



# Urban Governance in Afghanistan:

## Assessing the New Urban Development Programme and Its Implementation

H. Detlef Kammeier and Zabihullah Issa

June 2017



15 YEARS OF HIGH-QUALITY RESEARCH





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## About the Authors

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## About the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research institute based in Kabul. AREU's mission is to inform and influence policy and practice by conducting high-quality, policy-relevant research and actively disseminating the results, and by promoting a culture of research and learning. To achieve its mission AREU engages with policymakers, civil society, researchers and students to promote their use of AREU's research and its library, to strengthen their research capacity, and to create opportunities for analysis, reflection, and debate.

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community in Afghanistan and has a Board of Directors comprised of representatives from donor organisations, the United Nations and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations.

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For any inaccuracies, omissions and inadequacies, the authors take personal responsibility and promise to do better if there is a future opportunity.

This AREU Discussion Paper was prepared as a contribution to the Govern4Afg. Govern4Afg has been launched by German and Afghan partners to establish a platform for policy dialogue on governance topics identified as being highly relevant for Afghanistan. The two-year initiative brings together representatives of research, governance practitioners and decision makers to discuss and further develop governance mechanisms that guide state-building as well as enhance the overall understanding of the context in Afghanistan. Govern4Afg was steered by GIZ and supported by an Afghan-German consortium consisting of GOPA Consultants; AREU; and JS Consultancy Services. As a consortium, AREU has published a series of related research papers on governance in Afghanistan.

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## Glossary

<b>Citizens' Charter</b>	The first ever inter-ministerial, multi-sectorial National Priority Program of the National Unity Government of Afghanistan. It is, where Ministries collaborate on a single program using a programmatic approach. As overarching policy document for rural and urban areas it is the main reference document for the forthcoming urban governance development programme, which is the focus of this report. The Citizens' Charter is also used for developing all rural communities.
<b>Gozar</b>	Local government unit above the level of Community Development Councils, and below the nahiya level, headed by a Wakil-i-Gozar. Smaller cities do not even have gozars yet. In other cities, the population size of the gozar varies between very small and rather large. To amend the administrative system, the Citizens' Charter proposes a standard size of 1,000 to 1,250 households for each gozar, resulting in a standard neighbourhood of 7,000 to 10,000 persons.
<b>Nahiya</b>	A Nahiya is a district in a municipality. It is an important sub-municipal administrative unit that may vary considerably in area and population. The Citizens' Charter proposes a standardization in order to increase administrative system efficiency: The standard nahiya is expected to comprise 4-5 gozars, thus adding up to 4,000-6,000 households at the nahiya level. The reality differs with nahiyas at a very wide range of sizes.
<b>Urban governance and development programme (under the Citizens' Charter)</b>	Occasionally, the paper uses terms such as "new urban support programme" instead of "urban governance and development programme" to mean the same programme that is the focus of the paper and that is about to be launched with World Bank and possibly other international funding combined with local contributions. The programme is designed to use governance mechanisms for introducing and implementing a standardized set of local infrastructure improvements at the neighbourhood level.

## Abbreviations

<b>ANDS</b>	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
<b>CC</b>	Citizens' Charter
<b>CDC</b>	Community Development Council (in rural and urban areas)
<b>DMM</b>	Deputy Ministry of Municipalities
<b>GoIRA</b>	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
<b>Govern4Afg</b>	Governance Forum Afghanistan
<b>GIZ (previously GTZ)</b>	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
<b>HH</b>	Household
<b>IDLG</b>	Independent Directorate of Local Governance
<b>KM</b>	Kabul Municipality
<b>MOUD, MUDA, MUDH</b>	Ministry of Urban Development, later called Ministry of Urban Development Affairs, today Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
<b>MRRD</b>	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Government Organization
<b>NSP</b>	National Solidarity Programme
<b>SMAP, SNAP</b>	Strategic Municipal (Nahiya) Action Programme
<b>UNCDF</b>	United Nations Capital Development Fund
<b>U-NPP</b>	Urban National Priority Programme
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

# Executive Summary

## 1. Introduction

Improving the good governance agenda in Afghanistan must emphasise the burgeoning urban sphere and with it the importance of municipal government, since urbanisation has now been recognised as one of the most significant drivers of change. While the urbanisation rate at the turn of the 21st century was estimated at about 10-15 percent, it now stands at some 8.3 to 10.1 million or about 22-25 percent, depending on how “urban” is defined.

During publication of this paper, the preparatory work for a city support programme is being finalized with an eye to being implemented in a few months. Therefore, the paper assesses both the conceptual framework of the national programme, and its implementation.

## 2. Objectives (and Limitations)

The new Urban National Priority Programme provides the framework for subsequent urban policies and legislative action. It is closely related to another major set of policy and action, i.e. the Citizens’ Charter and its expected implementation by means of a massive World Bank grant for urban improvements in four cities: Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar, and Jalalabad.

As a Discussion Paper, the study intends to cover two interrelated directions: the assessment of current urban sector conditions in Afghanistan, and recommendations for implementing the programme in the four cities:

1. Principles of decentralised urban development, with three sub-issues:

1.1 Why is decentralisation so important to newly urbanising countries?

1.2 Which major international support programmes may serve as models for Afghanistan?

1.3 What are the essential modalities for programme implementation relevant to Afghanistan, in view of the international experience?

2. Lessons to learn for structuring the “good city”. Here the emphasis is on discussing empirical and normative figures on public facilities at the neighbourhood level (equating this with the local concept of gozars, spatially, socially and economically), but also further up.

In doing so, the paper links and incorporates three major aspects—a review of the existing policy and legal framework, a brief discussion of deconcentrated/decentralised urban management and providing an outline of the dimensions of the urban governance and development programme.

The study does not fully answer the question about the “good city in Afghanistan” because of time limitations. The paper also does not include all the relevant material that must have been written for the World Bank-funded programme. The reasons are simple: much of the material is classified or is too detailed for a more general discussion of the basic questions on the recent phenomenon of rapid urbanisation in Afghanistan.

## 3. Methodology

The research began with local fact finding by means of interviews among key officers involved in urban management, as well as by a dialogue with stakeholder representatives during the preparation of the research. Due to limited time-frame and security restrictions particularly for international expert, possibility for primary research was only limited to interviews in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif with telephone interviews with officials in other cities. The draft of the interview questions was based on a review of the relevant literature on the broader issues in urban management. Here, the sub-municipal structure of nahiyas (districts) and, under them, gozars (sub-districts) and the capacity of their officers play important roles.

The research work conducted a dialogue with stakeholders in the field of urban development. Two sets of questions were discussed among national experts (in individual meetings and scheduled larger dialogue events) and with selected city officials (in individual interviews). The information was used in the recommendations for (a) options for standardising the gozar as the most important administrative unit for the proposed support programme, and (b) how the proposed measures (a minimum of greening, selected community facilities, and basic infrastructure upgrading) might contribute to the vision for a “good city” in Afghanistan.

The interviews were conducted among high-ranking representatives of the four cities, including mayors and construction bureau chiefs. In addition, several persons based in Kabul were interviewed. For all interviews, a uniform set of 10 questions was used. The draft study was presented at a dialogue forum (held at AREU in February 2017) with national experts so as to incorporate their views.

Together, Kabul and the four large cities selected (“Grade One” cities) account for well over 60 percent of the most important urban areas in Afghanistan or about 6 million people, so the emerging support programme for the four major cities will be designed to serve the needs of at least 2.5 million people initially, though this number is growing.

In this context of rapid but largely uncontrolled urban growth, it is of great importance to strengthen the functions of the municipalities and their main sub-units, the nahiyas and gozars, and below them, the Community Development Council. Therefore, both the fact finding through interviews with local officials and the assessment of the secondary data available aimed at developing a viable model of urban governance adapted to the four cities’ needs.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Required administrative structure for successful programme implementation

The originally intended limitation on gozar and nahiya standardisation (in terms of population size) had to be broadened because most grassroots improvements cannot be planned and implemented in isolation from the larger plans and networks.

Three layers of planning and management activities come together in the urban support programme:

1. the “grassroots” or “bottom up” efforts under the Citizens’ Charter, coupled with massive block grants for Community Development Councils and gozars;
2. the intended strategic action programmes at nahiya and municipality levels (SNAP and SMAP)<sup>1</sup>; and
3. the national and regional sector priority programmes in Education, Health, Water and Waste Management and many others.

### 4.2 Need for gozar boundary reform as a precondition for implementing the urban development programme

A quick review of the four cities revealed that only in Kandahar can the gozar area/population size remain close to present values. However, in the other three cities, the reform will amount to a drastic reduction of the numbers of very small gozars. The gozar restructuring would have to be undertaken before the urban support programme begins, as a precondition for grant disbursement. It will also be a serious testing ground for the administrative capacity of each city, both at the gozar level and for the municipality as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> SNAPs and SMAPs are the proposed strategic format for area development plans replacing the outdated and inefficient “Master Plan” concept.

### 4.3 “Menu”-driven programme implementation

The urban support programme is designed to be implemented on the basis of a “menu” from which the Community Development Councils and gozar councils may select one or more facilities, such as playgrounds, those for women’s job creation and education, or basic environmental functions. The Discussion Paper deals with the wider framework of required or desirable facilities all over the city although the Citizens’ Charter support programme is deliberately limited to the Community Development Councils and gozar levels.

Local-level improvements to infrastructure, public utilities and community facilities constitutes one of the frequently used approaches to combining bottom-up planning and decision-making with the financing and managing of urban facilities through multiple sources. In view of the need for general orientation on urban facilities, this part of the paper includes an overview of the “big picture” of city facilities by city size and type, and an overview of the wider neighbourhood facilities to which the Citizens’ Charter programme will contribute.

## 5. Conclusion

It is expected that the emerging urban support programme will constitute a real breakthrough in the mix of difficult socio-economic and political conditions with the massive challenges of urbanisation. The Citizens’ Charter is perhaps the most ambitious, as well as most promising, long-term programme, especially if the present main actors in the urban sector (the Government, UN Habitat and World Bank) are joined by a range of other important international players. The menu of projects eligible for programme support is essentially sound as a tool for interventions at the lowest sub-municipal levels. However, it is not quite satisfactory as a tool or reference framework for the entire municipality, as it is not connected to urban facilities at higher levels. The four cities are ready to start the preliminary work for the programme while the operations and implementation modalities are to be finalised with the assistance of the international agencies.

## 6. Recommendations

In view of the deficiencies in urban physical and socio-economic conditions, the need for boosting the urban management capability requires long-term and clearly targeted support (which is not described in the programme documents accessible to the researchers). This calls for a concerted action programme which includes the following components:

- Design a pilot programme - one nahiya in one of the four cities, or in two or even all four cities simultaneously; it is important to design and implement this kind of pilot programme without the rush that might stem from the impatience of the rest of the city to start “their own” programmes.
- Start the pilot work only in areas where the preconditions have been met, i.e., where the gozar boundary adjustment has been completed.
- Involve trainees from any relevant education programme, for example, the new Masters Course at Kabul Polytechnic University.
- Retain the best performers among the local trainers and get them involved in subsequent courses. Bring in officers from other cities to witness the programme in the four large cities. The next generation of cities where the support programme is implemented will benefit immensely from the experience.

It is envisaged that the action programme will include four or five specialisations in the broad field of socio-economic and physical urban improvements, such as accounting and procurement, water/wastewater and environmental components; integrating the women’s learning and training facilities; playgrounds and primary schools in the neighbourhood, and many others.

The general recommendation to the government and the funding agencies is to prepare for independent research activities running in parallel with the implementation of this important national programme. The present assessment study may be seen as a forerunner of similar research and monitoring reports.

# 1. Introduction

This AREU Discussion Paper was prepared as a contribution to the Governance Forum Afghanistan (Govern4Afg). Govern4Afg was launched by German and Afghan partners to establish a platform for policy dialogue on governance topics identified as being highly relevant for Afghanistan. Given the high rates of urban growth, cities present one of the most pressing governance challenges in Afghanistan. Against this background, Afghan and German partners jointly selected urban governance as one of six topics within Govern4Afg to discuss key challenges in the sector and create a better understanding of recent developments. In this context, AREU as a consortium partner has published a series of related research and issues papers on governance with a particular focus on local governance and its slow progress in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup>

However, not much conceptual work on governance has been completed in Afghanistan in the context of the rapidly rising urbanisation although the upcoming programme is close to beginning its implementation. The main partners, i.e., the Government of Afghanistan and the World Bank, supported by a number of international agencies, are currently getting ready for the launch of the programme, which easily qualifies as one of the largest and most ambitious for the development of the country. This study can only make a small contribution in conceptual terms, with the hope that the programme produces a significant impact on the four cities scheduled for receiving the support.

## 1.1 The Context of Rapid Urbanisation in Afghanistan

The broad agenda for good governance in Afghanistan must include an emphasis on the burgeoning urban sphere and the important role of municipal government because urbanisation has been recognised as one of the most significant drivers of change for several years. As in most other countries, growing urbanisation used to be seen as a threat, especially because it is coupled with massive rural-urban migration due to continuing civil war, and the subsequent lack of economic opportunities in rural areas. In contrast with negative views of its threats and risks, urbanisation it is now reinterpreted as a considerable opportunity: new opportunities arise from the increasing demographic concentration as it is relatively easier to provide social facilities in cities than in the low-density countryside. It is also easier to concentrate new job opportunities in selected cities. As well, the necessary action for administrative capacity building may be best provided in selected cities. Thus Afghanistan has joined many other formerly agrarian countries where rapid urban changes are now taking place, providing excellent opportunities for comparative assessment of development and capacity-building models.

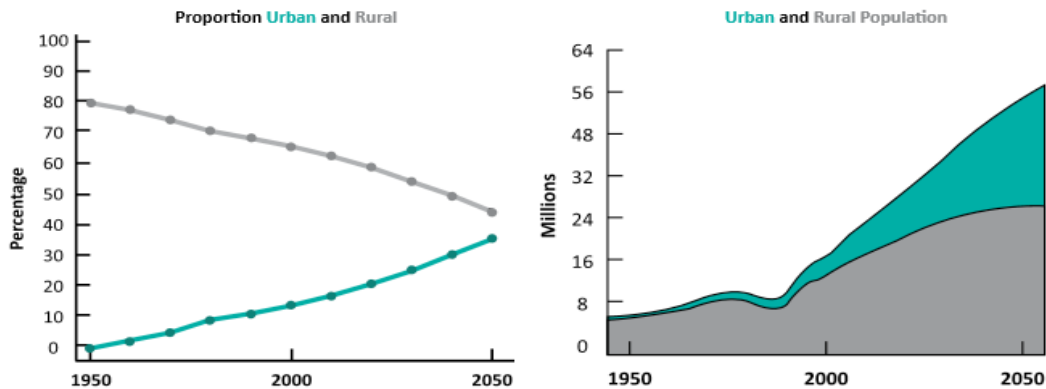
The re-evaluation of the inescapable demographic trends has been translated into national programmes that are promoted by most international development agencies all over the world. While some development agencies in Afghanistan continue to focus on rural development, and implicitly, on anti-urban policies, the World Bank and UN Habitat are very active as the most prominent and experienced supporters of appropriate urbanisation strategies that are felt to be the new, indispensable “drivers” for the country.<sup>3</sup> These are now being launched in Afghanistan, and the urban governance programme is a closely related component.

