Support Scheme for Energy Audits (SSEA)

Guidance for Applicants
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1. Introduction

This Guidance document is for businesses who are interested in applying to the Support Scheme for Energy Audits. Guidance for Registered Energy Auditors is available on the webpage: https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/small-and-medium-business/energy-audits/

1.1 Scheme context

The Irish Government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030, equating to a 7% reduction every year. This represents both a significant challenge and an exciting opportunity, and as a business you are likely to find yourself under increasing pressure from your clients, customers and employees to look at ways to be more sustainable and to “decarbonise” your operations. It can be difficult to know where to start, but you will almost certainly have to become more energy efficient. Energy efficiency means using less energy while not reducing or limiting your outputs and a high-quality energy audit will help to educate you about your own energy use and also provide a list of concrete actions that you can take to become more energy efficient.

SEAI’s Support Scheme for Energy Audits (SSEA) offers financial support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to get an Energy Audit. The Energy Audit will help you to understand your energy use and will make recommendations on the most effective ways to save money on your energy bills. The application and approval process is quick and easy, and in most cases the financial support provided by SEAI will cover the entire cost of the Energy Audit. Support is issued in the form of a Voucher, which is awarded to the Applicant (the SME), who will then use it to “pay” the Auditor once the audit is complete. The Auditor will claim the cost of the Voucher from SEAI.

1.2 What is an Energy Audit?

The aim of an Energy Audit is to identify energy saving opportunities in a facility, process or system. This is achieved by inspecting and analysing how energy is used, in order to minimise energy use without adversely affecting outputs.

The Energy Audits supported under the SSEA will look at electricity, gas, oil, diesel and any other energy sources that are used at the Facility. The Energy Audit will include transport fuel for the company fleet, if applicable, but will not look at processes and activities that occur offsite. The Energy Audit will consist of 3 main steps: 1) Collection & review of Facility’s energy data, 2) Site visit by Auditor, and 3) Production of Energy Audit Report (called the SSEA Report).

Audits will be carried out by Registered Energy Auditors, who must meet certain criteria relating to their experience and qualifications before they can register to participate. This means that you can be confident that you will receive professional service and a high-quality audit when you apply.

1.3 Timelines

The SSEA opens for applications in summer 2021 and will remain open continually, subject to annual budget caps. A review of the programme is planned for the end of 2022, following which changes may be made to the Scheme rules. Vouchers issued under the SSEA are valid for a period of 8 months.

Vouchers will be awarded to eligible Applicants on a first come, first served basis, subject to the available budget.

1.4 Supporting documents

Unless otherwise stated, documents are available to download from https://www.seai.ie/business-and-public-sector/small-and-medium-business/energy-audits/

Links:

Templates:
- SSEA Report Template
- SSEA Energy Audit Data Excel template

Rules & Guidance:
- SSEA: Guidance for Applicants (this document)
SSEA: Guidance for Applicants

- SSEA: Guidance for Auditors
- SSEA Terms & Conditions
- SSEA Privacy notice

Questions regarding the Scheme, or this document, should be sent to SEAI’s Business and Industry Department: smegrants@seai.ie

Important notice for Applicants

⚠ Please review the SSEA Terms & Conditions before applying to the Scheme.

2. Applicant eligibility

To be eligible for the SSEA an Applicant must:
- Be an SME, and
- Spend at least €10,000 per year on energy at the Facility being audited

3.1 Applicant eligibility

✓ The SSEA is open to SMEs and other non-obligated commercial or public sector entities.
✗ The SSEA is not open to the residential sector.
✗ The SSEA is not open to Obligated Entities.

Are you an SME?
If your business is linked to other enterprises, or if you are unsure whether or not your company is an SME, please review the definition available here: https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/42921/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native

Are you an Obligated Entity?
Obligated entities are those that are required to undergo an energy audit under the European Energy Efficiency Directive (SI 426 of 2014). Obligated entities are defined as:
- Non-SMEs (i.e. companies with 250 or more employees, or an annual turnover in excess of €50 million/annual balance sheet in excess of €43 million), or
- Public sector bodies with a useful floor area of more than 500m², or an annual energy spend of more than €35,000.

