



## Urban Planning & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts

# DAMIETTA SPATIAL PROFILE

Egypt

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Egypt

## Abbreviations

SECO:	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
UPIMC:	Urban Migration & Infrastructure in Migration Contexts
UN-Habitat:	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR:	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNFCCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
IOM:	The International Organization for Migration
UCLG:	United Cities and Local Governments
MMC:	Mixed Migration Center
GOPP:	General Organization for Physical Planning
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
MHUUC:	Ministry of Housing, Utilities and Urban Communities
MALR:	Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation
MODMP:	Ministry of Defence and Military Production
MOH:	Ministry of Housing
MOLD:	Ministry of Local Development
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
NUCA:	New Urban Communities Authority
NSPUD:	National Strategic Plan for Urban Development
TDA:	Tourism Development Authority
IDA:	Industrial Development Authority
SDS:	Sustainable Development Strategy
CAPMAS:	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
LPC:	Local Popular Council
ND-GAIN index:	The Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index
SLR:	Sea Level Rise
WFP:	World Food Programme
ICZM:	Integrated Coastal Zone Management
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
3RP:	The Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan in Response to Syria Crisis
ERP:	Egypt Response Plan for Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq and Yemen
SGBV:	Sexual and gender-based violence
EFTA:	European Free Trade Association
CRS:	Catholic Relief Services
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SCA:	Supreme Council of Antiquities

## Definition of Terminology

Cordon	French word, refers in Arabic to the boundary of local government's administrative jurisdiction
Haiez	Urban planning and development boundary
Hiyaza	Adverse possession
Awqaf	Awqaf are similar to common law trusts where the trustee is the mosque or individual in charge of the waqf and the beneficiary is usually the community as a whole.
Ziman	The official boundary between agricultural and desert land
Markaz	District, is a second-level administrative division below Governorates of Egypt
Hai	Neighborhood / quarter
Shyakhah	Neighborhood subdivision
Usufruct	English noun, The right to enjoy the use and advantages of another's property short of the destruction or waste of its substance.

1 feddan = 1.038 acres  
 1 hectare = 2.38 feddans  
 1 sq.km = 247.105 acres



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## Executive Summary

This document is the product of intensive profiling work done for New Damietta. This profile has a hierarchical scalar approach, starting from the national level and ending at the city level.

### National Level:

Being a safe haven in a region that has experienced much turmoil, Egypt has welcomed several waves of refugees over the years. Enormous population growth patterns coupled with rapid urbanisation and internal displacement has resulted in Egypt being one of the most urbanised countries in the world. There is no doubt about the fact that Egypt's population has been and will keep increasing as economic and political stabilization returns to the county, with forecasts predicting a total population of 160 million in 2050. This has posed various challenges and strains on the country's infrastructure, economy, and the quality of services. Additionally, the rapid population growth has led to an increase in housing demands and congestion. Egypt is divided into 27 Governorates, and to house the country's growing population, provide residents with high-quality amenities and services, create investment, and job opportunities and reduce pressure on existing cities, the Government of Egypt planned to build new cities to reduce the pressure on the Nile area and create new investments in the adjacent vast desert. There are several plans, policies, and visions that are meant to shape the development of Egypt. Furthermore, municipal financing is deeply centralized in Egypt. Municipalities face a double challenge in prioritizing their infrastructure project. The numerical indicators extracted from the final accounts of the State General Budget indicate that local revenues are limited compared to total national or local expenditures and that there may be low ability from the local government to finance infrastructure projects.

Municipalities depend on central government transfers to finance their needs, either concurrently or via capital. Although Egypt's infrastructure received a score of 52 out of 100 in the Infrastructure Index in the Global Competitiveness Report 2019, there are still a number of measures that need to be improved, especially in terms of financial markets and funding capacity. The presence of a well-connected street network, 13 major airports, 15 commercial ports, and 29 specialty ports has increased Egypt's connectivity and transportation infrastructure. The industry sector contributes for more than 30% of Egypt's GDP. The main source of water for Egypt is the Nile, a source that now appears to be quickly drying up<sup>1</sup>. Another major concern for the nation is sea level rise. Due to the threat to Egypt's food supply, which already has a 29.7% poverty rate<sup>2</sup>, the nation becomes more poorer.

Within this context, this spatial profile has analysed the Republic from the national to city level with the aim of identifying the key challenges, opportunities, and needed investments. The national level section provides a background on the national and spatial distribution setting, as well as data on demographics, socio-economic conditions, and refugees in Egypt. This includes an in-depth analysis of cross-border displacement dynamics, the governance and administration system, the national planning context, key plans and strategies, land and property rights, municipal finance, major infrastructure initiatives, and the climate change risk and vulnerability context.

### Regional Level:

Zooming in to Damietta's Governorate, this profile has analysed topics such as the Governorate's location and connectivity, the regional land administration and

institutional context, the regional planning context, Governorate structure and departments, demographics, refugees, regional infrastructural access, land use, environment, land use, and economy.

It was found that Damietta Governorate's transportation and road networks are well connected to the road networks of the eastern, western, and upper Governorates in Egypt. The city of New Damietta is also linked to the surrounding cities and communities. The Governorate consists of five administrative centers, 11 cities, 47 rural local units, and 85 villages. The GOPP is responsible for the overall mapping of the general policies related to sustainable urban planning and development in Damietta Governorate. Additionally, Damietta Governorate, which includes the city of New Damietta is the 13<sup>th</sup> largest Governorate in terms of population and has a substantial geographical location among the Republic's Governorates. Damietta Governorate has a total population of 1,496,765 inhabitants with a density of 1,413 p/km<sup>2</sup> and covers an area of 920 km<sup>2</sup> representing 4.6% of the Nile Delta. The population is mainly rural, with 60.6% compared to 39.4% urban population with an annual growth rate of approximately 2%. Damietta Governorate hosts a total of 9,133 refugees, mainly coming from Syria. Damietta, well known for its furniture industry as the main source of income, has recorded zero unemployment (the lowest unemployment rate in the country) and experienced an influx of workers coming from adjacent Governorates such as Dakkahalia and Gharbiya. However, in the last few years, the sector has faced various challenges after the 2011 revolution, which led to an increase in unemployment, with a current rate of 8%<sup>3</sup>. Economic development in Damietta is characterized by its multi-faceted nature without a mono-sector that leads the



economic growth of the Governorate. Here, agriculture, trade, industry, and craft industries play a pivotal role in the overall development of Damietta Governorate.

### City Level:

This section looks at the administrative and governance context, demographics and population trend growth, population density and distribution, land use, socio-economic centers and activities, access to public facilities and transport, and vulnerable neighborhoods context. The city of New Damietta was established by Prime Minister's Resolution no. 546 in 1980, it falls under NUCA's general authority. The city is located north of Damietta Governorate and extends on the Mediterranean coast with a length of nine kilometres. The total area of New Damietta is about 43.9 Km<sup>2</sup> - 10847.93 acres. The city's total population is estimated to be about 71342 residents in 2022. During held workshops with the community and the refugees, residents stressed that most of the Syrian refugees had occupied the oldest parts of the city since its establishment more than 40 years of age.

Based on the spatial analysis and the results of the validation workshop with the city's residents, the identified challenges, and the needed interventions in relation to the SDGs, are as follows:



### SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being

The analysis revealed that there is a lack of access to **health care facilities** within a 5 to 15-minutes walking distance, specifically in District two, three, and five. This was validated by the technical staff and the residents. Accordingly, the **needed intervention** is to **construct a comprehensive health centre** close to those areas or upgrade and transform the existing hospitals within the city.



### SDG 4: Quality Education

There are no schools in New Damietta's northern and north-western districts. To relieve the pressure and overcrowding on other educational facilities, locals stressed the need for new schools in particular locations. **Building new schools** on undeveloped land in Districts three and five is one of the necessary interventions in this regard, Improve the accessibility of all educational facilities to accommodate students with disabilities.



### SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Residents mentioned the need to improve the safe potable water service supply in some areas of the city. The main issue with **water** remains its quality, faucet water has high turbidity and salt concentration, where clay is considered one of the main pollutants. According to interviews with New Damietta residents, there is an assumption that the water treatment and purification plants are not providing the right filter for the water to become drinkable. Overall, the water capacity assessment revealed a relatively high demand for the water network. Upper floors in some housing units do not get water, and the existing water network and pipes are dilapidated and weak especially in the 70th and 80th neighborhoods. Residents also explained that the sanitation network needs regular maintenance. This is aligned with the capacity analysis conducted that revealed the water and sewerage networks within these neighbourhoods are overloaded.

Therefore, the needed intervention is to **upgrade the current water pipeline network**, and the sanitation network needs regular maintenance to accommodate the increase in population. Another highlighted need is the general need to **manage waste and control** the quality of air being affected by the burning of crops and smoke from coal kilns surrounding the city.



### SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth

Residents expressed the need to enhance employment opportunities and improve individuals' capacities and skills. The **needed interventions** in this regard are to unlock economic opportunities and enhance the economic connectivity of the city with its surroundings by introducing an eco-cultural tourism path and strengthening and extending the commercial spine of the city while upgrading and developing the industrial area.



### SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities

The per capita share of green areas is a bit less than the national standard, **Recreational outlets** are concentrated in the central area of the city and not within a 15-minute walking distance, The residents stressed that the overall existing condition of the beach is not utilized or attractive, therefore, the **needed intervention** is **creating green pockets** within the city and **introduce urban agricultural gardens** and rehabilitate and improve open space and seafront.

As for **transportation**, Citizens and refugees find public transportation modes interrupted not covering all areas of the city. For users to reach inner areas of the desired destination they seek the use of unaffordable taxi cars. Introducing other **green means of transportation** such as creating a network for bikes and pedestrians is needed.

Regarding **housing and infrastructure**, the analysis revealed there are Inadequate dwellings are in poor condition. Interviews with the residents highlighted the need to **rehabilitate dilapidated buildings and upgrade storm-water drainage network** to face the challenge of floods.

## Introduction

This document is a product of intensive profiling work conducted by the UN-Habitat team to fulfill the project's first component. It is a stand-alone document, yet it is important to be considered while reading the action plans and prioritized interventions which will also be produced. The profile utilizes a hierarchical scalar approach, starting from the national level and ending with the local/neighborhood level. Each section of the profile presents cartographic interpretations of the situation that provides a spatial dimension of the narrative. The formulation of the profile had considered the interconnectivity between each scale to allow a two-way reading mechanism of the document.

### About UN-Habitat

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations agency working for a better urban future. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities to provide adequate shelter for all. UN-Habitat promotes transformative change in cities and human settlements through knowledge, policy advice, technical assistance, and collaborative action to leave no one and no place behind. UN-Habitat focuses on reducing spatial inequality and poverty in communities across the urban-rural continuum, enhancing shared prosperity for cities and regions, strengthening climate action and improving the urban environment, and effective urban crisis prevention and response.

### Urban Planning and Infrastructure in Migration Contexts (UPIMC) PROGRAMME

UN-Habitat is partnering with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to improve access to reliable services and socio-economic opportunities for migrants and displaced populations in urban settlements. The UPIMC will support a number of municipalities that host displaced populations in developing long-term strategies that build on their resilience to face future challenges. The UPIMC aims to foster multi-sectoral collaboration between UN-Habitat, national and local governments, humanitarian actors, development partners, as well as inter-national financial institutions to develop sustainable interventions that build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable settings. The program is implemented in three countries, namely, Cameroon, Egypt, and Jordan.

### Objectives

The UPIMC aims to contribute to the continuous national and international efforts to improve access to services and socio-economic opportunities for displaced populations side by side with the citizens living in challenging situations in selected cities. This goal will be achieved by supporting municipalities with a long-term strategic approach to improve the accessibility of public services in migration and displacement-affected neighborhoods through bankable infrastructure investments. The adopted planning approach ensures integrating a wide spectrum of stakeholders that involves humanitarian and development actors, as well as governmental parties such as line ministries and target municipalities. Such an approach aspires to support connecting short-term humanitarian responses with long-term development interventions to enable more comprehensive and inclusive interventions. The urban profiles, scenarios, and action plans from the first

two components set out the rationale and evidence to support decision-makers in identifying interventions for prioritized investment in municipal services that are both financially realistic and viable. The production of the third component incorporates assessing the economic, social, and environmental potentials to obtain the sustainable impact of proposed interventions. The last component will build up and foster knowledge exchange and awareness in the cities among stakeholders for the importance of good data management and urban observatory platforms for future use. Through forums and digital media, the program will connect cities nationally and internationally through events and international conferences, including the Cities Investment Platform events.

### Target Audience

This profile provides entry points for national and international practitioners seeking to develop long-term development strategies in their cities, donor organizations, and potential financiers.

### Methodology

The methodology comprised of primary and secondary data collection, field visits, and intensive consultation with local and national government actors and communities. The collected data were triangulated against a desktop review of multiple literature sources, including academic and grey sources. A set of spatial analyses was conducted from regional to neighborhood scales to define the major challenges and opportunities and inform the project's next steps. Finally, the profile was reviewed and validated with the primary actors in the project, including representatives from the community.

**Approach**

UPIMC consists of four interlinked components: (1) spatial analytics and urban profiling, (2) developing a strategic vision and scenario building, (3) defining prioritized infrastructure investments and establishing linkage to financing, and (4) contributing to knowledge exchange. In the first component, the UPIMC team developed urban profiles based on a spatially focused cross-sectoral situational analysis of urban settlements hosting displaced populations, allowing local stakeholders to get a comprehensive spatial understanding of the existing situation as a basis for decision-making long-term urban development strategies and infrastructure investment planning. Building on the profile developed, the second component will develop a strategic vision for urban development in selected areas in the targeted cities. Participatory approach and planning charrettes rest at the core of this process, involving critical institutional stakeholders together with representatives of civil society.

## UPIMC Programme

By conducting activities that go beyond a pure planning stage, the Programme endeavours to support the prioritization of infrastructure investments and their linkage to financing, which will benefit migrant communities and all urban dwellers with a better quality of life and better access to economic opportunities. Accordingly, the scope of work will also ensure significant contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by supporting the selected cities and neighbourhoods to become increasingly inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. This will allow for the necessary shift from short term emergency interventions to long term development investments. The Programme will achieve this through the four interlinked components below:

### • Spatial Analytics and Urban Profiling

Under the first component, this Programme will develop urban profiles based on a spatially focused cross-sectoral situational analysis of urban settlements hosting displaced populations. This allows local stakeholders to get a comprehensive spatial understanding of the existing situation as a basis for decision making on long-term urban development strategies and infrastructure investment planning. The urban profiling itself will build upon data already collected by the various actors using a participatory and area-based approach. It will develop a baseline that can be used as a consultative mechanism to support vertical and horizontal integration of stakeholder requirements including government entities at various levels and other relevant stakeholders. It will also be used to select suitable pilot areas within the cities, where more detailed scenario building will be conducted under the second component.

### • Develop a Strategic Vision and Scenario Building

Building upon the analytical work and the recommendations for the selection of pilot areas under the first component, this component will develop strategic visioning and scenario building for urban development in selected neighbourhoods. It is based on a comprehensive planning charrette, which is highly participatory and inclusionary, involving critical institutional stakeholders together with representatives of civil society (displaced, migrants, host communities, etc.), and the private sector. Participants will provide direct inputs into the visioning process, which will facilitate discussion on strategic urban development visions, possible interventions, related individual interests, technical opportunities and/or constraints, as well as political objectives. The scenario building will be supported by an action plan outlining what could be done, where and when. This will also unlock the next step for the clear identification of strategic infrastructure interventions and will allow for technical assessment of the intervention prioritization and its definition.

### • Define Prioritized Infrastructure Investments and Linkage to Financing

The urban profiles, scenarios, and action plans from the first and second components set out the rationale and evidence to support decision-makers in identifying interventions for prioritized investment in municipal services that are both financially realistic and viable. It will aid in prioritizing investments through an assessment of the economic, social, and environmental potential as well as of the sustainable impact of the proposed interventions on the city and its migrant communities. The technical and financial feasibility of the prioritized

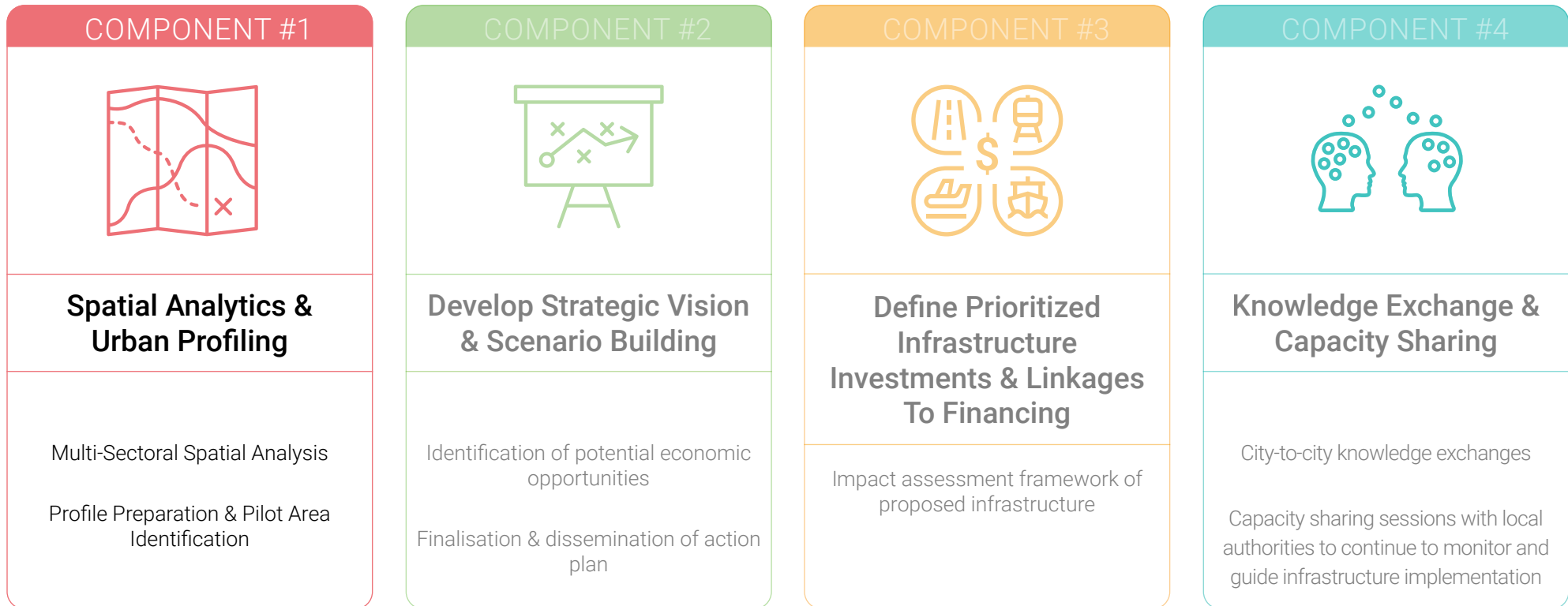
interventions will further be detailed through technical assistance and consultative bilateral engagements with national and local authorities, donors, and development banks. As well as through analysing city budgets, capital spend potential, as well as investment platforms, such as UN-Habitat's Cities Investment Facility. The proposed prioritized infrastructure intervention and anchor points (where catalytic projects can be linked to existing city/neighbourhood priorities and policies for bank ability) will then be presented and validated in a workshop with key local authority, development partners, and, where possible, the private sector. This will include work to link them to potential partners for financing and detailed pre-feasibility studies.

### • Knowledge Exchange

This last component will build and foster knowledge exchange and awareness in the cities among stakeholders for the importance of good data management and urban observatory platforms for future use. Through forums and digital media, the Programme will also connect cities at the national and international levels through events and international conferences, including the Cities Investment Platform events. It will also make use of UN-Habitat's platforms and those of partners i.e., Cities and Migration Joint Work Programme of the Cities Alliance, share respective knowledge and experiences, as well as other examples such as UN Migration Network, UCLG or MMC.



#### 4 Main Components



1

NATIONAL  
CONTEXT







Cairo, Egypt's Capital.  
Source: goaheadtours.com



## National Urbanisation Context

### Geographical Setting

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a transcontinental country stretching from Northeast Africa to Southwest Asia. The Sinai Peninsula acts as a land bridge between the two continents. The country covers an area of 1,001,500 square kilometers with a total population of 107,148,417, and a projection estimated to reach 120 million by 2030. Egypt's population is 42.7 % urban, with rural population numbers increasing at a rate of 1.82% per annum. However, the percentage of population that lives in urban population areas has not fluctuated dramatically over the last few years with a predictable and steady increase of population growth.

### Economy

Between the fifties and mid-seventies, Egypt's economy was highly centralized, with prominent publicly owned industries and a large agricultural sector dominated by smallholders, following land reforms. After the Open-Door policies were introduced in 1974, foreign and domestic investments emerged, and a higher population fed into the international labor force, causing a prominent leap in the flow of external remittances entering the country, which was on many occasions invested into the urban growth of the country at both micro (individual) and macro (state) levels. Egypt's macroeconomics improved significantly in the nineties because of external debt relief and adjustment reforms. In the 2000s, further monetary taxation and business-friendly policies assisted the country in creating a market-oriented economy, attracting increased external investment. After the event of the 2011 Revolution, Egypt's foreign exchange reserves fell dramatically. Egypt's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth fell to less than 2% from 2012 to 2013.

### POPULATION

**107 Million** <sup>4</sup>

Urban Population - 42,7 %  
Rural Population - 57,3 %

### GROWTH RATE

**1.97%** (annual)<sup>5</sup>  
**2.29 %** Urbanization growth rate (2020)

### AGE PROFILE *(Statista, 2021)*

**25.7%** youth  
**50.63%** Female  
**51.7%** Male

### DENSITY

**104.11 p/sq.km** <sup>6</sup>  
**GDP Growth: 3.6%** <sup>7</sup>

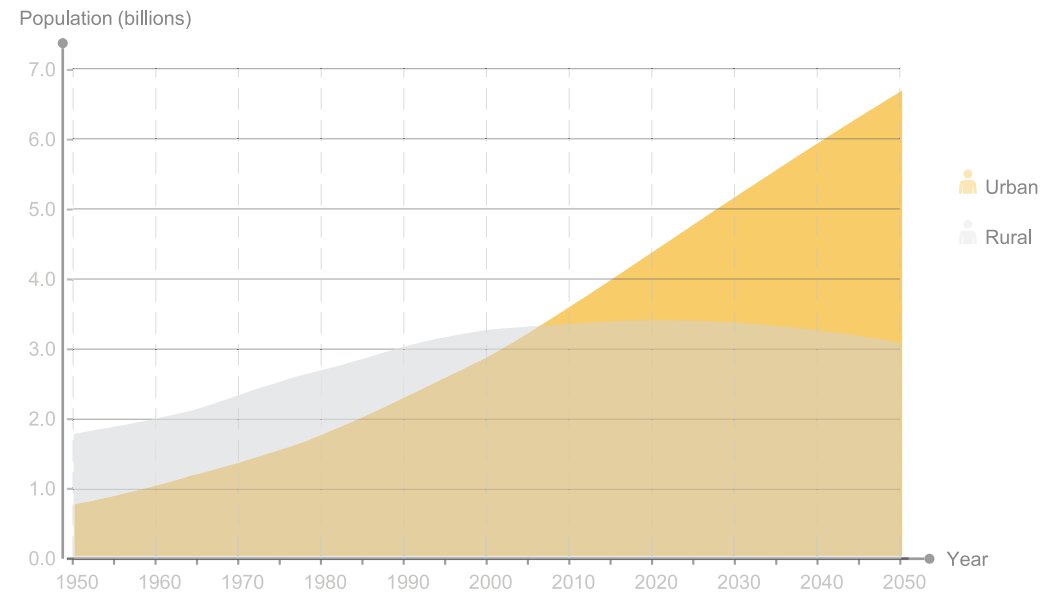
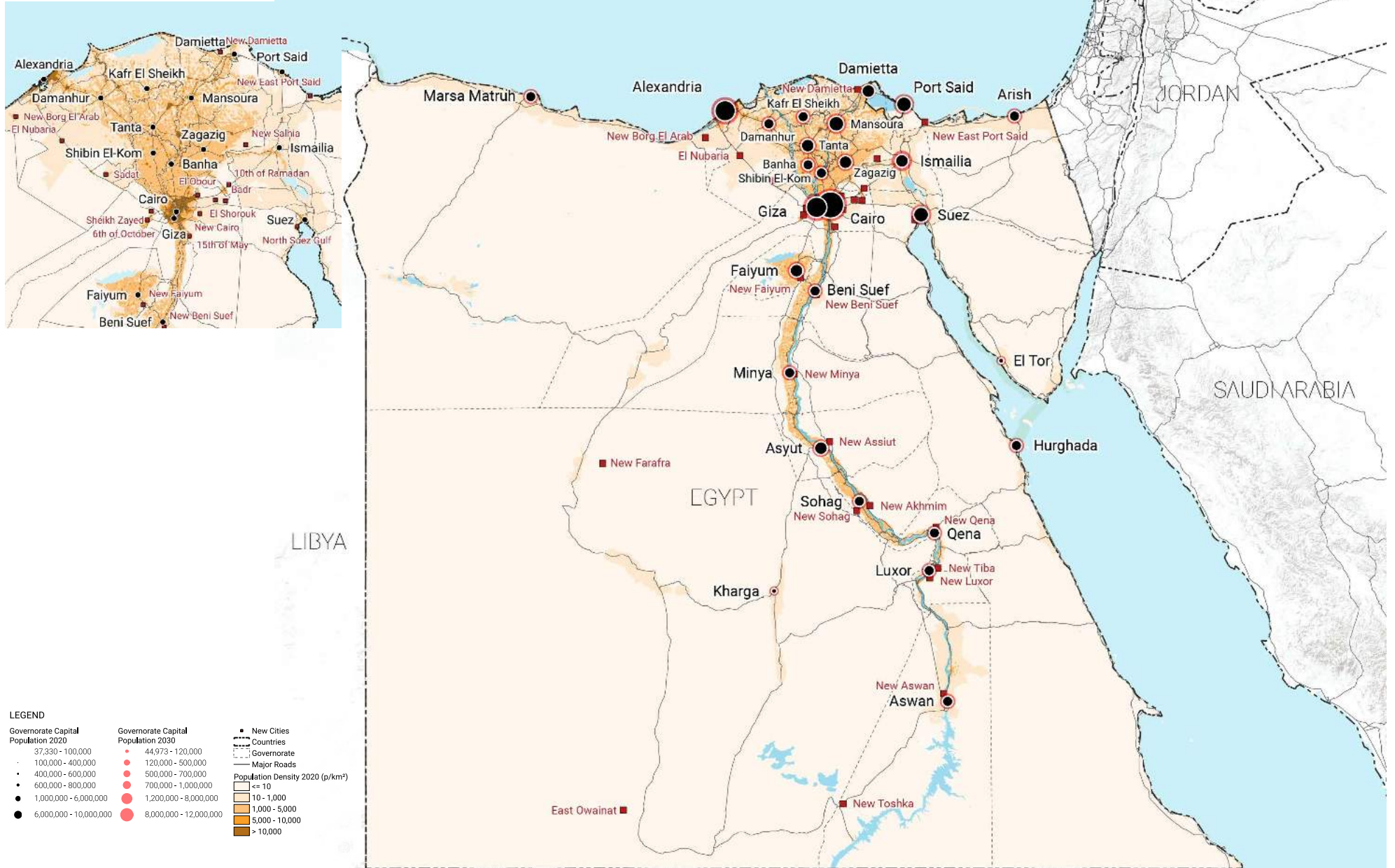


Figure 1. Urban and Rural Population Growth  
Source: UN DESA, Population Division (2018).



**LEGEND**

<b>Governorate Capital</b>	<b>Governorate Capital</b>	<b>New Cities</b>
<b>Population 2020</b>	<b>Population 2030</b>	<b>Countries</b>
• 37,330 - 100,000	• 44,973 - 120,000	--- Countries
• 100,000 - 400,000	• 120,000 - 500,000	--- Governorate
• 400,000 - 600,000	• 500,000 - 700,000	— Major Roads
• 600,000 - 800,000	• 700,000 - 1,000,000	
• 1,000,000 - 6,000,000	• 1,200,000 - 8,000,000	<b>Population Density 2020 (p/km²)</b>
• 6,000,000 - 10,000,000	• 8,000,000 - 12,000,000	□ <= 10
		□ 10 - 1,000
		□ 1,000 - 5,000
		□ 5,000 - 10,000
		□ > 10,000

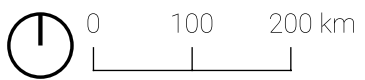


Figure 2. The Spatial Distribution of Existing and Estimated Population in 2020 and 2030, Egypt  
Source: Department of Statistics, 2021



In 2014 inflation rose partly due to fuel and electricity price hikes and continued to rise on several occasions due to international political events. However, some commentators saw a modest economic recovery, with foreign investments returning and GDP growth in 2020 rising to above 3%.

**Urbanization Context**

Almost all of the country's population and main economic activities are concentrated along the Nile Valley, the Delta, and the Canal Zone, representing 5 to 6% only of its one million square kilometers total area<sup>8</sup>. This concentration of population and activities continues despite an overriding government spatial policy since the late 1970s that aims to shift development towards the desert to relieve the over-crowdedness in the Valley.

The total population in the Delta region is 39 million per capita, accounting for nearly 39% of Egypt's total population<sup>9</sup>. Official figures report that in 2020 a total of 42.78% of Egypt's population was urban, residing in 124 urban areas. This percentage grew steadily until it marginally declined between 1986 and 1996. It is noteworthy to mention that such a trend of decreasing urban population is more related to the administrative definitions of urban settings in Egypt rather than the overall mobility of the population.

In Egypt, the official Census definition of urban areas is merely administrative; (1) urban Governorates – limited to Cairo, Port Said, Suez, and, recently, Alexandria; (2) agglomerations that have been declared "cities" and have a city council, or (3) the capitals of rural districts (markaz)<sup>10</sup>.

This definition is not related to the population but to the administrative boundaries, which were rarely reclassified or redrawn by CAPMAS. In other words, the population counted within the administrative boundaries of the setting is considered urban, while any population outside is rural, leading to a gross underestimation of urbanization.

Cities in Egypt continue to grow in population size, and inhabitants keep moving toward these urban areas for opportunities and better services. The rapid growth of Egyptian cities has rooted the imbalanced distribution of services in favor of the main urban centers, particularly Cairo and Alexandria<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, the pressure on major cities of Egypt has led to a series of challenges, such as a rapid increase in population densities and inadequacies in infrastructure and services provision in major urban centers, loss of environmental balance due to resource consumption, and urban encroachment onto agricultural land. Moreover, informal settlements are amongst the major challenges that cities are facing. According to the Ministry of Local Development in 2007, about 1,171 areas across the country were considered informal, accommodating a population of around 15 million inhabitants<sup>12</sup>, which is approximately 15% of the total population. In the Greater Cairo Region, almost two-thirds of inhabitants live in unplanned areas.

YEAR	URBAN	RURAL	% URBAN	% RURAL
1947	6,363	12,604	34%	66%
1960	9,965	16,12	38%	62%
1966	12,033	18,043	40%	60%
1976	16,036	20,59	44%	56%
1986	21,216	27,038	44%	56%
1996	25,286	34,027	42.60%	57.40%
2006	30,950	41,631	42.60%	57.40%
2020	43,781	58,552	42.78%	57.22%

Urban population and Rural population Growth from 1947 to 2020  
Source: World Bank

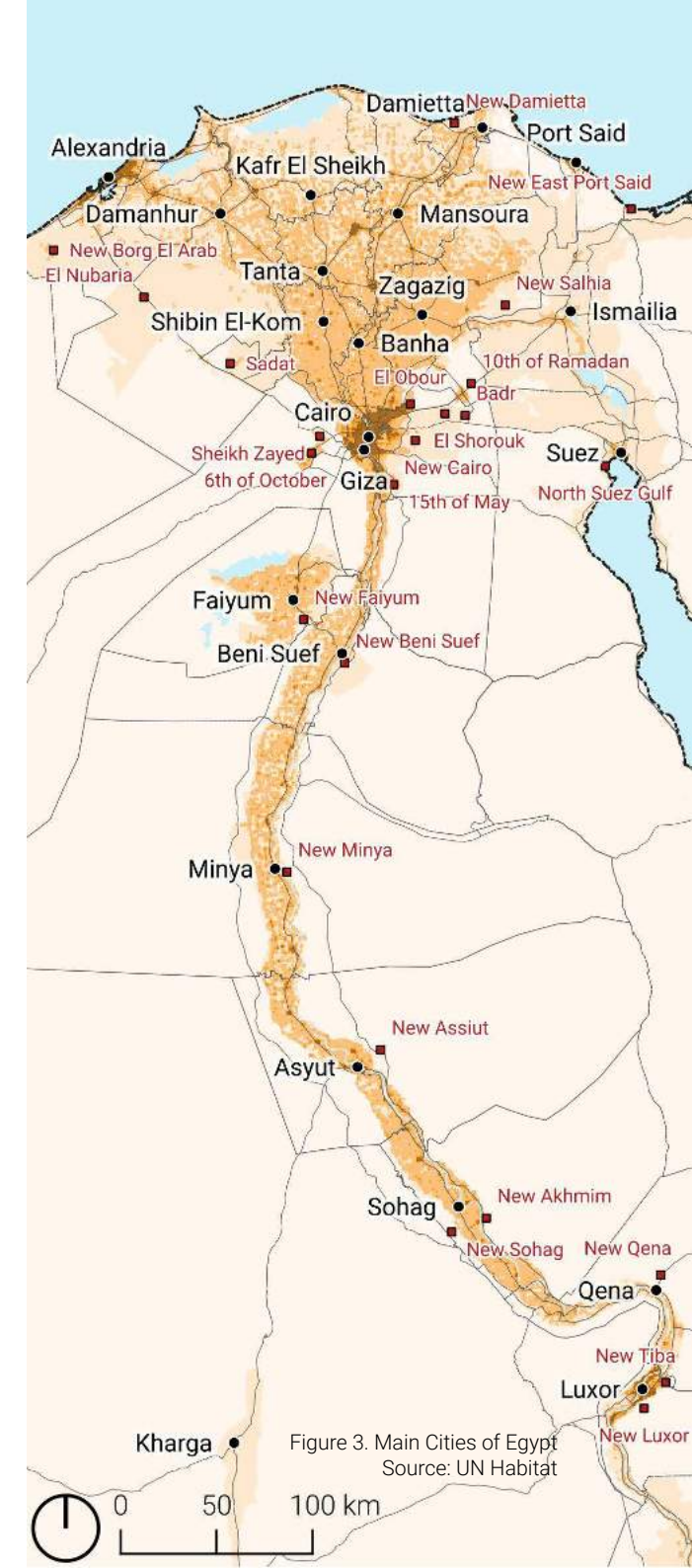


Figure 3. Main Cities of Egypt  
Source: UN Habitat

## New Urban Communities

Driven by the official recognition by the government that “the old inhabited areas along the Nile valleys are no longer able to absorb the increasing population and that Egyptians have to conquer their desert land to ensure the sustainable growth of the nation”, the new town policy was launched in 1974-75 under Law 59 of 1979, aiming to attract population beyond the river banks, create an industrial base outside the Valley, and attract public and private investments. This has led to the founding of the New Urban Communities Authority (NUCA) under MHUUC, which became responsible for establishing new communities. The responsibilities of NUCA encompassed identifying sites, providing on- and off-site infrastructure, and distributing land for investors. Individual new cities would be managed by “town development agencies” reporting directly to NUCA.

