

## Contribution to studies on the impact of marine pollution on groundwater quality in the islands

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**ABSTRACT:** This review, based on the impacts of marine pollution on groundwater quality in the islands, provides ample evidence of the complexity of the socio-economic and environmental management of the islands due to their geographical position and human pressure. The coastal ecosystem of the islands is complex, dynamic and, above all, vulnerable to human activity, marine intrusion and climate change.

In addition, it can come from a variety of sources such as agriculture, industry, tourism, inadequate waste management and mining activities. It is essential for these island communities to implement effective measures to prevent groundwater pollution and protect their precious water resources.

The aim of this study was to review the literature on the impact of marine pollution on groundwater quality in island regions. The aim was to identify all the parameters influencing groundwater pollution on islands.

**KEYWORDS:** impact, marine pollution, quality, groundwater, islands.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Around 2.1 billion people in the world, or 30% of the population, do not have access to domestic drinking water services [1].

Water is a very abundant resource on the planet and is distributed between four major reservoirs: the oceans [around 97.2%], polar ice [2.15%], continental water (surface and groundwater) [0.649%] and the atmosphere [0.001%]. The hydrological cycle ensures exchanges and equilibrium between the atmosphere and the other terrestrial compartments through precipitation, evaporation, evapotranspiration, infiltration and runoff [2].

One of the major challenges for the sustainable use of a water resource is its quality in aquifers. In recent years, global water quality has deteriorated significantly due to uncontrolled industrial discharges, the intensive use of chemical fertilisers in agriculture and the haphazard exploitation of water resources [3].

Water is a precious natural resource that is essential for many uses. Its use for food or hygiene purposes requires excellent physico-chemical and microbiological quality [4].

The use of groundwater resources around the world is becoming increasingly popular as a result of the deterioration in surface water quality caused by human activities. The world is currently facing a serious problem of degradation of groundwater quality in connection with anthropogenic activities and population growth [5].

[3] indicated in his work that, in general, groundwater is threatened by numerous sources of pollution (urbanisation, industry, livestock farming, uncontrolled dumping, marine intrusion, etc.), which have multiplied throughout the world without any measures being taken to protect the environment, and water resources in particular.

Water scarcity has become a crucial problem for all societies, particularly those in developing countries. Population growth and the development of urban areas, industrial units and cultivated land have led to a deterioration in the quality of groundwater and a significant drop in reserves, which are sometimes the only water resources available to feed the population [6].

The drinking water sector is one of the driving forces behind the economic and social development of the world's populations. Despite this, the potential of the resources mobilised to find it is insufficient because of growing demand. In order to meet people's water needs, a series of hydrogeological prospecting campaigns in different countries is essential [7].

## 2 PRESENTATION OF THE INSULAR COASTAL ZONE

The coastal zone, also known as the coastline, is a dynamic and complex geographical region located at the boundary between land and sea. It is characterised by a great diversity of landscapes, ecosystems and natural resources [8]. It includes a variety of ecosystems such as beaches, salt marshes, estuaries and coral reefs, which are home to a rich biodiversity and play a crucial role in regulating the climate and protecting land from erosion [9].

In the world as a whole, the coastal zone is a crucial ecosystem that provides vital ecosystem services (in terms of the economy, culture and food security) for human communities and biodiversity. In West Africa, it plays a significant role in the regional economy. According to [10] the coastal zone of West Africa is home to a large proportion of the region's population and supports vital economic activities such as fishing, tourism and maritime trade. These economic activities are highly dependent on the natural resources provided by the coastal zone, underlining its importance to the socio-economic well-being of local populations [10].

According to [9] anthropogenic pressures on the coastal zone have increased in recent decades, jeopardising its ability to provide crucial ecosystem services. To meet these challenges, integrated and sustainable management of the coastal zone is essential. Hence the focus of a recent study in which the authors highlighted the importance of holistic approaches to managing coastal zones in order to preserve their ecological integrity while meeting the socio-economic needs of local communities [11].

