# Message from the Land Portal Coordinator



First and foremost, it is my pleasure to introduce new members of the Land Portal Board. After an open and transparent recruiting process, resulting in highly qualified applicants from the land community around the world, four new members of the Land Portal Foundation Board were chosen by the existing board. We are honored to announce that Timothy Fella, Annette Jaitner, Dr. Johannes Keizer and Dr. Ritu Verma have joined the Land Portal Foundation Board. See their bios below and on the Land Portal.

I am pleased to announce that we have adopted a new five-year strategy for the period of 2017-2021. This strategy provides a solid framework for strengthening our efforts to create a better information ecosystem for land governance, working through a core and trusted platform based on open development and wide-ranging partnerships. We will continue to work with

cutting-edge linked and open data technologies and providing services and support to the land community that improve data access and build a more inclusive information landscape.

I am also proud to announce that the Land Portal has officially become a GLTN Partner. While the Land Portal and the GLTN have collaborated extensively, including on the landmark discussion on the Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC), collaboration with the GLTN continues to deepen. For instance, the Land Portal is taking a greater role in the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) hosted by GLTN. The Land Portal looks forward to scaling up its partnership with GLTN on a range of activities.

We are just returning from a successful World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, where the Land Portal Team presented in two events, displayed three posters, shared a booth with DFID's Legend program, of which the Land Portal is a part, and met with numerous current and potential partners to make plans for strengthening our collaboration. A highlight of the week was the workshop we organized together with the Cadasta Foundation - Open Data and Land Governance: Moving Towards an Information Ecosystem, which was a highly successful event that brought together many of the key players from the land governance community. Participants at this event unanimously adopted the Land Information Ecosystem Declaration in their personal capacity, resolving to promote open data policies and practices, support open source tools, and consider adopting internationally recognized metadata standards, including the Linked Land Governance Thesaurus (LandVoc).

This newsletter also comes off the heels of a highly successful capacity building workshop and festival on Enhancing Open Access to Knowledge, Information & Data in the Mekong in Yangon, Myanmar from 26-28 February. We are grateful for the collaboration and partnership of Phandeeyar, the local open data hub in

Myanmar, Open Development Mekong (ODM), Mekong Region Land Governance (MRLG), OneMap Myanmar, the Thomson Reuters Foundation and the USAID, and for the participation of government officials from Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam, with whom we can now confidently work to build an open data ecosystem in the region.

The Land Portal itself continues to evolve and progress in regard to data visualizations and creating a deeper understanding of land governance issues through Land Book country and thematic portfolios. In February, we launched country portfolios for [Bolivia](), [Colombia](), [Ecuador](), [Paraguay]() and [Peru]() that describe land tenure systems, historical context, trends in land use and key challenges and problems facing each country in partnership with the  Institute for Rural Development of South America - Instituto Para el Desarrollo Rural de Sudamérica (IPDRS). Recently, we launched two thematic portfolios. Together with the Colombia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI), we launched the [Thematic Portfolio on Land & Investments](), which provides extensive data and information to inform decision making processes. Additionally, we launched the [Urban Tenure Portfolio]() together with Habitat for Humanity International, which serves as an intuitive and open access tool for policy makers, researchers, journalists, civil society and all other stakeholders involved in urban tenure issues.

We are happy to announce the establishment of an agreement with NRMC-Center for Land Governance, based in India, as a local data hub for land and development related issues; the Land Portal will also serve as the media partner for the [2017 India Land and Development Conference]().

We are also the process of establishing similar partnership agreements with numerous organizations in the Global South, emphasizing the building of capacity to share and use land-related information, including with Land

Development and Governance Institute (LDGI) in Kenya, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) in Uganda, the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF) in collaboration with Landesa, Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR) and Centro Terra Viva (CTV) in Mozambique, among others.

As always, we are grateful for the financial support of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) as part of the [Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development (LEGEND)](#) program, which makes this work possible.

Thank you to the network of the Land Portal community and partners. We appreciate your engagement and support. It is our job to make your work more discoverable, interoperable and visible, whether on a global or local level, and we offer you our sincere commitment to ensuring the work of the Land Portal serves as an added value and helps create an information ecosystem from which we all can benefit.

Laura Meggiolaro
Coordinator, Land Portal Foundation

## New Land Portal Foundation Board Members



### Annette Jaitner

Annette is a senior expert in programme development and implementation, guided by high ethical standards and integrity, and she is passionate about land governance, social inclusion and development. Annette joined Transparency International (TI) in September 2009 to coordinate the multi-country project Poverty

and Corruption in Africa, and since 2014 has been leading the development of TI's new thematic area on engaging partners and people in counteracting land corruption.

## Timothy Fella

Tim Fella is the Global Business Development Manager for Land Administration at Esri. He comes to ESRI with 12 years of experience with land tenure and land administration issues from across the globe. Just prior to Esri, Mr. Fella led new business development and consulting for the land and natural resources sectors at Indufor North America. Before this, he spent approximately 10 years with the U.S. Federal Government (Millennium Challenge Corporation & USAID) where he led the design, management and evaluation of large land administration reform projects for national governments in more than 20 countries across Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

## Dr. Ritu Verma

Dr. Ritu Verma is an anthropologist, international development expert and civil engineer with over 20 years of research experience in East and Southern Africa and the Buddhist Himalayas. She specializes in land tenure, livelihoods and climate change, from the perspective of the anthropology of development and political ecology, with a focus on indigenous knowledge, socio-cultural relations, human well-being and natural resource management. Dr. Verma is a senior

researcher at the Tarayana Foundation, adjunct professor at the College of Language and Culture Studies, and director at Out of the Box Research and Action.

