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# DENR sets \$4.65 million project to address COVID-19 waste

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The STAR / Miguel de Guzman, file

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to implement a project with a funding of \$4.65 million to address the waste problem brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The DENR has expressed concern about the increased generation of health care wastes.

The agency said it is looking forward to carrying out the health care waste management project, which was approved for funding by its partner Global Environment Facility (GEF).

DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) director William Cuñado said the project involves the reduction of unintentionally-produced POPs (persistent organic pollutants) released to the environment.

“Management of mercury-added products and mercury waste from the health care sector will be addressed as these can

have adverse effects on human health once released into the environment,” Cuñado said.

“We also need to strengthen the management of non-pathological infectious waste generated from the health care system brought about by COVID-19. These trash should be properly treated and disposed of to prevent the spread of the virus,” he added.

Cuñado said the project would also demonstrate low-cost and non-combustion treatment of waste suitable for small-scale and remote hospitals.

“This will be implemented in a cluster of health care facilities. The project will upgrade the capacity of waste service providers with best available technologies, techniques and practices. It will also link local governments to public and private investments,” he said.

The DENR is mandated to reduce the use of mercury under its obligation as a party to the Minamata Convention.

Human exposure to mercury has been linked to disorders of the central nervous system resulting in incognitive motor skills, kidney failure and birth defects.

The Philippines is also committed to the elimination of POPs under the Stockholm Convention.

The project will be implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and EMB as the lead executing agency.

The Department of Health said infectious waste is most likely to contain pathogens (bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi) in sufficient concentration or quantity to cause diseases in susceptible hosts.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/09/08/2125575/denr-sets-465-million-project-address-covid-19-waste?fbclid=IwAR36GEdbegCMv1ycmnmhW8Q0QMahY0BOY6XIOIrrtwLNc69FB20hsucJEU>