

Review of the implementation of the AGORA methodology in Afghanistan under SRDP IV



Annex IV. The notion of *manteqa*: a case study of eight *manteqas* in Faryab Province

I. Executive Summary

Building on the evidence built since 2018 through the implementation of SRDP IV and the Secondary Data Review on the notion of *manteqa* (see annex II), this report provides the key findings from the case study of eight *manteqas* in Qaisar and Shirin Tagab districts (five in Qaisar district and three in Shirin Tagab district), followed by individual *manteqa* profiles. Each profile provides general information on the *manteqa* studied, as well as an overview of the key resources essential for rural livelihoods, and an understanding of how they are managed.

The case study showed the *manteqa* as a key identity reference for the village population in each of the assessed area, and their geographical boundaries, which are often watersheds, mountain ridges or other geographical features, to be known to both their residents and to those living in neighbouring *manteqas*. The case study also served to underline the lack of clarity around the notion of village and village boundaries. There was some confusion between villages and hamlets, and between larger villages and their neighbourhoods, particularly when large villages are aggregates of multiple older villages that have grown over the decades.

Beyond geographical boundaries, the case study found that the existence of each *manteqa* in the minds of its inhabitants stemmed from a feeling of belonging and attachment towards it, itself borne out of geographical proximity, common history, economic, social and tribal / ethnic ties, and the solidarity derived from the community management of some of the resources upon which rural livelihoods depend.

Crucially, the case study confirmed that the customary governance structures in place at various levels within each *manteqa* assessed were legitimate and accountable to the local population, contradicting the view that informal governance is managed by authoritarian chiefs, unconstrained and unaccountable to the community. Rather, in the absence of state presence at sub-district level, customary informal governance mechanisms seem to have largely underpinned community resilience throughout decades of war in rural areas.

The above point was most clearly illustrated by the customary management of water, by far the most precious resource for rural communities. All seven *manteqas* with irrigation networks relied on sophisticated systems of community paid and managed customary water managers (Mirbashis, Mirabs, Chakbashis) in charge of allocating water and maintaining irrigation systems. A similar system was also put in place by the community of one *manteqa* to manage a drinking water system serving multiple villages. The irrigation system's maintenance was ensured through the two traditional community solidarity systems of 'ashr' and 'chanda'¹, and beyond water, communities in all *manteqas* assessed also relied on ash and / or chanda to maintain key community infrastructures (roads, bridges, mosques, bazaars etc.), pointing to the importance of these mechanisms to foster community resilience.

The case study served to highlight a number of tangible benefits related to planning and delivering aid through *manteqas* in rural areas and *nahias* in urban areas:

1. As a notion familiar and tangible to Afghans that espouses pre-existing socio-spatial realities, it provides an entry point that is culturally appropriate, useful to understand the social and economic relationships between villages / neighbourhoods and the political economy of target

¹ Ashr is the provision of free labor by the community members towards the creation or maintenance of a collective good, and chanda the provision of money or in-kind resources by the community for the same purpose

areas, as well as to plan and deliver all types of assistance, from emergency to development, in ways that are locally owned and accountable to communities.

2. Aid planned and delivered at *manteqa* level can address key inter-village issues, including with regards to the joint management of resources such as irrigation water, roads or markets. This is particularly important in the context of rural Afghanistan where resources upon which livelihoods depend are usually managed by communities at the level of multiple villages, not individual villages. In this regard, planning and implementing projects through territories that make sense and are owned by Afghan communities likely enables more effective and accountable livelihood support, building resilience and helping to pre-empt and address local conflicts over resources.
3. A *manteqa* rather than a village level focus also enables a sharper understanding of the cross-*manteqa* economic and social relationships around the use of pastures / rangelands, as well as a good grasp of the different steps and actors involved in the value chain with regards to the production and marketing of agricultural or other products, and local crafts, with important potential for understanding and supporting community livelihoods. For this reason, the *manteqa* is arguably an optimal prism through which to understand and gather quality data about the systems underpinning rural livelihoods.
4. Working through a territory that is tangible and understood in its granularity by rural communities enabled ACTED and IMPACT to tap more effectively local knowledge, generating more accurate data and analysis for the purpose of aid planning and delivery. Beyond its usefulness to ACTED's programming, the *manteqa* approach therefore offers ways to improve assessments and related planning for the broader aid response.
5. Because basic service units (BSUs) are usually smaller than *manteqas*, the provision of health, education, water, and other basic services can vary within a *manteqa*, and the *manteqa* approach provides a good entry point to identify gaps in BSUs and help improve planning for key government services.
6. Combining a *manteqa* based approach in rural areas and a *nahia/guzar*² focus in urban areas has potential to generate a better understanding of rural / urban relationships, useful both to inform programming as well as broader policy choices.
7. Similarly, a *manteqa* / *nahia* based approach may also facilitate a better understanding of the links between *manteqas* and transnational / diaspora networks. Given the high number of Afghan refugees and migrants abroad, this could be useful to inform programming and policy choices on the issue of migration.

II. Methodology

The case study was carried out by staff knowledgeable about Afghanistan but external to the implementation of SRDP. It is the result of a drawn-out process that included three field visits to Afghanistan undertaken in February 2021, February 2022 and March 2022 respectively, with the bulk of the case study specific data being gathered in February 2022 through structured engagement with community members, complemented by interviews with staff members and local authorities.

² Guzars are small urban neighborhoods organised around one or more mosques. Nahias are made up of multiple guzars.



The evidence base for the case study was enriched by a review of SRDP related documents as well as external academic and aid system sources.

A. Working definition of the notion of *manteqa*

In the absence of a single accepted academic definition of the notion of *manteqa*³, ACTED and IMPACT are using the following working definition of *manteqa* that draws on the work of several academic and aid practitioners.⁴

The manteqa is a geographic area containing a number of villages and is identified by both its inhabitants and the other inhabitants of the district under one common regional name. It is thus the basic reference point for the village population in the area. The manteqa boundaries are usually clearly defined by natural geographical features such as rivers, watersheds etc.

B. Evidence base underpinning the case study

This case study builds on the extensive data collection carried out around the notion of *manteqa* by IMPACT and ACTED under the SRDP IV program since 2018 in Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh and Samangan Provinces.

Seven rounds of data collection were carried out between 2018 and 2022 to map out and understand 64 *manteqas* in 24 districts across Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh and Samangan Provinces.

- Between October and November 2018, community leaders were interviewed and each *manteqa* was mapped out and its infrastructure identified.
- Between January and February 2019, key informant (KI) interviews focused on agricultural land, community leadership, and access to basic service were carried out in every village in each *manteqa*.
- Between August and September 2019, a third round of data collection was conducted to provide additional information on access to basic services, markets and the economy in each *manteqa*. Data from all three rounds of data collection was analysed and then aggregated to the *manteqa* level, Individual *manteqa* indicators were combined to form composite indicators to be used for prioritisation of needs within each *manteqa*.
- A fourth round implemented between November 2019 and December 2019, mapped the irrigation water networks and land types of each of the 24 SRDP IV target districts, in order to more precisely map the links between *manteqas* and resources managed collectively by communities and that are of key importance for agricultural livelihoods as well as assemble a

³ See the Secondary Data Review on the notion of *manteqa* (Annex I) for more information on the different tentative definitions put forward by academics and aid practitioners.

⁴ The working definition takes elements from the following authors, complemented by the findings of this case study

- Liz Alden Wily, "Land Rights in Crisis: Restoring Tenure Security in Afghanistan" (Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Issues Paper Series, 2003), 71 and "Land Relations in Faryab Province: Findings from a Field Study in 11 villages" (AREU, Case Studies Series, 2004), 3
- Roussel, Frédéric; Caley, Marie-Pierre. "Les *manteqas* : le puzzle souterrain de l'Afghanistan." Unpublished, 1994.



database of irrigation canals and water managers in order to improve the SRDP IV's capacity for engagement in agricultural activities.

- In early 2021, a review of the *manteqa* and irrigation system of Khulm district was undertaken in order to address gaps in qualitative data identified during previous rounds.
- In February 2022, a round of data collection was undertaken in order to address gaps in qualitative data identified during previous rounds, in the form of a qualitative review of 9 *manteqa* in Qaisar, Shirin Tagab and Dawlatabad districts of Faryab Province, and refine *manteqa* assessments tools.
- An additional round of data collection was undertaken in Balkh Province in March 2022, with a view to pilot the revised *manteqa* assessment tools.

In total, based on population data provided by KI, the assessment area covered approximately 2,239,746 rural and 1,093,657 urban individuals, for a total estimated population of 3,333,403 people, as indicated in table 1 below.

Table 1: Villages, families, population and number of KI interviews for assessment, by rural/urban environments

Province	District	<i>Manteqa</i>	Environments	Villages	Families	Population	KI Interviews
Jawzjan	3	5	Rural	100	38,643	202,198	39
	1	1	Urban	136	32,931	229,151	12
Balkh	3	9	Rural	253	82,636	400,092	67
	1	2	Urban	100	85,726	345,731	24
Faryab	11	34	Rural	1024	223,538	1,256,562	225
	1	1	Urban	65	16,478	103,887	9
Samangan	1	11	Rural	127	23,077	231,939	58
	3	1	Urban	130	33,223	200,173	12
Total	18	59	Rural	1,504	367,894	2,239,746	419
	6	5	Urban	431	168,358	1,093,657	57
	24	64	Total	1,935	536,252	3,333,403	476

The results from these data collection rounds inform our understanding of the local characteristics of each *manteqa*, including the community leadership, the scale and scope of community-managed resources (irrigation, pastures etc.), active economic sectors, market access, trade, and basic service access for health, education, and water.

The *manteqa* profiles presented in this paper include data from all data collection rounds referred above for the eight target *manteqas*, but in particular from qualitative data gathered during research conducted in February 2022. Two FGDs were held in each *manteqa* assessed using a standard questionnaire, with questions focusing on generating a better understanding of the patterns of community solidarity, the key resources underpinning rural livelihoods (irrigation systems, rainfed lands, pastures) and their management, as well as trade and handicrafts.

