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**1 Significant wind disturbances induced by giant  
2 dunes.**

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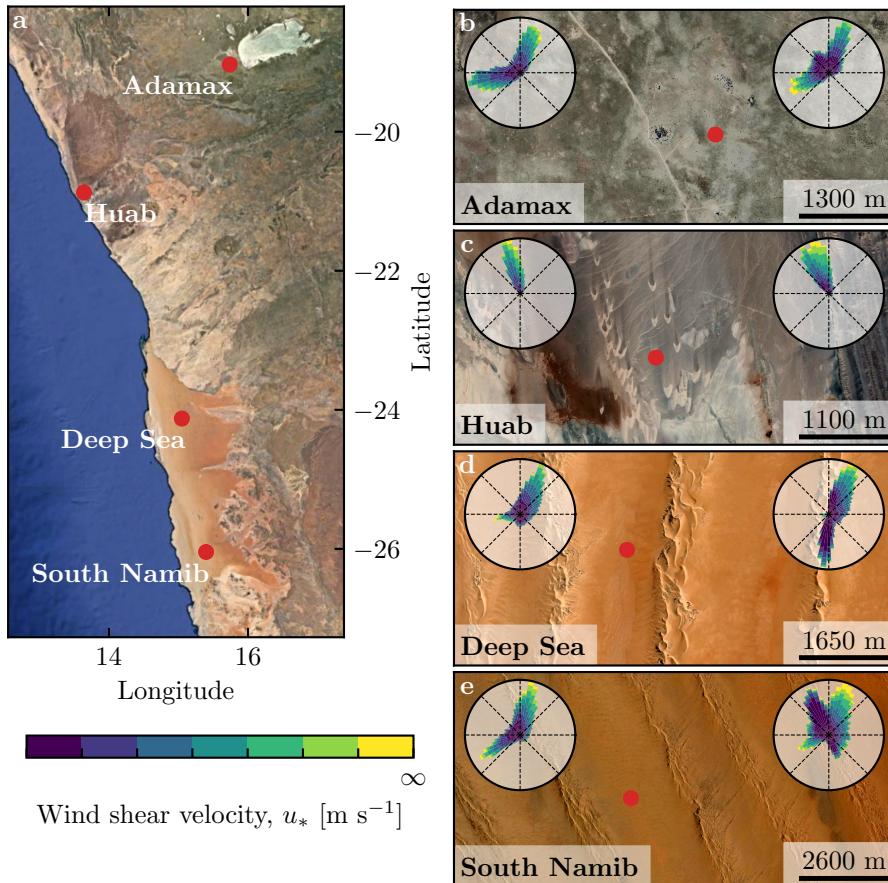
**13 1 Introduction**

14 Whenever a flow encounters an obstacle, various types of interactions can arise  
15 depending on the different time and length scales involved. In the case of atmo-  
16 spheric flows, this depends mainly on the part of the vertical structure of the  
17 atmosphere, schematically composed of a turbulent boundary layer topped by  
18 a turbulence-free part, with which the obstacle interacts (Stull 1988). At the  
19 largest scale, the feedback of mountains on the stratified flow of the free at-  
20 mosphere results in wave generation as well as significant wind disturbances,  
21 such as foehn winds in the lee side (?). Inside the boundary layer, the inter-  
22 action between a turbulent flow and hilly surfaces is for example key to the  
23 understanding ocean surface wind-driven waves, or eolian bedforms in desert  
24 (Belcher and Hunt 1998; Sullivan and McWilliams 2010; Courrech du Pont  
25 2015).

26 Indeed, eolian sand dunes typically emerge from the feedback of the topog-  
27 raphy on the turbulent flow, which speeds up close to the dune crest (Rubin  
28 and Hunter 1987; Charru et al. 2013; Courrech du Pont et al. 2014). Later  
29 on, when the dune reaches an intermediate size, it may also induce significant  
30 wind deflections. This can impact the sediment pathways of coastal systems  
31 (Hesp et al. 2015), or affect the collective behavior of dune populations with  
32 long-range interactions due to flow disturbances induced by each individual  
33 (Smith et al. 2017; Bacik et al. 2020). As the dunes increase in size by col-  
34 lisions and coarsening, they sometimes reach a giant size, comparable to the  
35 boundary layer depth, thus inducing interactions not only with the turbulent  
36 flow of the ABL, but also with the free atmosphere (Andreotti et al. 2009).  
37 However, the wind disturbances induced by these giant dunes have never been  
38 quantified.

39 The study of the impact of obstacles on the atmospheric flows allows its  
40 incorporation within meteorological numerical model. Therefore, they mainly  
41 become limited by the precision of the included topographical data, as well  
42 as the spatial grid of the model. For example, the latest climate reanalysis,  
43 ERA5-Land, is limited by its 9 km spatial resolution, while including the  
44 data 30-m Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) of the shuttle radar topography  
45 mission (Farr et al. 2007; Muñoz-Sabater et al. 2021). As such, it can not  
46 reproduce the flow disturbances induced by giant dunes, which have a typical  
47 length scale  $\sim 1$  km.

48 Here, we compare the wind predictions from the ERA5-Land dataset to  
49 local measurements in four different places across the Namib desert. In places  
50 with no significant topographies smaller than the model grid, we show that  
51 both wind datasets agree with each other. On the contrary, in places with  
52 giant dunes, we show that they may differ for some specific meteorological  
53 conditions, that we link to the circadian cycle of the ABL. We thus highlight  
54 the importance of the mid-scale topographies for local wind regimes, and its  
55 implications in the case of sand seas for smaller-scale eolian bedforms.



**Fig. 1** Wind data used in this study **a**: Location of the studied sites. **b–e**: Satellite images of the studied sites (Google-Earth, Maxar Technologies, CNES/Airbus). In each subplot, the left and right wind roses represent the data from the ERA5Land climate reanalysis and the in situ stations, respectively. Note that the bars show the direction towards which the wind blows. The red dots show the location of the in situ stations.

## 56 2 Wind regimes across the Namib Sand Sea

57 In this study, we focus on four places across and nearby the Namib desert,  
 58 highlighting different environments (see Fig. 1). The Adamax station is lo-  
 59 cated near the Adamax salt pan, in a highly vegetated area. The Huab station,  
 60 located on the coast at the outlet of the Huab river is an arid environment  
 61 exhibiting 60-m scale barchan dunes. While these two stations are in environ-  
 62 ments with no mid-scale topography, this is not the case for the Deep Sea  
 63 and South Namib stations. Both are located in the interdune between giant  
 64 linear dunes with kilometric wavelengths and superimposed patterns. In this  
 65 section, we describe and compare the wind regimes resulting from the available  
 66 datasets in each station.

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67 2.1 Datasets

68 Two wind datasets are used in this study. First, local winds are provided by  
69 stations situated in the four different places (see Fig. 1). The wind strength and  
70 direction are measured every 10 minutes by cup anemometers and wind vanes,  
71 at heights between 2 m and 3 m depending on the station. The available period  
72 of measurements ranges from 1 to 5 discontinuous years distributed between  
73 2012 and 2020 (see Fig. S1). We checked that at least one complete seasonal  
74 cycle is available at each station. Then, regional winds are extracted at the  
75 same locations and periods from the ERA5-Land dataset, which is a replay  
76 at a smaller spatial resolution of ERA5, the latest climate reanalysis from  
77 the ECMWF (Hersbach et al. 2020; Muñoz-Sabater et al. 2021). It provides  
78 hourly estimates of the 10-m wind velocity and direction at a spatial resolution  
79 of  $\sim 9$  km ( $0.1^\circ \times 0.1^\circ$ ).

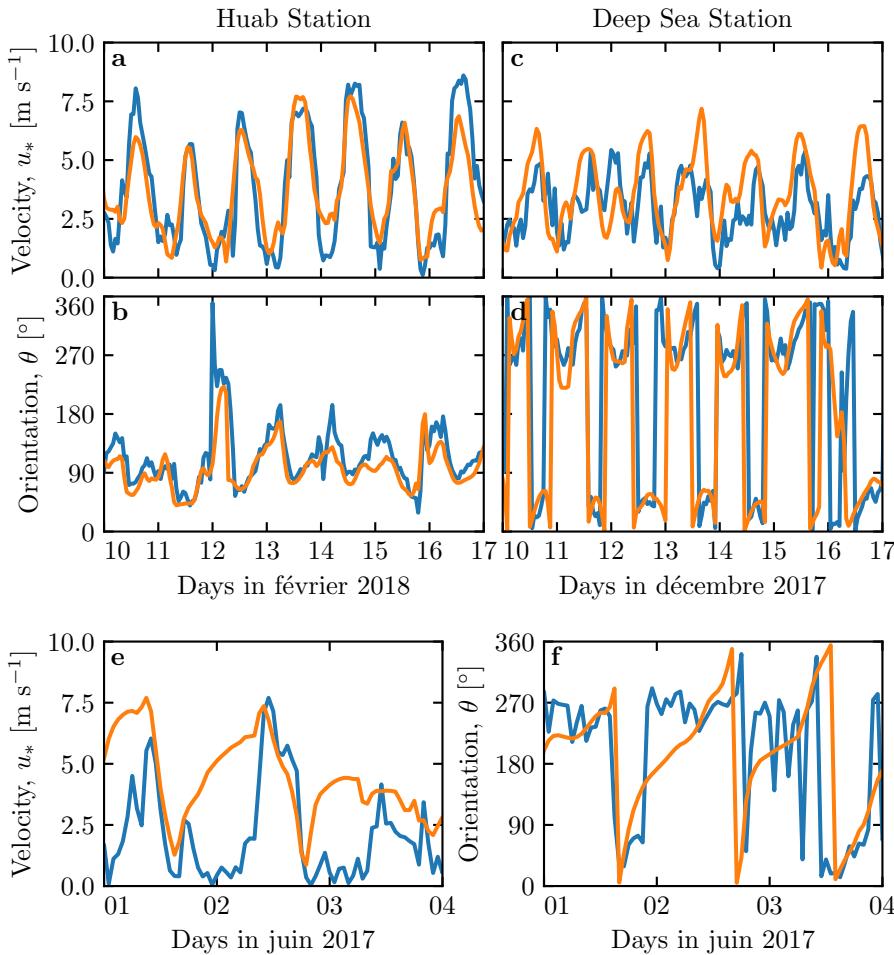
80 For comparison, the local measurements are averaged into 1-hr bins cen-  
81 tered on the temporal scale of the ERA5-Land estimates (see Fig. S2). As the  
82 wind velocities of both datasets are provided at different heights, we convert  
83 them into shear velocities (see SI section 1), characteristic of the whole turbu-  
84 lent wind profile within the atmospheric boundary layer, which are then used  
85 together with the wind direction for further analysis. The resulting wind data  
86 are shown on the wind roses of Fig. 1(b–e).

