Response to Reviewer 1

We thank reviewer 1 for the comments. The manuscript has been updated as suggested:

- One of the capabilities of HEMCO listed is the option to regrid. This can be rather confusing. I don't see how HEMCO is able to regrid emissions data that are in different projections. Countries often have their own projection system and this is not necessary lon-lat. If that is correct than the paper should explain that all conversion of other non-lon-lat projections need to be done in GIS outside of HEMCO as a necessary preparations step. Especially this step can be quite laborious and frustrating because nothing ever fits exactly.

More details on the regridding capabilities – both within an ESMF environment and when running HEMCO stand-alone – are now provided in sections 2.2. and 2.5.

- The compactness of the paper is appreciated but "2.6 Extensions for on-line scale factors" is too compact for my liking. Examples are named but not really given. I would like to see this a bit more elaborated. Just take one example like dust and then show how the parameterization is taken up in the extension, where do the climate data come from? what is needed if you apply this elsewhere? Does it reproduce what was presented in the original paper for this sources? Right now the figures (Fig.3) are pretty much black boxes called "emissions + dust" but how it got there is not really described. And in th case of dust - as what is it added; PM with size fractions? or TSP? Is the parameterization applicable everywhere or only in certain environments or climate conditions, is that restriction than build in? Or are these the kind of things a user should do him/herself? That would be perfectly understandable but it would good to have this pointed out then.

We updated section 2.6 and Figure 3 to provide more details on the HEMCO extensions as well as the exchangeability amongst different model environments. The dust size bins used by the dust extensions are now given in Table 1, as are the accumulation and coarse mode size of the sea salt aerosols.

- An issue when combining emission inventories is often different source sector definitions - How is this handled? Are there conversion tables? or is it handled by simply summing everything for a pollutant - or does every gridcel keep the source sectors of its original inventory? Some explanation on this would be welcome. It is obvious that HEMCO cannot solve all such issues but it would be good to also make clear that some problems must be solved elsewhere.

HEMCO gives the user complete freedom in the definitions of the emission sectors (through the category attribute in the configuration file), i.e. it is the responsibility of the user to ensure that emission sectors from different inventories are added or overlaid in a meaningful manner. This is now addressed in more detail in section 2.1.

- A final remark is more of a philosophical nature. When many origin al sources are being combined, plotted on different girds, multiplied with new scale factors etc. what is the proper reference to the data? This is not a HEMCO problem but if the authors have a clear vison on this it might be worth spending a few lines on this.

This is an excellent question! In the GEOS-Chem community, this is typically addressed by referencing the original base inventory (e.g., EDGAR) as well as the journal article describing additional updates or modifications (e.g., scaling factors, regional masks). Since other authors may have a different philosophy, we leave this issue to the discretion of individual authors.

Response to Reviewer 2

We thank reviewer 2 for the comments and updated the manuscript accordingly. Please find below the detailed replies.

1.1) Table 1 lists all emission inventories readily available in HEMCO. Here species from different inventories are mixed. e.g. CO,NOx,SO2 from EDGAR, VOCs from RETRO, NH3 from GEIA. Using different species which originate from similar sources from different inventories with different methodologies could lead to inconsistencies. While I think that it is reasonable to do so this issue needs to be discussed and the choices made need to be explained.

We added the following sentence to section 2.2: "[These files] correspond to the standard emission settings currently used in the GEOS-Chem chemical transport model" in order to clarify that the emission fields listed in Table 1 do not represent a new emission inventory but rather reflect the emissions setup currently used in the standard version of GEOS-Chem. The choice of these emission inventories have been discussed and validated in many publications, see e.g. Fairlie et al. (2010); Millet et al. (2010); van Donkelaar et al. (2006); Xiao et al. (2008); Yevich and Logan (2003).

1.2) Furthermore, it seems that the model is lacking a large fraction of PM2.5 (e.g. primary sulphate particles, primary nitrate particles, unspeciated primary particles). Is there a reason for this?

The listed emission fields correspond to the data used in GEOS-Chem. GEOS-Chem doesn't represent PM2.5 explicitly. Rather, PM2.5 is obtained through linear combination of 6 individual GEOS-Chem tracers, as described in detail under http://wiki.seas.harvard.edu/geos-chem/index.php/Particulate_matter_in_GEOS-Chem.
When using HEMCO in models with other species definitions, it may be necessary to convert emission data accordingly and/or add species-specific emission data to the data library. This issue is addressed in more detail in section 2.1 of the revised manuscript.

