Assessing the climate impact of the AHEAD multi-fuel blended wing body

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Abstract

Air traffic is important to our society and guarantees mobility especially for long distances. Air traffic is also contributing to climate warming via emissions of CO2 and various non-CO2 effects, such as contrail-cirrus or increase in ozone concentrations. Here we investigate the climate impact of a future aircraft design, a multi fuel blended wing body (MF-BWB), conceptually designed within the EU-project AHEAD. We re-calculate the parameters for the contrail formation criterion, since this aircraft has very different characteristics compared to conventional technologies and show that contrail formation potentially already occurs at lower altitudes than for conventional aircraft. The geometry of the contrails, however, is similar to conventional aircraft, as detailed LES simulations show. The global contrail-cirrus coverage and related radiative forcing is investigated with a climate model including a contrail-cirrus parameterisation and shows an increase in contrail-cirrus radiative forcing compared to conventional technologies, if the number of emitted particles is equal to conventional technologies. However, there are strong indications that the AHEAD engines would have a substantial reduction in the emission of soot particles and there are strong indications that this leads to a substantial reduction in the contrail-cirrus radiative forcing. An overall climate impact assessment with a climate-chemistry response model shows that the climate impact is likely to be reduced by 20% to 25% compared to a future aircraft with conventional technologies. We further tested the sensitivity of this result with respect to different future scenarios for the use of bio fuels, improvements of the fuel efficiency for conventional aircraft and the impact of the number of emitted soot particles on the radiative forcing. Only the latter has the potential to significantly impact our findings and needs further investigation. Our findings show that the development of new and climate compatible aircraft designs requires the inclusion of climate impact assessments already at an early stage, i.e. pre-design level.

Keywords: AHEAD project, Multi fuel blended wing body, contrails, climate impact, air traffic

1 Introduction

Air traffic is a part of our mobility with an increasing rate in transport volume in the order of 5% per year (Lee et al., 2010). Clean Sky, the European private public partnership (www.cleansky.eu), states that “Air transport’s contribution to climate change represents 2% of human-induced CO2 emissions”. Putting the focus from a carbon footprint to an ecological or climate footprint increases the importance of air traffic on climate change. Contrail-cirrus, atmospheric ozone, methane, water vapour, and particle concentrations are altered by aviation and add to the carbon dioxide induced aviation’s contribution to climate change. Hence a 2% contribution to carbon dioxide emissions turns into a roughly 5% contribution to climate change (Lee et al., 2010). The European Commission whitepaper (EC, 2011a) clearly states that “transport is fundamental to our economy and society” and that it “is aiming at a competitive and resource efficient transport system” to contribute to “limiting climate change below 2°C”. Thus it implies for new aircraft developments to include climate impact assessments rather than evaluations of CO2 emissions as currently frequently done, e.g. within Clean Sky.

Within the European project AHEAD (www.ahead-euproject.eu) new combustor technologies were investigated for use at a blended wing body (BWB). Two types of fuels are considered in series in two combustion chambers in order to reduce emissions (multi-fuel blended wing body, MF-BWB). In a first combustion chamber liquid hydrogen (LH2) or liquid natural gas (LNG), i.e. methane, is burnt to reduce the CO2 emissions. A part of the emerging exhaust is inserted into the second combustor chamber, which is fueled with bio kerosene and burnt flameless in a water vapour
rich and low oxygen environment reducing NOx emissions. From the conceptual point a decrease in emissions is obvious, but the impact on climate via non-CO2 effects is not obvious, since the impact also depends on the region where species are emitted (e.g., Grewe and Stenke, 2008; Frömming et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the non-CO2 effects as well, since the radiative forcing, e.g., of todays contrail-cirrus is larger than that of CO2 ever since emitted by air traffic (Burkhardt and Kärcher, 2011). Here we exemplarily demonstrate the importance and need for the inclusion of such a climate assessment, already during the development of new technologies, which includes CO2, contrail-cirrus, NOx, and water vapour effects. Section 2 will give an overview on the applied methods and the applied atmospheric models. Section 3 describes the AHEAD engine and aircraft including emissions on both engine and fleet basis. Section 4 shows results on the simulation of contrails for the AHEAD aircraft and Section 5 presents the potential of the AHEAD aircraft to reduce the overall climate impact relative to a conventional technology.

2 Methods

2.1 Overview

Table 1 provides an overview on the applied atmospheric models (also briefly described in the following sections) and methods. We first calculated the parameters for the contrail formation criterion (Schmidt-Appelman criterion) based on the use of two different fuels. We then performed Large-Eddy-Simulations (LES) to describe the contrail geometry and microphysical properties for the new and a reference aircraft (Section 2.2, EULAG model). In a third step, the probability of contrail formation at a given atmospheric state, the global coverage and radiative forcing (RF) of a fleet of AHEAD aircraft are calculated using a climate model which includes a contrail-cirrus parameterisation (Section 2.3, ECHAM4/5-CCMod). Results from this simulation are then used in a climate-chemistry response model (Section 2.4, AirClim) to estimate the overall climate impact of a fleet of AHEAD aircraft.

