

# ISWfoam: A numerical model for internal solitary wave simulation in continuously stratified fluids

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**Abstract.** A numerical model, ISWfoam, for simulating internal solitary waves (ISWs) in continuously stratified, incompressible, viscous fluids is developed based on a fully three-dimensional (3D) Navier-Stokes equation using the open source code OpenFOAM. This model combines the density transport equation with the Reynolds-averaged Navier-Stokes equation with the Coriolis force, and the model discrete equation adopts the finite volume method. The  $k-\omega$  SST turbulence model has also been modified accordingly to the variable density field. ISWfoam provides two initial wave generation methods to generate an ISW in continuously stratified fluids, including solving the weakly nonlinear models of the extended Korteweg–de Vries (eKdV) equation and the fully nonlinear models of the Dubreil-Jacotin-Long (DJL) equation. Grid independence tests for ISWfoam are performed, considering the accuracy and computing efficiency, the appropriate grid size of the ISW simulation is recommended to be one-hundred and fiftieth of the characteristic length and one-twenty fifth of the ISW amplitude. Model verifications are conducted through comparisons between the simulated and experimental data for ISW propagation examples over a flat bottom section, including laboratory scale and actual ocean scale, a submerged triangular ridge, a Gaussian ridge and slope. The laboratory test results, including the ISW profile, wave breaking location, ISW arrival time, and the spatial and temporal changes in the mixture region, are well reproduced by ISWfoam. The ISWfoam model with unstructured grids and local mesh refinement can effectively simulate the evolution of ISWs, the ISW breaking phenomenon, waveform inversion of ISWs, and the interaction between ISWs and complex topography.

**Key words.** OpenFoam, Internal solitary wave tank, Stratified fluid, the DJL equation, Grid independence.

## 1. Introduction

Internal solitary waves (ISWs) are commonly observed in oceans, particularly on continental shelf

29 regions, due to strong tidal current flows over large topographic features (Huthnance, 1981), such as in  
30 the northern South China Sea (Alford et al., 2010; Alford et al., 2015; Cai et al., 2012). ISWs play an  
31 important role in both conveying nutrients from the deep ocean to shallower layers and promoting  
32 biological growth (Sandstrom et al., 1984). Additionally, ISWs are a potential threat to the ocean  
33 structures of resource exploration, exploitation, and submarine navigation vehicles (Alford et al., 2010;  
34 Osborne et al., 1980). A considerable number of studies, which include field measurements, remote  
35 sensing, experiments, theoretical analysis and numerical simulations, have been carried out due to the  
36 significance of ISWs (Vlasenko et al., 2005; Apel et al., 2006; Alford et al., 2011; Guo et al., 2014).

37 For numerically simulated ISWs, many models have been adopted, including the Euler equation,  
38 the inviscid/viscid incompressible Boussinesq model, the hydrostatic model, the non-hydrostatic model,  
39 and the VOF based two-phase flow model. Among these models, the representative hydrostatic models  
40 include the Naval Research Laboratory Ocean Nowcast/Forecast System (ONFS) (Ko et al., 2008), the  
41 Regional Hallberg Isopycnal Tide Mode (RHIMT) (Hallberg and Rhines, 1996; Hallberg, 1997), and the  
42 Ostrovsky-Hunter model. The representative non-hydrostatic models include the Bergen Ocean Model  
43 (BOM), the nonhydrostatic Regional Ocean Modeling System model (ROMS), the Stanford  
44 Unstructured Nonhydrostatic Terrain-following Adaptive Navier-Stokes Simulator (SUNTANS), and the  
45 Massachusetts Institute of Technology general circulation model (MITgcm). For example, Zhang et al  
46 (2012) established a variable water depth internal wave numerical model in a continuously stratified fluid  
47 system based on the Euler equation. Xu and Stastna (2020) used the viscid incompressible Boussinesq  
48 model to study cross-boundary-layer transport (Boegman and Stastna, 2019) by the fissioning process of  
49 shoaling ISWs. Lamb (1994) established a non-hydrostatic model, using a second-order projection  
50 method developed by Bell and Marcus (1992), which is used for internal wave research including  
51 boundary layer instability (Aghsaee et al., 2012), reflection (Lamb, 2009), and the interaction of the tides  
52 with the topography (Lamb, 2007; Aghsaee et al., 2010). Diamessis (2005) developed a spectral  
53 multidomain penalty method model and correctly reproduced the characteristic vorticity and internal  
54 wave structure. Subich et al (2013) developed a spectral collocation method for the solution of the  
55 Navier–Stokes equations under the Boussinesq approximation, and simulated the internal wave in  
56 continuously stratified fluid. Smedstad et al (2003) employed the ONFS model to establish a global ocean  
57 real-time forecasting system with an operational eddy resolution of  $1/16^\circ$ , which effectively tracks ocean

68 eddies, ocean currents and ocean fronts. [Simmons et al \(2004\)](#) employed the RHIMT model to carry out  
69 a global numerical simulation of tidal currents, and analyzed the whole process of the conversion rate of  
60 barotropic waves into baroclinic waves. [Thiem \(2011\)](#) used the Bergen Ocean Model to explore the  
61 bottom boundary layer flow caused by waves beneath a propagating ISW in a two-fluid system. [Li and  
62 Farmer \(2011\)](#) employed the Ostrovsky-Hunter model to study the nonlinear evolution of a  
63 monochromatic internal wave. [Buijsman et al \(2010\)](#) employed ROMS model to study the asymmetry in  
64 solitons to the east and west of Luzon Strait. [Zhang et al \(2011\)](#) used the nonhydrostatic SUNTANS  
65 model ([Fringer et al., 2006](#)) to study the dynamics of A wave and B wave formation. [Rayson et al \(2018\)](#)  
66 used the modified SUNTANS model to study the internal waves around Scott Reef and provided the  
67 generation process of internal lee waves. [Vlasenko et al \(2010\)](#) employed the MITgcm model to  
68 investigate the baroclinic tidal energy conversion in the area west of the Luzon Strait.

69 In summary, for continuously stratified fluids in complex ocean environments, numerical simulation  
70 has become a leading method for ISW investigations. However, there are presently few versatile  
71 numerical models with share code that can accurately simulate the ISW flow around complex topography  
72 and submarine navigation vehicles in continuously stratified fluids. Therefore, the main objective of this  
73 paper is to develop a solver, referred to as ISWFOam with a modified  $k-\omega$  SST model that considers the  
74 variable density field, which simulates the ISW in continuous density stratification, incompressible and  
75 viscous fluids using the finite volume method with unstructured grids based on a fully three-dimensional  
76 (3D) Navier-Stokes equation using the OpenFOAM library.

77 Notably, the open source field operation and manipulation code OpenFOAM®, as an object-  
78 oriented C++ open source library that can be used to build a variety of solvers for computational fluid  
79 problems based on the finite volume method, is becoming increasingly popular in the computational fluid  
80 research community. At present, the official version of OpenFOAM® does not have a solver or boundary  
81 conditions for solving the ISW in continuously stratified fluids. Although some researchers simulate  
82 ISWs by modifying the OpenFOAM® code, most of these studies are based on a two-fluid system  
83 without considering continuous stratification in density, such as [Meng and Zhang \(2016\)](#) and [Li et al  
84 \(2017\)](#). Though recent work by [Ding et al \(2020\)](#) and [Li et al \(2021\)](#) considered continuous stratification  
85 in density, their wave generation theories does not consider continuous stratification in density. To  
86 extensively use of the numerical model of ISWs as a tool in the future, we will develop ISWFOam to

87 simulate the ISW in continuously stratified, incompressible and viscous fluids based on the OpenFOAM  
88 library. The turbulence model will consider the variable density field. In addition, ISWfoam will provide  
89 two initial methods to generate an ISW in continuously stratified fluids, including solving the weakly  
90 nonlinear models of the extended Korteweg-de Vries (eKdV) equation and the fully nonlinear models of  
91 the Dubreil-Jacotin-Long (DJL) equation. This approach renders the numerical model suitable for the  
92 simulation of ISW flows in complex geometries and topographies. It is worth noting that ISWfoam does  
93 not consider the generation process of ISWs, but focuses on the propagation and evolution of ISWs that  
94 have already been generated, and the interaction between ISWs and complex structures and topography  
95 on field scales.

96 The outline of the paper is described as follows. First, in Section 2, the governing equations for a  
97 continuously stratified fluid are presented, and discrete forms of these equations are derived. Then, grid  
98 independence tests of the developed ISWfoam model are described in Section 3. Subsequently, in  
99 Section 4, a series of test cases are presented to verify the model. Simulation examples at the field scale  
100 in Section 5. Finally, the conclusions are drawn in Section 6.

## 101 **2. ISWfoam: A three-dimensional numerical solver for ISWs in a continuously stratified fluid**

### 102 **2.1 Governing equations**

103 We present an ISW numerical model by solving the motion of a three-dimensional, viscous,  
104 incompressible fluid with the Boussinesq approximation and rigid lid hypothesis. The governing  
105 equations of the model are

$$106 \quad \nabla \cdot \mathbf{U} = 0, \quad (1)$$

$$107 \quad \frac{\partial \mathbf{U}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{U} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{U} - \nabla \cdot (v_{Eff} \nabla \mathbf{U}) = \mathbf{Q} \quad \mathbf{Q} = \frac{1}{\rho_0} \left( -\nabla p_{rgh} - \mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X} \nabla \rho - \Omega \mathbf{e}_3 \right), \quad (2)$$

$$108 \quad \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{U} \cdot \nabla) \rho = \nabla \cdot (k \nabla \rho), \quad (3)$$

109 where  $\mathbf{U} = (u_i, u_j, u_k)$  is the velocity vector,  $t$  is time,  $\nabla$  is the gradient operator,  $\mathbf{Q}$  is the source term,  $\rho_0$   
110 is the reference density,  $\rho$  is the density field,  $p_{rgh}$  is a modified pressure field,  $\mathbf{g}$  is the gravitational  
111 acceleration vector, and  $\mathbf{X}$  is the position vector.  $v_{Eff}$  is the effective kinematic viscosity defined as  $v_{Eff} =$   
112  $\mu_{Eff} / \rho_0$ , where  $\mu_{Eff}$  is the effective dynamic viscosity including the molecular viscosity ( $\mu_t$ ) and turbulent  
113 viscosity ( $\mu_t$ ).  $k$  is the diffusion coefficient, and its value is the same as the effective dynamic

114 viscosity( $\mu_{Eff}$ ).  $\Omega$  is the Coriolis parameter, which is the twice the speed of rotation around the vertical  
 115 unit vector  $e_3 = (0,0,1)$ . ISWFOam uses a modified pressure  $p_{\_rgh}$  instead of a total pressure  $p$ , and their  
 116 relationship is given by

$$117 \quad p_{\_rgh} = p - \rho \mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X}, \quad \nabla p_{\_rgh} = \nabla p - \rho \mathbf{g} - \mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X} \nabla \rho, \quad (4)$$

118 To close the above equations, the turbulence model needs to be employed. The two-equation  $k$ - $\varepsilon$   
 119 model is widely used as an effective turbulence model, but it cannot capture the proper behaviour of  
 120 turbulent boundary layers up to separation due to adverse pressure gradients (Wilcox, 1993). For the  
 121 above boundary layers separation problem, Bardina et al. (1997) and Menter et al. (2003) suggested the  
 122 use of the  $k$ - $\omega$  SST model to obtain substantially more accurate results. Therefore, the turbulence model  
 123 used in this paper is the  $k$ - $\omega$  SST model. Notably that in OpenFOAM, the incompressible version for  
 124 turbulence models does not consider the variable density field, and instead, it treats the density as a  
 125 constant, such as the  $k$ - $\omega$  SST model

$$126 \quad \frac{\partial k}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\mathbf{U}k) = \nabla \cdot \left[ (v_{Eff} + \sigma_k v_t) \nabla k \right] + P_k^* - \beta^* \omega k \quad (5)$$

$$127 \quad \frac{\partial \omega}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\mathbf{U}\omega) = \nabla \cdot \left[ (v_{Eff} + \sigma_\omega v_t) \nabla \omega \right] + C_\gamma \frac{\omega}{k} P_k - C_\beta \omega^2 + 2(1 - F_1) \frac{\sigma_\omega \omega^2}{\omega} \nabla k \cdot \nabla \omega \quad (6)$$

$$128 \quad P_k^* = \min(P_k, c_1 C_\mu k \omega) \quad (7)$$

$$129 \quad v_t = \frac{a_1 k}{\max(a_1 \omega, \sqrt{2} S_t F_2)} \quad (8)$$

130 where  $k$  is the turbulent kinetic energy,  $\omega$  is the specific dissipation rate,  $P_k$  is the production term of  $k$ ,  
 131  $P_k = \tau^R : \nabla \mathbf{U}$ ,  $P_k^*$  is related to the production term of turbulence kinetic energy  $P_k$  in the  $k$  equation,  $v_t$   
 132 is the turbulent kinematic viscosity,  $S_t$  is the mean rate of the flow strain,  $S_t = 0.5(\nabla \mathbf{U} + \nabla \mathbf{U}^T)$ , the model  
 133 constants are assigned the values  $\beta^* = 0.09$ ,  $a_1 = 0.31$ ,  $c_1 = 10$  and  $C_\mu = 0.09$ ,  $F_1$  and  $F_2$  are blending  
 134 functions, the value of  $\sigma_k$ ,  $\sigma_\omega$ ,  $C_\gamma$  and  $C_\beta$  are blended using the equation  $\Phi = F_1 \Phi_1 + (1 - F_1) \Phi_2$  in which  
 135  $\Phi_1$  and  $\Phi_2$  are given in Table 1.

136 Table 1 Default values for  $\Phi_1$  and  $\Phi_2$

$\Phi$	$\sigma_k$	$\sigma_\omega$	$C_\beta$	$C_\gamma$
$\Phi_1$	0.85	0.5	0.075	5/9
$\Phi_2$	1.0	0.856	0.0828	0.44

137

138 Considering the variable density field during the solution process, it is necessary to consider the  
 139 change in the density field in the turbulence model. Therefore, we modify the turbulence model to

140 consider the change in density, and finally a modified  $k$ - $\omega$  SST model that considers the change in density  
 141 is used to close the equation

$$142 \quad \frac{\partial \rho k}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{U} k) = \nabla \cdot \left[ \rho (v_{Eff} + \sigma_k v_t) \nabla k \right] + \rho P_k^* - \rho \beta^* \omega k \quad (9)$$

$$143 \quad \frac{\partial \rho \omega}{\partial t} + \nabla \cdot (\rho \mathbf{U} \omega) = \nabla \cdot \left[ \rho (v_{Eff} + \sigma_\omega v_t) \nabla \omega \right] + C_\gamma \frac{\omega}{k} P_k - C_\beta \rho \omega^2 + 2(1 - F_1) \rho \frac{\sigma_{\omega 2}}{\omega} \nabla k \cdot \nabla \omega \quad (10)$$

144

## 145 2.2 Numerical discretization

146 The governing equations are numerically discretized using the finite volume method based on the  
 147 C++ open source library of OpenFOAM. The finite volume method requires that Eqs. (2) and (3) are  
 148 satisfied over the control volume  $V_P$  around point P in integral form:

$$149 \quad \int_{V_P} \int_{\Delta t} \left[ \frac{\partial \mathbf{U}}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{U} \cdot \nabla) \mathbf{U} - \nabla \cdot (v_{Eff} \nabla \mathbf{U}) \right] dV dt = \int_{V_P} \int_{\Delta t} Q dV dt, \quad (11)$$

$$150 \quad \int_{V_P} \int_{\Delta t} \left[ \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + (\mathbf{U} \cdot \nabla) \rho - \nabla \cdot (k \nabla \rho) \right] dV dt = 0, \quad (12)$$

151 The momentum equation in ISWFOam is solved by constructing a predicted velocity field and then  
 152 using the Pressure Implicit with Splitting of Operators (PISO) algorithm (Issa, 1986) to modify it.  $n$  is  
 153 defined to represent the current moment. The PISO iteration process is marked as  $m$ ; when  $m$  is equal to  
 154 zero, it represents the initial moment ( $t^n$ ).

