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Paper

Restoration of cultural heritage and urban identity in Syria

URBAN RECOVERY FRAMEWORK | December 2021

**URBAN
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Restoration of cultural heritage and urban identity in Syria



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Table of Contents

Disclaimer	02
Copyright	02
Table of Contents	03
List of tables	04
List of figures	04
Abbreviations	05
Terminology	06
01. Executive Summary	07
02. Introduction	09
03. Contextual Analysis & Policy Challenges	10
Crisis impact on urban heritage	11
Crisis impact on urban heritage in a sample of Syrian cities	13
04. Governance of urban heritage	15
Cultural heritage stakeholders	15
Institutional challenges	21
Normative and Legal Frameworks	22
05. Case Study: Urban Heritage Recovery in the Old City of Aleppo	25
The Old City of Aleppo	26
Main actors and recovery actions	28
06. Prioritizing Policy Options - Transformative Actions for Urban Recovery	30
Policy challenges to be addressed	30
Cultural heritage considerations in Urban Recovery Frameworks, in Syrian cities	30
Policy principles	32
07. Policy Design	34
Implementation model	34
Phased recovery actions based on a recovery ladder	39
Recommendations for the heritage recovery ladder	40
Heritage evaluation grid	44
08. Implementation and Monitoring	48
Potential roles in transforming policy priorities to actions	48
Possible financing options	49
Monitoring	50
09. Conclusion	52
References	54
Annex 1 Crisis Affected Structures in Old Cities	56
Annex 2 Syrian Laws and Regulations concerning Urban Heritage	63

List of tables

Table 1:	Urban Heritage sites in Syria	11
Table 2:	Heritage Evaluation Grid (Source: UN-Habitat)	46
Table 3:	Overview structural damages in six Syrian cities	56
Table 4:	Structural damages in Aleppo by category	57
Table 5:	Structural damages in Dar'a by category	58
Table 6:	Structural damages in Hama by category	59
Table 7:	Structural damages in Homs by category	60
Table 8:	Structural damages in As-Sweida by category	61
Table 9:	Structural damages in Raqqa by category	62

List of figures

Figure 1:	Map of the Urban Heritage in Syria	10
Figure 2:	Impact of the crisis on Syrian Old Cities. Source: Joint Research Centre, European Commission (2020)	14
Figure 3:	Affected residential structures in the old cities. Source: Joint Research Centre, European Commission (2020)	14
Figure 4:	Organigram of government actors involved in the management of urban heritage in Syria	18
Figure 5:	Map with damaged monuments in the Old City of Aleppo	25
Figure 6:	Timeline of restoration and conservation efforts for the Old City of Aleppo	27
Figure 7:	Heritage Sites and Heritage corridor map	35
Figure 8:	An urban recover plan	36
Figure 9:	The area-based Hara approach	37
Figure 10:	Range of targets	39

Abbreviations

AKDN	Aga Khan Development Network
AKTC	Aga Khan Trust for Culture
ALIPH	International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas
ARC-WH	Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage
ASOR	American Society of Overseas Research
DGAM	Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums
DSOCR	Desired state of conservation for the removal from the list of world heritage in Danger
DOC	Directory of the Old City
EAMENA	Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East & North Africa
GDCA	General Directorate of Cadastral Affairs
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoS	Government of Syria
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
Interpol	International Criminal Police Organization
IPFRM	Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul
MAM	Municipal Administration Modernisation Programme
MIK	Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin
MIS	Municipal Information System
MoLAE	Ministry of Local Administration and Environment
NC	Neighbourhood Committee
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDP	Urban Development Project
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOSAT	United Nations Satellite Centre
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
Urban-S	Urban Analysis Network Syria
URF	Urban Recovery Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
WHL	World Heritage List
WHS	World Heritage Site
WMF	World Monuments Fund

Terminology

Area-based approaches: are multisectoral, multi-stakeholder, geographically targeted and consider the whole population within a selected location.

Awqaf: religious endowment, e.g., buildings, plots of land etc. donated for charitable purposes

Building-back-better: an approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks

Cluster: a group of residential buildings

Cul-de-sac: Street with impasse end.

Hara's: both traditional residential neighbourhoods and the elementary unit of the urban society in Syria
Heritage Corridors: regional ensembles of cities which share commonalities that can be leveraged for programming (e.g., greenways, travel routes, heritages sites etc.)

Heritage Evaluation Grid: scoring system used to identify cities and sites of important heritage value

Hub-based recovery: using tailored pilot projects of small quarters and cul-de-sac for gathering places, local economic activities, and social life, to support reconciliation (especially for vulnerable groups).

Mukhtar: The representative of the smallest administrative unit at the local level. There might be several mukhtars, according to the area's population. As an administrative officer, the mukhtar is responsible for some of the official functions established among the people of his/her community, such as registration of national registers, births, deaths, and marriages.

Noria: Arabic word meaning waterwheel

Protected and buffer zones: Protected/Buffer zones are an important tool for conservation of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. With the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the protection of the surroundings of the sites was considered an essential component of the conservation strategy, for both cultural and natural sites alike, and is therefore included in the Operational Guidelines as one of the elements to be considered.

The World Heritage Sites in Syria are legally listed as a protected zone with an official, surrounding buffer zone.

Recovery ladder: the identification and prioritisation of actions along a continuum from stabilization to transformation and across scales from local to national

Souq: an open-air marketplace, street market; a bazaar also it could be covered,

Urban Corridors: the areas linking urban heritage in cities with their rural hinterlands

Urban cultural heritage: in this paper, urban cultural heritage is used to describe both the layers of historical built environment, including buildings and "monuments" of architectural and historic value (historic houses, churches and other religious buildings, castles, city walls, palaces, and institutional buildings), as well as the intangible heritage values including societal traditions and customs passes on from generations.

Urban Recovery Framework: the Urban Recovery Framework (URF) is a methodology developed to guide urban-specific dimensions of post-disaster and post-conflict recovery. It is intended to fill a significant gap in the international system's ability to support countries and cities affected by urban crises.

Executive Summary

Over the course of Syria's ten-year conflict, the country has endured large-scale destruction to its cities and towns. The impact on Syria's rich and diverse cultural heritage encompasses vast damage to cultural heritage sites and buildings, and a fragmentation of cities' socio-cultural fabric and local identities. Throughout the crisis, many clashes have taken place in historic city centres, causing damage and destruction to sites and structures of cultural significance.

Syrian cities also host tens of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have fled from different parts of the country. This is adding pressure to already scarce resources, including land and housing, and may contribute to increased social tension. At the same time, weakened governance combined with competing humanitarian needs and constrained financial budgets, is limiting local governments' capacities to protect traditional neighbourhoods and the more than 1200 sites of significant cultural, religious, and historical importance in the country.

Central factors contributing to the crisis impact on cultural heritage in Syrian cities include:

Damage to traditional neighbourhoods and buildings: the significant damage inflicted on historic residential districts, Hara's, is contributing to changing the urban fabric and eroding historic cities' coherent architectural expression with dense, traditional neighbourhoods. Adding to this is the poor maintenance of historical buildings as owners and/or tenants are not in a position to prioritise the high costs of restoration and repairs.

Demographic changes: the many urban clashes that have taken place in the historic core of cities have forced people to flee their homes and abandon their neighbourhoods. At the same time, the arrival of displaced persons in cities has transformed entire neighbourhoods and added pressure on housing and land, including cultural heritage buildings and sites.

Rights issues: the loss of civil and cadastral records is hindering displaced persons from asserting their housing, land, and tenure rights. This is also contributing to land speculation targeting destroyed heritage sites, the transformation of heritage sites into informal waste dumping areas, as well as encroachment on and abandonment of heritage buildings and sites.

Reduced economic activities: the significant damage and destruction of old market areas and traditional artisanal production buildings have contributed to the loss of commercial exchange and livelihoods in, and connected to, the open-air markets known as souqs.

Loss of traditional craftsmanship: the crisis-induced displacement of people and reduction in demand for goods and services are threatening the preservation of traditional craftsmanship based on local identities and know-how, and the transfer of such knowledge and traditions from one generation to another.

Impact on environmental heritage components: increased pressure on land and damage to the built environment has led to losses of green space of cultural heritage significance in cities, such as traditional orchard courtyard-gardens.

Increased housing needs: the increase of poverty levels in residential heritage areas, often marked by high poverty even prior to the crisis, has resulted in increased number of people living in traditional residential buildings, often with adaptations made to the buildings to accommodate more residents at the expense of the traditional architecture.

Poor governance: a weakening of national institutions, furthered by the lack of human and financial resources and inadequate legislations and policies, have led to a loss of institutional and administrative capacities to undertake urban planning and management, including management of cultural heritage. Among others, this represents

a barrier to the development and implementation of coordinated strategies for post-crisis recovery and urban planning sensitive to the historic context.

To address these grievances, any holistic urban recovery planning in Syrian cities should consider integrating cultural heritage considerations. This because:

- a. Cultural heritage, with its diversity, offers a range of opportunities for urban recovery strategies.
- b. Urban heritage sites and buildings will primarily be reconstructed by private house owners in the longer-term.
- c. Urban heritage sites are rarely isolated but are rather part of larger ecologies of structures, spaces, and practices.
- d. Urban heritage must be understood in relation to changing needs.
- e. Urban heritage holds a central role in building urban identity and reconciliation.
- f. Urban heritage can be a vehicle to strengthen HLP rights for displaced persons.
- g. Urban heritage protection and rebuilding efforts must be based on participatory processes.
- h. Urban heritage must be protected, and reconstruction facilitated, through adequate legislations and policies.
- i. Urban heritage should be integrated into urban planning and management.

based strategic planning across scales from national to local level, encompassing:

- I. national level, including legal and regulatory environment, as well as rural-urban and inter-city linkages and value-chains;
- II. city level, including municipal systems and responsive urban planning;
- III. neighbourhood level, including needs and vulnerabilities.

Furthermore, a heritage recovery ladder is used to prioritise actions along a continuum from absorptive, adaptive and transformative phases, across the scales from local to national. While short term actions are focused on emergency stabilization, mid-term actions seek to absorb shocks, and long-term actions promote transformative change for the protection and rebuilding of urban cultural heritage.

With the magnitude of damage and continued threat to Syria's urban heritage, coupled with the current economic crisis and limited funding availability to prioritise heritage recovery, the phased recovery model with implementation of selected concrete, feasible and transformative interventions across governance levels and timescales, offers an opportunity to strategically address heritage issues within area-based recovery planning.

Policy design

This paper informs the discussion on urban recovery needs and options in Syria, and how the integration of cultural heritage in urban recovery efforts may both help address root causes and effects of the current crisis. Specifically, the paper discusses how embedding cultural heritage in area-based approaches such as Urban Recovery Frameworks (URF) can help advance conditions for urban functionality, local economic recovery, social cohesion and returns preparedness. The recommendations outlined in this paper are intended to guide integrated urban recovery actions through pilot projects to strengthen socio-economic development, stabilisation, and reconciliation.

This paper presents a policy design to identify concrete and feasible interventions with potential transformative effects for urban recovery. Central to this is linking territorial approaches with culture-

Introduction

This paper has been developed as part of a series of thematic papers initiated under the Urban Recovery Framework (URF) project led by a multi-stakeholder consortium and funded by the European Union. The papers seek to explore conditions and recovery options under a set of thematic areas, seen as interlinked pillars to any urban recovery. The URF approach acknowledges the interlinked geographical scales that must be considered to prompt urban recovery, from the community and neighbourhood, city, regional, inter-city, to the national scale. As such, the URF considers both actions involving affected populations and communities, city wide systems and local governments, as well as national level policies and regulations. The URF includes interventions across the humanitarian-development continuum, and actions to drive urban recovery from absorptive measures to respond to immediate needs, adaptive efforts to prompt recovery, and transformative interventions and bounce-forward measures.

Against this backdrop, the objective of this paper is to inform a policy dialogue on area-based approaches such as the URF for urban recovery in general, and cultural heritage preservation and restoration in particular. In doing so, the aim is to foster debate on the challenges and opportunities that urban cultural heritage recovery represents. This includes its role in sustainable social and economic recovery, encourage formulation of specific recommendations for urban recovery, and foster future research and design initiatives on the issues raised.

The paper is structured in six main chapters. The first chapter provides a contextual analysis of the current state and main threats to the cultural heritage in Syrian cities. Importantly, the analysis is based on a people-centred approach. This is reflected in a focus on local economic recovery through for example skills-building and restoration of livelihoods, and the creation of conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified return. The second chapter outlines key institutional challenges and discusses central actors and their roles as well as the legal and regulatory environment. The third chapter presents a case-study of the Old City of Aleppo, covering the city's recent history and the efforts undertaken to

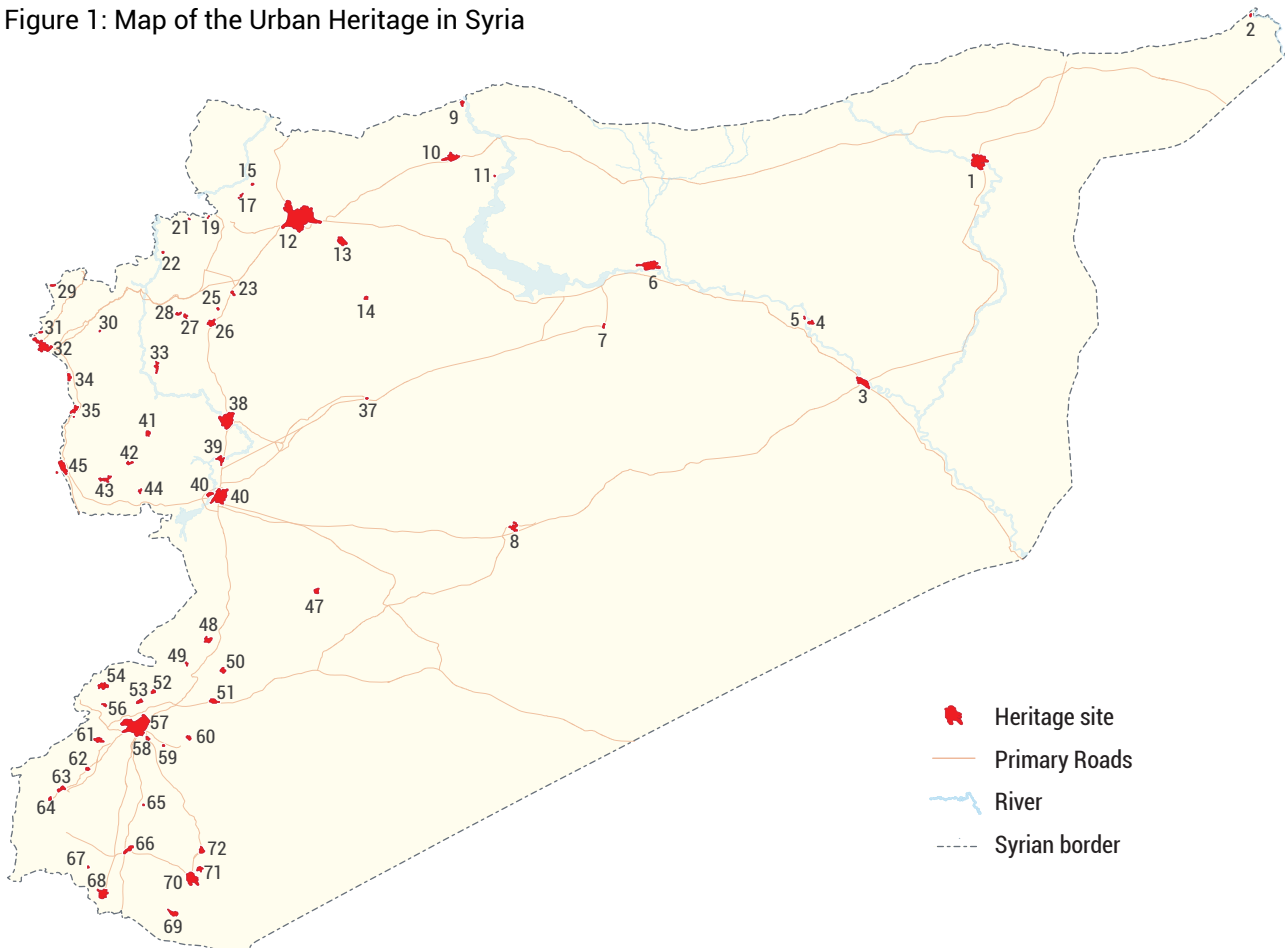
preserve and rebuild its cultural heritage. The fourth chapter presents an overview of policy implications from the foregoing discussion, including policy challenges, key messages, and principles to consider. The fifth chapter presents a suggested policy design, including a concept of an "heritage recovery ladder". In the following chapter, chapter six, implementation and monitoring is discussed. Lastly, some preliminary reflections on possible steps to advance cultural heritage preservation and restoration through area-based approaches such as the URF is presented.

Contextual Analysis & Policy Challenges

Syria is home to some of the longest inhabited cities in the world. This is reflected in their rich and diverse urban heritage with layered identities, typo-morphologies, and socio-cultural characteristics, both as separate cities and as regional and national ensembles. There are more than 1200 sites of significant cultural, religious, and historical importance in the country. These sites include six sites registered on the "World Heritage List" (WHL) between 1979 and 2011¹, ICH²

and added to the "List of World Heritage in Danger" in 2013,³ twelve sites on the "Tentative List", and 120 sites identified by the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM) as important historic sites in Syria according to different heritage criteria. Prior to the crisis, international funding contributed significantly to the preservation efforts of urban heritage in Syria, playing a key role in the restoration and tourism development in certain areas.

Figure 1: Map of the Urban Heritage in Syria



1 UNESCO, "Syrian Arab Republic: Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List". Available from: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/sy>. Accessed 13 December 2021.

2 3 elements listed World intangible heritage: (2021: Al-Qudoud al-Halabiya, 2019: Practices and craftsmanship associated with the Damascene rose in Al-Mrah, 2018: Shadow play)

3 UNESCO, "Syria's Six World Heritage sites placed on List of World Heritage in Danger", 20 June 2013.

Table 1: Urban Heritage sites in Syria

1	Al-Hasakeh	19	Darqeta	37	Sheikh Hilal	55	Bludan
2	Ein Diwar	20	Baqrha	38	Hama	56	Suq Wadi Barada
3	Deir-ez-Zor	21	Qalb Lozeh	39	Ar-Rastan	57	Damascus
4	Halabiyeh	22	bansra&fasouq	40	Homs	58	Sayyeda Zeinab
5	Zalbia	23	Mardikh	41	Masyaf	59	Qarhata
6	Ar-Raqqa	24	Ebla	42	Hosn Suliman	60	Haran Al'awameed
7	Rasafa	25	Jarada	43	Safita	61	Qatana
8	Tadmor	26	Ma'arrat An Nu'man	44	Hisn	62	Sa'sa'
9	Jarablus	27	Bara	45	Tartous	63	Khan Arnaba
10	Menbij	28	Srjela	46	Arwad	64	Quneitra
11	Halula	29	Ras alBaseet	47	Qaryatein	65	Shaara
12	Aleppo	30	Qalet Salah al Din	48	Yabroud	66	Izra'
13	As-Safira	31	Ugareat	49	Ma'loula	67	Tal alashry
14	Khanaser	32	Lattakia	50	Jirud	68	Dar'a
15	Brad	33	Afamia	51	Dhameer	69	Busra Esh-Sham
16	Qalet Samaan	34	Jablah	52	Sidnaya	70	As-Sweida
17	Deir Samaan	35	Banyas	53	Monin	71	Qanawat
18	Rufada	36	Qalet alMrqab	54	Az-Zabdani	72	Shahba

Crisis impact on urban heritage

Urban cultural heritage in Syria has come under significant threat over the ten-year crisis, with devastating effect on the built environment and social structures.⁴ This includes the damage and destruction inflicted on traditional residential neighbourhoods, heritage buildings, and sites as well as large-scale displacement and poverty affecting the demographic composition of neighbourhoods, people's individual and collective identity, and their sense of belonging. The crisis has evolved along different timelines in the affected cities, with implications on use and whether rehabilitation efforts have been undertaken today. While the destruction of monuments and heritage landmarks has gained the most international attention, the bulk of the damage to the cultural heritage has occurred in the historic cores of cities.

