

State of the science in reconciling top-down and bottom-up approaches for terrestrial CO 2 budget

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bottom-up

20 **Running Title:** On reconciliation of $CO₂$ budgets

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73 **Abstract**

74 Robust estimates of CO_2 budget, CO_2 exchanged between the atmosphere and terrestrial biosphere, are 75 necessary to better understand the role of the terrestrial biosphere in mitigating anthropogenic $CO₂$ 76 emissions. Over the past decade, this field of research has advanced through understanding of the 77 differences and similarities of two fundamentally different approaches: "top-down" atmospheric 78 inversions and "bottom-up" biosphere models. Since the first studies were undertaken, these approaches 79 have shown an increasing level of agreement, but disagreements in some regions still persist, in part 80 because they \overline{d} and estimate the same quantity of atmosphere-biosphere CO_2 exchange. Here we 81 conducted a thorough comparison of $CO₂$ budgets at multiple scales and from multiple methods to 82 assess the current state of the science in estimating $CO₂$ budgets. Our set of atmospheric inversions and 83 biosphere models, which were adjusted for a consistent flux definition, showed a high level of 84 agreement for global and hemispheric $CO₂$ budgets in the 2000s. Regionally, improved agreement in 85 CO2 budgets was notable for North America and Southeast Asia. However, large gaps between the two 86 methods remained in East Asia and South America. In other regions, Europe, boreal Asia, Africa, South 87 Asia, and Oceania, it was difficult to determine whether those regions act as a net sink or source because 88 of the large spread in estimates from atmospheric inversions. These results highlight two research 89 directions to improve the robustness of $CO₂$ budgets: (1) to increase representation of processes in 90 biosphere models that could contribute to fill the budget gaps, such as forest regrowth and forest 91 degradation, and (2) to reduce sink-source compensation between regions (dipoles) in atmospheric 92 inversion so that their estimates become more comparable. Advancements on both research areas will 93 increase the level of agreement between the top-down and bottom-up approaches and yield more robust 94 knowledge of regional $CO₂$ budgets. 76 emissions, Quer line past decade, that iteld of research has advanced through understanding of the terms of the states were undertaken, these approaches inversions and bontown up "bissphere models. Since the first stati

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- 96 **Keywords:** terrestrial CO₂ budget, net CO₂ flux, atmospheric inversion, biosphere model, carbon stock

98 **1. INTRODUCTION**

99 Understanding the mitigation potential of the terrestrial biosphere against anthropogenic $CO₂$ 100 emissions hinges upon accurate assessment of the net atmosphere-land CO_2 flux (net CO_2 flux, - for a 101 net sink and + for a net source). Our ability to diagnose CO_2 sink-source patterns of the net CO_2 flux has 102 progressed owing to the development of "top-down" atmospheric inversions (Peylin et al., 2013; 103 Thompson et al., 2016) and "bottom-up" biosphere models (Sitch et al., 2008, 2015). Compared with 104 early studies that varied by more than 3.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ in their estimates of northern and tropical $CO₂$ fluxes 105 (e.g., Gurney et al., 2002; Jacobson, Fletcher, Gruber, Sarmiento, & Gloor, 2007; Peylin, Baker, 106 Sarmiento, Ciais, & Bousquet, 2002; Rödenbeck, Houweling, Gloor, & Heimann, 2003), net CO₂ fluxes 107 by current atmospheric inversions are converging around a sink of 1.0 to 2.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ in northern 108 extratropical (NE) lands and a small net flux in southern−tropical (ST) lands, due to improvements in 109 the transport processes modeling and abundance of aircraft and vessel observations, along with 110 improved in situ CO2 observation networks (Gaubert et al., 2019; Stephens et al., 2007). Likewise, net 111 CO₂ fluxes simulated by biosphere models have become roughly consistent with this pattern, especially 112 in ST lands, due to the offset of land-use change (LUC) emissions with enhanced $CO₂$ uptake by the 113 stimulating effect of rising atmospheric $CO₂$ on plant photosynthesis (Schimel, Stephens, & Fisher, 114 2015). However, disagreements in the $CO₂$ budgets between top-down and bottom-up approaches 115 remain nontrivial at regional scales (Cervarich et al., 2016; Ciais et al., 2013; Kondo, Ichii, Takagi, & 116 Sasakawa, 2015). In the fifth assessment report of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 117 AR5), the sign and magnitude of regional $CO₂$ budget estimates were still contradictory between 118 atmospheric inversions and biosphere models for some regions (Ciais et al., 2013). 102 progressed owning to the development of "dop-down" atmospheric inversions (Peylin et al., 2013;

103 Thompson et al., 2016; and "botton-up" biosphere models (Sikh et al., 2008; 2015). Congared with

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119 These previous syntheses highlight the challenges of reconciling the top-down and bottom-up 120 approaches and the importance of spatial scale in evaluating agreement and uncertainties. When 121 comparing CO_2 budgets of multiple methods, understanding the definition of the net CO_2 flux and 122 associated component fluxes that are included in developing the CO₂ budgets become increasingly 123 important because these could lead to either a "total" or "partial" exchange of $CO₂$ between the 124 atmosphere and land depending upon the methods employed. The former applies to methods that use 125 atmospheric CO₂ concentrations as a basis for estimation such as atmospheric inversions (Peylin et al., 126 2013). The latter applies to methods that account for known processes in the carbon cycle interacting 127 with the biosphere such as biosphere models (Sitch et al., 2015). Major terms that cause challenges in

129 hydrosphere fluxes, such as lateral riverine carbon export and $CO₂$ evasion from rivers and lakes, 130 included in atmospheric inversions, but not simulated in biosphere models, and (2) the incomplete 131 representation of $CO₂$ fluxes from land-use and management in biosphere models. Mitigating these 132 differences in terminology will advance our understanding of net CO₂ flux at regional scales which so 133 far has remained unresolved.

