Project	SEAMLESS No 101004032	**Start / Duration**	1 January 2021/ 36 Months
Dissemination	Public	**Nature**	Other
Date	31/05/2023	**Version**	**3.0**

Deliverable D2.4

Public release and full documentation of the SEAMLESS prototype

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This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101004032.

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Document History:

Release	Date	Reason for Change	Status	Distribution
1.0		initial document for review	Released	Internal
2.0	15.05.22	updated document for further review	Released	Internal
3.0	31.05.22	first submission	Released	Internal
3.0	04.01.24	Made publicly available	Released	External

To cite this document

Bruggeman, B., Bolding, K., Nerger, L., Teruzzi, A., Spada, S., Wakamatsu, T., Çağlar Yumruktepe, V., Skákala, J., Ciavatta, S. Public release and full documentation of the SEAMLESS prototype. SEAMLESS Deliverable 2.4. Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.10581313

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Scope

This document presents the SEAMLESS prototype: the Ensemble and Assimilation Tool (EAT), which is a flexible and extensible software package that enables data assimilation of physical and biogeochemical variables in a one-dimensional water column. EAT itself is the Deliverable D2.4 (nature "Other") of SEAMLESS; this paper is a supporting document.

EAT builds on established open-source components for ocean physics (GOTM), biogeochemistry (FABM) and data assimilation (PDAF). It is easy to install and operate, and flexible through support for user-written plugins. With full support for strongly and weakly coupled physical-biogeochemical data assimilation, the ability to assimilate observations of any diagnostic calculated within biogeochemical models, and the ability to estimate biogeochemical parameters, EAT is well suited to explore and advance the state-of-the-art in marine data assimilation (DA). Its range of capabilities is demonstrated with four applications that demonstrate core functionality and EAT's ability to mimic the configuration of operational data assimilation systems.

The EAT source code is publicly available from https://github.com/BoldingBruggeman/eat. Binary installation packages are available via the package manager system conda and can be installed with a single line on Linux, Mac and Windows systems that have the Anaconda Python distribution:

```
conda create -n eat -c bolding-bruggeman -c conda-forge eatpy
```

If necessary, Anaconda can itself be installed with a single command, without requiring administrator/root permissions)

EAT comes with detailed instructions for installation and usage: https://github.com/BoldingBruggeman/eat/wiki.

The remainder of this document describes the functionality of EAT and places it in the context of marine data assimilation research and development. This text will form the basis of a manuscript to be submitted to Geoscientific Model Development.

2. Introduction

To understand and predict the ocean's capacity for carbon sequestration, its ability to supply food, and its response to climate change, we need to know the ocean state: its physical and biogeochemical properties from surface to sea floor. Our ability to directly observe this state is limited: satellites have extensive, often global, geographic coverage but only observe the ocean surface, while platforms such as moorings and gliders may operate throughout the water column but are limited to specific sites or regions. Our best knowledge of the ocean state is obtained through data assimilation (DA), which combines numerical models and observations to deliver the best possible characterisation of ocean variables. This approach underpins, for instance, the multidecadal reanalyses and ten-day forecasts produced by the Copernicus Marine Service (CMEMS; https://marine.copernicus.eu).

Data assimilation in marine systems has a long history and is widely used in operational setting (Brasseur et al., 2009; Fennel et al., 2019), but the field is still under active development (Moore et al., 2019; Carrassi et al., 2018). A first example: the arrival of autonomous observing platforms such as BGC Argo (Roemmich et al., 2019) and the development of new remote sensing products (Brewin et al., 2021) has increased spatial coverage and added new types of observations, notably for ocean biogeochemistry. Extensive experiments are needed to assess how best to integrate these observations in DA pipelines (Skákala et al., 2021; Ford, 2021; Teruzzi et al., 2021). For instance, coupled assimilation of physical and biogeochemical variables shows promise but also comes with challenges: it can improve (Goodliff et al., 2019) or degrade assimilation results (Park et al., 2018), depending on model and observation specifics (Wakamatsu et al. in prep). Second, new and enhanced algorithms for blending model simulations and observations are continuously being developed, with established schemes such as 3D-Var and the Ensemble Kalman filter being supplemented by hybrid variational-ensemble schemes and Particle Filters (Van Leeuwen et al., 2015). Third, extending data assimilation to estimate (biogeochemical) parameters (in addition to model state) promises to help understand model deficiencies and to improve parametrisations (Beck, 1987). However, extensive experiments are needed to evaluate the viability of this approach, along with practical aspects such as the spatial correlation structure and regionalized setting of estimated parameters (Brankart et al., 2012). In short, the many promising developments in ocean data assimilation will require rigorous experiments before they can be integrated in operational (3D) DA systems.

Unfortunately, 3D data assimilation systems are computationally expensive and time-consuming to run. This applies in particular to ensemble-based methods that require potentially order of one hundred of simultaneous model simulations. As computational resources are limited, it is typically not feasible to perform extensive experiments with operational DA systems. A second obstacle is that these systems are technically complex, requiring considerable high-performance computing and programming skills to develop, modify and operate. The number of people capable of operating them is therefore limited. The consequence of these resource and skill requirements is that there is a considerable lag between the development of new DA theory and methods on the one hand, and their evaluation and application in production systems on the other. There is therefore a clear need for DA testbeds that are both efficient to run and easy to operate.

Here we present the Ensemble and Assimilation Tool (EAT): a flexible and extensible software package that enables data assimilation of physical and biogeochemical variables in a one-dimensional (1D) water column. Water column models are an ideal test bed for data assimilation: they are sufficiently realistic to resolve vertical gradients in temperature, light and biogeochemistry, as well as the role of (turbulent) mixing and its response to atmospheric forcing, yet they are efficient enough to allow one year to be simulated in under a minute on a single core of a regular computer workstation. For that reason, experiments in marine data assimilation often focus on 1D, for instance, when testing biogeochemical data assimilation in setups with parametrised physics (Pelc et al., 2012; Eknes and Evensen, 2002; Simon and Bertino, 2012; Bertino et al., 2003), offline physics (Lenartz et al., 2007), and online physics (Torres et al., 2006, 2020; Hoteit et al., 2003; Allen et al., 2003), when assimilating rates as well as state (Mamnun et al., 2022), and when performing

parameter-state estimation (Gharamti et al., 2017a, b). EAT is designed specifically to facilitate such experiments. At its core, EAT builds upon established open-source frameworks for modelling water column hydrodynamics (GOTM, Burchard et al., 1999), ocean biogeochemistry (FABM, Bruggeman and Bolding, 2014), and data assimilation (PDAF, Nerger and Hiller, 2013). Through these frameworks, users have access to extensive collections of state-of-the-art biogeochemical models and data assimilation schemes. Moreover, these frameworks are also common ingredients of established 3D data assimilation systems; this benefits the transferability of developments from 1D EAT to 3D. In the next sections, we describe the feature set and structure of EAT, along with four examples showcasing coupled physical-biogeochemical assimilation, the capability to use both ensemble-based and variational methods, and the ability to perform state-parameter estimation.

3. Methods

EAT consists of the Python package "eatpy" which manages the data assimilation filter and the observations to assimilate, and the Fortran executable "eat-gotm" that contains the 1D hydrodynamic-biogeochemical model (Fig. 1). In both components, the core functionality is provided by established, Fortran-based open-source software packages:

- the General Ocean Turbulence Model (GOTM) simulates the physics (temperature, salinity, mixing) of the water column.
- the Framework for Aquatic Biogeochemical Models (FABM) integrates with GOTM to provide a wide range of biogeochemical models.
- the Parallel Data Assimilation Framework (PDAF) provides a wide range of data assimilation algorithms.

By wrapping these existing packages, the EAT-specific source code has remained relatively compact (< 5,000 lines).

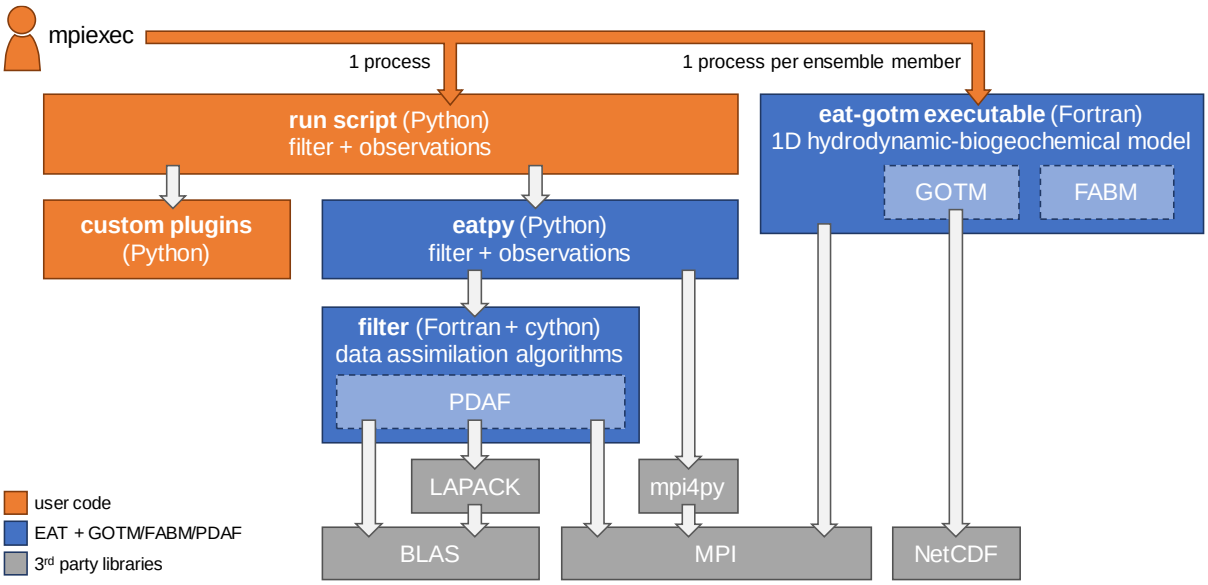

Figure 1. Components of EAT and its dependencies. Each box indicates a script, compiled executable, Python package, or library; arrows indicate dependencies.

