

Urban oasis for adaptation to climate change: analysis of climate adaptation plans (CAP) around the world

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Abstract

Driven by climate change, especially the increase in the occurrence of heat waves around the world, this work has the objective of systematizing the municipal climate adaptation plans collected according to the criteria outlined in the document Measuring Benefits of Urban Heat Adaptation published in March 2021 by the C40 Group of Major Cities for Climate Leadership. The main results show that, out of 259 documents raised, only 154 effectively correspond to Climate Adaptation Plans, being that most of these documents are American. Among the actions proposed by C40, mention of mitigation is present in all documents, through the guideline aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The second most mentioned action refers to green infrastructure, 75%. However, it is important to highlight two other actions: heatwave response planning and development of cooling places, mentioned in only 44% and 34% of the analysed documents, respectively. In particular, actions related to cooling places, such as grey built-up structures and water features, appear only in more recent plans, mainly from 2015. Therefore, due to the current demand, it is urgent the readaptation of public spaces through the design of a network of refrigeration spaces distributed throughout the city.

Keywords - Climate Change, Climate Adaptation Plans, Heat Waves, Cooling Places.

1. Introduction

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change is a phenomenon attributed directly and indirectly to human activity that modifies the global atmosphere composition that is beyond the natural climate variability which is already observed, creating changes in climatic pattern, rising global temperature average and extreme events attached to climate (IPCC, 2023).

Studies suggest that society will experience many impacts of climate change in the near future, over the next thirty years, and even more so in the second half of this century. Among these impacts, one that has significant implications for energy demand and the health of the population is the increase in the frequency and intensity of heat waves. Although there is no universally acceptable definition of heat waves (Perkins; Alexander, 2013) these are understood as periods of unusual hot and dry/humid weather lasting at least two to three days and having a noticeable impact on human activities. Over the duration of heat waves, not only daytime temperatures reach high values, but also night time temperatures, and humidity changes beyond the long-term average. Heat waves are relative to a climate location; the same weather conditions may constitute a heat wave in one place but not another (Stefanon et al., 2012).

Extreme heat conditions are becoming more frequent, increasing risks to human health and health systems. The main impacts have been recorded in places where extreme heat occurs in context with population aging, urbanization, urban heat island, and inequalities in health care (Fajersztajn et al., 2016). According to Zhao et al. (2019), climate change will increase the number of deaths linked to heat waves between 2031 and 2080, and Brazil is among the most affected countries.

As for extreme temperature events, these overload the human body by damaging the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, especially for the most fragile people such as the elderly, pregnant women, children up to 4 years old, and obese people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO,

2018). Cities are not the cause of heat waves; however, they potentiate their effects. Because of the large concentration of asphalt, concrete, stone, and other inert materials, cities end up absorbing and retaining more heat than rural areas (Stone, 2012), and are therefore more vulnerable to heat waves.

As for the vulnerable population, in 2018 about 220 million people under 65 years of age were exposed to heat waves, a higher figure compared to the period from 1986 to 2005 (WMO, 2020). It is worth noting, according to Diniz et al. (2020), that the projections made for the near future (2030 - 2050) and distant future (2059 - 2099) show that excess mortality of the elderly related to heat waves will increase, being higher when urban adaptation actions are not applied, especially for cardiovascular diseases in women (up to 587 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants/ year). In the Brazilian context, recent research indicates an increase in the frequency of heat waves over the years in different regions of the country under different climates. It is expected that by the end of the 21st century, with the increase in heat waves, the Brazilian Northeast region, due to its location and also affected by socioeconomic inequalities, will become the region most affected by intense heat (Geirinhas et al., 2017).

Importantly, urban areas have a dual role: besides housing much of the population, the present lifestyle is one of the main inducers of climate change, since cities are marked by excessive consumption, solid waste production, greenhouse gas emissions, intensive energy use, landscape fragmentation, soil sealing, predominance of inert and heat-absorbing materials, and other factors that intensify the effects of climate change. In this sense, the structuring of space, form of development and expansion of the urban fabric (Nobre, Young, 2011) added to the implementation of urban green infrastructure (Farrugia et al., 2013) are points to be considered. Urban green infrastructure can be interpreted as a hybrid of green spaces and built systems such as forests, wetlands, parks, green roofs and walls that together can contribute to ecosystem resilience and bring benefits to humans through ecosystem services (Naumann et al., 2021; European Environment Agency, 2022).

