



Network of Excellence
on Land Governance in Africa

NELGA Good Practices

African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences

The Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) is a **partnership of leading African universities and research institutions** with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. Currently NELGA has more than **70 partner institutions in over 40 countries** and is organized in 6 regional and 1 technical node supported by a Secretariat.

NELGA African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences

The **Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences (AJLP & GS)** constitutes the collaborative work and cooperation among the African Land Policy Center (ALPC) and the NELGA. It was in the beginning created as local Moroccan Journal that is hosted at and managed by IAV Hassan II and was then mandated by ALPC and NELGA partners to cover the whole continent. Since 2018 it has become the African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences (AJLP & GS). The open-access journal aims to encourage innovation in research, promote knowledge exchange and advance scientific research in land policy and geospatial sciences in Africa.



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Objectives and achieved results

The African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences (AJLP & GS) mirrors the technical and scientific capacities African researchers, professors and experts have developed throughout the years in land related issues. Hence, the Journal has created a momentum within the scientific Land Governance community by encouraging the participation and collaboration among scholars towards a better knowledge management on the land governance issues in the regions and on the continent.

The Journal publishes evidenced-based research that speaks to the needs of land stakeholders with the aim to propose updated scientific research to accompany land governance reforms. It seeks to advise actions towards tested recommendations to deal with related risks and challenges.

A special focus of the Journal is set on a gender mainstreaming approach in research, with supporting both, research done by women and research focusing on gender related land issues. To enhance the quality of women participation, a special attention in the “call for papers” is expressively affirming the importance of gender related land issues.



Implementation – Facts and Figures

Organizational Structure

The African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences (AJLP & GS) has an organizational structure called Editorial Team consisting of the Editorial Board, the Scientific Reviewers Committee, and the Editorial Staff members.



Editorial Board

The Editorial Board are peers, whose judgements are highly valued and will set the policy and guidelines of AJLP & GS. Board members provide oversight, and visibility to the Journal in academic and policy making institutions. They also endorse the Journal to authors, readers and subscribers and provide support and advice to the Editorial Staff. The purpose of the Journal and its administrative structure are determined by the Board. Additionally, the Editor-in-Chief is advised by them on trends of editorial policy and they suggest overall operational guidelines for improving the content of the Journal. The Board meets at least once a year, if practicable once at each Conference on Land Policy in Africa. The Board Chair and Editor-in-Chief select and choose eminent experts at the national, African, and international level to be editors or part of the Scientific Committee of the Journal. The Editors are responsible for rejecting and accepting original manuscripts. They should have no conflict of interest regarding the contributions they reject or accept.



Scientific Review Committee

The Scientific Review Committee is composed of African and international experts in the field of land policy and geospatial sciences. The Committee members discuss the guidelines, general rules and topics of the Journal. They are part of the review process and are responsible for encouraging and motivating potential authors to submit papers to the Journal. The Scientific Review Committee members ensure a rigorous process so that any scientific material published has the appropriate level of scientific merit regarding the topics of the AJLP & GS. The Scientific Review Committee members can be selected for one or several issues of the Journal including the special issues.



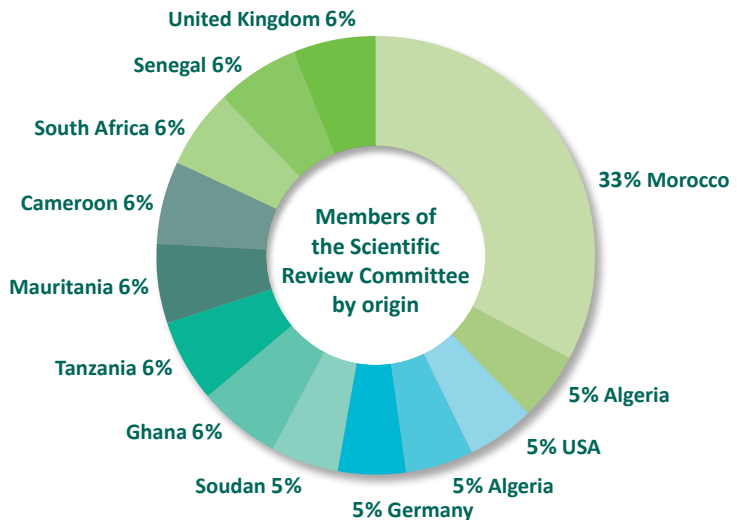
Editorial Staff

The Editorial Staff works with the Editorial Team to assist managing the Journal. The Editorial Staff has to set up and publish each issue of the Journal.

