

Affordable Energy Plan

1. Policies and mechanisms for reducing energy costs for consumers and industry

Reducing energy costs for SMEs and the industry is essential for maintaining economic competitiveness, especially in the context of significant fluctuations in electricity and natural gas prices, which place major pressure on small and medium-sized enterprises. According to the **Affordable Energy Action Plan**, one of the European Union's priorities is to support companies in their transition to more accessible and sustainable energy sources.

In this context, **FICSIMM** proposes the following measures that could contribute to achieving this objective in Romania:

A. Implementation of a national support mechanism for SMEs in energy efficiency: ((see the attached **RENOV-IMM financial instrument proposal**). This program should provide SMEs with access to dedicated funding for modernization, including both **subsidies** and **preferential-interest loans** for the acquisition of energy-efficient equipment. Currently, SMEs face difficulties in accessing such funds, as most existing programs focus on new investments and do not allow for the **replacement of outdated equipment**, which limits their ability to **modernize their production processes**.

B. Accelerating digitalization and optimizing energy consumption through the implementation of smart grids and advanced energy management systems. These solutions allow for **real-time monitoring of energy consumption** and **automatic adjustments based on actual needs**, which can lead to a **10-20% reduction in energy consumption**. For example, the **use of smart lighting systems, temperature and humidity sensors in production facilities, and automation for industrial equipment** can significantly contribute to **minimizing energy losses** and **improving overall efficiency**.

- C. Reviewing energy taxes and excise duties for SMEs** so as to **better reflect the actual costs of energy infrastructure** and **reduce the fiscal burden on small and medium-sized enterprises**. The **European Commission**, in the **Affordable Energy Action Plan**, has emphasized the importance of **reforming the pricing system** so that SMEs can benefit from **differentiated tariffs based on consumption levels** as well as **incentives for investments in energy efficiency**.
- D. Facilitating access to long-term contracts for energy procurement at stable and predictable prices**: SMEs often struggle with **energy market volatility**, which significantly impacts their **budget planning and financial stability**. To address this challenge, **supporting the adoption of long-term contracts (Power Purchase Agreements - PPAs) for the procurement of renewable energy at competitive prices** could help **stabilize energy costs over the long term**, ensuring **greater predictability and financial resilience for SMEs**.
- E. Energy aggregation mechanisms for SMEs through regional hubs** that would enable SMEs to **purchase energy collectively**, securing **more advantageous rates** through **bulk procurement and enhanced negotiating power**. Such initiatives have already been successfully implemented in other European countries, resulting in **price reductions of up to 15-20%** due to the **increased bargaining leverage** of SME groups. This model fosters **cost efficiency, stability, and improved access to renewable energy sources**, ultimately strengthening the competitiveness of participating companies.

1. The „Energiepool” program in Austria

In Austria, **several industrial clusters and regional SME associations** have joined forces to create **common energy procurement platforms** through a mechanism called “Energiepool”. SMEs from a specific sector or region **collaborate and negotiate collective contracts with energy suppliers to secure better rates**.

Results:

- SMEs participating in this system have achieved electricity and gas price reductions of **15-18%**, thanks to the large aggregated consumption volume negotiated with suppliers.

- Contracts are more **predictable and stable in the long term**, allowing SMEs to avoid significant price fluctuations in the spot market.

<https://www.energiepool.at/energiepool/>

2. The Consorzi Energia approach - Italy

Italy has implemented a **national system of energy consortia (Conсорzi Energia)**, which enables **SMEs from the same region or sector to pool their energy demand and collectively purchase electricity and natural gas at negotiated rates directly from suppliers.**

Results:

- **SME members of these consortia have reported annual energy cost savings of 10-20%** due to the **increased purchasing power of the collective.**
- **Greater transparency in the procurement process**, allowing SMEs to access **long-term supply contracts with fixed prices and favorable conditions.**
- **These consortia also collaborate with financial institutions**, providing SMEs with the opportunity to **secure funding for energy efficiency projects**, further enhancing their competitiveness and sustainability.

