



web-workshop series



This report provides a summary of an online workshop on March 16th 2020, organised in place of a planned fringe meeting of the World Bank Land and Poverty Conference which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2-hour digital workshop brought together over 40 participants from across the world to discuss key data and key open data use-cases for land governance. This report is written based on workshop recordings and shared notes.

# Towards an open up guide on land governance

March 16th 2020 web-workshop report





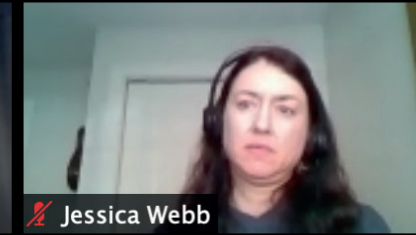
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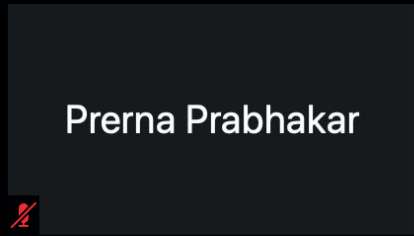
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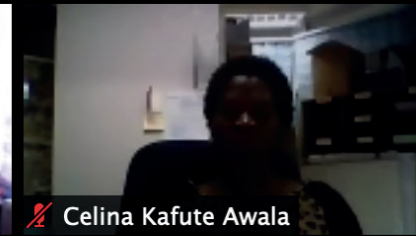
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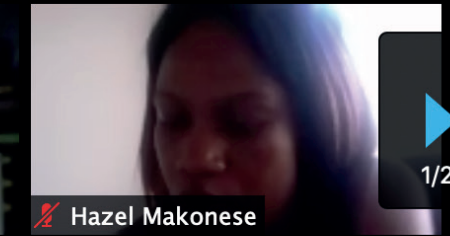
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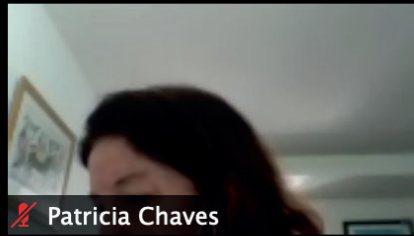
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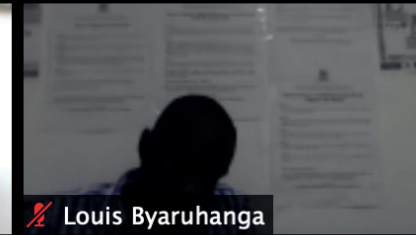
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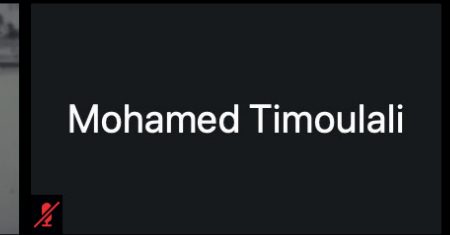
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# Setting the scene

The workshop was organised by *The Land Portal Foundation*, *The Open Data Charter*, the *Open Government Partnership* research team, and the *Global Data Barometer*.

The **Land Portal Foundation** is a global initiative that works to increase access to land data and to nurture an information ecosystem that can support better-informed decisions and policies designed to secure land rights for the most marginalised, support the fight against corruption, as well as to improve transparency and accountability. Over the last decade, the Land Portal has supported dialogue on the availability and interoperability of land-sector information, finding that whilst the amount of data and information on land has grown exponentially over the past decade, increased data availability doesn't necessarily mean increased data accessibility, increased use of the data or increased data accountability.



**Laura Meggiolaro**  
team leader,  
LandPortal

In 2019, the Land Portal hosted an *online dialogue on open data, land and anti-corruption* which identified priority datasets including: cadastres, land registries, land ownership translations, land use data, and data on licenses and permits. Recognising the need to take a responsible and context-sensitive approach to open data on land, the dialogue also identified sub-categorisations, distinguishing, for example, between disclosure of all land ownership records vs. only disclosing public owned land, or corporate owned land.



**Agustina De Luca**  
network director,  
Open Data Charter

The **Open Data Charter** is a collaboration between governments and experts working to open up data. It was founded in 2015 around six principles for how governments should be publishing information: (1) open data by default; (2) timely and comprehensive data; (3) accessibility and usability; (4) comparability and interoperability; (5) data for improved governance and citizen engagement; and (6) data for inclusive development and innovation. The Charter has supported development of a number of sectoral 'Open Up Guides' which are developed through a three stage process of design, testing and refinement. These guides set out priority datasets that respond to key sectoral challenges, and that should be made available in open, comparable forms.



