for each observation i , the data point is excluded if:

$$(\mathbf{R}_{\max})_{\max}^{i,i} > 20 \text{ ppb} \quad (7)$$

This criterion does not necessarily exclude only plumes generating a big signal, but also the ones that are very poorly reproduced by the transport model.

One should notice that this criterion is computed in association with the low constraint criterion of Eq. 5. That is to say, a region which always illuminates the observation network through plume-like air masses will have all its constraining observations filtered out. As a consequence, it will be considered poorly constrained and then be itself eliminated from the inversion.

Taken all together, the criteria defined above filter out a large part of the available observations and regional fluxes. In particular, hot spot emissions are largely removed from the inversion (except for some exception when the observations are far enough, so that the transport manages to well reproduce the plume generated by the emissions).

3 Set up for an Eurasian domain

We are interested in the Eurasian surface-atmosphere budget of methane. As developed in Sect. 2, the computation of the marginalized inversion needs measurements (\mathbf{y}^o ; Sect. 3.1), prior fluxes (\mathbf{x}^b ; Sect. 3.3) and an observation operator computed with an atmospheric transport model (\mathbf{H} ; Sect. 3.4).

325 The footprints of the observation network required for choosing the aggregation patterns (necessary to the computation of \mathbf{H}) are estimated with a Lagrangian model (Sect. 3.2). The observations are compared to the fluxes through the observation operator \mathbf{H} . The operator \mathbf{H} is computed with a transport model, which simulates mixing ratios, whereas the observation sites provide dry air mole fractions. For trace gases such as CH_4 , dry air mole fractions and mixing ratios are equivalent. In all
330 of the following, we affiliate dry air mole fractions to mixing ratios.

3.1 The observation network: \mathbf{y}^o

The inversion is based on measurements of atmospheric CH_4 dry air mole fractions at 14 Eurasian surface sites. The Eurasian sites are situated all over the Eurasian continent, from South Korea to Scandinavia (see Fig. 1). They are maintained by the National Institute for Environmental Studies
335 (NIES, Tsukuba, Japan), the Institute for Atmospheric Optics (IAO, Tomsk, Russian Federation), the Max Planck Institute (MPI, Iena, Germany), the P. E. Melnikov Permafrost Institute (Yakutsk, Russian Federation), the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI, Helsinki, Finland) and NOAA Earth System Research Laboratories (Boulder, United States of America). Most stations provide quasi-continuous measurements of methane atmospheric composition. A few stations only collect flasks
340 at a weekly scale (see Tab. 1). The location, measurement type, maintaining institute and 3-letter symbol of each observation site are described in Tab. 1.

Flasks samples are collected at SDZ, TAP and UUM sites as partners of the NOAA global cooperative air sampling network (Dlugokencky et al., 1994). **These flask sampling sites are designed to monitor large-scale and global variability. They are then placed at locations, which are most of the time not illuminated by local and regional sources. Thus, the observations from these sites generally pass the filtering criteria of Sect. 2.4.** Flasks samples are sent to and analysed at NOAA-ESRL by gas chromatography with flame ionization detection against the NOAA 2004 CH_4 standard scale (Dlugokencky et al., 2005).

NIES sites (AZV, BRZ, DEM, IGR, KRS, NOY, VGN and YAK) are part of the Japan–Russia
350 Siberian Tall Tower Inland Observation Network (JR-STATION; Sasakawa et al., 2010) and are equipped with CH_4 semiconductor sensors based on a tin dioxide natural gas leak detector developed by Suto and Inoue (2010). The instruments are calibrated on tanks traceable to NIES 94 CH_4 scale. The NIES 94 CH_4 scale is higher than the NOAA 04 scale by 3.5–4.6 ppb in the range between 1750 and 1840 ppb (Zhou et al., 2009). ZOT site is operated by MPI since April 2009 (Winderlich et al.,
355 2010) and air is analysed by an EnviroSense 3000i analyser (Picarro Inc., USA, CFADS-17) based

on the cavity ring-down spectroscopy technique (CRDS Crosson, 2008). The calibration system uses tanks traceable to NOAA 04 scale. All the mixing ratios are reported to the NOAA 04 scale before being implemented into the inversion system.

JR-STATION and ZOT sites are located in the vicinity of anthropogenic and wetland sources. These local sources strongly influence the Siberian network, which was designed to monitor regional emissions. As a consequence, numerous observations from the Siberian network are ill-reproduced by our transport model and then are filtered out from the inversion as “plume” observations (following criteria in Sect. 2.4; see also Fig. 2 and Tab. 2 in Sect. 6.1). In particular, measured mixing ratios at BRZ site are not well simulated by our model, possibly due to missing local emissions in the prior. Most BRZ observations are thus filtered out from the inversion.

Due to logistical issues or instrument dysfunctions, observation sites do not provide measurements all year round. Fig. 2, described in Sect. 4.1, details the temporal availability of the observations. The sampling bias is known to impact the inversion results (Villani et al., 2010). The issue is discussed in Sect. 4.1, but the general method developed in Sect. 2 consistently takes into account such a bias into increased posterior tolerance intervals and constraints on the emissions.

The observation vector \mathbf{y}^o is defined after Sect. 2.4.1 sampling method. The final size of \mathbf{y}^o implemented in the inversion is 2000. On average, 0.4 observations per station per day are validated for the inversion.

3.2 Estimates of the network footprints

As the observations that will be implemented in the system are known, the observation network footprints, necessary to choose the aggregation patterns in order to define the prior state vector \mathbf{x}^b and the observation operator \mathbf{H} (as detailed in Sect. 2.4.2), can be computed. As we do not carry out a quantitative analysis of the footprints, we only need a rough estimation of the footprint patterns. Thus, we compute simulations with the Lagrangian dispersion model FLEXPART version 8.2.3 (Stohl et al., 2005) to get such an estimation. To build the footprints, we compute numerous back-trajectories of virtual particles from the observation sites at the times when measurements are available and valid for the inversion.

The model is forced by ECMWF ERA-Interim data at an horizontal resolution of $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$, with 60 vertical levels and 3 hours temporal resolution (Uppala et al., 2005). Virtual particles are released in a 3D box (10 km per side and 1000 m high) centered around each observation site with 10-day lifetime backwards in time. The footprints are computed on a $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$ horizontal grid, following the method of Lin et al. (2003), taking into account the boundary layer height at each particle location. This method considers that only the particles within the boundary layer are influenced by surface emissions and that the boundary layer is well-enough mixed to be considered as uniform.

Table 1: Sites characteristics. The altitudes of the sites are given as m above sea level (a.s.l.) and the inlet height is in m above ground level (a.g.l.). The frequency column depict the type of instrument in the site: C=quasi-continuous, F=flask sampling.

Station	ID	Location			Inlet height (m a.g.l.)	Frequency	Network / Institute
		Lon (° E)	Lat (° N)	Alt (m a.s.l)			
Azovo	AZV	73.03	54.71	100	50	C	JR-STATION
Berezorechka	BRZ	84.33	56.15	150	80	C	JR-STATION
Demyanskoe	DEM	70.87	59.79	75	63	C	JR-STATION
Igrim	IGR	64.42	63.19	25	47	C	JR-STATION
Karasevoe	KRS	82.42	58.25	50	67	C	JR-STATION
Noyabrsk	NOY	75.78	63.43	100	43	C	JR-STATION
Pallas	PAL	24.12	67.97	560	7	C	FMI
Shangdianzi	SDZ	117.12	40.65	287	0	F	NOAA/ESRL
Tae-ahn Peninsula	TAP	126.12	36.72	20	0	F	NOAA/ESRL
Ulaan Uul	UUM	11.08	44.45	914	0	F	NOAA/ESRL
Vaganovo	VGN	62.32	54.50	200	85	C	JR-STATION
Yakutsk	YAK	129.36	62.09	210	77	C	JR-STATION
Zotino	ZOT	89.35	60.80	104	301	C	MPI

390 3.3 Prior fluxes and state vector: x

The inversion system optimizes prior fluxes grouped in the regions aggregated by the pre-processing procedure (see Sect. 2.2). The prior spatial distribution and temporal variability of the fluxes are deduced from: 1) EDGAR database v4.2 FT2010 (<http://edgar.jrc.ec.europa.eu>) for year 2010 for anthropogenic emissions, 2) LPX-Bern v1.2 process model (Stocker et al., 2014) at a monthly scale
395 for wetland emissions 3) GFED v4 database at a daily scale for wildfires. In Fig. 1, the distributions of the anthropogenic hot spots of emissions and of the wetland regions are represented, superimposed over the regional topography. Anthropogenic emissions of methane in the region are mainly hot spots related to the intense oil and gas industry in the Siberian Lowlands and to the leaks in the distribution system in population centres in the vicinity of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the Southern part of
400 the Siberian plain. Wetland emissions are mainly confined to the lower part of Siberia in the West Siberian plain, half of which is lower than 100 meters above sea level. Wildfires occur mainly in spring and summer in the Eurasian forest-covered areas; they emit CH_4 as intense hot spots.

