

Deep Geological Conditions and Constrains for CO₂ Storage in the Setúbal Peninsula, Portugal

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Abstract — This paper describes the research conducted in order to identify potential CO₂ storage reservoirs in the Setúbal Peninsula, Portugal. The studied area is located in the southern sector of the Lusitanian Basin, the largest Portuguese Mesozoic sedimentary basin. Data from deep geological conditions was collected from oil and gas exploration wells and structural maps of the target geological horizons were processed from seismic reflection profiles. A potential reservoir for CO₂ storage in the Lower Cretaceous was identified and its volume was calculated based on kriging interpolation methods. Net-to-gross ratio and porosities were determined from geological logs. A total CO₂ storage capacity of 42 Mt was estimated. However, the lack of data about the lateral continuity of the seal, the presence of the most important Portuguese groundwater resources at shallower depths and the relatively high earthquake hazard, hinders the studied reservoir from offering the necessary geological conditions for a safe CO₂ storage in the studied area.

Keywords — CO₂ storage, reservoir and cap-rock, groundwater resources, seismicity, Portugal.

1 INTRODUCTION

The research described in this paper was carried out as part of the 'COMET' project launched under the European 7th Framework Programme, which aims to define an integrated transport infrastructure linking CO₂ sources and sinks for geological CO₂ storage in Portugal, Spain and Morocco. In Portugal, several potential sedimentary basins for CO₂ storage in deep saline aquifers were screened. The most important sedimentary basin is the Lusitanian Mesozoic Basin, in the south of which the studied area is located. In this work we describe the multi-disciplinary techniques used to assess potential geological CO₂ sinks in the Setúbal Peninsula. Geological data was collected from ~~existing geophysical logs, from oil and gas well data, from seismic reflection profiles and from reported geological studies of the reservoir horizons where they outcrop. Such an approach allowed to quantify the storage capacity and~~

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~~existing geophysical logs, from oil and gas well data, from seismic reflection profiles and from reported geological studies of the reservoir horizons where they outcrop. Such an approach allowed to quantify the storage capacity and~~ assess the potential of the reservoir for safe CO₂ storage.

2. GEOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE SETÚBAL PENINSULA

The Setúbal Peninsula is located at the southern sector of the Lusitanian basin, which was formed over a sequence of rift pulses and subsequent opening of the North Atlantic Ocean, between the Late Triassic and Early Cretaceous [1], [2], [3], [4]. The southern sector of the Lusitanian basin is limited to the north by the Tagus valley fault system and to the South by the Arrábida fault [5] (Fig. 1). The N-S Pinhal Novo fault, is the eastern border of the basin, separating the Paleozoic and overlying Cenozoic sediments from the more than 3 km thick Mesozoic sediments of the Setúbal peninsula. The Setúbal Peninsula is an open synclinal of Ceno-Mesozoic

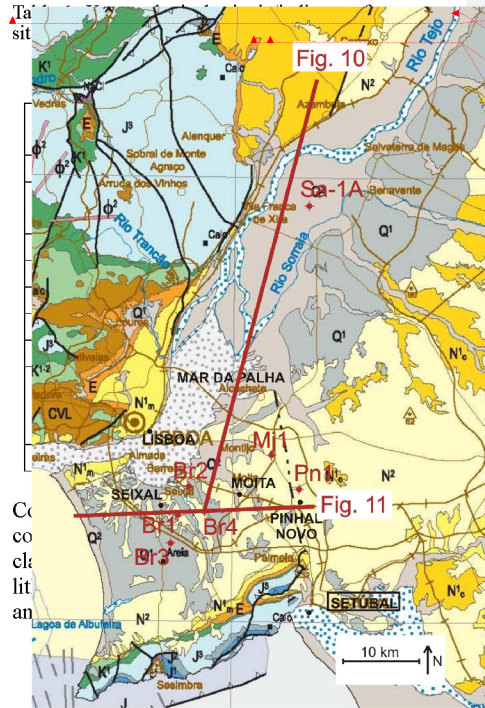
sediments, with an E-W trending axis. At the south border, the Cretaceous and Jurassic crop out at the Arrábida compressive chain. The lower and medium Jurassic sediments are affected by N-S faults and are sealed by the Upper Jurassic [5].

