



# ESA Contract Report

SMOS ESL contract 4000130567/20/I-BG

Contract Report to the European Space Agency

## Quarter 4 2022: Operations Service Report

Authors: Pete Weston and Patricia de Rosnay  
Contract officer: Raffaele Crapolicchio

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European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts  
Shinfield Park, Reading, RG2 9AX, England

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## Abbreviations

BUFR .....	Binary Universal Form for the Representation of meteorological data
DHS .....	Data Handling System
DPGS .....	Data Processing Ground Segment
ECFS .....	ECMWF's File Storage system
ECMWF .....	European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts
ESA.....	European Space Agency
ESAC .....	European Space Astronomy Centre
ESL .....	Expert Support Laboratory
HPC .....	High Performance Computing
MIRAS .....	Microwave Imaging Radiometer using Aperture Synthesis
NetCDF .....	Network Common Data Form
NN.....	Neural Network
NRT .....	Near Real Time
NWP .....	Numerical Weather Prediction
SAPP.....	Scalable Acquisition and Pre-Processing system
SMOS .....	Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity

## 1. Introduction

This document summarises the production and dissemination status of the European Space Agency (ESA) Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity (SMOS) neural network (NN) nominal soil moisture product for the fourth quarter of 2022. The NN nominal product is produced at the European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and it processes raw SMOS BUFR files within 30 minutes of their arrival via the Scalable Acquisition and Pre-Processing system (SAPP). The SMOS BUFR files should be available to ECMWF less than 165 minutes from the initial observation time and the NN product NetCDF files should be delivered to ESA less than 240 minutes from the initial observation time in the corresponding source BUFR file. Statistics of the production and timeliness of the delivered product are presented, reasons for the lack of completeness and/or failure to meet the timeliness deadline are given and corrective actions (if possible) are described in this report.

## 2. Quarterly statistics of completeness and timeliness of the SMOS NN product

Figure 1 shows the time series of daily file completeness and timeliness as defined by files that are delivered to ESA within 240 minutes of the initial observation time in the corresponding input BUFR file. The percentages are calculated by dividing the total time covered in the output files by the 24 hours in any single day. For example, for a single day if there are 30 BUFR files covering 48 minutes of data each and 1 file is not produced and 1 file is delivered late then the completeness percentage is 96.67% and the timeliness percentage is 93.33%. The time series covers the fourth quarter of 2022, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The data shows that for the vast majority of days the completeness is 100% or very close to 100% and the timeliness is greater than 90%. An explanation of the periods where completeness drops below 95% and timeliness drops below 80% can be found in section 3.

Table 1 shows the monthly and entire quarter mean statistics of completeness and timeliness. The completeness is above 99% for all months and the entire quarter average is 100.0%. The timeliness is 94% or above for all months and the entire quarter average is 97.3%.

Month	Completeness	Timeliness
October	100.0%	99.1%
November	100.0%	97.9%
December	100.0%	94.9%
<b>Quarter</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>97.3%</b>

Table 1: Monthly mean statistics of completeness and timeliness of SMOS NN nominal soil moisture product delivery

