

Scaling Stories



The ASTER Model

ASTER is a social utility business model in Flanders, providing Belgium’s cheapest green electricity to social housing tenants. Since their founding in 2020, ASTER has installed over 140,000 solar panels across almost 14,000 homes, financed through a €150m bank loan and with no reliance on subsidies or household contributions. Today, ASTER is the largest owner of residential solar panel installations in Belgium. An open-source organisational architecture available for others to replicate, ASTER is designed explicitly with large-scale in mind - not just one-off pilots.

The ASTER model works because it leverages and integrates mature innovations, packaged into a consumer-focussed energy service, and delivered through professionalised companies:

Policy

ASTER leverages Belgium’s “social tariff” energy policy, selling on-site solar energy to social housing tenants up to 10% cheaper than the lowest social tariff. For customers not entitled to a social tariff, the price is up to 30% cheaper than the lowest commercial tariff (as low as €0,19/kWh vs Flemish grid average of €0,26/kWh). In 2026, **ASTER has established itself as a white label energy supplier** - *ASTER Energie* - soon able to sell affordable clean energy to all social tenants through the grid, regardless of having rooftop solar.

Economic

ASTER is an **energy cooperative** that bundles 41 separate social housing provider members into a single investment vehicle. This aggregation **lowers transaction costs** and enables large-scale, cost-efficient, and standardised procurement of energy services. ASTER relieves balance-sheet pressures from their social housing manager members, while helping them achieve their climate and social objectives.

Social

ASTER pivots away from volunteer-reliant energy communities, towards a **professional and market-oriented business model** that delivers affordable, clean, and simple energy services to underserved social housing consumers. A network of regional professionals ensures quality and a stable energy price, backed by service contracts and clearly defined energy system typologies.

Technology

ASTER **leverages mature, affordable, and low-risk clean energy technologies** including solar, storage and energy management systems. This supports predictable and long-term cash-flow, and a bankable offering for financiers. Their technology architecture supports standardised energy system configurations, remaining flexible enough to integrate new components and access new energy market opportunities.



The energy transition will be inclusive, or it will not happen at all. With ASTER, underserved families save more than €1m per year on their energy bills.

Sven van Elst, General Manager

