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Collaborative aspects of nature-based solutions: strategies, plans, programs, policies, projects

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The integrated approach of sustainable development refers to addressing complex challenges by combining knowledge from various environmental and planning fields. Thus, nature-based solutions (NbS) are a category of new tools that can help cities increase their resilience and sustainability. They represent those actions inspired, supported or copied from nature, which have a high potential to be energy efficient and to use natural resources, as well as promote multi-functionality and connectivity between green infrastructure and built-up areas. To achieve their purpose NbS have to be developed and managed in collaborative ways. The strategies, plans, programs, policies and projects developed at European and international level have led to the consolidation, at least from a theoretical perspective, of the significance and role of NbS in urban areas. Thus, this study aims to identify the way these documents are directed towards sustainability and innovative solutions (such as NbS), with emphasis on the collaborative approaches for NbS. Our preliminary results indicate that most of the international and European documents specify that the economic development needs to be achieved in close connection with increasing urban sustainability, based on sustainable investments such as green infrastructures or NbS. Furthermore, under the guidance of these documents, the international institutions, research experts and decision makers seek collaboration with city representatives in order to integrate the benefits generated by such sustainable investments. Among the analyzed documents, the new 2030 Urban Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, reveal the need for participatory approaches to reach consensus about sustainable development. Other important international and European documents directed towards sustainability and NbS are Urban Water Agenda 2030, New Urban Agenda – Habitat III or 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. So, NbS represent a support in the efficient use of resources in order to promote urban development in concordance with the economic growth, participatory planning and governance, environmental policy, social cohesion and justice, public health and quality of life, environment protection.