**Agricultural Investment Models**

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Alternatives to land acquisitions: Agricultural investment and collaborative business models

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edited by [Lorenzo Cotula](http://pubs.iied.org/search.php?a=Lorenzo%20Cotula), [Rebeca Leonard](http://pubs.iied.org/search.php?a=Rebeca%20Leonard" \o "Show everything by Rebeca Leonard)

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in private-sector investment in agriculture. Some have welcomed this trend as a bearer of new livelihood opportunities in lower and middle-income countries. Others have raised concerns about the possible social impacts, including loss of local rights to land, water and other natural resources; threats to local food security; and, more generally, the risk that large-scale investments may marginalise family farmers. The recent debates about “land grabbing” – whereby investors acquire large areas of land in lower- and middle-income countries – illustrate these trends and positions.

There is great demand for insights on how to structure agricultural investments in ways that leave land and share value with local farmers and communities. And in many parts of the world, there is growing experience with models for structuring agricultural investments other than large-scale land acquisitions.

This publication captures the highlights of the international workshop “Agricultural investment and more inclusive business models”, which took place in Maputo in March 2010. At the workshop, farmers’ organisations, agribusiness, government and civil society came together to share lessons from practical experience. The publication makes the insights gained from this exchange available to a wider audience.

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Making the most of agricultural investment: A survey of business models that provide opportunities for smallholders

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Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in agricultural investment. In many cases, this has translated into large-scale acquisitions of farmland in lower- and middle-income countries. Partly as a result of sustained media attention, these acquisitions have triggered lively if polarised debates about “land grabbing”. Less attention has been paid, however, to alternative ways of structuring agricultural investments that do not involve large-scale land acquisitions. These include a wide range of more collaborative arrangements between investors and local smallholders and communities, such as diverse types of contract farming schemes, joint ventures, management contracts and new supply chain relationships. Drawing on a literature review, this report explores the range of business models that can be used to structure agricultural investments in lower- and middle-income countries, and that provide an alternative to large-scale land acquisitions.

<http://pubs.iied.org/12570IIED.html> (Malaysia)

Community-investor business models: Lessons from the oil palm sector in East Malaysia

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Concerns about food and energy security, coupled with increasing returns from agriculture, have increased interest in agricultural investments in developing countries. Public debates about ‘land grabbing’ have questioned the socio-economic impacts of large-scale land acquisitions. There is new interest in business models involving collaboration between companies and communities.

In Eastern Malaysia, community-investor business models have been implemented for several years to expand oil palm cultivation in customarily held lands. This report documents lessons learned through case studies of different business models.

(A French version of this report will be available at the end of May.)

<http://pubs.iied.org/12569IIED.html> (South Africa)

Joint ventures in agriculture: Lessons from land reform projects in South Africa

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‘Inclusive business models’ have attracted renewed interest in recent years, as part of wider debates about growing agricultural investment in developing countries. This report discusses joint ventures in South Africa’s agricultural sector. The South African experience features major specificities linked to the country’s history and recent land reform programme. Land reform beneficiaries entered into a range of joint ventures with commercial partners. The report provides a cautionary tale for international debates about inclusive business models, while also identifying more promising models that are now starting to emerge. (A French version of this report will be available at the end of May.)

<http://pubs.iied.org/12571IIED.html> (Zambia)

Long-term outcomes of agricultural investments: Lessons from Zambia

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Agricultural investments involving the acquisition of long-term rights over large areas of land in developing countries have been the focus of much debate in recent years. Many have welcomed the renewed momentum for private investment in agriculture, but trends towards large-scale land acquisitions raise major social, economic and environmental concerns. While calls for more inclusive investment models have multiplied, there is limited understanding of what works and under what conditions. For many recent agricultural investments, it is just too early to assess socio-economic outcomes. This report discusses two agricultural investments in Zambia. Both projects started as state-led, development-oriented initiatives in the 1970s and early 1980s, and were later privatised. This long implementation history provides an opportunity to assess the longer-term socio-economic outcomes of agricultural investments, and to distil insights on practical ways to include lower-income groups in investment processes.

<http://pubs.iied.org/10037IIED.html> (Mali)

Agricultural investments and land acquisitions in Mali: Context, trends and case studies

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[Moussa Djiré](http://pubs.iied.org/search.php?a=Moussa%20Djir%C3%A9), [with Amadou Keita and Alfousseyni Diawara](http://pubs.iied.org/search.php?a=with%20Amadou%20Keita%20and%20Alfousseyni%20Diawara)

Agricultural investments involving the acquisition of long-term rights over large areas of land in developing countries have been the focus of much debate in recent years. While many have welcomed the renewed momentum for private investment in agriculture, trends towards large-scale land acquisitions raise major social, economic and environmental concerns. And while calls for more inclusive investment models have multiplied, there is limited understanding of what works and under what conditions. This report discusses agricultural investments in Mali. It analyses national trends in investment flows and patterns; it assesses the adequacy of the legal and institutional framework regulating land and investment; and it examines two examples of more inclusive investments. The findings provide ground for concern as to the preparedness of national frameworks to ensure that investment pursues sustainable development goals. They also provide insights on the potential and challenges of making more inclusive investment models work in practice.