GOTM: General Ocean Turbulence Model

The General Ocean Turbulence Model (GOTM, Burchard et al., 1999) is a 1D water column model that has been actively developed over the last 20 years. GOTM is written in Fortran 90. It was originally developed to test and compare different turbulence closure models under identical conditions, e.g., forcing and numerics. Accordingly, GOTM comes with a comprehensive library of turbulence closure schemes. In addition, it has over time been extended to become increasingly flexible and configurable (Burchard et al., 2006). As part of this, GOTM has been coupled to FABM (see below) to support coupled simulations with a wide variety of biogeochemical models. GOTM has numerous applications in the ocean and in lakes, several of which includes data assimilation (Torres et al., 2020, 2006; Mattern et al., 2010; Bagniewski et al., 2011; Gharamti et al., 2017b).

GOTM uses a single text file in YAML format (https://yaml.org/), *gotm.yaml*, to describe the physical model configuration. This file in turn can point to additional forcing files, which are text-based and use a format for a time-series of vertical profiles for depth-explicit variables (e.g., temperature, salinity), or a format for time-series of depth-independent variables (e.g., meteorological forcing). All output is written in NetCDF format. The model state, which includes biogeochemistry if active, is written to and optionally read from a restart file; this also uses the NetCDF format.

FABM: Framework for Aquatic Biogeochemical Models

The Framework for Aquatic Biogeochemical Models (FABM, Bruggeman and Bolding, 2014) is a generic Fortran-based framework in which models for marine and freshwater biogeochemistry can be implemented. Several comprehensive models have been implemented in FABM, including those used by most CMEMS Monitoring and Forecasting Centers (MFCs):

- ERSEM (Atlantic European North West shelves) (Butenschön et al., 2016)
- BFM (Mediterranean Sea) (Vichi et al., 2020)
- ECOSMO (Arctic Ocean) (Daewel and Schrum, 2013; Yumruktepe et al., 2022)
- PISCES (global and Iberian Biscay Irish Sea) (Aumont et al., 2015)
- ERGOM (Baltic Sea) (Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research, 2015)

Efforts to add the remaining biogeochemical model (BAMHBI for the Black Sea) are underway.

FABM integrates with a large variety of hydrodynamic models: couplers have been developed for NEMO, HYCOM, ROMS, GETM, FVCOM, SCHISM, GOTM, among others. FABM-based biogeochemical models analysed in 1D GOTM water columns using EAT are directly available in all these hydrodynamic models, which notably covers all CMEMS MFCs (HYCOM for the Arctic Ocean, NEMO for the other domains). Accordingly, our understanding of the controllability of BGC models developed by using EAT translates readily to production-ready 3D models.

FABM is configured through a single text file in YAML format, *fabm.yaml*. This file specifies which biogeochemical processes are active during a simulation, their parameterisation, and default initial

values for all state variables. This default initial value is depth-independent and can be overridden by the hydrodynamic model. For instance, when FABM is coupled to GOTM, depth-explicit initial values or biogeochemical variables can be read from restarts, or specified by pointing to a text file with profiles in *gotm.yaml*.

PDAF: parallel data assimilation framework

The parallel data assimilation framework (PDAF, https://pdaf.awi.de, Nerger and Hiller, 2013; Nerger et al., 2005) is a model-agnostic framework for data assimilation. PDAF provides different ensemble filters and smoothers as well as variational methods. In addition, PDAF provides ensemble diagnostics. As a framework it provides support to convert numerical models into models simulating an ensemble of model state realizations. The data assimilation methods are implemented in a generic way allowing PDAF to be applied in various modelling applications like ocean physics (Brüning et al., 2021) and sea ice (Mu et al., 2019), ocean biogeochemistry (Goodliff et al., 2019; Pradhan et al., 2019), hydrology (Kurtz et al., 2016), geodynamo (Fournier et al., 2013) and geodynamics (Schachtschneider et al., 2022) or transport dynamics in the atmosphere (Pardini et al., 2020). PDAF is implemented in Fortran 95 with some functions of Fortran 2003 and uses parallelization with the Message Passing Interface (MPI, Gropp et al., 1994) and OpenMP. It is suited for small applications or toy model, but also high-dimensional models that are applied with several thousand processor cores (e.g., Kurtz et al., 2016; Nerger et al., 2020). PDAF consists of a core program library and templates for case-specific functions, which build the basis for the implementation for a particular model. The structure of PDAF provides a clear separation of concerns in between the data assimilation method, the model, and observations that are assimilated.

There are different strategies to couple a model with PDAF. The offline coupling uses separate programs for the model and the data assimilation, which transfer information on the ensemble of model states via restart files. This avoids the need for changes in the model code, but the frequent writing and reading of files as well as full model restarts lead to overheads. Computationally more efficient is the online coupling, as used in EAT. In this case, the data assimilation step (analysis) is performed within the model avoiding model restarts. Online coupling is achieved by inserting function calls to PDAF. This can be done by augmenting the model source code itself, which then enables simulation of an ensemble of model states in a single execution of the model. Alternatively, for models already capable of ensemble simulations, it can be implemented in dedicated DA code after an ensemble of model results is received. The latter is the approach adopted by EAT. PDAF-specific additions to the code are usually four functions, all of which are placed outside of the actual numerical core of the model. Overall, the online coupling approach reduces the amount of data that needs to be written to files and allows efficient data assimilation, in particular when the forecast phase between two assimilation steps is short compared to the start-up time of a model, as is common for GOTM-FABM.

Since the PDAF core is a program library, it is configured by function arguments. This allows the user to implement flexible configuration options that are consistent with the model. In EAT, these options are configured by the user in a Python run script. The ensemble state is stored internally in an array, which EAT synchronizes with the active GOTM-FABM processes before and after the data assimilation update.

Implementation

The data assimilation core of EAT is the "eatpy" Python package, which includes the filter algorithms as well as the logic for ensemble generation and observation handling. The user interacts with this package by writing compact Python scripts that generate the model ensemble (Fig 2) and that run the data assimilation experiment (Fig 3). This scripting approach allows the user to retain full control: it provides access to all DA configuration settings, but also makes it straightforward to insert custom code, for instance, to introduce new ensemble generation methods or variable transformations. At run time, a data assimilation experiment combines the user's Python run script and a number of instances of the coupled hydrodynamic-biogeochemical model (Fig 1). This uses the multiple program-multiple data paradigm, with different components (programs) communicating via the Message Passing Interface (MPI) protocol. The user starts a DA experiment using normal MPI syntax, e.g., `mpiexec -n 1 python <RUNSCRIPT> : -n <NENSEMBLE> eat-gotm <EXTRA_ARGS>`.

```
import eatpy
import numpy as np

N = 20    # ensemble size
with eatpy.models.gotm.YAMLEnsemble("gotm.yaml", N) as f:
    f["surface/u10/scale_factor"] = np.random.lognormal(sigma=0.1, size=N)
    f["surface/v10/scale_factor"] = np.random.lognormal(sigma=0.1, size=N)
    f["turbulence/turb_param/k_min"] = np.random.lognormal(mean=np.log(3e-6), sigma=0.1, size=N)
```

Figure 2. Example code for generating a data assimilation ensemble with members differing in the parameterisation of the surface momentum flux (scale factors applied to the eastward and northward wind components) and turbulence (the background turbulent kinetic energy k_{min}). These parameters are set in GOTM's configuration file "gotm.yaml", which specifies the physical model configuration in nested mappings; each parameter is identified by its full path in these mappings. Standard numpy functions are used to draw the values of each parameter from lognormal probability distributions, using an implied median value of 1 for the scale factors and an explicitly specified median value of 3×10^{-6} m^2 s^{-2} for turbulent kinetic energy.

```
import eatpy

gotm = eatpy.models.GOTM(diagnostics_in_state=['total_chlorophyll_calculator_result'])

filter = eatpy.PDAF(eatpy.pdaf.FilterType.ESTKF)

bgc_variables = [v for v in gotm.variables if '_' in v]
gotm.add_plugin(eatpy.plugins.select.Select(include=['temp', 'salt'] + bgc_variables))
gotm.add_plugin(eatpy.plugins.transform.Log(*bgc_variables, transform_obs=False, minimum=1e-12))

gotm.add_observations("temp[-1]", "cci_sst.dat")
gotm.add_observations("total_chlorophyll_calculator_result[-1]", "cci_chl.dat")

gotm.run(filter)
```

Figure 3. Example code for an EAT experiment in which sea surface temperature and chlorophyll are assimilated. Total chlorophyll is a diagnostic of the biogeochemical model, made available to the DA filter by explicitly adding it to the model state. The Error Subspace Transform Kalman Filter (ESTKF, Nerger et al., 2012) is used as filter. Biogeochemical state variables are identified by having an underscore in their name (this is the case for all FABM-based models). The "select.Select" plugin is used to restrict the filter to operating on temperature, salinity and all biogeochemical state variables (i.e., water velocities and turbulent quantities are not affected by assimilation). The "transform.Log" plugin is used to log-transform all BGC variables; any associated observations have already been log-transformed in preprocessing (therefore, transform_obs=False). Observations to assimilate are read from files "cci_sst.dat" and "cci_chl.dat" and mapped to model variables "temp" and "total_chlorophyll_calculator_result", respectively. In both cases, the observations were obtained through remote sensing; they are therefore linked to the water surface (the last model layer in GOTM, specified by index -1).

