



Historical upper air data rescue at Météo-France for ERA-CLIM

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Regular upper-air observations had been made in France mainland since the 1900s, in France former colonies since the 1920s, in France overseas since the 1930s and in FSAAT since the 1950s.

Despite the rich heritage of French historical upper air data, no upper air records prior to 1948 was readily available in digital form in the Météo-France database at the start of ERA-CLIM project.

Météo-France contribution for ERA-CLIM has focused on the recovery and the digitization of upper-air observations made prior to 1958 in France and France former colonies.

The first step, not yet finished, has consisted of identifying the upper-air data sources (climate reports and publications). The second step (work still ongoing) has been dedicated to locate and to inventory the upper-air data. Because of the wide dispersion of Météo-France climate archives around the world, detailed inventorying has been carried out in 26 different archives in France mainland and in 7 archives in French Overseas Departments and Territories. The inventory has enabled the selection of the top priority upper-air series to be recovered according the length, the coverage of the series and the spatial resolution of the series. Based on this selection, imaging has been planned and organized. Météo-France has scanned more than 500 000 pages of daily bulletins and climate reports containing upper-air data from France and Africa. 1,5 million upper-air data have been digitized and quality controlled for the period 1919-1958 but a huge amount of recorded data is still available in imaged form.