

# CubitPython4SPEED Manual

The meshing tool presented here is a modification of GEOCUBIT by Emanuele Casarotti (<https://github.com/casarotti/GEOCUBIT--experimental/tree/master/geocubitlib>). The routines have been modified to be compatible with Python3 and with the latest version of CUBIT. A free non-commercial license for CUBIT can be requested here: <https://coreform.com/products/coreform-cubit/free-meshing-software/>. Furthermore, it has been optimized for running in 1 CPU (GEOCUBIT is focused on parallel runs), and routines for the generation of the *input files* for SPEED are included.

The routines use the Python interface of the meshing software CUBIT. The interface provides an object-oriented structure that allows a developer to manipulate Cubit objects such as volumes, surfaces, etc. It also allows developers to create and manipulate as well as query geometry:

[https://coreform.com/cubit\\_help/cubithelp.htm#t=python%2Fnamespace\\_cubit\\_interface.htm](https://coreform.com/cubit_help/cubithelp.htm#t=python%2Fnamespace_cubit_interface.htm)

Cubit must be included in the Environment variables – System variables – Path, e.g. : C:\Program Files\Coreform Cubit 2022.11\bin (according to your installation).

You should also install Python: <https://www.python.org/downloads/>

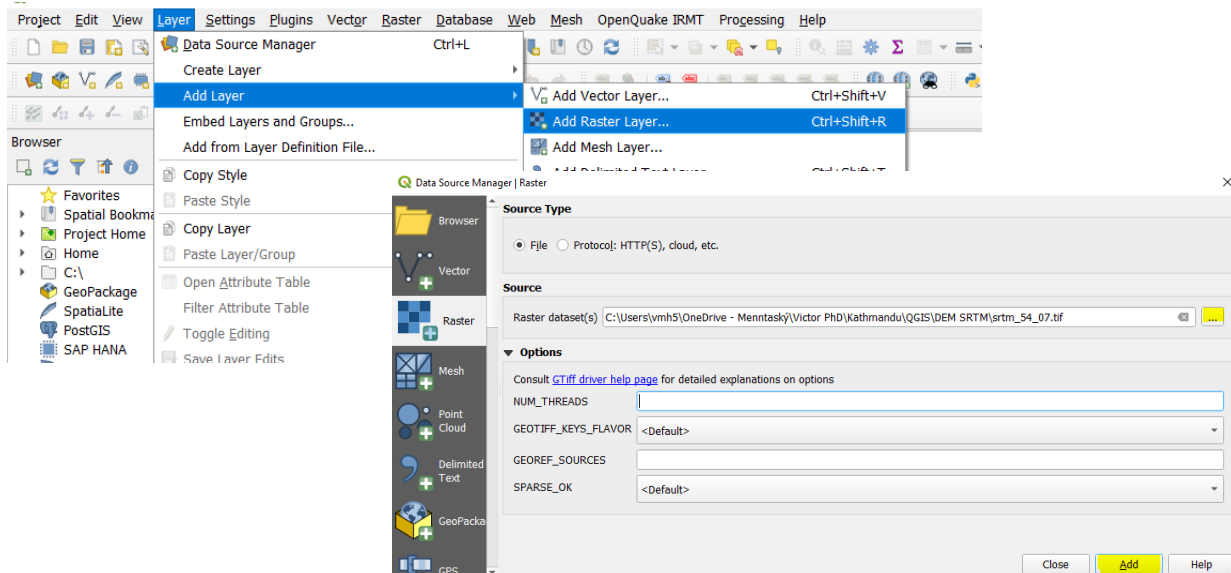
## 1 Topography (DEM)

The first step for setting up the model is to define the topography, if considered. You can download topography data (raster) from the SRTM DEM with 30 m (1 arc sec) resolution in the US and 90 m (3 arc sec) DEM in the rest of the world. It can be accessed from here: <http://srtm.csi.cgiar.org/srtmdata/>

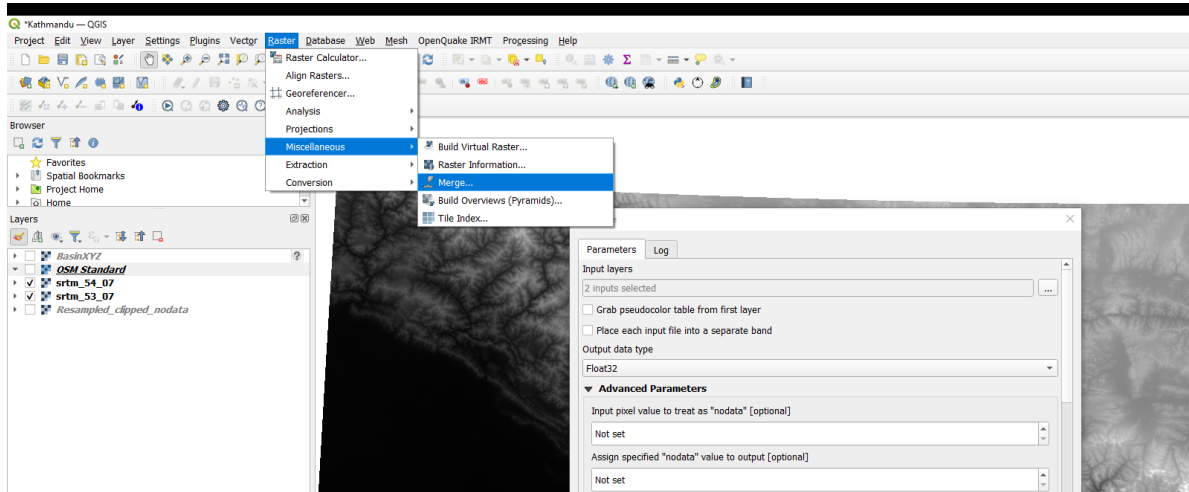
Depending on the country, local agencies might have more detailed models, e.g., (Landmælingar Íslands): <https://atlas.lmi.is/mapview/?application=DEM> for Iceland.