The EDGAR inventory uses economic activity maps by sectors and convolved with emission factors calculated in laboratories or with statistical studies (Olivier et al., 2005). The Bern based

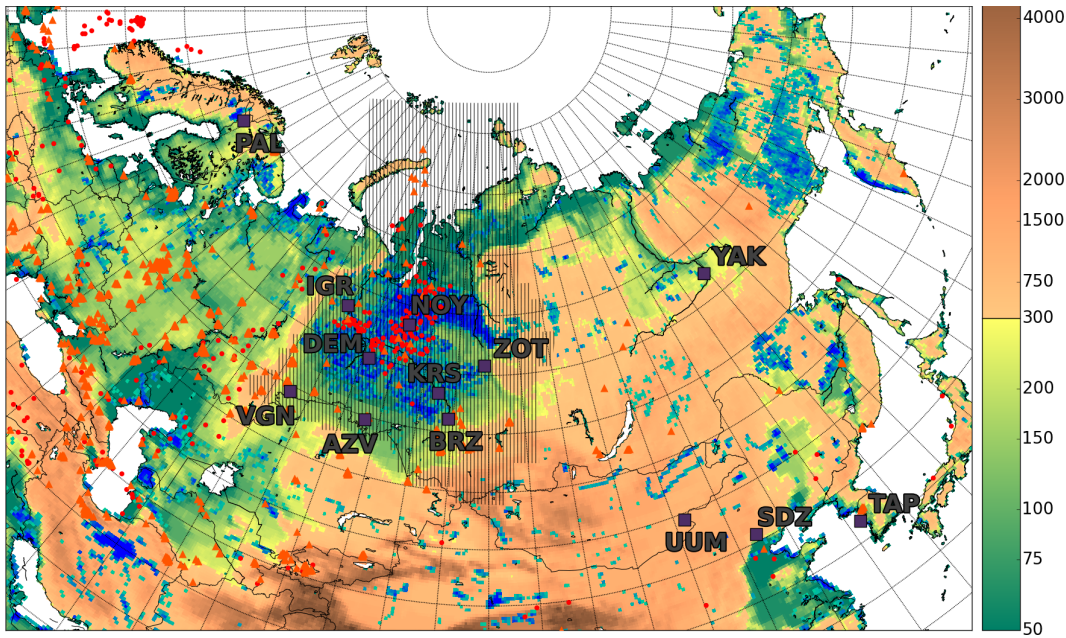


Figure 1: Topographic map of the domain of interest. The colour bar paints the altitude above sea level (from ETOPO1 database; Amante and Eakins, 2009). Red dots (resp. orange triangle) depict hot spots of CH₄ emissions (based on EDGAR v4.2 inventory; see Sect. 3.3) related to oil welling and refineries (resp. gas extraction and leaks during distribution in population centres). Purple squares highlight the observation site localizations. Blueish shaded areas represent inundated regions, wetlands and peatlands (from the Global Lakes and Wetlands Database; Lehner and Döll, 2004). The Siberian budget in Sect. 5.2 is calculated on the hatched area.

405 Land surface Processes and eXchanges (LPX-Bern v1.2) model is an update of the dynamic global
 vegetation model LPJ (Spahni et al., 2011). It includes a dynamical simulation of inundated wetland
 areas (Stocker et al., 2014), dynamic nitrogen cycle (Stocker et al., 2013), and dynamic evolution
 of peatlands (Spahni et al., 2013; Stocker et al., 2014). The model uses CRU TS 3.21 input data
 (temperature, precipitation rate, cloud cover, wet days), observed atmospheric CO₂ and prescribed
 410 nitrogen deposition (Lamarque et al., 2011) for each year for the simulation of dynamic forest and
 peatland vegetation growth. The GFED v4 database is built from the 500 m Collection 5.1 MODIS
 DB burned-area mapping algorithm (Giglio et al., 2009). CH₄ emissions at monthly and daily scales
 are deduced from the burnt areas using Carnegie-Ames-Stanford-Approach (CASA model; Potter
 et al., 1993) and emission factors (van der Werf et al., 2010).

415 We are aiming at a separation of the types of emissions at the meso-scale. We therefore aggregate
 the emissions along the three different types of sources, with specific spatial patterns and temporal
 profiles for each type of emissions. Anthropogenic sources are hot spots emitting all year round. Wet-
 lands are responsible for diffuse fluxes on large areas, with high temporal variability depending on

the local weather conditions (typically temperature or water table depth). The emissions of CH_4 from wildfires comes from point sources and occur on relatively short periods (Kasischke and Bruhwiler, 2002). Consequently, we do not aggregate the different types of emissions along the same spatial patterns and temporal intervals. Anthropogenic emissions are aggregated by month, while wetlands and wildfires, which have quicker time responses to meteorological changes, are grouped by periods of 10 days. In the following, we discuss the inversion results only in term of anthropogenic and wetland emissions. Indeed, as the wildfire emissions generate plumes relatively well-defined from the ambient air, the marginalized inversion exclude from the system all the emission contribution related to fires (according to the procedures described in Sect. 2.2).

For the computation of the observation operator \mathbf{H} (see Sect. 3.4), we use a regional chemistry-transport model with a domain limited in space and time. Initial and lateral boundary conditions (hereafter IC and LBC) are then also to be optimized in the system. Prior lateral mixing ratios are deduced from simulations at the global scale by the general circulation model LMDz with the assimilation of surface observations outside the domain of interest (Bousquet et al., 2011). LBC are assimilated by periods of 10 days. We arbitrarily aggregate LBC along 4 horizontal components (by side of the domain) and 2 vertical ones (1013–600 hPa and 600–300 hPa). Though we are mainly focused on Siberian lowlands, the domain of model computation has been chosen spanning over all Eurasia. This is expected to attenuate the impact of the rough global resolution in LMDz boundary conditions on the simulated variations of mixing ratios at the observation sites. Indeed, the central region is thousands of kilometres away from the sides of the domain.

To summarize, all the pieces of information in the observations are assimilated to constrain 1700 aggregated regions of flux and boundary conditions: 10×12 month regions for anthropogenic emissions, 10×36 10-day period for wildfires, 25×36 10-day period for wetlands, 9 (4 sides \times 2 horizontal levels + roof top) $\times 36$ 10-day period for the lateral boundary conditions. **After the filtering of Sect. 2.4, the dimension of the state space is reduced from 1700 to 275.**

3.4 The observation operator: \mathbf{H}

We explicitly define the observation operator \mathbf{H} by computing the forward atmospheric transport from the regions of aggregated emissions (defined in Sect. 3.3) to the observation sites. As CH_4 is a reactive species, the observation operator should include the oxidation by OH radicals. **However, as the residence time of the air masses in the domain of simulation is short (a few days to a few weeks) compared to CH_4 atmospheric life time (8–10 years; Dentener et al., 2003), ignoring OH sink only generates small differences in the simulated mixing ratios. Additionally, OH sink is mostly responsible for large scale gradients while the regional inversion focuses on the synoptic scale. Thus, the regional inversion system attributes OH sink to global boundary conditions, and not to regional fluxes.**

Thus, for each aggregated region, we calculate the so-called response functions using the transport
455 module of the Eulerian meso-scale non-hydrostatic chemistry transport model CHIMERE (Vautard
et al., 2001; Menut et al., 2013). This model was developed in a framework of air quality simulations
(Schmidt et al., 2001; Pison et al., 2007), but is also used for greenhouse gas studies (Broquet et al.,
2011; Berchet et al., 2013b). We use a quasi-regular horizontal grid zoomed near the observation sites
after Sect. 2 considerations. The domain of interest is of limited area and spans over the mainland
460 of the Eurasian continent (see Fig. 3). As we are interested in meso-scale fluxes, we take a spatial
resolution larger than 25 km. The average side length of the grid cells is 25 km close to the West-
Siberian stations and 150 km away of the centre of the domain. The 3D-domain embraces roughly
all the troposphere, from the surface to 300 hPa (~ 9000 m), with 29 vertical layers geometrically
spaced. The model time step varies dynamically from 4 to 6 min depending on the maximum wind
465 speed in the domain. The model is an off-line model which needs meteorological fields as forcing.
The forcing fields are deduced from interpolated meteorological fields from the European Centre
for Medium-range Weather Forecast (ECMWF) with a horizontal resolution of $0.5^\circ \times 0.5^\circ$ every 3 h
(Uppala et al., 2005).

