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An evaluation of organizational learning on the performance of energy efficiency projects: cases amongst small and medium energy service companies in South Africa

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2015-05-14
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/17752

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Literature shows that an organization that participates in learning broadens its competitive advantage, capabilities and efficiency ensuring overall improved performance. This study reviews organizational learning in small and medium Energy Service Companies (ESCos) undertaking energy efficiency projects in the South African building industry. In addition, the study examines what impact the organizational learning has on the performance of ESCos. Furthermore factors and practices that influence organizational learning in small and medium sized ESCos are identified and reviewed.

Aim: The study develops a framework for the effective learning practices which lead to better performance in implementing energy effiency projects.

Design/methodology/approach: The study uses a combination of interviews, document and literature review. Interviews and literature were used to gather information on organizational learning and learning practices in small and medium ESCos undertaking energy efficiency building projects. Company documents, government policies and Eskom's operational documents were documents used for analysis. All the findings were triangulated to ensure validity and reliability.

Outcome: ESCOs are instrumental in promoting energy efficiency. This study identified current learning practices and the factors that promote learning within ESCos. This enables ESCos to strategize on the possible improvement on their performances.

Keywords: Buildings, Energy Efficiency, Energy Service Companies (ESCos), Organizational Learning, Performance, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and South Africa

1 Eskom is a utility company in South Africa that generates, transmits and distributes electricity to various sectors within the country and other SADC region.