



CHANGE

Promoting Intelligent Energy to SMEs

Final report – October 2010



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1. Executive Summary

Short background

The goal of the CHANGE project was to help SMEs optimise their energy use by developing an extensive European network of intelligent energy advisors at Chambers of Commerce and Industry, thus building on the traditional role of Chambers as “first port of call” for SMEs in many matters of their concern and adding the energy dimension to this.

Activities

Over the course of two years Chambers have set up 61 websites providing intelligent energy information, organised 329 events on various energy topics for over 12.000 participants, carried out or facilitate more than 660 energy pre-checks published more than 460 articles on a wide range of intelligent energy topics.

Results

The main results of the project, apart from the activities carried out, were:

- The training carried out for Chamber energy advisors, two days joint training followed by two days of national training, set the foundation of for future activities. The training material will also remain available for new advisors to be trained.
- While national, regional and local Chambers have to act in different environments, the network created, is acting as a platform to exchange experiences, learn from others and cooperate. The meetings held during the project helped to do this face to face and were greatly appreciated.
- Two main publications of the project at European level were the result of the combined work of the 12 partners. The survey results, “Energy Efficiency in SMEs: Success Factors and Obstacles”, gathered data from over 2000 SMEs in 12 European countries on intelligent energy topics.
- The reference manual, “Advising SMEs on energy – A reference manual for business organisations”, summarised the experiences made working with SMEs during the project duration and will assist Chamber advisors in the future.

Conclusions

The project’s aim to establish a network of intelligent energy advisors in Chambers of Commerce and Industry has been achieved. The knowledge gained and networks created during the two years will continue to be put to use by the Chambers. The activities have shown that there is a great demand for Chamber services focusing on intelligent energy issues. Those Chambers with less human resources dedicated to dealing with energy issues will try to increase capacities in order to comply with SME needs.

2. Introduction

Background

To reach the EU's ambitious "20-20-20" goal (reduce greenhouse gases by 20%, reduce energy consumption by 20% and increase the share of renewable energies in energy consumption by 20%) by 2020, the active engagement of companies of all sizes is essential. Businesses recognise the importance of fighting climate change and the opportunities deriving from energy efficiency. At the same time, the economic and financial crisis, lack of awareness and information or lack of time result in many opportunities to save energy being under exploited.

The project CHANGE – Chambers promoting Intelligent Energy for SMEs was initiated as a response to the need for information and support services of companies, especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), concerning intelligent energy topics.

Partners involved

The project was coordinate by EUROCHAMBRES and involved 12 European Chamber organisations from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Spain and Sweden. Ten partners involved some of their regional offices, member Chambers or other related organisations, resulting in a network of 61 CHANGE partners.

Main tasks of the action

The project ran over a period of 24 months, from September 2008 to August 2010. The actions carried in the project were steps to reach two specific objections, to build capacity in Chambers and install intelligent energy advisors in the participating Chambers and to kick-start/enhance concrete assistance to SMEs to optimise their energy use.

The project started with a two phase training for all involved Chamber advisors, two days joint training in Brussels followed by a two day national training. This set the base for the activities carried out by the advisers offered to SMEs. These were: creation of websites on intelligent energy information, organising events for businesses focusing on energy related topics, carrying out or facilitating energy pre-checks for SMEs and publishing articles on intelligent energy topics in Chamber newsletters and magazines.

A survey was conducted in the first half of the project on the success factors and barriers for the uptake of intelligent energy activities in SMEs. At the end of the project, a manual with practical guidelines and best practices was published, which will serve as a reference document for participants as well as new Chamber advisors or other institutions wishing to offer to work with SMEs on intelligent energy topics.

2.1 Partners

	EUROCHAMBRES (project coordinator)
Austria	Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
Belgium	Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belgium
Bulgaria	Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Croatia	Croatian Chamber of Economy
France	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille-Provence
Germany	DIHK (Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce) Service GmbH
Hungary	Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Italy	Unioncamere, the Italian Association of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Handcraft and Agriculture
Malta	Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry
Poland	Polish Chamber of Commerce
Spain	High Council of Official Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Spain
Sweden	Chamber of Commerce Mälardalen Service AB

2.2 Work packages

Work package 1 – Project Management

The general project management, such as communication with and between project partners, liaison with the EACI project and financial officer or the organisation of the four project meetings. To facilitate this work, an internal project website, for the sharing of documents and information, was set up. The management and implementation of the project in the respective countries was the task of the national coordinators.

