

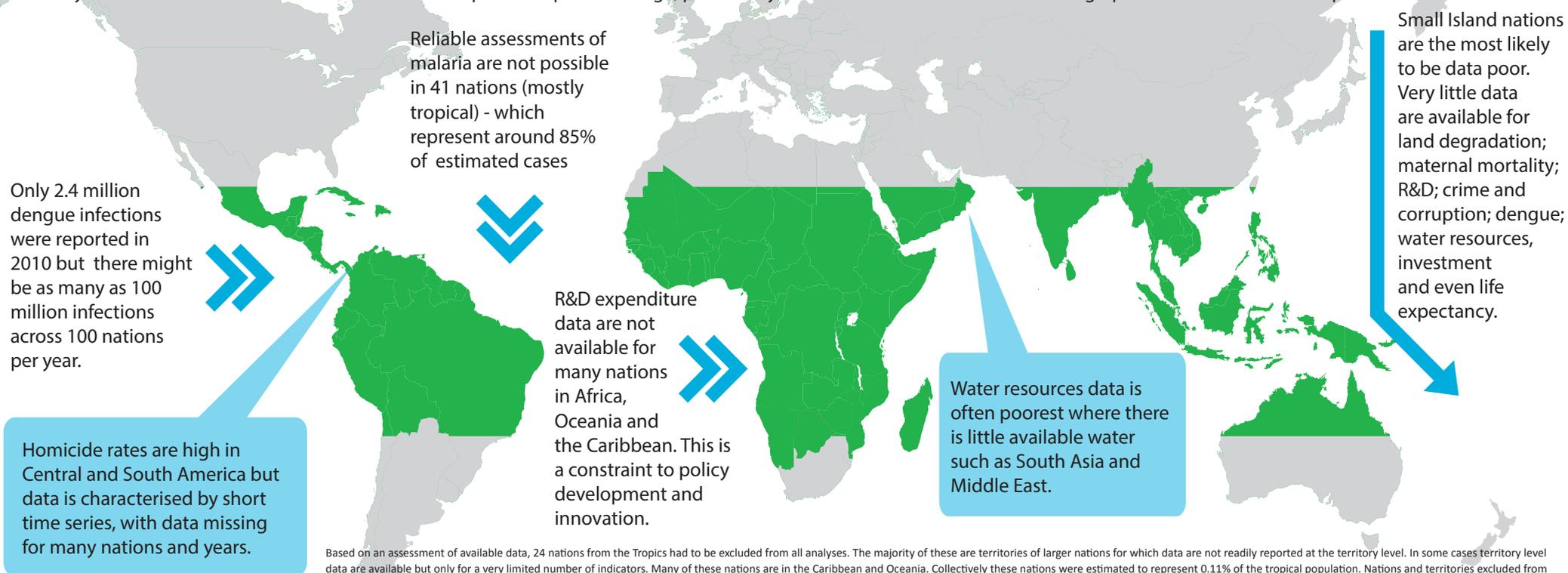
SHORT STORIES: Too small to matter? The missing data of the Tropics

The State of the Tropics 2014 Report provides the first in-depth, objective assessment of the Tropics an environmental and geopolitical entity in its own right. Drawing on the knowledge, experience and diverse backgrounds of leading institutions across the Tropics, the report assess the state of the region and examines the implications of the immense changes the region is experiencing.

During the development of the report, across 50 social, economic and environmental indicators, a number of cross cutting issues have emerged. In the Tropics there are many small nations with small populations and surface areas coupled with limited capacity to provide high quality data to multilateral organisations. What this means for State of the Tropics is that the data from these nations does not contribute to regional values or has very little influence on these values. It is essential that information about these small nations is not lost – that they are not considered too small or unimportant to matter.

The State of the Tropics report relies on existing data from a range of sources to calculate regional values. Although indicators were chosen with reasonable coverage, data was not available for all nations for all years. This is often because data is based on sporadic surveys (particularly in low income nations) and only available every few years. Some nations regularly do not report due to conflict, lack of statistical capacity or other reasons. Some nations are so new there are few data available (e.g. South Sudan, Timor Leste). Other types of data may only be collected for a certain group of nations (e.g. Developing or OECD nations).

Many of the datasets included in the State of the Tropics have poor coverage, particularly for small island nations. See the infographic below for some examples.



Based on an assessment of available data, 24 nations from the Tropics had to be excluded from all analyses. The majority of these are territories of larger nations for which data are not readily reported at the territory level. In some cases territory level data are available but only for a very limited number of indicators. Many of these nations are in the Caribbean and Oceania. Collectively these nations were estimated to represent 0.11% of the tropical population. Nations and territories excluded from all State of the Tropics analysis include: Anguilla (United Kingdom), Aruba (Netherlands), British Virgin Islands (United Kingdom), Cayman Islands (United Kingdom), Grenada, Guadeloupe (France), Martinique (France), Montserrat (United Kingdom), Netherlands Antilles (Netherlands), Turks & Caicos Islands (United Kingdom), United States Virgin Islands (United States), American Samoa (United States), Cook Islands, Guam (United States), Midway Islands (United States), Nauru, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands (United States) Tokelau, Wake Island (United States), Wallis & Futuna Islands (France), and French Guiana (France).