

SENT TO LSU AGCENTER/LOUISIANA FOREST PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER - FOREST SECTOR / FORESTY PRODUCTS INTEREST GROUP

(My ex-PhD students, Dr. Anand Mishra (India) – Dissertation Topic -- & Dr. Priyan Perera (Sri Lanka) and I have conducted research in the area of small-scale off-grid gasification-→electricity for developing countries.)

CANADIAN BIOMASS

Opitciwan, Que., community to build forest biomass cogen plant

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Photo: Annex Business Media

The Conseil des Atikamekw d'Opitciwan (CAO), Hydro-Québec (HQ) and the Société en commandite Onimiskiw Opitciwan (SCOO) have forged a historic agreement to build a forest biomass cogeneration plant to supply Opitciwan. The future off-grid system will be the first of its kind in an Indigenous community in Québec.

The agreement opens the door to the next stages of this project that's been long desired by the community. With an installed capacity of 4.8 MW, the plant is scheduled for commissioning in July 2026. The 25-year agreement, which has the option of a 15-year extension, also involves the acquisition and installation of a dryer at the Opitciwan sawmill.



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Once in operation, the plant will ensure the community a reliable, sustainable and renewable electricity supply. The project will also contribute significantly to local job creation and economic development by consolidating and maximizing the activities of the sawmill, whose majority shareholder is the CAO.

With the overall costs at an estimated \$60.2 million, provincial and federal government contributions will be required along with investments from the proponents (SCOO and CAO). In terms of jobs, 40 workers will be hired for the construction phase, with about 15 permanent jobs to be created once the facility is up and running.

Lastly, though the current diesel generators must be kept as a back-up source to ensure power supply reliability, the project represents a major step forward in terms of environmental conservation and the fight against climate change. Diesel consumption is expected to decrease by roughly 85 per cent.

The new facilities will optimize use of forestry resources, reduce noise and odour pollution, drastically cut fossil fuel dependence and significantly lower the transport related to diesel and wood products (bark and raw timber). In total, annual GHG emissions are expected to be reduced by 13,000 t of CO₂ equivalent, or 325,000 t of CO₂ equivalent over 25 years – results that are comparable to removing 5,000 cars from the roads each year.

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