

Partnership for Action

Information Ecosystem for Land Governance

Washington D.C., USA

17-18 March 2018

Workshop Report



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Executive Summary

With land rights finally at a point of global attention, the land sector is at a unique and pivotal moment, where land tenure issues can and must be brought to the highest political levels and be placed firmly on the international development agenda. Our goal is of course, to contribute to the success of the SDGs, but also to be part of sustainable development in its real and practical sense. We now need to work together effectively and share knowledge about land rights issues with key and wider audiences, as well as with one another. An essential component of this will be effective, organized and well-managed knowledge sharing. Most importantly, however, it is our job to ensure the link between the information ecosystem and improved tenure security for vulnerable people around the world is made! This was the foundation for convening the ***Partnership for Action: Information Ecosystem for Land Governance*** workshop.

In order to encourage coordinated action on this front, the Land Portal, along with partners Resource Equity, Habitat for Humanity, the Rights and Resources Initiative and LandMark gathered 40 eager participants over a two day period. Colleagues from across the land community brought their own expertise and background to the discussions, allowing for concrete brainstorming on both data management and dissemination, lessons learnt and the way forward in this regard. More specifically the following key elements were discussed: **information gaps with regards to land issues**, strategies on **how to increase access to information and how to use it in order to address identified land issues**, as well as **to collectively raise awareness and build capacities to gather and communicate knowledge to reach a wider impact and be part of the information ecosystem**.

As a group, all aspects of the data cycle and its challenges were discussed. With regards to **data collection and analytics**, participants indicated that while there may be data available, it is often not the right data - either it does not incorporate gender issues or the collection methods are not participatory. The collection and analytics process needs to be designed in a manner that allows the outputs to be reasonably user friendly and that the audience/user of the data is clearly defined from the outset. Issues relating to security risks and not being able to determine the reliability of the information relate to **data management** elements of the data cycle. In the **data dissemination**-context, challenges to communicate to certain audiences were highlighted as challenges. Grassroots communities and women, in particular, were identified as groups that do not have the same access to data. Governments were also identified as an important source of data, that cannot always be determined whether their processes and data are completely transparent. Finally, in terms of **data feedback**, participants indicated that they feel that they do not have enough time to consider the meaning and value of data that they are producing, particularly to link it to practical implementation.

A **concrete plan and commitments** were made in two areas. The first area, **data dissemination & communication**, there were discussions around how to ensure land data influences positive change; we want to choose pioneers who can bring land data to a policy level and to publish data strategically by looking into fields such as data journalism, for example. For the second group, which focused on **data sharing**, we decided that in order to work together more effectively, the most pressing challenge we face is knowing who is doing what. Therefore, we want to collectively look at existing information sources per country and ongoing efforts. That scoping will be used as a basis to identify a number of countries where the Partnership can go in depth and harmonize efforts within the information ecosystem.

Ultimately, the coming together of such a diverse group of actors means that we want to coordinate efforts, rather than duplicate them. We look forward to seeing what lies ahead!

1. Introduction

1.1 Report structure

This report is intended to give workshop participants an overview of the main discussions, themes and decisions taken during the **Partnership for Action** workshop. Its' purpose is to recapitulate the plenary and side discussions which took place, as well as to serve as an impetus and catalyst for collaborative action. We encourage workshop participants to provide feedback on the report and to refer back to it when necessary. We also hope that this will serve as an important piece initial piece in the framework of future **Partnership for Action** workshops and events.

1.2 Aim & Objectives of Workshop

The inclusion of land indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals has created an unprecedented momentum around land data collection and monitoring. The workshop was intended to reflect on our approach to dealing with data collection and monitoring - and the status of the information ecosystem in the land sector, and explore our individual roles within that. The concrete objectives at the outset were:

- **Identify information gaps** (gaps in existence, accessibility or abilities to re-use) with regards to concrete land rights issues;
- Collectively raising awareness and building capacities of participants to **increase access to information and use it** in order to address identified land rights issues;
- Collectively raising awareness and building capacities of communications participants **to gather and communicate knowledge** to reach a wider impact and be part of and promote the information ecosystem;
- Collectively having participants **implement and adopt action plan** and become part of the information ecosystem.

1.3 Date and Venue

The Partnership for Action workshop took place on the weekend of 17-18 March, 2018, in Washington DC at the National Union Building. Forty participants from civil society organizations, NGOs and universities came together throughout the two-day workshop to discuss issues around data availability, collection, management and dissemination. A full list of participants can be found in Annex A of this workshop report.

2. Summary of Discussions

The organizers introduced the aim and objectives of the workshop. The 'information ecosystem' is a concept often used within the Open Data community and encompasses the following aspects:

- **Information** that can drive change when delivered into the right hands into the right context;
- **People** who all have their respective roles and expertise within the ecosystem;
- **Attitude** to collaborate, to learn from and use information and to provide feedback to information providers to collectively, efficiently and continuously improve quality, ensure relevancy of information and ensure the information drives change;
- **Infrastructure** that allows for improved discoverability of existing information on both national and global levels, more fluid information exchange between databases and ultimately enabling information to reach the person and context where it can drive change.