The crisis impact on historic residential districts (as in Aleppo, Homs, Deir-ez-Zor) and towns (as in Ma'loula) is reflected in the urban morphology, where the compact urban fabric has been fractured with empty spaces where buildings once stood. Damage and destruction have also been inflicted on monuments and landmarks (as in Aleppo, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Ma'loula, and Busra Esh-Sham), and historic infrastructures (as in Hama), like old water systems. Historic residential buildings have also been damaged by encroachment, land speculation and informal reconstruction, often done with unsuitable construction materials and techniques, heights, and forms. There has furthermore been a reduction of green infrastructure with heritage value, such as traditional orchards (as in Hama) and courtyard-gardens (as in Aleppo, Homs), with consequences

⁴ Samir Abdulac, "ICOMOS Working Group, Directions for the Safeguarding and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in Syria", in *Nach der Stunde Null, After the Zero Hour*, Friederike Fless and Jörg Haspel, eds., (Berlin, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 2019b).

for liveability and public health. In combination with a lack of building maintenance, this has caused a deterioration of the urban heritage, including the possible loss of World Heritage Sites (WHS) (e.g., the old city in Aleppo).

Syrian cities have also undergone significant demographic changes over the course of the crisis. The historic cores of several Syrian cities have been the epicentre of clashes during the crisis, resulting in abandoned buildings and neighbourhoods (as in Aleppo).⁵ At the same time, relatively safer urban areas have attracted a large number of displaced persons.⁶

This population influx, in combination with an increasing number of poor local families, has added significant pressure on land and infrastructure (as in al-Joura in the Old City of Damascus), including many historic neighbourhoods.⁷ This has been seen to generate largescale speculation in land, including heritage plots, as well as encroachment on and abandonment of heritage sites. Some sites have also been transformed into waste dumping areas.⁸ A gender imbalance of residents can be observed in many traditional neighbourhoods where Internally Displaced People (IDPs) reside, with a relatively low number of male adults and youth compared to female adults and youth. Changing family compositions, increased needs (e.g., new generations suffering from living without privacy in one room of a family courtyard house), and competition over land and housing is a driving force for the adaptation of traditional residential buildings.

The loss of civil and cadastral records has contributed to land speculation and challenged displaced people's options to assert their Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights. Lack of coordination and solid systems between institutions in charge of heritage has caused further difficulties in issuing permits and responding to restoration requests.

The destruction of souqs, the old market areas, as well as damage to traditional artisanal production buildings (e.g., soap factories and silver production

in Aleppo) has led to the loss of jobs within the souqs, and traditional production and craftsmanship (woodwork, jewellery, glass, textile making etc.). Some industries have relocated to safer areas of the country (e.g., Aleppo's soap production moved to the coast), with consequences for local economies and livelihoods based on traditions, craftsmanship and identity in both the places left behind and the places of relocation. While the crisis has put a halt to tourism, the loss and damages to urban heritage will have long-term effects on tourism in the future.

Limited human and financial resources, challenging political conditions, and the absence of adequate legal frameworks and binding procedures, are contributing to low institutional and administrative capacities to address the crisis impact and protect cultural heritage in cities. So far, there is limited progress in both heritage-sensitive rehabilitation interventions and adoption of urban heritage as a cross-cutting dimension in urban recovery strategies and urban plans. Noticeable exceptions are projects initiated by Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) (as in Aleppo for the Souq al-Saqqatiyya, Souq al Hareer and others) and by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in among others rehabilitation of souqs.⁹

5 Samir Abdulac (2019b).

6 The New Humanitarian, "Syria: A decade of flight". 17 March 2021.

7 Khan Academy. "Cultural heritage at risk: Syria". Available from: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/special-topics-art-history/arches-at-risk-cultural-heritage-education-series/xa0148fd6a60f2ff6:cultural-heritage-endangered-round-the-world/a/cultural-heritage-at-risk-syria>. Accessed 13 December 2021.

8 DGAM, "Initial Damages Assessment for Syrian Cultural Heritage During the Crisis". Damascus, 1 March 2014.

9 Samir Abdulac, "A Tale of Three Syrian Souks. Reconstruction and Regeneration of Urban Commercial Areas, in Aleppo, Damascus and Homs", presentation given at the Reconstruction and Recovery of Towns after War Damage in the different parts of the world. Theory, methodology, practice. Malbork Castle, Poland, September 2019a.

Crisis impact on urban heritage in a sample of Syrian cities

To illustrate the severe impact the crisis has had on urban heritage, this section provides an overview of the physical impact of the conflict on cultural heritage across some of the main cities in Syria.¹⁰ Annex 1 Crisis Affected Structures in Old Cities provides a full overview of damages within each land-use class in the below cities.

- a. **Aleppo** is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world. Its old city core has been listed as a WHS since 1986.¹¹ The old city covers an area of 345 hectares out of the 15,870 hectares city total. Of the old city, 98 per cent of the structures were affected by the crisis (Figure 2). The residential areas makes up more than 78 per cent of the old city, counting 7,702 structures of which close to 52 per cent has been slightly/moderately affected, and 25 per cent severely affected/destroyed (Figure 3). During the crisis, the old city was almost completely evacuated. As the city embark the reconstruction process, it will face further challenges due to the damage to or loss of nearly 33,000 land registry documents.¹² The loss of the documents poses a threat to the HLP rights of displaced persons with land titles as issuing permitting and restoration requests is likely to be challenging.
- b. In **Homs**, the historic urban landscape was transformed during the last century, with new roads cutting the traditional urban fabric and new buildings replacing a significant share of buildings in the old city. Today, the city extent covers 4,225 hectares, of which the old city covers 128 hectares. During the crisis, about 34 per cent of the remaining urban heritage has been damaged and 23 per cent severely or completely destroyed (Figure 2). In the old city, 71 per cent of the area is residential – an estimated 4,722 structures, of which 33 per cent incurred damages (Figure 3).
- c. **Dar'a** was the first city to be affected by the crisis in 2011. When families started to return to the governorate in 2018, many found their houses damaged. Furthermore, there is a major north/south divide when it comes to almost all urban recovery challenges in the city: the north of the city is currently in a more stable situation in terms of housing and services, whereas the south has experienced much more substantial damage, bordering on catastrophic. The housing deficit in Dar'a is 10,400 homes, approximately 33 percent of buildings (Figure 3). Dar'a's wealth of cultural and natural heritage sites and practices have not been touristic since 2011. Heritage sites include the old Roman city of Dar'a in the Al-Balad neighborhood, which hosts old houses and Roman structures such as a temple and theatre, as well as other structures including a hammam and churches.
- d. In **As-Sweida**, many of the heritage sites and buildings that were damaged during the crisis have become the subject of real estate speculation.¹³ Some damaged buildings, built on the remains of ruins of ancient civilizations, have been replaced by new constructions inconsistent with the historic architecture and materiality. Other structures have not been restored or maintained, or been poorly restored, noticeably by the addition of ill-fitted new building materials by families that could not afford adequate restoration materials. In other cases, important ancient structures have been left as informal waste dumps. The visual historic quality of the city has been further damaged by the approval of the development of a 'main street' across the core of the historic centre. In the old city, 20 per cent of the built structures were moderately or severely damaged during the crisis (Figure 2), with the majority of structures being residential (Figure 3).

10 Cities were selected according to the following criteria: Presence of urban heritage, urban type, and urban fabric; WHS listed, tangible and intangible heritage values; Geographic location (a good geographical balance); Density of population; priority for programming; Typology of Damage; IDPs / Returnees / Hosting communities; Heritage challenges.

11 UNESCO, "Ancient City of Aleppo". Available from: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/21/>. Accessed 13 December 2021.

12 In Aleppo, part of the real estate records were damaged after being submerged in water following move of the records to the directorate's basements in 2013. The damaged records count 1586 (out of the total of 9,368 records), containing about 33,000 real estate papers of varying degree of damage. Source: UrbAN-S, Aleppo City Profile. 2019.

13 Abir Arkawir and Natalia Atfeh, "Social and Economic Development through Heritage Revival: Reviving public spaces in the historic center of Sweida", *Journal of Urban Research*, 32 (1), (2019), pp. 49-64.

- e. In **Hama**, the crisis has impacted the historic urban landscape along the Orontes River (which was already heavily damaged during the Hama Uprising in 1982, when large parts of the old city were destroyed). This area encompasses the main natural and urban heritage components, including historic infrastructures (norias [waterwheels] and related aqueducts) in the city. The management of the norias and aqueducts is suffering from a lack of resources and the recession of the water level in the river. While 2 per cent of the old city structures were affected by the crisis, the mentioned effect on natural and urban heritage components has been further exacerbated by polluted water runoff from IDP hosting sites which has led to the disuse of the fruit gardens along the river. The fruit gardens are favourably located adjacent to residential neighbourhoods, commercial markets, and public services.
- f. In **Raqqa**, the old city makes up 193 hectares of the city total of 2,539 hectares. During the crisis, 62 per cent of the around 7,000 structures in the city was affected, with 26 per cent incurring slight or moderate damages and 36 per cent severely damaged or destroyed (Figure 2). In Dar'a, the old city covers 86 of the 1,526 hectares city total. 80 per cent of the old city's structures were affected during the crisis. In both Raqqa and Dar'a, 98 per cent of the affected structures were residential (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Impact of the crisis on Syrian Old Cities. Source: Joint Research Centre, European Commission (2020)

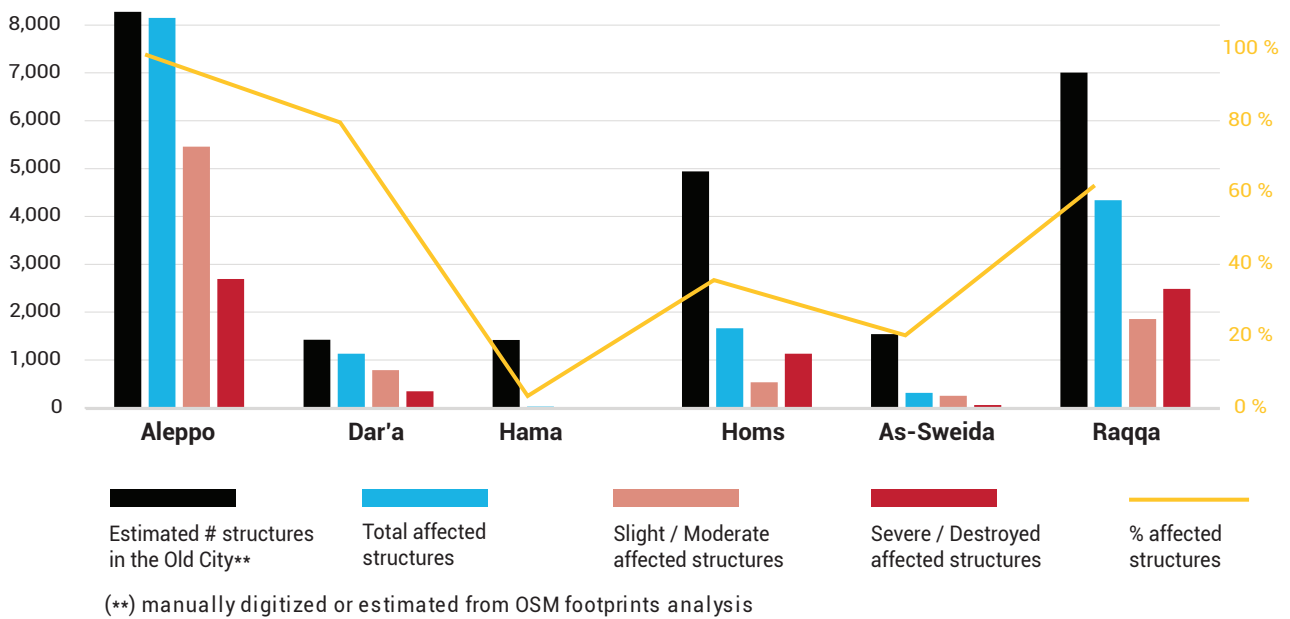
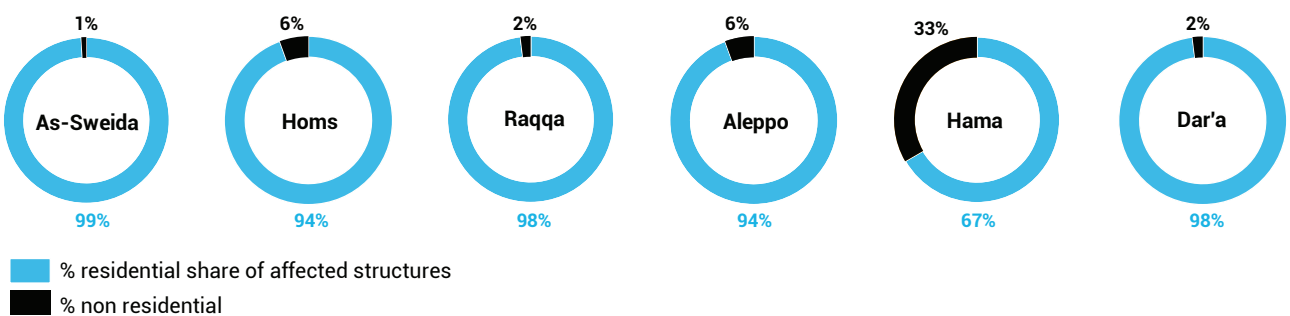


Figure 3: Affected residential structures in the old cities. Source: Joint Research Centre, European Commission (2020)



Governance of urban heritage

Cultural heritage in Syria is governed by a number of governmental and administrative bodies, as well as normative and regulatory frameworks. In addition, non-state actors, such as international and local organisations, civil society and community actors, are initiating and implementing heritage activities. While this provides opportunities for a sound anchoring for urban heritage recovery, there are several challenges preventing an enabling environment for urban heritage recovery. This chapter will outline the main governance structures of cultural heritage in Syria, as well as current shortcomings of institutional capacities and current policies and regulations.

Cultural heritage stakeholders

Figure 4 presents an organigram of actors involved in urban heritage at local, to national and international levels. Box 2 summarises recent activities of international and local stakeholders in urban heritage recovery. Their main expertise and responsibilities can be summarised as follows:

Neighbourhood stakeholders with a mandate or formal or informal role in heritage activities includes *mukhtars*,¹⁴ local community groups, neighbourhood committees, and religious leaders.

City stakeholders with a heritage mandate includes municipalities and related institutions responsible for developing and implementing urban plans and strategies, including for cultural heritage. In addition, local actors such as NGOs and private sector have formal and informal roles in local initiatives.

National stakeholders include ministries and directorates, national institutions, organisations, and universities. DGAM is the main state actor

responsible for the management of urban heritage, under the oversight of the Ministry of Culture. The DGAM (as well as Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE) concerning decentralised actions), coordinate with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Endowment, and the Ministry of Tourism for actions on specific buildings and areas, as well as the Ministry of Public Work and Housing when appropriate. Ministry of Endowments owns a large share of the buildings in the old cities. The governmental entities are responsible for developing policies, regulations and adopting plans for heritage and natural sites management, while academic institutions and organisations have become increasingly important to advocate and provide knowledge on heritage preservation and recovery. See Box 1 Syrian government actors involved in heritage activities for further elaboration.

International stakeholders include international organizations, universities, and religious and non-religious donors. There is a body of data and knowledge on Syrian urban heritage built up among international stakeholders. Few of these organizations, however, have the capacity to work on the ground given the challenging security environment.

¹⁴ Samir Abdulac, "ICOMOS Working Group, Directions for the Safeguarding and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in Syria", in *Nach der Stunde Null, After the Zero Hour*, Friederike Fless and Jörg Haspel, eds., (Berlin, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 2019b).

Box 1: Syrian government actors involved in heritage activities

The Ministry of Culture / Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums (DGAM)

Acts at a central level through the Directorate of Museums Affairs, the Directorate of Exploration and Studies, the Directorate of Engineering and the Directorate of Archaeological Buildings and Sites. At a local level, the Directorate of Antiquities oversees archaeological buildings belonging to the local authorities, archaeological buildings in private ownership, *Awqaf*¹⁵ archaeological buildings within archaeological zones, as well as to monitor the restoration process regarding permits of restoration, reconstruction and use. It has department and committees responsible for urban heritage.

The Ministry of Local Administration and Environment (MoLAE)

Acts directly at decentralised levels through the Directorate of the Old Cities, which is in charge of planning and managing sites, licensing commercial establishments, and granting permits for restoration, improvement and/or new construction works; the Directorate of Urban Planning; the Directorate of Technical Services; and the Environment Directorate. MoLAE has several departments involved in heritage issues, among others in the fields of planning, economy and trade, culture, antiquities, tourism.

The General Directorate of Cadastral Affairs (GDCA)

Under MoLAE, maintains property records for historic and non-historic properties alike, while certain large municipalities maintain a Temporary Land Registry that records more up-to-date property rights.

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing

Acts at a central level through several entities involved in heritage, including the General Company of Building and Construction, the General Organization of Housing, the General Authority of Real Estate Development and Investment, the Directorates of Regional Planning Authority, the Directorate of Urban Development, Directorate of Urban Planning, and the Directorate of Planning and Implementation. It proposes the general policy and strategies of the country in the areas of public works and housing, urban planning and urban development and real estate investment. Its Regional Planning Commission is responsible for the cultural heritage development. There are no directorates at a local / Municipal level.

The Ministry of Endowment

Acts at a city level through the Endowment Directorate, which is in charge of restoration works of mosques, religious schools and endowment residential and trade buildings. It has department and committees taking care of buildings belonging to *Awqaf* in the old cities.

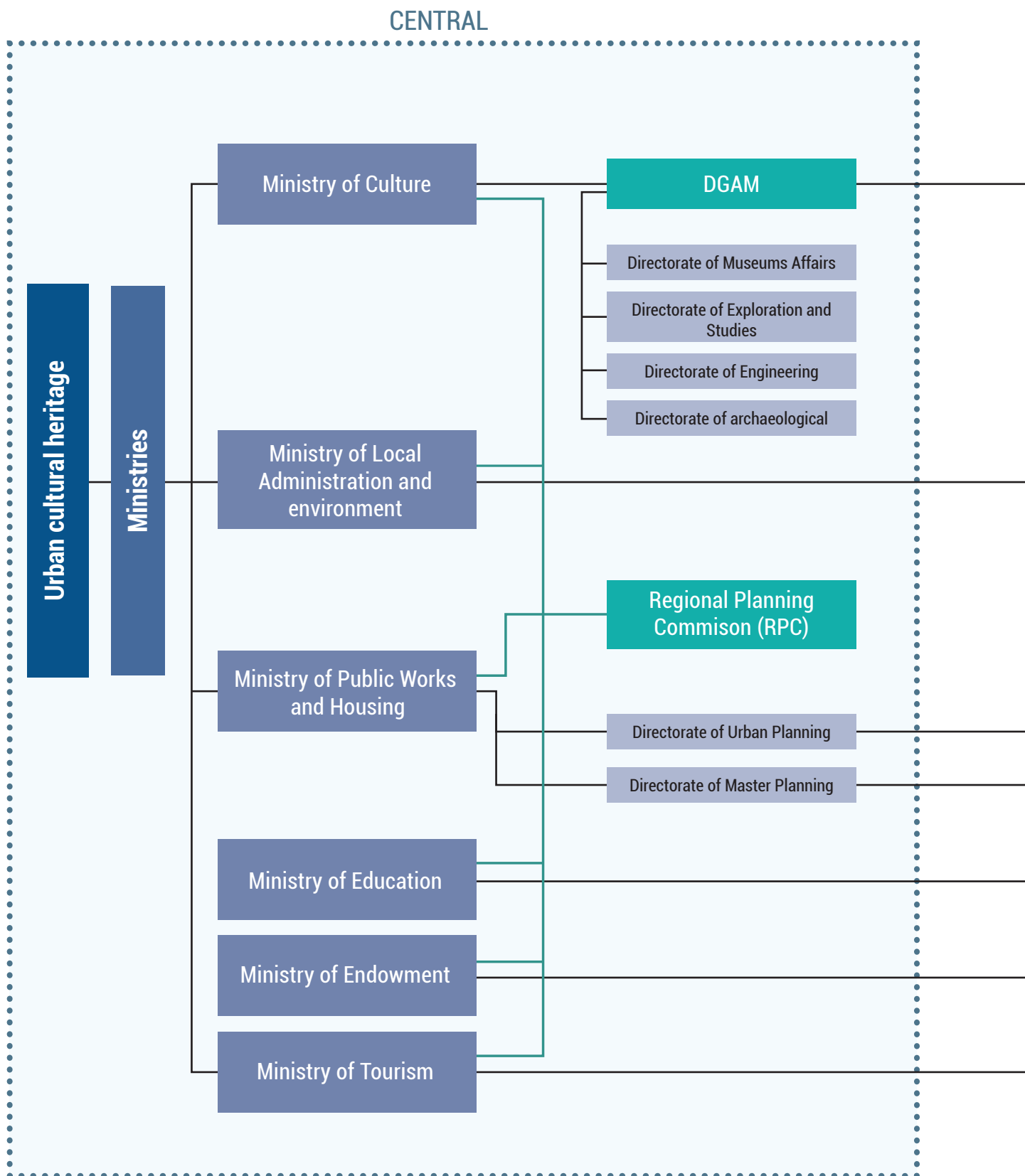
The Ministry of Tourism

Acts at a city level through the Directorate of Old Cities Tourism. It has department and committees taking care of the tourism in the context of the urban heritage.