We concentrate on the contribution of the AHEAD technology to a reduction of the long-term temperature change. In other words we consider the question: “How much is the AHEAD technology reducing the long-term climate impact in comparison to a future conventional technology?”. This defines well the climate objective (Table 1) and important implications of the overall climate assessment can be deduced (see also Tables 2, 3 and Grewe and Dahlmann (2015) for the procedure).

We define a reference aircraft with approximately the same range (7,500 nm, roughly 14,000 km), the B777-800 (abbreviated as B787) and as a comparison also the B777-ER200 (B777), which comprise two different technology levels a newer and an older one, respectively. Since we address the contribution to a long-term climate impact, we need to consider a whole fleet. We regard a plausible fleet development: an entry into service (EIS) for the AHEAD aircraft in 2050, a constant increase of the fleet size until 2075. Since we regard an entry into service (EIS) for the AHEAD aircraft in 2050, we also add some future enhancements in fuel efficiency of 10% for the refer-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model/Method</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAC</td>
<td>Schmidt-Appleman criterion</td>
<td>Condition for contrail formation</td>
<td>SCHUMANN (1996)</td>
<td>Calculation of parameters required due to the use of two fuels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EULAG-LCM</td>
<td>EUlerian and LAGrangian framework for solving the anelastic equations with a Lagrangian Cirrus Module</td>
<td>Characterisation of early contrail stage</td>
<td>PRUSA et al. (2008); SÖLCH and KÄRCHER (2010)</td>
<td>Large-Eddy-Simulation including a Lagrangian tracking of ice crystals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHAM5-CCMod</td>
<td>ECHAM5 incl. updated Contrail-Cirrus Model</td>
<td>Estimate of soot reduction impact on contrail-cirrus RF</td>
<td>BOCK (2014)</td>
<td>2-moment scheme for cirrus and contrails: ice mass and number density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AirClim</td>
<td>Air traffic Climate impact model</td>
<td>Estimate of overall climate impact</td>
<td>GREWE and STENKE (2008); DAHLMANN et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Response model including effects from CO2, NOx, H2O and contrail-cirrus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate objective</td>
<td>Detailed formulation of the underlying objective with regard to climate mitigation</td>
<td>Basis for the climate impact assessment</td>
<td>GREWE and DAHLMANN (2015)</td>
<td>Defines implicitly climate metric, time horizon, fleet development, and a reference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Overview on the methods and models used in this study.
The climate impact assessment of this new aircraft requires some considerations with respect to contrail processes. These are presented in the following sections. Other effects arising from CO₂, H₂O, and NOₓ emissions can be characterised by the emission strength and conditions we chose an ambient temperature of 217 K, a Brunt-Väisälä frequency of 1.15 10⁻⁵ s⁻¹ and a relative humidity with respect to ice of 120 %. The latter is a moderate supersaturation value that guarantees that the contrail would be persistent, but natural cirrus formation via homogeneous freezing of ambient liquid aerosol droplets would not yet commence.

2.3 ECHAM4/5-CCMod

We study the effect of contrail-cirrus on climate using the German Community Climate Model ECHAM4-CCMod that was extended to simulate contrail cirrus as an independent cloud class consistent with the natural cloud scheme (Burkhardt and Kärcher, 2009). The frequency of ice supersaturation, which is the condition for contrail-cirrus persistence, is parameterised (Burkhardt et al., 2008). The following processes controlling contrail cirrus coverage and properties are parameterised:

1. contrail formation according to the Schmidt-Appleman criterion (see Section 4.1)
2. advection of contrails with the flow and persistence depending on ice supersaturation
3. contrail spreading proportional to the wind shear and vertical extent of the contrails
4. microphysical processes and optical properties as parameterised for natural clouds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Basic assumptions for the AHEAD fleet scenario.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference aircraft with year 2000 technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference aircraft with year 2014 technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference aircraft with year 2050 technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry into Service (EIS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full fleet size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant market share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future fuel efficiency improvement (B7878-FUT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon neutral contribution by drop-in bio fuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of city pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual flown reference distance for full fleet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The radiative impact of contrail-cirrus depends on the background cloudiness (natural clouds and contrail-cirrus). Therefore, we need to prescribe the emissions of a complete air traffic fleet in our model. In order to be able to isolate the effect of changing to AHEAD aircraft we replace all aircraft by AHEAD aircraft. We calculate the effect of contrail-cirrus taking into account the change in the Schmidt-Appleman criterion (Section 4.1) and an increase in the cruise altitude by 2000 m. Additionally, we performed a simulation without changes in cruise altitude and with small changes (700 m) for diagnostic purpose, i.e. to separate the effect of changing the SAC and changing the cruise altitude. The AERO2k air traffic scenario (Eyers et al., 2004) was employed for the base case simulation as well as for the parametric studies on the cruise altitude changes. Simulations over 10 years were carried out with ECHAM4-CCMod including online calculations of the stratosphere-adjusted radiative forcing (e.g. Hansen et al., 1997) as a measure for the radiative imbalance of the atmosphere due to contrail-cirrus.

