

**The South Asian
summer monsoon in
the HadGEM2 family**

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The influence of dynamic vegetation on the present-day simulation and future projections of the South Asian summer monsoon in the HadGEM2 family

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Various studies have shown the importance of Earth System feedbacks in the climate system and the necessity of including these in models used for making climate change projections. The HadGEM2 family of Met Office Unified Model configurations combines model components which facilitate the representation of many different processes within the climate system, including atmosphere, ocean and sea ice, and Earth System components including the terrestrial and oceanic carbon cycle and tropospheric chemistry. We examine the climatology of the Asian summer monsoon in present-day simulations and in idealised climate change experiments in which a quadrupling of CO₂ is applied as a step change. Members of the HadGEM2 family are used, with a common physical framework, one of which includes tropospheric chemistry and an interactive terrestrial and oceanic carbon cycle, to investigate whether such components affect the way in which the monsoon changes. We focus particularly on the role of interactive vegetation in the simulations from these model configurations. Using an atmosphere-only HadGEM2 configuration, we investigate how the changes in land cover which result from the interaction between the dynamic vegetation and the model systematic rainfall biases affect the Asian summer monsoon, both in the present-day and in future climate projections. We demonstrate that the response of the dynamic vegetation to biases in regional climate, such as lack of rainfall over tropical dust-producing regions, can affect both the present-day simulation and the response to climate change forcing scenarios.

1 Introduction

The term “Earth System processes”, as used in climate modelling, generally refers to the set of equations describing physical, chemical and biological processes within and between the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and the terrestrial and marine biosphere. There is no strict definition of which processes at what level of complexity are required before a climate model becomes an Earth System Model (Collins et al., 2011).

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However, typically the term “Earth System” is used for those models that at least include terrestrial and ocean carbon cycles.

The inclusion of Earth system components in a climate model allows both consistent calculation of the impacts of climate change on atmospheric composition or ecosystems and the incorporation of biogeochemical feedbacks which can be negative (damping the sensitivity of the climate to external forcing, e.g. Charlson et al., 1987), or positive (amplifying the sensitivity, e.g. Cox et al., 2000; Friedlingstein et al., 2006). These feedbacks will either affect projections of future climate for a given forcing or, for a given desired climate outcome (such as limiting warming below 2K above pre-industrial values), will affect the calculations of allowable emissions (e.g. Jones et al., 2006).

Earth system models tend to be driven by emissions of greenhouse gases (particularly CO₂), rather than having concentrations specified. Adding Earth system components and processes increases the complexity of the model system. Many biogeochemical processes are less well understood or constrained than their physical counterparts. Hence the model spread in future projections is considerably larger, and better represents the true uncertainty of the future evolution of climate. Booth et al. (2012) found that the spread in predicted temperatures due to uncertainty in just the carbon cycle modelling was comparable to the spread due to uncertainty in all the physical parameters.

However, the increased complexity can also result in larger and/or more numerous systematic biases in models. The growth of systematic errors in General Circulation Models (GCMs) remains one of the central problems in providing accurate projections of climate change for the next 50 to 100 yr (Randall et al., 2007). Although great advances in global modelling have been made in recent decades (Solomon et al., 2007), there are still large uncertainties in many processes such as clouds, convection and coupling to the ocean and the land surface (e.g. Cubasch et al., 2001; Koster et al., 2004). It is not clear, therefore, to what extent climate projections are improved by the additional complexity of including Earth System process when the resulting changes in

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systematic biases are taken into account. As noted by Hurrell et al. (2009), given relatively large systematic errors in models, the additional feedbacks from more interactive components in Earth System models clearly increase the uncertainty in the magnitude and nature of the climate changes projected in future scenario simulations.

5 The HadGEM2 model family (The HadGEM2 Development Team, 2011) is a suite of model configurations incorporating different levels of complexity but with a common physical framework. The HadGEM2 family includes atmosphere, ocean and sea-ice components, and Earth System components including the terrestrial and oceanic carbon cycles and atmospheric chemistry. The HadGEM2 Development Team (2011) showed consistency in the large-scale physical performance of these model configurations and in the overall improvement compared with the previous model version (HadGEM1).

10 Previous studies investigating the influence of land cover, including those which examine the uncertainty in present-day vegetation distribution (e.g. Feddema et al., 2005; McCarthy et al., 2012) and those which apply idealised changes (e.g. Bonan et al., 1992; Osborne et al., 2004; Swann et al., 2012), have demonstrated significant impacts on tropical climate from vegetation changes in both the tropics and the mid-latitudes. In this paper, we examine the influence of changes in land cover resulting from the interactive terrestrial carbon cycle in the HadGEM2 Earth System configuration (HadGEM2-ES) on the present-day simulation and future projections of the South Asian summer monsoon.

2 Model experiments

25 We make use of present-day (1980–2005) sections of historical coupled model runs, initialised in 1860 after spin-up of a pre-industrial control (the method of spin-up is described in Collins et al., 2011) and run through the 20th century, atmosphere-only runs for the same period forced with observed sea surface temperatures (SSTs) and sea ice, idealised climate change experiments in which a quadrupling of CO₂ is applied as

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peninsula compared with HadGEM2-A, while the CCS and ES configurations show similar or even larger biases.

Figure 3 shows the seasonal cycle of rainfall from the four configurations. The amplitude of the seasonal cycle of Indian rainfall is underestimated, particularly by HadGEM2-A. The coupled configurations exhibit a delayed onset due to an Arabian Sea SST bias in spring (Levine and Turner, 2012), but have better peak rainfall. The latter is associated with a negative feedback between the rainfall and SSTs in the equatorial Indian Ocean region, with the reduced rainfall bias and colder SSTs both promoting increased rainfall over India. As suggested by the seasonal mean rainfall biases in Fig. 1, the CCS and ES configurations show reduced rainfall amounts over the Indian peninsula compared with HadGEM2-AO.

The ES and CCS configurations, which both include the terrestrial carbon cycle, have much more bare soil over India and the Sahel than the A or AO configurations, replacing grass, shrubs and broadleaf trees (Fig. 4). This is a result of persistent underestimation of monsoon rainfall over India during the pre-industrial control and historical runs, and illustrates the feedbacks that can occur between model systematic biases.

Over India, this is associated with smaller latent heat fluxes in ES and CCS in summer (Fig. 5) as evaporation and transpiration from vegetation is reduced. This may contribute to the larger Indian rainfall bias in ES and CCS. However, the latent heat flux is affected by the land cover type (which affects evaporation), the wind speed (which is related to the monsoon circulation as a whole, which itself is related to the surface temperature distribution and differs markedly between the coupled and atmosphere-only configurations) and the soil moisture, and the latter is also related to the precipitation. Thus, understanding the processes by which the precipitation is affected is not straightforward.

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4 Sensitivity experiments

In order to shed light on the role of the vegetation distribution in the differences in monsoon rainfall between these configurations, additional experiments have been run with the atmosphere-only configuration, HadGEM2-A. Each is based on the standard Atmospheric Model Intercomparison Project (AMIP) setup as described in Taylor et al. (2012) and details of the baseline HadGEM2-A configuration are given in The HadGEM2 Development Team (2011). The details of each sensitivity experiment, along with the results, are described in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Using land cover from the ES configuration

In this experiment, the monthly mean land cover information from years 1980–2005 of the HadGEM2-ES historical run is used in HadGEM2-A in place of the standard land cover distribution as described in Jones et al. (2011). Therefore, the variations in land cover with time during this period in HadGEM2-ES are experienced by HadGEM2-A, but there is no interactive terrestrial carbon cycle and no feedbacks on the land cover. We refer to this experiment as “HadGEM2-AE”.