3.5 Independent observations for evaluation

470 Any inversion has to be confronted by independent data in order to evaluate its results. Few in-situ
measurements of CH_4 mixing ratios are available in Siberia. We choose to assimilate all surface
observations described in Sect. 3.1 for the optimization of CH_4 fluxes. **NIES and LSCE carry out
aircraft measurements in the region (Paris et al., 2010; Umezawa et al., 2012; Berchet et al., 2013a),
but these measurements are still difficult to compare to meso-scale models. In addition, their spatial
475 and temporal coverage is poor for the year 2010 and they are not numerous enough to get significant
validation insights.**

For year 2010, the only remaining observations with sufficient spatial coverage and temporal
availability are the total columns retrieved by the Greenhouse Gas Observing SATellite (GOSAT).
In Sect. 6.2, we evaluate the results of the inversion against GOSAT data. The Japanese satellite
480 GOSAT was launched by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), NIES and the Japanese
Ministry of the Environment (MOE) in January 2009. It has a polar sun-synchronous orbit at 667 km
and provides a full coverage of the Earth every 3 days with a swath of 750 km and a ground pixel
resolution of 10.5 km at nadir. The TANSO-FTS instrument observes the solar radiation reflected
at the surface and the top of the atmosphere in the short wave infrared (SWIR) domain that allows
485 deducing total columns of methane (XCH_4) in cloud-free and sunlight conditions. The typical size
of GOSAT pixels is ~ 10 km. We use version 3.2 of the TANSO-FTS bias-corrected XCH_4 proxy re-
trievals performed at the University of Leicester (Parker et al., 2011). The XCH_4 retrieval algorithm
uses an iterative retrieval scheme based on Bayesian optimal estimation and associated to averaging
kernels and a priori profiles. The retrieval accuracy is estimated to be about 0.6% (i.e. ~ 10 ppb).

490 The retrieval algorithm needs CO₂ mixing ratios as a proxy for the light path. We use the 4-D CO₂ analysis from the surface air-sample inversion by Chevallier et al. (2010) (MACC v10.2). We obtain ~25000 GOSAT observations in 2010 over the domain of interest.

In order to compare the observations of the total columns to the model, we use the averaging kernels to compute prior and posterior model equivalents. The regional CTM CHIMERE has a top layer at 300 hPa in our set-up. The stratospheric contribution to the total columns is deduced from the global model LMDz used for the initial and lateral boundary conditions (described in Sect. 3.3). 495 The average observed XCH₄ is ~ 1775 ppb over the domain throughout the year. The prior average in LMDz XCH₄ is ~ 1820 ppb. This bias is attributable to the excessive injection of tropospheric air into the stratosphere in our version of LMDz. In Sect. 6.2, the bias on XCH₄ of 45 ppb has been 500 corrected to allow the observation-model comparison.

4 Diagnostics of the marginalized inversion

The marginalized inversion described in Sect. 2 provides us with tolerance intervals of posterior fluxes, posterior correlations of errors and influence indicators. As the marginalized inversion filters out some data and regions, we present and analyse here the overall performance of our inversion, the effects of the data selection in the inversion and the implied limitations. 505

4.1 Observation weight in the inversion

4.1.1 Temporal monitoring constraints

As explained in Sect. 2, the method developed by Berchet et al. (2014) filters out numerous observations and emission regions. Some observations available in the domain in 2010 are set aside before the inversion because of known flaws in CTMs. But the marginalized inversion also flags out additional observations when they are measured within plumes difficult to inverse. The remaining pieces of data do not have the same weight in the inversion. Contrary to most classical inversion methods which cannot afford the computation of the explicit sensitivity matrix (see Sect. 2.3.1) informing in the weight of individual observations, the marginalized inversion allows us to explicitly analyse the use of the observations in the system. In Fig. 2, we represent the observations filtered out along the PBL height criterion before the inversion (grey points), the ones flagged out during the inversion (black dots) and the relative weight of the remaining used observations (coloured circles). 515

Many observations cannot be assimilated (black dots), especially in winter, when the very cold conditions (temperatures lower than -20°C in average) related to the Siberian High generate very stable atmospheric conditions. In these conditions, the local emissions, which cannot be well assimilated in our inversion system, significantly influence the observations. In addition to the numerous not-assimilated observations, all daily observations that are not filtered do not necessarily convey the same amount of information: all the blue circles in Fig. 2 depict pieces of data with a negligible 520

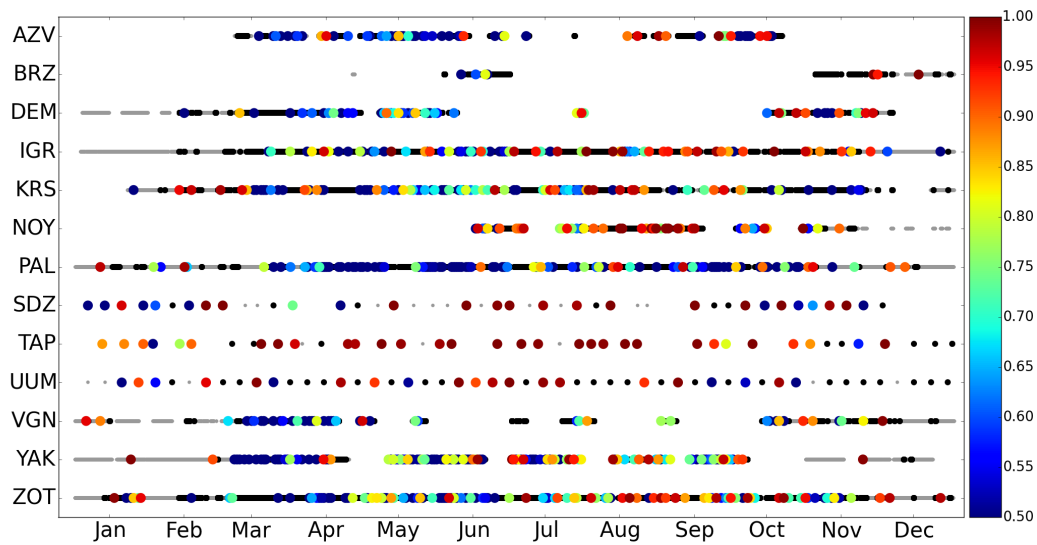


Figure 2: Observation availability and contribution to the inversion for each site. Grey dots stand for available data flagged out because of a planetary boundary layer height smaller than 500 m. Black dots denote the data points that are filtered during the computation of the algorithm described in Sect. 2 and 3.1. Colour circles represent the pieces of information carried out by each selected piece of data (see Sect. 2.3).

influence on the inversion. The two main explanations for this inability to assimilate all the available pieces of data is the chosen scale of interest and the integrating character of the atmosphere. First, as we are interested in meso-scale fluxes, the system has been chosen with a spatial resolution of 25 to 100 km. All the variability in CH₄ mixing ratios driven by single local plumes cannot be reproduced in the system. Second, the limitation of the atmospheric inversion comes from the fact that the atmosphere behaves as an integrator, hence attenuating some information in the atmospheric signal. Tracking back the atmospheric signal to the fluxes then has intrinsic limitations. This limited capability of the system drastically reduces the number of usable pieces of information. Out of the 127000 hourly measurements available in 2010, the pre-processing (as defined in Sect. 3.1) only retains 2000 daily aggregates into the inversion system. The system then excludes some observations and, at the end, only 800 data points remains, with 460 pieces of information (i.e. the trace of the sensitivity matrix; see details in Cardinali et al., 2004) carried by the atmospheric signal. Many observations give redundant information in our specific inversion framework at the meso-scale. The observations that cannot be processed by the meso-scale marginalized inversion carry information about local emissions.

