Interactive comment on “Soil Conservation in the 21st Century: Why we need Smart Intensification” by Gerard Govers et al.

M. van Ittersum (Referee)

martin.vanittersum@wur.nl

Received and published: 7 October 2016

This is a very well written manuscript that makes a plea for a smart intensification of agriculture to allow for effective soil conservation in the 21st century. One may argue it comes close to an opinion paper rather than a research or review paper, but it is consistent in its reasoning and it is generally well backed up by references and some data. I largely agree with the reasoning of the authors and I think it is well worth to publish such a message. But clearly the limitation is that the piece is largely qualitative as is illustrated by Table 1 and Figure 1. I think the authors should emphasize that Figure 1 is illustrative and not based on any data – if that is not true the authors must indicate the basis for their ‘quantities’. Also, some kind of definition of Smart intensification is needed: do we really need such term, or would sustainable intensification be equally good? Please no more confusing terms than strictly necessary!

Other than that, I have no reservation to recommend the manuscript for publication after minor revisions:

define poor, fair, negative, etc.

Interactive comment on SOIL Discuss., doi:10.5194/soil-2016-36, 2016.