



A new natural hazards data-base for volcanic ash and SO₂ from global satellite remote sensing measurements

Kerstin Stebel (1), Fred Prata (1,2), Nicolas Theys (3), Lucia Tampellini (4), Martijn Kamstra (5), and Claus Zehner (6)

(1) NILU - Norwegian Institute for Air Research, Kjeller, Norway (kst@nilu.no), (2) Nicarnica Aviation, Kjeller, Norway (fp@nicarnicaaviation.com), (3) Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy, Brussels, Belgium (Nicolas.Theys@aeronomie.be), (4) Compagnia Generale Per lo Spazio SpA, Milano, Italia (ltampellini@cgspace.it), (5) S[&]T, Oslo, Norway (kamstra@stcorp.no), (6) European Space Agency, ESRI, Frascati, Italy (Claus.Zehner@esa.int)

Over the last few years there has been a recognition of the utility of satellite measurements to identify and track volcanic emissions that present a natural hazard to human populations. Mitigation of the volcanic hazard to life and the environment requires understanding of the properties of volcanic emissions, identifying the hazard in near real-time and being able to provide timely and accurate forecasts to affected areas. Amongst the many ways to measure volcanic emissions, satellite remote sensing is capable of providing global quantitative retrievals of important microphysical parameters such as ash mass loading, ash particle effective radius, infrared optical depth, SO₂ partial and total column abundance, plume altitude, aerosol optical depth and aerosol absorbing index.

The eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in April May, 2010 led to increased research and measurement programs to better characterize properties of volcanic ash and the need to establish a data-base in which to store and access these data was confirmed. The European Space Agency (ESA) has recognized the importance of having a quality controlled data-base of satellite retrievals and has funded an activity called Volcanic Ash Strategic Initiative Team VAST (vast.nilu.no) to develop novel remote sensing retrieval schemes and a data-base, initially focused on several recent hazardous volcanic eruptions. In addition, the data-base will host satellite and validation data sets provided from the ESA projects Support to Aviation Control Service SACS (sacs.aeronomie.be) and Study on an end-to-end system for volcanic ash plume monitoring and prediction SMASH.

Starting with data for the eruptions of Eyjafjallajökull, Grímsvötn, and Kasatochi, satellite retrievals for Puyhue-Cordon Caulle, Nabro, Merapi, Okmok, Kasatochi and Sarychev Peak will eventually be ingested. Dispersion model simulations are also being included in the data-base. Several atmospheric dispersion models (FLEXPART, SILAM and WRF-Chem) are used in VAST to simulate the dispersion of volcanic ash and SO₂ emitted during an eruption. Source terms and dispersion model results will be given. In time, data from conventional in situ sampling instruments, airborne and ground-based remote sensing platforms and other meta-data (bulk ash and gas properties, volcanic setting, volcanic eruption chronologies, potential impacts etc.) will be added.

Important applications of the data-base are illustrated related to the ash/aviation problem and to estimating SO₂ fluxes from active volcanoes—as a means to diagnose future unrest. The data-base has the potential to provide the natural hazards community with a dynamic atmospheric volcanic hazards map and will be a valuable tool particularly for aviation.