87 Finally, the dune properties are computed using autocorrelation on the 30-  
88 m Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) of the shuttle radar topography mission  
89 (Farr et al. 2007). For the South Namib and Deep Sea stations, we obtain  
90 respectively orientations of  $85^\circ$  and  $125^\circ$ , wavelengths of 2.6 km and 2.3 km  
91 and amplitudes of 45 m and 20 m (see Fig. S4 for more details).

92 2.2 Agreement between local and regional winds

93 The obtained wind regimes are shown in figure 1. In the Namib, the regional  
94 wind patterns are essentially controlled by the sea breeze, resulting in strong  
95 northward components (sometimes slightly deviated by the large scale topogra-  
96 phy) present in all regional wind roses (Lancaster 1985). These daily winds are  
97 dominant during the second-half of the year (Septembre-January). In winter,  
98 an additional easterly component can be recorded during the night, induced by  
99 the combination of katabatic winds forming on the mountains, and infrequent  
100 ‘berg’ winds, which are responsible of the high wind velocities observed (Lan-  
101 caster 1984). The frequency of these easterly components decreases from the  
102 inland to the coast, resulting in bidirectional wind regimes within the Namib  
103 Sand Sea and at the Adamax salt pan (Fig. 1b, 1d and 1e) and a unidirectional  
104 wind regime on the coast at the outlet of the Huab River (Fig. 1c).

105 In the case of the Adamax and Huab stations, the regional wind roses  
106 qualitatively match those corresponding to the local in situ measurements.  
107 However, for the Deep Sea and South Namib stations, the local wind roses  
108 exhibit additional components aligned with the giant dune orientation visible

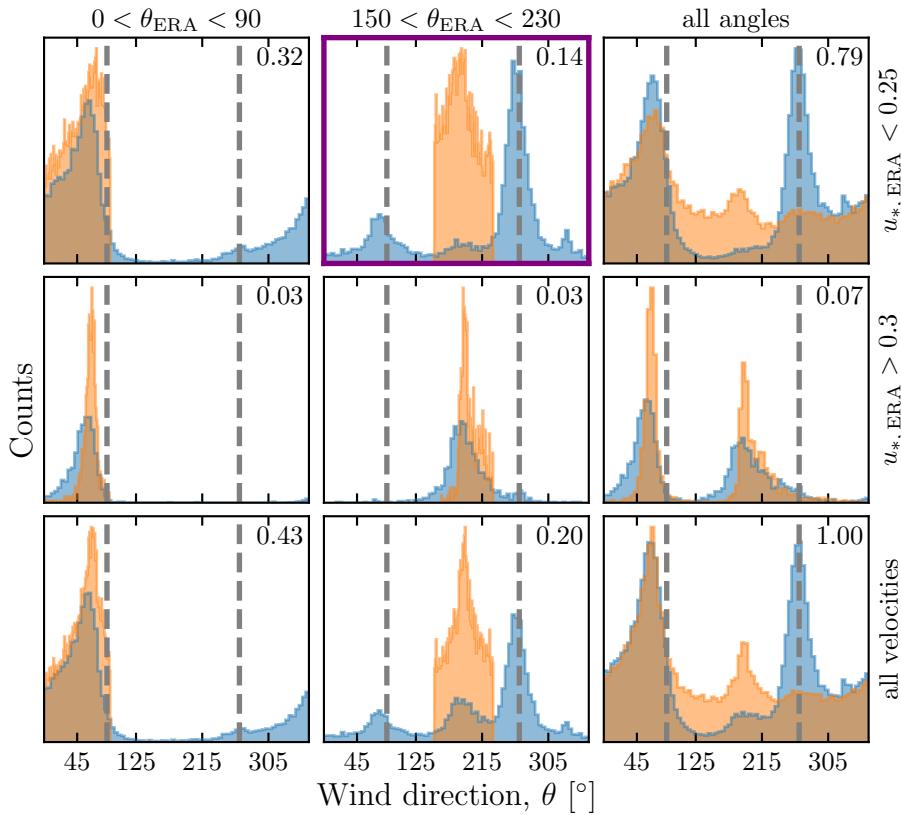


**Fig. 2** Temporal comparison between the wind data coming from the Era5Land climate reanalysis (orange lines) and from the in situ measurements (blue lines). **a–b:** Huab station. **c–d:** Deep Sea station in winter. **e–f:** Deep Sea station in summer.

on the satellite images (Fig. 1c–d). Indeed, the analysis of the wind speed and direction time series shows that the agreement between the local and regional datasets is always verified when no mid-scale topography are present (Fig. 2a–b) and Fig. S5). In contrast, for the stations within the giant dune field, we observe that this agreement is limited to the Septembre–January time periods (Fig. 2c–d).

### 2.3 Influence of the giant dunes on local wind regimes

When giant dunes are present, in the February–August period, the local and regional winds match only during the morning, i.e when the southerly/southwesterly



**Fig. 3** Distributions of wind direction at the Deep Sea Station for the Era5Land climate reanalysis (orange) and the in situ measurements (blue). In each subplot, both distributions are plotted from the same time steps, selected with constraints on the wind direction (columns) and/or wind velocity (rows) in the Era5Land dataset. The vertical gray dashed lines indicate the dune orientation, and the top right numbers the percentage of the total number of time steps selected in each subplot. The purple frame highlights the regime (small wind velocities, nocturnal summer wind) during which the wind data from both datasets differs. A similar figure can be obtained for the Deep Sea station (see Fig. S6).

118 sea breeze dominates (see Fig. 2(e–f), Fig. 3 and Fig. S6). In the late after-  
 119 noon and during the night, when the northwesterly ‘berg’ and katabatic winds  
 120 blow, the two datasets differ. In this case, the angular wind distribution of  
 121 the local measurements exhibits two additional modes separated of  $\simeq 180^\circ$ ,  
 122 each corresponding to the giant dune alignment (purple frame in Fig. 3 and  
 123 Fig. S6, as well as Fig. S7). This deviation is also associated with a global  
 124 attenuation of the wind strength (Fig. S8). Remarkably, all these figures show  
 125 that this process occurs for low wind velocities, typically for  $u_* < 0.1 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ .  
 126 For shear velocities larger than  $0.25 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ , this wind reorientation does not  
 127 occur. Finally, for intermediate shear velocities, both reorientation along the  
 128 dune crest and no reorientation are observed (Fig. S7).

129 **3 Influence of the circadian cycle of the atmospheric boundary  
130 layer**

131 In the case of linear ridges, dune-induced flow disturbances have mainly been  
132 related to the incident wind direction (Walker et al. 2009; Hesp et al. 2015).  
133 In our case, it is unlikely to be the dominant parameter, as the most deflected  
134 wind for both stations is the most perpendicular, where it should be winds with  
135 a  $30^\circ -- 70^\circ$  incident direction (Hesp et al. 2015). An important observation is  
136 the difference in behavior between low and high wind velocities, which suggests  
137 a change in the hydrodynamical regime.

138 Previous studies have linked meteorological flow around and over topo-  
139 graphical obstacles to the vertical structure of the atmosphere (Stull 1988).  
140 More particularly, dunes evolves in its lower part, the turbulent atmospheric  
141 boundary layer (ABL), typically characterized by a logarithmic wind profile  
142 and a vertically constant potential temperature  $\theta$ . Above, the free atmosphere  
143 (FA) is a stably stratified zone in which turbulence is negligible, and where  
144 the flow is usually considered as incompressible and inviscid. In the middle, a  
145 transitional layer, also known as entrainment zone, is characterized by a sharp  
146 increase of the potential temperature, which traps turbulence resulting from  
147 the surface friction below it.

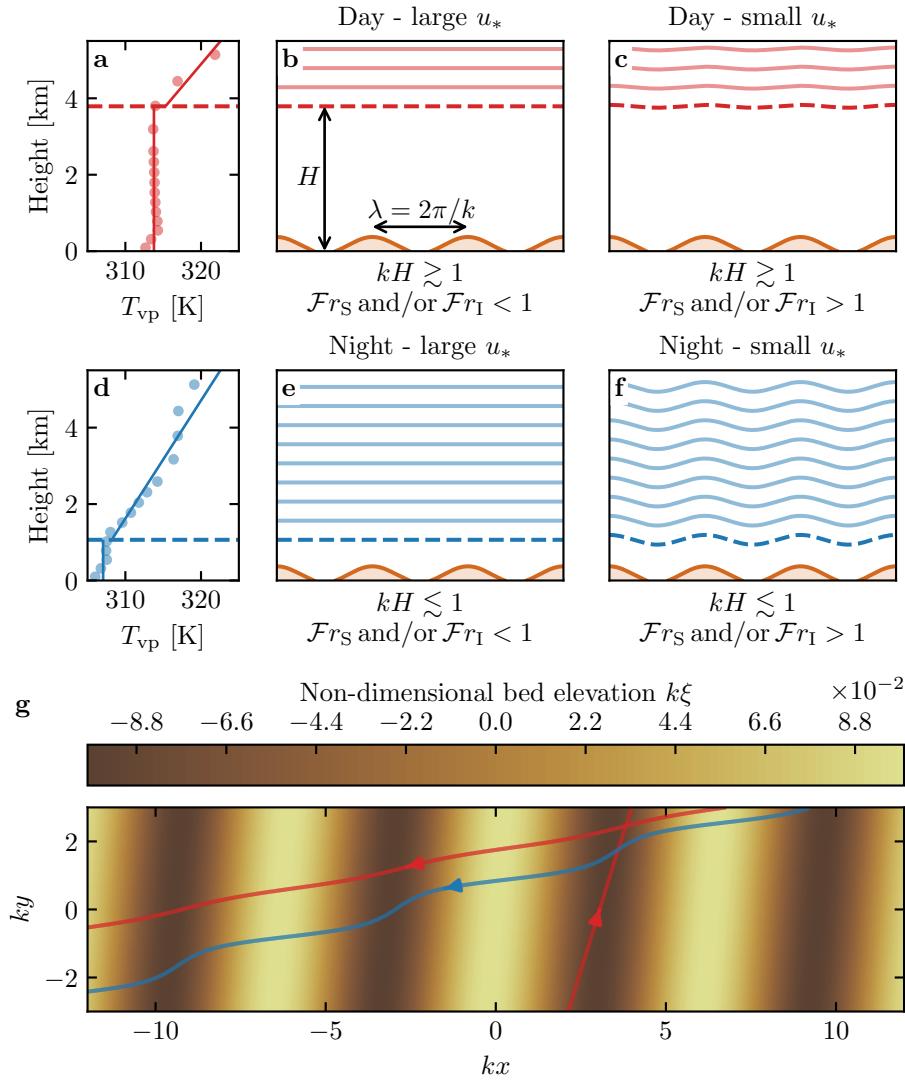
148 In the following, we sum-up the dominant numbers leading to different  
149 hydrodynamical interactions with the obstacle, and interpret the data with  
150 respect to the corresponding physical mechanisms.

