

How can power utilities restructure their resource base in order to survive market change driven by technological innovations?

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Research

- Historically, Norwegian power incumbents engage in entrepreneurial activity in cycles when business is profitable
- Despite having large cash reserves and technology access, little to no venturing for new business opportunity exploitation are active
- This does not resonate with the role and activity incumbents are predicted to have in diffusion and commercialization of renewable energy technologies (Crockett, 2013; Richter, 2012; Hockerts & Wüstenhagen, 2010)

Preliminary findings suggest that strong mediating effects are:

- Previous commercialization failures
- Public-private ownership model
- Dividend model structure
- Existing resource base built with monopolistic attitudes

Main finding from screening interviews: (NO) Utilities are escalating efforts in using technology startups as risk bearers to overcome their in-house commercialization barriers

- Objective: To investigate the meeting point between established firms and startups to understand cooperative commercialization of new renewable energy technology
- Body of knowledge: Corporate entrepreneurship
 - Seeks to explain why and how established organization engage in corporate venturing or strategic entrepreneurship to pursue new business opportunities
 - Focus on firm level and top management teams ability to handle uncertainty and opportunity exploration-exploitation
 - Is an overly positive literature domain, where we know little of when organizations should not engage in entrepreneurial activities
 - Is presented as a linear organizational process, where the real phenomenon seems to be cyclical in this case
 - Oriented around an internal resource focus, while commercialization often occur outside the firm in collaboration with startups
- RQ: How do utilities cooperate with startups that serve as technological risk bearers to pursue new business opportunities?
- Study design:
 - Firm level
 - Qualitative multiple case study
 - Cross-sectional sample of the largest Norwegian power utilities (N=12) (CEO and Head of Strategy/Innovation in each) and cooperating technology startups (N=24)