

**Water management in the Azores Islands**

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**Abstract**

The sustainable development of the Azores involves rational management of available resources and their protection. The small size of the islands, combined with a rugged relief and a geological environment dominated by permeable volcanic formations, induces hydrological specificities, making island water bodies particularly vulnerable to climate change.

Groundwater is the main source of fresh water on the Azores islands, with perched and basal aquifers being explored. Basal groundwater presents quality problems due to salinization processes.

Water management on each island is based on uses and is shared by two government entities: human and industrial consumption is managed by municipalities, who are several on some islands, while agricultural supply is managed by the agricultural planning institute (IROA). This fragmented management policy encourages conflict situations, related to the degradation of water quality due to overexploitation.

In this reflection, it is considered that water management in the Azores archipelago must reflect the specificities related with fragmentation and territorial discontinuity, as well as adapt solutions for optimizing water resources adjusted to the reality of each island, as a territorial unit marked by its own restrictions.

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