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1 Modeling the lava heat flux during severe effusive volcanic 2 eruption: an important impact on surface air quality

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3 **Abstract.** The Reunion Island experienced its biggest eruption of Piton de
4 la Fournaise volcano during April 2007. Known as “the eruption of the century”,
5 this event degassed more than 230 KT of SO₂. These emissions led to impor-
6 tant health issues, accompanied by environmental and infrastructure degrada-
7 tions. This modeling study uses the mesoscale chemical model MesoNH-C to
8 simulate the transport of gazeous SO₂ between April 2nd and 7th, with a focus
9 on the influence of heat fluxes from lava. This study required the implementa-
10 tion of a reduced chemical scheme, a basic surface model and an estimation of
11 lava heat fluxes in the atmospheric model. The model was able to reproduce gen-
12 eral trends of this eruption, in particular the crossing of trade wind inversion,
13 the SO₂ surface concentration (with highest peak of SO₂ of 600 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ observed
14 April 4th for western Reunion locations), and the wet deposition associated to
15 rainfall. A sensitivity study shows that without heat fluxes over the vent and the
16 lava flow, simulated SO₂ surface concentration are up to 45 times higher than
17 observed.

1. Introduction

1.1. Generalities

18 Volcanoes are one of the most important natural sources of air pollution, both during and be-
19 tween eruptions [Oppenheimer, 2003]. It is essential for different areas of atmospheric science
20 to have a good knowledge of volcanic volatile emissions in time and space, their atmospheric
21 chemistry, physical and radiative effects. There are two different types of volcanoes: "reds"
22 volcanoes characterized by relatively quiet effusive eruptions and transmitting any fluid lava
23 in the form of castings, and "gray" volcanoes characterized by explosive eruptions and emit-
24 ting pasty lava and ash in the form of pyroclastic flows. Each type of volcano is impacting
25 the atmosphere in very different way, particularly in terms of injection depth and nature of the
26 products ejected. Explosive volcanic eruptions such as those of El Chichon (Mexico) in 1982
27 [Pollack *et al.*, 1983; Hoffman, 1987] and Mount Pinatubo in 1991 [McCornick *et al.*, 1995;
28 Fiocco *et al.*, 1996; Robock, 2002], mainly affected climate because of radiative and chem-
29 ical impact of the plumes formed by aerosols injected into the stratosphere [Solomon, 1999;
30 Robock, 2000, 2002]. For effusive volcanic eruptions such as those of Piton de la Fournaise
31 (Reunion Island, Indian Ocean), the problem is different. Knowledge of their atmospheric and
32 environmental impacts in the troposphere and degassing processes has some shortcomings. By
33 chemical oxidation reactions, volcanic gases such as SO₂, which is predominant during the
34 degassing of the lava, become acidic and can interact with the aerosol phase as precursors of
35 particles through nucleation and/or condensation. These tropospheric volcanic aerosols play
36 an important role in atmospheric radiation, directly by scattering and absorbing of short wave
37 radiation, and indirectly by changing cloud cover and cloud properties [Hobbs *et al.*, 1982; Al-

38 *brecht*, 1989; *Kaufman et al.*, 2000; *Yuan et al.*, 2011a, b]. Tropospheric volcanic aerosols and
39 gaseous compounds, especially sulfur dioxide, can also be source of risks to terrestrial ecosys-
40 tems and health at local or regional scales [*Baxter et al.*, 1982; *Mannino et al.*, 1996; *Allen*
41 *et al.*, 2000; *Delmelle et al.*, 2001]. Piton de la Fournaise is a typical basaltic shield volcano
42 located on the Indian Ocean Island of Réunion and, as Etna and Kilauea, it is one of the world's
43 most active effusive volcanoes, with an eruption occurring every 10 months in average [*Roult*
44 *et al.*, 2012]. Reunion island is born 3 million years ago in the emergence of a gigantic vol-
45 cano, in the southwest of the Indian Ocean at 21.06°S and 55.32°E. It presents on its 2512 km²
46 a unique variety of landforms and landscapes with Piton des Neiges (3071m) being its highest
47 point. The orographic influence on local dynamics of Reunion Island expected to be major. The
48 interaction of the high mountainous terrain with the synoptic flow induces a large variability of
49 wind field at local scale. The maritime and tropical location of the island, as well as the com-
50 plexity of the terrain and wind exposure, imply a multitude of local circulations and weather,
51 marked by large variations in temperature and precipitation. Modeling of local circulations is
52 very complex to achieve in an environment like Réunion Island because it is the result of a
53 complex interaction between topographic circulations, thermal breezes and local formation of
54 clouds and precipitation. During an eruption, other parameters make modeling more difficult,
55 including the effects of the dynamics of volcanic flows and thermal secondary effects associ-
56 ated with lava flow. Few studies, as the Vog Measurement and Prediction Project (VMAP) on
57 island of Hawaii (<http://mkwc.ifa.hawaii.edu/vmap/hysplit>), have been able to accurately rep-
58 resent the distribution of volcanic pollution at characteristic scales of a volcanic island. The
59 Piton de la Fournaise eruption of April 2007 presented all the characteristics of complex flow of
60 sulfur dioxide with a temporal discontinuity between the highest concentrations of surface SO₂

61 observed and the paroxysmal period of emission from the vent. The sulfur dioxide SO_2 is the
62 second gas emitted at the Piton de la Fournaise volcano after water H_2O , followed by carbon
63 dioxide CO_2 and hydrochloric acid HCl . The objectives in the framework of this case study
64 are two-folds. First the paper aims to investigate the complex transport and distribution of the
65 sulfur dioxide influenced by steep topography and three-dimensional atmospheric circulation.
66 The second objective is to highlight the influence of the cloud scavenging and the heat fluxes
67 on the SO_2 surface concentration. For the latter, high resolution numerical simulations have
68 been used to analyze the sensitivity of the heat fluxes on the volcanic pollutants. This paper
69 starts with a brief description of April 2007 eruption as well as numerical methods (section 2).
70 Section 3 is devoted to analyzing the estimation of the heat flux release during the eruption. The
71 section emphasizes the influence of lava flow on the convection and its consequences on the
72 SO_2 distribution.

1.2. Description of the April 2007 eruption of the Piton de la Fournaise

73 In April 2007, the Reunion's Island has known its biggest eruption of Piton de la Fournaise
74 volcano at least three centuries [Michon *et al.*, 2013]. Within a month, 210 Mm^3 of lava flowed
75 out with 90 Mm^3 reaching the sea. Above all, the collapse of the summit caldera caused signif-
76 icant morphological change [Michon *et al.*, 2007]. Due to this nearby events and large environ-
77 mental and civil protection impacts, this eruption is very well described in literature [Staudacher
78 *et al.*, 2009; Vlastélic *et al.*, 2012; Barde-Cabusson *et al.*, 2011; Tulet and Villeneuve, 2010;
79 Di Muro *et al.*, 2014]. After two short eruptive events (18 February and 30 March), a critical
80 phase of the eruption started at 06 UTC on 2 April, located on the lower south-eastern part of the
81 volcano ($55^\circ 46' 25.5'' \text{ E}$; $21^\circ 16' 54.6'' \text{ S}$,WGS84) at only 590m above the sea level and only
82 3km from the coast (Figure 1). In less than eleven hours, two main lava streams reached the sea,

83 producing significant water vapor plumes with a very low pH due to strong presence of sulfuric
84 and chlorohydric compound ($\text{pH} < 2$, *Staudacher et al.* [2009]). During the first two day, lava
85 fountains up between 50m and 150m high were observed. From 4 April, MODIS sensor shows
86 a significant increase of the lava flow rate until the 6th of April, where the peak of emissions of
87 lava was observed (greater than $200 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ at the vent, *Coppola et al.* [2009]; *Staudacher et al.*
88 [2009]). SO_2 emissions, proportional to lava emissions, were estimated at 80 kg s^{-1} the 4 April
89 12 UTC, 320 kg s^{-1} the 5 April 12 UTC and 1600 kg s^{-1} the 6 April 12 UTC before a strong
90 decrease until 8 April 12 UTC at 55 kg s^{-1} , and finally a constant emission of $55\text{-}70 \text{ kg s}^{-1}$
91 until 11 April [*Tulet and Villeneuve*, 2010]. The peak of degassing was simulated at 1800 kg
92 s^{-1} on April 6, with the total budget estimated at 230kT, which is in agreement with the petro-
93 logic estimation of 311kT [*Di Muro et al.*, 2014]. The Observatoire Volcanologique du Piton de
94 la Fournaise (OVPF) recorded the 5 April at 20:48 UTC an earthquake of 4.8 magnitude syn-
95 chronous with the caldeira collapse [*Michon et al.*, 2007; *Staudacher et al.*, 2009]. As described
96 in *Tulet and Villeneuve* [2010] the location of this ash plume is well separate from the SO_2 one,
97 as well as the vapor plume. The 6 April, lava fountains reached more than 200m high, and there
98 were several tens of individual lava flows from 2 to 20m wide [*Staudacher et al.*, 2009]. At this
99 moment, the lava flow reaches its maximum lateral and longitudinal extents. In late 6 April,
100 the intensity dramatically decreases, and the eruption became more “typical” compared to usual
101 eruptions of Piton de la Fournaise. The 12th of April, the shallow seismicity came back at its
102 highest, causing a new Dolomieu crater collapse. In the next days, the lava eruption intensity
103 became steady with effusion measured at $15\text{-}20 \text{ m}^3.\text{s}^{-1}$. This last event continued until May 1st
104 2007, the last eruption day.

