



Frequently Asked Questions



This project has received funding from the European Union's Single Market Programme (SMP) under grant agreement No. 101143477, and is being executed in direct cooperation with the Enterprise Europe Network

1 . Application & Selection.....	4
Q: How will the merits of my application be considered during the selection process?	4
Q: I would like to participate in the EENergy open call but cannot commit to the deadline. What other options do I have?	4
Q: How many application rounds are foreseen, or is it a continuous call with cut offs?.....	4
Q: Why should I apply for the call if the selection of the beneficiaries will be performed randomly?.	4
Q: Am I still required to provide data about my energy consumption even if I am not selected for a grant?.....	4
Q: What does the “eligibility check” entail? Will the action plan be assessed by an evaluator or only by the clients’ EEN advisor at the beginning of the application process?	4
Q: What are the selection criteria for being funded or not?.....	4
Q: What are the criteria for energy intensive industries?.....	5
Q: How long does the energy efficiency assessment and action plan process with the EEN advisor take?.....	5
Q: What happens if you have more than 1800 companies applying before the call closure, will you close the call earlier?	5
Q: Can Sustainability Advisors submit applications on behalf of their clients?.....	5
Q: Who will communicate the result to the SME? Will the advisor be informed in advance?	5
Q: When will I receive the €10.000 funding?.....	5
Q: If the SME is working with multiple EEN advisors, can they also provide other EEN advisors details in the application?.....	5
Q: Are EEN consortium partners eligible to apply for the call?	5
Q: Can you provide details regarding the contracting and sub-grant agreement for funded beneficiaries?	6
2 . Use of Funds	6
Q: Can I combine multiple categories of funding in a single EENergy activity?	6
Q: I would like to implement an activity which will cost more than the maximum grant of €10,000. Can I use the funds from EENergy to contribute to this activity?	6
Q: I have received funding from another public program to implement the same measures planned under my EENergy application. Can I combine these funds to execute the project?.....	6
Q: How long is the period of implementation if the company is selected for funding?	6
Q: Will clients have to provide proof of the use of funding resources (i.e. financial reporting) or can it be considered as lump sum funding without any required financial reporting.....	6
Q: If a company applies for more than €10,000 is the application automatically discarded?.....	7
Q: Can ESG-related activities (the assessment of the impact of companies on the environment, society, and corporate governance) be funded?	7
Q: Is green coding an eligible activity to be funded?.....	7
Q: Must a company select a solution from the energy efficiency catalogue or are they free to define any other appropriate energy efficiency activity?	7

Q: Does the activity invoice have to be dated after the call opening date or can it also have occurred earlier? 7

Q: What are the eligibility requirements to invest in infrastructure, such as walls, doors, windows, roofs, etc, must the company have ownership of the infrastructure or is a long-term rent agreement that is registered in land registry sufficient? 7

Q: When can the company start implementing its action plan and execute the project? 7

Q: Which types of devices or machinery are eligible for funding under the program?..... 8

Q: For indirect activities such as consultancy, audits, or training, when does the company have to present the outcomes?..... 8

Q: In the case of a solar panel installation where surplus production is resold to an energy supplier, the purchaser of the surplus may be a public body. Is it still possible to apply for EENergy, or would this contradict the double-funding rules?..... 8

Q: A customer wants to replace a high-consumption furnace on its production line with a new model. Is this an eligible investment?..... 8

Q: If an SME requests a grant for training, can members of the management (even if they are considered corporately self-employed) also receive the training, or only general staff?..... 8

3 . Energy Reduction Target..... 9

Q: What happens if the 5% energy reduction is not reached during the implementation period? 9

Q: I have an action plan for a 5% energy reduction, but I do not have the data available in units of kWh. How can I demonstrate the achievement of the 5% reduction target?..... 9

Q: How can I prove the 5% energy reduction if the expected impacts of my activities will only be realised in a longer timeline than the project duration? 9

Q: I plan to use the EENergy funds to perform an energy audit, but this will not directly result in a 5% energy reduction. How can I fulfil the target? 9

