

Assessment of the Results of the REDD+ Partnership

Tony La Viña and Donna Lee

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Executive Summary

The report is divided into the following components: Section 1 summarizes the objectives, framework, methodology, and process used by the consultants to conduct this assessment; Section 2 gives the context of the Partnership by relating it to the history of REDD+ more generally and in comparison to other REDD+ initiatives; Section 3 provides an assessment of the Partnership's objectives and the Voluntary REDD+ Database; and Section 4 provides lessons learned and some conclusions and recommendations for the future.

Background of the REDD+ Partnership

The REDD+ Partnership was launched in 2010 following the disappointment of many countries in the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP-15, December 2009), where Parties were unable to adopt a new climate change agreement. As early as March 2010, at a ministerial meeting in Paris, governments and stakeholders met and called for a REDD+ partnership to be formalized in May 2010, at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference. The founding document of the REDD+ Partnership, adopted at the Oslo meeting, states that the Partnership is voluntary, non-binding and that:

"The core objective of the Partnership is to contribute to the global battle against climate change by serving as an interim platform for the Partners to scale up REDD+ actions and finance, and to that end to take immediate action, including improving the effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and coordination of REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments, to facilitate among other things knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer."

This assessment is organized around these objectives. To assess the success of the Partnership in achieving their stated objectives, information was used from a review of relevant literature, responses received in a survey administered online, and interviews conducted with selected informants.

Summary of the Assessment

The REDD+ Partnership has been a modest success, achieving a number of its stated objectives. As elaborated in the main report, the Partnership's value was largely in the following areas:

- Providing an *informal* space for communication, to discuss a range of issues and explore solutions to identified challenges, including those being negotiated under the UNFCCC;
- Increasing transparency among Partners and with Observers;
- Building trust, understanding, social capital;
- Sharing knowledge and building capacity on REDD+ issues;
- Taking efforts to document REDD+ finance through the Voluntary REDD+ Database.

One particular objective that Partners and Observers felt was either not achieved, or not fully achieved, was the scaling up REDD+ actions and finance. Assessing this goal was challenging due to a lack of a shared understanding, or interpretation, of what the objective meant and entailed.

Finally, while concluding that the VRD is a successful initiative, it is recognized that challenges remain including the collection of data, ensuring data quality and comparability, and technical issues such as the usability of the website. Its high cost has also been cited by some as a major concern.

The Future of the REDD+ Partnership

As for the future of the Partnership, while recognizing the critical role the Partnership has provided to support the UNFCCC negotiations, many see such a role as less relevant after the Warsaw Framework on REDD+ was adopted in 2013. The majority of Partners and stakeholders believe it is now time for the REDD+ community to move into a new phase, and suggest the Partnership should end in 2014. But many suggest that some partnership programs and activities could be continued in a new form or structure that focuses on catalyzing actions on the ground and advances implementation, including meetings that:

- Update recent scientific knowledge and disseminate useful tools for implementation;
- Build capacity of developing countries, and provide opportunities to build relationships and network;
- Focus on sharing of experiences at the regional level;
- Provide countries an opportunity to learn from those at different stages of REDD+ implementation.

The following are our recommendations, regardless of the decision taken by Partners on whether to continue the Partnership:

- Activities in the coming years should focus on narrowing the gap between theory (e.g. COP decisions) and actual practice; giving particular consideration on how to continue knowledge sharing on REDD+ implementation, with particular focus on south-south and regional exchanges.
- Alternative platforms for informal spaces to assist in future UNFCCC negotiations, if needed again, should be explored.
- With regard to governance issues, and in the event that the Partnership is continued, or a similar platform is established in the future:
 - Have a stronger, shared understanding of objectives;
 - Modify the informal procedural rules it has been following, for example by lengthening the term of the co-Chairs and empowering them to take more decisions;
 - Continue the practice of inclusiveness and participation of Partners and stakeholders, and the balanced decision-making between developed and developing countries.
- The VRD should be continued, subject to further discussions on a suitable host organization, agreed objectives for the future, a reasonable estimate of costs, and means to further address the technical challenges that have been identified.

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1. Introduction to the Assessment

The objectives of the Assessment of the Results of the REDD+ Partnership, as contained in the Terms of Reference, were:

- a. To provide an assessment of the Partnership's achievements and challenges to date, including the effectiveness of its activities;
- b. To provide lessons learned from the execution of the work programs at various levels;
- c. To inform a decision by Partners to continue with the REDD+ Partnership and/or recommendations on the need for further work by the interim REDD+ Partnership beyond 2014.

In order to conduct the assessment, the authors have:

- 1) Collected and reviewed background information, including all Partnership and third party documents, analyzing:
 - The partnership objectives and achievements;
 - The history and context of the Partnership;
 - The Partnership vis-à-vis other REDD+ initiatives.
- 2) Developed an assessment matrix with indicators associated with key objectives.
- 3) Conducted an anonymous on-line Questionnaire to get feedback from a broad set of Partners and Observers:
 - 25 Partners and 15 Observers responded to the Questionnaire;
 - Quantitative responses can be found in Section 3.3, following the format of the assessment matrix.
- 4) Conducted a set of structured interviews to gather further information from Partners, Observers and Secretariat members:
 - 25 interviews were conducted, including 18 Partners (9 developing countries and 9 developed countries) plus 7 others (Observers and Secretariat members);
 - 7 current or former co-Chair were among those interviewed;
 - From REDD countries, 4 from Latin America, 3 from Asia, and 2 from Africa were interviewed; emails requesting interviews were sent to roughly equivalent numbers of Partners in each region, the final count is reflective of the responses received (i.e. all those who responded were interviewed);
- 5) An assessment of the Partnership was then made by the authors, drawing from the desk review, questionnaire responses, and interviews. However, the authors take full responsibility for the final analysis.

The assessment is divided into three components: Section 2 provides context of the Partnership through putting the birth and development of the Partnership in the context of the evolution of REDD+ more generally, as well as comparing the Partnership to other REDD+ initiatives; Section 3 provides an assessment of the Partnership's objectives and the voluntary REDD+ Database; and Section 4 provides lessons learned and some conclusions and recommendations for the future.

2. The REDD+ Partnership: History and Context

2.1. REDD+ in UNFCCC: From Montreal to Warsaw¹

In 2005, forests were elevated on the agenda of the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP). Prior to the meeting in Montreal, the Governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica made a joint submission entitled “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries: Approaches to Stimulate Action”. That proposal triggered a two-year process for exploring methodological and policy issues, which culminated in 2007 with the formal launch of the work on REDD+ in Bali, Indonesia (COP-13). The intent of the Bali Action Plan was to complete discussions on a new climate agreement among Parties to the UNFCCC by 2009.

The Bali Action Plan provided for five “building blocks” around which the Parties’ future work would revolve (outside the Kyoto Protocol): shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, and finance. The mitigation track included “policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries”. This would eventually be the scope of REDD+².

To the disappointment of many Parties, the 2009 COP in Copenhagen did not result in a new, legally-binding climate change agreement. However, discussions on REDD+ fared better than most other issues. The COP reached agreement on initial methodological guidance for REDD+. And while Parties did not take additional REDD+ decisions in Copenhagen, they had already largely come to a consensus on many REDD+ issues, including on safeguards and phases of REDD+ (preparatory, demonstration activities, results-based payments).

While this progress was not adopted formally at COP-15, the Copenhagen Accord took note of and recognized the crucial role of REDD+ and of enhancing the function of forests in removing GHGs from the atmosphere, in the context of the provision of positive incentives through the establishment of a mechanism, including REDD+. The Accord also acknowledged the need of “scaled up, new and additional, predictable and adequate funding” for REDD+, among other activities, from a wide variety of sources, along with improved access by developing countries.

It was after the Copenhagen COP that the REDD+ Partnership was established. How this came about and the objectives the Partnership adopted are discussed in Section 2.2.

In Cancun, Mexico (COP-16, 2010) the text negotiated in Copenhagen a year earlier was adopted with a few minor amendments, and is known as the “Cancun Agreements on Climate Change”. Among those was a decision where REDD+ was defined and elements for a REDD+ framework were outlined. The Cancun Agreement on REDD+ enumerated five activities³ and four elements that developing country parties that want to participate in REDD+ need to develop: a national strategy or action plan, national

¹ For a brief history of forests in international agreements prior to Montreal, see the Annex.

² The scope of REDD+ was formally adopted in Cancun at COP-16.

³ The five REDD+ activities are: (1) reducing emissions from deforestation; (2) reducing emissions from forest degradation; (3) conservation of forest carbon stocks; (4) sustainable management of forests; and (5) enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

forest reference emission level and/or forest reference level, national forest monitoring system, and a safeguard information system. Related issues, to be addressed when developing and implementing strategies and action plans, were also identified, including drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, land tenure, forest governance, gender considerations and safeguards.

The COP, in Cancun, also decided on the remaining agenda for the full implementation of REDD+, prioritizing for future discussions guidance on technical issues and the safeguards information system (assigned to SBSTA) and exploring how results-based finance could be achieved, including the modalities for it (assigned to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Long Term Cooperative Action or AWG-LCA).

A year later in Durban, South Africa, the COP adopted decisions on national forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and safeguard information systems. It also adopted an overall framework for results-based REDD+ finance while identifying tasks that remained. The following COP in Doha, however, was challenging as Parties could not come to consensus on a number of technical (e.g. MRV) and finance/institutional issues, including how to address non-carbon benefits. Their resolution had to wait the Warsaw Conference of the Parties in 2013.

After nearly a decade of negotiations, in Warsaw Poland at COP-19, Parties agreed to seven decisions (see Annex) called the “Warsaw Framework for REDD+”. Together with previous agreements in Cancun, Durban and Doha, they provide rules and procedures that can be used to operationalize results-based actions and payments. While there are still remaining issues and new ones that are likely to emerge, many Parties suggest that these COP decisions provide comprehensive guidance for the implementation of REDD+. And, with the adoption of the Warsaw Framework, many Partners believe that REDD+ should enter a new phase, with a focus less on international governance issues and more attention given to practical and implementation challenges.

