

# Sentinel-3 SLSTR SST Validation using a Fiducial Reference Measurements (FRM) Service

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## Abstract

ESA is building on almost 15 years of continuous Fiducial Reference Measurements (FRM) from UK-funded shipborne radiometers by establishing a service to provide historic and ongoing FRM measurements to the wider SST community through an International SST FRM Radiometer Network (ships4sst). The ships4sst is open for partners around the world, currently comprising of partners from the UK (University of Southampton, Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, Space ConneXions), Denmark (Danish Meteorological Institute) and France (Ifremer) and will not only collect Shipborne radiometer data but also use the data to validate SLSTR and other satellite SST products with the Felyx MDB tool. Included in the service is a long term data archive of the FRM datasets at Ifremer where the data will be stored in the ships4sst netCDF L2R format. We will show examples of the ships4sst data and demonstrate its use with the newest SLSTR validation results from the ships4sst network regions, showing that SLSTR performs at least as well as its predecessor AATSR. We will also show results of the SLSTR A and B units during the Sentinel-3 tandem phase in 2018 by using triple collocations on the ships4sst FRM data and the SLSTR units on Sentinel 3 A and B.



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## 1 Introduction

Sea Surface Temperature (SST) measurement is one of the most easily obtainable climate variables. However, it is challenging to meet the required absolute accuracy and long term stability whether the data are derived by, *in situ*, or satellite measurements. In order to be able to make such an assessment, the uncertainty of each measurement has to be known, but also all the measurements have to be traceable to the same standard.

## 2 Fiducial reference measurement data

Fiducial Reference Measurement (FRM) data for SST is mainly acquired with Infrared Shipborne Radiometers (ISRs), such as Infrared Sea surface temperature Autonomous Radiometer (ISAR) [1,2], Scanning Infrared Sea Surface Temperature Radiometer (SISTeR) and Marine Atmospheric Emitted Radiance Interferometer (M-AERI). The ships4sst project provides a platform to coordinate the collection and storage of FRM data sets in a standardised netcdf format. Fig. 1 shows a map of the ships4sst archive data.

In order to make ISR data a FRM, the instruments are calibrated before and after each deployment with the NIST and NPL traceable infrared (IR) black body source (e.g. CASOTS II [3]). Furthermore each measurement has its individual uncertainty assigned. All ISR in the ships4sst archive produce the uncertainty based on a uncertainty model (e.g. [1]) which is derived from first principles by analysing each instrument component, and assigning an uncertainty to each component. These uncertainties are then fed through the ISR SST processor to estimate an uncertainty for each Sea Surface Temperature at the Skin interface ( $SST_{skin}$ ) measurement.