1.3. ORA observations

105 ORA (Observatoire Réunionnais de l'air) provides daily monitoring of air pollution levels.
106 It is equipped with several fixed and mobile stations along the Reunion coastline, measuring
107 continuously primary and secondary pollutants. During the April 2007 eruption, 8 stations
108 measured the SO₂ surface concentration from Saint Louis to Saint Denis passing through Cam-
109 baie in the west (Figure 1). Data from these three stations are compared to simulations. The
110 first day, surface concentration of SO₂ is very low with value under 20 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for all stations
111 (Figure 2). The next day from 02 UTC, Saint Louis and Cambaie stations measured signifi-
112 cant increases of SO₂ concentrations with a peak of more than 60 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Cambaie and 200
113 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Saint Louis at 06 UTC. The 4th of April, new strong increases of surface concentra-
114 tion have been measured by all stations located on the southwest and northwest coast. A peak
115 of 600 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ was observed at Cambaie and 587 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in Saint Louis at 13 UTC. A significant
116 decrease followed this peak of SO₂ surface concentration, with SO₂ concentration falling below
117 the 100 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ threshold at the end of the day. The 5th, a slight increase appears at dawn (from
118 03 UTC) with 200 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Cambaie and 269 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Saint Louis. Subsequently, from the
119 5th (12 UTC) to the 10th of April (06 UTC), the concentration varied between 20 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ to 120
120 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for all west coast station except Saint Louis station, where brief peaks appeared for few
121 hours on the 10th (345 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) and the 24th (390 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$). The highest values measured by
122 ORA are not in phases in time with the maximum emitted from the vent. This paradox needs a
123 detailed study of sulfur dioxide transport.

2. Model description

2.1. Atmospheric model

124 The mesoscale non hydrostatic atmospheric model (MesoNH) developed by the Centre Na-
125 tional de la Recherche Météorologique and the Laboratoire d'Aérodologie [Lafore *et al.*, 1998]
126 has been used for the study. MesoNH can be used at all scales ranging from synoptic to large
127 eddy scales (<http://mesonh.aero.obs-mip.fr/>). It can be run in a two way nested mode involving
128 up to eight nesting stages. Different sets of parameterizations have been introduced for convec-
129 tion [Bechtold *et al.*, 2001; Pergaud *et al.*, 2009], cloud microphysics [Cohard and Pinty, 2000],
130 turbulence [Bougeault and Lacarrere, 1989], lightning [Barthe *et al.*, 2007], gaseous chemistry
131 [Suhre *et al.*, 1998; Tulet *et al.*, 2003], cloud chemistry [Leriche *et al.*, 2000] and aerosols [Tulet
132 *et al.*, 2005; Grini *et al.*, 2006].

2.2. Surface model

133 The SURFEx surface scheme is coupled with MesoNH to simulate surface processes, ther-
134 modynamic and chemical exchanges with the atmosphere. (<http://www.cnrm.meteo.fr/surfex/>;
135 Masson *et al.*, 2013.). SURFEx is composed by various parameterizations for natural land sur-
136 face [Noilhan and Mahfouf, 1996; Bougeault and Lacarrere, 1989], urbanized area [Masson,
137 2000], lakes and oceans [Salgado and Le Moigne, 2010] and chemistry and aerosols surface
138 processes [Tulet *et al.*, 2003; Mokhtari *et al.*, 2012]. The coupling with the atmospheric model
139 is performed by averaging the surface fluxes over a model grid box. Within SURFEx, the lava
140 flow is represented by a line of potential heat flux emission, starting from the vent of the volcano
141 at 21.28°S and 55.77°E to the coastline at 21.28°S and 55.80°E. This representation implies two
142 major approximations for the lava flow. The first one is the misrepresentation of lava flow shape,
143 as the observed lava flow has a triangular shape. The second is relative to the static represen-

144 tation of the lava under SURFEX, when the lava propagation is not integrated in time. The
145 increasing surface of lava flow and its heat flux is modeled by multiplying the line of potential
146 emission with a coefficient proportional to the increase of the lava flow surface.

2.3. Model configuration

147 The simulation starts at 00 UTC on April 2nd 2007, and ends at 00 UTC on April 7th 2007.
148 The simulation has two nested domains with Kessler microphysics scheme and TKE turbu-
149 lence scheme (prognostic turbulent kinetic energy, one and a half order closure). The largest
150 domain with high model grid spacing (2km) is centered over the Reunion island. The do-
151 main extends over 330km from north to south and 450km from east to west. The second
152 domain covers only the Reunion Island and its coastline with a horizontal model grid spac-
153 ing of 500m. The vertical grid is composed of 72 levels for both models stretching up to
154 31km altitude with a first level 5m above ground level. Initial and lateral boundary condi-
155 tions are extracted from ECMWF analysis for the meteorological fields and from MOCAGE
156 (<http://www.cnrm.meteo.fr/gmgec/spip.php?article87>) for gaseous chemistry fields. The gas
157 phase chemistry is resolved on both domains using the ReLACS chemical mechanism [*Crassier*
158 *et al.*, 2009], which is a reduced version of RACM including the oxidation of sulfur dioxide by
159 OH radical. In SURFEX, the entire SO₂ emission is released at the vent. This assumption is
160 well correlated with the fact that the magma begin to degas when it reaches the vent and its sur-
161 roundings. In consequence, with a 500m MesoNH horizontal model grid spacing, the location
162 of SO₂ emission is well represented. A simulation protocol was implemented to limit the model
163 drift by reinitializing the model dynamic (wind, humidity and temperature filed) in the middle
164 of the simulation while the chemical fields have been preserved along the whole period (Figure
165 3). A second simulation starts the 3rd at 18 UTC until the 4th of April at 00 UTC. This latter

166 provides at its end the dynamic fields refresh, while suppressing the need for model spin-up
 167 (time taken by the model to reach equilibrium state). Finally, a new simulation starts the 4 April
 168 at 00 UTC with the dynamic of simulation 2 and chemistry of simulation 1.

169 Sensitivity tests are made in this study to highlight the influence of heat fluxes in the transport
 170 of volcanic pollutants and the influence of cloud chemistry in scavenging sulfur dioxide. The 3
 171 simulations configurations are sum up in the table 1.

3. Estimations of thermodynamic emissions

3.1. Heat flow estimation

172 Lava heat is released in the atmosphere from the core of an active flow by conduction through
 173 the basal, lateral and surface crusts [*Oppenheimer, 1991; Klingelhofer et al., 1999; Quareni*
 174 *et al., 2004*]. At the surface, heat losses are dominated by radiation ($5 \times 10^4 \text{ W m}^{-2}$) and con-
 175 vection (10^4 W m^{-2}), whereas conduction from the base to the ground is predominant (10^3 W
 176 m^{-2} , *Harris et al. [2005]*). For this study, only convective heat fluxes are implemented, with the
 177 assumption that heat losses by conduction and by rain falling on the flow (250 W m^{-2} , *Harris*
 178 *et al. [2005]*) are negligible. As the influence of radiant heat fluxes is inversely proportional
 179 to the square of the distance; we have also neglected it for our simulation. The heat flow by
 180 convection is calculated from:

$$Q_{conv} = hc(T_{surf} - T_{air})$$

181 With hc the heat transfert coefficient estimated at 50 W m^{-2} by *Keszthelyi et al. [2003]*, T_{surf}
 182 the lava surface temperature and T_{air} the air temperature (290K). Estimation of the sensible heat
 183 fluxes, and hence the lava cooling, is mainly controlled by the surface winds. The heat flux
 184 relation to the wind from *Keszthelyi* observations are taken into account in our model (Figure

185 4). The surface covered by hot (1100°C) liquid lava flow and the crusted (400°C) lava is taken
186 from the day by day observation given by *Bachèlery et al.* [2014] between April 2nd and 8th,
187 allowing the estimation of the heat flow (in m^2) from the ground.

4. Sulfur transport during the April 2007 eruption of Piton de la Fournaise volcano using MesoNH atmospheric model

4.1. SO₂ mass burden

188 Figure 5 represents the evolution of SO₂ mass burden simulated by MesoNH between April
189 3rd and April 6th at 18 UTC. The first period until 4 April shows that the plume is oriented to
190 the west with a maximum of mass burden of 210 DU. From April 5 and 6, the plume at the
191 vent, above 5km ASL is oriented to the north with a large value (330 DU) over Reunion island.
192 During this period, the strong presence of SO₂ in the north of Reunion Island indicates a plume
193 separation. The change in direction between the two periods is due to the SO₂ plume crossing
194 the inversion of trade winds around 3500m-4500m ASL. Below the inversion, a lower branch
195 of the SO₂ plume is transported westward by the trade winds, while above, an upper plume is
196 advected eastward. This analysis of SO₂ plume evolution in the first 4 days of the eruption is
197 consistent with the study based on satellite data OMI and CALIOP by Tulet and Villeneuve
198 (2010).

4.2. Simulated SO₂ surface concentrations

199 In the morning of April 2, the SO₂ plume at the surface is oriented southwestwards, contourn-
200 ing by the south the Piton de la Fournaise area. The plume is then transported along the coastline
201 influenced by the trade winds circumventing the island, where a strong gradient of SO₂ appears.
202 During this day, the SO₂ plume reaches Cambaie, at the northwest of the island with low surface
203 concentration of SO₂ in order of some tens of $\mu g m^{-3}$. The strongest simulated concentrations

204 are located at low altitude, near Saint Joseph in the south, with $350 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. For other stations,
205 SO_2 surface concentration is $125 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at Saint Louis in the southwest or a comparatively low
206 $25 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ is observed in Sainte Thérèse in the northwest, while concentrations in Saint Denis
207 to the north is even lower with $1 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. Not much changes occur the 3th of April, when the
208 overall atmospheric dynamics confine the volcanic pollutants to the west of the island (Figure 6,
209 dots represent ORA stations, Saint Denis at the north, Cambaie at the northwest and Saint-Louis
210 at the southwest). Concentrations for the majority of the stations are stronger than the eve, with
211 $200 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at Saint Louis and $75 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at Cambaie and Sainte Thérèse (Figure 6). However,
212 the strong SO_2 gradient noted earlier is no longer present on April 3rd. SO_2 distribution appears
213 larger on the south and west side of La Reunion and to the west above the ocean.

