

The sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction (S2S) project database

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1 **The Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Prediction (S2S) Project Database**

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30 Summary: A database containing sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts from 11 operational
31 centres is available to the research community and will help advance our understanding of
32 the sub-seasonal to seasonal time range.

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51 **Abstract**

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53 Demands are growing rapidly in the operational prediction and applications communities for
54 forecasts that fill the gap between medium-range weather and long-range or seasonal
55 forecasts. Based on the potential for improved forecast skill at the sub-seasonal to seasonal
56 time range, a sub-seasonal prediction (S2S) research project has been established by the
57 World Weather Research Program/World Climate Research Program. A main deliverable of
58 this project is the establishment of an extensive database, containing sub-seasonal (up to 60
59 days) forecasts, 3-weeks behind real-time, and reforecasts from 11 operational centers,
60 modelled in part on the THORPEX Interactive Grand Global Ensemble (TIGGE) database for
61 medium range forecasts (up to 15 days).

62

63 The S2S database, available to the research community since May 2015, represents an
64 important tool to advance our understanding of the sub-seasonal to seasonal time range that
65 has been considered for a long time as a “desert of predictability”. In particular, this database
66 will help identify common successes and shortcomings in the model simulation and
67 prediction of sources of sub-seasonal to seasonal predictability. For instance, a preliminary
68 study suggests that the S2S models underestimate significantly the amplitude of the Madden
69 Julian Oscillation (MJO) teleconnections over the Euro-Atlantic sector. The S2S database
70 represents also an important tool for case studies of extreme events. For instance, a multi-
71 model combination of S2S models displays higher probability of a landfall over Vanuatu
72 islands 2 to 3 weeks before tropical cyclone Pam devastated the islands in March 2015.

73

74 **1) Sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction**

75 Demands are growing rapidly in the operational prediction and applications communities for
76 forecasts that fill the gap between medium-range weather (up to 15 days) and long-range or
77 seasonal (3–6 months) forecasts. Skillful sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction (forecast range
78 more than 2 weeks but less than a season) provides an important opportunity to inform
79 decision makers of, for example, changes in risks of extreme events or opportunities for
80 optimizing resource management decisions. Although many challenges remain to make sub-
81 seasonal forecasts sufficiently reliable, skillful and tailored for users, a great return on
82 investment in weather and climate science and model development is to be expected if the
83 science and forecast products of sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction can be successfully
84 connected to societal applications.

85 Weather-related hazards, including slow onset of long-lasting events such as drought and
86 extended periods of extreme cold or heat, trigger and account for a large proportion of
87 disaster losses, even during years with other very large geophysical events (e.g., Haitian and
88 Chilean earthquakes) (source Munich Re:
89 <http://www.iii.org/sites/default/files/docs/pdf/munichre-010715.pdf>). While many end-users
90 have benefited by applying weather and climate forecasts in their decision-making, there
91 remains ample evidence to suggest that such information is underutilized across a wide
92 range of economic sectors (e.g., Morss et al., 2008; Rayner et al., 2005; O'Connor et al., 2005;
93 Pielke and Carbone, 2002; Hansen, 2002). This may be explained in part by the presence of
94 'gaps' in our forecasting capabilities at the sub-seasonal time scale and in part by the
95 complexity of processes and the numerous facets involved in decision making. Developing

96 countries are most affected by major gaps in access to forecasts and knowledge. The goal of
97 the Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Prediction (S2S) Project and its associated database is to help
98 fill these gaps.

99

100 **2) The S2S Project**

101 Sub-seasonal forecasting, bridging a gap between the more mature weather and climate
102 prediction communities, is at a relatively early stage of development. Forecasting the day-to-
103 day weather is often considered as an atmospheric initial condition problem. Most of the
104 current operational medium-range forecasting systems (forecasts up to day 15) are not
105 coupled to an ocean model, although there can be an influence from ocean (e.g. Bender and
106 Ginnis 2000) and land conditions (e.g. Koster et al, 2010). Forecasting at the multi-season to
107 multi-annual range depends strongly on the slowly-evolving components of the earth system
108 such as the sea surface temperature. In between these two time scales is sub-seasonal to
109 seasonal variability (defined here as the time range between 2 weeks and 2 months).
110 Forecasting for this time range has so far received much less attention than medium-range
111 and multi-season prediction despite the considerable socio-economic value that could be
112 derived from such forecasts. This timescale is critical for proactive disaster mitigation efforts.
113 It is considered a difficult time range since the lead time is sufficiently long that much of the
114 memory of the atmospheric initial conditions is lost and it is too short for the variability of the
115 ocean to have a strong influence. However, recent research has indicated important
116 potential sources of predictability for this time range such as the MJO, the state of ENSO, soil
117 moisture, snow cover and sea ice, stratosphere-troposphere interactions, ocean conditions
118 and tropical-extratropical teleconnections (see for example review in Vitart et al., 2015).

119 The fundamental goals of the sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction (S2S) research project are
120 to improve forecast skill and understanding on the sub-seasonal to seasonal timescales, and
121 to promote its uptake by operational centers and by the applications community (Vitart et al,
122 2012). An extensive database containing sub-seasonal (up to 60 days) forecasts and
123 reforecasts (sometimes known as hindcasts) has been created to enable research to
124 operational pathways to accomplish these goals. It is modelled in part on the THORPEX
125 Interactive Grand Global Ensemble (TIGGE) database for medium range forecasts (up to 15
126 days) (Bougeault et al, 2010) and the Climate-System Historical Forecast project (CHFP)
127 (<http://wcrp-climate.org/index.php/wgsip-chfp/chfp-overview>) for seasonal forecasts. The
128 research is organized around a set of six topics (Madden-Julian Oscillation, Monsoons, Africa,
129 Extremes, Teleconnections and Verification), each intersected by the cross-cutting research
130 and modeling issues, and applications and user needs. The latest science plans of each sub-
131 project are available online (<http://www.s2sprediction.net/documents/reports>). Some of the
132 main research questions include:

- 133 • What is the benefit of a multi-model forecast for sub-seasonal to seasonal
134 prediction and how can it be constructed and implemented?
- 135 • What is the predictability of extreme events and how can we identify windows of
136 opportunity for sub-seasonal to seasonal prediction?
137
- 138 • What is the best initialization strategy for a forecasting system that includes
139 ocean, land and cryosphere? What is the optimal way to generate an ensemble of
140 sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts?