151 3.1 Relevant non-dimensional parameters and physical modeling

152 As a result, the giant dunes evolve in a turbulent flow capped by a strati-  
153 fied atmosphere, with a transitional layer acting as a free surface in between.  
154 When the dune are small enough, typically in the case of dune emergence  
155 or early coarsening (Fig. 4b), they do no interact with the top of the ABL  
156 (Fourriere et al. 2010). However, the giant dunes present in the Deep Sea and  
157 South Namib stations have wavelengths comparable or larger than typical  
158 ABL depths, inducing their interaction with the capping layer and the free  
159 atmosphere above (Andreotti et al. 2009). However, as sketched in Fig. 4c-d,  
160 the nature of this interaction depends on two non-dimensional number, both  
161 called Froude numbers in the literature (Vosper 2004; Sheridan and Vosper  
162 2006; Hunt et al. 2006; Jiang 2014).

163 The ability of the capping layer to deform under the presence of an under-  
164 lying topography is controlled by the *surface Froude number*, typically used in  
165 the context of bedforms in rivers (Fourriere et al. 2010; Andreotti et al. 2012):

$$\mathcal{F}r_S = \frac{U}{\sqrt{\frac{\Delta\rho}{\rho} g H}}, \quad (1)$$



**Fig. 4** **a:** Vertical profiles of the virtual potential temperature at 2 different time steps (blue - 29/11/2012 - 1100 UTC, red - 21/03/2017 - 1200 UTC) at the Deep Sea station. Dots: data from the ERA5 reanalysis. Transparent dashed lines: boundary layer height given by the ERA5 reanalysis, calculated from the bulk Richardson number (Seidel et al. 2012). Plain lines: vertical (boundary layer) and linear (free atmosphere) fits to estimate the stratification properties. **b-d:** Sketches representing the interaction between the giant dunes and the atmospheric flow for different meteorological conditions. **e:** Streamlines qualitatively representing the effect of flow confinement, in the case of the Deep Sea station. The red and straight blue lines are calculated from the unconfined case, representing the situations **b-c**. The sinuous blue line represents the confined case of **d**. For details on their derivation, see Appendix.

where  $U$  is the wind velocity at the top of the ABL,  $H$  its depth,  $\rho$  its average density and  $\Delta\rho$  the density jump between the ABL and the FA. Likewise, the FA stratification ability to deform is controlled by the *internal Froude number*, typically used in the context of flow disturbances induced by mountains (Stull 1988):

$$\mathcal{Fr}_I = \frac{U}{HN}, \quad (2)$$

where  $N$  is the Brunt-Väisälä frequency, characteristic of a stratified fluid. When the flow inertia dominates over its weight ( $\mathcal{Fr}_S \gg 1$ ) and the weight of the stratification ( $\mathcal{Fr}_I \gg 1$ ), both the capping layer and the stratification deform and adapt to the underlying topography (Fig. 4d), resulting in an unconfined flow (?). However, an opposite force balance induces a rigid capping layer and/or stratification (Fig. 4c), resulting in confined flows. In this case, the confined flow has trouble going smoothly over the obstacle, and are then typically associated with large deviations and modulation of the wind velocity, as qualitatively illustrated in the case of the Deep Sea station by Fig. 4e (?).

### 3.2 Flow regime diagrams

In the spirit of Sheridan and Vosper (2006), we aim to compute flow regime diagrams in the space defined by the three relevant non-dimensional numbers presented above, ( $kH$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_S$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_I$ ). They are calculated from the time series of the geopotential, temperature and specific humidity vertical profiles available in the ERA5 climate reanalysis (see SI ??). The relative velocity modulation is computed as

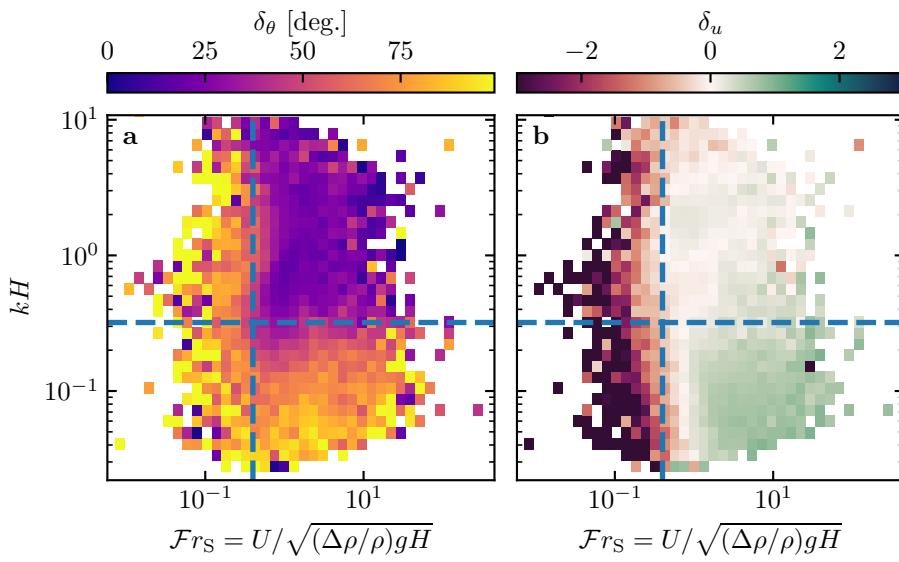
$$\delta_u = \frac{u_*^{\text{ERA}} - u_*^{\text{station}}}{u_*^{\text{ERA}}}, \quad (3)$$

and the flow deviation as the minimal angle between the wind orientation in the two datasets:

$$\delta_\theta = |\min([\theta_{\text{ERA}} - \theta_{\text{station}}] \bmod 360, [\theta_{\text{station}} - \theta_{\text{ERA}}] \bmod 360)|, \quad (4)$$

When these two variables are represented in the marginal spaces ( $kH$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_S$ ) and ( $kH$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_I$ ), different regime emerges (Fig. 5). The small wind disturbances ( $\delta_\theta \rightarrow 0$ ,  $\delta_u \rightarrow 0$ ) are located in the top-right part of the diagrams, corresponding to a regime mixing low-interactions ( $kH$  large enough, Fig. 4b) and low-confinement ( $\mathcal{Fr}_S$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_I$  large enough, Fig. 4c).

Lower values of  $kH$  (stronger interaction) or Froude numbers (stronger confinement) then both leads to an increase in wind disturbances, both in terms of orientation and velocity. Interestingly, the limit of no-interactions between the topography and the boundary layer structure ( $kH \gg 1$ ), in which the properties of the capping layer and the stratification become irrelevant (Fig. 4b–4c), is never reached here, in the case of giant dunes. Below a threshold value of  $kH \simeq 0.3$ , wind disturbance occurs independently of the Froude numbers value. However, the latter seem to control a transition between from damped to amplified wind velocities within the interdune (Fig. 5c–5d), for which we do not have an explanation.



**Fig. 5** Regime diagrams of the wind deviation  $\delta_\theta$  and relative attenuation/amplification  $\delta_u$  in the space  $(\mathcal{Fr}_S, kH)$ , containing the data from both the Deep Sea and South Namib stations. Blue dashed lines empirically delimit the different regimes. The point density in each bin of the diagrams is shown in Fig. S11. The regime diagrams in the spaces  $(\mathcal{Fr}_I, kH)$  and  $(\mathcal{Fr}_I, \mathcal{Fr}_S)$  are shown in Fig. S12.

#### 204 4 Discussion

205 The comparison of local and regional wind data gives a direct evidence of the  
 206 giant dunes feedback on the flow. In flat areas, the matching between both  
 207 datasets highlights the ability of the latest generation of climate reanalysis to  
 208 predict the wind flow up to scales  $\sim 10$  km, i.e the grid model. When smaller  
 209 scale topographies are present (giant dunes in our case), locally measured wind  
 210 regimes may significantly differ from the regional ones. Furthermore, we link  
 211 these disturbances induced by the dunes to their interaction with the lower  
 212 part of the atmospheric vertical structure, and more specifically to its circadian  
 213 variability. During the day, the top of the ABL is high enough to limit  
 214 the interaction of the capping layer and the FA stratification with the giant  
 215 dunes, resulting in a low flow confinement, and thus small wind disturbances.  
 216 During the night, the small ABL height induces a stronger flow confinement,  
 217 associated with large wind deviation and acceleration or deceleration. Interest-  
 218 ingly, we also found that this effect could be counterbalanced by the presence  
 219 of large wind velocities, capable of deforming the capping layer and/or the FA  
 220 stratification and thus decreasing the confinement effect.

221 Simple linear model such as the one of Andreotti et al. (2009) also sug-  
 222 gests that larger wind disturbances occur under strong flow confinement such  
 223 as described above. However, they are unable to reproduce the magnitude of  
 224 the observed deviations, probably due to the presence of hydrodynamical non-

linear effects, negligible in low confinement situations, but not otherwise (see Fig. S12 and Appendix 1). Another limit in the comparison between theoretical predictions and measured is induces by the the single-point measurements. To have reliable representations of the flow structures related to wind disturbances, additional measurements in different places on and near the same topographical obstacle are needed.

This study highlights the interaction between giant dunes and the atmospheric boundary layer, thus supporting for example the way the capping layer acts as a bounding surface limiting dune growth (Andreotti et al. 2009; Gunn et al. 2021). This interaction also have implications at smaller scales, where bedforms then develop from the disturbed wind instead of the regional one. Differences between larger and smaller scale (thus older and more recent) dune patterns are observed ubiquitously, and have sometimes in the literature been attributed to climatic changes in wind regimes (?). Here, we suggest using this feedback mechanism that current winds can explain dune patterns at all scales, such as the linear dunes ( $\sim 50$  m -wide) elongating within the interdune between two giant linear dunes ( $\sim 2$  km -wide) in the Namib Sand Sea (see Fig. 6).