Figure 1 illustrates the shifts in urban and rural population over time. The long-term prospects (and they are threatening indeed) envisage nearly 40 percent urban population in 2050 or 50 percent in 2060, coupled with continuing high natural population growth rates. The reported compound urban growth rate of 4.4 percent *per annum* is among the highest in the world.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The most relevant AREU publications in this respect are Nematullah Bizhan, Ferhat Emil, with Haroon Nayegkhail. “Bringing the State Closer To the People: Deconcentrating Planning and Budgeting in Afghanistan” (Kabul, AREU Issues Paper, July 2016); Orzala Ashraf Nemat, and Karin Werner, “Civil Society and Governance” (Kabul, AREU Issues Paper, July 2016); Aarya Nijat, Kristof Gosztonyi, Basir Feda, and Jan Koehler, “Subnational Governance in Afghanistan: I. The State of Affairs, and II. The Future of District and Village Representation” (Kabul, AREU Issues Paper, July 2016).

<sup>3</sup> The main reference in this respect is UN Habitat, and its work in trailblazing national publications such as GoIRA, State of Afghan Cities, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> None of these recently published data can claim high statistical confidence, but they are repeated here to reiterate the enormous challenge to a country that is plagued by political instability, aggravated by the onslaught of rapid demographic shifts and changes, including that of premature urbanization and ubiquitous poverty.

**Figure 1: Long-term urban-rural population dynamics in Afghanistan****FIGURE 1.4: AFGHANISTAN'S URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION DYNAMICS**

Source: GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities*, Vol. 1, 2015, p.10

The current phase of rapid urbanisation in Afghanistan is still relatively new in the hitherto overwhelmingly agrarian country with a population that is not at all used to anything that may be described as urban culture. While the urbanisation rate at the turn of the 21st century was estimated at about 10-15 percent, it now stands at some 8.3 to 10.1 million or about 22-25 percent, depending on how “urban” is defined.<sup>5</sup> The related detailed population analyses are at the core of the work for the four major cities where the new urban development programme is being launched.

A rough summary of the present situation is that the bulk of the urban population is concentrated in five city regions, i.e., Kabul and the four cities on which this paper is focused (a rough population estimate of those five cities is 6 million, without even counting in the large and growing rural-urban fringe areas). As in other countries at similarly early urban development stages, both the recognition and acceptance of such facts have been changing in recent years. The government and the supporting donor organisations have fully recognised that urban growth is not only a threat and a multi-dimensional challenge (this being the previous view), but an opportunity to be understood and utilised (this being the contemporary view). It is in this context that the urban governance and development programme becomes so important, in itself as well as for most other aspects of national development.

Two major documents must be referred to as the basis for the current national development policies:

1. The Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), 2017-2021,<sup>6</sup> which sets out the overall perspective for the coming five years, including the new emphasis on urban development.
2. As in the past 15 or more years, the country is highly dependent on international financial and technical support; many countries have recently renewed their support by jointly signing the Brussels Communiqué in October 2016.<sup>7</sup>

In the overall policy context, several National Priority Programmes (NPP) and strategies play significant roles. For urban development, the new, so-called Urban National Priority Programme (U-NPP), which is very important, frames subsequent policies and legislative action. Table 1 shows an overview. The U-NPP is closely related to another major policy and action set, i.e., the

<sup>5</sup> The systematic work by UN Habitat research teams throughout the country has now established a universally accepted analytical database and interpretation of the cities in Afghanistan to support many international and national agencies' development work. The most important references are GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities*, 2015, and the closely related GoIRA, *Atlas of Afghan City Regions*, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> GoIRA, *Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF), 2017-2021*.

<sup>7</sup> Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, *Communiqué, 5 October 2016: Partnership for Prosperity and Peace*



Citizens' Charter (CC) and its expected implementation by means of a massive World Bank grant for urban improvements. The CC is thus primarily linked with "Pillar Two" of the U-NPP, and, to a lesser degree, to Pillars One and Three.

**Table 1: The overriding policies under the Urban National Priority Programme (U-NPP)**

<b>Vision:</b> "By 2024, Afghanistan has a network of dynamic, safe, liveable urban centres that are hubs of economic growth and arenas of culture and social inclusion through decentralised urban planning and participatory urban governance."		
<b>Pillar One:</b> Strengthened Urban Governance and Institutions	<b>Pillar Two:</b> Adequate Housing and Basic Urban Services for All Afghans	<b>Pillar Three:</b> Strengthened Urban Economy and Infrastructure
Six major components of the Outputs 2016-2020, focus on legislative, regulatory framework and procedural issues	Eight major components of the Outputs 2016-2020, focus on housing and physical urban development	Five major components of the Outputs 2016-2020, focus on transportation and other parts of infrastructure for economic development

Source: GoIRA, *Urban National Priority Programme (U-NPP), Results Framework, 2016*

Good governance tends to end up as fruitless theory unless it is linked with real improvements. Afghanistan is at a point where theory and practice are beginning to be linked, and the people's expectations are rising. Therefore, the government is under considerable pressure to deliver such improvements without wasting time and money.

The reason for this is that the government intends to proceed as quickly as possible with implementing the urban development programme in the four major cities, as determined by the disbursement of the World Bank funds. The governance programme in Kabul (which has been under implementation for some time) is not included in this paper because it is being run as a separate project.

At a later stage (to be determined by DMM/IDLG) the next set of medium-sized and smaller municipalities will be formed where the programme will be implemented after conducting much of the work in the four large cities. It is expected that the smaller the municipalities are, the lower the likely capacity of the staff for planning, managing, and implementing any improvement programmes. In the long run, the national urban development policy must be conceptualised for all or most of the 150 municipalities, although in reality it would have to be limited to a set of about 50 or 60 cities and towns, i.e., the most important of the 34 provincial capitals, and an appropriate selection of the 120 district capitals. Given the size and complexity of the programme, the implementation may take 15 years for the core group alone, and much longer if all categories of cities and towns are included. However, there is no information yet on how the government plans to phase in its action programmes, apart from the decision to support Kabul and the four major cities through implementing the CC in some essential respects.

The conceptual guidelines for the four largest cities would have to be rewritten and adjusted two or three times, making use of the experiences from the first round in the four large cities. The updated guidelines would target the specific needs of (1) the intermediate cities (Grade Two, 8 provincial capitals); and (2) the smaller provincial cities (Grade Three, 21 provincial capitals); to be followed by (3) a large number of smaller cities (important district capitals), and, ultimately, those rural towns that have not been designated and incorporated as municipalities yet. Many of the smaller towns are part of Afghanistan's urbanisation process, so they are candidates for becoming new municipalities in the medium-term future. In other words, the four-cities programme in this paper is only the beginning of an ambitious, long-term reform process.

## 1.2 Objectives and Structure of the Paper

The paper is expected to link three major aspects to meet its objectives of an *ex-ante* assessment:

- a. a compilation and assessment of the substantive body of policy papers and laws that have been produced most recently on the programme for supporting the municipalities, in particular the four cities that are at the focus of this paper;
- b. a brief discussion of the international “state of the art” in relevant programmes of deconcentrated/decentralised urban management and urban services; and,
- c. an outline of the specific dimensions of the urban improvement and development programme that is scheduled to begin within 2017.

These three components would suffice to sketch out the dimensions of the urban development programme, and to uncover certain issues of programme design and implementation. However, the discussion to which the paper is expected to contribute cannot possibly cover the full extent of the fundamentally important World Bank support programme and its likely impact on the country.<sup>8</sup>

The title of the Discussion Paper underlines its being an assessment of the conditions for the upcoming urban development programme. This implies some knowledge (but not an in-depth analysis) of past and existing government structures and trends in support of a view into the near future when the existing structures will be put to an all-out “stress test”. The focus is on the major urban development programme under the CC, supported by the forthcoming World Bank funding programme. In particular, the study looks at the four largest cities (excluding Kabul as a special case of urban development) where the emerging programme will be implemented in the next ten years.

## 1.3 Methodology

The methodology comprised two parts:

1. A review of the broader issues in urban management both in Afghanistan and in other countries, from the smallest social and administrative units up to the level of the municipality, and its interaction with the line agencies involved - i.e., ministries and their departments at the levels of the provinces and districts, and related actors in civil society, and NGOs.<sup>9</sup>
2. Fact finding by means of interviews among the key officers involved in urban management in the four cities, and several other persons who can assess the cities’ ability to cope with the emerging work at the local level. The interviews with such key informants resulted in a modest yield of qualitative primary data.<sup>10</sup>

The key informants as defined by the study are high-ranking representatives of the four cities, including mayors and construction bureau chiefs. In addition, several persons based in Kabul were interviewed. For all the interviews, a uniform set of ten questions was used. The questions focused on aspects of the cities’ abilities to cope with the upcoming tasks of providing the much-needed basic infrastructure at gozar and nahiya levels. As could be expected, it was not easy to meet with those persons because the researchers were not allowed to move around the country, but the key informants were traveling both in Afghanistan and abroad. Altogether, 17 key informants were interviewed in person or by telephone. As some persons were interviewed two or three times, a total number of 20 interviews were conducted.

<sup>8</sup> Much of the World Bank’s preparatory work is for limited circulation only although at least one of the key papers is publicly accessible on the internet. For that reason, references can be made to that paper - Project Appraisal Document on a proposed grant of 500 mill US\$ for a Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan Project (P160567), 6 October 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Conventionally referred to as a literature review, the material primarily consists of policy statements, regulations, project reports and the like, with only some books and other sources of knowledge that are normally associated with the term literature.

<sup>10</sup> Annex 2 provides an overview of the interview questions and a list of the key respondents. Their views are summarized in Section 3.3.

Both parts together add up to a mix of secondary and some primary data, in preparation for a broad *ex-ante* assessment of the programme and its implementation prior to its actual beginning. The assessment is supposed to emphasise two important sets of questions, i.e.,

- a. options for standardising the gozar as the most important administrative unit for implementing the proposed infrastructure support programme, and
- b. how the proposed measures (a minimum of greening, community facilities, and basic infrastructure upgrading) might contribute to concepts of a “good city” in Afghanistan.

Probing into these two technicalities only would be too narrow without a broader view of the implementation processes and challenges implied, as well as referring to comparable international lessons. These may be best described as “decentralisation in practice”, i.e., concepts of political, administrative and fiscal deconcentration and decentralisation and their applications to urban growth and prosperity by means of creating useful community facilities and infrastructure.

## 1.4 Limitations

The assessment is part of a relatively modest overall objective, i.e., contributing to the dialogue of urban development stakeholders. While the research project might have achieved its purpose in that respect, it does have serious limitations with regard to the depth of analysis that might be expected by critical observers of Afghanistan. This is because while the interviews with selected key informants were not too difficult (although it took considerable time to fix appointments), unfortunately, they yielded few specific new insights.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, access to important World Bank material is restricted, both in terms of key documents and desirable interviews with officials. Otherwise, more primary information could have been included in the assessment study. Finally, the time available was far too short for an in-depth analysis, as might be expected from such a study. Therefore, the findings should not be overestimated, but they are deemed sufficient as a preliminary assessment of the status of the urban development programme for the four major cities, to be followed up by a more comprehensive assessment as soon as a monitoring report is possible.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to the brief summary of the interview results in Section 3.3.

## 2. Urban Governance Reforms

A document outlining a grand vision of urban development in the next ten or 20 years must be bold, but also realistic as far as feasible achievements in the medium to long run are concerned. The Vision Statement from the U-NPP speaks for itself even if less than half of what is described may be achieved in the coming ten years: “By 2024, Afghanistan has a network of dynamic, safe, livable urban centers that are hubs of economic growth and arenas of culture and social inclusion through decentralized urban planning and participatory urban governance.”<sup>12</sup>

Many countries have embarked on ambitious reform programmes to turn enormous urbanisation challenges into opportunities and ultimately, tangible results and measurable development. The World Bank’s conventional wisdom is that all countries moving into the middle income group are industrialising and urbanising at the same time, even though urbanisation is typically happening without industrialisation. This process is unavoidable and, in all likelihood, continues to be as chaotic as it is right now in Afghanistan. Therefore, appropriate urban policies are needed to mitigate the difficulties.

### 2.1 Review of Experiences and Models

A brief review of the literature related to the proposed municipality support programme must include at least four major discussion points: three interrelated points on decentralised development, and one on “good city” structure:

#### 1. Principles of decentralised development, with three sub-issues:

1.1 Why is decentralisation so important to newly urbanising countries?

1.2 Which major international support programmes may serve as models for Afghanistan?

1.3 What are the essential modalities for programme implementation relevant to Afghanistan, in view of the international experience?

**2. Are there any lessons for structuring the “good city”?** Here the emphasis is on discussing empirical and/or normative figures on public facilities at all levels of a city. First, this refers to the neighbourhood level (equating this with the local concept of gozars, spatially, socially and economically), but second, all levels of cities of various sizes may have to be addressed.

The following paragraphs add comments and references to the questions in the initial list.

1.1 Decentralisation effects and expectations: A survey of Asian countries for the main German aid agency in 2001<sup>13</sup> showed some surprising results: virtually all countries surveyed, from socialist to liberal, from very large to very small and at various stages of socio-economic development, were actively engaged in reform policies that included specific variants of decentralisation, reassignment of government functions and the like. It is perhaps necessary to explain the differences among various types of decentralisation policies (Table 2).

It is also important to recognise that decentralisation policies, including the least politically loaded format of deconcentration, require a certain level of government development as a precondition for success. In some countries, such policies may thus be premature and not successful. In general, it is expected that decentralisation leads to greater efficiency coupled with more social justice. There are proven links between decentralisation, the active development of urban management structures and the style of governance as a whole, and the overriding goal of strengthening the state.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Vision Statement at the beginning of GoIRA, *Urban National Priority Programme (U-NPP) - Results Framework*, 2016

<sup>13</sup> Kammeier, H. Detlef, *Decentralization, Urban Development and Management: Experiences from Asian Countries* (Eschborn, Germany, GTZ, Division 42, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Paul Smoke, “Understanding Decentralization in Asia: An Overview of Key Issues and Challenges”, in *Decentralization, Local Governance and Rural Development*, edited by H. Detlef Kammeier and Harvey Demaine, 1-22 (Bangkok: Asian Institute of Technology, 2000). A more recent collection of relevant research papers is Rondinelli, Dennis A. (editor), *Public Administration and Democratic Governance: Governments Serving Citizens*, 7th Global Forum on Reinventing Government - Building Trust in Government, June 2007, Vienna, Austria, United Nations, January 2007, ST/ESA/PAD/SER.E/98.

Table 2: Main categories, objectives and instruments of decentralisation

Four main categories of decentralisation	Main objectives	Main instruments
1. Political (or democratic) decentralisation	To improve democracy and political equity	Empowerment of elected sub-national and local governments through constitutional and statutory reforms
2. Administrative (or institutional) decentralisation, (deconcentration)	To improve the efficiency of management and service delivery	Devolution and delegation of authority (but also deconcentration of administrative functions)
3. Fiscal decentralisation	To improve financial performance through increased revenue generation and rational expenditure decisions	Reassignment of revenues and expenditure responsibilities, and intergovernmental fiscal transfers
4. Economic (or market) decentralisation (often as a separate category)	To provide a better environment for private enterprise and responsiveness to local needs	Transfer of functions to public-private partnerships or business organisations, and strengthening of market economy through deregulation

Source: Kammeier, H. Detlef, *Decentralization, Urban Development and Management: Experiences from Asian Countries*, GTZ, Division 42, Eschborn (Germany), 2001, p.4

1.2 International Programmes: Improvements in governance, coupled with new methods of deconcentrated management and funding, require proof of what they promise: more effective delivery of services to citizens who are waiting for government action, but also eager to participate in successful schemes. Therefore, many international agencies have typically linked theory and practice, beginning at the lowest government levels, and quite often with considerable success. The large family of programmes called “Local Development Funds” (LDFs, and similar terms) is the trademark of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), which is mandated to limit itself to working in least-developed countries all over the world (but UNCDF is not present in Afghanistan).