- 141 • What is the impact of horizontal and vertical resolution of atmosphere and ocean
142 models on sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts?
- 143 • What are the origins of the systematic errors affecting sub-seasonal to seasonal
144 forecasts?
- 145 • How well do state-of-the-art models represent tropical-extratropical
146 teleconnections?
- 147 • What forecast quality attributes are important when verifying S2S forecasts and
148 how should they be assessed?
- 149 • What are current S2S forecasting capabilities for daily weather characteristics
150 relevant to agriculture, water resource management and public health, such as
151 heavy rainfall events, dry spells and monsoon onset/cessation dates?
- 152 • How well do we understand the fundamentals of predictability and dynamical
153 processes of the sub-seasonal variability?

154

155 **3) Description of the S2S database**

156 The S2S database builds on the experience of creating the TIGGE database and can be seen
157 as its extension to the longer forecasts ranges. The S2S database includes near real-time
158 ensemble forecasts and reforecasts up to 60 days from 11 centers: Australian Bureau of
159 Meteorology (BoM), China Meteorological Administration (CMA), European Centre for
160 Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), Environment and Climate Change Canada
161 (ECCC), the Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate (CNR-ISAC), Hydrometeorological
162 Centre of Russia (HMCR), Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), Korea Meteorological
163 Administration (KMA), Météo-France/Centre National de Recherche Meteorologiques

164 (CNRM), National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) and the United Kingdom's
165 Met Office (UKMO). A key difference with the TIGGE database, is that the S2S database
166 includes reforecasts, whereas none are included in the TIGGE database. For short-range
167 weather forecasts, model error is not usually so dominant that a reforecast set is needed, but
168 for the sub-seasonal to seasonal range model error is too large to be ignored. Therefore an
169 extensive reforecast set spanning several years is needed to calculate model bias. Such
170 reforecasts in some cases can also be used to evaluate skill. The models are also generally
171 different from the TIGGE models. For instance, S2S models can have the atmospheric
172 component coupled to an ocean model and an active sea ice model (Table 1).

173

174 Because S2S is a research project, the real-time forecasts are only available with a 3-week
175 delay. Table 1 displays the main characteristics of the S2S models. Tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
176 show the list of variables which have been requested for the S2S archive, which include
177 standard variables at many pressure levels, together with a large number of single-level
178 variables including thermodynamic, hydrological, and surface flux fields. However, some
179 models are providing just a subset of the requested variables. The list of variables provided
180 by each model can be found here:

181 <https://software.ecmwf.int/wiki/display/S2S/Provided+parameters>. Pressure level fields are
182 available in the stratosphere at 50 and 10 hPa to facilitate the diagnostic of sudden
183 stratospheric warming events and their downward propagation. The frequency of archiving is
184 once a day except for maximum and minimum near surface temperature and total
185 precipitation which are available 4 times a day (computed over 6-hour periods). The data is
186 archived in GRIB2 format, and a conversion to NetCDF will be made available. There are plans
187 to add some oceanic variables in the near future, from the coupled ocean-atmosphere

188 models: sea surface salinity, depth of the 20 degree isotherm, heat content in the top 300 m,
189 salinity in top 30 meters, U and V surface current and sea surface height. It is also planned to
190 include sea-ice thickness for the models which have a dynamical sea-ice model.

191

192 The S2S database is a database of “opportunity”, which means that the forecasts have not
193 been produced specifically for the S2S project following an agreed protocol. Table 1
194 highlights differences in model setup between the operational centers. The main differences
195 between real-time forecasts from different centers include:

196

- 197 • The forecast time range varies from 32 to 60 days
- 198 • The horizontal resolution of the atmospheric model varies from a few hundreds
199 kilometers resolution to about 30 kilometers.
- 200 • The ensemble size varies from 4 to 51 members. This reflects a different of
201 strategy between operational centers. The centers producing a low number of
202 ensemble members typically produce forecasts in lag mode (combining ensemble
203 members from different start dates to produce an ensemble forecast).
- 204 • The frequency of initializing forecasts varies. Some models are run in burst mode
205 on a sub-weekly basis with a large ensemble size (e.g. ECMWF, BoM, ECCO..), whereas
206 other models are run in continuous mode on a daily basis with a smaller ensemble
207 size (e.g. NCEP, UKMO, CMA, KMA..). Other models (e.g. CNRM) are run on a monthly
208 basis.
- 209 • Some models have an atmosphere component coupled to an ocean and a sea ice
210 model (e.g. UKMO, NCEP, CNRM, CMA) while other use a combination of persistence

211 of initial conditions and climatology to define the oceanic and sea ice boundary
212 conditions (e.g. JMA, ECCC).

213

214 The configuration of the reforecasts also varies greatly between the models:

215

- 216 • Some models have a re-forecast set covering a period exceeding 30 years (e.g.
217 JMA, BoM), while other re-forecast sets span a much shorter number of years
218 (e.g. NCEP, UKMO)
- 219 • Some reforecasts are produced progressively “on the fly” (as at ECMWF), while
220 others are computed all at once prior to operational implementation (e.g., BoM,
221 NCEP).
- 222 • The ensemble size can vary from just 1 member (e.g. CNR-ISAC) to 33 members
223 (BoM).
- 224 • Some models have reforecasts produced on a daily basis (e.g. NCEP) while others
225 have reforecasts on a sub-weekly basis (e.g., BoM, ECMWF) and others have
226 reforecasts on a monthly basis (e.g CNRM).