Q: What if a company is undergoing a production expansion and energy consumption rises anyways, regardless of increased efficiency? 9

Q: What if a warm spring session leads to a decreasing amount of heating energy larger than 5% during the project period?..... 9

Q: Is the 5% reduction meant for the entire company or can it also be on a single unit level (e.g. a department within the firm, a specific production line or a piece of equipment)?..... 9

Q: I have received a couple of questions, whether the grant could be used to replace oil heating to air heat pump. To me this sounds a sensible project, moving towards using renewable energy, but does not really result in reduction of electricity consumption (kWh)? What should I reply to the companies? 10

Q: We would like to apply for an investment to install solar panels for producing our own electricity, but this will not result in an energy consumption reduction in itself. Is this still eligible? 10

Q: We would like to invest in an upgrade to one of our production lines, but have no direct measurements for the production line itself, nor any bills specifically for that production line. How can we prove the 5% energy reduction in such a case?..... 10

4 . Data Collection and Benchmarks..... 10

Q: Could you please specify which data will be collected from the companies? 10

Q: As SMEs we have access to EEN services regardless. What is the added value for us if we do not receive the funding? What will motivate us to report our data three more times during the project? 10

Q: Must energy bills be uploaded in English? 11

Q: What happens if a company that does not receive the grant does not provide data for the benchmarking reports? 11

Q: Are gas, oil, electricity and solid fuels the only sources of energy accounted for / analysed?..... 11

Q: Will we have access to the benchmark reports even if we do not apply to the programme? 11

5 . General Questions..... 11

Q: What does the 2% target (of all SME in EU) practically mean? Is this the number of SMEs to be contacted by the EEN in the frame of that project? 11

Q: What if the 2% minimum number of SME applications isn't reached? 11

Q: What is the maximum amount of grants that can be provided to a single country?..... 12

Q: If a grant of less than €10,000 is requested, is the rest of the budget available for other SMEs, and could more than 900 SMEs get financial support? 12

Q: Are self-employed people eligible? 12

Q: Is aid compatible for SMEs that belong to a group or holding company? 12

Q: Are SMEs based in Switzerland eligible to participate in the EENergy open call?..... 12

Q: Are SMEs based in the United Kingdom eligible to participate in the EENergy open call? 12

6 . EEN-related Questions 12

Q: My company is located in a country without an existing EEN node or without an EEN sustainability advisor. How can I participate in the call? 12

Q: I have been unable to contact my local EEN sustainability advisor. Can I still apply? 12

Q: My local EEN sustainability advisor is being unresponsive and not supporting me on the definition of my action plan. What can I do?..... 12

Q: Is there more information available regarding the process of the mandatory assessment performed by the EEN sustainability advisors? 13

Q: I am interested in accessing EEN services but do not wish to apply to EENergy. What options do I have?..... 13

Q: Can EEN Advisors other than sustainability advisors support applications of interested companies? 13

Q: How should EEN report the services and action plan in Community? 13

Q: What are the requirements for the Action Plan; is there a template? 13

Q: Can previously carried out sustainability assessments and action plans be considered for EENergy? 13

Q: Does the Hub & Spoke model apply as usual for reporting achievements? E.g. to whom is achievement attributed in case a client is referred by an EEN expert from one organization and receives shared services by a Sustainability advisor from another organization? 13

Q: Can a company from my region be supported from a Sustainability Advisor coming from another region, but who is still part of my consortium?..... 13

Q: Where can I find the action plan assessment tool for sustainability advisors? 14

1. Application & Selection

Q: How will the merits of my application be considered during the selection process?

The selection process is fully randomised accounting only for the geographical and industrial requirements set out in the guideline for applicants. That means no preference will be given to companies performing activities, which may be objectively considered as “better,” e.g., those companies expecting a greater energy reduction will not be treated preferentially.

Q: I would like to participate in the EENergy open call but cannot commit to the deadline. What other options do I have?

Only one single call is planned for EENergy and the deadline on the 15th April is fixed. The application process is designed to be as quick and straightforward as possible, so the EENergy team encourages you to engage with your local EEN advisor and move ahead with application submission by the deadline, even if time is tight.

