

1 **RAPID applied to the SIM-France model**

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24 **Abstract**

25 SIM-France is a large connected atmosphere/land surface/river/groundwater modeling
26 system that simulates the water cycle throughout metropolitan France. The work
27 presented in this study investigates the replacement of the river routing scheme in SIM-
28 France by a river network model called RAPID to enhance the capacity to relate
29 simulated flows to river gages and to take advantage of the automated parameter
30 estimation procedure of RAPID. RAPID was run with SIM-France over a ten-year
31 period and results compared with those of the previous river routing scheme. We found
32 that while the formulation of RAPID enhanced the functionality of SIM-France, the flow
33 simulations are comparable in accuracy to those previously obtained by SIM-France.
34 Sub-basin optimization of RAPID parameters was found to increase model efficiency. A
35 single criterion for quantifying the quality of river flow simulations using several river
36 gages globally in a river network is developed that normalizes the square error of
37 modeled flow to allow equal treatment of all gaging stations regardless of the magnitude
38 of flow. The use of this criterion as the cost function for parameter estimation in RAPID
39 allows better results than by increasing the degree of spatial variability in optimization of
40 model parameters. Likewise, increased spatial variability of RAPID parameters through
41 accounting for topography is shown to enhance model performance.

42

43 **Keywords** stream flow, river network, network matrix, parameters, estimation, dam, quad-
44 tree

45

46 **1. Introduction**

47 In the past two decades, several large scale river routing schemes have been used along
48 with land surface models for hydrologic modeling. Among the most notable applications
49 of large scale river routing are TRIP [Total Runoff Integrating Pathways, *Ngo-Duc, et al.*,
50 2007; *Oki and Sud*, 1998], RiTHM [River-Transfer Hydrological Model, *Ducharne, et*
51 *al.*, 2003], the routing model of Lohmann et al. [*Lohmann, et al.*, 1996; 1998a; 1998b;
52 1998c; 2004; *Maurer, et al.*, 2001], that of Wetzel [*Abdulla, et al.*, 1996; *Nijssen, et al.*,
53 1997; *Wetzel*, 1994], and that of Olivera et al. [2000]. These approaches have been used
54 along with land surface parameterization schemes to calculate river flow from runoff at
55 the regional, continental and the global scale. MODCOU [Modèle Couplé, *Ledoux, et*
56 *al.*, 1989] is another model with routing capabilities that differs from the previously cited
57 models in that it has two separate networks of grid cells for horizontal routing of water on
58 the land surface: one for overland routing and one for routing within the river system.
59 MODCOU simulates flows throughout Metropolitan France (mainland France and
60 Corsica) as part of the SIM-France modeling framework [*Habets, et al.*, 2008].
61 SIM-France (SAFRAN-ISBA-MODCOU-France) is a large connected atmosphere, land
62 surface, river and groundwater model (see Figure 1) that involves coupling the national-
63 scale atmospheric analysis system SAFRAN [Système d'Analyse Fournissant des
64 Renseignements Atmosphériques à la Neige, *Durand, et al.*, 1993; *Quintana-Seguí, et al.*,
65 2008], with the ISBA land surface model [Interactions Soil- Biosphere-Atmosphere,
66 *Boone, et al.*, 1999; *Noilhan and Planton*, 1989], and with the MODCOU
67 hydrogeological model [*Ledoux, et al.*, 1989]. ISBA computes the vertical water and
68 energy balance between the land surface and the atmosphere. The improved physics of

69 the land surface parameterization of ISBA that consist of an exponential profile for soil
70 hydraulic conductivity developed in Decharme et al. [2006] with calibration of soil
71 hydraulic conductivity and subgrid runoff over France by Quintana-Seguí et al. [2009]
72 are used in this study. Surface runoff and deep-soil drainage are computed by ISBA and
73 transferred to MODCOU which computes the horizontal flow routing on the land surface,
74 in rivers and in aquifers. Aquifers in MODCOU are modeled within the two main river
75 basins of France, the Seine and the Rhône, which together represent 30% of the land area
76 of France.

77 MODCOU handles the calculations of flow and volume of water within the river network
78 of SIM-France. This river network is made up of grid cells divided into a quad-tree
79 pattern and the calculations of MODCOU are made for groups of quad-tree cells; not for
80 each quad-tree cell separately. Using groups of cells for calculations is advantageous for
81 reducing computational costs but it limits the modularity of MODCOU. In particular, the
82 location and number of gaging stations are difficult to modify.

83 The work presented herein investigates the impact of replacing the routing module used
84 in MODCOU by a river network model called RAPID [Routing Application for Parallel
85 Computation of Discharge, *David, et al.*, 2011]. RAPID uses a matrix-based version of
86 the Muskingum method to calculate flow and volume of water for each reach of a river
87 network separately and has an automated parameter estimation procedure. RAPID
88 therefore allows greater flexibility than the routing module in MODCOU with regards to
89 changing the locations of computations in an existing domain or to running SIM on a new
90 domain. RAPID was previously applied to a GIS vector river network [*David, et al.*,
91 2011], and the present study shows how it can also be applied to a quad-tree gridded river

92 network. In addition, RAPID is advantageous because of its ability to run in a parallel
93 computing environment and its fine time step allowing potential comparison with river
94 flow observations at high temporal resolution. Finally, replacing the routing module of
95 MODCOU by RAPID has already allowed computing river flow height and helping
96 quantify river/aquifer interactions at the regional scale [*Saleh, et al.*, 2010; 2011].
97 In this paper, the original river routing of MODCOU as well as that of RAPID are briefly
98 presented followed by a ten-year application (1995-2005) of SIM-France comparing the
99 two river routing applications for different sets of parameters used in RAPID.

100

101 **2. Modeling framework**

102 **2.1. River modeling in SIM-France**

103 The computational domain of SIM-France includes all of Metropolitan France, including
104 Corsica. Parts of Spain, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium are also included where
105 their drainage area flows through France, as shown in Figure 2. The total surface area of
106 the computational domain is 610,000 km².

107 Surface routing and river routing in SIM-France are done by MODCOU [*Ledoux, et al.*,
108 1989]. The surface and river networks of SIM-France and their connectivity were created
109 using a routine called HydroDem [*Leblois and Sauquet, 2000*] and consist of 193,861
110 surface cells and 24,264 river cells, each river cell being a particular surface cell. The
111 surface area covered by the river cells is 65,000 km². The surface network uses a quad-
112 tree structure with cell sizes of 1 km, 2 km, 4 km and 8 km. The river network has cell
113 sizes of 1 km and 2 km. The smaller quad-tree cells are used at the conference of
114 branches of the river network for better representation of the network connectivity and at
115 basin boundaries for more accurate basin surface area.

116 The connectivity between river cells is given by a table that provides for each
117 downstream river cell up to three upstream river cells. There are no loops or divergences
118 in the river network of SIM-France. The connectivity between catchments and rivers is
119 given by a table that provides for each surface cell a unique downstream cell where its
120 runoff enters the river.

121 For both surface and river routing, the calculations of flow and volume of water within
122 MODCOU are carried out using groups of cells as computing elements, therefore
123 minimizing the amount of calculations compared to computing for all cells separately.

124 These groups of cells – or isochrone zones – are based on the notion of isochronism
125 developed by Leblanc and Villeneuve [1978]. An isochrone is a line representing a
126 constant time of travel to a reference point downstream. An isochrone zone is the area
127 between two successive isochrones. This zone is represented by a set of cells which are a
128 single computational unit in MODCOU. Both the land surface isochrones and river
129 isochrones of MODCOU have three-hour time intervals, which means that the time of
130 travel between the upstream-most and the downstream-most cell in a given isochrone
131 zone is approximately three hours. All the isochrones of a given network are determined
132 using the travel time between connected cells which is estimated based on topography
133 and on the geometry of the quad-tree mesh. For surface cells and river cells, the travel
134 time $\tau_{i,j}$ between two consecutive cells i and j is calculated using the distance
135 $d_{i,j}$ between the two cells and the slope $s_{i,j}$, as shown in Equation (1):

136

$$137 \quad \tau_{i,j} = \alpha \cdot \frac{d_{i,j}}{\sqrt{s_{i,j}}} \quad (1)$$

138

139 where α is the inverse of a velocity. In the current version of SIM-France, a unique
140 value of α is calibrated for each major basin.

