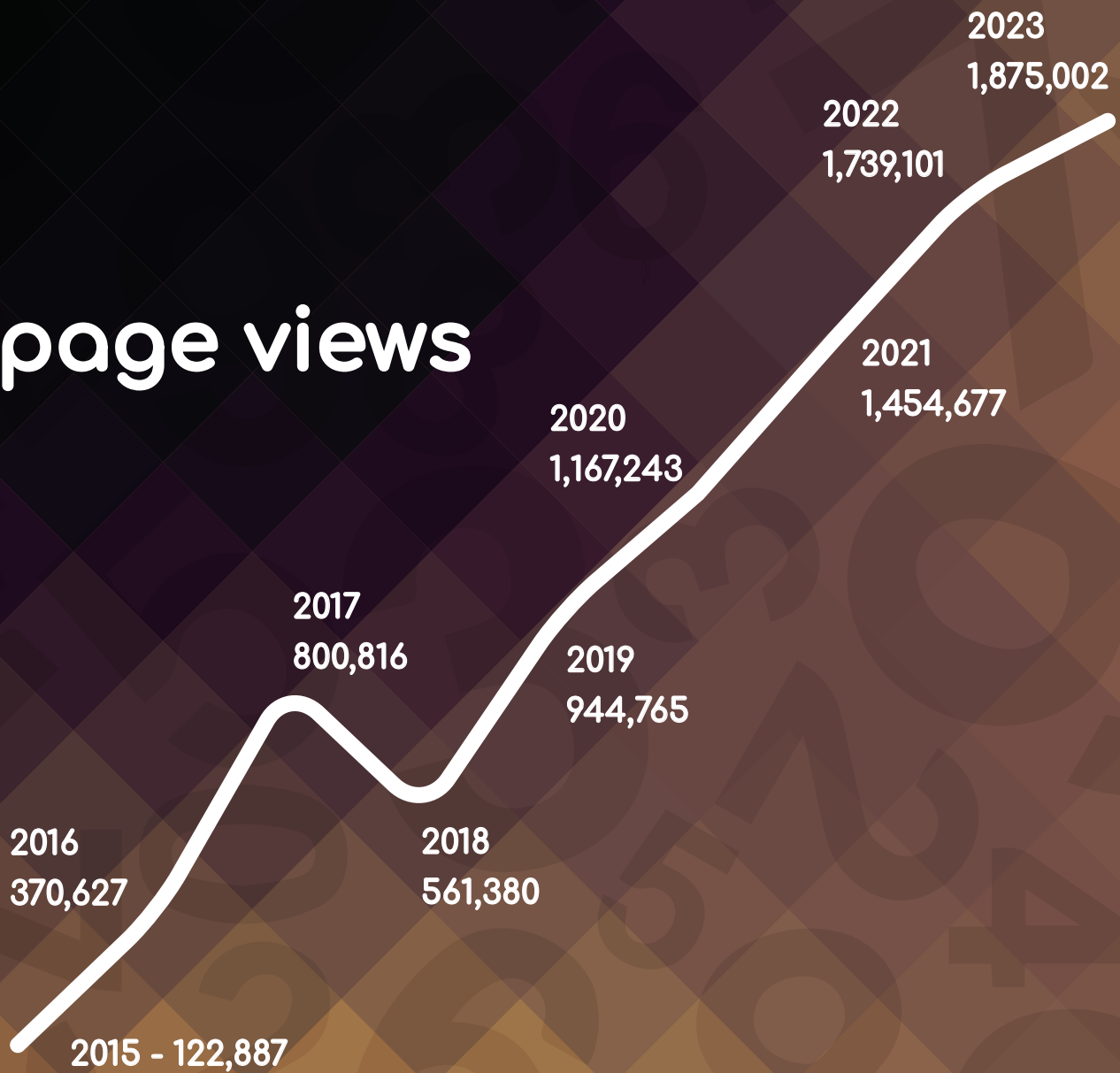




annual report

2023

page views



999,867

visits

2,085

sources of
information

14

webinars

68,892

land library
resources

5,717

LandPortal
users

15

SOLI
profiles

717

statistical
indicators

85

country
portfolios

66%

users from
the Global
South

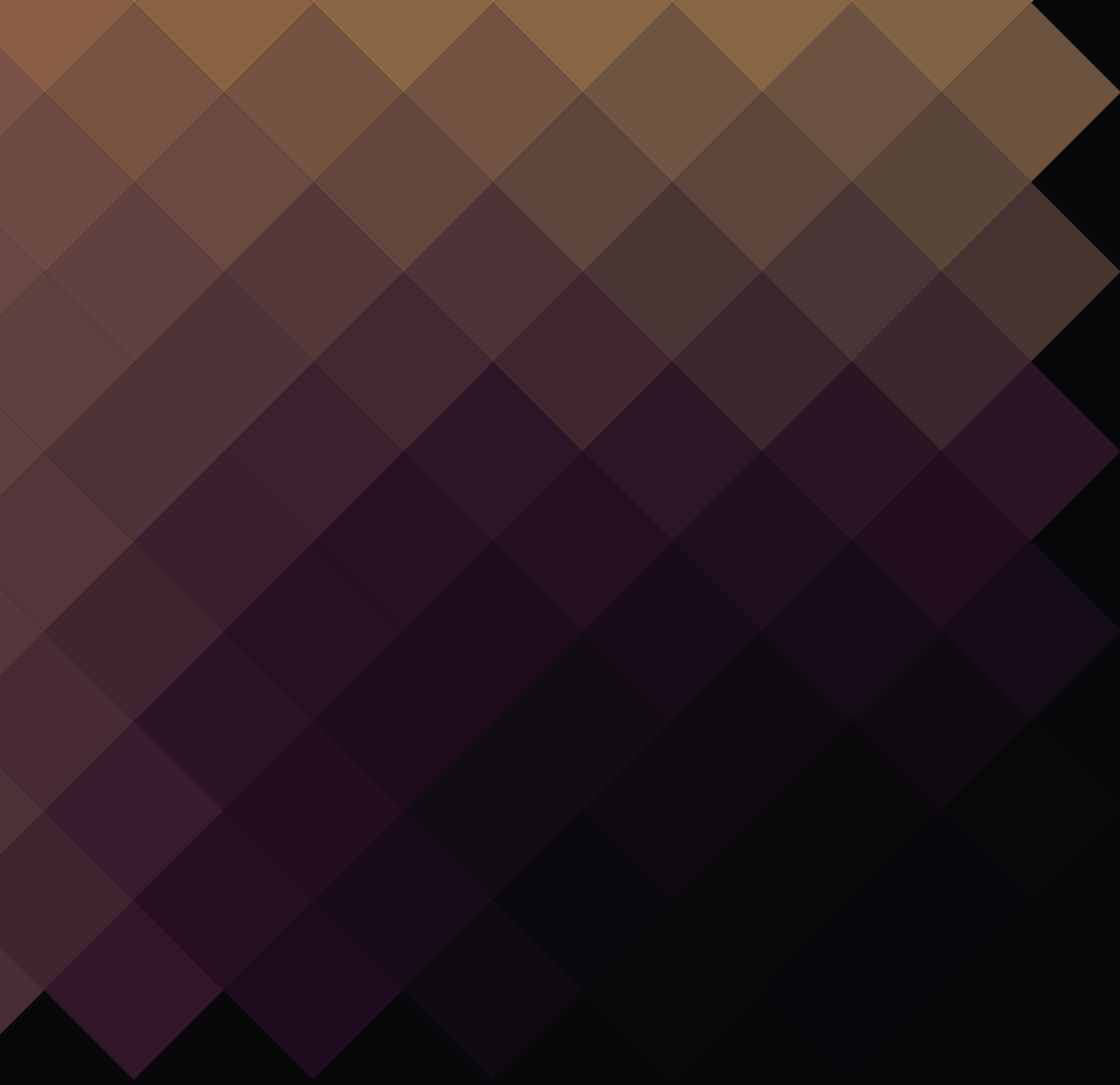


From insights to action: transforming land governance through access to information



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Contents

Message from the Chair of the Board	6
Letter from the Managing Director	8
Inform	11
Country and thematic insights	12
Data stories	13
Global projects database	13
Open	15
Enhancing Land Governance Data Management	16
Supporting Data Literacy and Advocacy	16
The State of Land Information (SOLI) Initiative	17
Debate	19
Elevating land governance dialogue: a year of impactful communications	20
Convening global land governance dialogue through engaging webinars	20
Catalyzing support for forest communities: tracking the IPLC forest tenure pledge through the land portal	21
Land Portal People	22

Message from the Chair of the Board

The Land Portal Foundation saw some remarkable achievements in 2023, marking yet another milestone year for our maturing organization. Our annual user survey surpassed all previous records with an unprecedented turnout of 590 respondents. Notably, 75% of the feedback originated from our platform's users in the Majority World. Our all-time high Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 55, which measures the likelihood a Land Portal user would recommend us to a colleague, reflected a sixth consecutive year of growth. It is also gratifying to note that more than four out of five respondents acknowledged the Land Portal's pivotal role in enhancing the quality of their work.

