

# Multi-Frequency Satellite Approaches for Snow on Sea Ice Polar+ Snow on Sea Ice (PSSI)




Deliverable 4.1 appendix:  
Experimental Dataset Description (EDD)




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	Polar+ Theme 1 Snow on sea ice	Reference : Polar+_D6.1_SR Version : 1 Date : 20/05/2022 page2
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	Polar+ Theme 1 Snow on sea ice	Reference : Polar+_D6.1_SR Version : 1 Date : 20/05/2022 page3
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Document History

Version	Date	Updated by	Reason
<i>1.a</i>	<i>2/11/2024</i>	<i>UCL</i>	<i>Requested fusion approach by ESA</i>
<i>1.b</i>	<i>13/6/2025</i>	<i>UCL</i>	<i>Updated with merged product</i>

Detailed History of Changes

Version	Section	Updated by	Details
<i>Authors</i>		<i>Michel Tsamados Weibin Chen Connor Nelson</i>	Connor Nelson and Weibin have supported the coding (binning, neural network implementation and plotting)

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The project website is <http://www.cpom.ucl.ac.uk/snow-on-sea-ice/index.html>

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**Table of Contents**

Table of Contents.....4

1 6

2 7

3 8

Timeseries.....11

4 17

5 20

6 21

7 23

8 24



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page5

Date : 20/05/2022

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

AltiKa – Ka-band Altimeter  
 AMSR-E - Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer - Earth Observing System  
 ATBD – Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document  
 AVHRR - Extended Advanced Very High Resolution Radiometer  
 AWI – Alfred Wegener Institute  
 CICE – The Los Alamos Sea Ice Model  
 CRREL - Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory  
 CryoVEx - CryoSat Validation Experiment  
 CS2 – CryoSat-2  
 DuST – Dual-altimeter Snow Thickness  
 ECMWF – European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts  
 Envisat – Environmental Satellite  
 EO – Earth Observation  
 ERS – European Remote Sensing Satellite  
 ESA – European Space Agency  
 EXPRO – Express Procurement  
 FBEM - Facet-Based numerical Echo Model  
 FMI – Finnish Meteorological Institute  
 FYI – First-Year Ice  
 GLAS – Geoscience Laser Altimeter System  
 IABP – International Arctic Buoy Program  
 IAR – Impact Assessment Report  
 ICESat – Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite  
 IMB – Ice Mass-balance Buoy  
 ITT – Invitation To Tender  
 KO – Kick-Off  
 KuKa – Ku (radar) / Ka (radar) snow thickness product  
 KuLa – Ku (radar) / Laser snow thickness product

LEGOS - Laboratoire d'Etudes en Géophysique et Océanographie Spatiales  
 LIM – Louvain-la-Neuve Sea Ice Model  
 MAF – Management, Administrative and Financial proposal  
 MYI – Multi-Year Ice  
 NASA – National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
 NCEP – National Centers for Environmental Prediction  
 NSIDC – National Snow and Ice Data Centre  
 OIB - Operation IceBridge  
 PP – Project Partner  
 RA2 – Radar Altimeter 2  
 RB – Requirement Baseline  
 SAR – Synthetic Aperture Radar  
 SARAL – Satellite for Argos and AltiKa  
 SHEBA - Surface Heat Budget of the Arctic Ocean  
 SIPN – Sea Ice Prediction Network  
 SMOS - Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity satellite  
 SnoDSI – SNOw on Drifting Sea Ice  
 SOW – Statement Of Work  
 SR – Scientific Roadmap  
 SSM/I - Special Sensor Microwave Imager  
 SSMIS – SSM/I Sounder  
 STSE – Support To Science Element  
 SWE – Snow Water Equivalent  
 TP – Technical Proposal  
 UiT – Arctic University of Norway  
 UCL – University College London  
 W99 – Warren et al. (1999) snow climatology  
 WP – Work Package  
 YOPP – Year of Polar Prediction



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page6

Date : 20/05/2022

## 1 Document objectives

This document aims at aligning all the snow depth products presented in the Experimental Dataset Description (EDD) deliverable in the framework of the ESAPolar+ project. This follows a request from ESA to provide one merged product from the variety of snow products delivered in the EDD, namely: UiT KuLa, UiT KuKa, LEGOS KuLa, LEGOS KuKa (both Samosa and T50) and CPOM KuLa, and CPOM KuKa. The suggestion by ESA was to merge the products using a bias correction approach. We describe this approach in this document as well as the merged final snow product, the code to obtain the merging from the individual snow products and the code to plot the results shown here.

## 2 Input data

We use the EDD snow products described below as input to our final merged product (Table 1). The period they cover, the original gridding and the method used to obtain the products are described in section 3 of the EDD.

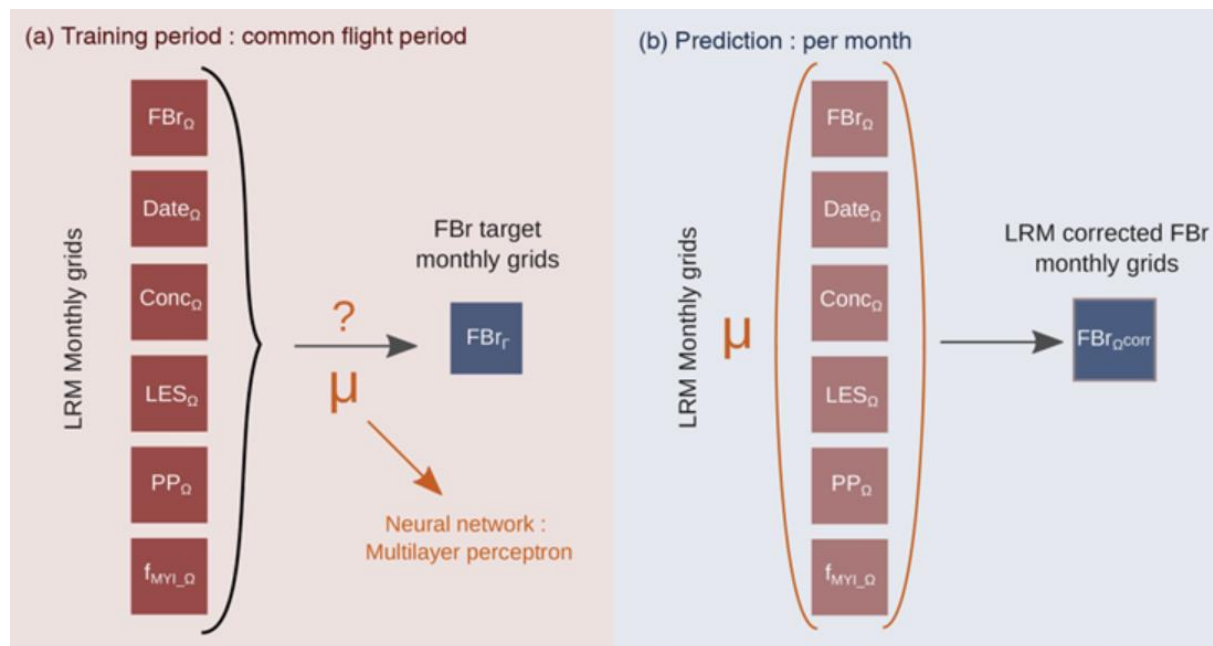
Product	Period	Original gridding	Method
University of Tromsø (UIT)	11/2018 - 04/2020 (November to April)	50 km (181X181)	KuLa - Waveform methodology
	11/2018 - 04/2020 (November to April)	50 km (181X181)	KuKa - Waveform methodology
University of Leeds (UoL)	10/2018 - 12/2021 (October to April)	25,67 km (267x267)	KuLa - Calibration methodology
	03/2013 - 12/2021 (October to April)	25,67 km (267x267)	KuKa - Calibration methodology
LEGOS	10/2018 - 04/2021 (October to April)	25 km (356x356)	KuLa - Bias correction
	10/2013 - 04/2021 (October to April)	25 km (712x712)	KuKa - pLRM/LRM - Bias correction

