

New Israeli Waste Treatment Facility Turns Tel Aviv's Garbage Green

The recently opened Hiriya plant, one of the largest of its kind in the world, produces refuse-derived fuel.

The largest and most advanced facility in Israel for treating waste recently went online near the Hiriya site outside Tel Aviv, and it is now taking in around half of all the municipal waste in the Dan region.

A large portion of the treated waste is transferred to the Neshar cement plant in Ramle, where it provides around a fifth of the fuel needed to run the plant's ovens.

The initiative for the 400 million shekel (\$109.7 million) plant came from the Dan Municipal Sanitation Association, whose members include all the large cities in the region. Both Neshar and the Veridis company, which specializes in waste and water projects, were partners in setting up the facility, which was built without government funding. It utilizes a process that produces RDF (refuse-derived fuel) and is one of the largest of its kind in the world.

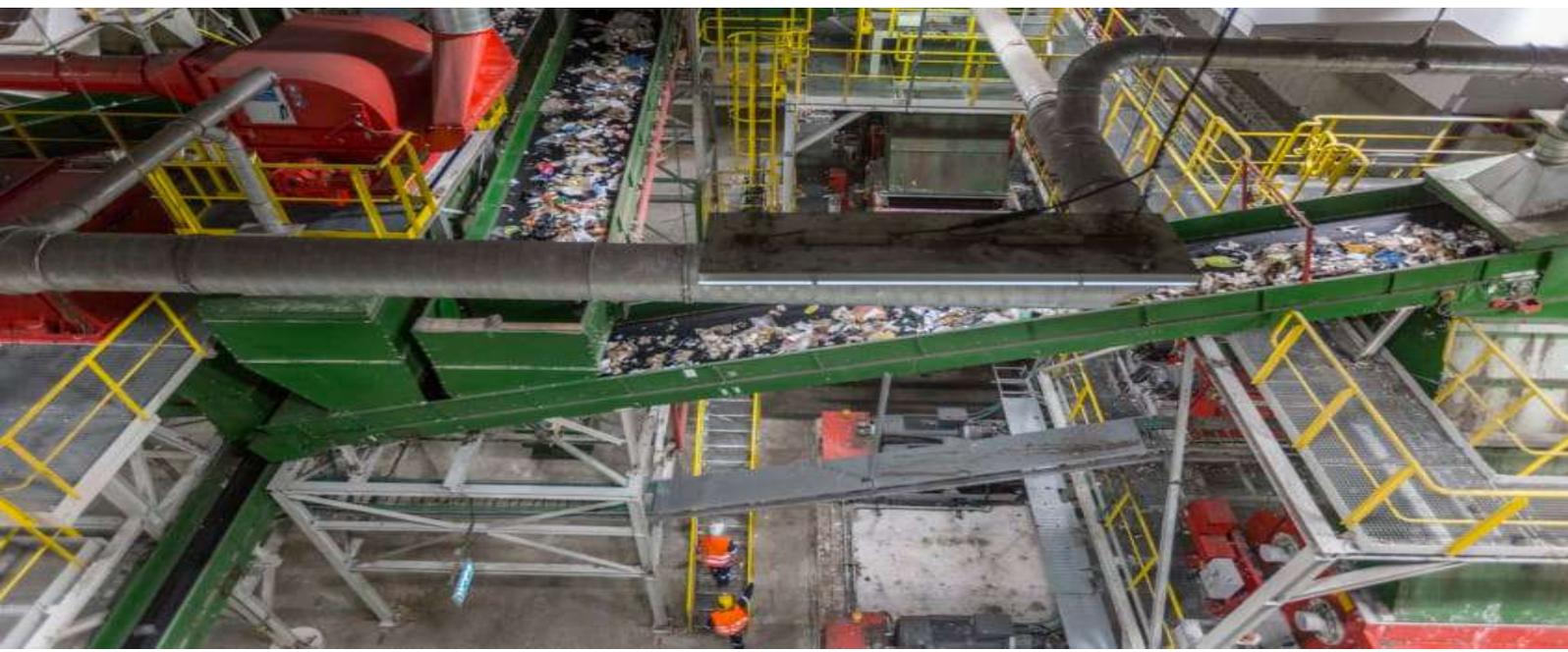


Aerial Sharon Park



Dozens of trucks arrive from the area's cities, delivering 1,500 tons of waste daily. Their cargo is put on a number of conveyors and sorted by various means. Wet waste (organic material, primarily food scraps) are sent to a site in the Jordan Valley where it is turned into fertilizer. Metals, wood and cardboard are also separated and sent to recycling plants.

About a third of the waste, primarily plastics, is shredded, dried and sent to the ovens at the Nesher plant, where it replaces other fuels that were more polluting. About a third of the waste can be neither recycled nor burned; this sorting residue, as it's called, is sent to a landfill. Until recently, almost all the Dan Region's waste was being sent to a Negev landfill.





“This facility is part of a comprehensive recycling park to be erected here,” said Doron Sapir, a Tel Aviv deputy mayor and director of the sanitation association. “The facilities here will be able to serve one another. We already have a facility that sorts some 400 tons of waste a day and uses the organic material to produce energy, and it can give the new facility all the other components it separates from that waste. In return, the new facility can give it the organic material that was separated.”

That is the plan for the future, at least; this waste is now being taken to the Jordan Valley until certain financial issues between the facilities are worked out.

Those involved in building the facility said Sunday that the Environmental Protection Ministry ought to do more to encourage the construction of plants that can sort and treat municipal waste. Veridis CEO Ariel Kappon said that sorting residue sent to landfills should be accepted at a reduced rate, to acknowledge the effort made to exploit it for recycling or energy. As of now, there is no such incentive.

Nesher CEO Moshe Kaplinsky said that the cement plant in Ramle could take in double the amount of RDF that it is using now, but the Environmental Protection Ministry has set limits on the amount of such waste it can take in, a restriction that Kaplinsky says has no environmental justification.

HAARETZ