OpenLandContracts.org serves as the first online, searchable, and user-friendly repository of publicly available contracts for large-scale land, agriculture, and forestry projects. The online repository includes the full text of contracts; plain language summaries of each contract's key social, environmental, human rights, fiscal, and operational terms; and options for searching and comparing contracts. Launched in 2015, OpenLandContracts.org promotes greater transparency of land-based investments, facilitates better understanding of the contracts that govern them, and provides useful tools for governments, communities, companies, and other stakeholders.
Module Objectives and Outline

 Spirits of Self-Study Module One:

- Introduce you to OpenLandContracts.org
- Provide an overview of the repository’s key features

Outline:

- Part One: OpenLandContracts.org: An Introduction
- Part Two: OpenLandContracts.org: Key Features
- Key Takeaways
Part One

OpenLandContracts.org

An Introduction
OpenLandContracts.org is the first online, searchable, user-friendly repository of publicly available investor-state “land contracts”

It is freely available to everyone
For the purposes of OpenLandContracts.org, “land contracts” are:

1. Written agreements

2. Between host governments (and/or their sub-entities) and investors (either domestic or foreign)

3. To transfer rights to use, control, or own land

4. For the purpose of large-scale commercial agriculture (including biofuels and renewable energy production) or forestry projects (such as timber extraction)
Examples of land contracts include:

- Agricultural Development Agreements
- Concession Agreements
- Establishment Conventions
- Forest Management Contracts
- Investment Agreements
- Investment Incentive Contracts
- Land Lease Agreements
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Sub-leases
- Timber Sale Contracts
The repository features:

1. The full text of contracts
2. Plain-language summaries (or “annotations”) of each contract’s key social, environmental, human rights, fiscal, and operational provisions. These help users to better understand the provisions (and the contract as a whole)
3. Metadata, i.e. basic information concerning a contract, including its year of signature and resource type, which is used to categorize contracts featured on the repository
Introduction

- You can use the repository to:
  - View or download contracts
  - Search for contracts by country, resource type, company, and other categories
  - Clip or compare annotations of contractual provisions
  - Access guides and training materials on land contracts

- Governments can also work with the OpenLandContracts.org team to develop country-specific repositories for contract disclosure.
Contracts from **around the world** are featured on this global repository, which will continue to expand as the number of disclosed contracts grows:
The repository also features **associated documents**

These are documents that are related to land contracts, which:

- Help to build a more complete picture of the deal underlying a contract
- Give further context regarding the rights and obligations established or affected by a contract

**Examples** of associated documents include:

- Environmental and Social Impact Assessments (ESIAs)
- Community Development Agreements (CDAs)
- Forest Management Plans
- Maps of Concessions
OpenLandContracts.org is an initiative of the Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI), a joint center of the Columbia Law School and the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York.

The project is supported by UK Aid from the Department for International Development (DFID).

It is a sister site of ResourceContracts.org, an online repository of oil, gas, and mining contracts created by the Natural Resource Governance Institute, the World Bank, and CCSI.

Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment
A JOINT CENTER OF COLUMBIA LAW SCHOOL AND THE EARTH INSTITUTE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

UK aid
from the British people
OpenLandContracts.org aims to:

1. **Equip** stakeholders with the tools and resources necessary to effectively read and understand land contracts
2. **Catalyze** broader awareness of the implications of land contracts and their underlying deals
3. **Demonstrate** that land contract disclosure is both feasible and valuable
4. **Promote** greater transparency and **facilitate** disclosure of land contracts
Part Two

OpenLandContracts.org

Key Features
Key Features

Part Two of this module provides an overview of OpenLandContracts.org’s layout and key features:

1. Homepage
2. Searching for Documents
   a) Free Text
   b) Category Dropdowns
   c) Downloading or Sharing Results
3. Viewing a Contract
   a) PDF View
   b) Text View
   c) Searching Within a Contract
4. Annotations
5. Summary Page
6. Clipping & Comparing
7. Additional Resources
1. Homepage