214 Higher concentrations are simulated the 4th of April, with a peak of $680 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ obtained at
215 St. Joseph and $350 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ obtained at St. Louis. For stations in the north of the island, the
216 concentrations are close to of those April 3rd. The maximum SO_2 concentration at the surface
217 is thus located in the heights of the island, where high concentrations are simulated notably
218 with more $1000 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in the heights above the city of Saint Joseph (south of Réunion Island).
219 On the 5th of April, an increase of heat flow and a decrease in the stability of the atmospheric
220 boundary layer allows the plume to reach higher altitude and in consequence be oriented directly
221 to the northwest.

222 Finally, the 6 April, high concentrations are only simulated over the entire southern half of
223 the island, with concentrations over $5000 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$, 10 times the threshold recommended by
224 European standards. Unfortunately, no observations are available in the south of the island to
225 validate these very high-simulated concentrations the 6 April.

4.3. Comparison between MesoNH simulation and ORA data

From 2 to 5 April, the simulation succeeds to correctly reproduce general trends for all simulated stations on the island (Figure 7). On the 2nd, the SO₂ surface concentration given by MesoNH corresponds to ORA observations for these three stations with values below 15 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Cambaie and Saint Denis and a peak of 200 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in the middle of the day for Saint Louis. On the 3rd, Saint Denis station did not record any presence of SO₂ while Cambaie station had a gradual increase with a peak of 85 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for ORA observation and 135 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in MesoNH simulation. Saint Louis has experienced a significant increase with a SO₂ surface concentration of 480 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ measured by ORA and of 605 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ simulated by MesoNH, once again in the middle of the day. The 4th of April, no changes occurred for Saint Denis, while a strong SO₂ increase appears at Cambaie with 500 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ in MesoNH and 601 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for ORA observations. The same behaviour is also seen for Saint Louis station, with 585 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ observed against a strong over concentration simulated value of 1135 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. It is important to note that this latter station is positioned on a very strong gradient of SO₂ (1135 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ to 220 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at 5km away). This strong increase is immediately followed by a sharp decrease at the end of the day, with value below 150 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Cambaie and 200 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Saint Louis. On the 5th SO₂ concentration varies between 30 to 200 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Cambaie, and 10 to 300 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for Saint Louis except in the evening (18 UTC) where the simulation does not succeed to keep low concentration values (550 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ simulated instead of 35 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ observed). For the simulation's last day, the SO₂ surface concentration given by the model is stronger than observations, with highest values of more than 450 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ (against 45 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ observed) at Cambaie and a peak of 590 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ at Saint Louis instead of 55 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. The same anomaly appears for Saint Denis, when shortly after 00 UTC, the simulation gives a peak of 450 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ instead of a total absence of

248 volcanic SO₂ highlighted by ORA measurements. Despite these orders of magnitude anomalies
249 from the April 6th, and the global over exposition of SO₂ surface concentration for Saint Louis,
250 SO₂ concentrations between 2 and April 7 are generally consistent with ORA measurements.
251 The simulation succeed to recreate the paradoxical situation between the highest surface SO₂
252 concentration measured by ORA the 4 April whereas the paroxysmal intensity of the eruption
253 is in the night (from 20 UTC) of the 5 April and on April 6th.

4.4. Vertical transport above the eruption

254 The increased lava flow and its greater surface coverage between April 2 and 7 consequently
255 involves an increase in heat flux over the lava flow. Heat flow for the first three days are moderate
256 with an average of 12800 W m⁻². Local circulation is still dominated by trade winds with
257 surface winds around 5 m s⁻¹. The plume reached 2.5km ASL. (under 100 μg m⁻³) and the
258 highest SO₂ concentration value are close to the surface (23000 μg m⁻³). However, from April
259 5th, the general trend is the increasing of trade winds (11 m s⁻¹ around the eruption zone). This
260 increase induces more heat flux (22500 W m⁻² April 5) and a local breeze in the eruption area
261 which creates a more efficient vertical transport of volcanic sulfur.

262 The surface warming and the heat flow associated with the lava flow generate atmospheric
263 instability in the low layers of the troposphere. On Figure 8, the strong convection above the lava
264 flow creates a large mixing area with a maximal negative vertical gradient of equivalent potential
265 temperature of $\partial\theta_e/\partial z = -1.5\text{K/km}$ between the lava and 7km ASL. Under the influence of the
266 trade winds, the vertical structure of the plume in altitude is moving slightly westward. The
267 vertical wind above the eruption reached 14 m s⁻¹ from 3 to 5km ASL. and transports SO₂ up
268 to 8 km high (under 100 μg m⁻³), ie above the inversion zone trade winds situated between 2.5
269 and 3.5 km of altitude. At this altitude the plume is in thermodynamic equilibrium with the

270 environment and oriented according to the wind direction, ie west/southwest. The plume is no
271 longer transported to the west, but in the direction of Mauritius and Australia. High values of
272 SO₂ concentration are modeled up to 6km (above 30000 $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) the 6 April (Figure 9, cross
273 section in left panel corresponds to blue line (2 April) in Figure 1 and cross section in right
274 panel corresponds to red line (6 April)).

4.5. Rainfall and aqueous chemistry

275 The 5 and the 6 April, strong clouds formations appears in the Piton de la Fournaise area. The
276 associated accumulated rainfall simulated between 2 and 7 April 2007 by MesoNH is consistent
277 with Meteo-France observations (Figure 10). Only the southeast weather station gives high
278 rainfall value (67mm cumulated), whereas the western weather station recorded lower value
279 (15mm and 6mm). One possible causes of concentrations overprediction for April 6th is that
280 the scavenging of SO₂ by rain and cloud water leading to sulfuric acid formation is not taken
281 into account in the simulation. However, Meteo-France measurements have shown that between
282 April 2 and 7, the largest quantity of rain were observed only for the 6 April in the volcanic
283 region. As MesoNH includes a cloud chemistry module [Leriche *et al.*, 2013] a sensitivity test
284 was realized from April 5 18 UTC to April 7 00 UTC (limited period due to high computational
285 cost) by activating this module. A simplified mechanism in aqueous phase was used including
286 the oxidation of SO₂ into sulfuric acid by hydrogen peroxide, ozone and pernitric acid [Leriche
287 *et al.*, 2003]. The module includes also the mass transfer kinetic for the exchange between
288 the gas phase and liquid phases of soluble gases and their redistribution between cloud water
289 and rainwater by microphysical processes (collision/coalescence leading to precipitation and
290 sedimentation of raindrops leading to wet deposition).

291 One of the main consequence of cloud chemistry activation is a global decrease of SO₂ surface
292 concentration due to SO₂ scavenging by rainfall and aqueous phase SO₂ chemistry transforma-
293 tion inside clouds over Reunion Island. The 6 April at 13 UTC, the difference of SO₂ surface
294 concentration between the simulation with cloud chemistry activated (AQ simulation) and ref-
295 erence simulation (REF) reach up to $-700 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ over the high terrain in the center of the island
296 (Figure 11). The SO₂ surface concentration for the western coastline is $200 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ lower for
297 the AQ simulation than the REF simulation and for the Piton de la Fournaise area, a strong de-
298 crease appears due to the proximity of the vent with the presence of high rainfall this day over
299 the volcano. Generally, a 30% to 60% decrease is simulated by MesoNH, giving SO₂ surface
300 concentrations close to ORA observations (Figure 12).

5. Influence of sensible heat fluxes in the transport of SO₂

301 A sensitivity study was performed to characterize the influence of heat flux forcings over the
302 vent and lava on the vertical transport of SO₂ (Figure 9). To do so, an additional simulation
303 has been made without thermodynamic flux (NO-FLX) to highlight the contribution of these
304 fluxes in the transport and the dispersion of sulfur dioxide. This simulation rapidly presents
305 large discrepancy from the reference simulation (REF) as shown by Figure 13 in the differences
306 of SO₂ concentration (in $\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$) between the NO-FLX simulation and the REF simulation on
307 the 3,4,5 and 6 of April at 13 UTC. A strong positive difference in concentrations appears for
308 the whole southern part of the island with a maximum of $32000 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$. The northwestern part
309 of the island is also overexposed to higher concentrations of the order of $500 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ for April
310 3 and $1000 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ from April 3 to 5. Conversely, negative anomalies are simulated the 4th
311 of April for the northwest with less than $340 \mu\text{g m}^{-3}$ compared to concentrations in the REF
312 simulation. As a main consequence, concentrations obtained with the simulation NO-FLX are

313 also far from ORA measurements. In general, unrealistic peaks are simulated (Figure 14) with
314 a factor of 5 to 35 in the south, and 5 to 10 in the northwest compared to ORA observations.
315 Taking into account sensible heat flux from lava is therefore of prime importance as the NO-
316 FLX simulation did not recreate correctly the spatial and temporal distribution of sulfur dioxide
317 for the 2007 eruption of Piton de la Fournaise. Here, the lack of heat flux injection did not allow
318 adequate vertical transport, essential to get an overall good representation of SO₂ distribution.
319 As a general consequence we estimate that numerical modeling of the April 2007 eruption
320 cannot be represented without heat flux correctly estimated and injected at the eruptive vent.

