



Review

# Sustainable practices for the efficient use of green energy in Ciudad Juárez SMEs



## *Prácticas sostenibles para el uso eficiente de energía verde en PyMEs de Ciudad Juárez*

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**Abstract.** - *Carbon emissions have been increasing due to economic growth and development. Fossil-based energy is one of the main factors of environmental pollution. In Mexico, 77.24% of fossil-based energy is from stationary source combustion, 15.7% from industry processes and commercial activities, 6.64% from mobile sources, and 0.05% from agriculture and livestock activities. Specifically, manufacturing operations use 33.4%, of the total consumption of electricity and natural gas. Because the production of green energy is from naturally regenerating sources and does not emit greenhouse gases or compounds, decreases the environmental impact, and because they are able to apply to manufacturing operations, it is pertinent the efforts in this sense. The article presents the PRISMA 2020 as a methodology for searching between distinct databases and current research with the objective of identifying variables and their measurements so micro, small, and mid-size enterprises in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico can develop collaboration strategies towards a sustainable manufacturing environment. The literature review resulted in the identification of six green energy indicators and their measurements.*

**Keywords:** SMEs; Sustainable manufacturing; Energy efficiency.

**Resumen.** - *Las emisiones de carbono han ido en aumento debido al crecimiento y desarrollo económico. La energía de origen fósil es uno de los principales factores de contaminación ambiental. En México 77.24% de la energía de origen fósil proviene de la combustión de fuentes estacionarias, 15.7% de procesos industriales y actividades comerciales, 6.64% por fuentes móviles y 0.05% actividades agropecuarias. En concreto, las operaciones manufactureras utilizan el 33,4%, del consumo total de electricidad y gas natural. Debido a que la producción de energía verde es a partir de fuentes que se regeneran naturalmente y no emiten gases o compuestos de efecto invernadero, disminuye el impacto ambiental, y porque son capaces de aplicarse a las operaciones de fabricación, es pertinente los esfuerzos en este sentido. El artículo presenta el PRISMA 2020 como metodología de búsqueda entre distintas bases de datos e investigaciones actuales con el objetivo de identificar variables y sus mediciones para que las micro, pequeñas y medianas empresas de Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México puedan desarrollar estrategias de colaboración hacia un entorno de manufactura sustentable. La revisión bibliográfica dio como resultado la identificación de seis indicadores de energía verde y sus mediciones.*

**Palabras clave:** PyMEs; Manufactura sostenible; Eficiencia energética.



## 1. Introduction

Globally, fossil-fuel usage represents an 80% of the energy, being carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) responsible for the 60-75% of the total emissions [1, 2].

By 2020, the first five countries with higher energy production are China, United States of America, Russia, Saudi Arabia and India with 19.75%, 15.26%, 10.10%, 4.30% and 4.01%, respectively; while Mexico descended two places setting in seventeenth place with a 1.05% of the energy produced worldwide [3].

This usage is nowadays visible environmentally and economically in climate change. Crude oil, coal, natural gas, green energy and uranium (nuclear energy) represent the primary energy produced globally, with a 29.85%, 26.98%, 23.47%, 14.77% and 4.93%, respectively. From this energy production, comes an energy consumption.

Energy consumption is the amount of energy used to conduct any kind of activity from industrial, commercial or domestic sectors, even though the energy intensity depends on the countries' energy infrastructure [4].

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have been increasing due to economic growth and development, due to the economy's dependence on fossil fuel leading to an intensified greenhouse effect.

Indistinctively from the kind of usage of fossil-fuel energy, it must be used consciously and efficiently because it is limited on sources [5], for fossil-fuel combustion releases carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions causing environmental degradation, unsustainable fossil resources use, among other negative consequences for Earth [6].

Energy efficiency and green energy usage are gaining strength globally to promote sustainable

development and boost green economic growth. As mentioned by [4], green energy in OECD countries accounted for 10.5% of the total energy, where 15.2% supplied by Europe, a 9.1% from America, 5.5% by Oceania and Asia.