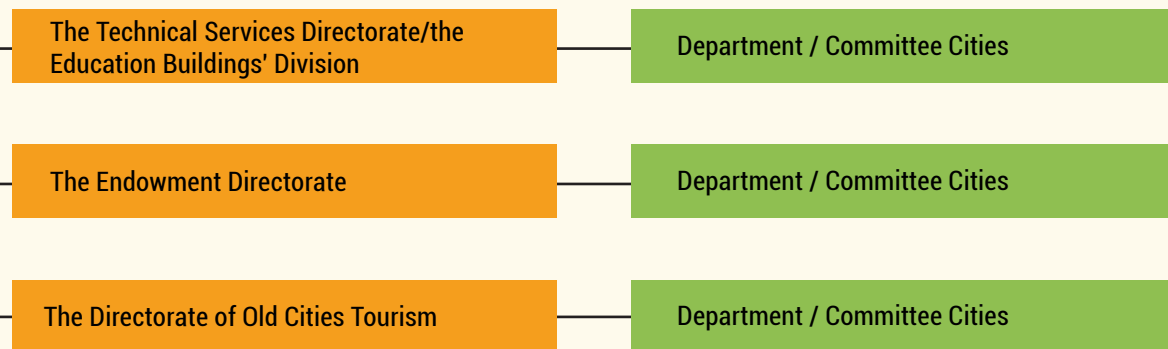
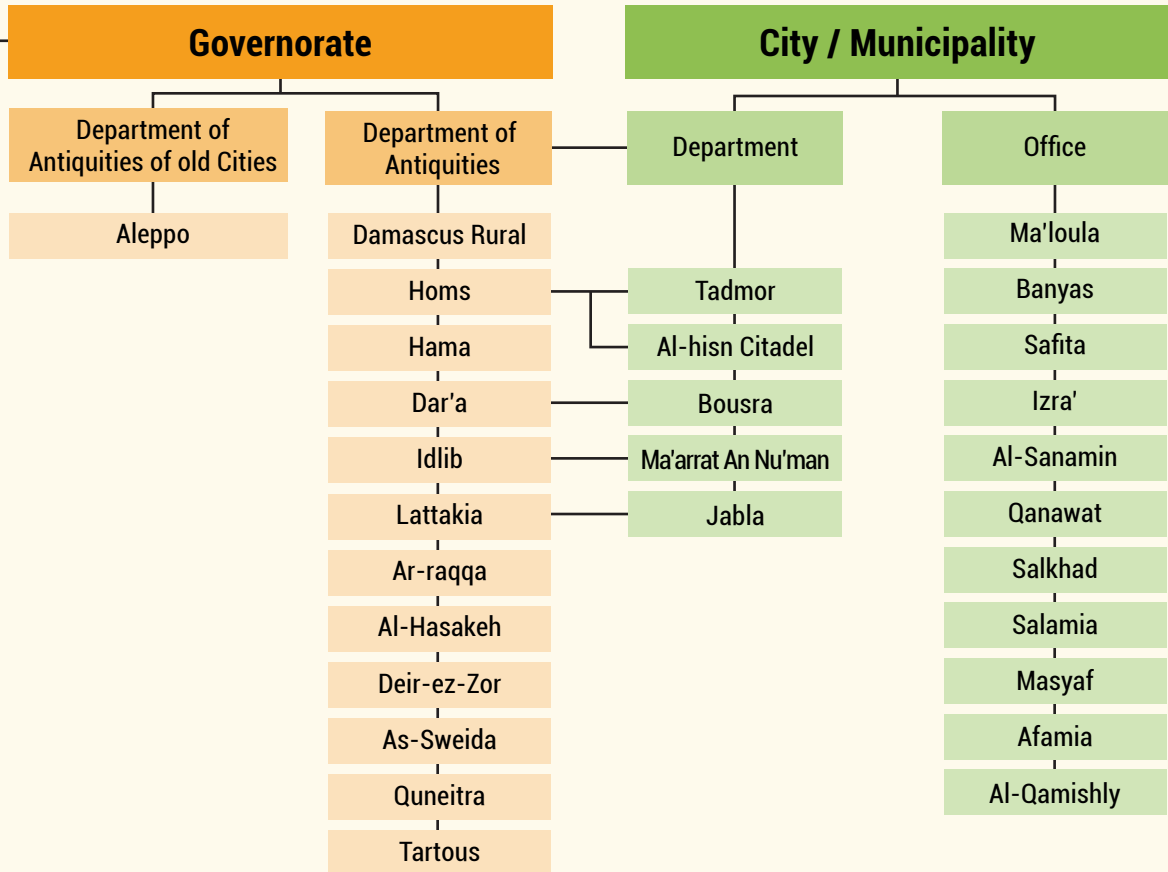
15 *Awqaf* are religious endowment, e.g., buildings, plots of land etc. donated for charitable purposes.



Figure 4: Organigram of government actors involved in the management of urban heritage in Syria



SUB-NATIONAL



Box 2: Recent activities of international and local stakeholders in urban heritage recovery

International stakeholders

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is working on awareness raising, damage assessments, coordination and education. From 2014 to 2017, UNESCO coordinated the Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project, a project aimed at contributing to restore social cohesion, stability and sustainable development through the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, encouraging local authorities to restore houses and small monuments, not just religious buildings.¹⁶ There is now an ongoing cooperation between DGAM and UNESCO concerning documentation work for the Old City of Damascus, where meetings have been held in 2018, 2019 and 2021 regarding the listing of the Old City as a World Heritage Site in Danger. In 2017, UNESCO prepared the *Technical and Coordination Meeting for the Ancient City of Aleppo*.¹⁷

UN-Habitat Syria are working on several initiatives to promote urban recovery with attention to cultural sites and their linked public spaces across 85 cities in Syria. Among others, is the programme supporting the development of comprehensive cross-sectoral and area-based analysis at the city and sub-city levels, informing spatial and phased urban recovery plans. Urban cultural heritage is a key layer to the analysis and a vehicle in the area-based model for recovery. Many of the action plans were developed around public space, heritage, markets and housing as integrated interventions. Several cities (for example: Busra Esh-Sham, Dar'a, As-Sanamayn, Old Aleppo and Tadmor) therefore have action plans with due attention to cultural heritage interventions.

In addition, the programme is supporting restoration of key infrastructure in two cities, a joint programme on Urban and Rural Resilience, contributes to the damage assessment of residential buildings in nine neighbourhoods of Aleppo, including in the Old City, as well as engage in Housing, Land and Property interventions among others identifying cadastral services' obstacles to recovery efforts.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has initiated several projects to support the safeguarding of Syrian cultural heritage. The agency is among others, supporting works in Homs, Ma'loula and Aleppo souqs and has together with the Kashihara Institute, a Japanese archaeological institute, provided capacity development to DGAM, as well as training to local experts. UNDP has also provided support to several museums including the National Museum in Damascus and the National Museum in Aleppo.¹⁸

Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) has carried out the restoration projects of the Souq Al-Saqatiyya in Aleppo, the entrance bridge to the Citadel, and on Souq Khan al-Harer. It also organized on-site training of a group of local stone workers in collaboration with the French mentoring network of craftsmen and artisans, *Les Compagnons du Devoir*.

International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH) has supported several projects to enhance archaeological and heritage management, rehabilitation of heritage sites, and protection of heritage assets in Syria, with a focus on North-East Syria.¹⁹

Other international organizations with heritage activities includes International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of

16 UNESCO, "Observatory of Syrian Cultural Heritage: The Emergency Safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project". Available from: <https://en.unesco.org/syrian-observatory/emergency-safeguarding-syrian-cultural-heritage-project>. Accessed 14 December 2021.

17 UNESCO, "Table of Actions for the Recovery of the Ancient City of Aleppo", outcome from the Strategic Planning of the Technical and Coordination Meeting. Beirut, March 2017.

18 UNDP, *Annual Report 2019; Supporting the Resilience of Local Communities* (Damascus, 2019)

19 International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH), "Project(s) supported in Northeastern Syrian and Syrian heritage". Available from: <https://www.aliph-foundation.org/en/actions-country/SY>. Accessed 13 December 2021.

Cultural Property (ICCROM), Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH), World Monuments Fund (WMF), The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and World Customs.

International organisations, research centres and universities are engaged in research and documentation of (damages to) heritage assets in Syria, such as the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT), American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR), the Endangered Archaeology in the Middle East & North Africa (EAMENA) database on Syrian Heritage in Danger, and the partnership between German Archaeological Institute (DAI) and Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin (MIK) with several projects including the Syrian Heritage Archive Project, Aleppo Heritage Catalogue, Crossroads Aleppo, and the Aleppo Archive in Exile.

National Organizations / Stakeholders

Universities such as the University of Damascus and University of Aleppo, through the Faculties of Architecture, Faculties of Engineering, the High Institute of Regional Planning, the Research Centre of Scientific Work, Departments of Archaeology.

Syrian NGOs involved in heritage activities, such as the Syria Trust for Development.

Several associations are active in heritage issues, such as the Antiquities Association, the Archaeological Societies, and the General Union of Craft Associations. The latter addresses the necessary services, and suggest locations for centres for traditional crafts.

Local Organizations / Stakeholders

Local NGOs and stakeholders active in heritage activities include: Al-Adyat (active in Aleppo, Homs, Tartous, and As-Sweida), Friends of Damascus, local heritage committees, City Chambers (Chamber of Commerce, Chamber of Tourism, Chamber of Industry), Craftsmen's Syndicate, Syndicate of Engineers (City Branch) and other local NGOs.

Institutional challenges

On all levels, stakeholders face challenges related to urban heritage preservation and recovery, including:

Poor and outdated policies pertaining to urban heritage and limited focus on heritage in urban policies and plans, is a barrier to anchoring cultural heritage in recovery planning and to ensure a clear division of roles and responsibilities across relevant stakeholders. Given the economic situation, rehabilitation efforts are happening in an ad-hoc manner based on when funding is available. Strengthening policies and the regulatory framework for cultural heritage across Syrian cities will be crucial for protection today and reconstruction of cultural heritage in the future.

Horizontal and vertical coordination between institutions with urban heritage mandates is complex,

with both gaps and overlaps in mandates and responsibilities. The lack of coordination between stakeholders cuts across international, national and local levels. This is exacerbated by capacity constraints and difficult political conditions, which have disrupted good practices of collaboration.

A brain-drain of professionals and experts threatens the institutional knowledge and expertise, and technical know-how on heritage recovery that has been acquired over decades. The loss of available traditional craftsmen and skilled workers (e.g., in Aleppo), will impact the ability to restore heritage in line with traditional construction methods.

Capacities of cultural heritage stakeholders are constrained by the direct damage institutions has suffered throughout the conflict. For instance, has

the General Directorate of Cadastral Affairs (GDCA) suffered damage, and their records destroyed in some locations.

The capacity to develop urban recovery strategies, regional studies, action- and masterplans is low. The limited leadership of DGAM (except for in Damascus and Aleppo), especially for coordination of projects and masterplans, including the coordination with MoLAE is a main reason for this. Despite the efforts of the DGAM and other local entities working on specific sites (e.g., the update of the National Framework for National Intervention, and the preparation of the 2020 site management plan for the endangered World Heritage Site in Damascus by the Old City of Damascus, DGAM and Damascus University), DGAM's role is constrained by limited resources, including technical expertise, and a narrow mandate to oversee planning and projects. For example, the Directorate of World Heritage Site Management at DGAM is in need of qualified personnel and capacity building to sustain an extension of its responsibilities over a larger number of sites. See Box 4: Best practices for post-conflict reconstruction planning: Mosul Old City for an example on planning from in the region, including embedded capacity strengthening.

Housing reconstructions' reliance on private capital contributes to speculation on land and rapid increase in building prices, particularly in central areas of cities. Unmanaged redevelopment, upgrade, and new development on urban heritage sites and buildings is linked with local governments' and private actors' political and financial interests to replace the urban heritage housing stock with different building typologies. Moreover, the prevailing trend of focusing restoration on monuments and landmarks, has led to a haphazard and slow process of rehabilitation of residential heritage houses.²⁰

There is low community engagement and limited participatory planning at the local level. This is in part due to a lack of mechanisms for community outreach and engagement and limited local government capacities and resources for community outreach and engagement. While Neighbourhood Committees (NCs) and mukhtars will be important local stakeholders to engage at the local level, there is a need for a broader spectrum of community mobilisation and engagement mechanisms, such as

community contracting.

The management of protected and buffer zones²¹ is suffering from a lack of coordination between relevant stakeholders. Management systems of the old cities also lacks adequate attention to protected and buffer zones. Currently, there are institutional capacity constraints, such as the lack of experience and holistic strategies to support this. In some cases (e.g., the Old City of Aleppo) the buffer zone has been recently revised.

Allocation of resources does not match responsibilities, enforcement and compliance of permits. The DGAM, heads of directorates, inspectors, museum curators, antiquities controllers, and their respective assistants are considered by law as members of the judicial police.²² DGAM is responsible for providing permits to municipalities and private parties to undertake activities linked to the registration of cultural heritage sites, such as repairs or new construction. The Directorate of Antiquities is responsible for granting permits and for monitoring restoration processes. However, in practice, depending on the location, human resources and budgets, and permitting responsibilities may fall entirely upon municipalities, technical and protection committees, or the Directorate of the Old City.

Normative and Legal Frameworks

Existing national normative and legal frameworks

A number of laws and regulatory frameworks stipulate how urban heritage should be protected and managed. Annex 2 Syrian Laws and Regulations concerning Urban Heritage, provides a detailed overview of the provisions of the respective land and property laws, and cultural heritage laws. The below summarizes the laws with particular importance to cultural heritage recovery in crisis affected cities:

20 DGAM annually publishes the results of implemented public heritage reconstruction actions, as well as update on urban heritage through a directory for site management of World Heritage Sites.

21 The protection of the surroundings of heritage sites is considered essential component of conservation strategies (see Terminology section). The WHS in Syria are legally listed as a protected zone with an official, surrounding buffer zone.

22 Because DGAM is responsible for granting permits and for monitoring restoration processes and to remove any illegal addition on the heritage sites.

- a. **The 1963 Antiquities Law (Legislative Decree 222) is the main legal framework for Syrian cultural heritage.** This law provides a strong fundament for the protection of built cultural heritage, referred to as “immovable antiquities”,²³ and provides antiquities authorities with substantial regulatory jurisdiction.
- b. **Law 3/2018 (Debris Management Law)** governs the removal and sale of debris from damaged buildings in Syria. The law gives the government the right to remove damaged buildings built over public properties. The use of debris from historic buildings and properties is not allowed without an official permit from the authorities.
- c. **Law 12 (2012) covers the development of emergency plans.** These plans can be supplemented by operating monitoring networks. For World Heritage Sites, emergency plans must be prepared in collaboration with UNESCO (e.g., in the Old City of Damascus an emergency plan is under preparation).
- d. **Law 39/2017 (Building Permit Fee Exemption Law)** was enacted to facilitate resettlement. The law exempts property owners from paying building permit fees if properties damaged from the conflict are repaired or reconstructed. Conditions to the law include that the property should be located within stable areas not in need of full reconstruction, and that works should return the property to its original condition without any additions.
- e. **The Syrian Constitution (2012)** protects the right of private ownership of property, specifying that it may not be removed except in the public interest, by a decree and against fair compensation.
- f. **The Syrian Civil Code of 1949** asserts that if a property is destroyed during lease, the contract is automatically terminated. If the property is partially destroyed or becomes unfit for use, the tenant can seek to either decrease the rent or terminate the contract if the landlord fails to restore the property to its original condition within a reasonable time.
- g. **Law 5/1982 with update 5/2002, law 15/2008, law 23/2015 and law 10/2018 (Urban Planning Laws)** establishes the implementation of master and site plans through a rezoning process that includes land division, property valuation, and redistribution procedures. The law allows for the administrative acquisition of lands for free and requires landowners to divide their

land within three years of notification of the zoning announcement. It furthermore requires landowners to present proof of ownership documents issued by the Land Registry to apply for land division, documents which many Syrians may have lost over the course of the crisis.

- h. A law for the “**Protection, Development, Management and Promotion of Antiquities Heritage**”, which will be the main antiquities law for the management of cultural heritage sites, is under review.

International normative frameworks

The existing international normative framework for urban heritage is based on guidelines developed by UNESCO, ICOMOS and ICCROM. A holistic approach towards urban heritage recovery, aimed at connecting urban reconstruction with the recovery of all segments of society, can help advance sustainable solutions for the benefit of all; working towards reduced spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum; an enhanced shared prosperity of cities and regions; an improved urban environment; and an effective urban crisis prevention (including climate) and response. As such, preserving urban heritage is integral to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG11 focused on Sustainable Cities and Communities (see Monitoring in the Implementation and Monitoring chapter for further elaboration on how the SDGs, and SDG11 can provide a monitoring framework for urban recovery).

Gaps in current legislative and regulatory frameworks

The existing legislative and regulatory frameworks are not effective in addressing the challenges outlined in this paper. However, there are provisions within these frameworks that open to address current heritage protection needs, yet clarifications of the potential applicability and limitations are needed, and potential legal holes needs to be identified. The following areas need strengthening in current legislative and regulatory frameworks:

- a. **Many displaced persons face challenges attesting land ownership in cases of lost documentation.** Tenure documents are not

²³ The law defines “immovable antiquity” property existing on land which was built, made, produced, or inscribed before 200 years prior, or more recent immovable property having historic, artistic or national characteristics recognized by ministerial decision.

always available to support the identification of types of properties and categorization of land. In some cases, meetings between mukhtars and neighbours are facilitated by local authorities to attest ownerships. Many are also precluded from engaging in the land acquisition process and potentially lose their rights to the property due to the requirement that landowners must divide their land within three years of notification.