In view of the above, this work has the objective of systematizing the main national and subnational climate adaptation plans according to the criteria outlined in the document Measuring Benefits of Urban Heat Adaptation, published in March 2021 by the C40 Group of Major Cities for Climate Leadership (C40, 2021), highlighting the strategic role of urban planning and design in climate adaptation to the urban heat, looking mainly at the propositions for the creation of climate amenity spaces.

2. Methods

The analysis of the Climate Adaptation Plans was carried out in order to systematize them according to the criteria outlined in the document Measuring Benefits of Urban Heat Adaptation, published in March 2021 by the C40 Group of Major Cities for Climate Leadership (C40, 2021). Among the C40 criteria, this analysis was based on the temperature reduction potential of the proposed actions and feasibility of implementation, as follows:

- Cool surface: found on sidewalks and roofs, these are those that reduce energy absorption and capture as a result of the reflective capacity of the elements;
- Green infrastructure:
 1. Urban parks: responsible for reducing the local urban temperature according to their size and canopy cover;
 2. Green corridors: correspond to connected green spaces in order to direct the wind and promote biodiversity;
 3. Vegetation, in general: corresponding to flowerbeds, bio-valets and green roofs.
- Urban form planning and design: according to the width of the streets, density, gauge, and materiality, it is possible to increase the albedo and consequently reduce the solar radiation stored on the urban surface.
- Heatwave response planning: corresponds to the policy of making the population aware of heat waves as well as action plans upon their occurrence in order to mitigate the effects generated by prolonged exposure to increased temperatures.
- Grey urban shading structures: corresponds to structures that provide shading, whose importance comes from the reduction of the amount of solar radiation captured and stored in the

urban surface and, therefore, reduction of air and surface temperature.

- Urban Water features: due to their greater ability to absorb solar radiation, when compared to inert materials, and to evaporative cooling, water bodies can reduce the air temperature of the surrounding area and promote greater thermal comfort.
- Wind corridors: through convection and evaporation, wind corridors can generate temperature reduction.

In addition to these criteria, this analysis included the search for the proposition and design of cooling places, as spaces of climate amenities distributed in a targeted manner throughout the city in order to assist the population during extreme heat.

It is worth noting the absence of conceptualization and specific literature on this topic, since the understanding about cooling places comes according to the local reality. The definition found is the one applied in Climate Adaptation Plans of developed countries such as the United States and Australia, in which the cooling places are mainly public or private air-conditioned buildings, able to receive the population, and where people are guided to go during extreme heat, besides some open spaces such as parks, public pools, squares with access to water, etc.

In total, 259 documents were analysed (Table 1). These documents encompass: i) municipal plans, ii) regional plans: preferably, administrative divisions corresponding to states and capitals; iii) documents available in official electronic portals; iv) cities mentioned in the consulted bibliographical references, so that there is a better understanding about the local conditions and possible similarities. This research was carried out based on municipal websites and specific websites related to climate change.

3. Results

Out of 259 of documents raised, 17 are from cities in Africa, 126 from America, 63 from Asia, 38 from Europe and 7 from Oceania; circa 68% correspond to Climate Adaptation Plans, as defined by Obermaier and Rosa (2013), with delimitation of the guidelines aimed at the local reality. Already 8% fit the pattern of booklets that, according to the IAUC (2020), are documents with education character that address the basic concepts on the subject and are not restricted to the existing local demands.

