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وزارة الشؤون البلدية والقروية

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY



FUTURE-SAUDI-CITIES

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DRAFT REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

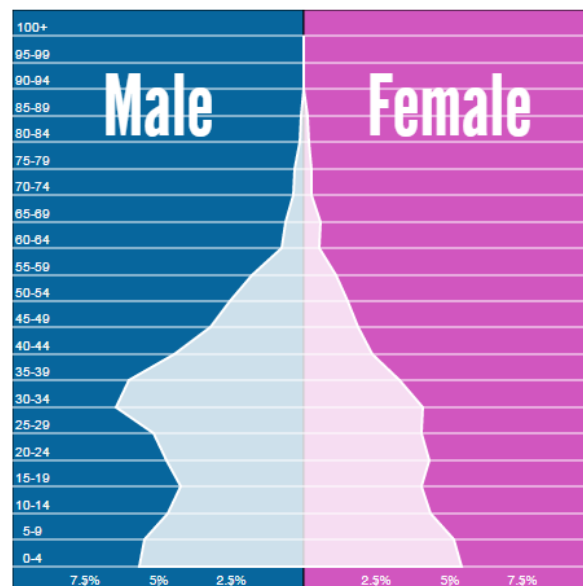
CDSI	Central Department of Statistics and Information
FSCP	Future Saudi Cities Programme
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
IG-UTP	International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MODON	Saudi Industrial Property Authority
MoEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoMRA	Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs
NDP	National Development Plan
NSS	National Spatial Strategy <i>In this report, "NSS" refers to the 2001 version unless otherwise stated</i>
NUF	National Urban Forum
NUP	National Urban Policy
PME	Presidency of Meteorology and Environment
SPAR	Strategic Plan for Arriyadh Region
UGDB	Urban Growth and Development Boundaries

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (FORTHCOMING)

KEY DATA AND FIGURES

	2006	2009	2013
Total Population (millions)	20.1	25.4	28.8
Population Growth (annual %)	2.63	2.72	1.89
Urban Population Growth (annual %)	2.93	3.00	2.15
GDP Growth (annual %)	4.86	5.58	2.67
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	4.95	2.95	1.85
Industry, value added (% of GDP)	53.90	62.88	60.05
Services, etc., value added (% of GDP)	41.14	34.17	38.10
GNI per capita, PPP (current international \$)	29,820	37,500	53,760
Life Expectancy at birth, total (years)	72.6	74.2	75.7
Fertility rate, total (births per woman)	3.99	3.14	2.64
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	22.9	19.2	15.5
Improved Water source (% of pop. with access)	95	97	97
Improved Sanitation facilities (% of pop. with access)	96.8	100	100
Electric Power Consumption (kWh per capita)	5811	6607	8765*
Time required to start a Business (days)	/	42	20.5

Source: World Bank Development Indicators (2015), *data from 2012



Source: www.populationpyramid.net (2010)

1. INTRODUCTION

Inadequate distribution of population, resources and activities has been a concern for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for the past 40 years. The urban population currently accounts for 83% in the Kingdom and it is expected to reach 90% by 2050 (UN World Urbanization Prospects, 2014). More than half of the Saudi population is concentrated within a Western-Eastern corridor comprising the 5 metropolises: Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina and Damman. Economic activities are concentrated in three regions (Riyadh, Mecca and Eastern region) that hosted 74% of the operating businesses country-wide in 2007 (9th National Development Plan, 2010).

The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MoMRA) initiated the first National Spatial Strategy (NSS) in the late 70's to promote a more "balanced development". This NSS was finalized in the early 80's and data and information were only presented at the level of the five Provinces in the Kingdom though. In 1985, it was realized that the basis of the NSS had changed due to the rapid development that had taken place in Saudi society. The MoMRA therefore requested an update of the NSS that culminated in the 1987 version of the NSS. This version displayed data and information (secondary sources, ie no field surveys and studies) at the level of the 14 Emirates unlike the previous version and covered issues related to: natural resources, population and settlement structure, economy, industry and agriculture, social infrastructure, transportation, physical infrastructure, administrative structure and planning process and recent trends and spatial implications.

In 2000, the Council of Ministers approved¹ a new version of the NSS that introduced two new instruments: development corridors and growth centres, as shown in figure 1. This version will be referred to as "the NSS" in this report. The overall objective of the NSS is to *"achieve, over the long run, balanced development between regions on one hand and within regions on the other, with emphasis on integrating rural and urban areas"*. In 2005, the MoMRA undertook a study that aimed at supporting the implementation of the NSS. The study comprised five volumes that form the NSS implementation framework: (1) technical and administrative conception of the project, (2) information analysis, policies and guidelines for the NSS implementation, (3) **XX**, (4) necessary administrative and organizational structures for the NSS implementation, and (5) necessary legal framework for the NSS implementation.

The MoMRA has recently initiated a process to review and revise the NSS with the view to better capturing the current development priorities and future challenges of the Kingdom. The NSS review is one of the key components of the Future Saudi Cities Programme (FSCP), which is a joint partnership between UN-Habitat and MoMRA. The FSCP is covering 17 cities diverse in size and functions that include all the capitals of the 13 Saudi regions. Each of the 17 participating cities presents

¹ Decree No 127 dated 28 August 2000

some specific problems but the root causes are often similar. The FSCP aims at addressing the root causes to unleash the socio-economic potential of Saudi cities in an inclusive and sustainable way.

The NSS review will be structured along a set of three complementary reviews: NSS effectiveness, NSS relevance and NSS integration. The rationale behind this choice is to cover all the key dimensions that could influence the success of the NSS, which means its content (relevance), process (integration) and results (effectiveness). The review of the NSS effectiveness will assess the extent to which the NSS has attained its strategic objectives. The review of the NSS relevance will assess the extent to which the NSS has attained its strategic objectives. The review of the NSS integration will assess the engagement, ownership and uptake of ministries, utilities, regions and cities. The specific approach and methodology for each review is detailed in the concerned chapters. Other dimensions related to efficiency or impacts of the NSS are not covered under this study due to scope limitation and unavailability of data and information.

The NSS review is based on analytical reviews, feedback received from national and local consultations and benchmark with international standards² and practices³. Consultations had been held with ten national agencies and ministries and three pilot cities namely: Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing, Saudi Industrial Property Authority (MODON), Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP), Presidency of Meteorology and Environment, Saudi Health Council, Ministry of Transport (MoT), Ministry of Water and Electricity, Buraydah city, Damman city and Riyadh city. Two tailored questionnaires were developed to guide the consultations at national and local levels. The report also builds on the lessons learnt from the review of selected international experiences on national spatial frameworks as well the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning.

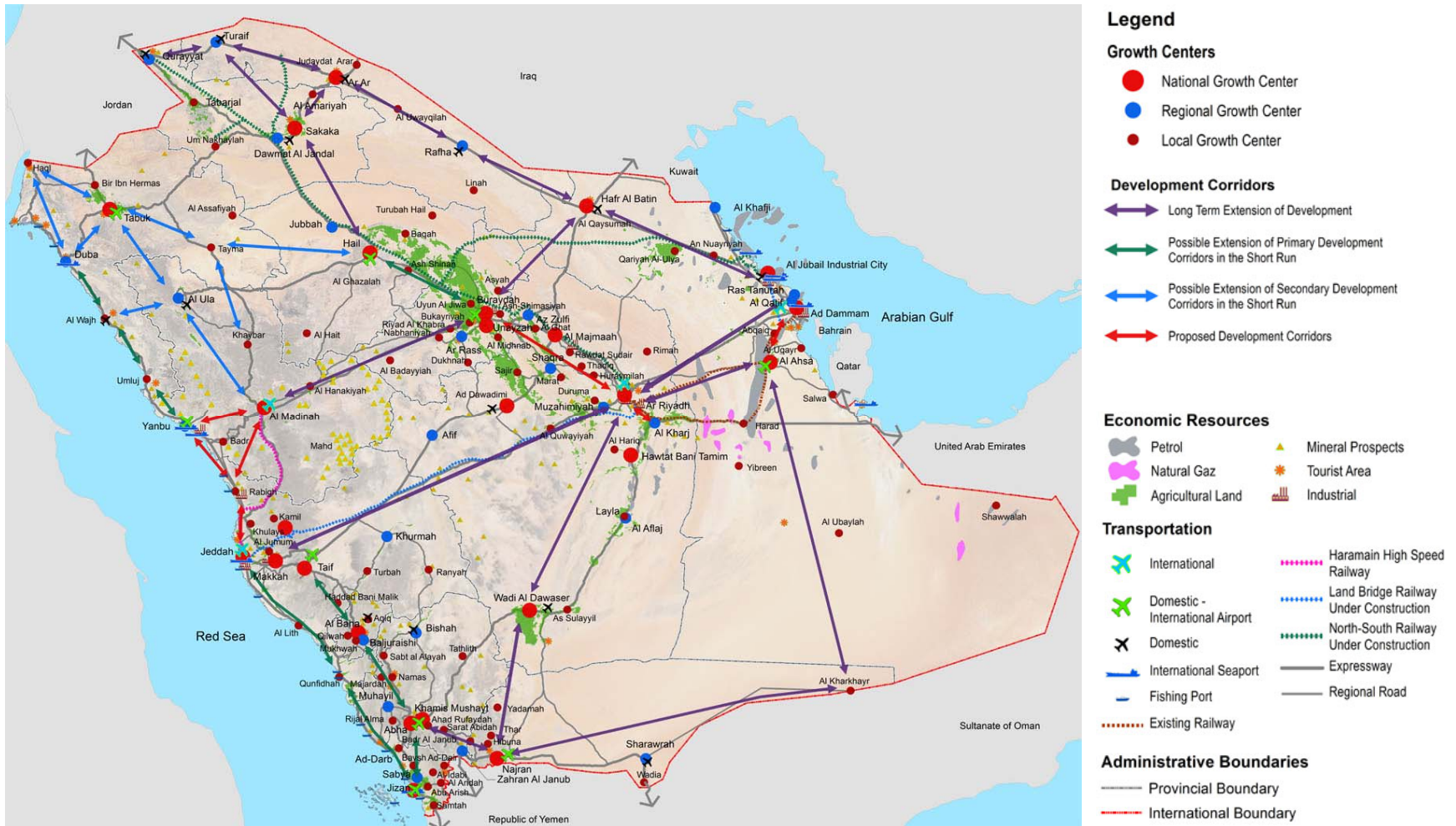
The set of data and documents that have been used to conduct the NSS review are as follows: National Spatial Strategy: report 1 – background papers (1987); Brochure/Executive Summary of the NSS (2001); In-house Summary of the NSS Implementation Framework (2005); National Strategies: Industry (2009), Transport (2011); Executive Summary of Strategic Plan for Arriyadh Region (2012); National Transportation Strategy (2011); FSCP studies and reports: City Prosperity Index and Spatial Capital (2015); UNDP, Report of lessons learnt from international experiences on NSS (2014); Central Department of Statistics and Information (2014); UN World Urbanization Prospects (2014); International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (2015) and Google Earth Imageries.

² International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning approved in April 2015 by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat, which include twelve key principles and a series of action-oriented recommendations that are based on strong evidence, inspiring practices and lessons learnt from various regions and contexts.

³ Lessons learnt from International Experiences on National Spatial Frameworks (2014), study developed under the FSCP that includes five in-depth case studies on the Republic of Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Morocco and China. The case studies cover the whole planning cycle from formulation of plans to implementation, monitoring and evaluation and cover a wide range of issues including legislation, governance and finance.

This report is structured along four main chapters. The introduction presents the context, objectives, scope and methodology of the NSS review. The first, second and third chapters cover respectively the review of the NSS effectiveness, NSS relevance and NSS integration. The fourth chapter proposes a way forward including key recommendations and a roadmap for the NSS revision.

FIGURE 1: National Spatial Strategy (2000)



Source: Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (2001)

2. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE NSS

This chapter on the NSS effectiveness constitutes the first part of the NSS review that will focus on the assessment of the extent to which the NSS has attained its strategic objectives. Whenever possible, the assessment will also look at the major factors that have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the NSS objectives.

The NSS does not include a monitoring and evaluation framework. While undertaking the research, there was no transparent methodology and/or indicators to assess to what extent the objectives of the NSS have been met. Further, key data on economy and finance, such as allocation of national budget per cities/regions, evolution of economic activities along the development corridors, were not easily available to conduct a fully-fledged evaluation. Despite these limitations, it is important to conduct a reality check- exercise to assess where the NSS results stand prior to considering any revision of the NSS.

Spatial distribution of population (across regions and cities) and social services (health and education) will be used as proxies to assess the NSS results since 2000. As mentioned above, it is very challenging to ascertain any causation chain between the NSS objectives and results. It is therefore more relevant to get back to the overall objective of the NSS that is to achieve balanced regional development. This objective assessment will be based on the trends observed while giving a specific attention to evolutions in “lagging regions” and “small and intermediate cities”. On-going studies such as the City Prosperity Index and the review of city plans might further complement and strengthen this assessment later on.

The assessment of the NSS effectiveness will be structured along three sections namely:

- (1) Distribution of population across regions;
- (2) Distribution of population across urban agglomerations;
- (3) Distribution of health and education facilities across regions.

2.1 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION ACROSS REGIONS

The NSS includes a specific objective (No 1) on distribution of population that reads as follows: “Promoting a spatially balanced pattern of population distribution on national space”. The analysis in this section will look at the evolution of the distribution of population across regions between 2000 (pre-NSS) and 2014 (post-NSS). The section 2.2 hereafter will then focus on the evolution of the distribution of population across urban agglomerations to capture demographic and migration dynamics within regions.

The total population in KSA increased from 20.8 million in 2000 to 30.8 million in 2014⁴ supported both by natural growth and external migration. The overall fertility rate (total births per woman) has dropped from 3.99 in 2000 to 2.64 in 2013⁵. The non-Saudi population has grown from 5.3 million in 2000 to 10.1 million in 2014 (+91%) while the Saudi population has grown from 15.6 million to 20.7 million (+33%) over the same period.

The overall distribution of population across regions has slightly changed between 2000 and 2014⁶, as shown in figure 2. In other words, the demographic weight of each region hardly changed for the past 15 years. The maximum variation is observed in Al Riyadh region that counted for 25% of the total population in 2000 which increased to 27% in 2014 (ie +3 million inhabitants approximately). Over the 2000-2014 period, the demographic weight of the Eastern region has increased (+1%) while it has decreased in the regions of Al Qassim, Al Baha and Asir have (-1%). The demographic weight of the other eight regions remained stable.

