

Estimating National Percentages of Indigenous and Community Lands
Methods and Findings for Europe

1 November 2015 - Last updated 1 December 2021

By Fabrice Dubertret

To cite this document or the data displayed on LandMark for this layer, please use:

Fabrice Dubertret. 2015. Estimating National Percentages of Indigenous and Community Lands: Methods and Findings for Europe. Data file from *LandMark: The Global Platform of Indigenous and Community Lands*. Available at: www.landmarkmap.org



This document details the findings of the literature reviews used to estimate the area of community lands in Europe (formally recognized or not).

General Notes:

1. **Baseline country area data.** The total country area excludes major inland water bodies. The data source used is the [World Bank Land area table](#).
2. **Indigenous and community lands combined.** No distinction is made between community lands as customarily held by Indigenous Peoples (self-identification) or the customary lands of other communities in the final estimates. However, when disaggregated data are available, these are presented in the country notes.
3. **Area estimates of indigenous and community lands are conservative.** The estimates are based on information found in literature reviews and from personal communication. Area estimates are often available for formally recognized indigenous and community lands only. Estimates of not formally recognized land areas are often partial or non-existent. In such cases, the best

information available is recorded, such as the number of formal land petitions requesting demarcation and titling.

4. **Percentages of the country area apply strictly to *lands*:** Many coastal and lakeside Indigenous Peoples and communities claim rights to adjacent foreshore and waters. These are not included.
5. **Plural sources of findings.** Literature review research of the assessor may lead to different estimations from different sources. Space only allows most recent sources accessed to be recorded in country notes.
6. **Information is under periodic review.** Findings are current as of 1st October 2015 based on research conducted over 2014-2015. More information improving reliability of figures is continuously coming out. Dated additions and adjustments will be made periodically.
7. **Estimates are presented per country.** The estimates are detailed below along with relevant notes. Countries are sorted by region and country name, using the UN division of the World (including necessary adjustments as needed for data presentation). Only countries that have been assessed or where some partial information has been found are presented.
8. **Indigenous Peoples in Europe are fewer than in other parts of the world** (with the exception of Russia). The most well-known peoples self-identifying as Indigenous in the continent are the Sami, whose traditional territory spreads across the Northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia's Kola peninsula, and other Indigenous groups living in the Eastern part of Europe, such as the Tatars of Crimea in Ukraine.
Source: Mauro Barelli, 2010. The Interplay between Global and Regional Human Rights Systems in the Construction of the Indigenous Rights Regime. Human Rights Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 951-979
Thus, Indigenous Peoples' lands have been considered non-existent in the other regions of Europe, until more information indicates otherwise.

COUNTRY BY COUNTRY DETAILED ESTIMATES



EASTERN EUROPE

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Cossack Associations in Shared Ownership are formally recognized forms of community land ownership covering 0.02 Mha. 72.15 Mha of lands are designated for Indigenous Peoples and local communities as Traditional Indigenous Collectives under State or Municipal Ownership and Cossack Associations under State or Municipal Ownership. Thus, 4.41% of the country land area is formally recognized as Indigenous Peoples and community lands.

Source: Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015, Who Owns the World's Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights. Washington, DC: RRI. Available at: http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf

No data could be found regarding the land area not formally recognized to Indigenous Peoples and rural communities. Nevertheless, ethnic Russians are mainly living in urban areas, while Indigenous Peoples are mainly rural dwellers. Beyond the 40 peoples officially recognized as "indigenous small-numbered peoples" in Russia (accounting for only 0.2% of the country population but largely scattered across the North, Siberia and the Far East), other peoples are pursuing recognition. Still, their self-identification as indigenous varies.

Source: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs and Mikkelsen, C., 2015. The Indigenous World, 2015. Copenhagen, Denmark: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs. Available at: http://www.iwgia.org/iwgia_files_publications_files/0716_THE_INDIGENOUS_ORLD_2015_eb.pdf

UKRAINE

The 2014 World Bank Land Governance Assessment Framework synthesis for the country states that 0.02% of Ukraine land area is communal land, the rest being private land (51%) and public lands (49%).

