

Issue # 17

Energy Auditor Performance: Do We Need to Check It?

About 50 energy auditors will face approximately 2,500 energy managers in the next 2 years. Team work is required to prepare a good energy audit and a realistic business plan.

In the past, some State attempts to introduce mandatory energy audits were pretty murky. Energy audits for Rs. 20,000 were not uncommon. It is impossible to perform a meaningful energy audit at this cost. Any professional energy auditor with expensive equipment and a missionary drive to do a good job and charging a reasonable Rs. 200,000 to Rs. 500,000 did not have a chance to get a contract. Therefore, the resulting audit quality and usefulness was very poor, and the purpose of a mandatory energy audit, helping to reduce energy costs in a financially attractive manner, was defeated.

This situation will improve under the provisions of the Energy Conservation Act. Since most accredited energy auditor firms are neither small, nor interested in roaming through a firm with a note pad trying to smell energy inefficiency, they won't be cheap. It will cost real money to hire them. However, the professional fees for an energy audit, are typically paid back within days, not months or years - assuming the energy manager is also up to the mark and does his contribution. Moreover an energy audit is only the beginning and not the end. It is the Energy Manager's role to implement cost effective measures and provide ongoing performance monitoring. A good friend of mine, who should know, put it more drastically: "Energy audits should be outlawed". An energy audit without implementation, or is done so poorly that it provides no reliable recommendations to implement, is useless and a waste of resources.

Consequently, a minimum level of monitoring and appraising the quality of energy audits and reports, as well as implementation of the recommendations is necessary.

Monitoring will also help those energy auditors who could later claim the award of being the "Best Energy Auditor of the Year" or some other recognition.

We would like to hear from our subscribers about the following:

(i) Is it necessary and helpful to establish a quality control system for energy audit reports?

(ii) If so, why is it necessary?

(iii) Practically, how might a quality control system be implemented?