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Profit model of grid-side energy storage



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).

How do business models of energy storage work?

Building upon both strands of work, we propose to characterize business models of energy storage as the combination of an application of storage with the revenue stream earned from the operation and the market role of the investor.

Are grid-side ESSs profitable?

Turning to the energy arbitrage of grid-side ESSs, researchers have investigated the profitability considering various technologies and electricity markets. Energy arbitrage means that ESSs charge electricity during valley hours and discharge it during peak hours, thus making profits via the peak-valley electricity tariff gap [14].

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 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.

Can coal-fired power plants be converted to grid-side energy storage systems?

This paper focuses on the possibility of retrofitting coal-fired power plants (CFPPs) and converting these to grid-side energy storage systems (ESSs). It proposes a sizing and scheduling co-optimisation model to investigate the energy arbitrage profitability of such systems.

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