- b. **Families residing in heritage properties classified as national heritage may not be able to change functions in residential areas that are protected.** Since restoration work is expensive and many residents cannot afford them, this has been seen to result in the abandonment of houses or illegal changes to these heritage properties.
- c. **Existing building codes for affected cities and monuments and guidelines for recovery of historical houses are not sufficient to ensure careful and sustainable reconstruction of historic structures.** This is particularly important for the reconstruction of residential heritage houses, that are not recognized as monuments but still represents the largest share of heritage buildings.
- d. **The current legal frameworks are not effective in preventing speculation and conversion of heritage houses, including the buying and selling of damaged building plots, and in stipulating appropriate reconstruction techniques and forms.** While the law states that historical buildings and land should be preserved and taken into consideration in municipal planning, which obligates private development projects to obtain building and restoration permits from antiquities authorities within protection zones, this is not adequate to ensure the protection of heritage buildings and sites.
- e. **The development of heritage recovery plans is mostly ad-hoc** (which was the case for the Damascus and Aleppo heritage recovery plans). The development and operationalisation of such plans would benefit from being better anchored in a legal framework.
- f. **Cultural and historic natural environments in city centres are not effectively protected by current legal and regulatory frameworks.** For instance, many trees belonging to traditional gardens have been cut down and burned during the crisis. Furthermore, in many cases cultural landscapes

are not listed yet as heritage sites (e.g., the “Dead Cities” in Northern Syria²⁴). This is in part due to the multiple jurisdictions, gaps in collaboration between DGAM and other ministries, and a predominant focus on monuments.

24 The “Dead Cities” (or Forgotten Cities) refer to several hundred larger and smaller abandoned settlements in North-Eastern Syria, built between the 1st and 7th century, of significant heritage value. This includes 40 villages grouped into 8 archaeological parks.

Case Study: Urban Heritage Recovery in the Old City of Aleppo

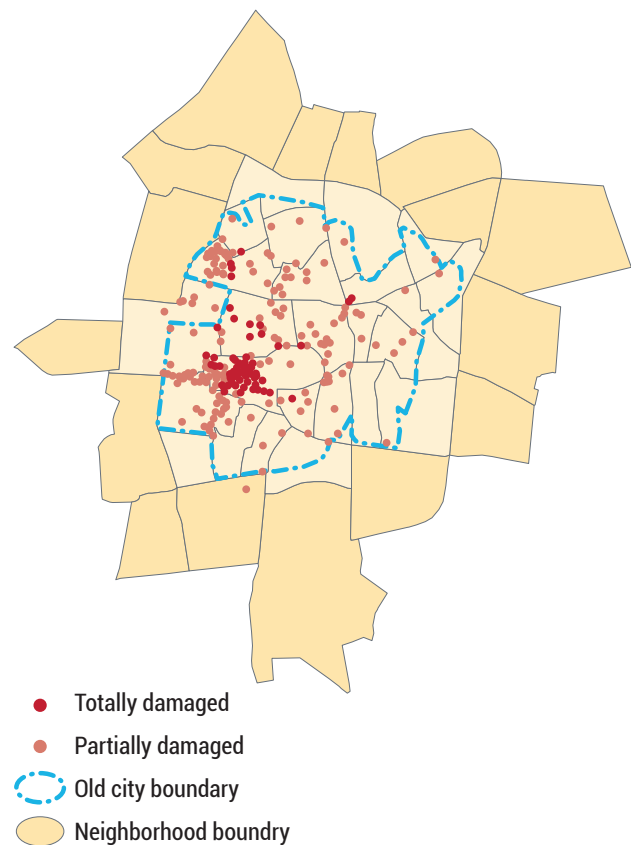
Aleppo is one of the longest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with a population traced back to the 2nd millennium BC. As the population of Aleppo grew significantly between 2004 and 2011, the growth rate outstripped the ability to provide formal housing.²⁵ By the start of the crisis, this had resulted in 40 per cent of Aleppo's housing stock being informal. A large share of this informal development had taken place in the eastern suburbs. Moreover, neighbourhoods across the city were to a large degree characterised by the demographic makeup of the residents, such as place of origin, ethno-sectarian identity, or profession. These community dynamics have been further reinforced with the ensuing crisis.

During the conflict, Aleppo has been the centre of clashes between opposing forces, especially between 2012 and 2016. Non-state armed groups entered Aleppo in July 2012 from the eastern suburbs, and the east remained controlled by the armed opposition throughout the conflict, effectively splitting the city in two. East Aleppo was largely deserted and heavily damaged in the process, and most of the displacement originated from this part of the city. Further, widespread damage was inflicted on major monuments, large sections of the residential urban fabric, and economic functions, leaving the city core in ruins. Among others, Aleppo's industrial areas were decimated and large industrial enterprises (e.g., soap production) were moved to Syria's coasts. From January 2016, the Government of Syria (GoS) took complete control of the city of Aleppo.

Return to the city has been slow, with some returning from the west to their homes in the east. However, most of those residing in the countryside or in Turkey are choosing not to return. For some, access to their neighbourhoods is blocked, effectively hindering return. The loss of civil and cadastral records has

exacerbated complex land rights issues. This makes it difficult for many who have been displaced from their homes to assert their housing, land, and tenure rights.

Figure 5: Map with damaged monuments in the Old City of Aleppo



²⁵ UrbAN-S, Aleppo City Profile. 2019.

The Old City of Aleppo

The Old City of Aleppo makes up 26 neighbourhoods covering an area of 420 hectares at the core of the Syrian industrial capital. The Old City houses 300 kilometres of alleyways, 12 hectares of covered bazars and 240 registered monuments. Prior to the crisis, there were also 37 markets in the Old City (e.g., the Zarb and Attarin markets with 71 shops and 82 shops respectively).²⁶ The eastern and western sides of the Old City have different characteristics, including the architectural styles of courtyard houses and residential neighbourhoods.

In the 1980s, the Old City of Aleppo and particularly the 15 hectares area of al-Farafira, was transformed when multi-storey buildings were erected along the fast thoroughfares. These buildings cut across the ancient urban fabric, destroying heritage buildings and traditional neighbourhoods. The development also led to the displacement of residents.^{27 28} In 1986 the Old City of Aleppo was listed as a World Heritage Site based on its social, cultural, and economic historic qualities,²⁹ and in 2013 inscribed on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger.³⁰ See Figure 7 Timeline of restoration and conservation efforts for the Old City of Aleppo.

During the crisis, severe damage to the Old City affected both eastern and western areas, with the frontline cutting straight through it. UNESCO estimates that more than 60 per cent was severely damaged in the crisis, and 30 per cent was destroyed.³¹ In particular, the neighbourhoods of al-Jdeideh, to the North and al-Farafira, to the West, which were particularly rich in heritage, and Souq al-Medina, were severely affected. Markets in the Old City were damaged and closed, and traditional green spaces were lost, including gardens inside the courtyards of both residential and commercial buildings. Today DGAM is strict in changing functions and usages of the buildings, with the aim to rebuild the urban fabric and activities as it was before 2012.

Before the crisis, 115,000 people were living in the Old City of Aleppo.³² So far return have been limited. Many homeowners are willing to sell their houses as they do not intend to return. A further increase in poverty levels, which was already high pre-crisis in areas of the Old City where many houses were rented by low-income households,³³ has contributed to families taking over and adapting traditional residential buildings. Some of these traditional buildings, which are too large and expensive for people to maintain and restore appropriately, have been illegally adapted to meet needs while some have been restored through heritage initiatives.

The current damage levels will have implications for future tourism. Prior to the crisis, tourism attracted by the rich architecture and archaeological sites in the Old City was a significant contributor to the city's economy. In addition to the loss of tourism, the heavy destruction of the Souq al-Medina and *awaqf* of Ipsir Pasha, as well as damage to traditional artisanal production buildings, has led to a loss of jobs within the souqs, and traditional production and craftsmanship (e.g., traditional textile and silver making). As outlined below, some organizations have started rehabilitating markets in the city (e.g., the Souq al-Saqqatiyya in the Souq al-Medina, which was restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture),³⁴ or are documenting souqs prioritized to be recovered (e.g., Suwaiqat 'Ali).³⁵ However, commercial activities are still very limited. Moreover, only 25 per cent of the original shop owners have returned to the Old City. Many shop owners have moved to modern neighbourhoods or rented out their shops to small size merchants, many of whom have altered the traditional use of the shops.

26 UN-Habitat, Aleppo Urban Profile. Damascus, December 2020.

27 Gyoji Banshoya and Jean-Claude David, "Projet d'aménagement de la vieille ville d'Alep", in *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 169 (1973), pp. 84-5.

28 Jean-Claude David, "Projets d'urbanisme et changements dans les quartiers anciens d'Alep", in *Politiques urbaines dans le Monde Arabe*, eds. Jean Métal and Georges Mutin (Lyon, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 1984), pp. 351-65.

29 UNESCO, 2021a.

30 UNESCO, Decision 37 COM 7B.57.

31 UNESCO and UNITAR, *Five Years of Conflict. The State of Cultural Heritage in the Ancient City of Aleppo. A comprehensive multi-temporal satellite imagery-based damage analysis for the Ancient City of Aleppo*. Paris, 2018.

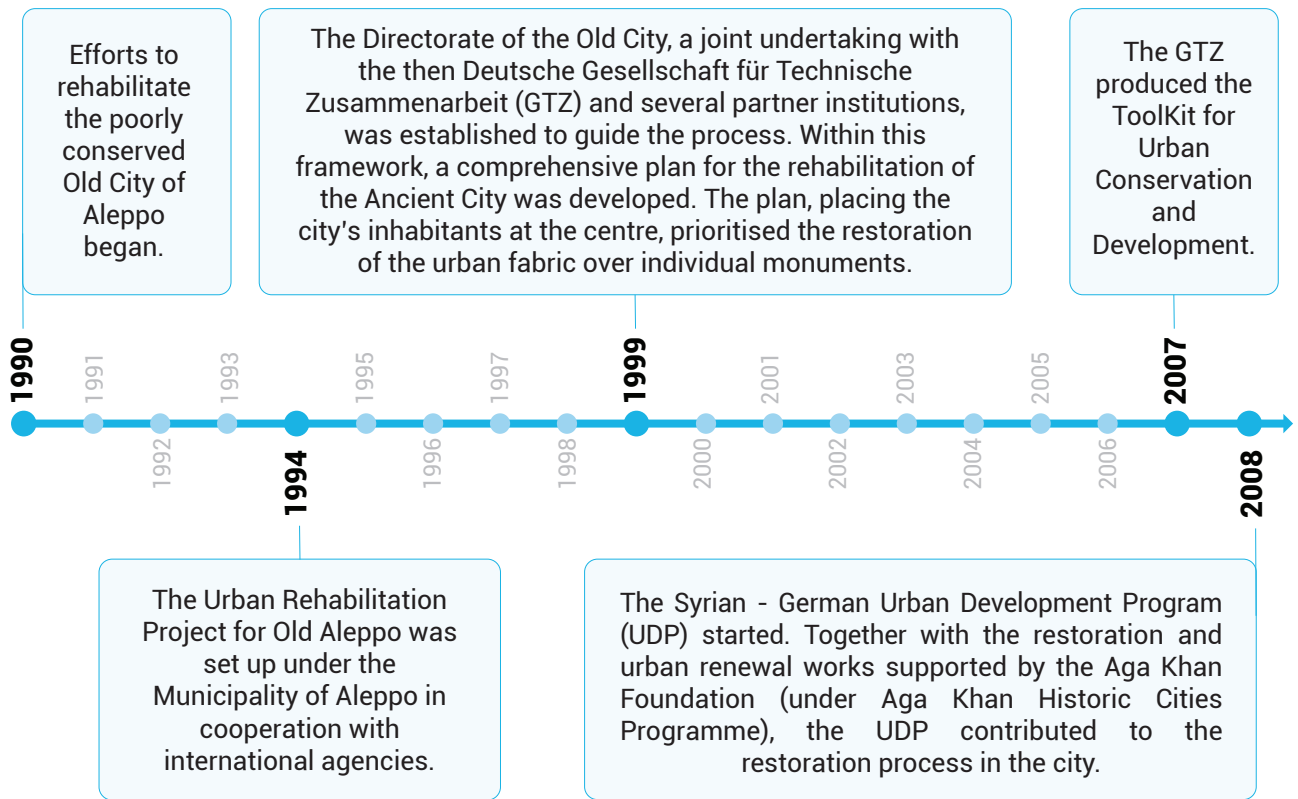
32 UN-Habitat, 2020.

33 GIZ, *ToolKit for Urban Conservation and Development*. Eschborn, 2008.

34 AKDN, "Aga Khan Trust for Culture receives ICCROM-Sharjah award for best practice in conservation of Islamic heritage". Available from: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/aga-khan-trust-culture-receives-iccrom-sharjah-award-for-best-practice-in-conservation-of-islamic-heritage>. Accessed 13 December 2021.

35 Thierry Grandin, Ruba Kasmoo, and Giulia Annalinda Neglia, *Post-Conflict Documentation of a Historic Neighborhood: (Suwayqat Ali Area – Old City of Aleppo)*, Dima Dayoub, Ruba Kasmoo and Anne Mollenhauer, eds. (Heidelberg, arthistoricum.net, 2021).

Figure 7: Timeline of restoration and conservation efforts for the Old City of Aleppo



Main actors and recovery actions

Since the crisis started, several stakeholders have initiated damage assessments, interventions and dialogue on post-crisis reconstruction for the crisis affected areas of the city, as well as undertaken initiatives to document damage based on existing archives,³⁶ historical data, and recent surveys and documentation.³⁷

Meanwhile, a loss of institutional capacities and brain-drain of experts who contributed to the pre-crisis GIZ/UDP heritage restoration efforts (see Figure 7), is a challenge for the implementation of a coordinated, comprehensive, and integrated recovery approach and urban planning sensitive to the historic context of Aleppo. Moreover, Directory of the Old City (DOC) and DGAM face limitations in terms of human resources, technical experience, and logistics to support the rehabilitation of the city's fabric, including coordination internally and with other institutions.

The main actors and recovery actions undertaken in the Old City of Aleppo following the crisis include:

- **UNESCO** has organized several meetings between 2013 and 2018 on the preservation on heritage in Aleppo, including: the *Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Middle East Context and in the Old City of Aleppo in Particular*.³⁸ This laid the foundation for among other an Action Plan with a strategy and guidelines for cultural and natural heritage recovery. Several representatives from DGAM, the Aleppo City Council, the Ministry of Tourism, the Directorate of Aleppo Awqaf (Ministry of Endowments), NGOs and universities were brought together in this process to present legal, technical and scientific initiatives, resulting in the *Table of Actions for the Recovery of the Ancient City*.³⁹
- **DGAM** is implementing The Intervention Plan for Aleppo Ancient City based on the recommendations of UNESCO. The plan was prepared in cooperation with several stakeholders, including AKDN, and sent to UNESCO in 2019. The objective with the plan was to identify urgent actions and execution phases based on previous plans. The plan includes a minor modification of the boundaries and buffer zone of the Old City. DGAM is working with the Municipality of Aleppo to restore the Grand Umayyad Mosque (funded by the Republic of Chechnya for USD 1.4 million, and in collaboration with the University of Aleppo), and partially rehabilitate the Citadel of Aleppo.
- The **Municipality of Aleppo** has supervised and implemented many upgrading and rehabilitation projects, including the opening of main access roads, the removing, classification and treating of debris from historic buildings, the recovery of Sahet Al Hatab square in Al Jadaideh, and the infrastructure works in the main axis of Bab Al Hadeed and Jaddet al Khandaq street.
- **UNDP** has undertaken interventions to of revive and support the livelihoods of 199 workshop and shop owners in four souks in the old city of Aleppo; Al-Khabieh, Al-Mahmas, Al-Sham and Al-Nahaseen. The interventions included removing 2,500 tons of debris from the souks' areas, allowing access to houses and shops. In partnership with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, Roman Catholic Archbishopric, and the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese and with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Government of Japan, UNDP assisted workshops and shops owners within these markets to help them recover their livelihoods and maintain a sustainable income and therefore revive the markets. Through provision of equipment, shelves, storefronts rehabilitation, raw materials, and assets; 65 shops in Al-Khabieh, 27 shops in Al-Mahmas, 17 shops in Al-Sham, and 45 workshops in Al-Nahaseen were revived and now active, providing residents with important services and commodities.⁴⁰
- **AKDN** has conducted restoration efforts in the

36 For a comprehensive list of initiatives see Silvia Perini and Emma Cunliffe, Towards a protection of the Syrian cultural heritage: A summary of the national and international responses Volumes I, II and III. Girona, Heritage for Peace, 2014-2015, and Leonardo Leckie, Emma Cunliffe, and Bastien Varoutsilos, Towards a protection of the Syrian cultural heritage: A summary of the national and international responses Volume IV (Girona, Heritage for Peace, 2017).

37 See for example: World Bank, Syria damage assessment of selected cities Aleppo, Hama, Idlib. March, 2017.

38 UNESCO, "Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Middle East Context: and in the Old City of Aleppo in particular," 18-19 June 2015.

39 UNESCO, 2017.

40 UNDP, "Revival of 4 ancient markets in the Old City of Aleppo", 26 June 2019.

Souq al-Saqqatiyya and restored 53 shops, between 2018-2019. The project was awarded *Best Practice in Heritage Preservation* by ICCROM-Sharjah. It has also worked on the restoration of Souq Sahat Festok and Khan al-Harir"

- **AKDN** and **Syria Trust for Development** have undertaken interventions to restore and revive the Souq Khan Al Hareer, with 60 rehabilitated shops.



Prioritizing Policy Options - Transformative Actions for Urban Recovery

Policy challenges to be addressed

Rehabilitation, restoration and preservation of the traditional cultural heritage of Syrian cities is integral for socio-economic development, reconstruction, stabilisation, and reconciliation in post-crisis Syria. As such, cultural heritage should be part of any integrated urban recovery efforts to support conditions for urban functionality, local economic recovery, social cohesion and return preparedness. This will require a conflict sensitive approach backed by appropriate due diligence measures.

To do so, the following identified policy challenges need to be addressed:

- a. **The crisis has led to an abandonment of historic cores.** The re-activation of the economy in traditional urban neighbourhoods is necessary to secure conditions for safe and voluntary return and to support local economic recovery and development of the cities and their regions.
- b. **Poorly programmed reconstruction of physical infrastructure, housing and markets can entrench inequalities rather than promote reconciliation.** Additionally, sectoral interventions within e.g., infrastructure upgrades, may contribute to the rehabilitation of heritage if projects are designed well.
- c. **Urban governance and planning are generally not based on inclusive participatory processes.** This is a considerable barrier to identifying needs, opportunities and to anchor solutions within the population, including disadvantaged groups.
- d. **Changing conditions in Syrian cities require context-specific and updated information** to embed cultural heritage in integrated responses.
- e. **A lack of coordination** between different levels of government and international stakeholders has led to an incoherent, ad-hoc response. This is reducing potential synergies between activities

and geographies, and best value for money of available funds.

- f. **There are limited available resources for cultural heritage interventions,** where pressing humanitarian needs are often prioritised. Addressing cultural heritage needs will require unlocking funding with a longer-term horizon.
- g. **The loss of cultural heritage expertise** as well as craftsmanship inside the country is reducing the know-how and expertise on traditional building construction and restoration techniques needed for recovery interventions.
- h. **A lack of best practices of heritage reconstruction in crisis/affected areas** requires new solutions and ways of thinking.

Cultural heritage considerations in Urban Recovery Frameworks, in Syrian cities

Based on the forgoing, the following are key messages to guide how the outlined policy challenges can be addressed:

- a. **Urban heritage in Syria is diverse,** recovery strategies need to reflect this diversity. This should include considerations for the built environments with a range of architectural styles, materiality, urban configurations, settlement patterns and role of functions such as the marketplace; natural features such as green and blue lunges in the city; and socio-economic structures, such as craftsmanship, sense of

community and shared history. Strategies should further consider social challenges including poverty, gender inequality, and changes of the population composition (e.g., related to age and gender), that in turn affect the economic and cultural practices.