2.1 Identification of challenges

In order to explore the status of the information ecosystem and the participants' role within the ecosystem, the participants were asked to share two things:

- 1) **Their contributions** in terms of information and expertise to the ecosystem;
- 2) **The challenges** they face when dealing with information and data.



From collecting and categorizing the challenges, it became evident that the participants experience challenges in all aspects of the data cycle. With regards to **data collection and analytics**, participants indicated that while there may be data available, it is often not the right data - either it does not incorporate gender issues or the collection methods are not participatory. The collection and analytics process from the outset needs to be designed in a manner that allows the outputs to be reasonably user friendly and that the audience/user of the data is clearly defined from the outset. Issues relating to dealing with security risks and licensing as a publisher of information, or on the user side: not being able to find reliable data or determine the reliability of the information that can be found, are directly related to **data management** elements of the data cycle. Security risks and the stakes of preventing harm versus being open, were also challenges attributed in the **data dissemination**-context, along with several challenges relating to the dissemination for certain audiences; grassroots communities and women, in particular, were identified as groups that do not have the same access to data, nor is data published in a way that is of any use to them. Governments were also identified as an important source of data, that cannot always be determined whether their processes and data are completely transparent. Finally, in terms of **data feedback**, participants indicated that they feel that they do not have enough time to consider the meaning and value of data that they are producing, particularly to link it to practical implementation.

2.2 Talk show

Five participants were invited to highlight their approaches, challenges and successes with regards to dealing with data in their daily work or specific projects. **Pranab Choudhrey from NRMCI India** highlighted their work as coordinator of Land Governance Assessment Framework (LGAF) in India, as well as the challenges around working with data to create the "State of Land in India" report, launched in February 2018. **Ms. Jenna DiPaolo from the Rights and Resources Initiative** addressed data issues from a communication and dissemination point of view, and stressed the importance of sharing data and starting a conversation based on the findings. The perspective from a global platform on community and indigenous land rights was highlighted by **Mr. Peter Veit from LandMark/World Resources Institute**. He discussed



LandMark, the user friendliness of the tool, the multiple layers as well as the fact that clicking on any community land on LandMark will lead the user to be able to view forest cover, concessions and carbon stocks. **Ms. Tamzin Hudson from Habitat for Humanity Africa and Middle East** highlighted case studies of community mappings in slums in South Africa, and the challenges of bringing different stakeholders together, from slum communities to

local governments. Finally, **Mr. Ward Anseeuw from the International Land Coalition Secretariat** shared the perspective from the Dashboard initiative, and the need for data and information that is people-driven, rather than top-down.

Discussions sparked whether and how a partnership around the different initiatives can be established to synergize these ongoing efforts. Do we need to avoid duplication or should we not blindly stare at collaboration and coordination, but celebrate different perspectives to the same or a similar issue? Is it necessary to have a concrete plan of action, or can we reflect on discussions and identify how we can complement ongoing activities?

2.3 Data Cycle World Cafe

For the World Cafe, participants were invited to join the different stations that represented an aspect of the data life cycle. For each data cycle, participants delved into the user needs and the capacity needed to bring forth good quality data that can impact change, and the challenges and possible solutions that came with that.

Data collection & analytics - The station led by Stephanie Keene from RRI and Liz Alden Wiley from LandMark highlighted the need that the perspective from “real” and vulnerable people needs to be captured when collecting data, which is a considerable challenge. Other needs that were identified were a standardization of terms, as well as spending time and local resources to analyze and synthesize existing data, before collecting ‘new’ data. Concrete solutions to these issues would require: 1) Foresight (institutional commitment to gather and analyze data); 2) Time; 3) Money; and 4) Human resources.



Data management - The data management station, led by Lisette Mey from the Land Portal Foundation, flipped the perspective of the participants and questioned: as a user of data, what information do you need to know to use the data? All groups noted similar aspects: knowing the source of data, its reputation and other stakes, being able to determine accuracy, knowing a methodology, etc. A producer and/or publisher of data is responsible to provide the user these elements. In other words: a publisher should provide good and standard metadata (Dublin Core metadata standard). Other elements that were highlighted with regards to data management were data ethics: when preparing for data dissemination, publishers should consider that their data might harm people. To establish trust as a data collector, we should publish data management plans with clear criteria on when data should and should not be published to avoid ad hoc solutions on sensitivity of data.

Data dissemination - The dissemination station was led by Jane Katz from Habitat for Humanity and Jenna DiPaolo from RRI, and posed the participants with questions such as: why are we disseminating data? For whom are we disseminating data? What tools should we use for each of the target audiences? Discussions differed per group, but an overall conclusion was that specific audiences of the data should be prioritized. Different tools should be used for different users: governments, financial institutions, private sector, local communities -- all require a different approach. The concrete take-away from the data dissemination station was that we need understandable and relevant communication plans. There should be consistency across the board, address politically sensitive issues and give user groups incentives to use data. Dissemination is a critical aspect to tailor the data message to specific groups.

