

Leveraging CESM2 data for machine learning based S2S forecasting

Anisha Pal
Scientific Machine Learning Engineer
Planette AI

NCAR CESM Workshop 2025
11 June 2025
Boulder, CO, USA

Planette AI Team



Anisha Pal



Dr. Hansi Singh



Dr. Kalai Ramea



Dr. Kyle Heyblom



Dr. Aodhan J-Sweeney

AI Foundation Models

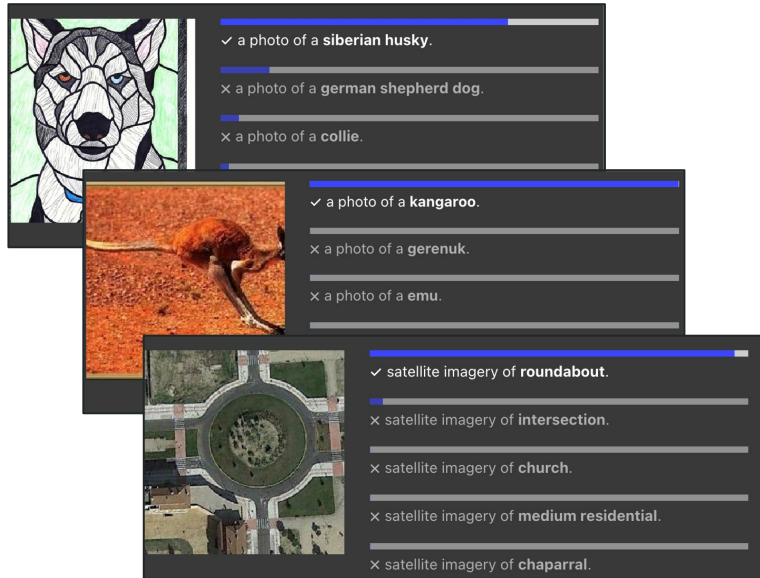
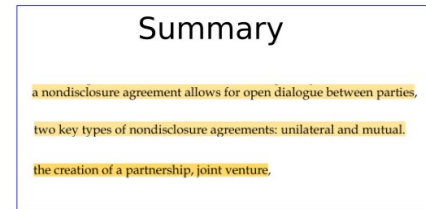
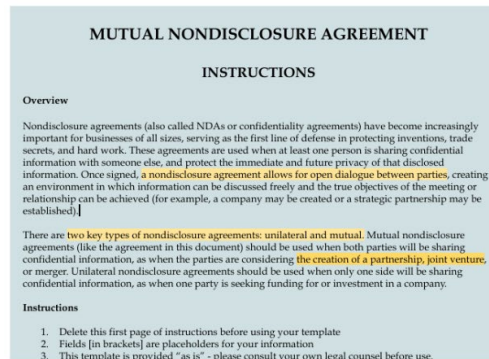


Image Classification ^[1]

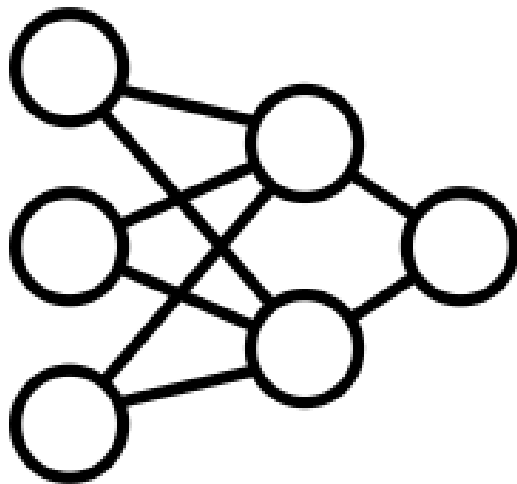


Image Segmentation ^[2]



Text Summarization ^[3]

Pretrain Broad → Finetune Precise



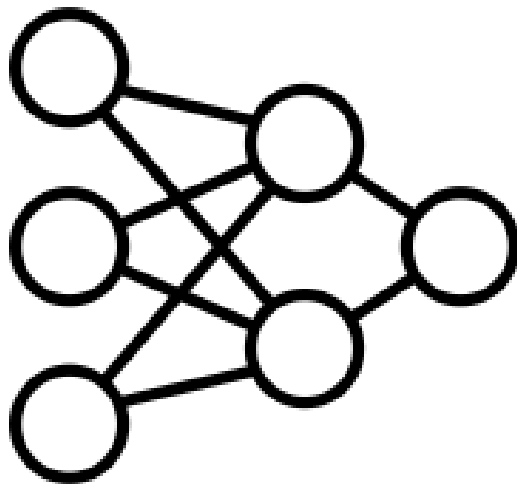
Simple Objective/
Same as Finetuning
Objective