### 1.1 DEM manipulation in QGIS

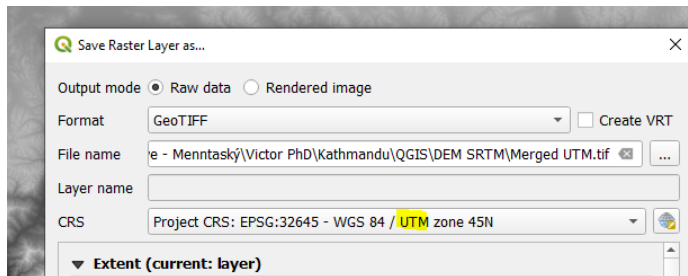
Import the DEM into QGIS: Layer-> Add Layer-> Select file-> Add



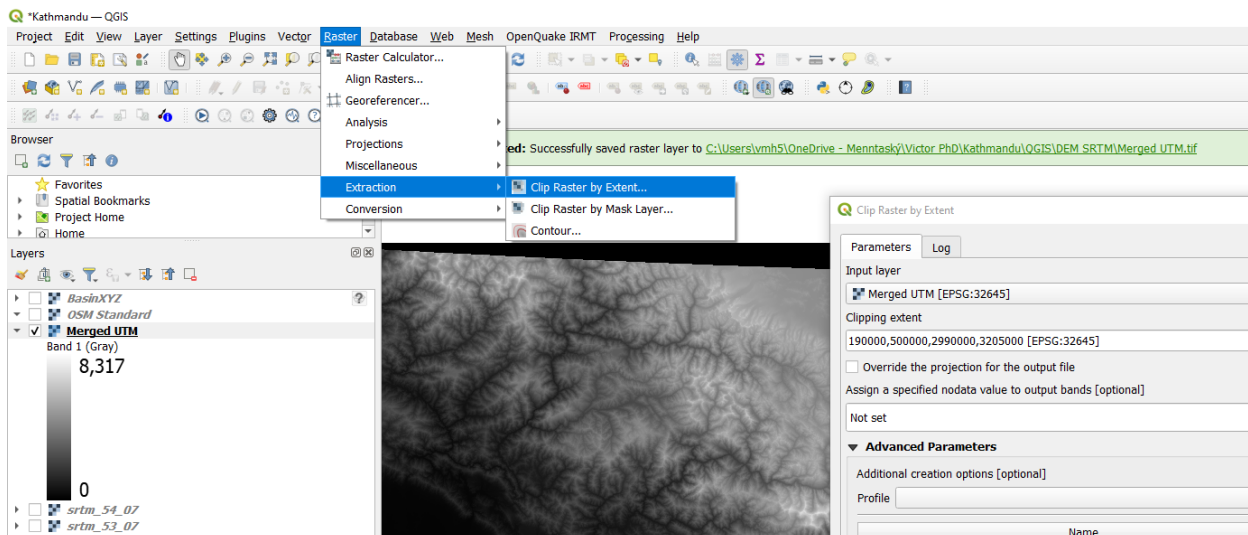
The whole region might be covered by more than one DEM file, in that case you need to merge them: Raster-> Miscellaneous-> Merge-> Select rasters -> Run



DEM from SRTM is in Geographical coordinates, but for SPEED with need projected coordinates (UTM), so you have to change its CRS (coordinate reference system):

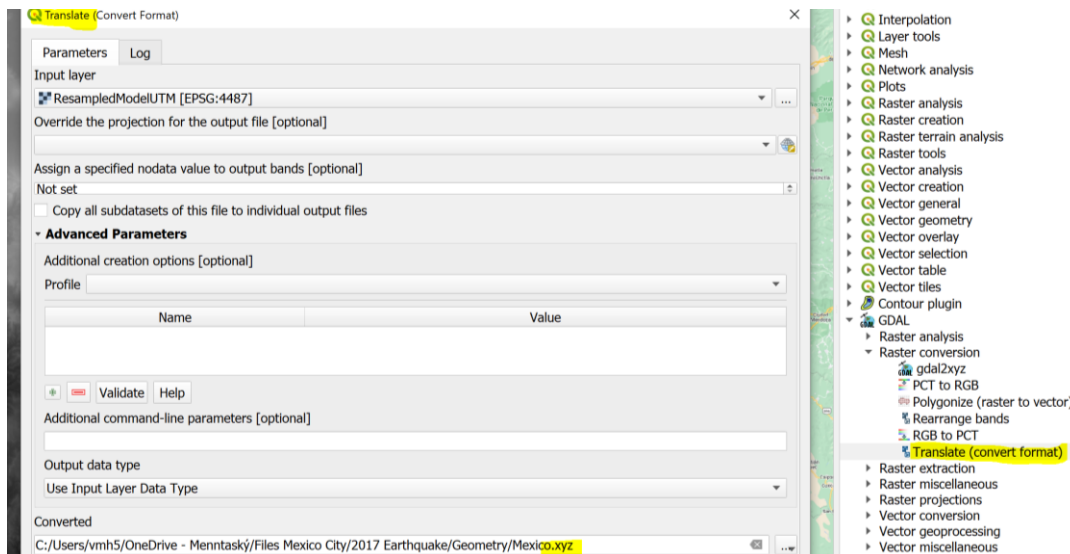


Clip the merged the DEM (take are of interest): Raster-> Extraction-> Clip Raster by Extent-> Select clipping extent -> Run



