

# EnergyEfficiency4SMEs

Deliverable 4.1

## Training Material for SMEs

Prepared by Eurochambres

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|---------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| PROJECT NAME        | EnergyEfficiency4SMEs                      |
| PROJECT ACRONYM     | EnergyEfficiency4SMEs                      |
| WORK PACKAGE        | 4                                          |
| DOCUMENT TITLE      | Deliverable 4.1 Training Material for SMEs |
| AUTHOR(S)           | Eurochambres                               |
| VERSION             | 1 – Final version                          |
| DATE                | 27/08/2025                                 |
| TYPE                | R — Document, report                       |
| DISSEMINATION LEVEL | PU — Public                                |

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## Executive Summary

As part of the *EnergyEfficiency4SMEs* project, a series of targeted training modules was developed to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in three key sectors—hospitality and food services, agri-food, and metal industries—in their journey toward improved energy efficiency and sustainability. Recognising the challenges these businesses face—such as limited technical expertise, lack of internal resources, and the absence of financial incentives—the trainings aim to build capacity, foster autonomy in energy management, and support long-term behavioural and operational change. The sessions combine technical insights with practical, sector-relevant guidance to encourage participation and peer learning.

Each training module addresses a specific dimension of the energy transition for SMEs. Topics range from understanding and managing energy consumption through ISO 50001, to planning photovoltaic and geothermal energy projects, and even to interpreting energy invoices for better financial oversight. While these core modules provide a common foundation across the project, countries also had the liberty to complement and adapt them according to local needs and opportunities. This flexibility allowed partners to respond more effectively to sector-specific challenges, national regulations, and participant priorities, ensuring the trainings remained relevant and impactful.

By equipping SMEs with the knowledge and tools to take ownership of their energy performance, the trainings contribute to building a more resilient, competitive, and low-carbon European business ecosystem.

## Trainings and workshops for SMEs

The EE4SMEs project recognises that sustainable energy efficiency is not achieved through one-off interventions but requires continuous engagement, structured knowledge transfer, and effective internal communication within companies. To this end, a core component of the project was the delivery of targeted training workshops designed to build both awareness and practical skills among SME staff.

Each partner country organised a series of thematic workshops—71 in total—tailored to the needs and realities of their local SME communities. Experts in the field were engaged to ensure the trainings provided actionable insights and up-to-date guidance. Where necessary, content from the IMPAWATT platform was adapted or expanded to address the specific needs of the target sectors.

This deliverable presents an overview of the training activities carried out across the participating countries. It outlines the modules developed in the project and the methodologies applied in the various workshops implemented. Furthermore, it highlights how these trainings contributed to equipping SMEs with the tools and knowledge required to maintain their improved energy performance over time—thereby supporting the broader objectives of the LIFE programme in fostering a low-carbon and energy-efficient European economy.

## EE4SMEs training modules

To support EE4SMEs partners in the implementation of training sessions, 4 modules have been developed to provide basic information that may serve as the starting point for further discussion on topics related to the implementation of energy efficiency measures. An additional module related to the IMPAWATT platform was also developed to discuss what the platform is and the services offered to SMEs.

The modules developed are detailed below.

### Module 1: Photovoltaics

This module was designed to address a critical gap in SME knowledge around planning and implementing photovoltaic (PV) installations. This topic is particularly relevant for SMEs in the accommodation, agri-food, and metal sectors—sectors where energy costs can be substantial, and where the potential benefits of renewable energy sources are often underutilized due to lack of technical understanding and internal capacity.

The module was necessary because implementing a photovoltaic system goes far beyond the financial return on investment—it involves navigating a complex landscape of technical, legal, planning, and insurance-related constraints. Many SMEs lack the internal expertise to assess risks like structural weaknesses of roofs, shading that reduces performance, civil aviation restrictions, or costly grid connection requirements. By advising SMEs with clear, structured information on these constraints and practical tools (like shadow simulation software and links to national grid operator portals), the module contributes to helping them make informed, realistic decisions. This not only improves their energy autonomy but also reduces the risk of abandoned or failed projects—supporting long-term sustainability and performance improvements.

## Module 2: Geothermal energy

The training module on geothermal energy was designed to demystify this lesser known but promising renewable energy source and help SMEs understand its practical uses and requirements. Considering that many SMEs in the project's target sectors may be unfamiliar with geothermal technology, this module provides foundational knowledge, from basic principles to implementation phases. It introduces the different types of geothermal systems (surface and deep), their technical mechanisms (notably heat pumps), and real-world applications for space heating, hot water production, cooling, and certain industrial processes.

Creating this module was essential to support SMEs in exploring sustainable energy solutions beyond more mainstream options like solar PV. Geothermal systems can operate year-round, are largely independent of climate variations, and offer low greenhouse gas emissions—making them ideal for long-term energy autonomy and decarbonisation. The added value for SMEs lies in the module's practical guidance on each step of a geothermal project: from opportunity analysis and feasibility studies to regulatory compliance, installation, and operation. By improving knowledge and awareness in this technology, the module becomes an added-value that helps SMEs explore other options to invest in energy solutions that support both environmental goals and operational efficiency.

## Module 3: ISO 50001

The ISO 50001 training module was developed to support SMEs in managing and improving their energy performance through structured, standardised practices. Many small and medium-sized businesses face challenges in maintaining consistent energy savings over time, especially without financial incentives or in-house expertise. This module offers a step-by-step overview of the ISO 50001 standard and clarifies its application by focusing on both its technical and organisational aspects. Through real-world examples and simplified guidance, SMEs learn how to implement an Energy Management System (EnMS) tailored to their context and energy profile.

