LM Data Editor Guidelines: General

Work in progress

Currently valid version:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/161DkhuZr0uJqzvqO8n27VWUdjtts8Nv4/view?usp=drive_link

INTRODUCTION

The "Data Editor Handbook -guidelines for data entry-" has been developed to provide general instructions, rules, and guidance for entering data on large-scale land acquisitions (LSLAs) into the Land Matrix database.

For help and instructions regarding the technical functionalities and features of the LM application, please refer to the manual of the web-application:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VHSWff4tRNhjFZ1kq1FRUuOXpp3Qds-9/view?usp=drive_link
New data reporters, editors and administrators should read this manual first.

For questions on the deal update process and the quantitative targets for data entry, please refer to the following two documents:

 Fully updating guidelines:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1bzejMADscywlGeESZPA-

80rujh8kRbfz/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=102660977782443621588&rtpof=true&sd=true

 Targets for the quantitative data indicators:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/13ULJXdpAi2n-
5zkacQ2OWN8xr3XKuJVo/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=102660977782443621588&rtpof=true&sd=true

> **_Important:_** To familiarise yourself with data entry or to test certain aspects, you should not work on the live version of the database, but on **https://dev.landmatrix.org/deal/add/.**

Please note: The "guidelines for data entry" should be considered a living document which will be adapted to future software development and improved according to user feedback.

1. GENERAL REMARKS AND RULES FOR DATA ENTRY

1.1 Land Matrix data policy

The Land Matrix Initiative has an **open data policy** that aims to provide information on large-scale land acquisitions free from constraints and restrictions on use. Data, infographics, charts, maps, and other material provided on the Land Matrix website carry the **<u>Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 International</u>** license. This means users are permitted to download, share, and adapt the material for any use, including commercial use, but must indicate any modification made and attribute the material appropriately.

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1.2 Land Matrix deal definition: What is a land deal?

The Land Matrix defines a land deal as any intended, concluded, or failed attempt to acquire land through purchase, lease, or concession for agricultural production, timber extraction, carbon trading, renewable energy production, industry, mining, oil and gas extraction, conservation, tourism, and land speculation in low- and middle-income countries.

The Land Matrix Global Observatory records deals that:

  Entail a transfer of rights to use, control, or ownership of land through sale, lease, or concession;

  Have been negotiated or concluded in the year 2000 or later;

  Cover an area of 200 hectares or more;

  Imply a potential effect on smallholder livelihoods, local community use, important ecosystem service provision, or on the distribution of land (rights).

Please note: For some of the countries hosting a Land Matrix National Land Observatory (NLO), the thresholds applied differ slightly from those of the Global Observatory. This is currently the case in Cameroon, Philippines, Senegal, and Uganda, where the NLOs apply a reduced minimum area size of 50 hectares per deal.

1.3 Minimum information criteria

In order for a deal recorded in the Land Matrix database to be published on the Land Matrix website, it must fulfil certain data requirements, so-called minimum information criteria:

1. Location: At least the target country of the deal must be known and recorded.
2. Investor names: At least the name of one investor must be known and recorded.
3. Data sources: At least one data source must be available and specified.
4. Deal size: At least one value must be specified for one of the three variables on land area size.

If one of these four minimum criteria is not met, the deal will remain in the database for further research but will only be accessible to registered and logged-in users.

1.4 Accuracy of information and conflicting information

Information on large-scale land investments is often fragmentary and, in some cases, it is difficult to fully assess the details of individual cases. Given this lack of data, as well as the fact that the Land Matrix only captures certain aspects in a schematised manner, their complexity might not be completely reflected.

Nevertheless, **it is crucial that all information collected in the database is based on credible data sources and can be verified against these. It is therefore essential that all sources of information used are recorded in the "Data sources" section within the deal.** Variables for which no data sources could be found despite intensive research must be left blank.

In the case of diverging and/or contradicting information, try to verify each piece of information and to check their plausibility. If uncertainties remain and none of the contradictory information can be identified as clearly more plausible, the more moderate information should be provided. Leave a clear note about diverging or contradicting information in the "**Additional comments**" and a justification for the information ultimately provided.

> **_Important:_ ALL** sources of information used must be specified in the "**Data sources**" section so that the data collected can be checked against these sources (see 2.6 Data sources).

Please note, the "A**dditional comments**" field can and should be used to enrich data and provide more details on deals, particularly in the case of complex deals. They also enable you to add personal remarks you would like to share with other users, such as doubts related to certain quotations. Additional comment fields are of particular importance for **subsumed deals** (see section 1.5). Please be aware that **ALL** comment fields are publicly visible, so please check your grammar and spelling before posting.