Technologies, practices and assessments in industrial energy consumption have the goal to implement improvements and motivate sustainable development for enterprises to incorporate green energy sources in energy consumption within processes related to production [7, 8].

From the EU strategy to implement energy policy [9], China's attempt to strengthen green energy enterprises with tax incentives [10], countries are adopting different practices focused on environmental responsibility.

Even though, green energy consumption contributes to environmental problems, its adoption requires certain energy strategies and investments depending on the enterprise's needs. Research has increased in regard of green energy quantitative and qualitative perspectives, trying to propose different aspects both negative and positive towards a green energy development [11, 12].

Yet, it lacks a systematic review identifying green energy indicators and their measurements, which guide SMEs towards strategic and collaborative practices within a sustainable manufacturing development.

In Mexico, green energy resources, infrastructure and strategies are still limited in its development and growth within economic sectors, having a gap between Mexico's involvement and other OECD countries [13, 14].

Mexico's green energy consumption represents a 9.74% of the total energy consumption versus



European Union that represents 37.40% from their total energy consumption [15, 16].

Research is limited, [17] in 2014 presents how Mexico can generate green energy from natural sources due to geographical position. More specifically, in Juarez City, Chihuahua, Mexico, a known industrial city at the north of the Mexican Republic and border with El Paso, Texas has a bilateral economic movement, that incentivizes SMEs startups, new business models and entrepreneurial environment. However, green energy research applied in Juarez City is scarce and limited.

From seminal research, that presents different initiatives of green energy production projects and their maturity level, by identifying the entities interested in research and development green energy projects [18].

To research where a structural equation model is developed between Green Supply Chain Management and four items within maquiladora industry [13].

Research has yet lack a PRISMA 2020 method within green energy context. Therefore, this paper presents an application of PRISMA 2020 method for a systematic review of the literature to obtain green energy sustainable indicators and measurements [19, 20], where SMEs in Juarez City can collaborate in sustainable manufacturing actions towards a green energy usage, thus, replacing fossil-fuel usage.

The rest of the article is as follows. Section 2 describes a background of Mexico's green energy sources and consumption within the industry sector, and furthermore, Juarez City, Chihuahua position as an industrial city to promote green energy sustainable practices. Section 3 describes a literature review in green energy consumption, barriers and driving factors analysis through the PRISMA methodology.

Section 4 presents the indicators and their measurements, which were identified by the PRISMA 2020 methodology. Section 5 describes the conclusions and recommendations for further research in green energy sources and sustainable practices in the industry sector.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Energy in Mexico**

In Mexico, different types of fossil-fuels sources produce energy; the highest of them all is natural gas with a 49.11%, crude oil with a 36.30%, followed by coal and uranium with a 3.06% and a 1.61%, respectively; and green energy sources generate in a 9.74% [3].

In Mexico, from 1990 to 2015, energy consumption increased a 74.1% the origin of which is petroleum and natural gas; by 2021, the transport sector represents a 51.55% of the total energy consumption, followed by the industry sector with a 21.34%, residential and commercial sector with a 17.42% and agribusiness with a 3.31% [3, 21], data presented in Table 1.



**Table 1.** Sector consumption in Mexico [3].

		Transport	Industry	Residential/Commercial	Agribusiness
Energy		51.55%	21.34%	17.42%	3.31%
<b>Gas</b>	Dry Gas	0.06%	32.65%	4.20%	
	Fuel Oil	0.14%	1.26%		
	Diesel	25.70%			70.36%
<b>Liquid</b>	Liquid Gas	2.17%	3.34%	31.91%	2.42%
	Gasoline	66.93%	0.13%		
	Kerosene			0.01%	
<b>Solid</b>	Coal		5.53%		
	Coal Coke		4.20%		
	Petroleum Coke		11.02%		
<b>Biomass</b>	Bagasse		4.09%		
	Firewood			26.10%	
<b>Green</b>	Solar		0.11%		
<b>Electric</b>		0.20%	32.98%		27.21%