The main dimensions of Local Development Fund programmes are administrative and fiscal decentralisation reforms, and successive phases of policy experiments for demonstrating the usefulness of locally planned, executed, and financed development with direct benefits for selected poor districts, provinces, and towns.<sup>15</sup> A prominent example of UNCDF’s work in Asia is Cambodia, where, in cooperation with other UN agencies, it began rebuilding the country in 1993, leading to the establishment of the entire modern legislation in rural and, later on, urban areas. Current urban development programmes in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (with ADB funding) may be seen as the third-generation beneficiaries of earlier UNCDF work.

There have been several other international programmes of this type, including bilateral aid (GIZ, USAID and others), as well as UNDP and its prominent efforts toward cultivating administrative decentralisation in the mid-1990s, and the World Bank, with its decades of similar schemes called *Social Development Funds*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Kammeier, H. Detlef and Harvey Demaine (editors), *Decentralization, Local Governance and Rural Development, Proceedings of the International Workshop on Decentralized Planning and Financing of Rural Development in Asia (January 1999)*, (Bangkok: Asian Institute of Technology, 2000. The country chapters include Bhutan, Cambodia, and Vietnam where the two book editors (and writers of several chapters) were actively involved in UNCDF work.

<sup>16</sup> Related evaluation studies are, among many others, UNDP, *UNDP and Governance: Experiences and Lessons Learned*, 2006, <http://www.pogar.org/publications/other/undp/governance/lessonslearned-e.pdf>; World Bank, *Social Development Funds Senegal*, 2007, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/.../Senegal-Social-Development-Fund-Project>

1.3 Relevant modalities of programme implementation: Experience in participatory development programmes all over the world show that poor people are resourceful, and more than willing to contribute if they see the benefits of internationally sponsored projects. Therefore, in all such projects there is a “give and take” principle to be applied. Charity projects are not appreciated as much as those where the local requirements amount to significant volumes of money, labour or other in-kind contributions. All international agencies usually require more than a token contribution by the project beneficiaries. Therefore, a nominal value of 10 percent (or 20 percent and more) of the local project’s value is normal to expect and not difficult to enforce, but the material obtained in the context of the CC and its implementation does not seem to mention this essential point. Therefore, it must be stated as early as possible in this paper that any externally funded infrastructure projects must include beneficiaries’ contributions. This aspect will be further discussed in the programme implementation suggestions.

2 Empirical and normative figures for public facilities: The proposed grassroots improvements under the Afghan CC add up to facilities for public use at the Community Development Council (CDC) and gozar levels. The literature on urban planning and development is replete with proposals for community facilities to be provided at various levels, from the street block to the neighbourhood, up to the city district and finally, to cities of various population sizes. Cities are expected to offer schools and health stations, parks and playgrounds, and other typical community facilities, apart from public utilities for water supply, wastewater and sanitation services, or garbage collection and disposal (the latter playing a prominent role in the current proposals for Afghan municipalities).

Urban analysts and geographers would typically refer to empirical values, i.e., the city level (population size, or administrative category of city) wherein certain basic facilities are found in a given country.<sup>17</sup> Urban planners and designers of ideal future cities, however, are more interested in those facilities and conveniences that are expected by the citizens, without necessarily thinking about aspects of finance and maintenance.

Urban management specialists need to know something about both empirical values and normative planning aspects. So it is important to include some points in the context of the rhetoric on “what is a good, or vibrant, or sustainable city in contemporary Afghanistan?” Since few cities today meet that kind of quality, this needs to be complemented by a second question, “what does the country have to do to approach the stage of such desirable, liveable, and safe or simply good cities in the shortest possible time?” The literature on this is immense, but much of it hardly applicable in Afghanistan because the administrative and financial capacity is as yet so low.

Another source of information may be tapped in the context of the suggested much broader work on appropriate urban planning and management in future years - the monumental work by Christopher Alexander and his team that was first published in 1977. While it would be well beyond the scope of short-term fixes by international agencies, perhaps the growing league of socially conscious young scholars in Afghanistan might take on the difficult task of filtering the most relevant concepts from the monumental book (more than 1,200 pages), which continues to be one of the best sellers in the field, 40 years after its first publication.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.2 Major Challenges and Policy Reforms in Afghanistan

The conditions in Afghanistan’s cities are difficult and far from satisfactory. UN Habitat’s short but topical Discussion Papers (both the “blue” and the “green” series, 2014-15 and 2016, respectively) show what has gone wrong, and what the government might be able to do, which obviously would require massive international support.

<sup>17</sup> A summary of the essential points is in Klaus Borchard, “Städtebauliche Orientierungswerte”, *DBZ (Deutsche Bauzeitung)*, 2/78, pp. 280 - 1.1-1.5, 1978 (in German). Because that collection of data is now dated, it offers a possibility of comparing the author’s views of 1978 with today’s “orientation values” for planning many of which are quite different.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Alexander, et al., *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977; also available via download). It is not suggested to use the work as compulsory reading for government officers but - possibly, and hopefully - as a source of inspiration for thoughtful graduate students and faculty members engaged in building up new planning schools in the country.

Table 3 provides the briefest possible summary of the challenges and problems, referring to four interrelated subject areas: weak governance, informal settlements and spatial inequalities, financial and economic constraints, and infrastructure deficits. All of these need to be addressed by the policies and programmes already in place or under preparation.<sup>19</sup>

**Table 3: Current urban development challenges**

<p><b>Weak governance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear boundaries (CDC, gozar, nahiya)</li> <li>• Lack of reliable data for planning</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge about urban culture, citizens' rights and responsibilities</li> <li>• Lack of coordination among stakeholders</li> </ul>	<p><b>Financial and economic constraints:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient municipal revenues</li> <li>• No support from national budget</li> <li>• Lack of economic development plans</li> <li>• Urban dwellers reluctant to pay municipal fees and charges due to lack of trust</li> </ul>
<p><b>Informal settlement structure, spatial inequality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approx. 70 percent of cities are informal structures with limited services</li> <li>• Limited tenure security</li> <li>• Uncontrolled urban growth, land grabbing and unplanned areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>Infrastructure deficits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak sustainable economic development</li> <li>• Insufficient private sector engagement and productive investment</li> <li>• Women and youth excluded and under-represented</li> <li>• Urgent need for job creation and urban investment</li> </ul>

Source: Slightly modified summary from UN Habitat Discussion Paper No. 8 (Series Two). April 2016.

While a listing of urban development issues in contemporary Afghanistan largely consists of glaring deficiencies and complaints, it is worth pointing to the rich history of hundreds of years of urban culture in the country. So the question of “learning from the past” is not hollow rhetoric, but worth pursuing along with the suggestions for good practice in basic infrastructure given by the aid agencies. The country has had well-organised cities in its rich history, but not much of that is in the minds of planners or is incorporated in today’s efforts for developing and strengthening something that may be called “urban culture”.<sup>20</sup>

It is more important for a Discussion Paper to highlight the policy reforms currently underway than repeating the long lists of urban challenges, without stating how the challenges might be met. No doubt, the CC is the most frequently cited centrepiece of the policies for developing a much more participatory and deconcentrated framework of governance. The citation below captures the far reaching scope of the work:

*A ‘Citizens’ Charter’ is a document setting out the service entitlements of citizens. It is usually a government document that lists out a set of public services and/or the standards with which they will be delivered, guaranteed to the citizens by the government, often with the right of redress on occasions where a public service is not provided or fails to meet the agreed standards. Citizens’ Charter is a document which represents a systematic effort to focus on the commitment of the government towards its citizens in respects of standard of services, information, choice and consultation, non-discrimination and accessibility, grievance redress, and efficiency.<sup>21</sup>*

19 The Discussion Papers by both UN Habitat and AREU include a wider range of aspects, from technicalities to broad governance and social justice. Two pertinent AREU examples are - (1) Bizhan, Nematullah, Ferhat Emil, with Haroon Nayegkhail, *Bringing the State Closer To the People: Deconcentrating Planning and Budgeting in Afghanistan*, AREU Issues Paper, Kabul, July 2016; and (2) Nemat, Orzala Ashraf, and Karin Werner, *Civil Society and Governance*, AREU Issues Paper, Kabul, July 2016.

20 The outstanding work for the innovative strategic Master Plan for Herat differs in many positive respects from the basic and utilitarian urban planning work that is otherwise produced in Afghanistan - University of Florence et al., *Herat Strategic Master Plan: A Vision for the Future* (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 2013).

21 Text from the first paragraph of the Citizens’ Charter [CC], Draft, October 2016; for more information about the CC and the World Bank’s role in it, refer to the World Bank’s related general website, World Bank, *Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan*, [www.projects.worldbank.org/P160567](http://www.projects.worldbank.org/P160567); also refer to the innovations for the CC in Cities, in UN Habitat, *Citizens’ Charter in Cities, Discussion Paper No. 8 (Series Two)*, April 2016.

The CC as a national programme has recently replaced the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), which had been successfully implemented since 2003. The CDCs that had been created for the NSP (primarily in rural areas) are equally used as the basic organisational unit for the CC. However, the scope of the programme is much wider in two respects - urban areas are now explicitly included, and, apart from MRRD, the main ministry in charge of the NSP, there are several ministries participating in the upcoming CC programme. The list now includes ministries of Finance, MRRD, MUDH, DMM/IDLG, and all infrastructure-related line ministries (water, electric power, environment, and others). Despite the publicity around the upcoming CC programme, it should be borne in mind that it is yet to be finalised and implemented. Therefore, the essential planning criteria have not been proven in operational terms yet. So the situation is one of rising expectations among the future users (cities and their sub-units, and of course, citizens) and interested observers inside and outside Afghanistan.

The overriding policy of the CC has been detailed in elaborate operational recent manuals for deconcentrated planning, management, and financing at municipal and sub-municipal levels—the focus of this paper. Documents to be referred to specifically are the CC operational manual and the manual on social training related to CC implementation in both rural and urban areas.<sup>22</sup> Manuals on the fiscal treatment of local block grants do not seem to be in place, or at least they have not been published yet.

In most policy documents, the term “deconcentration” is used rather than “decentralisation” because the latter might create the impression of encouraging unwanted divisive tendencies. However, national unity is the most important goal in the multi-ethnic country, which retains its character as a unitary state, rather than encouraging any ideas about introducing elements of a federated form of government. The intended deconcentration policy under the CC will permit considerable variations in each of the four cities where historic patterns, social and economic differences and varying attitudes of inhabitants demand a properly “tailored” intelligent approach.

A nutshell summary of the emerging national urban policy is in Figure 2 below, linking the form of governance (as determined by CC), the planning framework and the necessary investments. The National Urban Policy does not exist, but can be expected. It will also determine how the ambitious CC urban support programme and its implementation may be aligned with the national urban policy.

**Figure 2: Toward a National Urban Policy in Afghanistan**



Source: UN Habitat quick information (“one-pager”), not dated (mid-2016)

The new urban policy framework is grounded not only in clear analytical thinking but, for data, it is highly dependent on the background work that has taken years of work all over the country: To be mentioned here are (a) the baseline participatory mapping (which has facilitated detailed population estimates as a substitute for reliable national population statistics), (b) ongoing land property registration, and (c) the groundwork for property taxation. UN Habitat as the lead organisation has been supporting the government in such fundamentally important activities, and the deconcentrated urban governance programme with its block grants would be impossible to run without the underlying cadastral and GIS work.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, the statistical DMM work must also be recognised as an indispensable basis for urban development strategies.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> GoIRA, *Citizens’ Charter, Social Training Manuals*, 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Refer to Annex 1, which illustrates the background mapping work for the four major cities, leading to a special method for estimating population numbers in the absence of a census.

<sup>24</sup> Popal, Abdul Baqi, *Municipalities in Afghanistan*, Kabul, June 2014; and Hamidi, Mohammad Naseer, *Afghan Municipalities in the Past 12 Years: Study and Survey of Afghan Municipalities*, Bahar-e-Andista, Mazar-e-Sharif, 2014



### 3. From Core Issues to Participatory Programme Operations

This section moves from general issues to operational questions under the emerging city development programme. In the first subsections, it is argued that the study would be utterly incomplete if it were limited to a discussion of “grassroots” operations at CDC and gozar levels. The second subsection (3.2) outlines the wider scope for the operations when the support programme is implemented in the four cities. Finally, Section 3.3 summarises the interviews with key informants from the four cities.

#### 3.1 The Wider Scope of the Study

Initially, the authors were expected to dwell on the comparatively modest scope of strengthening the ongoing dialogue among the many partners who are jointly committed to the tasks ahead, i.e., raising the capacity of the local authorities and the active participation by the local communities. This would include some aspects that may add up to ideas for a “good city” or a “liveable city”. These are important points for discussing basic requirements for viable quarters and neighbourhoods, i.e., mainly at the CDC and gozar levels. However, this kind of discussion would be meaningless without reference to the major infrastructure requirements at higher levels. For example, plants for drinking water supply and wastewater management, dumpsites or landfill sites, major drainage canals, urban road networks, or sites for small industries—all of these are at least as important as the basic infrastructure at the lowest levels of urban communities. Moreover, most grassroots improvements cannot be planned and implemented in isolation from the larger plants and networks to which they are connected.

The dialogue among the various stakeholders was supposed to include the social and administrative structure of local communities and their interactions with government institutions and international agencies at work in Afghanistan. Shortly after beginning the research work, it was found that the present stage of development is one of decisions taken, i.e., there is no need for searching for appropriate structures and mechanisms. The most recent government documents prove that; both the elaborate Results Framework of the U-NPP (as discussed above), and the CC<sup>25</sup> are quite clear on how “good urban governance” is to be translated into effective operations aiming at basic neighbourhood infrastructure.

In addition, the implementation of the support programme in Kabul is already at an advanced stage, and the programme for the next four cities is expected to begin as soon as possible. Therefore, “learning from the Kabul experience” should be quite possible at this stage (although this aspect is not considered in this report).

The aspects covered by the original research agenda seem to cover only some components of the physical objects of the urban structure, while omitting the most important aspects of project design, process and implementation. Thus, the description does not include the essential aspects of how such ideas and criteria are to be translated into action by the combined effects of the CC (for public participation), and the World Bank-funded block grants for CDCs and gozars, and, more indirectly, for nahiyas. Therefore, the scope of the research agenda needs to be widened to include the interaction of local communities and operating agencies, i.e., municipal authorities and provincial line agencies, supported by the national agencies (above all, DMM/ IDLG and MUDA), and the international partners.

<sup>25</sup> GoIRA, *Operational Manual for the Field Implementation of the First Phase of the Citizens’ Charter National Priority Program (CCNPP) and the Citizens’ Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP)*, Draft Version 2, October 2016

So one of the fundamental questions, “what is a good city in Afghanistan?” must be broadened into a more adequate expression, such as:

*“What is a good (or viable, sustainable, liveable, or even resilient) city in Afghanistan nowadays and in the medium-term future, and what must be done to create the essential physical, economic, and institutional preconditions, and promote and guide their most appropriate interaction?”*

The answer to this more complex question may be given by two overview charts. The first chart shows that within a larger municipality (of the Grade One type), there are at least three layers of planning and management activities:

- the “grassroots” or “bottom up” efforts under the CC, soon to take shape by means of massive block grants for CDCs and gozars;
- the intended strategic action programmes at nahiya and municipality levels (SNAP and SMAP); and
- the national and regional priority programmes in education, health, water and waste management and many others.