6. Conclusions

321 The objective of this study was to model fine scale spatial distribution of SO₂ degassed during
322 the eruption of the Piton de la Fournaise in April 2007. It was necessary to adequately modeled
323 the heat flux injection over the vent and lava flow to simulate the atmosphere dynamics that
324 drives this SO₂ distribution. The simulation has been found to be in relatively good agreement
325 with observations, and highlighted two phases. With moderate value of heat fluxes from lava
326 flow (12800 W.m⁻²), the first phase, between April 2 and 4, shows a SO₂ plume still contained
327 under the trade wind inversion at 3km ASL. The main consequence is a high SO₂ surface con-
328 centration for western stations (600 μg m⁻³ for ORA observations, 500 μg m⁻³ for simulation at
329 Cambaie). The second phase, between April 5 and 7, corresponds to the eruption maximum in-
330 tensity. This high intensity is accompanied by a strong increase in lava heat flux (22500 W m⁻²)
331 that allows the SO₂ plume to cross the trade wind inversion, and reach an altitude of 8km ASL
332 on the 6th of April. This deep convection reduces surface SO₂ concentration (600 μg m⁻³ to 100
333 μg m⁻³ in few hours at Cambaie), but the model fails to keep low SO₂ surface concentration on
334 the last simulation day (peaks at 400 μg m⁻³ instead of 55 μg m⁻³ at the end of 6 April). These

335 over predictions were addressed by taking into account the cloud chemistry in a sensitivity study
336 realized from 12 UTC on April 5 to April 7. During this period, the scavenging of SO₂ by rain
337 water and cloud water significantly reduces SO₂ surface concentration, producing sulfuric acid
338 and as a consequence acid rain. Overall, the reference simulation was largely in good agreement
339 and within the same order of magnitude, with the observation values from ORA. To highlight
340 heat flux influence, a second sensitivity study was performed, in which the heat fluxes from the
341 vent and lava flow were totally suppressed. Without these additional contributions of heat flux,
342 the simulated surface concentrations are up to 45 times higher than the observations. One of
343 the main conclusions of the study is that heat flux above lava is a crucial parameter to take into
344 account in order to reproduce correctly SO₂ distribution. This additional energy allows the de-
345 velopment of strong convection that injects volcanic discharges over the atmospheric boundary
346 layer. The heat flux model, although still imperfect by its surface representation, significantly
347 improve the SO₂ spatial distribution, as shown in this study by respecting orders of magnitude
348 compared to observations and by displaying correct temporal evolution of the simulated surface
349 concentrations.

350 A perspective of improvement is the implementation of a new deep convection scheme to
351 improve the representation of sub-grid convective transport in MesoNH model. The initial deep
352 convection scheme from MESO-NH basic package is not adapted for an extreme event such
353 as volcanic eruption. Indeed, some important processes are not taken into account or are not
354 representative of a phenomenology of an eruption, such as the speed of ejection of gas and
355 heat flow, or the absence of the mixing vertical processes. A strategy could be a coupling
356 system between a more detailed lava surface model and MesoNH atmospheric model to better
357 reproduce the distribution and evolution of the lava during the period.

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Simulation	Period	Lava heat flux	Cloud chemistry
REF	04/02 00 UTC - 04/07 00 UTC	Yes	No
NO-FLX	04/02 00 UTC - 04/07 00 UTC	No	No
AQ	04/05 18 UTC - 04/07 00 UTC	Yes	Yes

Table 1. The 3 simulations configurations. REF is the reference simulation, NO-FLX is the simulation without heat fluxes from lava flows and AQ is the simulation with cloud chemistry activated

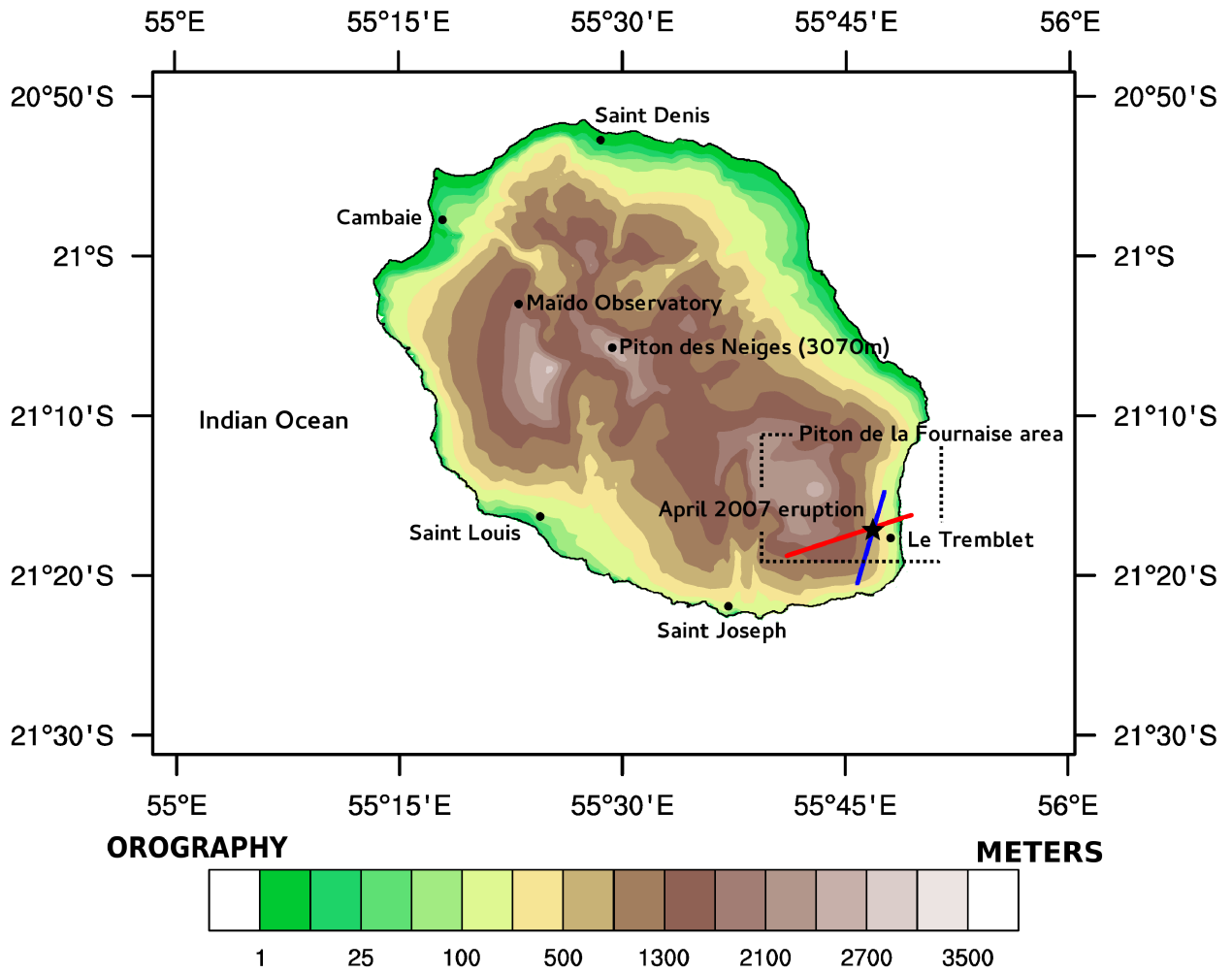


Figure 1. Orography and geographic situation of Reunion Island. The blue line and the red line in the Piton de la Fournaise area correspond respectively to the cross section of 2 April 2007 and 6 April 2007 describes in section 4-3.

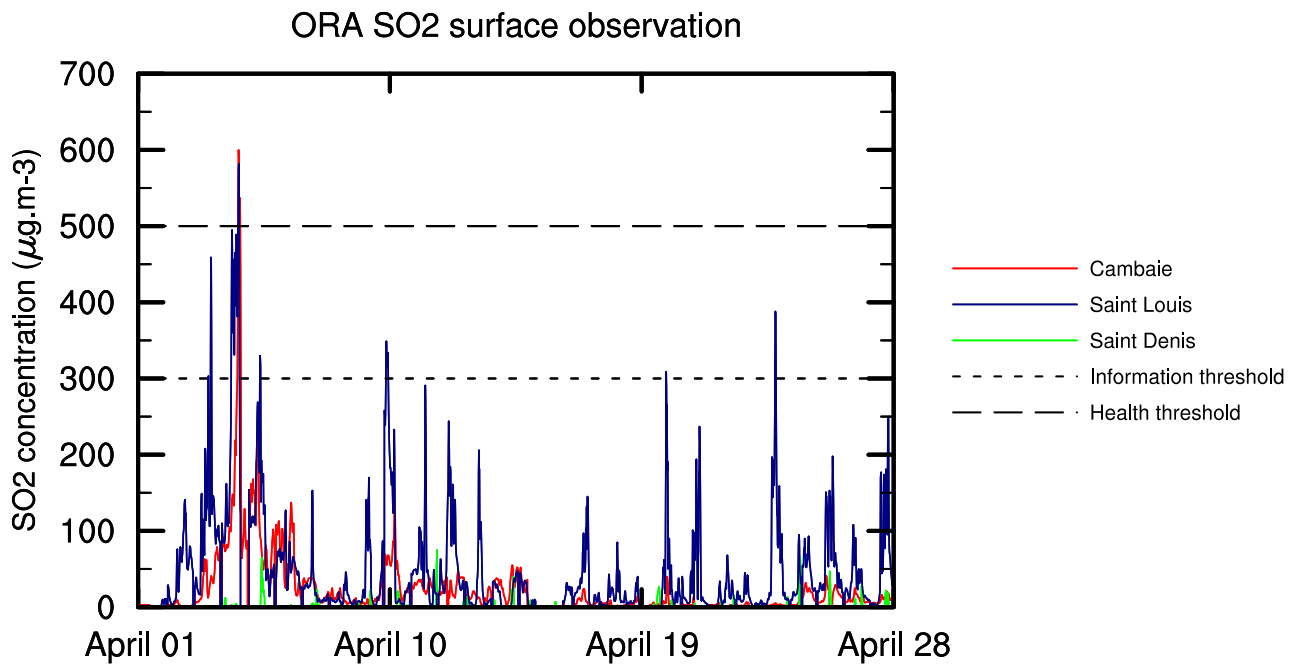


Figure 2. ORA measurements between April 1st and April 28th for Cambaie in the northwest (red), Saint Louis in the southwest (blue) and Saint Denis in the north (Green). Thin dashed line is the public information threshold and the large dashed line is the health threshold.

