# Webinar Series: Machine Learning for operational forecasters

# Webinar 1: Discover Machine Learning Models for Operational Forecasters

**11 November 2025** 

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### Welcome!

#### Webinar series aims:

- Provide operational forecasters with what you might need to know to use ECMWF machine learning model outputs effectively
  - Basics of the models (Webinar 1)
  - Accessing forecast products (Webinar 1)
  - Known issues (Webinar 2)
  - Verification (Webinar 2)
  - Case Studies (Webinar 3)
- Encourage use, and feedback, of ECMWF machine learning models

Please type questions in the chat
ECMWF colleagues are online
to answer, we will also answer
some at the end of the webinar

Your comments on your use of ML models are very welcome – we would like to better understand how you use them!



# Webinar 1 - Discover Machine Learning Models for Operational Forecasters

- Introduction (Becky)
  - What ECMWF machine learning models are available
  - Basic information on models and accessing them
- The machine learning models (Gabriel)
  - Basics of how a machine model works
  - Differences between AIFS Single and AIFS ENS
  - Future Plans
- Demonstration of accessing machine model forecasts (Milana)
  - How to access via ecCharts and OpenCharts
  - Where to find more informaiton

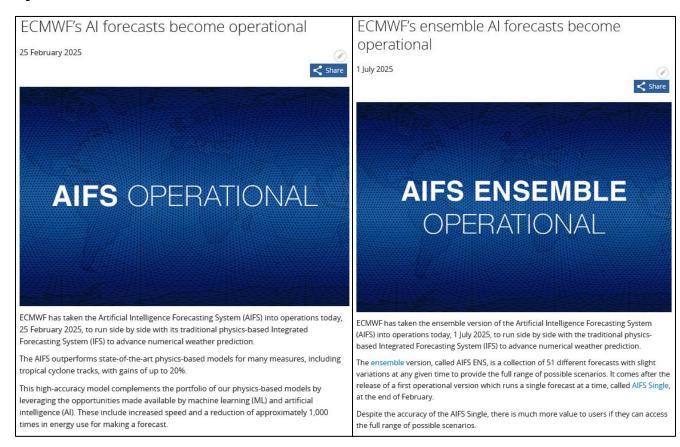
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# **ECMWF Machine Learning models**

- AIFS = Artificial Intelligence Forecasting System, ECMWF's ML models
- AIFS Single = Deterministic model
  - v1 released 25 February 2025
- AIFS ENS = Ensemble model
  - v1 released 1 July 2025



IFS = Integrated Forecasting System, which is ECMWF's NWP model



## ECMWF's current operational forecasting system

#### ENS Control (and HRES) including ocean waves (WAM) – computationally identical in 49r1:

9 km, 137 levels, to 15 days at 00UTC and 12UTC and to 6 days at 06UTC and 18 UTC

#### **Ensemble forecast (ENS) including ocean waves (WAM):**

- 50 members, 9 km, 137 levels, to 15 days at 00UTC and 12UTC and atmosphere model only to 3 days at 06UTC and 18 UTC
- ENS Sub-Seasonal (Extended-range): once a day (00UTC), 100 members, 36 km, 137 levels, to 46 days ahead

#### Long range:

SEAS5: Once a month, 51-members, 36 km, 91 levels, to 7 months ahead, 4 x a year to 13 months

#### AIFS Single v1.1 (implemented 27 August 2025):

− ~32 km, 13 levels, 4 x a day to 15 days ahead, limited parameters, 6-hourly timesteps

#### AIFS ENS v1 (released 1 July 2025):

50 members, ~32 km, 13 levels, 4 x a day to 15 days ahead, limited parameters, 6-hourly timesteps



AIFS Single and AIFS ENS key configuration values

		AIFS Single v1	AIFS ENS v1	
Basetime&frequency		00/06/12/18 daily	00/06/12/18 daily	
Forecast range		15-days	15-days	
Steps		6 hourly	6 hourly	
	Class	ai	ai	
MARS	Stream	oper	enfo	
keywords	Model	aifs-single	aifs-ens	
	Туре	fc	cf/pf	
Gaussian grid		n320	n320	
Horizontal grid resolution		~32 km	~32 km	
Dissemination (LL)		0.25°	0.25°	
Model Level vertical resolution		13	13	
Ensemble members		1	50+1	

Step 0 is from the IFS analysis and has 0 values for accumulated fields.

This is the same for IFS, AIFS Single and AIFS ENS.

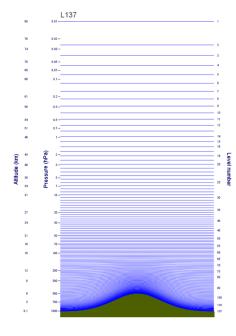


### AIFS Model Level vertical resolution

AIFS models have 13 levels:

-50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 400, 500, 600,700, 850, 950, 1000 hPa

• IFS has 137 levels





# AIFS Single Model forecast parameters

Field	Level type	Input/Output
Geopotential, horizontal and vertical wind components, specific humidity, temperature	Pressure level: 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 850, 925, 1000	Both ("Prognostic")
Surface pressure, mean sea-level pressure, sea-surface temperature, skin temperature, 2 m temperature, 2 m dewpoint temperature, 10 m horizontal wind components (u,v), total column water	Surface	Both ("Prognostic")
Volumetric soil moisture (vsw) and Soil temperature (sot), both at solid depth 1 and 2	Soil layer level: 1, 2	Both ("Prognostic")
100m horizontal wind components (u,v), Solar radiation (ssrd-Surface short-wave (solar) radiation downwards and strd Surface long-wave (thermal) radiation downwards), Cloud variables (tcc, hcc, mcc, lcc), Runoff (rowe) and snow fall (sf)	Surface	Output ("Diagnostic")
Standard deviation of sub-gridscale orography (sdor), Slope of sub-gridscale orography (slor)	Surface	Input ("Forcings")
Total precipitation, convective precipitation	Surface	Output ("Diagnostic")
Land-sea mask, orography, insolation, latitude/longitude, time of day/day of year	Surface	Input ("Forcings")

#### Implementation page:

https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FCST/Implementation+of+AIFS+Single+v1



### AIFS ENS v1 raw data

#### Control and perturbed forecast parameters

Field	Level type	Input/Output
Geopotential (z) Specific humidity (q) Temperature (t) U component of wind (u) V component of wind (v) Vertical velocity (w)	Pressure level: 50, 100, 150, 200, 250, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 850, 925, 1000	Both ("Prognostic")
2 metre dewpoint temperature (2d) 2 metre temperature (2t) 10 metre U wind component (10u) 10 metre V wind component (10v) Mean sea level pressure (msl) Skin temperature (skt) Surface pressure (sp) Total column water (tcw)	Surface	Both ("Prognostic")
Soil temperature (sot), at solid depth 1 and 2	Soil layer level	Both ("Prognostic")
Total precipitation (tp)  100 metre U wind component (100u)  100 metre V wind component (100v)  Surface short-wave (solar) radiation downwards (ssrd)  Surface long-wave (thermal) radiation downwards (strd)  Cloud variables (tcc, hcc, mcc, lcc),  Runoff water equivalent (surface plus subsurface) (rowe)  Snowfall water equivalent (sf)	Surface	Output ("Diagnostic")
Standard deviation of sub-gridscale orography (sdor) Slope of sub-gridscale orography (slor) Land-sea mask (lsm), orography, insolation, latitude/longitude, time of day/day of year	Surface	Input ("Forcings")

#### Implementation page:

https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FCST/Implementation+of+AIFS+ENS+v1



### AIFS ENS v1 raw data

#### Post-processed parameters

Field	Statistic	Level type
2 metre temperature 10 metre wind speed 100 metre wind speed Mean sea level pressure	Ensemble mean and standard deviation	Surface
Geopotential, temperature, wind speed	Ensemble mean and standard deviation	Pressure level: 250, 300, 500, 850, 1000
2 metre temperature less than 273.15 K Total precipitation of less than 0.1 mm 10 metre Wind speed of at least 10 m/s and 15 m/s Total precipitation of at least 1 mm/5 mm/10 mm/20 mm/25 mm/50 mm/100 mm Total precipitation rate less than 1 mm/day Total precipitation rate of at least 3 mm/day Total precipitation rate of at least 5 mm/day	Probabilities	Surface

#### Implementation page:

https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FCST/Implementation+of+AIFS+ENS+v1



# Updates to the models

- All ECMWF models (AIFS and IFS) adhere to operational upgrade procedures
  - Documentation including implementation pages and webinars
  - Test data available prior to making models operational
  - Communications
- Under current plans
  - AIFS Single and AIFS ENS will become v2 at the same time as IFS 50r1 Early 2026
  - Smaller updates e.g. vX.1, vX.2... can happen at other times



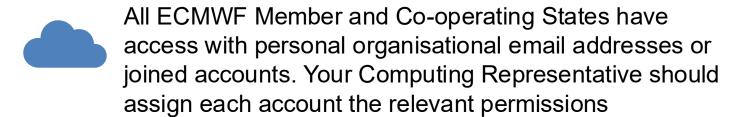
# Accessing AIFS model forecast data

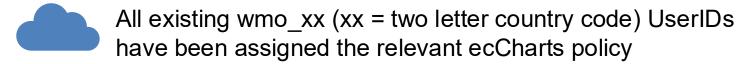
- OpenCharts: <a href="https://charts.ecmwf.int/">https://charts.ecmwf.int/</a>
  - Free to access for all, no login required
- ecCharts: <a href="https://eccharts.ecmwf.int/">https://eccharts.ecmwf.int/</a>
  - Login required
  - Each WMO country has access with their wmo xx UserID
- WMS service: <a href="https://eccharts.ecmwf.int/wms/">https://eccharts.ecmwf.int/wms/</a>
  - The same licence as ecCharts
- Open data (raw data, not images): <a href="https://data.ecmwf.int/forecasts/">https://data.ecmwf.int/forecasts/</a>
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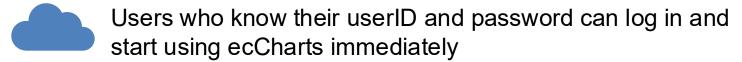
Milana will demo how to access machine learning model forecasts later in this webinar



### How to access ecCharts







If you don't know your wmo\_xx UserID, you can contact ECMWF via our Support Portal for the details

To update your WMO login details, we require confirmation of the change from the Permanent Representative of your country

https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/DAC/Request+chang e+of+WMO+account





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Neural networks as universal approximation systems

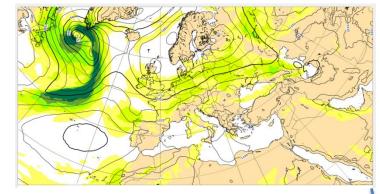
Given enough compute and data any relationship can be learnt....

Is this true for weather forecasting?



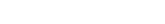
### Data?