3. DATA AND METHODS

The site identification process relied on existing data from deep wells and seismic profiles. Information from oil and gas exploration wells was combined with structural maps of deep geological horizons from [6] and from [7].

3.1 Reservoir selection based on deep-wells

This study used geological information from the oil and gas exploration wells Br1, Br2, Br3, Br4 (near Barreiro), PN1 (Pinhal Novo), Mj1 (Montijo) and Sa-1A (Samora Correia) (Fig. 1). The potential CO₂ reservoirs and seal rocks were selected according to the criteria defined by Chadwick et al. [8], summarized in table 1. Table 2 outlines the key geological aspects (lithology, thickness, depth) of the selected reservoirs and seals identified from the studied wells.



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Pinhal Novo probable fault

		BACIAS MESO-CENOZÓICAS	
CENOZÓICO	Quaternário	Q1	Areias, cascalheiros, siltes e argilas
	Neógeno	Q2	Conglomerados, areilas, siltes e argilas
	Neógeno (intermédio)	N1	Areias, conglomerados e siltes
	Neógeno (inferior)	N2, N3, N4	N1 - Areias, argilas, conglomerados e calcários (pedregal calcário) N2 - Conglomerados, areias, calcários, siltes e argilas (pedregal marinho)
Paleógeno		E	Areias, areoles, conglomerados, argilas e siltes
	Cretácico	Superior	K1, K2
Intermédio		K3	Calcários (com rudistas no topo, a sul de Lisboa), arenitas, margas e dolomitos (magmatismo básico: 94-100 Ma)
Inferior		K4	Areias, calcários, margas e dolomitos (magmatismo básico: 135-130 Ma)
MESOZÓICO	Jurássico	J1	Calcários, margas e arenitas
	Jurássico	J2	Calcários, margas e dolomitos
	Jurássico	J3	Calcários, margas e dolomitos
	Jurássico	J4	Areias, argilas e arenites com intercalações carbonatadas
			Magmatismo básico, vulcânico

Fig 1. Geological map [9] with the location of the deep wells considered and the cross sections presented on figures 10 and 11.

Table 2. Summary of the identified reservoir and seal rocks based on the studied wells.

Well	Seal		Reservoir		Favorable?
Br1	1150 - 1170 m Red clays (Oligocene)	Favorable, although slightly thin	1170-1190 m Dolomitic limestone interbedded with sandstone, marlstone and limestone (Early Cretaceous)	1190 - 1240 m Sandstone with marly cement (Early Cretaceous)	medium favorable
Br2	645 - 685 m Carbonated and sandy clay (Cenozoic)	Favorable lithology but not ideal; does not fits the depth criteria	685 - 735 m Fine to coarse sandstone with carbonate cement, clay limestone with clay levels (Cenozoic)		Does not fit the depth criteria unfavorable
Br2	1100 - 1155 m Red clays (Cenozoic)	Suitable	1155 - 1185 m Sandy marlstone (Early Cretaceous.)	1185 - 1325 m Poorly consolidated sandstone with sandy marlstone and carbonated clay levels (Early Cretaceous)	highly favorable
Br3	865-925 m Carbonated clay intercalated with marly sandstone (Oligocene)	Favorable lithology	925 - 1240 m Sandy marl, coarse sandstone with carbonate cement, and dolomite interbedded with marlstone, limestone and carbonate-cemented sandstone (Early to Upper Cretaceous)	1240 - 1330 m Clay-cemented sandstone with sandy clay levels (Upper Jurassic.)	The presence of clay/marl could stratify the reservoir medium favorable unfavorable /3
Br4	1030 - 1151 m Sandstone with clay layers interbedded with clay (Paleogene)	Low to Medium Favorable	1210 - 1430 m Sandstone with clay layers interbedded with limestone (Early to Mid Cretaceous)	1430 - 1657 m Sandstone interbedded with clay and limestone (Upper Jurassic)	Low to Medium Favorable unfavorable