The non-Saudi population has grown faster than the Saudi population in all regions of the Kingdom between 2000 and 2014⁷, as shown in table 1. Over the 2014-2019 period, the non-Saudi population tripled in Jazan and at least doubled in four regions namely: Northern Borders (+127%), Eastern Region and Najran (+101%) and Al Riyadh (+100%). One should note that the increase of non-Saudi population is more prominent within the bordering regions, which is somehow in line with the 9th objective of the NSS “Fostering development within border cities due to their importance for national security”.

Overall, the pattern of population distribution across regions tend to stabilize with half of the total population located in Al Riyadh and Makkah regions and the other half spread across the other regions. However, these two regions host four out of the five metropolises of the Kingdom (Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca and Damman) and most of its economic, strategic and political functions. Though the NSS has not reversed the pattern of population distribution across regions, it has contributed to avoid an over-concentration of population in “leading regions”.

⁴ Central Department of Statistics and Information (2010 & 2014)

⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators (2015)

⁶ Central Department of Statistics and Information (2010 & 2014)

⁷ *ibid*

TABLE 1: Evolution of Saudi and non-Saudi Population across Regions (2000-2014)

REGIONS	2000		2014		Evolution 2000-2014	2000		2014		Evolution 2000-2014	2000		2014		Evolution 2000-2014
	Total Pop.	% of Total Pop.	Total Pop.	% of Total Pop.		non- Saudi Pop.	% of non- Saudi Pop.	non- Saudi Pop.	% of non- Saudi Pop.		Saudi Pop.	% of Saudi Pop.	Saudi Pop.	% of Saudi Pop.	
MAKKAH	5 448 773	26%	7 897 975	26%	45%	1 893 213	35%	3 342 976	42%	77%	3 555 560	65%	4 554 999	58%	28%
AL RIYADH	4 730 330	23%	7 717 467	25%	63%	1 477 601	31%	2 962 520	38%	100%	3 252 729	69%	4 754 947	62%	46%
EASTERN REGION	3 008 913	14%	4 650 183	15%	55%	721 869	24%	1 450 762	31%	101%	2 287 044	76%	3 199 421	69%	40%
AL MADINAH	1 378 870	7%	2 012 749	7%	46%	317 779	23%	615 604	31%	94%	1 061 091	77%	1 397 145	69%	32%
AL QASSIM	979 858	5%	1 370 727	4%	40%	188 927	19%	343 223	25%	82%	790 931	81%	1 027 504	75%	30%
ASIR	1 637 464	8%	2 145 733	7%	31%	208 193	13%	385 239	18%	85%	1 429 271	87%	1 760 494	82%	23%
TABOUK	593 706	3%	887 383	3%	49%	85 825	14%	155 725	18%	81%	507 881	86%	731 658	82%	44%
HAIL	519 984	2%	670 468	2%	29%	70 301	14%	131 309	20%	87%	449 683	86%	539 159	80%	20%
NORTHERN BORDERS	249 544	1%	359 297	1%	44%	27 591	11%	62 522	17%	127%	221 953	89%	296 775	83%	34%
JAZAN	1 083 022	5%	1 533 496	5%	42%	100 565	9%	310 555	20%	209%	982 457	91%	1 222 941	80%	24%
NAJRAN	385 588	2%	568 631	2%	47%	61 319	16%	123 293	22%	101%	324 269	84%	445 338	78%	37%
AL BAHA	476 382	2%	461 360	1%	-3%	42 179	9%	75 546	16%	79%	434 203	91%	385 814	84%	-11%
AL JOUF	354 450	2%	494 906	2%	40%	62 717	18%	108 565	22%	73%	291 733	82%	386 341	78%	32%
T O T A L	20 846 884	100%	30 770 375	100%	48%	5 258 079	100%	10 067 839	100%	91%	15 588 805	100%	20 702 536	100%	33%

Source: Central Department of Statistics and Information (2010 & 2014) and UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

2.2 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION ACROSS URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS

For the purpose of this analysis, three classes of urban agglomerations have been defined: metropolises (5), secondary cities (9) and small and intermediate cities⁸. Taking 2015 as a reference year, the metropolises include urban agglomerations with more than one million inhabitants, the secondary cities include urban agglomerations with population between 300,000 and one million inhabitants and small and intermediate cities include urban agglomerations with less than 300,000 inhabitants. Urban agglomeration refers to the definition commonly used by the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects (2014).

The demographic weight of the five metropolises has grown over the past 15 years to reach 49% of the Saudi population in 2015, as shown in figure 4. Meanwhile, the demographic weight of the small and intermediate cities dropped from 43% in 2000 to 36% in 2015⁹ while the demographic weight of secondary cities moved from 14% in 2000 to 15% in 2015. The main factor underlying this trend is the significant average growth (both natural and migration) of Riyadh and Jeddah, respectively +4% and +3% annually over the past 15 years.

The primacy of the five metropolises is not unusual when compared to other big and highly urbanized countries in Latin America for instance, as shown in figure 3. The Total Primacy Index (TPI)¹⁰ had evolved from 16% in 1985 to 26% in 2015 (see table 2), which shows an increased concentration of people in Riyadh over time. This value is comparable in Buenos Aires, Argentina or Santiago, Chile as shown in figure 3. Further, the Four City Primacy Index (FCPI)¹¹, which had evolved from 0.41 in 1985 to 0.47 in 2015 (see table 2), highlights a distribution of the urban population very close to the rank-size rule¹² and thus does not highlight a high-level of urban primacy.

It is also worth to zoom out and note that the population growth in metropolises and secondary cities has followed the same pattern since 1985¹³ as shown in table 3. In average, the population of metropolises had increased by 82% between 1985 and 1995 while the population secondary cities had increased by 73% during the same period. These figures had subsequently dropped by almost half between 2000 and 2010 for metropolises (+41%) and secondary cities (+38%). A similar trend -ie a decrease by half of the population growth- is expected to occur between 2015 and 2025.

FIGURE 3: Urban Primacy measured by TPI in Latin America and the Caribbean (2010)

⁸ The FSCP is covering the five metropolises, seven out of the nine secondary cities (except Al Jubail and Hafar Al Batin) and five small and intermediate cities namely: Quatif, Sakaka, Arar, Jazan and Abha.

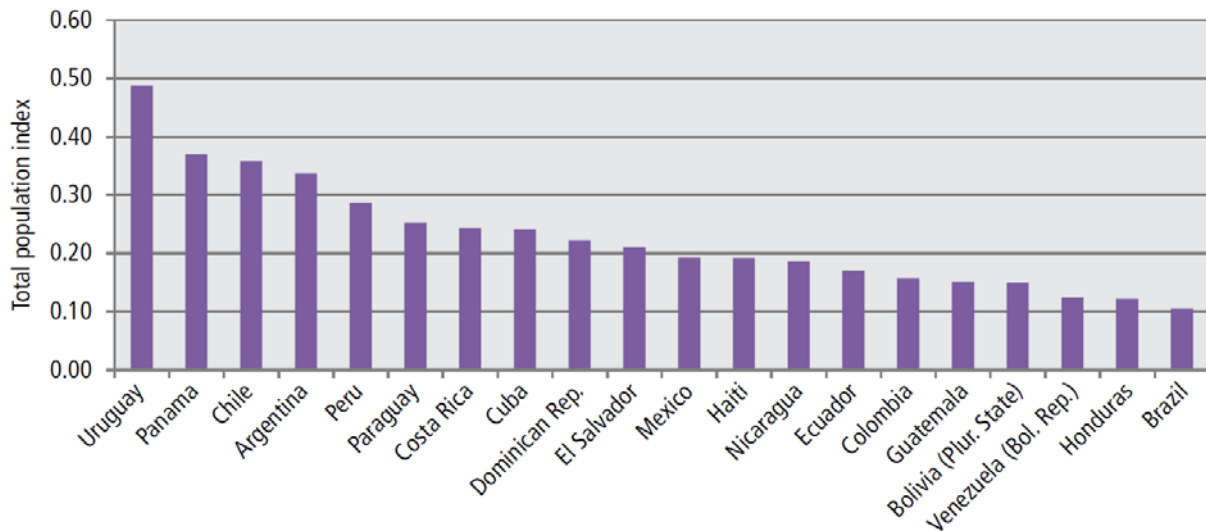
⁹ UN World Urbanization Prospects (2014)

¹⁰The TPI is calculated as follows: $P1/Total\ urban\ population$ where P1 is the population of the primate city

¹¹ The FCPI is calculated as follows: $P1/(P1+P2+P3+P4)$ where P1 is the population of the primate city and P2, P3 and P4 are the population of the next 3 cities.

¹² If cities are distributed according to the rank-size rule (ie $P1= 2 \times P2$; $P1= 3 \times P3$; $P1=4 \times P4$), FCPI will be 0.48. Thus, a FCPI below 0.48 means that urban hierarchy could be considered as 'adequate'.

¹³ UN World Urbanization Prospects (2014)



Source: UN-Habitat, *State of Latin American and Caribbean Cities* (2012)

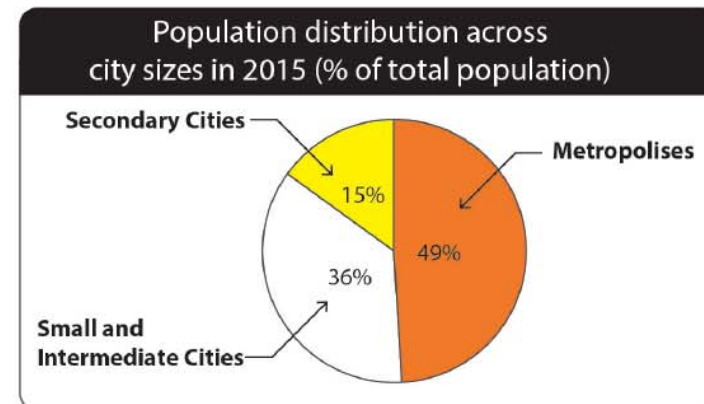
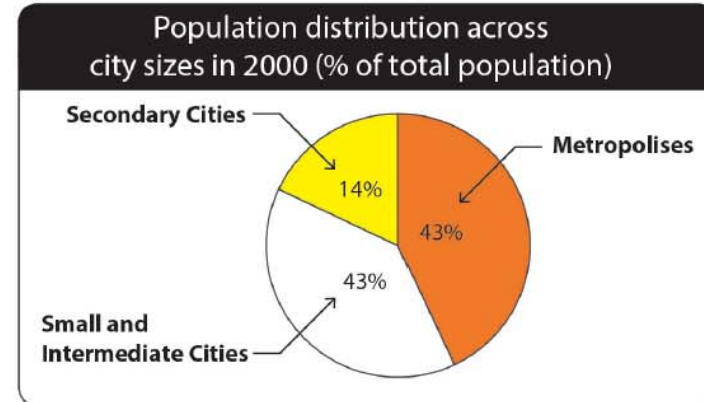
The current distribution of population across urban agglomerations features a promising ‘portfolio of cities’ that seem to be complementary in sizes and functions. The metropolises and secondary cities form a backbone of urban agglomerations that could work as a system and support the development of small and intermediate cities while strengthening urban-rural linkages. A pre-requisite to such a system of cities would be to seek and promote ‘unity’ rather than ‘uniformity’.

One should note that discouraging the concentration of people in economically dense places could be sometimes counter-productive. This is exemplified in the Indonesia’s Transmigration Program that tried to relocate people from densely populated areas of Kalimantan, Papua, Sulawesi and Sumatra. At its peak between 1979 and 1984, 535,000 families or almost 2.5 million people were relocated. The objective was to promote ‘balanced demographic development’ and reduce poverty by providing land and new economic opportunities for poor landless settlers. But the Program made almost no dent in the population density of Java, nor did the high cost of the Program to reduce poverty much among the migrants (World Development Report, 2009).

FIGURE 4: Evolution of the Distribution of Population across Urban Agglomerations (2000-2015)

Distribution of Population across Urban Agglomerations (> 300,000)						
City	Pop. (2000)	% of Total Pop. (2000)	Pop. (2015)	% of Total Pop. (2015)		
Metropolises						
1. Riyadh	3,567,444	18%	6,369,710	21%	43%	
2. Jeddah	2,508,532	12%	4,075,803	14%		
3. Mecca	1,167,576	6%	1,770,600	6%		
4. Medina	794,831	4%	1,280,248	4%		
5. Damman	639,014	3%	1,064,418	4%		
Secondary Cities						
6. Hufuf Mubarraz	524,198	14%	743,248	15%		
7. Taif	481,574					
8. Tabuk	381,942					
9. Buraydah	326,468					
Al Jubail	189,471					
10. Kamis Mushait	308,586					
11. Narjan	173,804					
12. Ha'il	230,958					
Hafar al-Batin	193,156					
TOTAL	20,144,584				29,897,741	

Source: World Urbanization Prospects (2014)



Source: UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

TABLE 2: Evolution of the Distribution of Population across Urban Agglomerations (1985-2025) – in Thousands

No	Urban Agglomeration	1985	1990	1995	1985-1995	2000	2005	2010	2000-2010	2015	2020	2025	2015-2025			
1	Riyadh	1 566	2 325	3 035	94%	82%	3 567	4 227	5 227	47%	41%	6 370	7 133	7 617	20%	18%
2	Jeddah	1 217	1 742	2 200	81%		2 509	2 883	3 452	38%		4 076	4 475	4 770	17%	
3	Mecca	655	856	1 033	58%		1 168	1 326	1 543	32%		1 771	1 912	2 039	15%	
4	Medina	388	529	669	72%		795	942	1 106	39%		1 280	1 391	1 488	16%	
5	Damman	283	409	533	88%		639	765	909	42%		1 064	1 166	1 251	18%	
6	Hufuf-Mubarraz	292	391	472	62%	73%	524	585	664	27%	38%	743	791	845	14%	18%
7	Taif	313	381	438	40%		482	529	582	21%		631	658	701	11%	
8	Tabuk	169	247	322	90%		382	451	515	35%		580	621	665	15%	
9	Buraydah	149	212	274	83%		326	390	471	44%		560	620	669	20%	
11	Jubail	80	118	156	95%		189	236	342	81%		488	609	675	38%	
12	Khamis Mushait	120	181	247	105%		309	380	433	40%		486	518	555	14%	
13	Najran	70	84	115	63%		174	254	300	73%		350	383	414	18%	
14	Ha'il	98	147	194	99%		231	273	312	35%		353	378	406	15%	
15	Hafar al-Batin	78	115	155	100%		193	237	273	41%		310	333	359	16%	

Total Population	13 274	16 206	18 567
Total Urban Population	9 643	12 411	14 607
Urbanization Rate	73%	77%	79%

	20 145	24 690	27 258
	16 085	19 994	22 375
	80%	81%	82%

	29 898	32 341	34 207
	24 854	27 202	29 086
	83%	84%	85%

TPI	16%	19%	21%
FCPI	0,41	0,43	0,44

	22%	21%	23%
	0,44	0,45	0,46

	26%	26%	26%
	0,47	0,48	0,48

Source: World Urbanization Prospects (2014) and UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

TPI: Total Primacy Index

FCPI: Four Cities Primacy Index

2.3 DISTRIBUTION OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION FACILITIES ACROSS REGIONS

The distribution of health facilities across regions are reviewed according to two indicators: (i) the number of hospitals and (ii) the number of health care centres. The targets/standards set by the Government for these indicators (aside from the NSS) are as follows: one hospital per 400,000 inhabitants and one health care centre per 7,000 inhabitants¹⁴. The table 3 below only covers public hospitals and health care centres since data is not available for private facilities. However, one should acknowledge the major role played by the private sector that owns 30% of the hospitals countrywide¹⁵ (ie 141 out of the 453). The below figures should therefore be only viewed as proxies to analyze the trends since these figures must be higher when including the private facilities.

