



IIED publications

The global land rush and agricultural investment





Land is central to livelihoods, culture and identity for millions of people across the developing world. But there is growing concern that people's connection to their land is being undermined. Over the past few years, large-scale acquisitions of land for agricultural investments in Africa, Asia and Latin America have made headlines in media reports across the world. Private sector expectations of higher world food and commodity prices, mainly linked to projected demographic growth, and government concerns about longer-term national food and energy security, have both made land a more attractive asset.

Dubbed 'land grabs' in the media, land-based investments have kindled much international debate. Some commentators have welcomed this trend as a bearer of new livelihood opportunities in lower-income countries. Others have raised concerns about negative social impacts, including loss of local rights to land, water and other natural resources; threats to local food security; and the risk that large-scale investments marginalise small-scale farmers. Yet others have pointed to models of agricultural investment that include local farmers.

Decisions taken now will have major repercussions for the livelihoods and food security of many people for decades to come. The nature of agricultural investments will have lasting implications for the future of agriculture, including the role of agribusiness and family farming. There is a need for vigorous public debate, internationally and — even more importantly — in recipient countries.

To support such debate, IIED and partners have been generating evidence on a range of strategic issues concerning agricultural investment and the global land rush.

All publications are available from <http://pubs.iied.org>

Trends and drivers of the global land rush

Designing appropriate policy responses requires a good understanding of the scale, geography and drivers of the global land rush. High-profile reports and cutting-edge briefing notes generate evidence on these issues.



Fuelling exclusion? The biofuels boom and poor people's access to land

Lorenzo Cotula, Nat Dyer, Sonja Vermeulen

What are the impacts of the increasing spread of biofuels on access to land in producer countries, particularly for poorer rural people? Biofuels could revitalise rural agriculture and livelihoods — or, where there are competing claims on land — exclude poorer land and resource users. This study documents knowledge on current and potential impacts of commercial biofuel production for access to land in Africa, Latin America and Asia, charting both negative experiences and promising approaches.

2008, ISBN 978-1-84369-702-2, 72pp

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12551IIED.html>



Land grab or development opportunity? Agricultural investment and international land deals in Africa

Lorenzo Cotula, Sonja Vermeulen, Rebeca Leonard, James Keeley

The outcome of a collaboration between IIED, FAO and IFAD, this report discusses key trends and drivers in land acquisitions, the contractual arrangements underpinning them and the way these are negotiated, and the early impacts on land access for rural people in recipient countries. It draws on a literature review, qualitative interviews with key informants internationally, national inventories of ongoing and proposed land acquisitions between 2004 and 2009 in African countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar and Mali) and qualitative studies in Mozambique and Tanzania, and legal analysis of national law and of a small sample of investor-state contracts.

2009, ISBN 978-1-84369-741-1, 145pp

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12561IIED>



Global land rush briefing series

IIED briefing papers are focused overviews of today's environment and development issues. Accessible, topical and relevant, they offer up-to date research and point to the shifts in policy needed. This series raises neglected issues, challenges myths and reframes debates on the global land rush.

The global land rush: what the evidence reveals about scale and geography

Lorenzo Cotula, Emily Polack

2012, <http://pubs.iied.org/17124IIED>

Agricultural land acquisitions: a lens on Southeast Asia

Emily Polack

2012, <http://pubs.iied.org/17123IIED>

Farms and funds: investment funds in the global land rush

Abbi Buxton, Mark Campanale, Lorenzo Cotula

2012, <http://pubs.iied.org/17121IIED>

Are land deals driving 'water grabs'?

Jamie Skinner, Lorenzo Cotula

2011, <http://pubs.iied.org/17102IIED>

REDD+: Ready to engage private investors?

Isilda Nhandumbo

2011, <http://pubs.iied.org/17112IIED>

Biomass energy: Another driver of land acquisitions?

