

Evaluating CHASERV4.0 global formaldehyde (HCHO) simulations using satellite, aircraft, and ground-based remote sensing observations

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Abstract

Formaldehyde (HCHO), a precursor to tropospheric ozone, is an important tracer of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the atmosphere. Two years (2019 -2020) of HCHO simulations obtained from the global chemistry transport model CHASER at a horizontal resolution of $2.8^{\circ} \times 2.8^{\circ}$ have been evaluated using the Tropospheric Ozone Monitoring Experiment (TROPOMI) and multi-axis differential optical absorption spectroscopy (MAX-DOAS) observations. In-situ measurements from the Atmospheric Tomography Mission (ATom) in 2018 were used to evaluate the HCHO simulations for 2018. CHASER reproduced the TROPOMI-observed global HCHO spatial distribution with a spatial correlation (r) of 0.93 and a negative bias of 7%. The model showed good capability for reproducing the observed magnitude of the HCHO seasonality in different regions, including the background conditions. The discrepancies between the model and satellite in the Asian regions were related mainly to the underestimated and missing anthropogenic emission inventories. The maximum difference between two HCHO simulations based on two different nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emission inventories was 20%. TROPOMI's finer spatial resolution than that of the Ozone Monitoring Experiment (OMI) sensor reduced the global model--satellite root-mean-square-error (RMSE) by 20%. The OMI and TROPOMI observed seasonal variations in HCHO abundances were consistent. The simulated seasonality showed better agreement with TROPOMI in most regions. The simulated HCHO and isoprene profiles correlated strongly ($R = 0.81$) with the ATom observations. However, CHASER overestimated HCHO mixing ratios over dense vegetation areas in South America and the remote Pacific (background condition) regions, mainly within the planetary boundary layer (<2 km). The simulated seasonal variations in the HCHO columns showed good agreement ($R > 0.70$) with the MAX-DOAS observations and agreed within the 1-

34 sigma standard deviation of the observed values. However, the temporal correlation ($R \sim 0.40$) was
35 moderate on the daily scale. CHASER underestimated the HCHO levels at all sites, and the peak
36 occurrence in the observed and simulated HCHO seasonality differed. The coarse model resolution can
37 potentially lead to such discrepancies. Sensitivity studies showed that anthropogenic emissions were the
38 highest contributor (up to $\sim 35\%$) to the winter-time regional HCHO levels.

39 **1 Introduction**

40 Formaldehyde (HCHO), the most abundant carbonyl compound in the atmosphere, is a high-yield
41 oxidation product of all primary biogenic and anthropogenic non-methane volatile organic compounds
42 (NMVOCs). Methane (CH_4) oxidization produces background HCHO concentrations of 0.2–1.0 ppbv
43 (Burkert et al., 2001; Singh et al., 2004; Sinreich et al., 2005; Weller et al., 2000). Along with secondary
44 sources (i.e., oxidization of NMVOCs), biomass burning, industrial processes, and fossil fuel combustions
45 are primary HCHO emission sources (Fu et al., 2008; Hak et al., 2005; Lee et al., 1997). However, the
46 oxidization of NMVOCs drives the spatial variability of HCHO on a global scale (Franco et al., 2015).
47 The HCHO removal mechanisms include photolysis at wavelengths below 400 nm, oxidization by
48 hydroxyl radicals (OH), and wet deposition. The atmospheric lifetime of HCHO is around a few hours
49 (Arlander et al. 1995). Therefore, HCHO observations can help elucidate chemical processes in the
50 atmosphere. A few examples are the following: (1) the ozone (O_3) production regime can be determined
51 from the HCHO to nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) ratio (Duncan et al., 2010; Hoque et al., 2022; Martin et al.,
52 2004); (2) midday OH levels can be quantified from the oxidation of isoprene into HCHO (Kaisar et al.,
53 2015); and (3) HCHO, being an intermediate product in oxidation chain of NMVOCs, engenders the
54 formation of carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO_2). Consequently, CO chemical production
55 from NMVOCs and CH_4 can be quantified from HCHO measurements (De Smedt et al., 2021).

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57 Given its importance, global HCHO observations started in 1995 with the launch of the nadir viewing
58 ultraviolet (UV) sensor Global Ozone Monitoring Experiment (GOME; Burrows et al., 1997). Since then,
59 numerous sensors have succeeded: SCanning Imaging Absorption Spectrometer for Atmospheric
60 CHartography (SCIAMACHY; De Smedt et al., 2008, 2010; Wittrock et al., 2006) onboard the
61 ENVISAT satellite, Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) (Levelt et al., 2018), Global Ozone Monitoring
62 Experiment – 2 (GOME-2) (Munro et al., 2016), and Ozone Mapping and Profiler Suite (González Abad

et al., 2016, new reference). The HCHO observations from these sensors have been used extensively to evaluate models, air quality, and climate change (Chutia et al., 2019; De Smedt et al., 2010, 2012, 2015; Hoque et al., 2022). The Tropospheric Ozone Monitoring Instrument (TROPOMI) (De Smedt et al., 2021; Veefkind et al., 2012), launched on the European Copernicus Sentinel-5 Precursor (S5P) satellite on October 13, 2017, is the recent addition to the series of nadir viewing UV sensors providing HCHO data. The unprecedented original spatial resolution of $3.5 \times 7 \text{ km}^2$ (across-track $\times$ along-track) refined to $3.5 \times 5.5 \text{ km}^2$ on August 6, 2019, is the crucial feature of TROPOMI. Such spatial resolution is almost 16 times finer than its predecessor, OMI (De Smedt et al., 2021). Such high-resolution observations will likely reduce uncertainties in the HCHO products for multiple research purposes.

Several studies using the TROPOMI HCHO product have been reported in the literature. De Smedt et al. (2021) and Vigouroux et al. (2020) have validated TROPOMI HCHO comprehensively against MAX-DOAS and FTIR networks. Both studies have concluded that TROPOMI HCHO products have achieved the pre-launch accuracy requirement of $< 40\text{--}80\%$. Ryan et al. (2021) and Chan et al. (2020) reported good agreement (temporal correlation, $R > 0.70$) between TROPOMI and MAX-DOAS in Melbourne and Munich. In addition to validation studies, HCHO products have been used to infer changes in the global HCHO levels during the COVID-19 pandemic-led shutdown (Level et al., 2022; Sourì et al., 2021; Su et al., 2021), demonstrating the role of anthropogenic emission on global HCHO variability.

Among the multitude of applications of TROPOMI HCHO observations, few efforts have specifically evaluated HCHO simulations from global chemistry transport models (CTMs). This work evaluates the global Chemical Atmospheric General Circulation Model for the Study of Atmospheric Environment and Radiative Forcing (CTM CHASER) (Sekiya & Sudo, 2014; Sudo et al., 2002, 2007) simulated HCHO spatiotemporal distribution against TROPOMI HCHO observations. In addition, airborne and ground-based observations are used to validate the simulated HCHO profiles and surface mixing ratios in a few regions. CHASER simulations of NO_2 , OH, and O_3 have been evaluated against satellite and ground-based observations (e.g., Sekiya & Sudo, 2014; Sekiya et al., 2018). Moreover, CHASER is a forward model in the chemical reanalysis system (TCR) developed by Miyazaki et al. (2017, 2020). The model simulations are performed at a horizontal resolution of $2.8^\circ \times 2.8^\circ$ (T42). Although the model can run at

91 higher resolutions, T42 is the most commonly used framework for CHASER applications. Therefore, it
92 is used for this study.

93 Hoque et al. (2022) validated CHASER-simulated NO₂ and HCHO against OMI and MAX-DOAS
94 observations for 2017. CHASER showed good skills in reproducing the OMI- (spatial correlation, $r =$
95 0.74) and MAX-DOAS- (temporal correlation $R > 0.80$) observed HCHO abundances. The study found
96 that biomass burning contributes ~50% to the HCHO levels observed at the site in Thailand. However,
97 the limitations of the study are: (1) Simulated HCHO partial column and profile were evaluated against
98 MAX-DOAS observation on a seasonal scale only, (2) Model sensitivity studies were site-specific, thus
99 providing no global statistics on emission contribution, and (3) Satellite observations were used as
100 supporting datasets; thus the model-satellite comparison has not been comprehensive. This study utilizes
101 multi-satellite (TROPOMI and OMI) HCHO observations, different NO_x emission inventories, aircraft
102 measurements, and daily and diurnal MAX-DOAS data to provide robust and comprehensive statistics
103 on the model HCHO simulations.

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106 **2 Model, observations, and methods**

107 **2.1 CHASER**

108 CHASER 4.0 (ver. 4) is a global CTM that studies the atmospheric environment and radiative forcing. It
109 is coupled online with the MIROC atmospheric general circulation model (AGCM) and the SPRINTAS
110 aerosol transport model (Takemura et al., 2005, 2009). The latest version of CHASER (Ha et al., 2023;
111 He et al., 2022) entails several updates, including the formation of aerosol species and related chemistry,
112 radiation, and cloud processes.

113 Through 263 multi-phase (gaseous, aqueous, and heterogenous) chemical reactions, CHASER calculates
114 the concentrations of 92 species considering the chemical cycle of O₃ – NO_x (nitrogen oxides) – HO_x
115 (hydrogen oxides) -CH₄-CO along with oxidation of NMVOCs (Ha et al., 2023; He et al., 2022; Hoque
116 et al., 2022; Miyazaki et al., 2017; Sekiya et al., 2023). The chemical mechanism is adopted mainly from
117 the master chemical mechanism (MCM) (Jenkin et al., 2015). The stratospheric O₃ chemistry simulations
118 are based on the Chapman mechanisms, the catalytic reaction of halogen oxides, and polar stratospheric
119 clouds. The dry and wet depositions are calculated based on resistance-based parameterization (Wesley
120 et al., 1984), cumulus convection, and large-scale condensation parameterization. Advective trace

121 transport is calculated using the piecewise parabolic method (Colella & Woodward, 1984) and flux-form
122 semi-Lagrangian schemes. Tracer transport is simulated on a sub-grid scale in the framework of the
123 prognostic Arakawa–Schubert cumulus convection scheme (Emori et al., 2001) and vertical diffusion
124 scheme (Mellor & Yamada, 1974). The simulations were performed at a horizontal resolution of $2.8^\circ \times$
125 2.8° , with 36 vertical layers from the surface to approx. 50 km altitude, with a 20 min time step. At every
126 time step, meteorological fields obtained from the MIROC AGCM were nudged toward the 6-hourly
127 NCEP FNL reanalysis data.

128 CHASER incorporates emissions from biomass burning, anthropogenic sources, lightning, and soil.
129 Anthropogenic NO_x emissions for 2018 are obtained from the HTAP_v3 inventory (Crippa et al., 2023).
130 Other anthropogenic emissions are taken from the HTAPv2.2 for 2008 and the biomass burning emissions
131 from MACC-GFAS (Inness et al., 2013). The monthly soil NO_x emissions derived from Yienger and
132 Levy (1995) are constant each year. Biogenic emissions of VOCs are obtained from a process-based
133 biogeochemical model: the Vegetation Integrative Simulator for trace gases (VISIT) (Ito and Inatomi,
134 2012). VISIT is a part of the CHASER modeling framework and incorporates the biogenic flux estimate
135 scheme of Guenther et al. (1997) (Ito et al., 2022). The global isoprene emissions in VISIT and CAMS
136 global biogenic emission inventory (Sinderolova et al., 2022; based on MEGANv2.1) are 400 and 450
137 TgC/yr , respectively. Lightning NO_x production estimates are based on the parameterization of Price and
138 Rind (1992) and linked to the convection scheme of the AGCM. Global NO_x emissions in CHASER are
139 set to 43.80 TgN/yr considering industrial production (23.10 TgN/yr), biomass burning (9.65 TgN/yr),
140 soil (5.50 TgN/yr), lightning (5 TgN/yr), and aircraft (0.55 TgN/yr) as significant emission sources.
141 Annual monoterpene, acetone, and other non-methane volatile organic compound (ONMV) emissions are
142 102, 20, and 60 TgC/yr , respectively. Direct emissions of HCHO from anthropogenic sources and biomass
143 burning are not considered in CHASER. However, secondary production of HCHO from VOCs (C_2H_6 ,
144 C_3H_8 , C_2H_4 , C_3H_6 , CH_3COCH_3 , ONMV) emitted directly from anthropogenic and pyrogenic sources is
145 considered.

146 Sekiya et al. (2018) comprehensively assessed CHASER simulated NO_2 abundances using OMI
147 observations. CHASER well reproduced the ATom-observed OH spatiotemporal variation (Sekiya et al.,
148 2018). The quality of O_3 simulations has been explained in the work of Sudo et al. (2014). Ha et al. (2023)
149 and He et al. (2022) updated the heterogeneous chemistry and lightning NO_x scheme, respectively. These
150 updates have not been considered in the current study. The effect of these updates on the HCHO

151 simulations will be addressed in a separate study. Multiple simulations with varying emission inputs were
152 performed for the study. They are presented in Table 1.

153 **Table 1.** Combinations of emission inventories for different simulations used in this study

Simulation name	NO _x emissions	Biogenic emissions	Anthropogenic VOC emissions	Biomass burning
Standard	HTAP_v3	ON	ON	ON
ANI ^a	HTAP_v3	ON	Increased three-fold	ON
OLNE ^b	HTAP_v2.2	ON	ON	ON
Biogenic_off	HTAP_v3	OFF	ON	ON
Anthropogenic_off	HTAP_v3	ON	OFF	ON
Biomass_off	HTAP_v3	ON	ON	OFF

154 ^a Anthropogenic VOC emission increased by three folds (ANI), ^bSimulation using old NO_x emissions (OLNE)

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157 To account for the altitude dependence of TROPOMI observations, averaging kernel (AK) information
158 obtained from the level (L2) files was applied to all simulations following the method of Sekiya et al.
159 (2018). First, the simulated HCHO profiles were sampled closest to the TROPOMI overpass of 13:30 LT
160 (Local Time). Secondly, AKs averaged on a 2.8° bin grid were applied to the sampled profiles. Then, the
161 total column was calculated. Thirdly, the AK-applied model columns on the available measurement days
162 were selected.