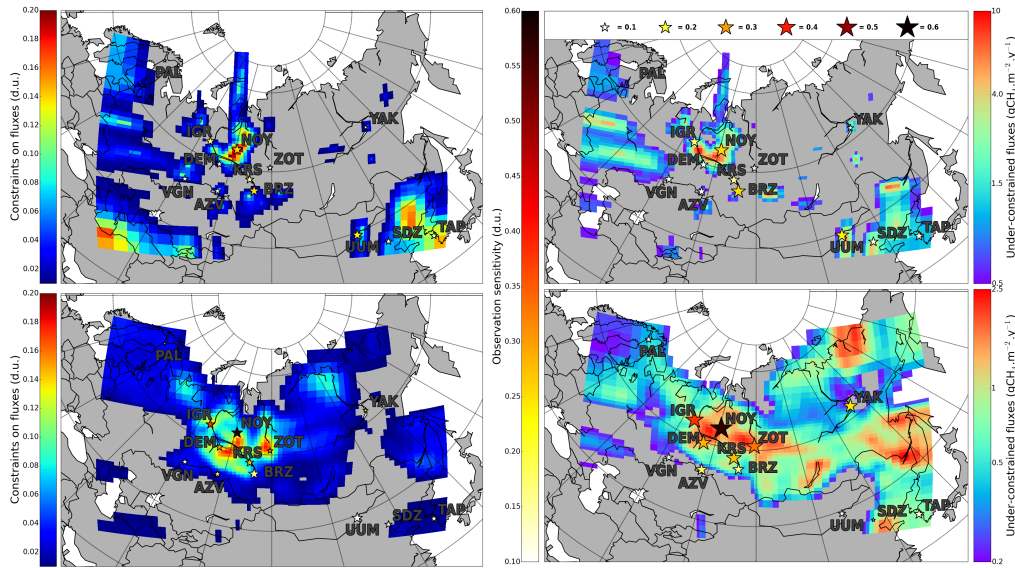


Figure 3: Maps of the constraints on the fluxes (top: anthropogenic fluxes; bottom: wetland emissions) from the observations in the inversion. (left column) Constraints on the fluxes as calculated from the influence matrix (see Sect. 2.3.1) and sensitivity of the inversion to observation sites as defined by their average weight ω in Eq. 4a of Sect. 2.3.1. (right column) Non-constrained fluxes as computed from the vector ϵ defined in Eq. 4b of Sect. 2.3.1 in gCH₄.m⁻².y⁻¹.

4.1.2 Network range of constraints

540 The temporal use of the available observations matters in the inversion, as much as the relative use of the different observation sites. Fig. 3 displays the location and the average weight of each observation site (the coloured background is described and discussed further in Sect. 4.2). It is divided into four panels in order to separate the use of information related to anthropogenic (top panels) and wetland (bottom panels) emissions. As the marginalized inversion raw results are also processed in order to
 545 detect the regions that are mis-separated from the boundary conditions (see Sect. 2.3.2), data from side observation sites is noticeably less used than for central sites.

Comparing anthropogenic (top panel) and wetland (bottom panel) maps, we notice that the weights of the observations are smaller for anthropogenic hot spot emissions. As expected, the inversion experiences difficulties in constraining emission hot spots, compared to diffuse fluxes. Concerning
 550 the spatial distribution of observation weights, wetland-related constraints follow the heuristics that the closer the observation site is to the fluxes, the higher the constraints to the inversion system is. Anthropogenic-related constraints do not exhibit such a pattern. For instance, NOY, close to the main oil extraction fields, has a lower observational influence than BRZ, remote from hot spots. Looking at wetland-related influences, BRZ has a bigger influence than NOY, while, as for anthropogenic
 555 emissions, wetlands emit more intensely in the vicinity of NOY. Then, a surface observation site

must be not too close, but not too far, from an emission hot spot to optimally constrain it. There is no generic criterion for this optimal distance to the observation sites as it depends on the atmospheric transport or the intensity of the hot spots.

Looking at the differences in the relative weights of the observation sites between the raw inversion results and the LBC-separated ones (not shown here), one can notice that the sites at the edge of the domain of interest are logically dedicated to constraining the LBC. Even the relative weight of the observation sites surrounding the Siberian Lowlands is significantly reduced. Additional observations away from the region of interest would be necessary to overcome the influence of the LBC.

565 4.2 Constrained regions

The spatial distribution of the observational constraints on the fluxes is calculated from the sensitivity matrix (see Sect. 2.3). The information in this matrix is convolved with the prior distribution of the fluxes to deduce the maps in the right column of Fig. 3. The spatial distribution of the constraints on the fluxes depends on the intensity of the emissions and the distance to the observation sites. In the left column of Fig. 3, the constraints are higher close to the Siberian network than away from it independent of the intensity of emissions. For example, the Western part of the Russian Federation contains most of the anthropogenic emissions of the country (roughly 20 TgCH₄/y according to EDGAR FT2010). But the constraints are lower for this region than for the Siberian Lowlands with smaller emissions (8 TgCH₄/y according to EDGAR FT2010). The post-processing excluding the regions that are mis-separated from the LBC by the inversion **highlights** this pattern. The observation sites within the denser part of the network seem to constrain emissions within a radius of roughly 500 km.

In the right column of Fig. 3, we display the average fluxes which are not considered as constrained by the inversion (as detailed in Sect. 2.3.1). Despite the limited range of the observation sites and the high number of filtered out data points, wetlands in the Siberian Lowlands are significantly constrained. The remaining unconstrained fluxes are of the same order of magnitude as minor wetland emitting region, such as in the far Eastern parts of Russian shores on the Arctic ocean and the Pacific ocean. As a consequence, with the existing network constraining major wetland areas, minor wetland regions now contribute equally to the uncertainties on Siberian CH₄ budget. This points to a needed extension of the monitoring network toward these minor emitting wetland areas. For anthropogenic emissions, the constraints on oil and gas related emissions are still too low. Anthropogenic emissions in Siberian Lowlands are still to be inquired into to reduced uncertainties on Russian CH₄ emissions.

In Fig. 5 described in Sect. 2.3.3, we also explicitly compute the portion of constrained emissions per month. On average, the major part of the emissions is not constrained by the inversion. The maximum proportion of constrained emissions is reached in summer with 50–70% of the emissions

constrained. In contrast, in winter, only a small part of the emissions are constrained. The proportion is critical in January and November when only 0–9% of the emissions are constrained. In Sect. 4.1.1, we noticed that most of the observations are flagged out in winter because of the very low boundary layer. Consequently, emissions in winter months are not well constrained.

Overall, the configuration of the network gives valuable insights on Siberian Lowland emissions, but it is not entirely adapted to our objective of constraining the Siberian Lowland CH₄ budget, even during the period when supply issues do not prevent the acquisition of observations and when the atmosphere is mixed enough for the CTM to accurately reproduce the transport patterns. Additional observation sites would be needed for a complete resolution of the regional fluxes.

4.3 Solved time and space resolution

In order to inquire into possible improvements in the regional inversion, we compute the typical temporal and spatial resolutions the inversion can solve. These scales are plotted in Fig. 4.

For each pixel of the domain of interest, we consider the groups the pixel is within at the different periods of the year (months for anthropogenic pixels, 10-day periods for wetland emissions). We then average the size of the selected groups along the year. We do the same for the duration of each period. The lowest common time step for anthropogenic and wetland emissions is month. Anthropogenic are thus consistently solved at a monthly scale. As wetland emissions can be grouped with anthropogenic ones, their solved time resolution can be increased from the 10-day basis. The temporal resolution is then computed only for wetland emissions in Fig. 4.

As expected, the resolved spatial resolution is better close to the network. Thus, most of Siberian Lowlands are constrained with a typical resolution below 2×10^6 km². The best resolution in our system configuration is roughly 700000 km². As we chose aggregation patterns with a mesh of about 300000 km² in Sect. 2.4.2, this confirms that our aggregation procedures are not too coarse.

