

Data sources

Introduction - adding and citing data sources:

When adding or editing deals, it is essential to indicate the corresponding data sources. This ensures that all information can be traced, verified, and updated when necessary. Most importantly, the Land Matrix data can only be legitimately substantiated through proper and reliable data sources.

Once a data source has been added to a deal, it can — and, since 1 May 2025, must — be linked to specific pieces of information (variables/attributes) using the new Data Source Citation System. Using this tool, a single data source can be linked to multiple attributes, and conversely, each attribute can be linked to multiple data sources.

The linking between attributes and data sources can either be done individually or collectively when saving the deal.

Ideally, the data of a deal should be supported by multiple data sources of different types. However, if numerous similar sources report the same information (e.g., media articles), it is not necessary to include all of them.

In cases where contradictory information is provided by sources of comparable credibility, these discrepancies must be transparently documented in the comment fields of the respective attributes, and all conflicting sources must be appropriately cited by using the Data Source Citation System.

Important notes and instructions:

1. Data sources are central to the legitimacy and credibility of Land Matrix data. Please treat them with the highest priority and care.
2. The upload of data source files is mandatory for all data source types.
3. Since 1 May 2025, the citation of data sources via the citation system has been mandatory for all newly added information.
4. A deal cannot be activated (i.e. made publicly accessible) unless at least one data source has been entered. Ideally, the data of a deal should be supported by multiple data sources of different types.
5. Certain aspects of the data sources are monitored through data quality indicators (see data statistics section).
6. If a contract document originating from OpenLandContracts.org is uploaded as a data source file, it must not be made publicly accessible (i.e. “keep the PDF not public” has to be checked). Instead, the corresponding Open Contracting ID (OCID) must be entered in the designated field of the data editor.

Type

The data source type is a categorical classification of the recorded data source based on publication type and origin.

Selectable data source types:

- **Media Report:** Articles and contributions published on websites, blogs, newspapers, magazines etc., that do not meet scientific standards.
- **Research Paper / Policy Report:** Contributions from researchers, as well as detailed reports by NGOs, agricultural associations, international organizations, etc.
- **Government sources:** Any information originating from governments, government agencies or government representatives.
- **Company sources:** Any information from companies or corporate representatives.
- **Contract:** Legal documents such as licensing agreements, concessions, leaseholds, purchase agreements, or related official documents (e.g., social or environmental assessments).
- **Contract (contract farming agreement):** Legal documents that specify contract farming arrangements, including any official accompanying documentation.
- **Personal information:** Information obtained directly from an individual informant. Name, organisation, email and phone should be entered in the respective fields, if available.
- **Crowdsourcing:** Information submitted by the general public or users of the platform.
- **Other:** Information from any other source not listed above. If you select this option, please specify the data source type in the comment field.

URL

URL of an online available data source.

If the data source is a downloadable file, this URL links to the download page of the file, not directly to the file itself.

Since URLs can expire, change, or become unavailable over time, the content of online sources is preserved by saving a copy of the URL's webpage or of the downloadable file (see <File>).

File

A copy of the data source stored as a file within the database.

Please always upload a copy of your data source as a file. Carefully check the file quality and ensure that the upload completed successfully.

The Land Matrix ensures long-term accessibility and verification by saving a copy of the data sources in its database. Either a copy of the original data source document/file is stored, or a screenshot of the referenced web page is saved as an image or a PDF.

Supported file types are: .pdf, .xls, .xlsx, .jpg, .jpeg, .png, .mp4, .mkv.

Spatial data source files are stored as GeoJSON under 'Locations', but a map screenshot is saved here for reference.

If a data source file exceeds the maximum file size of 20 MB, it can be compressed. For PDF files, a free compression tool is available from Adobe: [Adobe PDF Compressor](#).

If you do not want the PDF to be publicly visible, you can check the "keep the PDF not public" box.

Please note: As per the Land Matrix agreement with Open Land Contracts (

<https://openlandcontracts.org/>), you may add the PDF of a contract from this source as a data source file, however, "Keep PDF not public" must then be selected.

By entering the Open Contracting ID (OCID) into the respective field, a link to the contract on OpenLandContracts.org is automatically generated, directing users to the corresponding webpage.

Publication title

Title of the data source: The official or descriptive title of the source, such as the title of a research paper, policy report, annual report, media article, contract, webpage, or map.

Date

Publication date, month or year of the data source. If not available, date, month or year the data source was accessed.

Please add details to the comment field.

(To prepare for the redesign of the 'Data source' section, please always enter the access date in the comment field (access date: YYYY-MM-DD).

Name

Informant name (Only applicable for data sources of type 'personal information').

Organisation

Informant organisation: The name of the institution, company, or group with which the informant is affiliated. (Only applicable for data sources of type 'personal information').

Email

Informant email address (Only applicable for data sources of type 'personal information').

Phone

Informant phone number (Only applicable for data sources of type 'personal information').

Includes in-country-verified information

Please check this box if the data source is directly based on on-the-ground verification through fieldwork or similar efforts.

Open Contracting ID

(for data source type Contract)

An Open Contracting ID (ocid) is a globally unique identifier for a contracting process that facilitates the integration and traceability of contracts across systems. Here it is used to link the

data source in the Land Matrix database to the corresponding contract document on OpenLandContracts.org.

Once the OCID has been entered, a link to the corresponding contract documents on OpenLandContracts.org will be generated automatically.

Comment on data source

Any additional information on the data source. In particular details regarding the publication date.

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