Table 1: Description of the characteristics of each snow product

### 3 Neural Network snow adjustment algorithm

The algorithm used here is inspired by multiparameter neural network (NN) based method to calibrate Envisat against CryoSat2 and ERS-2 against Envisat described in Bocquet et al (2023). The NN is motivated by the requirement to manage strong non-linearities and was shown to perform well in a similar setting (i.e. radar freeboard). Here we extend this approach to dual-frequency snow products with the underlying understanding that these snow products rely on radar and laser freeboards.

The neural network employed in our code is a multilayer perceptron (MLP) implemented with PyTorch. The MLP consists of two layers: the first hidden layer has 8 neurons, and the output layer has 1 neuron. This network uses ReLU activation for the hidden layer. We optimised the model using the AdamW optimiser with a learning rate of 0.001 and a weight decay of 1e-5. The loss function is SmoothL1 loss, and training is managed through a batch size of 512 over 50 epochs, with a ReduceLROnPlateau learning rate scheduler to adjust the learning rate based on validation loss.



**Figure 1. Diagram from Bocquet et al (2023) illustrating the principle of freeboard correction by a neural network with the two main steps: in panel (a), the neural network training phase, and in panel (b), the prediction (correction) phase. corresponds to the inputs and to the output of the neural network. FB: radar freeboard; Conc: sea ice concentration; LES: leading-edge slope; PP: pulse peakiness, fMYI: MYI proportion. Here we adapt that model and replace the input freeboards FB by our snow products and the reference freeboard by our reference snow product (i.e. UiT KuLa).**

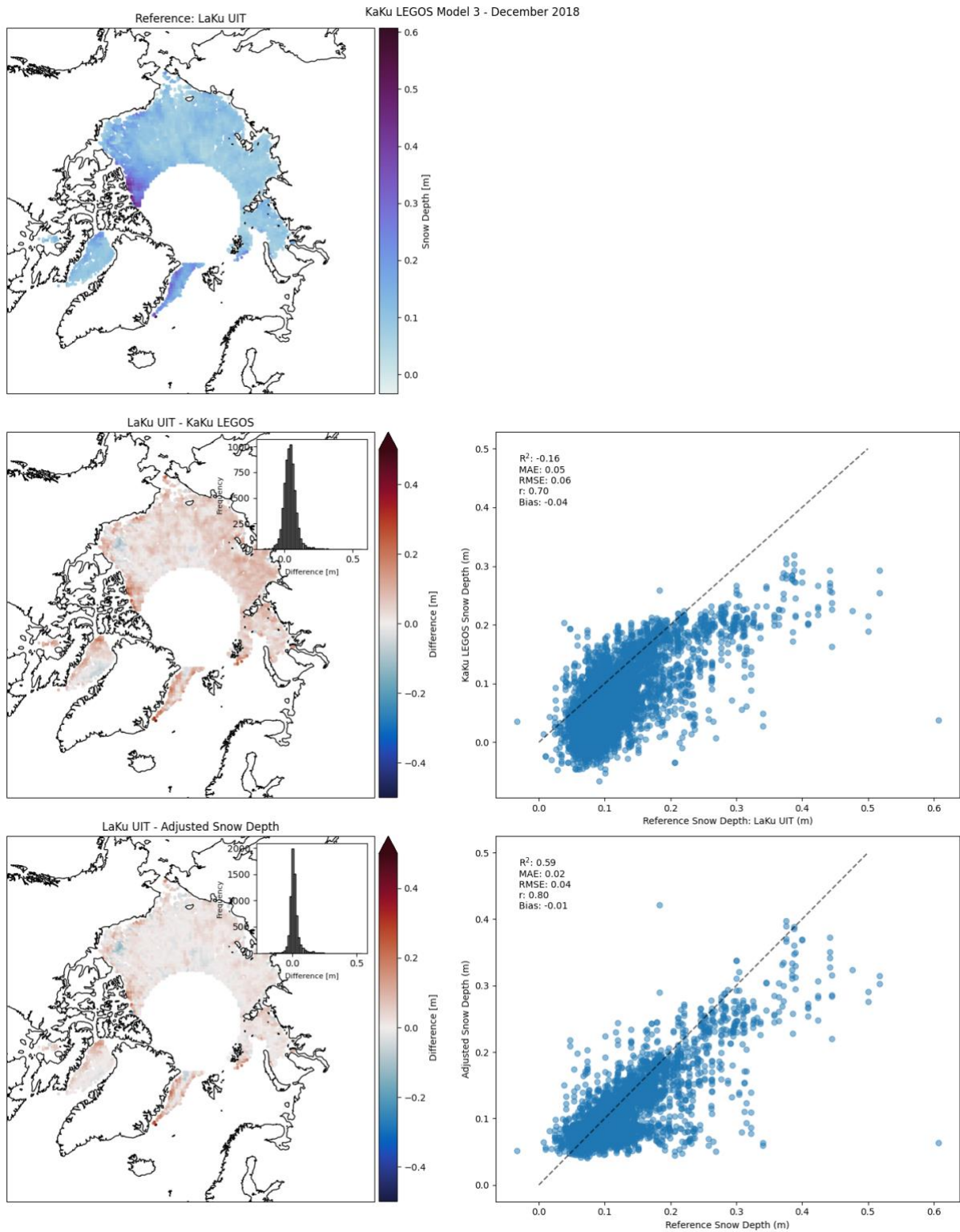
The NN is trained on the common period 2018-10 to 2020-04 when all snow products are available. We have chosen UiT KuLa as the snow product to be considered a reference due to

	Polar+ Theme 1 Snow on sea ice	Reference : Polar+_D6.1_SR Version : 1 Date : 20/05/2022 page9
--	-----------------------------------	---


its overall good performance in the validation analysis (validation report). All other snow products are corrected ('adjusted') against this reference.