Q: How many application rounds are foreseen, or is it a continuous call with cut offs?

One application round is planned with a single deadline at 17:00 CET on the 15th of April 2024.

Q: Why should I apply for the call if the selection of the beneficiaries will be performed randomly?

The main value of EENergy is the structural support framework offered to SMEs to improve their energy efficiency. Regardless of the outcome of the selection process, SMEs will receive a tailored action plan as well as continued support from their EEN advisor to find complementary methods of realising this action plan. In addition, all applicants will have access to regular benchmarking reports allowing them to track their Energy Efficiency performance over time, and in comparison, with other SMEs in their region, industry, and size range. In any case, a success rate of ~50% is expected, which is higher than many alternative funding programmes.

Q: Am I still required to provide data about my energy consumption even if I am not selected for a grant?

Yes, SMEs not selected for grants are considered regular beneficiaries of the call as they will continue to receive EEN advisory services and benchmarking reports. A prerequisite to access these benefits is the provision of the energy data during the reporting periods in January 2025, June 2025, and January 2026. Furthermore, any SME who applies to the programme commits to a declaration of honour as part of the application form which confirms their SME's commitment to provide data during each of these reporting periods.

Q: What does the “eligibility check” entail? Will the action plan be assessed by an evaluator or only by the clients’ EEN advisor at the beginning of the application process?

During the eligibility check, the EENergy consortium will ensure that the applicant fulfils all the eligibility criteria, in terms of the SME criteria, its location, its start date of operation, and its cooperation with the EEN. The EEN advisor is primarily responsible for ensuring that the developed action plan is suitable for the requirements of the call.

Q: What are the selection criteria for being funded or not?

In addition to the eligibility criteria for an SME to apply to the programme, the only targets considered as part of the application process are that applications include a minimum 2% representation from each SMP country, and at least 20% of SMEs will be active in energy intensive industries. Given these conditions, all eligible applicants will be treated equally in the random selection process.

Q: Where can I find the EEN sustainability advisor?

EEN services are available to all SMEs located in member states associated to EUs Single market programme. You can find the nearest EEN office via this link: <https://een.ec.europa.eu/local-contact-points>

Q: What are the criteria for energy intensive industries?

A company is considered energy intensive if it is operating in one of the industries specified in the corresponding question on the application form. These industries are defined according to the European Commission's *ERA Roadmap Industrial Technology Roadmap for low-carbon technologies in energy-intensive industries*.

Q: How long does the energy efficiency assessment and action plan process with the EEN advisor take?

The duration of the overall process will vary depending on several factors, for example, the complexity of the company's energy behaviour, the experience of the advisor, and the level of existing engagement between the company and the advisor. In general, between 2 and 8 hours of work could be expected to complete these steps.

Q: What happens if you have more than 1800 companies applying before the call closure, will you close the call earlier?

No. The call will remain open until April 15th 2024, irrespective of the number of applications.

Q: Can Sustainability Advisors submit applications on behalf of their clients?

No, the application form must be completed and submitted by the SMEs themselves. This is important as the SMEs must complete the consent- and declaration sections to be eligible for the program.

Q: Who will communicate the result to the SME? Will the advisor be informed in advance?

Both the SME and the advisor will be informed via email once the selection process has been completed.

Q: When will I receive the €10.000 funding?

The funding is provided on a cost reimbursement basis. Once the activities have been implemented, the client must report their expenditures and new energy data to the consortium, which will be used as a basis for validating and approving the grant payment. This can be done in one of the two reporting periods - in January 2025 or July 2025.

Q: If the SME is working with multiple EEN advisors, can they also provide other EEN advisors details in the application?

Applicants can only provide one EEN advisor name and email address in their application. This should correspond to the sustainability advisor who has been the main contact point and who has formulated the action plan. The same advisor must also upload the action plan within the internal reporting tool of the EEN - EEN Connect.

Q: Are EEN consortium partners eligible to apply for the call?

No, as this constitutes a conflict of interest between the applicant and the sustainability advisors.

Q: If the space where the activity is to be implemented is rented, is this still eligible?