**Acknowledgements** These should follow the concluding section of the paper and precede the References and any appendices, if they are present. The acknowledgements section does not require a section number.

## Appendix 1: ABL turbulent wind model

Following the work of Fourriere et al. (2010) and Andreotti et al. (2012), we briefly expose in this section the linear response of a turbulent flow to a small aspect ratio perturbation of the topography  $\xi$ . As this topography can be decomposed into several sinusoidal modes, we focus on the response to a sinusoidal topography as:

$$\xi = \xi_0 \cos [k (\cos(\alpha)x + \sin(\alpha)y)], \quad (5)$$

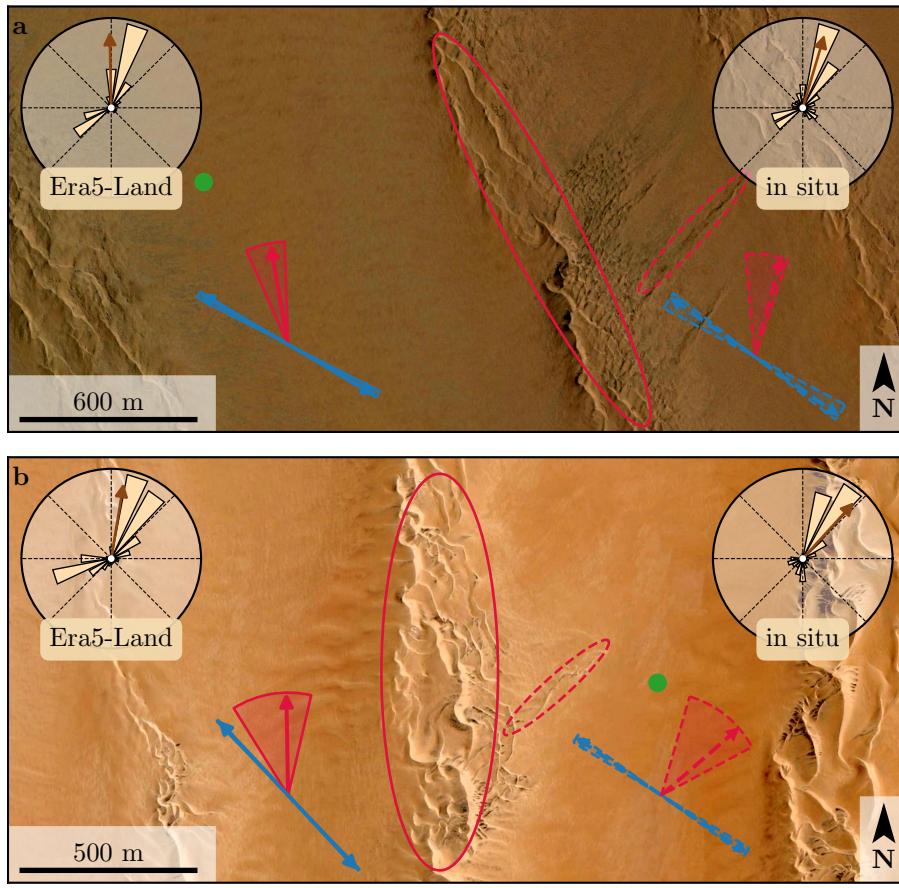
which is also a good approximation to the giant dunes observed in the Deep Sea and South Namib Station (see Fig 1 and Fig S4). Here,  $x$  and  $y$  are the streamwise and spanwise coordinates,  $k = 2\pi/\lambda$  the wavenumber of the sinusoidal perturbation, and  $\alpha$  its crest orientation, calculated with respect to the  $y$ -direction.

In terms of basal shear stress  $\tau = \rho u_*^2$ , the flow response can then generally be written in as:

$$\tau_x = \tau_0 \left( 1 + k \xi_0 \sqrt{\mathcal{A}_x^2 + \mathcal{B}_x^2} \cos [k (\cos(\alpha)x + \sin(\alpha)y) + \phi_x] \right), \quad (6)$$

$$\tau_y = \tau_0 k \xi_0 \sqrt{\mathcal{A}_y^2 + \mathcal{B}_y^2} \cos [k (\cos(\alpha)x + \sin(\alpha)y) + \phi_y], \quad (7)$$

where  $\tau_0$  is the basal shear stress on a flat bed, and  $\phi_{x,y} = \tan^{-1} (\mathcal{B}_{x,y}/\mathcal{A}_{x,y})$ . The in-phase and in-quadrature hydrodynamical coefficients  $\mathcal{A}_{x,y}$  and  $\mathcal{B}_{x,y}$



**Fig. 6** Implications for smaller scale patterns in (a) the South Namib and (b) Deep Sea. The ellipses indicates the different types of elongating dunes, at large (plain) and small scale (dashed). The dune orientations are calculated using the model of ? from the sand flux angular distributions, shown here for typical sand quartz grains of  $180 \mu\text{m}$ . The double blue and single red arrows correspond to the two possible dune growth mechanisms, bed instability and elongation, respectively. Likewise, plain arrows are calculated from the ERA5-Land datasets, and dashed arrows from the in situ measurements. Wedges show the uncertainty on the orientation calculation, and the arrows correspond to typical parameters found in the literature, i.e a grain diameter of  $180 \mu\text{m}$  and a flux-up ratio of 1.6. The green dots indicate the position of the measurement stations. See Appendix 2 for details.

261 are functions of the flow conditions, i.e the bottom roughness, the free surface  
 262 or the incident flow direction (Fourriere et al. 2010; Andreotti et al. 2009, 2012;  
 263 Charru et al. 2013).

<sup>264</sup> Andreotti et al. (2012) have shown that the impact of the incident wind  
<sup>265</sup> direction can be well approximated by the following expressions:

$$\mathcal{A}_x = \mathcal{A}_0 \cos^2 \alpha, \quad (8)$$

$$\mathcal{B}_x = \mathcal{B}_0 \cos^2 \alpha, \quad (9)$$

$$\mathcal{A}_y = \frac{1}{2} \mathcal{A}_0 \cos \alpha \sin \alpha, \quad (10)$$

$$\mathcal{B}_y = \frac{1}{2} \mathcal{B}_0 \cos \alpha \sin \alpha, \quad (11)$$

<sup>266</sup> where  $\mathcal{A}_0$  and  $\mathcal{B}_0$  are now two coefficients independent of the dune orientation  
<sup>267</sup>  $\alpha$ . In the case of a fully turbulent boundary layer capped by a free atmosphere  
<sup>268</sup> capping, they now only depend on  $kH$ ,  $kz_0$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_I$  and  $\mathcal{Fr}_S$ , as detailed by  
<sup>269</sup> Andreotti et al. (2009). More specifically, their variation in the marginal spaces  
<sup>270</sup> ( $kH$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_S$ ) and ( $kH$ ,  $\mathcal{Fr}_I$ ) are shown in Fig. S12.

<sup>271</sup> Typical values for the unconfined case are therefore  $\mathcal{A}_0 = 3.4$  and  $\mathcal{B}_0 = 1$ .  
<sup>272</sup> In our case of giant dunes with  $k\xi_0 \sim 0.1$ , significant wind disturbances are  
<sup>273</sup> then expected when  $\sqrt{\mathcal{A}_0^2 + \mathcal{B}_0^2} \sim 10$ . However, this is also the limit of the  
<sup>274</sup> linear regime where this theoretical model is applicable, as hydrodynamical  
<sup>275</sup> non-linearities become significant when  $k\xi_0 \sqrt{\mathcal{A}_0^2 + \mathcal{B}_0^2} \sim 1$ .

## <sup>276</sup> Appendix 2: Sediment transport and dune morphodynamics

<sup>277</sup> Here, we briefly detail the sediment transport and dune morphodynamics theo-  
<sup>278</sup> retorical framework leading to the prediction of sand fluxes and dune orientations  
<sup>279</sup> from wind data.

<sup>280</sup> The sediment fluxes can been directly linked to the wind basal shear stress  
<sup>281</sup> at each time steps  $t$  from transport laws, whose exact forms depends on the  
<sup>282</sup> sediment transport mechanisms taken into account. In this work, we following  
<sup>283</sup> the recent work of Pähntz and Durán (2020), where the sediment flux  $q_{\text{sat}}$  on a  
<sup>284</sup> flat bed made of loose sand can be expressed as:

$$\frac{q_{\text{sat}, t}}{Q} = \frac{2\sqrt{\Theta_{\text{th}}}}{\kappa\mu} (\Theta_t - \Theta_{\text{th}}) \left( 1 + \frac{C_M}{\mu} [\Theta_t - \Theta_{\text{th}}] \right), \quad (12)$$

<sup>285</sup> where  $\kappa = 0.4$  is the von Kármán constant,  $C_M = 1.7$  a constant,  $Q =$   
<sup>286</sup>  $d\sqrt{(\rho_s - \rho)gd/\rho}$  is a characteristic flux, with  $\rho_s = 2.6 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$  and  $d = 180 \mu\text{m}$   
<sup>287</sup> the grain density and diameter, and  $g$  the gravitational acceleration. The fric-  
<sup>288</sup> tion coefficient  $\mu$  is taken to be the avalanche slope of the granular material,  
<sup>289</sup> i.e.  $\sim 0.6$ . Finally, the Shields number is defined as  $\Theta = \rho u_{*,t}^2 / (\rho_s - \rho)gd$ , and  
<sup>290</sup> its threshold value for incipient sediment transport as been calibrated using  
<sup>291</sup> laboratory experiments to  $\Theta_{\text{th}} = 0.0035$ .

<sup>292</sup> The dune orientations are then predicted from the dimensional model of  
<sup>293</sup> Courrech du Pont et al. (2014). The orientation  $\alpha$  corresponding the bed in-  
<sup>294</sup> stability is then the one that maximizes the following growth rate:

$$\sigma \propto \frac{1}{HWT} \int_t q_{\text{crest},t} |\sin(\theta_t - \alpha)|, \quad (13)$$

295 where  $H$  and  $W$  are dimensional constants representing the dune height and  
 296 width, respectively. The flux at the crest is expressed as:

$$q_{\text{crest},t} = q_{\text{sat},t} [1 + \gamma |\sin(\theta_t - \alpha)|], \quad (14)$$

297 where the flux-up ratio  $\gamma$  has been calibrated to 1.6 using field studies, under-  
 298 water laboratory experiments and numerical simulations. Similarly, the dune  
 299 orientation corresponding to the elongation mechanism is the one that verifies:

$$\tan(\alpha) = \frac{\langle q_{\text{crest},t}(\alpha) \mathbf{e}_{\theta_t} \rangle \cdot \mathbf{e}_{WE}}{\langle q_{\text{crest},t}(\alpha) \mathbf{e}_{\theta_t} \rangle \cdot \mathbf{e}_{SN}}, \quad (15)$$

300 where  $\langle \cdot \rangle$  denotes a vectorial time average. The unitary vectors  $\mathbf{e}_{WE}$ ,  $\mathbf{e}_{SN}$  and  
 301  $\mathbf{e}_{\theta_t}$  are in the West–East, South–North and wind direction, respectively.

