

# *Cuban nickel brings income*

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## **Cuban nickel production**

By Roberto Morejón

Placed among its main exportable items, nickel represents an essential economic branch for Cuba, although little is said about it, given its strategic character and the U.S. encirclement.

However, it was made official that Cuba obtained higher revenues than expected in 2021, a singular year due to the scourge of the pandemic, with an impact on the workforce of the two plants involved in the process.

These are the companies Comandante Ernesto Che Guevara and Comandante Pedro Soto Alba, the latter of mixed capital with the Canadian company Sherritt International.

Pedro Soto Alba is described as a prosperous and sustainable joint business model and, like the other processing plant, is working hard to overcome technological hurdles.

However, the production of nickel plus cobalt in the municipality of Moa, the main nickel and cobalt region in the country, ended last year favorably in terms of values, with 33.9 percent overcompliance.

This balance was helped by the increase in prices in the foreign market, since the physical contribution accumulated more than 46,800 tons, for 89 percent of the plan.

Executives, technicians and skilled workers of the Moa emporium acknowledged problems in the metallurgical efficiency and in the extraction of the mineral, among other setbacks.

In the year that has just begun, the Cuban nickel industry will further promote its business opportunities for foreign capital and stimulate productivity through the qualification of personnel.

We are talking about a task that will bring benefits in the medium and long term, especially to one of the industries, Pedro Sotillo Alba, where interesting projects are being studied.

In a visit to the site at the end of 2021, the general president of Sherritt International, Leon Binedell, said that he was evaluating options to expand production capacity.

Analysts recalled that nickel and cobalt are essential minerals in the production of more powerful and durable batteries.

In view of such prospects, the Nickel Business Group is well aware of its role in Cuba's economic and social development.

The technicians and those in charge of the two plants are therefore considering linking up with universities and contributing to improving the living conditions of the workers and the neighborhoods where they live, in the eastern cities of Moa and Nicaro.

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