Note that in these simulations we do not calculate explicitly any changes that may be due to changes in the soot number emissions as the latter are not known. Using LH2 or LNG in one of the combustors should lead to a significant reduction in soot number emissions. These are expected to lead to significant reductions in the initial ice crystal number (Kärcher and Yu, 2009; Kärcher et al., 2015) and therefore in contrail-cirrus radiative forcing (Zhang et al., 1999; Meerkötter et al., 1999). This effect is dependent on ambient temperatures. A decrease in temperature, as connected with an increase in flight level, leads to an increase in initial ice crystal number. Therefore, we refer to a recently updated model version ECHAM5-CCMod (Bock, 2014; Bock and Burkhardt, 2016), which includes not only the parameterisation of the contrail-cirrus ice mass but also the ice particle number densities. As the results of Bock (2014) indicate a substantial reduction in the RF of around 60 % if the soot emission number is globally reduced by 80 %, we consider this effect also for the AHEAD simulations (Section 5).

### 2.4 AirClim

The climate-chemistry response model AirClim (Grewe and Stenke, 2008; Dahlmann et al., revised) combines results of detailed climate-chemistry models, with emission data to obtain time series of RF and temperature changes caused by these emissions. These climate-chemistry model results describe the impact of a local emission on the radiation budget, e.g. the change in contrail-cirrus radiative forcing due to air traffic as resulting from the simulations described in Section 2.3, and eventually on the global mean near surface temperature. So far, the impact of CO2, NOx, H2O emissions and flight distances on the atmosphere are taken into account via the climate agents CO2, O3, CH4, primary mode ozone (PMO, i.e. the feedback of methane changes on ozone), H2O, and contrail-cirrus.

All effects which are simulated with AirClim, except contrail-cirrus, can be described based on amount and location of emissions. The formation of contrails depend also on fuel and aircraft parameters. Therefore we adapted the model to be able to simulate the effects of the AHEAD fleet. The previously used response function between contrail-cirrus coverage (CCCov) and RF:

\[
RF(\text{lat}) = CCCov \times 14.9 \frac{W}{m^2} \tag{2.1}
\]

was refined based on results of the ECHAM4-CCMod model.

The climate impact of contrail-cirrus in AirClim 2.0 was estimated based on a particular climate model simulation using a particular air traffic inventory. The application of AirClim to another aircraft inventory and changed contrail formation conditions are likely to result in discrepancies in radiative forcing as compared to the full climate model simulations. And hence four

### Table 3: Characteristics of the six aircraft types and respective fleets. Energy by kerosene means the contribution of kerosene to the propulsion. Fuel consumption equals kerosene consumption for conventional technologies and the sum of LH2 (LNG) and kerosene for the AHEAD-LH2 (AHEAD-LNG) aircraft. CO2 emissions include a 25% reduction for kerosene use due to biofuels (see Table 2). Pax abbreviates passenger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>B777</th>
<th>B787</th>
<th>B787-FUT</th>
<th>AHEAD-LH2-Min</th>
<th>AHEAD-LH2-Max</th>
<th>AHEAD-LNG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology Level</td>
<td>year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AHEAD-LH2-Min</td>
<td>AHEAD-LH2-Max</td>
<td>AHEAD-LNG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passengers</td>
<td>number</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy by kerosene</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight level</td>
<td>hfeet</td>
<td>310–370</td>
<td>350–430</td>
<td>350–430</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel consumption</td>
<td>Tg/year</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass. fuel cons.</td>
<td>kg/100 pax-km</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO2-Emission</td>
<td>Tg/year</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOx-Emission</td>
<td>10^6 kg(NO2) per year</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2O-Emission</td>
<td>Tg/year</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that in these simulations we do not calculate explicitly any changes that may be due to changes in the soot number emissions as the latter are not known. Using LH2 or LNG in one of the combustors should lead to a significant reduction in soot number emissions. These are expected to lead to significant reductions in the initial ice crystal number (Kärcher and Yu, 2009; Kärcher et al., 2015) and therefore in contrail-cirrus radiative forcing (e.g. Hansen et al., 1997) as a measure for the radiative imbalance of the atmosphere due to contrail-cirrus.
Table 4: Results for the RF [mW m−2] from contrail-cirrus of the AHEAD and conventional fleets for the standard and revised AirClim model version in comparison to the ECHAM4-CCMod model. Delta describes the relative difference [%] of the revised version AirClim 2.1 to the ECHAM4-CCMod results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AirClim 2.0</th>
<th>AirClim 2.1</th>
<th>ECHAM4-CCMod</th>
<th>Delta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mW m−2</td>
<td>mW m−2</td>
<td>mW m−2</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LH2</td>
<td>39.58</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>71.76</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNG</td>
<td>38.03</td>
<td>63.15</td>
<td>63.87</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conv.</td>
<td>34.16</td>
<td>38.63</td>
<td>38.94</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

