

# INDONESIAN DREAM ISLANDS TO BE AUCTIONED OFF FOR HOSPITALITY SECTOR



the auction.

In a few days, a true paradise of turquoise lagoons, immense white sand beaches and tropical forests will be up for sale. Between December 8 and 14, Sotheby's will auction the Widi reserve, an Indonesian archipelago of about 10,000 hectares, located in the "Coral Triangle". A deposit of \$100,000 is required to participate in

the auction.

These 100 uninhabited tropical dream islands are crucial to the region and even the planet. They are home to hundreds of rare and endangered species, such as blue whales and whale sharks. **More than 600 known species of marine mammals, fish, birds, insects and other lizards have been identified in the region of the dream islands.** The area, which represents about 1% of the planet's surface, is rich in coral reefs and concentrates the greatest marine biodiversity in the world.

## Indonesia Tries to Protect the Jewel

In Indonesia, non-Indonesians cannot officially own islands in their country. Therefore, the future buyer will have to invest in the holding company PT. Leadership Islands Indonesia (LII). The latter holds exclusive development and management licenses to maintain the Widi reserve.

The company has been trying for years to organize itself to develop an environmentally friendly, low-density residential complex on the archipelago. American hotel architect and designer Bill Bensley, known for establishing luxury hotels throughout Southeast Asia, has joined the project.

## Beginning of the End for the Archipelago?

All developments will have to be environmentally friendly, says Sotheby's. Seventeen islands out of 100 have so far been approved for development. A figure that could rise to 25. There is no question of implanting anything and everything in this idyllic setting, and each structure will have to meet precise environmental requirements. **A conservation center project, with cutting-edge research programs, such as the marking, tracking and monitoring of critically endangered species, is also under study.**

However, if the project is draped in good intentions, we know that the presence of man is rarely neutral on its environment. The proof is that the construction of a 1,000-meter runway on one of the largest dream islands is under study, in order to facilitate access to and from nearby destinations such as Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cairns or Jakarta. The Widi Reserve is only accessible by private plane, with the nearest Bali airport a 2.5-hour flight away. In addition, tourists can embark on cruise ships to visit the national parks of Raja Ampat and Komodo.

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