SDDP.jl: a Julia package for Stochastic Dual Dynamic Programming

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Abstract

SDDP.jl is an open-source library for solving computational stochastic optimization problems using Stochastic Dual Dynamic Programming. SDDP.jl is built upon JuMP, an algebraic modelling language in Julia. This enables a high-level interface for the user while simultaneously providing performance that is similar to implementations in lower-level languages. In this work we present SDDP.jl, justify implementation decisions, and demonstrate the capabilities through an example from the literature.

Keywords: SDDP, multistage, computational stochastic optimization, stochastic programming, library

1. Introduction

Solving any mathematical optimization problem requires four steps: the formulation of the problem by the user; the communication of the problem to the computer; the efficient computational solution of the problem; and the communication of the computational solution back to the user. Over time, considerable effort has been made to improve each of these four steps for a variety of problem classes such linear, quadratic, mixed-integer, conic, and non-linear (consider the evolution from early file-formats such as MPS [1] to modern algebraic modelling languages embedded in high-level languages such as JuMP [2], or the 73 fold speed-up in solving difficult Mixed-Integer Linear Programs in seven years by Gurobi [3]).

However, the same cannot be said for stochastic problem classes. This is particularly true of convex, multistage, stochastic optimization problems (which are to be the focus of this paper). There is even considerable debate [4, 5] about how best to even formulate a stochastic program. Moreover, when it comes to communicating the problem to the computer, some formats have been proposed [6, 7], but owing to the lack of agreement about the problem formulation, acceptance of these is not widespread. Instead, what happens is the development of an *ad-hoc*, problem-specific format that is often tightly coupled to individual implementations on a case-bycase basis. The visualization of stochastic policies is also difficult due to the high-dimensionality of the state and action spaces, and the inherent uncertainty. As such, policy visualization is also problem-specific, and in our opinion, an often neglected part of the solution process.

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Where progress has been made however, is in the development of efficient computational solution algorithms. The state-of-the-art solution technique for convex multistage stochastic optimization problems, Stochastic Dual Dynamic Programming (SDDP), was introduced in the seminal work of [8]. Since that time, SDDP (and its variants) have been widely used to solve a number of problems in both academia and industry. However, until recently, no open-source, flexible implementations of the algorithm existed in the public domain¹. Instead, practitioners were forced to code their own implementations in a variety of languages and styles. Research implementations have been reported in a variety of languages including AMPL [9], C++ [10, 11], GAMS [12, 13], JAVA [14] and MATLAB [15], as well as in commercial products such as the seminal SDDP [16] and DOASA [17]. In our opinion, this "re-invention of the wheel" has limited the adoption of the SDDP algorithm in areas outside of the electricity industry (which is the focus of most researchers) as it poses a large up-front cost to development. Furthermore, not all implementations are state-of-the-art as there is a high cost of maintenance. As such, many researchers develop and test new algorithmic improvements without being able to easily compare their ideas to the current state-of-the-art.

In developing SDDP.jl, it was our intention to provide a modern solution to all four steps of the mathematical optimization process for multistage convex stochastic optimization problems. In Section 2 we describe the standardized form for describing multistage stochastic optimization problems of the type that can be solved by SDDP. In Section 3, we describe the user-interface for SDDP.jl that was designed to closely match the mathematical description of the problem by building on-top-of JuMP.jl [18]. In Section 4, we discuss some of the improvements that have been made to the SDDP algorithm since its inception that have been incorporated into SDDP.jl, and how it has been designed to be extensible in order to allow new improvements to be added to the codebase with minimal effort. Lastly, we describe in Section 5, the interactive JavaScript visualization tool in SDDP.jl that allows the user to quickly and easily visualize high-dimensional solutions to stochastic optimization problems. As a central thread running through the paper, we use a variant on the Asset Management Problem from [19] to illustrate the features of SDDP.jl we describe in each section.

It is not the intention of the author to make this paper a comprehensive tutorial for Julia or SDDP. In places, familiarity is assumed of both the SDDP algorithm, Julia, and JuMP. Readers are directed to the project website at github.com/odow/SDDP.jl for more detailed documentation, examples, and source code.

2. Formulating the Problem

This paper is concerned with multistage, convex, stochastic optimization problems in a *Hazard-Decision* (also called *Wait-and-See*) framework. We shall use the notation of stochastic optimal control, where x_t represents state variables and u_t represents control variables in stage t. The goal of the optimization is to find a policy π_t that maps an incoming state variable \bar{x}_t , along with the observation of the random variable $\omega_t \sim \Omega_t$ to a feasible control u_{t,ω_t} for each stage t such that it minimizes the immediate cost, plus the risk-adjusted expected future cost. This can be expressed as the following optimization problem:

¹There are now at least four: https://github.com/JuliaOpt/StochDynamicProgramming.jl, https://github.com/blegat/StructDualDynProg.jl, https://web.stanford.edu/~lcambier/fast/, and https://github.com/odow/SDDP.jl.

$$\min_{\pi} \mathbb{F}_0 \left[V_i^{\pi}(x_0, \omega_i) \mid x_0 \right], \tag{1}$$

where

$$V_i^{\pi}(\bar{x},\omega) = C_i(\bar{x},u_{i,\omega},\omega) + \underset{j \in i^+, \ \omega_j \in \Omega_j}{\mathbb{F}_i} \left[V_j^{\pi}(x_{i,\omega},\omega_j) \right], \tag{2}$$

$$x_{i,\omega} = T_i(\bar{x}, u_{i,\omega}, \omega), \tag{3}$$

and

$$u_{i,\omega} = \pi_i(\bar{x}, \omega). \tag{4}$$

The policy $\pi_i(x,\omega)$ is a function that maps the incoming state of the system \bar{x} , and the observation of the noise ω into a control $u_{i,\omega}$. The policy respects any constraints on the domain of the control so that $u_{i,\omega} \in \mathcal{U}_i(x,\omega)$ and $x_{i\omega} \in \mathcal{X}_i(x,\omega)$. Stages form the vertices in a directed graph \mathcal{G} . We say that stage j is a child of stage i if there is a directed edge from stage i to stage j. We define the set of child nodes of stage i as i^+ . There is a known, finite probability of transitioning from stage i to every stage in i^+ . \mathbb{F} is a risk measure over the transition probabilities to each child stage j, and observations of the noise ω_j within each child stage. We also assume relatively complete recourse of \bar{x} . That is, for all $\omega \in \Omega_i$, there is a feasible control $u_{i,\omega}$, with a bounded objective value $V_i^{\pi}(\bar{x},\omega)$.