134 To address the current state of our knowledge on terrestrial CO₂ budgets and the level of 135 reconciliation between current modeling methods, $CO₂$ budget assessments at global, hemispheric, and 136 regional scales need to be reanalyzed with consistent datasets and definitions of the component fluxes 137 that determine net CO_2 flux. Based on the net CO_2 flux defined as "the atmosphere-biosphere CO_2 138 exchange" (excluding hydrosphere fluxes), we investigate net $CO₂$ fluxes estimated for the decade of 139 2000s (2000−2009) using fluxes adjusted around a consistent definition of the CO2 exchange. These are 140 compared with reproduced results of the IPCC AR5 obtained using inconsistent definitions, to determine 141 how definitions play a role in reconciliation between the modeling methods. Aimed at serving as a 142 useful reference, this study provides a thorough comparison between atmospheric inversions and 143 biosphere models, and also among other existing estimates of global and regional $CO₂$ budgets based on 144 forest inventories, remote sensing, atmospheric O_2 measurements, the residuals from non-terrestrial 145 components of global CO₂ budgets, and previous regional budget assessments from the REgional 146 Carbon Cycle Assessment and Processes (RECCAP, Canadell et al., 2011). Through these comparisons, 147 we highlight potential difficulties faced by current $CO₂$ budget assessments, and suggests ways forward 148 to increase the level of agreement between top-down and bottom-up approaches yielding more robust 149 knowledge of $CO₂$ budgets. 139 Interast content three comparisons of the method increases of the method increases and the served in the served on carbon stress and the served on the served content and the served in the served on the Author stock ch

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151 **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

152 **2.1 Definition of net CO2 flux**

153 We define the net $CO₂$ flux as the "atmosphere-biosphere $CO₂$ exchange", comprising components 154 such as photosynthesis, autotrophic and heterotrophic respirations, fire emissions, and $CO₂$ fluxes associated with land-use and land-cover changes. Adjustments based on the proposed definition of net CO2 flux were applied to the methods described herein where relevant (Fig. 1; Spatial and temporal applicability of the methods is shown in Table S1). Biosphere models comply with this definition, as they consider numerous processes of atmosphere-land biogeochemistry, including LUC fluxes in the

160 compilation of forest inventories (ΔC_{IM} , Pan et al., 2011) also complies with this definition. The 161 Vegetation Optical Depth (VOD) derived from passive microwave sensors (e.g., Liu et al., 2015) is only 162 applicable to aboveground vegetation, but can be supplemented by inventories of missing belowground 163 components to represent the total stock change (ΔC_{VOD}) . Methods that consider interactions beyond 164 those with the biosphere, such as atmospheric inversions, and global land uptake assessments based on a 165 residual of non-terrestrial components of global CO₂ budgets (residual method, Le Quéré et al., 2018a) 166 and based on decadal O_2 and CO_2 trends in the atmosphere (O_2 -based method, Keeling & Manning, 167 2014) can roughly comply with the proposed definition when the hydrosphere fluxes are excluded from 168 their budget estimates, as we discuss further in this paper.

- 170 **FIGURE 1.** Methods of terrestrial net CO₂ flux estimation.
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- 172 **2.2 Independent methods of estimating net CO2 flux**
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2.2.1 Atmospheric inversions

175 The net $CO₂$ flux from atmospheric inversions was represented by eight inversions (Table 1). These 176 inversions estimate net CO_2 flux through the assimilation of continuous or discrete atmospheric CO_2 measurements from global networks (e.g., World Data Centre for Greenhouse Gases, WDCGG; and the observation package (ObsPack) from the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory, NOAA/ESRL) in transport model, with prior information (e.g., net land flux, net ocean flux, fire emissions, and fossil fuel 180 emissions). The choices of $CO₂$ measurements and prior fluxes differ for each inversion system, as well as the spatial resolution and period of inverted fluxes (Table 1).

 For each inversion, posterior land flux was adjusted by the difference between the respective fossil fuel emissions prescribed in the inversion and a reference emission estimate. This "fossil fuel adjustment" is a necessary procedure for reducing variability in posterior fluxes, as differences in prescribed fossil fuel emissions largely affect posterior fluxes (Peylin et al., 2013), especially for recent periods for which the uncertainty in fossil fuel emissions remains large (Ballantyne et al., 2015). We applied the fossil fuel adjustment using the emission dataset prescribed in ACTM (Table 1), showing a 178 check the probability from the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory, NOAA/ESRL) in

179 transport model, with prior information (e.g., net land flux, net ocean flux, fire emissions, and fossil fuel

189 emissions, The

189 **TABLE 1.** Configuration of the atmospheric CO₂ inversion systems used in this study.