From the point of view of the REDD+ Partnership, it is worth noting that one of the Warsaw REDD+ decisions suggests that national entities or focal points, Parties and relevant entities financing REDD+ activities meet on a voluntary basis, in conjunction with SBSTA meetings, in order to discuss the needs and functions related to the coordination of support for REDD+ implementation. The decision recognizes needs related to the coordination of support, much of which is similar to the objectives of the REDD+ Partnership:

- Strengthen, consolidate and enhance the sharing of relevant information, knowledge, experiences and good practices, at the international level;
- Identify and consider possible needs and gaps in coordination of support;
- Exchange information between the relevant bodies established under the Convention and other multilateral and bilateral entities financing and funding REDD+ activities;
- Provide information and recommendations to the COP for decisions that could be taken to improve the effectiveness of finance, including results-based finance, technology and capacity-building for developing country Parties implementing REDD+ activities;
- Provide information and recommendations on improving the effectiveness of finance to entities including bilateral, multilateral and private sector entities that finance and implement REDD+ activities and on how these activities, including results-based actions, can be more effectively supported;

- Encourage other entities providing support for REDD+ activities to enhance efficiency and coordination and to seek consistency with the operating entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention;
- Exchange information on the development of different approaches, including joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests.

2.2. Birth of REDD+ Partnership

Prior to the Copenhagen COP, in April 2009 in London the Prince of Wales convened with several world leaders⁴ to discuss the need for “emergency finance” for forests. Those at the meeting acknowledged the importance of tropical forests in addressing climate change, and the urgency of scaling up funding for this purpose. On this basis, the Informal Working Group – Interim Finance for REDD+ (IWG-IFR) was formed, and comprised a group of countries from both donor governments and forested developing countries⁵. The IWG-IFR met three times, in May, August and September 2009, and published a report in October the same year that stated “immediate action on REDD+ is a crucial part of the climate change solution” and suggested a global partnership for the interim period could help to facilitate action on REDD+⁶.

Later that year, reflecting the disappointment by many Parties with the Copenhagen COP, there was a belief by many Parties and stakeholders that they should not wait for formal adoption of an agreement by the UNFCCC to catalyze action on REDD+. During the COP, several heads of state including Gabon, Mexico, Norway and Papua New Guinea met and discussed the possibility of creating an informal group. Soon after, the idea of establishing an interim platform for countries to scale up actions and finance for REDD+ was formalized. In March 2010, three months after Copenhagen, at a ministerial meeting in Paris, governments and stakeholders met and called for a REDD+ partnership to be created later that year in Oslo, Norway.

In May 2010, governments and stakeholders met at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference and recognized the crucial role REDD+ could play in pursuing the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC, including in holding the increase in global temperatures below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. They took note of the progress of the UNFCCC negotiations and agreed to provide a voluntary, non-legally binding framework for the interim REDD+ Partnership, within which the Partners may develop and implement collaborative REDD+ efforts.

The Partnership aimed to take immediate action, including scaling up REDD+ actions and finance and facilitating among other things knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, and mitigation actions. Any

⁴ The meeting included leaders from Australia, France, Germany, Guyana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Norway, Saudi Arabia and the European Union, and the US Secretary of State.

⁵ The IWG IFR member countries were: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, European Commission, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Uganda, UK and the USA.

⁶ http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/MD/Vedlegg/Klima/klima_skogprosjektet/iwg/Report%20of%20the%20Informal%20Working%20Group%20on%20Interim%20Finance%20for%20REDD+%20_IWG%20IFR_Final.pdf

country wanting to contribute to REDD+ actions or support was welcome to join the Partnership, and at its founding the Partnership included 58 Partner countries, which has now expanded to 75 countries.

In Oslo, the partners agreed that the work of the Partnership should not prejudice but support and contribute to the UNFCCC process. In fact, they acknowledged that the Partnership would be replaced by a future UNFCCC mechanism including REDD+. It should be noted that there is some debate about the use of the word “mechanism”—some prefer to use, for example, the term “approach”—but for consistency, in this report, we use the former term.

The Partners reaffirmed their intent to help establish such a mechanism and to enable the mobilization of financial and technical resources from developed countries in order to scale up the implementation of REDD+ actions. The Partners also recognized the importance of existing multilateral and bilateral initiatives on REDD+.

Governance Structure and Modus Operandi of REDD+ Partnership

The following summarizes the governance structure and modus operandi as articulated in the founding document of the Partnership. There are separate documents for the terms of the Secretariat Services and for modalities of stakeholder engagement. Section 4 later provides an evaluation of several of these items.

Regular meetings: (1) Meetings of senior officials depending on the issues at hand; (2) technical level meetings to address specific issues appropriate.

Co-chairs: One developing and one developed country Partner representative, both selected for non-renewable terms through an inclusive and transparent selection process. Co-chairs will report to the Partnership, and be responsible for soliciting and communicating Partner views, tasking secretariat services based on guidance from the partnership, and proposing meeting agendas to the partners for approval.

Secretariat services: Facility Management Team of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the UN REDD Programme Team together were requested to provide support to the Partnership.

Stakeholders: Inclusiveness and transparency promoted through the participation of a representative group of stakeholders – including indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society and the private sector – as Observers to the Partnership.

2.3. The Partnership in the context of REDD+ Initiatives

In assessing the role of the Partnership, including any need for further work beyond 2014, it is useful to consider where and how the REDD+ Partnership fits within the broader set of REDD+ initiatives. There are currently several venues for the REDD+ community to meet in addition to the UNFCCC negotiations, which has a different status as a political venue for international agreements. For example, in the following three forums, REDD+ is a particular focus:

- 1) The Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF);

- 2) The United Nations Collaborative Programme on REDD (UN-REDD); and
- 3) The REDD+ Partnership

This is not an exhaustive list—as there are many other regional and global meetings where REDD+ is discussed, either as the key issue (e.g. the Forest Investment Program), or as part of a larger set of issues (e.g. the UN Forum on Forests, the Global Environment Fund, Convention on Biodiversity, meetings of the Green Climate Fund, etc.). However, just taking the UNFCCC and the above three REDD+ venues into account, Table 1 illustrates meetings throughout the year that many REDD+ focal points attend. There are some REDD+ focal points who attend all such meetings—including additional global, regional and local meetings—and many suggest this puts a strain on country-level implementation.

Table 1: A list of REDD+ related meetings in 2013

Month	Location	REDD+ meetings in 2013
Mar	Wash DC	FCPF Participants Committee meeting
Mar	Wash DC	FCPF Carbon Fund meeting
Apr	Bonn	UNFCCC - ADP
Jun	Bonn	UNFCCC - SBSTA/ADP
Jun	Bonn	REDD+ Partnership meeting
Jun	Lombok	FCPF Participants Committee meeting
Jun	Lombok	UN-REDD Policy Board meeting
Jun	Paris	FCPF Carbon Fund meeting
Aug	Dominican Rep.	REDD+ Partnership regional meeting
Oct	Pakangkaraya	REDD+ Partnership meeting
Nov	Warsaw	REDD+ Partnership meeting
Nov	Warsaw	UNFCCC COP
Dec	Geneva	FCPF Participants Assembly/PC meeting
Dec	Geneva	UN-REDD Policy Board meeting
Dec	Paris	FCPF Carbon Fund meeting

There are differences in the purpose and goals of each of these venues. The UNFCCC is focused on international agreements related to climate change and, due to the nature of such agreements, can be a highly politicized forum. UN-REDD supports national REDD+ processes and readiness efforts, and is therefore focused on the design and implementation of REDD+ in developing countries. The FCPF is a pilot program to test payments for results from REDD+ actions and also “supports tropical and sub-tropical developing countries in preparing themselves to participate in a future, large-scale, system of positive incentives for REDD+”⁷. And the REDD+ Partnership was developed as a platform among donors and recipients to discuss a range of issues at the global level related to REDD+, and to coordinate and scale up REDD+ action and finance.

While the history of why each was initiated may differ, there are also commonalities in the objectives they pursue, in part because the mandates of these initiatives, in whole or part, are largely in support of

⁷ <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/readiness-fund-0>

the UNFCCC. Table 2 below compares the REDD+ Partnership's Core Objective plus four additional objectives (as described further in Section 3.1) to related objectives of the UNFCCC, FCPF and UN-REDD.

Table 2: Areas of commonality between the REDD+ Partnership objectives and those of other forums

REDD+ Partnership (Founding Document)	UNFCCC (Convention/Decisions)	FCPF (Charter/Information Memo)	UN-REDD programme (2011-2015 Strategy)
CORE OBJECTIVE: Contribute to global mitigation	<i>"The ultimate objective ... stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere..." (Article 2 of the Convention)</i>	<i>"To assist eligible REDD Countries in their efforts to achieve ERs from deforestation and/or forest degradation..."</i>	<i>"Developing countries have significantly reduced their forest and land-based emissions, as a result of incentives from a performance-based REDD+ mechanism..."</i>
OBJECTIVE 1: Serving as an interim platform	Decision 10/CP.19 (see below) suggests REDD+ focal points and other relevant entities to meet on a voluntary basis in conjunction with the first SBSTA of the year to discuss coordination of support for REDD+	No explicit objective, but has become a de facto platform for learning, testing and sharing knowledge among REDD+ focal points and stakeholders.	<i>"...the UN-REDD Programme will provide a platform for countries to interact with each other as well as international support mechanisms designed to support national-level REDD+ efforts." (Page 17)</i>
OBJECTIVE 2: Scale up REDD+ action and finance	Agreements have referred to scaled-up overall mitigation efforts and mobilizing scaled-up financial resources, including in the context of the Green Climate Fund	<i>"To pilot a performance-based payment system for Emission Reductions generated from REDD activities, with a view to ... promoting future large scale positive incentives for REDD"</i>	
OBJECTIVE 3: Improving REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments	Decision 10/CP.19 (see below) suggests that meetings of national focal points could provide recommendations on the effectiveness of finance	N/A (the FCPF itself is a financial instrument)	N/A (UN-REDD itself is a REDD+ initiative)
OBJECTIVE 4: Facilitating knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer	Decision 10/CP.19 suggests enhancing information sharing; past decisions have requested the Secretariat to develop a web platform (which has been done) to facilitate such information sharing.	<i>"To disseminate broadly the knowledge gained in the ... implementation of Readiness Plans and ER Programs"</i>	<i>"An area where the UN-REDD Programme expects to make a significant contribution will be in the generation, sharing and management of REDD+ knowledge."</i>

Participation in REDD+ Partnership meetings vs. other REDD+ meetings

Different sets of countries participate in the four main global venues where REDD+ goals are pursued and focal points meet to discuss REDD+, as illustrated by Table 3 below.