3.2 Facility eligibility
To participate in the SSEA, an Applicant must be spending at least €10,000 per year on energy at the Facility they wish to get audited. For example, an Applicant with two separate retail units, each spending €7,000 on energy, would not be eligible for the Scheme even though total energy spend is above €10,000. This threshold has been put in place to ensure value for money.

3.3 Multiple facilities
Businesses with more than one Facility, including chains and franchises, may wish to apply for vouchers for each different Facility:
- If you have 2 or 3 Facilities, please make a separate application for each Facility.
- If you have 4 or more Facilities, please contact SEAI so that we can determine the most effective approach for your business.
- Remember that each Facility must spend at least €10,000 per year on energy
3. Auditor eligibility

To participate in the Scheme Auditors must be on SEAI’s Register of Energy Auditors and must have agreed to the Scheme’s Terms and Conditions. The list of Registered Energy Auditors is available here: https://www.seai.ie/grants/find-a-registered-professional/ and you can filter the list to see which ones are participating in the SSEA. Please review the list prior to applying and contact your nominated Auditor to confirm that you would like them to carry out the Energy Audit under the SSEA.

4. Level of support

The support offered under the Scheme is a Voucher with a value of €2,000 ex. VAT. This Voucher can be used to acquire an Energy Audit for the Facility. The cost of the Energy Audit is not set by SEAI and the Voucher may cover all, or part, of the cost.

Please note that analysis carried out by SEAI indicates that an in-depth Energy Audit for businesses spending up to €50,000 on energy is not likely to cost more than €2,000. Businesses spending more than this amount on energy may be required to “top up” the value of the Voucher. If this is the case for you, SEAI strongly recommends that you request a quote from 3 auditors before nominating one to carry out the audit.

Applicants will only receive one Voucher per Facility.

5.1 Eligible expenditure

The Voucher issued shall be used to obtain an Energy Audit from an Auditor or Auditing Company on SEAI’s list of Registered Energy Auditors. No other products or services may be procured with the Voucher.

The Energy Audit should align with the general guidance laid out in the Energy Audit Handbook¹ and must be completed in the template provided by SEAI. The Auditor must collect all the necessary information and conduct the analysis required to complete the SSEA report template. Auditors participating in the Scheme must accept the SEAI Voucher as payment for this service.

Eligible and non-eligible costs are listed in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Included under SSEA?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation &amp; planning for Energy Audit</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of your energy bills</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visit and associated costs²</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice on the actions you should take to improve energy efficiency</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and issuing of the Energy Audit report in the required template</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of report and audit data to SEAI</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of activities occurring offsite</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Eligible and non-eligible costs

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² Please review the SSEA report template for a full list of what the site visit should include
5. SSEA process

The SSEA process is outlined below:

### Pre audit
- Applicant confirms eligibility
- Applicant contacts Auditor to confirm availability and cost
- Applicant applies to Scheme and receives Voucher
- Applicant and Auditor schedule site visit

### Audit
- Site visit takes place
- Auditor issues SSEA Report to Applicant
- Applicant and Auditor sign Completion of Works form

### Post audit
- Auditor submits Audit Data and Report to SEAI
- Auditor requests payment from SEAI
- SEAI issue payment to Auditor

Please note that the recipient of the Energy Audit must apply for the Voucher themselves: SEAI will only issue the Voucher to the Applicant, not to an Auditor, consultant, or other entity.