discrepancies between the AirClim 2.0 and ECHAM4-CCMod results for the RF of the AHEAD versus the conventional aircraft were found and the response function refined accordingly. First the contrail-cirrus coverage is found to be larger by the a factor $F$, which equals the ratio of the overall propulsion efficiencies $\eta$, e.g. $F(\text{LH2}) = \frac{\eta_{\text{AHEAD}}}{\eta_{\text{Conv}}}$. Second, a shift of the contrail coverage towards the equator was found, which is expressed by a latitude ($\text{lat}$, in °N) dependent function $f(\text{lat}) = 0.86 \cos \left( \frac{\text{lat}}{50} \right) + 1.62$. Third, the RF from conventional aircraft show a latitude dependency, which has not been regarded yet: $h(\text{lat}) = 0.24 \cos \left( \frac{\pi}{42} \text{lat} \right) + 1.00$. And fourth, the AHEAD aircraft show additionally a further RF variation, which is expressed by: $g(\text{lat}) = 0.25 \sin \left( \frac{\pi}{23} \text{lat} \right) + 1.10$ (and $g(\text{lat}) = 1$ for conventional aircraft). These refinements then lead to the new RF response function in the revised model version AirClim 2.1:

$$RF(\text{lat}) = F \times f(\text{lat}) \times g(\text{lat}) \times h(\text{lat}) \times CC\text{Cov} \times 14.9 \frac{\text{W}}{\text{m}^2}. \quad (2.2)$$

which improve the agreement between AirClim and ECHAM4-CCMod (Table 4). Note that these refinements occur in addition to the changed Schmidt-Appleman criterion, which is incorporated in AirClim.

3 Engine, aircraft, and emissions

3.1 Engine and aircraft

We are considering a new combustion technology with a dual combustion chamber (Figure 1, top) mounted on a blended wing body (Figure 1, bottom), which is fully described by Rao et al. (2014). The engine requirements are (1) multi-fuel capability, (2) low emissions of NOx and particles, (3) low installation penalty, and (4) capable for ingestion of the aircraft’s boundary layer, which the regarded engine fulfills (Rao et al., 2014). The engine is designed so that 70% of the energy is provided by the LNG and LH2 combustion, respectively and 30% by bio kerosene (Table 3).

In order to have the fuel storage possibilities and an improved lift to drag ratio a blended wing body was chosen as an adequate airframe (Figure 1, bottom). Table 3 describes some characteristics of the 2-engine AHEAD aircraft, such as a capacity of 300 passengers, a cruising at flight level FL 430 (around 13 km) and a range of 14,000 km, which corresponds to around 7,500 nm. An iterative procedure is used to design the aircraft, which includes sizing, weight, stability and control, propulsion, structures, and a performance analysis (Roskam, 1997). A first design optimisation was performed to achieve optimal lift to drag ratio during cruise. However, a first climate impact assessment gave evidence to a large climate impact due to water vapour emissions at high cruise altitudes (see also Grewe et al., 2007; Grewe et al., 2010). Hence, the cruise altitude was reduced to flight level 430, achieving a lift to drag ratio of about 25. The LH2 storage requires a large volume, which could impose some drag and weight penalties on the AHEAD aircraft. Since we did not investigate this effect in detail we consider two extreme situations, covering a wide range of possible aircraft dimensions: A minimum case (LH2-Min), where no changes in the aircraft design are necessary for LH2 storages and a maximum case with increased aircraft dimensions and weight (LH2-Max).

3.2 Emissions

The emission index of NOx for the first and second combustor stage is calculated based on NOx recordings obtained from atmospheric combustor experiments. Both test rigs allow establishing the same temperature boundary conditions with respect to the calculated adiabatic flame temperature $T_{adi}$ as in the engine during cruise.
For the AHEAD-LH2 and AHEAD-LNG aircraft, the use of bio fuels for the future (Table 2) and ranges between 1.9 Tg per year for the AHEAD-LH2 fleet and 14 Tg per year for the B777. Note that the comparison mixes different technology levels. For the same technology level (2050) the conventional technology and the AHEAD-LNG technology emits approximately the same amount of CO₂, whereas the AHEAD-LH2 fleet emits more water vapour. Note that we assume here that the production of LH2 can be achieved carbon neutrally. Nitrogen oxide emissions are reduced from 73 10⁶ kg(NO₂)/year to 9 10⁶ kg(NO₂)/year, i.e. roughly a 90% emission reduction.

For multi fuel use, the normal emission index is meaningless, therefore we provide annual emissions (Table 3), which clearly show the reduced CO₂ and NOₓ emissions for the AHEAD technologies in comparison to the future conventional technology. However, water vapour emissions are increased.

The regional distributions of H₂O and NOₓ emissions are presented in Figure 3, showing that the selected 10 city pairs cover a representative area of the globe, with a maximum in northern mid latitudes (top). The vertical distribution (bottom) reflects the step climb shown in Figure 2 with a large fraction of the H₂O emissions of the AHEAD fleet deposited at flight level 430. The temporal evolution of the emission of aviation follows the IPCC FA1 scenario.

4 Contrails

In this section, we discuss in detail the contrail formation and contrail properties of the AHEAD aircraft in comparison to a conventional aircraft by using a modelling tool suite, which is described in Section 2 and Table 1. It is important to note that the detailed work on contrails and also some preliminary climate impact assessments (not shown) was performed in parallel to the work on the aircraft-engine design. This had on the one hand the great advantage that initial findings on the climate impact from, e.g., contrails and water vapour fed back to the aircraft/engine design. On the other hand the detailed studies were performed with preliminary emission data that differ from the final emission data presented in Section 3.3. However, Section 4 shows more principal results, which are less affected by the specific fleet layout. The overall climate impact assessment in Section 5 is, however, based consistently on the calculated fleet emissions in Section 3.3 and takes into account main results from this Section.

