

Project Vendor

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'India's water demand to exceed supply by 2020'

Renu Rajaram, Thursday, August 11, 2011, 14:45 Hrs [IST]



SPML Infra Ltd is a leading infrastructure developer with operational experience across India. Rishabh Sethi, Executive Director - SPML Infra Limited told Renu Rajaram that the biggest hurdle to improving water supply & sewerage network has been resistance by consumers to pay for water.

Give us an overview of SPML's water and wastewater treatment business?

SPML is a leading player in the Indian water & wastewater market and has over three decades of experience in executing turnkey EPC & PPP projects in the water & wastewater space from design, construction to commissioning. Its capabilities include treatment of all types of water and wastewater - raw water, drinking water, sewage, industrial effluent, brackish water and sea water desalination across industrial, municipal and infrastructure segments.

Tell us about SPML's competitive strength and core technology?

SPML is a complete water solutions provider managing water across the value chain with a focus on saving water and protecting resources. This includes raw water intake, water treatment, water storage, clear water & sewage pumping, city water distribution & transmission, service & process and water needs for irrigation. At the reverse cycle, SPML treats sewage and effluent for disposing treated water back into the source or recycling for further usage.

SPML is a preferred and reliable partner for a number of power plants in the areas of intake water, water treatment plants, cooling water systems, station piping, civil, mechanical & electrical works. The SPML with its JV company, Insituform is carrying out sewer rehabilitation through Cured-in-place Pipe (CIPP), a trenchless rehabilitation technology using jetting cum suction machines, silt loaders, CCTV surveys and robotic controlled cutting device to restore service laterals.

Which is the water treatment technologies recently introduced for industrial applications?

With pollution control board standards for all manufacturing industries becoming more rigorous and enforcement become tighter, zero discharge systems and wastewater recycling are becoming increasingly popular in India. The water treatment market is moving gradually from chemical treatment and demineralisation plants to membrane technology.

New technologies in the area of physical chemical treatment processes include membrane filtration, micro-filtration, ultra-filtration and nanofiltration. Biological treatment technologies like membrane bioreactors (MBR) have become more cost effective, and many can be easily retrofitted into aging systems.

SPML's experience in effluent treatment can be witnessed in common effluent treatment plants running successfully in Delhi at Okhla, Naraina, Lawrence Road and the largest 35 MLD CETP in Bawana recently commissioned for serving more than 20,000 industrial units there.

SPML recently won a contract worth ₹262 crore for water treatment plant and solid waste management for Goa and Dehradun Municipal Corporations. Comment. ?

The first order of ₹137 crore from Goa Water Supply and Sewerage Board under the aegis of Public Works Department, Govt. of Goa is for the expansion of 100 MLD Water Treatment Plant at Salaulim, Goa - it will be executed through a joint venture between SPML Infra Ltd and SMC Infrastructures Pvt Ltd. The project includes operation and maintenance for five years after commissioning. It entails expansion and rehabilitation of water supply facilities in order to augment the existing water supply system that extracts water from the Salaulim Dam for supply to Mormugao, Salcete, Quepem and part of Sanguem in South Goa.

The second order with cumulative projected revenue of ₹125 crore is for integrated solid waste management project for Dehradun on publicprivate partnership (PPP) basis. The project involves design, construction, operations and management of municipal solid waste for a period of 14 years.

How do you see the current trend in water & wastewater project business in India?

The Indian water industry is moderately competitive. There is significant competition, but players differ in terms of project capabilities. Companies that are engaged exclusively in water treatment having proprietary technology and can undertake turnkey water contracts. On the other hand, large construction companies with execution capability to undertake large projects, but no water expertise also sub-contract the water treatment work in large projects to specialty companies. Local players with low cost manpower at their disposal are also undertaking low technology O&M work and civil sub-contracts on water projects.



Effluent Treatment

What are the major hurdles the industry is facing today?

The current gap between treated and untreated urban wastewater is growing with every passing year. As the water supply and sanitation services in India are managed by the state or local municipal bodies - the biggest hurdles to improving the water supply & sewerage network have

been financial and resistance by consumers to pay for water. As a result, ULBs in many Indian cities are unable to upgrade its water supply and distribution infrastructure and continue to work on outdated transmission & distribution networks for water and wastewater.

The country urgently needs adequate sewage and wastewater management plants as a large number of cities are still working without sewers. Existing installations are in a bad shape and are inefficient due to poor maintenance. The immediate rehabilitation or replacement to keep up with the pace of the growing urbanization is becoming more eminent for India to grow in infrastructure.



Insituform

What are your suggestions for the successful growth of water & wastewater business in India? Estimates reveal that by 2020, India's demand for water will exceed all sources of supply. By 2025, the per capita availability of water is likely to slip below the critical mark of 1,000 CM. There is clearly an urgent need for action. Indiscriminate pumping of groundwater needs to be prevented at all costs to prevent declining water table and more emphasis will be given on water recycling. New infrastructure

needs to be built especially in underserved areas such as the water-rich northeast and eastern part of the country where investments can transform water from a curse to a blessing. The country needs to invest in water infrastructure at all levels - from large multipurpose water projects to small community watershed management and rainwater harvesting. A centralized funding agency and large scale resource capital framework for Public Private Partnership in water projects would aid acceleration in determining our water future.

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