Analysis



Fusion of short-range forecast with latest observations

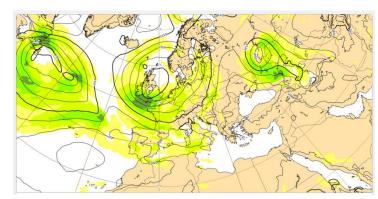
**NWP Model** 

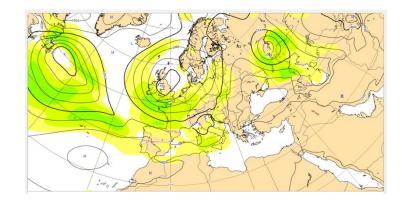


Data Driven Model

Learned from 40 years of **ERA5** analyses

Forecast

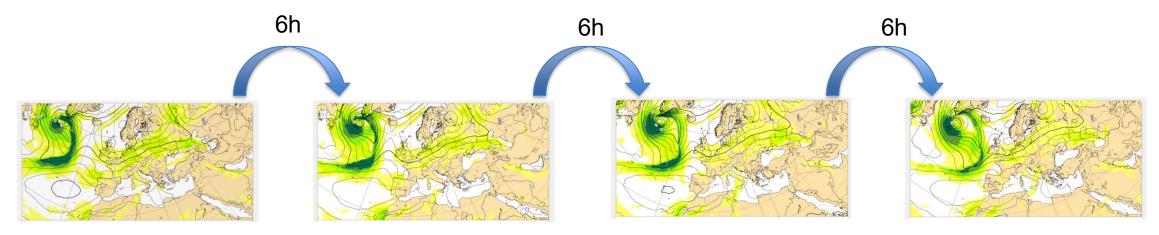






### Weather Forecasts – Data Driven?

Here, the models learn from ca. 40 years of ECMWF's ERA5 re-analysis data, stepping e.g. 6h from analysis to analysis



The forecast is then **autoregressively** stepping 6h into the future  $x_n = f(x_{n-1})$  ...



### Variables used in AIFS v1

A mix of **prognostic**, **diagnostic**, and **forcing** variables:

- Upper Atmosphere (13 pressure levels)
  - Geopotential height
  - •**€** Wind components (u, v)
  - ♦ Specific humidity
  - I Temperature
- Surface Variables
  - 2 m temperature
  - •€ 10 m wind speed
  - Precipitation

•...



- **(A)** Orography
- insolation
- Latitude / Longitude
- Time of day / Time of year

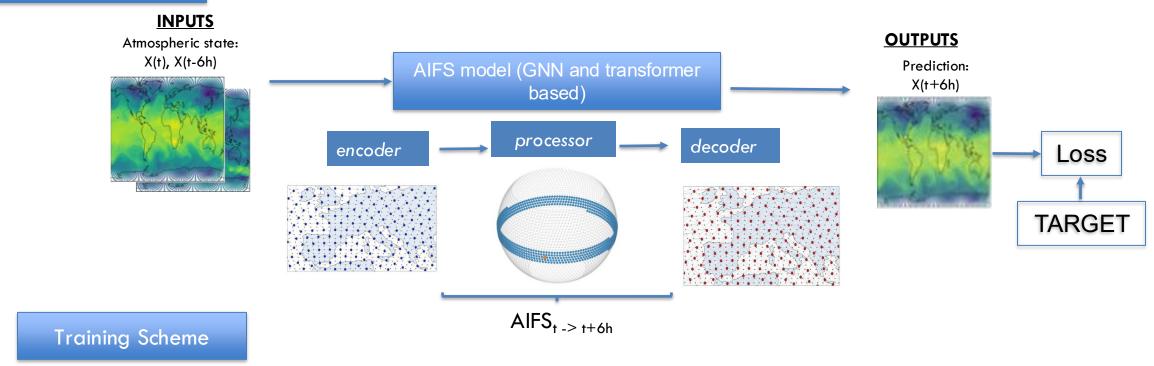


Variable name	Short	Level type	Variable	Normalization	Scaling
	name	Pressure	type:		
		level (50-	Prognostic,		
		1000 hPa)	Diagnostic,		
		or Surface	Forcing		
Geopotential	z	Pl	P	Z-score	12
Horizontal wind components	u, v	Pl	P	Z-score	0.8,  0.5
Specific humidity	q	Pl	P	Std	0.6
Temperature	t	Pl	P	Z-score	6
Surface pressure	sp	S	P	Z-score	10
Mean sea-level pressure	msl	S	P	Z-score	1
Skin temperature	skt	S	P	Z-score	1
2 m temperature	2t	S	P	Z-score	1
2 m dewpoint temperature	2d	S	P	Z-score	0.5
10 m horizontal wind components	10u, 10v	S	P	Z-score	0.5, 0.5
Total column water	tcw	S	P	Std	1
Volumetric soil water level 1	swvl1,	S	P	None	1, 2
and 2*	swvl2				,
Soil temperature level 1 and	stl1, stl2	S	P	None	1, 10
2*	,				,
Total precipitation	tp	S	D	Std	0.025
Convective precipitation	ср	S	D	Std (tp)	0.0025
Snowfall*	sf	S	D	Std (tp)	0.025
Total cloud cover*	tcc	S	D	None	0.1
High cloud cover*	hcc	S	D	None	0.1
Medium cloud cover*	mcc	S	D	None	0.1
Low cloud cover*	lcc	S	D	None	0.1
Runoff*	ro	S	D	Std	0.005
Surface solar radiation downwards*	ssrd	S	D	Std	0.05
Surface thermal radiation downwards*	strd	S	D	Z-score	0.1
100 m horizontal wind components*	100u, 100v	S	D	Z-score	0.1, 0.1
Land-sea mask	lsm	S	F	None	
Orography	z	S	F	Max	
Standard deviation of sub-	sdor	S	F	Max	
grid orography					
Slope of sub-scale orography	slor	S	F	Max	
Insolation	insolation	S	F	None	
Latitude/longitude (cos/sin)	lat/lon	S	F	None	
Time of day/day of year	local time,	S	F	None	
., .	julian day				

Table 1: Variables used in the training of AIFS, with their short names, level type, variable type, normalization method, and scaling factors. Variables marked with \* were newly introduced compared to AIFS v0.2.1.

### AIFS - Artificial Intelligence Forecasting System

### TRAINING

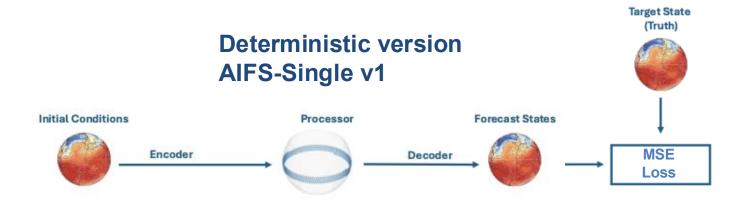


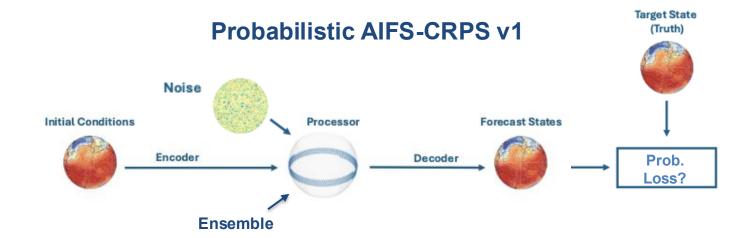
Step 1: pre-training phase, during which the model is given the task to forecast 6h ahead

Step 2: model is autoregressively trained to optimise forecasts between 6h and 72h ahead



### AIFS Probabilistic vs Deterministic

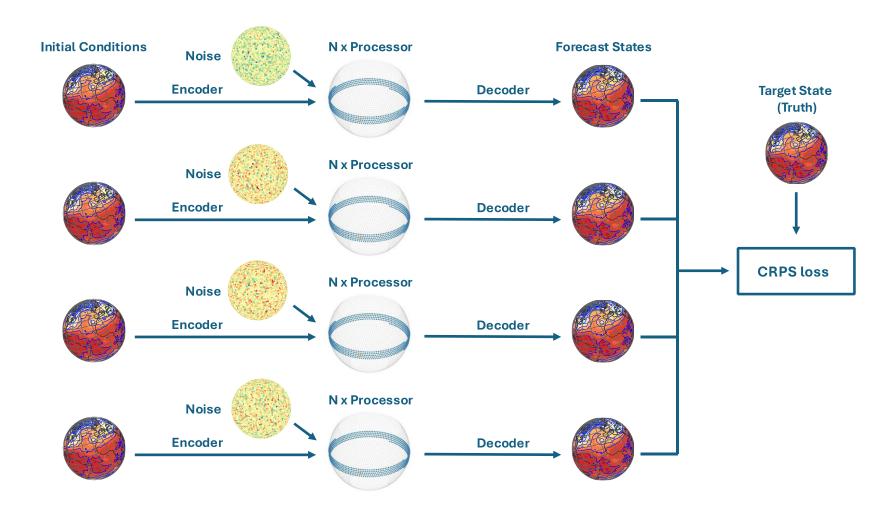






### Proper score loss – AIFS-CRPS:

In training: run (small) ensemble:



To generate a forecast (single member): run model with noise realization for each forecast step



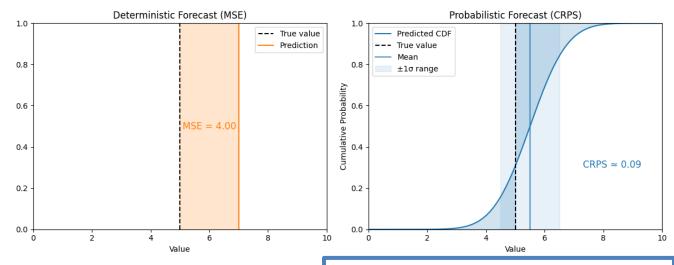
### CRPS vs MSE

- Regression losses (MSE, MAE):
  - Robust and easy to implement
  - Penalises large errors strongly
  - Will produce smooth fields.
- Probabilistic (CRPS, Energy Score):
  - Harder to implement (ensemble needed)
  - Evaluates full predictive distribution

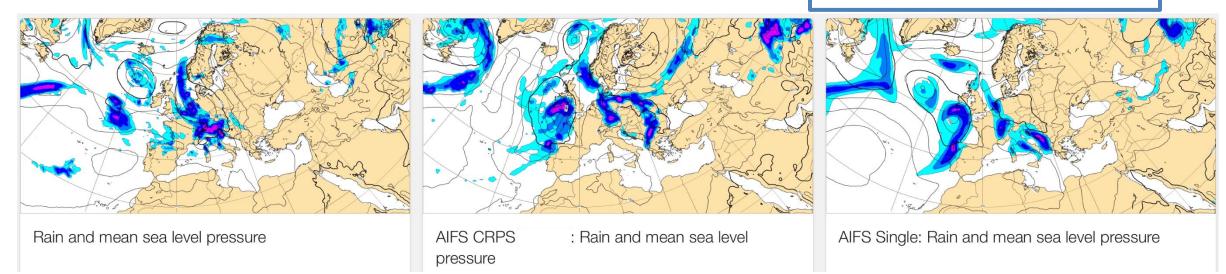


#### What should the model care about?

#### Comparing MSE and CRPS Losses



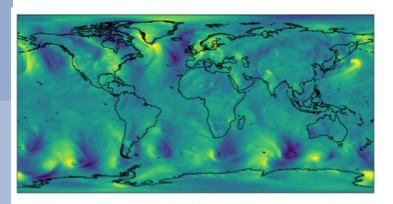
**CRPS**: CDF should match the observation step CDF function **MSE**: minimise forecast error