Yes, it is still eligible, however the renter should ensure that they have the appropriate permissions/rights to implement the activity even if they are not owning the property. Furthermore, the renter should ensure there is a minimal risk that they will not be relocating during the period of the activity to avoid reporting complications.

Q: Can you provide details regarding the contracting and sub-grant agreement for funded beneficiaries?

Funded beneficiaries will enter into a sub-grant agreement with the EENergy consortium. A template sub-grant agreement will be made available shortly. The signatures and contracting will be processed through the EENergy grant platform.

Q: The application form asks for the establishment's approximate value of total machinery equipment for production and asks for either the current value or replacement value in Euros. Since "current value" could imply market value, and "replacement value," the cost to replace the equipment with new versions, these figures can differ significantly. What should we do in this instance?

When providing a response to this question as part of the application, the replacement value should be the approximate value to replace the piece of machinery with a pre-used alternative. The replacement value should not be considered the value of replacing the piece of machinery with a completely new alternative.

2. Use of Funds

Q: Can I combine multiple categories of funding in a single EENergy activity?

Yes, combinations of activities within the three categories (Investment, Consulting, and Training & Skills) are possible. However, all activities should be related to an overall action plan which lays out the goal to reach 5% energy reduction through these actions.

Q: I would like to implement an activity which will cost more than the maximum grant of €10,000. Can I use the funds from EENergy to contribute to this activity?

A contribution of the EENergy funds to a larger activity or investment is allowed, as long as the remaining funds for this activity come from private sources, e.g., a company's own capital, a private investment, or a loan from a private bank. During the reporting of the activity, you will be required to demonstrate the use of the EENergy funds and, in the case of a larger investment, to also provide evidence that the remaining funds did not originate from public sources.

Q: I have received funding from another public program to implement the same measures planned under my EENergy application. Can I combine these funds to execute the project?

No, the activities described in your application can only be funded from a single public funding source, and you cannot combine EENergy funds with any other public source of funds.

Q: How long is the period of implementation if the company is selected for funding?

There are no upper or lower limits for the implementation period. The action plan definition should also specify the duration of the activity. An estimation of the duration must be provided at the time of the application. Beneficiaries performing activities, which extend beyond the 30th June 2025 will be required to complete and sign a declaration of honour in order to receive the grant payment.

Q: Will clients have to provide proof of the use of funding resources (i.e. financial reporting) or can it be considered as lump sum funding without any required financial reporting.

EENergy funds are not provided as a lump sum, but on a cost-reimbursement basis against actual costs. Beneficiaries must provide evidence of expenditure (e.g., invoices) as well as the relevant energy data in order to be reimbursed. Auditing of beneficiaries will take place during the project to ensure proper and accurate reporting.

Q: If a company applies for more than €10,000 is the application automatically discarded?

No. Companies can define action plans with larger budgets to which EENergy will contribute, however a maximum of €10.000 will be paid in all cases. In this instance, beneficiaries must ensure that they have access to the additional funds required for implementing the action plans, and that these funds are not considered double funding as described in the Guideline for Applicants.

Q: Can ESG-related activities (the assessment of the impact of companies on the environment, society, and corporate governance) be funded?

ESG-related activities are not excluded per se, however there must be a clear connection between performing these activities and the achievement of the 5% energy efficiency improvement. Simple ESG assessments, which do not lead to any changes are not eligible.

Q: Is green coding an eligible activity to be funded?

Green coding is not excluded per se, however there must be a clear connection between this and the achievement of the 5% energy efficiency improvement. Furthermore, such an activity must be carried out by an external service provider since the funds cannot be used for staff costs.

Q: Can I use EENergy funds to cover staff costs associated with the installation of a piece of equipment funded under the investment category?

No, internal staff costs are not eligible.

Q: Must a company select a solution from the energy efficiency catalogue or are they free to define any other appropriate energy efficiency activity?

The energy efficiency catalogue serves as a guideline and resource for applicants and advisors to help identify possible measures to be implemented, but its use is not mandatory. Any activity which falls under the three defined categories of investment, consulting or skills and training, and can result in the 5% improvement is eligible.