Comparison of the seasonal mean precipitation from HadGEM2-A and HadGEM2-AE shows a marked decrease in rainfall over the Indian region in the sensitivity experiment, while precipitation increases over the South China Sea and the western Pacific (Fig. 6). These changes are similar in pattern to those seen between HadGEM2-ES and -AO (Fig. 6d) but they are considerably larger in the atmosphere-only experiments. In addition, the HadGEM2-AE experiment shows a large increase in dust which is generated as a result of the additional fraction of bare soil in key tropical regions such as India, Saudi Arabia, Africa and Australia (Fig. 7). A similar increase in total column dust occurs between HadGEM2-ES and HadGEM2-AO¹ (not shown). This affects the clear-sky radiative fluxes at the surface, particularly by increasing outgoing shortwave

¹Note that different dust tuning parameters are applied in HadGEM2-A compared with those used in the coupled HadGEM2 configurations, resulting in different (larger) total amounts

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radiation at the top of the atmosphere and reducing the downward shortwave radiation at the surface (Fig. 8a and b). The outgoing longwave radiation at the top of the atmosphere is also reduced (Fig. 8c). These changes are largest over the Arabian Sea, India and the Bay of Bengal although they are also apparent over West Africa and northern Australia.

The radiative effects of the dust act to cool the daytime maximum temperatures and warm the nighttime minimum temperatures. Since most of the convection over land is during the day (in the model) the impact on total rainfall may be significant. In order to test this hypothesis, we run an additional pair of experiments where the direct radiative effects of the dust are switched off. We find that there is indeed a substantial direct radiative impact on the monsoon rainfall of the additional dust generated as a response to the change in the vegetation distribution (Fig. 9a, b and d). With the original AMIP land cover distribution, the sensitivity is smaller because there is much less dust (Fig. 9c). The low level monsoon circulation (Fig. 10) is reduced in association with the change in radiative heating and precipitation.

4.2 Impacts of changes in land cover with no dust radiative feedback

We have demonstrated that the errors in the land cover distribution which arise through the interaction between the dynamic vegetation and existing systematic biases in monsoon rainfall can have a noticeable impact on the seasonal mean monsoon precipitation in South Asia via feedbacks on the dust loading of the atmosphere. While this sensitivity may be exaggerated in this model configuration through its specific combination of physical parametrisations, this demonstrates how feedbacks between compensating errors may change the climatology of a region. However, by removing the direct radiative effects of dust, our experiments may isolate more clearly the impacts of the changes in the vegetation distribution.

of dust emission, deposition and total dust mass; however, the relative changes between the HadGEM2-AE and HadGEM2-A experiments and the ES and AO historical runs are comparable.

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of Turner and Slingo (2011) have indicated that the cooling associated with increased Eurasian snow cover, such as that found in our experiments (and in those of McCarthy et al. (2012) in response to the change in land cover), can be associated with weakening of the Tibetan anticyclone and weaker upper level easterly winds over the monsoon region, as a result of the reduction in the tropospheric meridional temperature gradient. However, Turner and Slingo (2011) noted that this response could be reversed if the opposing changes over the Himalayas and Tibetan Plateau were dominant. Figures 11 and 12 suggest that the cooling/warming in these two regions are of similar magnitude and may cancel. We find that the dynamical response is to broaden and weaken the upper level subtropical jet slightly, but that the changes are indeed relatively small (Fig. 13). This is consistent with the small changes in low level monsoon winds and precipitation shown in Sect. 4.1.

4.3 Future experiments

The results discussed above, along with previous studies such as those of McCarthy et al. (2012), suggest that the interaction between dynamic vegetation and model systematic biases, such as regional rainfall, may affect the simulation of present-day climate. It follows that the response to climate change may also be affected. This is potentially an area for concern given the increasing number of Earth System models which include dynamic vegetation schemes.

4.3.1 $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ experiments

In order to shed some light on this, we first examine a pair of idealised climate change experiments, using HadGEM2-ES and HadGEM2-AO, in which an instantaneous quadrupling of CO_2 is applied as a step change to a long pre-industrial control and run for many decades. The Asian monsoon climatology and the pattern of change with $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ is very similar in the two configurations (Fig. 14). Increases in monsoon rainfall are seen in the $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ runs over the area spanning the Arabian Sea, India and the

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Bay of Bengal. The low-level flow over the Arabian Sea is directed more towards the north of India, while the westerly flow across the southern Arabian Sea is weakened somewhat (Fig. 15). This is consistent with the findings in CMIP3 of enhanced moisture availability dominating any weakening of the monsoon flow that arises through a weakening of the tropospheric meridional temperature gradient (Meehl et al., 2007).

There is initial relative weakening of the tropospheric meridional temperature gradient with $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ due to pronounced heating over the equator in June and July (Fig. 16a). This is associated with a slight delay in the peak of the monsoon rainfall (Fig. 16b). This relative weakening reduces towards the end of the monsoon season due to enhanced heating (reduced cooling) over Indian land. This is associated with a slight lengthening of monsoon rainy season (depending on the domain chosen).

As described in Sect. 3, the land cover distribution in the control runs of HadGEM2-ES and HadGEM2-AO differ in the amount of bare soil over India, the Sahel, Saudi Arabia and Australia, and this is associated with a substantial increase in atmospheric dust loading (Sect. 4.1). Under $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ there is a small decrease in extent of these bare soil regions as vegetation grows back in response to increased rainfall. However, this is insufficient to reduce the dust loading in HadGEM2-ES (not shown). Figures 14 and 16b suggest a slightly larger increase in monsoon rainfall in the HadGEM2-ES experiments, although the differences may not be significant. This is investigated further in the next sub-section.

4.3.2 Timeslice experiments

In order to investigate the role of the different vegetation distributions in the climate change response, with and without the feedbacks on the dust loading, we carry out future timeslice experiments as described in Sect. 2. Two 26-yr runs are carried out, with and without the land cover from HadGEM2-ES, and a third 26-yr run uses the land cover from HadGEM2-ES but with the direct effects of mineral dust switched off. Each is compared with its present-day counterpart.

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Seasonal mean monsoon rainfall increases and the monsoon circulation changes in the future timeslice experiments, in a similar manner to the $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ experiments (Fig. 17). The future-present differences are similar in the experiments with and without the ES land cover, in agreement with the results from the previous sub-section.

5 However, there is a stronger indication of larger increases in rainfall over the Indian region when the ES land cover is used in the timeslice experiments, and this appears to be associated with an additional increase (or reduced decrease) in convergence over the Indian peninsula. These differences are illustrated better by the “double-difference” plots in Fig. 18a and c.

10 As mentioned in Sect. 4.3.1, the vegetation responds to the increased future rainfall in the $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ experiments by reducing the bare soil extent and replacing this mainly with grasses, particularly over Asia. There is some increase in tree cover over north-eastern Eurasia but there is also an increase in the fraction of shrub. These changes also occur between ca. 2100 and present-day (Fig. 19) in the RCP8.5 experiment. 15 However, the extent of bare soil in dust-emitting regions is still excessive compared with HadGEM2-AO for the same time period, and there is little change in the dust load between future-present (not shown).

Over the Indian peninsula, without the dust radiative effect there is a slightly larger increase in rainfall over and above that seen between future-present when the ES land cover distribution is used (Fig. 18b and d), although over the Indian region as a whole 20 the effect is mixed. The impact of the dust is rather larger over the South China Sea and western Pacific where the double-difference plots (Fig. 18a and b) suggest that it is the dust radiative effect that drives the apparently smaller increase in rainfall in this eastern region between future-present when the ES vegetation distribution is used. We 25 therefore investigate the impact of the different vegetation distributions on the future-present differences with the direct radiative effects of the dust removed.