- b. **Urban heritage reconstruction by private house owners (individual owners, landlords or Waqf) will constitute the bulk of the reconstruction efforts in the longer-term.** In this process, the cultural heritage should be protected against land speculation (particularly pertinent for central land in cities) through adequate regulations and urban governance, while also taking people's lack of resources and need for housing into consideration.
- c. **Urban heritage sites are rarely isolated but are rather functioning within an "ecology" of structures, spaces, and practices.** Whilst heritage preservation efforts often focus on cultural landmarks, much of their cultural value lies in how they connect and interact with the larger context. The recovery of this ecology is dependent on culture-oriented action plans that respect the historic urban landscape and related ecological and environmental settings, centred on community clusters for interventions. Integrated recovery efforts, including assessments and planning, should use cultural heritage as an entry point to improve urban and rural linkages, integration of the old city with the new, and connections between the city to the natural environment.
- d. **Urban heritage in Syria is changing.** In response to the deterioration of heritage buildings and urban landscapes, *Building-back-better-approaches* can help adapting the built heritage to respond to current and future needs of inhabitants. These approaches may also aid the inclusion of new discoveries of archaeological remains during reconstruction works.
- e. **Reconstruction of heritage is an opportunity to both restore economic activities and create jobs.** Integrating rehabilitation of urban heritage in prioritised and area-based urban recovery plans, will be important to support (local) economic development considering the role of old city centres in the tourism sector and economic activities, e.g., the *souqs*. Such reconstruction work is labour intensive and would thus be a significant contribution to job-creation.
- f. **Urban heritage is central to strengthen urban identity and reconciliation:** Working collaboratively on the rebuilding of a shared cultural heritage will be integral to mitigate social segregation and promote tolerance and a sense of belonging as building blocks for the future.
- g. **Urban heritage may be used to strengthen HLP rights for displaced persons.** In general, and particularly in cases where tenure documentation has been lost, ownership is often difficult to prove. However, procedures anchored in socio-cultural factors, such as neighbours and mukhtars attest to the ownership of land, can provide alternative ways to improve HLP rights.
- h. **Urban heritage protection and rebuilding efforts must be based on participatory processes.** This is crucial to promote awareness on the collective value of cultural heritage, as well as to identify through which mechanisms the preservation of the cultural heritage can become a priority for people and actors who are faced with competing needs.
- i. **Urban heritage must be protected, and reconstruction facilitated, through adequate legislations and policies.** Heritage interventions would benefit from a clarification of the provisions of existing legal framework to be able to respond to the emerging needs following the crisis. At the same time, heritage laws that protects historic buildings should allow modifications to the architecture and materiality in recognition of acute housing needs and high poverty levels. Legislations and policies should further be developed with attention to the country's past experiences with heritage restoration, and responsive to on-ground changes to the situation.
- j. **Urban heritage should be integrated into urban planning and management.** This requires a strengthening of institutional capacities at local and national levels and improved coordination between entities.

Policy principles

The policy principles for cultural heritage are aligned with the overall ambitions and logic of the URF, with special attention to restoration of urban identity and urban landscape recovery. The policy principles of cultural heritage measures in cities include:

1. Apply area-based approaches and encourage community participation.
2. Consider ecology and environmental networks in cities, and the linkages with semi-urban and rural areas.
3. Centre on housing, open spaces and infrastructures reconstruction and recovery.
4. Incentivise local economy and creative industries, through skills, workers, and capacity building.
5. Strengthen information management on urban heritage.
6. Focus on social and economic hubs as drivers for urban heritage recovery.



Policy Design

Considering the magnitude of damage and continued threat to Syria's urban heritage, this cannot be adequately addressed with the limited funds and resources currently available. This paper therefore proposes a phased recovery model with implementation of selected concrete, feasible and transformative interventions at relevant governance levels (national (regional), city and local) and timescales (immediate, medium, and longer-term). By understanding how urban heritage dimensions link between these scales, opportunities for synergies and transformative actions may emerge. This can in turn help guide the prioritisation of investment and resource allocations.

To guide this process, this paper suggests linking territorial approaches and urban development. The prioritised measures should be implemented through integrated and well-coordinated processes sensitive to changing economic, social, environmental, and cultural conditions. Due considerations must further be given to do-no-harm and safeguarding measures to ensure sustainable results. This requires both top-down and bottom-up approaches that places culture and people at the centre.

are based on environmental, social, and economic connections that may contribute to strengthen the preservation and rebuilding of urban heritage between cities. These corridors can help strengthening linkages between urban heritage recovery and rural and urban development. Promotion of national heritage corridors as a strategic means to address urban heritage preservation will depend on the capacities of national and government partners, in particular for adapting the notion of heritage corridors in national urban and regional planning and heritage conservation plans. See Box 3 Heritage corridors for a list of potential heritage corridors and map of their location.

Implementation model

The implementation model will be designed along the following core concepts at each level of intervention:

National level: National Heritage Corridors connecting cities to regions

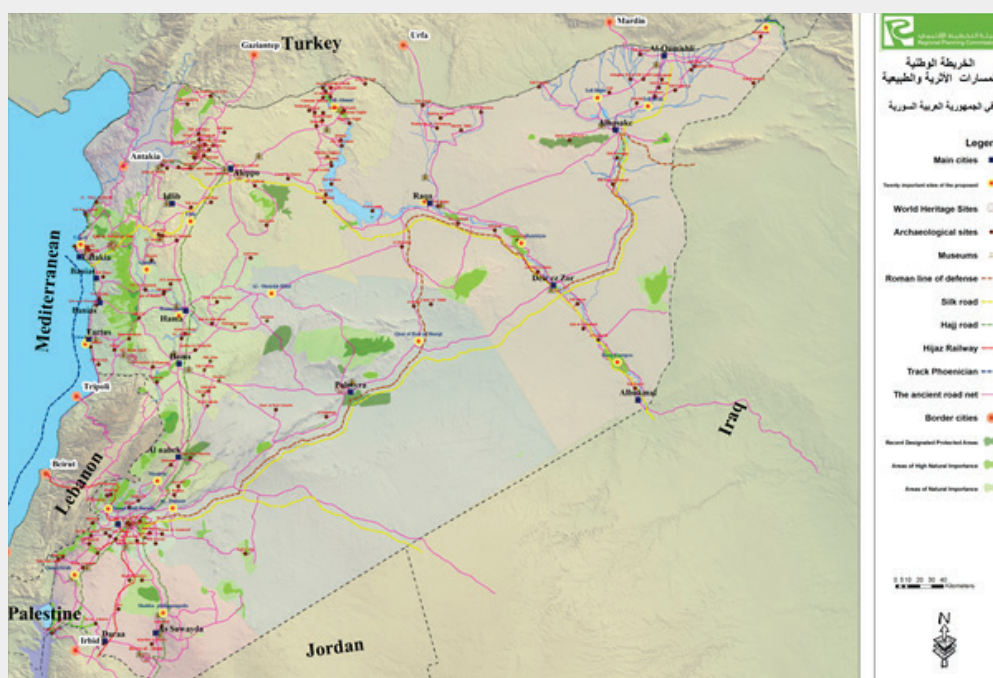
At a national level, cities form regional ensembles and share commonalities that can be leveraged for programming. The regional level criteria are based on national heritage corridors to guide a variety of programming modalities that connect urban heritage recovery to rural and regional development (see Heritage evaluation grid for elaboration on how heritage corridors can be identified). The corridors

Box 3 Heritage corridors

Potential heritage corridors include:

		Description
National level	Silk road	The main axis includes cities like Aleppo and Palmyra.
	Hajj Road (Islamic, Christian and St. Bolos Road)	Linking cities like Damascus, Aleppo, Hama and Bosra Asham, which is actually located at the governance of Dara
	Hijaz Railway	Including Damascus, Dara
	The roman road	Including Palmyra, Rassafa, Damascus
	Track Phoenician	Aroad, Tartous, Amreet
	The ancient road-net	The network of cultural heritage roads combined, showing the importance of not only the sites but the network by itself
Regional level	Orontes River connecting Hama and Homs to smaller localities with significant heritage assets like Muhradah and Salmiyeh	The river basin links the major cities of Hama and Homs with rural districts, villages and towns
	The Limestone Massif region on the Aleppo plateau in northern Syria, including the Dead Cities	Around 40 villages grouped into eight archaeological parks that provide an insight into rural life in late antiquity during the Byzantine period
	A heritage corridor along the Lebanese border with Homs at the centre	The corridor links a series of locations with valuable urban heritage adjacent to the city of Homs.
	An Archaeological Corridor in the south	The corridor links canals and ancient mills, and would potentially focus on the preservation of traditional rural heritage and customs.
City level	The courtyard gardens for Aleppo	The courtyard gardens of Aleppo represent a unique heritage asset which was utilised in the resurgence of the local economy prior to the conflict, notably in neighbourhoods like Jdeideh

Figure 7: Heritage Sites and Heritage corridor map



City level: Urban recovery plans embedding heritage restoration as an integral pillar for recovery

Evidence-based multi-sectoral and phased recovery plans at the city (and municipal) level will help identify priority interventions with the most impact in crisis affected cities, and reconstruction of city functions and services to its inhabitants (Figure 9). Integrating heritage recovery as a pillar will both be important to ensure due consideration to the protection of heritage assets and restoration of

Syrian old cities in overall recovery efforts, as well as leveraging the opportunity of heritage recovery in both contributing to restore urban identity, boost local economic development, and job creation. See *Box 4: Best practices for post-conflict reconstruction planning: Mosul Old City*, for an example of how such an integrated plan can be developed in partnership with local authorities.

Figure 8: an urban recover plan

**RESPECT HISTORICAL CHARACTERISTICS
DEVICE BUILDING GUIDELINES**

<p>SPECIAL HERITAGE INTERVENTION PRESERVATION Preservation is defined as measures carried out to maintain a cultural property in its existing situation and prevent further deterioration. It aims to protect and preserve. Cultural Heritage properties as close as possible to their original condition, and for as long a period of time as possible. Preservation is implemented when indicators show that the general stability and condition of a cultural property is endangered, and/or immediate intervention is required to mitigate this threat. Research, documentation, and recording are fundamental components of the preservation process and practice. Documentation should be implemented before, during and after any conservation work undertaken, and it should also accompany any subsequent monitoring of the cultural property. Any physical intervention or change to the fabric must be kept to a minimum.</p>	<p>SPECIAL HERITAGE INTERVENTION STABILIZATION AND RESTORATION Restoration, as a process, aims to retain and/or maintain the original setting and fabric of a cultural property whilst also preventing any further deterioration. Interventions may include the substitution, renewal or reposition of decorative, non-structural and structural elements, in order to bring back the buildings former or original state. The process also seeks to ensure structural and material stability. Restoration includes three categories: partial restoration and comprehensive restoration. Partial restoration is implemented when indicators show that a cultural property is in relatively good condition, but some elements are deteriorating and require interventions. Comprehensive restoration is implemented when indicators show the setting and fabric of a cultural property is exhibiting severe physical deterioration and requires more extensive, appropriate intervention.</p>	<p>URBAN SCALE DESTRUCTION URBAN REHABILITATION Urban rehabilitation is a complex process that should involve all sectors in society living within an historic urban area. All urban rehabilitation programmes in historic areas should be based on an integrated conservation approach. Urban rehabilitation can involve modification of a cultural property to contemporary functional standards which may include adaptation for new uses. These interventions will take into consideration one or more blocks or groups of blocks focusing on their rehabilitation as a whole. Any interventions will respect the pre-existing street pattern and the curtain of buildings defining its boundary. Volume, accessibility/permittability and appearance of the facades will be defined by the urban rehabilitation guidelines.</p>	<p>URBAN SCALE DESTRUCTION URBAN REGENERATION Urban regeneration is aimed at the recovery of large parts of the city where destruction has reached such proportions that the physical environment is affected (meaning the built fabric and the ecological systems), hence affecting both economic and social dynamics. Operations cover both public and private properties; they require a cross-cutting strategy that can address the phenomenon of under used land, economic health, and productivity. The process envisages changes in future urban growth and productivity patterns.</p>
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<p>NEGOTIABLE DAMAGE MAINTENANCE Maintenance activities carried out regularly, according to a pre-determined schedule; maintenance aims to protect the physical fabric and setting of a cultural property from the effects of time and use, through both preventive and scheduled actions. Maintenance is implemented when indicators show that the cultural property is generally in good condition and only minor interventions are required.</p>	<p>MINOR DAMAGE REPAIR Repair concerns interventions that aim to replace or correct broken, damaged or faulty components or elements of a building, either inside or outside, or to make minor alterations or renovations to it in order to maintain its operating efficiency. It includes the substitution of doors, windows, and finishing, as well as the replacement or completion of electrical and mechanical systems.</p>
<p>SEVERE DAMAGE BUILDING REHABILITATION - STRUCTURAL Structural rehabilitation interventions are aimed at the recovery of the main functions of a building that suffered major structural damage. The operations envisage the rehabilitation or completion of the structural works, and include the refurbishment of partitions, facades and stairs.</p>	<p>NO RECONSTRUCTION This category of intervention aims at a de-densification of the historic urban fabric while providing social and community services and public spaces. After the removal of rubble and debris, severely damaged or fully destroyed buildings will not be rebuilt, leaving urban voids.</p>

MAJOR DAMAGE
BUILDING REHABILITATION - NON STRUCTURAL
Rehabilitation is usually carried out in order to extend a building's life and/or its economic viability. Rehabilitation aims at the refurbishment of a damaged building that is not able to fulfil its performance. This category of rehabilitation does not involve structural works or retrofitting. It envisages opening or closing of rooms, or the recovery of courtyards and facades that do not imply structural works.

DESTRUCTION
RECONSTRUCTION
This category of intervention is aimed at the reconstruction of buildings that are severely damaged or totally destroyed. Reconstruction in situ involves the re-creation of a non-existent building on its original site. Based upon historical, literary, graphic and pictorial as well as archaeological evidence, a replica of the original is built using both modern and/or traditional methods of construction. Any relocation of a cultural property should be documented and dismantled parts should be rebuilt or reassembled. Reconstruction entails new foundations and structural works, the building of rooms around a courtyard (if pre-existing), as well as partitions, facades and staircases.

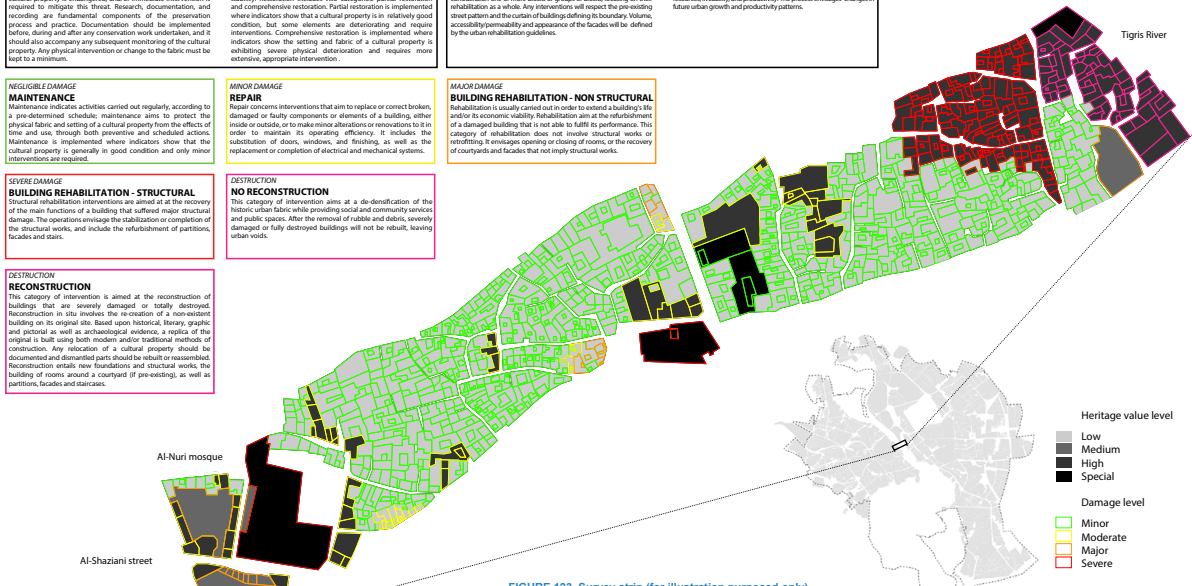


FIGURE 123. Survey strip (for illustration purposes only)
The 'strip' runs from the Al-Nuri mosque and the commercial street Al-Shaziani north-east towards the riverfront and Al-Maidan area. It covers a broad spectrum of structures with varying degrees of damage and differing heritage values.

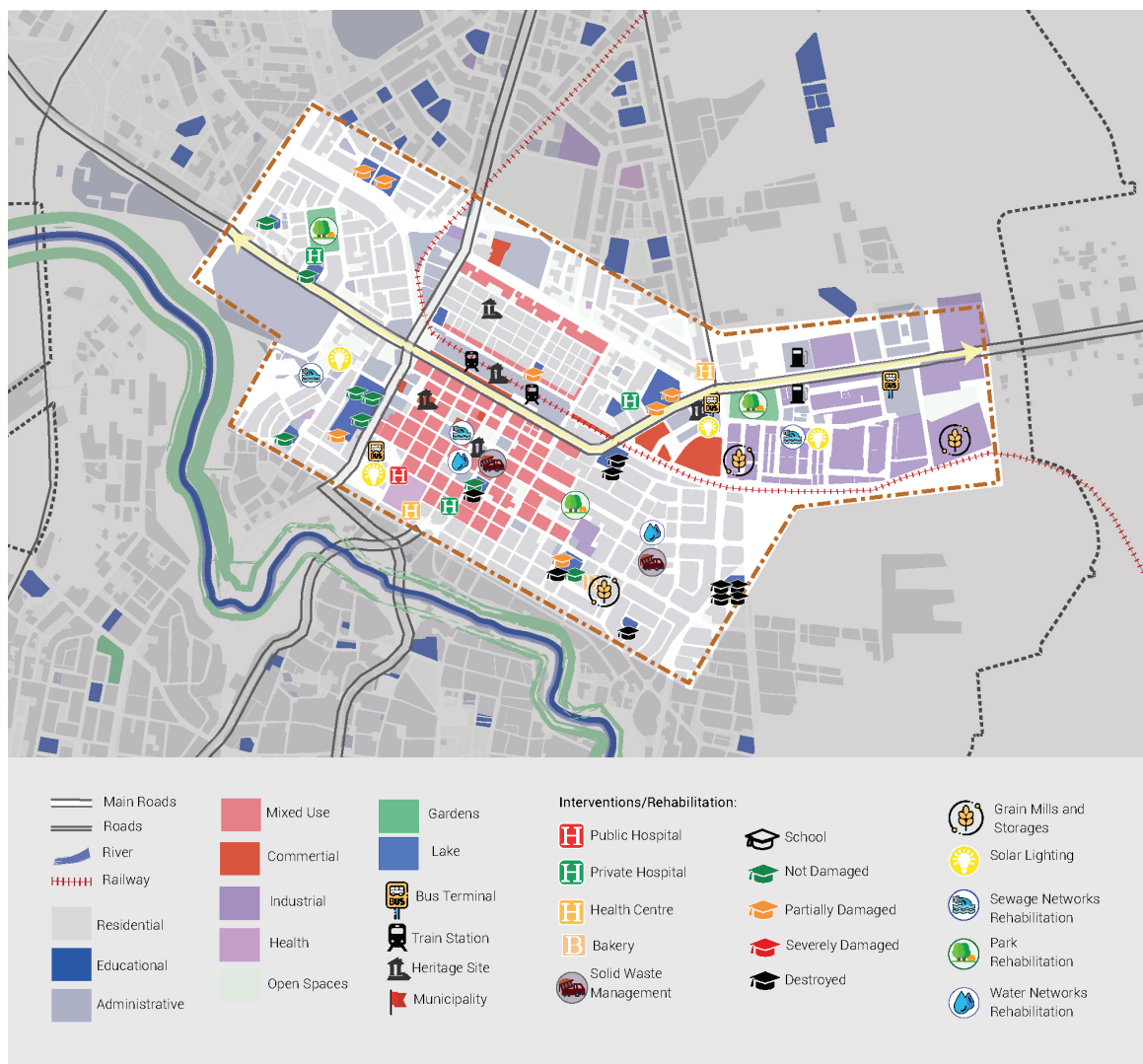


Neighbourhood level: Area-based approach based on *Hara's*

In the Syrian context, *Hara's* are both traditional residential neighbourhoods and the elementary unit of the urban society. These play a central role in the rebuilding of the urban historic fabric and cultural identity. By focusing selected implementation on *Hara's* and linking social needs and the reconstruction of local economic infrastructure to craftsmanship and local know-how, *Hara's* can

contribute to conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified return (Figure 10). Moreover, “clusters” are suggested as a minimum unit of intervention. The cluster encompass a number of residential units targeting for heritage restoration. See *Box 5 Clusters as minimum intervention units for the area-based recovery* for a further description.