The “**first generation**” of new towns was planned to be geographically and economically independent of major cities (e.g. New Damietta, Tenth of Ramadan, the Sixth of October, and El Sadat) each with its industrial base and large target populations<sup>13</sup>. The “**second generation**” of nine new settlements was planned in the desert around Greater Cairo in the mid-1980s adopting the concept of satellite settlements. In parallel, a “**third generation**” of new towns was established near the desert as sister towns or twins to provincial cities. Examples include New Assiut, New Thebes, New Minya, etc.

Until the early 1990s, new towns were largely developed to target the working classes by constructing state subsidized low-cost housing blocks. However, the three previous generations were criticized for the quality and aesthetic of social housing. A shift towards a more capitalist orientated approach was adopted in the following years. The shift can be spotted in

the extended boundaries of the new towns and the inclination towards attracting the investors’ sectors of the community. At the same time, three “second generation” satellite settlements were amalgamated to create New Cairo in the desert east of the metropolis.

### Challenges Facing New Cities

The new towns/cities are often criticized for their significantly low occupancy rate. Initially the new towns were planned to host up to five million inhabitants. Yet, not a single new urban community has reached its target population and the vast majority have not even surpassed the 50% mark<sup>14</sup>. According to CAPMAS estimates, the new cities’ success at meeting their target population is far lower and ranges from a low of 3% to a high of 27%. The 2013 Census enumerated less than 5% of the national population in all new towns.

The new cities also remain state investment dependent, and management is still centralized with the state. Furthermore, the new cities are generally considered an unaffordable alternative<sup>15</sup>. This is mainly related to considering the supply side only with limited consideration of contextual dynamics such as socio-economic conditions, which has increased the cost of basic services such as transportation. In some cases, proper technical tests prior to development e.g., like soil tests, were not undertaken. Accordingly, the designated lands could not be developed and remained vacant despite their high speculative value.

Most importantly, the high standards of housing and the restricted uses imposed in new cities have given a low appeal to the middle and lower classes of the community. For instance, most buildings in new cities are not authorized or permitted to open retail shops,

services, or offices, when these prohibited uses are often the income generation means of the majority of urban communities in Egypt.

Yet, it is noteworthy that some cities witnessed more relaxed restrictions. For instance, in the city of Sixth of October, older worker housing areas were permitted for change of land-use, and the result was the conversion of the housing blocks into a series of small shops and services. Such an intervention, if successful, could be meaningful translating to other cities to catalyze developmental opportunities. Notably, many new cities in Egypt have witnessed significant development during the influx of Syrian refugees into the country, specifically of those refugee populations located in Greater Cairo, Alexandria, and Damietta<sup>16</sup>. This can be mainly related to the potential that those new cities, such as the Sixth of October, and Tenth of Ramadan, hold for the Syrian refugees, such as proximity to universities and other economic opportunities in addition to the relatively unoccupied areas that could host the refugee population.

Combined with the favorable treatment by the national authorities, the Syrian refugees had access to a number of economic and livelihood opportunities, which contributed to the overall development of these new cities. In many cases, the strong social network that the Syrian refugees established over time led to some new cities like the Sixth of October (or little Damascus) and New Damietta to become known as the first arrival destination of new asylum seekers from the refugee community.

## National Planning Context and Relevant National Planning Frameworks

Until 1940, Egypt had no master plan nor guiding planning system. Planning was regulated through the Subdivision Law (52 of 1940) and managed through various governmental bodies. When Egypt declared itself a republic in 1952, urban development started to become regularized. Egypt produced the five-year socio-economic national development plan, which was later on further divided at lower levels through the local administration act 34 of 1979. Since 1971, the Government of Egypt introduced a new system aiming toward decentralization in its law 57 of 1971, which was amended several times until law 314 of 1982, which defined the role of the GOPP and local governments, and presented opportunities for urban planning as well as to enhance public participation in urban planning processes at the local level. Indeed, in 1990, national and regional planning approaches were defined to ensure the integration of master plans with regional plans, and the GOPP established Regional Centers for urban planning. This was later followed by the Development of Urban Development strategic plans at local levels.

Numerous entities within the MHUUC and other line ministries are involved in urban planning at the national and regional levels in Egypt including mainly the GOPP<sup>18</sup>, which falls under MHUUS, and considered the main entity involved in preparing and developing plans at various levels. GOPP, with its seven regional centers, has designed and issued more than 86 master plans for cities and 25 regional plans in cooperation with concerned local authorities. Recently, GOPP has prepared strategic development plans for over 100 small and medium size cities. It has also set enlarged boundaries for over 4,000 villages (al-haiez al-'omrani)<sup>19</sup>.

Yet, other line ministries such as Al-Awqaf and the MALR, affect the decision-making in State land assignments for urban development<sup>20</sup>. Other line ministries even prepare regional development studies and plan autonomously. It is noteworthy that regardless of the source entity, all plans at all levels must be approved by the MODMP<sup>21</sup>. At the local level, and according to Law 43/1979, Governorates have authority over most urban planning and management activities. This has led, in some cases, to base urban development planning decisions on the Governor's vision which might contradict the national and regional orientations.



Current urban image of Cairo, Egypt.  
Source: theculturetrip.com



There are several plans, policies, and strategies that shape the development of Egypt. These strategies expand to the country's national, regional, and local levels. The main highlights of each plan are as follows:

### **National Level - Macro Scale:**

Egypt Vision 2030 was launched in February 2016 by the government, serving as a roadmap for optimal utilization of Egypt's potential and its competitive advantages, aiming to ensure a dignified life for all the residents of the country, citizens and foreigners. The strategic vision focuses on eight main pillars, namely; (1) Social Justice, (2) Knowledge, Innovation & Scientific Research, (3) Economic Development, (4) Environment, (5) Energy, Education & Training, (6) Urban Development, (7) Health, Transparency, and Efficiency of Government Institutions, (8) Culture. The document was also amended in 2020 as a response to the unprecedented challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brought.

The updated document re-established a comprehensive framework that includes three main dimensions: (economic, social, and environmental dimensions). Multiple steps have been taken since 2016 to actualize the vision; one of the most pioneering projects is the "Haya Karima" initiative which directly targets Egypt's most impoverished and vulnerable segments of society, mainly in the countryside and remote villages. The initiative aims to provide adequate housing, quality medical and educational services, and basic infrastructure for the communities that it is targeting.

The strong momentum of Vision 2030 has prompted it to be listed in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) Good Practices report](#).

On another fold, the NSPUD 2052, formally known as the SDS, has officially released by the MOH in January 2014, with the participation of different ministries and official authorities.

There is strong correlation between the plans which are mutually affirming, both supporting the continuation of the 2030 Vision and its development goals, unifying sectors of the country into an integrated common vision for Egypt. The NSPUD aims to locate urban clusters, development poles, and corridors based on available resources and economic activities. It further designates the extension areas for expected population growth. It is noteworthy that the plan aims to increase from 6 to 14% of the urban footprint through various development axes represented by the current national road network and the recently adopted new cities program. Yet, both visions 2030 and 2052 face multifaceted challenges towards their implementation; such challenges can be summarized as the lack of capacitated human cadres to follow up and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, poor coordination among key stakeholders to ensure efficient implementation of the agenda, and inaccessible and incomplete data sets that allow measuring the progress of implementation<sup>17</sup>.

Moreover, at the national level, it is noteworthy to mention that Egypt has been reported as "on track" toward achieving the targets of SDGs one–four, six, seven, eight, and 13 according to the Arab Region SDG Index and dashboards. However, the report also indicated the stagnating performance of the country on SDG 11. Therefore, much attention was directed toward achieving comprehensive and inclusive strategic spatial planning in the country.

However, since these plans and strategies are urban-oriented documents, they are not considered binding documents for implementation. At the same time, the multiple unintegrated sectoral policies have limited comprehensive planning to be actualized<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, structuring urban strategies within a comprehensive framework that crosses multiple sectors, such as health and education, promises better chances of implementation on the ground.

In early 2022, Egypt's parliament gave preliminary approval to the new 'General Planning Law' that aims to streamline the process of preparing the country's economic policies and to engage the private sector in economic development projects which hold many potentials for harmonization of the developmental efforts across the country<sup>23</sup>. However, time is needed to assess the effectiveness of this initiative.

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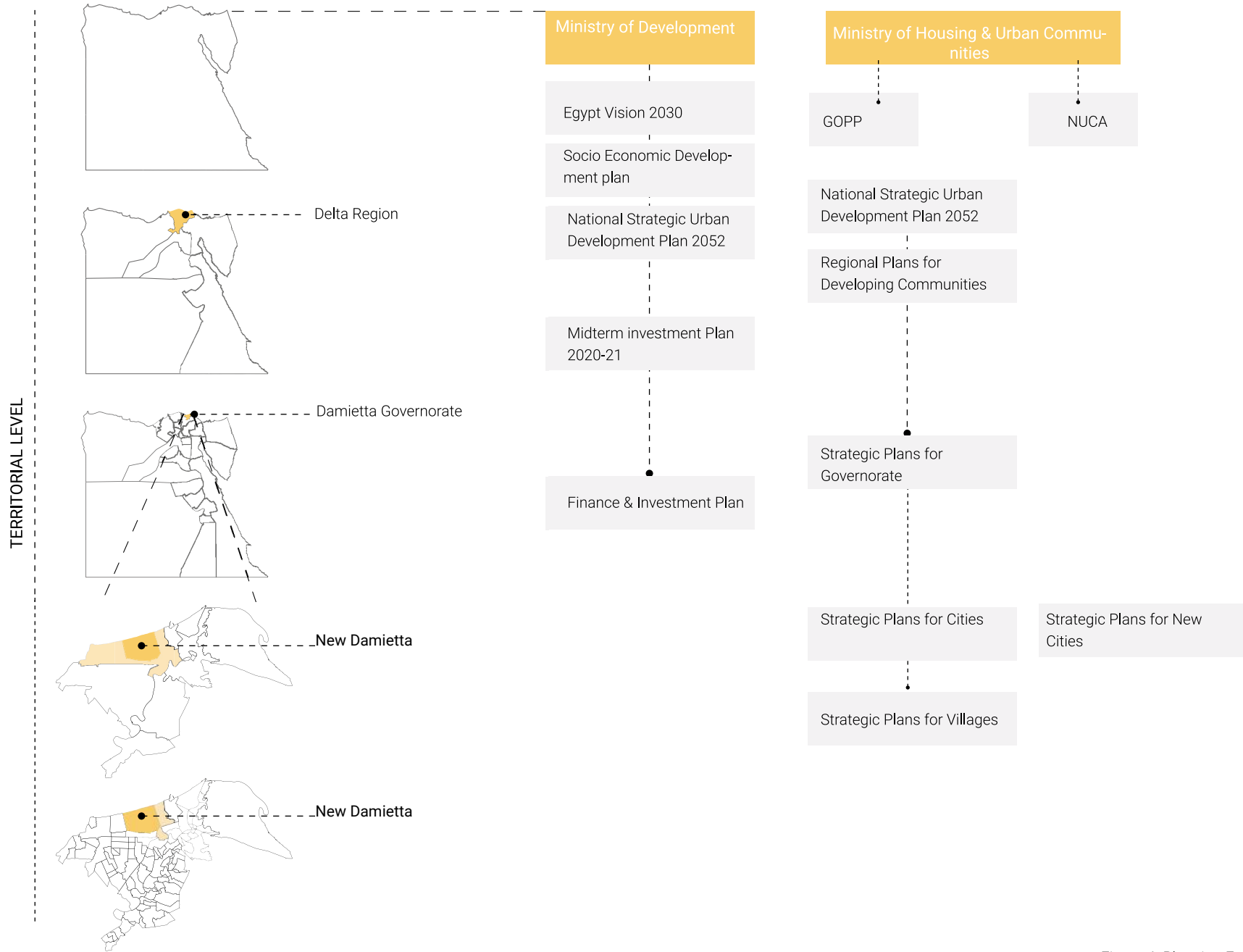


Figure 4. Planning Frameworks and Plans in Egypt  
Source: UN-Habitat

## TYPES OF SPATIAL PLANS IN EGYPT

### National Plan

- To define policies and urban development programs in the country.
- To specify national projects and implementation phases thereof.
- To specify the roles of public entities for national projects.

### Regional Plan

- To specify national and regional projects and implementation phases thereof.
- To specify the roles of public entities for the projects.

### Governorate Plan

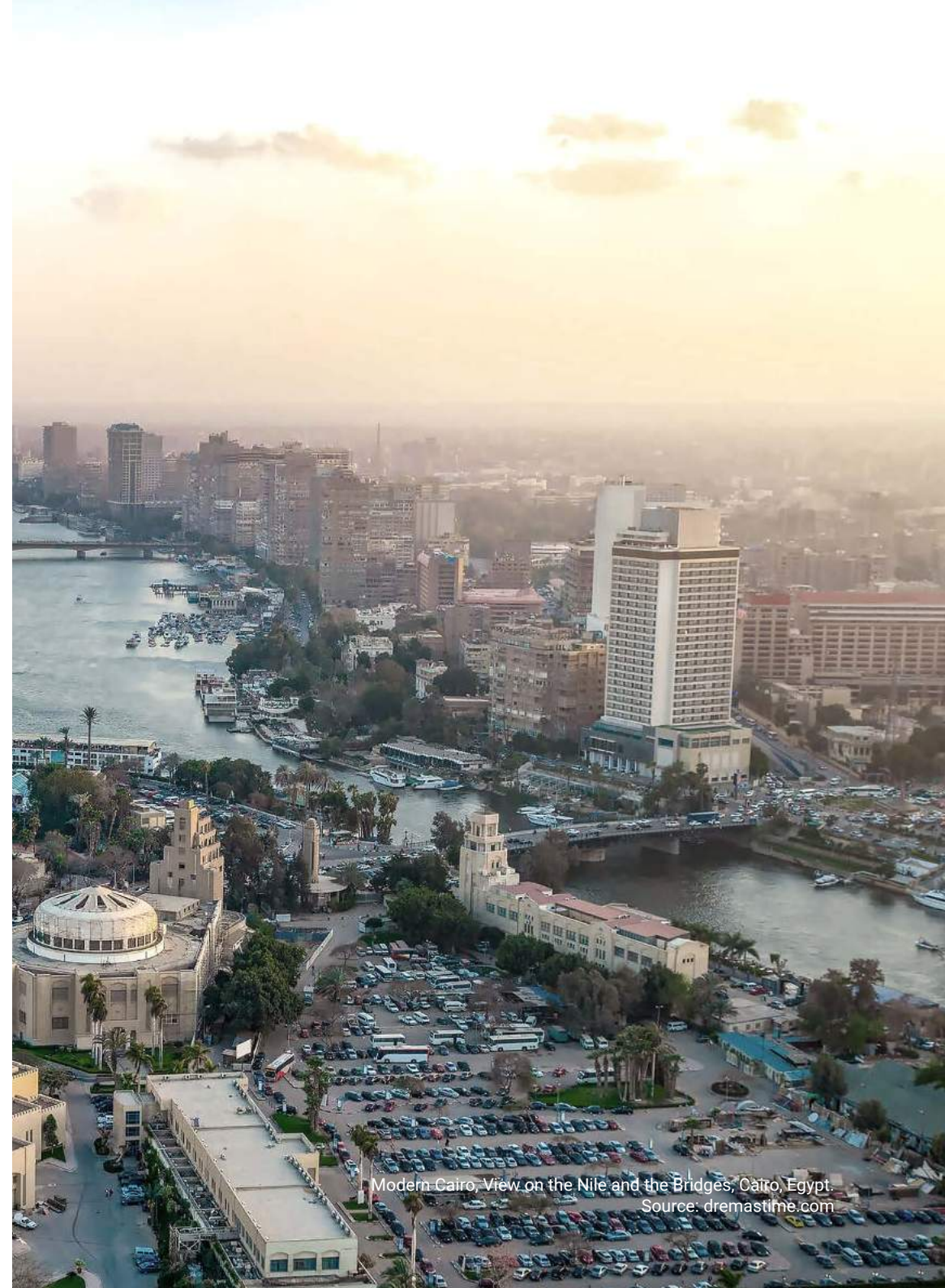
- To define policies and urban development programs for each Governorate following the strategic plan for its cities and villages, and in the framework of the regional plan.
- To specify the projects as well as priorities and implementation thereof.
- To specify the roles of public entities for the projects .

### Strategic Plan

- To draw up the future vision of the city or the village.
- To specify the local socio-economic, environmental, and urban development plans.
- To achieve sustainable development.
- To define the urban boundaries of the city or the village.
- To specify its future needs for urban expansion and different uses of land.
- To identify action plans, programs, priorities, mechanisms of implementation, and sources of finance.

### Detailed Plan

- To set forth land uses, rules, requirements, and implementation programs for the areas of the strategic plan of the city or the village.
- To specify the development projects for the urban design, land subdivision, and coordination of sites proposed for implementation within the strategic plan.



Modern Cairo, View on the Nile and the Bridges, Cairo, Egypt.  
Source: dremastime.com



## Land Administration and Governance

### Governance

The Republic of Egypt is further divided into different local units such as Governorates (27), Cities, Markaz (Qisms), District (hai), and villages (shyakha). On the other side, rural communities are structured differently, the rural area of a Markaz is divided into local units with each unit consisting of one major village (known as the mother village) and affiliated villages. Zimam refers to agricultural land that affiliates with one village, the village's built-up area, and other fragmented settlements. Each Governorate is placed under the authority of a governor (appointed by the President), who upholds administrative and executive duties and a local popular council which holds an advisory and monitoring role over the activities of the city and village councils, e.g., approving decisions, draft budgets, and recommending ways of increasing productivity<sup>24</sup>. At the Markaz and Qism levels, heads of cities hold administrative and executive authority.

Despite the decentralization initiative, the relationship between local and national levels remains centralized. The central government is the main decision-maker responsible for facilitating access to financial resources and where policies and development plans are established and approved. While ministries are responsible for policy making at the national and regional levels, at the local level, Governorates and cities execute development plans through their sectoral departments cooperation with the GOPP at the national level, and NUCA for new cities.

### Urban Planning

After the 1973 war, a national Five-Year Plan was established to achieve comprehensive socio-economic transformation; consequently, the GOPP was founded in 1978 and was responsible for preparing urban master plans for all cities and villages in Egypt. The role was advisory and did not imply any implementation responsibilities. In 1982, the physical planning law 1982/3 was issued, and GOPP transformed into an executive entity, the central agency responsible for approving master plans. GOPP began establishing Regional Centers in 1986 to be closer to the beneficiaries of the spatial plan. Governorates formed by a decree by the president are the first and main local administrative level and consist of two types, urban-simple and complex. Local government units launch and manage public services and design industrial areas within their districts. They are subdivided into Markaz (Qisms), cities, hai, and villages, all formed by a decree from the prime minister.

With the establishment of the Greater Cairo Planning Law 314 of 1982, which defined the role of the GOPP, local government policies and development plans were developed at the national level. Later, the Greater Cairo Planning and Executive Agency was established, which held a limited responsibility of preparing the Structural Plan of Greater Cairo. GOPP continued to play a primary role in the urban planning process; in 2008, under law No. 2008/ 119, GOPP was assigned the complete multi-scalar strategic planning at the national, regional, and local levels. Simultaneously, attempts to decentralize the urban planning procedures have been taking place by assigning partial urban development/maintenance responsibilities at the local level of the city. However,

GOPP and Cairo's central government remain the primary actors in planning and supervising urban interventions.

### Investments at National Level

Ministries are responsible for policy-making at the national and regional levels. Local administration in Egypt, whatever its status (Governorates, districts, towns, urban subdivisions, or villages), is made up of two important bodies: Local executive councils and local popular councils.

At the local level, Governorates (main local administrative entities) execute development plans through their local executive units. Local councils are subject to many checks carried out by central authorities, which have the last word in terms of managing local affairs. Elected Popular councils to represent the population on the Governorate and district level; their roles include approval of plans and budgets.

The Social and Economic Plan (established by the central government) strongly affects the role of local units in planning for social and economic development.

### Land Ownership in Egypt

The three main forms of land ownership in Egypt are; (1) Public or State land, which is divided into the State's public domain which cannot be alienated, and the State's private domain, which can be alienated generally through sale, lease, or through the right of use (i.e. usufruct), (2) Private land, which can be alienated/

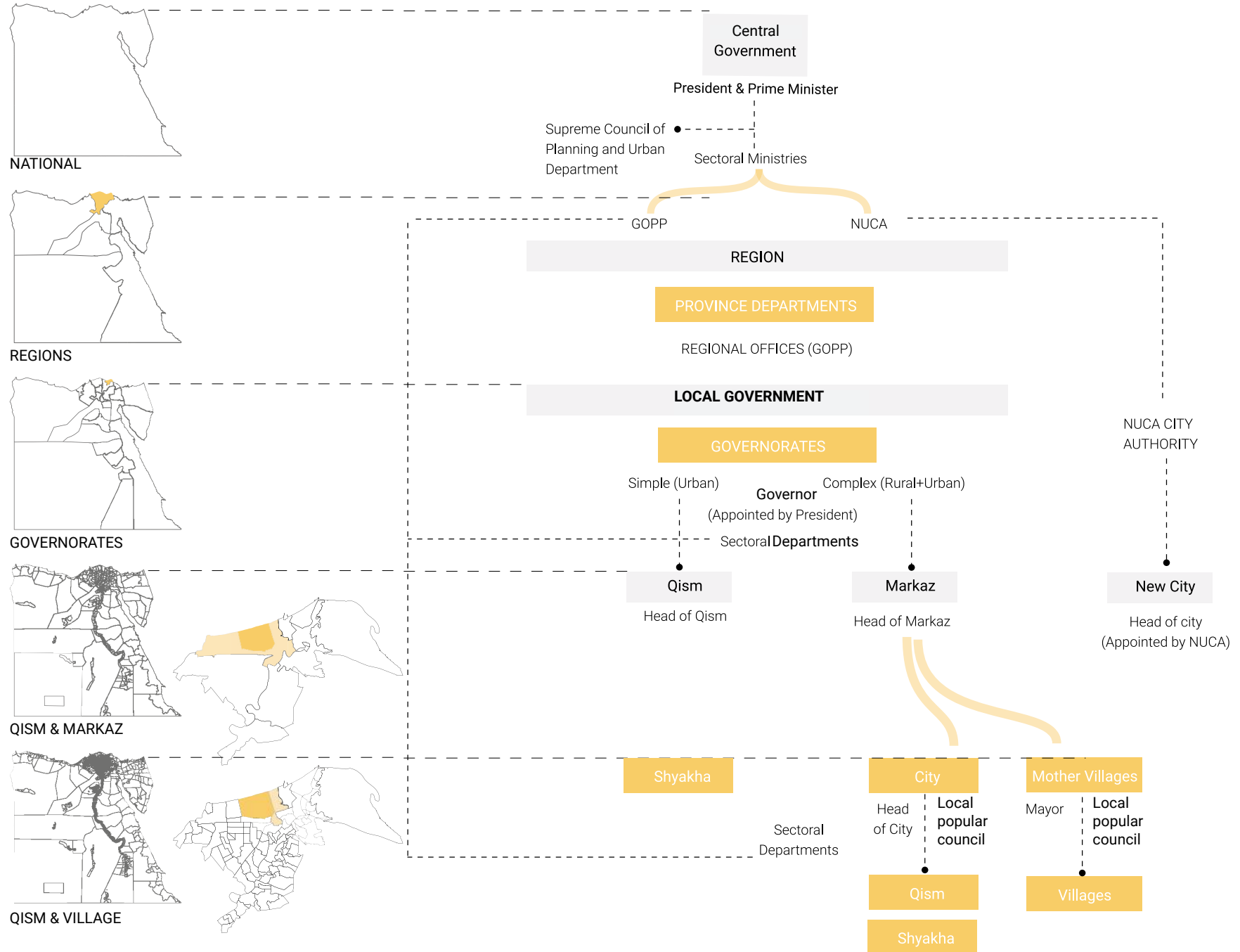


Figure 5. Planning Governance and Administration from National to Local Level  
Source: UN-Habitat

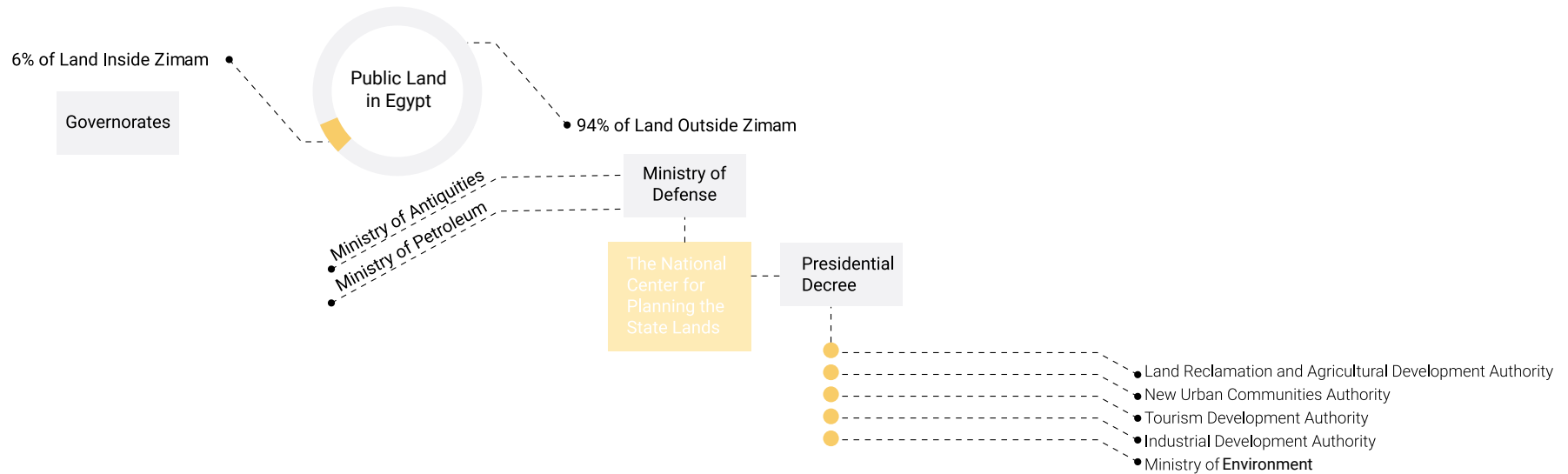


Figure 6. Access to Public Land & Governance in Egypt  
Source: UN-Habitat

transferred freely; and (3) Waqf land (Endowment) which is land held as a trust/endowment for religious or charitable purposes and is often subject to covenants on transfer or use<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the Civil Code (No. 131 of 1948) recognizes Hiyaza (i.e., possession of immovable/movable property without ownership) as a legitimate channel to acquire ownership of the property in question through adverse possession provided that the Hiyaza has been “peaceful, unchallenged and uninterrupted” for 15 years. The Hiyaza Law has been recently updated in 2022 with major modifications that encourage individuals to register their property with a set of facilitation procedures<sup>26</sup>. However, the Hiyaza right does not apply to State lands. The large majority of land in Egypt is public or State-owned, mostly undeveloped (estimated to be 90-95% of the national territory)<sup>27</sup>.

### Public Land Governance

Public land in Egypt is classified into three main

categories according to their locations: (1) Located within the Zimam, (2) Located within two kilometers outside of the Zimam (labelled as desert land); and (3) Located beyond two kilometers outside of the Zimam (also labelled desert land). Zimam refers to the perimeter limits that comprise urban lands within the city or village cordons and boundaries of cultivated and uncultivated agricultural lands that the Egyptian Survey had captured.

### Major Challenges and Improvement Efforts

Access to public land is complex due to a highly fragmented institutional and regulatory framework governing public land (fig.6) this has resulted in a state where a significant portion of land remains unregistered and insecure, constraining the ability of many residents to utilize the full potential of the land they possess. At the same time, urban sprawl remains a pressing issue in Egypt, requiring revisiting the legal

and regulatory impediments to developing land within urban boundaries with special attention to regularizing land rights within informal settlement areas.

### Main Challenges of Urban Development in Egypt

- Varying actors and institutions in the urban development and planning practices, resulting in a conflict of interest or overlapping of functions between entities, and Lack of integration of plans and coordination among actors.
- Decision-making commonly remains a top-down process.
- A lack of unified urban strategy results in low buy-in and weak urban development and growth in the long-run

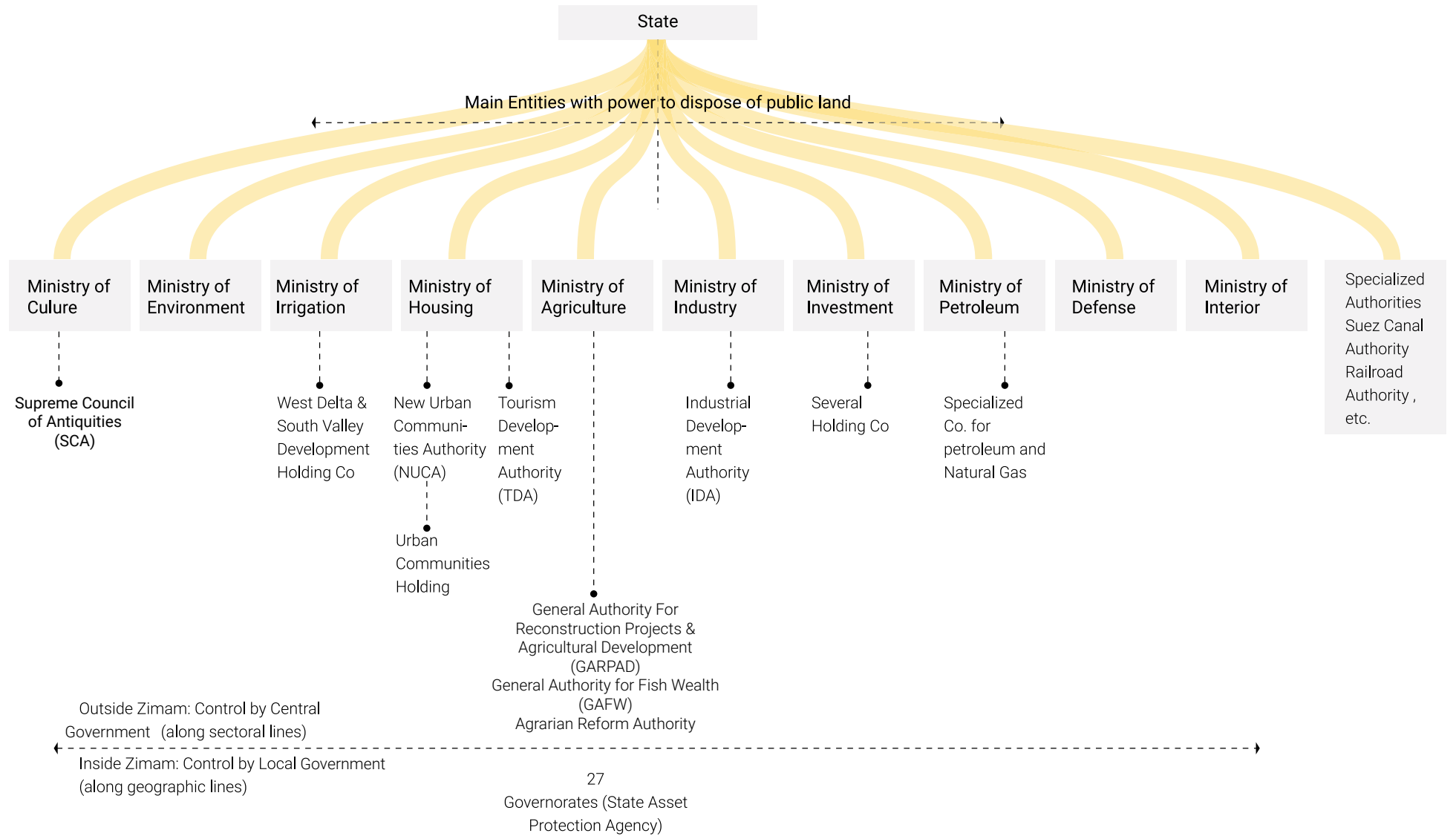


Figure 7. Planning Administration and Governance System in Egypt. Source: UN-Habitat

## Municipal Financing

Investment planning in Egypt is largely a top-down process, given that the plans are designed and validated by the central government. The process is relatively complex as the plans are prepared and also managed amongst several entities. Several laws govern local capital investment planning: the Planning Law (a new law has been issued), the State General Budget Law (SGB) (replaced by the Unified Public Finance Law no.6/2022), and Local Administration Law no. 43/1979. The SGB law is the legal framework governing the distribution of the state financial resources among the planned requirements for the various budgetary authorities.

The building block of spatial planning in Egypt is the Strategic Plan. A Strategic Plan for a Governorate, city, or village describes the future needs for urban expansion and clarifies the economic, social, environmental, and urban development projects for sustainable development as well as the different land uses and building regulations.

The Economic and Social (Sustainable) Development Plans aim to translate the state's development vision and strategy into several projects, including infrastructure. A typical Strategic Plan entails projections for population growth and the consequent need for social services, public amenities, and infrastructure. The Plan also suggests the leading sectors for economic growth on the local level. Sectoral plans are national growth targets, policies, interventions, and projects for each sector by the relevant authorities. The planned investments are allocated in isolation from any spatial determinants.

There are two types of sustainable development plans:

- The Mid-term Economic and Social Development plans (3-5 year investment plans).

- The annual plans are attached to chapter six of the State General Budget (illustrated shortly).

Both plans are a grouping of sectoral plans designed by different authorities. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MoPED) is mandated to group, validate, allocate, and monitor the implementation of these plans. The alleged disconnect between socioeconomic growth and urban planning arises from the fact that their intersection is more like a collection of plans than the incorporation of a true spatial component in sectoral planning beginning in the ideation phase. Spatial balancing or locational development is a separate pillar in the mid-term plan, where the projects are sorted out by location. Allocation of funds to implement the needed investment and infrastructure projects again are spatially neutral. It is noteworthy that strategic plans still lay the foundation for infrastructure projects that should be provided to match the legalized uses and activities within a certain area.