4.1 Contrail formation

The Schmidt-Appleman theory (Schmidt, 1941; Appleman, 1953; Schumann, 1996) states that a contrail
will form when the exhaust-air mixture in the expanding plume reaches water-saturation. The phase diagram (Figure 4) shows possible mixing trajectories: They start well outside the figure at high temperature and high water vapour pressure of the exhaust gas. Mixing with ambient air moves the mixture’s phase-point down along a straight line which here touches the saturation curve for liquid water. Eventually the mixture approaches asymptotically the final point of the trajectory, which is solely given by the ambient temperature and water vapour pressure (not shown). A contrail will form if the mixing trajectory is tangential to the water vapour saturation curve or crosses it, i.e. trespasses into the water supersaturated regime. Then tiny droplets form by condensation (with the aid of mainly emitted soot particles that serve as condensation nuclei or abundant ambient particles) and they freeze quickly at temperatures below the supercooling limit of water, around −38 °C. The slope $G$ of the mixing trajectory, the ambient temperature and the water vapour pressure are determining whether a contrail will form or not. The slope depends on air pressure, fuel and aircraft properties. The expression for $G$ can be derived by an application of fundamental physical laws to the motion of an aircraft, namely the conservation of energy and linear momentum:

$$G = \frac{c_p p}{\epsilon} \frac{E_{H_2O}}{Q(1 - \eta)},$$

where $c_p$ is the specific heat of air at constant pressure, and $\epsilon$ is the ratio of the molar masses of water and air. The slope $G$, depends furthermore on ambient pressure $p$, fuel properties, such as the emission of water vapour per kilogram fuel burnt, $E_{H_2O}$ and heat energy per kilogram fuel burnt, $Q$, and on the overall propulsion efficiency, $\eta$. The larger $G$, the higher is the maximum temperature at which a contrail can form. This maximum is marked by the tangential point of the mixing trajectory with the water saturation curve. In Figure 4 we show three tangential mixing trajectories, one for a conventional aircraft (driven by kerosene only with an over-
all propulsion efficiency of 0.333), and one for AHEAD-LH2 and LNG versions, respectively. (Details on the calculation of the slopes for the different aircraft are given in the appendix). The AHEAD aircraft (green and purple lines) form contrails at considerably higher temperatures than conventional aircraft (red line), mainly because of the enhanced emission index of water. As temperature generally decreases with altitude in the troposphere, higher contrail formation threshold temperatures can be translated into lower altitudes at which contrails can be formed. Here one has to consider that the condensed droplets must freeze to form a contrail. For pure water and droplets including poor freezing nuclei, such as aircraft soot, this requires temperatures below −38 °C. A climate impact of contrails is only present, once a contrail (the lines are tangent to the saturation line with respect to liquid water). Phase points to the right of the mixing lines represent atmospheric states where contrail cannot form.

4.2 Early contrail stage

During the first minutes after their formation, contrails strongly interact with the trailing wake vortices. On the one hand, this leads to a strong vertical expansion (contrail depths of more than 500 m are possible). On the other hand, adiabatic heating in the downward moving vortex system can lead to a substantial loss of ice crystals. Both processes affect the properties of the evolving contrail-cirrus (Unterstrasser and Gierens, 2010; Unterstrasser and Görsch, 2014).

Three cases are compared to allow a better justification of the environmental benefit of the MF-BWB in terms of contrail formation and their climate impact. These are (1) the MF-BWB with the LH2 engines, (2) a standard aircraft (A340/B747 type), and (3) a hypothetical aircraft with MF-BWB geometry but with standard kerosene combustion. We assume the same flight altitude for these three cases to isolate the effect of the airframe and fuel. All three simulations start with similar wake vortex characteristics (i.e. initial circulation and vortex separation), as the wing span, aircraft weight and speed are similar. Then the descent speed and decay of the vortex system are similar. Figure 5 (top) shows vertical ice mass profiles after 5 minutes (at an age when the wake vortices have already dissolved). The profiles are similar for all three cases. We conclude that differences in the initial ice mass $I_0$ are of minor importance for the later ice mass evolution. This is due to the fact that the total ice mass increases (see Figure 5, mid), especially ice crystals in the secondary wake around the original contrail formation altitude at $z = 0$ m (cruise altitude) take up excess water vapour from the environment. The contribution of the initial water vapour emission to the total contrail mass becomes less and less. Initially, the majority of ice crystals is entrained into the vortex system and transported downwards. During the descent some ice crystals get detrained and form a curtain between the primary wake (i.e. the exhaust trapped within the vortices) and the original formation altitude. Eventually, the vortices break up and much material rises back due to buoyancy. The simulations suggest that these entrainment/detrainment effects are barely affected by the initial spatial exhaust distribution. This result is in line with previous sensitivity studies varying initial distributions for conventional aircraft geometries (Huebisch and Lewellen, 2006; Unterstrasser and Görsch, 2014; Unterstrasser et al., 2014). Nevertheless, this rather weak sensitivity is unexpected, as the initial differences examined here are larger than in the previous studies.