Following the approach presented by Bocquet et al (2023), the NN takes as inputs monthly grids of the following parameters: snow products (one at a time to be corrected), the CryoSat-2 (CS2) pulse peakiness, CS2 leading-edge slope, ice concentration, MYI proportion, the month and, as a target, the reference UiT KuLa snow product. Note that the month of the year is taken to capture the seasonal variability better, as snow on sea ice and sea ice physical properties change along the seasons. Inputs and targets are standardized before the training step.

Note that all snow products and auxiliary products have been binned on the same EASE2 monthly 25km resolution grid. The grid is 350x350 and is provided with the products.



**Figure 2. Figure showing an example of the reference LaKu UIT snow product for December 2018 (top) and the different with the original KaKu LEGOS snow product**

	<p>Polar+ Theme 1 Snow on sea ice</p>	<p>Reference : Polar+_D6.1_SR Version : 1 Date : 20/05/2022</p> <p style="text-align: right;">page11</p>
--	---	--

**(middle) and adjusted KaKu LEGOS snow product (bottom). Scatter plots on the right column show the improvement before and after NN correction is applied.**



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

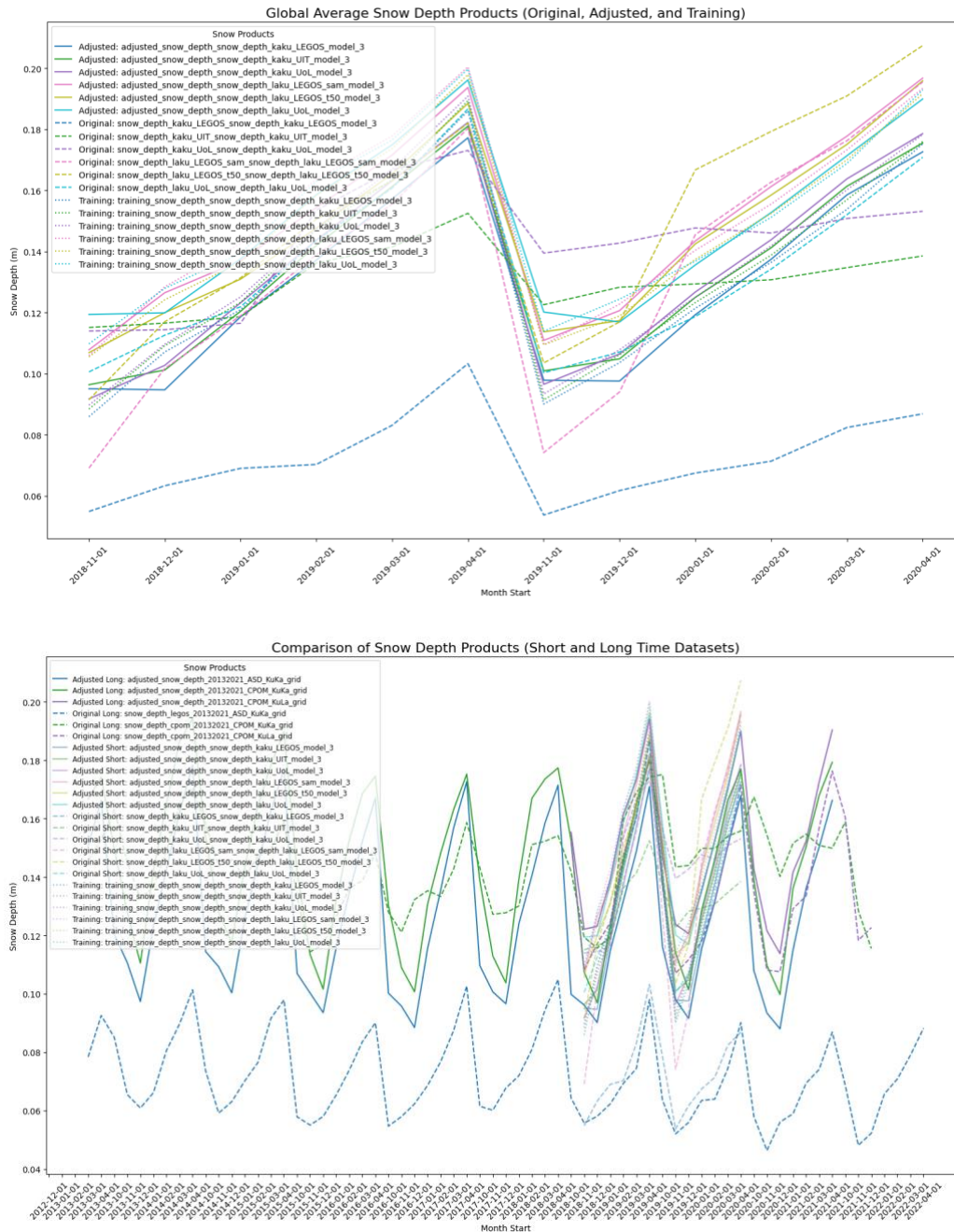
Version : 1

page12

Date : 20/05/2022

### Timeseries

Comparison of the original snow products, adjusted snow products and training reference UIT KuLa snow product averaged over the entire Arctic and over the overlap period 2018-10 to 2020-04 (Figure XX) and over the longer 2013-10 to 2022-04 period (Figure XX).