Data ~ 5M datapoints

Pretrain Broad → Finetune Precise

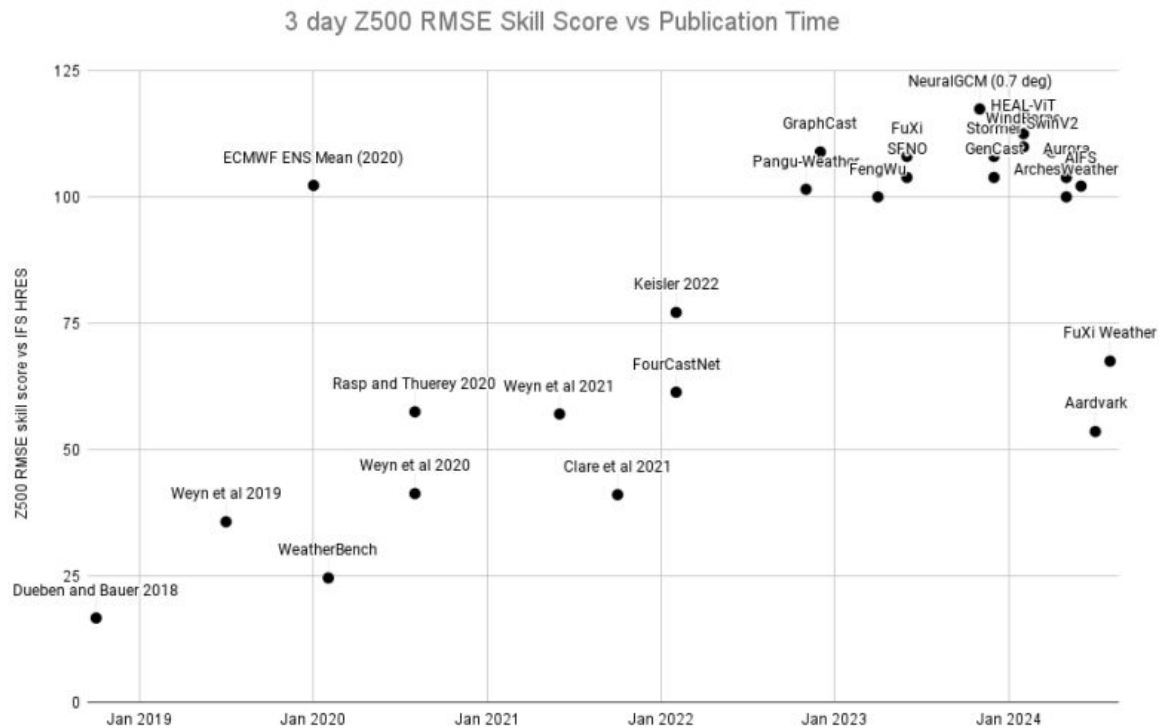


Task Specific Data ~
500



Specific Task

AI Based Weather Modelling



Data Source - ERA5

Temporal Scale - Hourly

Multiple Downstream
Tasks

AI Weather model skill^[4]

AI Based S2S Forecasting - Challenges



AI based **S2S** forecasting is **difficult** compared to AI based weather forecasting

Increased **task complexity** and additional constraints

Earth System Model Data to the rescue !

ERA5

- 1980 (1940) - 2024
- 527 months
- 1 ensemble member

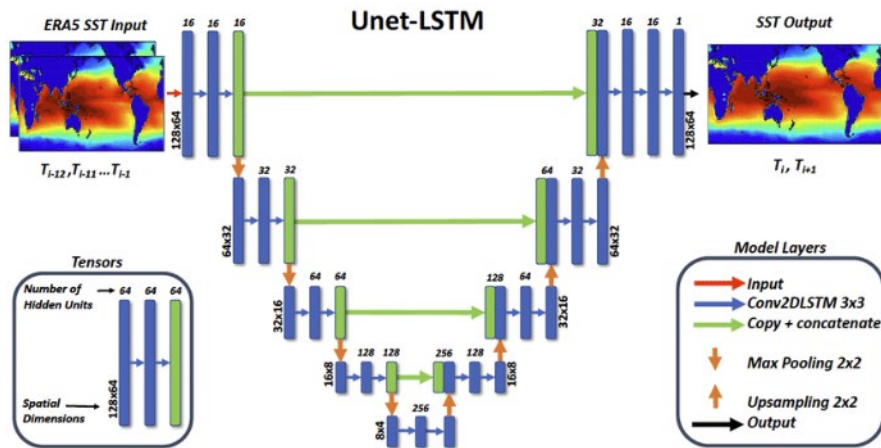
Total Data Points - **527**

CESM2

- 1850 - 2100
- ~3000 months
- 100 ensemble members

Total Data Points - **300,000 !**

Our Model

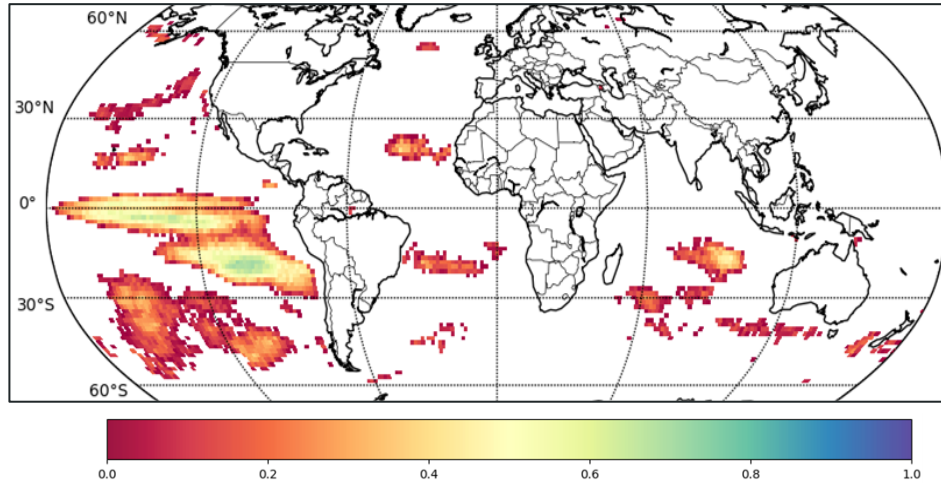


UnetLSTM architecture^[5]