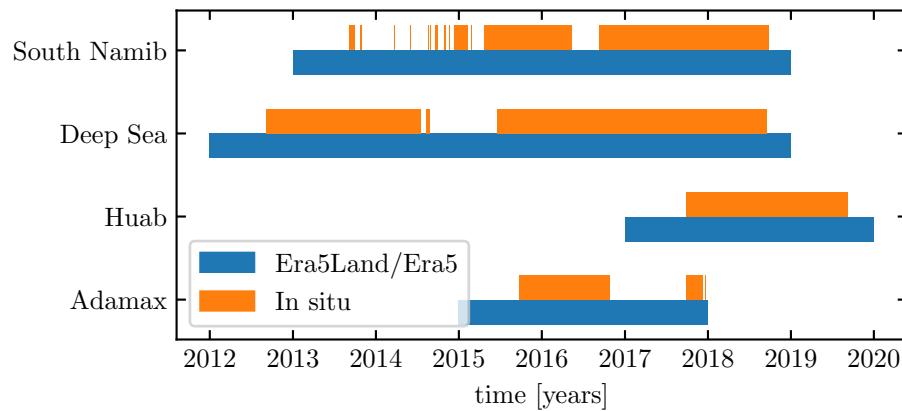
302 The computed dune orientations, blue and red arrows in figure 6, are how-  
 303 ever depending on a large number of parameters, for which we took typical  
 304 values for eolian desert on Earth. We therefore run a sensibility test by calculat-  
 305 ing the dune orientations for grain diameters ranging from 100  $\mu\text{m}$  to 400  $\mu\text{m}$   
 306 and the speed-up ratio from 0.1 to 10 (wedges on figure 6). We also checked  
 307 the sensibility the transport low by repeating the process with the quadratic  
 308 transport also used for comparison in Pähzt and Durán (2020), which led to  
 309 no more than  $n\%$  of variation with respect to (12).

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**Fig. S1** Gant chart representing the usable time steps for the two data sets, for all stations.

382    **Supplementary Material for *Boundary-Layer Meteorology* Sample  
383    Paper: Instructions for Authors**

384    **First Author\* · Second Author · Third Author**

385  
386    \*Affiliation and email address for the corresponding author only (note that  
387    the corresponding author does not need to be the first author).

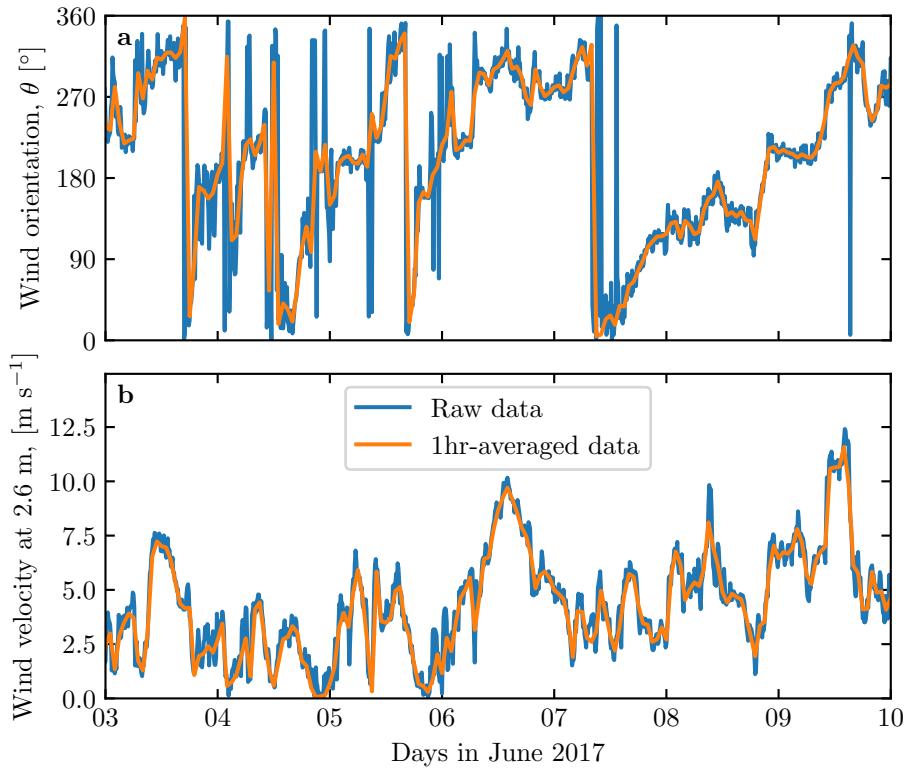
388    **1. Shear velocity and calibration of the hydrodynamical roughness**

389    For each station, the hydrodynamic roughness is calibrated by finding the  
390    one that minimizes the relative difference  $\delta$  between the wind vectors of both  
391    datasets:

$$\delta = \frac{\sqrt{\langle \|u_{*,\text{era}} - u_{*,\text{station}}\|^2 \rangle_t}}{\sqrt{\langle \|u_{*,\text{era}}\| \rangle_t \langle \|u_{*,\text{station}}\| \rangle_t}} \quad (16)$$

392    This  $\delta$ -parameter is computed for hydrodynamic roughness values ranging  
393    from  $10^{-5}$  m to  $10^{-2}$  m for the different stations. As shown by figure S3,  
394    the minimum of  $\delta$  in the space ( $z_0, \text{Era}, z_0, \text{in situ}$ ) forms a line. We thus take  
395    the roughness of the Era5Land dataset as the typical value when sediment  
396    transport occurs,  $10^{-3}$  m, corresponding to the thickness of the transport  
397    layer (?). It leads for the Adamax, Deep Sea, Huab and South Namib stations  
398    values of 2.7 mm, 0.76 mm, 0.12 mm and 0.48 mm, respectively.

399    The choice of the hydrodynamic roughness values only impacts the cal-  
400    culated shear velocities, but note the wind directions. As such, most of our  
401    conclusions are then independent of such a choice, and only the magnitude of  
402    the wind velocity attenuation in confined situation might be affected.



**Fig. S2** Comparison between raw in situ wind measurements, and centered averaged data over one hour for the South Namib station. **a:** wind direction. **b:** wind velocity at the measurement height, 2.6 m.

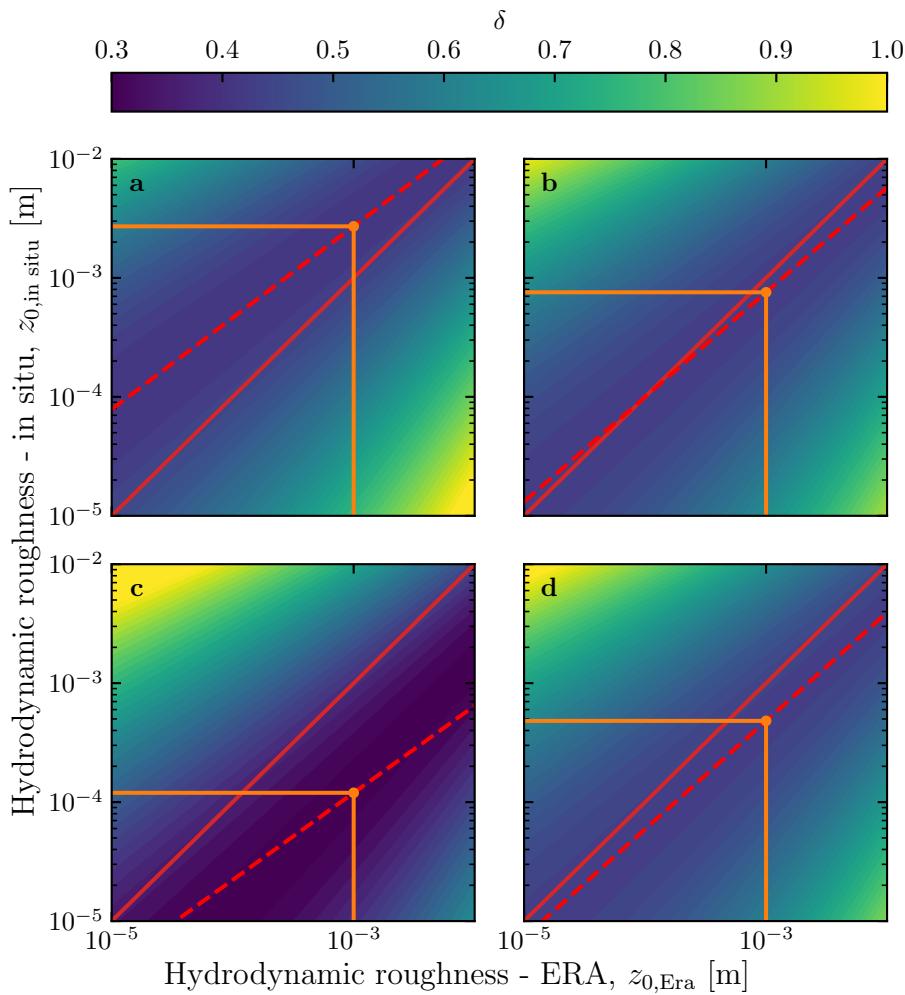
## 403 2. Extraction of the ABL properties

404 In order to estimate the relevant non-dimensional numbers, one need to es-  
 405 timate in addition to the wind and dune properties some parameters of the  
 406 ABL. The Era5 dataset provides a direct bulk estimate of the ABL depth  $H$   
 407 from a bulk Richardson number calculation, as well as vertical profiles of the  
 408 geopotential  $\phi$ , temperature  $T$  and specific humidity  $e_w$  at given pressure lev-  
 409 els  $P$ . From these quantities, the virtual potential temperature, which takes  
 410 into account the vertical pressure and humidity changes, can be calculated as:

$$T_{vp} = T (1 + [R_M - 1] e_w) \left( \frac{P_0}{P} \right)^{P_c(1-0.24e_w)}, \quad (17)$$