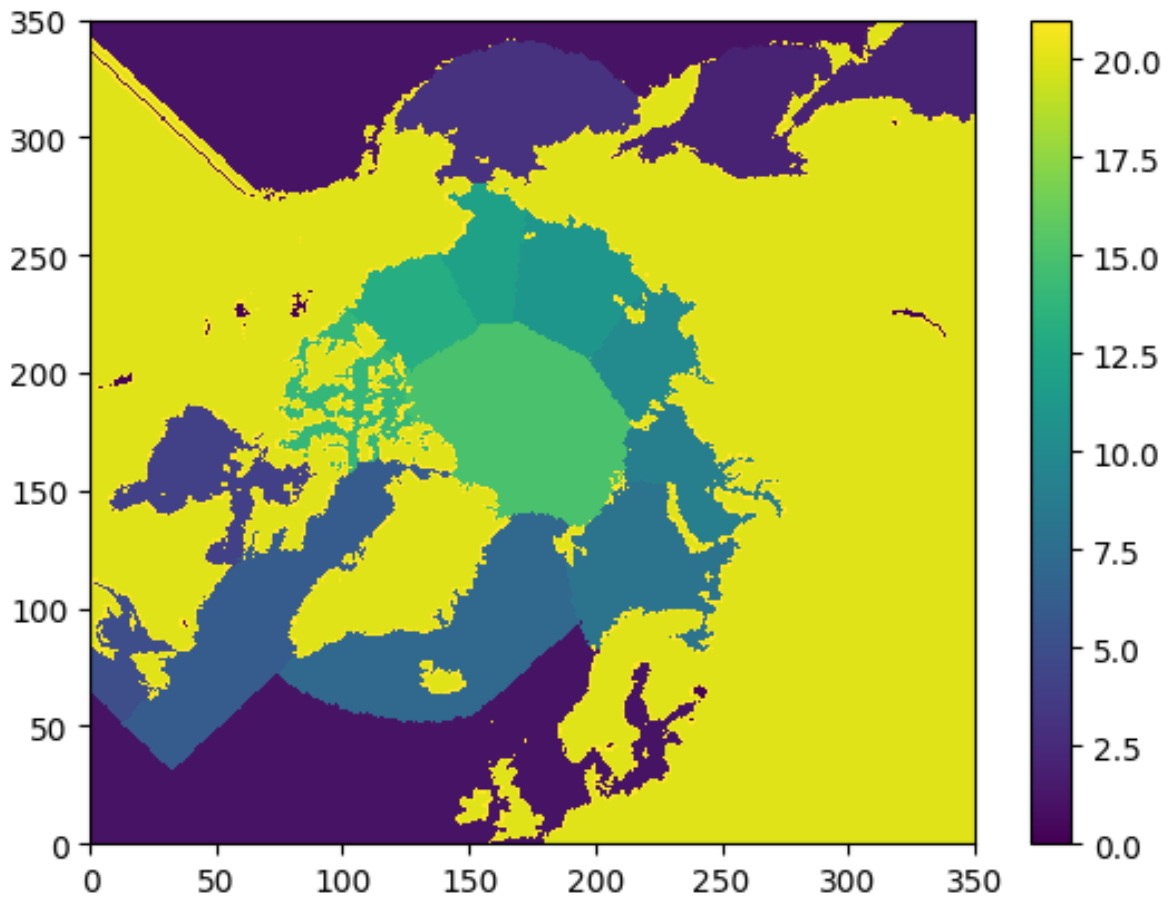


**Figure 3. Figures showing the global average snow for each original products (dashed lines), each adjusted products (solid lines) and for the reference training UIT KuLa product (dotted lines). Not that the dotted lines are different from each other because of**

**the difference of averaging regions as averages are taken for each product where both original and reference product coexist.**

Timeseries by regions are shown below for the regions as defined by NSIDC and below in Figure XX.

```
regions = ['Baffin','Greenland','Barents','Kara','Laptev','E. Siberian','Chukchi','Beaufort','Central Arctic']
regs = [6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,15]
```



**Figure 4. Figure showing the indices for each region used for our regional analysis.**



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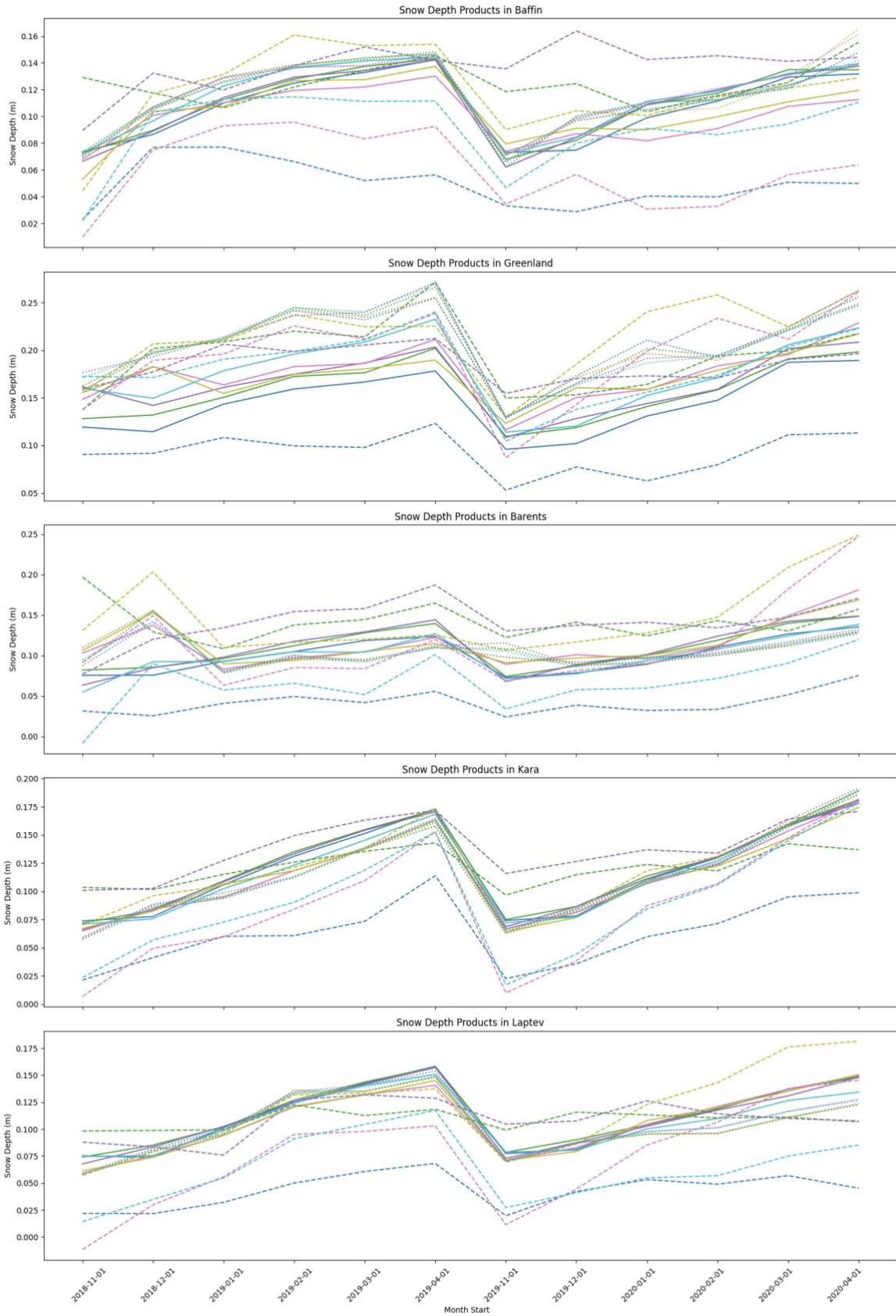
Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

