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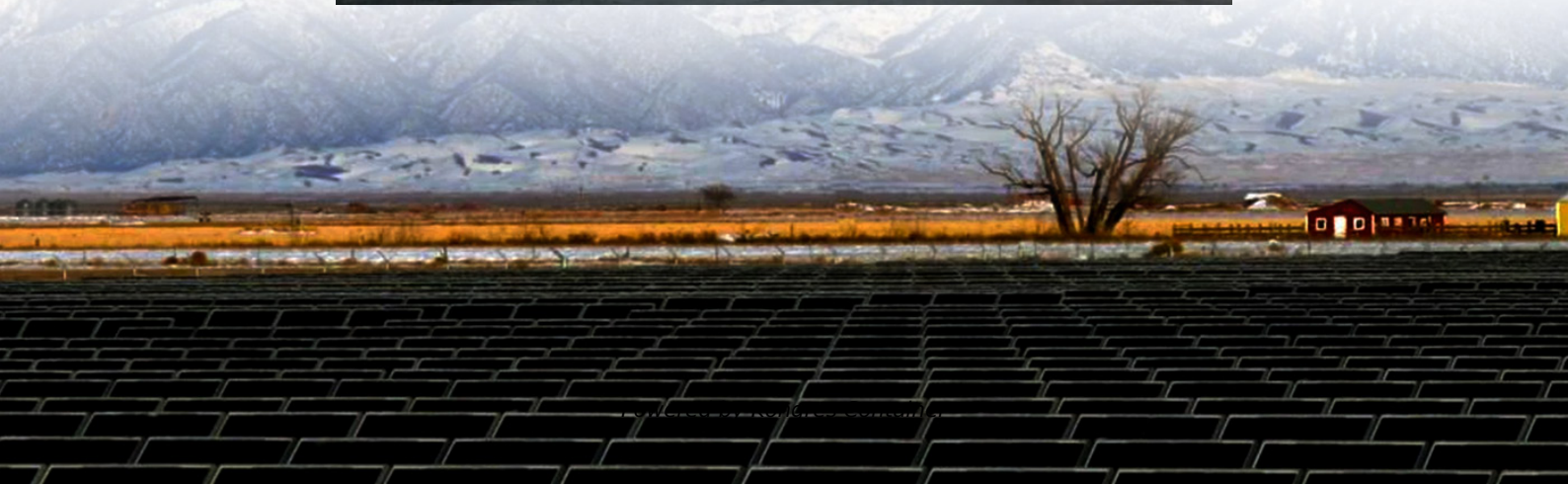
Profit model and commercial value of energy storage power stations



Overview

Is energy storage a profitable business model?

Although academic analysis finds that business models for energy storage are largely unprofitable, annual deployment of storage capacity is globally on the rise (IEA, 2020). One reason may be generous subsidy support and non-financial drivers like a first-mover advantage (Wood Mackenzie, 2019).

What are business models for energy storage?

Business Models for Energy Storage Rows display market roles, columns reflect types of revenue streams, and boxes specify the business model around an application. Each of the three parameters is useful to systematically differentiate investment opportunities for energy storage in terms of applicable business models.

Do investors underestimate the value of energy storage?

While energy storage is already being deployed to support grids across major power markets, new McKinsey analysis suggests investors often underestimate the value of energy storage in their business cases.

How many business models are there for energy storage technologies?

Figure 1 depicts 28 distinct business models for energy storage technologies that we identify based on the combination of the three parameters described above. Each business model, represented by a box in Fig- ure 1, applies storage to solve a particular problem and to generate a distinct revenue stream for a specific market role.

How would a storage facility exploit differences in power prices?

In application (8), the owner of a storage facility would seize the opportunity to exploit differences in power prices by selling electricity when prices are high and buying energy when prices are low.

How can energy storage be profitable?

Where a profitable application of energy storage requires saving of costs or deferral of investments, direct mechanisms, such as subsidies and rebates, will be effective. For applications dependent on price arbitrage, the existence and access to variable market prices are essential.

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