141 Figure 3 shows an example of the isochrone zones and connectivity between surface cells
142 and river cells in MODCOU for the Ardèche River Basin. Figure 3a) shows the Ardèche
143 River, its basin and three river gages. Figure 3b) shows the river isochrone zones of the
144 Ardèche River. Figure 3c) shows the surface isochrone zones corresponding to the
145 upstream-most river isochrone zone. Each surface cell belongs to a surface isochrone

146 zone, but only the isochrone zones corresponding to one river isochrone zone are shown
 147 of Figure 3c) for clarity. The units used for isochrone zones are the number of
 148 MODCOU 3-hour time steps to the outlet (here the Mediterranean). The quad-tree
 149 structure of increasing resolution can be seen at the boundary of the basin in Figure 3c).
 150 In MODCOU, the volume of water V^{out} that discharges across each isochrone line in a
 151 computation time step is calculated differently for the surface network and for the river
 152 network. For routing on the land surface, all the volume of water V available in the
 153 isochrone zone is transferred to the downstream zone, as shown in Equation (2):

154

$$155 \quad V^{out} = V \quad (2)$$

156

157 For routing in the river network, V^{out} is proportional to the volume of water V available
 158 within the isochrone zone as shown in Equation (3):

159

$$160 \quad V^{out} = \beta \cdot V \quad (3)$$

161

162 where $\beta \in [0,1]$ is manually calibrated and usually set constant for large basins. Equation
 163 (3) can be viewed as the linear reservoir equation associated with a first-order explicit
 164 development of the continuity equation. The variation of volume related to lateral inflow
 165 and groundwater inflow of water are added to the volume V before calculating V^{out} . In
 166 SIM-France, β has four possible values: 0.5, 0.7, 0.8 and 0.9 as shown in Figure 4.

167 Equation (3) is applied to isochrone zones. Hence, the volume of water within each
168 isochrone zone needs be partitioned among its several river cells before computation of
169 the river-aquifer exchanges. This interaction depends on the aquifer head, on the river
170 head – assumed constant – and on the volume of water in the river cell when the river
171 infiltrates water into the aquifer. The partitioning of water volume among all cells of an
172 isochrone zone is done using a weighted average of the total amount of water reflecting
173 the spatial distribution of lateral inflow in each isochrone zone.

174 This formulation has several inconsistencies, especially when the junction between two
175 streams lies in the interior of an isochrone zone. This can have a consequence in river-
176 aquifer interactions, but also in the computation of river flow. Furthermore, using only
177 one set of isochrones in each basin can lead to two gages being located in one isochrone
178 zone (for example a zone containing a confluence with gaging stations on both sides), in
179 which case the flow computed by MODCOU has to match the flow at two different
180 gaging stations. In order to avoid such inconsistencies, MODCOU uses a unique set of
181 isochrone zones for each gage, such that each gage is the downstream-most river cell in
182 its isochrone zone. Therefore, several flow calculations can be performed for a given
183 cell, if the given cell belongs to several isochrone zones, which is inefficient and requires
184 time consuming processing work in case of change of number or locations or river gages.
185 The work done herein aims at simplifying the river modeling done within SIM-France
186 and to ensure evolution of the code as for instance the computation of river flow height
187 [*Saleh, et al.*, 2010; 2011] and velocity.

188 **2.2. RAPID**

189 RAPID [David, et al., 2011] is a river network model that uses a matrix-based version of
 190 the Muskingum routing scheme to calculate discharge simultaneously through a river
 191 network. RAPID was first applied to the Guadalupe and San Antonio River Basins in
 192 Texas using a vector-based river network extracted from a geographic information
 193 system dataset called NHDPlus [USEPA and USGS, 2007]. The governing equation used
 194 in RAPID is the following:

195

$$196 \quad (\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{C}_1 \cdot \mathbf{N}) \cdot \mathbf{Q}(t + \Delta t) = \mathbf{C}_1 \cdot \mathbf{Q}^e(t) + \mathbf{C}_2 \cdot (\mathbf{N} \cdot \mathbf{Q}(t) + \mathbf{Q}^e(t)) + \mathbf{C}_3 \cdot \mathbf{Q}(t) \quad (4)$$

197

198 where t is time and Δt is the river routing time step. The bolded notation is used for
 199 vectors and matrices. All matrices are square. \mathbf{I} is the identity matrix. \mathbf{N} is the river
 200 network connectivity matrix which has a value of one in element $N_{i,j}$ if reach j flows
 201 into reach i and zero elsewhere. \mathbf{C}_1 , \mathbf{C}_2 and \mathbf{C}_3 are parameter matrices which depend on
 202 Muskingum k , x and time step Δt . $\mathbf{Q}(t)$ is a vector of outflows from river reaches,
 203 and $\mathbf{Q}^e(t)$ is a vector of lateral inflows to these reaches from land surface runoff or
 204 groundwater inflow. The number of river quad-tree cells – here 24,264 – is used for
 205 dimension of all vectors and matrices, each element of the vectors corresponding to one
 206 river cell.

207 Provided with a vector of lateral inflows $\mathbf{Q}^e(t)$, RAPID calculates the flow and volume
 208 of water in all reaches of a river network, therefore allowing coupling of a river network
 209 to most land surface models and groundwater models. A different value for the
 210 parameters k and x of the Muskingum method can be assigned for each river quad-tree

211 cell, and RAPID uses two vectors \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{x} as input which are used to compute the values
 212 of the matrices \mathbf{C}_1 , \mathbf{C}_2 and \mathbf{C}_3 . However, before routing with RAPID, horizontal surface
 213 and subsurface routing is needed to transport runoff from a land surface cell to its
 214 corresponding river cell. In the present study, this surface and subsurface routing is done
 215 by MODCOU and RAPID replaces only the river modeling of MODCOU.
 216 The connectivity information that already exists between the river cells in the SIM-
 217 France river network is used to create the network connectivity matrix \mathbf{N} needed by
 218 RAPID and described in David et al. [2011].
 219 RAPID uses an automated parameter estimation procedure which, given lateral inflow
 220 \mathbf{Q}^e everywhere in the river network, and gage measurements at some locations,
 221 determines a best set of parameters based on a square error cost function. As in David et
 222 al. [2011], the search for optimal vectors of parameters \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{x} is made by determining
 223 two multiplying factors λ_k and λ_x such that:

224

$$225 \quad \forall j \in [1, 24264] \quad k_j^\rho = \lambda_k \cdot \frac{L_j}{c^0} \quad , \quad x_j^\rho = \lambda_x \cdot 0.1 \quad (5)$$

226

227 where j is the index of a quad-tree river cell, k_j^ρ and x_j^ρ are its Muskingum parameters,
 228 L_j is the flow distance within a river cell and $c^0 = 1km \cdot h^{-1} = 0.28m \cdot s^{-1}$ is a reference
 229 celerity for the flow wave. The parameters k_j^ρ and x_j^ρ are the same developed in David et
 230 al. [2011] and are referred to as ρ parameters in the following. In this study, the size of
 231 the side of each quad-tree river cell was used as an approximation of its flow distance.

232 The value of λ_x is bounded by the interval $[0,5]$ since the Muskingum method is stable
233 only for $x \in [0.0, 0.5]$, as shown in Cunge [1969]. The two scalars λ_k and λ_x are
234 determined such that the corresponding vectors \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{x} minimize the value of an
235 optimization criteria, or cost function. At the end of the optimization procedure, one
236 couple (λ_k, λ_x) is determined for a given part of the network. The values of λ_k and λ_x can
237 be determined for the entire study domain, or for sub-basins. If a sub-basin is located
238 downstream of another sub-basin, observations at a gaging station are used to provide the
239 upstream flow. Therefore, the delineation of sub-basins has to be consistent with the
240 location of available gage measurements.

241 The optimization procedure uses a line-search algorithm called the Nelder-Mead method
242 [*Nelder and Mead*, 1965] to determine the two scalars λ_k and λ_x .

243 The use of RAPID within SIM-France allows for flow and volume calculation at each
244 river cell and RAPID allows for the ready inclusion of additional river gages to be used
245 for calibration.

246

247 **3. Application of RAPID in France**

248 **3.1. Optimization of RAPID parameters**

249 This section focuses on the optimization of RAPID parameters with various options used
250 for k_j and x_j , for the optimization cost function and for the spatial variability of the
251 optimization. Two formulations are applied for computing k_j and x_j including one
252 formulation taking topography into account, two cost functions are tested, and three
253 different domain decompositions are used for optimization of parameters. In order to
254 simplify the optimization procedure and to ensure its repeatability, the parameter
255 estimation of RAPID was run uncoupled from SIM-France. Lateral and groundwater
256 inflow to the river network were obtained from a simulation using the standard version of
257 SIM-France (without RAPID) augmented with improved physics of the land surface
258 parameterization of ISBA developed in Decharme et al. [2006] and calibrated over
259 France by Quintana-Seguí et al. [2009]. Daily gage measurements from the French
260 HYDRO database [SCHAPI, 2008] were used for the parameter estimation as well as for
261 comparison with daily-averaged flow calculations .

262 The period of interest of the present study is August 1st 1995 to July 31st 2005. However,
263 the parameter estimation was performed using five months of the first winter (November
264 1st 1995 to March 31st 1996). As part of the first year (1995-1996) was used for
265 calibration, separate statistical results are presented for 1995-1996 and 1995-2005.

266 RAPID is run using a 30-minute time step and forced with 3-hourly lateral inflow
267 volumes; daily averages of computed discharge are compared with daily observations at
268 gage locations. There are 907 stations within the river network of SIM-France but only

269 493 of these have daily measurements every day during the first year (August 1st 1995 to
270 July 31st 1996). Amongst the 493 available stations, the best 291 were utilized for
271 optimization of RAPID parameters. The criterion used for the selection of the 291 best
272 stations is a Nash efficiency [*Nash and Sutcliffe, 1970*] better than 0.5 in the existing
273 SIM-France model (without RAPID) over 1995-1996. This selection excludes the gages
274 that are affected either by dams or by water diversions, and thus avoids unrealistic model
275 parameters due to anthropogenic modifications of river flow. Therefore, the proposed
276 routing scheme is optimized at locations where the previous routing scheme already
277 performed well.

