

Dear Somnath,

please find below our reply to the comments. References to line numbers refer to the revised manuscript including track changes.

1. "Section 3.1: I did not quite understand the rationale of introducing soil moisture data here...."

We have updated the manuscript clarifying the rationale behind introducing soil moisture. (from l.172). The availability of soil moisture is what drives plant growth/senescence and thus we observe a good correlation with NDVI at monthly time scales, and a poor one with precipitation. The SMAP soil moisture record however is too short to allow for a meaningful analysis of interannual and decadal variability, which is why for that purpose we exploit the longer precipitation records, which at these time scales works well.

2. "Fig.2: ... (2) why soil moisture is not included in Figure 2b? Then, it is unfair to say precipitation agrees better with NDVI.

We updated Fig. 2 by including soil moisture into panel 2b.

(3) Why the correlation between precipitation and NDVI differs across different timescale? Time lag effect??"

We have added a few sentences explaining why the correlation between precipitation and NDVI differs across time scales (from l. 258).

I am OK with your responses but I think these clarifications should also be in the manuscript. The readers may also have the same questions. Kindly add brief 2-3 sentence clarifications at appropriate locations and resubmit the manuscript.

We hope that with our reply above and the corresponding changes in the text, our manuscript can now be accepted for publication.

Kind regards,

The authors