

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Government of India Publishes Draft Automotive Industry Standards as it Accelerates Ethanol Blending Mandate

Country: India

Post: New Delhi

Report Category: Biofuels, SP1 - Expand International Marketing Opportunities, Sugar, FAIRS Subject Report, Agriculture in the News, Policy and Program Announcements

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Report Highlights:

On December 22, 2020, the Government Of India's (GOI), Ministry of Road Transport and Highways published a Draft Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) containing procedural and safety requirements for ethanol, flex-fuel and ethanol-gasoline blend vehicles. Comments are requested within thirty days by January 21, 2021. The draft standards complement the GOI's 2018 National Biofuels Policy, as India looks to introduce E-85 and E-100 vehicles into regions with an ethanol surplus.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Disclaimer: The information contained in this report was retrieved from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways website at <https://morth.nic.in>. The Office of Agricultural Affairs, USDA and/or the U.S. Government make no claim of accuracy or authenticity.

Background:

Continuing its resolve to divert surplus sugar toward ethanol, the Government of India's (GOI) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on December 22, 2020 published a draft Automotive Industry Standard (AIS) titled "Safety and Procedural Requirements for Type Approval of Pure Ethanol, Flex-Fuel & Ethanol Gasoline Blend Vehicles." According to the AIS, the "purpose of this standard is to enhance vehicle safety by specifying safety requirements for hazards such as fire, corrosion, exposure to fumes etc." Comments are requested within thirty days by January 21, 2021.

While the National Biofuel Policy (2018) envisioned a 20 percent national average ethanol-gasoline blend by 2030, the GOI has reportedly proposed to advance this blend mandate by 2025 in efforts to reduce vehicular pollution and curtail carbon dioxide and hydrocarbon emissions. As a result, the GOI has published this AIS with the intent to introduce E-85 and E-100 vehicles into India for regions with an ethanol surplus. India's expected average blend rate is 5.2 percent (2020) while targeting an average 10 percent blend by 2022.

India's ethanol blending prioritization also relates to its sugar export assistance (sugarcane the primary ethanol feedstock in India), which in 2019, led to a challenge at the WTO over distortionary subsidies to sugarcane farmers (See: [DS581- Measures Concerning Sugar and Sugarcane](#)). India responded at the September 2020 WTO Agriculture Committee meeting by stating that it could continue to give export incentives until the end of 2023, in reference to a decision from the December 2015 Nairobi Ministerial. Going beyond 2023, the GOI may utilize its excess sugar inventories to produce ethanol to achieve its blending mandate.

For additional information, please refer to: [GAIN: IN2020-0122](#) and [GAIN: IN2020-0160](#). The full text of the draft AIS is pasted below and is available at the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways website at <https://morth.nic.in/>.

Attachments:

[Draft AIS Ethanol Standard.pdf](#)