**Joseph Foti**  
chief research officer,  
Open Government Partnership

The **Open Government Partnership (OGP)** brings together 78 national governments, and more than 20 local government partners, along with civil society organisations, academics and private sector actors, to co-create bi-annual action plans that commit to actions on open government. Over 4000 commitments have been made to date, and these are monitored through self-assessment, civil society feedback, and the OGP Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM).

108 of the commitments made (by 50 OGP members) address land, with the primary areas of focus being:

- » **Climate change and environment** (36 commitments)
- » **Extractives industries** (28 commitments)
- » **Anti-corruption** (33 commitments) and;
- » **Spatial planning** (25 commitments).

There is a strong overlap between extractives and anti-corruption commitments, and these often reference the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Spatial planning-related commitments are more likely to come from local governments. Some of these focus on citizen participation in land use and spatial planning. An Open Up Guide could help inform further ambitious OGP commitments in relation to land.



**Tim Davies**  
principal investigator,  
Open Data Barometer

The **Global Data Barometer** is a new study of data for the public good, looking at data governance, open data availability and data use. It will include a component on land, informed by the Open Up Guide, and responding to learning from **The State of Open Data project**, which reviewed open data practice across 16 sectors. Both the Barometer and the Open Up Guide will also draw upon the 2019 Land Portal dialogue on **open land data in the fight against corruption** which identify a range of relevant datasets, and explored the **guidance gap** faced by governments seeking to open up data.

# Break-out groups: synthesis

Open Up Guides describe how to *publish with purpose*, prioritising datasets that can meet a wide range of needs, and thinking about the way in which data is published. Using an abridged design canvas from the Open Data Charter, four groups explored *key land governance challenges, key stakeholders, data needs, limitations, and priority use cases*.

YOUR LAND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGE	PEOPLE MOST IMPACTED	YOUR DATA NEEDS	LIMITATIONS IN DATA SOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» What is your primary purpose for collecting and using data?</li><li>» What open data propositions are you considering (i.e. improve government, empower citizens, create economic opportunity, solve public problems)?</li><li>» How are you contributing to the land governance agenda? Is this a global or national commitment?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Who are your target audience and key partners?</li><li>» Which individual groups, demographics or organisations will be positively affected by this project? How?</li><li>» Are others working in this space? Who?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» What data sources are available that can help address this problem?</li><li>» How are these data collected and by whom?</li><li>» What missing data do you wish you had? Is there any personal data that is otherwise sensitive?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» Are there any limitations that could influence your project's outcomes?</li></ul> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» bias in data collection, gaps or omission in data, provenance and data quality</li><li>» capacities to analyse, algorithmic discrimination</li><li>» other issues affecting decisions such as team composition</li></ul>
<b>USE CASES</b>			
What are possible use cases for the identified data types? (What difference would it make if the data needs above were met?)			

## LAND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES AND STAKEHOLDERS

Workshop participants discussed a wide range of purposes for data collecting, including academic research, policy advocacy, designing government policy and interoperability frameworks, supporting spatial planning, improving tax collection, evaluating policy impacts, supporting land investment, and monitoring and addressing land-grabs.

### KEY CHALLENGES

Specific challenges surfaced through discussions included:

- » **Improving land ownership records.** This may be addressed through local capture of a wide range of overlapping data points that can be used to evidence title and store detailed data about land. Documented ownership can support tax collection, and can aid landowners with access to finance through secured bank loans. Decisions on data collection may be affected by concerns about how potentially sensitive data points (occupancy; soil quality) might be misused if made open.
- » **Addressing women's land insecurity.** This can often be due to women being omitted from title documents of joint owned land. One participant reported local primary survey work in Brazil that identified this problem, and then supported advocacy to improve women's prioritised inclusion on land titles. *Gender analysis* of land ownership data was identified as a priority issue, although culture and regulation varies between countries on the collection and sharing of gender data. Another participant noted the importance of understanding *perceptions of tenure security* as well as objective measures on whether people have legal titles or documentation.
- » **Tracking the impact of policies.** Researchers and policy makers need to understand whether land use interventions are having their anticipated impact on poverty reduction, improved public health and education. This can require access to data on changes in land use, investments and funding, and outcomes in a wide range of domains.
- » **Improving interoperability of data across government.** In addition to the ministries or agencies responsible for land registration (which may be national, regional or local), agriculture ministries, mining and resource ministries, and ministries of finance all use and manage information about land. One participant reported work on formulating a *national land strategy*, and the need to identify the data that should be available and interoperable across different ministries as part of this. This may be linked to the development and openness of national geospatial infrastructures.
- » **Upgrading informal settlements and supporting spatial planning.** Local communities should have control over data about their areas, and ability to work with that data to shape plans and policies. Use of data for local spatial planning might be proactive (developing community-led plans), and reactive (monitoring proposed plans and making sure communities are able to respond).
- » **Promoting responsible land investment, and addressing land grabs.** From the perspective of farmers groups this might involve questions of how to protect the quality of the soil and address erosion, as well as tracking which investors are taking ownership of land, and protecting against dispossession.

