

International Manual of Planning Practice Third Volume 1998



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CITY AND REGIONAL PLANNERS
ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES URBANISTES
INTERNATIONALE GESELLSCHAFT DER STADT - UND REGIONALPLANER
ASOCIACION INTERNACIONAL DU URBANISTAS

SAUDI ARABIA

PART I

INTRODUCTION

The goal of spatial planning in Saudi Arabia is to promote balanced regional development based upon equity and efficiency and to improve the environmental conditions of the urban centres through the formulation and application of rational policies, strategies, plans at the national, regional and local levels.

1) TYPE OF CHANGE.

Following groups of changes is the subject of planning:

- Reduction of regional disparities
- Intensity of land utilisation
- Managing urban growth
- Regulating land development.

2) WHO MAKES ARRANGEMENTS?

Level	Type of Arrangement
Central	Legislation Goals and Policies National Spatial Strategy Regulations, procedures Spatial plans for regions and municipalities, which do not have the technical capability.
Regional/Provincial	Follow up of regional plans/strategies; co-ordination of investments, land use decisions and provision of infrastructure.
Local	Planning control Building control Co-ordination and follow up of structure and local plans.

SAUDI ARABIA

3) WHO GIVES CONSENT?

Approval of any national or regional plans rests with the Council of Ministers chaired by HM the King. Powers are sometimes delegated to the Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Approval of structure plans and local plans is given by the Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

Policies, regulations and procedures relating to spatial planning and land development also emanate either from Council of Ministers or the Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs in the form of decrees, directives and circulars.

4) WHO CAN OBJECT?

The plans are discussed and debated at the national, regional and local levels to incorporate the views of various agencies but there is no system of public hearing / objections as practised in the west. The individuals can challenge any provisions of the plan under Sharia (Islamic Law) which is the basis of all legislation in the country. Special courts known as Diwan-e-Mazalem have been established to hear complaints against government decisions and actions.

SAUDI ARABIA

PART I

STAGE 1 Question 2a & b				2b: What type of arrangements			Country: Saudi Arabia
2a: Who makes arrangements for change				Name	Scale	Description	
Level	Size	Description					
1	National	16.9 Millions population 1992 census	Deputy Ministry of Town Planning Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA)	National Spatial Strategy	Text and Diagrams	Corridors of Development National Road Network Settlement Pattern Policy Statements Guidelines Regulations, Procedures Model Land Development Code	
2	Regional or Provincial	13 Provinces from 4.47 millions (Makkah) to 0.30 millions (Najran)	Regional Directorate of MOMRA or Regional Municipality	Legislation Regional Plan / Regional Strategy	Text Text and Diagrams	Policy Statements Guidelines Regional Infrastructure Conservation Areas	
3	Local Cities	Amanats 5 (Met. Area municipal.) 97 Municipalities	Amanats for 5 big cities headed by the appointed mayors Municipalities of A, B, C, D grade depending upon their size and village cluster centres headed by the appointed Mayors	Structure Plan Local Plans Urban Growth Boundaries Village Plans	Diagrams Regulations Text & Diagrams Diagrams	Road network for the subregion Indication of development zones Land use and Zoning Map Land Development Code Indication of boundaries for Phase I, II and the Protection Zone Regulations Land uses and road network	
	Village cluster centres Villages	Village cluster centres 62 Villages 2030	Managed by the Regional Municipalities or Regional Directorate of MOMRA				

SAUDI ARABIA

PART II

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Saudi Arabia is a monarchy with the Holy Qur'an as the constitution. The main institutions of the system are: the King, the Council of Ministers and the Consultative Council (Majlis Al Shura). The King is the supreme authority in the Kingdom. Independent judicial system interprets the laws and makes decisions in all sorts of cases.

The Council of Ministers is the formal policy making body with executive and legislative powers. It is chaired by the King and is responsible for the formulation of policies. However, the King approves all laws, treaties, concessions, national budget and these are promulgated through royal decrees. These laws and decrees form the basis of planning legislation in the Kingdom. In addition, other royal orders, Crown Prince resolutions, and Council of Minister's directives issued to tackle particular problems supplement and support the planning legislation. A second level of decision making are the ministries which are authorised to interpret the laws formulated by the higher institutions and issue directives, resolutions and ordinances to implement them. These are enforced through circulars, even though these circulars may not have direct legal sanctions.