As Table 1 shows, fossil-fuel energy is the most used in Mexico by the different sectors, and even though Transport sector has the highest percentage of energy usage, the Industry sector is the one sector that uses a variety of types of fuels for energy, and the only sector that uses green energy as a source. From the production perspective, Mexico has a potential geographical location and climate conditions to produce green energy, such as solar, wind, biomass, hydropower and geothermal [17], sources that can boost green energy consumption in manufacturing processes within the industry sector. Mexico’s enterprises can incorporate green energy initiatives engaging in energy efficiency programs and strategies to reach a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions [8, 22, 23]. For enterprises to improve and enable changes in manufacturing processes, a framework of indicators and their measurement

should be presented in a way for businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

## 2.2 Energy in Juarez City, Chihuahua

Juarez city, Chihuahua is located at the north of Mexico in the border with Doña Ana, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, with a territorial extension of 6,561.14 km<sup>2</sup>. The town’s geographical coordinates are 31°47’ latitude north; 31°07’ latitude south; 106°11 latitude east; and, 106°57 latitude west [24]. Juarez City geographical position, with an altitude of 1,137 meters above the sea offers a desert weather condition, presenting high temperatures in summer sometimes exceeding the 40 degrees Celsius, and a cold winter reaching sub-zero temperatures. The industry sector, ranking first in energy demand with a 54% of the total energy production, is integrated of 2,589 enterprises,



being a 90% micro, small and mid-size enterprises with 2,337 economic units [18, 25]. Even though Juarez City shows interest in green energy production, it has few projects that have

been materialized in green energy, as shown in Table 2 the types of green energy projects and its maturity level.

**Table 2.** Juarez city green energy projects [18].

<b>Green Energy</b>	<b>Installed Capacity</b>	<b>Technology Level</b>
<b>Biogas (landfill site)</b>	6.4 MW	Maturity
<b>Photovoltaic Solar Energy</b>	221kW	Maturity
<b>Photothermal Solar Energy</b>	--	Maturity
<b>Wind Energy</b>	5kW	Maturity
<b>Biofuel</b>	--	Innovation
<b>Alternative fuels*</b>	--	Innovation
<b>Hydroelectric</b>	--	Maturity
<b>Geothermal Energy</b>	--	Maturity

\*Alternative fuels from clothes, tires, organic solid waste, cellulose, cooking oil.

Several private and public organizations and institutions, as well as non-profit organizations and universities are developing the projects mentioned above. This research presents opportunity and strength in Juarez City for green energy adoption within the industry sector, because the initial research and technology development are already in a maturity level [18].

### 3. Methodology

Because the production of green energy is from naturally regenerating sources and not emit greenhouse gases or compounds, decreases the environmental impact, and because they are able to apply to manufacturing operations [26], it is pertinent the efforts in this sense. For this reason, this article begins with the identification of green energy indicators and their measurements applying the PRISMA statement 2020. The data

obtained was screened using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) methodology as recommended by [19, 20]. In “Figure 1: Literature review following PRISMA 2020 methodology” shows the flow diagram that follows the criteria taken into account for better reporting relevant records associated in the literature review to identify green energy indicators and their measurements.