However, the coastal zone also faces growing environmental challenges such as urbanisation, pollution from plastic waste and industrial discharges that threaten the health of coastal ecosystems, climate change and the exploitation of natural resources. Climate change, pollution, habitat loss and over-exploitation of marine resources threaten the sustainability of the coastal zone [10]. In addition, it leads to sea level rise and extreme weather events that can have devastating consequences for coastal communities [12].

### 2.1 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE WORLD'S COASTAL ZONE

The geographical framework of the world's coastal zone spans the continents and islands of the globe (see Fig. 1). Coastal zones are present on all continents and are often populated because of their natural and economic attractiveness [11]. The work of [13] illustrates the importance of the coastal zone in the world: these zones are among the most dynamic regions in the world in terms of human activities and interactions with the natural environment. They are also among the most vulnerable to global environmental change.

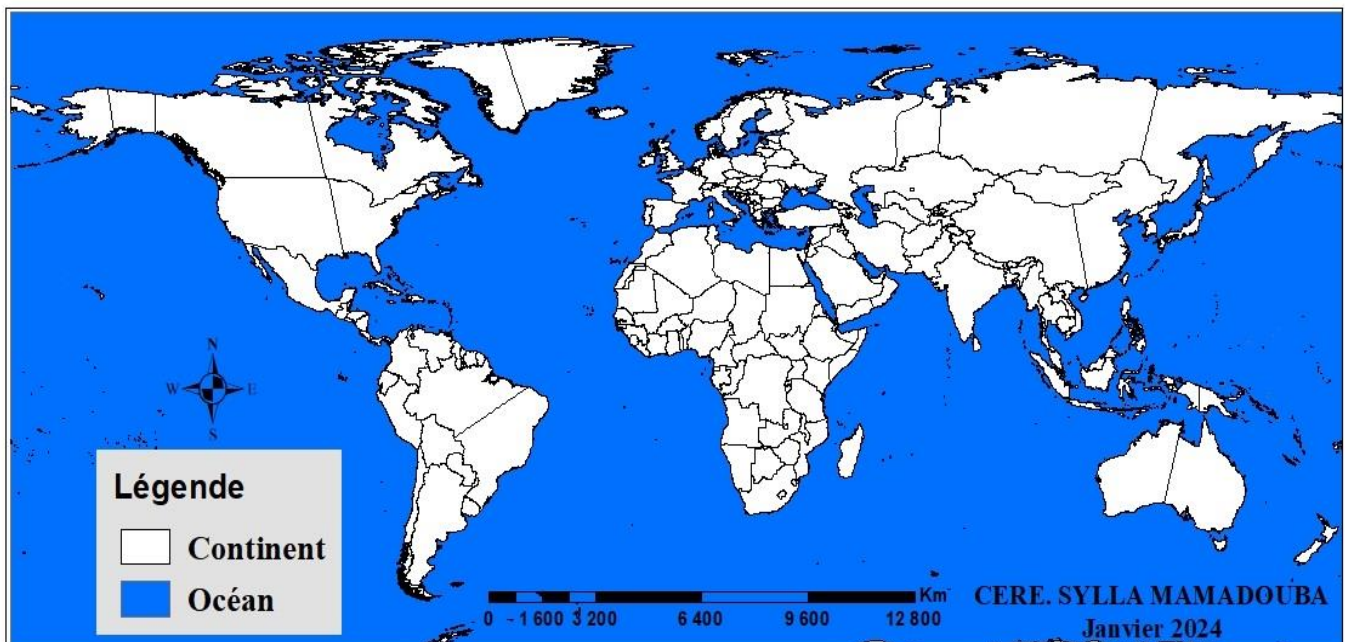


Fig. 1. Map of the world's coastal zones

## 2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE COASTAL ZONE IN WEST AFRICA

This region is characterised by its geographical, cultural and economic diversity. It is home to marine ecosystems rich in biodiversity, important port for maritime trade and coastal communities that depend on marine resources for their livelihoods [14]. It extends along the Atlantic coast of Africa (see Fig. 2), including countries such as Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria [15].