TABLE 3: Distribution of Health Facilities across Regions (2001-2012)

REGIONS	Number of hospitals per 400,000 inhabitants			Number of health care centres per 7,000 inhabitants		
	2001	2012	Evolution	2001	2012	Evolution
MAKKAH	< 0.4	< 0.4	<=>	0.41	0.28	-32%
AL RIYADH	< 0.4	< 0.4	<=>			
EASTERN REGION	< 0.4	< 0.4	<=>	0.49	0.36	-27%
AL MADINAH				0.46	0.41	-11%
AL QASSIM						
ASIR					> 1	
TABOUK				0.56	0.56	<=>
HAIL	0.56	0.69	+23%		> 1	
NORTHERN BORDERS	0.67	0.74	+10%		> 1	
JAZAN	0.45	0.49	+9%			
NAJRAN	0.65	0.74	+14%			
AL BAHA	0.7	0.91	+30%		> 1	
AL JOUF	0.96	1.1	+15%	0.96	0.74	-23%

Source: UNDP, draft NSS review (May 2015)

To be completed by Hatem/Ayman (see SDSI, Services Guide) if possible.

The delivery of hospitals and health care centres remains low in the most populated regions while it had notably increased in other regions. The regions of Al Riyadh, Eastern region and Al Madinah are less than half way from the national standard on hospitals delivery (less than 0.4), which is mostly due to their rapid and continued population growth. On the other hand, the regions of Hail, Al Baha and the bordering regions (Al Jouf, Jazan, Najran and the Northern Borders) exhibit good and promising improvements in terms of delivery of both hospitals and health care

¹⁴ UNDP, draft NSS review (May 2015)

¹⁵ Central Department of Statistics and Information (2014)

centres, which is in compliance with the renewed attention given to these regions as stated in the 9th NSS objective “Fostering development within border cities due to their importance for national security”.

The distribution of education facilities across regions are reviewed according to two indicators: (i) the number of universities and (ii) the number of schools. The targets/standards set by the Government for these indicators (aside from the NSS) are as follows: one university per 500,000 inhabitants and one school per 400 inhabitants¹⁶. Once again, the available data covers only public schools and universities, which does not entirely reflect the landscape of education facilities countrywide but gives a glimpse of the trends.

The distribution of universities and schools across regions since 2001 is one of the success stories of the NSS and the Kingdom. Prior to the NSS approval, universities were concentrated in five regions namely: Al Riyadh, Makkah, Al Madinah, Eastern region and Asir. Today, there are universities in all regions of the Kingdom. However, the national standard for delivery of universities had only been met in three regions so far: Al Jouf, Al Baha and Nothern borders¹⁷. Further, all regions have delivered beyond the national standard on provision of schools.

Overall, the delivery of health and education facilities has experienced tremendous improvements since the NSS approval in 2000. This may result from targeted efforts from the Government to support the “lagging regions” and a continuous monitoring of the service provision through simple standards/indicators. This overall approach could serve as an inspiring experience for other sectors. The recently established High Committee on access to basic services -led by MoEP and gathering several utilities and line ministries (including MoMRA)- is therefore a good and timely initiative. This Committee shall meet quarterly to review guidelines and standards on access to basic services and track progress at national and regional levels via harmonized key performance indicators.

¹⁶ UNDP, draft NSS review (May 2015)

¹⁷ *Ibid*

3 RELEVANCE OF THE NSS

This chapter on the NSS relevance constitutes the second part of the NSS review that will focus on the assessment of the extent to which the NSS is suited to the national challenges and priorities. The assessment will look at key questions such as: to what extent are the objectives of the NSS still valid? are the NSS instruments (ie grow centres and development corridors) consistent with the NSS objectives and intended impacts an effects?

Two main documents will be used as reference tools to support the review of the NSS relevance:

- **International Experiences on National Spatial Frameworks (2014):** this study was specifically developed to inform the update of the Saudi NSS by analyzing five National Spatial Frameworks (NSF) and identifying sustainable and progressive approaches. The five case studies provide a cross section of experiences from Republic of Korea, Germany, Malaysia, Morocco and China. They cover the whole planning cycle from formulation of plans to implementation, monitoring and evaluation and cover a wide range of issues including legislation, governance and finance.
- **International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (2015):** The Guidelines are a valuable reference framework that covers the multi-scale continuum of planning. They were approved in April 2015 by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. The Guidelines include twelve key principles and a series of action-oriented recommendations that are based on strong evidence, inspiring practices and lessons learnt from various regions and contexts. The drafting of the Guidelines was supported by a group of 35 high-level experts over two years through a broad-based consultative and participatory process and based on evidence, good practices and lessons learnt from different contexts and at different planning scale.

The assessment of the NSS relevance will be structured along three sections namely:

- (1) NSS objectives and strategic directions;
- (2) NSS scope and focus areas;
- (3) NSS instruments: growth centres and development corridors.

3.1 NSS OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The NSS was approved on 28 August 2000 by the Council of Ministers (Decree No 127) to ***“achieve, over the long run, balanced development between regions on one hand and within regions on the other, with emphasis on integrating rural and urban areas.”***

A specific emphasis has been given to balanced regional development since the 5th National Development Plan (1985-1990). More recently, The 9th National Development Plan (2010-2014) included a specific chapter on regional development, which was also one of its five major themes. Further, the 10th National Development Plan (2015-2019) includes two sub-objectives that are particularly reasserting the importance of the spatial dimension in policy-making:

- **Objective 2.10 (Spatial Diversification):** *“Making use of the comparative advantages of the provinces in boosting spatial diversification of economic activities along with 3 expansion in establishment of industrial zones and business and technology incubators to improve utilization of these advantages.”;*
- **Objective 21.2 (Urban and Service Planning):** *“Achieving universal coverage of public services and facilities in the development corridors and centers in line with the National Spatial Strategy.”*

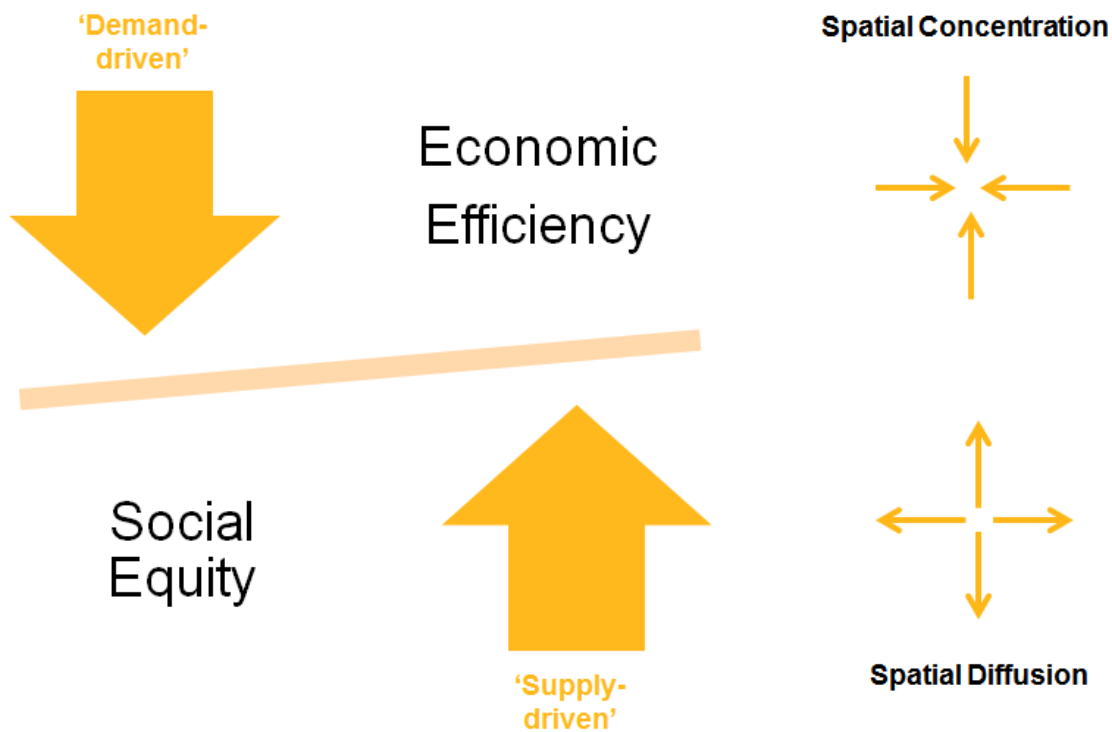
BOX 1: The nine objectives of the NSS

- **Objective 1:** “Promoting a spatially balanced pattern of population distribution on national space”.
- **Objective 2:** “Minimizing the adverse consequences of the continuous increase in the population of large cities”.
- **Objective 3:** “Ensuring the efficient utilization of infrastructure and public services already in place”.
- **Objective 4:** “Directing support to the overall growth of small and medium cities”.
- **Objective 5:** “Intensifying efforts to diversify the economic base of different regions as to fully utilize their existing and potential resources”.
- **Objective 6:** “Supporting selected settlements to act as growth centers capable of transmitting and coordinating development impulses toward surrounding areas”.
- **Objective 7:** “Supporting new activities that contribute positively to the integration between rural and urban areas”.
- **Objective 8:** “Improving the administrative structure of selected growth centers and defining accurately their service areas”.
- **Objective 9:** “Fostering development within border cities due to their importance for national security”.

The strategic directions of the NSS could be summarized as follows: (1) adoption of **development corridors** as an essential instrument in managing long term spatial development in order to promote integration across regions; (2) identification of the most desirable and balanced **hierarchy of urban settlements** through the definition of national, regional and local growth centres; (3) recognition of the importance of supporting **small and medium cities** to achieve balanced urban development.

The nine objectives of the NSS have given strong emphasis to economic growth despite the overall objective of achieving balanced regional development. The spatial concentration-diffusion dilemma is at the core of the NSS, as shown in figure 6. Economy efficiency depends on spatial concentration (eg: densities) while social equity depends on spatial diffusion (eg: service provision). The NSS would therefore gain in finding a balance between these two opposing forces while preserving the environmental sustainability. While people seek opportunities, the Government shall seek unity and not uniformity. As a start, the dialogue with relevant stakeholders could be strengthened to promote the concept of “integrated development” that better reflects the idea of leveraging on synergies and complementarities with the view to building a system of cities. This requires a departure from business as usual that could yield results in the short-term while strengthening the socio-economic resilience of territories.

FIGURE 6: The Spatial Concentration-Diffusion Dilemma



Source : UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

It is important to think from the start how the NSS objectives could be disaggregated by sectors and reflected spatially to ensure onward uptake and implementation. The list of objectives is indeed mixing “spatial-oriented objectives” and “means of implementation”, which makes it difficult to identify at a glance who could lead on what. Since MoMRA is expected to directly implement only part of the NSS, the structure and definition of the objectives is instrumental for the implementation and monitoring phases. Though the objectives are cross-cutting by nature, a specific attention could be given to clarity and simplicity.

3.2 NSS SCOPE AND FOCUS AREAS

The FSCP study on International Experiences on National Spatial Frameworks (2014) identified the following **six key takeaways for revision/formulation of NSF** that will be screened throughout this report:

1. **Reflecting Supra-National Perspectives:** Extending the scope of spatial planning frameworks to incorporate regional/international considerations and cooperation, to maximize development opportunities;
2. **Addressing Environmental Challenges:** Integrating land use and environmental policies to foster a sustainable environment, with an emphasis on protecting the natural environment, biodiversity and mitigating climate change risks;
3. **Leveraging Economic Opportunities:** Using spatial development policies to diversify the economic opportunities available and create interlinked economic clusters which support job development and economic growth;
4. **Delivering Equitable Access to Basic Services:** Addressing the disparities in service provision across all segments of society to provide equal opportunities;
5. **Fostering Participation and Collaborative Implementation:** Maximising the potential of the NSF through shared responsibility and accountability and by encouraging active investment at a nationwide level;
6. **Measuring Success for Effective Implementation:** A sound and well informed evaluation of spatial development outcomes which is suitably flexible to address the comprehensive nature of the NSF.

This section will particularly focus on items one and two. The following section 1.3 on “NSS instruments” will cover items three and four. The fifth item will be discussed under chapter 3 on NSS integration while the sixth item was cover under chapter 2 on NSS effectiveness.

