BEYOND THE PLAN: THE NEED TO BUILD IN-HOUSE CAPACITY TO PLAN, DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT URBAN AND TERRITORIAL STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANS

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Community based Vision Workshop Willemstad, Curacao 2017 (photo by author)

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, I was invited to co-advise the President of Afghanistan on the best way to plan and fix the fast-growing metropolis of Kabul. Once dubbed 'the Paris of the East', it had become one the most polluted and dangerous cities, especially for women and children. Upon arrival I was handed the existing multi-volume metropolitan masterplans for Old and New Kabul, prepared by overseas consultants. I immediately knew this Plan could not work.

Why not? Because in my opinion: a) the use of static masterplans is obsolete; b) the plans were drafted in an office 6,260km further away from the city; c) the foreign planners who prepared the plan are rooted in an entirely different (planning) culture; and, d) there was insufficient local leadership and planning capacity to steward the implementation and enforcement of these (over)ambitious plans.

I witnessed a similar, yet very different problem, with masterplans developed by Israel for Area C of the West Bank. These plans did not respond to the real needs of the local Palestinian communities – they were more of an obstacle than a catalyst for sustainable community development.

Only when communities were supported to plan for themselves, do things start to change.

All over the world we can observe the benefits of less sophisticated, but primarily community-driven and in-house strategic and action-oriented planning. Yet, the practice of entirely outsourcing masterplans for city-extensions or entirely new cities is far from over. For example, look at the glossy but unsustainable masterplans for New Cairo or New Yangon among others around the globe and especially in Asia.

INTEGRATED URBAN AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING: THE THEORY

The first principle of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IGUTP) (UN-Habitat, 2015) is: "Urban and Territorial Planning is an integrative and participatory decision-making process that addresses competing interests and is linked to a shared vision, an overall development strategy and national, regional and local urban policies." But the IGUTP does not prescribe any planning methodology. Nor does the New Urban Agenda, approved by all UN-member states in 2017 (UN, 2017).

The IGUTP Handbook (UN-HABITAT, 2018) however distinguishes the important difference between planning products and planning processes, with the understanding that a good planning product - such as an urban policy, a vision for a city, or an urban design for a neighbourhood or street - can only come out of a

good planning process, understood as an integrative and participatory decision making process. According to IGUTP and NUA, both process and product need to deliver human habitation that is more compact, less carbon-emitting, well connected, more socially inclusive, respecting biodiversity, and more climate resilient. This will require planning systems that are better equipped to address these eminent challenges as well planners with the right values, tools and skills to support this relentless endeavour.

THE CASE FOR STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING
'Strategic Spatial Planning' is widely acclaimed as a better planning methodology than the traditional master-planning approach that is still widely used - if not dominant in the planning practice.

Patsy Healey defines strategic planning as: 'a social process through which a range of people in diverse institutional relations and positions come together to design plan-making processes and develop contents and strategies for the management of spatial change' (Healey, 1997). Strategic planning is looked upon as 'self-conscious collective efforts to re-imagine a city, urban region or wider terri-

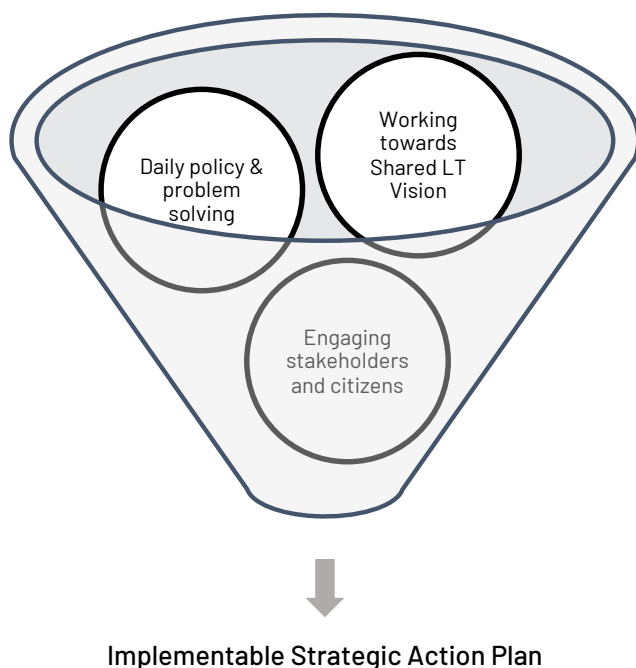**Implementable Strategic Action Plan**

Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process (after Van den Broeck, 2004)

tory and to translate the result into priorities for area investment, conservation measures, strategic infrastructure investments and principles of land use regulation' (see HEALEY, 2000). Interpreted in this way, strategic planning deploys one of its most interesting potentials, its capacity to produce action frameworks and interpretative images capable of mobilizing people to action and, in some cases, of constructing a new governance culture (ALBRECHTS et al., 2003).

Together with Albrechts, Jef Van den Broeck advocates a multi-track strategic planning approach as illustrated in the figure above.

While the diagram is largely self-explanatory, it is important to stress that the elements leading to the plan can, and should, run in parallel. Van den Broeck et.al. developed this methodology based on several practices in both high and low-income countries and at all scales of planning, from neighbourhood, over city-level, region and even transnational. For low-income countries the methodology was readapted to localise the Agenda 21, the predecessor of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (see also UN-HABITAT, 2004).

While many planning approaches come and go as fashion trends, strategic spatial planning remains a robust, yet flexible, methodology overcoming perceived shortcomings of more rigid statutory and traditional top-down master planning. "The shifts from control to framing, from an extended present to becoming, from comprehensive to selective, from masterplans and land-use plans to probes of the future, strategies, projects and distributive justice, from places as containers toward many space-time geographies, all constitute not only epistemological challenges but also fundamental ontological issues" (ALBRECHTS, 2017).

However, Albrechts and other staunch advocates of strategic planning – including myself - are not blind of its actual and potential deficiencies and shortcomings:

1. Economic, political and ideological critiques draw a link between the rise of strategic spatial planning and the strengthened neoliberal political climate and questions are raised whether strategic spatial planning practices can resist the hegemonic discourses of neoliberalism (SWYNGEDOUW, 2014).

2. It can lead to questions about the 'collaborative' and 'participatory' credentials of the more interactive strategic planning approaches, resulting in frustration and 'participation tiredness', if all depends on private market corporations and their political cronies.

3. Civil society, human rights and environmental advocates can critique the state-monopoly of strategic and collaborative planning, especially when they are carried out by authoritarian and/or neoliberal governments.

4. From an implementation perspective, others ask whether practices of strategic spatial planning really follow their normative groundings and critique the lack of concern about the path dependency of the resources, and a too sequential view of the relationships between visioning, action, structure, institutions and discourse.

5. Concern is also raised about the legitimation of strategic spatial planning, the role of expertise and knowledge, and how to introduce transformative practices (ALBRECHTS, 2010).

6. Strategic planning did not yet fully embrace and integrate key aspects of urban design and placemaking. Many places increasingly desire more tangible and quick-win spatial interventions through placemaking and the more traditional urban design. This can erode a more comprehensive and long-term strategic planning (VOGELIJ, 2015).

