

A VISION FOR Effective and streamlined reporting in the Pacific



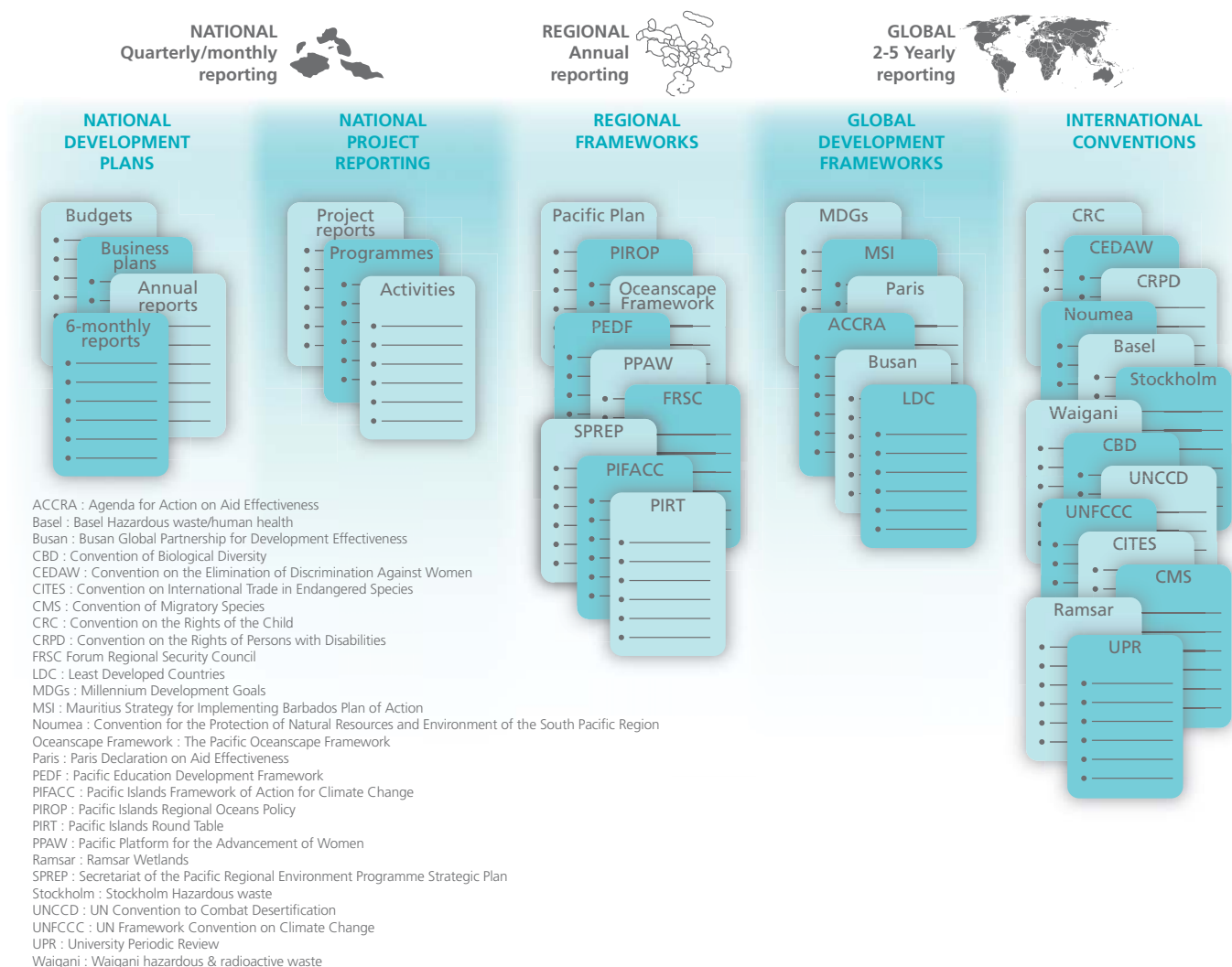
global
reporting burden
regional
national
climate
ocean
resources
diversity
integration
ownership
indicators
sustainable
island

Current reporting requirements

Statement of purpose

The 2010 Pacific Forum Leaders' and Forum Economic Ministers' directive on reporting acknowledged the need to streamline global, regional, and national reporting to reduce the reporting burden at the national level in the Pacific. For the environment sector, member countries of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) endorsed a plan for the establishment of a regional state of environment framework by 2012 and streamlined reporting

by 2015. These goals are formalised in the SPREP Strategic Plan (2011-2015). A workshop was jointly convened by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and SPREP in March 2012 in Fiji to provide a vision for more effective and streamlined reporting in the Pacific region. This process will be taken forward by relevant regional mechanisms such as the Pacific Plan, Forum Compact, and the Council for Regional Organizations in the Pacific (CROP) to achieve the vision presented here.



