

REDD+ Partnership Voluntary REDD+ Database Progress Report November 2012

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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.

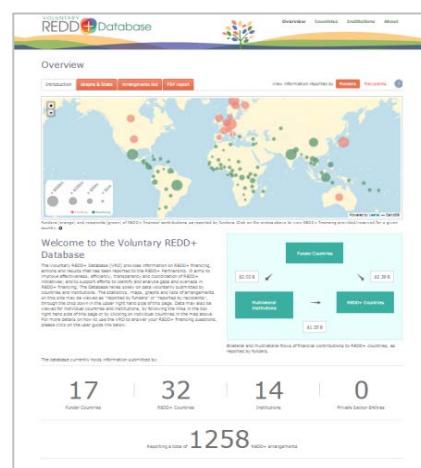


Figure 1: The Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD). Visit <http://reddplusdatabase.org/>

This progress report outlines key VRD developments during 2012, including: developments related to data collection and analyses, the development and launch of the new VRD website interface, and the data collection training exercise undertaken in the Congo Basin in September of this year.



2. Data overview

2 a. Data collection

In the first half of the year, the VRD Team continued with efforts to finalise responses to the 2011 Questionnaire. This involved liaising with Partners to ensure clarity in responses submitted and subsequently finalising and entering these responses into the database. Parallel to this effort, work began on the development of the new questionnaire based on feedback received by Partners.

In July 2012, the VRD Team launched the new *REDD+ Partnership Questionnaire for Financing, Actions and Results*. A significant innovation has been a shift from the old Microsoft Word format to an online format directly accessible by focal points via internet and with direct links to the database¹. The questionnaire was equally streamlined to improve clarity in responses. In this regard several sections (Approaches to REDD+, REDD+ Pledges and Additional Financing requirements) which were part of the 2011 Questionnaire did not feature in the 2012 version. Several new fields were also added, which have enabled parties to report on disbursed funds in REDD+ arrangements, indicate whether or not an arrangement constitutes part of a funder country's fast-start finance pledge, and the Phase(s) of REDD+ that is/are being funded in an arrangement.

Responses to the 2012 Questionnaire

The VRD team sent out emails to potential respondents requesting that they submit contact information of focal points for the VRD. Following their responses, 98 invitations were sent to users in 65 countries and institutions. Fifty six users, representing 45 countries and institutions, accepted our invitation and are now users of the system. As of 24 November, the VRD had received 38 submissions from 11 funder countries (including the European Commission), 18 REDD+ countries, and 9 institutions. All submissions received in 2012 have been finalised and entered into the database.

Current situation in the database

As a result of this exercise, the database presently contains 1278 arrangements. Of these, 41% (526 arrangements) were updated while a further 15% (188 arrangements) were newly created.

The VRD currently contains information on 95 recipient countries (32 of which have reported to the database) and 24 funder countries (17 of which have reported to the database [including the European Commission]). In addition, there is information on almost 170 institutions (15 of which have reported to the database); please see Annex I.

2 b. Data analysis

Efforts during the past two years to collect REDD+ financing data from partner countries and affiliated stakeholder institutions have resulted in the VRD now containing a considerable dataset on REDD+ financing. For the first time there has been the opportunity to carry out detailed analyses and present the Partnership with an in-depth look at trends in the data. To this effect the VRD team have produced an analytical report which answers a number of questions regarding volume and type of global and regional funding as well as funding flows and the type of actions.

¹ The VRD team equally created an excel based equivalent to be made available to Partners having problems using the online format



Headline results of this analysis² show that **funder countries** have reported a total of almost **US\$6.27 billion in funding for REDD+ between 2006 and 2022**. The **majority** of this financing is **bilateral** and in the form of **grants**. Overall, trends in public financing commitments for REDD+ cover a **large geographical range (95 REDD+ countries)**.

Who is providing the funding?

The total amount for REDD+ finance reported by 15 Partnership funder countries and the EC, from 2006 to 2022 is shown in table 1 below. The amounts include all funding modalities including bilateral, multilateral, institutional, internal with benefits to REDD+ countries, and funding with unspecified or multiple recipients. Figures are based on information provided to date.