278 The optimization is first performed on all rivers of the domain, therefore obtaining unique
279 values of λ_k and λ_x for all 24,264 river quad-tree cells. However, such an optimization
280 may not capture the variability between river basins and within sub-basins, due to the
281 various slopes or soil types. Therefore, the optimization procedure was also run
282 independently within the seven main river basins of France shown in Figure 5a) and
283 within the twenty sub-basins shown in Figure 5b).

284 In order to limit the effect of the initial state of the system at the beginning of the
285 optimization procedure, the initial flows on 01 November 1995 were estimated using a
286 simple run of RAPID. This estimation was obtained through running the routing model
287 from 01 August to 31 October 1995 with uniform values of λ_k and λ_x over the study
288 domain and initial flows $0 \text{ m}^3/\text{s}$ for all river cells on 01 August 1995.

289 The results of a parameter estimation procedure depend slightly on the initial guess for
290 the parameters. Therefore, three different sets of initial guesses for λ_k and λ_x were used:

291 $(\lambda_k, \lambda_x) = (2, 3)$, $(\lambda_k, \lambda_x) = (4, 1)$ or $(\lambda_k, \lambda_x) = (1, 1)$. The numerical values of these three
292 sets have no particular meaning and serve to start the optimization with a different initial
293 value for \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{x} . Each set of initial guesses leads to slightly different results for the
294 optimal λ_k and λ_x . Out of the three sets of optimal λ_k and λ_x that are determined for
295 each sub-basin, only the best is kept. This selection is based on the set of parameters that
296 leads to the smallest value of the optimization cost function.

297 Once the optimization procedure was completed, RAPID was run with SIM-France over
298 a 10-year period, from August 1995 to July 2005. This section focuses on the first year
299 while the next section studies the ten-year run. In order to compare the overall
300 performance of both routing models on the river network, the Nash efficiency and the
301 root mean square error (RMSE) were calculated for each of the 493 gaging stations over
302 1995-1996. These criteria are sorted and comparisons between the computations of
303 MODCOU and those of RAPID are shown in Figure 6. The two graphs in Figure 6 do
304 not allow comparing both models at each gaging station since the criteria are sorted, but
305 they depict the overall relative performance of both models. Table 1 shows the average
306 Nash efficiencies and RMSEs obtained by the original version of SIM-France and with
307 RAPID using various optimization procedures. During 1995-1996, 382 stations have a
308 positive efficiency using the standard version of SIM-France. The averages presented in
309 Table 1 show the best 382 values for both efficiency and RMSE, but similar patterns are
310 found for all 493 values or the best 291 values.

311 In its original formulation, the criterion used in the optimization of RAPID is based on a
312 square error cost function ϕ_1 . This function is the sum of the square errors between daily

313 measurements $Q_i^s(t)$ and daily-averaged $\overline{Q}_i(t)$ flow computations for several river
 314 gaging stations i and for everyday of a given period of time $[t_o, t_f]$, as shown in
 315 Equation (6).

316

$$317 \quad \phi_1(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{x}) = \sum_{t=t_o}^{t=t_f} \sum_{i=1}^{i=291} \left[\frac{\overline{Q}_i(t) - Q_i^s(t)}{f} \right]^2 \quad (6)$$

318

319 where the summation is made daily and at river cells with active gaging stations only. t_o
 320 and t_f are respectively the first day and last day used for the calculation of ϕ_1 .
 321 $i \in [1, 291]$ is the index for gaging stations. The model parameter vectors \mathbf{k} and \mathbf{x} are
 322 kept constant within the temporal interval $[t_o, t_f]$, and the cost function is calculated
 323 several times with different sets of parameters during the optimization procedure. f is a
 324 scalar that allows ϕ_1 to be of the order of magnitude of 10^1 which is helpful for automated
 325 optimization procedures. One can notice that, in ϕ_1 , a given fractional error (5% error
 326 between modeled and measured flow for example) for two stations with different orders
 327 of magnitude for river flow influences the cost function differently. A small fractional
 328 error on a gaging station with a large flow penalizes the cost function more than the same
 329 fractional error on a gaging station with small flow. The Nash efficiency E is highly
 330 influenced by the difference between the model computation and the mean average flow,
 331 as shown in Equation (7):

332

333

$$E = 1 - \frac{\sum_{t=t_0}^{t=t_f} [Q_i^g(t) - \bar{Q}_i(t)]^2}{\sum_{t=t_0}^{t=t_f} [Q_i^g(t) - \langle Q_i^g \rangle]^2} \quad (7)$$

334

335 where $\langle Q_i^g \rangle$ is the average daily flow observed at the gaging station i over a long
 336 interval. Therefore, the use of ϕ_1 penalizes the Nash efficiency. In order to avoid that the
 337 order of magnitude of flow at each gaging station influences their weight in the cost
 338 function, a new cost function ϕ_2 is created, as shown in Equation (8):

339

340

$$\phi_2(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{x}) = \sum_{t=t_0}^{t=t_f} \sum_{i=1}^{i=291} \left[\frac{\bar{Q}_i(t) - Q_i^g(t)}{\langle Q_i^g \rangle} \right]^2 \quad (8)$$

341

342 The new cost function ϕ_2 results in the changes shown in Table 1 and Figure 6 where the
 343 Nash efficiencies and RMSEs obtained with RAPID using ϕ_2 are better than with ϕ_1 .
 344 Overall, the Nash efficiencies and the RMSEs in RAPID are comparable while not as
 345 good as those obtained with the routing scheme of the original SIM-France. Therefore,
 346 the choice of the cost function is crucial to determining a set of optimal parameters.

347 In order to estimate the effect of more spatial variability in the optimization of RAPID
348 parameters, the parameter estimation was done on different basins and sub-basins. Figure
349 7 shows the sorted Nash efficiencies and RMSEs obtained with three degrees of spatial
350 variability of optimization using ϕ_2 as the cost function. These spatial variabilities
351 include “France” which has uniform parameters over the whole domain, “basins” for the
352 7 river basins of Figure 5a) (Adour, Garonne, Loire, Seine, Meuse, Rhône and Hérault)
353 and “sub-basins” where the major river basins have been divided into 20 sub-basins as
354 shown in Figure 5b). The increase in spatial variability of optimization increases the
355 efficiency while the RMSE remains almost constant, but the increase in efficiency is
356 limited compared to that triggered by a change in the cost function. The values of
357 parameters λ_k and λ_x obtained with the parameter estimation procedure using the second
358 cost function are shown in Table 2.

359 The number of gaging stations in a basin can be divided by the number of river cells in
360 the basin to calculate an observability ratio O , as done in Table 2. This ratio ranges from
361 $O = 22$ on the Ardèche River to $O = 1307$ downstream of the Seine River, showing a wide
362 spread in density of observations. The Seine River, of great interest to the French
363 community, has a higher resolution and therefore more river cells in SIM-France than any
364 other basin – all the river cells are of size 1 km – which explains the lower observability
365 ratio. Unrealistically low results are obtained for λ_k in the downstream part of the Seine
366 River and for the Ardèche River Basin. The former is explained by the limited amount of
367 stations used for optimization in the downstream part of the Seine River Basin (only one
368 station). The latter is due to the basin being small with regards to the number of gages

369 (leading to a low observability ratio) and therefore over-constraining the optimization
 370 procedure. The observability ratio is therefore a key metric for the quality of the
 371 optimization. These unrealistic values for λ_k may partly explain why the effect of
 372 optimization from 7 basins to 20 sub-basins is very limited. As expected, the
 373 optimization procedure converges to the largest values of the parameter λ_k for the Seine
 374 and Loire rivers which are the slowest rivers. For each of the 7 major basins, the value of
 375 λ_k is bounded by the value of λ_k for each of their corresponding sub-basins. Also, one
 376 can notice that upstream parts of a basin are usually faster (lower λ_k) than downstream
 377 parts as can be seen for the upstream part of the Loire Basin, and for the Allier Basin
 378 which are located in high topography areas. This shows that – as expected – topography
 379 plays an important role in the travel time of flow waves. This motivates a final
 380 experiment where RAPID model parameters are estimated based on topography as shown
 381 in Equation (9).