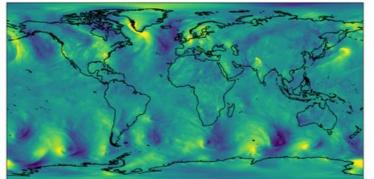


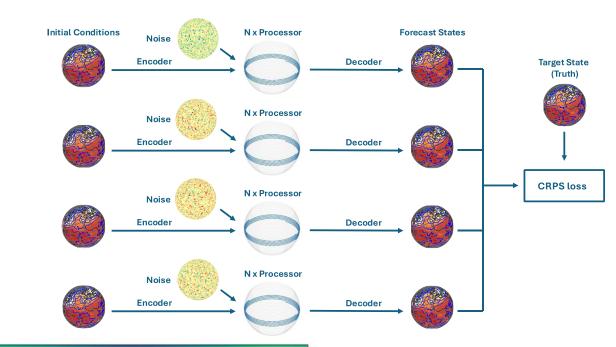
### **AIFS-ENS:**

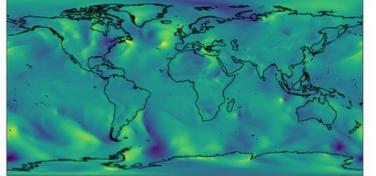
#### Probabilistic training of AIFS:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{afCRPS}_{\alpha} &:= \alpha \, \text{fCRPS} + (1 - \alpha) \text{CRPS} \\ &= \frac{1}{M} \sum_{j=1}^{M} |x_j - y| - \frac{M - 1 + \alpha}{2M^2(M - 1)} \sum_{j=1}^{M} \sum_{k=1}^{M} |x_j - x_k| \\ &= \frac{1}{M} \sum_{j=1}^{M} |x_j - y| - \frac{1 - \epsilon}{2M(M - 1)} \sum_{j=1}^{M} \sum_{k=1}^{M} |x_j - x_k| \end{aligned}$$

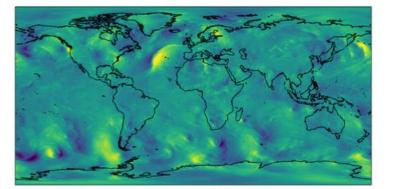








AIFS-single, day 1 and 10



AIFS-ENS, day 1 and 10

#### **AIFS-ENS Forecast configuration:**

50 perturbed member, starting from the perturbed initial conditions of the IFS-ENS

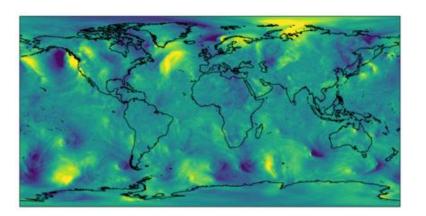
1 control member, starting from the unperturbed initial conditions of the IFS-ENS control (model uncertainty from the injected noise)

15-day forecasts, N320 (~ 0.25) resolution, 6 hourly output

#### **AIFS-Single Forecast configuration:**

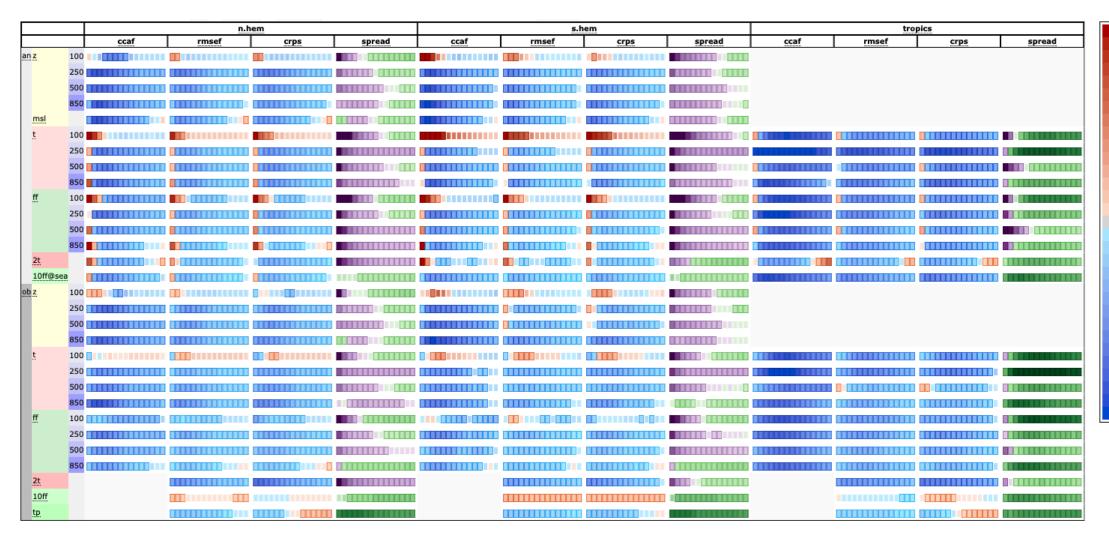
1 forecast started from the unperturbed member in initial conditions of the IFS-ENS

15-day forecasts, N320 (~ 0.25) resolution, 6 hourly output



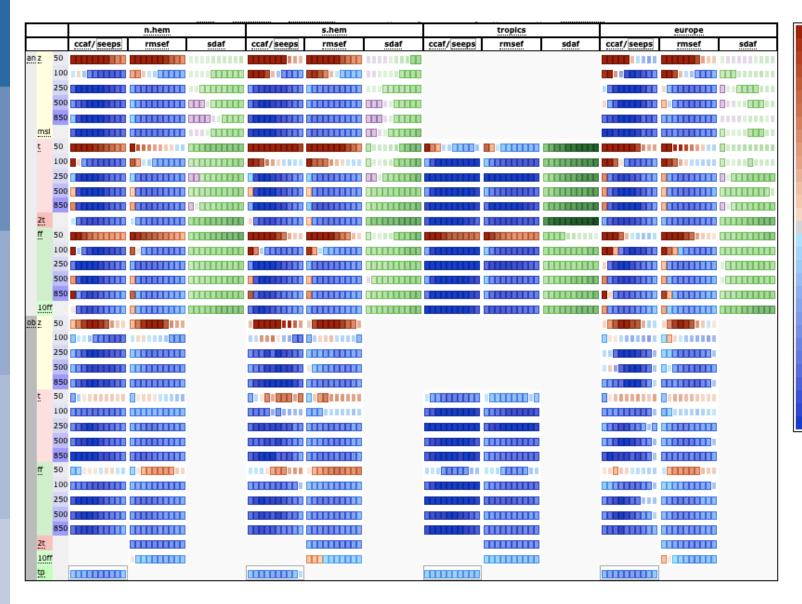
#### AIFS ENS 1 vs IFS scorecard

dates=[2024-03-01 00:00:00,2024-03-01 12:00:00,2024-03-02 00:00:00,...,2025-02-28 12:00:00,2025-03-01 00:00:00] steps=[24, 48, 72, 96, 120, 144, 168, 192, 216, 240, 264, 288, 312, 336, 360]



25.0% 23.3% 23.3% 21.7% 21.7% 20.0% 20.0% 18.3% 18.3% 16.7% 16.7% 15.0% 15.0% 13.3% 13.3% 11.7% 11.7% 10.0% 10.0% 8.3% 8.3% 6.7% 6.7% 5.0% 5.0% 3.3% 3.3% 1.7% 1.7% 0.0% 0.0% 1.7% 1.7% 3.3% 3.3% 5.0% 5.0% 6.7% 6.7% 8.3% 8.3% 10.0% 10.0% 11.7% 11.7% 13.3% 13.3% 15.0% 15.0% 16.7% 16.7% 18.3% 20.0% 20.0% 21.7% 21.7% 23.3% 23.3% 25.0%

### AIFS vs IFS 2024



- 25.0% 25.0% 23.3% 23.3% 21.7% 21.7% 20.0% 20.0% 18.3% 18.3% 16.7% 16.7% 15.0% 15.0% 13.3% 13.3% 11.7% 11.7% 10.0% 10.0% 8.3% 8.3% 6.7% 6.7% 5.0% 5.0% 3.3% 3.3% 1.7% 1.7% 0.0% 0.0% 1.7% 1.7% 3.3% 3.3% 5.0% 5.0% 6.7% 6.7% 8.3% 8.3% 10.0% 10.0% 11.7% 11.7% 13.3% 13.3% 15.0% 15.0% 16.7% 16.7% 18.3% 18.3% 20.0% 20.0% 21.7% 21.7% 23.3% 25.0% 25.0%
- Better performance overall for AIFS
- Less forecast activity (smoothing)
- Issues in the stratosphere
- Scores tend to be worse for short lead times 1D



### Where are we?

- For headline scores, data-driven models are best.
- AIFS-Single does not represent spatial scales correctly.
  - The different training strategy used in AIFS-CRPS allows to solve this issue.
- Extreme events
  - AIFS Single underpredicts extreme events but still useful. AIFS CRPS and IFS-ENS similar scores

### Future improvements

- New wave variables, higher model top and more recent data used for training for even better scores. AIFS v2 coming at the beginning of 2026 together with the release of 50r1
- Forecast artifacts significantly improved in AIFS-CRPS v2.
- Higher temporal resolution
- Higher resolution models (9km) in development.
- Ocean variables.



