

Response to the Author:

I think the authors did a good job in revising the manuscript and I have no bigger concerns for going ahead with the publication process.

Response: Thanks, we made the following changes.

One thing that I think still needs additional attention is the newly added text on differences in observations potentially stemming from the timing of the sampling (two different seasons in 2018 vs 2019 were sampled). I think this is an important caveat that has to be put more prominently also in the conclusion and the abstract which sum-up the study to the reader. But I see the changes in this regard only in the discussion. Please amend or elaborate why you think otherwise.

Response: We included the differences in the abstract and the conclusions as following: 'during a wet sampling period in 2018 and a drier sampling period in 2019' (L. 24 – 25) and 'The temporal differences in observations suggest to be stemming from the timing of a different sampling period in 2018 compared to 2019.' (L. 478-479).

Furthermore, the wording of the new text to describe 2018 v 2019 wetness differences is a bit confusing: for example, page 22: You start l.387 with "the wetter 2019" but in l.388 it is written "a drier 2019". I realize that these are different catchments, but I would advice to explain the discrepancies in the local weather conditions due to sampling and monitoring at different points in time already in the methods and then establish a clear wording how you call the seasonal differences. For example, in tables 2018 is described as the "wet period" but 2019 as the "drier period" instead of "dry period" or something similar. My advice would be to go through the manuscript and try to use clear and distinct wording whenever speaking of a dryer vs. wetter year, or a strong or weak dry/wet season.

Response: Overall, 2019 is wetter compared to 2018 in the natural forest and the tea-tree plantations. The smallholder agriculture is wetter in 2019 than 2018. However, the sampling period is wetter in 2018 and drier in 2019 for all three catchments.

We included one sentence about the sampling period in the methods: 'Suspended sediment was sampled during both long rainy seasons in 2018 and 2019 (May-September 2018 and April-May 2019). However, the sampling period in 2019 coincided with the onset of the long rainy season in 2019 and was drier compared to 2018. Therefore, the first sampling campaign in 2018 is described as '2018 wet period' and the second sampling campaign in 2019 as '2019 drier period' (L. 188-191).

We further amended the sentence to 'The overall wetter 2019 with higher annual rainfall...' (L. 376) highlighting that we refer to the entire year and not the sampling campaign.

Minor comment for l. 240. Just say "Data analysis was conducted in R (or using R)".

Response: Thanks, we amended accordingly.