The global changes between future-present from the simulations using land cover from HadGEM2-ES show the overall warming of the northern hemisphere land accompanied by reduced outgoing shortwave radiation as the northern hemisphere sea

ice melts (Fig. 20). As mentioned in Sect. 4.3.1, the meridional tropospheric temperature gradient between the Indian Ocean and the Asian land mass decreases and the Tibetan anticyclone weakens (Fig. 21a). This is counteracted somewhat, however, by the inclusion of the land cover distribution from HadGEM2-ES (Fig. 21b), which is associated with a larger warming over the northeastern Eurasian landmass in spring which becomes widespread in summer (Fig. 22). This is related to a larger reduction in Eurasian snow cover between future-present with the ES land cover (not shown), which is associated with a larger decrease in outgoing shortwave radiation and warmer surface temperatures (larger surface sensible heat fluxes; Fig. 22). We find that these differences in the future-present changes are mainly due to the differences between the present-day simulations with and without the ES land cover, as there is more snow cover in the present-day HadGEM2-AE than HadGEM2-A (Sect. 4.2).

5 Summary and conclusions

In this study we have investigated the impact of using dynamic vegetation in a climate model on the south Asian summer monsoon climatology and its response to climate change. We have used the HadGEM2 model family which includes members with and without dynamic vegetation and other Earth System processes, but has a common physical framework. This allows us to isolate the role of such processes in regional climate changes.

The members of the HadGEM2 model family share common systematic biases in monsoon rainfall and circulation. In particular, despite a realistic monsoon circulation, there is a persistent dry bias in rainfall over the Indian peninsula. When interactive vegetation is included, the persistent dry bias is associated with an increase in the bare soil fraction in this region as well as other regions such as the Sahel and Saudi Arabia. This generates a large increase in the atmospheric dust loading, which affects the radiation balance in the region. Experiments where this radiative feedback is removed

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have shown that this contributes to an increased dry bias in the seasonal mean Indian rainfall, and that this dominates any other response to the vegetation distribution.

In the absence of radiative effects of changes in dust, a response to changes in the vegetation distribution over Eurasia can be discerned. In a similar manner to previous work, we find that changes in tree cover over northeast Eurasia are associated with changes in snow cover which generate a dynamical response in the South Asian summer monsoon through their effects on the development of the meridional temperature gradient. Having demonstrated the sensitivity of the Asian summer monsoon to land cover changes in this model configuration in the present-day, we have subsequently shown that such changes also increase the climate change response of the monsoon, although we find that this is largely attributable to changes in the present-day simulation.

Our study suggests that, at least on the timescales examined here, the inclusion of interactive vegetation plays a role both in the simulation of the present-day climatology of the Asian summer monsoon and in determining the projection of future monsoon rainfall. However, it is possible that the signal over land may be different if there was not a general underestimation of rainfall over the Indian land in this model. The effect of this systematic bias on the monsoon rainfall through the large increase in atmospheric dust loading illustrates how feedbacks between model biases can offset the benefits of including additional processes in a climate model. Thus it is desirable that other modelling centres investigate these responses in other models where the biases may be different. This also highlights the importance of the development of robust metrics for evaluation of the additional processes represented in Earth System models.

Several previous studies have highlighted the influence of land cover (including both idealised changes and uncertainty in the present-day representation) on the tropical climate (e.g. Feddema et al., 2005; Swann et al., 2012; McCarthy et al., 2012). A number of models within the CMIP5 ensemble include dynamic vegetation, in a similar manner to HadGEM2-ES. Our study suggests that the response of the dynamic vegetation to biases in regional climate, such as lack of rainfall over tropical dust-producing regions,

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can affect both the present-day simulation and the response to climate change forcing scenarios. Therefore, while the inclusion of dynamic vegetation that can respond to, and feed back on, changes in greenhouse gases may be important for constraining climate change projections, their inclusion further necessitates the reduction of basic model systematic biases in order to avoid feedbacks which may increase, rather than reduce, the uncertainty in tropical climate change.

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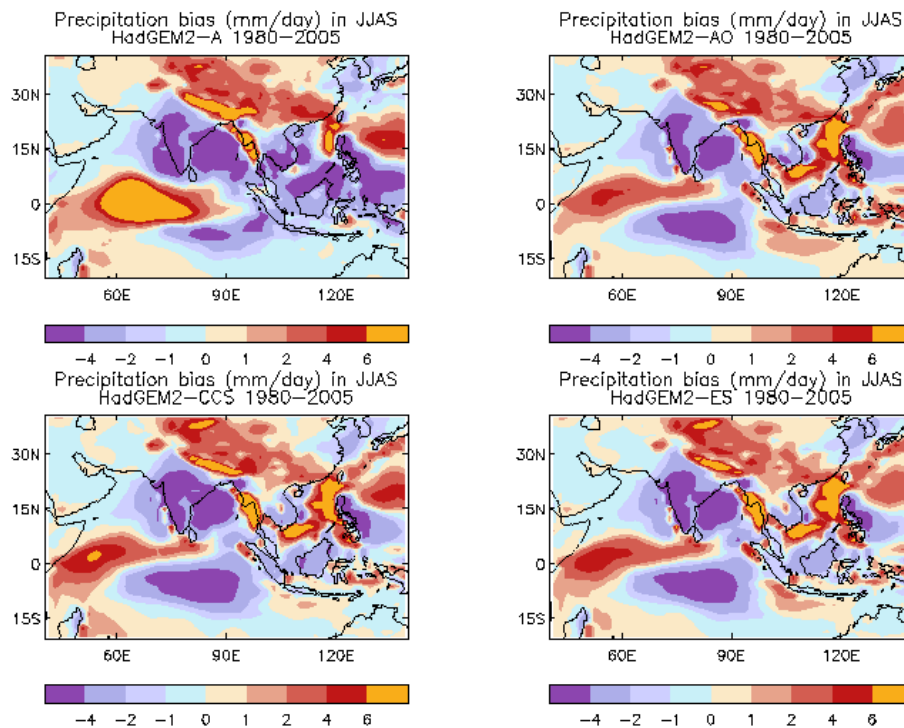


Fig. 1. Precipitation (mm day^{-1}) in June–September (JJAS) difference from observed (Climate Prediction Center (CPC) Merged Analysis of Precipitation (CMAP/O); Xie and Arkin 1997). -A: atmosphere-only; -AO: coupled; -CCS: coupled, carbon cycle, stratosphere; -ES: coupled, carbon cycle, chemistry.

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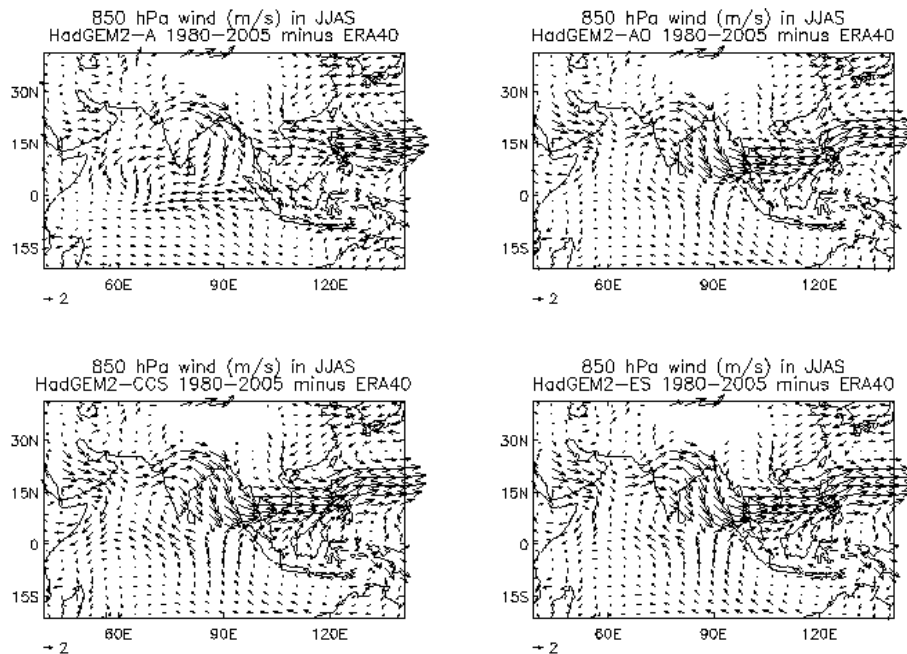


Fig. 2. As Fig. 1 but for horizontal wind at 850 hPa compared with ERA40 reanalyses (Uppala et al., 2005).