3.2.1 Reflecting Supra-National Perspectives

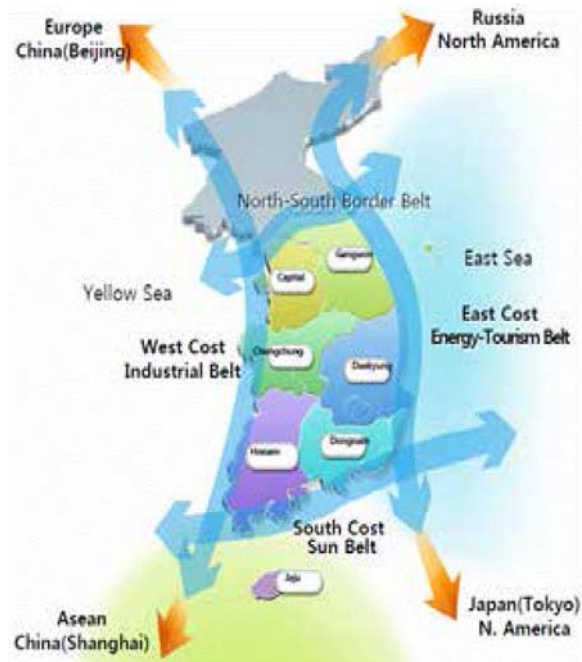
The NSS does not explicitly look beyond the boundaries of Saudi Arabia despite the major role played by the Kingdom at regional and international levels. The objective is two-fold: harnessing the benefits of enhanced regional cooperation and integration while mitigating risks and ensuring national security (water, food, energy, conflicts...).

The NSS would gain in including a supra-national concept/vision along with a preliminary analysis to strengthen regional cooperation and integration. This is exemplified in the Korean NSF through the concept of “Open national territory”, as shown in box 2. This is all the more important considering the major role played by Saudi Arabia in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). For instance, between 2009 and 2013, the exportations from Saudi Arabia to GCC member States were multiplied by 1.23 while the importations from GCC member States to KSA had been multiplied by 2.76¹⁸. The large GCC infrastructure projects (power grids, railways and water) that had been agreed upon could also be reflected in the revised NSS.

The NSS could also promote resilience while considering the potential risks that might undermine the national development and security. The concept that water, energy and food securities are interdependent is now part of the modern development canon. Any strategy that focuses on one part of the water-food-energy nexus without considering its interconnections risks serious unintended consequences (World Economic Forum, 2011). Regional integration between upstream and downstream areas is indeed critical to improve risk management, productivity and resource efficiency of the three sectors. Further, the social/political instability observed in the neighboring countries calls for specific attention when revising the NSS and developing concerned regional plans.

The NSS could explicitly acknowledge the specific and crucial role of the five Saudi metropolises (Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina and Damman) in the national development. Riyadh hosts key political and administrative functions. Jeddah and Damman enjoy a strategic location (respectively gateways in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf) and represent major sources of prosperity. Mecca and Medina are the two holiest cities in the Muslim World and play therefore an important religious function. These cities play an international role that calls for a differentiated approach and perhaps a specific metropolitan status.

¹⁸ Central Department of Statistics and Information, Statistical Yearbook 2014

BOX 2: “Open national territory” in the Republic of Korea

The fourth Comprehensive National Territorial Plan (2000-2020) sets a “Global Green National Territory” as the new vision and includes four pillars: (1) Competitive and integrated national territory, (2) Sustainable and eco-friendly national territory, (3) Elegant and attractive national territory and (4) Open national territory. Through the fourth pillar, the Republic of Korea seeks to gain a global foothold for openness to make a leap forward as an important basis for logistic, finance and exchanges in the Eurasia-Pacific region while also serving as the gateway to the Eurasia Pacific region by establishing infrastructure that connects Eurasia to the Pacific region.

Mega-economic regional zones are designed to improve regional competitiveness through interconnection and co-operation among metropolitan cities and provinces. The establishment of mega-economic regional zones is expected to overcome the limitation of administrative boundaries and enhance inter-regional cooperation and collaboration. The mega-economic regional zones are linked through four Supra-Economic Regions (belts), which are specialized on specific sectors and intend to foster international competitiveness through economies of scale.

Each mega-economic regional zone is composed of one to three large cities and 5 million to 8 million people, with the exception of the Capital Region (25 million), Gangwon and Jeju (1% to 3% of total population). Each zone has an Economic Regional Development Plan (ERDP) and an Economic Regional Development Committee that supervises the design and implementation of the ERDP. ERDPs have a strong impact on cities in a region because they concern industry, science and technology, cultural, infrastructure and institutional issues that affect urban areas to a large extent.

Source: FSCP, National Spatial Frameworks - Lessons learnt from International Experiences (2014)

3.2.2 Addressing Environmental Risks and Challenges

The NSS could better reflect the environmental dimension and cover issues related biodiversity, natural resources management, disaster risk reduction and climate change. The importance of mainstreaming environment in planning has been recognized in the recently approved International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-Habitat, 2015), as shown in box 3. Further, there is scope to transform some of these challenges into opportunities but this requires adequate and in-depth studies as well as a close dialogue with concerned stakeholders. This is exemplified in the German NSF through the concept of “Conservation of resources and shaping of cultural landscapes” (see Box 4).

BOX 3: Urban and Territorial Planning and the Environment

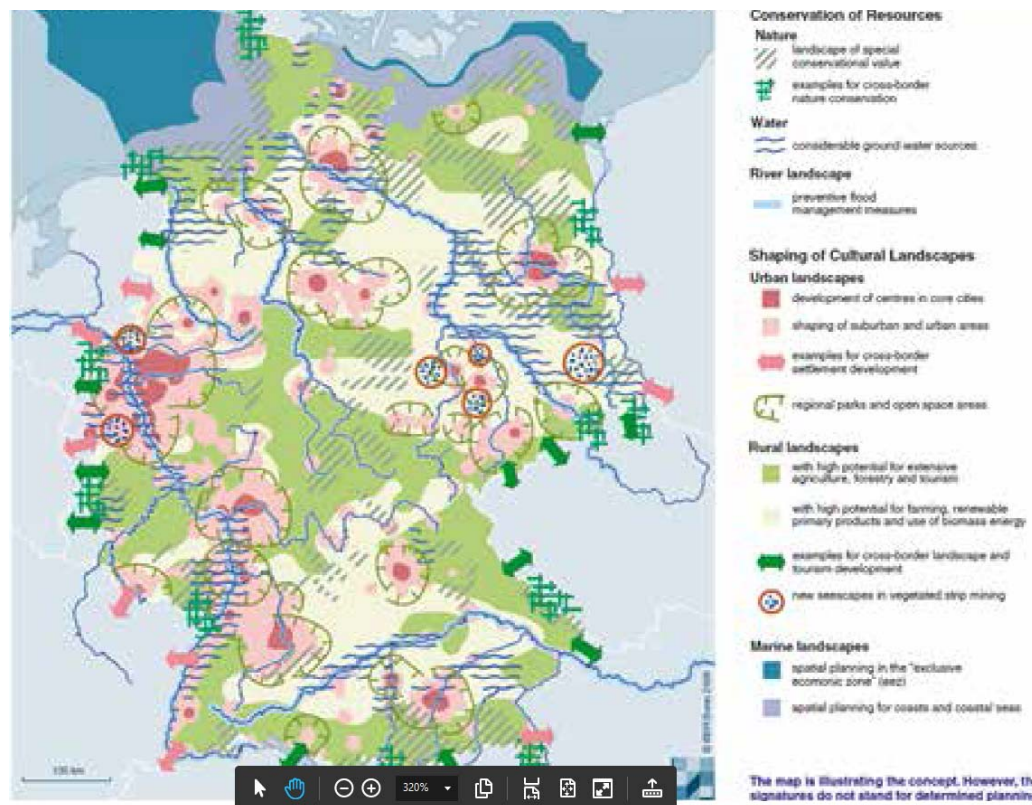
“Urban and territorial planning provides a spatial framework to protect and manage the natural and built environment of cities and territories, including their biodiversity, land and natural resources, and to ensure integrated and sustainable development” (Principle 12a).

“Urban and territorial planning contributes to increased human security by strengthening environmental and socioeconomic resilience, enhancing mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and improving the management of natural and environmental hazards and risks” (Principle 12b).

Source: International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (2015)

Considering the scarcity of water and arable land, the NSS could put a greater emphasis on the management of natural resources. Use of groundwater to meet growing demand (mostly agriculture) has had serious implications in terms of rising water salinity, falling water reserves, and increased soil degradation and soil salinity. The total water withdrawn per inhabitant per year in KSA is six times greater than the total renewable water resources. Riyadh and Jeddah relies on desalinated water for respectively 60% and 97% of their water production. The arable land reduced by almost 14% between 2002 and 2014, dropping from 3.6 to 3.16 million of hectares. In 2012, the arable land represented 1.5% of the total land of KSA (FAO, 2014).

The NSS could embrace issues related to climate change and disaster risk reduction (flood, sea level rise, droughts...) that are critical in the Saudi context. Around 50% of the KSA population lives within 100 km of the coast (UN-Habitat, 2012). Dammam, Ras Tanura, Jubail and Khafji on the eastern coast and Jeddah, Rabigh, Yanbu and Jizan on the western coast are the most vulnerable coastal cities. The major flood crises experienced along the Red Sea coast in 2011 stressed the urgency to tackle the issue of disaster risk reduction. In 2010, the CO₂ emissions in KSA reached 17 metric tons per capita, which is 30% above the average emissions of high-income non OECD countries (World Bank, 2014). These emissions were due to electricity and heat production (53%), transport (24%), manufacturing industries and construction (22%), residential buildings and commercial and public services (1%).

BOX 4: “Conservation of resources and shaping of cultural landscapes” in Germany

The Concept and Strategies for Spatial Development (CSSD) identifies three concepts, which respond to national urban priorities and pinpoints regional development strategies capable of achieving consensus, namely: (1) growth and innovation, (2) ensuring services of public interest, and (3) conserving resources and shaping cultural landscapes. The CSSD identifies areas of special conservational value such as regional parks, maps water resources and rural zones with high potential for extensive agriculture, and main areas for spatial planning in marine zones.

The priority of the CSSD is to preserve historically and culturally diverse landscapes, ensuring that spatial planning decisions allow for them to sustainably coexist alongside areas serving different functions. In support, the CSSD urges the need for Länders (administrative regions and second tier of Government) to reduce land use through resource efficiency, regeneration projects and innovatively managing competing demands on land use.

Finally, the concept specifies that open space should be protected by creating a network of open spaces across regional boundaries. These open spaces should be developed into cultural landscapes to assist in regional development and stabilising declining areas. The CSSD highlights the need for a social dialogue in determining the success of cultural landscaping and its role in promoting the identity of an area.

Source: FSCP, National Spatial Frameworks - Lessons learnt from International Experiences (2014)

3.3 NSS INSTRUMENTS: GROWTH CENTRES AND DEVELOPMENT CORRIDORS

The NSS has adopted two main instruments to guide the spatial development across the regions: the development corridors and the grow centres. The development corridors are classified into three categories: primary (7), medium term and long term, so as the growth centres: national (29), regional (38) and local (108)¹⁹. These two instruments are meant to address the “spatial concentration-diffusion dilemma”²⁰: the development corridors to leverage economic opportunities and the grow centres to promote social equity in service delivery. While the NSS instruments seem to be on the whole aligned with the NSS objectives and intended impacts, there is scope to clarify how could these instruments be easily understand and used by relevant stakeholders.

3.3.1 Unpacking the Concept of Development Corridors

A corridor defines a space that is dedicated to or has increased density of activities toward particular function(s). This understanding is fundamental to appreciating the diverse uses of the term “corridor.” Corridors are defined in various contexts, from urban planning, environmental management, migration of animals, to the spread of communicable diseases. In each case, a corridor can generally be viewed in function–space terms: a space dedicated to or dominated by the flow of an indicated function. Development corridors should be perceived as potential networks that link activities across space and increase their densities within that space.

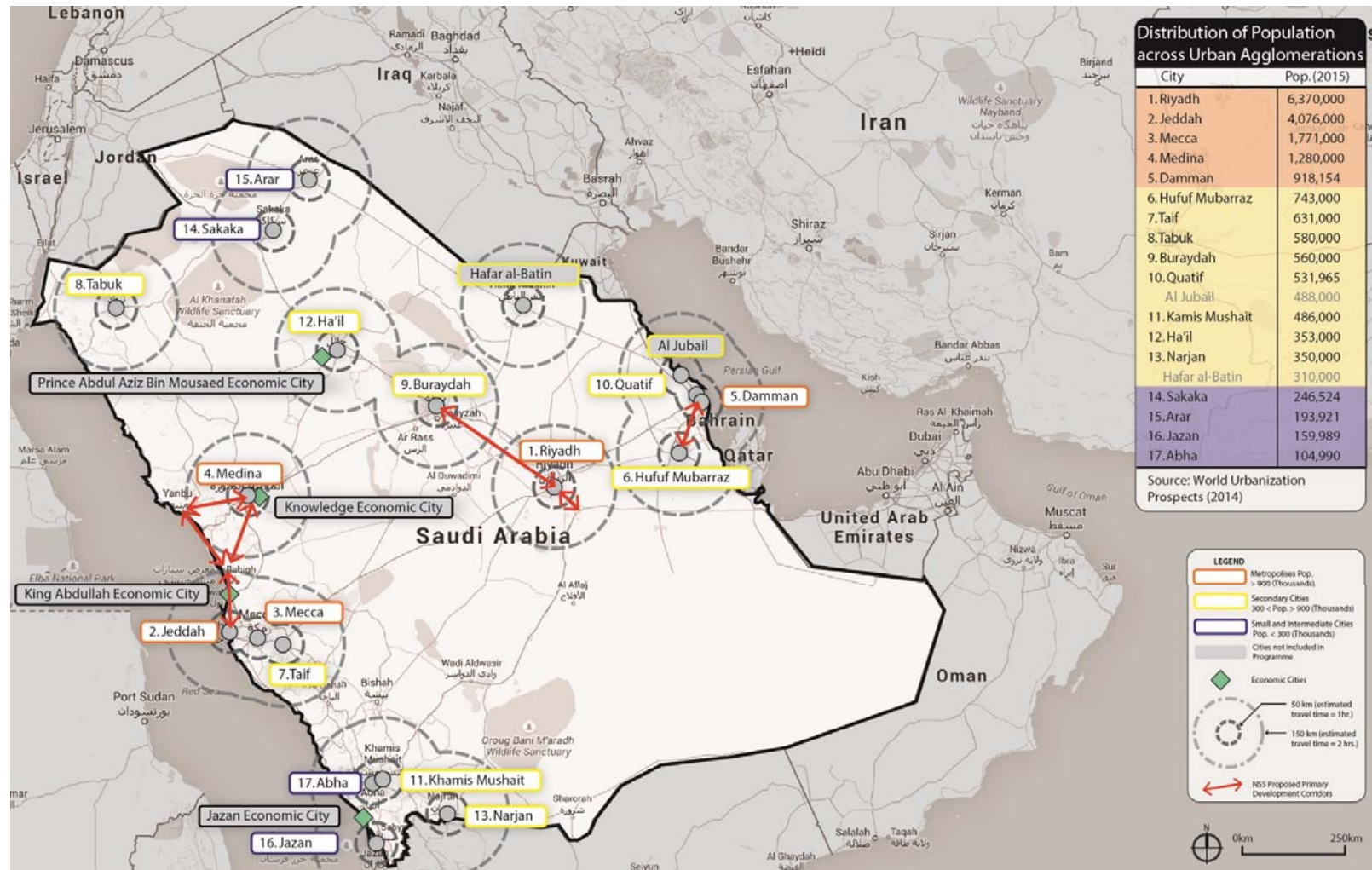
The NSS could therefore clearly define the functions (main and secondary) of each identified development corridor, which should neither be conflated with a particular road nor should be viewed as building or promoting commercial establishments on a particular road. So far, the NSS simply states a series of potential functions for each of the identified corridors. For instance for the “Al Kharj-Riyadh-Qassim Corridor”, it reads “this development corridor enjoys high proven development potentials in industry, commerce, finance, specialized services and agro-based activities. The good road network represents another locational advantage within this development corridor”. There is scope and benefit to back such statements by adequate studies and evidence in the NSS revision.

