

Good Practice Factsheet

Ireland – SME Business Programme

Topic	Energy Services – Offer side: energy services for small clients
Name of work programme/project	Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Business Programme Note: For the purposes of this programme SME businesses are classified as businesses with annual energy bills of less than €1M per annum.
Project scope and description	
Short description of the programme & what it hopes to achieve	<p>The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) established their Small Medium Enterprise (SME) Programme or Small Business Programme in 2007 to support businesses in tackling their energy costs, which are a significant part of any company's operating costs and which influences their competitive position. Through this programme SEAI has worked with businesses of all sizes and types, and not one business showed up as unable to save money on energy. The programme was also extended to cover public sector organisations. The main core themes for the programme are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of SMEs through telephone advice and on-site assessments. • Building the Energy Management Action Programme (Energy MAP) structured energy management web resource for SMEs. • Development of a body of standard solutions that offer proven energy efficiency opportunities to firms at minimal transaction costs. • Building the energy services market through role models, case studies, dissemination, verification and capacity building. • Ensuring a high quality service is provided to SME's through on-going review procedures.
What is the scope of the project? e.g. - National/regional/local - Building type/owner	<p>The programme is managed by a Central Support Unit (CSU) located in SEAI head office in Dublin. Participating businesses generally have an energy bill of less than €500,000 per annum. A team of Assessors working on behalf of SEAI conduct a site visit and follow up mentoring over a three month period for businesses with a spend <u>in excess of</u> €30,000 per annum. For businesses with an energy spend of <u>less than</u> €30,000 per annum, business qualify for a phone support consultation. Businesses with an energy spend <u>in excess of</u> €500,000 are recommended to participate in Energy MAP training or invited to engage with the Large Industry Energy Network (LIEN)</p>
Who are the key people involved? e.g.: - Installers - Local Authorities	<p>SEAI manage the project and through the use of smart IT system all business registrations and consultations are managed with minimum intervention from administration staff. A team of 20 to 30 prequalified assessors are available once a request for assistance is received. This team comprises experts across most disciplines related to industrial and building energy use and are matched to the business' needs. Most participating would not have the turnover or scale to employ an Energy Manager directly so generally the consultations would be with the General Manager or Financial Controller. Some of the larger public sector participants would have an Energy Officer to handle their participation. Developing and maintaining relationships with key allies such as the Small Firms Association, Irish Business Employers Confederation and other representative bodies is central to maintaining momentum.</p>

Who was the target audience?	There are 20,000 SMEs operating in Ireland and these are the prime targets. All SMEs with an energy spend between €5,000 and €350,000 per annum, Businesses with a spend of between €350,000 and €500,000 can participate if they are just setting up an energy management programme. Businesses with experience and internal capacity are usually referred to the LIEN programme.
How was this work programme/project financed?	SEAI is partly financed by Ireland's EU Structural Funds Programme co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union.
What was the cost of the work programme/project?	Annual programme budgets vary depending on scale of activity but typically of the order of €250,000 per annum excluding grant.
When did it start and end?	Commenced in 2007 and currently operational.
Project Outcomes & Communication	
What were the key achievements?	<p>On average, businesses make an 11% energy savings through this programme and the benefit is straight to the bottom line. To date businesses participating in the programme have shared savings in excess of €50M</p> <p>The key opportunities for energy savings among many participants are in the following areas. Many of these can be implemented at relatively low cost:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Energy management practices – becoming more organised about understanding & monitoring energy performance and taking action to exploit opportunities for savings.</i> • <i>Lighting – switching off, changing to more efficient fittings, daylight & occupancy sensors, e.g. 16% electricity saving (€4,700 saving per annum) in a school by replacing light fittings;</i> • <i>Refrigeration, heating, ventilation & air conditioning – designing, procuring, operating, maintaining & controlling these systems more efficiently, e.g. refrigeration can account for up to 65% of consumption in the retail sector.</i> <p>Range of Savings</p> <p>Although the average annual energy saving attributable to participation in the programme is over 11%, the range of savings enjoyed by specific participants varies significantly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% of participants save at least 5%; • Over half make at least 10% savings; • Nearly a third saves more than 15%.
What were the outcomes and expected benefits?	Over 2,000 businesses supported through the Advice, Mentoring & Assessment (AMA) and training programmes and over €2.2 million in grants (2011 only) for 35 businesses delivering savings of 73GWh per annum.
What were the key lessons learned?	The programme offers an energy assessment as opposed to an energy audit and businesses were expecting investment grade audits to emanate from the programme. This was not an objective at the outset so a minority of businesses were not entirely satisfied with the subsequent report.
Is there anything you would do differently in future?	Work more with representative groups, smarter marketing strategy to increase penetration.
What makes this a good practice example?	<i>Key to its success is the fact that all advice and information, training etc. is built on a foundation, which encourages businesses to adopt a structured approach to energy management.</i>

Web links to further information	www.seai.ie/business/
Contact details of named person for further information	Ivan Sproule, ivan.sproule@seai.ie
Please indicate if this case study can be made available to the public?	Yes
Specific to this topic	
Core and other elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice, Mentoring & Assessments Service: One-to-one advice and mentoring from an appointed Energy Advisor (an independent consultant). The service commences with a telephone consultation or site assessment, then a written report with suggestions for energy savings, plus follow-up support by phone or email over 90 days. The role of the advisor is to motivate and help the business to assess their own energy use, to identify opportunities for savings and to take action to realise these savings. • Training: Innovative training programmes on energy management developed specifically for SMEs and the Public Sector. The courses are a comprehensive yet practical, structured approach to energy management. The training programmes are delivered in co-operation with partners who host the training and undertake much of the marketing and administration for the courses. Participants register their interest with SEAI. Tailored courses are then organised for specific sectors or geographical areas. Programme participants range from small local enterprises to organisations with regional and national presences. Such organisations as Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and Enterprise Ireland actively promote the courses among their client companies. • Energy Awards: The annual Sustainable Energy Awards encourage, recognise and reward excellence in energy management among energy users of all sizes. These all-Island awards provide an opportunity for organisations, regardless of size or sector, to gain public recognition for their achievements in reducing energy use and CO2 emissions. • Louth Energy Saving Pilot: In association with the Louth Economic Forum, 45 businesses in County Louth participated in a pilot programme to provide intensively resourced energy management training. With a combined annual spend of €12M, savings in excess of €500k were achieved within 12 months. 12 graduate interns were recruited through a work placement Programme, SEAI provided training and a number of larger organisations already experienced in energy management provided mentoring in support of other smaller local businesses. Three interns received fulltime work placements on foot of the programme.