Under the hood, EAT builds on numerous software components. These include the GOTM, FABM and PDAF Fortran codes that are distributed with EAT, as well as established Python packages (e.g., numpy, mpi4py). In turn, these components depend on third-party libraries such as MPI, BLAS, LAPACK, and NetCDF. It can be challenging to assemble and compile these codes and dependencies from scratch. To avoid this becoming a bottleneck, EAT uses the conda package manager (https://conda.io) to set up its compilation and execution environment. Conda pulls in all required packages (runtime dependencies as well as the necessary compilers) with a single command and further ensures the versions of these components are compatible. EAT offers three conda-based installation options: (1) the user installs a pre-compiled EAT package with a single command that also pulls in all runtime dependencies, (2) the user creates the compilation and execution environment with a single command, and then uses this to compile EAT him/herself. This is appropriate if the user wants to integrate custom Fortran code, in particular, additional FABM-based biogeochemical models, (3) the user sets up a minimal execution environment with a single command, but uses pre-installed compilers to build EAT against pre-installed libraries (MPI, BLAS, LAPACK, NetCDF). This is appropriate for high-performance computing (HPC) systems, which typically have optimized compilers and libraries installed. These three options work on all major platforms – Linux, Mac and Windows. Together, they cover a wide range of use cases: from rapid installation on student laptops for a workshop or course, to custom tailored installations on HPC clusters that will run time-consuming experiments (large ensembles, long simulations, multiple configurations or scenarios, computationally expensive biogeochemistry).

When using ensemble-based or hybrid data assimilation methods, the first step in running an EAT experiment is to generate the ensemble. Ensemble members can differ in their initial state (the "restart"), and in their physical and biogeochemical configuration (*gotm.yaml* and *fabm.yaml*, respectively), which includes parameter values as well as forcing files. EAT includes logic to manipulate GOTM-FABM's NetCDF-based restart files and YAML-based configuration files (Fig 2). For restart files, EAT provides read/write access to all variables that are parts of the model state (physical and biogeochemical, depth-explicit and depth-independent). For configuration files, EAT provides read/write access to every setting, independent of its data type (float, int, Boolean, string). Thus, it is possible to vary real-valued configuration parameters across the ensemble, as well as directing different ensemble members to different forcing files (string-valued paths in the configuration file). Common perturbation strategies, e.g., scaling the original value(s) of a state variable or parameter with some factor drawn from some user-selected distribution, can be implemented with a single line of code per variable. As EAT provides full access to the spatially explicit initial state and model configuration, more complex strategies can be implemented as well, for instance, ones that impose spatial (vertical) correlations (Evensen, 2003) or cross-correlations among variables and/or parameters.

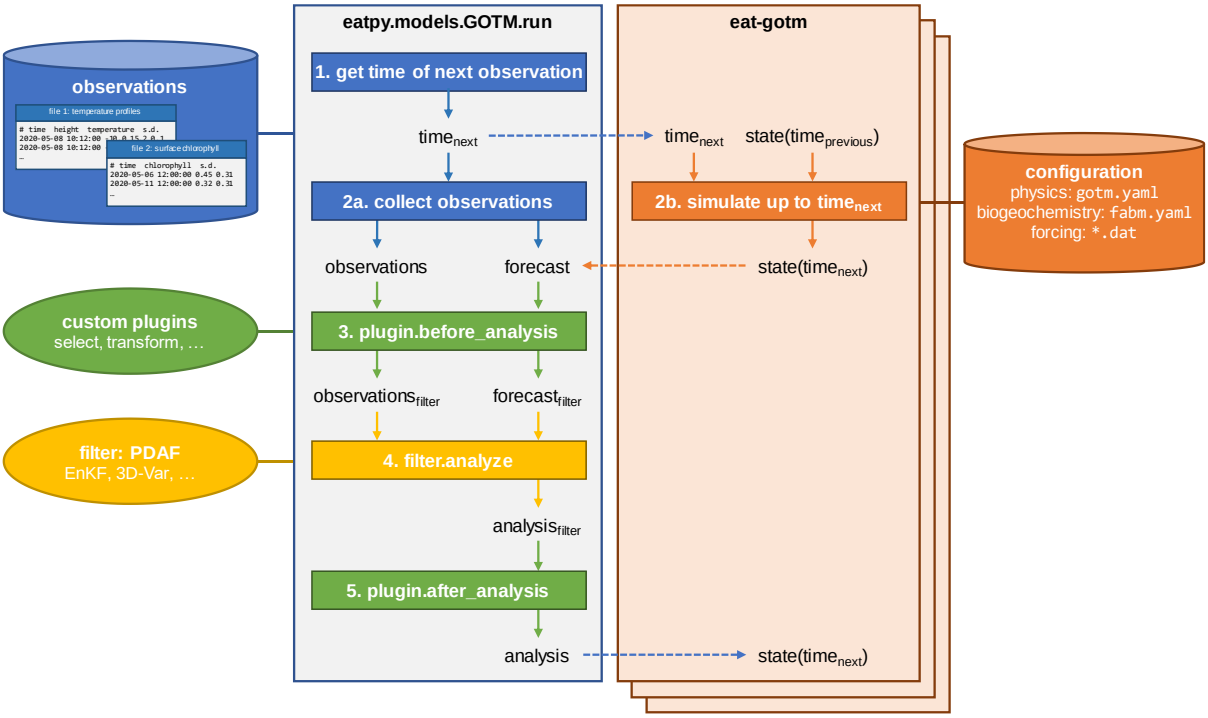

Figure 4. The data assimilation cycle in EAT, showing the flow of information through the eatpy.model.GOTM.run routine, responsible for observation handling and analysis, and the eat-gotm model component. Dashed arrows indicate inter-process communication between eatpy.model.GOTM.run (1 process) and eat-gotm (1 process per ensemble member), via MPI. After the analysis state is sent back to the model instances (bottom), the cycle repeats with the updated state taking the role of state($time_{previous}$) on the eat-gotm side.

The runtime data assimilation cycle in EAT is depicted in Fig 4. The eatpy package exchanges information with one or more instances of the coupled hydrodynamic-biogeochemical model, GOTM-FABM. Assimilation happens *online*: each of the model instances is preserved in between

assimilation cycles, with information passed via MPI rather than via restart files. Information that is passed includes the time till which to simulate and the model state before and after analysis. This model state includes all prognostic fields associated with physics (e.g., temperature, salinity, horizontal velocities, turbulent quantities), pelagic biogeochemistry (e.g., nutrients, plankton), and biogeochemical variables at the surface and bottom interfaces (e.g., variables associated with benthos/sediments). Furthermore, at the direction of the user (in the run script), this state can be augmented with any physical and biogeochemical diagnostic field available within GOTM-FABM (e.g., total chlorophyll, primary production) and any biogeochemical parameter. The latter enables parameter-state estimation, in which the selected parameter(s) become time-varying and are estimated along with the model state.

A complete data assimilation experiment requires files with observations: one text file per observed variable, with each line describing observation time, observed depth (only for depth-explicit observations), observed value, and its standard deviation. These observations are linked to model variables (state variables and diagnostics) in the user's run script. It is also possible to perform ensemble-only simulations in which no observations are assimilated; such experiments are often used as control in DA studies. They are performed simply by executing the model (eat-gotm) only: `mpiexec -n <NENSEMBLE> eat-gotm <EXTRA_ARGS>`. Finally, it is also possible to run the model in serial, without MPI; in this case, it behaves exactly as the stand-alone GOTM-FABM model would.

Most real-world data assimilation experiments require user-specified logic as part of the data assimilation update, e.g., to limit the data assimilation update to a subset of the model state, to apply anamorphosis functions that transform variables into a "Gaussian" space, to apply additional constraints to state variable values (e.g., to ensure values remain physically meaningful, or to ensure mass conservation), or to specify the background error covariance matrix in variational schemes. EAT makes this possible through *plugins*: snippets of Python code that execute during initialization, just before the assimilation update, and just after the assimilation update. These plugins have read/write access to the model state variables and all assimilated observations, which allows them to a variety of things: during initialization, they can add/remove variables to the state seen by the DA filter, at runtime they can transform state variables and/or observations, check and log variable ranges and clip values, or save any element of the assimilation update (forecast, analysis, observations) to file. EAT includes example plugins that perform each of these functions; users can also implement their own, typically directly within the run script. EAT's plugin infrastructure is additionally used with variational data assimilation schemes (parameterized and hybrid 3D-Var) to allow the user to provide custom routines for covariance transformation; these are then called during the iterative state update. Any number of plugins can be active during an EAT experiment; they will be called sequentially. EAT's flexibility extends beyond plugins: users can also implement custom data assimilation filters and use these instead of the provided PDAF options; this requires just one Python function that takes in the forecast state and observations, and returns the analysis state.

4. Applications

The EAT package has been applied at different locations in the European seas in four different configurations (table 1). Together, these demonstrate EAT's core functionality – coupled physical-biogeochemical assimilation and parameter estimation – as well as its ability to closely mimic operational data assimilation systems, e.g., the use of variational methods with prescribed covariances (BFM in the Mediterranean Sea) and the use of scripting to replicate short assimilation cycles and impose atmospheric forcing along a trajectory of a float-based observing system (ECOSMOII in the Norwegian Sea).

All four setups used hourly atmospheric forcings extracted from ERA5 (Hersbach et al., 2023). The model setups and EAT scripts are publicly available (see data availability section).

Table 1. Summary of the EAT applications at four locations with different assimilation setups.

