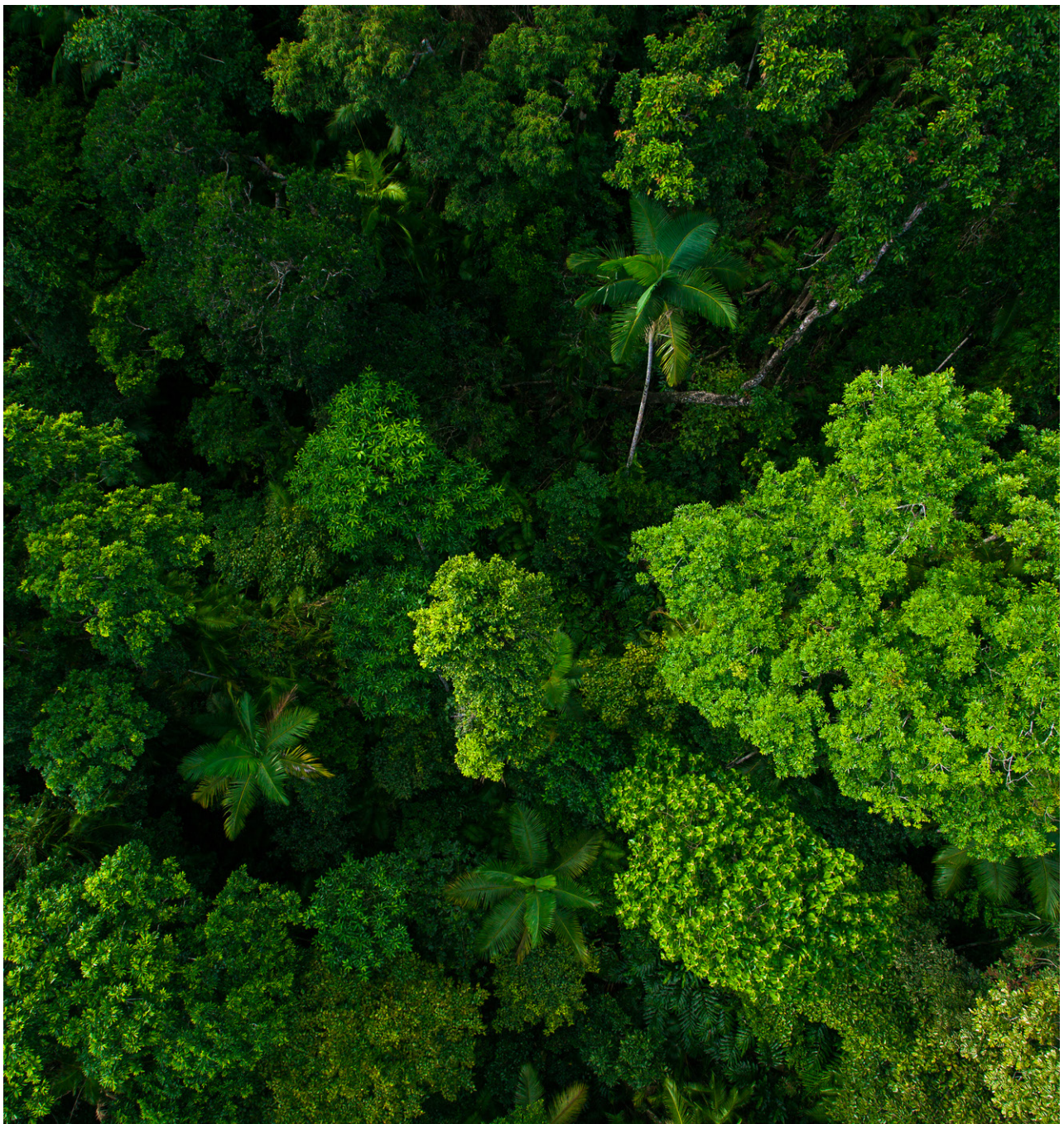


Building reputation for Jurisdictional REDD+

An evidence-led strategy
for advocates

SEPTEMBER 2022



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1 Introduction

‘Complex but crucial’ is an accurate way of describing jurisdictional REDD+ (JREDD+), a comprehensive and inclusive approach to forest conservation scaled-up to cover an entire jurisdiction. It appears in a [paper](#) that lays out the options for private sector involvement in these types of forest and climate strategies, and gets to the heart of the why it is taking so long to turn JREDD+ from concept to reality.

REDD+ stands for ‘Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation’ and the “+” refers to the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks, encompassing all activities aimed at protecting and restoring forests from deforestation. REDD+ has been on the climate scene, in some shape or form, for nearly 30 years.

[Jurisdictional programmes](#) have emerged in the last 10 years as a way of tackling some of the challenges associated with earlier REDD+ projects – such as threats to Indigenous peoples’ rights, and ‘leakage’ where the threatened deforestation simply occurs in another location nearby.

The characteristics of these jurisdictional projects are that they occur on a much larger scale than earlier REDD+ projects, such as a state, province or even nation.

This requires government involvement, which is essential given that halting and reversing deforestation usually requires actions that only governments can perform.

JREDD+ associated standards are set up to include safeguards to ensure that Indigenous peoples and local communities are engaged from the beginning to avoid any infringement of Indigenous rights.

Today, demand for [JREDD+ programmes](#) is growing globally as an increasing number of companies seek high-quality emissions reductions and voluntary carbon credits.

And initiatives like the [LEAF Coalition](#), which was set up in 2021, were designed to be the 'missing link' to finance large-scale forest protection strategies, from a coalition of the willing in the public and private sector who commit to buying the highest quality credits.

All of this means that JREDD+ is attracting interest and scrutiny from many newcomers to the topic – whether that's public and private sector groups looking to meet their net zero targets or the world's media.

It is important then for many different stakeholder groups to understand how people view this vastly complex programme – whether it's governments responsible for implementing policies in their own jurisdictions, private sector organisations looking to invest, academics and civil society groups looking to implement and research such approaches, and most important of all, the people who live in the landscapes affected by them.

This research was designed to help those who are involved in jurisdictional REDD+ – to a broad range of practitioners, implementers, policymakers and communicators.

It uses tracking software to reveal how the nature of REDD+'s reputation has evolved over time, and how the emerging concept of jurisdictional REDD+ is beginning to play out in the media and online conversations. It provides an overview of public sentiment towards these projects – including what forms that reputation and how it can be influenced.

While this research highlights where there are areas of concern and confusion, and offers recommendations for how to address these, ultimately it provides us with a ray of hope that overall, most people have a positive sentiment towards these 'complex but crucial' approaches to protecting the world's forests that are so critical to people, to nature and our planet.



This is a critical time for the reputation of JREDD+

Reputation matters.

It is the intangible asset that supports any organisation or cause in more effectively reaching its goal. Gaining consensus, opening doors, removing barriers and hastening decision making.

When it comes to forest protection, the UN-programme REDD+ has faced many hurdles.