The West African coastal zone also faces environmental challenges such as coastal erosion, marine pollution and overfishing [16]. These challenges are exacerbated by growing demographic pressures and the effects of climate change. Politicians and international organisations are working on the sustainable management of these coastal ecosystems in order to preserve their ecological and economic value [17].



Fig. 2. Map of the West African coastal zone

## 2.3 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE COASTAL ZONE IN THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

The Republic of Guinea is a West African country bordering the Atlantic Ocean. Its coastal zone extends approximately 320 kilometres along the Atlantic coastline [18]. The map of this area is shown in Fig. 3. This region is geographically diverse, including coastal plains, mangroves, estuaries, beaches and cliffs [19]. Guinea's coastal zone is also home to several important ports, such as the port of Conakry, which is the country's largest port and a vital centre for maritime trade [20].

In addition, the Guinean coastal zone faces environmental challenges such as coastal erosion due to rising sea levels and deforestation. These problems are exacerbated by human activities such as unsustainable logging, excessive fishing and pollution [21].

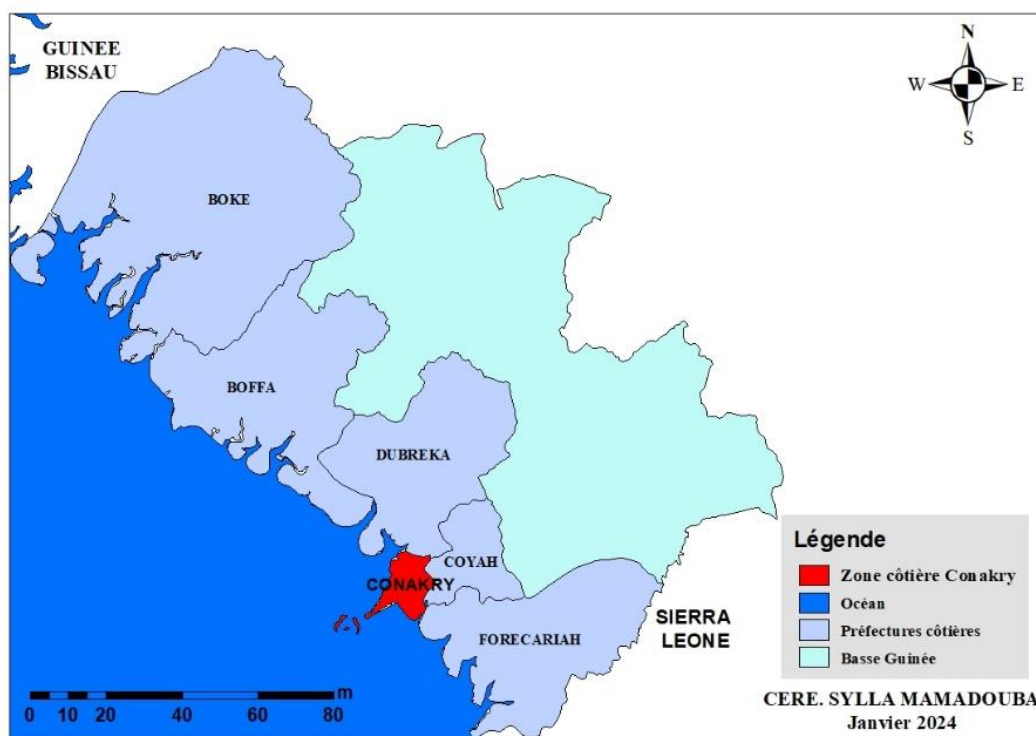


Fig. 3. Map of the Guinean coastal zone

### 3 SOURCES OF GROUNDWATER POLLUTION AND THEIR MITIGATION MEASURES IN THE ISLANDS

Groundwater pollution on islands can come from a variety of sources, including human activities, marine intrusion, remoteness and environmental sensitivity. These sources can contribute to groundwater contamination by substances (such as nitrates, pesticides, heavy metals, hydrocarbons and industrial chemicals) and salinity [22] et [23].