Assimilation method	Location	Model	Assimilated observations	State estimation	Parameter estimation
ESTKF	North Sea	PISCES	satellite sea surface temperature and chlorophyll	temperature, salinity, all biogeochemical variables	-
EnKF	Norwegian Sea	ECOSMOII	simulated surface temperature and chlorophyll	2 phytoplankton 2 chlorophyll-a 2 zooplankton 3 nutrients	-
Var	Mediterranean Sea	BFM	satellite chlorophyll	17 phytoplankton variables	-
En-Var	English Channel	ERSEM	North-West European Shelf-sea reanalysis, in turn assimilating OC PFT chlorophyll	5 diatom constituents (C,N,P,Si,Chl)	Maximum specific productivity at reference temperature for diatoms

Joint physical-biogeochemical data assimilation with the Error Subspace Transform Kalman filter

Different types of coupled physical-biogeochemical data assimilation were tested for a site in the Northern North Sea (59.33° N, 1.28° E) using the FABM implementation of the PISCES biogeochemical model (Aumont et al., 2015). The model is set up to cover the period 2020-2022. Initial conditions were taken from the World Ocean Atlas 2018 (temperature, salinity, nitrate, phosphate, silicate, oxygen) and GLODAP v2 (total dissolved inorganic carbon, alkalinity). Tidal forcing was implemented by prescribing horizontal gradients in surface elevation, taken from TPXO9 (Egbert and Erofeeva, 2002).

Two data assimilation experiments were performed: the first assimilated only daily sea surface temperature observations from the level 4 SST-CCI product, the second additionally assimilated surface chlorophyll observations from the level 3 OceanColour CCI product. In the first experiment, the assimilation scheme operates on temperature and salinity only (biogeochemical fields are affected through simulation with the coupled model system). In the second, strongly-coupled experiment, the assimilation scheme operates on a joint physical-biogeochemical model state that combines temperature, salinity, all biogeochemical state variables defined by the PISCES model, and the diagnostic total chlorophyll concentration, obtained by summing chlorophyll in PISCES' two phytoplankton function types (PFTs). Error covariances between physical and BGC variables are non-zero and exploited by the assimilation scheme during the joint state update. Thus, both temperature and chlorophyll observations can impact any part of the physical-biogeochemical state, both during the joint state update, and subsequently during simulation with the coupled model. All biogeochemical variables are log-transformed.

Data assimilation uses the Error Subspace Transform Kalman filter (Nerger et al., 2012) with an ensemble of 20 members. The initial ensemble was generated by applying log-normally distributed scale factors to:

- the x- and y-components of the surface wind
- the minimum turbulent kinetic energy, which in GOTM is typically used to parameterise unresolved processes that contribute to vertical mixing (e.g., internal waves)
- the maximum growth rate of PISCES' two PFTs

All scale factors were drawn from a log-normal distribution with a standard deviation of 0.2 in natural log units. This was done independently per ensemble member, for each of the five scale factors (i.e., they are independently distributed).

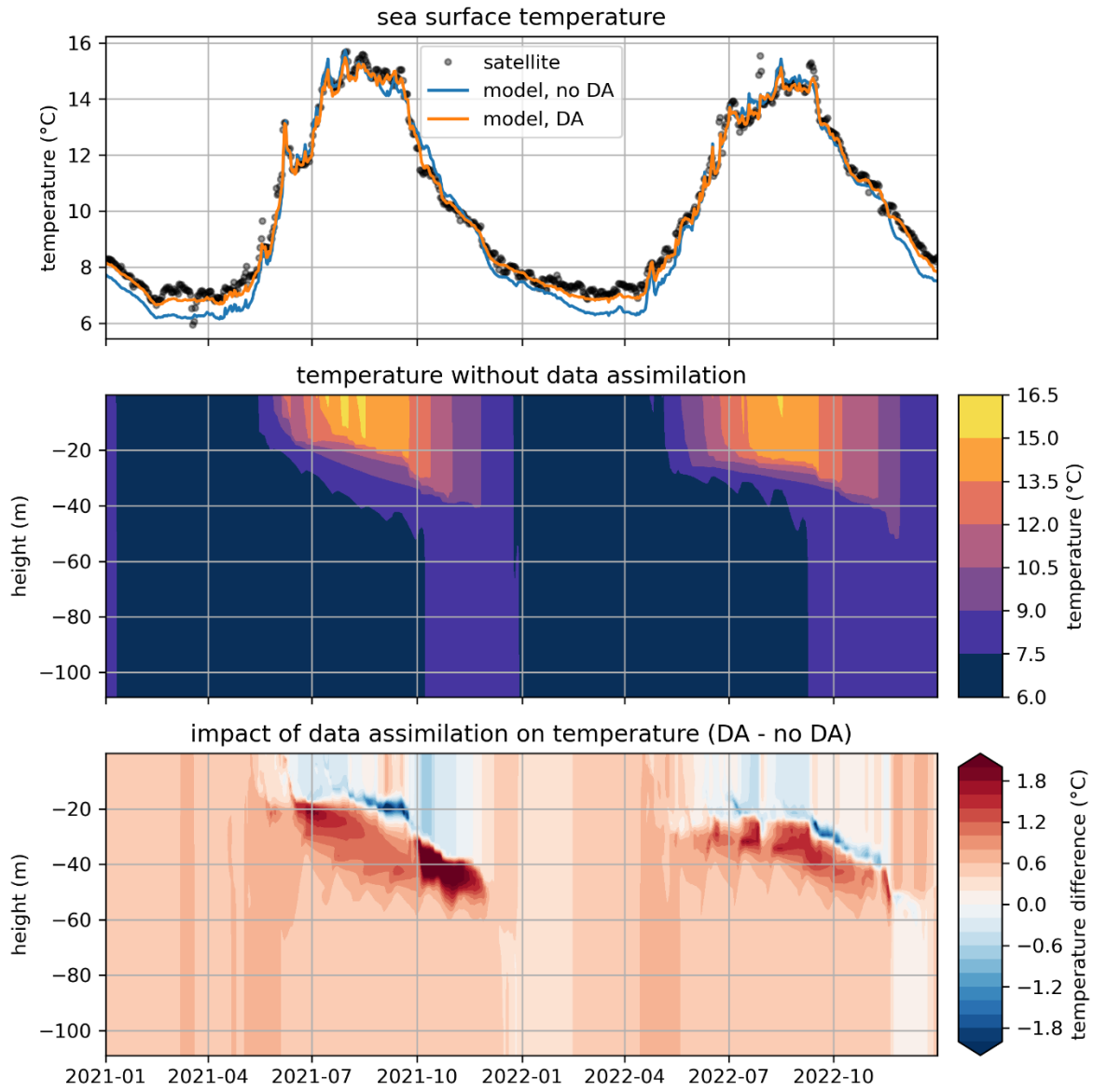

Figure 5. Modelled and observed temperature in a free model run ("no DA") and in the experiment where remotely sensed sea surface temperature was assimilated ("DA"). The top panel (a) shows surface temperature (modelled and observed), the middle panel (b) shows the temperature throughout the water column in the free run, and the bottom panel (c) shows the difference in temperature between the assimilation experiment and the free run.

Figure 5a shows the impact of data assimilation on sea surface temperature (SST). The free-running model can be seen to have a cold bias in autumn and winter, which is eliminated when SST is assimilated. Figure 5c shows the impact of assimilation on temperature throughout the water column, compared to the free-running reference of Figure 5b. Data assimilation already has a pronounced impact in summer, causing slightly colder surface temperature and considerably warmer (>1°C) temperatures around the thermocline, suggesting enhanced vertical mixing. This pattern persists into autumn.