7. Concerns also are raised about the lack of creativity and care for spatial quality that capitalizes on the sense of place (VOGELIJ, 2015).

Figure 2: Motivations to Outsource, Deloitte Global Outsourcing Survey 2016[1]

IN-HOUSE VERSUS OUTSOURCING
– THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER STAFFING

The overdependency on hiring outsourced consultants to produce wholesale strategic plans (and other planning types and policy documents as well) is often justified as a method to overcome the in-house capacity gaps, often attributed to austerity policies. It can also be perceived as a pathway to deliberately privatise basic governmental functions and diverting the planning responsibility outside the democratic and political apparatus. However, there are also valuable reasons to outsource, as shown in the following diagram (Figure 2).
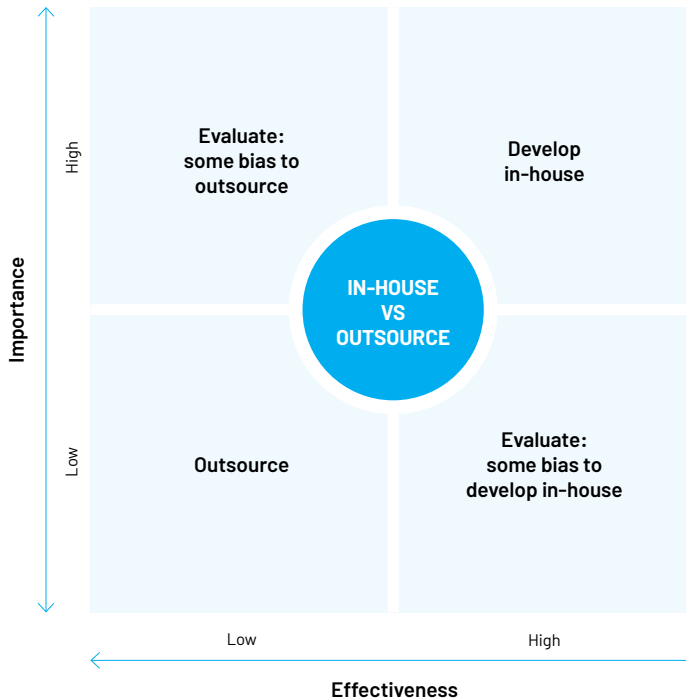
Figure 3: Matrix with In-house vs Outsource options (after SupplyChainDigest [2]).

Another approach is to augment in-house planning capacity with contractual staff members. In-sourcing could be considered as a variant of in-house with the help of external experts, whether from private or related public sector. The main difference between out- and in-sourcing is that out-sourced planning tasks are typically executed by a planning consultancy with the bulk of the work done outside the planning authority, while in-sourcing typically involves planning experts that help to execute the bulk of the work inside the planning authority. Some agencies use a hybrid mix of both approaches (see Figure 3).

On one dimension is the level of importance of a supply chain function or (planning) process to an organization (high or low); on the other dimension is the organization's competence or effectiveness at the function/process (high or low). High/high combos are reserved for in-house staff while low-low projects are outsourcing candidates. The high-low/low high combinations require more nuanced analysis, with some bias towards outsourcing functions of high importance and low competence, as it is likely you can find an outsourcer that can in fact do this important thing well. I will look at some of my personal planning practices through this additional lens.

PRACTITIONERS CASES

In the following case studies, we examine the use of exterior and interior staffing schemes to develop several Strategic Plans.

SPATIAL PLANS FOR FLANDERS, THE NETHERLANDS, BENELUX AND ITS BORDER-REGIONS

Already back in the mid-90ies, Strategic Spatial Planning was put to the test by Charles Vermeersch, Louis Albrechts and Jef Van den Broeck as the main authors – rather main directors – of the first Strategic Spatial Plan for the Flanders region in Belgium, approved by its Government in 1997.

Figure 4 shows the desired spatial structure for the Flanders region, its graphic 'business card' produced by the 'communicative/discursive' strategic planning approach. While the application and implementation of the plan faced increasing resistance and obstruction from vested interests (who sought to maintain a rather unsustainable spatial structure and land consumption), the key spatial concepts are still relevant and the plan was, and still is, regarded as a landmark technical and political document.

The plan was accomplished despite insufficient capacities and skills to break with the longstanding tradition of regulatory land-use planning. The administration could have chosen to outsource the plan, preferably to a consortium of leading academic institutions. But the leading academics wisely advised and obtained
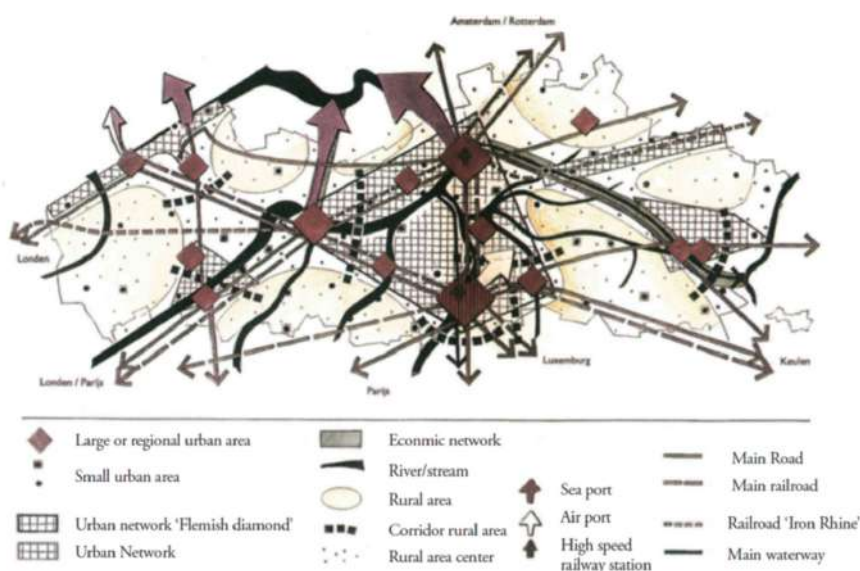

Figure 4: Desired Spatial Structure for the Flanders Region, MVG, 1997

support for an in-sourcing model, with partial outsourcing of thematic studies and the gradual build-up of in-house strategic planning capacities and skills. While this staffing strategy was largely successful at the regional level, insufficient capacity was shared with local administrations who were critical to apply and implement the regional structure plan. This perception was widely echoed by leading experts who were asked to reflect 20 years after the approval of the plan (VRP, 2017).

A Spatial Structure Plan also was done for the Benelux, the trinational/multiregional association of Belgium (and its three regions), the Netherlands and Luxemburg. With Jef van den Broeck as team leader and myself as principal administrator and facilitator, the 'Second Benelux Structural Outline' was developed in parallel with the Flemish plan and endorsed in 1997 by all five Benelux ministers responsible for spatial planning (Zonneveld, 2004 & De Vries, 2008).

Even the worldwide respected Dutch spatial planning administrators eventually were convinced of the merits of this strategic planning approach, resulting in a unique transnational planning scheme that provided a compass for a better mutual understanding and cross-border cooperation in this dense core part of the European Union.

