

EIGHTH ISSUE
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BY THE ARAB URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

LAND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

THE INTERVIEW
His Excellency the Mayor of Jeddah, Saleh Al-Turki, speaks from his experience on Sustainable Land Management in the city of Jeddah

URBAN INSIGHTS
Experts' insights on Sustainable Land Management and their significance
Toolkits for Land Management

CITIES IN ACTION
Projects and Initiatives in Arab Cities on Sustainable Land Management

MUDUNUNA

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EIGHTH ISSUE

LAND MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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Mudununa Editorial Team

Dr. Anas Almughairy | General Supervisor
Dr. Ziad Alameddine | Editor in Chief
Mishel Ijaz | Project Coordinator
AbdelRahman Alzoubi | Project Coordinator
Khalid Khairy | Senior Translator
Dr. Jihad Farah | Advisor
Ombretta Tempra | Coordinator, Arab Land Initiative, UN-Habitat
Heather Elaydi | Researcher, Arab Land Initiative, UN-Habitat

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EDITORIAL

LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE ARAB REGION

By Dr. Ziad Alameddine- Editor in Chief

Various cities worldwide are experiencing rapid urbanization and mounting challenges in managing natural resources, optimizing land use, and delivering efficient infrastructure and services that cater to their needs in a sustainable and balanced way. In today's world, effective land management is not an optional but a fundamental requirement for achieving sustainable urban development. Many cities across the Arab region are leading innovative approaches integrating technology, community participation, and regulatory reforms, paving the way for resilient and dynamic urban environments. This editorial intends to highlight the initiatives taken by some Arab cities, discussed in this eighth edition of "MUDUNUNA", explaining the role of sustainable land management in reshaping the urban landscape and its impact on enhancing economic growth, social equity, and environmental conservation.

This issue commences with an interview of His Excellency, the Mayor of Jeddah Province, who talks about his experience with managing urban lands and the major challenges faced by Jeddah city, explaining the most important strategies followed to achieve a balanced urban expansion and preservation of environmental and natural resources.

The "Urban Insights" section features an engaging discourse, with contributions from experts in the field of Urban Development from across the region. Ombretta Tempera, Land Specialist with UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network gives an overview of strategies for sustainable urban land management in the Arab region. Dr. Layla Raswol, Dean of City and Regional Planning at the University of Duhok, focuses specifically on Land Governance challenges in Iraq, detailing multiple aspects of the national land management system. From the Maghreb, Azhar Kittou, General Director of the National Agency of Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation of Rundown Buildings in Morocco (ANRUR), talks about urban regeneration initiatives and how renovation is adopted as a tool to address challenges of land management.

Furthermore, in "Cities in Action" we present some of the most important developments in land management and governance across Arab Cities. In Dubai and Abu Dhabi, we see the pioneering adoption of "Blockchain" technology to enhance land management transparency and efficiency. These advanced practices in digital governance offer exemplary practices in modernizing sustainable land management.

In Algiers and Tripoli, the green belts strategy presents a promising approach, effectively curbing rapid urban sprawl while striking a balance between urban expansion and environmental conservation. Such green belt strategies, on the one hand, address environmental challenges and climate change; on the other hand, they provide parks, green spaces, cultural landmarks, and public facilities. This demonstrates how green solutions can redefine urban growth boundaries.

Additionally, in cities across Tunisia and Egypt, neighborhood rehabilitation programs emphasize the social benefits of sustainable land management. The rehabilitation and integration of residential neighborhoods has revitalized public spaces, upgraded infrastructure, improved living conditions, and provided economic opportunities. These projects highlight how integrating informal settlements into formal urban planning can strengthen urban resilience while tackling the challenges of unregulated urban growth. Sustainable urban development policies are tailored to address various challenges, such as controlling urban sprawl and congestion, while promoting competitiveness, innovation, environmental sustainability, and active community participation.

We also see that in Qena, Damietta, and Baidoa, the engagement of local stakeholders in decision-making has led to initiatives that align infrastructure development with long-term sustainability. In some specific cases, rapid urban expansion is being addressed through integrated land registration and spatial planning while meeting the needs of internally displaced people (IDPs). These examples underscore the significance of inclusive urban policies in fostering a fair sustainable urban future.

Despite challenges associated with financial policies like taxing white land, such policies promote more balanced urban development. The financial policy adopted by Saudi Arabia stands out as one of the leading initiatives across the Arab region, aiming to curb land monopolies and address imbalances in the real estate market. This financial policy, which targets large undeveloped plots of land, was successful in generating revenues that are being directed to cover the housing sector expenses.

The collective impact of these initiatives signifies a broader move towards smarter and more sustainable urban land management. By leveraging technology to incorporate green infrastructure, adaptive reuse, and comprehensive planning, cities across the region are establishing resilient frameworks capable of addressing the complex challenges of urban expansion. As urban policymakers across the Arab world seek to formulate effective strategies, the lessons learned from the cities highlighted in this issue of "Mudununa" provide valuable models of innovation and sustainability.

The journey to create resilient Arab cities is just at the beginning, where cities need to implement comprehensive and adaptable plans and strategies that place sustainability at the heart of urban development, prioritizing sustainable land management. These strategies are critical to creating an urban future that balances economic growth, environmental preservation, and social fairness.

The Arab Urban Development Institute is also working on multiple fronts to strengthen urban development practices in cities. This issue features some key initiatives the institute has participated in over the past two months, including AUDI's contribution to preparing its flagship event, "Arab European Cities Dialogue", to be held next May. In addition, AUDI has conducted several online training courses focusing on local economic development and prepared a comprehensive practice report on "Municipalities and Digital Transformation in Arab Cities", set to be launched online on 9th February 2025. AUDI has also played a key role in this year's Arab Towns Initiative meeting, held in Tangier, Morocco.

With the start of the new year, AUDI has also launched its Annual Report for 2024, highlighting the institute's key achievements and engagements during the last year.

INTERVIEW

MAYOR OF JEDDAH
SALEH AL-TURKI

In dialogue about Jeddah's experience with Land Management

One of the most prominent awards received by His Excellency the Mayor of Jeddah Governorate, Mr. Saleh Al-Turki, is the King Salman bin Abdulaziz Award for Supporting Young Businessmen, for his efforts in many stations, the most important of which was his chairmanship of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Jeddah, and the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, until he reached his current position in the Jeddah Municipality since 2018 until now.

What helped him to be creative in drawing the right plans is his academic specialization, as he graduated from a bachelor's degree in public administration from the American University of Beirut in 1970, to support his education with a master's degree in the same specialization, from California State University, which he obtained in 1975.

From one place to another, Al-Turki left clear fingerprints in several stations, as he previously led the Makkah al-Mukarramah Development Authority and held the position of appointed Mayor of the Holy City of Makkah al-Mukarramah. He also chaired the board of directors of "Nesma Holding Company, Saudi Foras Investment Company, and Jeddah Holding Company", in addition to chairing the board of directors of the Al-Birr Association in Jeddah, and the Tarahum Committee for the Care of Prisoners in Jeddah, in addition to his membership in government agencies and multiple private companies.

In 2010, the Government of the Republic of Austria chose him as its honorary consul in Jeddah, and the Saudi Ministry of Social Affairs honored him as one of the most important supporters of social work in 2011, and he received the Prince Mohammed bin Fahd Award for Service to Charity Works.



Photo: His Excellency Saleh Al-Turki, Mayor of Jeddah

Jeddah, as one of Saudi Arabia's major cities and a gateway to the holy sites of Makkah and Madinah, is undergoing rapid urbanization and development in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030. With this growth comes the challenge of ensuring sustainable land management that balances urban needs with environmental preservation and community well-being. We engage in an insightful discussion with the Mayor of Jeddah on how the city is addressing these challenges, focusing on policies, initiatives, and future plans to create a more sustainable and equitable urban environment.

What major challenges has Jeddah encountered in managing urban land as a city with a deep historical heritage and significant growth over the past century?

Jeddah's rapid growth and expansion have significantly increased the demand for land and urban planning. However, this development has been hindered by a lack of integrated infrastructure and an overreliance on structural rather than comprehensive planning. These issues have contributed to the emergence of slums (informal neighborhoods) and infrastructure that fails to account for essential components, such as water and sewage systems. As a

result, service delivery to homes often depends on extensive excavations. To address these challenges, the municipality, in collaboration with relevant authorities, has taken steps to tackle encroachments, enhance infrastructure, improve road quality, and treat groundwater. This involves carrying out projects to effectively drain rainwater and accommodate the city's increasing demands.

We also aim to revive Jeddah's cultural identity through the Building Compliance Program, designed to improve the city's urban landscape.

Additionally, With the generous support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, along with the oversight of the Emirate of Makkah Al-Mukarramah Region, Jeddah is undergoing mega development projects aimed at elevating its global standing and enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors.

With Jeddah's population increasing, how can the municipality strike a balance between urban expansion and the preservation of green spaces within the city, as well as environmental and natural resources like sea beaches and rainwater channels in valleys?

In collaboration with developers, the municipality has been eager to include parks in the special plans. Moreover, the municipality has established over 442 parks across the city, distributing them based on population density, which increases the per capita share of green spaces.

Al-Saja Park, which spans over 60,000 square meters, was recently inaugurated as a high-quality addition to Jeddah's urban landscape. The municipality is now designing new locations that will act as both a destination for visitors and a breathing space for city residents.

The (Bahja) Jeddah project was also launched as one of the Ministry of Municipal, Rural Affairs, and Housing's initiatives to benefit from open spaces.

To allow residents and visitors to enjoy Jeddah's coasts, the municipality has implemented five waterfront projects that prioritize safety and quality while also creating a new environment for tourism and recreational services, which is one of the 2030 Vision's objectives.

What types of strategies, regulations, and policies adopted by Jeddah to enhance land development practices effectively and thoughtfully?

At Jeddah Municipality, we are committed to promoting effective and well-planned land development. In collaboration with our partners at the Jeddah Development Authority, we are developing a citywide strategy— a comprehensive roadmap designed to achieve sustainable development, fulfill residents' aspirations, and strengthen Jeddah's status as a leading economic and tourist destination. For this, we work together at both the structural plan and local plan levels, to solidify our commitment to promoting



Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
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the development process and its effective management within the city. Additionally, we have approved the (Jawharat Al-Arous) project for investors to develop the infrastructure. This step is regarded as a key practice that accelerates the implementation of grant plans and establishes a promising model for their development in collaboration with the private sector.

Furthermore, the municipality implemented financial sustainability principles in collaboration with real estate developers, providing programs to increase the project's financial sustainability by delegating operating and maintenance costs to the developers.