191

192 **2.2.2 Biosphere models**

193 Simulations from TRENDY v6 (Le Quéré et al., 2018a) represent the net $CO₂$ flux from the biosphere models of this study (Table 2). These simulations were prepared with a consistent forcing dataset: a global atmospheric CO2 concentrations for 1860−2016 based on ice core measurements and stationary observations from NOAA, a gridded climate dataset (CRU-NCEP v8) for 1901−2016 (Viovy, 2018), and a gridded annual land-use and land-cover change dataset for 1860−2016 (Hurtt et al., 2017; Klein Goldewijk, Beusen, Doelman, & Stehfest, 2017). The TRENDY models carried out three types of simulations: S1 that used varied atmospheric CO2, fixed climate (1901−1920) and fixed land-use and 200 land-cover (1860), S2 that used varied $CO₂$ and climate (with fixed land-use and land-cover at 1860), and S3 that varied all three drivers. For each simulation, the models first established an equilibrium 202 carbon balance by a spin-up run, forced with the 1860 CO_2 concentration (287.14 ppm), recycling climate variability from 1901−1920, and constant 1860 crop and pasture distributions. 213 diameter application and three states and the states of CSD-2016 based on ice core measurements and

216 diamary observations from NOAA, a gridded climate dataset (CRU-NCTP v8) for 1901–2016 (Viovy,

2018), and it gri

204 Attributes of the net CO_2 flux (i.e. the effects of CO_2 , climate, and LUC) were extracted by 205 separating flux signals in the S1, S2, and S3 simulations (Friedlingstein et al., 2006). The net $CO₂$ flux 206 of S3 represented the estimate most closely matching observations, including the interactions between 207 CO2, climate, and LUC effects on the ecosystem carbon cycling. Those from S1 and S2 represented 208 partial contributions to the net CO_2 flux, isolating the CO_2 effect and CO_2 +climate effects on the net 209 CO_2 flux, respectively. The LUC effect on the net CO_2 flux was extracted by subtracting estimates of S2 210 from that of S3. Similarly, the effect of climate was extracted by subtracting the net $CO₂$ flux of S1 from

212 **TABLE 2.** Configuration of the TRENDY models used in this study.

214

215 **2.2.3 Carbon stock changes, O2-based method, residual method, and RECCAP**

216 Inventory-based carbon stock changes (ΔC_{IM}) were estimated by incorporating information on forest area and biomass density obtained from (i) United Nations Global Forest Resources Assessment reports (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2006, 2010), (ii) deforestation and afforestation estimates from a book-keeping model (Houghton, 2007), and (iii) the observed carbon pools for regions around the globe. From these datasets, the sums of carbon stocks for intact and regrowth forests and soil carbon for 221 2000 and 2007 were used to calculate regional carbon stock changes (Pan et al., 2011), except for South Asia where a missing estimate was supplemented by inventory and forest area data for 1992−2002 from 223 Kaula, Dadhwal, and Mohren (2009). To estimate VOD-based carbon stock change (ΔC_{VOD}) for the 2000s, we used the satellite-derived gridded aboveground biomass from Global Aboveground Biomass Carbon v1.0 (Liu et al., 2015). The VOD-based aboveground biomass is estimated based on an empirical relationship between the gridded aboveground biomass for tropical regions (Saatchi et al., 2011) and harmonized passive microwave observations. VOD only measures aboveground backscatter, therefore belowground biomass was estimated as a constant fraction of the estimated aboveground biomass (Liu et al., 2015). To provide more reliable estimates, we replaced this belowground biomass of ΔC_{VOD} with the data used for ΔC_{IM} . 223 Based on the available major method of the available major and minor fluxes and minimizes from a book-keeping model (Houghton, 2007), and (iii) the observed enrono pools for regions around the book-keeping model (Houg

231 The O_2 -based method provides a mean annual global CO_2 budget for the land and ocean based on 232 destructive and constructive O_2 and CO_2 processes (Keeling & Manning, 2014). This approach utilizes 233 long-term measurements of CO_2 and the O_2/N_2 molar ratio between a sample and a reference, expressed 234 as $\delta(O_2/N_2)$, as changes in the global mean molar fraction of CO_2 and $\delta(O_2/N_2)$ are related to the net 235 sources and sinks of CO_2 , O_2 , and N_2 in the atmosphere. The budget used in this study was estimated for 236 2000–2010 by Keeling and Manning (2014). The residual method from the Global Carbon Project (Le 237 Quéré et al., 2018a) provided the global annual budget of land $CO₂$ uptake calculated as the difference 238 between the other terms in the global carbon budget, i.e., fossil fuel emissions minus the $CO₂$ growth 239 rate and the net ocean uptake simulated by biogeochemical models. The budget of this method for the 240 2000s was calculated using the data of Le Quéré et al. (2018a). The RECCAP project quantified regional 241 anthropogenic and biogenic $CO₂$ budgets by integrating $CO₂$ fluxes from multiple independent 242 approaches, including biosphere models, atmospheric inversions, and inventories (Canadell et al., 2011).

244 fluxes, the regional $CO₂$ budget was estimated for global regions. The regional budgets used in this 245 study were from re-calculated estimates based on the RECCAP studies in Li et al. (2016).

