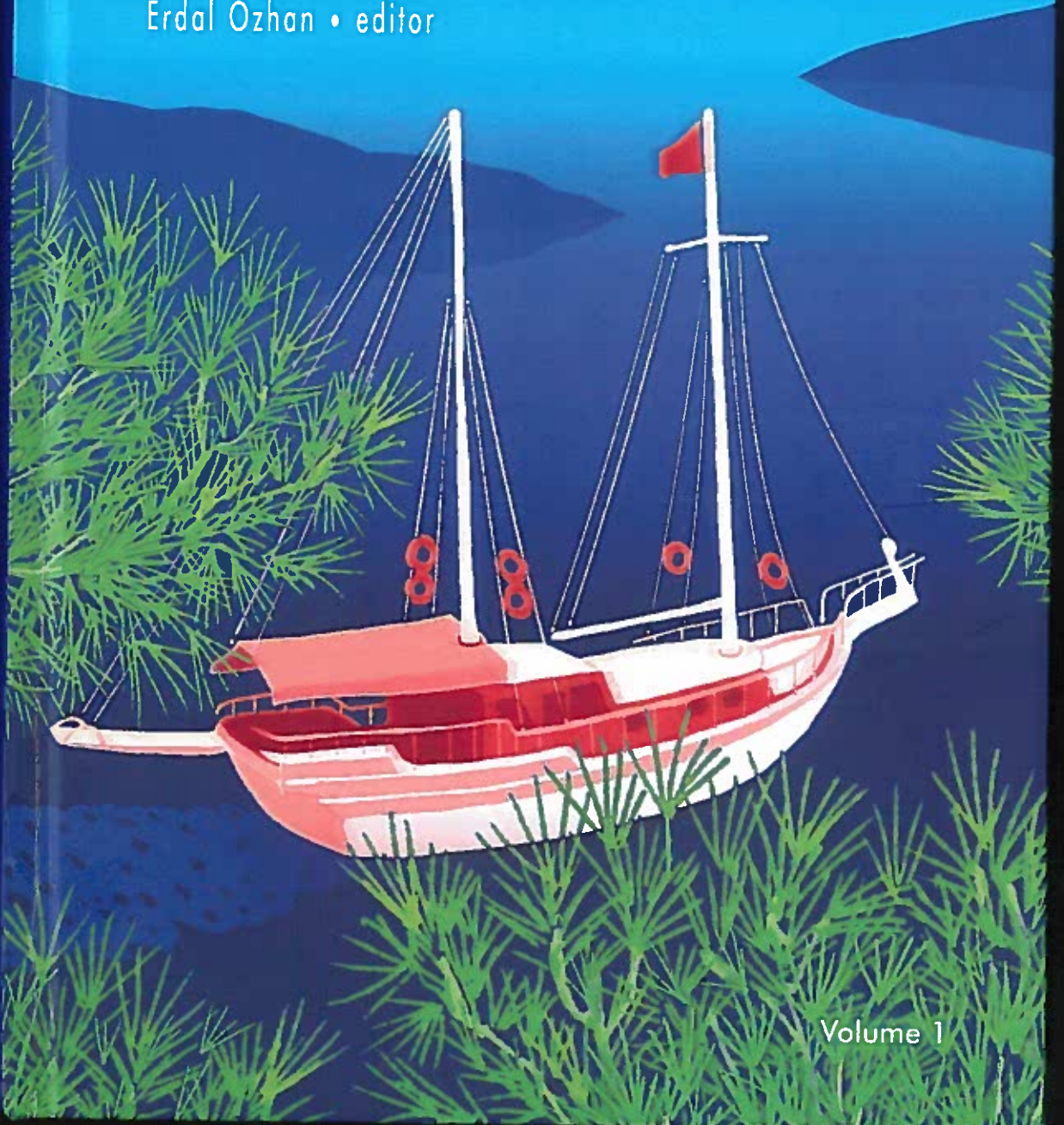




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ON COASTAL AND MARINE SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, MANAGEMENT & CONSERVATION

Erdal Özhan • editor



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OPENCoastS: on-Demand Forecast Tool for Management

