



How do you see India in the Asian continent over the years?

India is not only the most important, but also the most exciting market in Asia, growing because there is a severe need for power and there are a lot of factors that make it attractive, besides the need for solar to takeoff. Now with the support of Narendra Modi, Prime Minister, Government of India, the timing was great because the solar is so cost-effective. So, all these ingredients came together. Two years ago, we started a small office in Hyderabad and have expanded it. So, we've got a lot of design engineering done here to adapt our product to the local conditions and achieve a spin in the leading technology for utility scale power plants globally.

What are the basic USPs of your product?

The customers are sophisticated here. They demand low capital cost,

“ We are introducing **1,500 volt tracker technology** in India ”



According to **Dan Shugar, Chief Executive Officer**, NEXTracker customers in India are sophisticated as they demand low capital cost, but they are also very concerned about quality and performance.

Please explain a bit about your company and your India operations?

NEXTracker is very focused on the larger projects that are utility scale, and projects through large industrial operations. We are the global leader 30 per cent share. We manufacture and ship to customers in five continents and India is a top focus for us. I've personally done this over 25 years, and with the NEXTracker over the last two years. We have over a GW of supply, and are in the process of expanding our manufacturing capability and working on new projects.

but they are also very concerned about quality and performance. We are the folks who are delivering all those factors, and we are able to leverage our global scale. Our scale is much larger than a typical company, besides technology. And also our systems are produced for efficiency, for example we launched a very exciting feature for these trackers for Indian conditions - dust, particles or water vapour. The new way to follow the sun with these panels can produce 2-6 per cent more energy than a typical tracker. And that really helps the product economics.

So what is the approach? Is it product-based or service-based?

It's a product approach, but we also provide services like heavy support for the customers. But we are a B2B, it's our position in the industry. We are not doing EPC in India, we are supporting contractors and developers directly, and so we manufacture products very cost-effectively.

You are associated with a lot of EPC contractors directly. Are these all particularly for Solar PV or only tracker?

We provide in India primarily trackers today. In other places like the United States, we are doing battery systems now and we are opening other technologies to India. We think this is a very exciting growth market in India. The trackers are a perfect

Can you tell me about the reason for collaboration with Cleanmax Solar?

Cleanmax is a very interesting company. Instead of hitting on utility off-take they focus on serving end customers like the corporate and industrial sector. So, we've developed a tracker project with them where we are serving some of the customers with the energy from that. Cleanmax is additionally developing a new project using 1,500 volt technology we have introduced in India for trackers. Previously the trackers were of 1,000 volts three years ago. Trackers of 1,500 volts lower cost of solar power, the system is much more efficient, losses are low, the trackers won't close because they are longer and the whole system is more efficient. Now with Cleanmax we are looking at that high voltage solution for the next big projects.

What is your experience in India?

We've maintained an office in India for a long time. We've actually worked so much by delivering projects in India and our local team here has provided local engineering and project contributions that have helped us outside India too. So, we put our technology in, but they helped us improve various other things.

Basically projects here have to be delivered very quickly and the product has to be extremely flexible. So, we were receiving a lot of orders in a very short span of time last year and everyone wanted the product at the same time. So, what we gathered here is we need to make the product very flexible and easy to use, which is why we've invested in local capacity also supporting the 'Make in India' project. I think the way the policy has been pursued here has



solution because customers need energy not only in the middle of the day, but also in the early morning and late afternoon as well. We think that the tracker is very important there.

That means you want to use trackers for developing the first approach customer base and then build on it.

Right. As the market is in a very high growth phase, the need for just basic energy is really high and there's a lot of opportunity for solar, the timing is perfect for the technology to come in at such an affordable price. Later with more optimisation, batteries and technologies can be added.

What are the projects undertaken in India?

In June, we have announced that we have 21 projects to be delivered to 7 clients, including Adani, Cleanmax, ReNew Power and Suzlon. We are receiving repeat orders now.

How does India compare in the global context?

The India pricing has been very competitive. It's probably the lowest we've seen, because India is quickly pushing the scale through larger projects, the sun is pretty good and the top source of energy. What we've seen with more sophisticated clients is more discipline on pricing.

been very intelligent, because the scaling happened at the right time when the cost of the technology was competitive, and not too early like in Europe, about 10 years ago.

Do you expect any support from the government?

We worked with local governments in terms of the basic logistics. So, everyone has been co-operative. We think there's opportunity if the government wants to - not for the tracker, the tracker is okay, but for the larger ecosystem of solar system of solar panels.

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- RAHUL KAMAT