246

247 **2.3 Adjustments for the atmosphere-biosphere CO2 exchange estimation**

248 To yield the atmosphere-biosphere $CO₂$ exchange, global gridded data of lateral riverine carbon 249 export and $CO₂$ evasion from rivers and lakes were used to remove the hydrosphere components from 250 the fossil fuel adjusted $CO₂$ budgets of the atmospheric inversions. Global lateral riverine carbon 251 including dissolved organic and inorganic carbon (DOC and DIC, respectively) was obtained from the 252 multi-form model of nutrient exports by NEWS 2 (Mayorga et al. 2010). Global river CO_2 evasion was 253 derived from the empirical river water $pCO₂$ model and global maps of stream surface area and gas 254 exchange velocities (Lauerwald, Laruelle, Hartmann, Ciais, & Regnier, 2015). Global lake CO_2 evasion 255 was estimated based on lake pCO_2 , total lake/reservoir surface area, and total CO_2 evasions for 231 256 coastal regions (Raymond et al., 2013), subsequently downscaled to a continuous grid scale via the 257 Global Lakes and Wetland Database (Zscheischler et al., 2017). 273 To yield the authorsphere CO2 exchange, global gridded data of lateral riverime carbon
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258 These data were also used to derive the atmosphere-biosphere CO_2 exchange for the O_2 -based 259 method and RECCAP. The O_2 -based method and RECCAP account for lateral riverine exports as a part 260 of the land biosphere flux. Thus, we excluded annual riverine DOC and DIC fluxes from the global 261 budget estimates of both methods using the data described above. Global $CO₂$ uptake by the residual 262 method includes only riverine carbon exports due to anthropogenic perturbations (Le Quéré et al., 263 2018b). To remove that flux from the residual method, an estimate of the anthropogenic component of 264 river flux from Regnier et al. (2018) was used.

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266 **2.4 A constraint for the global budget**

267 Owing to atmospheric observations, the $CO₂$ budget at the global scale is the best understood among 268 those at other scales (Le Quéré et al., 2018a). To analyze $CO₂$ budgets at multiple scales, it is important 269 to have consistent global $CO₂$ budgets so that results of hemispheric and regional budgets would not be 270 misinterpreted due to outliers of global budget estimates. Therefore, we defined a criterion, based on the 271 global CO_2 budget from the residual method and ± 1.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ uncertainties, to constrain global CO_2 272 budgets from the top-down and bottom-up models for the 2000s. All eight atmospheric inversions of this 274 inversions. As for biosphere models, among the TRENDY models that provided net $CO₂$ fluxes of all 275 three experiments, ten models satisfied this criterion (Table 2).

276

277 **3. GLOBAL AND HEMISPHERIC BUDGETS**

278 To articulate differences from results of the IPCC AR5, we compared experiments from TRENDY 279 (S2: not including time-varying LUC simulation, and S3: including time-varying LUC simulation), and 280 atmospheric inversions before (INV) and after correcting for the hydrosphere components $(INV_{AB}$ 281 denotes inversions adjusted for the atmosphere-biosphere CO_2 exchange). TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} 282 represented "best estimates" of the net $CO₂$ flux, and TRENDY S2 and INV represented estimates 283 reproduced using the IPCC AR5 configuration (Fig. 2). As illustrated in Figure 3a, global $CO₂$ budgets 284 by TRENDY S2 (-2.6 [-2.9, -2.1] Pg C yr⁻¹: medians [lower, upper quartiles]) and INV (-2.3 [-2.5, -1.7] 285 Pg C yr⁻¹) largely overestimated the amount of $CO₂$ uptake compared with other independent estimates: 286 ΔC_{VOD} (-1.2 Pg C yr⁻¹), ΔC_{IM} (-1.2 Pg C yr⁻¹), the residual method (-0.9 Pg C yr⁻¹), O₂-based method (-287 0.7 Pg C yr⁻¹), and RECCAP (-1.3 \pm 0.6 Pg C yr⁻¹, mean \pm 1 σ). This overestimated CO₂ uptake is likely a 288 consequence of missing and excess components needed to satisfy the net $CO₂$ flux definition. 289 Meanwhile, upward shifts in the net $CO₂$ flux caused by accounting for LUC emissions in the biosphere 290 models and discounting the hydrosphere fluxes in the atmospheric inversions led to a close agreement in 291 global CO_2 budgets with respect to the other independent estimates and with each other, where 292 TRENDY S3 estimated -0.9 [-1.4, -0.8] Pg C yr⁻¹ and INV_{AB} estimated -0.9 [-1.2, -0.4] Pg C yr⁻¹ (Fig. 273 3 3 (S2) interannual variability (IAV) shown in Fig. S1).

293 3 3 (S2) interactions before (INV) and after considered the inversions before (INV) and after considered the method of the authorities inversions adjusted

295 **FIGURE 2.** Differences in definition of the net $CO₂$ flux. Schematics show the components of the net $CO₂$ flux. considered in: **a)** TRENDY S2 (biosphere models without LUC), **b)** INV (atmospheric inversions including hydrospheric components), **c)** TRENDY S3 (biosphere models including LUC), and **d)** INVAB (atmospheric inversions excluding hydrospheric components).

