

## RENEWABLE ENERGY REVOLUTION IN URUGUAY

In 2019 the 98% of energy consumption of Uruguay was derived from renewable sources. In particular, the new diverse energy mix of the country is actually provided by hydropower for a 55,6%, wind energy for a 33,6%, biomass 6%, solar power for a 2,8% and thermal energy for a 2%.

The news, sourced from UTE, the public company of the energy sector of Uruguay, was spread by national newspapers and by international organizations in the sector.

The Objective 7 of Sustainable Development: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, highlights that.....*Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today, including jobs, adaptation to climate change, food security, or to increase income. Universal access to energy is essential.*

In this context, Uruguay has achieved remarkable results and it is today recognized as a benchmark at international level for its progress in energy security, in improving the environment and for decarbonising its economy in a record time span of just 10 years.

The process of reconversion of the national energy matrix, characterized by a strong partnership between the public and private sectors, began with the development of a comprehensive long-term energy plan, the National Energy Policy 2005-2030, with the overall objective to diversify the energy mix, reduce dependency from fossil fuels, improve energy efficiency, and increase the use of endogenous resources, mostly renewables. The plan set a target of 50% primary energy from renewable energy sources by 2015, including renewable energy for electricity generation, industrial and domestic heat, and transport. The National Energy Policy 2005-2030 was approved in 2008, and in 2010 it was endorsed by all political parties represented in Congress.

A determining factor of success consisted of the support of all the parties, aligned behind a country strategy promoted by the State and allowing its effectiveness against the political changes that normally occur in the implementation of a long-term plan. As a result of the multi-party endorsement, during the last years energy investments for renewables were increasing, mobilizing public and private funds. Through state guarantees, Uruguay has encouraged companies and many investors to build plants across the country.

Also significant is the implementation of a strategy that involves actors at different levels, including companies with advanced technological capabilities, agricultural farms of different sizes, households and small savers. For example, the UTE opened an





opportunity for association with 15,000 small partners savers for the construction of wind parks.

Another success factor consisted in expanding renewable energy sources, developing all existing potentials. Beside the investments in hydropower plants, which historically generated electricity in the country, the National Plan has developed the potentials of wind, photovoltaic and thermal energy. Initiatives are also underway to generate energy from biomass, taking advantage of firewood, forest waste, rice husk, sugarcane bagasse, urban or industrial waste.

The diversification of the energy sources, which has required a strong investment in the acquisitions and transfer of new technologies and in the development of national capacities, contributed to the country's energy security, in a context of a steadily rising electricity demand. It has contributed to reducing its costs, diminishing the risks related to climate conditions (e.g. the high dependence on climate of hydropower generation) and to the changing prices of imported fuels. Furthermore, the diversification of energy sources has contributed to reduce the environmental impact of the sector and to safeguard the beauty of the landscapes in rural areas.

Another crucial aspect of the new national energy system is the capacity to answer the needs of all citizens. Since 2010 electricity was provided to more than 8000 households of rural areas, consolidating Uruguay's position as the most electrified country in Latin America, with an electrification rate of almost 99.9%.

The [Report published in December 2019 on the UTE Strategic Plan](#) presents extensive information on the different aspects of the national plan and the results achieved.

As part of its activities, the UTE also develops initiatives to involve new generations in the country's energy model changes. One of these, of great impact, is the [Eco UTE Challenge](#), held in 2019 in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining, the Council of Technical Professional Education and the Automobile Club of Uruguay. The Project has *challenged* students from 18 technical schools in 9 Departments of Uruguay to design and build a 100% electric car. The students received a manufacturing kit with the basic materials for the construction of the vehicle and worked during six months in its design and manufacture, guided by the teachers of the respective schools with the tutoring of experts from the Automobile Club of Uruguay. In December 2019 this fantastic project was concluded with the [competition of the 18 electric cars in the circuit of El Pinar](#). The Technical School of Paso de los Toros was the winner of the ECO-UTE 2019 Challenge, after successfully passing the tests carried out in the El Pinar circuit.

[In the UTE Portal](#) news and articles on the implementation of the new energy system in Uruguay can be found to know all the different aspects involved.

## To know more

[Balance de gestión y futuro del sector eléctrico in UTE Portal](#)

[Política Nacional de Energía](#)

[Portal UTE – energy sources](#)



[Article in Portal UTE](#)

[News in eficienciaenergetica.gub.uy](#)

[Presente y futuro de las energías renovables en Uruguay en opp.gob.uy](#)

[2019 Report - Plan estrategico UTE](#)

[Energiasolar.gub.yu](#)

[Article in IRENA \(International Renewable Energy Agency\).](#)

[Article in energytransition.org](#)

[Article in energynews.es](#)

[Article in iea.org](#)

[Article in theguardian.com](#)

[Informe 2019 Uruguay Cambio Climatico en unfccc.int](#)

[Informe Nacional 2018 ODS Uruguay](#)