Q: Does the activity invoice have to be dated after the call opening date or can it also have occurred earlier?

Action plan implementation and the expenditures associated with this may not begin until the sub-grant agreement between the beneficiary and the EENergy consortium has been signed. Any expenditures before this date will be ineligible and cannot be reimbursed.

Q: What are the eligibility requirements to invest in infrastructure, such as walls, doors, windows, roofs, etc, must the company have ownership of the infrastructure or is a long-term rent agreement that is registered in land registry sufficient?

Companies must have the legal right to perform these activities. For example, if the company wishes to invest in an improvement to a building that they do not own, but which is part of their premises, they must ensure that they are able to do this and that this action is not for example prohibited by their rental or lease agreement.

Q: When can the company start implementing its action plan and execute the project?

Funded beneficiaries receiving the grant may only start their activities following the signature of the sub-grant agreement with the EENergy consortium. Regular beneficiaries not receiving the grant may start implementing their action plan as soon as they receive the results of the selection process.

Q: Which types of devices or machinery are eligible for funding under the program?

Any type of device or machinery, which results in an energy efficiency improvement of 5% is eligible for funding.

Q: For indirect activities such as consultancy, audits, or training, when does the company have to present the outcomes?

In these cases, companies must present the expected outcomes of the performed activities and explain how these outcomes will be implemented in the future to arrive at the 5% energy reduction target – this will likely occur after the initial training or consultancy has been performed, once the learnings of said service have been implemented. This should be considered when estimating the duration of the action plan.

Q: In the case of a solar panel installation where surplus production is resold to an energy supplier, the purchaser of the surplus may be a public body. Is it still possible to apply for EENergy, or would this contradict the double-funding rules?

The double funding rules concern the financing of the action, in this case the purchase and installation of the panels. If they are not financed by any other public financial support, then they are eligible. The surplus production and reselling are not part of the action plan but rather an operational consequence of the investment, and hence will not normally contradict the double-funding rules.

Q: A customer wants to replace a high-consumption furnace on its production line with a new model. Is this an eligible investment?

Yes, it is eligible if it saves at least 5 % of energy.

Q: If an SME requests a grant for training, can members of the management (even if they are considered corporately self-employed) also receive the training, or only general staff?

Any representative of the company or staff member is eligible for receiving training, as long as they have a legal relationship with the company (e.g., as an employee, owner, management etc.), and as long as the measure is designed to target the 5% energy reduction.

Q: Our local currency is not in Euros. What do I need to pay attention to when planning my use of funds and providing the data for the data collection?

All monetary data provided within the application is requested in Euros (€). In order to convert local currency into Euros, SMEs should use the following link: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/procedures-guidelines-tenders/information-contractors-and-beneficiaries/exchange-rate-inforeuro_en. When providing company-related information for data collection (e.g., revenue, cost of materials etc.), clients should use the exchange rate on the first day of the reporting period (this will be specified in the application form and the follow up surveys). When calculating costs related to the EENergy activities, companies should use the exchange rate on the date of the payment of the invoice.

Q: Can the EENergy grant be combined with financing from state backed financial institutions, for example loans with a funding component (the overall interest rate is lower than the one the market offers), or those granted by De-Minimis regulation or by the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)?

The EENergy funding cannot be combined with other public **grants**. The differentiating factor here refers to the nature of the financing, i.e., if the funds are repayable or not. If the financing takes the form of a loan which must be paid back, this is not considered double funding.

3. Energy Reduction Target

Q: What happens if the 5% energy reduction is not reached during the implementation period?

Applicants funded by EENergy must achieve a 5% energy reduction. If this cannot be achieved by 30th June 2025, funded beneficiaries must complete and sign a declaration of honour committing to achieving this reduction in the future, along with a rationale and explanation of how this target will be reached.

Q: I have an action plan for a 5% energy reduction, but I do not have the data available in units of kWh. How can I demonstrate the achievement of the 5% reduction target?

It is the responsibility of the SMEs to convert any relevant data into the required kWh unit. Applicants must make it clear if the source data is not in kWh and provide the methodology used for converting the source data into kWh units.