A similar hybrid staffing model was chosen to develop this plan. The in-house Benelux office was augmented by close cooperation with five constituent planning departments and in-sourcing with planning experts from the constituent parts of the transnational planning area. There also was limited outsourcing of thematic
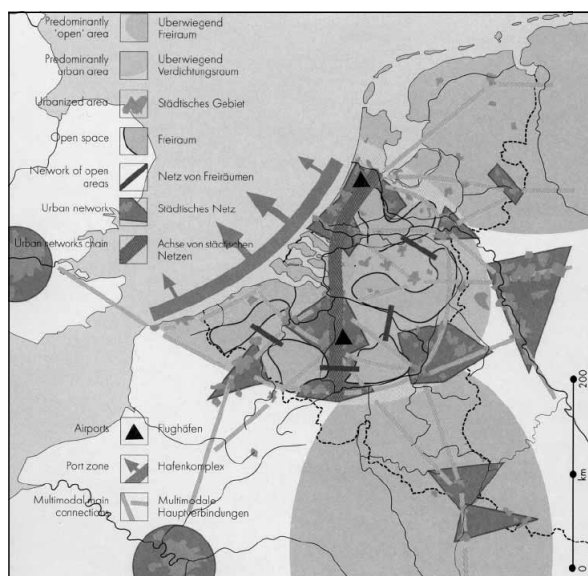

Figure 5- Envisioned spatial structure of Benelux, including a large-scale chain of urban networks and a green heart' (lower right). (Source: Secretariat-General of the Benelux Economic Union, 1996).
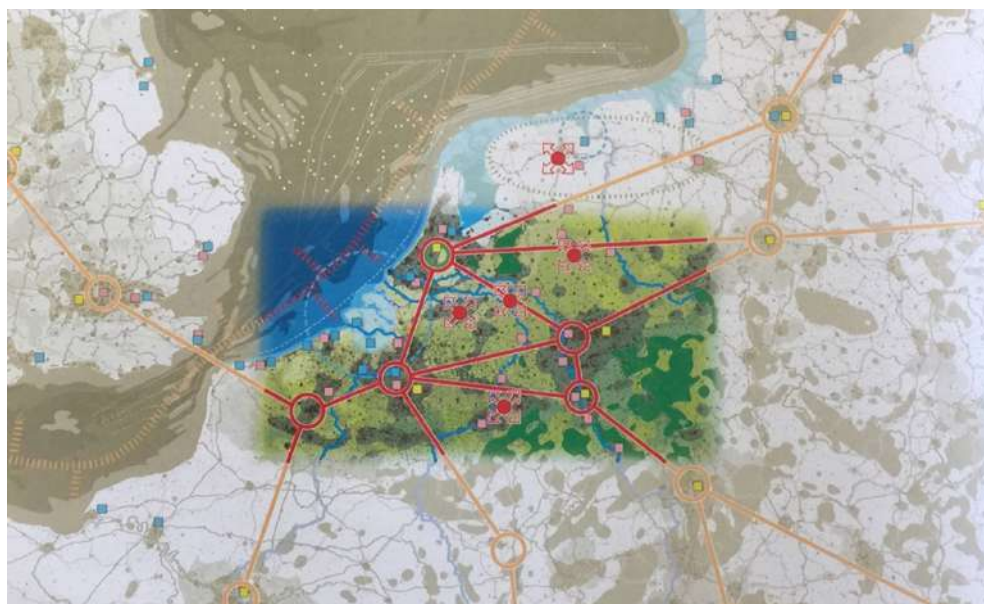
Figure 6 - Transnational Spatial Structure Map of Fifth Policy Document on Spatial Planning, MVROM, 2001

studies as input to an in-house develop integral vision. A major shortcoming however was the lack of resources and capacities to consult with stakeholders outside the five planning departments – hence the lack of support for the vision outside the inner-circle.

Thanks to visionary Dutch 'fonctionnaires' like Derek Martin[3] , the Benelux planning example contributed to the transnational and transboundary dimension of the 5th National Policy Report 2020 (MVROM, 2001).

This strategic, yet comprehensive, national plan was entirely done in-house, complemented by a series of out-sourced thematic studies. The Dutch Spatial Planning Agency could be considered as the best resourced and capacitated public planning institutions in Europe if not worldwide.

Well, that was until the finalisation of this Fifth and last Policy Document, marking the end of a post-war welfare-state-led planning era. Due to a fall of the cabinet over the Dutch responsibility in the Srebrenica tragedy, this plan never got approved by the Dutch parliament and a more right-wing government emerged after the elections. This new government dismantled the Planning Ministry and its crown-jewel Spatial Planning Agency and decentralised planning authority to regional and local level. While larger cities and most of the provinces boosted their own planning capacities, it can be argued that the tarnished Dutch governmental planning reputation never entirely recovered from the setbacks since the turn of this millennium.

The added-value of a well-resourced planning agency can be illustrated by efforts dedicated to planning beyond the own borders. The vision for the Benelux and surrounding areas of Northwest Europe would later inspire the first (and last?) 'European Spatial Development Perspective' endorsed by EU-ministers for spatial planning in Leipzig in 1999. While I actively participated in both the Benelux and European transnational planning efforts, I highly enjoyed the subsequent and more place-specific planning for all Benelux cross-border regions, most notably for the Rhine-Scheldt Delta (RSD).

This Dutch/Flanders cross-border estuary area counts more than 3.5 million inhabitants and represents the world's largest combined mainport, putting a high stress on its unique terrestrial and marine nature. I had the opportunity to facilitate a bottom-up Shared Vision based on the combined views of its most relevant stakeholders and inspired powerful stakeholders to develop their own (joint) vision, as illustrated by Figure 7. Later, this shared vision was partial implemented by improving the maritime accessibility to the inland ports and improvements to flood resilience and a nature compensation programme – through a multiyear binational project called 'ProSes' ('Project Scheldt Estuary').
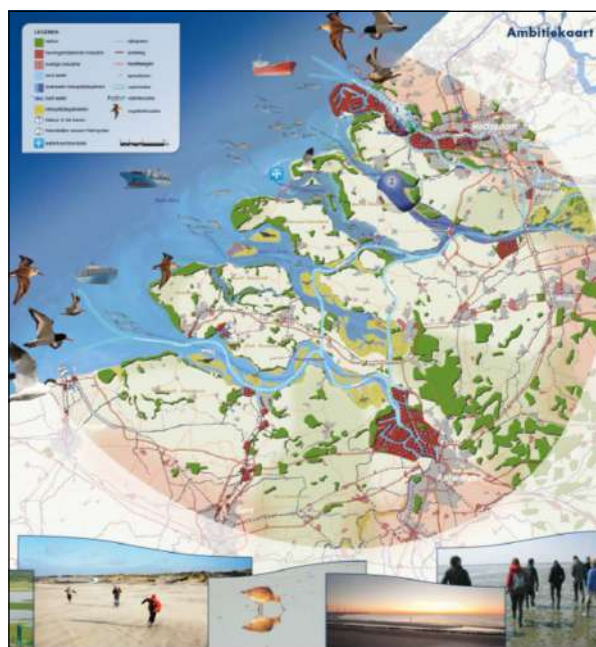

Figure 7 Delta-perspective by Port of Rotterdam and World Wide Fund

Jos Claessens, the co-director of ProSeS, summarized some lessons learned from this unique and inspiring cross-border experience (CLAESSENS):
· Sound research and joint-fact-finding is an excellent way to build trust and seek win-win situations;
· Thinking and working for the entire area instead of your own territory is essential to create win-wins across the border;
· Be transparent and communicate daily – don't ever forget the human factor in complicated planning processes.