163 **2.2 TROPOMI**

164 The TROPOMI operational L2 offline (OFFL) HCHO vertical column density (VCD) (ver. 1.1.5.7) data
165 from 2019 to 2020 have been used for this study. The S5P TROPOMI HCHO L2 product user manual
166 (Veefkind et al., 2012) provides a detailed product description. The TROPOMI HCHO retrieval
167 algorithm is based on the DOAS technique, adapted directly from the OMI QA4ECV product retrieval
168 algorithm (De Smedt et al., 2017). The three-step retrieval algorithm was explained explicitly by De
169 Smedt et al. (2018). Slant columns were retrieved from the UV part of the spectra (Channel 3) in a 328.5–
170 358 nm fitting window. The HCHO cross-section data reported by Meller and Moortgart (2000) were
171 used to fit the spectra. All the cross-sections were convolved with the instrument slit function (adjusted
172 after the launch) for every row separately. Spectra averaged over the tropical Pacific region from the prior
173 day were used as reference spectra for the DOAS fit (De Smedt et al., 2021; Vigouroux et al., 2020). The

174 slant columns, therefore, exceed the average Pacific background HCHO levels because they were derived
 175 from the local and reference spectrum differences. The slant columns were converted to tropospheric
 176 columns (N_v) using a look-up table of vertically resolved air mass factors (M) at 340 nm calculated with
 177 the radiative transfer model VILDORT v2.6 (Spurr, 2008). The value of M depends on the observation
 178 geometry, surface albedo, cloud properties, and a priori profiles of HCHO. The surface albedo at a spatial
 179 resolution of $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$ was extracted from the monthly OMI albedo climatology (Kleipool et al., 2008).
 180 Daily HCHO a priori profiles were obtained from TM5-MP CTM at a similar spatial resolution. The
 181 independent pixel approximation (Boersma et al., 2004) approach was applied to pixels with cloud
 182 fractions greater than 0.1. Background correction was performed based on HCHO slant columns from the
 183 five prior days over the Pacific Ocean to account for any remaining global offsets and stripes (De Smedt
 184 et al., 2021). Background HCHO contribution from CH_4 oxidation in the reference region is calculated
 185 with TM5-MP. The resulting HCHO tropospheric column is calculated using equation (1):

$$186 \quad N_v = \frac{N_s - N_{s,o}}{M} + \frac{M_o}{M} * N_{v,0}^{CTM} \quad (1)$$

187 where M_o is the air mass factor of the reference sector. Following De Smedt et al. (2021), the following
 188 filters ensured the data quality: (1) cloud fraction less than 0.3, (2) quality assurance values greater than
 189 0.5, (3) retrievals with solar zenith angle (SZA) less than 70° , (4) surface albedo less than 0.1, and (5) air
 190 mass factor greater than 0.1. The total uncertainty in the reprocessed TROPOMI HCHO columns was
 191 estimated as $\geq 90\%$ for the fire-free region (Zhao et al., 2022, and references therein). The uncertainties
 192 in the air mass factors, slant column fitting, and background HCHO, respectively, account for 75, 25, and
 193 40% of the total uncertainty. The estimated uncertainty in the retrievals in regions with strong fires is
 194 $\sim 35\%$. The filtering criteria of the TROPOMI datasets are as follows: quality assurance value (QA) >0.6 ,
 195 solar zenith angle $<70^\circ$, cloud fraction < 0.3 , AMF > 0.1 , and surface reflectivity <0.2 .

196 TROPOMI observations are averaged spatially and temporally to the CHASER grid (T42) daily, leading
 197 to horizontal representativeness errors. However, the random horizontal representativeness errors are in
 198 the order of 5-10%, which is lower than the individual retrieval error of the satellite observations
 199 (Boersma et al., 2015). If the model horizontal resolution is increased by 50% (i.e., simulated at a
 200 horizontal resolution of $1.4^\circ \times 1.4^\circ$), the change in HCHO abundances is less than 6% (Fig S1 and Table
 201 S1 in supplementary information). The vertical sensitivity of the satellite retrievals is the most relevant
 202 source of representativeness error (Boersma et al., 2015). The current study utilizes the TROPOMI AK
 203 information to minimize the representativeness error. Therefore, the horizontal representative error will
 204 likely affect the results less than other error sources, such as uncertainties in satellite retrieval, emission
 205 inventories, and model chemical mechanisms.

206 **2.3 OMI**

207 The comparison study used HCHO retrievals from OMI, a nadir-viewing spectrometer on board the Aura
 208 satellite, which measures backscattering solar radiation in the spectral range of 270–500 nm (Levelt et al.,
 209 2018). OMI crosses the equator at 13:40 LT (Zara et al., 2018) and provides daily global coverage of trace
 210 gases, including HCHO, at a spatial resolution of $13 \times 24 \text{ km}^2$. For use in this study, HCHO columns

211 from 2019 to 2020, retrieved using the BIRA-IASBv14 (De Smedt et al., 2021), were obtained from the
212 Aeronomie website (i.e., https://www.temis.nl/qa4ecv/hcho/hcho_omi.php, last accessed on 01/07/2023).
213 The data-filtering criteria were cloud fraction < 0.3, SZA < 70°, quality flag = 0, and cross-track quality
214 flag = 0. Like TROPOMI, OMI data were also averaged spatially and temporally to the model grid(T42).

215 2.4 ATom-4 aircraft campaign

216 The NASA Atmospheric Tomography (ATom) mission used a DC-8 aircraft to study the remote
217 atmosphere over the Pacific and Atlantic oceans from ~80° N to ~65° S (Wofsy et al., 2018). Repeated
218 flights measured the vertical profiles from 0.15 to 12 km to provide information related to greenhouse
219 gases, reactive and tracer species, and aerosol composition and size distribution (Kupc et al., 2018). Over
220 two years and four phases, sampling was conducted in one of the four seasons in each stage (Zhao et al.,
221 2022). Here, the 1-minute averaged measurements of HCHO and isoprene during the ATom-4 flight
222 (Fig.S2) in 2018 are used for the model evaluation. The NASA In Situ Airborne Formaldehyde (ISAF)
223 instrument (Cazorla et al., 2015) performed HCHO sampling based on the laser-induced fluorescence
224 technique. Isoprene was measured using two instruments: (a) The University of Irvine Whole Air Sampler
225 (WAS) and (b) the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) Trace Organic Gas Analyzer
226 (TOGA). WAS sampled the air every 3–5 min, with subsequent analyses in the laboratory using gas
227 chromatography (Simpson et al., 2020). TOGA sampling was conducted every 2 min with a 35 s
228 integrated sampling time (Apel et al., 2021). The uncertainty in the WAS and TOGA isoprene
229 observations are, respectively, ±10 and 15%. Measurement uncertainties in HCHO were reported as 10%.
230 The simulations have been interpolated to the observed spatial and temporal resolution following the
231 method of He et al. (2022). The observed and interpolated HCHO and isoprene vertical profiles were
232 averaged over a 300-meter bin. The Atom campaign took place between 2016 and 2018.

233 2.5 MAX-DOAS observations

234 HCHO columns and the volume mixing ratio (vmr) were retrieved from two-year (2019–2020) MAX-
235 DOAS observations at Phimai (15.18°N, 102.46°E, 212 m a.s.l.), Chiba (35.62°N, 140.10°E, 21 m a.s.l.),
236 and Kasuga (33.52°N, 130.47°E, 28 m a.s.l.). The MAX-DOAS observations were conducted under the
237 framework of the international air quality and sky research remote sensing (A-SKY) network (Irie, 2021).
238 The sites were selected because continuous measurements from 2019 to 2020 were available for these
239 sites. Phimai is a rural site in Thailand and experiences biomass burning influence from January to April.
240 The climate is divided into two seasons- (1) dry season (January to May) and (2) wet season (June to
241 December). Chiba and Kasuga are urban sites in central and southern Japan, respectively. The seasonal
242 classification at these sites is – Spring (March to May), Summer (June to August), Autumn (September
243 to November), and winter (December to February). The observations at these sites are described
244 elsewhere (i.e., Hoque et al., 2018a; Irie et al., 2011,2015).

245 The A-SKY MAX-DOAS system, including the instrument and algorithm, participated in the Cabauw
246 Intercomparison campaign for Nitrogen Dioxide measuring Instruments (CINDI) and CINDI-2 (Kreher
247 et al., 2020; Roscoe et al., 2010) campaigns. The instrumentation has been described explicitly by Irie et
248 al. (2008, 2011, 2015). A UV spectrometer (Maya2000Pro; Ocean Insight, Inc.) recorded high-resolution

spectra from 310–515 nm at six elevation angles (ELs) of 2°, 3°, 4°, 6°, 8° and 70°, which were repeated every 15 min. The reference spectra were recorded at EL of 70° instead of 90° to avoid saturation intensity. Spectra measured at all ELs were considered in the retrieved vertical profile and total columns. Consequently, the choice of reference ELs has no appreciable effect on the retrieval. The systematic error in the oxygen collision complex (O₄) was reduced by limiting the off-axis ELs to less than 10° (Irie et al., 2015). However, this limitation reduces sensitivity above the planetary boundary layer (PBL), maintaining high sensitivity in the lower layers of the retrieved profiles. The high-resolution solar spectrum measured by Kurucz et al. (1984) was used for daily wavelength calibration. The spectral resolution is approximately 0.4 nm at 357 and 476 nm (Hoque et al., 2022). Aerosol and trace gas columns and profiles were retrieved using the Japanese vertical profile retrieval algorithm JM2 (ver. 2) (Irie et al., 2011, 2015). Three-step profile and column retrievals by JM2 are explained explicitly in earlier reports (e.g., Hoque et al., 2018; Irie et al., 2011, 2015). The partial VCD values are converted to the volume mixing ratio (vmr) by scaling the U.S. standard atmosphere temperature and pressure data to the respective site surface measurements. The estimated total error (random and systematic) in the HCHO product is 30% (Hoque et al., 2022). Following Irie et al. (2011) and Hoque et al. (2018a, 2022), cloud screening was performed to ensure data quality.

3 Results and discussion

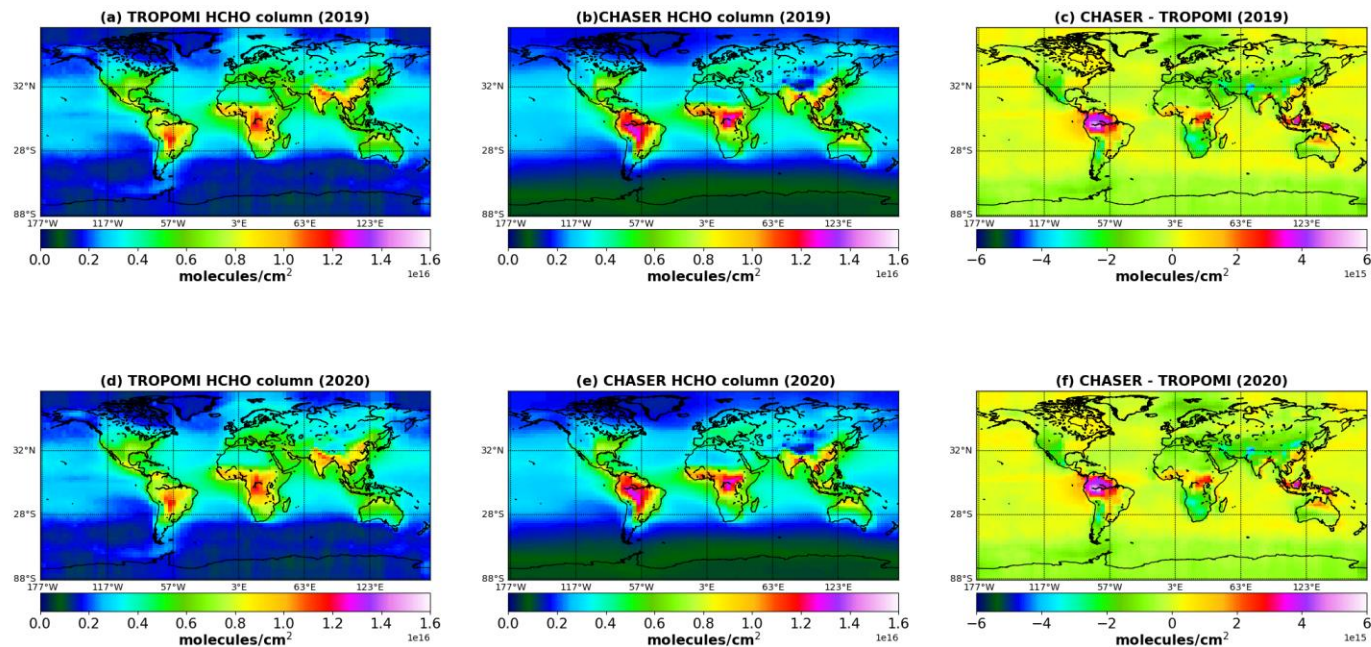
3.1 Comparison of CHASER HCHO with TROPOMI observations

Figure 1 presents a comparison of global distributions of annual mean HCHO columns obtained from TROPOMI retrievals and standard CHASER simulations at the TROPOMI overpass time (13:30). Differences between the observations and model simulations in the respective years are also depicted. The statistics related to the comparison are presented in Table 2. The simulation results agree well with the TROPOMI observations, with a global spatial correlation (r) of 0.93, mean bias error (MBE) (CHASER–TROPOMI) of -0.20×10^{15} molecules cm⁻², and root-mean-square error (RMSE) of 0.75×10^{15} molecules cm⁻². The r , MBE, and RMSE values between 60° S and 60° N were, respectively, 0.92, 0.13×10^{15} molecules cm⁻², and 0.82×10^{15} molecules cm⁻². CHASER HCHO columns are negatively biased relative to the TROPOMI retrievals. Table S2 shows the MBE and RMSE values obtained for the individual months. No seasonal variation in the systematic differences was observed between CHASER and TROPOMI. Biases can originate from uncertainties in the retrieval and model assumptions. TROPOMI HCHO retrievals greater than 8×10^{15} molecules cm⁻² were negatively biased by 25% relative to the ground-based MAX-DOAS observations (De Smedt et al., 2021), whereas direct emissions of HCHO were not considered in CHASER.

281 TROPOMI and CHASER show high HCHO concentrations over South America, central Africa, India,
282 eastern China, and Southeast Asia. Simulated HCHO magnitudes in the hotspot regions were $0.8\text{--}1.4 \times$
283 10^{16} molecules cm^{-2} , slightly higher than the observed range of $0.8\text{--}1 \times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} . The dataset's
284 greatest differences ($\sim 4 \times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2}) were observed over Brazil and Southeast Asia. The
285 datasets show strong congruence in the high-latitude regions. The simulated and observed HCHO
286 columns over Europe, the Middle East, Japan, and Russia were $0.3\text{--}0.6 \times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} . Simulated
287 HCHO columns ($\sim 3 \times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2}) over the remote Pacific region were consistent with the
288 observations, too. The remote Pacific regions represent background conditions strongly linked to CH₄
289 oxidation. Congruence with observations in this region suggests that the simulated CH₄ estimates in the
290 remote areas are reasonable.

