International Conference on Space Optics—ICSO 2008

Toulouse, France

14–17 October 2008

Edited by Josiane Costeraste, Errico Armandillo, and Nikos Karafolas

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International Conference on Space Optics — ICSO 2008, edited by Josiane Costeraste, Errico Armandillo, Nikos Karafolas, Proc. of SPIE Vol. 10566, 105661I · © 2008 ESA and CNES
CCC code: 0277-786X/17/\$18 · doi: 10.1117/12.2308246

Proc. of SPIE Vol. 10566 105661I-1

Development and Evaluation of a High sensitivity DIAL System for Profiling Atmospheric CO₂

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A ground-based 2-micron Differential Absorption Lidar (DIAL) CO₂ profiling system for atmospheric boundary layer studies and validation of space-based CO₂ sensors is being developed and tested at NASA Langley Research Center as part of the NASA Instrument Incubator Program. To capture the variability of CO₂ in the lower troposphere a precision of 1-2 ppm of CO₂ (<0.5%) with 0.5 to 1 km vertical resolution from near surface to free troposphere (4-5 km) is one of the goals of this program. In addition, a 1% (3 ppm) absolute accuracy with a 1 km resolution over 0.5 km to free troposphere (4-5 km) is also a goal of the program. This DIAL system leverages 2-micron laser technology developed under NASA's Laser Risk Reduction Program (LRRP) and other NASA programs to develop new solid-state laser technology that provides high pulse energy, tunable, wavelength-stabilized, and double-pulsed lasers that are operable over pre-selected temperature insensitive strong CO₂ absorption lines suitable for profiling of lower tropospheric CO₂. It also incorporates new high quantum efficiency, high gain, and relatively low noise phototransistors, and a new receiver/signal processor system to achieve high precision DIAL measurements. This presentation describes the capabilities of this system for atmospheric CO₂ and aerosol profiling. Examples of atmospheric measurements in the lidar and DIAL mode will be presented.