

# Wasteserv and ERA to participate in Interreg Europe project COCOON on landfill management

The Malta Business Weekly 19 Jan 2017



Wasteserv, as the operator, and the Environment and Resource Authority, as the regulator, will be participating in an Interreg Europe project, bearing the name COCOON. The name of the project reflects the change happening during the metamorphosis of waste through the concept of landfill mining. This project aims to improve regional policy on landfill management within the participating regions and countries. This project has a total budget of €14M with around €176,000 going to the Maltese partners at a cofinancing rate of 85%. Its total duration is 60 months and will run until February 2022. I-Cleantech Flanders, a Belgian entity, is the coordinator and

brings together 8 partners from the countries of Cyprus, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Malta.

The objective of this project is to develop, integrate and improve relevant policy instruments, while increasing subsidies through operational programmes for landfill management projects, bringing together distinct EU regions to share and capitalise on regional good practices.

As a result of landfill management projects, the recovery of resources as well as land recovery is increased while future environmental hazards can be avoided. Moreover, landfill management projects generate economic development opportunities and create new green jobs, all within the context of an EU-wide transition to a resilient, low-carbon, circular economy.

Since the 1950's, Europe has been disposing significant amounts of waste in landfills. In fact it is estimated that over 450,000 non-sanitary landfills in Europe have limited environmental protection technologies. In light of this, the European Commission has acknowledged that a vision for managing Europe's landfills is urgently required. Landfills are to be considered as dynamic stocks of resources that can be integrated into the economy, while landfill management supports reclaiming land and avoids astronomical remediation and aftercare costs.

Malta, an island state with limited land available for landfilling, is participating in the COCOON project through two key stakeholders in waste management - Wasteserv and ERA, which fall under the remit of the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate Change. The project's objectives fit with Wasteserv's vision – that of creating resources from waste. In fact the company's educational drive focuses on changing people's behaviour and have them move away from disposing in landfills and closer to the concepts of reducing, reusing and recycling. This is in line with the waste management hierarchy, which is also the underlying principle of the waste legislation which ERA manages.