

## AERIF Board visit to Portugal

In October 2021, the board of directors visited two clean energy plants in Portugal which are part of the AERI portfolio.

The board was joined by a delegation from Aquila Capital, represented by the Head of Asset Management Hydropower Christian Heidfeld, Senior Investment Manager Hydropower Eduardo Fonseca and Senior Manager Portfolio Advisory Michael Anderson. The trip was organised by Lars Meisinger, Head of International Client Advisory, and his team.

### Day 1: Kick-off and in-person exchange with the colleagues at the Aquila office in Lisbon

The journey started at the local Aquila Capital office in Lisbon. After months of virtual meetings and interactions, the visitors enjoyed the opportunity to meet and exchange with the local Aquila asset management teams in Portugal to learn more about the daily operations around the energy plants and the strategic importance behind Aquila's hands-on asset management approach.

*"Everyone enjoyed the opportunity of a personal exchange, which has been one of the most important aspects of the visit. Not only the board members appreciated connecting with the local Aquila teams, also our colleagues in Lisbon were eager to interact with the directors as the interface to the investors and showcase their activities",* said Lars Meisinger, Head of International Client Advisory Aquila Group.



Our legal partners from Uría Menéndez kindly followed the invitation to set the scene for the country visit by providing an outlook on the Portuguese renewables market for the upcoming decade. In this meeting, the directors had the opportunity to debate the company's investment proposition with an external party and gain further insights on the Portuguese policy framework around renewable investments.

Subsequently, the local hydropower and solar teams performed briefings on their respective fields of expertise and their activities on the board. The previous presentation enabled the board members to contextualise the presented projects and the local management approach to the expected development and regulatory environment of the market. The board was also provided with security instructions for the scheduled site visits, which included the distribution of appropriate protective gear including helmets, protective boots and high visibility vests.

### Visiting the Solar PV park “Vale de Alto” in Minde, Azambuja

After a joint lunch with the Lisbon colleagues, the group headed to the first site visit one hour north of Lisbon. The visited solar PV park forms part of the Benfica III portfolio, which has an installed capacity of 18MW and represents 35% of the Portuguese solar exposure in the AERI portfolio. The plant is located near Minde in the Azambuja municipality, a mountainous region close to the sea with favorable characteristics for renewable energy generation. Windy conditions allow for an effective solar production in this area as it provides additional cooling for the modules while still achieving high levels of solar radiation due to the additional altitude.

The group was accompanied by local asset manager David Silva, who coordinated the site visit together with the colleagues from the O&M provider Infratec. The team got the chance to learn all about operational day-to-day activities performed on-site and obtained a first-hand impression of the importance of asset management functions in ensuring reliable production volumes.





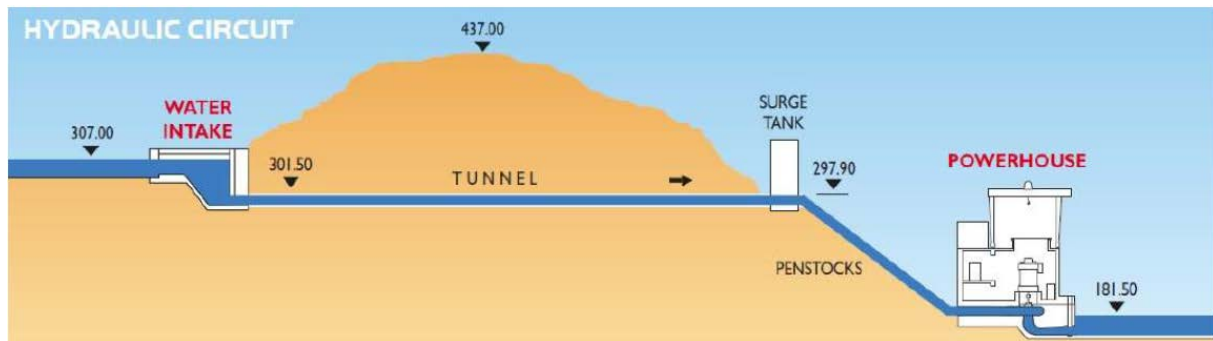
*“It’s great that we finally had the opportunity to meet and exchange with our German colleagues and the board of directors as the representatives of our investors. I have always been passionate about my work and enjoyed the opportunity to showcase our activities we perform on the ground. Solar energy is a safe and cost-competitive clean energy source and by assuring its reliable operation we can unlock its immense potential”, says David Silva, Asset Manager Solar Portugal.*



## **Day 2 - Heading North: Visit of the Hydroelectric Power Plant “Terragido”**

The next day the group travelled further north to visit one of the 19 hydropower plants included in Sagres, the hydropower portfolio of which AERI holds 18% of the shares. The site is located close to Vila Real, a city located at the frontier of the Douro Valley. The region experiences high precipitation levels in winter months (between 1500mm to 1900mm), which are expected to increase by 30 – 50% annually in the next decade. Accompanied by a mild climate, the region not only provides favorable conditions for hydropower investments, but also forms one of the most prestigious wine regions in Europe. The Terragido dam has been inaugurated in 1992 and has a production capacity of 12MW, thereby representing one of the larger plants in the small-scale hydropower plant portfolio.

The group was accompanied by our local asset management colleagues Nuno Figuera, Head of Hydropower Portugal and Project Manager Monica Piedade. The team coordinated the site visit with the O&M partners of WHS around Joao Perreira, whose team has welcomed the visitors with a security briefing and protective fitting of appropriate gear before accompanying the group to the remotely situated sites. The visit was threefold; the first stop was at the dam, where the water is collected and directed to a surge tank through a tunnel. The team continued to inspect the surge tank, where a steep pipe releases the water to create a current which enables the turbine in the powerhouse. The visit concluded at the powerhouse where the electricity is finally generated.



[Scheme of the water flow for the Sagres hydropower plant Terragido]

Throughout the visit, the board members actively engaged with the present investment and asset managers to gain a better understanding on the technical aspects behind the hydro power production. “It has been a great opportunity to learn more about the complexities behind the daily operations of these plants and to exchange with the technical operators on site. The team impressed us with their in-depth knowledge and passion for the technology. The local Aquila managers provide a direct interface with the O&M teams. It is a true value-add for our investors to have this strong expertise on the ground.”, says Patricia Rodrigues, Member of AERI management board.



[Christian Heidfeld (left) and Monica Piedade (right), demonstrating the production scheme to the board members]

The trip concluded with a joint picnic with the larger Portuguese hydropower team. In a calm setting with less background noise stemming from flowing water or running turbines, the group enjoyed the personal exchange where apart from technical queries could be answered in more detail. After two days filled with interesting discussions and insightful impressions the board members headed back to the airport. All emissions associated with the site visit (Flights, Hotels, Transport) were offset in cooperation with AQ GreenTec through the acquisition of high-quality carbon credits from a certified (Gold Standard) Wind energy project in India.