Work package 2 – Building CCI Capacity

The objective of this work package was to enable the participating CCI advisors to become “first ports of call” for business on intelligent energy topics and to create a network of intelligent energy advisors in Chambers, who can mutually support each other. This included a two day joint training in Brussels, followed by a two day national training. To complement their work, Chamber advisors compiled information on national and local markets and established networks. An exchange of experience meeting towards the end of the project allowed the participants to meet again and reinforce the advisor network. The end of the project was marked by the publication of a reference manual containing practical guidelines and best practices. It will serve as a reference document for participants as well as new Chamber advisors, and which can be used as a basis for training organised by Chambers or other institutions wishing to work with SMEs on intelligent energy topics.

Work package 3 – Activities and Information for SMEs

This work package included a set of concrete activities which directly benefited SMEs, and gave visibility to the services of the Chamber, as well as allowing Chamber advisors to gain additional practical experience. In the scope of this work package advisors organised information events / seminars for businesses, published articles about intelligent energy topics and offered and/or promoted energy pre-checks to SMEs.

Work package 4 - Survey

A survey was conducted among businesses, which focused on the one hand on success factors and barriers for the uptake of intelligent energy activities in SMEs and on the other hand on the Chambers' role as facilitators. The survey had to fulfil two purposes, providing feedback and practical insights from the business world for policy makers, at regional national and EU level; and to help Chambers improve their support to SMEs and give impetus for future activities within and after the project lifetime.

Work package 5 – Communication and Dissemination

A communication strategy was developed to accompany the project and disseminate its results. The work package also included the development of a project website at European level and an energy focused site on each of the (sub-) partners' websites. The work also included the dissemination of the survey results and of the reference manual.

Work package 6 – Common Dissemination Activities

This work package covered resources to contribute, upon request by the EACI, to common dissemination activities to increase synergies between, and the visibility of, IEE-supported projects.

3. Building a European intelligent energy advisor network in Chambers of Commerce

The aim of the training for Chamber advisors and the exchange of experience in the second half of the project was that participating Chambers would have an advisor who knows the local energy market and is able to provide businesses with basic advice and direct them towards appropriate sources of specialised advice and services on all three topics defined as belonging to “intelligent energy” (i.e. energy efficiency, application of renewable energies, and using opportunities provided by the liberalised electricity market). This knowledge will remain within the Chamber system also long after the project concludes.

The training was divided into two parts, a joint training of all participating Chamber advisors, followed by a national training, to which also other regional and local Chamber advisors were invited.

The joint training and the exchange of experience, but also the project meetings of the national coordinators, brought the Chamber advisors together providing the opportunity for face to face discussions. This was highly valued as an opportunity to learn from others and gather inspiration for possible actions in their country. The internal website was also used to aid the network created.

3.1 Joint training in Brussels



The joint two day training was held in Brussels in December 2008 gathering 74 participants from 12 different countries. Most of the participants came from the partner Chambers, and few additional participants joined the training. Trainers/speakers were an energy consultant, a company representative, experts from DG TREN/EACI and the representation of Valencia region, as well as experienced Chamber staff.

The training had three main aims:

- To provide especially those advisors with no or little previous exposure to energy topics insight into the general technical, policy and business background and to enable them to learn about case studies of successful implementation of intelligent energy measures in business. Those advisors with some previous activities would be able to share and update their knowledge, and get ideas for future activities from their peers.
- To enable staff from less experienced Chambers - or new staff - to get in contact with staff from “front runner” Chambers. During the training, the contact with Chamber advisors from different backgrounds (national/regional situation and/or level of experience) should enable learning from each other and exchanges of experience.
- Finally, starting the creation of a network of intelligent energy advisors. The personal contacts being established should especially enable less experienced Chamber advisors to call upon more experienced colleagues later on.

The training included four sessions, providing technical information, exchanging experience, presenting practical cases and complementary information.

Technical

The technical sessions, the core of the training, dealt with three main themes:

SMEs' problems and solutions when dealing with energy efficiency

Energy audits/pre-checks

Renewable energy sources

Exchange of experience

These sessions allowed participants to discuss their experience when dealing with SMEs in the field of energy efficiency and their collaboration with other actors of the sector (consultants, authorities, academia...).

Practical cases

The practical cases included a presentation by a Belgian company which has implemented energy efficiency measures and presentations from three Chambers, giving the participants ideas and practical tips for their own activities.