III. Faryab Province

Faryab is one of 34 provinces of Afghanistan, lying in the country's northwest bordering Turkmenistan. It is composed of 13 districts and one municipality (Maimana city). Jawzjan and Sar-i Pul Provinces lie to the east and Ghor and Badghis Provinces to the south. The Province is predominantly dry, with continental weather. The mountain snow of the southern districts feeds the Province's main rivers which flow south to north. Most of the rivers are seasonal, with water level varying greatly over the course of the year.



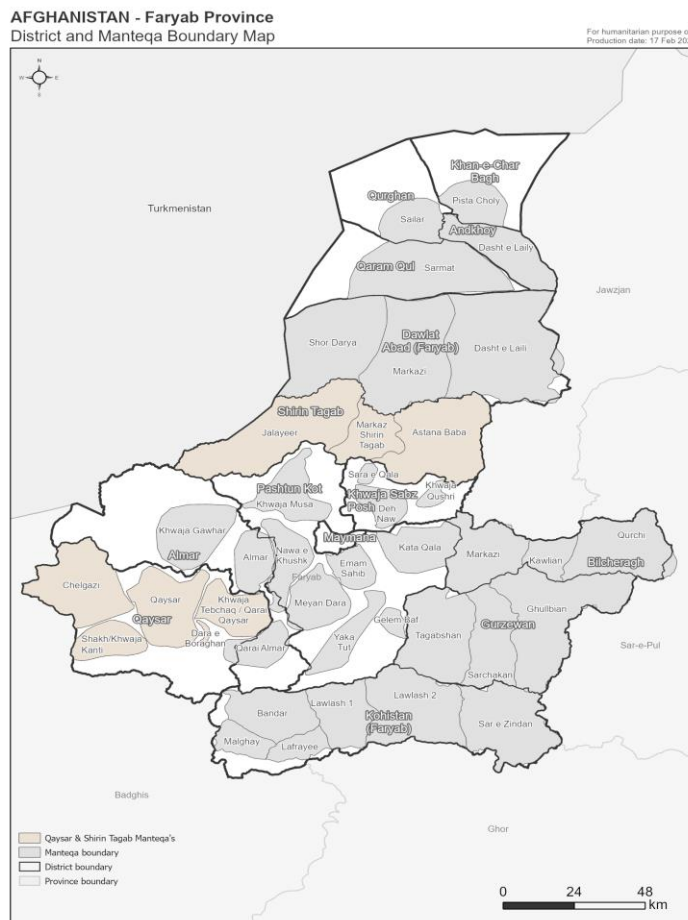
Much of the Province is mountainous, but large semi-desertic areas used as seasonal pastures dominate in the west, bordering Turkmenistan, and in the east adjoining Jawzjan Province, where the well-known Dasht-e-laile desert lies.

The population of Faryab is estimated at 1.1 million people. The Province is ethnically diverse. Uzbeks are the majority (54 percent), with Pashtuns making up the second largest ethnic group with about 20 percent of the population. Other ethnic groups are present in smaller numbers such as Tajiks (9%), Aimaq (8%), Turkmen (4.5%), Arab (3%), Sayed (2%) and Hazara (0.2%). The presence of Pashtuns in Faryab goes back to the policies of Abdul Rahman Khan and his successors to give land grants and settle Pashtuns near the country's northern border, a practice that started in 1880 and continued well into the second half of the 20th century, often causing friction with the local population that periodically flared up into inter-ethnic conflicts.

Faryab Province historically has been predominantly agro-pastoral with an extensive degree of pastoral transhumance practiced up until the present. Rangeland accounts for two-thirds of the area. Over 30 percent of the Province is cultivated as rain-fed farms, nearly all of it on sloping land. Less than seven percent of the area is under irrigation.

IMPACT and ACTED have mapped 34 *manteqas* in 13 districts of Faryab. Map 2 shows these *manteqas*, highlighting those included in this case study.

Map 2. Districts and *manteqas* of Faryab Province, and *manteqas* targeted by the case study



IV. Key findings

The key findings from the case study of eight *manteqas* put into sharper focus the understanding of *manteqas* generated since 2018 through both field research and work with communities at that level. They also point to the potential of the *manteqa* approach for the purpose of aid planning and delivery, as well as more broadly, local governance.

A. Key features of *manteqas*

The following key features of *manteqas* were identified through the case study, confirming and refining findings from the Secondary Data Review presented in Annex I and earlier rounds of data collection carried out under SRDP IV referred above:

1. In all *manteqas* assessed, the *manteqa* was a key identity reference point for the village population in the area, and their geographical boundaries, which are often watersheds, mountain ridges or other geographical features, were known to both their residents and to those living in neighbouring *manteqas*.
2. The assessment also served to underline the lack of clarity around the notion of village and village boundaries. Notably, there was some confusion between villages and hamlets, and between larger villages and their neighbourhoods, in particular when large villages are aggregate of multiple older villages that have grown over the decades. People also use the mosque as a socio-spatial reference, with villages usually being composed of multiple mosques that serve different areas.
3. Beyond geographical boundaries, the case study shows that the existence of each of the assessed *manteqa* in the minds of its inhabitants stems from a feeling of belonging and attachment towards it, itself borne out of geographical proximity, common history, economic, social and tribal / ethnic ties, and the solidarity derived from the community management of some of the resources upon which rural livelihoods depend.
4. The *manteqa* is a socio-spatial construct that can evolve over time, although this evolution is likely to be slow. For example, the civil war that has raged on over the last decades may have re-shaped allegiances, urbanisation may gradually weaken or strengthen community bonds, and the shift from rural to urban livelihoods will impact the reliance on community managed systems around which rural livelihoods are built. The existence of *manteqa* do not preclude conflict within the *manteqa*, as it does not eliminate the segmentary nature of Afghan society.
5. The case study confirmed that the customary governance structures in place at various levels within each *manteqa* assessed are legitimate and accountable to the local population, contradicting the view that informal governance is managed by authoritarian chiefs, unconstrained and unaccountable to the community. Rather, in the absence of a functioning state, customary informal governance mechanisms seem to have largely underpinned community resilience throughout decades of war.
6. The above point was most clearly illustrated by the customary management of water, by far the most precious resource for rural communities. All seven *manteqas* with irrigation networks relied on sophisticated systems of community paid customary water managers (mirbashis, mirabs, chakbashis) in charge of allocating water and maintaining irrigation systems. A similar system was also put in place by the community of one *manteqa* to manage a drinking water

system serving multiple villages. The irrigation systems' maintenance was ensured through the two traditional community solidarity systems of 'ashr' and 'chanda', with ashhr being the provision of free labour by the community members towards the creation or maintenance of a collective good, and chanda the provision of money or in-kind resources by the community for the same purpose. As noted above, in the communities studied, the customary water governance system described above was functional, effective and accountable to the local community.

7. Beyond water, communities in all *manteqas* assessed also relied on ashhr and / or chanda to maintain key community infrastructures (roads, bridges, mosques, bazaars etc.), pointing to the importance of these mechanisms to foster community resilience. For example, in Shirin Tagab centre and Dara-e-boraghan *manteqas*, communities collected relatively large sums through chanda for repair or construction of key bridges, with community members living abroad also contributing in the case of Shirin Tagab centre.
8. The case study also provided concrete illustrations of problems regarding land titling and the resulting insecurity of tenure in Afghanistan. This was particularly notable with regards to pastures, which together with water are the most precious resources to most rural communities in Faryab. While communities in the assessed *manteqas* have developed internally and with neighbouring communities clear systems of customary 'ownership' or use of pastures that, to the best of our knowledge, are effective and accountable, the fact that in many cases this customary ownership or right of use is not formally recognised by the government fragilises security of tenure and livelihoods by providing possible entry points for the State or other actors to appropriate, sell or allocate to third parties collectively owned pastures without proper compensation to communities.
9. Basic Service Units (BSU), which are the catchment areas of key (mostly) government provided health, water, or education services tend to be much smaller than *manteqas* and are generally contained within the geography of the *manteqa*.

B. The potential benefits of working at *manteqa* level

The case study served to highlight a number of tangible benefits related to planning and delivering aid through *manteqas* in rural areas:

1. The notion of *manteqa* is familiar and tangible to Afghans and espouses pre-existing socio-spatial realities. As such, it provides an entry point that is culturally appropriate, useful to understand the social and economic relationships between villages / neighbourhoods and the political economy of target areas and interact with communities in ways that are locally owned and accountable to communities. In this regard, planning and implementing projects through territories that make sense and are owned by Afghan communities likely enables more effective and accountable livelihood support, building resilience and helping to pre-empt and address local conflicts over resources.
2. The case study clearly indicated that working at *manteqa* rather than village level enables an understanding of the common resources used by and managed at the level of multiple villages, and of the social and economic relationships between villages. This in turn enables planning and delivery of projects that address key inter-village issues, including with regards to the joint



management of these resources, thereby building the resilience of communities and helping to address or manage local conflicts around natural resources.