Data feedback - Two questions were addressed in the data feedback station, which was led by Renee Giovarelli from Resource Equity, namely: is data correct, and is data being used? Once data has been disseminated, we have to ensure who the audience is and who we are seeking feedback from? The participants mentioned that the ideal and most useful is going back to the community and verifying that what you found reflects what they told you. The alternative way would be to use different data sources to see if the data tells the same story. Participants discussed the fact that it is also easier to get verbal feedback as opposed to expecting people to send feedback emails. NGO grants often do not give money to provide feedback. We want to ensure that we have enough feedback on data without having an excess of feedback, which is often the case.

3. Outcomes & Action Plan

Throughout the two days of the workshop, a few concrete actions points came forward that the land sector could take towards a more inclusive and effective information ecosystem on land:

- Workshop participants feel that they are having challenges in all aspects of the data cycle and that there is **room for improvement** at each of these stages;
- In terms of **data collection**, a concrete action point could be to endorse a clear standard for collecting data that the land community can follow, and finding a way to communicate that in an effective manner;
- For **data management**, information providers should use and publish according to standard metadata models (i.e. Dublin Core) to describe their data in a way that is useful for any type of user. Besides that, sensitivity and privacy elements of data should carefully be considered and published in a data management plan, to avoid ad hoc data management approaches;
- When **disseminating data**, simply making a report or findings available online is not enough. One should seriously consider and explore how to make data resonate with different audience groups;
- Finally, when discussing the data cycle, it became clear that the **data feedback** stage of the cycle should become more of a priority and should be funded by donors: we need to figure out how to do a better job at bridging the global and local gap.



In essence, the two issues of priority that were discussed in more detail in parallel groups were the following:

- 1) ***How can we communicate data and its messages to the right audiences?; and***
- 2) ***How can we share data more effectively to work in partnership in the information ecosystem?***

3.1 Data Dissemination Action Plan

The parallel group focusing on data dissemination felt that we need a critical mass of people who are supporting stories of data and **making the data talk**, for advocacy and influencing purposes. The three main points that came out of this parallel session were the following:

- 1) **WHAT:** We want to see land data being used to influence positive changes to land governance policies. We want our land data to connect to people and resonate with designated audiences;
- 2) **HOW:** We want to get usable data into the right hands, as opposed to publishing data without aim. An example of this could be the co-authoring of blogs for policy makers so that they have a better understanding of the importance of data, using infographics as well as looking more into data journalism;
- 3) **WHO:** We want to choose **pioneers** who could bring data to a policy level and those that could carry it to a more regional agenda, for example. We have to decide what we want our data to say.

3.2 Data Sharing Action Plan

Some of the main initial questions that came out of this parallel session were in which areas the cooperation and coordination were most needed. In which areas is a Partnership for Action most needed?

Many initiatives exist to **identify land data indicators** and collect data according to those. Partnerships have formed around the identification of different land indicators already, therefore that is not the most pressing challenge. Another element that came up was how to think of a more **unified language and a standard set of concepts** to minimize confusion in the vast information ecosystem on land. The most pressing challenge however that was identified in this session, was simply knowing where collaboration and partnership can be established - **how do we know who is doing what, and where?**

The main points that came out of this session were the following:

- 1) **WHAT:** We want to find a basis to collaborate when dealing with any aspect of the data cycle to avoid duplications, harmonize data efforts and ultimately work towards an inclusive and democratized information ecosystem;
- 2) **HOW:** We will begin with scoping data sources in a number different countries, and assess what those sources bring to the table. The Land Portal Foundation will start with a survey among workshop participants to gauge where these actors are working, what they are working on and where overlaps exist. From there, we will establish partnerships in each country to harmonize activities around data where it is needed;
- 3) **WHO:** We want one focal point from each country that reports back. We want to make sure that they coordinate between different efforts from the countries.

Annex I - Workshop agenda

AGENDA

Day 1: Saturday March 17th 2018		
Time	Activity	Room
08:00-09:00 AM	Networking breakfast & Registration	Kitchen (3rd floor)
09:00-10:00 AM	Opening & Keynote speech	Plenary room (4th floor)
10:00-11:00 AM	Challenge identification exercise	Plenary (4th floor)
<i>Coffee break</i>		
11:30-01:00 PM	Talk show panel <u>Panelists:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Pranab Choudhrey - NRMCI India • Mr. Peter Veit - World Resource Institute / LandMark • Ms. Jenna DiPaolo - Rights and Resources Initiative • Ms. Tamzin Hudson - Habitat for Humanity Africa • Mr. Ward Anseeuw - International Land Coalition. 	Plenary room (4th floor)
<i>Lunch</i>		Kitchen (3rd floor)
02:00-03:30 PM	Data Cycle World Cafe	Plenary room (4th floor)
<i>Coffee break</i>		
04:00-05:00 PM	Reflections & Conclusions	Plenary room (4th floor)
06:00 PM	Cocktails & Informal dinner	Circa