However, the resolved spatial resolution suggests that numerous additional monitoring sites would be required to identify emission patterns in relation to hydrological and meteorological parameters as wetlands can react quickly and with high gradients to changes in the weather or in the water table depth. A high temporal resolution would be required in the inversion to link wetland emissions to these physical parameters. We see in Fig. 4 that most wetland fluxes are constrained with a temporal resolution of typically two weeks, which is too long to resolve quick changes in emissions. Wetlands along the Yenissei river, far from anthropogenic emissions are solved with a better temporal resolution than wetlands in central Lowlands. Unfortunately, this encouraging resolution is compensated by very high posterior uncertainties in the Yenissei flux. Overall, wetland emissions are resolved at

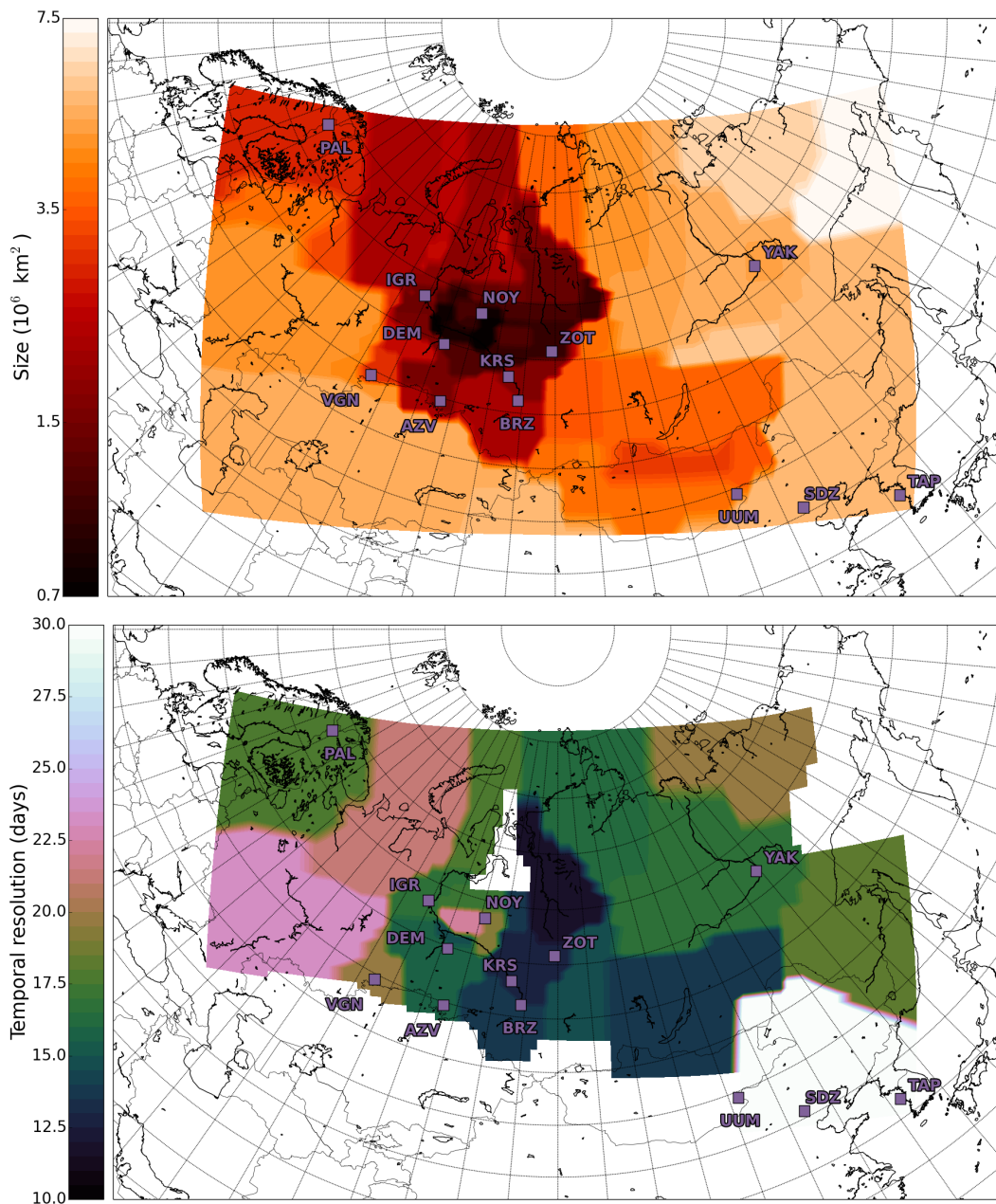


Figure 4: Temporal and spatial resolutions solved by the inversion. (top) Typical sizes of aggregation groups (as defined in Sect. 2.3.2); for each pixel, the size of the group the pixel belongs to is averaged along the whole period of study. (bottom) Time-scales resolved for wetland emissions; the period covered by pixel groups is averaged along the year.

a temporal resolution that allows the detection of the seasonal cycle, but not sufficient for linking
625 wetland emissions to physical parameters varying at the synoptic scale.

To summarize, the inversion approach that we developed allows a precise quantification of the
use of the observations. We also can deduce where the inversion results are the most reliable from
the spatial influence of the network. At the meso-scale and in the Siberian framework, it appears
that i) hourly and even daily measurements are difficult to assimilate, ii) anthropogenic emission hot
630 spots require observation sites remote from them to be inverted, iii) diffuse wetland emissions can be
constrained with sites located close to them, iv) the observation sites constrain fluxes within a radius
of ~ 500 km in our meso-scale inversion. This knowledge could find applications in network design
and in the choice of the type of measurements.

5 Results of the marginalized inversion

635 In Sect. 5.1, we describe the methane fluxes resulting from the inversion system that are explicitly
constrained and not mis-separated from the lateral boundary conditions. We then extrapolate the
fluxes on the constrained regions to the Siberian Lowlands and discuss the total budget of CH_4 of
the region (Sect. 5.2).

5.1 Inverted fluxes

640 We defined successive filtering and aggregating procedures in Sect. 2. At the end of the inversion,
out of the 275 constrained aggregated regions, only 166 groups of regions are kept: 35 anthropogenic
groups, 101 wetland groups and 30 mixed groups. Constraints, ill-separated regions and posterior
fluxes are summarized in Fig. 5 described in Sect. 2.3.3.

In summer, when wetlands are active, only August and September provide dominant wetland sig-
645 nals whereas winter months (December to April) show dominant anthropogenic sources. The rest of
the year (May to July and October to November), the mixed source dominates, indicating that the
inversion meets with difficulties in separating anthropogenic from wetland emissions. In the config-
uration we use, as expected with a sparse network, the usable pieces of information are not sufficient
to fully reach the objective to separate emission types. In general, as we filtered out hot spots too
650 close from the observation sites, only distant emissions and diffuse ones are constrained. Thus, the
inversion system tries to separate similar mixed atmospheric signals from different sources. With no
reliable information on the temporal profile of the different co-located emissions or any measure-
ments of the isotopic atmospheric composition, separating co-located emissions with atmospheric
meso-scale inversion is not possible.

655 In almost all cases, the intensity of the prior fluxes is close to the middle of the posterior tolerance
interval. This means that the inventories and models used to get the prior fluxes in the region are
reasonably close to the physical fluxes. The main output of the marginalized inversion compared

