A VISION FOR
Effective and streamlined reporting in the Pacific
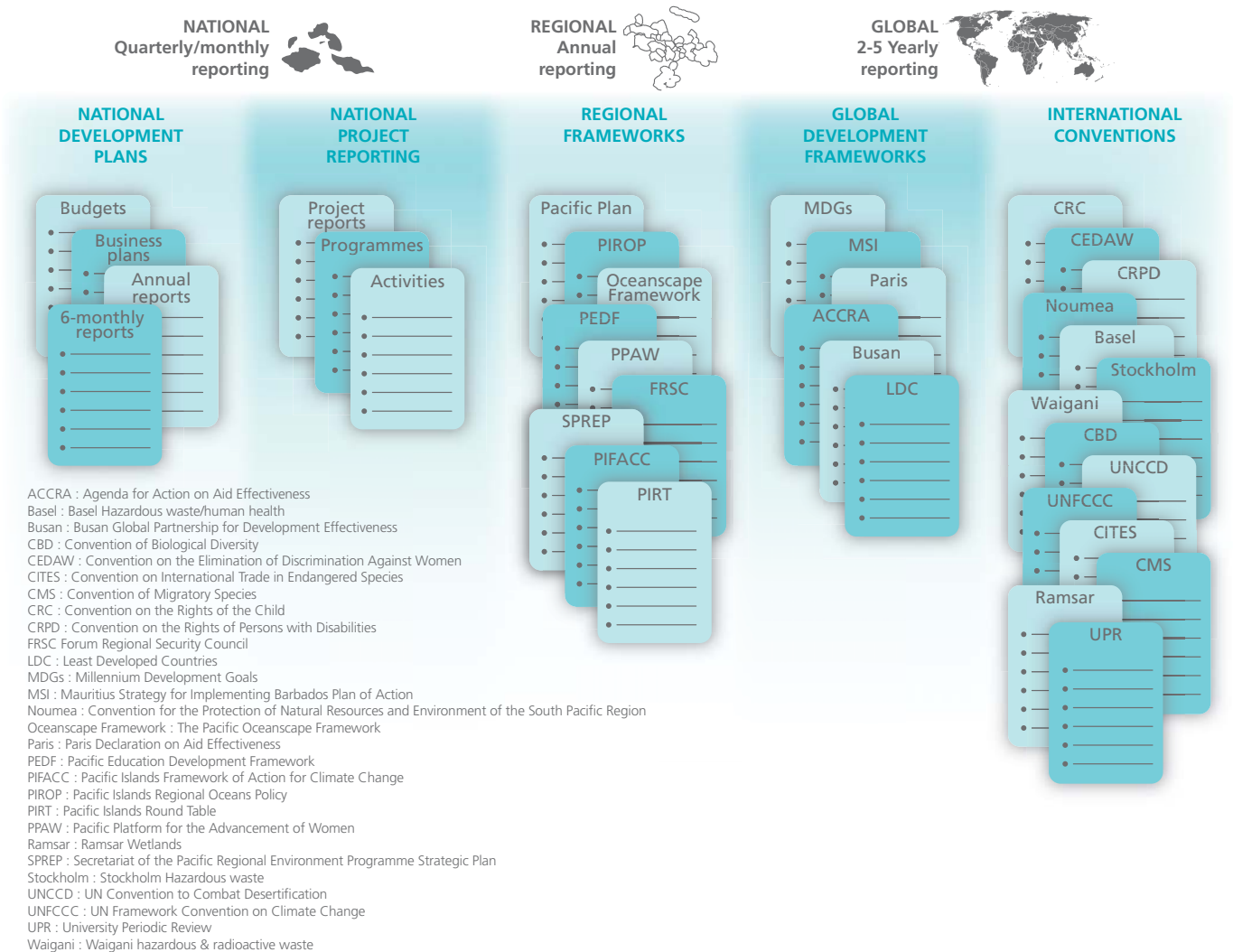
climate **global** diversity
reporting burden
regional ocean integration ownership
indicators
national sustainable
resources **island**

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.

NATIONAL
Quarterly/monthly reporting

REGIONAL
Annual reporting

GLOBAL
2-5 Yearly reporting

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

- Budgets
- Business plans
- Annual reports
- 6-monthly reports

NATIONAL PROJECT REPORTING

- Project reports
- Programmes
- Activities

REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- Pacific Plan
- PIROP
- Oceanscape Framework
- PEDF
- PPAW
- FRSC
- SPREP
- PIFACC
- PIRT

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

- MDGs
- MSI
- Paris
- ACCRA
- Busan
- LDC

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

- CRC
- CEDAW
- CRPD
- Noumea
- Basel
- Stockholm
- Waigani
- CBD
- UNCCD
- UNFCCC
- CITES
- CMS
- Ramsar
- UPR

