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## **EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF PREVENTING FOREST FIRES THROUGH FOCUS GROUPS**

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### **Abstract**

We report in this paper preliminary results from conducting focus groups with different types of stakeholders involved directly or indirectly with forest fires and a semi structured interview with a civil protection officer. This is part of an ongoing project on population involvement in forest fires prevention in Portugal. Participants were members of the local population and some were forest owners or derived income from forest related activities. Other participants were invited in their official role as representatives from local government and local associations. Methodologically we combined the content analysis from the focus groups transcripts with a short questionnaire, and an interview. The study elicits amongst other topics the perception of participants in terms of the losses that forest fires caused and will serve the basis to propose a strategy for population involvement in forest fire prevention.

**Keywords:** forest fires; economic value; qualitative methods; focus groups

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