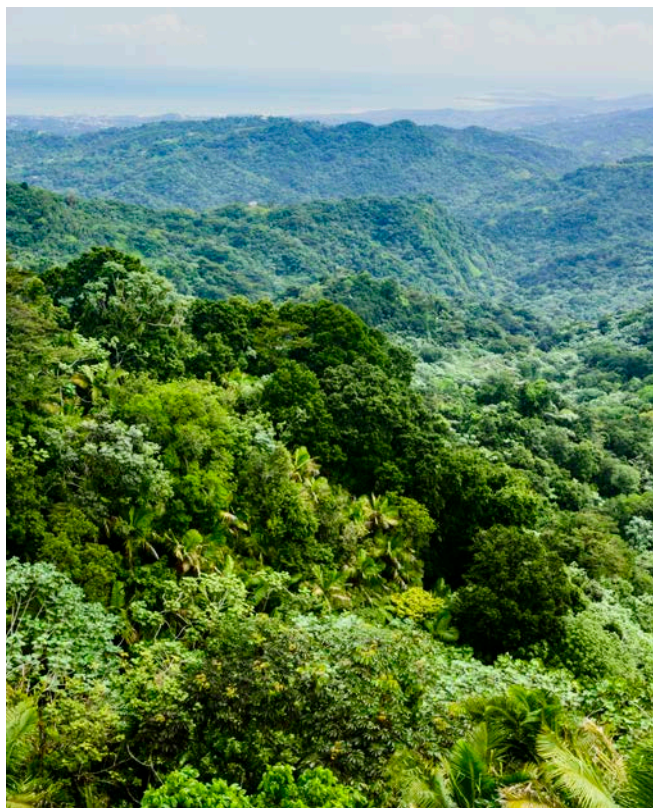
As the focus is now on scaling forest protection programmes, how perceptions are influenced over the development of JREDD+, will substantially affect future success and level of positive impact achieved.

By examining the current reputation profile of REDD+, we wish to better understand how REDD+ solutions are seen and talked about by all stakeholders and learn from its successes and drawbacks to ensure strong support as JREDD+ approaches are developing and getting increased scrutiny.

Through this increased understanding, advocates can better support the next phase of their mission to increase uptake of REDD+ and JREDD+ projects and programmes.



Why is JREDD+ reputation at a critical stage?



JREDD+ is increasingly stepping into the spotlight, gaining mainstream attention and scrutiny.

It is also being introduced to new audiences.

After REDD+ being the preserve of specialists and experts for so many years, advocates are needing to educate and inform non-specialist audiences on this new development with a jurisdictional approach (media, politicians, business leaders, members of the public etc).

Building understanding of the complexities and realities of what it means to implement JREDD+ projects in real-world situations.

It is critical that this 'understanding' increases at the same rate as 'awareness'.

Also, as REDD+ becomes higher profile, there is an opportunity to use these insights to build a strong, distinct reputation for JREDD+.

Highlighting how it operates to meet the concerns of stakeholders, especially in improving effectiveness and good governance by adopting a 'bigger picture' approach.

Projecting and protecting the positive reputation of JREDD+

To advocates of REDD+, the increased media scrutiny over the last 2 years may make it feel like negative reputation issues are accelerating. However, **the overall balance of sentiment and emotion associated with REDD+ remains steady and positive.**

It is human nature to feel losses more than gains when it comes to the reputation of a cause we care passionately about. A bad media headline or high-profile problem with a REDD+ project may feel like it tarnishes the reputation of the whole cause.

However, the truth is that the significant majority of profile and commentary around REDD+ is positive.

This positive sentiment comes from expressions of hope that REDD+ can make a significant contribution to meeting our global and environmental challenges (as well as immediate impact it has on communities). Audiences are appreciative of the ambition, intent and successes that REDD+ projects demonstrate.

Learning how to better harness this positive sentiment for JREDD+ communication is key to effective storytelling and projecting a stronger reputation.

It also important that these hard-won gains are protected. That new audiences are made aware of such benefits and that criticism stemming from past and future issues and incidents doesn't stand unchallenged.



Scrutiny and criticism is an opportunity to educate

It would be unrealistic to expect there to be no negative commentary, criticism or scrutiny of JREDD+ as its profile and significance increases.

This is the nature of any environmental issue, complex political topic or corporate environmental initiative.

In fact, **this rising level of commentary provides an opportunity for advocates.** Using the increasing spotlight to help raise profile, develop a clearer understanding and explain the context and complexities of JREDD+.

However, this will require a more confident, louder voice for advocates. For supporters of JREDD+ there is no choice but to engage and explain if they want JREDD+ to achieve its full potential.

Helping a wide-range of audiences to understand the nature of the solutions and the real-life challenges and issues that will occur when REDD+ is applied to specific projects, communities and jurisdictions.

The importance of clear and effective communication has never been so great.



2 Methodology

This research has been carried out using tracking software designed by Sensu Insight in partnership with University of Salford to extract meaning from large volumes of digital content and conversation

The method and tool has been refined over a number of years (in commercial use since 2012), delivering insight for leading organisations from a wide variety of sectors across the world.

It captures digital content and conversation for specified terms (in this case REDD+) within targeted topics of online content and conversation.

It gathers this content and conversation from any publicly available source (i.e. not content that is private or password protected) in order to evidence and track reputation of the subject.

This study has analysed global topics (i.e. the search has not been limited to a specific territory) looking at the topics of REDD+, climate change, deforestation, carbon credits (also including carbon markets and carbon offsets) and natural climate solutions.

The search works retrospectively and has tracked back to January 2012.

The data included in this report runs up to and includes December 2021 (ten years profile in total).

It also allowed us to draw out profile for JREDD+, looking at how focus on this theme is growing and evolving within the wider topic.

The data generated by these searches has been analysed using a series of dictionaries to reveal how the nature of REDD+'s profile has evolved over time.

These allow analysis of the association of REDD+ with the following set of dictionaries: environmental themes, a glossary of specific terms related to REDD+, specific influencers, countries, businesses and industries.

Dictionaries were also created to track association with specific attributes related to REDD+'s implementation. These include governance, business impact, social impact, success and effectiveness.

Certain sources of content were tracked separately to allow this profile to be analysed in isolation.

This included both media and non-media new sources – the latter group including influential NGOs, blogs, forums, academic institutions, professional organisations etc.

Each mention of REDD+ used in this analysis has been weighted to account for the likely audience impact (e.g. by prominence), giving a more accurate impression of how REDD+ is actually seen by stakeholders.

This data will also act as a benchmark moving forward. A new way to track and report the impact of advocacy for REDD+ and individual schemes.