Table 1: REDD+ finance reported by 15 Partnership funder countries and the EC, from 2006 to 2022

Funder Country	Contributions (millions of USD)	Reporting Periods
Japan	1856	2006 – 2014
Norway	1193	2006 – 2015
Germany	684	2008 - 2020
United Kingdom	458	2008 – 2022
France	374	2010 – 2012
European Commission	300	2009 – 2017
Netherlands	263	2010 – 2012
United States of America	249	2010 only
Australia	241	2007 – 2013
Canada	123	2006 – 2016
Sweden	119	2008 – 2013
Finland	106	2007 – 2015
Denmark	94	2006 – 2017
Spain	73	2008 – 2012
Italy	71	2008 – 2014
Switzerland	62	2008 – 2015

Who are the top ten recipients of REDD+ Finance?

A glance at the top ten countries receiving REDD+ funding shows that more than 55% of total bilateral financing for REDD+ is reported to be received by just 5 countries including India, Brazil, China, Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (figure 2). The high volumes of funding to India and China are due largely to loans from Japan between 2006 and 2009.

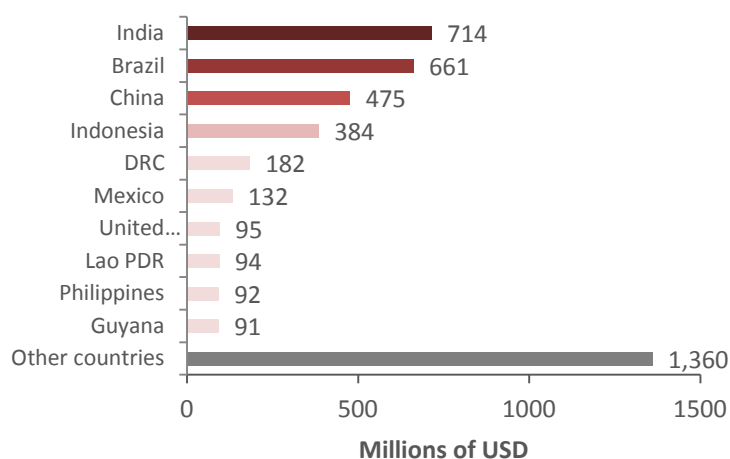


Figure 2: Financial contributions to the top ten recipient countries for the period 2006 to 2022

² As at 8 November 2012



3. Addressing discrepancies

3 a. Removing pre-2006 data in the Database

As part of our ongoing mandate to address discrepancies and data quality issues in the Database, the VRD team has been in communication with countries to remove inconsistencies in reported data. One of the most significant contributions to this effort was the agreement with funders that no data before 2006 would count as finance for REDD+. Pre-2006 data had originally been reported through the 2010 Oslo survey, when there was no clear guidance on the earliest start year that funding could legitimately be reported on as contributing to RED/REDD/REDD+; indeed, some countries reported funding extending back to the mid 1990s. Given that the concept of REDD was first discussed by UNFCCC in Montreal at the end of 2005, the VRD team proposed to countries that only funding from 2006 onwards should be included in the VRD. In a process of dialogue with countries this was agreed upon and reported funding predating 2006 was withdrawn by countries. This agreement meant that, prior to the launch of the 2012 Questionnaire, the global figures in the database changed significantly, **decreasing by a total of US\$3.05 billion.**

Although this process has taken some time to conclude, the result is that the VRD now records more consistent and accurate data on REDD+ financing.

3 b. Reducing the largest discrepancies in the Database

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\$ 897.6 million worth of discrepancies in the Database. In collaboration with reporting countries and institutions, the VRD Team has either eliminated or significantly reduced four of these ten discrepancies, **thus helping to resolve about US\$ 400 million 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. The main reason for not reporting an arrangement was due to lack of information on the side of one party about the existence of the REDD+ arrangement and/or no reporter coverage from one party.

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);
- disagreements about methods for calculating country contributions to multilateral funds for REDD+;
- lack of contact information for parties to an arrangement which are not members of the Partnership



3 c. 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 finalization of their 2012 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.

4. Web interface

During 2012, further development of the VRD web interface was undertaken to enhance the functionality, user-friendliness and design of the site, and thus further develop it as the number one source of country verified data on REDD+ financing. In the first part of 2012, some improvements to the existing 2011 site were made, including addressing outstanding bugs, as well as incorporating information on fast-start finance, and further clarifying selected statistics on the site.