Current reporting is complex, duplicative, and overwhelming

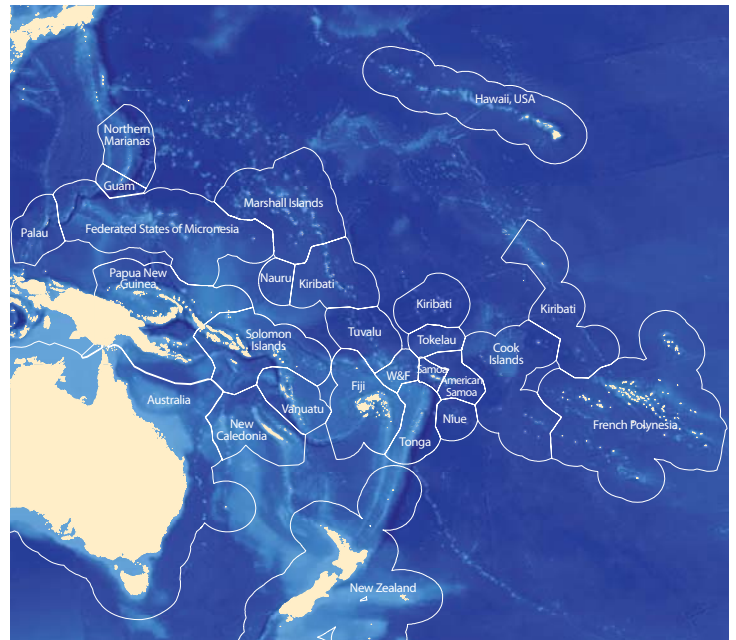
The burden of global, regional, and project reporting has been a longstanding concern of Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs), particularly on Smaller Island States (SIS). There are multiple types of reporting at the national level, which includes internal government reporting on national plans and budgets. Other national reporting requirements are mostly externally driven and include regional reporting, global development framework reporting, and global convention reporting. Global, regional, and donor project reporting is often focused on satisfying multilateral and bilateral donor needs and processes. Reporting to donors on projects and managing multiple donor missions in country occupies a lot of government officials' work times. The complexity, duplication, and sheer volume of reporting is overwhelming small administrations.