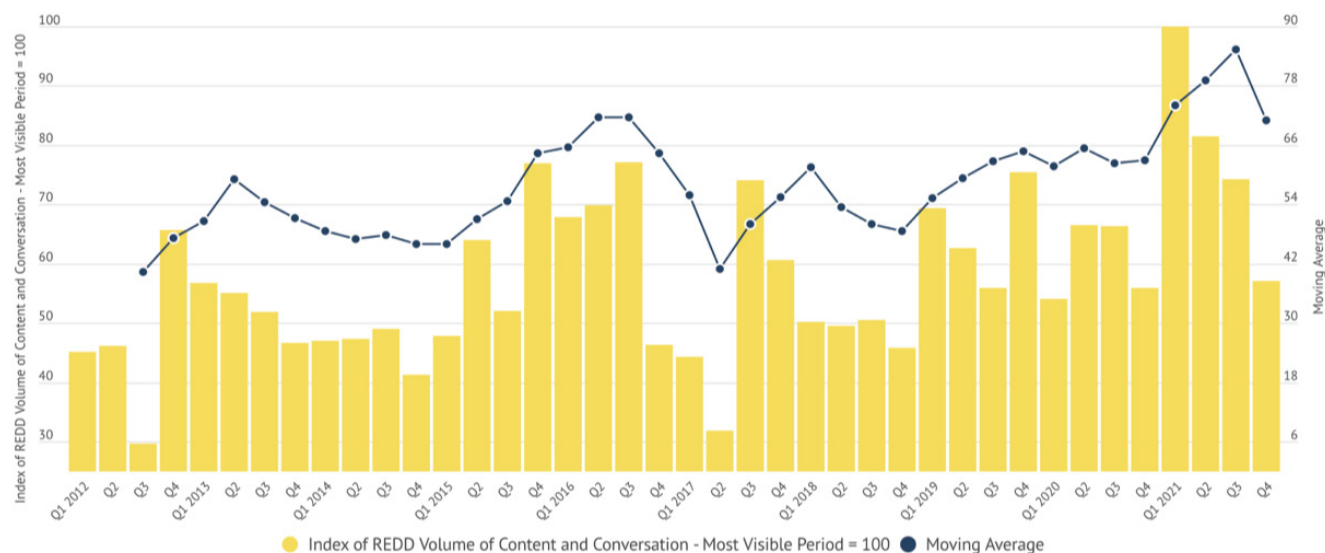


3 The challenges facing JREDD+ advocates

In the last 10 years, REDD+ has gone from being a niche topic debated by experts to mainstream news.

Profile has grown steadily since 2012, rising to its highest point in 2021. Until recently, this profile ebbed and flowed in line with major international agreements and summits. Visibility came from content and conversation shared between expert stakeholders. However, in 2021, REDD+ made a significant shift into the spotlight, with an increase in profile coming from mainstream influencers and media (a 150% increase in media profile year-on-year). This shift into the mainstream brings with it increased fame and the potential to have influence. It also poses new communications challenges, for both REDD+ and those seeking to create awareness and understanding of JREDD+.

REDD+ historical volumes of content and conversation index scores: 100 = highest quarter





Communicating with new audiences and media

As the audience for JREDD+ expands, its profile needs to be carefully nurtured to build an accurate and fair understanding of the jurisdictional approach and what it can achieve.

Mainstream media are becoming a much more vocal influencer for REDD+ despite the fact that many journalists will still be in a learning phase on the many complexities concerning REDD+, as well as JREDD+, and the way in which schemes operate.

There has been a **150% increase in profile from mainstream media** (as well as 40% increase in profile coming from NGO sources). Three regions dominate these global sources of news, with North America, Northern Europe and South America representing over two-thirds (68%) of news media profile.

As the balance of influence shifts between media and the (historically dominant) REDD+ community, so does the tone of the profile.

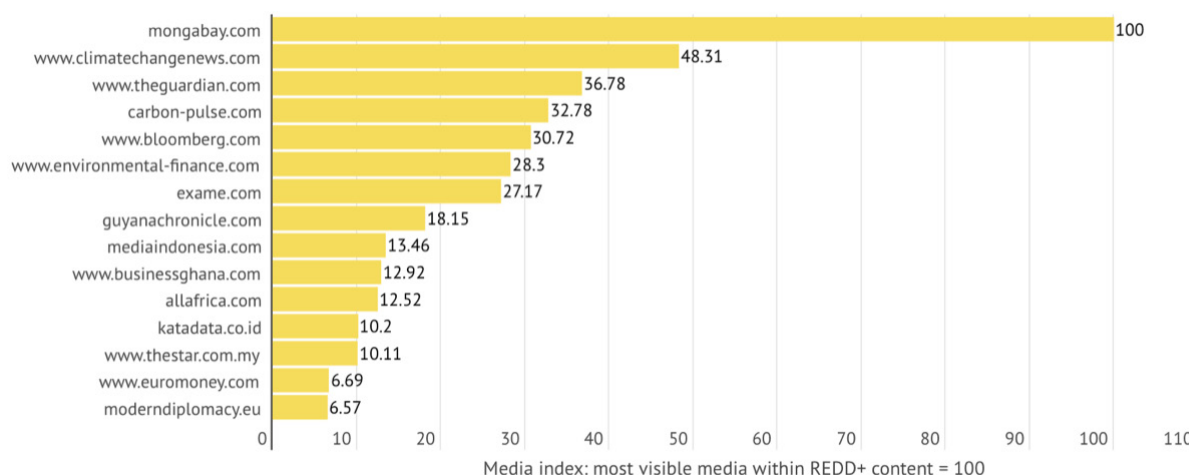
Positive sentiment drops within REDD+ profile coming from news sources. In 2021, the difference was 68% positive / 32% negative in all content and conversation to 57% positive / 43% negative, in media profile alone.

The sentiment of media-only news profile is also more volatile, with positive sentiment dropping as low as 32% in some months or rising as high as 82% in others.

Negative emotional associations are also heightened in media coverage. Within media profile these associations rise significantly – anger rises to 25% of emotional association (from 10% in all content and conversation) and hurt to 9% (from 3%).

It is worthy of note however, that even in media sources, happiness (expressions of delight and positivity) remains at 49%, indicating that there is still a significant emphasis on positive rather than negative.

REDD+ profile in 2020 / 2021: media news sources



Global influence of REDD+ news sources by region



Responding to increased criticism and scrutiny

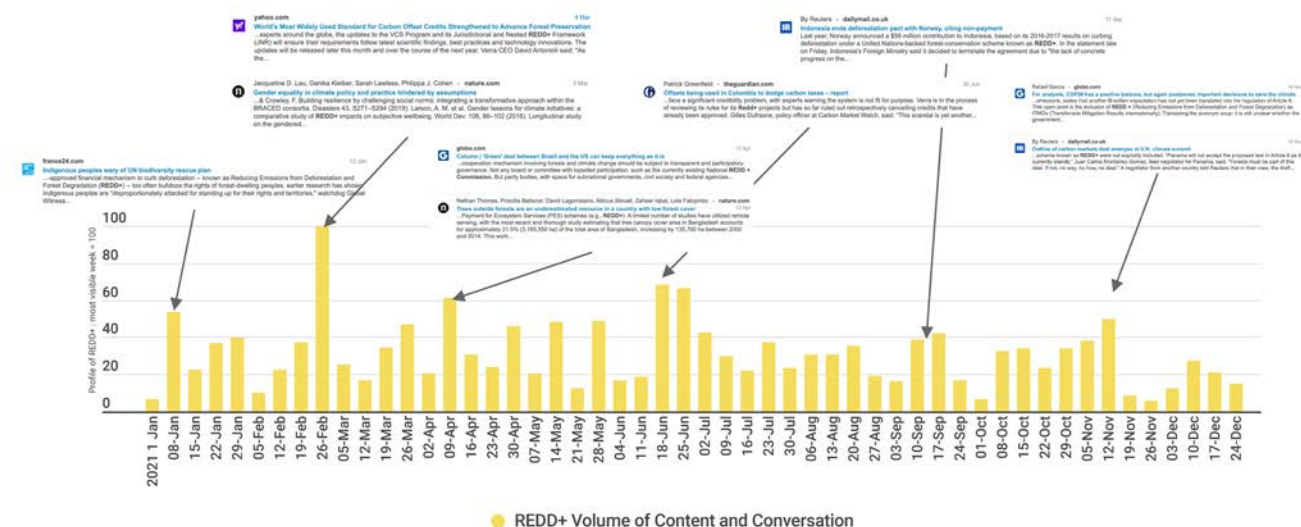
As the visibility of JREDD+ grows with new audiences (especially from media news sources) its reputation is being held up to scrutiny on a larger stage and by stakeholders from different backgrounds, levels of expertise and points of view. We can see in the data that the profile of REDD+ is evolving as this attention grows.