The second part of the year involved a more significant overhaul of the existing site through the development of a new website interface. The new version of the site was launched on Friday 23 November 2012. Main changes to the site from the 2011 version include:

- **A new website design which maintains branding consistency with the REDD+ Partnership website**, including greater consistency in colour schemes, fonts and visual styles between the two sites.
- **Improvements to information displayed on the home page**, including reorganisation of homepage map to feature more prominently on the site; a new “bilateral and multilateral flows of REDD+ financing” diagram, and more detailed information on reporting coverage to the database; see figure 4.
- **Improvements to arrangement pages and lists**, to increase clarity and standardise functions across different pages.
- **Improvements to map design and layout**, to include information on funders as well as recipients of REDD+ financing.
- **Establishing new graphics and analyses on overview and country/institution pages**. At the overview level, this includes graphs showing how much has been reported for REDD+, the distribution of financing to REDD+ countries over time, the regional distribution of financing to REDD+ countries, and the types of actions being undertaken in REDD+ arrangements. At the country/institution level, this includes graphs and diagrams showing the distribution of REDD+ financing to or from a country/institution over time, and types of actions being undertaken in REDD+ arrangements; see figure 5.
- **A data download feature**, which enables users to access the underlying data in the database.

The new site offers Partners and the public the opportunity to search, summarise and visualize REDD+ financing data in a more comprehensive manner, both at the global level, and further at the specific country or institution level.



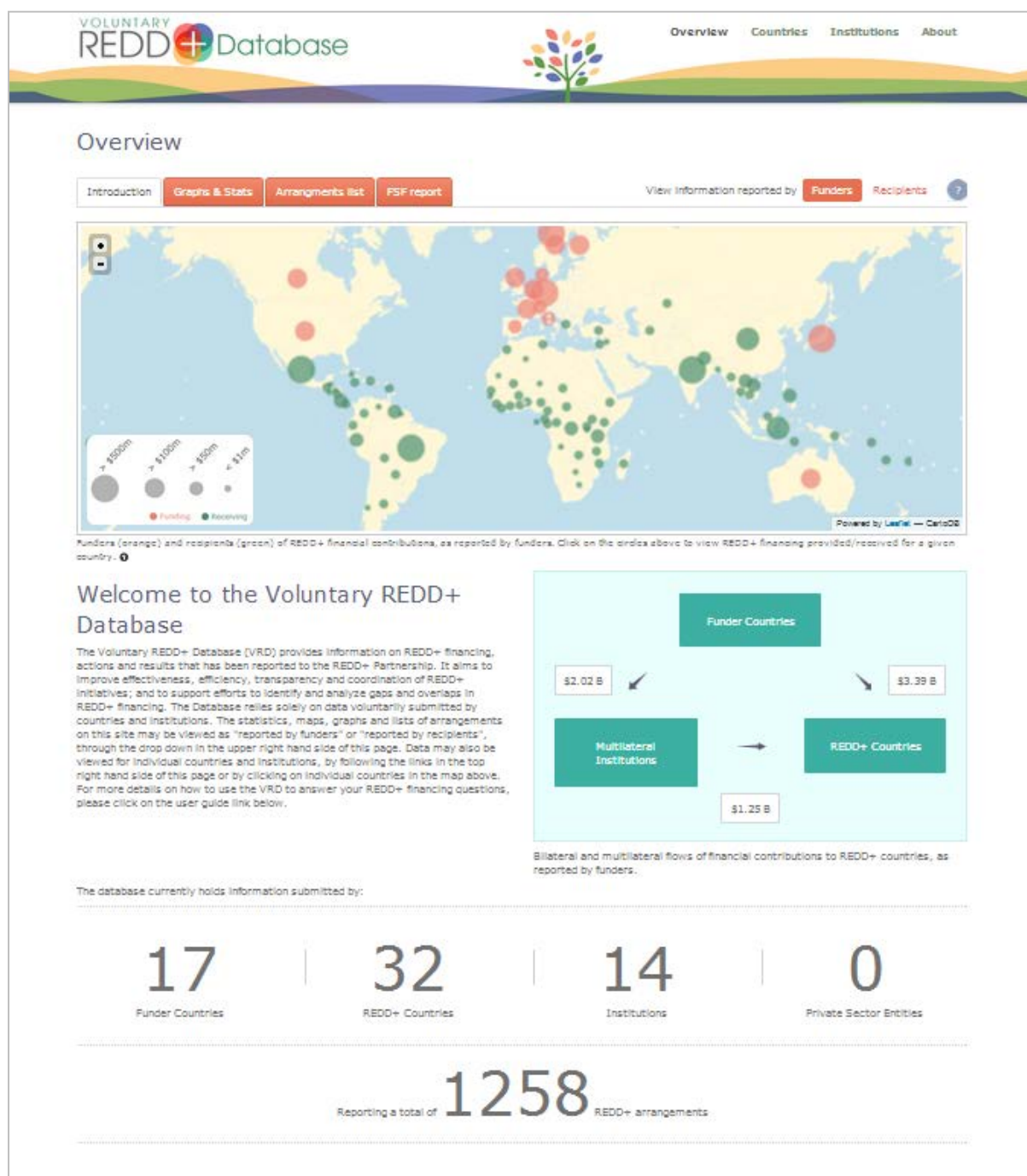
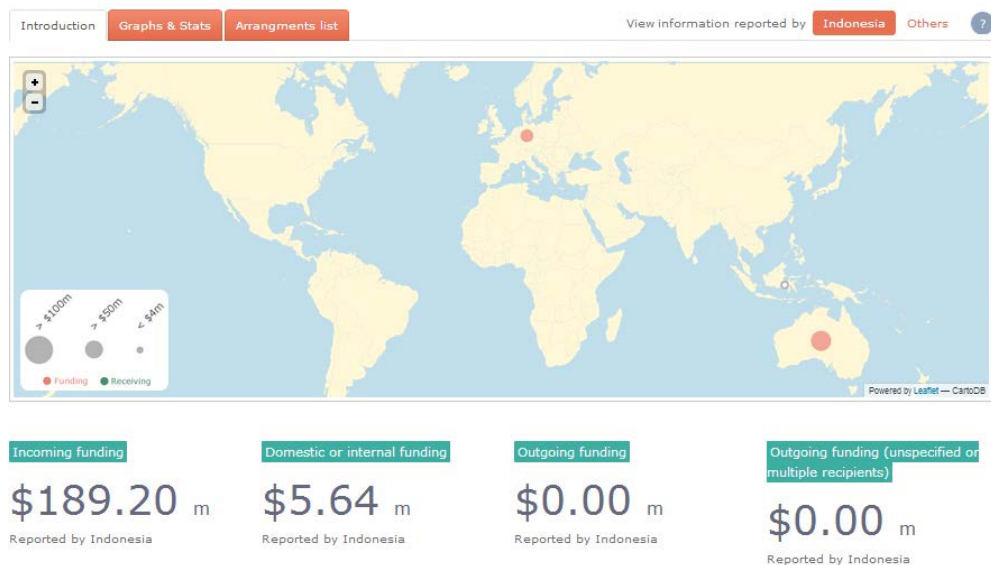