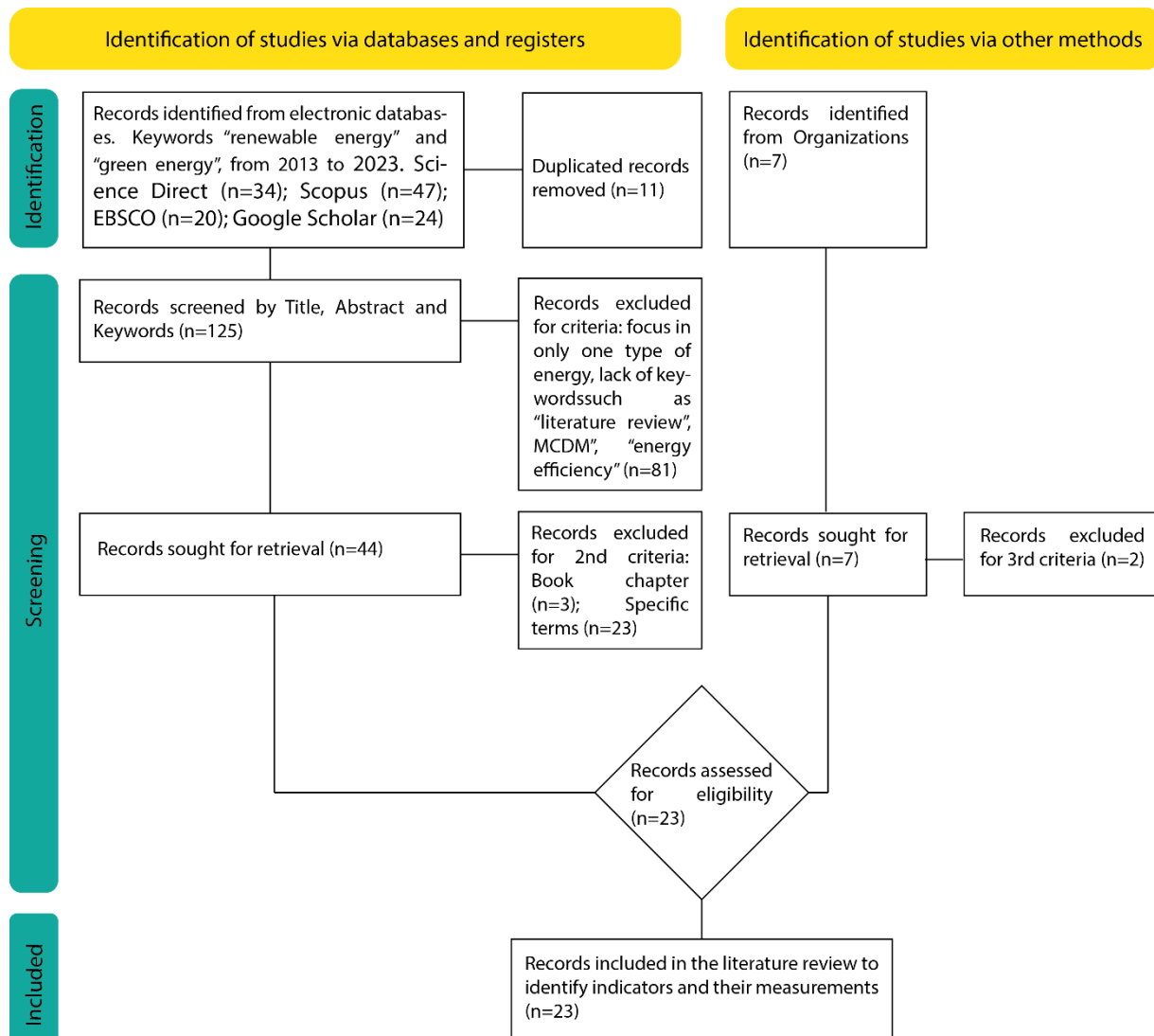


Figure 1. Literature review following PRISMA 2020 methodology.

The authors employed the PRISMA 2020 method to include and exclude records from Science Direct, Scopus, EBSCO and Google Scholar, and other methods through records from organizations. For the literature survey, the search terms “renewable energy factors” AND “green energy” were applied, in a year range from 2013 to 2023, initially obtaining 103 records by eliminating 11 duplicated records. Then, the authors excluded records for not meeting the criteria in the initial screening in Title, Abstract and Keywords. In such a case, the results were reduced to 44 records. Furthermore, only articles, reviews and reports were chosen for

the current study, published in English-language and those that had complete access to the entire document, reducing the included records to 23. From this point on, the articles were analyzed by year of publication. In “Figure 2: Year base publications of included records” shows that 2021 is the year where the largest number of articles reviewed are focused on, followed by 2022 with 3 records and 2023 with 2 records. This is an interesting observation taking into account that the United Nations in 2015 adopted the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. Enterprises are working towards an industrial symbiosis where the



substitution of fossil-fuel can be diminished little by little to open way for green energy production

and consumption, where products are being reused or recycle [27].