382

$$383 \quad \forall j \in [1, 24264] \quad k_j^\sigma = \lambda_k \cdot \alpha \cdot \frac{d_{i,j}}{\sqrt{s_{i,j}}} \quad , \quad x_j^\sigma = \lambda_x \cdot 0.1 \quad (9)$$

384

385 This formulation of k_j^σ is adapted from Equation (1) which is used to determine the
 386 location of isochrone zones. In the following, the parameters k_j^σ and x_j^σ of Equation (9)
 387 are referred to as σ parameters. Table 1 shows the average efficiencies and RMSEs
 388 obtained with σ parameters using ϕ_1 and ϕ_2 uniformly over France, and with

389 σ parameters over the 7 major basins using ϕ_2 . Figure 8 shows the sorted efficiencies
390 and RMSEs obtained with σ parameters using ϕ_1 and ϕ_2 uniformly over France. From
391 Table 1 and Figure 8 one can conclude that regardless of the optimization cost function
392 used, σ parameters allow to obtain better results than ρ parameters. Therefore, taking
393 topography into account in the travel time of the flow wave is advantageous. Similarly,
394 regardless of the parameters used and of the spatial resolution of the optimization,
395 optimizing using ϕ_2 allows obtaining better average results than with ϕ_1 . The average
396 results obtained using σ parameters and ϕ_2 are comparable (slightly better) than those
397 obtained by the original routing module of SIM-France. One should note however, that
398 the best stations with MODCOU are better than the best with RAPID, while the worse
399 stations in MODCOU are worse than the worst in RAPID. This suggests a flattening of
400 the curves most likely due to equal treatment of all stations in the ϕ_2 cost function.

401 Finally, regardless of the cost function used in optimization or the set of parameters
402 (σ and ρ) basin and sub-basin optimizations have a limited effect on overall
403 performance of RAPID. This suggests that increased inter-basin and intra-basin
404 variability of river routing parameters has little effect on efficiency or RMSE at the
405 spatial scale of France as it is modeled in SIM-France.

406 **3.2. Comparison of routing schemes over 10 years**

407 Over 1995-2005, only 3 gaging stations have a full daily record. Therefore, results
408 presented in this section are using stations with gaps in observations; efficiency and
409 RMSE are calculated only at times when measurements are available. A threshold of
410 70% of daily measurements available over 1995-2005 leads to selecting 493 gaging

411 stations. These stations differ slightly from the ones used in 1995-1996. Out of the 493
412 stations that have full daily record in 1995-1996, 436 stations are included in the 1995-
413 2005 period. Similarly, out of the best 291 stations that have full daily record in 1995-
414 1996, 261 are included in 1995-2005. During 1995-2005, 427 out of the 493 stations
415 have a positive efficiency using the standard version of SIM-France. Table 1 shows
416 average statistics for 1995-2005 for the best 427 values for both efficiency and RMSE,
417 but similar patterns are found for all 493 values. The conclusions drawn in Section 3.2.
418 regarding the sets of parameters, the cost functions and the spatial resolution of the
419 optimization are still valid for the ten-year simulation. However, one should note that
420 over ten years, MODCOU performs slightly better than RAPID using the best set of
421 options. This may be explained by the slightly different stations used for the 5-month
422 optimization and for the ten-year study. However, five months of the first year seem to
423 be sufficient to capture RAPID parameters and allow comparable performance between
424 MODCOU and RAPID over ten years. Figure 9 shows the sorted efficiencies and
425 RMSEs obtained with MODCOU and with RAPID with σ parameters optimized
426 uniformly over France using ϕ_2 . Globally the two models perform comparably although,
427 similarly to 1995-1996 results, the best stations are degraded and some stations with low
428 but positive efficiency are improved. Figure 10 shows observations and modeled
429 hydrographs during 1995-1996 and 1995-2005 for the Meuse River at Stenay (the
430 location of this station is shown in Figure 11) in which MODCOU and RAPID are almost
431 indiscernible. One should note, however, that in all the hydrographs plotted (not shown)
432 the timing of events differs slightly between the two models, none of which being

433 consistently better than the other regardless of the optimization options as expected from
434 results shown in Table 1 and Figure 9.

435 Figure 11 shows a spatial comparison of efficiencies obtained over France.

436 Improvements and degradations of statistical results between MODCOU and RAPID
437 have no particular spatial patterns. Overall, the discharge simulated by MODCOU and
438 RAPID are similar in RMSE and Nash efficiency. This similarity can be explained by
439 the strong dependence of discharge calculations on the lateral inflow forcing which is the
440 same for both river routing schemes. Furthermore, the routing equations used in
441 MODCOU and RAPID are comparable (the linear reservoir equation in SIM-France is a
442 simplified Muskingum equation, given $x=0$). The addition of RAPID to SIM-France can
443 be regarded as advantageous since RAPID provides with flow and volume of water in all
444 the cells of the river network separately and provides flexibility in the number and
445 location of river gages, which was not the case in the original version of SIM-France.
446 Also, the 30-min time step in RAPID allows potential comparisons with observations at
447 higher temporal resolution than the 3-hour time step of MODCOU. Finally, RAPID is
448 better suited than MODCOU for computation of river flow height in all grid cells of the
449 river network separately hence allowing the study of river-aquifer exchanges as shown in
450 Saleh et al. [2010; 2011].

451 **3.3. Influence of dams on river flow**

452 RAPID does not have a specific physical model for treatment of dams. However, the
453 model is designed such that observations at gaging stations can easily be substituted for
454 upstream flow. This capability is not available in the routing scheme of MODCOU and
455 is useful for a gaging station located at the outlet of a dam because the flows discharging

456 from man-made infrastructures reflect human decisions. In France, the quality of flow
457 calculations at the outlet of the Rhône River (at Beaucaire) is influenced by the dam at
458 the outlet of Lake Geneva. Figure 12 demonstrates the influence of forcing with
459 observations at Pougny (downstream of the dam) on the calculation of flow at the outlet
460 of the Rhône River Basin. The gaging station a Pougny is the outlet of the “Rhône
461 upstream” basin in Figure 5b) and is also shown on Figure 11. The first year (August 1st
462 1995 – July 31st 1996) was used for this experiment. Forcing with observations at Lake
463 Geneva increases the Nash Efficiency from 0.49 to 0.62 at Beaucaire, the outlet of the
464 Rhône basin.

465

466 **4. Conclusions**

467 The river routing in SIM-France is done by MODCOU which uses groups of cells called
468 isochrone zones for its computations and does not directly compute flow and volume of
469 water for each cell of its quad-tree river network. The use of isochrones limits the
470 flexibility in the number and location of river gages. The work in this paper presents the
471 replacement of the river routing module in MODCOU by the river network model called
472 RAPID. Information on the network connectivity between the quad-tree river cells of
473 SIM-France is readily available in tables that relate upstream and downstream cells.
474 These tables can be used directly to create the network matrix of RAPID. A ten-year
475 study of river flow in Metropolitan France is presented comparing RAPID and the
476 routing module of MODCOU. An automated procedure for determining optimal model
477 parameters is available in RAPID and various options for the estimation of the
478 parameters are investigated. Sub-basin optimization increases model performance but its
479 influence is much smaller than the choice of the cost function. A cost function was
480 developed that normalizes the square-error between observations at each river gage and
481 RAPID computations by the average flow at the gage. This cost function is found to
482 globally increase the Nash efficiency of computed flow in all gages. We suggest that this
483 is due to the average flow having an influence on the computation of the Nash efficiency.
484 Therefore, the use of an appropriate criterion for quantifying the quality of river flow as
485 the cost function for the optimization procedure helps the betterment of model
486 computations. Also, flow wave celerities included in the temporal parameter of the
487 Muskingum method benefit from taking into account topography when compared to a
488 simple constant celerity formulation. Overall, the computation obtained with the addition

489 of RAPID are comparable to those of the original river routing module in SIM-France.
490 We consider the addition of RAPID as advantageous since flow and volume of water is
491 directly computed for each cell of the quad-tree river network. The formulation of
492 RAPID allows for easily substituting observed flows for the upstream calculated flow,
493 which is advantageous when considering a man-made infrastructure as was shown for the
494 Rhône River.
495

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509

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608
609

610 Table 1 Average efficiencies and average root mean square errors computed for MODCOU and for RAPID with 7 different
 611 sets of parameters. The best 382 values are used for 1995-1996 and the best 427 values are used for 1995-2005.

