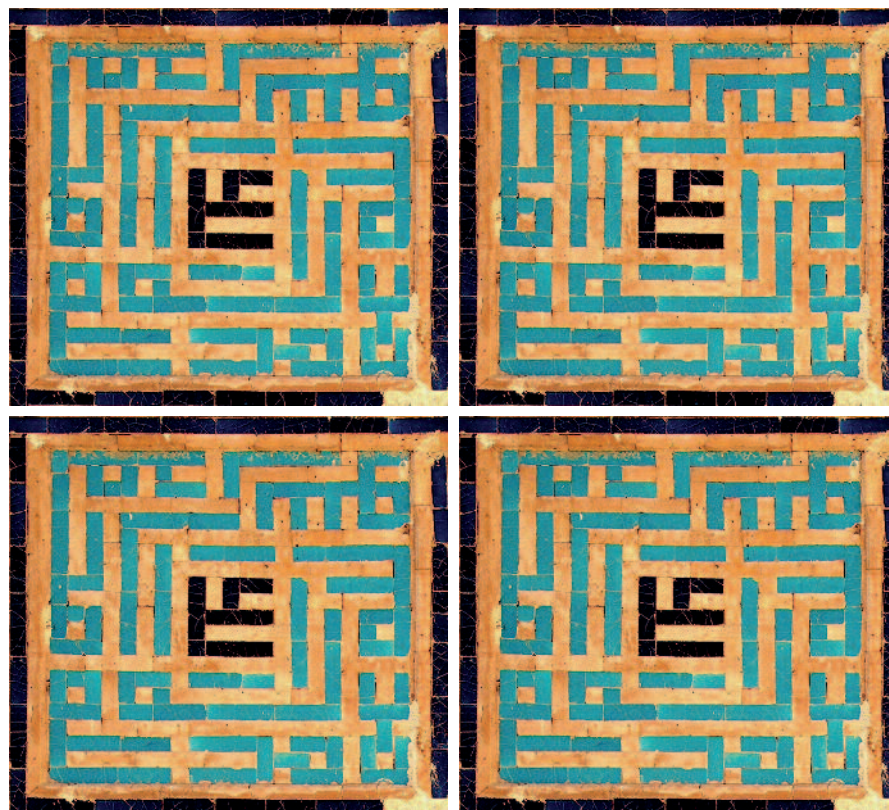


HERAT STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

ماسترپلان راهبردی هرات، چشم اندازی برای آینده



EDIZIONI POLISTAMPA

LAGES – LABORATORIO DI GEOGRAFIA SOCIALE, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE

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Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (DGCS) del Ministero Italiano degli Affari Esteri



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE
SAGAS
DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA,
ARCHEOLOGIA, GEOGRAFIA,
ARTE E SPETTACOLO

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE

SAGAS – Dipartimento di Storia, Archeologia, Geografia, Arte e Spettacolo



LaGeS – Laboratorio di Geografia Sociale



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Urban Development Affairs
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

MUDA Ministry of Urban Development Afghanistan



Government of Herat Province
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



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Introduction

■ This Masterplan project is the result of a long and intense collaborative relationship between the University of Florence and the University, the Department for Urban Development and the Municipal Council of Herat.

This relationship was formally set in motion in 2004 on the initiative of the coordinator of the project, and author of this introduction, who became aware, while conducting research surveys in Herat, of the absolute lack of recent socio-economic and demographic data relating to the city.

Afghanistan's tribulations and complicated history since the late 1970s have, in fact, led to a drastic reduction in room for manoeuvre as far as research is concerned, with a resulting huge gap in knowledge on all aspects that are not strictly military regarding life in the country. By the time the Taleban fell, the country had been deeply transformed; yet it was still a puzzle, not only because of an almost complete lack of reliable data but also because of the difficulty in rebuilding structures capable of managing all the needs of a civil society. It should be borne in mind that the Statistical Yearbook of 2008-09 is the first systematic collection of data that the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of Kabul, the only official statistical organization in the country, has succeeded in publishing – with justifiable pride, given the number of obstacles to overcome – since the conflict.