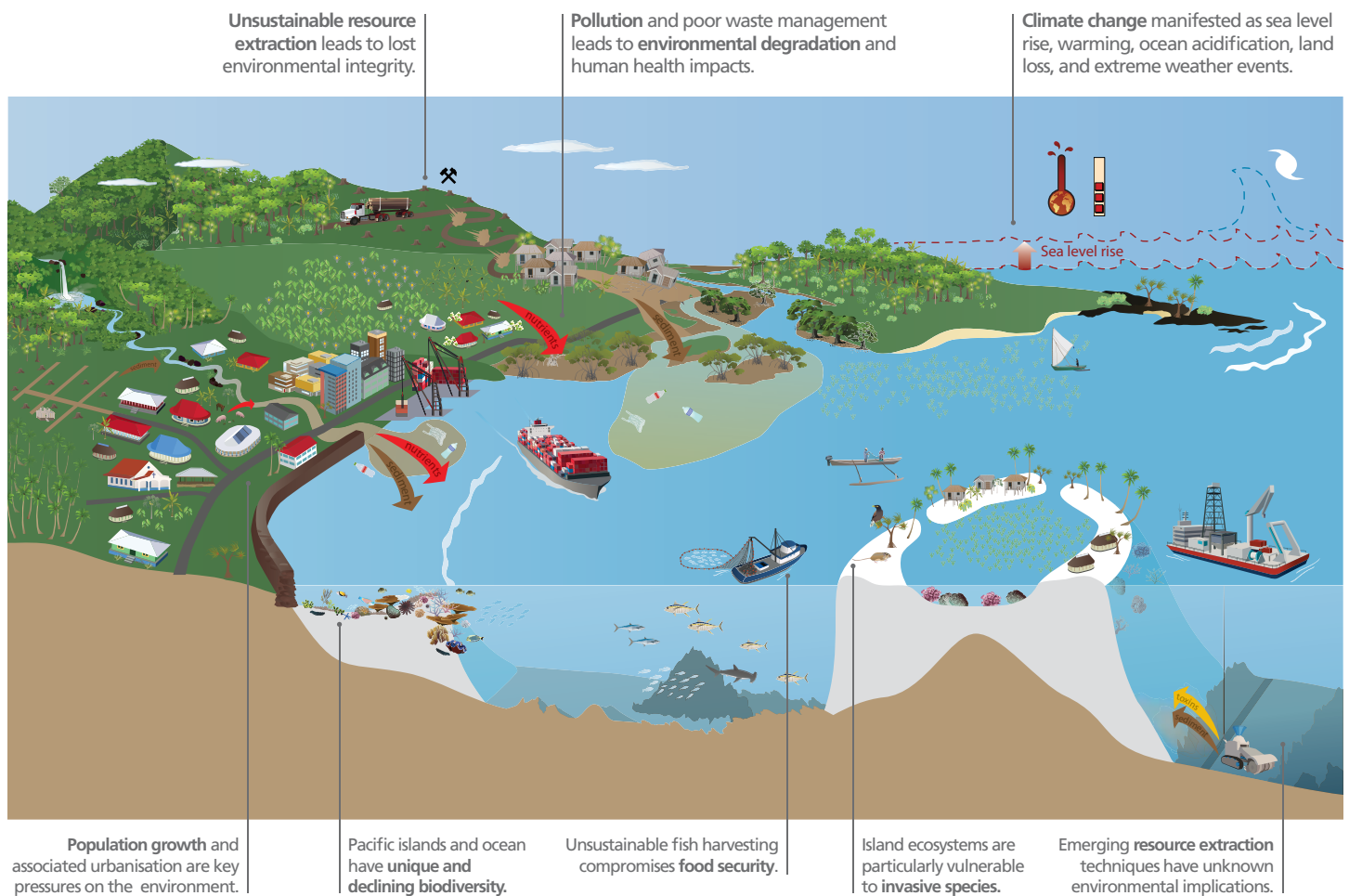
Pacific regional context

Diverse islands and peoples are widely distributed across the Pacific Ocean

The Pacific Ocean is populated by both volcanic islands and atolls, supporting many nations and territories which have populations ranging in scale from Papua New Guinea (~7,000,000) to Tokelau (~1,400). The Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Pacific nations and territories cover a significant portion of the Pacific Ocean. The EEZ can be substantially greater than the land area (e.g., Kiribati EEZ is ~5,000 x greater than the land area). Climate change has been identified as one of the region's major threats, and Pacific leaders have called on development partners, multilateral organisations, and donors to assist in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. In addition, population growth, the growing impacts of lifestyle diseases, food security, and susceptibility to economic disruptions and natural disasters (e.g., tsunamis, cyclones) continue to challenge Pacific nations and territories.