Also, the municipality requires developers to take into account population density when they develop plans, ensuring that services delivered are proportional to demand, creating an ideal environment for residents, and providing high-quality municipal services that meet the goals of the master plan.

Jeddah has undergone a remarkable digital transformation as a result of the adoption of cutting-edge technologies such as using digital twin technology in land management and geospatial data. How is the municipality implementing these technologies to improve land governance and management?

Over the last two decades, Jeddah Municipality has worked to improve its digital infrastructure to streamline municipal services and make them more accessible to the city's residents and investors. Among these services is the implementation of a geospatial database system and a land database, which resulted in the creation of the geospatial portal, geospatial explorer, and local plan atlas, all of which improved user information transparency. Moreover, the municipality also updated the high-resolution aerial images.

We also worked on the Kingdom's first city management project, which entailed creating a control center to present indicators of ongoing projects and track their progress.

In addition, the municipality has provided users with access to data (such as land division plans, urban boundaries, sub-municipal boundaries, and other related services) via the Jeddah Smart Map.

These measures have made it easier to monitor and protect land from encroachment.

Slums (informal neighborhoods) are regarded as one of the most serious challenges that major cities face in terms of land management and service delivery. How has Jeddah handled this dilemma, and what may be learned from its experience?

As previously mentioned, rapid expansion increased demand for land and planning, resulting in the formation of slums with no public services or infrastructure. As a result, the municipality carried out a study on the current situation of these slums and their impact on the city's growth and then submitted the study to the competent entities to resolve it. With the kind support and guidance of His Majesty, an



implementing plan and a timetable have been developed to address 64 slums. During the first phase of the project, we were able to remove (32) neighborhoods, while the second phase will include the reorganization of 32 neighborhoods as well as the development of organizational plans for those neighborhoods, contributing to improving the quality of life for Jeddah residents and integrating these neighborhoods into the urban fabric.

With limited land and rising demand for city life, how is Jeddah incorporating urban land sustainability into its new development projects such as housing, recreational facilities, and commercial projects?

Jeddah city doesn't lack land because it is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's second-largest city, covering approximately 4,500 square kilometers. The key challenge is to manage, improve, and exploit urban development spaces in a way that balances urban expansion with the preservation of the urban, social, and economic environment within the city.

As the Kingdom's cities prepare to stage major global events such as the World Cup, what are Jeddah's future urban development goals, and how they will be realized?

Jeddah city is known as the gateway to the Two Holy Mosques, with two million pilgrims and Umrah visitors visiting Makkah and Madinah each year, as well as hosting various regional and international events, including the Club World Cup, Formula 1 (F1), marine sports, and entertainment seasons. To be capable of staging such events, the municipality of Jeddah seeks to promote urban growth by investing in pioneering, tourism, cultural, and recreational projects, developing sea beaches, and increasing the number of shopping centers, hotels, hospitals, and other related services.



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URBAN INSIGHTS

External Article

STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE ARAB REGION



Ombretta Tempra

Land Specialist with UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network. Leads the UN-Habitat global portfolio on land and conflict, and she is the Global Coordinator of the Housing, Land and Property Area of Responsibility. Ombretta also leads the Arab Land Initiative since its establishment in 2016, providing technical advice to countries and managing regional and national land interventions. Women's land rights, land-related climate action, and tenure security of displaced people are the focus of her work, published in the United Nations University Press.

The success of Arab cities in meeting the challenges of the 21st century will largely depend on their ability to manage urban land. City leaders need to make the most of their land resources to unlock investments, achieve social inclusion, and provide access to adequate housing and services to all.

The world is urbanizing at a rapid pace. More than 56 per cent of the global population lives in cities, a figure expected to rise to 68 per cent by 2050. In the Arab region, urban residents already account for 60 per cent of the total population.

Cities play a crucial role as safety valves in times of crisis. In the Arab region, significantly more than half of migrants and displaced people seek refuge in urban centres where they can find some access to shelter, basic services and livelihood opportunities. Cities that prioritize inclusive spatial planning, compact and serviced urban growth, and an effective housing and land management system are better equipped to offer durable solutions for displacement to the benefit of both displaced people and host communities.

Sustainable urban land management balances the current needs of all urban residents with environmental

concerns and consideration for the needs of future populations. Land use planning is an essential tool to that end. The lack of land-use planning can result in unregulated urban sprawl, environmental degradation, and lower quality of life, particularly for the most vulnerable. Unregulated urban and peri-urban sprawl can encroach on fertile agricultural land, impacting local and regional food security; this is a key concern in the Arab region. In the case of coastal cities, unplanned expansion risks the destruction of wetlands and floodplains that could otherwise offer protection from rising sea levels and extreme weather events.

The power of planning, regulation and land-based financing

Governments, municipalities, planners and developers have a range of strategies and tools at their disposal to facilitate inclusive and sustainable urban land management. Crucial among them are effective regulations, land-based financing mechanisms, planning frameworks and participatory approaches.

Land-based financing includes a range of instruments that local governments can use to increase their revenues and raise funds necessary for providing services, infrastructure development and meeting maintenance needs. Property taxes, land value capture and other fiscal tools can all be used to encourage efficient land use. These can enhance public finances, create a more equitable connection between public investments, private benefits and public revenues and promote more sustainable urban development practices.

By taxing land speculation and vacant properties, municipalities can reduce incentives for sprawl and promote densification. Similarly, tax incentives for green development or brownfield remediation can stimulate sustainable building practices and the revitalization of underused spaces.

As cities grow, so does the value of the land. Rather than allowing land speculators to profit from unchecked growth, cities can implement land value capture policies. These taxes or fees charge landowners for the rise in land value due to public investments, such as new roads, transit systems or parks. The revenue generated can be reinvested into the city, improving infrastructure and affordability.

Land readjustment enables public access to land and enhances the ability of authorities to intervene in how land is used. The process involves consolidating individual land parcels in an area and redeveloping them as a single unit. New infrastructure, such as roads, sewer systems and utilities, can be integrated. Once the planning and infrastructure improvements are complete, portions of the land are returned to the original owners, with the value of that land having increased due to the increased services and infrastructure.

"Cities play a crucial role as safety valves in times of crisis"

Effective land-use regulations are also essential for steering urban development in a sustainable direction. Zoning laws that promote mixed-use, higher-density neighborhoods that integrate green space are critical. Transit-oriented development is another regulatory strategy that concentrates residential and commercial development around public transport hubs to discourage urban sprawl.

Enabling participatory urban land use planning that involves local communities is essential for meeting the needs of all residents. When vulnerable communities are invited to participate in spatial planning processes and have their needs accounted for, the likelihood of unplanned, informal settlements being established is significantly reduced. Inclusive cities are sustainable cities, where all residents have a stake in shaping their environment, leading to more resilient, equitable, and lasting urban development.

UN-Habitat works on the ground to support Arab cities develop their urban planning systems that limit sprawl and make cities more livable for residents. In Egypt, for example, UN-Habitat has supported the government in defining new city limits and structuring urban expansions in a way that accommodates growth while preserving natural resources. These planned city extensions prioritize increasing residential and economic densities, optimizing land use and reducing speculation.

Recommendations for a sustainable future

The path to sustainable urban land development requires a concerted effort from governments, planners, the private sector, and local communities. There are several steps cities can take to help them move toward more sustainable and resilient futures.

Governments and municipalities should adopt regulation and zoning policies that prioritize land use efficiency and land tenure security. This includes regularizing informal settlements, promoting high-density development, mixed land use and transit-oriented growth and ensuring access to affordable housing. Financial incentives through subsidies or the taxation system can also encourage private developers to pursue these strategies.

Cities should prioritize the integration of green spaces, community gardens and urban agriculture in their planning. These initiatives not only benefit the environment, but they also provide food security and promote community well-being.

Sustainable urban land management requires the active participation of local communities. Governments and international organizations should invest in capacity-building for urban planners and local leaders, ensuring stakeholders have the tools and knowledge to make informed decisions.

Cities should leverage digital tools for urban planning, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and data analytics, to make smarter land-use decisions. These tools can help track land use patterns, identify areas for densification and optimize public services.

As cities continue to grow, the way urban land is managed will have a profound impact on their sustainability, livability and ability to adequately support the most vulnerable. Municipalities can play a key role by prioritizing sustainable land management practices to ensure that cities in the Arab region will be better positioned to build more vibrant, resilient communities while preserving land for future generations.

External Article

LAND GOVERNANCE IN IRAQ: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Layla M. Raswol

The Dean of City and Regional Planning at the University of Duhok, Kurdistan Region/Iraq. She held her PhD in Urban Planning from the Technical University of Berlin/Germany in 2010. She was involved in the program of promoting planning education in Iraq and a member of the Steering board for establishing the joint BSc Program in Spatial Planning in 2012 at the University of Duhok jointly with the Technical University of Dortmund/Germany. From 2016 to 2020 she was the dean of Engineering college at Nawroz University/Duhok.

Iraq has a federal system consisting of 15 governorates and the Kurdistan region, comprised of three governorates and recognized as a federal region by the Constitution Article 117/1. The local administrative level is comprised of 251 municipalities. Land governance plays a critical role in managing land resources, addressing tenure security, and promoting sustainable development. However, it faces significant challenges due to decades of conflict, weak institutions, and encroachment over land ownership and use. The current land systems in Iraq are greatly influenced by social and political insecurity and multiple waves of forced displacement over recent years, which have contributed to land tenure insecurity and land use conflicts.

Land Tenure System include private land ownership and state-owned land, which Includes public lands used for agriculture, industry, or conservation. The General Directorate for Real Estate Registration (GDRER) is responsible for all land registration in Iraq in accordance with Land Registration Law No. 43 of 1971 as amended. The Iraqi Real Estate Registration Law n.43 of 1971 determines four types of property and ownership: Mulk or privately owned land, Amiri or land owned by the state, waqf or endowed lands, and right use or lands owned by the state with right of their use by local communities.

In rural areas, tribal customs often influence land use and ownership, leading to informal systems of governance. The Ministry of Agriculture manages agricultural lands and related policies. The land

registration system is not digitized. However, the regional Government of Kurdistan, and the Government of Iraq are now considering digitalization of certain registry services as part of their Electronic Government Project (KRG 2020). The State Property Department (SPD) is responsible for the inventory and management of State lands and management of confiscated properties. The General Directorate for Survey (GDS) is the main governmental authority that represents the main source of all maps in Iraq. The General Directorate for Physical Planning (GDPP) regulate zoning land use in cities and towns according to urban planning and development laws. These laws often overlap, creating confusion and legal disputes over land ownership and usage.

