The Spatial Sampling Approach for Orbiting Carbon Observatory Measurements: Strategies of Validation of OCO Measurements Against Surface Networks

D. Crisp¹, R. Salawitch¹, and the OCO Science Team

¹Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, 4800 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena, CA 91109; 818 354-2224, Fax: 818-0966, E-mail: David.Crisp@jpl.nasa.gov

The Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO) will make global, space-based, measurements of the column-averaged atmospheric CO₂ dry air mole fraction, \(X_{\text{CO}_2}\). These measurements must be validated against results from the existing global network to ensure that their accuracy is adequate to quantify regional scale surface sources and sinks of CO₂. A few aspects of the \(X_{\text{CO}_2}\) soundings will pose challenges to routine comparisons with surface \textit{in situ} data. In particular, the atmospheric optical path associated with each \(X_{\text{CO}_2}\) sounding extends along the incoming solar beam from the top of the atmosphere to the surface footprint, and then back to the top of the atmosphere in the direction of the spacecraft. At high latitudes, where the solar zenith angles are large, these paths can extend the spatial sampling well beyond the extent of the surface footprint (Fig. 1). To address this issue, the OCO team will use ground-based, solar-looking Fourier Transfer Spectrometers (FTS’s) as a transfer standard. These systems are being deployed as part of the Total Carbon Column Observing Network (c.f. Washenfelder et al. 2006). Each FTS uses the same CO₂ and O₂ bands as the space-based OCO instrument, and can acquire simultaneous observations along the same incoming solar beam. However, because they stare directly at they sun, they have greater the signal to noise and greater spectral resolution than the space-based system. Their measurements are also less susceptible to pathlength errors associated with scattering by thin clouds and aerosols. \(X_{\text{CO}_2}\) results from the FTS systems at Park Falls, Wisconsin and Darwin Australia have been validated directly against aircraft \textit{in situ} measurements of the CO₂ column (Fig 1b). While the TCCON network is continuing to grow, it will always be much smaller than the CO₂ surface and tower networks. Advanced data fusion methods will be needed compare and combine the space based data with the data from those networks. One of the primary challenges will be representing the sampling footprints associated with each measurement type without introducing biases.

**Figure 1.** (a) Horizontal scale of atmospheric soundings for Nadir observations at low and high latitudes. Even though the OCO surface footprint is only 3km² at nadir, the atmospheric footprint associated with the incoming solar beam can extend 100’s of km. (b) The FTS adjacent to the WLEF tower near Park Falls, Wisconsin. These stations will facilitate comparisons of OCO data to the surface network.