Source :USAID and World Bank, 2014. " Issues and Options for Improved Land Sector Governance in Ukraine".
URL :
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLGA/Resources/Ukraine_Synthesis_Report.pdf



NORTHERN EUROPE

ÅLAND ISLANDS (FINLAND)

0.155 Mha out of the total Åland land area (1.33 Mha) are recognized as Local Community Ownership. Thus, 11.65% of the archipelago land base is formally recognized as owned by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It represents 0.51% of the total Finland area.

Source: Rights and Resources Initiative, 2015, Who Owns the World's Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights. Washington, DC: RRI. Available at: http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf

FINLAND (ÅLAND ISLANDS EXCLUDED)

Indigenous and community lands formally recognized in the Åland islands cover 1.33 Mha (0.51% of the total Finland country area). This data is displayed here for the country level, but is a double counting of the separately treated Åland islands.

The figure of 3 Mha of unrecognized lands corresponds to the formally recognized cultural and linguistic heritage site of the Sámi (i.e. "homeland"), which does not concern control and ownership of resources. The homeland is recognized in both the Sámi Parliament Act 17.7.1995/974 (4§) and the Finnish Constitution (17§ and 121§). This is the area that the Sámi "claim" as part of the ratification process of the ILO Convention 169, which Finland has not completed. The ratification would hand the indigenous community full land use rights within this territory, of which 91% is currently controlled by the government.

Sources:

RRI, 2015, Who Owns the World's Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights. Washington, DC: RRI. Available at: http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf

RRI, 2020. Estimate of the area of land and territories of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro- descendants where their rights have not been recognized. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Area-Study-Final-1.pdf>

NORWAY

In 2005, an act that recognized the rights of Sámi people to land and natural resources was adopted by the parliament. In 2008, there were a governmental initiative to survey and clarify Sámi property and use rights in the county of Finnmark, which includes former state land approx. 46 000 km². The process has so far not been very successful seen from the Sámi side. There is also a similar process proposed for Sámi areas south of Finnmark. So far, 5.18 Mha are owned by Indigenous peoples and local communities in Norway (representing 14.19% of the country landmass). These land rights include Indigenous/Local ownership (Svartskogsaken), Indigenous/Local ownership of the Finnmark Estate, and the Bygd Commons (Bygdeallmenning). The estimated area of unrecognized Sami Territory is 4.6 Mha.

Sources: RRI, 2015, Who Owns the World's Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights. Washington, DC: RRI. Available at: http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf

RRI, 2020. Estimate of the area of land and territories of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants where their rights have not been recognized. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Area-Study-Final-1.pdf>

SWEDEN

0.94 Mha are designated for Indigenous peoples in Sweden (representing 2.31% of the country landmass), as Indigenous Co-Management of Laponia Tjuottjudus (Laponia World Heritage Site). The estimated area of unrecognized indigenous territories is 22.60 mha (Lars-Ove Sjaun, 2019).

Sources: RRI, 2015, Who Owns the World's Land? A global baseline of formally recognized indigenous and community land rights. Washington, DC: RRI. Available at: http://www.rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/GlobalBaseline_web.pdf

RRI, 2020. Estimate of the area of land and territories of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendants where their rights have not been recognized. Available at: <https://rightsandresources.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Area-Study-Final-1.pdf>

UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

SCOTLAND

The latest figure for land defined as being held in community ownership in Scotland is 0.19 Mha (470 094 acres). Based on a land mass of Scotland of 7.79 Mha (19.25 M acres), this would represent 2.44% of Scotland's land mass. This figure has been calculated using the definition of Community Ownership that was agreed by the Scottish Government Short Life Working Group on community land ownership (1 million acre target group) in September 2015.