These layers of planning and management must be reconciled and coordinated in the process of preparations, implementation, and “after care” over many years, i.e., continuous maintenance of the facilities that would have been created by joint efforts and multiple grants.

The required processes of coordination and reconciliation of interests and actions are new in the growing cities of Afghanistan where the prevailing mode of “urban culture” might be described as a mix of top-down sectoral decision-making and haphazard implementation, combined with people’s attitude of low interest in civic matters.

In this context, it needs to be stated that in Afghan cities, the processes of urban management as described in modern textbooks are exactly the opposite of what is happening in reality where an outmoded master plan concept is in place. The growth of informal settlements arose from the extremely limited absorption capacity of major urban areas and the lack of affordable formal settlement solutions for many city dwellers, i.e., migrants and refugees and their families.<sup>26</sup> If the typical urban management of a formal area follows four steps, from (i) planning, to (ii) services and infrastructure delivery, and then on to (iii) building and (iv) occupation, the process in informal settlements is reversed. Land occupation and shelter building happens first. It is followed, in rare cases and after considerable delay, by service and infrastructure delivery, and finally planning by the municipality and urban development agencies, for example, through upgrading. Approximately 70 percent of urban areas in Afghanistan developed informally and require some form of regularisation, as is well recognised in UN Habitat documentations and the proposed National Urban Policy (NUP), which is expected to be published in the next few months.

### 3.2 The Emerging Programme in Four Cities

Together, Kabul and the four large cities (Grade One cities) account for well over 60 percent of the most important urban areas in Afghanistan or about 6 million people (counting only the provincial cities, as shown in Table 4). If the district towns were included in the statistics, the percentage for the 1+4 largest cities may still be 45-50 percent, but that is not possible to verify on the basis of the currently available statistics. Therefore, the priority given to these 1+4 cities in planning and managing the support programme is highly justified. In other words, and speaking to the next four to five years, if the government and its international support agencies are successful in the enormous tasks involved, urban management in Afghanistan will be much less of the nightmare than it is right now.

<sup>26</sup> The World Bank and UNHCR, *Research Study on IDPs in urban settings, Afghanistan*, Kabul, May 2011.

Table 5 adds an overview of the rural-urban continuum in the same group of 1+4 cities. Generously defined, the fringe areas contain another 5.1 million people, and some of such areas would be urban within the next ten years. Within this context and its very large population numbers that are continuously growing, the emerging support programme for the four major cities will be designed to serve the needs of at least 2.5 million people.

**Table 4: Provincial capitals by population size (data as of 2014-15)**

City category (all of them are provincial capitals)	Number of provincial cities and towns (smallest to largest by class, rounded)	Subtotals by size class, high estimate by UN Habitat, 2014-15 (i.e., nine pers. per dwelling) (in 1,000)	% by size class	Remarks
1. Kabul	1	3,565	38.0	
2. Four largest cities after Kabul (in descending order: Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar, Jalalabad)	4 (356,000-808,000)	2,414	25.7	The four cities at the focus of this study
3. Next size class (> 200,000)	4 (221,000-276,000)	1,300	13.8	Ad hoc city “classes” arbitrary by population size, but not by administrative type of municipality
4. Next size class (> 100,000)	5 (106,000-176,000)	735	7.8	
5. Next size class (> 50,000)	9 (50,000-96,000)	1,078	11.5	
6. Smallest provincial capitals	11 (2,000-49,000)	299	3.2	
<b>Total (provincial cities only)</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9.391 million</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Note: Summary of cities from a complete list of provincial cities in Annex 1 (which is from GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities, Vols. 1 and 2*, 2015)

**Table 5: “1+4” City Regions: Current Population by Core and Fringe Areas**

*Table 1: City regions populations*

City Regions	Municipalities	Estimated Population in 2015/16 (thousands)		
		Urban <sup>a</sup>	Rural-Urban Fringe <sup>b</sup>	Total city Region
Kabul	Kabul, Charikar, Jabl-ul-Siraj, Mahmoud Raqi, Qarabagh, Shakadara, Bachakot, Pul-i-Alam, Maidan Shar	3,266 – 3,919	1,570	4,836 - 5,489
Jalalabad	Jalalabad, Shinwar, Torkham	342 – 410	1,199	1,541 - 1,609
Kandahar	Kandahar, Arghandab, Panjwai Zheray	524 – 629	679	1,203 - 1,308
Herat	Herat, Injil, Gozara	798 – 957	729	1,527 - 1,686
Mazar	Mazar-i-Sherif, Balkh	620 – 744	969	1,589 - 1,713
Estimated population in five city regions		5,550 – 6,659	5,146	10,696 - 11,805
Others 41 Provincial and District Municipalities		2,838 – 3,405		
<b>Total Population</b>		<b>8,388 – 10,065</b>		

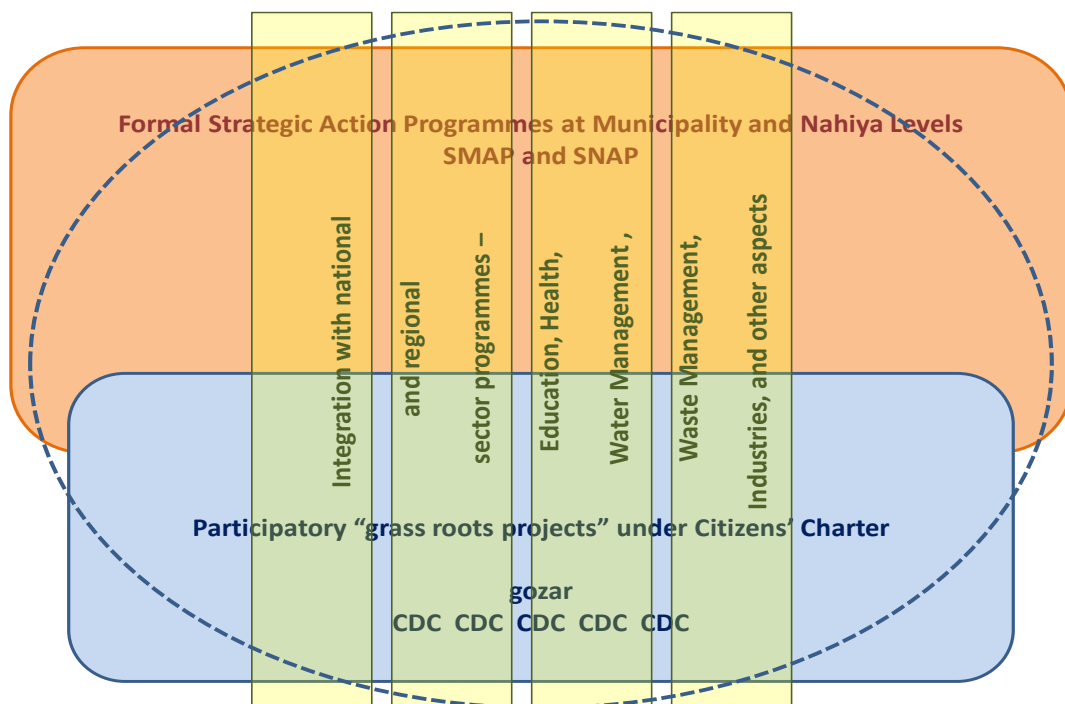
Source: GoIRA, *Atlas of Afghan City Regions*, 2016

Note that the population estimate in this table is for 2015-16, i.e., different from the one in Table 4

Charts 1 and 2 below have been designed to illustrate the institutional and functional environment in those four target cities. They outline a future functioning system of urban governance that will take several years to establish, but it is realistic to assume that good progress can be made in that direction because the overall system design appears to be sound. As the social and economic conditions tend to change continuously, the local governance system must be able to adjust itself over time as capacity and resources are growing (the optimist scenario) or taking much longer than currently hoped for (the pessimist scenario). Close monitoring of the implementation of the block-grant scheme in the four largest cities is essential so the experiences can be fed into the preparations for the next generation of cities (the eight Grade Two cities), which might begin as early as 2018.

Chart 1 shows a simple oval (dotted line) for the municipality, and three main layers of planning and management in action where integration and coordination are needed. The reality is much more complex, of course: The municipality boundaries may include large tracts of rural land where the settlement densities are much lower than in the core areas; or, in other cities, the municipality boundaries may be too narrow so the urbanising lands around the city core are not included. This would then require close coordination between urban and rural communities and local government authorities if a reform of municipality boundaries were to be politically and administratively impossible. This is only one broad aspect that is well beyond the scope of this Discussion Paper, but it is indicative of the implications of major shifts in governance and local government that are triggered by the deconcentration policies promoted by the national government.

**Chart 1: Multi-level plans, programmes, management of a municipality**



Summarising the major components of the urban development programme

The second chart illustrates the future that is envisioned, i.e., urban governance through interaction between state and local authorities and civil society (represented by CDC and gozar councils and inhabitants), supported by international agencies and NGOs. Both charts together depict a kind of abstract vision of the “good city in Afghanistan” because the current reality is full of shortcomings and gaps to be filled by the combined efforts of all agencies concerned.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Note that the innovative plan categories of SMAP and SNAP are mentioned in both charts because they were mentioned by DMM officers, but they do not seem to exist yet. Therefore, no sample plan was available for inspection.

**Chart 2: An overview of the framework for local level planning, financing and managing urban development - through local, regional, national, international cooperation**

Major Programme Component	Spatial and Organisational Scale			
	Sub-municipality: CDC, Gozar	Municipality and its Nahiyas	Provincial Line Departments	National Ministries
1. Institutional and Organisational Framework and Guidelines	Government agencies at several levels, supported by international agencies			
	Community - people and leaders		Supporting NGOs (national, internat'l)	
2. Principal Technical Guidelines: Major Infrastructure, Adjusted Gozar Size/Boundaries	CDC/Gozar Menu: Five to six standard components, plus one suggested project per Gozar		Technical support by National Ministries and international agencies, leading role with UN Habitat	
	Major infrastructure projects integrated in SNAP/SMAP			
3. Planning Process and Procedures for Implementation	Local block grants (CDCs, Gozars), and other funds		National sector plans (environment, education, health, and others), housing & informal settlement strategies	
	Municipal strategic plans (SNAP/SMAP)			
	Municipal capacity building as part of programme implementation			
4. Funding: External Grants, Community Contributions, Investment/ Recurrent Costs, Monitoring/Auditing	Local block grants plus community contributions in kind/cash; investment and recurrent costs		National laws and guidelines, and specific donor agencies' requirements on funding, accountability, auditing	
	Municipal block grants and annual budgets (investm. & recurrent)			
5. Legal and Policy Foundations	Under the Constitution, the growing and increasingly complex framework of national laws and policies, notably Citizens' Charter and its Operational Manual, Social Training Manual, Urban National Priority Program (U-NPP), Municipality Laws, and others			

Illustrating the major components of programme implementation in which governance functions and minimum requirements at gozar level are just one part.

### 3.3 Results of the Interviews with Key Informants

The interviews yielded qualitative data that are summarised here. The overall impression from the survey response is that the interviewees are not very well informed about the upcoming programme and its implications for the cities. They seem to hold vague notions as to the size of the gozars in their cities and their expected roles in programme implementation. They also do not seem to know much about the basic components of the upcoming programme and the important question of whether the gozars might be able to responsibly choose suitable infrastructure. The answers about people's own contributions to the external grants were reasonably encouraging as respondents expected the communities to be able and willing to make their own contributions either in kind or financially.

The following notes provide brief summaries of the interview results for each of the ten questions (gist of each question listed as Q 1, Q 2, etc.)

**Q1 - Major issues in our city:** Highly deficient infrastructure conditions; pollution, corruption, powerful people's interference in city's affairs, land grabbing, and no proper law enforcement; but on the other hand low management capacity of the city authorities.

**Q2 - Urban growth:** rapid growth in all directions, changing boundaries; master plans not covering all areas, and no detailed plans for largely unplanned areas; massive funding required

**Q3 - Nahiyas:** Very different in size, understaffed, need for capacity building

**Q4 - Gozars, including interaction with CDCs:** Unequal size (but no assessment of what size would be appropriate), need for capacity building to cope with the enormous demand for infrastructure (sewer system, green belt, public education, and others)

**Q5 - Ability and willingness:** People's willingness to contribute (in kind) confirmed

**Q6 - Citizens' Charter and operational manuals:** No knowledge of such manuals, with one exception where positive experience in cooperation with UN Habitat was pointed out

**Q7 - Gozar reform/adjustment:** Generally positive response

**Q8 - Previous experience with block grants:** Limited experience

**Q9 - Other factors influencing management capacity:** Corruption, general lack of capacity to manage such a programme

**Q10 - Other points:** No other points added

In view of the sobering interview results, the following points may be stated. The city support programme will only work if implementation is guided and supervised by external advisors who will have to spend much time on helping the local government representatives in their work, "walking them through" their tasks. To some extent, this kind of result had been expected because the management capacity at local levels (even in major cities) is known to be very low. However, there is hope that willingness and ability grow with the job. The first set of gozar officers will be completely dependent on the external assistants, but they may be motivated and able to help the next set of gozars in their planning and management tasks.

## 4. Conditions and Principles for Programme Implementation

The government, in coordination with the World Bank, has decided that the bodies and mechanisms for public participation need to be standardised to facilitate the CC. The CDC and gozar population sizes are supposed to be standardised (200 households, and 1,000-1,250 households, respectively). This implies a revision of gozar territories and boundaries. The nahiya territories and boundaries might also be considered for standardisation in the near future, but for now, they will not be touched.

### 4.1 Preparing the Ground for Participatory Urban Management

The CC and its application in the context of a multimillion-dollar infrastructure programme will be a very serious test ground for participatory planning and management. As both CDC and gozars are relatively new in urban areas, their functionality should be assessed well before the programme is launched. It would have been far beyond the scope of this Discussion Paper to assess the mechanisms of public participation on which the success of the urban support programme hinges. It must be assumed that the programme design for implementing the CC included a proper assessment of the most effective participation mechanisms.

UN Habitat as the lead agency in urban management and the preparatory work on the ground (but also other agencies) would have worked with CDC and gozar councils, so they would be able to assess their strengths. They would also have worked on training programmes that may parallel the urban support programme.<sup>28</sup> It must be assumed that the external agencies helping implement the urban support programme take full responsibility for technical and managerial work as required.

### 4.2 Revising Gozar Boundaries

A glance at the UN Habitat statistics reveals the historically grown differences in gozar population size (and a comparison of the satellite maps would show the geographical differences). The data compiled show that by population size, the nahiya and gozar in the four cities (as summarised in Table 4 above) are very different. Similarly, the mean value of the gozar by population is significantly different for each of the four cities.<sup>29</sup> Along with it, the distributions from smallest to largest units, both in terms of population and area are likely to differ considerably (to be verified by an appropriate mapping analysis). It will thus be possible to define a typology of gozars, most probably ranging from relatively small areas with a dense concentration of land uses and population numbers, to the typically much larger (and newer) gozars towards the fringes of the municipalities.

A closer inspection of the excellent maps produced by UN Habitat will reveal such differences, providing a good basis for the gozar review which must be scheduled as a first stage of preparing for the block grant implementation.<sup>30</sup>

The CC suggests a standard size CDC of some 200 households, and 4-5 CDCs per gozar.<sup>31</sup> Suggested gozar size is thus 1,000-1,250 households, with a minimum of 800 in areas of lower density. At the present average household size of 7.5 persons, or even 9 persons, the resulting gozar sizes are from 7,000 to 10,000 persons—which is a good neighbourhood size by international comparison.

28 It should be obvious that within the limited scope of this paper, it would have been impossible to cover more details of this very important theme - quantitative data on the low management capacity at the local level as a background to developing appropriate training programmes.

