

REDD+ Partnership Voluntary REDD+ Database Progress Report November 2011

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1. Introduction

The Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD) aims to be a key provider of information to the global community on REDD+ financing, actions and results. The objectives of the database are to improve transparency and coordination around REDD+, support efforts to identify and analyse gaps and overlaps in REDD+ financing, and help share experiences and ideas on REDD+ among Partners and with other stakeholders.

The need for the VRD was initially voiced during the preparations for the Paris International Conference on the Major Forest Basins in March 2010. This initiated a first data collection effort and a report to the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in May 2010, when the REDD+ Partnership was founded. The development of the VRD was further agreed in the first Work Program of the REDD+ Partnership for 2010, and the UN-REDD Programme team was tasked to develop the design and implementation of a database structure. Database development and management is carried out by a team from FAO and UNEP-WCMC, under the guidance of co-Chairs and Partners, as part of the Secretariat Services provided to the REDD+ Partnership by FMT/PT.

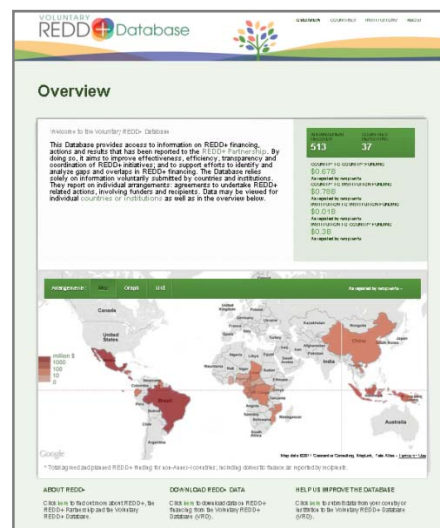


Figure 1: The Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD). Visit <http://reddplusdatabase.org/>



This progress report outlines VRD developments since the recent REDD+ Partnership meeting in Panama City, including those on specific priorities identified by the Partnership before and during the Panama meeting (collecting data and reporting on fast-start financing, addressing discrepancies in data reporting, and definitions), as well as ongoing work in data collection and interface development. It also provides proposals on the way forward for the VRD in 2012.

2. Data overview

2 a. Data collection

In early 2011, the VRD Team launched the new *REDD+ Partnership Questionnaire for Financing, Actions and Results*. The questionnaire was created in response to a set of priorities requested by the Partnership for 2011, including gathering new data from new respondents, clarifying the data and assuring its quality, updating existing information, and collecting information in a form more appropriate for analytic purposes. The following sections describe overall progress in 2011 on each of these priorities:

Gathering new data from new respondents: As of 24 November 2011, **37** 2011 Questionnaire responses have been received, from **18** REDD+ countries, **12** funder countries and the European Commission, and **7** institutions. Almost half (**18**) of the total number of respondents in 2011 were reporting for the first time. A total of **30** Partners have submitted questionnaire responses in 2011, representing approximately **40%** of the total Partnership (see figure 2).

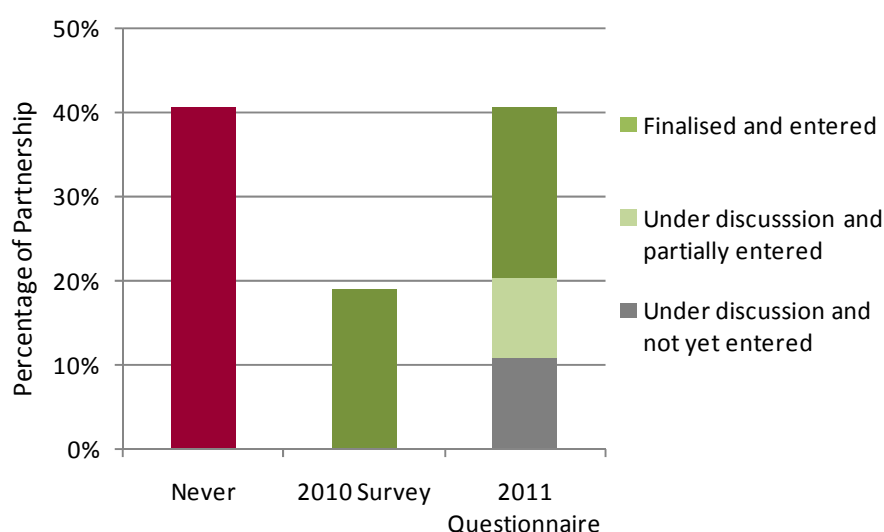


Figure 2: Percentage of Partners submitting information to the VRD. Most recent submission counted.