"Land governance plays a critical role in managing land resources, addressing tenure security, and promoting sustainable development"

The main Challenges of land governance system in Iraq include conflicts and displacement that have led to unclear land tenure and competition over ownership. Moreover, the rapid urbanization and poor land management have led to the expansion of informal settlements, environmental degradation in the form of desertification, deforestation and declining agricultural productivity. Therefore, the government in Iraq and Kurdistan region has adopted several strategies to address land development challenge, while promoting sustainable land management and environmental protection practices through a national development plan and environmental development plan. These outline strategies for addressing economic, social, and environmental challenges, including land management and environmental degradation to promote sustainable development.

In light of this, several projects and initiatives are currently underway in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. These include the National Strategy for Sustainable Land Management, where the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Iraq's Ministry of Environment (MoE) are collaborating to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at reversing land degradation and conserving natural resources. This initiative involves drafting a Marshland Conservation Action Plan and establishing a Knowledge Management Platform for Iraq.

Other afforestation projects are undertaken by the World Food Programme (WFP) in both southern Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, aligning with efforts to combat climate change and promote environmental sustainability. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed a plan that promotes sustainable land and forest management to enhance resilience against climate change impacts in the Kurdistan Region. The Green Future Initiative has undertaken a project to restore degraded lands and promote sustainable practices in Iraq and Kurdistan region through reforestation, soil conservation, and community-based land governance. This involves the plantation of native trees and the integration of agroforestry systems to restore forest cover and improve soil health as well as efficient irrigation systems to combat soil erosion and water scarcity. The project provides trainings on sustainable practice to local farmers and tribal leaders and involve them in decision-making processes. The main outcomes of the project included 30% increase in vegetation cover, enhanced water retention, and reduced soil erosion in surrounding agricultural areas.

These projects reflect a concerted effort by various organizations and governmental bodies to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable land management practices in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

External Article

URBAN REGENERATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN MOROCCO



Azhar Ktitou

General Director of the National Agency of Urban Renewal and Rehabilitation of Rundown Buildings in Morocco (ANRUR) since 2022. Under her guidance, ANRUR has developed early warning systems and data collection methods to identify rundown buildings, collaborating with local authorities. Previously, she held the position of regional inspector for land use planning and urbanization in the Rabat-Salé-Kenitra region, and regional director of housing and city policy, where she supervised a group of urban development projects in the region.

Cities today face an ever-increasing demand for land due to unprecedented population growth, and an urban development model that promotes urban sprawl. Territories are sources of polarity, creators of wealth and catalysts of innovation, but at the same time, they witness social, urban, and environmental failures. This situation has given rise to a contrasting urban model, as well as spatial and functional imbalances, with notably marginalized entities and social and economic decline in inner cities.

As urbanization progresses, the objectives of urban renewal in Morocco have evolved beyond the initial focus on large-scale demolition and reconstruction of dilapidated urban areas. It now encompasses a broader agenda to address complex urban challenges, including social marginalization, economic stagnation, and environmental degradation.

The land management system in Morocco is a structured framework that regulates land use, distribution, and governance, aiming to support urban development, ensure property rights, and promote sustainable land practices. The complex heritage of land in Morocco comprises a duality in the legal and administrative framework of traditional and modern property rights presents real challenges in urban development.

Several strategic and urban planning documents at different levels, governed by Moroccan legislation, guide land use, ranging from the regional level to the municipal level, balancing economic development, social protection, and environmental sustainability. The urban planning document is the regulatory tool that defines land use rights within the territories it

covers. It is the instrument that translates the guidelines of the urban planning master plan into legal requirements. This document outlines the expansion of new land for urbanization, while also defining areas undergoing transformation or redevelopment.

Every city has pockets of underused and underutilized land or distressed and decaying urban areas. These pockets of underused land weaken the city's image, livability, and productivity. They are usually the result of changes in urban growth and productivity patterns. Urban regeneration policies either target inner city declining neighborhoods or vacant land parcels.

Law 94-12 introduced a new urban planning and management tool (Urban Renewal Plan) aimed at revitalizing old neighborhoods, considered as an operational and contractual urban mechanism for implementing sectoral public strategies, thus translating the vision of different stakeholders to achieve sustainable and harmonious development objectives for old and run-down neighborhoods.

Urban renewal operations, as introduced by the new regulations, are a recent practice, with the first projects emerging in 2022 and led by the National Agency for Urban Renewal and the Rehabilitation of Rundown Buildings. They target vulnerable sites reflecting both the advanced deterioration of the built environment and the socio-economic fragility of the local population, but also the opportunities and potential for transformation offered by the sector. Six segments have been identified (Colonial district, Ksour et Kasbah, semi urban area, informal neighborhoods, ancient Median, new Medina) with very different architectural, social and urban characteristics. In many old and informal neighborhoods, the land designated for regeneration is characterized by fragmented ownership, requiring assembly and reorganization.

The presence of informal settlements and renters further complicates the process by requiring measurements for equitable development, adding both costs and time due to potential compensation and resettlement efforts. It sometimes involves structural transformations of the areas concerned through demolition/reconstruction operations, de-densification or densification, involving upzoning, changes in land use and urban regulation. While urban renewal can be seen as a mechanism for rebalancing and repositioning declining areas, several factors influence this process, including demographics, infrastructure, accessibility, land ownership rights, the presence of natural or anthropological risks.

"Urban renewal can be seen as a mechanism for rebalancing declining areas"

Even though the urban renewal plan is a recent tool, large scale urban regeneration operations have marked the context of modern urbanization since the 2000s, in cities such as Rabat and Casablanca, where land is in short supply. Regeneration operations are based on densification and the integration of a mixed-use program to meet the growing demand for housing and boost the economic attractiveness of neighborhoods that are generally centrally located.

Cities respond to the demand for land by densifying existing urban cores, where pockets of underused land on a large scale exist such as the CASANFA project in Casablanca (475 hectares) that aims to transform the city's historic former airport into a modern urban development. This large-scale project will revitalize the area by creating new spaces for residential, commercial, and recreational purposes, contributing to the city's growth and modernization. It seeks to integrate contemporary infrastructure while preserving the historical significance of the site.

This major project, which has boosted Casablanca's attractiveness, is based on a strategic vision of the city's development. Its implementation required new practices, including management by an ad hoc structure (AUDA Agency), and an effective public-private partnership to ensure the long-term viability of the operation.

In Moroccan cities, where multiple issues arise, such as the scarcity of land, the advanced degradation of old fabrics, the optimization of resources, the public authorities consider urban renovation as a crucial tool to address these challenges and facilitate the process for the long-term growth and sustainability of cities. However, they require a capable local government that can coordinate the various components of such a multifaceted and multi-stakeholder initiative.

TOOLKITS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Land management is a key component of development in any city, and as the global rate of urbanization increases, the sustainable management of land grows in complexity. The subject of urban land is intrinsically linked to local climate, socio-economic realities, politics, as well as institutional and financial systems and capacities. In light of these municipalities and urban practitioners are faced with a wide range of challenges, all requiring an integrated approach to ensure that land management practices remain responsive to the needs of the public.

This issue of Mudununa has carefully curated four toolkits developed by international organizations that deal with various aspects of urban land management. These have been designed specifically to help municipalities better understand the processes required for successful governance and management of land, including thematic concerns related to land-based finance, brownfield development, land readjustment, and climate and financial impacts of land-use decisions.

1

Toolkit 1:
Leveraging Land: Land-Based Finance for Local Governments

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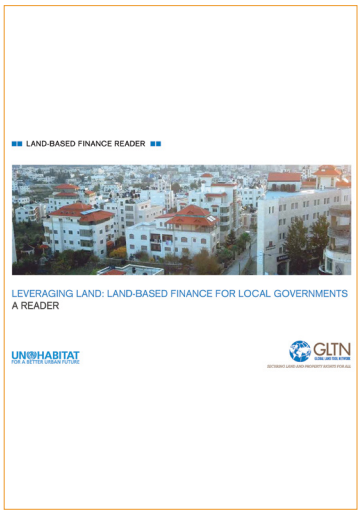

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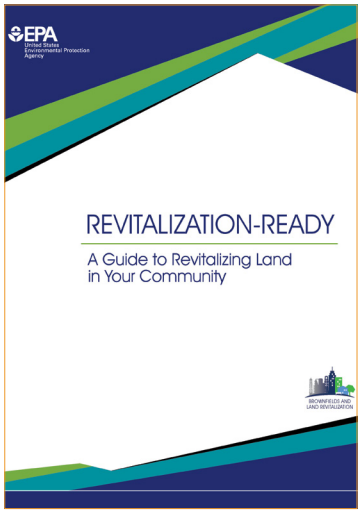
https://gltn.net/download/leveraging-land-land-based-finance-for-local-governments-a-reader/

Toolkit 1:
Leveraging Land: Land-Based Finance for Local Governments

This toolkit provides an overview of the key land-based financing instruments that have been adopted around the world, and is intended for participants and trainers/facilitators of the GLTN/UN-Habitat Land-Based Financing (LBF) training course. However, it is also highly relevant for all practitioners and entities working in the land management sector.

The document introduced Land-Based Financing as an all-encompassing term to describe the various instruments through which local governments generate revenue from land, for the purpose of better service delivery and infrastructure development, and other key municipal functions. It presents a range of instruments, describing and demonstrating their effectiveness through case studies. The main instruments discussed include annual tax on immovable property, betterment charges, developer exactions, land value increment taxes, the sale of development rights, land sales and leases, and transfer taxes.

Each section describes the respective instrument, provides references to relevant literature, illustrates examples demonstrating the tool, lists the pre-requisites and key issues that can potentially influence the adoption of said instrument, and discusses the financial, social, economic, and spatial impacts that could emerge from the instrument's use. The document is also supported by a trainer's guide, intended for participants and trainers/facilitators of the Land-based Finance Training course.



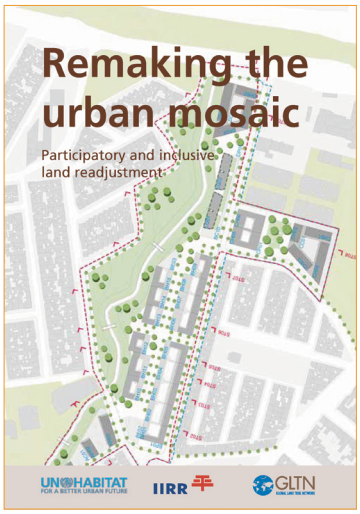
United States Environmental Protection Agency, ©2021

https://www.epa.gov/land-revitalization/revitalization-ready-guide

Toolkit 2:
Revitalization-Ready: A Guide to Revitalizing Land in Your Community

This toolkit is designed to provide a general process for the evaluation of a brownfield site, in order to identify what actions are needed for its revitalization. It is targeted at local governments and community stakeholders, to help them redevelop contaminated, potentially contaminated, idle, and underused properties in their neighborhoods or cities.