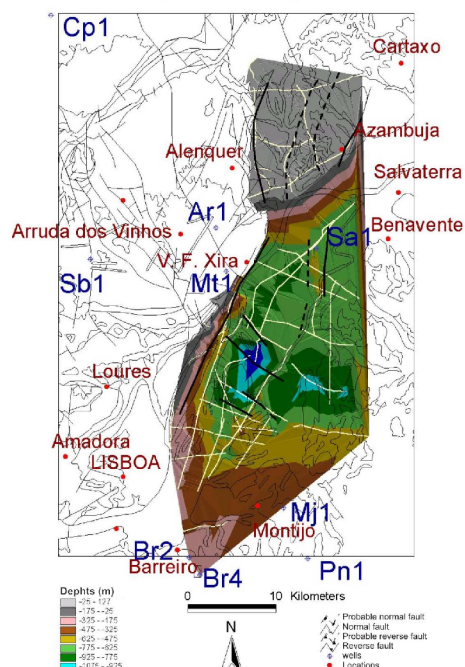
3.2 Analysis of time structure maps of selected geological horizons

The analysis of seismic reflection profiles enabled to characterize the overall geological structure of the study area. Four seismic horizons were considered, which correspond to surfaces inside the possible reservoir or cap-rocks: i) Intra-Neogene; ii) Approximate Top of the Paleogene; iii) Base of the Paleogene/approximate Top of the Cretaceous; iv) Approximate Top of the Jurassic. These horizons were obtained from a seismic to well-tie using well logs calibrated with checkshots, vertical seismic profiles and synthetic seismograms. The seismic reflection profiles were interpreted using the original processing by Lomholt et al. [7], later reprocessed and reinterpreted by Carvalho

[6]. Figures 2 to 5 show the depth and structure maps of these horizons [6].

Horizon 1: Intra-Neogene (sandstone, marlstone and limestone interbedded with clay; the reflector is a limestone bed)

This horizon is present in well Br1 at a depth of 300 m, and in Towards the N horizon is present in separate basins, separate 1075m and 107. To the W, SW al. Time-map occurs at progre The Neogene o small basins, a possible active



reservoir, the Neogene is of no interest since the thickness of the sandstones within the succession is unknown, while significant volume of unsuitable rock types, such as limestones and marls, are present. As a seal, the Neogene also does not appear to be interesting because the thickness and lateral continuity of the clay layers are not known.

Horizon 2: Approximate Top of the Paleogene (sandstone interbedded with clay and minor limestone levels (Br4); in Br1 and Br2 this horizon reaches thicknesses of several tens of meters)

The Top of Paleogene is intersected in well Br1 at a depth of 846 m; at well Br2 at an uncertain depth (the likely base of the Paleogene is at 1165 m); at well Br3 at a depth of 805 m; and well Br4 at a depth of 843 m.

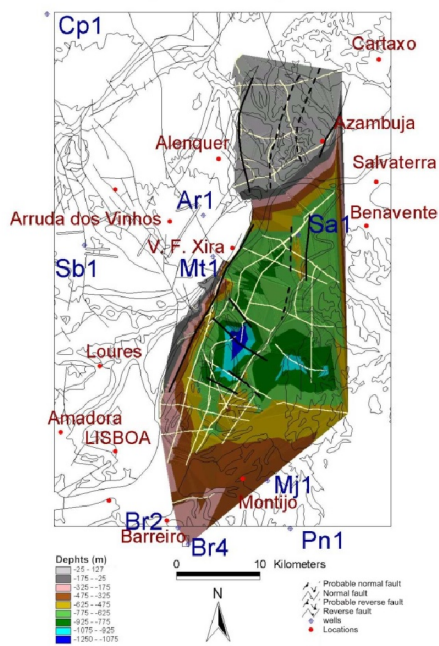


Fig 2. Depth and structure of the Intra-Neogene horizon in the Setúbal peninsula (from [6]).