Q: How can I prove the 5% energy reduction if the expected impacts of my activities will only be realised in a longer timeline than the project duration?

It is recognised that some funded activities will not result in an immediate 5% reduction but may only have an impact on a longer term. In this instance, the company must complete and sign a declaration of honour committing to achieving this reduction of 5% in the future, along with a rationale and explanation of how this target will be reached.

Q: I plan to use the EENergy funds to perform an energy audit, but this will not directly result in a 5% energy reduction. How can I fulfil the target?

For indirect activities such as consultancy, audits, or training, you must present the outcomes of the performed activities and explain how these outcomes will be implemented in the future to arrive at the 5% energy reduction target.

Q: What if a company is undergoing a production expansion and energy consumption rises anyways, regardless of increased efficiency?

Beneficiaries are required to provide company-level data at the application stage, and at three further reporting stages in January 2025, July 2025, and January 2026. This data will indicate company-wide changes to production or consumption which can be used to scale the reported values if necessary.

Q: What if a warm spring session leads to a decreasing amount of heating energy larger than 5% during the project period?

The company-level data will be considered together with the raw consumption data in order to account for external factors.

Q: Is the 5% reduction meant for the entire company or can it also be on a single unit level (e.g. a department within the firm, a specific production line or a piece of equipment)?

The applicant and the advisor must define the unit level of measurement as part of the action plan. This will define the reference point for the 5% measurement.

Q: I have received a couple of questions, whether the grant could be used to replace oil heating to air heat pump. To me this sounds a sensible project, moving towards using renewable energy, but does not really result in reduction of electricity consumption (kWh)? What should I reply to the companies?

While EENergy encourages companies to become greener in their choice of energy source, simply changing from one type of energy source to another is not sufficient to be considered an eligible activity. The energy reduction element must be covered and the 5% target will be the aspect which defines the eligibility of the activity.

Q: We would like to apply for an investment to install solar panels for producing our own electricity, but this will not result in an energy consumption reduction in itself. Is this still eligible?

A 5% energy reduction in some form or context is a requirement of all activities. Since a goal of EENergy is to reduce energy dependence of SMEs, such an activity would be considered eligible if this results in, for example, a 5% reduction of energy consumption from the energy grid, with this energy being generated by the new solar panels instead.

Q: We would like to invest in an upgrade to one of our production lines, but have no direct measurements for the production line itself, nor any bills specifically for that production line. How can we prove the 5% energy reduction in such a case?

In cases where no direct energy measurements or bills are available in relation to the activity scope, it is the responsibility of the beneficiary to define a methodology and approach for calculating the energy reduction arising from the activity. This could be based on, for example, manufacturer's data, or through indirect measurements linked to operational records. Due to the large variety of activities to be funded, EENergy cannot provide a single standard methodology for this. However, as long as the methodology, rationale, and data presented for this energy reduction calculation is transparent and reasonable, it will be considered for reporting purposes. In cases of doubt, EENergy will work with beneficiaries to find a solution.

4. Data Collection and Benchmarks

Q: Could you please specify which data will be collected from the companies?

The regular data collection for all beneficiaries will cover basic, company level information on their energy consumption as well as some general business metrics. This data is specified in the Application Form sections "Company Background Information" and "Background on Main Investment Site" which forms the first set of data to be collected. Very similar data will be collected in the three reporting periods in January 2025, July 2025, and January 2026.

Q: As SMEs we have access to EEN services regardless. What is the added value for us if we do not receive the funding? What will motivate us to report our data three more times during the project?

By applying to the EENergy open call you are committing to providing your data at the described reporting periods. Providing data in each of these periods will grant you access to a tailored energy efficiency benchmark report, which will inform you about your energy efficiency performance in comparison with other SMEs from your region, country, industry, and those of a similar size. This will allow you to identify further areas for energy efficiency improvement and monitor the progress of your company.

Q: Must energy bills be uploaded in English?

No, this is not necessary. You may upload bills in your regional language / the language you receive them in. The most important aspect is to ensure that the figures for consumption and costs are clearly readable.