Figure 9: diagram on the area-based *Hara* approach



Box 4: Best practices for post-conflict reconstruction planning: Mosul Old City

Without a holistic and coordinated strategy, post-crisis reconstruction in historic urban areas is at best inefficient and at worst may jeopardize the longer-term recovery and resilience of cultural heritage. This concern was raised by local government actors in Mosul, Iraq. It was argued that without an overarching and holistic plan, reconstruction of Mosul would be counterproductive to long-term sustainable development of the city and could produce irreversible damage. In response, a planning framework for Mosul and a strategic document for reconstruction priorities in the Old City, that considered emerging needs and the fast-changing reality on the ground, were developed to guide the reconstruction process.

The Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul¹ (IPFRM) was developed by a multi-disciplinary team from UN-Habitat and UNESCO, to support Mosul's local government with urban reconstruction and recovery, and to define recovery priorities for the greater Mosul area. The framework paid special attention to the Old City, highlighting ten priorities for safeguarding and reconstruction of the historic urban landscape. While much of the unique architectural heritage has been lost, the historic and cultural character of the city – its “soul” - is still very much present. It was therefore seen as imperative that the reconstruction, restoration, and conservation processes respect the tangible surviving elements of the historic urban fabric and the traditions and techniques used in their original construction and associated practices. Key interventions in the Old City should adhere to specific rebuilding guidelines, be developed in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, and be based on adequate research and documentation, in support of rebuilding or restoring structures. Furthermore, data on surviving building types, architectural elements and material used, will be collated as a reference.

The section *Mosul Old City: Reconstruction Priorities* from the IPFRM presents a summary of key recommendations and actions. The documents should be seen in the context of the overall framework for Mosul city, as many challenges that the Old City face are shared with the wider city. The document provides the first priorities to be endorsed by the Prime Minister's Task Force for Reconstruction of the Old City to support the self-reconstruction process and prevent unintended consequences or secondary damage from recovery and reconstruction activities in the Old City. It draws upon the earlier studies of the Old City; “Reconstruction of the Old City of Mosul Preliminary Study” (2017) and the “Reconstruction of Mosul Action Plan” (2018), both produced by the Engineering Consulting Bureau of Mosul University, as well as recommendations of Iraq's Engineering Union. The following implementable actions are recommended:

1. Protect the heritage from further destruction
2. Recover the Old City through a block approach
3. Clear the city from debris and unexploded ordnances
4. Ensure reconstruction respects the city's historical character
5. Support the self-reconstruction process
6. Support the small-medium enterprises in commercial streets
7. Bring back schools to the Old City
8. Reconnect the Old City to the rest of Mosul
9. Assist Old City residents with property documents
10. Implement pre-crisis plans to build-back-better.

¹ UN-Habitat and UNESCO, The Initial Planning Framework for the Reconstruction of Mosul. New York, 2019.

Box 5: Clusters as minimum intervention units for the area-based recovery

Clusters, or groups of residential buildings, are suggested as the minimum unit for implementation of tailored (social, economic, physical, and ecological) pilot projects. In conjunction with associated open spaces and infrastructures, such clusters may serve as starting points to preserve or rebuild historic urban landscapes. For reconstruction of documented buildings and monuments, procedures will be coordinated with DGAM. For reconstruction of minor and undocumented residential heritage around monuments, these will be provided with building codes, guidelines, and toolkits to rebuild the houses preserving the homogeneity and consistency of the historic urban landscape.

Phased recovery actions based on a recovery ladder

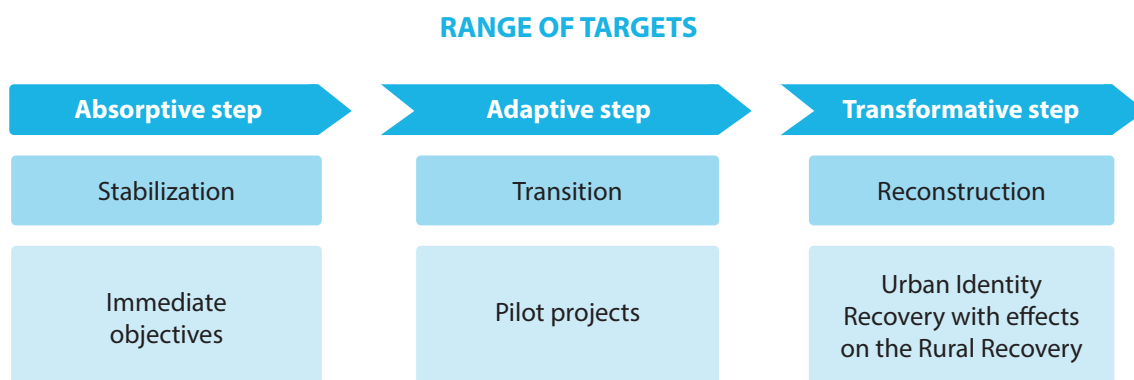
The heritage recovery ladder identifies actions along the continuum from absorption, adaptation, to transformation. This is based on the principle that multiple temporalities must be planned for in parallel, to ensure a flexible, iterative process that navigates shifting needs and challenges in the immediate/short-term towards the medium and long-term. This underpins the logic that there will be a more effective urban heritage preservation when there is a move from the recovery to reconstruction phase, which in turn will be critical to consider in short-term response to mitigate an obliteration in heritage if heritage assets are un-checked. The structure of this recovery ladder follows the scalar logic outlined

above, spanning hara's, city, (regional), and national levels.

The heritage recovery ladder can be divided into three "phases" with corresponding measures:

- **Absorptive:** responding to immediate needs for stabilization, including need for housing, and livelihoods.
- **Adaptive:** medium-term response, including conditions for safe, voluntary, safe, and dignified return.
- **Transformative:** longer-term, including disruptive and bounce-forward measures towards resilience.

Figure 10: Range of targets



Recommendations for the heritage recovery ladder

The recommendations outlined in this section follows the heritage recovery ladder to identify phased priority interventions. Using this ladder, possible strategic entry points to target both stressors and root causes for the inflicted damage and possible threats to the cultural heritage in Syrian cities is indicated as recommendations on hara's, city, (regional), and national scales. This as a starting point to identify opportunities for absorptive, adaptive, and transformative measures using the concept of heritage corridors to define spatial inter-linkages between the respective levels and within Area-Based interventions targeting cities. These recommendations can be embedded into urban recovery efforts through cross-sectorial and multi-stakeholder engagement, with the aim to implement initiatives with the greatest potential impact and value for money. A pre-requisite for initiating the outlined recommendations is a need for solid damage assessments and sound contextual, urban analysis. Below are suggested priorities across the recovery ladder and geographical scales.

Drawing on the case-study, some recommendations are also outlined for Aleppo to illustrate how these can respond to a specific city-context.

Hara's: Recommendations on a neighbourhood level

The policy goals at the neighbourhood levels are to:

1. Reduce spatial inequality and poverty while preserving urban heritage.
2. Turn post-crisis-traumas into opportunities to 'build back better' and to pave the way for reconciliation at all levels.
3. Recover the variety of small public spaces that are *connected to cultural practices (e.g., cul-de-sac, small Souqs and squares around neighbourhood facilities)*.
4. *Strengthen the sense of belonging and increase social cohesion through shared cultural heritage references.*

Absorptive steps:

- a. Integrate heritage in area-based approaches using an inter-scalar implementation model, and promote community level projects for re-appropriation of public spaces and reactivating traditional livelihoods (e.g., craftsmanship, fabric and soap production, merchants etc.) in souqs.
- b. Raise awareness among residents on the role of cultural heritage in urban recovery, including housing restoration and site development, through awareness raising, training, participatory processes.
- c. Guide development of and monitor the implementation of neighbourhood action plans, with strong community participation including women and youth, to facilitate the implementation of short-term interventions.
- d. Organize community interventions and engagement through neighbourhood committees, starting from local planning processes with municipality technical staff and local community representatives, to reach the final validation and endorsement of developed plans through wider community consultation in the concerned neighbourhoods.
- e. Facilitate participation through consultative meetings with neighbourhood committees, mukhtars, community leaders, DGAM directorate (Governorate level and experts in coordination with ministry of culture), representatives of organizations and professional unions, to identify and prioritise interventions and agree upon roles and responsibilities for involved actors at a local level.

Adaptive steps:

- f. Connect participatory action planning to longer-term strategic planning and policy design, to support conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified return (e.g., for security, access to basic services, housing, integration, and reconciliation).
- g. Identify clusters and related infrastructure and public spaces to pilot projects for integrated (physical, socio-economic, and environmental) recovery of urban heritage. In Aleppo, relevant clusters may include houses in al-Jdeideh around the waqf of Ipship Pasha, the Suwayqat

Ali in al-Farafira, and the area at the feet of the Citadel in Aleppo.

- h. Carry out surveys and assessments of damaged areas (e.g. al-Jdeideh and al-Farafira in Aleppo) using relevant and up-to-date technology, coordinated by local and international research and data analysis centres, focusing on in-crisis transformations, social cohesion and needs, economic infrastructure (e.g., trade and cultural industries, cultural heritage production), and cultural, social, and economic resources (e.g., community centres and local skills).
- i. Extend and improve evidence-based recovery planning approach (e.g., "neighbourhood action plans"), as a tool for comprehensive cultural heritage recovery.

Transformative steps:

- j. Implement tailored pilot projects of small squares and cul-de-sac for gathering places and social life, to support reconciliation, boost local economy through creative industries and commerce, and promote environmental and resilient neighbourhoods, around public spaces such as schools or neighbourhood souqs.

Urban Recovery Plans: Recommendations on a city level

The policy goals at the city levels are to:

- 5. Reduce speculation and replacement of traditional building stock, safeguarding historic quarters.
- 6. Strengthen climate action and increase resilience using traditional materials and techniques appropriate for the climate and ways of living.
- 7. Connect urban heritage recovery to socio-economic development, with particular attention to creating opportunities for women.

Absorptive steps:

- a. Promote awareness raising activities to stakeholders including private sector, and decision makers, on the role of cultural heritage recovery in local economic recovery and

stabilisation efforts. Re-launch awareness raising activities in cities where cultural heritage awareness programmes have been carried out, such as Aleppo.

- b. Build a network of local, national, and international actors, NGOs, and civil society to develop a recovery planning strategy.
- c. Include cultural heritage in multi-sector assessments, drawing on archival documentation and spatial mapping.
- d. Remove debris in highly damaged areas to increase accessibility and connections.
- e. Increase the capacity of the law offices of old cities and DGAM teams to supervise restoration and reconstruction processes of historic buildings and update the building codes of the old cities.
- f. Develop adequate processes and technical guidance for the reconstruction of historic buildings and neighbourhoods, using context-sensitive and climate-appropriate materials and designs.
- g. Explore options for mobilising private sector partners in rehabilitation projects, e.g., by connecting the rehabilitation of residential units with commercial shops and infrastructure.
- h. Connect special heritage recovery tracks (through updated or locally adjusted building codes) for construction licenses to funding mechanisms for heritage-recovery (See Box 6 Mechanisms for efficient issuing of building permits to assist housing reconstruction in heritage buildings).

Adaptive steps:

- i. Update and develop integrated strategic urban plans using an integrated spatial approach for long-term culture-based recovery sensitive to the needs of displaced persons and urban poor, while also addressing threats to the urban heritage.
- j. Develop local heritage plans that recognize urban-rural and regional connections. Create a national catalogue of good practices case studies and share these through local dissemination and communication strategies.
- k. Integrate urban heritage considerations in Municipal Information Systems (MIS) to support analysis and prioritisation of holistic and effective interventions.
- l. Update local regulations and increase the capacity of municipal technical offices and DGAM teams to supervise restoration and

reconstruction processes.

- m. Use cultural heritage as an entry point to secure access to affordable housing and safe and green public spaces.
- n. Build the capacities of decentralized government staff and planning institutions, local planners, and other relevant urban heritage recovery stakeholders to facilitate integrated urban planning processes.
- o. Agree on and embed cultural heritage recovery measures in masterplans and site management plans, to be coordinated between MoLAE and DGAM, at the national, regional, and local levels.
- p. Build the capacities of decentralized government staff and planning institutions on urban heritage recovery planning processes and use pilot projects to implement 'build back better' recovery interventions.

Transformative steps:

- q. Enhance urban regeneration and strengthen social cohesion through community engagement in local (socio-economic) development processes and spatial connectivity, including heritage related and creative industries.
- r. Develop 'good practice' pilot projects to demonstrate how cultural heritage restoration can be addressed through urban recovery urban planning frameworks.
- s. Develop strategic urban plans towards reconciliation that focuses on integrating and linking areas of the cities to promote social stability, linking commercial areas, historical sites and recreational facilities.
- t. Develop toolkits and guidelines for a top-down and bottom-up housing recovery and reconstruction, through collaboration between national and international entities working on urban heritage, and dissemination through e.g., DGAM, Old City Departments, board of Engineering.

Heritage Corridors: Recommendations on a national and regional level

The policy goals at the national and regional levels are to:

- 8. Connect urban heritage recovery efforts

between cities and their surrounding areas based on ecological and economic systems, and in line with nationally formulated principles and the on-ground situation.

- 9. Become a trusted intermediary for coordinating immediate and long-term recovery actions of international, national, and local actors.

Absorptive steps:

- a. Develop prioritization grid for interventions in cities using the heritage grid to evaluate sites and discuss potential interventions at regular intervals.
- b. Develop a set of key messages that lay out the vision, the roadmap, and the priorities for urban heritage recovery.
- c. Identify key opportunities for linking urban-rural areas using heritage as entry point towards urban recovery.
- d. Build a system to support coordination of urban heritage, heritage sites around the city and rural areas, providing financial support and bottom-up / top-down strategies, processes and toolkits to reconstruct and regenerate houses.

Adaptive step:

- e. Monitor the impact of heritage recovery activities on economy, housing, and civil society, while being aware of crisis-sensitivities and shifting security conditions.
- f. Develop heritage plans that identifies options for urban-rural and regional connections.
- g. Develop capacity-building plan for local authorities to strengthen technical know-how as well as streamlined coordination of culture heritage measures.

Transformative step (implementation at regional scale):

- h. Establish a mechanism to transit from recovery focus to reconstruction and finally development mode, strengthening institutional roles, and the role and involvement of civil society institutions, international organisations, universities etc.
- i. Protect urban and regional cultural sites with high potential for future tourism that will benefit the local population.
- j. Connect recovery of souqs interventions

with efforts to strengthen local economic development and rural-urban linkages, linking

local markets, cultural industries and regional agriculture.

Box 6: Mechanisms for efficient issuing of building permits to assist housing reconstruction in heritage buildings

Rebuilding or restoration of residential buildings is often hampered by long and difficult processes to obtain building permits. Developing mechanisms to enhance these processes will require tailored procedures to respond to the damage to each building and estimated cost of rehabilitation (see Box 4: Best practices for post-conflict reconstruction planning: Mosul Old City). At the local levels, these mechanisms should contribute to conditions for voluntary, safe, and dignified return. Developing a building code system and database of heritage buildings (e.g., data on the urban environment, housing types, building materials, damages, building restoration processes, and costing) may increase transparency and accountability in building permits processes and heritage restoration overall.

Implementation mechanisms - Routes to obtain building permits:

- a. **The 'Heritage Route'**, for highly valuable buildings in terms of architecture and heritage, will follow international standards for adaptive re-use and restoration.⁴¹ Documentation on the status of the buildings prior to the crisis and inflicted damages will be requested to verify standards. Coordination between national and international stakeholders working on documenting Syrian heritage is needed for this verification process.
- b. **The 'Recovery Route'**, for buildings with low or no heritage value in urban areas with heritage values, and affected by major or severe damage, will be rehabilitated in coordination and under supervision with relevant heritage stakeholders.⁴² This route aims to prevent illegal, poor, or unsuitable reconstruction, and to preserve historic urban landscapes from possible replacement of buildings with low or no heritage value with new buildings inconsistent with the historic environment. For this route, guidelines will be provided by the Old City Departments together with national and international stakeholders with relevant experience.
- c. **The 'Fast Track Route'**, for heritage buildings with minor damage, will follow standards, guidelines, and toolkits provided by the Old City Department. Documentation on the pre-damaged status of the buildings will be requested. For this route, toolkits will be released to local communities and technicians by mukhtars, engineering/architectural associations, and NGOs working on the ground, to allow people to self-rebuild their houses.

41 Julia Sowińska-Heim, "Adaptive Reuse of Architectural Heritage and Its Role in the Post-Disaster Reconstruction of Urban Identity: Post-Communist Łódź" (Sustainability, 2020, 12(19): 8054).

42 Samir Abdulac, "ICOMOS Working Group, Directions for the Safeguarding and Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in Syria". 2019.

Heritage evaluation grid

To identify cities and heritage sites of particular value for prioritised recovery and reconstruction interventions, a **heritage evaluation grid** ranking cities against a set of criteria is proposed in this section. The grid is populated according to factors with significance for urban cultural heritage, outlined below. At the regional level, the grid helps identification of sites and cities within a region that share cultural and natural heritage features, forming “heritage corridors”. Similarly, the evaluation grid will help identify and prioritise cities where due attention to heritage restoration is needed. And finally, *Hara's*, traditional residential neighbourhoods, may be identified based on their current functions and potential to act as catalysts for cultural heritage. Working across these scales, interventions contributing to housing restitution and livelihoods in Syrian cities, towards longer-term socio-economic development, stabilisation, and reconciliation in the country may be identified and prioritised.

Heritage evaluation grid to define cities of national and regional interest.

The heritage evaluation grid is developed so that cities can be ranked according to agreed-upon criteria (such as number of IDPs, damages population, housing, economy, social cohesion, environment, and urban planning), with the highest score indicating priority cities for urban heritage recovery interventions. While some of these criteria can be quantified, others might be based on empirical evidence or “best guesses”. Although not a precise exercise, these criteria combined gives an overview of cultural heritage aspects that should be considered and an indication of particularly important sites and cities. This includes a balance in selection of geographic areas, a range in policy priority actions related to present conditions and the changing reality on the ground, using the following evaluation criteria (presented in Table 1):

1. Size of damage to immovable cultural heritage, including damaged buildings, monuments, and infrastructures.
2. Crisis-impact on socio-cultural factors, including damages to the cultural identify and

changes due to abandonment of areas and influx of displaced persons.

3. Ratio of the population of the entire city, in relation to the population in the heritage area, and percentage damage to residential units.
4. The per centage of returnees and IDPs over the overall city figures.
5. Cities size and its economic importance in the region.
6. Heritage value of the historic urban fabric, designated as sites on the World Heritage List (WHL), candidate sites for the WHL, sites included in the National List,⁴³ presence of heritage sites within the National Framework 2011, social-cultural values, and intangible heritage.
7. Types of urban heritage, across heritage classes in Syria, including variations of construction materials and housing typology.
8. Natural landscape and environment values, within region, province, or city, both in terms of physical and socio-economic value.
9. Safety, accessibility and possibility for international organizations to conduct activities.
10. Geographic distribution within the country, to cover the North-South main internal axis connecting Aleppo to Dar'a (through Homs and Hama); the transversal axis from the desert and the Euphrates (with Palmyra (Tadmor), Ar-Raqqa, and Deir-ez-Zor) to the coastline (Tartous and Jableh).
11. Location within heritage corridors (see Policy; DesignImplementation model for examples of potential corridors).