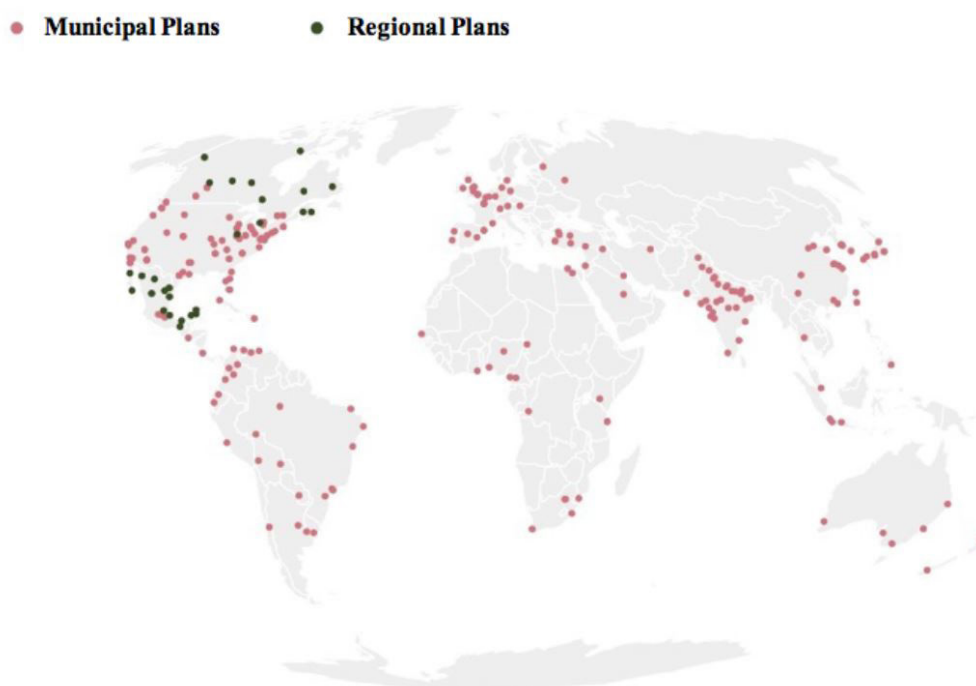


Figure 1: Spatialization of Climate Adaptation Plans: out of 259 of documents raised, 17 are from cities in Africa, 126 from America, 63 from Asia, 38 from Europe and 7 from Oceania (Authors, 2023; Infographics by Nicholas Pretto)

From the analysis of the above-mentioned plans, it was possible to understand the spatial distribution of the plans (Figure 1), which are more frequent in developed countries, especially in the USA. In addition, it was possible to draw an overview of the main issues dealt with in the Climate Adaptation Plans and similar documents (Figure 2 and 3). In Figure 2, through the bar graph, it is possible to understand the geographic Distribution of the analyzed documents as well as their publication period. Through Figure 3, it is possible to understand the mention of strategies.

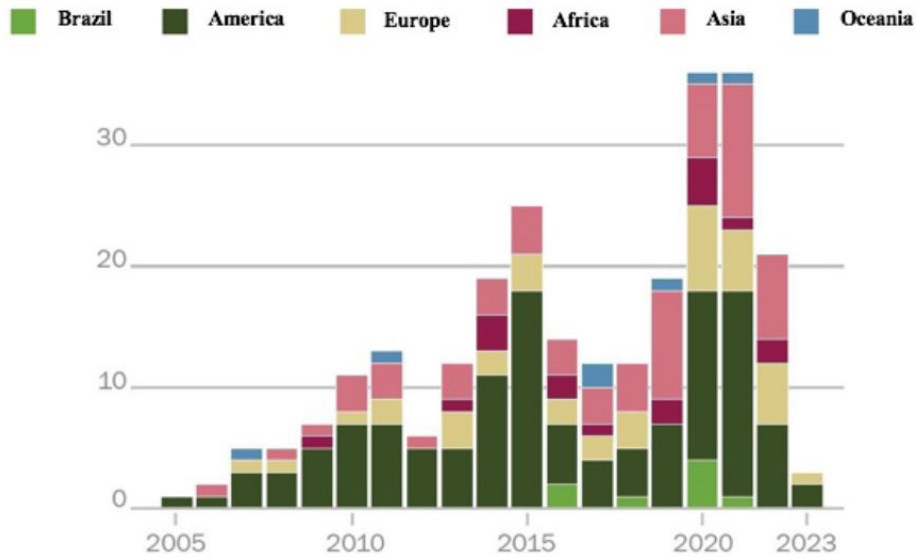


Figure 2: Geographic distribution of Climate Adaptation Plans (Authors, 2023; Infographics by Nicholas Pretto)

