IPO Note Tuesday, October 15, 2024 Ng Hong Tong hongtong@mersec.com.my

Consumer Products & Services Sector

ACE Market

Subscribe IPO Price: RM0.37

Fair Value: RM0.45

Sorento Capital Bhd

Enhancing Modern Living Spaces

Valuation / Recommendation

We recommend SUBSCRIBING to Sorento Capital Berhad (Sorento), with an FV of RM0.45 based on 13.2x CY25F EPS, indicating a potential upside of 22% to the IPO price. Our target PE valuation reflects a 40% discount to global comparable peers' average, given Sorento's smaller market cap and its niche focus in retailing bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares. Key re-rating catalysts for the stock include stronger residential property sales and further market share gain.

Investment Highlights

Robust property market to drive growth. Sorento is primarily involved in marketing, distributing, and selling bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares. The company recorded a commendable 3-year revenue CAGR of 31.8%, rising strongly from RM66m in FY21 to RM152m in FY24. Its notable sales growth is tied to the robust upswing in the Malaysian property sector, particularly the impressive recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic from 2021 to 2023. Overall, a robust property market will result in more new property launches and increased numbers of secondary market transactions, both of which will benefit Sorento.

Adding more dealers. Sorento plans to strengthen its distribution network by adding 200 new dealers over the next three years, expanding beyond its current base of 664 dealers across Malaysia. As part of this strategy, the company will allocate RM20m (including RM5m from IPO proceeds) to offer subsidies to both new and existing dealers, focusing on locations where it seeks to boost market presence or capture new market share. In our view, dealer expansion is critical for Sorento, as dealer-based sales will remain a key revenue driver (55%-60% of total sales) for the company moving forward.

Growing margin in FY26-27F. Sorento's GP margins expanded from 31.4% in FY21 to 47.6% in FY23, mainly due to its effective cost management strategies, such as paying suppliers faster to get better pricing, buying in larger volumes, and switching to cost-competitive Chinese suppliers. However, its GP margin subsequently normalised to 42.5% in FY24 because of rising raw material and freight costs. We expect margins for FY25F will experience a slight decline before rebounding in FY26-27F due to increased sales and more favourable inventory costs. Given that 90% of inventory purchases were sourced from overseas third-party manufacturers (primarily transacted in USD and RMB), Sorento will also stand to benefit from the strengthening of the Ringgit.

Risk factors for Sorento include (1) Fluctuation in raw material cost; (2) Dependence on third-party manufacturers: and (3) Exposure to forey risk

Dependence on tima-p	dity manun	aotaroro, a	на (о) Ехр	30010 10 101	OX HOIG
FY Jun	FY23	FY24	FY25F	FY26F	FY27F
Revenue (RM m)	112.3	151.5	175.0	203.5	237.1
EBITDA (RM m)	34.1	35.7	42.6	49.7	57.4
PAT (RM m)	24.9	24.4	26.5	32.3	38.6
PAT Margin (%)	22.2	16.1	15.1	15.9	16.3
EPS (sen)	3.5	3.5	3.1	3.8	4.5
EPS Growth (%)	95.7	(2.0)	(11.2)	22.2	19.3
BV Per Share (sen)	7.1	9.3	21.2	25.8	31.3
PE (x)	10.5	10.7	12.0	9.8	8.2
Net Gearing (x)	Cash	0.1	Cash	Cash	Cash
ROE (%)	49.6	37.2	17.7	17.8	17.5

Business Overview

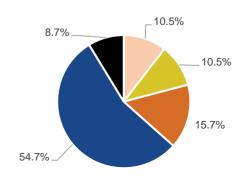
Sorento is principally	involved in the	e marketing,	distribution
and sales of bathroom	and kitchen sa	anitary wares	8.

Listing Details	
Listing date	28 Oct 2024
New shares (m)	155.0
Offer for sale (m)	74.0
Funds raised (RM m)	57.4

Post Listing	
Ordinary shares (m)	860.0
Market cap (RM m)	318.2
Free float	26.6
P/E (FY26F)	9.8

Top 3 Shareholders	
LCL Success Sdn Bhd	60.0%
Loo Chai Lai	10.1%
Loo Jing Kai	2.3%

Utilisation of Proceeds	RM m	
Working capital for inventory purchase	31.4	
Dealers network expansion	6.0	
Repayment of bank borrowings	9.0	
Brand promotion & marketing	6.0	
Estimated listing expenses	5.0	



Source: Company, Mercury Securities

Financial Highlights and Valuation

Figure 1: Sorento's revenue trend (in RM m)



Figure 2: Residential property transactions (in units)



