



# Land Matrix press release

10 June 2013

## LAND MATRIX PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHES SECOND PHASE OF ITS GLOBAL OBSERVATORY ON LARGE SCALE LAND ACQUISITIONS

### Dynamic public interface promotes greater transparency in land investments

**Bern/Hamburg/Montpellier/Rome (10 June 2013)** The Land Matrix partnership today launches 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. Madiodio Niasse, Director of the International Land Coalition (ILC) Secretariat noted, "We have taken all comments that we have received very seriously, and we thank those who have contributed."

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 (32.5 million ha for 753 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.

As the Land Matrix is a constantly evolving database, conclusions drawn from the data should be tentative. Jann Lay, from the GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies noted, "The Land Matrix Global Observatory data reveal the importance of capturing the dynamics of large scale land acquisitions, which are not easy to trace."

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.

Markus Giger from the CDE (Centre for Development and Environment) at the University of Bern said, "We hope for feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. More evidence and data is needed to help to continuously update and improve the quality of the data".

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) 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](http://www.landmatrix.org)

Watch a new video about the Land Matrix Global Observatory:

### **About the Land Matrix Partnership and Its Spokespeople**

**CIRAD (Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement)** is a French research centre working with developing countries to tackle international agricultural and development issues.

**Ward Anseeuw** - CIRAD Researcher University of Pretoria, Email: ward.anseeuw@up.ac.za; Tel: +270 12 420 5022

**CDE (Centre for Development and Environment)** is the University of Bern's centre for sustainable development research. It was founded with the aim of fostering sustainable development-oriented research across various institutes and departments of the University of Bern.

**Peter Messerli** - Director University of Bern Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), Email: peter.messerli@cde.unibe.ch; Tel. +41 (0)31 631 88 22 / 30 60

**GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies** is a Hamburg-based research institute focused on political, economic and social developments in Africa, Asia, Latin America, North Africa, and the Middle East.

**Jann Lay** - GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies and University of Goettingen, Email: lay@giga-hamburg.de; Tel. +49-(0)40-42825-763

**GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)** is an international enterprise owned by the German Federal Government targeting international cooperation services for sustainable development across more than 130 countries.

**ILC (International Land Coalition)** is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organisations working together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

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