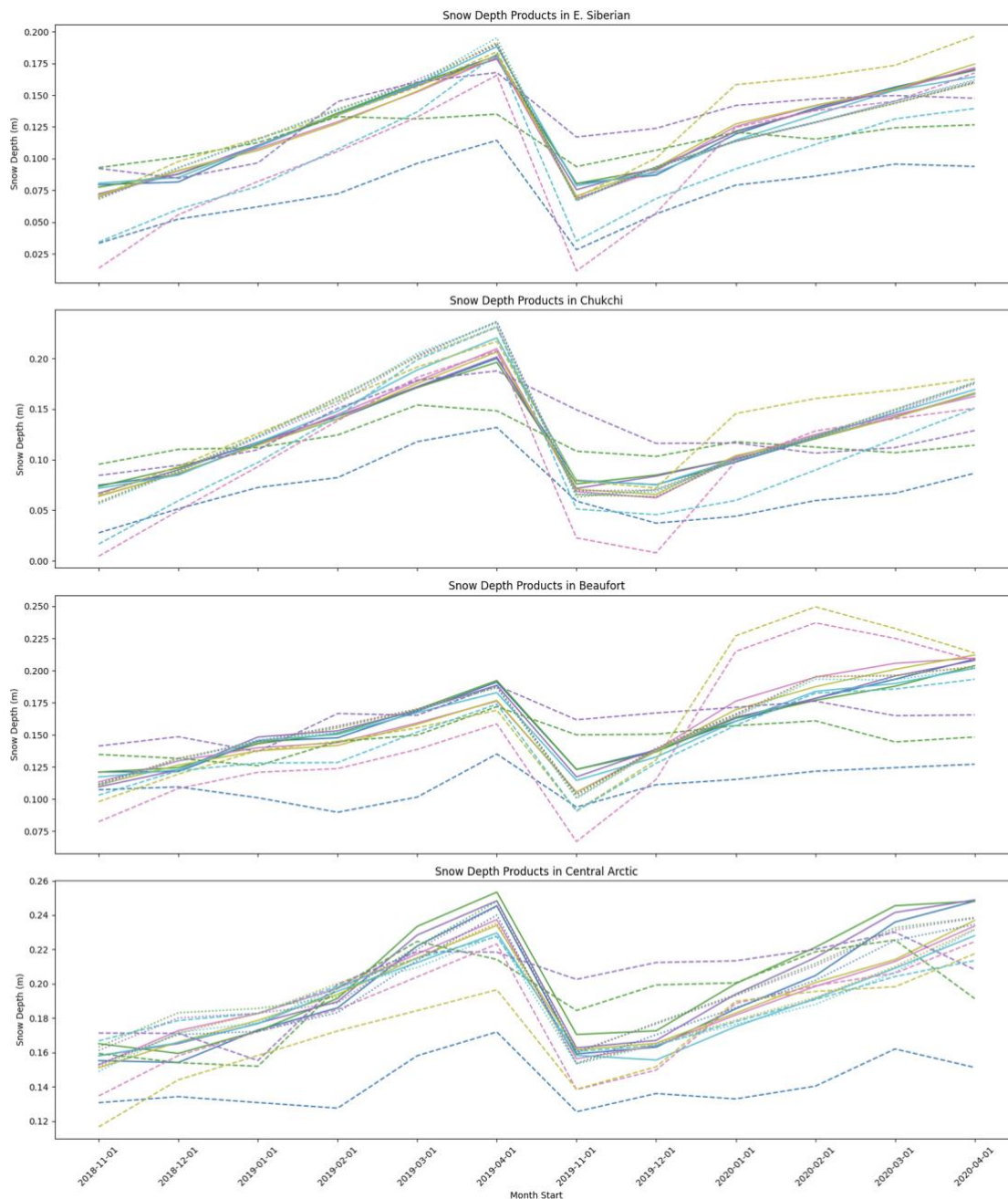
Version : 1

page14

Date : 20/05/2022



**Figure 5. Average snow depth for each region and each product.**



**Figure 6. Average snow depth for each region and each product (continued).**



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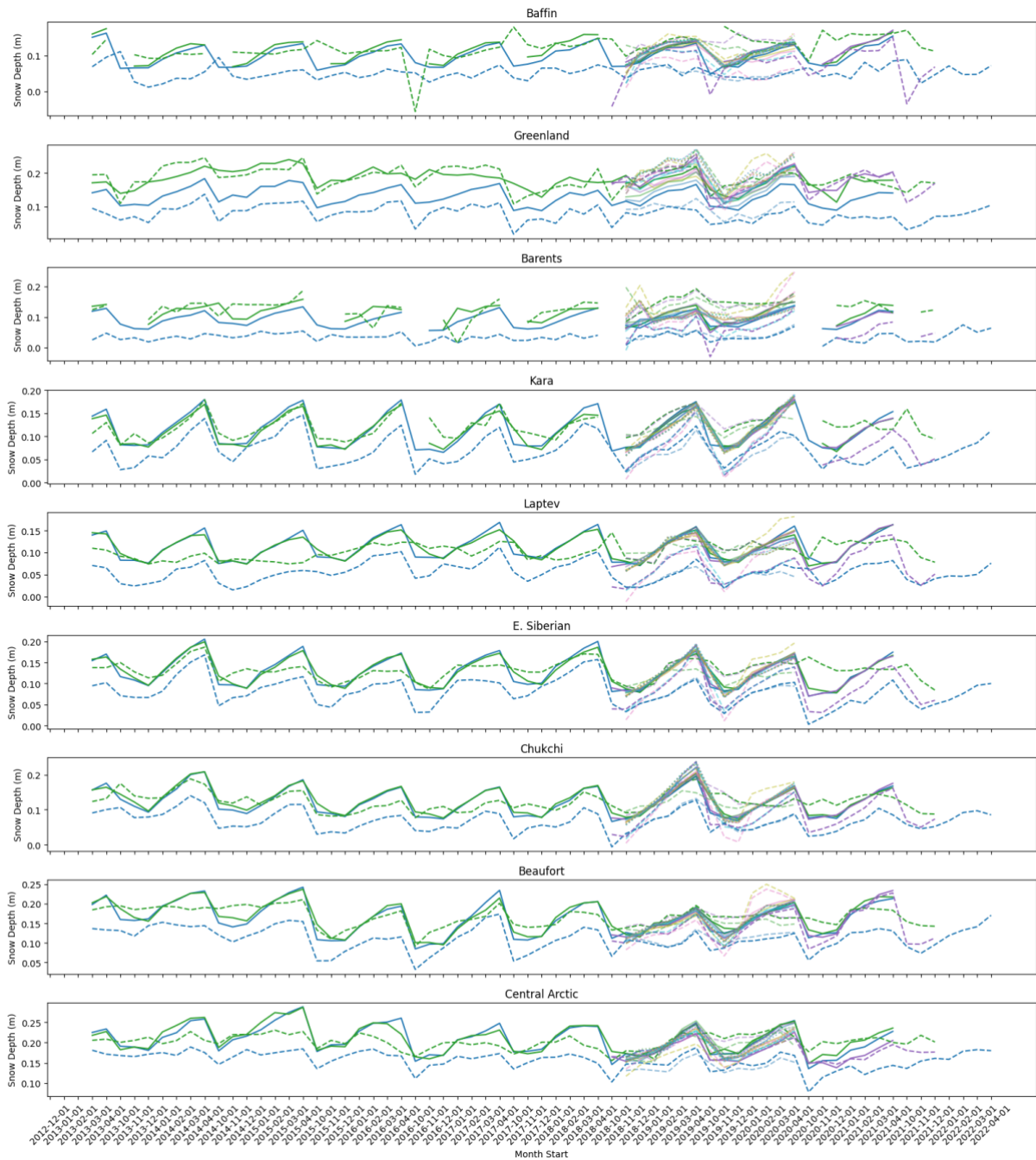
Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page16