Key threats to Pacific Island nations



Prioritising indicators

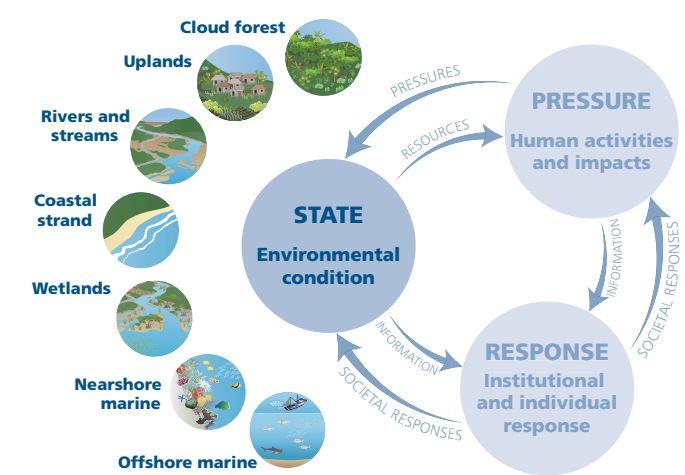
An environmental case study

A simple, targeted, and strategic monitoring and reporting framework can facilitate streamlined reporting by allowing data and information to be used for multiple reporting requirements. For example, in the environment sector, priorities for monitoring could include key indicators in areas such as invasive species, biodiversity, water and air quality, climatic conditions, topographic and geological features. This information could be recorded once in a centralised database, and used to meet national, regional, and global reporting obligations, including Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

For effective assessment of ecosystem condition, indicators must link features and threats

For the Environment Sector, reporting frameworks include assessments of Pressures (threats to ecosystem condition), State (current state of ecosystem condition), and Response (management actions taken to improve ecosystem condition). Pressure and Response indicators are often well developed, and are a common component of regional and global reporting requirements. However, there is relatively little reporting on State indicators of national concern.

Using priority features and threats identified at the national level, environmental indicators that link these features and threats can be identified using a habitat-based approach. The health of each habitat can then be combined to describe the overall State of the environment and culturally important natural resources. Synthesis of available data may identify key knowledge and data gaps. Prioritising additional indicators may be achieved by balancing the additional information they provide with their associated cost.



Using a habitat-based approach to determine the overall State of the environment.

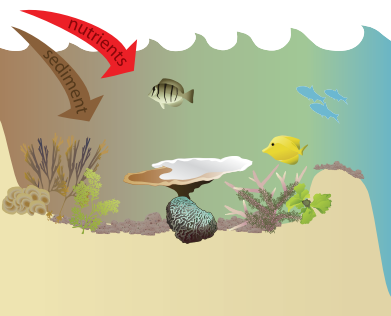








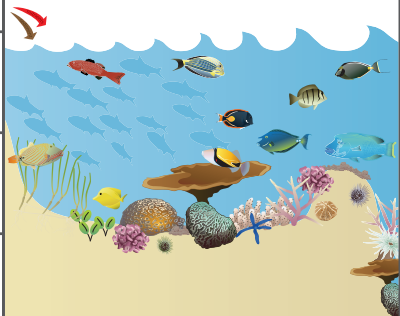











Healthy reefs: example indicators for nearshore marine habitat

Healthy coral reefs support Pacific island fisheries and supply food to Pacific island communities. Regular monitoring and reporting of priority reef health indicators help improve understanding of long-term change in ecosystem condition. This type of information allows better management decisions to be made to protect coral reefs and fisheries. There are many potential indicators for evaluation of nearshore marine habitat. Indicators used here as examples include coral cover and health, fish biomass and richness, and water quality.

Other example indicators could incorporate data relating to:

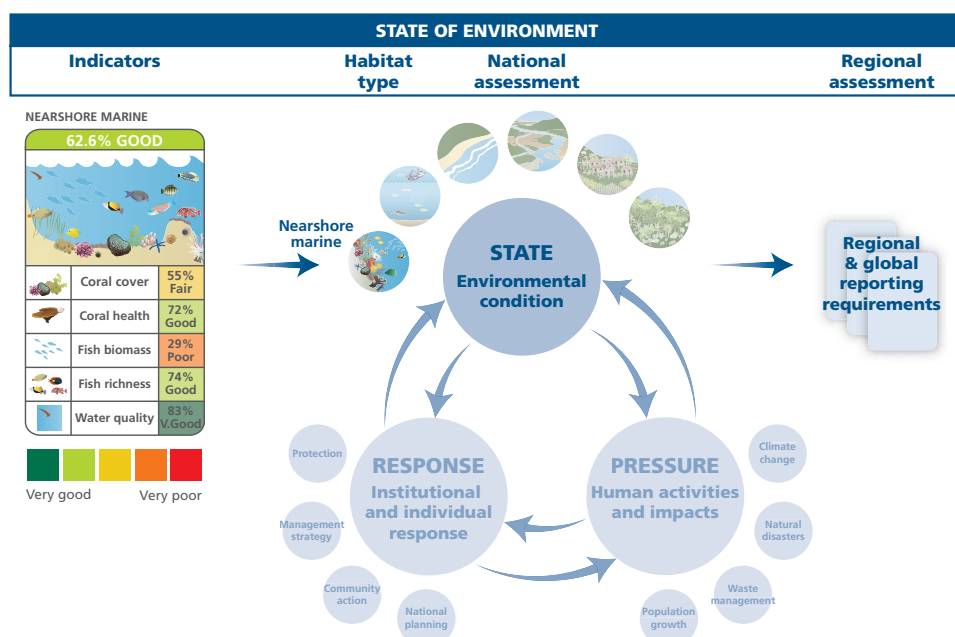
- habitat structure;
- coral health;
- fish community structure;
- water quality;
- non-coral invertebrates;
- invasive species.

