

107. Global Land Project

The Global Land Project (GLP) is a joint project of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP). It looks at human and ecological aspects of land use, including current and future land use change.

Introduction

The Global Land Project (GLP) is a joint ten-year project of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP) and the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme. Derived from the previous Land Use/Cover Change project, GLP started its activities in 2005, with publication of the GLP science plan (GLP, 2005).

The focus of GLP is largely “land-centric” and includes people, biota¹ and natural resources. It aims to understand complex feedbacks between the societal and environmental components of the land system, and to improve understanding of local and regional processes in order to achieve global knowledge of land change.

GLP has a long tradition of local-based land studies, including social and demographic aspects of land use configurations, land management and planning, and design. These provide a basis for strong future links between research and practice.

Research and results

Since 2005, the GLP community has made considerable progress in understanding land use change. It focuses on empirical land use studies and modelling, and on managing land resources to support the transition towards sustainable development. The community now understands some of the interdisciplinary issues affecting land science. These issues include the behaviour of people and society, the multi-level character of decision-makers and land units, the ways in which people and land units are connected to the broader world within which they exist, and relevant aspects of the past, present and future.

GLP has produced dynamic and innovative research in areas such as global tele-coupling effects and the drivers of indirect land use change, policy issues regarding large-scale land acquisitions (land grabbing²), competing claims on land for food production, and alternative strategies to manage land resources in the discussion of land sparing versus land sharing.

Interactions between people and their environment have been at the core of GLP research. Its recent results have led to opportunities to bridge the gap between natural and social science. They have also improved understanding of the contribution of social

practices to global climate change. The research includes understanding of changes in land use practice, in land cover (for instance, deforestation and afforestation), and in climate and carbon dioxide fluxes between the land surface and the atmosphere.

From a social science perspective, GLP has added to the understanding of:

- contemporary urban and rural transformations
- post-industrial revitalisation
- increasing mobility and migration
- demographic and lifestyle changes related to changes in agriculture, food, fibre and biomass production and consumption
- food quality and security
- functioning of ecosystems.

It also examines the cultural aspects of landscape patterns and their effect on decision-making processes, institutions and governance structures for land management.

Key findings

- A basic understanding of the historical processes and transitions underlying present and possible future land change, in many nations and regions.
- Tried, tested and updated methodologies such as the use of meta-analyses in land change research, and the incorporation of human behaviour and decision-making processes into land use and climate system models.

Chair: Peter Verburg

Executive officer: Giovana Espindola

www.globallandproject.org

www.glp-osm2014.org

Notes

1. The collective animal and plant life of a particular geographical region or period.
2. <http://landportal.info/landmatrix>.

Bibliography

GLP (2005), *Global Land Project Science Plan and Implementation Strategy*, International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP) Report No. 53/International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) Report No. 19, IGBP Secretariat, Stockholm, www.globallandproject.org/arquivos/report_53.pdf.



From:
World Social Science Report 2013
Changing Global Environments

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203419-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

International Social Science Council/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2013), "Global Land Project", in *World Social Science Report 2013: Changing Global Environments*, OECD Publishing, Paris/Unesco Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203419-111-en>

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