



Sines 'gamechanging' €1.3 billion investment plan "attracts no bidders"

By **Natasha Donn** - 8th April 2021

The PS government's hugely ambitious plan to transform Sines into Europe's premier container terminal – capable of moving more than seven million ultra large containers per year ([click here](#)) – has fallen flat, another victim of the ongoing pandemic.

When it was trailed with great enthusiasm back in 2019, the plan was described by economic news online Macauhub as having piqued the interest of "at least five Chinese consortiums, including COSCO Shipping (the largest Chinese shipping company)".

Last year, former British diplomat John Dobson wrote that there was also "very strong US interest in Sines, where firms want to expand the port's liquid natural gas terminal (LNG) in order to increase gas exports to Europe" – admitting that China was nonetheless "fighting hard to build a huge \$770 million Chinese-built container port in Sines, a key project in its Belt & Road Initiative of which Portugal became a member in 2018" ([click here](#)).

Now, just a few months on, Reuters reveals that everything has ground to a sorry halt.

The tender launched by the government in 2019, albeit extended to make up for the hiatus of Covid-19, expired on April 6 with not one bidder having emerged.

José Luís Cacho, president of the ports administration, told the news agency: "Naturally we are aware this pandemic context is not the best for a tender of this nature. There is a whole set of situations that did not favour the moment".

He stressed however that 52 entities – "including operators, financial companies and law firms – had expressed interest and had access to the tender documents".

Potential markets, beyond China and the United States, were "various European countries", South America and Israel.

What this news means for Portugal's overall 'masterplan' for the reindustrialisation of the country has not yet been explained ([click here](#)).

natasha.donn@algarveresident.com