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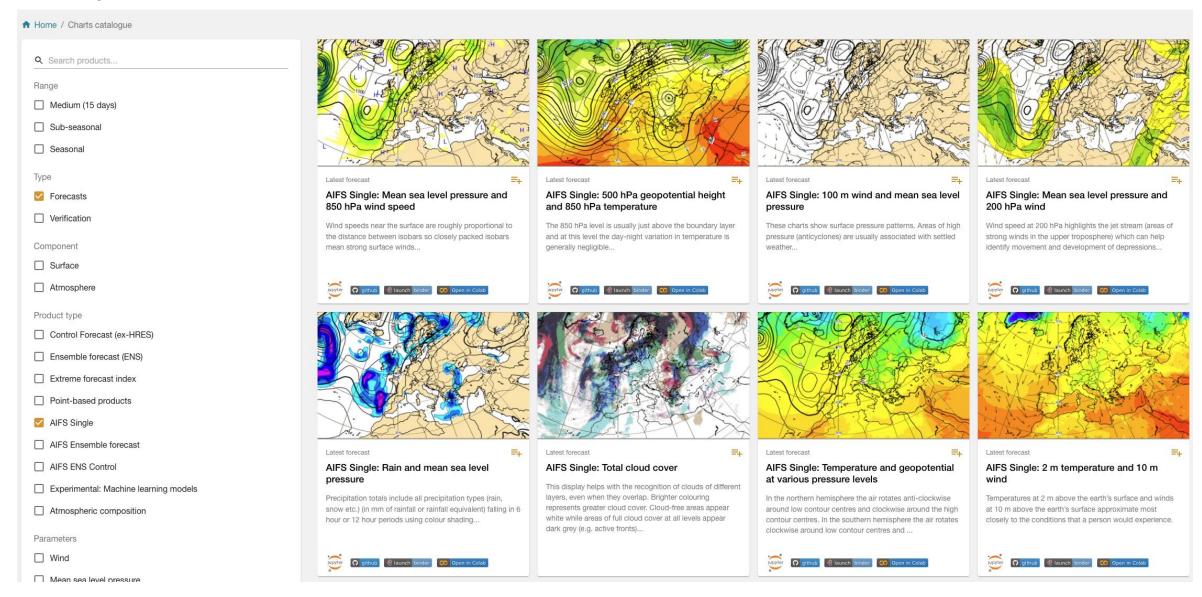
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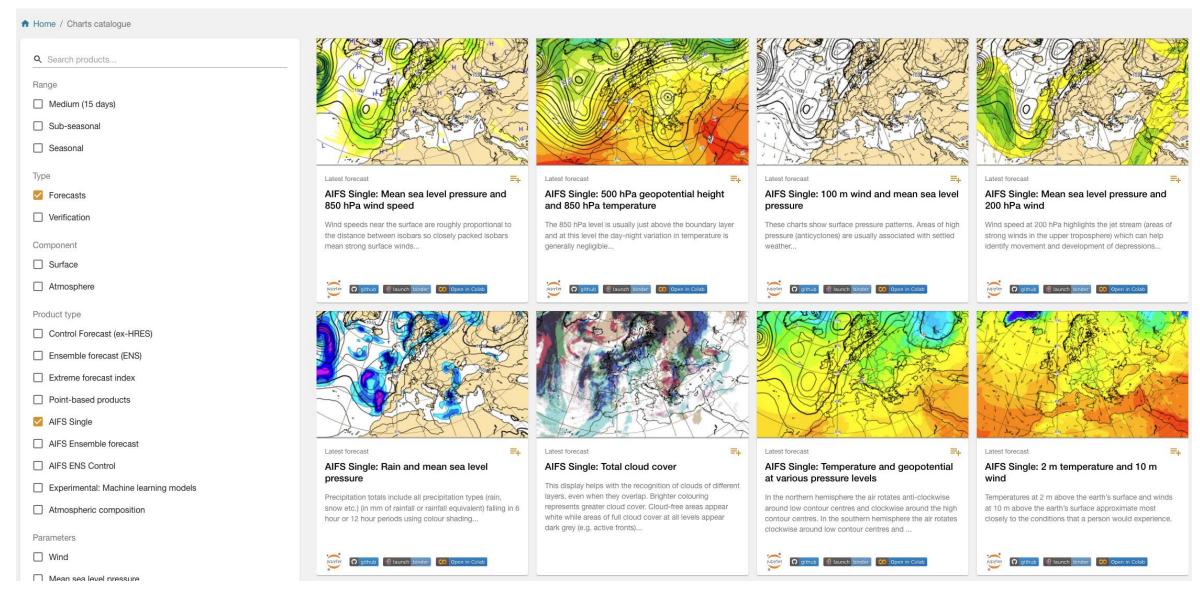
### AIFS Single – graphical products

• 13 graphical products in Open charts



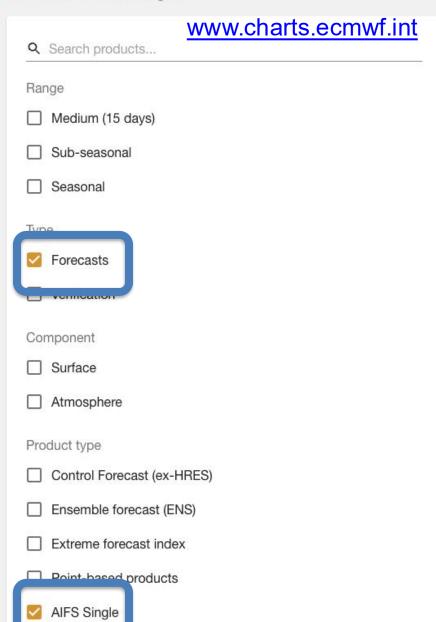
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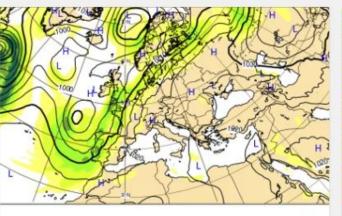
How to find them? <u>www.charts.ecmwf.int</u>

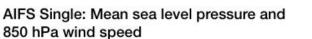


#### ★ Home / Charts catalogue

### AIFS Single – graphical products







Wind speeds near the surface are roughly proportional to the distance between isobars so closely packed isobars mean strong surface winds...

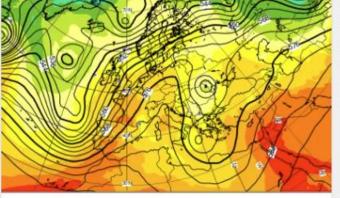


Latest forecast



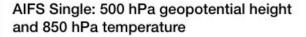






Latest forecast

=+



The 850 hPa level is usually just above the boundary layer and at this level the day-night variation in temperature is generally negligible...











=+

Latest forecast

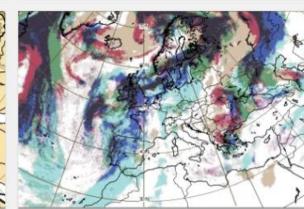
### AIFS Single pressure

These charts so pressure (anticomeather...









### AIFS Ensemble – graphical products

#### www.charts.ecmwf.int

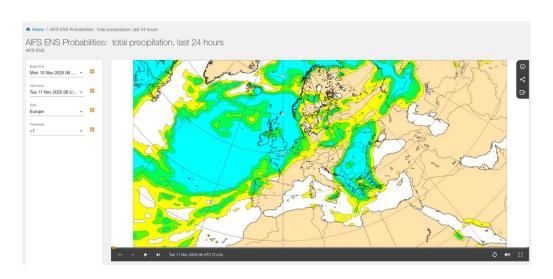
AIFS ENS Meteogram
User city:Reading 51.57°N 0.83°W (ENS land point) 48 m

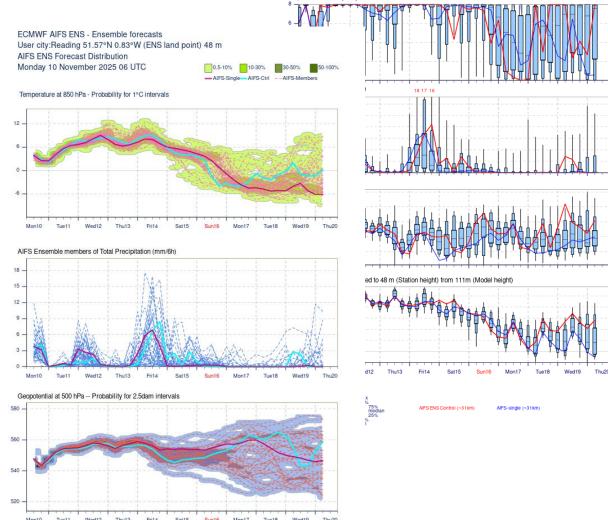


- 13 with full ensemble:
  - Meteogram and plumes diagram,
  - 7 ensemble mean and spread,

26 graphical products in Open charts:

- 4 probabilities
- 13 graphical products from AIFS ENS Control







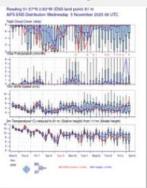
♠ Home / Charts catalogue

AIFO ENO CONTIO

### AIFS Ensemble – graphical products

#### www.charts.ecmwf.int

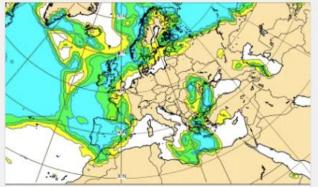
Q Search products
Range
☐ Medium (15 days)
☐ Sub-seasonal
☐ Seasonal
Туре
Forecasts
☐ Verification
Component
Surface
☐ Atmosphere
Product type
☐ Control Forecast (ex-HRES)
☐ Ensemble forecast (ENS)
Extreme forecast index
☐ Point-based products
ALCO Cinale
✓ AIFS Ensemble forecast



Latest point-based forecast

#### AIFS ENS Meteograms

AIFS ENS Meteograms show a probabilistic interpretation of the AIFS ENS forecasts for specific locations using a box and whisker plot. It shows the time evolution of the distribution of several meteorological parameters on a single diagram...



Latest forecast

=+

### AIFS ENS Probabilities: total precipitation, last 24 hours

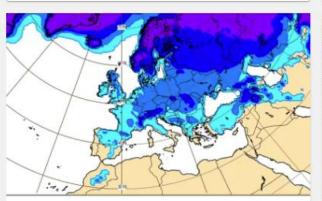
AIFS ENS: a deep learning-based system developed by ECMWF. It is initialised with ECMWF perturbed forecasts and operates at N320 (~0.25Deg) resolution



Latest forecast

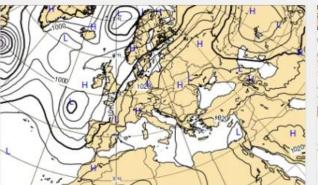
#### AIFS ENS Probabilities: 10n

AIFS ENS: a deep learning-based system. It is initialised with ECMWF and operates at N320 (~0.25Deg) res



Latest forecast =+

AIFS ENS Probabilities: 2 m temperature < 0°C (day 10-15)



