

Energy audits in the European Union

The improvement of energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways to concurrently improve the security of supply, reduce energy-related emissions, assure affordable energy prices, and improve economic competitiveness. To help improve energy efficiency in Europe, the Energy Efficiency Directive (Directive 2012/27/EU) entered into force on 4 December 2012. It aims to remove market barriers and failures, and promotes a more efficient use of energy in supply and demand side applications.

In its Article 8, the Energy Efficiency Directive addresses the requirements and promotion of energy audits and energy management systems. More specifically, it requires Member States to promote and ensure the use of high quality, cost-effective energy audits and energy management systems to all final customers. Whilst large enterprises are required to be subject to an energy audit by 5 December 2015 and at least every four years thereafter, SMEs should be encouraged to undertake energy audits and implement the resulting recommendations.

As a European Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive is a legal instrument that requires the transposition of its requirements into national laws by Member States. There is a degree of liberty in respect of national implementation, provided that the national transposition fulfils the Directive's minimum requirements. The European Commission has recently published a study on the national implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive, including guidance and good practice information. The documents of the study are available here::

<http://ec.europa.eu/energy>

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Energy audits
and energy
management
policies for


Small and
Medium-sized
Enterprises

Best practices
from the
Member States.

A European perspective: Good practice examples on energy audits & energy management

Denmark


English guidance documents



Denmark and other countries have published documents on their national implementation in English. This makes national implementation more accessible to internationally operating companies.

Ireland

Step-wise implementation support



Ireland has established an online system with step-wise implementation support for helping companies with the introduction of energy management.

Netherlands


Voluntary Agreements



In the Netherlands, voluntary agreements have proven successful in helping organisations to set up energy efficiency plans and implement cost-effective improvements.

Spain


Sector-specific guidance documents



Spain, and other countries, offer guidance documents on energy audits and thus facilitate the implementation of audits in specific environments.

Norway


One-stop shops



Norway bundles its support programmes for companies in a central hub and thus allows them to easily access all funding opportunities via a central online location.

Sweden


FAQ documents



Numerous countries have bundled information on the interpretation and implementation of mandatory energy audits and used this to identify FAQs. They have used this information to provide answers to these FAQs.

Germany


Management software overviews



A web-platform in Germany allows companies to define their requirements for energy management system software, and helps them to identify software packages that meet

Switzerland


Learning efficiency networks



The concept of energy efficiency networks began in Switzerland. It has proven to be a successful instrument for companies to regularly exchange information on energy efficiency improvements and to enhance their progress in

Malta

Helplines



Malta and other countries have established helplines for companies, to assist them with the interpretation of the legal aspects of audit implementation.