MEMORANDUM

From: Amir H. Gohar
Re: Submitting Report for Action Plan "9"
Date: 10-Aug-2005

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The purpose of this memorandum is to explain and clarify the way in which my time was spent during my stay in Syria in relation to Action Plans 9 & 10.

My report on AP 9 was developed in accordance with my personal understanding of the TOR, however, as a result of sharing it with my colleagues in the project and with Peter Jonquiere (Urban Planning Team Leader), it has been realized that the report has been written at a practicable level i.e. it concentrates on solutions and implementation issues rather policy issues.

According to my colleagues this is a valuable piece of work that will be of use in the future as the areas that it covers would require further investigation at a future stage in the project following on from the inception phase.

I believe strongly that this document will contribute to different peoples' understanding and may enhance their approach towards tackling the problems identified. I believe also that this report may be useful, in many aspects, during the inception phase; and as such could be submitted as an annex to the inception report.

During the second half of my stay I have worked closely with the other team members and, I believe, I have captured the objectives of the report and that the work I will produce will have a direct input in to the MAM inception report in action plan "9"

I am working also on Action Plan 10, informal settlements, and the objective of this report is to resolve the problems of the settlements on two levels:

a) To stop any growing or development of these settlements, and
b) Improve and develop the existing informal settlements to enhance the living quality for their inhabitants.

Part (a) should be resolved within action plan 9, and mentioned briefly in action plan 10 - simply because the informal settlements are a result of weaknesses in the development mechanisms, both planning and implementation.

Part (b) is thoroughly explained in the report of Action Plan 10, which (at the present time) is a separate report from AP 9.

I believe that being flexible and supportive of the team is more essential than blind commitment to my TOR. On this basis I have contributed to the report on AP 9 and worked on developing the report for AP 10.

Amir H. Gohar August 10, 2005

Municipal Administration Modernisation Project (MAM)
Syrian Arab Republic
EuropeAid/119822/D/SV/SY

PROJECT PROPOSALS IN ACTION PLAN 9
(URBAN PLANNING)

Amir H. Gohar (ISTE)
BSc.Dip.MA.
August 2005

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urban Planning is an active process of designing better ways of organizing the structure and function of cities, including an orderly sitting of land uses and activities.
This directly touches some parts of these cities which are not performing within the city harmony and considered odd undesired zones, these are the slum areas.
this report is going to layout the main issues and concern related to urban planning (action plan 9) also will propose possible intervention.

It has been realised that due to many different reasons the urban planning process and results and not very much sufficient.
Unfortunately, these reasons are very much alike in other developing countries in the region and no specific or significant reason could be characterised as “local” or as “only Syrian”, these could be summarised in:

- The lack of coordination between related authorities.
- Centralisation in the decision making process.
- Issues related to the planning law:
    - Law is very generic and difficult to apply in different areas
    - Lack of specific laws related to urban planning
    - Lack of law enforcement
    - Inefficiency in the mechanism of applying the law
- Lack of technical capabilities within the public sector

Although these weaknesses are realised, it has been noticed that there are huge tendency to develop the system and a strong desire to resolve the urban planning problems. For example there had been a numerous amount of repeated requests to the MAM project to improve the base maps, have GIS, integrate professional urban planning, develop vision about planning for tourism and thinking about transportation strategies within the cities. This holistic approach of development is the only method to cross the bridge and have a planning system in place and functioning properly.

This lack of adequate urban planning and for the previously mentioned reasons had resulted to informal settlements within the Syrian cities. These informal settlements, not only illegally built, but also lack basic services, infrastructure and utilities and therefore it is considered an over load on the government because it is highly populated areas and will require a certain share of the basic urban services.

The MAM project believes that it has a big role in identifying in which stage is the urban planning department and what is the needed steps to be taken to develop the urban planning system (process and implementation), also MAM believes that the involvement of local competent candidates

in the technical as well as management issues will play a huge role in the process of urban planning and upgrading of informal settlements, because these action plans have a very strong social pattern behind the physical seen form and the local knowledge is an incomparable asset.

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban planning is `indeed a very important matter in the Syrian republic and it has a great effect on the way that cities work, obviously good urban planning will lead to more efficiency and easier management from the local municipalities and directorates.

This report is a result of a rapid assessment of the existing urban planning and design as a practice and as a management system within the local authorities.

The data gathered to evaluate (the existing planning system & output) and propose (new planning guidelines, tools and techniques) is gathered from several meetings with hi officials that were conducted during the inception period, as well as visits to the selected cities and their representatives. In addition to these meetings, intensive visitations took place to capture the day today mechanism in which these cities operate such as urban management, traffic, maintenance construction, landscaping….etc.

The report will layout the common problems of urban planning and common suggestions to resolve these problems, however, a city specific issues will be highlighted and will be focused on in separate text. The city specific proposals will cover the main six cities as shown in the map below (Damascus, Aleppo, DerAzzor, Tartus, Lattakia and Homs)

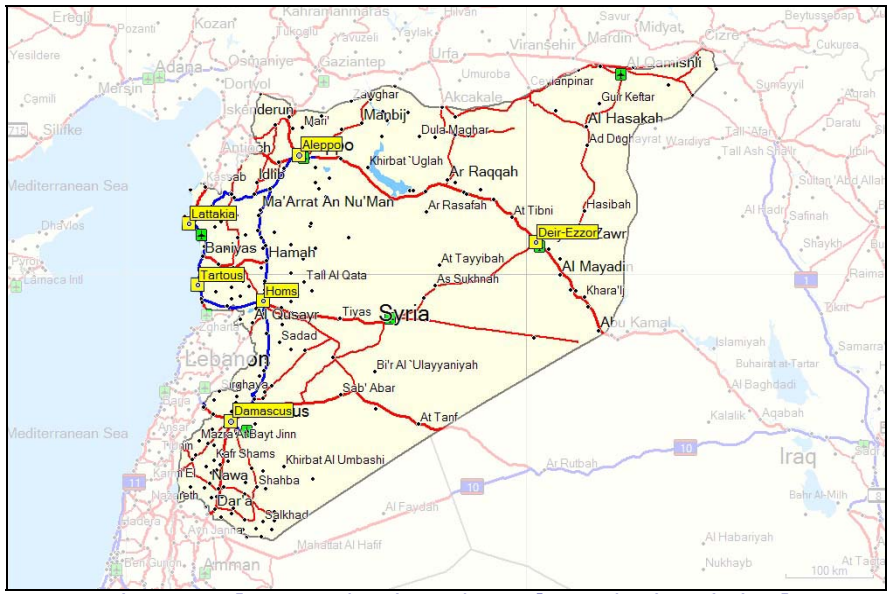

Figure 1 [A map showing the selected six cities]

2. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING SITUATION (GENERAL & COMMON FINDINGS)

The following issues are the areas within the urban planning discipline that is not well developed or understood clearly from the local municipalities especially the technical offices which is mainly responsible for the urban planning in the cities.
The project intervention should go through each of the following areas and provide technical support to improve and enhance both the understanding and the applying of these issues.

2.1 PLANNING DEFINITIONS

ISSUE:
There has been a wide range of definitions used within the working environment of the urban planning and it has been noticed that each and every term used has different meaning to different people, so each individual has his own perception about each term. For example the title “Urban Map” had been used in the PowerPoint presentations and by technical officials but in many different contexts.
PROPOSAL:
To collect all the information in all legends they produce and try to identify the content of each map and the level f detail in each map then come up with the list of information that could be presented in each planning level, starting from the regional plan through the structure plan and ending by the detailed plan.

2.2 PLANNING METHODOLOGY

ISSUE:
The Syrian planning authorities are concentrating on the physical planning and their planning output is only concerned with issues such as “Planning Law”, therefore, allot of the planning consideration is missing.

PROPOSAL:
The following planning methodology (after more and more enhancements) could be distributed to the planning technical offices to be viewed and to check each item in it then identify what they really achieve and what they do lack.

The planning methodology:

1- Define the general goal
2- Identify specific objectives
3- Identify study area boundaries
4- Study area analysis
a) Regional analysis (such as suburbs, highways, access, regional services, airports,..etc)
b) Man made elements analysis
Urban analysis:
- Infrastructure (sewage, water, electricity and roads)
- Built Form (building condition, building height, building use, building structure)

Social analysis
- illiteracy
- gender issues

- income
- demographical indicators
- dependency ration…etc

Services

- Health
- education
- social
- entertainment

c) Natural elements analysis (topography, geology, soil, geomorphology, water,…rtc)

5- Final planning decisions
6- Develop planning alternatives
7- Selection of best alternative (based on the satisfaction of the objectives)
9- Define the following in the selected alternative
a) Priority areas
b) Phasing (according the available resources and the minimisation of management conflicts
10- Implementation

The chart in figure (2) shows the methodology of the planning process, however a following chart shows in what extent it exist in the Syrian system and what is actually missing in the local planning process.