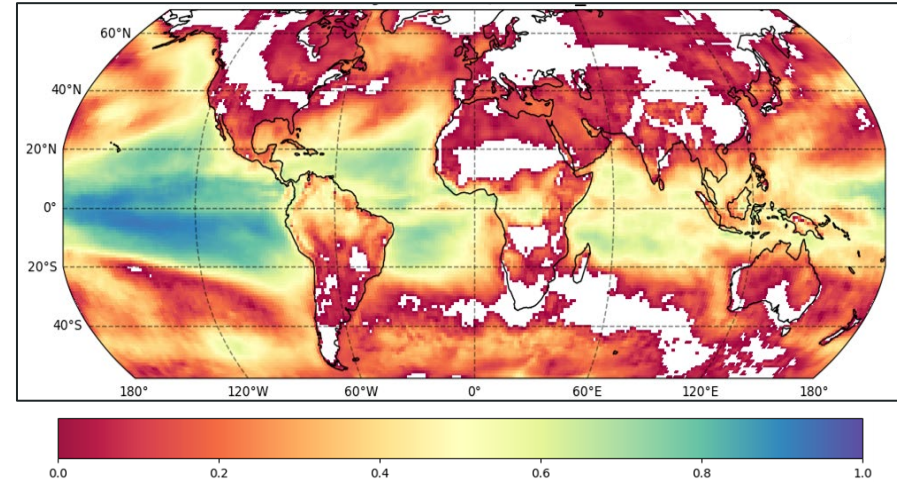
- **Unet-LSTM** - Spatiotemporal
- **Quantile Regression**
- Training Data - **CESM; 1850 - 1922**
- Test Data - **ERA5; 2008 - 2024**
- Grid Resolution - **$0.9^\circ \times 1.25^\circ$**
- Grid - **60°S to 60°N , 180°W to 180°E**
- Input - **11** variables
- Output - **T2M, Precip**
- Lead Times - **$\{0, 1, 2, 3\}$ months**
- **Metric** - Anomaly $R^2 \uparrow$

Effect of Training Data on ERA5 Test set

T2M Anomalies



Trained on ERA5



Trained on CESM2

CESM data helps the model learn important large scale features such as ENSO

Increasing Ensemble Members

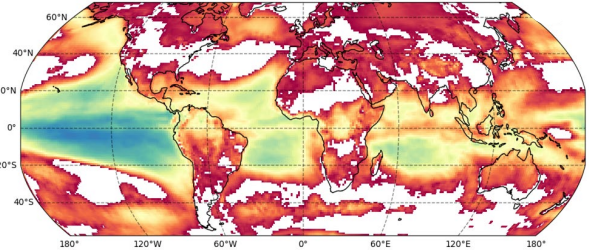
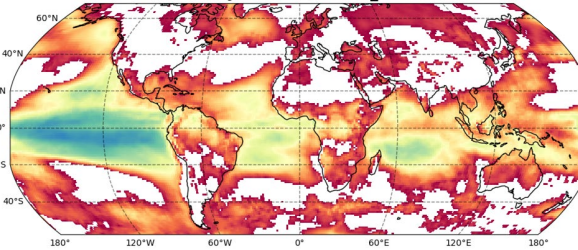
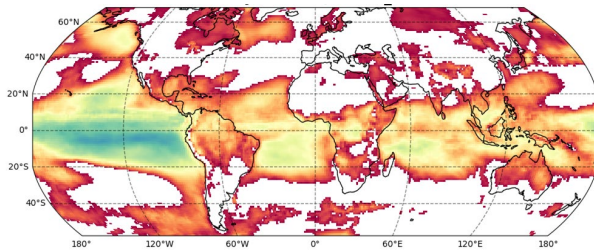
T2M Anomalies

Ensemble Members →

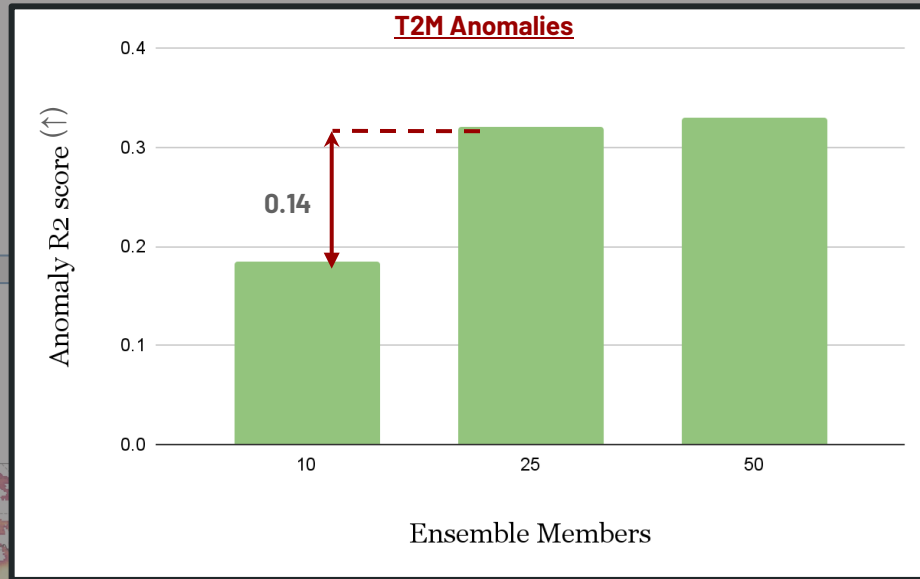
10

25

50



Increasing Ensemble Members



Diminishing returns after **25** ensemble members

Additional ensemble members contribute **minimally** to **unlearned large scale** variability

Capturing **additional patterns** from the noise requires a more **complex model** → **NIVA**

Effect of Data Normalization Strategies on T2M Anomalies

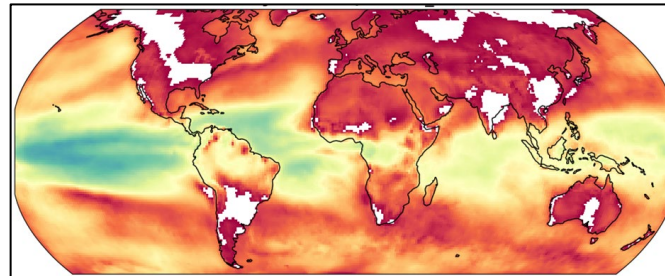
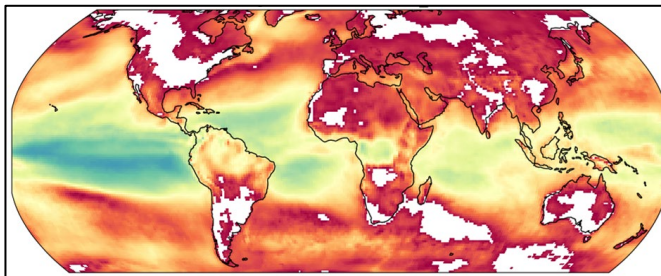
Spatial Axis →