Table 3: Participation in global venues where REDD+ is discussed

UNFCCC negotiations	REDD+ Partnership	FCPF (including the Readiness and Carbon Funds)	UN-REDD
All countries that are Parties to the UNFCCC may participate	75 countries total, although membership is open Includes: 61 developing countries and 14 developed countries; the European Commission is a financial contributor and active participant	55 countries total Includes: 44 developing countries, and 15 financial contributors including: 12 donor countries, the European Commission, The Nature Conservancy, and BP	53 countries total Includes: 48 developing countries (with targeted support for 18 national programs) and 5 donor countries plus the European Union

Of 14 global (i.e. not regional) meetings of the REDD+ Partnership from 2010 to 2014, 6 Partners had perfect attendance and 24 attended 75% or more of the scheduled meetings. Around half of the Partners attended at least 50% of the meetings; or, alternately, around 50% of the Partners attended less than half of the meetings, suggesting that active participation was not universal among Partners.

Of the 24 Partners who attended 75% or more of meetings, i.e. the most active Partners, 50% are donors (including the EC) and 50% are developing countries. Furthermore, 87% are members of either FCPF or UN-REDD (and around 50% are members of both), leaving a small portion (3 active Partners) that do not attend either FCPF or UN-REDD meetings.

3. Assessment of REDD+ Partnership Objectives

3.1. Introduction: The Partnership's Objectives

The founding document of the REDD+ Partnership, adopted at the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in 2010, states that the Partnership is voluntary, non-binding and that:

"The core objective of the Partnership is to contribute to the global battle against climate change by serving as an interim platform for the Partners to scale up REDD+ actions and finance, and to that end to take immediate action, including improving the effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and coordination of REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments, to facilitate among other things knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer."

The statement above can be divided into a Core Objective plus four additional objectives:

- Core objective: Contribute to the global battle against climate change
- Objective 1: Serving as an interim platform for the Partners
- Objective 2: Scaling up REDD+ actions and finance
- Objective 3: Improving REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments
- Objective 4: Facilitating knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer

Section 3.2 – The assessment provided in Section 3.2 is organized by the five bullets above and contains:

- A mapping of the Partnership's Work Program⁸ elements into each objective;
- Deliverables for each objective (provided in boxes);
- An overview of the quantitative scores given to each objective by Partners and Observers through the on-line Questionnaire, and a qualitative assessment of responses provided in the interviews;
- The authors' qualitative assessment of each objective.

An overall score, from 1 to 5 (with 5 as the highest value) is provided for each objective *based solely on the average score given by respondents to relevant questions found in the on-line questionnaire*. The qualitative assessment that follows is that of the authors of this report, although draws heavily on input from the open questions of the on-line questionnaire and the 25 one-on-one interviews conducted. At times, the assessment states the "sense of the community" on particular issues.

Section 3.3 – The assessment of the Voluntary REDD+ Database is provided separately in Section 3.3. The VRD may be seen as helping to meet multiple objectives.

Section 3.4 – This section is an overall summary of the data collected, including quantitative results from the questionnaire and interviews.

⁸ Following the establishment of the Partnership, three work programs were created for the periods 2010, 2011-2012, and 2013-2014.

3.2. Assessment of the Objectives

3.2.1. Meeting the core objective: Contributing to the global battle against climate change

The core objective, to “contribute to the global battle against climate change” is not directly reflected in work programs as it is a broad goal of the Partnership. Therefore, all the activities of the Partnership are seen as potentially contributing to this objective.

Results of the Questionnaire:

Average
SCORE:

3.3

The questionnaire asked respondents to score the Partnership based on its overall relevance to the global battle against climate change and its added value to national and international climate change and forest (REDD+) processes. The average score given to this objective was 3.3, indicating most felt the Partnership was of moderate value to tackling climate change. Higher scores were given to the Partnership for “presenting REDD+ as a relevant mitigation option to decision makers” and its added value to international REDD+ processes. Both Partners and Observers felt the

Partnership has less value for REDD+ processes at the national level.

During the interviews, we noted whether respondents provided an overall sense of satisfaction with the Partnership and whether it met its objectives. Of those interviewed, 60% were positive overall about the Partnership, 32% were non-committal, and 8% were dissatisfied.

Assessment of the Core Objective:

Whether the Partnership had a direct impact on mitigating climate change is too early to judge and difficult to attribute, but it likely had an indirect impact. It may be years before global forest assessments are made to see whether or not emissions from forest-related activities decrease significantly due to REDD+. Even if there is a marked change, attributing this directly to activities of the Partnership would be impossible to document and prove. However, we do believe that the Partnership has had an indirect effect on efforts to mitigate global warming through promoting political interest in REDD+ and providing momentum for this key mitigation option at a critical time in the history and evolution of discussions around international climate change cooperation, in particular, following the Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP-15). Symbolically, the Partnership demonstrates the existence of a community of countries—both donor governments and developing countries—that are committed to working together to slow, halt and reverse emissions from forests.

The Partnership had a positive “collateral” impact on UNFCCC negotiations. Nearly all respondents to the questionnaire and the interviews stated that the Partnership provided an effective, informal venue for dialogue, particularly on UNFCCC-related issues. The Partnership meetings allowed countries to advance their thinking on complex, technical issues (e.g. reference levels, safeguards, finance) and consider such issues in greater depth and detail, and in a more analytical, objective and less politicized atmosphere than the formal negotiations—therefore helping to increase a mutual understanding of such issues, laying the groundwork for consensus in the UNFCCC. Many countries found this instrumental both in the lead up to the initial text in Cancun that defined REDD+, and in the decisions up to and including the Warsaw Framework. It is likely that progress on REDD+, which is notably more advanced than other streams in the UNFCCC negotiations, has been made possible in part due to the

REDD+ Partnership. And this progress in the REDD+ negotiations can, by itself, be seen as contributing to the global battle against climate change, including the impact of countries realizing that consensus is achievable even when issues are politically difficult and technically complex.

3.2.2. Meeting Objective 1: Serving as an interim platform for the Partners

The REDD+ Partnership was designed to serve as an interim platform for Partners to achieve a variety of actions. This was largely achieved through a series of meetings that have been planned and conducted through 2010 to 2014. The three work programs also suggested that the Partnership should promote transparency and communication. The first work program (WP 1.4) called for the Secretariat to prepare an enhanced communication platform and report on promoting and facilitating cooperation among Partners. Following this, both the second and third work programs (WP 2.5 and WP 3.5) aimed to promote platforms for dialogue and information and knowledge exchange, increase the visibility of the Partnership and improve communication to promote main findings. In addition, WP3.5 called for an assessment of the results of the Partnership (i.e. this report).

Deliverables: Serving as an Interim Platform

Starting in 2010, a series of meetings has been organized by the Partnership:

- 2 Ministerial level meetings (2010 in Nagoya, 2012 in Doha)
- 14 technical level meetings for all Partners, promoting dialogue and information exchange
- 2 regional meetings, one in Latin America and one in Africa

The REDD+ Partnership website was launched in 2010 as a tool for communication among Partners, and between Partners and stakeholders. Since then:

- Web-streaming of meetings and workshops of the Partnership have been made available
- Regular updates have been made to the website, including all documents of the Partners, meetings (agendas, presentations, summaries)
- The Voluntary REDD+ Database has been regularly enhanced (see Section 2.3)

Dedicated discussion (Panama City, Sep 2011): A discussion was held to provide guidance from Partners on more effective communication and use of the website.

Two assessments of the REDD+ Partnership have been commissioned:

- The Secretariat prepared a paper on the *Main achievements and outputs in 2010-2011*, and presented it at the May 2012 (Bonn) meeting
- In 2014, an independent assessment of the results of the Partnership was commissioned

Results of the Questionnaire:

Average
SCORE:

3.4

The questionnaire asked respondents to score the Partnership based on its overall success in: promoting cooperation among Partners, the organization of the Partnership, its complementarity to other processes, and whether it promoted transparency and communication. The average score given to this objective was 3.4, indicating most felt the Partnership did an above average job in serving as an interim platform for REDD+.

Both Partners and Observers gave high scores to meetings as the best means of promoting cooperation. The VRD also scored high among Partners as a means of cooperation, transparency and communication. Secretarial support, meeting logistics and the leadership of the co-Chairs also scored well among both Partners and Observers. Most felt the Partnership was complementary to UN-REDD and the FCPF, but particularly complementary to the UNFCCC negotiations. In terms of promoting transparency and communication, Partners and Observers felt this was adequately achieved among Partners and stakeholders, but less satisfactorily accomplished with the general public.

A high percent of those interviewed were satisfied with the Partnership serving as an interim platform—84% percent (12% were non-committal and only 4% dissatisfied).

Assessment of Objective 1:

A key outcome of the Partnership was to build trust and relationships, and understanding, among Partners and stakeholders. Many cited the importance of the Partnership to building trust and confidence among countries and stakeholders. Civil society valued the opportunity to interact with negotiators and hear their views during the informal exchanges at Partnership meetings. Many suggested that the periodic meetings of the Partnership were critical for building relationships among negotiators, as well as creating an understanding of the challenges and circumstances of developing countries. Some civil society representatives we interviewed in fact said that the Partnership was essential for their own engagement with the UNFCCC negotiations as it provided them an added, “friendly” venue for engagement with negotiators.

The Partnership helped many countries become more familiar with REDD+ concepts. Many developing countries that might not otherwise be able to attend international meetings and learn about evolving REDD+ concepts were enabled to do so through the Partnership. This included during the Partnership meetings themselves, where many ideas about REDD+ have been formed, but also UNFCCC meetings, when the Partnership held meetings back-to-back with negotiations and supported the travel of developing country participants. Many Partners suggested that the meetings helped to build their capacity on REDD+, and to therefore engage more actively in international meetings.

Partnership meetings were the most effective means of promoting transparency and communication. Many cited Partnership meetings as an inclusive, open, and constructive platform for Partners and civil society to discuss and elaborate together concepts related to REDD+. Respondents during interviews generally cited meetings as the most valuable activity of the Partnership. Commissioned reports were considered less valuable, with some questioning whether they resulted in actions or application of their recommendations (much less read in full by many Partners and Observers).

There could have been additional value in expanding the circle of engagement. Most of the Partners were represented by their REDD+ negotiator, and many thought it would have been valuable to engage stakeholders beyond those who attend negotiations, for example practitioners or those involved in other sectors. For example, many cited the value of the participation of external finance experts at the meeting in London and the stronger participation of practitioners at the meeting in Palangkaraya. Similarly, while many found the Partnership complementary to the UNFCCC negotiations, FCPF and UN-REDD, other forest-related international processes or initiative, such as CBD, FLEGT, or the GEF could have been further engaged to enhance policy alignment both at the international and national levels. Experiences of the private sector could also have enriched the Partnership meetings if engagement with this sector were effectively designed.