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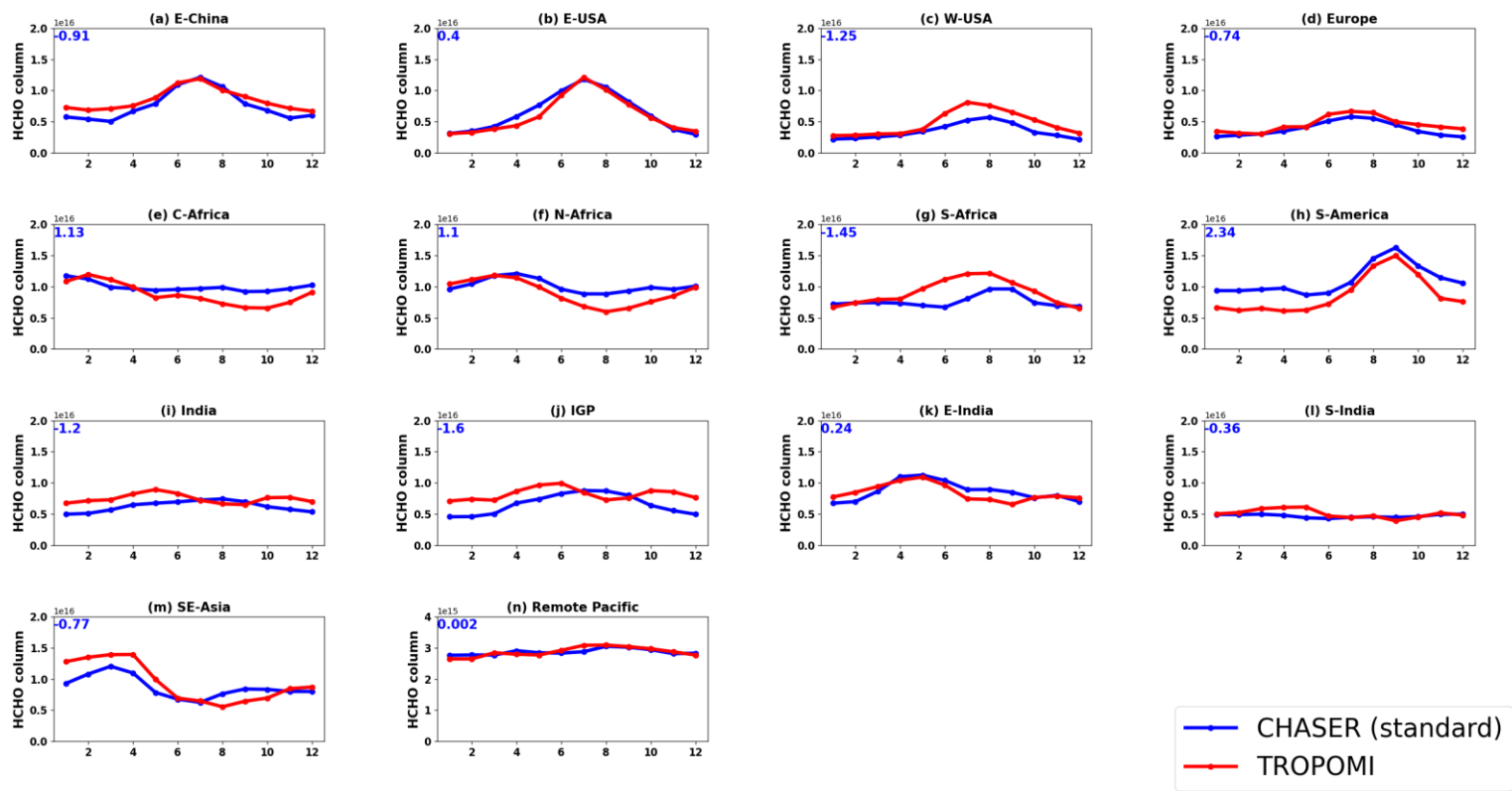
294 **Figure 1.** Annual mean HCHO columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) in 2019 and 2020 were obtained from TROPOMI
295 retrievals (first column) and standard CHASER simulation (second column). The differences between the model
296 and observations in the respective years are shown in the third column. The unit of difference is $\times 10^{15}$ molecules
297 cm^{-2} .

298
299 **Table 2.** Comparison of annual mean HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) column between TROPOMI retrievals and
300 CHASER simulations in 2019 and 2020. MBE and RMSE are the abbreviated forms of mean bias error and root
301 mean square error, respectively. Units of MBE and RMSE are $\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} . Correlation signifies the
302 spatial correlation between the datasets.

Year	Correlation	MBE	RMSE
2019	0.93	-0.20	0.75
2020	0.93	-0.19	0.75

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Figure 2 compares the observed and simulated seasonality in HCHO columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) in different regions. Datasets for 2019 and 2020 were used to calculate the observed and simulated monthly mean values. The MBE ($\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2}) between TROPOMI and CHASER HCHO columns in each region is shown in blue. The comparison statistics are given in Table 3. The regional boundaries are shown on the global distribution map in Fig. S3. Temporal correlations derived from daily values over two years are provided in Table S2.



314

315 **Figure 2.** Seasonal variation in HCHO columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) in eastern (a) China (E-China;
316 30–40°N, 110–123°E), (b) eastern United States (E-USA; 32–43°N, 95–71°W), (c) western United States

317 (W-USA; 32–43°N, 125–100°W), (d) Europe (35–60°N, -10°W–30°E), (e) central Africa (C-Africa; 4°S-
 318 5°N, 10° – 40°E), (f) northern Africa (N-Africa; 5–15°N, 10°W–30°E), (g) southern Africa (S-Africa; 5–
 319 15°S, 10–30°E), (h) South America (S-America; 20°S – 0°N, 50–70° W), (i) India (7.5–35°N, 68–89°E),
 320 (j) the Indo Gangetic Plain (IGP; 21–33°N, 72–89°E), (k) east India (E-India; 15–25°N, 80–90°E)), (l)
 321 south India (S-India; 0–15°N, 63–80°E), (m) Southeast Asia (SE-Asia, 10–20°N, 96–105°E), and (n) the
 322 remote Pacific region (28°S – 32°N, 117°–177°W) as inferred from CHASER simulations (blue) and
 323 TROPOMI observations (red). Blue numbers denote MBE between the TROPOMI and CHASER HCHO
 324 columns. The observed and simulated mean values represent the average of 2019 and 2020.

325

326

327 (a) E-China

328 Over E-China (Fig.2(a)), the datasets are moderately correlated spatially ($r=0.44$), with MBE and RMSE
 329 values of -0.9 and 1.62×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} , respectively. The simulated seasonality correlates strongly
 330 with the observations ($R=0.97$), with a consistent peak (1×10^{16} molecules cm^{-2}) in the HCHO variability
 331 in July. The HCHO columns' peaks are compatible with the peak in isoprene concentrations (Fig. S4),
 332 manifesting a strong biogenic contribution during summer. CHASER mostly underestimated the winter-
 333 time HCHO columns in this region. Liu et al. (2021) reported vehicular exhaust, solvent usage, and
 334 combustion-related regional transport as the primary VOC emission sources during winter in Shanghai, a
 335 megacity in eastern China. NMVOC emissions from these sources (i.e., vehicular exhaust, solvent usage,
 336 and transport) are considered in the HTAPv2.2 inventory (Crippa et al., 2023). Although CHASER
 337 considered HCHO production from the degradation of anthropogenic VOCs, it is likely underestimated,
 338 resulting in a lower simulated winter-time HCHO column in this region.

339

340 **Table 3:** Comparison of monthly mean tropospheric HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) columns obtained
 341 from TROPOMI retrievals and standard CHASER simulations. Coincident dates in 2019 and 2020 are
 342 used to calculate the statistics. Units of MBE and RMSE are $\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} . The temporal
 343 correlations are derived from the seasonal means.

Region	MBE (model – TROPOMI)	RMSE (model – TROPOMI)	Spatial Correlation (r-value)	Temporal Correlation (R-value)
E-China	-0.91	1.62	0.44	0.97
E – USA	0.40	0.43	0.97	0.97
W-USA	-1.25	1.29	0.85	0.95
Europe	-0.74	0.92	0.73	0.93
C-Africa	1.13	1.52	0.93	0.74
N-Africa	1.10	1.26	0.87	0.83
S-Africa	-1.45	1.64	0.89	0.59
S-America	2.34	2.85	0.56	0.97
India	-1.20	1.77	0.84	0.18
IGP	-1.60	1.99	0.91	0.44
E-India	0.24	1.08	0.86	0.72
S-India	-0.36	0.52	0.96	0.34
SE-Asia	-0.77	1.22	0.71	0.87

345					
346	Remote Pacific	0.002	0.13	0.86	0.76
347					

348

349 **(b) Eastern USA, western USA, and Europe**

350 CHASER has well-reproduced the HCHO spatial variability in the eastern USA (E-USA; Fig.2(b);
 351 $r=0.97$) and western USA (W-USA; Fig.2(c); $r=0.85$). The peaks in the HCHO variability coincide with
 352 the isoprene peak in these regions (Fig. S4). The simulated amplitude of the HCHO seasonal modulation
 353 in E-USA and W-USA are 74 and 62%, whereas the observed seasonal amplitudes are 74 and 65%,
 354 respectively. The peak in the HCHO seasonality in E-USA is similar in both datasets ($\sim 1.2 \times 10^{16}$
 355 molecules cm^{-2}). The RMSE value in the W-USA region is 15% higher than in E-USA. Although the
 356 spatial correlation in Europe (Fig.2(d)) is moderate ($r=0.73$), the temporal correlation is strong ($R=0.95$).
 357 The simulated and observed HCHO seasonal modulations in Europe are 60% and 62%, respectively. The
 358 model–satellite discrepancies are prominent in Europe and W-USA during summer and autumn. In both
 359 regions (i.e., Europe and W-USA), the biogenic and anthropogenic contribution to the total HCHO level
 360 is equivalent during summer. In autumn, the anthropogenic emission contributions are higher. (Section
 361 3.8). This manifests a potential model underestimation of biogenic HCHO levels in these regions, linked
 362 to the uncertainties in the biogenic emission inventory and isoprene mechanism. However, the model–
 363 satellite agreement is strong during the winter in these regions. During winter, anthropogenic VOC
 364 emissions drive the HCHO variability in these regions (Luecken et al., 2018; Pozzani et al., 2002).
 365 Therefore, the simulated contribution of anthropogenic sources to the HCHO abundances during winter
 366 in these regions is reasonable.

367

368 **(c) Central, Northern, and Southern Africa**

369 Over the African regions (Fig.2 (e-g), the spatial correlation is higher than 0.80. The African continent is
 370 the single largest biomass-burning emission source (Roberts et al., 2009). The observed and simulated
 371 amplitude of the HCHO seasonality in central Africa (C-Africa; Fig.2(e)) are, respectively, 45 and 21%.
 372 The mean simulated and observed HCHO abundances in North Africa (N-Africa; Fig.2(f)) during the

biomass burning season is $\sim 1.06 \times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} , consistent with the GOME-2 and SCIAMACHY observations (De Smedt et al., 2008). Figure S5 (Supplementary Information) shows the seasonal fire radiative power (FRP) cycle over the three African regions. FRP, a measure of outgoing radiant heat from fires, is a tracer of changes in atmospheric trace constituents related to pyrogenic emissions (Hoque et al., 2018a). The observed and simulated enhanced HCHO columns in N-Africa are congruent with the high FRP values, manifesting the contribution of biomass burning to the HCHO abundances. CHASER could not replicate the observed HCHO seasonality over C-Africa. However, simulations show a decrease in the HCHO abundances in C-Africa from January to March, consistent with the changes in the coincident FRP values.

Over South Africa (S-Africa; Fig.2(g)), elevated TROPOMI HCHO columns are consistent with GOME-2 and SCIAMACHY observations (De Smedt et al., 2008). The observed peaks in HCHO columns and FRP values (Fig.S5) are consistent and thus can be attributed to biomass burning. Pyrogenic emissions contribute $\sim 36\%$ to the high HCHO columns in this region (section 3.8). TROPOMI and CHASER have captured the shift in biomass-burning seasons from northern to southern Africa, which agrees well with earlier observations (i.e., GOME-2, SCIAMACHY). The observed amplitude of the HCHO seasonal cycle in South and North Africa is 46%, signifying an almost two-fold increase in HCHO abundances during the biomass-burning season. Earlier studies (e.g., De Smedt et al., 2008; Muller et al., 2008) found that such a feature (increment by a factor of 2) exists only in the Southern African region. This likely indicates an increase in fire intensity in Northern Africa.

(d) South America

CHASER showed moderate skill in reproducing the observed HCHO spatial distribution in South America (S-America; Fig 2(h); $r = 0.56$). However, the seasonal variation in the HCHO columns is strongly correlated ($R = 0.97$). The MBE and RMSE in the South American continent are 2.34×10^{15} and 2.385×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} , respectively. The enhanced HCHO columns during the South American biomass burning season are well reflected in the datasets. They show a distinctive seasonal cycle. The observed and simulated mean HCHO columns from August through October are $\sim 1.5 \times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} . CHASER estimated 46% seasonal modulation in the HCHO abundances, whereas the observed

modulation is 59%. The model overestimates the HCHO columns in S-America, similarly to C-Africa and N-Africa, probably because of the uncertainties in biogenic emission inventories and the isoprene oxidation scheme.

(e) India

CHASER well reproduced the observed HCHO spatial distribution in India (Fig.2 (i); $r = 0.84$), with MBE and RMSE of -1.20×10^{15} and 1.775×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . However, the temporal correlation ($R=0.18$) between the datasets is low. The observed seasonal modulation of $\sim 30\%$ manifests a less-prominent seasonality in HCHO abundances in India. The correlation between temperature variations and isoprene emissions in India is inhomogeneous (Starvakou et al., 2014). India has a diverse landscape, including major forests over the east, northeast, and southwest regions and deserts in northwestern India (Surl et al., 2018). The Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP) stretches from Eastern Pakistan to Bangladesh and is a major agricultural region in India (Kuttippurath et al., 2022). Thus, averaging the HCHO columns over a diverse landscape can lead to a less prominent seasonality. Moreover, biomass burning compromises 23% of India's total NMVOC (13 Tg/yr) emissions (Stewart et al., 2021). Sensitivity analysis (section 3.8) estimates show biomass burning contribution to the HCHO levels in India is $\sim 2\%$, manifesting that the modeled biomass burning emissions for India are underestimated. Considering the diverse Indian landscape, the model satellite comparison over three regions in India (IGP, east India, and South India) is shown in Fig.2 (j-l).

The model has shown good skill in reproducing the observed HCHO spatial variation in the IGP (Indo-Gangetic Plain; Fig.2(j)) region ($r = 0.91$). However, the temporal correlation is moderate ($R=0.44$). Several field studies (e.g., Hoque et al., 2018b) have reported biomass-burning influences during spring and autumn in IGP, explaining the elevated observed HCHO columns. HCHO seasonal variation during January–June is consistent in both datasets, with an R -value of 0.78. The mean observed and modeled HCHO abundances during spring in IGP are, respectively, 1.19×10^{16} and 8.72×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . However, the model could not reproduce the autumn-time biomass-burning events, reducing the overall R -value in the IGP region. CHASER underestimates winter HCHO columns in the IGP region. Liquid

petroleum gas (LPG) usage, evaporative fuels, and garbage burning contribute significantly to winter NMVOC levels in Delhi and Mohali (Kumar et al., 2021). Although NMVOC emissions from these sources are considered in the simulations, they are likely underestimated in the IGP region.

Over East India (Fig.2(k)), both the spatial ($r = 0.86$) and temporal ($R = 0.72$) agreement between TROPOMI and CHASER HCHO are strong. The observed and modeled amplitudes of the HCHO seasonal cycle are 40%. Both datasets show enhanced HCHO levels during spring., consistent with high isoprene concentrations (Fig.) Biogenic emissions are the main driver of the HCHO levels in East India; however, emissions from mines are also potential sources of NO_x and VOCs (Kuttippurath et al., 2022).