6.1 Pre audit
6.11 Applicant confirms eligibility

Before applying, check that your organisation and Facility meet the SSEA’s eligibility criteria:

✓ Your business or organisation is not an obligated entity
✓ You are spending at least €10,000 per annum on energy at the Facility
✓ Your business or organisation is tax compliant registered in the Republic of Ireland and has a valid CRO number
✓ You will not exceed the De Minimis State Aid* threshold upon receipt of the voucher
✓ If you have more than 3 facilities, including those that are part of a chain or franchise, contact SEAI at business@seai.ie before applying to the Scheme

* The SSEA is classed as de minimis Aid. There is a ceiling of €200,000 for all de minimis aid, regardless of the source, given to any one enterprise (including groups) in the previous 3 fiscal years. The SSEA Voucher is awarded with the understanding that the value of the Voucher combined with any other de minimis aid received by you in the last 3 years does not exceed the ceiling of €200,000 for all de minimis aid.
For more information please see: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A0802_2](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A0802_2)
6.12 Applicant contacts Auditor

- When you have checked your eligibility for the Scheme, select an Energy Auditor from the list of Registered Energy Auditors available here, which you can filter to show Auditors participating in the SSEA: https://www.seai.ie/grants/find-a-registered-professional/
- Contact the Energy Auditor and check that she/he has capacity to provide the Energy Audit service under the SSEA.
- SEAI also recommends that you confirm the cost of the Energy Audit with the Auditor prior to Application. If the cost exceeds the €2,000 Voucher, SEAI advises Applicants to acquire 3 quotes from potential Auditors before choosing one.

6.13 Applicant applies to the SSEA

- Apply to the SSEA via the Application Portal, providing basic details about your organisation and the Facility where the audit is to take place.
- As long as you meet the SSEA eligibility criteria you will be automatically issued the Voucher via email.
- SEAI will, at the same time, inform the nominated Auditor that a Voucher has been issued to you.
- The process for applying through the Application Portal is described in more detail in Appendix A. **We recommend that you review this information before making an Application.**
- Please note that SEAI reserves the right to request additional information to support an application.

6.14 Applicant and Auditor schedule site visit

- Once the Voucher has been issued, you can arrange the site visit with the Auditor.
- Prior to the site visit the Auditor must confirm with you what information they require for the pre-analysis, for example 12 months’ worth of energy bills; a list of the Facility’s assets/energy-using equipment; a site plan (for large or complex sites) and a copy of any previous energy audits or assessments, if applicable.

6.2 Audit

6.21 Site visit takes place

- The site visit (or visits, for large/complex sites) are arranged between yourself and the Auditor.
- Visit typically take 0.5 days to 2 days, depending on size and complexity of the Facility
- You must ensure that a member of staff will be available to participate in the site visit

6.22 Auditor produces SSEA Report

- Following the site visit, the Auditor produces the SSEA Report and will issue it to you no more than 10 working days after the site visit. The SSEA Report must be completed in the standard SSEA Energy Audit Report template, which is available on the website.
- The Auditor must ensure that he/she is available for any questions you may have at this point.

6.23 Applicant and Auditor sign Completion of Works form

- If you are satisfied with the Audit and the SSEA Report, a Director or Senior Manager of the organisation must complete and sign the Completion of Works form at the Auditor’s request. The Completion of Works is an Appendix to the SSEA Report and is signed by both Applicant and Auditor.

6.3 Post audit

6.31 Auditor submits Audit Report and receives payment

- The Auditor submits the required audit data to SEAI and requests payment
- SEAI reviews the submission and issues the payment to the Auditor, provided that the submission meets SSEA requirements. Where the Auditor has advised that the audit will cost more than the value of the Voucher the Applicant will be invoiced for the additional cost by the Auditor
Appendix A – Steps to Application

1. Contact details
- Register with an email address and a password
  - For “User Type” select “Non-domestic”
- Provide Applicant contact information
- Confirm your email address

2. Applicant details
When you have confirmed your email address you will be taken to the Business/Public Body details page where you will provide more information about Applicant organisation.
Applicants need to provide the Applicant Details listed below, so please ensure you have what you need to hand when applying:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information requested</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company Registration Number or Public Body number</td>
<td>Must be a valid number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax Clearance Access Number and VAT ID</td>
<td>Enterprises who cannot prove tax compliance are not eligible for support under this Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company headcount (for private sector companies)</td>
<td>Must have a headcount of fewer than 250 to be eligible for Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance sheet/turnover (for private sector companies)</td>
<td>Must have a balance sheet of less than €43M/turnover less than €50M to be eligible for the Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy spend and useful floor area (for public sector bodies)</td>
<td>Confirm useful floor area is less than 500m² and energy spend is less than €35,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector &amp; sub sector</td>
<td>Select from drop down list. All sectors are eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Minimis declaration</td>
<td>The Support Scheme for Energy Audits is operated under de minimis state aid, so applicants must declare that they have not exceeded the de minimis threshold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your business have more than 3 separate facilities?</td>
<td>If your organisation has more than 3 facilities (including chains and franchises) then we ask that you contact SEAI before applying so that we can develop a bespoke auditing program for you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant declarations</td>
<td>Declare that the company meets current Tax Compliance regulations and that the information provided is correct</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have provided the Applicant details, click Submit.