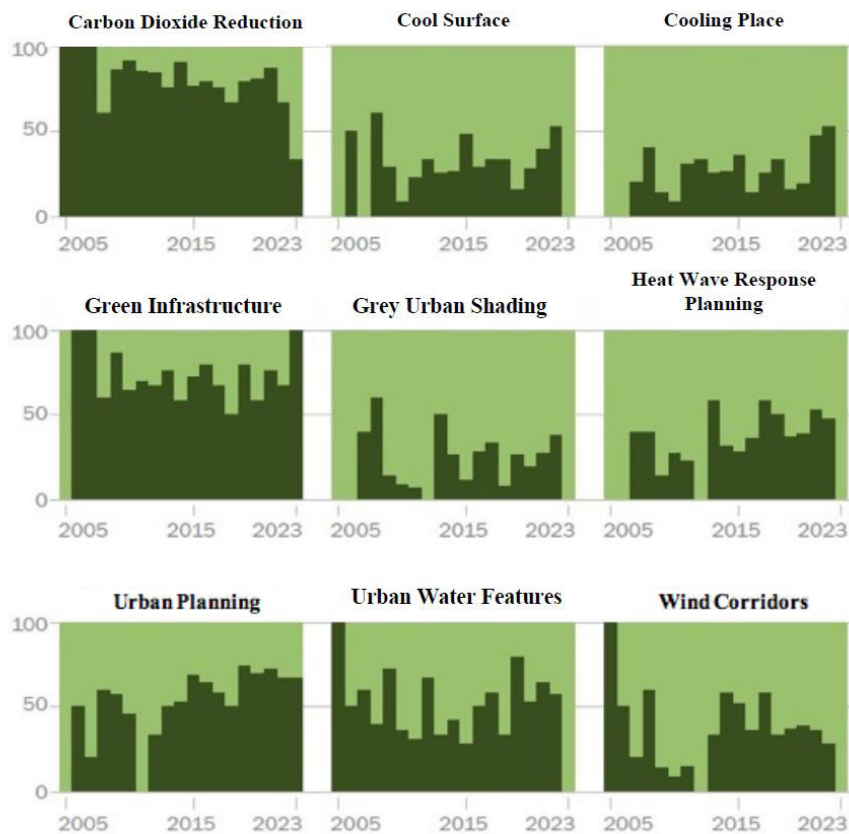


Figure 2: Geographic distribution of Climate Adaptation-Plans (Authors, 2023; Infographics by Nicholas Pretto)

4. Discussion

Among the actions posed by the C40, the mention refers to reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, stands out. However, it is known that the concern with the urban environment should not be restricted to mitigation measures, but also address adaptive measures of cities in the face of climate change (Duarte, 2019).

The second most mentioned action is related to green infrastructure (75%). Despite predominant, the level of detail given to this action fluctuates too much and three different approach patterns were found: i) only mention the importance of the vegetation for alleviating thermal stress; ii) indication of guidelines for urban parks, urban vegetation and green corridors; iii) reference to green infrastructure plans based on the demand mentioned in the analysed documents.

For example: i) in the Strategic Focus Area Plan for the city of Charlotte, USA, the importance of planting trees as a strategy for maintaining community resources is highlighted, but guidelines for these plantations are not outlined; ii) in Guide to Urban Cooling Strategies referring to Australia, in addition to pointing out practical alternatives arising from green infrastructure, they show how vegetation can contribute to the reduction of thermal stress; iii) in Chicago Climate Action Plan, USA, other documents, such as the Urban Forest Agenda and the Chicago Trees Initiative, are mentioned. It was considered important to highlight two other actions: heatwave response planning and cooling places, mentioned in only 44% and 34% of the analysed documents, respectively. There is a relationship between these actions, for example, warning systems triggered in cases of heat waves as part of the Excessive Heat Plan (Philadelphia Hot Weather - Health Watch Warning System). In this program, municipal teams work together with the National Weather Service to determine the heat wave and the consequent alert when they are hit.

Thus, there is guidance for people to go to places determined as cooling places, which are located through an interactive map available on the internet, the Stay Cool Interactive Map. On this map there is an indication of places with milder microclimates for these become temporary refuges until there is recovery from the thermal stress caused by the constant above-average temperatures for prolonged periods. When analysing the existing climate adaptation plans, it can be noted that many of them recommend that people seek air-conditioned spaces as a way to recover from excessive and prolonged heat.