3. Similarly, the case study indicated that a *manteqa* rather than a village level focus also enables a sharper understanding of the cross-*manteqa* economic and social relationships around the use of pastures / rangelands, as well as a good grasp of the different steps and actors involved in the value chain with regards to the production and marketing of agricultural products and local crafts, with important potential for understanding and supporting community livelihoods. For this reason, the *manteqa* is arguably an optimal prism through which to understand and gather quality data about the systems underpinning rural livelihoods.
4. Given their coverage of all communities, the case study indicated that local community structures at the *manteqa* level are very well placed to identify beneficiaries and delivering emergency assistance effectively.
5. Working through a territory that is tangible to and understood in its granularity by rural communities enabled ACTED and IMPACT to tap more effectively local knowledge, generating more accurate data and analysis for the purpose of aid planning and delivery. Beyond its usefulness to ACTED's programming, the *manteqa* approach therefore offers ways to improve assessments and related planning for the broader aid response.
6. Urbanisation has taken place at scale in the last 20 years, with the proportion of the urban residents going from 10 to above 30 percent of the country's population, and people coming from similar villages / communities have tended to congregate together in cities, especially in informal settlements, forming neighbourhoods known as *guzars*. In this regard, the case study indicated that by combining a *manteqa* based approach in rural areas and a *nahia/guzar* focus in urban areas, the AGORA approach would have potential to generate a better understanding of rural / urban relationships, useful both to inform programming as well as broader policy choices.
7. Similarly, the case study indicated that a *manteqa* based approach may also facilitate a better understanding of the links between *manteqas* and transnational / diaspora networks. Given the high number of Afghan refugees and migrants abroad, this could be useful to inform programming and policy choices on the issue of migration.
8. Because BSUs are much smaller than *manteqas*, the provision of health, education, water, and other basic services can vary within a *manteqa*. The *manteqa / nahia* approach provides a good entry point to identify gaps in BSUs and help improve planning for key government services.
9. The case study indicated that informal / customary local governance structures clearly play a key role in providing public goods and underpinning resilience at community level. In this regard, the *manteqa* could also be a useful operational unit for the purpose of managing and addressing a range of local governance issues that have not been adequately addressed to date in Afghanistan through the formal governance system. This could be done through recognising and supporting informal systems and linking them with formal governance mechanisms, for issues such as water management, pasture management, and land tenure administration.



V. Conclusions

The outcome of the case study put into sharper focus the fact that most of the support and collaboration systems developed over time to manage key economic resources essential for rural livelihoods (water, pastures etc.) are community-driven and managed, with formal governance structures and systems playing only a marginal role at best.

Moreover, the case study findings, as well as those drawn from our own work in the rest of the country where we operate, also clearly indicate that these customary governance mechanisms are both effective, accountable to and legitimate in the eyes of local communities.

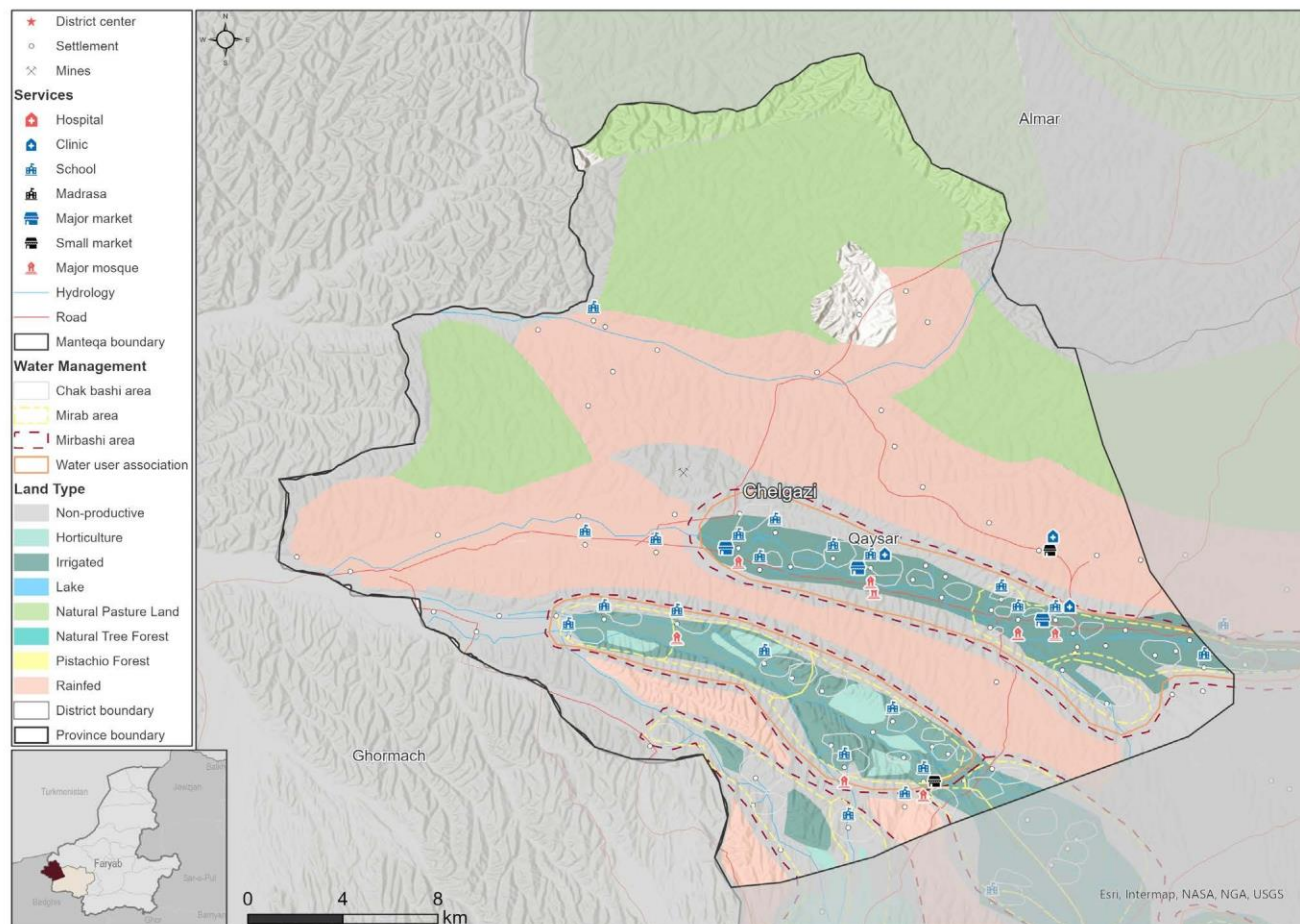
This points to the potential usefulness of a *manteqa* level focus both for understanding local realities for engaging with community governance mechanisms and systems for the purpose of planning and delivering rural development aid, and for strengthening local governance. AGORA therefore opens up space to usefully complement the traditional focus of development actors on supporting formal governance systems with a greater focus on supporting community / customary systems and linking them with formal governance where relevant and appropriate.



Context and Background

Chilgazi is one of the largest *manteqa* in Qaisar district, made up of 76 villages. Situated on the ring road, its agriculture is primarily agriculture and livestock based, with some important markets (notably for livestock). It is inhabited by a majority of Pashtuns, with a significant Uzbek minority. The geographical border of the *manteqa* is clear to its inhabitants and to those of neighbouring *manteqa* surveyed. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources. The process to turn the *manteqa* into a new district based on these boundaries has been initiated by the de facto authorities.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	12,512
Population	67,366
Villages	76

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	68%
Tajik	9%
Uzbek	21%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	2%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Land Type	Area (jirib)	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	118,010	62%
	Irrigated	38,293	20%
	Horticulture	11,340	6%
Pastureland	Natural	23,754	12%
	Artificial	0	0%
Forest	Pistachio	0	0%
	Natural	76	0%
Total		191,549	100%

¹A jirib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

Irrigation Land

There are two networks of irrigation canals feeding from rivers / streams in the *manteqa*, with 15 dams or canal intakes that irrigate between 5 to 4,000 jeribs of land each. The system is community managed, with one Mirbashi overseeing several Mirabs, all hired and paid by the community, to manage water distribution and oversee the system's maintenance. The Mirabs are contracted on an annual basis, with extensions based on good performance. Mirabs manage water allocation and maintenance at the level of the canal intakes and the main canals. Water is allocated on an hourly basis. Downstream, water allocation to the lands of individual households is calculated based on the amount of irrigated land each possesses.

The maintenance of the system is done through two traditional community solidarity systems, namely 'ashr' and 'chanda'. Ashr is the provision of free labour by community members towards the creation or maintenance of a collective good, while chanda is the provision of money or in-kind resources by the community for the same purpose.

Canals and dams are cleaned, and small repairs not requiring significant inputs are done through the practice of ash. Work requiring the purchase of inputs or requiring contracting is done through the chanda system. The yearly maintenance of the main canals mobilises ash and chanda from all villages relying on the irrigation systems. Maintenance of canals is handled by Mirabs at village level. The government is not involved, but the water rights/allocation of different canals is recorded in the Department of Agriculture at district level.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirabs with the support of community

elders if necessary. The ability of community members to monitor each other's water consumption facilitates conflict resolution. When disputes cannot be handled by the community, which is very rare, they may be referred to the formal courts.

In case water is scarce, downstream communities can request their upstream neighbours to allocate to them a portion of the available water. This practice is called 'silta', with downstream communities confirming that such requests were usually honoured by upstream villages. Community members noted that karezes were used for irrigation in the *manteqa* in the past, but no longer.

Pasture Land

People recognise three types of pastures in the *manteqa*: private, community and government pastures. Private pastures are few, implying that owners have documented ownership on a fee simple basis.

Community pastures belong to villages or groups of villages and are considered as 'owned' by communities based on customary use and, sometimes, the existence of documented agreements, but may not be formally recognised as community-owned by the government. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that 'own' them, and are managed at community level by elders. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there.

As in other *manteqas*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities residing in mountainous areas (Kuhistan, Jawand), with seasonal migration of flocks from mountain pastures in the summer to lower lying ones near the border in the fall/ spring.

Small conflicts over pasture are usually resolved in person, since everyone has a traditional pasture location known to everyone else, where their tent is pitched every year. More serious conflicts are rare and are resolved by elders. The government is also present in border areas.

The construction of a border fence by Turkmenistan in the last years has cut off people from some of their traditional grazing land located near the border.

Rainfed Land

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership documented and recognised by the government.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done through sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contributions of the lessor and lessee in terms of land use, labour, inputs and machinery. Conflicts over lalmi lands are few and are usually handled by community elders when they occur.

Other Resources

Ashr is practiced at *manteqa* level to maintain the main bazaar; fight prairie fires from Turkmenistan to prevent them from spreading to the pastures on the Afghan side of the border. Ashr and chanda are also practiced for the maintenance of secondary roads, cemeteries, mosques etc., at the level of the users (village, groups of villages).

