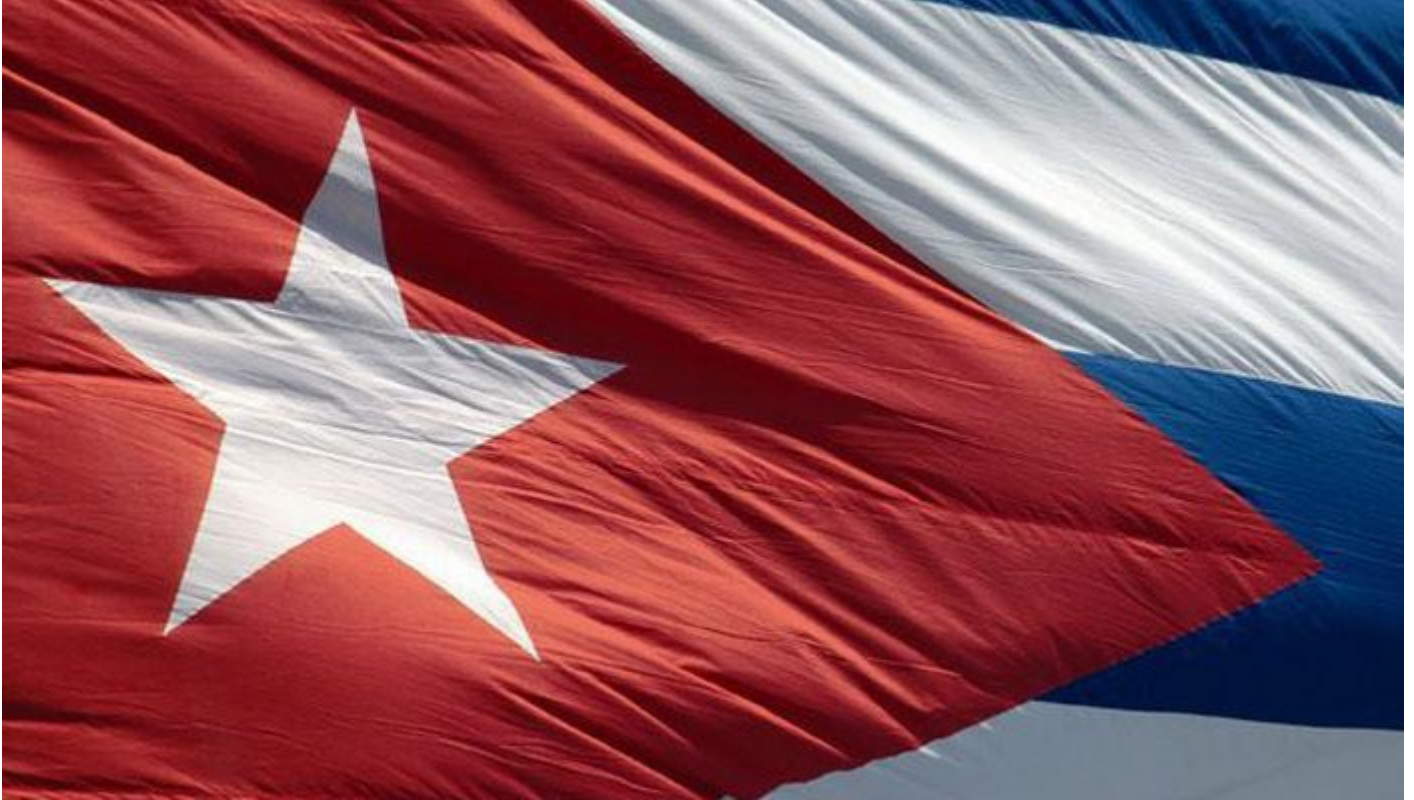


# *OPEC Aid Agency to Grant Cuba 50 Million Dollars*

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Havana, April 22 (RHC) – The aid agency of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has agreed to grant Cuba 50 million US dollars over the next few years to renovate infrastructure and boost agriculture, state daily Granma reported on Monday.

Suleiman J. Al-Herbish, director-general of the Fund for International Development (OFID), who was in Cuba last week on a working visit, told the newspaper he was in the country "to ratify that we will continue working" with the Caribbean island nation.

Since the OFID began its cooperation with Cuba in 2002, the agency has approved 10 loans totaling 128 million dollars to boost agriculture and renovate the electricity networks, water supply networks and sewage systems in several Cuban cities.

Herbish, who first visited Cuba in 2004, said as the earlier projects succeeded, the OFID has decided to pursue other projects.

Last year, OFID granted a \$20 million loan for the rehabilitation of the water supply and sewage system in the city of Guantánamo, a \$62 million project.

Al Herbish also said the OFID program has helped Cuba obtain loans from Arab nations. Saudi Arabia last year provided a \$30 million loan for the rehabilitation of the water network in Havana; two years ago, Kuwait granted \$25 million in loans for similar projects in Santiago and Holguín.

Created in 1976 to promote South-South cooperation, the OFID is a multilateral financial agency that provides aid for developing countries around the world, especially in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, to help fight poverty.

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