

Praj becomes first to set up 2G cellulosic ethanol plant

22 August 2013 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

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Praj Industries, the global process solutions company for bioethanol, alcohol and brewery, water and wastewater and critical process equipment has emerged as the first Company in South Asia to set up an integrated 2nd Generation (2G) Cellulosic ethanol plant. Praj's Executive chairman Mr. Pramod Chaudhari did the groundbreaking recently at Shirala in Sangli District in Maharashtra (India) along with chairman of Viraj Alcohols and Allied Industries Limited (VAAIL), Mr Mansingh Rao Naik.

The 2G Cellulosic ethanol demo plant will operate on different variety of biomass with a capacity of 100 dry tonnes of biomass per day, which includes agricultural wastes such as corn stover, cobs and bagasse. The demo plant will enable Praj to consolidate its 6 years of R&D efforts, starting with laboratory trials to pilot scale trials. The same plant will also enable Praj to develop various biochemicals and bioproducts.

The demo plant will seek to demonstrate various technical parameters including optimization of water and energy integration and its impact on the capex and opex. The plant will also develop the entire value chain including biomass handling and biomass composition and its impact on the operations. Praj expects the project cost to be in the region of US\$ 25 million (Rs 145-150 crore).

For this project, Praj will associate with VAAIL, an existing ethanol producer located in Western Maharashtra and a long term client of Praj. VAAIL will provide the land and allied services for the smooth operation of the project.

Commenting on the ground-breaking, Mr Pramod Chaudhari, executive chairman, Praj Industries, said, "Ground breaking of 2G Cellulosic ethanol plant is a giant leap in biotechnology and towards a more sustainable world. The greenhouse gas savings from Cellulosic ethanol is greater than those from 1st Generation crop-based biofuels as well as fossil-based fuel and hence this project will play a vital role in reducing carbon footprints. The project site at Shirala gives us a locational advantage

in terms of sourcing of biomass, utilities and manpower. We are delighted to work with VAAIL who has been our long term client."

On this occasion, Mr. Mansinghrao Naik, chairman, VAAIL said, "Viraj has more than a decade's experience in operating ethanol plants based on both, molasses as well as grains. Praj has supplied both these plant. It gives me great pride to be associated with Praj as it will give us the opportunity of participating in a path- breaking project."