Trade and Crafts

There are three main bazaars in the *manteqa*. Chichakto, Chilgazi and Chaharshambe. Chaharshambe bazaar is the largest livestock bazaar in Faryab, where people come to buy and sell from neighbouring provinces and sometimes even Kabul.

The *manteqa* is famous for its melons and dried raisins (kishmish), which are sold in Qaisar center and Maimana. The *manteqa* also produces wool, which is both sold outside and used for the weaving of gilems, for which the *manteqa* is famous.

Community members indicated that demand for gilems was down, with traders no longer coming to buy them as in the past. It was mentioned that some oil deposits exist in the *manteqa*, but that these were not commercially exploited.



Leveraging local capacities
Promoting settlement approaches
Enabling integrated response

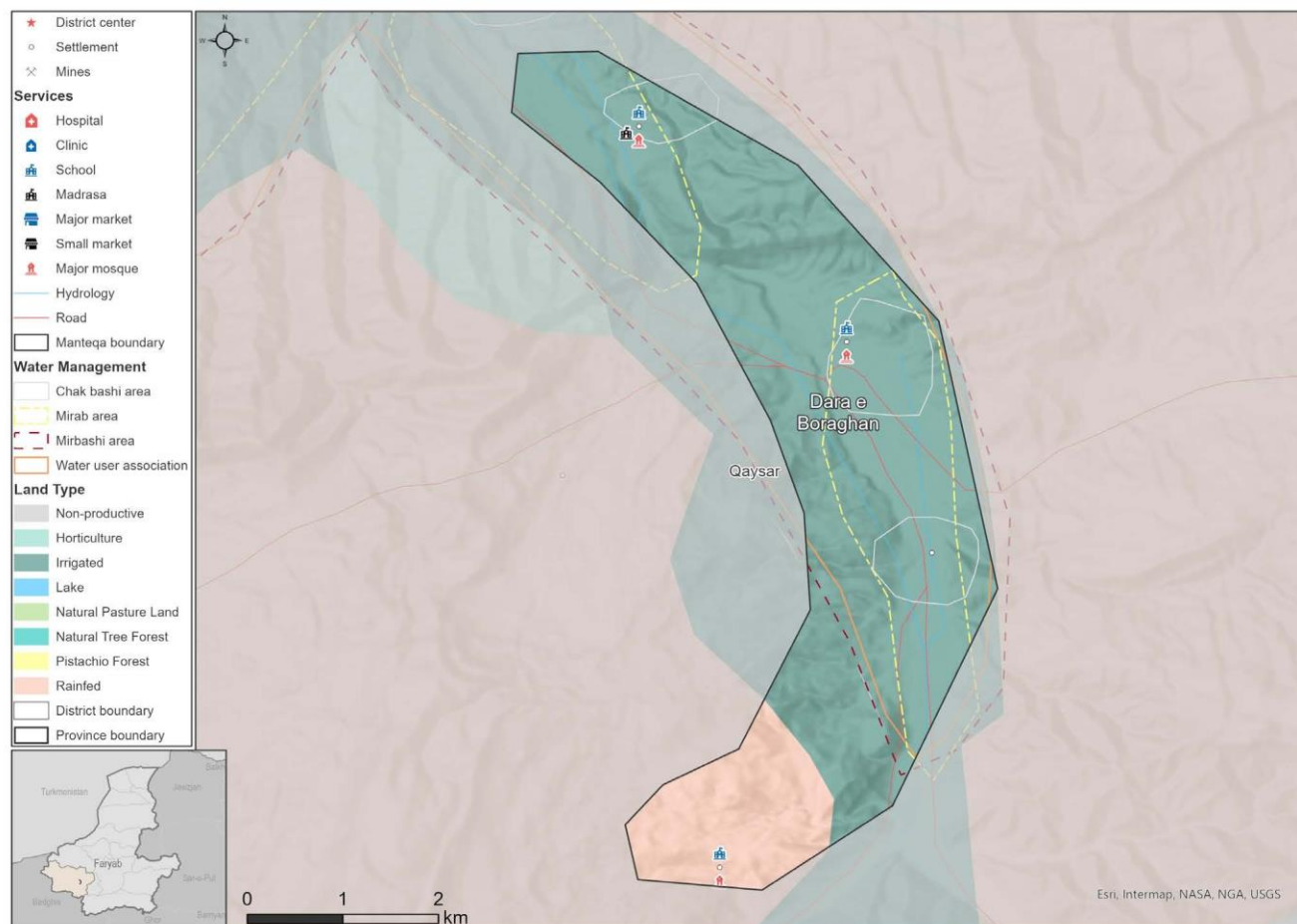
AGORA is a joint-venture between ACTED and IMPACT created in 2016 which aims to deliver effective recovery and resilience programming through area-based approaches in ways that are accountable to local communities and actors. It is a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the resilience and recovery of crisis affected people in fragile and crises contexts by putting local territories at the centre, supported by local knowledge, structures and capacities. AGORA core activities include community mapping, multi-sector and area-based assessments, needs prioritization and planning, as well as support to area-based coordination mechanisms and institutional cooperation. Through its territorial / area-based approach it aims to provide support tailored to local needs that transcends the humanitarian – development – peace divide.

Methodology Note: Quantitative data came from structured key informant interviews with community leadership between January-February 2019, mapped data came from participatory mapping discussions conducted with community leaders between November-December 2019, and qualitative data was collected from semi-structured key informant interviews with community leadership in February 2022.

Context and Background

Dara-e-boraghan is the smallest *manteqa* of Qaisar district, with 11 villages. Situated in a mountainous area off the ring road, it relies on the Qaisar centre main market for trade, and its economy is primarily agriculture and livestock based. The majority of the *manteqa's* inhabitants are Tajiks. Uzbeks also live in the *manteqa*. The geographical border of the *manteqa* is clear to its inhabitants and to those of neighbouring *manteqa* surveyed. The two valleys located upstream of the highest village of the *manteqa* are considered by its inhabitants as belonging to it, and have unpaved roads that lead to Jawand district of Badghis Province, and Qarai Almar *manteqa* of Almar district in Faryab respectively. The road to Jawand is only open half the year for vehicular traffic due to snow. The *manteqa's* inhabitants report a high percentage of landless, noting that every household has one to two sons working in Iran. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	1,306
Population	5,712
Villages	11

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	0%
Tajik	75%
Uzbek	25%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	0%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Agricultural	Rainfed	27,000	44%
	Irrigated	6,520	11%
	Horticulture	3,610	6%
Pastureland	Natural	2,780	5%
	Artificial	0	0%
Forest	Pistachio	0	0%
	Natural	10,500	17%
Total		60,910	100%

¹A jirib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

Irrigation Land

Four networks of canals feeding from the main river and one from a spring located downstream irrigate the *manteqa*, with 5 dams or canal intakes serving the *manteqa's* 11 villages. The system is entirely community managed, with one Mirab hired and paid by the community managing each of the main canals and related intakes, managing water distribution and overseeing the system's maintenance. The Mirabs are selected by elders and paid in kind or in cash or a combination of both (receiving 50 to 60,000 AF / year on average). Water is allocated on an hourly basis, with each main canal / sub-canal receiving a fixed allocation. The same system applies at village level with regards to water allocation to individual families, calculated based on the amount of irrigated land each possesses. There is no Mirbashi overseeing the Mirabs at *manteqa* level.

The maintenance of the system is done through the two traditional community solidarity systems of 'ashr' and 'chanda' described above (see Chilgazi *manteqa* profile). Canals and dams are cleaned, and small repairs not requiring significant inputs are done through ash. Work requiring the purchase of inputs or requiring contracting is done through the chanda system, whereby community members relying on the resource contribute money instead of labour. Maintenance of lower-level canals is handled at village level. The contribution is equal between landowning families for ash, but for chanda the contribution is adjusted to reflect the size of households' irrigated land holding. The government is not involved in the management of water.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirabs with the support of community elders if necessary. The ability of community members to monitor each other's water consumption facilitates conflict resolution. In case water is scarce, downstream communities can request their upstream

neighbours for 'silta', with downstream communities confirming that silta requests were usually honoured by upstream villages.

Pastureland

People recognise three types of pastures in the *manteqa*: private, community and government pastures. Private pastures are few and imply that the owner have full documented ownership on a fee simple basis.

Community pastures belong to villages or groups of villages and are considered as 'owned' by communities based on customary use and, sometimes, the existence of a range of documented agreements, but may not be formally recognised as community-owned by the government. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that 'own' them, and are managed at community level by elders. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there. Customary use can simply be affirmed by the fact that the same group of households have pitched their tent in the same pasture and used it for a long time, or the fact this group will have planted a tree or built walls there decades ago as proof of usage/ ownership.

As in other *manteqas*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities residing in higher altitude or lower lying areas, with seasonal migration of flocks from mountain pastures in the summer to lower lying ones near the border in the fall/ spring.

Small conflicts over pasture are usually resolved in person, since everyone has its traditional pasture location known to everyone else, where their tent is pitched every year. More serious conflicts are rare

and are resolved by elders.

Rainfed Land

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership documented and recognised by the government. Land that is recognised by the community as government owned land cannot be cultivated.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee in terms of land use, labour, inputs and machinery.

Conflicts over lalmi lands are reportedly few, and usually handled by community elders, with rare cases being referred to the government.

Other Resources

Ashr is practiced for the maintenance of roads, while chanda has been used for building the main Tangi bridge into the *manteqa*. Ashr requirements are discussed by elders and announced in mosques. Households benefitting from the resource

will contribute. In the case of the bridge, the whole *manteqa* contributed.

Trade and Crafts

There is no bazaar in the *manteqa*, only a few shops selling basic products in the main villages. For Eid, the main Friday mosque brings together people from about 20 villages (including the neighbouring villages of Qarai Qaisar *manteqa*). On the occasion of this yearly gathering, a market is created, with villagers and Qaisar traders bringing their goods to sell.

Women in the *manteqa* weave gilems which are well-known (the Ali Khoja gilem), and also make chapans.

Some raisins and apples are sold in Qaisar and Maimana bazaars, as well as shrubs collected in the mountains' valleys, but most of the agricultural production is consumed locally.