Latest forecast

AIFS ENS Ensemble mean and spread for mean sea level pressure



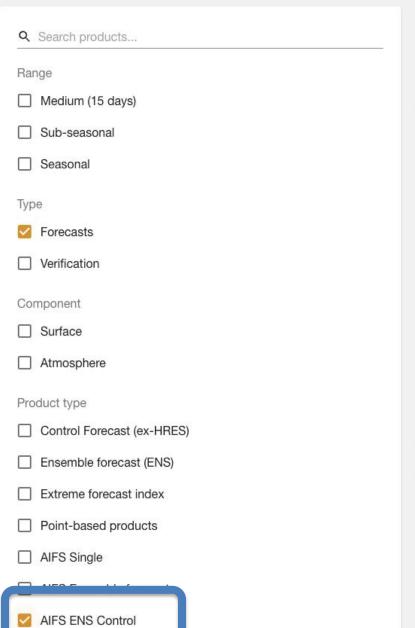
Latest forecast

AIFS ENS Ensemble mean a temperature

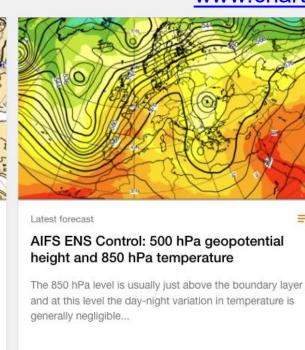
♠ Home / Charts catalogue

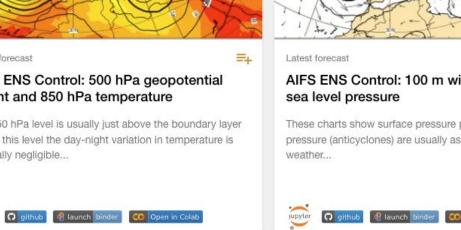
### AIFS Ensemble – graphical products

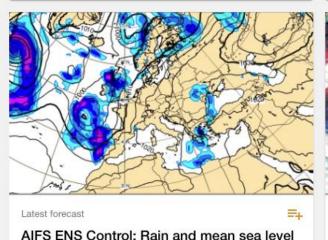
#### www.charts.ecmwf.int



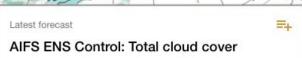


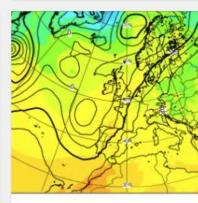






pressure



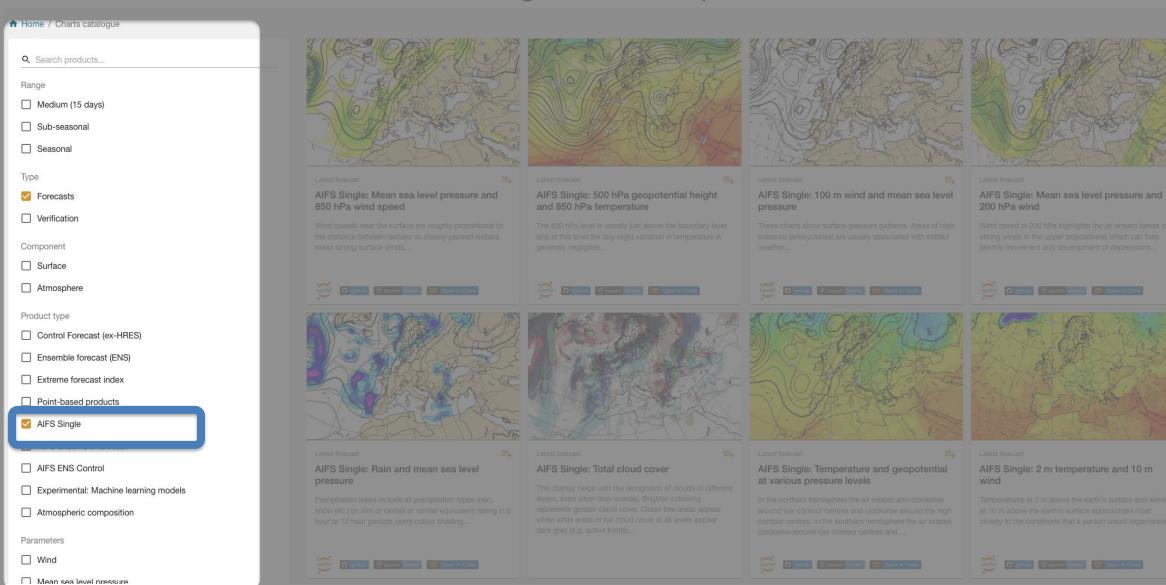


AIFS ENS Control: Temperar geopotential at various pres

Latest forecast

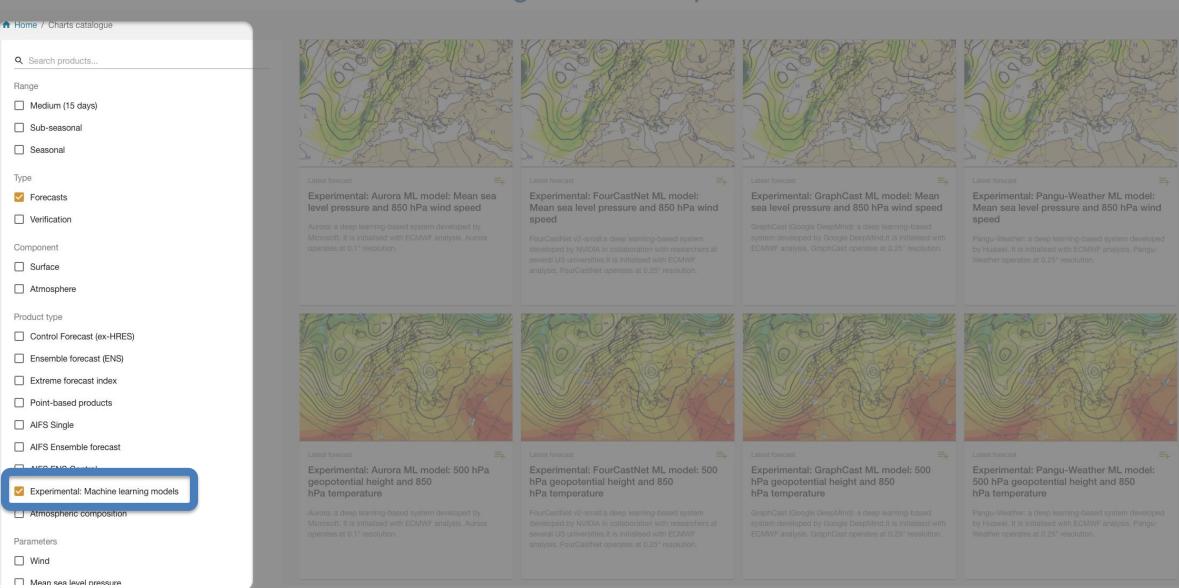
### Other Machine Learning models: experimental

#### www.charts.ecmwf.int



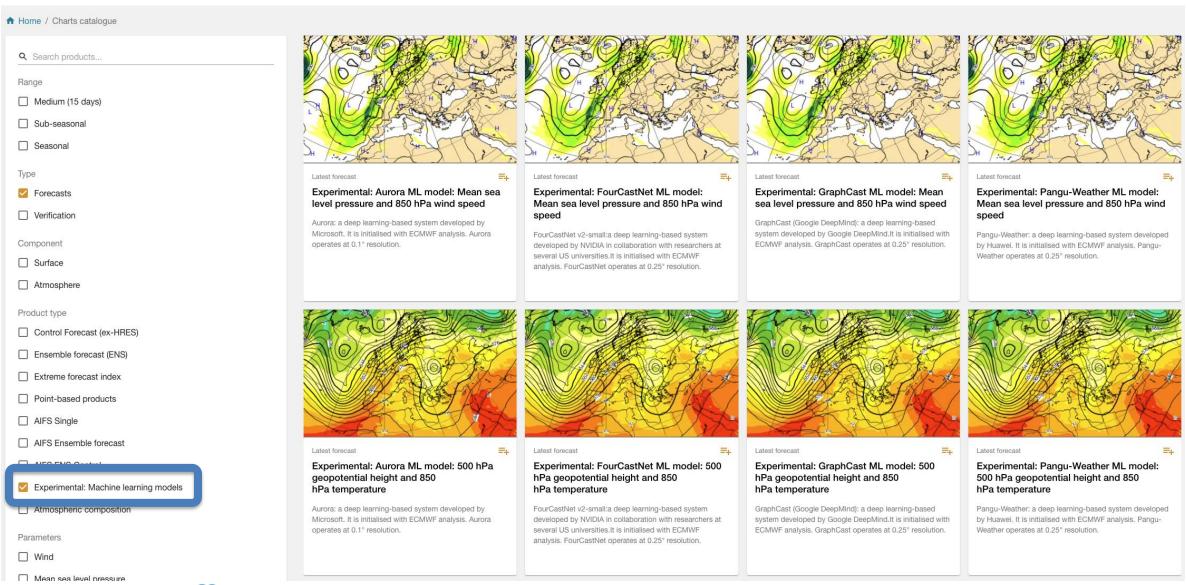
### Other Machine Learning models: experimental