Q: What happens if a company that does not receive the grant does not provide data for the benchmarking reports?

Companies must provide the relevant data and commit to sharing the requested data in the future to monitor progress, in order to be considered for selection. If a company does not provide the data, they will not receive the benchmark reports.

Q: Are gas, oil, electricity and solid fuels the only sources of energy accounted for / analysed?

Gas, oil, and electricity are the three energy sources considered for data gathering and benchmark reports, whereas the overall energy consumption of the company will also be considered (and hence will include other sources of energy like coal, biomass, and geothermal). Ultimately, across Europe there are many types of energy sources, and for the purpose of consistent data collection, we only request specific information for gas, oil, electricity and solid fuels. For the purpose of the 5% energy reduction evaluation, other energy sources may be considered if the applicant considers it relevant.

Q: Will we have access to the benchmark reports even if we do not apply to the programme?

No, companies must apply to the programme and provide the data at the application stage in order to access the first benchmark report. The following benchmark reports will be conditional on the company continuing to provide updated data in the corresponding reporting periods.

Q: Does the data that I provide as part of the application process or during subsequent reporting periods have to be accurate?

The data provided by an SME during the application form, or any future reporting period should be as accurate as possible. This data will be used to generate the previously mentioned benchmarking reports. This data will also be used to monitor the impact of the programme and will generate evidence to inform similar programmes in the future. Auditing of provided data will also be carried out to ensure accurate data is provided.

Q: My final accounts for 2023 have not yet been closed or finalised, how can I report accurate values for revenues, costs, and energy consumption for 2023 in this instance?

For the purposes of the data collection, values accurate to the cent are not required, hence preliminary values (e.g., from ongoing accounting activities) can be provided at this stage as long as they are a good indication of the actual figures.

5. General Questions

Q: What does the 2% target (of all SME in EU) practically mean? Is this the number of SMEs to be contacted by the EEN in the frame of that project?

As EENergy is funded by the EU's Single Market Programme, an equal geographical distribution across the SMP is desirable. In an ideal scenario, the applicant pool will reflect this 2% target. The selection process will therefore acknowledge geographical origin to ensure, if made possible by the number of eligible applications, a 2% distribution of grants.

Q: What if the 2% minimum number of SME applications isn't reached?

If certain countries do not fulfil the 2% requirement, the distribution of grants in this country will be proportionally restricted. The remaining budget will be awarded to eligible proposals from other regions during the randomized selection process.

Q: What is the maximum amount of grants that can be provided to a single country?

There is no fixed maximum number of grants per country as it depends on the number of applicants, the spread of the applications, and the requested budgets. The selection process will ensure the geographic distribution is as fair as possible.

Q: If a grant of less than €10,000 is requested, is the rest of the budget available for other SMEs, and could more than 900 SMEs get financial support?

Yes.

Q: Are self-employed people eligible?

Self-employed people may be eligible depending on the legal structure of their economically active entity. Applicants must fulfil all criteria set out by the [European Commission's SME definition](#). Single persons as legal entities are not eligible.

Q: Is aid compatible for SMEs that belong to a group or holding company?

Companies will only be eligible if they meet the SME requirement. In case the company belongs to a group or a holding, this must be considered when evaluating the SME criteria. The company must take the necessary steps to ensure that they are considered an SME according to these criteria, for example, by utilising the [self-assessment SME Questionnaire](#).

Q: Are SMEs based in Switzerland eligible to participate in the EENergy open call?

No, companies from Switzerland are not eligible to participate as they are not part of the SMP.

Q: Are SMEs based in the United Kingdom eligible to participate in the EENergy open call?

No, companies from the UK are not eligible to participate as they are not part of the SMP.

6. EEN-related Questions

Q: My company is located in a country without an existing EEN node or without an EEN sustainability advisor. How can I participate in the call?

Albania, Liechtenstein, and Moldova are part of the Single Market Programme, but do not currently have an operational EEN node. If you are from one of these countries, please get in touch with the EEN Sustainability Advisor in the closest geographical proximity to you, they will assist you with the next steps. You can find all offices via this link: <https://een.ec.europa.eu/local-contact-points>

Q: I have been unable to contact my local EEN sustainability advisor. Can I still apply?

