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Report on the Second International Pyrgeometer Intercomparison (27 Sept - 15 Oct 2015, PMOD/WRC)

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FOREWORD

The WMO Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation (CIMO) as one of the eight Technical Commission of WMO focuses its work on accurate meteorological measurements by promoting and facilitating international standardization and compatibility of meteorological measurement systems used by Members within the WMO Integrated Global Observing System. Ensuring the traceability of meteorological measurements to agreed references has been at the core of its work to improve the quality of the products and services delivered by Members.

Precise and traceable radiation measurements are crucial to understanding the Earth's energy budget, and for monitoring changes in climate. The World Infrared Standard Group (WISG) was established to serve as interim reference for the calibration of pyrgeometers to ensure the world-wide comparability of the measurements of terrestrial infrared irradiance.

This second International Pyrgeometer Intercomparison (IPgC) was organized by the Physikalisch-Meteorologisches Observatorium Davos/World Radiation Centre (PMOD/WRC) in Davos, Switzerland. It permitted not only the characterization and calibration of a large number of instruments in a consistent manner, but it also confirmed the stability of several instruments that had been compared with the WISG at the 1st IPgC and other intercomparisons. Bringing the instruments together on a regular basis helps ensure all instruments remain traceable to a consistent reference, and that the WISG itself is stable. This intercomparison was also an occasion to assess the performance of new types of instruments that have or are being developed, and some of these have the potential to be used in the future as references directly traceable to the International System of Units (SI).

PMOD/WRC organized this intercomparison in parallel with two other instrument intercomparisons: the regularly occurring International Pyrheliometer Intercomparison (IPC) and the Filter Radiometer Comparison. This is a very efficient use of resources for those attending, and a unique opportunity for capacity development and sharing of experience amount the participants.

The results of IPgC have already provided important information for the future traceability of terrestrial irradiance measurements and were used at the recent special meeting of the CIMO Task Team on Radiation References in 2017 to plan investigations on terrestrial radiation traceability for routine network measurements. As a result, the Task Team has recommended that, like the IPC is for the World Radiometric Reference, future IPgC are part of the governance protocols of the WISG.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and that of the WMO Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation to the organizers of the IPqC, and authors of this report for their valuable work, as well as to all the staff of PMOD for supporting this intercomparison propagating the traceability of terrestrial infrared irradiance measurements to the WMO and broader radiation measurement community.

(Prof. B. Calpini) President

Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation

Report of the second International Pyrgeometer Intercomparison from 27 September to 15 October 2015 at PMOD/WRC

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1 Introduction

The second international intercomparison of pyrgeometers (IPgC-II) was organised together with the twelfth International Pyrheliometer Comparison (IPC-XII) from 27 September to 15 October 2015 at the Infrared Radiometry Section (WRC-IRS) of the Physikalisch-Meteorologisches Observatorium Davos, World Radiation Centre (PMOD/WRC). 23 participants with a total of 38 pyrgeometers participated at this intercomparison. In addition, 5 IRIS radiometers (3 from PMOD/WRC, one from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), Australia and one from the Deutscher Wetterdienst (DWD), Germany, and 2 Absolute Cavity Pyrgeometer (ACP) from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), United States of America, were used during three clear-sky nights in view of establishing a new reference for longwave irradiance measurements traceable to SI.



View of the measurement platform of WRC-IRS on top of the PMOD/WRC. The picture was taken facing East.

2 Setup and Instrumentation

The intercomparison took place at the PMOD/WRC, Switzerland, from 27 September to 15 October 2015. The outdoor measurement platform is located on the roof of the PMOD/WRC building at 1610 m.a.s.l., 46.8 N, 9.83 E. The measurement site is located in the Swiss Alps and its horizon is limited by mountains. Each pyrgeometer was characterised in the Blackbody of PMOD/WRC (Blackbody BB2007) to retrieve the pyrgeometer coefficients according to the standard PMOD formula. This procedure lasted for about 10 hours per instrument, so that the duration of the campaign was barely sufficient to cycle all instruments.