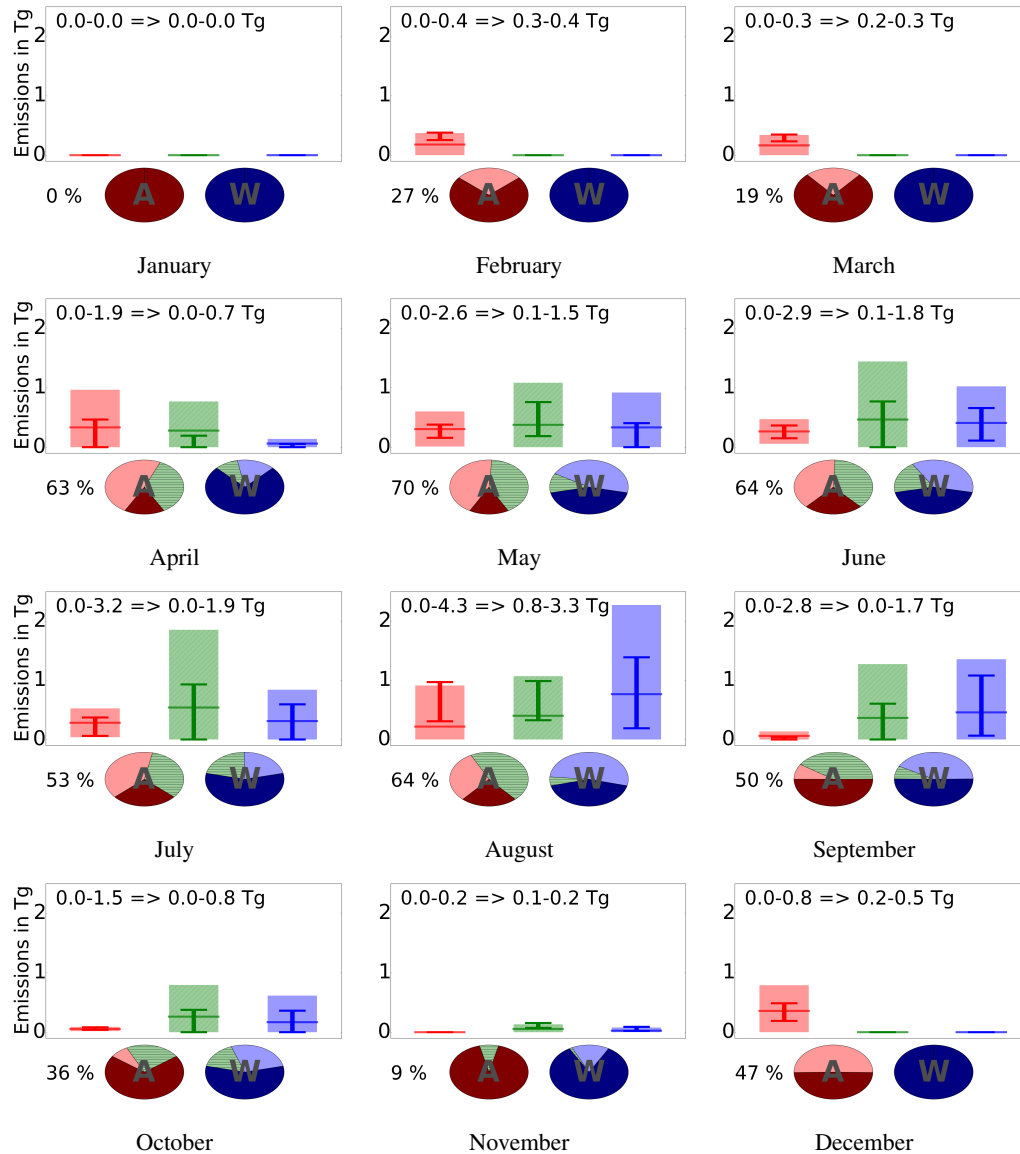


Figure 5: Inversion results for the twelve months of 2010 in the Siberian Lowlands (hatched area in Fig. 1). For each month, the bar plots show the prior (shade) and posterior (bar) tolerance intervals for anthropogenic (left), mixed (middle) and wetland (right) emissions. The pie charts depict the proportion of prior emissions within regions constrained by the inversion: (left, A) anthropogenic, (right, W) wetlands. Dark portions mean no constraint; lighter shade shows constrained regions; the hatched green portions are for the emissions the type of which the inversion cannot separate. The percentage indicates the fraction of the total emissions that are constrained each month. The given intervals in Tg are for the prior and posterior constrained Siberian budgets. See Sect. 2.3.3 for details.

to model or bottom-up approaches is the explicit computation of tolerance intervals of posterior fluxes on the regions that are explicitly constrained. The posterior tolerance intervals are significantly reduced compared to the prior uncertainties computed from the maximum likelihood. In most cases, the maximum likelihood algorithm suggests prior uncertainties more than 100% of the prior emissions. This is consistent with the uncertainties in the wetland models and in the anthropogenic emission inventories in the region (e.g., Hayhoe et al., 2002; Melton et al., 2013). After the inversion, on the constrained regions, the tolerance intervals are equivalent to uncertainties below 100%. For anthropogenic emissions, the posterior uncertainties are in the range of 20–50%, while for wetland emissions, the uncertainties span from 60 to 120%. The large ranges of uncertainties attributed to wetland emissions can be explained by the high temporal and spatial variability of the fluxes. The real temporal profiles and spatial patterns of wetland emissions differ from the ones used by the inversion system. The inversion thus experiences difficulties in precisely reproducing wetland fluxes, but consistently compute high posterior uncertainties. Despite the mis-separation of the co-located emissions, **the marginalized inversion thus provides reliable estimates of fluxes uncertainties at the regional scale.**

5.2 Siberian Lowland CH₄ budget

5.2.1 Seasonal cycle and yearly emissions

The marginalized inversion gives explicit tolerance intervals only on the constrained regions, that embody less than two thirds of the regional emissions. We then do not have more information than the prior emissions about the regions that are not upwind of the the observation sites or that are filtered out because of the plume criterion. Nevertheless, we are inquiring into the regional budget of methane. Extrapolations are necessary to infer regional emissions from the partial vision given by Fig. 5.

Here, for each month of the year 2010, we decide to extrapolate the corrections applied in Sect. 5.1 to all the fluxes only when a significant part of the prior emissions are constrained (hereafter 20%). As the prior emissions are close to the middle of the posterior tolerance intervals, this extrapolation does not radically change the inverted budget, but it allows the computation of regional uncertainties. The time series of the extrapolated anthropogenic, wetland and total emissions in the Siberian Lowlands (hatched area in Fig. 1) are displayed in Fig. 6. For each type of emissions, the posterior tolerance intervals are computed only for months with more than 20% of constrained emissions for the associated type. The total annual budgets in the legend of Fig. 6 are computed from the annual corrections on the constrained region for anthropogenic, wetland and total emissions.

Wetland emissions are negligible in winter and intense in summer. In the prior emission, the seasonal cycle of the regional emissions is smooth, the emitting season beginning in March. The marginalized inversion suggests a shift to April-May for the start of the CH₄ emissions from wet-

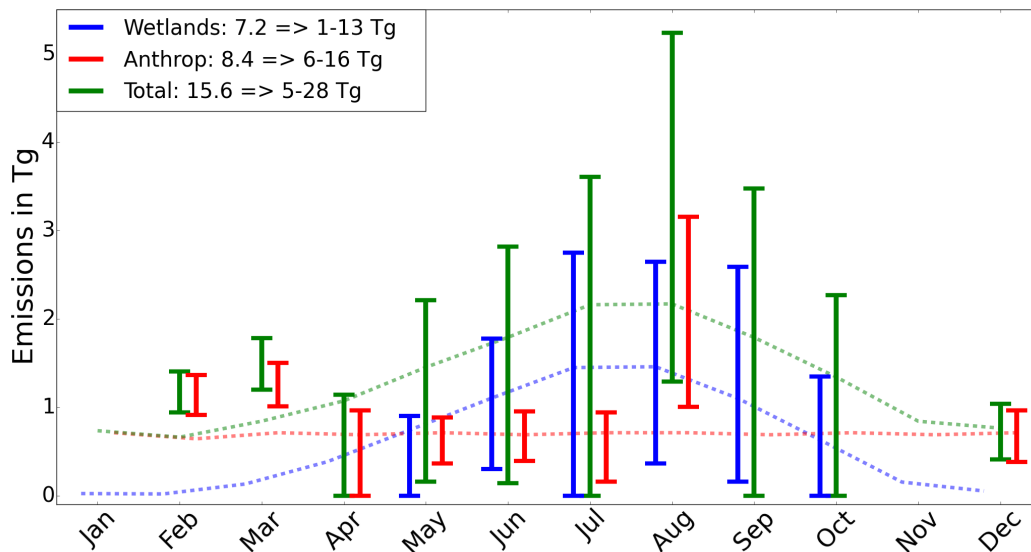


Figure 6: Time series of the posterior emissions on the Siberian Lowlands. The emissions are reported in TgCH₄ for each month. The correction factors computed on the constrained regions (in Sect. 5) are extrapolated to the Siberian Lowlands (see Fig. 1). The extrapolation is carried out only when more than 20% of the prior emissions are constrained. The error bars depict the tolerance interval of posterior emissions. The dotted lines denote the prior fluxes. The yearly prior emissions and posterior tolerance intervals in TgCH₄ are noted in the legend.

lands. Anthropogenic emissions are supposed to be constant in the prior. Posterior emissions in February and March are 20–30% higher than the average posterior emissions. In a region of dense oil and gas extraction, the emissions can be partly correlated to the production, but also to household heating consumption. As the demand of gas is higher in winter, the production is 15–20% bigger during the winter quarter (as suggested by GAZPROM annual reports, the main Russian gas company; www.gazprom.com). This could explain the higher posterior estimates in winter. However, local biogenic processes emitting CH₄ have also been observed in winter, which perturb the measured surface mixing ratios (Arshinov et al., 2009; Winderlich, 2012). Limited bacterial activity below the snow cover can produce CH₄, which perspires to the atmosphere. As the atmosphere is very stable in winter, this phenomenon can generate significant local increases of CH₄ mixing ratios close to the observation sites. As the model does not account for such emissions, the inversion would attribute them to the anthropogenic emissions. **This should be furtherly inquired into with isotopic measurements.** Nevertheless, **most problematic observations with possible local biogenic influence** within very stable planetary boundary layers have been flagged out from the inversion due to the mis-representation of the vertical mixing in the model. Therefore, the winter increase of CH₄ emissions in the inversion can be attributed to a real increase in anthropogenic emissions due to the cumulated increased production and consumption of gas for heating.