155 First, only the temporal, convection and diffusion terms appear in the discrete version of the  
 156 equation momentum, and the other terms are ignored. After this operation, we obtain an explicit  
 157 expression for the predicted velocity field  $\mathbf{U}_P^r$ , namely,

$$158 \quad \frac{\mathbf{U}_P^r - \mathbf{U}_P^n}{\Delta t} V_P + \sum_{f \in \partial V_P} (\phi_f^n \mathbf{U}_f^r) - \sum_{f \in \partial V_P} v_{Eff} \nabla \mathbf{U}_f^r \cdot \mathbf{S}_f = 0, \quad (13)$$

159 where  $P$  represents the centre of the grid cell,  $\phi_f^n = \mathbf{U}_f^n \cdot \mathbf{S}_f$  is the volume flux at the initial time  $n$  and  
 160  $\mathbf{S}_f$  is the face vector.

161 The solution process requires the velocity on the surface  $f$ . Assuming the variation in  $\mathbf{U}_f^r$  between  
 162 the centre  $P$  of the grid and the centre  $N$  of the adjacent grid, the face values are calculated using a mixture  
 163 method (blended differencing) of the central scheme (central differencing) and the upwind scheme  
 164 (upwind differencing) as follows (Jasak, 1996):

165 
$$\mathbf{U}_f = (1 - \lambda_U)(\mathbf{U}_f)_{UD} + \lambda_U(\mathbf{U}_f)_{CD} \quad (14)$$

166 where

167 
$$(\mathbf{U}_f)_{UD} = \begin{cases} \mathbf{U}_P & \text{for } \phi_f \geq 0, \\ \mathbf{U}_N & \text{for } \phi_f < 0, \end{cases} \quad \text{and} \quad (\mathbf{U}_f)_{CD} = \frac{\mathbf{U}_P + \mathbf{U}_N}{2} \quad (15)$$

168 where  $N$  represents the centre of the adjacent grid cells,  $\phi_f = \mathbf{U}_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f$  is volume flux. The limiter  $\lambda_U$   
 169 can be selected from several alternatives (OpenFOAM, 2019), including linear, QUICK, vanLeer, etc. In  
 170 the following derivation process, the vanLeer scheme was used to calculate the velocity of the face centre

171 
$$\mathbf{U}_f = \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{U}_P + \mathbf{U}_N) + \frac{1}{2}[\psi(\phi_f)(1 - \lambda_U)](\mathbf{U}_P - \mathbf{U}_N), \quad (16)$$

172 where  $\psi(\phi_f)$  is a step function defined by

173 
$$\psi(\phi_f) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } \phi_f \geq 0, \\ -1 & \text{for } \phi_f < 0, \end{cases} \quad (17)$$

174 Inserting Eq. (16) into Eq. (13) yields

175 
$$A_P \mathbf{U}_P^r = \sum_{f \in \partial V_P} A_N \mathbf{U}_P^m + \frac{\mathbf{U}_P^n}{\Delta t} = H(\mathbf{U}^m) \quad (18)$$

176 After some manipulation, the quantities  $A_P$  and  $A_N$  are given as

177 
$$A_P = \left\{ \frac{V_P}{\Delta t} + \sum_{f \in \partial V_P} \frac{\phi_f^n}{2} [1 + \psi(\phi_f)(1 - \lambda_U)] + \sum_{f \in \partial V_P} v_{Eff,f} \frac{|\mathbf{S}_f|}{|d|} \right\} \frac{1}{V_P} \quad (19)$$

178 
$$A_N = \left\{ -\frac{\phi_f^n}{2} [1 - \psi(\phi_f)(1 - \lambda_U)] + v_{Eff,f} \frac{|\mathbf{S}_f|}{|d|} \right\} \frac{1}{V_P} \quad (20)$$

179 Including the effect of gravity and the Coriolis force in Eq. (18)

180 
$$\mathbf{U}_P^r = \frac{H(\mathbf{U}^m)}{A_P} - \frac{(\mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X} \nabla \rho / \rho_0)^n}{A_P} - \frac{(\Omega e_3)^n}{A_P}, \quad (21)$$

181 Notably, that when  $m$  is equal to zero, it represents the initial moment  $n$ , and the value of the initial

182 moment is known. Therefore, we obtain the predicted velocity field  $\mathbf{U}_P^r$  in the first iteration. We define

183 the surface gradient operator  $(\nabla \frac{1}{f})$ , and the type of gradient operator acting on  $\mathbf{U}$  is

184  $\nabla \frac{1}{f} \mathbf{U} = (\mathbf{U}_N^m - \mathbf{U}_P^m) / |d|$ , which represents the distance from the centre of the grid  $N$  to  $P$ . Similarly,

185 the surface gradient operator  $(\nabla \frac{1}{f})$  acting on scalar  $\gamma$  is  $\nabla \frac{1}{f} \lambda = (\lambda_N^m - \lambda_P^m) / |d|$ . The associated flux

186  $(\phi_f = \mathbf{U}_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f)$  is achieved by executing an inner product with a surface vector ( $\mathbf{S}_f$ ) on the left and right

187 parts of Eq. (21), giving

$$188 \quad \phi_f^r = \left( \frac{H(\mathbf{U}^m)}{A_p} \right)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f - \left( \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right)_f (\mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X})_f^n \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} \rho \right)^n |\mathbf{S}_f| \right) - \left( \frac{(\Omega e_3)^n}{A_p} \right)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f, \quad (22)$$

189 Eq. (22) completed the flux calculation without considering the influence of the pressure term. The

190 pressure contribution in terms of a flux can be expressed as

$$191 \quad \left( \frac{-\nabla p_{\_rgh}}{\rho_0 A_p} \right)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f = \left( \frac{-1}{A_p} \right)_f \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} p_{\_rgh}^{m+1} \right) |\mathbf{S}_f|, \quad (23)$$

192 Then, Eq. (23) is now added to Eq. (22) to yield

$$193 \quad \phi_f^{m+1} = \left( \frac{H(\mathbf{U}^m)}{A_p} \right)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f - \left( \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right)_f (\mathbf{g} \cdot \mathbf{X})_f^n \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} \rho \right)^n |\mathbf{S}_f| \right) - \left( \frac{(\Omega e_3)^n}{A_p} \right)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f - \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right)_f \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} p_{\_rgh}^{m+1} \right) |\mathbf{S}_f| \quad (24)$$

194 Combined with Eq. (22), Eq. (24) is simplified and rewritten as

$$195 \quad \phi_f^{m+1} = \phi_f^r - \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right)_f \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} p_{\_rgh}^{m+1} \right) |\mathbf{S}_f| \quad (25)$$

196 Using conservation of mass, we solve the pressure field  $p_{\_rgh}^{m+1}$ , which results in

$$197 \quad \sum_{f \in \partial V_p} \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right)_f \left( \frac{1}{\rho_0} \nabla_{\frac{1}{f}} p_{\_rgh}^{m+1} \right) |\mathbf{S}_f| = \sum_{f \in \partial V_p} \phi_f^r \quad (26)$$

198 The preconditioned conjugate gradient method is used to solve the linear system constructed by Eq.

199 (26) (OpenFOAM, 2019). After  $p_{\_rgh}^{m+1}$  is obtained using Eq. (26), we calculate the volume flux using

200 Eq. (25) for each face. The cell centred velocity fields  $\mathbf{U}_p^{m+1}$  are calculated by reconstructing the face

201 velocity flux using the following expression (Deshpande, 2012)

$$202 \quad \mathbf{U}_p^{m+1} = \mathbf{U}_p^r + \left( \frac{1}{A_p} \right) \left( \sum_{f \in \partial V_p} \frac{\mathbf{S}_f \mathbf{S}_f}{|\mathbf{S}_f|} \right)^{-1} \cdot \left( \sum_{f \in \partial V_p} \left( \frac{\phi_f^{m+1} - (\mathbf{U}_p^r)_f \cdot \mathbf{S}_f}{(1/A_p)_f} \right) \frac{\mathbf{S}_f}{|\mathbf{S}_f|} \right) \quad (27)$$

203 Eq. (27) completes the velocity field calculation of the first iteration step in the PISO algorithm. By

204 converting the identifier  $m$  to  $m+1$ , the next PISO iteration is completed and updating the velocity in Eq.

205 (18) with the velocity  $\mathbf{U}_p^{m+1}$  calculated from Eq. (27), thereby updating  $p_{\_rgh}$ ,  $\phi_f$  and  $\mathbf{U}$ . This procedure

206 is performed  $M$  times to guarantee that the results of the velocity and pressure together conform to the

207 continuity and momentum equations. Considering that PISO iteration levels require more than 1, but



208 typically not more than 4 (OpenFOAM, 2019), we specify that the number of PISO iteration levels is 3  
 209 in the computations presented in this paper. After completing the three iterations, the converged values  
 210 are considered the result of the next time step ( $n + 1$ ), namely,

$$211 \quad \phi_f^{n+1} = \phi_f^M, \quad \mathbf{U}_P^{n+1} = \mathbf{U}_P^M, \quad P_{\_rgh}^{n+1} = P_{\_rgh}^M, \quad (28)$$

212 We discretize the convection-diffusion equation of density (12) to obtain

$$213 \quad \frac{V_P}{\Delta t} (\rho_P^{n+1} - \rho_P^n) + \sum (\phi_f^{n+1} \rho_f^{n+1}) = \sum k \left[ |\mathbf{S}_f| \frac{\rho_N^{n+1} - \rho_P^{n+1}}{|d|} \right], \quad (29)$$

214 At the end of the iteration procedure, we bring the results of the volume flux into Eq. (29) to  
 215 calculate the density field at the next time ( $\rho_P^{n+1}$ ), thereby updating the density field for the next step  
 216 calculation ( $\Delta t = t^{n+2} - t^{n+1}$ ).

### 217 2.3 Initialized field of ISW generation

218 ISW generation methods mainly include the gravity collapse mechanism, double push-pedals  
 219 method (Fu et al., 2008), velocity-inlet method (Gao et al., 2012), mass source method (Wang et al.,  
 220 2018), initialization method, and methods addressing the interaction between tidal current and  
 221 topography. For example, Hsieh et al (2014) investigated the flow evolution of a depression ISW  
 222 generated by the gravity collapse mechanism. Cheng et al (2020) studied the interaction between ISWs  
 223 and a cylinder using the gravity collapse mechanism. The initialization method involves solving the  
 224 internal solitary wave theory at the initial moment, such as the Korteweg-de Vries (KdV) equation  
 225 (Grimshaw et al., 2010), the modified KdV (mKdV) equation, the extended KdV (eKdV) equation, the  
 226 forced KdV equation, the Ostrovsky equation (Li and Farmer, 2011), the Miyata-Choi-Camassa (MCC)  
 227 model (Miyata 1985 and 1988; Choi and Camassa, 1999), and the Dureuil-Jacotin-Long (DJL) equation  
 228 (Long, 1953; Turkington, 1991; Brown and Christie, 1997; Dunphy et al., 2011), to obtain the wave  
 229 surface, velocity field. The method of an interacting between tidal current and terrain that stimulates  
 230 ISWs is adopted by many scholars, such as Farmer and Smith (1980), Lamb et al (1994), and Shaw et al  
 231 (2009).

232 In this paper, the method of initializing the field is selected to generate the ISWs. To increase the  
 233 application range of the ISWfoam model, two initialization methods are provided, including solving the  
 234 weakly nonlinear models of the eKdV equation (Helfrich and Melville, 2006) and the fully nonlinear

235 models of the DJL equation for continuously stratified fluids (Turkington, 1991; Dunphy et al, 2011).

236 The Dubreil-Jacotin-Long (DJL) equation is expressed as

$$237 \quad \nabla^2 \eta + \frac{N^2(z-\eta)}{c^2} \eta = 0, \quad \eta = 0 \quad \text{at} \quad z = 0, -H \quad (30)$$

$$\eta = 0 \quad \text{at} \quad |x| \rightarrow \infty$$

238 where  $\eta$  is the isopycnal displacement,  $H$  is the water depth,  $c$  is the propagation speed,  $N$  is the definition  
239 of the buoyancy frequency, and  $z$  is vertical position.

$$240 \quad N^2(z) = -g \frac{d\rho_0(z)}{dz}, \quad (31)$$

241 where  $\rho_0(z)$  is the reference density, and  $g$  is the gravitational acceleration.

242 By solving the above DJL equation we can obtain  $\eta$  and  $c$ , and then through the relationship  $\psi = \eta c$ ,  
243 where  $\psi$  is the stream function, we can obtain the wave-induced velocity field. We use the DJLES open  
244 source package provided by Dunphy et al (2011) to solve the DJL equations. Then we input the initial  
245 field calculated by DJLES into OpenFOAM to obtain the initial field required for OpenFOAM numerical  
246 simulation.

247 Another theory of ISWFOam model wave generation involves the weakly nonlinear models of the  
248 eKdV equation. Using the first order stream function for the DJL equation, we can obtain the well-known  
249 KdV equation and further obtain the eKdV equation. For the specific derivation, please refer to the paper  
250 by Lamb and Yan (1996). The eKdV equation (Helfrich and Melville, 2006) is

$$251 \quad \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial t} + (c_0 + c_1 \zeta + c_3 \zeta^2) \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial x} + c_2 \frac{\partial^3 \zeta}{\partial x^3} = 0, \quad (32)$$

$$252 \quad c_0^2 = \frac{gh_1 h_2 (\rho_2 - \rho_1)}{\rho_1 h_2 + \rho_2 h_1}, \quad (33)$$

$$253 \quad c_1 = -\frac{3c_0}{2} \frac{\rho_1 h_2^2 - \rho_2 h_1^2}{\rho_1 h_1 h_2^2 + \rho_2 h_1^2 h_2}, \quad (34)$$

$$254 \quad c_2 = \frac{c_0}{6} \frac{\rho_1 h_1^2 h_2 + \rho_2 h_1 h_2^2}{\rho_1 h_2 + \rho_2 h_1}, \quad (35)$$

$$255 \quad c_3 = \frac{3c_0}{h_1^2 h_2^2} \left[ \frac{7}{8} \left( \frac{\rho_1 h_2^2 - \rho_2 h_1^2}{\rho_1 h_2 + \rho_2 h_1} \right)^2 - \frac{\rho_1 h_2^3 + \rho_2 h_1^3}{\rho_1 h_2 + \rho_2 h_1} \right], \quad (36)$$

256 where  $\zeta$  is the isopycnal vertical displacement;  $h_1$  and  $h_2$  are the mean upper and lower layer depths,

257 respectively;  $\rho_1$  and  $\rho_1$  are the fluid densities of the upper and lower layers, respectively. The theoretical  
 258 solution of Eq. (32) above is

$$259 \quad \zeta = \frac{a}{B + (1-B) \cosh^2 \left[ \lambda_{\text{eKdV}} (x - c_{\text{eKdV}} t) \right]}, \quad (37)$$

$$260 \quad \lambda_{\text{eKdV}}^2 = \frac{a}{12c_2} \left( c_1 + \frac{1}{2} c_3 a \right), \quad (38)$$

$$261 \quad c_{\text{eKdV}} = c_0 + \frac{a}{3} \left( c_1 + \frac{1}{2} c_3 a \right), \quad (39)$$

$$262 \quad B = \frac{-ac_3}{2c_1 + ac_3}, \quad (40)$$

$$263 \quad u_1 = -c_{\text{eKdV}} \frac{\zeta}{h_1 - \zeta}, \quad u_2 = c_{\text{eKdV}} \frac{\zeta}{h_2 + \zeta}, \quad (41)$$

264 where  $a$  is the ISW amplitude,  $\lambda_{\text{eKdV}}$  is the wavelength,  $c_{\text{eKdV}}$  is the wave speed,  $B$  is an auxiliary parameter,  
 265 and  $u_1$  and  $u_2$  are the speeds of the upper and lower layers of the fluid, respectively. The waveform and  
 266 velocity field of the ISWs are solved at the initial moment by the developed function and then assigned  
 267 to the calculation domain.