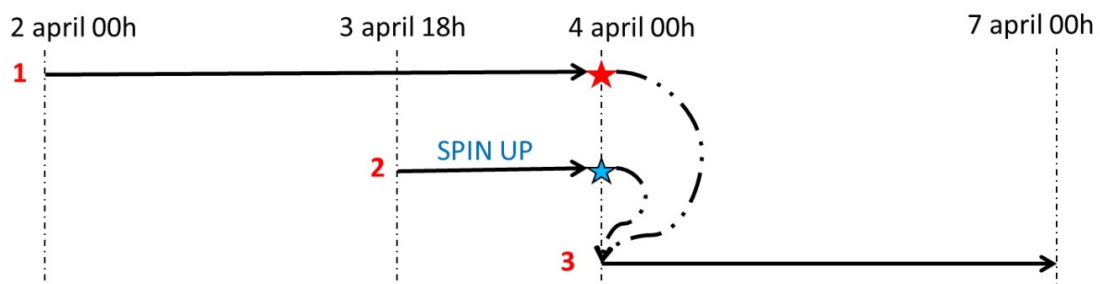


Figure 3. Updating the model dynamic: As a first step, the reference simulation begins the 2 April until 4 April 00 UTC (1). Then a new simulation begins April 3 18 UTC until 4 April 00 UTC (2). This latter will give the new model dynamics while avoiding the early simulation spin up. Finally, the REF simulation resumes the 4 April 00 UTC into the end, with chemical fields of (1) and model dynamic of (2).

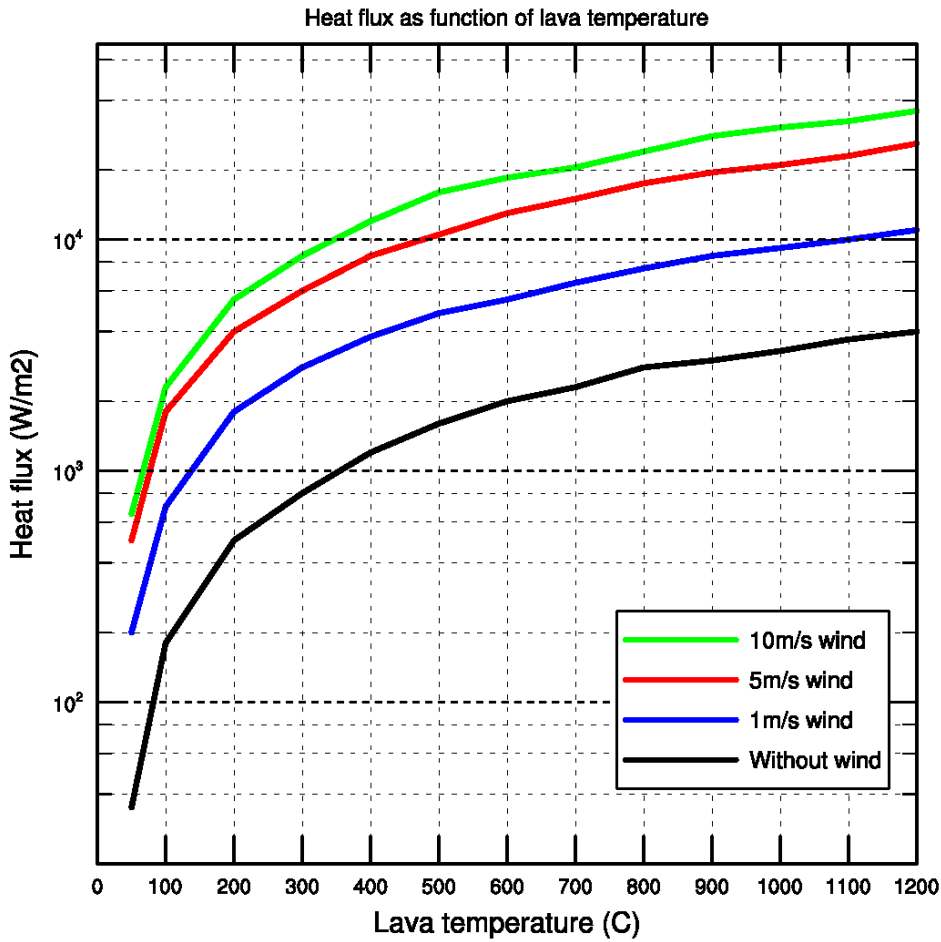


Figure 4. Heat flux evolution with lava surface temperature (Kezsthelyi et al, 2003). The green, red, blue and black lines represent heat fluxes respectively for 10 m s⁻¹, 5 m s⁻¹, 1 m s⁻¹ and without surface wind.

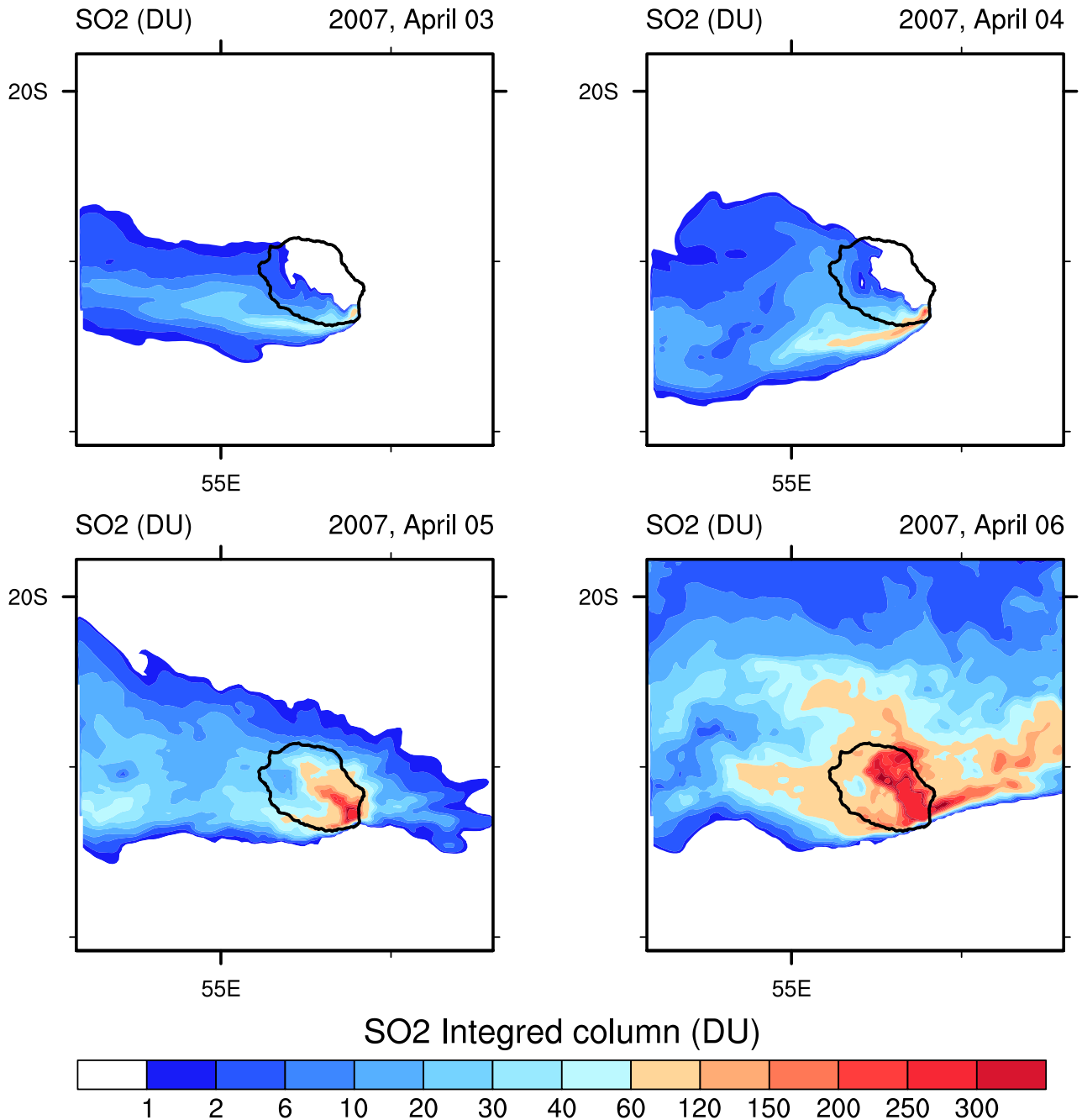


Figure 5. Integrated column of SO₂ (DU) between April 3 and April 6 at 13 UTC above the Reunion Island from first model domain (2km horizontal model grid spacing). April 2 and 3, the SO₂ plume, influenced by the trade winds below the thermic inversion, is oriented to the west. The 4 and 5 April, a large part of the SO₂ plume are crossing the trade winds inversion and is transported to the northeast.

