

# AN INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENTS, UNEP LIVE AND IRIS

## Background and mandate

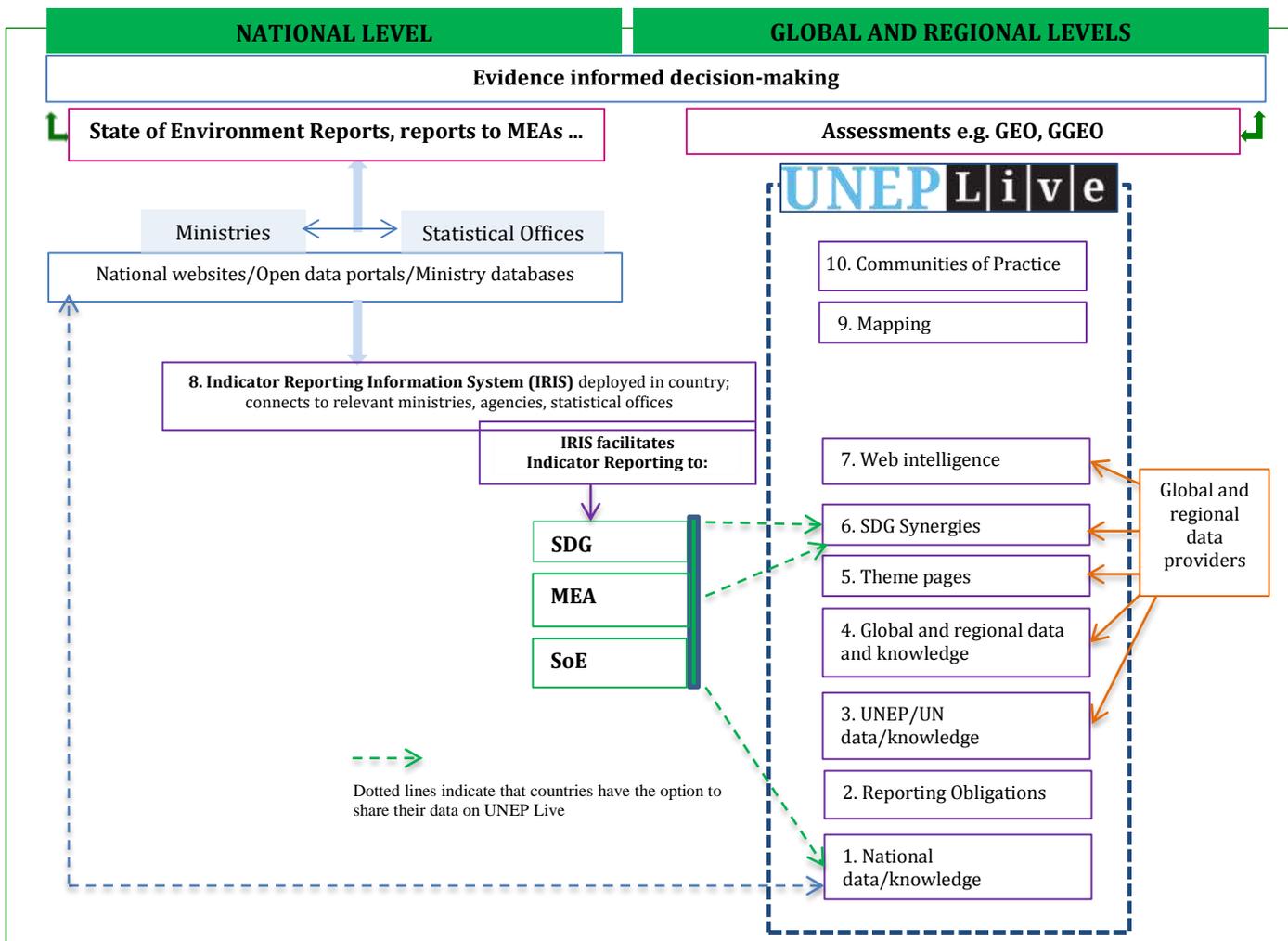
UNEP Live was launched in January 2014 as a knowledge management platform to support assessments and strengthen capacities to make use of substantiated knowledge in decision-making. UNEP Live does this by making accessible and discoverable, tools for contextualized data and knowledge sharing at the global, regional and national levels.

## Illustration of the global integrated framework

**Global and Regional levels:** One of UNEP's mandate is to keep the environment under review - it does this through the conduct of integrated environmental assessments such as the periodic Global Environment Outlook (GEO). The UNEP Live knowledge management platform supports such processes by making available tools, data and knowledge. In turn knowledge generated through assessments is fed into UNEP Live so that the platform remains up-to-date for use in the next assessments.

**National level:** To facilitate country reporting – e.g. national State of Environment Reports, reporting to MEA's and on SDG's - UNEP has developed an online reporting tool called the *Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS)*.

The diagram below highlights key relationships between [UNEP Live](#), Assessments such as GEO, and IRIS. Boxes in the diagram are numbered and correspond to the explanation text provided below.