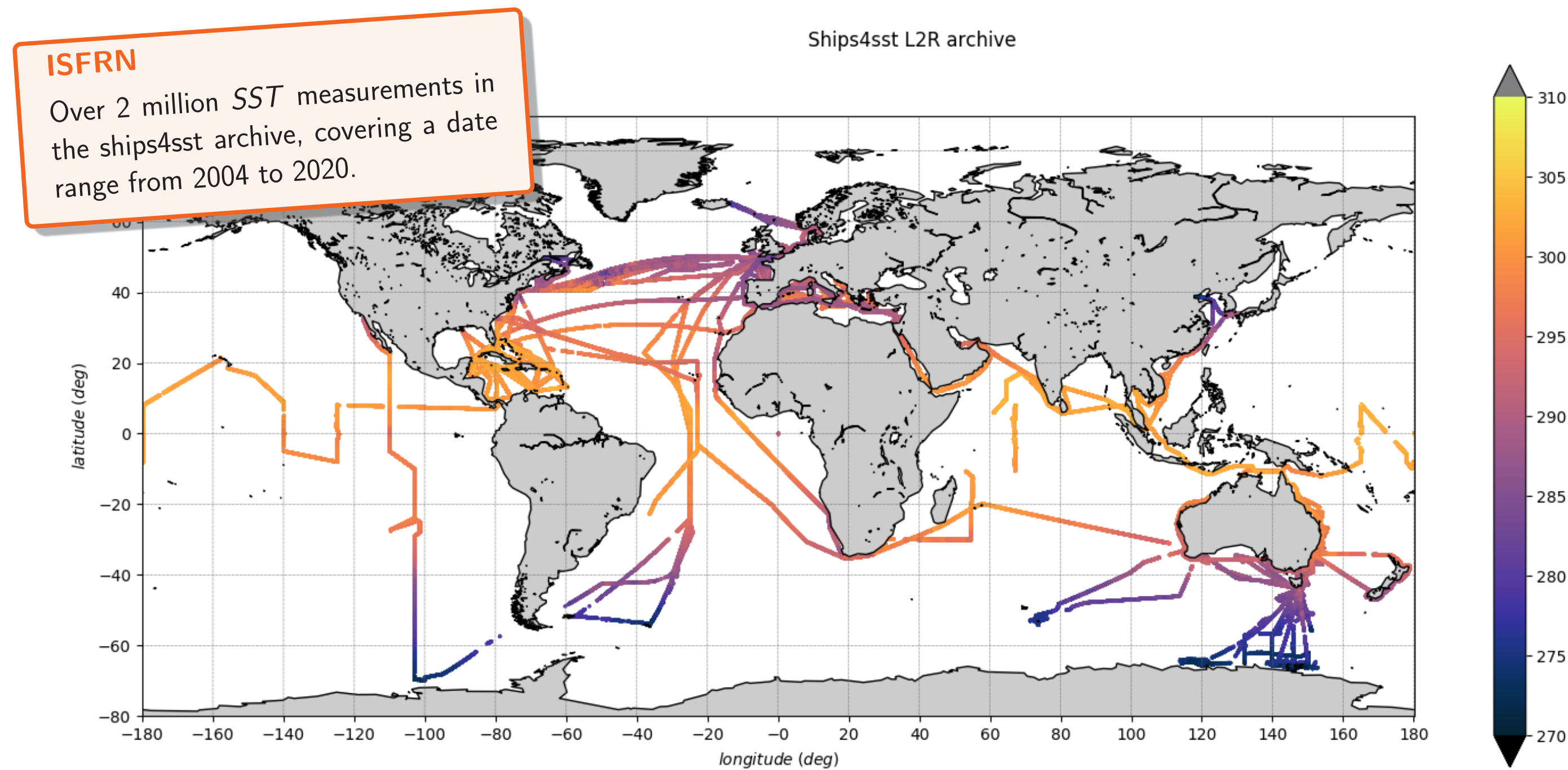


Fig. 1: Map of the FRM data in the ships4sst archive, as of Feb 2020.

## 3 FRM4STS

Because FRM play an important part of SST validation, it is important that ISR, such as ISAR, SISTeR and MAERI, comply with FRM protocols and standards a number of inter-comparisons were carried out in 2016 and 2017 organised by European Space Agency (ESA) and National Physical Laboratory, Teddington, UK (NPL). The results showed good agreement between the instruments in the laboratory tests and the field experiments (Greenland - ICE, Wraysbury - SST, Namibia - LST) and can be seen at the FRM4STS webpage ([www.frm4sts.org](http://www.frm4sts.org)).



Fig. 2: FRM4STS comparison at Wraysbury

## References

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- [3] C. J. Donlon, W. Wimmer, I. Robinson, G. Fisher, M. Ferlet, T. Nightingale, and B. Bras. *A Second-Generation Blackbody System for the Calibration and Verification of Sea-Going Infrared Radiometers*. In: J. Atmos. Oceanic Technol. (2014).
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- [5] C. J. Donlon, M. Martin, J. Stark, J. Roberts-Jones, E. Fiedler, and W. Wimmer. *The Operational Sea Surface Temperature and Sea Ice Analysis (OSTIA) system*. In: Remote Sensing of Environment 116 (2012).