This last observation was important. We were not really prepared to deal with the concerns and growing angriness of farmers that could lose their farmlands to widening of the riverbed and dredging to increase the cargo-accessibility. As a result, it would take many more years before real projects could be implemented – a hard lesson learned.

However, the overall experience was positive, mainly because two countries had joined efforts not by outsourcing a complicated planning process, but by creating a temporary institutional mechanism to bring together its finest people in a joint-project team working closely with the respective administrations and non-governmental partners. Reconciling economy with ecology is never easy but ProSes proved its not entirely impossible.

POST-CONFLICT PLANNING IN KOSOVO

After the violent break-up of 'planning-minded' Yugoslavia, the Kosovo-Albanian majority leadership, administered by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), was faced with a new reality to plan for its own future. A young and dynamic national planning institute was created to develop an entirely new Kosovo Spatial Plan, based on the multi-stakeholder strategic spatial planning as described for the Flanders Structure Plan. The Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (IHS) supported this enterprise following the in-sourcing model and building up domestic planning capacities 'on the job'.

Meanwhile, UN-Habitat, funded by Sweden, was tasked to (re)build the planning capacities at local level, with focus on all 6 regional cities – unfortunately omitting the capital city of Prishtina. Although small sized, Prishtina was considered as too complex in terms of governance, and possible out of fear after the cold-blooded and unresolved murder of the chief of the town-planning office in Prishtina, who had recently ordered illegal buildings and kiosks built in the city after the conflict to be demolished.

Figure 8a/b/c – SPK, Visioning book and Municipal Toolbox, ISP/UN–HABITAT, 2012/2015

With UNMIK's eyes on securing internal and external stability, illegal constructions and settlements were not (longer) considered a priority. As a result, conversions mushroomed all over Kosovo, resulting in irreversible damage of historic districts and cultural heritage, as well in unsustainable urban sprawl and increasing costs of urban servicing. Low salaries exposed municipal administrators to corruption and honest civil servants were unable to turn the tide and control development in a society that switched overnight from (soft) socialist to (hard) anarcho-capitalist. It took UN-Habitat (and other supportive partners) more than a decade to empower, retrain and capacitate municipal planning departments to re-establish some of the planning controls aiming at desired development embedded in Shared Visions. The method was 'advanced in-sourcing', by establishing a mixed team of one locally and one internationally recruited urban planner placed within the municipal planning departments, coordinated and supported by a UN-Habitat back-office team.

The official evaluation report 'Evaluation of the Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme (MuSPP)' concluded: "Overall, the programme has been doing excellent pioneering work in helping Municipalities to develop a capacity to plan and to manage their development. Municipalities appreciate the support and have a good understanding of the plans. However, they still have weak ability to prepare or update new plans. Staff turnover and changes of leadership related to elections have made it difficult to build up sustainable capacity" (UN-HABITAT, 2014a).

Community visioning, pioneered in Kosovo, has since been applied in many other places all over the world. It features prominently in the UN-Habitat's 'Toolbox' to handover the legacy of 10 years MUSPP in Kosovo (UN-Habitat, 2014b) – see Figure 8c. However, what stood out then and still stand out today is the

need for a more holistic view on planning capacities and the need to properly assess, review and improve planning capacities and skills at an early stage of any meaningful planning project and process that requires more than routine handling – as any planning process should be (see also D'HONDT, 2012).

IN-CONFLICT PLANNING IN PALESTINE AND AFGHANISTAN

PALESTINE

Palestinians living in the landlocked West Bank are highly concentrated within cities under Palestinian authority, while the residual population is spread over many traditional villages in Area C of the West Bank, under nearly exclusive Israeli military control.

Between 2013 and 2016, The UN-Habitat initiated planning projects for and with the Palestinian communities in Area C. At the beginning of this project, the buzzword 'masterplans' was all over the place. During the intensive 3-year mission the discourse was shifted to development, strategic planning and placemaking.

In large part the 'masterplans' were (and still are) drafted by Palestinian plan developers (both profit and non-profit) to provide these rural communities with a static land-use plan to justify restricted but legal building activities within the perimeter. Both the plan perimeter and content need approval by the Israeli military administration, who used an extremely lengthy approval procedures including cumbersome negotiations between the plan developer (not the community!) and the military. This process resulted in a very low approval rates. And even the approved plans were often questioned, if not condemned, by the international community. Palestinian masterplans were also heavily

Figure 9 a/b/c: Strategic Planning efforts in Palestine

criticized for accepting the military logic of planning perimeters and other severe development restrictions.

In 2015, a small International Advisory Board (IAB) of experienced planners was convened to review a sample of the local masterplans. The IAB found that there was "a lack of transparency about criteria and procedures, and Israeli planning control has not only favoured the Israeli settlers' access to scarce water resources, but also prevented the Palestinian Authority from developing infrastructure networks through Area C to serve villages and connect towns in Areas A and B"[4].

While there was no legal alternative to these local masterplans, a strategy was developed to produce complementary regional plans to provide a more strategic development framework for remaining Palestinian communities, while more directly engaging with those highly challenged communities through 'placemaking' and 'tactical urbanism'. By engaging both the master planning developers and the Palestinian authorities overseeing those plans, an element of capacity strengthening was added.

While the local communities wholeheartedly embraced the more tangible method of placemaking (within the legal masterplan frameworks), and really enjoyed and absorbed their in-house self-planning and development capacity development, insufficient resources and convincing power was at our hand to change the minds and operating procedures of established Palestinian plan developers, Palestinian administrators and decision makers, the international community including funding donors, INGOs, as well most other UN-agencies. However, consensus among UN agencies was achieved to:

a.) develop according to 'One-UN' approach on strategic spatial planning in the West Bank (see Figure 9a);

b.) establish visioning workshops in partnership with ISOCARP for both the metropolitan areas of East Jerusalem and Gaza-city (see Figure 9b);

c.) develop the first Palestinian- made regional plans for pilot areas in the West Bank;

and, d.) implement four place-making visions and pilots (see Figure 9c).

Unfortunately, the Syrian crisis drained donor funding away from Palestine – the longest in-conflict territory since UN's existence – to neighbouring areas coping with millions of Syrian refugees. A longer-term planning support programme like Kosovo MUSPP would be required to step and scale up efforts to boost strategic and action-based planning capacities and skills among Palestinian communities and their planners.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan was a mainly rural country, but it is rapidly urbanizing at one of the fastest rates worldwide. By 2060 half of the population will live in cities[5]. With increasing urbanization comes the need for adapted planning approaches to trigger and enable the desired kind of development needed to reverse vicious into virtuous cycles including extreme poverty, human rights, women and youth rights, employment, education, terrorism/insecurity, and environmental degradation.