ACCRA : Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness
Basel : Basel Hazardous waste/human health
Busan : Busan Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness
CBD : Convention of Biological Diversity
CEDAW : Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CITES : Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CMS : Convention of Migratory Species
CRC : Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD : Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
FRSC Forum Regional Security Council
LDC : Least Developed Countries
MDGs : Millennium Development Goals
MSI : Mauritius Strategy for Implementing Barbados Plan of Action
Noumea : Convention for the Protection of Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region
Oceanscape Framework : The Pacific Oceanscape Framework
Paris : Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
PEDF : Pacific Education Development Framework
PIFACC : Pacific Islands Framework of Action for Climate Change
PIROP : Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy
PIRT : Pacific Islands Round Table
PPAW : Pacific Platform for the Advancement of Women
Ramsar : Ramsar Wetlands
SPREP : Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme Strategic Plan
Stockholm : Stockholm Hazardous waste
UNCCD : UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC : UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UPR : University Periodic Review
Waigani : Waigani hazardous & radioactive waste

NATIONAL

REPORTING TO REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS & PROJECTS

REPORTING TO CONVENTIONS, PROJECTS & DONORS

EXCESSIVE REPORTING

REGIONAL

GLOBAL

LIMITED INTEGRATION OF REPORTING

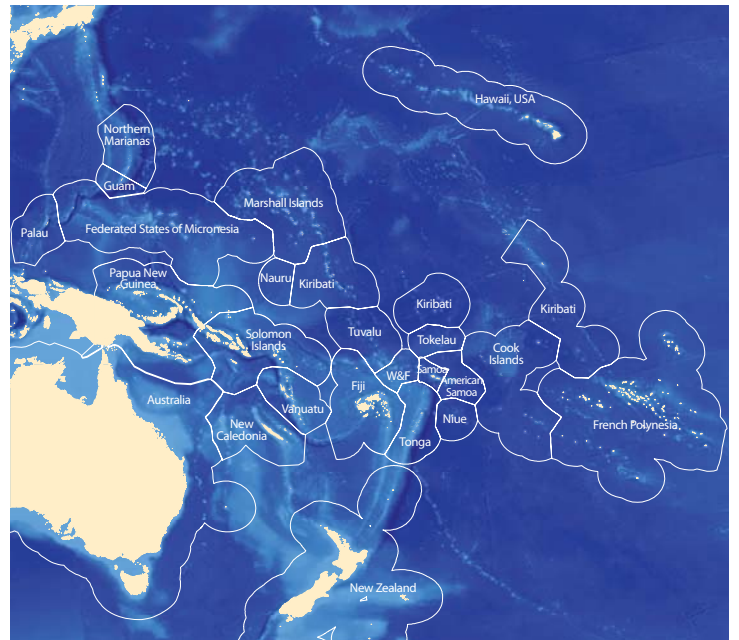## Current reporting is complex, duplicative, and overwhelming

