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**Hydraulic infrastructures and local expectations of development:
the case of the Guadiana's estuary.**

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Abstract:

The authors present a case study on social expectations regarding the construction of two large infrastructures (the dams of Alqueva and Andévalo) in the basin of the Guadiana River. The study covers mainly the municipalities of Mértola, Alcoutim, Castro Marim and Vila Real de Santo António.

Concluded in 2003, this research explores and discusses socio-ecological factors influencing sustainability of estuarine areas. In methodological terms, the study comprehends a multi-method approach, involving interviewing techniques and a survey, applied to stakeholders and local political leaders. Further, a cluster's analysis was pursued in order to identify differences and homogeneities on territory.

Thus, the case study highlights situations of social vulnerability and environmental dependence of the river Guadiana, and presents a set of social expectations of development by sectors of economic activity. The authors emphasize the need of a privileged dialogue between political authorities and local populations.

Knowledge of social expectations is crucial given the probability of social conflict as a reaction to scarcity.

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