Public resources defined in the State Budget are tax revenues, grants, and other revenues (recurrent income from productive assets) in addition to the funding sources such as privatization proceeds and loans meant to overcome the gap between the expenses and revenues. Tax revenues are considered "sovereign revenues", meaning that the national government has the ultimate control over them, setting the base and the rates. On the local level, the General Bureau and service directorates are considered budgetary authorities, independently negotiating their budget allocation from the central authority. Lower administrative levels are not independent budgetary units, meaning their budgets are collected and included in their upper-level authority. The revenues are identified for each local administration level per the latest legal amendments.

### 1- Governorate-Level Resources:

- National Government Transfers.
- Taxes and duties on means of transport licensed from the Governorate.
- Contributions, donations, and loans.
- Returns on the Governorate's investment projects and special funds.

### 2- District-Level Resources:

- Transfers from the Governorate to the district allocated by the LPC.
- Proceeds of investments of the district's special funds.

Contributions and donations.

### 3- City-Level Resources:

- Transfer from the Governorate to the city allocated by the LPC.
- Fees imposed by the city's LPC within its jurisdiction and within the limits of laws and regulations such as fees for requested copies of birth registration... etc.
- Proceeds of gambling and entertainment taxes levied within the local jurisdiction.
- Revenues of local investments, the utilities managed by the city, and income from the public markets within its jurisdiction.
- Contributions, donations.

### 4- Village-Level Resources:

- Funding from the Governorate's LPC allocated to the village.
- Fees on services provided by the village's special funds and accounts.
- Contributions, donations.



## Challenges Financing Infrastructure Planning Projects

The planning, implementation, and financing processes for infrastructure projects in Egypt are dispersed temporally and among several central and local entities. The detachment of responsibilities between strategic urban plans from one side and the mid-term economic development and annual investment plans from the other, along with the limited authority of the localities in those plans, create heavy concerns over the spatial, economic, and social logic of the planned and implemented projects.

Furthermore, heavy infrastructure projects are mostly assigned to local planning authorities: ministries, service authorities, and holding companies. Municipal projects are auxiliary at certain stages depending on initial provision by the central authorities. In addition, new cities have special agencies mandated for service providers other than the typical agencies. This again challenges the coherence of objectives of the various projects and puts the new cities' plans in isolation from the main cities, which are the centers for economic activities and population densities. The dichotomy between having the projects planned on a mid-term span and financed by the treasury on an annual basis puts the continuation and the speed of implementation under pressure, given the need to re-negotiate the allocated fund each year.

The numerical indicators extracted from the final accounts of the State General Budget indicate that local revenues are limited compared to total national or local expenditures and that there may be low ability from the local government to finance infrastructure projects. Municipalities depend on central government transfers to finance their needs, either concurrently or via capital. The most significant sources of local revenues are

proceeds from special projects, funds, and fees from different localities' services. Numbers could artificially point out the ability of local revenue to cover the local investment. However, it is important to note that most of the revenue generated from special funds and projects often leave little surplus or net profit when associated with high operating costs for projects. In addition, the MoF intervened during the last few years to direct an extra percentage of the special funds' revenue to the central treasury, which resulted in the local authorities receiving more pressure to achieve net profits by the end of each fiscal year.

In summary, municipalities face a double challenge in prioritizing their infrastructure project. Financial challenges could potentially be overcome through non-conventional sources, either through local resources, international grants, and/or partnerships with the private sector, which is subject to the attractiveness and the packaging of the proposed projects, for instance, the energy investment sector has become exceptionally attractive for public-private partnerships given the newly issued laws for the feed-in tariff. This also necessitates a systematic building of the capacities of the technical staff at the municipalities. The second layer of the challenge relates to the administrative cycles of developing and funding projects which require a high level of negotiation and communication amongst relevant stakeholders and the municipalities.



Suez Canal Container Terminal, Egypt.  
Source: APMT



## Climate Change Context

Climate Change has become a major concern in Egypt at the national and local levels. The country ranked 107 out of 181 countries in the 2019 ND-GAIN Index. Located in an arid to semi-arid zone, the country covers approximately 7% of the inhabited area, the rest being desert <sup>28</sup>. With a population mainly concentrated along the Nile Delta and Mediterranean coast and heavily dependent on the Nile River as a primary water resource, Egypt is highly vulnerable to the adverse effects of Climate Change. It faces severe threats to its economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Egypt signed the UNFCCC in 1992 and ratified it in 1994. The country also adopted a National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in 2011 as a framework of adaptation policy. The plan aims to achieve low emissions development in various sectors, increase renewable and alternative energy sources, and preserve natural resources and green spaces. With a coastline of 3,500 km along the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the country is most vulnerable to impacts of sea level rise, particularly inundation and salt intrusion due to its relatively low elevation. Indeed, topography within the country ranges from 133 m below sea level to 2,629 m above sea level.

Coastal zones host around 15% of Egypt's total population, with the Nile Delta North Coast hosting several major cities such as Alexandria, Port Said, Damietta, and Rosetta. Those are facing critical exposures due to their proximity to hazardous-prone areas and are expected to suffer further from direct climate change impacts on their population, infrastructures, and their key economic sectors. This includes severe land degradation along the Nile and its north coast impacting key sectors such as agriculture,

tourism, industry, and fisheries. Furthermore, increased temperatures and extreme weather events in the future are likely to exacerbate drought conditions, changes in productivity, and water scarcities and deficits, which will significantly impact livelihood resources, agricultural needs, and communities' access to clean water.

Sea level rise is also projected to reach between 3cm and 61cm by 2085, with consequential loss of agricultural land, infrastructure, and urban areas, due to a combination of inundation and erosion. The economic impacts of SLR are also expected to increase and will range between US\$130 million and US\$260 million by 2030, causing a decrease in the GDP by 6%. Additionally, limited water and the sizable loss of agricultural land and population growth will jeopardize the food security balance of the country.

Aside from the climate impacts on the Nile, pollution of the Nile has been a major threat with direct consequences on biodiversity, human health, and economic development. Indeed, wastewater and untreated sewage from open drains, agricultural return flows, and industrial wastewater are redirected into the rivers, deteriorating water quality. Furthermore, decreases in the water supply are predicted as a result of the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which will also result in a high concentration of pollutants.

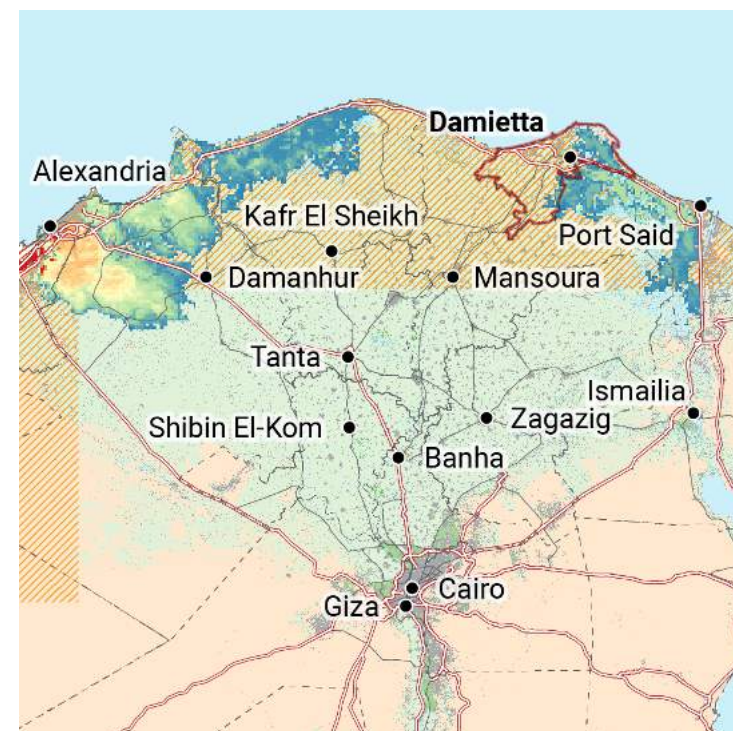


Figure 8. Climate Change in Delta Region  
Source: UN Habitat

**LEGEND**

<b>Governorate Capital</b> Population 2020	<b>Places</b>	<b>Land Cover</b>
• 37,330 - 100,000	• Governorate Capital	■ Cropland
• 100,000 - 400,000	■ Countries	■ Forest
• 400,000 - 600,000	■ Governorates	■ Grassland
• 600,000 - 800,000	— Major Roads	■ Shrubland
• 1,000,000 - 6,000,000	— Transportation	■ Wetland
• 6,000,000 - 10,000,000	■ Natural Hazards	■ Water
	■ Coastal Flood	■ Impervious Surface
	■ River Flood	■ Bareland
	■ Drought	■ Snow/Ice

Source: UNISDR Global Assessment Report (2015) Risk Platform, Muis-et-al.

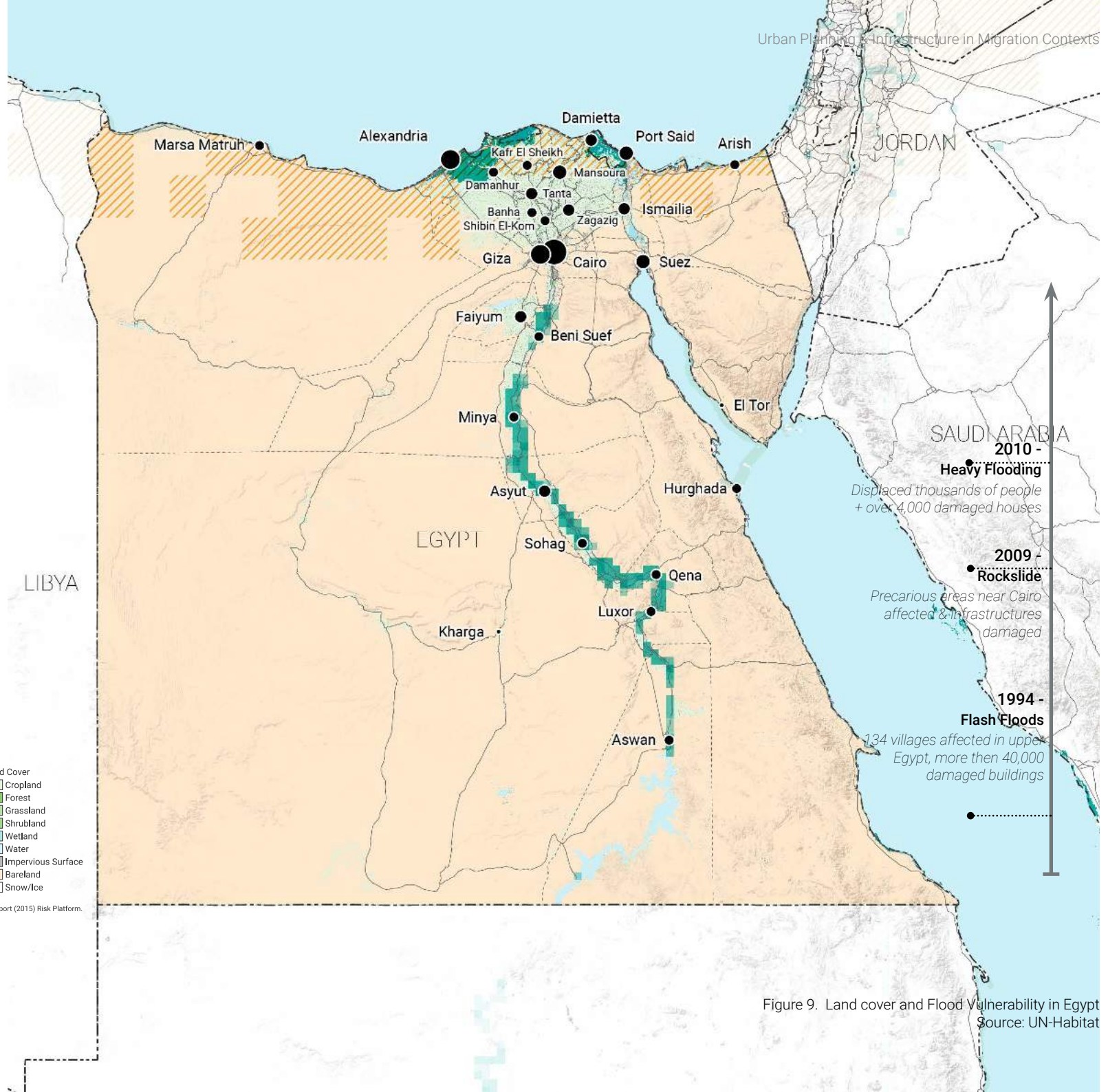
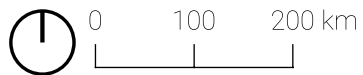


Figure 9. Land cover and Flood Vulnerability in Egypt  
Source: UN-Habitat

## Displacement Context

Several migration waves (internal and external) occur in Egypt, which also result in several modalities of response. The two dominant modalities for response in place are opening services for the migrants and responding by redeveloping urban cities (e.g., establishing new cities and districts like Sheikh Zayed District in Ismailia city and New Port Said). The vast majority of the registered refugee and citizen population resides in urban areas with 68% in Greater Cairo, followed by 10% in Alexandria and 8% in Qalyubia<sup>29</sup>. The socioeconomic situation of refugees is challenging, and these groups still face several pressing challenges. Resilient interventions promise improved conditions for citizens and refugees, especially since the humanitarian fund is decreasing. It is noteworthy to mention that non-Arab refugees face additional challenges due to cultural differences<sup>30</sup>.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even before signing the 1951 refugee convention and 1967 protocol, Egypt continued to host several migration influxes. The Armenian refugee wave in 1915 is among the first, followed by waves of Greek, Polish and Yugoslav refugees who arrived due to the Second World War. Egypt also witnessed three main histories of internal displacements throughout the past century, namely (1) the displacement of the Nubian population in 1964 because of the construction of the High Dam in Aswan, (2) the displacement of the population of Port Said city during the Suez War in 1956, and (3) the internal displacement of Suez Canal residents 1967 and 1974 as a result of the Six Days War in June 1967.

Such waves have had a direct and indirect impact on the affected settings' built environment manifested through the actions taken by the state to reconstruct the evicted settings and establish new districts and cities. Egypt

also received four main forced migration waves from neighboring geographies in the Middle East, namely (1) Palestine refugees as a result of the 1948 and 1967 events, (2) Kuwaitis during the Second Gulf War in 1990, (3) Iraqis during the Third Gulf War between 2003 and 2007, (4) and finally Syrians since 2011.

The state's response to the different displacement waves varied from setting up temporary refugee camps (during the World War) to resettling the population in other villages and cities. Additionally, almost all displaced populations enjoyed access to the state's infrastructure and services, including the housing and business markets. Currently, Egypt remains a destination country, with refugees arriving across the Middle East and East Africa. There are around 288,173 registered refugees and asylum seekers from 62 different countries: half are from Syria (144,683), followed by Sudan (58,521), South Sudan (23,701), Eritrea (22,131), Ethiopia (15,919), Yemen (9,404), and Iraq (6,805)<sup>31</sup>.

### Poverty Profile

- 39% Refugees are considered poor
- 53% Non-Arabic speakers refugees live under **female-headed households**.
- 16% **Syrian** refugees live under **female-headed households**.
- 50% Refugees 15 years old/above join labour market.
- 60% African non-Arabic speakers join labour market.

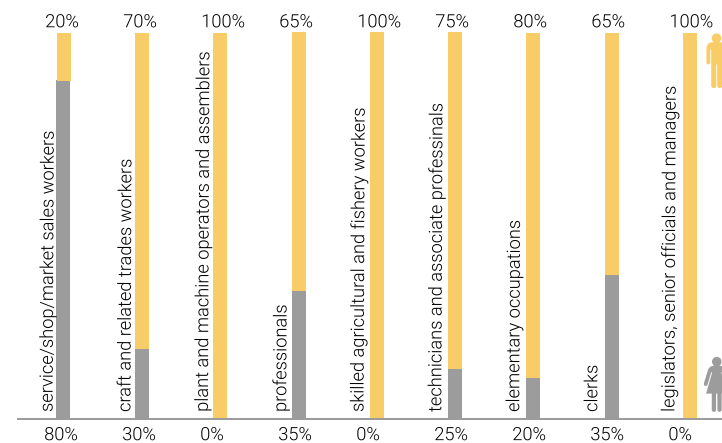


Figure 10. Poverty Profile of Refugees in Egypt  
Source: UNHCR

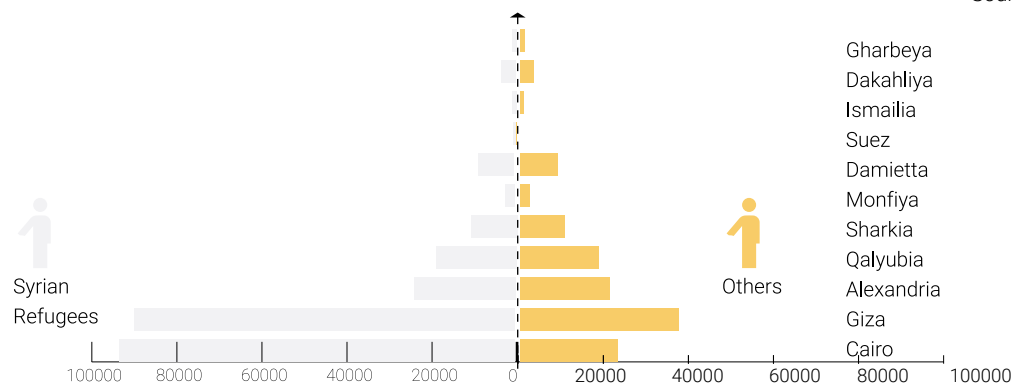


Figure 11. Number of residents and refugees living in different cities in Egypt  
Source: UNHCR



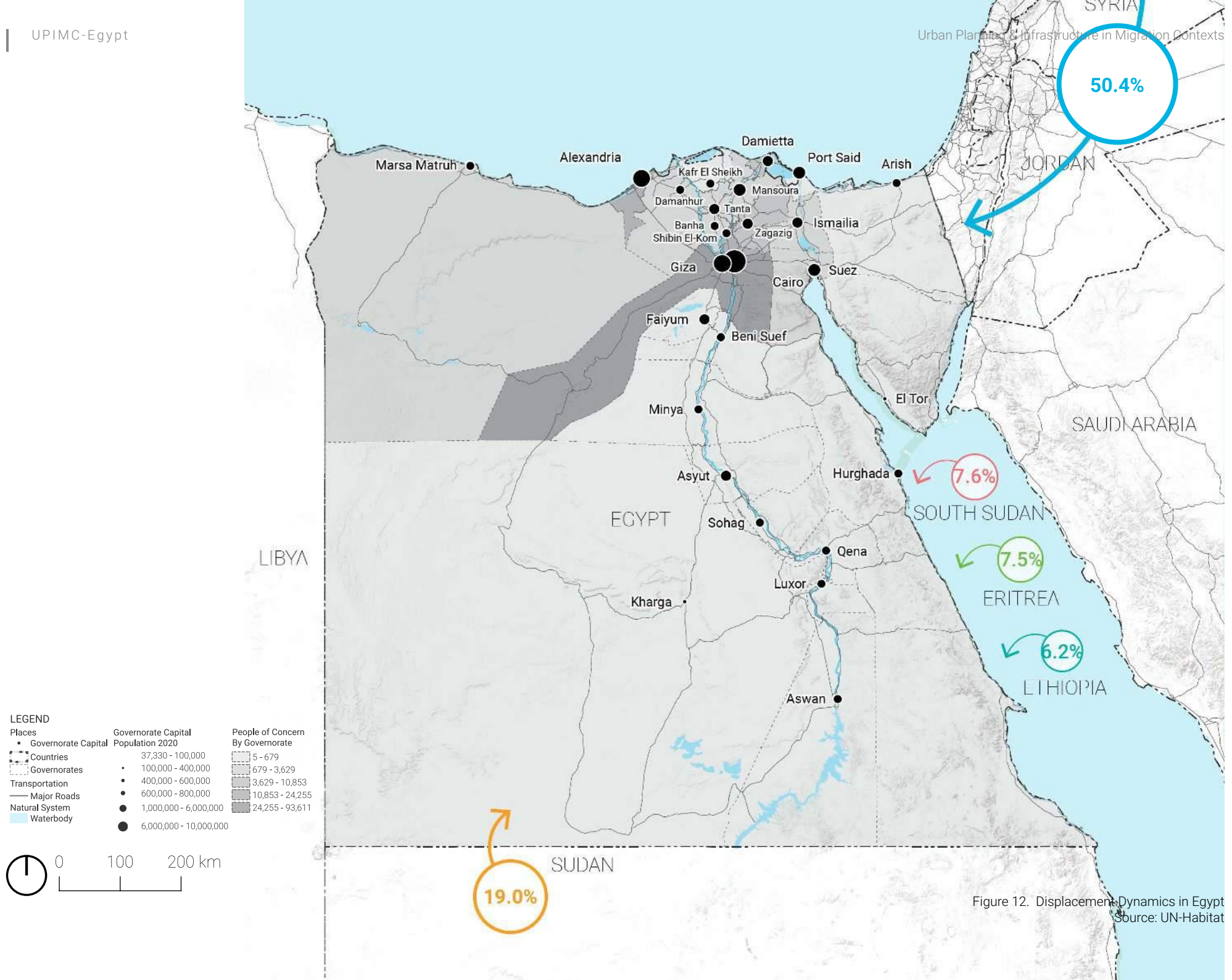


Figure 12. Displacement Dynamics in Egypt  
Source: UN-Habitat

## Humanitarian Response To The Syrian Crisis In Egypt

After more than 10 years of protracted crises in Syria, Egypt continues to host migrants and asylum seekers till this day. Syrians enter Egypt either through tourist visas or asylum-seeking (family reunification). The Government of Egypt continues to allow refugees and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR to regularize their residency and grants six-month renewable residence permits<sup>32</sup>. Syrian refugees mostly reside in urban areas alongside Egyptian communities and are mainly concentrated in Greater Cairo - which includes Cairo, Giza and Qalyubia - as well as Damietta and Alexandria.

Syrians in Egypt have access to public education and health services, adding to the increasing challenges the Egyptian economy faces. On the other hand, some Syrians managed to feed the Egyptian economy by establishing small to medium-scale businesses that can be found within the fabric of the city such as restaurants, or in satellite cities such as the 10th of Ramadan and Obour cities, through establishing textile industries<sup>33</sup>.

The vast majority of refugees and asylum-seekers cite difficulties in meeting their basic needs as one of their biggest challenges in Egypt. Regular vulnerability assessments performed by 3RP partners show that the vulnerability levels among Syrian refugees in Egypt are constantly rising. Although though they face the same issues as urban poor households in the host community, they also have to deal with more complicated administrative processes for residency renewals and fewer job opportunities. The lack of access to work permits due to significant administrative constraints forces refugee households to resort to informal employment, which can occasionally be risky and exploitative. Consequently, it is estimated that 67%

of Syrian refugees are extremely poor and in need of assistance<sup>34</sup>.

The recent structural economic changes in Egypt (especially after the liberalization of the Egyptian Pound) have significantly affected both vulnerable citizens and refugees, resulting in serious challenges to reduce their reliance immensely on aid. Such vulnerability, coupled with a protracted refuge, necessitates more resilient interventions targeting the communities and the infrastructure of their residence settings, especially in the poorest settings, which will eventually contribute to building inclusive cities and achieving durable solutions. Resilience interventions become even more crucial to support the efforts of the Government of Egypt and the international community to provide adequate health services and education to Syrian refugees and enhance the capacity of national institutions to absorb and respond to the increasing demand for public services<sup>35</sup>.

As a strategic response to the Syrian crisis, Egypt has joined forces with the international community and is committed to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan - 3RP. Moreover, the Government of Egypt and UNHCR adopted the "One Refugee" approach, aiming to ensure equity in access to protection, services, and humanitarian assistance for Africans, Iraqis and Yemenis registered with UNHCR<sup>36</sup>.

**288,173** refugees and asylum-seekers  
**62** countries  
**3,794** unaccompanied and separated children

### Egypt Response Plan (ERP) for Refugees and Asylum seekers from Sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq and Yemen

The ERP was first launched in 2018 to respond to the humanitarian needs in the country by drawing strategic responses over five main sectors; (1) Protection, (2) Public Health, (3) Education, (4) Basic Needs and Livelihoods, and (5) Food Security. The main priority areas of the intervention included improving registration, targeted multi-purpose, cash assistance, promotion of livelihood opportunities, prevention and response to SGBV, and improved access, to child protection, amongst other interventions <sup>37</sup>.

However, despite the well-developed proposed interventions, the funding of the ERP continues to decrease one year after another; for instance, the funding of 2020 ERP did not exceed 45%, which demands a serious shift towards applying more durable and resilient solutions that target the development and humanitarian demands in an agile manner, especially that the overlap between the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the provision of long-term development can be effortlessly found in the communities that host protracted refugee.

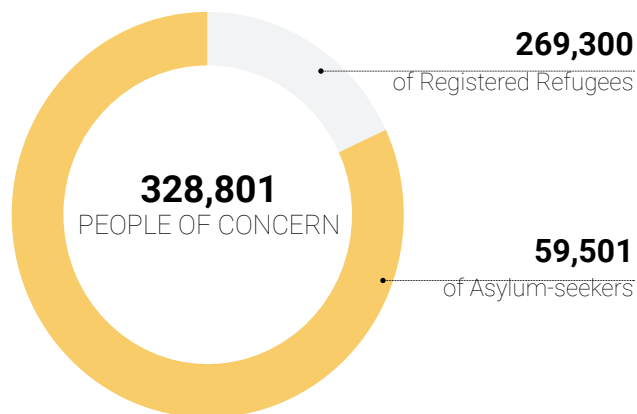


Figure 13. Number of people of concern in Egypt <sup>38</sup>  
Source: UNHCR

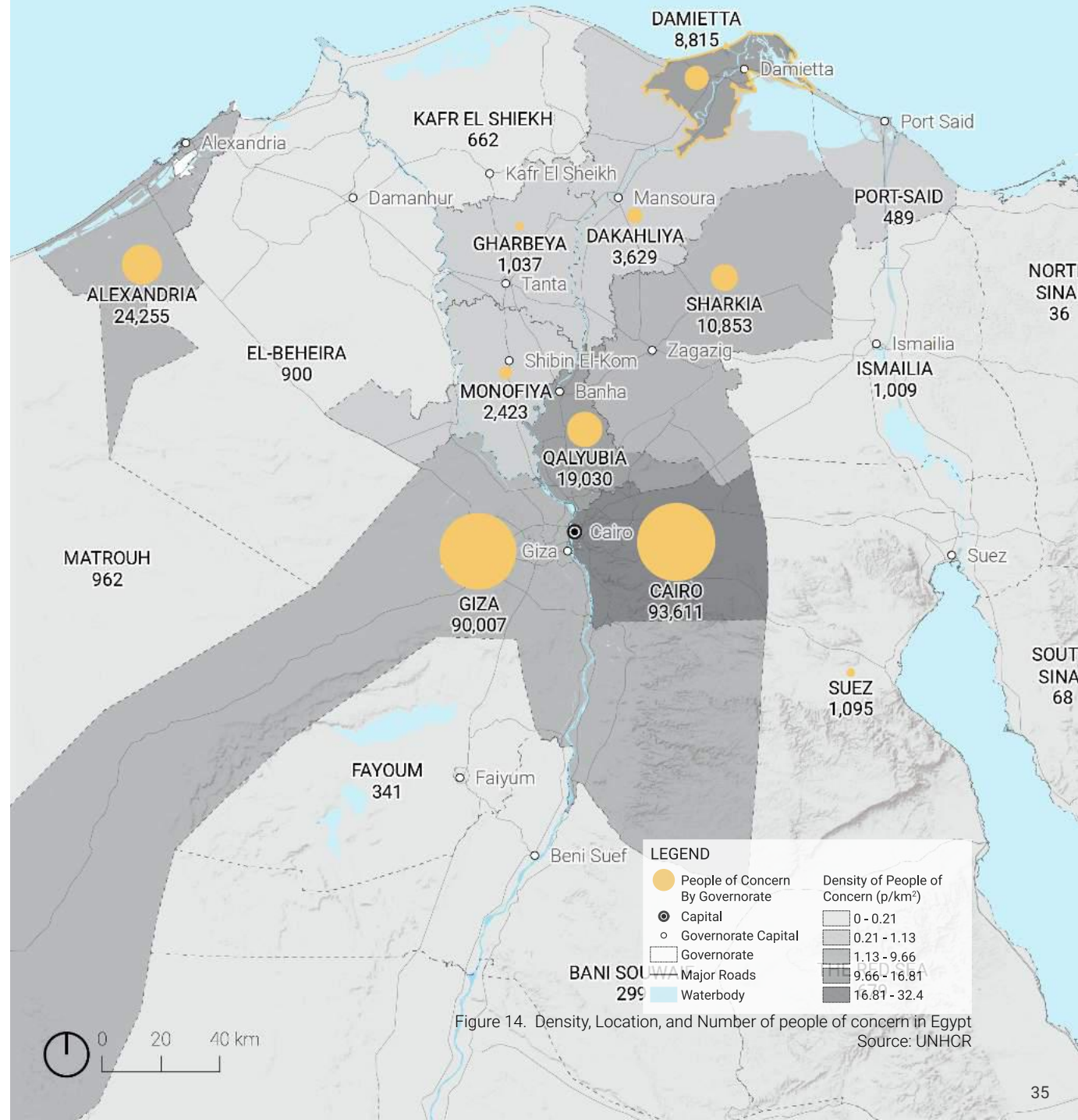


Figure 14. Density, Location, and Number of people of concern in Egypt  
Source: UNHCR



# 2

## GOVERNORATE CONTEXT







Kafr El Battikh city, Damietta Governorate, Egypt.  
Source: UN Habitat



## Regional Access Infrastructure

Damietta Governorate is located in the Delta Region extending from Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea between Alexandria in the West and Port Said in the East. The Governorate is divided by the Nile River into two branches in the north-eastern part of the region. Its influence is limited by Mansoura City, a key industrial hub in the area, Dakahlia Governorate on the south, and Port Said and its industrial developments.

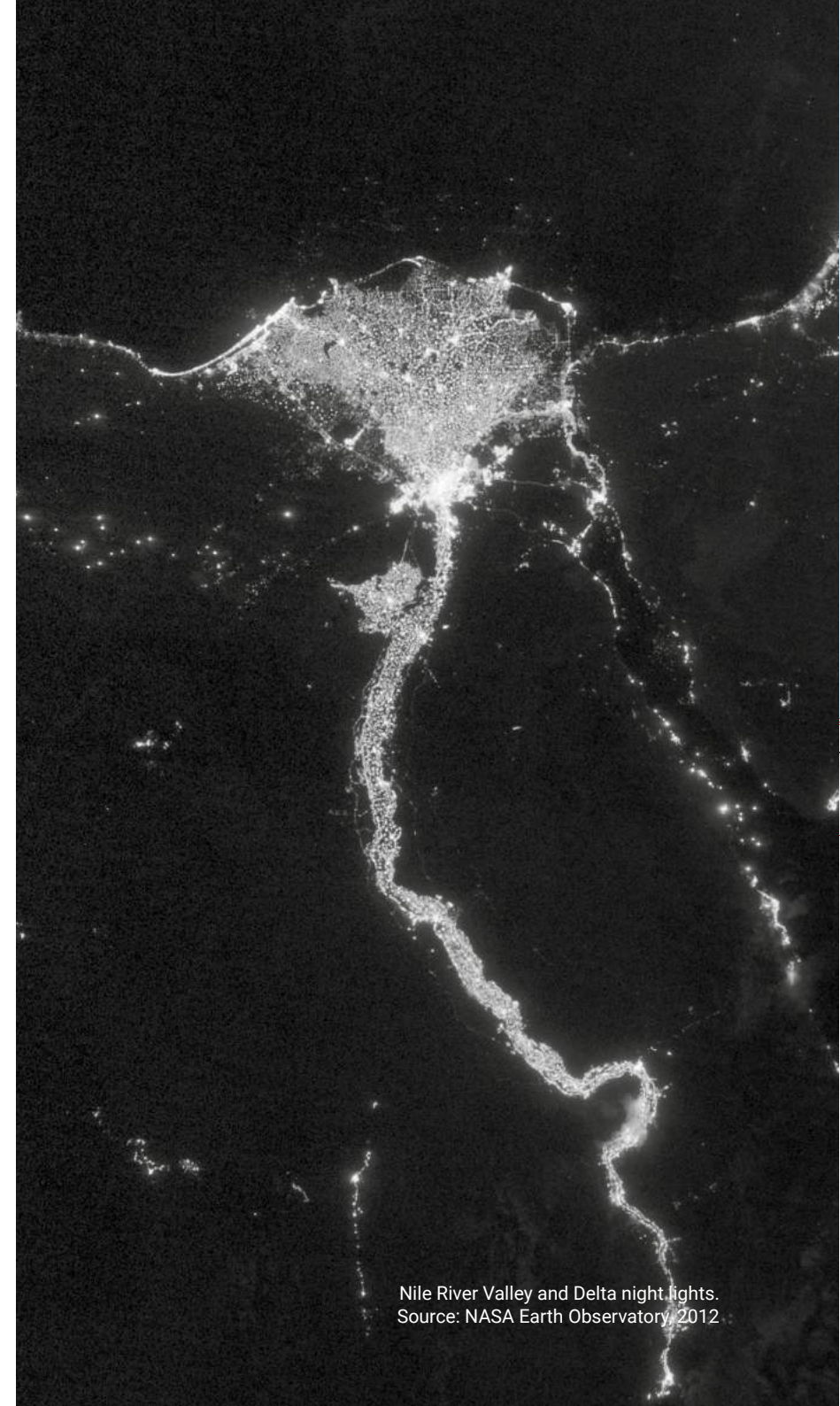
Before Alexandria's rise and the Suez Canal's opening, Damietta served as Egypt's window into the outside world, ensuring maritime relations with the western Mediterranean. With one of the oldest ports in Egypt, Damietta became a hub of economic trade connected to several major international and inland trade routes. The port of Damietta plays an important logistic role in the region, given its strategic and unique location on the Mediterranean <sup>39</sup>.

Damietta Governorate mainly used to be accessible through two paths, the shortest one from south to the north, by crossing several urban settlements such as Shubra El Kheima, Tanta, and Banha, using congested and poorly maintained roads and then reaching the highway at Mansoura. The second path goes through Port Said highway, which can be longer but faster.

Nowadays, the development of the international Coastal highway passes through the city of Damietta and allows direct connection from East to West.