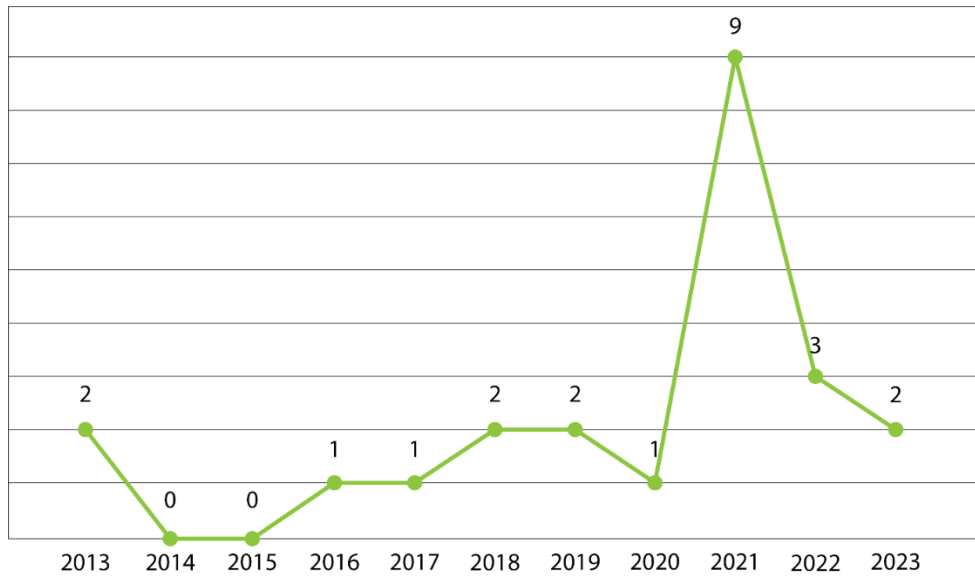


Figure 2. Year base publications of included records.

Additionally, the records screened and reviewed were graphed by Journal publication. In “Figure 3: Journal publication of included records” presents the Journal Sustainability as the journal with more articles published in the renewable energy sector, with five records. Following, the journal Energies with three records and last, Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews with two articles.



Figure 3. Journal publications of included records.



Mexico is one of the N-11 nations that have not invested in green energy sectors, despite the global efforts to decrease the environmental problems caused by fossil-fuel energy [12]. In the Sustainability journal, research presents different in depths of green energy usage, comprehension, and quantitative analysis, among other. From a description of the importance of R&D in green energy sources to the knowledge and awareness of society in this matter [28, 29], to invest in green energy factors such as democratic ecological footprint, economic growth, and environmental regulations, to have a more efficient energy usage [2].

### 3.1 Green Energy Indicators and its Measurements

Every transition towards green energy consumption begins with the production of green energy sources, emphasizing in green energy policy, technology-push and market-pull [30]. As described by [27], the industry sector has an important goal to decrease CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and

have a positive effect in climate change by practicing measures towards usage efficiency in materials and energy. Nevertheless, this sector depends on a number of variables on the industry sector such as geographical location, government policy, technological and innovation source, adaptation and resilience challenges, among others [31–34]. On the other hand, adapting sustainable practices towards green manufacturing, enterprises seek benefits such as reputation and brand image, consumers’ preference on green products and services, and a positive change in economic performance [35, 36]. From the systematic review, six indicators were identified (1) Technology and Innovation, (2) Geographical Aspects, (3) Investment, (4) Government Regulations, (5) Emissions, and (6) Sustainable Practices as shown in Table 2. Each indicator was related to their respective measurements appropriate for creating and adapting green energy in sustainable manufacturing for SMEs.