Date : 20/05/2022



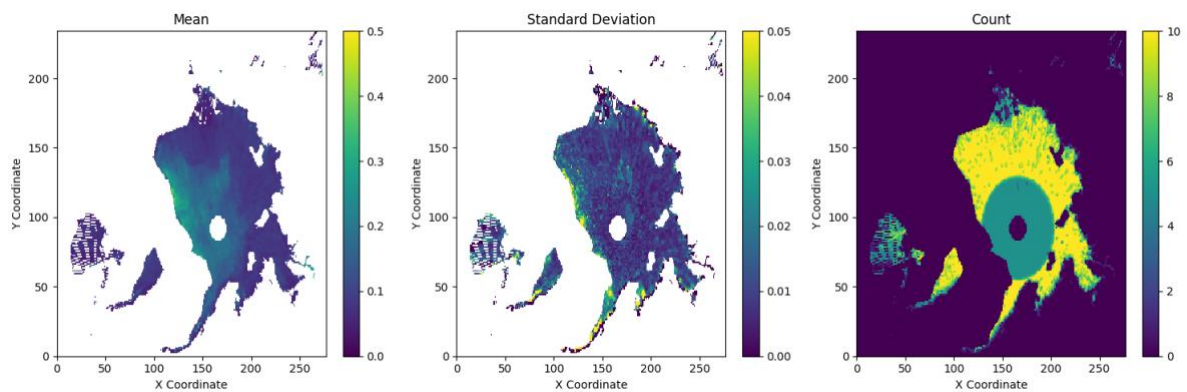
**Figure 7. Average snow depth for each region and each product over the extended period.**

#### 4 Fusion of the bias corrected snow products

Here we compare the original products and adjusted products and show the consolidated time series.

The idea for the merged product is to average all the adjusted / bias corrected snow products and provide also the standard deviation (or min-max) as a product. Example of such mean and standard deviation are shown in the figure below for a given month.

Code to load and plot this new merged dataset is available on the project website.



**Figure 8. Left: Mean of all adjusted snow products for 2019-12-01. Middle: Standard Deviation of all snow products for 2019-12-01. Right: Count of number of snow products for each EASE2 grid cell contributing to the mean and standard deviation.**



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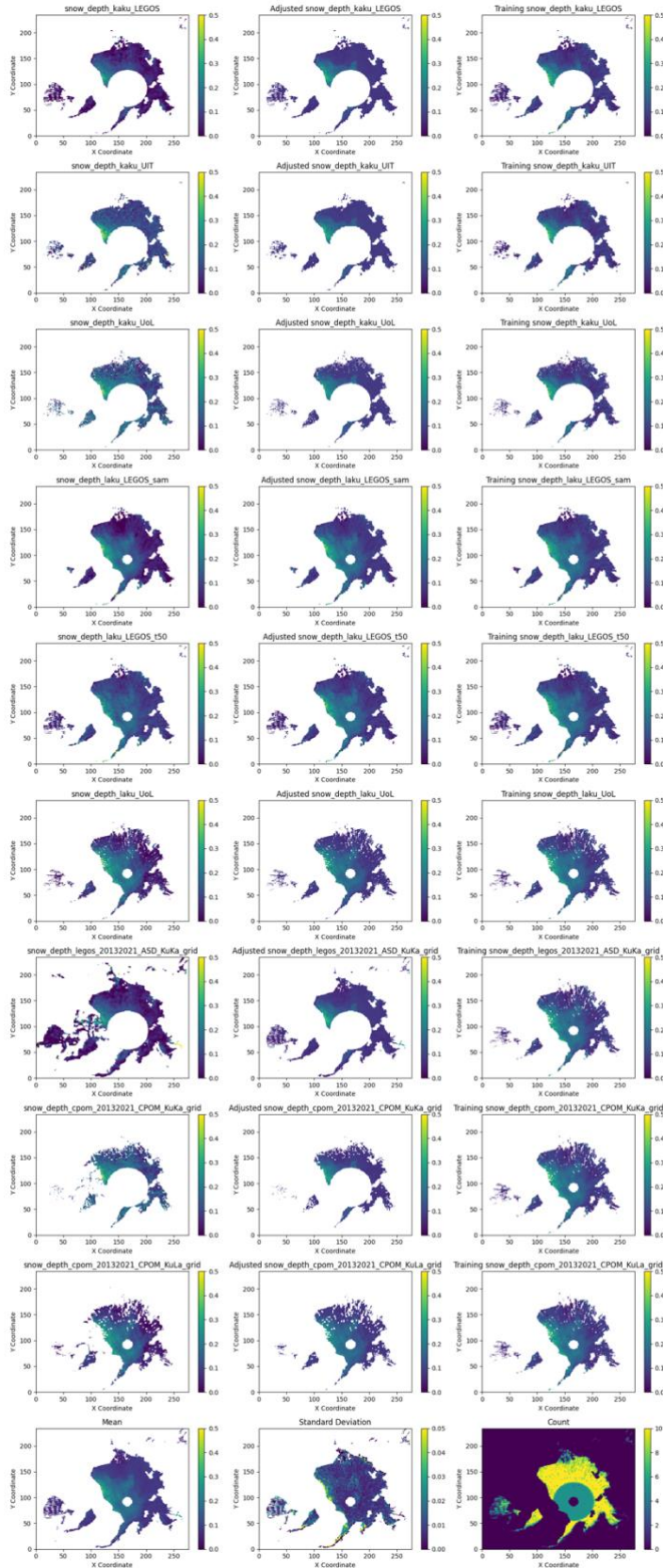
Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page18

