

Zona Especial de Desarrollo Mariel — Cuba's Flagship Special Development Zone Falls Short of Its Targets

City Innovation Library · Good practice · Cuba

Quality score: 29/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

Cuba's 2013 flagship special economic zone at Mariel drew 62 approved businesses and over \$3bn in committed investment by 2022, but only 328 people worked in operational firms against an original 70,000-job target — a government-acknowledged shortfall.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of impact / measured results	2/3
Transferability / demonstrated replication	0/3
Scalability	0/3
Sustainability / continuity	1/3
Innovation	1/3
Inclusiveness / equity	0/3
Multi-stakeholder collaboration	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

[C-NAPSE web research](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[Mariel Development Zone Administration \(Cuban Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment\)](#) — accessed 2026-09-23

[OnCubaNews](#) — ZED Mariel investment and business figures — accessed 2026-09-23

[CiberCuba](#) — government acknowledges shortfall (Dec 2024) — accessed 2026-09-23

[Havana Times](#) — Mariel: the stalled 'engine' of the Cuban economy — accessed 2026-09-23

[UNCTAD Investment Policy Hub](#) — Mariel Special Development Zone — accessed 2026-09-23

Cite this — Evidoria. *Zona Especial de Desarrollo Mariel — Cuba's Flagship Special Development Zone Falls Short of Its Targets*. Persistent ID: e58e10bf-9cdf-4d15-964a-bb6a337e5da0.