The pyrgeometers were installed on the measurement platform in ventilation units, on shaded and unshaded positions. The specific conditions for each pyrgeometer are described in Table 1. When not otherwise noted, pyrgeometers were placed in PMOD-VHS ventilation and heating units. Most pyrgeometers were connected to the PMOD data acquisition system (DAQ), apart from those denoted with "Operator". The measured data were saved as one minute averages and regularly submitted to PMOD/WRC. A few instruments were initially operated on operator-controlled data acquisition systems, followed by a few days on the PMOD DAQ, as can be seen in Table 1.

The calibration of the participating pyrgeometers was performed according to the calibration procedure described in the IOM report No. 120 (WMO, 2015), using the World Infrared Standard Group of Pyrgeometers (WISG) as reference for atmospheric longwave irradiance.

Table 1. Participant information

Nb	Pyrgeometer	Туре	DAQ	Institution	Remarks	
1	PIR 31463F3	PIRmod	PMOD	PMOD/WRC	WISG1	
2	PIR 31464F3	PIRmod	PMOD	PMOD/WRC	WISG2	
3	CG4_FT004	CG4	PMOD	PMOD/WRC	WISG3	
4	CG4_010535	CG4	PMOD	PMOD/WRC	WISG4	
5	CG4_FT006	CG4	PMOD	PMOD/WRC		
6	CG4_060921	CG4	PMOD	BOM, Australia		
7	CGR4_140103	CGR4	PMOD	ASIAQ, Greenland		
8	IR20_105	IR20	PMOD	PMOD/WRC Hukseflux	No solarblind filter	
9	IR20_103	IR20	PMOD	PMOD/WRC Hukseflux		
10	CGR4_110390	CGR4	PMOD	PMOD/WRC Kipp&Zonen	No solarblind filter	
11	IR20_T2_4019	IR20	PMOD	Hukseflux, the Netherlands		
12	CG4_010536	CG4	PMOD	Kipp&Zonen, the Netherlands		
13	PIR 34007F3	PIR	PMOD	BOM, Australia		
14	CG4_050792	CG4	PMOD	SMHI, Sweden	SMHI Ventilation unit	
15	PIR 28806F3	PIRmod	PMOD	Meteoswiss, Switzerland		
16	CG4_040736	CG4	PMOD	KNMI, the Netherlands	CVF3 Ventilation unit	
17	CG4_060881	CG4	PMOD	NREL, US		
18	CGR4_100210	CGR4 PT100	PMOD	WMGO, Russia		
19	CG4_010567	CG4 PT100	PMOD	JMA, Japan		
20	CGR4_140016	CGR4 PT100	PMOD	SHMI, Slovakia		
21	CGR4_130648	CGR4	PMOD	CHMI, Czech Republic		
22	PIR_32227F3	PIR	PMOD	Eppley, US		
23	CGR4_130621	CGR4	PMOD	KACST, Saudi Arabia	CVF4 Ventilation unit	
24	CG4_080066	CG4 PT100	PMOD	CENER, Spain		
25	CG4_030665	CG4	PMOD	CMA, China		
26	CGR4_140070	CGR4	PMOD	DMHZ, Croatia		
27	CGR4_100288	CGR4	PMOD	PUCC, Chile		
28	IR20_4018	IR20	PMOD	Nat. Cen. Univ. Taiwan	VU01 Ventilation unit	
29	IR20_4020	IR20	PMOD	Nat. Cen. Univ. Taiwan	VU01 Ventilation unit	
30	PIR_29143F3	PIR	PMOD	NOAA, US		
31	CGR4_110413	CGR4	Operator	Meteofrance, France		
32	IR20_4008	IR20	Operator	DWD, Germany	VU01 Ventilation unit. Measurements between 29 Sep. and 5 Oct. were affected by a clogged filter in the Ventilation unit.	
33	IR20WS_5008	IR20	Operator	DWD, Germany	No solarblind filter, VU01 Measurements between 29 Sep. and 5 Oct. were affected by a clogged filter in the Ventilation unit.	
34	CGR4_060027	CGR4 PT100	Operator	DWD, Germany	29 September-11 October Eigenbrodt SBL480 Ventilation unit	
35	CG4_020617	CG4 PT100	Operator	DWD, Germany	Eigenbrodt SBL480 Ventilation unit.	
36	PIR_30475F3	PIRmod	Operator	DWD, Germany	Eigenbrodt Ventilation unit	
37	CGR4_060027	CGR4 PT100	PMOD	DWD, Germany	11 – 15 October	
38	IR20_102	IR20	Operator	Hukseflux	29 Sep6 Oct., VU01	
39	IR20_101	IR20	Operator	Hukseflux	VU01 Ventilation unit	