Communication could have been enhanced. We generally agree with those who suggested that more modern tools of communication could have been employed beyond the use of email, teleconferences and posting information on the website. For example, a regular update or newsletter could have been published, particularly addressing the need to have stronger communication with those outside the REDD+ community. Social media could have been a potent tool as the establishment of the Partnership coincided with the growth of such platforms.

The Partnership was at times politicized, which decreased its effectiveness. There were occasions when the Partnership was politicized, increasing time spent on process while reducing the Partnership's ability to focus on substance. This was particularly true in the earlier years of the Partnership as Partners explored and struggled to define its role and because of the informal procedural rules that were followed.

3.2.3. Meeting Objective 2: Scaling up REDD+ actions and finance

All three work programs include elements related to facilitating the scaling up of finance and actions. The 2010 work program suggested that improving the effectiveness of multilateral initiatives, sharing lessons and enhancing cooperation can enable the scaling up of REDD+ finance and action. The 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 work programs had explicit components dedicated to this topic that focused on sharing experiences from existing REDD+ financial mechanisms, promoting and understanding public-private partnerships, improving bilateral and multilateral institutions and the deployment of REDD+ support, promoting transparency and enhancing the VRD.

Deliverables: Scaling up REDD+ actions and finance

Four workshops in 2011 and 2012 were convened by the REDD+ Partnership related to scaling up finance. More recently (2013-2014), two reports have been commissioned with dedicated discussions on REDD+ finance during Partnership meetings:

- Jun 2011 (Bonn): **Workshop on Scaling up REDD+ Finance** (1-day) focused on four themes:
 - o Mobilizing private sector finance
 - o Lessons from the fast-start – practical pilot experiences of scaling up result-based incentives
 - o Characteristics of the funding needs for REDD+
 - o Barriers to scaling up REDD+ finance/enabling environments
- Nov 2011 (Durban): **Workshop on REDD+ Financing Options** (1/2 day)
- Feb 2012 (London): **Open Meeting on Finance** (2-days), sessions included:
 - o The need to scale up REDD+ financing
 - o Financing pathways: Challenges in accessing finance
 - o Financing pathways: Challenges in delivering finance
 - o Can non-government finance provide solutions (non-market and market)?
 - o Towards a compliance market for REDD+
 - o Non-market approaches to REDD+ financing
 - o REDD+ in the context of low carbon growth
- Jul 2012 (Santa Marta): **In-depth finance workshop** (1.5 days); included background note commissioned by the Partnership: **Advanced REDD+ Finance**. Sessions included:
 - o Advanced REDD+ Finance

- Lessons learned from existing REDD+ initiatives and other markets
- Creating strategies to overcoming challenges: How to scale-up REDD+ financing
- REPORT: ***Experiences of Public-Private Partnerships*** has been commissioned
 - Jun 2014 - Discussion (Bonn): Introduction of methodology for the study
- REPORT: ***Lessons Learned from Fast Start Financing for REDD+*** commissioned
 - Nov 2013 - Discussion (Warsaw): Presentation on Fast Start Finance and discussion
 - Jun 2014 - Discussion (Bonn): Presentation of interim findings, discussion and feedback
- June 2014 - Discussion (Bonn): Stimulating interim (2015-2020) demand and investment for REDD+

Results of the Questionnaire:

Average
SCORE:

2.8

The questionnaire reveals Objective 2 as the least satisfactorily met among the Partnership's objectives. Very few respondents could point to a specific incidence in which the Partnership resulted in a concrete action or new source of finance provided. Where responses were "moderate" or above (i.e. scored a 3 or higher), they likely referred to an *indirect* impact that the Partnership had on REDD+ actions and finance. The interviews resulted in similar results with 32% believing the Partnership helped to scale up actions and finance and 44% saying the Partnership failed in this regard (40% non-committal).

Assessment of Objective 2:

Partners had different expectations from the start as to what "scaling up" meant, and what the Partnership could achieve. Many interviewed noted that throughout the life of the Partnership, there lacked a common understanding of the Partnership's objectives—particularly with regard to this Objective. While the goals of the Partnership were inscribed in the founding document, their interpretation differed by those engaged in the Partnership. The low scoring of this objective likely reflects unmet expectations, while those who provided higher scores likely had more modest expectations of what the Partnership could achieve. Some Partners expected the Partnership to catalyze the flow of money to REDD+ countries, and others saw it as mainly a forum to share best practices in REDD+ finance. A small group of Partners saw the Partnership as an opportunity to identify sources of funds, analyze obstacles to access, and propose solutions to those obstacles.

The Partnership likely had, at best, a modest and indirect impact on REDD+ finance and actions. As with the core objective, attribution is difficult. Some REDD+ actions were likely catalyzed by the increased awareness about REDD+ through Partnership activities. Several REDD countries suggested they valued the opportunity to learn from each other, be inspired by each other's activities, and also to understand expectations of donor countries. Many also felt that the Partnership was critical in mobilizing political will in the early years, especially after Copenhagen—providing momentum without which REDD+ may not have progressed.

On finance, some donors suggested that the transparency and accountability of the VRD created a risk of downscaling overall contributions to REDD+, as the VRD made such budget information—often opaque to the general public—more easily accessible, opening donors up for criticism for declining finance. In addition, some stated that the Partnership meetings provided a continuous focus on REDD+ which indirectly contributed to pressure for REDD+ financing. Some donors also suggested that the high-level meetings had an indirect impact, allowing REDD+ to gain the attention of Ministers with

authority over climate finance decisions. At the same time, other donors suggested that those attending the technical meetings were largely not those engaged in, or authorized to make, funding decisions for their countries. Some suggested that the Partnership impacted the way money was spent more than the actual amounts.

In both cases, i.e. increasing actions and finance, direct attribution is difficult, if not impossible as in all countries multiple factors influence both actions and funding decisions.

The Partnership could have done more to facilitate scaling up. With a stronger focus on implementation, versus international policies, the Partnership could have possibly better identified barriers to financial disbursement, and promoted solutions to accessing existing sources of REDD+ (thereby also helping to scale up actions). While there were many discussions on finance, some Partners felt many sessions were highly conceptual, rather than operational or focused on concrete programs or financial delivery (with exception to the London and Santa Marta meetings). Other initiatives whose mandate and structure are more aligned with delivering finance and actions, such as the FCPF Readiness and Carbon Funds, may be better fit for meeting this objective.

3.2.4. Meeting Objective 3: Improving REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments

Objective 3 has two parts: (1) Improving the effectiveness of multilateral REDD+ initiatives; and (2) Financing gaps and overlaps. With regard to improving the effectiveness of multilateral REDD+ initiatives, the founding document of the Partnership did not specify which initiatives or financial instruments it sought to improve. However, Partners have focused this objective on evaluation of multilateral REDD+ initiatives. The 2010 work program (WP 1.3) had a component dedicated to discussing the effectiveness of multilateral REDD+ Initiatives and formulating concrete recommendations for targeted improvements to multilateral funds supporting REDD+.

With regard to analysis of financing gaps and overlaps, the 2010 work program (WP 1.2) called for an analysis of REDD+ financing gaps and overlaps and an initial set of recommendations on ways to address them. This resulted in the first study commissioned by the Partnership. A number of discussions have followed on this topic, which can be seen as contributing to the objective of improving REDD+ initiative and financial instruments. The same work program also called for a report on institutional arrangements (WP 1.5), but Partners eventually agreed not to pursue this particular component of the first work program.

Deliverables: Improving REDD+ Initiatives and financial instruments

The Partnership has held multiple dedicated discussions at Partnership meetings on the topic of the effectiveness of multilateral REDD+ initiatives. It also commissioned a report and produced an agreed set of recommendations.

- Oct 2010 - Discussion (Tianjin): Discussion on commissioning a study; DRC presented on plans to ensure coordination among the FCPF, UN-REDD and FIP, drawing on the respective strengths of each initiative; TNC presentation on multilateral initiatives.
- Apr 2011 - Discussion (Bangkok): Presentation by IDLgroup (contracted to do the study) and discussion of preliminary work.
- Jun 2011 - Discussion (Bonn): Presentation of early findings by IDLgroup followed by discussion among Partners.

- Jul 2011 – Report issued: ***Recommendations for targeted improvements to multilateral initiatives***
- Sep 2011 - Discussion (Panama City): Presentation by IDL and discussion on findings.
- REPORT: ***Discussion of Effectiveness of Multilateral REDD+ Initiatives*** by the IDLgroup (24 October 2011)

The Partnership also commissioned a report on gaps and overlaps and held multiple discussions on the topic:

- Oct 2010 - Discussion (Tianjin): Presentation of preliminary findings of report, panel with NGOs and discussion among Partners on gaps and overlaps;
- REPORT: ***Analysis for REDD+ Financing Gaps and Overlaps*** by Markku Simula (30 December 2010).
- Apr 2011 - Discussion (Bangkok): Presentation of key findings of study and discussion among Partners;
- Jun 2011 - Discussion (Bonn): Continued discussion on gap analysis and financing.

Results of the Questionnaire:

Average
SCORE:

3.1

The questionnaire asked respondents to score the Partnership on its contribution to positive changes in multilateral REDD+ initiatives. Partners were more positive, rating the Partnership as moderate (average 3.2), while Observers were more critical and their scores (average 2.6) suggested an unsatisfactory response by the Partnership.

On financing gaps and overlaps, the overall scores were higher (generally above 3 by both Partners and Observers) and indicated a moderate level of satisfaction in meeting this objective. The scoring also indicated a higher level of approval of the analysis commissioned by the Partnership versus the effectiveness of discussions on this topic at Partnership meetings.

The interviews, however, revealed that many people had difficulty responding to this question, and that there was some confusion over the interpretation of this objective—in particular, whether it included the UNFCCC or was uniquely focused on initiatives such as the FCPF, Forest Investment Program (FIP), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and UN-REDD⁹. Nearly half (48%) chose not to respond to this question, or were non-committal; 32% suggested the Partnership did have an impact on multilateral initiatives (with some citing the UNFCCC, and others not considering this as part of the objective) and 20% felt the Partnership did not have an impact.

