Energy Efficiency Policy Toolkit Case Study

Mexico

Sustainable Eco Credit for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (*Eco Crédito Sustentable*)

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the *Eco Crédito Sustentable*, led by the development bank Nacional Financiera (NAFIN) in co ordination with the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), is to accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient technologies and clean energy solutions among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The programme aims to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while strengthening SMEs' competitiveness through improved access to finance and technical expertise.

COUNTRY

Mexico, 2024 – ongoing

SECTOR AND APPROACH

Industry; Information and Incentives

SOURCE

Eco Crédito Sustentable

DESCRIPTION

Under Eco Crédito Sustentable, SMEs can access financing of up to USD 830 000 per project to implement energy efficiency measures in the industrial, commercial (trade activities) and service sectors. Eligible investments include high-efficiency motors; heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems; process optimisation technologies; and solar photovoltaic systems. SMEs must complete a validated energy audit before accessing finance. Loans are channelled through participating commercial banks under NAFIN's risk-sharing framework. With *Eco Crédito Sustentable*, SMEs financing is available with a fixed interest rate of up to 16% and an eight-year repayment period.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme pairs affordable loans with tailored technical support. SMEs first receive a free energy audit to pinpoint cost-effective savings, ensuring that financing targets measures with real impact. A public guarantee covering up to 80% of each loan lowers risk for commercial banks, enabling them to lend to firms that might otherwise struggle to access credit. This risk sharing approach allows companies to benefit from longer repayment periods and better loan conditions, strengthening the financial case for energy efficiency investments.

RESULTS

The project was expected to deliver up to 15% savings on gas bills and up to 80% on electricity bills across at least 1 200 projects, reflecting substantial potential operational and environmental benefits. Across the programme, the total expected impact includes mitigating up to 486 539 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and mobilising around USD 33 million in private investment for energy efficiency projects in the industrial, services and commercial sectors.

LESSONS LEARNED

Eco Crédito Sustentable shows that combining technical guidance, concessional finance and public risk-sharing can enable SMEs to implement energy efficiency and low-carbon projects. Energy audits build confidence in project outcomes, while longer loan tenors, fixed interest rates and government guarantees reduce financial barriers and encourage bank participation.

ALIGNMENT WITH REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Eco Crédito Sustentable contributes to various national energy policies, in particular to Mexico’s Sustainable Finance Mobilisation Strategy, by helping SMEs access financing for energy efficiency and low-carbon investments. The strategy is a national framework to redirect public and private financial flows towards activities that generate environmental and social benefits, including climate action and energy transition.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT

NAFIN manages the programme, sets standards, approves projects and ensures compliance. Participating commercial banks verify that loan funds are used as intended, collect financial reports from SMEs and ensure repayment obligations are met. Accredited auditors confirm installations and measure savings against a baseline to ensure targets are met. International partners such as the Mitigation Action Facility and GIZ provide technical support and capacity building for auditors and SMEs, aligning the programme with international best practices.