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Collaboration mechanisms for business models in distributed energy ecosystems

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1 Introduction

Distributed energy systems rely on a different logic compared to large-scale, centralised power plants, and fuel production units (Johansson et al., 2005, Magnusson et al., 2005, Mirata et al., 2005). The logic cannot rely on the same premises as in the traditional energy sector, for instance when it comes to power equipment manufacturing (Magnusson *et al.*, 2005), but also in general creating specific logics of distributed economies (Johansson et al., 2005, Mirata et al., 2005). This implies a need for considering the underpinning business models. It has been argued that distributed energy systems, like **sustainable or renewable energy** at large, require new and differing types of business models, often putting the entrepreneur at a centre stage (see e.g. Johnson and Suskewicz, 2009, Loock, 2012, Okkonen and Suhonen, 2010, Provance et al., 2011). However, few business models have become established in the field, but new ones are continuously being developed and tested (see e.g. Okkonen and Suhonen, 2010, Provance et al., 2011). For example, in the biogas business one recurring question has been the one between centralised and farm scale plants (Raven and Geels, 2010).

A central aspect of business models is indeed the notion of change or transformation (Demil and Lecocq, 2010). The idea is to improve performance by choosing a new business model that does things better (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010, Magretta, 2002), a phenomenon studied under the label of business model innovation (Amit and Zott, 2012, Bock et al., 2012, Desyllas and Sako, 2013). An emerging stream of research suggest that business models not only transform businesses, but may in fact be vehicles for transforming entire sectors by integrating disconnected parties or by inducing system changes (Brusoni et al., 2009, Johnson and Suskewicz, 2009). Industry transformation and system changes tend to require the joint efforts of several companies or the change of more than one company's business model. Still, most studies on business models revolve either around the performance implications for a single firm (e.g. Patzelt et al., 2008, Zott

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