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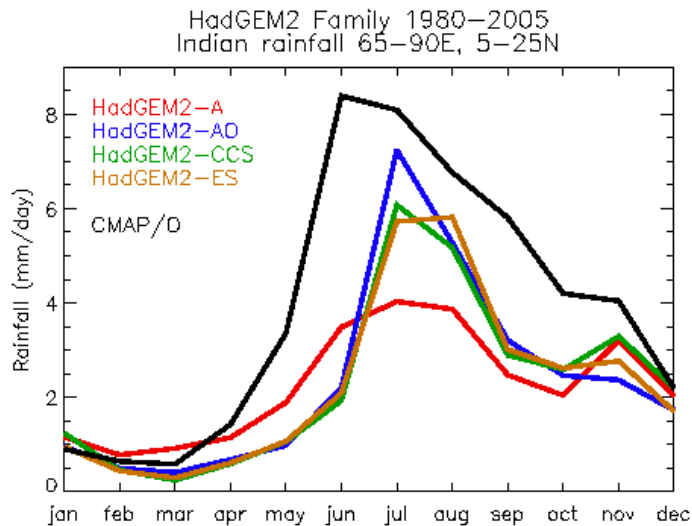


Fig. 3. Seasonal cycle of rainfall over the Indian region (65–90° E, 5–25° N) in the HadGEM2 model family, compared with CMAP/O.

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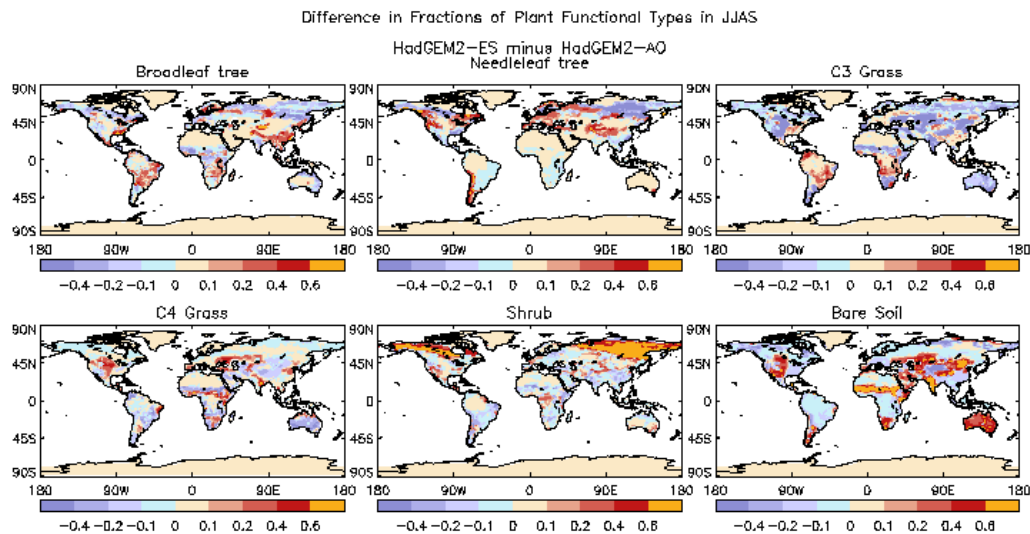


Fig. 4. Differences in present-day (1980–2005) land cover type between HadGEM2-ES and HadGEM2-AO.

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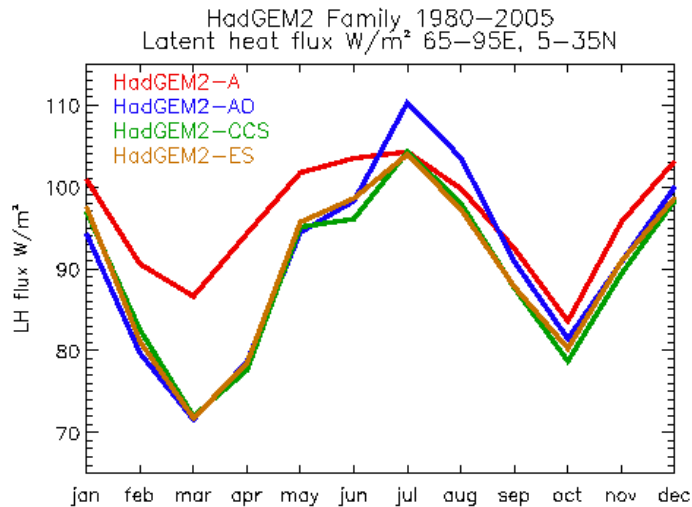


Fig. 5. Latent heat flux averaged over the Indian region in the HadGEM2 family.

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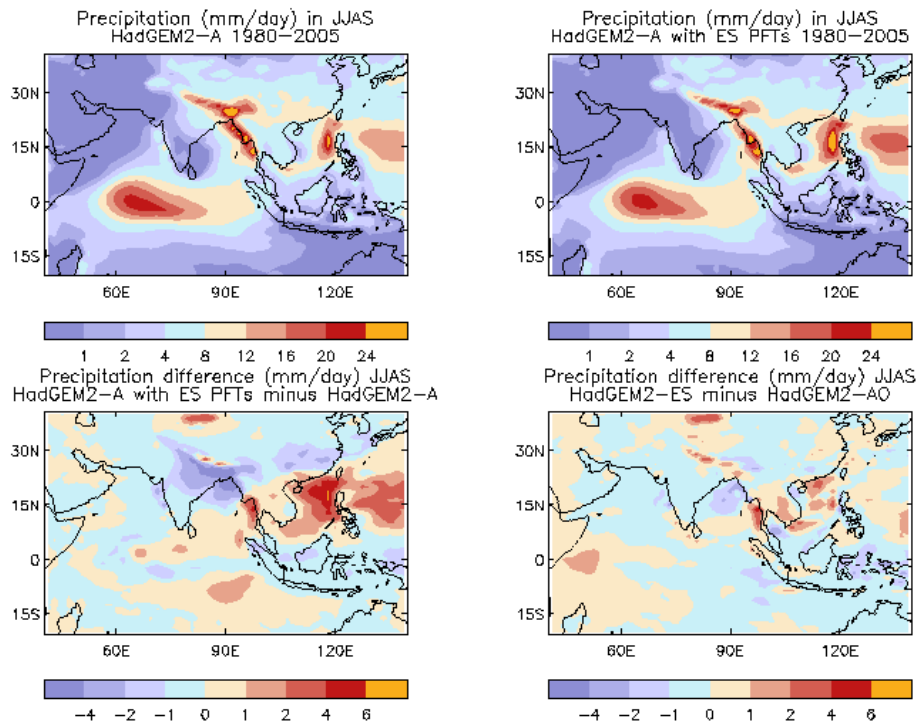


Fig. 6. Precipitation in JJAS (mm day^{-1}) in (a) HadGEM2-A and (b) the HadGEM2-AE experiment, and differences (c) HadGEM2-AE minus HadGEM2-A and (d) HadGEM2-ES minus HadGEM2-AO.