- From the **Homepage**, you can access:
  - The *free text search box*, which allows you to run in-text searches, or to search for a specific contract
  - A link for *Advanced Search*, which provides dropdown categories for easy searching
  - The *menu*, which provides access to the *All Documents* page, in addition to informational pages, including the Glossary and the Guides page
  - A *featured box*, which links to the *All Documents* page, the *Countries* page, and the *Resources* page, as well as to preset searches of contractual terms that may be of interest
  - A hyperlinked *map* that shows the number of contracts from specific countries
1. Homepage

An online repository of Open Land Contracts

OpenLandContracts.org is a repository of publicly available investment contracts for land, agriculture, and forestry projects. It features plain language summaries of key provisions and provides tools for searching and comparing contracts. Learn more.

The search box allows users to search for a specific contract or type of contract using any search term, e.g. “palm oil”, “Liberia”, or “concession”

The “Advanced search” link allows users to access dropdown categories for easy searching.
1. Homepage

Users can reach the sidebar menu by clicking on this icon.

OpenLandContracts.org is a repository of publicly available investment contracts for land, agriculture, and forestry projects. It features plain language summaries of key provisions and provides tools for searching and comparing contracts. Learn more.
1. Homepage

The sidebar menu gives users access to the All Documents page, in addition to pages where contracts are classified by Country and Resource; the Glossary and Guides pages are also accessible from the sidebar menu.
1. Homepage

An online repository of Open Land Contracts

Search 167 contracts and associated documents

Explore contract terms:
- Environmental impact assessment
- Outgrowers programs
- Work and investment commitments

OpenLandContracts.org is a repository of publicly available investment contracts for land, agriculture, and forestry projects. It features plain language summaries of key provisions and provides tools for searching and comparing contracts. Learn more
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This hyperlinked map shows the number of contracts from specific countries.

Hover over a country to see the number of available contracts; click on a country to access a list of that country’s contracts.
2. Searching: Free Text Search Box

- The free text search box on the **Homepage** is also found at the **top of every page** on the website.

- You can type anything into the free text search box. The site will then search for your word(s) in all texts that have been extracted from contract PDFs, and will also search all annotations and metadata.

- Example: Run a search for “Liberia” **and** “palm oil”
2. Searching: Free Text

Using the free text search box to search for "liberia" and "palm oil" returns 6 documents.
2. Searching: Free Text

Using the free text search box to search for “liberia” and “palm oil” returns any contracts with a matching Annotation or piece of Metadata, or any contracts where the text contains the search term(s).

Clicking on the document name leads users to the contract view page for that document.

Clicking on the language next to “Text” leads users to the first place in the contract text where the search result found.

Clicking on the language next to “Annotation” leads users to the first annotation where the search result is found.
2. Searching: Free Text

You can also use **targeted search terms** in the free text search box:

- **+** signifies “AND”: Two or more terms or phrases must be in the description. For instance: `consult+indigenous` will return search results for documents that contain both `consult` and `indigenous`.

- **|** signifies “OR”: Either one or the other of the multiple terms specified must be in the description. For instance: `monitoring|consultation` will return search results for documents that contain either `monitoring` or `consultation`.

- **-** negates a search term: Documents possessing the term will be excluded from the search. For instance: `-consent` will exclude documents containing the word `consent`.

- **“** wraps a number of terms to signify a phrase for searching. For instance: “`local community`” will only return documents that contain that entire phrase.
2. Searching: Free Text

More **targeted search terms** for the free text search box include:

- * at the end of a term signifies a prefix query. For instance: `consult*` will return search results for `consult`, `consultation`, `consulting`, `consultant`, etc.

- ( ) signifies precedence: Any phrase or term in () has a higher precedence than other terms or phrase. For instance: `("local community" + "contracts") | regional` will produce search results where “local community” and “contracts” have high precedence than “regional”.

- ~N after a word signifies edit distance (fuzziness), meaning the number of character changes that need to be made to one string or more to make it the same as another string. For instance: `stabilisation~2` will produce search results for both “stabilisation”, “stabilization” and other terms that have maximum two characters difference in their spelling from the search term.

