

**The management of “Rio Tinto” points out that the “Jadar” project is transparent, but the exact amount of funds, intended for lithium and pine mining and mine start-up, has not been published, although according to the submitted study it can be concluded that the budget was prepared in advance.**

Miroslav Mijatović, from the Podrinje Anti-Corruption Team (PAKT), notes for “Nova” that the main question is why “Rio Tinto” hides the costs of previous investments and that there is a real fear that the costs will be artificially increased to add value to the project.

In the period from 2004 to 2020, “Rio Tinto” invested 209.1 million US dollars in the costs of field geological works, according to the documents of this company, obtained by the daily “Nova”.

- What is worrying is the data from the Elaborate, from which it can only be concluded that the final investment figure of “Rio Tinto” is slightly more than 200 million dollars. However, we have heard that over 450 million euros have been invested this year alone, although no work has been done on the ground throughout the year - warns Mijatović.

- In the study, almost all data on investments are obscured. There is a real fear that “Rio Tinto” will “wake up” investments, because the ore rent for lithium and boron is charged in the amount of five percent of net income - our interlocutor explains and adds that it is realistic to imagine a situation in which “Rio Tinto” will not show actual profits until the investment pays off.

According to earlier announcements from this company about the amount of lithium and boron production, Serbia would receive about seven million euros a year, along with 23 million, which would follow from the profit tax.

Commenting on the mentioned data, Mijatović states that, in the best scenario, Serbia will remain without ore rent for at least five years.

In a statement given last Monday, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic pointed out that the “Jadar” project would not be withdrawn.

“That project is standing still and will not move anywhere. They brought him, and we did everything that the people asked for, and that’s it, “he said, without explaining why, although it is a request of the citizens, the state is not giving up on this project.

Lack of information and insufficient transparency, ie vagueness of the top of the state and the management of the company “Rio Tinto”, contributed to the debate in which the question dominates whether the government does not give up the “Jadar” project, due to possible penalties that Serbia would pay.

On the other hand, Mijatović points out that he is convinced that the citizens of Serbia will not return the money to “Rio Tinto”, and that it is unbelievable that compensation for damage is being mentioned now.

- Now some bilateral agreements are mentioned, and “Rio Tinto” persistently hides costs from the public. I would rather say that someone individually promised help to this company

and took money for it. If you take a good look, you will see that the laws in the last 15 years have been compared because of them - concludes Mijatović.

A study on the resources and reserves of boron and lithium in the Jadar deposit near Loznica, prepared by Rio Tinto and adopted by the Ministry of Mining and Energy on January 6 this year, states that this multinational company has invested more than \$ 200 million to cover the costs of field geological works, which include exploratory drilling for all programs, laboratory analysis, testing, as well as the costs of the project team and study work.

Although this document shows how much has been invested so far in geological research and that there is a predetermined figure for exploitation, “Rio Tinto” has not yet disclosed data on how much money is intended for exploitation.

#### **Where is the cost of mining circuit infrastructure**

“Capital costs of exploitation consist of the costs of mining works, the costs of mining infrastructure and facilities on the surface. The latter include facilities, installations and works on the surface of the terrain that are not covered by the costs of exploitation, ie preparation of mineral raw materials. “These are costs for the construction of mining facilities, such as offices, bathrooms, workshops, internal roads and other infrastructure on the surface of the terrain that is not included in other cost items,” the Rio Tinto document states.

Source: nova.rs