The toolkit is structured along five main sections that it describes as the 'Ready process'. The first section focuses on identifying what land use can best serve the broader social and economic aspirations of the affected community. The second section stresses the need for a Reuse Assessment, which identifies and evaluates property attributes to help develop a realistic plan for it. The third section covers the Reuse plan, that involves mapping and visualization of the property, a coherent vision for the reuse, project economics, and strategies for the retention, sale, or transfer of the property. The fourth section focuses on implementation by identifying risk management tools and approaches, developing a brownfields investment package, leveraging resources, and initiating the process by which the property will be leased or sold. The last section further elaborates the aspects of implementation, including ensuring environmental responsibility, engineering and institutional controls, and transactional due diligence.



UN-Habitat, ©2016

https://unhabitat.org/remaking-the-urban-mosaic-participatory-and-inclusive-land-readjustment

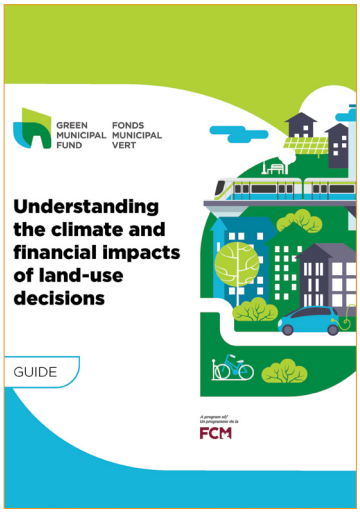
Toolkit 3:

Remaking The Urban Mosaic – Participatory And Inclusive Land Readjustment

This document provides guidance on how to apply conventional land readjustment methodology in a developing country context. Land readjustment involves intervening in a specific area by collecting all land parcels and planning them as a unit, to incorporate roads and other municipal infrastructure, and then redividing them for the original owners.

Designed for a wide range of audience across multiple specialist fields, the document details the process for Participatory and Inclusive Land Readjustment (PILaR), involving all stakeholders including landowners, tenants, informal residents, municipalities, professional experts, and community organizations.

The document is structured along ten sections, where the first provides an overview of the PILaR approach's usefulness and gives examples of its use by different organizations. The next eight sections each focus on a specific aspect of the process, including governance, land management, planning and design, data analysis, community engagement, legal concerns, finance, and communication. The last section of the book demonstrates how the guidelines presented in each section can be put into practice. As a whole the document stresses that land readjustment is more likely to be successful and more sustainable if local stakeholders are involved in the process, leading to improved supply of serviced urban land, better public spaces, higher percentage of social housing, and decreased conflict in planning processes.



Federation of Canadian Municipalities, ©2018

https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/resources/toolkit-making-sustainable-land-use-decisions-your-municipality

Toolkit 4:

Understanding the climate and financial impacts of land-use decisions

With the growth of cities, urban densification practices are gaining momentum. In light of this, it is important to assess the impact of land use decisions on the environment, and on the financial viability of land management and development practices. This toolkit is a comprehensive guide that provides a high-level understanding of how land use decisions impact a city's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and fiscal sustainability. It is targeted specifically at municipal officials and other urban development professionals and outlines the sources of GHG emissions associated with various types of residential development, and their subsequent financial implications.

To demonstrate these implications, the toolkit looks at three predominant development typologies found in cities, high density, medium density, and low density, and assesses each against three types of GHG emissions. It aims to calculate the extent to which a development typology contributes to environmental degradation, and in doing so, incurs a financial loss.

The toolkit also provides a case study, of the city of Prince George in British Columbia, to demonstrate the application of the assessment. In this case, the assessment concluded that medium density infill development emerged as the most responsible option in terms of both climate and financial outcomes in the city of Prince George.

CITIES IN ACTION

Project 1



Abu Dhabi Skyscrapers
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Revolutionizing Land Management Systems

Blockchain technology in Dubai and Abu Dhabi

At the core of urban development processes in a city lies the management of its land. As cities continue to grow in complexity, their land management systems require a higher level of sophistication. This article looks into how the cities of Dubai and Abu Dhabi have successfully adopted advanced digital technologies to streamline all processes related to land management, subsequently enhancing efficiency and user accessibility.

In 2017, the Dubai Land Department (DLD) became the world's first entity of its kind to adopt blockchain technology, in line with its "Dubai Blockchain Strategy." This strategy aims to enhance government efficiency, create greater business opportunities, and position Dubai as a global leader and knowledge hub on blockchain technology. In the context of land management, the blockchain can be defined as a decentralized ledger system that securely stores all property related data, such as ownership records, transactions, and title deeds.

Dubai uses the system to streamline all management, transfers, regulation, and land monitoring processes. Doing so eliminates the need for residents to rely on intermediary entities, such as banks, lawyers, and real estate brokers, and protects the end user against fraud. This technology will also enable both local and foreign investors to verify property related data in an accurate and transparent manner, enhancing credibility of transactions and clarity regarding market situation.



Dubai Future Blockchain Summit
©2019 Arabian Business

The adoption of blockchain technology in Dubai successfully facilitates linkages of all real estate contracts with other municipal services such as water, electricity, telecommunications, and various property related bills. In addition to collaboration with Dubai Electricity and Water Authority, the DLD has also engaged in public-private partnerships with a number of key partners, including Wasl Asset Management Group, which will develop a smart e-gateway, connecting tenant lease contracts to the blockchain and Emirates National Bank of Dubai (NBD) which is the lead banking partners for the initiative.

Having the system thoroughly integrated with tenants' Emirates Identity Cards ensures that all payments are conducted electronically from within one platform, regardless of the location of the tenant. Due to the integration of citizen's national identities, the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs plays a key role in the new system, taking responsibility for verifying residency data and required documentation. Initially, blockchain services were available primarily to landlords and tenants, however, the objective is to include other stakeholders such as developers and investors.

One of the key benefits of adopting blockchain technology for land management is the significant reduction in costs. The Smart Dubai website states that the use of this blockchain system in Dubai stands to save 5.5 billion dirhams annually from document processing alone. To support successful integration, Dubai has also introduced updated regulatory frameworks to govern the process, ensuring that all firms dealing with blockchain technology comply with security and privacy laws. By the year 2020, the DLD was providing over 1.4 million digital services for residents through its digital channels.

Similarly, in 2019, Abu Dhabi's Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities (DPM) announced that all land registry-related documents issued by the municipality will be stored and tracked in a blockchain, ensuring the security of all transactions and hosting encrypted records of all activity. The department also partnered with Tech Mahindra, an Indian multinational information technology services and consulting company, to roll out an application that will provide services related to tenancy contract verification and purchase of property. Titled SmartHub, the application will help trace land records and reduce processing time for real estate transactions. Abu Dhabi Municipality cites this initiative as a step towards enhancing customer happiness, quality of life, and accessibility to the municipality's services.

For Abu Dhabi, the next phase involves incorporating various government and private sector entities into the system, including banks. The plan is to capture the entire land registry system, starting from two-dimensional drawings submitted by developers to all the approvals and processes required for development projects. The ultimate goal is to expand this system and create an all-in-one application catering to the 1.45 million residents of the emirate.

The actions taken towards incorporating blockchain systems in both the emirates are aligned with the Emirates Blockchain Strategy 2021, which mandates that 50% of government transactions migrate to blockchain in the first two years of the strategy. These efforts indicate the rapid transformation of urban management systems taking place in the region. The successful adoption of advanced technologies for land management in Dubai and Abu Dhabi presents an insightful case for other cities, both in the Arab region and internationally.

Project 2



Tripoli Green Belt, Libya
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Combating Sprawl
The Role of Green Belts in Algiers and Tripoli

The use of green belts in the context of cities remains one of the most widely used practices when it comes to controlling urban sprawl. This article discusses the development of green belts in the cities of Algiers in Algeria, and Tripoli in Libya, highlighting the ways in which both cities have implemented the green belt to address their unique urban challenges.

In 2010, the city of Algiers initiated a project to establish a green belt, enveloping the city as well as some of the northern municipalities. The project was based on the Urban Management Plan of the region of Alger and designed against the backdrop of challenges posed by climate change and the resultant loss of valuable land in and around the city. Some of the key objectives included establishing a biological belt around urban agglomerations, preserving agricultural and forestry activities, increasing the ratio of green spaces to balance the urban environment, reducing carbon emissions, and improving ambient air quality.

The primary components of the green belt included agro parks, community gardens, as well as other interventions to integrate the green belt with the city. Formal actions started taking place after 2015, with the introduction of green spaces across several urban and peri-urban areas in Algiers. In the first phase, two main types of green spaces were developed. These include public gardens, such as the Tafourah Public Garden and Sofia Garden, as well as Agro-parks, 23 of which were developed across the city, including in

Reghaïa, Rouiba, and Dely Ibrahim. They contained a wide diversity of agricultural plantation such as orange, loquat, and vineyards. In 2019, the plantation of olive trees across 8 hectares of land was also initiated.

The green belt project in Algiers was led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in collaboration with regional authorities and municipalities. Funding depended on both national and regional public budgets. In addition to this, the project also received non-financial contributions in the form of land, labor, and expertise from public departments and civil society. In this way, the green belt development took place through the active engagement of citizens with a particular focus on involving local communities in tree-planting, vegetation, and management activities. These were supported by public awareness campaigns for the communities as well.

In the case of Tripoli, Libya, a green belt project was launched in 2009 to control its sprawling development. The belt was designed to cover an area of over 700 hectares in the form of a green collar that would envelop the city and redraw the limits of the historic center.

While the key principle behind the green belt stressed the role of nature-based interventions, it also included the development of new residential districts, parks and public spaces, and various civic amenities. In particular, the belt consisted of 9 key sectors. These included a coastal gateway that integrates with the waterfront through the development of beaches, promenades, as well as shopping centers, and a museum. The green belt project also worked on the transformation of Suq-Al-Tulata by converting the old craft market into a public park and conserving market elements to celebrate Tripoli's cultural heritage.

Additionally, a zoological and natural forest was proposed, consisting of mixed forests of eucalyptus and pine, and accessible to the public for educational and recreational purposes. Along the same lines, an olive field consisting of ancient trees was integrated into the green belt, with community gardens proposed along the fields. To support educational activities, land was allocated to the Agronomy University, where linear promenades were constructed that connected academic facilities with public gardens. Spaces in the belt, particularly those that were fragmented and underdeveloped, were also allocated for urban farming activities, kitchen gardens, and public parks. The belt further consists of a restricted government precinct that provides facilities for the management and maintenance of the forests and gardens.

The project was led by the Libyan state with the design and planning outsourced to various private sector companies. While work on the belt was initiated in 2009, only one forest park, covering an area of 132 hectares, was fully completed by 2011. In the same year, the park at Suq-Al-Tulata was partially completed, and four other parks were in the study and design phase.