The VRD team has made continuous efforts to increase the number of responses throughout 2011. These include email invitations to focal points to submit information, pre-filling of questionnaire responses for countries which have indicated that they intend to submit in 2011, and follow up phone calls and emails to focal points to encourage reporting. Thirty countries have yet to submit a report.



Clarifying the data and assuring quality: Questionnaire responses submitted by Partners and stakeholders undergo a data quality review process before they can be finalised and entered into the database. During the review process, the VRD Team works in collaboration with country and institution focal points to ensure that information is as complete as possible before it is published in the database. Questionnaires cannot be finalised and entered into the database if information is missing for mandatory fields in the Questionnaire (such as information on annual contributions). The nature of the review process means that considerable time may elapse (extending over weeks, or months, in some cases) before the data have been reviewed and clarified and finally entered into the database. Several Partners have noted this, and the resulting implications for the quality and comprehensiveness of the database coverage. A conclusion that may be drawn from this is that in future data collection exercises, data accuracy and comprehensiveness will need to be balanced against the desirability of a simple and quick submission process.

Updating existing information: In completing their 2011 Questionnaire responses, countries and institutions are encouraged by the VRD Team to report on all existing arrangements, in addition to any new relevant arrangements. The VRD specifically points out to each country/institution any arrangements they are involved in that constitute a discrepancy between the reporting parties. These measures ensure that information for older arrangements is updated, that new information targeted by the 2011 Questionnaire is included, and discrepancies from previous reporting reduced (see also Section 3).

Collecting information in better form to facilitate analyses: The 2011 Questionnaire had new fields requesting more specific information on arrangements compared to the 2010 Survey, including a request for reporting on financing per calendar year; encouraging reporting of arrangements by both parties to reduce discrepancies (see Section 3); and converting older arrangements reported using the 2010 Survey format to the new 2011 Questionnaire format.

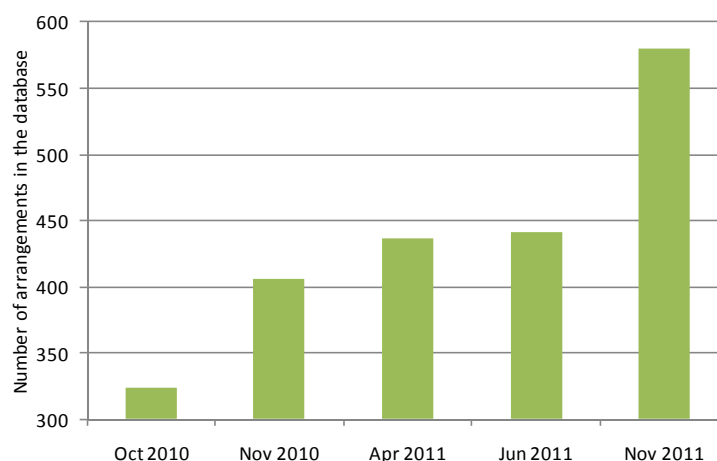


Figure 3: Number of arrangements finalized and entered in the database over time.



2 b. 2011 Data overview

As of 24 November 2011, a total of **580** arrangement records feature in the database. This represents a **79%** increase from the total number of arrangement records in the database when it was launched in late October 2010 (324 arrangements; see Figure 3). These arrangements have been reported by **44** countries and **13** institutions submitting information to the VRD since its inception in 2010 (see Annex 1).