411 where  $P_0 = 10^5$  Pa is the standard pressure,  $P_c = 0.2854$  the Poisson coefficient  
 412 for dry air and  $R_M = 1.61$  is the ratio between the molecular masses of dry  
 413 air and water. The vertical coordinates are calculated as:

$$z = \frac{\phi R_t}{g R_t - \phi}, \quad (18)$$

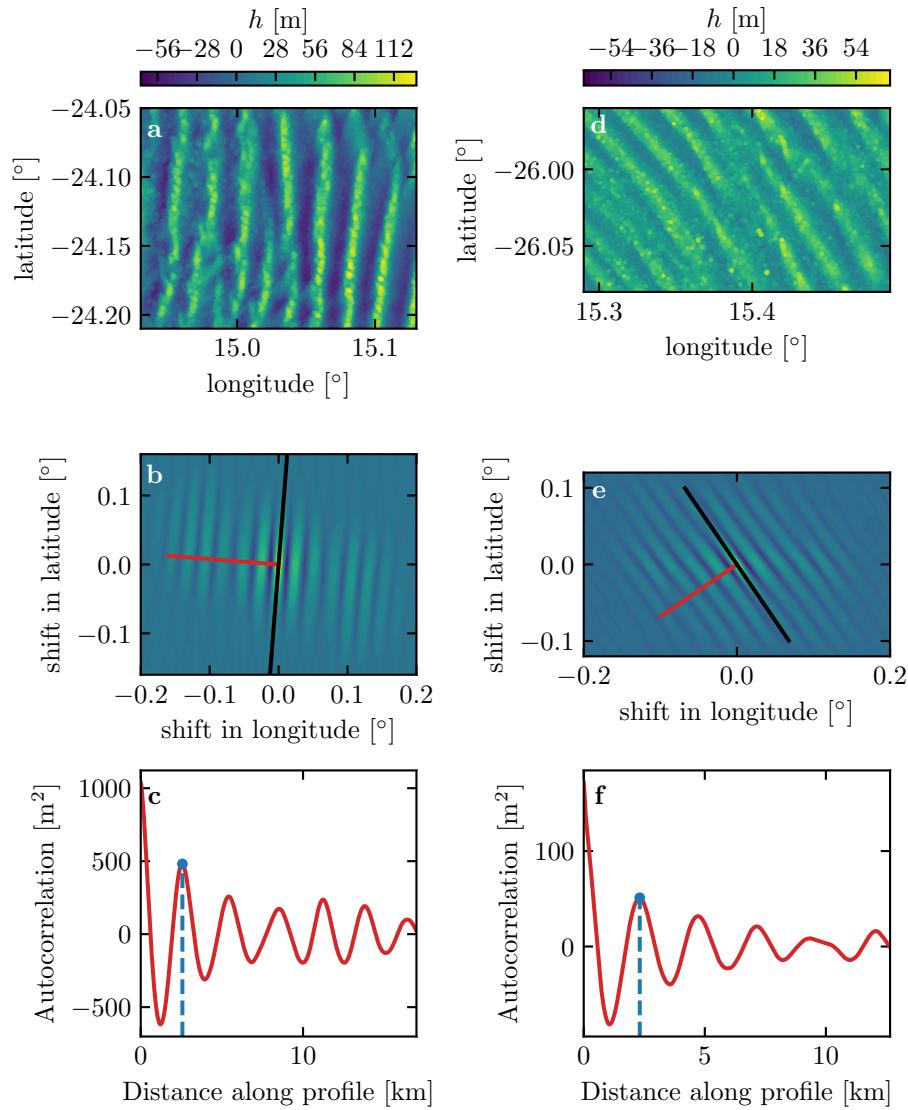


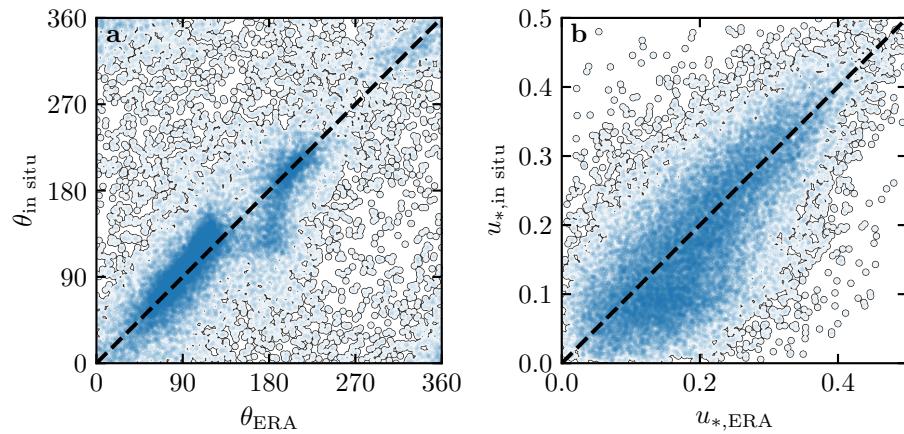
**Fig. S3** Calibration of the hydrodynamic roughnesses. The metric  $\delta$  defined in (16) is represented in colorscale as a function of the hydrodynamic roughnesses chosen for the Era5-Land and in situ datasets, for the Adamax (**a**), Deep Sea (**b**), Huab (**c**) and South Namib (**d**) Stations. The red dashed and plain lines shows the minima of  $\delta$  and the identity line. The orange lines and dots highlights the chosen the hydrodynamic roughnesses for the in situ datasets by imposing  $z_{0,\text{ERA}} = 1 \text{ mm}$ , leading for each station to 2.7 mm, 0.76 mm, 0.12 mm and 0.48 mm, respectively.

where  $R_t = 6356766 \text{ m}$  is the average Earth radius, and  $g = 9.81 \text{ m s}^{-2}$  the gravitational acceleration.

Example of obtained vertical profiles of the virtual potential temperature are shown in Fig. S9. On each of them, an average is computed below the ABL depth given by the Era5 dataset, and a linear function is fitted above.

Under the Boussinesq approximation, the temperature variations are assumed to induce most of those of the density, leading to  $\Delta\rho/\rho \simeq \Delta T_{\text{vp}}/T_{\text{vp}}$ .

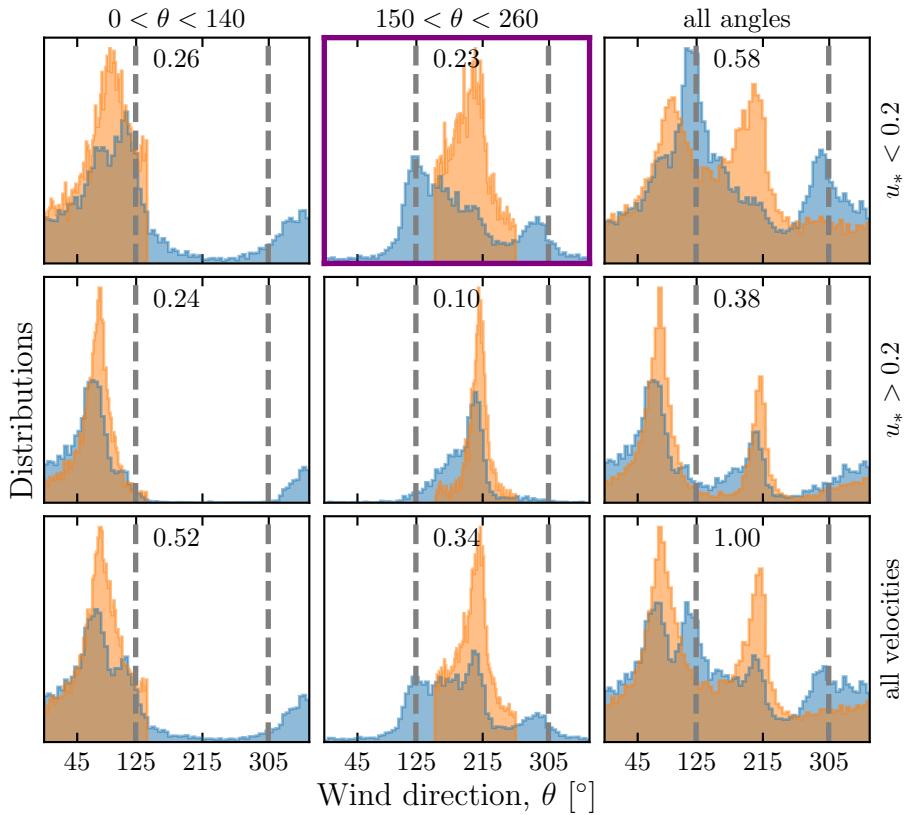




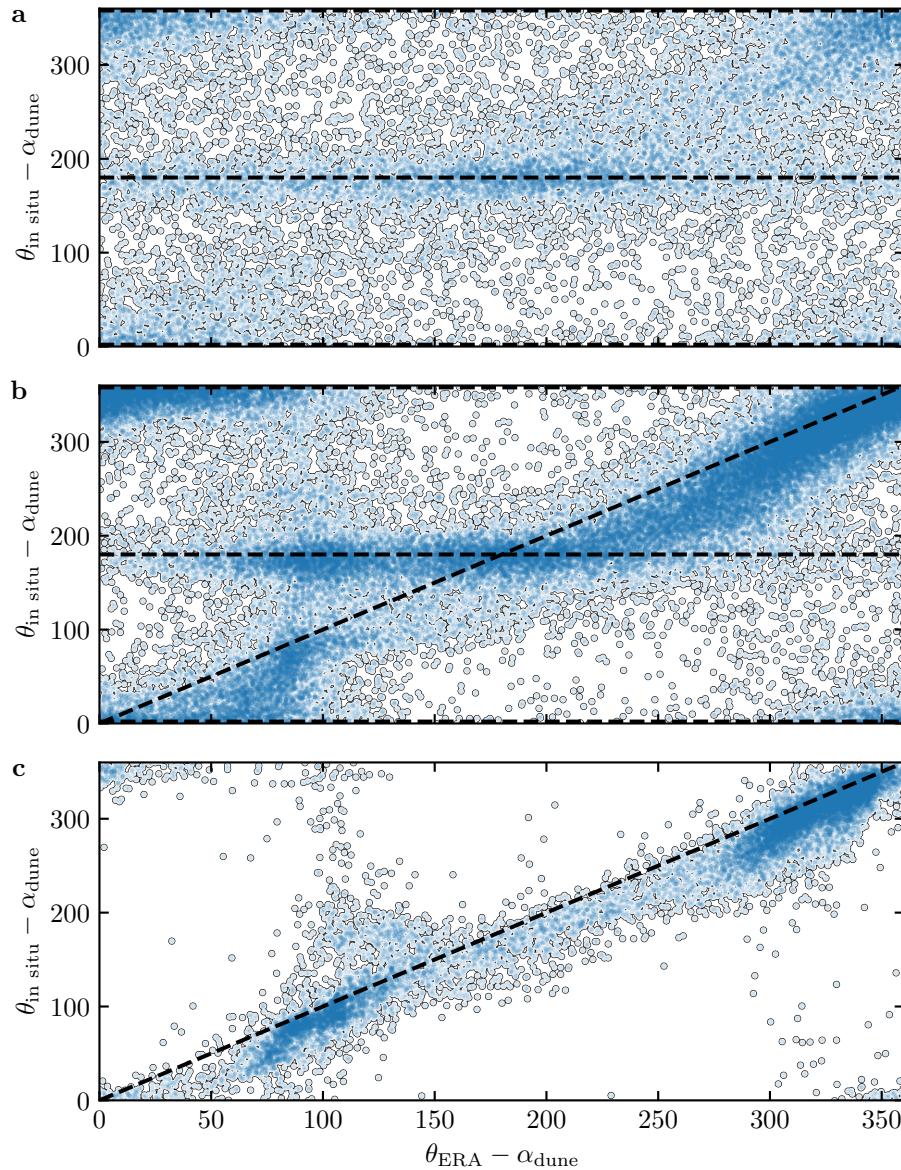
**Fig. S5** Statistical agreement of the wind orientation (a) and velocity (b) between the Era5Land dataset and the in situ measurements for the Huab and Adamax stations. Note how the points are clustered around identity lines, black and dashed.