No, cooperation with the local EEN sustainability advisor and the production of an action plan is a prerequisite for applying for this call. Please contact your local EEN contact point and request their support to engage with the local EEN sustainability advisor. If you have further trouble making contact, please write to the EENergy helpdesk.

Q: My local EEN sustainability advisor is being unresponsive and not supporting me on the definition of my action plan. What can I do?

Please contact the EENergy helpdesk with details of the issue and we will endeavour to resolve the situation.

Q: Is there more information available regarding the process of the mandatory assessment performed by the EEN sustainability advisors?

The toolset and methodology for the mandatory assessment is not publicly available. All EEN sustainability advisors have received detailed instructions and training on the process for conducting the mandatory assessment and formulating the action plan and can explain the approach during your cooperation.

Q: I am interested in accessing EEN services but do not wish to apply to EENergy. What options do I have?

EEN services are available to all SMEs where a regional network node is established. All offices can be identified at this link: <https://een.ec.europa.eu/local-contact-points>

Q: Can EEN Advisors other than sustainability advisors support applications of interested companies?

Other EEN advisors can also be involved in the process; however, the advisors need to be sure they deliver sustainability advice of sufficient quality. Therefore, we encourage support from the sustainability advisors as much as possible. Each EEN consortium can always choose to appoint more Sustainability advisors – Please contact the help desk if you need help in doing so.

Q: How should EEN report the services and action plan in Community?

The network advisor should report their work the same way as normal EEN advisory services, ensuring that the action plan is in line with the EENergy project goals, indicating the service as “sustainability service”. Content wise, the action plan should show how at least 5% energy efficiency/ savings will be addressed.

Q: What are the requirements for the Action Plan; is there a template?

There are no specific requirements for the action plan beyond the normal EEN requirements and the description of the actions leading to the energy efficiency improvement of at least 5%. For existing action plans or clients, a service tab may be added detailing the individual approach that shall lead to at least 5% energy efficiency/ savings.

Q: Can previously carried out sustainability assessments and action plans be considered for EENergy?

Yes, but the assessment and action plan should be updated and/or adapted to fit to the scope and budget of EENergy. The action plan uploaded in the internal reporting tool of the EEN – EEN Connect must specifically mention EENergy and fit to the requirements of the call.

Alternatively a service tab can be added detailing the individual approach that shall lead to at least 5% energy efficiency/ savings and the actions foreseen to be carried out if obtaining the grant.

Q: Does the Hub & Spoke model apply as usual for reporting achievements? E.g. to whom is achievement attributed in case a client is referred by an EEN expert from one organization and receives shared services by a Sustainability advisor from another organization?

The Achievement is listed with the hub, e.g. network node of origin of the primary network client. If the network services/ realisation of the EENergy grant involves further network partners (or their respective clients) the regular achievement guidelines and procedures apply.

Q: Can a company from my region be supported from a Sustainability Advisor coming from another region, but who is still part of my consortium?

Yes, the prerequisite is an action plan and confirmation from the sustainability advisor on the client's application. This needs to be coordinated between the two network partners involved.

Q: Where can I find the action plan assessment tool for sustainability advisors?

The action plan assessment tool is available online in the [EENergy Workspace in Connect \[accessible for EEN staff only\]](#).

Q: My client has submitted their application, however there are errors which need to be corrected. Should I reject the application or ask them to change it first?

Please inform your client that corrections are required on the application form. They can continue to change their answers until the call deadline. Once they have updated the answers, they should resubmit their application. **The EEN advisor will not receive a new email;** however, they should use the link in the first notification email to confirm the application.

Q: I have not received a notification email even though my client has submitted an application, what should I do?

Please check with your client to make sure your email was correctly entered. Next, please check your spam folder to see if the email is there. Finally, please check your profile settings on the grant platform (if you have created an account there) and make sure you have enabled the option to receive your notification emails. Once all these steps have been taken, **please contact the helpdesk so that we can generate a new email approval for you.**