

Dominican Republic seeking 'big players' in Caribbean gas hub plans



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The Dominican Republic is ready to position itself as a Caribbean natural gas hub as it steps up efforts to encourage private energy investments, according to a senior official.

The country is expanding its gas infrastructure to meet demand from local off-takers – particularly thermoelectric generators – as well as nearby export markets.

"We are trying to attract big players in the natural gas business – players that have their own gas," Rafael Velazco, head of Dominican Republic power regulator [SIE](#), said during the Institute of the Americas' 30th [La Jolla Conference](#).

"It could be gas from the United States. That is obviously the most economically viable source for us although we have imported from Trinidad and Tobago in recent years. We believe that we can serve as a [Caribbean gas] hub, to help other islands install power generation facilities. The private sector will play a vital role."

Velazco said the Dominican Republic currently has around 1GW of installed gas-fired power capacity and predicted that an additional 200MW would be added in the "next few years."

Gas supply initiatives include a proposal by [AES Corp](#) to implement a [ship-to-ship transfer system](#) that would allow the delivery of LNG from the [AES Andrés](#) import terminal in Punta Caucedo to other Caribbean nations.

Officials said the plan will complement a [second natural gas storage tank](#) under development by the [Energía Nacional Dominicana](#) consortium, due to begin operating in 2023.

Velazco said the gas developments are being accompanied by regulatory changes that also seek to boost investment in wind and solar power, as well as other energy transition projects.

"We already have 20MW of battery [energy storage](#), ... a [growing] fleet of [electric cars](#) and 230MW of net metering in households. We are adjusting regulations for those markets that already exist," he said.

"The most important thing we are doing is allowing the private sector to invest, and the government is setting rules to guarantee those investments."

Velazco added the government "has no plans to invest anything in generation, we are allowing the private sector to do that. We have to invest in [transmission], which is a bottleneck, and we want to attract private investment in the grid so that it can be more fluent."

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