Lorenzo Cotula, Lynn Finnegan, Duncan Macqueen

2011, <http://pubs.iied.org/17098IIED>

Alternatives to land acquisitions

Agricultural investments can be structured in ways that involve collaboration with local farmers or communities, rather than large-scale land acquisitions — for example, through contract farming, joint ventures, management contracts and new supply-chain relationships. In many parts of the world, there is growing experience with these models, both positive and negative. Publications in this area of work document and share lessons learnt from this experience.



Alternatives to land acquisitions: Agricultural investments and collaborative business models

Edited by: Lorenzo Cotula, Rebeca Leonard

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in private-sector investment in agriculture. Some have welcomed this trend as a bearer of new livelihood opportunities in lower- and middle-income countries. Others have raised concerns about the possible social impacts, including loss of local rights to land, water and other natural resources; threats to local food security; and more generally, the risk that large-scale investments may marginalise family farmers. Drawing on discussions from an international workshop, this report discusses models to structure investments that leave land and share value with local farmers.

2010, ISBN 978-1-84369-786-2, 133pp
For a free hardcopy email: newbooks@iied.org
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/125671IIED>



Making the most of agricultural investment: A survey of business models that provide opportunities for smallholders

Lorenzo Cotula, Sonja Vermeulen

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in agricultural investment. In many cases, this has translated into large-scale acquisitions of farmland in lower- and middle-income countries. These acquisitions have triggered lively if polarised debates about 'land grabbing'. But less attention has been paid to alternative ways of structuring agricultural investments. These include a wide range of more collaborative arrangements between investors and local smallholders and communities, such as diverse types of contract farming schemes, joint ventures, management contracts and new supply-chain relationships. This report explores the range of business models that can be used to structure agricultural investments in lower- and middle-income countries, providing an alternative to large-scale land acquisitions.

2010, ISBN 978-1-84369-774-9, 110pp
For a free hardcopy email: newbooks@iied.org
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/125661IIED>



Why it makes more sense to invest in farmers than in farmland

Lorenzo Cotula

IIED opinion papers are a platform for our researchers, partners and affiliates to air their views on today's key issues in sustainable development. This one argues that governments and investors should properly consider the wider range of options to invest in agriculture than rushing into land deals. In many parts of the world, family farmers have proved efficient and dynamic. Working with them can generate healthy returns, avoid the risks associated with land acquisitions, and improve farmers' livelihoods.

2010, <http://pubs.iied.org/17082IIED>

Features and outcomes of agricultural investments

What impacts are agricultural investments having on host countries and communities? Through case studies of different investment models in Africa and Asia, this work sheds light on what works where, what does not, and why. Additional research is ongoing in Cambodia, Ghana, Mali and Zambia.



Joint ventures in agriculture: Lessons from land reform projects in South Africa

Edward Lahiff, Nerhene Davis, Tshililo Manenzhe

'Inclusive business models' have attracted renewed interest in recent years, as part of wider debates about growing agricultural investment in developing countries. This report discusses joint ventures in South Africa's agricultural sector. The South African experience features major specificities linked to the country's history and recent land reform programme. Land reform beneficiaries entered into a range of joint ventures with commercial partners. The report provides a cautionary tale for international debates about inclusive business models, while also identifying more promising models that are now starting to emerge.

English: 2012, ISBN 978-1-84369-840-1, 74pp
For a free hardcopy email: newbooks@iied.org
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12569IIED>

French: forthcoming



Community-investor business models: Lessons from the oil palm sector in East Malaysia

Fadzilah Majid Cooke, Sumei Toh, Justine Vaz

Concerns about food and energy security, coupled with increasing returns from agriculture, have increased interest in agricultural investments in developing countries. Public debates about 'land grabbing' have questioned the socio-economic impacts of large-scale land acquisitions. There is new interest in business models involving collaboration between companies and communities. In Eastern Malaysia, community-investor business models have been implemented for several years to expand oil palm cultivation in customarily held lands. This report documents lessons learned through case studies of different business models.