As for the actions related to urban planning and design strategies, 70% of the plans mention them, whose level of detail, as well as for green infrastructure, varies a lot. As an example, for this action, the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2030+ is cited, which highlights the direct relationship between the reduction of air and surface temperature according to urban morphology and urban parameters, such as the minimum setback in urban lots and the shape of buildings.

5. Conclusion

Analysing the results of this research, it is possible to observe that there is a recent need - mainly in the last 10 years, with emphasis on the period after 2020 - for the development of climate adaptation plans, with most of the climate adaptation documents found in developed countries. In the last 10 years, there has been a strong movement in the Asian continent. These plans aim to reduce the impacts generated by climate change and advance the understanding of the subject and the implementation of practical measures that minimize the expected impacts.

Despite this, part of the documents found can be classified as primers, as they approach the topic superficially and have an education rather than a performance or prescriptive nature. Most of these documents lack important details and may not be applicable to reality.

It is noted the prevalence of green infrastructure, actions related to urban morphology and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the first two aspects being climate adaptation actions, while the last one is aimed at mitigating climate change. The actions related to cooling places, grey urban built-up structures and urban water features, it was observed that these are less frequent in the survey and it appears only in more recent plans, being first mentioned in 2015.

Due to the current demand and the need for measures aimed at climate adaptation, the urgency needs to readapt public spaces through the design of a network of cooling places distributed throughout the city. Cooling places must be designed in accordance to local reality and might be interesting to be associated with green infrastructure and better developed with urban morphology actions in order to alleviate the thermal stress generated by heat waves.

6. Acknowledgements

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8. Appendix

8.1. Analyzed documents

Table 1: Table with list of analyzed documents – Part 1 (Authors, 2023)

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CITY	COUNTRY
AMERICA			
Plan de Acción sobre el Cambio Climático 2021-25	2021	Buenos Aires	Argentina
Plano Municipal de Mitigação e Adaptação às Mudanças do Clima de Rio Branco	2020	Rio Branco	Brazil
Plano de Ação Climática	2020	Salvador	Brazil
Plano Local de Ação Climática da Cidade de Fortaleza	2020	Fortaleza	Brazil
Plano de Mitigação e Adaptação às Mudanças Climáticas	2020	Curitiba	Brazil
Goiânia Sustentável	2011	Goiânia	Brazil
Plano Local de Ação Climática	2022	Belo Horizonte	Brazil
Plano de Ação Climática	2023	João Pessoa	Brazil
Plano Local de Ação Climática da Cidade de Recife	2020	Recife	Brazil
Plano de Ação Climática da Cidade de Teresina	2023	Teresina	Brazil
Plano de Desenvolvimento Sustentável e Ação Climática	2021	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil
Plan Clima SP	2021	São Paulo	Brazil
Plano de Resiliência de Aracaju 2017-2024	2017	Aracaju	Brazil
Climate Change Strategy	2008	Alberta	Canada
Calgary Climate Strategy	2022	Calgary	Canada
Climate Resilient Edmonton	2018	Edmonton	Canada
Strategic Plan Mississauga	2009	Mississauga	Canada
Montreal Management of the Climate Change Adaptation Plan	2017	Montréal	Canada
Climate Change Action Plan	2014	New Brunswick	Canada
The Way Forward on Climate Change	2019	foundland and Labrador	Canada
Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Nunavut	2011	Nunavut	Canada
Climate Change Strategy	2015	Ontario	Canada
Climate Change Master Plan	2020	Ottawa	Canada
A Strategy for Reducing the Impacts of Global Warming	2008	Prince Edward Island	Canada
Climate Change Action Plan	2013	Quebec	Canada
TransformTO - City of Toronto	2021	Toronto	Canada
Climate Change Adaptation Strategy	2018	Vancouver	Canada
Community Climate Adaptation Plan for Waterloo Region	2020	Waterloo Region	Canada
A Sustainable Winnipeg	2011	Winnipeg	Canada
Climate Change Action Plan	2009	Yukon	Canada
Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan	2019	Santiago	Chile
Mitigación a La Variabilidad y El Cambio Climático	2013	Bogotá	Colombia
Climate Adaptation Plan for Medellín 2020-2050	2020	Medellin	Colombia
Green Vision	2008	San Jose	Costa Rica
Adaptation Plan for the Havana Coastal Zone	2019	Havana	Cuba
Planning-for-Climate-Adaptation	2018	Santo Domingo	Dominican Republic
Climate Action Plan	2021	Quito	Ecuador
Climate Action Plan	2020	San Salvador	El Salvador
Programa de Acción ante el Cambio Climático del Estado de Chiapas	2010	Chiapas	Mexico
Climate Action Program	2014	Mexico City	Mexico
Plan de Adaptacion del municipio de Puebla	2012	Puebla	Mexico
Climate Change Action Plan Overview	2009	Veracruz	Mexico
Recommendations of Actions for Resilience and Sustainability	2020	Asunción	Paraguay
Climate Action Plan	2015	Atlanta	United States of America
Climate Change Adaptation in Austin's Community Forest and Natural Areas	2014	Austin	United States of America
Baltimore County Climate Action Plan	2021	Baltimore	United States of America
Climate Ready Boston. Municipal Vulnerability to Climate Change	2019	Boston	United States of America
Bozeman Climate Plan	2021	Bozeman	United States of America
BGreen 2020 A Sustainability Plan for Bridgeport, Connecticut	2020	Bridgeport	United States of America