From the scoring, the following prioritized cities have been identified as particularly important for intervention:

Aleppo, Homs, Dar'a, Hama, Busra Esh-Sham, Deir Ezzor and Jableh. The long list includes Palmyra, Ar-Raqqa, Safita, Tartous, Ma'loula, Damascus, As-Sanamayn, As-Sweida and Qaryatein .

43 The National List includes all cultural heritage sites protected by law.



Table 2: Heritage Evaluation Grid (Source: UN-Habitat)

List		short list						
Name of city		Aleppo	Homs	Dar'a	Hama	Bosra	Jableh	Deir Ezzor
Geographic location		Centre of Aleppo governorate (North)	Center of Governorate - middle region	Center of Governorate - South region	Center of Governorate - middle region	Rural Dar'a - District - South region	(Coastal Area) rural Latakia	Center of Governorate - Eastn region
Density of population (Volume)		Central city - High density	Central city - High density	Central city - High density	Central city - High density	Middle city - Middle density	Secondary city - center of district - Middel density	Central city - High density
Population, 2019		1,600,000	496,800	140,750	589,000	35,000	40,200	123,500
Heritage Values	listed	Old City of Aleppo is Listed as a world heritage site	Old City is listed at National	The center is listed at National	Old City is listed at National	Listed as a world heritage site	Old City is listed at National	The center is listed at National & nomanated as WHS
	Socio-economic values	High	Middel	Middel	High	High	High	Middel
	land scape	High	Middel	High	High	Middel	Low	Middel
	intangable heratige	High	Middelv	Middel	Middel	High	Middel	Middel
Typology of Damage	Direct	High	High	High	Middel	Middel	Low	High
	Indirect	High	High	High	Middel	Middel	Middel	High
Urban type	urban fabric	Urban house (stone) with a courtyard	Urban haouse Bazalt stone	Urban hous Bazalt stone	Urban house white stones	Court house, basic house	Urban house white stones	Traditional
IDPs	Returnees/ Hosting	Low number of returnees	Both	High returnees	Hosting	Middel returnees	Hosting	Low returnees
	No. of residents in heritage areas (before/after war)	110,000/15.000	30000/5000	30000/NA	20000/NA	5000/NA	15000/NA	30000/NA
Heritage challenges		High cost for recovery & reconstruction. Big number of damaged residential units & suques Big impact on economy. Lack of restoration technics	Big number of damaged residential units,urban services.	The main monements have big damages, middel number of damaged residential units.urban services	Urban services, Lack of restoration technics +Q25	Infrastructure problem,Urban services, Lack of restoration technics	Urban services, Lack of restoration technics	Big number of damaged residential units.big damage of suques, high cost of reconstructions
Priorities of Programme (UN-Habitat)		High Priority, (MTOS, MTOS +, KFW, possible cooperation with Agha Khan ...)	Profile,MTOS, MTOS+	MTOS, MTOS+, ROAS, JP, KFW, Unrwa agreement	MTOS, Profile	MTOS	MTOS	MTOS, MTOS+, ROAS, JP, KFW...

long list								
Palmyra	Raqaa	Safitah	Tartous	Malula	Damascus	Sanamen	Sweida	AlQaryatein
Rural Homs, Sub-district middel region	Center of Governorate - Eastn region	Rural Tartous - middle regio	Center of Governorate (Coastal Area)	Rural Damascus, Sub-district South region	Capital/ Center of Governorate - South region	Rural Dar'a - District - South region	Capital/Center of Governorate - South region	Rural Homs, Sub-district
Small city - Low density	Central city	Secondary city - center of dstrict - Middel density	Central city - High density	Small city - Low density	Middle density	Middle city - Middle density	Middel density	Small city - Low density
20,000	139,400	30,750	219,700	3,600	1,840,000	30,500	99000	7,500
Listed as a world heritage site	Old City is listed at National nomanated as WHS	Old City is listed at National	Old city is Nominated world heritage site	Listed at national Nominated as a world heritage site	Damascus Old City is Listed as a world Heritage site	Part of the city ist listed at national	Old city center is listed at National	A regionally important religious heritage of Saint Elian Monastery
High	High	High	Middel	High	High	Middel	High	Middel
High	Middel	High	Middel	High	Middel	Low	Low	Low
High	Middel	Middel	Middel	High	High	Middel	High	Middel
High	Low	Middel	High	High	Middel	Middel	Middel	Middel
High	Middel	Middel	Middel	High	Middel	Middel	Middel	Middel
Rural court house, basic house		Lebanese house white ston.	Urban house white stones	Urban court house, basic house, gallery house, house with iwan.	Urban house (stone)with a courtyard	Rural court house, basic house	Bazalt haouse	Rural court house, basic house
Low returnees	Low returnees	Low returnees	Both	Middle returnees	Hosting	NA	NA	Middle returnees
7000/NA	100000/NA	7000/NA	15000/NA	5000/NA	30000 /25000	NA	20000/NA	10000/NA
Urban services, big distruction of the main monemnts	No big damage at the old structure, but Lack of restoration techenic & urban services	Urban services\ big damage of the casel	Urban services, Lack of restoration techenics	Big number of damaged residential units.Lack of restoration techenics,urban srevices	Lack of restoration techenics ,urban services	Urban services, Lack of restoration techenics	Infrastructurem urban srevices. restorationtec	Urban services
Profile+ MTOS	Profile	MTOS	MTOS	UNDP	NA	MTOS	MTOS	MTOS, MTOS+, EU

Implementation and Monitoring

Potential roles in transforming policy priorities to actions

Responsibilities of the Syrian government to implement measures include:

- **Set-up a Heritage Recovery Coordination Committee** at national and subnational levels, with the purpose of improving coordination and regulatory set-up for heritage reconstruction between various government departments and national and international stakeholders, based on the principles and approaches for heritage recovery as discussed within this policy paper. This committee should at least include representatives of MoLAE, DGAM/Ministry of Culture, the Regional Planning Commission, relevant UN Agencies as a core group. The committee should be established with sub-committees that will cover coordination at subnational levels, including with municipalities.
- **Set-up inter-municipality working groups to develop updated building codes for heritage restoration and intra-national working groups to develop guidelines and toolkits** to support the ongoing process of housing self-reconstruction. Develop roadmaps to process building permissions to, among others protect the old cities from further damages as a result of poor reconstruction, future disasters (e.g., earthquakes and floods), and gentrification as land speculation increases. This should be supported by capacity building and technical assistance to local communities and committees (e.g., Heritage Committees, and Engineers Syndicate), in collaboration with national and international entities working with urban heritage.
- **Activate an urban observatory at the regional level** with a focus on identifying, developing and updating heritage corridors and urban heritage recovery data layers for monitoring and planning. Benchmark progress towards heritage recovery using SDG11+ (see Monitoring). The observatories should further, with relevant heritage institutions, help oversee studies to inform planning, e.g., archaeological studies to help identify and safeguard urban cultural heritage, including the 120 sites identified by DGAM as important heritage sites that are so far not included in the WHL or tentative lists.
- **Develop advocacy programs for local authorities and homeowners** on the importance of urban heritage, including its cultural, social, economic, symbolic, aesthetic, ecological, financial, and technical value.
- **Enforce or revise existing rules and regulations on urban heritage.** For example, the laws to protect and recovery of cultural heritage should be revised to speed up reconstruction works, and a mechanism for improved communication and involvement of institutional entities should be put in place. Further, the establishment or revision of buffer zones and inclusion of these in urban and regional plans, e.g., using urban and regional environmental corridors, should be carried out.
- **Increase community involvement in the restoration and management of urban heritage.** National and local government actors should consult community representatives and homeowners in urban heritage initiatives to ensure that activities are design to meet local needs and leverage local capacities. This includes integrating community participation in heritage projects in the city, including for hara's reconstruction.
- **Re-activate specialized networks in a way that will strengthen institutional knowledge on**

urban heritage conservation and reconstruction.

Involve, especially for WHS, international experts who previously worked on Syrian urban heritage recovery, to benefit from their advice, and to support local authorities in preparing integrated local recovery plans and area-based actions. Furthermore, foster the use of open access archives in order to make documentation on urban heritage reconstruction available for future local and international research.

Responsibilities of donors and international organisations to implement measures include:

- **Support the development and implementation of “quick-win”, scalable projects** to provide proof of concept, with a strong community participation component, including when feasible community contracting.
- **Support the development and implementation of programs that stimulate the local economy** and create entrepreneurship opportunities in creative and construction industries. This includes applying traditional skills to new technology for building materials (e.g., earthquake-resistant systems, pre-composed building blocks from rubbles, performant materials) and techniques (e.g., 3D printing in clay construction, climate-efficient design solutions) to be used in urban recovery.
- **Provide technical support to municipal and regional government actors.** This can support intersectoral urban recovery approaches, development of guidelines and approaches to safeguard housing, land, and property rights, and capacity building programs. Such support could be embedded into existing programmes, or through joint programming with specialized agencies.
- **Design urban heritage reconstruction programming around cluster-based approaches.** This requires a broader understanding of heritage as also including the historic urban landscape⁴⁴ (which is not yet covered by law) to rebuild and safeguard not just landmarks and monuments, but also historic landscapes and “ordinary” traditional neighbourhoods and public places (e.g., cul-de-sac, souqs, courtyard gardens and orchards) with cultural significance to local communities. Housing reconstruction and restoration with micro-credit loans, or the recovery of open spaces linked to the recovery

of surrounding landmarks and monuments are two possible entry-points.

- **Advocate for the protection of Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights.** Promote social connections and community networks, retain cultural heritage values, practices, and assets, and enhance public safety, as well as complimentary measures to address grievances (e.g., further deterioration of the economic situation) that might impact HLP rights.

Possible financing options.

Possible financing options:

- Mobilise donors with potential interest in supporting rehabilitation of landmarks, monuments, or infrastructures, including commercial and educational, and advocate for holistic interventions also contributing to the recovery the surrounding cluster of houses or open spaces.
- Identify alternative financing models, considering options such as individual contributions and self-reconstruction, public private partnerships (PPP), international donations, and municipal investments to co-finance initiatives centred on e.g., local economic activities and housing.
- Fundraising mechanisms, together with co-financing options, can be considered. Such schemes have been previously implemented by GTZ and UDP since 1994 in Aleppo and other Syrian cities. These include micro-credit schemes to undertake urgent repairs or reconstruction work on houses, and loans and subsidies for environmentally friendly investments.
- In the longer term, levy taxes on tourism-related activities for restoration of historic buildings.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, *The UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape: Report of the Second Consultation on its Implementation by Member States*. Paris, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2019.

Monitoring

Monitoring of heritage recovery interventions as part of urban recovery efforts will require a flexible monitoring tool to capture progress against indicators across the scales of interventions; neighbourhood, city, and national levels. The indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the basis for such tool, outlining relevant urban and heritage indicators at national and city levels, which could be further supplemented with tools to properly assess and quantify the protection and rebuilding of cultural heritage and its contribution to urban development and urban recovery. The SDG11+ has been developed as a concept (see Box 7 SDG 11+) to support the monitoring of urban recovery frameworks. The SDG11+ builds on SDG11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, and provide a further elaborated indicator framework embedding indicators from other relevant goals. Relevant SDG indicators for urban recovery can be supplemented with specific indicators for the reconstruction of cultural heritage (Box 7) which progress can be monitored on the following three administrative levels:

Neighbourhood level: Monitoring through mukhtars, neighbourhood committees, and mechanisms set up as part of community contracting: this level should capture interventions in residential areas, e.g., rehabilitation in old cities, and its impact on both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, as well as economic outputs. Monitoring at the neighbourhood levels should be reported to municipalities.

City-level: Through municipalities, this level should at least address project-level monitoring, in particular related to performance of urban recovery projects with a direct or indirect importance to heritage recovery. This minimal SDG-focused heritage recovery indicator package could become part of each city-level recovery plan.

Regional level: Through regional and national environmental observatories,

National level: Through DGAM, this level has a focus on the consolidation of indicators above to feed into reporting towards national and international normative frameworks on heritage preservation and rehabilitation in the context of urban recovery. Monitoring will further inform evidence-based planning of e.g., urban heritage corridors and planning of transformative actions within urban recovery addressing among others heritage protection needs.

Development and selection of indicators related to heritage recovery within an overall urban recovery monitoring tool, should have a special focus on:

- Measuring heritage recovery impact on the provision of safe, dignified, and voluntary return conditions, by ensuring access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services.
- Measuring progress to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage as a contribution to building sustainable and resilient cities, including measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and build resource efficiency and resilience to further disasters.
- Measuring recovery of traditional natural and public urban features as a contribution to providing universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, elders and people with disabilities.
- Measuring the rehabilitation of traditional markets, touristic assets, and productive and creative industries contribution to local economic development focusing not just on buildings, but also on economic and social systems.
- Measuring the participation of local communities in preserving tangible and intangible heritage contribution towards inclusive and socially cohesive local communities.

Box 7: SDG 11+ and cultural heritage indicators

The thematic paper “SDG11+ as tool for monitoring area-based recovery approaches” suggests SDG11+ as a complementary monitoring and evaluation framework to humanitarian monitoring frameworks, streamlining the tracking of urban recovery specifically in the context of increasing adoption of “area-based approaches”. It comprises a selection of 28 indicators suitable for the monitoring of recovery in urban areas. As such, it aims to support 1) Improved identification of urban recovery interventions for both international organisations and local authorities (analysis); 2) To promote a standardized language of communicating access to services in urban areas, facilitating data exchange between administrative levels/communication); 3) As a way to identify areas lagging in urban recovery that should be prioritized by local and national authorities, as well as international organisations (coordination). Indicators related to heritage highlighted in this monitoring framework are:

11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums.

11.3 Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive, accessible, green, and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

12.b. Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

Potential local indicators relevant to add for measuring progress of cultural heritage recovery include:

City level: Per centage of urban fabric reconstructed according to original typologies.

City level: Proportion of houses reconstructed with approved building guidelines.

City level: Per centage of cultural heritage sites recovered according to international standards.



Conclusion

The conflict in Syria has had a devastating impact on cultural heritage of both significant Syrian and global values. Syrian cities today are overlaid historic layers, populated with heritage monuments and historic old city centres, to the extent that these cities, and peoples lives and livelihoods cannot be separated from their historic surroundings. The ten-year conflict has caused large-scale destruction to the cultural heritage sites and buildings, and a fragmentation of cities socio-cultural fabric and local identities.

As Syrian cities increasingly have become the hosting sites for the tens of thousands of internally displaced persons who have fled from different parts of the country, this is adding pressure to already scarce resources, and on the built environment – including on heritage buildings and sites. At the same time, weakened governance combined with competing humanitarian needs and constrained financial budgets, is limiting local governments' capacities to protect traditional neighbourhoods and the more than 1200 sites of significant cultural, religious, and historical importance in the country.

For urban recovery efforts to contribute to restoring socio-economic assets, as well as contributing to build resilient communities in the longer-term and attracting displaced urban population to return back to their cities of origin, integrating cultural heritage restoration and protection will both be essential and an opportunity for integrating Syria's unique heritage assets into what will shape the Syria of tomorrow. To do so, the following considerations for integrating cultural heritage within urban recovery in Syrian cities should be considered:

1. Cultural heritage, with its diversity, offers a range of opportunities for urban recovery strategies.
2. Urban heritage sites and buildings will primarily be reconstructed by private house owners in the longer-term.
3. Urban heritage sites are rarely isolated but are rather part of larger ecologies of structures, spaces, and practices.
4. Urban heritage must be understood in relation to changing needs.
5. Urban heritage holds a central role in building urban identity and reconciliation.
6. Urban heritage can be a vehicle to strengthen HLP rights for displaced persons.
7. Urban heritage protection and rebuilding efforts must be based on participatory processes.
8. Urban heritage must be protected, and reconstruction facilitated, through adequate legislations and policies.
9. Urban heritage should be integrated into urban planning and management.

The proposed policy design focuses on concrete and feasible interventions with potential transformative effects for urban recovery, across time and geographic scales. A heritage recovery ladder has then been used to suggest prioritised actions along a continuum from stabilization to transformation across scales from local to national. While short term actions are focused on emergency stabilization, mid-term actions seek to absorb shocks, and long-term actions promote transformative change for the protection and rebuilding of urban cultural heritage.

Pursuing the policy goals and outlined principles, mainstreaming heritage considerations should be done in parallel across the outlined levels of engagement – from the national policy and institutional level, to the regional and city level planning, and finally to the local community and neighbourhood levels. Across these levels national and decentralised government, relevant central and local institutions and service providers, civil society, and communities needs to be sensitised on the role of cultural heritage in restoring urban functions in Syria and on potential responsive urban recovery trajectories. Furthermore, these stakeholders need to be resourced (technically and financially) to bolster capacities in leading inclusive and transformative recovery planning and implementation with due cultural heritage considerations. For international donors and organisations, this means considering heritage streamlining as a key safeguarding principle in immediate response actions, and, when the situation allows, in any reconstruction efforts.