Of the arrangement records presently in the database¹, planned and finalized **arrangements reported by funder countries with contributions directed to REDD+ countries total US\$ 4.16 billion** (Table 1). Arrangements reported by funder countries with contributions directed to institutions (e.g. multilaterals) total **US\$ 3.95 billion**. Arrangement records in the database reported by REDD+ countries, in their role as recipients of contributions from funder countries and/or institutions, total **US\$ 1.1 billion**. This represents a **US\$ 470 million increase** on the total funding for arrangements reported by recipient countries in April 2011..

Table 1: Total amounts reported in November 2011 (figures from April 2011 in parenthesis) for REDD+ arrangements between funder countries, REDD+ countries and institutions (excluding domestic funding).

Arrangement type	Amount (billion US\$) in Nov (Apr) 2011 as reported by:		
	Funder countries	Recipient countries	Institutions
Funder country → REDD+ country	4.16 (4.1)	0.84 (0.4)	<i>n.appl.</i>
Funder country → Institution	3.95 (3.6)	<i>n.appl.</i>	0.76 (0.0)
Institution → REDD+ country	<i>n.appl.</i>	0.23 (0.2)	0.46(1.0)

There continues to be a significant difference in the total amount of REDD+ funding going to REDD+ countries as reported by funders (US\$ 4.62 billion) and as reported by recipients (US\$ 1.1 billion). This is largely a reflection of the fact that the vast majority of arrangements in the database (approximately 82 percent) have been reported by funders. Through its dialogue with countries on Questionnaire responses, the VRD Team is presently working with recipient countries to increase the number of arrangements reported by both sides to an arrangement. For a more detailed discussion on reporting discrepancies in the database, please see Section 3.

¹ The arrangement records presently in the database do not reflect all funding reported to the database to date. This is because some questionnaire responses are still in the process of being finalised and corresponding data has yet to be entered into the database.



3. Addressing discrepancies

3 a. Reducing the largest discrepancies in the Database

Following a request by co-Chairs and Partners in Panama, September 2011, to address discrepancies between funders and recipients in data reported, the VRD Team undertook an exercise to identify and resolve the top ten discrepancies in the Database which were at the time not in the process of being addressed through Questionnaire responses. The “top ten” were defined as the ten arrangements involving the largest differences in reports between funders and recipients, including those only reported by one party to the arrangement. Together, these arrangements accounted for approximately US\$ 1.4 billion worth of discrepancies in the Database. In collaboration with reporting countries and institutions, the VRD Team has successfully managed to either eliminate or significantly reduce eight of these ten discrepancies, **thus helping to resolve about US\$ 1.15 billion worth of discrepancies in the Database.**

The overall process lasted several weeks, during which the VRD team contacted the relevant focal points to identify the reasons underlying the discrepancy, and where possible, reduce or eliminate the discrepancy. Main reasons for discrepancies included:

- reporting on different stages in fund disbursement;
- reporting of the arrangement by only one party. This was the case for 7 out of 10 arrangements in the “top ten” list. Reasons for not reporting an arrangement included:
 - lack of information on the side of one party about the existence of the REDD+ arrangement;
 - disagreements about whether the reported arrangement is a contribution to REDD+;
 - differences in opinion about whether funding should be reported as an arrangement, or whether it was a preliminary allocation/pledge.

For arrangements where communication is ongoing about discrepancies, challenges include:

- differences in interpretation of what constitutes a financing contribution to REDD+ (e.g. only funds that have been disbursed, or funds that have been disbursed and committed/pledged);
- difficulties in determining what proportion of a total financing package can be attributed specifically to REDD+;
- lack of contact information for parties to an arrangement which are not members of the Partnership.

3 b. Ongoing efforts to reduce discrepancies in the Database

The vast majority of remaining discrepancies, including the top ten ones, arise because only one party to an arrangement has reported it. Such discrepancies can be eliminated or significantly reduced through a report by the other party. For this reason, as part of its ongoing work with parties in the finalisation of their 2011 Questionnaire responses, the VRD Team has been requesting countries and institutions to report on arrangements reported by others involving their country or institution, but that they themselves have not yet reported on. This has played a significant role in reducing the number of arrangements where only one side (e.g. funder or recipient) has reported.