Similarly, CHASER has shown a strong capability for reproducing the HCHO spatial distribution ($r=0.96$) in south India (S-India; Fig..2(l)). However, the temporal correlation is low. The mean observed and simulated HCHO abundances are, respectively, 4.68×10^{15} and 5.03×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . The HCHO seasonality in S-India is less prominent than in the other two regions. The coordinates bounds defined for S-India in this study compromise a large portion of the southern coastal region, which experiences a tropical maritime climate with limited seasonal variations in temperature (Surl et al., 2018). Such a feature can potentially lead to a less prominent HCHO seasonality in S-India.

(f) Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia (SE-Asia; Fig.2(m)), the r -value is 0.71. The MBE and RMSE are respectively -0.77×10^{15} and 1.2×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . During the dry season (January–April), prominent biomass burning occurs in this region in many countries (e.g., Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia). Such fire events degrade local air quality and cause transboundary pollution (Hoque et al., 2018; Kahn et al., 2016). TROPOMI and CHASER have well-captured the pyrogenic emissions-led enhanced HCHO levels. The simulated and observed mean dry season HCHO columns are, respectively, 1.07×10^{16} and 1.35×10^{16} molecules cm^{-2} . The observed and simulated amplitude of the seasonal cycle are, respectively, 48 and

456 60%. CHASER-reproduced columns during the dry season are underestimated. Potential reasons for such
457 discrepancies are discussed in section 3.3.

458

459 **(g) Remote Pacific region**

460

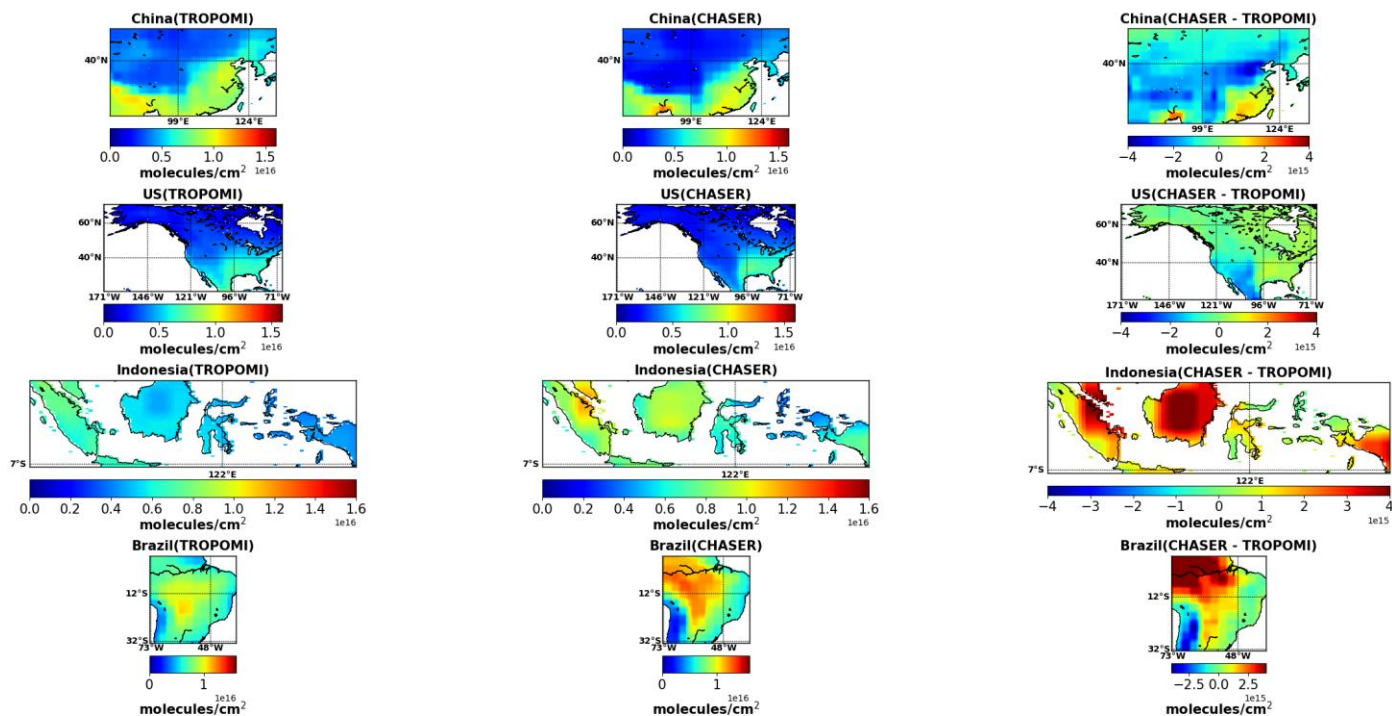
461 The datasets correlate strongly over the remote Pacific region (Fig.2 (n)), representing the background
462 condition. No prominent seasonal variation is observed in this region, which CHASER has well
463 simulated. The simulated and observed background HCHO column is 2.86×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} .

464

465 **3.2 Comparison over countries with large forested areas**

466 Figure 3 shows the observed and simulated HCHO columns over countries where large forested areas are
467 located. The definition of the countries is adopted from the work of Opacka et al. (2021). The statistics
468 presented in Table 4 include regions with high and low biogenic activities. This section compares the
469 overall biogenic emissions in the defined regions with literature values and assesses their impact on model
470 performance.

471 Over China, CHASER correlates strongly with TROPOMI ($r = 0.92$), with MBE of -3×10^{15} molecules
472 cm^{-2} . The lowest differences between the datasets are observed primarily in the southeastern and western
473 parts of China. Shanghai, Nanjing, and Guangzhou megacities are located in southeastern China.
474 Consequently, CHASER has demonstrated good skills in the areas encompassed by multiple megacities.
475 The annual isoprene emission for China in CHASER is 34 TgC/yr, higher than that of Opacka et al. (2021)
476 (9.5–23 TgC/yr).



478 **Figure 3:** Two-year (2019 and 2020) mean CHASER (first column) and TROPOMI (second column) HCHO
479 columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm⁻² cm⁻²) in China (18.19–53.45°N, 73.67–135.02°E), United States (18.91–45°N, 66–
480 171°W), Indonesia (10°S–6°N, 95–142°E), and Brazil (33°S – 5.24°N, 34–73°W). The differences between the
481 datasets are presented in the third column. Only the coincident dates among the datasets are used to calculate the
482 annual mean data.

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491 **Table 4:** Comparison of two-year mean HCHO ($\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm⁻²) column between TROPOMI and
492 CHASER over countries with large forested areas. The coordinate bounds of the regions are adapted from

Opacka et al. (2020). Correlation signifies the spatial agreement between CHASER and TROPOMI, calculated from the annual mean data. The unit of MBE is $\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2}

Region	Spatial correlation (model vs. TROPOMI)	MBE (model–TROPOMI)
China	0.92	-0.84
US	0.93	-0.05
Indonesia	0.81	1.05
Brazil	0.84	1.06

CHASER has shown excellent skill in reproducing TROPOMI observations over the US. Along with high *r*-values, the simulated magnitude of the HCHO columns is consistent with observations throughout the whole region. Consequently, the bias between the datasets for the US is 2%. In CHASER, annual isoprene emissions in the US and the southeastern US are 22 and 7.8 TgC/yr, respectively. Such values are within the ranges reported by Stavrou et al. (2015) and Opacka et al. (2021).

The MBE between TROPOMI and CHASER in Indonesia is 1.05×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . The *r*-value is 0.81. Indonesia's annual mean TROPOMI and CHASER HCHO abundance is 5.06×10^{15} and 6.15×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . The most significant differences between the datasets (4×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2}) are observed for Sumatra, Borneo, and Sulawesi islands. Annual isoprene emissions in Indonesia used in the CHASER simulations are 42 TgC/yr. Indonesian isoprene emissions vary between 25.5 to 32 TgC/yr depending on the land-use change (Opacka et al., 2021). Top-down estimates based on OMI and GOME-2 observations are ~ 11 TgC/yr (Stavrou et al., 2015). However, the 11 TgC/yr emissions are half of the top-down estimates based on SCIAMACHY observations. Consequently, isoprene emissions in Indonesia

511 remain largely uncertain. However, CHASER estimates with the VISIT emissions are higher than those
512 reported in the literature, likely leading to the model overestimation in Indonesia.

513

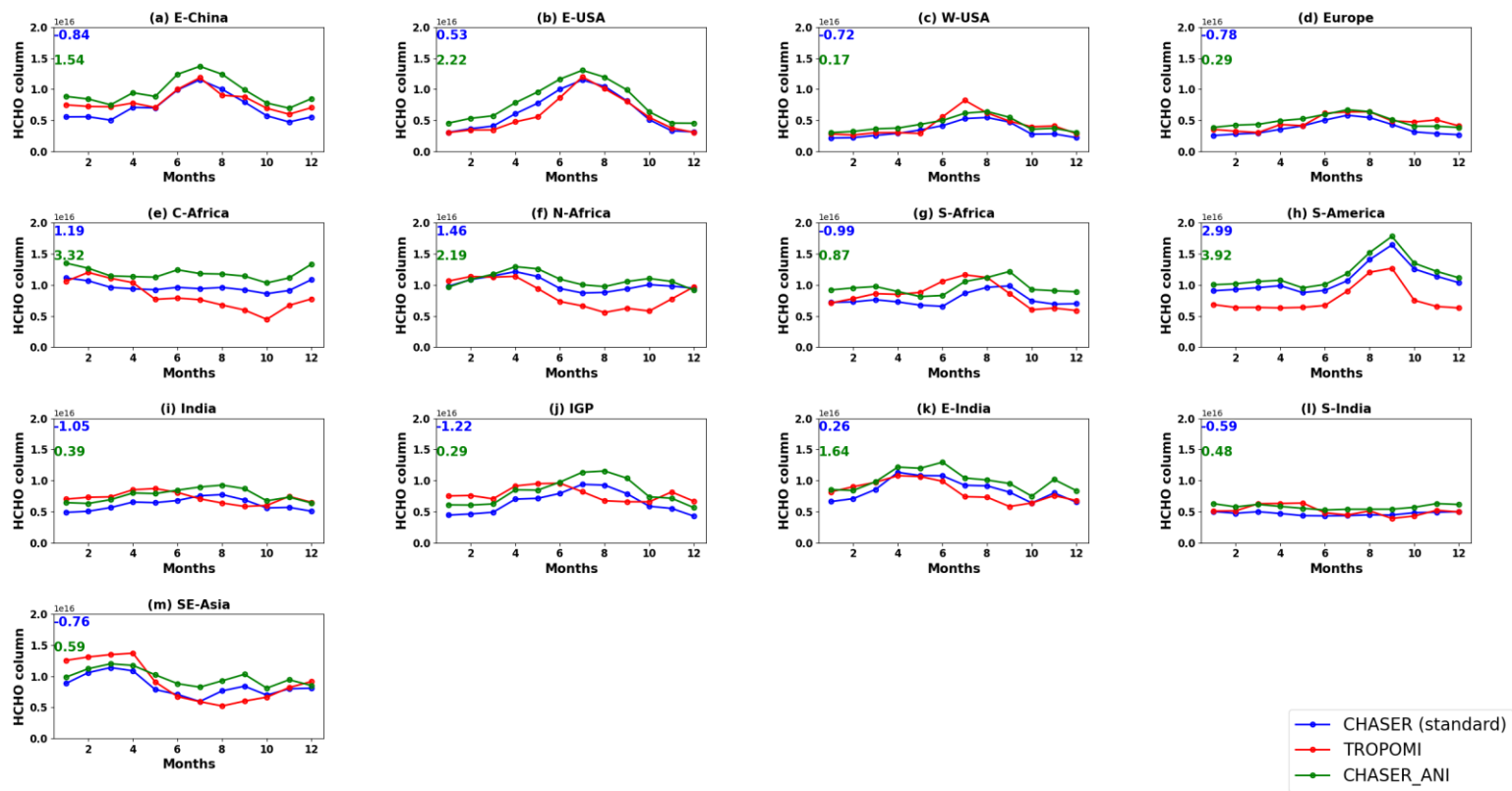
514 CHASER overestimates the HCHO columns over the Amazonia, mostly in northern Brazil. Fig.S6 shows
515 the observed and simulated seasonal HCHO variation over Brazil. Although the model reproduced the
516 temporal variability well, the magnitude was overestimated. This indicates that emission uncertainties are
517 more prominent than uncertainties related to the chemical mechanism for this region. In CHASER, annual
518 isoprene emissions over Amazonia are 67 Tg/yr, consistent with the OMI-based top-down estimates of
519 70 Tg/yr, estimated using apriori emissions from MEGAN (Stavrakou et al., 2015). However,
520 deforestation affects the VOC emissions in the Amazon (Yáñez-Serrano et al., 2020). Massive
521 deforestation in the Amazon occurred between 1985 and 2020, changing 11% of the Amazonian biome
522 (Cabarelo et al., 2022). Depending on the land use and land cover change(LULCC), isoprene emissions
523 in Brazil can vary between 79. And 106.5 Tg/yr (Opacka et al., 2021). Moreover, although biogenic VOC
524 modeling in the Amazon has improved, VOC dynamics in the changing Amazonian biome are poorly
525 understood (Salzar et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2018). Therefore, updated biogenic VOC and LULCC
526 inventories can potentially improve the model performance in Brazil.

527 In addition, CHASER isoprene emission estimates for Europe and Russia are, respectively, 17 and 15
528 TgC/yr, which are comparable to values reported in the literature (e.g., Guenther et al., 2006; Sinderolova
529 et al., 2022).

530 The discussion is based on isoprene emissions because isoprene is the dominant biogenic VOC (BVOC).
531 Although not included in the current discussion, the chemical yield of HCHO from the oxidation of other
532 BVOCs might also be a source of model uncertainty.

533

534



536

537 **Figure 4:** Seasonal variation of HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) in the selected regions, as inferred from standard
538 simulations (blue), TROPOMI observations (red), and ANI estimate (green). Anthropogenic VOC emissions are
539 increased threefold in the ANI simulations. The blue numbers denote MBE between the TROPOMI and CHASER
540 HCHO columns. The MBE between the ANI and TROPOMI columns is shown in green. The coordinate bounds
541 of the regions are similar to those in Fig. 2. Simulations and observations in 2019 were used to calculate the monthly
542 mean values.

543

544 3.3 Uncertainties related to anthropogenic VOC emissions

545 Uncertainties in anthropogenic VOC emissions can also be crucially important. Sensitivity simulations
546 are performed by perturbing the anthropogenic VOC emissions. Perturbation effects are relevant when
547 the anthropogenic VOC emissions are increased by threefold or more. We select the lowest perturbed
548 simulation (i.e., threefold increase; hereafter ANI). A better agreement between ANI and TROPOMI
549 HCHO columns is attributed to underestimated anthropogenic VOC emissions in the standard simulation.

Figure 4 compares the TROPOMI HCHO columns and ANI simulations in 2019. Standard simulation estimates for 2019 are also shown. The comparison statistics are provided in Table 5. Over E-China (Fig.4(a)) and India (Fig.4(i)), ANI shows better agreement with TROPOMI than the standard simulation during winter. In India and China, the contribution of anthropogenic emissions to the NMVOC levels is more significant during the winter (Kumar et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021). Thus, the ANI simulations improve the contribution of the winter-time anthropogenic VOCs in these regions. The ANI MBE and RMSE values over E-China are higher than the standard simulation. This indicates the anthropogenic VOC estimates in E-China during the other seasons are reasonable. In contrast, the ANI simulations reduce the MBE values in India, manifesting a higher underestimation of anthropogenic VOC emissions in this region than in E-China.