English: 2012, ISBN 978-1-84369-841-8, 78pp
For a free hardcopy email: newbooks@iied.org
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12570IIED>

French: forthcoming

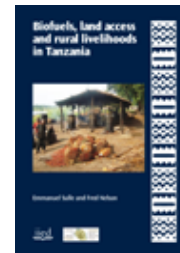


Biofuels, land access and rural livelihoods in Mozambique

Isilda Nhantumbo, Alda Salomão

In recent years, global demand for biofuels has increased as a result of changing oil prices coupled with concerns over energy security and climate change. In Mozambique, private investors have expressed growing interest in biofuel production. Although this trend may create new livelihood opportunities, it may also undermine access to land and natural resources for rural people. This report explores the early impacts of the biofuels boom on access to land and on local livelihoods in Mozambique. It draws on fieldwork on biofuel projects representing different business models for agricultural production.

2010, ISBN 978-1-84369-744-2, 48pp, US\$25.00,
Order No. 12563IIED
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12563IIED>



Biofuels, land access and rural livelihoods in Tanzania

Emmanuel Sulle, Fred Nelson

For African countries that are non-oil producers, biofuel production has the potential to provide a substitute for costly oil imports, which are one of the major uses of foreign exchange and sources of inflation in African economies. It could also provide a new source of agricultural income in rural areas. Tanzania is one African country that has seen a rapid increase in biofuel production and investment proposals during the past several years. This report describes existing patterns of biofuel development and crop cultivation in Tanzanian rural areas in order to improve the understanding of how the potential threats and opportunities from biofuels expansion are playing out in reality.

2009, ISBN 978-1-84369-749-7, 75pp, US\$25.00,
Order No. 12560IIED
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12560IIED>

Contracts and legal frameworks

Together with applicable national and international law, contracts define the terms of an investment project, and the way risks, costs and benefits are distributed. Who has the authority to sign the contract and through what process greatly influences the extent to which people's voices are heard. Yet very little is known about the exact terms of the land deals. Public scrutiny of these deals is needed. Publications on this topic include analyses of land deals and their wider legal framework, and capacity building materials for government and civil society.



Land deals in Africa: What is in the contracts?

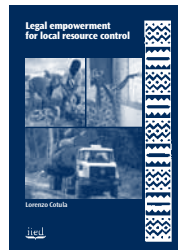
Acquisitions foncières en Afrique: Que disent les contrats?

Lorenzo Cotula

Over the past few years, agribusiness, investment funds and government agencies have been acquiring long-term rights over large areas of land in Africa. Together with applicable national and international law, contracts define the terms of an investment project, and the way risks, costs and benefits are distributed. Who has the authority to sign the contract and through what process greatly influences the extent to which people's voices can be heard. Yet very little is known about the exact terms of the land deals. Drawing on the legal analysis of twelve land deals from different parts of Africa, this report discusses the contractual issues for which public scrutiny is most needed, and aims to promote informed public debate about them.

English: 2011, ISBN 978-1-84369-804-3, 48pp, US\$25.00, Order No. 125681IED
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/125681IED.html>

French: 2011, ISBN 978-1-84369-811-1, 50pp, US\$25.00, Order No. 12568F1IED
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12568F1IED>



Legal empowerment for local resource control: Securing local resource rights within foreign investment projects in Africa

Lorenzo Cotula

This report draws lessons from experience of using legal processes to secure local resource rights when dealing with foreign investment projects in Africa. It sets out the case for taking law seriously as a tool for empowerment and positive change. It argues that designing and implementing legal tools that deliver positive change also depend on tackling power relations and other social, cultural, political and economic factors. The report contributes to ongoing debates on the relationship between law and power by developing a conceptual framework and linking this to the empirical analysis of law and power issues within foreign investment projects in Africa. It will be of interest to development lawyers, development practitioners working at a macro-planning level and researchers.

2007, ISBN 978-1-84369-667-4, 127pp, US\$25.00, Order No. 125421IED
To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/125421IED>

Journal articles and external publications authored by IIED staff

In addition to IIED reports, IIED staff have published on large-scale land acquisitions in international journals such as *International Affairs* (2009), *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2010 and 2012), *Food Security* (2011) and *Development* (2011), and have co-authored a report published by the International Land Coalition (2012).