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.
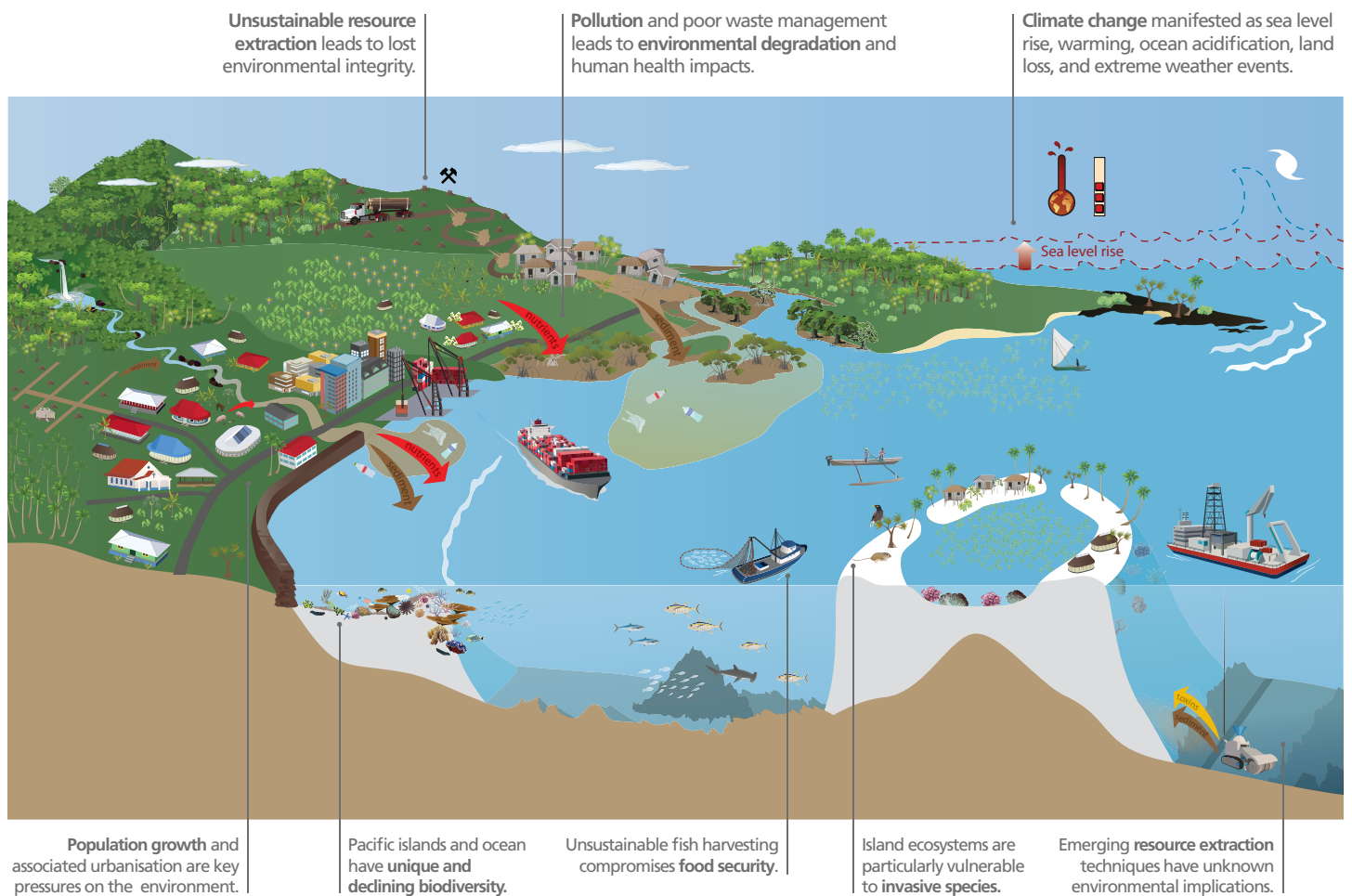
Pacific regional context

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

Unsustainable resource extraction leads to lost environmental integrity.

Pollution and poor waste management leads to **environmental degradation** and human health impacts.

Climate change manifested as sea level rise, warming, ocean acidification, land loss, and extreme weather events.

Population growth and associated urbanisation are key pressures on the environment.

Pacific islands and ocean have **unique and declining biodiversity.**

Unsustainable fish harvesting compromises **food security**.

Island ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to **invasive species.**

Emerging **resource extraction** techniques have unknown environmental implications.

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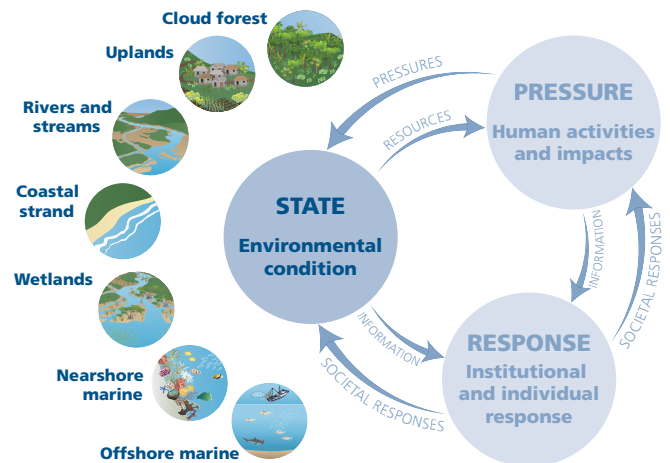
Using a habitat-based approach to determine the overall State of the environment.

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

NEARSHORE MARINE HABITAT

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

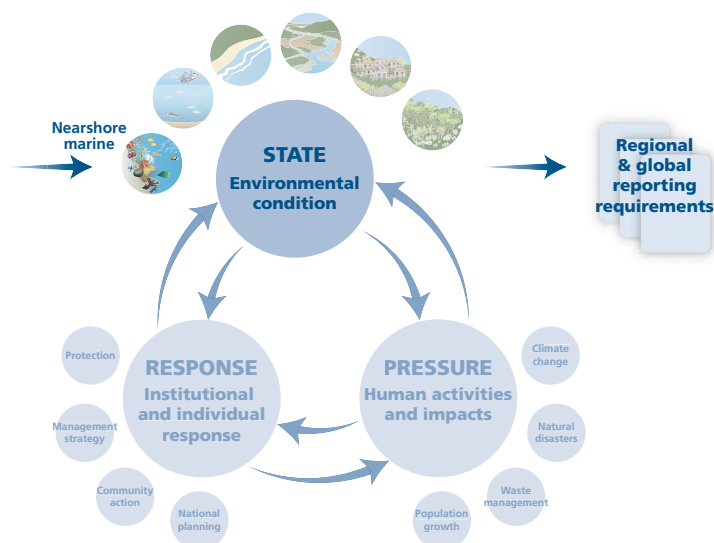# Streamlined reporting examples

STATE OF ENVIRONMENT			
Indicators	**Habitat type**	**National assessment**	**Regional assessment**