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Abstract

Coastal forecast systems have become reliable tools to support daily coastal management and strategic long-term planning. However, the availability of these systems for most coastal areas remains scarce, in particular for small estuaries and coastal bays, which limits the efficiency of management for these areas from both economic and environmental perspectives. Building a new forecast system or maintaining in operation an existing one requires considerable effort, from both financial and personnel points of view. Accurate forecasts require a team comprising experts in coastal processes and computer science and the availability of robust and large computational resources to maintain the predictions available on a daily basis. Herein, a new concept in forecast tools is presented, building the foundations for forecast systems to be built and made available for all coastal systems worldwide. Denoted OPENCoastS, this freely available web service builds forecasts systems for the coastal area selected by the user and maintains them in operation using the European Open Science Cloud infrastructure. Forecasts are based on the SCHISM community model's simulations using a computational grid uploaded by the user, to predict the 2D barotropic or 3D baroclinic circulation in the coastal area of interest. An open grid repository is also available for testing the platform and to promote shared work. The

web platform includes the whole forecast workflow: system configuration, system management and forecasts viewer. Forecast accuracy can be controlled by the user at configuration stage by: i) the selection of the forcings from the several sources available (including Meteo France and NOAA's atmospheric predictions and ocean boundary conditions from CMEMS and FES2014, among others); and ii) the choice of several model parameters. The quality of the predictions can be assessed by automatic comparison with user-selected EMODNET data stations. Default settings are also provided to facilitate the uptake of the OPENCoastS platform by people less familiar with the use of the SCHISM model. An example of the application of OPENCoastS to simulate 3D hydrodynamics is provided for the Ria Formosa coastal lagoon.

Introduction

Timely information about the coastal waters status is of utmost importance to support both daily and strategic management of these systems. To address this need, forecast systems of coastal conditions have been under development at global, regional and local scales for the last three decades (e.g., Brassington et al., 2007; Baptista et al., 2008), being nowadays a common working tool for many coastal stakeholders (e.g., Boulay and Batt, 2015). Current forecast systems range from simple tidal predictions to complex circulation forecasts including wave and current interactions (Fortunato et al., 2017) and water quality (e.g., Oliveira et al., 2014; David et al., 2015). The need to guarantee the accuracy of the predictions have also reinforced the linkage between real time monitoring networks such as EMODnet (<http://www.emodnet.eu/>) and the exploitation of citizen science in the context of emergency events (Lofis et al., 2019).

Building forecast systems is not however a trivial task as it requires: a) a multidisciplinary team comprised of both coastal processes and modelling experts and IT personnel; b) the availability of computational resources adequate to provide the predictions in a timely way on a daily basis; and c) the availability of ways to disseminate the forecast results to the end-users, targeted to their specific needs (e.g. a web portal where the users can visualize their predictions, an email server to address alerts, among others). When multiple forecasts systems are in operation, the effort for keeping them running in a reliable way and to keep them up-to-date with new features or new versions of the supporting modelling tool can often be too large. As a result, many coastal systems do not take advantage of this very important tool and many managers have to take short and long term management decisions without adequate knowledge of their system's dynamics.

To address this problem, a new paradigm in coastal forecasting was developed - a coastal forecast service, where users can build, in a friendly way, their forecast systems for their own sites. Denoted OPENCoastS, this service allows for a simple creation of a forecast system, requiring only the availability of a computational grid for the domain chosen (Oliveira et al., 2019a, b). An open grid repository is also available for testing the platform and to promote shared work (Oliveira et al., 2019b, repository link: <https://github.com/LNEC-GTI/OPENCoastS-Grids>). OPENCoastS builds on-demand circulation forecast systems for selected coast areas and maintain them running operationally for the time frame defined by the user, starting in one month period with the possibility of extending it on request. This daily service has multiple options, for the physics being simulated (2D barotropic or 3D baroclinic circulation), the choice of