Damietta's transport network is multimodal, from land and rail to the river. Inland roads connect to all Egyptian Governorates via the international Coastal Road and transversal axis. The International Coastal Highway is a strategic regional highway connecting Egypt with the Maghreb Region. The Governorate's total road network is about 1224 km, with 80% of its roads in good condition.

Damietta also has a railway network connecting Capital City, Cairo, and the surrounding cities. The Government of Egypt is also planning to establish a rail corridor through the Delta Nile by upgrading the Tanta - El Mansoura - Damietta route. This key traffic corridor will also facilitate the transport of goods into the capital and other major cities.



Nile River Valley and Delta night lights.  
Source: NASA Earth Observatory, 2012



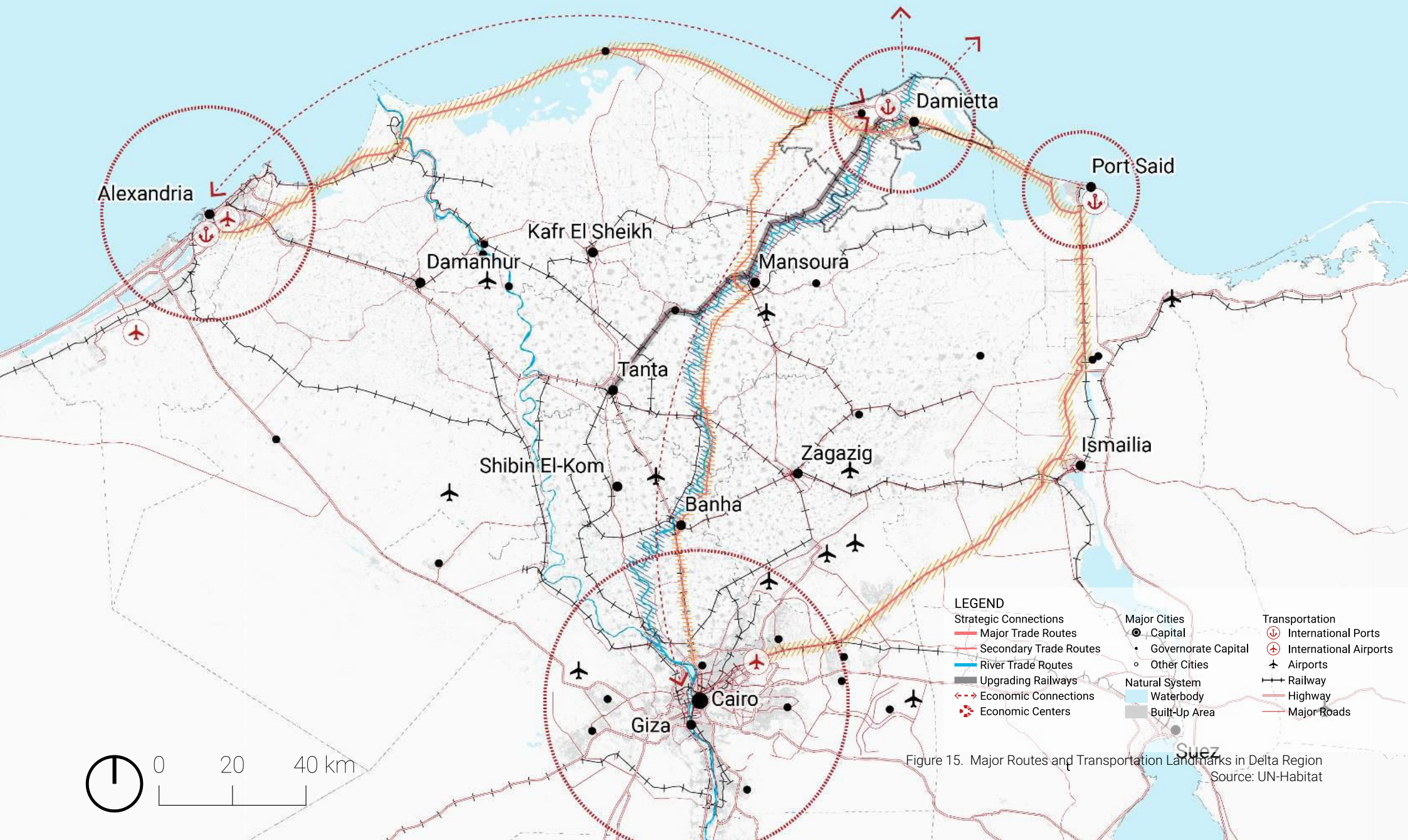


Figure 15. Major Routes and Transportation Landmarks in Delta Region  
Source: UN-Habitat



## Location & Connectivity

The transportation and road networks of Damietta Governorate are well connected to the road networks of the eastern Delta and Sinai Governorates, as well as the Governorates of West Delta and the Northwest Coast, including Cairo, Qalyubia, and Upper Egypt. The city of Damietta enjoys strong and direct communication opportunities with the Delta region in general and the East Delta region in particular through the regional road network. The total length of paved roads is 752 km, and the total length of dirt roads is 18 km.

The city of New Damietta is linked to the surrounding cities and communities, whether located inside or outside Damietta's Governorate, through several rapid regional connections, the most important of which are:

- The international coastal regional road, which is the most important regional road passing through the city of New Damietta from the southern side, and its extension also passes through the north of the city.
- Mansoura / Damietta Road is a 14 km long road that passes through the port of Damietta.
- Railway network links Damietta Governorate with its neighboring Governorates, namely Kafr El-Sheikh - Dakahlia - Sharkia - Gharbiya Governorates.

Damietta Port plays a pivotal role in developing New Damietta and the Governorate, especially after improving the regional road network that connects the port and the new city with the surrounding Governorates. Damietta port is 8.5 km west of the Damietta branch of the Nile River, and to the west of Ras El Bar in the Mediterranean. Needless to mention, the port represents an effective development element in revitalizing the economic base of Damietta Governorate.

The functional elements of Damietta Port are summarized in two main elements; (1) A service element as a port for ships: loading and unloading of goods exported and imported to Egypt, and as a port for receiving transit goods (transit port between the markets of the Middle and Far East, and between Egypt, the United States and Europe), and (2) A productive and commercial element includes an industrial complex, a free zone, and a commercial area.

The relative importance of the location of New Damietta stems from its location within the regional orbit of Damietta Governorate, in addition to its proximity to the port, which is one of the most important elements in supporting the city's interaction with its surrounding. Consequently, New Damietta is considered a development pole that integrates with the existing city to address pressing challenges of the Governorate, mainly related to unlocking economic opportunities. Such a position provides huge opportunities for investment in various fields (food, chemical, furniture, paper industries, engineering industries, packaging, and storage), whether in the industrial or coastal areas, as well as in the field of housing.

According to the Strategic Plan for Damietta Governorate 2032, key strategic projects aiming at improving connectivity and accessibility infrastructures within the area include the following:

- Expanding and developing the international coastal road.
- Establishing a road that will serve as a transversal axis linking Damietta Governorate with the Governorates of Dakahlia, Kafr Al-Sheikh, and Buhaira.
- Consolidation axis proposed in Sinai and the Canal and East of the Nile

- Double the railway line "Mansoura - Damietta" railway line to become a double primary class line.
- Double the railway line to transport goods from Kafr El-Battikh to Damietta Port to increase the capacity.
- Development of railways located within the Governorate.
- Completing the Damietta Port development plan to become a global port (with an area of 1,800 feddans) that provides 28,000 job opportunities.
- River transport lines (river buses for passengers and barges for goods)
- Establishing an airport in Damietta to serve passengers and cargo.
- Developing the fishing port in Ezbet Al-Burj and establishing an integrated industrial city.
- Construction of a dry port and transportation services between Damietta and Gamasa.

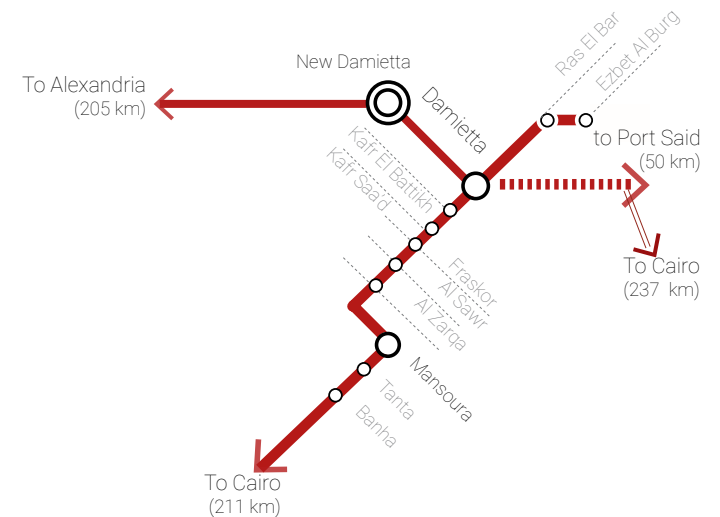


Figure 16. Network of major urban areas in Delta region. Source: UN Habitat

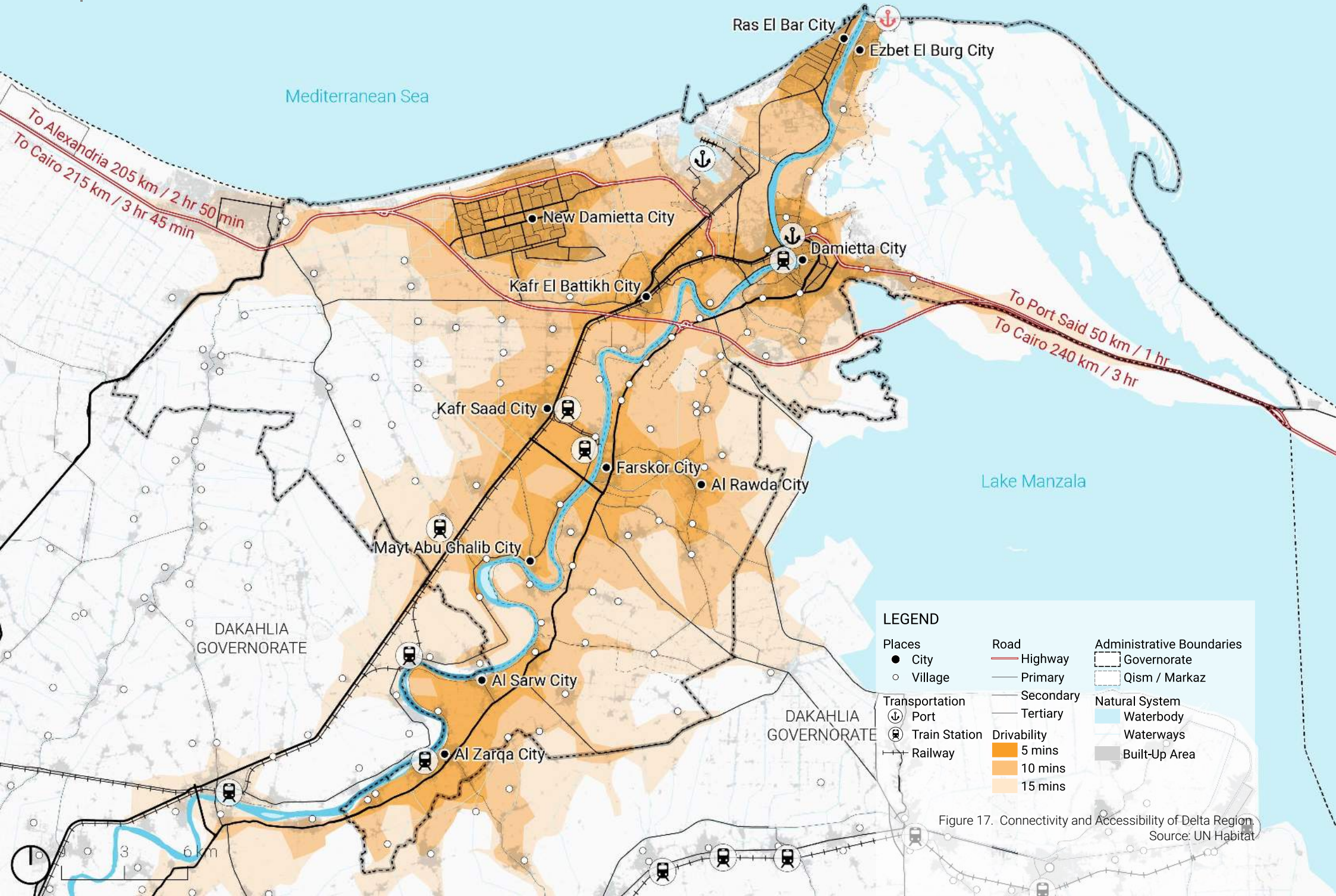


Figure 17. Connectivity and Accessibility of Delta Region. Source: UN Habitat



## Governorate Land Administration & Institutional Context

The Governorate consists of five administrative centers, 11 cities, 47 rural local units, and 85 villages. The administrative centers are Damietta - Fraskor - Kafr Saad - Zarqa - Kafr El-Battikh. The Governor is considered at the top of the administrative hierarchy of the Governorate; the responsibilities of the Governor are mainly related to the general administration of the Governorate and with the assistance of the General Secretary and the Assistant General Secretary. The Governor reports directly to the Minister of Local development. Similar to other Governorates, GOPP is responsible for the overall mapping of the general policies related to sustainable urban planning and development in Damietta Governorate; this also includes preparing plans and programs at the national, regional, and local levels. Yet, New Damietta as a new city falls under NUCA's general authority.

The city of New Damietta was established by Prime Minister's Resolution no. 546. The general strategic plan for New Damietta started in 1980, in parallel with the preparation of executive documents for 324 housing units of low-cost housing to meet the urgent need of port workers; the actual implementation of the city began in 1984. The main regulating urbanization laws are:

- Urban planning, the establishment of new urban communities, the legislation of government lands and desert lands, and limiting the encroachment on agricultural lands and expropriation.
- Regulation of building activities, including permitting construction, expansion, restoration, and maintenance works.
- Housing (leasing properties and regulating the relationship between landowners and tenants).
- Legislation and permitting of the different uses of land and the conduct of various activities
- Public roads and squares
- Protection of the natural environment

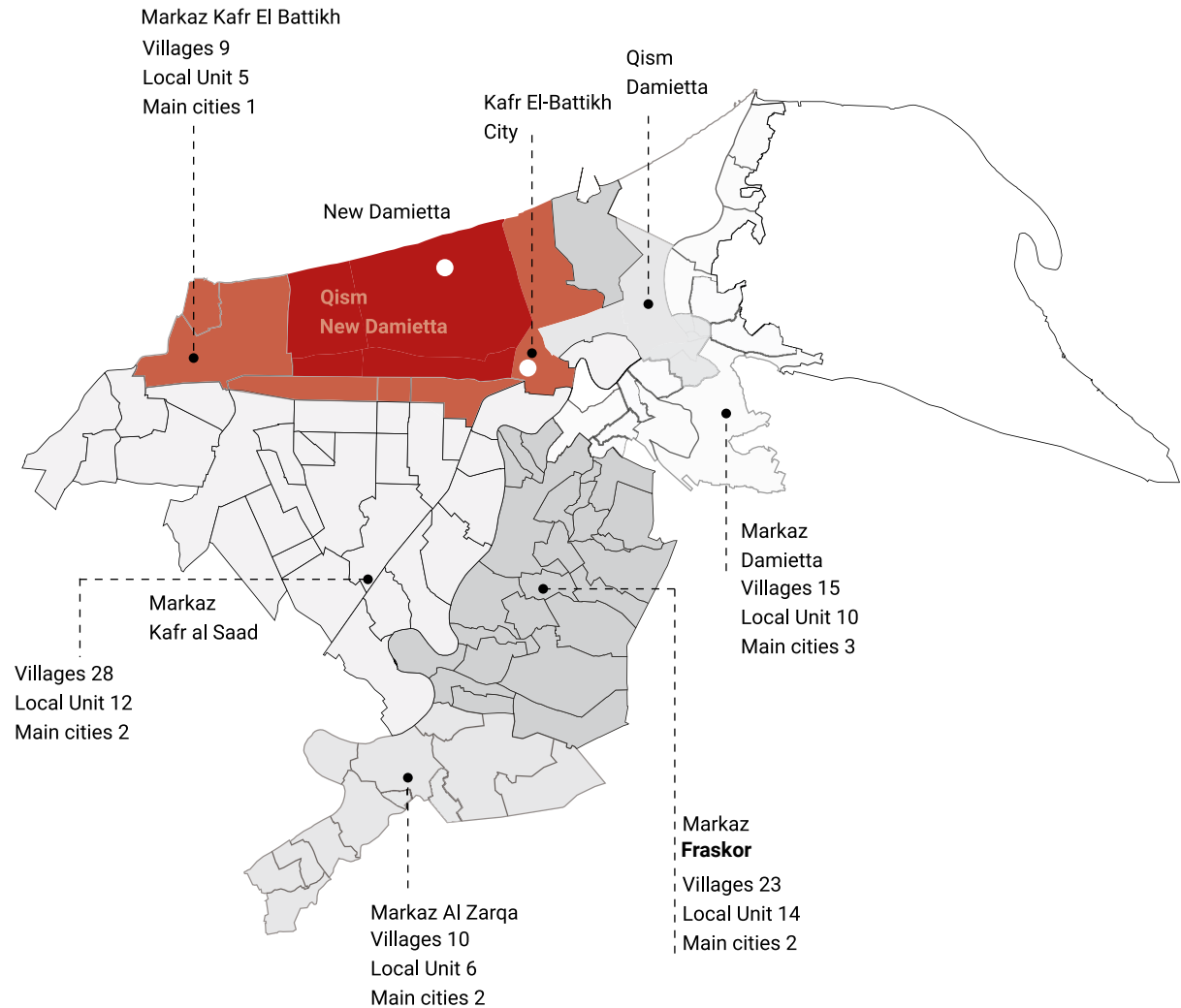


Figure 18: Governorate Land Administration and Departments in Damietta Governorate. Source: UN Habitat

# Governorate Structure

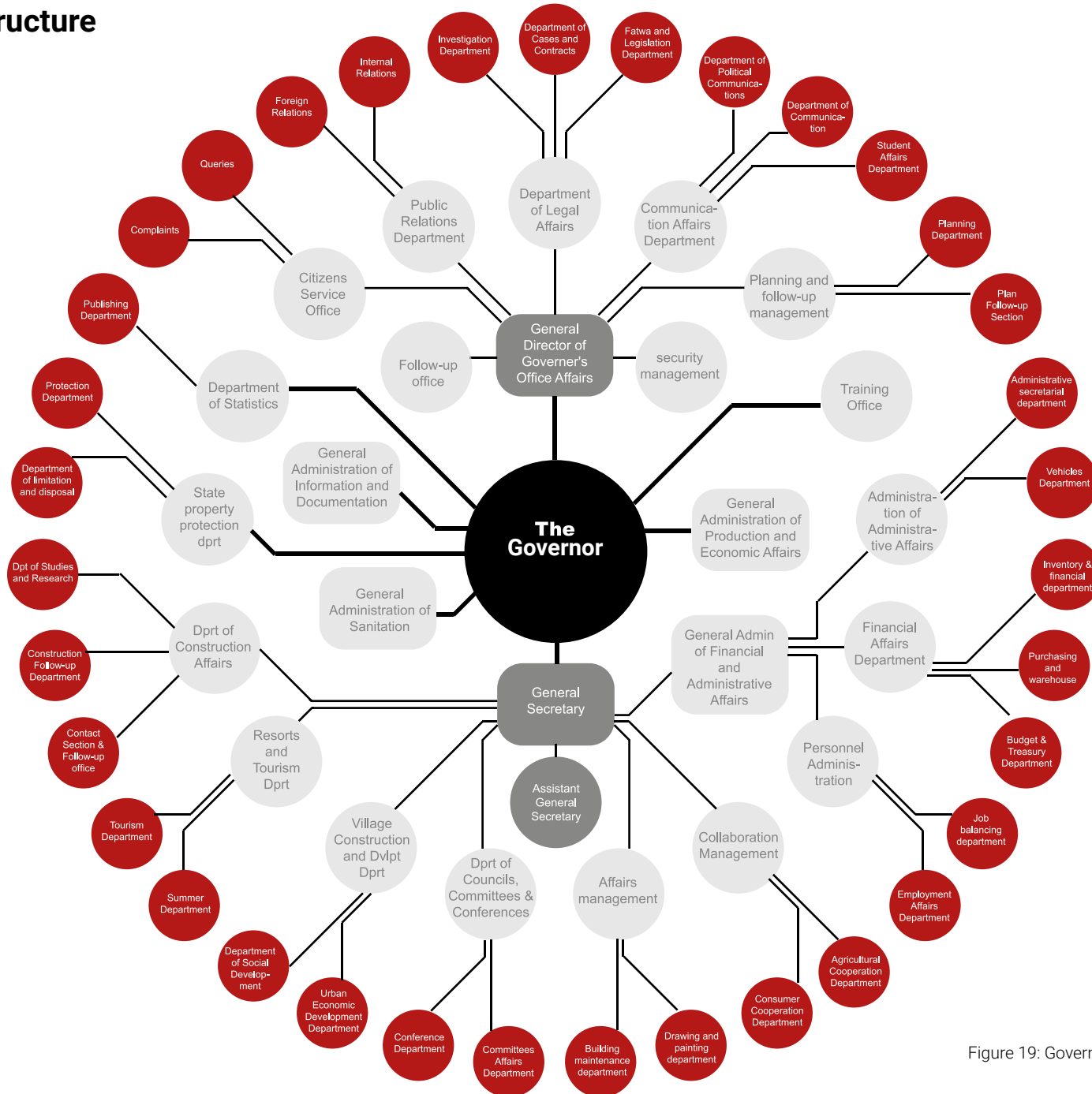


Figure 19: Governorate Structure and Departments  
Source: UN Habitat



## Demographic & Population Distribution

The total area of the Governorate is 1026 sq. km, resembling 4.6% of the Delta's total area and 0.1% of the state's land. The estimated area of the inhabited land is 590 sq. km, of which 90% is rural. Damietta Governorate has a total population of 1,496,765 inhabitants with a density of 1,413 p/km<sup>2</sup>. The population is mainly rural <sup>40</sup>, occupied by approximately 60.6% compared to 39.4% urban population.

Damietta Governorate is among the most overpopulated Governorates of Egypt, with an annual growth rate of approximately 2%. Following the same national pattern, major population centers remain concentrated along the Nile River, with Damietta city being the biggest one with a total population of 281,493, followed by New Damietta, Ezbet El Burg, Kafr El-Battikh, and Fraskor (fig. 20). Although New Damietta concentrates the second-highest population within the Governorate, with 71,342 inhabitants. However, the density remains amongst the lowest within the Governorate.

### Refugees Population in Damietta Governorate

Damietta Governorate hosts a total of 9,133 refugees, mainly coming from Syria. New Damietta hosts the majority of refugees, around 8,511, due to existing social networks and carpentry skills well known in the area, followed by Ras El Bar with 364 refugees and Fraskor with 103 refugees.

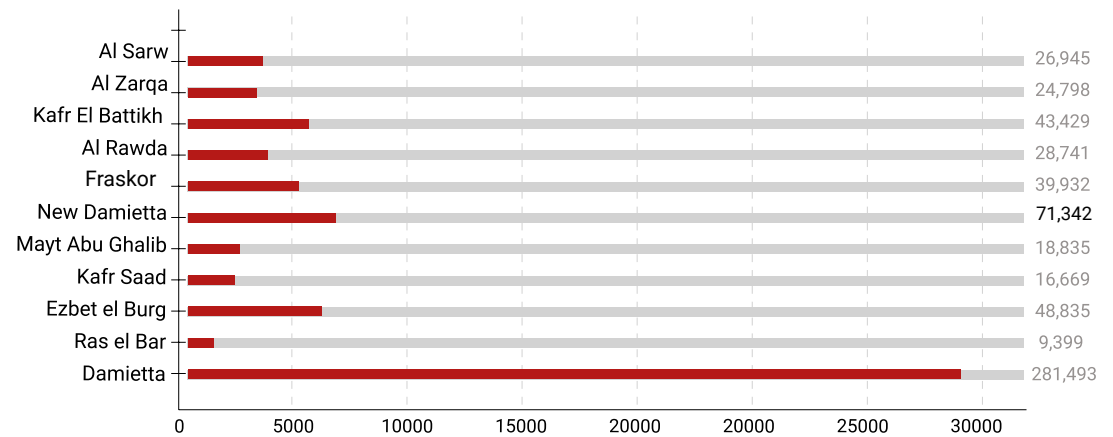


Figure 20: Number of population residing in different cities in Damietta Governorate  
Source: UN Habitat

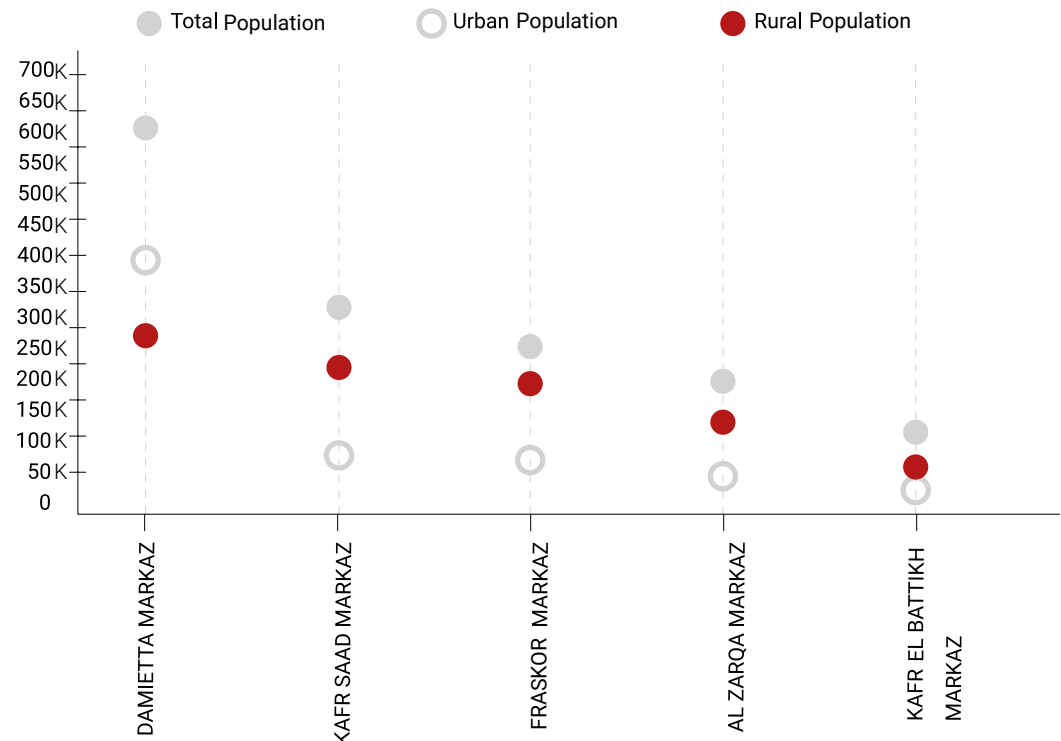
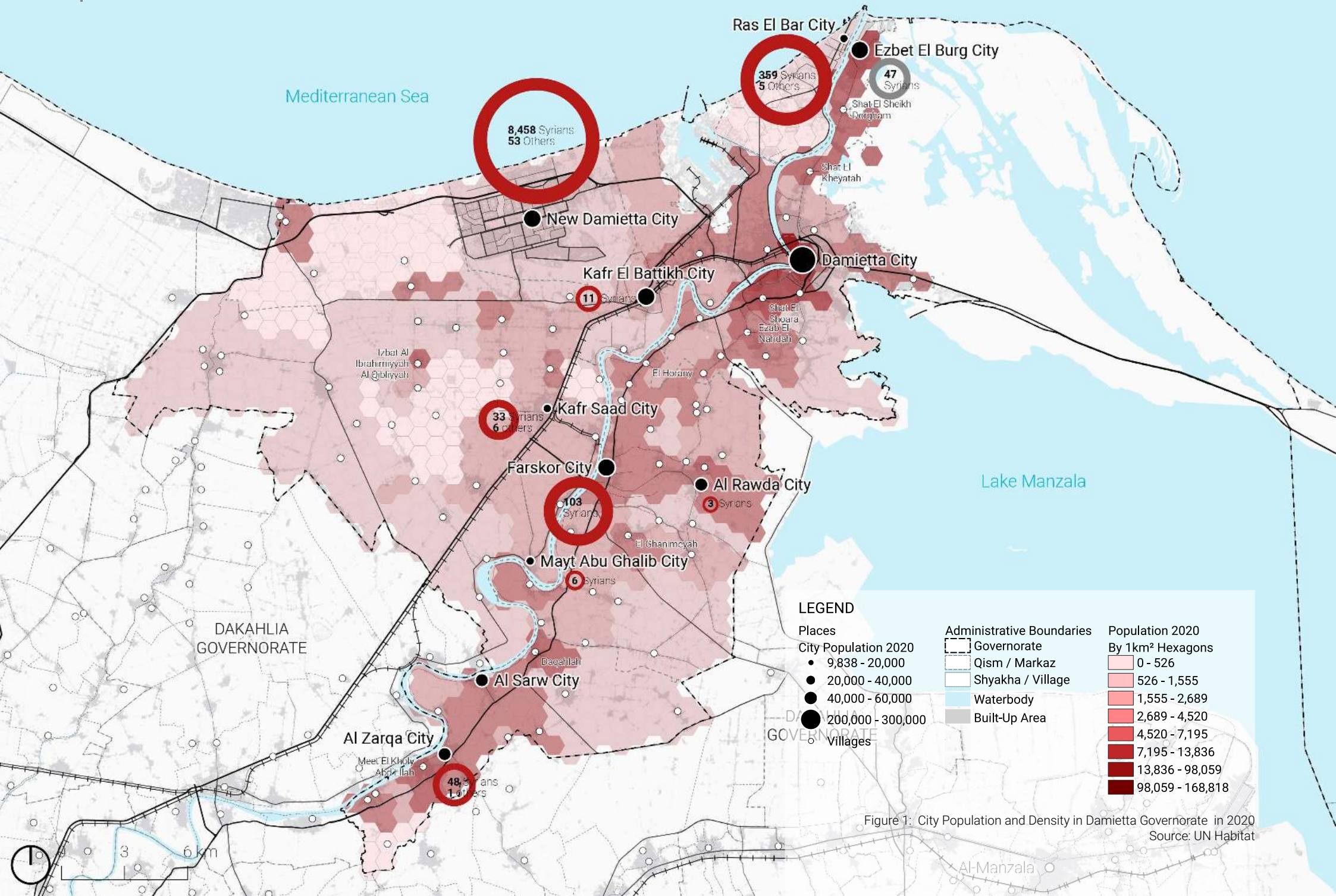


Figure 21: Total number of population in different cities and comparing its rural and urban population  
Source: UN Habitat



8,458 Syrians  
53 Others

359 Syrians  
5 Others

47 Syrians

11 Syrians

33 Syrians  
6 Others

103 Syrians

6 Syrians

48 Syrians  
1 Others

Figure 1: City Population and Density in Damietta Governorate in 2020  
Source: UN Habitat



## Role Of Damietta Port In Damietta

Damietta Governorate is Egypt's first window on the Mediterranean coast. It is located north of the Delta on the eastern bank of the Nile, and the Governorate's capital is 15 km from the river's mouth.

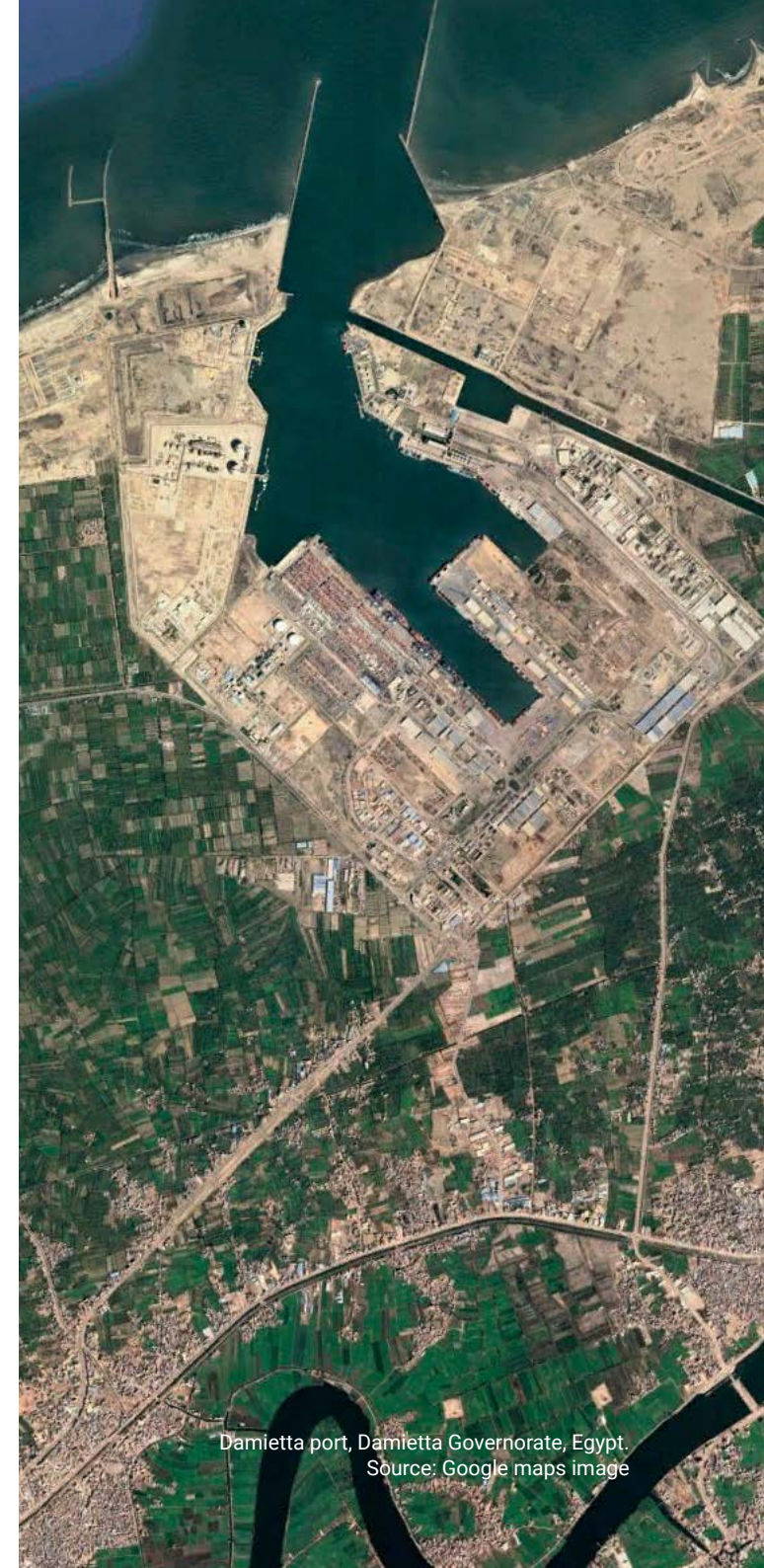
The Governorate witnessed significant economic changes in the mid-eighties of the twentieth century as a direct response to the establishment of Damietta Port, which is considered an interchange port of Alexandria. This has led to a significant reduction in shipping costs and fees for the waiting for ships. The development of container transport achieved a great leap as a transit port with the largest container space in Egypt. The Governorate has a fishing fleet amounting to 50% of the total fishing fleet at the national level and an arsenal for shipbuilding. There is also a free industrial zone next to the eastern border of Damietta Port, with an area of 8 sq. km for industrial exports. An additional industrial area is located south of New Damietta city, over 2.5 sq.km.