This check list is just a guidance structure, because there could be other items that is highly considered in the Syrian planning process but not in the methodology chart in.

To be able to evaluate the Syrian process, the relative weight of each point in the check list should be identified and also the sequence og their methodology should be tested.

It has been noticed through some official presentations and meetings that during the planning process some weaknesses do impact the methodology, and these can be summarised in the following points:

- Using the inappropriate indicators to achieve certain arguments.
- Allot of studies have been accomplished but not utilised in the planning process in the right place
- Huge amount of data is acquired but not effectively influence the planning decision making process
- Critics and arguments used are not representing the reality of the situations (for example comparing the average density in the built area of the city to the average density for the whole country – this is not true comparison because it is comparing net density to gross density, which does not help as an indicator)

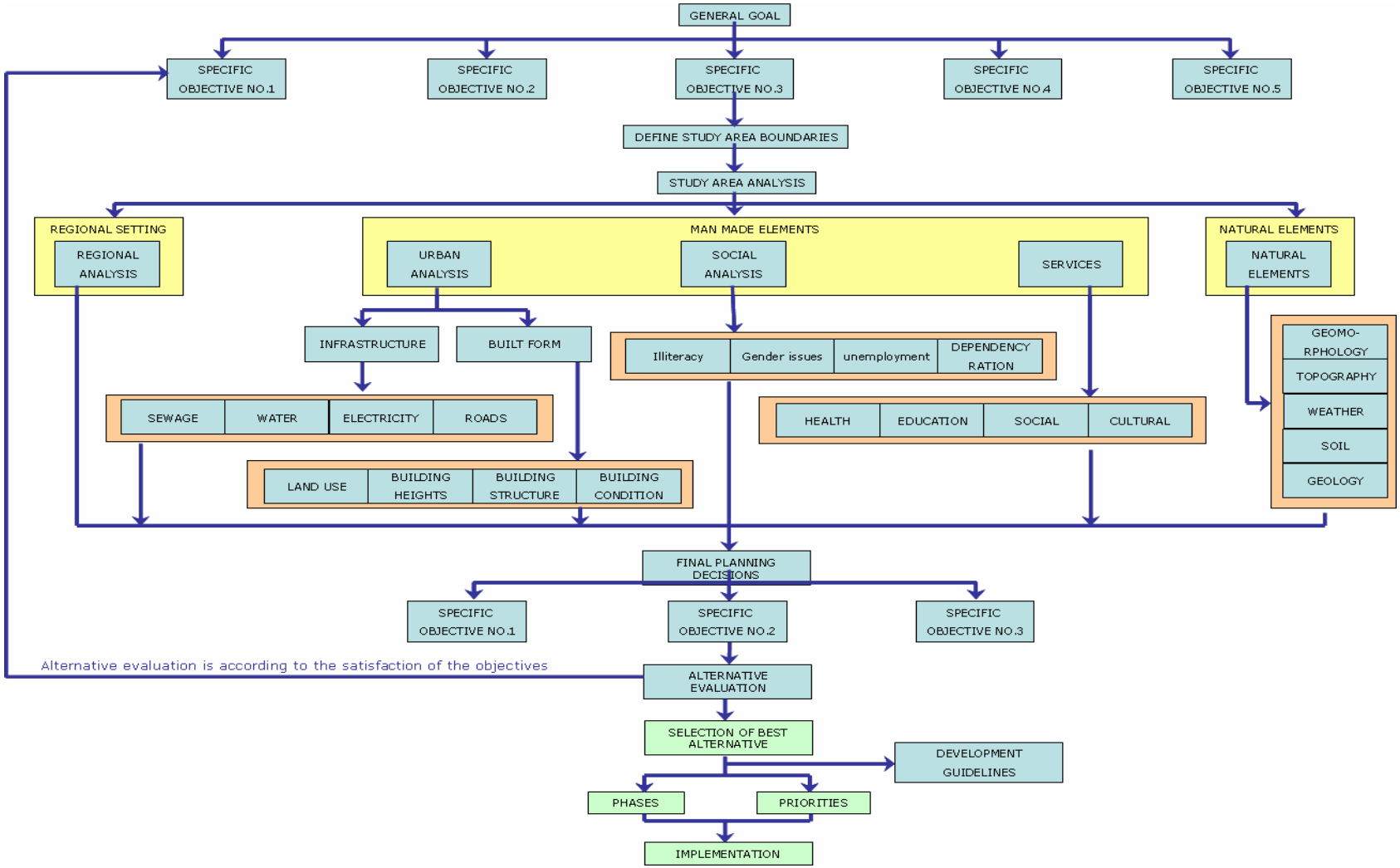

Figure 2 [a theoretical planning methodology to be compared with the local planning methodology]

2.3 CAPACITY BUILDING

ISSUE:
There is a good base of knowledge within the local technical planning team but it lacks, some basic urban planning rational, the talent of presentations.
From an urban planning standpoint some basic issues need to be clarified for the local staff through training and capacity building:

- The different between the urban envelop (or the boundaries of the built are within the land lot) and the actual architecture design.
- Hierarchal structure of the roads network is not very present, so the importance of this hierarchy need to be highlighted to the local planners and the best way of implemented.
- From the presentation given, the land subdivisions seem to be very irregular, so concepts such as regularity, sufficient use for the land, corners layout…etc need to be introduced intensively.

PROPOSAL:
It has been noticed that there is a need for improving and developing the capacity of the planning teams in the local authorities and enhance the regular performance through highlighting of the critical issues that they really lack.
This is in the form of on-the-job training, class rooms, observatory study tours,…etc. the syllabus of these trainings should include:

- Introductory planning courses
- Maps presentation
- Visual representation of the data
- GPS usage as a mapping tool
- Participatory planning exercises
- Urban profile survey
- Introduction to GIS
- Introduction to Remote sensing

2.4 MAKE PILOT URBAN PLANS

ISSUE:
Implementing certain urban planning is definitely a challenge faced in the Syrian context and it is much more complicated when it has other hidden dimensions, such as the involvement of other different authorities in the old city, and another good example is the sophistication faced while tackling or implementing an approved urban plan in informal settlements.
PROPOSAL:
Phasing is the key aspect to get the approved plan implemented, and to achieve that certain zones need to be identified to start with, and they should have all the success aspects and stake holders involvement to guarantee a successful experience that could easily be a model to learn

from and also to be able to transform this success to other areas around them.
These zones shall be selected based on certain criteria that will be identified after gathering the needed information and data about each city.
EXAMPLE: Developing a selected zone in the old city.
This potential model was explored while doing some surveys in the old city because it has all the ingredients:

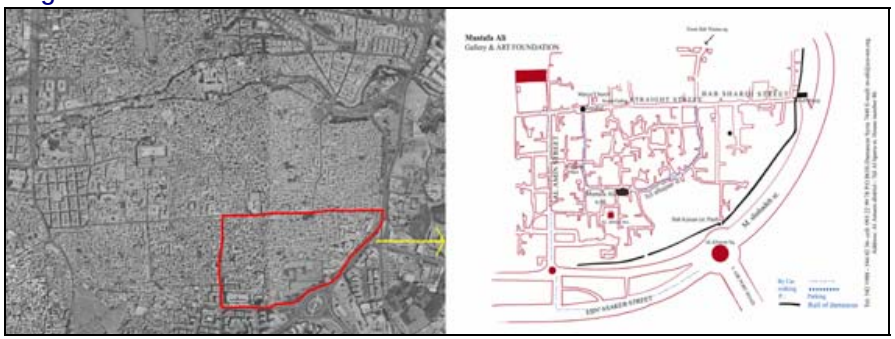

Figure 3 [to the left is a map for the old city, and the southern east quarter is the area that capture the artists interest and where they can provide support as third party in the project, and to the right is the mapping done by these artist (initiative by sculptor Mustafa Ali) whom are interested in the development of this part of the old city]

The maps in figure (3) shows an area in the southern east of the old city where there are private initiative to improve the built environment by the sculptors and artists whom have their "atelier" and show rooms within the area. By all means it is a win/win game, since all stake holder have the same objective, the artists want their area clean and ready to receive guests, the old city directorate is interested in promoting the area for tourism, and the municipality is interested in having the urban landscape and implemented and functioning properly.