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF PLANNING

Saudi Arabia has a centralised system of government whereby the central government plays a strong role but the other two levels are also performing the assigned functions. At present the three levels carry out the following duties:

1. At central government level, there are 21 ministries. However in relation to spatial planning two are directly concerned. Ministry of Planning (MOP) prepares the economic and sectoral framework for the country through the 5-Year Development Plans. Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA) is the primary agency in the Kingdom responsible for spatial planning and the provision and management of infrastructure in all the settlements.
2. At the regional level all the ministries are represented through their regional offices which carry out the implementation of projects. MOMRA's representation is through the Directorate General or Regional Municipality which deal with spatial planning. The co-ordination of the development activities in the region is the responsibility of the Provincial Council chaired by the Governor.

SAUDI ARABIA

3. At local level, the municipality is the centre of the existing spatial planning legislation. The municipalities are organised according to the population size and their importance. The largest five are known as Amanats and the others numbering 97 are graded as A, B, C, and D according to their population sizes. There are also 62 village cluster centres. All Amanats, municipalities and village cluster centres are headed by the mayors appointed by the central government with administrative control exercised by MOMRA. Funds are allocated by the Ministry of Finance on the recommendation of MOMRA. As most of the municipalities do not have adequate planning staff, the Deputy Ministry of Town Planning, MOMRA initiates and undertakes plan preparation in collaboration with the municipalities. Sometimes Amanats hire planning consultants to prepare spatial plans of varied nature.

STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS

MOMRA is mainly responsible for the development of standards and regulations. Various government ministries also develop their own standards, which may be adopted by MOMRA. As the regulations and procedures are in the form of royal decrees, resolutions, directives and ministerial circular, MOMRA has brought them together and updated them in the form of a Model Land Development Code.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Saudi Arabia has a strong centralised system of government with all revenue generation and allocation of funds handled by the centre. The head of state and chief executive is the King. The King appoints the Council of Ministers to help him formulate policies and implement them. The country is divided into 13 administrative regions known as Provinces and these are headed by governors appointed by the King. The Consultative Council at the Centre and Regional Council in the Provinces established in 1992 constitute an important structure in the formulation and implementation of participatory planning in the country. According to this system, the Consultative Council consists of a Chairman and 90 well educated members to be appointed by the King. The Council is charged with the responsibility of debating important issues and rendering advice with suggestions to the decision-makers for integrating the citizen with the development process and to improve their quality of life.

The provincial system aims at upgrading the level of administrative work and development in all parts of the Kingdom. It also aims at the preservation of security and order, the rights of citizen and their freedom within the framework of Islamic Sharia.

SAUDI ARABIA

Under the system each region is divided into a number of districts and centres. The system provides for the establishment of citizen councils at these levels also.

SAUDI ARABIA

LEGAL STRUCTURE OF SPATIAL PLANNING

Framework	National Level	Regional Level	Local Level
Municipal and Road Statutes (1938)			Establishment of municipalities and preparing plans.
Municipal System Act (1972)	Establishment of Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs (MOMRA) in 1975 and set up of Deputy Ministry of Town Planning within MOMRA to deal with spatial planning.	Establishment of Regional Directorates, Regional Water and Sewerage Authorities	Categorisation of municipalities according to their size and functions. Enlargement of responsibilities. Establishment of village cluster centres.
This act established a vertical organisational structure in the country by defining the relationship among the three tiers of the government.			

STATISTICAL DATA

Area	2,250,000	sq. km.
Population.....	16,900,000	inhabitants.(1992 Census)
	19,500,000	inhabitants. (1998 estimated)
Density.....	7.51	inhabitants sq. km.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

13 Provinces
102 Municipalities
62 Village Cluster Centres

13 Provinces

Largest Area.....(Eastern Province)..... 726,059 sq. km.
Smallest Area.....(Al Baha)..... 10,690 sq. km.

