



MasterClass Abstract

The Land Matrix

An open online tool to collect, visualize and provide information about large-scale land acquisitions and to support decentralized land observatories.

Overview

The Land Matrix is a global and independent land monitoring initiative, a partnership of five “global” founding organizations (CDE, CIRAD, GIGA, GIZ, ILC) and currently five “regional” partners (AFA, NECU, FUNDAPAZ, JASIL, University of Pretoria). The Land Matrix Initiative (LMI) facilitates an open development community of citizens, researchers, policy-makers and technology specialists to provide open data and to promote transparency and accountability in decisions over land and investment. Our overall development goal is to make decision-making over land and investments informed by evidence, inclusive and equitable, as well as respectful of the rights of traditional land users. We are aiming to contribute in an innovative and relevant way to the growing movement towards open development – allowing for greater public involvement in critical decisions that affect the lives of land-users around the world. Already since 2010, the Land Matrix has been systematically collecting and verifying information on large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs). The Land Matrix Global Observatory records cases of intended, failed and realized land transactions in low- and middle-income countries that entail a transfer of rights to use, control or own land through sale, lease or concession, that are 200 ha or larger; and that have been initiated since the year 2000. It mainly focuses on transactions that involve foreign investors, although domestic cases have also been documented. The data come from a variety of sources that include media reports, company and government sources like contracts and annual reports, reports by international organizations and NGOs, information by networks of key resource individuals and organizations in host countries, as well as academic research based on field-research projects and to a minor extent also crowd-sourcing. For several years now the Land Matrix database has been regarded the most comprehensive data collection on large-scale land acquisitions. Our public interface, the Land Matrix Global Observatory (<http://landmatrix.org>), has been used by a wide range of stakeholders and serves as one of the primary reference points for data, data visualizations and information on LSLAs. As an

open tool, the Land Matrix Global Observatory allows wide participation in constantly upgrading, correcting and improving the information it contains.

Since 2014, the LMI has embarked in a decentralization process with Regional Focal Points in Africa, Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America and in 2018 the organizational structure has been further decentralized by the set-up of five Land Observatories at national level. To promote and to support this decentralization process a new Land Matrix web-application, adaptable to the needs of local partners and equipped with improved features to collect, visualize and provide information on LSLAs, has been developed.

This MasterClass, organized by the Land Matrix Initiative (LMI), will include a demonstration of the key features and tools of the new Land Matrix web application and will present a range of strategies, methodologies, limitations, challenges as well as lessons learned with regard to the monitoring of large-scale land acquisitions.

The Class will focus on increasing the understanding of the Land Matrix data and on using the Land Matrix web platform to either contribute to the dataset or to obtain data and information about LSLAs. The class will also include a discussion on how the Land Matrix could further develop the database, the data sourcing strategies and the technical tools to achieve our goals and to better serve to the needs of our different user communities.