## 4 Satellite SST validation

Satellite validation is carried out over a number of temporal and spatial *matchup* windows ranging from 6.5 h and 25 km to 0.5h and 1km. Here we show the results of a *matchup* window of 2h and 1km. The Sea and Land Surface Temperature Radiometer (SLSTR) validation was performed with Felyx MDB v6.0 revision 1 (August 2016 - April 2018) for Group for High Resolution Sea Surface Temperature (GHRSSST) quality level 5 and water surface temperature (WST) data.

Global SLSTR FRM validation

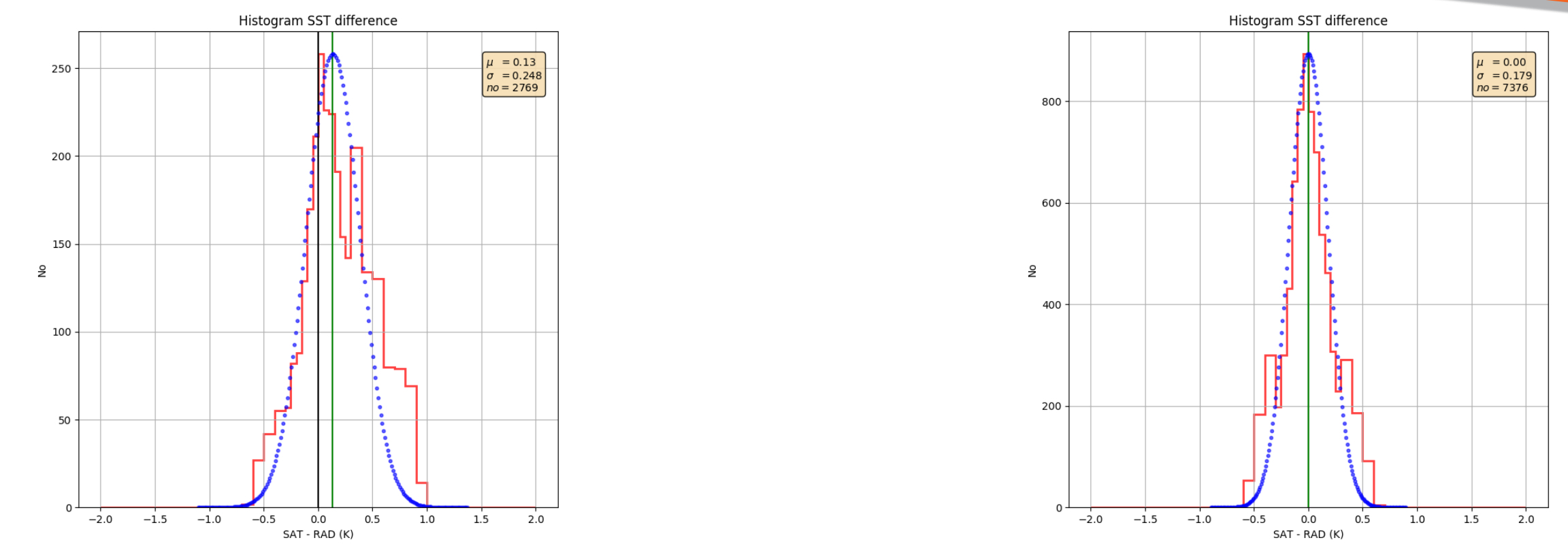


Fig. 3: Histogram for global day time data. Fig. 4: Histogram for global night time data.

