



S5P Mission Performance Centre Methane [L2__CH4___] Readme



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¹ The S5PVT AO project summaries can be found at <https://earth.esa.int/web/guest/pi-community/search-results-and-projects/mission>

1 Summary

This is the Product Readme File (PRF) for the Sentinel 5 Precursor Tropospheric Monitoring Instrument (S5P/TROPOMI) Methane (CH₄) total column level 2 data product and is applicable for the Offline (OFFL) timeliness data product.

Product Identifier: **L2_CH4**

Example filename:

S5P_OFFL_L2_CH4_20190115T172935_20190115T191105_06517_01_010202_20190121T194108.nc

The OFFL product has the following doi: <http://doi.org/10.5270/S5P-3p6lnwd>

The Readme file describes the current processing baseline, product and quality limitations, and product availability status. More information on this data product is available from the Copernicus Sentinel product webpage:

<https://sentinels.copernicus.eu/web/sentinel/technical-guides/sentinel-5p/products-algorithms>,

and from the TROPOMI product webpage <http://www.tropomi.eu/data-products>.

The data file contains the column average dry air mixing ratio of methane, XCH₄ (`methane_mixing_ratio`), which gives the total atmospheric column between the surface and the top of the atmosphere normalized to the corresponding dry air column. The respective random error originating from the spectral fit is given in the methane (CH₄) total column `_precision`. As a user guideline for the data quality a `qa_value` is given with the data. In order to avoid misinterpretation of the data quality, it is recommended at the current stage to only use those pixels with a `qa_value` above 0.5.

Independent validation by S5p Mission Performance Centre (MPC) Cal/Val experts and the Sentinel-5 Precursor Validation Team (S5PVT) concludes that the methane total column data is in good overall agreement with (i) reference measurements collected from the TCCON and NDACC global ground-based networks, and (ii) the corresponding satellite data products from GOSAT.

An overall bias of -0.3% (-0.8% for `methane_mixing_ratio_not_bias_corrected`) is found in the MPC Validation Data Analysis Facility (VDAF) data comparison against 22 TCCON stations and is well within the mission requirements (Table 1) of $\leq 1.5\%$ (24 ppb). The scatter of the data around this bias also complies with mission requirements of $\leq 1.0\%$ (18 ppb). The comparison of S5p TROPOMI and GOSAT XCH₄ product supports the findings of the data product validation with ground-based measurements.

The data product requirements are listed in the S5p Calibration and Validation Plan [RD01]

Parameter	Data product	Vertical Resolution	Bias	Random
Total column OFFL	Methane (CH ₄)	Total column	1.5%	1.0%

Table 1: Mission data requirements for the CH₄

2 Processing baseline description

The Table 2 contains the history of the CH₄ processor versions. Also reprocessed CH₄ data products ('RPRO' tag in filename) have been made available on the Copernicus Sentinel-5P Pre-operations Data Hub. The products are available for selected orbits (list available here <https://sentinels.copernicus.eu/documents/247904/2474724/Reprocessed-S5p-CH4-orbit-list-1.0.pdf>) reprocessed in the frame of the Validation campaign performed prior to the public CH₄ data release.

Processor Version	In operation from	In operation until
01.02.02	RPRO: orbit 2830, 2018-04-30	Orbit 5346, 2018-10-25
01.02.02	OFFL: orbit 5833, 2018-11-28	Orbit 7424, 2019-03-20
01.03.00	OFFL: orbit 7425, 2019-03-20	Orbit 7906, 2019-04-23
01.03.01	OFFL: orbit 7907, 2019-04-23	Orbit 8814, 2019-06-26
01.03.02	OFFL: orbit 8815, 2019-06-26	Current version

Table 2: History of CH₄ processor versions

3 Product Quality

3.1 Recommendations for data usage

It is recommended to use TROPOMI CH₄ data associated with a quality assurance value `qa_value` > 0.5. The `qa_value` is provided as part of the CH₄ data product and the overall definition used in the current data release is summarized in Table 3. A more detailed discussion on the `qa_value` parameter can be found in the Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document (ATBD) [RD02].

