

Supplementary Material

Mixed Strategies for Robust Optimization of Unknown Objectives

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A Proof of Theorem 2

Proof. In this proof, we condition on the event in Lemma 1 holding true, meaning that ucb_t and lcb_t provide valid confidence bounds as per (13). As stated in the lemma, this holds with probability at least $1 - \delta$.

Our main goal in this proof is to upper bound the difference:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \theta)] - \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T f(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta). \quad (19)$$

To do so, we provide upper and lower bounds of the first and second terms, respectively, and then we upper bound their difference.

First, we show that the following holds:

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T f(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \geq \left(\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \right) - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\lambda \gamma_T}{T}}, \quad (20)$$

where \mathbf{x}_t is the point queried at time t .

To prove Eq. (20) we use the lower confidence bound and (14):

$$\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T f(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \geq \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \text{lcb}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \quad (21)$$

$$= \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T (\text{ucb}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) - 2\beta_t \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta)) \quad (22)$$

$$\geq \left(\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \right) - \max_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T 2\beta_t \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \quad (23)$$

$$\geq \left(\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \right) - \frac{2\beta_T}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\theta \in \Theta} \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \quad (24)$$

$$= \left(\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \right) - \frac{2\beta_T}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta_t) \quad (25)$$

$$\geq \left(\min_{\theta \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta) \right) - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}, \quad (26)$$

where (22) follows from the definition of the confidence bounds in (5) and (6), (24) is due to monotonicity of β_t , and (25) is by rule (10) used in Algorithm 1 to select θ_t . Finally, (26) is obtained via the standard result from (Srinivas et al., 2010; Chowdhury and Gopalan, 2017)

$$\sum_{t=1}^T \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta_t) \leq \sqrt{4T\lambda\gamma_T}, \quad (27)$$

when $\lambda \geq 1$.

Next, we show that the first term can be upper bounded as follows:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\theta \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \theta)] \leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\theta \sim w_t}[\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \theta)].$$

To prove this, we start by upper bounding the minimum value of the inner objective:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \leq \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i)] \quad (28)$$

$$\leq \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i)] \quad (29)$$

$$= \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} \left[\sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \right] \quad (30)$$

$$\leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} \left[\sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \right] \quad (31)$$

$$= \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \quad (32)$$

$$= \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i). \quad (33)$$

We obtain Eq. (28) as the following trivially holds

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \leq \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i)]$$

for each t and $\mathbf{w}_t \in \{\mathbf{w} \in [0, 1]^m : \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}[i] = 1\}$, and hence it also holds for the average value

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i)].$$

Eq. (29) follows from (14), (30) follows by the linearity of expectation, and (32) holds since Dirac delta $\boldsymbol{\delta}_{\mathbf{x}}$, $\forall \mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}$, is in $\Delta(\mathcal{X})$. Finally, (33) follows by rule (9) used in Algorithm 1 to select \mathbf{x}_t .

Next, we bound the difference in (19) by combining the bounds obtained in (26) and (33):

$$\begin{aligned} & \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T f(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \\ & \leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathbf{w}_t} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) + 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}} \\ & \leq \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} + 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}, \end{aligned} \quad (34)$$

where (34) follows by the guarantees of the no-regret online multiplicative weight updates algorithm played by the adversary, that is,

$$\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathbf{w}_t} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) \leq \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}}, \quad (35)$$

with the learning rate set to $\eta_T = \sqrt{\frac{8 \log(m)}{T}}$. For more details on this result see (Cesa-Bianchi and Lugosi, 2006, Section 4.2) where the same online algorithm is considered. Specifically, the result above follows from (Cesa-Bianchi and Lugosi, 2006, Theorem 2.2) by noting that $\sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathbf{w}_t} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] = \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbf{w}_t^T \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \cdot)$, $\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) = \min_{\mathbf{w} \in \Delta(\Theta)} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbf{w}^T \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \cdot)$ and $\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\cdot, \cdot) \in [0, 1]$ for every t . In our case, the objective function changes with t but remains bounded, which allows the result to hold despite the changes (see time-varying games result extension (Cesa-Bianchi and Lugosi, 2006, Remark 7.3)).

