Interactive comment on “FaIRv2.0.0: a generalised impulse-response model for climate uncertainty and future scenario exploration” by Nicholas J. Leach et al.

Anonymous Referee #2

Received and published: 12 February 2021

This manuscript presents a major update of the FaIR model, it clearly explains the main equations of the model, and presents parameterizations for a set of GHGs and forcings. As I understand, this manuscript has gone already through a major round of reviews and revisions, and this version is already in a very advanced stage. I do not have major comments, and I think it can be accepted after a few minor revisions.
1 Minor comments

• Sec 2.1, second line (line numbers do not add up. Very likely a misuse of LaTeX line numbers with equations). I would rather call it a '4-timescale IRF' than a '4-pool IRF'. You can think about an IRF as a coordinate transformation, that takes a four-pool carbon cycle model and maps it to a four coordinate system along four eigen directions with respective eigenvalues. Also, I assume you are talking here only about IRF$_{CO_2}$ from Joos et al. (2013), and not the other IRFs in their Table 5. Please clarify.

• Eq. 1. The time-dependency in the adjustment factor is missing. You should write $\alpha(t)$.

• Ln 145. Isn’t more appropriate to say ‘carbon dioxide’ than ‘carbon cycle’? For CO2 $n=4$, and for methane $n=1$, so CO2 includes the full complexity of the approach, but not methane.

• Ln 177. Please check the units of the pre-industrial CH4 concentration, ppb instead of ppm?

• Section 2.4. The state-space representation of the temperature response is a very interesting an elegant way to express these equations. However, I do not think it is correct to include the forcing term $F$ as part of the vector of states. It doesn’t have the same units as the temperature variables, and it is a non-autonomous term. I suggest expressing this equation as

$$\dot{X} = F(t) + AX \quad (1)$$

with

$$F(t) = \begin{pmatrix} F(t)/C_1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

(2)
and

\[ A = \begin{pmatrix}
-(\lambda + k_2)/C_1 & k_2/C_1 & 0 \\
 k_2/C_2 & -(k_2 + \epsilon k_3)/C_2 & \epsilon k_3/C_2 \\
 0 & k_3/C_3 & -k_3/C_3
\end{pmatrix} \]  \(3\)

In this representation, you obtain a matrix \(A\) that is invertible, which would guarantee that you can perform an eigen decomposition on the entire matrix, and not just on a portion of it, as expressed in lines 323-325. Also, it better expresses the fact that in this model, temperatures respond to a time-dependent forcing according to a set of fixed timescales and heat capacities of a three-box model.

Interactive comment on Geosci. Model Dev. Discuss., https://doi.org/10.5194/gmd-2020-390, 2020.