qa_value	Condition	Remark
1.0	Convergence, clear-sky	Highest quality data
0.8	Failed deconvolution irradiance spectrum	Not pixel specific but row-specific
0.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not confidentially clear-sky (VIIRS, non-scattering retrieval) • SZA > 70°, VZA > 60° • Surface albedo (SWIR) < 0.02 • Fraction of 'good' spectral pixels (SIWR, NIR) < 70% • AOT < 0.3, • CH₄ noise related error < 10 • χ^2 < 100 • SNR SWIR < 50 	For details in cloud filter see Sect. 5.4 of the ATBD [RD02] Thresholds are specified in configuration file
0.0	No convergence	

Table 3: `qa_value` definition

Current TROPOMI CH₄ data is available only for inner 2/3 of the swath (VZA < 60°) and over land.

For further details, data users are encouraged to read the Product User Manual (PUM) [RD03] and ATBD [RD02] associated with this data product, both available on <https://sentinels.copernicus.eu/web/sentinel/technical-guides/sentinel-5p/products-algorithms>.

3.2 Validation results

3.2.1 Status of product validation

This section presents a summary of the key validation results obtained by VDAF of the S5p MPC and by the S5PVT activities. Current conclusions are based on the limited amount of reference measurements available at the time of this analysis, and on the period covered by the initial S5p dataset. The conclusions summarized hereafter need to be confirmed by a larger amount of co-locations, and extended over multiple years of data, hence, a full cycle of key influence quantities, in order to enable detection and quantification of potential patterns, dependences, seasonal cycles and longer-term features.

3.2.2 Validation approach

3.2.2.1 Ground-based networks

S5P/TROPOMI L2__CH4__ methane total column data are routinely compared to reference measurements of the TCCON and NDACC networks.

3.2.2.2 Satellites

Initial S5P/TROPOMI L2__CH4__ methane total column data have also been compared to GOSAT CH₄ data (Hu et al., 2018).

3.2.2.3 Model

Not done yet

3.2.3 Validation results

Hu et al., 2018 [RD04] compared the column averaged dry air mole fraction of methane (XCH₄) with spatiotemporal collocated XCH₄ measurements of the Japanese GOSAT mission. For intercomparing TROPOMI and GOSAT methane observations, they chose the methane proxy product, that is delivered in the context of the Copernicus Atmospheric Monitoring Service (CAMS, [RD05]). The proxy approach uses radiance measurements in the 1.6 μm spectral range covering weak absorption bands of CO₂ and CH₄. The method infers the total column density of both trace gases [CH₄] and [CO₂] ignoring any atmospheric scattering and relies on the assumption that scattering effects cancel in the ratio of the CH₄ column [CH₄] and the CO₂ column [CO₂], and that a prior estimate of XCO₂ is sufficiently accurate to recalculate the XCH₄ from the measured [CH₄]/[CO₂] ratio [RD07]. The GOSAT data product is bias-corrected with respect to high-precision ground-based measurements from the TCCON [RD06] but has a remaining bias of -6.6 ppb and a standard deviation of 15.5 ppb with respect to TCCON measurements. Note that the proxy method cannot be applied to TROPOMI measurements, because there is no suitable light-path proxy for CH₄ in the 2.3 μm band and so this comparison relies not on two different spectrometers but also on different retrieval methods and two different spectral ranges.

Using TROPOMI measurements with the 2-band operational retrieval algorithm [RD08] from 11 November to September 2018 and following the comparison approach in Hu et al., 2018, we find a very good agreement between TROPOMI and GOSAT methane products with a mean difference of 7.4 ppb, a standard deviation of 21.0 ppb, and a Pearson's correlation coefficient of 0.86.

The inspection of the GOSAT and TROPOMI product indicated a clear albedo dependence of the differences between both data product with a clear underestimation of the TROPOMI XCH₄ data for low albedo. Based on this, a bias correction is derived and applied to the current version of the data product (see for more details the product ATBD [RD02]), leading to the bias-corrected XCH₄ entry (`methane_mixing_ratio_bias_corrected`) of the TROPOMI data product.