Looking at periods of highest profile across the last two years, spikes occur in weeks when there are one or two high profile events or issues that attract media coverage, comment and wider discussion amongst stakeholders.

These have come from a range of events, including controversies (such as accusations that [Indonesia is claiming money from the Green Climate Fund despite deforestation rising](#)), studies on [the impact of REDD+ that preceded COP26](#) and the Earth Day announcement from [LEAF of \\$1 billion pledged to halt deforestation in developing countries](#) through JREDD+.

These developments, especially in 2021, have led to a **rise in news sources reporting on REDD+ related events and issues**. These come from both traditional news sources as well as specialist organisations (such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth) who also often act as sources of news for people (including other influencers and primary media) on environmental matters.

REDD+ profile in 2021



Businesswire.com: [World's Most Widely Used Standard for Carbon Offset Credits Strengthened to Advance Forest Preservation and Restoration](#)

DailyMail.co.uk: [Indonesia ends deforestation pact with Norway, citing non-payment](#)

DailyMail.co.uk: [Outline of carbon markets deal emerges at U.N. climate summit](#)

France24.com: [Indigenous peoples wary of UN biodiversity rescue plan](#)

Globo.com: ['Green' deal between Brazil and the US can keep everything as it is](#)

Globo.com: [COP26 has a positive balance, but postpones important decisions to save the climate to 2022](#)

Guardian.com: [Offsets being used in Colombia to dodge carbon taxes - report](#)

Nature.com: [Gender equality in climate policy and practice hindered by assumptions](#)

Nature.com: [Trees outside forests are an underestimated resource in a country with low forest cover](#)

Providing proof of effectiveness and good governance

The additional scrutiny from media will bring even greater importance to protecting perceptions around effectiveness and good governance.

These attributes are seeing the biggest increase in attention as media profile for REDD+ grows.

Media are also, currently, the primary source of profile that undermines these perceptions, reporting on examples of (perceived or real) corruption, failures and ineffectiveness.

There is a need to robustly project and protect JREDD+'s reputation for these attributes in particular, effectiveness and good governance.

Often media reports will cite 'suspicions' or 'claims' from experts and observers in negative news stories.

Media are relying on these critical experts to shine a light on a subject area where they themselves may not hold a great deal of knowledge.

Therefore, **it is crucial to build relationships and profile for JREDD+ advocates** (who can challenge, provide evidence, place problems into their wider context) so that media can more easily give a right to reply and present a fair, balanced view.

Making the business case for REDD+

One area that is lacking from the attributes associated with REDD+ is its positive business impact.

There is a need for clearer storytelling and a higher profile for how JREDD+ enables business to make a positive contribution to improving our environment and people's lives.

Businesses need to trust that JREDD+ is a respected, effective and unproblematic means by which to improve their environmental impact.

REDD+'s association with industry sectors is currently strongest with aviation, food production/farming, energy companies and mining.

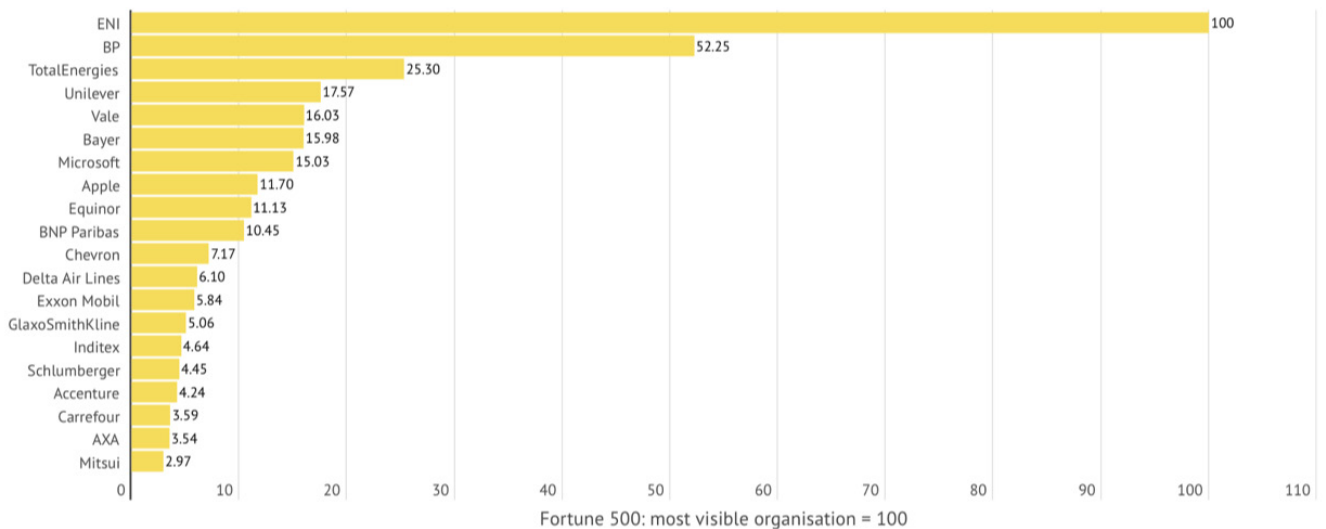
In terms of specific companies (we looked at all Fortune 500 companies) energy companies dominate the association, with ENI, BP and TotalEnergies amongst the most visible.

The types of companies most associated with REDD+ are often those most in need of utilising its benefits.

However, the nature of these organisations, and the sectors in which they operate, does create reputation issues for REDD+. Because these sectors attract greater suspicion and scepticism from commentators, some of this negative profile becomes attached to REDD+ by association.

Fortune 500

Index: 100 = most visible organisations in REDD+ profile



Showing how REDD+ means more than just carbon credits

REDD+ gains significant profile within content and conversation for carbon credits. However, this topic is often associated with negative connotations. For example, accusations of greenwashing to mask environmentally damaging business practices, undermining perceptions of effectiveness and governance.

While profile for carbon credits is by no means wholly negative, **it is important to make it clearly understood how REDD+ and particular JREDD+ in this case, is a distinct and different proposition**, so that the underlying action to protect and restore tropical forests is distinguished from the use of JREDD+ credits to make corporate climate claims.

REDD+ and JREDD+ can be positioned as providing the means for governments or industry to pool their resources in ways that can deliver tangible change on a large scale. Overcoming the issues with politics and on the ground practical challenges, to create schemes to which money can be channelled to do most good.