In the stochastic optimization community, policies typically take the form of an optimization problem. Therefore, $V_i^{\pi}(\bar{x},\omega)$ is the objective of the optimization problem:

$$\mathbf{P}_{i}(\bar{x},\omega): \quad \min_{u_{i,\omega}} \quad C_{i}(\bar{x},u_{i,\omega},\omega) + \underset{j \in i^{+}, \ \omega_{j} \in \Omega_{j}}{\mathbb{F}_{i}} \left[V_{j}^{\pi}(x_{i,\omega},\omega_{j}) \right]$$

$$s.t. \quad x_{i,\omega} = T_{i}(\bar{x},u_{i,\omega},\omega)$$

$$u_{i,\omega} \in \mathcal{U}_{i}(x,\omega)$$

$$x_{i,\omega} \in \mathcal{X}_{i}(x,\omega),$$

$$(5)$$

where the policy $\pi_i(\bar{x}, \omega) \in \arg\min_{u} \mathbf{P}_i(\bar{x}, \omega)$.

SDDP.jl is able to solve the sub-set of these problems that satisfy the following requirements:

- 1. X and U are polyhedral sets;
- 2. C is linear for a given ω ;
- 3. *T* is a linear functions of its arguments;
- 4. \mathbb{F}_0 is the Expectation risk measure;
- 5. \mathbb{F}_i is a convex combination of the expectation, and Average Value @ Risk (AV@R) risk measures;
- 6. Ω is a discrete distribution with a finite number of outcomes;
- 7. The stage graph forms an acyclic Markov chain (in the vein of [20]) with a finite number of Markov states in each stage.

Requirements (1), (2), and (3) are another way of saying that the problem $\mathbf{P}_i(\bar{x},\omega)$ can be written as a linear program with varying objective and right-hand-side coefficients, but not constraint coefficients. We note that these requirements are more restrictive than necessary, and that

variations of the SDDP algorithm have been proven to converge for more general classes of problems (for example, with convex non-linear programs [21], or when $X = \{0, 1\}$ [22]). However, these requirements permit the modelling of most real-world applications.

We now formulate a variation on the Asset Management Problem from [19] in order to illustrate these requirements.

2.1. Asset Management Example Formulation

The goal of the asset management problem is to choose an investment portfolio that is composed of stocks and bonds in order to meet a target wealth goal at the end of the time horizon. After five, and ten years, the agent observes the portfolio and is able to re-balance their wealth between the two asset classes. As an extension to the original problem, we introduce two new random variables. The first that represents a source of additional wealth in years 5 and 10. The second is an immediate reward that the agent incurs for holding stocks at the end of years 5 and 10. This can be though of as a dividend that cannot be reinvested.

Stage Graph. There are four sequential stages: Today; Year 5; Year 10; and Horizon. Today is a deterministic Decision-Only stage. The next three stages are Hazard-Decision problems. In Figure 1, we provide a graphical representation of this staging. Each square node represents a stage. Straight arrows are connections between stages. Wavy lines indicated exogenous random information is revealed at the start of the stage. The shaded circle is the root node at which we evaluate the risk-adjusted expectation of Eq. 1.

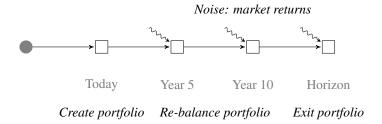


Figure 1: Asset Management Problem: stage graph

We now give the stage problem formulations (Eq. 5) for each of the stages using the notation of linear programming. We exclude the future cost component of the objective as this is handled separately by SDDP.jl.

Today (Decision-Only).

$$P_{\text{today}}\left(\left[\bar{x}^{s}, \bar{x}^{b}\right]\right): \quad \min \quad 0$$
s.t.
$$x^{s} + x^{b} = 55 + \bar{x}^{s} + \bar{x}^{b}$$

$$x^{s}, x^{b} \ge 0,$$
(6)

where \bar{x}^s is the value of stocks (in dollars) held at the start of the stage, x^s is the value of stocks (in dollars) held at the end of the stage, \bar{x}^b is the value of bonds (in dollars) held at the start of the stage, and x^b is the value of bonds (in dollars) held at the end of the stage. The control variables (value of stocks and bonds to buy) are implicit in this formulation.

The first stage has the initial solution $(\bar{x}^s, \bar{x}^b) = (0, 0)$.

Year 5 and Year 10 (Hazard-Decision).

$$P_{\text{re-balance}}\left([\bar{x}^s, \bar{x}^b], [\omega^s, \omega^b, \varphi, \psi]\right): \quad \min \quad -\psi \times x^s$$
s.t.
$$\omega^s \bar{x}^s + \omega^b \bar{x}^b + \varphi = x^s + x^b$$

$$x^s, x^b \ge 0,$$
(7)

where ω^s is the increase in the value of the stocks during the stage, and ω^b is the increase in the value of the bonds during the stage. The control variable (value of stocks to exchange for bonds) is implicit in this formulation. φ is an additional injection of cash (in dollars) that may represent the sale of other assets not modelled in the optimization problem. ψ is some fraction of the stocks value that is paid out as a dividend and is not able to be reinvested.

The two random variables φ and ψ are perfectly correlated² so that:

$$(\varphi, \psi) = \begin{cases} (5,0) & w.p. \ 0.4, \\ (-1,0.02) & w.p. \ 0.6. \end{cases}$$
 (8)

Horizon (Hazard-Decision).

$$P_{\text{horizon}}\left([\bar{x}^s, \bar{x}^b], [\omega^s, \omega^b]\right): \quad \min \quad 4u - v$$
s.t.
$$\omega^s \bar{x}^s + \omega^b \bar{x}^b + u - v = 80$$

$$u, v > 0.$$
(9)

where u is the quantity by which the portfolio is less than the target (\$80), and v is the quantity by which the portfolio exceeds the target.