Damietta, well known for its furniture industry as the main source of income, has recorded zero unemployment (the lowest unemployment rate in the country) and experienced an influx of workers coming from adjacent Governorates such as Dakhahalia and Gharbiya. However, in the last few years, the sector has faced various challenges after the 2011 revolution, which led to an increase in unemployment, with a current rate of 8%.

Ras El Bar Resort is characterized by a unique location that forms a wonderful panorama at the confluence of the Nile River with the Mediterranean Sea at the "tongue" in the form of a triangle. The resort has witnessed tremendous development that made it to the forefront of the republic's resorts in local tourism.

There are also numerous investments in the Governorate, such as freezing and packaging vegetables and fruits in the free industrial zone in the new city of Damietta, wood industries, and complementary furniture industries.

It is noteworthy that establishing Damietta port and the international highway and industrial zones in New Damietta significantly changed the perspective of development in Damietta Governorate. However, the urban development strategy proposed in Damietta's Regional Strategy was not entirely successful in achieving a more balanced distribution of population and economic activity on limited agricultural lands. The new east-west development axis failed to absorb the Governorate's population growth or relieve the pressure from the north-south development axis on Damietta branch. This is mainly due to the fluctuating population growth of New Damietta and the failure of Kafr Saad and Kafr El-Battikh to reach a population size capable of creating secondary urban centers of economic feasibility.



Damietta port, Damietta Governorate, Egypt.  
Source: Google maps image

## Land Use

The Governorate's lands consist of river sediments deposited over thousands of years. Its dominant geographical features include the Nile and the Delta, which cover 4.6% of the Governorate, while sandy banks and salt marshes are found along the coast. The dunes extend parallel to the northern coast of the delta from east of Burullus lake to the northern border of Kafr El-Battikh. This area is bordered from the south by dense palm trees, and by moving inland away from the northern shore, areas of meadows, swamps, and ponds start to dominate the area's nature.

The delta has gone through a number of stages of expansion and accumulation over time. However, during the past century and a half, the construction of dams and barrages along the upper and lower reaches of the Nile contributed to the gradual shrinkage of the size of the delta. The cultivated lands in the Governorate constitute about 74% of the land area, while water covers more than 20% of the Governorate area. Barren lands are mainly located at the coast strip and are not adequate for agriculture potential due to high salinity. The Nile River divides the Governorate into two parts, carrying water along its eastern branch through the delta from Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea. The Delta region, located on both banks of the Nile, is responsible for producing most of the crops grown in Damietta.

Despite the cultivation of various crops in the Governorate, wheat and long-legged clover crops are predominant during the winter, while rice cultivation is predominant during the summer. The soil of the area formed by river deposits is generally sandy (calcareous) and suffers from poor drainage, as the groundwater level in it is often less than 150 cm below the surface of the earth, which results in high soil salinity.

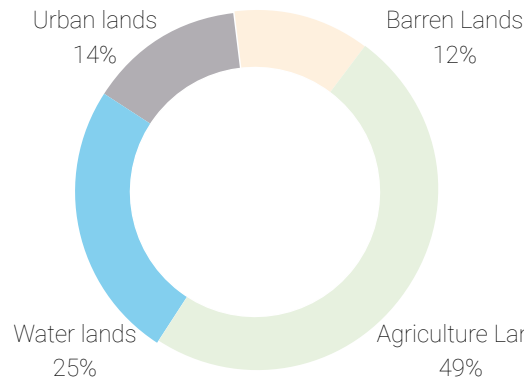


Figure 23: Land Cover Percentages in Damietta Governorate  
Source: UN Habitat

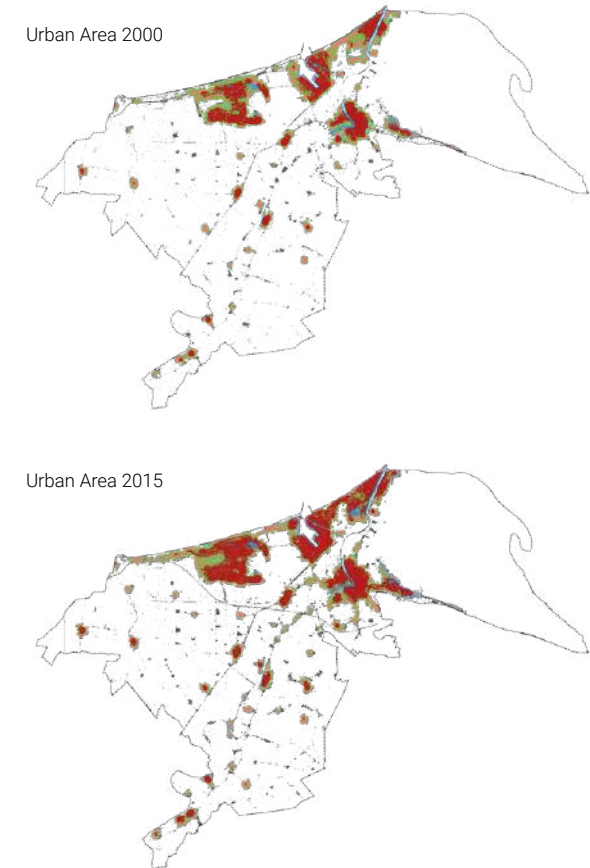


Figure 24: Urban Areas in 2000 and 2015  
Source: UN Habitat



## ENVIRONMENT

### Environmental Challenges

Groundwater quality is deteriorating as a result of pollution resulting from domestic sewage and wastewater containing agricultural chemicals. Salinity levels are very high. Although this is a matter of concern, it can be said that most of the waters of the Nile and irrigation canals are still unpolluted. The water quality in Lake Manzala is witnessing a significant deterioration, and the recorded levels of many heavy substances exceed the permissible limits by more than 20 times. As for the standard chemical parameters (total dissolved substances, chemical oxygen, biological oxygen, and phosphate), the recorded values exceed the permissible limits by about three to ten times, and a large part of the reasons for the deterioration of water quality is due to two factors: the increase in the incoming water pollution loads and the decrease in the quantities of seawater entering the lake since the links between the lake and the sea were closed in 1967 <sup>41</sup>.

The amount of fresh water and silt discharged from the Nile into the Mediterranean has been significantly reduced, especially with the building of the Aswan High Dam. As a direct result, Damietta Governorate has been experiencing significant erosion in its shoreline, reaching 500m within almost 10 years (1983-1995). The erosion continues severely with the non-stop urbanization along the river's banks and the coastline. Average rates of shoreline change from -35m/y to 40 m/y were measured from the satellites and verified from the ground depending on the implemented protection measures and shoreline orientation concerning marine processes <sup>42</sup>.

Moreover, due to its location in a low-lying coastal zone, Damietta zone, Damietta is highly impacted by the adverse effects of Climate change. The Governorate is under major sea level rise threats, which have critical socioeconomic impacts on the Nile Delta, including loss of agricultural resources and damage to major infrastructures. Based on projections done by Mansoura University, a Sea level rise of 1 meter could inundate approximately 254 km<sup>2</sup> of the Governorate land, representing 16% of its total land <sup>43</sup>.

Global sea level rise (SLR), Land subsidence and earthquakes: Several Integrated Coastal Zone Management studies (ICZM) estimate Global SLR up to 1m, some studies even indicated that approximately one-third of the lands at Nile Delta would be submerged by 2100 <sup>44</sup>. Furthermore, it was estimated that more than 391,000 people would be forced to be relocated. As part of the seismic-impacted Delta region, Damietta has two historically active spots; one near Ras El Bar city and the other near to Gammsa city. An earthquake strongly hit the area in 1988, similar to 1955.

The region is subject to pluvial surface water floods, especially in urban areas with low surface permeability. A shortage or a failure in the urban drainage system might occur. Moreover, the northern coast is susceptible to coastal flooding by seawater due to intense wind-storm events at the same time as the high tide (storm surge). Further environmental challenges are facing the Governorate, mainly concerning land degradation and soil and water contamination<sup>45</sup>.

Such challenges stem from rapid urbanization, excessive use of agricultural pesticides, and the disposal of untreated waste directly in the water bodies. Moreover, solid waste remains a major environmental challenge in Damietta. Comprehensive solid waste management mechanism reform is urgently needed in the Governorate, especially for domestic and agricultural waste and hazardous waste disposal.





**LEGEND**

<b>Places</b>	<b>Road</b>	<b>Land Cover</b>
City Population 2020	— Highway	■ Shrubland
● 9,838 - 20,000	— Primary	■ Grassland
● 20,000 - 40,000	— Secondary	■ Cropland
● 40,000 - 60,000	— Tertiary	■ Wetland
● 200,000 - 300,000	— Administrative Boundaries	■ Water
○ Villages	— Governorate	■ Impervious Surface
	— Qism / Markaz	■ Bareland
	— Shyakhya / Village	

Figure 25. Land Cover in Damietta Governorate. Source: UN Habitat



## ECONOMY

Economic development in Damietta is characterized by its multi-faceted nature without a mono-sector that leads the economic growth of the Governorate. Here, agriculture, trade, industry, and craft industries play a pivotal role in the overall development of Damietta Governorate. Yet, according to the regional and local strategic plans, it is expected that the relative importance of craft industries will increase in the near future. It is also expected that commercial activity will gain greater importance with the operation of Damietta Port with its planned capacity in parallel with the development of craft industries.

On the other hand, Damietta Governorate is considered the least contributing Governorate of the region in the field of agriculture. Despite the proposals to increase employment opportunities in the agricultural and fishery sectors, the limited agricultural areas will contribute to the decline in the share of agricultural employment to the benefit of the increase in the growth rate of industrial employment as an eventual result of the future development policies that focus on the growth of the two new poles of the region, namely New Damietta and Damietta port. The economic resources in Damietta are represented in human and natural resources from agricultural land, fisheries, and livestock, which constitute the current economic strength. Therefore, manufacturing industries, agriculture, and fishing are the main sectors that provide job opportunities in the Governorate, where approximately 18% of the labor force works in agriculture <sup>46</sup>. Although approximately 53% of the workforce is employed in the industrial sector, this is a different percentage from the national average of 13.9%. Furthermore, small industries are expected to gain more importance in Damietta. It is also noted that among all the sectors, the brokerage, real estate, and business services sectors were the fastest growing.

The Governorate is rich in many industrial activities that rely mainly on utilizing agricultural production, where several factories can be found, including weaving and food products. The furniture, carpentry, and wood industries are the leading sector in Damietta's handicraft industries, as they form more than 70% of the overall handicraft industries. Egypt signed various international agreements, such as the EFTA directly impacted the government's economic dynamic, adding to its international competition and industrial production that contributes to the international market.

The strategic location of Damietta port on the Mediterranean forms a pivotal point of international and transit trade, which opens countless developmental potentials for the Governorate. Furthermore, the free industrial zone located in the port forms an additional significant economic hub that can absorb labor and technical expertise from Damietta and other Governorates.

**Industrial Sector:** Damietta Governorate is considered one of the most important Governorates of the Republic with multiple industries; most importantly, Wood manufacturing (holding 19.30% of the total facilities of the Republic); furniture industry (26.1%); wood processing and cutting (13.5%); ship industry and repair (12.5%); amongst other various industries (fig.26).

The main factor that contributes to the industrial development in the Governorate is; (1) the availability of semi-finished and intermediate goods that can be imported from the port, as well as agricultural products, (2) the strength of comparative spatial advantage, communication links, and availability of skilled and trained workforce Governorate-wide, (3) uninterrupted transportation network of raw materials

and products between preservation parts, (4) a significant location of the Governorate, overlooking the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, (5) solid developmental opportunities in fish production and industries (Damietta Governorate is the second in fish production at the level of the Republic), (6) the distinctive weaving industries, and wood manufacturing, opening new and advanced industries in the field of wood furniture.

**Tourism Sector:** Damietta Governorate enjoys distinctive tourism potential, especially with various beaches and water bodies on the Mediterranean and the Nile. Such areas can be found in Ras El Bar area; the tower's manor; the tongue's opposite side at the Nile River's confluence and the Mediterranean waters; and Lake Manzala. Tourism resources in Damietta Governorate depend on domestic tourism, which comes second after Alexandria, as its share is 20% of the total domestic tourism in Egyptian resorts. Additionally, the moderate climate, rich heritage, and touristic environmental attractions, such as Lake Manzala, add to the potential economic development opportunities.

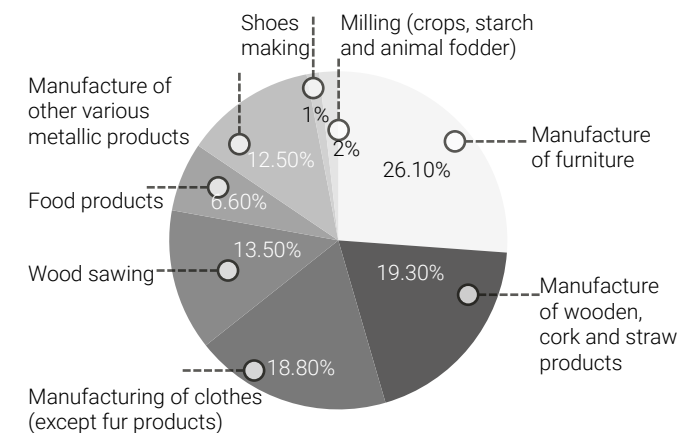


Figure 26. Industries in Damietta Governorate. Source: Damietta Governorate Environmental Action Plan

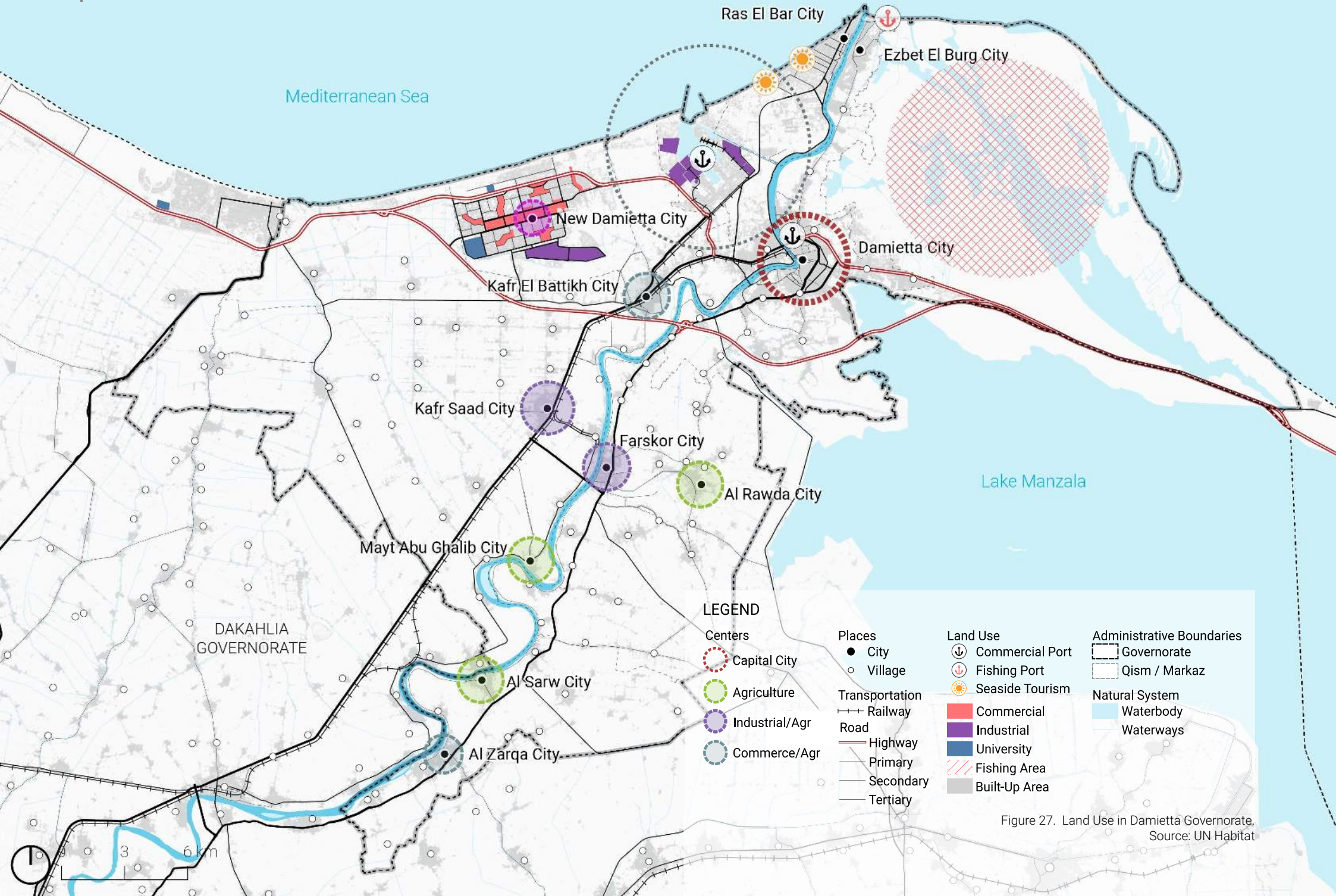


Figure 27. Land Use in Damietta Governorate. Source: UN Habitat



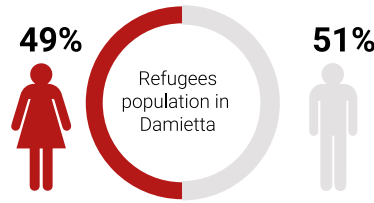
## DISPLACEMENT IN DAMIETTA

Damietta's refugee population represents 22% of the total population on the north coast 41,731 as of September 2021. Out of 9,133 refugees in Damietta Governorate, 8511 reside in New Damietta where Syrian refugees represent 99% of this population. Syrian refugees have chosen New Damietta mainly due to the existing social network and the market demand for their craftsmanship (especially in carpentry), in addition to the relative affordability of living in Damietta compared to Cairo.

According to the joint assessment for Syrian refugees in New Damietta conducted in 2013 by several international agencies, namely UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, IOM, CRS, and RESALA, the main protection challenges for Syrian refugees in New Damietta are related to their accessibility to accurate information on available services, trauma, psycho-social support, social isolation, livelihood, and access to adequate housing.

While accessibility to education is granted by law, the main challenges in accessing education are associated with the high classroom crowdedness, curriculum differences, and accessibility of educational premises to Persons with Disabilities. The same problems are faced by the Egyptians as well. Such a situation has resulted in severe losses in the academic achievement of the refugees. In the health sector, the main challenges were related to quality and availability of services such as prenatal care and vaccination for children under five years, mainly due to the lack of awareness of the available services and the costly medication expenses.

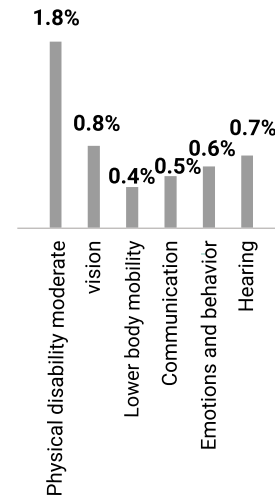
### GENERAL INFORMATION



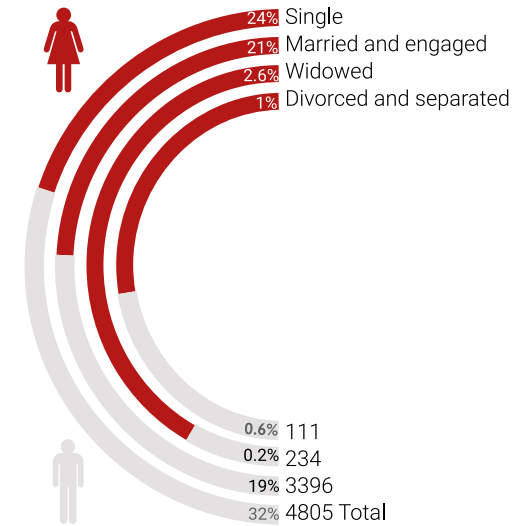
### Average family size

**4** Individuals

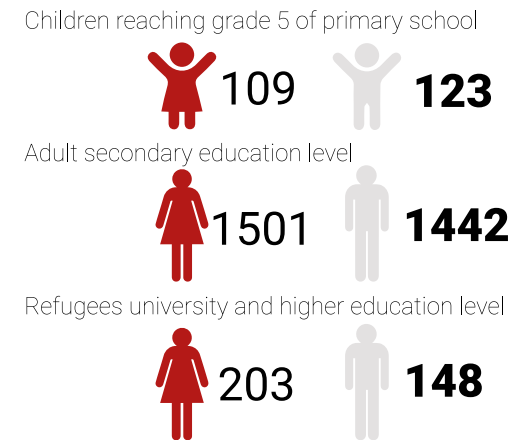
### Disability



### Marital Status



### Educational Level



**5%** Syrian refugees **18 years** old are illiterate.  
**57%** Refugees have primary/preparatory education.  
**12%** Refugees have higher education.

Figure 28. Displacement Figures in Damietta Governorate. Source: UNHCR



Refugees and citizens in Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN-Habitat



# 3

## NEW DAMIETTA CITY CONTEXT







The New Damietta's border wall, New Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN-Habitat



## New Damietta Sub-Region

New Damietta and Kafr El-Battikh are seen to form a sub-region with various economic potentials, especially with the existing flow of relations between the two areas, mainly related to economic opportunities and social networks. Yet, the weak infrastructural connectivity between the two cities has been revealed to be hindering the future growth of the area, especially for the high number of Syrian refugees who reside in New Damietta.

New Damietta was figuratively built on a complex location, having the Mediterranean Sea, The Nile River and Damietta port in close proximity. Modern additions such as universities, schools, service centers, and a garden makes it a vital site in Damietta Governorate. New Damietta serves as a major hub for domestic traffic. It is one of the most fully urbanized cities on Egypt's north coast and amongst the most expensive areas<sup>47</sup>. Existing fine infrastructure plays a key role in hosting refugees. The city of Kafr El-Battikh, on the other side, enjoys a dynamic role in a multifaceted location close to New Damietta, old Damietta, and the port. Its semi-urban neighborhoods and inadequate infrastructure make it a non-desirable place for refugees. There is an agricultural pillow surrounding both New Damietta and Kafr El-Battikh. However, the city's proximity to coal kilns has a particularly negative influence on the environment and poses a health risk to everyone who lives there. It also has poor infrastructure. New Damietta occasionally provides services to Kafr El-Battikh while residents commute for work, visit relatives, and leisure.

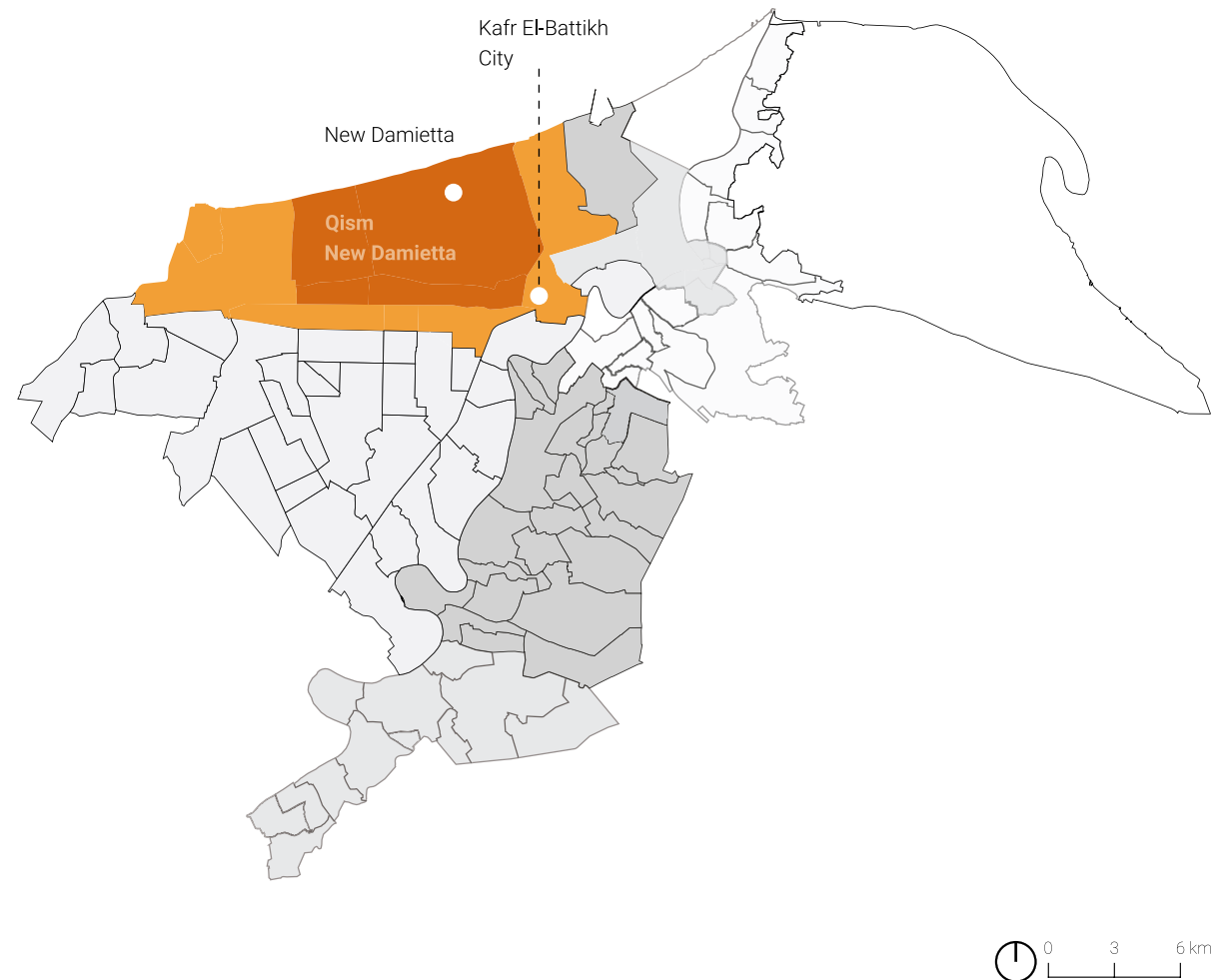


Figure 29: Regional Administration Divisions in Damietta Governorate  
Source: UN Habitat

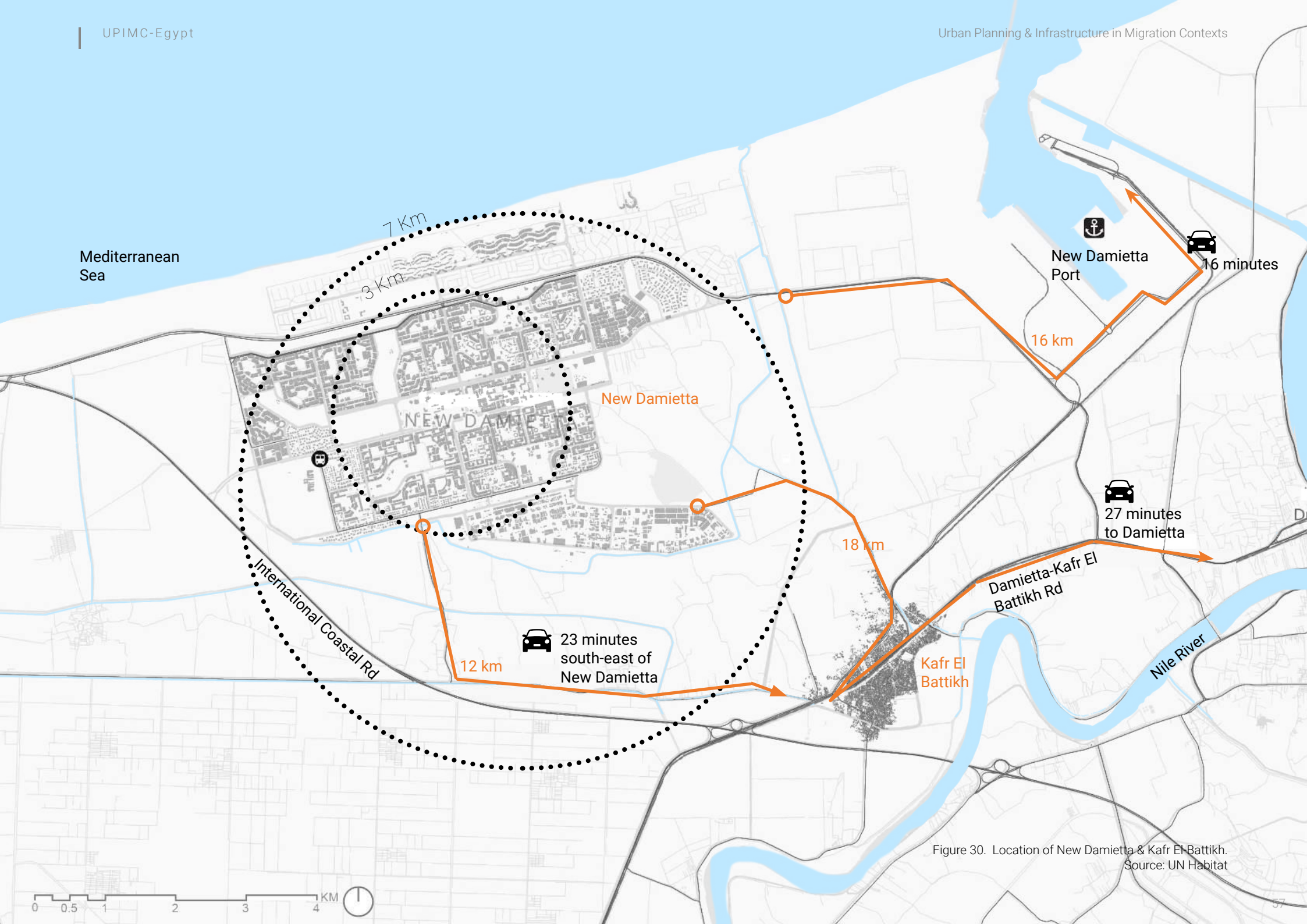


Figure 30. Location of New Damietta & Kafr El Battikh.  
Source: UN Habitat



## Kafr El-Battikh - Summary

Kafr El-Battikh Markaz is located north of Damietta Governorate, where the Nile River borders it from the eastern side. Its scope includes the city of Kafr El-Battikh -the center's capital- and the villages' local units (Riyadh, Al-Basateen, Umm Al-Rida, Al-Rikabiya, and Gamasa). The total area of the Kafr El-Battikh center is 217.23 km<sup>2</sup>, representing 23.9% of the Governorate area. A Ministerial Resolution No. 2072 of 2008 was issued to establish the Kafr El-Battikh Police Station (Qism) in the Damietta Security Directorate, where its administrative components are: the city of Kafr El-Battikh and the 12 villages surrounding it. Additionally, the Ministerial Decree No. 408 of 2010 was issued to establish the local unit of the Kafr El-Battikh center. Accordingly, the local unit of the Kafr El-Battikh center was established.

Kafr El-Battikh center is located in the middle of Damietta Governorate, where it is bordered on the east by the Nile River. The city of Kafr El-Battikh is located in the east of Kafr El-Battikh Markaz. A group of villages, such as the villages of Ezbet al-Najjarin from the north, Kahil from the south, the Sawahel from the east, and Al-Hawshim from the west, surrounds it. Due to the city's location, surrounded by high-quality agricultural lands from all directions, and the random urban growth of the city over different time periods led to a decrease in the city's population density. Yet, Kafr El-Battikh remains one of the smallest cities in terms of population size at the Governorate level.

The city of Kafr El-Battikh was called by this name for its famous reputation in the past for the cultivation of watermelons ("battikh" in Arabic) in what is also known as the land of valleys.

The city of Kafr El-Battikh is distinguished by its geographical location, as it is the major gateway to Damietta Governorate, where several regional and national roads pass through it, namely (Damietta-Mansoura Road, Damietta Port Road, Ras al-Bar, Gamasa Resort Road, Kafr al-Battikh Power Station Road, and Kafr Suleiman al-Bahri Road).

The city holds many economic opportunities that play a key role in developing a prosperous urban area. The competitive advantage in the furniture industry, coupled with its strategic location near Damietta port, makes it a dynamic entity on the verge of an international, regional road to finished export products and raw wood.

While having many advantages in terms of agriculture and the strategic location of Kafr El-Battikh, the city suffers a poor economy due to significant rise in wood prices, in addition to the lack of marketing centers, the presence of agricultural pests, and availability of vacant land to establish agricultural and tourist activities. The biggest environmental issues in the city are the presence of large amounts of solid and organic waste, especially from the agricultural activities and wood industries. Despite the city's fame for its furniture and crops, it lacks optimal exploitation of these solid wastes due to the lack of economic incentives to attract investors in waste management projects. Even worse, many farmers burn certain types of agricultural waste to produce coal to generate income, leading to an environmental catastrophe that reaches the surrounding areas. At the same time, Kafr El-Battikh suffers from the lack of effective management of economic development, with the limited role of local government in the development of the city, as there are no allocated budgets for such interventions.

At the built-up environment level, the city's informal growth has led to the encroachment on agricultural lands producing environmental, visual, and audio pollutants that affected both nature and the population.

Moreover, despite the full coverage of water network, the quality of the potable water remains problematic and in need of immediate intervention. Other neighborhoods in Kafr El-Battikh have not been serviced with wastewater network. Roads are in poor condition which affects accessibility and transportation.

Existing conditions of both population and infrastructure in Kafr El-Battikh can make many of the implications related to the health insufficiencies even more urgent. An immediate example, is the city's lack of medical and emergency centers. Education is another key challenge facing the city, with illiteracy rate standing at 24.48% of the total population<sup>48</sup>.

