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RESOURCE

Core principles for successfully implementing and upscaling Nature-based Solutions

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Description / Abstract

Despite substantial increases in the scope and magnitude of biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration, there remains ongoing degradation of natural resources that adversely affects both biodiversity and human well-being. Nature-based Solutions (NbS) can be an effective framework for reversing this trend, by increasing the alignment between conservation and sustainable development objectives. However, unless there is clarity on its evolution, definition and principles, and relationship with related approaches, it will not be possible to develop evidence-based standards and guidelines, or to implement, assess, improve and upscale NbS interventions globally. In order to address this gap, we present the definition and principles underpinning the NbS framework, recently adopted by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and compare it to (1) the Ecosystem Approach that was the foundation for developing the NbS definitional framework, and (2) four specific ecosystem-based approaches (Forest Landscape Restoration, Ecosystem-based Adaptation, Ecological Restoration and Protected Areas) that can be considered as falling under the NbS framework. Although we found substantial alignment between NbS principles and the principles of the other frameworks, three of the eight NbS principles stand out from other approaches: NbS can be implemented alone or in an integrated manner with other solutions; NbS should be applied at a landscape scale; and, NbS are integral to the overall design of policies, measures and actions, to address societal challenges. Reversely, concepts such as adaptive management/governance, effectiveness, uncertainty, multi-stakeholder participation, and temporal scale are present in other frameworks but not captured at all or detailed enough in the NbS principles.

This critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the NbS principles can inform the review and revision of principles supporting specific types of NbS (such as the approaches reviewed here), as well as serve as the foundation for the development of standards for the successful implementation of NbS.

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