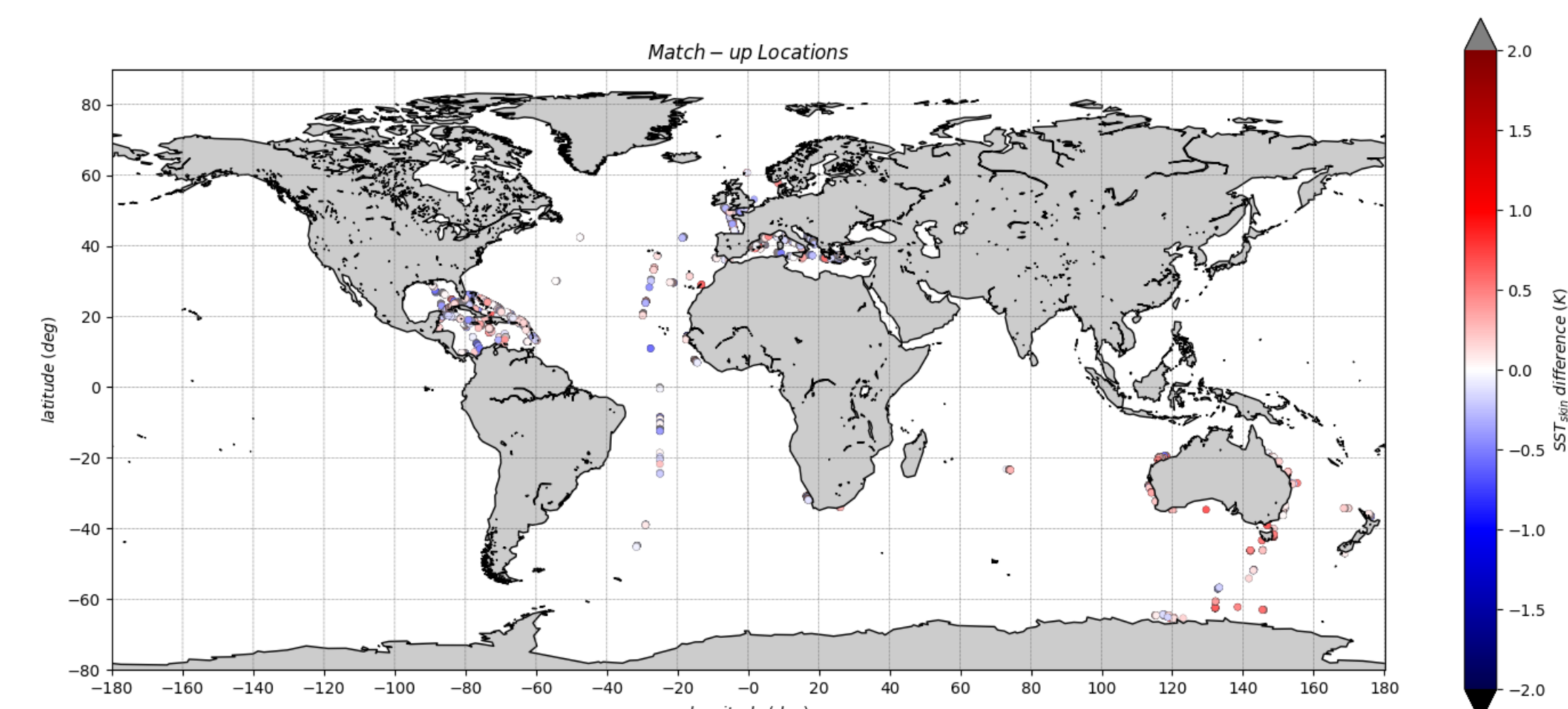


Fig. 5: Map of the match-up locations.