Complementary information

The complementary information sessions dealt with two topics: the political and economic context of intelligent energy and EU-level tools and information. The presentations were made by experts from DG TREN, EACI and the representative office of the Valencia region.

These topics were interesting for CCI advisors who often have less information about activities at EU-level and usually have better knowledge of national tools and policies.

3.2 National Training

The joint training in Brussels was complemented by national training which took place in all participating countries (except Malta). The main target group were the participants of the joint training, but finally 276 Chamber advisors participated in the 11 national trainings. The aim of the national training days, which took place between February and June 2009, was to add the national dimension to the training. This included information on market actors, information sources, subsidy programmes and possible complementary initiatives on national level. Those Chambers which had planned to carry out pre-checks themselves had a greater focus on this, including the familiarisation with the tool/questionnaire used and if needed further technical training.

3.3 Exchange of Experience

In the second half of the project an exchange of experience meeting was held in Brussels, bringing together all the Chamber advisors. This meeting was held parallel to the European Sustainable Energy Week 2010, giving the participants also the chance to take part in other events. The event started with a presentation of the survey results and a panel discussion with Members of the European Parliament and other high level speakers. This part of the meeting was also open to the public.

The main aim was to allow advisors to exchange the experiences made working more intensely on energy topics with SMEs. Workshops on five different topics were held, which also provided valuable input for the guidance manual. The workshop covered energy pre-checks, tools used when working

with SMEs on energy topics, promotion of energy topics to SMEs, the impact company size/sector has on the work and general aspects of energy efficiency measures / intelligent energy.

To give all participants an overview of the achievements and challenges faced, each national coordinator gave a brief overview of the project in their country. The meeting was rounded off by a presentation of the IEE Call 2010.

4. Survey

Energy Efficiency in SMEs: Success Factors and Obstacles

(download: www.eurochambres.eu/change)



The survey focused on the one hand on success factors and barriers for the uptake of intelligent energy activities in SMEs, and on the other hand on the Chambers' role as facilitators. The survey's two main aims were to:

- Shed light on the factors which influence the uptake of energy efficiency measures or renewable energy sources positively or negatively and therefore provide valuable input for policy makers at national level (who have to draw up, implement and regularly update national energy efficiency action plans), as well as regional and EU levels.
- Provide feedback to Chambers on their activities to enable them to understand better the needs of businesses, especially SMEs, and the priorities their advisors should be setting when continuing their activities during and after the CHANGE project.

The survey was conducted between May and December 2009. The responses of 2154 companies

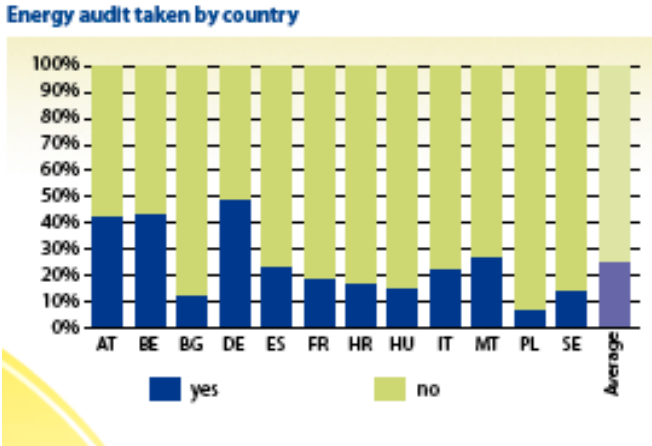
from the following 12 European countries were evaluated.

Companies of all sizes and from all sectors participated in this survey. The vast majority of companies interviewed were small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which reflects the European business structure and corresponds with the aim of the study.

A large variety of methods to approach companies were used. Interviews were conducted by phone, or personally at events or company visits. Additionally, the questionnaire was posted on CHANGE project partners' websites to be completed online, or sent out by e-mail. The questionnaire was translated into the national languages of the participating countries. Country specific questions were not evaluated in this report, but at national level.

4.1 Attitudes and approaches to energy efficiency

This section of the evaluation looked at the attitudes and approaches companies take to energy costs, consumption and energy efficiency in general.



Companies were asked on their views regarding the importance which energy plays in regard to the total costs. The importance of energy costs is greater, the higher the share of energy in company's total costs. While the majority of companies perceive energy to an important topic, 41% stated that responsibility for energy issues is not linked to a specific person. Companies with a higher number of employees are more likely to have a person in charge of energy.

