WP6 – T4 - Launch of EUROPEAN “SME BENCHMARK” COMMUNITY – UCV and ANCE

## AIM of the community

The aim of the community shall be twofold:

1. on one hand, it will operate as broad awareness raising action for promoting the adoption by an increasing number of SMEs in Europe of energy efficiency measures in their premises (warehouse, industry, offices, other buildings);
2. on the other hand, it will operate as vehicle for the promotion of “GREEN GROWTH” opportunities behind EPBD, especially for SMEs from the supply chain of products linked to energy efficiency for buildings.

There are well known **obstacles and barriers** to the take up of energy efficiency measures by companies/SMEs and to the full exploitation of the opportunities linked to Green Growth for companies in Europe:

* The information asymmetry which smaller companies suffer from as compared to multinational suppliers
* The lack, also in the EPBD, of clear reference to industrial and commercial buildings and the difficulty of market actors to contextualize the potential benefits linked with the EPBD enforcement with their day-to-day activity
* The lack of a unique window on emerging Europe-wide markets – standards, suppliers and tenders
* The difficulty of smaller SMEs and expert professionals to expand into broader European markets
* The accessibility to market opportunities for all market actors, in particular SMEs. SMEs have to listen to the trends of the market and rather the long term trends. They may adapt their products toward more sustainability or energy performance
* The lack of a link to financial tools which may cover the initial investment for construction or renovation works (link to funding measures, ESCOs or EPCs also for small investments)
* The lack of financial tools to support the recovery and the construction of new buildings according to measure of efficiency.
* The lack of certainty of fiscal incentives tied to energy saving for the future.
* The lack of a unique and standard pattern of reference for measuring the energy performance of buildings.

A pilot online forum targeting SMEs on whether they will try to launch innovative products in the next 2 / 5 years  because of the EPBD (energy efficient, cost savings, green devices) or EUP (Eco design directive) will be launched nationally. The forum will encompass subscription to the community and whether they are seeking alliances for new product and technology development.

We will implement a blog forum for the exchange of information between the countries that take part the project. The blog must be always updated and managed by a moderator.

Periodically we will send users newsletters to update them on topics within the community, and to invite them to participate and to propose additional issues to be discussed.

**TOPICS ONLY FOR SMEs COMMUNITIES**

We have planned these questions in order to activate the communities and to discuss topics:

* + SME Benchmark:
    - Why do you should assess the level of energy efficiency of the company and its structures? When is it required?
    - What type of intervention of efficiency should give greater prominence?
    - What are the main difficulties in implementing efficiency projects?
    - Where and how to find the necessary funds?
    - What are the characteristics of sustainability of the products required by the market?
    - What advantages can be achieved by improving your company’s brand in terms of environmental sustainability?
    - How to avoid the problem of green washing?
  + **Energy efficiency in construction:**
    - What are the materials for thermal insulation with highest performance?
    - Which door-frame and window-frame are more advantageous to increase the energetic class of the building?
    - What thermal systems with the best cost/benefit range are used in new buildings (condensing boilers, heat pumps and radiant floor systems)?
    - Have you developed some innovative product for building? Which are the obstacles of the market?
  + **Sustainability** **Certification Protocols:**
    - Which certification protocols are most commonly used in construction?
    - What are the characteristics that differentiate the various certification protocols in the construction industry?
    - Which are the different results obtained by the application of different protocols of certification?
    - What are the economic, environmental and energy benefits that can be obtained from the application of certification protocols?
    - What are the costs for certification in construction?
  + **National and European calls for incentives and funding;**
    - What are national and European calls for funding proposals?
    - What are the winning strategies to be involved in public calls for funding proposals?
    - What is the national normative evolution of the framework of incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy sources and what are the consequences on the market development?
  + **Renewable energy sources (photovoltaic, wind, geothermal, biomass, etc.):**
    - What are the new innovative technologies available in the market?
    - How is evolving the technical normative?
    - How is evolving the national legislation?
    - What will the scenery of the 2020 renewable sources development?
  + **Free market in electricity and natural gas:**
    - What are the advantages of free market energy?
    - How much can you save by entering the free market in electricity and natural gas?
    - Are really profitable for SMEs the several offers available on the free market of energy?
    - How and where can you find professional consultants that can guide SMEs in buying energy consciously and with tangible benefits?

For every question, we will propose a first basic answer or some documents to enrich the topic.

Please note that questions and topics to discuss will depend on users needs.