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# Filipino firm taps US partner for 25-MW biomass project

by **Myrna Velasco**  
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Filipino firm Eastern Renewables has tapped US firm Wellons Energy Solutions as strategic partner for its planned 25-megawatt biomass power facility in Mindanao grid.

In a chance interview in Makati, Wellons director of International Business David A. Butler noted that he already visited the project site early May and he had seen favorable prospects on the facility's development.

Eastern Renewables chairman Fernando L. Martinez indicated that firming up its partnership with the American firm has upped the ante on the project's eventual implementation.

The proposed facility, costing \$80 million, will be developed under corporate vehicle Caraga Renewable Power Corporation (CARE). The initial capital outlay, according to Martinez, will be P700 million.

He had previously indicated that the US partner will be pivotal in providing technology application that shall guarantee fuel-efficient operations of the facility.

The foreign partner already has a well-cemented track record on biomass project developments, primarily for wood-fired boiler equipped biomass facilities in North Carolina in the United States.

Following its prospective take-off point from the Butuan investment, the affiliate firm of Eastern Petroleum Corporation is also exploring potentials of providing the electricity needs of off-grid areas with biomass technology deployments.






The motivation for this investment goal, he said, is anchored more on helping government free up its hands on heavy subsidies to areas being energized under the Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG) of the National Power Corporation.

The plan, he stressed, will be to concretize a 'biomass development business model' which would be scalable in other off-grid areas.

With biomass as an alternative to off-grid areas, Martinez averred that the Filipino consumers could be spared partly from paying hefty subsidies as pass-on cost via the universal charge for missionary electrification.

The cost of subsidies funneled to SPUG areas had been estimated at P8 to P14 per kilowatt hour, and that could be eased with the relatively cheaper cost of biomass.

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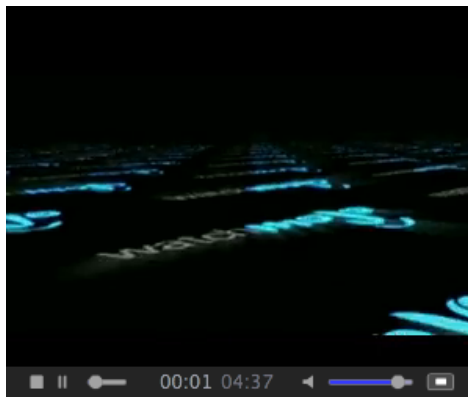
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