Customer collaboration in developing new energy services

Background

Innovation management studies have recognized customers as valuable contributors to the innovation process. Since customers have heterogenous needs, collaboration with customers leads to innovations being adapted to different customer groups which leads to higher customer satisfaction and willingness to pay extra for customized products. Furthermore, in the context of new service development, the need for customer involvement and customization is especially important.

In the energy sector, new service development has a high potential to contribute to both sustainable energy system and higher profitability of energy companies. Although Swedish energy companies are increasingly engaging in energy service innovations, they experience a lack of knowledge about and engagement from the potential customers. Therefore, increased actor collaboration and customer involvement in the energy service innovation is an important prerequisite for continued development of new energy services. However, so far it remains unclear to what extent and how customers are involved in new service development in the energy sector.

This master thesis project will be connected to an ongoing research project that investigates customized service development in the energy sector from both companies’ and customers’ perspectives. Three senior researchers at the Department of Technology Management and Economics are involved in the project: Magnus Persson, Susanne Ollilla and Ksenia Onufrey.

In this master thesis project, the students will analyze a database consisting of annual reports and webpages of 150 Swedish energy companies in order to investigate customization and customer involvement in new service development.

Examples of master thesis objectives

• To investigate to what extent energy companies are offering customized energy services to different types of customers.
• To investigate to what extent customers have been involved in the development of different services.

The specific objectives and research questions will be discussed and formulated by the students in collaboration with the supervisor/examiner.

Prerequisites

• Courses related to industrial organization and innovation management.

Contact information
For more information, please contact magper@chalmers.se. The master thesis will be supervised/examined by one or several senior researchers involved in the research project.