Source: Company, Mercury Securities

Source: National Property Information Centre

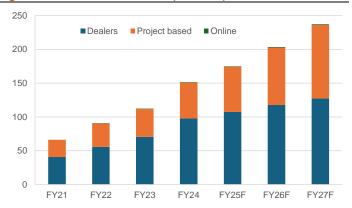
Stellar earnings growth amid robust property market outlook. Sorento recorded a commendable 3-year revenue CAGR of 31.8%, rising strongly from RM66m in FY21 to RM152m in FY24. Its notable sales growth is tied to the robust upswing in the Malaysian property sector, particularly the impressive recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic from 2021 to 2023 (see Figure 2). Overall, a robust property market will lead to more new property launches and a higher number of secondary market residential property transactions. Both of these factors would benefit Sorento as a supplier of bathroom and kitchen sanitary products, since these are essential fixtures in residential properties.

Adding 200 new dealers over 3 years. Sorento plans to strengthen its distribution network by adding 200 new dealers over the next three years, expanding beyond its current base of 664 dealers across Malaysia. As part of this strategy, Sorento will allocate RM20m (including RM5m from IPO proceeds) to offer subsidies to both new and existing dealers, focusing on locations where the company seeks to boost market presence or capture new market share. In our view, dealer expansion is critical for Sorento, as dealer-based sales will remain a key revenue driver (55%-60% of total sales) for the company moving forward.

Figure 3: Details of Sorento's subsidy plan

Nature of subsidy	Subsidy per store (RM)
To upgrade the product displays or storefront signage, renovation cost and design ideas to set up or upgrade the display areas for our products at existing and new dealers stores	10,000 – 80,000
Subsidy for renovation and fit-out cost for existing and new dealers who sell our house brands exclusively at their stores	80,000 – 150,000
Subsidy for renovation and fit-out cost and/ or supply of display units for existing and new dealers to facilitate the setting up of the concept stores	300,000 – 500,000

Figure 4: Revenue breakdown (in RM m)



Source: Company, Mercury Securities

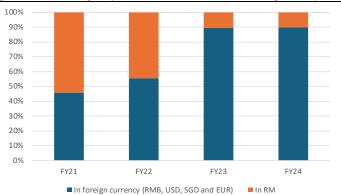
Source: Company, Mercury Securities

More contribution from project-based sales. As part of its expansion strategy, Sorento aims to bolster its project-based revenue by targeting new construction and renovation projects across various property sectors such as affordable housing, hotels, and offices. This initiative aligns with recent government priorities outlined in the Budget, emphasising property projects focused on refurbishing, maintaining, and constructing public amenities, including lavatories, educational and sports facilities, and affordable housing. According to management, Sorento expects to secure higher project-based sales from its Northern and Southern regions, driven by the government's expanded rollout of residential projects in these areas.

Figure 5: Sorento's margin trend (in %)



Figure 6: Currency exposure of Sorento's inventory cost (in %)



Source: Company, Mercury Securities

Source: Company, Mercury Securities

Growing margin but normalised in FY24. Sorento has seen its GP margins expand from 31.4% in FY21 to reach a high of 47.6% in FY23, primarily due to effective cost management strategies. These include 1) Reducing the time taken to pay suppliers to obtain better pricing, 2) Purchasing in larger volumes to lower costs per unit, and 3) Switching to Chinese suppliers that offer more competitive pricing. However, its GP margin normalised to 42.5% in FY24, affected by rising raw material and freight costs given the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East.

Going forward, Sorento's FY25F margin is likely to decline slightly due to higher initial expenses from expanding the dealers' subsidy initiative. In FY26-27F, we expect Sorento's margins to improve on the back of the higher sales (after expanding its distribution network) as well as benefitting from more favourable inventory costs given higher purchase volumes with its suppliers.

Beneficiary of stronger Ringgit. Sorento is poised to benefit from the stronger Ringgit, as a significant portion (90% in FY24) of its inventory purchases were sourced from overseas third-party manufacturers, with transactions denominated in foreign currencies such as USD and RMB. As such, the recent strengthening of the Ringgit against foreign currency is expected to alleviate the rising cost pressures on goods purchases. We believe this currency tailwind should help stabilise Sorento's profit margins and provide a buffer against cost volatility, contributing to more consistent financial performance.

Stronger balance sheet. Sorento's net gearing ratio stands at 0.1x pre-listing. With RM57.4m cash raised from the IPO and the allocation of RM9.0m from the IPO proceeds for repayment of its bank borrowings, Sorento's balance sheet will be strengthened to a net cash position after listing. Based on its historical dividend payout of 25-54% and strong net cash position, we reasonably expect Sorento to adopt a dividend policy of 30% payout in FY25-27F.