The current National Unity Government (NUG), established in 2014 and led by President Ashraf Ghani showed strong commitment to initiate domestic urban policies and planning to harness the new urban development opportunities. UN-Habitat (extensively) supported the NUG in developing an in-house Urban National Priority Programme, including a first National Urban Policy and National Spatial Strategy (see Figure 10).

A major proposed project of the U-NPP was the Kabul Metropolitan Initiative. The point of departure was a series of masterplans developed by Japanese consultancies and funded by Japan (JAICA). These masterplans included detailed land-use plans for both Kabul city as well for a projected New Kabul City north of the existing city. They also included atypical planning items such as interior designs for future luxury apartments in the new city. Both masterplans were framed by a study for the larger metropolitan area of the Kabul valley, surrounded by high-rise mountains (see Figure 11a).
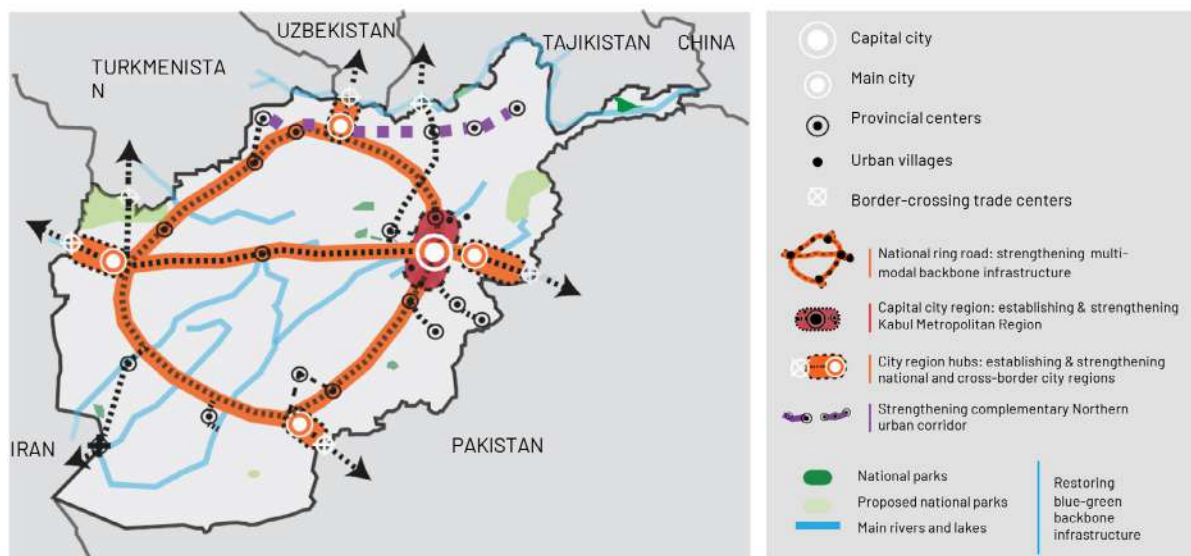

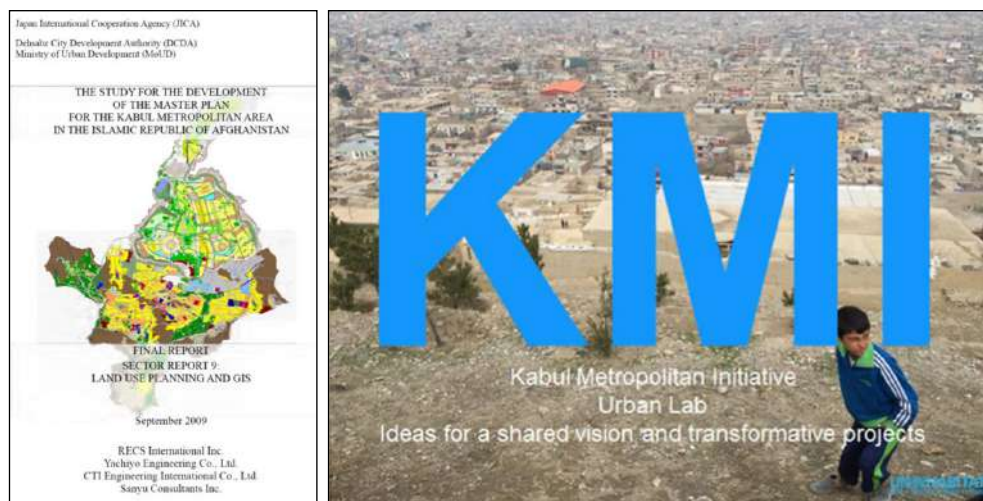Figure 10 - Afghanistan Spatial Outline, UN–HABITAT, 2016

Figure 11a/b – Kabul Metropolitan Masterplan, JAICA 2009/Kabul Metropolitan Vision, UN–HABITAT, 2016

Unfortunately, these overreached the capacity of domestic planners to properly understand, let alone adequately apply and implement, these over-ambitious plans. As a result, for the past decade the masterplan for New Kabul City is still waiting for its first fancy house, while informal settlements keep mushrooming. When discussing how to address these slums, some officials stated that they cannot be legally improved as they are not included in the masterplan.

Advocating action-oriented people-centric participatory strategic planning in a master planning-minded environment sounds like blaspheme, yet the metropolitan proposal developed by a dedicated Habitat-team got an initial presidential nod. Unfortunately, the promised funds to go full swing with a multi-stakeholder in-house/insourcing planning model never kicked in and all that could be done was to further advance the initial ideas alongside the establishment of the Urban NPP.

Yet we could establish two historic meetings of the Kabul Metropolitan Forum, resulting in a joint Kabul Metropolitan Declaration. We also conducted a very first metropolitan traffic study to establish the boundaries of the daily commuting area and established a basic GIS with educational and inspiring maps. An attempt to co-organize an expert-based metropolitan visioning workshop with ISOCARP failed due to the absence of funds but a smaller workshop with UN-Habitat's Urban Lab resulted in a useful metropolitan territorial strategy of planned city extensions including the redevelopment the old city and the preservation of the blue-green ecosystem of the Kabul Valley (see Figure 11b). However, as most of the work was done by Habitat-staff, there was very little 'on-the-job' knowledge and practice transfer.

When the final report was presented back to the President and his Government, the approach received tacit approval, but the lack of real ownership fired back in a way that there was no follow up. Instead, Sasaki Associates, a Japanese consultancy that won an international design competition for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and that developed the Kuala Lumpur International Financial District Master Plan, was awarded a new masterplan for Kabul City, with minor attention for the entire city-region.

SMALL–ISLAND STATE PLANNING IN THE CARIBBEAN

Caribbean Small-island States (CSiS) present a very different world than land-locked Afghanistan, West-Bank and Kosovo. Although aggravated by increasing threats related to climate change, these are places where most people want to visit for a relaxing holiday. But also are places where many young locals are looking for better job and life opportunities elsewhere in more urbanised areas on nearby and even far-away main lands.