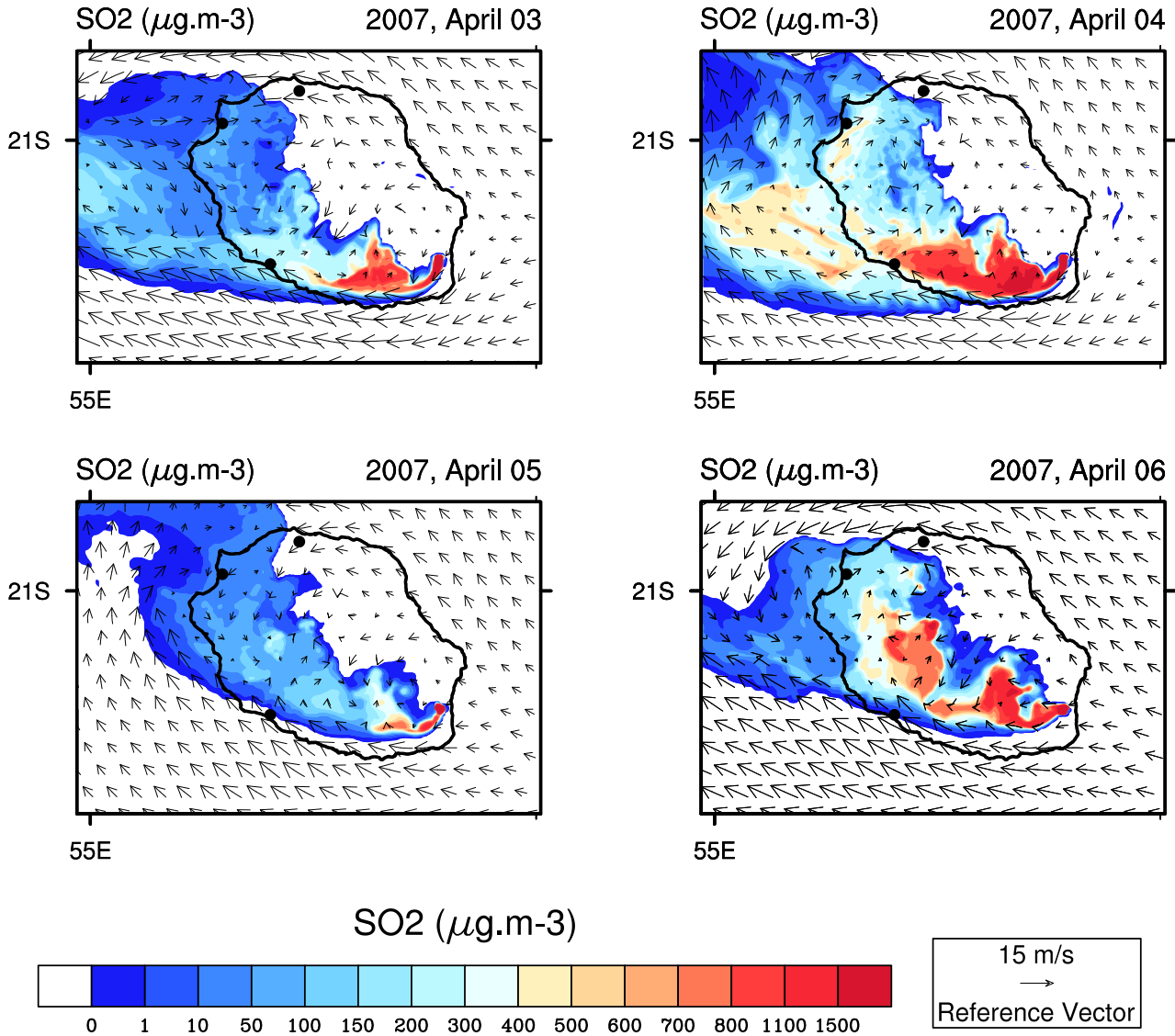


Figure 6. Surface concentration of SO₂ between April 3 and 6 at 13 UTC from MesoNH mesoscale atmospheric model smallest domain (500m horizontal model grid spacing)

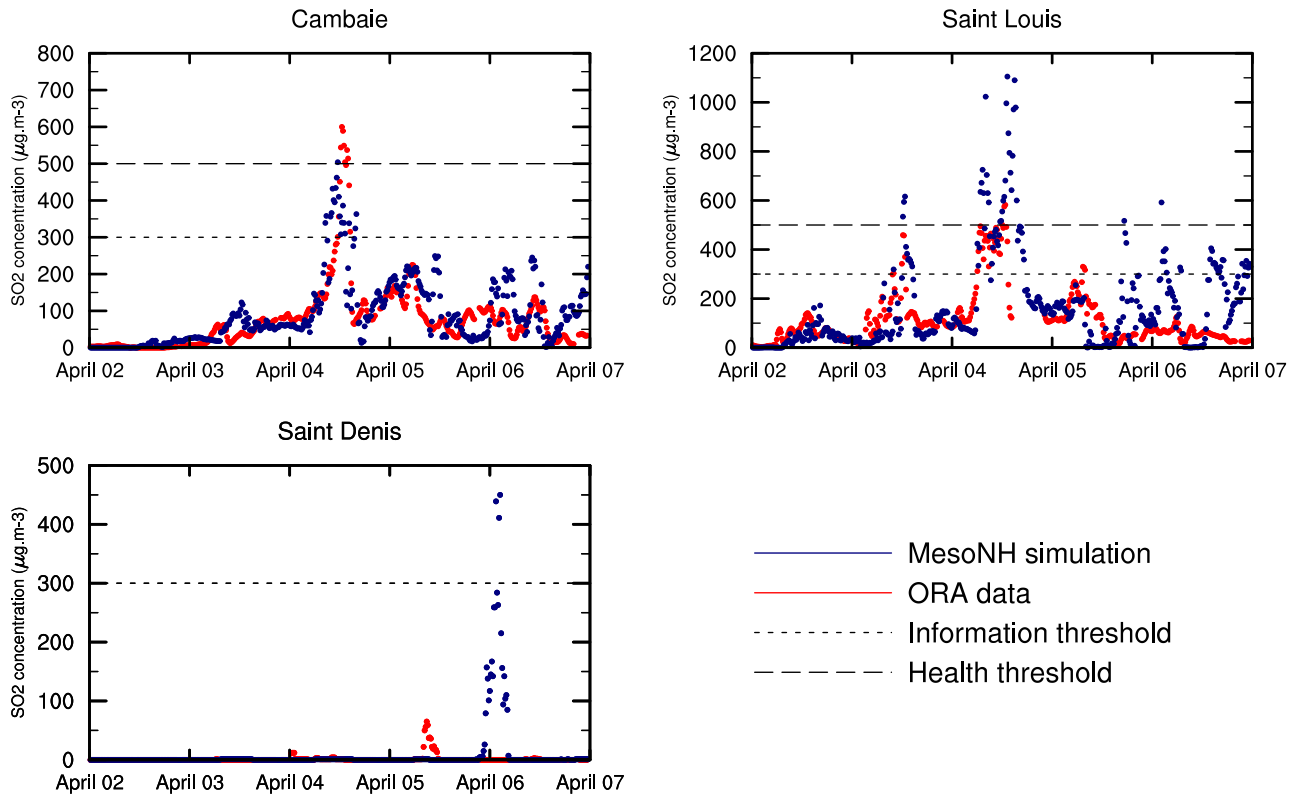


Figure 7. Comparison between ORA observation (blue points) and MesoNH simulation (red points) from April 2 to 7 April. The large dashed line is the health threshold while the thin dashed line is the information threshold.

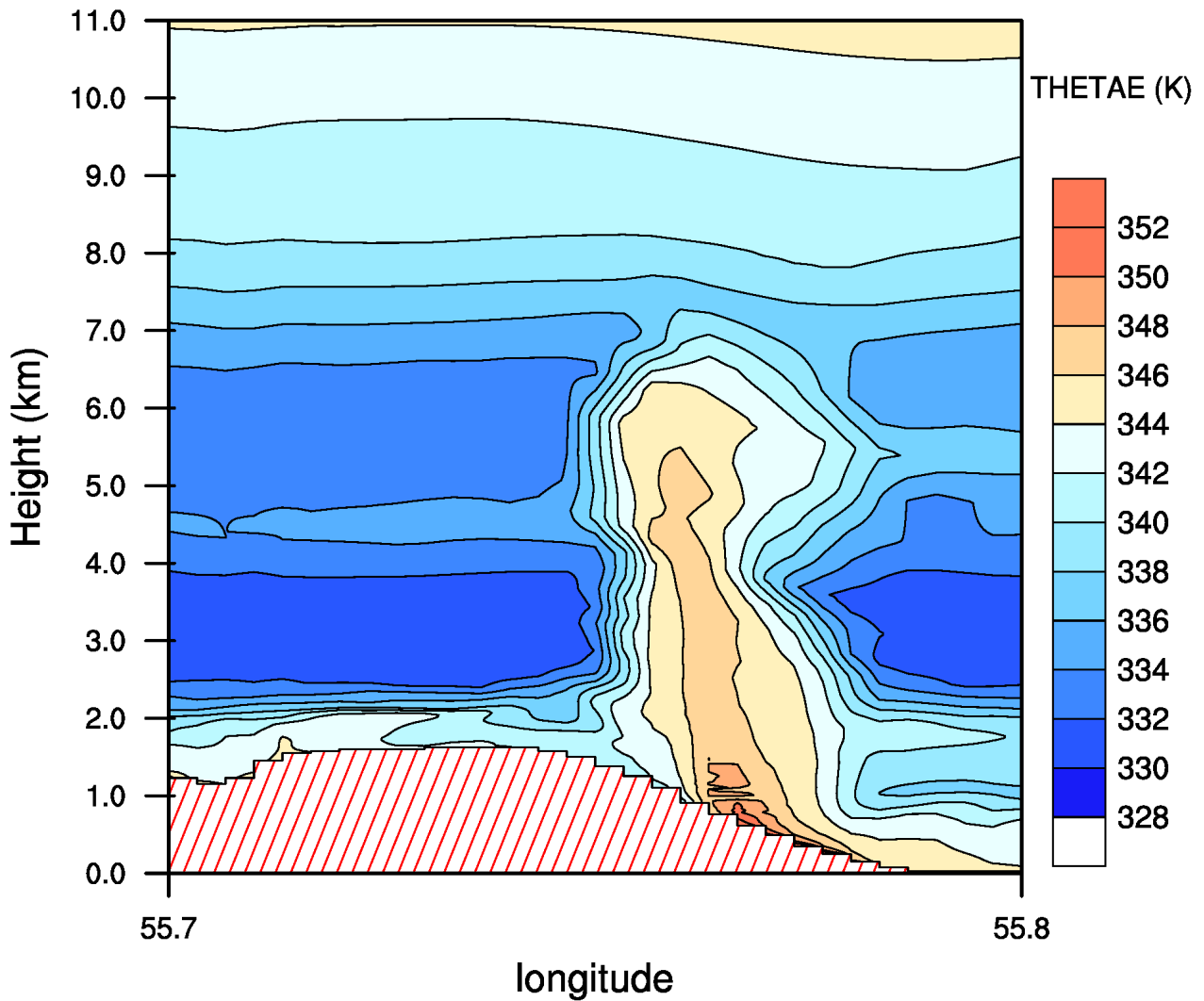


Figure 8. Cross section of equivalent potential temperature (K) for the 6th April at 13 UTC along red line in Figure 1. The strong convection above the lava flow creates a large mixing area with a maximal negative vertical gradient of equivalent potential temperature of $\partial\theta_e/\partial z = -1.5\text{K/km}$ between the lava and 7km ASL. Under the influence of the trade winds, the vertical structure of the plume in altitude is moving slightly westward.

