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The Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM) Autor: Juventud Rebelde Publicado: 08/11/2017 | 04:06 pm

A Mega-project Starting to Take Roots

Four years after its creation, the Mariel Special Development Zone holds 31 approved businesses and 50 investment opportunities; in addition it speeds up the works related to the deployment of its infrastructure, indispensable steps to become “a regional hub as a foreign capital collector”

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At a distance of 45 kms west of Havana and with 465,4 square kms of extension –subdivided into nine sectors to be developed by stages-, the Mariel Special Development Zone (ZEDM) is a mega-project undertaken by Cuba whose aim is to be “a regional hub as a foreign capital collector”, for which the technological development must boost the production of goods and the provision of service of high added value.

Its geographical location at the center of the Caribbean region and the American continent, makes it the center to a circumference of a thousand miles radius, where the main maritime routes of cargo ships of the western hemisphere are located.

Four years after its creation, the Mariel Special Development Zone starts to take roots and holds 31 approved businesses. It has achieved a total investment exceeding 1100 million dollars, as explained by ZEDM Director General Ana Teresa Igarza Martínez, who highlighted the willingness to diversify the market and consolidate it as a favorable space for investing.

Since latest Havana International Fair 12 new businesses have been approved, and in addition to projects attracted by sector A – destined for high technology industries, logistics and advanced manufacture-, investment

have been authorized for sectors dealing with tourist and agricultural activity, as well as the construction material industry.

Likewise, work related to the development of a high standard infrastructure has been prioritized. In this regard, the Cuban State has invested an average of 300 million dollars annually. According to Igarza Martínez to date the area has about 29 kilometers of highway and other roads, in addition to the existence of a railway with all the benefits, including the double track, which allow to expedite the process of transportation of goods.

The container terminal, which will also be celebrating its fourth anniversary, this year reached the 1 million containers operated, as part of its expansion strategy, and operations with 14 of the most important shipping companies at the international level are underway. Advances was also achieved in infocommunications, aqueduct, sewage, electrical networks, public lighting, bridges, railway stations ..., a set of facilities that is made available to investors.

We'd like this megaproject to flourish faster and its results to be more tangible but we know that the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba has been and is the main obstacle for the Zone to take off. However, the fact that the aforementioned figures exist is a clear evidence that it is heading to replace imports, increase sales in the international market and create new sources of employment, all in line with the domestic economy.

Today, work continues, in addition, in the development of basic and auxiliary infrastructures, in the gaining and approval of businesses, as well as in the investment process for its establishment and production.

Representatives of the new projects during the 2nd. Investment Forum - one of the main activities of the Fair- showed their experiences and results of work, appreciated the opportunity of this area for their potential and expressed their satisfaction with the one-stop-shop system operating in the Area, which streamlines procedures, gives confidence to those interested in negotiating with the country and makes the processing of legal documents very efficient.

Why to invest in Mariel?

ZEDM provides a productive and logistics first class platform for the establishment of companies whose productions and service will be destined to the internal market or to export and will benefit from its regulatory framework, its incentives and its friendly business environment.

Project Portfolio

Important Cuban companies have developed a group of projects (currently 50) for its development within the ZEDM with foreign participation. The investor is not limited to the selection of projects of the Portfolio. It could prefer to develop its own project in line with the guidelines, principles and priorities.

Present in the Zone

Established businesses: 31

Countries: 14

Multinational companies: 8

Direct Jobs: 4 638

Total Investment: Over 1 100 million dollars

Companies with 100% Cuban capital: 5

Companies with 100% Foreign capital: 16

Joint ventures: 8

International Economic Associations Contracts: 16

Users in operations: 9

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