- ~N after a phrase signifies slop amount, meaning how far apart terms are allowed to be while still considering the document a match. For instance: “local community”~2 returns search results where “local community” is a phrase, or where 1 or 2 words appear in between “local” and “community.”
In addition to the free text search box, you can search for contracts using the **Advanced Search functionality**, which provides various dropdown categories.

The advanced search dropdowns can be found through a link on the home page, which takes you to a *Search* page.

Whenever you are on a page other than the *Search* page, the dropdowns are available by clicking on the free text search box, which will then pop up an “Advanced search” bubble. Clicking on the bubble will open up the dropdowns. You can hide the dropdowns using the “Hide” button.
2. Searching

Placing the cursor in the “Search all documents” box prompts the “Advanced search” button to appear.

Clicking on the “Advanced search” hover prompts the dropdown categories to appear.
2. Searching: Dropdowns

- Dropdowns provide an easy way to search for different types of documents by **category**

- Available dropdown categories include: Country, Resource, Year Signed, Company Name, Language, Document Type, Contract Type, Annotation Category

- You can also search for “Annotated Contracts Only”

- Example: Run a search by selecting “Liberia” from the **Country** dropdown and “Oil Palm or Palm Oils” from the **Resource** dropdown
  - This search will return only contracts that match those categories
2. Searching: Dropdowns

Select the Country by beginning to type your search term, or by scrolling down through the Country dropdown.

Use the same method to select any of the dropdown search categories.
2. Searching: Dropdowns

The search returns contracts that match the selected categories.
2. Searching: Downloading or Sharing Search Results

- Once you’ve searched for documents (using either the free text search box or the dropdowns), you will have a list of returned search results

- From this list, you can download:
  - A CSV file (Excel document) containing a list of the results
  - A PDF version of any contract returned in the search results
  - A CSV file containing the annotations (plain-language summaries) that are attached to any contract returned in the search results

- You can also share your search results on Facebook, Twitter, or via email
2. Searching: Downloading or Sharing Search Results

Users can download a full list of their search results, and can share these results on Twitter, Facebook, and by Email.

By clicking on the cloud icon, users can download: (1) a PDF version of each listed contract, and (2) a list of annotations for each listed contract.
2. Searching

If you would like further guidance, a short tutorial video on Searching For and Viewing Contracts is available on the Guides page of OpenLandContracts.org: www.openlandcontracts.org/guides
3. Viewing a Contract

- You can **view contracts directly** on the *Contract View* page.

- For most contracts, there are **two types of views** available:
  1. PDF View (this is the default view)
  2. Text View

- Regardless of which view is chosen, the *Contract View* page will include an **annotations column** on the left and a **metadata column** on the right.

- A **toolbar** on the top allows you to search within the contract’s text, choose between PDF View and Text View, and move between pages of a contract. You can also:
  - Download the contract
  - Email a link to the page, or share it through social media
  - Turn on the “clipping” functionality
3. Viewing a Contract

- Users can toggle between the Text and PDF views, move from page to page, and adjust the zoom.
- Annotations are listed in the scrolling left hand column.
- Users can download a PDF version of the contract, share a link to the contract, or turn on the “Clips” tool.
- Metadata is listed in the right-hand column.
- Clicking on this ID number will take users to the contract’s corresponding Land Matrix deal page.