Exogenous Information. Stages Year 5, Year 10, and Horizon have the following probability set for ω of:

$$(\omega^s, \omega^b) = \begin{cases} (1.25, 1.14) & w.p. \ 0.5 & (\text{High Return}), \\ (1.06, 1.12) & w.p. \ 0.5 & (\text{Low Return}). \end{cases}$$
(10)

Reformulating to meet SDDP. jl criteria. In the formulation above, the random variable ω occurs in the coefficients of the constraints. However, one requirement of SDDP. jl is that the transition function is linear in its arguments. Therefore, we model the observations of ω by the Markov chain in Figure 2.

In this formulation, ω^s and ω^b can be replaced by constants in the subproblems, with the uncertainty now lying on the arcs exiting the stages in the stage graph. For each stage, we need to provide the transition probabilities of arriving from the Markov states in the previous stage. For simplicity, we shall now refer to the stages Today, Year 5, Year 10, and Horizon as stages 1,2,3, and 4 respectively. In addition, we shall refer to the Low Return and High Return Markov states as 1 and 2 respectively. By convention, we say that the root node, and any subproblem in a stage with one Markov state is Markov state 1. Therefore, for stage 1 (Today), the probability transition matrix of transitioning from the root node (Markov state 1) to the only Markov state in the stage is

²We note that this is not a limiting assumption as it is possible to construct the Cartesian product of the two random variables.

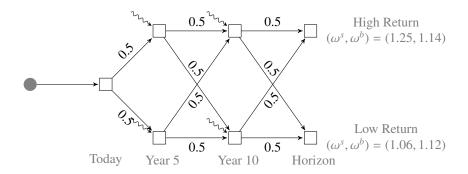


Figure 2: Asset Management Problem: revised stage graph

$$P_1 = \left[\begin{array}{c} 1.0 \end{array} \right]. \tag{11}$$

In the second stage (Year 5), the probability of transitioning from Markov state 1 in the previous stage, to each Markov state is 0.5. Therefore the transition matrix is:

$$P_2 = \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 & 0.5 \end{bmatrix}. \tag{12}$$

In the final two stages, it is possible to arrive from either Markov state 1 or 2. Therefore, the transition matrix is:

$$P_t = \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 & 0.5 \\ 0.5 & 0.5 \end{bmatrix}, \quad t = 3, 4. \tag{13}$$

Risk Measures. Another piece of information we need to describe is the risk measure (\mathbb{F}_i) for each stage. We shall use a convex combination of the Expectation, and Average Value at Risk measures as proposed by [23] and [20]:

$$\mathbb{F}[X] = \lambda \,\mathbb{E}[X] + (1 - \lambda) \text{AVaR}_{1-\beta}[X]. \tag{14}$$

As the values of λ and β increase, the measure becomes less risk-averse³.

To introduce risk into the Asset Management problem, we choose to make the risk measure associated with stages today, Year 5, and Horizon the Expectation operator. However, in Year 10, we use Eq. (14) with the values $\lambda = 0.5$ and $\beta = 0.5$.

Lower bound. Lastly, we need to give a bound on the value of Eq. 1. Although not necessary from a theoretical point of view, providing such a bound simplifies the practical implementation of the algorithm. If the user is unsure of a bound, we recommend choosing some large negative (if minimizing) value and running the SDDP algorithm for a number of iterations. If the problem converges to a value close to the bound set by the user, we suggest increasing the initial bound by an order of magnitude and resolving. The best-case outcome of the asset management problem would be to end assets worth much greater than \$80. To be safe, we assume a bound of -\$1000 which is well in excess of the potential profit over the time horizon.

We have now described all the information necessary to implement the model in SDDP.jl. In the next section, we introduce the user interface of SDDP.jl, and implement the Asset Management example.

³This differs from other authors (i.e. [20]) who prefer the $(1 - \lambda)$ on the expectation operator.

3. Communicating the Problem to the Solver

In the previous section, we formulated the Asset Management example as a multistage linear stochastic optimization problem. This was done by decomposing the problem into a collection of sub-problems that could be described as linear programs, along with some meta information (i.e.e the transition matrices) about how the stages were inter-related. This design decision greatly simplifies the challenge of communicating the stochastic optimization problem to the solver as we can leverage other work on communicating linear subproblems. For that, we turn to JuMP.

JuMP [2] is a algebraic modelling language for mathematical optimization in the Julia programming language [24]. JuMP supports a wide range of problem classes including linear, mixed-integer, quadratic, conic-quadratic and non-linear. In particular, a large effort has been placed on abstracting multiple steps in the typical optimization modelling process in a way that is open to extension by third parties. This has allowed us to create a SDDP modelling library that builds on the functionality of both JuMP and Julia. The expressiveness of JuMP's modelling syntax is available to the user with minimal implementation effort, while Julia's multiple dispatch, parallelism and macro-programming features enable a performant yet flexible implementation of the SDDP algorithm.

We now describe many features of the user interface of SDDP.jl by walking through the Asset Management example. As a note to the reader, lines of code are given as verbatim text. Commands to be entered into the Julia REPL are prefixed with julia>. Lines of code for the Asset Management example are enclosed in a framed box. The entire text file can be run by calling:

```
julia> include("path/to/text/file")
```

To begin, we need to install the latest version of SDDP. jl (this requires Julia 0.5 or later):

```
julia> Pkg.clone("https://github.com/odow/SDDP.jl")
```

If not already installed, this will also install JuMP and the COIN-OR solver Clp. At the top of our model file, we load the relevant packages⁴:

```
using JuMP, SDDP, Clp
```

3.1. Initializing the model

The most important constructor in the SDDP. jl library is the following:

⁴Users are free to use any of the other solvers in the JuliaOpt ecosystem that support MathProgBase instead of Clp.

This command constructs a new SDDPModel object and attaches it to the variable m. Of note to the reader, we highlight the SDDPModel() do ... end syntax with three arguments after the do keyword. The first is a pointer to a new JuMP model for each subproblem. This can be named anything by the user, but we recommend standardizing upon sp. The second is an integer counter that will take the values 1, 2, ... T, where T is the number of stages in the model. The third is an integer counter that will take the values 1, 2, ..., M, where M is the number of Markov states in stage t. These three arguments can be arbitrarily named by the user, by we prefer sp, t, and i by convention.