#### 3.1 POLLUTION CAUSED BY HUMAN ACTIVITIES

Anthropogenic groundwater pollution in island regions is a growing concern due to the vulnerability of these ecosystems and their importance for human consumption and ecological balance. This pollution can have adverse effects on the quality and availability of freshwater resources, as well as on the health of human and natural communities [24].

Studies on anthropogenic pollution have highlighted the various sources, pathways and consequences of this form of pollution, as well as potential mitigation measures. Anthropogenic pollution refers to the contamination of the environment by human activities, such as industry, urbanisation, agriculture, domestic wastewater, tourism, shipping and energy consumption [25].

Agriculture is a major source of groundwater pollution in the islands. Intensive agricultural practices, such as the excessive use of fertilisers and pesticides, can lead to the infiltration of these substances into groundwater. According to [26] that intensive agriculture is often associated with increased nitrate levels in groundwater on islands, which can have adverse effects on human health and the environment.

A recent study by [27] examined the contamination of groundwater in the Caribbean islands by agricultural runoff and its implications for water quality and public health. The authors found that high levels of nitrates and pesticides from agricultural activities were leaching into groundwater, posing risks to both human health and marine ecosystems.

For urbanisation, an important contribution comes from the work of [28] who examined the impact of urbanisation on groundwater pollution in Pacific island nations. Their study found that rapid urban development was leading to increased contamination of groundwater by heavy metals and organic pollutants, threatening the sustainability of water resources in these regions.

In addition, industry and tourism can also contribute to groundwater pollution in the islands. Industrial discharges and wastewater from tourist facilities can contain harmful substances that end up in groundwater. According to [29] the rapid growth of tourism on many islands has led to a significant increase in pressure on freshwater resources, leading to an increase in groundwater pollution from wastewater.

Inadequate management of solid and liquid waste can also be a major source of groundwater pollution on islands. Uncontrolled landfills and leaking waste storage tanks can contaminate groundwater with toxic substances. According to [30] poor management of solid and liquid waste has been identified as one of the main causes of groundwater pollution in Malta, with negative impacts on drinking water quality.

Mining activities can also contribute to groundwater pollution in some islands. Mining tailings often contain heavy metals and other toxic substances that can leach into groundwater [31]. According to the study by [32] mining activities have been associated with a significant increase in heavy metal concentration in groundwater on some islands, posing a risk to human health and the environment.

These recent studies collectively highlight the diversity of sources and impacts of anthropogenic pollution on groundwater in island regions around the world. They also highlight the urgency of implementing effective management strategies to protect these vital freshwater resources for current and future generations [33] et [34].

## **3.2 POTENTIAL MITIGATION MEASURES**

To mitigate these adverse effects, potential mitigation measures have been proposed. These include strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote the recycling and reuse of materials, improve waste management and restore degraded ecosystems. In addition, environmental policies such as international climate agreements and biodiversity protection aim to limit anthropogenic pollution on a global scale [35].

### **3.2.1 POLLUTION DUE TO MARINE INTRUSION**

Marine intrusion into island groundwater refers to the penetration of seawater into island aquifers, which can have adverse consequences for drinking water quality and terrestrial and marine ecosystems [36]. Islands are often surrounded by ocean, making them particularly vulnerable to marine intrusion due to their low elevation and small size [37]. This phenomenon is exacerbated by factors such as over-consumption of freshwater, climate change and rising sea levels. It is crucial to understand the mechanisms of marine intrusion and to implement appropriate management strategies to mitigate its effects [38]; [39] et [40].