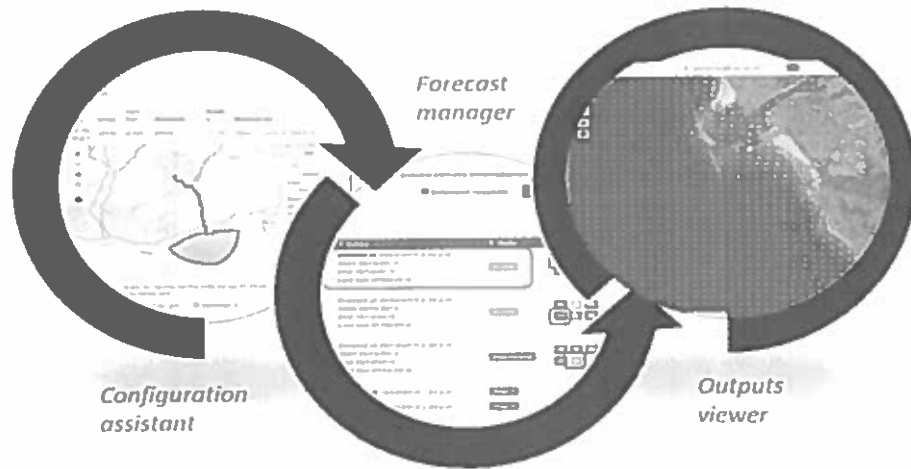


Fig. 1: The three components of OPENCoastS service.

forcings (between several regional and global providers) or model parameters (default or user choice of selected parameters). Outputs include forecasts of water levels and velocities (and 3D fields of velocity, salinity and temperature in the 3D option) along with comparison with user selected online data sets from EMODnet or user defined virtual sensors. The forecasts are produced for periods of 48 hours, based on numerical simulations of all relevant physical processes.

The service comprises three components (Fig. 1): a configuration assistant, to build the forecast; a forecast manager, to view and alter existing forecasts; and a viewer to visualize results, compare them with in-situ data and download output files. All three components are freely available through a web portal at <https://opencoasts.ncg.ingrid.pt/>. To facilitate the uptake of the service by users from both research and management communities, several training events are being promoted and training tools are freely available at http://opencoasts.lnec.pt/index_en.php.

This paper is organized as follows. First, an overview of OPENCoast's main features are presented, along with the new functionalities built for the 3D simulations. Then, the flexibility and usability of the service is demonstrated in the application to a case study, the 3D baroclinic circulation of the Faro lagoon. Finally, the paper closes with some concluding remarks and directions for further developments.

The OPENCoastS Service: Main Features and New Functionalities

OPENCoastS is a new Web platform developed under the concept of open science, provided to users as an open-access service integrated in the thematic services and marketplace of the project EOSC-Hub (<https://www.eosc-hub.eu/services/OPENCoastS>). The service is composed by a frontend (the web platform) and a backend (that deals with all computing tasks) - Fig.2. The frontend was developed with the Django Python Web framework and uses a PostGIS spatial object relational database and the ncWMS2 software to provide the forecasts outputs as Web Map Services (WMS), with UGRID-compliant NetCDF files.

The backend is responsible for generating the forecast results, handling all tasks of the simulation chain established for each forecast deployment. This component is based on the Water Information Forecast Framework, WIFF (Fortunato et al., 2017), which simplifies the assembly and execution of the recurring tasks needed for every simulation. WIFF was developed by LNEC and is a generic forecasting platform, adaptable to any geographical location, which integrates a set of numerical models that run periodically.

To provide local forecasts for any coastal region in the world, OPENCoastS uses several oceanic and atmospheric forecast providers. This linkage is necessary to provide reliable and accurate predictions at local scales forced by robust systems that are integrated with global monitoring networks through data assimilation. Users can select the physical processes to be accounted for (tides, tides + storm surges, tides + storm surges), model resolution and area of coverage. Comparison with elevation data is provided through an automate request to EMODnet-Physics (<http://www.emodnet.eu/physics>), that identifies the data stations within the computational domain. Afterward, the user only needs to select data stations to be used for the time series comparison.