268 The vertical profile of the initial density is given by a hyperbolic tangent function profile ([Aghsaee](#)  
 269 [et al., 2010](#))

$$270 \quad \bar{\rho}(z) = \frac{\rho_1 + \rho_2}{2} - \frac{\rho_2 - \rho_1}{2} \tanh \left( \frac{z - z_{\text{pyc}}}{d_{\text{pyc}}} \right) \quad (42)$$

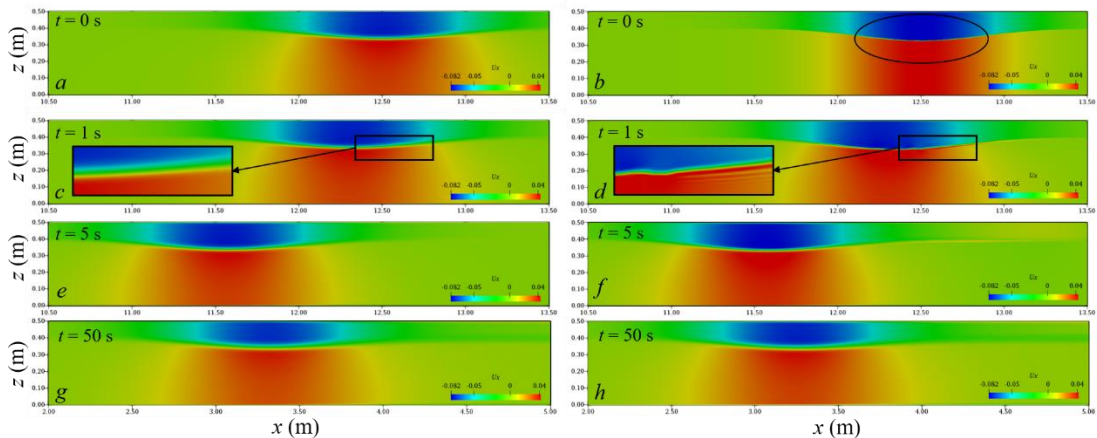
271 where  $z$  is the vertical position;  $\rho_1$  and  $\rho_2$  are the fluid densities of the upper and lower layers, respectively;  
 272  $z_{\text{pyc}}$  is the location of the centre of the pycnocline; and  $d_{\text{pyc}}$  is the thickness of the pycnocline. In this paper,  
 273 unless otherwise specified, the form of the density profile adopts Eq. (42). The internal solitary wave  
 274 surface is obtained by calculating the gradient of the density field, and the absolute value of the maximum  
 275 value of the gradient represents the vertical position of the wave surface. Notably, the density profile of  
 276 the actual ocean is not always hyperbolic, so our model provides a function for users to modify the  
 277 density profile according to the actual situation.

### 278 **2.3.1 Comparison between the DJL equation and the eKdV equation**

279 To compare the DJL equation and the eKdV equation, we set up a numerical simulation, which  
 280 includes a tank that is 15 m long, 1 m wide and has a water depth of 0.5 m. The depths of the upper ( $h_1$ )  
 281 and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers are 0.1 m and 0.4 m, respectively, the densities of the upper and lower layers are

282 1022 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and 1028 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively, the location of the centre of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc}$ ) is 0.4 m, the  
 283 pycnocline thickness ( $d_{pyc}$ ) is 0.04 m vertically, the initial ISW amplitude ( $a$ ) is 0.065 m and the location  
 284 of the centre of ISW is 12.5m. The ISWs propagate from right to left. The measuring point P is set at a  
 285 position 10m away from the initial ISW. The grid is uniform in the  $x$ -direction,  $y$ -direction and  $z$ -direction,  
 286 and the sizes are  $\Delta x = 1 \times 10^{-2}$  m,  $\Delta y = 1 \times 10^{-2}$  m and  $\Delta z = 1 \times 10^{-3}$  m, respectively. Slip boundary conditions  
 287 are applied to the bottom and both sides, while cyclic boundary conditions are assigned to the inlet and  
 288 outlet boundaries. The top boundary is a rigid lid. The boundary conditions related to the density field  
 289 are no-flux boundary conditions.

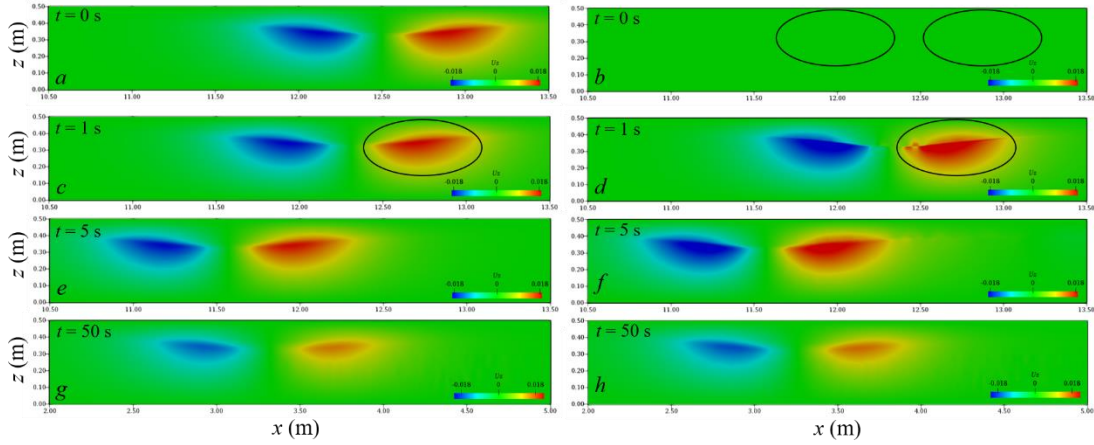
290 Fig. 1 shows the comparison of the horizontal velocity component field when the DJL equation and  
 291 the eKdV equation are used to generate ISWs. At the initial moment, the ISW generated by the eKdV  
 292 equation is not as smooth as the ISW generated by the DJL equation, and the horizontal velocity at the  
 293 interface area is discontinuous as shown in Fig. 1(a) and (b). With the propagation of ISWs, the ISWs  
 294 generated by the DJL equation are always smooth at the interface area, and the velocity field is always  
 295 continuous as shown in Fig. 1(a), (c), (e) and (g). Correspondingly, the ISW generated by the eKdV  
 296 equation gradually produces a gradient in the vertical direction of the horizontal velocity in the interface  
 297 area, thus, the interface area becomes smooth, and the velocity becomes continuous. Fig. 1(d) shows this  
 298 evolution process, which is basically completed in 5s as shown in Fig. 1(f). At 50s, the difference between  
 299 the horizontal velocity fields of the two equations is very small as shown in Fig. 1(g) and (h).



300  
 301 Figure 1: Comparison chart of the horizontal velocity component field: DJL equation (left) and eKdV equation  
 302 (right).

303 Fig. 2 shows the comparison of the vertical velocity component field when the DJL equation and  
 304 the eKdV equation are used to generate ISWs. Since the theoretical solution of the eKdV equation only  
 305 obtain the average horizontal velocity of the upper and lower layers of the fluid, there is no vertical

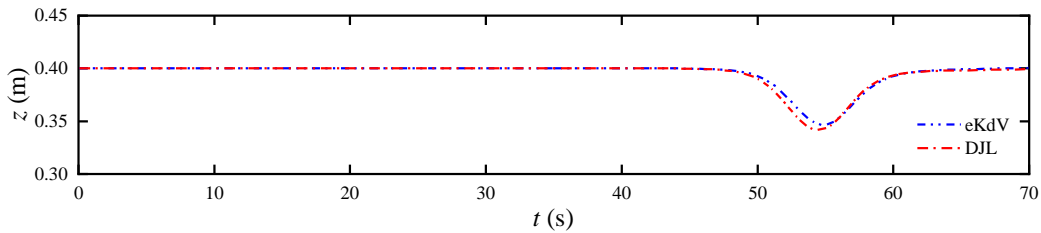
306 velocity at the initial moment, as shown in Fig. 2(b). With the propagation of ISWs, the vertical velocity  
 307 field will gradually be generated and finally stabilized, and the stable time occurs at 5s as shown in Fig.  
 308 2(b), (d), (f) and (h). At 50s, the difference between the vertical velocity fields of the two equations is  
 309 very small as shown in Fig. 2(g) and (h).



310

311 Figure 2: Comparison chart of the vertical velocity component field: DJL equation (left) and eKdV equation  
 312 (right).

313 The ISW propagates for 10 m, and the amplitudes of the ISWs generated by the DJL equation and  
 314 the eKdV equation are reduced by 9.88% and 17.96%, respectively, as shown in Fig. 3. Overall, the  
 315 reduction in energy leads to the attenuation of the amplitude of the ISW, which in turn reduces the wave  
 316 speed. Except for the difference in initial fields, the grid sizes, time step, turbulence model, and other  
 317 features are the same. Therefore, the initial stage of ISWs generated by the eKdV equation leads to  
 318 excessive energy loss compared with those generated by the DJL equation. From the above analysis of  
 319 the velocity field, we know that the method of initializing the field with the eKdV equation requires a  
 320 period of movement before the jump of the velocity field develops into a field with continuous changes  
 321 in velocity. In addition, the DJL equation, as a fully nonlinear model, can better reflect its superiority for  
 322 internal waves with strong nonlinearity. Therefore, the wave generation of the subsequent numerical  
 323 cases in this paper adopts the method of initializing the field with the DJL equation.



324

325 Figure 3: Time series of the interface displacement. The probe was 10 m away from the initial ISW.

### 326 3. Grid independence of the ISW simulation

327 These grid independence tests were performed in the horizontal and vertical directions by applying  
328 meshes of different sizes. The sizes of the mesh determined in this paper are calculated based on the  
329 amplitude of the ISW and a characteristic length determined through the integration of the wave profile  
330 (Michallet and Ivey, 1999)

$$331 \quad L = \frac{1}{a} \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \zeta(x) dx \quad (43)$$

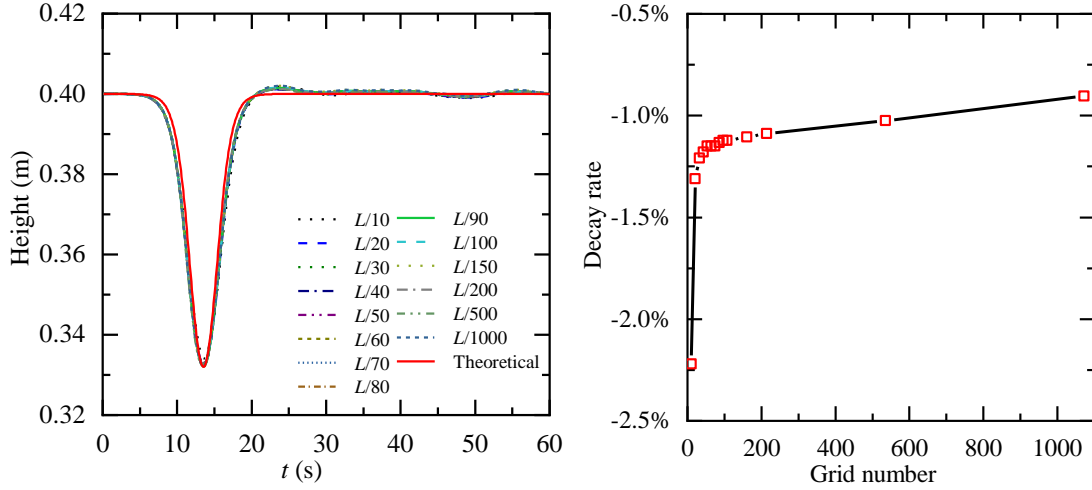
332 where  $\zeta$  is the isopycnal vertical displacement and  $a$  is the ISW amplitude.

333 To determine the appropriate mesh size, the propagation of ISWs on flat bottoms is calculated, and  
334 the numerical results are compared with the DJL theoretical solution. We set up a numerical simulation,  
335 which includes a tank that is 50 m long, 0.5 m wide and has a water depth of 0.5 m. The depths of the  
336 upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers are 0.1 m and 0.4 m, respectively, the densities of the upper and lower  
337 layers are 1000 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and 1030 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively, the location of the centre of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc}$ ) is  
338 0.4 m, and the pycnocline thickness ( $d_{pyc}$ ) is 0.05 m vertically, the ISW amplitude ( $a$ ) is 0.065 m. The  
339 measuring point P is set at a position  $10L$  away from the initial ISW. The sponge layer on both sides,  
340 whose length is the double wave characteristic length, has been checked to properly dissipate the  
341 reflected wave. Slip boundary conditions are applied to the bottom and both sides, while cyclic boundary  
342 conditions are assigned to the inlet and outlet boundaries. The top boundary is a rigid lid. The boundary  
343 conditions related to the density field are no-flux boundary conditions.

#### 344 3.1 Grid independence in the horizontal direction

345 First, we analyse the grid independence in the horizontal direction, with a constant cell height of  $\Delta z$   
346 =  $a/20$  m. Fig. 4 shows the results of the comparison of the waveform and decay rate in the horizontal  
347 direction at probe P1 with the ISWFoam using a wide range of grid configurations. The results show a  
348 negligible difference in the waveform when the mesh size is less than  $L/40$ , so it is difficult to accurately  
349 analyse the grid independence just by the waveform. A traditional decay rate parameter is adopted,  
350 namely  $\delta = (a_{probe} - a_{initial})/a_{initial}$ , where  $a_{initial}$  is the ISW amplitude value at the initial moment,  $a_{probe}$  is  
351 the ISW amplitude value of the probe  $10L$  away from the initial ISW. Fig. 4(b) shows the relationship  
352 between the decay rate of the ISW amplitude and the grid quantity per unit length for different mesh  
353 sizes. As shown in Fig. 4(b), the decay rate of the ISW amplitude tends to be smooth as the grid number

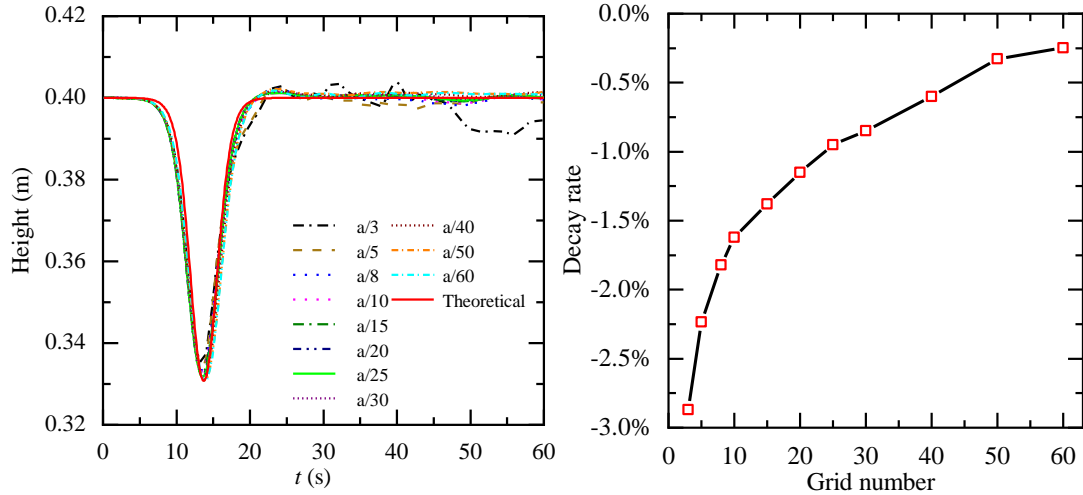
354 per unit length increases to 160 ( $\Delta x = L/150$ ), and then the increase in the grid quantity has a relatively  
 355 small effect on the decay rate. Therefore, for ISWfoam developed in this paper, we suggest that the  
 356 dimensions of the horizontal grid are  $L/150$ .