2.5 BUILDING REGULATION

ISSUE:
The building regulations are generic and applied to different urban contexts, and this reduces the quality of the built form because areas vary in densities, foot prints, street networks,… etc
PROPOSAL:
New building regulation should be an output of environmental considerations as well as the legal status of the building law.. Parking is a single aspect of it but other implications could be related to townscape including:

- Signage Strategy
- Lighting guideline
- Paving Material & style (vehicular and pedestrian movements)
- Regulation related to management of modes of transportation
- Outdoor spaces (plazas, squares,…etc)

In addition to the above guidelines, there are existing urban planning & design lows for the spatial distribution of urban features and developing layouts of detailed areas, however, there has been new guidelines that is possible to be developed with new planning areas, this

is mainly to avoid the very generic existing building low that ends with a typical urban form and avoids creativity in urban design

2.6 BUILDING CODES IN OLD TOWN

ISSUE:
The building codes are special IDs given to the buildings to identify each building and the lack of these codes makes it extremely difficult to manage these buildings in the old city.
PROPOSAL:

- The old town (especially the historic buildings) should be literally mapped and geographically located using a global positioning system (cross cutting with the GIS)
- A complete photographic documentation
- Historical profile for each building to construct a historical profile that will help in the marketing of the area as a tourism destination.

2.7 DEVELOPING ONE-STOP-SHOP

ISSUE:
The difficulty in getting the approvals in the development process (either for single cases or on a district, group, zones , areas…etc) are extremely difficult at the moment and for inconvenient reasons the one-stop-shop is not functioning properly.

In theory, it should not be a problem to establish this method especially that nothing is against the regulation or it does not require extra laws, it is all about the cooperation and coordination between different and all level of personnel within the local authority.
PROPOSAL:
Introducing a one-stop-shop approach to building licences and introduce a computerised system for the registration of applications and licences is not an easy process within this centralised system. However the process could be reduced through two levels of coordination:

1- Municipality Level (Vertical Coordination):
The municipality as local authority represent the government in legal issues so all related permissions and legal forms could be obtained through a one-=stop-shop because it is all under one structure.
Example:
Lets take the old city as an example (old city is the core of an existing city such as Damascus, Tartus or..etc)
Any physical intervention or urban management issues should be coordinated vertically as in the diagram in figure (4); which starts from the governorate level, to the local municipality level, to the city directorate and down to the old city directorate.

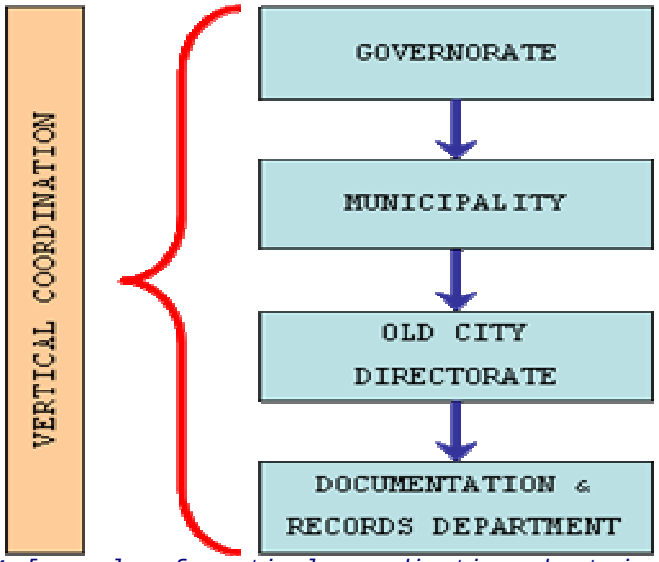

Figure 4 [example of vertical coordination chart in the old city area]

2- Sectoral Level (Horizontal Coordination:
It is the coordination between different central authorities such as different ministries.
Example:
If we take the same example for the old city, another type of horizontal coordination is needed which deals with different ministries as shown in the diagram below

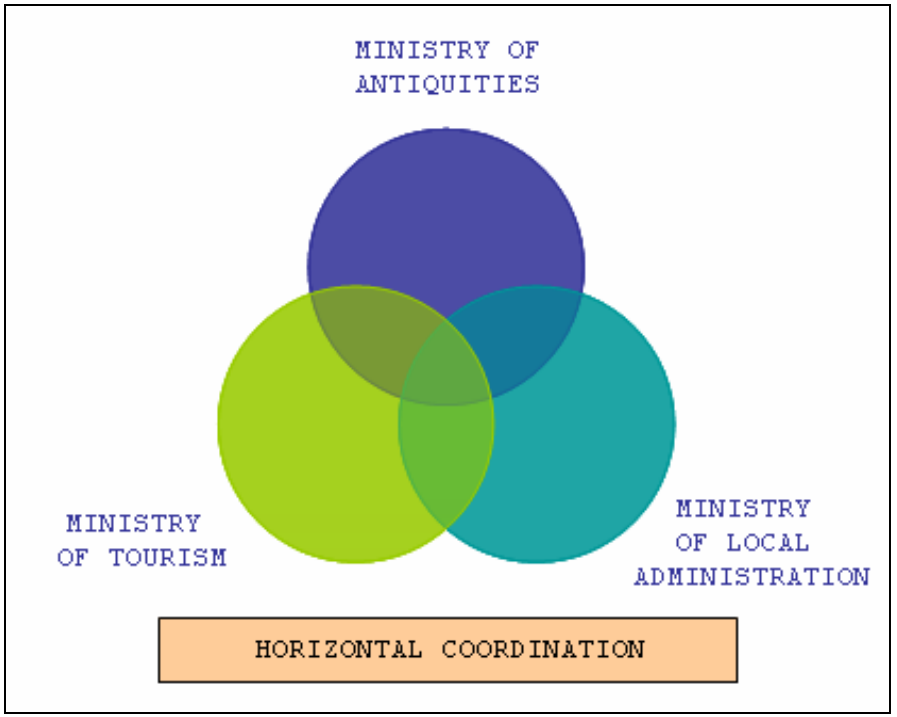

Figure 5 [example of horizontal coordination chart in the old city are]

3. FINDINGS RELATED TO SPECIFIC CITIES

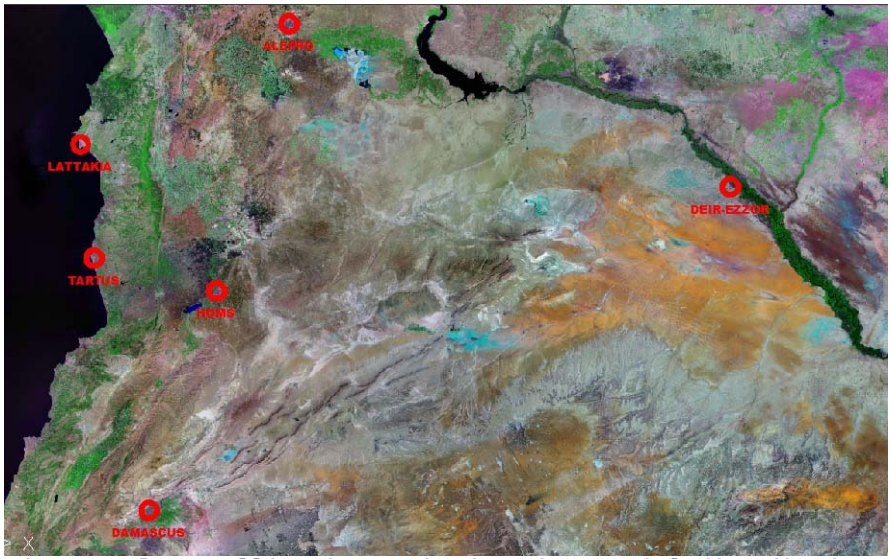

Figure 6 [a satellite image showing the spatial distribution of the six cities in their natural context]

In addition to the general findings in all cities this section of the report will focus on issues which are site specific in each city. Each subsection will be followed by a set of recommendations or possible intervention for the project.

CITY ONE (DAMASCUS)

The city of Damascus is the capital of Syria and the capital of the governorate of Damascus; it is a rapidly growing city in terms of the population and urban encroachment.
The issues that are important for planning and will directly contribute to the general planning matters of Damascus are expressed in following text.

OLD CITY OF DAMASCUS

ISSUE:
The old city of Damascus is considered one of the very old cities in the world, and it has evolved to become a living city with full of day to day activities, these activities are happening side to side to the old historic buildings. Therefore a special treatment and considerations must be brought up to the attention of the local authorities and all stake holders.
PROPOSALS:
Proposals in preservation of this old city could be through implementation of many pilot projects which some of them could be summarised in the following points:

a- NORTH East-West Path:
The northern edge of the old city has a nice historic path that is required more protection, it has been suggested that this part should be open for the specialised visitors such as researchers, archaeologist…etc and not for the general public,

it has a carrying capacity that require more attention and further investigation.

Figure 7 [a map for the old city showing the location of the sensitive path]

b- BUFFER ZONE & DEMOLISHING BUILDINGS NEAR TO THE WALL:

the old city is surrounded by areas that is considered archeologically sensitive as well, (maybe some of these are in less importance than other ones within the old city boundaries), however, a different level of protection is highly needed in this buffer zone, a comprehensive study and mapping should be done in this regard to identify the buffer zone accurately, the illustration in figure (8) shows a preliminary proposal of the buffer area as described by architects in the old city directorate.

