

Editors' Comment:

Dear Authors, Based on my assessment of the responses to the reviewers' comments and the revised manuscript, I am happy to recommend publication of this manuscript. The only suggestion I'd like to make is to acknowledge the bias in the precipitation forecasts (GFS forecasts) relative to observed precipitation (IMERG) and the need for bias-correction of the precipitation forecasts before coupling them with observed precipitation. Since the study focuses on the dry part of the season, the impact of this would be relatively minor, but this can matter during the main rainy season. Thanks.

Response:

We appreciate the editor's positive recommendation and thank them for this helpful suggestion. We have revised the manuscript to acknowledge that GFS precipitation forecasts may exhibit systematic biases relative to IMERG-based observed precipitation. We now clarify in Section 5.3 (from Line 381 - 391) that, when precipitation contributes substantially to the water balance, GFS forecast precipitation should ideally be bias-corrected using recent IMERG precipitation as the reference dataset before being included in the net water requirement calculation. We have also updated the limitations section (from Line 686 - 699) to clarify that sDRIPS is designed primarily for managed irrigation periods, such as the dry-season TBP application from January to April, and is not intended to replace rainfed or monsoon-season water management in its current form. Because the present study focuses on the dry irrigation season, the impact of precipitation forecast bias is expected to be relatively minor for the results presented here, but it should be explicitly addressed in applications where rainfall is a dominant water source.