Similar to E-China, the ANI MBE and RMSE values are higher in C-Africa, N-Africa, S-Africa, South America, and E-USA. Over Europe (Fig.4(d)) and W-USA(Fig.4(c)), ANI RMSE values are lower than the standard simulation. The ANI simulations replicated the observed HCHO column magnitude in both regions from October to December, resulting in lower RMSE values.

ANI estimates during the dry season in SE Asia (Fig.4(m)) are similar to the standard simulation values, indicating a small effect of anthropogenic emission uncertainties. The dry season columns are overestimated when the anthropogenic VOC emissions are increased fivefold (Fig. S7). Space-based observations have provided substantial evidence of increasing anthropogenic VOC emissions in Asian cities (Bauwens et al., 2022). Therefore, the anthropogenic VOC emission inventory should be updated to reduce the discrepancy between CHASER and TROPOMI over SE-Asia.

570

Table 5: Comparison among regional mean tropospheric HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) columns inferred from TROPOMI observations, standard simulation, and ANI estimates. Units of MBE1, MBE2, RMSE1, and RMSE 2 are $\times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} . The simulations and observations for 2019 were used to calculate the statistics.

575

576

Region	MBE1 (Standard– TROPOMI)	MBE2 (ANI– TROPOMI)	RMSE1 (Standard– TROPOMI)	RMSE2(ANI– TROPOMI)
E-China	-0.84	1.54	1.40	1.74
E-USA	0.53	2.22	0.58	2.25
W-USA	-0.72	0.17	0.80	0.43
Europe	-0.78	0.29	0.92	0.67
C-Africa	1.19	3.32	1.57	3.60
N-Africa	1.46	2.19	1.61	2.30
S-Africa	-0.99	0.87	1.32	1.39
S-America	2.99	3.92	3.41	4.28
India	-1.05	0.39	1.57	1.50
IGP	-1.22	0.29	1.69	2.02
E-India	0.26	1.64	1.22	2.11
S-India	-0.59	0.48	0.69	0.58
SE-Asia	-0.76	0.59	1.16	0.78

600 3.4 Impacts of NO_x emissions uncertainties on HCHO simulations

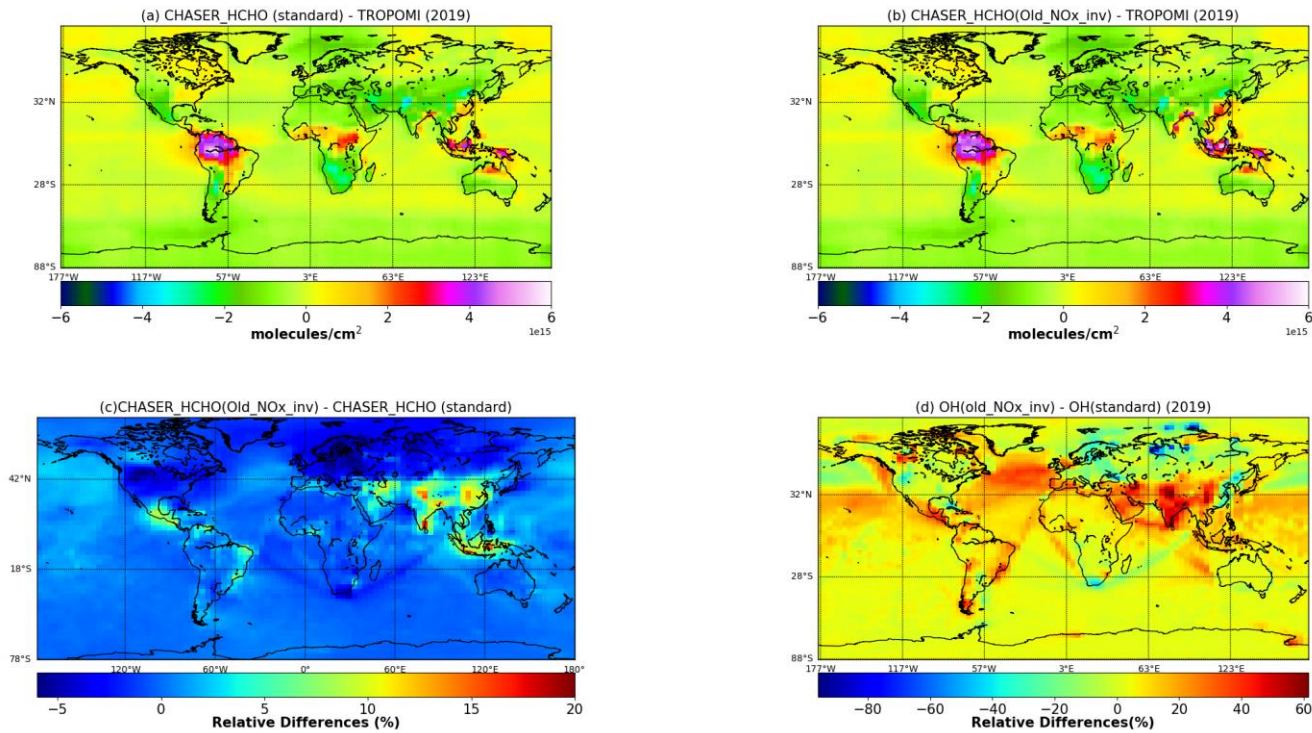
601 Uncertainties in the NO_x emissions can affect the HCHO abundances through the NO_x-HO_x-VOC cycle.
602 Such effects are assessed by comparing simulations with different NO_x inventories with the TROPOMI
603 observations. The CHASER standard, OLN, and TROPOMI HCHO columns are depicted in Fig. 5. The
604 HTAP_v3 NO_x emission inventory is replaced with the HTAP_v2.2 inventory in the OLN simulations
605 without altering the remaining emission inventories. The differences between the two NO_x inventories
606 are – (1) HTAP-v3 inventory considers the changes in NO_x emissions from 2000 to 2018, whereas the
607 temporal coverage of HTAP_v2.2 is 2008 – 2010, and (2) Emissions in HTAP-v3 have a higher sectoral
608 disaggregation (Crippa et al., 2023). The comparison-related statistics are given in Table S3. NO_x
609 emissions from both inventories are shown in Fig. S8

610 On a global scale, HCHO column estimates are mostly unaffected by the changes in the NO_x emission
611 inventories, manifested by the MBE values (Table 6). However, RMSE is 8% lower in the case of standard
612 simulation. OLN estimates in the higher latitude ($\geq 50^\circ\text{N}$) are 5% lower than the standard simulations.
613 Such differences do not affect the model–satellite agreement in these regions.

614 The standard HCHO columns in India, China, and Southeast Asia are approximately 10–20% lower than
615 the OLN estimates (Fig.5(c)). In fact, those differences are consistent with changes in the regional OH
616 estimates (Fig.5(d)). This finding implies that the changes in the NO_x emissions estimates have affected
617 the OH and HCHO abundances in these regions. Satellite data assimilation results reported by Miyazaki
618 et al. (2017, 2020) indicate that NO_x emissions in India have increased by 30% since 2008, whereas NO_x
619 emissions in China have declined since 2011 (Liu et al., 2016). Over E-China (Fig. 5(a &b)), the standard
620 simulations reduce the absolute annual mean difference between OLN and TROPOMI of 3×10^{15}
621 molecules cm⁻² to 1×10^{15} molecules cm⁻², which is consistent with the lower NO_x emissions in this region
622 in the updated inventory (Fig. S8). Over India and SE-Asia, the standard OH concentrations are ~40%
623 lower (Fig.5(d)) than the OLN estimates, resulting in lower HCHO columns. The lower standard HCHO
624 columns can be linked to the increasing NO_x emissions in these regions (Fig.S8); however, the magnitude
625 of the change in the NO_x emissions for these regions in the updated inventory is likely overestimated.

626 In E-USA and W-USA (Table S3), the standard simulation reduces the MBE by 26% and 12%,
 627 respectively. The reduction in MBE and RMSE values in Africa and South America is less than 10%.
 628 Therefore, NO_x emission uncertainties mainly affect the HCHO simulations in India and SE Asia.

629
 630



631 **Figure 5:** Annual mean HCHO columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) in 2019, obtained from the (a) standard and (b)
 632 OLNE simulations. The HTAP-2008 NO_x emission inventory was used instead of the HTAP-2018 inventory for
 633 the OLNE simulations (Table 1). The remaining emission inventories are similar in both simulations. (c) Global
 634 relative differences between the two HCHO simulations (OLNE–Standard). (d) Relative differences (global)
 635 between two OH (OLNE–Standard) simulations. The standard and OLNE OH simulation settings are similar to the
 636 description in Table 1. OH and HCHO simulations were obtained simultaneously.

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640 **3.5 Comparison with OMI HCHO Observations**

641 TROPOMI was able to achieve improved precision of HCHO columns at shorter timescales (De Smedt
642 et al., 2021). The effect of such features on the comparison results is evaluated in this section. The method
643 of De Smedt et al. (2021) has been adopted to minimize the effect of different cloud retrieval algorithms
644 used for OMI and TROPOMI retrievals. Figure S9 shows the global distribution mean HCHO columns
645 obtained from TROPOMI and OMI retrievals and CHASER simulations in 2019 during the TROPOMI
646 overpass time (13:30). Only the coincident dates among the three datasets are shown. Global and regional
647 comparison statistics are presented in Table 6.

648

649 The spatial correlation between OMI and CHASER is 0.89 (Table 6) . OMI retrievals are positively biased
650 by 7% compared to CHASER. A similar bias is also observed between TROPOMI and CHASER. Despite
651 similar MBE values, TROPOMI reduces the global RMSE by 20%. Monthly MBE and RMSE values
652 between OMI and CHASER are higher than those of TROPOMI and exhibit no seasonality (Table S3).
653 The highest absolute differences between the model and OMI retrievals are observed in Amazonia in
654 Brazil, C-Africa, and SE-Asia (Fig.S9). The magnitudes of differences between the model and
655 observation in these regions are similar for both sensors. Despite the improved resolution, TROPOMI and
656 OMI show equivalent biases in regions with high HCHO levels (De Smedt et al., 2021). A regional
657 comparison among the three datasets is portrayed in Fig. 6. The red (TROPOMI–CHASER) and green
658 (OMI–CHASER) numbers are the respective MBE values.

659

660 **Table 6.** Comparison of global mean HCHO columns between satellite observations (TROPOMI and
661 OMI) and standard CHASER simulations. Units of MBE and RMSE are $\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} . The *r*-
662 value signifies the spatial correlation. The statistics are based on simulation and observations for 2019.

663

Region	MBE1 (Standard– TROPOMI)	MBE2 (Standard– OMI)	RMSE1 (Standard– TROPOMI)	RMSE2 (Standard– OMI)	<i>r</i> -value (CHASER vs. TROPOMI)	<i>r</i> -value (CHASER vs. OMI)
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Global	-0.23	-0.24	0.77	0.99	0.93	0.89
E-China	-0.84	-2.54	1.40	3.03	0.56	0.17
E-USA	0.53	-1.02	0.58	1.12	0.92	0.86
W-USA	-0.72	-2.09	0.80	2.17	0.83	0.64
Europe	-0.78	-1.31	0.92	1.60	0.77	0.67
C-Africa	1.19	0.94	1.57	1.28	0.93	0.93
N-Africa	1.46	1.42	1.61	1.59	0.81	0.79
S-Africa	-0.99	-2.59	1.32	2.75	0.86	0.84
S-America	2.99	2.02	3.41	2.61	0.47	0.56
India	-1.05	-1.19	1.57	2.66	0.85	0.66
IGP	-1.22	-2.85	1.69	3.19	0.91	0.84
E-India	0.26	-0.05	1.22	1.34	0.82	0.76
S-India	-0.59	-0.16	0.69	0.41	0.96	0.97
SE-Asia	-0.76	-0.83	1.16	1.14	0.78	0.86

665

666

667 Over E-China (Fig.6(a)), the monthly mean TROPOMI columns are ~22% lower than those of OMI,
668 reducing the RMSE by 53%. The simulated spatial distribution shows better congruence with the new
669 observations. TROPOMI improved the summer model–satellite agreement considerably. The magnitude
670 of the seasonal modulation in the three datasets is 50%. Both sensors show that winter HCHO levels in
671 E-China are $\sim 8 \times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} .

672

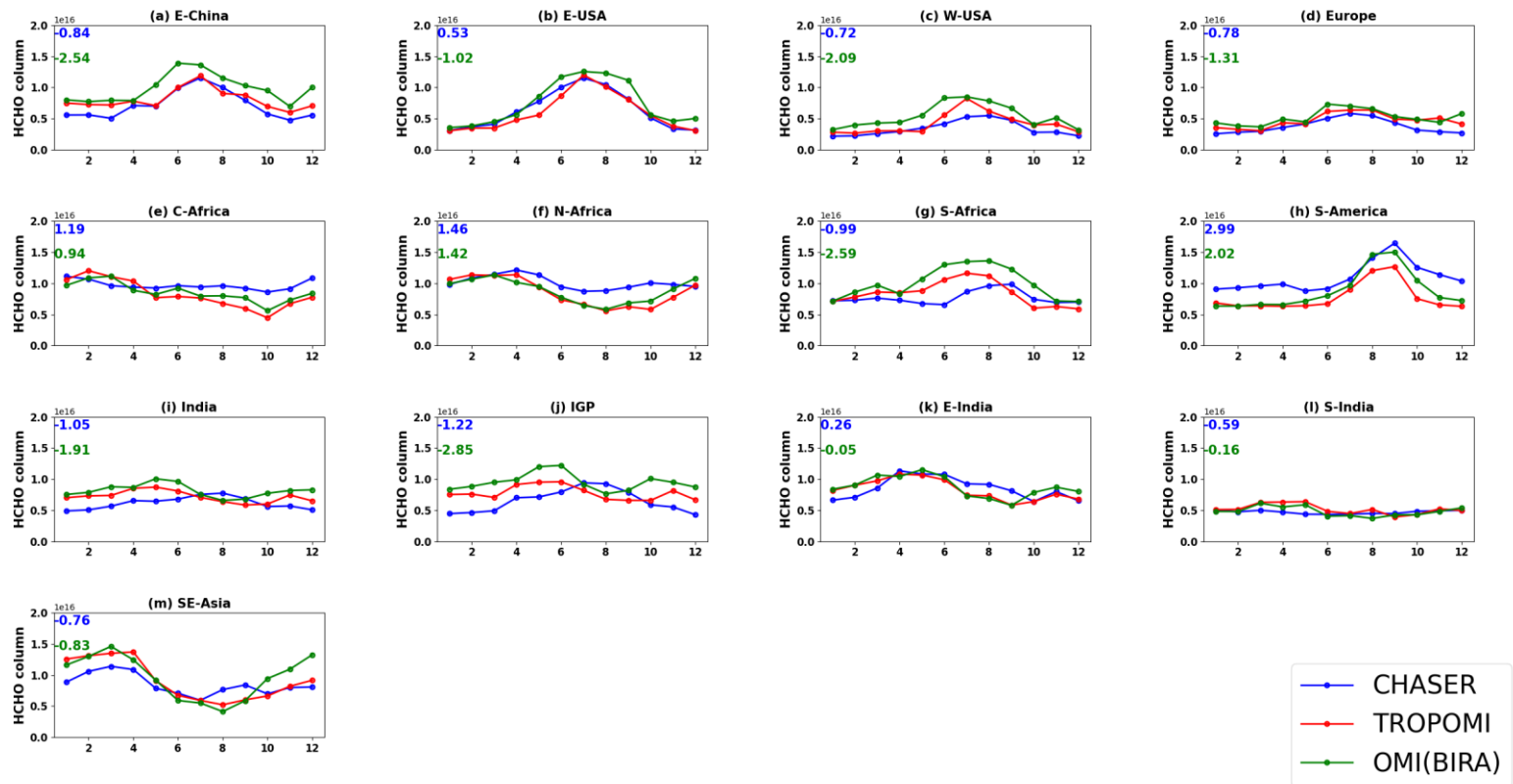
673 Over E-USA (Fig.6(b)), the *r*-value between CHASER and OMI is 0.86. CHASER columns are
674 underestimated compared to OMI, with MBE and RMSE of -1.0×10^{15} and 1.1×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} .
675 TROPOMI reduced the model–satellite RMSE by 50% and improved the *r*-value by 6%. The most
676 significant improvements were observed during the summer and autumn.