**Table 2. Green Indicators and their Measurements.**

Indicator	Measurements	Scholars	Description
<b>Technology &amp; Innovation</b>	Technological Development	[31, 32, 37–39]	Technology applied for production processes; technology maturity; efficient use of technology; technology R&D
	Collaboration Capacity	[6, 31, 40]	Intellectual Property on innovations; promote technology transfer and cooperation; address competitiveness issues; accelerate diffusion; coordination among Research Centers, Universities and other enterprises
<b>Geographical Aspects</b>	Soil		
	Water	[17, 27, 34, 38]	Land requirement; environmental impact; resource availability and use efficiency; total energy and source consumption intensity; ground water pollution
	Energy		





<b>Investment</b>	Human Capital	[6, 31, 34, 40, 41]	Efficient use of skills and knowledge of human resources; invest in new human resources; training in green energy usage and resources
	Energy Efficiency	[12, 27, 38, 39, 42, 43]	Energy intensity and final consumption; investments in opportunity areas for renewable energy projects; enhancing renewable energy deployment; share of green energy installed capacity
	Supply Chain Connection	[32, 34, 40, 44]	Establishment on an industry chain; green energy industry manpower; market development plans; accessibility and facility simplicity; flexibility
<b>Government Regulations</b>	Policy	[12, 32, 37, 41, 42, 44, 45]	Environmental regulations and policies; establishment and diffusion in green energy practices; coordination with R&D institutions; green certificates; green power purchase legislations
	Incentive		Incentive measures; preferential purchase prices rates, financial subsidies; Economic returns on green energy projects; Facilitating green energy deployment; Risk investment green energy analysis
<b>Emissions</b>	Indicators	[27, 32, 34, 37, 38, 41, 44–46]	Investment costs; ground, water and air pollution impacts; energy consumption per unit of production; direct energy consumption carbon, heat and electricity footprint; innovation policy
<b>Sustainable Processes</b>	Residual		No use of hazardous materials or virgin material for products in the production process; Production processes designed to avoid waste
	Reduce		Minor use of material per unit of production; Product design with increased durability
	Reuse		Reuse material in production; Use of waste as input material; Resale of products with minimum defect, Unsold product on inventory; Use discarded components and adapt them for other functions
	Repair	[7, 12, 27, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40]	Repair and maintenance of products; Collect defective products in centers (branches or points of sale) through the manufacturer or a third-party company
	Refurbish		Modular product design for ease of disassembly; Disassembly of the overall product structure, checking, cleaning, and potentially repairing components
	Recycle		Recovering the product at the end of its useful life; Ensure the use of recycled raw materials
	Recover		Capture energy from residuals