Creating this module was necessary because ISO 50001 is not just about compliance—it is a strategic tool that enables SMEs to move from reactive energy-saving efforts to systematic, measurable, and continuous performance improvement. The training highlights how the standard helps organisations set energy baselines, define clear objectives, involve internal teams (via roles like the "energy team"), and ensure top management engagement. For SMEs, adopting ISO 50001 adds value by building internal capacity, preparing for future regulatory obligations, and unlocking access to bonuses and support schemes such as PRO-SME in France. Ultimately, this fosters long-term energy efficiency, cost savings, and a stronger contribution to decarbonisation.

## Module 4: How to read an energy invoice

This module was developed to strengthen SMEs' foundational knowledge of how energy costs are structured and billed. Despite being a critical step in managing and reducing energy consumption, many SMEs do not fully understand their electricity or gas bills—making it difficult to identify inefficiencies, negotiate better contracts, or evaluate the impact of energy-saving measures. This module responds to that gap with a clear breakdown of invoice components, regulatory obligations, and supplier practices, providing specific examples within the French energy context.

This training was necessary because effective energy management begins with awareness and control over consumption and costs. By learning how to interpret elements such as network usage tariff, excise duties, reactive energy charges, and consumption profiles, SMEs can spot avoidable expenses, adapt their usage patterns, and align procurement choices with their operational profile (e.g. selecting peak/off-peak options or reviewing load curves). The added value for SMEs is twofold:

they gain confidence and competence to engage with suppliers, and they are better positioned to track and evaluate the benefits of energy efficiency measures—making this module a practical enabler for long-term cost savings and energy performance improvements.

#### Module 5: IMPAWATT platform

As companies should be motivated and trained on the use of the IMPAWATT platform, Senercon provided a presentation on the IMPAWATT platform in English and German as additional training material.

## France

*Target no. of trainings: 14*

*Actual no. of trainings: 24*

*Target no. of participants: 210*

*Actual no. of participants: 320*

*BSO training sessions: 4*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 57*

The training activities carried out in France as part of the EE4SMEs project were coordinated at both national and regional levels, involving CCI France and several regional chambers of commerce. Each partner tailored its delivery approach based on local needs, sectoral dynamics, and the profile of participating SMEs. While the training modules developed by the project provided a common reference point, many CCIs adapted or supplemented these with regionally relevant content. This ensured that training remained practical and engaging for SMEs, while still contributing to the project's shared objectives and indicators.

In the **Bourgogne Franche-Comté (BFC)** region, CCI BFC hosted a series of awareness-raising workshops open to companies from all sectors, adapting the strategy to accommodate a geographically dispersed SME base. Between May 2024 and June 2025, a total of 13 events—mainly in webinar format—were delivered in collaboration with regional stakeholders such as ADEME, the Regional Council, and the RT2E network. While over 500 participants attended in total, 52 were eligible under LIFE criteria and are counted toward the project KPIs. These events covered five thematic areas: energy management and decarbonisation, renewable energy (particularly photovoltaics), financial tools and subsidies, sustainable mobility, and sustainable tourism. Notable sessions included workshops on ISO 50001, self-consumption of solar energy, energy-saving certificates, and the integration of PV infrastructure into business operations.

**CCI Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (ARA)** scheduled two training sessions on geothermal energy intended to respond to regional interest in renewable heating solutions. In **Lyon Métropole**, CCI Lyon developed a webinar focused on photovoltaic technologies. However, the team faced difficulties attracting SMEs in the specific NACE codes targeted by the project. In response, the strategy was adapted to include more personalised and small-group sessions aimed at improving engagement and reaching eligible companies more effectively.

**CCI Nice Côte d'Azur (NCA)** successfully delivered two in-person workshops focused on SMEs in the hospitality sector. Their approach stood out for its use of interactive digital tools like Kahoot to assess knowledge during sessions, as well as for the personalised support provided to SMEs following the training. This model, which combined formal instruction with site visits and tailored coaching, significantly increased the likelihood of participants implementing energy efficiency measures in practice.

In **Nouvelle-Aquitaine**, CCI NA organised three in-person workshops on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2025. These covered: (1) photovoltaics, including regulatory obligations and benefits, (2) financing options for the energy transition, and (3) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with a strong focus on energy efficiency. The content was carefully tailored to account for both national and regional support schemes as well as local regulatory frameworks. Participant engagement was high, with many SMEs

requesting follow-up support to apply the knowledge in their business contexts—an encouraging indicator of real implementation potential.

At the national level, **CCI France** coordinated capacity-building efforts through its internal training body, CFDE. Two online training sessions were delivered to a cohort of 57 CCI advisors from across France, focusing on energy, water, and waste management in HORECA businesses. Due to high demand, additional sessions were offered. These trainings used digital tools to enhance participant interaction, track attendance, and collect feedback. By equipping local chamber advisors with practical knowledge and resources, this approach enabled a cascading effect—ensuring more consistent support for SMEs throughout the national chamber network.

The French implementation of EE4SMEs training activities showcases a multi-level approach that combined national coordination with regional customisation. While all partners aligned with the overarching content and methodology developed under the project, they also demonstrated flexibility in adapting the material to local conditions and SME profiles. Across France, the project supported not only SME awareness and knowledge, but also practical steps toward the implementation of energy efficiency measures.

