



### E.3 Identification of potential solutions to reduce energy consumption

*The identification of potential solutions to reduce energy consumption, even after an appropriate evaluation of the current energy demand has been performed, is a crucial task. This would be one of the main roles of an energy audit: however, energy audits are expensive, and SMEs might not be willing to invest the money required for the audit if they are not already aware of the existence, and the potential, of energy-saving measures.*

SMEs often have a significant energy savings potential, but just as often they are not aware of its size, and on how it could translate into a benefit for the company. Depending on the building and business type, small businesses could reduce their energy costs between 10 and 30 percent through competitive rates, straightforward efficiency upgrades and simple behavioral adjustments, all without sacrificing service or comfort.

**Conducting an energy audit** (or, to a smaller extent, an energy scan) results in a list of recommendations for solutions and actions to improve energy efficiency in a company. This is clearly one of the most important reasons for promoting energy audits in SMEs.

However, there are complementary ways of identifying promising measures. The Trusted Partner could, for example, help the SME by providing access to **databases of best practices**, where the SME, possibly guided by the Trusted Partner, can get an overview of the solutions that are available, and on what are resulting savings that they could expect. Some examples of best practices can be found in the table, below.

Type of action	Examples
Purchasing energy	Switch to a retail energy supplier.
	Lock-in flexible electricity and natural gas rates.
	Consider solar power.
	Take advantage of tax breaks and other incentives.
	Connect with other companies to get best offers.
Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC)	Tune-up HVAC system.
	Change or clean HVAC filters.
	Use fans.
	Upgrade to smart thermostats.
Lighting to save energy	Install occupancy sensors.
	Change light bulbs with LED.
Office equipment	Turn off unused equipment.
	Use power management features and software.
Water conservation	Use automatic taps.



Type of action	Examples
	Upgrade to a more efficient water heater.
	Set water temperature.

Such a database will be added to the online ‘Energy Efficient SME’ portal of the GEAR@SME-project. Almost in every European country, the Trusted Partner will be able to get access to documentation and/or small guides gathering the most common “tips” and macro-areas where SMEs can take inputs for understanding the wide potential of available solutions.

The identification of potential solutions requires knowledge and experience and can often not be fully supported by a simple tool. Therefore, energy efficiency experts may need to be involved. The database of best practices can, in a complementary way, help the Trusted Partner and the SMEs to understand and evaluate the most effective energy efficiency intervention.