

# Frequently Asked Questions



There are over 500 waste-to-energy plants in the European Union that convert waste energy into thermal and electric power. At the same time, they reduce the amount of waste that is dumped in landfills and strengthen the EU's energy independence with a locally available resource. Waste-to-energy plants are often built in cities as modern urban structures that attract tourists and places where residents of the neighborhood like to spend their time.

We want to build a new waste-to-energy plant in Latvia that would be modern, use safe technologies, be environmentally friendly and freely accessible to local residents and tourists.

On this page, more about the idea, which you can read about at [www.irenergija.lv](http://www.irenergija.lv).

Where will the waste-to-energy plant be built?

The plan is to build the waste-to-energy plant in Ropaži, a territory meant for industrial development. It has several advantages – a shorter distance for the transportation of raw materials and a potential for a more efficient connection to Riga's district heating system.

At present, the project is in the development stage. We want to create a unique project by implementing the EU's climate goals to reduce the amount of waste buried in landfills and to create a new source of energy by turning waste into a material producing thermal and electric power. The result would be energy which is cheaper and independent from Russia.

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Ropaži is a popular residential neighborhood. It has been an attractive place for investment in real estate. How will the waste-to-energy plant affect property prices in the neighborhood?

The project will be implemented in an industrial development area with already existing similar objects, so there are no reasons to expect a negative effect on real estate prices. The aim is to provide value added to the Ropaži municipality – recognizability, leisure opportunities and well-groomed green areas. Hiking trails, cycling routes and activity grounds will serve the well-being of the community. If we manage to create a popular and attractive tourism site, it might even have a positive effect on the value of real estate in the area.

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What will the plant be like and what will be its capacity?

We will be generating thermal and electric power, using waste energy as a resource. This will be a modern resource recovery plant in which we will be using state-of-the-art technologies that meet the EU's exemplary practice standards. It will help cut energy prices in Latvia and diversify the resources used in energy generation. At present, 514,000 tons of waste are buried in landfills each year. The plant will convert 143,000 tons of waste into energy, ensuring heat supply to roughly 100,000 people.

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What do the neighborhood's residents say about the waste-to-energy plant?

The development and implementation of the project consists of several stages. The first important stage is an environmental impact assessment, which includes a public debate. We will present the project to the residents of the neighborhood and other interested people, as well as survey the residents to find out their opinion. After that, we will involve the residents of the neighborhood by asking their opinion on how to best use the public space. In Denmark, for instance, there is a hill with a ski slope on top of a plant producing clean energy. On this 85-meters-high hill it is possible to ski 365 days a year and it is visited by some 300,000 people a year. In Latvia, too, the plan is to create an urban infrastructure object that would be attractive to the local community and tourists.

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Who are the implementers of the project?

The project is being implemented by Vides resursu centrs, a company of CleanR Group. We plan to involve investors in the project's implementation, and we will do this in cooperation with the international auditing firm KPMG. As we look for investors, we prioritize experience with similar projects, which is why we are primarily looking at Scandinavian countries like Denmark and Norway where waste recycling is an essential part of the economy, as well as potential partners in France and Germany.

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Why does Latvia need yet another energy project?

The diversification of types and sources of energy is a highly important aspect of independence and sustainability. When energy produced from one source competes with energy generated from another source, it benefits the consumer who does not need to overpay for energy. Wind, solar energy, and recycled materials make up a complex environment which in the long run can ensure energy sufficiency, independence, and predictable prices. Amid so many political risks, it would be unwise to put all eggs into one basket.

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Does Latvia have enough waste to produce the necessary amount of energy?

Our Group's common goals – to produce less waste, to sort more, to use waste as a raw material – remain unchanged. At present, around 514,000 tons of waste are buried in landfills a year, and our plant will have the capacity to convert 143,000 tons of waste into energy. This means that importing waste would make no economic sense, our main task will be to process the waste that already exists in Latvia.

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There are plans in Europe to shut some waste-to-energy plants down. Is this the right time for Latvia to start something that other countries are already trying to reduce?

There are over 500 waste-to-energy plants in Europe. Some of them have been built long ago, their technologies have grown obsolete and no longer meet today's environmental standards, so the closure of such plants makes sense. Furthermore, those countries where waste import is becoming a business model tend to restrict the use of waste in energy generation. Neither of these situations is Latvia's case. We will be using modern technologies, and we have our own waste in abundance. Latvia produces around 478.3 kilograms of waste per resident a year, and to achieve the goals set by the EU, we are faced with another extreme – we might soon have difficulties burying our waste in landfills. By using waste for heat generation, we can make it work instead of idling in the landfill and earning extra penalties from the European Union.

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Isn't the waste combustion process harmful to the environment? What impact this project might have on the environment?

Burning, especially if it is used in heat and electricity generation, is considered an improvement in comparison with burying waste in landfills where it emits methane and can leak toxic chemicals. Moreover, EU provisions prescribe a thorough control of the process and responsibility. As we work on the project, we set even stricter requirements than those set by EU laws because we want to make the environment attractive and accessible to the neighborhood's residents and tourists.

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Can there be any changes in air quality, bad odors or noises in the area of the plant that might disturb the neighborhood's residents?

The new plant definitely will not be a disturbance to the neighborhood's residents. On the contrary, with its landscaped territory, the plant will become an attractive object to visit. All recycling operations take place within closed premises and closed facilities, in line with Scandinavian experience and good EU practice.

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Won't the Waste-to-Energy plant be an additional impediment to introducing a circular economy considering that waste sorting is not very developed in Latvia?

The project is being implemented by a company of CleanR Group which aims for a zero-waste economy by educating the public on how to produce less waste, promoting waste sorting habits, at the same time making sorting more convenient, and by developing projects that turn waste into raw materials from which something new can be made. We want to expand the Group's operations that are based in the principles of circular economy by involving the public and investing in new projects that we believe will be very useful for our country and society.

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