The NSS could identify and select development corridors based on their respective assets (eg: location and population density), potentials (eg: physical connectivity) and functions. Figure 7 displays the seven identified primary corridors, the location of the four new Economic Cities and the physical connectivity potential of metropolises and secondary cities (50km and 150km radius). Firstly, it is worth to note that two out of four Economic Cities are not part of a primary development corridor. Secondly, the conurbation of Al Jubail-Qatif-Damman and the South-Western triangle of Jazan, Abha, Khamis-Mushait and Narjan do not host any development corridor despite their respective strategic locations. Thirdly, from a physical connectivity perspective, the metropolises and secondary cities present a good potential to work as a complementary network/system.

¹⁹ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, National Habitat III Report (April 2015)

²⁰ See section 2.1 “NSS objectives and strategic directions”

FIGURE 7: Location of Primary Development Corridors and potential Interconnectivity of Urban Agglomerations



Source: UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

In the context of the NSS, four functions of corridors could be identified: (i) transport, (ii) transit, (iii) economic activities, and (iv) socio-environmental. These four functions may not always be compatible, which requires informed decision-making. In particular, transit corridors are focused on point-to-point trips, with little role for anything in between. Economic corridors focus on increased density and variety of economic activities in the corridor space, which tends to conflict with the transit objectives of greater speed and reliability in point-to-point movements. It is also possible that improved point-to-point connectivity may “hollow out” areas in between the two points due to migration of people and economic activities toward the endpoints of a transit corridor.

The transport function is a pre-requisite to any development corridor (even for information technology corridor) to ensure adequate connectivity and mobility of goods and people. This is particularly relevant in KSA since it is a large land area with vast distances and often sparse populations spread across difficult terrain, including mountains and deserts. The Saudi road network is rather developed but the railway network still needs to be improved for the sake of economic efficiency and environmental sustainability. The railway network could be designed as a backbone of the development corridors in order to densify selected areas while linking these areas to major inter-modal nodes including air, sea and roads. This requires a closer coordination with the Ministry of Transport, which is currently implementing its National Transport Strategy.

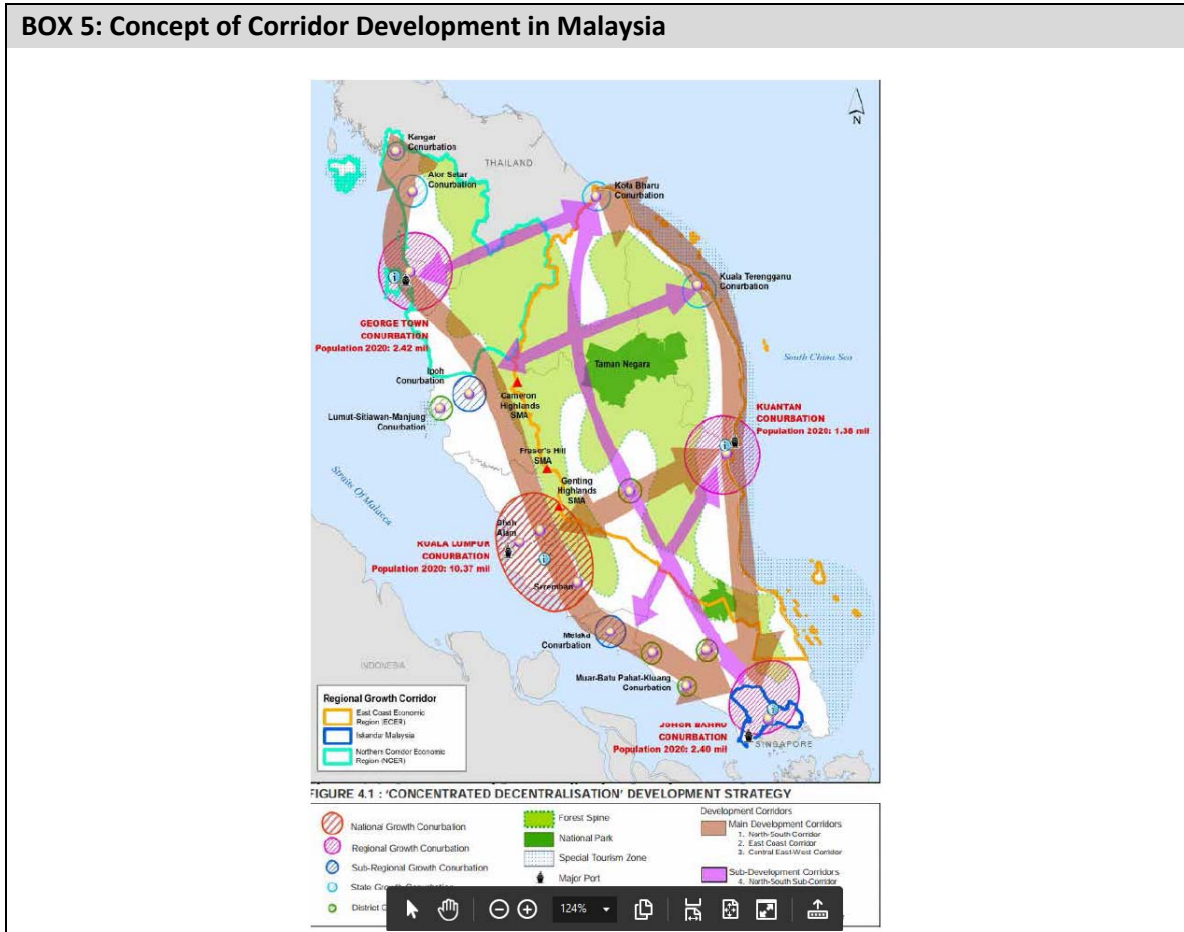
The transit function is also important because a majority of the GCC countries depend on smooth, efficient and low-cost movement of people and goods through neighboring countries. To the extent that transit corridors go through more than one country, they have aspects of public good. Actions taken by one country can have positive (or negative) externalities for a neighboring country or countries, implying substantial scope for coordination and regional cooperation in developing transit corridors. At the simplest level, investment in good-quality services at border crossing points in one country may not provide any return if the border remains choked or invokes high costs due to inefficiency. Similarly, maintenance of road segments within one country, or road safety standards within one country, can have an impact on the attractiveness of the corridor as a whole serving a transit role to other countries. This reinforces the need to thinking beyond the borders and reflects supra-national perspectives.

The economic function is the main focus of the current NSS that is concerned with the spatial organization and diversification of economic activities. This implies building on the connectivity being developed under transport and transit corridors to promote spatial transformation, agglomeration, and economic diversification. Economic corridors encompass a constellation of connected markets that may, in turn, be linked to other markets outside of the region. To the extent that cities, and the regions around them, represent a hierarchy of markets, economic corridors represent networks of connectivity between a variety of markets, that is, larger markets connected to smaller markets, markets within a sector trading inputs into final production, and markets for services.

The socio-environmental function is instrumental to safeguard and develop natural and cultural corridors that are major contributors to national socio-economic development. The cultural and religious heritage of the Kingdom is enormous and could be better reflected in the revised NSS. Identifying, protecting and developing “networks” of historical and holy sites could boost the tourism

industry, create job opportunities and thus support endogenous growth. Further, the NSS would gain in protecting further blue corridors (water), green corridors (forests) and biodiversity corridors, which are very sensitive to upstream/downstream continuity. There is an urge to adapt infrastructure development to natural and environmental assets and not the other way around. Otherwise socio-environmental impacts and damages might be very difficult to compensate or even irreversible.

The development of corridors is therefore a multi-faceted concept that goes beyond spatial/physical planning. The proposed four functions could be discussed and fine-tuned to best fit the national development objectives. The NSS should therefore unpack this concept clearly and simply in order to get all concerned stakeholders on-board such as line ministries, utilities and the private sector. Further, it is difficult to conceive of successful economic corridors based exclusively on public investments, with no role for the private sector. Indeed, the role of the public sector and public investments in economic corridor is preferably focused on maximizing the multiplier for private investment for every dollar of public investment. This is exemplified in the Malaysian NSF through the concept of “Development Corridors”, as shown in Box 5.



BOX 5: Concept of Corridor Development in Malaysia (continued)

Malaysia's corridor development is part of its overall regional development strategy for integrated spatial development and includes five economic corridors implemented through its national plans, of which three are in Peninsular Malaysia: the Northern Corridor Economic Region, East Coast Economic Region, and Iskandar Malaysia. In addition to a central planning agency, each corridor has its own implementing authority (e.g., the Northern Corridor Implementing Authority and the East Coast Economic Region Development Council). Each of these was established through legislative acts of Parliament to coordinate implementation of respective corridor development across different government agencies at the central and provincial levels.

The corridor development authorities are organized in the form of an apex steering entity co-chaired by the Prime Minister and a chief minister, the head of provincial government; the focus is on legislative and policy issues to support the corridor's development. These are supported by an entity focusing on approval processes and headed by the chief minister with participation from the central government and provincial government that acts as a "one-stop center" for private investors. The corridor development authority supervises project implementation and day-to-day administration.

Customizing the corridors to local advantage, while retaining the overall framework of national development priorities, is important. Corridors are designed to build on existing strengths and resources as well as economic growth potential within the corridor region. Iskandar Malaysia focuses on industries like electrical and electronics, petrochemicals, and health care, while the Northern Corridor Economic Region focuses on agriculture, logistics, and tourism. Common to all the corridors, however, is an emphasis on them being private sector-driven. The amount of private investment mobilized along with the number of jobs created are two of the key performance indicators for these corridors, which implicitly compete in obtaining public resources and attracting private investment, although in different economic areas of emphasis. Aside from implementing projects, anchor investors also participate in consultations with the government during corridor development planning.

Comprehensive economic analysis is an important prerequisite to enhancing the success of corridor development. Existing industries may need to be assessed for attractiveness (i.e., industry profitability, industry growth, and industry size) and strategic fit (e.g., potential to create jobs, potential to leverage existing resources, and potential for future growth and national priorities). For the Northern Corridor Economic Region in Malaysia, for example, more than 30 industries were analyzed in detail before they were prioritized into a smaller group for corridor focus.

Source: FSCP, National Spatial Frameworks - Lessons learnt from International Experiences (2014)

3.3.2 Refining the Classification of Growth Centres

The functional classification of cities into growth centres is aligned with the NSS objectives and intended impacts and has yielded positive results in delivery and access to basic services. This has been particularly prominent in the delivery of health and education facilities with major adjustments that had happened in the last 15 years²¹. It is however unclear if the growth centres have had economic ripple effects in their hinterlands as expected in the 6th objective of the NSS “Supporting selected settlements to act as growth centers capable of transmitting and coordinating development impulses toward surrounding areas”. The inadequate attention to supra-national perspectives as well as the weaknesses, opportunities and threats in selected cities may have led to a classification of growth centres that rather reflected the situation of 2000. In other words, the revised NSS could be forward-looking and better acknowledge the expected development dynamics. This is exemplified in the German NSF through the concept of “Growth and innovation”, as shown in box 6.

The insufficient convergence between functional and administrative classification of cities is locking the potential of growth centres. The Kingdom is administratively structured around 13 Regions²², 106 Governorates and 1197 Centres that include cities and villages. The Law on Municipalities and Villages (1977 - 1397H) classified cities into three main categories: greater municipality, area municipality and municipalities (class A, B, C and D). The classification of growth centres has been used by MoMRA in a number of regulations and standards such as on infrastructure development (roads, water, drainage, sewage, electricity) and land-subdivision within the urban growth and development boundaries²³. However, no evidence has been found on the use of the concept of growth centres in other sectoral regulations with the view to guiding decision-making and allocation of resources. Further, the five metropolises could be granted a specific status in line with the roles and functions that they are performing.

The City Prosperity Index (CPI) could be used as a reference tool to inform a potential revision of the classification of growth centres. The CPI is based on a holistic approach to urban development and it has conceptualized prosperity as being composed of the following: productivity, infrastructure, quality of life, equity and inclusion, environmental sustainability, and governance and legislation. The CPI provides indices and measurements relevant to cities at the outcome level while supporting national and local authorities in identifying opportunities and potential areas of intervention for their cities to become more prosperous. This is therefore very much in line with the concept of growth centres. A set of “basic” CPI indicators could be selected, after consultations with relevant stakeholders, to review the current classification of growth centres and eventually propose some revisions where appropriate. In addition to the metric, the CPI could contribute to enhance

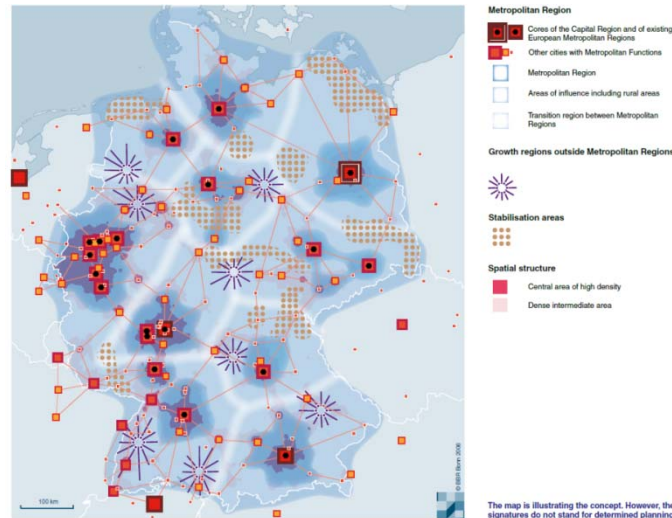
²¹ See section 1.3 “Distribution of health and education facilities across regions”.

