

Benguet Corp. offers open pit as landfill site for Baguio City

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THE PROPOSED rehabilitation program of one portion of Benguet Corp.'s Antamok open pit is seen to ease the garbage problem of Baguio City and Itogon town, the company said in a statement over the weekend.

The listed miner said the project will involve an engineered sanitary landfill (ESL), which will lead to a renewable waste-to-energy project (WTE).

Benguet Corp. said it signed last Jan. 6 a memorandum of agreement with the two local government units (LGUs), with a separate letter from the firm assuring that "all the necessary project feasibility studies will be done in consultation with the LGU officials to ensure that all their concerns will be addressed."

Initial findings show that the ESL could provide and recycle biodegradable raw material input to the WTE project estimated to generate as much 25 megawatts.

Currently, Baguio transports its wastes to Capas, Tarlac located 155 kilometers away, spending about P80 million a year for the delivery cost.

Benguet Corp.'s proposed Antamok Site, with a 42-hectare area allocated for the project, is about 18.5 kilometers from Baguio and Itogon.

"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," the company said.

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

A technological working group, composed of representatives from the two LGUs, Benguet Corp., the regional offices of the Environmental Management Bureau and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), and Goldrich, has been created for the project. -- **Janina C. Lim**