## Italy

*Target no. of trainings: 15*

*Actual no. of trainings: 14*

*Target no. of participants: 225*

*Actual no. of participants: 482*

*BSO training sessions: 1*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 29*

In Italy, capacity-building activities showed strong and consistent engagement across multiple regions. Training sessions were delivered through a mix of in-person, webinar, and hybrid formats, allowing for a wide geographic spread that included locations such as Jesolo, Venice, Padua, and Vicenza. The content was consistently aligned with the energy efficiency needs of SMEs, while also being tailored to reflect regional and national specificities.

The **Chamber of Commerce of Genoa (CCIAA GE)** and **AS RIVLIG**, operating within the same geographical area, co-organised four capacity-building events. Their engagement with local micro and small enterprises revealed a limited understanding of energy efficiency and energy-saving practices, prompting the design of a training pathway that introduced basic cross-sectoral concepts before progressing towards sector-specific content. These sessions also introduced key notions such as digitalisation and ecological transition and the use of energy sustainability assessments as tools for SME support. Funding opportunities for implementing EE measures were also covered in detail.

To round off this series of sessions, CCIAA GE organised a more technical workshop focused on Renewable Energy Communities (RECs). This session explained the regulatory framework introduced at regional level and how RECs serve as non-profit entities that promote renewable energy self-consumption, reduce energy usage, and support experimentation with innovative EE practices.

Meanwhile, **UCV EIC**, in collaboration with **FGEP**, conducted nine capacity-building events and has committed to continuing dissemination and training activities throughout the final months of the project. Their sessions covered a wide array of relevant topics, all highly tailored to the regional (Veneto) and national (Italy) context. The training modules used in these events included:

- Self-consumption configurations for shared renewable energy
- Overview of EE measures in the building and process sectors
- Incentives and subsidies for EE, including Conto Termico and Piano Transizione 5.0
- Technological solutions for EE 4.0 and 5.0
- The role of energy communities for SMEs
- General introduction to energy efficiency in SMEs and the EE4SMEs project
- Use of the IMPAWATT platform
- A dedicated survey on existing and planned EE measures

These modules were continuously updated and adapted to reflect participant needs, with an emphasis on the availability of public support schemes, technological solutions, and practical applications of EE

measures. Throughout the sessions, the EE4SMEs project and its tools were introduced to all participants, and companies were encouraged to explore and register on the IMPAWATT platform.

Participant feedback was positive. Many SMEs expressed their appreciation for the quality of the training content and requested further sessions in the near future, indicating a strong interest in continuing to explore energy efficiency improvements. This demonstrates both the relevance of the training content and the impact of a regionally adapted approach in supporting SMEs on their energy transition journey.

## Austria

*Target no. of trainings: 5*

*Actual no. of trainings: 5*

*Target no. of participants: 75*

*Actual no. of participants: 158*

*BSO training sessions: 2*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 86*

In Austria, the content of the training sessions was based on involving the target group at an early stage and focusing on specific topics that have proven to be particularly relevant for the sector in surveys and direct discussions with companies. In Austria, the project has been focussing on the hospitality sector, and there the most relevant topics are particularly those related to building management systems and energy consumption monitoring.

The training courses had to take into account the specific situation in Austria, where there is a quite successful modular system of direct regional contacts for energy efficiency improvement in companies with a network of company energy consultants, which is well interlinked with the funding programmes for efficiency and climate protection investments at federal level. The range of advice, subsidies, information materials and training courses on offer has led to a certain degree of saturation among companies when it comes to energy efficiency measures. The hospitality sector has been chosen as the main target group, as it was especially stricken during the lockdowns, when incomes declined, but energy costs did not fall significantly.

The main purpose of the training courses was to ensure that the topic of energy does not disappear from the list of priorities in everyday business life. The aim is to offer companies a low-threshold programme that motivates them to take simple steps in improving their energy performance. Above all, in the context of a project like this, it is important to take away companies' fears that participation only means additional administrative work. The training sessions were designed to communicate the prospects of success.

Related to the training of **business support organisations**, regional partners – gate keepers to the target group – were chosen to reach accommodation providers which are, as mentioned above, in many cases saturated with energy efficiency and environmental protection offers. Thus, **e7** and **EIW** closely cooperated with **Wirtschaftskammer Tirol**, Tyrol's regional economic chamber, which is representing a strong tourism sector. Further partners are e.g. Vienna's economic chamber, Lower Austria's official tourism organisation or Urban Innovation Vienna.

The lectures have been mainly recorded to provide easy access for companies to effective solutions for improving energy efficiency. All the presentations are also available online.

Key contents of the training material were developed with a specific Austrian focus for the respective workshops and tailored to the target group – which, in addition to companies in the hotel industry, to a good extent also included multipliers (BSOs) such as representatives of the national and the local energy agencies, further energy consultants and auditors. As liquid funds are usually very limited in tourism businesses, the main objective of the training courses in Austria was on low-cost and no-cost measures. The presentations included information about the LIFE projects and helpful material and links on energy efficiency, energy management and subsidies.

The content focused on the following:

### **Load profile analysis**

Within an electricity consumption analysis, the quarter-hourly data (i.e. 35,000 values available per year) recorded by the smart meters provide reliable data on how a building ticks.

A graphical representation of this time series in up to 80 displays provides an illustrative picture of where measures need to be taken, most of which are around building control/building automation. These displays visualise in an understandable way where problem areas lie and where investments can be used most effectively.

### **Building management systems/building automation**

Although building's functions may have been operating without problems over the years, these services are often not optimally configured in terms of energy efficiency. In most cases, the systems deliver a steady service, but without checking their energy efficiency.