²² The surge of interest in regional development in the late 80s culminated in the approval of the Royal Decree No A/92 on 28 August 1992, which established the division of the Kingdom into 13 regions replacing the five Provinces.

²³ The percentage of plots that shall be developed when subdivision occurs before the development period sets in the UGDB is as follows: 75% for national growth centres, 50 % for regional growth centres and 25% for local growth centres.

coordination and policy dialogue while promoting an evidence-based approach to policy and plan making.

BOX 6: Concept of “Growth and innovation” in Germany



The Concept and Strategies for Spatial Development (CSSD) identifies metropolitan areas, growth areas outside of metropolitan regions, and lagging ‘stabilisation’ areas as focal points for spatial development concepts. Metropolitan regions are encouraged to support and foster specialised economic opportunities for the greater area, with a special emphasis on their ability to compete with the European market. In addition, metropolitan regions are better taken into account in national and European sectoral policies, while regions are positioned to promote the European perspective and gain recognition in the European landscape.

The need to enable dynamic growth areas outside of metropolitan regions is also underlined, suggesting that better cooperation between metropolitan areas and dynamic areas can help the latter promote development and innovation. For areas experiencing slower growth, the CSSD recommends using regional competencies and endogenous potential to stabilise the area and interrupt the downward spiral of unemployment and outward migration. The CSSD also encourages cross-authority spatial development strategies, to enable the potential of regions for tourism, research, local transport and energy supply. Finally, the CSSD recommends that regional Länders work collaboratively with rural hinterlands to achieve new forms of regional coordination, with a suggested first step of integrated transport strategies.

One could consider the consensus achieved between Länder and federal government one of the main success of the strategy. This is all the more important given the great autonomy of the Länders on spatial planning along with the large socio-economic disparities countrywide. Three years after the issuing of the CSSD in 2006, it is estimated that 12 out of the 16 Länders had integrated at least some of the concepts.

Source: FSCP, National Spatial Frameworks - Lessons learnt from International Experiences (2014)

4. INTEGRATION OF THE NSS

This chapter on the NSS integration constitutes the third and final part of the NSS review that will focus on the engagement, ownership and uptake of ministries, utilities, regions and cities. The assessment will look at key questions such as: is the NSS supported by a clear and fit-for-purpose coordination mechanism? does the NSS provide relevant stakeholders with clear guidance and incentives for implementation and monitoring? Whenever possible, the assessment will also look at the major factors that have influenced the ownership and uptake of the NSS at different levels.

The assessment is based on a feedback received during a series of interviews and workshops that took place from May to November 2015. Consultations had been held with ten national agencies and ministries and three pilot cities namely: Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing, Saudi Industrial Property Authority (MODON), Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP), Presidency of Meteorology and Environment, Saudi Health Council, Ministry of Transport (MoT), Ministry of Water and Electricity, Buraydah city, Damman city and Riyadh city. Two tailored questionnaires were developed to guide the consultations at national and local levels.

The assessment is also based on analytical reviews of the new Strategy of MoMRA (2015), the Strategic Plan for Arriyadh Region (SPAR, 2012) and the National Transportation Strategy (NTS, 2011) and the mechanism of regional budget allocation. The implementation of the new Strategy of MoMRA could be a good opportunity to strengthen the engagement and ownership of relevant stakeholders vis-à-vis the revised NSS. The SPAR and the NTS have been selected to illustrate the challenges and opportunities of vertical and horizontal integration respectively. The SPAR is a recent and good example of the new generation of regional plans while the NTS is one of the critical national strategies that could support the effective implementation of the NSS especially the development corridors. Other Plans and Strategies have also been discussed during the national and local consultations. The review of the regional budget allocation is both a topical and instrumental issue to reassert the spatial dimension in policy-making.

The assessment of the NSS integration will be structured along three sections namely:

- (1) Coherence with the new Strategy of MoMRA;
- (2) Vertical integration: Ownership and uptake of regions and cities;
- (3) Horizontal integration: Ownership and uptake of ministries and utilities.

4.1 COHERENCE WITH THE NEW STRATEGY OF MOMRA

The MoMRA has recently developed a new Strategy that was approved in 2015 by the newly created Council of Economic and Development Affairs. This Council oversees the performance and strategic directions of all line ministries in Saudi Arabia. The new Strategy includes a vision and seven strategic objectives –as shown in box 7- that would be soon supported by an implementation roadmap.

BOX 7: The vision and seven objectives of the new Strategy of MoMRA

Vision: “Achieve balance and sustainability in urban development in the context of justice and competitiveness in all regions and cities of the Kingdom through the formation of a high-efficient urban environments, respond to the aspirations and needs of present and future generations, and promote standards of quality of life and prosperity, with the concerted efforts of the development partners within an institutionalized process and the participation of community”.

Objective 1: “Improve the quality of urban development and raise the performance level of cities economically, socially, environmentally and culturally in order to achieve high levels of prosperity and quality of life”.

Objective 2: “Achieve spatial and sectoral integration and sustainable, balanced development between national, regional and local growth centers, and reduce the gap between regions and cities of all levels, through the development of legislation and regulations that govern urban development”.

Objective 3: “Develop measures and indicators of development for all cities in the Kingdom that are compatible with internationally approved indicators”.

Objective 4: “Preserve public property and its documentation”.

Objective 5: “Achieve active community participation in urban development through a variety of mechanisms including: municipal councils, and the application of participatory planning methodology with local community, and communicate directly with citizens”.

Objective 6: “Expand and strengthen the partnership with the private sector and attract local and international investments to participate in the provision of municipal services in order to raise the efficiency of these services, and the transfer of knowledge and appropriate technology, and the development of municipal revenues”.

Objective 7: “Achieve strong and sustainable institutional performance of the ministry and the Amanat and municipalities including administrative and technical procedures, systems in accordance with the methodology of administrative decentralization, and depending on the human cadres and the development of standards and tools to monitor corporate performance”.

The revised NSS could be the main instrument to directly support the delivery of the second objective of the new Strategy of MoMRA. Three points are worth to mention regarding the wording

of this objective. Firstly, and most importantly, one should command the explicit acknowledgment of the need for “spatial and sectoral integration”, which is critical for MoMRA. The NSS is by nature meant to be the software to ensure adequate integration across scales and sectors. Secondly, the explicit recognition of grow centres as the vehicle to achieve “balanced development”, without any specific mention of the development corridors. The focus on “growth centres” is overall in line with the findings presented on the chapters 2 and 3 respectively on NSS effectiveness and NSS relevance. Thirdly, the narrow focus on “legislation and regulations” as the tools to achieve this objective could be questioned. It would have been more powerful to encompass the NSS and its means of implementation that are legislation, governance and finance.

The role of the NSS in supporting the delivery of some objectives of the new Strategy of MoMRA could be reflected in the unfolding implementation roadmap. In addition to the second objective of the new Strategy, the NSS could also contribute to the following: first objective (performance of cities), third objective (monitoring indicators), fourth objective (public property) and fifth objective (community participation) since they are aligned with the NSS spirit and strategic directions. In return, the objectives of the new Strategy of MoMRA could also be reflected in the revised NSS. The implementation roadmap could build on existing flagship instruments of MoMRA such as the NSS and the Urban Development and Growth Boundaries (UGDB)²⁴ while exploring avenues to strengthen linkages and coherence between the strategies, plans and regulations designed by MoMRA. The NSS review could therefore substantially inform the unfolding implementation roadmap and lay the groundwork for the definition of legal and financial tools.

4.2 VERTICAL INTEGRATION: OWNERSHIP AND UPTAKE OF REGIONS AND CITIES

The assessment of the NSS vertical integration is based on the feedback received during the local consultations and the review of the Strategic Plan for Arriyadh Region (SPAR). The local consultations had been held in the three FSCP pilot cities namely: Riyadh, Buraydah and Damman. The SPAR has been reviewed with regards to its alignment with the NSS, particularly through the comparison of the classification of growth centres.

The SPAR was developed by the Arriyadh Development Authority, approved by the Regional Council in 2012 and endorsed by MoMRA in 2013. The SPAR was developed to complement the Metropolitan Development Strategy for the Arriyadh Region (MEDSTAR 2030) that triggered for instance the development of the Riyadh Metro system. The SPAR provides recommendations for five identified polarized areas (cluster of cities) that are backed by 38 executive projects structured along

²⁴ The UGDB were approved by Royal Decree in 1987 and updated in 2014. The UGDB include four sub-phases of development (phase I: 2014; phase II-1: 2014-2020; phase II-2: 2020-2025 and phase II-3: 2025-2030) and an ‘urban protection zone’ that defines the extent of the land needed for future urban growth and protects this land from claims for development sites. The objective of the UGDB is to create incentives for land development within the city boundary and discourage land development beyond the boundary through various approaches that range from making development more expensive to prohibition of certain land uses.

seven “sectors”: population, urban development, economic development, transport, infrastructure, environment and “comprehensive executive programmes”.

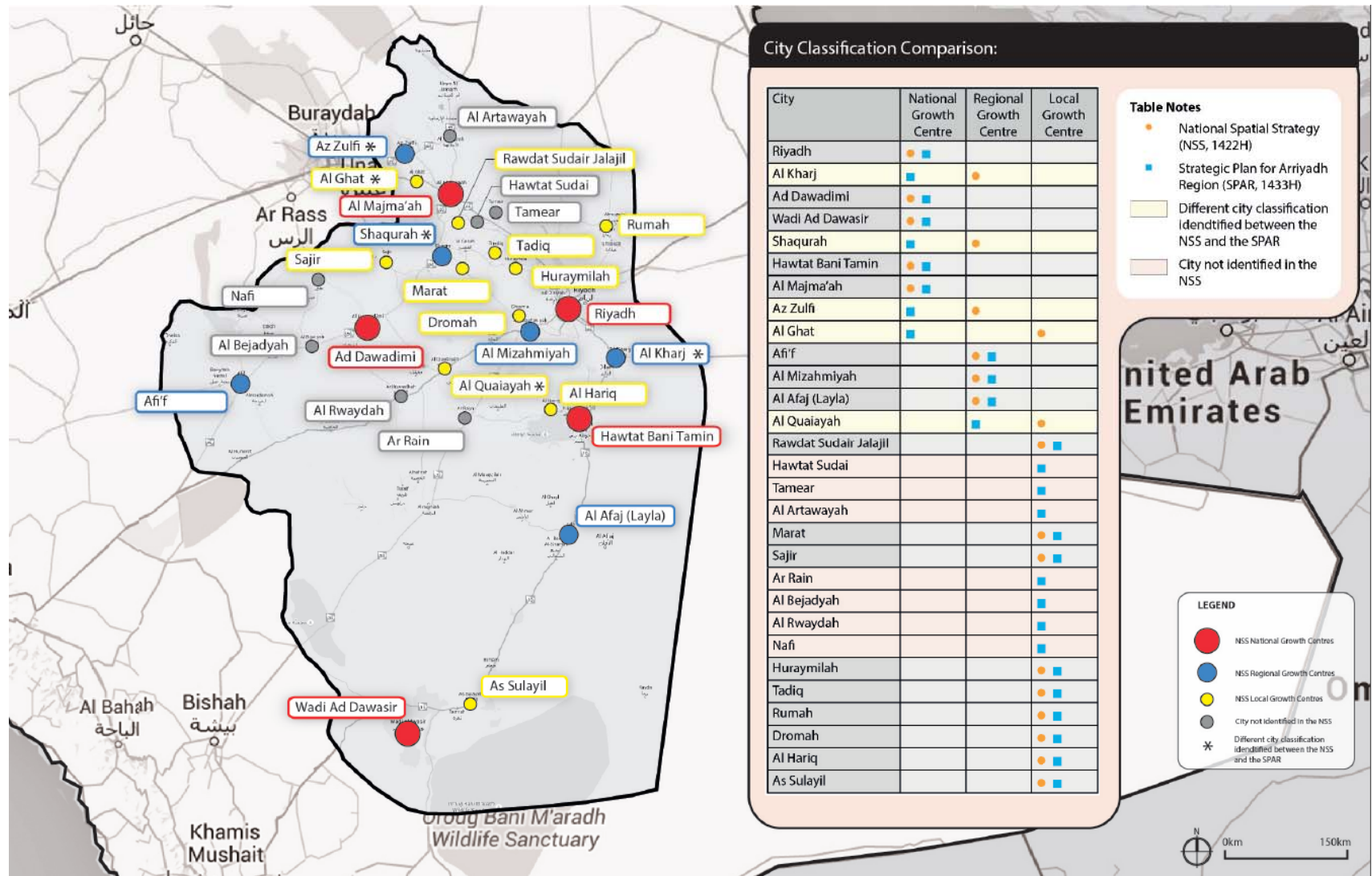
The comparison of classification of growth centres between the SPAR (2012) and the NSS (2000) features some discrepancies, as shown in figure 8. Two types of discrepancies have been identified: (i) different classification of growth centres between the SPAR and the NSS (Al Kharj, Shaqurah, Az Zulfi, Al Ghat, Al Quaiayah) and (ii) inclusion of new growth centres in the SPAR that were not in the NSS (Hawtat Sudai, Tamear, Al Artawayah, Ar Rain, Al Bejadyah, Al Rwaydah and Nafi). One should however note that the classification of growth centres in the SPAR seems to be based on a broad set of criteria namely: geographical location, accessibility, economic diversity, social and historical aspects, development potentials, available natural resources and water resources.

This example highlights the need for flexibility in regional plan-making (NSS is an overall framework) and continuous feedback loops to enable cross-fertilization of approaches (top-down and bottom-up). The rationale behind these discrepancies could be understood in the light of the timeframe (12 years), criteria for classification (see above) and absence of an institutionalized and collaborative platform on spatial planning and urban issues (eg: National Urban Forum). This specific example calls for a strengthened dialogue between MoMRA and Regional and Metropolitan Authorities to ensure relevance, integration and effectiveness of both the NSS and regional/metropolitan plans. This is all the more important since the Kingdom is embarking upon a new generation of regional plans.