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CITY	COUNTRY
Resilient-Buffalo-Niagara	2020	Buffalo	United States of America
Towards Resilience	2018	Charlotte	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2022	Chicago	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2013	Cleveland	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2020	Columbus	United States of America
City Environmental & Climate	2019	Dallas	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2021	Delaware	United States of America
Denver 2015 Climate Action Plan	2015	Denver	United States of America
Sustainability Action Agenda	2013	Detroit	United States of America
Fort Worth 2010 Sustainability Task Force Recommendations	2010	Fort Worth	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2020	Houston	United States of America
Climate Change Roadmap	2020	Indiana	United States of America
Adaptation Action Area Workgroup Workgroup Recommendations	2019	Jacksonville	United States of America
Climate-Risk-and-Vulnerability-Assessment	2019	Kansas City	United States of America
Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance	2021	Las Vegas	United States of America
2045 Climate Action Plan	2023	Los Angeles	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2020	Memphis	United States of America
Climate Action Strategy	2021	Miami	United States of America
ECO Presentation to Governor's Climate Task Force	2020	Milwaukee	United States of America
Minneapolis Climate Action Plan	2013	Minneapolis	United States of America
A General Plan for Nashville and Davidson County	2015	Nashville	United States of America
Climate Change at NYC	2021	New York City	United States of America
Community Action Plan	2018	Orlando	United States of America
Philadelphia Climate Action	2021	Philadelphia	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2021	Phoenix	United States of America
Climate Action Plan 3.0	2017	Pittsburgh	United States of America
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability	2021	Portland	United States of America
Climate Adaptation and Resiliency	2019	Riverside	United States of America
Sacramento Climate Action & Adaptation Plan	2022	Sacramento	United States of America
Climate Adaptation Plan	2021	Salt Lake City	United States of America
Climate Ready. A Pathway for Climate Action and Adaptation	2019	San Antonio	United States of America
Climate Action Plan	2022	San Diego	United States of America
San Francisco's Action Plan	2021	San Francisco	United States of America
Coastal Adaptation and Resilience in Tampa Bay	2015	Tampa	United States of America
Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan	2021	Virginia Beach	United States of America
DNR's Plan for Climate Resilience	2020	Washington DC	United States of America
Wisconsin Climate and Health Adaptation Plan	2016	Wisconsin	United States of America

Table 2: Table with list of analyzed documents – Part 1 (Authors, 2023)