677

678 Over the W-USA (Fig.6(c)), TROPOMI retrievals are 26% lower than OMI observations, reducing the
679 model–satellite RMSE by 63%. The spatial correlation between OMI and CHASER is moderate. The
680 simulated and TROPOMI wintertime columns are ~30% lower than OMI. However, the observed peak
681 in HCHO seasonality in July is consistent in the observational datasets.

682

683 OMI and TROPOMI HCHO observations over Europe (Fig.6(d)) are consistent. The seasonal cycle
684 amplitude inferred from both sensors is 60%. The simulated spatial distribution shows better agreement
685 with the TROPOMI observations, manifesting the effects of improved resolution.



687 **Figure 6:** Seasonal variation of HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) inferred from TROPOMI (red curve) and OMI
688 (orange curve) retrievals and standard CHASER (blue curves) simulations. The region definitions are shown in Fig.
689 S2. The blue numbers signify the MBE between TROPOMI and CHASER, whereas the green numbers represent
690 the MBE between CHASER and OMI. Coincident dates in 2019 among the datasets are used to calculate the
691 monthly mean data.

692

693

694 Over C-Africa(Fig.6(e)), the RMSE value between CHASER and OMI is $\sim 18\%$ lower than that of
695 TROPOMI. TROPOMI values are biased by 18% on the lower side compared to OMI.

696 Over N-Africa(Fig.6(f)), OMI retrievals are moderately correlated with CHASER. The amplitude of
697 seasonal modulation inferred from CHASER, TROPOMI, and OMI are 48, 62, and 66%, respectively.
698 The RMSE and MBE between OMI and CHASER are 1.41×10^{15} and 1.59×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} ,
699 respectively. OMI retrievals are approximately 13% higher than TROPOMI. Simulated North African
700 HCHO columns show better consistency with the observations during the biomass-burning season.

701

702 Over S-Africa(Fig.6(g)), OMI HCHO columns are biased respectively by 32 and 25% on the higher side
703 compared to TROPOMI and CHASER. The simulated seasonal variabilities and spatial distribution of
704 HCHO show more relevance to TROPOMI than to OMI.

705

706 Over S-America(Fig.6(h)), the simulated peak (1.6×10^{16} molecules cm^{-2}) in the HCHO seasonality
707 shows strong congruence with the OMI observations. Despite such consistency, simulated values are
708 higher than OMI retrievals, with MBE and RMSE of $\sim 2 \times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} . Observations and
709 simulations show that the peak HCHO abundances can vary between $1.0 \times 10^{16} - 1.8 \times 10^{16}$ molecules
710 cm^{-2} in September. Although the *r*-value between OMI and CHASER is higher than that of TROPOMI,
711 the model's capability to replicate the observed spatial distribution was limited. OMI HCHO columns are
712 positively biased by 30% compared to TROPOMI, thereby reducing the model–satellite RMSE by 23%.

713

714 Over India(Fig.6(i)), CHASER HCHO columns are negatively biased by 23% compared to OMI
715 observations. Although TROPOMI minimized the model–satellite bias, seasonal discrepancies between
716 the model and observations prevail. Over the IGP region, OMI HCHO retrievals are biased by 24% and
717 36% respectively, respectively, on the higher side, compared to TROPOMI and CHASER. Both sensors
718 captured a similar HCHO seasonality in the IGP, with a modulation of 49%. Although CHASER could
719 not reproduce the seasonality, the simulated modulation is 48%. The bias between the model and
720 observations (OMI and TROPOMI) is $\sim 4\%$ in E-India and S-India. Simulated HCHO spatial variation
721 strongly correlates with the observation datasets (*r*-value of ~ 0.85). The amplitude of the seasonal
722 modulation in E-India inferred from OMI is $\sim 40\%$.

723 Over Southeast Asia(Fig.6(m)), CHASER columns are negatively biased by 19% compared to the OMI
724 columns. Despite lower biases, both datasets have a similar model–satellite discrepancies during the dry
725 season. A few reasons for the CHASER underestimation in SE Asia during the dry season have been
726 discussed in section 3.2. In addition, assumptions and uncertainties in the retrieval could also potentially
727 engender such model satellite discrepancy. Figure S10 compares CHASER and OMI SOA (González et
728 al., 2016) products. The data selection criterion is similar to the description presented in Section 2. The

most relevant differences between the OMI BIRA and SAO products are related to the underlying CTMs that simulate the apriori profiles and the reference sector correction (Zhu et al., 2016). A comprehensive list of the differences between the two products is available from Zhu et al. (2016). The comparison statistics are given in Table S5. CHASER columns during the dry seasons in SE Asia show excellent agreement with the OMI SOA retrievals (Fig.S10(m)). OMI SOA values during the dry season are negatively biased by 7% compared to TROPOMI observations. The MBE between CHASER and SOA product is 0.04×10^{15} molecules cm^{-2} . Based on the comparison with OMI SOA products, the model performance during the dry season can be considered excellent. The emission estimates for SE-Asia in CHASER can be regarded as reasonable, too.

Similarly, in E-China (Fig.S10(a)), the OMI SOA product reduces the bias between the model and observations by 11%. The simulated wintertime columns are consistent with the SOA estimates but underestimated compared to TROPOMI. The ANI estimates (Fig.4(a)) for this region are higher than the SOA product, manifesting that the anthropogenic emissions in CHASER for this region are rational. Therefore, uncertainties related to the retrieval procedure can also significantly affect the comparison results on a regional scale.

Comparison between CHASER and OMI BIRA HCHO products shows differences from the results of Hoque et al. (2022), where the simulation and observations for 2017 were used. The simulations in both studies are similar. However, the OMI data in the earlier study are systematically higher, mainly causing the statistically significant differences found between the study results. A detailed investigation of the reasons will be addressed in a separate work.

3.6 Validation using MAX-DOAS observations

756 3.6.1 Seasonal Variation

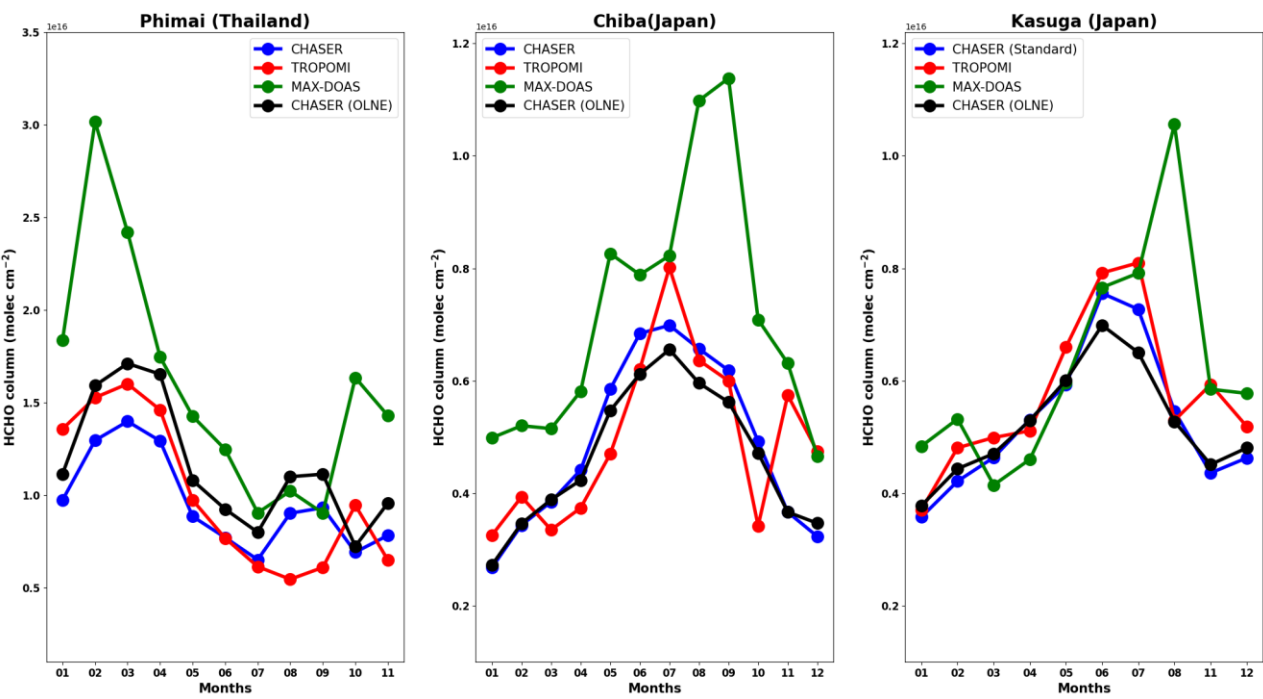
757 CHASER columns are compared with ground-based MAX-DOAS observations in Phimai, Chiba, and
758 Kasuga in Fig. 7. Coincident TROPOMI observations over the sites are used for comparative discussion.
759 The TROPOMI AK applied standard, and OLN simulations are used. MAX-DOAS observations
760 between 12:00 and 15:00 were averaged to estimate the monthly mean columns. Only the common dates
761 among the three datasets were compared. De Smedt et al. (2021) compared the TROPOMI and A-SKY
762 MAX-DOAS datasets in Phimai and Chiba. Because the model-ground-based comparison is the primary
763 focus of this comparison effort, we do not consider the differences in the vertical sensitivity of TROPOMI
764 and MAX-DOAS. Thus, the statistics will differ from De Smedt et al. (2021).

765

766 In Phimai, standard CHASER HCHO seasonality correlates strongly ($R=0.71$) with the MAX-DOAS
767 observations; it is underestimated by 39%. However, the bias between the standard model estimates and
768 TROPOMI observations is 4%. Despite a strong correlation, TROPOMI observations are negatively
769 biased by 37% compared to the MAX-DOAS ($R=0.84$). Such underestimation might be related to the
770 coarse binning of the satellite data. Using a finer bin, De Smedt (2021) reported a negative bias of 23%
771 in Phimai.

772

773 Biomass burning-led enhancements during the dry season (January–April) are well reflected in the
774 simulations. During the wet season, MAX-DOAS, TROPOMI, and standard CHASER HCHO columns
775 are mostly lower than 1×10^{16} molecules cm^{-2} . The simulated standard HCHO peak in March is consistent
776 with the satellite observation, whereas MAX-DOAS observation shows a peak during February. During
777 the dry seasons of 2015 and 2016, the HCHO peak was observed in March (e.g. Hoque et al., 2018).
778 Consequently, such a shift in the HCHO peak might be related to fire numbers and fire radiative power
779 changes (Hoque et al., 2022).



781

782 **Figure 7:** Seasonal variations in HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2} cm^{-2}) columns inferred from satellite
783 retrievals (red), model simulations (blue and black), and ground-based MAX-DOAS observations (green)
784 in Phimai (Thailand), Chiba (Japan), and Kasuga (Japan). MAX-DOAS observations and CHASER
785 simulations during 12:00–15:00 LT were selected for comparison. Common dates among the datasets are
786 used to calculate the monthly mean statistics. The blue and black curves, respectively, signify the standard
787 and OLNE simulations. TROPOMI AKs have been applied to both simulations. The simulation settings
788 are provided in Table 1.

789

790

791 The bias between OLNE and MAX-DOAS observations is 27%. OLNE estimates agree better with the
792 TROPOMI observations during the dry season. However, the overall bias (13%) between the model and
793 satellite observations is higher in the case of OLNE simulations.

794

795 At Chiba, the simulated HCHO seasonality correlates strongly with the MAX-DOAS retrievals ($R=0.81$)
796 and is negatively biased by $\sim 31\%$. The amplitudes of seasonality inferred from the simulations, MAX-
797 DOAS observations, and TROPOMI retrievals are, respectively, 59, 60, and 34%. The MAX-DOAS,
798 TROPOMI, and CHASER HCHO columns, respectively, reach peaks in September, July, and June.
799 Similar to Phimai, the HCHO peaks in satellite and ground-based observations differ. One reason might
800 be the differences in spatial representativity. TROPOMI data used for comparison are spatially averaged
801 over 200 km, centering on the Chiba site, whereas the spatial representativity of the MAX-DOAS is
802 approx-10 km. Moreover, MAX-DOAS observations are most sensitive to altitudes near the surface,
803 whereas satellite sensitivity decreases near the surface. Consequently, the air masses sampled by the
804 instruments at the same local time might differ, leading to inconsistent observation peaks.

805

806 At Kasuga, the simulated HCHO levels are strongly correlated with the TROPOMI observations ($R =$
807 0.75) and are negatively biased by 35%. Although the correlation between the model and MAX-DOAS
808 retrievals is moderate, the bias between CHASER and MAX-DOAS retrievals is 14%. Therefore,
809 CHASER shows better agreement with MAX-DOAS than with TROPOMI. MAX-DOAS observations
810 exhibit seasonality similar to that of Chiba, with a peak HCHO column during August. Similar to Chiba,
811 the satellite-observed and CHASER peaks are observed during July and June, respectively. Chiba and
812 Kasuga sites are located near the ocean and exhibit similar HCHO variability, which has been captured
813 well in the simulations.

814

815 Although the bias between OLN and standard simulations for Chiba and Kasuga is $\sim 4\%$, the absolute
816 difference is $\sim 1 \times 10^{15}$ molecules cm^{-2} . NO_x emissions in Japan have not changed markedly since 2005
817 (Miyazaki et al., 2017). The differences between the simulations are observed during the summer when
818 isoprene emissions are expected to peak (Hoque et al., 2018a). Because the OH estimates over Japan are
819 similar for both simulations (Fig. 5(d)), the differences are likely related to the interaction between
820 isoprene and NO_x inventories.

821

822 3.6.2 Diurnal and Daily Variations

823 **Figure 8** compares the observed and simulated daily and diurnal variations in the surface HCHO vmr.
824 The error bars represent the 1σ standard deviation of the observed mean values. The daily variation
825 comparison entails only the standard simulations.