227

228 There is much greater diversity between the various S2S forecast systems than in other
229 databases for medium and seasonal time ranges (e.g. TIGGE, EUROSIP, CHFP). Very different
230 strategies are currently in use. For example, some centers take advantage of their seasonal
231 and climate systems, while other centers employ systems used for weather forecasting. This
232 highlights the current lack of consensus on the best practice for sub-seasonal prediction
233 unlike for medium-range and seasonal forecasting and diversity of priorities of operational
234 centers. One of the goals of the S2S project is to make recommendations on the optimal

235 configuration of sub-seasonal systems. The S2S database will enable these issues to be
236 addressed by clustering the models sharing similar characteristics (e.g. coupled ocean-
237 atmosphere models vs atmosphere-only models; lag vs burst initialization...) and comparing
238 their forecast skill scores.

239

240 Despite the differences in system set-up, there are enough commonalities between them to
241 make inter-comparisons or multi-model combinations possible, as will be shown in Section 3.
242 For instance, almost all of the S2S systems produce real-time ensemble forecasts every
243 Thursday, and have reforecasts covering the period 1999-2010. Therefore, it is possible to
244 create a multi-model combination of the S2S models every Thursday, calibrated using the
245 common period 1999-2010.

246

247 The database is currently updated routinely with near real-time forecasts and reforecasts
248 from nine data providers, namely, JMA, NCEP, BoM, ECMWF, UKMO, CMA, CNRM, CNR-ISAC
249 and HMCR. Data from ECCO and KMA will be available soon. The S2S database is hosted by
250 two archiving centers, ECMWF and CMA, and was opened to the public on 6 May 2015 at
251 ECMWF via the Data Portal and ECMWF Web API (Application Programming Interface) and in
252 November 2015 at CMA. Users can register, visit the data portal and browse the contents of
253 the database, and are encouraged to use the ECMWF Web API to download data in batch.

254

255 By the end of 2015, about 300 users from 42 countries had registered and had already
256 executed over 200,000 requests to extract about 30 Terabytes of data from ECMWF. ECMWF
257 and CMA are working together closely to ensure the timely synchronization of the two
258 databases. The S2S database at ECMWF can be accessed at

259 <http://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/s2s> and <http://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/s2s->
260 [reforecasts](#) for the reforecasts. The S2S database at CMA can be accessed at
261 <http://s2s.cma.cn/>.

262

263 At CMA, about 22 Terabytes of forecast and re-forecast data have been collected from
264 ECMWF. S2S data is archived on tapes into the MARS system (same archiving system as at
265 ECMWF) and also stored into a large online storage system with a preprocessed unified form.
266 The CMA data portal, as the ECMWF data portal, provides descriptions of the models from
267 the different centers and S2S data parameters, in addition to the data download service. Two
268 ways of searching and accessing the data are supported: free text search and faceted search.
269 The method of downloading data is similar to the e-commerce "shopping-cart" through a
270 "Data cart". All the S2S data can be accessed by HTTP currently and OPeNDAP in the near
271 future. The S2S data in GRIB2 format can be directly downloaded at CMA, and data in NetCDF
272 format obtained through online conversion.

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279 **4) Examples of use of the S2S database**

280

281 4.1 Multi-model prediction

282

283 In order to monitor the S2S forecasts, a basic set of products has been developed, including
284 ensemble mean anomalies for few meteorological parameters and some atmospheric
285 indices. These products are generated routinely at ECMWF from each individual forecast
286 system and for a multi-model combination. Figure 1 shows an example of multi-model
287 prediction of 2-meter temperature anomalies from three S2S models, along with the
288 verification. This figure shows that a cold event in the northeast of US and Canada in
289 February 2015 was well predicted for the day 12-18 time range. These S2S products will be
290 made available on the ECMWF public website to support the S2S community with a 3-week
291 delay by the end of 2016.

292

293 4.1 The strong March 2015 MJO event

294 The S2S dataset can be used to assess the performance of current state-of-the-art sub-
295 seasonal to seasonal forecasting systems to predict recent extreme events. For instance 2015
296 witnessed an exceptional MJO event in March; it exhibited record amplification resulting in
297 the largest amplitude ever recorded (above 4 standard deviation; Marshall et al. 2016) and
298 triggered the formation of twin tropical cyclones, one on each side of the Equator. The
299 amplification was promoted by the unusually warm waters near the dateline (Marshall et al.
300 2016), which preceded development of strong El Nino conditions in the eastern Pacific later
301 in the year. The surface westerly winds that developed in the western Pacific as a result of
302 this March MJO event with twin cyclones likely enhanced the development of the strong El

303 Niño later in the year. It is encouraging to see that all the models and the multi-model
304 combination (black line in Fig. 2a) forecasted a strong MJO event more than 2 weeks in
305 advance (Figure 2a). Most models also predicted the occurrence of an MJO event 3 weeks in
306 advance (black line in Fig. 2b), although the amplitude is generally underestimated, and no
307 ensemble member predicted such a strong amplitude event.

308

309 This record-strength MJO event also contributed to the formation of Tropical Cyclone Pam,
310 which intensified to Category 5 strength and hit the islands of Vanuatu in the south Pacific on
311 13 March with devastating effects. Around 15 people were killed and many buildings were
312 destroyed. The cyclone was the second strongest on record in the southern Pacific, second
313 only to Zoe (2002). It is regarded as the worst natural disaster in Vanuatu's history. The
314 cyclone formed on 6 March east of the Solomon Islands and was classified as a tropical storm
315 on 9 March.

316 Previous studies (e.g. Vitart, 2009) have demonstrated that state-of-the-art extended-range
317 forecasting systems can simulate the modulation of tropical cyclone activity by the MJO, with
318 an increase risk of tropical cyclone activity over the South-West Pacific when the MJO is in
319 Phase 6 and 7. In order to assess the skill of the S2S models to predict the probability of a
320 tropical cyclone hitting Vanuatu, tropical cyclones have been tracked in each ensemble
321 forecast member from CMA, JMA, NCEP, ECMWF and BoM using the algorithm described in
322 Vitart et al. (1997). Figure 3 shows the probability of a tropical cyclone strike within a 300 km
323 radius for the multi-model combination of the 5 real-time forecasts starting on 19 and 26
324 February 2015 and verifying on the weekly period 9-15 March 2015 when Pam hit the islands
325 of Vanuatu. Figure 3 suggests that this event had some extended-range predictability, the

326 multi-model combination indicating an increased risk of tropical cyclone strike probability in
327 the vicinity of Vanuatu (indicated by a black dot in Figure 3) 2 to 3 weeks in advance. The
328 multi-model also predicted the possibility of a tropical cyclone strike in the western Pacific,
329 which is consistent with the twin tropical cyclone genesis associated to the strong MJO event
330 of March 2015. The multi-model forecast from 26 February also predicted an increased risk
331 of tropical cyclone strike east of Madagascar and over the northwest coast of Australia which
332 could correspond respectively to tropical Storm Haliba (7-10 March 2015) and tropical
333 cyclone Olwyn (8-14 March 2015).