The construction of an updated information base appeared, then, to be of the utmost urgency for Herat, where a tumultuous expansion process of the urban area was underway. This process, begun during the Taleban period because of the relative security of the city, was subsequently accelerated, generating a profound but problematic transformation of the organization and layout of places (Loda and Hinz, 2008). The construction of a first database on demographic and social dynamics was singled out as the most important aim of the Florence-Herat interuniversity cooperation.

Multiple changes occurred in the absence of any updated instruments for governing the territory. The city's urban policies referred to the old Masterplan, devised at central government level in 1963. This plan was based on an orthogonal grid and envisaged such significant expansion that the Ministry of Culture called for a revision, a request which was only partially met in 1978. In the absence of other instruments, this Masterplan, or rather a combination of Masterplan and a previous plan of 1936, written by a German engineer from Braunschweig Technical University and aspiring to western urban models, effectively influenced the city administration in their day-to-day running of the territory.

Apart from the fact that such plans had little to do with the local context, they were found, after the fall of the Taleban, to be totally inadequate for tackling the new problems of the area. This had a negative effect both on the results and the image of public action.

These considerations fuelled our conviction that the main priority of this coopera-

tion was to ensure the availability of updated instruments for governing the area, both to deal with the new problems arising from the expansion of the city, and to stabilize Herati society according to more ordered and enduring models of civic togetherness.

Thus, the University of Florence developed a special cooperation project which aimed to offer theoretic, methodological and technical support to local entities engaged in the important role of managing the territory, while at the same time offering training to personnel.

In 2011, with the financial support of the *Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (DGCS)* of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in line with the philosophy of decentralization underpinning ANDS (Afghan National Development Strategy), the University of Florence, in conjunction with the Department of Urban Development, the University and Municipal Council of Herat, undertook a systematic programme of analysis and planning of the urban area, aimed at the formulation of a new strategic Masterplan (SMP) for the city of Herat.

As the name suggests, this is a planning approach which, far from being based on a static vision of urban space, is an attempt to harness the most significant aspects of change and development, ensuring, at the same time, the deepest consideration of the specific geographic, cultural and social aspects of the area within a multidisciplinary approach.

The SMP has been created along the following lines:

- *Strategic approach*: the plan is intended as a set of guidelines for the medium and long term, according to a systemic vision of the urban context. The plan takes an overarching perspective, without getting mired in detail, and its strategic strength lies in its internal coherence and hence its ability to generate further levels of operational planning;
- *Multidisciplinary approach*: the plan embraces a wide range of disciplines. Far from being limited to the strictly urban sphere, it encompasses such areas as the social system, the physical environment, mobility, economic prospects, cultural heritage etc., all of which contribute to the creation of the urban environment as a whole;
- *Sustainability*: the plan takes account of the pressing need to pursue sustainable development of the urban system within a context of change influenced by technological development, a globalized economy, environmental emergencies and social and behavioural transformation: in other words, sustainability means safeguarding those factors which are fundamental to urban quality, social well-being and environmental awareness;
- *Sharing*: the plan aims to build a shared vision; through the systematic involvement of the local community and population, as well as competent bodies and stakeholders, the plan aspires to a sustainable city by enhancing what already exists, boosting housing and public spaces, developing the local economy and affirming the concept of the city not as a static space but as an evolving process.

The foundation work for the provision of the new SMP was entrusted to a Training-Planning Team who worked at the Laboratory of social geography (LaGeS) of the University of Florence and took charge of the scientific side of the project.

Provision of the SMP took the form of a sequence of macro-activities of analysis and planning according to the following agenda:

- A. Analysis of the current situation
- B. Construction of scenarios
- C. Definition of development strategies

The first macro-activity was based, as far as the scanty existing material permitted, on the perusal of existing literature and documentation, and was carried out mainly by personnel from the University of Herat. The themes dealt with were the physical environment, economic prospects and cultural heritage. Only for the latter was there already a vast collection of accurate documents, thanks to the hard work carried out in Herat by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, who courteously allowed us access to their data on material heritage.