1.5 Avoidance of duplicates

1.6 Subsumed deals

As a rule, separate deals should be differentiated from each other and be added individually to the Land Matrix database. However, in some cases, investors carry out several different projects (based on different agreements) in the same country, region, or sub-region. This can make it very difficult, or even impossible, to identify the single projects of one investor or group of investors in a specific area or specific details about an individual land acquisition (e.g. exact location, corresponding contracts, primary investors, and investment conditions). In these situations, you may only be able to obtain general information, for example, the number of hectares an investor has acquired in a given region. In cases like these, where information is too scarce to distinguish single projects, there is no other option but to "subsume" various deals under one parent deal – that is, enter several projects of one investor in the same region or country as one single deal. The problem with this, however, is that, while the system allows you to make several entries for some variables (e.g. location, land area under contract/in operation, intention of investment, negotiation and operation status) in order to subsume multiple deals, these variables cannot be connected to each other, nor can the individual deals be differentiated from each other.[1] These subsumed deals should therefore be split up in the long run, as soon as further details can be found. This also decreases the risk of duplications, since each deal can be identified.
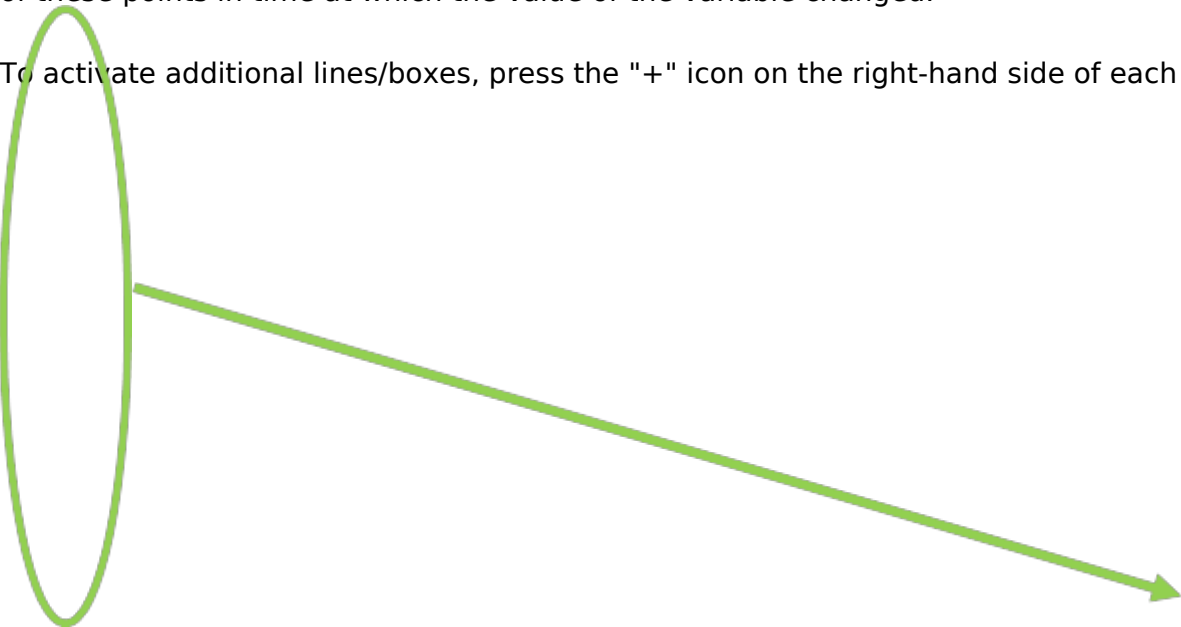
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[1] For instance, if you know that an investor operates in several (specified) regions, that contract farming (CF) is applied and that 1,000 ha were leased, and then enter these data, it is not clear whether CF is applied in all projects or just some – maybe the investor leased 1,000 ha in one of the areas but in others only operates via CF, without having acquired any land (if it is CF on farmers' own lands, see section 2.8). Likewise, if you select "in operation" in 2005 and "project abandoned" in 2009 for implementation status, if the deal subsumes different projects, whether all operations were closed in 2009, or just one in one certain area, cannot be seen. In such cases, it is therefore very important to use the "additional comment" fields to note such ambiguities and to give more explanations on your entries.

1.7 Year-/date-based data

To be able to track the evolution of a deal over time, so-called year-/date-based variables were introduced in the LM database. With these, it is possible to record multiple values for one variable and assign them to different years or dates and thus to track the evolution/progress of certain aspects of a deal over time (e.g. the area size in operation or the implementation process).

If data of a year-/date-based variable changed over time and these different values are available for different points in time **("Date")**, you should enter the corresponding values for all these points in time, not just for the most recent one. In the data editor, each line (or each box) represents one of these points in time at which the value of the variable changed.

To activate additional lines/boxes, press the "+" icon on the right-hand side of each line.

Negotiation status

Negotiation status

Current	Date	Choice			
○	YYYY-MM-DD	Intended (Expression of interest)	×	∨	+ −
○	2001	Intended (Under negotiation)	×	∨	+ −
○	2003-08-30	Concluded (Contract signed)	×	∨	+ −
●	2023-06	Failed (Contract cancelled)	×	∨	+ −
○	YYYY-MM-DD	Please select		∨	+ −

Marking the line(s) with the most up-to-date data available and therefore the currently valid value(s) for that variable by ticking one of the "**Current**"-checkboxes is technically mandatory.

1.8 Orphaned deals

1.9 Data sourcing

1.10 Data scope

Representativeness, completeness, coverage

1.11 Data updating