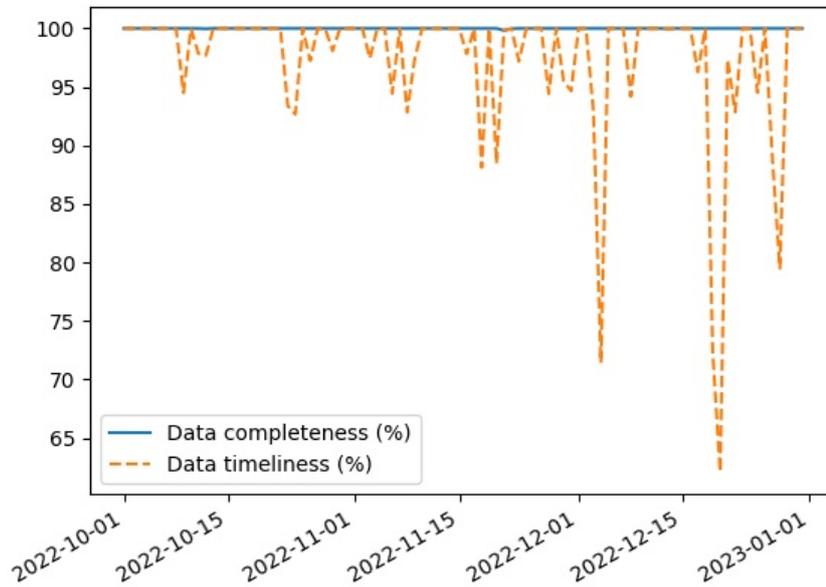


Figure 1: Daily SMOS NN nominal soil moisture production completeness and delivery timeliness percentages (see text for how these are calculated) for the fourth quarter of 2022: 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022



Figure 2: Monthly SMOS NN nominal soil moisture production completeness and delivery timeliness percentages (see text for how these are calculated) for the period January 2020 to December 2022

Figure 2 shows the monthly statistics of completeness and timeliness since January 2020 and shows that the completeness and timeliness have remained fairly constant in quarter 4 of 2022 compared to quarter 3 of 2022.

### 3. Operational anomalies in this quarter

Figure 1 shows that there were no days where completeness dropped below 95% this quarter. There are some other days where the percentage drops very slightly below 100% and these are due to a small number of input SMOS BUFR files containing only ocean points. When the neural network processor encounters such a file it skips the file because the neural network product is only validly produced over land.

Figure 1 also shows that there are several days in the past three months where the timeliness drops significantly below 80%, namely 4<sup>th</sup> December, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 20<sup>th</sup> December and 28<sup>th</sup> December, where it drops to 71.4%, 72.2%, 62.1% and 79.5% respectively. Most of these significant drops were caused by ESA delays to the delivery of the BUFR files due to a degraded near-real time (NRT) dissemination service. On 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> December the delay was due to a MIRAS CCU reset. On the 28<sup>th</sup> December the delay was due to the SMOS level 0 processor being blocked by an FTP process. These events are out of ECMWF's control, so no corrective action can be taken to stop these events happening in the future.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> December the delay was due to a server outage between 00UTC and 11UTC at ECMWF. These server outages happen very occasionally and are difficult to predict and/or prevent. However, once the server came back online the processor caught up with all files which had been missed during the outage.

In addition, this quarter the SMOS NN NRT processor was switched from running on the old servers in Reading to the new ATOS HPC system in Bologna. The switchover happened on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and there was no impact on the timeliness or completeness of the SMOS NN NRT product. Also, as mentioned in the previous quarterly report (Weston & de Rosnay, 2022), the data handling system (DHS) move from Reading to Bologna continued from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 until 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022. Thanks to work carried out over the past year to make the SMOS NN processor more robust, there was no drop off in the performance of the SMOS NN processor linked to this event.

### 4. Comparisons between the ESA nominal and ECMWF assimilation neural network products

In this section the retrieved soil moisture from both the nominal neural network product delivered to ESA and the assimilation neural network product used at ECMWF will be compared. The month chosen for the comparison is November 2022 as this is the middle month of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

