INTERVIEWS | INTERVIEW

“Electric vehicles to plug last-mile distribution gaps"

What will be the sole purpose of the recent fundraising by Celcius?

By **Sanjiv Das** | August 2, 2021



electric-vehicles-to-plug-last-mile-distribution-gaps

WordPress post #12685

Established in November 2020, Mumbai-based cold-chain marketplace startup Celsius is working to reinforce the cold-chain infrastructure in India. Though the cold chain industry has witnessed a huge transformation during the last few years, the COVID-19 lockdown has opened an array of hope for companies like Celsius, which could efficiently transport essential commodities of high priority such as dairy, seafood, and fruits. It serves as a unique aggregator platform and offers solutions for both reefer logistics and cold storage warehousing. Swarup Bose, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Celcius Logistics Solutions, Mumbai reveals more about the startup's operations and plans, during an interaction with NuFFooDS Spectrum.

What will be the sole purpose of the recent fundraising by Celcius?

We were fortunate enough to raise about $500,000 as our seed funding in May of this year. We are thankful to the institutional VCs that backed us up early on. MaGEhold, Keiretsu forum, EVAN, LUMIS partners, Huddle, Mumbai Angels and a few others showed confidence in our offerings. We are looking at using the fund to expand our team and reach. Currently, we operate across 90 cities in India, but we aim to expand our operations to have a reach all over the country. We will also be using the funding to scale up our partner base and enhance our tech platform to make it more efficient with each update.

How does the business model at Celcius operate?

We started Celcius at the height of the lockdown in 2020 when the entire country was shut down. Transportation of essential commodities was of high priority during these times. We realised that creating a nationwide cold chain network was the need of the hour since the cold chain facilities available were scarce. Our modus operandi was to create an asset-light SaaS-based platform that would help cold chain entities collaborate regardless of their bandwidth. This meant that even smaller shippers and transporters would be able to use our platform to assist larger manufacturers. We check storage units of shippers and fleets of transporters for Good Distribution Practices (GDP) compliance and if they do not meet the needs, we help them install technological devices that would get them the clearance. Notably, we have seen

tremendous growth in the past year.

Where are your facilities located across India? Any plans to open new facilities in the country and abroad?

We have gone from operating in Mumbai to operating in 90 cities across India, and from only connecting the major hubs in metro cities to Tier II and III cities. We have transporters working with us that come from over 60 cities and this helps us reach the remote and rural parts of the country. We plan on opening four other offices across the country, in the North, North East, East and the South. This way, we can increase our reach to Tier II and III cities. Also, over the next three years, we are planning on growing our domestic network, venturing into shipping, and connecting our network with other countries so we can facilitate the import and export of perishables across the globe.

What plans have you drawn out for the next five years?

We plan to grow and cover over 500 cities in the next two or three years while creating India’s largest last-mile delivery network. The services we offer will cover everything from primary movement to the last mile distribution, thereby providing a complete cold chain solution. Our software operations too, are set to evolve from transaction-based to completely integrated TMS (Transportation Management System) and WMS (Warehouse Management System). This change will further help us create a holistic end-to-end supply chain solution for the cold chain network.

What are the main challenges facing the cold chain industry in India?

The pandemic has brought a lot of the issues with the cold chain industry to the forefront. Apart from the clear lack of facilities and infrastructure, the industry often has to deal with technological challenges. Most cold chain products are sensitive to minor fluctuations in temperature. A lot of the storage and shipping companies do not have the technological

solutions required to monitor the conditions of the products stored or track the products when they are en route. This eventually leads to a lot of the products deteriorating in quality, and the amount of waste generated increases. To prevent such instances, we ensure that we install IoT devices and GPS trackers in the vehicles of every transporter we get onboard. This way, not only do we monitor the temperature conditions of the shipments but we can also track the location of the vehicles to assist them in case of any mishaps that might occur on the road.

How can India build an efficient cold chain infrastructure system for perishable products?

An efficient cold chain supply system is crucial for perishable cargo to be widely available across the country. In India, the fleet size required for hauling perishable cargo to the cities and the rural areas is close to 2 lakhs whereas the infrastructure available is only 50,000. Since the facilities cannot expand overnight, what we can do is create a nationwide network of cold chain entities. Through this network, manufacturers can collaborate with transporters and shipping companies based on their needs. This network will enable transporters and shippers from across the country to work with manufacturers of different bandwidths. Through this, we can utilise all the infrastructure available to its complete potential while also ensuring that the perishable cargo can reach even the remote parts of India.

What new technology-driven cold-chain solutions are we going to witness in the long run in the cold chain infra sector?

The cold chain industry is going to witness an era of Electric Vehicles (EV) replacing the existing petro fuel vehicles for last-mile distribution. This will reduce costs across the board for the distribution of perishable products, especially in the last mile, where we lack infrastructure. As of now, new technologies like PCM (Phase Change Material) are being widely used in the distribution of temperature-sensitive products. We are also working on a prototype project where we will be launching last-mile services in a select few cities with EV being a part of the

fleet. Once this drive is successful, we will implement the same across the country, forming the largest network of vehicles for the distribution of cold chain products.

Sanjiv Das

sanjiv.das@mmactiv.com

Read online: https://nuffoodsspectrum.in/interviews/23/17811/electric-vehicles-to-plug-last-mile-distribution-gaps.html

© 2026 NUFFOODS Spectrum. All rights reserved.