While such an approach is not the sole solution, it is part of the wide-ranging, extensive changes to society that will all be necessary in order to limit the effects of climate change.





4 The opportunities for building reputation

Advocates for REDD+ and JREDD+ can be reassured that there are plenty of positives to work with.

By tracking spikes in profile, sentiment and emotion, it is possible to draw out the aspects of REDD+ that have most impact on audiences and therefore how it is perceived. These highlight the areas where reputation is most likely to be enhanced.

They should become the central pillars of communication for both the projection and protection of reputation for JREDD+. Weaving these positive associations into the emerging 'brand' of JREDD+, to ensure it captures the attention and imagination of its stakeholders. These pillars are set out below.

1. Consistent positive sentiment and emotion

The overall profile of REDD+ has a consistent balance between negative and positive sentiment. Throughout the full timeframe of this research, REDD+ has maintained a high share of positive sentiment. Always at least double that of any negative profile.

This compares favourably to the net sentiment of other topics and issues. REDD+'s positivity is second only to that of natural climate solutions of the four wider topics analysed (climate change, deforestation, natural climate solutions, carbon credits).

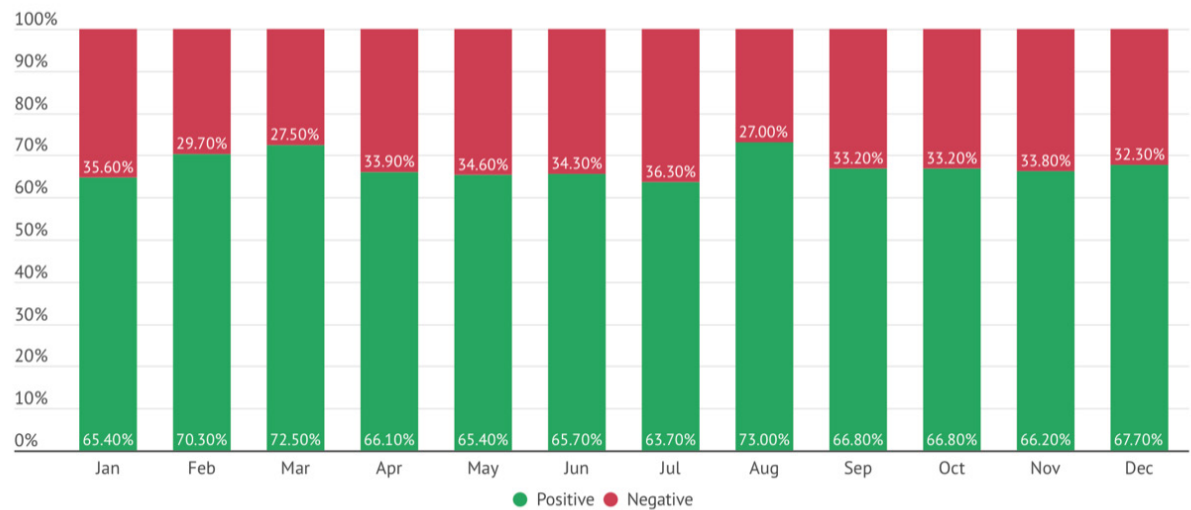
Similarly, looking at emotional associations with REDD+, 'happiness' (expressions of gratitude and delight) are the most visible emotion (52% of all emotional association in 2021).

This stems from positive profile around projects and the potential of REDD+ to make a positive impact on our climate.

Of negative emotion, the highest association is with fear (33% - associated with concerns about the future – typically high for environmental topics) and anger (10% - expressions of frustration at lack of change or failures).

The most toxic emotional associations are at a low level – hurt 3% (indicating harm being caused) and uncaring 1% (indicating contemptuous or even criminal association).

REDD+ sentiment trend: positive and negative 2021



2. Human impact of JREDD+ is a significant reputation asset

While the core aims of JREDD+ may be focused on emissions and ending deforestation, it is **the human element that is often the subject of people's focus and engagement.**

Its ability to deliver tangible and significant improvements to the lives of local communities provides compelling human interest stories.

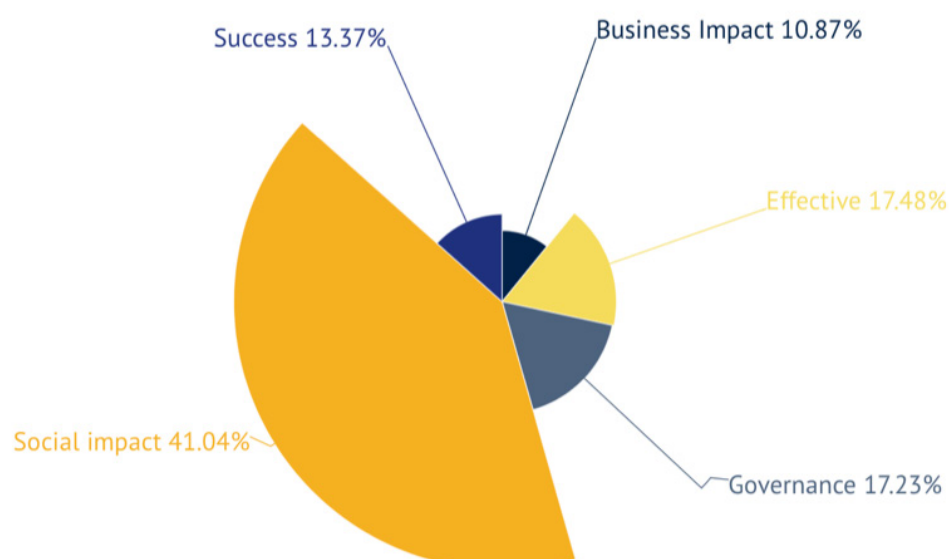
Social impact was the most visible of the range of attributes we analysed within profile for REDD+.

Words and phrases like 'community', 'gender equality', 'livelihood', 'Indigenous people' feature prominently in the language associated with REDD+.

These elements are essential to the jurisdictional approach as it builds around inclusiveness and participation, characteristics to emphasize and underline when promoting a JREDD+ approach.

While matters relating to finance and climate science can be hard to relate to or empathise with, the ability to change the lives of people and communities in need (especially with programmes in countries that may not have good human rights records) gives JREDD+ projects a compelling narrative with potential to reach wider audiences.

REDD+ association with reputation attributes



REDD+ reputation attributes: language associated (positive and negative)



3. Amplifying positive news and achievements

Throughout the profile of REDD+ are many positive achievements and milestones that can be amplified to a wider audience.

In 2021, the following events triggered strong positive profile for REDD+ as measured by both their visibility and strength of association with positive sentiment and / or emotion.

● January 2021:

Work within the Brazilian state of Pará, using a jurisdictional approach to overcome local land issues using a high-level government approach.

● April 2021:

Announcement of the \$1bn LEAF coalition with governments and companies working together to save tropical forests, support Indigenous communities and meet climate goals.

● July 2021:

Gabon becoming the first African country to receive results-based payments for reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Many of these were reported in expert, specialist media rather than breaking through into the mainstream.