### Educational Services Index

Unemployment 4.83%

Illiteracy 24.48%



Kafr El Battikh  
(Google Earth)



Kafr El Battikh railway  
(Google Earth)

**LEGEND**

- Balamoon Canal/water bodies
- Undeveloped Lands
- Commercial Buildings
- Residential Buildings
- Residential-mixed Buildings
- Industrial
- Cemetery
- Retail
- Exhibition
- Ferry services
- Fire station
- Government office
- Open Space
- Farm
- City entry points

Figure 31. Urban Footprint of Kafr El-Battikh.  
Source: UN Habitat



## New Damietta - Administration & Governance Context

New Damietta city is one of the new urban communities established by Egypt's Prime Minister's decision No. 546/1980. It is located adjacent to the existing Damietta city. It also belongs to the first generation of new urban communities affiliated with NUCA. The main aim of its establishment is to provide a development pole that integrates with the existing city (Damietta city) to solve the current challenges of Damietta Governorate and the existing city, such as providing new economic and employment opportunities, and new extension areas for productive activities (industry and tourism).

New Damietta city is located north of Damietta Governorate and extends on the Mediterranean coast with a length of 9 kilometres. Also, it is located within 4.5 kilometres of Damietta Port. The city can be accessed through the Saheli Dawli International Coastal road and the Damietta-Kafr El-Sheikh Road.

The total area of New Damietta is about 43.9 Km<sup>2</sup>-10847.93 acres. The city's total population is estimated to be about 71342 residents in 2022<sup>49</sup>.

The city is divided into six districts. Each district consists of 6 neighborhoods; some of these districts are for residential areas and public facilities, and others are specifically for economic and business activities. New Damietta provides more than 86,404 residential units divided into private-sector and social projects. Aside from New Damietta's residential districts, there are also areas specific for commercial, tourist, business, and industrial activities:

The central, coastal, and industrial area. The Industrial District extends over 560 acres and includes industries, such as leather, furniture, clothing, and engineering industries. There are a total of 444 factories in this district<sup>50</sup>, including the Qal'et Kartoon factory, Shouman factory, Mobiliana Furniture factory, and Ghazala factory for vans.

The city holds a variety of economic activities to support both Egyptians and non-Egyptians



District six, New Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN Habitat





The city is divided into six districts, The central area which includes the public facilities and services divides the residential districts into two parts; the northern part, which includes residential districts. No. 2, 3, 5, and 6, and the southern part includes residential districts no. 1 and 4.

The industrial activities and the cemetery are located at the south of the city.

**LEGEND**

New Damietta Boundary	Population Density/Block 80 - 100%
Built-Up Area	Population Density/Block 50 - 79%
Road	Population Density/Block 0 - 49%
Refugees' Clustering	

Figure 32. New Damietta Districts Divisions. Source: UN Habitat

## Demographics and Urban Growth

As a new urban community, New Damietta is well-equipped to accommodate all the investments needed to provide the basic services and facilities that serve all community classes. Its urban built-up area expands to an area of 6,500 acres, including residential, services, industrial, tourism, and recreational areas <sup>51</sup>.

The number of residents in New Damietta was about 27,028 inhabitants in 2006<sup>52</sup>, and the population growth rate has increased by around 2.4% annually due to various factors, including rural-urban migration, the concentration of economic activities and services in the urban areas, but most importantly, the influx of refugees. The city's population is estimated at 71,342 residents in 2022, and it aims to accommodate 500,000 inhabitants.

As the growth map of New Damietta shows, the city has passed through different stages throughout the last years. First of all, it can be noticed that large areas of the industrial area, the central area, and many residential areas, particularly in districts one, two, four, and some tourist areas, were initially developed in 2000. This was followed by growth in 2005 and 2010, specifically in the third, fifth and sixth districts and tourist areas in the coastal parts. Then, in 2014, a major growth occurred in the fifth district and some regional services, such as Damietta University. Eventually, in 2016, in the fifth district, many tourist villages were developed.

**New Damietta Area** 43.9 Km<sup>2</sup>  
**Population** 71,342 residents in 2022  
**Refugee Population** 8,511 refugees

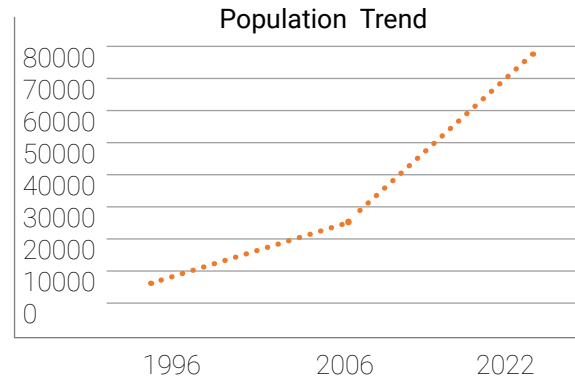


Figure 33: Population trend from 1996 to 2022 in New Damietta  
 Source: CAPMAS 1996 and 2006, and population projection in 2022



New Damietta workshops, Egypt.  
 Source: UN Habitat



### VIEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY

During held workshops with the community and the refugees, residents stressed that most of the Syrian refugees had occupied the oldest parts of the city since its establishment more than 20 years of age. Structures and sewage infrastructure in those areas suffer from decay.

Mediterranean Sea



Figure 34. Growth Map of New Damietta  
Source: UN Habitat

## Population Density & Distribution

According to the UN Habitat standards, a high-density cluster/urban centre is a density of at least 1500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and a minimum population of 50000. The urban population density in New Damietta (The total population/the total urban or built-up area) is about (2644.03 people/km<sup>2</sup>). In comparison, the net population density (the total population/the total residential area) is about (4005.58 people/km<sup>2</sup>) which is considered higher than the average high-density urban centers.

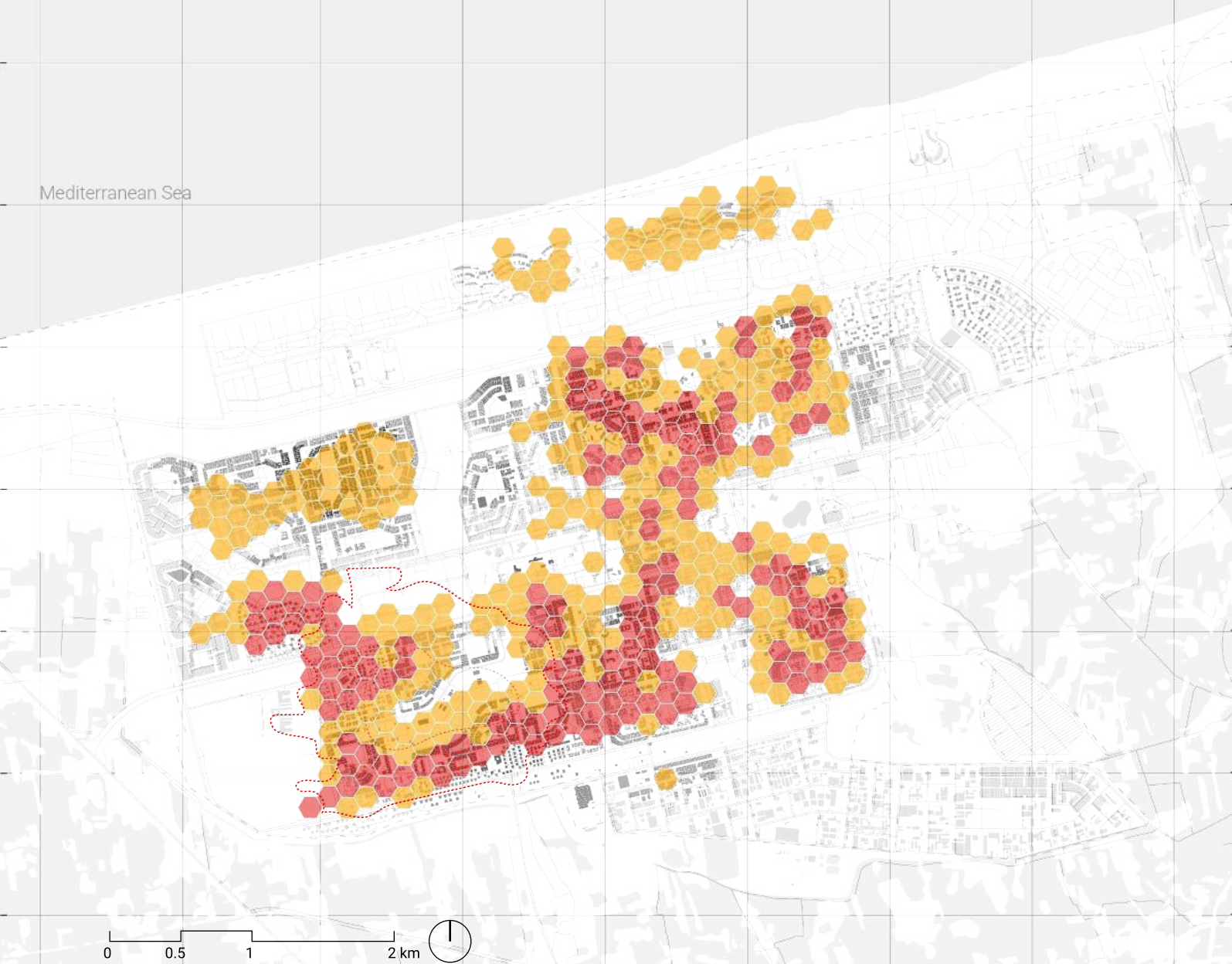
According to (fig. 35), the population distribution shows that as one moves further to the southern, eastern, and some north-west parts of the city, the population density increases. It is noticed that the refugees are highly concentrated in the southwest areas as they tend to settle near the economic activities (industrial and commercial activities) as much as possible, and due to these parts being one of the oldest in the city since its establishment, which may be more affordable to most vulnerable groups. The areas with higher population density correspond to the areas with higher refugee presence.



New Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN-Habitat



Mediterranean Sea



LEGEND










-  New Damietta Boundary
  -  Built-Up Area
  -  Road
  -  Refugees' Clustering
  -  High Crowdedness Rate 1.5 - 2.2 (person per room)
  -  Medium-high Crowdedness Rate 1.0 - 1.4 (person per room)
- | Population Density/Block  |           |
|---|-----------|
|  | 80 - 100% |
|  | 50 - 79%  |
|  | 0 - 49%   |

Figure 35: Population Density and Distribution Map  
Source: UN Habitat



## Land Use

The land uses within the city of New Damietta are classified into several usages:

- Residential uses are divided into private-sector projects and social projects.
- Service uses include commercial, educational, health, administrative, recreational, cultural, and religious.
- Mixed land and various other uses are represented in commercial and military, archaeological, agricultural, and vacant lands.
- Roads of various degrees, car parking areas, and regional or local parking lots.

The total area for vacant lands in New Damietta is 1.6 km<sup>2</sup>.

According to CAPMAS field survey 2017, it can be observed that the total area of land uses in the city is amounted to about 9037.7 acres, which can be analyzed as follows:

### Residential:

Residential areas constitute about 4296.7 acres, representing about 48% of the total area of land use in the city<sup>53</sup>.

New Damietta provides more than 86,404 residential units, which are:

- Premium residence: it includes 984 residential units
- Average residence (Dar Misr): it includes 7,272 residential units
- Luxurious residence (Janna): it includes 3,144 residential units
- Egypt residence: it includes 3,840 residential units.

### Services:

The total area of services of various types, according to the results of the field survey in 2017, amounted to about 1077.1 acres, representing 14% of the total area of land uses in the city, and distributed as follows:

#### 1. Educational services:

These institutions vary between military secondary education, government vocational education, and 26 primary and secondary schools. It also includes an international school and five private schools, including Thebes Distinguished Language School, the Egyptian Nile School, the Japanese System School, Al-Azhar University, Horus University, and Damietta University as well.

#### 2. Health services:

Health institutions include private hospitals, a military hospital implemented by the Engineering Authority of the Armed Forces, a public hospital, and a hospital dedicated to mental and nervous disorders in the Fourth District. Al-Azhar University Hospital, Dar El-Oyoun hospital, and El-Shorouk hospitals, in addition to a medical center and an ambulance station.

#### 3. Religious and social services:

About nine social services institutions, one church, and 22 mosques exist.

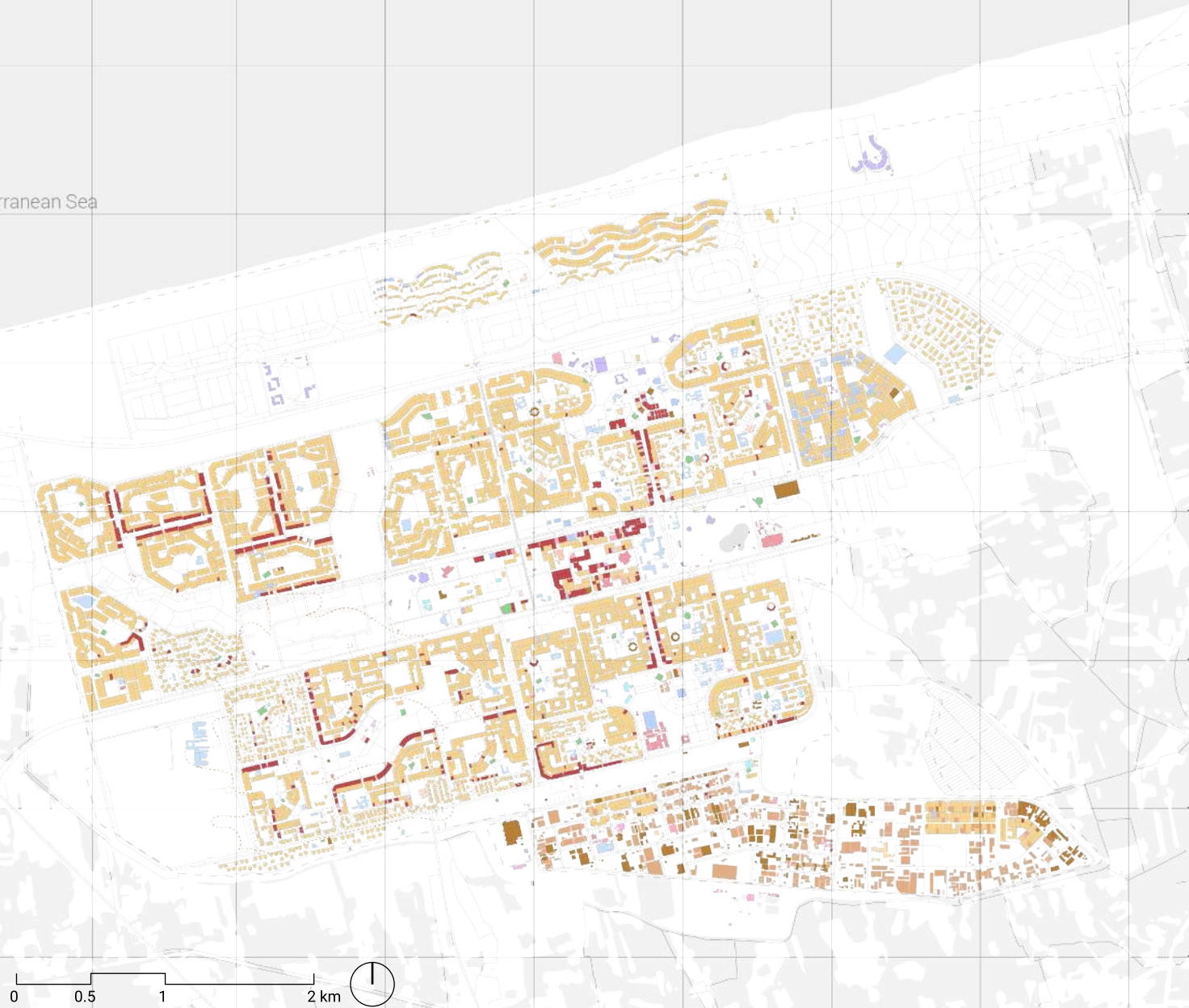
#### 4. Other public services:

There are sports facilities like Wadi Degla, El Mostakbal, El-Mohandeseen sports clubs, and New Damietta's Stadium. There are also recreational services, for example, New Damietta's Public Park and New Damietta's Cultural Palace. As for commercial services, there are two shopping malls, nine hotels, and many cafés and restaurants.

### Industries:

The total area of the industrial areas is about 996.9 acres, representing about 11% of the total land use in the city. The number of factory areas is about 510 producing factories. There are also 97 factories under construction.

Mediterranean Sea



The majority of land in New Damietta in terms of land use distribution is residential land, which comprises the highest percentage at 48%. Green and open spaces, on the other hand, add up to around 3.8% of planned areas. Commercial land use in New Damietta follows main and secondary roads, and a concentration of commercial and mixed-use are seen industrial district and the central-eastern parts of the city. As described earlier, the refugees mostly live in highly urbanized industrial and commercial areas. This is due to easy access to livelihoods and services.

LEGEND

- New Damietta Boundary
- Built-up Area
- Road
- Refugee's Clustering
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Commercial Residential
- Industrial residential
- Multi use residential
- Deserted
- Educational
- Religious
- Cultural
- Medical
- Residential
- Entertainment
- Transportation
- Diplomatic
- Public service
- Administrative

Figure 36: Land Use Map



## Economic Activity

Like other countries, mixed-use buildings in Egypt usually include commercial service facilities on the ground floors. The commercial and economic land use in New Damietta city occupies about 14% with a total area of approximately 6300 square meters. As per NUCA's law, mixed use of buildings are not fully allowed and in many cases forbidden by law, that is why the percentage could be seen as a low one.

As shown in the socio-economic analysis map, the economic centers show concentration in the main axe of Damietta city (the commercial axe) beside the clustering in the center of each neighborhood which goes with the landuse that the master plan states. Nevertheless, many economic activities appear in the southeast new Damietta city, where the industrial area is located. In addition, the economic activities are mainly existed on the city's major and main roads, which featured with high frequency and exposure.

Although nearly 95% of the city population has access to commercial activities within a 30-minute walk, the industrial area remains relatively far and least accessible than the other economic centers in the city. Public transportation nearly reaches the edge of this area and with the absence of alternative mobility modes, reaching the industrial zone remains a challenge for the residing labor. On the other hand, it is noteworthy to mention that NUCA has recently released, to a certain extent, the constraints over adjusting the buildings' land use, which allowed a smoother transition from housing to commercial use all over the city.

The city holds much potential for further economic prosperity, especially with its available space, human capital, and strategic location. It is widely acknowledged

that major economic center are divided into direct and indirect economic sectors. In contrast, commercial and industrial facilities which contribute directly to the area's economy are classified as the direct economic sector, while facilities such as banks, education, and medical centers are classified as the indirect economic sector.

Studying the area is of great importance as it reflects the relative importance of economic activities in the city. As for New Damietta city, the light will be shed on the human resources and the work market by discussing several points, such as the number of employed people above 15 years of age according to main economic activities, leading to activities that make up the economic base, and the number of laborers in the various productive sectors. Regarding the classification of employed people according to the main economic activities, what can be observed is that the percentage of employed people was about 8% of the total employed people in Damietta Governorate. It was also about 55% of the total population of New Damietta 54, and this percentage decreased by 12% compared to the year 2006 (67%)<sup>55</sup>. It is worth noting that the percentage of males employed was about 83% of the total employees, while women were about 17% .

### Education Sector:

It is considered the main and leading activity in the city, about 18.3% of the workforce worked in educational institutions.

### Human health and social work activities:

They are considered one of the main activities in New Damietta, mainly because they serve a wide category of individuals, either Egyptians or Non-Egyptians (refugees and asylum seekers). In addition, more than 8% of the

total laborers worked in these sectors <sup>56</sup>.

### Commercial Sector:

The main sectors include wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, information and communication, financial and insurance, real estate, arts entertainment, and recreational activities. Over the past few years, the city has seen increased commercial business transactions and established shopping centers, malls, and large commercial centers like Hady Mall and City Grand Mall. Various cafés, restaurants, and athletic and cultural centers are also available.

### Industrial Sector:

About 11% of the total laborers work in industrial institutions. It is worth noting that the industrial areas include many industries such as leather, furniture, clothing, and engineering. As for refugee employment, according to the field survey conducted by CAPMAS 2017, it can be said that most of the refugees and asylum seekers in New Damietta work in commercial and industrial activities.

Mediterranean Sea

Only 15 % of the total population can reach commercial facilities within 15 and 5 minutes, respectively.



LEGEND

- New Damietta Boundary
- Built-Up Area
- Road
- Refugees' Clustering
- Industrial
- Commercial
- Commercial Residential
- Economic Center
- Population Density/Block Working Force (16-65 years) 80 - 100%
- 50 - 79%
- 0 - 49%
- Walkability to commercial 30 mins
- 15 mins
- 5 mins

Figure 37: Socio-Economic Accessibility Map  
Source: UN Habitat





Industrial area in New Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN-Habitat



Mediterranean Sea



There are three types of economic activities in the city; industrial activities which mainly exist in the industrial area in the south-eastern part; commercial activities, which are scattered and represent about 10% of the total economic activities area; and commercial residential activities which are the dominant type (occupies about 65% of the total economic area). Most of the working force are mainly concentrated in district 1,2, and 4.

LEGEND

- New Damietta Boundary
  - Built-Up Area
  - Road
  - Refugees' Clustering
  - Industrial
  - Commercial
  - Commercial Residential
  - Economic Center
- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Population Density/Block Working Force (16-65 years) |           |
|  | 80 - 100% |
|  | 50 - 79%  |
|  | 0 - 49%   |

Figure 38: Socio-Economic Centers Map  
Source: UN Habitat



## Access To Basic Services

Based on the GIS analysis, The people of New Damietta do not have their needs fully met from the current provision of basic services, such as electricity, water, sanitation, and gas.

### Access to Energy & Electricity

In New Damietta, East Delta Electricity Production Company has built the New Damietta Gas Power Station located west of New Damietta, generating 500 megawatts annually.

According to New Damietta Environmental Profile, New Damietta owns three transformer stations with a capacity of 165 M.F.A, and the number of distributors is estimated to be 24. According to NUCA, the total completed length of power networks is about 2152.6 km.

Regarding the spatial distribution of power connectivity in New Damietta, what can be noticed is that despite the shortage of up-to-date data, the analysis revealed that around 12% of the hexagons \*, where the data is available, are connected to authorized energy networks. Meanwhile, only 4% of the hexagons have half of their total area connected to authorized energy networks. As shown in the infrastructure map of New Damietta, most of the east-southern parts of the city, around 61.3% of their area, are well connected to energy. Furthermore, around 79% of the total population in the city is well connected to the energy services in the city. Spatially, the percentage of electrical connectivity is high in the eastern neighborhoods, where the population density is higher. Similarly, areas with overcrowding rates range from 75% to 100% in the electrical connectivity to an electrical energy.

### Access to Water

The Drinking Water and Sanitation Company in Damietta Governorate is responsible for providing the production and distribution of drinking water and managing the facility at the Governorate level including the city of New Damietta. The Holding Company for Drinking Water and Sanitation was established by Presidential Decree No. 135 of 2004. Water companies in several Governorates, including Damietta, joined the holding company. According to the third paragraph of the aforementioned Republican Decree, the public economic bodies and public sector companies for drinking water and sanitation in the Governorates were transformed into subsidiaries of the holding company subject to the provisions of the Public Business Sector Companies Law Promulgated by Law No. 203 of 1991. Among the company's main tasks:

- Production and distribution of potable water throughout the Governorate.
- The operation, maintenance and development of production units, distribution networks and their accessories.

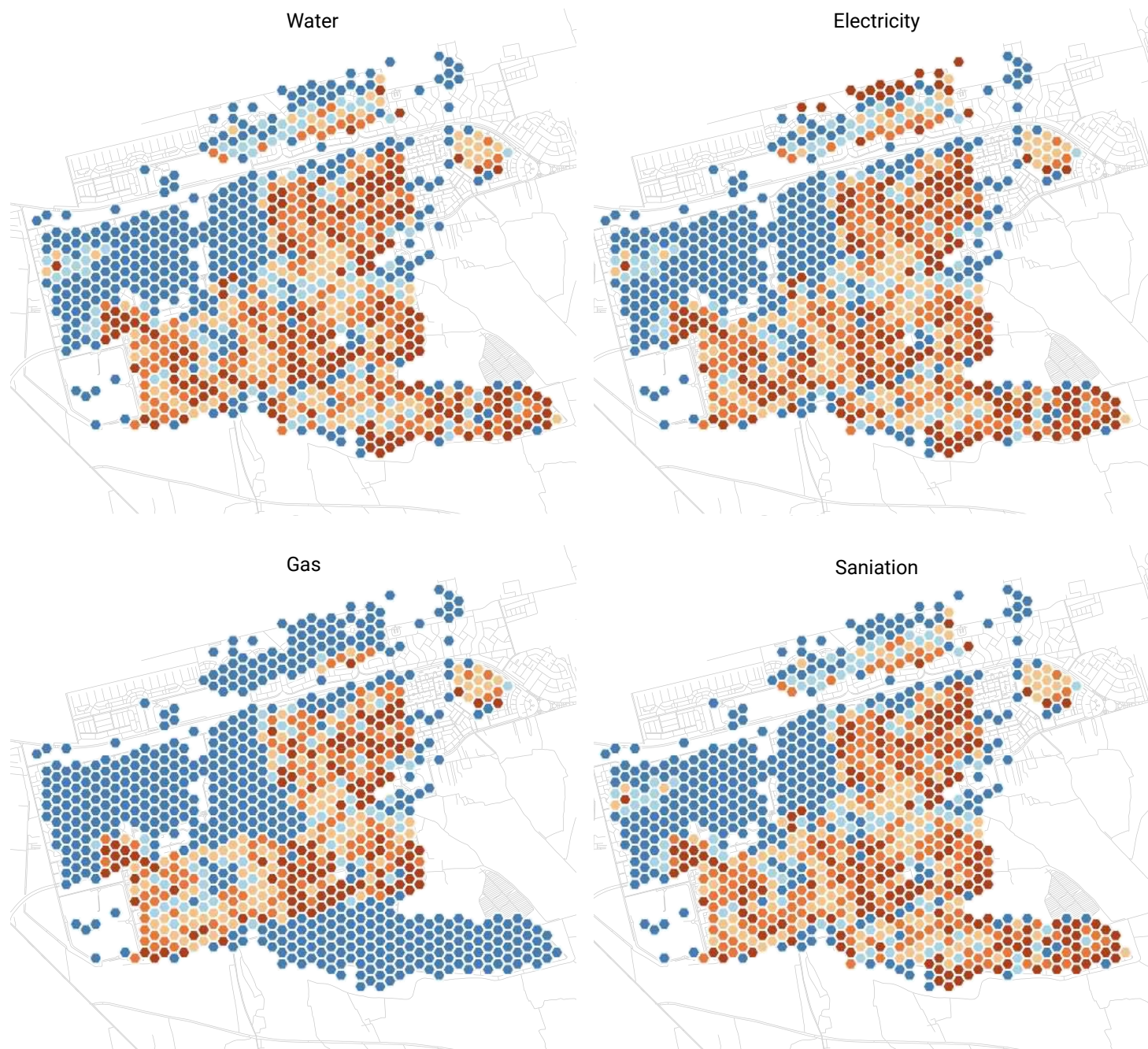
Water provision has been one of Egypt's most challenging issues recently. It is associated with several local, regional, and global challenges. These challenges vary from the increasing demand for clean water supply locally to the regional conflicts between Egypt and Ethiopia because of the Renaissance Dam and the impacts of climate change that threaten the water supply globally. These challenges were addressed recently in a water management strategy in 2020 to tackle any possible shortages in the water supply<sup>57</sup>. New Damietta city mainly relies on surface water sources, such as The

Nile River, to provide its water needs. New Damietta city owns a treatment plant with a capacity of (86 thousand m<sup>3</sup>/day) as the first phase, and the second phase of the plant is being implemented so that the capacity can be (172 thousand m<sup>3</sup>/day). In addition, the length of the completed network is estimated to be around 604 Km, and the pipes' diameters are about 100/100 mm.

Based on the analysis done on the city level, about 79.4% of the total population are well-connected to water, and they can use it for different purposes. As shown in the infrastructure map, it can be observed that most of the eastern parts and southern parts of the city are well-connected to the drinking water network, while the western parts and northern parts of the city are fairly connected to it.

The main issue with water remains its quality; faucet water has high turbidity and salt concentration, where clay is considered one of the main pollutants. According to interviews with New Damietta residents, there is an assumption that the water treatment and purification plants are not providing the right filter for the water to become drinkable. Overall, the water capacity assessment revealed a relatively high demand for the water network. Upper floors in some housing units do not get water, and the existing water network and pipes are dilapidated and weak, indicating a need to upgrade the water pipeline network to replace the current network, especially in the seventy and eighty neighborhoods.

\* Each hexagon's area – 21000 M<sup>2</sup> (5.19 Acres)



### Sewage Network

Regarding the spatial distribution of sewage connectivity, its distribution has a similar pattern to the distribution of electricity and clean water services. Demographically, around 80% of the total estimated population is connected to the sewage network in the city. This pattern indicates good connectivity of the most crowded and dense areas to basic sanitation, clean water, and electricity.

### Storm-Water Drainage System

Many residents and refugees complained about the storm-water drainage system not having the excess water from rain drained properly, causing some neighborhoods to face the challenge of floods.

### Natural Gas

Regarding the spatial distribution of natural gas connectivity, it can be observed that most of the eastern parts and the southern parts of the city are well-connected to the natural gas network. In contrast, the western and northern parts, some southern parts are not completely connected.

#### LEGEND

Connectivity to Utilities

- 0 - 22.9%
- 23 - 56.9%
- 57 - 74.9%
- 75 - 89.9%
- 90 - 100%

Figure 39: Infrastructure Analysis & Connectivity to Utilities  
Source: UN Habitat



## Access To Public Facilities

### Education Facilities

The educational system in Egypt is fundamentally divided into two stages; primary education, under the Ministry of Education, which includes the preparatory, elementary, and secondary phases; the second stage is higher education, under the Ministry of Higher Education, and this stage is concerned with university education, it is also common that the same school serve both the primary and the preparatory stages for better utilization of the space.

Many Egyptian schools suffer poor infrastructure, with approximately one in five school buildings considered unfit for use and lacking functional water and sanitation facilities <sup>58</sup>. Although Egypt has a free educational system, it is difficult for refugees and citizens to enroll in public schools without previous educational documentation. On the other hand, some refugees cannot afford to send their children to private schools due to high costs and a lack of money.

In New Damietta, about 20,901 inhabitants are in the school-age group representing about 30% of the total population. The primary stage exceeds half of the total students enrolled in school education with about 56% of the total enrolled students, and the preparatory stage comes in the second rank with about 24%, while the secondary stage has the lowest number of enrolled students with about 20%.

As the Syrian conflict continues into its 10<sup>th</sup> year, Syrian refugee children in Egypt are confronting obstacles to education that grow more acute as they progress into

secondary education.

The main factors contributing to the decreasing education enrolment of Syrian refugees in Egypt include poverty, the lack of affordable and safe transportation, the poor quality of education in schools for Syrian children, the low value of continuing education for Syrian refugees are given their limited professional opportunities in Egypt, educational documentation, administrative barriers to enrolment, and a lack of accommodations for children with disabilities <sup>59</sup>.

**According to the school supply & demand map**, along New Damietta city, the primary and preparatory schools have a good distribution covering six neighborhoods. In comparison, six secondary schools in the city only cover four neighborhoods—the north and the north-western part lack any schools. About 6% of the total population can reach primary and secondary schools in 30 minutes, about 60 % can reach in 15 minutes, and about 34% of the total population has access to these schools within a five-minute walkway.

Mediterranean Sea



Current capacity of existing public schools was analyzed, current number of primary schools in the city are nine schools, seven of which are overcrowded and suffer a deficit to accommodate at least 100 more students which leads to high density of students per class at 35 students/class or more. The other two schools who currently have enough supply, will eventually face more demand and suffer from lack of classrooms and high density of students per class in the coming 10 years.

LEGEND

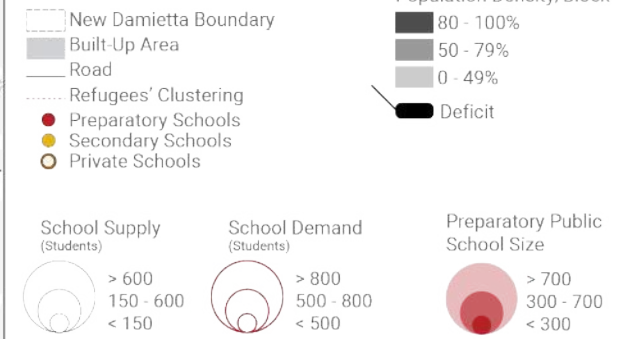


Figure 40: Preparatory & Secondary Schools Size, Supply & Demand Map  
Source: UN Habitat



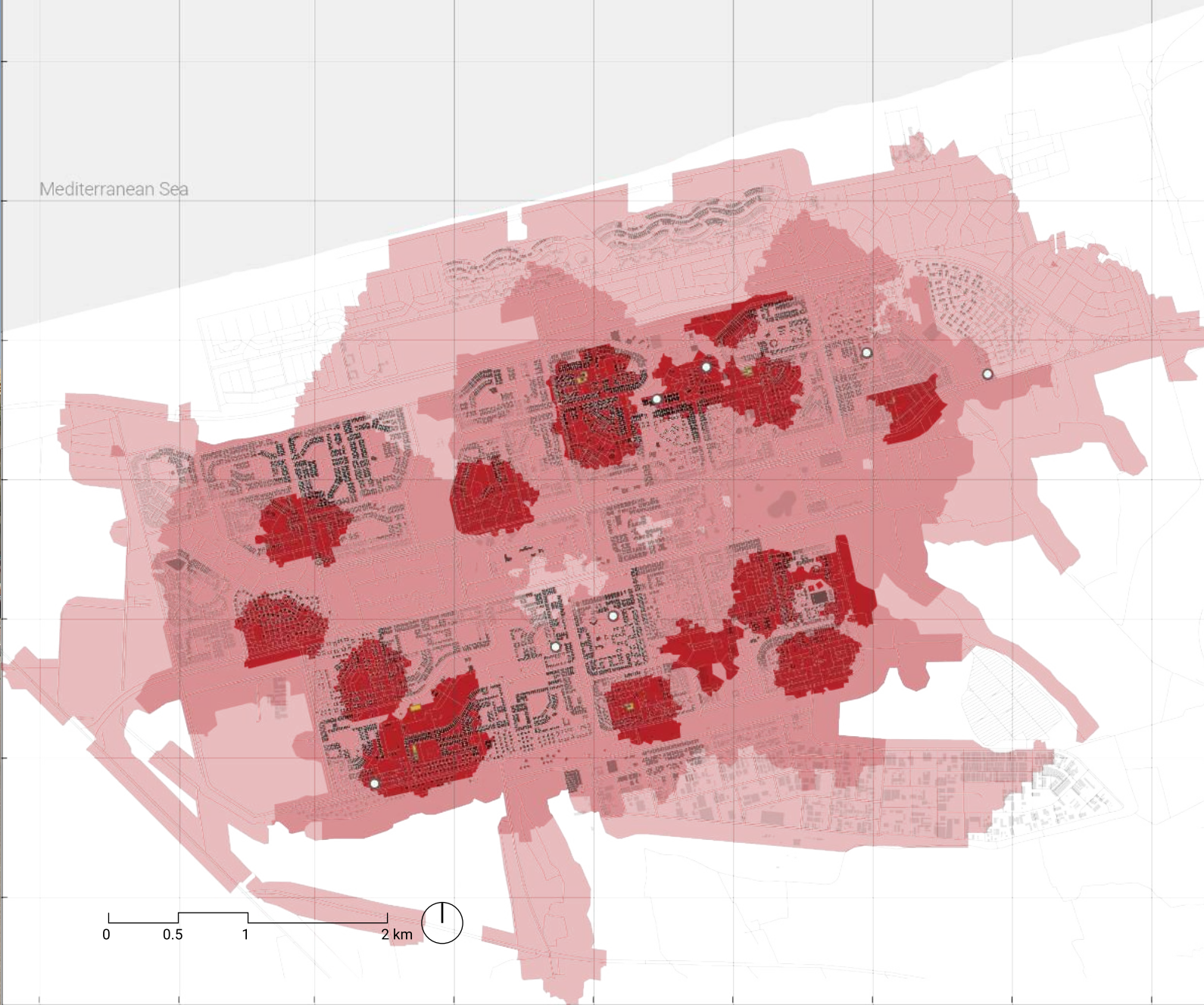


Damietta University, New Damietta, Egypt.  
Source: UN-Habitat



Walkability analysis reveals that district three and five lack accessibility to schools within a 15 minutes walking distance as there is only one school serving the two districts.

