



Renewable energy growth havana

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The foreign trade ministry has traditionally controlled equipment imports, while state-owned power utility UNE has managed project development. Havana is now moving to legalize and encourage individual enterprise and small businesses.

The government said it will remove customs duties on renewable power equipment, parts and components, including solar heaters, photovoltaic pumps, small wind turbines, biodigesters, biogas pumps, solar lighting, solar air conditioning systems and related parts.

The attempt to accelerate development of renewables coincides with lengthening power outages, a long decline in domestic crude production and reduced subsidized oil supply from political ally Venezuela.

Cuba currently has renewable power capacity of 225MW, a small complement to its aging oil-based fleet of generators.

"In the last five years, investments in renewables have been made that exceed \$500mn, which shows the priority given by the government to meet the 2030 targets of the national economic program," the government says.

Several small wind and solar plants have been installed across the island, but most of the major renewable power capacity has been installed through joint ventures with foreign investors.

UK renewable energy developer Havana Energy and Cuba's state-owned sugar company Azcuba subsidiary Zerus are operating a 60MW biomass plant that burns bagasse, the residue from sugar cane milling, and wood chips from the invasive marabou weed.

The government is constructing two similar plants with combined capacity of 70MW.

UK developer Hive Energy and China's equipment manufacturer Shanghai Electric Group are building a 50MW solar project at the Mariel commercial and industrial zone 45km west of Havana.

And India has given Cuba \$75mn in supplier's credit to finance development of several solar plants with combined capacity of 75MW.

Blackouts worsened in the first half of this year as Cuba struggled with plant breakdowns and a shortage of



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generation fuels.

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