

The School of Doctorate of the University of Venice IUAV and the Department of Design and Planning in Complex Environment is pleased to invite you to the fourth seminar of the series

“Water, energy, land and food security. The challenge of large-scale land acquisitions”

that will be run from October 2014 to January 2015

The seminars are organized in collaboration with the **Venice International University (VIU)**,

and the endorsement of the **National Institute of Agricultural Economics (INEA)**, the **Venice Expò2015 Committee** and the **ENEL Foundation**,

and will be held on

Wednesday 10th December 2014 at 2 p.m.

at IUAV University of Venice, Room Tafuri, Palazzo Badoer, San Polo 2468 Venezia

The seminar will **address the issue of data availability and transparency in global land acquisitions** with contributions from

Martin Ostermeier (Hamburg, GIGA),

“The Land Matrix – Patterns and Challenges of Tracking Large-Scale Land Acquisitions”

Stefania Bracco (University of Siena)

“Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in Africa: Exploring Actors, Roles and Responsibilities”

A detailed programme of the seminar is enclosed.

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Speaker: Martin Ostermeier

Title: The Land Matrix – Patterns and Challenges of Tracking Large-Scale Land Acquisitions

Abstract:

Large-scale land acquisitions (LSLA) are notoriously non-transparent. The Land Matrix is a global and independent land monitoring initiative that promotes transparency and accountability in decisions over land and investment. The first part of this seminar will introduce the Land Matrix database and highlight general patterns and recent trends around LSLA. The second part discusses challenges of gathering data and tracking land acquisitions.

Biography

Martin Ostermeier is a research fellow at the GIGA Institute of Latin American Studies in Hamburg and a PhD student at the Department of Economics at the University of Göttingen. He is in charge of the global database management within the Land Matrix Global Observatory and coordinates the regional data collection strategy. His research interest comprises large-scale agricultural investments and sustainable development, with a focus on agrofuel production

Speaker: Stefania Bracco

Title: Large-Scale Land Acquisitions in Africa: Exploring Actors, Roles and Responsibilities

Abstract

Adding additional sources and information on the concluded deals collected by the Land Matrix Global Observatory dataset, we will provide a detailed assessment of the large-scale land acquisitions in Africa, in terms of investors (private, financial, public sector, multinational corporations, etc.), purpose of the deal and investors' behaviour. It will show economic, environmental and social benefits and costs of large-scale land acquisitions, and explain how external environmental and social negative spillovers create space for responsible investment initiatives to internalize these costs in a corporate strategy. Adopting unsustainable strategies, investors encounter potential costs in terms of conflict with local communities and/or NGOs, reputational and credit risk and financial losses. Hence, in many cases they have incentive to adopt sustainability criteria and responsible strategies.

We will review the corporate social responsibility's initiatives and standards that the actors involved in land acquisitions in Africa declare to join and follow. The analysis of requirements and criteria set by various initiatives helps to identify which role corporate social responsibility may play in making large-scale land acquisitions in Africa more beneficial, or at least less harmful, for sustainable development. The evidence provided on what the investors are currently doing to ensure fair acquisitions is showing that the goal of responsible land investments in Africa is still far to be reached, despite some steps in the right direction.

Biography

Stefania Bracco is a third year PhD Student in Economics at the University of Siena, Italy. She is developing her thesis on the economic, social and environmental consequences of biofuels' policy. She was visiting scholar at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University in the city of New York (2014), and visiting student at the University of Reading, UK (2010-2011). In 2011, she worked in the Migration and Development Office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She got Bachelor (2009) and Master's Degree (2011) in Development Economics at the University of Firenze, Italy. Her research interests are Sustainable Development; Development Economics; Environmental Economics; International Economic and Food Security.