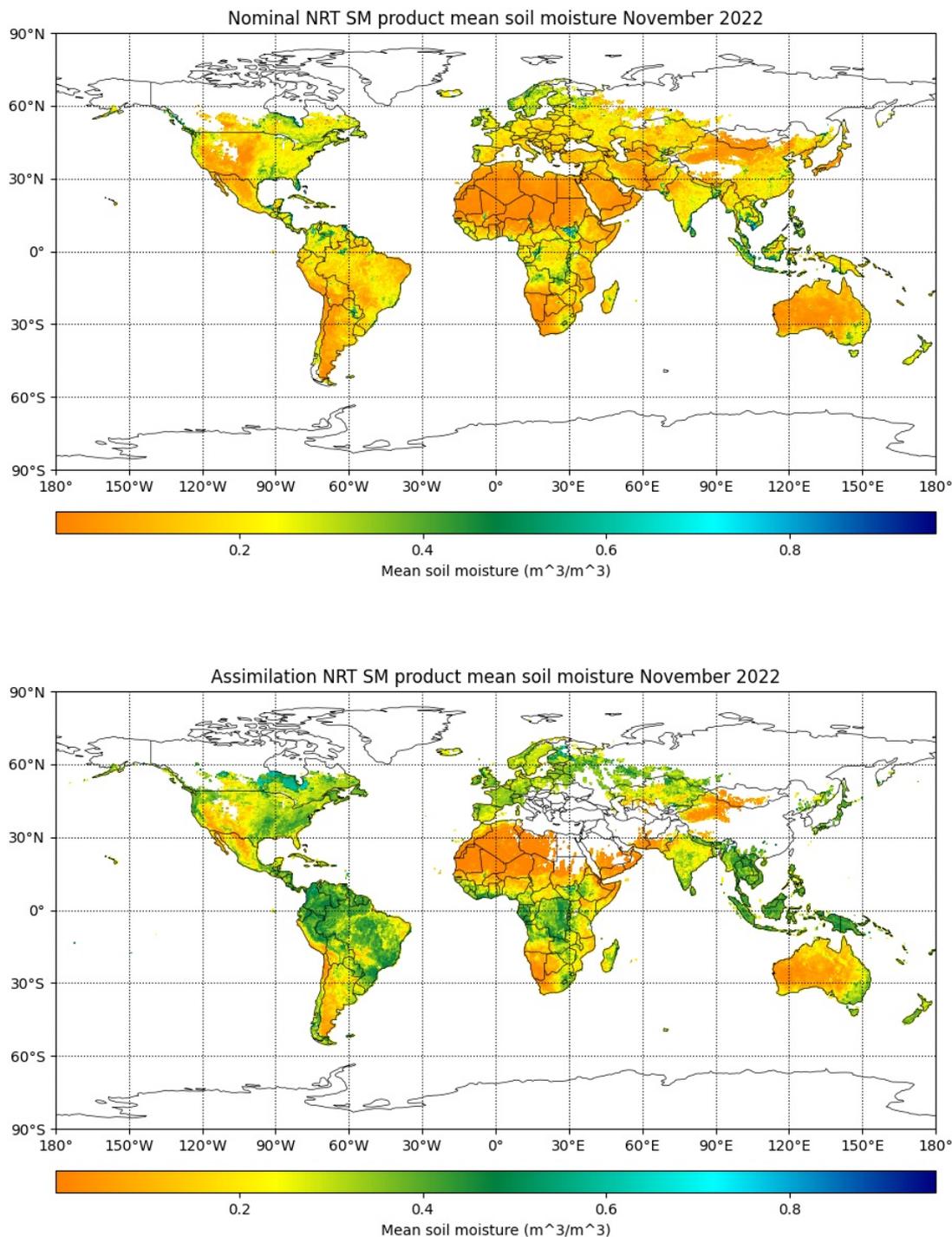


Figure 3: Mean retrieved soil moisture (m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>3</sup>) for November 2022 for the nominal NRT product (upper) and assimilation NRT product (lower)

Figure 3 shows that data is missing over China and the Middle East for the ECMWF assimilation product due to extensive radio frequency interference (RFI) in the SMOS brightness temperatures over those regions. These areas are not missing for the ESA nominal product due to a different use of RFI

flags in the training of the nominal and assimilation products. It has been decided to leave the nominal and assimilation products as they are until the next re-training when the use of the RFI flags in the training will be re-assessed and made more consistent between the two products.

There are also large areas of missing data over Northern Canada and Siberia which is due to the onset of the Northern hemisphere winter and these areas being covered by snow or frozen ground.