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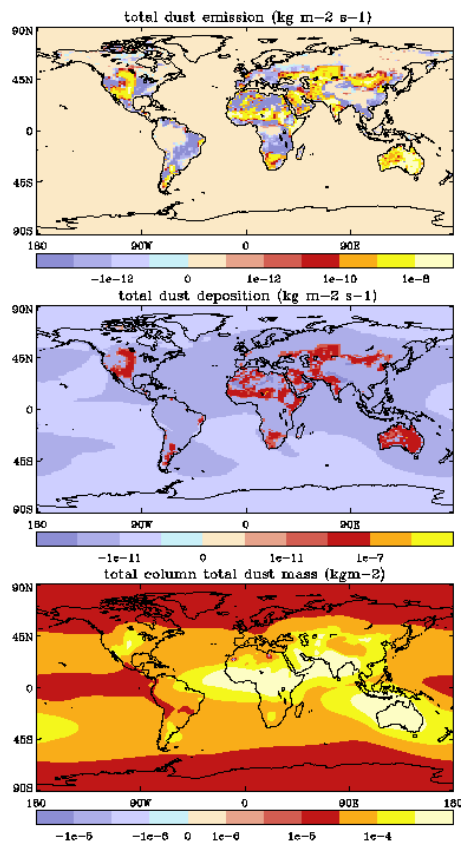


Fig. 7. Change in annual climatology of dust emission, deposition and total column dust mass between HadGEM2-AE and HadGEM2-A simulations (with and without land cover from HadGEM2-ES). Note the non-linear scale.

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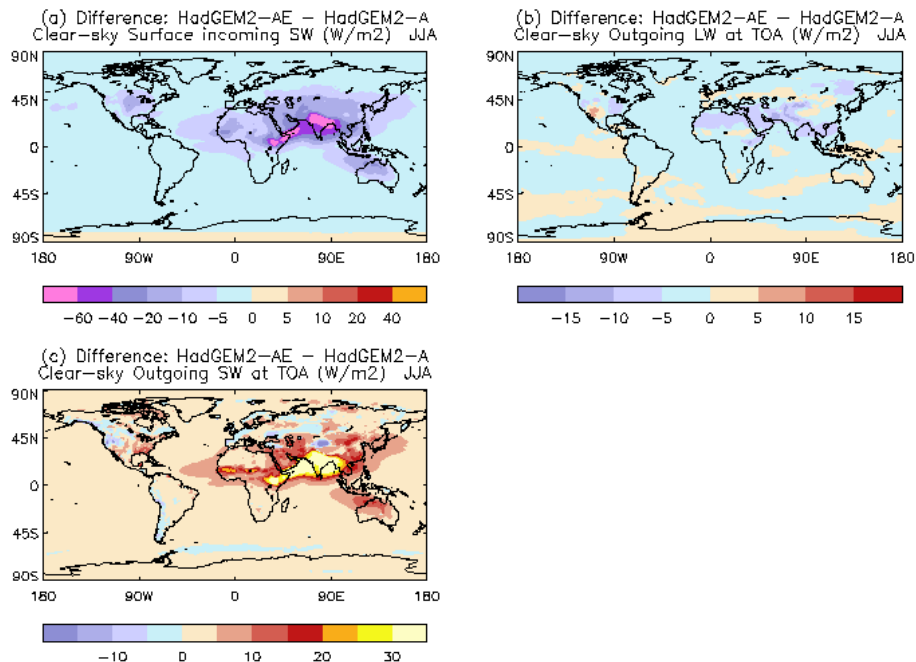


Fig. 8. Clear-sky radiative flux differences (W m^{-2}) in JJA between HadGEM2-AE and HadGEM2-A runs: **(a)** surface incoming SW; **(b)** outgoing LW at TOA; **(c)** outgoing SW at TOA.

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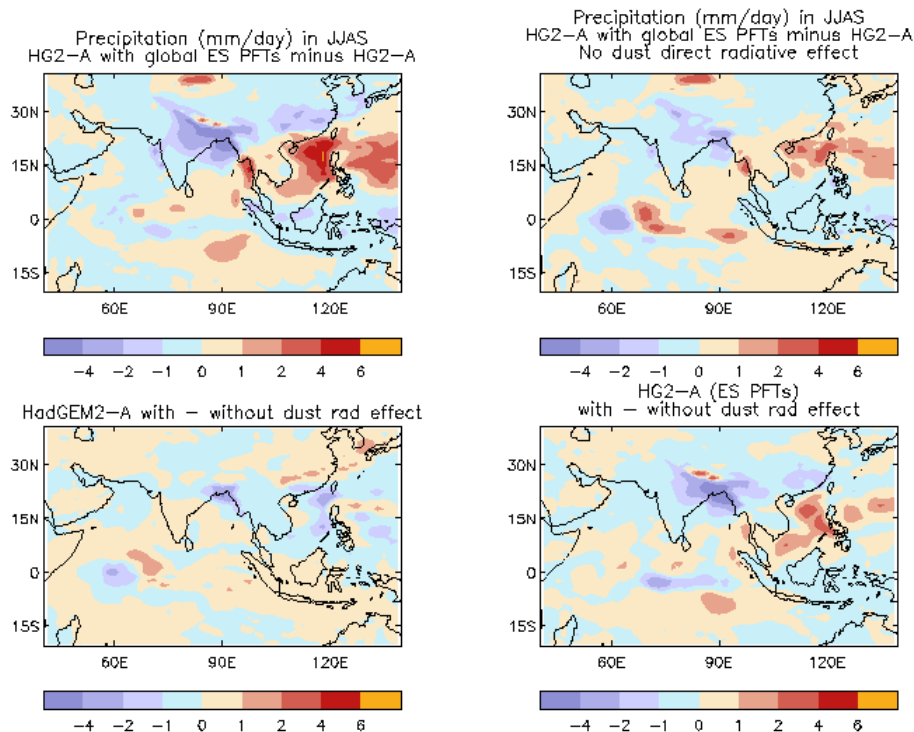


Fig. 9. Changes in JJAS precipitation between (a) HadGEM2-AE and -A experiments, (b) as (a) but without the direct radiative effect of dust, (c) HadGEM2-A with-without direct radiative effect of dust, (d) as (c) but for HadGEM2-AE.

