

Interactive comment on “An overview of the SCOUT-AMMA stratospheric aircraft, balloons and sondes campaign in West Africa, August 2006: rationale, roadmap and highlights” by F. Cairo et al.

D. Brunner (Editor)

dominik.brunner@empa.ch

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The discussion here brings up an important dilemma that is not easy to resolve. As the authors correctly point out, ACP accepts introduction and overview papers that bracket the individual special issue papers and synthesize or summarize the key findings or provide information on background and motivation. This is where the authors try to position their manuscript.

Now the dilemma is that for special issues in ACP the individual papers do not need

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to be submitted and re-viewed at the same time, which allows for a lot more flexibility and reduces delays in submission of important results, but on the other hand makes it very difficult to compose a paper that tries to provide at the same time an introduction and an overview. Individual papers may need to refer the introduction part to avoid repeating the same information in each individual study, while the overview part needs to refer to the individual papers. Thus, it becomes clear that the individual papers need to be available at approximately the same time. I felt the same dilemma when writing the overview paper for the SCOUT-O3 Darwin campaign that should provide at the same time useful information on the campaign but also be attractive for the scientifically interested reader, which is difficult when the individual studies potentially to be referenced are submitted separately.

I agree with the reviewers that only results should be summarized that are published and thus available to the reviewers to evaluate, but I would think it should be acceptable to refer at this stage to publications in the open ACP discussion, which, however, by the final date of acceptance of the overview manuscript need to be accepted as well. Work that is only in preparation can not be referred to.

A potential solution to the dilemma might indeed be to split the publication in two parts as suggested by re-viewer 2 (and supported by reviewer 1), an introduction part and an overview part. The introduction paper, which may include information on the general scope and design of the campaign, instrument payloads etc can easily be written before the individual papers. Complementing this with an analysis of the general meteorological context would probably add sufficient “meat” to such a paper.

Once a majority of papers of the special issue is published or submitted, an overview paper can be submitted that summarizes the results and puts them into context. Information on individual flight missions as presented here would then probably fit well in such an overview.