

Interactive comment on “Conservation of soil organic carbon, biodiversity and the provision of other ecosystem services along climatic gradients in West Africa” by E. Marks et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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The paper is a nice overview of the current knowledge on soil carbon of african ecosystem. It also highlights some potentials in carbon sequestration through different land management options. However it is to me a review more than a research paper. From this point of view the editors should decide whether it is appropriate in this section of the journal. In any case I find useful to have a general overview on this topic and it fits well on the ongoing special issue on African carbon cycle. To be completed the paper should address also the potential implications of climatic changes on soil carbon oxidation and release to the atmosphere. If the aim of the paper is to generate some expectation that an improved land use can contribute to mitigation of ghg emissions, it has also to be discussed the potential of drawbacks such as the vulnerability

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of soil carbon pools to climate effects and the risk that this could impair the mitigation potentials. Of course this type analysis should be carried out across different African regions where climate drivers can have different impacts. The paper would also benefit of some more original data of the Authors who I believe are in position to present their results of ongoing reserach. In conclusion the paper need to be complemented with additional information and can be published as a review, if appropriate.

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