In 2023, we took over the Land Governance Program Map & Database from the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL), revitalizing their initiative into what is now the largest global database of land and property rights programs and projects worldwide. Through our collaboration with GDWGL members, we are implementing automatic updates to the database using standards based on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), reaffirming our commitment to continue serving as a digital public good for land data and information.

As a key convener of global discussions on land issues, the Foundation brought together nearly 8,000 stakeholders in 2023 to address critical topics, ranging from indigenous land rights within the context of climate change, to enhancing coordination between the funders of land programs.

Our commitment to innovation is evident through new activities and knowledge products, such as our data stories and State of Land Information reports, which contribute to an improved understanding of the key role of effectively and transparently managing land data and information in strengthening land governance and, ultimately, the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. These efforts have garnered recognition beyond the global community of practice on land, extending into partnerships with organizations working on open government and open data.



In 2023, the Board commissioned a thorough organizational review of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, furthering our dedication to building an inclusive workplace environment. Significant strides have also been made by the Board in strengthening institutional policies.

We have been delighted to welcome Dr. Cynthia Caron, Dr. Richard Baldwin and Laura Cunial to our Board of Directors in 2023. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to departing Board Directors, Chair Timothy Fella, Dr. Ritu Verma, and Chris Addison, for volunteering their time, guidance and support to the Land Portal through periods of substantial transition and growth.

As the Foundation's influence continues to broaden, our mission of improving land governance by opening-up land data and fostering well-informed debate remains steadfast. With a promising trajectory ahead, I am optimistic about the enduring positive impact our organization will achieve.

Dr. Elizabeth Daley,
Chair, on behalf of the Board



Letter from the Managing Director

Dear all,

I believe that land data and information – at a national and local-level – must be more open than they currently are. Free and open access to information is key to enabling coordinated global action on land issues, which are at the heart of the most pressing crises we face today.

In 2023, we embraced this commitment wholeheartedly and embarked on a path of collaboration and collective actions.

I am thrilled to share that in 2023 the Land Portal Foundation has joined the EC Land Data Partnership, a dynamic partnership funded with support from the European Commission and committed to tackling land governance challenges through the power of data.

This alliance brings together four strong land data organizations – The Land Portal Foundation, the International Land Coalition, the Land Matrix Initiative, and Prindex. Together, we are dedicated to harnessing the power of data to tackle land governance challenges, and promoting inclusive governance at both global and local levels.

Measuring access to data fills a critical gap in the land sector, as our society grows ever-more dependent on data for decision-making and problem-solving. One of the key endeavors in 2023 was the investment in strengthening our State of Land Information (SOLI) Initiative. This initiative addresses the issue of inaccessible land data by tracking its completeness and openness at the country level. In 2023 we published new detailed SOLI reports for seven countries in Africa, and in May we launched the groundbreaking State of Land Information Index (SOLIndex). This index allows for comprehensive data exploration and country comparisons, marking a significant step forward in our quest for data transparency.

In October, we celebrated a major milestone with the publication of our 80th country portfolio. This achievement represents four years of dedicated work by our team of researchers and nearly 100 peer reviewers and is a testament to the dedication of the Land Portal to making land information open and accessible to all. By bridging the gap between the academic community with the broader land community we aim to empower stakeholders with knowledge they need to drive positive change.