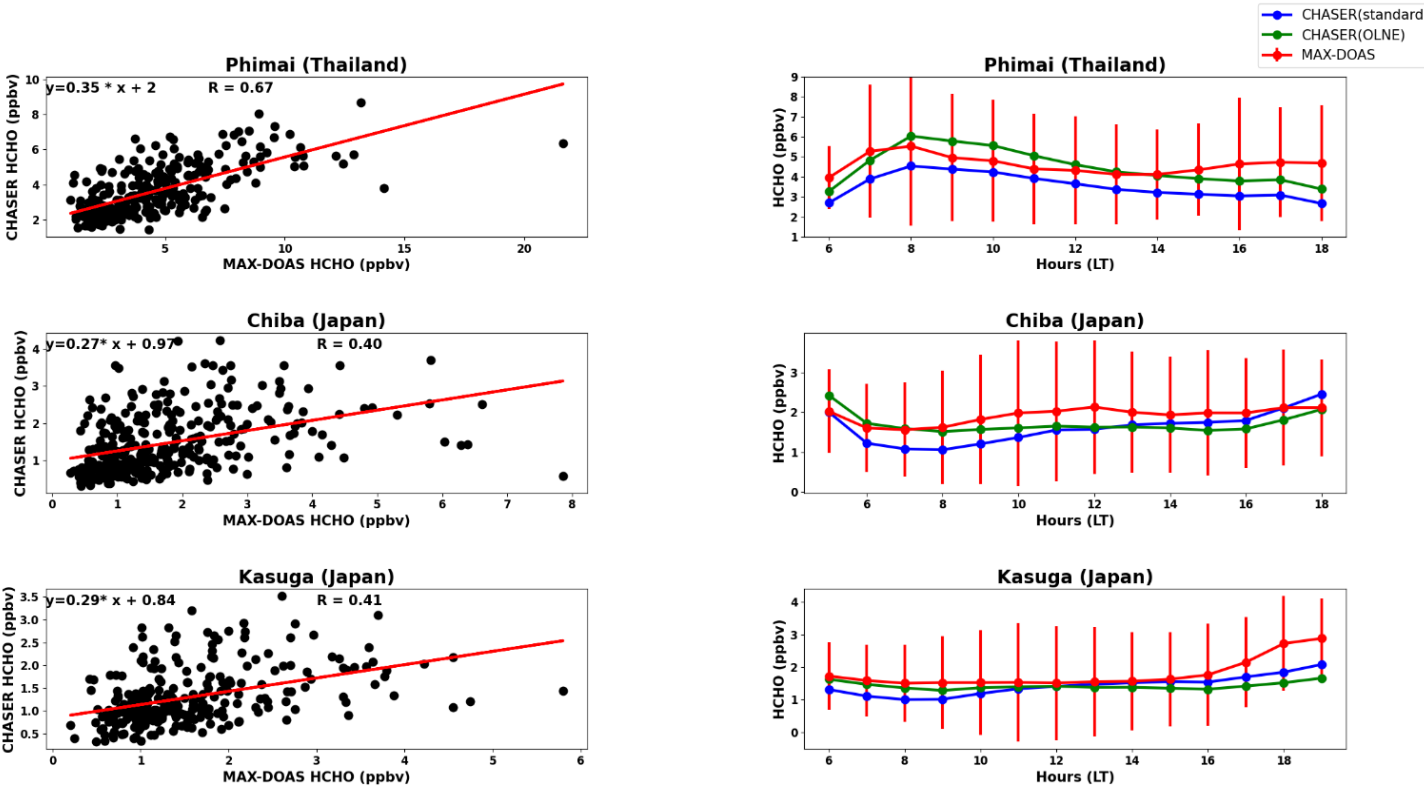
826

827 In Phimai, the daily datasets correlate well, with an R -value of 0.67. The slope of the fitted line is 0.35.
828 The observed and simulated daily mean HCHO vmr is ~ 4 ppbv. CHASER daily mean values are
829 negatively biased by 19% and 11%, respectively, during the dry and wet seasons. The standard diurnal
830 variations at Phimai are also well correlated with the observations ($R=0.64$). The simulated values lie
831 within the standard deviation of the observations. HCHO mixing ratios show a peak (~ 6 ppbv) at 8:00
832 LT in both datasets. Noontime (12:00 LT) vmr are approximately 4 ppbv, and hourly HCHO levels vary
833 between 2 and 6 ppbv. The OLNE diurnal values are 20% higher than the standard values. However, the
834 mean absolute difference between the two simulations is 1 ppbv.

835

836 The standard simulation reproduced the observed diurnal variations at Chiba, with a temporal correlation
837 of 0.79, higher than at Phimai. Both simulations are biased by 10% on the lower side compared to the
838 observations. No distinctive peak is observed in the diurnal variations. The increasing daytime HCHO
839 levels in Chiba are well reflected in the model runs. The simulated daily mean values in Chiba are
840 negatively biased by 18%, with a temporal correlation of 0.40. The slope of the fitted line to the daily
841 mean concentrations is 0.27, lower than at Phimai, suggesting a higher underestimation similar to the
842 total columns (Fig. 7).

843



845

846 **Figure 8:** (left panel) Scatter plots show the correlation between the daily mean observed (MAX-DOAS) and
847 simulated HCHO surface mixing ratios at the three sites. The standard simulations are used in the scatter plots. The
848 linear fitted lines are shown in red. (right panel) Diurnal variations in the HCHO mixing ratios at the three sites are
849 inferred from the MAX-DOAS observations and standard (blue) and OLNE (green) simulations. The error bars
850 represent the 1-sigma standard deviation of the mean values estimated from the observations. Observations and
851 simulations at the coincident date and time (local) are selected for comparison.

852

853

854 In Kasuga, modeled daily variations correlate moderately ($R=0.41$) with the observations. The effect of
855 the NO_x inventories on the simulated diurnal variations in Kasuga is not significant. The simulated daily
856 mean values are negatively biased by 20%, and the slope of the fitting is 0.29. Although Chiba and Kasuga

are similar sites, their observed diurnal variations are slightly different. However, the simulated values in both cases agree with the observed standard deviation.

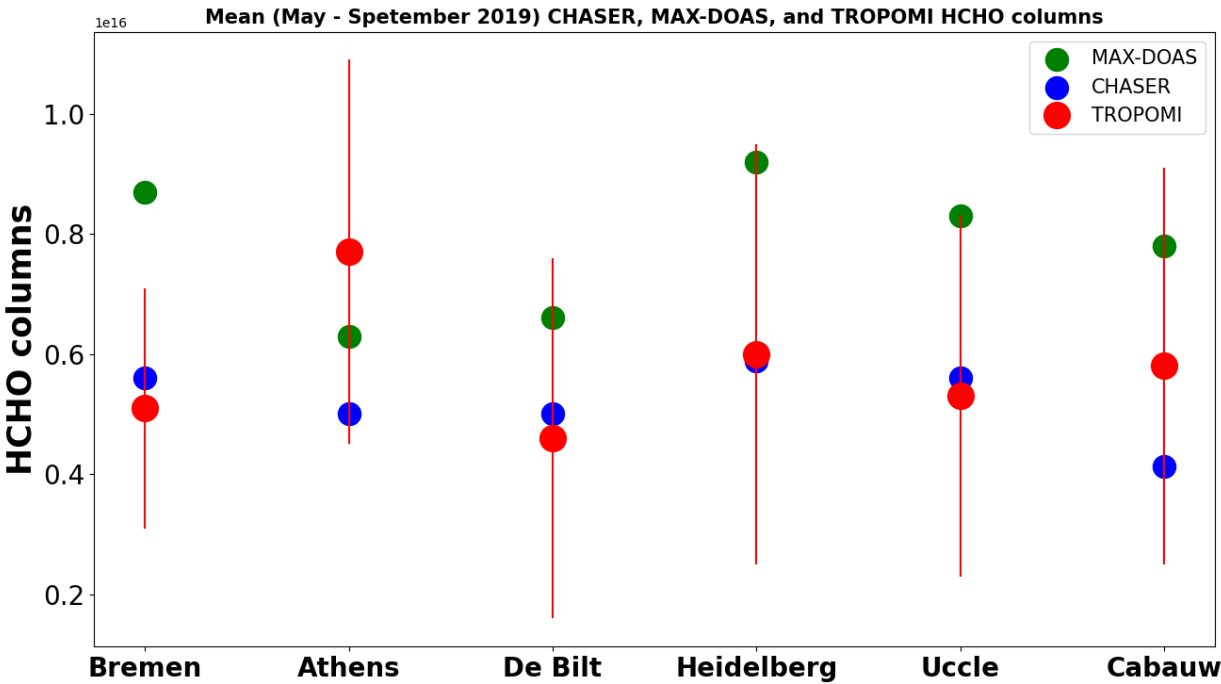


Figure 9: Scatter plot comparing CHASER (red), MAX-DOAS (green), and TROPOMI (red) HCHO columns ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) at a few European sites. The MAX-DOAS observed values are taken from the work of Oomen et al. (2024). These values represent the mean HCHO column from May to September in 2019. The observations from 12:00 – 15:00 LT were used to calculate the mean values. Using a similar temporal filter, the modeled mean values were calculated from the simulations for 2019. TROPOMI data for 2019 were filtered as described in Section 2.2. The error bars signify the 1-sigma standard deviation of the TROPOMI mean HCHO columns.

In addition, CHASER HCHO columns are also compared with MAX-DOAS observations reported in the literature, shown in Fig.9. The observed values are obtained from Oomen et al. (2024). The observed

872 mean values represent the averages of MAX-DOAS observations between 12:00 and 15:00 LT from May
873 to September 2019. A similar temporal filter was applied to the CHASER simulations for 2019. The
874 coincident TROPOMI HCHO columns are also plotted. TROPOMI AKs are applied to the CHASER
875 values. The error bars signify the 1-sigma standard deviation of the TROPOMI mean values.

876 Like the Asian sites, CHASER underestimates the HCHO columns at the European sites. All three
877 datasets mostly agree within the 1-sigma variability range of the satellite observations. CHASER and
878 TROPOMI HCHO columns are lower than the MAX-DOAS observations except in Athens. CHASER
879 shows better agreement with the MAX-DOAS observations in Athens. De Smedt et al. (2021) reported
880 the biases between TROPOMI and MAX-DOAS observations at these sites, estimated from a daily time
881 scale. As the simulated HCHO magnitude is consistent with the TROPOMI values, biases between the
882 CHASER and MAX-DOAS HCHO columns at these sites will likely be equivalent.

883

884

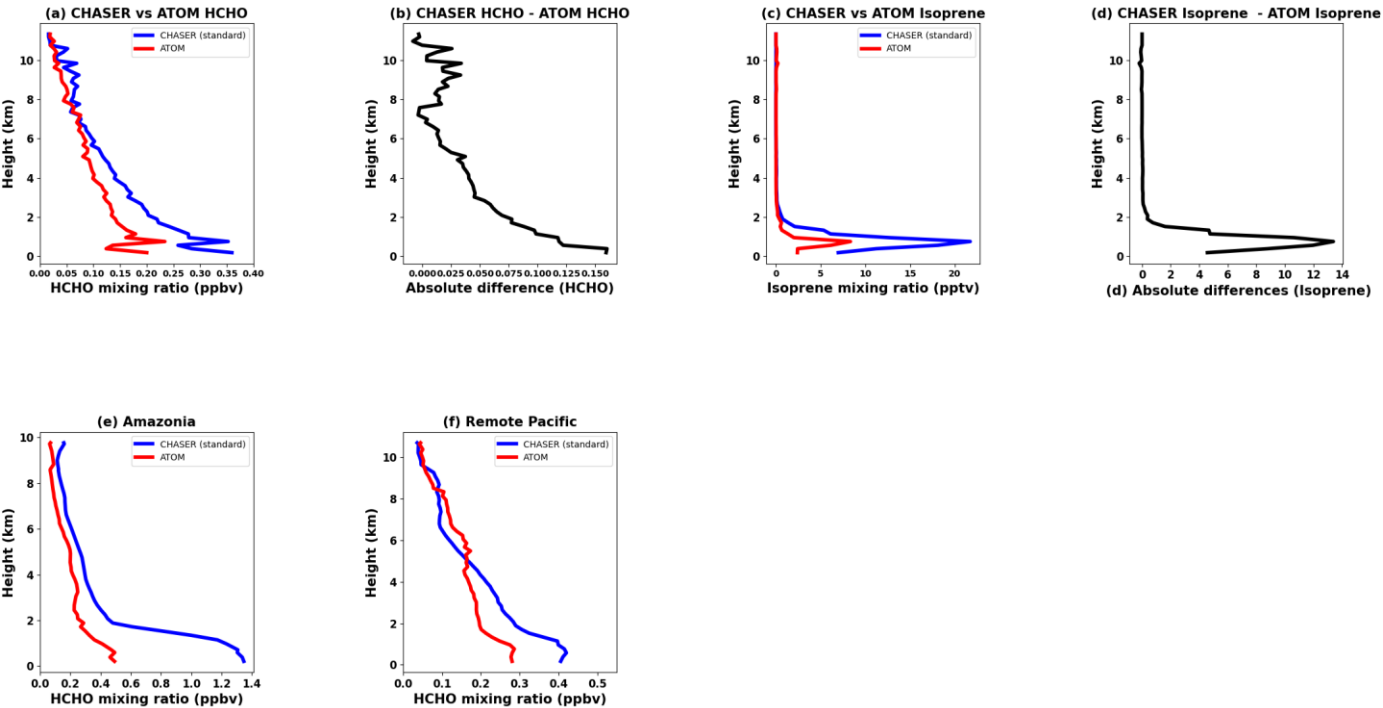
885 **3.7 Comparison with ATom-4 flight observations**

886

887 A comparison between simulated and observed HCHO and isoprene profiles along the ATom-4 flight
888 path (Fig. S2) is depicted in Fig. 10 (a and c). Only the coincident dates have been included in the
889 comparison.

890 The simulated HCHO and isoprene profiles agree well with the observations, with an *R*-value of 0.95.

891 Above and below 4 km, CHASER HCHO profiles are positively biased by 29 and



894 **Figure 10:** (top panel) Comparison between ATom observed (red) and CHASER simulated (blue) (a) HCHO, and
895 (c) isoprene profiles along the ATom-4 flight path in 2018. The ATom-4 flight path is depicted in Fig.S2. Standard
896 simulations are used for comparison. Simulations at the time of the ATom observations were selected. Both datasets
897 were averaged within a 0.3 km bin. The relative differences between the observed and simulated (c) HCHO and
898 (d) isoprene profiles are also shown. (bottom panel) Atom-4 observed, and CHASER simulated HCHO profiles
899 over the (e) Amazonia and (f) the Remote Pacific region are compared. Amazonia (10° - 40° W, 10° S- 10° N) represents
900 a densely vegetated region, whereas the remote Pacific region (160° - 180° W, 20° S- 20° N) represents the background
901 HCHO conditions. The units of the HCHO and isoprene mixing ratios are, respectively, ppbv and pptv.

