



## Press release

Brussels, 19 04 2024



### **Energy sharing now easily accessible for local authorities, schools and hospitals through the innovative solution provided by Belfius and WeSmart**

**Belfius Bank has joined forces with the Belgian scale-up, WeSmart, a company that specialises in managing energy-sharing. Through this collaboration, they offer an innovative solution that stands out on the Belgian market, and which is designed to support users, such as local authorities, hospitals, schools and universities, in creating energy communities at a local level. The objective is to maximise the self-consumption of the renewable energy that users produce from their buildings. This new initiative enables Belfius to extend its range of services, by offering an innovative, all-inclusive solution for sharing energy, beginning with a feasibility study, and continuing through to project management, including project financing.**

This new service developed by Belfius, in partnership with WeSmart, is aimed at a wide range of public and social service providers, such as local authorities, provinces, hospitals, retirement homes, (high) schools and universities.

Belfius and WeSmart are very much aware of the positive impact that these institutions can have on the construction and renovation of buildings to increase their energy efficiency. They can also play a key role in the production and collective self-consumption of renewable energy on a local scale. This can be done in particular through energy communities that bring together other private or public consumers situated nearby. By encouraging this type of initiative, Belfius and WeSmart aim to help these key players to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as to limit their energy dependency and maximise consumption of the power they produce themselves.

**Belfius**



## All-inclusive solution

The aim of this partnership is to simplify the process of implementing energy-sharing projects, by offering an all-inclusive service and providing guidance from A to Z. This assistance starts with the feasibility study (examining the energy-producing potential of buildings, looking at any constraints, estimating project profitability, estimating CO<sub>2</sub> reductions, etc.) and continues through to implementation on the ground (design of the concept of energy-sharing, building and delivering energy production infrastructures, comprehensive administrative handling, etc.). All of this is made possible by tailored financing that takes any grants and subsidies available into account. This support also extends to the day-to-day management and guidance provided via the WeSmart digital platform, which enables new participants to easily join the community, while at the same time monitoring and optimising the production and consumption of energy in real-time and facilitating the management of billing.

**Dirk Gyselinck, Executive Director Wealth, Enterprises & Public at Belfius Bank:** *“Local authorities and a good number of providers in the social sector have a key role to play in the energy transition: very often they have numerous buildings on which renewable energy production infrastructures can be installed (schools, municipal buildings, sports halls, hospitals, etc.). But even then, it’s still necessary to be able to finance and implement the works, as well as install the energy production (and storage) capacity and organise the practical side of sharing the energy produced. And that’s where Belfius comes in: not only by financing projects, but also by handling the coordination of works for those customers who want it.*”

*Thanks to our partnership with WeSmart, renewable energy produced in this way can now be shared efficiently, not only between public buildings, which have different energy consumption profiles (which means that a school can supply a retirement home with renewable electricity at the end of the day and during the weekend), but also with local businesses. The sharing of energy will be at a price calculated based on the production cost, which does not fluctuate in line with the market. This new service fully aligns with our ESG targets and with our aim to provide practical support for energy transition, while helping Belgian society as a whole to keep moving forward.”*

**François Bordes, Founder & CEO at WeSmart:** *“We are very enthusiastic about this partnership with Belfius. Together, we offer a single solution and a full toolbox for energy communities. This collaboration meets all the needs of the parties leading the way in energy-sharing. Starting from the feasibility study stage, our teams work together to identify and maximise the potential offered by the production of renewable energy in each project. In addition, with the introduction of the WeSmart digital platform, we are able to ensure that energy communities are managed effectively. This partnership not only makes it possible to speed up energy transition, but also to support local targets in terms of renewable energy.*”

*“This partnership with Belfius is an opportunity to showcase the energy, environment and climate-related benefits of energy communities. Not only are we optimising the production and consumption of renewable energy, but we are also contributing to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and the fight against climate change. The social aspect of our model is also absolutely essential. We enable local communities to fight against energy poverty, while offering them access to local, renewable energy at an affordable price. This is a vital step towards achieving a sustainable and fair future for us all.”*



## About Belfius

### Meaningful & Inspiring for Belgian Society. Together

Belfius Bank & Insurance is a strong bank and insurance company owned by the Belgian federal state. With 160 years of experience in the public sector behind it and 60 years in the personal customer segment, Belfius has deep local roots in Belgium's economy and society:

- partner of 3.8 million personal, self-employed and SME customers
- leading provider in the Corporate and Business market
- leading bank in the public and non-profit sector
- dominant brand in Life and Non-Life insurance
- leading bank for Private and Wealth Management

The very particular attention focused on customer satisfaction and sustainability enables Belfius to achieve excellent results each year.

## About WeSmart

WeSmart provides a digital platform and specialist services for managing energy communities. WeSmart combines expertise, collective participation and technology for reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions. We are committed to creating a more sustainable economy by offering solutions for energy transition. Established by specialists with many years of experience in the energy and environment sector as software engineers, data experts and energy consultants, WeSmart works in co-creation with its customers.

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### WeSmart

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