29 Data compiled from GoIRA, *Atlas of Afghan City Regions*, 2016; and GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities, Vol. 1 and 2*, 2015

30 However, at the time of writing this paper, there was no opportunity for undertaking any mapping exercise, but such work is absolutely indispensable as a precondition for readjustment of Gozar boundaries.

31 GoIRA, *Citizens' Charter, Social Training Manuals*, 2016.

Table 6 illustrates the vastly different conditions in the four cities. Only in Kandahar does the mean value of 986 households for a gozar come close to the CC-recommended size of 1,000 households; the values for the three other cities are far too low. This implies that after the revision of the gozar boundaries, Herat would need to reduce its number from 340 to about 100. Mazar would have to define about 70 new gozars, i.e., slash most of its 432 units. Jalalabad would also only need about 95 to 100 gozars to replace the 232 units that are far too small.

**Table 6: Gozar statistics in four cities, and gozar reform required to meet CC targets**

City	Nahiya	Gozar	Gozar/ Nahiya	Households (HH)	HH/ Nahiya	HH/Gozar	Reform target (Gozar)
Herat	15	331	22	112,504	7,500	340	112
Kandahar	15	78	5	76,880	5,125	986	No change
Mazar-i- Sharif	10	432	43	72,743	7,274	168	72
Jalalabad	9	232	26	96,877	10,764	417	97
Total population, 4 cities (households) = approx. 2.51 million inhabitants (at 7 pers./HH)				359,004			

Note: Targets for gozar reform schematically indicated at 1,000 households

Obviously, the work on gozar reforms and boundary adjustments would have to take into account a number of factors such as terrain, population density, and configuration or existing boundaries. However, the schematic targets in the last column of Table 6 illustrate the significant changes to be faced by the cities—prior to any negotiations with gozar councils about minimum infrastructure needs and other expectations.

The population size of the gozars and nahiya is subject to continuous change, so the CC-recommended numbers are likely to differ widely in the next 10-15 years, and the reformed gozars will not be uniform at all:

1. Family and household sizes are likely to decrease since fertility is beginning to decrease. For comparison, more advanced Asian countries like Thailand have urban household sizes of just 3-4 persons (and even smaller in urban areas), with increasing numbers of one-person households. That will take much longer in Afghanistan because average household size still stands at about 7 persons, but it is going to happen in the long run.
2. Some cities are growing, while others are shrinking. Therefore, the future gozar landscape will be far from equally sized gozars. Be prepared for a policy of periodic boundary adjustments. As an alternative, allocate block grants adjusted to population size and area characteristics (poverty, present infrastructure endowment, and other aspects).

It should be possible to undertake a more detailed analysis before the programme begins: most of the important information to be utilised here is from the *State of the Afghan Cities*; and *UN Habitat database*.<sup>32</sup> Time permitting, it would be good to conduct a statistical analysis of the UN Habitat data down to gozar and CDC levels to point out similarities and regional or city differences. If possible, include an overview summary of essential characteristics of gozar/nahiya/municipalities from the UN Habitat statistics.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> GoIRA, *Atlas of Afghan City Regions*, 2016; and GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities, Vols. 1 and 2*, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> At this point, the paper moves from analysis, which is limited by lack of data and time, into recommendation for programme implementation in a sense that suggestions given by the Citizens' Charter need to be verified against the reality on the ground: Cities do differ in many respects, and any planning guidelines need to be applied with some caution.



The gozar appears to be a useful basis for participatory planning, with some planning activities beginning from the CDC level. However, there should not be too much emphasis on the CDC level for urban facilities and utilities because CDCs are too small as reference areas and would create an excess of mini-projects.<sup>34</sup>

It is suggested to adjust the existing gozars by the following criteria, using a “top down” approach with patient community consultations:

1. Do not change existing boundaries too much, emphasise continuity! Reportedly, gozars have existed for many decades in most cities, so boundary adjustments are sensitive.
2. If a gozar is too large, then divide it into two or more new ones, or
3. Merge several small gozars into one more adequately sized new gozar.

Illustrated sample calculations for one district each in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif are in Charts 3 (a) and (b). Unfortunately, the data that are currently available from UN Habitat do not include complete tabulations and matching maps. Therefore, the sample analysis in this draft had to be limited to the examples given in Charts 3 (a) and (b).

It is obvious from the exceedingly limited sample test in Chart 3 that the gozar boundary review in all four cities will take a lot of staff time before the actual allocation of block grants can begin. The gozar reform is supposed to be carried out with full involvement of the local councils rather than as a top-down exercise of redrawing boundaries. As initially shown in Table 6, the gozar reform would imply that hundreds of existing gozar councils will become jobless: for example, in Mazar-i-Sharif where the present 432 gozars would be amalgamated into just 72 new gozars. This will be a very difficult process, especially because everyone knows that the new gozar councils would become responsible for implementing dozens of small infrastructure projects offering all kinds of small jobs on the side.

<sup>34</sup> This would differ in rural areas with much smaller settlements where the CDC as a standard minimum unit of social and spatial management makes more sense.

Chart 3: (a) Readjustment of 26 Gozars in District 6, Herat

Number / شمعه	Gozar / گوزر	House خانده / رهائش /	No.	Name of gozar	Assessment	Proposed re-alignment	New-code
1	Jada Farhang wa Kawsar	1083	1	Jada Farhang wa Kawsar	Appropriate	As before, nothing to be changed	A
2	Jade shafa khana noor ,	112	2	Jade shafa khana noor, Jada zargar wa Haqiqat, Hese Awal Jada Etahad, Wasat Jada Etahad,	Too small	Merge old gozars 2, 3, 4, 5	B
3	Jada zargar wa Haqiqat	416					
4	Hese Awal Jada Etahad,	187					
5	Wasat Jada Etahad,	365					
6	Shahrak Etahad,	592					
7	Ghaizan,	978	3	Shahrak Etahad, Pol Ragina	Small	Merge old gozars 6 ,9	C
8	Tank Markaz	115	4	Ghaizan, Tank Markaz	Small	Old gozars 7, 8	D
9	Pol Ragina	464					
10	Gerde Park	171	5	Gerde Park, Jade Aref Khan Jada Mejidi	Too small	Old gozars 10, 11, 12	E
11	Jade Aref Khan	352					
12	Jada Mejidi	168					
13	Jakan Olya	947	6	Jakan Olya	Appropriate	As before, nothing to be changed	F
14	Jakan Sofla	922	7	Jakan Sofla	Appropriate	As before, nothing to be changed	G
15	Jada Doctor Fazli	1405	8	Jada Doctor Fazli	Appropriate	As before, nothing to be changed	H
16	Khair abad	506					
17	Sofi Abad	950					
18	Karte Dowom Amin	4	9	Khair abad, Karte Dowom Amin, 12 metra zain al abedin	Too small	Merge old gozars 16, 18, 19	I
19	12 metra zain al abedin	376					
20	Jade Emam Shesh Noor	2125	10	Sofi Abad	Appropriate	As before, nothing to be changed	J
21	Masjid Hazrat Mohamamd	133	11	Jade Emam Shesh Noor A	Far too large	Split into two	K
22	Zaman Abad	333					
23	Abdul Abad	337	12	Jade Emam Shesh Noor B	Far too large	Spilt into two	L
24	Qala Kabuli ah	132	13	Masjid Hazrat Mohamamd, Zaman Abad, Abdul Abad, Qala Kabuli ah	Too small	Merge old gozars 22, 23, 24	M
25	Kababian	651					
26	Ghazian Sangar	460					
			14	Kababian , Ghazian Sangar	Small	Merge old gozars 25, 26	N

Chart 3 (a) demonstrates how the gozar areas can be readjusted to match the standard size of 1,000-1,250 households, or at least a minimum of 800 households. For District 6 in Herat, the re-adjustment of area size would include a realignment of the boundaries, in this case reducing 26 old gozars into just 14 new ones. The sample does not show what this would look like on a map because maps were not available when this demonstration case was designed. Obviously, the boundaries need to be realigned in such a way that the new gozars are “in one piece”, and if possible, in a reasonable area shape.

**Chart 3: (b) Readjustment of 20 Gozars in District 8, Mazar-i-Sharif**

No/ شماره	District/ ناحیه	Gozar / گنزر	House/خده رهښی	No.	Name of gozar	Assessment	Proposed re-alignment	New code
1	8	Block Hawaee 1 (11)	631	1	Block Hawaee 1( 11), Block 3 Noor khoda(15)	Small	Merge old gozars 1, 2	A
2	8	Block 3 Noor khoda (15)	531					
3	8	Block 2 Noor khoda (14)	174	2	Block 2 Noor khoda(14), Block 2 Noor khoda (21-20), Block 1 Noor khoda (13)	Too small	Merge old gozars 3, 4, 5	B
4	8	Block 2 Noor khoda (21-20)	418					
5	8	Block 1 Noor khoda (13)	643					
6	8	Block 300 m (23-24)	521					
7	8	Qismat 2-3 Hawaee (17-19)	566	3	Block 300 m ( 23-24), Qismat 2-3 Hawaee (17-19)	Small	Merge old gozars 6,7	C
8	8	Dawlatabad 2 (12-16 )	565	4	Dawlatabad 2(12-16 ), Karta e Mawlana Jamei, Karta Bokhdi - 2	Too small	Merge old gozars 8, 9, 10	D
9	8	Karta e Mawlana Jamei	191					
10	8	Karta Bokhdi - 2	528					
11	8	Nawbahar - 3	464	5	Nawbahar - 3 , Said Abad	Small	Merge old gozars 11,12	E
12	8	Said Abad	699					
13	8	Osman Asadi	246	6	Osman Asadi, Karta Bakhter 3, Karta Bakhter 4, Karta Bokhdi 1- 3, Sayad Toray	Way too small	Merge old gozars 13, 14, 15, 16, 17	F
14	8	Karta Bakhter 3	143					
15	8	Karta Bakhter 4	220					
16	8	Karta Bokhdi 1- 3	269					
17	8	Sayad Toray	188					
18	8	Nawbahar - 2	449	7	Nawbahar - 2, Mohammad Qorban Shahed, Ahmad shah Masoud	Small	Merge old gozars 18, 19, 20	G
19	8	Mohammad Qorban Shahed	155					
20	8	Ahmad shah Masoud	359					

Chart 3 (b) demonstrates the same principles for sample District 8 in Mazar, which currently consists of 20 very small gozars. These 20 old gozars may be readjusted and fitted into just six new gozars that are close to the standard size of about 1,000-1,250 households. Again, the mapping exercise still needs to be conducted to fully demonstrate the conversion of old into new gozars. Quite obviously, this will require a considerable amount of time of technical advisors and office staff (from UN Habitat, or trained by UN Habitat officers) to work with gozar representatives. It is not possible at this stage to estimate the time required for completing the gozar revision in each of the four cities.

## 5. Components of the Block Grants Programme

The urban support programme is designed to be implemented on the basis of a “menu” of facilities from which the CDCs and gozar councils may select one or more facilities within the budget limits, such as playgrounds, or those for women’s job creation and education or basic environmental functions. The Discussion Paper aims to deal with the wider framework of required or desirable urban facilities all over the city, although the CC support programme is deliberately limited to the CDC and gozar levels within the emerging four-year programme (2016-2020).<sup>35</sup>

### 5.1 The Framework for Urban Facilities Programming

Local improvements to infrastructure, public utilities and community facilities constitute one of the frequently used approaches to combining active participation of local inhabitants in planning and decision-making from the bottom up, with the financing and managing of urban facilities through multiple sources.

If the government has not yet drafted a framework for urban facilities, this is the time for beginning with an overall draft by type and size of city, by source of funding and refinancing, for example, through user fees and taxes. The key phrase in this context is not “fixed normative values”, but a “framework for orientation”, which must be flexible enough to be used for a long time, although many details keep changing<sup>36</sup>.

As pointed out earlier, this paper was intended to be limited to basic facilities in the context of the CC urban support programme. However, it may be useful to include an overview of the “big picture” of facilities by city size and type, and of the wider neighbourhood facilities to which the CC support programme will contribute. Charts 4 and 5 cover a sketch of the main aspects, as a basis for more detailed future work, which is essential for the success of a credible municipal governance programme.

The focus of the CC and the emerging funding programme is on the lowest levels of a municipality, i.e., the neighbourhood. However, all infrastructure facilities mentioned in the programme are unthinkable without proper systems in place, or at least under planning for the city as a whole and even above it at the regional level, though few such facilities are mentioned in Chart 4.

For example, waste collection and waste transfer stations are needed in each neighbourhood, and they may well be managed with local participation after agreeing on their locations. However, the larger-scale systems components must be planned and managed by professionals in this field: Garbage trucks, and their procurement, deployment and maintenance; in addition, landfill sites and their planning and management.

The same can be stated about water supply facilities, their planning, maintenance and continuous financing (through water user fees). Even the idea of local green spaces cannot be limited to small “corner parks” or playgrounds that may well be combined with women’s centres (as suggested by this study). Cities also need open space systems such as parks and major sports grounds to be associated with nahiyas and the entire municipality. Such facilities can only be responsibly planned, maintained and funded by having the municipalities and the nahiyas involved, with professionally trained personnel in charge.

<sup>35</sup> Although a time frame of just four years is mentioned in the World Bank project appraisal, it is very doubtful whether that is sufficient. The required reforms of the gozar areas and boundaries alone add up to a highly political programme that cannot be completed within a year or two - before the first tranche of grant money can be disbursed. The interviewees’ opinions on the gozar reform appear to be over-optimistic as the limited time available for the reforms was not doubted. (Refer to interview summary in Section 3.3).

<sup>36</sup> AREU, in cooperation with UN Habitat, might wish to launch a research project on this theme, perhaps beginning with a modest theme like “best fit solutions to local urban facilities and infrastructure”. Such a project would be able to combine social research on people’s preferences with the professional assessment of feasible options within each field of public utilities and community facilities.

Chart 4: Indicative public facilities at the level of municipalities by population size

Scale (Population, households)	Municipality/ admin category	Sub-municipal units	Education	Health	Transport
> 1 mill (140,000 hh)	National capital		National University	Specialized hospital	International airport
500,000 (70,000 hh)	Municipality I Municipality II		Regional University	Provincial hospital (several classes)	Regional airport
100,000 (14,000 hh)	Municipality III		College	District hospital	Major regional bus terminal
50,000 (7,000 hh)	Municipality IV	Nahiya	Vocational School		Provincial bus terminal
20,000 (3,000 hh)			High school		
10,000		Gozar	Primary school		
5,000		(CDC)			Refer to separate table on sub-municipal conditions

Editorial Note: Charts 4 and 5 may be reproduced together on a single “landscape” page to save space. Alternatively, print the two charts face to face on opposite pages

Chart 5: Indicative public facilities at the lowest levels (CDC and Gozar)

Scale (Population, households)	Municipality/ admin category	Sub-municipal units	Education/ social facilities	Health	Transport, public utilities
(Municipalities of various grades)					
	Refer to separate table on higher-order municipal facilities				
20,000 (3,000 hh)	(Municipality)	(Nahiya)			
	Smaller municipalities of only 20,000 inhabitants (and less) also need many municipal services although, on economic grounds, they are "too small" for full facilities.				
			Livelihood project for women		
10,000 (1,400 hh)	Wakil's office	Gozar	Primary school	Health clinic	Various local bus stops
"Standard gozar": 5,600 - 7,000 (800-1,000 hh)					Proper waste transfer station (gozar)
5,000 (700-800 hh)			Kindergarten Playground(*)		
"Standard CDC" 1,400 (200 hh)		CDC			CDC level waste collection point

(\*) Associated with social facilities such as primary school, playground or women's livelihood project: "minimum greening" at the local level

Note: Both Charts 4 and 5 are based on the experts' knowledge applied to the conditions in Afghanistan. It would be useful to expand this kind of tentative menu by proper field surveys and fact finding on the actual distribution of public facilities in the major cities.