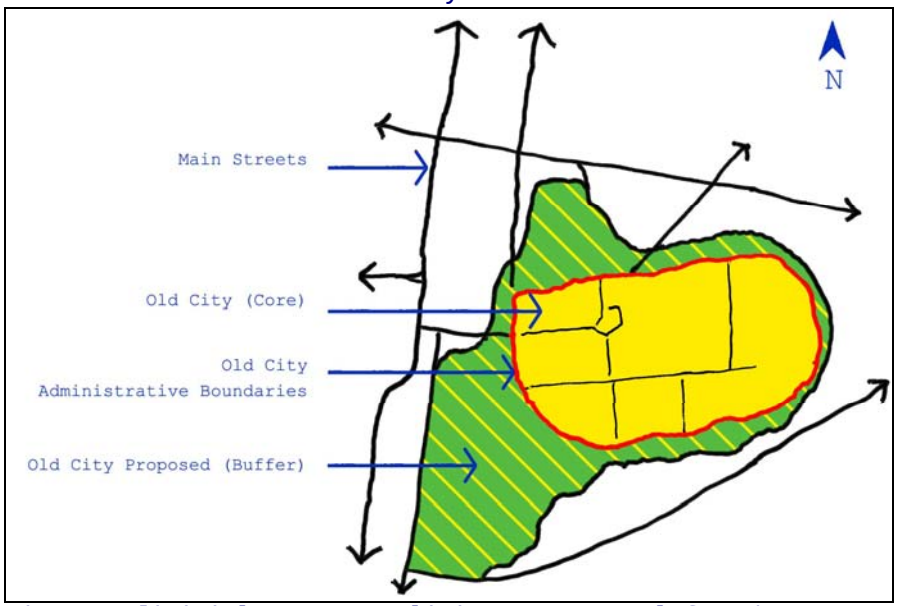

Figure 8 [initial – very preliminary- proposal for the boundaries of the buffer area around the old city

c- TRAFFIC:

Traffic within the old city is very much affecting the preservation and restoration of the old heritage sites. As a result of that, before developing a traffic management scheme, a god understanding of the public space occupation need to be understood.

Possession is one of the urban qualities that users experience and enjoy in the old city and due

to the traditional right over the public space, the old city had witnessed expansion and spread of commercial as well as social activities.

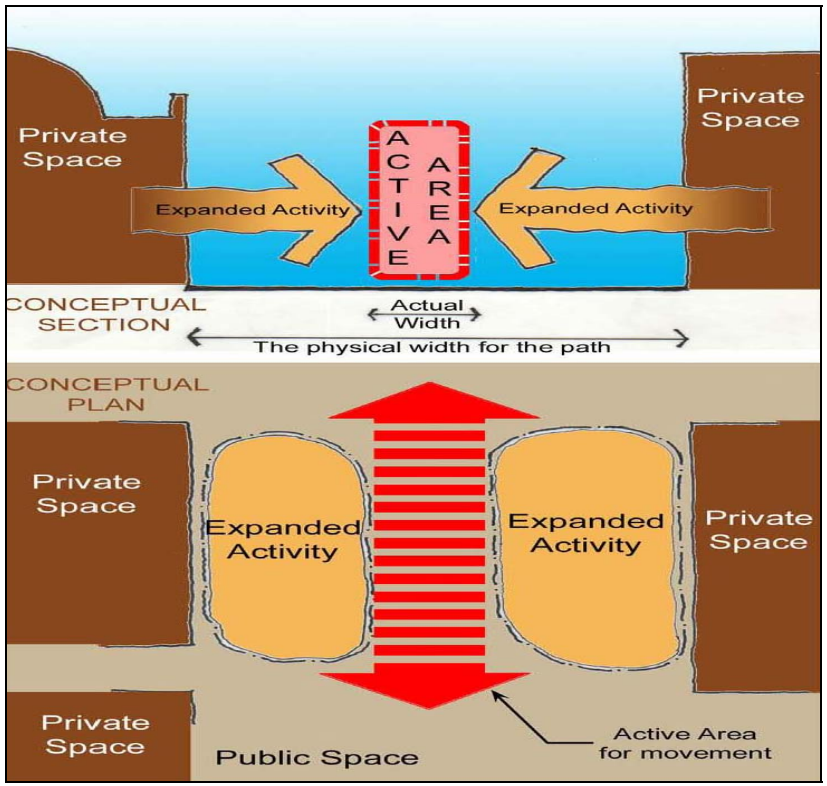

Figure 9 [expansion of activities on the public space, illustrated in conceptual section in the above and conceptual plan in the bottom]

People tend to sit, chat, eat and relax in places where they can do, without affecting the main flow or other public activities on the street. This quality is expressed in different areas in the street by different ways (social, commercial, religious and also for entertainment).
As shown in figure ----- the expanded activities occupy parts of the public space. People are used to live with that and accept it if it does not affect the public flow, therefore there are two widths for the path, the physical one which could be measured from the map as well as the actual width which varies from one part to another due to the radiation of the activities in the public space.

After taking this quality in consideration then the following scheme could be proposed:

1- Only certain number (licensed) cars allowed entering the old city boundaries.
2- This vehicular movement should be limited to certain streets only
3- The vehicular movement shall be limited to certain time and specific duration of the day.
4- In order to generate a tourism friendly atmosphere, the old city should provide a safe and enjoyable walking journey, therefore, a clear paved path should be defined for pedestrians and very narrow roads should be designated for pedestrians only
5- A median mode of transportation should be introduced (such as horse carriages, electrical cars, small electrical trains…etc), which is considered and

enjoyable journey for tourist and quicker transportation for residents.

d- TOURISM:

The city of Damascus is extremely rich in its heritage since it is one of the oldest towns in the world. There is a huge opportunity in converting this incomparable urban fabric into an ecotourism destination.
Realising the existing opportunities and with very little enhancement, management efforts, and coordination, the old city will be able to contribute extremely positively to the economy of the country.
To achieve this vision the following issues

e- VISUAL MAP OF CITY:

f- URBAN LANDSCAPE:
Urban landscape is extremely essential in the urban planning process of the entire city and mainly focusing on the old city a hierarchal plan should be developed for all the urban landscape elements such as (lighting, signage, sitting areas, bins, tree gratings, shops lockers, ceilings…etc)

The intensity of lighting should be studied to be distributed on the urban layout of the old city based on the hierarchal structure, for example a high intense lighting coverage should be in the main streets that construct the main network of the city

Figure 10 [examples of different levels of lighting to support the hierarchal structure system of the public spaces, to the left is bigger level post, in the middle is the medium and to the left is a small wall mounted lighting fixture]

The above pictures in figure (10) shows a sample of the hierarchy needed in lighting starting from a long lamp post to a medium one (in the middle) and down to a mounted lighting fixture (to the left).

The same strategy should be applied on the other urban landscape features and all streetscape elements, for example the seats in the narrow corridors (dynamic spaces) should be different from those in wider more relaxed plazas (static

spaces), and the collection of the seats in the diagram in figure (11)shows some samples of possible seats that could be implemented.

Figure 11 [samples of the seating benches, the proposed ones should fit with the local style of the old city]

Another aspect of the urban landscape is the street bins which also contribute to the refinement of cityscape and add to the unity of the old city, figure (12), shows some samples of the waste bins used in other places,

Figure 12 [samples of the waste bins, the proposed ones should fit with the local style of the old cit]

Tree gratings is not very common but it will be a plus if it is considered to add an amount of unity to the old town district, some examples of this element is shown in figure (13)

Signage is an important aspect of this urban landscape, firstly, in terms of the content such as the language chosen, the font, the amount of information,…etc, and secondly, in terms of the design size, length, material, colour,…etc these signs should target the different type of users (tourist, locals, services vehicular,…etc and it should be implemented in harmony with the other features, a sample of a signage post is shown in figure (14).

Figure 13 [tree gratins should be made locally and maintained through a local manufacturer to guarantee the sustainability and the maintenance]

Figure 14 [some samples of the bollard bars (to the left) – and the signage posts (to the right) , both should be done

with local material and fit within the local style of the old city]

The same hierarchy also should be applied to bollard posts, especially when they are intensively used in blocking the vehicular movement at the ends of the pedestrian paths

METRO

The proposed metro study could be very convenient, but it is till a kind of threat to the old heritage sites if not implemented properly, there is a great wealth of history in the old city of Damascus and to be able to impalement this route successfully with minimum damage, the following approaches should be considered:

1- Try to relocate the segments of the metro that is attached to the old city boundaries
2- Study the successful models and best practices in implementing the same type of metro through sensitive built areas and guarantee applying these best practices in Damascus.

INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Action plan 9 & Action Plan 10 are very much related in the MAM project, a separate report is going to layout the main issues and concern related to urban planning and informal settlements and also will propose possible intervention.

CITY TWO (TARTUS)

The city of tortuous is located on the Mediterranean see and it has a very interesting small old city and a potential for tourism if this old city is well marketed together with the water front stretch of coast. Figure 15 shows a panoramic view from the middle of the city looking north

Figure 15 [panorama shows the northern part of the city]

In figure 16 the illustration shows the main structure of the city which is the old city surrounded by the expanded recent built form; and the water front development that is proposed to be a very important tourism attraction for the city.

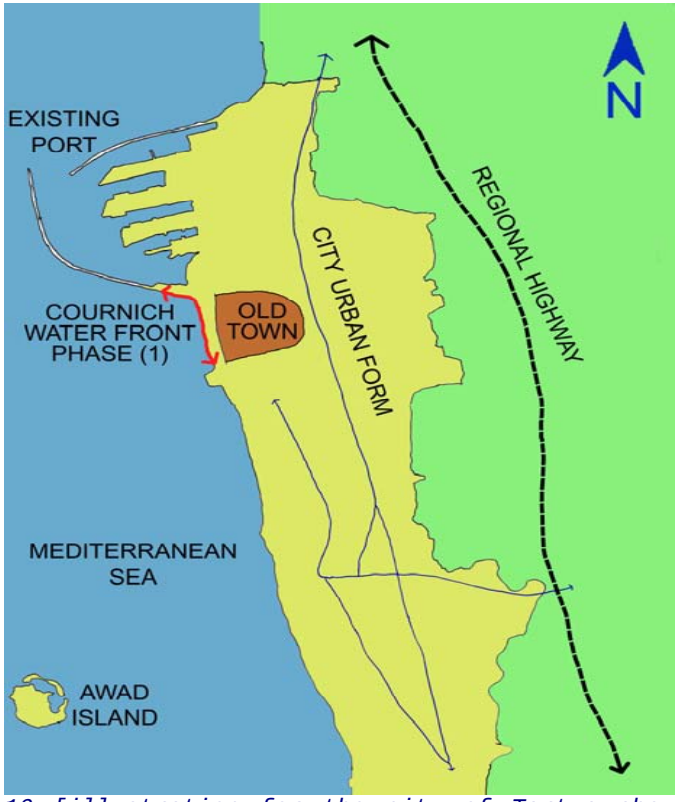

Figure 16 [illustration for the city of Tartus showing the built area, the island, the agriculture suburbs, the old town and the phase one in the water front development project]

TARTUS MASTER PLAN

The master plan of Tartus is nothing more than a land use plan that is not very much considering other aspects of urban planning such as social, economical aspects and in general how the mechanism of the city as integrated built form is operating.

OLD CITY OF TARTUS

There is allot of construction took place (using different materials and obviously not native such as concrete) and this addition really destroys the visual image of the built form and very much affect the historical context of the city.
There is an established building code within the antiquities authority.
Most of the properties within the city is privately owned (about 90%) and only about 10% is considered public sector.
It has been found that there are other ancient buildings (200-300 years old) around the old city boundaries but not protected and not even within a buffer zone.
The old city of Tartus has great opportunities for tourism but it is just not in the focus of the local administration. Some changes and allot of additions in terms of architectural elements had been added to adapt the ancient buildings to accommodate families for daily living; this additions could be subcategorised into two groups:

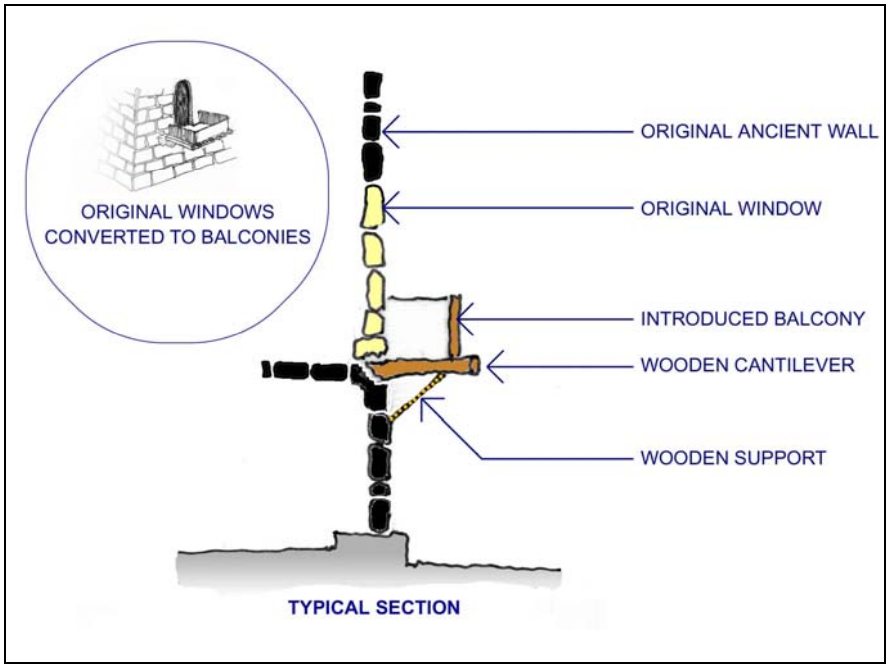

Figure 17 [original ancient windows converted to balconies]

1- Additional elements that is constructed based on core changes in the old ancient building such as converting windows to balconies as illustrated in figure (17), where extra posts need to be inserted in the old walls.

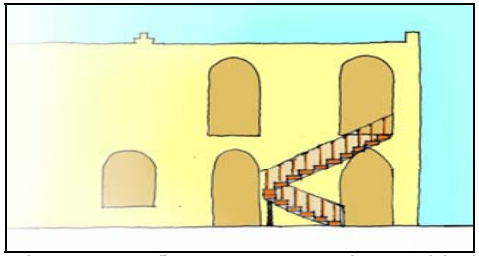

Figure 18 [concrete stairs added to the original building – destroying the image]

2- Additions that could easily removed (and these are the most of the cases) so it is doable and possible to get these old buildings to their original shapes. A good example is the concrete staircase that is added on the elevation of the building as shown in the illustration figure (18)

The surrounding of the old city is also composed of some ancient buildings, but not protected by law as the old city defined boundary, therefore a proposed buffer zone shall be considered while developing the future planning for the city.

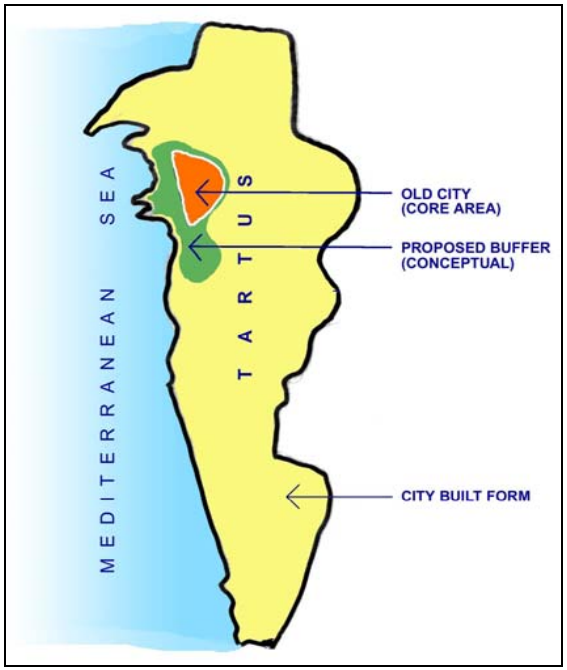

Figure 19 [Old city & proposed buffer]

WATER FRONT

The city directorate is very much in favour of developing the different all segments of the water front because it will be a major attraction for tourism in the city. The panorama in figure () shows a view of how this water front currently look

Figure 20 [panoramic view looking east towards the coast]

The water front of the whole city is divided into four segments of development to be implemented on four phases, the first phase proposal is shown in figure (21) which include to phtos taken for the same project from both ends

Figure 21 [picture of the 3D wooden model for the famous project of water front in Tartus, this model is in the main entrance of the city directorate in Tartus]

The waterfront project is a partnership between public and private sector, although it is very much interesting, but it should highly consider the old city and the local identity of Tartus in terms of development style. The proposed tourism activities and hotels seem not to mach with the existing demand; this is a quick estimate about the existing situation, however, a more detailed and comprehensive study need to be done in this regard.

In addition to the above, this project (especially phase three) is geographically overlapping with sites that include archaeological remains, and this was discovered while digging for any further construction n the southern edge of the courniche.

