

Environmental activists held several protests against the announcement of the opening of lithium mine and tailings, and the multinational company Rio Tinto, which is the 100% owner of the “Jadar” project, said that “they are working to ensure that the environmental impact is within the legal limits in Serbia.” .

Due to the high concentration of lithium and boron per ton of excavated ore, Jadar is ranked as one of the most important lithium deposits in the world.

“Jadar” is a world-class project for the exploration of lithium and boron deposits, according to the prospectus of the mining company Rio Tinto, one of the largest mining and metallurgical corporations in the world. The deposit of the new mineral jadarite was discovered in 2004 by the company’s geologists. Although the Rio Tinto project currently only involves the construction of a mine and an ore processing factory, president of Serbia Vucic stated that “he will not allow any drilling until they build the largest battery factory for electric cars, to make batteries here.” If the project is realized, three final products will be made there - lithium carbonate from which batteries and electric vehicles are made, then boric acid and sodium sulfate. The project, which is currently in the feasibility study phase, has invested or committed \$ 450 million. Lithium and borates are essential for our daily lives and for a low-carbon future. Borates are an integral part of the production of glass wool, glass, ceramics, fertilizers, detergents, wood preservatives and a large number of other products that are used every day.

What do environmentalists say?

“For the needs of the mine, it is necessary to pump large amounts of water, which could lead to drought during the summer and floods during the rainy periods,” Miroslav Mijatovic, president of the Podrinje anti-corruption team, told Danas.

“In addition, the toxic cocktail of chemicals used to extract lithium from the country is also capable of infiltrating nearby rivers, streams and water supply,” Mijatovic added.

Rio Tinto announced that it has developed an innovative technology that will be in the service of the environment.

Nikola Sunjić from the company Rio Tinto in Serbia stated that a comprehensive study that will examine the potential impacts on the environment will be completed “by the middle of this year”.

“We are working to ensure that the impact on the environment is within the limits allowed by legal solutions in Serbia,” Sunjic told Danas.

In the past months, the process of buying land from the local population has begun, and numerous permits from the state are yet to be obtained.

The Government of Serbia said that the development of the project is of exceptional importance for Serbia and Loznica and that “only in the phase of construction of mines and processing plants, more than 2,100 workers will be hired.” The Minister of Mining and Energy, Zorana Mihajlovic, stated that all projects that will be realized in this area will have to meet the highest environmental standards, in order to harmonize economic development and preserve a healthy environment.

“It is not in the interest to destroy a part of Serbia in order to earn huge money, regardless of the fact that the potential is huge (...), but everything must be with more modern and best technologies, no matter how much they cost, in order to keep the environment clean.” the Minister emphasized.

Source: danas.rs