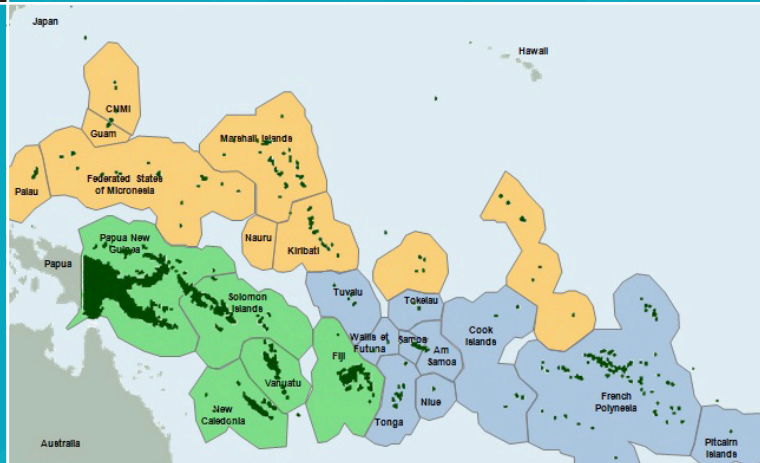




The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Pacific Island Region

Putting
statistics at
the heart of
the debate





At the onset of the MDG process, Pacific Island countries struggled with access to reliable development statistics across the full range of MDG goals.

Over the past decade, statistical support has become more strategic and features prominently in bilateral *partnerships for development* at the national level, with multi-year funding support dedicated to developing and implementing a Pacific regional strategy.

- In 2000, only 3 out of 15 countries were able to provide relevant statistics on poverty.
- By 2010, 14 out of 15 countries were able to do so.
- By mid 2014, 9 countries will have 2 or 3 data points, enabling assessment of poverty and hardship over time.

As 2015 approaches, debate is intensifying on the remaining challenges, impact and future of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Statisticians across the Pacific Island region hope that this debate will mobilize policy makers and development partners to put statistics at the heart of development policy. There are encouraging signs of progress, like the call for a ‘data revolution’ by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons. The challenge now is to ensure that this leads to action.

MDGs: WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE EFFECTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS?

Across the Pacific Island region, as throughout the world, the MDGs have succeeded in attracting attention on the importance of having reliable, quality statistics in order to develop, implement and monitor development policies. Meanwhile, the agenda on aid effectiveness reinforces a results-driven culture and decisions based on facts. In this context:

- The demand for statistics has been stimulated.
- Support has been strengthened, with statistics now featuring prominently in bilateral and regional development partnerships.
- A Ten-Year Pacific Statistics Strategy 2011–2020 was developed, providing support for countries developing their own national strategies (NSDSs) to strengthen their national statistical systems.

BUILDING ON THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MDGs

Since 2000, recognition of the importance of national statistical systems has increased across the Pacific Island region. However, regular monitoring of MDG progress has remained challenging.

This has been mainly due to:

- An early top-down approach, where development objectives and indicators were not sufficiently discussed with developing countries in general, and statisticians in particular.



- Weak ownership by countries, where monitoring of development progress has been largely ad hoc, managed and financed from outside government planning and statistical departments, without explicit links to national requirements to regularly monitor and report on policy performance.
- Key data and indicators are still missing across many areas, or are contradictory depending on source used.



POST-2015 ROADMAP

Data and evidence are at the heart of debates on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Ensuring NSSs are included in the debate can pay a double-dividend — reinforcing statistical capacity and improving the development framework — in three important ways:

1. Engaging Statisticians to ensure a statistically sound measurement framework

Statisticians should be involved in the preparatory processes of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including more dialogue between users and producers; PARIS21 stands ready to help in this regard. These joint efforts will lead to:

- The development of measurable, realistic and more appropriate goals and associated indicators in accordance with national development plans in developing countries, and the setting of realistic timelines for achieving these goals and targets, recognizing the speed and magnitude of progress made during the 15 years of the MDGs.
- The promotion of better governance, transparency and accountability of National Statistical Offices and a more prominent role for statisticians worldwide in the development of public policy.



2. Supporting national statistical capacity and building on international momentum for global statistical goals

In November 2011, the international community made a commitment to support a global plan for statistics dubbed the Busan Action Plan for Statistics (BAPS). Post-2015 efforts should build on this solid foundation by:

- Reinforcing fundraising and the implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDSs).





Under its Good Governance strategic objective, the *Pacific Plan* called for an expansion of statistics to support the development and recording of Pacific development indicators relating to international development goals, including MDGs;

In 2013, the *SPC National Minimum Development Indicator* database contains 200+ indicators across 15 themes, including coverage of all population-based MDG indicators (www.spc.int/nmdi)

- Facilitating the coordination of statistics development partners in line with country strategies.
- Building and sustaining effective dialogue between data users and producers to ensure data production meets user needs in terms of quality, relevance and timeliness.
- Promoting easier access to data produced in countries for use by the general public; national, regional and international students; and researchers, policy analysts and professionals, to ensure maximum value is extracted from statistical collection.

3. Giving priority to statistics in development and supporting evidence-based decision making

Statistics are a development priority in their own right. They provide objective measures of progress that inform decision making by governments, businesses, philanthropic organisations and citizens alike. Pacific leaders confirmed their recognition of this fact in the 2005 Pacific Plan, which included the following axes of action:

- **Consolidate the relationship** between statisticians, planners and policy-makers to ensure evidence-based decision making, monitoring progress and measuring results become a routine part of good governance
- **Promote alignment** between national policies and plans, international policy commitments (post-2015 development agenda), and long-term strategies for the development of statistics
- **Be bold** – help put statistics at the heart of the debate on the post-2015 development agenda
- Include stepped-up efforts on statistical development as a **core development objective** in its own right in the post-2015 development agenda