Inside the SDDPModel() constructor, we must provide a number of keyword arguments. These are:

- 1. sense: must be : Max or : Min (defaults to : Min);
- 2. stages: an Int that describes the number of stages;
- 3. solver: a MathProgBase compatible solver (i.e. ClpSolver());
- 4. objective_bound: a bound on the optimal objective of the first stage problem;
- markov_transition: a vector of Markov transition matrices with one entry for each stage. If this is not specified, it is assumed that there is only one Markov state in each stage;
- 6. risk_measure: an AbstractRiskMeasure defined by the SDDP.jl library. If this is not specified it defaults to the expectation operator (Expectation()).

Risk Measures. Two risk measures are currently implemented in the SDDP.jl library: Expectation, and a convex combination of Expectation and Average Value @ Risk (Ex. 14) using the "change of probabilities" approach of [25]. The Average Value @ Risk risk measure can be constructed with the constructor:

```
julia> NestedAVaR(;lambda=1.0, beta=1.0)
```

The expectation operator is simply Expectation(). Risk measures for a stage are set using the risk_measure keyword in the SDDPModel constructor. If a single risk measure is given (i.e. risk_measure = Expectation()), then this measure will be applied to every stage in the problem. Another option is to provide a vector of risk measures. There must be one element for every stage. For example:

```
risk_measure = [ NestedAVaR(lambda=0.5, beta=0.25), Expectation() ]
```

This will apply the i^{th} element of risk_measure to every Markov state in the i^{th} stage. The last option is to provide a vector (one element for each stage) of vectors of risk measures (one for each Markov state in the stage). For example:

```
risk_measure = [
# Stage 1 Markov 1 # Stage 1 Markov 2 #
    [ Expectation(), Expectation() ],
    # ------ Stage 2 Markov 1 ------ ## ------ Stage 2 Markov 2 ------ #
    [ NestedAVaR(lambda=0.5, beta=0.25), NestedAVaR(lambda=0.25, beta=0.3) ]
```

Note that even though the last stage does not have a future cost function associated with it (as it has no children), we still have to specify a risk measure. This is necessary to simplify the implementation of the algorithm.

We can now update our model file with the data for the asset management example:

```
m = SDDPModel(
               sense = :Min,
              stages = 4,
             solver = ClpSolver(),
    objective_bound = -1000,
  markov_transition = [
                 [1.0],
                 [0.5 \ 0.5],
                 [0.5 \ 0.5; \ 0.5 \ 0.5],
                 [0.5 0.5; 0.5 0.5]
            ],
       risk_measure = [
            Expectation(),
            Expectation(),
            NestedAVaR(lambda=0.5, beta=0.5),
            Expectation()
        ],
                     ) do sp, t, i
    # ... sub-problem definition will go here ...
end
```

Let us now turn out attention to the definition of the sub-problems. As we mentioned earlier, we seek to describe each subproblem (Eq. 5) as a JuMP model (the sp in the constructor). Where possible, we have utilized the JuMP tooling directly. However, some modifications were necessary (for instance, to create state variables). In the next few sub-sections, we step through the process of representing the stage problem by a JuMP model. However, before we begin, we define some data that will be used later. These vectors correspond to the returns ω_s and ω_b in the Low Return and High Return Markov states:

```
ws = [1.06, 1.25]
wb = [1.12, 1.14]
```

We now describe how to create state variables in SDDP.jl.

3.2. State Variables

State variables are created using the @state macro. It takes three arguments. The first is the variable pointing to the JuMP model in the do sp, t, i part of the model constructor (i.e. sp). The second is a definition of the outgoing state variable (i.e. x_t), and the third is the definition of the incoming state variable (i.e. \bar{x}_t). The outgoing state variable permits any valid JuMP syntax that could be used to construct a variable via @variable. For example:

```
@state(sp, x >= 0, ... still to describe ...)
@state(sp, i <= x[i=1:3] <= 2i, ... still to describe ...)</pre>
```

The third argument contains syntax specific to SDDP.jl. It must be of the form [variablename] == [initial value in the root node]. This will create a new JuMP variable with the same index sets as the outgoing state variable. In addition, the initial value can use the elements in the index set in its definition. For example:

```
@state(sp, x >= 0, xbar == 0.0)
@state(sp, i <= x[i=1:3] <= 2i, xbar == i - 0.5)</pre>
```

We now construct the state variables of the Asset Management example:

```
@state(sp, xs >= 0, xsbar == 0.0)
@state(sp, xb >= 0, xbbar == 0.0)
```

Just as JuMP has a plural form of many of its macros (i.e. @variables), there is an @states macro. Its syntax will be familiar to users of JuMP:

```
@states(sp, begin
    x >= 0, xbar == 0.0
    i <= y[i=1:3] <= 2i, ybar == i - 0.5
end)</pre>
```

3.3. Control Variables

Control variables can be added as normal JuMP variables (using the @variable macro). In the formulation of the Asset Management example, there are two control variable (u and v) in the final stage. These should not be added to the first three stages. This can be accomplished by using an if statement on the stage counter t (from the do sp, t, i line). For example:

```
if t == 4
    @variable(sp, u >= 0)
    @variable(sp, v >= 0)
end
```

3.4. Transition Function and Feasibility Sets

The transition constraints (\mathcal{T}_i) and feasibility sets of the controls (\mathcal{U}_i) and state (X_i) can be implemented as normal JuMP constraints. However, if they depend on the realization of the stage-wise noise, we need to use the @rhsnoise macro instead the @constraint macro.

Important: the stage-wise independent noise must occur in the RHS of the constraint. It cannot be used in the constraint matrix (i.e. as a coefficient to a variable).