The approach adopted by both Tripoli and Algiers exemplifies the value of green belts in not only controlling urban sprawl, but also encouraging sustainable development practices.



Area reserved for Donia Park as part of the Algiers Green Belt
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Project 3



Imbaba Airport Land Development Project
©2020 Al-Masry Al-Youm

Enhancing the Quality of Life in Tunisia and Egypt

Neighborhood Rehabilitation and Land Use Planning

Rehabilitation of existing settlements is one of the most widely used tools to utilize prime urban land in cities. In addition to facilitating the process of densification, it also supports local economic development and enhances urban quality of life. This article discusses the rehabilitation of neighborhoods across multiple cities in Tunisia, and in Giza in Egypt, focusing on the improvement of living conditions and integration of informal settlements in the formal planning process.

Starting in 2012, the Tunisian state launched a large-scale program to upgrade the living conditions in 155 neighborhoods across 87 municipalities in the country. Titled 'Program for the Rehabilitation and Integration of Residential Neighborhoods (PRIQH)', its operations were entrusted to the Urban Rehabilitation and Renewal Agency (ARRU) in coordination with the relevant ministries and municipalities. The program is funded by the French Development Agency (AFD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the European Union. It focuses on sustainable urban development, infrastructure upgrade, and social inclusion, with the aim of integrating underserved communities into the urban fabric. Key activities of the program include the construction of sports and cultural facilities, neighborhood grounds, communal spaces, and premises for economic activities. The program also focuses on rehabilitation of basic infrastructure such as drinking water supply, sanitation, drainage, and public lighting.

One of the first neighborhoods it targeted was the Bouakroucha district in the Mohammedia town of Ben Arous governorate. Since 2017, extensive road works, sanitation works, and installation of public lighting have been carried out. Seven kilometers of roads were renovated, and 242 lighting points installed. The program also constructed a sports field and a sports and cultural complex, enhancing the citizens' access to recreational activities. Additionally, a manufacturing and crafts center was constructed, targeting small and medium-sized businesses in the region. Approximately 6,000 residents benefited from these interventions.

Across the targeted neighborhoods, the program established 52 facilities, and 19 activity centers, benefiting over 864,000 residents. Following the success of the first phase of the program, a second phase was launched in 2019, covering 160 districts and benefitting an additional 800,000 Tunisian residents. The second phase focuses on energy-efficient infrastructure and increased citizen participation in planning and design.

In the case of Giza, the aim of rehabilitation was to improve the living conditions in Al Warrak and Imbaba neighborhoods, two of the most populated and underdeveloped urban areas in the region. Both areas were suffering from uncontrolled urbanization, with a predominant population of low and middle-income families. The rehabilitation program, implemented between 2017 and 2022, revolved around the upgrade of urban facilities, provision of new job opportunities, establishment of revenue generating activities, and creation of public spaces.

The first phase of the program focused on the conversion of the former Imbaba Airport into an urban mixed-use area with quality infrastructure, public services, housing, and public spaces. It also focuses on the extension of the Ahmed Oraby Axis Road, as a means to address congestion. This illustrates effective use of previously abandoned land and aligns with the growing demands of the neighborhoods burdened by a burgeoning population.

Following the conversion of the former airport, the program focused on developing the Kawmeya sector, which is part of both Imbaba and Al Warrak neighborhoods. The first intervention established two 'joint service centers', built on vacant land on Al



Programme for the Rehabilitation and Integration of Residential Areas (PRIQH), Tunisia
©2023 Agence Tunis Afrique Presse (Agence TAP)

Kawmeya Al Arabeya Avenue, with the aim of fostering the growth of income-generating activities and facilitating residents' access to public services. The second intervention focused on existing settlements, through an integrated development approach. This included restoration of buildings, improvements in pedestrian and road infrastructure, and interventions in basic municipal services such as water, energy, and sanitation. In particular, the program developed educational institutions, playgrounds, youth centers, a sports city, public parks, a district council, Giza Red Crescent Society, a post office, a fire brigade, a police station, a cultural center, children's services center, senior citizens club, and a women's club. Existing health facilities were also selected for upgrade. The third intervention was carried out in coordination with the Governorate of Giza and the Ministry of Housing, to establish a Management Unit that will be responsible for the implementation of the rehabilitation works. In total, the program benefited 50,000 residents of the Kawmeya corridor and 250,000 potential users of the new public services and facilities.

As in the case of Tunisia, the success of this program also paved the way for its replication in other parts of the city, with the next phase being planned for the area parallel to line 3 of the Metro between the Ring Road and Rod El Farrag Corridor station. Similar to the districts of Imbaba and Al Warrak, this area also suffers from an increase in informal settlements and rapid population and urban growth.

Both programs indicate that sustainable land management relies heavily on addressing existing urban challenges faced by the city, both through the establishment of new development interventions as well as through the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure.

Project 4



Al-Bahr Mosque, Manarat, Delta, Damietta
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Strategic Planning

Land Management in the cities of Qena, Damietta and Baidoa

In the context of many cities, sustainable land management requires interventions from multiple fronts, across various sectors of urban development. In order to effectively carry these out, comprehensive city level strategies are formulated to address urban land management and utilization concerns. This article studies two such strategies, from the Hayenna project in Egypt and Baidoa city in Somalia.

In 2018, the Hayenna Integrated Urban Development Project was launched by the UN Habitat in partnership with the Governorates of Qena and Damietta along with the Egyptian Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities, the Egyptian General Organization of Physical Planning, as well as the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. The intent of this project is to provide the government of Egypt with an effective land readjustment model, and in doing so, support their efforts in planning for the expected increase in urban population.

The project is integrated with UN-Habitat's Participatory and Inclusive Land Readjustment (PILaR) approach, which is a framework for land readjustment in the context of developing countries. It facilitates the process of unified planning and re-parceling of land units that have multiple owners and stakeholders.

The project aims for Egypt's governorates to have a transparent land management system, along with well-planned and financially sustainable infrastructure services. This is achieved by intervening in 3 key areas including urban planning and design, public finance management and land-based financing, and urban legislation and regulation. The project sites include al-Humydat and al-Ma'aana in Qena City, and Alshoaraa in Damietta City.

In terms of urban planning and design, the project deals specifically with building laws, spatial planning, land management and the process by which plans are developed. It also addresses the implementation system of plans to suppoty local governments' capacity to manage interventions both within the inner city and at the periphery, incorporating key principles of public participation and engagement. For public finance management and land-based financing, the project addresses challenges related to investment planning, as well as the use of land value capture instruments. It does so through three thematic areas including revenue mobilization, land-based revenue system, and local investment planning, all of which are to be implemented in the target cities. On the front of urban regulation, the project documents lessons learned and best practices from local and international cases, and proposes action-oriented policies and legal reforms at the national level.

Similarly, in the city of Baidoa in Somalia, the municipality has led multiple efforts to plan for the city's rapid expansion and high influx of internally displaced people (IDPs). In light of these challenges, in early 2022, the Public Works, Housing, and Land Administration Department was established under the municipality. Since then, the municipality has implemented transformational initiatives across multiple fronts including an extension plan for the city, digitization of tax systems, and robust public engagement platforms.

Some of the key achievements since the establishment of this department include land administration and dispute resolution efforts, where the municipality has registered over 5,000 properties to enhance land tenure security for its residents since 2022. 70% of the registration beneficiaries include the IDPs, enabling them to integrate effectively with the host communities. In the process, the municipality was also able to resolve 400 land conflict cases. Furthermore, through the strategy, the municipality also provided 15 square kilometers of land to resettle the IDPs and has successfully relocated over 22,000 individuals.

Another key achievement is the development of a Spatial Strategic Plan in 2023, with the support of UN-Habitat. The strategy aims to support local governments identify the primary constraints and



Aerial image of Baidoa, Somalia
©2022 Abdishukur Ihaybe | Baidoa City Strategy 2023

strengths within their city's context, and subsequently facilitate the process of decision-making regarding development interventions and capital investments. Titled the 'Baidoa City Strategy', it is developed in the backdrop of the recently enacted Urban Land Management Law for Somalia.

The main objective of the Strategy is to anticipate and guide the sustainable development of the urban expansion expected to take place in the city. It does this through several fronts, including densification, environmental preservation, infill development, regeneration of peri-urban areas, and establishment of new areas for housing. In order to support these interventions, the strategy also proposes an efficient street network with quality pedestrian infrastructure and public transport services. Given the high number of IDPs in the city, the strategy also proposed a Baidoa North Planned City Extension component.

The City Strategy is also considered as a starting point for a series of stakeholder consultations and technical workshops to be led by the municipality and other key public entities. It relies on four major succeeding steps for successful implementation, including public participation, technical development in the form of sectoral plans, formal planning though required regulatory channels, and capacity development of all relevant state and local authorities involved in the implementation process.

The comprehensive approach taken by both Hayenna and Baidoa illustrates the impact of city-wide plans and strategies in the effective management of urban land, particularly when such strategies are developed to respond to the unique contexts of cities.



Displaced communities before relocation in Baidoa, Somalia
©2019 IOM/Foresight Films | Baidoa City Strategy 2023

Project 5



Al Khalifa Park, Cairo
©2024 Dr. May al-Ibrashy | ArchDaily

Regenerating Brownfields
Land Use Conversion in Cairo, Beirut, and Dubai

Regeneration of brownfield sites is one of the most effective ways to sustainably utilize land in cities, especially those facing high population growth and scarcity of land. Brownfield land refers to previously developed sites that are currently not in use and may carry the risk of pollution. This article investigates the regeneration of these sites across three major cities in the Arab region, namely Cairo, Beirut, and Dubai.

In 2017, the Cairo governorate, in partnership with UN-Habitat and Megawra, led the ambitious revitalization of Al-Khalifa neighborhood through the development of a Conservation and Management Plan. One of the key components of this revitalization included the conversion of a 3,000 square meter site from a garbage dump into a heritage and environment park for residents of the neighborhood, addressing the lack of accessible green spaces for the community.

An initial visioning exercise was held with the community, where over 100 residents were engaged through an interactive 3-day Minecraft workshop to develop ideas for improving the site. The park was eventually designed to include an educational center for children, a kindergarten, a theatre, a playground, a women's sports center, an awareness center, and spaces for urban farming. The park is located in the

heart of a heritage site and residential buildings; both which were at risk from settlement and inundation of subsurface water flow. The proposed park, therefore, also included interventions that would extract groundwater and reuse it for irrigation purposes.