Global

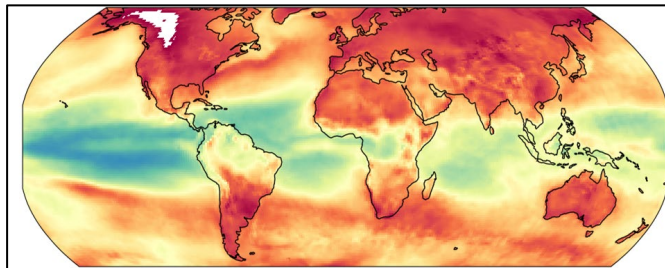
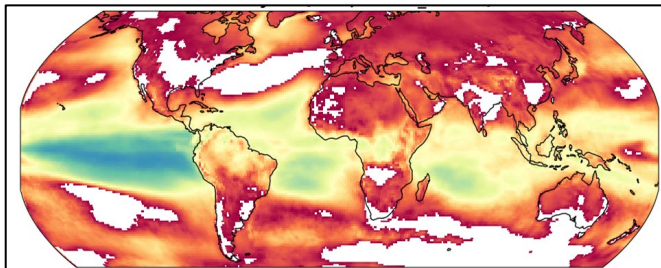
Local

Temporal Axis ↑

All Time



Monthwise



Lead - 0 month

Effect of Data Normalization Strategies on T2M

Spatial Axis →

Global

Local

Temporal Axis →
All Time

The distribution of a variable's values exhibits **seasonal** variability

Variation based on **location** is also substantial

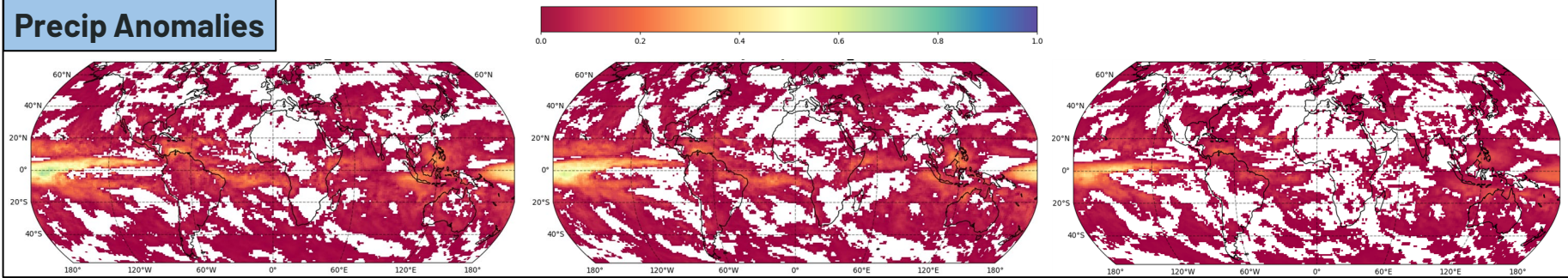
Monthwise

Using a **single** mean and standard deviation per variable results in a **highly skewed** distribution, making it **harder for the model to learn effectively**

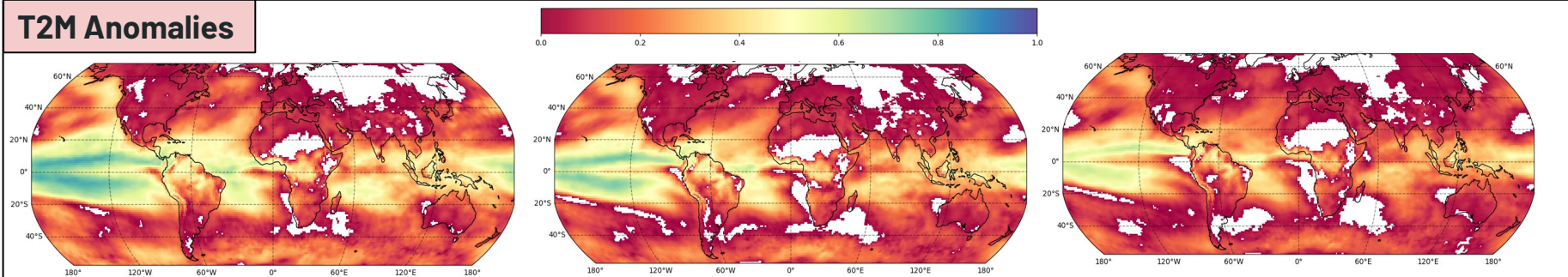
Different Lead Times



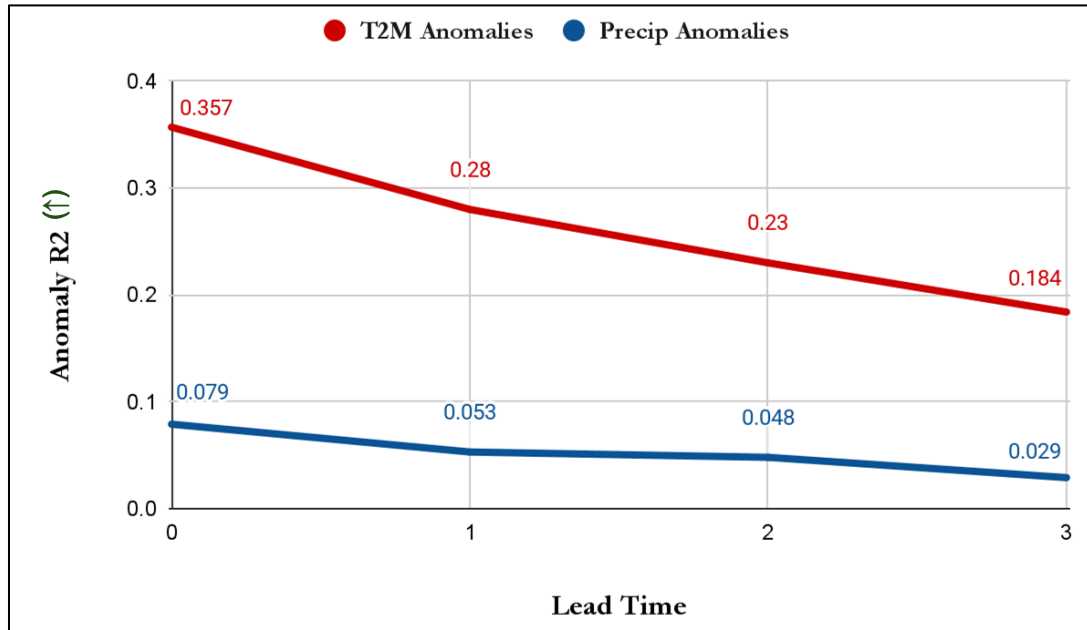
Precip Anomalies



T2M Anomalies



Different Lead Times



Model demonstrates greater skill in predicting **temperature** than precipitation