Date : 20/05/2022



**Figure 9. Individual snow products that have contributed to the mean snow product, standard deviation and count show here and in the previous figure for 2019-12-01.**

## 5 Merged snow product description

The snow\_depth\_statistics\_with\_maps.nc file is as follows:

```
netcdf snow_depth_statistics_with_maps {
dimensions:
    month_start = 83 ;
    y = 350 ;
    x = 350 ;
variables:
    double mean_snow_depth(month_start, y, x) ;
        mean_snow_depth:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double std_snow_depth(month_start, y, x) ;
        std_snow_depth:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double max_min_snow_depth(month_start, y, x) ;
        max_min_snow_depth:_FillValue = NaN ;
    int64 product_count(month_start, y, x) ;
    int64 month_start(month_start) ;
        month_start:units = "days since 2010-11-01 00:00:00" ;
        month_start:calendar = "proleptic_gregorian" ;
    double x(x) ;
        x:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double y(y) ;
        y:_FillValue = NaN ;
```

This contains monthly maps of:

- the average of all available snow corrected snow products (mean\_snow\_depth)
- the standard deviation of all the corrected snow products (std\_snow\_depth)
- the maximum – minimum range of values (max\_min\_snow\_depth)
- the product count (product\_count)
- the month (month\_start)
- the location (x, y)



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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page21

Date : 20/05/2022

## 6 Adjusted data product description

The corrected\_snow\_depth.nc files are as follows:

```
corrected_snow_depth {
dimensions:
    index = 40953600 ;
variables:
    double y(index) ;
        y:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double x(index) ;
        x:_FillValue = NaN ;
    string month_start(index) ;
    double stack_peakiness(index) ;
        stack_peakiness:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_peakiness_bin_count(index) ;
        stack_peakiness_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_skewness(index) ;
        stack_skewness:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_skewness_bin_count(index) ;
        stack_skewness_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_scaled_amplitude(index) ;
        stack_scaled_amplitude:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_scaled_amplitude_bin_count(index) ;
        stack_scaled_amplitude_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_standard_deviation(index) ;
        stack_standard_deviation:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_standard_deviation_bin_count(index) ;
        stack_standard_deviation_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_kurtosis(index) ;
        stack_kurtosis:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double stack_kurtosis_bin_count(index) ;
        stack_kurtosis_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double ocog_width(index) ;
        ocog_width:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double ocog_width_bin_count(index) ;
        ocog_width_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double ocog_amplitude(index) ;
        ocog_amplitude:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double ocog_amplitude_bin_count(index) ;
        ocog_amplitude_bin_count:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double peakiness(index) ;
        peakiness:_FillValue = NaN ;
    double peakiness_bin_count(index) ;
```



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page22

Date : 20/05/2022

```
    peakiness_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double peakiness_normed(index) ;
    peakiness_normed: FillValue = NaN ;
double peakiness_normed_bin_count(index) ;
    peakiness_normed_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double leading_edge_width(index) ;
    leading_edge_width: FillValue = NaN ;
double leading_edge_width_bin_count(index) ;
    leading_edge_width_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double peak_power(index) ;
    peak_power: FillValue = NaN ;
double peak_power_bin_count(index) ;
    peak_power_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double sigma0(index) ;
    sigma0: FillValue = NaN ;
double sigma0_bin_count(index) ;
    sigma0_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double sea_ice_concentration(index) ;
    sea_ice_concentration: FillValue = NaN ;
double sea_ice_concentration_bin_count(index) ;
    sea_ice_concentration_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double sea_ice_type(index) ;
    sea_ice_type: FillValue = NaN ;
double sea_ice_type_bin_count(index) ;
    sea_ice_type_bin_count: FillValue = NaN ;
double longitude(index) ;
    longitude: FillValue = NaN ;
double latitude(index) ;
    latitude: FillValue = NaN ;
double snow_depth_cpom(index) ;
    snow_depth_cpom: FillValue = NaN ;
double sea_ice_region_surface_mask(index) ;
    sea_ice_region_surface_mask: FillValue = NaN ;
double snow_depth_laku UIT(index) ;
    snow_depth_laku UIT: FillValue = NaN ;
int64 month(index) ;
double adjusted_snow_depth(index) ;
    adjusted_snow_depth: FillValue = NaN ;
int64 index(index) ;
```



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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR


Version : 1

page23

Date : 20/05/2022

## 7 References

Bocquet, Marion, Sara Fleury, Fanny Piras, Eero Rinne, Heidi Sallila, Florent Garnier, and Frédérique Rémy. "Arctic sea ice radar freeboard retrieval from the European Remote-Sensing Satellite (ERS-2) using altimetry: Toward sea ice thickness observation from 1995 to 2021." *The Cryosphere* 17, no. 7 (2023): 3013-3039.

	Polar+ Theme 1 Snow on sea ice	Reference : Polar+_D6.1_SR Version : 1 Date : 20/05/2022 page24
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## 8 Assessment

### Appendix A: Adjusted and fused product description

The final product will contain the LEGOS LaKu and KaKu snow depth products, the corresponding freeboards used to compute the snow depth and the standard deviation values of all products, for the 3 KaKu products and the 3 LaKu products with also a variable containing the number of products used to compute these statistics at each grid point. It is provided in 356x356 EASE2 grids on a monthly basis over the common period.