RM0.45 FV based on 13.2x CY25F EPS. Given Sorento's smaller market capitalisation, we peg a target PE valuation of 13.2x, which is at approximately 40% discount to its comparable peers' average. We have picked global peers who are principally involved in the manufacturing of bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares, as Sorento's niche in the distribution and retailing of these products does not have comparable listed peers in Malaysia. Applying it to our CY25F EPS of 3.4sen, we arrive at an FV of RM0.45 for Sorento.

Peer Comparison - Calendar Year basis (As at 14 Oct 2024)

Company	Country		Mkt Cap	EPS Grov	wth (%)	P/E	(x)	P/I	3	ROE	(%)	Net Yie	ld (%)
		(LC)	(USD m)	CY24	CY25	CY24	CY25	CY24	CY25	CY24	CY25	CY24	CY25
Geberit	Switzerland	526.6	21,562.2	(3.1)	6.6	29.6	27.8	12.9	11.9	44.4	45.1	2.4	2.5
Masco	US	83.5	18,221.6	6.6	9.6	20.3	18.5	137.1	78.5	204.4	506.1	1.4	1.5
Furtune Brand	US	88.0	10,919.0	9.6	11.0	20.5	18.5	4.5	4.0	22.0	22.8	1.1	1.2
Toto Ltd	Japan	5,280.0	6,256.4	30.8	8.4	23.5	21.7	1.7	1.6	7.8	8.3	1.9	2.1
Lixil Corp	Japan	1,668.5	3,209.9	(224.1)	209.0	-	30.1	0.8	0.8	0.4	4.0	5.4	5.4
Xiamen Solex	China	19.7	1,136.8	8.2	21.1	18.8	15.5	2.7	2.3	14.0	15.0	1.5	2.0
Average				(28.7)	44.3	18.8	22.0	26.6	16.5	48.8	100.2	2.3	2.4
Sorento Capital		0.37	74.2	(2.0)	5.5	10.7	10.9	4.0	1.7	37.2	19.2	1.9	2.8

Source: Bloomberg, Mercury Securities

Company Background

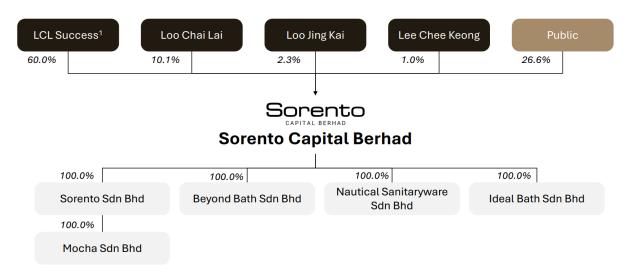
Bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares provider. Sorento is primarily involved in marketing, distributing, and selling a wide range of bathroom and kitchen sanitary ware products. These products are marketed under in-house brands such as Sorento, I-Born, Mocha, and Cahana, as well as third-party brands like Bravat and Infinity. These brands serve both residential and commercial customers, offering products that range from mass-market to affordable and luxury premium ranges.

Figure 7: Business overview



Source: Company

Figure 8: Corporate structure post listing



¹Loo Chai Lai owns 90.00% and Loo Jing Kai owns 10.00%.

Source: Company

Figure 9: Sorento's product offerings

Categories	Bathroom sanitary wares	Kitchen sanitary wares	Categories	Bathroom sanitary wares	Kitchen sanitary wares	
House brands - (p	oremium & affordable range)		i-Born	Water closets	Kitchen sinks	
Sorento	Wash basins Water closets Jacuzzi and bathtubs Bathroom furniture and mirrors Bathroom faucets Shower and bidets Bathroom accessories Water pumps	Kitchen sinks Kitchen accessories Kitchen faucets	Foreign third part	Wash basins Bathroom furniture and mirrors Bathroom accessories Bidets Bathroom faucets ty brand/ Luxury range	Kitchen faucets	
Mocha	Wash basins Water closets Jacuzzi and bathtubs Bathroom furniture and mirrors Bathroom faucets Shower and bidets Bathroom accessories Water pump	Kitchen sinksKitchen accessoriesKitchen faucets	Bravat	Water closets Wash basins Bathtubs Bathroom faucets Shower and bidets Bathroom accessories	Kitchen faucets	
Cabana	Wash basins Water closets Jacuzzi and bathtubs Bathroom furniture and mirrors Bathroom faucets Shower and bidets Bathroom accessories	Kitchen sinks Kitchen accessories Kitchen faucets	Infinity	Water closets Wash basins Bathrubs Bathroom faucets Shower and bidets Bathroom accessories	Kitchen faucets	

Source: Company

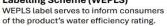
Figure 10: Product standard & quality assurance







SPAN/ Water Efficient Product
Labelling Scheme (WEPLS)
WEPLS label serves to inform consumer





Malaysian Green Technology and Climate Change Corporation (MGTC)/ MyHIJAU mark

To promote the sourcing and purchasing of green products and services in Malaysia.

