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HZI BioMethan to Retrofit Gas Upgrading System at Biogas Plant

The operator of a biogas plant in Parum (in the German state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) is changing its facility to produce biomethane in future rather than converting raw biogas into electricity. The retrofit order was awarded to the Zeven-based gas upgrading specialist Hitachi Zosen Inova BioMethan (HZI BioMethan). The realignment will enable the economically viable operation of the plant after the feed-in tariffs under the German Renewable Energy Act (EEG) expire, while at the same time avoiding replacement investments in costly cogeneration plants going forward.

After many years of successful operation, the operator of the biogas plant in Parum faced the prospect of having to invest in the renovation of its cogeneration facilities, this coupled with the imminent expiry of the EEG feed-in tariffs. Turning to biomethane production via biogas upgrading offered an economically viable long-term alternative. With this process, the carbon dioxide (CO₂) contained in the biogas is separated from the methane, which is then upgraded to natural gas quality, and fed into the existing natural gas grid.

This will be realized by HZI BioMethan using pressureless amine scrubbing, with a raw biogas capacity of up to 1,000Nm³ per hour. The initial supply to the HanseWerk grid is planned for 2017.

Financially Viable without State Subsidies

“Thanks to the revenues from the sale of the biomethane, the investment in the gas upgrading technology will deliver a good level of economic efficiency,” explained Dr. Karsten Wünsche, CEO of HZI BioMethan. Unlike using biogas to produce electricity, this concept is not based on limited state subsidies. HZI BioMethan is thus currently in direct discussions with numerous operators of biogas plants. “Biomethane is a key fuel of the future. It fits in with the development of renewable energies, and sufficient infrastructure is available. Unlike electricity, biomethane can be transported and distributed as required,” said Karsten Wünsche. Its range of uses is just as diverse as fossil fuels, and it is compatible with all gas-powered devices and vehicles.

About Hitachi Zosen Inova BioMethan

Hitachi Zosen Inova BioMethan GmbH (HZI BioMethan) is one of the leading providers of gas upgrading systems, delivering its solutions with two processes for separating CO₂ from the biogas or flue gases.

The company was founded in spring 2015 as the result of an asset deal to acquire MT-BioMethan GmbH, one of the pioneers in the field of biomethane production through CO₂ separation and gas feed-in. HZI BioMethan combines its expertise with many years of practical experience in numerous reference projects across Europe. The company is part of the HZI Group, rounding out the latter's biological waste treatment portfolio.

Pressureless amine scrubbing is an efficient, heat-led process that makes sensible use of the waste heat from CHP facilities or gas boilers. HZI BioMethan also offers a three-stage pressure-driven process using membrane-based gas permeation. Both of these technologies deliver the highest degree of purity with minimal methane slip.

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