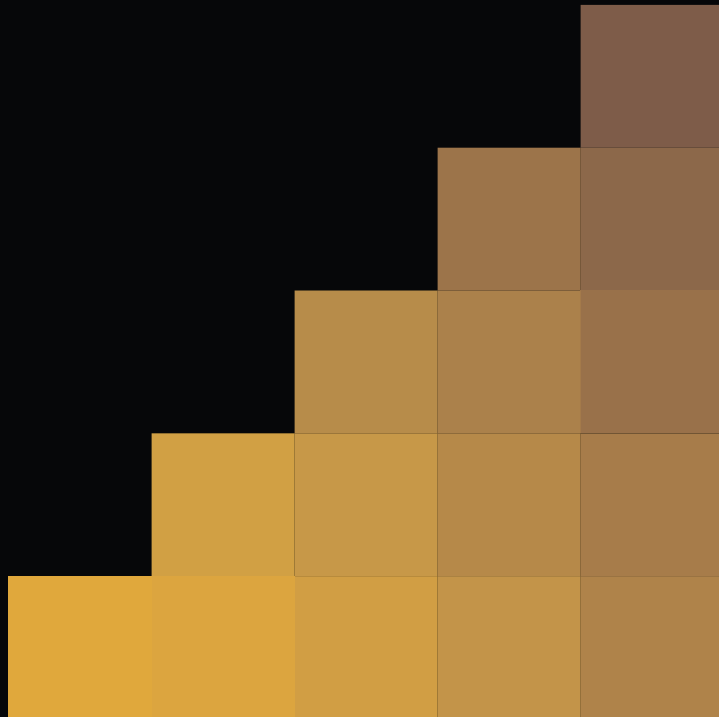
Our convening role also flourished in 2023, as evidenced by our webinar partnerships with esteemed organizations. These webinars tackled cutting-edge topics such as the role of traditional authorities in land investments, the impact of carbon markets on indigenous lands, etc. With an average of 800 registrants per webinar and 265 live participants from around the globe, our events continue to foster inclusive dialogue and cross-sector collaboration.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our board members, advisors, partners, donors, and users. Your steadfast belief in our mission fuels our passion and drives us forward. As we reflect on the milestones of 2023 we are reminded of the power of collaboration and collective dedication in affecting change.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared vision during another year of impact and transformation.

Warm regards,


Laura Meggiolaro



PILLAR 1

Inform



The vast majority of land governance data remains fragmented, poorly organized, and presented in highly specialized language, reducing the likelihood that people searching for land data will find what they need or be able to use the data. In response, the Land Portal aims to ensure that land governance issues are documented in a centralized but interoperable platform, with a thorough description of the context and various types of supporting data.

Our goal is to create a fully inclusive and comprehensive information landscape where anyone can contribute their data and information, especially the less visible and accessible resources from the Global South. In 2023, we put out 80 country portfolios, revised several thematic portfolios, published innovative new data stories and other knowledge products, and revamped our global projects database.

Country and thematic insights

At the Land Portal we seek to deepen understanding of land governance in countries around the world. We do this through comprehensive country and thematic portfolios that describe key issues, challenges, and opportunities for improving land governance. By offering a wealth of knowledge in an approachable format, we aim to empower individuals and communities worldwide with the vital information needed to navigate the complexities of land issues.

In 2023, we celebrated the publication of **80 country portfolios** on the Land Portal. This achievement embodies seven years of dedicated effort and underscores the Land Portal's commitment to democratizing access to land information. Our diverse collection spans various languages, including English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and with a growing number in Arabic. Each portfolio is crafted through rigorous research, writing, and peer-review processes. These comprehensive guides delve into the complex web of history, politics, and culture, catering to a broad spectrum of readers.

Our extensive **collection of thematic portfolios** delves into crucial land governance issues, fostering comprehension of the interconnectedness between land matters and development in society, while offering access to a wealth of resources, including publications, news articles, blogs, event updates, and development initiatives related to each theme. In 2023, we unveiled fully revamped portfolios focusing on Land & Corruption, Land & Investments, Land & Conflicts, Indigenous & Community Land Rights, and Land & Climate. Notably, the Land & Climate portfolio was launched in time for COP28, ensuring its relevance and alignment with the latest advancements in climate discourse.

In tandem with our ongoing efforts, our **What to Read Digests** offer concise yet comprehensive summaries of the most recent and pertinent publications, initiatives, and videos pertaining to specific land issues, prepared by our researchers. These digests distill important messages and highlight key areas of contention and discussion, thereby providing new entry points for deeper exploration. Throughout 2023, our digests addressed a range of relevant topics, including the repercussions of failed large-scale land deals, the nuanced relationship between pastoralists and climate change (including common misconceptions), local insights on addressing climate change amidst land insecurity, and reflections on the significance of open land data in the context of sustainability and power dynamics.

Data stories

Land Portal data stories combine compelling narratives with data visualizations and other visual elements. In 2023, four data stories highlighted the issues surrounding land at local and international levels. The **initial story**, released on International Women's Day, delved into women's tenure security in Sierra Leone, showcasing the unique challenges and progress in this area. The **second story** investigated the impact of land projects, offering insights into the successes and obstacles encountered in these initiatives. The **third story** presented an analysis of land formalization in Africa, juxtaposing the expectations with the on-the-ground realities. The **final story** examined the interplay between climate change, conflict, and displacement in the Sahel region, illuminating the complex dynamics that contribute to land-related issues in this vulnerable area.