## 5.2 The Menu for Basic Improvements (under the Citizens' Charter)

Menu-driven mechanisms are commonly used in programmes for infrastructure improvements.<sup>37</sup> Apart from the menu itself, such planning and management schemes would include, first of all, area diagnostic tools by means of participatory rapid appraisal. This would lead to a broad classification of needs by area unit as some areas are naturally better off than others, so they would receive less funding. Further, there would have to be tools (and the related community training) for turning spontaneous “wishlists” into considered priority lists, in view of the funding resources available. Third, communities need to know the basic rules of public sector procurement (at least three bids for each sub-project, bid opening with witnesses, ranking of bids, and selection of the best offer to meet the community's needs). Such procedures and rules are not mentioned in the various reports and proposals related to the CC.

Principles and examples of good practices similar to the proposed menu-based approach:

- The CC covers the social and political aspects of “good participatory governance”, but the Operational Guidelines must add the essential aspects of physical planning and those of fair economic and fiscal management.
- Criteria for good management of bottom-up planning and management at the gozar level (to some extent also the CDC level) should be included, but the gozar level will be more important for practical urban planning/management.
- Rules and regulations on block grant management, including locally raised complementary funding (often in kind), are to be developed in more detail; to some extent, the rules and regulations have already been included in the CC Operational Manuals;
- References to similar project experiences in other countries may be evaluated and presented in more detail. Apart from the Local Development Funds of the UNCDF, the experiences from similar programmes of other agencies are available for evaluation and adaptation.<sup>38</sup>
- It may also be useful to peruse the municipality standards of India as a basis for developing appropriate standards for Afghan cities.<sup>39</sup> India as the largest neighbouring country with a well organised urban development sector may be the most logical choice, but there are many other countries where similar standards and regulations are available for review and possible adaptation.

The menu that was presented in the CC Operations Manual may have been the end result of long deliberations on the most feasible approaches in Afghanistan at this time. Therefore, the menu is simply accepted as the part of the decisions already taken by the World Bank in cooperation with the government and the leading technical assistance agencies such as UN Habitat. However, it should be possible to refine and improve the approach even further as indicated by the suggestions in and after Table 7.

<sup>37</sup> Refer to the various country programmes discussed by Kammeier and Demaine (eds.), *Decentralization, Local Governance and Rural Development*, AIT Bangkok, 2000.

<sup>38</sup> For UNCDF experiences in Asia, see footnotes 17 and 18.

<sup>39</sup> On Indian municipal standards, refer to Mathur, M. P., Rajesh Chandra, Satpal Singh, Basudha Chattopadhyay, *Norms and Standards of Municipal Basic Services in India*, National Institute of Urban Affairs, New Delhi, April 2007 (NIUA WP 07-01). This is just one example of the kind of Indian standards that may be considered for adaptation to Afghanistan's urban conditions.

Table 7: Annotated menu and list of options—"6 + 1"

Component	CC Menu as designed, plus one additional priority project	Realistic examples	Remarks
(This activity is a precondition without which projects cannot be selected from the menu)	<b>Household numbering</b>	Why in this list? it seems to be out of place although it is an important element. Household numbering may be undertaken with the help of a facilitator at very low costs, i.e., without touching the resources under the World Bank grant	Recommended to turn this into a mandatory component to be implemented before considering the priority list of infrastructure components
1	<b>Street upgrading, drainage, tree planting</b>	Street upgrading, including drainage, must conform to minimum technical standards; mostly two or three gozars jointly. Tree planting along streets—better as joint projects of at least two gozars	"minimum greening" not in this category but better in the community's own priority menu (see item 7 below)
2	<b>Potable water provision</b>	Possible solutions—shallow wells, even deep wells for groups of households (CDC) Alternative: small reticulation systems around one deep well owned by an entire gozar; Problems: water quality? Cost sharing system, water fees?	Difficult if part of a larger city area because water table sinks rapidly if many wells are sunk! Linking such small water schemes with city-wide system not an easy task
3	<b>Solid waste management</b>	Lowest level of waste management system—collection from households to collection points and on to larger transfer centre; from there trucking to waste deposit/landfill site;	As for water projects, proper links between community and city-wide system is a must!
4	<b>Park/recreation area/playground</b>	Different standards for, for example, small children's playgrounds and soccer fields.	To be planned carefully according to needs and availability of space
5	<b>Lighting/electricity</b>	Minor extensions as described; problems: installing meters and organising electricity charges and fee collection	Proper linkage with city wide system to ensured
6	<b>Livelihood projects for women</b>	Livelihood projects for women should include education and vocational training; Preferably in combination with multi-purpose community centre, community park, children's playground.	Very important and promising; preferably joint project by two or three gozars
7	<b>New component: An additional project defined by the community</b>	Possible projects instead or in addition to the standard projects in the menu: For example, multi-purpose sports grounds, either separate or as part of schools; and/or all types of neighbourhood facilities	An important tool for making the scheme more flexible and better suited to different districts and smaller communities
<b>Projects not eligible for funding through gozar block grant</b>		To be defined and listed to avoid misunderstandings about the nature of the programme	For example, mosques and <i>madrassas</i> are not supposed to be financed within this city support programme



Table 7 with its annotations is self-explanatory but it will require a much more detailed presentation, containing more detailed explanations and examples of good practices from Afghan cities. The municipality staff and their advisors (from UN Habitat and other agencies) will need such detailed instructions, even for the first trial projects, but that is well beyond the scope of this Discussion Paper.

There are some principal suggestions on how to improve the CC menu:

1. *Household numbering*: Do not count household numbering as a project because it is better to run it as a compulsory activity to be carried out (perhaps with some financial assistance) prior to activating the project menu. In other words, CDCs and gozars are not allowed to decide on their preferred projects unless they have completed the household numbering work.
2. *An additional priority project for each gozar*: The second suggested innovation is to add a project to be defined by the receiving CDC and/or gozar council. This measure will increase the flexibility in defining good local projects and it will definitely motivate the recipient local community to cooperate because they would be invited to set their own priorities within and now even beyond the fixed menu.
3. *Small private community projects*: Another suggestion is to consider small projects to be set up by community groups (even smaller than a full CDC) - for example, playgrounds for small children may be set up on this basis, with land provided by one or more private land owners who commit themselves to providing that plot (which could be as small as 500 sq m) for a number of years for that community purpose. This might also include agreed user fees.

### 5.3 Suggestions for Implementation Programming

The proposed approach to gozar block grant management for the creation of basic facilities (as shown in Table 7 above) may consider the following points:

#### A. CDCs and gozar councils as implementing partners:

1. Principal need for, and feasibility of local contributions to local project costs: Clarify whether 10 percent of project value is a feasible minimum. Many areas should be able to increase that to 20 percent (in cash or in kind).
2. De-emphasise the importance of CDCs and give more authority to gozars as the principal “local authorities” for the planning and management of urban facilities.
3. Define the necessary support and its operations from the municipality administration as the supervisor and partner of the gozars.
4. First approval of projects by whom? Municipality? Second/final approval by Project Office (with World Bank, UN Habitat, other agencies, and government representatives). Approval and supervisory capacity should be defined in a wider sense as advisory functions.
5. It is assumed that UN Habitat and/or other agencies act as standard process facilitators (probably to be decided by government and to be announced along with CC Operational Manual).
6. Local councils will not be able to transform initial wish lists into considered, prioritised lists of projects for implementation, but assistance must be both supportive and respectful because CDC/gozar/nahiya councils are supposed to be empowered in their roles as local authorities.
7. Further development of this overview by means of qualified commentary on grassroots community facilities and options for their planning and management. List to be revised after testing in a pilot district in each of the four cities.

**B. Further work on procedures:**

1. Costing of all proposals must be based on authorised reference prices specific to city or region
2. Technical standards for most infrastructure projects to be clearly stipulated as CC projects cannot be set up without properly defined standards (even if they are lower than standards for larger public facilities)
3. Procurement preferably as packages of similar projects—for example, street improvements in neighbouring gozars to be put up for contractors' bidding, but not every gozar separately. Bidding procedures (opening of bids with witnesses, etc.) as in all other construction projects
4. Accounting principles (for example, interest accounts for gozars), cost control, auditing, etc.—as a separate manual, professional assistance to local councils required!
5. Land acquisition for small projects: Can it be stipulated that normally, land is to be provided by the community at no cost or nominal cost? UP to a certain extent, land costs may well qualify as local contributions to overall project costs.
6. Even though the proposed programme is very large indeed, so far it is a one-off scheme without a follow-up programme. So the effects of demonstrating the advantages of deconcentrated project planning/financing are limited because the continuity is missing. Are there any possibilities for a follow-up scheme, perhaps at a smaller scale, in the years after completing the World Bank funded programme? Have other funding agencies agreed to use the same project mechanisms?
7. Procurement: If packages of gozar projects are formed - for example, bundles of road construction/drainage projects; green areas and tree planting, preparation of sports grounds; buildings for community centres; electricity provision - which agency acts as the technical advisor of the local community in negotiating with contractors?
8. Do the four cities have strategic plans at nahiya and municipality levels in place or are they just beginning to work on them? Ideally, the SNAP/SMAPs should be in place when the community driven planning begins.

The menu discussed in Table 7 is no more than a rough outline of the projects to be planned with strong community participation, with CDCs and gozars as project owners. As such, the project owners must take on certain responsibilities for maintenance and management. These are not covered by the presently available documents on the CC operations, but they need to be drafted, discussed, and decided by the authority in charge of CC operations—most probably, a joint body of representatives of government, World Bank, and other agencies (donors and operating agents).

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

In this study, the search for solutions had to be limited to an assessment of the government preparations for the joint urban support programme with the World Bank, a modest “opinion poll” among some stakeholders, and a review of the major shifts and changes in international urban governance style and practice, with a view to what might be suitable for Afghanistan.

### 6.1 Conclusions

The assessment of the political, social and economic context confirms the mixed views held by most international observers: The country is in a continued particularly challenging phase of its history where rapid urbanisation with all its challenges overlaps the structural difficulties of a situation of never-ending violent conflict, coupled with a very high degree of long-term dependency on foreign aid. This makes it difficult to assume that despite its obvious progress, the new government (since fall 2014) has the power to lead the country to fast recovery and improvements. It goes without saying that any serious observer sincerely hopes for exactly that: a real breakthrough in the difficult mix of intractable socio-economic and political conditions, and the massive challenges of urbanisation.

The conclusions on the status of the “emerging” urban support programme are:

1. **High expectations from the new urban development programme:** This is perhaps the most ambitious, but also most promising long-term programme, especially if the present main actors (World Bank, Government, and UN Habitat) are joined by a range of important other international players. However, there are reservations in the high hopes raised by the programme because there does not seem to be a perspective for programme continuation beyond the first four or seven years. However, the urban development programme ought to be able to take a 20-year perspective.
2. **Strengths and weaknesses of municipalities:** The (modest) strengths and (glaring) weaknesses of the existing municipalities, including the four large ones under this programme, are well documented; they have been confirmed by the limited data gathering carried out in this research study. Sufficiently detailed information about the sub-municipal set-up (nahiya offices and especially gozar councils, as well as CDCs) has not been gathered in this research study, and it was not possible to do so due to lack of time and mobility.
3. **Need for more information on the gozars and the intended reform:** As the main emphasis in the emerging programme is on the lowest levels, especially the gozars, there is an urgent need for more evidence and real data, possibly through UN Habitat and other international players with experience at that level. The rather different sizes and shapes of the four cities’ gozars have been shown in this report, supporting the need for a thorough readjustment of areas and boundaries, using the methodology demonstrated. This will require considerable time prior to starting the support programme as such. Therefore, the suggested implementation time of only four years amounts to a serious underestimate.
4. **Other administrative reforms:** A reform and strengthening of the CDCs in urban areas may also be required, but the gozar reform appears to be more urgent. By the same token, undertake a study on needs and modalities for a nahiya reform, but postpone it until completing the gozar reform.
5. **Proposed menu-driven infrastructure programme:** The proposed approach, i.e., list of projects eligible for programme support, is essentially sound as a tool for interventions at the lowest sub-municipal levels. However, the menu is not quite satisfactory as a whole, and it is not connected to urban facilities at higher levels (which must be tackled by means of other support programmes).

On the whole, the conclusion is that the four cities are ready and eager to start the preliminary work for the programme while the operations and implementation modalities are to be finalised with the assistance of the international agencies. In due course, the cities should then be ready for full programme implementation which involves disbursement of large funds over a long time period.

## 6.2 Suggested Action Programme

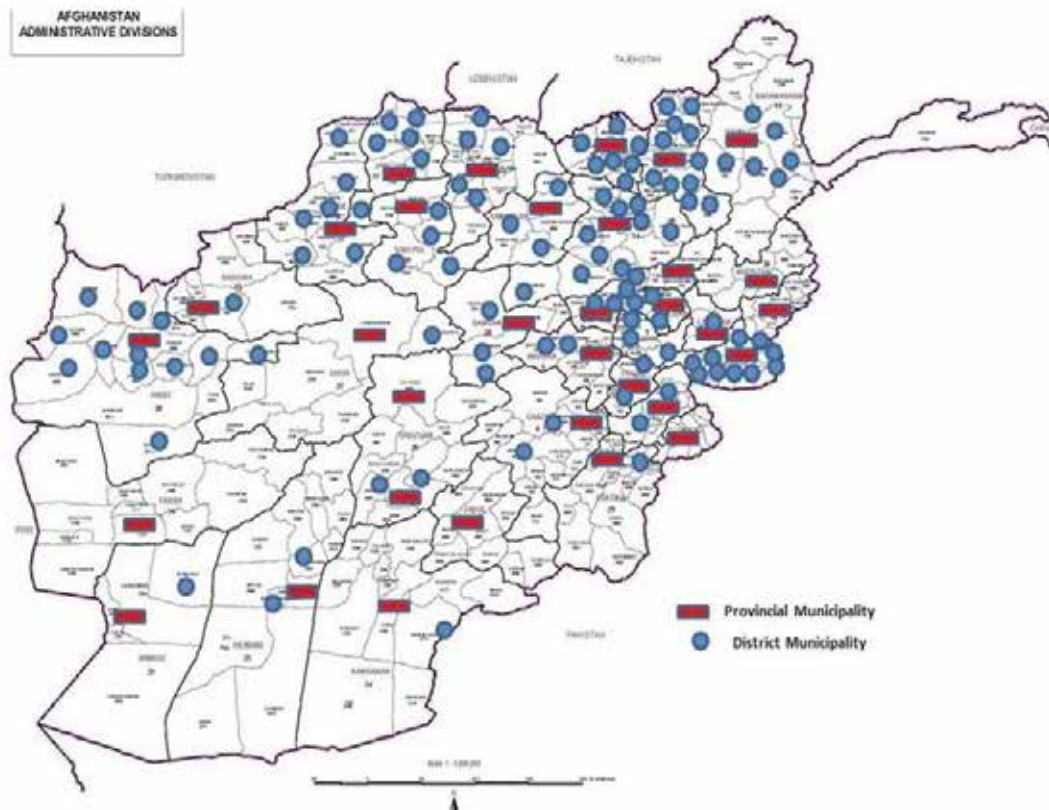
In view of the deficiencies in urban physical and socio-economic conditions, the need for boosting the urban management capability requires long-term and clearly targeted support (which is not described in the programme documents accessible to the researchers). This calls for a concerted action programme along the lines that are sketched out below. The recommendations below would add up to a comprehensive programme, but that will require much more work and discussion than is possible within the framework of this Discussion Paper.

