



Effect of Vatnajökull ice cap on meso- and fine scale atmospheric flow

Hálfdán Ágústsson (1), Haraldur Ólafsson (2), and Finnur Pálsson (3)

(1) Institute for meteorological research, Research and development, Mosfellsbær, Iceland (halfdana@gmail.com), (2) University of Iceland, Icelandic meteorological office and Bergen school of meteorology, University of Bergen, Norway, (3) Institute of earth sciences, University of Iceland

The large Icelandic ice caps have a significant effect on the mesoscale atmospheric flow in Iceland. To name a few; atmospheric blockings, downslope windstorms, extreme gust events at the south coast are all associated with orographically affected flow in and near the high topography of the ice caps.

To quantify the effect of the ice caps on the flow, two sets of high-resolution atmospheric simulations have been performed. The control simulation uses the current land height and glacial cover while in the sensitivity run the ice caps have been removed and their bottom topography used instead of their surface as land height. The simulations are done at 8 and 2 km horizontal resolution and are forced with the Interim re-analysis of the ECMWF for two consecutive years 2004-2006.

Some of the key results for Vatnajökul ice cap in Southeast-Iceland include an increase in the annual mean wind near the ice cap due to the reduced topography height and weaker atmospheric blocking. Mean winds on the ice cap decrease, due to increased surface roughness and lower topography. Frequency of strong wind events near the ice cap decreases and patterns of diurnal winds near the ice edge change significantly.