Forecast systems typically entail computationally demanding tasks. The OPENCoastS platform has been deployed in the INCD infrastructure, and are under deployment at the CSIC/IFCA infrastructure. These cloud infrastructure providers are available within the European Open Science Cloud, EOSC (<https://www.eosc-portal.eu/>), supporting the OPENCoastS service through the EOSC-hub project (<https://www.eosc-hub.eu/>). The EOSC provides several types of services, including computing from EGI (cloud and grid), storage from EUDAT, and authentication and authorization infrastructure (AAI) from EGI. The OPENCoastS platform is being integrated with some of these services in the framework of EOSC-hub Thematic Services, and is already using authentication and computing services in EOSC. More details on the core service are available in Oliveira et al. (2019a, b).

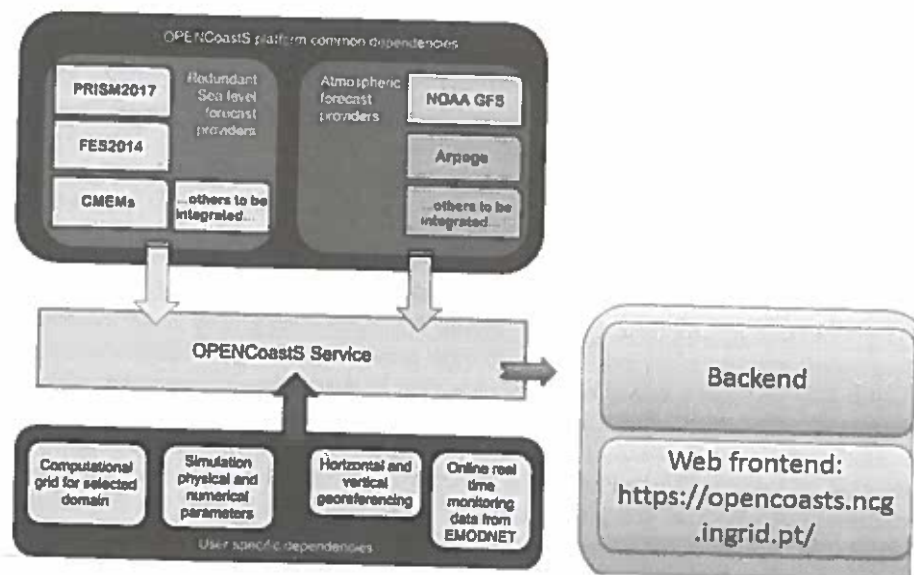


Fig. 2: The OPENCoastS architecture and building blocks.

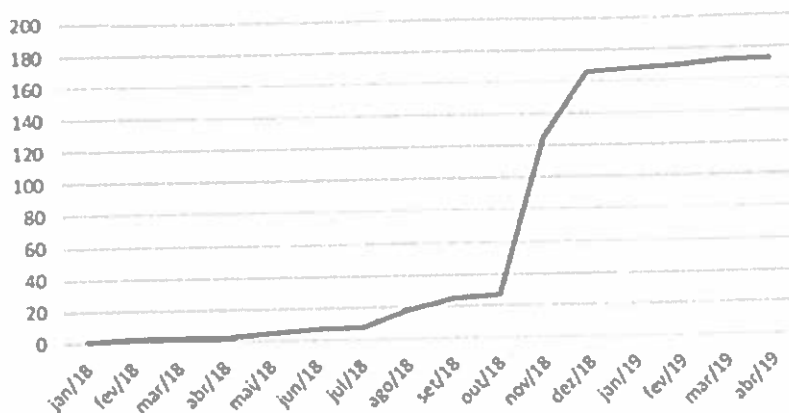


Fig. 3: Evolution on OPENCoastS users for the 1st year of service operation.

As of last April, OPENCoastS had already over 175 users (Fig. 3) and supported over 140 service applications to forecast simulations in all continents.

The new version of OPENCoastS, presented herein, offers new functionalities: the possibility to create forecasts for 3D baroclinic circulations, predicting water level and 3D velocities, salinities and temperatures. To address this new feature, several new functionalities have been included.

Forcings options were enlarged to address providers of boundary conditions for salinity. Therefore, both global and Iberian CMEMs were included in the ocean forcings. Given the importance of river inputs on salinity and temperature fields, new possibilities were added for the riverine forcings. To increase the accuracy of the simulations at the riverine end, the possibility of including a source of river forecasts in the OPENCoastS predictions was also included, by providing a web service with a specific file format. The viewer was also improved with new features to view and download 3D results. The application of the OPENCoastS service to forecast the 3D circulation in the Faro lagoon (Fig. 4) illustrates some of those new items (Fig. 5 to 8).