421 Here,  $T_{\text{vp}}/T_{\text{vp}}$  is the relative virtual potential temperature jump at the cap-  
 422 ping, directly measured on the vertical profiles.

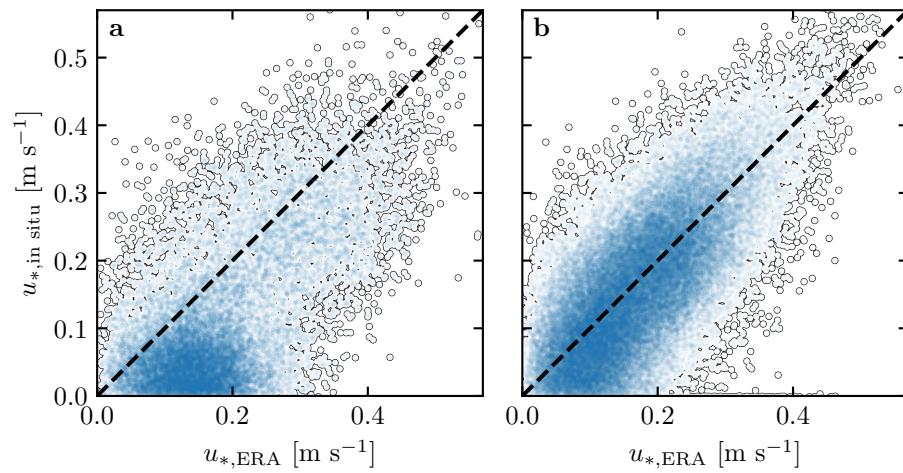
423 Following Tritton (2012), the relative density jump at the capping layer



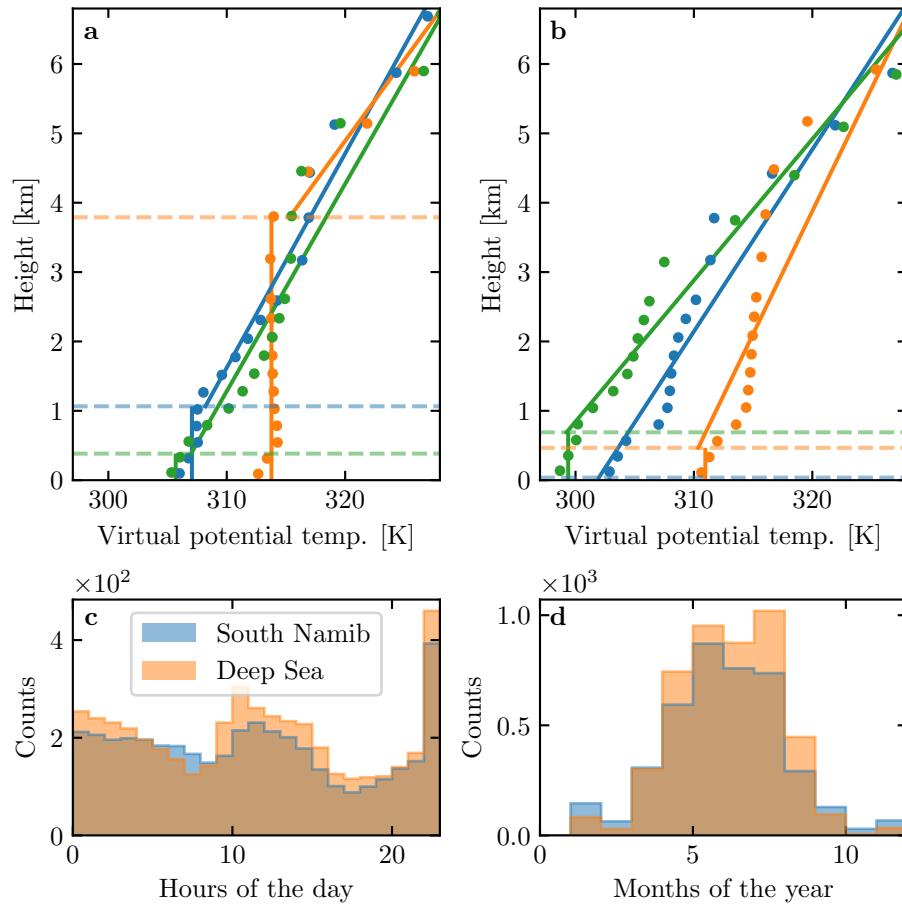
**Fig. S6** Distributions of wind direction at the South Namib Station for the Era5Land climate reanalysis (orange) and the in situ measurements (blue). In each subplot, both distributions are plotted from the same time steps, selected with constraints on the wind direction (columns) and/or wind velocity (rows) in the Era5Land dataset. The grey dashed vertical lines indicate the dune orientation. The purple frame highlights the regime (small wind velocities, nocturnal summer wind) during which the wind data from both datasets differs. A similar figure can be obtained for the South Namib station (see Fig. 3).



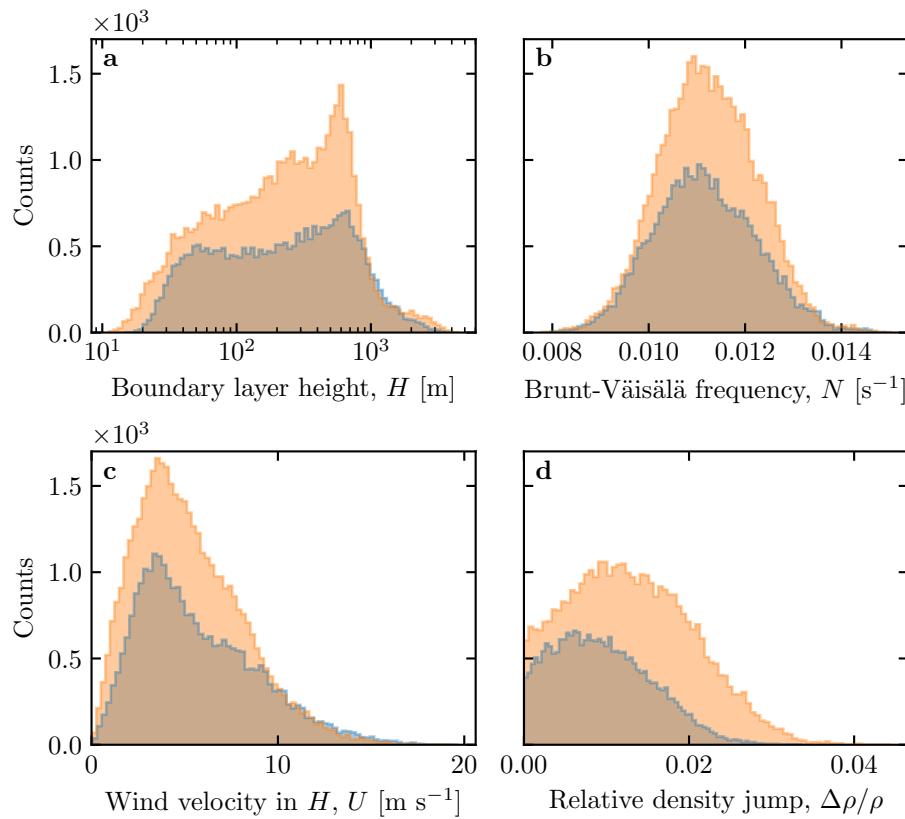
**Fig. S7** Statistical comparison of the wind orientation between the Era5Land dataset and in situ measurements for the South Namib and Deep Sea stations, for different velocity ranges. **a:**  $u_{*,\text{ERA}} < 0.1 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . **b:**  $0.1 < u_{*,\text{ERA}} \leq 0.25 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . **c:**  $u_{*,\text{ERA}} \geq 0.25 \text{ m s}^{-1}$ . Note that the dune orientations measured are subtracted to the wind orientation, which allows to plot both stations on the same graph. Black dashed lines indicates in situ orientations aligned with the dune crests (here  $0^\circ$ ,  $180^\circ$  and  $360^\circ$  – **a, b**), as well as the identity lines (**b, c**).



