

japanese to invest in waste management

A Japanese investor has offered waste management technology to process garbage at the Putri Cempo dump in Mojosoongo, Surakarta, Central Java, which has been overloaded with piles of waste for the last five years.

The offer was made public on Saturday by Surakarta Development Planning Board (Bappeda) head Anung Indro Susanto. However, the name of the investor was kept confidential.

“The technology offered will be an additional reference in the ongoing study on the management of the Putri Cempo dump. We have conveyed the offer to Bappenas [National Development Planning Board],” Anung said.

The Putri Cempo dump is currently being studied by Bappenas, which has taken over management of the site from June 2012 to February 2013. Bappenas has come up with two alternatives of waste management technology, namely anaerobic digestion and landfill.

Of the two options, the administration prefers anaerobic digestion as the method does not require land expansion. Besides the two options, Anung said, the administration still welcomed other alternatives.

Anung said that from the investor’s presentation, the technology offered would not involve the waste being sorted. The technology is claimed to be able to minimize residue because the waste is directly burned in a vessel that is destroyed.

Anung expressed hope that the most suitable technology would be chosen before bidding for the project opened from between April and May this year.

A different way of managing the dump was first put forward by former Surakarta mayor Joko “Jokowi” Widodo in 2009, who said that suitable waste management technology for Putri Cempo was to turn the waste into other substances such as fertilizer or energy.

An investor came up with the required technology the same year but later withdrew from the project. The investment needed to properly manage the dump is reportedly estimated to reach up to Rp 300 billion (US\$31 million), which could not be covered by the municipal budget. This has led to private sector involvement being sought.

In 2012 alone, waste dumped at the site was expected to reach 290 tons, 70 percent of it from households. Waste at the site has accumulated over the past five years, creating a hill of garbage up to 10 meters high.

To date, waste reduction has only been assisted by some 100 trash pickers and locals who herd cows there. The piling up of waste at the site resulted in a fire in mid-2012 that lasted for a month, creating haze over six villages in the surroundings.