

Brazil Takes the Lead on Wind Energy in Latin America

Contributed by Shirley Prestes
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The largest wind energy park in Brazil and one of the greatest in the world, which is being built in Osório, city in the north coast of the southernmost Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, is going to place the country in the leading positions in wind energy in Latin America and add 150 megawatts (MW) to the Brazilian energy matrix.

The production represents 5% of the energy consumed in the state and will be sufficient to meet the demands in a 600,000 people city or two thirds of the residential consumption in Porto Alegre, capital city of Rio Grande do Sul.

The state secretary for Energy, Mines and Communications, Valdir Andre, said that the first aero-generators are to be installed next January. The forecast is that energy generation starts on the first semester 2007. The project is part of the Alternative Energy Sources Program (Proinfa) from state-owned Eletrobrás, which ensures the purchase of the energy produced for 20 years.

"Aeolian energy is a new thing in Brazil today. It is important as it is a renewable source, non-polluting and that doesn't end like the fossil fuels," stated the secretary.

The contract for financing the project, of US\$ 200.2 million from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), was signed in 2004. The value corresponds to 69% of the undertaking's cost, calculated in US\$ 291.6 million.

About 400 people work today in the construction site and in January, another 100 workers will be employed. Six companies were hired directly and another 20 were sub hired for the construction.

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