

Cummins India bets big on biogas-based power systems

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CUMMINS India is betting big on biogas-based power generation systems, eyeing global markets. The company has a technology agreement with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and hopes to install five to ten power plant projects in the country annually.

It is also looking at entering markets in the Asia Pacific, African and Latin American regions.

"We have already deployed two biogas-based power projects with capacities of 1 mw and 1.5 mw in Tamil Nadu. Over 25 pilot plants with capacities ranging from 100kw to 1mw are being installed in different parts of the country. Besides, we are also part of the National Bamboo Mission and has installed 25kw power systems for rural electrification projects", Cummins India vice-president (power generation business unit) Rampraveen Swaminathan said.

The company is also in talks with various agencies abroad to deploy captive and independent power plants. "This initiative provides a significant life cycle cost advantage over hydrocarbon fuels and also enables us to develop distributed generation solutions with low operating costs. Under biogas power project, the cost of generation per unit ranges from Rs 3.50 to Rs 4 as against Rs 5 for natural gas-based projects and Rs 8 for diesel-based," he pointed out.

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CUMMIN'S POWER

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design advice for installing plants, IISc's technology will be used to make gas from biomass. "This technology helps reduce forex-related risks as it does not require hydrocarbon fuels. Materials like coconut shell, rice husk and certain wood can be used for combusting and generating biogas," he said. It is estimated that in India alone about 3,000 mw captive power plants are set up every year. The company wants to cash in on this opportunity. Besides, these plants can also claim subsidies under the renewable energy mission by the central government.

Last fiscal, Cummins India clocked revenues of Rs 1,800 crore, of which about 45% was contributed by the power generation business unit.

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