334

335

336 **4.3 MJO Teleconnections in the Northern Extratropics**

337 Accurate predictions of MJO events are not sufficient for successful sub-seasonal forecasts.
338 The ability to predict the impact of MJO events on the global circulation is crucial. By acting
339 to excite the NAO, the MJO affects European weather (Cassou 2008; Lin et al. 2009) and
340 North Atlantic significant ocean wave heights (Marshall et al. 2015). Cassou (2008) and Lin et
341 al. (2009) showed that the probability of a positive phase of the NAO is significantly increased
342 about 10 days after the MJO is in Phase 3 (Phase 3 + 10 days), and significantly decreased
343 about 10 days after the MJO is in Phase 6 (Phase 6 + 10 days). The probability of a negative
344 phase of the NAO is decreased (increased) about 10 days after the MJO is in Phase 3 (Phase
345 6). The impact of the MJO on two other Euro-Atlantic weather regimes, the Atlantic Ridge
346 and Scandinavian blocking, is much weaker.

347 Vitart and Molteni (2010) showed that a set of ECMWF reforecasts using cycle 32R3
348 displayed realistic MJO teleconnections over the Northern Extratropics, consistent with the
349 observed impacts (Cassou 2008; Lin et al. 2009). Lin et al. (2010) further found that the MJO
350 has a significant impact on the intra-seasonal NAO skill scores using the ECCO model. This
351 section evaluates whether the MJO teleconnections in the Northern Extratropics are
352 adequately simulated in the reforecasts from the S2S database. We do this by forming 500
353 hPa geopotential height composites 10 days after an MJO is in Phase 3 for all cases when the
354 predicted MJO has amplitude larger than one standard deviation. Only the reforecasts
355 covering the period from January to April have been considered.

356 Figure 4 shows that the models generally capture the spatial pattern of the teleconnection
357 but tend to overestimate the intensity of the MJO teleconnections in the North Pacific and
358 underestimate its projection onto the positive phase of the NAO over the North Atlantic
359 basin. This underestimation could be explained by the analysis being based on a single
360 observed realization whereas the model composites are averaged over several ensemble
361 members. Since not a single ensemble member reproduced the intensity of the
362 teleconnection in the North Atlantic sector as strongly as in the analysis, it follows that
363 underestimation of the MJO impact over the Atlantic (Vitart and Molteni (2010) is a real
364 deficiency, common to several models. The under-representation of the MJO impact over
365 the Euro-Atlantic sector is likely to limit the predictability and predictive skill over the North
366 Atlantic and Europe in the sub-seasonal time range and therefore is an important aspect to
367 be analyzed.

368

369 **5) Other activities**

370 The above examples give a flavour of the potential scope for research that the database
371 offers. This database will also help to assess the potential of current operational S2S systems
372 to forecast the extreme events around the globe, which are discussed in the BAMS special
373 annual supplement on extremes, and other events which have led to major humanitarian aid
374 responses. Three important aspects of the S2S database---namely that it contains (a) an
375 archive of real-time forecasts (3 weeks delayed), (b) accompanying re-forecast sets, and (c)
376 that these outputs are from WMO-recognized systems used currently for operational
377 forecasts---make it a uniquely powerful tool for improving operational forecasts and
378 exploring and prototyping decision support elements based on S2S forecast information. The
379 WMO Lead-Centre for Long-Range Forecast Multi Model Ensembles (LC-LRFMME) will have
380 access to the S2S database and will obtain the real-time forecasts *without* the 3-week
381 embargo, enabling National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to utilize
382 real-time forecast information in a few years time once the necessary research has been
383 done to estimate and document skill and approval has been obtained by WMO. The S2S
384 database will augment the resources available to developing countries to enable the research
385 in early warning system products. The S2S project is using the database to train young
386 developing-country scientists to access the data, perform the necessary research, and
387 collaborate with international experts.

388

389 **6) Conclusions**

390

391 The S2S database, a key component of the WWRP-WCRP Sub-seasonal to Seasonal Prediction
392 Project science plan, is currently open to the public. It contains reforecasts and also near real-

393 time sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts from all the major operational centers. This database
394 represents an important tool to advance our understanding of the sub-seasonal to seasonal
395 time range that has been considered for a long time as a “desert of predictability”. Use of
396 this database by the research community can include:

- 397 - Assess the average forecast skill of sub-seasonal to seasonal predictions in a statistical
398 way through the large number of reforecasts and near-real time forecasts;
- 399 - Assess the potential predictability of the S2S models and identify forecast windows of
400 opportunity;
- 401 - Perform case studies to assess the skill of the model during a specific period or event;
- 402 - Identify sources of predictability, dynamical processes and their impact on the
403 forecast skill scores (e.g. sudden stratospheric warmings, MJO and its
404 teleconnections, sea-ice, soil initial conditions...);
- 405 - Assess the models capability to represent these key dynamical processes that are
406 sources of sub-seasonal predictability so as to guide ongoing model development
- 407 - Assess the benefit of a multi-model approach on sub-seasonal time scale and
408 estimate the effective ensemble size of the multi-model ensemble as in Pennell and
409 Reichler (2011) for climate models.
- 410 - Assess the representation of model uncertainty in the current operational systems;
- 411 - Assess the potential benefit of sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasts in applications;
- 412 - Compare the strategies for model initialization (e.g. burst vs lag ensemble
413 initialization).

