



### **Terms of Reference**

Follow-up report of the [Overview of Renewable Energy Spatial Planning and Designation of Acceleration Areas in Selected EU Member States](#)

### **BACKGROUND**

BirdLife Europe, CAN Europe, EEB, WWF EPO and TNC are seeking a consultant to produce a follow-up to their [joint report on the overview of spatial planning in EU Member States](#), contributing to strategies for accelerating the permitting of renewable energy projects in a sustainable, fair and nature-positive way.

RED III mandates EU Member States (MS) to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy (RES) projects through coordinated spatial planning and the designation of Renewable Acceleration Areas (RAAs). The initial "Overview of Renewable Energy Spatial Planning and Designation of Acceleration Areas in Selected EU Member States" report (May 2024) provided an in-depth analysis of the status of spatial planning and RAA designation in six EU MS: Estonia, Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland, and Portugal. The analysis included clear recommendations at both EU and national levels to develop a robust spatial planning framework and ensure the adequate and efficient designation of RAAs.

As the 21 May 2025 deadline for MS to carry out coordinated spatial planning (under RED III, Article 15b) approaches, there is a clear need to take stock of progress. A key challenge remains the lack of readily available examples of lessons learned, good practices, and strategies to overcome barriers, particularly for MS struggling to implement coordinated planning effectively. This planning must respect the needs of nature conservation, key economic sectors, and broader societal aspirations, while also engaging and informing local communities and stakeholders.

Now that Member States have begun the mapping and planning process, a deeper and more nuanced understanding of both barriers and successful strategies is essential. The update of the initial overview aims to further explore lessons learned and highlight emerging best practices.

BirdLife Europe, CAN Europe, EEB, WWF EPO and TNC aim to commission a follow-up study to update and expand the findings, incorporating developments in the same six EU MS and adding additional MS. The follow-up study will track progress in spatial planning reforms, analyse remaining barriers, showcase good examples, and provide actionable recommendations for policy implementation and advocacy.

### **AIM & SCOPE**

- Update national overviews: provide an updated analysis of spatial planning frameworks and RAA designation progress in the six MS considered in the first report (Estonia, Germany, Greece, Spain, Poland, and Portugal), and with 4 additional (France, Italy, Croatia and Czech Republic) to provide a broader understanding of spatial planning trends across the EU.
- Assess key developments: analyse how spatial planning policies, sensitivity mapping - including wildlife and biodiversity sensitivity mapping-, and public engagement have evolved since the 2024 report at the EU and the national levels.
- Identify remaining barriers: evaluate persistent challenges in designating RAAs, including legal, administrative, environmental, mapping-related and social obstacles, At the same time, identify key enablers and good practices from the selected MS in addressing the same topics.
- Provide strategic policy recommendations targeted to the Commission and the MS as well as technical implementation recommendations to tackle the mapping barriers identified above to enhance spatial planning processes and accelerate RES deployment across the EU.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study is expected to follow the methodology below, with the final report, approx 30 pages, to be launched mid/end of June via a public webinar.

<p><b>Task 1a - Data Collection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Conduct desk research on policy developments, regulatory changes related to RES spatial planning, and implementation updates at EU level and in the selected MS.</li><li>● Engage with national stakeholders (NGOs, policymakers, siting specialists, academic and industry experts) through interviews, questionnaires etc.</li><li>● Compare findings with the 2024 report, highlighting progress, stagnation, or setbacks.</li></ul> <p><b>Task 1b - Best practice and case studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Update the analysis on the effectiveness of sensitivity mapping tools and methodological approaches, and the integration of public participation/ engagement campaigns and consultations in spatial planning processes for RES and dedicated grids infrastructure.</li></ul>	<p>A document detailing the data collected on EU and national policy developments &amp; regulatory changes related to RES spatial planning process of designation of renewables acceleration zones, and sensitivity mapping, and implementation updates at national level.</p> <p>A document listing best practices among the 10 MS selected related to sensitivity mapping tools and methodological approaches, and the integration of public engagement campaigns and consultations in spatial planning processes for RES and dedicated grids infrastructure.</p>	<p>Mid-May</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identify and detail best practices related to spatial planning, including for related grid infrastructure, sensitivity mapping, with nature-friendly approaches and public engagement</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Task 2 - Barrier Analysis &amp; Recommendations Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Investigate barriers and challenges hindering the development, implementation or improvement of spatial planning and sensitivity mapping across MS.</li> <li>● Based on the findings and the recommendations from the first report, develop a set of in-depth actionable recommendations tailored to each MS's unique challenges and needs. (jointly with BirdLife Europe, CAN Europe, EEB, TNC and WWF)</li> </ul>		End of May
<p><b>Task 3 - Report Compilation:</b> Integrate all findings, case studies, barriers, and recommendations into a cohesive report.</p>	<p><b>Draft Report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consolidation of all the findings, case studies, and recommendations.</li> <li>● To be shared with BirdLife Europe, CAN Europe, EEB, WWF for two rounds of</li> </ul>	Draft beginning of June

	<p>feedback</p> <p><b>Final Joint Report:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporate the feedback received (two rounds) on the draft and finalise the report. This will be the primary deliverable detailing the state of spatial planning in selected MS, spotlighting best practices, highlighting barriers, and offering recommendations.</li> </ul>	<p>Final report by mid-June</p>
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### **TIMELINE & BUDGET**

Budget foreseen: a maximum of EUR 29.000 total budget (VAT incl.).

Start date: As soon as possible

Deadline for proposals: Tuesday 08 April

End date: By the delivery of final report- mid/end of June

*The signature of the consulting contract is pending the approval of a grant to be signed with ECF in the course of April.*

### **LOGISTICAL SUPPORT**

This consultancy does not include any logistical support

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For clarifications and queries, please contact Flore Belin [flore.belin@caneurope.org](mailto:flore.belin@caneurope.org)