The survey showed that a quarter of companies have undertaken an energy audit or used an energy consultant within the last three years. The percentage of energy audits undertaken increases with company size and energy consumption. Also the rate of energy audits taken is considerably higher in those countries where public funding is offered to take such measures.

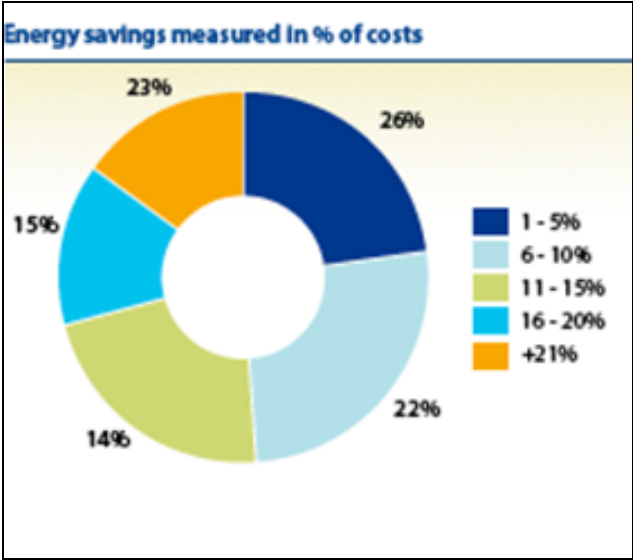
4.2 Reasons for energy efficiency

Companies were asked what motivates them to take energy efficiency measures. The most common reason is to reduce energy bills.

Reasons for taking actions to increase energy efficiency:

- Reduction of energy bill (90%)
- Prepare of future increases in energy prices (83%)
- Contribute to fight against climate change / protection of environment (75%)
- Improve image (65%)
- Increase safety of operations (55%)
- Increase value of building through efficient facilities (45%)
- Improve product quality (43%)

Together with financial reasons linked to energy consumption, reasons such as protection of the environment and image are also considered important. While reducing the company's energy bill is a 'quick-win', investing in the image has positive long term effects and can bring strategic advantages.

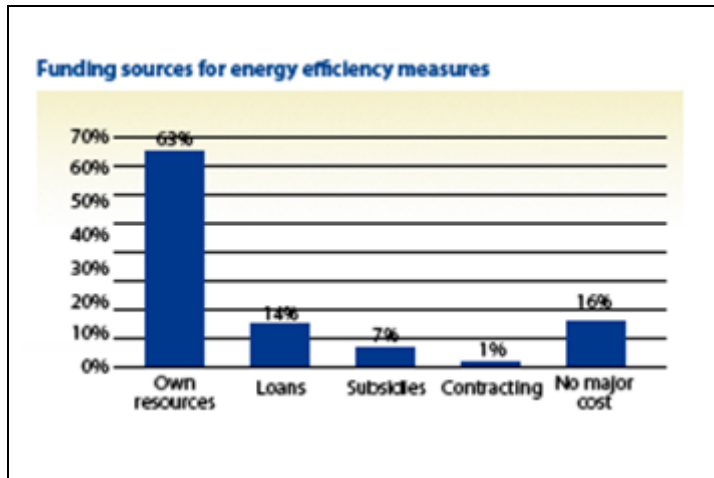


While the majority of companies perceive energy efficiency measures to be (somewhat) beneficial, only a small proportion actually indicate that they measure their impact. This indicates that energy use is not widely measured and controlled among enterprises. Systems which measure, and partly manage, are available for companies of all sizes and energy consumption level. The idea behind such systems is, the better the management is informed about the energy use, the better one can evaluate the potential for savings and in turn measure them. The survey also showed that more than 50% of companies achieve savings of over 11% through energy efficiency measures.

4.3 Financing energy efficiency

Companies were asked to indicate their two main sources of funding when investing in energy

efficiency measures. The main source listed was own resources (76%), followed by loans (6%), while 15% of the interviewed companies stated that the implementation of energy efficiency measures did not involve any major investments. Neither company size, nor turnover, has an impact on the type of funding used.



When the most frequent investments currently undertaken are considered, i.e. staff information and lighting, it is notable that both are usually less cost-intensive. This underlines the preference for investments in low-cost areas, which require less funding. Considering the financial background at the time of the survey (financial and economic crisis), it is not surprising that few high investments have been made recently in energy efficiency.

