

### SMART targets

An important element of the energy management planning process is the development of SMART targets. Before defining the SMART concept, it is useful to distinguish between *objectives and targets* – as both should appear in your Programme Plan. Objectives relate to general aims or purpose; an example of an objective would be: reduce energy use per tonne of raw material used.

*Targets* represent the tangible stepping stones on the path towards the achievement of an objective. They are more specific and measurable. An objective may have one or many targets that must be fulfilled to achieve the objective. For instance, the objective described above might have the following targets:

- 1) achieve 3% per annum reduction in electricity consumption per tonne of raw material X used over the next 3 years;
- 2) achieve 4% per annum reduction in fuel oil consumption per tonne of material X used over the next 3 years.

In summary, objectives are broad whereas targets are narrow and more ‘concrete’.

After setting important objectives, you should move on to setting targets. You can then decide on actions to achieve your targets. A useful method for setting good targets is to check if they pass the SMART test. SMART is an acronym that describes the key characteristics of good targets, namely:

1. *Specific* (well-defined, focused, detailed, concrete) – ask yourself: What are we trying to do? Why is this important? Who is going to do what? When do we need it done? How are we going to do it?
2. *Measurable* (kWh, time, money, %, etc.) – ask yourself: How will we know when this target has been achieved? How can we make the relevant measurements?
3. *Achievable* (feasible, actionable) – ask yourself: Is this possible? Can we get it done within the timeframe? Do we understand the constraints and risk factors? Has this been done (successfully) before?
4. *Realistic* (in the context of the resources that can be made available) – ask yourself: Do we currently have the resources required to achieve this target? If not, can we secure extra resources? Do we need to reprioritise the allocation of time, budget, human resources to make this happen?
5. *Time-Bound* (defined deadline or schedule) – ask yourself: When will this target be accomplished? Is the deadline unambiguous? Is the deadline achievable and realistic? Try to set deadlines that create just the right amount of urgency to get the work done.

When writing targets, it is not always best to follow the order set out above. Sometimes, it is easier to approach target setting in the order M - A - R - S - T. The important thing is that you check that your final targets pass the SMART test.