300 The global CO₂ budget largely consists of fluxes from northern boreal-temperate and pantropical ecosystems, with the former accounting for a large part of the global sink and the latter for a large part of the global LUC emissions (Ciais et al., 2019; Le Quéré et al., 2018b). That is, the well-constrained global $CO₂$ budgets among the methods should accompany a consistent budget partitioning between those regions. To evaluate this aspect, we applied the so-called "diver down" plot of Schimel, Stephens, 305 and Fisher (2015) to better understand global CO₂ budget partitioning into NE and ST lands (Fig. 3b, c). The reproduced IPCC AR5 results (TRENDY S2 and INV) exhibited limited overlap with each other

 lands. With the absence of LUC emissions, TRENDY S2 resulted in a net sink for both NE and ST lands, spanning approximately -1.0 to -2.0 Pg C yr-1. Including simulated LUC fluxes in biosphere models and removing the hydrosphere fluxes from atmospheric inversions shifted the NE and ST land fluxes of the two methods towards a reduced sink or net source, leading to an overlap between TRENDY S3 and 312 INV_{AB} (Fig. 3c; IAV shown in Fig. S2) and with ΔC_{VOD} , ΔC_{IM} , and RECCAP (Fig. 3c). However, 313 agreements between TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} are not yet robust, as the distribution of INV_{AB} leans more towards a net sink in NE lands (-2.2 to -0.7 Pg C yr-1) and a net source in ST lands (-0.4 to 1.0 Pg C yr-1) 315 than that of TRENDY S3: -2.0 to -0.5 Pg C yr⁻¹ in NE and -1.1 to 0.6 Pg C yr⁻¹ in ST lands.

319 carbon stock changes: ΔC_{VOD} (black dashed line) and ΔC_{IM} (green dashed line), O₂-based method (yellow dashed 320 line), residual method (red dashed line), and estimates from the RECCAP project (circle representing the mean 321 value and bar representing the 1σ uncertainty). Box plots are shown for the biosphere models (three TRENDY 322 simulations, S1, S2, and S3) and atmospheric inversions (INV and INV_{AB}). Partitioning of the global CO_2 budget 323 into northern extratropical (NE) and southern-tropical (ST) lands (diver-down plot) for **b)** TRENDY S2 and INV 324 (IPCC AR5 reproduction), and **c**) TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} (results from this study). Gray lines are the constraint 325 on global CO_2 budgets represented by the global budget estimate from the residual method, with ± 1.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ 326 uncertainty. Results that fall within the constraints are combinations of NE and ST land budgets that preserve the 327 reference value of global $CO₂$ budget. Individual model estimates and error ellipse of 2σ range are shown for 328 TRENDY S2 and S3 (green and orange upper triangles, respectively), and INV and INV_{AB} (cyan and purple lower 329 triangles, respectively), along with the independent estimates from carbon stock changes: ΔC_{VOD} and ΔC_{IM} (star 330 and square, respectively) and estimate from the RECCAP project (circle representing the mean value).

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332 Figure 3c illustrates the results only of the net balance of CO₂ fluxes. To gain confidence in the 333 overlapping pattern between the two methods, it is necessary to understand changes in the patterns of 334 sinks and sources induced by the major processes governing the net $CO₂$ flux. The effect of increasing 335 CO₂ concentration on photosynthesis (the CO₂ effect) is considered the dominant driver of current 336 terrestrial CO2 uptake (Keenan et al., 2016; Keenan & Williams, 2018; Kondo et al., 2018a; Schimel, 337 Stephens, & Fisher, 2015), and LUC activities (the LUC effect) are the major net emissions source from 338 ecosystems to the atmosphere (Arneth et al., 2017; Kondo et al., 2018b). The net $CO₂$ flux of TRENDY 339 S3 decomposed into three attributes confirms that the CO₂ and LUC effects are the major sink and 340 source components in NE and ST lands, respectively (Fig. 4a). However, the climate effect should not 341 be overlooked, as it induces substantial changes in sink-source patterns during El Niño and La Niña 342 phases, especially in ST lands (Fig. 4a). Importantly, the overlap between TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} 343 holds not only for the decadal mean (Fig. 3c), but also for the El Niño and La Niña phases during the 344 2000s (Fig. 4b; IAV and seasonality of ST land fluxes shown in Fig. S3), indicating that large-scale flux 345 changes in response to El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) are similar in the atmospheric inversions 323 into northern extratropical
324 (IPCC AR5 reproduction)
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348 **FIGURE 4.** Patterns of global CO₂ budget partitioned into hemispheres under ENSO variability. Partitioning of 349 global CO2 budget into NE and ST lands (diver-down plots), during El Niño years (2002, 03, 04, 05, 06, and 09) 350 and La Niña years (2000, 07, and 08) are shown for: **a**) each attribute of the net CO_2 flux by TRENDY S3, CO_2 351 effect (TRENDY S1: grey upper triangles), climate effect (TRENDY S2-S1: green upper triangles), and LUC 352 effect (TRENDY S3-S2: orange upper triangles) and **b**) the net CO₂ fluxes of INV_{AB} and TRENDY S3. El Niño 353 years are the years that have six-month averaged Multivariate ENSO Index (MEI) values >0.5 within a year, and 354 La Niña years are the years that have MEI values <-0.5 within a year. Gray lines represent the global budget 355 constraint and ± 1.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ uncertainty same as in Figure 3c.