Together, these stories contribute to a broader understanding of land governance challenges and efforts across different contexts, highlighting the importance of data in shaping policies and interventions.

Global projects database

In 2023, we comprehensively overhauled the Land Projects Database, a project spearheaded by our data team in partnership with the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL). This enhancement expanded the database's coverage from around 1,000 to over 2,500 land governance projects, marking a substantial increase in its scope and depth. The upgrade employed a new approach, primarily sourcing data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Moreover, the revision process underscored the role of data curation performed by the Land Portal team. Our attention to detail and accuracy have been highly valued by the donor community, affirming the importance of our team's efforts in ensuring the database remains a reliable and up-to-date resource.

"Because of the Land Portal, I spend more time researching and analyzing information on land governance. Networking is now a priority for synergistic action."

- **Anonymous**, *l'Institut des Médias pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (IM2DH)*



PILLAR 2

Open

—

The Land Portal is at the forefront of creating an inclusive and transparent land information ecosystem that values diverse viewpoints equally and fosters an environment where data and information drive constructive change in land governance.

We are responding to the challenge that poorly managed data leaves information inaccessible and underutilized.

We aim to build and strengthen an open and democratic standards-based data infrastructure within the context of an increasingly digital society, that enables the flow of land information across all perspectives and levels.

Enhancing Land Governance Data Management

The **Open Up Guide for Land Governance** serves as an essential toolkit for governments, designed to enhance the quality, availability, accessibility, and utilization of land-related data. The goal is to foster greater civic engagement, informed decision-making, and innovation. The Open Up Guide focuses on vital land governance aspects such as tenure, use, development, and valuation.

Following two capacity-building workshops held in Majunga and Antananarivo, which aimed at enhancing both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in open data publication, we released the State of Land Information report for Madagascar in both **English** and **French**. This comprehensive report presents an Open Data Action Framework specifically tailored for the Government of Madagascar. The framework is intended to assist in land data management and usage by facilitating easier access, fostering collaborative efforts, and enhancing the capabilities of all involved stakeholders.

Supporting Data Literacy and Advocacy

In our continuous effort to elevate data management practices within the land sector, the Land Portal has been at the forefront of advocating for open data and enhancing data capacity and literacy across the globe. This year has been marked by several significant contributions and participations, underscoring our commitment to this cause. Notably, our involvement in the IATI Community Exchange showcased our Land Projects Database, while our active participation in the United Nations World Data Forum 2023 allowed us to engage in critical discussions about measuring data for the public good. A pivotal moment was at the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Partners Meeting, where we not only discussed monitoring the land agenda and introduced the SOLIndex, but also celebrated a landmark achievement—the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Land Commission of Kenya. This MoU signifies a major step forward in our collaborative efforts to improve land governance data management and utilization.

“The Land Portal has helped me to clearly understand the impact of access to land data for vulnerable groups.”

- Abdel Rahman Mustafa, Sudan

The State of Land Information (SOLI) Initiative

The State of Land Information (SOLI) Initiative aims to map the land data ecosystem at the country level. Through this work, we identify data sources, custodians, and governance frameworks to aid practitioners and support countries in overcoming challenges such as data fragmentation and managing land information systems, thereby facilitating the transition from policy to practice.

We continued to deepen the collective understanding of the state of land data and information in 2023 by publishing **State of Land Information (SOLI)** research and reports for Botswana, Liberia, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sudan, and Zambia.

We introduced the **State of Land Information Index (SOLIndex)**, a comprehensive suite of indicators designed to monitor the transparency and comprehensiveness of land-related data at national level. The Global Land Governance Index (LANDex) has committed to integrating the SOLIndex while the Global Data Barometer (GDB) and the Global Land Observatory (GLO-FAO) have expressed strong interest in integrating the SOLIndex into their frameworks, highlighting its potential impact on national land data transparency.

“The Land Portal helps me have a global view of the challenges faced in land administration in other developing countries and how they are addressed.”

- **World Bank Consultant** on Land Economics and Governance in Zambia



PILLAR 3

Debate



The ability to access land governance information translates into power, with implications for vulnerable communities striving for secure land rights. The Land Portal is dedicated to enhancing, informing, and contributing to the international discourse on best practices for open and transparent land governance information systems. We aim to amplify the visibility of our diverse range of partners at national, regional, and international levels, advocating for a more equitable and informed approach to land governance.