## Johannes Keizer

Johannes Keizer has worked in the area of Agricultural Information Management for the last 25 years. He is responsible for partnerships in Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) secretariat and works in the project coordination of the H2020 Project eROSA on roadmaps for eInfrastructures in Agricultural Research and Development. Until the end of 2016 he worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). He was responsible for the transformation of the International Information System for Agricultural Science and Technology (AGRIS) from a bibliographical database into a Global Linked Open Data Application.

## Land Portal 2017-2021 Strategy

The new 2017-2021 Land Portal strategy builds upon efforts to create **a better information ecosystem** for land governance, working through a **core and trusted platform** and **wide-ranging partnerships,** while emphasizing that the Land Portal's work is based on an **open development approach.**

This strategy focuses on **cutting-edge linked and open data technologies**, providing services and support that improve data access, and that build **a more inclusive information landscape**.

# Land Portal Approved as Global Land Tool Network Partner (GLTN)

It is with great pleasure that the Land Portal has become an official Partner of GLTN. During the GLTN reception at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, Oumar Sylla, GLTN Unit Lead, officially recognized the Land Portal's new status. The Land Portal and the GLTN have increasingly collaborated over this past year. The successful debate on the Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC) - Sharing Best Practices and Lessons Learned for Supporting Women's Land Rights - brought together 23 key stakeholders from 15 countries, resulting in a wide-ranging discussion. This collaboration also included enhancing metadata of GLTN publications and integration into the Land Portal.  The Land Portal and the GLTN are now collaborating to create a platform for tracking land-related SDGs on the Land Portal in concert with the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII), which holds great promise.

## Open Data Festival and Capacity Building Workshop in Myanmar

From 26-28 February, the Land Portal, together with numerous partners, organized a Open Data Festival and Regional Capacity-building Workshop in Yangon, Myanmar.

The festival was hosted by Phandeeyar, an innovation lab that is spearheading the development of Myanmar's tech ecosystem. Attended by 65 participants from local and international organizations, the festival included an interactive panel discussion moderated by Thomson Reuters journalist Thin Lei Win, with Muchiri Nyaggah from the Local Development Research Institute  (Kenya) , Penhleak "Pinkie" Chan. from the East-West Management Institute (Cambodia), Dr. Do Van Hung, Dean of Faculty of Library and Information Science at the  Vietnam National University (VNU), Dr. Thatheva Saphangthong, Director General of the Council for Science and Technology in Laos and Laura Meggiolaro,

Land Portal Coordinator.

Muchiri Nyagah led workshop, which was attended by 4 government officials from Myanmar, 4 from Vietnam and 3 from Laos, all strategically selected for their interest and ability to affect change with regard to open data, including on land, within their governments. The participants were highly motivated and engaged; the result will be a 'community of practice' on land and open data that will continue to build upon the success of this workshop.

The organization of the workshop was highly collaborative with Mekong Region Land Governance (MRLG), OneMap Myanmar (CDE), USAID and the Land Portal sharing the financial costs, and Open Development Mekong (ODM), Phandeeyar and Thomson Reuters providing in-kind support.

# Urban Tenure

## Thematic Portfolio on Urban Tenure

Acknowledging the importance of sustainable land governance in urban areas for successful development strategies, the Land Portal Foundation and Habitat for Humanity International's Solid Ground global advocacy campaign joined efforts and launched a new Thematic Portfolio on Urban Tenure.

Land & Investments

## Thematic Portfolio on Land & Investments

The Land Portal Foundation, together with the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI) launched a Thematic Portfolio on Land & Investments, which provides an overview of the relationship between land tenure and land investments, the international standards on land investments, the ongoing challenges associated with ensuring responsible investment, as well as ongoing initiatives aimed at increasing investment transparency.



## Land Portal & IPDRS Launch Country Portfolios for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru

The Land Portal Foundation and the Institute for Rural Development of South America - Instituto Para el Desarrollo Rural de Sudamérica (IPDRS) launched country portfolios for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru that describe land tenure systems, historical context, trends in land use and key challenges and problems facing each country.

The country portfolios represent the culmination of a partnership between the Land Portal and IPDRS as a local data hub in South America.  In the context of this partnership, the Land Portal and the IPDRS worked together to build capacity for linking specialized knowledge on land issues between the two initiatives and to promote free access (Linked Open Data) to 589 investigations, case studies, articles, essays, books and other documents.

The Land Portal is supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) as part of the Land: Enhancing Governance for Economic Development (LEGEND) program, which is a DFID global program designed to mobilize knowledge and capacity for design and delivery of new country programs, improve land governance as an essential and inclusive basis for economic development, and strengthen land and property rights at scale.

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