- » **Putting remote observations in context.** Projects like Global Forest Watch can detect changes in land use using remote sensing, but need data on the presence of land-use restrictions, licensing and local land ownership in order to put that information in context and understand how to respond to potentially illegal deforestation.
- » **Addressing land-related corruption.** Land can be used as an asset to launder illicit finance, leading to inflated land prices in particular markets. Journalists have used land ownership data to identify corruption, and call for prosecutions or asset recovery. However, opacity of land ownership data (including through offshore companies, or through complex options contracts), can act as a barrier to this work.
- » **Understanding different kinds of tenure and land** including range lands and agricultural lands, in order to support policy-making, responding to common gaps in government knowledge or policy awareness of different kinds of land and land use.
- » **Disaster planning and recovery**, including developing mitigation measures for floods and climate disasters, and supporting humanitarian response and longer-term reconstruction response after natural disasters.
- » **Conflict resolution.** Land conflicts may be easier to address without the common situation of asymmetrical information. It can be easier to resolve conflicts if everyone has access to the same data.

## STAKEHOLDERS

A wide range of stakeholders were mentioned through the workshop, including:

- » Government officials in land ministries
- » Government officials in related ministries
- » Taxation authorities
- » Academic researchers
- » Community based organisations
- » Ecologists working to prevent deforestation
- » Farmers and pastoralists
- » Banks and lenders
- » Land investors
- » Journalists
- » Private and non-profit firms involved in providing land registration services

The next stage of guide development may need to carry out further work to develop a more detailed understanding of the particular data needs and challenges different stakeholders face.



## DATA NEEDS

Across the break-out groups, a number of *core questions* emerged, although the way these may be answered in different country contexts will depend on the data infrastructures available.

- » **Land parcels and land use.** *What are the boundaries of a particular land parcel? What is this land used for? What is the land designated for?*

Data to address these questions might come from a *national cadastre*; from *national licensing datasets*; from *concessions data*; from local spatial planning and *zoning data*; or from community generated datasets. Use of open geospatial standards is vital to allow this data to be connected to other datasets, such as remote-sensing.

- » **Rights and ownership.** *What rights and restrictions exist for a given parcel of land? Who holds those rights?*

This recognises that we often need to go beyond simple notions of 'land ownership' to understand the range of rights that relate to parcels of land. For some use cases, we need to identify the named owners and rights-holders. In other cases, it is important to understand demographic details at an aggregate level (e.g. amount of female-held land), or to know non-personally identifying information about rights (e.g. land that is held or controlled by government or corporations).

- » **Transactions.** *How are rights over land, or the uses to which land is being put, changing? Who is gaining or losing rights?*

While some use cases require timely access to new transactions, others call for an understanding of *historic transactions*, to track how land rights and use have

changed over time. Discussions noted the importance of collecting, but not necessarily publishing, data on all relevant transactions, including in-family transactions.

- » **Institutions.** *How well are land governance institutions functioning?*

This might be captured through objective data on investments in land registration, the percentage of a country where land ownership has been mapped, and the quality of digitised data, or through *perception-based metrics* on how secure people feel in their tenure.

