

Renewable energy growth lisbon

The second edition of Portugal's most important energy event focused on the central role of green hydrogen in the country's future energy landscape. The trade show also highlighted the need to accelerate the growth of the solar sector.

Portuguese Environment Minister Maria da Graça Carvalho, who took office in April 2024, opened the Lisbon Energy Summit with an update on the government's next strategic steps in renewable energy. She announced a EUR140 million (\$152 million) auction for green hydrogen and biomethane, covering investment over the next 10 years. However, she also revealed plans to reduce the previous government's target of 10 GW of offshore wind in 10 years.

"We want to support the development of this technology, but not to an extent that is prohibitively expensive," said da Graça Carvalho. She did not comment on the Portuguese government's solar or storage strategy.

Green hydrogen and renewable gases drew the most attention at the hydrogen and decarbonization Conference. The event focused on efforts to decarbonize the transport and industrial sectors with renewable gases. A gold-rush atmosphere emerged in Portugal's hydrogen industry after two Portuguese projects won EUR329 million in contracts from the first European Hydrogen Bank tender.

"Nobody knows exactly how the sector will develop," said Tiago Gonçalves, a representative for Iberdrola Portugal. "Even the winning consortium MadoquaPower2X has stated that the progress of the project is uncertain due to the lack market maturity."

The exhibitors included several solar and energy storage companies. The importers, wholesalers and manufacturers were both optimistic and skeptical about the prospects for PV in Portugal:

"Demand for PV in Portugal is currently stagnating due to a lack of subsidies and the low price of electricity," Hugo Moura, manager of trading show company Parinox, told pv magazine.

Francesco Tondo, a sales director for battery manufacturer Exide Technologies, agreed, noting the number of visitors to the Lisbon Energy Summit and the event's audience. Despite growing price cannibalization, Portugal's storage market has been held back by a lack of viable business models.

"In countries like Germany with mature battery markets, batteries currently have a turnover of five to six years, in Portugal it is seven to eight years, and with high self-consumption even up to ten years," said Pilar Bójar, another sales manager for Exide Technologies. "Nevertheless, we have projects in Portugal, because more and more companies want to meet their decarbonization commitments with a completely green energy supply."

Subsidies for PV, as well as incentives and business models for battery storage, would revive Portugal's PV and storage market, said many industry representatives in Lisbon. However, lengthy permitting processes are paralyzing the Portuguese solar market.

"We need fewer entities involved, working on the same processes in parallel but without coordination," stated Jos? Eduardo Pereira, business development manager at certifier ISQ.

The new Mission Structure for the Licensing of Renewable Energy Projects (EMER 2030) could change this. This entity aims to significantly speed up permitting processes for renewable energy projects in Portugal. It seeks to bridge the gap through cooperation between the government, project developers, and investors.

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