357  
 358 Figure 4: Grid independence in the horizontal direction at probe P1: (a) comparison of waveform and (b) decay  
 359 rate.

### 360 3.2 Grid independence in the vertical direction

361 Second, we analyse the grid independence in the vertical direction, with a constant cell width of  $\Delta x$   
 362  $= L/150$  m. Fig. 5 shows the results of a comparison of the waveform and decay rate of the ISW amplitude  
 363 in the vertical direction at probe P1 with the ISWfoam using a wide range of grid configurations. The  
 364 results also show a negligible difference in the waveform when the mesh size is less than  $a/10$ , so it is  
 365 difficult to accurately analyse the grid independence just by the waveform. As shown in Fig. 5(b), the  
 366 decay rate of the ISW amplitude decreases as the grid quantity increases in a wave height range before  
 367 the numerical oscillation occurs. Here, we assume that the grid size with the decay rate of the ISW  
 368 amplitude less than one percent is the appropriate vertical grid size; namely, the vertical grid size is  $a/25$   
 369 m. Therefore, for ISWfoam developed in this paper, we suggest that the dimensions of the vertical grid  
 370 be  $a/25$ .



371

372 Figure 5: Grid independence analysis in the vertical direction at probe P1: (a) comparison of waveform and (b)  
 373 decay rate.

374 Finally, for ISWfoam developed in this paper, we suggest that the dimensions of the horizontal grid  
 375 are  $L/150$ , while the vertical grid is  $a/25$ .

#### 376 4. Model verification and results

377 To verify the numerical model of the ISWs, the propagation of ISWs on a flat bottom section,  
 378 submerged triangular ridge and slopes is calculated, and the numerical results are compared with the  
 379 corresponding experimental results. To verify the correctness of Coriolis code implantation and reflect  
 380 the role of local mesh refinement, the propagation of ISWs on a flat bottom section of actual ocean scale  
 381 and a Gaussian ridge is calculated.

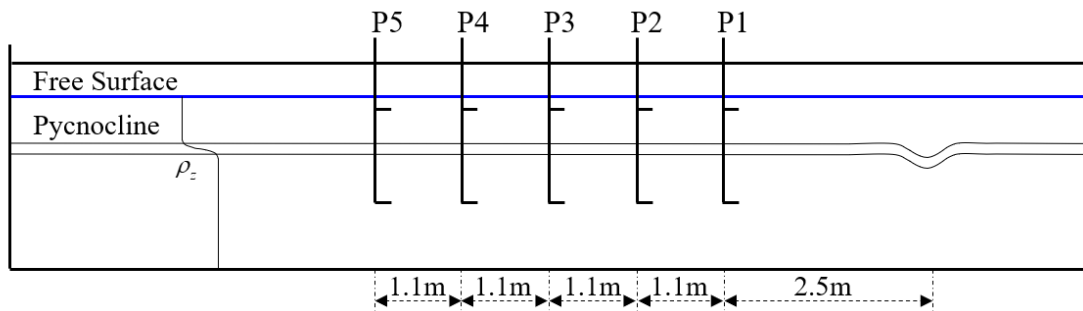
#### 382 4.1 ISW propagating on a flat bottom section

##### 383 4.1.1 Experimental data used

384 In this section, ISWfoam is verified by employing ISWs propagating on a flat bottom section with  
 385 Case Flat\_4 in the continuously stratified laboratory experiment described in Hsieh et al. (2014). The  
 386 physical dimensions and ultrasonic probe locations in the experiments of Hsieh et al. (2014), as shown  
 387 in Fig. 6, are adopted to establish the numerical computation domain. We set up a numerical tank of the  
 388 experiment of Hsieh and co-authors, which includes a tank that is 15 m long, 0.5 m wide and has a stable  
 389 water depth of 0.5 m; the fluid densities of the upper ( $\rho_1$ ) and lower ( $\rho_2$ ) layers are  $996 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and  $1030$   
 390  $\text{kg/m}^3$ , respectively; the ISW amplitude ( $a$ ) is  $0.068 \text{ m}$ ; the location of the centre of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc}$ )



391 is 0.4 m, the pycnocline thickness ( $d_{pyc}$ ) is 0.04 m vertically, and the depths of the upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower  
 392 ( $h_2$ ) layers are 0.1 m and 0.4 m, respectively. The grid is uniform in the  $x$ -direction,  $y$ -direction and  $z$ -  
 393 direction, and the sizes are  $\Delta x = 1.5 \times 10^{-2}$  m,  $\Delta y = 1.5 \times 10^{-2}$  m and  $\Delta z = 2.72 \times 10^{-3}$  m, respectively. The  
 394 sponge layer on both sides, whose length is double wave characteristic length, has been checked to  
 395 properly dissipate the reflected wave. Slip boundary conditions are applied to the bottom and both sides,  
 396 while cyclic boundary conditions are assigned to the inlet and outlet boundaries. The top boundary is a  
 397 rigid lid. The boundary conditions related to the density field are no-flux boundary conditions.



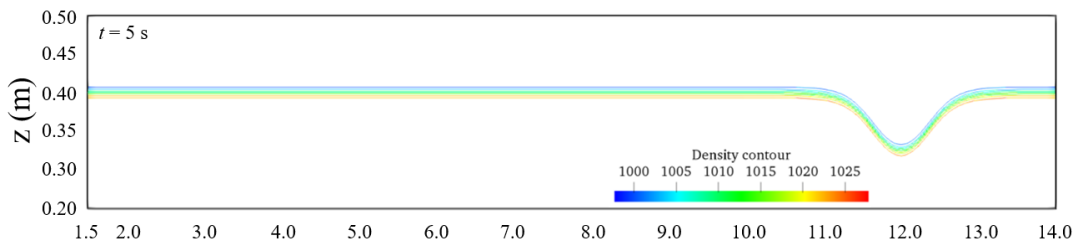
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Figure 6: Schematic diagram of probe position (P1–P5) (Hsieh et al. (2014)).

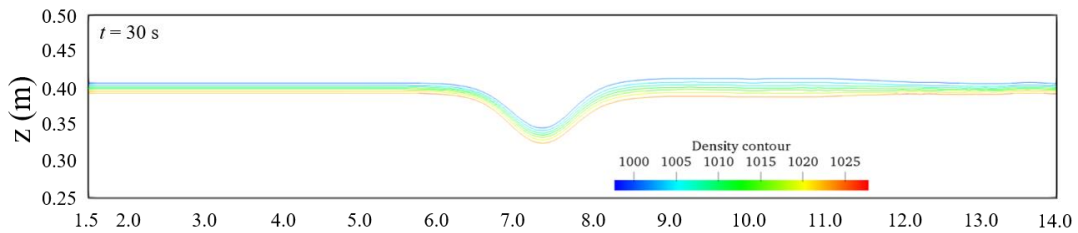
#### 400 4.1.2 Comparisons between the numerical and experimental results

401 Fig. 7 shows the density contours at three different times from Case Flat\_4 in the laboratory  
 402 experiment of Hsieh and coworkers, showing the stable evolution of an ISW. The results also show the  
 403 realistic evolution of the thickening of the pycnocline after ISW propagation because of convection and  
 404 diffusion. At the same time, the propagation of the ISW is stable and unbroken.

405



406



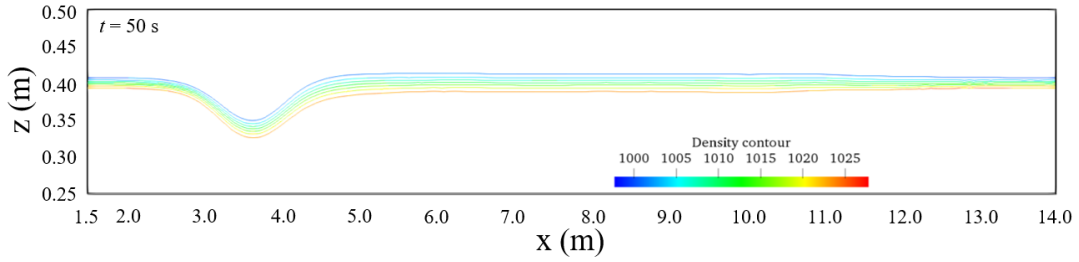
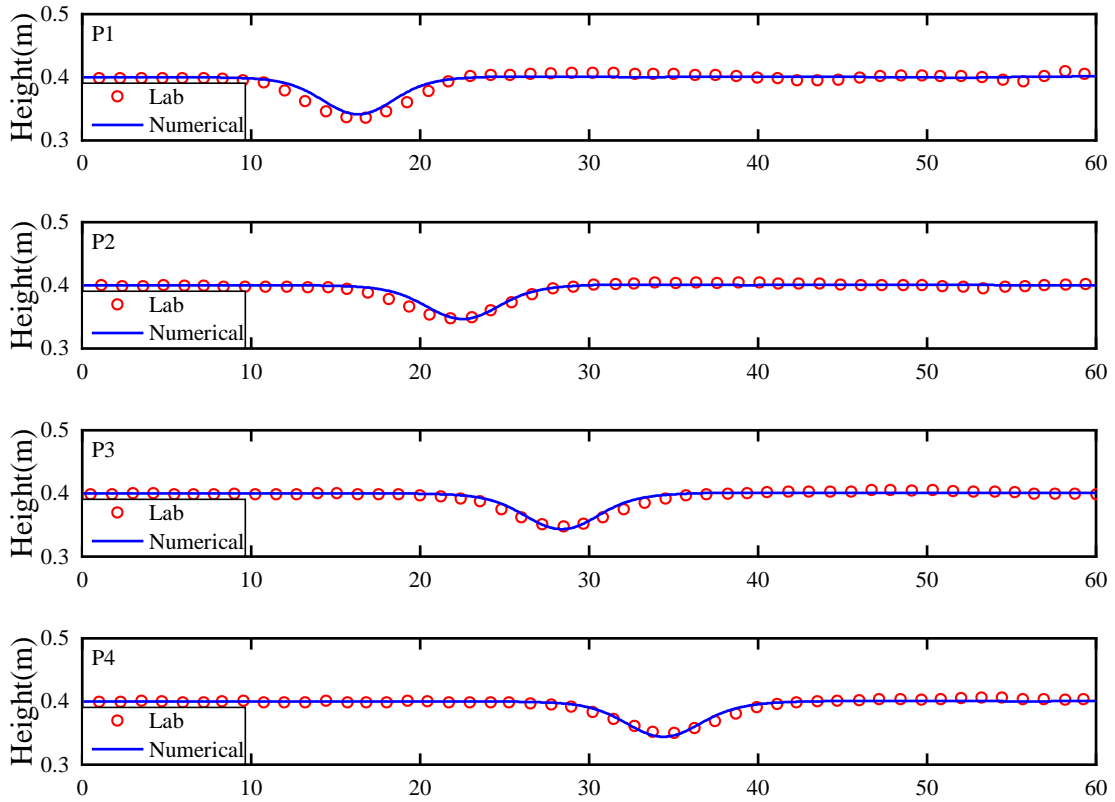
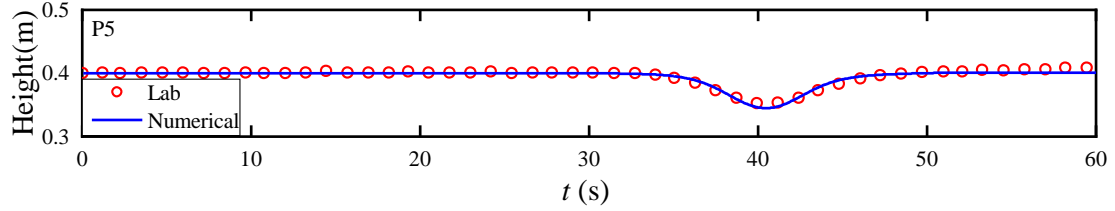


Figure 7: Density contours at different moments.

To further verify the model, the waveform is compared between the numerical simulations and the experimental measurements, and the measurement point selection is the same as the experimental setting, as shown in Fig. 6. Fig. 8 shows the comparison results between the waveform simulated by ISWFOam and the experimental results at probes P1-P5. Fig. 8 shows that the results of the numerical simulations agree with the experimental results (red circle). Notably, the laboratory wave height at the probe P1 measurement point is greater than the numerical simulation results, and the wave surface of the laboratory wave is not smooth, which is caused by the wave generation method using the gravity collapse mechanism in the laboratory. In general, the model developed in this paper can simulate the generation and evolution of ISWs in continuously stratified fluids.





422

423

Figure 8: Comparison of the waveform between the experimental results and numerical simulation results at probes P1-P5.

424

## 425 4.2 ISW propagating over a submerged triangular ridge

### 426 4.2.1 Experimental data used

427

In this section, the validation of the numerical model is conducted through an ISW propagating over a submerged triangular ridge with the continuously stratified experiments described in [Hsieh et al. \(2015\)](#).

428

429

The laboratory tank is 12 m long and has a stable water depth of 0.5 m, with which the fluid system has

430

a finite thickness of the pycnocline. The specific experimental parameters used for validation of

431

ISWfoam include the various depths of the upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers; the fluid density of the upper

432

( $\rho_1$ ) and lower ( $\rho_2$ ) layers of  $996 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and  $1030 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , respectively; the ISW amplitude ( $\alpha = 0.056 \text{ m}$ );

433

the location of the centre of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc} = 0.4 \text{ m}$ ); the thickness of the pycnocline ( $d_{pyc} = 0.04 \text{ m}$

434

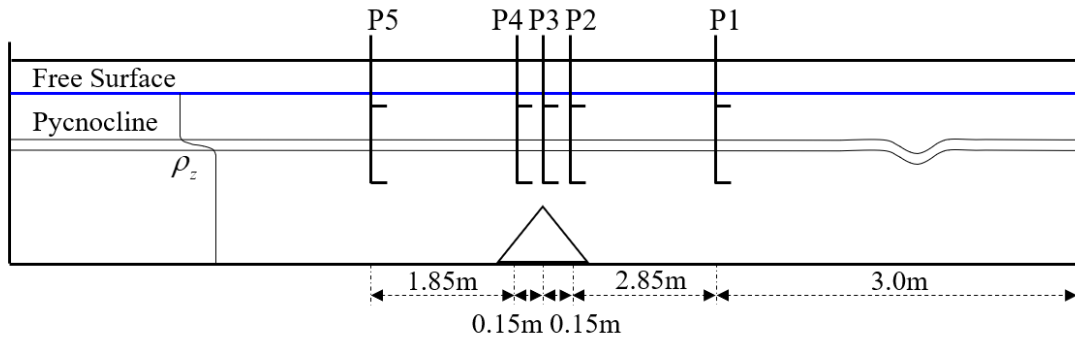
vertically); the height of the isosceles triangular ridge ( $h_s = 0.30 \text{ m}$  vertically); and the slope angle of the

435

ridge for  $\alpha = 45^\circ$ . The physical dimensions, and ultrasonic probe locations in the experiments of [Hsieh](#)

436

[et al. \(2015\)](#), as shown in Fig. 9, are adopted to establish the numerical computation domain.