Predictive skill **declines with lead time**, but not as sharply as anticipated.

Key Takeaways

CESM2 data can help create the **next generation of AI foundation models** for S2S scale

Performance is very **sensitive the distribution of data** - picking the right normalization scheme is important

More data is beneficial but **model complexity** also needs to be scaled accordingly

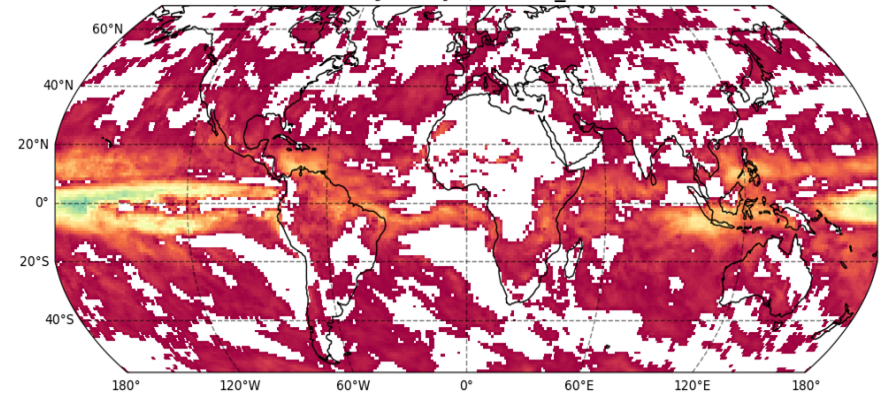
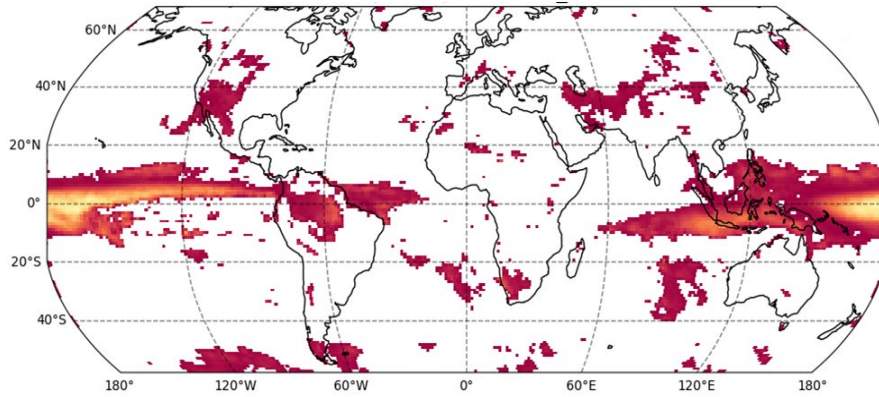
References

- [1] Radford, A., Kim, J. W., Hallacy, C., Ramesh, A., Goh, G., Agarwal, S., ... Sutskever, I. (2021). Learning Transferable Visual Models From Natural Language Supervision. *arXiv [Cs.CV]*. Retrieved from <http://arxiv.org/abs/2103.00020>
- [2] Kirillov, A., Mintun, E., Ravi, N., Mao, H., Rolland, C., Gustafson, L., ... Girshick, R. (2023). Segment Anything. *arXiv [Cs.CV]*. Retrieved from <http://arxiv.org/abs/2304.02643>
- [3] Devlin, J., Chang, M.-W., Lee, K., & Toutanova, K. (2019). BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding. *arXiv [Cs.CL]*. Retrieved from <http://arxiv.org/abs/1810.04805>
- [4] Rasp, S. (2024, November 13). *Here is an updated version of my chart showing the progress of AI-weather. . . | Stephan Rasp | 22 comments [Online forum post]*. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/stephan-rasp-4154481aa_here-is-an-updated-version-of-my-chart-showing-activity-7262397352424992770-7TJU
- [5] Taylor J and Feng M (2022) A deep learning model for forecasting global monthly mean sea surface temperature anomalies. *Front. Clim.* 4:932932. doi: 10.3389/fclim.2022.932932

Thank You !
Any Questions ?

Extra Slides

Effect of Training Data



Effect of Data Normalization Strategies on Precipitation

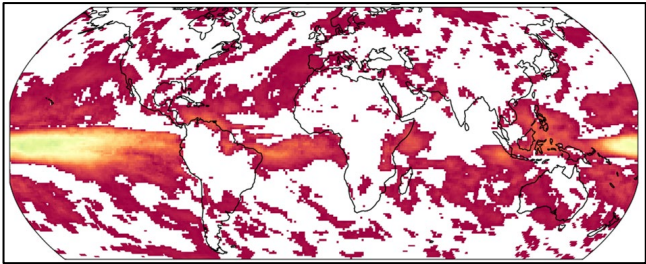
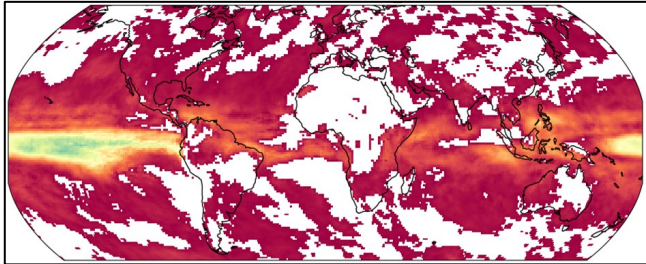
Spatial Axis →