By rearranging (34) and by letting $\mathcal{U}^{(T)}$ be the uniform distribution over the queried points $\{\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_T\}$ during

the run of Algorithm 1, we obtain:

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{U}(T)} [f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \geq \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} [f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}.$$

Finally, we require $\epsilon \geq \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} + 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}$, which we obtain when

$$T \geq \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(\frac{\log(m)}{2} + \beta_T \sqrt{32\lambda\gamma_T \log(m)} + 16\beta_T^2 \lambda \gamma_T \right).$$

□

B Proof of Corollary 3

Proof. The proof closely follows the one of Theorem 2. The main changes are due to the modified best-response rule from (16).

For a given distribution $\mathcal{Q} \in \Delta(\Theta)$ and trade-off parameter $\chi \in (0, 1]$, we can define the new function

$$g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) := \chi \cdot f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}) + (1 - \chi) \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \quad (36)$$

Same as before, our goal is to upper bound the difference:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} [g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T g(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}), \quad (37)$$

where \mathbf{x}_t is the point selected at time t by GP-MRO using the modified best-response rule as in (16).

Next, we condition on the event in Lemma 1 holding true, and we provide upper and lower bounds of the first and second term, respectively.

First, we show that the second term of (37) can be lower bounded as:

$$\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T g(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \geq \chi \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\lambda\gamma_T}{T}}. \quad (38)$$

To prove Eq. (38) we make use of (36) and similar arguments as the ones used in the proof of Theorem 2:

$$\begin{aligned} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T g(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) &= \chi \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T f(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [f(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) \\ &\geq \chi \left[\left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) - \frac{2\beta_T}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}_t) \right] + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [f(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) \\ &\geq \chi \left[\left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) - \frac{2\beta_T}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}_t) \right] + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) - 2\beta_t \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) \\ &\geq \chi \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) - \frac{2\beta_T}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sigma_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}_t) \\ &\geq \chi \left(\min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}. \end{aligned}$$

Next, we show that the first term of (37) can be upper bounded as:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} [g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \leq \chi \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathbf{w}_t} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}} [\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right). \quad (39)$$

To prove this we use similar arguments as in the proof of Theorem 2:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] &\leq \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i)] \\
 &\leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}} \left[\sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \right] \\
 &= \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \\
 &= \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \left[\chi \cdot \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) + (1 - \chi) \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}}[f(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right] \\
 &\leq \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \max_{\mathbf{x} \in \mathcal{X}} \left[\chi \cdot \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) + (1 - \chi) \cdot \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}}[\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right] \\
 &= \chi \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \sum_{i=1}^m \mathbf{w}_t[i] \cdot \overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}_i) \right) + (1 - \chi) \left(\frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T \mathbb{E}_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \sim \mathcal{Q}}[\overline{\text{ucb}}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta})] \right), \quad (40)
 \end{aligned}$$

where (40) is obtained by the rule in (16) used to select \mathbf{x}_t .

Next, we bound the difference in (37) by combining the bounds (38) and (39) and applying (35) to obtain:

$$\max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T g(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \leq \chi \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} + 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}, \quad (41)$$

By letting $\mathcal{U}^{(T)}$ be the uniform distribution over the queried points $\{\mathbf{x}_1, \dots, \mathbf{x}_T\}$ and by using the definitions of $W(\cdot)$ and \mathcal{P}^* together with the bound (41), we obtain:

$$\begin{aligned}
 W(\mathcal{U}^{(T)}) &= \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \frac{1}{T} \sum_{t=1}^T g(\mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\theta}) \geq \max_{\mathcal{P} \in \Delta(\mathcal{X})} \min_{\boldsymbol{\theta} \in \Theta} \mathbb{E}_{\mathbf{x} \sim \mathcal{P}}[g(\mathbf{x}, \boldsymbol{\theta})] - \chi \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}} \\
 &= W(\mathcal{P}^*) - \chi \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} - 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}} \quad (42)
 \end{aligned}$$

Finally, we require $\epsilon \geq \chi \sqrt{\frac{\log(m)}{2T}} + 4\beta_T \sqrt{\frac{\gamma_T \lambda}{T}}$, which we obtain when

$$T \geq \frac{1}{\epsilon^2} \left(\frac{\chi^2 \log(m)}{2} + \chi \beta_T \sqrt{32\lambda\gamma_T \log(m)} + 16\beta_T^2 \lambda \gamma_T \right).$$

□