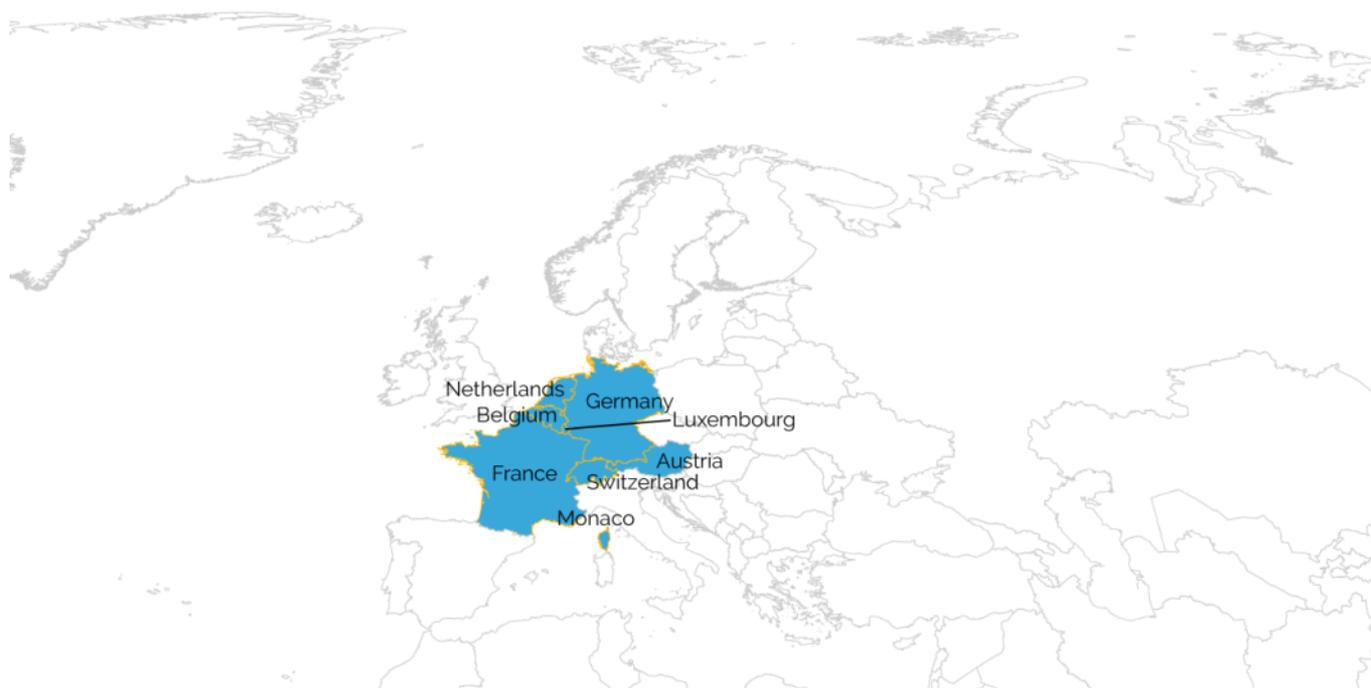
Source: Peter Peacock, Community Land Scotland, personal communication. 2015/09/21.

As community lands data have been found for Scotland only, the decision has been made by the LandMark Operational Team to display the United Kingdom's component countries separately (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales).



SOUTHERN EUROPE

No country has yet been assessed.



WESTERN EUROPE

FRANCE

A research paper from Nicole Vivier examines the historic evolution of common lands in France, and show that although their size has been critically reduced since the 18th century - largely due to privatization - these lands still cover 10% of the country area as of today.

Common lands in France are lands owned by municipalities (*communes*) over which all inhabitants have access and use rights. They are mainly made of pastures and forests lands, which are managed collectively by the *communes*.

Source : Nadine Vivier, 1998. "Les biens communaux en France de 1750 à 1914. État, notables et paysans face à la modernisation de l'agriculture". *Ruralia*, URL : <http://ruralia.revues.org/44>