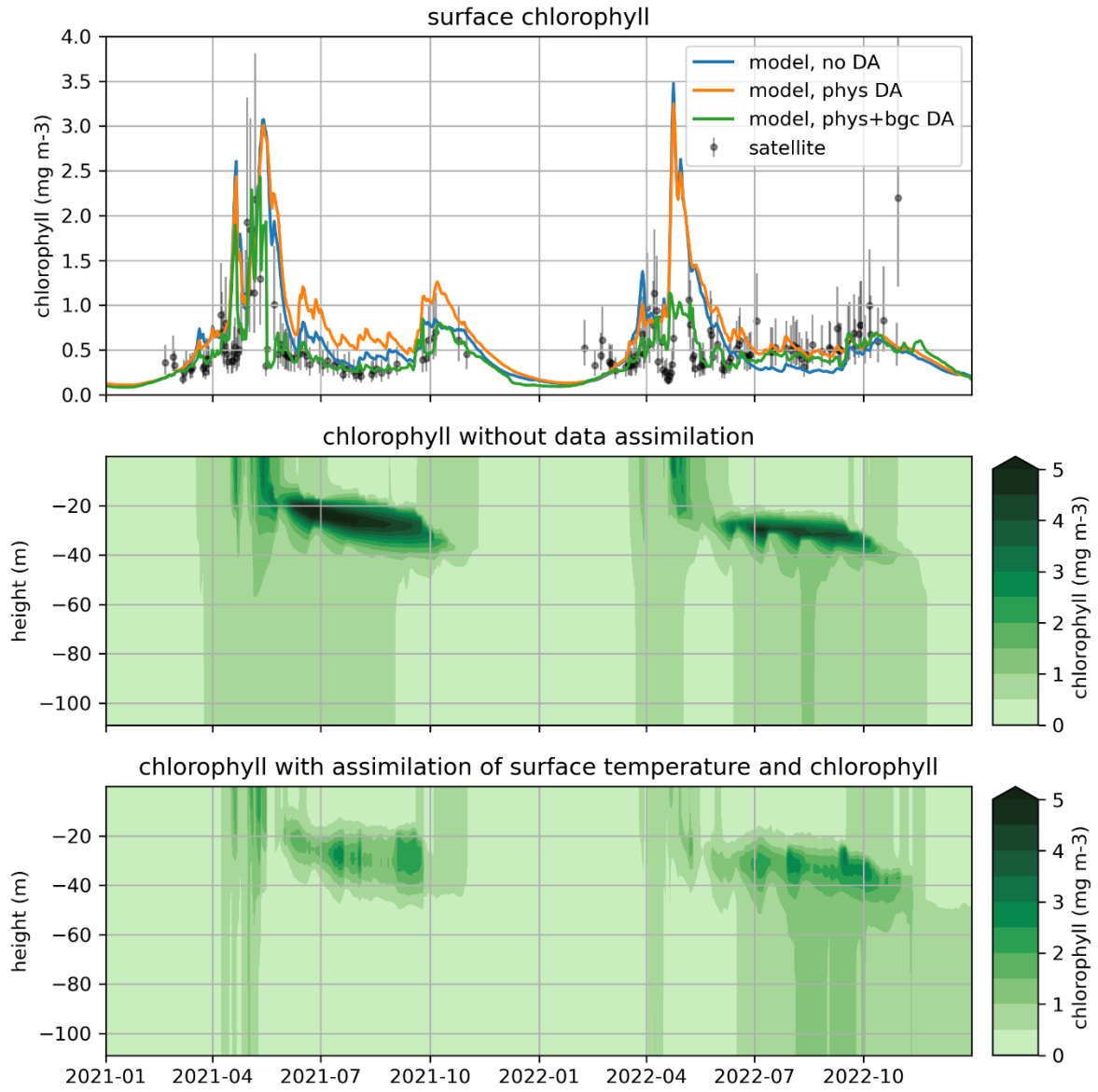

Figure 6. Modelled and observed total chlorophyll in a free model run ("no DA"), the experiment where remotely sensed sea surface temperatures were assimilated ("phys DA"), and the experiment where remotely sensed temperature and chlorophyll were assimilated ("phys+bgc DA"). The top panel (a) shows surface chlorophyll (modelled and observed), the middle panel (b) shows chlorophyll throughout the water column in the free run, and the bottom panel (c) shows chlorophyll throughout the water column for the experiment where both SST and chlorophyll were assimilated.

Figure 6 shows the impact of assimilation on surface chlorophyll, both through SST-only assimilation in the first experiment (weak coupling between physics and biogeochemistry, "phys DA"), and through SST and chlorophyll assimilation in the second experiment ("phys + bgc DA"). SST assimilation alone does not necessarily improve chlorophyll: it tends to increase chlorophyll in summer (likely though the enhanced mixing caused by SST assimilation), which deteriorates results in 2021 when surface chlorophyll is already overestimated by the model, but improves results in 2022, when chlorophyll is underestimated. Unsurprisingly, the combined assimilation of SST and

surface chlorophyll results in the model closely tracking observations throughout the simulation. The impact of assimilation is felt more strongly at depth, however: the subsurface chlorophyll maximum is much less pronounced, with concentrations dropping at least twofold.

Biogeochemical state estimation with the Ensemble Kalman Filter

EnKF data assimilation with EAT was tested in the southern Norwegian Sea using ECOSMO II biogeochemical model (Yumruktepe et al., 2022), coupled to GOTM with FABM coupler. The GOTM-FABM-ECOSMO 1D model is configured for the station M (66° N, 2° E) in the Norwegian Sea for the strongly-coupled data assimilation experiment from March 2020 to October 2020. The spin up run of GOTM is forced by atmospheric forcing and initialized with the world ocean atlas (WOA) climatology from 2011 to 2019 at the mean coordinate of the Argo float, (65.33° N,1.75° W) first. Then, GOTM is forced by along-trajectory atmospheric forcing from 2019 January 1st to 2020 December 31st to obtain a free run model state. In the data assimilation experiment, the same free run configuration is used to generate the initial ensemble members with ensemble atmospheric forcing from 2019 January to 2020 March.

The EnKF data assimilation system is set up as sequential system with an 8-day assimilation cycle interval. The initial ensemble with 80 ensemble members is generated by a GOTM ensemble run with perturbations in atmospheric forcing (10m wind and downward shortwave radiation) and ECOSMO model parameters from 2019 January to 2020 March. During each assimilation cycle, atmospheric forcing is reperturbed to keep ensemble spread after analysis. For atmospheric forcing, the 10m zonal wind (u10) and 10m meridional wind (v10) is perturbed. For the biogeochemistry, the following set of parameters is perturbed:

- maximum growth rate of large phytoplankton (muPl)
- maximum growth rate of small phytoplankton (muPs)
- large phytoplankton mortality rate (mPl)
- small phytoplankton mortality rate (mPs)
- large zooplankton mortality rate (mZl)
- small zooplankton mortality rate (mZs)
- detritus and opal sinking rate (sinkDet/sinkOPAL).

20% of default value of each variable is given as standard error of perturbation. The system replicates the data assimilation system for the Copernicus Arctic Ocean biogeochemical reanalysis product (Wakamatsu et al., 2022).

The data assimilation experiments are conducted in twin experiment setups. The simulated true state is generated from GOTM single run using atmospheric forcing along the Argo float 6903554 in 2020 initialized with climatological hydrographic profile at station M. The surface temperature and Chl-a are sampled at every 8 days from 2020 April 6th to October 6th and saved as surface observations for data assimilation experiment. Standard deviation of the observation is set to 30% of the true value. Profile time series of Chl-a and nitrate from the model free run and the simulated true state are depicted in Figure 7. The respective surface values and their ensemble spreads are depicted in Figure 8.

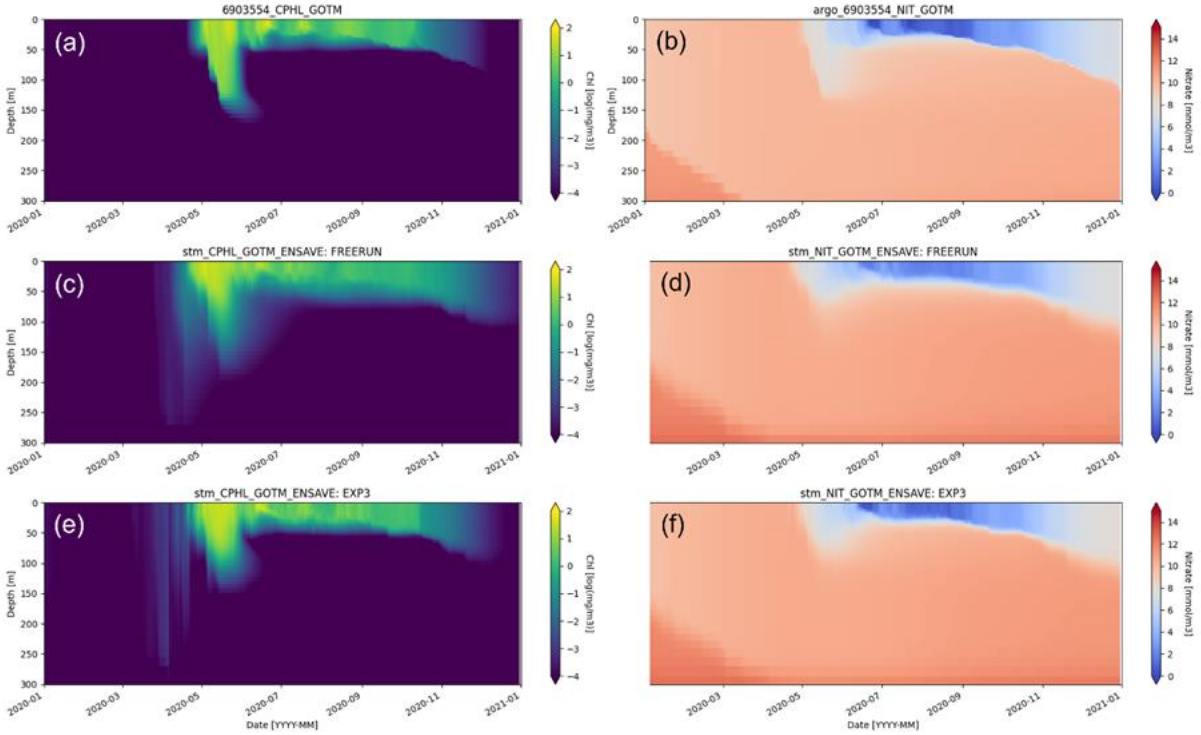

Figure 7. Chl-a profiles (left columns) and nitrate profiles (right columns) at station M in 2020. Top panels (a,b): True state, middle panels (c,d): Free run ensemble mean, Bottom panels (e,f): EAT analysis.

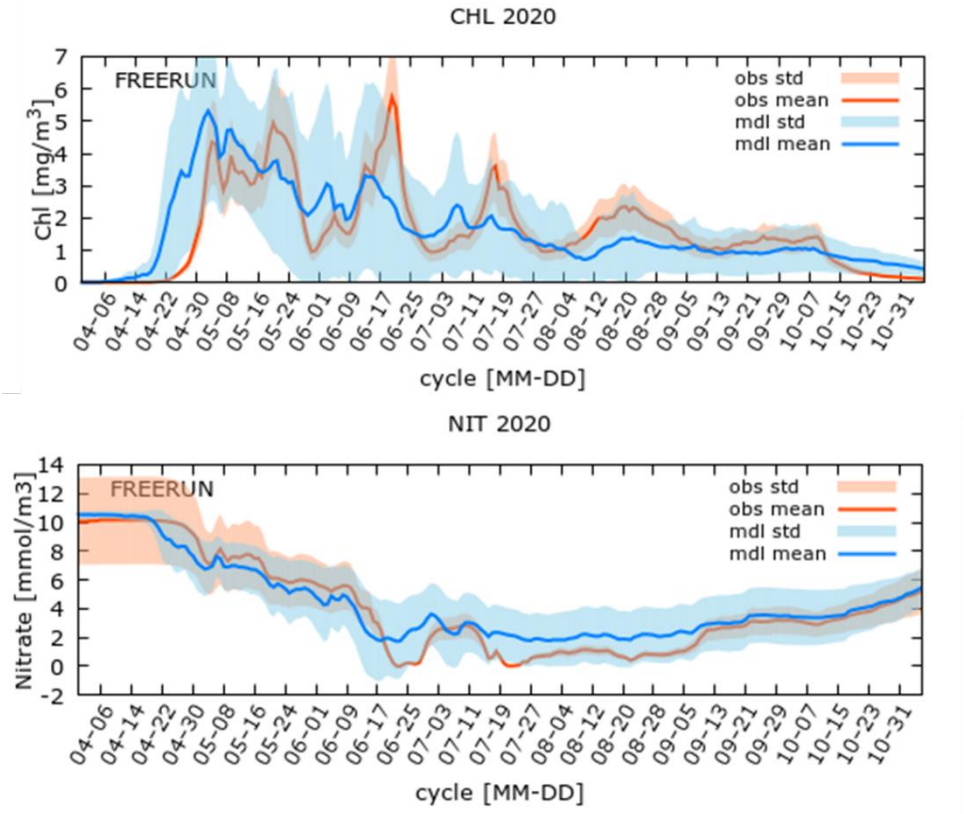

Figure 8. Surface Chlorophyll-a (top) and surface nitrate (bottom) at station M from model free run (mdl) and simulated truth (obs) from the twin experiment.

