

ABB's Electrification Business strengthens position in Pakistan - Loay Dajani

Exclusive Interview of Lead Business Manager, Middle East and Africa, ABB Electrification

EU: What potential do you see in the electrification sector of Pakistan and how do you plan to exploit that potential?

LD: Pakistan, with its urban population of around one hundred million people has tremendous growth potential and our ABB Electrification Business is seeing steady growth.

We see increasing investment in renewable generation and a change in the behaviour of the consumers. Since the power demand is increasing, the generation and distribution network need to be reliable and decentralized. Here, we see that the demand for the type tested switchgear - both medium and low voltage is also increasing in Pakistan, especially after the ABB technology transfer licensing program to our channel partners, which has helped create more awareness in the market.

We are constantly innovating our offer and that helps position ABB as a leader in all Utility projects. In Pakistan, we have also supplied and installed E-Mobility charging solutions and fast DC chargers in many cities across the country.

EU: Which segment of electrification will ABB focus on and what are the long-term plans for Pakistan?

LD: As the world becomes more digitally enabled and customer behaviour is shifting to automation, we see many opportunities arising. For the Electrification portfolio, ABB in Pakistan has a greater focus on the distribution of energy in areas like utilities, renewable energy, e-mobility, data centres and large infrastructure projects. We are keen to work with all the major projects and customers in Pakistan.

EU: Low cost Chinese products are a big challenge for many major brands in the world? How ABB is planning to handle the situation in Pakistan?

LD: ABB believes in value-based selling where we offer the lowest life cycle cost to our customers and complement it with well-trained local service teams. ABB has added partners in the local market after an extensive global due-diligence process. With ample stock, quality and the right pricing, we are already on the right path and showing sustained growth in Pakistan. We have already established solid brand awareness and customer loyalty.

EU: Following the divestment, what will be your key priorities in Pakistan and how will your clients in the region benefit from this new development?

■ By Engr. Nadeem Ashraf



LD: In Pakistan, there is pressure to upgrade the grid like in Europe and America and the necessity to produce cleaner, more efficient energy is a key priority for the Government. This will require intensive monitoring of the network, consumption points and assets. ABB's products are designed for a distribution network able to be monitored in real time from the substation to home devices.

Following the divestment of Power Grids to Hitachi, the Hitachi ABB Power Grids joint venture is focused on transmission and sub-transmission while ABB will continue to concentrate on solutions across the full electricity distribution

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value chain. This will cover power distribution, e-mobility, decentralized renewable integration and energy storage systems.

EU: What are some of the existing market challenges that you think will be addressed by the new changes?

LD: One of the key challenges would be to integrate the increasing renewable sources like solar and wind and decentralized generation sources whilst ensuring grid stability. A high level of renewables in the energy system requires reliable back-up capacity. Another challenge is line losses and improper load management in distribution companies.

The challenge can be solved by increasing the interconnection capacity of the grid or investing in energy management/storage to balance the demand and the supply. Distribution Automation will help power distribution companies to manage better line losses and proper load management with selective tripping. This needs a strong focus on digitalization and digitally enabled products, specifically in the low-voltage and medium-voltage part of the network, which ABB is driving with several digital solutions across its ABB Ability™ platform.

EU: How do you see the utility market evolving over the next 5 years?

LD: If we look at the global transformation which is taking place in the utility sector, we can anticipate that some of those trends will also arrive in the next five years in Pakistan. Ten years ago, much of the utility sector in Pakistan had a largely integrated model including conventional generation, renewable, transmission, distribution and supply but the energy landscape is getting diverse with decentralized generation and renewable integration.

Most of the traditional utilities are now transforming themselves and their business models to become more agile, with both European utilities/standards and Chinese investors accelerating transformation in Pakistan. The speed of change will depend on the regulation authorities, but distribution companies are planning projects of automatic meter reading and distribution automation. Transmission utilities are planning to shift to the digital grid gradually.

EU: What future do you see in terms of investment opportunities in the energy sector of Pakistan?

LD: There are many exciting opportunities in the energy sector under CEPC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) as well as in the renewable sector. We are collaborating with Chinese EPCs in China to have ABB equipment in CPEC and complementing it with local service and after sales team. We are supplying many global and local players in solar and wind with our products and components and further developing solutions for the interconnection within the solar or wind facilities.

EU: What is the vision of ABB in Pakistan for the next 5-10 years?

LD: We will continue strengthening ABB's positioning in the country. ABB will continue to be a principle player in the energy transition so we can continue to transform and enable safe, smart and sustainable business and communities. We are focusing on a more decentralized, efficient and reliable distribution of energy. Our focus in the Electrification business will continue to be on the development of digitally enabled sustainable products and the development of software solutions that support utilities to reduce their operations cost and help them transform and build a new era in energy.

EU: ABB is pioneer in Electric vehicle charging facilities in the world. Popularity of EVs are increasing in the Pakistani Market. But for EVs to be practical, a lot of infrastructure development is still required from charging stations to electric supply. Does ABB have any plans specifically for the EV industry in Pakistan?

LD: ABB is a global leader in e-mobility, having sold more than 17,000 DC fast chargers across more than 80 markets. Specifically looking at Pakistan, ABB is looking to leverage that global e-mobility expertise to facilitate local EV adoption. have supported many pioneering e-mobility projects in Pakistan. ABB has supplied and commissioned the first commercial EV Charger in Pakistan at the GO Fuel Station located in Lahore. We have

delivered and commissioned DC fast EV Charger to Attock Petroleum Limited for their first public EV charging station in Islamabad, Pakistan.

ABB EV chargers have also been commissioned at the Audi Service Stations in three cities including Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

ABB is in contact with all oil marketing companies, vehicle manufacturers, importers and infrastructure developers to have the EV charging network across the country.

EU: What are some of the main problems you see in the electrification sector of Pakistan which in your experience must be resolved on a priority basis?

LD: There is a room for improvement in the Electrification sector of Pakistan where ABB, as global leader, wants to highlight some key areas and opportunities.

a. Utilities are traditional in their approach and must adapt the equipment specifications to support the rapidly changing grid.

b. Distribution automation is necessary to curb unnecessary load shedding and essential for utilities as they adopt grid automation.

c. Announcement of special tariff for EV Charging to attract investors in fast charging networks and working on payment terminals

d. Addition of outdoor Load Breaker Switches / Breakers on overhead feeders in distribution utilities to have ease of load management and selective tripping. ■

Courtesy Engineering Post