Ethiopia, Green Valley, Land Lease Agreement, 27 February 2012
3. Viewing a Contract: PDF View

- The PDF View allows you to view the contract in its original form: this is generally a scanned version of the original hard copy.
- This allows you to view any stamps of approval, signatures, or other unique elements of the contract.
- Annotations are visible on and linked to the PDF View.
3. Viewing a Contract: PDF View

Ethiopia, Green Valley, Land Lease Agreement, 27 February 2012

Assignment or transfer

Unless 75% of the land is developed, Green Valley Agro has no right to transfer the land or the right to use the land and properties to other persons; Upon developing 75% of the land, Green Valley Agro can transfer the developed portion of the land or the properties on the land to other persons only with prior written consent of Ministry of Agriculture less Page 4 (Arts. 4.12-4.13)

Audit mechanisms - financial obligations

Ministry of Agriculture may monitor and establish that Green Valley Agro is discharging and accomplishing its obligations diligently, provided that... more Page 4 (Arts. 5.1, 5.3)

Cancellation or termination

The contract may be terminated upon: (a) the expiration of the term of the contract (b) a failure of Ministry... more Page 5 (Arts. 3.6, 9, 5.2; 6.5)

Clicking on an Article reference for an annotation automatically scrolls the contract to the page containing the first relevant annotated provision.
3. Viewing a Contract: Text View

- The Text View enables you to read the contract in plain text (rather than in the original PDF format)

- This can be useful if the PDF file is difficult to read, and also enables you to run in-text searches (through using the “search in this document” box in the toolbar, or even through using a Control+F search)
3. Viewing a Contract: Text View

Where does the text version come from?

- To generate a Text version, each contract is first processed (when possible) using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software

- Each extracted text is then manually reviewed and amended for accuracy through Mechanical Turk (MT), an online transcription service

- To improve accuracy, each text version is then further reviewed (and amended if necessary) by a research assistant working for the OpenLandContracts.org team

- Caution! While we aim for accuracy, the text may contain errors and differences from the contract’s original PDF file
The Text view enables users to run an in-text search for terms within the contract.
3. Viewing a Contract: Text View

Example: searching for the term “termination” yields a list of results where “termination” is mentioned in either: (1) the text of the contract, or (2) an annotation.
4. Annotations

- Annotations are **plain language summaries** of the key provisions of each contract.

- They can assist you in **understanding the meaning** of important contractual provisions, or in **finding where certain issues are addressed** in a contract.

- You can view the annotations attached to each contract in **three ways**:  
  1. Alongside the Contract, in either the PDF View or Text View  
  2. On a contract’s Summary Page  
  3. By downloading a CSV file containing a list of a contract’s annotations
4. Annotations

- When viewing annotations alongside a contract (either in PDF View or Text View), you can group them **By Page or By Topic**
  - **By Page** lists them in order of their appearance in the contract
  - **By Topic** organizes them into topical categories:
    - **General**: basic information, such as company name, project location, resource(s), year contract signed, etc.
    - **Environment**: water use, requirements for EIAs or environmental monitoring, etc.
    - **Fiscal**: taxes, surface fees or rent, etc.
    - **Operations**: infrastructure, land use outside of concession area, etc.
    - **Social**: employment and training commitments, local development agreements, etc., and other issues affecting local communities or workers, such as use of physical security or rights to access area
    - **Legal Rules**: dispute resolution (including arbitration), governing law, force majeure, etc.
4. Annotations

Annotations can be sorted by page or by topic.

Clicking on an annotation article reference will automatically scroll the PDF to the page that contains the first summarized provision.

Yellow annotation markers indicate the location of the annotated provision on the page.
4. Annotations

Hovering over the yellow annotation markers will bring up an annotation box with the annotation text, title, and article reference.

Clicking here leads to the Contract Summary Page.
5. Summary Page

- Each contract’s Summary Page contains:
  1. The contract’s Open Contracting ID and metadata
  2. Further information on the company/investor
  3. A list of any associated documents that are relevant to the contract
  4. The source URL for contracts originally uploaded on another website
  5. A list of the contract’s annotations, organized by category
5. Summary Page

- Both on the **Summary Page** and in the metadata column (featured on the *Contract* and *Text View* pages of each contract), you’ll find the contract’s **Open Contracting ID**
  - This is a unique identifier for the contract (much like an ISBN for a publication)
  - By attaching an Open Contracting ID to each contract, data users can conduct structured analyses across various contracts
  - For further information, see: [http://standard.open-contracting.org](http://standard.open-contracting.org)
5. Summary Page

- Where available, the following type of information regarding the company/investor is also provided:
  - **Jurisdiction of incorporation**: The country in which the company is incorporated
  - **OpenCorporates ID**: This is a link to the company’s profile on OpenCorporates.com
  - **Company address**: The company’s registered address
  - **Corporate grouping**: As described by OpenCorporates: a “loose collection of different companies” considered to be part of the same group

- This information is drawn from the contract and from OpenCorporates (https://opencorporates.com/)
5. Summary Page

Each contract is assigned an Open Contracting identifier (or “OCID”).