Figure 5c shows the temporal evolution of ice crystal number. We note that the difference between the solid and the dashed line is much smaller than the difference of these with the dotted line. This shows that the contrail microphysical properties depend stronger on the composition of the exhaust (water and soot particles) than on the aircraft geometry (wing shape and position of the engines). In all cases there is some crystal loss due to sublimation in the downward traveling vortex pair, but the fraction of crystals that gets lost is larger in the two cases with a conventional engine (35 % vs. 5 % for the LH2 engine). The crystals are initially smaller, as the ratio $I_0$ to $N_0$ is smaller for a conventional engine, and they sublimate more easily than the bigger crystals of the LH2 contrail. After a few minutes the LH2 contrail...
contains 4 times fewer ice crystals than the conventional aircraft, which is less than at the beginning, where there were 6.7 times fewer ice crystals. Larger and less ice crystals as in the MF-BWB case imply (1) smaller optical thickness of the contrail and (2) larger crystal fall speeds and thus (3) shorter lifetime than in the cases with conventional engines. Therefore, for the here assumed number emission index of soot particles and in a direct comparison (same meteorology for both aircraft), the contrail climate impact of MF-BWB aircraft is expected to be smaller than that of conventional aircraft. The impact of different cruise levels (see Figure 2) and different fuels on the radiative forcing is investigated in the next Section.

4.3 Global contrail-cirrus

Figure 6 shows the change in the contrail formation probability due to the change in the Schmidt-Appleman criterion (see also Section 4.1) at 250 hPa and 300 hPa, the change in contrail-cirrus coverage and the radiative forcing caused by the replacement of a whole fleet of conventional aircraft by the AHEAD-LH2 aircraft including an upward shift of air traffic by 2000 m. It shows large increases of the contrail formation probability particularly in the tropics and subtropics that are mostly larger at lower levels (Figure 6a,b). In those areas at the main air traffic levels and below, contrail formation is limited by the Schmidt-Appleman criterion for conventional aircraft. Above 230 hPa contrail formation probability does not change significantly since at this altitude the Schmidt-Appleman criterion is usually fulfilled, but contrail persistence is limited by ice supersaturation frequency. The increase in the contrail formation probability is mainly due to the increase in water vapour emissions when considering the AHEAD-LH2 aircraft (see also Table 3). In the extra tropics, contrail formation conditions at the main flight levels are such that whenever tropospheric air is ice supersaturated contrails can usually form. Therefore, changing to an AHEAD-LH2 aircraft introduces only slight changes in the formation conditions in the extra tropics. The change in the contrail formation conditions alone induces an increase in the contrail-cirrus coverage (Figure 6c) and radiative forcing (Figure 6d) that is largest in the areas of maximum air traffic, over Northern America, Europe and Southeast Asia. The change over Southeast Asia is as large as over the main air traffic areas due to the fact that the formation conditions are changing much more strongly. The higher cruise altitude leads in the extratropics to a shift of the aircraft into the stratosphere where contrails cannot persist due to the low relative humidity and therefore to a decreased contrail-cirrus cover. In the tropics and subtropics the higher cruise altitude leads to an increase of air traffic in the upper troposphere and therefore to increased contrail-cirrus cover. Overall the change in formation conditions and the increase in cruise altitude lead to an increased contrail-cirrus cover over the main air traffic areas and over the tropics (Figure 6c). Contrail-cirrus radiative forcing is reduced in the extra tropics due to the higher cruise altitude and otherwise, mainly over the eastern USA and Southeast Asia, increased (Figure 6d). Overall, contrail-cirrus radiative forcing is increased by 50%, when switching the whole air traffic fleet to AHEAD-LH2 technology and moving air traffic up by 2 km. Note that a mere shift of air traffic from flight level 370 to 380 would have led to a decrease of contrail-cirrus radiative forcing in the extratropics, since these flight would occur more frequently in the dry lower-most stratosphere. However, the additional shift of air traffic from lower levels into the upper troposphere compensated this effect. Note also that changes in soot number emissions are not regarded here (see discussion below).
Figure 6: Change in contrail formation probability [%] at 300 hPa (a) and 250 hPa (b) and change in contrail-cirrus coverage [%] (c) and radiative forcing [mW m\(^{-2}\)] (d). The calculations include an increase of the cruise altitude and a change in the contrail formation conditions resulting from the replacement of conventional aircraft by AHEAD-LH2 aircraft (see text for more details). (a) and (b) have isolines every 2.5 % (dark green: below 2.5 %, light green–orange: 2.5 % to 7.5 %, red: above 7.5 %).

Figure 7: Same as Figure 6, but for the AHEAD-LNG aircraft.

