An initiative for participatory monitoring of large scale land acquisitions: Opportunities and results so far

Markus Giger, CDE, University of Berne
Michael Taylor, ILC
Peter Messerli, CDE

Washington DC, April 19th 2011
Challenges related to land acquisition

- Data on land acquisitions is difficult to get, often unreliable
- The phenomenon is very dynamic
- Data often only available at national level
- Information on proponents and stakeholders is crucial
The Matrix Project: What it is and who is involved?

✓ Open database of land-related investment projects enabling continued monitoring and improvement of data accuracy by project’s partners and other actors.

✓ Involves a large number of organizations and individuals working on the ground

✓ Research partnership between ILC, CIRAD, CDE, Oxfam Novib and GIZ

✓ Part of wider initiative of ILC on Commercial Pressures on Land
From rumours to more reliable information

Objectives:

• Transparency over individual deals
• Inform on the scale, trends and impacts on global scale
• Analysis of drivers
Collection and verification of data

Data collection:
Media reports
Research reports
Survey with ILC partners

Verification of data
Review of data by partners and experts

Continuous up-date
Emerging patterns (1):

1233 announcements of land deals in database up to now

80 Mio ha globally
- 51 Mio ha in Africa,
- 19 Mio ha in Asia,
- 9 Mio ha in Latin America,
- 1 Mio ha in other regions, mainly Eastern Europe

Tip of the iceberg?

Overestimation based on rumours?

Source: ILC matrix project, CIRAD
Emerging patterns (2):

- 17 Mio ha of deals actually signed and verified globally
- 8 Mio ha in Africa and Asia each

Source: ILC matrix project, CIRAD
Develop dynamic monitoring tools:

Open access, web-based, spatially explicit, live updates

• Moving from survey to more systematic approach
• „Crowd-sourcing“ of data input
• Validation-verification through «crowd» (network of experts)
• Spatial analysis (overlay with additional data)
Developing a vision for a continuous information and monitoring system:

Requirements:
• live update to overcome high dynamics
• need for contextualisation to show political dimension
• relate land interventions to stakeholders (accountability)
• “democratize” reporting and ensure quality control

Opportunities:
• Spatial data open access and publicly manageable
• Social network tools changing governance systems
• Web goes mobile (overcoming digital divide)

ILC-CDE-Oxfam Novib- CIRAD-GIZ
Crowd-sourcing as an opportunity for data-input

- Rumors can be tracked by reports (via sms, twitter etc.) and serve as early-warning system
- Reports will contribute information about on-going deals and their impacts
- Live-up date possible
- Validation by experts still needed
Example: Ushahidi

- Collecting reports from different sources (web, sms, etc...)
- Mapping the reports spatially
- Categorize information, etc.
- Verifying reports
- Subscribe to alerts..
Get Alerts

Step 1: Select your city or location:

Drag a spot on the map below, and we will alert you when a report is submitted within 20 kilometers.

Step 2: Send alerts to my:

- Email address:
  - enter email address

Step 3 (Optional): Select Categories

- Deaths
- Disease
- Government Forces
- Humanitarian Actions
- Incidents of Conflict
- Internally Displaced People
- Kidnappings
- Looting
- Mines
- Origin of Internally Displaced People
- Peace Efforts
- Property Loss
- Rebel Group
- Riots
- Sexual Violence
- UN Peacekeeping Force
- Verified Sources

Save My Alert

Confirm A Previous Alert Request

RSS Feeds (copy the url below)
Developing a vision for a continuous information and monitoring system:

Input
- Key informants
- “Crowdsourcing”
- Global & national spatial information

Web-based and continuously updated global database

Contextualisation of land interventions
- Geo-referenced database depicting relations stakeholders–interventions
  - Stakeholders
  - Land Interventions
  - Agriculture, natural resources, landuse, poverty, etc.

Output
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Stakeholder negotiation and Advocacy
- Informed decision-making
Spatially-explicit analysis of land acquisitions

Example from Lao PDR
Land use concessions are found in the best agricultural lands...

with high population densities...

with relatively low poverty rates...

Source: Peter Messerli, CDE
The matrix platform provides:

- a basis for improved understanding of the extent and nature of land-based investments,
- a basis for dialogue and debate,
- a tool to promote better decision-making at local, national and global levels regarding land investment,
- a tool to promote more transparency related to land-based investments
- a means to empower affected communities to protect and claim their rights,
- a source of information to promote accountability in cases of investment-related dispossession and other human rights abuses.
Moving towards the second phase

✓ Existing database is being up-dated, contributions are very welcome
✓ Initiative is open to new partners
✓ More intensive work in pilot countries is a next objective