

CMRL seeks to procure 80% power through renewable energy

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CHENNAI: In an effort to harness renewable power and cutdown cost on energy bills, the Chennai Metro seeks to meet 80% of its power requirements through renewable sources on a long-term basis. Apart from the 5.2 Mega Watt rooftop solar plant set up by it, CMRL has invited bids to procure power through group captive renewable power for long term through tariff based competitive bidding process.

As against its average annual power consumption of 110 million units, CMRL plans to procure 72 MU of wind power or 90 MU of solar or hybrid technology to meet its energy requirements. By fixing a cap on maximum tariff at Rs 3.5 per unit, the Metro would like to rope in renewable power developers at much cheaper tariff.

At present, CMRL has an installed rooftop solar capacity of 5.2 MW and it aims to increase the capacity up to 8 MW which would help generate 11.6 million units per year. "By procuring the renewable power on long term basis at a cheaper rate, we will be able to save our expense on monthly power bill," a senior CMRL official said.

As of now, CMRL has been charged Rs 6.35 per unit for the Railway traction consumption by Tangedco while other loads like ATM, kiosks, stalls and hotels in the Metro premises were being charged separately at Rs 8 per unit. "When the energy could be procured at cheaper rate, it makes sense to use the opportunity. Moreover, CMRL is facing financial burden considering the higher tariff paid by it as against Rs 3 per unit envisaged during the DPR based on which load schedule were worked out," the official said.



GREEN CAPACITY

- CMRL plans to procure 72 MU of wind power or 90 MU of solar or hybrid sources
- Cost of power capped at maximum of Rs 3.5 per unit for 25 years
- At present, CMRL has an installed capacity of 5.2 MW rooftop solar plants
- Metro plans to increase rooftop solar capacity to 8 MW shortly

An expert in the power sector said the developers have now started to look at group captive power projects as a business model to expand operations in the open access market. "Unlike an individual captive or third-party sale power project, group captive is an arrangement through which a developer sets up a power project for the collective use of multiple industrial or commercial consumers who have 26 per cent equity in the project and must consume 51 per cent of the power produced," the expert said, noting that the primary advantage of a group captive model is that cross-subsidy, and additional surcharges are not levied on the power procured.