Global

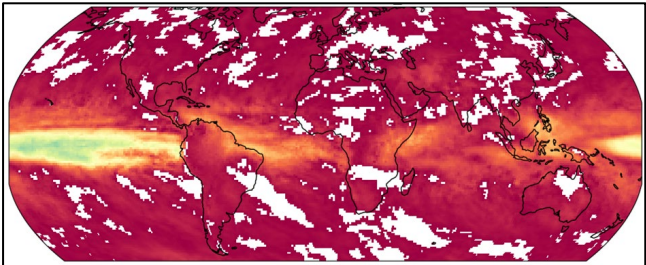
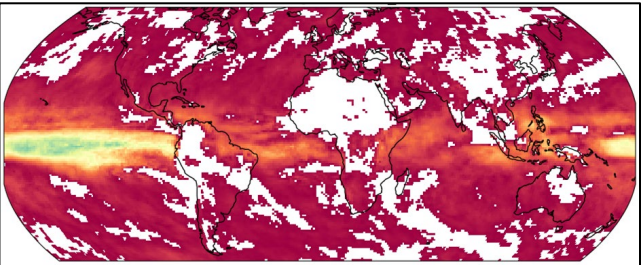
Local

Temporal Axis ↑

All Time



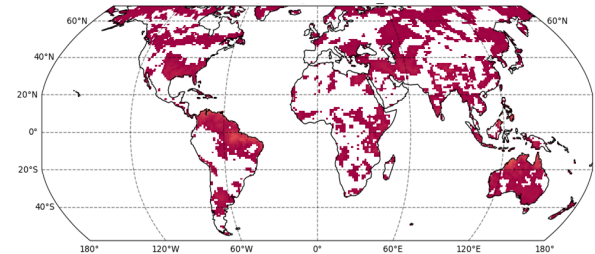
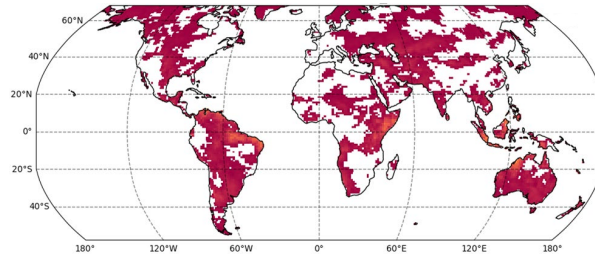
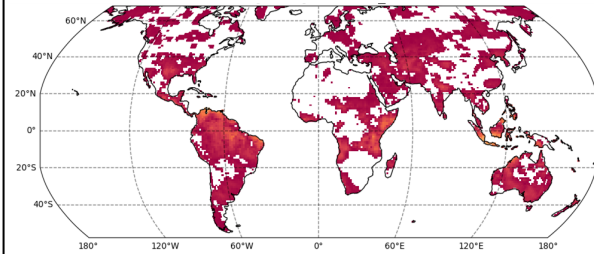
Monthwise



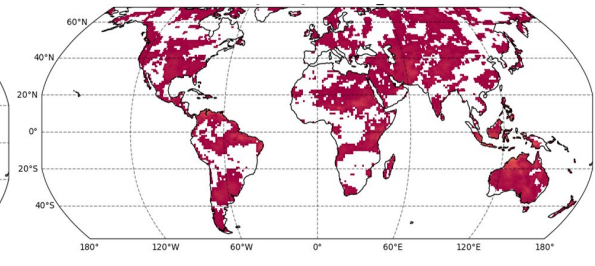
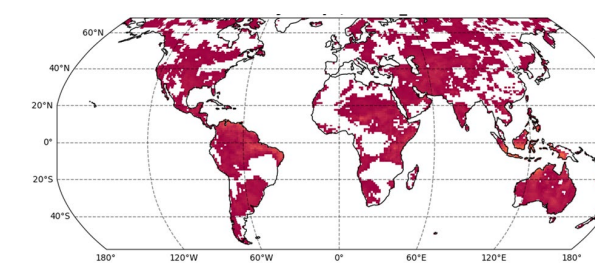
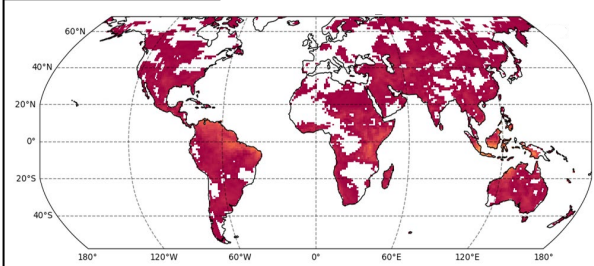
Zero Shot vs Fine Tuning Precipitation (Land)



Zero Shot



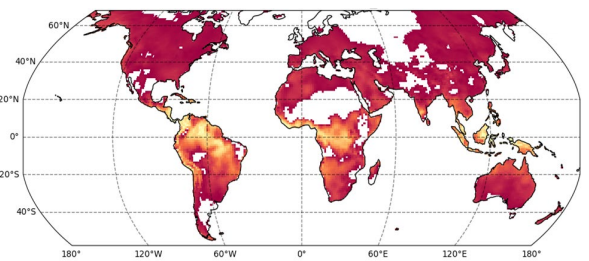
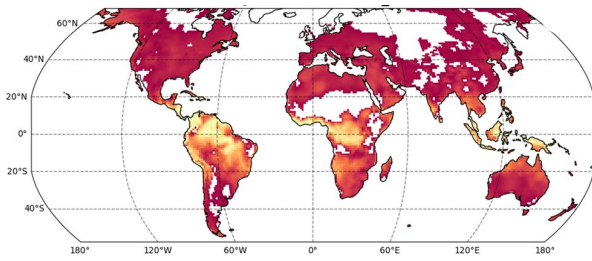
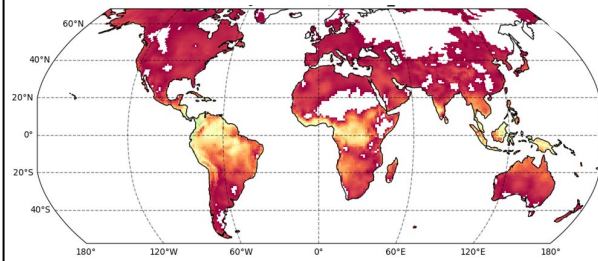
Fine Tuned