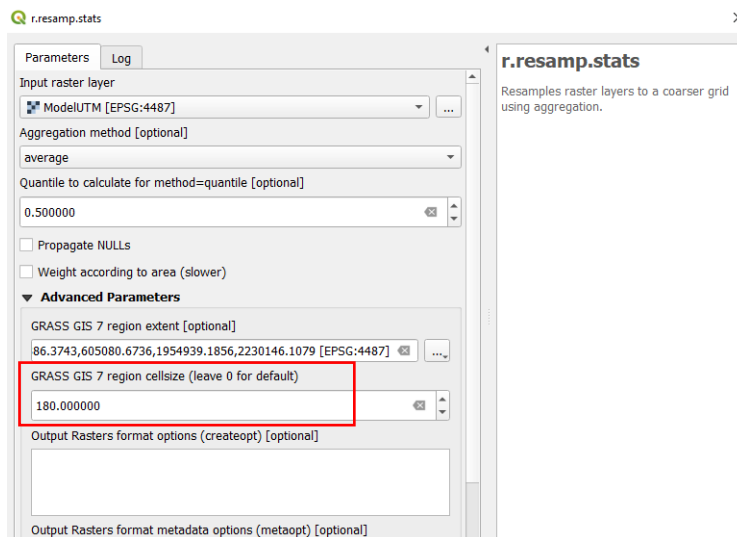
## 1.2 Export XYZ grid

Use the plugin GDAL-> Translate to export as XYZ (points):



No Data: Sometimes pixels of the raster don't have a value (No data), hence they are assigned a very large number in the Z coordinate. You should fix this before exporting, or post-process the output file to change these values.

**NB: If the raster is too big to work with, you might need to reduce its size (resample) with GRASS-> r.resamp.stats (choose a bigger region cellsize):**



## 1.3 Topography file for Cubit

The output from the plugin GDAL is a file \*.xyz that contains the coordinates of the DEM, with one point (3 coordinates, x y and z) per row. It is ordered from West to East and from North to South. For reference, see the topo.dat file in the Files folder.

It is certainly not necessary to use QGIS to create the topography file, but if done somewhere else, it should have the characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph (be an ordered grid).

## 2 CubitPython4SPEED

### 2.1 Configuration (input) file

The configuration `cfg` file has a format similar to `ini` windows files. It is divided in [sections]. There is no order in the position or in the name of the sections. The parameters that control the general options are in the first section, called [cubit.options] and [simulation.cpu\_parameters]. For example (see *TopoExample.cfg* in the Files folder):

[cubit . options]

**cubit\_info =off** turn on/ off the information of the Cubit command

**echo\_info =off** turn on/ off the echo of the Cubit command

**cubit\_info =off** turn on/ off the Cubit journaling

**jou\_info =off** turn on/ off the Cubit journaling

**working\_dir =tmp** set the working directory

**output\_dir = output** set the output directory

**geometry = True** true for building the geometry (volumes)

**onlysurface = True** for creating just the top surface (topography)

**meshing = True** true if it meshes the geometry

**merging = True** true if it merges the meshed the geometry. By default, the routine creates vertical chunks that are disconnected from the rest of the chunks.

**export\_mesh = False** true if it saves the mesh file in SPEED format.

**disassociate = True** true if after meshing each chunk it disassociates the mesh from the volumes and deletes the volumes. THIS SAVES A LOT OF RAM!

[simulation . cpu\_parameters]

**number\_chunks\_xi = 2** number of chunks in the X direction

**number\_chunks\_eta = 2** number of chunks in the Y direction

**start\_chunk\_xi = 0**

**start\_chunk\_eta = 2**

**end\_chunk\_xi = 0**

**end\_chunk\_eta = 2**

The start and end chunk flags allow to work with the same \*.xyz topography file, but use just a part of the domain to create the mesh or a surface mesh (e.g., the XYZ.out mesh covering just the basin area for using the not-honoring technique). By the default the start\_chunk is set to 0, and the end\_chunk equal to number\_chunks.

---

```

[cubit.options]
cubit_info=on
echo_info=on
jou_info=off
jer_info=on
working_dir=tmp
output_dir=output
geometry = True
onlysurface = False
meshing = True
merging = True
disassociate = True
export_mesh = False

[simulation.cpu_parameters]
number_chunks_xi = 2
number_chunks_eta = 2
start_chunk_xi = 0
start_chunk_eta = 0
end_chunk_xi = 2
end_chunk_eta = 2

[geometry.volumes]
volume_type = layercake_from_ascii_regulargrid
latitude_min = 10000
latitude_max = 54000
longitude_min = 5000
longitude_max = 45000
nx = 5
ny = 5
unit = utm
# geo or utm

[geometry.volumes.layercake]
nz = 3
#include the bottom
bottomflat = True
depth_bottom = -10000
filename = Files\topo.dat,
geometry_format=ascii
zlayer = -10000,-6000
volumecreation_method = loft

[meshing]
map_meshing_type=regularmap
iv_interval=2,4
size=2000
or_mesh_scheme=map
ntripl=1
smoothing=False
tripl=3,
curve_refinement = False
curvename=Files/box.sat
curvename2=Files/curve.sat
num_curve_refinement = 2
block_firstlayer = True

```

---

[geometry.volumes]

**latitude/longitude min and max** are the limits of the topography grid file.

**nx** are the number of points in the grid file along the X direction.

**ny** are the number of points in the grid file along the Y direction.

**unit = utm or geo** are the units of the grid file and of the latitude/longitude values given above, utm units are preferred.

