

Energy storage industry havana

London - UK company Havana Energy Ltd - part of the Esencia Group - has teamed up with Zerus SA, a company linked to the Ministry of Sugar, to develop a pilot 30MW power plant at Ciro Redondo Sugar Mill, about 400km from Havana, and as a second stage four further power plants.

Cuba's ministry of sugar and National Electricity Board have a strategy to increase power generation in all its operating sugar mills to decentralise the grid and provide power generation in areas which have weaker supply today.

"Bagasse is the fibrous residual left after cane crushing. In Cuba it is possible via the sugar mills and bagasse based power plants to generate up to 40% of the energy needs of the country today".

Andrew Macdonald, director of Havana Energy, who has been working in Cuba for the past seven years, said: "Our Cuban colleagues have a deep understanding of the renewable sector, they have already registered CDM projects and have pilot projects in most areas - hydro, solar, waste, etc."

Last November, a mission with academics from Scotland visited Cuba, supported by the SDTI and Havana Energy. The scope of the visit was to primarily investigate renewable energy crops, primarily a shrub called Marabu that has invaded over 1 million hectares.

Julian Bell from the Scottish Agricultural College, commented: "The intended model of bagasse to produce electricity in Ciro Redondo makes total sense and even better if the brushy wood Marabu can be utilised and therefore also converting more land to agricultural use?"

The experts noted the possibility of utilising this shrub as a secondary biomass for the local power plants and that it has an interesting export potential. Marabu is currently been tested in laboratories in the UK to investigate its properties.

Martin Tangle, director of Biofuel Centre, said the sugar mill/biomass plant process is one of the most efficient sources of renewable energy in the world, the next stage should be incorporating biofuels from the other waste products from the sugar cane."

Peter Hall, professor of energy storage from Strathclyde University with Havana Energy will launch in the spring 2011 a university study project into the design process within the sugar industry.

The state-owned Unión Eléctrica (UNE) is responsible for supplying electricity to the Cuban population and the national economy. This is a complex process in which more than 50,000 workers intervene, highlighted Jorge Armando Cepero Hernández, UNE's general director during a recent press

conference. The executive explained that electrical energy is produced with a generation fleet that has more than 6,500 MW installed (Figure 1).

1. Current Cuban energetic matrix. Source: UNE

“Of these, 480 MW of combined cycle technology that uses the accompanying gas produced from the extraction of national crude oil as a fuel,” he said. This is the cheapest generation in the country and its facilities treat the gas, which is used then for food cooking in some regions of Havana city.

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