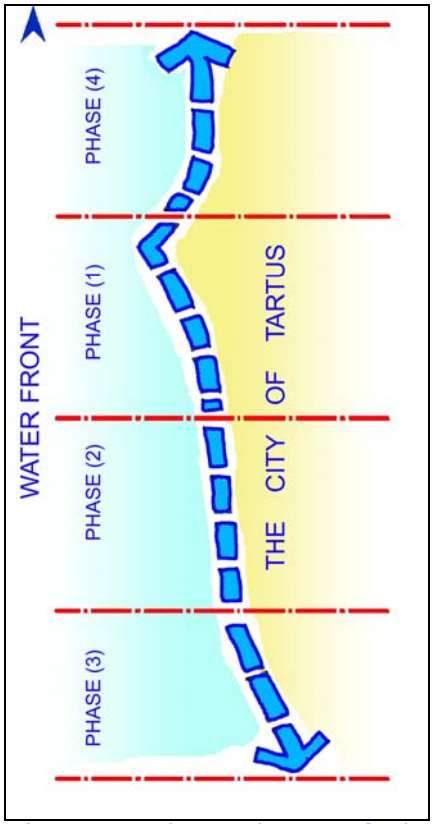

Figure 22 the 4 phases of the waterfront development in the city of Tartus

4. LIST OF RELATED MEETINGS CONDUCTED WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Meeting No.:	1
DATE:	25 July 2005
Time:	12:00 – 15:00
CITY:	Damascus
LOCATION:	Ministry of local Administration
MEETING WITH:	Dr. Nabeel El Ashraf (Assistant of Minister of Local Administration)
ATTENDEES:	Peter Jonquire, Richard Cantwell, Amir Gohar, Kareem Edrisi
MEETING ABOUT:	Introductory to the local Syrian planning and trying to gather the needed information about the related cities.

Meeting No.:	2
DATE:	27 July 2005
Time:	09:00 – 12:00
CITY:	Tartus
LOCATION:	Municipality of Tartus
MEETING WITH:	Amin Ismaail (Head of technical department) & Fawzi Sheikh Deeb (Director of urban planning department).
ATTENDEES:	Amir H. Gohar, Richard Cantwell, David Michelmore
MEETING ABOUT:	Introductory to the existing condition in Tartus in terms of urban planning, maps and GIS

Meeting No.:	3
DATE:	27 July 2005
Time:	12:30 – 15:00
CITY:	Tartus
LOCATION:	Old City of Tartus
MEETING WITH:	Mary Yazigy & Nabil Akra
ATTENDEES:	Amir H. Gohar, David Michelmore
MEETING ABOUT:	Introductory to the old city management system and walking through the city to see the existing situation

Meeting No.:	4
DATE:	28 July 2005
Time:	08:30 – 12:30
CITY:	Damascus
LOCATION:	Old City of Damascus
MEETING WITH:	Tarek El Nahhas (head of permissions authority), Besher Barri (head of the documentation authority), Aya Abushami (Head of the old city municipality, Rim Abboud (Arch. & Following up department)
ATTENDEES:	Amir H. Gohar, David Michelmore, Richard Cantwell, Kinda , Ilio
MEETING ABOUT:	Introductory to the old city management system and the

existing ways of documentation and data collection

Meeting No.:	5
DATE:	01 August 2005
Time:	10:15 – 12:00
CITY:	Homs
LOCATION:	MAM Office in Damascus
MEETING WITH:	Nedal El Sofi
ATTENDEES:	Amir H. Gohar, Richard Cantwell, Peter Ross, Kinda
MEETING ABOUT:	Over all existing situation about Planning in Homs.

Detailed contents of these meetings are attached to this report as appendixes.

Municipal Administration Modernisation Project (MAM)
Syrian Arab Republic
EuropeAid/119822/D/SV/SY

ANNEXES

Questionnaire sent to the local authorities &
Meetings Conducted in the technical offices

FOR ACTION PLAN 9
(URBAN PLANNING)

URBAN PLANNING QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

REGIONAL LEVEL	التخطيط على المستوى الإقـــليمي:
1- Do you have a regional plan for the city that include the urban layout with its surrounding uses (surrounding villagers, rail ways, ports, highways, airports … and any other regional facilities)? 2- Do you have an updated map on this level and in which format?	1- هل يوجد مخطط إقليمي للمنطقة يشمل المناطق العمرانية والتجمعات السكانية المحيطة كذلك الخدمات الإقليمية (القرى المحيطة، خطوط السكة الحديد، الطرق الإقليمية، المطارات، ..... 2- هل يوجد خريطة محدثة تبين هذه الاستعمالات؟
ON CITY LEVEL: 1- Are there a map showing the growing stages of the urban form (for example 1900 – 1930 – 1950 – 1970 - 1990 – 2000 – 2005) whatever is available? 2- Do you have a recent approved master plan for the city (showing uses, areas of possible extension, urban profile, street network …etc? 3- Do you have an updated base map and in which format?	**تخطيط المدينة:** 1- هل يوجد خرائط تبين التطور العمراني للكتلة العمرانية (1900 -1950 – 1930 – 1980.....) 2- هل هناك مخطط عام أو آخر هيكلي معتمد من قسم التخطيط العمراني \ وزارة الإدارة المحلية والذي يبين الاستعمالات القائمة و المقترحة، مناطق الامتداد المستقبلي: شبكة الطرق القائمة والمقترحة،.... 3- هل يوجد خريطة محدثة تبين هذه الاستعمالات؟

ON DETAILED PLANNING LEVEL:	التخطيط التفصيلي:
1- Do you have a detailed plan developed for selected action areas (for example the old or historic town)? 2- Do you have a detailed well surveyed map and what is its source & format?	1- هل يوجد مخطط تفصيلي لمناطق مختارة طبقا لتوصيات المخطط العام 2- - هل يوجد خريطة محدثة ومرفوعة عمرانيا بدقة للمنطقة المختارة؟
For any provided maps, please provide the following information about it: - Type (digital map or paper map) - format, (JPG, SID, DWG..) - source, - date, - level of accuracy	**الخرائط المتاحة:** الرجاء التكرم بحصر الخرائط المتاحة مبينا: - نوع الخريطة (مساحية – تصوير جوي – صورة قمر صناعي....) - الوسط أو النوع (ورقية / رقمية) أو طريقة الحفظ (JPG– DXF -GWD –SID) - المصدر - التاريخ - مستوى الدقة - مقياس الرسم

MEETING (1)
MINISTRY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER
25 July 2005, 12.00 – 15.00

Present: (MAM) Peter Jonquiere, Richard Cantwell, Amir H. Gohar, Kinda, Mohammed
(MLAE) Deputy Minister: Dr Nabil Al-Achraf, two assistants (AbdelKareem Edris / Mahmoud)

This was an extensive meeting covering GIS and Urban Planning and the following text will describe the issues discussed in sequence regarding GIS & Planning

Dr Nabil welcomed the team and got the planning questionnaire in hand and read it quickly then started answering and discussing different points.

Dr Nabil started out by saying that the MLAE is moving towards the policy of regional planning, which has not been done before in Syria. In this effort there have been some problems with the State Planning Commission (SPC) (problems with concept of regional planning – or turf?)

The regional plans are intended to be prepared using GIS. And the use of GIS by the ministry is seen as a performance indicator.

The main data layers for the regional plans are the 1:50,000 sheets produced by the General Establishment of Survey, however these sheets are not without problems – specifically relating to the placement of features.

There is little or no co-ordination between Ministries and government bodies on the use of GIS.
It has been noticed that there is a big mixing in planning definitions things like “urban map” is used widely while it does not represent any level or scale of urban planning (it is very generic, could be regional, city or detailed level)

He also emphasised the lack in the software as well the hardware and also the weak ability of the local staff in operating a complete GIS.

At this point there was a powerpoint presentation by Dr Nabil (Copy given to Amir and he hand it in to George to be archived in the project library) detailing a pilot project for a detailed plan for a village near Damascus. The Pilot study demonstrated a multi-level approach, with the level of detail increasing as the scale moved from the region to the village down to the individual zoning areas. The study demonstrated an impressive knowledge of spatial analysis techniques, ranging from simple overlay to volumetric analysis and raster algebra performed on a range of Digital Terrain Model outputs.

From an urban planning standpoint some basic issues need to be clarified for the local staff through training and capacity building:

- The different between the urban envelop (or the boundaries of the built are within the land lot) and the actual architecture design.
- Hierarchal structure of the roads network is not very present, so the importance of this hierarchy need to be highlighted to the local planners and the best way of implemented.
- From the presentation given, the land subdivisions seem to be very irregular, so concepts such as regularity, sufficient use for the land, corners layout…etc need to be introduced intensively.