**sample\_grid** flag should set to True to resample the input topography file.

**rot\_deg = deg** is the anticlockwise degree of rotation of the domain (negative for clockwise).

[geometry.volumes.layercake]

**nz** is the number of the surfaces in the volume (in this case: topography, one intermediate layer boundary and the bottom).

**bottomflat** is True if the bottom is flat.

**depth\_bottom** is the depth of the bottom of the model.

**filename** is a list of files defining surfaces (in this case there is only the topography file).

**geometry\_format** in this case is set to ascii since the definition of the surfaces comes from ASCII files (structured xyz points).

**zlayer** list with the depths of the interfaces from bottom to top, without including the topography

The [meshing] section contains the parameters requested for the meshing process:

**map\_meshing\_type** sets the meshing scheme and is regularmap by default (other schemes are in preliminary phase).

**iv\_interval** sets the number of "horizontal" hex sheets for each layer. Since  $nz=3$ , we will have 2 layers vertically, so two values must be included here.

**size** is the dimension of the hexahedra (horizontally) **before refinement**.

**or\_mesh\_scheme** is the meshing scheme for the topography (map or pave are possible, see the Cubit manual for more information).

**ntripl** is the number of refinements (tripling) to be done.

**tripl** means in this case that the refinement layer is located at the third surface (the topography). The surfaces are ordered from the bottom (surface 1) to the top (surface 3). Keep in mind that after refinement the size of the hexahedra on top will be approximately  $size/(3 * ntripl)$ .

**smoothing** performs the smoothing command in Cubit.

**block\_firstlayer** optional flag set by default to False. In case it's True, the uppermost sheet of hexahedra will be included in a different block.

When a **local** refinement (basin) is needed, the following lines are included in the input file

**curve\_refinement** True for carrying out the refinement.

**num\_curve\_refinement** is the number of split iterations inside the curve.

**curvename** name of the **closed ACIS curve** inside of which the refinement will be done. This file must be present in the Files folder. The closed curve could be created in Rhino for example, using the polyline command:

```
Command: Polyline
Start of polyline ( PersistentClose=No ): 0,0,0
Next point of polyline ( PersistentClose=No Mode=Line Helpers=No Undo ): 1000,0,0
Next point of polyline. Press Enter when done ( PersistentClose=No Mode=Line Helpers=No Length Undo ): 1000,1000,0
Next point of polyline. Press Enter when done ( PersistentClose=No Close Mode=Line Helpers=No Length Undo ): 0,1000,0
Next point of polyline. Press Enter when done ( PersistentClose=No Close Mode=Line Helpers=No Length Undo ): c
1 closed curve added to selection.
Command: _Export
Saved C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython\Files\Box2.sat.
```

When the `num_curve_refinement` is set to 2, **curvename2** is also needed (it could be the same as `curvename`). `curvename2` should be contained inside `curvename`. In this case the first refinement will be done for the hexahedra inside `curvename`, and a second refinement will be done inside `curvename2`.

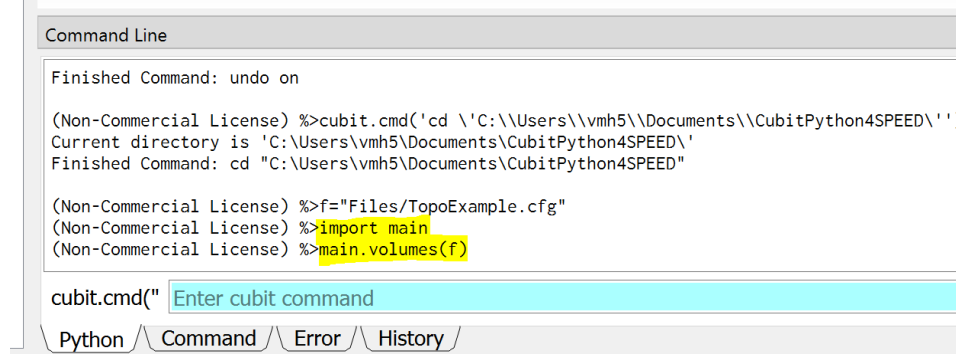
One important observation is that using the flag “disassociate” (RECOMMENDED), the use of RAM is drastically reduced. Disassociate the mesh means to keep just the meshed entities, hexahedral (elements) and quad (faces), without the underlying geometry. When using the flag `merging`, the mesh will always be disassociated, whether you used the flag `disassociate` or not.

### 3 Examples

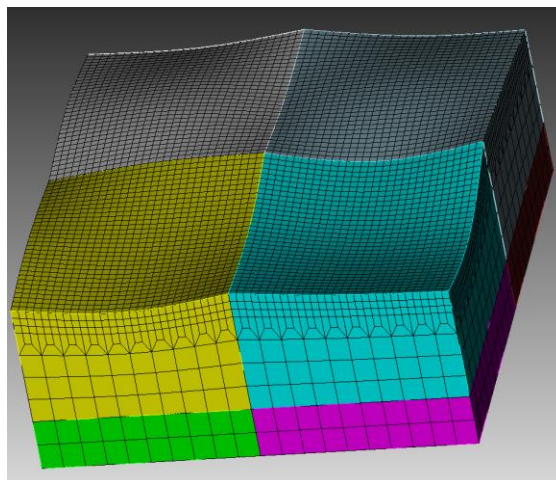
The input file for the first example is *TopoExample.cfg* (available in the Files folder).

The meshing tool can be run directly from the Cubit GUI, you just have to type the following commands in the Python interpreter tab:

```
cubit.cmd('cd \\C:\\Users\\vmh5\\Documents\\CubitPython4SPEED\\') <-location of the python
modules that you downloaded from Github
f="Files/TopoExample.cfg" <-Input file located in the subfolder Files
import main
main.volumes(f) <- run routine volumes from the main module
```



The output file is *vol.cub5*. If the flags `merging` and `disassociate` are deactivated, you should see the following output:





As you can see the domain was divided in 4 vertical chunks, 2 in the X direction and 2 in the Y direction.