Small changes can easily result in savings of 5 to 10 percent – without any investments. The presentation used specific case studies to illustrate how small deviations can cause significant costs – e.g. in case of a too early heating up of rooms, poorly set heating or cooling curves, or inappropriate air volumes. A structured analysis identifies deviations – be it suboptimal settings or broken resp. faulty sensors or valves – and enables measures to be taken at short notice.

### **Photovoltaics**

Roofs as well as the parking lots of tourist facilities usually have sufficient space to be of interest for larger PV systems. Obstacles for their implementation is the lack of funding, but especially also time resources for planning, building and maintaining a PV system.

Various cooperation models such as energy communities, contracting or crowdfunding were presented, showing how companies can obtain renewable electricity without investing a lot of time and money: Photovoltaik-Flächenbörse is a free online exchange that provides low-threshold access to a broad range of business models. Anyone with usable space for photovoltaics can find the right partner for realisation here.

### **IMPAWATT Platform**

In collaboration with the German project partner Senercon, the “Austrian section” of the IMPAWATT platform was presented to a larger number of users in Austria. The IMPAWATT platform is the core tool and “product” within EE4SMEs – a free online tool that was developed as part of EU projects to help companies improve their energy performance. By entering some key (energy) data, companies can assess their own energy efficiency status and identify the most effective savings measures, further they can find proven technical solutions as well as options for funding and financing.

### **Decarbonisation of businesses**

In cooperation with the Vienna Tourist Board, a webinar on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was held. A short presentation (25 minutes) looked at load profile analysis and building automation (see the other two presentations). In the end, the recorded two presentations were also discussed among the participants.

## Cyprus

*Target no. of trainings: 3*

*Actual no. of trainings: 3*

*Target no. of participants: 45*

*Actual no. of participants: 38*

*BSO training sessions: N/A*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: N/A*

The approach in Cyprus for these trainings was focused on preparation and needs assessment. CEA and CCI Cyprus held several bilateral meetings to coordinate and cluster trainings, while also mapping SME needs to tailor content accordingly.

In Cyprus, the EE4SMEs training initiative was strategically designed to engage SMEs operating in sectors with high energy consumption and strong potential for sustainable transformation. The **Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI)** led targeted outreach efforts to ensure participation from businesses most likely to benefit from the training. These efforts included direct email campaigns, circulars, social media posts, and follow-up phone calls, all aimed specifically at companies operating within the hospitality and food services sector (NACE codes I55 to I56.3.0), the agri-food industry (NACE codes C10 to C11.0.7), and the metal processing industry (NACE codes C24 to C25.9.9).

By focusing on these key sectors, the training addressed Cyprus's broader sustainability priorities and aligned with EU-level objectives such as the European Green Deal and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). This targeted outreach ensured that the training reached the most relevant SME stakeholders, enhancing the practical value and policy relevance of the initiative.

The training session took place on 17 June 2025 at the CCCI premises in Nicosia, gathering 38 participants. While the majority represented the hospitality and food services, agri-food, and metal processing sectors, the event also attracted stakeholders from a broader range of fields, including the Deputy Ministry of Research, banks, and insurance companies. To ensure maximum participation from all registered stakeholders, all training activities were condensed into a single full-day session. This diversity reflects the cross-sectoral interest in energy efficiency and sustainability, and the increasing relevance of green transition topics across the Cypriot economy.

### Training Content and Adaptation to National Context – Detailed Analysis

The EE4SMEs training in Cyprus not only met growing demand for regulatory compliance information but also tackled the often-complex transition SMEs face in adopting sustainable business models. By combining regulatory guidance, practical technology insights, and funding navigation, the event offered a comprehensive roadmap to green transformation.

### Training Structure and Key Content

The session, titled “Green Transition in Practice: Tools and Solutions for SMEs,” took place on 17 June 2025 and followed this agenda:

#### Key Themes Covered:

### **ESG Compliance and the CSRD (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive)**

The training session included a comprehensive segment on ESG compliance and the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), delivered by a Legal and Regulatory Compliance Expert. This part of the training provided participants with an in-depth introduction to the upcoming EU obligations that SMEs will soon need to comply with, highlighting the growing importance of sustainability reporting in the business landscape. The discussion underscored how ESG factors are increasingly critical not only for regulatory compliance but also for securing market access, attracting investment, and establishing strong business partnerships. Emphasis was placed on the necessity for SMEs to proactively understand and prepare for the CSRD, which will broaden the scope of reporting requirements to include many smaller enterprises that previously were not subject to such regulations. This expansion is expected to enhance transparency and accountability, ultimately influencing SMEs' competitiveness and strategic planning. By raising awareness of these developments, the session aimed to equip SMEs with the knowledge to navigate the evolving regulatory environment and integrate ESG considerations into their core business practices.

### **Energy Efficiency and Green Technologies for SMEs**

The importance of adopting a formal energy policy as a foundational step toward achieving sustainable and efficient operations within SMEs was highlighted during the session. Participants were provided with a detailed overview of key technical tools that can support this process, including energy audits, life cycle cost analysis (LCCA), and energy monitoring and management systems (EMS). These tools are essential for helping SMEs systematically identify opportunities to save energy and make informed decisions about prioritizing investments based on both cost-effectiveness and environmental impact. The session highlighted how applying these methodologies not only reduces operational costs but also significantly improves the environmental footprint of businesses. Delivered by an expert from the Cyprus Energy Agency, the presentation offered practical insights tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by local SMEs in their journey toward energy efficiency and sustainability.