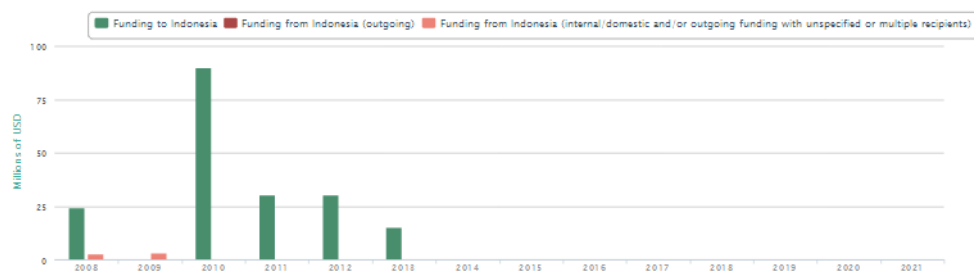
Figure 3: Homepage of the new VRD website (visit: <http://reddplusdatabase.org>)



Indonesia

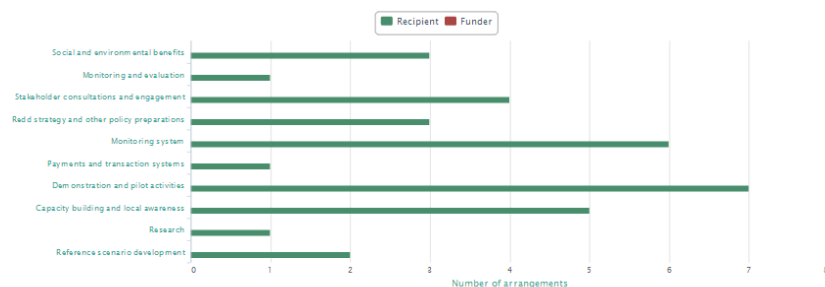


What is the distribution of REDD+ financing to Indonesia over time?



Total financial contributions to/from Indonesia, as reported by Indonesia. These values include internal/domestic financing, where applicable.

