

Cuba sets ambitious renewables target

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02/09/2016

The Cuban government has outlined plans to vastly increase renewable power generation in the country in an attempt to reduce its dependence on energy imports. The plans were outlined at *IJGlobal* and New Energy Events' inaugural Cuba Energy & Infrastructure Summit in Havana on 1 September 2016.

The government wants to produce 24% of Cuba's power generation from renewable sources by 2030. The main source of renewables in the country at present is biomass from sugar cane, with 57 sugar mills producing 490MW of power. The target is to increase this to 755MW.

The plans also involve increasing wind power generation from 11.7MW to 633MW, and solar photovoltaic from 24.4MW to 700MW. New hydro, biogas and forest biomass plants are also being planned.

Peak power demand in Cuba is roughly 3,300MW in the height of summer, according to Rosell Guerra Campana, the director of renewable energy at the Ministry of Energy & Mining. He could not however share official projections of demand growth related to an expected increase in tourism and foreign investment. At present, 52% of Cuba's energy is imported.

The Cuban government is keen to attract foreign investment now that trade embargoes imposed by the US are beginning to be loosened. It is early days for outside investment into the Cuban power sector however attendees at the conference are keen to learn more about the contracts on offer in the country.

Deborah Rivas Saavedra, director general of the Ministry of Foreign Trade Investments, told delegates that investors would not benefit from a sovereign guarantee against offtaker obligations under any power purchase agreement. Though this measure is intended to wean local businesses off relying on state support, it may prove prohibitive to some foreign companies investing in Cuba.

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