In 2016 UNOPS, the UN agency that is known for constructing infrastructure rather than for urban planning, was invited to prospect possibilities to link infrastructure assessment with urban policy and planning in three Dutch/English-speaking CSiS. In Curacao the project started with a government request to assess a number of roundabouts to alleviate increasing traffic congestion, and it ended with a foundation for an island-wide Urban Transformation Policy. In Saint Vincent the Prime Minster requested ideas to convert a closed airport near the capital city Kingstown, after the opening of a larger and more remote new international airport. We provided ideas that were less fancy but more realistic than the ones provided by a Canadian real-estate company, but that bird didn't fly. In Saint Lucia however, we were asked by the Prime minister to assessing a 10-year old plan for its capital city Castries, and we ended up co-drafting a new vision for the entire City-region.

Both in Curacao and Saint Lucia we worked in very close collaboration with a given ministry of the government, respectively the Curacao Ministry of Transport and Spatial Planning and the Saint Lucia Ministry of Finance and Economy. This collaboration turned out to be an interesting experience. While engaging on planning matters seems to be more favourable through cooperating with a dedicated ministry, we experienced a comparable if not more engaged commitment and dedication from a non-specialized ministry, possibly because there was less bias in the latter. Civil servants in the finance ministry were more eager to learn on-the-job skills than civil servants in a planning department. Probably it is simply easier to learn than to un-learn or re-learn how to practice sustainable urban planning.
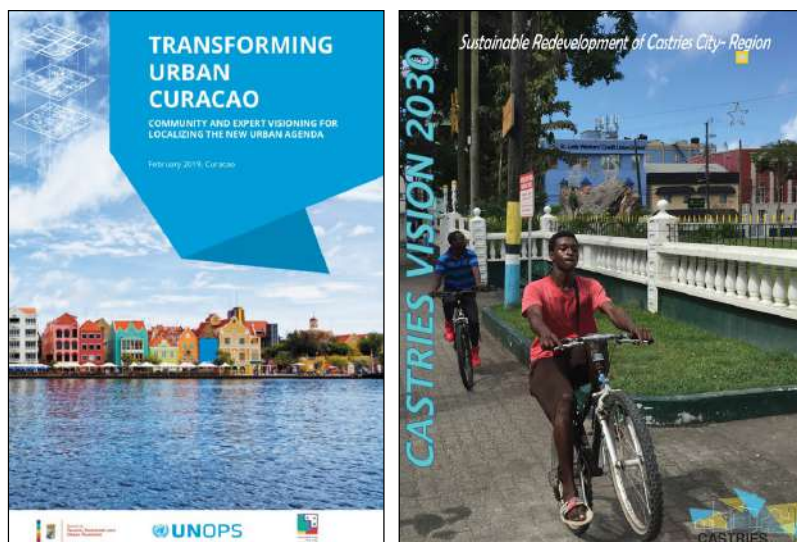
Figure 12a/b - Curacao Urban Transformation Report and Castries Vision 2030 (UNOPS, 2018/2019)

In both cases the project methodology was similar but with some meaningful differences.

In Curacao, we embarked on an effort to localise the New Urban Agenda, following a return from the Habitat III conference in Quito. Except of a small inner-circle, not many people knew about the NUA. In addition, the country just overcame a political crisis (and fall of the government) over different interpretations of the existing 25-year old land-use plan for the island (EOP). The localisation of the NUA was by some considered as a pathway to undermine the EOP, for others it could help reinforce its status. This bias ran through the entire planning process and included many hiccups that needed to be addressed in a very diplomatic way.

Thanks to the determination of the responsible Minister and the local UNOPS Support Team, meaningful results could be achieved in the end. The final report is still awaiting endorsement at the time of writing this article, but the process and content has already been shared through Curacao social media as were the results from an ISOCARP Expert-based Vision Workshop 12-16 November 2018 in Willemstad. The Expert Vision Workshop capitalized on: a.) two preceding Community-based Vision Workshops – one for urban Curacao and one for rural Curacao; b.) an Evidence Based Infrastructure Diagnosis implemented by UNOPS with support from Cambridge University; and, c.) an additional Planning Brief with a complementary urban and spatial diagnosis including a proposed new urban typology as basis for a new urban policy that would incorporate the NUA principles.

The Community-Vision workshops were entirely done in-house with tacit support by the local UNOPS Team and an external adviser. It not only empowers NUA-minded civil servants within the ministry but also civil society and un-associated residents taking part in the workshops. The final Expert-based Vision Workshop matched 4 international planners with 4 domestic planners and can be considered as on-the-job capacity building. For the minister it was a refreshing approach to think out of the box and open departmental silo's, despite lingering scepticism and resistance. It is to be seen if, and to what extent, this will affect the follow up of this temporary ministry-UNOPS collaboration. If effective it should result in a new strategic planning policy and plan to complement, or eventually replace, the outdated EOP land-use plan. It also needs to be seen if the sectoral minister will be able to leverage wider support of a multi-sectoral urban and territorial policy.

In Saint Lucia the objective was clearer; to review an existing plan for Castries. The cooperation between UNOPS and the finance ministry was, and still is, directly supervised by the prime minister, who is a multi-hotel owner and tourism-entrepreneur. The PM had a direct stake in boosting the attractiveness of a decaying capital city. Castries' core-city, just like Willemstad in Curacao, is now perceived as a ghost-city once civil servants and cruise-tourists leave after 5-6pm. With most residents now living in the sprawled outskirts of Castries, the economic basis is missing for self-regeneration while commuting traffic is in a near standstill at rush hours – an all too familiar but worrying trend all over CSiS. When quick-scanning the 10-year-old National Vision Plan for Saint Lucia and Castries, it was recognized that making a new more sustainable and people-centred vision was far better than updating an overambitious tourism-centric plan drafted by a Miami based tourism and PR specialized consultancy.

Given the very limited budget attributed to the review of the 2008 Plan, we were forced to apply a low-cost in-house strategic planning approach, resulting in a multi-stakeholder vision but NOT in a masterplan. A Castries Planning Team was composed with technicians from the most relevant departments, supported by a local UNOPS team and two external planning experts. In-house support was essential to quickly organize a series of thematic Focus Group sessions resulting in a first Castries Urban Forum. This event gathering around 70 representatives of most relevant urban stakeholders and resulting in a Stakeholder Declaration with guiding principles for the new vision.