Table 2. Preliminary report on pledges, arrangements and disbursements contributing to fast-start financing for REDD+, as reported to the VRD by donor countries in the REDD+ Partnership. Several countries are still processing their official figures. Please see Section 5 and Annex 2 of this report for definitions of terms.

Country	Fast-start Pledge (million USD)	Fast-start Arrangements ² 2010-2012 (million USD)	Disbursement 2010 (million USD)	Disbursement 2011 (million USD)	Comments
Australia	144				Corresponding to AUD 146 million, correct exchange rate not yet confirmed. Communication on remaining data ongoing.
Belgium	14	14	14		USD 14 million (EUR 10 million – exchange rate 1.4 used) were pledged in FSF for REDD+ in 2010. No FSF pledges have yet been made for 2011 and 2012.
Canada	41	41		41	
Denmark					
European Commission	See comment	19.6	5.6	14	Exchange rate 1.4 used. The EC's fast-start pledge is €50million per annum, divided 50/50 between adaptation and mitigation. REDD+ is included under mitigation; no specific REDD+ earmarking.
Finland	None	48	7	20 ³	Finland has made no formal pledges. All intended FSF is reported as arrangements.
France	342	276			
Germany					
Italy					Data processing is nearly finalized
Japan	500	491	302		Disbursements for the fast start period cover up to March 2011
Netherlands	19				Exchange rate 1.4 used. The Netherlands' FS pledge for REDD+ is €13.3 million.
Norway	1 000	746	470	178 ³	
Slovenia					
Spain	See comment	23.95	18.57	1.32 ³	Spain's fast-start pledge is €375 million in total for adaptation, mitigation, and REDD+; no specific REDD+ earmarking.
Sweden	81.9				In 2010 Sweden pledged 81.9 million USD in FSF for REDD+ 2010-2012. Sweden has not been able to update the details in their report from 2010. However, the report from 2010 regarding Sweden's pledge for 2010-2012 is still valid at large. For further information SE refer to the EU fast start report.
Switzerland		34*	11	14	*Committed to global and regional initiatives, estimate as some of the commitments go beyond 2012.
United Kingdom	493	303	215	89 ³	UK financial year ends in March.
United States	1 000	205			The 205 million USD reported arrangements concern 2010; numbers for 2011 not yet available.

² These arrangements constitute those that are viewed by the country as contributing to their fast-start pledge.

³ Funds which have been partially disbursed/planned to be disbursed in 2011

4. Fast-start finance

In the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, and reiterated in the 2010 Cancun Agreements, developed countries committed to “provide new and additional resources, including forestry and investments through international institutions, approaching US\$ 30 billion for the period 2010-2012, with a balanced allocation between mitigation and adaptation”. This commitment has been generally referred to as ‘fast-start finance’. Fast-start finance is intended to support an immediate scaling up of climate change response actions in developing countries, including REDD+.

In Copenhagen in December 2009, US\$ 3.5 billion was pledged by developed countries towards REDD+. At the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in May 2010, the total had risen to US\$ 4.0 billion. In the Aichi-Nagoya Ministerial Meeting of the REDD+ Partnership in October 2010, further discussions on pledges were held. The report of this meeting is available among the meeting reports on the REDD+ Partnership website.

At the meeting of the REDD+ Partnership in Panama in September 2011, the VRD Team was requested to gather additional information from funder countries on fast start financing for REDD+, in preparation for a report to the Partnership presented in Durban in November 2011. Using information on arrangements submitted to the VRD covering the fast-start period, the VRD team worked with countries to compile the additional information requested. The VRD reports only on data submitted by government focal points directly to the VRD, and therefore reflect first-hand information from countries. Recent country reports on fast-start finance to the UNFCCC were also consulted in instances where they helped to inform country reporting on fast-start financing for REDD+.

The resulting dataset (Table 2) is not yet complete for all funders, and therefore show lower-than-actual numbers, but the data provides an indication of the current flow of fast-start finance for REDD+. More than half of what countries consider their fast-start pledges have so far been committed in an agreement with a recipient, and more than half of these arrangements have been/will be disbursed before end of 2011.