437

438

Figure 9: Schematic illustration of the laboratory setup and the locations of the probes ([Hsieh et al. \(2015\)](#)).

### 439 4.2.2 Numerical implementation

440

The numerical tank is designed to reproduce the experiment described in Fig. 9. The unstructured

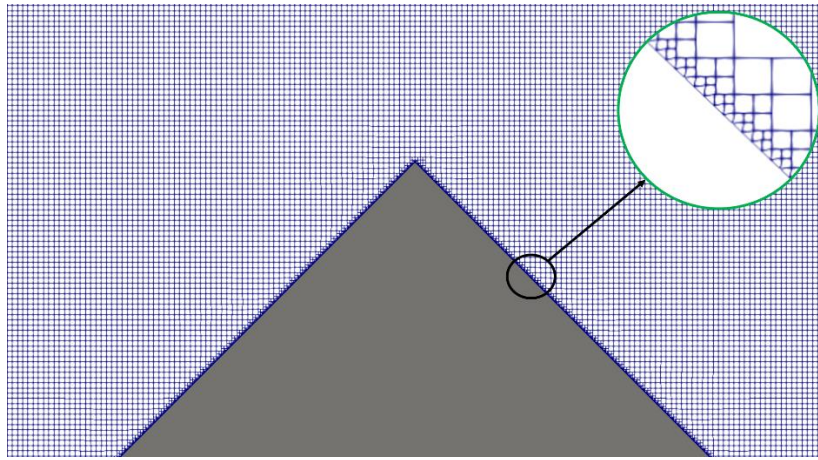
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grid and local mesh refinement based on the finite volume method are used to construct the computational

442

domain and discretize the governing equations. The grid is uniform in the  $x$ -direction,  $y$ -direction and  $z$ -

443 direction, and the sizes are  $\Delta x = 2 \times 10^{-3}$  m,  $\Delta y = 2 \times 10^{-3}$  m and  $\Delta z = 2 \times 10^{-3}$  m, respectively. The precise  
444 grid described triangular ridge section is  $\Delta x = 2.5 \times 10^{-4}$  m,  $\Delta y = 2.5 \times 10^{-4}$  m and  $\Delta z = 2.5 \times 10^{-4}$  m at the  
445 slope, as shown in Fig. 10. The sponge layer on both sides, whose length is double the wave characteristic  
446 length defined through integration of the wave profile in Section 3 for this case, has been checked to  
447 absorb the reflected wave well. A rigid wall conditions is applied to both sides, while the slip and slip  
448 conditions are assigned to the bottom and the surface of the submerged ridge boundaries, respectively.  
449 The top boundary is a rigid lid. The inlet and outlet boundaries adopt cyclic boundary condition. The  
450 boundary conditions related to the density field are no-flux boundary conditions.



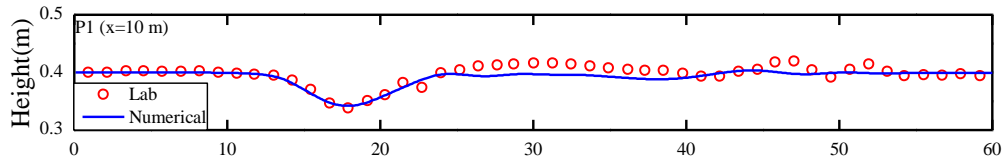
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Fig. 10. Schematic of the mesh

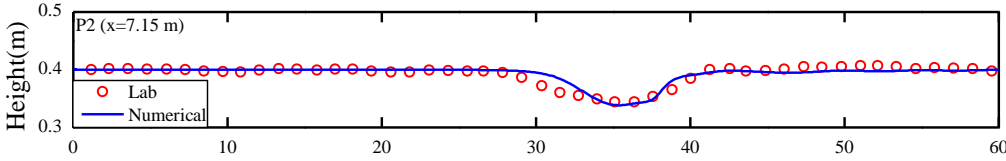
### 453 4.2.3 Comparisons between the numerical and experimental results

454 Fig. 11 shows the comparison results between the waveform calculated by ISWfoam and the  
455 experimental results at probes P1-P5. In each subplot, the results of the numerical simulations (blue line)  
456 are found to be in good agreement with the experimental results (red circle). From Fig. 11 (a), the  
457 numerical simulation result of the probe P1 measurement after 20 s is different from the experimental  
458 results, which is caused by the different ISW generation methods. For the experimental results, the first  
459 large leading ISW is formed via the gravity collapse mechanism, which is trailed by a train of small-  
460 amplitude mode-one waves that is generated due to shear instabilities. However, the initialization method  
461 used to generate an initial ISW for the numerical simulation in this paper is more stable than the gravity  
462 collapse mechanism, so the rear part of the ISW is relatively flat compared to the experimental results  
463 for probe P1. In Fig. 11, the waveform of the ISW gradually evolves towards a flat waveform due to the  
464 interaction between the ISW and the ridge. In general, the model developed in this paper can simulate  
465 the interaction between ISWs and structures.

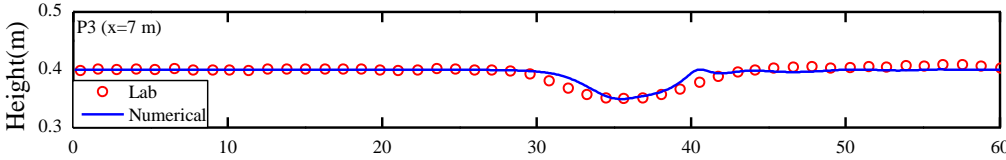
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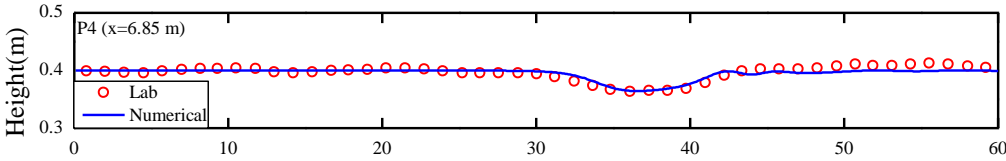
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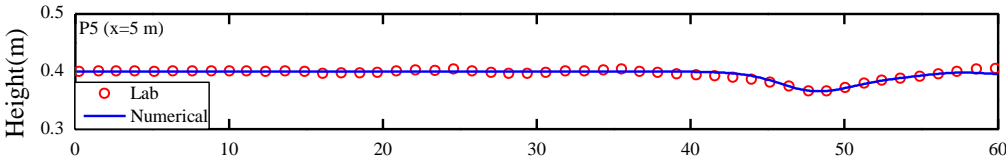
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469



470



471

Figure 11: Comparison of the waveform between the experimental results in Hsieh et al. (2015) and numerical

472

simulation results at probes P1-P5.

473

### 4.3 ISW propagating on a slope

474

To verify the ability and accuracy of simulating the ISW breaking of the numerical model, two

475

continuously stratified laboratory experiments (12 and 15) of Michallet and Ivey. (1999) are chosen for

476

the simulation in this section. The experimental setup is represented schematically in Fig. 12. We set up

477

a numerical tank of the experiment of Michallet and Ivey. (1999), which includes a tank is  $L=4.2$  m long,

478

0.25 m wide and has a water depth of 0.15 m. The layer thickness ratio ( $h/H$ ) varies from 0.60~0.91. A

479

linear slope  $s = 0.214$  starts at 0.7 m from the right end of the tank for experiments 12 and 15. The grid

480

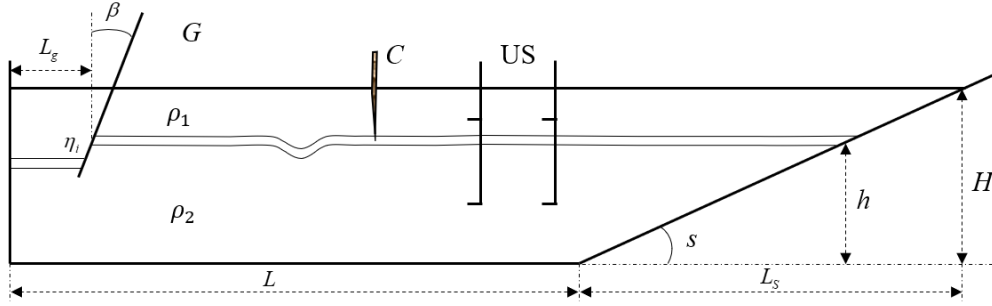
is uniform in the  $x$ -direction,  $y$ -direction and  $z$ -direction, and the sizes are  $\Delta x = 2.5 \times 10^{-3}$  m,  $\Delta y = 2.5 \times 10^{-3}$

481

m and  $\Delta z = 1.25 \times 10^{-3}$  m, respectively. The precise grid describing the slope section is  $\Delta x = \Delta y = 6.25 \times 10^{-4}$

482

m and  $\Delta z = 3.125 \times 10^{-4}$  m at the slope.



483

484 Figure 12: Schematic diagram of the laboratory setup. “C” and “US” represent the experimental device at probes.

485

486 The sponge layer on the left side, whose length is the double wave characteristic length, is checked  
 487 to properly dissipate the reflected wave. Slip boundary conditions are applied to the bottom and both  
 488 sides, while slip boundary conditions are assigned to the top boundaries. The boundary conditions related  
 489 to the density field are no-flux boundary conditions.

489

The vertical profile of the initial density is given by a hyperbolic tangent function profile

$$490 \quad \bar{\rho}(z) = \rho_1 + \frac{\Delta\rho}{2} \left\{ 1 + \tanh \left[ \frac{-(z - z_{pyc})}{d_{pyc}} \right] \right\} \quad (44)$$

491

where  $z$  is the vertical position,  $\rho_1 = 1 \times 10^3 \text{ kg/m}^3$  is the base density field,  $\Delta\rho$  is the change in the density,

492

$z_{pyc}$  is the location of the centre of the pycnocline, and  $d_{pyc}$  is the thickness of the pycnocline.

493

#### 4.3.1 Case one and results

494

The first case of model verification is experiment 12 of [Michallet and Ivey. \(1999\)](#) in this section.

495

The layer thickness ratio ( $h/H$ ) is 0.84, and the density change ( $\Delta\rho$ ) value is  $14 \text{ kg/m}^3$ . Fig. 13 presents

496

the time series for the interface displacement ( $\zeta$ ) for experiment 12 of [Michallet and Ivey. \(1999\)](#). The

497

results indicate reasonably good agreement between the time series of the simulated interface

498

displacement and that of the laboratory results. The first trough centred around  $t = 25 \text{ s}$  represents the

499

incident ISW propagating the probe 99.8 cm away from the start of the slope. The second trough centred

500

at approximately  $t = 87 \text{ s}$  represents the reflected ISW at the generation side, which has a smaller

501

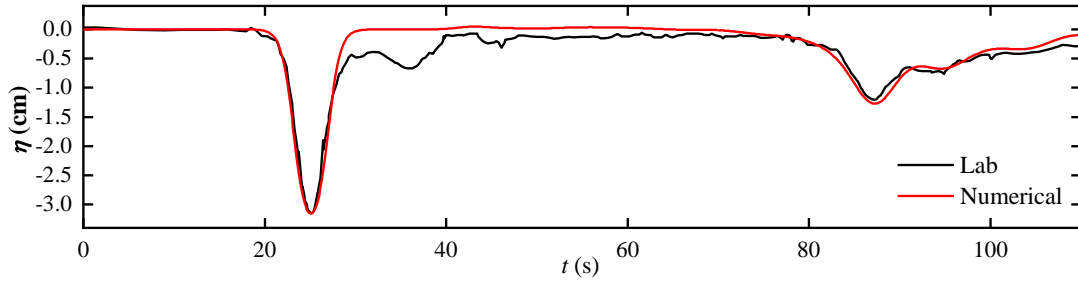
amplitude and a longer wavelength than the incident ISW as the energy in the wave decreases. As shown

502

in Fig. 13, the smooth waveform of the incident ISW of the numerical simulation indicates that the

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initialization method of wave generation in this paper is more stable than the experiment.



504

505

Figure 13: Time series of the interface displacement. The probe was 99.8 cm away from the start of the slope.

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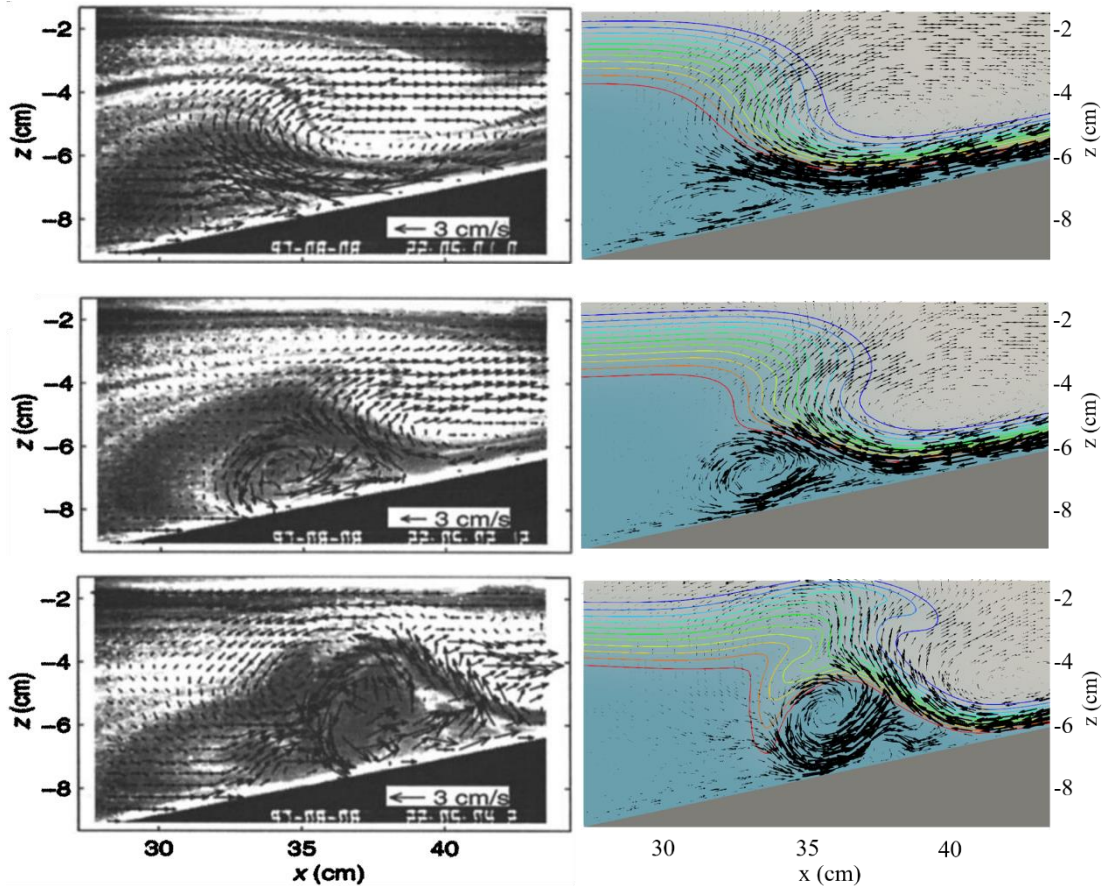
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Fig. 14 shows a comparison of ISWfoam results and the experimental observations of the velocity field associated with the ISW run-up process along the slope. The model effectively reproduces laboratory tests, such as the intensity and direction of the velocity field, the location of the vortices, and the occurrence of boundary-layer separation beneath the ISW. Therefore, the model developed in this paper can reflect the ISW breaking phenomenon during the propagation of ISWs along the slope.



