



The solar pumps could provide Indian farmers with cheaper water and cut back on pollution | Photo source Chelsea Aaron on Unsplash

INDIAN COMPANY BUILDS SOLAR-POWERED PUMPS FOR FARMERS

 AGRICULTURE & ENERGY

The crowdfunded campaign would install community solar water pumps in India, providing cheaper, greener irrigation water

Spotted: India-based Oorja has created a pay-as-you-go solar pump irrigation system. The system has the potential to help farmers grow more crops and spend less on irrigation, the company says.

Oorja has piloted a community solar pump system, known as Oonnati, that it says will make irrigation more affordable and more ecologically clean.

Oonnati, which means progress in Hindi, could disrupt the cycle of poverty and improve lives in rural India, Oorja says. Currently, millions of Indian farmers used diesel-powered pumps to irrigate their lands. The fuel is expensive, and they often cannot afford to pump enough water to grow sufficient crops. Farmers depend on diesel-powered pumps because the initial cost of solar pumps is too high.

The Oonnati system would be more affordable because farmers only pay for what they use, the company says. There is no upfront cost for the community pump to be installed. Oorja has already piloted the system in Uttar Pradesh, India. It is currently running an Indiegogo page to raise the money for six community solar pumps in Assam, India.

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Takeaway:

Oorja says its solar pump programme can solve several problems for poor farmers in India. The company notes that 9 million Indian farmers use diesel pumps, at a collective cost of \$4 billion a year. The environmental cost could be even greater. Diesel is one of the largest contributors to global pollution. The solar pumps could provide farmers with cheaper water and cut back on pollution. Springwise has spotted other ways startups are helping farmers find better ways to irrigate. In Egypt, there is an effort to use ancient clay pots to create inexpensive irrigation systems, and in the US, farmers are trying a system that allows them to lease out surplus water.