3D Circulation Prediction in the Faro Lagoon

The Faro lagoon is the most important coastal ecosystem in the southern coast of Portugal (Fig. 4). This coastal lagoon provides several goods and services, which support important economic activities in the region (Newton et al., 2014), and its ecological value is well recognized (Newton et al., 2014).

This coastal waterbody is a mesotidal lagoon that connects to the Ocean Atlantic through six inlets (Ancão, Faro-Olhão, Armona, Fuzeta, Tavira and Lacém inlets - Fig. 4). This lagoon has a complex network of channels interconnected with the inlets, allowing the recirculation of water within the system and a permanent exchange with the adjacent ocean. To simulate the circulation in the Faro lagoon the application of Fabião et al. (2016) was extended and updated for SCHISM (Zhang et al., 2016). In particular, the horizontal grid was extended to include the Gilão River and the bathymetry was updated with the most recent data available, namely data from



Fig. 4: Faro lagoon location and morphology.

topographic and bathymetric surveys performed during 2011 along the Portuguese coast with LiDAR equipment (Silva et al., 2012). The updated horizontal grid has about 98000 nodes/193000 elements, while the vertical grid has 11 levels (7 S levels and 4 Z levels). The model was first calibrated against water levels data from 1980 and validated against water levels, velocities, salinity and water temperature data from 2011 and 2017. For further details regarding the model implementation and validation see Rosa et al. (in preparation).

Based on the model application of Rosa et al. (in preparation), a new forecast system was implemented for the Faro lagoon coast using the OPENCoastS service. To deploy this system, seven steps were followed using the Configuration Assistant:

- 1) The selection of the run type and of the model: 3D baroclinic, SCHISM model;
- 2) The input of the horizontal and vertical grids (Fig. 5);
- 3) The definition of the boundary conditions (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7): the Faro lagoon forecasts are forced by tides, salinity and water temperature from CMEMS-IBI (http://marine.copernicus.eu/services-portfolio/access-to-products/?option=com_csw&view=details&product_id=IBI_ANALYSIS_FORECAST_PHYS_005_001) at the ocean boundary, by monthly climatology of the river flow and the water temperature at the Gilão River and by the atmospheric forecasts from NOAA/NCEP-GFS at the surface (<https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/data-access/model-data/model-datasets/global-forecast-system-gfs>);
- 4) The definition of stations for data analysis: three virtual stations were selected along the Faro lagoon (Faro-Olhão inlet, CC-Cais Comercial and Tavira inlet);
- 5) The definition of input parameters (e.g. time step);
- 6) The definition of additional data (e.g. spatially-varying parameters like the friction coefficient or initial conditions for salinity and water temperature);
- 7) The submission of the forecast system.



Fig. 5: Configuration Assistant - overview of the horizontal domain of the Faro lagoon forecast system.