When the flag `merging=True`, the output file `vol.cub5` will be a free mesh disassociated from the volumes (whether you used the flag `disassociate` or not) with the same geometry but with the chunks merged (sharing nodes). Then, if you change the `curve_refinement` flag to `TRUE`, you could run from the Cubit GUI (having the `vol.cub5` file open) the `basin_refinement` routine separately:

```

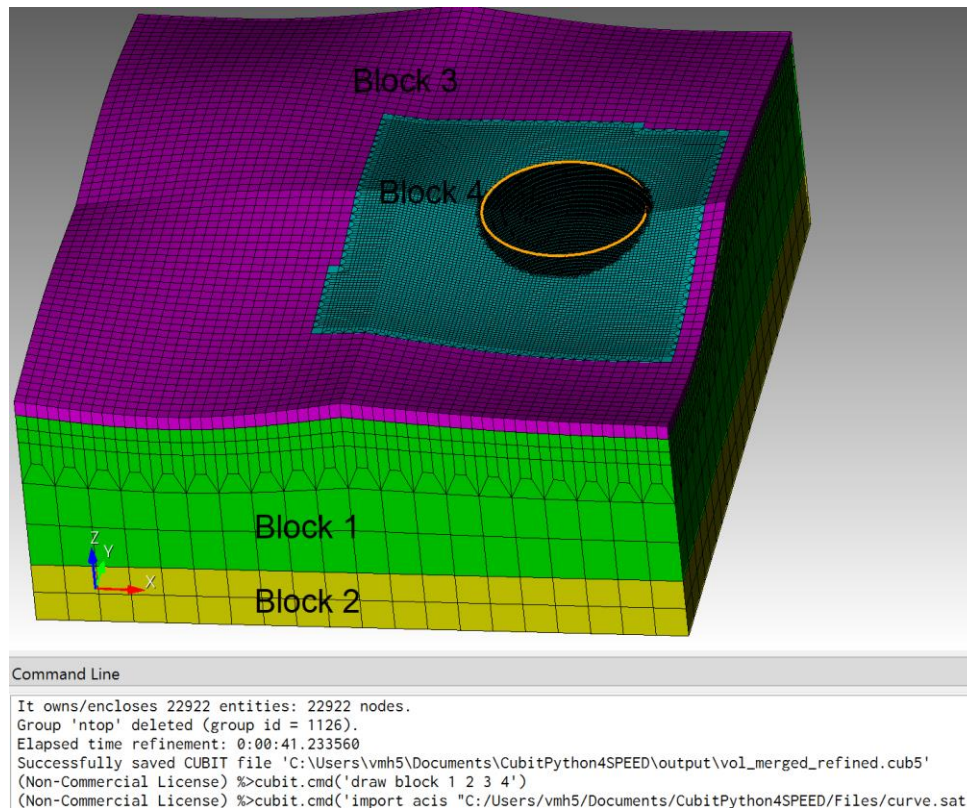
Command Line
Elapsed time geometry and meshing: 0:00:05.046451
Successfully saved CUBIT file 'C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED\output\vol.cub5'
Preserving undo information...done
Total elapsed time: 0:00:06.697363
(Non-Commercial License) %>f="Files\TopoExampleRefinement.cfg"
(Non-Commercial License) %>import main
(Non-Commercial License) %>main.basin_refinement(f)

cubit.cmd(" Enter cubit command

Python / Command / Error / History

```

The resulting file is `vol_merged_refined.cub5`, which is a free mesh with the necessary blocks for SPEED already defined. If you import `Box.sat` and `curve.sat` (the input curves for the refinement), you will see that the local refinement was done for the hexes inside of them.



\*The `curve_refinement` flag can be set to `True` from the beginning.

Blocks 1 to  $n$  represent the different  $n$  horizontal layers. They are numbered from top to bottom. In this case we have 2 since we included 3 interfaces ( $n_z=3$ ). Then, if the flag `block_firstlayer=`



True, the next block (3 in this case) will be the first sheet of hexahedra. Finally, the next block (4 in this case) will contain the hexes that were refined. Usually, the basin will lie inside this last block, so the not-honoring technique should be applied to this block.

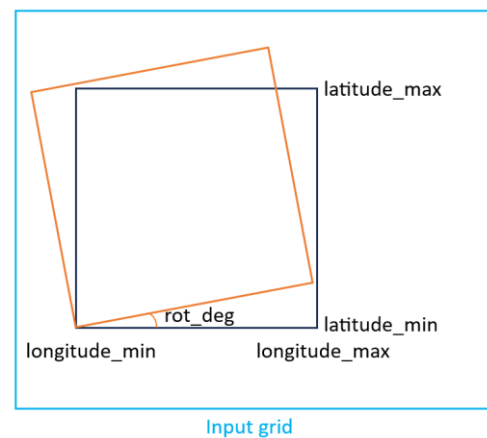
Block 100 includes the external faces for the absorbing boundary conditions.

### Resample \*.xyz grid and rotated domain

While the resampling of the DEM grid can be easily done in QGIS, it could also be done inside CubitPython4SPEED using the flag `sample_grid = True`. When this flag is used, the values latitude/longitude\_min/max refer to the desired model domain (unrotated) and not to the limits of the input topography file. In this case `nx` and `ny` are the number of points wanted to create the resampled topography instead of the number of points in the input grid. The spacing of the resampled topography (i.e. total size/number of points) should be larger than that of the input grid. The resampled grid could also be rotated by an angle defined by `rot_deg` (by default =0).