903 62%, respectively, compared to ATom-4 HCHO levels. The absolute difference in the isoprene profiles
904 around 1 km is 14 pptv, which strongly correlates with the difference in the HCHO profile below 2km.
905 This finding signifies that overestimated CHASER isoprene mixing ratios induce a positive bias in the
906 HCHO estimates. Despite non-significant isoprene mixing ratios at altitudes greater than 2 km, both

907 datasets show considerable HCHO levels above 2 km. Zhao et al. (2022) reported a similar finding and
908 attributed enhanced CH₄ oxidation to the HCHO mixing ratios above 2 km. At higher altitudes HCHO is
909 produced through the CH₄ oxidation (i.e., CH₄ + OH) initiated CH₃O₂ (methyl peroxy radical) + CH₃O₂
910 pathway. HCHO production through this pathway is considered in CHASER. Therefore, despite the
911 differences in the magnitude, CHASER has shown good skills in reproducing the VOC profiles.

912

913 The potential reason for the higher HCHO simulated values below 2 km could be CHASER's
914 overestimated HCHO mixing ratios over South America, mainly the Amazon (Fig 2(c)). Figure 10(e and
915 f) depicts the observed and simulated HCHO profiles over the Amazon (10°-40°W, 10°S-10°N) and the
916 remote Pacific region (160°-180°W, 20°S-20°N). The HCHO profiles over the remote Pacific region
917 represent the background HCHO mixing ratio. CHASER and ATom background HCHO mixing ratios
918 within the boundary layer are 0.4 and 0.3 ppbv, respectively. The mean relative differences between the
919 two datasets within the boundary layer over Amazonia and the remote Pacific region are ~60 and ~22%,
920 indicating that the uncertainty in the contributions from the isoprene emissions to the total HCHO
921 uncertainties is higher. Above 5 km, CHASER underestimates the background HCHO mixing ratios.
922 However, simulated and TROPOMI HCHO columns over the remote Pacific regions showed consistency
923 when gridded over a similar horizontal grid (Fig. 1). Consequently, differences in the horizontal resolution
924 can cause discrepancies between the simulations and ATom observations over the remote regions. Over
925 South America, the model overestimates the observed (TROPOMI and ATom) HCHO abundances
926 irrespective of the horizontal resolution. Therefore, the biogenic emission estimates for South America in
927 CHASER should be reviewed to reduce the model-observation biases.

928

929 3.8 Contribution estimates

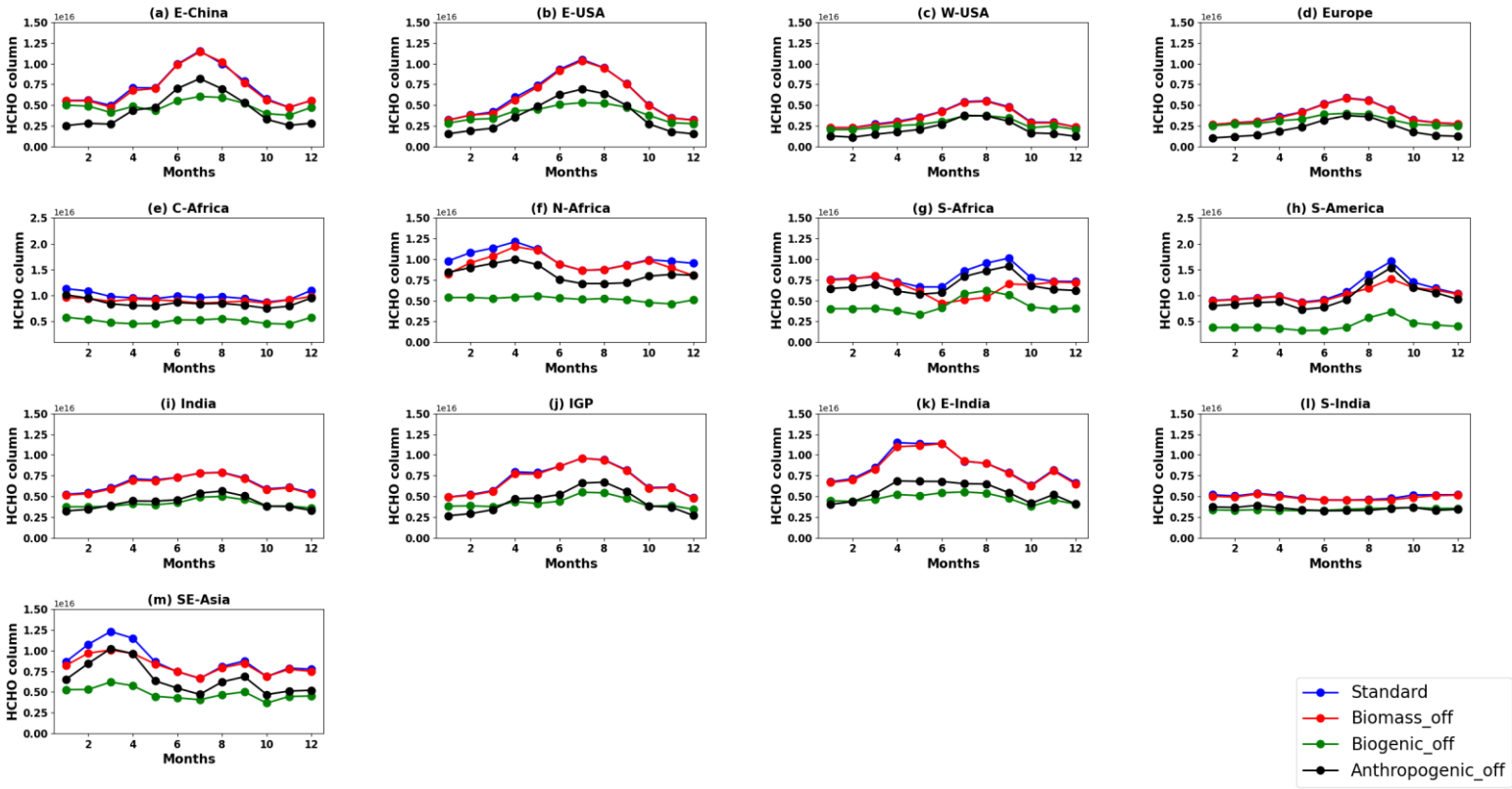
930 The contributions of different VOC emission sources to the regional HCHO abundances are presented in
931 Fig. 11. The contribution estimates are presented in Table 8. A stacked-bar plot of the annual contributions
932 of the emission sources is portrayed in Fig. S11.

933

934 Over E-China (Fig.11(a)), biomass burning has a non-significant effect on the regional HCHO columns.
 935 During summer, the biogenic and anthropogenic VOC emission contributions are 44% and 17%,
 936 respectively. In contrast, anthropogenic and biogenic contributions to the regional HCHO level during
 937 winter are 35% and 13%, respectively.

938

939 Non-significant biomass burning effects on the HCHO columns can be observed over E-USA (Fig.11(b)),
 940 W-USA(Fig.11c)), and Europe(Fig.11(d)). Biogenic emissions contribute more than 20% (35% in E-
 941 USA) in these regions. In these regions, annual anthropogenic contributions are higher than the biogenic
 942 contribution. Although the simulated winter columns in these regions are consistent with TROPOMI (Fig.
 943 2), the model values are lower during summer and autumn. Moreover, the sensitivity results show non-
 944 significant biogenic contribution during winter and autumn, which likely reduces the annual biogenic
 945 contribution estimates.



946

947 **Figure 11:** Seasonal variation of HCHO ($\times 10^{16}$ molecules cm^{-2}) inferred from different simulations. The settings
948 of the standard simulation are presented in Table 1. The model estimates shown in red, green, and blue are simulated
949 by switching off the biomass-burning, biogenic, and anthropogenic emissions. The satellite AKs have been applied
950 to all the simulations. The coordinate bounds of the regions are similar to those in Fig. 2.

951
952 In C-Africa(Fig.11(e)), biogenic emissions (48%) are the most significant contributor, followed by
953 anthropogenic emissions (13%). Although the biogenic emission contributions are equivalent in N-
954 Africa(Fig.11(f); 48%) and S-Africa (Fig.11(b); 43%), the pyrogenic contributions are twice as high in
955 the latter region. Consequently, despite similar HCHO abundances and modulation in these regions, the
956 source contributions differ.

957
958
959
960 **Table 8.** Contributions (%) of different emission sources to HCHO abundances in selected regions. The
961 respective emissions were switched off to estimate the contribution to the total HCHO abundances. The
962 contributions have been calculated with respect to the standard simulations. The satellite AKs were
963 applied to all simulations.

Region	Biomass-burning contribution	Biogenic contribution	Anthropogenic contribution
E-China	1.4%	32%	37%
E-USA	1.7%	35%	38%
W-USA	1.8%	23%	39%
Europe	1.2%	20%	45%

C-Africa	8%	48%	13%
N-Africa	6%	48%	17%
S-Africa	15%	43%	12%
S-America	7%	61%	10%
India	1.4%	37%	34%
IGP	1.1%	39%	37%
E-India	1.5%	44%	36%
S-India	2.1%	30%	29%
SE-Asia	6%	45%	24%

965

966

967 Biogenic emissions over South America(Fig.11(h)) contribute 61% to the regional HCHO abundances.
 968 The pyrogenic contribution during the biomass-burning period is 12%, whereas the annual contribution
 969 is 7%.

970

971 In SE-Asia(Fig.11(m)), annual anthropogenic contributions are ~20%. During the dry season, the
 972 anthropogenic, pyrogenic, and biogenic contributions are 7%, 12%, and 48%, respectively. Biogenic

973 production compromises 43% of the HCHO columns from July to December, whereas anthropogenic
974 emissions account for 9%.

975

976 In India(Fig.11(i)), annual pyrogenic emissions contribute ~2% to the HCHO levels. A similar source
977 contribution to the HCHO levels in IGP(Fig.11(j)) is also observed. The model's capability to reproduce
978 the observed HCHO seasonality in India and the IGP region was limited. Consequently, robust source
979 contribution estimates for these regions cannot be derived from the current analysis.

980 Over E-India (Fig.11(k)), 44% of the HCHO levels originate from biogenic sources, followed by
981 anthropogenic VOC emissions (36%). Similar source contributions of biogenic (30%) and anthropogenic
982 (29%) emissions are observed in S-India(Fig.11(l)). Over both regions, the pyrogenic source contribution
983 is ~2%.

984

985 **3.9 Uncertainties in the chemical mechanism**

986 Uncertainties in the chemical mechanisms affect the HCHO simulations. Representation of isoprene
987 chemistry can vary among the gas-phase chemistry mechanisms used in the CTMs. The most commonly
988 used isoprene schemes underestimate observed HCHO by at least 15% (Marvin et al., 2017). Such
989 underestimations are also strongly linked with the errors in the NO_x emission inventories (Anderson et
990 al., 2017). In addition, potential errors in the acetaldehyde emission and chemistry can also lead to
991 underestimated HCHO vmr up to 75 pptv in the lower troposphere (Anderson et al., 2017).

992

993 **4 Conclusions**

994 CHASER simulated global HCHO spatiotemporal distributions at a horizontal resolution of 2.8° ×
995 2.8°were evaluated against multi-platform observations. First, two years of simulation results (2019–
996 2020) were compared with the latest HCHO satellite observations from TROPOMI. The model-satellite
997 agreement was excellent, with a global *r*-value of 0.93 and RMSE of 0.75×10^{15} molecules cm⁻². The
998 model showed good capabilities for reproducing the HCHO columns in hotspot and background regions.
999 CHASER HCHO columns over large forested areas showed good consistency with the observations,
1000 demonstrating that the biogenic emission estimates in the model are reasonable. Simulated HCHO
1001 seasonality in a few selected regions was consistent with the observations. The model was able to

1002 reproduce the observed wintertime HCHO columns in E-USA, W-USA, and Europe, in addition to
1003 summer peaks. Disagreement between TROPOMI and CHASER was observed primarily in India, China,
1004 Amazonia, and SE Asia. Uncertainties in background HCHO columns, anthropogenic VOC emission
1005 inventories, chemical mechanisms adopted in the model, and retrieval algorithms were the potential
1006 contributors to these discrepancies. However, such uncertainties did not affect the model–satellite
1007 agreement in Africa and South America. Comparison among OMI, TROPOMI, and CHASER HCHO
1008 columns demonstrated that TROPOMI's improved spatial resolution effect was limited globally.
1009 However, in most regions, simulated HCHO seasonality showed better agreement with TROPOMI than
1010 with OMI, reducing the RMSE by up to 63%. TROPOMI retrievals were, on average, 30% lower than
1011 those of OMI.

1012 Second, CHASER simulations were compared with two-year MAX-DOAS observations of HCHO at
1013 Phimai, Chiba, and Kasuga. Daily CHASER HCHO mixing ratios showed consistency with the
1014 observations at the three sites, with *R*-values of 0.39–0.67. The slopes of linear fitting were lower for
1015 Chiba (0.29) and Kasuga (0.29) than for Phimai (0.37), implying lower model underestimation at the
1016 latter site. The diurnal variations at the sites were consistent with the observations. The change in the NO_x
1017 emission inventories did not affect the simulated diurnal variations.

1018 Third, simulated HCHO and isoprene profiles for 2018 were compared with ATom-4 flight observations.
1019 Despite consistent profile shapes, the model overestimated VOC mixing ratios mainly within the PBL.
1020 Uncertainties related to VOC emission inventories, background HCHO levels, and model resolution were
1021 potential reasons for the model–flight discrepancies.

1022 Lastly, sensitivity studies were conducted to estimate the contributions of the different emissions sources
1023 to the total HCHO columns in different regions. Biogenic emissions were the most significant contributor
1024 in most of the regions. In a few cases, biogenic and anthropogenic emission contributions were equivalent.
1025 In some regions, only summertime biogenic estimates were found to be reasonable.

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1027 **Code availability:** The CHASER source code needed to reproduce the simulations in this work is available
1028 from the repository at <https://zenodo.org/records/10892945> (Sudo et al., 2024).

1029 **Data availability:** The processed model output and observational datasets needed to reproduce the results
1030 are available from the repository at <https://zenodo.org/records/10052384> (Hoque et al., 2024). The MAX-
1031 DOAS profile and column data provided by Dr. Hitoshi Irie can be accessed from the repository(i.e., Hoque
1032 et al., 2024). TROPOMI (<https://scihub.copernicus.eu/dhus/#/home>, last access: 01 July 2023; De Smedt et
1033 al., 2021), OMI BIRA product, (https://www.temis.nl/qa4ecv/hcho/hcho_omi.php, last access: 01 July 2023;
1034 De Smedt et al., 2021) and ATom(https://daac.ornl.gov/ATOM/guides/ATom_nav.html, last access: 01 July
1035 2023; Wofsy et al., 2018) data were obtained from the respective websites.

1036

1037 **Author contributions:** HMSH conceptualized the study, conducted the model simulations, analyzed the
1038 datasets, and drafted the manuscript. YH helped with the data processing. HI developed the JM2 code
1039 and maintained the A-SKY network. KS developed the CHASER model and supervised the study. MFK
1040 extended his expertise to explain the results. All the authors commented and provided feedback on the
1041 final results and manuscript.

1042

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1044

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