To the NNE of the Barreiro wells, this horizon constitutes a NNE-SSW trending basin, down to a depth of 2500 m [6]. This basin coincides with the present-day Mar da Palha and with the

Western basin identified in the intra-Neogene horizon (fig 2).

The Lomholt et al. [7] Time-map confirms the presence of this basin and suggests the presence of another, smaller and deeper one to the East of Barreiro, roughly corresponding to the area of Moita.

The Paleogene has no interest as a reservoir, but can be a good seal. This formation, locally known as Formação de Benfica, are present in wells Br1 and Br2, in which they display favorable, although thin (20 and 55 m), clay levels. Its lateral continuity could not be assessed, but the formation is often described as a highly heterogeneous continental formation [11] composed of sequences of red conglomerates, sandstones, clay layers and marls. Permeability is usually low, even when conglomerates predominate, due to the presence of a clay cement.

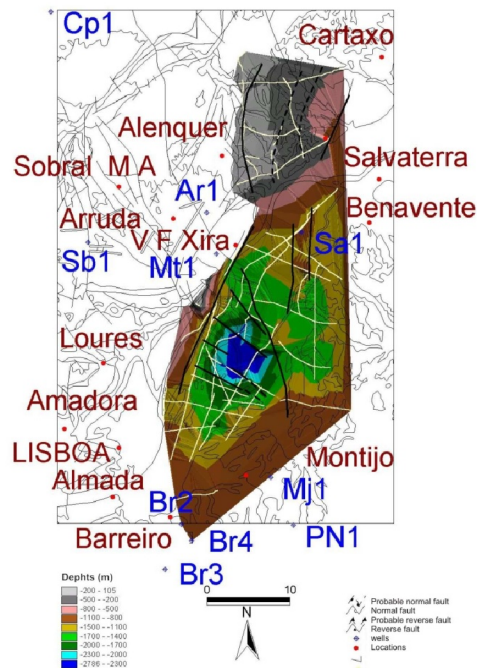


Fig 3. Depth and structure of the top of the Paleogene horizon in the Setúbal peninsula (from [6]).

Horizon 3: Base of the Paleogene/approximate Top of the Cretaceous (mostly sandstone)

This horizon occurs at depths in wells: Br1 – 1166 m; Br2 – 1155 m; Br3 – 925 m; Br4 – 1200 m. It is present at reasonable depths (below 800 m) in practically all the Setúbal Peninsula, Mar da Palha and Left bank of the Tagus River. In addition to the two basins mentioned for horizon 2 (Mar da Palha and Moita), a third basin can be defined in the Bay of Seixal. However, during the Cretaceous, the Mar da Palha depocenter appears to have shifted towards the South in comparison to its location during the Paleogene, at depths of 2000 – 2235 m according to Carvalho [6] or at a depth of 1800 m according to Lomholt et al. [7] (fig 4). At the Seixal and Moita basins this horizon occurs at a depth of 1300-1400m [7].

The Cretaceous sandstones have good reservoir characteristics since they occur at favorable depths and have enough thickness. The information from the wells show that this sandstone sequence contains thin marlstone and limestone layers, and a thickness of 70 m (Br1), 170 m (Br2), 220 m (Br4) and 310 m (Br3).

Fig 4. Depth and structure of the top of the Cretaceous horizon in the Setúbal peninsula (from [6]).

Horizon 4: Approximate Top of the Jurassic (mostly sandstone with thin layers of limestone and claystone)

This horizon occurs at the following depths in wells: Br4 – 1432 m; Br3 – 1240 m. In the remaining wells this horizon is mainly composed by limestone.

This horizon occurs at favorable depths (below 800m) throughout the Setúbal Peninsula, Mar da Palha and Left bank of the Tagus River. It defines the same three basins as described for the Cretaceous, however the Mar da Palha depocenter again shifted, but this time towards the North, in comparison to its location during the Cretaceous (Fig 5). To the NE of the Pinhal Novo fault this horizon is not recognized.

The Upper Jurassic sandstone has good reservoir characteristics, occurring at favorable depths.