See `TopoRotated.cfg`.

```
[geometry.volumes]
volume_type.....=layercake_from_ascii_regulargrid
sample_grid = True
rot_deg = 10
latitude_min.....=18000
latitude_max.....= 47000
longitude_min.....= 8000
longitude_max.....= 42000
nx = 7
ny = 7
unit.....= utm
```



### Running from command prompt

This is more efficient and recommended for large meshes. You have to run a script similar to this one (`ExampleRunCubitPython.py`):

```
ExampleRunCubitPython.py 1
C: > Users > vmh5 > Documents > CubitPython4SPEED > ExampleRunCubitPython.py > ...
1 import cubit
2 cubit.init(['cubit', '-nojournal'])
3 cubit.reset()
4
5 cubit.cmd('cd \\C:\\Users\\vmh5\\Documents\\CubitPython4SPEED\\')
6 f="Files\\TopoExample.cfg"
7
8 import main
9 main.volumes(f)
```

The first lines initialize Cubit, and the following lines are the same typed in the GUI. To run the script you simply change the directory to the one where the script is located, and then you run it with the command `python`:

```

C:\Users\vmh5>cd C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED

C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED>python ExampleRunCubitPython.py
[2023-11-03 10:15:46.021] [info] RLM session initialized
Creating new Workspace session
Initializing LLVM
Loading workspace command plugin
Starting volume creation
Start x: 0
Start y: 0
end x: 2
end y: 2
Number of Chunks: 4
comment 'PROC: 0/4 '
NORTH2SOUTH
end of receiving grd files
end of building grid 0
number of point: 25

```

Since the basin refinement is done after disassociation and merging, the refinement doesn't have to follow the smooth ACIS topographic surface, making the operation extremely faster. Each hex is simply split internally.

## Regular mesh

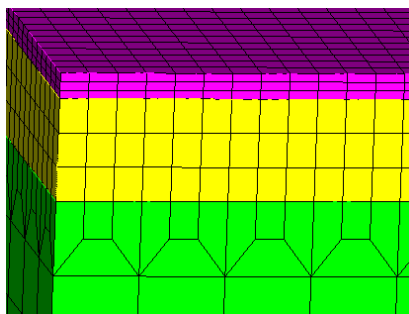
```

[simulation.cpu_parameters]
number_chunks_xi.....=1
number_chunks_eta.....=1
#
[geometry.volumes]
volume_type.....=layercake_from_ascii_regulargrid
latitude_min.....= 0
latitude_max.....= 20000
longitude_min.....= 0
longitude_max.....= 20000
unit.....= utm
# geo or utm

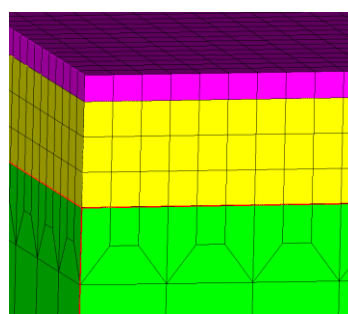
[geometry.volumes.layercake]
nz = 4
#included the bottom
bottomflat = True
depth bottom = -10000
geometry_format=regmesh
zlayer=-10000,-3000,-600,0

[meshing]
map_meshing_type=regularmap
iv_interval=4,1,1
size=2000
or_mesh_scheme=map
ntripl=1
tripl=2,
smoothing=False
coarsening_top_layer= True
actual_vertical_interval_top_layer=1

```



No flag coarsening\_top\_layer



flag coarsening\_top\_layer=True

In the example *RegmeshExample.cfg*, a simple regular mesh for a “box” with flat interfaces is created. The flag for this case is **geometry\_format=regmesh**. There are 3 layers with interfaces at depths defined by *zlayer=-10000,-3000,-600,0*. In this case **zlayer** has the same size of **nz**, because it must include the depth of the uppermost interface. The initial mesh has hexes with horizontal size=2000 (before refinement) and the number of vertical hex sheets are *iv\_interval=4,1,1* for the bottom, middle and top layers, respectively. A refinement layer (*ntripl=1*) is included at *tripl=2* interface (the second from the bottom). Since *iv\_interval* refers to the intervals before refinements, after the refinement is done there will be 3 sheets of hexes in the first layer of 600 m, and the vertical dimensions of these hexes will be 200 m. The flag *coarsening\_top\_layer=True* remeshes the top layer and the number of vertical hex sheet in the vertical is changed by *actual\_vertical\_interval\_top\_layer* (=1 in this case).

For these simple models (regmesh) there is no need to subdivide the domain in chunks, use 1 for *number\_chunks*.