One of the key actions that were taken prior to implementation included addressing soil salinity, which involved replacing the existing soil as well as planting salt-tolerant plants. Parallel to this, the Cairo governorate implemented the first phase of the park project, which included grading and retaining walls. Following this, in 2019, various entities collaborated to build seating areas in the park, establish waste collection points, and develop a small-scale communal farm. One of the key components of the park is its irrigation system, which uses water that is diverted away from the domes of al-Ashraf Khalil and Fatima Khatun heritage sites, both of which were at risk from inundation. The park now plays a central role in hosting communal activities such as art workshops, and heritage and cultural events.

Other examples from Arab cities illustrate how conversion and appropriation of brownfields does not have to be limited to parks and green spaces alone. In Beirut, for example, there have been multiple initiatives by the private sector to convert deindustrialized buildings into art and cultural centers, concert halls, and offices. Often, these are driven by growing congestion and increasing land prices in the city center, indicating that brownfield conversion is also linked to the economy of land.

This is evident in areas such as Karantina, a historic neighborhood in Beirut formerly populated by migrants and industrial workers. Over the past years, many artists and creative entrepreneurs have converted and appropriated the site for art galleries, clubs, and studios. One of the first attempts towards this conversion took place in 1998, with the opening of a famous club, B108, located underneath a carpark. The region's first white cube art space also opened in this neighborhood, paving the way for more creative spaces to follow suit. To the south of Karantina and in the industrial area in Corniche el-Nahr, a similar dynamic took place, including the opening of the Beirut Art Centre, the Station Beirut, which is a hybrid cultural space built on an old wood factory, and Ashkal Alwan, which is the Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts that was inaugurated in a former industrial building neighboring Beirut Art Center.



Beirut Art Center, Beirut
©2025 Vit-e

Similarly, in Dubai, the old industrial compound in Al Quoz is now a hub for art galleries. Since 2010, the area has seen a gradual influx of art spaces drawn in due to cheaper rental prices. In 2021, this transformation was supported by the Dubai government, where an Al Quoz accelerators workshop was launched through collaboration between Dubai Municipality, Dubai Tourism, Roads, and Transport Authority, with the aim of supporting creative businesses in the area. One district in the compound, known as Alserkal Avenue, presents as a successful case for this purpose. Run privately, it originally consisted of 39 warehouses and is now a mix of industrial business and creative spaces, housing over 60 art, design, and other creative venues. It also hosts the Alserkal Arts Foundation, offering a residency program for artists inside the district.

Examples from across these cities illustrate the variety of regeneration typologies that exist in the Arab world when it comes to rehabilitating former industrial sites and, in doing so, provide spaces that benefit both the community and support sustainable land management practices in the city.



Al Serkal Avenue, Dubai
©2023 Near+Far



Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
©2017 Argaam

White Land Tax as a Catalyst for Urban Development in Saudi Arabian Cities

Land governance and management is incomplete without a compatible regulatory framework to govern its financial and institutional aspects. This article discusses the role of regulatory measures such as taxation, on urban development trends and practices within a city. This is particularly necessary to explore in the context of Arab cities, where the framework for urban land tax is not as comprehensive as it may be in the context of other large cities. Nevertheless, there are pioneering initiatives across Arab cities, one of them being the White Land Tax in Saudi Arabia, that emerges as the first of its kind in the region.

The White Land Tax is a tax levied by the Ministry of Housing on vacant lands in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Vacant land in this context means land that is not developed for its purposes in accordance with the relevant laws and regulations applicable to it. According to the National Housing Service Company, the primary aim of this tax is not only to raise additional income but rather to correct the situation of the market and increase the supply of developed lands. In doing so, this tax will achieve a balance between supply and demand in the real estate sector. An additional objective is to limit monopolization of the sector, protect fair competition between stakeholders, and ensure that the provision of residential land is set at a

reasonable price for the public. It is expected that the implementation of this tax will encourage some developers to speed up the process of developing their lands or selling them.

The tax is in the form of an annual levy on vacant plots, calculated at 2.5% of the value of the land that has been designated for residential or commercial use, is located within the urban limits, and is owned by one or more natural or non-governmental legal persons. The government has formulated a set of regulations governing the process by which this tax is to be implemented. It specifies the timeline for incremental taxation, the criteria for determining whether a parcel of land qualifies for this tax, the procedures to be set in place to prevent tax evasion, the agencies that are responsible for tax collection, as well as the system through which landowners are to be notified regarding the decisions issued against them. To streamline and create an efficient implementation system, the regulation also mandates that a database be established which contains all information related to tax applications.

The implementation of the tax is planned to be carried out in three stages, starting with the first stage, where tax is imposed on vacant plots of 10,000 square meters or more that are not developed, i.e. lands whose owners and developers have not serviced it with basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, drainage. In the second phase, even developed lands are targeted if they cover an area of 10,000 square meters or more. Also, the tax is imposed on individuals if the sum of the areas of the unbuilt land they own is 10,000 square meters or more. The third stage brings down the size of single taxable unbuilt lands to as low as 5,000 square meters. Failure to pay within the specified period may result in a fine of up to 100% of the fee value.

The first stage of the tax implementation plan began in 2016, starting with the larger cities, specifically, Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam. In total this stage generated 1.4 billion Saudi Riyals (USD 373 million). In 2018, a local investment company reported that 327 plots in Riyadh were issued the tax bill, prompting the development of up to 3 million square meters of land in the city. The collected tax amount is allocated for expenditure on housing projects, public utilities, and public services.

Between 2017 and 2021, the first stage of the tax was also applied to the cities of Makkah, Madina, Asir, Jazan, Taif, Tabuk, and Ahsa. In 2022, the second stage of the tax was applied to Riyadh, followed by Jeddah, Makkah, and Dammam in 2023. In 2023, it was also reported that the taxation rate may gradually increase from 2.5% to up to 10% of the estimated value of the land.

While the implementation of financial regulations to direct development and real estate patterns in a city serves a useful purpose, it requires comprehensive foresight and planning to ensure it achieves the desired goals. As the first such initiative in Saudi Arabia, the White Land Tax is gradually moving forward with its objectives. However, it does face challenges in the form of tax collection, which is largely linked to developer perception and trust, as well as awareness. Nevertheless, it is evident in the design of the tax that it has been developed for the sake of public interest, in that, it is not applied to smaller plots and therefore not a financial burden on small landowners.

OUR NEWS

AUDI AND RIYADH MUNICIPALITY PARTNER FOR THE LARGEST EVENT: AECD

The **ARAB EUROPEAN CITIES DIALOGUE** is an inter-regional initiative that fosters collaboration and networking between mayors and other representatives of Arab and European cities, alongside international and financing organizations. It aims to contribute to the dynamic between the Arab region and Europe by harnessing the potential of cities' diplomacy and partnerships for resilient and sustainable development.

- **Cities Cooperation**
- **Livable Cities & Environment**
- **Technology & Digital Transformation**
- **Municipal Financial Sustainability**

EXCHANGE
With **45+**
SPECIALIZED ORGANIZATIONS
Innovative Urban Policies And Practices

DISCOVER
20+
LARGE SCALE PROJECTS
In Riyadh, a city in transformation

CONNECT
With **120+**
MAYORS
Of major cities from Arab and European regions

ENGAGE
With **25+**
FUNDS
To capture investment and development opportunities for cities



ARAB EUROPEAN CITIES DIALOGUE
Riyadh 2025

Arab European Cities Dialogue

11-13 MAY 2025
RIYADH,
SAUDI ARABIA



"Bridging Cities, Building Futures"

Hosted by:
أمانة منطقة الرياض
RIYADH REGION MUNICIPALITY

Organized by:
المعهد العربي لإنماء المدن
Arab Urban Development Inst.
PLATFORMA
CILG

AUDI STRENGTHENS CITY DIPLOMACY AND COOPERATION IN MOROCCO

A high-level delegation from the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) and the Riyadh Municipality recently visited Casablanca and Tangier, reinforcing international collaboration among Arab cities and beyond.

Strengthening International Collaboration in Casablanca

During the visit to Casablanca, AUDI and Riyadh Municipality representatives engaged with senior political officials from the Municipality of Casablanca. The discussions focused on the growing importance of city diplomacy in urban development, emphasizing how Arab cities can strengthen international cooperation through shared projects and knowledge exchange. The meeting underscored the need for collaborative initiatives among Arab cities and global counterparts, addressing diverse urban challenges through topic-based and project-based connections. Additionally, the delegation explored key urban regeneration projects and public spaces in Casablanca, gaining valuable insights into the city's development strategies.

Active Participation in the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Arab Towns Organization in Tangier

In Tangier, AUDI was warmly welcomed by the host of the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Arab Towns Organization (ATO), the Municipality of Tangier. The event was attended by the Mayor of Tangier, Mounir [Last Name], who also serves as the President of the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMFCC).

On the first day, AUDI participated in the meeting of associations under ATO, where it presented an overview of its key projects and activities undertaken throughout 2024. The discussions led to a landmark agreement to enhance collaboration between associations, with the objective of strengthening municipal work across the Arab world.

The second day of the event featured the Executive Committee meeting, gathering representatives from multiple cities. High-ranking municipal leaders and mayors from across the network actively participated, reaffirming their commitment to fostering stronger inter-municipal cooperation.

Memorandum of Understanding to Enhance Municipal Cooperation

A significant milestone of the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AUDI and the Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMFCC). The agreement outlines cooperation in several key areas, including development projects, training and capacity-building initiatives, urban research and policy, and participation in international events. This MoU marks a step forward in strengthening the ties between AUDI and Moroccan municipalities, reinforcing a shared vision for sustainable urban development in the region.

AUDI's participation in these strategic meetings in Morocco underscores its dedication to fostering stronger city-to-city ties, promoting knowledge exchange, and advancing urban development policies across the Arab world and beyond.

AUDI AND AMPCC SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

About MAPCC

The Moroccan Association of Presidents of Communal Councils (AMPCC) was established in 2013 on the sidelines of the 4th World Congress of United Cities and Local Governments. This Association represents the locally elected officials of 1,503 communities across 12 entities in the Kingdom of Morocco.

Key Areas of Collaboration:

Collaboration on joint development projects through sharing expertise and essential data for management and implementation.

Collaboration in training and capacity building through organizing joint programs and workshops aimed at city planning and development professionals.

Collaboration in studies and consultations on urban development, with a focus on participating in specialized initiatives and events.



AUDI AND AMPCC Sign Cooperation Agreement
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AUDI PARTICIPATES IN THE 62ND SESSION OF ARAB TOWNS ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN TANGIER

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) participated in the 62nd session of the Executive Council of the Arab Towns Organization (ATO) held in Tangier, Morocco, from January 31 to February 3, 2025. The session witnessed the presence of Arab cities' mayors and heads of municipalities.

