

# The role of TSOs in local green initiatives

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Track 2

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Given the significant potential for Transport System Operators (TSOs) to help society in becoming greener in the domain of energy, government generally articulates this to be a public task for TSOs. This extra responsibility has high costs and uncertainties and may compete with existing public tasks. This makes TSOs run into a typical infrastructure dilemma. It requires trade-offs among public values.

Regulators recognize and acknowledge the dilemma with respect to duty for TSOs to facilitate energy transitions, but nevertheless regulators may refuse to adapt their tariff regulation accordingly. This does not encourage TSOs to help exploit the many local opportunities with a reasonable positive cost-benefit ratio for society at large. Non-adaptive regulation in response to extra public tasks compels TSOs to cope with more, potentially conflicting, demands.

What is the role of TSOs in coping with these conflicts with respect to local initiatives that create a greener energy system? We found our preliminary answers on long-term research experience in the Dutch energy sector and in particular in the context of our recent research in the gas sector. We mutually confront arguments from the field of law, politics, policy, economics and engineering. We discuss why the role of TSOs is currently underarticulated. We show what this means for TSO decisions and social outcomes. We argue how this connects to the regulatory regime and the wider institutional context of TSOs. Aim of this paper is, thus, to unpack the way TSOs may fill in their role to contribute to a greener society. In this paper, we are more argumentative than empirical. In conclusion, we sketch a research approach that fits the challenge to better understand and support TSOs in this matter.