Vector of parameters used in optimization	Optimization cost function	Spatial optimization	Model	1995-1996		1995-2005	
				Best 382 values		Best 427 values	
				Average efficiency	Average RMSE (m ³ /s)	Average efficiency	Average RMSE (m ³ /s)
N/A	N/A	N/A	MODCOU	0.617	8.37	0.650	12.67
ρ	ϕ_1	France	RAPID	0.581	8.85	0.614	13.64
ρ	ϕ_2	France	RAPID	0.611	8.39	0.638	13.07
ρ	ϕ_2	7 basins	RAPID	0.615	8.40	0.640	13.06
ρ	ϕ_2	20 sub-basins	RAPID	0.615	8.38	0.637	13.04
σ	ϕ_1	France	RAPID	0.602	8.63	0.632	13.25
σ	ϕ_2	France	RAPID	0.620	8.37	0.647	12.91
σ	ϕ_2	7 basins	RAPID	0.624	8.32	0.646	12.92

612

613 Table 2 Results of optimization procedure using ρ parameters and the ϕ_2 cost function

Basin	Sub-basin	Number of river cells	Number of stations	Observability ratio	Optimized λ_k	Optimized λ_x	Basin	Sub-basin	Number of river cells	Number of stations	Observability ratio	Optimized λ_k	Optimized λ_x
France	all basin	24264	291	83.4	0.366	0.237	Loire	Loire downstream	1763	25	70.5	0.436	0.091
Adour	all basin	666	9	74.0	0.375	0.313	Seine	all basin	5115	41	124.8	0.531	0.234
Garonne	all basin	2985	58	51.5	0.294	0.009	Seine	Seine upstream	2919	30	97.3	0.579	0.145
Garonne	Garonne upstream	558	5	111.6	0.160	0.420	Seine	Oise	889	10	88.9	0.469	3.766
Garonne	Tarn	356	8	44.5	0.152	0.674	Seine	Seine downstream	1307	1	1307.0	0.031	4.984
Garonne	Lot	369	10	36.9	0.394	0.113	Meuse	all basin	832	3	277.3	0.383	0.059
Garonne	Dordogne	431	12	35.9	0.356	0.056	Rhône	all basin	3426	51	67.2	0.256	0.118
Garonne	Garonne downstream	1271	23	55.3	0.375	0.313	Rhône	Saône	1043	32	32.6	0.236	0.007
Loire	all basin	4138	88	47.0	0.414	0.197	Rhône	Ardèche	66	3	22.0	0.000	0.156
Loire	Vienne	706	20	35.3	0.386	0.145	Rhône	Rhône upstream	279	1	279.0	0.500	4.750
Loire	Allier	458	17	26.9	0.308	2.670	Rhône	Rhône downstream	2038	15	135.9	0.403	0.076
Loire	Loire upstream	541	12	45.1	0.391	0.305	Hérault	Hérault	101	3	33.7	0.375	4.813
Loire	Loir	670	14	47.9	0.453	0.273							

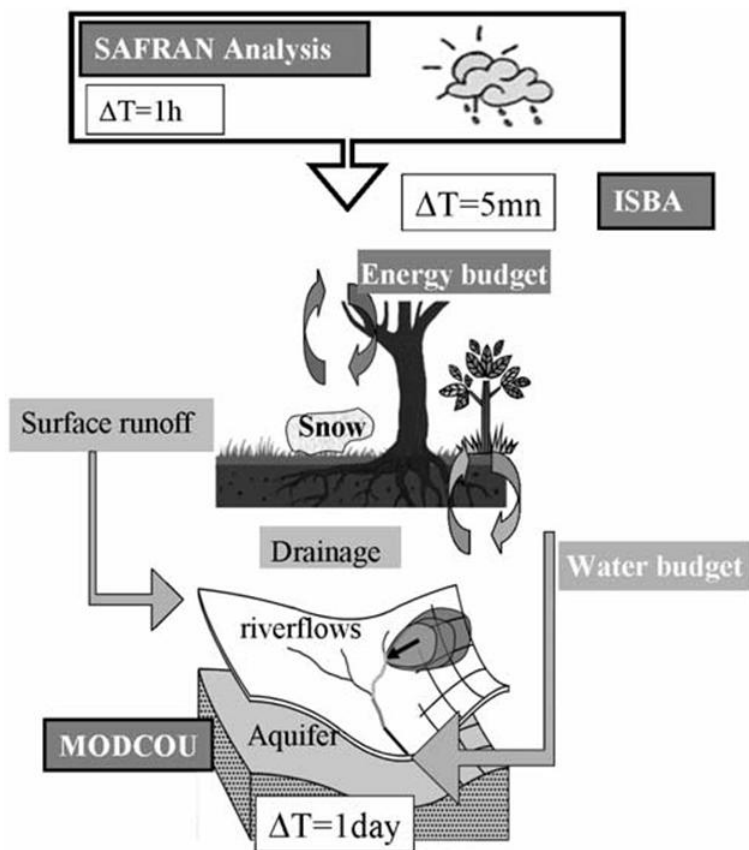
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615 **Captions to illustrations**

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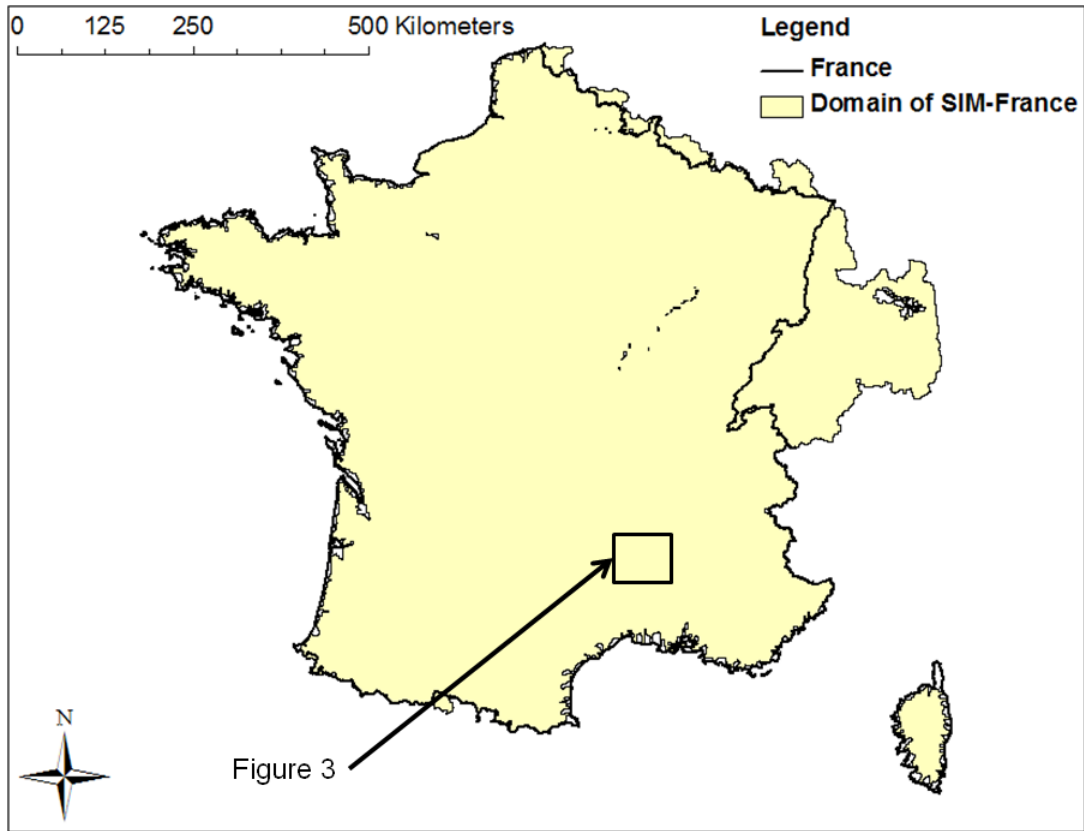
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620 Figure 1 Structure of SIM-France, from Habets et al. [2008]

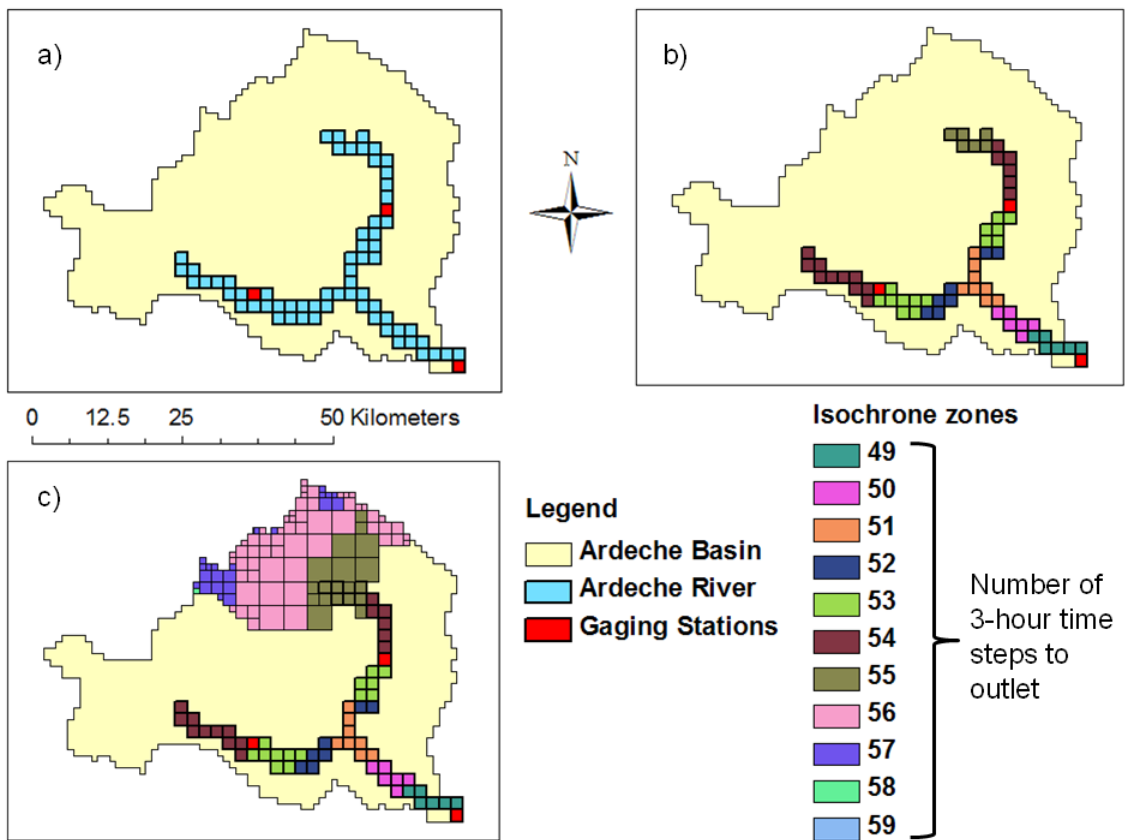
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623 Figure 2 France and computational domain of SIM-France