Switching to the AHEAD-LNG aircraft and moving flight levels upwards is connected with very slight decreases in contrail-cirrus coverage and radiative forcing in the extra tropics and with increases in the tropics and sub tropics (Figure 7c,d). The change is hence similar to those of the AHEAD-LH2 aircraft (Figure 6c,d). The change in the formation probability at 300 hPa is smaller than for the AHEAD-LH2 aircraft. Changes in contrail-cirrus coverage and radiative forcing for the AHEAD-LNG aircraft are very similar to changes for AHEAD-LH2 aircraft, but slightly smaller (Figure 7c,d). Figure 8 summarises the results regarding the change in contrail-cirrus radiative forcing due to changes in the flight level and changes in the contrail formation probability caused...
by the emissions of the AHEAD-LH2 and AHEAD-LNG aircraft. Contrail-cirrus radiative forcing is larger by approximately 40% for the AHEAD-LNG aircraft due to the change in the contrail formation probability and the upwards shift of air traffic.

A decrease in soot number emissions that is likely to be connected with replacing conventional aircraft by the AHEAD-LH2 and also AHEAD-LNG aircraft would be expected to lead to a decrease in initial ice crystal concentration on average, depending on the atmospheric state (Kärcher and Yu, 2009; Kärcher et al., 2015) and likely to a decrease in contrail-cirrus coverage and radiative forcing due to changes in the microphysical and optical properties and the associated shortening of the lifetime of contrail-cirrus (Bock and Burkhardt, 2016), when keeping the flight level unchanged. Based on this study, we conservatively assume a reduction of the RF by 40% for a reduction in the soot number densities of 80% and analyse the impact of this estimate in parametric sensitivity studies in Section 5.

5 Climate impact

In this Section, we investigate how much the introduction of the AHEAD aircraft reduces the long-term climate impact in relation to future conventional technology (see also Section 2.1). The fleets, as described in Section 3.3, are evaluated with the climate-chemistry response model AirClim (Section 2.4) with respect to the impact of CO₂, NOₓ and water vapour emissions on the global-mean near-surface temperature change via the climate agents CO₂, O₃, CH₄, PMO, H₂O, and contrail-cirrus. Figure 9 shows the temporal evolution of this temperature change for the reference configuration B787-FUT (top) as well as the AHEAD fleets. Ozone changes and contrail-cirrus contribute most to the induced temperature increase for the B787-FUT, whereas contrails, water vapour, and ozone changes are important for the AHEAD technologies.

Figure 10 (left) summarises the results on the climate impact as a change in the average temperature response over 100 years after introducing the fleet (ATR100). A clear improvement of the fleet’s climate impact from the B777 to the B787 and the future technology B787-FUT is simulated, which is basically achieved by CO₂ and NOₓ emission reductions. However, the higher cruise altitude of the B787 causes more (less) contrail formation in the tropics (mid-latitudes) with an overall increase in the contrail-cirrus RF and temperature change. The AHEAD technologies show a large reduction of the climate impact from NOₓ emissions in the range of 15% to 20% and from contrail-cirrus in the order of 5% to 10% relative to the future conventional technology. Since the AHEAD aircraft has similar flight altitudes compared to B787 and B787-FUT, these reductions mainly arise from the low NOₓ and soot emissions, respectively. The large water vapour emissions of the AHEAD technologies (see Table 3) compensate the climate impact reduc-
tion by NO_{x} and contrail-cirrus significantly (roughly 5% to 10% of the climate impact of the reference). The high cruise altitude leads to larger residence time of the even larger amounts of emitted water vapour of the AHEAD aircraft compared to the conventional aircraft, which is in agreement with earlier studies (GREWE and STENKE, 2008; GREWE et al., 2010). The AHEAD-LNG version is even better, mainly because of lower water vapour and NO_{x} emissions (see also Table 3).

It is important to mention that the B787 has a lower passenger capacity than B777 and the AHEAD aircraft. Hence although the considered fleets have identical flight distances, the transport volume in terms of passenger kilometres differ by 33%. In Figure 10 (right) we have considered this effect and compare the results with respect to the same transport volume. In this case, the climate impact of the reference (B787-FUT) is increased in comparison to the AHEAD aircraft configurations. Hence the climate impact reductions are even larger and increase from around 10% to 25% for the AHEAD fleets to roughly 30% to 45%.

The calculation of the future climate impact includes a couple of assumptions, which we discuss in the following (Table 5). We assumed for our climate impact calculation a 40% reduction of the contrail-cirrus radiative forcing due to the reduced soot emission (see Section 2.3), which we regard as a conservative estimate. We tested a range of reduction factors from 0% (i.e. no reduction) to 60% (Table 5). Clearly this parameter largely affects the results. Assuming no impact of the reduced soot emissions (0%), would even lead to opposite effects, the AHEAD technology would be worse than conventional. On the other hand, an even stronger impact of the reduced soot particle emissions (60% reduction of the RF) leads to 25% and to 40% reduction of the climate impact of the AHEAD fleet.