Increased profile and interest in JREDD+ provides the opportunity for similar initiatives to be communicated to a wider audience in the future.

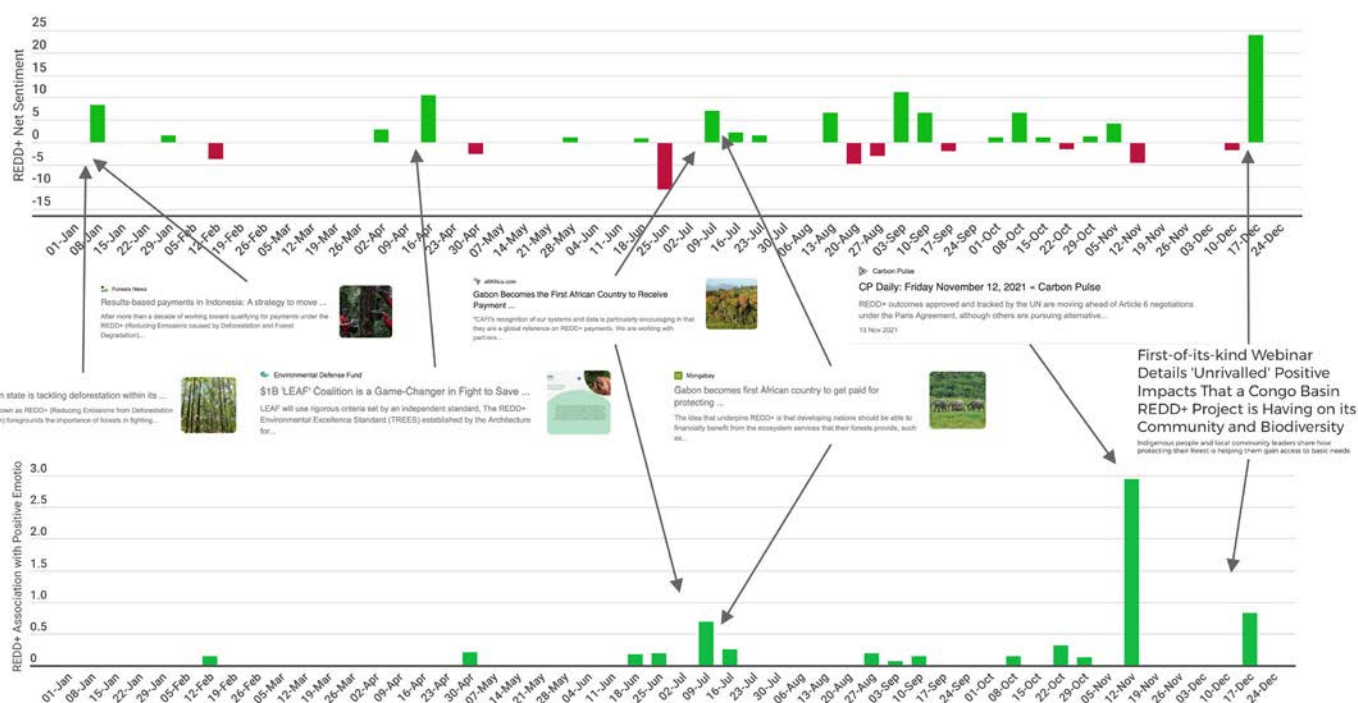
● November 2021:

Progress made within COP26 negotiations.

● December 2021:

A joint webinar held by leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo Government, Indigenous people, local communities and conservation groups to highlight the progress and impact of the REDD+ strategy.

REDD+ media spikes 2021: positive sentiment and emotion



- <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/70481/how-one-brazilian-state-is-tackling-deforestation-within-its-borders?fnl=en>
- <https://forestsnews.cifor.org/70458/results-based-payments-in-indonesia-a-strategy-to-move-redd-forward?fnl=en>
- <https://www.edf.org/media/1b-leaf-coalition-game-changer-fight-save-tropical-forests-support-indigenous-communities-and>
- <https://allafrica.com/stories/202107130089.html>
- <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/07/gabon-becomes-first-african-country-to-get-paid-for-protecting-its-forests/>
- <https://carbon-pulse.com/144024/>
- <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/first-of-its-kind-webinar-details-unrivalled-positive-impacts-that-a-congo-basin-redd-project-is-having-on-its-community-and-biodiversity-301446726.html>



5 Building trust and confidence

Understanding how reputations are formed provides a roadmap for building a stronger profile, trust and confidence among target audiences.

This can help as REDD+ advocates plan how to engage with new audiences and to build a distinct profile for JREDD+ as an effective way to deliver a global climate action. When developing a strategy to build positive reputation, consider the following:

1. Make reputation a facilitator not a blockage
2. Reputational is subjective and depends on audience priorities
3. Reputation is formed by a wide range of factors – each need development and nurturing
4. Understand and prioritise the biggest drivers of reputation

1. Make reputation a facilitator not a blockage

A good reputation can have a transformative effect – the goodwill, support and momentum it generates can act as an invisible hand guiding you towards your goal.

Conversely, a poor reputation makes achieving an objective almost impossible. Placing barriers in your way whenever you need co-operation or consensus.

Understanding reputation, so that it can be better managed and influenced, is therefore crucial to any organisation seeking to achieve its goal.

This requires both a proactive effort to project a positive reputation, as well as a quick response when that reputation comes under attack.



2. Reputational is subjective and depends on audience priorities



Reputation can be defined as the combined collection of beliefs and perceptions held about the subject by all of its stakeholders.

Because of this nature, reputation isn't factual or scientific. It can be inaccurate, subjective, emotional, but is nonetheless important and influential on successful outcomes.

Therefore, **don't let misleading representations of JREDD+ go unchallenged.** No matter how ill-informed, high-profile issues or media concerns may become the perceived reality.

The role of an advocate is to be an ambassador for JREDD+ helping educate and inform.

Equally, however, it is important to acknowledge where things aren't perfect and to help place such flaws into context or weigh them against the benefits delivered.

Finally, realise that each audience group will have competing concerns and priorities that need to be treated with respect and properly acknowledged.