Taking up loans for investments into energy efficiency measures leaves less scope for investments in other, maybe strategically important, areas.

Companies were asked to indicate the main obstacles for taking (further) energy efficiency measures. “Financial issues” are the main obstacle to investments. This is also reflected by the fact that most already implemented investments are not capital-intensive.

The following reasons were most frequently mentioned as barriers:

- Pay-back period of investments is too long (69%)
- Available funds must be used for more important investments (67%)
- Lack of funding for investments (65%)
- Lack of time / too much other work (57%)

4.4 Facilitation and support for businesses

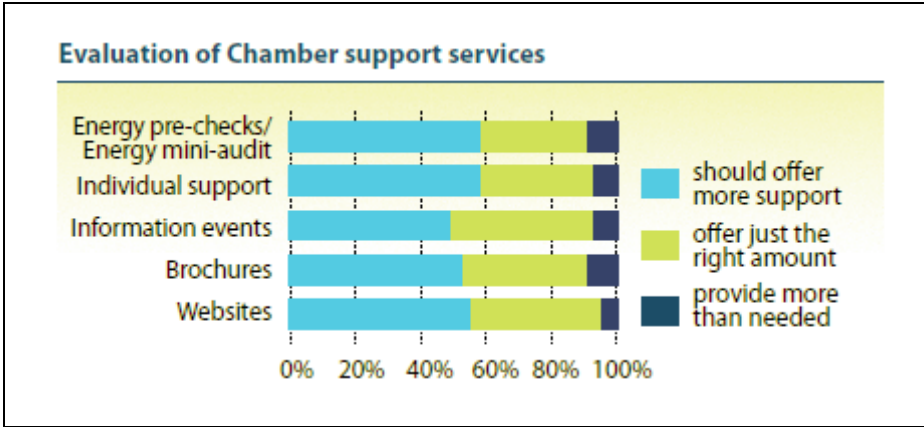
Companies were asked which instruments they consider most important for exploiting the potential for energy efficiency and renewable energies in businesses.

Improving access to finance and tax incentives are seen as the most important points. As mentioned before, the economic crisis has had a strong impact on the financial situation of businesses, and the response to this question may partly be influenced by the timing. Different energy efficiency measures need different types and levels of financial investments. While some measures, such as soft

measures, need little or no investment, higher financial input is required if a company wants to exploit other possibilities.

While finance related measures were rated highest, soft measures such as information and motivation campaigns, educational campaigns, promotion of energy consultancy and the exchange of best practice examples were also identified as important.

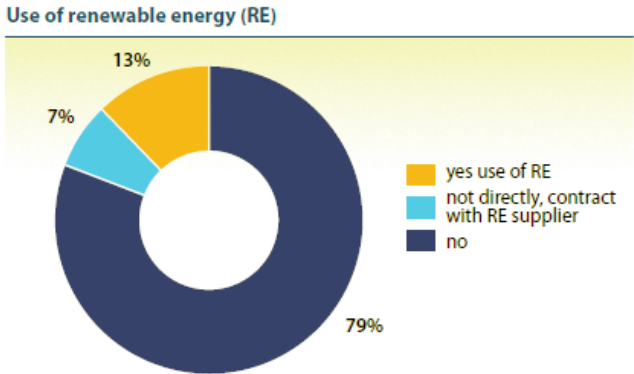
Companies were asked to indicate and assess the forms and sources of support used. An additional focus was attached to Chamber activities, to enable the Chamber network to evaluate and improve its services. Whilst information and support are provided through different sources, these are exploited to varying degrees. Websites and brochures are the most frequently used sources of support and information on energy topics. The larger a company is, the more likely it is to attend events on energy topics. Interestingly, energy pre-checks or energy mini-audits are the least used forms of support.



While services provided by Chambers are already being widely used, there is room for improvement.

4.5 SMEs and renewables

Companies were asked if they use renewable energies and, if so, which sources. The vast majority of the interviewed companies do not use any form of renewable energy, whilst 7% have a contract with a renewable energy supplier. Among the 13% indicating the use of renewable energy sources, the use of solar energy dominates, with 51%.