As experts we drafted maps and narratives that were discussed multiple times with multiple audiences, resulting in a first draft Shared Vision Castries 2030, aligned with SDS 11, NUA and the IGUTP. A 5-hour long hands-on meeting with

the Prime-minister in our dedicated Planning Situation Room was at moments intense as there were initially many disagreements. Eventually we solved most of them with respect to the underlying principles. A follow-up meeting with the Castries Urban Forum resulted in a pre-endorsement of a Shared Vision, co-opted by the Steering Committee and the Mayor's Office. A final two-hour presentation to and discussion with the Cabinet of Ministers resulted in an endorsement of the Shared Vision as basis for wider public consultation. Ideally the latter would have been included in the initial planning process, but a 4-month planning period does not allow a full swing public involvement – a lesson learned. Innovative in this approach was the extensive discussions we had about the need for an implementation mechanism – a Castries Redevelopment Agency was proposed and the need for advanced capacity building within that agency to ensure domestic stewardship of the implementation process – often neglected in traditional masterplans – hence the motto used in the title of this paper – 'Beyond the Plan'.
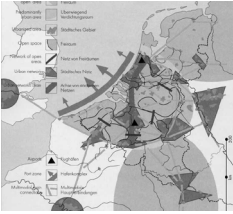
Combined lessons learned from Curacao and Saint Lucia experiences is that these small countries do not have all the capacities and skills needed for in-house planning. The resulting dependency on outsourced plans and designs is often more harmful than helpful. Temporary in-sourcing of experts through, for example, the UN or World Bank is certainly a smarter way to complement in-house capacities but too often the gains are too of a temporary nature. Hence, a more sustaining in-house/in-sourcing capacity development pathway could be explored by looking at capacity support mechanisms at the regional level of the Caribbean, perhaps a Caribbean Urban and Territorial Planning Institute under CARICOM[6] and with different language branches to better accommodate language preferences (primarily English, French, Spanish, Dutch and/or Papiamentu).

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 1 below summarizes anecdotal evaluations of the selected cases to illustrate the merits and flaws of in-house strategic spatial planning during the past 25 years and across the east-west axis.

Overall, this sample of personal practice experiences illustrate the need for through-thought and carefully designed planning processes. It addresses the need to exploit the full potential of the in-house/in-sourcing strategic planning approach, adding a fifth track to the four-track model presented in the introduction.

Jan Vogelij's doctoral study[7] confirmed that effective decision-making processes for long-term developments are open, interactive collaborations towards

Plan	Year	What worked out well?	What didn't work?	Why?	Remedy?
Flanders Spatial Structure Plan	1997	A ground-breaking 'in-house' urban/ rural territorial policy framework.	The application and implementation lost momentum and track in the 20 years upon approval.	Insufficient capacity to translate the regional vision in local vision and action.	Capacity strengthening at regional level to support in-house planning and action at local level.
Benelux Structural Outline	1997	A unique transnational compass for national, regional and cross-border planning in the Benelux-delta. A source of inspiration for Europe-wide territorial planning. Successful in-sourcing.	The plan had a (too) limited national and international exposure and was ever evaluated or reviewed.	Insufficient capacity to follow up on the vision and loss of Benelux appeal in EU (despite failure of EU to produce a similar spatial plan).	In times of increasing nationalism, a capacity boost is needed to revamp transnational and cross-border planning.
Fifth Dutch Policy Document on Spatial Planning	2001	For the first and last time, a national plan that looked explicitly at the transnational and cross-border context,	The plan was highly criticized for its overreach on prescribing local authorities, while the international dimension was perceived as overambitious in a EU without formal planning competences.	In times of deregulation and devolution, national territorial planning was considered unhelpful in boosting local economic development.	As long as national governments exist, they should have a national urban and territorial policy framework, but not necessarily national spatial plans. Instead, city-regional plans are more critical.
Scheldt-Estuary Development Outline 2030 (ProSes)	2005	Intensive joint-fact-finding and stakeholder-based Shared Vision and some key projects were implemented (after long political bickering).	Communication with and involvement of the 'losing group' (farmers) largely failed to build a strong consensus.	Insufficient resources and political mandate/backing to involve the farming community.	In the design of complex planning processes more attention and resources is required to meet the needs for public interaction.
Kosovo municipal plans	2006 2016	Unique decade-long capacity-building programme with tangible results in terms of on-the-job trainings, community visioning, approved municipal plans, placemaking designs and capital investments.	Insufficient hand-over of the built-up know-how from a local UN-Habitat team to domestic institution(s). Traditional master-planning still co-exists with strategic planning.	The support-programme did not allow to co-establish the needed institutional and educational mechanisms for proper continuation.	The Albanian Polis and Co-Plan provide solid benchmarks for further planning capacity-strengthening in Kosovo.

Area C Palestinian Community Plans	*2013 2015*	A shift of thinking has been established that micro-masterplans are insufficient to enable desirable urban and territorial development in mostly deprived areas. City-wide, city-regional planning and placemaking are now seen as part of a broader strategy.	The new approach did not entirely convince all main actors including the Israeli army, the Palestinian Authority or even the international community.	A two-year period with limited budget can not achieve what was achieved with a 10-year programme in Kosovo. A fast-paced replacement rate of international experts and domestic 'support-fatigue' are also factors.	A new domestic institutional mechanism with international support to advise the Palestinian Authority on strategic planning matters would be required to establish more local trust and work on a longer time base.
Kabul Metropolitan Initiative	*2016*	The two meetings of the Kabul Metropolitan Forum were innovative by bringing together state, provinces and municipalities around one table.	The Metropolitan Vision was too much expert-based with insufficient in-house involvement. Outsourced master planning still reigns.	Promised funds to establish a well resources in-house metro-planning team never materialized. Unlearning master planning is hard to do.	As with previous experience, a Metropolitan Planning Agency with mixed model of in-house/ in-sourcing and out-sourcing should be established to make a difference.
Castries Vision 2030	*2019*	Adding a new Shared Vision as a bonus to the initial task to review an old plan within a 4-mont period can be considered as a planning success, including a first time ever Castries Urban Forum and Cabinet-discussion/ endorsement. Thinking ahead about the needed implementation mechanism is also a positive bonus.	Lack of time to cost-estimate and finance transformat-ional projects might fire back in the follow up phase. Tacit support by the PM/Cabinet might erode due to vested interest in status quo.	In the rush to get started, the initial project agreement did not include a follow up phase to ensure a smooth transition from visioning to project implementation. Traditional attitudes are hardwired and difficult to change.	As in previous cases a follow up and implementation mechanism is required to ensure continuation beyond the vision and plan. Such a mechanism should include on-the-job training and in-house capacity development.

Table 1 – Summary of lessons learned from strategic planning practices

new concepts applying visualizations (maps) and the related storylines of representatives of the interests that are considered relevant locally. The necessary openness of such processes requires design to be a process of group creativity in collaboration of relevant participants, not conducting design as a person-focused internal activity as done in traditional master planning. This recommended 'interactions approach' provides useful conclusions and contributes novelty to existing planning theory (VOGELIJ, 2015).

I believe that the cases presented in this paper confirm this interactive and creative approach to strategic planning, with 'in-built' learning-and-training-on-the-job opportunities to strengthen in-house planning and steward wise and well managed in- and outsourcing. Let there be no misunderstanding: outsourcing is not considered as a bad practices per se, rather the wholesale outsourcing of a complex planning process with little or no capacity-transfer to the client.