Leveraging local capacities
Promoting settlement approaches
Enabling integrated response

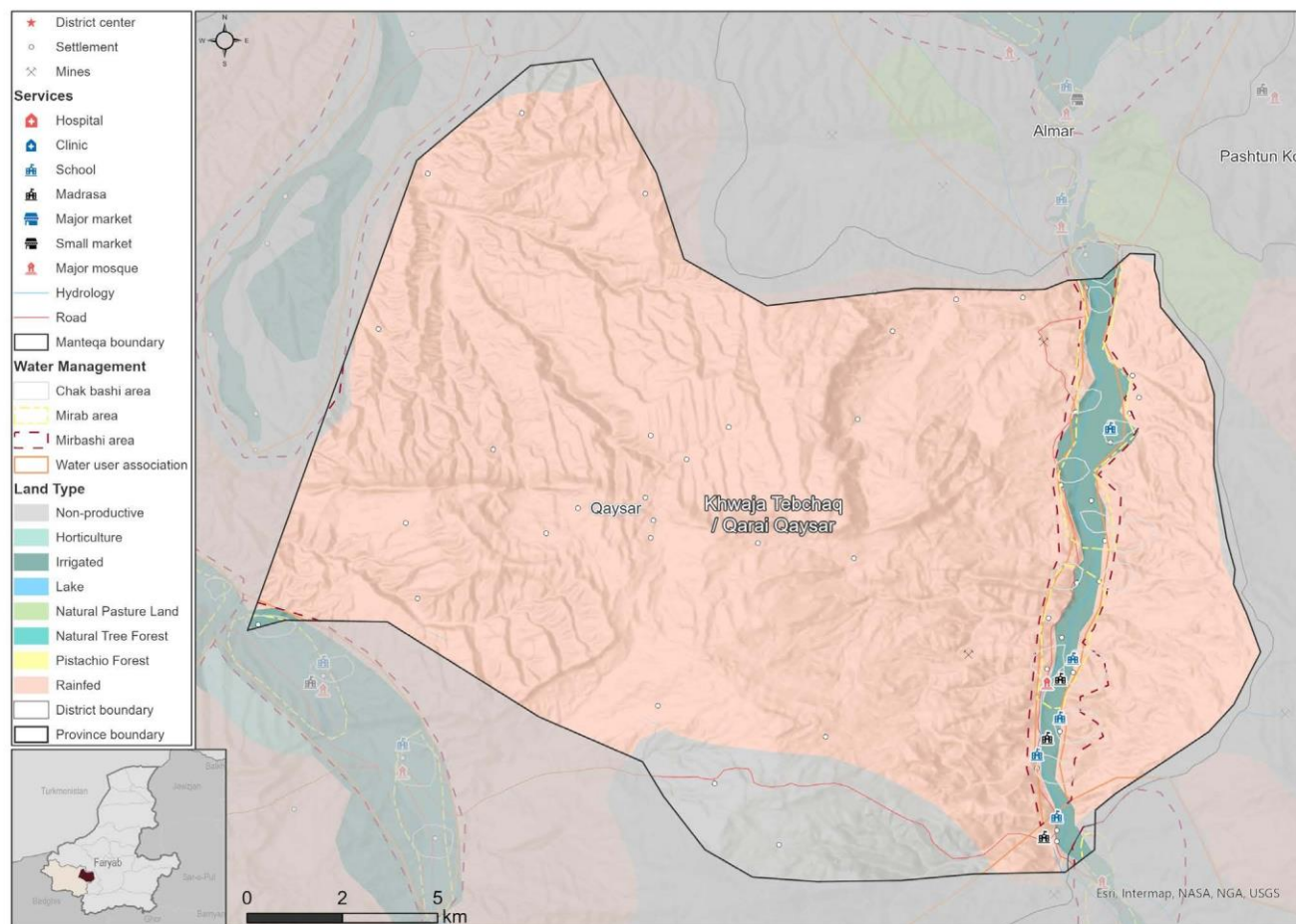
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Methodology Note: Quantitative data came from structured key informant interviews with community leadership between January-February 2019, mapped data came from participatory mapping discussions conducted with community leaders between November-December 2019, and qualitative data was collected from semi-structured key informant interviews with community leadership in February 2022.

Context and Background

Qaisar center *manteqa* is the most populated *manteqa* of the district, made up of 46 villages. Situated on the ring road, it contains the district administrative centre and main bazaar, and its agriculture is mostly livestock and agriculture based. The majority of the *manteqa's* inhabitants are Uzbeks. Pashtuns also live in the *manteqa*. The geographical border of the *manteqa* is clear to its inhabitants and to those of neighbouring *manteqa* surveyed. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	8,238
Population	43,765
Villages	46

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	3%
Tajik	8%
Uzbek	90%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	0%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Agricultural	Rainfed	215,689	92%
	Irrigated	11,527	5%
	Horticulture	5,771	2%
Pastureland	Natural	1,116	0%
	Artificial	9	0%
Forest	Pistachio	9	0%
	Natural	460	0%
Total		235,041	100%

¹A jerib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

▪ **Irrigation Land**

Fifteen main canals feeding from the main river irrigate the *manteqa*, while springs are used for drinking water. The system is entirely community managed, with one Mirab hired and paid by the community managing each of the main canals and related intakes, managing water distribution and overseeing the system’s maintenance from the intake to the villages. Once water reaches the subsidiary canals, village elders assume responsibility for water management. The Mirabs are selected by elders. There is no Mirbashi overseeing the Mirabs at *manteqa* level.

The maintenance of the system is done through the two traditional community solidarity systems of ‘ashr’ and ‘chanda’ described above (see Chilgazi *manteqa* profile). Maintenance of lower level canals is handled at village level.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirabs with the support of community elders if necessary. Larger conflicts may be referred to the government.

▪ **Pastureland**

People recognise two types of pastures in the *manteqa*: private and government pastures. There was no clear distinction made between privately owned and collectively owned pastures, the latter being often described as private as opposed to being government owned. Pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them. Users from outside the community wishing to use private / community pastures must first seek approval from the owners to graze their flocks there.

▪ **Rainfed Land**

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership documented and recognised by the government.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contributions of the lessor and lessee in terms of land use, labour, inputs and machinery.

Conflicts over lalmi lands are reportedly few, and are usually handled by community elders.

▪ **Other Resources**

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of some community infrastructure (secondary roads, bridges etc.). Chanda is practiced to pay wages of people watching over schools and the clinic.

▪ **Trade and Crafts**

The main bazaar of the district is located in Qaisar center *manteqa*, selling locally produced fruits and other agricultural products from all over the district (apples, raisins, cumin, vegetables, grapes).

The *manteqa* is famous for its dried raisins (kishmish). The women of the *manteqa* also weave gilems and a range of other products, which are mostly sold in the main bazaar as well as the bazaars of neighbouring *manteqas* and districts.



**Leveraging local capacities
Promoting settlement approaches
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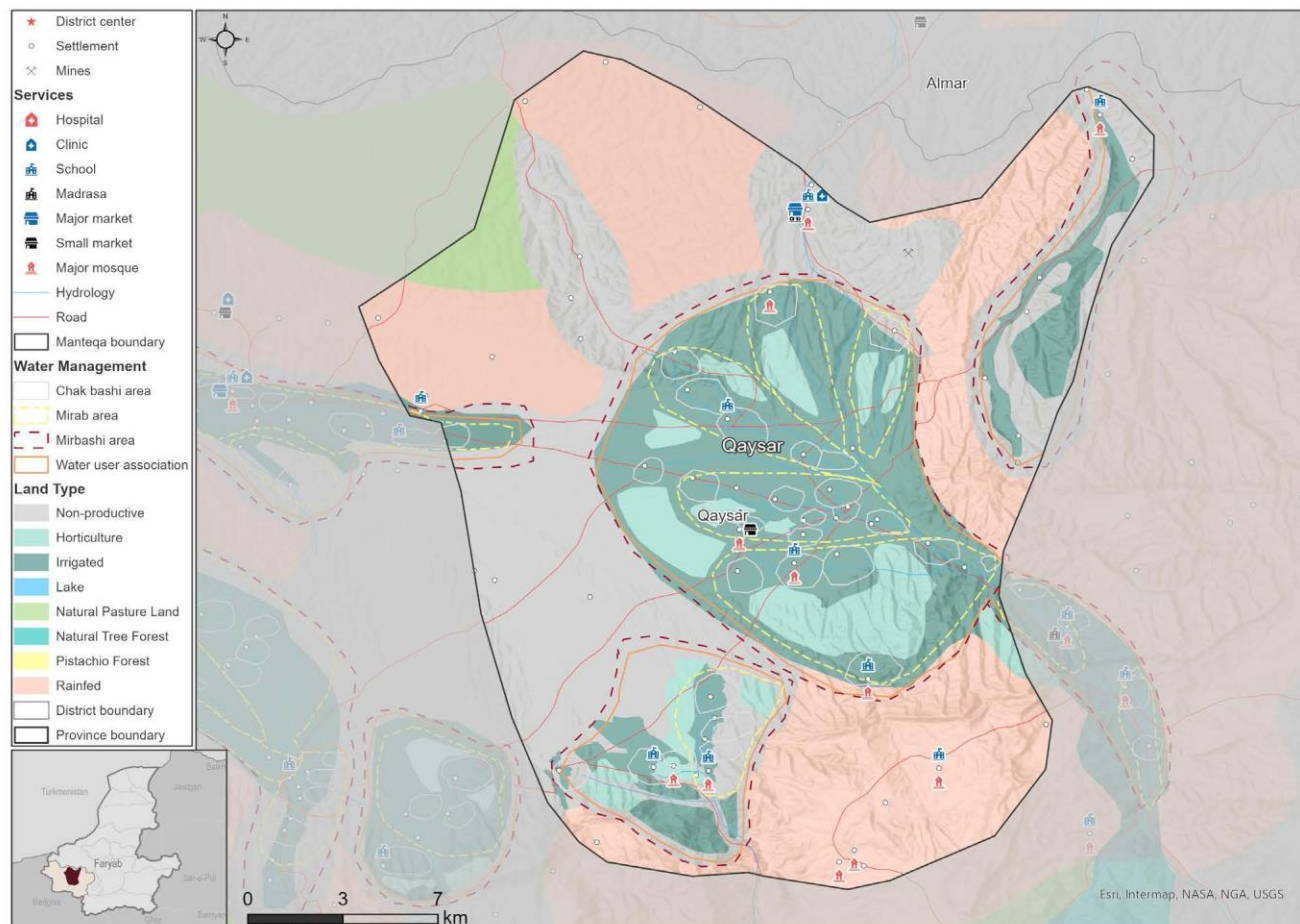
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Methodology Note: Quantitative data came from structured key informant interviews with community leadership between January-February 2019, mapped data came from participatory mapping discussions conducted with community leaders between November-December 2019, and qualitative data was collected from semi-structured key informant interviews with community leadership in February 2022.