AUDI took part in the first day's meetings, highlighting its core visions, projects, and activities carried out in 2024. These productive discussions led to several agreements aimed at strengthening collaboration among relevant entities to enhance



AUDI AND AMPCC Sign Cooperation Agreement
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municipal work across various Arab countries. On the second day, the sessions featured an Executive Committee meeting, bringing together representatives from different Arab cities.

Over the course of the meeting, which was attended by the Secretary General of (ATO), H.E. Eng. Abdulrahman Hisham Al-Asfour, Mr. Mounir Limouri, Mayor and President of (MAPCC) , as well as several Arab cities' mayors and heads of municipalities, the municipal leaders and mayors expressed their strong commitment to expanding cooperation among Arab municipalities and taking joint action to address the growing urban challenges.

On the sidelines of the meeting, AUDI's Director General, H.E. Dr. Anas Al-Mughairy, and Mr. Mounir Limouri, Mayor of Tangier and President of (MAPCC) signed a strategic cooperation agreement that covers the sharing of expertise and consultations in the areas of establishing institutional capacity for cities, implementing urban development policy programs, and participating in relevant global events.

This agreement is a critical strategic move toward strengthening ties between AUDI and Arab municipalities, and it will contribute to achieving a common vision for the urban development of cities.

For its part, AUDI emphasized that its participation in these events indicates its continued commitment to improving collaboration among Arab cities, sharing knowledge, expertise, and skills, and promoting urban development policies.



AUDI AND AMPCC Sign Cooperation Agreement
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AUDI VISITS CASABLANCA TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

As part of its commitment to enhance partnerships between Arab cities and leading regional institutions in urban development areas, a delegation comprising the Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) and Riyadh Region Municipality paid a visit to the Municipality of Casablanca, during the delegation's official visit to the city.

During the visit, the AUDI's Director General, H.E. Dr. Anas Al-Mughairy met with senior members of the Municipality Council, where they explored the significance of launching cooperation initiatives between Arab and international cities through partnerships based on specific plans and projects that contribute to tackling common urban challenges.

Furthermore, both parties showcased strategic visions of some major projects related to urban development and the creation of public spaces across Casablanca.

This visit comes within the framework of the Arab Urban Development Institute's commitment to strengthening partnerships and supporting cooperation between cities, which contributes to achieving urban development.

Of note, the Casablanca visit comes under the AUDI's solid commitment to strengthen partnerships and foster collaboration among cities, both of which contribute to urban development.



AUDI Visits Casablanca to Strengthen International Cooperation in Urban Development
©2025 Municipality of Casablanca

AUDI ISSUES ITS ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2024

The Arab Urban Development Institute has published its annual report for 2024, that highlights the main achievements and activities implemented during the past year. The report aims to present the Institute's priority actions, that strengthen its role in supporting and developing the urban development agenda in Arab cities.

In this report, the Institute confirms its commitment to its strategic objectives, which include contributing to urban studies and policy development, as well as providing specialized training for young leadership and building the capacities of cities to meet modern urban challenges. The Institute also focuses on building an effective network between Arab cities and global organizations with the intent to promote joint cooperation in urban development practices.



AUDI Annual Report 2024
©2025 Arab Urban Development Institute

The report is structured along our three key programs, which include:

- Urban Policy Program: This includes the Urban Development Portal, the Urban Living Lab, Urban Development Practices Reports, the Urban Development Barometer in Arab Cities, the newsletter "Mudununa", and the "Cities in Action Webinar" series.
- Training and capacity development: This includes specialized capacity development initiatives, the Executive Program in Innovation and Urban Management, and training programs in municipal development.
- Partnerships and Cooperation program: This includes the signing of 10 local and international cooperation agreements, as well as expanding cooperation in the field of urban development.

The report also highlights a number of foundational initiatives that focus on attracting experts and advisors in urban policy, and establishing a database of best practices and expertise in urban development. It also reviews plans to expand the Institute's communication and international relations activities in order to enhance its global presence, serving as a leading example across all domains of urban development.



AUDI Annual Report 2024

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LAUNCH OF REPORT ON DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ARAB MUNICIPALITIES

On February 9, 2025, AUDI will launch a report on Municipalities and Digital Transformation in Arab Cities: An Institutional Development Perspective, which addresses the various aspects of digital transformation taking place in Arab cities. The report discusses a strategic framework that reflects the opportunities and challenges faced by these cities in their efforts towards digital transformation and recommends actions and strategies to help them achieve a their ambitions regarding the management of cities through technology.

The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of digital transformation in many Arab cities, focusing on the importance of strategy development and leadership, internal processes, human resources and skills, finance, and stakeholder collaboration as key pillars to ensure a successful and impactful digital transformation. It also highlights the use of digital technologies to improve resource management and service provisions, and enhance community engagement. This report is an important step towards enhancing the use of digital technologies in the development of Arab cities and aims to inspire municipalities to benefit from the lessons learned from these experiences to improve their digital strategies and enhance their institutional efficiency.



Digital Transformation in Arab Municipalities
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AUDI ORGANIZES A SERIES OF SPECIALIZED TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Training Program on Local Economic Development Planning: Concepts and Implementation Mechanisms in Municipalities

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) in collaboration with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR International), which leverages its expertise in local governance and administrative development to help municipalities further enhance their capacity to implement these concepts, co-organized a virtual training program titled (Local Economic Development Planning: Concepts and Implementation Mechanisms in Municipalities).

Over 45 municipality officials from four Arab countries, including Jordan, Syria, Morocco, and Libya, attended the program to address Local Economic Development (LED) topics and tools used in implementing them in these countries' municipalities.

The program highlighted the role of municipalities in driving local economic development and fostering inclusive growth, emphasizing the need to incorporate social justice into development initiatives.

Furthermore, the program featured a range of objectives, including:

Understanding the interconnection of development factors: Help participants recognize the links between economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects within the context of local development.



INLOG-MENA Fostering Local Economic Development Online Training Session Highlights
©2025 Arab Urban Development Institute

Encouraging sustainable economic development: Equip participants with the required knowledge and skills to leverage local economic development for realizing long-term, inclusive growth.

Implementing effective strategies: Create practical strategies to drive local economic growth while maintaining social and environmental sustainability.

This program is regarded as an invaluable opportunity for participants from four countries' municipalities to strengthen their skills in the field of local economic development, resulting in improved municipal performance and support for local communities through innovative and sustainable strategies.

Training Program on (Municipal Investment and Privatization of Services)

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) organized a training program titled (Municipal Investment and Privatization of Services), to improve municipal personnel's capacities in municipal investment management and financial sustainability achievement.

The three-day training program, attended by 30 trainees from the Najran Municipality, focused on how to effectively use municipal assets, whether movable or immovable, by identifying and evaluating them, as well as making appropriate investment decisions or using the assets to maximize value.

The three-day training program, attended by 30 trainees from the Najran Municipality, focused on how to successfully use municipal assets, whether movable or immovable, by identifying and analyzing them, making suitable investment decisions, and maximizing asset value.

The program featured a review of investment plans that are aligned with the state or city's strategies, and it aimed at elevating the participants' awareness of various financing options such as collaborations with the private sector or privatization. It also provided hands-on training in the preparation of economic feasibility studies and risk assessments, with a focus on evaluating costs and revenues to ensure that informed strategic decisions are taken.

The training program's key goals and objectives were as follows:

- Enhance the municipal personnel's knowledge of municipal investment concepts and privatization of services.
- Develop investment decision-making skills dependent on feasibility and risk analysis.
- Align investment strategies with national and local development goals.
- Improve municipal performance through efficient finance strategies.

Of note, this training program is part of AUDI's collaborative efforts with municipalities and cities across the Arab region, and it is intended to enable participants to properly use municipal resources, helping to improve public service provision and achieve financial sustainability in cities.



INLOG-MENA Fostering Local Economic Development Online Training Session Highlights
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Training Program on (Developing Terms of Reference and Managing Contracts for Construction Projects)

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) held a virtual training program titled (Developing Terms of Reference and Managing Contracts for Construction Projects), to provide trainees with a comprehensive understanding of the components of the terms of reference (ToRs), as well as the procedures for drafting them in a way that strikes a balance between the contractual parties' interest in construction projects. The program also highlighted the most essential contractual regulations and rules that govern contract management in the construction sector.

Improve municipal personnel's capacities in municipal investment management and financial sustainability achievement.

The training program's key goals and objectives were as follows:

- Allow participants to prepare terms of reference and technical and legal requirements in an accurate and professional manner.
- Improve contract management skills and abilities efficiently, with a focus on the management of modifications and risks.
- Make participants aware of the international and local standards and laws governing construction project implementation.
- Develop the skills and abilities to settle conflicts and ensure successful project implementation.

This training program is regarded as a crucial opportunity for Najran Municipality construction professionals to improve their contract preparation and project management skills and abilities, hence improving institutional performance and increasing project implementation efficiency.

Launching the Mentoring Training Program for Municipal Leaders: Strengthening the Administrative and Leadership Abilities of Mayors and Heads of Municipalities

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) launched a specialized mentoring training program for mayors and heads of municipalities, to boost municipal leaders' administrative and leadership skills by using the knowledge and expertise of municipal-specific educators.

The training was delivered remotely (online) in five training sessions and was overseen by experts with experience in municipal leadership, including former and current mayors and city administrators from Arab and other countries. The program comprised fundamental topics aimed at empowering municipal leaders in various critical areas, such as:

- The balanced partnership between the Municipalities, the local community, and partners.
- Investment partnerships within the Municipalities.
- Strategies for the development of municipal work.
- Development of institutional performance (assessment of performance and human resources development).

Enhance the presence of the Municipality in international organizations and events at the local, regional, and global levels.

The program's key goals and objectives included the following:

- Improve the administrative and leadership abilities of mayors and heads of municipalities.
- Keep municipal leaders informed about mayors' and directors' experiences in foreign cities.
- Assist municipal leaders in identifying work priorities within the Municipality's strategic framework.
- Keep up with the latest global trends in municipal work.

This program allows municipal leaders to broaden their skills and abilities while learning from worldwide experiences and innovations in the field of municipal work.

Webinar

CITIES IN ACTION: DEALING WITH WATER CRISES IN ZAHLEH, LEBANON

The Arab Urban Development Institute (AUDI) organized its eighth session of the Cities in Action webinar series on Tuesday evening,24 Jumada al-Awwal 1446 AH, corresponding to November 26, 2024, in the presence of multiple specialists and professionals interested in urban development affairs.

Dr. Abdulla Difalla, moderator of the webinar and Professor of Urban Planning, began the session with an overview of the webinar series and highlighted its importance in enriching the discussion on urban development across all Arab cities. He also stressed that the benefit of these sessions lies in identifying pioneering urban development projects and exchanging ideas on mechanisms and the elements of success.