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 358 We further partitioned hemispheric budgets into nine regions. Regional $CO₂$ budgets were overall 359 comparable between TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} , but the degree of agreement differed by region (Fig. 5; 360 IAV shown in Fig. S4). Among the nine regions, the ranges of budget estimates were proximate among 361 INVAB, TRENDY S3, and the other independent estimates for North America and Southeast Asia. A 362 notable improvement was identified in Southeast Asia, where reduced $CO₂$ sinks by accounting for LUC 363 fluxes in biosphere models and discounting for the hydrosphere fluxes from atmospheric inversions 364 resulted in close agreement between INV_{AB} (0.01 [-0.04, 0.20] Pg C yr⁻¹) and TRENDY S3 (-0.01 [-0.06, 365 0.10] Pg C yr-1). Budget estimates for Europe, boreal Asia, Africa, South Asia, and Oceania overlapped, 366 but with a larger range in INV_{AB} than in TRENDY S3 (Fig. 5). In Africa, adjustments for the missing 367 and excess fluxes in the two modeling methods seemingly mitigated the gap between median INV and 368 TRENDY S2 values; however, a range > 1.0 Pg C yr⁻¹ in the individual estimates of INV_{AB} rendered 369 comparison with TRENDY S3 difficult.

370 Budget estimates for East Asia and South America showed notable differences between INV_{AB} and 371 TRENDY S3 (Fig. 5). In East Asia, the budget estimates by both INV_{AB} and TRENDY S3 indicated a 372 net sink, but INV_{AB} $(-0.5 \text{ } [-0.7, -0.3]$ Pg C yr⁻¹) leaned towards a greater net sink than TRENDY S3 $(-0.5 \text{ } [-0.7, -0.3]$ Pg C yr⁻¹) leaned towards a greater net sink than TRENDY S3 $(-0.5 \text{ } [-0.7, -0.3]$ 373 0.07 [-0.20, -0.01] Pg C yr⁻¹). In South America, INV_{AB} leaned towards a net source contrary to the net 374 sink indicated by TRENDY S3. The gap in South America was the most notable, with budget estimates 375 barely overlapping between INV_{AB} (0.6 [0.5, 0.8] Pg C yr⁻¹) and TRENDY S3 (-0.2 [-0.3, -0.1] Pg C yr-376). In this region, the flux adjustments did not reduce the gap in budgets. Importantly, these differences 377 explained the minor deviation in the distributions of global budget partitioning into hemispheres 378 between INV_{AB} and TRENDY S3 (Fig. 3c). The differences between budget estimates for East Asia are 379 largely responsible for INV_{AB} indicating a stronger net sink in NE lands than TRENDY S3. Likewise, 380 the differences in the estimates for South America are responsible for the INV_{AB} indicating a stronger 381 net source in ST lands than those of TRENDY S3. Thus, East Asia and South America are the regions 382 where future model improvements are needed to generate $CO₂$ budgets that agree at the hemispheric and 382 notable improvement was fluxes in biosphere mo
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385 **FIGURE 5.** Consistency and inconsistency among the estimates of regional CO₂ budgets. Regional CO₂ budgets 386 for the 2000s by the biosphere models (TRENDY S2 and S3) and atmospheric inversions (INV and INV_{AB}), 387 carbon stock changes (ΔC_{VOD} and ΔC_{IM}), and RECCAP project. Regional classification is based on the RECCAP 388 studies. Colors and symbols are the same as in Figure 3a.

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390 So far, we evaluated the regional CO₂ budgets in terms of the average patterns of the atmospheric inversions and biosphere models. However, to derive robust budget agreements for all regions, the means by which individual models partitioned hemispheric budgets into the nine regions must be further 393 investigated. Contrary to the consistent pattern found in the global budget partitioning, individual INV_{AB} results showed largely different patterns for the partitioning of NE and ST land budgets (Fig. 6a). Some inversions showed a greater net source or reduced sink in Europe, corresponding to a greater net sink in boreal Asia, while others showed the opposite pattern between these two regions. This sink-source compensation was also identified between boreal Asia and East Asia, East Asia and South Asia, and South America and Africa, with large variabilities in their patterns. These results suggest that differences in the sink-source compensation are likely the major factor responsible for the large range found in 400 regional budget estimates by INV_{AB} (Fig. 5). Although the magnitudes of budgets differed, the pattern of A the state of the state of the model in the state of the model similar among the models of TRENDY S3 (Fig. 6b). NE and ST land budget partitioning was overall similar among the models of TRENDY S3 (Fig. 6b). Also were co

402 Additionally, ΔC_{VOD} , ΔC_{IM} , and RECCAP showed close agreements in their patterns of partitioning (Fig. 403 6c), more closely resembling the average pattern of TRENDY S3 than that of INV_{AB}.

404

405 **FIGURE 6.** Multi-method comparison of hemispheric budget partitioning into regions. Partitioning of

407 TRENDY S3, and other independent estimates (ΔC_{IM} , ΔC_{VOD} , and RECCAP). Partitioning of the NE land budget into five regions and the ST land budget into four regions are shown for each method. All figures are in units of 409 Pg C yr^{-1} .