The @rhsnoise macro takes three arguments. The first is the subproblem variable (i.e. sp). The second has the form keyword = [list of values]. The third is any valid JuMP constraint that incorporates the keyword in the definition. For example:

```
w = [0.5, 1.0]
@rhsnoise(sp, i=w, x <= i)
@rhsnoise(sp, i=1:2, x <= w[i])</pre>
```

The probability of each scenario can be set with

```
setnoiseprobability!(sp, [ ... probabilities ... ])
```

The remainder of the transition function and feasibility sets that do not rely on the stage-wise independent noise can be set using the @constraint macro. We now give the definitions for the Asset Management example:

```
if t == 1
    @constraint(sp, xs + xb == 55 + xsbar + xbbar)
elseif t == 2 || t == 3
    @rhsnoise(sp, phi=[-1, 5], ws[i] * xsbar +
        wb[i] * xbbar + phi == xs + xb)
    setnoiseprobability!(sp, [0.6, 0.4])
else # t == 4
    @constraint(sp, ws[i] * xsbar + wb[i] * xbbar + u - v == 80)
end
```

Within a stage problem, there can be multiple constraints that depend on the realization of the stage-wise independent variable. These can be created by multiple @rhsnoise lines, or by the @rhsnoises macro (described below). If multiple @rhsnoise macros are used, the user must ensure that the number of elements in the vector of the second argument is the same for each call. For example, the following is valid:

```
@rhsnoise(sp, w=[1,2], x >= w)
@rhsnoise(sp, w=[3,4], x <= w)
but the following is invalid:</pre>
```

```
Orhsnoise(sp, w=[1,2], x \ge w)
Orhsnoise(sp, w=[3,4,5], x \le w)
```

The use of the @rhsnoises macro is very similar to other plural versions of the JuMP macros (such as @constraints). In contrast to the @rhsnoise macro, the third argument is a begin ... end block with one constraint per line.

```
@rhsnoises(sp, i=[1,2], begin
    x >= i
    x <= i + 2
end)</pre>
```

Performance Tip: order the realizations of the random variable from most-probable to least-probable. (i.e. setnoiseprobability!(sp, [0.6, 0.4]) instead of setnoiseprobability!(sp, [0.4, 0.6]).)

3.5. Objective Function

All that remains is to specify the stage-objective function (i.e. C_i) for each stage. In contrast to JuMP, this is done with the <code>@stageobjective!</code> macro. There are two versions of the <code>@stageobjective!</code> macro. The first should be used when the stage-objective function does not depend on the realization of the random variable. It takes two arguments. The first is the

JuMP subproblem (sp). The second is any valid JuMP expression that could be used in the third argument of the JuMP macro @objective (i.e. the objective expression).

The other version of the @stageobjective! macro takes three arguments and should be used when the stage-objective function *does* depend on the realization of the random variable. This functions very similarly to the @rhsnoise macro. The second argument should be of the form keyword = [list of values]. If the @rhsnoise macro is also used in the subproblem, then there should be the same number of realizations in the objective as there are realizations in the right-hand-side random variable. The two noises will be sampled in unison, so that when the first element of the RHS noise is sampled, so to will the first element of the objective noise. If the two random variables should be sampled independently, the user should form the Cartesian product of the two random variables. The noises are sampled using the probability distribution set by the setnoiseprobability! function. The objective functions for the Asset Management problem are:

```
if t == 1
    @stageobjective!(sp, 0.0)
elseif t == 2 || t == 3
    @stageobjective!(sp, psi = [0.0, 0.02], -psi * xs)
else # t == 4
    @stageobjective!(sp, 4u - v)
end
```

We have now finished communicating the model to SDDP.jl. The full code for the model is given in Appendix A.

4. Efficient Computational Solution of the Problem

Of the four basic steps in the mathematical optimization process, the efficient computational solution of the problem has received the most attention from the academic community. In this section, we highlight some of the features from the literature that have been included in SDDP.jl. It does not represent a complete state-of-the-art solution. One reason for this is the quantity and complexity of ideas that have been proposed presents a formidable challenge for a single author to implement. However, we hope to slowly build out the capability of SDDP.jl over time to incorporate as many of the state-of-the-art features as possible.

The basic call to solve the SDDP model m is

```
status = solve(m; kwargs...)
```

The status describes how the algorithm was terminated. There are many keyword arguments that can be used to modify the solution process. In the following sections, we describe some of the important ones.

4.1. Termination Criteria

One question that is unresolved in the literature is the best way to terminate the SDDP algorithm. In SDDP. jl, we provide four different methods.

1. Iteration Limit: the algorithm terminates after a set number of iterations. This can be set with the iteration_limit::Int keyword in the solve command;

- 2. Time Limit: the algorithm terminates after a set number of seconds. This can be set with the time_limit::Float64 keyword in the solve command;
- 3. Statistical convergence check: the algorithm terminates when the lower bound is within a confidence interval estimate for the upper bound (if minimizing). In particular, we implement the sequential sampling test of [26]. Briefly, the algorithm works as follows: after a number of iterations, a small number of Monte-Carlo simulations are conducted. With these values, a confidence interval for the estimate of the statistical bound is created. If there is evidence of convergence, more simulations are conducted. If there is no evidence of convergence, performing more simulations will only reduce the variance and further reduce the evidence of convergence. Therefore, we halt our test for convergence and resume the cutting phase of the SDDP algorithm. We control the behaviour of the policy simulation phase of the algorithm using the simulation = MonteCarloSimulation(;kwargs...) constructor. This just groups a series of related keyword arguments. The keywords are
 - frequency::Int the frequency (by iteration) with which to run the policy simulation phase of the algorithm in order to construct a statistical bound for the policy. Defaults 0 (never run).
 - min::Int the minimum number of simulations to conduct before constructing a confidence interval for the bound. Defaults to 20.
 - step::Int the number of additional simulations to conduct before constructing a new confidence interval for the bound. Defaults to 1.
 - max::Int the maximum number of simulations to conduct in the policy simulation phase. Defaults to min.
 - confidence::Float64 Confidence level of the confidence interval. Defaults to '0.95' (95% CI).
 - termination::Bool Whether to terminate the solution algorithm with the status :converged if the deterministic bound is with in the statistical bound after max simulations. Defaults to false.
- 4. Bound Stalling: terminate the algorithm when the deterministic bound fails to improve after a number of iterations (as suggested by [27]). This can be controlled by the bound_convergence = BoundConvergence(;kwargs...) keyword. BoundConvergence has the following keywords:
 - (a) iterations::Int terminate if the maximum deviation in the deterministic bound from the mean over the last iterations number of iterations is less than rtol (in relative terms) or atol (in absolute terms).
 - (b) ${\tt rtol::Float64}$ maximum allowed relative deviation from the mean. Defaults to '0.0'
 - (c) atol::Float64 maximum allowed absolute deviation from the mean. Defaults to '0.0'

Performance Tip: we prefer to set a maximum number of iterations and a time limit, rather than some other test of convergence.