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Figure 14: Comparison of the velocity field between the experimental observation results in [Michallet and Ivey \(1999\)](#) (left) and numerical simulation results (right).

516

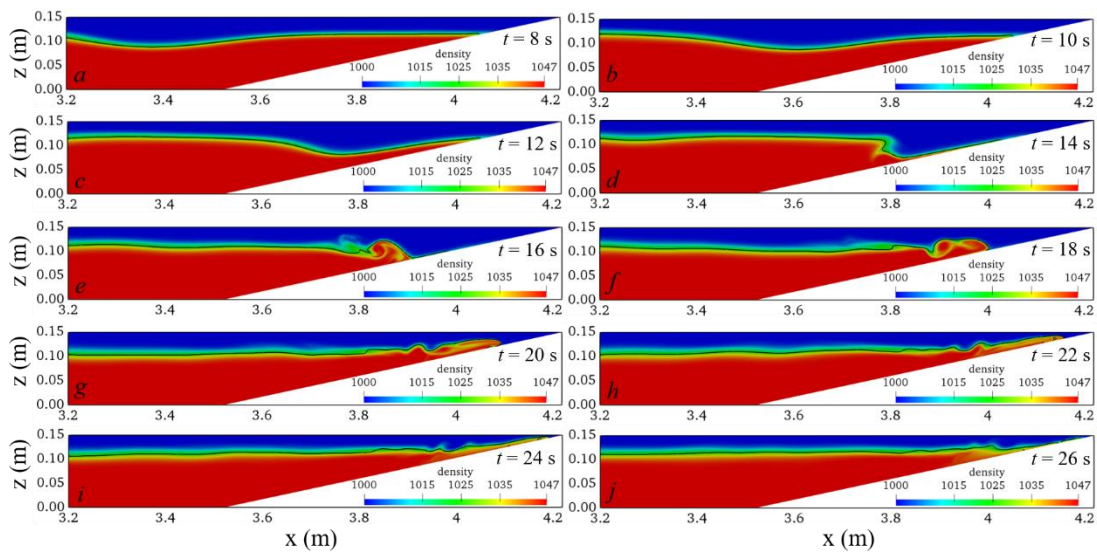
#### 4.3.2 Case two and results

517

Another laboratory experiment that more clearly shows the ISW breaking phenomenon from

518 Experiment 15 of Michallet and Ivey. (1999) is used to verify the numerical model presented in this paper,  
 519 and the corresponding numerical case is set corresponding to it. The layer thickness ratio ( $h/H$ ) is 0.77,  
 520 and the density change ( $\Delta\rho$ ) value is  $47 \text{ kg/m}^3$ . The wave amplitude and phase velocity at the slope  
 521 calculated by ISWFOam are  $2.71 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m}$  and  $10.83 \times 10^{-1} \text{ m/s}$ , which fit well with the experimental results  
 522 of  $2.7 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m}$  and  $10.8 \times 10^{-1} \text{ m/s}$ .

523 Fig. 15 shows the results of the numerical simulations of the ISWs propagating along the slope and  
 524 wave breaking using ISWFOam. As the ISW propagates to the slope, according to the conservation of  
 525 mass, the upper fluid forward and the downward velocity of the lower fluid increasing along the slope  
 526 results in the formation of a thin boundary layer, as shown in Fig. 15(a), (b), and (c). At the same time,  
 527 the amplitude of the ISW increases, and the rear of the ISW gradually becomes very steep but does not  
 528 overturn. With the development of the ISW, the rear waveform of the ISW cannot maintain its stability  
 529 and overturns forward, resulting in wave breaking, as shown in Fig. 15(d). After wave breaking occurs,  
 530 the denser lower layer flow accelerates into the less dense upper layer flow, forming a mixture region, as  
 531 shown in Fig. 15(e). After the lower layer flow is drawn downward from beneath the ISW, a mixing  
 532 region comprised of vortices is pushed upwards along the slope while the leading waveform is reflected,  
 533 as shown in Fig. 15(f), (g), and (h). Fig. 15(i), (j) shows the falling process of ISWs. From the perspective  
 534 of the entire process of wave breaking, the steepening of the rear waveform in this case is the main reason  
 535 for wave breaking.



536  
 537 Figure 15: Temporal and spatial variations in the ISWs breaking calculated using ISWFOam (the black line  
 538 represents the waveform).

539 For comparison with the flow visualization image of the experiment, a specified thickness of the



540 pycnocline is presented, and the pycnocline ranges from  $1003 \text{ kg/m}^3$  to  $1045 \text{ kg/m}^3$  with dark colours as  
541 shown in Fig. 16.

542 Fig. 16 compares the ISWfoam results and the experimental results of [Michallet and Ivey. \(1999\)](#)  
543 before, during, and after ISW breaking. The results indicate that some main features of the laboratory  
544 tests are reasonably well reproduced by ISWfoam, such as the profile of ISW, the location of the wave  
545 breaking point, ISW arrival time, and spatial and temporal changes in the mixture region. Therefore, the  
546 model developed in this paper can accurately simulate the ISW breaking phenomenon during the  
547 propagation of ISWs along the slope.

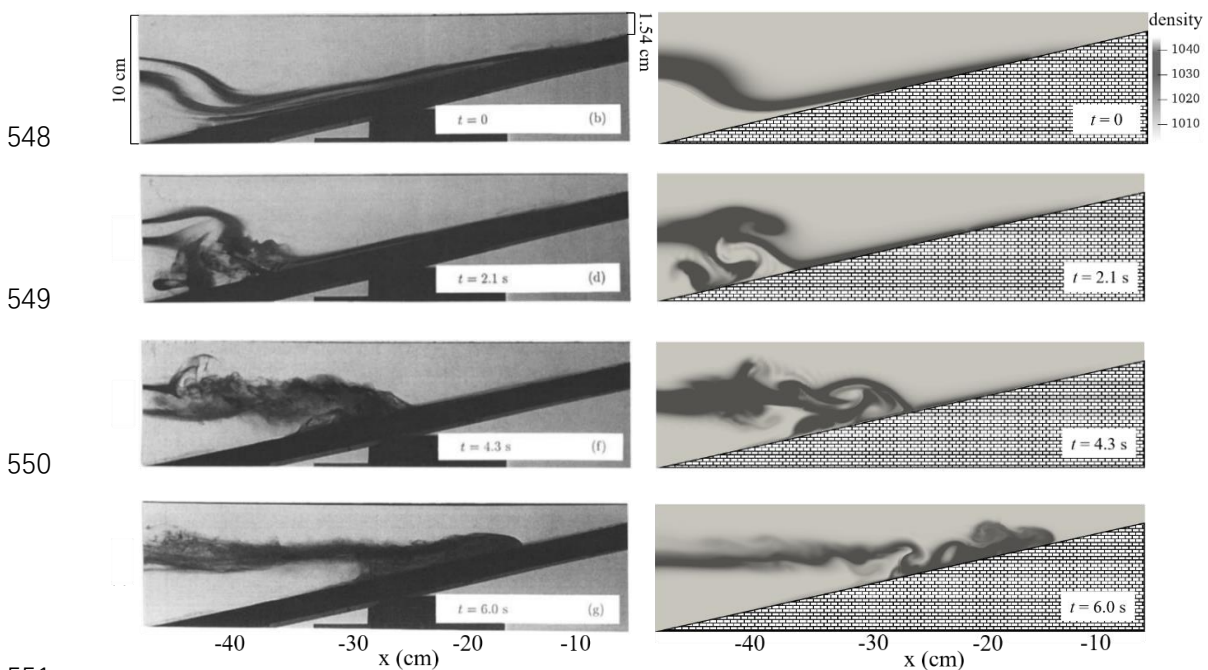


Figure 16: Comparison of the density fields between the experimental observation results in [Michallet and Ivey. \(1999\)](#) (left) and the numerical simulation results (right).

## 554 5. Simulation examples at the field scale

555 The ISWfoam model developed in the present paper can be used as a tool to investigate the  
556 interaction between ISWs and complex structures and topography. In this section, two numerical  
557 examples are presented to show the capability of ISWfoam on field scale simulation.

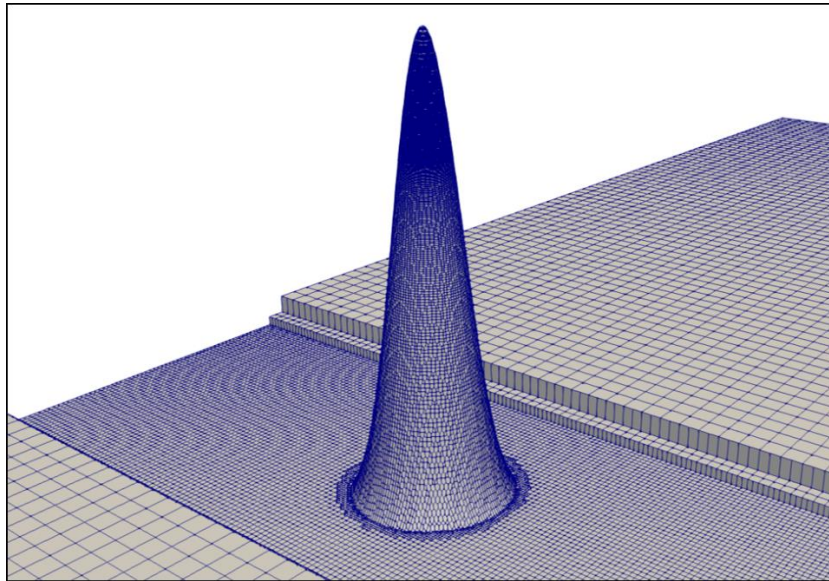
### 558 5.1 ISW propagating over a 3D Gaussian ridge

559 We designed a case of an ISW propagating over a 3D Gaussian ridge. The 3D Gaussian ridge is  
560 obtained by rotating a 2D Gaussian ridge

561 
$$z = ae^{-(x/l)^2} \tag{45}$$

562 where  $a$  is the ridge amplitude, and  $l$  is the standard deviation. With  $a = 100$  m and  $l = 10$ , we can obtain  
 563 a 2D Gaussian ridge with a height of 100 m and a bottom width of 40 m. Subsequently, the 3D Gaussian  
 564 ridge can be obtained after a vertical rotation of 180 degrees.

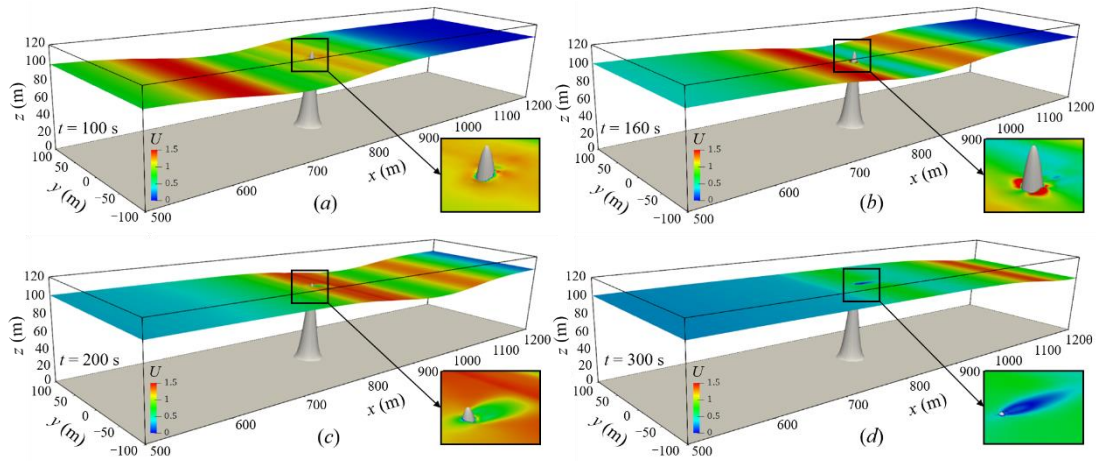
565 We set up a 3D numerical tank, which includes a tank that is 3 km long, 400 m wide ( $y$ -direction  
 566 from -200 m to 200 m) and has a water depth of 120 m. The depths of the upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers  
 567 are 20 m and 100 m, respectively, the densities of the upper and lower layers are 1000 kg/m<sup>3</sup> and 1030  
 568 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively, the location of the centre of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc}$ ) is 100 m, and the pycnocline  
 569 thickness ( $d_{pyc}$ ) is 1.5 m vertically, the ISW amplitude ( $a$ ) is 20 m. The Gaussian ridge is located at 800  
 570 m horizontally. The grid is gradually changed from  $\Delta x = 20$  m to  $\Delta x = 2.5$  m in the  $x$ -direction, the grids  
 571 in the  $y$ -direction are uniform with a constant cell width of  $\Delta y = 2.5$  m, and the grids in the  $z$ -direction  
 572 are non-uniform, with a minimum cell height of  $\Delta z = 1$  m near the interface of the ISW. The precise grid  
 573 described the 3D Gaussian ridge section as  $\Delta x = 3.9 \times 10^{-2}$  m,  $\Delta y = 3.9 \times 10^{-2}$  m and  $\Delta z = 1.56 \times 10^{-2}$  m, as  
 574 shown in Fig 17. The sponge layer on both sides, whose length is the double wave characteristic length,  
 575 has been checked to properly dissipate the reflected wave. Slip boundary conditions are applied to the  
 576 bottom and both sides, while cyclic boundary conditions are assigned to the inlet and outlet boundaries.  
 577 The top boundary is a rigid lid. The boundary conditions related to the density field are no-flux boundary  
 578 conditions.



579  
 580 Figure 17: Schematic of the local refinement of the grid.

581 Fig. 18. shows the temporal and spatial variations in the ISWs propagating over a 3D Gaussian

582 ridge. The ISW reaches the Gaussian ridge, causing the wave surface in front of the ridge to decrease,  
 583 and the wave surface behind the ridge to climb up the ridge, as shown in Fig. 18(a). Due to being  
 584 obstructed by the Gaussian ridge, flow around a ridge and wave surface uplift are generated on both sides  
 585 of the Gaussian ridge (perpendicular to the direction of wave propagation), as shown in Fig. 18(b). As  
 586 the ISW propagated over the Gaussian ridge, the wave surface climbed along the ridge, and at the same  
 587 time, low velocity was generated behind the ridge, as shown in Fig. 18(c). Since the top of the ridge is in  
 588 the pycnocline, there will be a low velocity area behind the ridge for a period of time after the ISW passes,  
 589 as shown in Fig. 18(d). In general, the ISWFoam model with unstructured grids and local mesh  
 590 refinement can simulate the interaction between ISWs and complex structures and topography at the field  
 591 scale.



592  
 593 Figure 18: Temporal and spatial variation in the ISWs propagating over a 3D Gaussian ridge.