What types of actions are being undertaken in REDD+ arrangements?



Actions to be undertaken in REDD+ arrangements involving Indonesia, as reported by Indonesia. The graph represents all arrangements reported by Indonesia to the database that specify actions to be undertaken (presently, 8 out of 10 arrangements where Indonesia is a recipient, and 0 out of 10 arrangements where Indonesia is a funder). It should be noted that since more than one action can be undertaken in an arrangement, some arrangements will be included in more than one action category. The purpose of this graph is to demonstrate the types of actions being recorded in arrangements reported by Indonesia; it does not show how much finance is going to different action categories.

Figure 4: Examples of new graphs and statistics available on country and institution pages of new VRD website (visit <http://reddplusdatabase.org>)



5. Congo Basin VRD training exercise

At the Partnership meeting which took place in Durban last November 2011, it was agreed to strengthen reporting capacities of REDD+ countries in a bid to improve their input into the VRD, thereby enhancing the quality of the data in the database. In Durban, within the same period, the Joint Declaration of Intent on REDD+ in the Congo Basin was issued. This declaration contained, amongst other objectives, the desire to use the VRD to identify gaps and improve transparency in funding.

As a result, on behalf of the Interim REDD+ Partnership, the United Nations Collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in developing countries (UN-REDD Programme), in collaboration with the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) and the CBFP Facilitation organized a workshop on the theme “Enhancing reporting on REDD+ finance to the Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD) by Congo Basin recipient Countries and institutions” in September 2012. The workshop aimed to:

- Increase the capacities of Congo Basin countries to identify and report on financial agreements under climate change financing mechanisms.
- Serve as a platform whereby both donors and recipients may review each other reports and agree on values reported.
- Build the capacities of a core team of experts in order to strengthen national capacities to compile and submit data on REDD+ finance initiatives.
- Share and exchange information on existing, new and emerging arrangements, and how these could be used to enhance REDD+ finance reporting to the VRD.

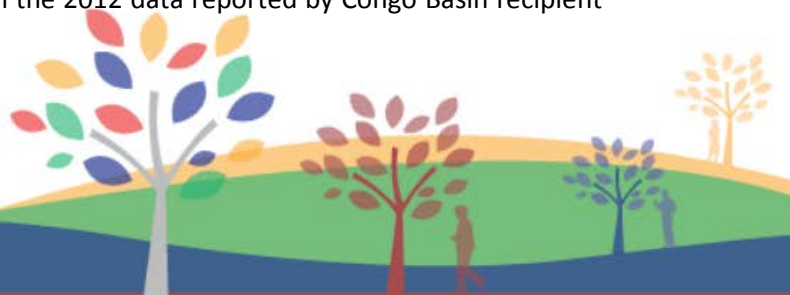
The training, which took place from the 17-18 September 2012, was organized to coincide with two other events: the launching of the Congo Basin MRV project financed by the Congo Basin Forest Fund which took place from the 16-17 September 2012, and the plenary of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership from the 19-24 September 2012. This ensured a high number of participants, as well as awareness being raised in the region on the usefulness of the database.

Forty participants took part in the workshop, which included VRD focal points from 7 out of 10 countries in the region, National REDD+ Focal points, COMIFAC focal points, local NGOs receiving REDD+ funding in the region, as well as representatives from 5 donor countries and institutions.

During the training session participants identified a number of constraints including: the weak internet access in the region, the absence of a French version of the online questionnaire, knowledge of what constitutes a REDD+ arrangement and the absence of a detailed user-guide. There was however a strong interest and a high level of willingness from participants to improve their understanding on not only how to submit data, but also on how to make best use of the database.

Submission of data

To engage as many participants from the region as possible, following the capacity building exercise, the Microsoft Excel based version of the questionnaire was translated into French and distributed to the workshop participants. As a result of the workshop, the VRD now holds information on an additional 23 arrangements covering 7 countries and worth US\$ 117 million; almost twice the amount reported by the sub-region in 2011. When the 2012 data reported by Congo Basin recipient



countries is compared with that reported by funders, however, significant discrepancies still exist both in the number of arrangements as well as the value of these arrangements. Funders have reported a total of 123 arrangements while recipients have reported only 23 arrangements. In terms of value, arrangements reported by funders were worth US\$ 435 million, while recipients reported receiving about US\$ 117 million.

Though there are differences between funder and recipient figures, the active participation of recipients means we can now fully concentrate on addressing discrepancies due to reporting within the sub-region.