3 Laboratory characterisation

Each pyrgeometer was characterised in the blackbody cavity BB2007 of PMOD/WRC (Gröbner, 2008). The characterisation procedure consisted in varying the blackbody temperature between +15 °C and -20 °C and the pyrgeometer body temperature between +20 °C and -10 °C to obtain 7 constant temperature levels at which the pyrgeometer coefficients C_{BB} , k_1 , k_2 , and k_3 , were retrieved using the following equation:

$$E = \frac{U}{C_{BB}} \left(1 + k_1 \sigma T_B^3 \right) + k_2 \sigma T_B^4 - k_3 \sigma (T_D^4 - T_B^4)$$
(1)

where E is the irradiance in Wm^{-2} , U the pyrgeometer voltage in volt, and T_B and T_D the body and dome temperature respectively (called PMOD equation from now on). C, k_1 , k_2 , and k_3 are pyrgeometer specific coefficients which are retrieved for each pyrgeometer separately. The last term in equation 1 is set to zero for pyrgeometers without dome thermistor such as the CG4 type radiometers. For PIR pyrgeometers, the retrieval sensitivity of k_3 is significantly improved by differentially heating the dome of the pyrgeometer by a copper heating ring. This allows heating the dome by about +1 K relative to the body temperature.

The same measurements were used to retrieve the responsivity C and in case of Eppley PIR the dome coefficient K using the simplified version of equation 1 (often denoted Albrecht equation),

$$E = \frac{U}{C_{BB}} + \sigma T_B^4 - k_3 \sigma (T_D^4 - T_B^4)$$
(2)

4 Calibration relative to WISG

The calibration of the participating pyrgeometers was performed according to the calibration procedure described in the IOM report No. 120 (WMO, 2015), against the WISG which served as reference for atmospheric longwave irradiance. Figure 1 shows the atmospheric downwelling longwave irradiance during the campaign. The data selection used to retrieve the sensitivity of the pyrgeometers used the following criteria:

- 1. Outliers are removed (U>0.001 V, U<-20 mV, |T_D|>40 °C, |T_B|>40 °C)
- 2. Any night containing rain is excluded (limit of 0.2 mm/10 min)
- 3. Stable atmospheric conditions, defined by the standard deviation of the WISG <2 Wm⁻²
- 4. Net radiation measured by the WISG < -70 Wm⁻²
- 5. Measurements from one night are used if there are at least 80% valid measurement points
- 6. Night is defined when the solar zenith angle is larger than 95°
- 7. Relative standard deviation of the test pyrgeometer signal <3%

Furthermore, as suggested in IOM report No. 120 (WMO, 2015), data is excluded from the calibration if the integrated water vapour (IWV), determined from the time delay of GPS receivers, is below 10 mm. The IWV varied between 4 mm and 20 mm during the campaign (see Figure 2).



Figure 1. Downwelling longwave irradiance during the campaign. The red dots represent the data points which satisfy the calibration criteria.



Figure 2. Integrated water vapour from GPS during the IPgC campaign. The threshold for using measurement data for the calibration is 10 mm (red curve). Nevertheless, the data for IWV less than 10 mm is still used for the comparison to the WISG.

