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ECOTÈCNIA IS WORKING ON PROJECTS INVOLVING THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE TECHNOLOGIES

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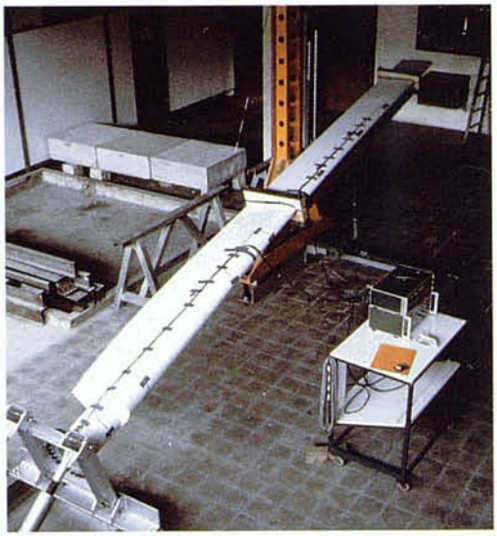

The firm of Ecotècnia first saw the light in April 1981, as an associated work co-operative formed by a group of people from different technical backgrounds, interested in spreading and carrying out activities connected with alternative energy sources. All of Ecotècnia's work so far has taken as its starting point the research, development and production of environmentally safe technologies.

The firm's initial funding came about through a somewhat unconventional formula arrived at by the company's eight founders: each of them agreed to make a non-recuperable contribution equivalent to one year's work, as well as contributing the symbolic sum of 10,000 pesetas to the Co-operative's business capital. Ecotècnia was therefore able to start its activities with a capital of only 80,000 pesetas and a small bank loan.

In the seven years it has been operating, a number of research and development projects have been carried out in the field of renewable energy sources. The most significant —and the most far-reaching in the long run— was a project carried out during 1982 and 1983 for the development of a 15 kW aerogenerator. This project, which resulted from a competition organized by the CDTI (a Ministry of Industry organism providing support and financial aid for firms engaged in technological development), was completed in 1984, when the prototype was installed at Vilopriu (Girona). Following this, Ecotècnia was able to supervise the production and installation of 30 kW aerogenerators derived from this first model. So far, 35 aerogenerators have been installed in different parts of Spain, with a total output of more than 1MW. Some of these aerogenerators have been installed in groups, making up the so-called "wind farms", which are simply small electrical power stations that generate electricity by means of wind. Ecotècnia has also shared in the financing of these wind farms, so that the windmill manufacturers themselves are at the same time part of the operating company, an obvious indication that, under certain conditions, renewable energies are perfectly well able to compete.

Today, Ecotècnia is one of the few manufacturers of windmills in Spain, and the only one with its own technology and developments in the three fields of technology involved in wind energy: new materials (blades), mechanics and electronics (control).

Following Spain's entry into the EEC, Ecotècnia has undertaken various R + D projects in collaboration with firms from other European countries, within the programmes the EEC organizes to promote and develop non-nuclear energy sources. At present we are working with firms in Germany, France and Italy, on projects such as the development of a new, 150 kW windmill, the design and running of a pilot wind-diesel plant and the development of a solar "window", making use of solar energy for domestic heating.

But Ecotècnia's work outside Spain is not restricted to R + D projects. During 1987, installations in different African countries were planned and carried out, mainly in the field of photo-electric solar energy. One of the most interesting projects involved the installation of photo-electric panels for generating electricity in a number of different hospitals.

Ecotècnia's projects for the future continue this involvement with the field of renewable energy and environmental engineering. In spite of the present downward trend in oil prices, it is quite clear that energy in the future will have to come from the renewable energy sources available in the world. ■