5. CHALLENGES FOR ESTIMATING REGIONAL CO2 BUDGETS

 Schimel, Stephens, and Fisher (2015) demonstrated a rough agreement in the global budget partitioning between atmospheric inversions that are capable of reproducing the observed annual vertical 414 gradients of atmospheric $CO₂$ and biosphere models that simulate offsets between the $CO₂$ and LUC effects. The results of our study revealed that agreements between the latest atmospheric inversions and 416 biosphere models are more consistent under a unified definition of the net $CO₂$ flux (Fig. 3c), confirming the roles of NE and ST lands in the global carbon cycle (Gaubert et al., 2019; Schimel, Stephens, & Fisher, 2015; Stephens et al., 2007). However, our results also emphasize that this level of agreement is 419 insufficient to fully reconcile regional $CO₂$ budgets, as illustrated in Figure 5. In addition, a meta-420 analysis of individual estimates from TRENDY S3 and INV_{AB} indicates that the agreement between individual models found for particular regions does not necessarily hold true for the other regions (Fig. S5). This implies that we do not yet have an optimal combination of atmospheric inversions and biosphere models that is capable of producing consistent budget estimates for all global regions. To 424 achieve consistent global, hemispheric, and regional $CO₂$ budgets between the two methods, we need to acknowledge some fundamental issues in modeling that should be resolved in future studies. **5. CHALLENGES FOR ESTIMATING REGIONAL CO₂ BUDGETS

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426 To produce regional CO₂ budgets with lower uncertainties, differences in the sink-source compensation ("the dipole effect"; Peylin, Baker, Sarmiento, Ciais, & Bousquet, 2002) among individual inversions need to be reduced. The dipole effect is intrinsic to the design of inversion systems, where the CO2 budgets of neighboring regions connected via wind paths are tightly anti-correlated, because the sum of the regions is better constrained from the large-scale atmospheric signals than the individual regions. Europe and boreal Asia are a good example of this effect, with both exhibiting large variability, but a reverse order in the net sinks and sources of individual inversions (Fig. 6). While 433 additional CO₂ observations could provide better constraints of the inversion system at global regions, this alone is unlikely to resolve the large variability among inversions. As notable variability was found 435 in Europe, one of the regions characterized by a high density of in-situ $CO₂$ observations, we need to acknowledge a possibility that modeling issues are responsible for this variability. They include

 estimated at given temporal and spatial resolutions), assimilation window length (the period during 439 which data assimilation is conducted), transport rates (rates at which $CO₂$ is transported from a source region to neighboring regions through model atmosphere), and transport model errors (in particular concerning vertical mixing) among inversions. For example, the degree to which a regional budget 442 reflects localized fossil fuel signals or $CO₂$ measurement signals varies with the resolution of the transport models and the size of the inversion control vector. These differences might have caused the 444 large variability in the European $CO₂$ budgets, which then propagated into the budget estimates for 445 boreal Asia via the dipole effect. Recent studies highlighted uncertainties in inter-hemispheric $CO₂$ 446 transports as one of the causes behind the variability in zonal $CO₂$ budgets among inversions (Le Quéré et al., 2018b; Schuh et al., 2019). The variability co-occurring between neighboring regions indicates a possibility that a non-negligible level of uncertainties may exist in intra-hemispheric transports as well.

 Contrary to atmospheric inversions, the biosphere models produced a relatively consistent pattern of hemispheric budget partitioning (Fig. 6b), however, this does not mean that the results are more reliable. Biosphere models still poorly represent certain processes, such as forest regrowth, cropland harvesting and management, shifting cultivation, wood harvesting, and degradation (Arneth et al., 2017; Kondo et al., 2018b; Mitchard, 2018; Pugh et al. 2015, 2019; Williams, Gu, MacLean, Masek, & Collatz, 2016; 454 Wolf et al., 2015), which could greatly affect regional budget estimates. For instance, a recent model that integrated the global forest age (the global forest age dataset (GFAD): Poulter et al., 2019) 456 suggested the enhancement of CO_2 uptake (~0.45 Pg C yr⁻¹) by regrowth of northern temperate and boreal forests (Pugh et al., 2019), compared with simulations without the age information. Although this alone may not resolve the issue, enhanced uptake by the age effect appears to play a role in filling the gap between the atmospheric inversions and biosphere models in East Asia (Fig. 5), as this region is one of the hot-spots of forest regrowth (Kondo et al., 2018a). In the case of South America, incomplete representations of shifting cultivation, wood harvesting, and forest degradation are potential causes for the biosphere models being inclined towards a net sink, opposite to the results based on atmospheric inversions (Fig. 5). Currently, there is limited spatiotemporal information available regarding forest degradation, but several studies have suggested that forest degradation is more important than other processes in tropical regions, potentially accounting for twice the carbon release of deforestation (Baccini et al., 2017; Mitchard, 2018; Ryan, Berry, & Joshi, 2014). Additional sinks and sources from these processes are expected to change the patterns of hemispheric budget partitioning and 442 collects localized forsal tiel signals or CO₂ measurement signals varies with the resolution of the transport mode<mark>ls and th</mark>e size of the inversion control vector. These differences might have caused the transport spread in regional budget estimates was smaller within the biosphere models than the atmospheric 470 inversions, spread in seasonality of net $CO₂$ flux was larger within the biosphere models than the atmospheric inversions across global, hemispheric, and regional scales (Fig. S6). Thus, we cannot conclude that biosphere models are more reliable than atmospheric inversions based on the consistency of the hemispheric budget partition and regional budget estimates among models.