The Root-mean-square-error (RMSE) of model state over the upper 30 meter against the simulated truth is calculated to measure the impact of the surface chlorophyll-a data assimilation on the state estimation. The RMSE of two state variables, total chlorophyll-a and nitrate, are evaluated here. During the free run, the RMSEs of chlorophyll-a and nitrate are 0.96 [mg m^{-3}] and 1.0 [mmol m^{-3}] respectively. Assimilation reduces these RMSEs are reduced to 0.68 [mg m^{-3}] and 0.81 [mmol m^{-3}], respectively. The timing of the blooms is corrected towards the pseudo-observation in the assimilative run (Figure 9) as a result of direct impact of assimilation of the surface chlorophyll-a. It is worth noting that the timing of changes in an unobserved state variable (nitrate) is simultaneously improved, thanks to the concurrent correction in the timing of nutrient consumption by phytoplankton.

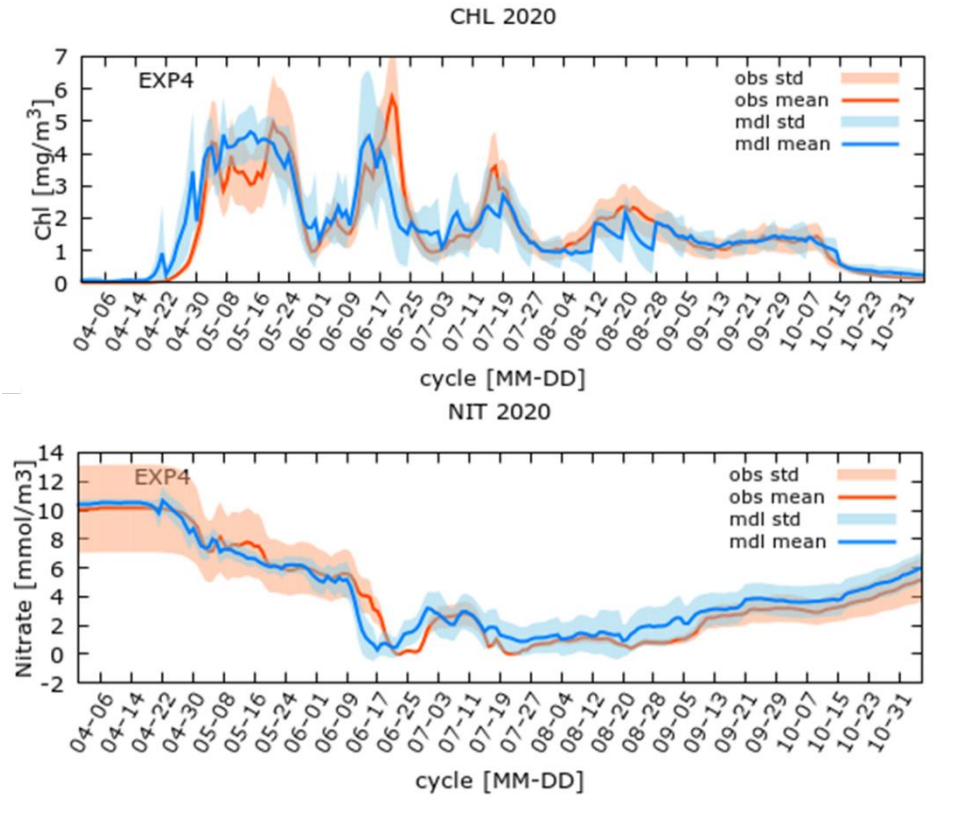

Figure 9. Surface Chlorophyll-a (top) and surface nitrate (bottom) at station M from EnKF analysis (mdl) and simulated truth (obs) from the twin experiment.

Biogeochemical state estimation with variational assimilation

The variational assimilation implemented in EAT has been tested in the Mediterranean Sea using the BFM biogeochemical model. For this purpose, GOTM-FABM has been set up for a location the Tyrrhenian Sea (12.36° E, 39.36° N). The atmospheric forcings and profiles of temperature and salinity used for nudging have been obtained using the iGOTM tool (https://igotm.bolding-bruggeman.com/). A relatively weak nudging to the temperature and salinity profiles has been imposed applying a one-year relaxation time.

The BFM model describes the marine low trophic web through the spatial and temporal evolution of 51 state variables. In BFM the fluxes among the nutrient pool (nitrate, phosphate and silicate) and the living functional types (phytoplankton, zooplankton and bacteria) are represented considering their different components (carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, silicon and chlorophyll) (Vichi et al., 2020).

Here a test with assimilation of satellite chlorophyll observations is presented. The assimilation is performed once a week in 2019 using weekly averaged observations at a location in the proximity of a BGC-Argo float location (12.36 °E, 39.35° W). Chlorophyll satellite observations are extracted from the near real time ocean colour (OC TAC) daily product in the Copernicus Marine Service catalogue.

The variational assimilation is performed using an opportunely developed plug-in that reflects the 3D variational scheme that is operationally implemented to provide the Mediterranean Sea biogeochemical products in the Copernicus Marine Service. In the present 1D application, the background error covariance matrix (that propagates the assimilation increments across space and variables) is composed by two elements: the vertical covariance operator and the biogeochemical one. As in the 3D application (Teruzzi et al., 2021), the vertical covariance is described by a set of precomputed covariance (empirical orthogonal functions of the on a multiannual simulation), while the biogeochemical covariance is limited to the phytoplankton variables and aims at preserving the phytoplankton physiological state by keeping constant the ratio among the phytoplankton components.

In the EAT framework, we performed two simulations using BFM to evaluate the variational assimilation and its impacts: a run with weekly assimilation of satellite chlorophyll concentration and a free run without assimilation. The comparison of the two simulations shows the assimilation effects on chlorophyll (Fig. 10) and primary production (Fig. 11). Greater assimilation impacts occur during winter and spring, with assimilation increasing chlorophyll concentration in the late winter mixed bloom (from mid-January to mid-February) while decreasing it at the beginning of march. At the beginning of the stratification phase (since April) subsurface chlorophyll is higher in the simulation with assimilation in the subsurface layer. Most relevant effects on primary production are occurs at the end of the surface bloom when primary production is higher in the variational assimilation run.

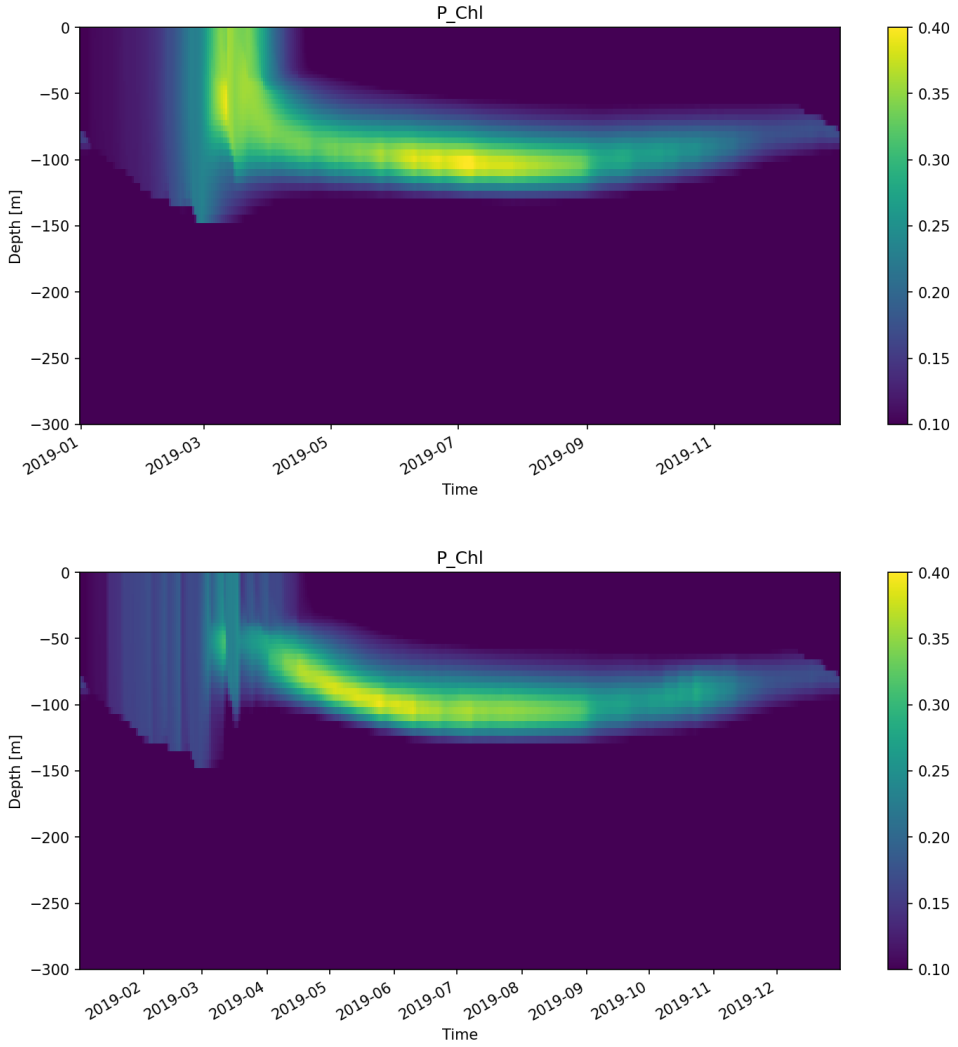

Figure 10. Chlorophyll concentration [mg m^{-3}] along time (horizontal axis) and depth (vertical axis): free run (top) and variational assimilation (bottom).

