The State of the Tropics 2014 Report provides the first in-depth, objective assessment of the Tropics as 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.