



Operational oceanography in the Mediterranean Sea: the ocean colour satellite observing system

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The synoptic view and the regular data coverage provided by satellite data make them essential to monitor the marine ecosystem. The ocean colour (OC) satellite observing system is a key component of the operational ocean observing and forecasting systems currently developed for both the global ocean and the European Seas. In the framework of MyOcean EU-Project, the GRID based system of the Satellite Oceanography Group of Rome (Italy) has focused on the fast delivery of data for their assimilation into ecosystem models, for environmental monitoring applications and for operational support to oceanographic cruises. GOS processor uses regional and platform-specific algorithms for OC product retrieval in the Mediterranean basin, which have been shown to significantly reduce data uncertainties. Moreover, both off- and on-line calibration and validation activities have been specifically designed to ensure high quality products meeting the requirements of the scientific community. As for the former, it will be shown how in situ measurements collected across the basin since 1998 are used to quantify the platform-specific data uncertainties. On-line validation is performed on a daily basis checking a series of indicators which refer to standard processing masks and flags: number of pixels contaminated by high sun glint or stray light, number of pixels classified as Case 2 waters or those contaminated by high concentration of absorbing aerosol. In addition, possible sensors' drifts are routinely checked by comparing daily data (both near real time and delayed time) to climatological values.