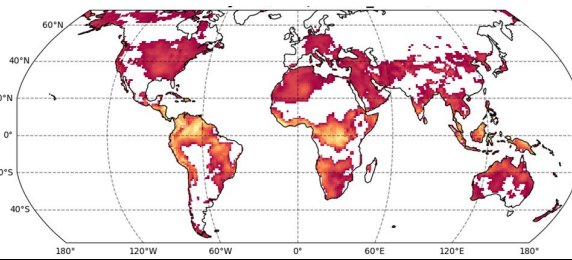
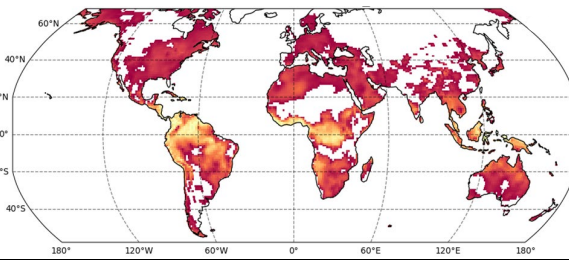
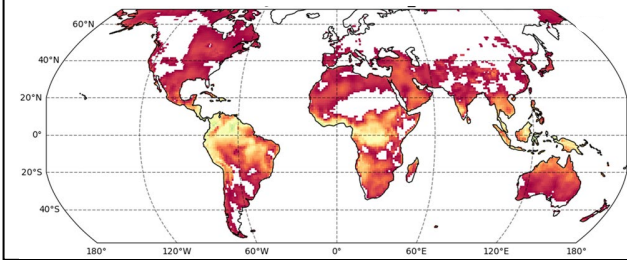
Zero Shot vs Fine Tuning T2M (Land)



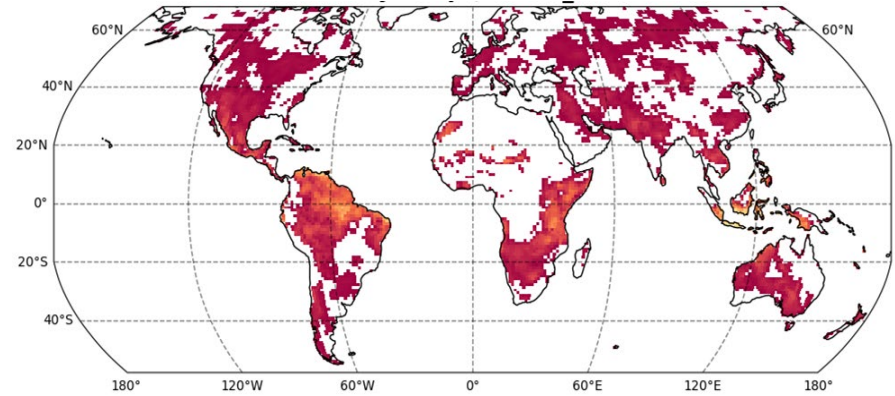
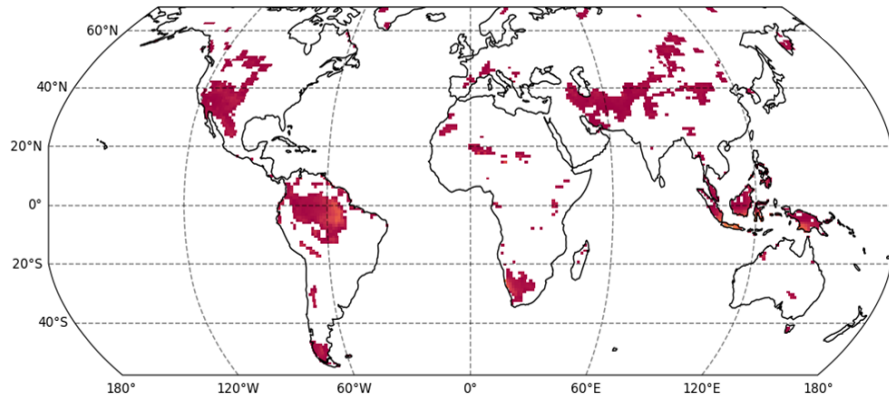
Zero Shot



Fine Tuned



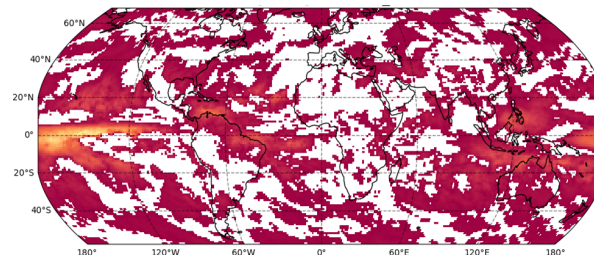
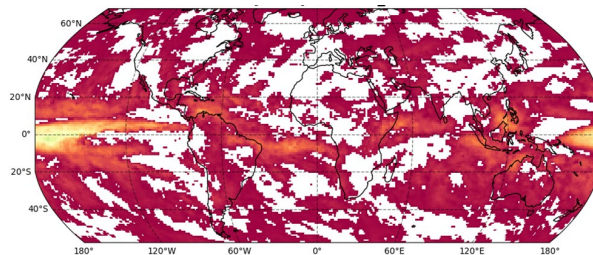
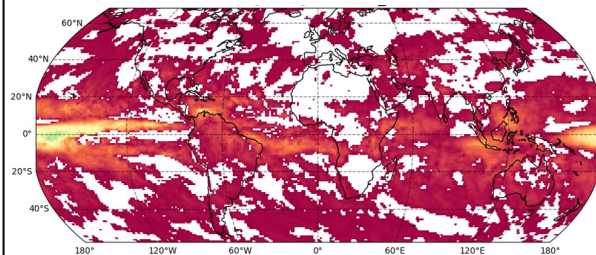
Effect of Training Data