474 A tendency for ΔC_{IM} , ΔC_{VOD} , and RECCAP results to agree more with biosphere models in estimates of regional budgets and partitioning than with atmospheric inversions may suggest that they capture common signals within the carbon cycle (Figs. 5, 6). However, we need to acknowledge the fact that carbon stock changes based on inventory measurements and VOD, as well as the statistical 478 approaches of RECCAP have their own limitations. Both ΔC_{IM} and ΔC_{VOD} provide "forest-oriented" CO2 budgets as available inventory data are of forests in large part and the conversion of VOD to biomass was based on an empirical relationship using ground measurements of forest biomass (Liu et al., 2015). These are considered insufficient to represent the diversity of terrestrial ecosystems, which include grasslands and croplands, and their associated carbon fluxes (King et al., 2015). Uncertainty in soil carbon stocks also affects the estimation of carbon stock changes. Even in the most extensive compilation of the inventory data, the global soil carbon stocks are likely underestimated, due to missing data of deep organic soils in ecosystems such as peatlands and mangroves (Pan et al., 2011). Despite 486 efforts to integrate possible processes in the carbon cycle for each region, the regional $CO₂$ budgets from 487 RECCAP are also influenced by the limitations in the independent $CO₂$ fluxes used for budget assessment, including the above-mentioned limitations in atmospheric inversions, biosphere models, and 489 inventories. Thus, along with the modeling methods, ΔC_{IM} , ΔC_{VOD} , and the statistical approaches of RECCAP should also be improved to serve as good references for future model improvements. 499 of the temispheric budget partition and regional budget estimates among models.

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 In addition to the above-mentioned issues of each method, further adjustments for the definition of 492 the net $CO₂$ flux could reduce the gap in budget estimates between the modeling methods. For instance, 493 lateral transports of harvested wood carbon via export and import affect regional $CO₂$ budget estimates (Peters, Davis, & Andrew, 2012), which is not well addressed in current biosphere models. Also, 495 incorporation of bottom-up pathways of $CO₂$ resulting from oxidation of biogenetic volatile organic compounds (BVOC), CO, CH4 (e.g., coming from biosphere, fire and fossil fuel emissions) could improve the gap in budget estimates. Despite recent progress aimed at filling the gaps between atmospheric inversions and biosphere models, our current level of modeling and process understanding #### **6. CONCLUSIONS**

502 The aim of this study was to detail the current status of agreement between terrestrial CO₂ budgets derived from top-down and bottom-up approaches and to provide a pathway for future improvement of 504 these methods. With comparisons under a consistent definition of net $CO₂$ flux, we illustrated different 505 levels of consistency in the $CO₂$ budgets of atmospheric inversions and biosphere models at the global, hemispheric, and regional scales. The overlapping distributions of hemispheric budgets, and close agreement found for some regions (i.e., North America and Southeast Asia) are good indications of progress towards reconciliation of budget estimates, therefore, increasing robustness of our knowledge. However, further improvements are required to reach a more robust regional understanding.

 First, differences in budget estimates between the modeling methods for East Asia and South America need to be reduced. To accomplish this, the impacts of physiological processes that contribute to net sinks or sources (e.g., age effects on regrowth, degradation, etc.) should be further investigated using biosphere models. Second, the large variability in the regional dipole effect within atmospheric inversions needs to be reduced for them to be more comparable with the estimates of biosphere models. This requires collective effort from the inverse modeling community to identify and resolve modeling issues at regional scales (e.g., detailed experiments on transport model and inversion performance, 517 validation of fossil fuel and biogenetic flux partitioning using ${}^{14}CO_2$ measurements, etc.). Given these 518 findings, caution should be taken when interpreting regional CO₂ budgets estimated using only either atmospheric inversions or biosphere models, or individual models from these approaches, unless regional applications have been properly parameterized and benchmarked with regional observations. Example 18 and these methods. With co

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521 The terrestrial biosphere plays a major role in mitigating $CO₂$ emitted by human activities (Le Quéré et al., 2018b). While the partitioning of the sink between the northern hemisphere and pantropic is increasingly better constrained, we have yet to establish confidence in the roles of global regions because of the uncertainties remaining in current models. Those uncertainties continue to limit our ability to project the mitigation potential by the terrestrial biosphere (Hoffman et al., 2014), and require continuous international and multidisciplinary efforts to resolve such as those under the umbrella of the Global Carbon Project.

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 Data availability: TRENDY data are available via Profs. Stephen Sitch and Pierre Friedlingstein, Exeter University (s.a.sitch@exeter.ac.uk; p.friedlingstein@exeter.ac.uk). CAMS, CT2017, JENA inversion data are available from the web sites (CAMS: https://apps.ecmwf.int/datasets/data/cams-ghg- inversions/, CT2017: https://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/carbontracker/, JENA: http://www.bgc- jena.mpg.de/CarboScope/). ACTM, MACTM, CCAM, and GELCA CAO inversion data are available by contacting Dr. Prabir K. Patra (prabir@jamstec.go.jp). JMA inversion data are available by contacting Dr. Takashi Maki (tmaki@mri-jma.go.jp). Global above-ground biomass carbon (v1.0) is

- 561 carbon-v1-0/). Flux data of Global Carbon Project are available from the web site 562 (https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/18/data.htm).
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564 **Competing interests**: The authors declare that there are no competing financial interests \blacksquare

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