<https://consorzioenergeticonazionale.it/>

3. Achats Énergie - France

In France, **Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI)** have launched **collective energy purchasing initiatives** for SMEs under the program **"Achats Énergie"**. This initiative provides **centralized negotiations with energy suppliers**, allowing SMEs to benefit from **preferential rates for electricity and gas.**

Results:

- **Participating SMEs have achieved energy bill reductions of 12-20%** through **bulk purchasing agreements.**
- **The system provides SMEs with access to energy consulting services**, helping them implement **energy efficiency measures** and **secure funding for green transition projects.**
- **The model has expanded to the municipal level**, where **local administrations collaborate with SMEs to jointly procure energy**, further enhancing **cost efficiency and price stability.**

<https://www.cci.fr/energie-les-cci-en-prise-directe-avec-les-besoins-des-entreprises>

<https://www.lyon-metropole.cci.fr/crise-energetique/achat-d-energie>

<https://cci41-energie.fr/>

2. Opportunities for collaboration in implementing the proposed solutions

For energy cost reduction measures to be **effectively implemented**, close collaboration between **public authorities, the business sector, industry associations, and financial institutions** is essential. **SMEs cannot navigate this transition alone**; they require a **support framework** that facilitates their **access to technology, expertise, and financing**.

In this regard, we propose the following **collaborative initiatives**:

- A. Establishing a national support consortium for SMEs in energy efficiency**, bringing together the **Ministry of Energy, the Ministry of Economy, financial institutions such as the Investment and Development Bank (BID), business organizations, and other relevant stakeholders**. This consortium would have the role of facilitating **SMEs' access to technical consultancy, training programs in energy efficiency, and dedicated financing schemes**.
- B. Partnerships between the academic environment and the private sector** for the development and testing of **innovative energy efficiency solutions applicable to SMEs**. Technical universities and research institutes could collaborate with SMEs to develop new energy-saving technologies, and through innovation centers, pilot projects could be implemented to demonstrate their feasibility
- C. Integration of Romanian SMEs into European initiatives for the green transition**, such as **Horizon Europe, the Just Transition Fund, and the Modernization Fund**, which provide funding for energy efficiency and sustainability projects. Currently, the participation of Romanian SMEs in these programs is low due to **bureaucratic obstacles and lack of information**, highlighting the need for **specialized contact points to support the application process**.

D. Creating decentralized production facilities for SMEs, in partnership with local authorities and private investors. This model, already applied in other EU countries, involves the development of solar or wind farms dedicated to SMEs, where they can purchase renewable energy at competitive prices, without having to invest in their own production systems.

1. The „Energie Partagée” initiative - Franța

Description: "Energie Partagée" is a French organization that supports and finances renewable energy projects owned by communities and SMEs. It facilitates collaboration between local authorities, private investors, and communities to develop projects such as photovoltaic and wind farms, allowing SMEs to access green energy without directly investing in infrastructure.

Key details:

- **Types of projects:** Collectively owned photovoltaic and wind farms.
- **Benefits for SMEs:** Access to renewable energy at competitive prices and participation in project governance.
- **Partnership model:** Cooperation between local communities, SMEs, and local authorities.

<https://energie-partagee.org/>

2. The „Middelgrunden Offshore Wind Farm” project - Denmark

Description: The Middelgrunden offshore wind farm, located near the coast of Copenhagen, is an example of cooperation between local authorities, private investors, and the local community. The project was developed as a public-private partnership, where 50% of the shares are owned by the local utility company, while the other half belongs to a cooperative of approximately 8,500 local investors, including SMEs.

Key details:

- **Capacity:** 40 MW
- **Benefits for SMEs:** Direct participation in renewable energy production and access to energy at competitive prices.
- **Partnership model:** Local cooperative and public utility company.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middelgrunden_wind_farm

<https://www.middelgrunden.dk/middelgrunden-windmill-cooperative/>



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<https://stateofgreen.com/en/solution-providers/middelgrunden-wind-turbine-cooperative/>