For many other areas of city life it was necessary to compile the database through direct surveys conducted by personnel in Herat under the direction of the Florentine team; the data was then processed at LaGeS. In particular, the following direct surveys were carried out:

- Household survey
- Mobility survey
- Traffic survey
- Study on the availability and conditions of real estate
- Study on property values
- Study on urban facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.)
- Study on intangible cultural heritage.

Fig. Int.1 Household survey.



Fig. Int.1 Participants in Master in Urban Analysis and Management.



At LaGeS a model was developed of the demographic evolution of the city up to the year 2051 and – through photointerpretation of satellite images – an analysis was carried out on land use in the Herat area, resulting in a useful by-product: digital cartography of the city, updated to September 2011.

The construction of a knowledge base was completed through detailed research conducted by Herati participants, as part either of their training or thesis, in the first cycle of the Master in Urban Analysis and Management at the University of Florence (see list of participants on the cover). These in-depth studies were on specific aspects both in the social area (e.g. employment of minors) and urban planning (e.g. urban standards in satellite towns), as well as transport (e.g. public transportation).

The second macro-activity consisted in the creation of possible evolutionary scenarios based on evidence resulting from the first macro-activity. Consistent with the philosophy of sharing and ensuring pertinence to the local context described above, these scenarios were publicly illustrated and discussed in Herat during a Forum on 2 October 2012. The Forum, in which about 150 people took part, including representatives of city institutions¹ and numerous stakeholders, concluded with a wide-ranging debate. All the members of the public were asked to fill out a questionnaire on their preferences regarding the possible scenarios. In this way, the Forum supplied the strategic indications necessary to proceed to the third and final phase of the planning process.

The third macro-activity consisted in the creation of project documents. Scenarios were selected and choices (strategic lines) identified in relation to a wide systemic context, not only of an urban planning nature but also with a view to a range of disciplines, as well as to sustainability and sharing. Community goals were set for each of the basic dimensions of city life (and for each sub-dimension), through a process of analysing the phenomena, resources and critical areas. The planning documents which emerged from this stage are not detailed implementation plans; neither do they have short-term aims (operational planning). Instead they provide a prelude to, and the foundation for the coherent development of subsequent operational plans (urban planning, mobility and transport, plans for other sectors).

The difficult but exciting process of creating the SMP, as well as of producing an instrument for managing the territory, able to cope with the problems arising from the process of development in this day and age, has generated a healthy series of positive repercussions.

First of all, it has kick-started a process of gathering and organizing data to bridge the main gaps in knowledge of basic aspects that regulate life in the city.

Furthermore, it has provided an extraordinary arena for experience and learning for staff involved in the analytical and planning stages. From this point of view, the parallel processes – on the one hand, preparing the SMP, and on the other offering special training to Herati personnel through the Master in Urban Analysis and Management at the University of Florence – are a particularly successful example of interuniversity cooperation but they also provide an inter-sectorial and integrated model for international cooperation. The public way in which the process was managed and shared provides a benchmark for future cooperative projects, not only involving technical specialists, but also open to the widest layers of civil society.

For the Florentine team and for all the members of LaGeS who have taken part in various ways in the initiative this has been an extraordinary experience. Furthermore, the repercussions of such a project on urban planning methods in developed countries cannot be ignored. The ability to tackle questions of the most pressing urgency and to

¹ Taking part in the Forum were, among others, the governor Dr. Daud Saba and mayor Mr. Salim Taraki, the University rector Prof. Bariz Hossaini, the head of the Department for Urban Development engineer Rashid Mohtasibzada, the president of the Regional Council (Shura Welayati) Dr. Abdul Zaher Faizzade, and five members of the national parliament.

find solutions with minimum waste means that we now look with a critical eye on the tangled procedures which weigh down most of our daily urban planning exercises, and on the plethora of devices used for settling differences.

