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Barriers and levers for implementing sustainable Nature-Based Solutions in cities

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Hydro-meteorological risks are increasing and this could be due to global changes. These risks are particularly important in the urban context where most human beings live. Indeed, the impervious surfaces present in cities increase the risk of flooding, for example. Nature-Based Solutions can help to reduce these risks by creating permeable soils or storing water while promoting biodiversity. In this context, it is essential to understand what hinders the development and sustainability of these Nature-based Solutions in the city and what could help to deploy them on a large scale. For this purpose, various professionals working on Nature-Based Solutions in the city in France, were interviewed between 2020 and 2021, both in the academic and operational sectors, or even at the interface between the two: researchers in ecology or hydrology, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) project manager, project managers at the Regional Biodiversity Agency, director and natural environment manager of a watershed union, agro-economists engineer among others. They were asked what are the barriers and potential opportunities for Nature-Based Solutions implementation and sustainability in city. By analysing their answers, it emerges that the obstacles are more often cultural, political or financial than technical. The potential levers often mentioned are education and awareness-raising at all levels, especially for elected officials and the general public. Regulations such as the PLU (Local Urban Plan) and new funding for more natural spaces in the city also seem to be means of promoting Nature-based Solutions in urban areas. These interviews with diverse professionals directly involved in Nature-Based Solutions in cities allow to give real courses of action to be taken to democratize these Solutions throughout the French territory, or even internationally, and therefore ultimately reduce the risks of hydro-meteorology. This is one of the objectives of the French ANR project EVNATURB (Assessment of ecosystem performance of a renaturation of the urban environment), in which this study has been carried out.