4.2. Cut Oracles

As the SDDP algorithm progresses, many cuts (typically thousands) are added to each subproblem. This increases the computational effort required to solve each subproblem (a real-world model may begin with subproblems with tens of variables and constraints, only to add 5000 constraints!). In addition, many of the cuts created early in the solution process may be redundant once additional cuts are added. This issue has spurred a vein of research (see [28, 29, 30, 31]) into heuristics for choosing cuts to keep or remove (henceforth called "cut selection"). To facilitate the development of such heuristics, SDDP.jl features the concept of a *cut oracle* associated with each subproblem. A cut oracle has two jobs: it should store the complete list of cuts created for that subproblem; and when asked, it should provide a subset of those cuts to retain in the subproblem. This can be done by defining a new sub-type of the abstract type AbstractCutOracle (defined in SDDP.jl), and then overloading two methods: storecut!, and validcuts. To illustrate this feature, we now give the code that implements the default behaviour of SDDP.jl (no cut selection):

```
immutable DefaultCutOracle <: AbstractCutOracle
    cuts::Vector{Cut}
end
DefaultCutOracle() = DefaultCutOracle(Cut[])

# add the cut to the oracle
function storecut!(o::DefaultCutOracle, m::SDDPModel, sp::JuMP.Model, c::Cut)
    push!(o.cuts, c)
end

# return all cuts to the user
function validcuts(o::DefaultCutOracle)
    return o.cuts
end</pre>
```

By creating a new type that is a sub-type of AbstractCutOracle, users can leverage Julia's multiple dispatch mechanisms to easily integrate new functionality into the library without having to dive into the internals. At present, only the default (described above), and Level-One [28] cut selection methods have been implemented. The Level-One cut selection oracle can be created as follows:

```
julia> cut_oracle = DematosCutOracle()
```

Cut oracles can be added to the model with the cut_oracle keyword in the SDDPModel constructor (see Section 3.1).⁵ For example:

```
m = SDDPModel(
    # ... other keyword arguments ...
    cut_oracle = DematosCutOracle()
```

⁵Readers may argue that a cut oracle belongs to the solution process rather than the model object. However this design is necessary to satisfy some of Julia's quirks regarding type stability.

```
) do sp, t, i $\# ... sub-problem definition will go here ...
```

Due to the design of JuMP, we are unable to delete cuts from the model⁶. Therefore, selecting a subset of cuts involves rebuilding the subproblems from scratch. The user can control the frequency by which the cuts are selected and the subproblems rebuilt with the cut_selection_frequency::Int keyword argument to solve. Frequent cut selection (i.e. when cut_selection_frequency is small) reduces the size of the subproblems that are solved, but incurs the overhead of rebuilding the subproblems. However, infrequent cut selection (i.e. when cut_selection_frequency is large) allows the subproblems to grow large (by adding many constraints) leading to an increase in the solve time of individual subproblems. Ultimately, this will be a model specific trade off.

Performance Tip: As a rule of thumb, simpler (i.e. few variables and constraints) models benefit from more frequent cut selection compared to complicated (i.e. many variables and constraints) models.

4.3. Risk Measures

end

In the last five years, significant efforts have been made to incorporate risk in to the SDDP algorithm [23, 20, 32, 25, 33, 34]. In SDDP.jl, we use the "change-of-probability" approach of [25]. They use the result of [35] to show how, for random variable Z with a finite number of realizations $\{Z(\omega): \omega \sim \Omega\}$ where Ω is a finite discrete distribution with probability $p_{\omega} = \mathbb{P}(\Omega = \omega)$, a coherent risk measure \mathbb{F} can be expressed as

$$\mathbb{F}_{\omega \in \Omega}[Z] = \sum_{\omega \in \Omega} p_{\omega} \times \xi_{\omega}^{\mathbb{F}} \times Z(\omega), \tag{15}$$

where $\xi_{\omega}^{\mathbb{F}} \in \mathbb{R}^+$ and meets some technical assumptions. If we replace $p_{\omega} \times \xi_{\omega}^{\mathbb{F}}$ with \hat{p} , we see this corresponds to taking the expectation of the same realizations of the random variable with respect to a "changed" probability distribution. Therefore, a "change-of-probabilty" risk measure is a function that takes the realizations of the random variable Z and the original probabilities p_{ω} , and returns the risk-adjusted distribution \hat{p} . For example, the worst-case risk measure is

$$\hat{p}_{\omega} = \begin{cases} 1, \ \omega = \arg\min_{\omega \in \Omega} \{Z(\omega)\} \\ 0, \ otherwise. \end{cases}$$
 (16)

As we described in Section 3.1, two risk measures have been implemented in the SDDP.jl library: Expectation, and a convex combination of AV@R and Expectation. However, similarly to the *cut oracle* design, SDDP.jl allows a core function (modifyprobability!) to be overloaded to allow the development and testing of new risk measures (for a real-world example of this, see [36]). modfiyprobability! takes a number of arguments. The first is an instance of the risk measure. The second is a vector of Float64 corresponding to the risk-adjusted probability (according to the "change-of-probability" approach of [25]) of each scenario. This should be modified in-place by the function. The third argument is a vector of the un-adjusted probabilities (i.e. the original probability distribution). The fourth argument is a vector of objective

⁶This may be rectified in future re-writes of JuMP.

values (one for each scenario i.e. for all $j \in i^+; \omega_j \in \Omega_j$). The fifth and sixth arguments are the SDDPModel and JuMP subproblems to allow for other risk-measures that require additional information.

To illustrate this feature, we give the code necessary to create the worst-case risk measure⁷. The worst-case risk measure places all of the probability on the scenario with the greatest objective value (if minimizing), or the smallest objective value (if maximizing):

After defining this code, the user could use risk_measure = WorstCase() in their definition of the SDDPModel object as if it were a risk measure defined in SDDP. jl. This highlights one of the core benefits of building a SDDP framework in Julia: that the underlying library can easily be extended by the user without modifying the library itself.

4.4. Parallelization

The SDDP algorithm is highly parallelizable. This observation dates back to [8] who noted that the process could be conducted asyncronously, with performing iterations independently, and sharing cuts periodically. Different authors [37, 38] have proposed different methods for efficiently parallelizing the algorithm. However, we choose an approach that minimizes interprocess communication.