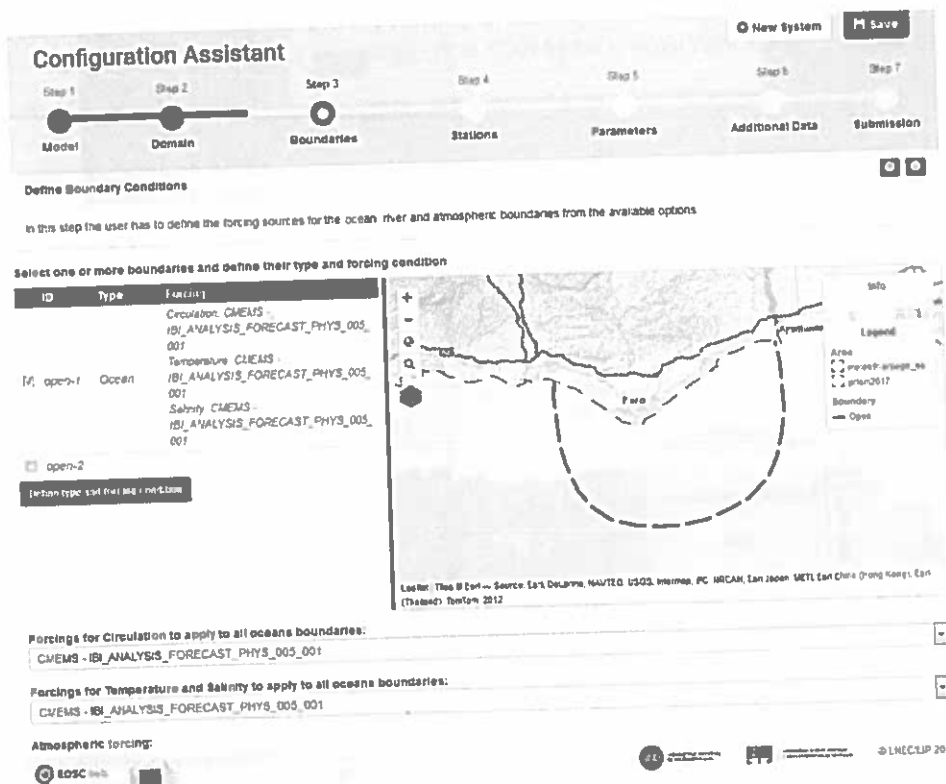


Fig. 6: Configuration Assistant - example of the definition of the boundary conditions at the oceanic boundary of the Faro lagoon forecast system using the CMEMS-IBI model option.

The 3D baroclinic forecast system of the Faro lagoon is in operation since June 2019 and the forecast results are available from the Outputs Viewer. In the Outputs Viewer the user can generate maps and time series of the simulated variables (water levels, and 3D velocities, salinity and water temperature), see the model results at the selected stations and also download the model forecasts (Fig. 8).

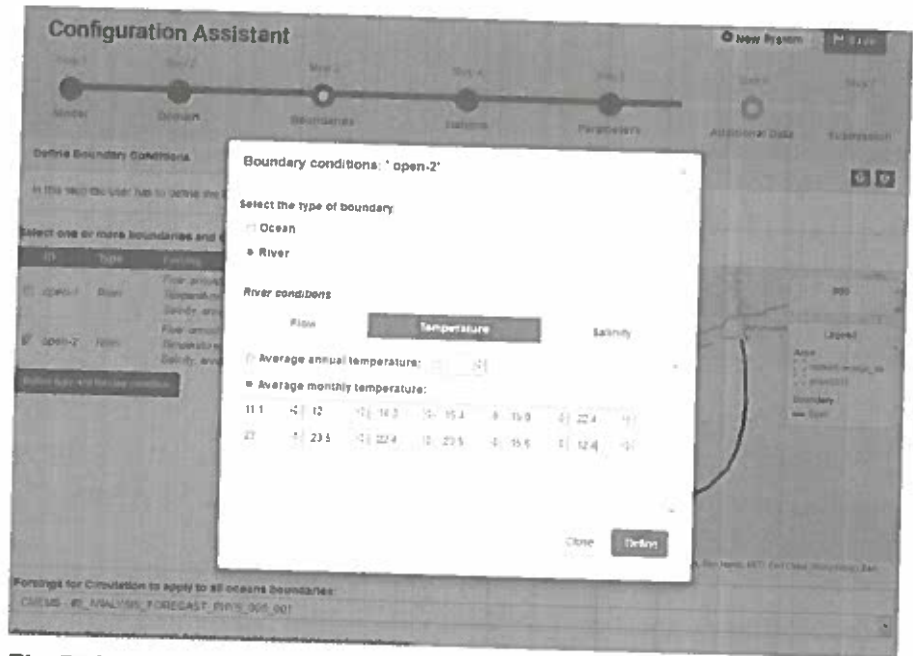


Fig. 7: Configuration Assistant - example of the definition of the boundary conditions at the river boundary of the Faro lagoon forecast, including river flow, salinity and water temperature boundary conditions.