### **Green Technology Solutions & Networking through EEN**

The training also provided guidance on how SMEs can leverage the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) to identify innovation opportunities and establish collaborative partnerships across Europe. Emphasizing the strategic value of networking, the session highlighted how connecting with peers and experts beyond national borders can accelerate the adoption of green technologies and enable the sharing of best practices. By tapping into EEN's extensive resources and support services, SMEs are better positioned to access expertise, funding opportunities, and markets that drive their sustainability and competitiveness goals. This component aimed to empower SMEs to expand their horizons and build cross-border collaborations that foster innovation and green growth.

### **Introduction to EE4SMEs and the IMPAWATT Platform**

A practical introduction and live demonstration of the IMPAWATT platform, was conducted during the training, a free and user-friendly digital tool specifically developed to help SMEs conduct self-assessments of their energy performance without requiring specialized technical expertise. Participants received step-by-step guidance on how to navigate the platform, interpret the assessment results, and implement tailored energy-saving measures based on their specific sector and operational scale. The platform's continuous monitoring features were also showcased, highlighting its capability to enable SMEs to track their energy improvements over time and refine their energy policies accordingly. By providing an accessible and practical tool, the session aimed to empower SMEs

with hands-on resources to drive ongoing energy efficiency and sustainability improvements. The demonstration was delivered jointly by representatives from the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Cyprus Energy Agency.

### **Funding Opportunities for Green Investments**

A detailed overview of funding opportunities at both the national and EU levels, aimed at supporting SMEs in financing energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy installations, and compliance with CSRD reporting requirements. The session clarified key eligibility criteria and explained application processes in detail, offering practical tips to help SMEs maximize their chances of securing funding. By addressing common challenges and financial barriers, this part of the training equipped participants with the knowledge needed to effectively access and leverage financial support mechanisms for their green investment projects, thereby facilitating a smoother and more feasible transition to sustainable business practices. This session was delivered by a representative of the Cyprus Energy Agency.

### **IMPAWATT Platform – Practical and Strategic Support**

The IMPAWATT platform was showcased during the training as a pivotal and practical tool designed specifically to empower SMEs with an accessible way to self-assess and improve their energy performance. It offers a user-friendly, step-by-step evaluation process that requires no advanced technical knowledge, thereby lowering barriers to effective energy management. Based on the self-assessment, IMPAWATT provides tailored, sector-specific recommendations that SMEs can implement to reduce energy waste and operational costs, helping them prioritize improvements that deliver tangible results without heavy upfront investments. The platform also integrates best practices and real-world case studies, giving SMEs concrete examples of successful energy-saving measures within similar businesses. Beyond initial assessment, IMPAWATT supports ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement by enabling SMEs to track their energy performance over time and adjust their strategies accordingly, fostering a culture of sustained energy efficiency. As a free and openly accessible tool, it removes financial barriers and encourages widespread adoption regardless of company size or resources. Additionally, IMPAWATT serves as a gateway to relevant funding schemes and technical support, connecting assessment outcomes to concrete assistance opportunities. The hands-on demonstration during the training ensured participants not only grasped the theoretical aspects but were also equipped to immediately start using the tool, increasing the likelihood of practical uptake and lasting impact.

### **Funding Opportunities for Green Investments**

The training addressed the crucial topic of funding, outlining national and EU financial instruments designed to incentivize energy efficiency and sustainability investments. By simplifying access routes and eligibility criteria, SMEs were better positioned to secure funds that can make green upgrades financially viable.

### **BSOs and Stakeholder Role in Implementation**

In Cyprus, **Business Support Organizations (BSOs)**—notably the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)**—played a pivotal role in amplifying the impact of energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Acting as multipliers, these organizations extended the reach of initial training events by providing ongoing, hands-on support tailored to the local SME landscape.

BSOs functioned as essential connectors between SMEs and the broader ecosystem of expertise, funding mechanisms, and technical assistance. Their active involvement ensured that businesses were not left to navigate energy management and carbon reporting requirements alone. Instead, SMEs

benefited from personalized guidance, access to practical tools, and facilitated collaboration across sectors.

Beyond knowledge dissemination, BSOs in Cyprus contributed to maintaining momentum by helping SMEs implement concrete measures, track their progress, and overcome implementation challenges. Their role was especially critical in promoting innovation and accelerating the green transition, ensuring that sustainability practices were not just introduced but integrated into long-term business strategies.

This sustained support model significantly increased the likelihood of successful adoption of energy efficiency, ISO 50001 systems, and carbon footprint tracking, reinforcing Cyprus's broader commitment to sustainable development and regulatory alignment at the EU level.

### **Participant Engagement and Impact**

Participant engagement during the training was notably high, with SMEs showing clear enthusiasm for practical tools like IMPAWATT that translate complex sustainability concepts into manageable and actionable steps. Many participants expressed strong intent to follow up by conducting energy audits and actively pursuing available funding opportunities, reflecting the training's success in sparking concrete actions beyond the event itself. The session also effectively established a foundational understanding of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and broader ESG compliance, topics that often present significant challenges for SMEs. Early feedback indicates that the combination of technical tools, regulatory guidance, and funding information created a comprehensive and well-rounded learning experience, one that was highly relevant to the specific needs and context of local businesses.