A further uncertainty in the scenario definition is the amount of bio fuel used in future and the sustainability of the bio fuel production. In the base case we assumed a 25% effective CO_{2} reduction by bio fuels. A variation of this number to 0% and 50% changes the numbers only slightly, mainly for two reasons. First the fuel efficiency already reduced the impact of CO_{2} from the B787 to B787-FUT. Further, the assumed evolution of the fleet reinforces the short-lived compounds more than the long-lived, such as CO_{2}. Further, we assumed an increase in fuel efficiency of the engine and conventional aircraft of 10%. If a 30% increase in fuel efficiency of the conventional technology could be achieved, then the AHEAD-LNG aircraft becomes only slightly (15%) better than the conventional technology. However, this implicitly includes that these efficiencies cannot be used by the AHEAD aircraft (e.g. lighter materials).
6 Conclusion

We investigated the climate impact of a fleet of a multi-fuel blended wing body in comparison to a future conventional technology. The AHEAD aircraft is designed with engines having 2 combustion chambers fueled with either liquid hydrogen (LH2) or liquid natural gas (LNG) in the first combustion chamber and bio kerosene in the second. The AHEAD aircraft has a larger overall propulsion efficiency, larger water vapour emission index and the fuel mix has a larger specific heat content than the reference aircraft, which leads to a larger probability in the contrail formation. The layer where contrails can form starts at a lower altitude especially in the tropics. The shape and geometry of the contrails is not significantly affected, which was shown by LES simulations. The emission index of soot particles and the related effect on the contrail-cirrus optical properties have not been investigated in detail. However, there are strong indications that both the number of emitted soot particles and the effect on RF are significantly reduced for the AHEAD aircraft. To cover this effect, we started with detailed simulations without any changes in the number of emitted soot particles. In this case, the global contrail coverage and radiative forcing increases by 40 % and 50 % for the LNG and LH2 AHEAD aircraft, respectively. Simulations with a 80 % reduction in the number of soot particles (Bock, 2014) showed a 60 % reduction in the RF. Based on this first climate model study (Bock, 2014) we conservatively assumed a 40 % reduction in the radiative forcing of contrail-cirrus caused by the lower optical thickness and a shorter lifetime of the AHEAD contrail-cirrus compared to conventional technologies and varied this parameter in the range of 0 % to 60 % in a sensitivity analysis of the overall climate impact assessment. For this climate impact assessment, we took all relevant climate agents, i.e. CO2, O3, CH4, PMO (latter three arising from NOx emissions), H2O, and contrail-cirrus into account. The results show that the AHEAD-LNG version significantly reduces the climate warming (about 20 to 25 %) in comparison to conventional technologies, whereas the LH2 version has a lower reduction potential. A sensitivity analysis showed that the results are robust against changes in the amount of bio fuel. Significantly larger increases in fuel efficiencies of 30 % for the future conventional aircraft than assumed here (10 %) would reduce the climate impact reduction of the AHEAD-LNG version to around 15 %, still having a lower climate impact than the conventional technology. The results crucially depend on the number of emitted soot particles for the AHEAD aircraft and on the impact of the soot emission index on the contrail properties, which still are under investigation.

It is important to note that only a frequent iteration between engine design, aircraft design and climate impact analysis ensured a climate compatible new design. Since a first version had a low CO2 and NOx emission, but the cruise altitude was higher, which made the water vapour emissions more important for climate change, since the residence times of water vapour in the lower stratosphere are significantly higher than in the tropopause region. Clearly, a CO2 reduction is important, but a climate impact reduction requires addressing also contrail-cirrus, water vapour and NOx emissions. As a result of the close cooperation between the disciplines, we found that the AHEAD aircraft fueled by LNG and bio kerosene, flying at FL 430, represents an adequate technology to reduce the climate impact and equivalent CO2 emissions.

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Appendix: Calculation of AHEAD parameters for the Schmidt-Appleman criterion

Table 6 shows the aircraft parameters used to calculate the slope $G$ in equation (4.1), i.e. to calculate the specific heat content of the combined fuel use $Q$, the emission index of water vapour $EI_{H_2O}$, and the overall propulsion efficiency $\eta$, via the equations (see also Table 7):

$$ EI_{H_2O}^X = \frac{m_{H_2O}^X}{m_{X}^{} + m_{ker}^X} \quad (6.1) $$

$$ Q^X = \frac{Q_{H_2O} X + Q_{ker} X m_{ker}^X}{m_{X}^{} + m_{ker}^X} \quad (6.2) $$

$$ \eta^X = \frac{F \gamma}{(m_{X}^{} + m_{ker}^X) Q^X} \quad (6.3) $$

where $X$ denotes the values for the specific fuel, either LH2 or LNG and $v = 250$ m s$^{-1}$ the speed of the aircraft.

<table>
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<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>AHEAD</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Net. Thrust</td>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>kN</td>
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<td>Fuel flow kerosene</td>
<td>$m_{ker}^X$</td>
<td>kg s$^{-1}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd fuel flow</td>
<td>$m_{X}^2$</td>
<td>kg s$^{-1}$</td>
<td>0.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>H2O emission rate</td>
<td>$m_{H_2O}^X$</td>
<td>kg s$^{-1}$</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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Table 7: Calculated parameters for the Schmidt-Appleman criterion of the AHEAD aircraft.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>AHEAD</th>
<th>Conv.</th>
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<td>$H_2O$-Emission Index</td>
<td>$E_{H_2O}$</td>
<td>kg kg$^{-1}$</td>
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<td>$Q$</td>
<td>MJ kg$^{-1}$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall propulsion efficiency</td>
<td>$\eta$</td>
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<td>0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slope at FL 430</td>
<td>$G$</td>
<td>Pa K$^{-1}$</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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