

PORTUGUESE RENEWABLES ACCELERATION ZONES

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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SUMÁRIO

The Portuguese Government has launched a public consultation on the draft Sectoral Programme for the Implementation of Renewables Acceleration Zones (*Programa Setorial das Zonas de Aceleração da Implantação de Energias Renováveis – “PSZAER”*), the instrument that identifies the future Renewables Acceleration Zones (*Zonas de Aceleração de Energias Renováveis – “ZAER”*) in mainland Portugal.

The ZAER stem from the transposition of [Directive \(EU\) 2023/2413 \(RED III\)](#) and are intended to accelerate the deployment of solar and wind energy projects by simplifying licensing procedures and reducing the administrative and environmental burdens associated with project development.

The public consultation runs until 15 July 2026 on the [PARTICIPA](#) portal.

I. What are the ZAER

The ZAER are areas of the Portuguese mainland territory identified as particularly suitable for the installation of renewable energy generation projects, on the basis of:

- Availability of a solar or wind resource;
- Proximity to electricity grid infrastructure;
- Compatibility with the territorial management instruments;
- Low environmental sensitivity;
- Lower potential for conflict with other land uses.

The aim is to concentrate the development of new projects in previously assessed areas, thereby reducing licensing times and increasing regulatory predictability for developers. In any event, the ZAER are not exclusive areas: projects may still be developed outside them under the general rules.

2. No environmental assessment within the ZAER

The main advantage of the ZAER is the simplification of the environmental licensing process.

As a rule, larger renewable energy projects are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (*Avaliação de Impacte Ambiental* – “**AIA**”), a procedure that can significantly extend development timelines and costs.

Within the ZAER, projects are exempt from AIA.

This exemption is possible because the environmental impacts have already been assessed in advance through the Strategic Environmental Assessment (*Avaliação Ambiental Estratégica* – “**AAE**”) carried out under the PSZAER. Rather than analysing each project individually, the environmental assessment is performed upfront for the set of areas identified as suitable for renewable energy deployment.

The AIA exemption does not, however, remove the obligation to comply with the other applicable environmental rules, in particular the existing legal constraints and the obtaining of the opinions, authorisations or licences required by law.

3. What is the PSZAER?

The PSZAER is the planning instrument through which the State identifies the ZAER.

The PSZAER:

- Identifies the areas with potential for inclusion in the ZAER;
- Establishes implementation criteria;
- sets out guidelines for the competent public authorities;
- Frames the future adaptation of the municipal spatial planning instruments.

As a planning instrument, the PSZAER is directly binding on public authorities, but does not produce immediate effects on private parties.

To take full effect at local level, its guidelines will subsequently have to be incorporated by the municipalities into their respective municipal master plans (*planos diretores municipais* – “**PDM**”).

According to the timetable published by the Mission Structure for the Licensing of Renewable Energy Projects 2030 (*Estrutura de Missão para o Licenciamento de Projetos de Energias Renováveis 2030* – “**EMER 2030**”), this adaptation is expected to take place between 2026 and 2028.

4. The Green Map in numbers

The so-called “Green Map” is the cartographic representation of the areas considered suitable to host renewable projects, after excluding the zones that are environmentally constrained or incompatible with such infrastructure. It is an indicative reference and does not yet correspond to the definitive delimitation of the ZAER. Confirmation of the selected areas will depend on the planning process being carried through and on its coordination with the municipal territorial management instruments.

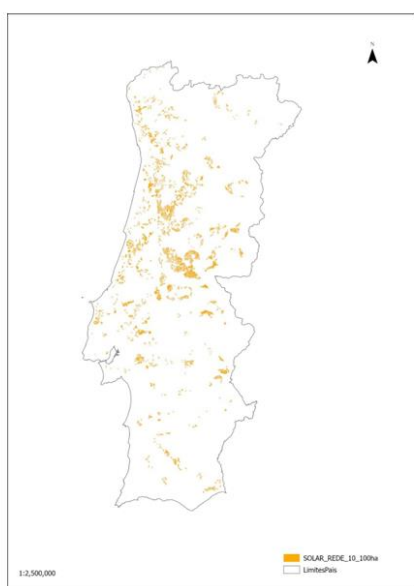


Figura 1 - Síntese das áreas mapeadas para solar PV. A figura mostra o resultado da aplicação dos critérios de exclusão combinado com as áreas com valor de recurso solar acima do valor limiar (GHI>1600kWh/ano), com mais de 100ha e a menos de 10km de uma subestação da RNT/RND.

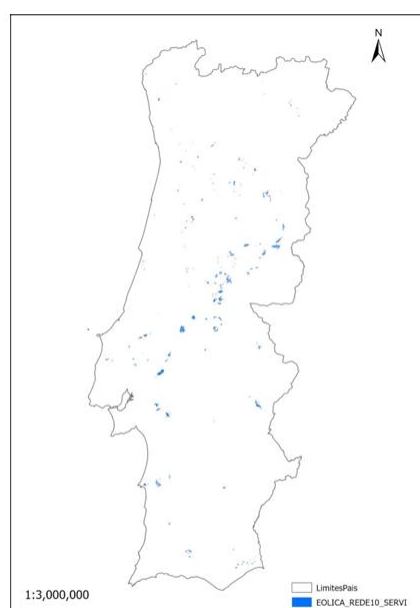


Figura 2 - Síntese das áreas mapeadas para eólica. A figura mostra o resultado da aplicação dos critérios de exclusão combinado com as áreas com valor de recurso eólico acima do valor limiar (INEPS>2100 h/ano), com mais de 20ha. No caso da tecnologia eólica não se considera a distância a uma subestação da RND/RNT.

The “Green Map”: areas suitable for solar PV (left) and wind (right).

In total, 1,302 zones were mapped across the country — 792 for solar energy and 510 for wind energy — corresponding to around 371,348 hectares suitable for solar PV and 84,489 hectares for wind.

The territorial distribution is uneven.

For solar energy, the most prominent regions are Coimbra, Viseu Dão Lafões, Lezíria do Tejo, the Leiria Region and the Porto Metropolitan Area.

For wind energy, the greatest concentration is found in the Beiras e Serra da Estrela, Beira Baixa and Lezíria do Tejo regions.

ZAER mapped: 792 solar and 510 wind, 1,302 zones in total



5. Deadline and participation

The public consultation runs from 17 June to 15 July 2026 via the [PARTICIPA](#) portal.

The documents made available include:

- The draft PSZAER;
- The Environmental Report of the Strategic Environmental Assessment;
- Its non-technical summary;
- The opinions gathered from the consulted entities;
- Supporting studies in the areas of energy, ecology, landscape, cultural heritage, spatial planning and geospatial information.

Contributions may be submitted by citizens, municipalities, associations, environmental entities, network operators, developers and other interested parties.

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