## 594 5.2 ISW propagating over a hyperbolic tangent terrain

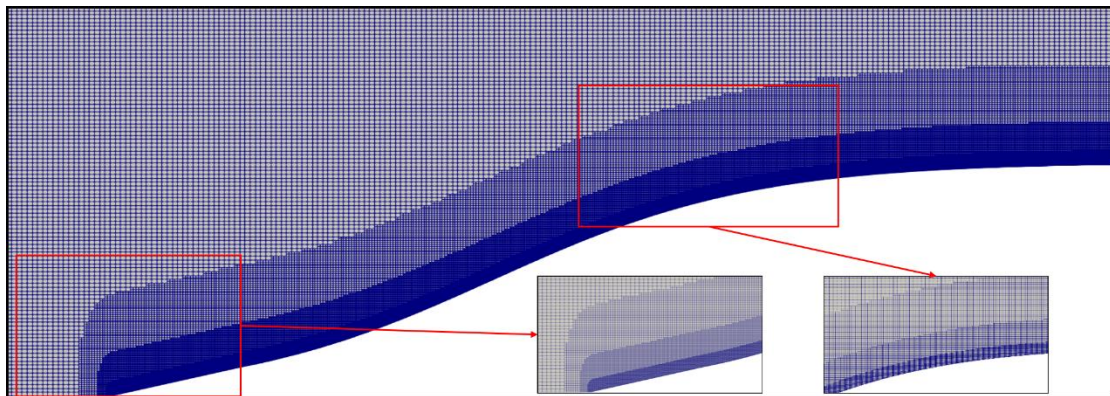
595 The propagation of ISWs to the shore is bound to be affected by the continental shelf, and  
 596 shallow water evolution phenomena such as nonlinear evolution, breaking phenomenon and  
 597 waveform inversion occur on the undulating continental shelf. For simplicity, this section simplifies  
 598 the continental shelf into a hyperbolic tangent terrain, the terrain profile formula is as follows (Lamb,  
 599 2002)

$$600 \quad z = \frac{a_T}{2} \left( 1 + \tanh \left( \frac{x}{L} \right) \right) \quad (46)$$

601 where  $a_T$  is the ridge amplitude, which is 60 m, and  $l$  is the width of the continental shelf change area,

602 which is 200 m, and  $x$  and  $z$  are the horizontal and vertical coordinate positions, respectively.

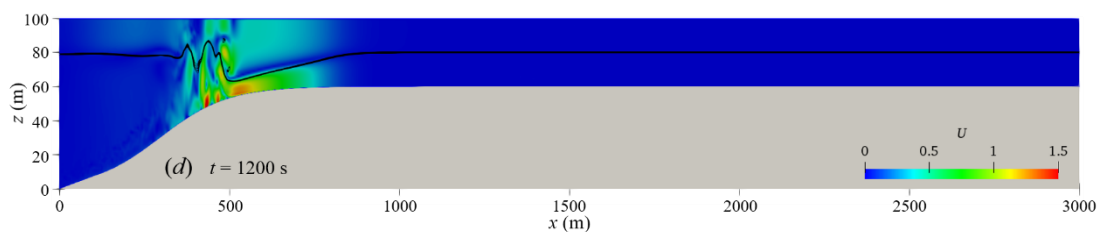
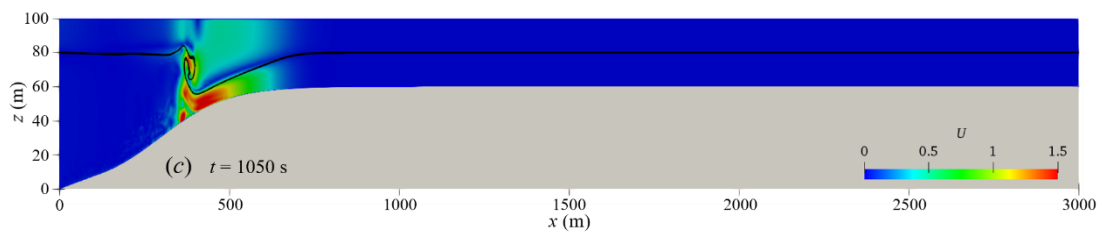
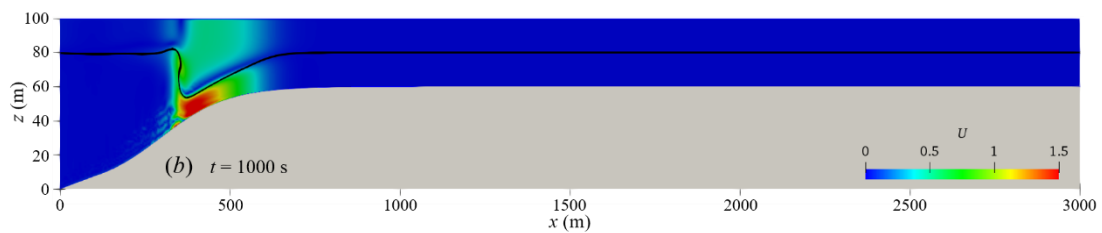
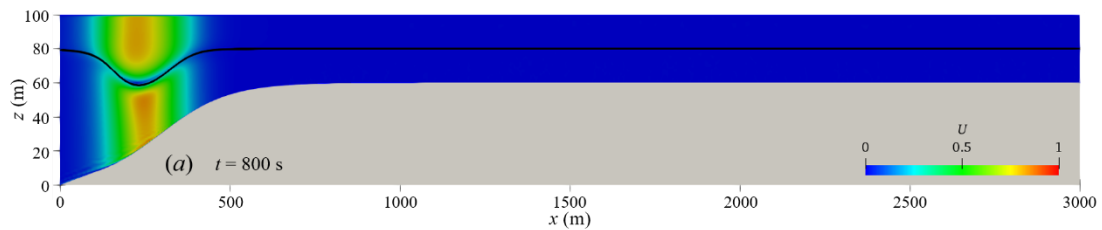
603 We set up a 3D numerical tank, which includes a tank that is 7.5 km long, 200 m wide ( $y$ -direction  
604 from -100 m to 100 m) and has a water depth of 100 m ( $z$ -direction from 0 m to 100 m). The depths of  
605 the upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers are 20 m and 80 m in the deep water, respectively, and the depths of  
606 the upper ( $h_1$ ) and lower ( $h_2$ ) layers are both 20 m in the shallow water. The densities of the upper and  
607 lower layers are  $1000 \text{ kg/m}^3$  and  $1012 \text{ kg/m}^3$ , respectively, and the pycnocline thickness ( $d_{pyc}$ ) is 2 m, the  
608 location of the pycnocline ( $z_{pyc}$ ) center is at 80 m, the ISW amplitude ( $a$ ) is 20 m. The starting point of  
609 the hyperbolic tangent terrain is located at 0 m horizontally, and the top of the terrain is 40 m underwater.  
610 Therefore, ISWs will gradually propagate from deep water area with a water depth of 100 m to shallow  
611 water area with a water depth of 40 m. The horizontal grid is gradually changed from 40 m at the inlet to  
612 4 m in the study area, and then from the study area to 60 m at the outlet, the grid is uniform in the  $y$ -  
613 direction and  $z$ -direction, which are 4 m and 1 m. The hyperbolic tangent terrain is characterized by 4-  
614 level local mesh refinement, and the minimum grid size is 5 cm, as shown in Fig 19. The sponge layer  
615 on both sides, whose length is the double wave characteristic length, has been checked to properly  
616 dissipate the reflected wave. Cyclic boundary conditions are assigned to the inlet, outlet and both sides,  
617 while the slip and non-slip conditions are assigned to the bottom and the shelf topography. The top  
618 boundary is a rigid lid. The boundary conditions related to the density field are no-flux boundary  
619 conditions.



620  
621 Figure 19: Schematic of the local refinement of the grid.

622 Fig. 20. shows the waveform and velocity field when the ISW passes through the hyperbolic tangent  
623 terrain. From Fig. 20, it can be seen that the ISW breaks and has a significant waveform inversion when  
624 propagating from deep water of 100 m to shallow water of 40 m. As the ISWs propagate to the continental  
625 shelf, the water depth gradually becomes shallower, and the thickness of the lower fluid gradually

626 decreases as shown in Fig. 2-20(a). Due to the presence of the continental slope, the nonlinearity of the  
 627 ISWs becomes stronger, and the trough velocity of the ISWs is significantly lower, which causes the  
 628 waveform at the rear of the ISW to become steep, as shown in Fig. 2-20(b). At the same time, the front  
 629 waveform of the ISW gradually becomes flat and parallel to the shelf topography. As the waveform at  
 630 the rear of the ISW becomes steeper and loses balance, the waveform at the rear of the ISW rolls forward,  
 631 leading to the occurrence of ISW breaking phenomenon, as shown in Fig. 2-20(c). It is worth noting that  
 632 the ISW breaking occurs at the rear of the ISW, while the front waveform does not break, but transforms  
 633 into another form of wave (referred to as the head wave), and continues to propagate steadily along the  
 634 continental shelf. The breaking of ISWs causes severe disturbances in the water, and excite a series of  
 635 secondary waves at the tail of the head wave, represented by elevation ISWs (as shown in Fig. 2-20(d),  
 636 (e), (f)), and then elevation ISWs propagate forward steadily in shallow water (as shown in Fig. 2-20(g),  
 637 (h), (i)). The shelf slope of the case in this section is the same as the shelf slope of s8\_c1c case studied  
 638 by Lamb and Xiao (2014), both of which are 0.1. The research results of Lamb and Xiao (2014) show  
 639 that waveform inversion of a depression ISW will occur at this shelf slope, and a series of elevation  
 640 ISWs will be generated and propagate stably in shallow water. The simulated results have good  
 641 agreement with that of Lamb and Xiao (2014).



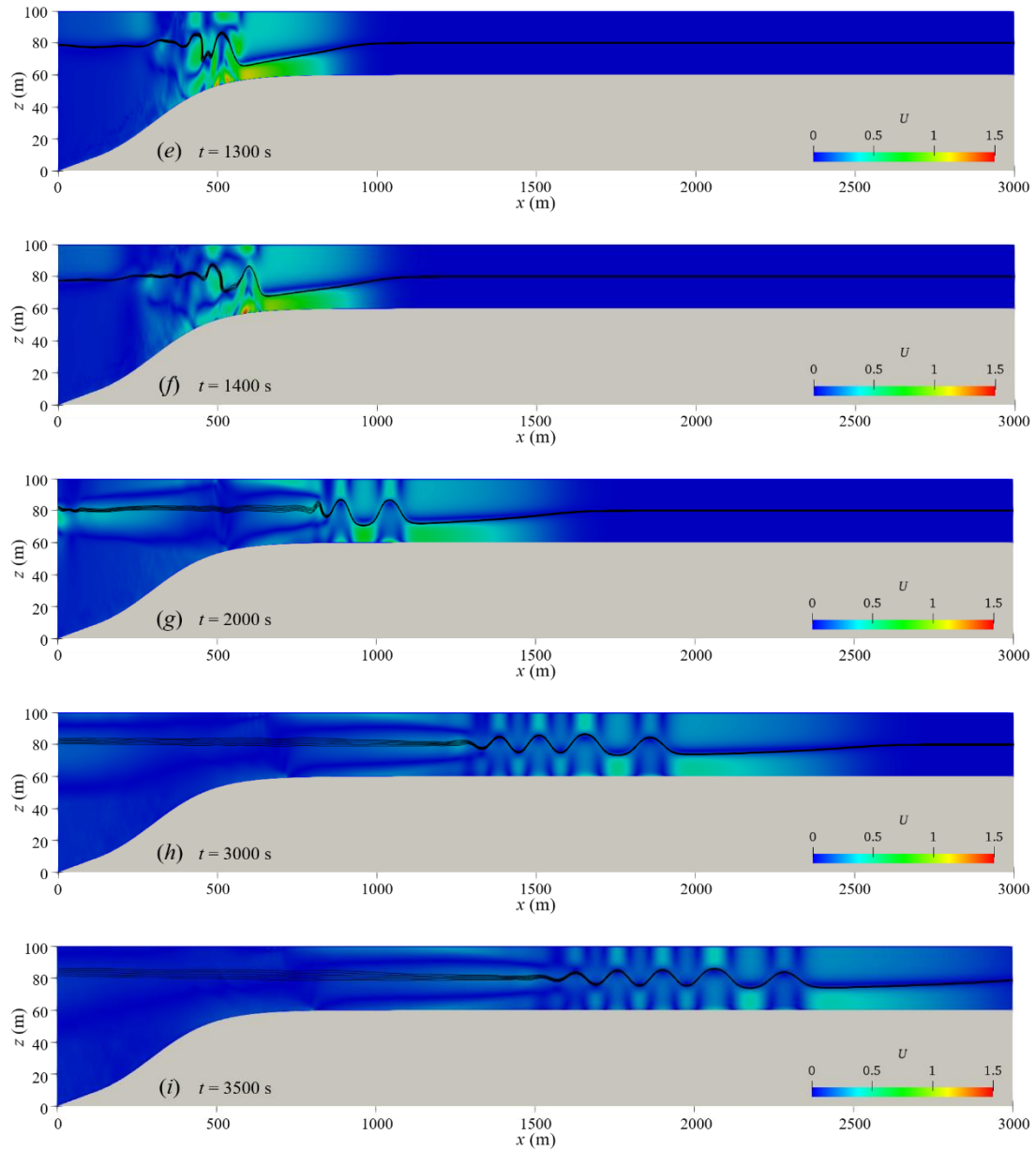
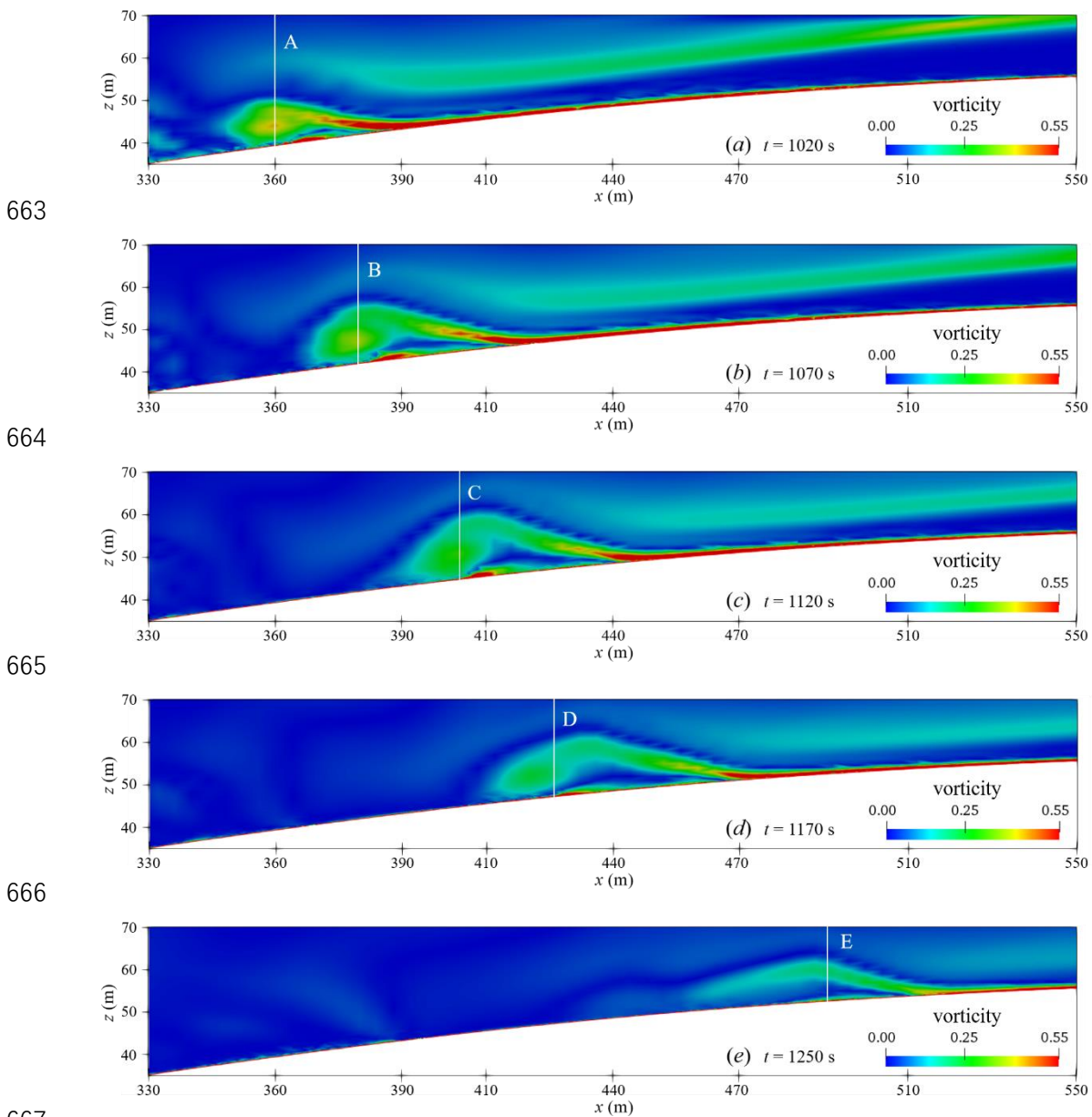


Figure 20: Velocity field diagram of ISW propagation (the black solid line is the iso-density contours).