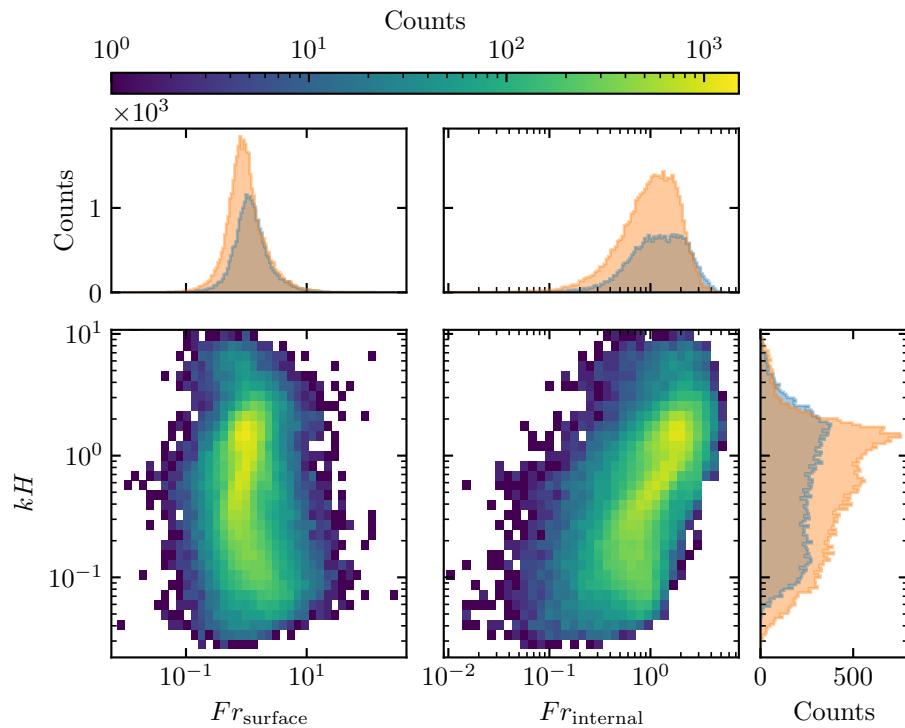
**Fig. S8** Statistical comparison of the wind velocity between the Era5Land dataset and in situ measurements for the South Namib and Deep Sea stations. **a:** Nocturnal summer easterly wind. **b:** Diurnal southerly wind. Black dashed lines are identity lines. The angle ranges corresponding to diurnal and nocturnal summer winds are those taken in Fig. 3 and Fig. S6.



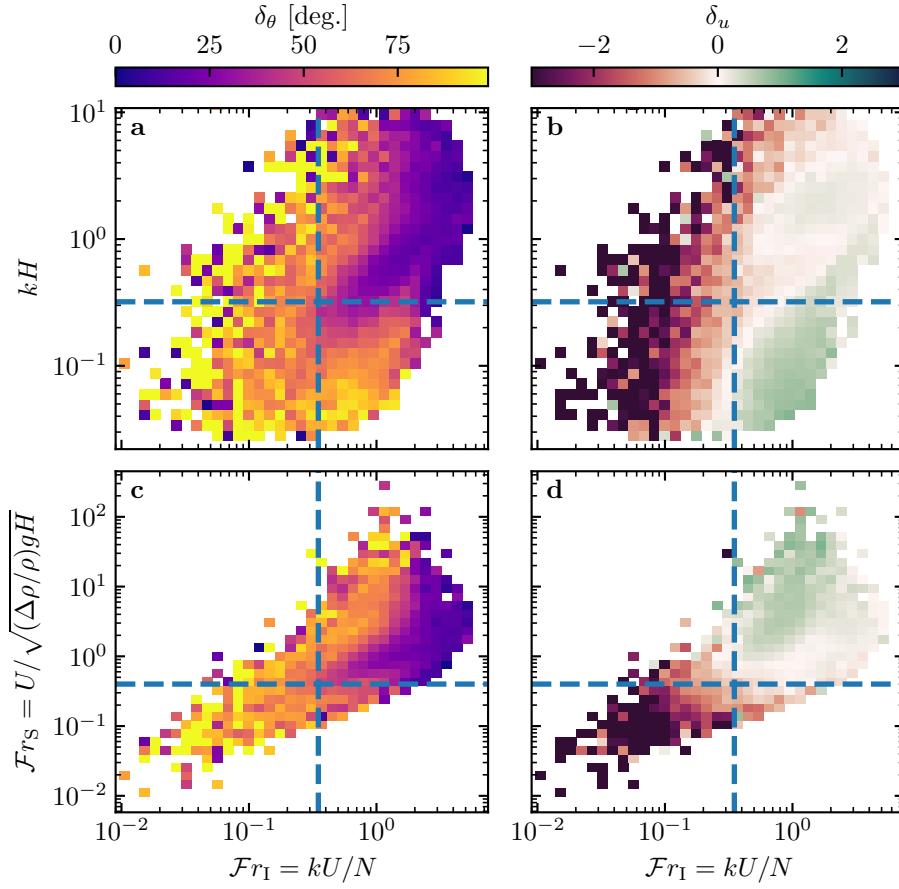
**Fig. S9** **a:** Vertical profiles of the virtual potential temperature at 3 different time steps (blue - 29/11/2012 - 1100 UTC, orange - 21/03/2017 - 1200 UTC, green - 21/03/2017 - 2000 UTC) at the South Namib station. Dots: data from the ERA5 reanalysis. Transparent dashed lines: boundary layer height given by the ERA5 reanalysis, calculated from the bulk Richardson number (Seidel et al. 2012). Plain lines: vertical (boundary layer) and linear (free atmosphere) fits to estimate the quantities in Fig. S10. **b:** Examples of ill-processed vertical profiles at 3 different time steps (blue - 2/12/2013 - 2300 UTC, orange - 20/03/2017 - 0000 UTC, green - 14/07/2017 - 1400 UTC) at the South Namib station. **c:** Hourly distribution of ill-processed vertical profiles. **d:** Monthly distribution of ill-processed vertical profiles. These profiles are ill-processed because the temperature found at the boundary layer from the linear fit in the free-atm is smaller than the average one inside the boundary layer. This is an unstable situation, which does not allow to calculate the surface Froude number.



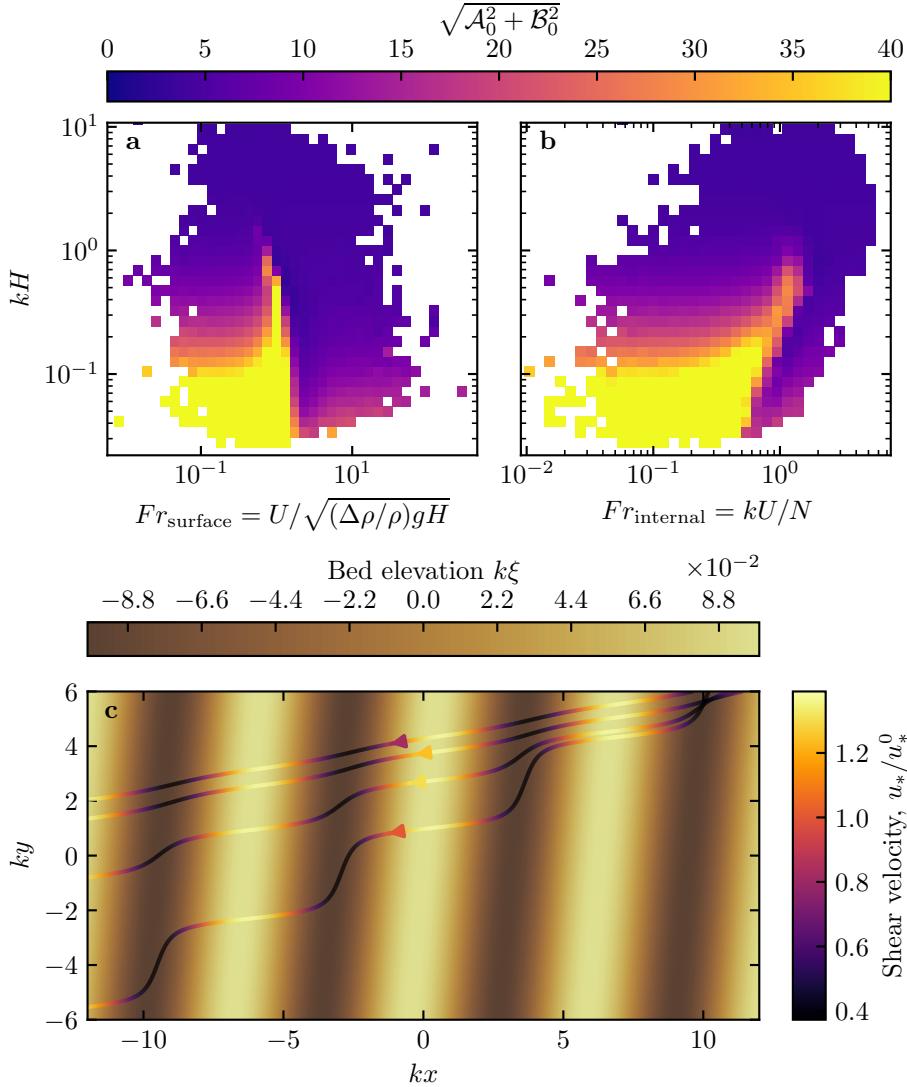
**Fig. S10** Distributions of the meteorological parameters resulting from the processing of the Era5-Land data for the South Namib (blue) and the Deep Sea (orange) stations.



**Fig. S11** Non-dimensional parameters distributions. For the marginal distributions, the orange correspond to the South Namib station, and the blue to the Deep Sea station.



**Fig. S12** Regime diagrams of the wind deviation  $\delta_\theta$  and relative attenuation/amplification  $\delta_u$  in the spaces  $(\mathcal{Fr}_I, kH)$  and  $(\mathcal{Fr}_I, \mathcal{Fr}_S)$ , containing the data from both the Deep Sea and South Namib stations. Blue dashed lines empirically delimit the different regimes. The point density in each bin of the diagrams is shown in Fig. S11. The regime diagrams in the space  $(\mathcal{Fr}_S, kH)$  are shown in Fig. S5.



**Fig. S13** Physical interpretation of the flow disturbance. (a) and (b) Magnitude of the disturbance induced by a sinusoidal topography calculated from the time series of the non-dimensional numbers presented in Figures 4 and 5 using the linear model of Andreotti et al. (2009). (c) Shear velocity streamlines represented in the case of the Deep Sea station, for increasing values of  $\sqrt{\mathcal{A}_0^2 + \mathcal{B}_0^2}$ . From the upper to the lower streamline, values of  $(kH, Fr_{\text{surface}}, Fr_{\text{internal}}, \mathcal{A}_0, \mathcal{B}_0, \sqrt{\mathcal{A}_0^2 + \mathcal{B}_0^2})$  are  $(1.9, 0.6, 1.5, 3.4, 1.0, 3.5)$ ,  $(1.5, 0.3, 0.4, 4.8, 1.4, 5.0)$ ,  $(0.1, 3.5, 1.0, 8.6, 0.1, 8.6)$ ,  $(0.5, 0.05, 0.04, 9.6, 2.5, 9.9)$ .