Largest Population.....(Makkah)..... 4,470,000 inhabitants*
Smallest Population.....(Najran)..... 300,000 inhabitants*

SAUDI ARABIA

Highest Density.....(Gizan)..... 52.02 inhabitants sq. km. *
Lowest Density.....(Najran)..... 2.15 inhabitants sq. km. *

* Based on 1992 Census

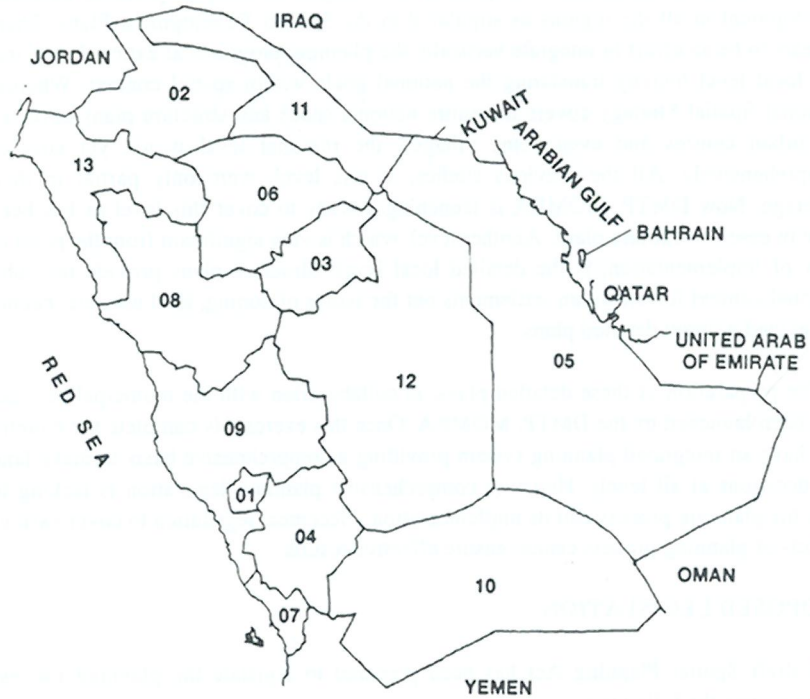
Highest Number of Towns..... 38 (Riyadh)
Lowest Number of Towns..... 4 (Najran and Northern province)

SAUDI ARABIA

PART II

PROVINCES

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 01 - AL BAHA | 08 - MADINAH |
| 02 - AL JAUF | 09 - MAKKAH |
| 03 - AL QASSIM | 10 - NAJHRAN |
| 04 - ASIR | 11 - NORTHERN PROVINCE |
| 05 - EASTERN PROVINCE | 12 - RIYADH |
| 06 - HAIL | 13 - TABUK |
| 07 - JIZAN | |



SAUDI ARABIA

PART III

EVALUATION & COMMENTARY

The present system of town planning in the Kingdom has evolved over the past 60 years. Even though the process seems to be fragmented, one could observe continuity in these developments and a gradual progression in its development to address the rapidly changing development problems. Starting from the stage of Municipal and Road Statutes, the planning process has gone through the stages of gridiron pattern during 1940's, Master planning during 60's, comprehensive urban and regional planning during 70's and 80's reaching the stage of National Spatial Strategy and Structure Planning in the 90's. Thus the entire national space is now subject to study to promote balanced development in all the regions as stipulated in the 5-Year Development Plans. There appears to be an effort to integrate vertically the planning programs at national, regional and local level thereby translating the national goals within spatial context. Whereas National Spatial Strategy covers the entire national space and structure plans cover all the urban centres and even some villages, the regional level is not yet covered comprehensively. All the previous studies, at this level, were only partial in their coverage. Now DMTP, MOMRA is launching a study to cover this level as has been done in case of structure plans. Another level, which is very significant from the point of view of implementation, is the detailed local level. Structure plans provide the sub-regional context for the urban settlements but the issues of zoning, land uses etc. cannot be decided without detailed plans.

The preparation of these detailed plans, in collaboration with the municipalities, has also been launched by the DMTP, MOMRA. Once this exercise is complete the country will have an integrated planning system providing a comprehensive basis to make land use decisions at all levels. However comprehensive planning legislation is lacking to back the planning process and its implementation. Piecemeal legislation to cover various aspects of planning process cannot ensure effective results.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

A draft Spatial Planning Act has been prepared to legislate the planning process which covers the following:

- The planning process at the three tiers of government.
- Jurisdictions and functions of various planning agencies.
- Approval procedures of plans.
- Implementation of plans.

SAUDI ARABIA

A draft Model Land Development Code has been prepared which will be adapted by each municipality with necessary modifications. It covers and provides:

- Bringing together all regulations and procedures dealing with land development.
- Tying up the planning process with implementation.
- Planning standards for various facilities and services.
- Penalties and appeals procedure.

S. Al-Hathloul, M. Aslam Mughal: 1998

