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## India confirms new smart village

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Indian technology company SunMoksha has developed a Smart NanoGrid system to power its first smart village in Chhotkei, Orissa State.

A \$14.5bn flagship smart cities programme has been launched by the Indian government, but Ashok Das, founder of SunMoksha says the issue of remote villages was not addressed fast enough with around 200 million people living off-grid.

According to Das, the problem in remote villages is that there is no follow up to the installation of high-end green energy equipment and the systems eventually stop working, and that is why he created a smart grid technology enabling a whole village's electrical infrastructure to be monitored from afar.



Ashok Das says: "Changing consumer behaviour in a big city is a major problem... It will take decades to build smart cities, but I can get thousands of smart villages done in that time."

A 30KW solar infrastructure was installed to power the village with sensors and meters to check the energy usage and monitor the system health, and the data is sent to SunMoksha's cloud-based monitoring system enabling the remote managing of supply and demand.

The villagers' consumption is also monitored in order to avoid the overloading of the grid, and they can check it themselves thanks to an app and Wi-Fi hotspots.

SunMoksha works in collaboration with the Finnish power company Wartsila's corporate social programme which financed the set-up costs for the project and with the Odisha (Orissa) Renewable Energy Development Agency (ORED), which is responsible for installing renewable power solutions in remote villages in Orissa.

Deputy Director Ashok Choudhury said: "You get a lot more control... It brings a real solution to a village; otherwise we install a system and don't know what happens to it when we leave."

Secretary in the ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) Upendra Tripathy decided to fund 30 per cent of 10 pilot projects after going at a demonstration day at the smart village last April.

Upendra Tripathy said: "I've seen plenty of microgrids, but the combination of technology in this village is a first... It's the integration and the remote monitoring. That's where they've done wonders."

Last month, SunMoksha got awarded in the Smart Village category during the 2016 Smart Cities India Awards.

A similar technology could be applied in the future to water consumption and environmental factors related to agriculture, in order to make the villages really smart.

Mr Das says: "The smart grid acts as a catalyst in the village and then all these other things become possible... The potential is huge."

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