Figure 3 also shows that the two products have significant mean differences with the ECMWF assimilation soil moisture product generally moister than the ESA nominal product in November 2022. The maps show that the differences are largest in the tropics (over South America, central Africa and the maritime continent in particular) and the Northern mid latitudes (USA and Europe). The products are in better agreement over the extra-tropical Southern hemisphere as well as in arid regions. The differences are due to the different datasets which the two neural networks are trained on and are consistent with what is seen in October and December 2022 as well as other months throughout the year. The nominal ESA product is trained on historical values of SMOS level 2 soil moisture whereas the ECMWF assimilation product is trained on the ECMWF model soil moisture. These datasets have different characteristics and represent different soil depths which lead to the differences in figure 3. The SMOS level 2 soil moisture represents the top most 2-3cm of soil whereas the ECMWF model soil moisture represents the top most 7cm of soil.

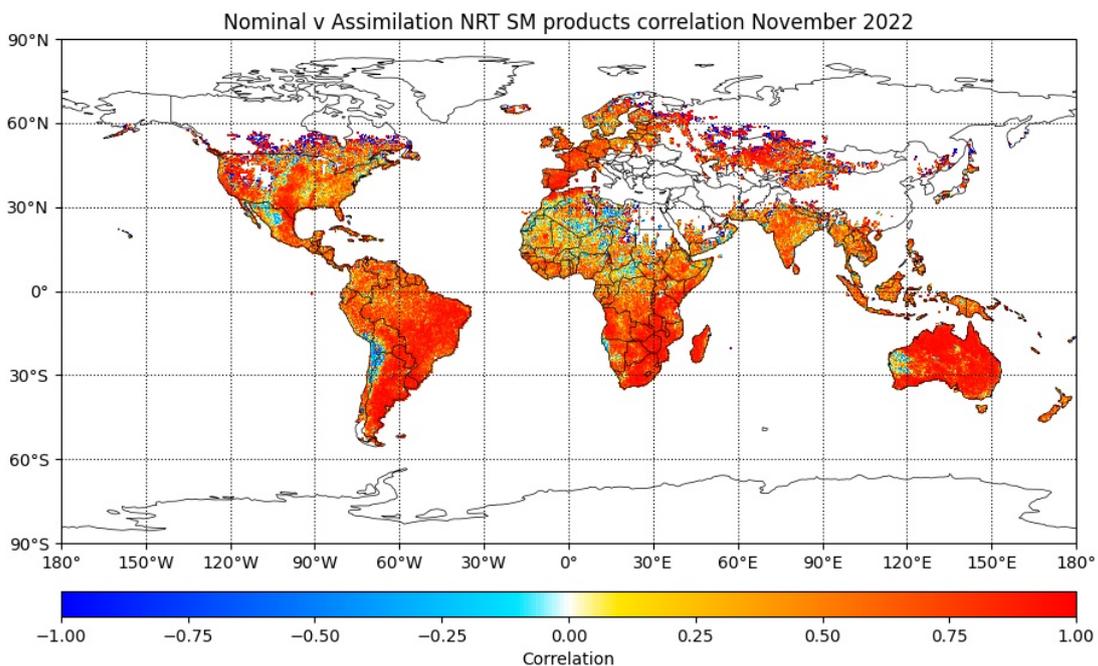


Figure 4: Correlation between the ESA nominal neural network product and the ECMWF assimilation neural network product in November 2022

Figure 4 shows that the two products have the strongest correlations in South America, Australia as well as the central US and Western Europe. There are moderate correlations in the remainder of the

Northern mid-latitudes and tropics with the weakest (and sometimes negative) correlations over arid regions such as the Sahara desert, Namib desert, the Andes and Western Australia.

## **5. References**

Weston, P.; de Rosnay, P. Quarter 3 2022: Operations Service Report. SMOS ESL contract 4000130567/20/I-BG.