⚠️ Please note that once you have made the declarations and submitted the information you cannot amend it, so please check all fields before submitting.

3. Application
The final step is to apply for the voucher.

- Click on the Home button at the top right hand of the screen:

  ![Home Button](image)

- Click “Create new Application”:

  ![Create new Application Button](image)
Applicants will need to provide the information below about the Location/Facility where the audit will take place:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information requested</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location Name</td>
<td>The name of Facility at which the audit will take place, e.g. the name of the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location MPRN</td>
<td>Only one voucher issued per MPRN. You can find it on your electricity bill. Must be a valid number. Click the validate button to autocomplete the Location Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Address, inc. Eircode</td>
<td>Autocompletes from MPRN, you may have to complete some of the fields manually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location Contact details</td>
<td>The person who will be contacted by the Energy Auditor to arrange and prepare for the site visit. The Location Contact can be the same person as the Company Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy spend per annum</td>
<td>Sites must be spending at least €10,000 pa on energy to be eligible for the Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditing Company and Auditor</td>
<td>Contact before applying, then select from drop down list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant declarations</td>
<td>Statement that the information provided is complete and true; that you have agreed to the Terms &amp; Conditions and that you accept the Privacy Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Audit process

1. Preparation
Before the site visit the Applicant should prepare by getting the following documents ready:

- 12 months’ worth of energy bills
  - Include electricity, gas and any other fuels used at the Facility e.g., heating oil
  - This is easy if you have online billing, otherwise it may be helpful to contact your business accountant for the information
  - If you have a company fleet, then include as much information as possible about your mileage and what you spend on petrol and/or diesel in a 12-month period
- Optional: a list of the Facility’s assets/energy-using equipment,
- Optional: a plan of the site will be helpful for large or complex facilities
- Optional: a copy of any previous energy audits or assessments, if applicable

2. Site visit

- The site visit will typically last between 0.5 days to 2 days, depending on the size and complexity of the Facility.
- The Applicant must ensure that a member of staff will be available on the day of the audit to participate in the site tour
  - This staff member should be a facilities manager, senior manager/owner, or someone otherwise familiar with the Facility’s energy use and able to answer basic questions about the Facility, e.g., the number of people onsite, where heating and cooling takes place, the processes that occur onsite, the occupancy hours, and knowledge of any existing energy management practices.
- The Auditor will need access to most areas of the Facility, particularly those areas where significant amounts of energy are used, e.g., kitchens, manufacturing areas, heaters/boilers, refrigerated areas, plant rooms, etc. The staff member participating in the site tour should be able to provide access to all of these areas.

3. Reporting
The Auditor will issue the Applicant with an electronic copy of your Audit Report within 10 working days of the site visit, along with a Completion of Works form. If the Applicant is satisfied with the Energy Audit and the report, he/she must sign the form to declare same. The signee must be a Director or Senior Manager from the business.

If the Applicant has any concerns about the content or the quality of the report, they should use this opportunity to raise these concerns with SEAI. Once the Completion of Works form has been signed by the Auditor and the Applicant, and if SEAI is also satisfied with the quality of the report, payment will be made to the Auditor.
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SEAI is Ireland’s national energy authority investing in, and delivering, appropriate, effective and sustainable solutions to help Ireland’s transition to a clean energy future. We work with the public, businesses, communities and the Government to achieve this, through expertise, funding, educational programmes, policy advice, research and the development of new technologies.

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