In our implementation, one processor is designated the "master" process, and the remainder are designated as "slaves". Each slave receives a full copy of the SDDP model and is set to work performing cutting iterations. At the end of each iteration, the slave passes the master the cuts it discovered during the iteration, and receives any new cuts discovered by other slaves. The slave also queries the master as to whether it should terminate, perform another cutting iteration, or perform a simulation. If the master requests a simulation (for example, in order to calculate a confidence interval in order to test for convergence), the slave returns the objective value of the simulation rather than a new set of cuts.

⁷This risk measure is not yet implemented in SDDP.jl. However, it would make a great start for a reader who would like to begin contributing to the project at https://github.com/odow/SDDP.jl.

This functionality can be controlled by the solve_type keyword. For example, solve_type=Serial() will solve the problem utilizing one processor. However, setting solve_type=Asyncronous() will utilize all of the processors available to Julia.

Performance Tip: typically, you should start Julia with the same number of processors as you have cores. For example, on a typical 8-core workstation with 16Gb of RAM, we find starting Julia with julia -p 8 works the best.

4.5. Logging

During the solution process, SDDP.jl outputs some logging information (an example of this is given in Appendix Appendix B). We briefly describe the columns:

- Objective Simulation: If this consists of one value, it is the objective value of the forward simulation. If it is a pair, it correspond to the confidence interval estimate as a result of a simulation phase;
- Objective Bound: is the deterministic bound of the problem (lower if minimizing, upper if maximizing);
- Objective % Gap: the relative percentage gap between the closest edge of the confidence interval and the deterministic bound (i.e. if minimizing: ([CIlower]-lowerbound)/lowerbound);
- Cut Passes #: the number of iterations (one forward pass, one backward pass) conducted;
- Cut Passes Time: the number seconds spent iterating to discover cuts;
- Simulations #: the number of forward passes conducted in order to estimate the upper (if minimizing, otherwise lower) bound;
- Simulations Time: the number of seconds spent conducting forward passes in order to estimate the upper (if minimizing, otherwise lower) bound;
- Total Time: total time (in seconds) of the solution process (including initialization).

Logging can be turned off by setting print_level to 0. It can also be written to the file specified by the log_file keyword.

4.6. Other extensions

One core goal of Dunning et al. [18] in designing JuMP was to make it extensible [18]. Therefore, JuMP contains functionality for injecting user-code into many of the points in the solution process. By building on-top-of JuMP and Julia, we have leveraged these features to allow other authors to implement features on-top-of SDDP.jl that seamlessly integrate into the existing infrastructure. The first such example of this is the Julia Package SDDiP.jl [39] which implements the method of [22] to solve stochastic integer programs. We believe this modularity and extensibility of the SDDP.jl framework is a rich starting point for future researchers to build upon.

5. Communicating the Solution to the User

The last step in solving a mathematical optimization problem is communicating the solution back to the user. In deterministic problems, this means some comment about the solver termination status (did it succeed or fail? If it failed, why?), the primal solution (feasibility etc., and the value of each of the variables, and maybe constraints in the solution), and if applicable, the dual solution. This can be compactly communicated to the user (the primal solution just requires a vector with one element for every variable).

In stochastic problems, the solution to the optimization problem isn't one solution vector, but a *policy*. That policy is a function that, for every stage, maps an incoming state variable and observation of the stage-wise independent noise to a feasible action. As such, communicating the policy to the user is much more difficult.

Status. The call to solve (m, ...) returns a symbol describing the termination status of the algorithm. It is one of:

- 1. :solving: if the solution process has not finished;
- :interrupted: if the user halts the solution process by throwing an InterruptException (i.e. by calling CRTL+C);
- 3. :converged: if the deterministic bound is within the confidence interval of the statistical bound;
- 4. :max_iterations: if the maximum number of iterations has been exceeded;
- 5. :bound_convergence: if the deterministic bound has stalled;
- 6. :time_limit: if the time spent solving exceeds the limit.

Objective Bound. The user can query the objective bound (i.e. the best known bound for Eq. 1) of a solved SDDPModel with the getbound function. For example:

```
julia > getbound(m)
```

Policy Simulation: Monte-Carlo. One way of evaluating the policy is to simulate it's performance via Monte-Carlo simulation. This can be done using the simulate function. simulate takes three arguments: the first is the SDDPModel m; the second is the number of independent Monte-Carlo simulations to perform; the third is a vector of symbols that correspond to variables in the JuMP subproblems. For example:

```
julia> results=simulate(m::SDDPPModel, N::Int, variables::Vector{Symbol})
```

results is a vector containing one dictionary for each simulation (indexed as results [simulation index]). In addition to the variables specified in the function call, other special keys are:

- 1. :stageobjective: costs incurred during the stage (not future);
- 2. : obj : objective of the stage including future cost;
- 3. :markov : index of Markov state visited;
- 4. :noise: index of noise visited;
- 5. : objective : total objective of simulation.

All values can be accessed as follows:

```
julia> results[simulation index][key][stage]
```

with the exception of ':objective' which is just:

```
julia> results[simulation index][:objective]
```

For example, the following code will perform 100 Monte-Carlo simulations, and store the value of the JuMP variables x and u in every stage:

```
julia> results = simulate(m, 10, [:x, :u])
```

We can access the value of the variable x in the third stage of the second simulation by:

```
julia> results[2][:x][3]
```

We could also calculate the mean objective of the policy across the simulations by:

```
julia> mean(r[:objective] for r in results)
```

Policy Simulation: Historic. Another option is to simulate the policy along one particular trajectory. This can be conducted using a variation on the simulate function with two keyword arguments: noises and markovstates. noises is a vector of integers with one element for each stage giving the index of the (in-sample) stage-wise independent noise to sample in each stage. markovstates is a vector of integers with one element for each stage giving the index of the (in-sample) Markov state to sample in each stage. For example:

To simulate out-of-sample outcomes (i.e. realizations of the stage-wise independent random variables that were not used to build the policy) the user has two options:

- 1. include the out-of-sample outcomes in the initialization of the model but use setnoiseprobability! to set their probability to 0.0;
- 2. save the cuts to file, build a new SDDPModel with the new realizations, load the cuts from file, then simulate.

