



DOMESTIC

IDC moves to make Assumption island key point of entry | 26 January 2024



Mr Savy (left) accompanied by Mr Lionnet during the press conference yesterday (Photo: Neil Sirame)

By Laura Pillay

In a bid to unlock the economic potential of Assomption Island, the Islands Development Company (IDC) has unveiled plans to upgrade its ageing airstrip, to establish the island as a key point of entry.

The move is part of IDC's strategy to attract high-end tourism and maximise economic benefits, while facilitating the development of a hotel on the island.

IDC's chief executive, Glenny Savy, emphasised the importance of this endeavour, in a press conference held yesterday.

The ambitious plans involve transforming Assomption into a clearing port, allowing aircraft and boats to clear in and out without necessarily travelling to Mahé, the main island.

"We believe there is the potential for us to attract high-end tourism, particularly individuals who are willing to spend a lot of money to visit Aldabra," he said.

The company seeks to encourage private jets, and is thus bound to specific standards and classification of the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) and the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO).

"Seychelles can benefit a lot from it," Mr Savy added.

The existing airstrip, constructed by the Seychelles Coast Guards in the 1980s, is one of the oldest on the outer islands. Despite previous attempts to improve its condition, enlargement is now necessary to meet the standards set forth by the IDC's plans, particularly with the hotel development.

IDC intends to establish other islands as points of entry, similarly to the Maldives and other island states.

In parallel, efforts are under way to rehabilitate Assomption Island to its pre-guano exportation state, including the reintroduction of species that disappeared from the island. IDC is also working towards making the island fully self-sufficient.

Regarding the Qatari hotel development, the IDC expressed satisfaction with the concept plan submitted by the Qatari company. The developer was the only one to respond to IDC's invitation in June 2023.

The outline plan is currently under review by the Seychelles Planning Authority, marking a significant step forward in the project.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the hotel development is nearing completion, with the Island Conservation Society (ICS) leading the Class 1 EIA.

Mr Savy clarified that ICS's involvement is crucial due to its responsibility for environmental conservation and management programmes on the outer islands.

“ICS can highlight potential dangers and ensure environmental measures are observed throughout and after construction,” he stated.

The hotel is positioned as a stepping stone to Unesco World Heritage site Aldabra and other surrounding islands.

Seychellois will also be encouraged to visit the island, with the construction of an IDC guesthouse.

Mr Savy was accompanied during the press conference by his deputy Christian Lionnet.

Laura Pillay



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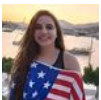
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