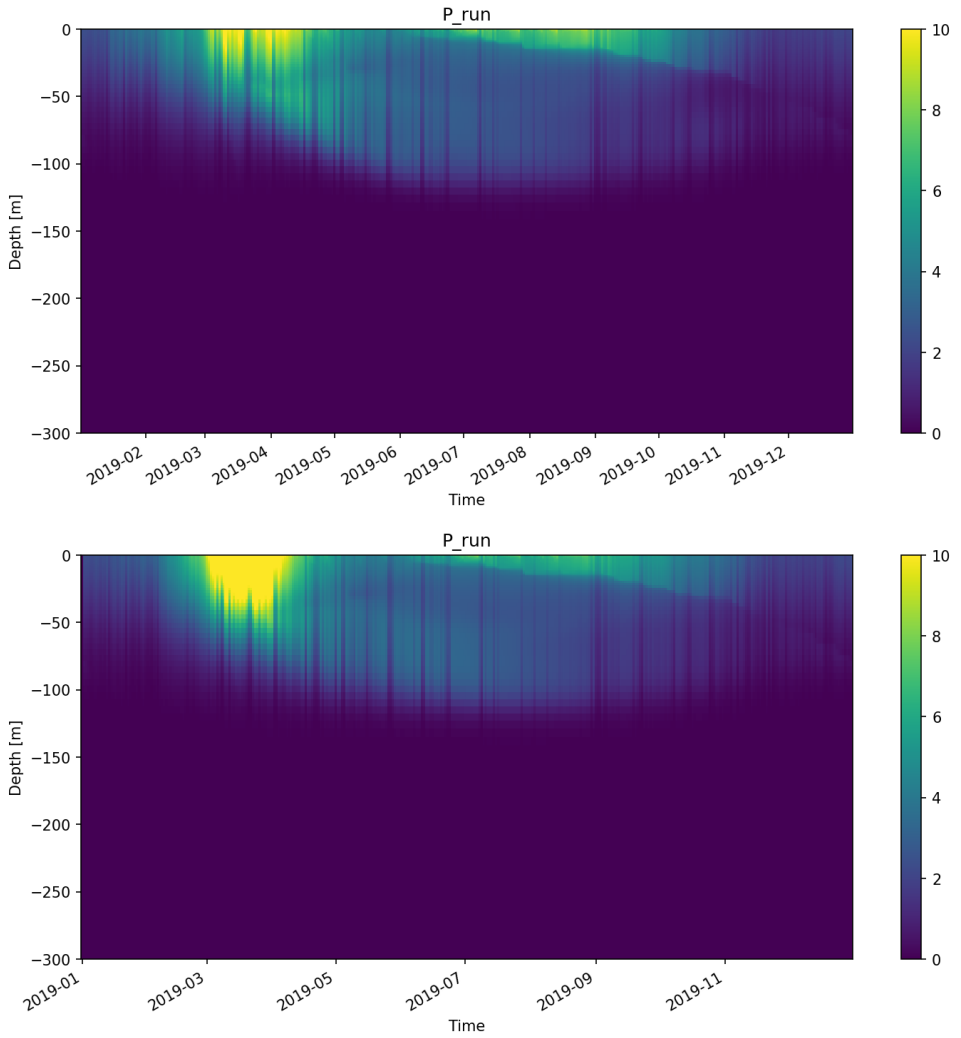

Figure 11. Primary production rate [mg C m^{-3} d^{-1}] along time (horizontal axis) and depth (vertical axis): free run (top) and variational assimilation (bottom).

Parameter estimation

We demonstrate the use of EAT software in an experiment where uncertain biogeochemical parameters are estimated in time-dependent way with the use of ensemble data assimilation techniques established in PDAF. The EAT system was run at the L4 location, which is an observing station in the western English Channel (part of Western English Channel Observatory, https://www.westernchannelobservatory.org.uk/), within the near-coastal zone, around 15 km from the Plymouth Sound (50° 15.00' N, 4° 13.02' W). The location is 50 m deep and is characterized by seasonally stratified dynamics (Pingree and Griffiths, 1978), with significant input from nearby river mouths (e.g., Tamar, Plym rivers). The observing station at L4 provides data for essential physical variables (e.g., temperature, salinity) and one of the longest continuous time-series (since 1988, Harris, 2010) for a number of biogeochemical variables, such as total phytoplankton chlorophyll and carbon biomass, nutrients (nitrate, phosphate, silicate, ammonium) and oxygen.

We have focused on the European Regional Seas Ecosystem Model (ERSEM), a highly complex biogeochemistry model with > 50 pelagic state variables and > 400 model parameters (Butenschön et al., 2016), most of which are highly uncertain. ERSEM uses variable stoichiometry, representing cycles of multiple chemical elements (carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, silicon), with four functional types of phytoplankton (picophytoplankton, nanophytoplankton, microphytoplankton, diatoms) and three functional types of zooplankton. From the many (mostly poorly constrained) ERSEM parameters we selected in this experiment the maximum specific productivity at reference temperature of diatoms (Butenschön et al., 2016) (we further use the "diat-MSP" abbreviation), which has been identified as one of the 5 most sensitive ERSEM parameters from the point of simulating a selected class of ecosystem target indicators (Ciavatta et al., 2022). The GOTM-FABM-ERSEM 1D configuration was run for the 3-year period between November 2014 and October 2017, using initial value conditions from a 7-year spin-up run.

In our experiment we used a 50-member ensemble originating purely from the estimated diat-MSP parameter perturbations, where the initial prior perturbations were drawn from a uniform distribution with ±30% interval around the currently used parameter value (diat-MSP=1.375 d^{-1}). Although by limiting ensembles only to perturbations of the diat-MSP parameter we lack realistic representation of the background uncertainty, it is still the most pragmatic choice given the constrained size of the ensemble, since introducing additional perturbations would introduce significant noise into the parameter-state cross-covariances. On the other hand, using only diat-MSP parameter perturbations for the ensemble, introduces perfect correlation between the parameter and the assimilated variable, potentially introducing spurious short-term fluctuations into the diat-MSP values. To remove this effect, we have low-pass filtered the diat-MSP time-series on a scale of a month.

The EAT assimilation method chosen for our experiment was ensemble-3DVAR relying on ESTKF for ensemble transformation. The optimal data for assimilation are diatom chlorophyll, which were not available among the L4 data for the relevant period. We thus decided to use the data from the North-West European Shelf bi-decadal reanalysis (https://doi.org/10.48670/moi-00059, Skákala et al., 2023) produced by the UK met Office, assimilating chlorophyll derived from the ocean color satellite measurements, and partitioned into phytoplankton functional types (including diatoms) (Brewin et al., 2017). The reanalysis validates nicely against many observed L4 variables (Skákala et al., 2023), with the comparison of total chlorophyll being slightly worse, probably due to representativity issues and noise in L4 observations (see some discussion in Skákala et al., 2023). The reanalysis data were assimilated into the model every 5 days, updating all the ERSEM diatom biomass components and the estimated diat-MSP parameter.

Figure 12 shows the time-series for diat-MSP, demonstrating that the parameter is highly time-variable. This suggests that, as far as model performance is concerned, it is better to change the model structure by accounting for diat-MSP time-variability, rather than fitting time-constant parameters as it is done in the present ERSEM. Such temporal (as well as spatial) variability in diatom parameters could account for changes in the internal diatom species composition, which remains unresolved by the ERSEM model, suggesting that ERSEM needs improving in its capability to capture

biodiversity. However, we need to keep in mind that Fig. 12 is only a temporally varying parameter fit, and as such should not be over-interpreted, e.g., the varying parameter values could be just a simple bias-compensation for various other model deficiencies, which could be also potentially related to the large numbers of other poorly constrained ERSEM parameters.

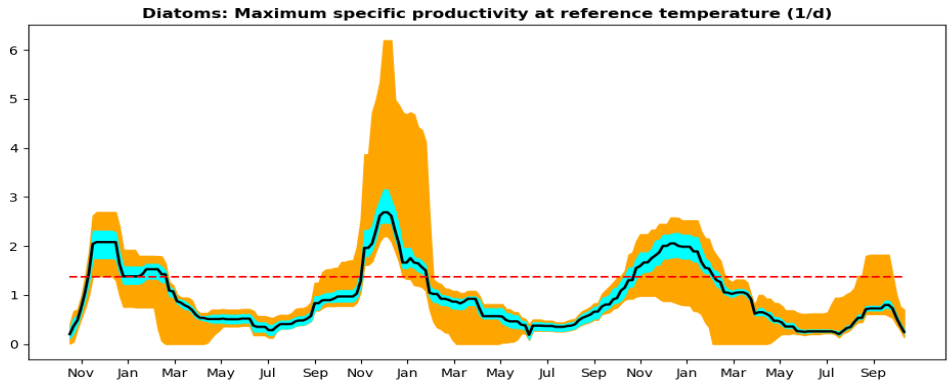

Figure 12. The November 2014 – October 2017 time series for the diat-MSP parameter, showing the median value (black line) with two quantiles around the median (cyan color) and the whole spread of the ensemble (from the minimum to the maximum value, orange color).