The feedback received during the local consultation process highlights that the challenges related to the NSS vertical integration go beyond the classification of growth centres. The questionnaire for local authorities was structured along three key questions: (i) to what extent the 9 objectives of the NSS are still valid today?, (ii) to what extent the development corridors and growth centres are still valid today?, (iii) what role the cities could play in the NSS formulation, implementation and monitoring? The key takeaways from the local consultation process are summarized hereafter...

Ayman to supply RMPU with the results of the the filled out questionnaires and outcomes (reports) of the local consultations

FIGURE 8: Comparison of City Classifications between the NSS (2001) and the SPAR (2012)



Source: NSS, MoMRA (2001), SPAR, ADA (2012) and UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

The NSS could be used to guide the process of regional budget allocation in order to ensure that the financed projects effectively support transformative and integrated development. The current mechanism of regional budget allocation is rather sectoral and spatial blind to some extent. The national budget prepared by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is allocated to sectors based on economic forecasts prepared by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP) and “operational plans” (74) prepared by ministries and utilities. These operational plans include a list of projects ranked by priority, with highest priority given to projects of regional importance (eg: GCC projects) and national importance (eg: metro system in Riyadh). Subsequently, the ministries and utilities allocate the agreed budget based on their sectoral plans and priorities and feedback received from Regional Authorities.

The Royal Decree (XX) released in June 2015 calls for more transparency, coordination and coherence in regional budget allocation. This Decree has requested **nine** ministries (including MoMRA and MoEP) to develop methodologies and indicators for regional budget allocation. The MoEP, through UN-DESA, has concurrently started a study to assess the level of development of all governorates across the Kingdom via a set of indicators and a tailored index. For instance, the preliminary findings of the study show an overall disconnect between the classification of growth centres and the level of development of concerned governorates. It is expected that the outcomes of this study would inform the NSS review and FSCP activities as a whole.

4.3 HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION: OWNERSHIP AND UPTAKE OF MINISTRIES AND UTILITIES

The assessment of the NSS vertical integration is based on the feedback received during the national consultations and the review of the National Transportation Strategy (NTS). The national consultations had been held in Riyadh with then national agencies and ministries: Arriyadh Development Authority (ADA), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Housing, Saudi Industrial Property Authority (MODON), Ministry of Economy and Planning (MoEP), Presidency of Meteorology and Environment, Saudi Health Council, Ministry of Transport (MoT), Ministry of Water and Electricity. The NTS has been reviewed with regards to its alignment with the NSS, particularly through the physical connectivity of selected growth centres.

The NTS was initiated in 2002 and had been developed through a broad consultation process (including MoMRA) that culminated in its approval in 2011 via the Royal Decree XX. The NTS identified six strategic “Programme Areas” mirrored by “Action Programmes” namely: (1) transport infrastructure development, (2) freight transportation and trade facilitation, (3) passenger transportation, (4) Hajj transportation, (5) transport Safety, and (6) environmental protection; which are supported by 28 specific actions that identify the concerned national agencies. One should note that the NTS is rather a mix between a Policy that links goal(s) to expected outcomes and a Strategy that links expected outcomes to outputs.

Though the NTS is a solid and comprehensive Policy/Strategy, it does not refer to the NSS nor highlight the importance of the spatial dimension in its “Action Programmes”. This seems to be a

missed opportunity since the NTS and NSS are by nature intertwined. Coming back to the “spatial concentration-diffusion dilemma”²⁵, the NSS and NTS are the best placed candidates to balance competing interests between sectors that are rather demand-driven (eg: industry, housing...) and sectors that are rather supply-driven (eg: education, health...).

The concept of development corridor -if adequately unpacked²⁶- could be a good entry point to strengthen the integration and coherence between the NSS and the NTS. This is exemplified in figure 9 that shows the seven primary development corridors and the road connectivity across the urban agglomerations²⁷ of the Kingdom. The figure 9 compares the space distance (50km and 150km radius) to the time distance (one hour and two hours isochrones²⁸). The idea here is to compare the theoretical connectivity to the actual connectivity based on the assumption that one could drive 50km in an hour and 150km in two hours in a well-connected urban agglomeration. Firstly, the figure 9 shows that overall level of road connectivity is good; and secondly it shows that despite good road connectivity and national priority (see 9th NSS objective), no primary development corridor was identified in the South-Western triangle that includes the cities of Jazan, Abha, Khamis-Mushait and Narjan. This specific example calls for a strengthened dialogue between MoMRA and MoT to ensure relevance, integration and effectiveness of both the NSS and transportation plans.

The feedback received during the national consultation process highlights that the challenges related to the NSS integration go beyond the transport sector, as shown in table 4. The questionnaire for national authorities was structured along four main sections: (i) knowledge of the NSS content and perception of its relevance, (ii) alignment of the NSS with sectoral policies, strategies and plans, (iii) importance given to the spatial dimension in sectoral policies, strategies and plans, (iv) building a participatory and collaborative platform to support the NSS revision. It is worth to note that the questionnaire and discussions had covered the three aspects of the NSS review, which are effectiveness, relevance and integration. Equally important to note is that the national authorities perceive the NSS integration as the bottleneck in the implementation process. The key takeaways from the national consultation process are summarized hereafter and structured along three dimensions: engagement, ownership and uptake of relevant stakeholders.

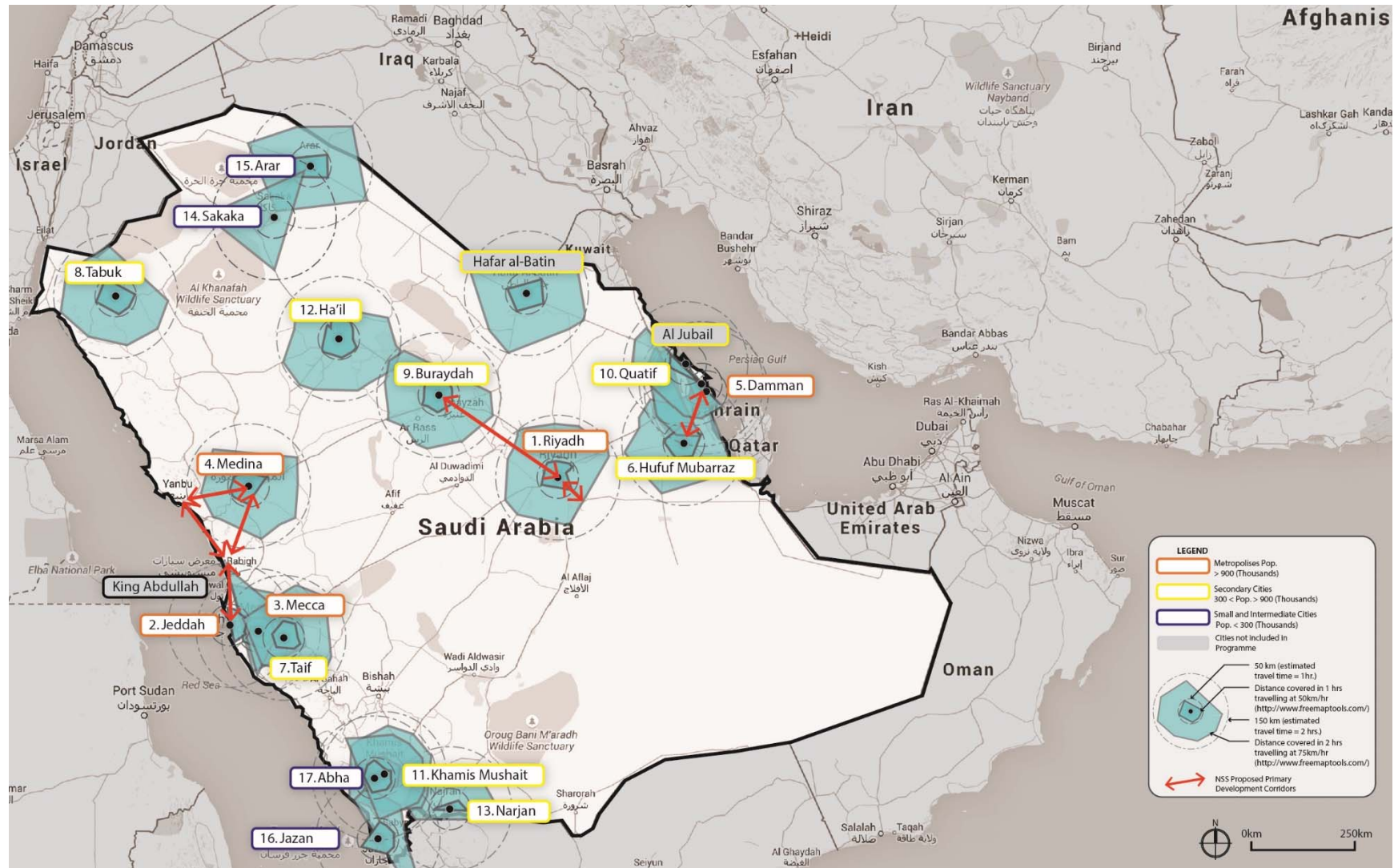
²⁵ See section 3.1 “NSS objectives and strategic directions”

²⁶ See section 3.3 “NSS instruments: growth centres and development corridors”

²⁷ See section 2.2 “Distribution of population across urban agglomerations”

²⁸ An isochrone is a line connecting places from which it takes the same time to travel to a certain point

FIGURE 9: Road Connectivity of Urban Agglomerations – one hour and two hours Isochrones



Source: UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

TABLE 4: Main Gaps identified in the National Consultation Process

Main Gaps identified	Results (Effectiveness)	Content (Relevance)	Process (Integration)	Source
The NSS has not been updated to include the new Economic Cities			X	MoMRA
The NSS lacks short-medium term vision and anchor in the realities		X		MoH
The NSS does not address the sectoral competing interests			X	MODON
The NSS is not used to guide resource allocation at regional level			X	MoEP
The NSS lacks an action plan and key performance indicators		X		SHC
The NSS does not reflect the potentialities and priorities of regions		X		ADA
The concept of development corridors does not fit to the Saudi context		X		MoT
The NSS does not help to speak the same language (forecasts, maps...)			X	All
The NSS does not promote the use of development rights		X		MoWE
The NSS does not enable the protection of natural resources	X			MoA
The NSS is not used to facilitate the dialogue with Municipalities			X	PME
The NSS does not address the issues related to the Growth Boundaries			X	All

Source: UN-Habitat, derived from feedback collected during interviews and workshops (2015)

Engagement: On one hand, the available documentation does not help to assess to what extent the NSS formulation process was consultative and participatory, although couple of line ministries confirmed that they were involved in a way or another. It is therefore suggested to document the formulation process of the revised NSS to enable proper ex-post evaluation. On the other hand, MoMRA is seating in several committees and working groups that aim at enhancing inter-sectoral coordination. However, these platforms of discussion are rather ad-hoc, which does not help to monitor and follow-up on agreed actions. The National Urban Forum that could take place every two years seems to be the ideal platform to strengthen the engagement of national and local authorities, which could also be opened up to private sector and civil society organisations as appropriate.

Ownership: Overall, the ownership of the NSS seems limited for three main reasons: (i) several senior managers who had been consulted were not familiar with the NSS. The absence of communication platform (on-line version) for the NSS, unlike other national strategies, as well as supporting communication, strategies and materials does not facilitate to reach out partners and beneficiaries; (ii) several participants and interviewees had highlighted that the NSS preceded the creation of their institution and/or the definition of their national strategy. This is for instance true for MODON, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Transport and the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment. Thus, the need to reflect these major changes in the revised NSS; (iii) several participants and interviewees had stressed that the NSS is rather general, long-term and not action-oriented which does not facilitate its understanding and implementation. The absence of concrete supporting programmes and projects and the difficulty to translate the concept of development corridors into actions came back several times.

Uptake: As a logical consequence of the ad-hoc engagement and limited ownership, the uptake of the NSS could be further strengthened. For instance, no explicit mention of the NSS has been found in any national plan or strategy, which is an important barrier for adequate uptake from relevant authorities and stakeholders. The absence of coordination, implementation and reporting mechanisms does not favour inter-ministerial dialogue, data and information exchange (eg: GIS layers), harmonization/disaggregation of key performance indicators, and thus reduces the opportunities for partnerships, joint implementation and co-benefits. Though, the revised NSS shall learn from and build on these lessons, the magnitude and scope of the challenges clearly go beyond a National Spatial Strategy. It is therefore strongly recommended to develop a fully-fledged National Urban Policy (NUP) to effectively address the root causes of integration challenges. The core goals and ingredients of a NUP and NSS are highlighted in table 5, which underlines the complementarities of these two instruments. As an illustration, one could say that the NUP is meant to be a compass while the NSS is supposed to be GIS software. The box 8 explains why it is important to develop a National Urban Policy for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

BOX 8: Why developing a National Urban Policy?

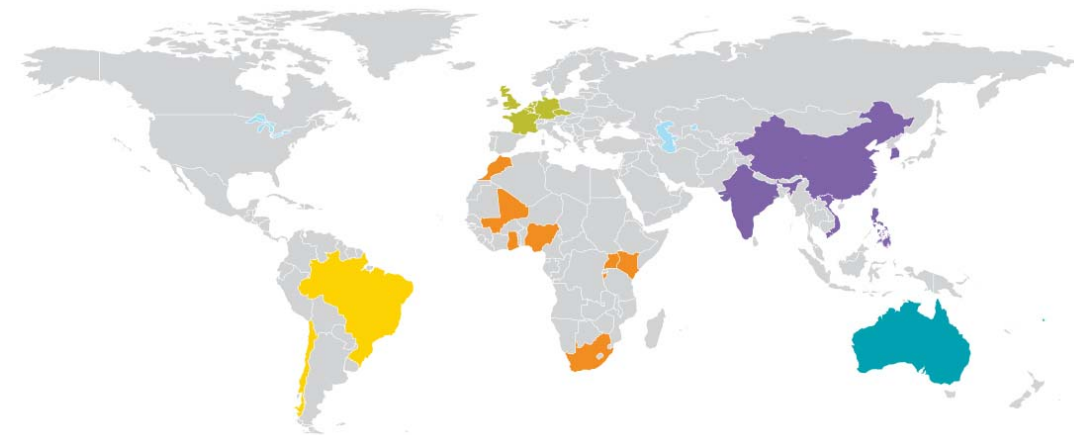
The complexity and scale of urban challenges requires a national approach to cities. National Governments, as key players in the future of urban systems, must provide leadership on innovative, adaptable and resilient solutions. The decisions that government, business and individuals make have a significant impact on cities. It is therefore necessary to know what effect decisions are likely to have on cities, and to set clear aspirations and directions that guide actions and interventions.