Assessment of Objective 3:

There is evidence that some recommendations by the Partnership have been addressed by multilateral REDD+ initiatives, but attribution is a challenge. It is difficult to assess whether changes made by the initiatives (i.e. FCPF, FIP, GEF and UN-REDD) were due to direct delivery of recommendations by the Partnership to the initiatives, or due to similar requests made by the governing bodies or concerns heard more generally in various fora. Examples of recommendations made by the Partnership that are consistent with changes seen in recent years by multilaterals include:

⁹ The four initiatives listed are highlighted because they were those assessed by IDL in a report commissioned by the REDD+ Partnership (presented to the Partnership in September 2011), and for which a set of recommendations was published and delivered to each organization.

- Increasing the number of south-south exchanges¹⁰; for example, both UN-REDD and the FCPF held 8 south-south learning activities each in 2013;
- Providing up-to-date information; the FCPF and UN-REDD in particular have improved the provision of up-to-date information on countries participating in their programs through their respective websites;
- Increasing cooperation, including avoiding overlaps and communicating the roles of each initiative to countries.

Increased cooperation appears to be particularly the case for FCPF, UN-REDD and the FIP. For example, the FCPF and UN-REDD have increased the number of joint missions to REDD countries. The two initiatives have also harmonized several of their program documents, planned and held joint south-south exchanges, and commissioned work together, such as reports on REDD+ benefit sharing, safeguards initiatives, and multi-stakeholder participation practices. FIP investments also appear to be increasingly integrated and aligned with the work of the FCPF, and are noted in several ER-PIN proposals to the Carbon Fund as providing supportive financing.

However, there are also some recommendations that are not, or remain only partly, addressed. While the multilateral institutions have made positive changes in some areas, others remain a work in progress or still need to be addressed. For example:

- Funding by the GEF appears to be less integrated into efforts by the FCPF, FIP and UN-REDD;
- Clarity on how the private sector will be engaged in REDD+ remains a challenge;
- Broadening the scope of work on mitigation to align with adaptation strategies/needs (while noting that governing bodies have not made this a priority request of the initiatives);
- In some cases, improving disbursement of finance to countries and/or creating a common platform for cooperation among delivery Partners.

There are multiple factors of why some areas are not yet fully addressed. For example, frustration with the slow delivery of finance relates to a range of issues, and is more generally true where countries are receiving direct access to funds. Factors may include in-country procurement capacity to institutional rules and procedures that create barriers to accessing finance. The latter (i.e. rules and procedures) requires different mechanisms to argue for change and is a much larger institutional issue than simply a problem of REDD+ funding.

Similarly, better cooperation among various financial delivery mechanisms may depend on a range of factors, from the type of finance being employed (including their mandate and restrictions) to personalities and broader institutional cooperation in country. Host country cooperation, particularly if different ministries serve as focal points for different multilateral efforts, may also be a factor. Success has therefore varied from country to country. These same factors also affect the provision of a common platform for delivery. More efforts, however, could be made by multilateral initiatives to improve on recommendations not yet fully addressed.

More strategic level discussions on financing gaps and overlaps could have taken place. The study by Markku Simula was well received and even though it was commissioned early in the Partnership (four years ago), several recalled this study as valuable. However, the Partnership had difficulty discussing

¹⁰ Some workshops held by the FCPF can be found at: <https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/workshops-0>

concrete solutions on how to address financing gaps and overlaps. In addition, the Partnership could have had more discussion on how various initiatives complement (or not) each other, and what could be done to improve coordination across multiple deliveries of finance.

3.2.5. Meeting Objective 4: Facilitating knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer

Many of the outputs of the Partnership could be seen to fall under this Objective – as meetings of the Partnership, in particular the many workshop (including those listed under Objective 2 on finance) are focused on sharing experiences and lessons learned. The 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 work programs had specific components that fit within this Objective, in particular facilitating readiness activities (WP 2.1 and 3.1), facilitating demonstration activities (WP 2.2 and 3.2), and facilitating results-based actions (WP 2.3 and 3.3). Most of the activities below are deliverables for those components.

Deliverables: Facilitating knowledge transfer, capacity enhancement, mitigation actions and technology development and transfer

- Nov 2010 – Workshop (Cancun): ***International Workshop on Enhancing Coordinated Delivery of REDD+: Emerging Lessons, Best Practices and Challenges*** (1-day). The five sessions of the workshop included:
 - o Significant REDD+ Actions and Financing
 - o Multi-stakeholder Consultations
 - o Benefit sharing mechanisms
 - o Applying safeguards
 - o Enhancing cooperation among Partners
- Apr 2011 - Workshop (Bangkok): ***Sharing of experiences on the design and implementation of demonstration activities and flagship projects*** (1-day). The workshop included an introduction to demonstration activities, and presentations of country experiences.
- Sep 2011 - Workshop (Panama City): ***Workshop on Safeguards: Concepts, practical approaches and perspectives for REDD+*** (½ day)
- Sep 2011 - Workshop (Panama City): ***Workshop on Measuring and Monitoring REDD+: Concepts, practical approaches and experiences*** (1-day)
- Nov 2011 - Workshop (Durban) – ***Workshop on REDD+ Reference Emission Levels/Reference Levels*** (½ day)
- May 2012 - Workshop (Bonn) – ***Workshop on Drivers of Deforestation and REDD+*** (1-day)
 - o General overview of Drivers of Deforestation
 - o Role of Government Policy in Reducing Deforestation
 - o The Role of Industry
 - o The Role of Finance: How can funding better address drivers of deforestation?
- Aug 2013 – ***Latin America Regional Meeting*** (Santo Domingo)
- Oct 2013 - Discussion (Palangkaraya) – ***Country needs assessment***, report jointly commissioned by FCPF and UN-REDD
- Oct 2013 – Field trip (Palangkaraya) – Visits to project sites, peatland rewetting, fire prevention, agricultural innovation and livelihood projects
- Oct 2013 - Discussion (Palangkaraya) – ***Emerging lessons and best practices in implementing demonstration and results-based actions for REDD+***

Results of the Questionnaire:

Average
SCORE:

3.3

The average score of 3.3 may be misleading, as this objective was seen by many stakeholders as being, in part, the most successful outcome of the Partnership. In particular, facilitating knowledge transfer and sharing lessons scored well (3.7 and 4.0, respectively). However, the average was brought down by lower scores in relation to facilitating technology transfer (average score of 2.4). The Partnership scored higher as a platform for North-South versus South-South cooperation. And responses also suggested the Partnership helped to facilitate REDD+ readiness, but was less successful in facilitating demonstration activities or results-based actions.

The results of the questionnaire are likely reflective of the structure of the Partnership itself (i.e. inclusive of both donors and recipients, so stronger on North-South discussions than South-South), as well as the stage of REDD countries, i.e. more have been engaged in readiness over the past four years versus results-based actions.

The interviews suggested that nearly all respondents were satisfied with this objective being met by the Partnership, with 92% responding positively (8% non-committal). No one interviewed voiced dissatisfaction with the Partnership's overall performance on this objective.

Assessment of Objective 4:

Facilitating knowledge transfer and sharing lessons was one of the most valuable outcomes of the Partnership. A number of Partners relayed during the interviews that the Partnership meetings were extremely helpful to 'getting them up to speed' when they first joined the REDD+ community. In addition, many cited the thematic workshops (particularly where external experts were brought in) as the most useful activity of the Partnership. Many donor governments also appreciated presentations of concrete case studies and experiences by REDD+ countries and said it was a good opportunity to better understand the challenges developing countries face.

Many cited the finance discussions as a concrete example of how the Partnership impacted knowledge on a particular topic. There was an evolution of perspectives within the REDD+ community on finance over the past two years—starting with the workshop in London, followed up by the sessions in Santa Marta and Bonn—that many feel can be attributed to the Partnership activities.

There remains a need to continue knowledge sharing, with a particular focus on implementation.

Most of those interviewed said that the REDD+ community is now entering an implementation phase and there is a stronger need to bring together practitioners and experts with field experience and program design, to understand what works, what does not, and what are key features of enabling environments, i.e. it is now time to link the theory agreed in the negotiations with what is happening on the ground.

Many cited the Palangkaraya meeting as particularly innovative in its approach, and useful to participants. The strong linkage to implementation, the higher participation by practitioners, the opportunity to visit the field, and the "bazaar" which allowed direct contact and discussion among

donors/recipients, were noted as successful elements that could be replicated in future meetings that aim to meet this objective.

Regional exchanges are particularly valuable to REDD countries. One of the highest demands cited in discussions with Partners, in particular developing countries, was for more regional workshops to share lessons learned, best practices, and on the ground experiences. Many developing countries suggested that regional meetings provide a more comfortable setting where they can speak in their native tongue and share experiences and challenges faced with countries that have similar circumstances.

3.3. The Voluntary REDD+ Database

The Voluntary REDD+ Database (VRD) provides basic and critical information on REDD+ financing, actions and results. In essence, it is a publicly accessible online database of REDD+ financing data based on voluntary submissions by governments that are members of the REDD+ Partnership, major multilateral institutions involved in financing REDD+ readiness, and a number of other institutions and organizations involved in REDD+ related actions.

Created in October 2010 for the benefit of the international community and owned by the REDD+ Partnership, the VRD was designed to serve as a tool that would support the REDD+ Partnership and its Partners that support and implement REDD+. Its main objectives are to:

- improve transparency and coordination around REDD+;
- support efforts to identify and analyze gaps and overlaps in REDD+ financing; and
- help share experiences and ideas on REDD+ among Partners and with other stakeholders.

Countries before the Paris International Conference on the Major Forest Basins first raised the necessity for a VRD in March 2010. Subsequently, there was a first attempt (See Box below) to collect data and a report prepared for the Oslo Climate and Forest Conference in May 2010. During the Oslo meeting, the development of a VRD was decided and incorporated into the 2010 Work Program by Partners.

The implementation of the VRD—from its design, database development and management—has from the beginning been carried out through a joint effort by FAO and UNEP-WCMC (VRD Team) as part of the REDD+ Partnership Secretariat Services. As agreed from its inception, the VRD Team reports and is under the guidance of the Partnership co-Chairs and Partners.

While the VRD is owned by the Partnership, it was agreed at the outset that countries and institutions making submissions to the database (reporters) maintain complete ownership of all information submitted. As such, the data submitted to the database on behalf of a country or institution is always submitted and formally approved by a designated VRD country or institution focal point, before it is publicly viewable on the database. As of end of 2013, 73% of the Partnership had reported to the database; this included 88% of funder country Partners and 66% of REDD+ country Partners. In addition, 15 institutions had reported to the database, including all the main intergovernmental and multilateral institutions involved in funding REDD+ readiness, as well as several NGOs.

