

## Belgium school energy storage

Belfius Bank and the "Secr tariat G n ral de l'Enseignement Catholique" (SeGEC, General Secretariat of Catholic Education) announce a major investment programme, with the support of the EIB and the EU mechanism ELENA, to equip more than 1,000 schools in Brussels and Wallonia with solar panels over the next four years. It will represent an investment of some EUR 23 million to make school buildings more sustainable for 475,000 pupils.

The aim of this ambitious four-year programme is to make our school buildings more sustainable and thus contribute to reducing CO2 emissions, while at the same time reducing the energy bill for the 800 or so organisational bodies of Catholic education in the French and German-speaking Communities.

Thanks to ELENA (European Local ENergy Assistance) grants, SeGEC and Belfius Bank have entrusted expert consultancy offices with the task of drafting specifications for the launch of a framework contract for the whole of Wallonia and Brussels, as well as the development of a digital platform on which schools will be able not only to simulate the ideal size of their installation and the financial impact of their investment, but also to place an order directly with the supplier, who will be awarded the contract.

All Catholic schools have been duly informed, from the smallest rural school to the High Schools. The awarding of the contract is expected to take place soon, which will give the effective start of this unprecedented wave of installation of thousands of solar panels on the roofs of those schools, the final cost of which is expected to be around EUR 23,000,000.

SeGEC will ensure the smooth running of the installations and will then take over the complete management of the operation. Belfius Bank will continue to support the project as a financial partner.

Dirk Gyselinck, Executive Director Wealth, Enterprises & Public of Belfius Bank: "This commitment by Belfius to SeGEC, to equip about a thousand schools with solar panels, fits perfectly with our ESG objectives as a bank-insurer, in particular our ambition to contribute to a significant reduction of CO2 emissions in our country, in the interests of people, the environment and society. We are therefore particularly pleased to provide concrete support to these schools in their energy transition and thus help Belgian society as a whole to move forward."

Belfius Bank & Insurance is an integrated bank-insurer owned by the Belgian federal government, which is anchored in all segments of the Belgian economy and society: a partner of 3.7 million private individuals, the self-employed and SMEs, a major player in the large corporate market and a reference bank in the public and non-profit sectors. It is also a strong brand in life and non-life insurance.

The General Secretariat of Catholic Education (SeGEC) federates the basic and secondary schools, High



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Schools and Colleges of Art, the Catholic social promotion establishments and the free Psycho-Medical-Social Centres.

The ELENA technical assistance facility is a joint initiative of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Commission. It provides non-repayable grants for technical assistance to help the public and private sectors prepare sustainable projects. This supports investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy for buildings and urban transport. ELENA's activities are currently covered by the InvestEU programme.

In late September 2022, Secr tariat g n ral de l'enseignement catholique (SeGEC), Belfius Banque, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the DUSS consultancy launched a major project to equip private schools with solar panels. A year and a half later, all of the partners together with Reno.energy -- the company that won the installation call for tenders in 2023 -- have stated that the project has so far been a success.

The EIB has agreed to support construction of seven new secondary schools in Hertfordshire, Berkshire and Bedfordshire that will improve education facilities and school life for thousands of children in the Home Counties.

The project aims to make a significant contribution to the energy grid by providing stored renewable energy during periods of low solar and wind energy production, this will reduce the reliance on coal and gas power plants.

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