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The decision-making steps for the construction of Renewable Energy Plants: an analysis of the conflict factors of the Italian authorisation procedures

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Abstract
The implementation of strategies oriented to the transition towards energy systems characterised using renewable sources, high levels of energy efficiency and good quality landscapes, requires the organisation of effective decision-making processes and authorisation procedures. In Italy, the twenty-year development of these aspects in relation to renewable energy plants highlighted situations of conflict due to two different rationales. The first type of rationale is resulting from the need to achieve the European targets for energy production from renewable sources. It pays little attention to the territorial and environmental contexts in which the projects are located. The second type of rationale is consequent to a systemic vision of development, whereby the energy factors must be integrated with the landscape characteristics of the sites. This essay analyses the framework of the legislation related to the above-mentioned topics and identifies conflicts and inconsistencies in the procedural paths. The analysis is conducted highlighting the relevant legislative and juridical background, the characteristics of the current procedures, the actors involved and the main operative tools, particularly regarding design criteria and location choices. The conclusions will summarise the unresolved issues and provide some considerations on the way forward towards a more balanced and effective approach.