As part of the S5PVT activity 'Validation of the S5p CO and CH₄ total column product' (AO Proposal ID28630), preliminary validation has been performed by SRON of a (re) processed subset of S5p TROPOMI CH₄ clear-sky measurements retrieved over TCCON stations. For this validation, we used independent ground based CH₄ measurements from 12 different stations located in North America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. We selected TROPOMI measurements from the same day as the TCCON measurements within a radius of 300 km around each station and found an agreement between TROPOMI CH₄ and TCCON of -12 ppb, with a station-to-station variability (i.e. standard deviation of the mean bias for all stations) of 11.5 ppb. If the radius is reduced to 50 km, the bias is -13.6 ppb, but the number of co-located measurements is reduced by 60%. The agreement between TROPOMI CH₄ corrected for the albedo dependency (see ATBD [RD02]) and TCCON (for a collocation radius of 300 km) is of -4.3 ppb, with a station-to-station variability of 7.4 ppb. The comparison results show that the quality of the TROPOMI CH₄ and CH₄ corrected product is such that they both largely comply with the mission requirements specified in Table 1.

The S5p MPC VDAF and the TCCON4S5P AO project performed a validation against all data available in both TCCON and NDACC networks covering the period 11/2017 – 12/2018 for both the standard XCH₄ S5p data product and the bias corrected product. The validation methodology compares the groundbased column with the satellite column after substitution of a common prior (see Rodgers et. al 2003, the S5p prior is used as the common prior). For the comparison against TCCON the S5p pixel selection criteria were set to a maximal distance of 100km from the FTIR site and a maximal time difference of 1 hour. Validation results show that both the S5p standard and bias corrected XCH₄ products satisfy the mission requirements. The comparison against TCCON leads to the following conclusions:

- The averaged bias for the comparison against 22 TCCON sites is -0.81% and -0.31% for the standard and bias corrected XCH₄ product. The relative mean difference of the standard XCH₄ product slightly exceeds the mission requirements (bias <1.5%) only at a few TCCON sites (e.g. Sodankylä, Easttroutlake, Parkfalls and Wollongong).
- The network wide average of the standard deviations of the relative differences is estimated at 0.6% for both standard and bias corrected products and lies well within the mission requirement on precision (<1%). All TCCON sites estimate the S5p precision below the required 1%.

For more details validation results, the user is referred to the S5p MPC VDAF website at <http://mpc-vdaf.tropomi.eu> and [RD04].

We thank all the TCCON and NDACC PI's for providing the data without which this validation study would not have been possible.

4 Data Quality Remarks

4.1 Known Data Issues

Currently, the following data quality issues are known, not covered by the quality flags, and should be kept in mind when looking at the methane product and also at preliminary validation results. For more details we refer to the MPC VDAF website <http://mpc-vdaf.tropomi.eu>.

- Filtering on `qa_value > 0.5` does not remove all pixels considered bad. Some pixels with too low methane concentrations are still present.
- Single TROPOMI overpasses show stripes of erroneous CH₄ values in the flight direction.
- Uncertainties for the XCH₄ is only based on the single sounding precision due to measurement noise. For applications requiring an overall uncertainty estimate, we propose to multiply the provided error by a factor 2, which reflects the scatter of single sounding errors in the TCCON validation.
- The current data release only provides XCH₄ over land. Glint ocean observations will be added in the next data release.

4.2 Solved Data Quality Issues

- Solved since orbit **7644 (05-APR-2019)**: Not all pixels above inland water are filtered.

4.3 Data Features

This section describes some characteristics of the data that might seem anomalous, however they are physically correct and not related to any problem.

Pixel bounds and crossing scan lines around North Pole

The solar irradiance is measured on a daily basis over the North Pole at a reference azimuth angle to remove seasonal effects on the measurements. To this end, a yaw manoeuvre is executed when the instrument is still in radiance mode, causing possible distortion on the scanlines observed during this manoeuvre (i.e. crossing scanlines, "bow-tie" ground pixel shape instead of rectangular). This occurs at most during the last 26 seconds of radiance measurements in few orbits (7-9 per week). Though this may seem anomalous, it is physically correct, and not related to any problem on the data geolocation.