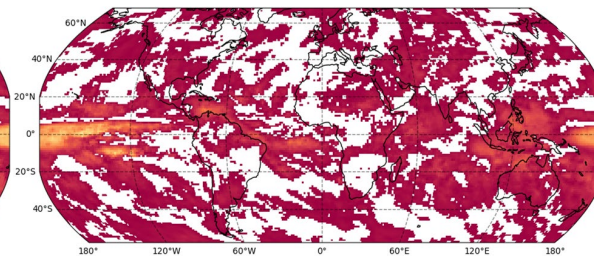
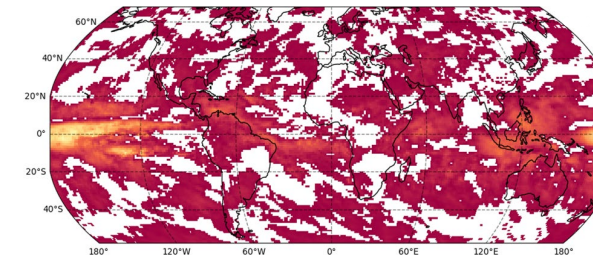
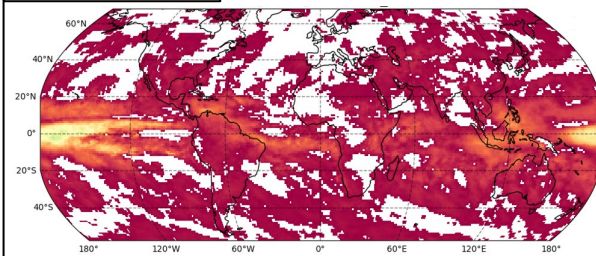
Zero Shot vs Fine Tuning Precipitation



Zero Shot



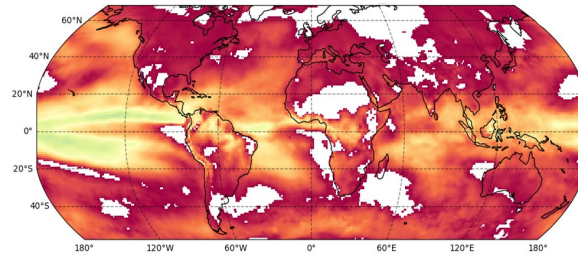
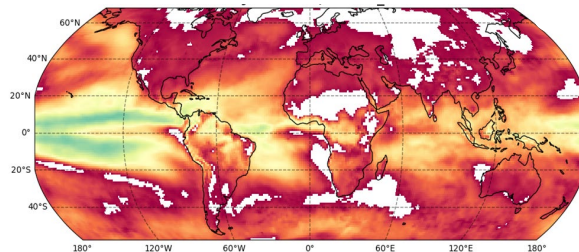
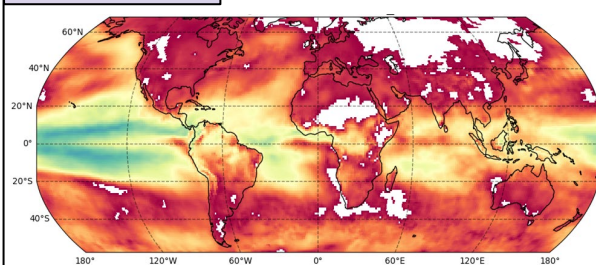
Fine Tuned



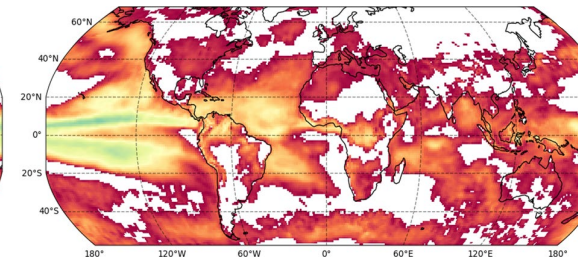
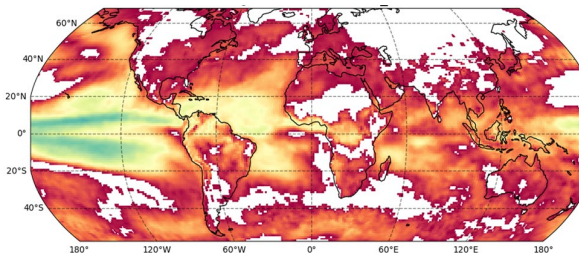
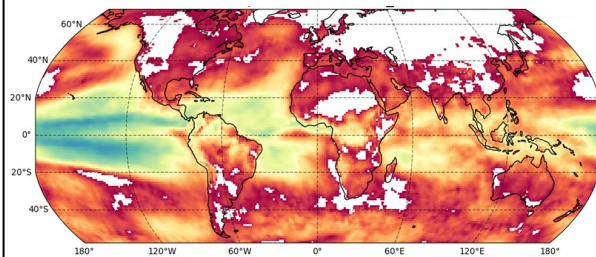
Zero Shot vs Fine Tuning T2M



Zero Shot



Fine Tuned



Values

		Precip (All)			
1 month		2 month		3 month	
Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned
0.053	0.054	0.048	0.049	0.029	0.036

		Precip (Land)			
1 month		2 month		3 month	
Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned
0.043	0.0375	0.035	0.032	0.021	0.0311

Values

		T2M (All)			
1 month		2 month		3 month	
Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned
0.28	0.3	0.23	0.24	0.184	0.2

		T2M (Land)			
1 month		2 month		3 month	
Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned	Zero Shot	Fine Tuned
0.16	0.18	0.13	0.15	0.116	0.12