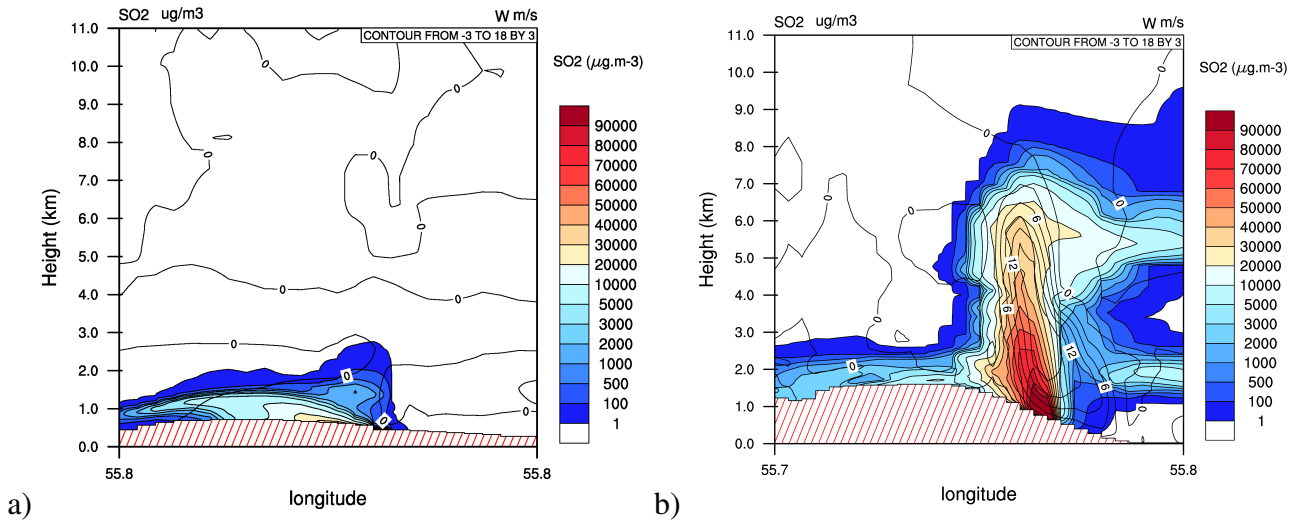
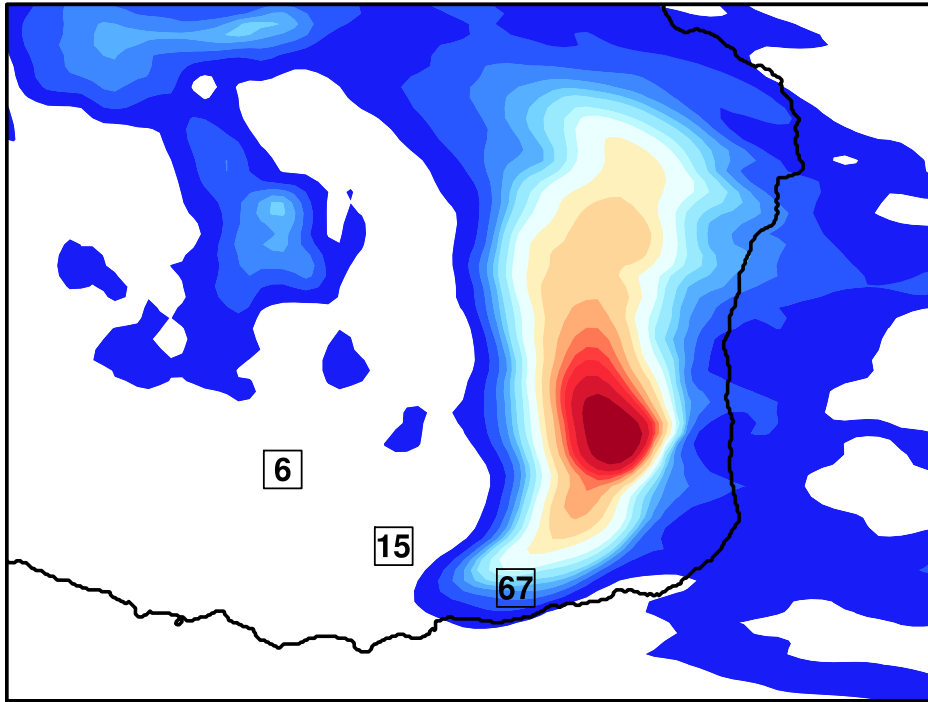


Figure 9. Cross section along SO_2 plumes for April 3 (left) and April 6 (right) at 13 UTC. The cross sections are not in the same direction due to change of plume orientation. The left panel corresponds to blue line in Figure 1, the right panel to red line. Color filling corresponds to SO_2 concentrations ($\mu\text{g m}^{-3}$), isocontours values represent the upward velocity intensity (m s^{-1}) generated by lava heat flow.

Accumulated rainfall (mm)

2007, April 07



Accumulated rainfall (mm)

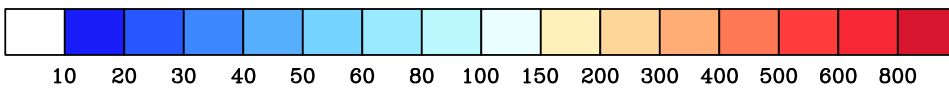


Figure 10. Accumulated rainfall given by MesoNH model between 2 and 7 April 2007. The numbers correspond to Meteo-France observations.

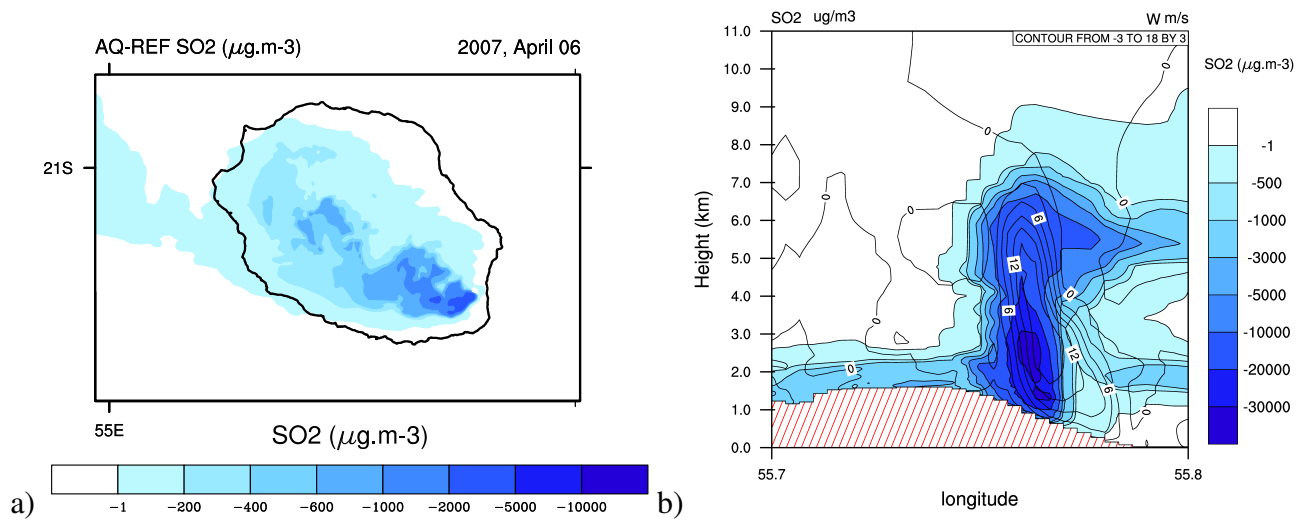


Figure 11. Difference of SO₂ concentration between AQ and REF simulation the 6 April at 13 UTC at the surface (left panel) and in the plume (right panel).