The study included a very wide range of data, from a variety of sources, including roads, drinking and foul water lines, electricity and telecoms networks. Dr Narbil mentioned at this stage that there is an obligation on the data providers to design and maintain their own datasets. It was noted in later discussion that gathering all of this data was a very difficult task. One of the aims of the pilot project was to demonstrate the possibility of moving towards more flexible planning guidelines – especially in relation to building regulations in terms of building heights and building uses.

The Ministry has requested assistance from the MAM project in carrying out further case studies, guidance input is sought. There is also a need for more staff training.

At this point there was much discussion of planning issues and Dr Nabil expressed his interest in being able to manage sets of data that include administrative boundaries, public services utilities, infrastructure… etc using a complete GIS system. The

However one point with was referred to many times, and discussed at some length, was the issue of the National Cadastral.

The Cadastral is under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture was at one time a colleague of Dr Narbil at university and they have met within the last fortnight to discuss the Cadastral.

The chief problem with the Cadastral is convincing the Ministry of Agriculture to modernise it. It is based still on the French survey of the late 1920's and uses datums and projections from that era. As a result, even with the digitising program within the Cadastral, which is ongoing apparently, the data will not match up with that produced by other agencies which are using local grids derived from the WGS84 datum. (see attached PDF for a description of the Datums in use in Syria) The methods of data collection in use in

the MLAE are considerably more accurate that those in use in the Cadastral. The Ministry of Agriculture has been requested a number of times to rebase their maps onto the more accurate datums in use the in MLAE and elsewhere, but the Cadastral have shown no interest in doing so. The view of the MLAE is that this problem is likely to run quite deep within the Cadastral and will require more than a simple request from a higher authority to surmount, a culture change within the organisation may be needed.

The MLAE's GIS system is primarily based on the ESRI suite of products and their extensions, which are used for plan creation and modelling. Also in use are other products such as WinGIS2000. The ministry also has some simple ortho-photogrammetry software which it has used to generate height products. However the current software is limited in it's functionality and further investment in more capable and advanced software is sought – the barrier to this investment is perceived as being procedural.

There are some planning guidelines and official letters addressing planning issues handed in to Amir who copied them and gave them to George to include them in the library (those documents are in arabi)

The Ministry's GIS vision includes the creation of a national GIS library, containing datasets from all GIS users in the State. All users of the Library would be obliged to make their own data available to it. In other countries such a library would form a critical part of their National Spatial Data Infrastructure. The concept of creating and maintaining a NSDI has yet to be raised in Syria.
There are existing urban planning & design lows for the spatial distribution of urban features and developing layouts of detailed areas, however, there has been new guidelines that is possible to be developed with new planning areas, this is mainly to avoid the very generic existing building low that ends with a typical urban form and avoids creativity in urban design

Summary

This was a useful and wide ranging meeting. Dr Narbil is very interested in the MAM project and is keen to see it's success. The Ministry has some experience with GIS and has conducted a successful and in-depth pilot study using GIS to create an urban plan for a village.
It is important to agree on the terminology used to ensure that there will not be any conflict or miss understanding in the future. For example what is actually meant by "urban map", "detailed plan", "administrative urban plan" and whar type and levlet of details and features should each map contain.

MAM Interest.

There are a number of issues where the MAM project can provide assistance to the MLAE. Included in these is the provision of assistance with the generation of further case studies which can be used to raise the profile of GIS within the ministry and with other government bodies. The Ministry also has a need for staff training and assistance with the acquisition of software.

The concept of a National Spatial Data Infrastructure is not something with which the MLAE is familiar; there may be a possibility for the MAM to provide guidelines on such an initiative. Assistance to the MLAE in setting up a National GIS Dataset Library would be beneficial to all stakeholders.

The MLAE's view is that possibly the greatest assistance the MAM project could provide is assistance in convincing the National Cadastral to update it's mapping to the latest digital standards. Naturally this is fraught with difficulties and if the MAM project is to get involved in this argument it must be very clear and very careful how it proceeds. The potential for causing upset and damaging the MAM project's other activities is large.

Document Revision:

Authored Jointly:

Amir H. Gohar	26-07-05
Richard Cantwell	26-07-05

MEETING (2)
MUNICIPALITY OF TARTUS
27 July 2005, 09.00 – 12.00

Present :(MAM) Amir H. Gohar, Richard Cantwell, David Michelmore. (Tartus) Amin Ismaail (Head of technical department) & Fawzi Sheikh Deeb (Director of urban planning department).

This was a lengthy meeting that covered all aspects of urban planning as well as the GIS.
The questionnaire submitted by the project was well received by the municipality and also answered carefully which took us to a good start.

Tartus as a city together with "Awad" island had very strong position 2000 years ago. The island is a separate entity and do not belong to Tartus.

Regarding the maps they have, it is all paper based and surveyed in 1992, and b because the archiving is not so good and the printing over heated the plans, it got distorted. The existing maps (in bad condition) are in scale 1/1000. The technical office requested big help in digitising these maps.

These maps are not useful anymore because they are the base for managing properties and ownerships and due to their distortion it is critical to obtain other new maps.

Developing these new maps will be through:

a. Correcting the error in the existing maps digitally (almost impossible)
b. Surveying the entire city using the total station
c. Purchasing a satellite imagery or request an aerial photography.

According to the technical department, the best and easiest option is the third one.

The existing maps are on the local grid and the (0,0) point of this grid exist in the city of Tadmur; the survey authority, cadastral and ministry of irrigation uses different coordinate system that is not linked with the Syrian local national grid. The national grid was developed in 1926 (based on the French system).

The main significant resources or characteristics of the city are (the sea, the old city, the mountain, the agriculture land, the antiquities zone and the rain). The topography of the city varies from the sea level (+2) up to (+45) on the mountain edge and these are divided naturally into five different levels gradually.

From urban planning stand point, the city had developed a land use plan that includes the boundaries expected for the city till year 2020;

this plan started in 1992 and got approved and published in 1999.
The population of Tartus varies very much from day to night and also seasonally, that is because allot of dependency from the surrounding settlements (rural areas); there are huge number of working journeys comes to the city from the villages in Tartus governorate. The governorate is interconnected and linked with street network hay enable rapid and huge amount of movements in and out of the city.
This linkage is not only due to working dependency but extend to services dependency such as medical and commercial (for example Banias and its suburbs gets its central services from the city of Tartus.

The sewage network in the surrounding villages is collectively linked and pumped to Tartus, which causes a major problem.

The hierarchal level of settlements:

1-City	2-Town	3-Village	4-Farm
1-“madeena”	2-“balda”	3-“qaria”	4-“mazra’a”

Scales & Level of urban planning:

1- Programme Plan
2- Structural Plan
3- General Regulatory Plan
4- Detailed Regulatory Plan
5- Detailed Regulatory Dividory Plan

Informal Settlements in Tartus:
The growth of informal settlements around the old city is obvious on the maps and in reality. On an earlier stage there has been 945 houses proposed for demolishing, however, this study is being revisited to reduce the amount this number.

After law 1 – year 2003, there has no single permission given to develop in these area and the slum areas were included in the planning of 2020 as formal and legal settlements, so this law has legalise the settlements on one hand and on the other hand stopped their growing entirely.

How these settlements are created?
The mechanism of the development of these informal lots is quite unique. For example the land lord (registered ownership) will divide his land into 2400 share and each house hold will buy his share from the owner (no registration), this area sold for a single house is not mapped and not defined on the big land lot but informally well known that it belongs to these buyer and the amount of shares among the 2400 is based on the house built area. After law 1 – year 2003, any landlord practice this type of unregistered group selling will be poisoned from 6 months to three years. And this law applied on all Tartus built area.
Main reason for these slum areas is that there is not enough areas for expanding as well as the relatively high land value.

Summary

It has been very informative, and the team realised that their mapping and GIS is priority to the municipality, they need it for the lack of any accurate base maps.
The capacity to run a mapping system is very limited.
The planning for the municipality is not more than land use and land subdivision and there is general vision r strategy to develop the city, also it has been found that there is no logical rational behind the final planning output, so they lack the process and just care for the result which is the master plan.

MAM Interest.

The project could have intervention in helping them developing base maps, and could also provide training in urban planning and mapping methodology.

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Authored Jointly: Amir H. Gohar 26-07-05

MEETING (3)
OLD CITY OF TARTUS
27 July 2005, 12.30 – 15.00

Present: (MAM) Amir H. Gohar, David Michelmore
(Old City Directorate) Mary Yazigy & Nabil Akra

This was a concentrated meeting on issues related to the old city management and planning. During the meeting in the old city directorate the following issues were discussed:

- The old city is inhabitant (some are legal residents and others are not)
- It is in bad condition and require a complete rehabilitation
- A previous project did some studies but it is paused now, this project was funded from Spain through a twinning programme between Tartus and Palma de Mallorca.
- This Spanish project developed a complete profile for the urban fabric of the old city.
- The annual designated budget for the city is only 500,000 LS which is not sufficient to do the needed restoration and preservation for the existing buildings.
- There are data available in digital format.