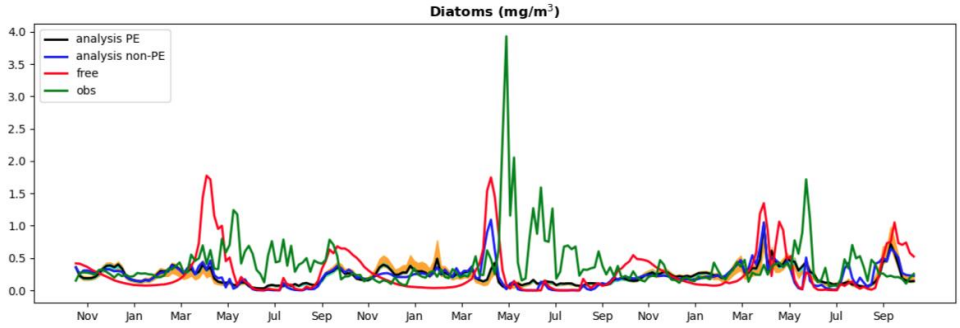

Figure 13. The time-series for surface diatom chlorophyll-a concentrations (in mg m^{-3}) comparing the median of the model free run ensemble (red) with the assimilated reanalysis (green), the analysis PE run (black, with the ensemble spread colored as in Fig. 7) and the analysis non-PE (blue).

Figure 12 also shows that the time-variability of diat-MSP is dominated by the strong seasonal harmonics, with high parameter values during Winter and low parameter values during Summer. It is then understandable that the diat-MSP parameter shows correlation with temperature (R=-0.55) and also with chlorophyll (R=0.48). Fig. 13 compares the surface diatom concentrations between the free run, the assimilated reanalysis data and the analysis from joint state-parameter estimation ("analysis Parameter Estimation": "analysis PE"), as well as with the analysis keeping the parameters constant and assimilating only the state ("analysis non-Parameter Estimation": "analysis non-PE").

The diat-MSP parameter variations can be understood from the Fig. 13: in the Winter the free model run underestimates diatom concentrations (represented by the assimilated data), which leads to the need to increase model diatom productivity by the larger winter values of diat-MSP (see Fig. 12). During April-May period the model significantly overestimates diatom concentrations, so the assimilation substantially lowers the model productivity by decreasing diat-MSP to less than 50% of its currently used value. Interestingly, during the Summer the assimilation fails to have much impact on the model, which also casts doubt on the estimated diat-MSP values during June-September period. It is quite likely that due to the lack of assimilation impact during Summer, the low diat-MSP values in that period are purely a remnant of the low diat-MSP values from the end of the April-May period (no assimilation means that the parameters will retain their last acquired values). Finally, Fig. 13 demonstrates that analysis PE and analysis non-PE runs produced similar diatom concentrations, so the parameter estimation per-se had only little impact on the estimated state. This can be seen also by validating the diat-MSP estimation with innovations (5-day model forecast), which have been improved within analysis PE run relative to the analysis non-PE run, but only by 2.5%.

5. Discussion

The EAT software package has several features that make it well suited for exploring the latest developments in marine data assimilation. First, its core 1D model, GOTM-FABM, is an *online coupled* hydrodynamic-biogeochemical model: it simultaneously simulates the physical and biogeochemical state of the water column. This combined state is available to the data assimilation filter, which means that (1) observations of any physical or biogeochemical variable can be assimilated, and (2) during an assimilation update, observational information can propagate to any part of the physical-biogeochemical state via emergent or prescribed cross-covariances. This enables *coupled* data assimilation, for instance, experiments that assess how assimilation of physical observations affects modelled biogeochemistry, or vice versa. Such coupling can either be “weak” (assimilated observational information propagates to other variables during simulation with the coupled model system) or “strong” (observational information additionally propagates to multiple variables during assimilation updates via cross-covariances) (Penny et al., 2017) (see the “Coupled physical-biogeochemical data assimilation” application). The propagation of information from biogeochemistry to physics placed further demands on the model system: first, it requires online physics as in GOTM-FABM, as opposed to parametrized physics (Pelc et al., 2012; Eknes and Evensen, 2002; Simon and Bertino, 2012; Bertino et al., 2003) or offline physics (Lenartz et al., 2007). Second, it benefits from a model system such as GOTM-FABM that explicitly represents feedbacks from biogeochemistry to physics, for instance, light absorption by BGC variables that heats the water, thereby changing density stratification and (turbulent) mixing (Skákala et al., 2020). These feedbacks modulate the link between BGC and physics; in weakly coupled DA experiments, they are the only mechanism through which biogeochemistry can influence physics.

A second key feature of EAT is that the biogeochemical state available to the assimilation system is readily extensible. Unlike other studies (Torres et al., 2006), it already includes benthic state variables, which permits benthic observations to be assimilated and to study the coupling between

pelagic and benthic systems in data assimilation. In addition, the model state can be augmented with biogeochemical diagnostics, for instance, process rates such as net primary production (Mamnun et al., 2022). Any diagnostic already exposed by the biogeochemical model is available for this purpose; there is no need to reimplement it as part of an observation operator within EAT. Even simple expressions dependent on model state, such as the sum of chlorophyll over multiple plankton functional types, are typically already available as BGC diagnostics and therefore do not require custom user code in order to be assimilated. Finally, the model state can be augmented with any biogeochemical parameter to perform parameter-state estimation (see the "Parameter estimation" example). The value of such parameters then changes over time in response to observations being assimilated (Gharamti et al., 2017b, a; Simon et al., 2015). At present, temporal but not vertical variation in these parameters is considered: at any given time, the parameter value is the same across the water column. This, however, is already sufficient to mimic experiments that consider temporal and horizontal variation in parameters, as for instance in Doron et al. (2013).

Finally, by building on established frameworks, EAT can offer the same state-of-the-art process descriptions and data assimilation algorithms that are used in operational data assimilation systems. Through GOTM, it supports a comprehensive library of turbulence closure schemes, as well as empirical vertical mixing schemes such as KPP (Li et al., 2021). Through FABM, EAT has access to a large and rapidly growing collection of biogeochemical models, including many used in reanalysis, forecasting and climate studies (e.g., ERSEM, BFM, PISCES, MEDUSA, ECOSMO, ERGOM). Through PDAF, it has access to the latest data assimilation algorithms, including ensemble-based, variational (3D-Var), and hybrid methods.

1D data assimilation systems such as EAT are valuable on their own for research and operational use (Thomas et al., 2020), but they also often serve as stepping stone to incorporating new DA theory and methods in 3D operational systems. EAT facilitates this by building on GOTM, FABM and PDAF. These frameworks and their underlying models and algorithms are widely used in existing 3D data assimilation systems. Therefore, knowledge gleaned through EAT about optimal strategies for coupled data assimilation, parameter evolution, and data assimilation methods can transfer readily to 3D.

Nevertheless, 1D models behave differently from 3D models in some respects. Their physics tend not to exhibit the (bounded) chaotic behaviour associated with 3D models (Carrassi et al., 2018), and therefore, they do not show the same sensitivity to initial conditions. For instance, a 1D water column model set up for shallow sites is often fully mixed in winter, with the water temperature converging to the temperature of the overlaying air. At that moment, any initial variations in water temperature across any ensemble disappear. If ensemble members differ *only* in water temperature, its spread then collapses entirely, causing ensemble methods to fail. 1D data assimilation therefore depends on additional methods for generating ensemble spread, e.g., by perturbing forcing or parameters of physical and biogeochemical processes. EAT include flexible ensemble perturbation logic specifically for this purpose. While this is crucial for 1D applications, it can also be helpful to explore alternative perturbations strategies that are under consideration for 3D application. Finally, 1D models have limitations independent of data assimilation. As they assume horizontal gradients

are negligible, they cannot represent conditions in areas dominated by horizontal features, e.g., high-energy horizontal currents (e.g., the Gulf Stream) or convection currents. Fortunately, these areas cover a minor fraction of the open and coastal oceans. Moreover, GOTM includes mechanisms to prescribe horizontal gradients, though these cannot respond to assimilation.

6. Conclusions

EAT is a 1D framework for marine data assimilation with numerous advantages. It is accessible: it can be installed on any computer workstation (Linux, Mac, Windows) with 2-5 commands, and is therefore readily usable by students as well as established scientists. It is flexible: through FABM, it can integrate a wide range of third-party biogeochemical models, including ones that are not distributed with EAT/GOTM/FABM. Moreover, through EAT's plugin architecture, users can readily add custom logic for ensemble generation, variable transformation and anamorphosis, covariance transformation for variational DA, ensemble diagnostics, and bespoke output in any format. Finally, EAT includes the functionality needed to replicate and develop state-of-the-art research in marine DA: it supports fully coupled physical-biogeochemical simulation and assimilation, and, through state augmentation, it supports assimilation of observation of diagnostics calculated by the model as well as parameter estimation. We believe this feature set makes it ideally suitable for a wide range of applications.

7. Code availability

The EAT source code is available from https://github.com/BoldingBruggeman/eat. It includes compatible versions of GOTM and FABM as submodules. FABM in turn includes numerous biogeochemical models, including ECOSMO.

The example applications use three biogeochemical models that are hosted externally:

- PISCES: https://github.com/BoldingBruggeman/fabm-pisces
- BFM: https://github.com/inogs/bfmforfabm
- ERSEM: https://github.com/pmlmodelling/ersem

Documentation is available at https://github.com/BoldingBruggeman/eat/wiki.

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