

## Ventania Puts Up Over US\$ 500 Million for Brazilian Wind Farms

Contributed by Newsroom  
Thursday, 20 November 2008

Controlled by the Portuguese company Martifer and the Brazilian Energia Global, the firm Ventania is vowing to invest 1.2 billion Brazilian reais (US\$ 520 million) in the construction 11 wind farms in northeastern Brazil between 2009 and 2010.

Of the 11 wind farms, five should be in the state of Ceará, four in Piauí and two in Rio Grande do Norte. "The entire investment should be made by Ventania, which will have a subsidiary in each state," said Armando Ferreira, the president at Energia Global.

According to the businessman, the confirmation of the projects "depends on the evolution of the current conjuncture, on federal government decisions relative to the release of specific auctions of wind sources and on the conditions."

On Friday (17), Ventania, whose capital is 55% in the hands of Martifer and 45% in the hands of Energia Global, inaugurated wind farms Canoa Quebrada and Lagoa do Mato, in Aracati, 140 kilometers away from Fortaleza.

The vice president of the group and CEO of Martifer Renewables, Jorge Martins, who was present at the inauguration, said that the two parks represent the company's entry into the wind energy market.

Included in the Alternative Energy Source Incentive Program (Proinfa), of the Ministry of Mines and Energy, both wind units received investment of 72 million reais (US\$ 31 million), being 44 million reais (US\$ 19 million) financed by the Bank of the Northeast, an institution headquartered in the city of Fortaleza.

Together, the parks should be able to generate around 61,000 megawatts/hour, enough to supply around 50,000 families, as estimated by Armando Ferreira, also president of the Brazil Portugal Chamber in Ceará. This capacity also avoids the emission of 25,800 tonnes of CO2 into the atmosphere.

The works for construction of the parks began in March 2007 and, according to the businessman, "this is an important step for Ceará, which is heading towards self sufficiency."

According to Jorge Martins, the investment program for the Northeast forecasts around 4 billion reais (US\$ 1.7 billion), distributed into renewable energy projects over the next four years in different cities.

Solar energy and biomass projects are also part of the plan, in a model that should follow the path of developments in California, in the United States, in the sense of providing the greatest possible profitability in energy sources that are combined in a hybrid park.

"Brazil fits well in this process, as it has better conditions," stated Martins, adding that "to date, the United States concentrate the greatest number of projects, with 800 MW, but Brazil is moving fast."

Jorge Martins also sees good perspectives for biodiesel, "which should find its space in the medium term." "Brazil is the best example of this, with ethanol," added the vice president at the group.

Martifer has a soy production area in Maranhão and plans to advance in the direction of Piauí, with the production of other kinds of grain, possibly maize, already under study. Production should be used to supply raw material for the group.

Martifer group operates in 19 countries and, according to Martins, already has two biodiesel production units in Europe.

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