



Land Matrix

Press release

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New data on large-scale land deals - not a “bubble”

<http://www.landportal.info/landmatrix>

Today a new report and website provide important insight into the complex, global phenomenon of large-scale acquisition of land. They confirm this is a lasting trend and not a mere “bubble”. While the rush for land may have peaked in 2009, it continues.

Analysis of international land investments for agriculture through over one thousand deals since 2000 suggests that they are geographically concentrated – just 11 countries, many in East Africa and Southeast Asia, account for 70% of the total land area acquired in these deals.

Close examination also reveals that almost half of land in question is already being used for crops, implying competition between investors and small-scale farmers.

“Land acquisition does often take place in areas with considerable population density, not so-called ‘idle land’” Says Markus Giger from the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern.

The report “[Transnational Land Deals for Agriculture in the Global South](#)” draws on data now made accessible in a new online interface called the Land Matrix. This website will provide unprecedented access to verified data on land deals, allowing people to explore and visualize trends from the global level down to individual deals.

The report and website are launched today in Washington by the Land Matrix partnership (CDE, CIRAD, GIGA, GIZ, and ILC) during the Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty.

Professor Jann Lay of GIGA comments, “With a couple of clicks, the Land Matrix provides the urgently needed answers to pressing questions: Who invests where and why? What are the trends?”

The aim of the Land Matrix is to promote transparency and accountability in decisions over land and investment through open data, accessible both via maps and visualizations and via

download.

“Lack of transparency is a major hindrance to promoting accountability and improved decisions on land and investment. The Land Matrix is a significant step to opening up information and debate on this trend” Madiodio Niasse, the Director of the International Land Coalition secretariat.

The launch of the Land Matrix will encourage researchers, governments, companies to provide more data on land acquisitions.

Even citizens can get involved: the innovative interface is designed for the public to crowdsource new information, and also improve the database's quality and reliability. The website is intended to provide a facility for observing trends on land and investment on an ongoing basis.

The Land Matrix will periodically publish an analytical report, with this first one of the series focusing specifically on transnational agriculture deals in low and middle income countries of Global South and Eastern Europe.

The report contains information on investors, the drivers for these deals, and their impacts.

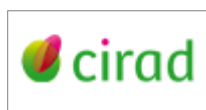
The main investor countries are classified into three groups: emerging economies, Gulf states, and Europe and North America. Evidence of increasing south-south investment and intraregionalism is another major finding.

As Lay explains, “The report - which supplements the Land Matrix site - explains the facts and figures in more depth and gives vivid examples. Furthermore, it provides extensive background knowledge on the processes behind the deals.”

But as Ward Anseeuw of CIRAD and the University of Pretoria reminds, “There is a need to distinguish different forms of investment in land from land grabs; many areas are in dire need of agricultural investment.”

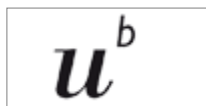
Investments examined by the Land Matrix, entail a transfer of rights to use, control or own land through sale, lease or concession; that cover 200 hectares (ha) or larger.

Notes and contacts for the interviews:



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.

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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.

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GIGA (German Institute for 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.

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

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ILC (International Land Coalition) is 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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