Marine intrusion into island groundwater is a topic of increasing interest to researchers and policy makers, as it has important implications for environmental sustainability and water security. Recent studies have examined this phenomenon from different perspectives, including using hydrological models to predict the magnitude of marine intrusion in specific island contexts, assessing impacts on freshwater resources and proposing adaptation solutions [41].

In addition, recent studies by [25]; [42]; [43]; [44]; [45] et [46] have examined the effects of marine intrusion on island ecosystems, highlighting the vulnerability of terrestrial and marine habitats to increasing salinisation, jeopardising the security of freshwater supplies for local populations. The researchers stressed the importance of closely monitoring saline intrusion and implementing effective management measures to mitigate its effects.

### **3.2.2 LONG-TERM PREDICTION OF MARINE INTRUSION**

Coastal or littoral aquifers are in contact with the sea or ocean, which forms their downstream limit; they are more or less sensitive to saline intrusions in natural conditions and under anthropogenic influence. This sensitivity is therefore linked to internal factors (the type of aquifer, hydrodynamic properties, heterogeneity) and external factors: exploitation for different uses (drinking water supply, tourism, agriculture, industry), recharge (effective precipitation), sea level [47].

According to the scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate change will have a number of impacts: changes in temperature and precipitation, rising sea levels (between 0.2 and 0.6 m by 2100 depending on the scenario; a 1 m rise in sea level during storms with a return period of 10 years), longer and more severe low-water periods, which would encourage marine invasion of rivers. In coastal areas, demographic pressure could also lead to an increase in water requirements. It is important to map the vulnerability of these aquifers, along with recommendations for their monitoring and management [47] et [22].

### **3.2.3 CONSEQUENCES OF SALINE INTRUSION IN COASTAL AQUIFERS**

Saline intrusion into coastal aquifers is a phenomenon that occurs when salt water enters freshwater aquifers located near the coast. This intrusion can be caused by human activities such as excessive groundwater pumping, dam construction or drainage of agricultural land [48]. The consequences of saline intrusion into coastal aquifers are manifold and can have a significant impact on the environment, freshwater supplies and coastal ecosystems.

Firstly, saline intrusion can compromise the quality of drinking water available in coastal regions. When salt water enters freshwater aquifers, it renders the water unfit for human consumption and may require costly treatment to make it potable. This can lead to public health problems and additional costs for water supply systems.

Saline intrusion can also have a negative impact on coastal ecosystems. Plants and animals that depend on groundwater can be affected by increased salinity, which can disrupt food chains and cause damage to natural habitats.

Saline intrusion can also affect agriculture in coastal regions. Salt water in aquifers can make soils unsuitable for cultivation, limiting agricultural opportunities and reducing crop yields [49].

Finally, saline intrusion can have a significant economic impact on coastal communities. Reduced availability of clean freshwater can lead to increased costs for water supply and treatment, as well as reduced agricultural productivity, which can have a negative impact on the local economy.

### 3.3 MEASURES TO MITIGATE GROUNDWATER POLLUTION ON THE ISLANDS

Marine groundwater pollution on islands is a complex environmental problem that can have serious consequences for marine ecosystems and island communities [49].

Effective management of pollution on islands requires an integrated approach that combines environmental monitoring, government regulation, public education and international cooperation. Initiatives such as the establishment of coastal buffer zones, improved wastewater treatment, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and the integration of advanced hydrological models and state-of-the-art technologies to prevent saltwater intrusion into aquifers can help mitigate the effects of pollution on island marine ecosystems [38] et [50]. In addition, it is essential to actively involve local communities in the protection and preservation of freshwater and marine resources to ensure a sustainable future for these fragile environments [51].

## 4 MANAGING THE IMPACT OF MARINE POLLUTION ON GROUNDWATER QUALITY IN THE ISLANDS

Marine pollution, whether anthropogenic or saline in origin, can have a significant impact on the quality of groundwater on islands. Because of their particular geography, islands are often more vulnerable to marine pollution than continents. Marine pollution can come from a variety of sources such as plastic waste, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, agricultural nutrients, industrial chemicals and saltwater intrusion [52]; [53]; [54] et [55].