The wells show a thickness of 90 m (Br3) and 220 m (Br4) for this sandstone which is interbedded with thin layers of limestone and claystone. This reservoir is in continuity with the overlapping Cretaceous reservoir.

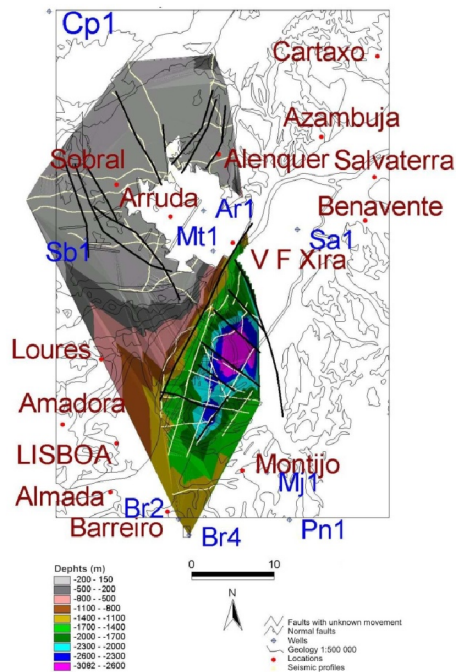


Fig 5. Depth and structure of the top of the Jurassic horizon in the Setúbal peninsula (from [6]).

studied wells and, therefore, are not addressed in this study.

The remaining horizons identified on the existing seismic survey could not be identified at the

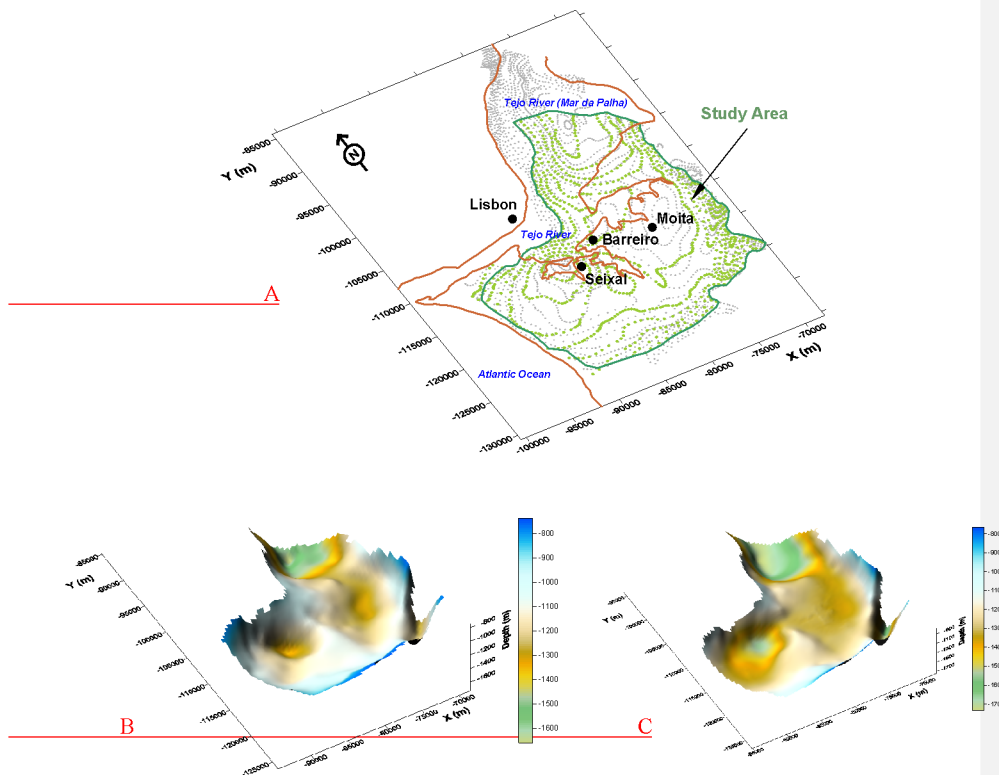


Fig. 6 – 3D modeling of the Cretaceous obtained by kriging interpolation. A- Locations, B - Top Cretaceous surface and C – Base of Cretaceous surface.