710 Overall, on a yearly basis, posterior anthropogenic and wetland emissions are roughly equal as
in the prior. The tolerance interval is 1–13 TgCH₄/y for wetland emissions, and 6–16 TgCH₄/y for
anthropogenic emissions. The ranges of uncertainties are reduced by 40% for wetland emissions
and 57% for anthropogenic emissions from prior to posterior fluxes. Siberian oil and gas extracting
715 activity and population centres are then responsible of 1.5–4.2% of the global anthropogenic emis-
sions. As a large portion of the oil and gas extracted in Siberia is exported to Europe, the inclusion
of the emissions from the Siberian extraction process would have a significant impact on the total
European emissions of ~ 27 TgCH₄ (as computed from EDGAR v4.2 for all Europe apart from Rus-
sia, Ukraine and Belarus). The uncertainties of the wetland emissions are still too high to provide
720 valuable insights for the modelling of these emissions, such as the start of the emitting season, or
correlation to the precipitation rates or temperatures.

5.2.2 Wildfire influence

A peak of anthropogenic emissions with large uncertainties occurs in August. The large tolerance
interval is still compatible with the prior scenario. Though, analysing into details posterior fluxes in
August aggregation groups, we can propose two plausible explanation to this increase un-captured
725 by prior data sets.

First, an increase of 0.7 TgCH₄ in August anthropogenic emissions is suggested in oil and gas ex-
traction regions. This could be explained by the activities of prospecting companies. They make use
of the decrease in the household demand in summer to carry out maintenance and welling operations
on the oil and gas welling sites. These operations are related to punctual leaks and purging releases
730 of gas.

Second, August is also a month with numerous forest fires. In particular, very large wildfires
occurred in Western Russia in August 2010, upwind our observation network. As said in Sect. 3.3,
wildfires are systematically excluded from the marginalized inversion because they generate intense
plumes difficult to take into account in our model. But, as West Russian wildfires took place far away
735 of the observing sites, emitted plumes could have been well mixed before reaching these sites. Thus,
the inversion system would have failed in eliminating observations very influenced by wildfires.
The increase in the mixing ratios could then have been wrongly attributed by the inversion to an
increase in anthropogenic emissions. As a confirmation, an aggregation group in August embraces
anthropogenic emissions from Western Russia, grouped with anthropogenic and wetland emissions
740 in the Siberian Lowlands. The inversion suggests that the emissions are increased by +150% for this
group.

6 Evaluation of the inversion

6.1 Performance on filtered out data

For any inversion system, the inversion results are to be evaluated with independent datasets. A
745 usual way to evaluate inversion results is to carry out a leave-one-out experiment. It usually consists
in 1) flagging out all the observations from a site, 2) computing the inversion with the reduced data
set, and 3) comparing the prior and posterior simulated mixing ratios to the observed ones at the
left-out site. In principle, the leave-one-out inversion should improve the simulated mixing ratios at
the left-out sites. That is to say, the posterior mixing ratios should be closer to and more consistent
750 with the observations at the left-out site than the prior ones, even if not assimilated in the inversion.
In our case, the observation sites are far from each other and not numerous in regard to the size
of the domain. Moreover, as developed in Sect. 4.2, the marginalized inversion explicitly informs
about the constrained regions. Flagging out one site modifies the inversion results mainly in the
surrounding regions where the uncertainty reduction becomes negligible compared to the complete
755 dataset. Therefore, the optimized fluxes in our leave-one-out experiments (not shown) remain within
the range of uncertainty of another one for constrained regions. This confirms that the method we
use consistently accounts for the uncertainties, but is not sufficient to quantitatively evaluate the
optimized fluxes.

We can also use the data points which have been filtered out by our system in order to evaluate the
760 inversion results. As the number of filtered out observations is high, sampling biases may be expected
from the filtering procedures. In addition, as only a few data points are assimilated, unrealistic fluxes
could have been inferred by the inversion to fit the assimilated data leading to a flawed reproduction
of the remaining observations. As one can see in Tab. 2, the marginalized inversion significantly
improves the simulated mixing ratios at the sites where data is used as expected. As a proof on
765 realistic flux prescription despite the filter on the observations, for all the remaining data, the model
results are also well improved for unused data.

This confirms that our method does not create sampling biases despite the high number of filtered
data points. It also confirms that the increments on the fluxes are realistic from the point of view of
our network.

770 6.2 GOSAT evaluation

Genuinely independent observations are required for a better evaluation of the inversion results.
Long-term monitoring surface sites are scarce in Siberia, and airborne (e.g., Paris et al., 2010;
Berchet et al., 2013a) or train (e.g., Tarasova et al., 2006) measurement campaigns only provide
snapshots of the Siberian atmospheric composition. Therefore, we try to evaluate the marginalized
775 inversion results with satellite data. We choose GOSAT total column biased-corrected retrievals
(see Sect. 3.5) and compare them to their simulated equivalents. In Fig. 7, we compare the prior

Table 2: Correlations of observed and simulated mixing ratios, prior and posterior to the inversion. Correlation coefficient r is presented for only the filtered data points used in the inversion, but also for the data points filtered out from the inversion. The number of daily available observations is also reported alongside with the number of data used in the inversion.

Site ID	Correlations			Number of observations	
	Prior	Posterior		Daily raw	Used
		Used	Filtered		
AZV	0.70	0.89	0.89	131	54
BRZ	0.79	0.77	0.71	66	7
DEM	0.69	0.84	0.84	184	49
IGR	0.58	0.78	0.77	349	71
KRS	0.62	0.79	0.89	307	87
NOY	0.56	0.82	0.78	122	44
PAL	0.53	0.76	0.75	362	102
SDZ	0.58	0.99	0.99	32	26
TAP	0.70	0.99	0.99	41	31
UUM	0.09	0.65	0.69	51	21
VGN	0.64	0.82	0.81	204	44
YAK	0.17	0.91	0.90	272	115
ZOT	0.64	0.90	0.92	363	107

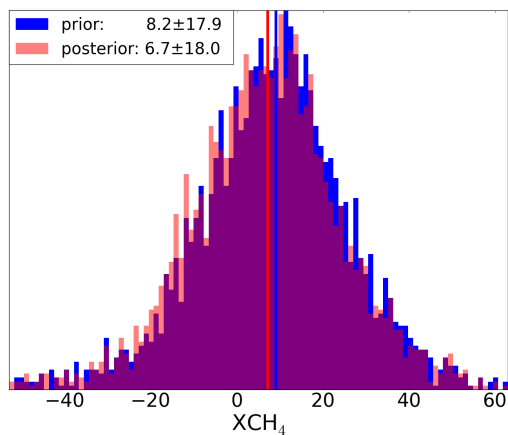


Figure 7: Distribution of the differences between the observed and simulated prior and posterior GOSAT total columns. The differences are computed only for the GOSAT observations downwind the emissions constrained by the surface sites, i.e. with a simulated contribution from these regions to the total column bigger than 2 ppb.

and posterior simulated total columns to the observed columns. Since the inversion only constrains the emissions that are upwind the assimilated surface observation sites, we focus on the GOSAT columns that are gathered downwind of the regions constrained by the surface sites. To do so, we
780 select only the CH₄ columns, of which the model equivalent is computed with a contribution from the constrained regions larger than 2 ppb. This criterion keeps 3000 of the 25000 available GOSAT measurements in the domain of interest during the year 2010. More than 96% of the selected prior and posterior simulated columns are less than 10 ppb different from each other. This shift is not significant compared with the ~10 ppb of uncertainties in the GOSAT retrievals.

785 GOSAT zonal coverage is rather uniform. GOSAT columns thus carry information on the spatial gradients of the atmospheric methane composition. As analysing the individual total columns does not provide sufficient information about the regional emissions, we therefore now focus on the spatial gradients of the total columns. In the observed CH₄ columns, we notice large-scale negative Eastward (from Europe to West Siberia) and Northward (from China to North-East Siberia)
790 gradients within measured total columns. These gradients of about 5 ppb per 1000 km are related to the large-scale mixing of the polluted air masses from Europe and China into clean background air masses. The contribution of the local emissions to the observed total columns is thus computed here as the local increase from the regional background in order to bypass the very large scale gradients. In Fig. 8, we represent the simulated and observed contributions of the Siberian local emissions to the GOSAT total columns. As the wetlands emit small amounts of CH₄ ($< 10^{-3}$ kg.m⁻².month⁻¹)
795 spread over very large areas ($\sim 2 \times 10^6$ km²), their contribution to CH₄ columns is very smooth. In the model, the contribution of wetlands to the total columns does not exceed 3 ppb over the Siberian Lowlands. Therefore, the gradients in the CH₄ columns due to regional wetland emissions cannot be separated from the large scale gradients of 5 ppb per 1000 km related to the emissions outside the
800 region of interest.