This proposal is a joint project of the Florentine team. The texts in this book have been written by the following: Mirella Loda: Introduction, I.4, I.5, I.8, II.1.3; Gaetano Di Benedetto: I.1, I.3, II.2.2, II.4 (except II.4.1); Manfred Hinz: I.11.2; Manfred Hinz and Daud Monir: I.11.5; Massimo Preite: I.11.3, I.11.4, II.3, II.4.1, II.2.1, II.2.2, II.6; Massimo Preite and Gabriella Maciocco: II.2.3, II.2.4, II.2.5; Mario Tartaglia: I.6, I.7, I.9, I.10, I.12, II.1.1, II.1.2, II.5; sections I.2.1 and I.2.3 were written by Ghulam Osmani and Abdul Mododi; section I.2.2 by Laila Tabibi and Abdul Mododi.

Having reached the end of this part of the journey we would like to thank, above all, the city of Herat, for the extraordinary welcome we received on all our visits, as well as governor Daud Saba and mayor Salim Taraki for their practical support for our surveys.

We would like to thank the institutions of Herat which so efficiently cooperated with our University, overcoming geographical distance with such ingenious solutions; we thank the outgoing Rector of the University of Herat, Bariz Hossaini and the engineer Rashid Mohtasibzada for the Department for Urban Development.

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NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

■ The building of a knowledge base in the Herati demographic and social context called for wide-ranging direct surveys on the following themes:

- Household survey
- Mobility survey
- Traffic survey
- Study on the availability and conditions of real estate
- Study on property values
- Study on urban facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.)
- Study on intangible cultural heritage.

These surveys were conducted in the period between October 2010 and February 2012, on the basis of methodology and samples selected in September 2010. At that time the area of Herat Municipality was contained in the 10 districts shown in fig. 3.

Subsequently, the Municipality extended outwards to encompass some areas to the south-east of the city (in the current District 6) and above all to the north-west (in the current District 12), cf. fig. 4.



Fig. Int.3 Herati districts 2010.

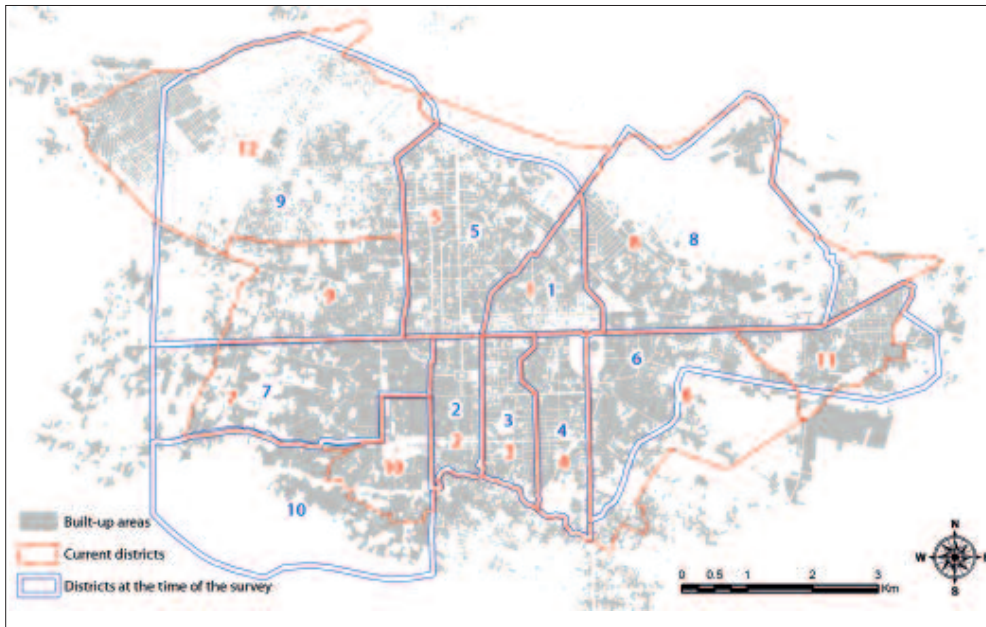


Fig. Int.4 Areas of the current municipal area not covered by the surveys.

These areas, while now part of the municipal area, are not included in the surveys. This explains why in the maps used to illustrate the outcome of the surveys in the following chapters they are without thematic shading although they have been partially urbanized (as highlighted by the grey shading corresponding to built-up areas).