

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. 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 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.

1.3 Timelines

The SSEA opened for applications in summer 2021 and will remain open continually, subject to annual budget caps. 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:

- SEAI Application portal (accessed by Applicant and Auditor via separate log ins): <https://mgen.seai.ie/>

Templates:

- SSEA Energy Audit Report Template

SSEA: Guidance for Applicants

- SSEA Energy Audit Data Excel template

Rules & Guidance:

- SSEA: Guidance for Applicants (this document)
- SSEA: Guidance for Auditors
- Energy Audit Handbook, available at: <https://www.seai.ie/publications/SEAI-Energy-Audit-Handbook.pdf>
- 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

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 (excluding transport energy).. Note the following:

- There is a limit of 1 audit voucher per Applicant or Business
- The €10,000 threshold includes all costs in relation to electricity and heating. Transport fuels are excluded from the total energy cost threshold
Auditor must verify that the Applicant meets the energy spend threshold of €10,000 per annum (excluding transport costs) through utility bills (estimates not permitted)

The following exclusions apply:

- Premises where the building is derelict, unoccupied or due to be demolished or re-purposed are not eligible.
- Applicants or Companies who have already had an audit carried out under the SSEA are not permitted to apply for another voucher

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. 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 SEA. 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.

Cost	Included under SSEA?
• Preparation & planning for Energy Audit	✓
• Analysis of your energy bills	✓
• Site visit and associated costs ²	✓
• Advice on the actions you should take to improve energy efficiency	✓
• Preparation and issuing of the Energy Audit report in the required template	✓
• Submission of report and audit data to SEAI	✓
• Assessment of activities occurring offsite	✗

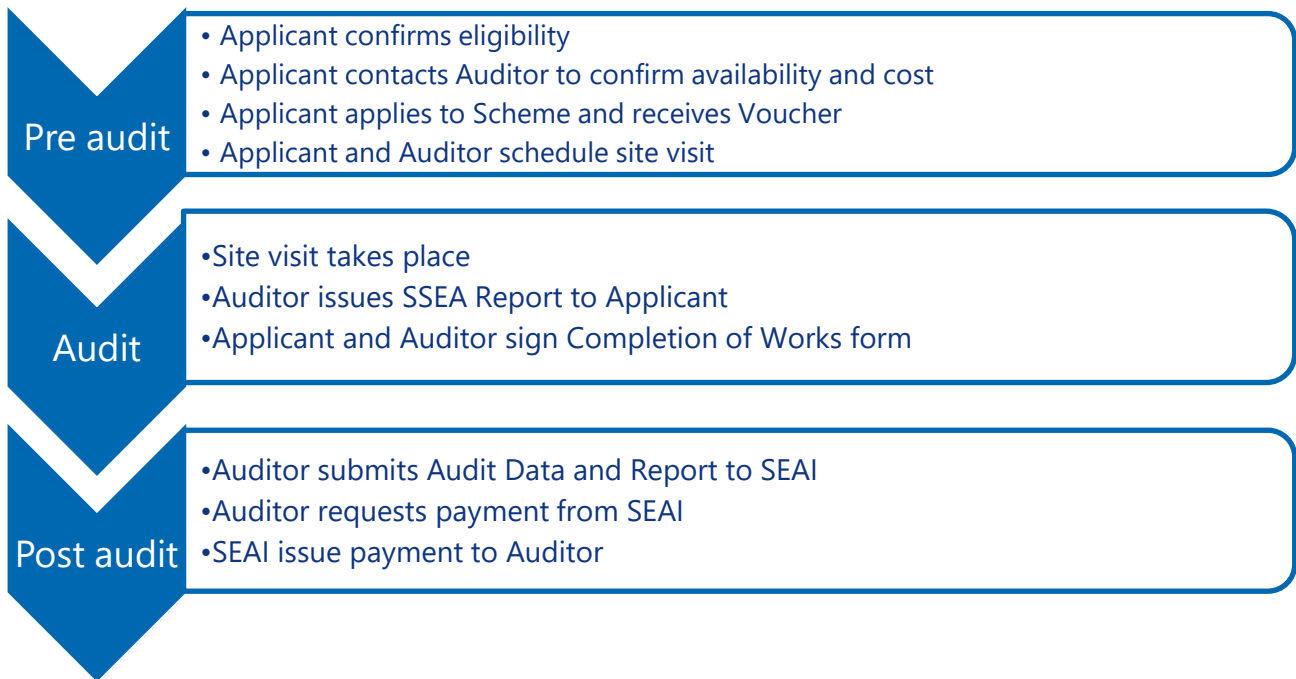
Table 1 Eligible and non-eligible costs

¹ <https://www.seai.ie/publications/SEAI-Energy-Audit-Handbook.pdf>

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:



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:

1. Your business or organisation is not an obligated entity
2. You are spending at least €10,000 per annum on energy (excluding transport costs) at the Facility
3. Your business or organisation is tax compliant, registered in the Republic of Ireland and has a valid CRO number
4. You will not exceed the De Minimis State Aid* threshold upon receipt of the voucher
5. There is a limit of 1 audit voucher per Applicant organisation

* 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

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.
- Visits 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.
- If the Auditor does not produce the report within the 10 working days from completing the site visit, you can contact SEAI @ SMEgrants@seai.ie to request a follow up.
- 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.