The anthropogenic hot spots are observable in both measured and simulated total columns. Above the hot spots in the Siberian Lowlands, the observed total columns shift from the observed background by up to 15 ppb. In the model, the local contribution of anthropogenic hot spots to the total columns is significant only close to the sources, with local increases in the total column up to 6 ppb.
805 With the spatial resolution that we chose for atmospheric transport (with grid cells of more than 25 km to be compared with GOSAT pixel size of ~ 10 km), the emissions from the local hot spots mix quickly into the background. This fast dilution can explain at least part of the factor of difference of 2–3 between observed and simulated CH₄ columns.

6.3 Toward using satellite measurements in regional frameworks

810 Satellite data, as a tool for filling the lack of observations in Siberia to evaluate the inversion results, do not seem to be suited for our regional configuration. As satellite observations offer a very good

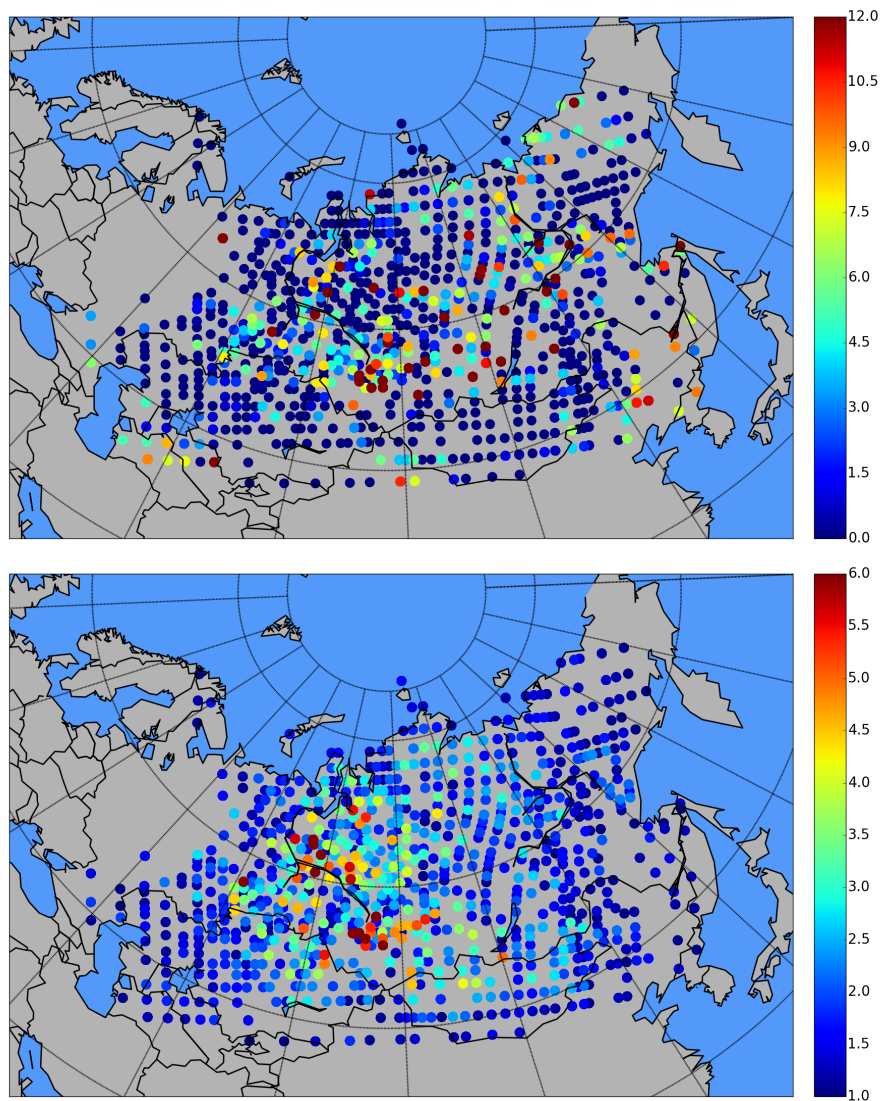


Figure 8: Observed (top) and simulated (bottom) contributions of the local Siberian sources to GOSAT total columns. The observed contribution of local sources are selected as excesses from the regional measured background (defined as the average observed total column in a zone of roughly 2000 km in the zonal direction and 1000 km in the meridional one). The simulated contributions are computed from CHIMERE forward simulations of the emissions of the Siberian Lowlands. The colour scale is not the same between the two panels in order to facilitate the readability of the figure.

potential in term of spatial coverage, in-situ observations difficult to maintain and extend in the Siberian framework should be complemented by new satellite data sets.

The inversion system could be developed in order to use GOSAT data as a proxy of the large scale
815 gradients given here by a global model. With such additional observations, the LBC, representative
of the emissions outside the domain of interest, would be better constrained in the inversion. As a
consequence, fewer regions would be expected to be mis-separated from the LBC and the assimilated
surface sites at the edge of the network would then provide more information about the emissions
within the domain of interest. In addition, high resolution transport simulations close to the hot spots
820 would better represent the dilution of the plumes. The model-observation comparison for quantifying
anthropogenic sources would then be more suitable. However, the plumes generated by the hot spots
are not necessarily simulated at the right location and date. Indeed, the location of emission hot
spots is not always well known a priori and temporal or spatial transport mismatches can occur.
Direct comparisons between the observed and simulated CH₄ columns would face the same issue
825 as for surface sites when assimilating hot spots plumes. Recent developments (e.g., Krings et al.,
2013) point to the possibility of using 1D or 2D high resolution snapshots of the hot spot plumes to
infer information about very local emissions. Integrated comparison of the observed and simulated
plumes in the CH₄ columns could then be implemented in a meso-scale inversion system.

With such techniques, future satellite missions with active remote sensing (e.g., the joint French-
830 German cooperation Methane Remote Sensing LIDAR Mission, MERLIN) providing high resolu-
tion accurate 1D or 2D products could be used in regional inversions; **the spatial resolution of the
products to be used in such an inversion system should of the same magnitude as the meso-scale
transport model, i.e. at least < 50 km.**

7 Conclusions

835 We assimilated the data collected in 2010 at 8 surface observation sites measuring atmospheric CH₄
mixing ratios in the West-Siberian plain **into a regional atmospheric inversion**. It was the first time
all these observations were used in a single study. **As regional inversions suffer from mis-specified
uncertainties**, we implemented an enhanced Bayesian method developed by Berchet et al. (2014) in
order to get reliable results at the regional scale with an objectified quantification of the uncertainties
840 in the system. This new method allows us to consistently evaluate the local spatial distribution of the
sensitivity of the emission areas to the inversion and the usefulness of each available observation.
The inversion seems to be able to primarily constrain the emissions close to the observation sites
(within a radius of roughly 500 km). The inversion system assimilate daily observation aggregates to
constrain the emissions. Amongst all the observation aggregates, and despite the efforts to provide
845 precise and quasi-continuous measurements, our meso-scale inversion system properly uses only
one piece of information every few days. This is mainly caused by atmospheric limitations related

to transport and mixing; the fewer the assimilated data, the higher the uncertainties keep after the inversion. Even in the regions close to the stations, the posterior uncertainties (objectively quantified) thus remain larger than 20% of the prior fluxes for anthropogenic emissions and 50% for wetlands, 850 although an important error reduction is achieved. Nevertheless, objectified uncertainties allow a robust evaluation of the wide range of proposed wetland and anthropogenic emissions in Siberia. On average, the **posterior** tolerance interval (defined so that 68.27% of the Monte Carlo marginalized ensemble is within the interval) on the West-Siberian plain methane budget is 5–28 TgCH₄ for the year 2010.

855 The year 2010 is the first year when most of the used observation sites are functional. Reproducing our set-up to subsequent years would provide a more robust estimation of the regional fluxes and possibly valuable information about the year-to-year variability of Siberian methane fluxes. Finally, satellite platforms provide an extensive spatial coverage of observational constraints. Implementing such rather uniform observation coverage in a regional framework with few surface sites is tempting. 860 However, with the inversion framework used here, satellite data would be useful only for constraining large scale gradients, hence the lateral boundary conditions. Further work on inversion systems is required so that satellite observations can be used to quantify local emissions in a regional framework like this one.

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