A central concept of the VRD is the REDD+ arrangement. What is reported to the VRD by countries and institutions is information on REDD+ financing in the form of “arrangements”. The VRD defines an arrangement as an agreement to undertake REDD+ related actions that involves a funder and a

recipient. The arrangement provides for a specified timeframe and an indicative budget (reported as “commitments and contributions”). These arrangements can indicate diverse modalities of REDD+ financing (such as bilateral, multilateral or domestic finance, and finance to NGOs), and may be specified for any of the three phases of REDD+: preparedness, pilot projects or programs, or results-based actions or finance. A total of 1687 REDD+ arrangement records have been reported to the database.

The Data in the VRD

Prior to the establishment of the VRD, Australia, France, and Papua New Guinea on their own initiative, and during the Paris-Oslo process, conducted a survey of countries and international bodies about their current REDD+ financing and implementing arrangements.

The objective of the 2010 Financing Activities Survey was “to help to build a common understanding of the actions countries are already undertaking to build capacity, finance and implement REDD+ activities”. This survey served as the basis for the initial VRD structure while the resulting survey responses - from 26 countries and 8 institutions – constituted the VRD’s first dataset.

Subsequently, The REDD+ Partnership launched its first questionnaire in March 2011 with the aim of updating and improving the dataset. Since 2011, the questionnaire has been undertaken on an annual basis – resulting in four questionnaires so far.

The 2011 questionnaire sought to update and expand upon existing records in the database, and collect additional information on REDD+ financing arrangements in response to Partnership requests to collect data in a form more appropriate for purposes of analysis.

In 2012, the questionnaire was further developed in the light of data collection experiences during 2011, and Partnership requests for inclusion of additional types of data, such as information on financial disbursements.

The 2013 version of the questionnaire has retained a similar structure to the 2012 version, but has been further refined to request information from parties on the criteria they employ for reporting REDD+ finance to the database (e.g. timeframe for arrangements, additionality, and the types of actions that qualify as REDD+ arrangements), since no universal definition for what “counts” as REDD+ finance currently exists, and countries use their own nationally-defined criteria for REDD+ finance.

Following feedback from Partners and the VRD Working Group in 2014, the 2014 version of the questionnaire has included a relabeling of “contributions” as “commitments” to align more closely with terminology used by other REDD+ finance tracking initiatives.

Source: *VRD Analytic Report 2013*

As reported in the 2013 Analytic Report, funder countries have reported a total of US\$ 6.92 billion in outgoing finance to REDD+ countries and institutions between 2006 and 2020, an increase of US\$ 1.12 billion from the total amount reported in 2012. Of this total amount, US\$ 4.1 billion is in the form of bilateral assistance to REDD+ countries while US\$ 2.82 billion has flowed via multilateral institutions and NGOs. Multilateral institutions in turn have reported that US\$ 2.65 billion that has been committed to multilateral funds from funder countries. In addition to these international flows, 16 REDD+ countries reported on domestic financing for REDD+, inclusive of the period 2008-2017, that totals over \$1.5 billion, but is suggested to be a underestimation of the actual amount.

Results of the Questionnaire

Average
SCORE:

3.0

In the survey, we asked specific questions on the questionnaire. More detailed results are provided in Section 3.4 of this report. While 3.0 is a moderate average score, the VRD was actually scored high by Partners in terms of design (3.4), transparency (3.3), cooperation in building the VRD (3.3) and most important of all in usefulness (3.4). It got moderate scores in usage (3.0), stakeholder ownership (3.1) and user support and harmonizing figures (2.9). The average score of the VRD however was pulled down because survey respondents had concerns about reliability (2.7) and most of all in terms of cost-efficiency where it scored quite low (2.4). Observers' scores are similar to those of Partners, although slightly lower.

The results of the survey were reaffirmed by interviews where most interviewees, Partners and Observers, were appreciative of the VRD, thought it has a lot of value, and recommended that it be continued, with improvements, if the right institutional host is found for it. Some interviewees cited technical issues regarding the usability and reliability of the VRD and a few raised concerns about cost-efficiency, with some conceded the value of the VRD but wondering if it was worth the cost.

Assessment of the VRD:

Based on the survey results and the interviews, supplemented by a review of the relevant VRD documents (the progress reports and the analytic reports), we conclude that ***the VRD has been a successful initiative and is meeting its main mandate to provide information to the global community on REDD+ financing, actions and results***. Certainly, it has supported the REDD+ Partnership by way of improving transparency around REDD+, assisted through its analytical reports to identify and analyze gaps and overlaps in REDD+ financing. By allowing for comparison, the VRD has helped Partners and stakeholders share experiences on REDD+.

One of the key values of the VRD is the analytic reports that have accompanied it, a first one for the 2012 data, and just recently, the 2013 VRD Analytic Report was launched. These reports present comprehensive analyses of the data reported to the VRD. The 2012 report featured analysis which was mostly based on reports to the database from funders (owing to the incompleteness at the time of the recipient reporter dataset); the 2013 version sought to provide a more transparent picture by incorporating reports from both funders and recipients. For example, the analysis illustrates the balance between bilateral grant and multilateral finance, or what range of countries REDD+ finance is reaching. The first analysis showed that trends in public financing commitments for REDD+ covered a large geographical range (95 REDD+ countries). Aside from providing a good summary of the current data in the VRD, the 2013 Analytic Report also features global and regional analyses of REDD+ financing and includes in-depth sections on multilateral financial flows, and on funding reported to the database for the fast-start finance period (2010 to 2012).

While concluding that the VRD is a successful initiative, this is not to ignore that technical challenges remain. These include the challenge of collecting data, data quality and comparability, and technical issues such as the usability of the website.

Data collection has improved, but remains a challenge, and will endure without a strong commitment by Partners to maintain, and increase, efforts to collect and submit data. A key challenge the VRD Team faces is data collection. Since information is submitted voluntarily, it must rely on countries and

institutions to respond. In 2011, when the first questionnaire was sent out, the VRD received a limited number of responses. Over time, however, the response rate has improved:

- In 2012, the VRD Team sent out 98 invitations to potential users in 65 countries and institutions. Fifty-six users, representing 45 countries and institutions, accepted that invitation and became users of the VRD. In that same year, the VRD subsequently received 38 submissions from 11 funder countries (including the European Commission), 18 REDD+ countries, and 9 institutions.
- This improved considerably in 2013. Although the Partnership had to extend the deadline to January 2014 because initially of a low response rate, by February 2014, the VRD Team had received 45 responses from 13 funder countries (including the European Commission), 24 REDD+ countries, and 8 institutions. In its progress report, the VRD Team considered the 2013 data collection round as the most successful in the VRD's history, citing in particular the eight new reporters representing REDD+ countries.

Behind the submissions, however, is in many cases a resource intensive effort by countries to compile such data. For many donor countries there is not a single database of funding specifically for REDD+, and often no single agency is disbursing such finance, requiring additional resources and cost to collect the data and encourage cooperation from multiple agencies. Similarly in recipient countries, there is often no single person, or department or ministry, who is involved in all REDD+ finance received by the country—much of which does not go directly to government agencies but is received by, for example, local and international NGOs or companies. There is a further challenge to calculate domestic funding that can be attributed to REDD+ efforts, and also some political hesitation to do so. While compiling all of a country's REDD+ financing data into one place is useful and has added value, many countries lack the capacity or resources to do this. Therefore, data collection will be a continuous challenge and is only as good as Partners' efforts.

Data quality may be improved, but some discrepancies are inherent in the system created and are therefore likely to persist. The VRD Team has attempted to address and work with countries to minimize discrepancies in the reported data, particularly those that could be explained or resolved. For example, when reporting only occurs by one party. A significant proportion of REDD+ Partner countries (33%) have not reported to the database, so many of the arrangements in the database reported by funders have no corresponding reports from recipients. Similarly, where funders and recipients report different stages in fund disbursements, these discrepancies would be minimized over time. However, when funders and recipients have different views on what legitimately counts as REDD+ related finance, and as long as the VRD allows countries to self-define REDD+ finance, these discrepancies will persist.

Technical and usability issues will likely still come up in the future, but are resolvable. From the time of its launch, there have been several concerns regarding both the manner the information is collected as well as the website design and its features. However based on the 2012 and 2013 progress reports, which we validated by navigating the website, the VRD Team has been overall responsive to these concerns. For example:

- A new website design which maintained branding consistency with the REDD+ Partnership website;
- Improvements to information displayed on the home page; to arrangement pages and lists; to map design and layout and new graphics and analyses on overview and country/institution pages;

- Adding a data download feature, which enables users to access the underlying data in the database.

If the VRD were to continue, some form of a VRD Working Group mandated to develop recommendations for continuous technical and usability improvements to the database and its website should be formed to provide input to the technical staff managing the database and website, and ensure that such issues are resolved satisfactorily.

3.4. Summary of Responses from On-line Questionnaire and Interviews

The following table represents the matrix used for the assessment of the Partnership. The questionnaire and interviews followed a similar structure—and the quantitative results have been collated below.