#### www.charts.ecmwf.int

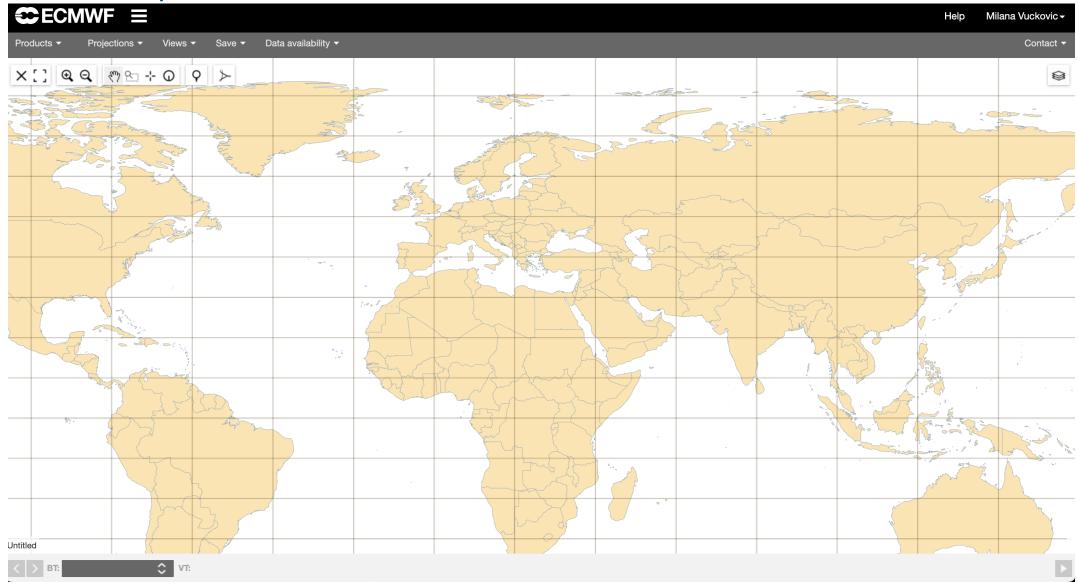


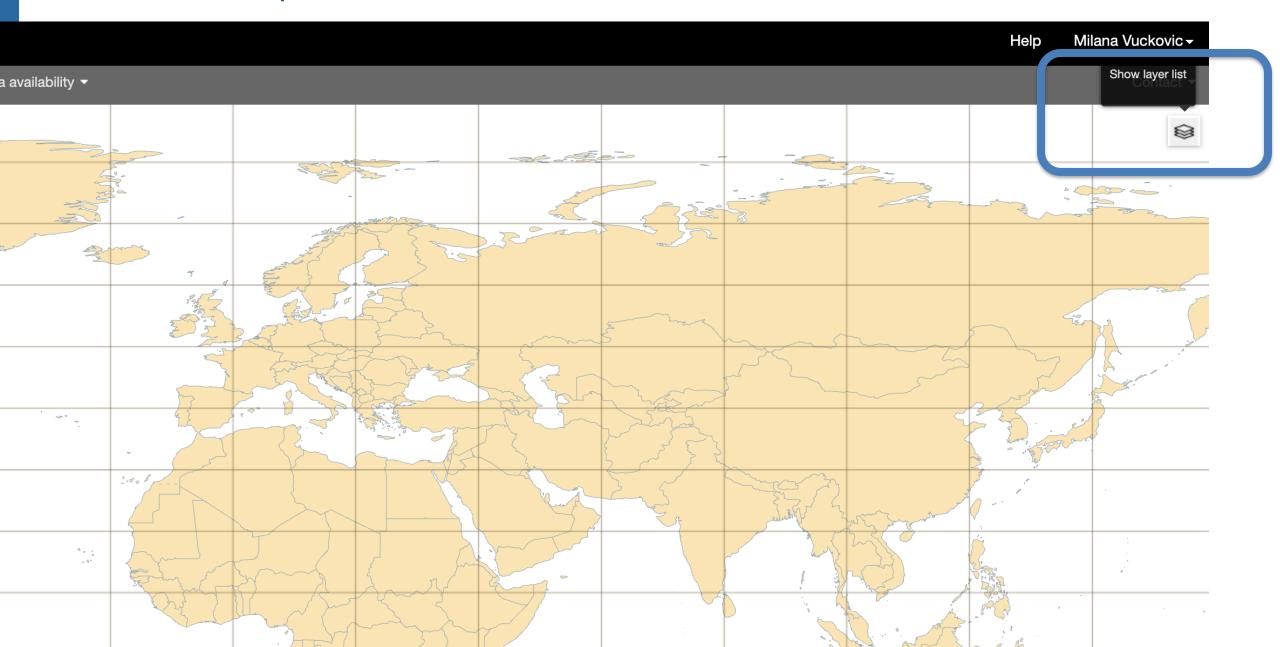
#### Other Machine Learning models: experimental