1.3) It is not clear which particle fraction (PM2.5, PM10, or PMC) is covered by the inventory "Mineral dust aerosols" Zender et al., 2003 Please specify this.
1.4) Please add the grid resolution of each dataset into the table

The horizontal resolutions of the base emission inventories are now given in Table 1, as are the dust size bins used by the dust extensions and the sea salt aerosol mode sizes.

2) In section 2.5 you write that the regridding method can only process datasets on a lat/lon grid. Yet, in table 1 you indicate that also EPA SMOKE data can be used as HEMCO input. As the SMOKE data is usually on a Lambert Conformal Conical Projection, how did you do the interpolation. Has this to be done externally (e.g. with the MAPL (Modeling Analysis and Prediction Program Layer) software toolkit)? If so you should indicate which projections can be interpolated by this software.

Data on Lambert Conformal grids (such as the EPA inventories) can directly be used in an ESMF environment since MAPL supports this grid type. This capability has not yet been implemented to the stand-alone version of HEMCO, and a regridded data set of the EPA emissions is used in this case. The horizontal resolutions of all base inventories are now added to Table 1 of the manuscript. We also added more details on the regridding capabilities of HEMCO (standalone and when coupled to ESMF) to sections 2.2. and 2.5.

3) Please adhere to the guidelines of GMD From the GMD homepage under "Manuscript Types" for Model Description papers: "All papers must include a section at the end of the paper entitled "Code availability". In this section, either instructions for obtaining the code (e.g. from a supplement or from a website) should be included, or a contact point should be given where the code can be obtained on request; or the reasons why the code is not available should be clearly stated."
The webpage is given in the last sentence of the Conclusion. I would suggest to add a "Code availibility" section just before the Acknowledgements and put that sentence there.

We thank the reviewer for pointing this out. A code availability section has been added as suggested.

4) As the HEMCO code is not available on the given webpage yet, I was unable to assess the source code. As I expect the paper to be published after revisions I would encourage the authors to give access to the model source code as suggested in the paper.

We were reluctant to release model code prior to peer-review. The HEMCO source code, data libraries and some sample configuration files will be made available once the paper is published.

5) My major criticism of this paper is the lack of a use case. I might expect too much of a

model development paper. But I think that there should be an exemplary CTM run to show the benefits of HEMCO for global modellers. E.g. a comparison of a CTM run with emissions from a single global inventory like EDGAR compared to a CTM run using the described HEMCO setup. It is common knowledge that more information does not neccessarily lead to better results. However, when putting so much effort in improving the emission dataset there needs to be a kind of "proof of concept" to illustrate the benefits and also possible shortcomings of the applied method.

We expanded Figure 2 to provide an illustrative example of the utility of HEMCO as a user interface between emission data and CTMs. We also modified line 1-5 on page 3 ("Here, we present the Harvard-NASA Emission Component version 1.0 (HEMCO), a software interface for atmospheric models that automates the implementation of new inventories and allows the construction of user-specified combinations of existing inventories and scale factors on a per region and/or per species basis.") and line 8-11 on page 6 ("They correspond to the standard emission settings currently used in the GEOS-Chem chemical transport model") to clarify that the goal of HEMCO is to streamline the way users pass emission data to the CTM, and not necessarily to improve upon the emission data sets themselves (see also reply to point 1). Previously, users of GEOS-Chem had to hardcode new emission fields, scaling factors, etc., whereas this is now handled externally through the HEMCO configuration file.

6) I agree with the first reviewer that the paper is a bit too compact at times. Especially the HEMCO extensions explained in section 2.6 and the data library in section 2.2 (see also comments 1.1 to 1.3). Also the interpolation capabilities need to be described in more detail (see comment 2).

We extended section 2.6 to provide more information on the HEMCO extensions, including a more detailed discussion on the example application and a modified version of Figure 3. As already discussed under comment 2, more details on the interpolation capabilities of HEMCO were added to the manuscript in section 2.2 and 2.5.

7) I would ask the authors to give an example for all configuration files. This could be given as a supplematary similar to Fig. 2. This could then be considered the "manual" part of the publication.

Sample configuration files - including the full configuration file used in the standard version of GEOS-Chem (using all the inventories listed in Table 1) - will be provided

along with the HEMCO source code. We hope that these files will serve as a good starting point for users who wish to modify/create their own configuration files.

References

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