Elevating land governance dialogue: a year of impactful communications

Throughout the past year, the Land Portal has solidified its reputation as a trusted partner, authoritative source of land information, and innovative facilitator of discussions on land governance. Our **Land Portal Newsroom** features our efforts to lead the global conversation on land, covering a wide array of topics from enhancing access to land data with the SOLIndex and Open Up Guide, to addressing trends in land governance data from fragmentation to equity, and the role of open land data for development. Our collaborative endeavors, such as the **FAO co-publication focusing on LandVoc and open data**, and contributions to international platforms like the German magazine **Development + Cooperation**, highlight our partnership approach to shaping land governance discourse. Importantly, our commitment to inclusivity is demonstrated through the systematic translation of content into French, Portuguese, and Spanish for our global audience.

“The Land Portal played a pivotal contribution in spreading the information on land initiatives in Chad at international level. This has been made possible thanks to the vast outreach of the Land Portal within and beyond the land community, and its reputation.”

- Barbara Codispoti, Oxfam Novib

Convening global land governance dialogue through engaging webinars

In 2023, our diverse range of webinars contributed to advancing the conversation around land governance and land information ecosystems, while elevating diverse voices. The **Land Dialogues series**, a collaborative effort with the Tenure Facility, the Ford Foundation, and the Thomson Reuters Foundation, concluded its third successful year with four webinars that shed light on a variety of important issues regarding the agency of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' land rights, while emphasizing the role of land data and information. As part of our commitment to enhancing land-based investment governance, the **Advancing Land-based Investment Governance (ALIGN) series** hosted two webinars.

The **Whose Land? series**, in partnership with Both ENDS, held its fourth and final session, marking another milestone in our webinar initiatives. Furthermore, 2023 saw the launch of a new **webinar series on responsible scaling within the LAND-at-scale program**, with two webinars already conducted and plans to continue through 2025. We also organized standalone webinars focused on the State of Land Information (SOLI) work, including **'Uncovering land data opportunities in Senegal'** and **'The state of land data: Transforming Africa into a powerhouse of the future.'**

Catalyzing support for forest communities: tracking the IPLC forest tenure pledge through the land portal

As the world convened at COP26 in 2021, 22 bilateral and philanthropic donors acknowledged the imperative to increase support for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) within tropical forest nations. In a landmark commitment, they announced a pledge of \$1.7 billion for the period of 2021-2025, aimed at bolstering forest tenure rights. This historic pledge, known as the IPLC Forest Tenure Pledge, signifies a concerted effort to enhance donor support effectively for forest-dwelling communities. It comes in response to the persistent advocacy by IPLCs and civil society organizations for a more substantial portion of climate finance to bolster IPLCs as custodians of forests and biodiversity.

In 2023, the Land Portal continued to be the **designated hub** for the official page of the Forest Tenure Funders Group, offering a platform to explain the US \$1.7 billion Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) Forest Tenure Pledge and monitor advancements in its realization. Through this initiative, the Land Portal helps to facilitate transparency, enhance accountability, and foster partnerships that aim to meet the urgent needs of forest communities globally.

"The Land Portal has enabled me to broaden my horizons and see how the wider public thinks about land issues."

- Annonciate Twagirayezu, ZOA Burundi



Land Portal People

Our Board of Directors

Dr. Elizabeth Daley (Chair)
Land Tenure, Gender Equity and
Social Inclusion Specialist

Prof. Jaap Zevenbergen
(Treasurer)
Full Professor, Department of
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University of Twente

Dr. Richard Baldwin
Land Administration Specialist

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Our Donors

With heartfelt appreciation, we extend our thanks to the donors who have contributed to furthering the mission and expanding the global influence of the Land Portal over the last year.



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Our pillars

The Land Portal has three primary objectives, underpinning all of our activities, that target the challenges faced in land governance systems around the world. We refer to these objectives as our pillars.

◆ Pillar 1 INFORM

Improve documentation, mapping and monitoring of land governance issues through a widely used platform providing data, structured information, tools and services.

◆ Pillar 2 OPEN

Democratize the information ecosystem by supporting the creation of a standards-based data infrastructure and building the capacities of information providers, to strengthen the flow of land governance information, from all perspectives and all levels.

◆ Pillar 3 DEBATE

Promote, inform and enrich the global debate and practice on key land issues while raising the visibility of national, regional and international partners.



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