## Malta

*Target no. of trainings: 3*

*Actual no. of trainings: 4*

*Target no. of participants: 45*

*Actual no. of participants: 156*

*BSO training sessions: 1*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 38*

Energy efficiency is often very challenging in small enterprise mainly due to lack of expertise, limited human resources and insufficient financial means. The closing meetings that were held after each energy audit helped Maltese partners better understand these challenges and the needs of this segment of enterprise, ensuring the right training programme was designed specifically for SMEs in Malta. A training plan for SMEs was thus prepared to address these challenges in line with the aims of the 'EnergyEfficiency4SMEs' Project.

A good communication plan ensured the purpose of the information sessions was clearly and timely delivered to the right audience. Different communication methods were selected to invite prospective SMEs, including social media and websites, and by sending personal emails to selected businesses. Partnering with business organisations such as the Malta Chamber further enhanced the effective reach of the target audience.

Two webinars for SMEs were organised by The **Energy & Water Agency (EWA)** together with the **Malta Business Bureau (MBB)** on 29-Oct-24 and 21-Nov-2024. The webinars provided ease of attendance & participation. Two other in-person events were organised, one in Malta and another at the sister island Gozo on 25-Nov-24 and 18-Feb-25 respectively. The in-person sessions also included workshops and a help desk, providing tailored individualised guidance to SMEs, ensuring high added value.

Presentations by expert speakers included topical themes including:

- Solar PV Technologies
- PV Regulations
- Best Practices & Case Studies presented by several SMEs
- Funding Opportunities for SMEs by various providers
- IMPAWATT – Presentations | Calculation Tools | Fact Sheets | Best Practices | Measures
- ISO 50001 Certification
- Energy Audits Scheme for SMEs – reimbursement of professional fees
- The GUEST Project (free energy audits) – key findings, trends, solutions
- Eco-Certifications
- Successful Business Models
- Opportunities & Challenges in the Gozo accommodation sector

A workshop was also organised on 17-Jun-2025, bringing together energy auditors, industry experts and business support organisations including the Malta Chamber, the Gozo Business Chamber and the Chamber of SMEs. Presentations included:

- Insights on the perception of Energy Audits in Enterprise
- The Energy Efficiency Directive & Renewable Energy Directive

- Selling the Energy Audit to Management
- Energy Audits – Expectations, Benefits, Challenges – an enterprise outlook
- Funding Opportunities

Time was allocated for networking giving the opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the challenges & opportunities in an informal environment.

<https://energywateragency.gov.mt/energy-efficiency-as-a-strategic-business-investment/>

## Bulgaria

*Target no. of trainings: 4*

*Actual no. of trainings: 4*

*Target no. of participants: 60*

*Actual no. of participants: 113*

*BSO training sessions: 1*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 40*

In Bulgaria, training activities under the EE4SMEs project focused on enhancing awareness and practical knowledge among SMEs regarding energy efficiency, energy management systems, and renewable energy solutions. The sessions were designed to introduce key technical concepts in a clear and accessible manner, with several presentations adapted to the audience to ensure effective learning.

A total of six training modules were delivered. The first module introduced ISO 50001 Energy Management Systems, explaining why certification can be valuable for organizations. Participants learned how implementing such systems can reduce energy expenditures, improve profitability, and contribute to environmental protection by curbing unnecessary energy consumption.

The second module focused on a framework for energy performance management, helping SMEs understand how to integrate energy-saving practices into their operations. This framework empowers companies to reduce costs, lower greenhouse gas emissions, enhance competitiveness, and comply with national and EU regulations—all while encouraging innovation through better use of energy data.

A third module guided participants through the process of conducting energy audits and implementing energy efficiency measures. This included methods for analysing energy consumption patterns, identifying inefficiencies, and proposing targeted upgrades such as lighting improvements, HVAC optimization, and equipment automation. The goal was to demonstrate how these improvements lead to reduced operational costs and energy use.

Another session covered Photovoltaic (PV) technology, outlining its principles, benefits, and practical applications. The training emphasized how PV systems contribute to energy cost reduction, carbon emission mitigation, and broader sustainability goals. Participants gained an understanding of how solar energy—from rooftop installations to industrial-scale systems—is becoming more accessible for SMEs.

An additional module presented the IMPAWATT platform, with a detailed walkthrough of its functionalities. This session showcased how the platform's digital tools can support SMEs in assessing, planning, and managing their energy efficiency journeys.

Finally, general presentations were given on the objectives and results of the EE4SMEs project. These helped situate the training content within the broader context of the project's mission to support SMEs across Europe in becoming more energy efficient.

Participants shared their own best practices, offering insights into the real-world application of energy-saving measures within Bulgarian SMEs.

## Estonia

*Target no. of trainings: 2*

*Actual no. of trainings: 3*

*Target no. of participants: 30*

*Actual no. of participants: 45*

*BSO training sessions: BSO-s were invited to SME all trainings*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 11*

As part of the knowledge enhancing actions, Estonia designed and delivered three targeted training sessions in 2024–2025 that focused explicitly on improving energy efficiency among SMEs and Business Support Organisations (BSOs). While sustainability was a broader theme, the primary objective was to help Estonian enterprises reduce energy consumption, improve operational cost-efficiency, and align with upcoming regulatory requirements for energy efficiency (EU-level, national).

Unlike the original project plan which suggested two separate sessions for SMEs and one for BSOs, the Estonian approach integrated both groups into all three sessions. This was a strategic decision based on the understanding that BSOs play a critical supporting role in guiding SMEs towards more energy-efficient practices and should be fully engaged in the same conversations. Combining both target groups also helped foster mutual understanding and more direct knowledge transfer.