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CITY	COUNTRY
AFRICA			
Resilience Strategy	2020	Accra	Ghana
Environmental Action Plan	2009	Alexandria	Egypt
Climate Change Policy	2017	Cape Town	South Africa
Territorial Climate Energy Plan of Dakar	2021	Dakar	Senegal
Dar es Salaam City Master Plan 2016-2036	2016	Dar es Salaam	Tanzania
Framework for Municipal Adaptation Plan. Case study of Douala V Municipality	2018	Douala	Cameroon
Durban Climate Change Strategy	2014	Durban	South Africa
Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. Corporate Disaster Management Plan	2013	Ekurhuleni	South Africa
Climate Change Adaptation. Plan for the City of Johannesburg	2021	Johannesburg	South Africa
Resilience Strategy	2020	Lagos	Nigeria
Voluntary Local Review	2020	Yaoundé	Cameroon
Nairobi Climate Action Plan 2020-2050	2020	Nairobi	Kenya
ASIA			
Climate Change and Environment Action Plan of Ahmedabad District	2022	Ahmadabad	India
Amman Green City Action Plan	2021	Amman	Jordan
Bangkok Assessment Report on Climate Change	2009	Bangkok	Thailand
Climate Change and Environment Action Plan of Bhopal District	2022	Bhopal	India
Resilience Chennai Strategy	2019	Chennai	India
Comprehensive Development Plan 2018-2022	2018	Davao	Philippines
Climate Action Plan 2030+	2020	Hong Kong	China
Climate Change and Environment Action Plan of Indore District	2022	Indore	India
Urban Challenges in a Changing Climate	2011	Jakarta	Indonesia
Karachi City Climate Change	2012	Karachi	Pakistan
City Lab Kochi	2020	Kochi	India
Implementation of the 2030 Agenda	2019	Kuwait City	Kuwait
Climate Action Plan	2022	Mumbai	India
Climate Change and Environment Action Plan of Nagpur District	2022	Nagpur	India
City Climate Action Plan	2021	New Delhi	India
Resilience Accelerator	2019	Pune	India
Ten Year Plan 2021-31	2021	Queenstown	Singapore
Climate Resilience City Action Plan	2018	Rajkot	India
Semarang Climate Change Resilience Strategy	2011	Semarang	Indonesia
A Guide for Sustainable Urban Development	2010	Shanghai	China
Preparing for a Climate Resilient Singapore	2021	Singapore	Singapore
Smart City Srinagar Report	2016	Srinagar	India
Surat Resilience Strategy. Resilient Cities Network	2017	Surat	India
Suwon Action Report	2020	Suwon	South Korea
Towards a Net Zero Future	2021	Taipei	Taiwan
Tokyo Climate Adaption Plan	2019	Tokyo	Japan
EUROPE			
Climate Emergency Action Plan	2022	London	United Kingdom
Paris Climate and Energy Action Plan_2012	2013	Paris	France
Copenhagen Climate Plan	2015	Copenhagen	Denmark
Ankara Climate Change Action Plan	2022	Ankara	Turkey

CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLANS	YEAR OF PUBLICATION	CITY	COUNTRY
Plan Cima	2018	Barcelona	Spain
Climate Plan for the territory of the City of Brussels	2022	Bruxelles	Belgium
Bursa Sustainable Energy and Climate Change Adaptation Plan	2017	Bursa	Turkey
The perspectives of Cologne 2030+	2021	Cologne	Germany
Climate Change Action Plan of Gaziantep	2023	Gaziantep	Turkey
Berlin's Climate Action and Adaptation Planning	2016	Berlin	Germany
Local Climate Change Governance	2011	Hamburg	Germany
Dublin City Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024	2019	Dublin	Ireland
Istanbul Climate Change Action Plan	2018	Istanbul	Turkey
Izmir Green City Action Plan	2020	Izmir	Turkey
Lille: action plan for a low carbon city	2014	Lille	France
European Green Capital	2020	Lisbon	Portugal
Roadmap to climate neutrality by 2050	2020	Madrid	Spain
Marseille's Path to a Greener Future	2021	Marseille	France
Climate Action Plan	2022	Moscow	Russia
Munich: Future Perspective	2013	Munich	Germany
Adapting to Climate Change in Vienna	2018	Vienna	Austria
Glasgow Climate Adaptation Plan 2022 - 2030	2022	Glasgow	United Kingdom
Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2012+	2011	Birmingham	United Kingdom
Valencia 2030 Climate Mission	2021	Valencia	Spain
Municipality Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan	2021	Karşıyaka	Turkey
OCEANIA			
City of Melbourne Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan	2019	Melbourne	Australia
Adapting for Climate Change	2016	Sydney	Australia
Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan 2011-2013	2016	Adelaide	Australia