



Key recommendation 1

Addressing financial constraints

SMEs often have limited financial and human resources to engage in energy efficiency interventions or carry out audits that are not required by law.

- Tailored soft loan programs could be helpful to ensure better access to finance.
- Risk sharing facilities among different funding bodies - such as guarantee and co-lending schemes - could help in sustaining energy efficiency investments.
- Vouchers can be used to support and motivate smaller enterprises to develop energy audits and, later on, introduce energy performance improvement actions (EPIAs).
- Networks of firms can alleviate the lack of resources and help in better exploiting energy efficiency opportunities, both in terms of technologies and access to incentives.
- Better information and guidance at national and local level are needed to better exploit existing European funding resources.
- A starting point to engage with business could be focusing on support measures addressing commercial benefits, such as installing solar PVs to reduce energy bills and help payback the loans quickly. It would also be beneficial to extend the payback period on loans.

Key recommendation 2

Tailoring

The disparity in size and core business of SMEs, and the different incidence of energy and resources costs, requires specific support measures and energy audit approaches.

Tailoring by sector

- Energy efficiency mechanisms should be based on sectoral approaches more than on general programmes.

Tailoring by size

- Micro SMEs could provide high potential savings but are more difficult to engage: simpler schemes could be applied to smaller businesses.

Tailoring the support and regulation framework

- Including energy audits as an eligible cost in support measures.
- Including Energy Management Systems (EnMS) in the requirements for private contracts or public tenders.
- Redesigning existing energy efficiency subsidies according to a future taxonomy regulation.

Key recommendation 3

Policy Framework

Energy efficiency policies for SMEs must be based on a permanent, stable, and predictable regulatory framework.

- In order for SMEs to adopt energy efficiency measures, government bodies need to establish an enabling framework aimed at providing technical assistance and targeted information. Indeed, monitoring consumption is essential for a more effective planning of interventions.
- After the identification of energy efficiency measures in an audit, support is needed for their implementation.
- Existing subsidies could be redesigned giving support to companies classified as green, according to a future taxonomy regulation.
- Loans are key to ensuring better access to finance, financing new investments, and business transfers for SMEs. Guarantee co-lending schemes for SMEs (risk sharing facility and co-lending among different funding bodies) could be another effective solution.

Key recommendation 4

Monitoring

Energy consumption is rarely monitored by SMEs and monitoring systems are scarce.

- Monitoring should be tailored to the energy and resources profile of the business sector and done step by step, starting with minimal requirements.
- Energy audits and EnMS (also in simplified versions) should be promoted.
- Supporting the adoption of EnMS could be effective in introducing continuous monitoring and to increase the implementation rate of EPIAs.

Key recommendation 5

Raising awareness

SMEs' awareness on energy consumption, energy efficiency options and support mechanisms is a necessary precondition to plan and implement effective EPIAs.

- The main challenge to increase the energy efficiency in SMEs is to promote a culture of energy efficiency, hence continuous training, formation and information is necessary.
- Policies should include information campaigns to make SMEs aware of which support measures are available as well as to constantly re-engage them.
- Special attention should be paid to inform and train SMEs, giving a clear idea of costs and benefits associated to energy audits and the implementation of energy efficiency measures.



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