Mediterranean Sea



LEGEND

- New Damietta Boundary
  - Built-Up Area
  - Road
  - Refugees' Clustering
  - Preparatory Schools
  - Secondary Schools
  - Private Schools
- |                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Population Density/Block |           |
|                          | 80 - 100% |
|                          | 50 - 79%  |
|                          | 0 - 49%   |
| Walkability              |           |
|                          | 30 mins   |
|                          | 15 mins   |
|                          | 5 mins    |

Figure 41: Preparatory & Secondary Schools Accessibility Map  
Source: UN Habitat



## Access To Public Facilities

### Healthcare Facilities

Despite the country's diversified health care system, which comprises public, private, and parastatal service providers, the health care system in Egypt still faces different challenges in improving and ensuring its residents' health and well-being<sup>60</sup>. The government's investment in the public healthcare system remains low<sup>61</sup>. Much of this sector's challenges are related to funding, especially since the government hospitals are "Self-funding" entities that utilize patients' fees in their specialized economic departments to generate revenue.

On the other hand, private hospitals mainly exist in urban areas and have proper and professional services. Yet, the government hospitals are the major service provider with more than 5000 health facilities and 8000 beds which represents nearly 84% of total beds in Egypt, while the private share a small portion as it has 2024 health facilities with a total of around 22647 beds and represents about 16% .

Currently, Egypt has included 15 million citizens in the health insurance system, which raised the health insurance beneficiaries percentage to about 68%. Furthermore, health vulnerability is still present in Egypt's urban and rural areas.

The most recent example is the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed numerous facets of injustice in the healthcare system<sup>62</sup>. Individuals with low income or living in poor areas suffered the high cost of health services, with limited access to self-protections such as face masks and Alcohol sprays. Such a situation increases the infection risks. This unprecedented event has opened the door wide to channel deeper

investments in bridging health inequality gaps, including implementing disease preventive measures.

New Damietta has only two hospitals: Damietta Military Hospital and Al-Azhar University Hospital, located in the central axe and the sixth neighborhood. There are two medical centers and smaller clinics.

The marginal location of the health care facilities has increased the inaccessibility to this service. About 5% of the total population is within a 5-minute walk from the healthcare facilities, and about 35% are within a 15-minute walk, while the majority (60%) are within a 30-minute walk which exceeds the national standards. Yet, it is noteworthy that the facilities are covering the current demand regarding the number of beds and built-up capacity.



Alazhar university hospital (Google Earth)

### VIEWS FROM THE COMMUNITY

During held consultation sessions with UN-Habitat, key informants repeatedly reported the need to improve the health care system's affordability and the staff's capacity to provide health service. Other needs mentioned are related to increasing the number of hospitals and improving the facilities' logistical infrastructure and expanding its footprint to accommodate the pressing needs of the patients.

The analysis shows that there is a concentration of all medical centers and hospitals in almost one area. Interviews with the technical staff from New Damietta confirmed that there is a need to establish new medical centers in other areas of the city.

Mediterranean Sea



Figure 42: Medical Centers Supply and Demand Map  
Source: UN Habitat





Damietta's military hospital located close to New Damietta Garden.  
Source: UN-Habitat



District three and five lack any hospitals and if there was a need for one, it would take about 20 minutes drive to reach the nearest one.

Mediterranean Sea

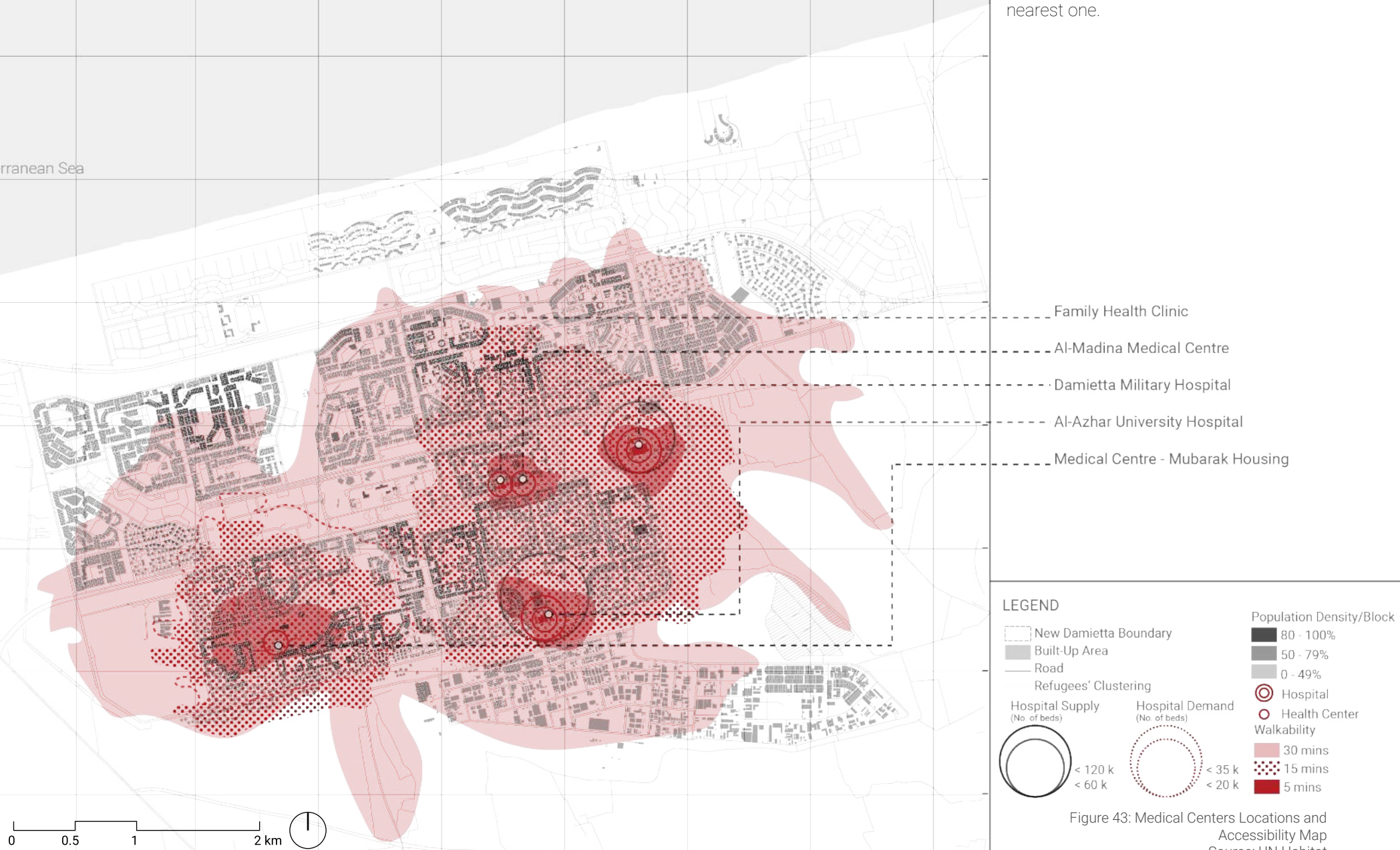


Figure 43: Medical Centers Locations and Accessibility Map  
Source: UN Habitat



## Access To Public Facilities

### Recreational Facilities

Egyptian cities witnessed low per capita share of public green spaces, and this is mainly because of the scarcity of vacant land in dense urban fabric<sup>63</sup>. On the other hand, new urban communities tries to respond to national standards and planned to have reasonable portion of public green spaces, however, there is a lack in developing and maintaining these services. New Damietta city is considered one of those new urban communities, whereas the city master plan has identified zones to allocate recreational functions, yet they are not fully developed or properly maintained<sup>64</sup>.

Overall, after thoroughly analyzing the availability and the spatial distribution of the recreational facilities in New Damietta, it is notable that the city has three sports clubs (Wadi Degla, El-Mostakbal and El-Mohandeseen sports clubs), a youth center, four playgrounds, a stadium, and a 55 acres central public park (New Damietta's Garden)<sup>65</sup>. In addition to an inaccessible 9-kilometer beach long on the Mediterranean Sea.

The total area of the recreational functions in the city is nearly 142.1 acres (0.57 km<sup>2</sup>), while the current New Damietta population is 71,342 residents; accordingly, the per capita share of the recreational areas is around 8.56 square meters per capita. This share is low compared to the national planning standard for the new urban communities, as it is equal to 15 square meters per capita. Accordingly, there is a gap between the current status and the national standards.

The spatial distribution of the recreational facilities in New Damietta is represented in figure 44, the analysis focused on the accessibility to major recreational

facilities such as the cinema, public park, stadium, and public playgrounds. Thus, it is notable that most of these facilities are mostly concentrated in the central corridor of the city to achieve accessibility with relative ease. The analysis reveals that about 3.8% (2670 capita) of the city's residents are located within 5 minutes walking distance from one of these facilities, and around 46% (31992 capita) are located within 15 minutes walking distance while 42.8% (29762 capita)

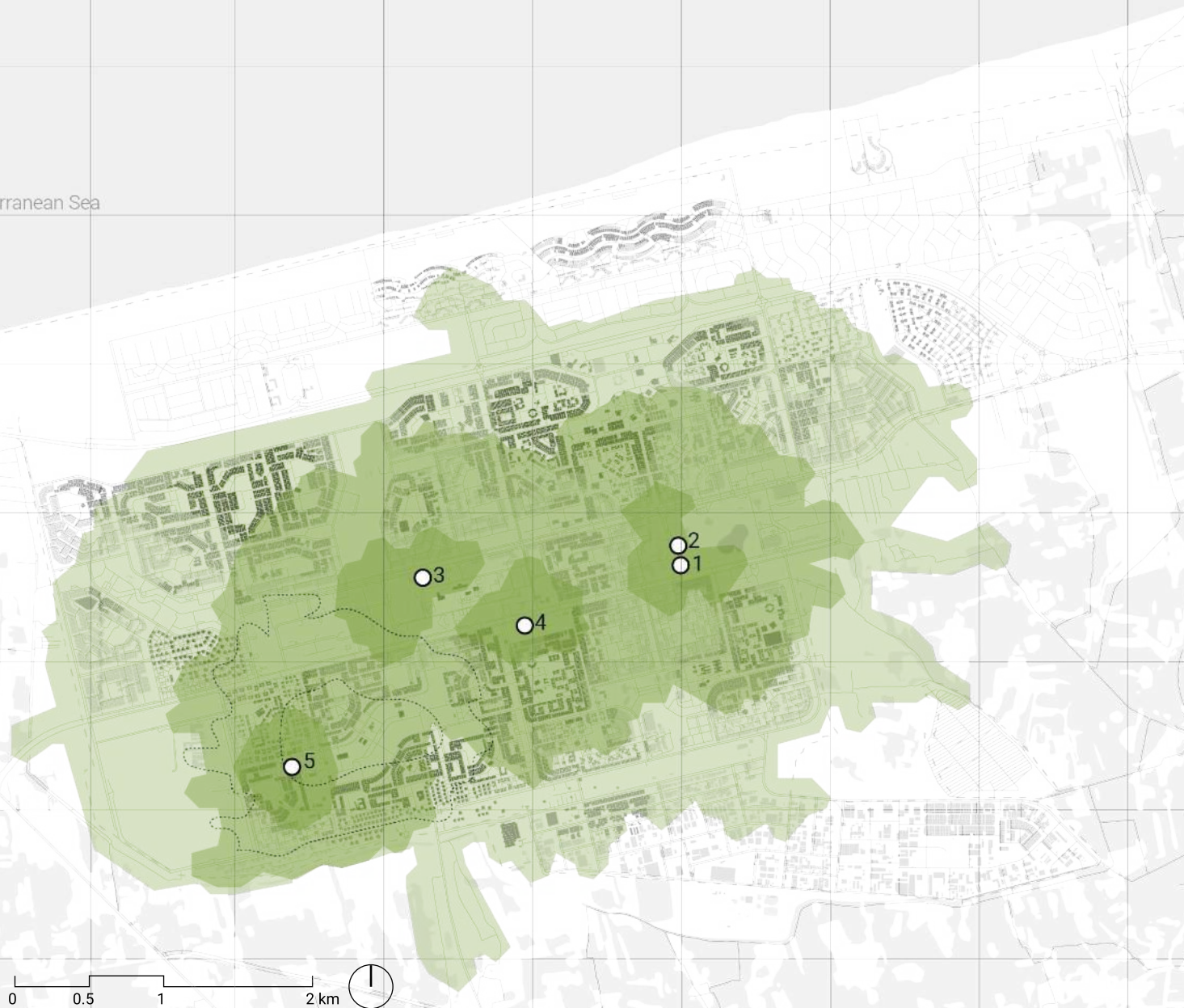
also have access to one of these facilities within 30 minutes. In conclusion, after thoroughly analyzing the accessibility of recreational facilities, it can be said that although there are diverse types of recreational facilities within the city, the per capita share of green areas is a bit less than the national standard, which poses a threat in the upcoming years, especially after the completion of the urban growth of the city.



New Damietta's Public Garden.  
Source: UN-Habitat

Though there is diversity in the available recreational facility with balanced spatial distribution, challenges could emerge when it comes to accessibility to a specific type of these facilities as mostly each type of frequency is not high and mainly concentrated, such as the case with the central park.

Mediterranean Sea



LEGEND

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> New Damietta Boundary</li> <li> Built-Up Area</li> <li> Road</li> <li> Refugees' Clustering</li> <li> Garden</li> <li><b>Serviced Area</b></li> <li> 5 mins</li> <li> 15 mins</li> <li> 30 mins</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Population Density/Block</b></li> <li> 80 - 100%</li> <li> 50 - 79%</li> <li> 0 - 49%</li> <li>1. Cinema</li> <li>2. Park</li> <li>3. Stadium</li> <li>4. Public football ground</li> <li>5. Public football ground</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Figure 44: Recreational Facilities Accessibility Map  
Source: UN Habitat



## Access To Public Transport

The analysis of the road network measured the coverage of current bus public transport services in New Damietta revealed it lack the coverage to access certain neighborhoods which require residents to take another mode of transportation such as, taxi to reach desired destination due to service cars being unavailable. Interviews with the locals showed this action is costly and becoming unaffordable.

A closer look at the spatial distribution of the bus stops in New Damietta city, as shown in figure 46, reveals that there are five lines of bus routes that connect most of the city. Moreover, the majority of the bus stops and bus routes cluster around the city center where the main economic activities are; the city center attracts variety of activities such as commercial, administrative, public services, and others, which generate high flow of movement, specifically along major roads in the city center. However, the accessibility in the southern industrial area is limited to one bus stop that serves the entire zone. As a result, it can be observed that nearly half of the area is within five and 15 minutes walking distances, and the other 50% of the area is within 30 minutes walking distances or more, similarly the northern coastal areas where touristic activities are located.



Eastern bus stop terminal  
Source: UN Habitat

The city's public transportation systems are disrupted and do not reach all parts of the city, according to residents and refugees.

In order for users to reach inner areas of the desired destination, they seek the use of unaffordable taxi cars. Residents also stressed the importance of other green means of transportation such as creating a network for bikes and walking.

Mediterranean Sea



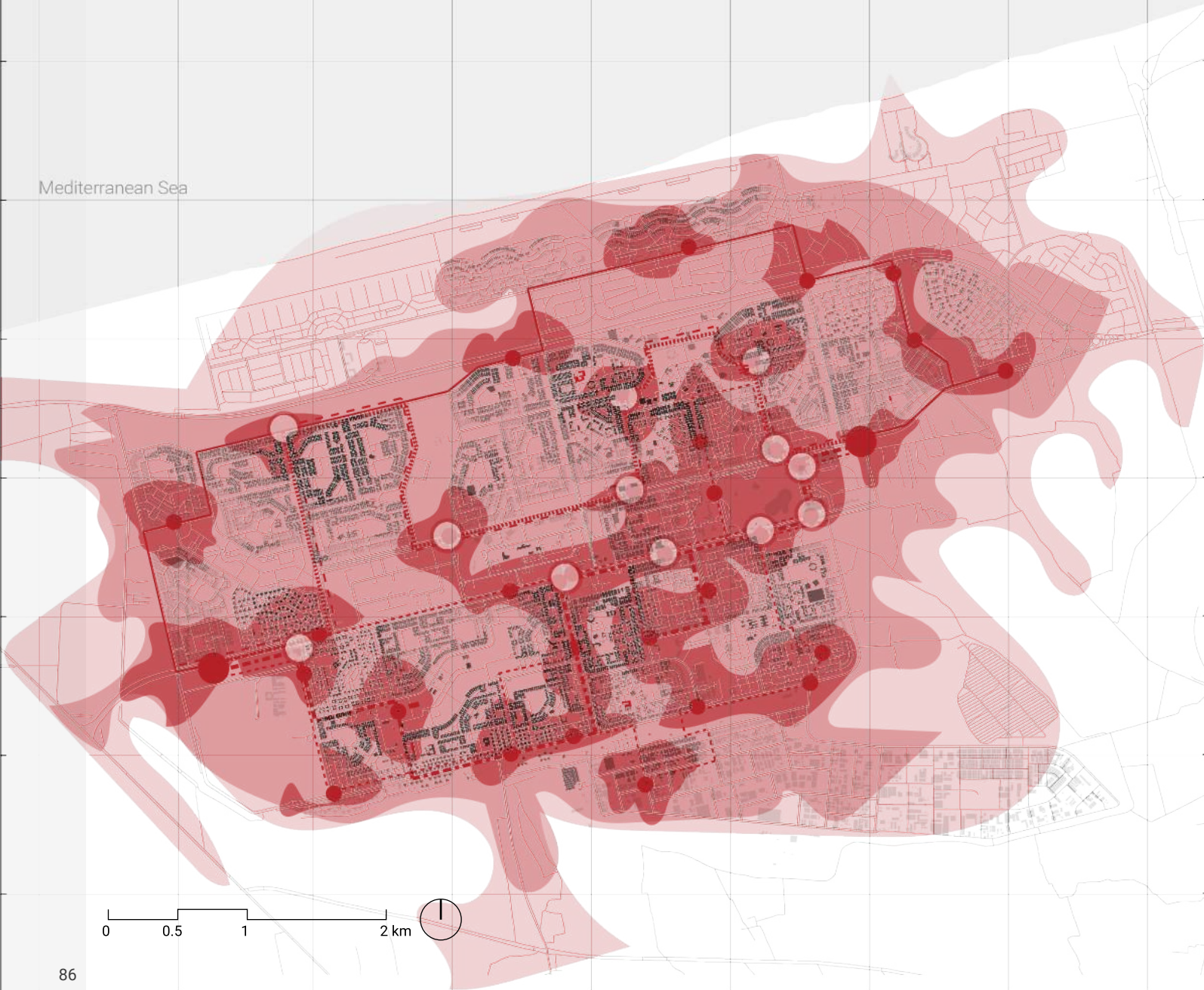
LEGEND

- New Damietta Boundary
- Built-Up Area
- Road
- Population Density/ Working Force (16-65 years)
  - 80 - 100%
  - 50 - 79%
  - 0 - 49%
- Transportation
  - One Stop
  - East/West Bus Stop
  - Two stops or more
  - Line 1
  - Line 2
  - Line 3
  - Line 4
  - Line 5

Figure 46: Bus Stop Locations Map  
Source: UN Habitat



Mediterranean Sea



The spatial analysis was used to measure the population covered by the existing public transportation service within the city. The result revealed that nearly 46.3% of the city population 32,264 residents are within a five minute walking distance to the nearest bus stop, while 53.3% (37,118 residents) are within 15 minutes, this leaves less than 0.5% covered within 30 minutes. Additionally, one major stop (micro-bus) in the eastern and western parts of the city is for transporting residents from the city to other nearby communities, such as the existing city of Damietta and other areas.

LEGEND

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| New Damietta Boundary | <b>Transportation</b> |
| Built-Up Area         | One Stop              |
| Road                  | East/West Bus Stop    |
| <b>Serviced Area</b>  | Two stops or more     |
| 5 mins                | Line 1                |
| 15 mins               | Line 2                |
| 30 mins               | Line 3                |
|                       | Line 4                |
|                       | Line 5                |

Figure 46: Bus Stop Accessibility Map  
Source: UN Habitat





New Damietta, Damietta Governorate, Egypt  
Source: UN Habitat



## Vulnerable Neighborhoods In New Damietta

Although New Damietta is considered a new city, its older parts have attracted the most vulnerable population for the refugees and the citizens, namely the sixtieth, seventieth, and twenty-seventh neighborhoods that age almost 40 years. Major challenges relate to safe access to adequate housing, economic opportunities, and services such as education and health.

It is noteworthy that any interventions that aim to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable and build on its hosting city's resilience necessitate a multiscale planning model that targets the subregion, the city, and the neighborhood. Such comprehensive and interconnected interventions are expected to build on the city's preparedness to face unprecedented shocks.

Therefore, UPIMC Egypt has developed a set of spatial interventions that cover Kafr El Battikh, New Damietta, down to the aforementioned neighborhoods.



Inadequate housing in district four in New Damietta.  
Source: UN Habitat



Figure 47: Location of vulnerable Neighborhoods in New Damietta  
Source: UN Habitat



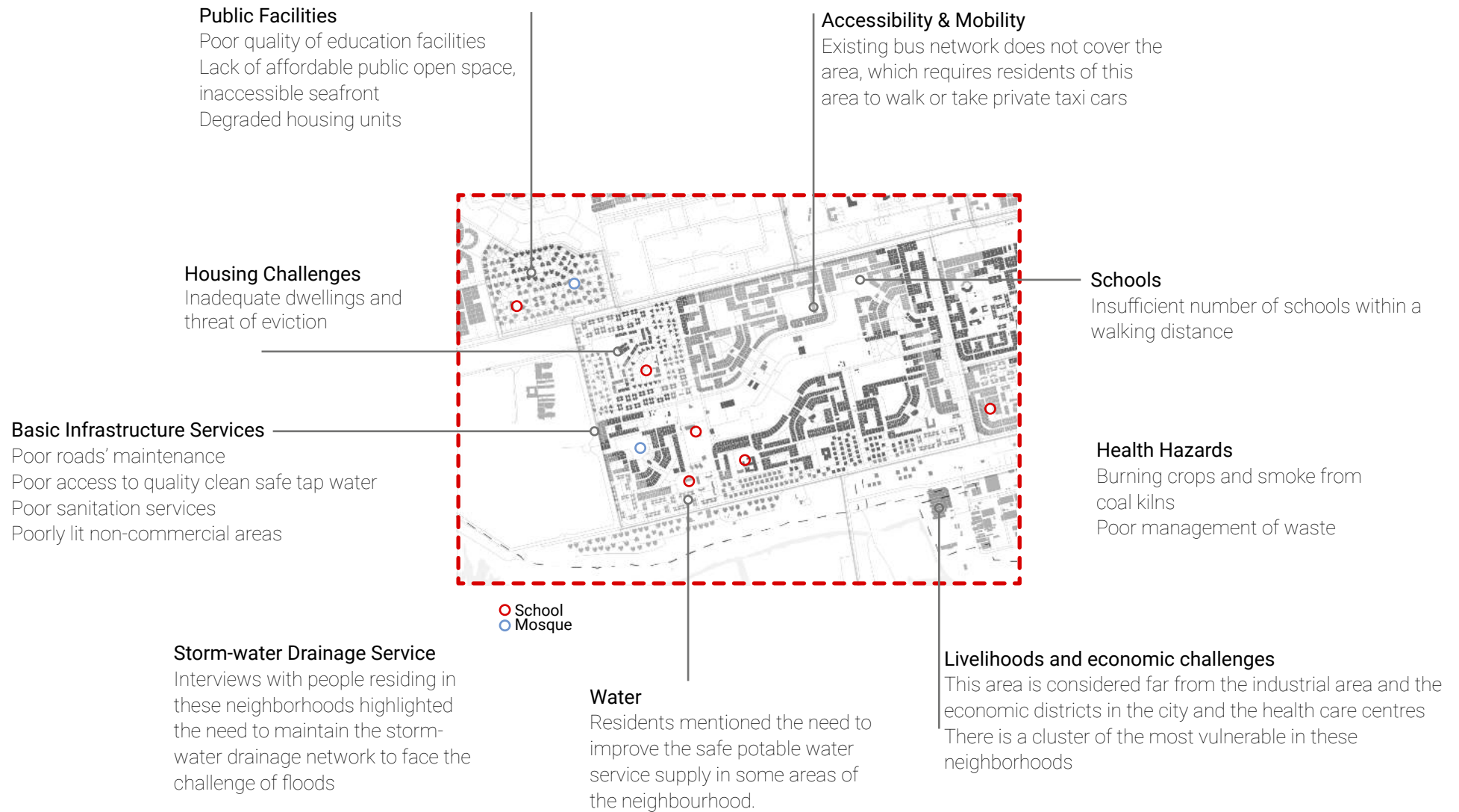


Figure 48: Challenges of Most Vulnerable Neighborhoods in New Damietta  
 Source: UN Habitat



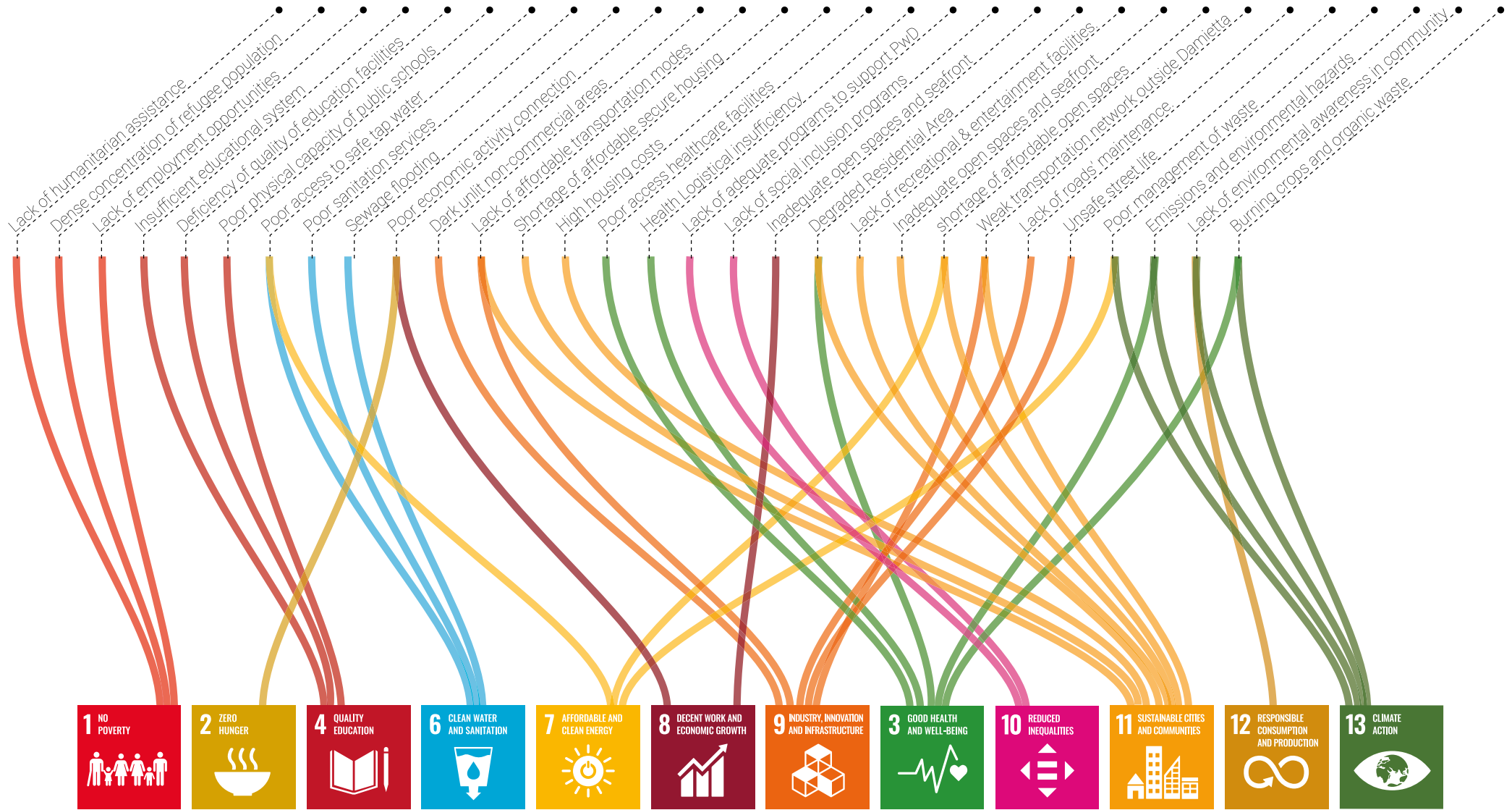
# 4

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Community participation in New Damietta  
Source: UN Habitat

# Challenges



**Sustainable Development Goals**

Figure 49: Challenges in New Damietta Classified According to SDGs  
Source: UN Habitat



## Objectives & Goals



### Education (SDG 4,11):

- Improve the physical capacity of the public and community schools (construct, rehabilitate and establish education facilities and learning spaces as well as provide gender-sensitive WASH facilities)
- Improve the accessibility of all educational facilities to accommodate students with disabilities.
- Improve the quality of formal and non-formal education within a protective learning environment (specifically to combat after-school private classes that are unaffordable and directly impact on the teaching quality at school).
- Expand the free enrollment in the Egyptian public educational system to include all groups of refugees such as the Iraqis.



### Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment (SDG 1,8)

- Enhance employment opportunities and improve individuals' capacities and skills
- Unlock economic opportunities and enhance the economic connectivity of the city with its surroundings.
- Increase economic protection of individuals through market monitoring.
- Expand humanitarian assistance (e.g., multi-purpose cash assistance) to include the most vulnerable refugees.



### Infrastructure and WASH (SDG 6,7,9)

- Provide sustainable, safe, and equitable access to table water as per min standards.
- Improve sanitation services (New Damietta) and expand (Kafr El-Battikh).
- Contribute to safer streets by expanding the lighting network.
- Improve, expand, and upgrade the road network.



### Health (SDG 3)

- Contribute to equal access to comprehensive and quality primary health care improved for refugees and most vulnerable individuals.
- Improve the capacity of national health care services to provide quality health care.
- Build the capacity of health care staff at public emergency, secondary, and tertiary healthcare facilities



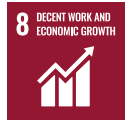
### Housing (SDG 9,10,11)

- Improve access to adequate, secure, and affordable housing for vulnerable individuals in the community.
- Contribute towards achieving secure tenure rights amongst the most vulnerable



### Environment and Waste Management (SDG 7,13)

- Eliminate major sources of pollution and environmental hazards (e.g., Coal kilns in Kafr El-Battikh).
- Provide a safe and clean environment (addressing the stray dogs challenge)
- Increase the community's environmental awareness



### Mobility (SDG 8,11)

- Provide affordable transportation means.
- Expand the public transportation network to cover all the neighborhoods.



### Inclusion of PwD (SDG 10)

- Promote social inclusion programs and awareness raising



### Open spaces and outlets (SDG 10,11)

- Increase the accessibility and affordability of open spaces
- Rehabilitate and improve open space and seafront

# Challenges

## Governance, Land Management & Planning Challenges



- Egypt currently hosts more than 288,173 registered refugees who live across the country. Due to the scarcity of employment possibilities and rising cost of living, refugees, and asylum seekers in Egypt struggle to meet their basic demands.
- Rapid urbanization and the rising rates of displaced people to urban centers will increase the struggle to further provide services such as housing, sanitation, health care, and education as the population grows.
- The rigid building system in new cities hinders the implementation of economic and developmental projects<sup>66</sup>.
- The difficulty of annexing new lands to the city, especially for the industrial and artisanal areas.
- Investors' reluctance to invest in the city due to associated environmental risks, mainly climate change and rising sea levels.

## Spatial Challenges



### Infrastructure

Poor connectivity between the port and New Damietta and other nearby cities. To open up new business prospects and raise the standard of living for the typical New Damietta household, a better access needs to be made.

### Demographic Profile

New Damietta has a young population profile, with 40% of the population falling under 30, and the median age

is 22.6 years old. Due to this, it will be difficult to provide sufficient educational facilities for the young population and job opportunities for the newly-emerging, young workforce.

### Housing

- Due to the skyrocketing costs of land, building materials, and energy, the lack of suitable, affordable housing has become a serious problem.
- The cost of renting housing increased due to the refugee influx.

### Accessibility and Connectivity

- There are insufficient links between New Damietta and other cities as a result of poor coverage in all urban regions, disrupted modes of transportation, and cost increases. Another issue regarding public transportation in Kafr el Battikh, is the use of unfavorable modes of transportation, such as tok toks.

### Recreational outlets

- Interrupted access to the beach since the current state of the area suggests that there are insufficient services and facilities to meet the needs of locals and refugees for designated areas for seating, shade, bathrooms, showers, and changing areas, as well as for lifeguards, restaurants, shops, and sports activities.
- For many districts, finding affordable entertainment options within a 15-minute commute is difficult. Not to mention the expensive entrance fees for many outlets.

