

KEY ASPECTS OF A GOOD ENERGY MANAGEMENT POLICY

However well a building hosting a hospitality business is constructed, a constant commitment is needed to raise both short and long-term energy efficiency and obtain continuous economic returns. Such efforts can only be sustained if a hospitality establishment adopts a holistic and systemic energy management policy. This chapter explains the key aspects which should be part of it.

1. Appoint a responsible person and a dedicated team

Energy efficiency and sustainability is a shared responsibility between all those who work in a hospitality establishment. However, it is most important that one person is given overall responsibility to ensure that all aspects related to energy efficiency in the business are dealt with satisfactorily and coherently. The responsible person should coordinate the energy management policy and should supervise a dedicated team in charge of monitoring energy consumptions, implementing procedures to raise energy efficiency and/or decrease unnecessary consumption and collect data to evaluate the progresses achieved.

2. Assess your energy profile

The starting point of any energy management policy consists in determining the energy profile of the business. This requires to monitor energy consumption by tracking energy bills over time. When possible, sub-metering can help to monitor more precisely which zone or building system use more energy. This assessment will help assessing the performance of the building/business, of the equipment and systems and allows to create a baseline against which future objectives to reduce energy consumption and raise energy efficiency will be assessed. This energy profile helps evaluating what are the best possible technical solutions and the possible returns on investment.

3. Frame your energy policy

The energy policy is a key document which explains how the relevant issues related to the energy usage of the business/building will be managed in order to raise energy efficiency and decrease energy consumption.

It shall be a simple document containing the following aspects:

- Clear and measurable energy performance goals to be achieved;
- Target dates for achievements of the goals;
- An action plan with a roadmap for achievements of the goals, including the technical steps to be implemented and the allocated resources (human, financial);
- All relevant features should be included: from the daily operational routine to possible future interventions on building equipment, systems or thermal insulation.

In cases where the action plan contains measures requiring investments, the issue of the funding should be considered at this stage already. A regular (i.e. annually) update is recommended to take into account recent achievements, change in energy patterns, and new priorities.

4. Train and engage your staff

Active participation of the staff and management is an essential aspect of any strategy to increase energy efficiency and reduce consumption. Behavioural change is the most cost-effective way and a major step to reach objectives in this field.

Staff information and training on energy efficiency and sustainability needs to be provided. This will help ensuring that every staff will be equipped to assist in implementing the energy policy and achieving the energy performance goals when carrying-out daily operational activities. This is essential to ensure that the hospitality business make the most of the investments made and to eliminate all avoidable energy losses.

Staff training has a direct and immediate positive impact on energy consumption and efficiency. Besides, it also has a highly positive inspirational impact on staff given the clear societal commitment it entails, leading to additional professional motivation. Information and training should ideally cover various fields, such as: awareness of the environmental impact of the business activities, how to contribute concretely to making energy savings and raising energy efficiency during daily activities, monitoring savings, how to communicate to guests the enterprise's efforts in energy efficiency and how guests can help to support sustainability, etc. This could be part of HR planning for employees.

5. Regular maintenance of equipment

It is essential that all the business/building's technical equipment are regularly inspected, serviced and maintained. Some of this will be carried out under regular maintenance agreements but simple inspections may be carried out by staff during their normal duties. A regular servicing and maintenance of the business/buildings technical equipment is crucial to ensure that energy performance remains high.

6. Implement energy efficient operational practices without any costs

Many improvements can be brought at no costs simply by implementing energy efficient practices into daily operational activities affecting guest rooms, kitchens, laundry, front office, etc. A good energy management policy will ensure that these practices are concretely implemented. Examples of such energy efficient operational practices are provided in this brochure (see pages 13-16).

7. Engage your guests

Guests have an important role to play to decrease energy consumptions. Therefore, it is important to communicate to them that the hospitality business they choose is committed to sustainability and energy efficiency, and how can they easily contribute to the goal of having a more sustainable hospitality experience.

A good energy management policy will consider how to engage guests by raising their awareness about the environmental/energy policy of the business and will encourage them to adopt simple sustainable actions about heating/cooling, window opening, switching lights off, electricity, etc. A variety of communication means may be used (e.g. leaflets in the room, stickers on appliances or switches), as long as the information is not too technical.

8. Evaluate progresses

Based on the energy profile established initially, and on the actions taken as part of the energy management policy, it is important to evaluate progresses made towards achievements of the goals set in the energy policy. It will imply measuring results so far, analysing current performances and compare them to the baselines. This will allow to evaluate the effectiveness of your action plan, review it accordingly and share with staff best-practices.

9. Communicate your achievements

Recognising achievements is essential for two reasons:

- it further engages the staff as it sees that efforts are yielding results;
- It helps gaining a competitive advantage by marketing you performance.

It is therefore advised to adopt a clear communication strategy to inform guests and staff about key successes in making the hospitality business more resource efficient and sustainable. This is also an opportunity to gain additional exposure in the media and to distinguish further the business in a very competitive market, therefore giving the potential to attract new clients and gain a competitive advantage that will generate returns on investments.

The 9 key steps of a good energy management policy