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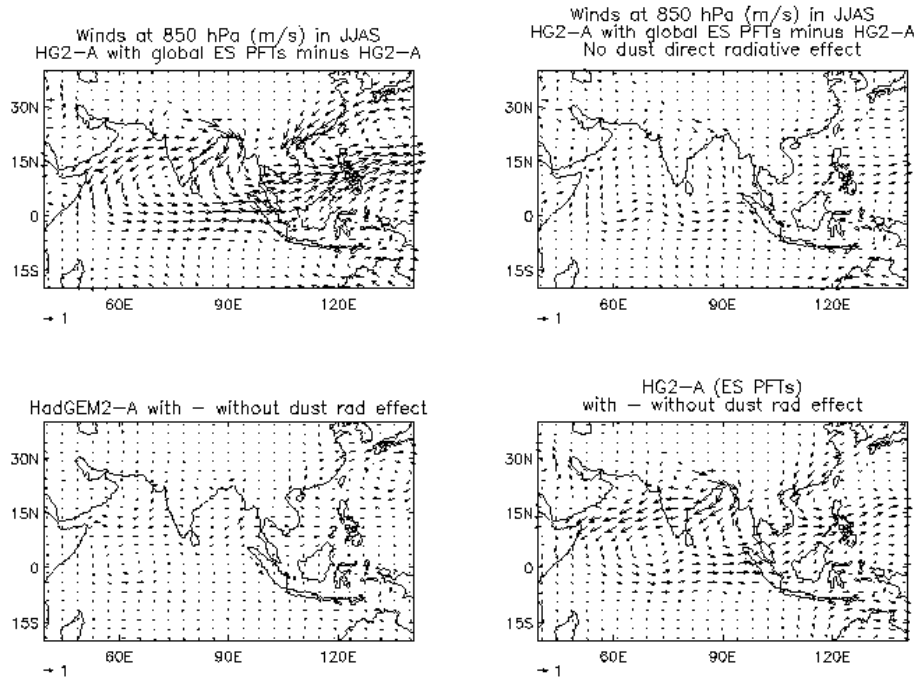


Fig. 10. As Fig. 9 but for horizontal wind at 850 hPa.

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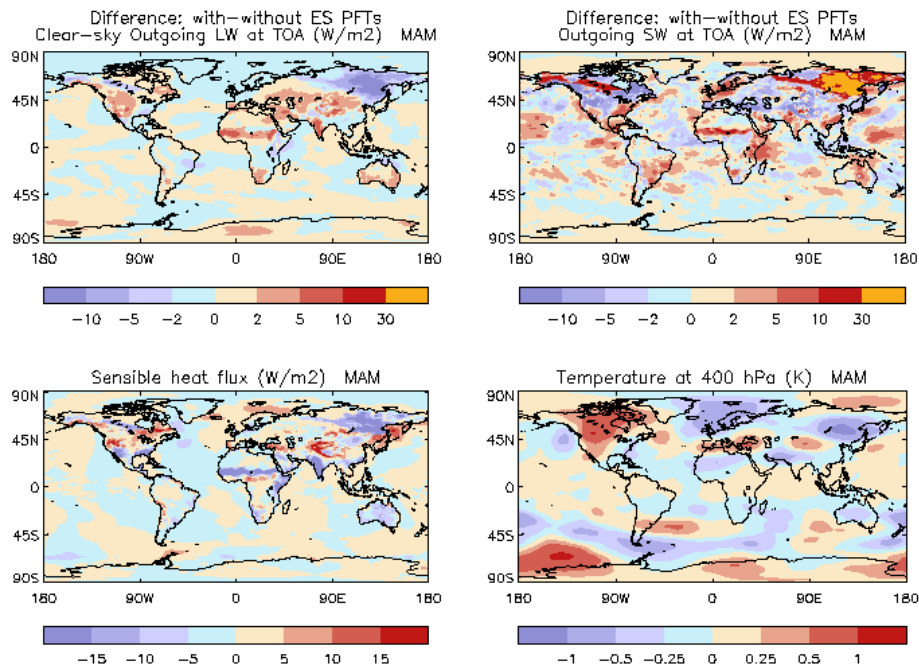


Fig. 11. Global changes in March, April, May (MAM) between experiments with and without land cover from HadGEM2-ES, and with no dust radiative effects: **(a)** clear-sky outgoing longwave radiation at top-of-atmosphere (TOA); **(b)** outgoing shortwave radiation at TOA; **(c)** surface sensible heat flux; **(d)** temperature at 400 hPa.

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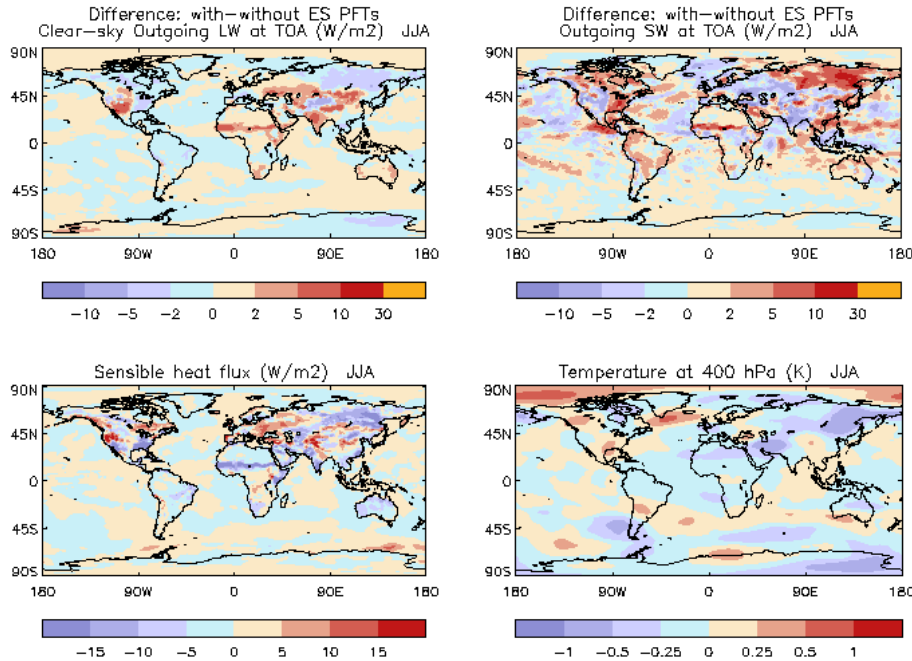


Fig. 12. As Fig. 11 but for June, July, August (JJA).

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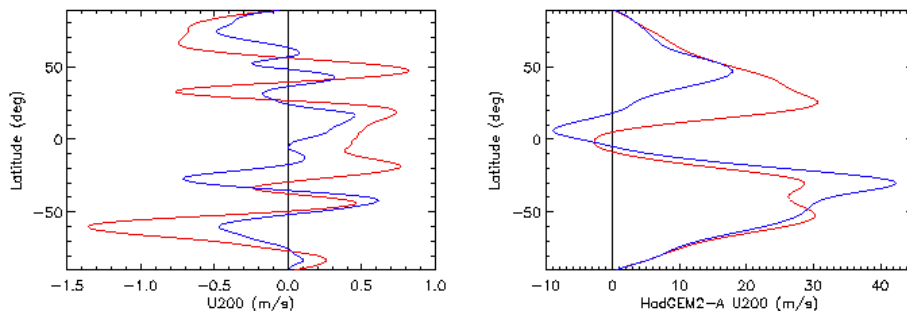


Fig. 13. Zonal mean horizontal westerly wind at 200 hPa (m s^{-1}) in MAM (red) and JJA (blue): **(a)** differences between runs with and without land cover from HadGEM2-ES (no dust radiative effects); **(b)** actual wind in HadGEM2-A (no dust radiative effects).