Source: Company

Figure 11: Sorento's existing facilities and its details



Source: Company

Figure 12: Key Management Team

Name and Designation	Age	Profile
Loo Chai Lai Managing Director	67	 Founded SSB together with his brother, Loo Chai Sing, whereby he was responsible for the day-to-day management of SSB Under Sorento, he is responsible for overseeing the group's overall finance, business operations and business development strategies. Has 20 years of experience in the bathroom and kitchen sanitary ware industry.
Loo Jing Kai Executive Director	29	 Responsible for overseeing the sales and purchasing as well as warehouse and customer services functions of Sorento. Bachelor of Business (International Business) from the Queensland University of Technology.
Lee Chee Keong Executive Director	44	 Experience in logistics and distribution, contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of Sorento's supply chain. Responsible for Sorrento's project-based sales and marketing. Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical and Production Engineering) and Graduate Diploma in Technopreneurship and Innovation Program from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
Tan Gine Ngee Chief Financial Officer	47	 Responsible for the preparation of Sorrento's financial and accounting reporting and managing the account department's day-to-day activities. Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance from the University of London in 1999. He is a member of the Malaysian Institute of Accountants since 2006.
Loo Ai Cheng Senior Manager - Warehouse & Customer Service	58	 Oversees warehouse management, warehouse day-to-day operations and customer service-related matters. Diploma in Commerce and Economics from Meijo University in Nagoya, Japan.
Ng Lai Heong Regional Sales Manager	55	Responsible for building and leading the sales team of Sorento, developing revenue-driving strategies and formulating sales plans.
Lam Li Hua Marketing Manager	40	Responsible for marketing management which includes strategising, planning and execution for both offline and online platforms of Sorento.

Source: Company

Future Plans & Business Strategies

Expansion of distribution reach. Sorento aims to expand its distribution reach and increase its market share by bolstering its current dealer network and adding new dealers throughout Malaysia. As part of this strategy, the company plans to grow its existing dealer network from 664 to 884 dealers by bringing in an additional 200 new dealers over the next three years. This expansion is anticipated to enhance market visibility, strengthen brand recognition, and improve financial performance.

Enhance revenue from project-based sales. Sorento plans to boost revenue by focusing on project-based sales, targeting large-volume orders and increasing brand visibility in property projects. This strategy will improve the company's financial performance and market share in the bathroom and kitchen sanitary ware industry. To achieve this, Sorento aims to expand its involvement in new builds and renovations across various segments including affordable housing, hotels, and offices.

Brand elevation and marketing strategy. Sorento intends to enhance its brand positioning through initiatives such as creating a company profile, brand story, product videos, and marketing materials. They will also establish an online database with product specifications, design concepts, brochures, training videos, installation guides, and maintenance instructions. This resource library will be exclusively accessible to dealers and project sales personnel to ensure consistent brand representation across all sales channels.

Key Risks

Exposure to raw materials cost fluctuation. Any significant increase in the production cost of the bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares could adversely affect Sorento's cost of goods sold. This could include the increase in the cost such as commodity costs, freight costs and labour costs.

Dependence on third-party manufacturers. Sorento relies heavily on third-party manufacturers to source their inventory purchases as they are not involved in the manufacturing of bathroom and kitchen sanitary wares. Since Sorento does not formally enter into any form of agreement with any of the third-party manufacturers, this poses a risk to the company for any potential unfavourable changes in the commercial terms or loss of the suppliers in the event they terminate the supply to Sorento.

Exposure to foreign exchange fluctuation risk. Sorento sources most of its inventory purchases from overseas suppliers which exposes the company to foreign exchange rate fluctuation risk. This is evident from the inventory purchases sourced from overseas suppliers representing 45.6%,55.5%, 89.4% and 90.1% of the inventory purchases from FY21 to FY24.

IPO Details

	Offer for Sale (m)	Public Issue (m)	Total (m)	(%)
Retail Offering				
Eligible Persons	-	16.0	5.9	1.8
Malaysian Public (Non-Bumiputera)	-	43.0	15.9	5.0
Bumiputera investors approved by MITI		96.0	35.5	11.2
Private Placement				
Selected investors	62.5		23.1	7.3
Bumiputera investors approved by MITI	11.5		4.3	1.3
<u>Total</u>	74.0	155.0	84.7	26.6

Source: Company

Disclaimer & Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The information contained in this report is based on data obtained from data and sources believed to be reliable at the time of issue of this report. However, the data and/or sources have not been independently verified and as such, no representation, express or implied, are made as to the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or reliability of the information or opinions in this report.