5. Definitions

As a response to a request made by Partners, the VRD team has developed a glossary to support the process of defining the scope of REDD+ financing data (Annex 2). While it remains up to countries to agree on what counts as REDD+ financing, this glossary presents definitions for understanding the terms related to the current content of the VRD, which is based on the 2010 Survey and the 2011 Questionnaire, the latter of which is designed to enable countries to report on fast-start pledges and arrangements for REDD+.

The definitions have been developed to reflect the current scope of the VRD, and have been drawn from definitions already used by the UNFCCC, or otherwise commonly used in reporting on financing. For 2012 however, the Partnership may wish to expand the scope of the database. For example, fast-start pledges are the only type of pledges that the 2011 Questionnaire requests information on. The total set of pledges could be expanded to include pledges beyond this time period, and from institutions as well as countries. However, although it is important that the VRD is further developed to reflect information needs, this needs to be balanced against a simplified



reporting process, to facilitate reporting. Further discussion by the Partnership on what data are important and feasible for countries to report would be valuable.

6. Web interface

The new graphical VRD interface was launched on 1 July 2011 at <http://reddplusdatabase.org>. The improved site offers access to maps, graphs and summary statistics on REDD+ financing reported, as well as detailed information on individual arrangements between countries and institutions. Further development of the database interface since the launch has focused on fine-tuning and further advancing site functionality. Efforts have also been made to improve user-friendliness of the site, for example, through the inclusion of a “how to use the VRD” section and an update to the Glossary of terms under the About pages, and provision of additional resources such as previous VRD progress report PDFs. A new “date of update” feature has also been incorporated into country/institution pages and individual arrangement record pages.

Following the Partnership meeting in Panama, Partners and Stakeholders were invited to provide additional written comments as inputs into a proposal on next steps for the database, including the database interface. In light of the comments provided, the VRD Team is presently planning to develop the site further in 2012 to incorporate priorities highlighted by Partners, and to enhance the functionality, user-friendliness and design of the VRD to further develop it as the number one source of country verified data on REDD+ financing.

7. Way forward

Priority tasks for the rest of 2011 will be to:

- continue to improve data donor financing
- resolve major discrepancies among arrangements
- collect information on fast-start pledges, arrangements and disbursements
- continue to work with countries and institutions to finalise their 2011 Questionnaire responses and publish corresponding REDD+ data on the database as quickly as possible. Addressing discrepancies between responses by funders and recipients shall remain a top priority, with various methods employed, such as encouragement of joint reporting and capacity building workshops
- continue to improve the web interface.

The next round of data collection in early 2012 will take place through a new, reworked 2012 Questionnaire, which will focus and simplify the reporting process. The VRD Team encourages a discussion in the Partnership on further clarification of definitions and priorities with regards to data types, to guide the development of the 2012 Questionnaire. The format of the 2012 Questionnaire will be more simplified, and potentially web-based. Comprehensive adjustments and redesign to the web interface are also planned, based on input from co-chairs and Partners, and experiences of the VRD Team.

Priority tasks for the first parts of 2012 include:

- New questionnaire for 2012 - unambiguous, focused, simplified
- Improve donor financing data
- Continue to collect information on FFS pledges, arrangements and disbursements
- Support countries in resolving remaining major discrepancies



The Team will further develop its dialogue with other initiatives on REDD+ finance tracking that are being undertaken by other institutions. Dialogue is on-going, for example, with the Fast Start Finance initiative, Global Canopy Programme (REDD Desk platform) and Forest Trends.



Annex 1: Countries and institutions currently included in the VRD

Countries in **bold** have submitted information to the VRD between 2010 and 2011. Non-bold indicates countries about which there is information in the database, as reported by others. Data correct as of 24 November 2011.