5. Reference Manual

Advising SMEs on energy – A reference manual for business organisations

(download: www.eurochambres.eu/change)



The survey conducted in the first half of the project clearly showed that while companies attach high importance to environmental protection and to reducing energy costs, a lack of time, information and funding inhibits their ability to contribute. Even though energy cost may only represent a small part of total costs for most SMEs, it is an area where savings are often possible without loss of quality of the product or service. Chamber advisors can use their close contacts with the business community to raise awareness among SMEs, and complement services offered by the market, bridging the gap between business and existing information, services and sources of specialised advice.

The manual compiled in the framework of the project is primarily aimed at Chamber advisors working with SMEs on energy topics, but is equally applicable to all advisors and organisations helping SMEs on energy related topics. It is aimed primarily at those with less experience in energy matters or those not working on energy issues only.

In order to best support SMEs, Chamber advisors have to be able to provide information on all three

aspects of Intelligent Energy: energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy contracts (market liberalisation).

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The manual gives an overview of the aspects which should be considered when training energy advisors and working with SMEs on energy topics. As circumstances differ in each country, this guide provides general, rather than country-specific information.

The areas addressed in the manual were identified by the project partners through their hands on experience working with SMEs.

The manual was disseminated amongst the Chambers participating in the CHANGE project, but also through the ECAP network. It was originally foreseen to be only available in English, but was also translated into Bulgarian and Polish, and further translations might be made after the end of the project.

5.1 Training for energy advisors

The implementation of the project, especially the day to day confrontation with the questions and problems of SMEs highlighted the areas where advisors need knowledge on. Advisors should know about common problems and be able to offer solutions, information and contacts. Advisors working on energy topics directly with SMEs have to know about the following topics:

- Basic technical aspects (heating, cooling, insulation...)
- Energy policy
- Financial incentives
- Legislative situation (national and regional)
- Local actors (partners)

A distinction must be made between the support activities offered by Chambers and intermediary organisations and specialised business support organisations. The Chamber advisor's role is that of a generalist and facilitator, while the experts provide technical, specialised hands-on support.

5.2 Issues to be addressed when working with SMEs

Advisors of business associations working on energy topics have to be prepared to address and react to a wide range of topics. Knowing where to find information and good contacts with regional and local energy market actors enhances the advisor's role as a facilitator. Advisors must recognise the fact that most SMEs operate mainly in a regional or national context.

Policy / Politics / Legislation

SMEs often do not know which energy legislation applies to them or how they are affected by certain policies. Chambers should therefore be in the position to provide the information on relevant legislation. While policy decisions at European level might not be of direct interest to SMEs, they undeniably influence the national and regional framework conditions. Special attention should be given to renewable energy sources (RES), it is important for advisors to acquire an understanding of how existing legislation is applied in practice, as there are some other factors which influence businesses when investing in RES. For this reason, Chamber advisors should stay in contact with local experts on RES application.

Energy Market

Europe's energy markets are not yet fully liberalised, so advisors working on this topic should keep themselves up-to-date on the liberalisation process in order to inform companies. This also includes providing information how companies can save costs by finding the ideal energy supplier and on common problems faced by companies in this process. Energy advisors should be able to help companies go through and interpret their energy contracts.

Funding

SMEs are often interested in understanding better funding opportunities, so energy advisors should be able to respond to inquiries on:

- Subsidies / funding programmes
- Special loans
- Energy Service Companies / Energy contracting
- Tax incentives

Renewable Energy Sources (RES)

Knowledge on RES which are suitable for a region, suppliers' contact details, availability of funding and the criteria to produce energy, such as registration requirements, have to be available to SMEs through the energy advisors.

To enable Chamber advisors to keep up-to-date with the large scope of legislation, procedures and technology concerning RES, it is recommended for them to establish good and regular co-operation with regional or national RES centres / institutions, as a source of information and experience.

Energy Controlling / Energy Management

The results of the study illustrated the scale of the need and challenge for business organisations and energy agencies/institutions to promote the controlling and management of energy use. SMEs need to be made familiar with easy-to-use tools, in order to be able to measure, and consequently control energy costs more efficiently. Advisors should be able to inform SMEs about available systems and encourage the use of energy management/controlling systems.

Business testimonials

Business testimonials were included in the CHANGE project training of advisors both at European and at national level. Both companies and Chamber advisors appreciate hearing directly from other companies about their experience in dealing with energy efficiency or RES.

Technical knowledge

Energy advisors should have basic technical knowledge on energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies in SMEs.

