

How utility sector intermediaries facilitate ESCO market development through value co-creation:

A case study of Sharjah Electricity & Water Authority (SEWA), UAE

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The growth of energy service companies (ESCOs) markets in the private sector is restricted by a fragmented and highly uncertain market and customers who are often unknowledgeable and unwilling. This study explores the potential role of public sector utility companies as intermediaries connecting supply-side ESCOs with potential demand-side customers in a manner that ensures customer satisfaction. The paper adopts a customer-centric, service-dominant logic perspective to examine how a utility company facilitates value co-creation in an in-depth case study of an extensive retrofit program in the Emirate of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. The findings underline several value co-creation roles associated with the utility company intermediary, including relationship-enabling, communication-enabling and knowledge-enabling. The paper concludes with recommendations on how utility companies can facilitate the co-creation of value at the ESCO-customer interface and hence, support ESCO markets' development towards decarbonising the built environment.

Keywords: energy service companies (ESCOs); energy service market; utility company; intermediary; private sector customer; value co-creation; triad, case study, United Arab Emirates.