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Global Biomass to put up \$4-M R&D, manufacturing plant in Iloilo

MANILA, Philippines - Global Biomass Plc Corp. is constructing a \$4-million research and development and manufacturing (RDM) facility in Mina, Iloilo being heralded as the first of its kind in the world.

Global Biomass is a Philippine-based company dedicated to the development of biomass fuel solutions.

The 5,000-square facility will conduct research, develop, design and manufacture equipment to support the harvesting, collection, transportation, storage and processing of agricultural wastes for use as an alternative to fossil fuels, as well as biomass fuel transportation and handling systems for biomass power plants.

Global Biomass Group chief executive officer David de Montaigne said the project would help alleviate poverty in rural areas and would not compete with organic farming.

“All of this equipment is being designed to help farmers efficiently gather and transport biomass wastes such as rice and corn straw, coconut, banana, pineapple and other biomass residues that Global Biomass will purchase from farmers and consolidators to use as an alternative fuel that will displace imported fossil fuels,” De Montaigne said.

These agricultural wastes are currently either burned in the fields causing carbon dioxide or left to rot causing methane, both greenhouse gases that contribute significantly towards climate change.

The company selected the municipality of Mina as the plant's location due to its progressive development plan good governance, as well as the strong support and encouragement of the provincial government of Iloilo.

Mina is the site of the 17.5-megawatt (MW) multi-fueled biomass power plants operated by Green Power Panay Philippines Inc.

Global Biomass will also register under the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 that facilitates the grant of incentives to local manufacturers within the renewable energy industry to ensure local and export products remain cost competitive.

Global Biomass and the rest of the renewable energy advocates are waiting for the release of the feed-in-tariff (FIT) now pending with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) for approval.

The company said the timely approval of the FIT "will help alleviate the power shortage in Panay and its adverse effects to the local economy," while mitigating climate change.

The feed-in tariff is a regulated incentive structure that typically pays a premium for electricity generated from renewable energy sources.