This box lists the contract’s metadata, i.e. basic information about the contract:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Contracting ID: ocids-591adf-3291791899</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Entity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Matrix ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3824</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To view the annotations on the Summary Page, users can click on: (1) specific hyperlinked annotation categories; or (2) “View all Annotations” - alternatively, users can simply scroll down the Summary Page.
The Summary Page also lists information about the Company, any Associated Documents for this contract, the Source URL, and the contract's Disclosure Mode.

Users can also read the contract’s annotations on the Summary Page.
The **Clips** tool allows you to **select and compare the text of Annotations** from one or more contracts.

It thus provides an easy way to **compare and analyze** Annotations for specific provisions.
6. Clip and Compare

- To **activate** the Clips tool, click on the “Clip” icon, which appears in the toolbar on the Contract View page for all documents.

- When the “**View Clips**” option is visible, this indicates that the Clipping function has been activated.
6. Clip and Compare

- To Clip an **individual** Annotation, click the icon beside that Annotation.

- To Clip **all** Annotations, click “Clip All”
6. Clip and Compare

- Clicking on “View Clips” allows you to:
  - **View** a list of all clipped Annotations
  - **Download** a CSV file of all clipped Annotations
  - Download a PDF bundle of contract pages corresponding to the clipped Annotations
  - **Print** and **Share** your Clips
In the **example** below, a user is comparing annotations for “Arbitration and dispute resolution” provisions from two contracts – one from Ethiopia, and another from Liberia.
6. Clip and Compare

- To **delete** your clippings, click “Clear all Clips”
- To **de-active** the Clips tool, click “Hide”
- Unless you clear your clippings, they will be saved for multiple browsing sessions (provided that you use the same browser and device to visit the site)
7. Additional Resources

- OpenLandContracts.org also makes additional resources available

- These include **two guides** to assist users in understanding the technical provisions and language commonly found in land contracts: *Guide to Forestry Contracts* and *Guide to Land Contracts: Agricultural Projects*

- Both are available for download from the **Guides** page
Also available on the **Guides** page:

- **Additional training modules**
- A **briefing note** on transparency in land-based investment, and an accompanying **summary** of relevant guidelines and principles
- A **short tutorial video** that guides you through the site’s search features is available on the **Guides** page

Key **guidelines and principles** relevant to land contract transparency are also available for download from the **About** page

The **Glossary** and **FAQ** pages further assist users in making the best use of the repository and the information available through it
Key Takeaways

- OpenLandContracts.org is the **first online, searchable, user-friendly repository** of land contracts

- OpenLandContracts.org features the **full text** of investor-state land contracts and **plain-language summaries** of key provisions

- A range of **key features**, including advanced search functions, and **additional resources** assist users in accessing land contracts and understanding their implications

- Additional resources available on OpenLandContracts.org include **guides**, **training modules**, and a **short tutorial video**; these resources support users in applying the repository’s key features
OpenLandContracts.org serves as the first online, searchable, and user-friendly repository of publicly available contracts for large-scale land, agriculture, and forestry projects. The online repository includes the full text of contracts; plain language summaries of each contract's key social, environmental, human rights, fiscal, and operational terms; and options for searching and comparing contracts. Launched in 2015, OpenLandContracts.org promotes greater transparency of land-based investments, facilitates better understanding of the contracts that govern them, and provides useful tools for governments, communities, companies, and other stakeholders.

Questions?
Email us:

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