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Comment

## ***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.***

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The paper addresses a critically important issue for Africa as a whole and Western Africa as the focus region. That is to explore the potential synergies of carbon sequestration along with the provision of other ecosystem services important for the livelihoods, agricultural production, and conservation agenda of Western Africa. A sectorial approach of carbon in this part of the world would be inappropriate and set to fail, so the authors have set an excellent integrative framework.

The value of the paper is in reviewing the scarce information available from this part of the world and in support of an integrative approach. For this, I support the ultimate

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acceptance and publication of the ms. but not quite in the current format.

The paper is perhaps too long for the amount of information that is being reviewed. In general, I find that there are too much background information on soil sciences and climate change which, yet it is valuable for context, distracts the reader and prevent the ms. from being a richer paper in information on the topic. In general, the paper as it stands reads a bit light with valuable information too diluted.

My suggestion is to shorten the paper at least 1/3 and focus more on the topic of the paper. When possible, provide more quantitative information on the topic. More general information on climate change and soil sciences is not always necessary as this is in the end a specialists journal on biogeosciences. I would also suggest the authors not only present the paper as a review but more of a synthesis in which conclusions are drawn in term of future possibilities for implementing the framework described.

Following there are a few examples of text from the first part of the paper that yet provide good scientific context it often becomes too general and tend to dilute the content which could come across in a much stronger and richer way:

p. 4418. lines 1 to 15. p. 4419. lines 20-27 p. 4420. lines 1-13 p. 4421. lines 1-26 etc.

I am not suggesting removing the text above necessarily; these are examples of very general text which dilutes the ms. Possibilities are shorten the text or in some cases delete it.

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Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., 5, 4413, 2008.

**BGD**

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