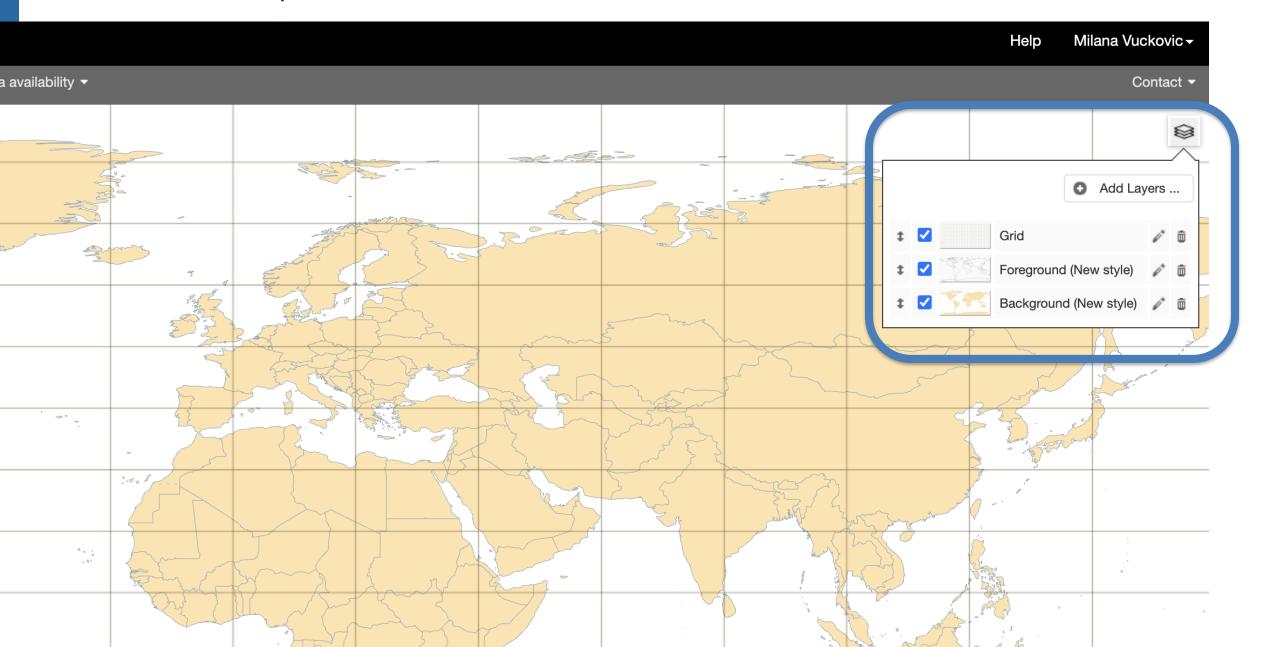
#### www.charts.ecmwf.int



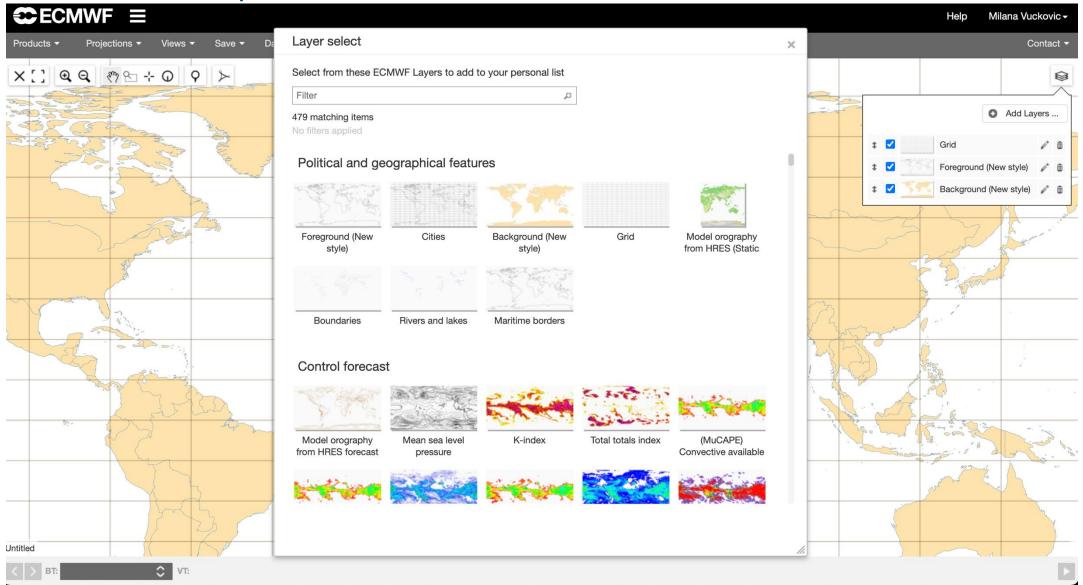
#### http://www.eccharts.ecmwf.int/

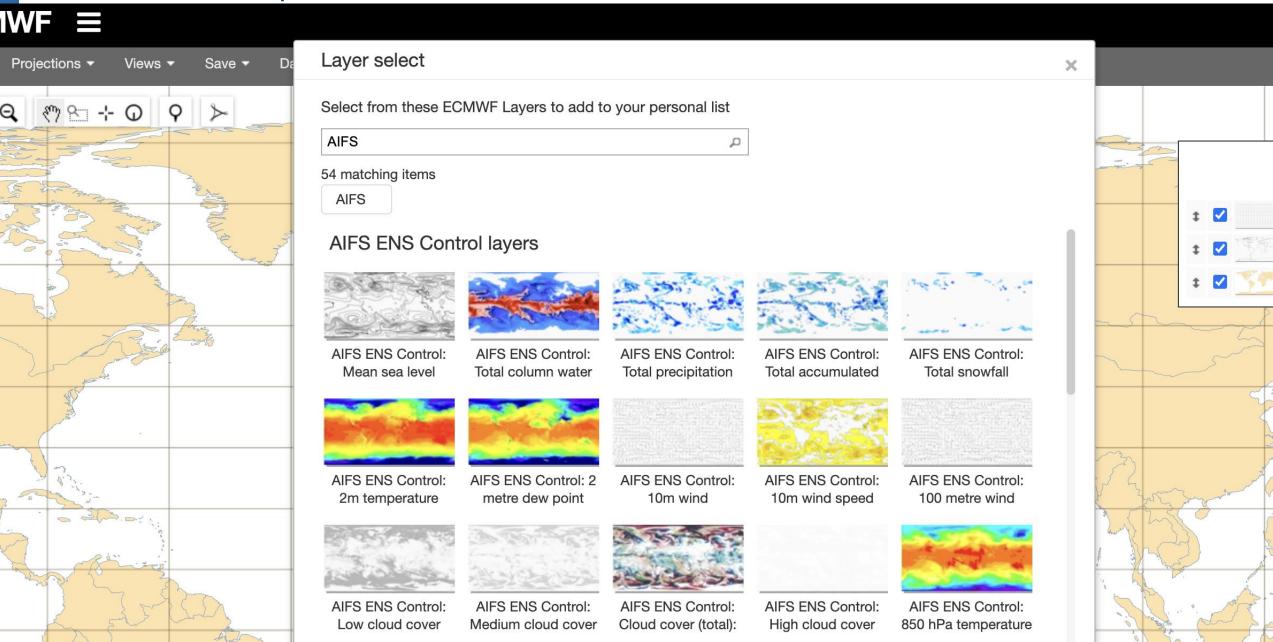


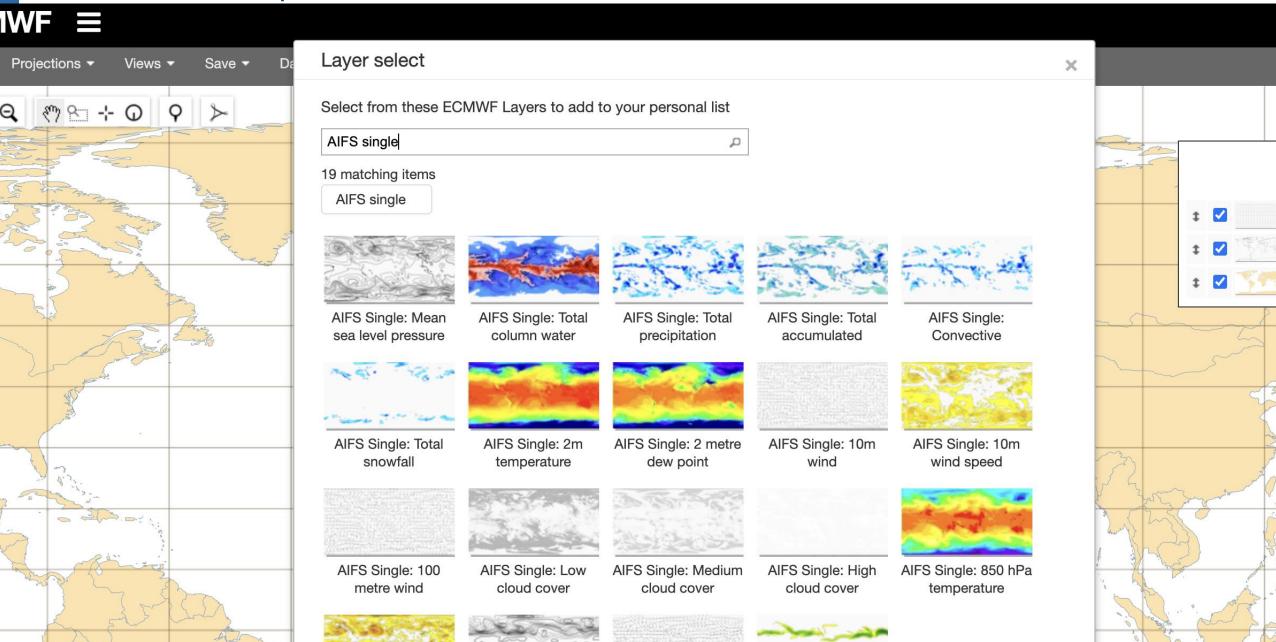


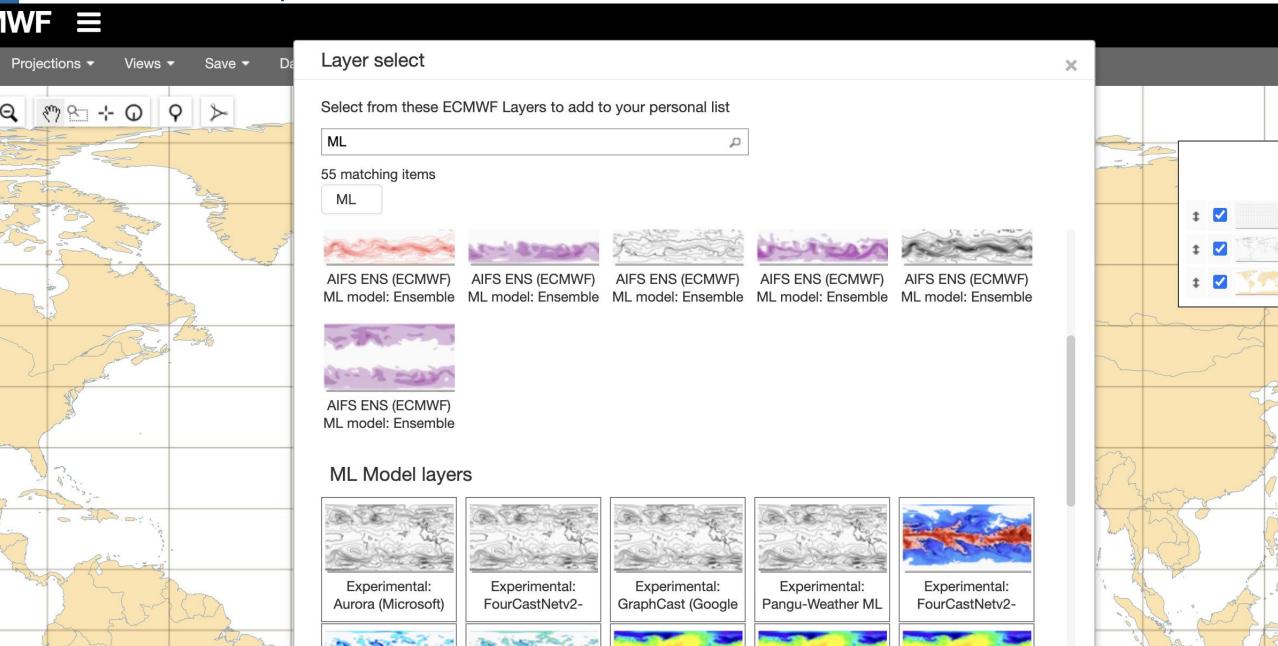


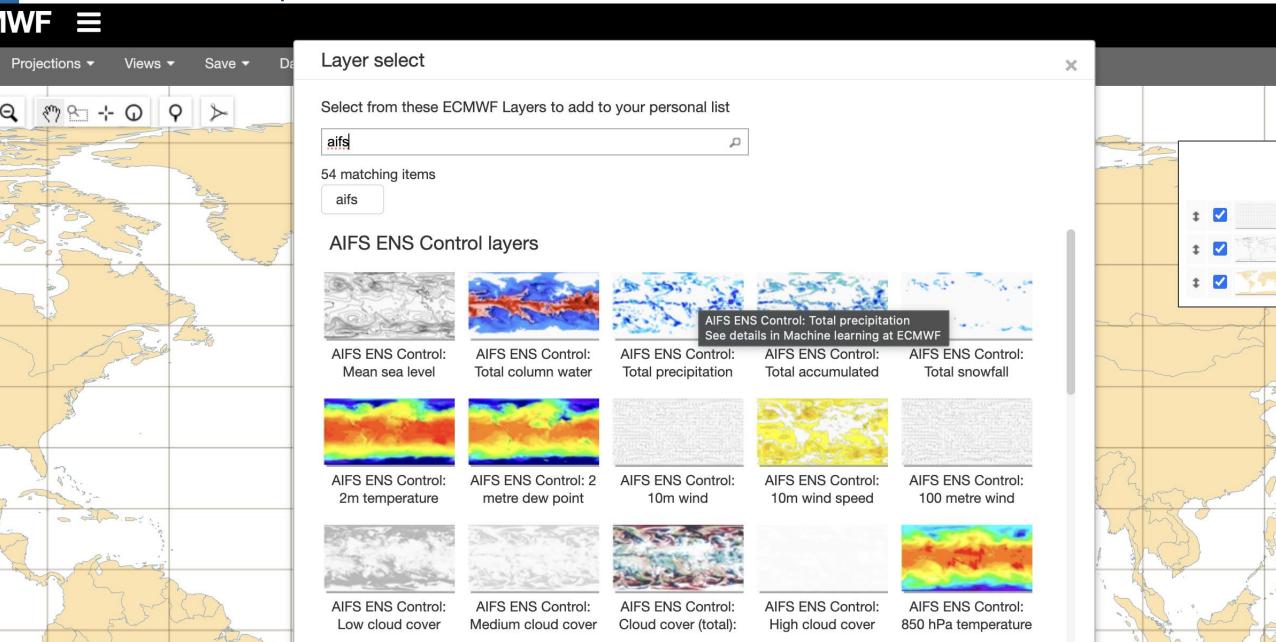
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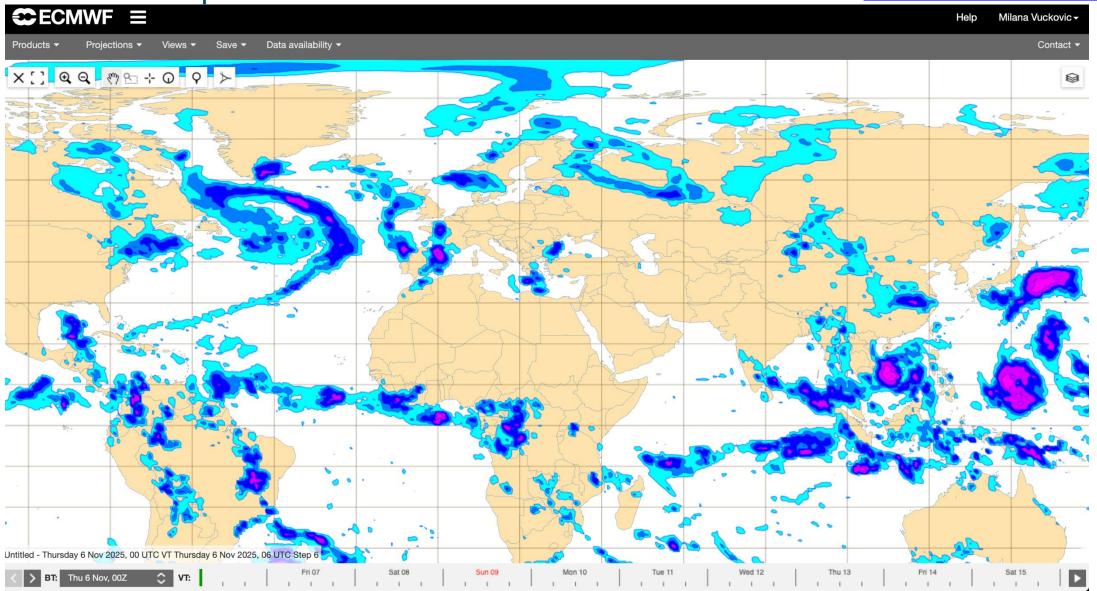