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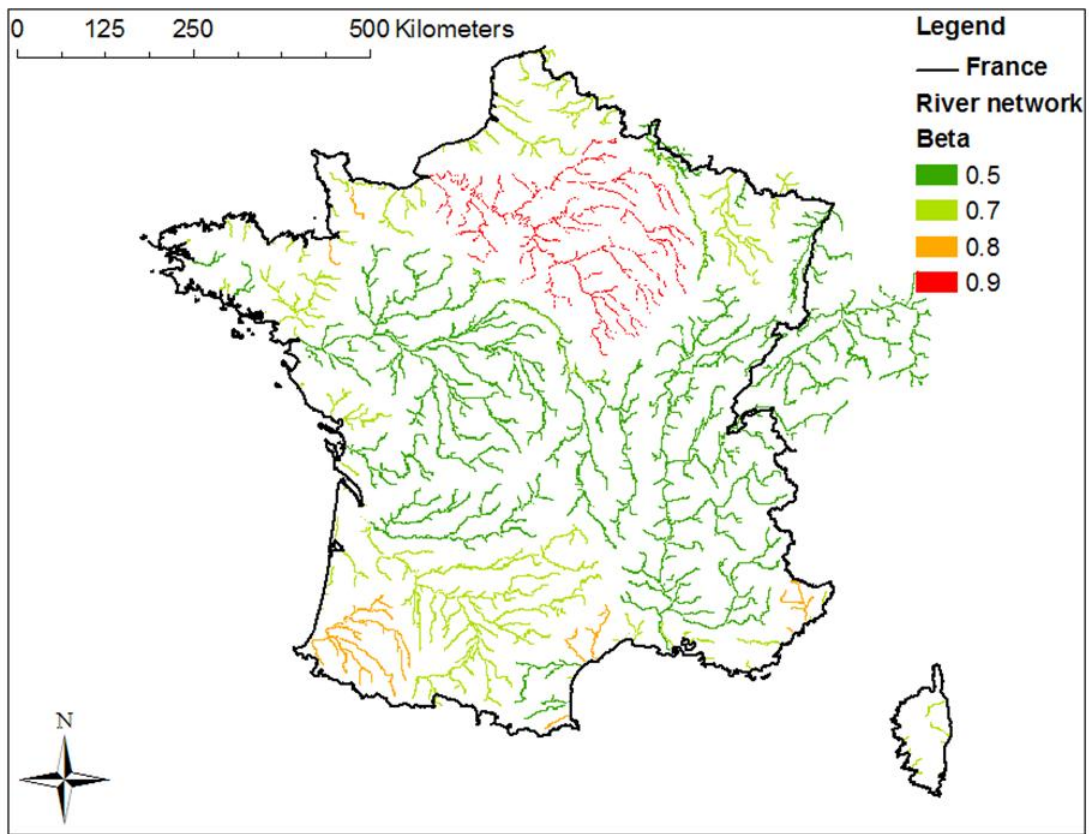


625

626 Figure 3 Surface and river isochrone zones in Ardèche Basin in MODCOU within

627 SIM-France

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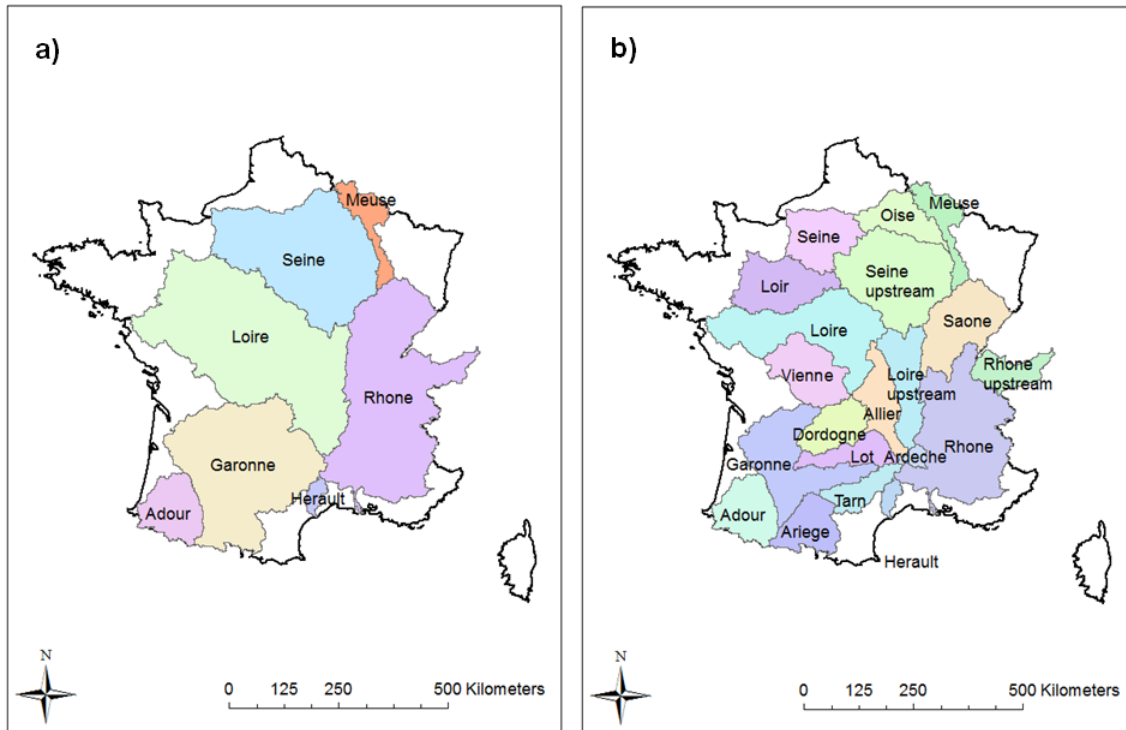


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630 Figure 4 Map of the parameter β used for river routing in MODCOU within SIM-

631 France

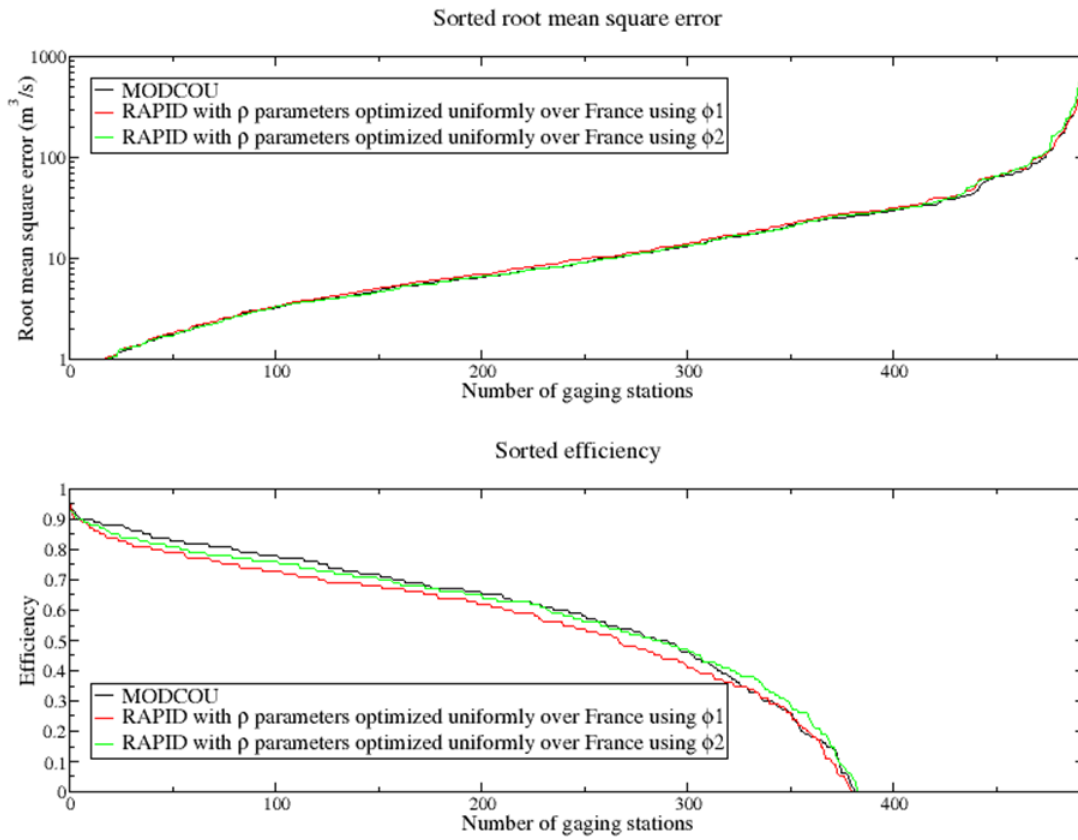
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634 Figure 5 Basins treated independently during optimization of RAPID parameters in
 635 SIM-France. a) Seven major river basins. b) Twenty sub-basins