Editor-in-Chief

The Editor-in-Chief, Moha El-Ayachi, has the duty to perform the overall missions of coordination, supervision, and follow up of the manuscripts' submissions. He assesses, in collaboration with the Editorial Board, to which extent articles address land policy and contribute to the development of land governance in Africa. He provides a report depicting the progress of scientific research in land related issues considering key topics such as subject of expertise, country, gender. He ensures the alignment of scientific research to the strategic objectives of NELGA and the African Union Agenda. This will involve decisions and activities related to:

- manuscript submissions and solicitation of content;
- peer reviewers' selection by collaborating with the editorial board members;
- enforcement of professional and editorial standards of ethics;
- handling of manuscripts and conformity with established guidelines;
- standards to be used in judging articles for inclusion;
- format of the Journal;
- hosting / managing the Journal.



Journal publications and contributions from researchers

Since its establishment, **11 issues** (5 special and 6 regular issues) of the Journal have been published. **98 scientific contributions** have been accepted from **228 authors** (as of May 2020) by the Journal.

The number of articles accepted and received by the African Journal is growing since 2018. NELGAs participation at regional (e.g. Continental NELGA Research Workshop 2018) and international events (e.g. CLPA 2019) enhanced the visibility of the Journal. Additionally, researchers were given the opportunity to share their research, knowledge and expertise with the network and their African counterparts. The table below shows the total published manuscripts since 2018.



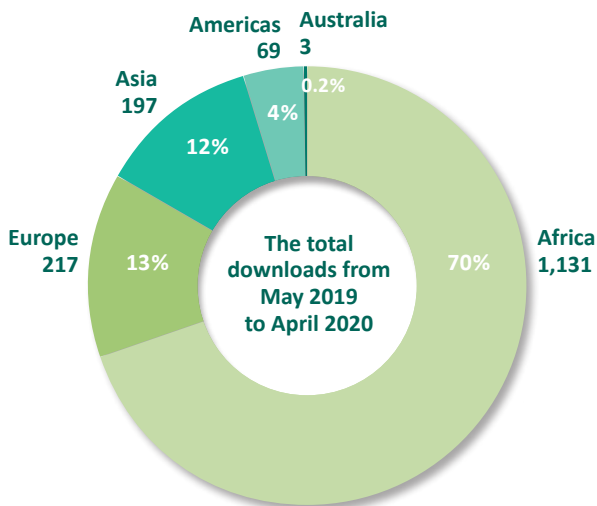
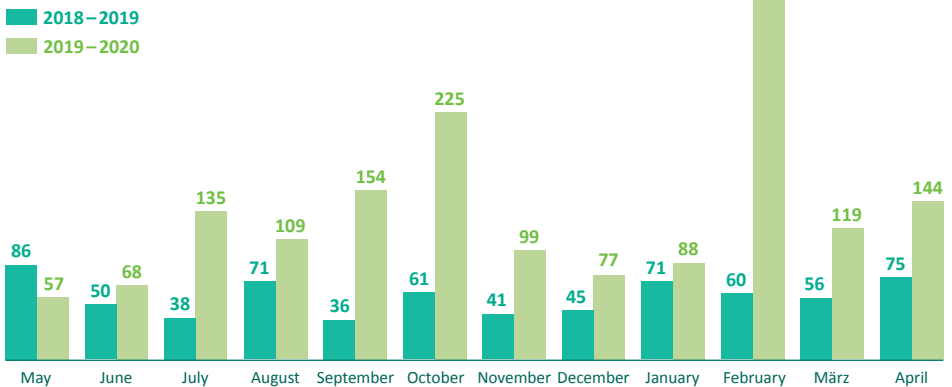
Visit the Journal's website here

Year	Volumes and Issues	Number of Manuscripts
2018	Vol. 1, No 1: Regular Issue	6
	Vol. 1, No 2: Special Issue on Youth and Land Governance	12
	Vol. 1, No 3: Regular Issue	11
2019	Vol. 2, No 1: Special Issue on Women and Land	7
	Vol. 2, No 2: Regular Issue	10
	Vol. 2, No 3: Regular Issue	11
2020	Vol. 3, No 1: Special Issue 1 on Land Policy in Africa	23
	Vol. 3, No 2: Special Issue 2 on Land Policy in Africa	11
	Vol. 3, No 3: Regular Issue	10
	Vol. 3, No 4: Regular Issue	8
	Vol. 3, No 5: Special Issue 3 on Land Policy in Africa	16

Impact of the Journal

Many professors, researchers, students, and professionals find the Journal and its series of publications beneficial to their work. The Editorial Staff has followed up on the evolution the downloads observed during the period 2018 – 2020. The figure below presents the achieved downloads.