Later on and after the brief from Mrs Marry, a discussion took place regarding the city buffer zone; the old city directorate has no responsibility to declare it as protected area.

Wile having a walk through the city it was found there is allot of construction took place (using different materials and obviously not native such as concrete) and this addition really destroys the visual image of the built form and very much affect the historical context of the city.

There is an established building code within the antiquities authority.
Most of the properties within the city is privately owned (about 90%) and only about 10% is considered public sector.

It has been found that there are other ancient buildings (200-300 years old) around the old city boundaries but not protected and not even within a buffer zone.

We also learned that there are some exhibitions that take place within the city buildings for local products such as handcrafts, leather products, local jewelleries…etc these are utilising indoor and outdoor spaces in the city but without any extra fees paid to the old city, if a payment system took place in these occasions, the city may make a million or two as income that may be extra resource to support the management of the city directorate.

Summary

Meeting was nice and the team managed to get as much possible information about the old city in the available time. Didn’t get physical material or digital data with us but managed to get an over all idea about how the city is managed.

MAM Interest.

MAM will be focusing on helping the old city developing a buffer zone for more protection. Also will assist in increasing the annual budget through the activation of the old city role in the exhibitions happening within its boundaries,

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Authored: Amir H. Gohar 26-07-05

MEETING (4)
OLD CITY DIRECTORATE (DAMASCUS)
28 July 2005, 08.30 – 12.30

Present:
(From MAM) David Michelmore, Amir H. Gohar, Richard Cantwell, Elio Trusiani, Kinda, Mohammed
(From Old City): Tarek El Nahhas, Besher Barri, Aya Abushami, Rim Abboud.

It was a nice, rich and fruitful meeting.. it started by Mr Besher giving a background about the old city of Damascus and this could be illustrated in the following bullets:

- The old city of Damascus has fixed and known boundaries in terms of its administrative authority.
- The areas north, North-East, South and South-West also have old and ancient buildings but it is not part of the administrative borders of the old city, although some buildings there gets back to the 15 & 16 century.
- The old city has 8 gates (Bab) and they are (clockwise starting from north::
    - Bab El Salam (in the north)
    - Bab Tuma
    - Bab sharqi (in the east)
    - Bab Kisan
    - Bab Al Saghir
    - Bab El Sagheir (in the south)
    - Bab El Janbeh (in the west)
    - Bab El faraj
    - Bab El Faradis (in the north)
- The wall is built to protect the city from external invader.
- The wall around the city is built by Salah El Din
- The mosque is part of an old temple which was bigger in size (occupied a larger lot of land).

The discussion then extended to take a form of questions and answers, the enquiries from the team started by trying to understand the capacity of the old city directorate including personnel and available data base. It has been found that there are 22 architects in the documentation department and they started in year 2000 an intensives survey that cover all aspects of each building in the process of constructing a complete data base. This survey forms were 4 pages could be summarised in:
- Page One: [Architecture Form] to collect the architectural data, plans, design related issues, number of spaces, openings ..etc
- Page Two: [Civil Form] to collect the civil data such as the construction methods, conditions, identify crcks in walls and ceilings..etc
- Page Three: [Social Form] to collect data related to the house hold, number of residents, their education, health …etc.
- Page Four: [History Form] to collect information related to the history of the building and its

ownership, date of construction, types of previous restorations..etc

This survey covered one quarter of the old city (the southern west part), then thy decided to develop a single sheet for less sophistication and to be bale to survey the entire old city and they did.

The city has about 5000 houses each is documented by a plan and sheet that shows the relevant data, this includes film, photo, digital picture, plan card..etc

The data is currently available as updated base map in CAD format, but the digital data base was lost due to a computer crash. A printed copy of land use map was handed to Amir Gohar (who submitted it to George to add it to the MAM library)

The old city is covered in a mosaic of 16 map sheets, each map is in 1/500 scale.

Current Critical Projects:

1- Beit haraneyya
2- Quatly house
3- Umm El Fadel (Used to be a school)
4- Straight Street infrastructure (as fase one for the whole city)

The city management has an objective to get the city back (in terms of built form) as it was in the 30s, therefore, any buildings or additions out of the form should be removed immediately.

The permission systems through the old city directorate usually could be summarised in 4 levels of intervention:

1- LEVEL ONE:
Simple restoration (plaster & paintings)
2- LEVEL TWO:
Construction restoration (ceilings, walls, supporting columns ...etc)
3- LEVEL THREE:
Reconstruction (rebuilding a room, terrace or a staircase)
4- LEVEL FOUR:
Change of use (for example licensing change from residential to commercial and monitoring the illegal change)

Summary

It has been a long and fruitful meeting. Allot of data is available and the people are very helpful in the old city directorate and welling to share allot of information.
There has been several mapped developed that require another visit to collect (a visit after 3 days was scheduled (With Mr. Ilio).
There is good database (paper based) and accurate maps (digital formats) to start with and it is considered advanced data sets (relatively speaking)

MAM Interest.

MAM could support in the development of the website or any other publications (posters, maps, flyers ,..etc) that could add to the public awareness about the importance of the city as heritage site and tourism destination.

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Authored: Amir H. Gohar 29-07-05

MEETING (5)
HOMS CITY DIRECTORATE
01 August 2005, 10:15 – 12:30

Present:
(From MAM) Amir H. Gohar, Richard Cantwell, Peter Ross, Kinda.
(From Homs city directorate): Nedal El Sofi.

The started by a brief introduction abut the planning in Homs city and the available capacity within the city directorate.
The regulatory planning started in 19970 and its development was very slow; however, the good aspect of this planning document is that it regulate and develop the informal settlement which was developed on no planning basis and not even covered by services and utilities.

In year 2000 the structure plan was developed but not based on any topo or cadastral map so it is till this moment just a nice drawing on a paper but not applicable. The formulation to this plan to be realistic requires good detailed base maps.

The existing maps are all paper based and need to be converted to digital formats to be overlaid on the available Arial photos that were acquired in 1997.
Another problem is that the maps available at the city is not matching with the ones in the cadastral because of (1- accuracy & 2- they use different grid systems)

There is a master plan for year 1970 with certain boundaries (total area of 4200 hectares), however, the informal settlements expanded to get out of this boundaries introducing informal housing around the master plan boundaries (total area of 1800 hectares), then in year 2000 new boundaries was proposed to include the informal added area and the expected growth of the population and needed services (this city extension area is 3500 hectare)

The local residents developed their houses in an informal way (could be working OK sometimes) but they definitely lack the public services and utilities. The city had conducted a social survey and proposed services were implemented within these settlements boundaries.

The circumstances in which these settlements were developed could be described as follow:
The land owner will divide his land into certain amount of shares and each house hold will buy his share from the owner informally, so each individual own a percentage of the entire land lot with no ownership document for this land.

These informal settlements are results of:
- A strong need for housing from the locals' side.

- Lack of land availability designated as housing zones
- Local municipalities take too much time to prepare plans.

Process of physical Development and intervention:

1- define the area development total cost, which is calculated based on the cost of:
   a) Cost of demolishing for certain areas
   b) Cost of constructing roads and utilities (electricity, water, sewage,…etc)
   c) Cost of public services (such as education, health,..etc
2- Develop a list of the owners' names and the percentage of the ownership.
3- Calculate the value of land for each resident (according to percentage or shares of the entire land lot)
4- About 1/3 to 1/2 of the value of the land designated for services and utilities, (free and without any compensation from the government).
5- After designation areas for services and utilities some of the residents do not get any land at the end of the process, so they get compensation to be able to go and build in another area.

Notes:

- This is a very good process and resolves many problems but it is considered a very long process
- The priority in the re-planning in this process is for the services allocation rather than the housing.
- The minimum road width is 10 meter and the maximum is 60 meters.
- This process helps in integrating the planning of this area with the master planning of the entire city.

The city is very much interested in having digital maps and matches it with the cadastral maps. There are regional maps (scale 1/25000) but all are too old and other maps from the military survey scale 1/1000 & 1/2000 produced in 1998 but also paper based.
There are ideas and proposals to increase the areas of building in the future and also allow vertical expansion to be able to accommodate more people

Summary

Mr. Nedal is interested in the project and would like to maximise the benefits that Homs can get.
Mr. Nedal is keen to have two main outputs:

1- digital updated maps matches with the cadastral map
2- Planning experience to develop the new areas around the city and carry on the existing structure plan further with more details and guidelines and also detailed planning for specific action areas.

Dr. Nedal also thinks that expansion reqier topographic maps especially that the surrounding countries in the region are very much advanced in this regards.

MAM Interest.

Document Revision:

Authored: Amir H. Gohar 29-07-0