### Facilities

Several areas in New Damietta and Kafr El Battikh face significant problems regarding education and health accessibility within a 15 minutes walking distance. According to the local residents, there are no schools or

health care centers in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> districts, located in the western parts of the city.

## Environmental & Natural Hazard Challenges



Environmental challenges, pressure on water, increased energy demands, climate change, and pollution are ever increasing.

### Water

Egypt is facing an annual water deficit, and climate change is a key part of the problem. The annual share of water per capita ranges between 550 and 560 cubic meters; New Damietta will face water shortages, and rising temperatures will lead to worsening drought. Water salinity and scarcity could make parts of the city uninhabitable in the future.

### Storm-water Drainage System

Many residents and refugees complained about the storm-water drainage system not having the excess water from rain drained properly, causing some neighborhoods to face the challenge of floods. According to a flood analysis in New Damietta, the sixtieth and seventieth neighborhoods are among the most vulnerable to flash floods due to their pressured dilapidated infrastructure.

### Air Quality

Around the city of New Damietta lies tens of earth mound kilns used for charcoal production. These kilns are incredibly inefficient and release a substantial amount of air emissions. Repeated exposure to coal kiln smoke will induce chronic diseases and respiratory problems, adding to the strain on the current health care infrastructure.



## Sewage-water Drainage System

Both New Damietta and Kafr El Battikh face weak sewage water drainage network which needs maintenance.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES



### Economy and Jobs

- Economic reforms and rising costs in New Damietta impacted refugees hard. Due to Government regulations and restrictions, refugees in New Damietta have limited hiring opportunities, limiting entry to the labor force. Work permit requirements include an assessment of legal status and are lengthy and costly. Refugees who have been employed report low wages, poor working conditions, and long hours.
- The lack of job opportunities and access to livelihoods poses a threat on local economic dynamics leading to many households falling into the 'working poor' category.
- Poor people are mainly clustered in the city's oldest most dilapidated parts, driven by low wages and high housing costs.



Refugees community participation in New Damietta  
Source: UN Habitat

## STRENGTHS: STRATEGIC STRENGTHS



- Egypt is a wide country with different challenges in each region. Massive investments will be required to make a significant impact in the circular economy. Therefore, a focus on specific sectors like Energy, Agriculture, Waste Management and Water and supporting the whole value chain may result in a better impact.
- The existence of strong and direct communication opportunities between the city of New Damietta and each of the Delta region in general and the East Delta region in particular, through the regional road network.
- The distinguished geographical location of new Damietta through its proximity to the port of Damietta and the international coastal road, which is an essential ingredient in revitalizing the economic base of the Governorate in general and the city of New Damietta in particular.
- The new city of Damietta is considered a new demographic and urban pole that serves the expected population growth as a result of the economic growth at the Governorate level.

## OPPORTUNITIES: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES



- An opportunity to implement state policies by directing future urban growth to the north of the Governorate towards the new city of Damietta.

- Opportunities to improve the urban environment and providing informal settlements with facilities and services, and raising the living standards of the most vulnerable.
- Major benefits would be reflected in the residents of New Damietta should a strong connection between the city with the port. Establishment of such roads would unlock economic opportunities and potentials to make strides the financial level of the normal family in modern Damietta.
- There is an opportunity for enhancing New Damietta's residents' livelihoods, local economy as well as attracting investors and businesses by increasing provision and investment in improving access to a proper water supply network, attractive beach facilities, drainage infrastructure, green/open and public spaces, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Considering the flat nature of New Damietta coupled by its young population, developing green mobility options such as bike rental and bikes lanes within the city's network will provide better accessibility to blocked neighborhoods at no cost for the average household resulting a reduction of the environmental impact from the use of buses and private cars.
- Turning the refugees and displaced person emergency into an improvement opportunity that draws in unused speculations and boosts the neighborhood economy
- The accessibility of different archives and databases gathered by multiple entities in Egypt such as, CAPMAS, UNHCR, and NUCA could provide a more beneficial strategic approach to help improve the living conditions of residents and refugees in New Damietta.
- Particularly in New Damietta where the median age for the population is below 25, there is an opportunity for a developing work drive and human

- assets. Skilled labor force is massively present in Egypt and concentrated in major cities.
- Environmental issues are particularly significant among youth. Though they have begun to emerge, green initiatives are still in their development when compared to those in other industries.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES



- Create an investment-appealing environment in the city that can attract more investments.
- Opportunities to benefit from tourism resources in the region and the city.
- Benefiting from the opportunity of the state's interest in new cities and industrial areas and facilitating procedures for foreign investors.
- Various opportunities for collaboration with neighboring cities like Kafr El-Battikh and the City of Damietta
- City's proximity to the port of Damietta can contribute to increasing the city's industrial and domestic production.
- Benefit from the diversity of investment fields in the region, such as freezing and packing vegetables and fruits in the New Damietta Free Industrial Zone.
- Several factories are located in the Governorate for the production of spinning and weaving, and foodstuffs, which are the two industries that contribute more than 95% of the added value of the industrial sector.



5

COMMUNITY  
PARTICIPATION





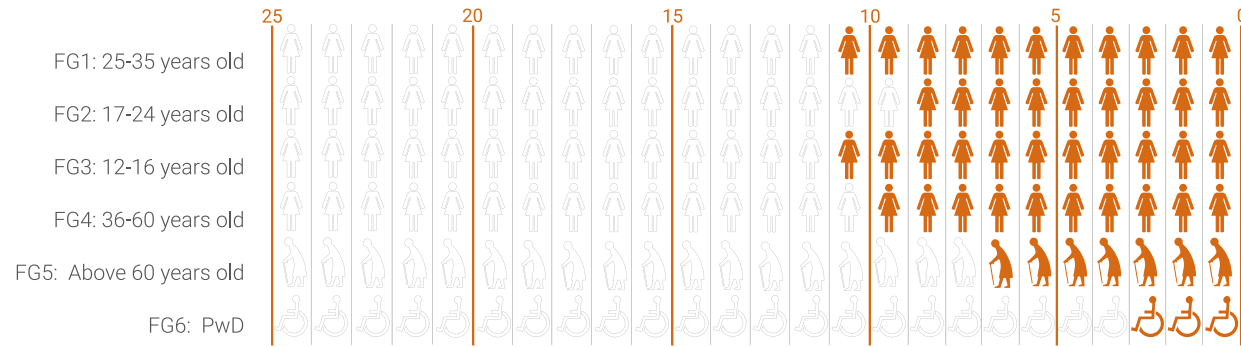
Stakeholders community participation, New Damietta  
Source: UN Habitat



# Voices From The Community

## Detecting the needs

FEMALE

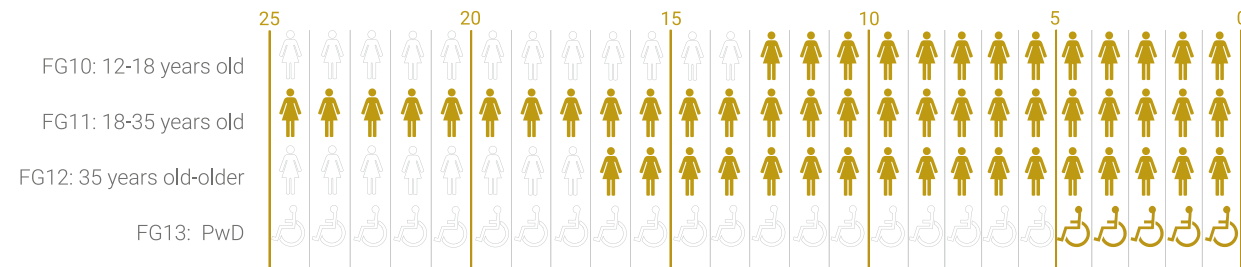


### Method:

The team conducted **15 focus groups** in Damietta and Kafr El-Battikh, reaching out to almost 200 Syrian refugees and citizens as well as technical staff at the city council (municipality).

The groups were gender-balanced and reached individuals aged between **12 and 70 years**. The project also paid particular attention to Person With Disabilities and dedicated three separate groups.

The primary **outcome** of these sessions is the **Common Need List** of the community with spatialized insights into the "Opportunities and Challenges" of the cities. This qualitative method is triangulated with the geospatial analysis to provide a deeper look into the existing situation of the city.



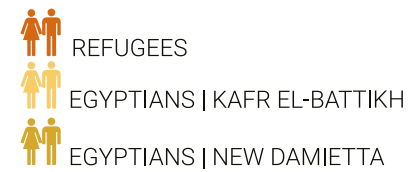
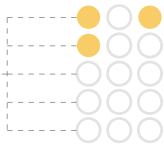


Figure 50. Community Needs, Focus Groups Age and Gender. Source: UN Habitat

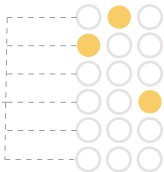


# Common Needs List

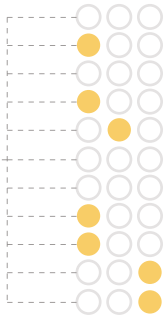
1 Improving Access to sources of income and rights



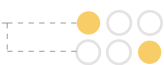
2 Improving the level of provided health care and PwD programs



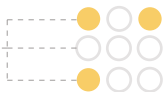
3 Rehabilitating housing and dilapidated areas and improving access to public areas



4 improving educational environment



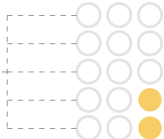
5 Solving the water quality and enhancing infrastructure systems



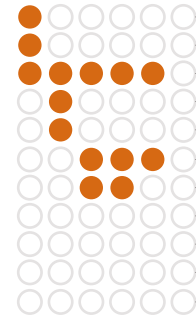
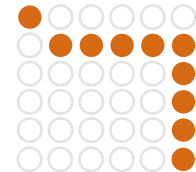
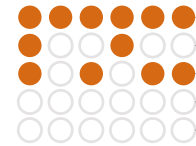
6 Solving environmental problems, with special concern to the coal kilns.



7 Developing PwD facilities and public transport infrastructure



8 Enhancing medical centers and improving access to rights

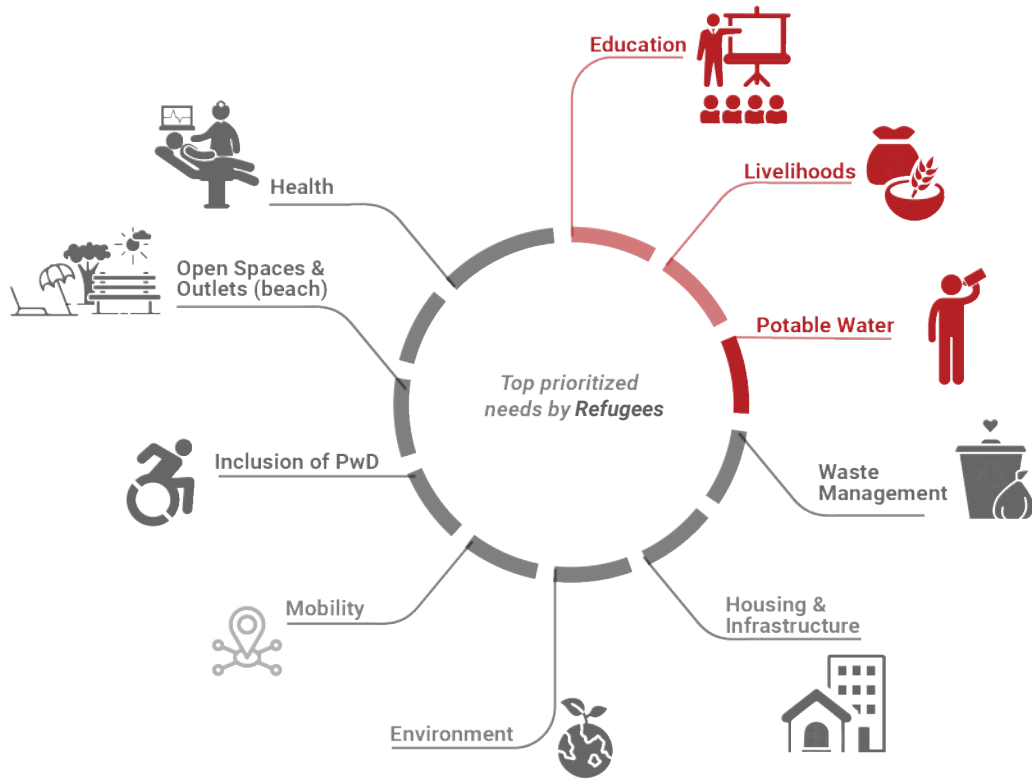


# Long Needs List



- 1- Catalyze job creation opportunities
- 2- Increase livelihood and income generation opportunities
- 3- Regulate and control prices of essential items in the market
- 4- Establish and implement small-business-grant programs for Women
- 5- Provide sufficient space for a public market and a governmental compound
- 6- Re-including refugees in the humanitarian assistance and expanding welfare umbrella for citizens
- 7- Improve healthcare provision
- 8- Promote social inclusion programmes for PwD
- 9- Establish inclusive activities and accessible open spaces for PwD
- 10- Improve the healthcare system and social monitoring for PwD
- 11- Address the stray dog issue
- 12- Provide subsidies for rental housing
- 13- Ensure accessible and secure streets
- 14- Establish affordable and accessible open spaces and recreational hubs (including sports clubs)
- 15- Rehabilitate the beach area
- 16- Improve housing adequacy and tenure security
- 17- Enhance the residence permits' issuance process
- 18- Upgrade dilapidated areas
- 19- Ensure compliance of the implementation with the approved plans.
- 20- Monitor the public transportation system
- 21- Ensure inclusive urban planning for PwD
- 22- Ensure comprehensive accessibility of the beach for PwD
- 23- Reform the Education System
- 24- Design and execute awareness streams to enhance the inclusion of PwD, especially in educational facilities
- 25- Improve the quality of potable water
- 26- Enhance the waste management and recycling system
- 27- Rehabilitate the sanitation systems and infrastructure
- 28- Address coal kilns hazard (from Kafr El-Batikh)
- 29- Mitigate environmental hazards (e.g.,burnging organic crop waste,coal kilns and floodings)
- 30- Improve roads' infrastructure
- 31- Cover the unserved areas with transportation mean
- 32- Provide the entire city with adequate and affordable means of transportation
- 33- Develop inclusive facilities for PwD
- 34- Adapt the public transport infrastructure for PwD
- 35- Establish and operate physiotherapy centers
- 36- Strengthen health infrastructure and medical insurance

## REFUGEE'S NEEDS



## CITIZEN'S NEEDS

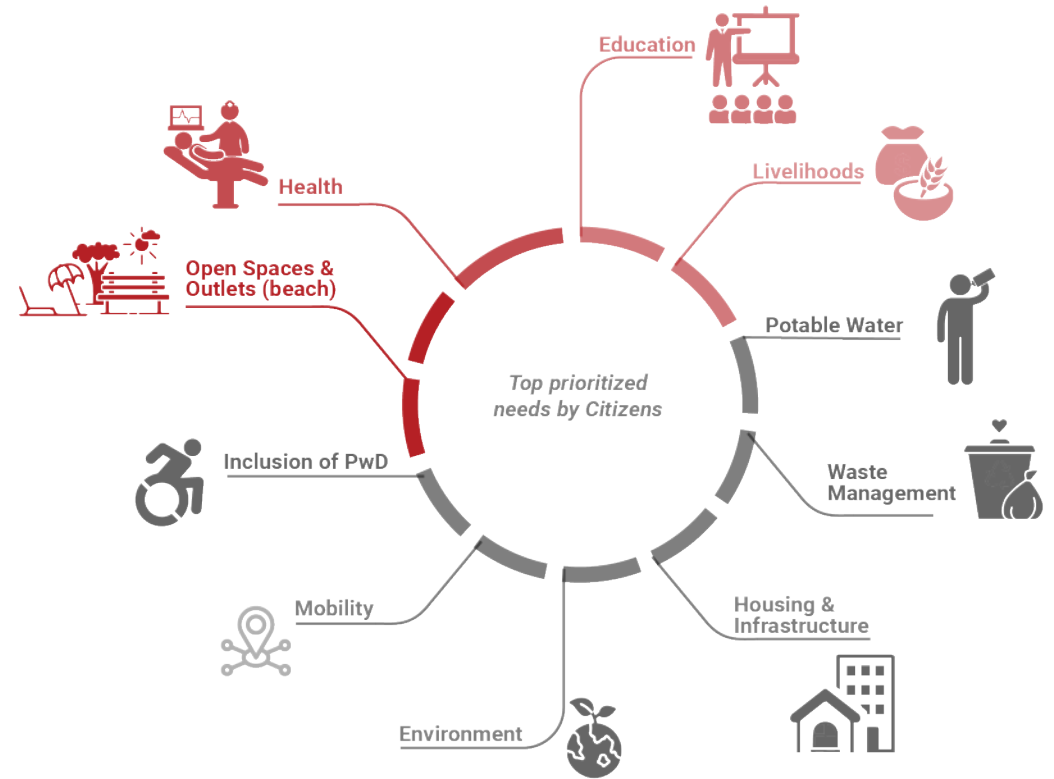


Figure 52. Refugee's & Citizen's Needs.  
Source: UN Habitat



## Voices from the community

### Detecting apparent potentials, opportunities, threats, and challenges

During focus groups sessions, the UN-Habitat team began the needs and opportunities identification session by explaining the importance of this identification for their city. Accordingly, the participants highlighted their needs and the potential opportunities available in New Damietta, which were categorised into the following five main themes:

#### 1 Public Facilities

##### - Health facilities

The residents explained that establishing a new health centre that provides a 24-hour emergency service is of the highest priority for the city. They also mapped the likely location for the aforementioned health center, as shown in the map. The local community also demanded that the existing hospitals receive maintenance and upgrading.

##### - Recreational facilities

The residents said that more urban parks and green spaces are needed in the city because New Damietta's parks are more than 15 minutes' walk from the majority of neighborhoods. They also discussed the critical necessity to provide the beach with play areas, public rest-rooms, shaded places, a kiosk, and routine maintenance in order to make it accessible and serviced. They also discussed how important it is to have inclusive programs and activities that include people with disabilities.

##### - Educational facilities:

According to the local residents, the city needs more schools, and some of the existing schools require upgrading.

#### 2 Housing

Residents stated that district four is home to the majority of vulnerable groups and that some maintenance and upkeep is needed for these residential structures. In addition, there are a few over 40-year-old buildings in districts one and two.

#### 3 Basic Services/Infrastructure

##### - Street infrastructure:

The residents mentioned the need for enhancing the street-lighting in dark unlit non-commercial areas.

##### - Sanitation (Sewerage) Service:

The need to upgrade the sewerage network was highlighted.

##### - Water Service:

Residents mentioned the need to improve the quality of the water supply.

##### - Storm-water Drainage Service:

The residents highlighted the need to maintain the storm-water drainage network.

#### 4 Accessibility and Public Transport

The city needs additional stops and broader routes for public transportation. Additionally, the people pointed out the importance of creating green transportation options, such as bike lanes along important roads in New Damietta.

#### 5 Environment

Residents indicated that coal kilns are a major challenge that needs to be addressed along with issues regarding solid waste management.

#### 6 Economy

Residents stated that a new connection between Damietta Port and New Damietta should be built in order to create improved work opportunities and unlock significant economic benefits. In the industrial area, a new factory for recycling agricultural waste could also be built.



Environmental Hazard - charcoal kilns



Degraded Housing Units



Inaccessible park (affordability and for PwD)



Inaccessible leisure amenities for PwD



Environmental Hazard - Industrial zone

City-wide Challenges

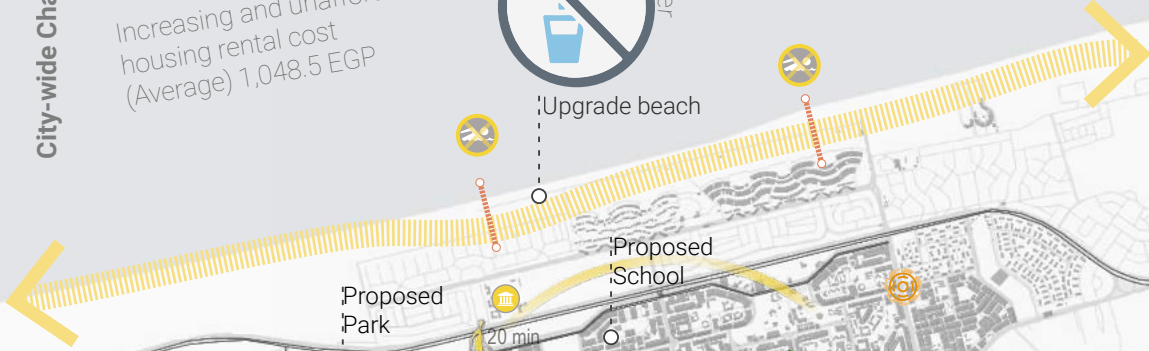


EGP

Increasing and unaffordable housing rental cost (Average) 1,048.5 EGP



Upgrade beach



Proposed Park  
Proposed School

20 min

10 min

Proposed Healthcare Center

Proposed Urban Bikeway Project

Proposed Lighting poles

Infrastructure rehabilitation

Water supply pipes upgrading

Full closure & removal of coal kilns

Buildings upgrading & rehabilitation

Proposed New factory for recycling waste

Industrial Area

Establishing a better connection to the port

GENERAL

- City's Boundary
- Kafr El-Battikh
- Harbour
- Railway
- Coal Kilns
- Hospital
- University



Figure 53. Opportunities and Needs identified by New Damietta Residents. Source: UN Habitat



## Conclusion

### Challenges & Interventions needed in New Damietta

Based on the spatial analysis and the results of the validation workshop with the city's residents, the identified challenges, and the needed interventions in New Damietta in relation to the SDGs, are as follows:



#### SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

The analysis revealed that there is a lack of access to **health care facilities** within a 5 to 15-minutes walking distance, specifically in District two, three, and five. This was validated by the technical staff and the residents. Accordingly, the **needed intervention** is to **construct a comprehensive health centre** close to those areas or upgrade and transform the existing hospitals within the city.



#### SDG 4: Quality Education

There are no schools in New Damietta's northern and north-western districts. To relieve the pressure and overcrowding on other educational facilities, locals stressed the need for new schools in particular locations. **Building new schools** on undeveloped land in Districts three and five is one of the necessary interventions in this regard, Improve the accessibility of all educational facilities to accommodate students with disabilities.



#### SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Residents mentioned the need to improve the safe potable water service supply in some areas of the

city. The main issue with **water** remains its quality; faucet water has high turbidity and salt concentration, where clay is considered one of the main pollutants. According to interviews with New Damietta residents, there is an assumption that the water treatment and purification plants are not providing the right filter for the water to become drinkable. Overall, the water capacity assessment revealed a relatively high demand for the water network. Upper floors in some housing units do not get water, and the existing water network and pipes are dilapidated and weak especially in the seventy and eighty neighborhoods. Residents also explained that the sanitation network needs regular maintenance. This is aligned with the capacity analysis conducted that revealed that the water and sewerage networks within these neighbourhoods are overloaded.

Therefore, the needed intervention is to **upgrade water and sewerage infrastructure networks** to accommodate the increase in population.



#### SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth

Residents expressed the need to enhance employment opportunities and improve individuals' capacities and skills. The needed interventions in this regard are to **unlock economic opportunities and enhance the economic connectivity of the city** with its surroundings by **introducing an Eco-cultural tourism corridor** and strengthening and extending the commercial spine of the city by **increasing the number of commercial shops** while upgrading and developing the industrial areas.



#### SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities

The per capita share of green areas in New Damietta

is less than the national standard. Recreational outlets are concentrated in the central area of the city and not within walking distance. Residents stressed that the overall existing condition of the beach is not utilized or attractive. Therefore, the needed intervention is **creating green pockets within the city and introduce urban agricultural gardens and rehabilitate and improve open space and seafront.**

As for transportation, citizens and refugees find public transportation modes to be highly disconnected and insufficient to service all areas of the city. In order for users to reach inner areas of the desired destination they seek the use of unaffordable taxi cars. Introducing other green means of transportation such as **creating a network for bikes and walking could help with this.**

The analysis of housing and infrastructure indicated that some of the roads are in poor condition and that there are inadequate dwellings. In order to tackle the challenge of floods, it is necessary to **maintain the storm-water drainage network and upgrade those older structures.**



#### SDG 13: Climate Change

According to interviews with residents. There is an overall need to **manage garbage and regulate air quality** that is being impacted by agricultural burning and smoke from coal kilns surrounding the city. The proposed recommendation is to ultimately **close and fully remove all burning sites** and **establish an agricultural waste recycling factory** in the industrial zone. Increasing green urban pockets in all areas of the city will further contribute to better air quality.

## Conclusion

### Challenges & Interventions needed in Kafr El Battikh

After the residents of Kafr El Battikh highlighted the challenges, needs, and opportunities, the necessary interventions in relation to the SDGs are outlined in this section.



#### SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

The analysis revealed that there is only one public hospital in the city, which makes it difficult to access the health services from all parts of the city. Accordingly, the needed intervention is to **construct a comprehensive health centre and upgrade and transform the existing hospital.**

Kafr El Battikh is divided by the passing of Balamoon Canal, residents complained from piling up of excessive amounts of garbage along the canal which lead to environmental and health implications. Therefore, the needed intervention is the possibility to **ceiling the canal and use that surface for development projects.** In addition to the **construction of intermediate waste collection plant** on the outskirts of the city to be a collection point for all garbage collected from the city.



#### SDG 4: Quality Education

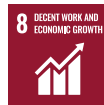
According to the analysis done in component one, the city has a high percentage of illiteracy (24.48%), requiring a significant need for educational services.

Locals emphasized the importance of **maintaining and extending existing schools in addition to building new ones.**



#### SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Residents mentioned there was an urgent need to upgrade the water supply service and the sewage network in the city in general. Some parts of the city's pipes require maintenance. Overall, the water and sewerage networks are overloaded. Therefore, the needed intervention is to **upgrade the current water pipeline network and the sanitation network needs regular maintenance to accommodate population growth.**



#### SDG 8: Decent work and Economic Growth

Residents expressed the need to enhance employment opportunities and improve individuals' capacities and skills. In this regard, interventions are required to open up economic opportunities and improve the city's economic relationship with New Damietta. Residents also mentioned that the city is not using its full economic potentials, especially **furniture production and agriculture industries.**



#### SDG 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities

With continuous land encroachment on agricultural lands outside the official boundary, the city becomes a concentrated urban space where a lot of it is extruded residential housing buildings. Residents expressed their desire to **regulate and organize urbanization** of the city.

Residents also expressed that there is no daily market in

the city for vegetables and fruits. Therefore, the needed intervention would be **creating a fruit and vegetable market** since Kafr El Battikh lacks one.

Another highlighted need was the lack of available vacant lands to construct the needed projects. The residents noted that there could be a possibility to **build on top of the Balamoon Canal after its ceiling** to provide the needed plot for agricultural, tourism, or economic activities. Built structures could be of light-weight materials that not only reduce the dead load of the building, but also provides easy control and high loading capacity of the movable parts and ensure less wastage of materials. These new structures would have the possibility to be dismantled and recycled.

Residents have complained that there is too much trash piled up along the Balamoon Canal, endangering the ecology and public health. The local residents recommended **building an intermediate trash collection facility** to maintain the city's essential infrastructure while also preserving the environment and using its resources to provide a high-quality urban environment.

In order to address the problem of congested streets and a lack of parking spaces, residents also noted the necessity for a **public transportation station** to meet the mobility requirements between the city and different urban areas.



## Overall Recommendations for The National Level

The Government of Egypt is enabling economic growth, employment, and poverty reduction by investing in urban infrastructure projects. Investment decisions in sustainable long-term urban infrastructure can have far-reaching impacts on the social and economic welfare of urban dwellers, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

The presence of Syrian refugees in Egypt can be utilized as an opportunity for development, to build upon refugee economies to draw in fresh capital and strengthen the local economy and businesses. As of mid-2022, 46% of the Syrian population in Egypt is estimated to be living under the national poverty line. The central government can respond to the growing concerns through a range of subsidized housing, relaxed land use terms, easier work authorization process, and mutual planning approach (bottom-up approach). In general, a variety of housing finance options should be explored and made available, including mortgage finance, financing for social and rental housing, non-collateral credit mechanisms for owner-builders, credit for developers, contractors, and producers of building materials and components. Cross-subsidy mechanisms, within urban projects, between commercial and housing land uses, and between high-cost and low-cost housing are important to encourage socially mixed development.

There have been recent efforts in Egypt to move away from a highly centralized system towards one that is gradually more decentralized and gives governorates and municipalities greater decision-making authority - its focus from 'government' to 'governance'. This is in response to the growing complexity of governing in a globalizing, multi-level context, and the need to engage a range of private sector and non-state actors. In this regard, the decentralization processes could encourage greater involvement by the municipalities with the local

community in the decision-making. The ministry of local development (MoLD) is recommended to allow for more guidance and ability to take decisions and allocate funding by local city governments who often could respond more rapidly to the needs of their populations. They can act more quickly and flexibly by adapting their policies and actions to follow sustainable development pathways to respond to an identified challenge.

The development of sustainable urban centers can present synergies with surrounding rural areas and communities via economic and employment linkages. Urban poverty reduction can positively impact rural poverty reduction, and rural areas help provide the ecosystem services and food security essential to urban functioning and sustainability. Therefore, the recommendation is that cities in Egypt should be interconnected with rural areas by planning roads and connected mobility network.

Egypt is considered a melting pot of mixed cultures. This diversity, in the form of heritage and knowledge, is a vital part of cities in Egypt, integral to their identity and dynamism as hubs of social and human development. Culture provides identity, agency, and tools for communities to fight poverty. Integrating diversity of culture into governance, based on the needs and expectations of citizens, facilitates participation, intercultural dialogue, and the practice of equality of rights.

Egypt needs to focus on green growth connecting between environmental, economic and social inclusion policies, therefore, new urban policies have to integrate growth rather than wide economic approach.

In terms of environment, water and air pollution are among the most severe and chronic challenges

facing low- and middle-income cities in Egypt, whose environmental infrastructure and regulatory capacity are significantly impacted by rapid growth. Environmental Infrastructure investments in the field of flood control, water purification, and air quality should be prioritized above spatial and economic interventions.

The use of technology in the cities of Egypt is very limited. Financing projects in the field of smart innovative technologies will make cities more inclusive and integrated. Smart city interventions integrate solutions through a planning-led approach in the areas of mobility, energy, water management, housing or other public services. For example, it could be intelligent street lighting, smart energy metering, alternative fuel vehicles, intelligent transport systems, efficient buildings and smart districts, storm water management, health and social care services, but also innovative approaches towards city administration and interaction with citizens.

## Overall Take-aways:

### Education

- Egypt has high education attainment rates, around 73% of the total population are educated<sup>67</sup>. However, literacy rates are higher in younger people, which means secondary schools suffer from students dropping due to economic situation<sup>68</sup>. Egypt is working on putting more emphasis on education and measure to improve and expand education to reach Egyptians and Non-Egyptians. The last change took place in 2014, when compulsory education was extended to grade 12 which provide the country with adequate educated work force.

### Health

- According to the World Bank Data, The Egyptian health system is not positioned to deliver high-quality health services to meet the most pressing needs of its population. Addressing Egypt's major health challenges and achieving broader development goals will require reorienting Egypt's health system toward delivering higher quality care (SDG 3). However, there are several planned health and social investments ,if fully implemented, will support better response to health-related issues among the citizens and refugees.

### Economy

- The complexities of business regulations in Egypt make it difficult for startups to expand; Syrians often cannot register their businesses in their own names and cannot travel abroad for business on refugee visas or import skilled labor from home. In addition to lack of access to credit and banking options inhibits many Syrians from opening or expanding their own businesses. Syrian refugees are unable to secure loans because of their lack of land and property in Egypt. Moreover, entrepreneurs are challenged due to microfinance organizations' reluctance to lend to foreigners. The government of Egypt is encouraged to give its residents and refugees the opportunity to establish home-based business, including Syrian refugees, which assists in improving the resident's

socio-economic conditions.

- There is an opportunity to improve Egypt's residents' livelihoods, local economy, and attract investors and businesses by increasing provision and investment in sustainable water and sewerage systems, public transportation, green/open and public spaces, and pedestrian infrastructure.
- As a result of the COVID-19 effects, Egyptian cities suffered from a rise in unemployment, food insecurity, and insufficient access to essential services and necessities. However, there is a chance to use the government's vacant lands for urban agriculture/farming to reduce unemployment, alleviate the effects of climate change, improve inhabitants' socioeconomic conditions, and attain food security.
- The COVID-19 pandemic also sparked some questions about the relevance of spatial planning and the availability of green/open space, emphasizing the importance of utilizing existing vacant lands and turning them into green/open spaces. Up to 12% of land within New Damietta's built-up area is unoccupied, allowing for significant intensification.

### Environment

- According to UNICEF, Egypt is highly vulnerable to climate change, with projected increase in heat waves, dust storms, storms along the Mediterranean coast and extreme weather. In terms of climate mitigation, Egypt has a high potential for mitigation for the availability of vast desert plains that could be utilized for solar energy production and may be used to generate power and reduce reliance on fossil fuel towards a sustainable country. Moreover, Egypt hosted COP27 in Sharm El-Sheik and has already made important steps towards addressing climate change, pioneering green bonds in the MENA region, launching its 2050 Climate Change Strategy and providing updated targets for emission reduction by 2030.

### Accessibility

- In terms of accessibility and mobility, Egypt is developing adequate mobility options within its cities that will give the opportunity to reduce the environmental impact, and improve the residents' socio-economic conditions, and access to job opportunities. Current investment in the Egyptian railway projects will further connect upper governorate with the rest of the country as an opportunity to enhance affordable accessibility and connectivity between these areas, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce air pollution.

### Gender Equality

- Egypt was placed 129th out of 156 nations in the Global Gender Gap Index in 2021. Only 20% of Egypt's working-age women are participating in the economy, compared to 75% of men<sup>69</sup>. Women represent 50% of the country's population, therefore, several gender equality initiatives are taking place through USAID and the World Bank which partnered with the National Council for Women in Egypt to revive the Egyptian Gender Equity Seal (EGES) certification. This model promotes gender equity in the private sector by building a series of good practices in the areas of recruitment, career development, family-work balance, and sexual harassment policies.

### Urban Development at Local Level

- There are also several planned infrastructure investments at the city level in New Damietta and Kafr El Battikh highlighted on sections 5/pages 102 and 103 within the urban strategic plans, that, once completed, will promote and enhance sustainability in the city and over 80 potential projects and initiatives that were prioritized to be implemented by 2030. These projects, when implemented, will assist in addressing the economic and environmental challenges, including education, health care, solid waste management, water and wastewater, mobility, and housing.



# 6

## ENDNOTES

## Endnotes

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