Dear Sameer,

This is response to your query on feasibility of biogas projects in our country. We are sending you a brief note on this aspect.

In recent years, biogas systems have attracted considerable attention as a promising approach to decentralized rural development. Developed and developing countries and several international organizations have shown interest in biogas systems with respect to various objectives: a renewable source of energy, biofertilizer, waste recycling, rural development, public health and hygiene, pollution control, environmental management, appropriate technology, and technical cooperation.

India has well equipped institutions to organize training and provide technical assistance to other developing countries in the areas of training of masons and fabrication/construction and installation of biogas plants, training of trainers, training in project formulation, implementation and management.

Biogas technology is being promoted in India chiefly under the aspect of energy. The focus on this derives from the crucial energy supply situation for the population in the country. Besides China, India is the country where the development of uncomplicated biogas plants for the Tropics which are simple to operate started. Since the fifties the mass dissemination of biogas plants has been propagated and initiated for rural households, yet this development did not experience an upswing until the seventies so that by 1980 100,000 plants had been installed. With the beginning of the 6th 5-year plan in 1981, the National Project for Biogas Development (NPBD) came into being following the objective of mass dissemination of household biogas plants and also including financial support.

Biogas dissemination in India experienced a number of set-backs as a large proportion of the plants erected were not used or only used to an insufficient extent. Reasons on the one hand, were the immature technical properties of plants themselves until the beginning of the eighties and on the other hand, a dissemination strategy which was only minimally developed and which did not recognise the importance of user training and follow-up services until much later. Despite this, biogas technology was constantly supported by the Indian government. In 1982, the newly founded Department of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (DNES) as a department of the Ministry of Power and Non-Conventional Energy Sources took over central control of biogas dissemination. In the meantime, there are around 1 million household biogas plants in India of which 70-80% are assumed to be in operation.
Biogas dissemination is promoted centrally by the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources (MNES, formerly DNES). This department consults on and resolves the guidelines on financial support for biogas technology, commissions assignments in research and development and decides on the eligibility of new biogas plants for aid. The actual dissemination work is carried out by the governments of the Indian states, the public corporations

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) but mainly by countless non-governmental organisations. Within the framework of aid prescribed by MNES each state is responsible for the guidelines applicable in its region. The individual provisions prevailing thus vary from state to state.

Promotion of biogas technology
The most important instrument in the promotion of biogas technology is the provision of allowances paid towards the investment costs which is of direct benefit to the farmers. Everyone in India installing a biogas plant has the right to an allowance paid by the central government. The extent of this sum is defined by the size of the plant, the social category the user belongs to and the relevant part of the country where the plant being promoted is located.

Please see the attachment for statewise achievements in installation of biogas plants up to Dec 1999. You may use windows explorer to view this file.

For more information on this aspect, you may contact Tata Energy Research Institute (E-mail- { HYPERLINK mailto:mailbox@teri.res.in) }mailbox@teri.res.in).

I hope this information serves your purpose.