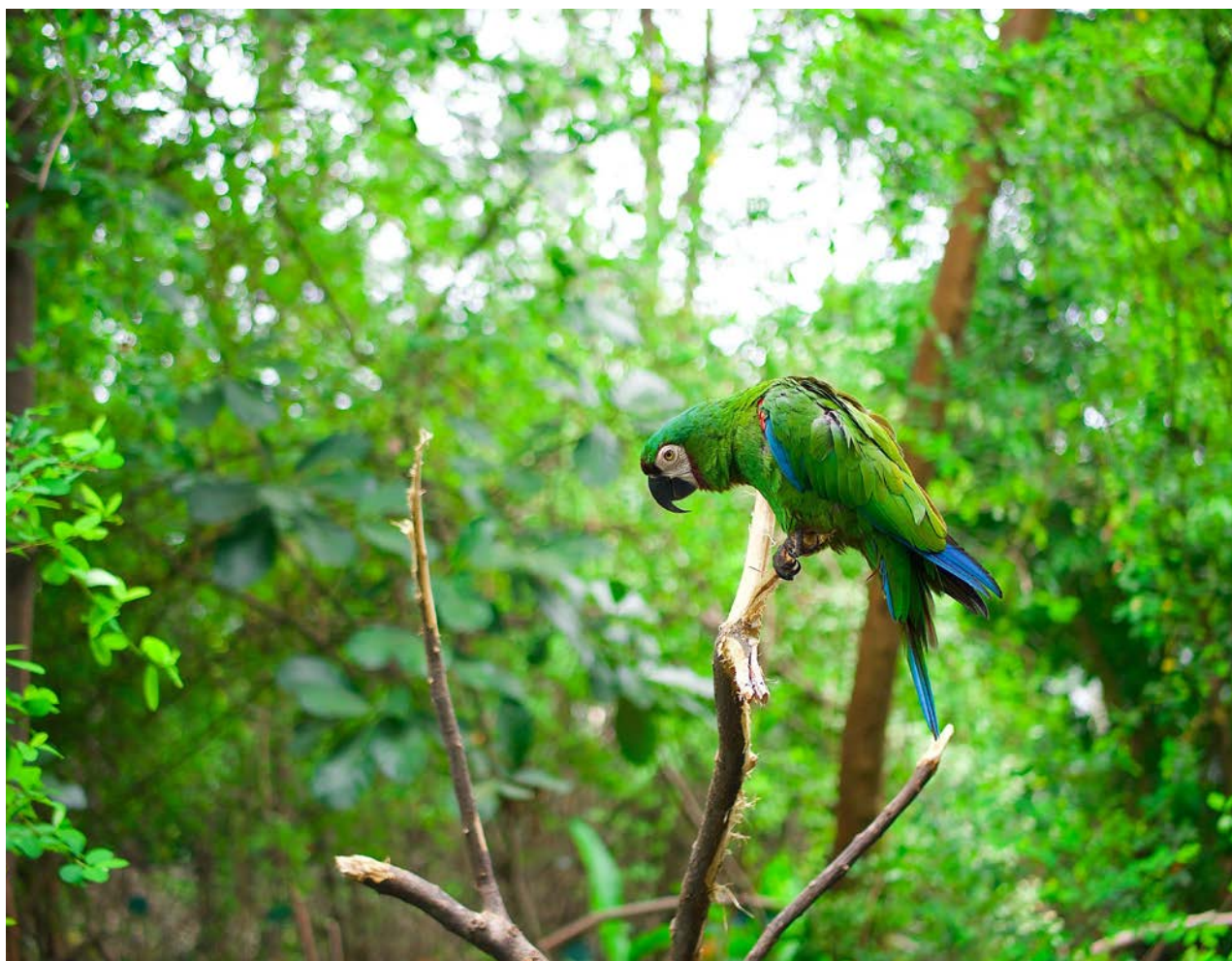
3. Reputation is formed by a wide range of factors – each need development and nurturing

Academic studies of reputation have determined how beliefs and perceptions are formed and influenced. Using these it is possible to create a reputation profile from a mosaic of evidence. This can be done using a reputation framework.

In our Jurisdictional REDD+ reputation framework, reputation profile is determined by understanding REDD+ perceived reputation strengths, qualities and external drivers to inform and guide how to frame and promote JREDD+

Its strengths are the foundations upon which a positive reputation can be based, these are:

- **Visibility:** is it being seen by stakeholders?
- **Understood:** are its features and benefits seen and understood?
- **Trusted:** do people believe that it consistently delivers on what it promises?



Its qualities are how well it is associated with the attributes that confer value and respect amongst stakeholders. For JREDD+ these have been refined to include:

- **Success:** is JREDD+ perceived to be a popular and widely used method?
- **Effective:** is JREDD+ seen to be consistently delivering reduced deforestation and emissions?
- **Governance:** is the stewardship of JREDD+ schemes considered to be robust, honest and ethical?
- **Business Impact:** does JREDD+ deliver on the needs of its business stakeholders?
- **Social Impact:** does JREDD+ deliver tangible social impacts for local communities?

4. Understand and prioritise the biggest drivers of reputation

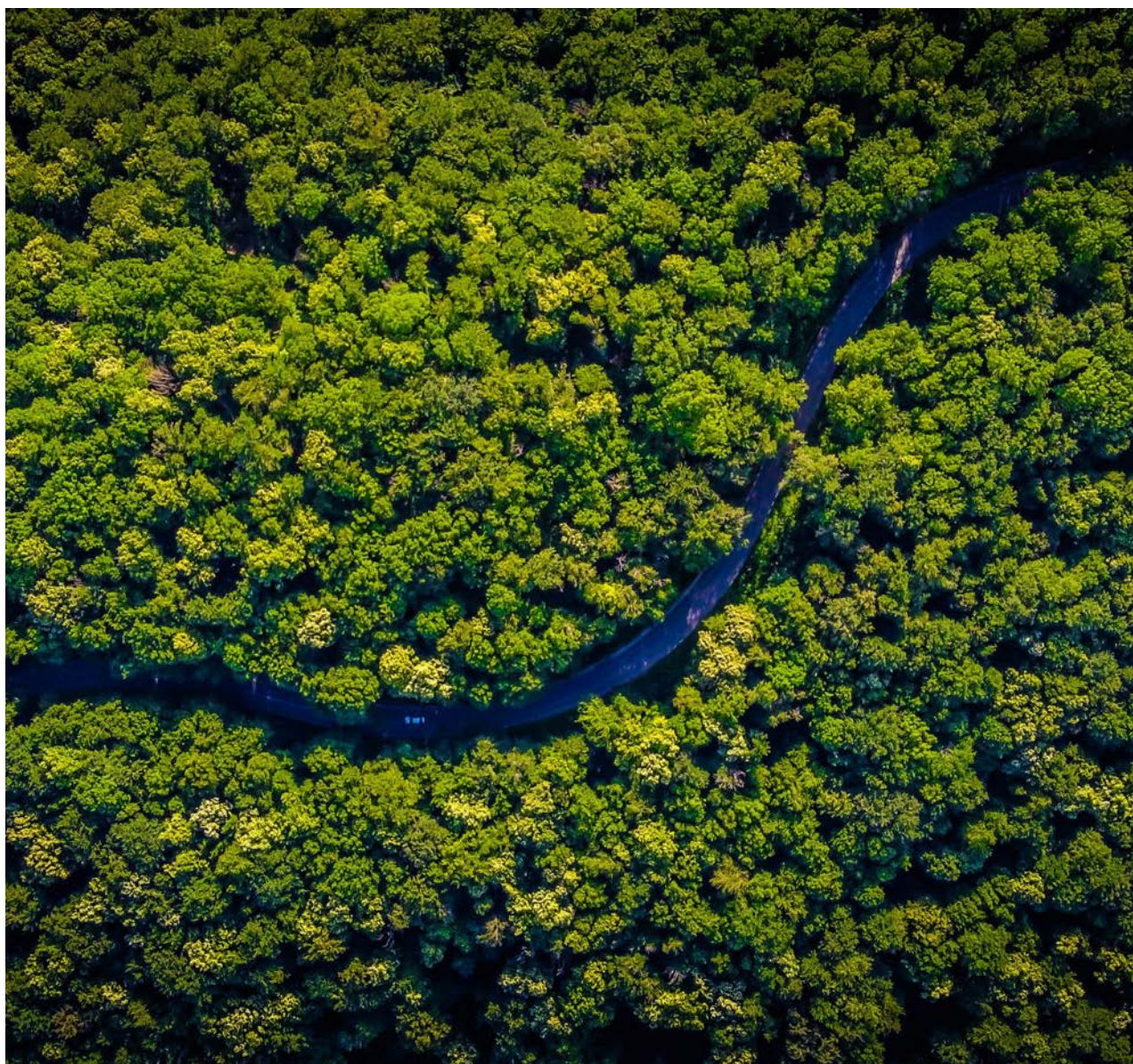
The reputation drivers of REDD+ are the events, influencers and agenda having most influence how it is perceived. When shaping and advocating JREDD+, the focus needs to be on:

- **Influencers:** who and what is shaping how JREDD+ is perceived?
- **Emotions:** how are stakeholders responding to JREDD+ issues and are there reputation risks that need to be addressed?
- **Agenda:** how are other events or topics affecting how JREDD+ is perceived?