Altogether, the three seminars attracted **45 SME representatives and 11 from BSOs**, covering all target sectors of EE4SME project. All modules were tailored to the Estonian context, and containing most relevant training materials adapted to target group needs and locally relevant case studies to ensure maximum applicability.

### **Training 1: Solar Energy and Storage Solutions for Enterprises**

**Date & Venue:** 19 March 2024, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tallinn

The first session focused on decentralised energy production and practical ways to enhance energy security and price resilience through solar power and storage technologies. Estonia, like many other countries, has experienced sharp increases in electricity prices in recent years, making this topic especially relevant for SMEs looking to reduce fixed operating costs.

The training, conducted in collaboration with Enefit and Swedbank, covered the following key areas:

- Current trends in solar and storage technologies in Estonia;
- Practical considerations for system sizing, efficiency and ROI calculations;
- Financing and investment support for renewable installations;
- Integration of solar and electric mobility solutions for cost-saving;
- Expected technological developments in energy storage.

The content was based on real-life examples from Estonian companies and included practical tools to help SMEs assess the feasibility of solar systems. BSOs were actively engaged to learn how to better advise their clients on planning and funding such investments. This session laid the foundation for a stronger SME understanding of energy independence and long-term savings.

### **Training 2: Energy Efficiency Measures for Hotels and Restaurants**

**Date & Venue:** 21 May 2025, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Tallinn, and parallel session online

The second training was dedicated to SMEs in the hospitality sector, a significant energy consumer group that must adapt to stricter energy efficiency and reporting regulations in the near future. The training highlighted both compliance obligations and cost-saving opportunities through smart energy use.

Key components included:

- Overview of building energy systems and energy use patterns;
- Introduction to the revised EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (2024/1275);
- Use of energy labels and building carbon footprint assessments;
- Insights from energy audits in Estonian hotels and restaurants;
- Support schemes available through national institutions;
- Introduction to basic circular economy practices relevant to the sector.

The seminar also featured testimonials from SME managers who had implemented successful energy-saving initiatives, demonstrating achievable results. Representatives from the **Estonian Environmental Investment Centre (KIK)** shared details about available grants, and energy expert Ülo Kask provided in-depth technical content. Participants appreciated the balance between regulatory updates and hands-on advice tailored to the hospitality sector's realities.

### **Training 3: Energy and Resource Efficiency in Manufacturing**

**Date & Format:** 26 May 2025, Online (MS Teams)

The third and final session focused on manufacturing companies (main focus to food and metal industries), offering advanced content on how to achieve energy and resource efficiency in industrial operations. This sector is critical in Estonia's economy and presents substantial potential for energy-saving interventions.

Topics covered included:

- Energy production from renewable sources and co-generation in factories;
- Resource efficiency audits and practical follow-up measures;
- Waste valorisation, eco-design, and circular packaging solutions;
- Benefits of environmental management systems for cost reduction;
- Overview of funding programmes and technical support for implementation;
- Best practices shared by Estonian manufacturing SMEs.

A highlight of this seminar was the participation of sectoral experts and business practitioners, who presented detailed case studies on how to optimise energy consumption through investments in smarter systems, waste reduction, and energy monitoring. Special attention was given to national grant schemes supporting energy-efficient technologies, process innovations, and low-emission business models.

### **Adaptation to the Estonian Context and Participant Response**

All training sessions were shaped by feedback from preparatory discussions with SMEs and BSOs in late 2024 and early 2025. These consultations helped identify the most urgent challenges and capacity gaps, which were addressed through customised training content and new materials tailored to Estonian conditions. Regulatory updates were presented in clear language, supported by practical examples relevant to local enterprises.

While sustainability was addressed where relevant, the consistent and explicit focus of all sessions remained on enhancing energy efficiency—whether through building upgrades, production process improvements, or onsite renewable energy generation. Each seminar reinforced this goal as a key driver of long-term business resilience and competitiveness.

Feedback from participants highlighted appreciation for the real-world examples, funding guidance, and opportunities for cross-sector learning. SMEs found the joint sessions with BSOs valuable, as they could directly engage with advisors and funding bodies. The sessions also helped BSOs better understand the day-to-day realities of their SME clients, thus strengthening their support capacity going forward.

## Spain

*Target no. of trainings: 19*

*Actual no. of trainings: 11*

*Target no. of participants: 285*

*Actual no. of participants: 253*

*BSO training sessions:*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 23*

In Spain, training activities under the EE4SMEs project were implemented by multiple regional Chambers of Commerce (CCIs), each contributing with their own timeline, delivery strategy, and participant outreach. The training sessions were based on the project's common modules and thematic priorities but also adapted to regional needs and evolving national policy contexts.

At the **CCI of Terrassa**, four targeted webinars were organised for SMEs in the hospitality and food services, agri-food, and metal industries sectors. These sessions were structured around the core EE4SMEs training modules, with an emphasis on practical and accessible energy efficiency strategies for SMEs.

One key session focused on ISO 50001 for SMEs, offering a practical introduction to energy management systems and their application in small and medium-sized businesses. The training highlighted how such systems can improve energy performance, reduce costs, and ensure readiness for future regulatory compliance.

Two webinars were dedicated to the topic of carbon footprint and business opportunities. The first introduced the basics of carbon footprint assessment and explained how energy efficiency directly contributes to emissions reduction and long-term business competitiveness. The second webinar, held later, addressed new national Spanish regulations on carbon accounting and reporting. It aimed to help SMEs understand their potential obligations and see compliance as an opportunity for innovation and market differentiation.