414

415 Work is ongoing to extend the list of oceanic and sea-ice variables and improve the
416 conversion of the data into NetCDF. There are also plans to automatically compute some
417 products from the database (e.g MJO, North Atlantic Oscillation, El-Niño Southern Oscillation,
418 Sudden Stratospheric Warming indices, weather regimes, tropical cyclone tracks...) and
419 make them available to the community to avoid multiple computations of the same indices.
420 For example the International research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI) at Columbia
421 University also plans to make available a user-oriented subset of products from the S2S
422 database hosted at ECMWF and CMA.

423

424

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497 **Figure captions:**

498 Figure 1: Multi-model comparisons. A possible use of the database is to make comparisons between
499 the outputs of different forecasting centers. The image shows forecasts of 2-meter temperature
500 anomalies from three S2S ensemble mean forecasts and a verification panel based on ECMWF re-
501 analysis (ERA-INTERIM, Dee et al. 2011). The forecast start date is 22 January 2015 and the forecast
502 range is days 12–18. The areas where the ensemble forecast is not significantly different from the
503 ensemble climatology, according to a Wilcoxon-Mann–Whitney (WMW) test (see for example
504 Wonacott and Wonacott 1977), are blanked.

505 Figure 2: *Phase diagram showing MJO index forecasts from five S2S systems. Forecasts are*
506 *initiated on a) 5 March 2015 and b) 26 February 2015 and are represented in colored lines.*
507 *The grey and the black thick solid lines represent the verification and the multi-model*
508 *ensemble respectively. The MJO index is based on a combined Empirical Orthogonal Function*
509 *(EOF) analysis using fields of near-equatorially-averaged 850-hPa and 200-hPa zonal wind*
510 *and outgoing longwave radiation (OLR) (Wheeler and Hendon 2004). The RMM1 and RMM2*
511 *give an information on the location of the MJO: Indian Ocean (quadrant 2 and 3), Maritime*
512 *Continent (quadrant 4 and 5), western pacific (quadrant 6 and 7) and western hemisphere*
513 *(quadrant 8 and 1). The amplitude of the MJO is represented by the distance to the center,*
514 *and the inner circle represents one standard deviation.*

515 Figure 3: *Probability anomalies of a tropical storm strike within 300 km radius from the multi-*
516 *model ensemble (combination of ECMWF, NCEP, CMA, JMA and BoM forecasts). The forecasts*
517 *were initialized on 26 February 2015 (top panel), 19 February 2015 (bottom panel) and cover*
518 *the weekly period 9-15 March 2015, which corresponds to a forecast range of day 12-18 (top*
519 *panel) and day 19-26 (bottom panel). The black dot in each panel represents the location of*
520 *landfall of tropical cyclone Pam over Vanuatu islands.*

521 Figure 4: *MJO Phase 3 10-day lagged composites of 500 hPa geopotential height anomaly*
522 *from ECMWF, NCEP, JMA and BoM over the Northern Extratropics for the period January to*
523 *April 1999 to 2010 (common re-forecast period) and ERA-Interim (left panel). Red colors*
524 *indicate positive anomalies. Blue colors indicate negative anomalies. The contours are plotted*
525 *every 10 meters.*

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Model	Time-range	Resolution	Ens size	Freq	Rfc	Rfc period	Rfc freq	Rfc size	Ocean Coupling	Sea-ice coupling
BoM	d 0-62	~2x2 L17	33	twice weekly	fixed	1981-2013	6/month	33	YES	NO
CMA	d 0-60	~1x1 L40	4	daily	fixed	1994-2014	daily	4	YES	YES
ECCC	d 0-32	0.45x0.45 L40	21	weekly	on the fly	1995-2012	weekly	4	NO	NO
ECMWF	d 0-46	0.25/0.25 day 0-10 0.5x0.5 after day 10 L91	51	twice weekly	on the fly	past 20y	2/week	11	YES	NO
HMCR	d 0-61	1.1x1.4 L28	20	weekly	On the fly	1985-2010	weekly	10	NO	NO
CNR-ISAC	d 0-31	0.8x0.56 L54	41	weekly	fixed	1981-2010	Every 5 days	1	NO	NO
JMA	d 0-33	~0.5x0.5 L60	25	twice weekly	fixed	1981-2010	3/month	5	NO	NO
KMA	d 0-60	~0.5x0.5 L85	4	daily	on the fly	1996-2009	4/month	3	YES	YES
CNRM	d 0-61	~0.7x0.7 L91	51	monthly	fix	1993-2014	2/month	15	YES	YES
NCEP	d 0-44	~1x1 L64	16	daily	fixed	1999-2010	day	4	YES	YES
UKMO	d 0-60	~0.5x0.8 L85	4	daily	on the fly	1996-2009	4/month	3	YES	YES

542

543 **Table 1:** Main characteristics of the 11 contributions to the S2S database where:

544 **Time range:** Forecast lead time in day

545 **Resolution:** Longitude and latitude resolution in degrees. The number after the letter L

546 represents the number of vertical levels.

547

548 **Ens size:** Number of members in the real-time forecast ensemble.

549 **Freq:** How often (Frequency) the forecasts are run.

550 **Rfc:** Re-forecast (hindcast) are run using the actual forecast model but for past several years
551 on the same (or nearby) calendar day as the forecast. The re-forecast is used to calibrate the
552 actual forecast. There are two types of reforecasts:

553 **fixed:** Some operational centers (e.g. NCEP) use the same version of their model
554 (“frozen” version) to produce real-time S2S forecasts over a period of several years
555 (typically 4-5 years). Therefore, the reforecasts are produced once, often before the
556 first real-time forecast is produced, and used for several years to calibrate the real-
557 time forecasts.

558 **on-the-fly:** Other operational centers (e.g. ECMWF) update their model version
559 several times per year. In order to ensure model consistency between real-time
560 forecasts and re-forecasts, the re-forecasts are produced continuously just before
561 the real-time forecast they will be used to calibrate. For example, at ECMWF, every
562 week, a set of reforecast is produced starting the same day and same month as the
563 next real-time forecast (e.g. 1st January 2015) but for the past 20 years (1st January
564 1995 to 2014).

