

Details on national observatories

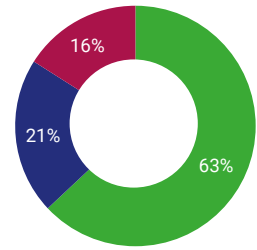
Meetings/interviews organised by
The Austrian Energy Agency (AEA)

Date	Type	Mode	Participants/Interviewees
June 2022 - February 2023	12 Interviews	Online	13
17 January 2023	Interview	Online	2
14 February 2023	Interview	Live	1
12 May 2023	Interview	Online	2
17 May 2023	Interview	Online	1

Total number of participants/interviewees: 19

Type of participants/interviewees

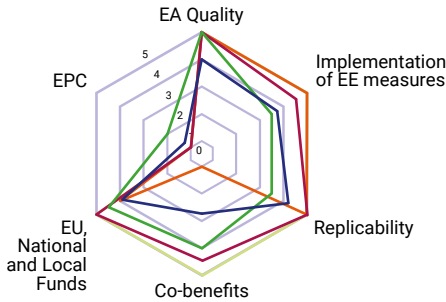
- Policy makers and funding bodies
- Business associations
- Academia and research



Background from policy assessment and surveys

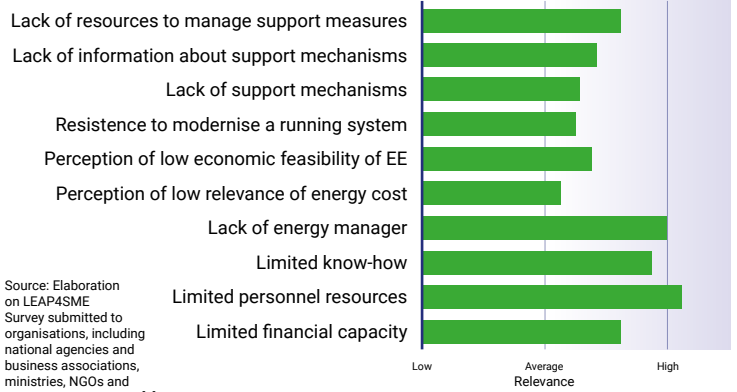
Evaluation of good practices in energy audit supporting programs in Austria

- Climate Alliance Austria - climate alliance programme for companies
- SME Energy Efficiency Voucher
- Klimaaktiv Building and Renovating
- Federal support programmes
- Mean



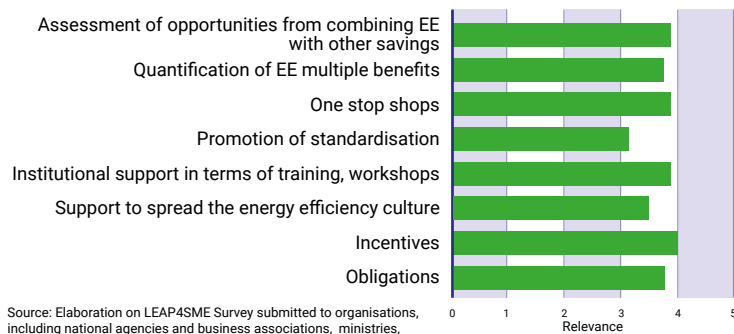
Source: Elaboration on [1]. Mean values are calculated from 21 good practices analysed in the 9 LEAP4SME countries.

Energy Audits: Most relevant barriers for SMEs



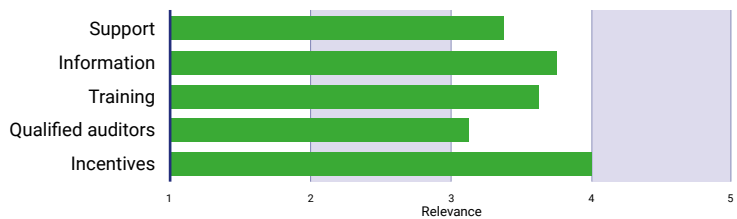
Source: Elaboration on LEAP4SME Survey submitted to organisations, including national agencies and business associations, ministries, NGOs and industrial associations [2].

Measures to increase the implementation of energy audit recommendations for SMEs



Source: Elaboration on LEAP4SME Survey submitted to organisations, including national agencies and business associations, ministries, NGOs and industrial associations [2].

Energy Audits: Most relevant needs for SMEs



Source: Elaboration on LEAP4SME Survey submitted to organisations, including national agencies and business associations, ministries, NGOs and industrial associations [2].

Observatories' main features

Main topics

- The observatories were carried out as bilateral interviews with relevant stakeholders based on an interview guideline
- The focus of the interviews was to discuss the barriers and challenges identified in the H2020 LEAP4SME project

Organisational tips and challenges

- Difficulties in engaging small companies
- Involvement of business associations could help in promoting the event and disseminating its results
- Energy agencies can stimulate the exchange between consultants by organising regular network meetings

[1] LEAP4SME Deliverable D3.3 Collection of good practices
[2] LEAP4SME Deliverable D3.2 Report on the characterisation of SMEs to steer an effective development policy



Key recommendations

From policy makers and funding bodies

- **Energy Management System (EnMS):** Implementing energy and environmental management systems in SMEs is more effective than conducting an energy audit, since it includes continuous monitoring and energy efficiency measures implementation.
- **Regulation:** Energy audits should be mandatory for energy-intensive medium-sized enterprises; on the other hand, obligated companies would no longer be eligible for funding. Moreover, including EnMS in the requirements for contracts or public tenders could push their implementation.
- **Energy efficiency support:** Existing subsidies could be redesigned giving support to companies classified as green, according to a future taxonomy regulation.
- **Simplification:** funding programs for smaller companies could be tailored also taking into account the amount of the claimed expense (providing a simplified procedure for lower expenses)
- **Awareness raising and know-how:** Energy efficiency and renewable energies in the education system, especially apprenticeship training. Factsheets on top ten energy efficiency measures for the most important sectors of smaller companies should be created and distributed directly to them.
- **Resource audit:** There is a trend towards no longer seeing the energy aspect separately, but also in the context of greenhouse gas balances, decarbonisation and circular economy; this would require requalification of energy auditors.

Shared with other stakeholders (SMEs, business associations and academia)

- **Tailoring:** For Small and Micro-enterprises direct contact (eg telephone) and online tools for self assessment could be more effective.
- **Financial constraints:** An energy and environmental management system is also suitable for smaller companies, but obtaining the certificate is often too costly for them.
- **Networks:** In principle, learning networks are good because authentic experiences are important; but in small companies, there is usually not enough time for regular get-togethers and personal exchange. Moreover, it is difficult to establish networks at an institutional level and to sustain them, because they usually depend on the commitment of individuals.
- **Skills:** The qualification criteria for energy consultants should be standardised in all federal states. Moreover, there are too few qualified experts or they are hard to find. A list of energy consultants specialised in different sectors would be very helpful.
- **Indicators:** Companies need energy benchmarks because they usually want to try to compare with other companies, even if this is a difficult task. The starting point for effective benchmarking should be assessing the baseline at a company level.