## Illustration Notes:

UNEP Live<sup>1</sup> is developed using an evolutionary integrative approach. It has been designed to deliver the following value-added services in a phased approach:

- **Strengthening UNEP's assessment processes** through access to source knowledge and data flows to keep the environment under review
- **Shaping a knowledge sharing culture** by supporting greater collaboration on knowledge co-creation, production and use of data, indicators, integrated and thematic assessment analyses and findings
- **Building capacity in countries and regions** to facilitate reporting on the national state of the environment, reporting to MEAs and on SDG's using the Indicator Reporting Information System.

### **Stage 1 (2014-2015):**

*This stage started with the promotion of open access to data and data sharing; integrating data assets in UNEP and the UN and connecting to key data providers. These activities will be on-going throughout the project life-cycle.*

**Box 1. UNEP Live principles promote open access to national data and knowledge** connecting to open data portals, harvesting data from country websites and making it accessible and available. As at December 2015, more than 2183 data flows from 192 countries were available in UNEP Live and the platform is being continuously updated. Open access via UNEP Live offers countries multiple benefits e.g. increasing visibility of a country's progress and enhancing transparency; facilitating interdisciplinary research and integrated environmental assessments; advancing knowledge and enriching information-sharing.

**Box 2. UNEP Live has a Reporting obligations database that provides countries with information on global reporting obligations i.e. to MEA's.** For each country, it contains reporting dates, legislative instruments, guidelines for reporting, agreed templates for reporting etc. This provides good reference on a country's international obligations.

**Box 3. UNEP Live aims to be a "knowledge integrator" of UNEP knowledge assets** by connecting to existing data assets such as the Material flows data, the InforMEA portal, the GEF knowledge assets, UNEP publications repositories and UNEP project databases. It also supports search and cataloguing functions for these assets and information. This makes existing assets more easily discoverable.

**Box 4. UNEP Live connects to data providers to make accessible global and regional data flows essential for assessments.** These flows are available as near-real time data, data files (csv/xls), as trend data for indicators relevant to internationally agreed goals, as maps, charts, scientific reports. As at December 2015, over 350 global datasets/dataflows were accessible via UNEP Live, the platform had 418 maps and hundreds of publications which include analyses and assessment findings on environmental and related social and economic factors. Users can therefore find a range of data and knowledge which can be downloaded and exported in various formats for further analyses and decision-making.

**Note: UNEP Live pages are accessible as an online platform in 90 languages (all UN languages).**

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<sup>1</sup> Development of UNEP Live began in 2014 with the aim to focus on providing open access to global, regional and national data and Knowledge; providing a range of analytical, mapping, search, visualisation tools and online Communities of Practice. It was developed on the principles of open access; data managed as close as possible to source; data collected once and shared for many purposes

## **Stage 2 (2016-2017)**

*In this stage assessment experts and other key users (policy-makers, scientists, etc.) can go beyond accessing unique data and knowledge flows at all levels to accessing various online tools (e.g. see Box 7, 9, 10); contextualized data that tracks emerging trends and stakeholder perceptions as well as comparable data related to SDGs and MEAs and their linkages, related ontologies and national data flows.*

**Box 5. Theme pages provide analyses and context** on key issues such as those that track internationally agreed goals, SDG Synergies (see Box 6), track emission-impacts and climate change; air quality, coral reefs etc. provide more in depth and contextualized data and knowledge;

**Box 6. SDG Synergies provide decision support** and offers users an effective way to retrieve relevant and comparable indicator-level data; track a country's progress in reporting; show relationships between SDG and MEA-related data; access the common underlying language (ontologies) used for indicators so that comparisons on knowledge and data can be made from different users; make linkages and related data available through dynamic visualizations for easy accessibility.

**Box 7. Web Intelligence analyzes relevant individual and public opinion trends** on air quality, biodiversity water and climate change from news channels, social media, online publications, global companies, environmental organizations, partners and stakeholders. The technology aligns and compares environmental indicators from structured sources with relevant documents and postings from these online sources. These analyses of stakeholder opinions and trends in the public discourse is computed in real time and in multiple languages using advanced visualizations. The collected information is important for obtaining a comprehensive and authentic reflection of current opinion on issues such as climate change.

**Box 8. A national reporting system, the *Indicator Reporting Information System (IRIS)* makes it easier for governments to take stock of the environment and share data across Ministries.** Those responsible for collecting data, indicators and reporting to MEAs, on SDG's and at the national level (for SoEs), will be able to online and easily share data, create reports and communicate indicator-based information. For countries interested in using IRIS, the software will be deployed to a country and owned and managed by the country.

**Box 9. Mapping functionalities provide easy to use GIS capabilities** thus enabling all users, including assessment practitioners, to create, save and publish maps easily – using a drag and drop function - one can easily visualize spatial content;

**Box 10. Communities of Practice enable sharing of ideas, data, information and provide a centralized way to coordinate assessment work.** As at December 2015, UNEP Live has over 9 CoP's with over 1500 members. The COP portal provides a shared working and exchange platform.

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