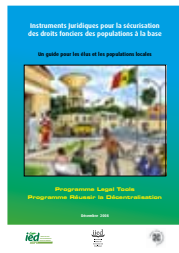
A detailed legal analysis of the national and international law regulating natural resource investments in Africa was published by Routledge in 2011:

Cotula, L. 2011. *Human Rights, Natural Resource and Investment Law in a Globalised World. Shades of grey in the shadow of the law*. Routledge, London, New York.

Legal empowerment as a strategy for change

As land competition increases, groups with insecure land rights may lose out. Legal empowerment is about people having more secure land rights and greater control over decisions affecting them. But legal rights alone are not enough — adequate capacity is needed to exercise them in practice, and collective action can help give real leverage to legal rights. Together with partners in Africa and Asia, IIED tests legal empowerment tools in selected sites and shares lessons from existing innovation. Because land pressures come from multiple sources, this work covers extractives, tourism and agriculture. The work is mainly about capacity building and lesson-sharing work, but a few publications are showcased here.

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Instruments juridiques pour la sécurisation des droits fonciers des populations à la base. Un guide pour les élus et les populations locales

IED Afrique

This publication is a legal literacy training on land rights and opportunities offered by decentralisation within the context of tourism investments in Senegal. The publication makes extensive use of visuals and comics. It builds on test trainings for paralegals in a coastal area of Senegal.

2009, IED Afrique/IIED

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/10559FIIED>



Investment contracts and sustainable development: How to make contracts for fairer and more sustainable natural resource investments, Natural Resource Issues 20

Lorenzo Cotula

Investment contracts define the terms of an investment project and the extent to which it advances — or undermines — sustainable development. Government capacity to negotiate and manage contracts and civil society capacity to scrutinise government dealings are key. Drawing on test trainings in Ghana and Central Asia and targeting host governments and national civil society, this guide discusses how to structure contracts for natural resource investments in ways that maximise sustainable development outcomes. The guide focuses on extractive industries but also covers agriculture.

2010, ISBN 978-1-84369-765-7, 104pp, US\$35.00, Order No. 17507IIED

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/17507IIED>



Legal empowerment in practice: Using legal tools to secure land rights in Africa

Edited by Lorenzo Cotula, Paul Mathieu

In March 2008, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, IIED, and the Faculty of Law of the University of Ghana jointly organised an international workshop to promote exchange of experience among practitioners in this field. Over the two days of the workshop, some 25 practitioners from different parts of Africa, together with a few practitioners and researchers from international institutions and from Europe, shared lessons and learnt from each others' experiences with legal empowerment. This report captures the highlights of workshop discussions.

2008, ISBN 978-1-84369-703-9, 152pp

For a free hardcopy email: newbooks@iied.org

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/12552IIED>



Manuel à l'intention des formateurs des communautés vivant dans les zones minières

Djibonding Dembelé, Moussa Djiré, Mamadou Fomba, Amadou Keita, Issa Makan Keita, Bala Konaré, Nagoungou Sanou, Kadari Traoré, Kader Traoré

This publication is a legal literacy training on the rights of people affected by mining developments in Mali. The publication combines legal information with use of a storyline and visuals. It builds on legal literacy training camps held in two mining areas of Mali's Sikasso Region.

2010, Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche en Sociologie et Droit Appliqué/IIED

To download free: <http://pubs.iied.org/G02753>

Acknowledgements

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The International Institute for Environment and Development is one of the world's top policy research organisations working in the field of sustainable development. With its broadbased network of partners, IIED is helping to tackle the biggest issues of our times — from climate change and cities to the pressures on natural resources and the forces shaping global markets.

IIED publishes the results of this work in a variety of platforms: from policy briefings and working papers, to reports and books.

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About IIED Land Team

IIED's Land Rights Team works to secure local land rights in lower-income countries by generating evidence, promoting public debate, developing tools to strengthen capacity, advocating for better policy and practice, and supporting international lesson sharing and alliance building.

**International Institute
for Environment and
Development**

80–86 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8NH
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
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