6. Suggestions for further work

Throughout 2012, the VRD work plan has focused on issues identified by the Partnership (discrepancies, increasing responder coverage, data analysis and communication, improvement of the web interface etc), and going forward our suggestion would be to maintain and strengthen these different work areas. These work areas will be dependent on the future work plan identified by the REDD+ Partnership. Work that could be undertaken in the future includes (but is not necessarily limited to):

- **Providing ongoing work to improve data quality by addressing discrepancies and gaps, and lack of reporting especially from recipient countries:** this includes undertaking a process of quality assurance with the 75 Partner countries, to address and resolve discrepancies in the database between funder and recipient reports of REDD+ financing, and ensure data submitted by Partners is as complete as possible. Also, a data collection effort in 2013 involving: a) launch of another Questionnaire round to the 75 Partner countries and affiliated institutions, b) subsequent communication and follow-up with Partner countries and affiliated institutions to review and finalise data submissions, and increase number of responses received to the database, and c) possible regional training and data collection exercises with recipient countries.
- **Strengthening of analyses of REDD+ finance and communication of results:** including analyses of data collected covering a range of different issues that will provide a clearer picture of REDD+ financing (e.g. REDD+ financial flows, financing modality and type, type of activities funded and where etc), and new ways of presenting and summarizing information held in the VRD (e.g. new forms of analyses outputs including interface statistics and graphics and bi-annual briefing papers, dedicated reports on financial flows of REDD+ in advance of Partnership meetings, and summary papers to engage the wider stakeholder community).
- **Further maintenance and development of the VRD web interface and online questionnaire:** including further development of the database interface (e.g. improving elements related to user interaction, incorporating more graphs and statistics showing information on REDD+ financing) and managing the maintenance of the new online Questionnaire developed in 2012.
- **Collaboration with other climate finance tracking initiatives:** to share and learn from experiences in tracking REDD+ finance.



Annex 1: Countries and institutions currently included in the VRD

Countries in **bold** have submitted information and have had their data finalized and entered into the VRD between 2010 and 2012. Non-bold indicates countries about which there is information in the database, as reported by others. Information correct as of 24 November 2012.

Recipient countries			Funder countries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albania - Algeria - Angola - Argentina - Azerbaijan - Bangladesh - Belize - Benin - Bhutan - Bolivia - Botswana - Brazil - Brunei - Burkina Faso - Burundi - Cambodia - Cameroon - Central African Republic - Chad - Chile - China - Colombia - Congo (DRC) - Congo (Republic) - Costa Rica - Cuba - Côte d'Ivoire - Dominica - Dominican Republic - Ecuador - El Salvador - Equatorial Guinea - Ethiopia - Fiji - Gabon - Ghana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guatemala - Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Guyana - Haiti - Honduras - India - Indonesia - Iran - Jamaica - Kazakhstan - Kenya - Kyrgyzstan - Laos - Lebanon - Liberia - Madagascar - Malawi - Malaysia - Mali - Mauritania - Mexico - Mongolia - Morocco - Mozambique - Myanmar - Namibia - Nepal - Nicaragua - Nigeria - Pakistan - Panama - Papua New Guinea - Paraguay - Peru - Philippines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rwanda - Samoa - São Tomé and Príncipe - Senegal - Sierra Leone - Solomon Islands - South Africa - Sri Lanka - Sudan - Suriname - Syria - Thailand - Timor-Leste - Togo - Tunisia - Turkmenistan - Uganda - United Republic of Tanzania - Vanuatu - Venezuela - Viet Nam - Zambia - Zimbabwe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Australia - Austria - Belgium - Canada - Denmark - Finland - France - Germany - Greece - Ireland - Italy - Japan - Korea - The Netherlands - New Zealand - Norway - Russian Federation - Slovenia - Spain - Sweden - Switzerland - United Kingdom - United States of America - European Commission
95 (32)			24 (17)



Institutions in **bold** have submitted information to the VRD between 2010 and 2012. Owing to the large number of institutions about which there is information in the database, as reported by others (154 institutions), such institutions are not included in this list. Information correct as of 24 November 2012.

Recipient institutions	Funder institutions	Funder and recipient institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) - Forest Trends - REDD+ Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pact Inc. - World Wildlife Fund (WWF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congo Basin Forest Fund (CBFF) - Conservation International (CI) - Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) - Forest Investment Program (FIP) - Global Environment Facility (GEF) - International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) - Rainforest Alliance - 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	10