565 **Rfc period:** The number of years the reforecasts are run. In some centers, the number of re-
566 forecast years is fixed, but the list of years varies from year to year. For instance the re-
567 forecast years at ECMWF cover the past 20 years.

568 **Rfc freq:** How often the reforecasts are run.

569 **Rfc size:** The number of ensemble members for reforecasts.

570 **Ocean coupling:** Indicates if the atmospheric component is coupled to a dynamics ocean
571 model

572 **Sea-ice coupling:** Indicates if an active dynamical sea ice model is included or not.

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Name	Abbreviation	Unit	Frequency
Geopotential height	gh	gpm	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
Temperature	t	K	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
U-velocity	u	m s ⁻¹	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
V-velocity	v	m s ⁻¹	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)

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590 *Table 2: 3-D parameters available on 10 pressure levels (1000, 925, 850, 700, 500, 300, 200,*

591 *100, 50 and 10 hPa) from all models.*

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Name	Abbreviation	Unit	Frequency
Specific humidity	q	kg kg-1	Instantaneous

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606 *Table 3: 3-D parameter available on 7 pressure levels (1000, 925, 850, 700, 500, 300, 200)*

607 from all models.

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Name	Abbreviation	Unit	Frequency
Vertical pressure velocity	w	pa s-1	once a day

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624 *Table 4: The following parameter is available at 500 hPa*

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Name	Abbreviation	Unit	Frequency
Potential vorticity	pv	K m ² kg ⁻¹ s ⁻¹	once a day

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641 *Table 5: The following parameter is available only at 320K.*

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Name	Abbreviation	Unit	Frequency
10 meter u	10u	m s-1	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
10 meter v	10v	m s-1	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
CAPE	cape	kg-1	Daily average
Skin temperature	skt	K	Daily average
Snow depth water equivalent	sd	kg m-2	Daily average
Snow density	rsn	kg m-3	Daily average
Snow fall water equivalent	sf	Kg m-2	Accumulated once a day
Snow albedo	asn	%	Daily average
Soil moisture top 20cm	sm20	kg m-3	Daily average
Soil moisture top 100cm	sm100	kg m-3	Daily average
Soil temperature to 20cm	st20	K	Daily average
Soil temperature top 100cm	st100	K	Daily average
Surface air max temperature	mx2t6	K	Instantaneous 4 time a day
Surface air min temperature	mn2t6	K	Instantaneous 4 times a day

Surface air temperature	2t	K	Daily average
Surface air dewpoint temperature	2d	K	Daily average
Sea surface temperature	wtmp	K	Daily average
Sea ice cover	ci	proportion	Daily average
Surface pressure	sp	Pa	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
Mean sea level pressure	msl	Pa	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
Total cloud cover	tcc	%	Daily average
Total column water	tcw	Kg m ⁻²	Daily average
Total precipitation	tp	Kg m ⁻²	Accumulated 4 times a day
Convective precipitation	cp	Kg m ⁻²	Accumulated once a day
Northward turbulent surface stress	nsss	N m ⁻² s	Accumulated once a day
Eastward turbulent surface stress	ewss	N m ⁻² s	Accumulated once a day
Water runoff and drainage	ro	kg m ⁻²	Accumulated once a day
Surface water runoff	sro	kg m ⁻²	Accumulated once a day
Land sea mask	lsm	Proportion	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)

		of land	
Orography	orog	gpm	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
Soil type	slt	Categorical	Instantaneous once a day (00Z)
Top net thermal radiation	ttr	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Surface latent heat flux	slhf	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Surface net solar radiation	ssr	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Surface net thermal radiation	str	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Surface sensible heat flux	sshf	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Solar radiation downwards	ssrd	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day
Surface thermal radiation downwards	strd	W m-2 s	Accumulated once a day

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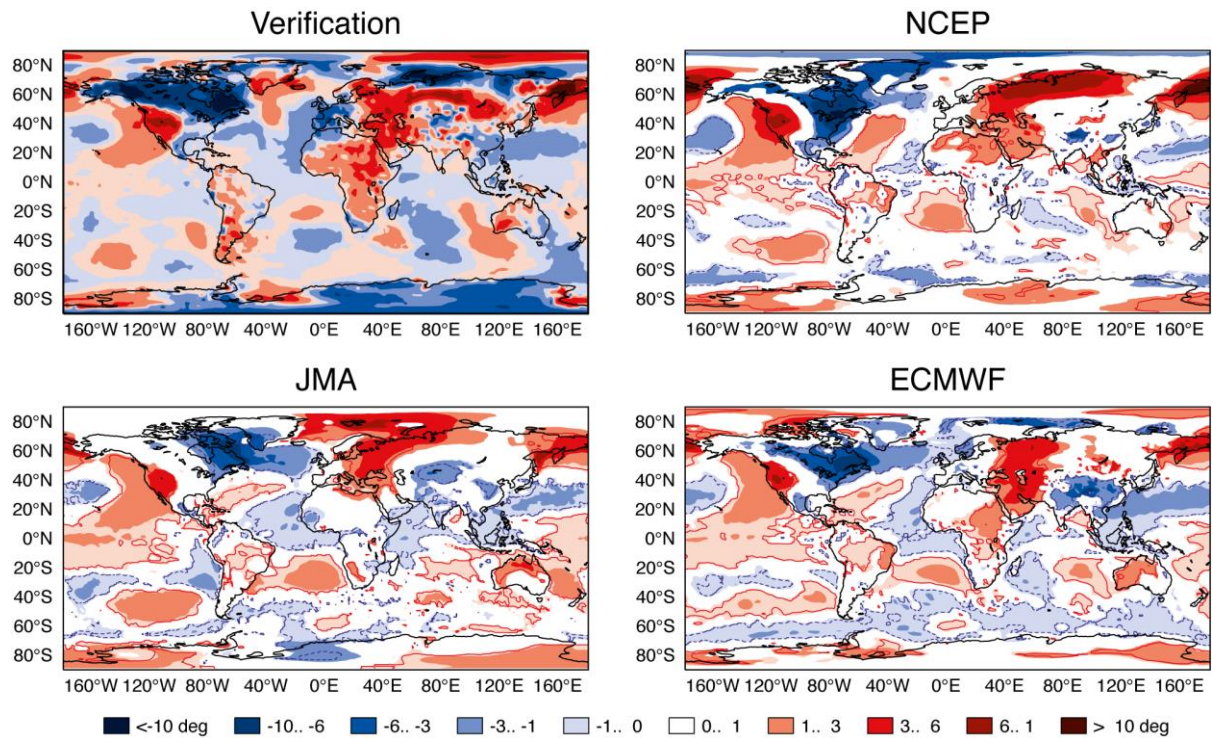
656 **Table 6:** *List of single level parameters*

