

Spanish island eyes world first with wind, water power

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Spain's largest wind turbine, Arinaga, at 154 metres (505 feet) tall with 62.5-metre (205-feet) long blades, is pictured on Gran Canaria on October 20, 2013

A Spanish island hopes to become the first in the world fully powered by renewable energy later this year when it launches a new wind and water energy plant, a spokeswoman said Thursday.

The Gorona de Viento plant is due to launch in June on El Hierro, the

smallest of the Canary Islands off the Atlantic coast of Africa, project spokeswoman Cristina Morales told AFP.

"It will introduce energy into the system gradually. By the end of this year, if all goes well, we will be able to reach 100 percent" of the power used by the island's 11,000 inhabitants.

The two sets of turbines, one powered by wind and one by water currents, have a capacity of 11.5 megawatts each, far exceeding the total eight megawatts used at peak times on the island.

To test a system of 100 percent [renewable energy](#), the volcanic island of 278 square kilometres (107 square miles) "is the ideal place because it is so small," Morales added.

The plant cost 80 million euros (\$110 million) to build and Morales said the local government hopes to save the same amount over 20 years by using this cheaper renewable energy.

The island is also expected to cut [carbon dioxide emissions](#) by 18,700 tonnes and diesel consumption by 6,000 tonnes.

The island authorities own 60 percent of the plant, with 30 percent held by Spanish [energy](#) company Endesa—a subsidiary of Italian group Enel—and 10 percent by a local technology institute.

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