Number of paper downloads during 2018–2019 / 2019–2020



Achievements and perspectives

After more than three years, several lessons can be drawn from the setting up of the AJLP & GS. The Journal has the setup of being mandated by ALPC and accepted by all NELGA African nodes. They work together to produce up-to-date scientific publications dealing with issues of interest for land stakeholders, including African policymakers. Several indicators depict the success of this initiative as good practice:

- ➔ The AJLP & GS is indexed by the Directory Access Journals (DAOJ) helping get open access to land-related research for many scientists and researchers.
- ➔ All published papers by AJLP & GS have an international Digital Object Identifier (DOI) for Journal indexing.
- ➔ The Journal passed the first committee's Web of Science assessment.
- ➔ The University of Barcelona gave the Journal an ICDS score of 3.3 for 2020. This certifies the Journal as one of the best references for scientists and researchers. [More information available here.](#)
- ➔ The AgEcon Search added the Journal to its repository as one of the best references for scientists and researchers. [More information available here.](#)
- ➔ The Journal has joined the European Reference Index for Humanities and Social Sciences (ERIH PLUS). [Listing of the Journal is available here.](#)
- ➔ The University of Leipzig has also included the Journal in its database as a repository of land themed information and data. [More information available here.](#)
- ➔ The Journal is integrated into the ZDB German Union Catalog. [More info available here.](#)
- ➔ Finally, the Journal is currently undergoing assessment by SCOPUS service.



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The digitization of the platform brought many benefits to NELGA's users and creators at different levels. It offered readers an easier access to publications and facilitated, for scholars, connection among peers and articles submission. Those benefits are showing their effect especially with the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa and globally.

The Editorial Board, in collaboration with ALPC and the NELGA Secretariat, held its first editorial meeting to identify the next necessary steps to ensure the sustainability of the digital Journal. Furthermore, three more editorial associates will support the Editor-in-Chief in managing the Journal.



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Interviews



Interview with Professor Moha El-Ayachi, NELGA North Africa coordinator and Editor-in-Chief of the African Journal.

Who are the AJLP & GS researchers and contributors?

The Journal targets contributions from advanced students, researchers, professors, and professionals working on land and related sectors.

What opportunities has the African NELGA Journal opened for you?

The Journal has enabled the NELGA programme to share produced articles with peer colleagues as well as land governance interest and knowledge with other scientists, researchers, and professionals. The Journal is a platform that offers the opportunity to connecting many researchers from all the continent and builds a strong and diverse research network. Furthermore, the Journal gave Africa the opportunity to share scientific achievements and serve as a potential platform of publishing the reviewed papers submitted to the conference of land policy in Africa each two years. As the host institution of the Journal, IAV Hassan II also gained a new visibility on land governance issues through this process.

Finally, it is important to highlight that the Journal is a tool in the hands of African researchers for them to highlight the land related scientific knowledge and expertise they developed on the continent.

Interview with **Natali Kossoumna Libaa**, Head of the Branch of University of Maroua in Kousseri and Head of the Department of Meteorology, Climatology, Hydrology and Pedologie at the University of Maroua, Cameroun, shortlisted researcher in the Second Issue of the Journal.



Please introduce yourself to us, and what is the topic of your gender focused research?

I am a specialist in geography. My research topic is about women's access to land in the North of Cameroun, between the persistence of tradition and socio-economic dynamics.

Do you think that the Journal changes some of your approaches?

Definitely! The Journal constitutes an online data repository and a great resource for our field of expertise. The availability of scientific data helps us to get into a dialogue with policymakers on critical issues. Likewise, the Journal supports the most prominent and hard-working contributors in Africa who strategically contribute to advancing the land agenda in the continent in accordance with the African Union Agenda.

What is your personal and professional drive for doing research?

As a geographer, land has been an issue of man for a long time, considering man as the only breadwinner. Several changes, such as a change of mentality, the rise of women as heads of households, and the quest for women's autonomy, are increasing women's interest in taking ownership of land despite the persisting difficulties. It is time to let women not only use resources but give them an equitable chance for access and control over land resources.

Any suggestions to African male and female researchers in this field of study?

I would advise other land governance researchers to go for evidence-based studies to help the leaders better steer this field of development. We urge NELGA and similar programmes to organize research workshops where we shall gather and get to know people in person to enhance the professional mobility of experts and researchers among academic institutions and land governance stakeholders.

NELGA

The **Network of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA)** is a partnership of leading African universities and research institutions with proven leadership in education, training and research on land governance. It strengthens capacities and knowledge exchange at more than 70 partner institutions across Africa.

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