Although the first option incurs some overhead during the solution process, this can be minimized by ensuring that the out-of-sample outcomes are collected at the end of the noise vectors. For the Asset Management example, we perform 100 Monte-Carlo simulations of the policy:

```
results = simulate(m, 100, [:xs, :xb])
```

Simulation Visualization. Now that we have simulated the policy, we need to interpret the results. This can be done by plotting the trajectories of each state and action over time. To begin, we initialize a new plotting object:

```
julia> p = SDDP.newplot()
```

Next, we can add plots to this object using the SDDP.addplot! method:

This will add a new figure to the SimulationPlot p, where the y-value is given by f(i,t) for all i in I (one for each series) and t in T (one for each stage). There are a number of keyword arguments that can be used to modify the plots. They are:

- 1. xlabel: set the xaxis label;
- 2. ylabel: set the yaxis label;
- 3. title: set the title of the plot;
- 4. ymin: set the minimum y value;
- 5. ymax: set the maximum y value;
- 6. cumulative: plot the additive accumulation of the value across the stages;
- 7. interpolate: interpolation method for lines between stages. Defaults to "linear". See the d3 documentation at https://github.com/d3/d3-3.x-api-reference/blob/master/SVG-Shapes.md#line_interpolate for all options.

Finally, we can open a browser window and render the final interactive Javascript plot with:

```
julia> show(p)
```

Therefore, the code to visualize the policy of the Asset Management example is:

```
p = SDDP.newplot()
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:1000, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:stageobjective][t],
    title="Objective", ylabel="Profit (\$)", cumulative=true)
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:1000, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:xs][t],
    title="Stocks")
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:1000, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:xb][t],
    title="Bonds")
show(p)
```

Value Function Visualization. Plot the value function of stage stage and Markov state markov state in the SDDPModel m at the points in the discretized state space given by states. If the value in states is a real number, the state is evaluated at that point. If the value is a vector, the state is evaluated at all the points in the vector. At most two states can be vectors.

```
SDDP.plotvaluefunction(m, 3, 1, 0.0:2.0:100, 0.0:2.0:100,
    label1 = "Stocks",
    label2="Bonds"
)
```

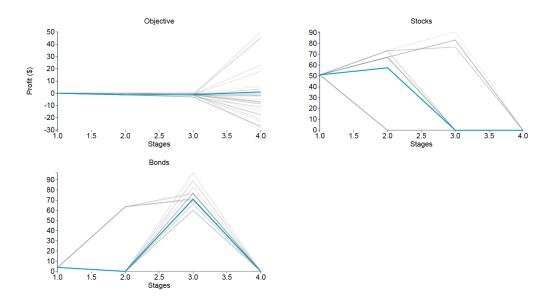


Figure 3: Policy Simulation of the Asset Management Example

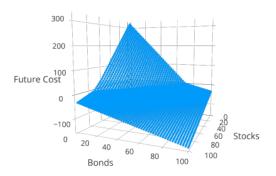


Figure 4: First Stage Value Function of the Asset Management Example

6. Conclusion

This paper describes SDDP.jl, a Julia package for Stochastic Dual Dynamic Programming. We believe the unique features of SDDP.jl (that it is written entirely in a high-level language and built upon the state-of-the-art mathematical optimization library JuMP) provide an excellent platform upon which to build and test, new improvements and extensions, to the SDDP algorithm.

We hope the community will see the value in collaborating on open-source implementations of stochastic programming codes to avoid the duplication of work that has hampered progress in our field.

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Appendix A. Code for Asset Management

```
using SDDP, JuMP, Clp
ws = [1.25, 1.06]
wb = [1.14, 1.12]
m = SDDPModel(
   sense = :Min,
    stages = 4,
    objective_bound = -1000.0,
    solver = ClpSolver(),
    markov_transition = Array{Float64, 2}[
        [1.0],
        [0.5 \ 0.5],
        [0.5 \ 0.5; \ 0.5 \ 0.5],
        [0.5 0.5; 0.5 0.5]
    ],
    risk_measure = [
        Expectation(), Expectation(),
        NestedAVaR(lambda = 0.5, beta=0.5), Expectation()
) do sp, t, i
    @state(sp, xs >= 0, xsbar==0)
    @state(sp, xb >= 0, xbbar==0)
    if t == 1
        @constraint(sp, xs + xb == 55 + xsbar + xbbar)
        Ostageobjective(sp, 0)
    elseif t == 2 \mid \mid t == 3
        Orhsnoise(sp, phi=[-1, 5], ws[i] * xsbar +
            wb[i] * xbbar + phi == xs + xb)
        @stageobjective(sp, psi = [0.02, 0.0], -psi * xs)
        setnoiseprobability!(sp, [0.6, 0.4])
    else
        @variable(sp, u >= 0)
        @variable(sp, v \ge 0)
        @constraint(sp, ws[i] * xsbar + wb[i] * xbbar +
            u - v == 80)
        @stageobjective(sp, 4u - v)
    end
end
status = solve(m,
```

```
max_iterations = 30,
    simulation = MonteCarloSimulation(
        frequency = 5,
       min = 100,
       step = 100,
       max = 500,
       termination = false
   ),
   bound_convergence = BoundConvergence(
       iterations = 5,
       rtol = 0.0,
                 = 0.001
       atol
   log_file="asset.log"
status == :bound_convergence # true
isapprox(getbound(m), -1.278, atol=1e-3) # true
results = simulate(m, 100, [:xs, :xb])
p = SDDP.newplot()
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:100, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:stageobjective][t],
   ylabel="Profit (\$)", cumulative=true)
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:100, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:xs][t],
   ylabel="Stocks")
SDDP.addplot!(p, 1:100, 1:4, (i, t)->results[i][:xb][t],
   ylabel="Bonds")
SDDP.show(p)
```

Appendix B. Output from SDDP.jl

```
SDDP Solver. Oscar Dowson, 2017.

Solver:
Serial solver

Model:
Stages: 4
States: 2
Subproblems: 7
Value Function: Default

Objective | Cut Passes Simulations Total
Simulation Bound % Gap | # Time # Time Time
```

Statis It	tics: erations:	3	0						
7.716	-4.601	-5.570	-38.5 	l 	30	0.1	2.4K	2.0	2.2
-30.	756	-5.570		1	29	0.1	1.9K	1.6	1.8
		s	ome lin	es o	mitted				
-7.782	-4.760	-6.346	-22.6	1	5	0.0	500	0.4	0.4
-10.271		-6.398		1	4	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
4.284		-7.550		1	3	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
-2.172		-7.848		1	2	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
-41.484		-9.722			1	0.0	0	0.0	0.0