4. CO₂ storage capacity

Considering the Lower Cretaceous formations as a potential CO₂ storage reservoir, the CO₂ Storage Capacity (MCO₂) was estimated based on the following analytical solution [8]:

$$MCO_2 = A \cdot H \cdot \phi \cdot S_{eff} \cdot NG \cdot \rho_{CO_2}$$

Where A is the area of the whole reservoir, H is thickness, ϕ is porosity, NG is the Net-to-Gross ratio, S_{eff} is the storage efficiency (or sweep efficiency) and ρ_{CO_2} is the CO₂ density at the reservoir pressure and temperature.

The weighted means values of porosity ($\phi = 6.6\%$) and net-to-gross (NG = 59%) were calculated based on the technical reports of boreholes Br-1, Br-2, Br-3 and Br-4. The typical mean porosity values of the reported Lower Cretaceous lithologies (sandstones, claystones and limestones) were taken from Custodio and Llamas [14]. From such calculations were excluded the Upper Jurassic formations. The default values of storage efficiency ($S_{eff} = 2\%$) and of CO₂ density ($\rho_{CO_2} = 650 \text{ kg/m}^3$) were used. The volume ($A \cdot H$) of the Lower Cretaceous reservoir was calculated by smoothing interpolation using a computational kriging method. The upper and lower surfaces of the reservoir were obtained from the time-structure maps interpreted in the MILUPOBAS project [11]. The reservoir volume was calculated for depths equal or greater than 800 m and corresponds to about 82 km³.

Based on these values, a Regional Bulk CO₂ Storage Capacity of 42 Mt CO₂ was obtained for the Lower Cretaceous. This capacity could allow the storage of 5 years of CO₂ emissions from the main Portuguese coal power plant, at Sines, where approximately 8 Mton of CO₂ are produced yearly.

5. RISK FACTORS

The identified reservoir/seal pair occur at suitable depths in the three sub-basins mentioned above, and depicted in fig. 7:

- Mar da Palha sub-basin
- Moita sub-basin
- Seixal sub-basin

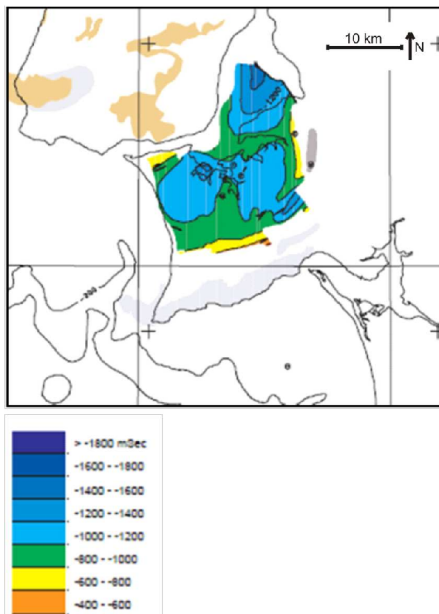


Fig. 7. Structure map (in milliseconds) of the Nearly Top Jurassic, suggesting the existence of three sub-basins in the study area [3].

However, for CO₂ storage to be considered at the study area, the risk factors should be clearly identified. The main risk factors in the study area are related to:

- Groundwater resources;
- Nature of the cap-rocks;
- Neo-tectonics and seismicity;
- Geological structure.

5.1. Groundwater resources

The region includes one of the most productive aquifer systems in Portugal; know as the Left Margin of the Tejo-Sado Basin. This multi-layered-aquifer system consists of porous formations ranging from the Miocene to modern alluvial deposits, reaching depths of at least 600 m. Greater depth are unknown from the hydrogeological point of view. This aquifer system is semi-confined to confined, and leakage between the stratified porous layers occurs due to hydraulic pressure differences. The groundwater quality is high and many wells exploit this aquifer system for the public supply to all municipalities in the area, as well as to water supply for industrial and agricultural purposes. According to Almeida et al. [12], the pumped volumes in the Setúbal Peninsula alone accounts to 58 hm³/yr. Thus, this aquifer system is a vital strategic groundwater resource for the region, since it is the only one available.