Another session titled Energy Efficiency for Non-experts, was designed for SME staff without technical backgrounds. It demystified key energy concepts and presented AI-based tools for energy monitoring, forecasting, and decision-making, showcasing how even simple digital solutions can improve efficiency at the SME level.

Although the initial plan foresaw additional training dates, participant recruitment proved challenging. In response, CCI Terrassa adjusted its strategy by extending invitations to a broader group, including Business Support Organisations (BSOs), energy experts, and larger companies. While these entities fall outside the core SME target group, they were included to broaden the impact and act as multipliers of the project's content, tools, and methodologies. This inclusive approach not only helps ensure stronger outreach but also builds broader capacity within the ecosystem supporting SMEs.

In parallel, **CCI Seville** developed its own structured training plan. This included defining priority themes and scheduling a series of workshops to be held through to September 2025. In preparing these sessions, they have engaged subject-matter experts and launched a dedicated promotional

campaign to attract relevant SMEs and stakeholders. This forward-looking approach is expected to contribute substantially to the project's training and impact KPIs in Spain.

The CCI Seville's workshops explored various topics, including key energy efficiency concepts and their social, environmental and economic benefits, as well as the European, national, regional and local frameworks. These frameworks include the European Green Deal and its sustainability goals, national legislation through the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) for 2023–2030, and the Andalusian Law on Climate Change and Energy Transition. The workshops covered the available funding mechanisms and support programmes. They also addressed the new energy model, focusing on energy efficiency and emission reduction, the role of renewable energies and storage solutions, the creation of green jobs, and the development of major clean energy projects supported by sustainable finance.

On average, 15 to 20 people have been attending each online workshop in Seville.

Together, the efforts of Spanish CCIs reflect a collaborative and adaptive approach to training implementation. By targeting both SMEs and broader support organisations, Spain's contribution helps strengthen the long-term sustainability of energy efficiency actions beyond the life of the project.

In the Valencian Community, the Valencia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (**CCI Valencia**) developed a five-session training programme within the framework of the EE4SMEs project, aimed at improving the energy efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. These sessions, delivered in a free webinar format, were designed to train SMEs, energy experts, and business support organisations in practical methodologies, management tools, and sustainable business models.

Each module was structured as a progressive learning path, moving from the fundamentals of energy efficiency to the financing opportunities available, while integrating technical, regulatory, and strategic aspects of the energy transition.

With more than 140 attendees, mostly SMEs from the region, the training activity in Valencia demonstrates the value of delivering structured information on energy efficiency for SMEs. Participants have been equipped with the technical, strategic, and financial knowledge needed to initiate or consolidate their energy transition.

On the other hand, due to the difficulties encountered in gauging the interest of SMEs in the project's target sectors, **CCI Murcia** is scheduled to organise its training activity in September 2025, taking place on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The training session will focus, broadly, on energy transition and its challenges, current landscape of energy efficiency and regulations, renewable energies (such as photovoltaic), and energy management systems (ISO-50001), and is expected to attract the participation of a number between 20 and 40 SMEs and experts.

## Germany

*Target no. of trainings: 3*

*Actual no. of trainings: 3*

*Target no. of participants: 45*

*Actual no. of participants: 40*

*BSO training sessions: 1*

*Number of energy auditors / other stakeholders with improved skills/knowledge: 3*

In Germany, four targeted training events were organised as part of the EE4SMEs project—three aimed at SMEs and one designed for Business Support Organisations (BSOs). The sessions were delivered by project partner **Senercon**, drawing on both project materials and their own extensive experience in energy consulting. The focus was primarily on the hospitality sector, particularly hotels, with training content tailored to their operational realities and regulatory environment.

The first training, held in October 2024, covered the topic of energy monitoring and energy management. It introduced relevant ISO 10000 standards and provided an overview of the legal requirements for energy monitoring and audit obligations in Germany. The session incorporated foundational elements from the WP4 project presentation, enriched with insights from Senercon's own consulting practice. It was attended by four hotel CEOs, offering a highly targeted and practical exchange.

The second training event, held in January 2025, focused on best practices in energy efficiency for reducing emissions and costs in hotels. The session combined project-based findings with real examples from Senercon's fieldwork, particularly audits conducted as part of EE4SMEs. The audience included five hotel CEOs and the technical CEO of a hotel group, allowing for an in-depth discussion on applicable measures and their potential ROI.

The third training, held in March 2025, addressed energy savings in hotels with a focus on user behaviour and low-investment measures. This was particularly relevant for hotels operating in rented facilities, where structural upgrades may be limited. The session also included a live demonstration of the IMPAWATT platform, showcasing its features and how SMEs can use it to plan and track energy efficiency actions. This training saw the highest participation, with 28 attendees from across the hotel sector.

The final event was an informational session targeted at Business Support Organisations (BSOs) such as industrial chambers, regional business innovation agencies, and business clusters. During this event, Senercon presented the overall EE4SMEs project, its tools—including the IMPAWATT platform—and how BSOs can play a role in disseminating and supporting energy efficiency among their SME networks. The session was attended by three representatives from hotel sector support organisations and innovation agencies in Bavaria.

Germany's contribution to the training activities demonstrates a sector-focused, knowledge-intensive approach tailored to the hospitality industry.

## Appendix 1: Training materials

All EE4SMEs training modules are accessible via the project website and are designed to serve **SMEs, chambers of commerce, trainers, and business support organisations** who are working to improve energy efficiency capacity at company level: [Capacity Building – Energy Efficiency for SME](#)