OBJECTIVE	Elements within the Objectives	Score from Questionnaire		Average score for Objective	Response from interviews
		Partners	Observers		
CORE OBJECTIVE: Contribute to the global battle against climate change	Overall relevance to battle against climate change	3.4	2.9	Partners: 3.5	General sense of satisfaction overall with the Partnership: Positive: 60% Non-committal: 32% Negative: 8%
	Added value to international climate change processes	3.5	3.3		
	Added value in presenting REDD+ as a relevant mitigation option to decision makers	3.8	3.5	Observers: 3.1	
	Added value in presenting REDD+ benefits beyond mitigation to decision makers	3.5	3.5		
	Added value in raising awareness about REDD+ outside expert circles	3.4	2.5		
	Added value to international REDD+ processes	3.6	3.3		
	Added value to the REDD+/forest and climate processes at the national level	3.1	2.6		
OBJECTIVE 1: Serving as an interim platform for the Partners	Overall success at promoting cooperation among partners	3.2	3.1	Partners: 3.4	Satisfaction with the Partnership serving as an interim platform: Positive: 84% Non-committal: 12% Negative: 4%
	Best means of promoting cooperation - Partners: Meetings and VRD tied (3.9) - Observers: Meetings (3.6)				
	Overall success in organizing the Partnership	3.6	3.4	Observers: 3.3	
	Overall complementarity of Partnership to other REDD+ processes	3.5	3.4		
	Overall satisfaction in promoting transparency and communication in REDD+ international processes and REDD+ finance	3.4	3.1		
	Best means of transparency/communication - Partners: VRD (4.1) - Observers: VRD (3.3)				

OBJECTIVE 2: Scaling up REDD+ actions and finance	Overall success of Partnership in helping scaling up REDD+ actions	3.3	2.6	Partners: 3.1	Partnership contributed to scaling up actions and finance: Positive: 16% Non-committal: 40% Negative: 44%
	Overall success of Partnership in helping scaling up REDD+ finance	3.2	2.6		
	Partnership activities resulted in REDD+ actions by new countries	3.0	2.4	Observers: 2.4	
	Partnership activities enhanced existing REDD+ actions in countries	3.3	2.4		
	Partnership activities resulted in more effective use of REDD+ finance	3.0	2.2		
	Partnership activities resulted in new sources of REDD+ finance	3.0	2.2		
	Partnership activities resulted in enhanced financial support for existing actions	3.0	2.3		
OBJECTIVE 3: Improving REDD+ initiatives and financial instruments	Overall contribution to positive changes in multilateral REDD+ initiatives	3.2	2.6	Partners: 3.2	The Partnership improved initiatives: Positive: 32% Non-committal: 48% Negative: 20%
	Financing gaps/overlaps: Relevance of the analysis commissioned by the Partnership	3.5	3.3	Observers: 2.9	
	Quality and usefulness of the analysis	3.4	3.0		
	Usefulness of the analysis	3.3	3.2		
	Effectiveness of discussion around gaps/overlaps at REDD+ Partnership meetings	3.0	3.0		
OBJECTIVE 4: Facilitating knowledge and technology transfer, capacity enhancement, sharing lessons	Partnership facilitated knowledge transfer	3.7	3.6	Partners: 3.1	The Partnership helped to facilitate knowledge transfer: Positive: 92% Non-committal: 8% Negative: 0%
	Partnership facilitated technology transfer	2.6	2.2		
	Partnership facilitated capacity enhancement	3.3	3.3	Observers: 3.1	
	Partnership facilitated sharing lessons	3.9	4.0		
	A successful platform for South-South cooperation	2.9	2.9		
	A successful platform for North-South cooperation	3.2	3.4		
	Partnership facilitated readiness	3.4	3.1		
	Partnership facilitated demonstration	2.8	3.1		
	Partnership facilitated results-based actions	2.5	2.1		
VRD: The Voluntary REDD+ Database	Design of VRD	3.4	2.9	Partners: 3.1	Positive: 82% Note: 20% of those who rated it positively raised concerns on costs Non-committal: 18% (mostly did not use it)
	Cooperation in building the VRD	3.3	3.1		
	Usage of VRD	3.0	2.9		
	Usefulness of VRD	3.4	3.1	Observers: 2.9	
	Reliability of VRD	2.7	2.8		
	Transparency of VRD	3.3	3.2		
	User support and harmonizing figures	2.9	2.7		
	Stakeholder ownership of VRD	3.1	2.5		
	Cost efficiency	2.4	2.7		

4. The Future

4.1. Added value of the Partnership

To understand better the options for the future of the Partnership, it is important to look at where the added value of the Partnership has been and whether the role it played in the last four years is still essential to advancing the REDD+ agenda internationally. The future of the REDD+ Partnership should be seen in the context of the future of REDD+ itself.

From the survey results and the interviews we conducted, there is a clear convergence among Partners that the **Partnership's value was largely in the following areas:**

- Providing an *informal* space for communication, to discuss a range of issues and explore solutions to identified challenges, including those being negotiated under the UNFCCC;
- Increasing transparency among Partners and with Observers;
- Building trust, understanding, social capital;
- Sharing knowledge and building capacity on REDD+ issues;
- Taking efforts to document REDD+ finance through the Voluntary REDD+ Database.

Among all of these, the first—providing informal space that supported the UNFCCC negotiations—has been identified as the most important added value of the Partnership by interviewees. Many pointed out that the space provided was indispensable during the period that the UNFCCC negotiations were progressing very slowly. Whether this value still exists is questioned by many Partners who share the view that the Warsaw Framework for REDD+ has resolved most policy and technical issues.

However, there are a couple outstanding issues mentioned by Partners who see a continued need for an informal space to discuss UNFCCC issues. The first is that while much guidance has been provided for REDD+, including for results-based actions and finance, an operational mechanism for results-based payments is still not fully agreed, or functional, within the COP (or any of its financial mechanisms). The other is that the Paris Conference of the Parties is expected to negotiate a new climate agreement, and it can be predicted that it will have a forest and land use agenda. Therefore, some questioned whether the Partnership may still be useful in providing an informal space for dialogue and momentum to ensure a place for REDD+ in a future agreement. On the other hand, given the issues involved, the current structure and composition of the Partnership may be inadequate for discussing these issues. In addition, an informal dialogue already exists to discuss the broader land use agenda that combines negotiators that cover the LULUCF, agriculture and REDD+ agendas.

Partners and Observers also strongly agreed on the added value of the Partnership in increasing transparency, building trust and understanding, as well as social capital, and in sharing knowledge and building capacity on REDD+ issues. The question is whether the Partnership remains necessary for these desired outcomes. In the interviews, Partners have pointed to various processes both within and external to the UNFCCC that could serve this function. The UNFCCC process itself has seen the consolidation of the trust, understanding and social capital built in the Partnership and the negotiations in the early years. The future information hub and the voluntary meeting of national entities or focal points, Parties and relevant entities financing REDD+ activities could also serve to increase transparency and share knowledge. Outside of the UNFCCC, many suggest that the FCPF and UN-REDD are useful venues that help meet these goals; and, as the two initiatives hold periodic meetings back-to-back, that global meetings on the margins of these two initiatives may be organized on an ad hoc basis to provide

the broader gathering for the REDD+ community that the Partnership provided. Section 2.3 counts nearly 90% of active members in the Partnership are participants in one or both of these organizations.

Finally, as reflected in the survey results and the interviews, there is general agreement among Partners and Observers that the VRD is imperfect, but valuable. As discussed in Section 3.3, the VRD has stimulated useful discussions on finance, including how REDD+ funds have been spent and disbursed. Partners interviewed have pointed out that the database provides valuable comparative information. The VRD, even while it has faced a myriad of technical challenges, has been instructive on the difficulties inherent in collecting, organizing, and disseminating information on a range of financial flows. Invaluable experience related to building this type of data base has been gained, and documented, by those involved. While acknowledging the usefulness and relevance of the VRD, many have viewed the cost and quality of the information in the VRD as problematic. Some suggest that the VRD may be folded into the UNFCCC (e.g. be part of the information hub) and others strongly believe it is better off outside the official process, or suggest it might continue as a stand-alone, voluntary platform supporting several REDD+ initiatives.

The Costs and Benefits of the Partnership

As of October 2014, the total spending of the REDD+ Partnership over the five years (2010 to 2014, inclusive) is just over USD \$6 million.

Secretariat costs*	\$2,332,470
Partnership Meetings and Workshops	\$1,725,369
Studies (Analysis and Reports)	\$477,356
Voluntary REDD+ Database	\$1,557,541
Communications and website	\$78,584
Total	\$6,171,320

**Secretariat costs include costs of coordination and communication, technical inputs and report writing, budget and project management, translation of documents and arrangement of meetings.*

In our interviews, 44% said the overall benefits of the Partnership outweighed costs, 16% thought the costs outweighed benefits, and the remainder chose not to respond, or were non-committal. Of those who hesitated to respond, many supported the VRD but felt it was too expensive. A strong majority, however, indicated that the costs of the meetings were justified, and that benefits of them outweighed the cost.

4.2. Perspectives on the future from Partners and Observers

Based on the survey results (through submitted comments) and the interviews, the majority of Partners and Observers believe the Partnership has played a constructive role in the launch of REDD+ but that it is now time for the REDD+ community to move into a new phase, and suggest the Partnership should end in 2014. A few Partners (e.g. 5 of the 25 interviewed) are in principle open to exploring a continuing

role for the Partnership+, and still others see potential for a different type of initiative as useful in the future. Many Partners, however, voiced concerns about Partnership meetings diminishing in value over time—particularly in the past year or two, becoming an added burden, overlapping with the UNFCCC and other REDD+ initiatives and taking focal points away from important in-country implementation.

More specifically, on the future of the Partnership, many respondents and interviewees believe that the REDD+ community is now beyond “interim” and, as a matter of (and to demonstrate) good governance, the Partnership should end. This new phase of REDD+ that we are now entering, many said, is less political and policy oriented; instead its focus is on implementation and meeting the challenges countries face as they build the technical and governance infrastructure for REDD+ (national strategies, reference levels, MRV, safeguards, etc.).

For this reason, Partners and Observers have articulated that a decision to end the Partnership does not mean that all its activities no longer have relevance. Many expressed a desire to see whether, and to explore how, some partnership programs and activities could be continued in a new form or structure (not necessarily under the Partnership) that focused on catalyzing action on the ground and advances implementation, including meetings that:

- Update recent scientific knowledge and disseminate useful tools for implementation;
- Build capacity of developing countries, and provide opportunities to build relationships and network;
- Focus on sharing of experiences at the regional level, and are held in native languages and provide an exchange of experiences with those with stronger commonalities;
- Provided an opportunity to learn from those at different stages of REDD+ implementation.

It should be noted that some of the civil society representatives voiced concern that the loss of the Partnership would leave a vacuum and reduce their ability to engage with REDD+ negotiators and national officials. Several stated that they would like to have a substitute for the informal space that the Partnership provided for the UNFCCC negotiations.

The Future of the VRD

In both the survey and the interviews, Partners and Observers supported the idea of the continuation of the VRD, with technical improvements and subject to finding the right organizational host (if the Partnership were to cease).

Some suggested that the VRD could be incorporated into the information hub that the UNFCCC is establishing. While this is an attractive option to facilitate coordination, many suggested that the VRD’s taking on an official character could undermine its main strengths: (a) that it is voluntary, and provides a level of comfort to countries that there is no review or scrutiny of what is submitted; and (b) countries and institutions can decide what information to submit, subject to agreed standards and protocols, but avoids the contentious debate over what constitutes REDD+ finance. Even if the information hub is designed to be also voluntary, the fact that it is under the UNFCCC cloaks all the information within it with some formal or official character, which could be problematic for some countries.

