

# *Cuba Approves New Joint Venture to Build Luxury Golf Course and Resort*

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Havana, March 30 (RHC-Agencies) -- Cuba has approved a joint venture with a Spanish company to develop a new luxury golf course and resort in the western province of Pinar del Rio, a senior tourism official said.

Director of Development and Investment at the Cuban Ministry of Tourism Jose Daniel Alonso told the press that the Caribbean nation is looking to expand its revenues and golf tourism is a priority in the sector.

Alonso added: "Later this year, another similar project will be authorized in the area of El Salado enclosed within the Mariel Special Development Zone just west of Havana."

The tourism official disclosed that negotiations for three other such projects would be finished later this year or in early 2018.

UK property magnates London & Regional signed a joint venture agreement with Cuba's Palmares in February 2014 for the Carbonera hotel-golf project, some 115 km east from Havana, and 30 km west from

Varadero, Cuba's main beach resort.

Meanwhile, China's Beijing Enterprises Holdings Ltd signed a memorandum of understanding with Cuban government last year for Bellomonte, a golf-hotel-condo project, at Guanabo, 30km east of Havana.

The high-ranking official said that Cuba currently has 110 business opportunities for foreign investment in the tourism sector.

Meanwhile, Luis Diaz, Cuba's Deputy Minister of Tourism, said the Caribbean state is focused on attracting foreign investment to increase the number of hotel rooms, the development of theme parks and luxury villas associated with golf courses.

He also announced that, in May, Havana will host the South American Hotel and Tourism Investment Conference (SAHIC) as a complement to this nation's tourism fair, FITCuba 2017, which will be held in the eastern province of Holguin from May 3-6.

Tourism is Cuba's second main hard currency earner, after medical and professional services provision.

In 2016, over 4 million tourists visited the Caribbean country making it the largest number in its history and it expects to draw 4.7 million visitors this year.

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