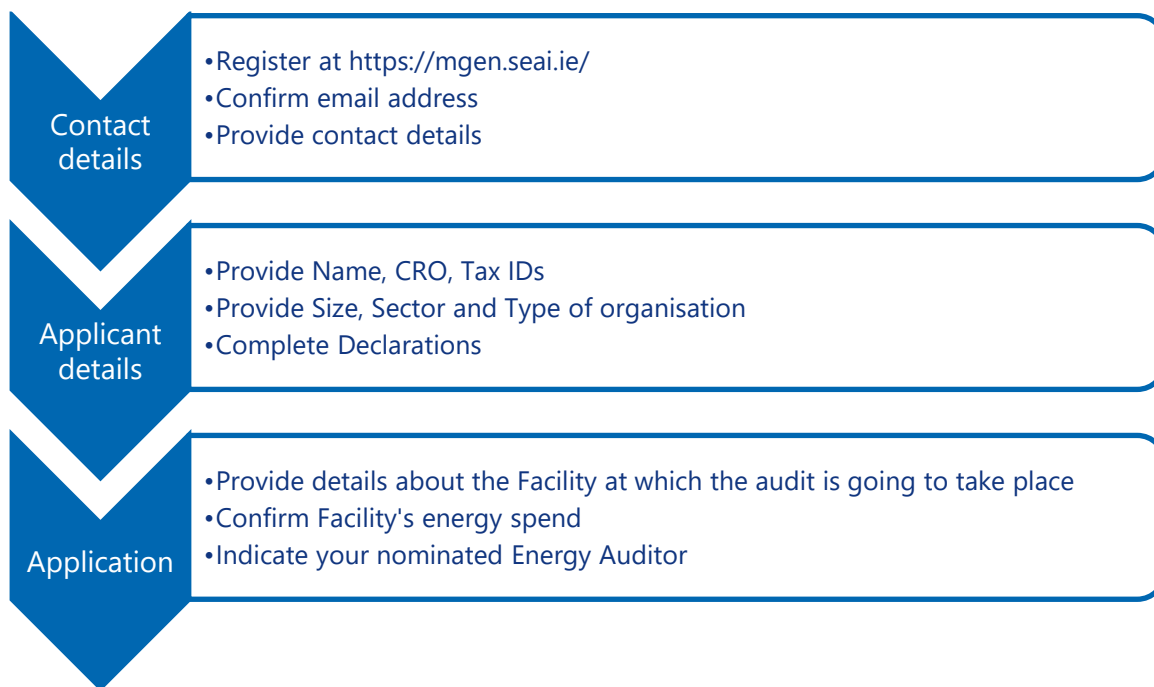
6.3 Post audit

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

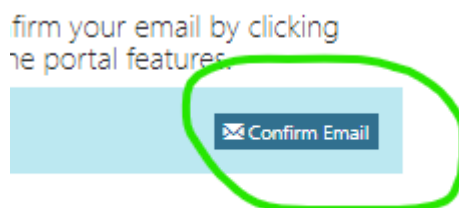
Appendix A – Steps to Application

Below is the 3-step process to applying for the SSEA. Please read this section carefully



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:

Information requested	Comments
Company Registration Number or Public Body number	Must be a valid number

Tax Clearance Access Number and VAT ID* Enterprises who cannot prove tax compliance are not eligible for support under this Scheme

*SME's who are not registered for VAT can apply by inputting 1234567A in the VAT ID section of the application form.

Company headcount (for private sector companies) Must have a headcount of fewer than 250 to be eligible for Scheme

Balance sheet/turnover (for private sector companies) Must have a balance sheet of less than €43M/turnover less than €50M to be eligible for the Scheme

Energy spend and useful floor area (for public sector bodies) Confirm useful floor area is less than 500m² and energy spend is less than €35,000 per annum

Sector & sub sector Select from drop down list. All sectors are eligible.

De Minimis declaration 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.

Applicant declarations Declare that the company meets current Tax Compliance regulations and that the information provided is correct



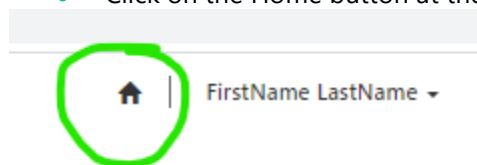
Once you have provided the Applicant details, click .