This report may contain forward-looking statements which are often but not always identified by the use of words such as "believe", "estimate", "intend" and "expect" and statements that an event or result "may", "will" or "might" occur or be achieved and other similar expressions. Such forward-looking statements are based on assumptions made and information currently available to Mercury Securities Sdn Bhd. ("Mercury Securities") and are subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors which may cause the actual results, performance or achievement to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievement, expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Caution should be taken with respect to such statements and recipients of this report should not place undue reliance on any such forward-looking statements. Mercury Securities expressly disclaims any obligation to update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or circumstances after the date of this publication or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events.

Accordingly, neither Mercury Securities nor any of its holding company, related companies, directors, employees, agents and/or associates nor person connected to it accept any liability whatsoever for any direct, indirect, or consequential losses (including loss of profits) or damages that may arise from the use or reliance on the information or opinions in this publication. Any information, opinions or recommendations contained herein are subject to change at any time without prior notice. Mercury Securities has no obligation to update its opinion or the information in this report.

This report does not have regard to the specific investment objectives, financial situation and particular needs of any specific person. Accordingly, investors are advised to make their own independent evaluation of the information contained in this report and seek advice from, amongst others, tax, accounting, financial planner, legal or other business professionals regarding the appropriateness of investing in any securities or the investment strategies discussed or recommended in this report. Nothing in this report constitutes investment, legal, accounting or tax advice or a representation that any investment or strategy is suitable or appropriate to your individual circumstances or otherwise represents a personal recommendation to you. This report is not intended, and should not under no circumstances be considered as an offer to sell or a solicitation of any offer or a solicitation or expression of views to influence any one to buy or sell the securities referred to herein or any related financial instruments.

Mercury Securities and its holding company, related companies, directors, employees, agents, associates and/or person connected with it may, from time to time, hold any positions in the securities and/or capital market products (including but not limited to shares, warrants and/or derivatives), trade or otherwise effect transactions for its own account or the account of its customers or be materially interested in any securities mentioned herein or any securities related thereto, and may further act as market maker or have assumed underwriting commitment or deal with such securities and provide advisory, investment, share margin facility or other services for or do business with any companies or entities mentioned in this report. In reviewing the report, investors should be aware that any or all of the foregoing among other things, may give rise to real or potential conflict of interests and should exercise their own judgement before making any investment decisions.

This research report is being supplied to you on a strictly confidential basis solely for your information and is made strictly on the basis that it will remain confidential. All materials presented in this report, unless specifically indicated otherwise, are under copyright to Mercury Securities. This research report and its contents may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, redistributed, transmitted, or passed on, directly or indirectly, to any person or published in whole or in part, or altered in any way, for any purpose.

This report may provide the addresses of, or contain hyperlinks to websites. Mercury Securities takes no responsibility for the content contained therein. Such addresses or hyperlinks (including addresses or hyperlinks to Mercury Securities own website material) are provided solely for your convenience. The information and the content of the linked site do not in any way form part of this report. Accessing such website or following such link through the report or Mercury Securities' website shall be at your own risk.

This report is not directed to or intended for distribution or publication outside Malaysia. If you are outside Malaysia, you should have regard to the laws of the jurisdiction in which you are located.

The views expressed in this research report accurately reflect the analyst's personal views about any and all of the subject securities or issuers; and no part of the research analyst's compensation was, is or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendations or views expressed in the report.

Recommendation Rating

Mercury Securities maintains a list of stock coverage. Stock can be added or dropped subject to needs with or without notice. Hence, the recommendation rating only applicable to stocks under the list. Stocks out of the coverage list will not carry recommendation rating as the analyst may not follow the stocks adequately.

Mercury Securities has the following recommendation rating:

BUY	Stock's total return is expected to be +10% or better over the next 12 months (including dividend yield)
HOLD	Stock's total return is expected to be within +10% or -10% over the next 12 months (including dividend yield)
SELL	Stock's total return is expected to be -10% or worse over the next 12 months (including dividend yield)

Published & Printed By:

MERCURY SECURITIES SDN BHD

Registration No. 198401000672 (113193-W)

L-7-2, No 2, Jalan Solaris, Solaris Mont' Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur

Telephone: (603) - 6203 7227

Website: www.mercurysecurities.com.my Email: mercurykl@mersec.com.my