Other countries and stakeholders suggest either continuing the current arrangement, with the VRD Team (FAO and UNEP-WCMC working with UN-REDD) continuing to host the website, or to transfer the function to an external institution (either an NGO, private firm or academic institution) with a final mandate provided by the REDD+ Partnership. However, some voiced concern that these options,

outside something such as the REDD+ Partnership, may not have full ownership by countries required to submit information and therefore risk data collection problems. If one of these options are taken, some suggested there could be an agreement for the VRD link to be accessed through the UNFCCC REDD+ Web platform.

4.3. Lesson Learned from the Partnership

Many lessons were learned from the experience of the Partnership. These lessons can help guide future efforts, to improve on the Partnership or to establish similar platforms, whether again for forests or for land use or even other equally challenging and complex issues.

Foremost among these lessons is the importance of transparency and inclusiveness in organizing a multilateral, multi-stakeholder partnership. In these areas, the Partnership received high marks from Partners and Observers alike and it is probably a key reason why it became a credible, albeit informal, space for discussing and exploring issues related to the UNFCCC negotiations.

The REDD+ Partnership has also generated lessons on how to enable and support a platform for information and knowledge exchange. Partners and Observers communicated the following good practices:

- Varying meeting venues, including meetings back-to-back with others (e.g. with the UNFCCC COP, for convenience), but also considering venues that may be less distracting and encourages participation of different people;
- Valuing the sharing of practical “real world” experiences, not just theory, and including the participation of practitioners and external experts, not just negotiators and focal points;
- Commissioning reports that are less theoretical and more practical; and keeping in mind that most with related authorities do not have time to read long reports and few take action on them.

From an organizational point of view, Parties have pointed to problems related with the overall governance of the Partnership and the informal procedural rules it has followed. Some observed that these rules were unclear or incomplete; others pointed to more specific concerns, such as:

- The rules did not sufficiently empower the co-Chairs to take decisions, and instead forced them to seek consensus on too many details (e.g. meeting agendas, terms of reference for consultants, etc.), hindering the effectiveness of the position through discouraging any risk-taking and creating an administrative burden, i.e. much of the co-Chairs’ time and resources went into finding consensus on marginal issues instead of focusing on Partnership activities. This also resulted in delays in getting materials out in time to make meetings and activities of the Partnership more effective;
- These technical rules on consensus were sometimes also invoked to prevent quick decisions and progress on issues, despite there being broad agreement among parties; some felt this limited what the Partnership could achieve;

- Many Partners commented that the six month tenure of the co-Chairs made longer term planning difficult—and also wasted meeting time to choose new co-Chairs at a high frequency; however, some thought the rotation structure allowed for more Partners to share the burden (as serving as co-Chair was a significant human resource expense) and be more strongly involved in the Partnership process.

Finally, a lesson learned from the REDD+ Partnership experience is that a Partnership can only be as valuable and strong as the shared cooperation and will of the Partners themselves. The Partnership, at times, illustrated how, for example, a lack of shared understanding, or interpretation, of the objectives (despite their enshrinement in founding documents) affected the Partnership. Contrary interpretations, and therefore expectations, by some Partners with regard to what the Partnership could achieve resulted, in some instances, to the politicizing of the Partnership. This in turn led to inefficiencies as those political issues needed to be resolved before being able to move forward with Partnership business.

4.4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The REDD+ Partnership has been a modest success, achieving a number of its objectives. As an interim platform for REDD+, it has assisted in the UNFCCC negotiations up to the Warsaw Framework for REDD+. It has achieved knowledge-sharing and the VRD has been a good product (despite its cost). And certainly from a process point of view, the REDD+ Partnership provided examples of best practices in inclusiveness and participation by Partners and stakeholders. It is harder to say whether scaling up REDD+ actions and finance was achieved.

The following are our recommendations, regardless of the decision taken by Partners on whether to continue the Partnership:

- Activities (whether or not within the Partnership) in the coming years should focus on narrowing the gap between theory (e.g. COP decisions) and actual practice; giving particular consideration on how to continue knowledge sharing on REDD+ implementation, with particular focus on south-south and regional exchanges. While the Partnership scored well on providing an impact to international processes, now is the time to have a stronger impact on national processes.
- Alternative platforms for informal spaces to assist in future UNFCCC negotiations, if needed again, should be explored.
- With regard to governance issues, and in the event that the Partnership is continued, or a similar platform is established in the future:
 - Have a shared understanding of objectives, i.e. not just agreeing on paper, but ensuring interpretations of such goals are aligned;
 - Modify the informal procedural rules it has followed, for example by lengthening the term of the co-Chairs (e.g. to one-year) and empowering them to take more decisions without having to reach consensus on minor details of managing the Partnership and to avoid procedural delays;
 - Continue the practice of inclusiveness and participation of Partners and stakeholders;

- Continue the practice of balanced decisionmaking between developed and developing countries.
- The VRD should be continued, subject to further discussions on a suitable host organization, agreed objectives for the future, a reasonable estimate of costs, and means to further address the technical challenges that have been identified.

ANNEX: Early History of Forests and Climate Change and Timeline of Events

Early history of international cooperation on forests and on climate change

The history of the REDD+ Partnership should be understood not only in the context of the evolution of REDD+ in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) but the evolution generally of international cooperation to reduce tropical deforestation, from the controversial Tropical Forestry Action Plan in the 1980s, the failure to agree on a forest treaty in the 1990s, to more recent forest initiatives in enforcement and sustainable management

As early as the 1980s, provision of compensation/payments for avoiding tropical deforestation, were raised and discussed. This was brought up in the 1992 Earth Summit, and became a topic of discussion in the Kyoto Protocol negotiations. The concept has also been raised in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF), and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

While international cooperation on forests did not result in international agreements or other legally binding instruments, the different initiatives enumerated above became important forums for sharing information and ideas. There was agreement by governments, non-governments and other actors on the importance of curbing tropical deforestation, but there was debate on the approaches that could be undertaken to achieve it. In particular, developing countries were concerned of the burden forest conservation would impose on economic development, and the uncertainty as to the economic and other benefits it would bring.

It is in the context of this policy vacuum that the emergence of climate change as a global environmental and development issue provided an opening to advance and make progress on international cooperation on tropical deforestation. Scientists have always acknowledged the link between climate change and deforestation. Policy-makers too recognize the importance of forests and highlighted its role in the UNFCCC, adopted in 1992. As discussed in the following section, however, it still took many years for Parties to the UNFCCC to consider how best to integrate forests into climate change agreements.

Both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol acknowledged the importance of tropical forests in GHG mitigation and adaptation, and there are provisions in the UNFCCC that directly apply to forests. For example, under the convention, both developed and developing country governments are mandated to promote, along with sustainable development, conserving and enhancing greenhouse-gas sinks and reservoirs, including biomass and forests, and to cooperate on this endeavor.

The Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change, adopted in 1997, advanced the forest agenda in the UNFCCC. With respect to forests in developed countries (Annex 1 Parties), the Protocol provided the legal framework for mitigation in the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. These LULUCF provisions allowed Annex I Parties to credit to their Quantified Emissions Limitation and Reduction Objectives (QUELROS) what they were/are doing in the LULUCF sector. Since developing countries did not have economy-wide or any type of legally binding mitigation targets under the Kyoto Protocol, the LULUCF provisions of the Protocol did not apply to tropical forests in developing countries.

The Kyoto Protocol did provide an opening for tropical forests through the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). Under the CDM, developed countries were allowed to meet their QUELROS by enabling and supporting “offset projects” in developing countries. In particular, carbon sequestration

activities, such as afforestation and reforestation activities, were allowed under the CDM. But for various reasons, activities related to forest conservation, i.e. avoiding or reducing deforestation and forest degradation, were excluded by CDM.

The exclusion of avoided deforestation and forest degradation in the Kyoto Protocol, and specifically in the CDM, was a topic of robust debate by governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Before, during, and after the Conference of Parties in Kyoto in 1997, Parties could not agree on an approach to this issue. Those opposing inclusion were concerned about issues related to environmental integrity, foremost of which was the uncertainty of permanence of carbon in forest and a high risk of leakage. At that time, there was an absence of appropriate methodologies to measure emission reductions from deforestation. There was also political opposition to generating offsets from avoided deforestation due to concerns that it would weaken the emission reduction targets of developed countries. For others, however, the CDM's exclusion of avoided deforestation was seen as a missed opportunity to provide incentives to and motivate countries with large forested areas, and high deforestation risk, to curb this trend.

It was not until 2005, that forests were brought back onto the agenda, and where the historical context covered in Section 2.1 begins.

Timeline of events relevant to the REDD+ Partnership

Year	Relevant REDD+ events
2005	December: At COP-11 (Montreal), the Coalition for Rainforest Nations introduces a proposal to put forests on the UNFCCC agenda
2007	December: At COP-13 (Bali), REDD+ is including in the Bali Action Plan
2009	April: The Prince of Wales holds a meeting with heads of state to discuss emergency finance for REDD+, catalyzing the Informal Working Group on Interim Finance for REDD+ (IWG-IFR) May to September: The IWG-IFR meets three times to discuss REDD+ financing, releasing a report in October, suggesting the utility of an interim Partnership December: COP-15 (Copenhagen) results in the Copenhagen Accord, but not a new legally binding agreement on climate change as many had hoped. However, the Accord recognizes the importance of forests and REDD+, and a decision on Methodological Guidance for REDD+ is adopted (4/CP.15)
2010	March: International Conference on the Major Forest Basins (Paris) is held, where governments and stakeholders call for the establishment of an interim REDD+ partnership. May: Oslo Climate and Forest Conference brings together heads of state, ministers and senior officials of 55 countries; REDD+ Partnership launched October: The Aichi-Nagoya Ministerial meeting of the REDD+ Partnership is held. Dec: COP-16 (Cancun): Key REDD+ decision (1/CP.16 Section III c, often called the "Cancun REDD+ Decision") defines REDD+ framework including eligible activities, a phased approach (leading to results-based actions), and REDD+ 'safeguards'
2011	Dec: COP-17 (Durban): Decision adopted on forest reference emission levels and/or forest reference levels and safeguard information systems (12/CP.17), and an overall framework for results-based REDD+ finance (2/CP.17 Section II c)
2012	Dec: REDD+ Partnership High-level event (Doha)

2013	COP-19 (Warsaw): The “Warsaw Framework” comprised of 7 decisions on REDD+, including: Methodological guidance on: - Modalities for National Forest Monitoring Systems; - Timing and frequency of the provision of information on safeguards; - Addressing drivers of deforestation and forest degradation; - Measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) of emission reductions; - Technical assessment of forest reference emission levels/forest reference levels; Coordination of support for REDD+ activities, including institutional arrangements; and Modalities for results-based finance for REDD+
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