

## Energy efficiency falling short for SMEs

Latest research by the H2020 project LEAP4SME reveals gaps in existing support networks for small businesses

**BRUSSELS, 06 September 2021** – Existing support measures for increased energy efficiency in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) **must go further to increase effectiveness**, suggests the latest research conducted by the Horizon 2020 project, [LEAP4SME](#).

[In this latest report](#), written by Energy Saving Trust in collaboration with the Austrian Energy Agency, a set of preliminary key recommendations have been proposed for policy makers to consider when planning and implementing energy efficiency support for SMEs.

Mike Thornton, Chief Executive, Energy Saving Trust comments – *“It is important that accessibility and ease of use are front and centre of any support programme, so simplifying the support mechanism is key.*

*Stakeholders, including governments, must offer a simple proposition which doesn't overburden the SMEs and gives them a credible return on their investment. The sharing of good practice at European level is quite powerful in this sector and examples show that a mix of different instruments can be successful to engage and assist smaller companies.”*

### The recommendations include:

- Further evaluate a combined approach with a mix of different instruments
- Awareness raising and communication of existing policy instruments for SMEs
- Simplification of application processes, as well as support for SMEs during the application phase
- Assess the effectiveness of focused obligations for SMEs to conduct energy audits
- Sector specific policy instruments
- Increased capacity building schemes



These suggestions to policy makers come on the back of an in-depth analysis that reviewed **173 policy instruments**, with research carried out into support programmes throughout Europe. Programmes in Austria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom were all reviewed – in addition to existing policies at EU-level.

Energy efficiency in SMEs is vital to develop a sustainable, low carbon economy in the EU. The establishment of energy audit and energy efficiency policies that work for SMEs is crucial to achieving this given that [SMEs make up 99% of all businesses in the EU](#), while globally they account for at least 13% of all energy demand. This equates to approximately 10 billion barrels of oil annually.

Cost-effective energy efficiency measures have the potential to reduce SME energy consumption by as much as 30%, which is [more than the annual energy consumption of Japan and South Korea combined](#), making research in existing measures crucial into understanding what can be done to facilitate this transition.

LEAP4SME is continuing its research with further results on the energy audits market and barriers to conducting energy audits of SMEs expected soon.

For the latest publications from LEAP4SME, [visit our website](#).

\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\*



## ABOUT

LEAP4SME aims to support Member States in establishing or improving effective policies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to undergo energy audits and implement cost-effective, recommended energy-saving measures through identifying the barriers for unlocking energy efficiency measures, mobilising private stakeholders, and proposing effective solutions to realise both energy and non-energy benefits.

## KEYWORDS

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), energy efficiency, energy savings, energy audits, policy, EUROPE

## MEDIA CONTACT

---

### LEAP4SME Communication

Danielle Kutka

Project Manager | REVOLVE  
[media@leap4sme.eu](mailto:media@leap4sme.eu)

### LEAP4SME Coordinator

Enrico Biele

Executive Project Coordinator | ENEA  
[enrico.biele@enea.it](mailto:enrico.biele@enea.it)

---