Here is the netcdf description using the *ncdump* command.

```
netcdf SD_201910 {
dimensions:
    u = 356 ;
    v = 356 ;
    time = UNLIMITED ; // (1 currently)
variables:
    float latitude(u, v) ;
        latitude:units = "degree_north" ;
        latitude:long_name = "latitude" ;
        latitude:description = "ease grid" ;
        latitude:_CoordinateAxisType = "Lat" ;
    float longitude(u, v) ;
        longitude:units = "degree_east" ;
        longitude:long_name = "ease grid" ;
        longitude:_CoordinateAxisType = "Lon" ;
    float time(time) ;
        time:units = "days since 2000-01-01" ;
        time:long_name = "time" ;
    float snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_sam(time, u, v) ;
        snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_sam:units = "m" ;
        snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_sam:long_name =
"snow_depth_laku_samosa_LEGOS" ;
        snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_sam:description = "snow depth from LEGOS
computed from freeboard elevation difference between IS2 ATL10 product and CS2 (GPOD
SAMOSA). The snow delay correction is calculated using Mallett et 2020 formula" ;
        snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_sam:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
    float freeboard_ku_sam(time, u, v) ;
        freeboard_ku_sam:units = "m" ;
        freeboard_ku_sam:long_name = "radar_freeboard_sam_LEGOS" ;
        freeboard_ku_sam:description = "Ku-band SAR radar freeboard from the
CryoSat-2 mission calculated using SAM+ retracker (for more details see laforge et al, 2020)"
```



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page25

Date : 20/05/2022

```

;
    freeboard_ku_sam:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float freeboard_ku_sam_std(time, u, v) ;
    freeboard_ku_sam_std:units = "m" ;
    freeboard_ku_sam_std:long_name = "radar_freeboard_sam_LEGOS_std" ;
    freeboard_ku_sam_std:description = "Standard deviation of
radar_freeboard_sam_std parameter" ;
    freeboard_ku_sam_std:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_t50(time, u, v) ;
    snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_t50:units = "m" ;
    snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_t50:long_name = "snow_depth_laku_t50_LEGOS" ;
    snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_t50:description = "snow depth from LEGOS
computed from freeboard elevation difference between IS2 ATL10 product and CS2
(BASELINE-D L1B + LEGOS PROCESSING TFMRA50). The snow delay correction is calculated
using Mallett et 2020 formula" ;
    snow_depth_laku_LEGOS_t50:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float freeboard_ku_t50(time, u, v) ;
    freeboard_ku_t50:units = "m" ;
    freeboard_ku_t50:long_name = "freeboard_ku_tfmra50_LEGOS" ;
    freeboard_ku_t50:description = "Ku-band SAR radar freeboard from the
CryoSat-2 mission calculated using TFMRA50 retracker from baseline-D L1B official product"
;
    freeboard_ku_t50:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float freeboard_ku_t50_std(time, u, v) ;
    freeboard_ku_t50_std:units = "m" ;
    freeboard_ku_t50_std:long_name = "freeboard_ku_tfmra50_LEGOS_std" ;
    freeboard_ku_t50_std:description = "Standard deviation of
radar_freeboard_t50" ;
    freeboard_ku_t50_std:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_laku_UoL(time, u, v) ;
    snow_depth_laku_UoL:units = "m" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UoL:long_name = "snow_depth_laku_UoL" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UoL:description = "Snow depth derived from (IS2-
Ku_calibrated)*0.781 [m]" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UoL:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_laku_UIT(time, u, v) ;
    snow_depth_laku_UIT:units = "m" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UIT:long_name = "snow_depth_laku_UIT" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UIT:description = "Snow Depth from ICESat-2 ATLAS
freeboard minus CryoSat-2 SIRAL freeboard (multiplied by correction factor 0.781)" ;
    snow_depth_laku_UIT:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS(time, u, v) ;
    snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS:units = "m" ;

```



FMI



Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page26

Date : 20/05/2022

```

snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS:long_name = "snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS" ;
snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS:description = "computed as
(saral_radar_freeboard_40hz_median- c2esaOC1_radar_freeboard_20hz_median)/1.238) to
take in account the speed reduction of radar in snow" ;
snow_depth_kaku_LEGOS:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float freeboard_ka(time, u, v) ;
freeboard_ka:units = "m" ;
freeboard_ka:long_name = "radar_freeboard_SRL_LEGOS" ;
freeboard_ka:description = "Radar (ku-band) freeboard computed from
differences between the ila_smooth_40hz (12.5km smoothed) and the sla_smooth_40hz
(12.5km)" ;
freeboard_ka:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_kaku_UoL(time, u, v) ;
snow_depth_kaku_UoL:units = "m" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UoL:long_name = "snow_depth_kaku_UoL" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UoL:description = "Snow depth derived from
(Ka_calibrated-Ku_calibrated)*0.781 [m]" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UoL:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float snow_depth_kaku_UIT(time, u, v) ;
snow_depth_kaku_UIT:units = "m" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UIT:long_name = "snow_depth_kaku_UIT" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UIT:description = "Snow Depth from Altika SARAL
freeboard minus CryoSat-2 SIRAL freeboard (multiplied by correction factor 0.781)" ;
snow_depth_kaku_UIT:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float std_sd(time, u, v) ;
std_sd:units = "m" ;
std_sd:long_name = "standard_deviation_snow_depth" ;
std_sd:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float std_sd_laku(time, u, v) ;
std_sd_laku:units = "m" ;
std_sd_laku:long_name = "standard_deviation_snow_depth_laku" ;
std_sd_laku:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float std_sd_kaku(time, u, v) ;
std_sd_kaku:units = "m" ;
std_sd_kaku:long_name = "standard_deviation_snow_depth_kaku" ;
std_sd_kaku:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
float nb_data_per_pixel(time, u, v) ;
nb_data_per_pixel:units = "" ;
nb_data_per_pixel:long_name = "number_of_data_per_pixel" ;
nb_data_per_pixel:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
nb_data_per_pixel:description = "Number of products (LaKu and KaKu from
LEGOS and UIT) used to compute the standard deviation for each grid point" ;
float nb_laku_data_per_pixel(time, u, v) ;

```



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Polar+ Theme 1  
Snow on sea ice

Reference : Polar+\_D6.1\_SR

Version : 1

page27

Date : 20/05/2022

```
nb_laku_data_per_pixel:units = "" ;
nb_laku_data_per_pixel:long_name = "number_of_laku_data_per_pixel" ;
nb_laku_data_per_pixel:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
nb_laku_data_per_pixel:description = "Number of products (LaKu from
LEGOS and UIT) used to compute the standard deviation for each grid point" ;
float nb_kaku_data_per_pixel(time, u, v) ;
nb_kaku_data_per_pixel:units = "" ;
nb_kaku_data_per_pixel:long_name = "number_of_kaku_data_per_pixel" ;
nb_kaku_data_per_pixel:coordinates = "lat lon" ;
nb_kaku_data_per_pixel:description = "Number of products (KaKu from
LEGOS and UIT) used to compute the standard deviation for each grid point" ;

// global attributes:
:institution = "LEGOS, UIT, UoL" ;
:contact = "sara.fleury@cnr.fr, jack.c.landy@uit.no,
i.r.lawrence@leeds.ac.uk" ;
:references = "Technical document available on request" ;
:project = "Polar+ Snow on Sea Ice" ;
:title = "6 altimetry snow depth products from Polar+ Snow on Sea Ice ESA
project" ;
```

End of the document