- Please note that once you have made the declarations and saved the information you cannot amend it, so please check all fields before saving.

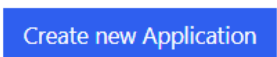
3. Application

The final step is to apply for the voucher.

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



- Click "Create new Application":



Applicants will need to provide the information below about the Location/Facility where the audit will take place:

Information requested	Comments
Location Name	The name of Facility at which the audit will take place, e.g. the name of the business

Location MPRN	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
Site Address, inc. Eircode	Autocompletes from MPRN, you may have to complete some of the fields manually
Location Contact details	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.
Energy spend per annum	Sites must be spending at least €10,000 pa on energy to be eligible for the Scheme
Auditing Company and Auditor	Contact before applying, then select from drop down list
Applicant declarations	Statement that the information provided is complete and true; that you have agreed to the Terms & Conditions and that you accept the Privacy Policy

Once you have completed the application details, click [Submit](#)

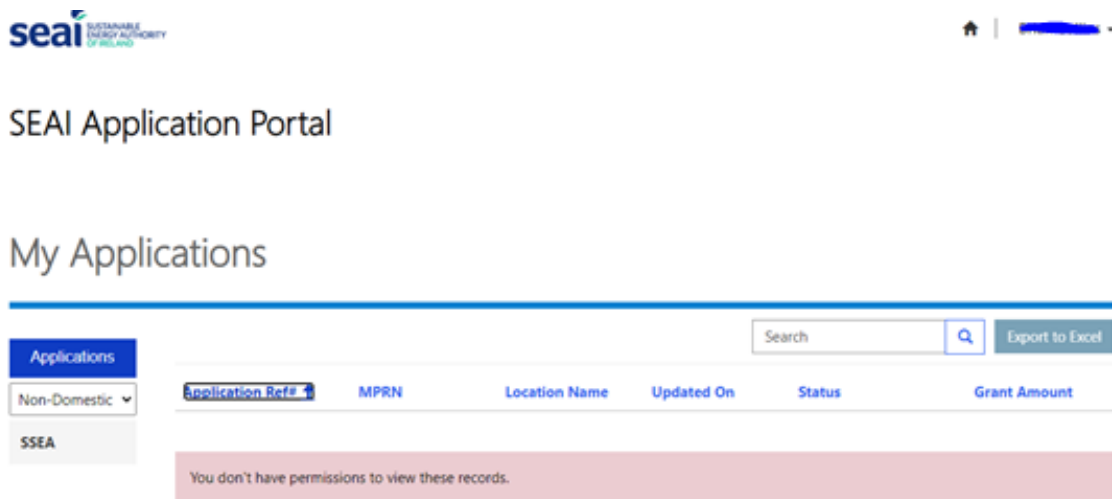
4. FAQ's when applying

1. I've submitted my details, but the portal is showing the message **"You don't have permission to view these records"**

That usually means that a part of the registration has not been completed and the system won't let you make an application until its complete.

If you click on **your name** in the top right-hand corner, in the dropdown select **'Profile'**. When you click profile, it will show you what is missing. The most common mistakes to check for are

- a. Have you clicked the confirm email box and confirmed your email in your inbox?
- b. Have you selected save?
- c. Is the email address you registered with the same one you've used to register? These need to be the same
- d. In some instances, using Apple Safari may also interfere with applying. If possible, please use alternative web browser such as Chrome

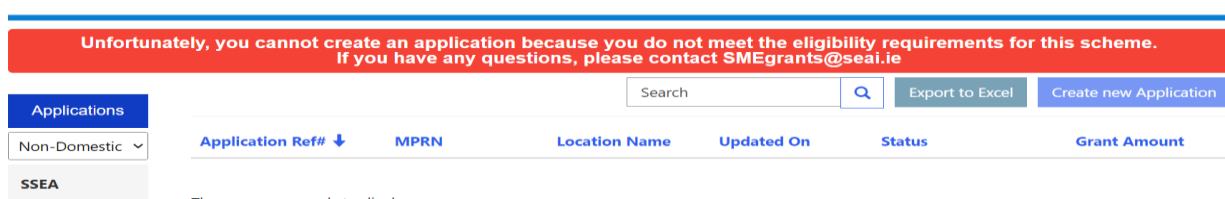


2. When I applied, I received a message saying **'Unfortunately, you cannot create an application because you do not meet the eligibility criteria requirements of the scheme'**

There are two reasons for this:

1. If you have entered your details correctly then you have not met the criteria for this scheme.
2. If you have made a mistake on your form, you can email SMEgrants@seai.ie to request the amendment.

Company/Applicant – Dashboard



3. I have used the wrong MPRN.

SEAI cannot amend the MPRN on your behalf. If you have entered the wrong MPRN, you will need to cancel that application and make a new one on the portal.

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
- 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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