

Wind farms expected to change usual landscape

Belarusian wind conditions are similar to those in Germany — a world leader in wind power

By Sergey Yevgeniev

We currently lag behind western countries in terms of wind power, although we have plenty of opportunities to develop this area. The main stimulus to developing alternative energy is the fact that Belarus has only small deposits of energy resources. The lion's share of hydrocarbons must be imported, with prices ever rising. Being in a similar situation, Germany, Spain, Holland, Sweden, Italy and other EU states are focusing on developing alternative sources. At present, these countries lead in this direction, generating around a quarter of their electricity via renewable sources. Specialists believe that we could also occupy a strong position in this niche.

Vladimir Nistyuk, the Executive Director of the Renewable Energy Association, believes that Belarus could generate up to 30 percent of its energy via renewable sources. Unlike most EU states, building density in Belarus is modest, so there are more sites on which to install stations and powerful wind farms. Over 1,840 sites are already earmarked as suitable.

Despite this huge potential, Belarusian private business is yet to be convinced of the viability of investments into wind energy. Few wind-power units are operational, with most used for scientific and demonstrational purposes; a handful generate energy for the common network. However, Mogilev's Tycoon firm plans to build a wind



Renewable energy sources allow country to satisfy up to 30 percent of needs

farm and small solar station near the regional centre, planning to earn additional profit.

"For a long time, we've been making calculations; the results unanimously show that it's profitable to generate electricity from renewable energy sources, supplying it to the electric network," notes Dmitry Shevchuk, a founder of the private enterprise. "Our calculations were also proven in practice, once we installed the first small capacity

wind-power unit. As a result, we've decided to construct a whole wind farm and have already purchased some of the equipment."

The state buys electricity from renewable sources at enhanced tariffs, which should attract injections. Any company can purchase a wind-power unit and receive income from selling the generated electricity.

Whether our landscapes will soon be graced with wind turbines, as seen across most devel-

oped countries, depends largely on whether we create economic stimuli for investors. Most foreign companies wishing to become engaged in wind power engineering begin with small projects. Only after their successful implementation, are more serious injections considered. If pilot projects prove profitable, investors will grow confident of gaining a return on their investments and serious wind power should appear in Belarus.

Swedish furniture to become more diverse

IKEA's subsidiary to set up large wood processing factory in Mogilev

"The Mogilev Region is interested in this project," notes Eduard Selivanov, the Head of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee's Department for Foreign Economic Ties. "A new, individual enterprise, whose creation we'll launch this year, will appear within Mogi-

lev's free economic zone. It will manufacture furniture, as well as various components from wood chips. Almost everything will be exported."

The project is estimated to cost over 50m Euros. This modern enterprise will enable the region to create around 1,000 new jobs, while raising the region's export potential and helping it enter new sales markets.

Results of past decade

Belarusian Steel Works (BMZ) joins one of the world's largest automobile and aircraft tyre producers — French Michelin — for long-term co-operation

Zhlobin recently hosted talks between high ranking officials from two industrial giants: BMZ and Michelin. The two companies already boast a high level of co-operation, with our plant supplying 17,000 tonnes of metal cord (or 17 percent of its total sales) to the French company last year, in addition to 6,000 tonnes of

bead wire. As regards the volume of sales, Michelin occupies second place among the Belarusian plant's European consumers.

The parties are confident that mutually beneficial ties can be extended, with volumes of orders raised. Michelin recognises BMZ as the best producer in its field and, in 2009, acknowledged it as the best supplier of metal cord and bead wire. Next year, the partners shall celebrate the tenth anniversary of their liaison, with a new long-term contract likely will be concluded to mark the date.

Conditions emancipate entrepreneurial spirit

Polotsk named Best City for Doing Business in Belarus



Lyubava factory's new production facility in Polotsk

By Galina Gubanova

In total, around 70 Belarusian towns and cities took part in the contest, with Polotsk earning the right to host an international investment forum which aims to inspire regional development. According to Valery Prokhorov, Director of Polotsk's Entrepreneur-

ship Support Centre, the victory was no accident. The city operates a reliable system of consultative support for all small and medium-sized businesses (from registration to liquidation). Moreover, upwards of 3,000 individual entrepreneurs successfully work in the city, alongside around 1,000 small and

medium-sized enterprises. These ensure a third of all city budget revenue, while accounting for 84 percent of service exports.

The inflow of investors wishing to invest in city development recently increased and, by the time of the international forum (to be held in Polotsk in late May), six new promising investment projects will have been prepared. These include the construction of Polotsk's own 'Disneyland' and a chain of hotels, in addition to infrastructure development near Polotsk's Saviour and St. Yevfrosiniya Convent and St. Sophia Cathedral.

In line with the regional development programme, the construction of a small business incubator is to begin in H1 2011, further promoting the city's investment attractiveness.

Experts ready to assist

Venture Capital Investment Agency helping innovative companies launch

The Venture Capital Investment Agency was registered by the Minsk City Executive Committee's Main Department of Justice on March 12th. Headquartered in Minsk, it is a commercial organisation aiming to support Belarus' innovation sector while increasing the number of venture (high-risk) projects and those relating to the commercialisation of intellectual property sites. Operating within the innovative segment, it will aid the financing of venture capital.

The new structure unites professionals in such areas as marketing, finance, law, venture capital financing and project management. If necessary, technical specialists can be brought in. It aims to assist in developing business plans for innovation projects, facilitating the search for suitable investors and preparing necessary documentation for projects relating to the commercialisation of intellectual property sites.

The Agency has already signed preliminary agreements on co-operation with a number of venture capital organisations, business incubators and associations of business angels in Belarus and abroad.

Juvenile fish with Gorki 'marking'

By Mikhail Kovalevsky

Belarus' largest farm to breed trout soon to be set up at Gorki Agricultural Academy, in Mogilev Region

"The enterprise is being set up using Finnish technology," notes Nikolay Barulin, a candidate of agricultural sciences and one of the initiators of the project. "It is unique in using fresh water drawn from an artesian spring. Our purification facilities are efficient enough to need just 5 percent of the water to be replaced daily, significantly reducing costs. The site is to be constructed as part of the state programme to develop the fish industry. We're planning to involve students, as the enterprise will also be a training centre for the fishery branch."

The developers of the project believe that it will quickly pay for itself, since precious fish species will easily be sold to Belarusian fish farms and go for export. The first 'live' produce should appear by late 2012.