

Marine Administration in Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

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SUMMARY

Despite the many potential gains that can ensue from the establishment of marine administration systems, the adoption of such systems in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is complicated. Physical geography often suggests that the entire land mass of small islands is marine-connected, thus there is little to distinguish land administration from marine administration. Historical patterns of settlement, current attitudes to land and marine development and inadequate institutional structures leave those with a genuine interest in land and marine area management with little ability to respond proactively to development. These issues and the technological optimism, including the use of exploration and engineering technology in the extraction of marine resources, so eagerly pursued by developers create huge gaps between developer and regulator.

This paper uses case studies from the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the Southern Caribbean to illustrate these complications. It adds to the case already made for SIDS to be considered as special in so far as physical development is concerned and indeed, the need to find ways to introduce marine administrative systems, including Spatial Data Infrastructure and Marine Cadastre systems into physical planning at a national level within these States.

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