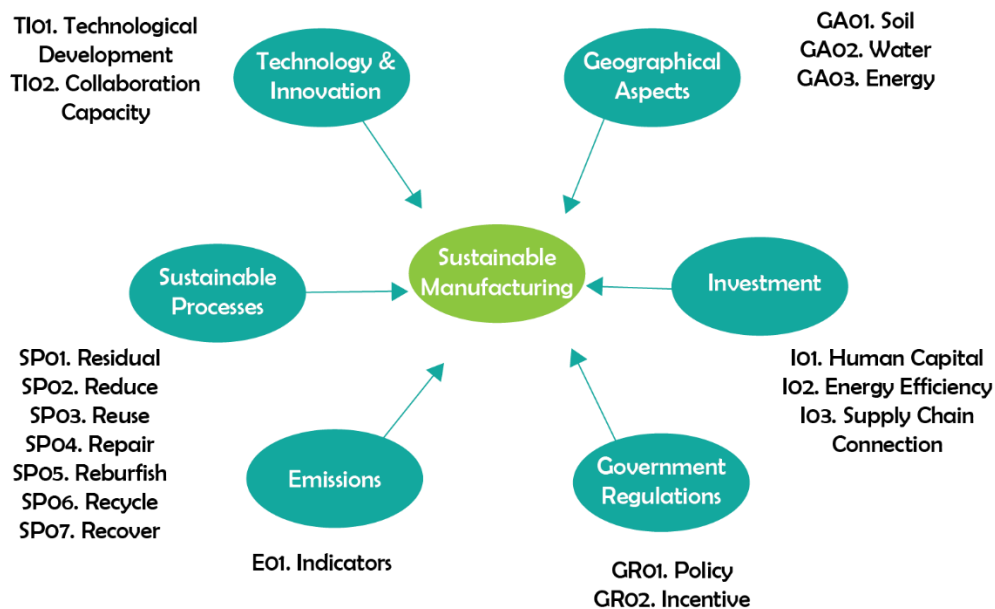


#### 4. Results and discussions

As mentioned above, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased due to the economic growth and development. From the United Nations to the International Energy Agency, organizations that have developed programs, research and goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, have triggered awareness and public concern in environmental issues, specifically in SDG 7 for Affordable and Clean Energy, the focus is in green sustainable business practices. As explain by [47], a way to achieve green economy is by changing business practices with regulatory measurements, financial green incentives, sustainable consumption, information sharing, among other activities. SMEs play an important role in each country's economy. In Mexico, they account for 99.7% of private enterprises, and a 35.2% of national total gross production [48]. As it is known, SMEs present certain deficits when new challenges arise. Green energy adoption within manufacturing processes, SMEs have to establish a degree of flexibility and resilience not just in establishing an industry chain, technological indicators, upgrades in

machinery; but also, in human capital training or new recruitment [46, 49].

This paper presented a systematic review by applying PRISMA 2020 methodology to the literature review with the objective of identifying green energy indicators and their measurements. This methodology has not been found applied in the field of green energy literature. From an initial screening in several databases, 103 articles were identified and following the PRISMA 2020 diagram flow the resulted records included were 23. From these records, the resulted indicators were six, such as (1) Technology and Innovation; (2) Geographical Aspects; (3) Investment; (4) Government Regulations; (5) Emissions; and, (6) Sustainable Processes, each with their respective measurements variables as shown in Figure 4. The six indicators and their measurements show a path towards SMEs transitioning to sustainable manufacturing, to complement each step of the value chain to reach reduction of waste and water usage, lower heating and energy loads [22], [33], [50]. The latter is to ease enterprises management to develop green energy sustainable practices within their manufacturing processes.



**Figure 4.** Green energy indicators and their measurements towards a Sustainable Manufacturing.



#### 4. Conclusions

SMEs are accounted for as pollution-intensive because they account for an approximately 90% of economic units, a 60% of employment and a 60% of value added [33]. Enterprises in the industry sector are making efforts to achieve sustainable manufacturing and mitigate environmental pollution. However, these efforts cannot provide effective results unless certain metrics and sustainable practices are implemented properly; this information is still under development and is not available to manufacturing plants. As [40] mentions, SMEs can contribute successfully to the environmental problems by replacing fossil-fuel consumption with green energy consumption. By developing a PRIMSA 2020 method, the authors identified 6 green energy indicators and 18 measurements to mitigate SMEs' challenges and barriers to implement green energy within manufacturing processes. From a process efficiency to waste disposal and disruptive product design with reuse of raw material and infrastructure efficiency, SMEs can demonstrate that changes can be made to reduce emissions. In this context, this research probes the impacts and importance of indicators on energy usage and emissions, and sustainable practices through R's techniques and by a systematic literature review with the PRISMA 2020 from 2013 to 2023. The main contribution in green energy adoption is towards SMEs businesses; by delimiting entrepreneurs, six indicators that can aid develop sustainable practices within manufacturing processes. SMEs can work in a sustainable manufacturing process by taking into account strategic actions within the six green energy indicators (1) Technology and Innovation, (2) Geographical Aspects, (3) Investments, (4) Government Regulations, (5) Metric and Emissions, and (6) Sustainable Processes. A collaboration between SMEs that have a similar geographical position can create opportunities in implementing sustainable actions for a green energy transition to mitigate

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. For future research, an in-depth analysis of structural equation model of the indicators and their measurements should be performed with a bigger sample in the Industry and Commercial sector, taking into account micro, small, mid-size and big enterprises.

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