NEARSHORE MARINE HABITAT

| DEGRADED | INDICATORS | DESIRED |
|--|--|---|
|  <p>High nutrient and sediment inputs  reduce water quality , leading to increased algal overgrowth . Low coral cover  and widespread coral bleaching  indicates poor coral health. Low fish biomass  and low fish richness  indicates unsustainable inshore fisheries.</p> | <div>low</div>  <div>high</div> <div>Coral cover</div> |  <p>Low nutrient and sediment inputs  maintains good water quality , with healthy seagrass communities . High coral cover  and minimal coral bleaching  indicates good coral health. High fish biomass  and high fish richness  indicates sustainable inshore fisheries.</p> |
| | <div>poor</div>  <div>good</div> <div>Coral health</div> | |
| | <div>low</div>  <div>high</div> <div>Fish biomass</div> | |
| | <div>low</div>  <div>high</div> <div>Fish richness</div> | |
| | <div>poor</div>  <div>good</div> <div>Water quality</div> | |
| | <div>poor</div> <div>?</div> <div>Other</div> <div>?</div> | |

Example indicators for nearshore marine habitat include coral cover, coral health, fish biomass, fish richness, and water quality.

Streamlined reporting examples



This reporting framework allows countries to assess environmental condition based on country-identified priorities, and presents a clear pathway to integrate data for state of the environment reporting. The example to the left shows how data from the nearshore marine habitat are used to evaluate key indicators of habitat health. Habitat results are combined to develop the country assessment, which is then used in regional and international reporting. Management actions can be clearly tied to address specific pressures on the environment, and habitat assessments will measure their effectiveness in improving environmental condition.

Sharing the burden through regional reporting

In 2005, Pacific Island Countries signed the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action (MSI). In the same year, the region finalised its Pacific Plan—the blueprint for regionalism and development. Recognising the need to minimise duplication, a United Nations agreement was secured in 2007 to utilise countries' reporting on the Pacific Plan as the region's global reporting on progress towards the MSI. As a result, one collective regional report was submitted to the United Nations by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on behalf of countries, demonstrating how a regional approach can be harnessed to reduce reporting burdens.

Streamlined reporting for biodiversity Multilateral Environmental Agreements

In 2008, Australia and the Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme collaborated on a trial integration of reporting templates for five biodiversity multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including: Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Convention on Migratory Species, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Reporting against a single consolidated reporting template was successfully tested in eight Pacific island countries, demonstrating the feasibility and practicality of the process. While the template was not endorsed by MEA Secretariats, the trial represents a practical example of how national reports to MEAs can be streamlined and harmonised.

Lessons from human rights treaty reporting

Important lessons have been learnt globally and regionally from the streamlining of human rights treaty reporting processes:

- 1. A 'driver' is needed to facilitate change.** Responsible agencies need dedicated time and resources to drive the process and ensure the input of all stakeholders.
- 2. Start small; take measurable steps over time.** Reform takes time, and is a complex process requiring careful negotiation, monitoring, and adjustment at appropriate milestones.
- 3. Consult with all stakeholders.** The views of stakeholders need to be considered and reflected in the streamlining process. These include national governments, reporting bodies, beneficiaries, and development agencies.
- 4. Strengthen the mandate for change.** 'Reducing the burden of reporting' is a common reason for streamlining, however the mandate to streamline can be strengthened when the total 'cost' to all parties is also considered.
- 5. Be bold, but realistic.** The streamlining process as a whole may need to occur over a long time span, split into realistic steps, and guided by an agreed and well-articulated vision.

