

## MPIC, QC GOV'T REVIVE TALKS ON 42-MW WASTE-TO-ENERGY PROJECT

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A consortium led by infrastructure conglomerate Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) has resumed negotiations with the **Quezon City local government unit (LGU)** on a project to develop a 42-megawatt waste-to-energy facility to address daily solid waste in the populous city.

The project was estimated to cost \$263 million or about P13 billion.

MPIC is hoping to get the final award of the project— which it first submitted as an unsolicited public-private partnership in 2017—before the May 2022 elections.

“We were recently informed by the negotiating team of the LGU that they wanted to reopen discussions, and they were now ready to proceed to try to resolve the remaining remaining issues,” MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim said in a recent briefing.

All remaining issues have now been resolved except for one item which was related to the contingent liabilities to be shouldered by the LGU, he said.

“In the event that the concessionaire defaults—in other words the private sector partner defaults—the government could not live with that contingent liability because it would not be in their budget,” Lim said.

Lim said the group would take the opportunity to sit down and meet with the LGU panel and try to iron out the remaining kinks and formalize the project.

“We’re hopeful we can achieve this with them at least before the elections next year,” Lim said.

The consortium also includes Covanta Energy LLC and Macquarie Group Ltd.

The integrated solid waste management facility will be capable of processing and converting up to 3,000 metric tons per day of the city’s municipal solid waste into renewable energy that is enough to power between 60,000 and 90,000 homes.

To date, the QC LGU is already implementing a waste collection program that requires house holds and commercial establishments to segregate biodegradable from nonbiodegradable waste.

The consortium has proposed this project as a sustainable approach to reduce the amount of waste that must be placed in landfills for disposal. Critics of the project, however, earlier asked the LGU to junk the project, warning that the proposed incinerator would cause air pollution.

Meanwhile, Meralco PowerGen Corp. (MGen)’s Powersource First Bulacan Solar Inc. linked to the grid last May its 50-MW solar farm in San Miguel, Bulacan province. This is currently the largest single operating solar plant in the country and has since delivered about 14.9 gigawatt-hour of solar energy in the first semester of this year. MGen’s wholly-owned Global Business Power Corp. has also broken ground for another renewable project involving a 115-MW solar plant in Baras, Rizal province. “We are targeting commercial operations in 2022,” Meralco chief executive officer Ray Espinosa said.