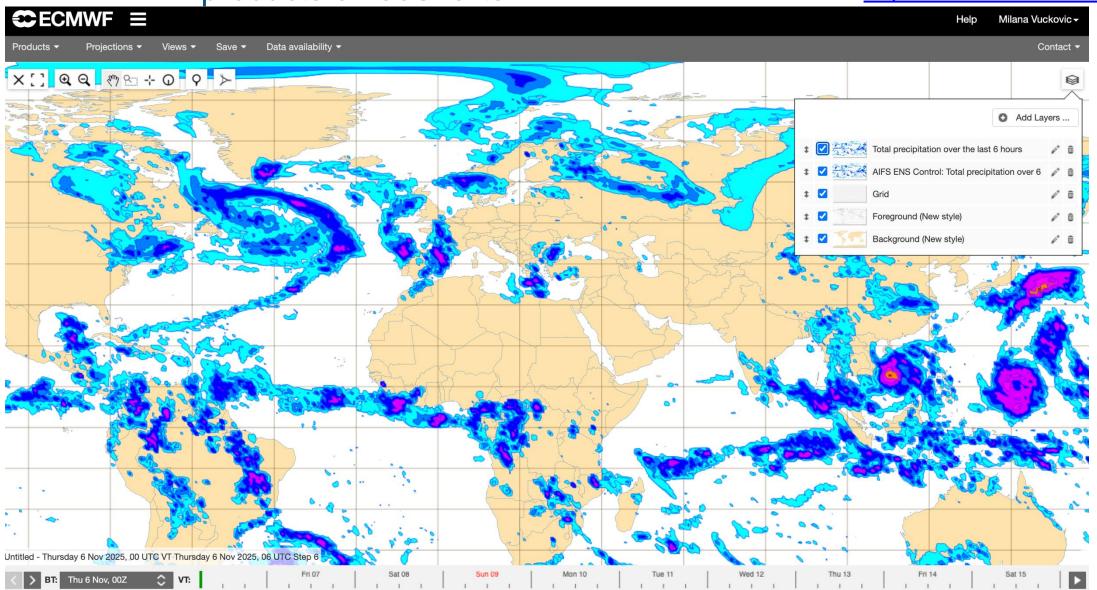


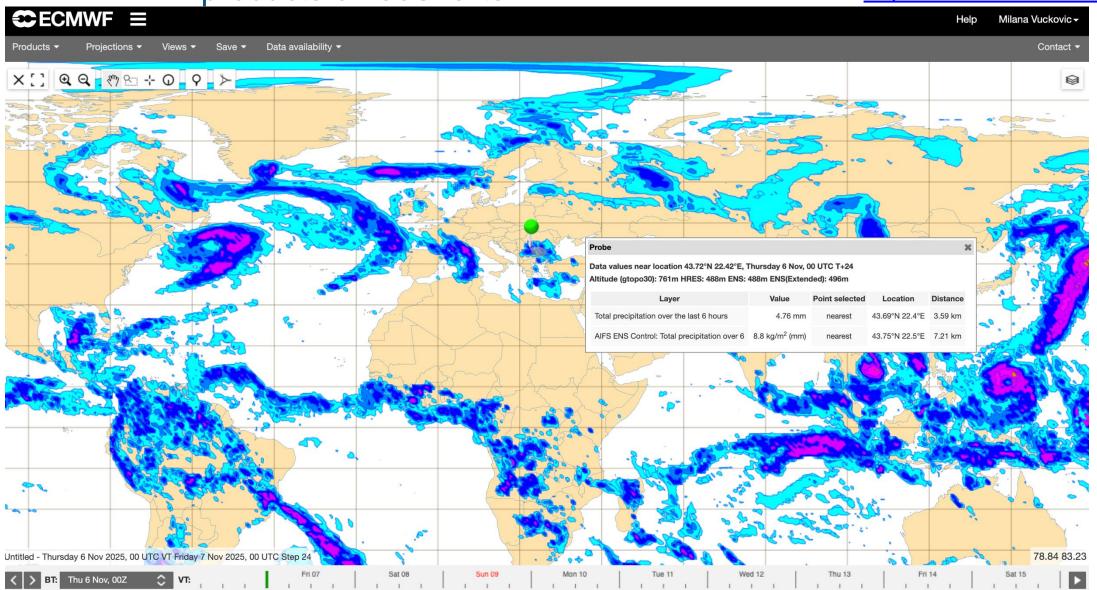


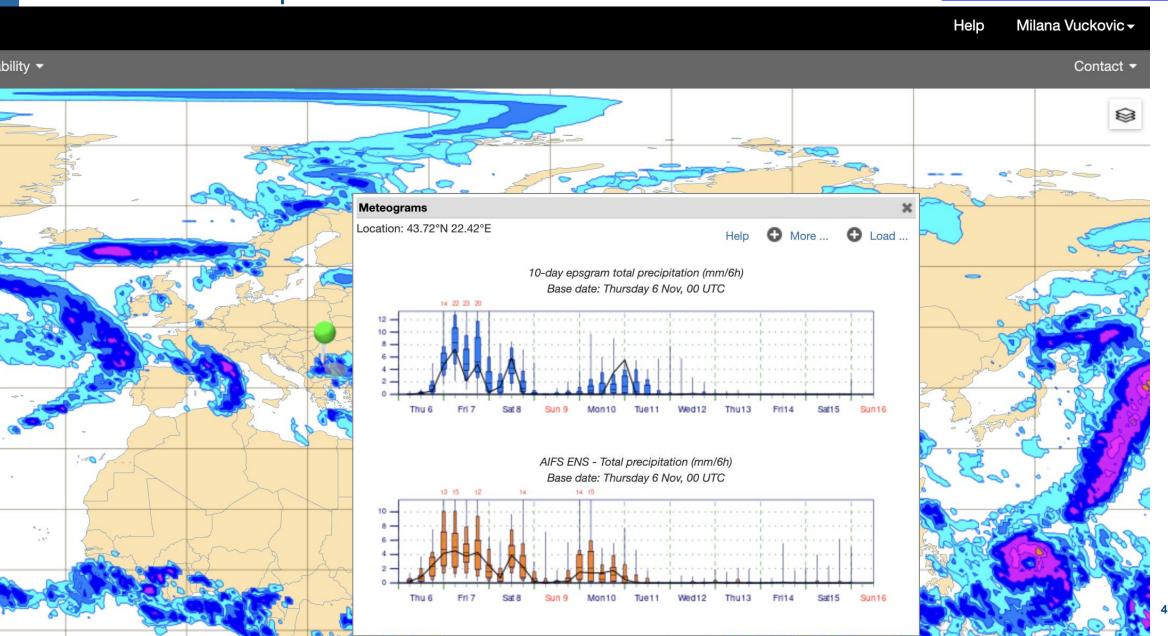


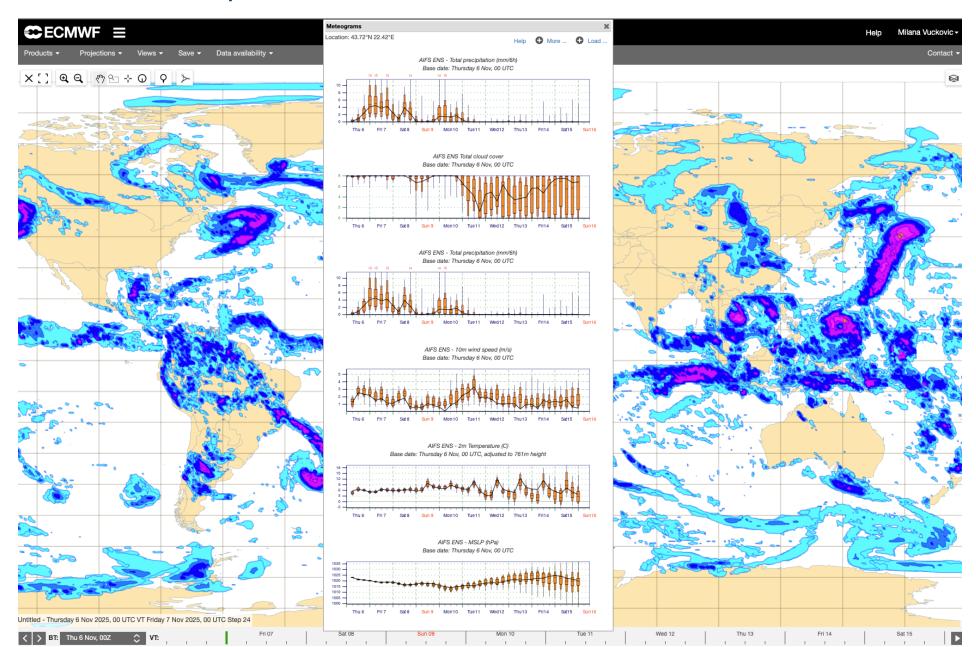






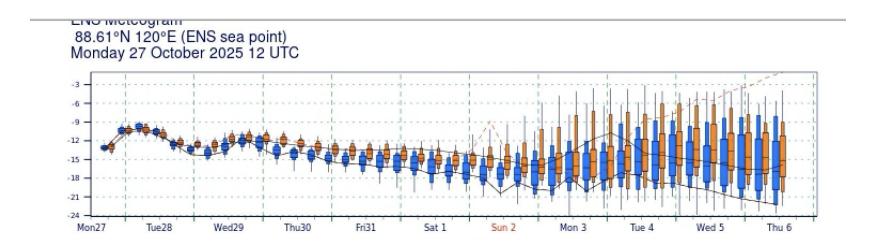






## Coming soon!

## IFS & AIFS meteograms in one plot





# Where to find more information

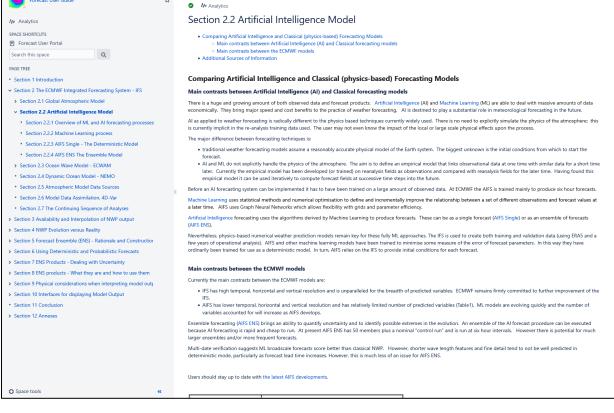
Forecast User Guide: <a href="https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FUG/Forecast+User+Guide">https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FUG/Forecast+User+Guide</a>

ECMWF Spaces People Calendars Analytics

New section: Section 2.2 Artificial Intelligence Model

https://confluence.ecmwf.int/display/FUG/Section+2.2+Artificial+Intelligence+Model



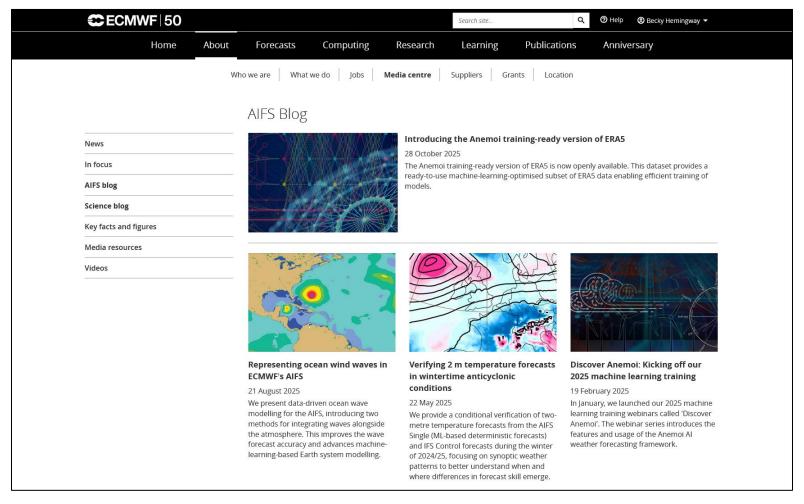


Pages / Forecast User Guide / Section 2 The ECMWF Integrated Forecasting System - IFS 🏻 🐿



# Where to find more information

AIFS Blog: https://www.ecmwf.int/en/about/media-centre/aifs-blog





# Before we finish, a question for you

Which new graphical product using AIFS would you like to see?



# Thank you for joining us today!

# Questions?



Webinar 2 - What you need to be aware of when using ECMWF's Machine Learning models 18 November 2025, 10:00 - 11:00 UTC / 11:00 - 12:00 CET

**Webinar 3 - Case Studies** 25 November 2025, 14:00 - 15:00 UTC / 15:00 - 16:00 CET

Registration still open! <a href="https://events.ecmwf.int/event/493/">https://events.ecmwf.int/event/493/</a>