These pollutants can contaminate groundwater through various mechanisms such as infiltration through the soil, percolation through porous rocks and migration through geological faults [1]; [56]; [57] et [35].

In addition, the degradation of groundwater quality can have a negative impact on fragile island ecosystems, including coastal wetlands, mangroves and coral reefs, whose survival depends on the supply of clean freshwater [58]; [59]. For example, compromised groundwater resources can hamper agricultural productivity and economic activities that depend on reliable access to drinking water [60].

Intensive irrigation on islands can also contribute to the accumulation of salts in soils and groundwater, exacerbating the problem of salinisation. Unsustainable agricultural practices, such as excessive use of fertilisers and chemical inputs, can increase the salt load in groundwater, compromising its quality and usefulness for agriculture [61].

Contaminants such as hydrocarbons can make water unfit for human consumption and affect aquatic fauna and flora. Furthermore, according to [62] marine pollution can also harm biodiversity by disrupting marine and coastal ecosystems, impacting the availability of natural resources for island communities.

### 4.1 PREVENTION OF ISLAND GROUNDWATER FROM MARINE CONTAMINATION

Research focused on understanding the pathways and consequences of pollution, as well as developing effective strategies to protect island groundwater resources from marine contamination, is a crucial area of environmentalism and environmental science. Islands, due to their often-isolated geographic location and dependence on freshwater resources, are particularly vulnerable to marine pollution which can affect their groundwater.

Additionally, research by [63] highlighted the complex pathways by which marine contaminants can migrate to island aquifers, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to assessing and managing this problem.

Research in this area also relies on advanced hydrogeological models to predict the behavior of contaminants in island groundwater. A baseline study by [64] used a numerical model to simulate the transport of pollutants from the coastal zone to island aquifers, providing crucial information for developing protection strategies.

It is essential to explore innovative methods for detecting and monitoring marine pollution in island groundwater. Recent research by [65] examined the use of advanced sensors to early detect the presence of marine contaminants in island aquifers, paving the way for proactive management of this critical environmental issue.

Finally, developing effective strategies to protect island groundwater resources from marine contamination requires a thorough understanding of freshwater and saltwater interactions in these unique island environments. A key study by [66] examined these complex interactions and proposed innovative approaches to minimize saltwater intrusion from overexploitation of island aquifers.

#### **4.2 INNOVATIVE METHODS FOR DETECTING AND MONITORING MARINE POLLUTION IN ISLAND GROUNDWATER**

Innovative methods for detecting and monitoring marine pollution in island groundwater are essential to protect fragile island ecosystems and ensure the security of freshwater resources. Marine pollution in island groundwater can come from various sources such as industrial waste, oil spills, agricultural activities and untreated sewage. To effectively detect and monitor this pollution, innovative methods are needed. These methods may include the use of advanced technologies such as remote sensing, chemical sensors, computer modeling and real-time monitoring [67].

Remote sensing is an innovative method that uses satellite images to monitor changes in the physical characteristics of water, which can indicate the presence of pollution. For example, a study by [68] used satellite images to detect marine pollution in island groundwater by identifying changes in water color caused by the presence of pollutants.

Chemical sensors are another innovative method that uses sensory devices to detect the presence of pollutants in water. Research by [57] developed advanced chemical sensors capable of detecting low concentrations of marine pollutants in island groundwater, providing a sensitive and precise method for monitoring pollution. Computer modeling is also an innovative method that uses specialized software to simulate the transport of pollutants in island groundwater. For example, a study by [64] used computer modeling to predict the dispersion of marine pollutants in groundwater around an island, providing crucial information for monitoring and management of the pollution.

