

Benguet proposes mine rehab

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BENGUET Corp. has informed Baguio City and Itogon town it will undertake the final rehabilitation of one of its Antamok Open Pits in Itogon with a project that will involve an Engineered Sanitary Landfill that will lead to a Renewable Waste to Energy Project.

The pit has a capacity of 535,400 cubic meters and could easily handle the disposal of the expected daily volume of 150 to 200 metric tons not only from Itogon and Baguio but also the surrounding areas of LaTrinidad, Itogon, Sablan, and Tuba-Tublay.

In a Memorandum of Agreement to cooperate with Baguio and Itogon Mayors Mauricio Domogan and Victorio Palangdan signed on Jan. 6, 2017, and a further letter to the City Council, Benguet Executive Director Isidro Alcantara informed them that all the necessary project feasibility studies would be done in consultation with the LGU officials to ensure that all their concerns would be addressed.

Initial findings show the ESL could provide a solution to the garbage disposal problem that can run indefinitely since it will provide and recycle bio-degradable raw material input to the WTE estimated to generate as much 25 megawatts.

Additionally, the ESL will avoid any potential health-related issues that may arise from the ill effects of insufficient handling of garbage in a major city.

Currently, Baguio sends its garbage to Capas, Tarlac, 155 kms away, and spends about P80 million yearly.

The proposed Antamok Site is only about 18.5 kms from Baguio while Itogon is 12.5 kms.

Expected savings for Baguio alone could be as much as P45 million annually.

An encouraging factor is that the project can then be launched very quickly without any cost spent for land acquisition, road building and with minimal site development.

Benguet will assign in perpetuity the 42 hectares open pit site.

A joint venture with an industrial partner and developer, Goldrich Natural Resources Exploration and Development Inc., will be formed which will construct and develop the ESL at no cost to Baguio and Itogon.

Another project proponent using latest renewable energy technology is being invited to put up the WTE and Baguio and Itogon are expected to receive benefits from the WTE Company.

A Technological Working Group and Assessment Team has been created composed of the representatives from the two LGUs, Benguet Corporation, the regional EMB and MGB and Goldrich. The TWG will assess and choose the technology, craft the corporate structure and address the public interest requirements for the project.

The final proposal will be presented for approval of the Mayors and their respective City Councils prior to implementation.