

Guidelines for urban and territorial planning: Incorporating NbS in urban land use planning

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Land take is the transformation of agricultural, natural, and semi-natural spaces into urban and other artificial uses. Since the mid-1950s, the total surface area of cities in the EU has increased by 78% while the population has grown by just 33%. Urban sprawl is now foremost among the drivers of rapid climate change and the erosion of biodiversity. The loss of soil functions and ecosystem services is one of the major environmental challenges Europe is facing. To address the global issue of land take, the European Commission has proposed in the EU Environment Action Program to 2020 (7th EAP) to achieve “No Net Land Take” by 2050 and calls for a paradigmatic shift in urban development. Sealing agricultural land and open spaces should be avoided as far as possible and the focus should be on building on land that has already been sealed. It marks a turning point in strategies designed to slow urban sprawl as it places the emphasis on urban renewal and densification. It also introduces a renaturing goal that involves “giving back to nature” an amount of land equivalent to that consumed by urban growth. The deliverable analyses the current urban land take situation in 3 European Union countries, how they are addressing the EC’s objective and gives guidelines on how to reduce urban land take.

In the second part, the deliverable looks at the integration of NBS into urban planning documents. It highlights the crucial need to integrate these solutions at different scales, at city, neighbourhood and building level. Rather than relying on standardised 'green' approaches, the document advocates strategies that take account of local ecological and climatic nuances. These strategies should prioritise a diverse range of habitats, vegetation, and structures to encourage native biodiversity. The guidelines for integrating native biodiversity into urban planning systems include various measures such as environmental assessments, the inclusion of ecological corridors, the modelling of ecosystem services, or the adoption of new governance frameworks and engagement in the co-design of native biodiversity. Guidelines are illustrated with several case studies coming from cities.

Further reading: [Guidelines for urban and territorial planning: Incorporating NbS in urban land use planning \(D6.5\)](#)