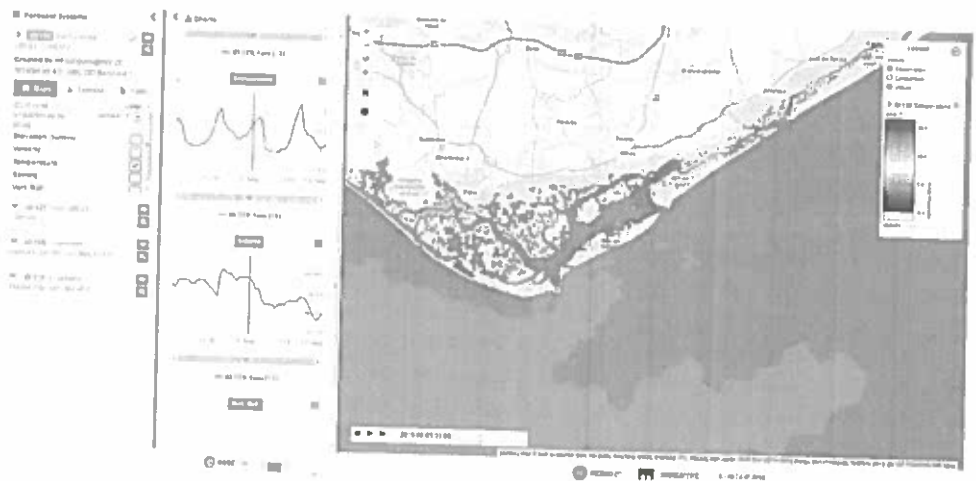


Fig. 8: Outputs Viewer – example of the outputs viewer with time series of salinity and water temperature and maps of water temperature.

Conclusions

The concept of coastal forecast systems, materialized in the OPENCoastS web platform has been in operation for over one year and attracted users and applications from all continents. Herein, we presented the new version of this system that can now be used to predict 3D baroclinic circulation in any coastal system worldwide. This development is part of the development roadmap of OPENCoastS (Fig. 9) for this and the next year and precludes the extension of the concept to water quality.

Besides the outlined expansion plans from the point of view of the coastal processes, other features have also been requested by users. While development timelines are not so rigid as the ones above, the tasks below are also in the development team agenda: integrate automatic error calculation for the selected data sets as data is collected; integrate other sources of data for comparison such as satellite or radar data; integrate a grid generator as a pre-step in the configuration assistant; integration of other coastal models; and production of a daily newsletter with digested results pre-configured at configuration stage and sent it to the system's stakeholders.

Finally, the concept of OPENCoastS can now be easily expanded to other type of waterbodies such as the drainage networks or hydrographic basins, to build a OPENWater service. Challenges for this endeavour are the distinct process time and spatial scales involved and the availability of forcing conditions. Linkage with systems such as those proposed by Campuzano et al. (2016) are a possible avenue.

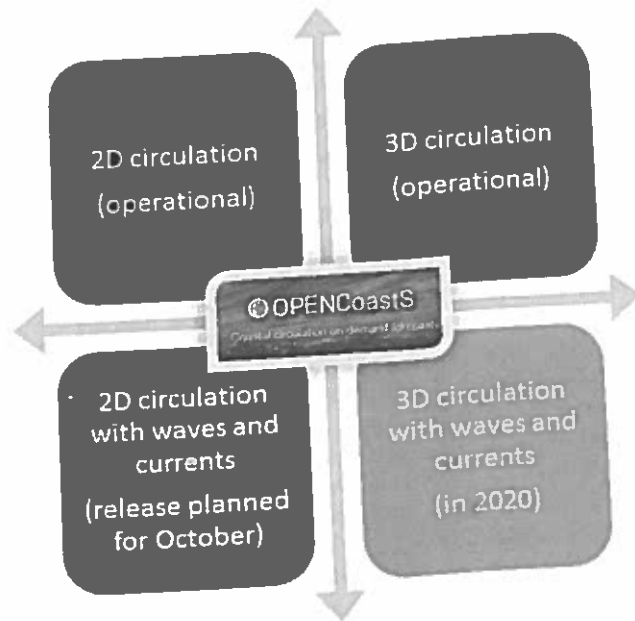


Fig. 9: OPENCoastS development roadmap: services available and timelines for the next ones.

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