ضيف اللقاء

د. ليال ابي أسبر

مهندسة بيئية، أخصائية في التغير المناخي وإدارة الموارد المائية.

لقاء افتراضي بعنوان

التعامل مع أزمات المياه الناتجة عن التحول المناخي في المدن

مدينة زحلة في لبنان أنموذجًا

Webinar on dealing with water crises in Zahleh, Lebanon
©2025 Arab Urban Development Institute

The meeting began with a presentation by Lyali Abi Asbar, an environmental engineer specializing in climate change and sustainable environmental management, working as a climate change specialist at the UN-Habitat office in Lebanon.

Eng. Lyali Abi Asbar commenced her talk with an overview on the multiple crisesLebanon has been facing since 2019, beginning with the Syrian exodus through the financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Beirut explosion. It is estimated that the country incurred $7 billion in financial losses resulting from the war in 2024, with major impact on food security and agricultural practices.

She reviewed the UN-Habitat project, initiated in 2021 in Lebanon, which aims to promote adaptation to the water challenges posed by climate change in Lebanon. The regional project had reached its final stages after three years of implementation. It is funded by the Adaptation Fund.

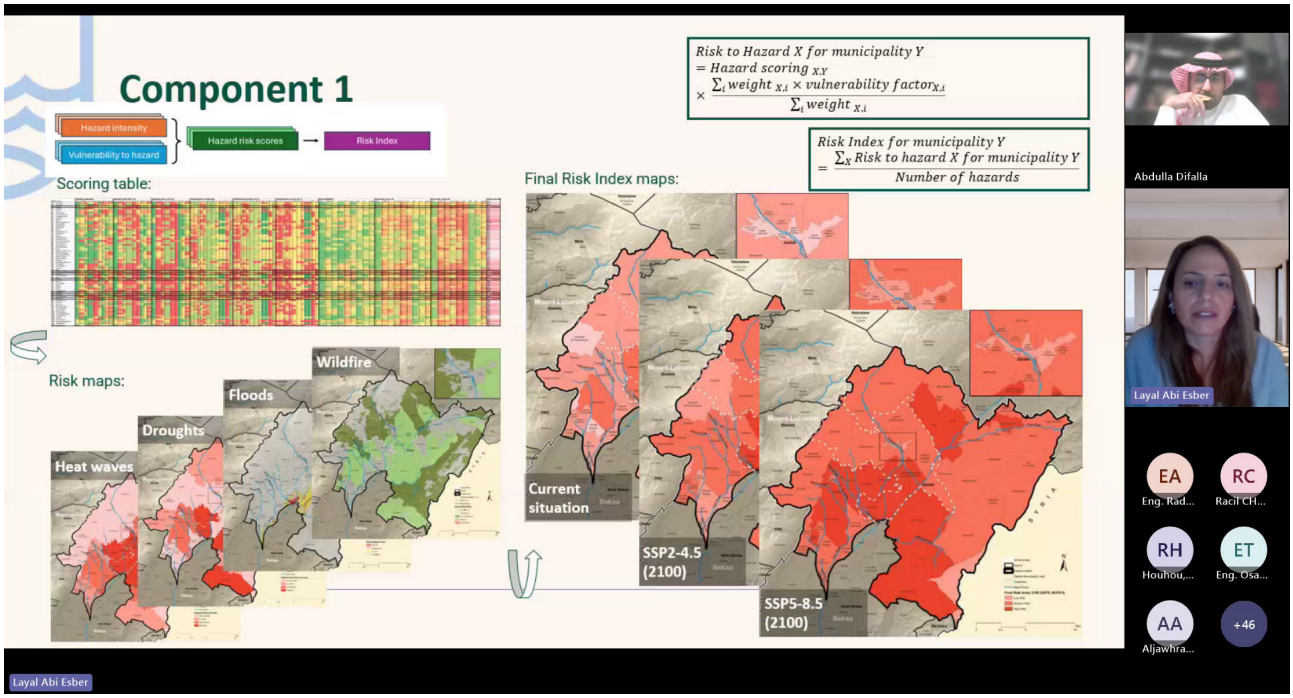
She noted the importance of the Zahlé Region, highlighting the decision to study and carry out activities related to the project. This region is experiencing rapid urbanization and is recognized as a strategic agricultural area in Lebanon; however, it faces significant water management challenges.

She mentioned that the objectives of the project include addressing the growing challenges through four key components, that are, focusing on civic planning, water management, knowledge dissemination, and adaptation to climate change.

She reported on the latest findings, where scenarios for urban expansion such "strategic balance" and "ideal green scenario" have been developed within the framework of improving urban planning in line with climate change.

She stressed that such concrete projects reflected integration in sustainable solutions and a clear mechanism for dealing with the region's environmental and water challenges. This has the potential to improve the quality of life in cities.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Abdulla Difalla thanked the attendees for their interaction and valuable participation, commending the outstanding role of Eng. Lyali Abi Asper in leading this distinguished presentation on dealing with water crises resulting from climate change in cities. He also stressed the importance of continuing these meetings to enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange among specialists in urban development.



Webinar on dealing with water crises in Zahleh, Lebanon
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Webinar

CITIES IN ACTION: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BAIDOA, SOMALIA

The Arab Urban Development Institute organized its ninth session of the Cities in Action webinar series on Tuesday evening, 24 Jumada al-Awwal 1446 AH, corresponding to December 23, 2024, in the presence of multiple specialists and professionals interested in urban development affairs.

Dr. Abdulla Difalla, moderator of the webinar and Professor of Urban Planning, began the session with an overview of the webinar series and highlighted its importance in enriching the discussion on urban development across all Arab cities. He also stressed that the benefit of these sessions lies in identifying pioneering urban development projects and exchanging ideas on mechanisms and the elements of success.



Webinar on Land Management and Sustainable Development in Baidoa, Somalia
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The meeting began with a presentation by His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Ali Watiin, Mayor of Baidoa, Somalia who is an expert in leadership, development, and conflict resolution.

He began by talking about the challenges faced by the Somali city of Baidoa, which had suffered from conflicts, periods of drought, and internal displacement between 1991 and 2012. Following the establishment of the Government of Western Somalia in 2014, the city went through a recovery phase. Mr. Watiin reviewed the mechanism that was developed for dealing with land management and conflict resolution issues, as well as efforts undertaken to address and overcome them.

The mayor stated that Baidoa currently hosts more than 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who migrated from Somalia's rural and central lands, leaving the city facing significant challenges in service provision, resources and land ownership disputes.

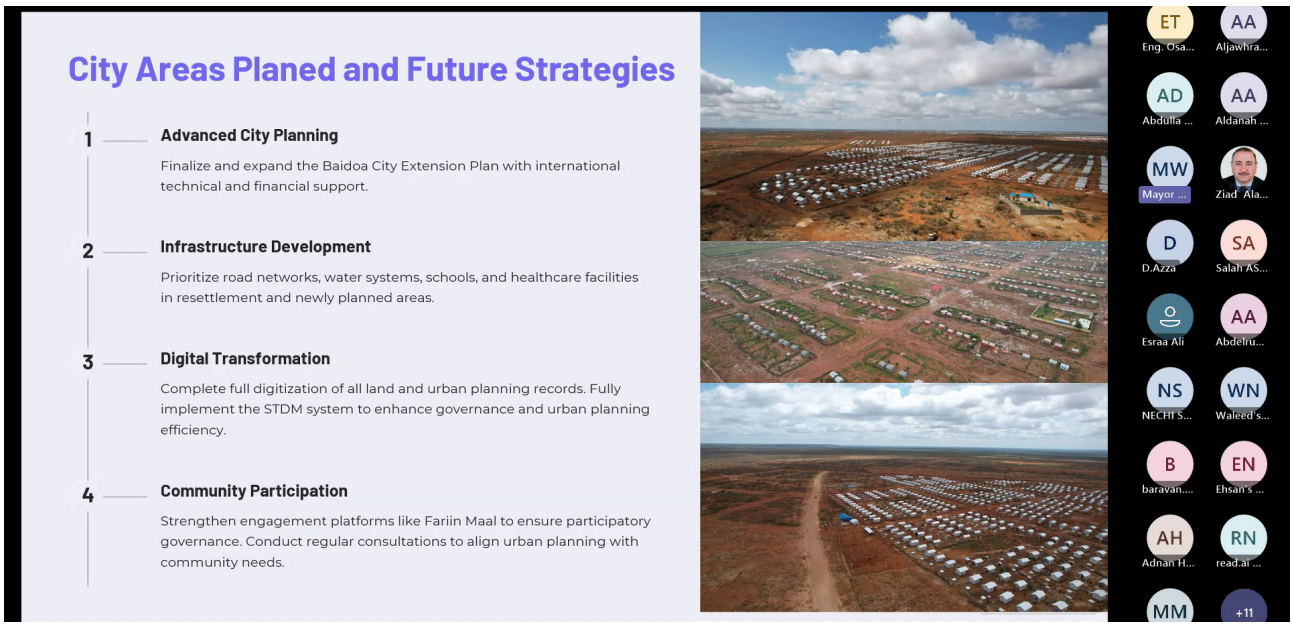
As a result, the reforms took place through cooperation between the Municipality of Baidoaand other development partners such as the UN-Habitat, the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration, with the aim ofproviding sustainable solutions to address the crisis.

The mayor presented the main actions taken bythe municipality of Baidoa to address the challenges. It established a land management section and registered more than 5,000 properties, 70 percent of which benefited internally displaced persons. More than 400 land disputes were also resolved, contributing to the city's stability.

Meanwhile, the municipality allocated 15 square kilometres of land to resettle displaced persons which consisted of 3,416 displaced families. These sites were serviced with basic facilities such as electricity and water, as well as permanent housing. Furthermore, these sites were developed as part of the plan to expand the city of Baidoa, which included the development of comprehensive infrastructure, including markets, roads, health and education facilities, within the framework of the city's comprehensive urban planning strategy.

He summarized the importance of preventive measures for urban growth problems, stressing the need to share experiences between cities globally, and the importance of partnership between governments, communities and international organizations to meet common challenges.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Abdulla Difalla thanked the attendees for their interaction and valuable participation, commending the prominent role played by His Excellency Mayor of Baidoa, Somalia in leading this distinguished presentation on land administration to address challenges of displacement and sustainable development in the city of Baidoa in Somalia . He stressed the importance of continuing these meetings to enhance cooperation and knowledge exchange between specialists in urban development.



Webinar on Land Management and Sustainable Development in Baidoa, Somalia
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Riyadh 11452
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

P.O Box 6892,
Diplomatic Quarter

T. +966114802698
mudununa@araburban.org

araburban.org

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