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**Institute for Landscape Ecology and Resources  
Management**

Chair for Landscape, Water and  
Biogeochemical Cycles

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Dear Editor,

Please find attached the revised response letters and the manuscript. You might wonder why it took so long to resubmit. First, we had communication problems among our co-authors. After we solved this, the Justus Liebig University Giessen had a severe cyber attack (no lame excuse, see <https://www.uni-giessen.de/jluoffline>). Since Dec 8th, we had no email system, no access to servers or the shared file systems, where our paper was stuck for weeks. We are now recovering slowly (today, January 21st, is the first day we have internet connection!). All this lead to a significant delay in the revision process of the paper. However, it also had advantages. We had sufficient time to carefully think about our initial response letters to the reviewers. Reading the response letters again, we found that there are even more things we need to change in the manuscript. Hence, we revised not only the manuscript, but also the response letters. We assume it is uncommon, but we ask that you update the response letters as well, if possible.

We are looking forward to your response. Given the limited time we had to work on the paper due to the cyber attack, we were not able to ask a professional language editing service to check the final version of the paper. But we are convinced that the revised version already improved substantially. In case necessary and in case we are allowed, we are happy to ask for a professional language check after the next round of revisions.

We sincerely hope that you will find our manuscript suitable for publication and look forward to hearing back from you.

Kind regards,  
On behalf of the authors,

Amani Mahindawansha