

# Where Power Supply Is Good Business

*Grabbing a part of the chain of electricity supply can deliver good returns*



Photo: Ubani Nkaginieme

MTN Cell site in Ikeja, north of Lagos, Nigeria: Telecom companies provide some of the biggest opportunities for suppliers of standby generating facility



A turbine Farm: Some business premises request for turbines as large as IMW capacity, in Nigeria

By Sully Manope

With hardly a reprieve from incessant power outage, Nigerian businesses have always looked outside the national grid.

The country generates 3,000Megawatts of electricity per day for a population of 145million and the third largest economy in Africa.

As stand by generators themselves become the de-facto providers of electricity, maintenance becomes a key issue. Business premises have for long hired managers whose key jobs were to ensure the capability and cost effectiveness of standby gen sets, but businesses are seeing that this is an entire, time taking, money guzzling exercise itself.

Now private power producers, outside of Independent Power Plants(IPP) that generate power to feed

into national grid, are taking over supply of standby power, providing business premises and industry as much power as they get from gen sets, at cheaper cost.

“There are many industries that are spending more than 30cents (\$0.3)per kilowatt hour”, says Ubani Nkaginieme, whose company, TOTAL Support, is involved in power sales, “We’d go to them and say we can do this for about 20 cents per kilowatt hour”.

TOTAL Support and companies like it take the burden of standby power generation from such companies, but they have to be large consumers of power for their own investment worthwhile.

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Power suppliers like Nkaginieme are located

in the chain between large diesel fired generating sets, IPPs and gas suppliers like Oando, the country’s largest domestic downstream company, which has benefited immensely from the country’s inadequate public power supply by delivering gas to large industries to fire their boilers.

What keeps this sort of business going is an acute awareness of two things; that (1)the power utility, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, is chronically inefficient and (2) the power problem in Nigeria is not about to be solved. “The same volume gas at that PHCN gets for 10cents, I’d pay \$4 for, but If I’d still be able to save a user money and deliver the power, it means there’s a market. That’s why people like Tara Systems (a mid sized IT company)come to us. We’ve delivered four turbines”.

Now that TOTAL Support has captured a good slice of the big business market, it is considering the small guy. “We’ve taken it further by saying that we can also give to individuals. We say: give me 60,000 naira every month and I’d give you xKV and you know you will get it, it is certain.

That’s where we are now. We’ve installed the turbine for Abiola Gardens. We’d start demonstrating, hopefully it would catch people’s eyes.■

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