Because of the importance of this groundwater resource, any intention of CO₂ storage in the underlying geological formations, such as the Early Cretaceous, must be cautiously approached. Despite of some confinement of these formations, the risk of groundwater contamination due to ascending CO₂ migration cannot be discarded. Ultimately, any CO₂ storage could increase substantially the vulnerability of the overlying multi-aquifer system. In fact, that is the case in the Mar da Palha sub-basin, where

several extensive faults (see section 4) could act as pathways for ascending CO₂.

Albeit the lack of groundwater hydrochemical data for the Lower Cretaceous, salinity measurements reported in the Br-1 geotechnical log, indicate freshwater in the underlying Upper Jurassic. At the depth of 2285-2323 m, salinity was found to range between 320-900 mg/L. Such freshwater values do not fall within the salinity criteria defined in Chadwick et al. 2006 [5], which require values to be high above 30000 mg/L. Due to the existence of freshwater in the geological formations above and below the Lower Cretaceous, it is not expected to find saline water in this reservoir, therefore the water salinity criteria for CO₂ storage is not fulfilled.

5.2 Nature and lateral continuity of the cap-rocks

The seal identified for the Cretaceous and Jurassic reservoirs are the low permeability layers of the Early Cenozoic (Paleogene), locally known as Formação de Benfica. At outcrop, namely on the right bank of the Tagus river, this formation is often described as a highly heterogeneous continental formation [11]. Still, the permeability is usually low, even when conglomerates predominate, due to the presence of clay cement. This highly heterogeneous, mostly clastic formation with abundant facies variation appears to be a favorable seal near de Barreiro wells. However, it is doubtful that this formation can constitute a reliable regional cap-rock, since the clay layers are not likely to be continuous on the scale of tens to hundreds of km² as required for CO₂ storage purposes. Furthermore, the presence of conglomeratic layers may lead to the development of preferential migration pathways for CO₂ leakage. Additionally, several extensional faults that cut and bound the Mar da Palha sub-basin [6] also affect the Paleogene (Fig. 10). Thus, it is not undisputable that the Paleogene can provide a proper sealing between any CO₂ reservoirs and the overlying freshwater resources.

5.3 Neotectonics and seismicity

The CO₂ storage site selection criteria require that storage sites should not be located in tectonically active areas. Figure 8 depicts the expected seismic intensity (Modified Mercalli scale) with 5% probability of being exceeded in 975 years. Notice the high intensity values in the

study area, where the expected intensity range from IX to X. This high seismic hazard is not just a consequence of distant, plate-boundary earthquake, but also due to local earthquake sources. In fact, the seismic records show several important earthquakes having its epicenter close to the study area (fig. 9).

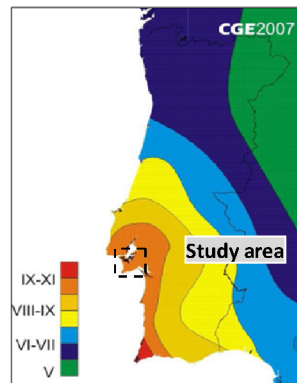


Fig. 8. Seismic hazard in Portugal, exceeding 5% probability in 975 years. Modified Mercalli Scale. In Bezzeghoud et al. 2007 and adapted from Peláez e Lopez Casado,[14].

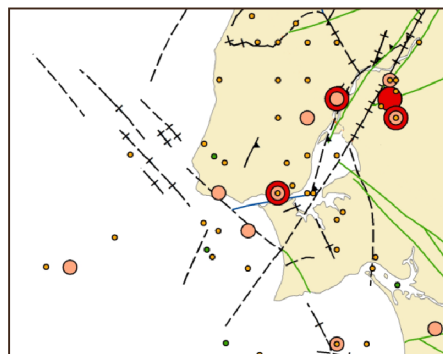
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Furthermore, several known active faults cross the study area (Fig. 9), the most important of which is the Lower Tagus System Faults, located right along the Mar da Palha sub-basin, making it unsuitable for CO₂ storage purposes.

