

APREN is preparing a licensing guide for onshore renewable energy projects

The initiative has the collaboration of APA and DGEG and aims to simplify and clarify the licensing process for onshore renewable projects. The beginning of the project was celebrated with a debate between the three entities.

[APREN – The Portuguese Renewable Energy Association](#) is preparing a licensing guide for onshore renewable energy projects in collaboration with the two public entities that manage and are responsible for these processes in Portugal - the Portuguese Environment Agency (APA) and the General Directorate of Energy and Geology (DGEG).

The document, which is being developed with the support of BioInsight, a consultancy company, aims to clarify all stages of the licensing process for onshore renewable projects, to make the procedures simpler and more expeditious.

The elaboration of the guide gained special relevance after the announcement of the European Commission's REPowerEU strategy, which places renewables at the center of a European energy security plan, driven by the need to ensure energy independence and security of supply. The final consumption target for energy from renewable sources will rise from the current 40% to 45%.

The new strategy foresees that renewable projects are considered of public interest, that go to areas are established for their installation and that they go forward by tacit approval.

Debate over the need of an onshore licensing guide for Renewable projects:

To mark the initiative, APREN organized a debate between the three entities. Pedro Amaral Jorge (President of the Board of APREN), Maria José Espírito Santo (Deputy Director of DGEG) and Nuno Lacasta (President of APA) discussed the importance of the guide with the moderation of Susana Serôdio (Head of Policy and Market Intelligence at APREN).

Pedro Amaral Jorge underlined the importance of properly dimensioning the entities responsible for licensing so that it is possible to meet the goals.

“Renewables now are not just an answer to environmental sustainability issues. We are talking about security of supply, energy independence and the country's economic competitiveness”, he stressed.

Pedro Amaral Jorge defends an increase in the capillarity of the connection points to the electricity grid to accommodate the necessary expansion. The Chairman of the Board of APREN has already requested an audience with the Minister of Finance to demonstrate

the advantages of accelerating renewables in the development of the economy, tax revenue, GDP growth and increased employment.

“It makes no sense to apply blind budgetary control rules in an area that will boost the country's socio-economic development with growth in the contribution to GDP, increase tax revenue and generate more than 200,000 jobs”, he underlined.

Nuno Lacasta congratulated all partners on the development of the guide, which will be very useful, and which should therefore be completed quickly.

“It would be great if the guide was the result of a consensus between the different stakeholders and that we could follow it as we follow ISO-type certifications”, he suggested.

For Maria José Espírito Santo, in addition to the guide, which will be an indispensable tool, it will be necessary to focus on raising awareness and informing the municipalities, so that Portugal can achieve the goals to which it is bound.

“Some municipalities are acting as an obstacle to many processes, not only for lack of a timely response, but often for lack of knowledge. It is necessary to realize that this is a national challenge and not the objective of a particular company. We all must work together to fulfil this purpose”, he warned.

Guide is already in progress:

The project to prepare the licensing guide began in March with the establishment of a technical monitoring committee that includes elements from APREN, APA and DGEG. The guide will be dedicated, in a first phase, to onshore renewable wind, solar and hydro energy projects, but the ambition is that it can be extended to other typologies, as explained by APREN's Head of Policy and Market Intelligence, Susana Serôdio.

The structure of the guide is defined, and content is already being developed. In the meantime, collaborative sessions will be held, namely with APREN members and other entities, to collect contributions.

At a previous moment, APREN, in collaboration with the official entities, had already carried out a mapping of the critical points of the licensing that was sent to the tutelage. The association undertook to make its contribution in this area by developing a licensing guide, a project that is now being developed and should be completed by the end of the year.

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About APREN:

[The Portuguese Renewable Energy Association \(APREN\)](#) is a non-profit association founded in October 1988. Its mission is to coordinate and represent the common interests of its members, promoting renewables energies in the electricity field.

APREN works closely with the government and other official entities, both on a national and international levels. It participates actively in the definition of energy and environmental policies, valuing natural resources for electricity production, namely hydric, wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, biogas, and urban solid waste