

Social risks and opportunities

CascaShopping

1. Introduction

The Social Risks and Opportunities study aimed to analyse and evaluate the Social Risks and opportunities, to which CascaiShopping, located in the city/municipality of Cascais, Portugal, is exposed to.

According to the BREEAM In-Use International version 6.0.0. scheme, the RSL 08 criterion aims to assess both the social risks to which an asset may be exposed and the opportunities it may generate to enhance social well-being, particularly for underrepresented or vulnerable groups. This assessment evaluates how the asset interacts with its surrounding community and supporting infrastructure, considering both the potential impacts it may have on the community and the risks it may face, due to community-related factors. Special attention is given to vulnerable groups, examining how local vulnerabilities could be amplified or mitigated by the assets' presence and operations.

Ultimately, this assessment supports a more socially resilient approach to asset management, encouraging actions and strategies that not only mitigate risk, but also enhance community well-being, inclusivity, and the long-term social value of the asset.

2. Social risks

The assessment considers specific indicators related to the surrounding socio-economic, demographic, and institutional context, as well as social disruptions, poverty and inequalities, public health and welfare, labour conditions, climate risks, and digital transition. These factors are analysed to provide a comprehensive and structured understanding of the risks and opportunities associated with the asset. The main indicators identified in this assessment include:

- **Migration Pressures:** In 2020, 4.3 per 1 000 people in the EU were immigrants, while Portugal recorded a higher rate of 6.5 per 1 000. In Cascais, immigrants make up 15.4% of the population, with the largest groups coming from Brazil (5 434) and the United Kingdom (1 309).
- **Crime and Safety:** Across Portugal, overall crime increased by 0.9% in 2021 compared with 2020, although violent and serious crimes decreased by 6.9%. In Cascais, 1 438 crimes were registered in 2017, in line with national averages.
- **Population and Social Support:** Cascais has 214 124 inhabitants, a 25.5% increase since 2001. In 2021, 3 781 residents received the Guaranteed Minimum Income or Social Insertion Income, reflecting the municipality's social support measures.
- **Poverty and Social Exclusion:** Globally, over 10% of the population lives on less than US\$1.90 per day. In Europe, 21.7% of people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, rising to 22.4% in Portugal. The highest-risk group in the EU is young adults aged 18–24 (27.3%). In Cascais, 18.3% of residents were at risk of poverty in 2016, slightly below the national average.
- **Wealth and Income Inequality:** Portugal's Gini Index is 33%, above the European average, while Cascais registers even higher inequality with a coefficient of 40.7%. Gender disparities also persist, with the pay gap at 13%

in Europe, 11.4% in Portugal, and in Cascais men earning €111 more per month than women.

- **Education:** Across Europe, the average proportion of adults (25–74) with higher education is 47.2%, compared with 23.6% in Portugal. Among 20–24 year-olds, Portugal surpasses the European average. In Cascais, 27.5% of residents hold a degree, reflecting relatively strong educational attainment nationally.
- **Inflation and Purchasing Power:** Inflation in Europe reached 11.5% in October 2022, its highest level in 25 years. In Cascais, per capita purchasing power is above the national average (118 vs. 100), supporting local economic resilience.
- **Life Expectancy:** In the EU, average life expectancy is 73.6 years for men and 80.5 years for women. Portugal exceeds these averages, with 77.8 years for men and 84.1 years for women. In Cascais, life expectancy in 2016 was slightly higher, at 78.3 years for men and 84.5 years for women.
- **Ageing Population:** Portugal's population is ageing, with 23.4% aged 65 or over in 2021 and only 12.9% under 14. In Cascais, 19.8% of the population was aged 65 or over, while 16.2% were under 14, reflecting a similar demographic trend.
- **Healthcare Workforce:** Cascais has 7.3 doctors per 1 000 inhabitants, supporting local health needs.
- **Forced and Child Labour:** In the Europe and Central Asia region, 3.5 people per 1 000 experience forced labour; in Portugal this is slightly lower at 2.5 per 1 000. Child labour is negligible in Portugal compared with 8.3% across the region (ages 5-17).
- **Minimum Wage and Earnings:** European minimum wages range from €363 in Albania to €2,313 in Luxembourg. In Portugal, the minimum wage is €705, with 24.6% of the population earning this amount, among the highest in the EU. Average monthly earnings in Portugal are €1 517 before taxes, higher than in Cascais, where employees earn €1 215 on average, despite the municipality's purchasing power being almost 20% above the national average.
- **Working Hours:** Portugal has a slightly higher weekly average than Europe, with 37.6 hours per week compared with 35.6 hours across the EU.
- **Unemployment:** The EU average unemployment rate is 6.6%, with Portugal at 5.8%. In Cascais, registered unemployment in 2021 was 5.9%, reflecting a situation close to the national average.
- **Sea Level Rise:** Between 1993 and 2021, mean sea levels rose 2-4 mm per year across European coasts. In Cascais, tide gauge data from 2019 indicate an average rise of around 20 cm over the past 100 years, reflecting local vulnerability.
- **Climate Change Risks:** The main physical risks CascaiShopping faces are Heavy Precipitation and Water stress.