4.1 Stability of the WISG

The WISG is operated continuously on the measurement platform of PMOD/WRC. Its stability is monitored by internal consistency checks of the four pyrgeometers comprising the WISG. As can be seen in Figure 3, the pyrgeometers of the WISG typically agree to within \pm 1 Wm⁻², with minor seasonal variations between individual members of the WISG.



Figure 3. Night average differences of longwave irradiance measurements between the WISG pyrgeometers relative to their average. The thick lines represent a monthly running average.

5 Results

The results of the blackbody characterisation and the outdoor calibration relative to the WISG are summarised in Table 2. The coefficients k_1 , k_2 , k_3 and $C_{BLACKBODY}$ were retrieved with the blackbody as radiation source, while C_{WISG} was retrieved using k_1 , k_2 , k_3 and the atmospheric downwelling irradiance as source, as measured by the WISG. The responsivities C_{WISG} were retrieved using the PMOD (k_1 , k_2 , k_3) and Albrecht equations respectively. The figures showing the individual performance of each pyrgeometer are shown in the Annex at the end of this report.

N II-	Durante	Ŀ	L.	1.	CBLAC	CKBODY	Cv	/ISG	shaded/
ND	Pyrgeometer	К 1	К ₂	К3	k_1, k_2, k_3	Albrecht	k_1, k_2, k_3	Albrecht	unshaded
1	PIR 31463F3	0.044	0.9952	3.2	3.617	3.325	3.770	3.506	S
2	PIR 31464F3	-0.014	0.9943	2.7	3.698	3.628	3.764	3.741	S
3	CG4_FT004	-0.058	0.9974	0	11.463	12.142	12.036	12.814	S
4	CG4_010535	-0.037	0.9979	0	8.913	9.013	9.388	9.743	S
5	CG4_FT006	0.066	1.0000	0	11.896	11.000	11.559	10.701	S
6	CG4_060921	0.036	0.9991	0	8.687	8.267	8.409	8.023	U
7	CGR4_14010 3	0.000	1.0000	0	12.020	12.020	11.807	11.807	S
8	IR20_105	-0.047	1.0006	0	15.300	16.294	14.798	15.739	U
9	IR20_103	-0.059	0.9988	0	17.000	18.174	17.832	19.122	U
10	CGR4_11039 0	-0.001	0.9989	0	8.833	8.871	8.406	8.379	U
11	IR20_T2_4019	-0.138	0.9988	0	6.870	8.280	7.156	8.553	S
12	CG4_010536	0.021	0.9976	0	9.382	9.000	9.172	8.854	S
13	PIR 34007F3	0.076	1.0000	4.02	3.654	3.342	4.037	3.695	S
14	CG4_050792	0.043	0.9992	0	8.853	8.363	8.609	8.150	U
15	PIR 28806F3	0.249	1.0081	3.2	4.210	3.397	4.439	3.522	S
16	CG4_040736	0.013	0.9994	0	12.620	12.364	12.254	12.032	U
17	CG4_060881	0.024	0.9978	0	8.390	8.024	8.315	8.004	U
18	CGR4_10021 0	0.012	0.9988	0	10.401	10.162	10.256	10.057	U
19	CG4_010567	0.014	0.9975	0	11.004	10.632	12.303	11.971	U
20	CGR4_14001 6	-0.020	0.9998	0	11.179	11.432	10.654	10.912	S
21	CGR4_13064 8	0.000	0.9993	0	10.800	10.770	10.860	10.828	U
22	PIR_32227F3	-0.035	0.9962	2.7	3.796	3.870	3.869	3.981	S
23	CGR4_13062 1	-0.032	0.9984	0	11.620	11.968	11.268	11.653	U
24	CG4_080066	0.050	0.9989	0	14.453	13.522	14.162	13.282	U
25	CG4_030665	0.035	0.9995	0	11.458	10.943	11.169	10.685	U
26	CGR4_14007 0	-0.018	0.9984	0	11.080	11.210	11.060	11.236	U
27	CGR4_10028 8	0.028	0.9989	0	7.356	7.058	7.183	6.913	U
28	IR20_4018	-0.111	0.9993	0	17.250	19.930	18.266	21.136	U
29	IR20_4020	-0.142	0.9990	0	6.648	8.031	7.016	8.493	U
30	PIR_29143F3	0.310	1.0044	3.9	4.588	3.414	4.659	3.426	U
*31	CGR4_11041 3	0.0341	0.9999	0	9.987	9.577	9.878	9.480	U
*32	IR20_4008	-0.124	0.9953	0	18.860	21.602	19.761	23.314	U
*33	IR20WS_5008	-0.137	0.9652	0	16.492	15.837	16.468	18.106	U
*34	CGR4_06002 7a	0.016	1.0000	0	14.945	14.658	14.679	14.397	U
*35	CG4_020617	0.041	0.9977	0	12.335	11.560	13.627	12.849	U
*36	PIR_30475F3	0.061	1.0011	3.8	3.743	3.504	4.031	3.770	U
37	CGR4_06002 7b	0.016	1.0000	0	14.945	14.658	14.752	14.469	U
*38	IR20_102b	-0.104	0.9984	0	17.115	19.463	17.662	20.169	U
*39	IR20_101	-0.103	0.9993	0	16.664	18.980	17.255	19.705	U

