

Consul Consolidated pitches for inverters to replace diesel gensets

M. Ramesh

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Peepul Capital-funded Consul Consolidated is positioning inverters (battery-packs) as an alternative for diesel gensets to meet electricity needs of commercial establishments.

"We see a sweet spot in the 10 kVa to 60 kVa range," says the company's Chief Executive Officer, Sriram Ramakrishnan.

The Chennai-based company that expects to end the current year with a turnover of Rs 150 crore aims for a slice of a Rs 7,000-crore market for power backing systems, a market currently dominated by multinational corporations.

At a time when the country is suffering from a chronic

power shortage, several commercial and industrial establishments have been using diesel fired generator sets to meet their electricity needs. While there is consensus that this is not a smart idea - Government picks up the subsidy bill for the fuel, while the user still spends about Rs 20-25 per unit of electricity - the usage of diesel gensets has continued for want of a better alternative.

SOLAR PLANTS

Against this backdrop, solar plants are now evolving as a more promising among the alternative technologies. Inverters, which work using batteries, have found a market more in homes than in com-

mercial establishments.

Consul Consolidated now wants to project inverters as a better alternative even to solar plants up to a certain level of usage. For higher levels, it has a combination of solar and inverters.

A 60 kVa inverter that can supply power for six hours occupies the same space as a diesel genset of similar capacity, says Sriram. Consul Consolidated sold such a system to a restaurant in Chennai, which according to him, save the restaurant Rs 5 lakh in five years.

Typically, an inverter would take in 55 units of electricity to charge itself to be able to give back 40 units. Still it is cheaper than diesel, he said.

Last year, Peepul Capital, a

private equity investor, invested \$ 20 million into the company for a "significant majority" stake. Recently, PE increased its stake but "it is not yet 100 per cent," Sriram said.

In January, Consul Consolidated acquired a Pune-based company called Megatech, which specialises in supplying power back up solutions for large buildings for applications such as powering elevators and lighting.

Megatech is also a player in the solar market and has installed about 3 MW of solar plants over 500 locations. Now, riding on Megatech's expertise, Consul Consolidated wants to "get very big in solar."

ramesh.m@thehindu.co.in