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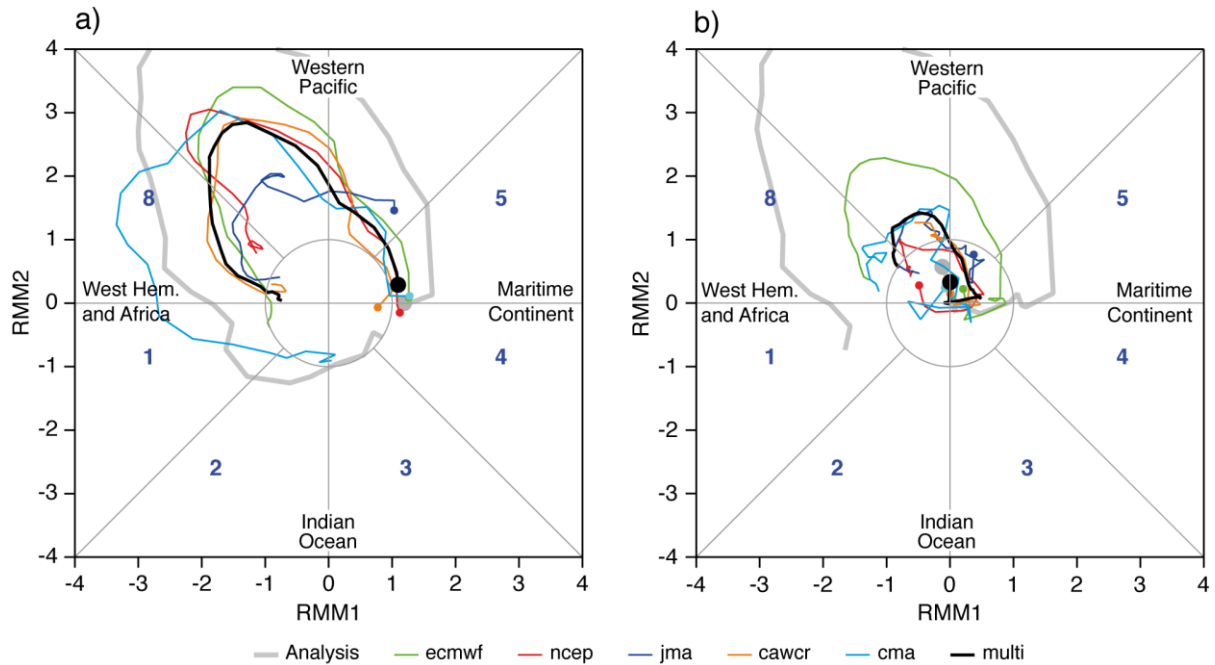
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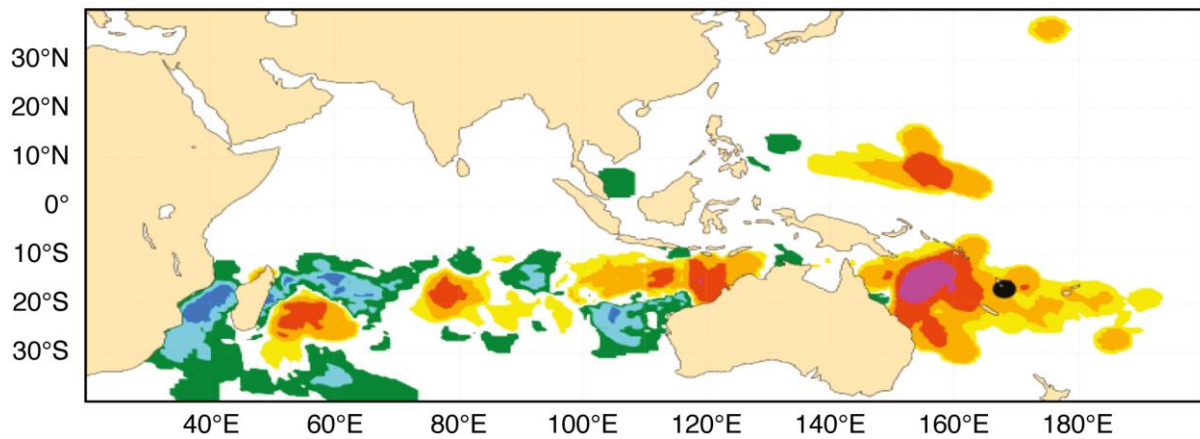
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680 *initiated on a) 5 March 2015 and b) 26 February 2015 and are represented in colored lines.*

