

SBES - Northmore Gordon

Canonical: <https://northmoregordon.com/glossary/sbes/>

Details:

Home › Glossary › SBES

SBES

SBES stands for Small Business Energy Saver Program. It is a government scheme designed to support energy efficiency improvements for small businesses. The program operates within Australia's broader framework of energy efficiency and environmental certificate schemes. Understanding SBES eligibility, activity requirements and certificate pathways is relevant for small business operators evaluating energy upgrade options alongside other available incentives such as the Energy Savings Scheme, Victorian Energy Upgrades, and renewable energy schemes.

Related guidance

Government schemes

Certificate services

Certificate trading

Measurement and verification

Energy audits

What to do after an energy audit

What does SBES stand for?

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How does SBES relate to other energy efficiency schemes and certificates available in Australia?

SBES is one of several Australian energy efficiency and environmental certificate schemes. Others include the NSW Energy Savings Scheme (which creates Energy Savings Certificates), Victorian Energy Upgrades (which creates Victorian Energy Efficiency Certificates), the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme, and renewable pathways such as Small-scale Technology Certificates and the Renewable Energy Target. Each scheme has distinct eligibility requirements, activity methods, certificate creation processes and commercial terms. A small business should establish which schemes apply to its location, activity and project timing before committing to an upgrade pathway.

What types of energy efficiency activities might be eligible under SBES?

SBES eligibility depends on the specific activities, equipment, premises and scheme conditions applicable at the time of implementation. Like other Australian energy efficiency schemes, SBES may cover activities such as lighting upgrades, heating and cooling improvements, compressed air optimisation, refrigeration efficiency, and process-specific measures. However, a technically sensible

upgrade is not automatically eligible. A small business should confirm the exact activity requirements, equipment specifications, implementation dates and evidence obligations that apply to its proposed project before proceeding with design or installation.

What evidence and documentation would a small business need to gather for an SBES project?

Eligibility under SBES requires documented evidence of the activity, equipment installed, implementation dates and energy performance. The specific evidence obligations depend on the scheme's current method and activity requirements. Typically, a small business should gather baseline energy data, equipment specifications, installation records, commissioning evidence and operating condition documentation. Early planning is important; measurement and verification requirements should be established before equipment changes occur. Our energy audit and measurement and verification services can help identify the evidence needed and ensure data collection supports both the SBES application and the business's operational decision-making.

How might Northmore Gordon assist a small business evaluating or implementing an SBES project?

We offer energy audits, investment case development, measurement and verification, and environmental certificate services applicable to small business energy projects. An initial energy audit can identify and prioritise improvement opportunities. A feasibility assessment can evaluate technical and commercial viability. If SBES eligibility is being considered, we can assess scheme requirements, activity suitability and evidence pathways. Measurement and verification services can document actual savings and support certificate creation. We recommend starting with a project brief defining the business decision, site details and available evidence to establish an appropriate scope.

Should a small business assume SBES will fund or incentivise its energy project?

SBES eligibility and certificate value should not be assumed without assessment of the specific activity, scheme rules, project timing and evidence requirements. A technically promising upgrade may not qualify under SBES if it does not meet prescribed activity or equipment conditions, or if timing or prior arrangements affect eligibility. Before relying on SBES funding or certificates in an investment case, a small business should obtain documented advice on the governing activity, eligibility assumptions, calculation basis and commercial terms. We recommend keeping the base business case separate from optimistic incentive scenarios and confirming scheme eligibility before making binding equipment purchases.

How does SBES interact with measurement and verification of energy savings?

Measurement and verification determines the actual energy savings achieved by an upgrade by comparing post-project consumption against a representative baseline under comparable operating conditions. SBES may have specific M&V requirements depending on the activity and scheme method. Early measurement planning is critical; baseline data collection should occur before equipment changes. Our M&V services include project-boundary selection, baseline modelling, savings calculation and reporting. The company emphasises that measurement planning must be established while baseline data can still be obtained, and that verified results should be kept distinct from engineering estimates or certificate calculations.

What role does project timing play in SBES eligibility and implementation?

Project timing directly affects SBES eligibility. Different scheme versions, activity methods and implementation date requirements can apply at different periods. A project implemented on one date may qualify under rules that do not apply to a project implemented weeks or months later. Funding or certificate arrangements made before equipment selection can create dependencies that affect later eligibility decisions. We emphasise that business decisions on equipment, ordering, installation and commissioning should be timed to preserve evidence collection options and avoid unintended

ineligibility. A project brief should establish the intended implementation date and chronology of any prior commitments or studies.

Can a small business pursue SBES alongside other energy efficiency or renewable energy schemes?

A small business may be able to pursue SBES alongside other schemes, but compatibility depends on the specific activities, timing, equipment and ownership of energy-saving or renewable attributes. For example, a renewable energy project might create Small-scale Technology Certificates; an efficiency project might create SBES-related certificates; but the same electricity generation cannot be counted twice across different schemes. Prior incentives, nominations and certificate arrangements must be disclosed and assessed for compatibility. We recommend establishing the proposed activity, scheme pathway and ownership arrangements early in project planning to avoid conflicts or unintended ineligibility.