By tracking these individual indicators, we can track the reputation profile for REDD+ and better understand how to build an improved reputation for JREDD+ that will facilitate its successful delivery.

For example, we know that human stories deliver greater interest and engagement. Harnessing these real-life impacts and giving a voice to indigenous peoples and local communities will help your communications to have greater reach and impact.

Equally, we know that accusations of low effectiveness and poor governance represent the most significant risks to both REDD+ and JREDD+ reputation. Rapid response when such concerns are raised is key to protecting the positive reputation you have work hard to gain.





6 REDD+ blueprint for improving reputation

REDD+ advocacy is at its most compelling where it combines high profile, with multiple facets of the reputation qualities – success, effectiveness, governance, business or social impact.

Common features from the standout examples in 2021 provide a blueprint for how communications can be most effective at improving reputation for JREDD+.

The features listed below are already working to increase positive profile for JREDD+, with visible mentions increasing 300% in 2021, compared to the previous year.

These features include:

- **Scale:**

evidence of the financial backing needed to make a tangible difference within the targeted locations. Many of the most positive examples lead with the financial details. Not just the sums involved, but also the sources and money and their credibility and robustness.

- **Collaboration:**

even the most positive reporting of REDD+ highlights the many challenges involved in delivering its goals. Not least in unifying competing interests. For this reason, good advocacy details the agreements and partnerships that have been formed and their binding nature.

- **Social Impact:**

the human impact of REDD+ projects is most often part of the leading message in successful advocacy. These are examples where the stated mission is more than just to reduce emissions, but to improve lives and preserve communities.

- **Breaking new ground:**

evidence of 'firsts' often feature in high impact, positive REDD+ profile. Whether that is due to the size of the scheme, its geographical location, its progress or impact. Breaking barriers carries with it a sense of hope. Hope that REDD+ schemes can be delivered in real-world situations and make a difference.

- **Clear evidence:**

showing verified proof of tangible impact is also a key element of the best advocacy for REDD+. This often leads with emission reductions and changes to the rate of deforestation.

- **Communication of complexity:**

the best examples of advocacy also often highlight the unique set of circumstances for the part of the world where projects are based. Building an understanding of these local issues is crucial to a better appreciation of REDD+ schemes. It helps to build a tolerance and acceptance for when problems occur.



Bad news travels further: how to respond

The visible examples of reputation risks from REDD+ over the same period, most often gain high profile when the principles of governance or effectiveness are undermined.

These are likely to gain momentum where it seems trust has been breached. For example, allegations of illegality, tax avoidance or where people have acted upon 'misleading' claims or promises.

Such reputation risks tend to gain higher profile in more mainstream media. As such, they have potential to undermine the reputation of REDD+ and JREDD+ with non-specialist audiences.

Meaning a potential loss of faith amongst consumers, businesses and loss of face for politicians and leaders advocating for these forest protection schemes.

Good advocacy, therefore, needs to both actively protect as well as programme reputation for JREDD+.

Working with mainstream media to help education, provide context and give balance to articles is increasingly important.

As is lending a voice of criticism when poor practice threatens to give all schemes a bad name, helping communicate the benefits of successful projects by way of comparison.

In dealing with such issues, it's important to follow key, golden rules:

Act quickly

Ensure that a balanced message appears in first reporting of the issue or incident. Reputation is formed on perceptions, so it's important to act before these perceptions have solidified.

Be transparent and honest

These attributes are the foundations of trust. Any defence must be based on an accurate and fair representation of what has occurred.

Work with stakeholders

Presenting a joint response shows the importance of collaboration and the shared commitment to delivering a successful project. It can also give a voice to the communities seeing the most immediate benefits of the scheme.

Understand and respect audience priorities

If concerns have been raised, it's important to acknowledge the legitimacy of their motivation. These are complex issues that are often seeking to balance competing needs.

Focus on the bigger picture

Not all audiences may be satisfied with your response but focus on how this will appear to the dispassionate observer and its overall effect on reputation.

Make it real

Focus on the human story. How is the issue affecting people and local communities? Don't just talk about emissions and the global picture.





7 Conclusion

There is a clear message from this report, *inaction is not an option.*

Jurisdictional REDD+ is entering public scrutiny, for good or bad. This scrutiny will shape its future reputation with all stakeholders.

This reputation will determine how easy it is to gain support and momentum for JREDD+ programmes and, therefore, the contribution it can make to reducing deforestation, forest degradation and lowering emissions.

Advocates should approach this mission with confidence. There is significant goodwill and desire for JREDD+ to succeed. Its impact on communities and indigenous cultures gives its projects and tangible, immediate benefit that allows it to demonstrate a clear, positive change.

In JREDD+ there is also a potential solution to overcome concerns around effectiveness and good governance, providing a solution on a larger-scale with governmental backing.

However, there are also significant challenges to overcome. Advocacy needs to be constant and consistent. It is important to both increase awareness and educate as new audiences become engaged.

This is also a complex topic and needs to be explained simply and with clarity. This will always be done against a backdrop of media / NGO scrutiny and dissenting voices.

Embrace this added attention.

Appreciate that it is being done for the right reasons and engage by making your case with transparency and honesty. The true audience for this debate is not the entrenched dissenter, but the dispassionate, undecided observer.

Develop a plan based on the principles of building positive reputation. Build awareness, understanding and trust. Share evidence of JREDD+'s growing relevance and impact, its effectiveness, the quality of its governance and its impact for both businesses and local communities.

Finally, don't stop.

Maintaining reputation is a never-ending mission. It needs to be constantly 'topped-up' and adapted to keep it relevant to the ever-changing agenda and prevailing issues of the day.

Contributors

Lucy Almond

Head of Strategic Communication,
Centre for Nature and Climate, World Economic Forum

Faëlle Dubois

Specialist,
Centre for Nature and Climate, World Economic Forum

Steve Leigh

Managing Director,
Sensu Insight

Contact Forests for Climate

e: forests4climate@weforum.org

w: www.weforum.org/forests-for-climate/home



World Economic Forum
91–93 route de la Capite
CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 869 1212
Fax: +41 (0) 22 786 2744
contact@weforum.org
www.weforum.org

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