REDD+ recipient countries			REDD+ funder countries
- Albania	- Equatorial Guinea	- Pakistan	Australia
- Algeria	- Laos	- Panama	Canada
- Angola	- Ethiopia	- Papua New Guinea	Denmark
- Argentina	- Fiji	- Paraguay	European Commission
- Azerbaijan	- Gabon	- Peru	Finland
- Bangladesh	- Gambia	- Philippines	France
- Belize	- Ghana	- Russian Federation	Germany
- Benin	- Guatemala	- Rwanda	Italy
- Bolivia	- Guinea	- São Tomé and Príncipe	Japan
- Brazil	- Guinea-Bissau	- Senegal	The Netherlands
- Brunei	- Guyana	- Seychelles	Norway
- Burkina Faso	- Honduras	- Sierra Leone	Spain
- Burundi	- India	- Singapore	Sweden
- Cambodia	- Indonesia	- Solomon Islands	Switzerland
- Cameroon	- Kenya	- Sudan	United Kingdom
- Cape Verde	- Lebanon	- Suriname	United States of America
- Central African Republic	- Liberia	- Swaziland	
- Chad	- Madagascar	- Syria	
- Chile	- Malawi	- Thailand	
- China	- Malaysia	- Togo	
- Colombia	- Mali	- Tunisia	
- Congo (DRC)	- Mauritania	- Turkey	
- Congo (Republic)	- Mexico	- Uganda	
- Costa Rica	- Morocco	- United Republic of Tanzania	
- Côte d'Ivoire	- Mozambique	- Vanuatu	
- Dominican Republic	- Myanmar	- Venezuela	
- Ecuador	- Nepal	- Viet Nam	
- Egypt	- Nicaragua	- Zambia	
- El Salvador	- Niger		
	- Nigeria		
87 (28)			16(16)



Institutions in **bold** have submitted information to the VRD between 2010 and 2011. Owing to the large number of institutions about which there is information in the database, as reported by others (almost 200), such institutions are not included in this list. Data correct as of 24 November 2011.

REDD+ recipient institutions	REDD+ funder institutions	REDD+ funder and recipient institutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amigos do Protocolo de Kyoto - Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) - Rainforest Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pact Inc. - World Wildlife Fund (WWF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation International (CI) - Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) - Forest Investment Program (FIP) - Global Environment Facility (GEF) - International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Nature Conservancy (TNC) - United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD Programme) - World Conservation Society (WCS)
3	2	8	



Annex 2: Definition of terms in the VRD

The glossary below only defines terms related to the current content of the VRD, which was designed to report on fast-start pledges and arrangements for REDD+. A checklist to characterize REDD+ financing is included in the final row.

Term	Proposed VRD definition	Notes
Fast-start period	2010 – 2012 inclusive	Follows UNFCCC usage of the term.
Pledge	A political announcement of intent on behalf of a funder to commit a certain amount to REDD+ related actions, not yet dedicated to a specific recipient	Fast-start pledges are the only type of pledges that the 2011 VRD Questionnaire requests information on. The total set of pledges could include pledges beyond this time period and by institutions as well as countries. The Partnership may consider a revision to the 2012 VRD questionnaire to accommodate this.
Fast-start pledge	A political announcement of intent on behalf of a country to commit a certain amount of Fast Start Finance to REDD+ related actions, not yet dedicated to a specific recipient.	I.e. a pledge made by a country for funds to be disbursed within the fast-start period. Whilst fast-start finance should imply additionality, this question was not posed in the 2011 Questionnaire. The fast-start pledge section of the 2011 Questionnaire was used by countries in different ways: some reporting countries used this section to list pledges that are already designated for specific recipient countries or institutions, whilst other countries listed similar ‘pledges’ as planned arrangements. In reporting on the 2011 Questionnaire, the VRD team has asked countries that have reported pledges to specific recipients to reformulate these as planned arrangements.
Arrangement	An arrangement is an agreement to undertake REDD+ related actions, involving funders and recipients. These are undertaken within a certain timeframe, with an indicative budget and defined objectives. Many funders can join forces in a given arrangement, and an arrangement can involve many recipients.	Reported arrangements may be ‘planned’ or ‘formal’. The primary difference between a pledge and a planned arrangement is that a planned arrangement is dedicated to a specific recipient. Some countries report on only arrangements that are primarily for REDD+, and others on actions that contribute to REDD+.