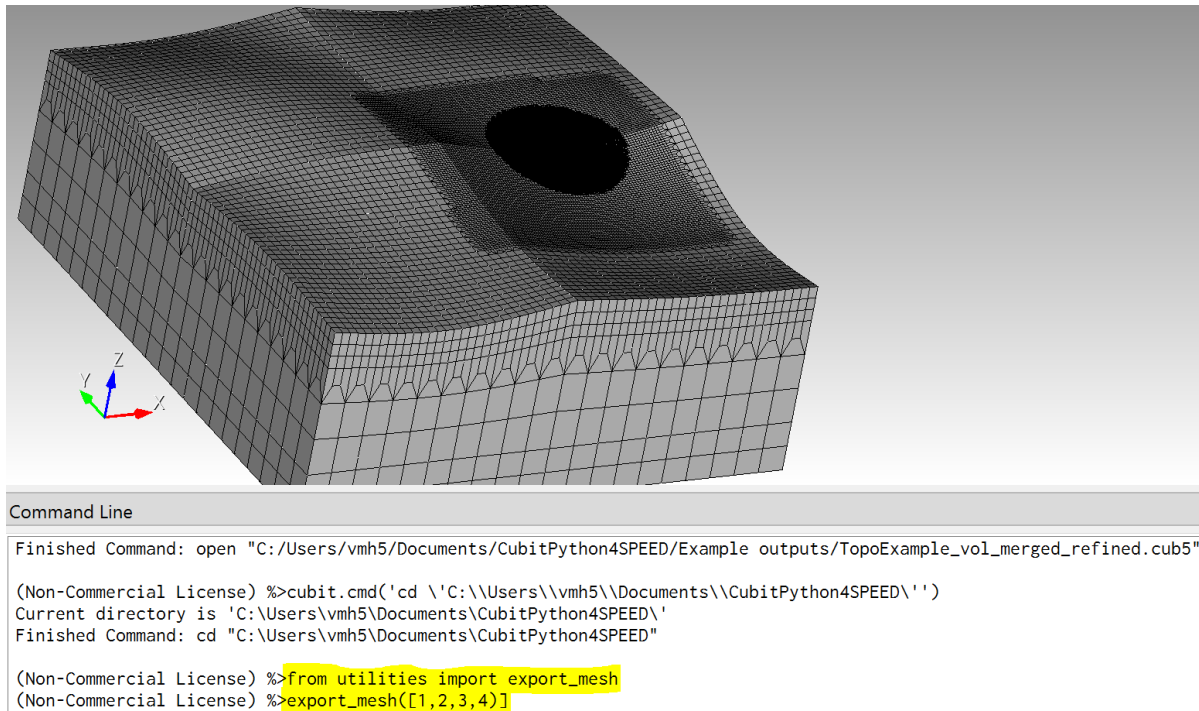
## Running individual routines

You can run individual routines, such as *merging*, *export\_mesh*, *basin\_refinement*, etc. These routines are located either in the *utilities.py* or *main.py* files. You could for instance create the domain without basin refinement first (*curve\_refinement = False*), and then test different options for refinement of the basin (*curve\_refinement = True* in *cfg* file), as it was shown before. See the script *ExampleRefinement.py* to run individual routines from the command prompt.

### 3.1 SPEED input files

#### Mesh file \*.mesh

To get the \*.mesh file you could either include the flag *export\_mesh=True*, or use separately the routine *export\_mesh([list hexahedral blocks])*, which is located in the *utilities* file:



The only requirement is that the hexahedral blocks were created using the command ***block n add hex in volume N***, instead of the classical command ***block n vol N***, where N is the number of the volume(s) to include in the block *n*. Moreover, the block for the ABC (absorbing boundary condition) should be created using the command ***block 100 add face in surface N***, where N are the numbers of the surfaces to include. This is already taken care of when using this tool to create the mesh. The output is a file named Meshfile.mesh.

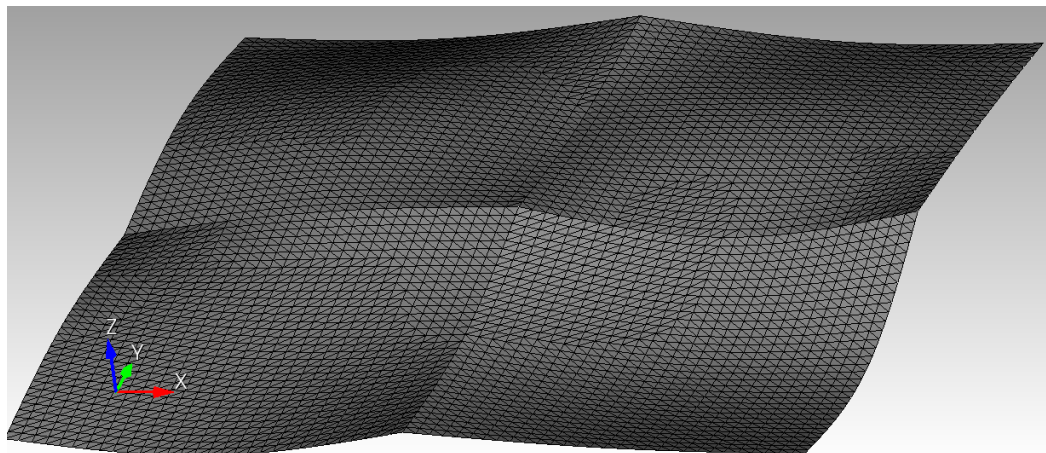
## Topography file XYZ.out

When using SPEED's honoring technique, you will need a triangular mesh (XYZ.out file) of the part of the topographic surface covering your basin mesh. You can create it from the same topography file \*.xyz using the flag **onlysurface = True**. If you use the same *number\_chunks*, *size* and *ntripl* as for the hexahedral mesh, the resulting surface mesh will be very similar to the upper boundary of the hexahedral mesh. The approximate size of the triangle edges will be *size/ntripl*.

See the file *TopoSurfaceExample.cfg*. The flag `export_mesh` is already set to True, so when you run it you will get the XYZ.out file.

Since this mesh doesn't necessarily have to cover the whole domain, but just the part of the topographic surface covering your basin surface mesh (ALL.out), you could use the flags `start_chunk` and `end_chunk` to create the surface just for the part you are interested in. When using NH for the whole mesh, since the XYZ surface should be larger than the area where NH is applied, the flag `enlarge_boundary=True` can be used in conjunction with `onlysurface`. It extends the boundaries of the surface by 50m to all sides. Parameters latitude/longitude min and max shouldn't be changed, since they refer to the limits of the topography (DEM) file.