Our cities and territories need good planning and management to thrive while keeping our planet healthy. Planned urbanisation and territorial development provides an avenue for sustainable social and economic development. In 'Leading Change- Delivering the New Urban Agenda through Urban and Territorial Planning', international planning experts strongly advocate engaging in urban and territorial planning processes that are strategic and participatory, with plans that are simple, clear and rapid (SALGA/UN-HABITAT, 2018). However, the high rate of urban growth far outpaces the capacity of many governments and other institutions to plan and manage this growth in a sustainable, effective and efficient manner. In the slipstream of the New Urban Agenda, many scholars have already pointed at the dangerous gap between planning expectations and planning capacities, both in numbers and quality. In her key-note speech at the 52nd ISOCARP world congress in Durban, Vanessa Watson, planning professor at Cape Town University said: "Planning is located as a central implementing tool in the Agenda, but is it an approach to planning which can achieve these very high expectations?" (WATSON, 2016). Governments, education providers and the planning community will need to step up and scale up efforts to boost the planning capacities needed for basic in-house planning. Well stewarded in/out sourcing may be needed to advance more sustainable territorial development as well to prevent a looming discredit that the planning discipline is not able to deliver on its promises as expressed by SDG11, the NUA and the IGUTP.

The IGUTP includes a recommendation to: "Design a human resource development strategy to strengthen local capacities, to be supported by other spheres of government, as appropriate; Reinforce institutional and human capacity development at the local level in the areas of planning, design, manage-

ment and monitoring, through training, exchanges of experience and expertise, knowledge transfers and organisational reviews."

In the handbook I have co-drafted to apply the IGUTP (UN-Habitat, 2018), I distinguish 'planning capacity needs' that are considered essential capacities and skills to meet the planning challenges of a certain territory. The Handbook defines 'planning capacity aspirations' as more ambitious goals on medium and long term which look beyond current needs and towards desirable planning capacities.

Capacity development needs to be planned and implemented. Typically, termed 'capacity building', it means training. However, if decision makers, managers, professionals and technicians are to operate at full capacity, they need more than just their own capabilities. They need a conductive and supportive institutional and organisational environment. Therefore, capacity building must embrace following three basic aspects[8]:

· Human resource development (HRD) - the process of equipping people with the understanding and skills, and the access to information and knowledge to perform effectively. Good HRD provides: incentives and rewards; opportunities for continuous training and retraining; clearly recognized career opportunities; and, competitive pay scales. This requires a dynamic and responsive organizational environment;

· Organizational development (OD) - the process that promotes and sustains collective activity within an organization. It is about management practices; rules and regulations; hierarchies and job descriptions – the structures and practices that shape how things get done. Particularly within central and local governments, such structures and relationships might require significant changes. However, organizational changes often depend upon institutional changes;

· Institutional development (ID): the legal and regulatory changes that must be made in order to enable organizations, institutions and agencies to enhance their capacities. It embraces such issues as the ability of local authorities to negotiate contracts and form partnerships with private companies and to enable and encourage communities to take responsibility for the management of their own neighborhoods and services. Such institutional issues generally need the political and legislative authority of national governments to bring about effective change.

Looking beyond the confines of traditional professional boundaries and state institutions, beyond attempts to micro-manage land-use and the discredited top-down, technocratic masterplans, then we can discern a new set of skills for

planning and managing urban and territorial development[9]:

· Analytical and cognitive skills: enabling planners to recognise where opportunities and constraints lie and how these relate to structures of power;

· Communication, negotiation and inclusion skills: learning to listen, question, synthesize, summarize and look for solutions;

· Strategic action skills: leadership matters and leadership skills are important in developing and sharing a territorial development vision;

· Management skills: to develop strategic plans and implement projects, to establish partnerships and manage budgets;

· Monitoring and learning skills: difficult situations cannot be turned around by old routines – monitoring and learning are essential for innovation.

Equipped with these understandings and tools, a re-thinking of planning capacity support for quality in-house planning is needed to implement the New Urban Agenda commitments.

This will need a parallel two-track approach:

· Governmental planning capacity development support to local authorities, to central level authorities and agencies and to existing governmental capacity providers; and,
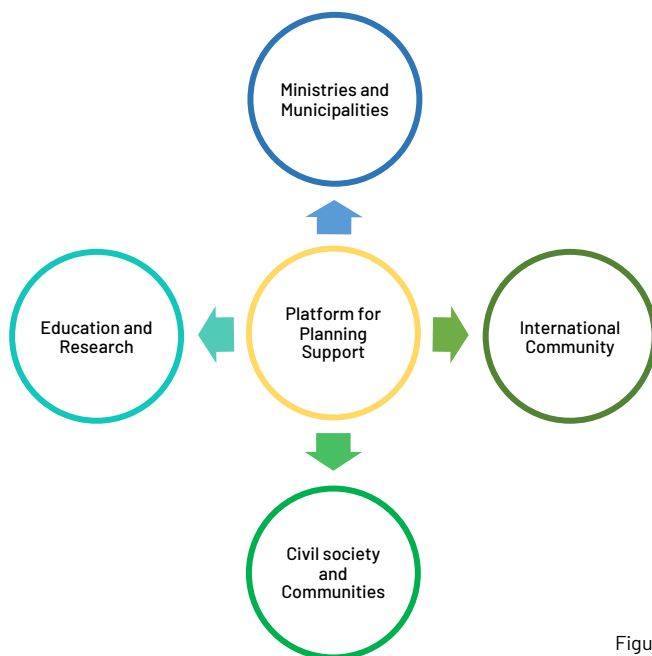
Figure 13 – Platform for Planning Capacity Support

·   Non-governmental planning capacity development support: legal and plan-
    ning advice and support for individuals, communities, civil society organiza-
    tions, business community. This includes planning education and research, as
    well planning advocacy and awareness (media).

To that purpose I advocate territorial platforms (at regional, national and
even transnational levels) for capacity planning and development to provide the
institutional support mechanism to address the growing capacity and human
capital deficit to implement the Sustainable Development and New Urban Agen-
da's – see Figure 13[10].

These platforms should address both governmental and non-govern-
mental capacity needs and aspirations, as an intermediate agent between
national and local governments on one hand, and civil society, business
community and communities on the other hand, while interacting with
and seeking occasional support from both international community and
the education and research sectors.

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Endnotes

1   Source: https://www.sctpos.ie/deloittes-global-outsourcing-survey-2016-reduce-costs-with-scts-helpdesk-
support/

2   Source: http://www.scdigest.com/assets/FirstThoughts/10-02-05.php

3   later working for the European Commission and as director of the International Federation of Housing and Plan-
ning (IFHP)

4   UN-Habitat, 2015

5   see 'State of Afghan Cities 2015' (UN-HABITAT, 2016)

6   The Caribbean Community is an organisation of fifteen Caribbean nations and dependencies whose main
objective is to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members, to ensure that the benefits of
integration are equitably shared, and to coordinate foreign policy.

7   Vogelij, 2015. Jan is a life-long planning friend with over 40 years of planning practice experience distilled in this
doctoral study. We once joined force as respectively president and vice-president of te European Council of Town
Planners (ECTP), a European association of national and regional planning associations.

8   'Based on 'Planning Capacity Appraisal Kosovo', UN-Habitat (unpublished) and 'Making Planning Work – A guide to
approaches and skills', C. Hague a/o, p.90

9   See 'Making Planning Work', op.cit., pp.14-15

10   Based on 'Capacity Planning Appraisal Kosovo' PowerPoint presentation, F. D'hondt/UN-Habitat (unpublished)

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