A National Urban Policy (NUP) aims at coordinating and rallying various actors for a common vision and shared goals that will promote more transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term. As such a NUP is often an interactive process. The new generation of NUP guides the urbanization process by promoting more compact, socially inclusive, better connected and integrated cities and territories that foster sustainable urban development and are resilient to climate change.

The new generation of NUP demands an approach to policy that reaches beyond spatial planning. While defining “urban policy” spatially has traditionally been considered as adequate in defining urban policy areas, the challenges and opportunities of rapid urbanization require a higher degree of governmental coordination and organization. Complex social problems that manifest in urban areas compel a broader approach to urban policy and a higher level of vertical and horizontal coordination, as well as creative partnerships outside of the public sector.

Several countries across all the world regions have embarked upon the NUP journey to depart from business as usual and embody an integrated and transformative rather than sectorial and piecemeal approach. Read more: “The Evolution of National Urban Policies: a Global Overview”, UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance (2014).

Selected countries with experience in NUP



Source: New Generation of National Urban Policies, UN-Habitat (2014)

TABLE 5: National Spatial Strategy Versus National Urban Policy – Core Goals and Ingredients

Core Goals and Ingredients	NSS	NUP
Inspire Define inclusive, consensual and action-oriented objectives		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Enable Design an overarching framework for coordination		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Guide Spatially guide the allocation of services and resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Facilitate Cater for adequate (land) incentives and partnerships		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Regulate Support the enforcement of planning rules and regulations		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Monitor Periodically adjust the actions when and where appropriate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Source: UN-Habitat, derived from the *International Experiences on National Spatial Frameworks (2015)*

5. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

5.1 MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS AT A GLANCE

The main findings of the NSS review are presented hereafter and structured along the three specific reviews.

Could be also moved at the end of each chapter if you wish.

NSS Effectiveness

- (1) The NSS does not include a monitoring and evaluation framework, which makes the assessment of its effectiveness rather difficult.
- (2) The total population in KSA increased from 20.8 million in 2000 to 30.8 million in 2014 supported both by natural growth and external migration.
- (3) The overall distribution of population across regions has slightly changed between 2000 and 2014.
- (4) The non-Saudi population has grown faster than the Saudi population in all regions of the Kingdom between 2000 and 2014.
- (5) Overall, the pattern of population distribution across regions tend to stabilize with half of the total population located in Al Riyadh and Makkah regions and the other half spread across the other regions.
- (6) The demographic weight of the five metropolises has grown over the past 15 years to reach 49% of the Saudi population in 2015.
- (7) The primacy of the five metropolises is not unusual when compared to other big and highly urbanized countries.
- (8) The population growth in metropolises and secondary cities has followed the same pattern since 1985.
- (9) The current distribution of population across urban agglomerations features a promising 'portfolio of cities' that seem to be complementary in sizes and functions.
- (10) The delivery of hospitals and health care centres remains low in the most populated regions while it had notably increased in other regions.
- (11) The distribution of universities and schools across regions since 2001 is one of the success stories of the NSS and the Kingdom.
- (12) Overall, the delivery of health and education facilities has experienced tremendous improvements since the NSS approval in 2000.

NSS Relevance

- (1) A specific emphasis has been given to balanced regional development since the 5th National Development Plan (1985-1990).
- (2) The nine objectives of the NSS have given strong emphasis to economic growth despite the overall objective of achieving balanced regional development.
- (3) It is important to think from the start how the NSS objectives could be disaggregated by sectors and reflected spatially to ensure onward uptake and implementation.
- (4) The NSS does not explicitly look beyond the boundaries of Saudi Arabia despite the major role played by the Kingdom at regional and international levels.
- (5) The NSS would gain in including a supra-national concept/vision along with a preliminary analysis to strengthen regional cooperation and integration.
- (6) The NSS could also promote resilience while considering the potential risks that might undermine the national development and security.
- (7) The NSS could explicitly acknowledge the specific and crucial role of the five Saudi metropolises (Riyadh, Jeddah, Mecca, Medina and Damman) in the national development.
- (8) The NSS could better reflect the environmental dimension and cover issues related biodiversity, natural resources management, disaster risk reduction and climate change.
- (9) Considering the scarcity of water and arable land, the NSS could put a greater emphasis on the management of natural resources.
- (10) The NSS could embrace issues related to climate change and disaster risk reduction (flood, sea level rise, droughts...) that are critical in the Saudi context.
- (11) The NSS could therefore clearly define the functions (main and secondary) of each identified development corridor.
- (12) The NSS could identify and select development corridors based on their respective assets (eg: location and population density), potentials (eg: physical connectivity) and functions.
- (13) In the context of the NSS, four functions of corridors could be identified: (i) transport, (ii) transit, (iii) economic activities, and (iv) socio-environmental.
- (14) The transport function is a pre-requisite to any development corridor (even for information technology corridor) to ensure adequate connectivity and mobility of goods and people.
- (15) The transit function is also important because a majority of the GCC countries depend on smooth, efficient and low-cost movement of people and goods through neighboring countries.
- (16) The economic function is the main focus of the current NSS that is concerned with the spatial organization and diversification of economic activities.

- (17) The socio-environmental function is instrumental to safeguard and develop natural and cultural corridors that are major contributors to national socio-economic development.
- (18) The development of corridors is therefore a multi-faceted concept that goes beyond spatial/physical planning.
- (19) The functional classification of cities into growth centres is aligned with the NSS objectives and intended impacts and has yielded positive results in delivery and access to basic services.
- (20) The lack of minimum convergence between functional and administrative classification of cities is locking the potential of growth centres.
- (21) The City Prosperity Index (CPI) could be used as a reference tool to inform a potential revision of the classification of growth centres.

NSS Integration

- (1) The revised NSS could be the main instrument to directly support the delivery of the second objective of the new Strategy of MoMRA.
- (2) The role of the NSS in supporting the delivery of some objectives of the new Strategy of MoMRA could be reflected in the unfolding implementation roadmap.
- (3) The comparison of classification of growth centres between the SPAR (2012) and the NSS (2000) features some discrepancies, which highlights the need for flexibility in regional plan-making (NSS is an overall framework) and continuous feedback loops to enable cross-fertilization of approaches (top-down and bottom-up).
- (4) The NSS could be used to guide the process of regional budget allocation in order to ensure that the financed projects effectively support transformative and integrated development.
- (5) Though the National Transportation Strategy is a solid and comprehensive Policy/Strategy, it does not refer to the NSS nor highlight the importance of the spatial dimension in its "Action Programmes".
- (6) The concept of development corridor -if adequately unpacked- could be a good entry point to strengthen the integration and coherence between the NSS and the National Transportation Strategy.
- (7) No explicit mention of the NSS has been found in any national plan or strategy, which is an important barrier for adequate uptake from relevant authorities and stakeholders.
- (8) Overall, the ownership of the NSS seems limited for three main reasons: (i) limited knowledge and communication on the NSS; (ii) NSS preceded the creation of major institutions and/or the definition of national strategies; (iii) the NSS is rather general, long-term and not action-oriented which does not facilitate its understanding and implementation.

- (9) The absence of coordination, implementation and reporting mechanisms does not favour inter-ministerial dialogue, data and information exchange (eg: GIS layers), harmonization/disaggregation of key performance indicators, and thus reduces the opportunities for partnerships, joint implementation and co-benefits.
- (10) The National Urban Forum that could take place every two years seems to be the ideal platform to strengthen the engagement of national and local authorities.
- (11) The development of a fully-fledged National Urban Policy could effectively address the root causes of integration challenges.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS: TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

The review of the NSS has highlighted some challenges that could be transformed into opportunities if addressed properly in the future revision of the NSS. In this perspective, three key recommendations supported by 15 specific actions are proposed hereunder.

A short para (3-4 lines) to be developed for each activity

Recommendation 1: Developing a NUP to address the “Integration Challenge”

Action 1.1: Rally early support from relevant stakeholders

Action 1.2: Undertake a rapid and action-oriented NUP Diagnosis

Action 1.3: Conduct national and regional/local consultations on NUP/NSS

Action 1.4: Formulate a NUP based on diagnosis and consultations

Action 1.5: Promote the NUP through appropriate networks and channels

Action 1.6: Implement selected catalytic and transformative projects

Recommendation 2: Revising the NSS based on the NUP Outcomes

Action 2.1: Launching specific studies on the main gaps identified

Action 2.2: Develop an outline of the proposed revised NSS (building on action 1.2)

Action 2.3: Conduct national and regional/local consultations on NUP/NSS (idem action 1.3)

Action 2.4: Revise the NSS based on studies and consultations

Action 2.5: Promote the NSS through appropriate networks and channels

Recommendation 3: Monitoring regularly the NSS and NUP Results

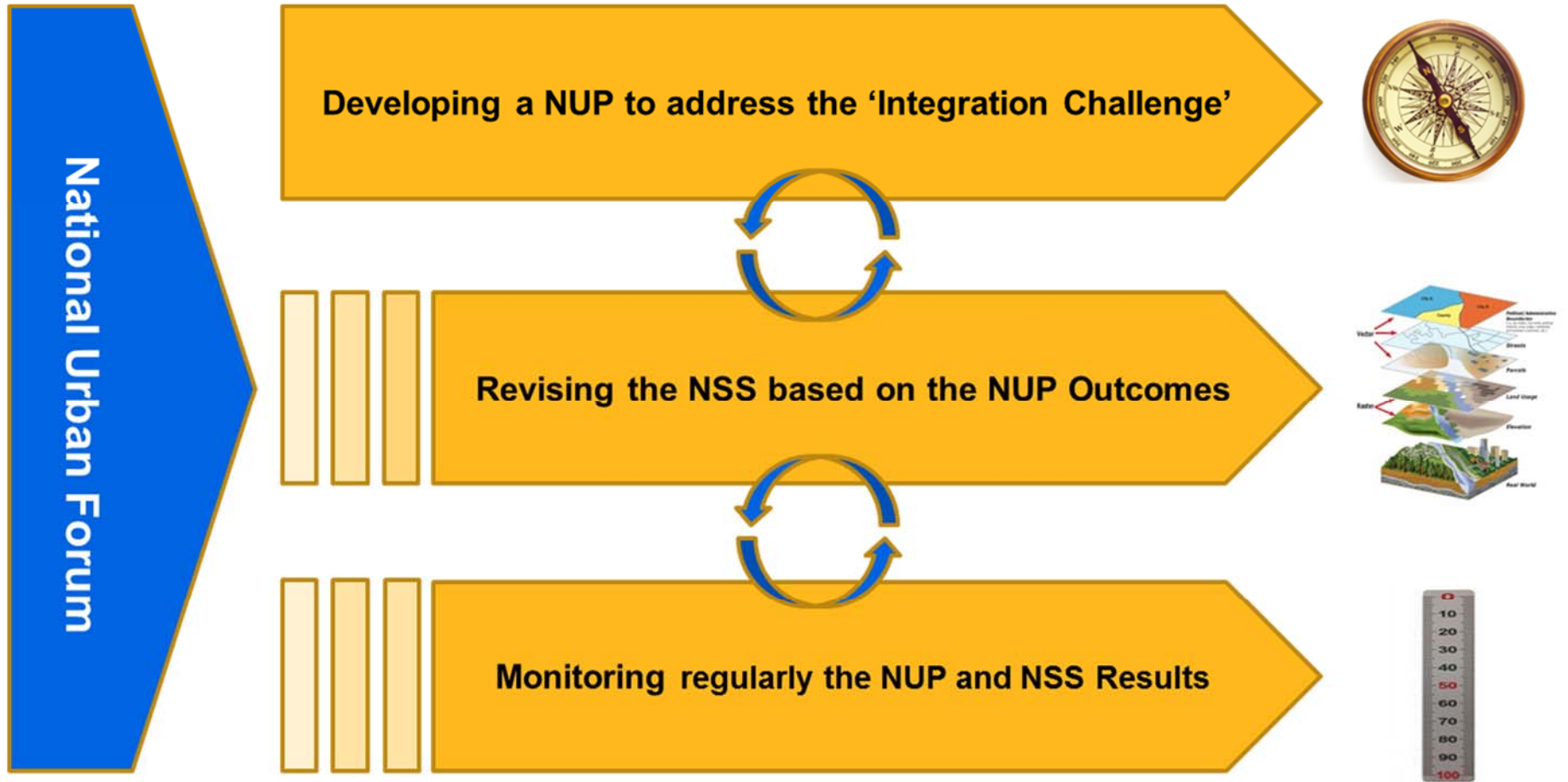
Action 2.1: Mandate an external Body/Committee to undertake the NUP/NSS monitoring

Action 2.3: Articulating the NUP/NSS monitoring with Five-year Plan development

Action 2.3: Using the National Urban Forum as a monitoring platform

Action 2.4: Using Regional and World Urban Forums as communication platforms

FIGURE 10: Proposed Key Recommendations: The Compass, the GIS and the Ruler



Source: UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

5.1 PROPOSED ROADMAP: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

2-3 para to be developed to present the following roadmap

TABLE 5: Proposed Roadmap

	Ref	Action	Who	When											
				2016				2017				2018			
								Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Reco. 1: Developing a NUP to address the “Integration Challenge”	1.1	Rally early support from relevant stakeholders													
	1.2	Undertake a rapid and action-oriented NUP Diagnosis													
	1.3	Conduct national and regional/local consultations on NUP/NSS													
	1.4	Formulate a NUP based on diagnosis and consultations													
	1.5	Promote the NUP through appropriate networks and channels													
	1.6	Implement selected catalytic and transformative projects													
Reco. 2: Revising the NSS based on the NUP Outcomes	2.1	Launching specific studies on the main gaps identified													
	2.2	Develop an outline of the proposed revised NSS													
	2.3	Conduct national and regional/local consultations on NUP/NSS (idem action 1.3)													
	2.4	Revise the NSS based on studies and consultations													
	2.5	Promote the NSS through appropriate networks and channels													
Reco. 3: Monitoring regularly the NSS and NUP Results	3.1	Mandate an external Body/Committee to undertake the NUP/NSS monitoring													
	3.2	Articulating the NUP/NSS monitoring with Five-year Plan development													
	3.3	Using the National Urban Forum as a monitoring platform													
	3.4	Using Regional and World Urban Forums as communication platforms													

Source: UN-Habitat, RMPU/UPDB (2015)

ANNEXES

To be completed

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