1. **Work towards an intelligent framework for programme preparation:** The recommendations of this and similar reports should be combined in an appropriate manner. This implies a circumspect approach rather than an uncritical application of normative values that may be found in textbooks and guidelines from other sources.
2. **Need for a solid pilot programme:** Design a pilot programme, perhaps for one nahiya (or at least for a representative group of five gozars) in one of the four cities, or in two or even all four cities simultaneously or in short succession; it is important to design and implement this kind of pilot programme without the rush that might stem from the impatience of the rest of the city to start “their own” programmes.
3. **After completion and evaluation,** adjust the approach if necessary before running it in all nahiyas in all four cities; carefully integrate the lessons learnt from the pilot work into the full-scale programme. Start the pilot work only in areas where the preconditions have been met, i.e., the gozar boundary adjustment (as demonstrated in Charts 3 (a) and (b)), and the household counting and registration (as suggested in Table 7).
4. **Link programme implementation and training of young professionals:** Even as early as during the pilot phase, it is recommended to involve trainees from any relevant programme. The new Masters Course at Kabul Polytechnic University is just one example. An innovative programme in urban governance and financial support will attract the best students and young graduates.
5. **The same involvement of students in a prestigious World Bank programme** will generate innovative thesis studies - far better and more meaningful topics. Build on the practical experience from the pilot phase in each city and incorporate it in the on-the-job training of officers at gozar, nahiya and municipality levels. This is an important opportunity for municipal capacity building.
6. **Proper management of human resources involved in programme operations:** Retain the best performers among the local trainers and get them involved in subsequent courses. Often the newly created local experts are the most active and highly motivated ones. The programme needs continuous innovation and changes in teaching/training staff.
7. **Bring in officers from other cities to witness the programme in the four large cities.** The next generation of cities where the support programme is implemented will benefit immensely from the experience during the first generation of the urban support programme.
8. **Work on specialisations in implementation and training:** In time, the action programme will include four or five specialisations in the broad field of socio-economic and physical urban improvements, such as accounting and procurement procedures, water/wastewater and environmental components; integrating the women’s learning and training facilities; playgrounds and primary schools in the neighbourhood, and many others.

**Research work for monitoring and guiding the programme:** The programme for implementing the infrastructure programme and the CC will be very large and diversified, ultimately covering the whole country, i.e., well beyond the four major cities at the focus of this assessment paper. Such a programme must be accompanied by a research programme running in parallel, to monitor its performance, to guide it when it moves into new regions and subject areas, and to continuously evaluate successes and failures. AREU would be perfectly situated to become one of the main partners in drafting the research programme needed, and implementing it. So this last recommendation is given to both AREU (as an independent agency) and the government agencies conducting the infrastructure programme.

## ANNEX 1: Recent urban development in Afghanistan

### 1. An overview of provincial and district cities and towns

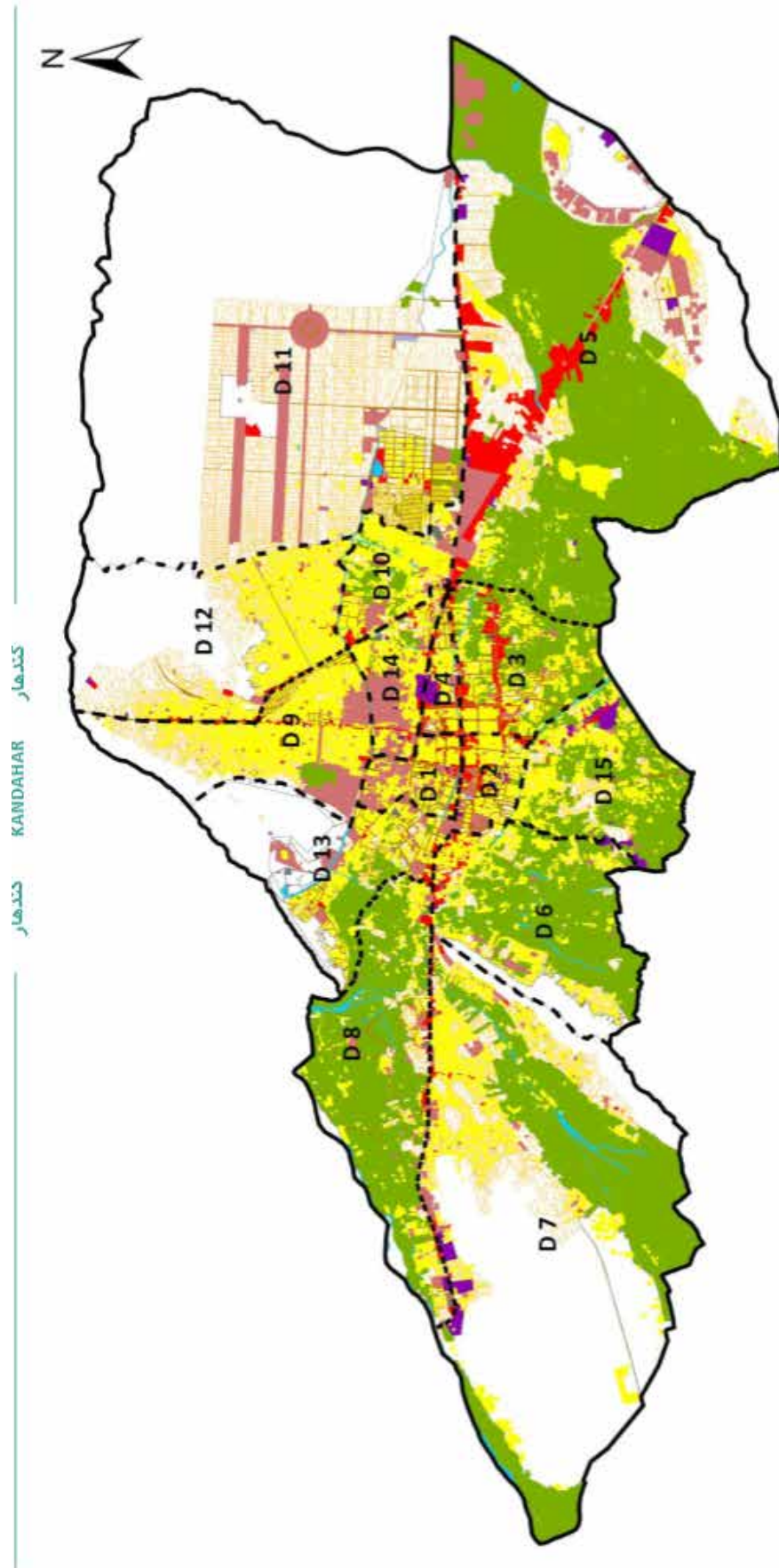


The first map shows a frequently reproduced map of the municipalities, distinguishing provincial municipalities or capitals of the 33 plus 1 provinces (Kabul as a special unit), and district municipalities ranking from mid-sized to very small sized and much less important than even the smallest provincial centre. This map has also been reproduced in the monograph on municipalities by Abdul Baqi Popal, 2014.

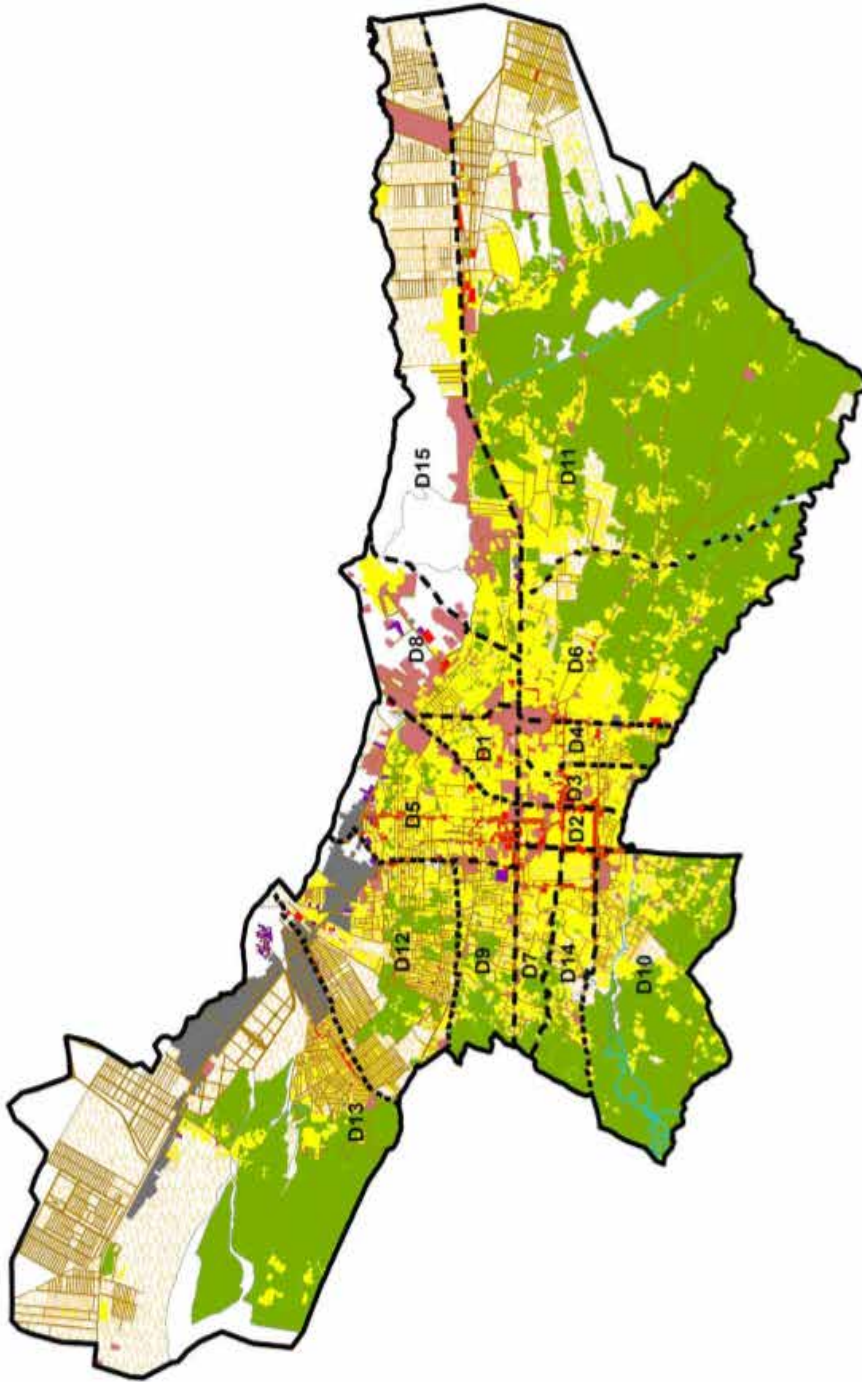
### 2. Land Use Maps from the documentation of the State of Afghan Cities

The second part of this Annex is on the four large cities that are at the focus of this report. The cartography clearly distinguishes the main types of land use and the districts (nahiya) in each city. The four maps show that the outer Districts usually include a large part of vacant or agricultural land which is - expectedly - hardly found in the inner-city Districts.

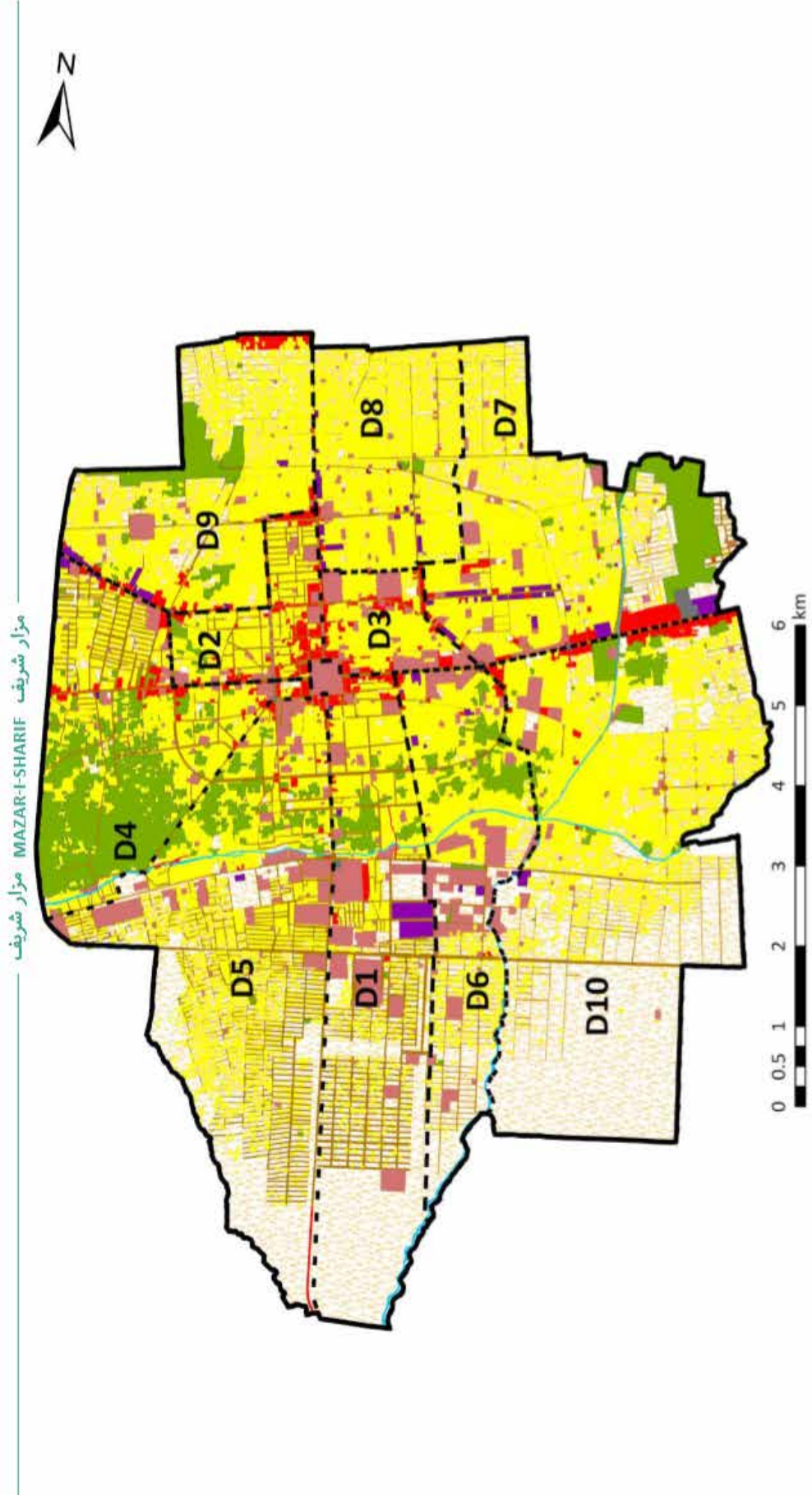
All four maps are from GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities*, 2015