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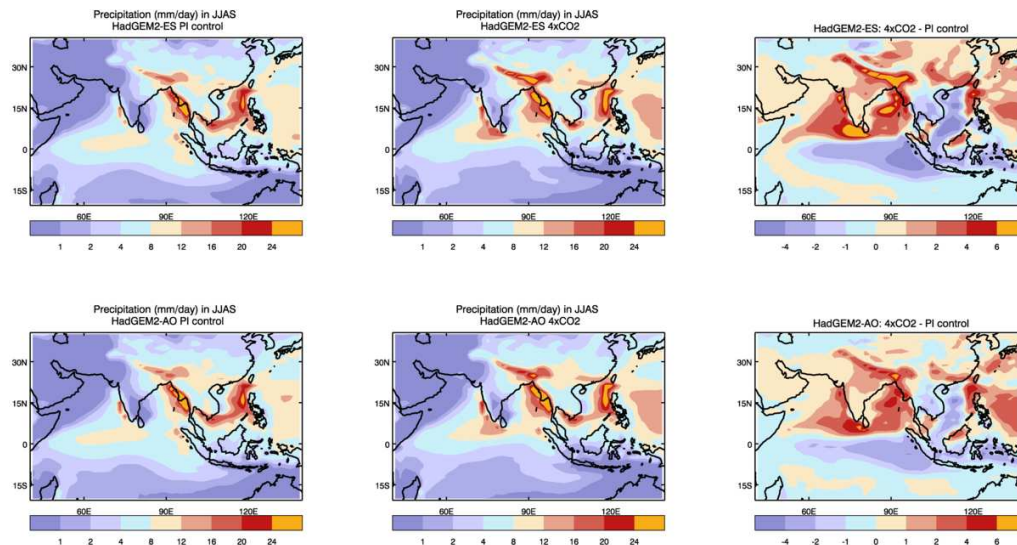


Fig. 14. JJAS Rainfall from pre-industrial control and $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ runs, and their difference, from (a–c) HadGEM2-ES and (d–f) HadGEM2-AO.

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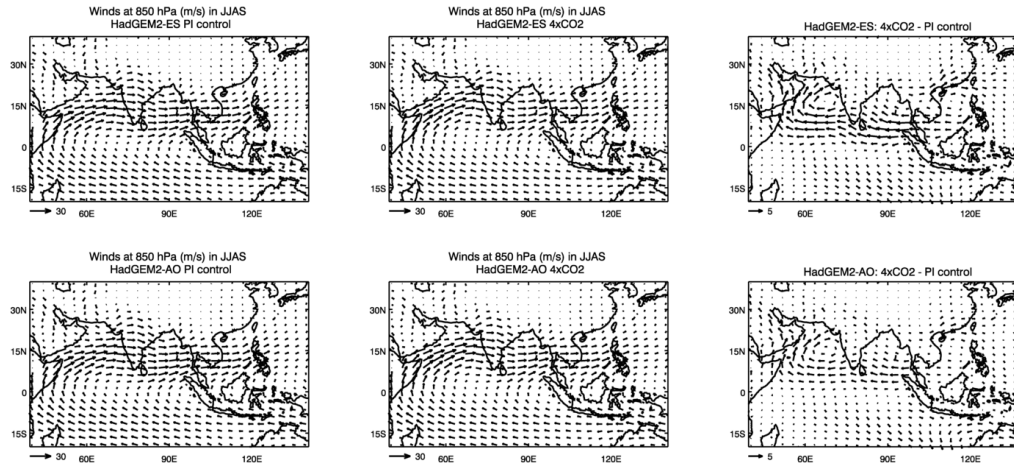


Fig. 15. As Fig. 14 but for horizontal winds at 850 hPa.

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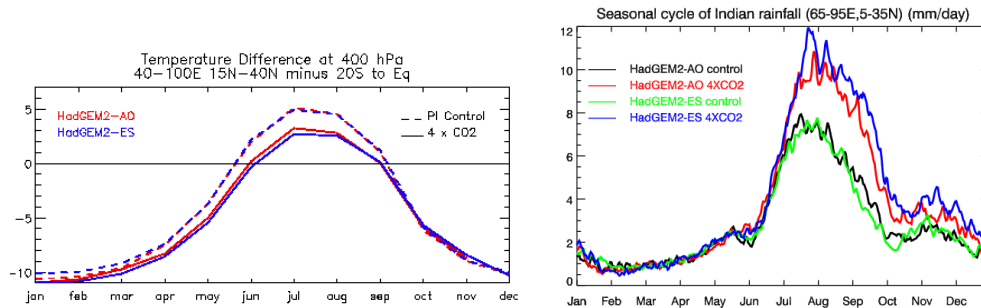


Fig. 16. (a) Mid-tropospheric (400 hPa) meridional temperature gradient between the Indian and equatorial regions in pre-industrial and $4 \times \text{CO}_2$ runs of HadGEM2-AO and HadGEM2-ES. **(b)** as **(a)** but climatological annual cycle of pentad rainfall over Indian region.

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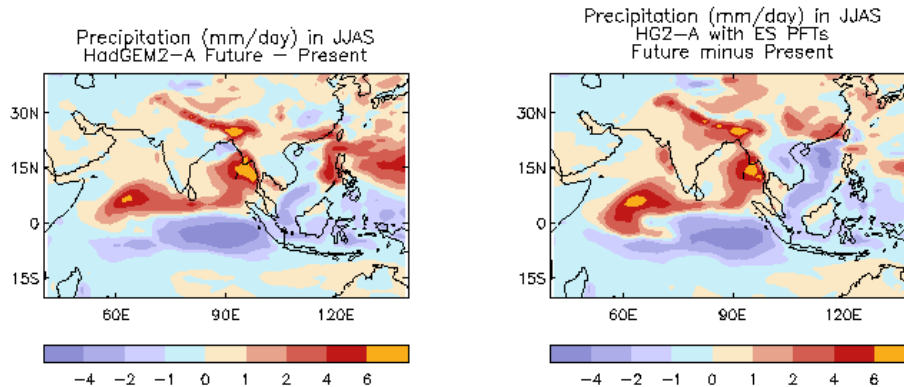


Fig. 17. Change in JJAS mean precipitation (mm day^{-1}) between future timeslice and present-day HadGEM2-A experiments, with and without land cover from HadGEM2-ES.

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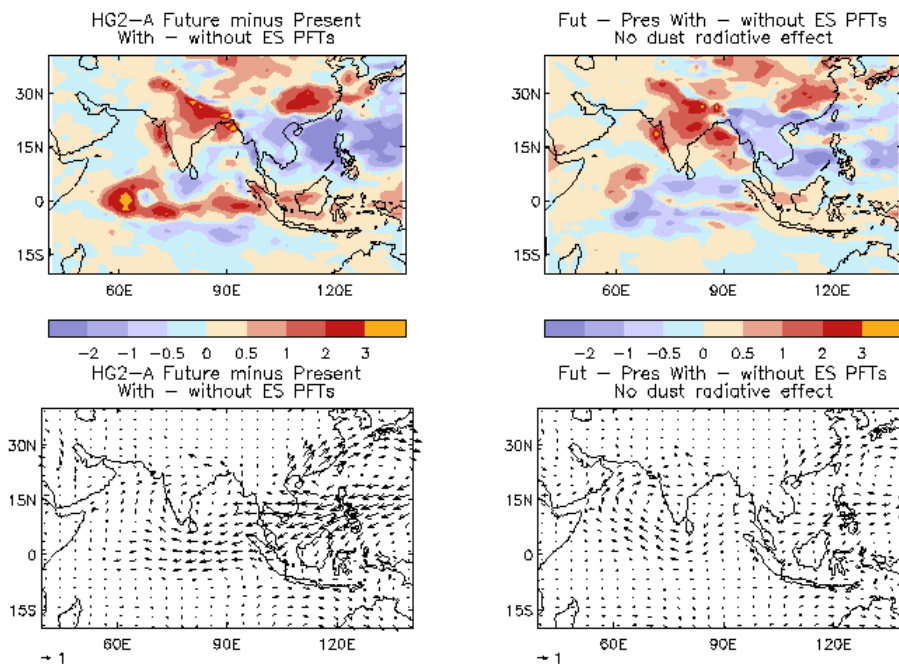


Fig. 18. Difference in the projected future-present changes in seasonal mean rainfall and horizontal wind at 850 hPa between runs with and without land cover taken from HadGEM-ES RCP4.5 experiments: (a and c) with, and (b and d) without direct radiative effects of dust.

