

Track 2 - The smart energy system transition in cities and regions

Title of the proposed paper

To PPP or not to PPP? (Public-)Private Partnerships involving green gas

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Text abstract (max. 300 words)

To realize a proper 'energy transition' government has to collaborate with private sector organizations. In the energy sector these latter organizations are often already involved in private-private partnerships for collaboration towards energy transition. The question seems justified if, upon closer analysis, these forms of collaboration also come with some form of (active) input from government. This seems to be the case in the construction of biogas-infrastructure for the production and distribution of green gas. Consequently, this contribution discusses if such collaboration should in fact be labeled as Public-Private Partnership. In the governance debate, this issue is important because in the organization of PPP the public interest (in this case: energy transition) has to be properly safeguarded.

On the base of a confrontation between the results from literature study and the results of empirical case study of a biogasinfrastructure in the Dutch region 'Noordoost Fryslân', we conclude that governmental influence can take a veiled form by 'quasi' private organizations. Law in particular, provides (binding) criteria for safeguarding public interests, such as on transparency, relevant also to the promotion of renewable energy. Public standards for these types of projects has to be sufficiently safeguarded, as regard to their form and content of steering, while at the same time retaining the advantages which ensue from the collaborative character of PPP.