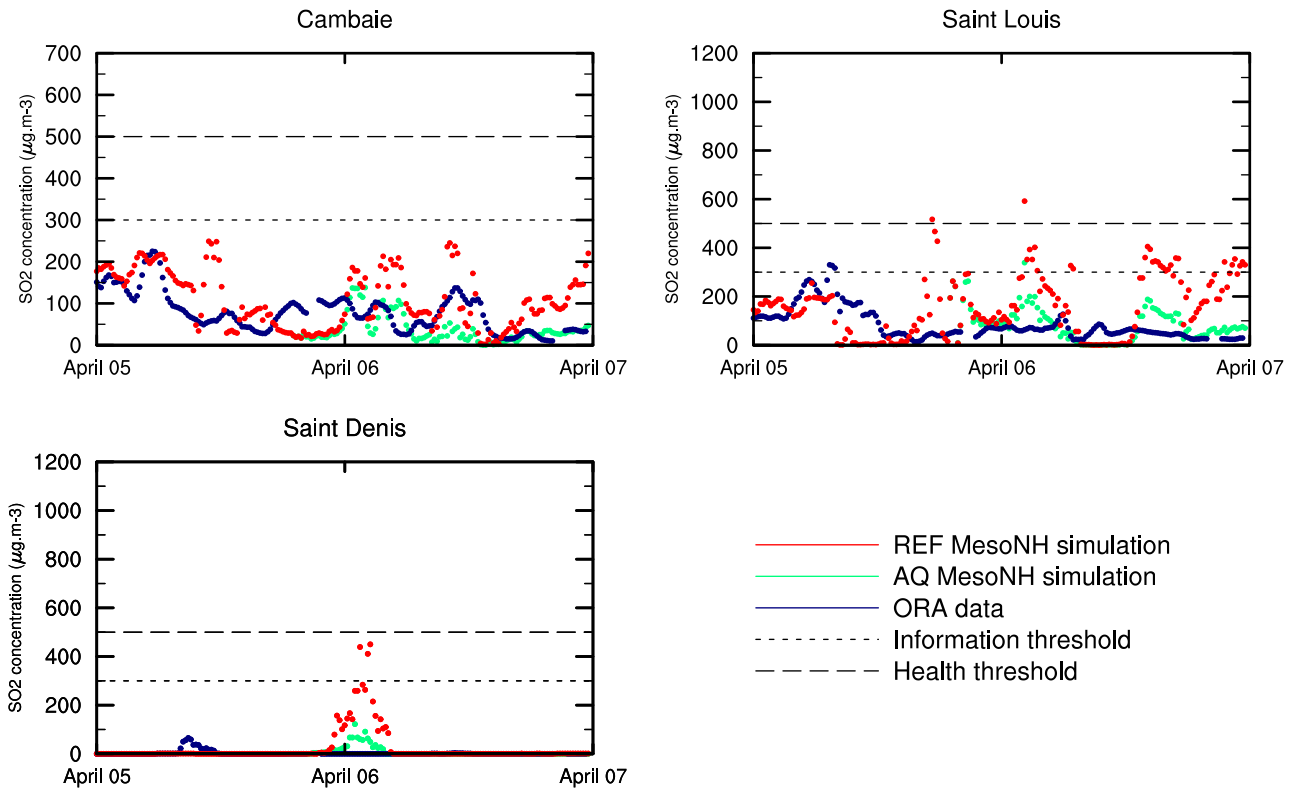


Figure 12. Comparison surface SO₂ concentration between between REF simulation and AQ simulation with observation providing by ORA.

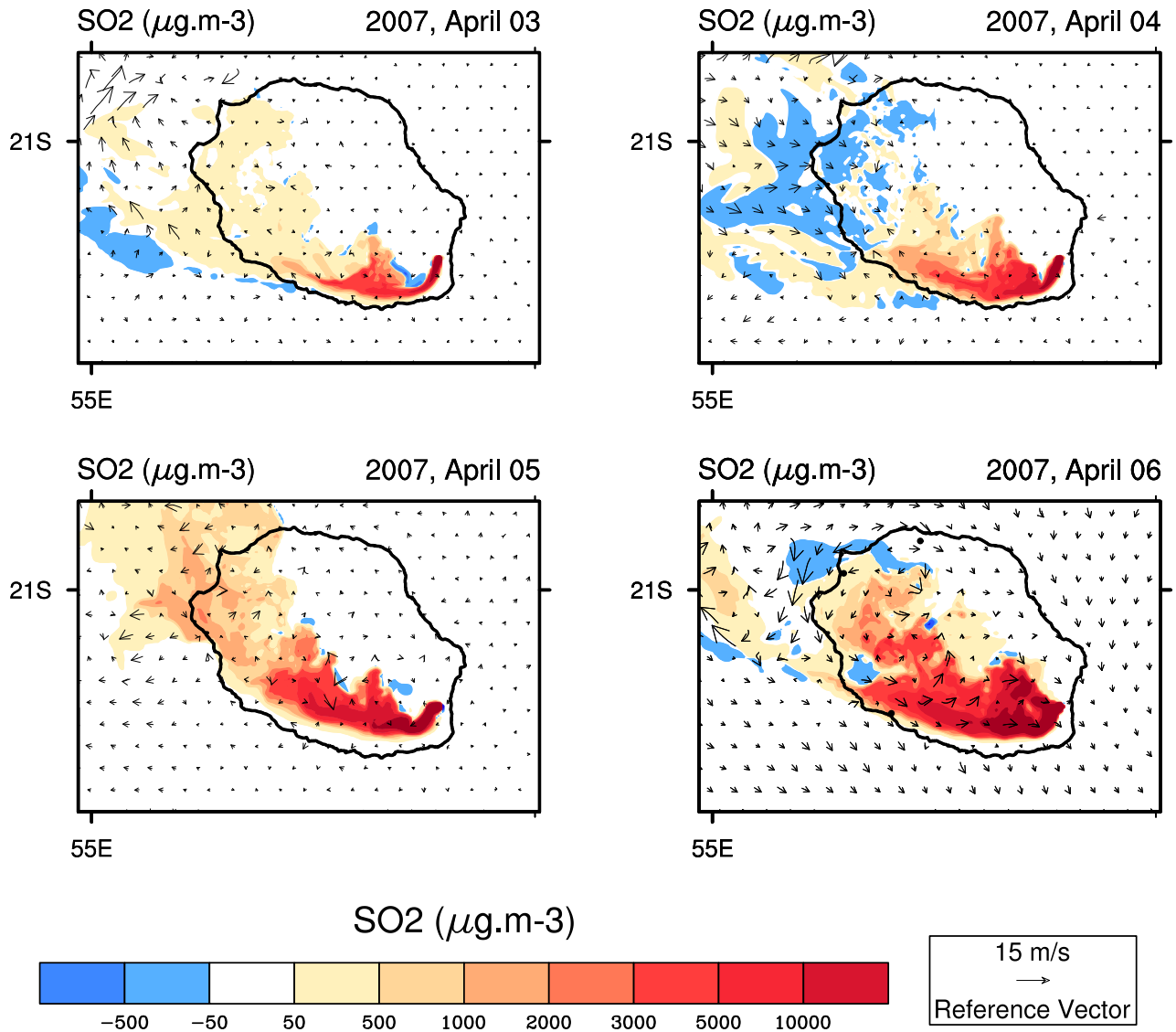


Figure 13. SO₂ concentration difference at the surface between NO-FLX and REF simulations, for April 3,4,5 and 6 2007 at 13 UTC. The arrows represent the difference of the wind field between NO-FLX simulation and REF simulation.

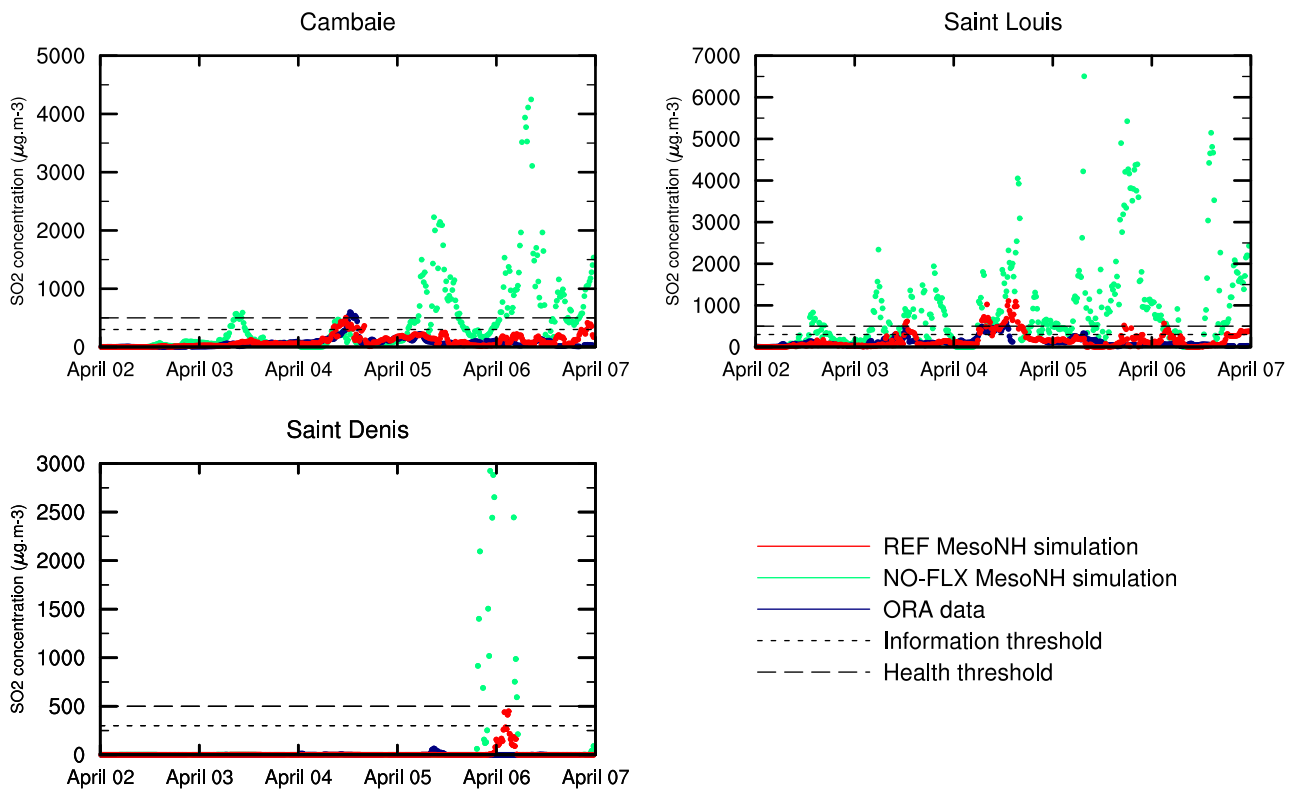


Figure 14. Comparison of surface SO₂ concentration between NO-FLX simulation (green), REF simulation (red) and ORA measurements (blue). Thin dashed line is the public information threshold. Large dashed line is the health threshold.