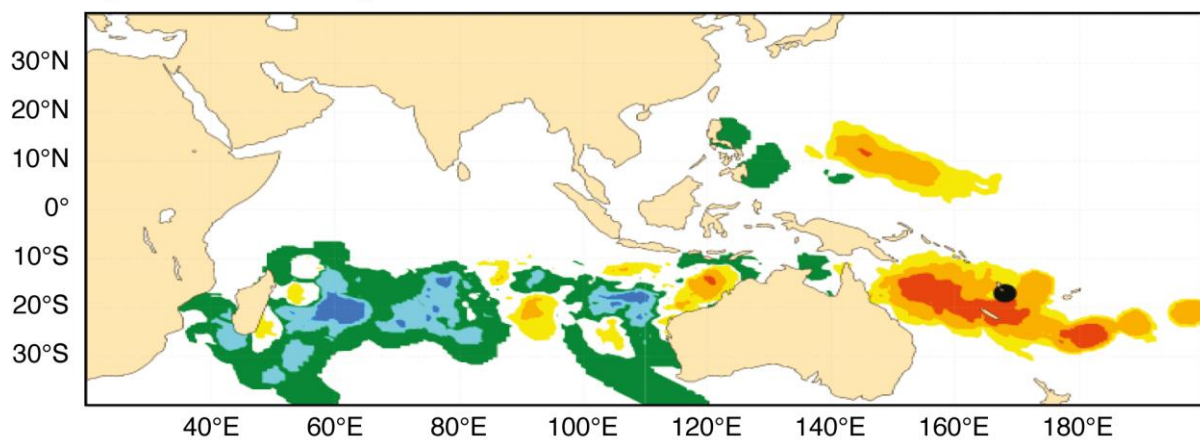
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682 *ensemble respectively. The MJO index is based on a combined Empirical Orthogonal Function*
683 *(EOF) analysis using fields of near-equatorially-averaged 850-hPa and 200-hPa zonal wind*
684 *and outgoing longwave radiation (OLR) (Wheeler and Hendon 2004). The RMM1 and RMM2*
685 *give an information on the location of the MJO: Indian Ocean (quadrant 2 and 3), Maritime*
686 *Continent (quadrant 4 and 5), western pacific (quadrant 6 and 7) and western hemisphere*
687 *(quadrant 8 and 1). The amplitude of the MJO is represented by the distance to the center,*
688 *and the inner circle represents one standard deviation.*

689

a) 2015/02/26 day 12–18



b) 2015/02/26 day 19–25



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692 *Figure 3: Probability anomalies of a tropical storm strike within 300 km radius from the multi-model*

693 *ensemble (combination of ECMWF, NCEP, CMA, JMA and BoM forecasts). The forecasts were*

694 *initialized on 26 February 2015 (top panel), 19 February 2015 (bottom panel) and cover the weekly*

695 *period 9-15 March 2015, which corresponds to a forecast range of day 12-18 (top panel) and day 19-*

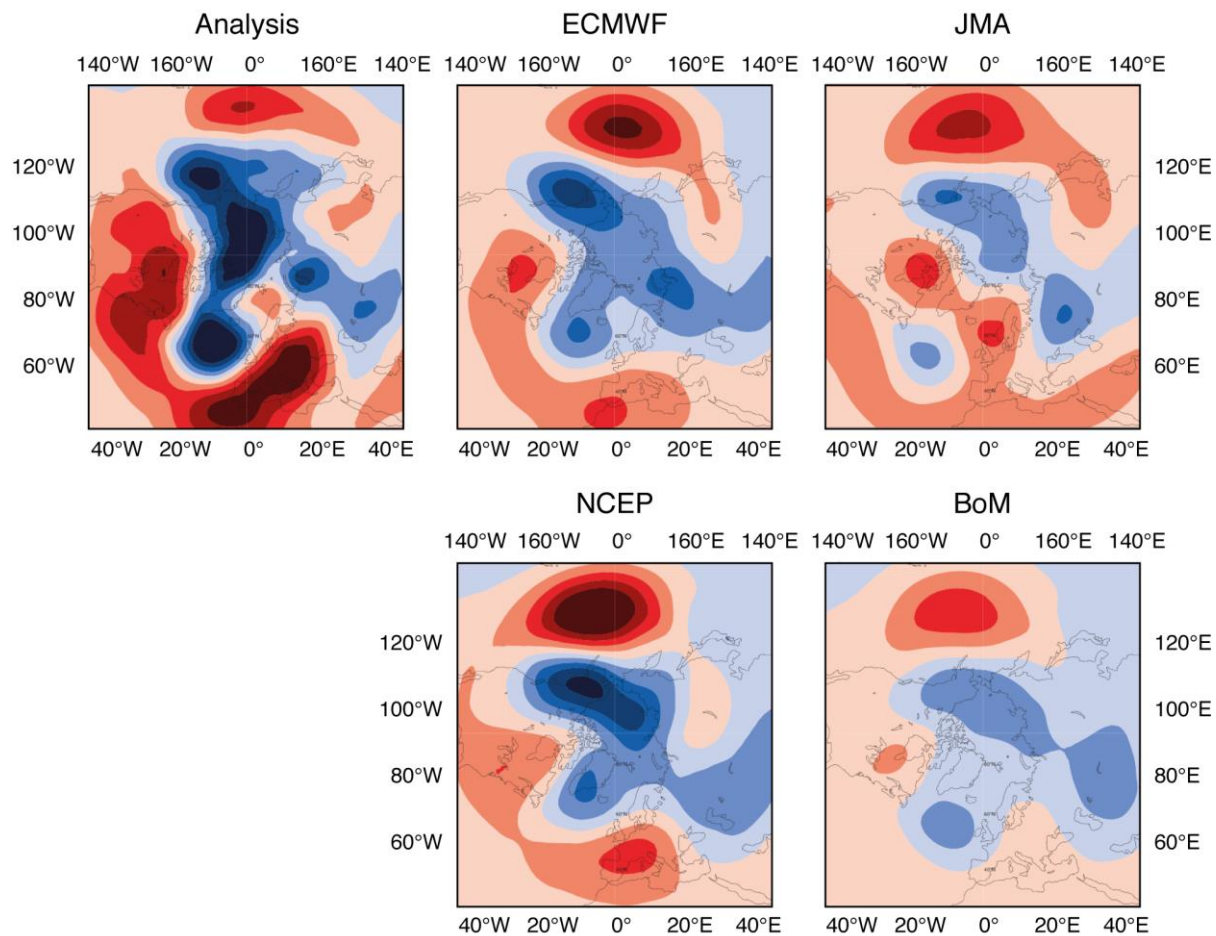
696 *26 (bottom panel). The black dot in each panel represents the location of landfall of tropical cyclone*

697 *Pam over Vanuatu islands.*

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704 **Figure 4:** MJO Phase 3 10-day lagged composites of 500 hPa geopotential height anomaly from
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707 anomalies. Blue colors indicate negative anomalies. The contours are plotted every 10 meters.

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