

# Calling for Water-Based Design Strategies after COP30 in Belém

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The yearly Climate Conference of the Parties (COP), also known as the UN Climate Conference and COP30, is coming up November 10–21, 2025. This will be the 30th meeting since the first one in 1995 in Berlin, and 34 years since the first report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was published in 1990. This year, the meeting will take place in Belém do Pará, Brazil, the natural gateway to the Amazon. After these last three decades, analyses indicate an international scenario that is far from what is necessary to guarantee the health of the planet and its inhabitants. We should perhaps be discouraged by the prospects for COP30 in Belém.

But often critical situations are windows of opportunity. Topics such as reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; adapting to climate change; financing developing countries, ecological transformation and the transition to renewable and low-carbon energy; preserving forests and biodiversity; and climate justice will be on the table for discussion in Belém. In a whirlwind of issues like these, it seems important to us to identify in advance, for each topic above, the main contributions of the connection between the material and cultural heritage of water and sustainable development in light of the growing urgency of preserving and valuing water resources in all regions of the world. In this context, records of methodological experiences and case studies, such as those being carried out by the journal *Blue Papers*, provide a valuable universe of analysis.

In Brazil, the Brazilian Research Network on Global Climate Change (Rede Clima) is an interdisciplinary network composed of 16 research groups interacting at various levels and through a variety of programs. Rede Clima has experience developing climate change cause-effect research from a “nexus+” perspective. In nexus+, an additional pillar is added to the classical water-energy-food nexus: socio-ecological security. This expands the approach by incorporating the political-territorial dimensions of interconnected social and ecological systems, within a collaborative research-practice frame.

The application of the nexus+ methodology has highlighted, among other things, the importance of recognizing the knowledge and heritage of Indigenous peoples in the development of nature-based solutions that simultaneously include reducing GHG emissions, adapting rural and urban environments to the effects of climate change, protecting forests, watercourses and biodiversity, while also promoting climate justice and facilitating the quantification of resources and the

identification of possible sources of financing necessary for their implementation. In addition, the rich process underway in Brazil involving the updating of the National Policy on Climate Change and the preparation of the National Plan on Climate Change (Plano Clima), has been carried out with significant participation from academia and society. In parallel, the new Brazilian Nationally Determined Contributions, announced at COP29 in Baku (2024), establish a national reduction in GHG emissions of between 59 per cent and 67 per cent by 2035. These three instruments, to be consolidated in Belém, clearly emphasize the importance of connecting the material and cultural heritage of water with sustainable development.

COP30 in Belém offers a strategic moment to assess and define the agenda of global climate action. The host nation, Brazil, provides a compelling focus. Its immense scale, encompassing seven biomes with cities like Recife (pictured on the cover of this issue) facing the nation's highest threat level from extreme weather, presents profound climate adaptation challenges and opportunities. Simultaneously, Brazil's continental diversity – its varied territories, histories, and deep-seated inequities – makes it a strategic epicenter for developing globally relevant climate solutions. A special issue of *Blue Papers* dedicated to the theme of valuing water and heritage would be a welcome addition to the discussions, capturing outcomes of COP30, promoting policy recommendations and contributing to sustainable development worldwide.