Context and Background

Qarai Qaisar is not located on the ring road. It is made up of 37 villages, of which 17 have irrigated land, it is almost fully inhabited by Uzbeks. The *manteqa's* economy is agriculture and livestock based but it has marble and coal mines. Although road access is easier from the centre of Almar district, the main trade link of the *manteqa* is with Qaisar centre bazaar, with strong cultural and family ties with the neighbouring *manteqa* of Qarai Almar. The geographical border of the *manteqa* is clear to its inhabitants and to those of neighbouring *manteqa* surveyed. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources. The process of creating a new district comprising the two Uzbek *manteqas* of Qarai Qaisar and Qarai Almar *manteqa*, to be named Khaiber district, has been initiated by the de facto authorities.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	14,151
Population	71,276
Villages	37

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	27%
Tajik	3%
Uzbek	70%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	0%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Sub-category	Value	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	286,898	77%
	Irrigated	46,454	12%
	Horticulture	34,146	9%
Pastureland	Natural	4,314	1%
	Artificial	20	0%
Forest	Pistachio	0	0%
	Natural	0	0%
Total		371,832	100%

¹A jerib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

Irrigation Land

There are three main water sources in the *manteqa* (streams or springs), with three main canals irrigating a total of eight distinct areas. The irrigation system is entirely community managed, with Mirabs hired and paid by the community managing the canals and related intakes, managing water distribution and overseeing the system’s maintenance. Water is allocated on an hourly basis, with each main canal / sub-canal receiving a fixed allocation.

The maintenance of the system is done through the two traditional community solidarity systems of ‘ashr’ and ‘chanda’ described above (see Chilgazi *manteqa* profile). The government is not involved in the management of water.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirabs, or by community elders in case Mirabs are unable to solve them. They are addressed either at village or *manteqa* level depending on what the issue is.

Pastureland

People indicate that all pastures in the *manteqa* belong to the government, but that many of them are for the use of specific villages or groups of villages, and can as such be considered as ‘owned’ by communities based on customary use although this ownership is not legally documented and formally recognised by the government. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that ‘own’ them. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there.

As in other *manteqa*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities

residing in higher altitude or lower lying areas, with some cases of seasonal migration of flocks from mountain pastures in the summer to lower lying ones near the border or in Badghis Province in the fall / spring.

Small conflicts over pasture are usually resolved in person, since everyone has its traditional pasture location known to everyone else, where their tent is pitched every year. More serious conflicts are rare and are resolved by elders, with government involvement in more serious cases.

Rainfed Land

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership documented and recognised by the government.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee in terms of land, input, labour and machinery.

No major conflict reported. When conflicts occur, they are solved mostly by elders.

Other Resources

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of the main roads and bridges into the *manteqa*, with all concerned villages contributing, with ash and chanda also being done when needed at village level to maintain and repair secondary roads.

Trade and Crafts

There is a main bazaar in Shakh, and a smaller one in Khwaja Kanti. The *manteqa* is an important fruit producer.

The women of the *manteqa* also weave gilems and qalins and a range of other woollen products.



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Context and Background

Shakh *manteqa* is made up of two separate valleys, each relying on different water systems. There are 37 villages, of which eight are located in Khwaja Kanti valley. This *manteqa* is ethnically mixed, with a Tajik majority population. The *manteqa*'s economy is agriculture and livestock based. The geographical border of the *manteqa* is clear to the community of the *manteqa* (either taken as a single *manteqa* or two), and to those of neighbouring *manteqa* surveyed. According to legend, the areas of Khwaja Kanti and Shakh belonged to two relatives (Khalifa Yussuf and Said Mohamed) who bestowed all the area's land to their descendants. Although both areas have historically been part of the same *manteqa*, the fact that Khawja Kanti was a key Taliban stronghold in the last decade (enabling control over the ring road and providing a back road to Herat through Badghis) seems to have led to a growing sentiment of being distinct on the part of the latter's inhabitants.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



*A jirib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-Western Asia. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

Demographics

Households	7,372
Population	38,510
Villages	37

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	11%
Tajik	55%
Uzbek	27%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	7%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	0%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Land Type	Reported land type, by jirib: ¹	
		Area (jirib)	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	140,262	46%
	Irrigated	79,181	26%
	Horticulture	82,153	27%
Pastureland	Natural	2,021	1%
	Artificial	0	0%
Forest	Pistachio	20	0%
	Natural	0	0%
Total		303,637	100%

Irrigation Land

There are three main water sources in the *manteqa* (streams or springs), with three main canals irrigating a total of eight distinct areas. The irrigation system is entirely community managed, with Mirabs hired and paid by the community managing the canals and related intakes, managing water distribution and overseeing the system’s maintenance. Water is allocated on an hourly basis, with each main canal / sub-canal receiving a fixed allocation.

The maintenance of the system is done through the two traditional community solidarity systems of ‘ashr’ and ‘chanda’ described above (see Chilgazi *manteqa* profile). The government is not involved in the management of water.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirabs, or by community elders in case Mirabs are unable to solve them. They are addressed either at village or *manteqa* level depending on what the issue is.

Pasture Land

People indicate that all pastures in the *manteqa* belong to the government, but that many of them are for the use of specific villages or groups of villages, and can as such be considered as ‘owned’ by communities based on customary use although this ownership is not legally documented and formally recognized by the government. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that ‘own’ them. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there.

As in other *manteqa*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities

residing in higher altitude or lower lying areas, with some cases of seasonal migration of flocks from mountain pastures in the summer to lower lying ones near the border or in Badghis Province in the fall / spring.

Small conflicts over pasture are usually resolved in person, since everyone has its traditional pasture location known to everyone else, where their tent is pitched every year. More serious conflicts are rare and are resolved by elders, with government involvement in more serious cases.

Rainfed Land

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership documented and recognised by the government.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee in terms of land, input, labour and machinery.

No major conflict reported. When conflicts occur, they are solved mostly by elders.

Other Resources

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of the main roads and bridges into the *manteqa*, with all concerned villages contributing, with ash and chanda also being done when needed at village level to maintain and repair secondary roads.

Trade and Crafts

There is a main bazaar in Shakh, and a smaller one in Khwaja Kanti. The *manteqa* is an important fruit producer.

The women of the *manteqa* also weave gilems and qalins and a range of other woollen products.



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ACTED IMPACT

Shaping practices
Influencing policies
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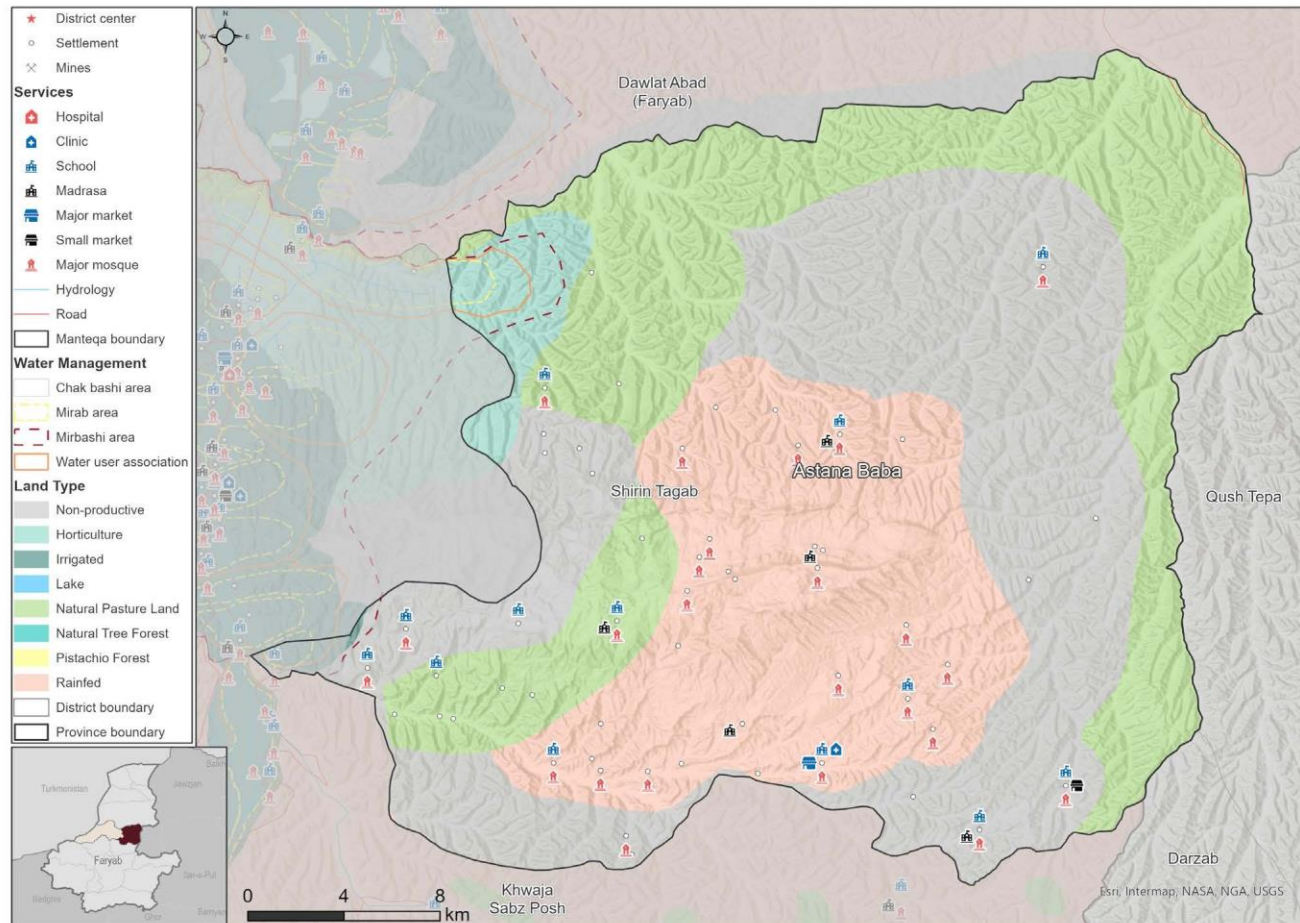


NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

Context and Background

Astana baba *manteqa* is composed of 46 villages, of which five are located near the Shirin Tagab River and have irrigated land. The *manteqa's* inhabitants are mostly Uzbek, with a large Arab minority. The *manteqa's* economy is agriculture and livestock based. The *manteqa* is home to the Astana Baba shrine, which according to the community is the reason people initially settled in the *manteqa*. The *manteqa* used to share a single Friday mosque and cemetery, but with population growth additional Friday mosques and cemeteries were built over the decades. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend, and the community management of many of these resources.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	5,283
Population	31,385
Villages	46

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	2%
Tajik	0%
Uzbek	63%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	35%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Land Type	Count	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	319,570	44%
	Irrigated	480	0%
	Horticulture	240	0%
Pastureland	Natural	391,070	54%
	Artificial	840	0%
Forest	Pistachio	11,200	2%
	Natural	0	0%
Total		723,400	100%

*A jerib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

Irrigation Land

Only five out of 46 villages have access to irrigated land. There is a single canal and intake, with subsidiary channels, all managed by a mirab hired by the community and chosen by elders of the concerned villages. The *manteqa* has a second mirab, responsible for overseeing the water allocation and maintenance of a drinking water network system build by an NGO that pipes water from a spring to a different set of five villages (18 mosques).

Ashr and chanda are used in both cases, with all concerned villages pitching in for the repairs and maintenance of the main canal or pipe and individual villages taking care of subsidiary irrigation canals or drinking water pipes. ‘Silta’ is also practiced for drinking water when there is water scarcity, with villages located at the end of the network requesting hours of drinking water to upstream communities through the Mirab.

Pastureland

People recognise two types of pastures in the *manteqa*: private and community pastures. Private pastures are few, and imply that the owner have full documented ownership on a fee simple basis. Community pastures belong to villages or groups of villages, and are considered as ‘owned’ by communities based on customary use, although this does not mean that the government recognises community ownership. Every village or groups of villages has its dedicated pasture. Community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that ‘own’ them. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there. Community pastures are managed by elders of the concerned villages. In the past, there used to be people dedicated to community

management of pastures in the *manteqa*, the equivalent of Mirabs for water, but no longer.

As in other *manteqa*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities residing in higher altitude or lower lying areas, with seasonal migration of flocks from alpage pastures in Kuhistan

/ Gurziwan district in the summer to lower lying ones near the border in the fall / spring.

Rainfed Land

According to the community, all lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership of lalmi lands documented and recognised by the government.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee in terms of land, input, labour and machinery.

Conflict over lalmi lands is usually handled by community elders, with rare cases being referred to the government.

Other Resources

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of secondary roads, bridges and other community infrastructure when needed (including repairing the clinic’s roof). Ashr requirements are discussed by elders and announced at mosques. Households benefitting from the resource will contribute. In the case of resources that affect the whole community (such as a main bridge), the whole *manteqa* contributes.

Trade and Crafts

There is one main bazaar in the *manteqa*’s centre which is active two days a week. In terms of crafts, the *manteqa* is known for its gilems and carpets. It also produces flax seeds.



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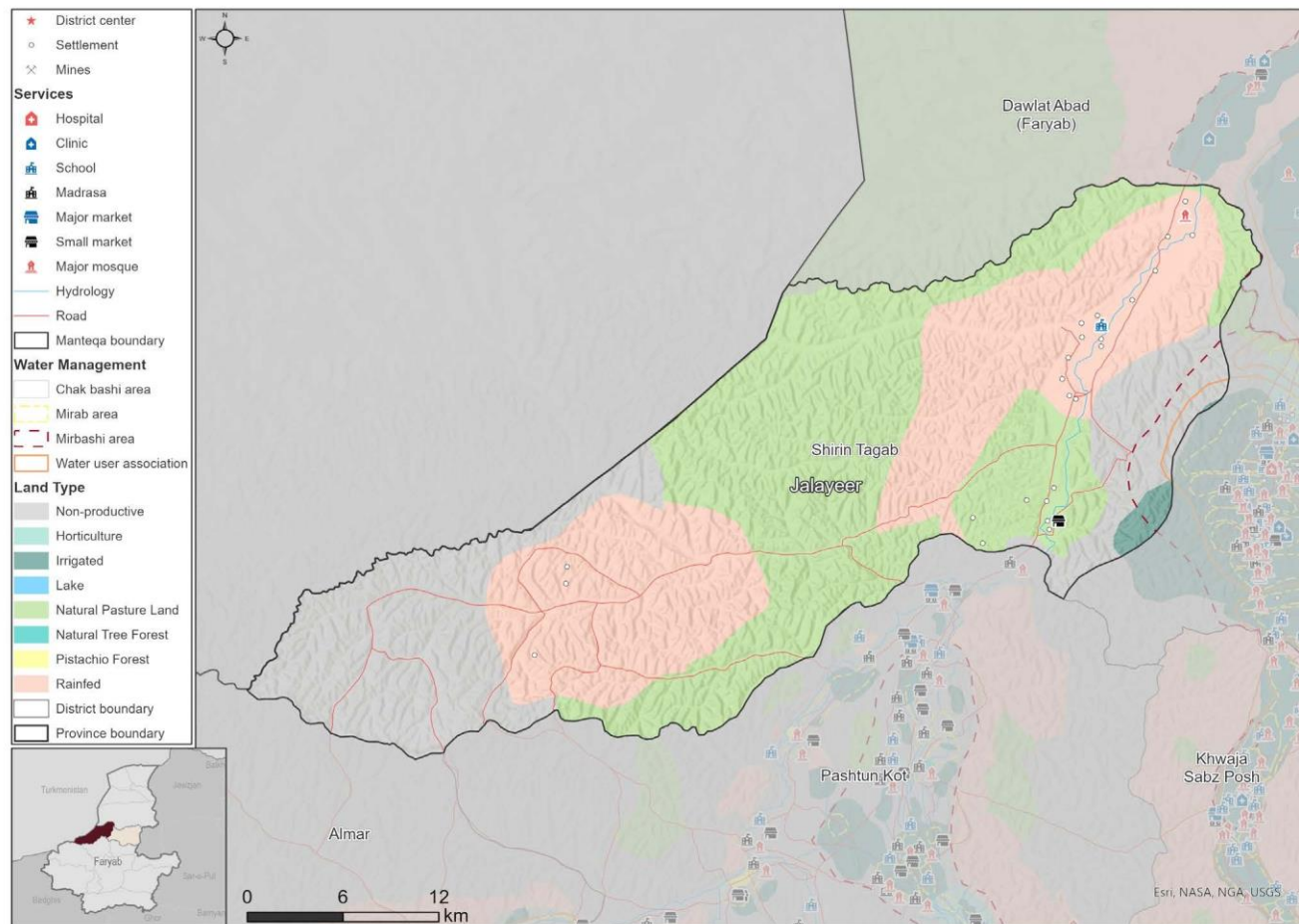


NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

Context and Background

Jalayer *manteqa* is composed of 35 villages, most of which lie along the course of the Shur Darya River (salty river). It is inhabited by Pashtuns, and its economy is entirely based on agriculture and livestock. Its boundaries are clear to its inhabitants and those of neighbouring *manteqas*. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	198
Population	1,132
Villages	35

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	100%
Tajik	0%
Uzbek	0%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	0%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Land Type	Reported land type, by jirib: ¹	
		Area (jirib)	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	60,000	69%
	Irrigated	0	0%
	Horticulture	0	0%
Pastureland	Natural	27,000	31%
	Artificial	0	0%
Forest	Pistachio	0	0%
	Natural	0	0%
Total		87,000	100%

¹A jirib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

▪ **Irrigation Land**

As the river water is too saline for irrigation, people use deep wells to irrigate their land. Although there is no irrigation water management system, water reservoirs are dug in various areas for the purpose of storing rain water for drinking purposes.,

▪ **Pastureland**

People recognise two types of pastures in the *manteqa*: community and government pastures. Community pastures are on government land but are considered by the community to belong to villages or groups of villages based on their customary use, although this ownership is not legally documented and formally recognised by the government. These community pastures are used by different villages based on customary agreement. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that ‘own’ them. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there.

As in other *manteqa*, there are arrangements for cross use of pastures with communities residing in higher altitude or lowerlying areas, with some cases of seasonal migration of flocks from mountain pastures inthe summer to lower lying ones near the border in the fall / spring.

Small conflicts over pastures are usually resolved in person, since everyone has its traditional pasture location knownto everyone else. More serious conflicts are rare and are resolved by elders, with government involvement in more serious cases.

▪ **Rainfed Land**

People in the *manteqa* recognise two types of the lalmi land in the *manteqa*. Most of it is privately owned by households, with ownership documents recognised by the government, but there are also 560jeribs of lalmi land that are cultivated on government land. The allocation of this land is the responsibility of elders.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee respectively in terms of land, input, labour and machinery.