The other two sub-basins (Seixal and Moita) are also very close to active faults, although the existing information is rather scarce, and it is difficult to say with certainty if those sub-basins are crossed by active faults.



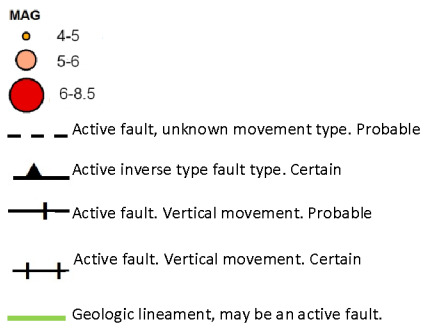


Fig. 9. Active faults and epicentres of earthquakes with magnitude higher than 4 for the study area (circles proportional to magnitude).

5.4 Structure of reservoirs and seals in the Setúbal peninsula

The significant lateral facies variations of the sequences intercepted by the Barreiro (Br) wells raise doubts about the existence of a reservoir with regional extension. Despite such constraints, it was possible to conclude that locally the Cretaceous and Upper Jurassic sandstones have good reservoir characteristics, and the Paleogenic Formação de Benfica can act as a seal, although its wide heterogeneity needs to be taken into account.

This Upper Jurassic to Paleogenic sequence occurs at favorable depths in the Mar da Palha, Moita and Seixal basins and at the Barreiro wells area. However, the seismic data shows several extensional faults that cut and bound the Mar da Palha Basin, limiting its interest for CO₂ storage because of possible leakage (see figures 10 and 11 and figure 1 for location of the cross-sections). The same may happen in the Moita basin, where seismic data is incomplete.

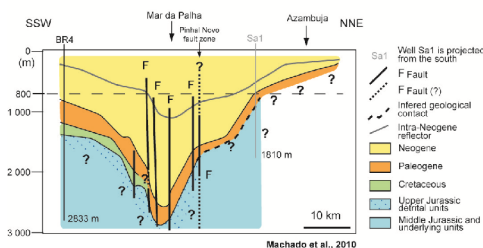


Figure 10. Schematic cross section showing the Mar da Palha basin based on data from [6] (see fig 1 for location).

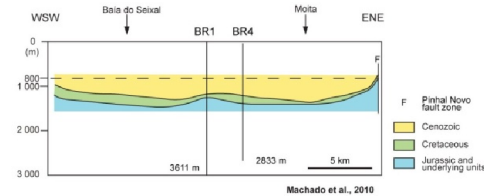


Figure 11. Schematic cross section showing the Seixal and Moita basins based on depth maps of [7] (see fig 1 for location).

At the Barreiro wells area, the geological units with good reservoir characteristics reach thicknesses of 400 m (Br3 e Br4). The absence of wells at the Moita basin does not allow an accurate evaluation of the selected reservoir and seal thicknesses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

At the Setúbal Peninsula three sub-basins (Mar da Palha, Seixal and Moita) were identified, where potential CO₂ reservoirs occur at the required depths. However, the risk factors identified for the area, namely the importance of the freshwater aquifers overlying the potential reservoirs, the geological heterogeneity of the cap-rocks and the striking seismicity hazard due to active faults crossing the Mar da Palha sub-basin and the geological structure of the Seixal and Moita sub-basins, represent very relevant unfavorable conditions for CO₂ storage and discourage its injection in this region. Additionally, the presence of a geological structure favorable to CO₂ storage (dome, anticline) and saline waters was not confirmed, and it was showed that the geological units are horizontal or defining an open structure to the surface. Such geometries are not favorable for CO₂ storage.

The storage capacity of the study area amounts to around 42 Mt, a relatively small volume taking into account the annual emissions at the

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main power plants in Portugal. Given the risk factors and the low storage capacity it was decided that Setúbal Peninsula would not be indicated as possible target for CO₂ storage.

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