In addition to these core questions, a wide range of other specific data needs were cited in discussions, including:

- » **Information on government plans** for land at a national and local level, to help support others to plan their land investments.
- » **Land valuations** including those used for taxation.
- » **Tax collection information** including information on payments from large land investors or extractives forms.
- » **Land occupancy rates** captured through local surveys or remote-sensing. For example, to understand the number of people living in a particular compound.
- » **Land contracts** including the detail of the rights and responsibilities they confer.
- » **Soil quality** and change of soil quality over time, measured through local data collection and remote sensing.
- » **Policy evaluations** which may be captured through specific data collection, or by comparing areas with and without policy reform using other data such as census datasets.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

A number of the data needs discussed are included in existing Open Up guides on *Agriculture*, *Anti-Corruption* and *Climate Change*, including but not limited to

- » *Land Use & Productivity Data* (Agriculture)
- » *Soil Data* (Agriculture)
  - » *Carbon Stock in Soil* (Climate Change)
- » *Land Register* (Anti-Corruption)
- » *Tax Records* (Anti-Corruption)
- » Georeferenced land-use data
  - » *Concessions Agreements* (Climate Change)
  - » *Location of Forest Plantations* (Climate Change)
  - » *Data on land use conversion rates* (Climate Change)

The creation of a full Open Up Guide on Land Governance will need to review whether the dataset requirements set out in these other guides meet the needs of land-sector stakeholders and use-cases. From this, it should be possible to identify any particular considerations that should be taken into account when these categories of data are opened up to improve their utility for land governance.

## LIMITATIONS TO OVERCOME

Break-out groups considered some of the limitations and barriers that may be faced in work to open up, and improve use of, land governance data. A full Open Up Guide will need to respond to these issues.

### PRIORITISATION

Discussions noted that there may be *different pathways in different countries* to move towards an open land governance data ecosystem. As one participant put it:

*“Many countries are at very different levels, and don’t even have land data digitized. What do you want to prioritize there? In analog data, what needs to be digitized? The other thing is even when you prioritize, you have to ask for what? Once you have examples of what it is used for the more you can convince that other data be open and used, and need to work on the impacts of that and when you have the first wave you can push other government entities to open up”*

### GENDER DISAGGREGATION

Understanding the gender dynamics of land ownership, and making sure datasets and data standards are gender sensitive is important. Researchers often want access to gender disaggregated data, but cannot always get this because such data has not historically been collected, or data systems don’t support it. Participants reported that, in some countries, laws can prohibit collection or sharing of gender disaggregated data.

## DATA USE CAPACITY

Research by GIZ has found that the capacity of potential data users to understand, access and make use of data is a major barrier to uptake of existing resources. This is likely to limit uptake of, and advocacy for, new open data sources. When understanding of data is limited, fears about misuse of data, and low confidence in ways of making responsible use of data can act as a major barrier.

A number of participants noted that whilst data might be available, if only professionals or small groups know about it and how to use it, opening up the data may not have the desired effects.

## INTERMEDIARIES

Intermediaries can play a critical role in translating data into use. This can be both in terms of technical translation: taking complex geospatial and other datasets and making them usable by local communities—and in terms of making data accessible in local languages. A wide range of community groups, universities and other institutions may act as intermediaries, but are likely to need capacity building support to do this effectively.

## PRIVACY CONCERNS

One participant reported particular concerns amongst academics, who want to make more use of data, but are unsure of how to collect and manage data in ways that don't violate privacy. Addressing privacy effectively requires sensitivity to context, as one participant working on open land contracts reported:

*“We have to do a lot of work to remove meta-data from contract documents shared with us before we publish them to protect the privacy and security of grassroots groups. This needs a lot of contextual knowledge.”*

## LOCAL GOVERNANCE

When considering national data collection systems and open data approaches, efforts should not undermine the **local management of data** and should ensure they support local data governance. As one participant put it: *“There is a level of integrity in community data.”*

## DATA INTEGRITY AND TIMELINESS

Data in existing systems may not be updated regularly, and there may be concerns about manipulation of data being fed into government systems, particularly when non-government use of that data increases.

# Next steps for the Open Up Guide

## PARTICIPANT'S ADVICE

We asked participants to share their advice for the next steps of the guide development. Feedback included:

- » Determine more clearly exactly what usage specific open datasets can have. This will enable a more concise prioritisation.
- » Address concerns about data use, mis-use and manipulation. The guide should address how to preserve and protect integrity of data.
- » Make sure affected communities have access to the data and know how to use it.
- » Prioritise making as much data as open as possible to eliminate corruption.
- » Real time mapping of documented land information is imperative to assess the accuracy of the data
- » Open Data is a two way street. As much as it has limitless positive potential, some parties can use it negatively, particularly on unsecured land rights which are common in developing countries
- » While it is clear that spatial boundary data needs to include (1) ownership, we will also want to give thought to (2) gender sensitization; (3) tenure type; (4) concessions data; (5) transaction history (incl. price); (6) taxation history
- » Challenges with land data should continue to be discussed so we can find solutions together. It is important to share experiences.
- » It's important to address issues such as farmers' rights, technical measures, trade issues, land market issues, and traditional knowledge.
- » Municipal governments should play a critical role in collection and management of ownership data. This data is key in fighting land corruption and ensuring security of tenure.

## CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The online workshop has productively moved discussions far broader than the work to date on open data for anti-corruption in land governance. It has shown the overlapping, and diverse, data needs around land, and the many issues that stakeholders are grappling with.

It has also underscored the value in clear guidance that can provide stakeholders with context-sensitive approaches to progressively making data available, making it usable and putting it to use. This provides a good foundation for further development of an Open Up Guide, and highlights a range of possible areas for future Open Government Partnership commitments on land governance.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting current plans for international events and projects, over the coming weeks we will identify options to develop a full Open Up Guide over 2020, looking to secure resources to hold follow-up workshops virtually or face-to-face, to more tightly define problem statements, use cases, datasets and guidance drawing on the workshop outputs.

# Annexe 1

# Workshop evaluation

An online survey was carried out shortly after the workshop to gather feedback. Results are shown below.

1) How well did this webinar/workshop cover the issue?

Excellent- **10**

Very good- **12**

Fair-**1**

2) Has your understanding of the issue increased? Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating your awareness has substantially increased.

**3.9** average rating

3) How useful was this webinar/workshop to you or your work?

Very useful- **13**

Useful- **9**

Somewhat useful- **1**

4) Please rate the format of this workshop/webinar on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being highly rated.

**4.6** average rating

5) Please share any positive or negative feedback you may have regarding this webinar/workshop.

*“I thought it went very well for the first conference I have been to since lockdown. The only thing I think I would like is to have people self-select for their individual groups and subtopics.”*

*“The workshop was very good and interesting especially the aspect of virtual setting. it was very well organised. the introductory session from the partners was good to highlight their vision and goals.”*

“Amazingly organised, with enough space for the participation of all attendees.”

“This workshop was one of the most amazing virtual experiences I have ever had. The Land Portal did an incredible job in bringing together an incredible diversity of people from all over the world.”

“Very innovative format of the webinar. I liked the idea with the break-out sessions.”

“Interactions were possible even with the virtual tool. But it was not easy to react during the first presentations sessions.”

**6) What is the main piece of advice you would like to share with us referring to building this Open Up Guide?**

“I think keeping it simple will be important.”

“Ensuring an inclusive and participatory process so that info shared are not biased.”

“Talk as much as you can with experts who work on the Ground. Use their experience to find cost-effective and feasible digital solutions and to inform the design of the Open Up Guide.”

“Consider the importance of institutional data — we need to measure the performance and the impact of land policies and land institutions too, if we want to improve global and local land governance. as well as the related information and data ecosystems.”

“Go for absolute transparency, it is the only way to make progress.”

**7) Please indicate whether you would like to be involved in the next steps?**

**100%** of respondents would like to be involved in the next steps.

## Annexe 2

# What three words

Participants were asked to share through the Zoom chat window the 'three words that first come to mind in relation to land governance data'. The raw results are below:

- » pastoral, property taxes, valuation
- » usage, valuation, taxation
- » digitalisation, digital gap, false data
- » land ownership, data accuracy , mortgage market
- » transparency, land information access, land access
- » land deals, land use, land disposition
- » sustainable natural resource management, geodata, land rights
- » access, transparency, high-risk
- » accessibility, digitization, timeliness
- » standards, collaboration, land information access
- » data for whom? what change we are really looking for?
- » spatial data, accessible data, and up to date information.
- » awareness, accessibility, availability
- » capacity development, safeguards, monitoring
- » rights, literacy, re-use
- » digital divide, accessibility, transparency
- » tenure, geospatial, environmental impact
- » clearly agreed upon, considers every person not just households, goes beyond objective
- » transparency, land rights, data protection
- » connectivity, ownership, context
- » decentralisation, collaboration, accessibility
- » land governance
- » corruption, vested interests, powerless groups



# PUTTING DATA INTO ACTION Shaping an Open Up Guide on Land Governance

16 MARCH, 2020  
9:00-11:00 AM EST/ 2:00-4:00 PM CET  
Online / Virtual Workshop



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Key words related to 'land governance data' suggested by participants.



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