No major conflict reported. When conflicts occur, they are mostly solved by elders.

▪ **Other Resources**

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of roads, with all concerned villages contributing, with ash also being done at *manteqa* level to fight prairie fires at the border with Turkmenistan when needed.

▪ **Trade and Crafts**

There are two small bazaars in the *manteqa*, operating on different days. The main trade relationship is with Shirin Tagab centre. The *manteqa* produces wool, some of which is used for gilems and carpet weaving by local women.



Leveraging local capacities
Promoting settlement approaches
Enabling integrated response

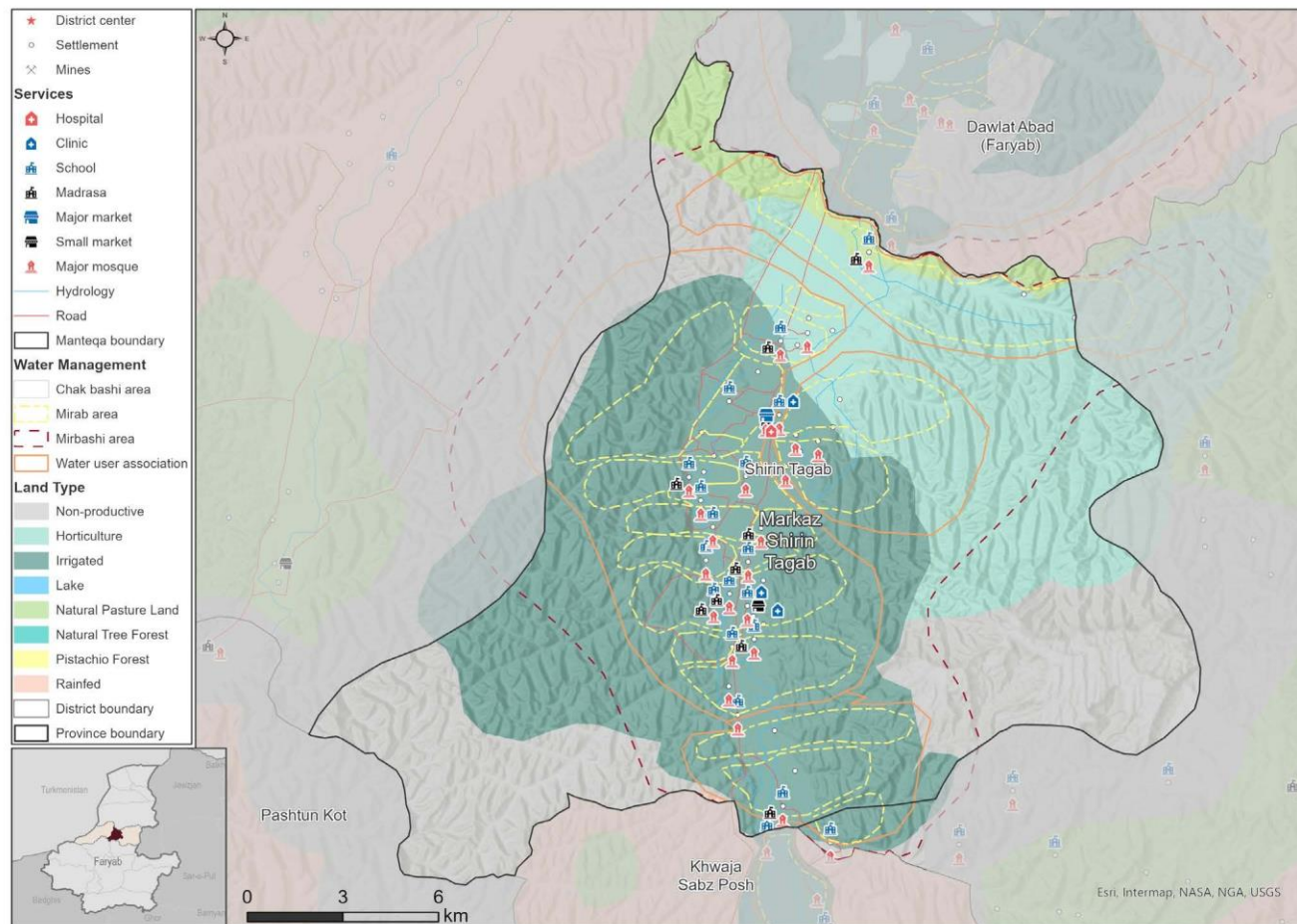
AGORA is a joint-venture between ACTED and IMPACT created in 2016 which aims to deliver effective recovery and resilience programming through area-based approaches in ways that are accountable to local communities and actors. It is a multi-stakeholder initiative that promotes the resilience and recovery of crisis affected people in fragile and crises contexts by putting local territories at the centre, supported by local knowledge, structures and capacities. AGORA core activities include community mapping, multi-sector and area-based assessments, needs prioritization and planning, as well as support to area-based coordination mechanisms and institutional cooperation. Through its territorial / area-based approach it aims to provide support tailored to local needs that transcends the humanitarian – development – peace divide.

Methodology Note: Quantitative data came from structured key informant interviews with community leadership between January-February 2019, mapped data came from participatory mapping discussions conducted with community leaders between November-December 2019, and qualitative data was collected from semi-structured key informant interviews with community leadership in February 2022.

Context and Background

This *manteqa* is located on the ring road, with most villages lying along the Shirin Tagab River which flows down from Gurziwan district. The *manteqa's* economy is primarily agriculture and livestock based. A chalk mine is also under exploitation. The inhabitants are predominantly Uzbek. To describe what underpins their sense of belonging to and identification with the *manteqa*, inhabitants cite geography, their common history, economic and social ties, the joint resources upon which rural livelihoods depend and the community management of many of these resources. They also pointed to their shared language (including a specific accent distinguishable from other *manteqas*) as well as participation in festivities such as weddings, as underpinning this sense of belonging.

Map of Villages, Water Systems and Land Types



Demographics

Households	7,054
Population	43,504
Villages	38

Ethnic Composition

Reported ethnic composition, by village:

Pashtun	3%
Tajik	0%
Uzbek	95%
Hazara	0%
Turkmen	0%
Aimaq	0%
Arab	3%
Moghul	0%
Jogi	0%
Kuchi	0%
Ismaili	0%

Land Use

Reported land type, by jirib:¹

Category	Land Type	Value	
		Count	Percentage
Agricultural	Rainfed	289,520	44%
	Irrigated	31,025	5%
	Horticulture	12,830	2%
Pastureland	Natural	328,490	50%
	Artificial	0	0%
Forest	Pistachio	20	0%
	Natural	0	0%
Total		661,885	100%

¹A jirib is a unit of measurement in the Middle East and South-western Africa. In Afghanistan, it is approximately equivalent to 2,000 m² (0.49 acres).

▪ **Irrigation Land**

There are five networks of irrigation canals feeding from the main river in the *manteqa*. There is also a dam in Jangara village. The system is entirely community managed, with one Mirbashi hired and paid by the community managing the entire system, supported by 23 Mirabs looking after subsidiary canals, themselves supported by almost 50 Chakbashis who are responsible for allocating water based on a set schedule to landowners. All of them together manage water distribution and oversee the system's maintenance. Water is allocated on an hourly basis, with each main canal / sub-canal / individual landowner receiving a fixed allocation based on an agreed schedule, calculated based on the amount of irrigated land each possesses. The maintenance of the system is done through the two traditional community solidarity systems of *ashr* and *chanda* described above, and overseen by the Mirbashi / Mirabs / Chakbashis. The government is not involved in the daily management of water but its allocation rights have been filed with the government.

Conflicts over water rights are resolved by the Mirbashi / Mirabs / Chakbashis with the support of community elders if necessary. The ability of community members to monitor each other's water consumption facilitates conflict resolution. Serious conflicts can be referred to the government. Unlike in other communities, the people of the *manteqa* do not give 'silta' to downstream communities in case of water scarcity.

▪ **Pastureland**

People recognise three types of pastures: private, community and government

pastures. Private pastures are few and imply that the owner have full documented ownership on a fee simple basis. Community pastures belong to villages or groups of villages and are considered as 'owned' by communities based on customary use, and registered as such with the government, although this does not mean that government recognises full community ownership. Every village has its dedicated pasture. While pastures on government land are open to all who wish to use them, community pastures are for the exclusive use of the communities that 'own' them. Users from outside the community wishing to use them must first seek approval from the community to graze their flocks there. Public or government pastures also exist but they are outside the *manteqa*, near the border with Turkmenistan. Small conflicts over pasture are usually resolved in person, since everyone has its traditional pasture location known to everyone else. More serious conflicts are rare and are resolved by elders.

▪ **Rainfed Land**

People in the *manteqa* indicate that all of the lalmi land in the *manteqa* is privately owned, with ownership registered with the government in the 1970s.

Users from outside the community wishing to cultivate lalmi lands cannot do so without renting the land from the owner, which is done on the basis of a range of sharecropping agreements reflecting the respective contribution of the lessor and lessee in terms of land, input, labour and machinery. Conflicts over lalmi lands are few given that ownership is clear. These are most often related to inheritance disputes, and are mostly handled

by elders, and in rare cases may be referred to the government.

▪ **Other Resources**

Ashr and chanda are practiced for the maintenance of secondary roads, bridges and other community infrastructure when needed. Ashr requirements are discussed by elders and announced at mosques. Households benefitting from the resource will contribute. In the case of resources that affect the whole community (such as a main bridge), the whole *manteqa* contributes. Youth working abroad also contribute to chanda by sending money to support particular projects. A few years back, the community inside the *manteqa* and people from the *manteqa* living abroad contributed US\$ 55,000 towards the construction of a bridge.

▪ **Trade and Crafts**

There is one main bazaar in the centre which is active two days a week, and a few shops in Islam Qala and Faizabad villages. Shirin Tagab, Dawlatabad and Khoja Sabz Posh bazaars are closely linked, all being held on different days, with some traders having shops in all three.

There is also limited silk production used for the weaving of headscarves and chapans. Women also weave gilams and qalins.

AGORA

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