#### **4.3 MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH FOR MONITORING SALTWATER INTRUSION INTO ISLAND AQUIFERS**

The method consists, firstly, of determining the structural and hydrodynamic characteristics of the aquifer, as well as the quantitative impacts of capture on the resource, based on field measurements (piezometry, flow rate and pumping frequency) and a summary of the available geological elements. Secondly, the acquisition of data on the salinity of groundwater using an innovative tool "Subsurface Monitoring Device (SMD)", allows in-situ salinity measurements, high frequency over time (every 3 hours) and over a long period (16 months). This tool measures the salinity of the pore fluid and does not cause disturbance to the environment: it is therefore able to provide a representative measurement of the quality of groundwater. Thirdly, the salinity data were correlated with piezometry and pumping rates, and crossed with the incidences predicted by hydrodynamic calculations [69].

#### **4.4 CHALLENGES OF SMALL ISLAND STATES IN GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE**

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face specific challenges in groundwater governance. These challenges include vulnerability to climate change, increasing population pressure, environmental degradation, scarcity of fresh water resources and inadequate management of water resources [70]. SIDS often face financial and technical constraints to effectively monitor and manage their groundwater resources. Additionally, pressures on these resources from salinization, agriculture, tourism and industrial activities are increasing the demand for groundwater, making the governance of these resources even more complex [18].

A recent example of these challenges can be seen in the Pacific Islands. According to [71]; [72] pacific small island states face major challenges in groundwater governance due to their vulnerability to climate change and increased reliance on groundwater to meet their needs. their drinking, agricultural and industrial water needs.

#### **4.5 DISTRIBUTION OF GROUNDWATER IN THE ISLANDS**

Groundwater equality in islands refers to the equitable distribution of groundwater in islands, which are often characterized by limited water resources and high dependence on these resources for drinking water supplies, agriculture and other needs [53]. Equitable management of groundwater on islands is essential to ensure the sustainability of these vital resources [73].

Challenges related to groundwater equality in the islands include competition for water between different uses, potential contamination of aquifers, and the effects of climate change on the availability of water resources [74].

Recent studies by [75]; [76] examined the specific challenges faced by small island developing states in groundwater governance, highlighting issues of equity and sustainability. It also highlights opportunities to improve groundwater management in these unique island contexts.

#### 4.6 GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT IN THE ISLAND CONTEXT

Unique island contexts present specific challenges to groundwater management. These challenges include increased vulnerability to climate change, pressure from population growth and economic development, and limited freshwater resources. However, these contexts also offer unique opportunities to improve groundwater management [77].

One of these opportunities lies in the adoption of integrated water resources management practices. In the island context, where water resources are often limited and vulnerable, an integrated approach that takes into account the needs for drinking water, agriculture, tourism and environmental preservation can contribute to a more sustainable use of groundwater.

Another opportunity lies in the development of innovative technologies for groundwater monitoring and management. Advances in areas such as remote sensing, smart sensors and hydrological modeling can enable a better understanding of island aquifer systems and facilitate more effective management of water resources [78].

Additionally, international partnerships and regional cooperation can play a crucial role in improving groundwater management in the island context. Pooling knowledge, technical and financial resources, and exchanging expertise between islands can help build local capacity and promote collaborative approaches to water resources management [38].

### 5 CONCLUSION

Marine pollution, whether of anthropogenic or saline origin, can have a significant impact on the quality of groundwater on the islands. Due to their particular geography, islands are often more vulnerable to marine pollution than continents. Marine pollution can come from various sources such as hydrocarbons, heavy metals, agricultural nutrients, industrial chemicals and saltwater intrusion.

In islands around the world, from West Africa to Guinea, the impacts of marine pollution on groundwater quality are visible. Therefore, research focused on understanding the pathways and consequences of pollution, as well as developing effective strategies to protect island groundwater resources from marine contamination, is a crucial area of environmentalism and environmental science.

Finally, education and public awareness play a crucial role in improving groundwater management in the island context. By involving local communities in the conservation and sustainable use of water resources, it is possible to promote a participatory and inclusive approach to groundwater management.

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### 7 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest in this work, and the authors agree to the publication of this article in this journal.

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