### Regional SLSTR FRM validation example

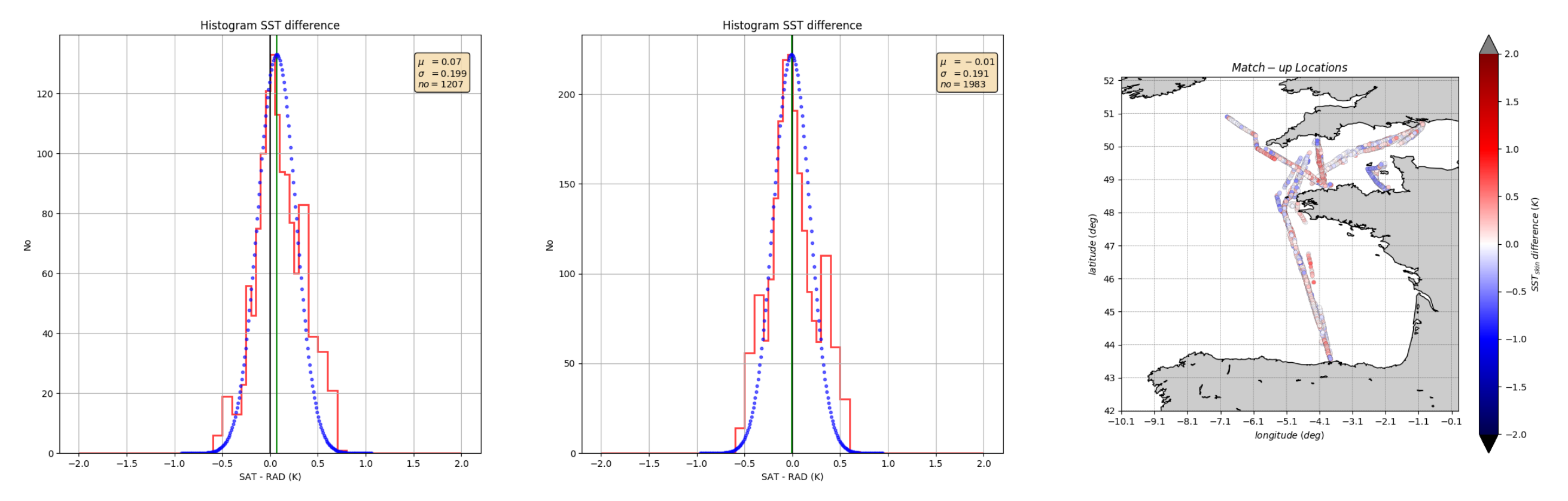


Fig. 6: Histogram for regional day time data.

Fig. 7: Histogram for regional night time data.

Fig. 8: Map of the match-up locations.

## 5 Conclusion

- SLSTR validation results for the August 2016 to April 2018 data show good agreement globally, a mean difference of 0.13 and an robust standard deviation (RSD) of 0.25 K for 2769 day time WST matches and a mean difference of 0.0 and an RSD of 0.18 K for night time WST 7376 matches.
- SLSTR validation results for the English Channel and Bay of Biscay region show a mean difference of 0.07 and an RSD of 0.20 K for day time WST 1207 matches and a mean difference of -0.01 and an RSD of 0.19 K for night time WST 1983 matches.
- The accuracy and stability assessment of SLSTR requires a traceable reference measurement, which is at least as stable and accurate as SLSTR, such as ISR.
- Updated Felyx *matchup* data base (MDB) v6r1 shows cloud contamination issues have been fixed together with improved number of *matchups* compared to previous versions have been improved.
- The ISR performance is regularly tested against a NIST and NPL through projects like FRM4STS.
- ISR SST measurement uncertainties are essential to classify *matchup* pairs, and identify uncertainty sources, so they are not attributed to the satellite SST uncertainty.

## Contributors to ships4sst:

- University of Southampton, UK
- Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, UK
- Danish Meteorological Institute, Denmark
- University of Miami, USA
- CSIRO, Australia

**International Ship-borne Fiducial Radiometer Network (ISFRN)**  
 Group for ship-borne IR measurements:  
 • Common data format (netcdf) and protocols  
 • **data archive** at IFREMER with automatic ingestion into the ESA Felyx MDB.  
 • web access via [www.ships4sst.org](http://www.ships4sst.org).  
 • **New members and contributors are always welcome.**