NEARSHORE MARINE

62.6% GOOD

Coral cover	55% Fair
Coral health	72% Good
Fish biomass	29% Poor
Fish richness	74% Good
Water quality	83% V.Good

Very good — Very poor

Nearshore marine

STATE Environmental condition

Regional & global reporting requirements

RESPONSE Institutional and individual response

PRESSURE Human activities and impacts

Protection, Management strategy, Community action, National planning

Climate change, Natural disasters, Waste management, Population growth

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

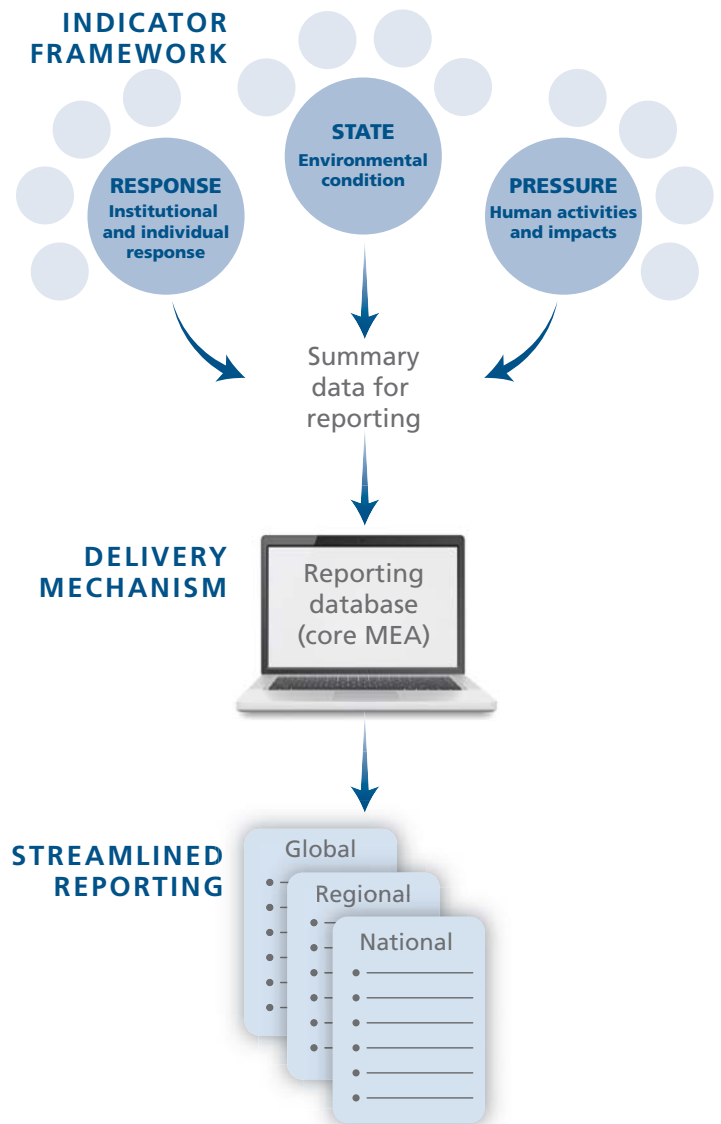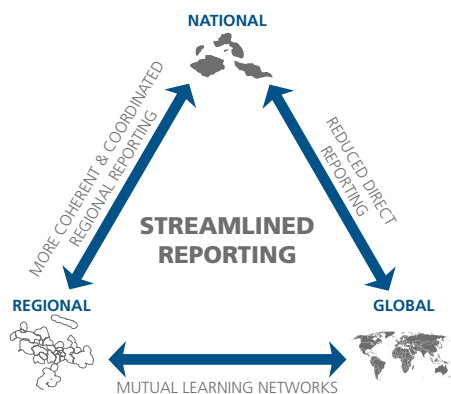## Streamlining national reporting

- **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.

INDICATOR FRAMEWORK

RESPONSE
Institutional and individual response

STATE
Environmental condition

PRESSURE
Human activities and impacts

Summary data for reporting

DELIVERY MECHANISM

Reporting database (core MEA)

STREAMLINED REPORTING

Global
Regional
National

NATIONAL

MORE COHERENT & COORDINATED REGIONAL REPORTING

REDUCED DIRECT REPORTING

STREAMLINED REPORTING

REGIONAL

GLOBAL

MUTUAL LEARNING NETWORKS

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