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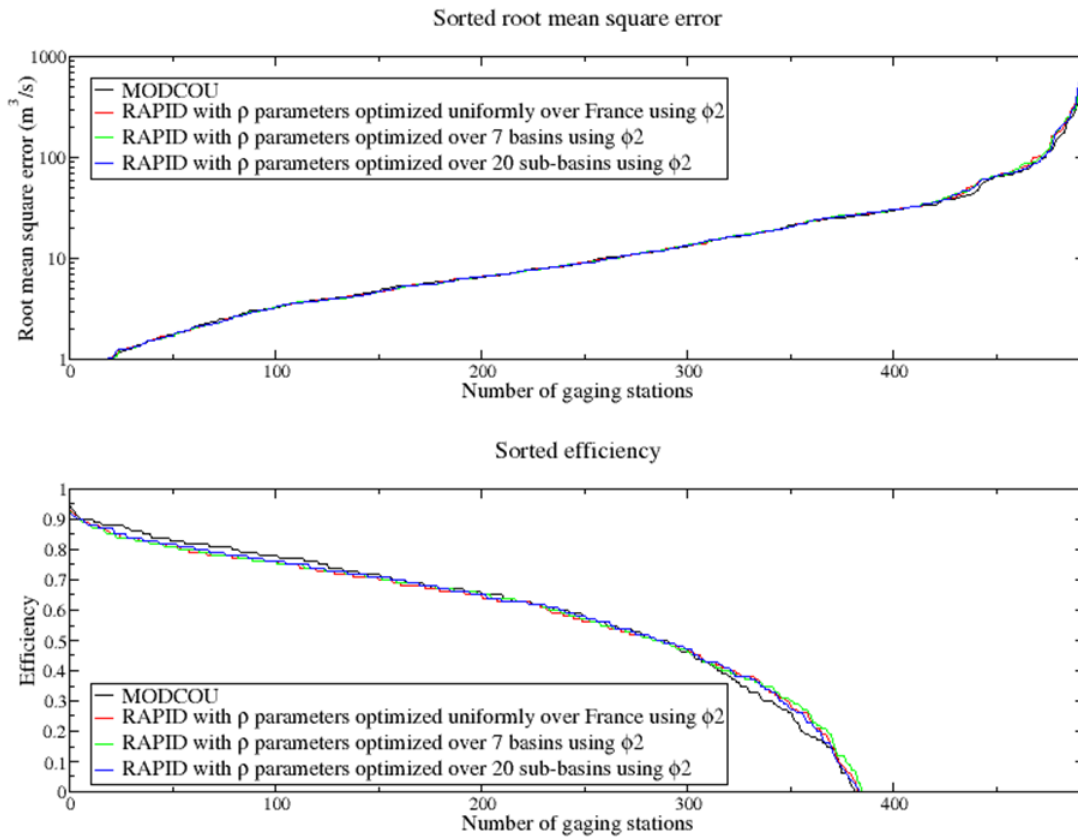
638 Figure 6 Comparison of sorted RMSEs and efficiencies for the year 1995-1996

639 between MODCOU and RAPID with ρ parameters optimized uniformly over France

640 using the original cost function ϕ_1 and using the new cost function ϕ_2

641

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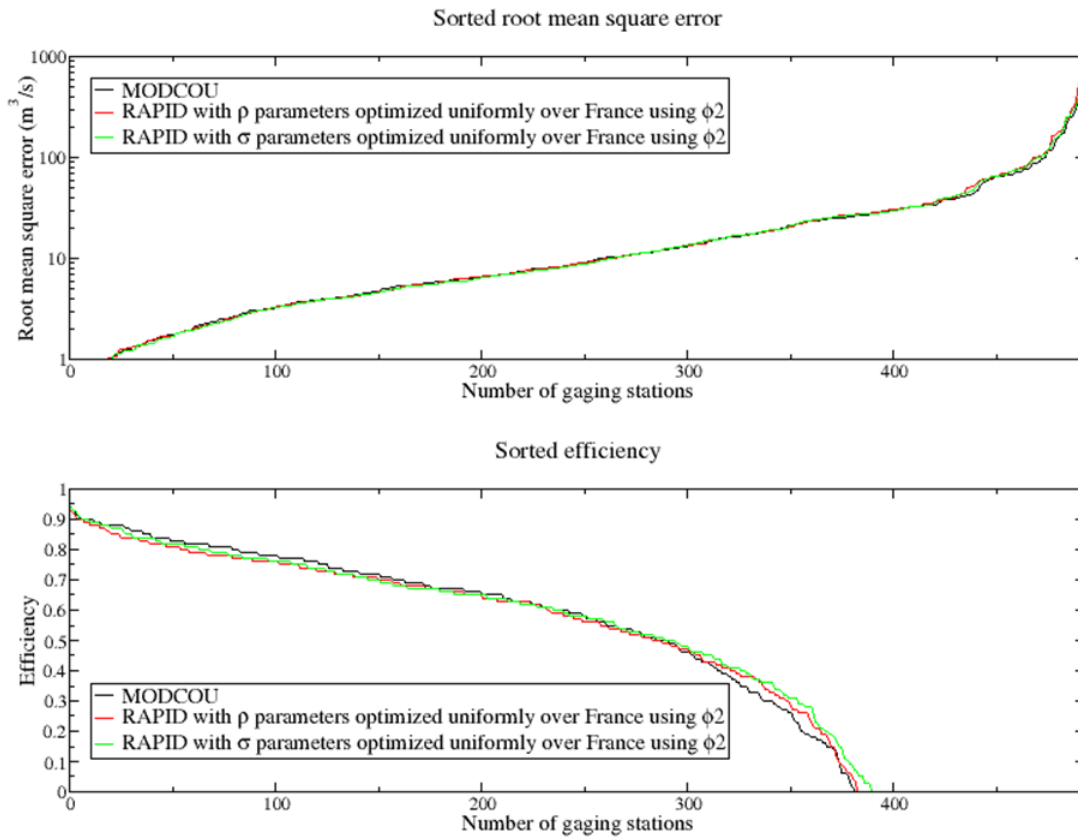


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644 Figure 7 Effect of sub-basin optimization for RAPID on RMSEs and efficiencies

645 for the year 1995-1996 with ρ parameters using the new cost function ϕ_2

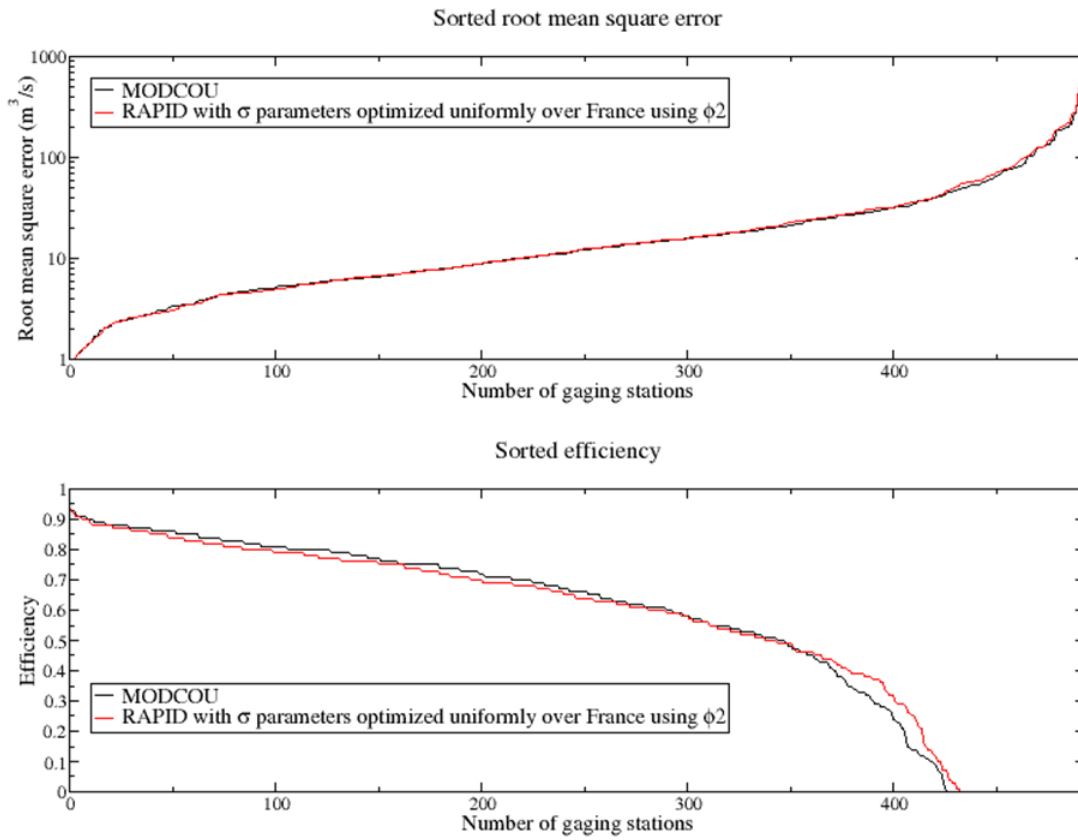
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648 Figure 8 Effect of set of parameters ρ and σ for RAPID on RMSEs and efficiencies