Due to the different level of knowledge – depending on whether the advisor is an economist or an engineer – the risk of providing too little or too much information has to be taken into account. Any advisor working with SMEs on energy matters requires a certain level of knowledge on energy related technology. Those advisors planning to conduct energy pre-checks, consult companies on technologies, hold workshops or write technical articles require a more in-depth knowledge. For all others, a good network with local experts is advisable.

Market actors

Other relevant market actors are important for the work of energy advisors. Besides being of importance to SMEs, they are sources of information, can be interesting partners or speakers for SME events.

Internet portals of market actors providing up-to-date information, such as daily information on energy topics, energy related events at national or local level, discussion forums, campaigns, consultation websites etc., should be referenced as additional information sources.

5.3 Working with SMEs

Providing easy access to information on energy related topics for companies is important. Events, such as information sessions or workshops, have to be tailored to the topic and target group they address.

Providing information

Information addressed to SMEs has to take into account their special needs. Most SMEs lack the necessary time to gather information on topics such as energy efficiency. Companies often do not know where to find information or whom to contact and are confronted with specific terminology they do not understand. The under-exploitation of energy efficiency measures is partly a result of lack of information about possible alternatives. Various media and channels of communication can be used to reach SMEs, including articles, websites or TV and radio.

Events

The success of an event is determined by a variety of factors and there is no one size fits all solution. Once the topic of the event is defined, the most important factor to be decided is the audience to be addressed. This influences the choice of speakers, time, duration and location.

Energy pre-checks

Energy pre-checks are a preliminary stage to full energy audits. They demonstrate to an entrepreneur where the weak points of the business lie in terms of energy use, as well as providing advice on simple actions they can undertake to improve their energy efficiency, on opportunities to use renewable energies cost effectively in their business, and on how to buy their energy at the best possible tariff.

Energy advisors can either conduct and/or promote energy pre-checks and audits. In both cases, the benefits to SMEs should be highlighted. Emphasising the no- or low-cost actions which can be taken (and which deliver fast results) lowers the barriers and increases the consideration of further, capital intensive investments.

The precise nature of an energy pre-check or energy audit must be made clear, especially what it consists of and what the benefits are. Entrepreneurs should understand that any information they

disclose, for example production methods, will be treated as confidential.

Creating networks

Active networks allow participants to share experiences, learn from others and profit from multiplier effects. Chamber advisors have created and initiated different forms of networks, for advisors and for companies. The advisor networks often also include a range of market actors, such as other SME organisations, energy agencies and local authorities. SME networks, often initiated by an intermediary, such as a Chamber, bring together entrepreneurs with similar interests, who may not necessarily come from the same sector.

The CHANGE project created a European network of Chamber energy advisors. The experiences gained during the project implementation and the exchange of experience among advisors and coordinators were instrumental in forming this network, which showed the following positive results:

- Advisors were given the opportunity to learn from others and exchange experience
- Looking across borders – both national and regional – provides new ideas and perspectives in working with SMEs

5.4 Leading by example

Reducing energy consumption and becoming more energy efficient often only requires a change in behaviour. But this is easier said than done. Chambers'/business support organisations' energy advisors can gain direct experience by making their own office more energy efficient.

6. Experience gained by working with SMEs

6.1 Articles

Nearly 470 articles in 10 different European languages were published over the course of the project. Chambers made use of their newsletters, magazines and homepages to step up the information disseminated on energy topics. But also co-operations with regional newspapers and even TV and radio were used.

6.2 Events

Over the course of two years over 320 events with more than 12.000 participants were held across Europe. While organising events belongs to the regular activities offered by Chambers, laying their focus on energy efficiency topics in financially challenging times sometimes posed a challenge to advisors. Time being a scarce resource for entrepreneurs, events had to be tailored to SMEs regional and/or sectoral needs to catch their attention. The financial crisis sometimes increased the interest of companies to focus more on energy matters, while others focused their attention on their core business.

Finally, no common conclusion can be made on the energy-related events held across Europe. While for some Chambers it was easy to attract the envisaged number of companies, others had more difficulties, often resulting in events which had fewer participants than planned. Some Chambers offered companies sector-specific events, others succeeded in focusing on technologies.

In the end the target set was achieved by organising events of different formats, from large conferences covering a wide range of energy related topics, to small workshops addressing specific aspects of energy efficiency or renewable energies. Regardless of the size, format or time of an event, participants appreciated the active interaction and discussions with experts and other participants. Successful events often included on site visits of companies showing installed technologies and hearing directly from the entrepreneurs the experiences made.