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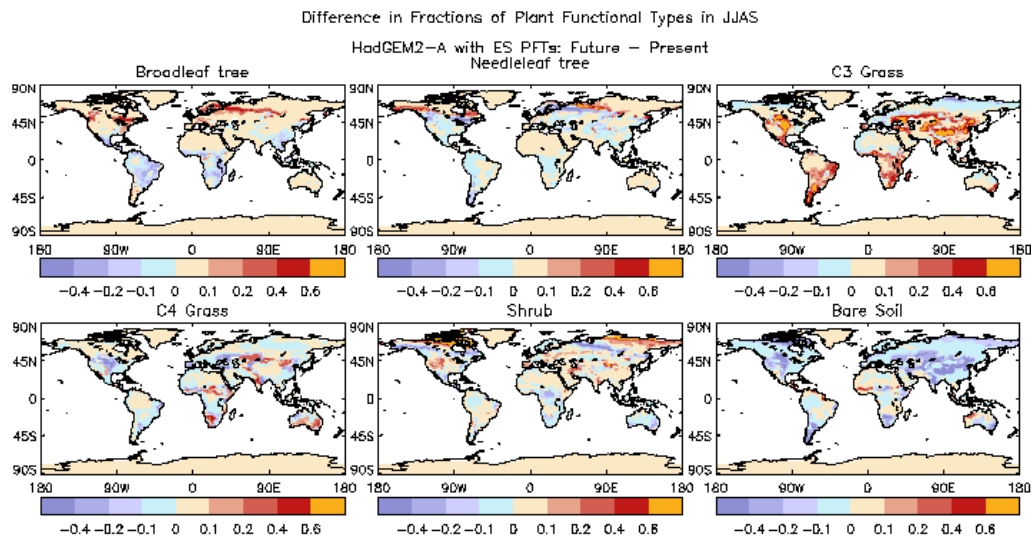


Fig. 19. Changes in land cover between ca. 2100 and present-day as simulated by HadGEM2-ES in the CMIP5 RCP8.5 scenario and applied in HadGEM2-AE present and future timeslice experiments.

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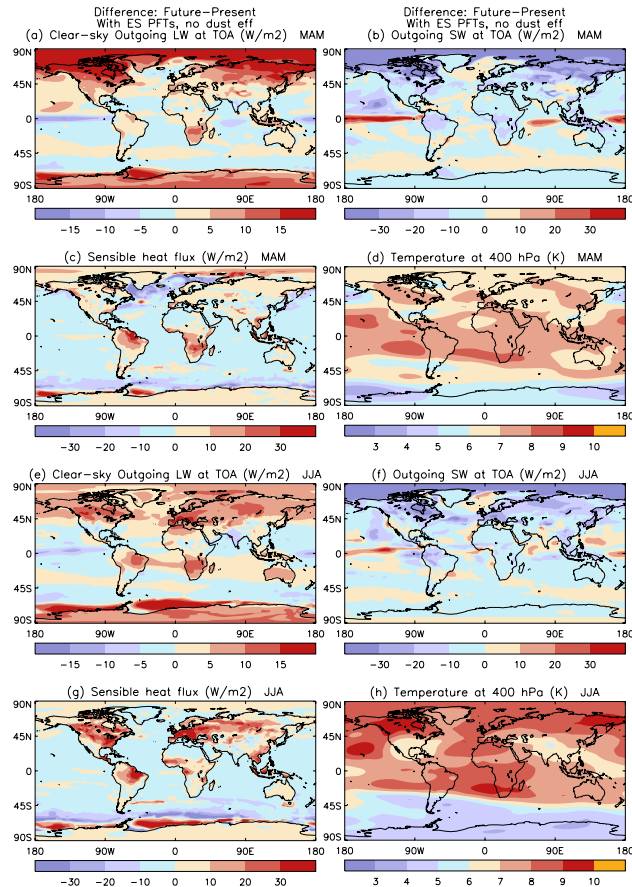


Fig. 20. Global differences between future timeslice and present-day simulations using HadGEM2-A with land cover from HadGEM2-ES (and no dust radiative effects): **(a)** clear-sky outgoing longwave radiation at TOA; **(b)** outgoing shortwave radiation at TOA; **(c)** surface sensible heat flux; **(d)** temperature at 400 hPa, for MAM, and **(e)–(h)** similar for JJA.

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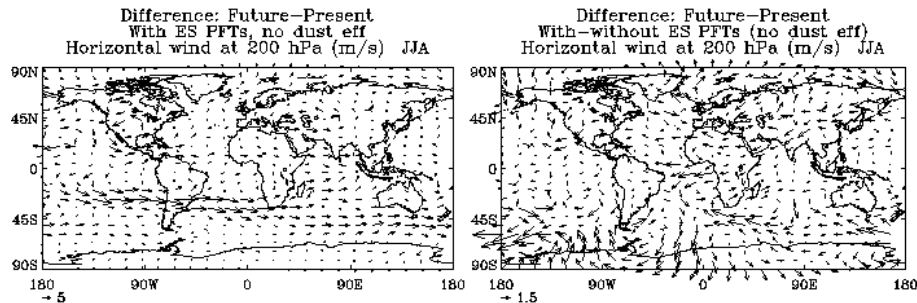


Fig. 21. Horizontal wind at 200 hPa (m s^{-1}): **(a)** Future-Present changes for HadGEM2-A with land cover from HadGEM2-ES; **(b)** the impact of the ES land cover on the future-present differences (with no dust radiative effects). Note different scales.

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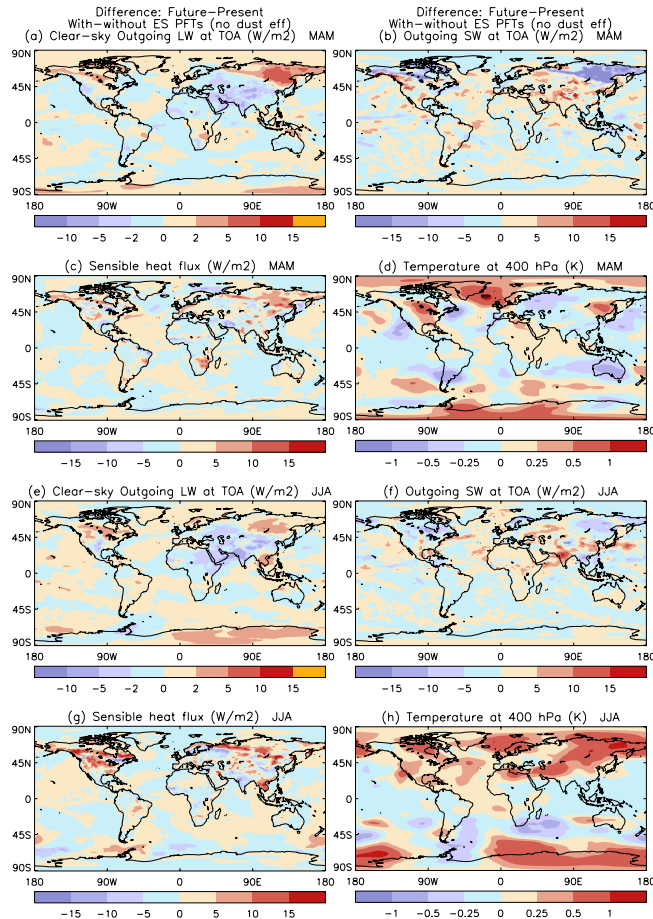


Fig. 22. As Fig. 20 but showing the impact of the ES land cover on the future-present differences (with no dust radiative effects).

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