The vortex structure has an important influence on the material transport at the bottom of the shelf, so it is very necessary to study the vortex structure when the ISW breaks. Fig. 2-21 shows the vorticity field of the ISW at the breaking stage. With the occurrence of ISW breaking, a significant counterclockwise vortex structure is generated below the waveform at the rear of the ISW, as shown in Fig. 2-21(a). With the propagation of the head wave, the vortex climbs along the shelf, and the vortex continues to develop horizontally and vertically during the upward climb, and the vertical scale is about 1/3 of the local water depth (as shown in Fig. 2-20(b), (c)). As the vortex structure continues to climb, the vorticity decays, and the vortex structure gradually disappears, as shown in Fig. 2-21(d), (e). Combined with the velocity field in Fig. 2-20, it can be seen that the vorticity before and after the ISW breaks is the largest, and the vortex structure is the most obvious. As the wave train of elevation ISWs

662 propagates steadily, the vortex structure climbs up the shelf and gradually disappears.



668 Figure 21: Vorticity field (A-E represents transverse section)

669 In order to analyze the vortex of the three-dimensional structure, Fig. 2-22 shows the vorticity  
670 field diagram on the transverse section, and the position of the transverse section corresponds to the  
671 marked section in Fig. 2-21. It can be seen from Fig. 2-22 that the vortex also evolves in the  
672 transverse section. Obviously, the bottom vortex structure generated by ISW breaking shows three-  
673 dimensional non-uniform features.

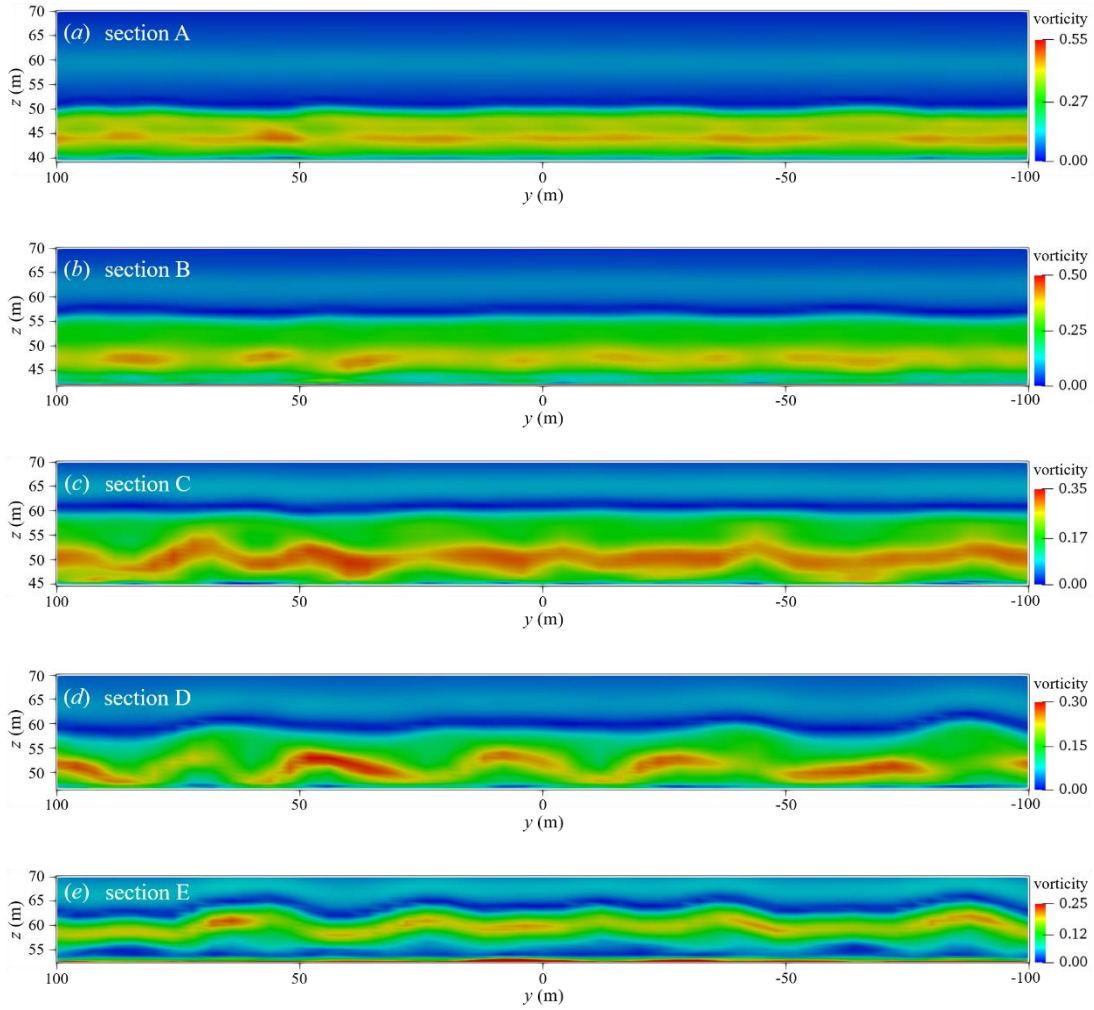
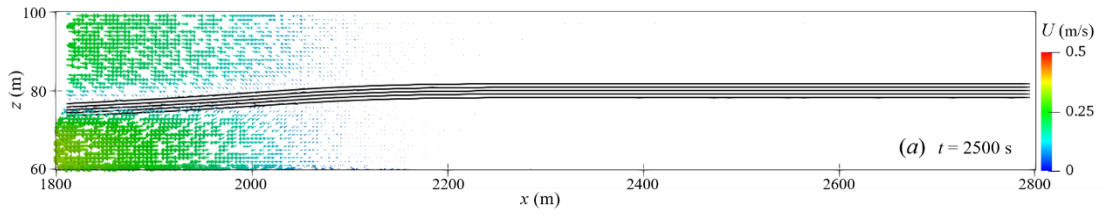


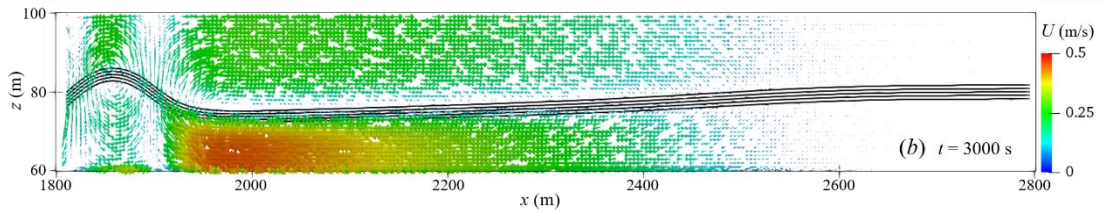
Figure 22: Vorticity field of transverse section.

The velocity vector field of the head wave and the wave train of elevation ISWs in the shallow water area are shown in Figure 2-23. The head wave generated by the breaking of the ISW loses the original wave shape of the ISW, the wave height becomes smaller, the wavelength becomes longer, and the velocity field is still in the form of upper layer forward and lower layer backward (as shown in Fig. 2-23(a), (b)). In Fig. 2-23(c), (d), the velocity field and waveform of the entire wave train following the head wave are stable, and the velocity field of each wave is backwards in the upper layer and forwards in the lower layer, and the wavelength gradually becomes longer as the wave train propagates. As the wave train propagates in shallow water, there is a large vorticity in the crest and trough areas of each wave, and it propagates forward steadily as the wave train propagates, as shown in Fig. 2-24. Generally, the waveform inversion and breaking phenomenon of ISWs is well indicated, and the propagation and evolution of the wave train generated by waveform inversion is also accurately described through ISWfoam simulation.

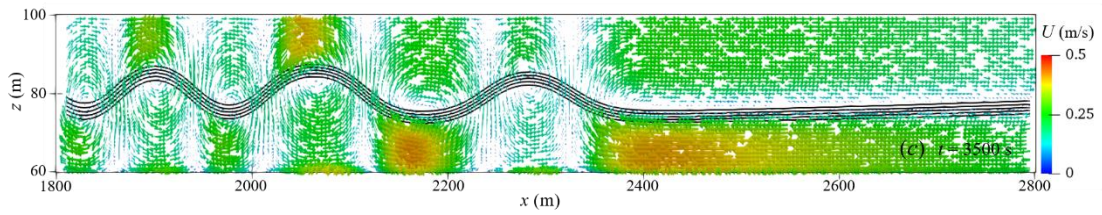




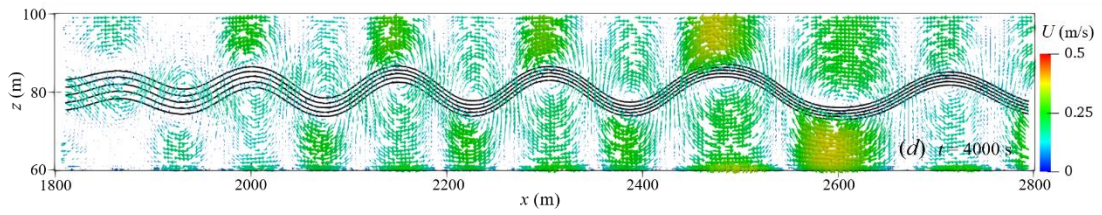
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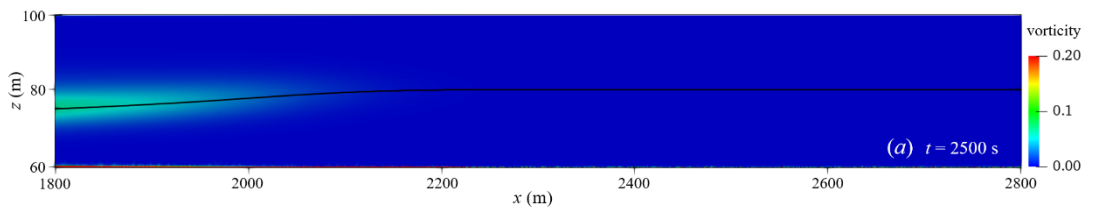
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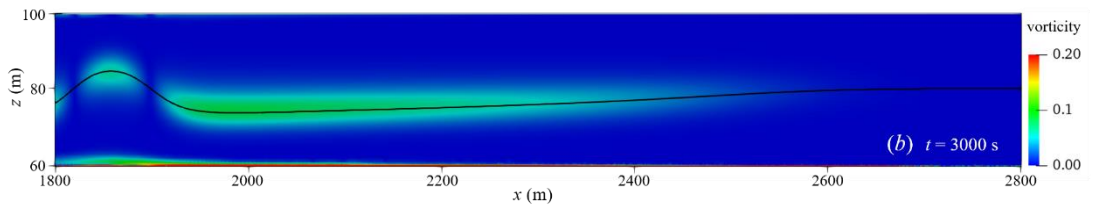
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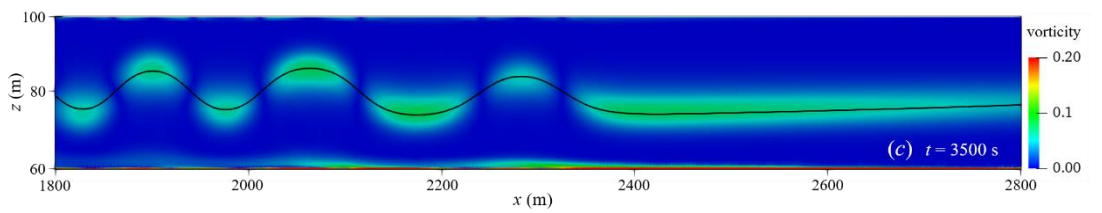
Figure 23: Velocity vector field of wave train in shallow water area.



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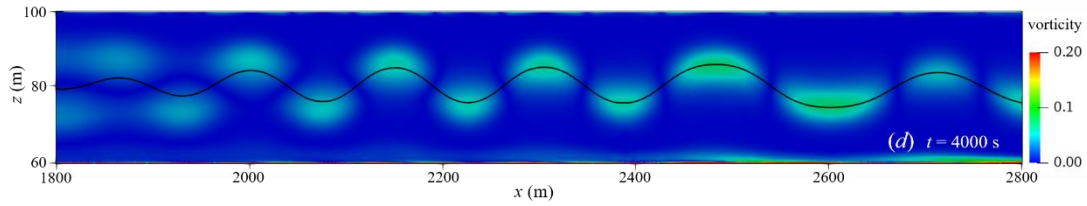


Figure 24: Vorticity field of wave train in shallow water (the black solid line is the waveform).

## 6. Conclusions

In this paper, a numerical model referred to as ISWFOam with a modified  $k-\omega$  SST model, established by combining the density transport equation with a fully three-dimensional (3D) Navier-Stokes equation, is developed to simulate ISWs in continuously stratified, incompressible, viscous fluids based on the finite volume method with unstructured grids and local mesh refinement of OpenFOAM. ISWFOam provides two initial wave generation methods to generate an ISW in continuously stratified fluids, including solving the weakly nonlinear models of the eKdV equation and the fully nonlinear models of the DJL equation. The verification process presents several applications, such as ISWs propagating on flat bottoms including laboratory scale and actual ocean scale, and ISWs over a submerged triangular ridge, a Gaussian ridge and slopes. The following conclusions were obtained as a result of this study.

ISWFOam using the finite volume method with unstructured grids and local mesh refinement can accurately simulate the generation and evolution of ISWs, the ISW breaking phenomenon, waveform inversion of ISWs and the interaction between ISWs and complex structures and topography. The method of initializing the ISW using weakly nonlinear eKdV equation models requires a period of movement before the jump of the velocity field develops into a field with continuous changes in velocity. The DJL equation wave generation method that considers the vertical velocity and the horizontal velocity along the vertical gradient is better than the eKdV equation wave generation method that only provides the horizontal average velocity. Using ISWFOam to simulate an ISW with infinite wave length, the metric for the appropriate mesh size is given as follows: the dimensions of the horizontal grid are one-one hundred and fiftieth of the characteristic length, while the vertical grid takes one-twenty fifth of the ISW amplitude.

725 **Computer code availability**

726 The ISWfoam code (DOI:10.5281/zenodo.5069480.) developed in this article can be downloaded  
727 for free from [https://zenodo.org/record/5069480#.YU1j\\_GJByHs](https://zenodo.org/record/5069480#.YU1j_GJByHs).

728 **Author contributions**

729 QZ and JL jointly developed this numerical method to calculate internal solitary waves in  
730 continuously stratified fluids. JL developed the code. TC performed the computations. QZ and JL  
731 jointly analysed the calculation results and wrote the paper together.

732 **Competing interest**

733 The authors of this paper declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

734 **Financial support**

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736 China (2017YFC1404200), and the National Natural Science Foundation of China (51509183).

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