649 for the year 1995-1996 using the new cost function ϕ_2 uniformly over France

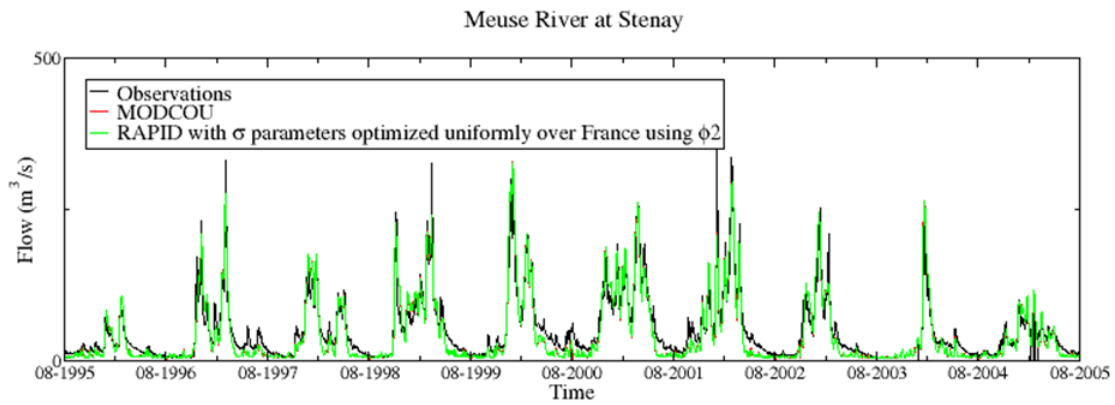
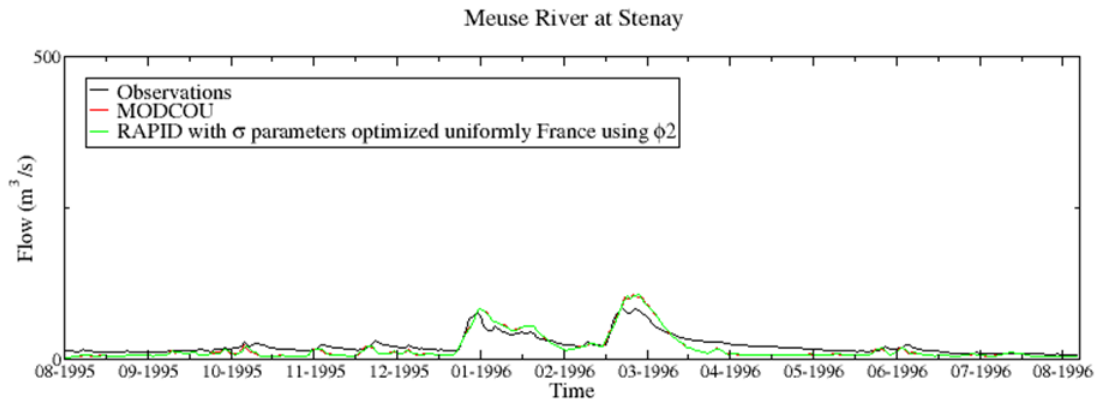


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651 Figure 9 Comparison of sorted RMSEs and efficiencies for the years 1995-2005

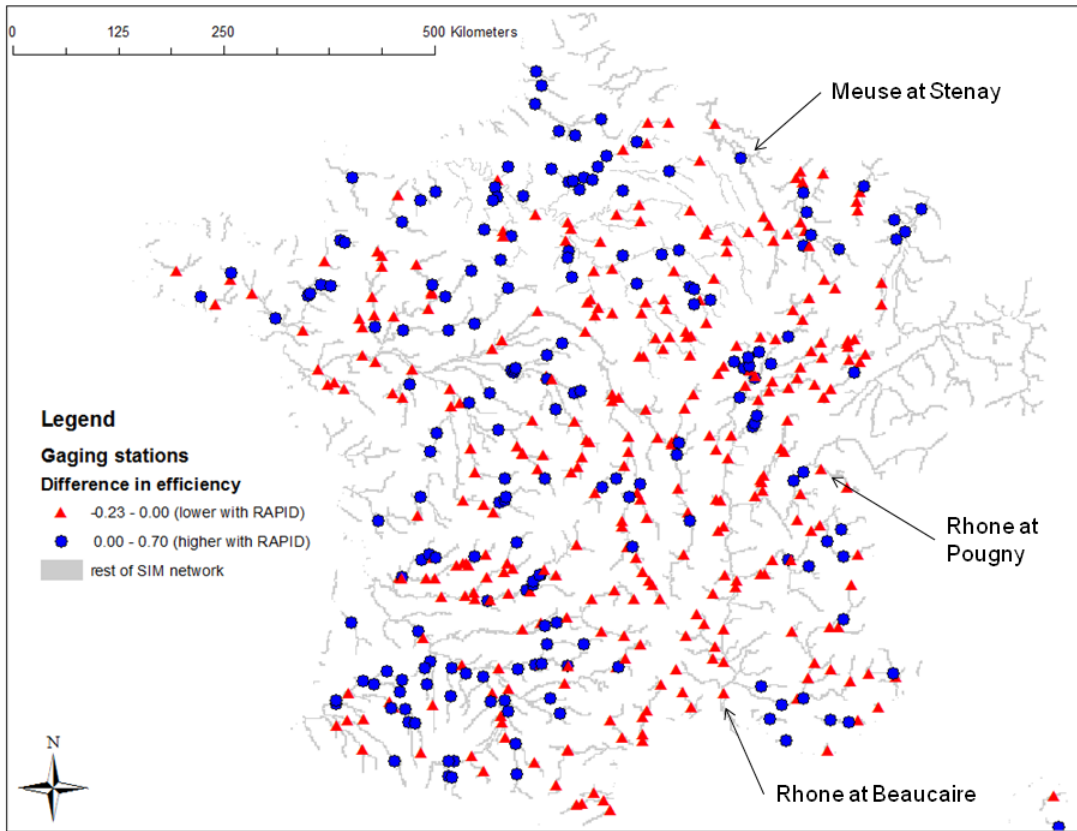
652 between MODCOU and RAPID with σ parameters optimized uniformly over France

653 using the new cost function ϕ_2



654

655 Figure 10 Comparison of 1995-1996 and 1995-2005 hydrographs for the Meuse
 656 River at Stenay obtained by MODCOU and RAPID with σ parameters optimized
 657 uniformly over France using the new cost function ϕ_2

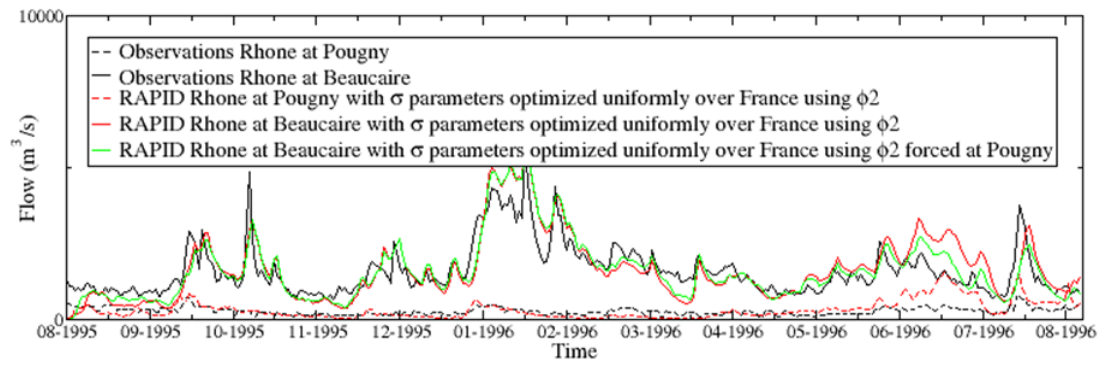


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659 Figure 11 Spatial difference of efficiencies obtained for the years 1995-2005
 660 between RAPID using σ parameters optimized uniformly over France using the new cost
 661 function ϕ_2 and MODCOU

662

Influence of dam at Pougny on river flow at Beaucaire



663

664 Figure 12 Comparison of RAPID discharge calculation at the outlet of the Rhône

665 River (at Beaucaire) with and without forcing at the outlet of Lake Geneva (at Pougny).