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Annex 1: Crisis Affected Structures in Old Cities

Table 3 Overview structural damages in six Syrian cities

BASE				DAMAGE AFFECTED STRUCTURES					
City	City Urban Extent Total Area (Ha)	Old City Total Area (Ha)	Estimated # structures in the Old City**	Total affected structures	Moderate Affected structures	Severe Affected Structures	% Affected structures	Residential structures affected	% Residential share of affected structures
Aleppo	15 870	345	8 277	8 152	5 458	2 694	98 %	7 702	94 %
Dar'a	1 526	87	1 421	1 130	786	344	80 %	1 108	98 %
Hama	4 070	62	1 419	24	11	13	2 %	16	67 %
Homs	4 225	128	4 941	1 662	532	1 130	34 %	1 562	94 %
As-Sweida	2 542	52	1 541	311	253	58	20 %	308	99 %
Raqqa	2 539	193	7 007	4 342	1 854	2 488	62 %	4 275	98 %

(**) manually digitized or estimated from OSM footprints analysis

Table 4 Structural damages in Aleppo by category

Aleppo	Area (Ha)	%	# buildings/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	15870			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	345	2,17		boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY			Union btw old-city extent and land use	yes	
OLD-CITY Damage assessment		8145	last DA in Feb 2017	Yes	

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (Ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	Total structures affected	Percentage structures affected
				Slight / moderate			Severely/destroyed				
Commercial	10	3	342	169	5	49	81	2	24	250	73 %
Education	4	1	32	16	2	50	10	1	31	26	81 %
Facility	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	100	1	-
Government	1	0	7	1	0	13	6	1	81	7	100 %
Green areas	12	3	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	-
Historical sites*	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0 %
Religion	8	2	156	98	5	63	32	2	20	130	83 %
Residential	271	78	7702	5166	140	52	2536	68	25	7 702	100 %
formal at- tached MS	9	3	313	193	5	62	73	2	23	266	85 %
formal individual MS	2	1	27	11	1	40	2	0	7	13	48 %
old city high density	259	75	9095	4962	133	51	2461	66	26	7 423	82 %
Unknowm	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0 %
Roads / open space*	33	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0 %
Touristic (Carlton Citadel hotel)	1	0	9	0	0	0	7	1	76	7	78 %
Unknown	1	0	29	8	0	28	18	1	62	26	90 %
Total	345	100	8277	5458	153		2694	76		8 152	98 %

(*) including damages to the ancient wall

Table 5: Structural damages in Dar'a by category

Dar'a	Area (ha)	%	# buildings/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	1526			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	86,68	5,68		boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY			Union btw old-city extent and land use	yes	
OLD-CITY Damage assessment			1130	last in September 2018	Yes

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Total affected structures	% affected structures
				Slight / moderate				Severely/destroyed					
Cemetery	3	4										0	
Education	3	3	31	9	1	29	29	5	0	16	16	14	45 %
Industrial	1	1	1					1	1	100	100	1	100 %
Green areas*	9	11	3					1			33	1	33 %
Historical sites	3	3	16									0	0 %
Religion	1	1	3	3	1	100	100					3	100 %
Residential	46	53	1364	771	26	57	57	337	10	23	25	1108	81 %
formal attached MS	33	38	889	525	20	59	59	159	6	18	18	684	77 %
formal individual MS	2	2	41	17	1	42	41	7	0	17	17	24	59 %
old city high density	11	12	431	228	6	53	53	169	4	39	39	397	92 %
unknown	0	0	3	1	0	38	33	2	0	63	67	3	100 %
roads / open space	21	24										0	
Unknown	0,1	0	3	3	0,1	100	100					3	100 %
Total	86,7	100	1421,0	786	27,7			344	11,5			1130	80 %

(*) orchard / agriculture
 (**) manually digitized

Table 6: Structural damages in Hama by category

Hama	Area (Ha)	%	# buildings/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	4070			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	62,39	1,53		boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY			Union btw old-city extent and land use	yes	
OLD-CITY Damage assessment		24	UNOSAT - Sept 2013 + March 2014 + July 2016	Yes	

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (ha)	Slight / moderate		Severly/destroyed				Total structures affected	Percentage structures affected
						% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT		
Commercial	1,55	2,48	55	3	0,01	0,65	5,45	3	0,01	0,65	5,45	6	11 %
Education	0,51	0,82	4									-	0 %
Green areas	5,87	9,41										-	
Historical sites	5,46	8,75										-	
Industrial	0,75	1,20	19	1	0,10	13,33	5,26					1	5 %
Religion	0,95	1,52	23					1	0,01	1,05		1	4 %
Residential	24,17	38,74	1312	7	0,13	0,54	0,53	9	0,15	0,62	0,69	16	1 %
formal attached MS	5,51	8,83	193	1	0,03	0,54	0,52				0,00	1	1 %
formal individual MS	0,14	0,22	3									-	0 %
old city high density	18,53	29,70	1116	6	0,10	0,54	0,54	9	0,15	0,81	0,81	15	1 %
roads / open space	19,37	31,05										-	
Unknown	0,83	1,33	6									-	0 %
Water	2,93	4,70										-	
Total	62,4	100,0	1419,0	11,0	0,2			13,0	0,2			24	2 %

(**) manually digitized and/or estimated

Table 7: Structural damages in Homs by category

Homs	Area (Ha)	%	# buildings/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	4225			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	128,17	3,03		boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY				Union btw old-city extent and landuse	yes
OLD-CITY Damage assessment			1662	UNOSAT - April 2014	Yes

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (Ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	Slight / moderate		Severly/destroyed				Total affected structures	% affected structures
						% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT		
Cemetery	0,3	0											
Commercial	7,6	6	133	24	1	18	18	26	1	19	20	50	38 %
Education	2,0	2	38	6	0	16	16	4	0	10	11	10	
Government	0,2	0	3	1	0	38	33	1	0	38	33	2	
Green areas	0,7	1						2				2	
health facility	0,1	0										-	
Historical sites	7,4	6		2	0	0	-	2	0	0	-	4	
Religion	2,5	2	42	11	1	27	26	18	1		43	29	
Residential	91,4	71	4722	487	10	11	10	1075	20	22	23	1 562	33 %
formal attached MS	17,2	13	591	82	2	14	14	100	3	17	17	182	31 %
formal individual MS	1,9	2	33	8	0	24	24	7	0	21	21	15	45 %
old city high density	72,1	56	4094	395	7	10	10	968	17	24	24	1 363	33 %
towers	0,2	0	4	2	0	47	50					2	
roads / open space	15,8	12										-	
Unknown	0,2	0	3	1	0	35	33	2	0	65	67	3	
Total	128,2	100	4941,0	532	12,4			1130	23,3			1 662	34 %

(**) manually digitized and/or estimated

Table 8: Structural damages in As-Sweida by category

As-Sweida	Area (Ha)	%	# buildi/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	2542			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	51,74	2,04		boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY				Union btw old-city extent and land use	yes
OLD-CITY Damage assessment			311	June 2020	Yes

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (Ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Total affected structures	% affected structures
				Slight / moderate				Severly/destroyed					
Commercial	0,3	0,6	6					4	0	49	50		50 %
Education	0,7	1,4	6	1	0,12	17,14	16,67	21	1	53	53	1	88 %
Green areas	1,4	2,6											100 %
Historical sites	0,7	1,3											100 %
Religion	0,0	0,1	1										
Residential	37,5	72,6	1514	252	5,99	15,96	16,64	56	1,32	3,52	3,70	308	
formal attached MS	3,7	7,1	142	18	0,47	12,68	12,68	2	0,05	1,36	1,41	20	14 %
formal individual MS	2,5	4,7	41										
old city high density	31,4	60,6	1330	234	5,52	17,60	17,59	54	1,27	4,05	4,06	288	22 %
towers	0,0	0,1	1										
roads / open space	10,6	20,4											
Unknown	0,5	1,0	14					2	0,08	14,81	14,29	2	14 %
Total	51,7	100,0	1541,0	253,0	6,1			58,0	1,4			311	20 %

(**) manually digitized and/or estimated

Table 9: Structural damages in Raqqa by category

RAQQA	Area (Ha)	%	# buildings/ structures	Notes	Vector data
CITY URBAN EXTENT	2539			boundary from UNH input	yes
OLD-CITY EXTENT	193,1	7,61		boundary from JRC	yes
OLD-CITY LANDUSE BOUNDARY				Union btw old-city extent and land use	yes
OLD-CITY Damage assessment			4342	last DA in October 2017	Yes

OLD CITY LANDUSE CLASSES	Area (Ha)	%	Estimated # structures**	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Affected structures	Affected area (Ha)	% ON TOTAL CLASS EXTENT	% ON TOTAL # STRUCTURES CLASS EXTENT	Total affected structures	% affected structures
				Slight / moderate				Severly/destroyed					
Commercial	0,4	0	8					4	0	49	50	4	50 %
Education	2	1	40	14	1	35	35	21	1	53	53	35	88 %
Facility	0,2	0	1	1	0	100	100					1	100 %
Government	0,1	0	1	1	0	100	100					1	100 %
Green areas	0,5	0											
Historical sites*	6	3	2										
Religion	0,2	0	7	5	0	71	71	2	0	29	29	7	100 %
Residential	138	72	6926	1831	37	26	26	2444	53	38	35	4275	62 %
formal attached MS	71	37	2892	760	19	26	26	1526	37	53	53	2286	79 %
old city high density	67	35	4034	1071	18	27	27	918	15	23	23	1989	49 %
roads / open space*	44	23											
Unknown	1	1	22	2	0	35	9	17	1	78	77	19	86 %
Total	193,1	100	7007	1854	38			2488	55			4342	62 %

(*) it includes damages to the ancient wall

(**) manually digitized or estimated from OSM footprints analysis

Annex 2: Syrian Laws and Regulations concerning Urban Heritage

Syrian Civil Code of 1949 – Syria's civil code classifies land in Syria into five types: *amiri* (State-owned), *mulk* (privately owned; immovable property "susceptible to full ownership"), *métrouké murfaka* (public land for use by a specific community), *métrouké mehmié* (public land for general use), and *khalié mubah* (State-owned land that has not been inventoried or delimited). It further stipulates ownership and use rights of these land typologies by describing occupancy, usufruct, and *superficie* rights along with use rights of waqf land (charitable land endowment under Islamic law typically used for religious purposes).⁴⁶ The Civil Code also contains lease and rental regulations. It provides that if a property is completely destroyed during the lease, the contract will be automatically terminated, however, the tenant may have the right to occupy similar premises in the reconstructed building if the destroyed building is replaced. If the property is partially destroyed or becomes unfit for use, and the tenant is not at fault, the tenant can seek to either decrease the rent or terminated the contract if the landlord fails to restore the property to its original condition within a reasonable time. In the event of the death of either party to a lease, the lease continues and is passed to the heirs of the landlord or tenant, though the legal heir to the tenant can request to terminate the agreement within six months of the tenant's death.

Antiquities Law (Legislative Decree 222) of 1963 – The legal framework surrounding Syrian cultural heritage is underpinned by the 1963 Antiquities Law (Legislative Decree 222). Though a series of amendments have been passed since, with the latest being in 1999, there has been no significant revision to the content of the law since its promulgation, nor has any new heritage legislation of substance been passed since. However, it should be noted that before 2011, a draft of a new Law on Antiquities was in the process of being drafted and put before Syrian

Parliament, though the outbreak of crisis prevented the law's presentation from taking place.

While Law 222 can and should be revised and updated in a number of regards, the law does provide a strong framework for the protection of immovable cultural heritage, referred to as "immovable antiquities", by providing antiquities authorities with substantial regulatory authority. However, the same power given to antiquities authorities by this law also can act as a threat to private HLP rights to heritage property.

The law defines "immovable antiquity" as property existing on land which was built, made, produced, or inscribed by a human being before 200 years prior, or more recent immovable property having historic, artistic or national characteristics recognized by ministerial decision. Antiquities must be registered to be under the antiquities authority's immediate jurisdiction and benefit from its efforts to preserve, maintain and study the cultural heritage object or site.

The law exhibits good practice for the protection of cultural heritage with consideration to urban development, though its provisions should be expanded and further clarified to provide more precise protection or better guide the development of Building Codes that respect heritage properties. In respect to municipal development projects, it states that historical buildings should be preserved and taken into consideration into the planning, expansion and landscaping projects of cities and villages and that all such activities will require the approval of antiquities authorities. In respect to private development projects, municipal authorities are required to obtain the approval of antiquities authorities before granting building and restoration permits in areas close to historical properties.

The law also establishes a number of prohibitions

with the aim of protecting cultural heritage properties. As previously mentioned, any demolition, transferal, renovation, restoration or other changes to the registered immovable antiquity are prohibited without the approval of antiquities authorities, as is construction on land adjacent to heritage properties. The law furthermore prohibits digging, planting, cutting trees or any other activity which may change the characteristics of the land upon which a historic building is situated without a permit from antiquities authorities. Especially relevant to crisis and post-crisis contexts is the prohibition of the use of debris from historic buildings and properties without an official permit from the authorities. Finally, heavy and hazardous industries and military installations are prohibited from being established within a half kilometre from a registered historical property. These prohibitions also demonstrate good practice, though the crisis in Syria has rendered them unenforceable during and immediately following active armed fighting.

In regard to enforcement and compliance, the Director General of Antiquities and Museums, heads of directorates, inspectors and their assistants, museum curators and their assistants and antiquities controllers are considered by law as members of the judicial police. Additionally, antiquities guards and their superiors are given the same authority as police in relation to their duties. As Syria's designated antiquities authority, DGAM is responsible for providing permits to municipalities and private parties to undertake any activity to or surrounding registered cultural heritage sites such as repairs or new construction. The Department of Antiquities specifically is responsible for granting such permits and for monitoring restoration processes. However, in practice, depending on the location (especially following the brain drain and loss of institutional capacity caused by years of internal conflict) permitting responsibilities may fall entirely upon municipalities, technical and protection committees, or the DOC.

Even though a regulatory response is likely not the easiest or most desirable route to organize such activities, space within existing laws and practices could be sought for improving the protection of heritage, while drawing on best practices of reconstruction in heritage areas in other recent reconstruction activities.

Article 15 of the Syrian Constitution (2012)—The Syrian Constitution protects the right of private

ownership of property, specifying that it may not be removed except in the public interest, by a decree, with a corresponding final court ruling, and against fair compensation, which is deemed to be equivalent to the real value of the property.

Law 12 (2012) sets the necessary basic rules for the safety and protection of the environment. This law on environmental protection in the Syrian Arab Republic aims at establishing the basic rules for environmental safety and protection from pollution, to achieve environmental development, and to define the tasks that the Ministry carries out in cooperation with the competent authorities to implement laws and regulations related to environmental affairs.

Law 23/2015 (Urban Planning Law) — The law on urban planning establishes and stipulates the implementation of master and site plans through a rezoning process that includes land division, property valuation, and redistribution procedures. The law allows for the administrative acquisition of lands “for free in exchange for the moral and material benefits that the landowners will receive as a result of the inclusion of their land in the zoning or division area.” There are, however, provisions for compensation when the redistributed property is of a lesser value than a landowner's original property. The law requires landowners in an area designated to be zoned to divide their land within three years of notification of the zoning announcement, which may preclude many displaced Syrians from being able to engage in the process and result in the loss of their rights to the property. It furthermore requires landowners to present proof of ownership documents issued by the Land Registry to apply for land division, documents which many Syrians may have lost over the course of the crisis. The law additionally stipulates severe penalties for dividing land in any way not compliant with its provisions. The law only gives landowners within the designated area thirty (30) days to present their ownership claims upon the publication of the decree establishing the rezoned area. Finally, the law specifies that land subdivision, land consolidation and the granting of building permits will be prohibited within the designated area until the completion of the zoning process.

Law 39/2017 (Building Permit Fee Exemption Law)— Exempts property owners from paying building permit fees, including the added fees, if they intend to carry out repairs in whole or in part on their properties to fix damages sustained as a result of terrorist acts during the crisis.⁴⁷ The following conditions apply:

the property must be located within stable areas, the repairs must not include added construction, the law is valid for one year following its promulgation. Replaces Law 21/2015.

Law 66/2012 (Urban Renewal Law in the Damascus Governorate) – Law 66 stipulates a process for establishing new urban zones within the administrative border of the Damascus governorate as part of the urban masterplan. It allows for the dissolution of ownership rights over property in highly populated and slum areas without having to comply with other expropriation and urban development laws. The law allows the government to replace individual property rights with shareholder rights on the plot of land to be developed and restrains property transactions for homes located within the redeveloped urban zones. In practice, the law has allowed for mass evictions and redevelopment projects that have increased rental and housing prices in Damascus.⁴⁸

Law 10/2018 (Urban Renewal Law) – Law 10 in essence takes the process for the establishment of new urban zones in the Damascus Governorate (Law 66/2012) and applies it on a national scale. The law uses expropriation to dissolve individual property rights and redevelop urban areas. When an area is designated for redevelopment, individuals in that area lose their individual property rights and are instead given stocks in the new urban zone. Once an owner has been provided with stock, they are prevented from dealing with their former property in any way. Procedures for valuation and distribution of reallocated parcels is similar to that of Law 23 and poses the same problems due to the especially limited timeframe given in Law 10 for proving property rights. Law 10 also describes eligibility for compensation of various types of evictees including residents of homes on public land and on private lands (informal dwellings), permanent leaseholders, property owners and shopkeepers. Finally, the law provides three options to shareholders as to how they may use these shares: (1) parcel allotment, (2) combine stock to create shareholding company or (3) sell shares or parcel in a public auction.⁴⁹ The third option is likely to be most common due to the increased prices or redeveloped land plots.

Law 3/2018 (Debris Management Law) – Law 3 governs the removal and sale of debris from damaged buildings in Syria. It establishes a process for identifying, removing and selling debris from zones identified by the Governor. Claims for ownership of the

debris can only be made after the Governor assesses the damage to the buildings and prepares a report. Claims can be made by property owners or relatives of the owners and these claims must include proof of ownership, or otherwise a description of the property when proof of ownership is not available. Following a process of report and chart preparation and a period of public review and objections, the owner can collect movable property from damaged buildings. Following this, the government has the right to enter damaged buildings built over public properties and destroy them. While the law is currently in force, it had not been put into practice as of March 2019.⁵⁰ The procedures for debris removal are specifically given as follows:

- a. The local **Administrative Unit (AU)** makes a request to the governor to identify the cadastral district and damaged buildings to be addressed.
- b. The Governor makes a decision regarding the district where debris management operations will take place. The decision is published for **15 days**.
- c. The AU produces a report on the cadastral district within **120 days** of the decision publication. The report provides details on damage quantity and rate, estimated costs of debris removal, required equipment for debris removal, estimated debris value, and a map demonstrating the damaged buildings, the relevant cadastral districts and the owners of the damaged buildings and private belongings.
- d. Property owners can apply to the AU to claim property rights in the cadastral district within **30 days** of the Governor decision publication.
- e. Upon submission of the AU report, the Governor establishes the **Ownership Description and Verification Committee (ODVC)** with the task of describing the private belongings and debris and verifying ownership within the relevant cadastral district.
- f. The ODVC creates an **inventory of damaged buildings** (including cadastral district name, parcel number, boundaries and adjacent parcels physical situation, damage degree, structural soundness of the building, recommendations whether to preserve, demolish partly or demolish completely the building), verifies ownership rights against the subdivision plans and ownership lists (as well as using utility bills, tax statements, neighbor testimony and field inspections), and produces an **ownership inventory** (including cadastral district name, parcel number, debris and private belongings owners, their respective

- shares and other necessary information).
- g. The ownership inventory is published and advertised by the AU for **15 days**. The AU can begin demolishing structurally unsound buildings on public property and removing the resulting debris. The AU sets an auction date to sell debris within **15 days** of the ownership inventory publication.
 - h. Within **30 days** of the publication of the ownership inventory property owners can challenge the ownership inventory at the governorate appellate court.
 - i. Within **30 days** of the appeal cut-off date, the AU will begin receiving requests for recovering private belongings from proven property owners (those initially listed in the ownership inventory or those who successfully appealed). The AU will receive requests for **30 days**.
 - j. Owners who don't claim their property and submit a request within this period will have their building demolished and the debris taken by the expropriating authority. The AU is required to keep belongings considered valuable at a dedicated warehouse for recovery to those who prove owners within **one (1) year** before selling it at auction.
 - k. The AU will sell expropriated debris and belongings at auction. The resulting funds will be deposited into a bank account used for the purpose of compensating rightsholders whose rights are later proven. The costs of debris removal by the AU will be deducted from this fund.
 - l. The AU has the unsold debris removed and recycled by its own means or through a qualified public or private entity.
 - m. Rightsholders who fail to recover their private belongings and debris or whose rights haven't been proven shall be compensated with an amount proportional to the auction price should they succeed to prove their rights.

Law 20/2015 (Landlord and Tenant Law) – The Landlord and Tenant Law regulates the relationship between landlords and tenants in newly reached lease agreements and retrospectively regulates older lease agreements reached through predated laws. It regulates evictions, defines the basis to determine rent value and puts in place protective measures for certain tenants. Under Law 20, a lease will be considered renewed if a tenant continues living there with the landlord's knowledge after the conclusion of an agreed lease period as long as the rental agreement has been registered with the municipality.

If it has not been registered, then the tenant can be subject to eviction by the landlord at any point. Law 20 also establishes that unless otherwise agreed, the landlord is responsible for the maintenance of the property and required to carry out major repairs as needed. If the landlord fails to maintain and/or repair the premises, a tenant can terminate the lease, reduce the rent or file a lawsuit against the landlord to request that the landlord carry out repairs or provide compensation. The main grounds for eviction as given in Law 20 include: failure to pay rent, neglecting upkeep of the premises or causing significant damage, subleasing the property without written consent, using the premises for purposes that differ from those specified in the lease agreement, deserting the leased premises without a reason for a period of one continuous year, and tenant insolvency or bankruptcy.

Legislative Decree 29/2012 (Reclamation of Agricultural Land) – Relates to authorizing the Minister of Irrigation in agreement with the Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform to decide land reclamation in any area in Syria in the public benefit. Land may be expropriated for agrarian reform against payment of compensations to owners of expropriated land, distribution and investment of reclaimed land, the maximum allowed limits of land ownership by individuals of reclaimed land and distribution of reclaimed land to peasants.

Ministerial Order 225/2008 (EIA Act) – Sets out the executive procedures for environmental impact assessments (EIAs) in Syria applying to construction projects initiated following the order's promulgation. Annex 1 provides the scope of the application of the EIA Act and stipulation of required actions according to project. Annex 2 provides the general or site-related screening criteria required to measure all impacts of a project. In its current form, EIA requirements generally do not apply for rehabilitation and restoration activities.



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