

Energy Dialogue on

# Innovation in the Energy Industry

Monday, July 3, 2017, ETH Alumni Pavillon

4.00pm – 5.45pm, Panel Discussion

6.00pm – 8.00pm, Apéro riche

Zurich, Switzerland

## Abstract

The electricity industry globally is undergoing a set of fundamental shifts, driven by the forces of decarbonization, decentralization and digitalization. The pace and extent of change can be dizzying: carbon-free renewable technologies are becoming increasingly cost-competitive; energy storage is enabling flexible demand and transportation electrification; digital technologies are enabling energy services beyond the provision of the commodity electrons; legal and regulatory frameworks are increasingly incorporating climate considerations; financial markets are demanding greater risk management of “carbon assets”; and customers are demanding greater choice and value. One set of entities caught in the crosswinds of change is the utility industry, which is seeing its existing business models and core competencies being upended. Yet, the traditional utility industry as a whole has not had to innovate fundamentally in decades. However, while some utilities across the world remain sanguine, others are actively exploring new operations and offerings in order to capture new value that is potentially being created. The key challenge remains: from a utility perspective, when to innovate, and on what, how, and with or by whom?

To explore this challenge, the Group for **Sustainability and Technology** at ETH Zurich and the **Sustainable Energy Initiative at the Stanford Graduate School of Business** will co-host a moderated panel of representatives from leading electricity firms.

### Panelists

**Cameron Briggs**

Head of Future  
Energy  
Origin Energy  
(Australia)

**Luís Manuel**

Member of the  
Executive Board  
EDP Inovação  
(Portugal)

**Thierry Lepercq**

EVP Research,  
Technology & Innov.  
Engie  
(France)

**Suzanne Thoma**

Chief Executive  
Officer  
BKW Group  
(Switzerland)

### Moderator

**Stephen D. Comello**

Director Sustainable  
Energy Initiative  
Stanford GSB  
(USA)

## About the Energy Dialogue

The purpose of this event is primarily to stimulate broad understanding of the changing electricity landscape, and how **incumbent firms are reassessing – and reimagining – their role and business models**. One main goal is to instantiate meaningful relationships among researchers and key actors who have informed views on these subjects.

The **Energy Dialogue** will use a **panel format, followed by a moderated discussion** where **4 experts** speak about a particular topic with ample opportunity for open discussion. An audience of approximately 50 representing academia, industry, start-ups, accelerators and policymakers will help explore the topic and identify interesting directions for future inquiry. The Energy Dialogue will adhere to the **Chatham House Rule**, so as to encourage honest conversation. Participation upon invitation only.

## The Podium

## About the Panelists

**Cameron Briggs**

Dr Briggs is the Head of Future Energy for Origin Energy. He has extensive experience in the development, deployment and commercialisation of technology. He has utilised this expertise most recently at Origin energy where he leads Origin's efforts in finding and partnering with global start-up companies whose technology can be deployed within Origin's ecosystem and spends most of his time in USA and China. Prior to this he held several senior executive roles in the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation focussing again on the commercialisation of new technologies within the energy sector. He has worked in four start up companies, two of which he founded. He holds a PhD and an MBA from the University of Queensland.

**Luís Manuel**

Mr Manuel is the Executive Director of EDP Inovação and responsible for the firm's corporate venture capital division (EDP Ventures) and its business incubation program (EDP Starter). Previously he worked two years at Explorer Investments, a Portuguese private equity fund manager, and spent six years at Galp Energia in the Strategy and Business Portfolio department. Prior to that, Mr Manuel worked at Espírito Santo Investment in the Project Finance and Corporate Finance Advisory divisions in Portugal and Brazil. Between 2004 and 2005, he was a member of the Cabinet of the Secretary of State of Economic Development and Innovation during the XVI Portuguese Constitutional Government. He holds a degree in Economics from Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

**Thierry Lepercq**

Mr Lepercq is the Executive Vice President of Engie, supervising the Research, Technology, and Innovation Department. Before joining Engie, he has founded NetsCapital and co-founded Solairedirect, adopting leading positions in both companies. Mr Lepercq spent five years with Oddo et Cie, an investment bank for young information technology companies where he managed about thirty fundraising and M&A transactions for well-known IT players. Prior to that, he performed M&A Advisory work for Arjil Bank. He began his career in acquisition financing with Bankers Trust in New York and Paris after graduating from HEC business school.

**Suzanne Thoma**

Dr Suzanne Thoma has been CEO of the BKW Group since 2013. With 6,000 employees across Europe, BKW offers integrated services in the fields of energy, building and infrastructure. She worked for 10 years as a chemical engineer at Ciba Spezialitätenchemie AG (today BASF AG) both in Switzerland and abroad, before heading high-tech materials and technology licensing firm Rolic Technologies AG. Prior to joining BKW as Head of Networks in 2010, Dr Thoma managed the WICOR Group's international automotive supply business in Rapperswil. Dr Thoma has a degree and PhD in chemical engineering from ETH Zurich.



## About the Moderator

**Stephen D. Comello**

Dr Comello is the director of the Sustainable Energy Initiative, Stanford Graduate School of Business, and a fellow at the Steyer-Taylor Center for Energy Policy and Finance, Stanford University. He is also a manager for Stanford University's Bits & Watts Initiative and a Precourt Energy Scholar. Stephen's research focuses broadly on energy technology economics, policy, and innovation. In particular, by applying tools and methods within finance, economics, and systems analysis, he investigates innovation and competitiveness of low-carbon energy solutions in both developed and emerging economies. He holds a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering, Stanford University.

