

Evaluating the Brazilian Information Dissemination Program for Energy Efficiency

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The present work makes an analysis of the Procel Info strategy effectiveness, as a relevant tool created to promote information on energy efficiency countrywide.

Background

In 2005, Procel (National Electricity Conservation Program) noticed that there was a lot of information on energy efficiency in Brazil and in the world. However, there was no agent working on a selection of the relevant issues and the available information was very dispersed, a situation that represented an important barrier for the energy efficiency market development in Brazil. Thus, it was necessary that a coordinator might promote a mechanism not only to capture but also to qualify and disseminate relevant information in the area of energy efficiency, in an organized way. In this context, Procel launched in November 2006 the Procel Info Web Portal, a web-based information center with a national scope which aims to be a reference on qualified information about energy efficiency in Brazil.

Evaluating the Web Portal's Effectiveness

In order to evaluate the Procel Info's effectiveness, it was taken as a reference the methodology of the International Energy Agency, recommended to evaluate energy efficiency information programs. The Evaluation Guidebook (prepared by the IEA) provides examples of indicators of impact on the market that have been used for programs related to information in general, including information centers, such as the level of awareness, knowledge and the adoption of efficient products and practices.

According to the IEA (2005), in most cases, it is difficult to make a good estimate of the increasing of energy efficiency adoption due to information centers, since this is an indirect benefit generated by the outcome indicators mentioned before, which act by reducing the existing market barriers.

Therefore, the proposed evaluation is designed to estimate the intensity of the relationship between the use of the offered products and the reduction of market barriers. This could happen through the cause-and-effect relationship between the efforts of the programs and the barriers, in order to determine the effects of these interventions on the market. The following topics describe the barriers identified by the referred guidebook and the results indicators — based on a survey — provided by Procel Info related to their reduction:

- Costs of information: Among the users registered on the Web Portal, 59% are subscribed to receive a daily newsletter, by email, with content related to the

theme of energy efficiency in Brazil and overseas. This is one of the main products offered by Procel Info, because it is the first source of news, specifically dedicated to that theme, in Brazil. Moreover, the survey has shown that 39% of the users has declared that the newsletter was the main reason of their registration;

- Uncertainty of performance and decisions influenced by custom: 74% of the users stated that they consider the information on the Web Portal very useful, helping them to make better decisions on energy use;
- Information quality: According to the survey with registered users, 88% classify the quality of information as “good” (45.6%) or “very good” (42.4%), confirming the reliability of the Web Portal and positioning it as a good reference on energy efficiency.

Results

Among the results of Procel Info, it is worth noting the number of 11.588 registered users, at the end of 2010, and more than 60 thousand downloads made, which shows an increase in the power of disseminating the content produced by Procel and partners. Since it was implemented, the Web Portal has grown not only in amount of published content, but in scope and depth, highlighting the launch of an area dedicated to the issue of buildings labeling in Brazil and the Online Guide to Measurement and Verification in 2008.

Finally, although it is not possible to associate directly the effective impacts arising from the reduction of the barrier “lack of qualified information”, the presented indicators have shown that the actions carried out by Procel Info have been converging with its goals, since it has clearly collaborated to the strengthen of the energy efficiency market in Brazil.