



The Energy Gain – a local training programme

Municipality of Lidköping, Sweden

Summary

The aim of the Energy Gain is to increase awareness of energy issues in SME in Lidköping, Sweden, by combining education with a voluntary agreement on action taken by the companies. The objective is to have 100 participating companies (manufacturing companies, industrial workshops, agricultural enterprises, real estate companies, groceries, supermarkets and automotive retailers etc) that are making efforts to make their energy use more efficient as well as investing their possibilities to change from fossil fuels to renewable energy, decreasing CO₂-emissions as well as emissions of other polluting substances.

86 companies have been given the education and the objective is very likely to be reached and exceeded during the programme. The first evaluation shows very content participants and increased activity, including concrete measures, at many companies. Crucial for success has been the contact with the local organisations for SME.

End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behaviour
- Education
- Other - Agriculture

Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other – Farmers, Industry

Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydro power
- Other

Context

The Municipality of Lidköping has an aim to decrease its emissions of carbon dioxide by 25 % by 2010 (in comparison with 1990) for the geographical region, and with 50 % for the municipal organization. The Energy Gain is one of the activities to be able to reduce the emissions in the geographical area.

A number of different methods have been used by the energy advisors and the Agenda 21-coordinators in the municipality of Lidköping. Some examples are guidance for the general public, local energy subsidies, lectures and seminars, exhibitions, a large number of articles and advertisements in the local newspaper, reports in local radio and TV, study circles, "energy search" for school children and bicycle competitions .

The experience in Lidköping is that it is efficient working with existing groups as for example organizations and companies. It has also shown that discussions and personal meetings giving by far the best result. This leads often to "opened doors", the knowledge level increases as well as the interest to do something concrete. This was the base when the concept of the Energy Gain was developed.



Objectives

The aim of the Energy Gain is to increase awareness of energy issues in SME, by combining education with a voluntary agreement on action taken by the companies. The objective is to have 100 participating companies (manufacturing companies, industrial workshops, agricultural enterprises, real estate companies, groceries, supermarkets and automotive retailers etc) that are making efforts to make their energy use more efficient as well as investing their possibilities to change from fossil fuels to renewable energy, decreasing CO₂-emissions as well as emissions of other polluting substances.

SME are often hard to reach and some key-factors to reach and involve them have been:

- Use existing channels
- Facilitate experience exchange
- Combine knowledge building with actions at the participating companies



Industry is one of the target groups for “The Energy Gain”

Process



Appreciated education for SME

The target group of the Energy Gain is SME in Lidköping, Sweden. The project contains two parts, one educational and one practical. The education is specific for each industry branch. The focus in the education is on energy use and both seminars and study visits are used. Each industry branch has their own education to facilitate experience exchange and to tailor-make the seminars. In the practical part the participating companies are doing an inventory of their energy use and invest their possibilities for making their energy use more efficient as well as increasing the use of renewable energy. This is done by support from the project. The project also includes making the companies aware of other environmental aspects. The project is carried out by the municipality of Lidköping in cooperation with several local SME organizations, but similar projects can be initiated by almost any actor. A key factor for success is the cooperation with the local trade and industry.

Much effort was put in creating an interest in and a confidence for the project in the initial phase. Tools to facilitate the practical work were developed before the first education round.

A voluntary agreement was made by the participators where they promise to do an energy inventory and an action plan for their organization.

Until now manufacturing companies, industrial workshops, agricultural enterprises, real estate companies, groceries, supermarkets and automotive retailers has participated in the education. One education round is about to start (Nov 2007) and a last education round is going to be done in February 2008. To ensure the quality of the education, experts were engaged for the different education rounds to fit different target groups. 86 companies have participated in education, which means that the objective is going to be reached and surpassed.

After the education the company is doing an energy inventory and action plan, with support by the Energy Gain, including a site visit. 50 companies have participated in this part so far.



One year after the education an evaluation is done, including which measures the company has taken, energy saved and decrease in emissions of carbon dioxide. Only the companies from the first education round have done the evaluation.

Financial resources and partners

The project is carried out during the period January 2006 – December 2008 with a total budget of 152 260 Euro. In addition to funding from the Municipality of Lidköping (73 800 Euro), the project received funding from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (73 800 Euro). The participating companies are paying a small fee for the education, in total 4400 Euro.

A crucial part for success in the Energy Gain is the cooperation with the local enterprise organizations in Lidköping. The Energy Gain is a cooperation between the municipality, Företagarna (organization for SME), Köpmannaföreningen (the retailers' organization) and LRF (the farmers' organization), through their cooperation organ, Miljöpunkten, a network for business driven environmental development. The municipality is project coordinator and the organizations are working as a channel to facilitate contact and confidence building.

Results

The Energy Gain has been very successful. The combination of education and practical measures has been very appreciated by the participating companies.

The secondary results of the Energy Gain are still to come, through the measures taken by the participating companies. Until now, only one evaluation has been made of the activities made by the companies. This includes energy savings and transitions from fossil to renewable energy at the participating companies.

However, several results have already been achieved:

- One set of tools for SME companies has been developed to facilitate their work with energy plans and action plans for increased energy efficiency or transition to use of renewable energy. An education method has been developed, and adjusted to several groups of SME; manufacturing companies, industrial workshops, agricultural enterprises, real estate companies, groceries, supermarkets and automotive retailers. The first evaluation shows that 97,8 percent of the participants are content with the education and the education gets 4,8 points at a six grade scale.
- 86 companies have gained new knowledge and awareness in the field of energy and environment. The tools have also been introduced to these companies. The objective, to reach 100 companies, is very likely to be reached or exceeded during the programme.
- Platforms for discussion of energy issues has been created for the nine education groups (86 companies), creating contact between the persons in charge of energy issues at companies in the same branch.
- 50 companies have gained knowledge of their own energy situation through individual site visits and by creating energy plans.
- The evaluation for the first group of companies shows that at most of the companies there is an increase in the interest in energy issues. Many of the companies have planned energy efficiency measures. Estimations from the companies show a potential for energy savings at between 15 and 50 percent.



Interested participants of the Energy Gain

In addition to these results, the energy savings are also giving cost reductions at the companies, the emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and particular matter is decreasing with reduced energy use.



Lessons learned and repeatability

SME are often hard to reach. Some key-factors to reach and involve them have been:

- Use existing channels. By cooperation with the local trade and industry organization this was met. Professional marketing has been important.
- Facilitate experience exchange. The experience exchange was facilitated by arranging study visits to the participating companies in each education round and by having branch separate education rounds. This also gave the possibility for the participants to get a branch network on energy issues.
- Combine theory and practice. By combining knowledge building with action at the participating companies the theoretical part was made useful and easier to implement. Much time spent on experience exchange has been a key factor for success.
- Easy tools. Easy tools for energy monitoring and work with energy efficiency has been important to make the participants realize the large saving potential, with economical gains as a result of the measure.
- Voluntary agreement. The participating companies made a voluntary agreement to make an energy plan and energy action plan. This ensures the engagement of the companies deciding to participate.
- Tailor-made education. Experts in different fields were engaged to ensure high quality and relevance for the participants.

The concept can easily be copied and used by many organizations in Europe. Important for the possibility to replicate it is good relations with representatives for SME.

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Project Web Site: www.lidkoping.se/energivinsten

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