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## **Cuban Government Seeks Foreign Partner To Help Finish Nickel Plant Construction**

*by Barbara Khol*

*Category/Department: General*

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On May 14, Pedro Florido, project manager of the government's metal industry investment company ECIMETAL, told Reuters that Cuba is seeking a foreign partner to help complete construction of the Las Camariocas nickel processing plant, located near the mining town of Moa (northeastern Cuba). The facility was to be built in cooperation with the former Soviet-led trade bloc Comecon. Florido said a partner is needed to provide capital or equipment. The estimated cost of finishing the installation is US\$70 million. The Cuban government, said Florido, would pay partners "using the plant's production." Las Camariocas output capacity is set at 30,000 metric tons per year. The plant would be Cuba's fourth. The combined output projection for the three existing plants this year is nearly 50,000 MT. Nickel production in 1989, the last year when precise official figures were available, was 46,509 MT. Cuba's nickel reserves are among the largest in the world. Florido said government officials have maintained contact with factories in former partner nations, including unified Germany, and they "are still part of the overall project." He added, "But we need another partner." The equipment required to complete the plant includes electric cables, instruments for automated control and components for a pneumatic tube system. Florido said that if a new foreign partner could be found, Cuba could have one 10,000-MT production line at Las Camariocas in operation by end-1993. Two other production lines would be added to make up the plant's full 30,000-MT capacity. (Basic data from Reuter, 05/14/92)

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