6.3 Pre-checks

Energy pre-checks are a preliminary stage to full energy audits. They demonstrate to the enterprises where their “weak points” in terms of usage of energy are, and inform on simple actions they can take to improve their energy efficiency and on opportunities to cost-efficiently use renewable energies in their business, and buy their energy at the best possible tariff.

The target set for the project was to offer or facilitate 530 energy pre-checks for SMEs. Apart from direct benefits for the companies involved, this action helped to improve the Chamber advisors' practical experience in energy efficiency matters. It also provided, in addition, identification whether it is appropriate and feasible to launch pre-check services to be maintained after the project lifetime.

Over 24 months more than 620 energy pre-checks were promoted or facilitated. Reaching the target set by the project was not always easy and often companies were sceptical of the benefits, doubted that their time was invested well or were worried about strangers entering their company. Demonstrating the benefits, the no or low cost investments which can be easily realised and show fast effects and guaranteeing confidentiality convinced the majority of companies. In fact, Chambers were regularly consulted after a pre-check for information on further measures which they can take or for a follow up meeting.

This process helped Chamber advisors gain first hand experience of the energy situation in businesses, discuss the problems and difficulties faced and establish direct contacts. While the majority of Chambers has decided to focus on promoting energy pre-checks or energy audits, they are now in a better position to do so. In those Chambers were also during the project the focus lay on promotion, advisors sometimes accompanies energy consultants.

7. Best practice examples

7.1 Development of an advisor training for German Chambers

The CHANGE energy advisor training acted as a kick-start in Germany for creating a national training programme for Chamber energy advisors. The German Chambers further developed the national training material of the project CHANGE, now offering specialised training to Chamber staff. Chambers wishing to participate have to pay a fee, making it possible carry on the work started within CHANGE without external funding. Two training sessions with over 30 participants took place in 2009 and it is planned to carry on offering this service. The training for energy advisors has been included in internal training catalogue for German Chamber staff.

7.2 The Polish CHANGE Website

While all Chambers have created websites in the framework of the CHANGE project, the Polish national project website was chosen as a best practice example. No comparable, energy related section was available on the Polish Chamber website before the CHANGE project. The website has a clear structure, providing SMEs information on a wide variety of energy topics. The link to the regional participating Chambers allows companies easy access to information relevant to their region. Besides fulfilling its function to provide information, it does this in a very attractive and easy to navigate way.

The website is accessible either directly, <http://www.change.kig.pl/>, or on the CHANGE partners page of the project website.

Inteligentna Energia - projekt CHANGE

- Przewodnik po efektywności
- Publikacje i narzędzia on line
- Polecane strony
- Energia odnawialna
- Audyt energetyczny
- Finansowanie. Zachęty i bariery dla przedsiębiorstw energooszczędnych
- Sieć informacji i doradztwa w Polsce

Prezentacja projektu

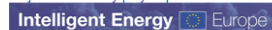


Koordinator krajowy projektu



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Projekt realizowany przy wsparciu:



Projekt pomaga Małym i Średnim Przedsiębiorstwom (MSP) zracjonalizować zużycie energii poprzez stworzenie europejskiej sieci izb oferujących informacje i doradztwo.

Potencjał zmniejszenia zużycia energii w przedsiębiorstwie - bez ponoszenia lub tylko niewielkim nakładem kosztów - ocenia się na 10-20%, dlatego izby mające bezpośredni kontakt z firmami zaangażowały się w promocję działań efektywnościowych.



[Europejska strona projektu](#)

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www.change.kig.pl

7.3 Survey

The results of the survey conducted, as part of the project, highlighted the success factors and barriers faced by SMEs in 12 European countries regarding the uptake of intelligent energy measures. It provide the Chamber advisors with concrete information on situation in SMEs and what services they need, both a national level but also in the European comparison.

The presentation of the survey results during the European Sustainable Energy Week 2010 was a very successful event. It was accompanied by a discussion with Members of the European Parliament, the European Renewable Energy Council, the EACI and entrepreneurs. The results also served to show decision makers, both at national and at European level, where SMEs stand and what they need to contribute towards the European energy efficiency and renewable energy targets.

The results were widely taken up by the media, both at national level in the countries participating in CHANGE, as well as by European publications, such as the European Voice or Europolitics.



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