3. OUR IMPACT

CascaiShopping has implemented a broad range of measures to ensure safety, well-being, and inclusivity for all who use the space, while actively managing potential risks. Through detailed risk assessments, the centre anticipates key hazards and introduces preventative measures to minimise incidents and maintain a secure environment. Beyond its facilities, CascaiShopping plays a significant role in the local community, generating economic, social, and environmental benefits for the surrounding population.

Opened in 1991, CascaiShopping was established in an area that, despite its proximity to the urban centres of Cascais and Lisbon, was historically rural, traces of which remain visible today. Its development has been instrumental in fostering local economic growth, creating direct and indirect employment opportunities, and supporting urban development in the surrounding region.

The centre has a robust Social Responsibility policy, guided by values such as environmental awareness, social engagement, openness to society, trust, and ethics. This commitment is reflected in partnerships with social, health, cultural, and sports institutions; the regular organisation of community events, often with cultural or environmental themes and occasionally targeted at specific groups such as children or the elderly; and collaboration with social and solidarity organisations through fundraising activities hosted on-site, alongside direct donations to institutions in need. At a corporate level, CascaiShopping also promotes employee participation in volunteering activities through dedicated systems that facilitate engagement in community activities.



Figure 1. “Cartão Mais Solidário” - Financial support for families affected by the pandemic¹

¹ Câmara Municipal de Cascais

Figure 2. Blood donation campaign²

Fair labour practices are central to the site's operations and form part of Sonae Sierra's formal policies. Direct staff receive fair wages and benefits in line with the company's Remuneration and Compensation Policy. Service providers are also required to comply with minimum regional wage standards and are included in benefits plans. Contracts with tenants and suppliers mandate full compliance with labour and social security legislation, and explicitly promote human rights, adequate working conditions, and fair remuneration policies.

In terms of health and safety, the centre has established and implemented comprehensive policies and plans, fully aligned with national legislation and designed to address the full spectrum of risks that may affect both the organisation and its community, including employees and customers. Security is reinforced through high-quality CCTV cameras, trained on-site personnel, and a detailed Internal Emergency Plan, with specific procedures to address terrorism threats. Key initiatives include two annual emergency drills testing all scenarios of the Internal Emergency Plan, health screenings and medical advice for visitors, installation of defibrillators, and awareness activities with children to promote safety and health. Tenants, service providers, and visitors also benefit from regular training and awareness campaigns, including guidance on the safe use of escalators and moving walkways. Since 2012, the centre has hosted an annual Civil Protection Week, further strengthening preparedness and resilience across the community.

² Câmara Municipal de Cascais



Figure 3. 4th Edition - Civil Protection Week³

Environmental responsibility is fully integrated in daily operations, with policies and practices designed to promote sustainability across the centre. Climate risks have been assessed, and resilience strategies are actively developed. A certified Safety, Health and Environmental Management System guides efforts to reduce energy and water consumption, promote recycling, and ensure sustainable sourcing. Visitors are encouraged to use public transportation, and electric vehicle chargers are available. The shopping centre is also recognized externally with respected sustainability certifications such as BREEAM, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001, demonstrating a long-term commitment to environmental stewardship.

Overall, this set of integrated initiatives reflects a responsible, inclusive, and sustainable approach to managing a modern shopping centre, one that prioritizes safety, health, human rights, community connection, and environmental resilience.

³ [Câmara Municipal de Cascais](#)