



Land Matrix

Land Matrix partnership launches second phase of its Global Observatory on large scale land acquisitions

Dynamic public interface promotes greater transparency in land investments

The Land Matrix partnership launched the second phase of the Global Observatory on large scale land acquisitions. The Land Matrix Global Observatory is a tool that promotes transparency in land transactions and supports open data and open source communities focused on land deals. The thoroughly updated dataset allows tracking of large scale land acquisitions, from negotiation to implementation.

Since the launch of the Beta version in April 2012, the Land Matrix partnership has received a substantial number of reactions, most of which expressed appreciation for the initiative, though some noted concerns. It provides valuable lessons on the challenges and successes of promoting open data on practices that are often shrouded in secrecy and have led to improving the Land Matrix and its database.

The modifications and improvements to the database structure and its contents explain the significant difference between earlier estimates of total large scale land acquisitions (83.2 million ha for 1217 land deals) provided by the Land Matrix and the new estimates (32.3 million ha for 756 *concluded* land deals). The database now differentiates between intended, concluded and failed deals. In addition, the platform reports the implementation status of each deal, including if a project actually becomes operational and eventually starts producing. Finally, each piece of information is directly related to its source, allowing the filtering of deals by the type of source and enabling users to themselves judge the reliability of the information.

The new dynamic interface offers multiple technical enhancements and innovations, including allowing users to download the entire unfiltered dataset - a significant step towards achieving truly open data. An advanced crowdsourcing function enables any user to submit details on land deals, from a single deal to sharing entire datasets.

With these improved functions, the Land Matrix Global Observatory can become an important tool to address the lack of transparency that still surrounds large-scale land transactions. Ward Anseeuw from the Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD) and the Post-Graduate School of Agriculture and Rural development (University of Pretoria) said, "The Land Matrix has evolved from a database into a public tool promoting greater transparency in decision-making over land and investment at a global level."

The Land Matrix Global Observatory: www.landmatrix.org