Recommendations

Streamlining national reporting

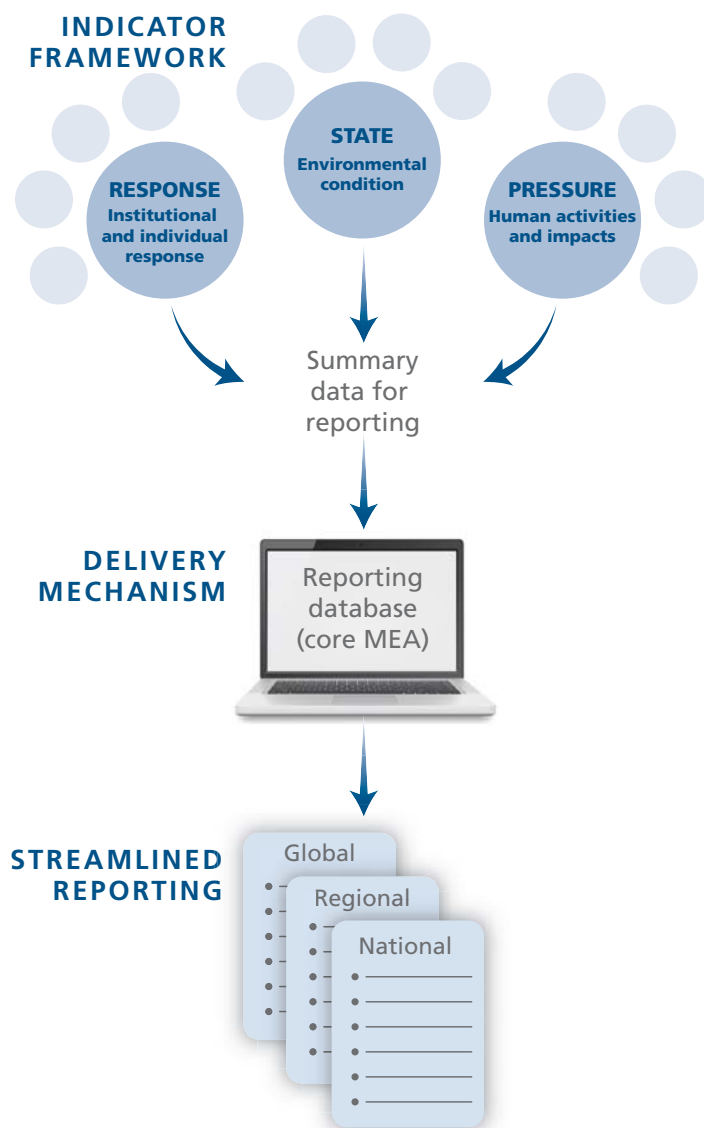
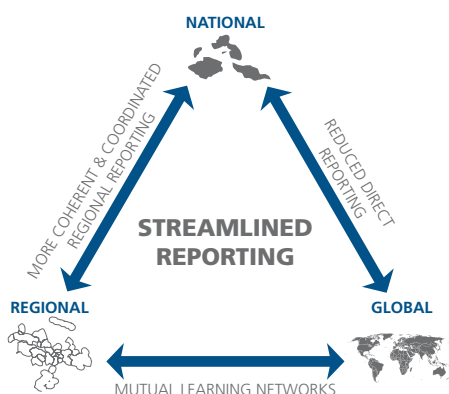
- **Promote national level ownership** of accountability for results and reporting, to drive an effective reporting process at national, regional, and global levels.
- **Develop indicator frameworks** that address national priorities while facilitating streamlined reporting using existing and accessible databases.
- **Increase national reporting & monitoring capacity** through training and supplementing national efforts.
- **Harmonise donor reporting requirements** through implementation of the Forum Compact and the Busan Global Partnership for Development Cooperation.

Streamlining regional reporting

- **Strengthen the regional framework** for sustainable development (Pacific Plan) so that regional and relevant global reporting can be better integrated.

Streamlining global reporting

- **PICTs petition the UN directly**, through the Pacific Islands Forum or other global forums, for coherence amongst global policy and reporting frameworks.



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