Table 2. Results from the blackbody characterisation and the calibration relative to theWISG

5.1 Blackbody versus WISG based calibration

As shown in previous studies, atmospheric downwelling irradiance measurements from pyrgeometers which are based on blackbody based calibrations show large differences. These differences can be quantified from the responsivities C_{WISG} and $C_{BLACKBODY}$. The relative difference between the two responsivities can be directly expressed in Wm⁻² by multiplying the relative difference by a net irradiance of -100 Wm⁻², typical for clear sky conditions. Figure 4 shows the relative difference between C_{WISG} and C_{BLACKBODY} expressed in %.



Figure 4. Relative differences between the blackbody based and WISG based responsivities. The red, blue and black bars represent the Kipp&Zonen CG4/CGR4, Eppley PIR and Hukseflux IR20 pyrgeometers respectively.

As can be seen in Figure 4, differences of up to 15 Wm⁻² can be expected between clear sky atmospheric longwave irradiance measurements from pyrgeometers calibrated in the same blackbody. As discussed in previous studies, these differences are assumed to arise from the spectral mismatch of the spectral dome transmissions and the spectral differences between the blackbody radiation and the atmospheric downwelling radiation.

5.2 PMOD versus Albrecht equation



Figure 5. Calibration residuals (standard deviation) using the PMOD or Albrecht equation for night-time data only.

The standard deviation of the residuals from the outdoor calibration relative to the WISG are shown in Figure 5 for the PMOD and Albrecht equations. As can be seen in the figure, the residuals from the PMOD equation are usually smaller than when using the Albrecht equation, even though for some instruments the opposite is also seen. On average, CG4 type pyrgeometers show the lowest residuals with respect to the WISG, followed by PIR and Hukseflux IR20 pyrgeometers (see Table 3).

Instrument	Residuals in Wm ⁻²		
	PMOD	Albrecht	
CG4/CGR4	0.25	0.27	
PIR	0.32	0.35	
IR20	0.40	0.48	

Table 3. Standard deviation of the calibration residuals per instrument type.

The PMOD equation performs about 10% better than the Albrecht equation for the CG4 and PIR pyrgeometers, while for the IR20 the improvement is nearly 20%. This is due to the fact that IR20 pyrgeometers do not include a temperature compensation circuitry, but need a temperature correction which is included in the PMOD equation through the k_1 coefficient (see equation 1) or by applying a temperature correction as suggested by the manufacturer.

5.3 Solar effect on unshaded pyrgeometers

The solar influence on pyrgeometer measurements was determined from daily data by correlating the residuals between the individual unshaded pyrgeometers to the shaded WISG with the direct shortwave solar irradiance converted to horizontal incidence (see figures in annex). The quoted solar bias in the figure below is then determined for nominal 1000 W direct solar irradiance (weighted on the receiver) by linearly extrapolating the residuals for each instrument.



