

# RENEWABLE ENERGY DISPUTES ON THE RISE IN PORTUGAL - AAA ADVOGADOS

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**Investors in Portugal's renewable energy market have endured a turbulent few years. Profitable projects ran into difficulties in 2012 after the Portuguese government cut back on generous industry incentives as part of its bailout plan.**

Lawyers active in this area have mixed feelings about the repercussions – the lucrative projects are fewer, but a rise in related disputes with the government has made up for any decreases in project work.

"Clearly, I prefer to be involved in developing the projects," says Vitor Pereira das Neves, partner at AAA Advogados. "If you ask me if we've had a reduced flow of work in the last few years, I'd have to say 'no' – for energy lawyers the nature of the work has changed but the volume of the work has been the same. Some disputes are already in court and some are preparing their petitions. We are representing some of these investors. This is taking up a lot of my time."

Such renewables projects are not only generating litigation work, many lawyers are also advising

investors on how to restructure these projects so they are more profitable. Despite the problems that some older renewables projects have faced, Pereira das Neves is optimistic about the appetite for new investment. "I believe that we are now starting a new phase," he says. "There will be new solar projects, and the regime that is applicable to these projects is very different to those applicable to the old projects. The Portuguese state has announced it will launch a new procedure for granting more access to the grids for solar projects. New projects will be designed to take into consideration these new rules. Older projects never considered these risks, whereas new projects are considering the risks from the beginning."