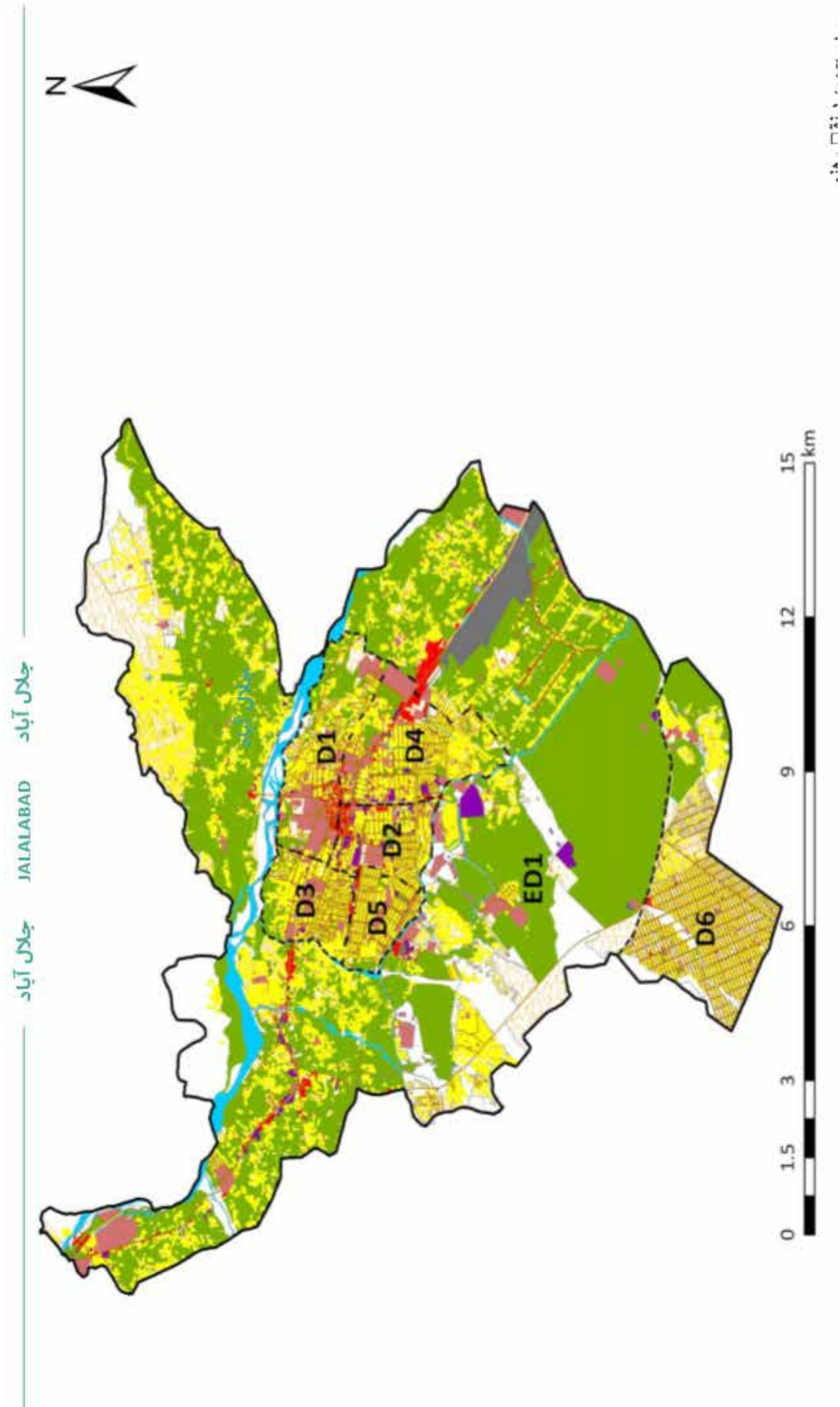


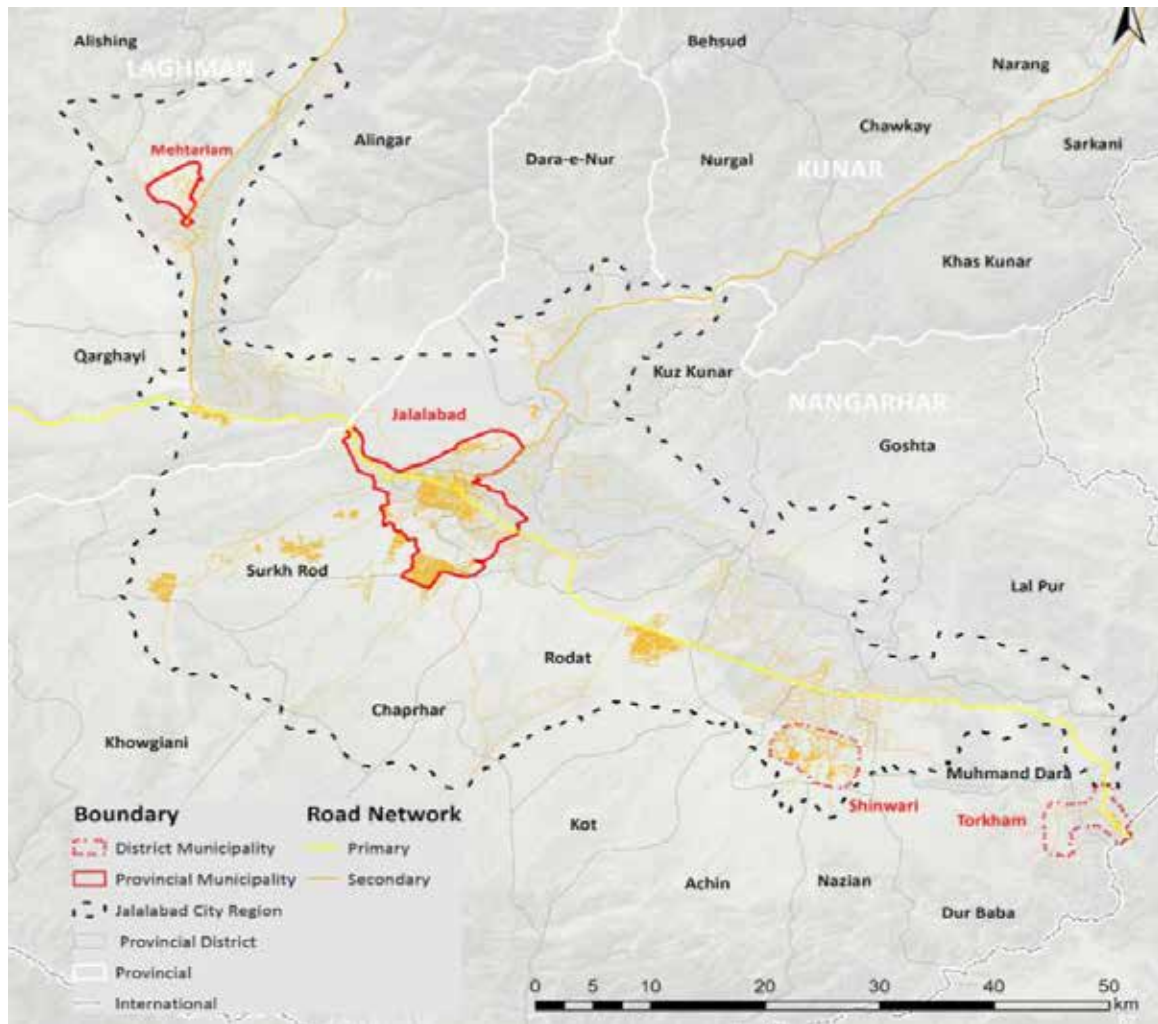
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The overview map on Jalalabad illustrates the very large “fringe area” which in this case includes 1.2 million inhabitants, compared with the 400,000 inhabitants within the core urban areas. The area selected for this map is very large indeed, approximately 100 km East-West, and 60 km North-South.

Source: GoIRA, *City Regions of Afghanistan*, 2016

### 3. Additional Information: Land Use Patterns

The methodology for estimating the city population essentially proceeds from relatively detailed satellite maps for land use by several categories (as shown in the diagram below) to a procedure for establishing population numbers by block areas, and later, within gozar areas. First, a putative household size (between 7.5 and 9 members) is applied to calculate lower and upper limits of population by block and gozar. This is then added up to establish the summary table for all provincial cities shown in Annex 1-4.



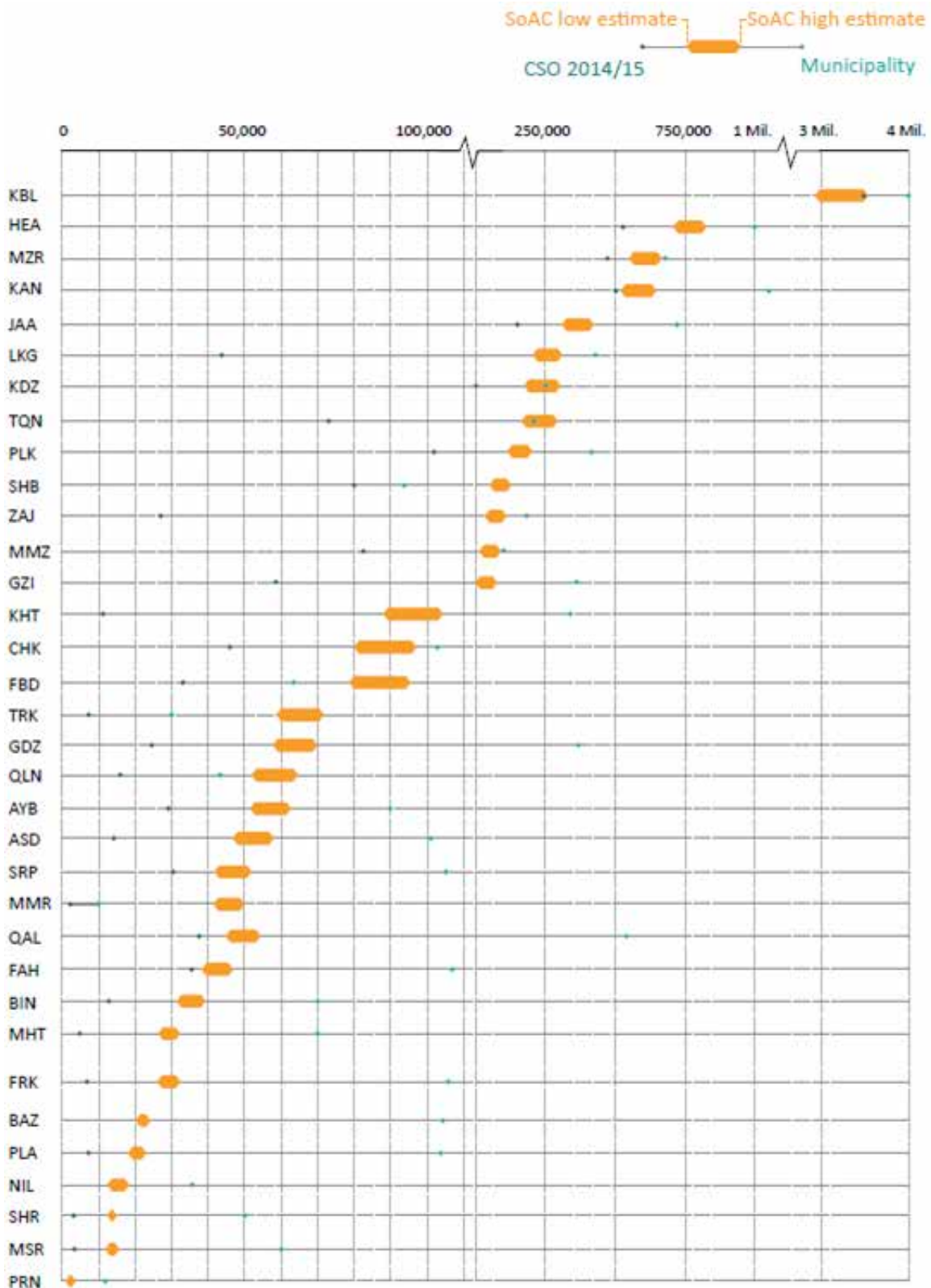
The annotated satellite map above is the most accurate kind of map available for all cities.

## 4. Population Estimates by UN Habitat and Central Statistical Office (CSO)

TABLE 1.3: AFGHANISTAN'S 34 PROVINCIAL CAPITALS

Provincial Capital	Province	Province Population (CSO)	Provincial Capital Population Estimates			
			CSO (2014/15)	Municipality	SoAC 2014/15	
					Low (7.5 per Dwelling)	High (9 per Dwelling)
Kabul	Kabul	4,227,200	3,543,700	4,000,000	2,970,713	3,564,855
Herat	Herat	1,852,800	463,300	1,000,000	673,425	808,110
Mazar-i-Sharif	Balkh	1,298,300	390,900	700,000	577,500	693,000
Kandahar	Kandahar	1,201,000	422,200	1,200,000	464,265	557,118
Jalalabad	Nangarhar	1,489,800	219,300	700,000	296,895	356,274
Lashkar Gah	Helmand	909,400	43,600	300,000	230,318	276,381
Kunduz	Kunduz	991,000	152,800	250,000	224,078	268,893
Taluqan	Takhar	966,600	71,800	220,000	215,183	258,219
Pul-i-Khumri	Baghlan	894,900	105,900	400,000	184,395	221,274
Sheberghan	Jawzjan	530,700	80,100	94,333	146,333	175,599
Zaranj	Nimroz	162,100	26,000	200,000	134,085	160,902
Maimana	Faryab	981,200	82,200	152,600	124,200	149,040
Ghazni	Ghazni	1,208,600	59,100	280,000	119,483	143,379
Khost	Khost	565,200	11,500	260,214	88,403	106,083
Charikar	Parwan	653,400	56,400	106,000	80,033	96,039
Faiz Abad	Badakhshan	935,300	33,000	63,000	79,538	95,445
Tarinkot	Uruzgan	380,500	6,700	20,000	59,670	71,604
Gardez	Paktya	427,700	24,300	285,000	58,868	70,641
Qala-i-Naw	Badghis	487,800	14,500	42,000	53,438	64,125
Aybak	Samangan	381,400	29,000	90,000	52,373	62,847
Asad Abad	Kunar	443,300	13,700	107,000	47,625	57,150
Sar-i-Pul	Sar-e Pol	550,200	30,100	115,000	42,563	51,075
Mahmood Raqi	Kapisa	433,900	1,500	10,000	42,075	50,490
Qalat	Zabul	299,100	12,000	530,000	40,965	49,158
Farah	Farah	498,900	36,600	109,000	39,743	47,691
Bamyan	Bamyan	439,900	12,600	70,000	33,263	39,915
Mehterlam	Laghman	438,300	5,000	70,000	27,458	32,949
Ferozkoh (Chaghcharan)	Ghor	679,000	6,900	132,000	26,055	31,266
Bazarak	Panjshir	151,000	-	130,000	20,603	24,723
Pul-i-Alam	Logar	385,600	5,500	110,000	19,095	22,914
Nili	Daykundi	417,500	-	35,000	14,955	17,946
Sharan	Paktika	543,000	2,800	50,000	13,043	15,651
Maidan Shahr	Wardak	586,600	3,000	60,658	11,888	14,265
Paroon	Nooristan	145,600	-	12,000	1,373	1,647

SOURCE: CSO (2014/15); SoAC GIS; POPAL (2014)



The two tables in this section are from the authoritative and comprehensive report on the *State of Afghan Cities*. The three population estimates for the major cities shows considerable discrepancies, from the estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) to the Municipalities' own estimates that are grossly different, and finally, the UN Habitat results of the estimation of population numbers from the analysis of the built-up areas. Here, the estimate offers a low and a high level, depending on which mean household size is applied, 7.5 or 9 members per household. Most probably, this is the most reliable current estimate for all provincial cities.

Source of both tables: GoIRA, *State of Afghan Cities*, 2015, pp. 12 and 13

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