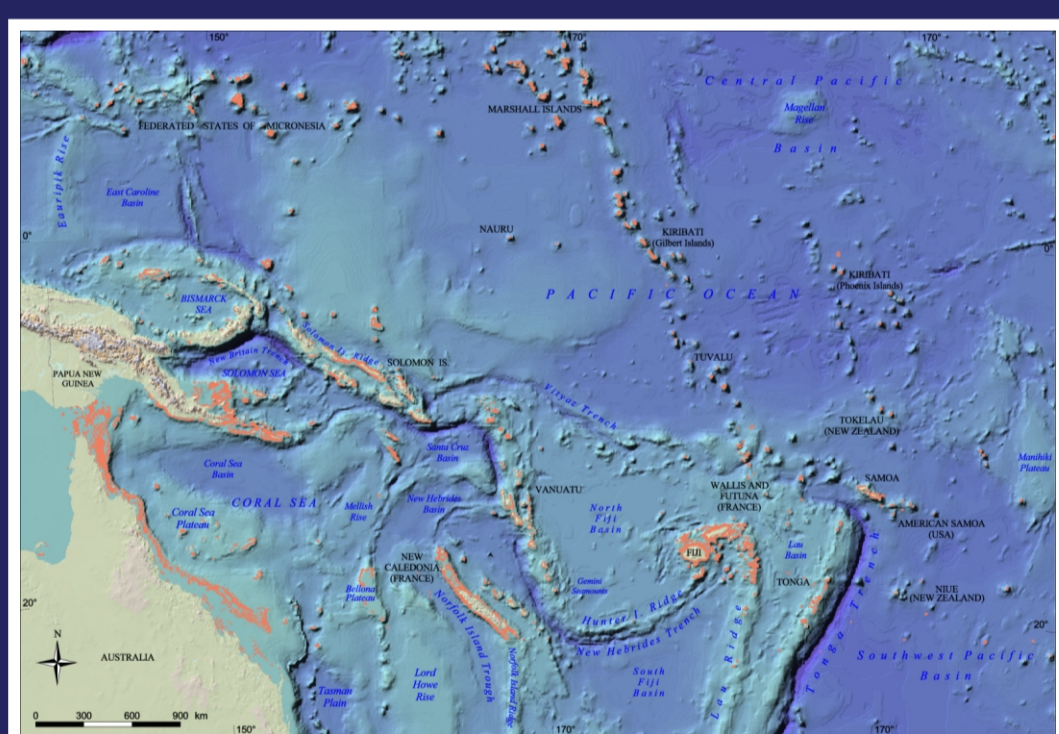




Carrying *Tridacna gigas* broodstock from sea, ICLARM Aquaculture Center, Solomon Islands. © Mike McCoy



SIDS and their vast oceans

The Kiribati archipelago has a land area of under 1000km², and rights to a total of 3.6 million km² of surrounding ocean. For many SIDS, managing their marine resources over such vast areas is almost impossible.



Island and reef near Changi airport, Singapore. © James Oliver

When the reefs are gone

With limited land resources, the coastal zones of SIDS are subject to intense development which poses a threat to near by coral reefs, as shown here for Singapore. Once the coral reefs have been destroyed, artificial protection is estimated at US\$10,000 per meter of coastline.

INVALUABLE CORAL REEFS

Geographic isolation makes Small Island Developing States (SIDS) highly vulnerable to economic and environmental pressures.

SIDS are the custodians of vast areas of ocean which surround their small land areas. With limited primary resources, many SIDS depend heavily on their marine environment, in particular their coral reef ecosystems. Coral reefs form an essential part of their cultural and natural heritage, and protect SIDS from coastal erosion.

Traditional economic activities such as reef fisheries and gathering of food from the reef flats sustained the local population.

Increasingly, reefs are also subject to the expanding dive tourism and aquarium trade. While this economic diversification provides valuable revenue, it also increases the pressure on coral reefs and threatens the source which guarantees the survival of many SIDS.



Dive storage area. © James Oliver

Dive tourism provides a significant diversification of the economies of many SIDS with coral reefs. Nearly two thirds of a total 10 million active SCUBA divers visit the Caribbean each year. For some Caribbean islands, dive tourism now accounts for up to 80% of the National GDP.



Black anemone fish *Amphiprion melanopus*. © James Oliver

The aquarium trade creates an estimated net benefit of US\$200-300 million per year world wide. The high profits are a strong incentive to switch from fisheries to the aquarium trade. In the Maldives 1kg of aquarium reef fish is worth up to US\$500, the same quantity of food reef fish is worth only US\$6.

<http://coral.unep.ch>