5 Algorithm Change Record

For a detailed description of the L2__CH4__ algorithms, please refer to the ATBD [RD02].

6 Data Format

The product is stored as NetCDF4 file. The NetCDF4 file contains both the data and the metadata for the product.

Details of the data format are provided in the PUM document [RD03].

6.1 Data format changes

This document describes the first public release of the data product, therefore there are no changes to report.

7 Product Availability

S5P/TROPOMI Methane data are available on the Copernicus S5p Open Access Hub <https://scihub.copernicus.eu/>

More information on this data product and data handling tools are available from the product web page under heading 'Tools': <http://www.tropomi.eu/data-products>.

For further questions regarding S5P/TROPOMI data products please contact EOSupport@Copernicus.esa.int.

The access and use of any Copernicus Sentinel data available through the Copernicus Sentinel Data Hub is governed by the Legal Notice on the use of Copernicus Sentinel Data and Service Information and is given here:

https://sentinels.copernicus.eu/documents/247904/690755/Sentinel_Data_Legal_Notice.

8 References

- [RD01] Sentinel-5 Precursor Calibration and Validation Plan for the Operational Phase
source: ESA; ref: ESA-EOPG-CSCOP-PL-0073; issue: 1.0 date 2017-06-11
url: <https://sentinel.esa.int/documents/247904/2474724/Sentinel-5P-Calibration-and-Validation-Plan.pdf>
- [RD02] Algorithm Theoretical Baseline Document for Sentinel-5 Precursor Methane Retrieval,
source: SRON ref: SRON-S5P-LEV2-RP-001, url:
<https://sentinel.esa.int/documents/247904/2476257/Sentinel-5P-TROPOMI-ATBD-Methane-retrieval>
- [RD03] Sentinel-5 precursor/TROPOMI Level 2 [Product User Manual](#) Methane
source: KNMI; ref: SRON-S5P-LEV2-MA-001
url: <https://sentinel.esa.int/documents/247904/2474726/Sentinel-5P-Level-2-Product-User-Manual-Methane>
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- [RD07] Frankenberg, C., Meirink, J., van Weele, M., U Platt, and Wagner, T. (2005a). Assessing methane emissions from global space-borne observations. *Science*, 308(5724), 1010–1014. doi:[10.1126/science.1106644](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1106644)
- [RD08] H. Hu, O. Hasekamp, A. Butz, A. Galli, J. Landgraf, J. Aan de Brugh, T. Borsdorff, R. Scheepmaker, and I. Aben. The operational methane retrieval algorithm for TROPOMI. *Atmos. Meas. Tech.*, 9,1-18, 2016.

More information on this data product is available from the Copernicus Sentinel product webpage:

<https://sentinels.copernicus.eu/web/sentinel/technical-guides/sentinel-5p/products-algorithms>,

and from the corresponding TROPOMI product webpage <http://www.tropomi.eu/data-products>.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ATBD	Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document
BIRA-IASB	Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy
CAMS	Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service
CH ₄	Methane
ESA	European Space Agency
ESL	Expert Support Laboratory
ESRIN	European Space Research INstitute
FTIR	Fourier Transform Infra-Red
IFS	ECMWF Integrated Forecasting System
KNMI	Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute / Koninklijk Nederlands Meteorologisch Instituut
MOPITT	Measurements of Pollution in the Troposphere
MPC	Mission Performance Centre
NDACC	Network for the Detection of Atmospheric Composition Change
OFFL	Offline
PRF	Product Readme File
PUM	Product User Manual
RPRO	Reprocessing
S5P	Sentinel-5 Precursor
S5PVT	Sentinel-5 Precursor Validation Team
SZA	Solar Zenith Angle
TCCON	Total Carbon Column Observing Network
TROPOMI	TROPOspheric Monitoring Instrument
VDAF	Validation Data Analysis Facility
VZA	Viewing Zenith Angle