Figure 6. Solar influence on daytime pyrgeometer measurements. The values are quoted for direct solar irradiance of 1 kW on a horizontal surface.

The average solar influence on the different pyrgeometer types is 3.6 Wm⁻² and 12.2 Wm⁻² for the CG4 and IR20 pyrgeometers respectively. There were not enough Eppley PIR pyrgeometers measuring in an unshaded position to provide any statistics. The slightly negative value of PIR 30475F3 is not significant.

6 IRIS, ACP and WISG

Four IRIS and 2 ACP absolutely calibrated longwave infrared radiometers took part in the IPgC. Due to their windowless operation, measurements were only available during nights without precipitation: 22 September was a nearly complete cloud free night, while 26 September was fully overcast. On 29, 30 September and 12 October, IRIS and ACP measured simultaneously during cloud free conditions. The IRIS radiometers provide irradiance values averaged over 10 seconds, the WISG 1 minute averages and the ACP every 30 seconds.

The Figures 7 to 10 show the residuals between the irradiance measurements by the individual radiometers as well as the WISG to the IRIS average.



Figure 7. Longwave irradiance measurements for the nights of 21 to 22 September and 25 to 26 September when only IRIS 1, 2, 3 and the WISG were present (top). Difference to average of IRIS 1, 2, 3 (bottom).



Figure 8. Longwave irradiance measurements for the nights of 28 to 29 September and 29 to 30 September with IRIS 1, 2, 3, 5, the ACP and the WISG (top). Difference to average of IRIS 1, 2, 3 (bottom).



Figure 9. Longwave irradiance measurements for the night of 11 to 12 October with IRIS 1, 2, 3, 5, the ACP-1 and ACP-2 and the WISG (top). Difference to average of IRIS 1, 2, 3 (bottom).

As seen in the figures, the IRIS and ACP radiometers measure between 3 Wm⁻² to 6 Wm⁻² higher irradiance than the WISG during cloud free nights. During overcast conditions (25 September and the evening of 28 September) the WISG and the IRIS agree much better, indicating that the differences arise from the net downwelling longwave irradiance.



Figure 10. Residuals between the radiometers and the average of the IRIS 1, 2, 3 for the selected days shown in the previous figures.

As can be seen in Figure 10, the IRIS radiometers agree well with each other, with average differences between -0.6 Wm⁻² to +0.7 Wm⁻². The WISG shows a distinct double peak, which comes from the difference between overcast and cloud free periods. During cloud-free periods, the average

difference is -4.2 Wm⁻². The ACP radiometers have less measurements, but they clearly group with the IRIS radiometers, at -1.25 Wm⁻² for ACP-1 and -0.54 Wm⁻² for ACP-2.

7 Conclusion

- 1) The WISG has been measuring continuously since 2004. Between 2004 and 2015, the four pyrgeometers comprising the WISG show an internal consistency of 1 Wm⁻², demonstrating that the WISG can be used as a stable reference for longterm atmospheric longwave irradiance measurements.
- 2) As shown in this IPgC, pyrgeometers can be calibrated relative to an outdoor reference like the WISG with an expanded uncertainty of less than 1 Wm⁻² with a 95% coverage probability.
- 3) The solar influence of unshaded pyrgeometers is correlated to the incoming direct solar irradiance and can be as high as 12 Wm⁻² for 1000 W horizontal direct solar irradiance.
- Atmospheric longwave irradiance measurements can give discrepancies of up to 15 Wm⁻² between instruments calibrated in the same blackbody cavity.
- 5) Atmospheric longwave irradiance measurements of the IRIS and ACP absolute radiometers give consistent results to within 1.5 Wm⁻², which is well within their stated uncertainties. The difference between ACP, IRIS and the WISG is 4.2 Wm⁻² during cloud free nights, with WISG measuring lower. These results are consistent with previous findings as published in Gröbner et al., 2014.

Reference

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Annex

Measurement results for individual pyrgeometers. DUT – Device under Test



















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