The routine used to export the surface mesh is `export_surfacemesh(n)`, which is located in the *utilities* file. You could also use this routine separately:



### Command Line

```
(Non-Commercial License) %>cubit.cmd('cd \'C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED\'')
Current directory is 'C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED\'
Finished Command: cd "C:\Users\vmh5\Documents\CubitPython4SPEED"

(Non-Commercial License) %>from utilities import export_surfacemesh
(Non-Commercial License) %>export_surfacemesh(1)
exporting SPEED surface file...
```

Where the ( $n$ ) is the block number of the mesh (1 in this case). The only requirement is that the block was created using the command ***block n add tri in surface N***, instead of the classical command ***block n surface N***, where N is the number of the surface.

The same individual routine could be used to export the basin **ALL.out** surface mesh. By default the name of the output file is XYZ.out, so you just need to rename it.

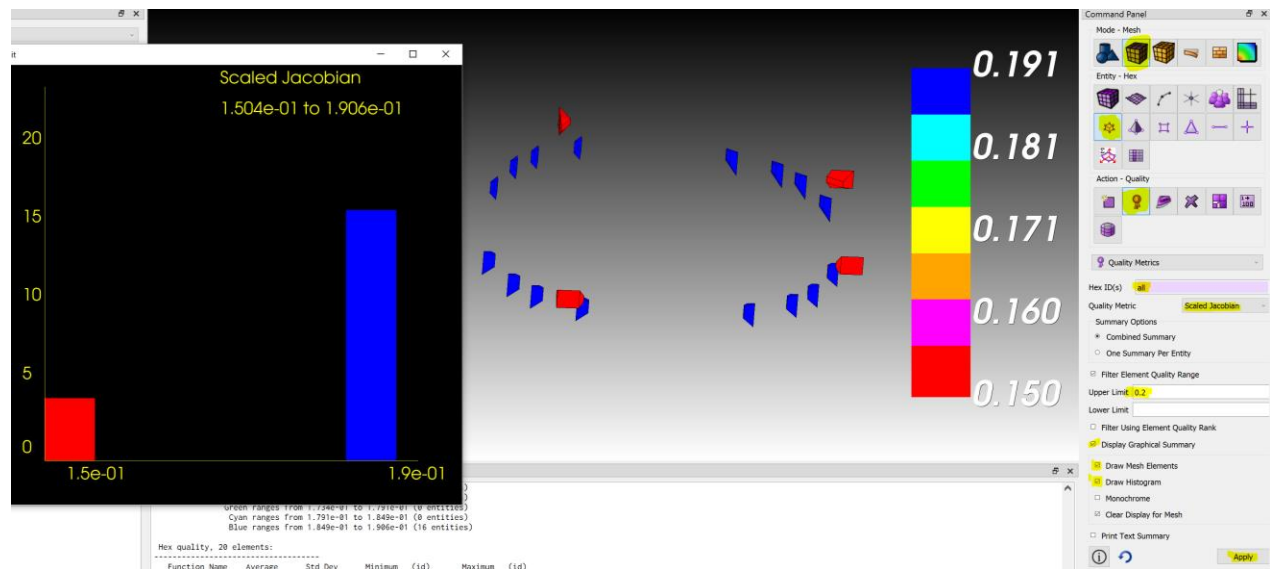
### Monitors file LS.input

This file contains the coordinates of the monitor points where you would like to export the results from SPEED. It is common to export results at the ground surface, or for a vertical cross section. The flag **onlysurface = True** again could be used to create a mesh at the ground surface, and the nodes of this mesh taken as monitors. This surface could also be locally refined to increase the density of monitors in a certain region, see the file *TopoSurfaceLSEExample.cfg*. Compared to *TopoSurfaceExample.cfg*, the flag `export_ls` was added, as well as the commands for the local refinement.

The routine used to export the surface mesh, located in the utilities file, is *export\_LS(n,istart)*, where the  $n$  is the block number of the triangular mesh and *istart* is the starting numbering of the monitors (by default =1). *istart* is useful in the case you want monitors in more than 1 surface (e.g., ground surface + cross-section), so you can export different surfaces (with consecutive numbering) and then combine them in one file. You could also use this routine separately as in the previous examples.

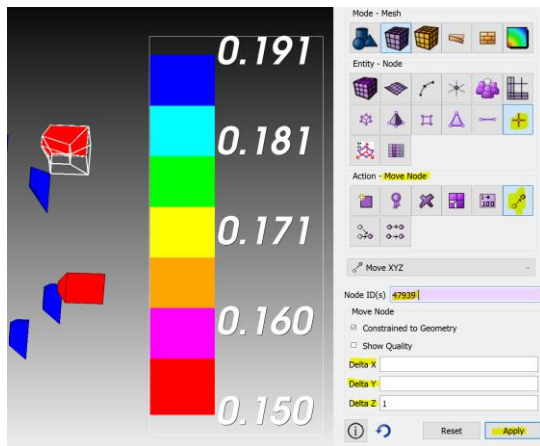
### 3.2 Mesh quality

It's important to always check the mesh quality, you can do this from the Cubit GUI:



You can use the buttons or directly input a command similar to this one: *quality hex all scaled jacobian global high 0.2 draw histogram draw mesh*

Ideally all the hexes should have a scaled Jacobian at least larger than 0.2 to ensure numerical stability. If there are hexes with low quality and smoothing doesn't improve the mesh quality, an option is to manually move nodes trying to improve the shape of those hexes (closer to a cube):



The command is: *node <list of nodes> move x <val> y <val> z <val>*

\*Meshes with elements with scaled Jacobians lower than 0.2 might still be stable. Depends on the specific case.