Solar Monkey drove solar panel adoption in the Netherlands and is ready to do the same across Europe

When thinking about the energy transition, what first comes to mind are often solar panels, wind mills and heat pumps. But these technologies need effective system enablers to reach the market at scale. Solar Monkey is an excellent example of such an enabler, both in their catalysing effect on solar panel adoption and as an example of business opportunities that only appear if you look deeper under the hood to see how markets really work.

[Solar Monkey](https://solarmonkey.nl/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=leadgen&gclid=CjwKCAiA3KefBhByEiwAi2LDHDkdwEQgSh3WEn2RwcHmGi7CFcO_NRluSNqNXn6SmfcfdnSxKcrTCBoCHLgQAvD_BwE)’s software makes selling and planning solar panel installation as simple as abc. As the market leader, their impact on solar panel adoption in the Netherlands has arguably been decisive in lifting the country [to the global top](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/the-netherlands-unquestionable-solar-energy-leader-of-2022-study/) when it comes to the amount of solar panels per inhabitant. A recent €4 million investment will further accelerate Solar Monkey’s growth abroad, and help other European countries transition to renewable energy faster.

SolarMonkey’s journey started on an Amsterdam attic, after the company’s founders were confronted with the time-consuming research and planning required for solar panel installation, which also drove up prices and made the sales process exhaustive. After a journey of exploring various ideas and business models, they identified that complexity as an opportunity. Jan Pieter Versluijs, co-founder of Solar Monkey:

“Soon after our decision to make a B2B SAAS solution to facilitate solar panel installation companies, we joined incubator YES!Delft. An important benefit of this incubator is its valuable business ecosystem, of which experienced entrepreneurs and investors are part, among many other parties.” Jan Pieter Versluijs

One of the most valuable learnings from their [YES!Delft](https://www.yesdelft.com/) period, was to attract paying customers at an early stage. Those early conversations with customers are of critical importance for building a product that effectively solves a real problem. “Our customers were able to grow faster because of our solution, which in turn not only benefitted our company but also drove solar panel adoption and contributed to the energy transition in the Netherlands as well.”

A major sales driver for SolarMonkey’s customers is the ability to accurately forecast and even guarantee energy yield, a very attractive proposition for solar panel buyers. This accuracy builds on SolarMonkeys ability to acquire a set of relevant data sources such as 3D maps, location-based solar power fluctuations etc. These data sources are integrated in SolarMonkey’s products.

The solar panel installation service only has to insert the data from their solar panel supplier. “One of our major unique selling points is the ease of use of our product. No calculations are required whatsoever, all the math is hidden onder the hood of our extensively optimised user interface,” says Jan Pieter. He believes that this feature makes their product so much more attractive to use than their competitors, not the least because it minimises error.

Their software, which is used for about 400,000 solar panel quotes annually in the Netherlands amounting to about 25-30% market share, combined with attractive subsidies from the Dutch government, has catalysed solar panel installation in the Netherlands. A fun fact is that although the Netherlands is known for traditional windmills and bicycles, the solar panel market is now larger than the bicycle market in terms of revenue.

**Part of The Hague’s impact business ecosystem**

Solar Monkey is a valuable member of the business ecosystem in The Hague. “As a mature impact scale-up, Solar Monkey adds valuable experience and skills to the impact community in our city,” says Coos Santing, programme manager at ImpactCity. “They have overcome many of the challenges that the startups are facing today and can give them hands-on advice. This diversity, in business maturity as well as in expertise, culture and personality is exactly what makes business communities thrive, and what we opted for in our impact business ecosystem,” he continues.

Solar Monkey has seen this business community grow as a result of the efforts and investments of [ImpactCity](https://storiesofpurpose.thehague.com/impact/hagues-commitment-its-impact-business-community-and-how-world-benefits), ever since the company outgrew the premises of tech incubator YES!Delft and settled at The Hague Tech, a vibrant tech community at the economic centre of The Hague. More recently, YES!Delft also opened its first satellite hub at The Hague Tech, as part of ImpactCity’s efforts to facilitate the tech community. “Being part of an entrepreneurial community such as The Hague Tech has numerous benefits,” says Jan Pieter. “First of all it is really inspirational and energising to hear other businesses ideas and how they achieve results and solve problems along the way. As we grow our companies, we all face more or less similar growth pains.”