Overview of UNECE activities in Bishkek

CDIA learning exchange

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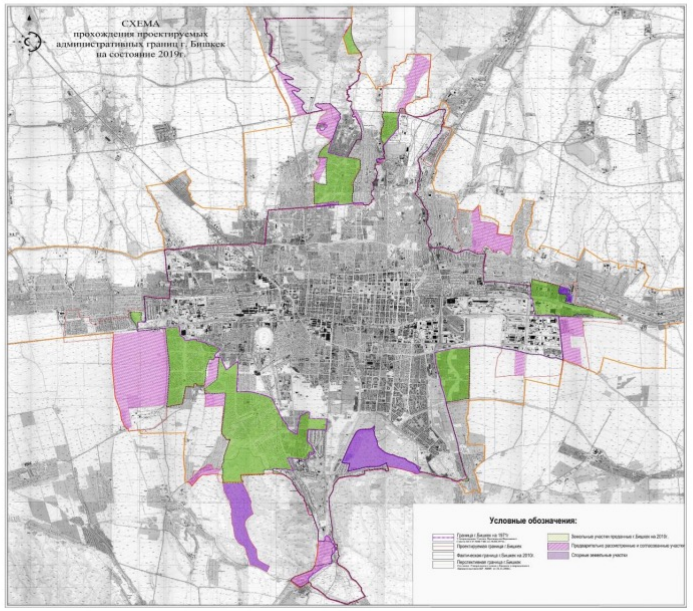
Cooperation between UNECE and Bishkek since 2020

- February 2020 and October 2021 → UNECE missions in Bishkek
- **Informal settlements challenge clear priority for City Hall**
- *Recovery from COVID-19 in informal settlements in the UNECE region project UNDA12th (2020-2023 and UNDA13th (2021-2022)*

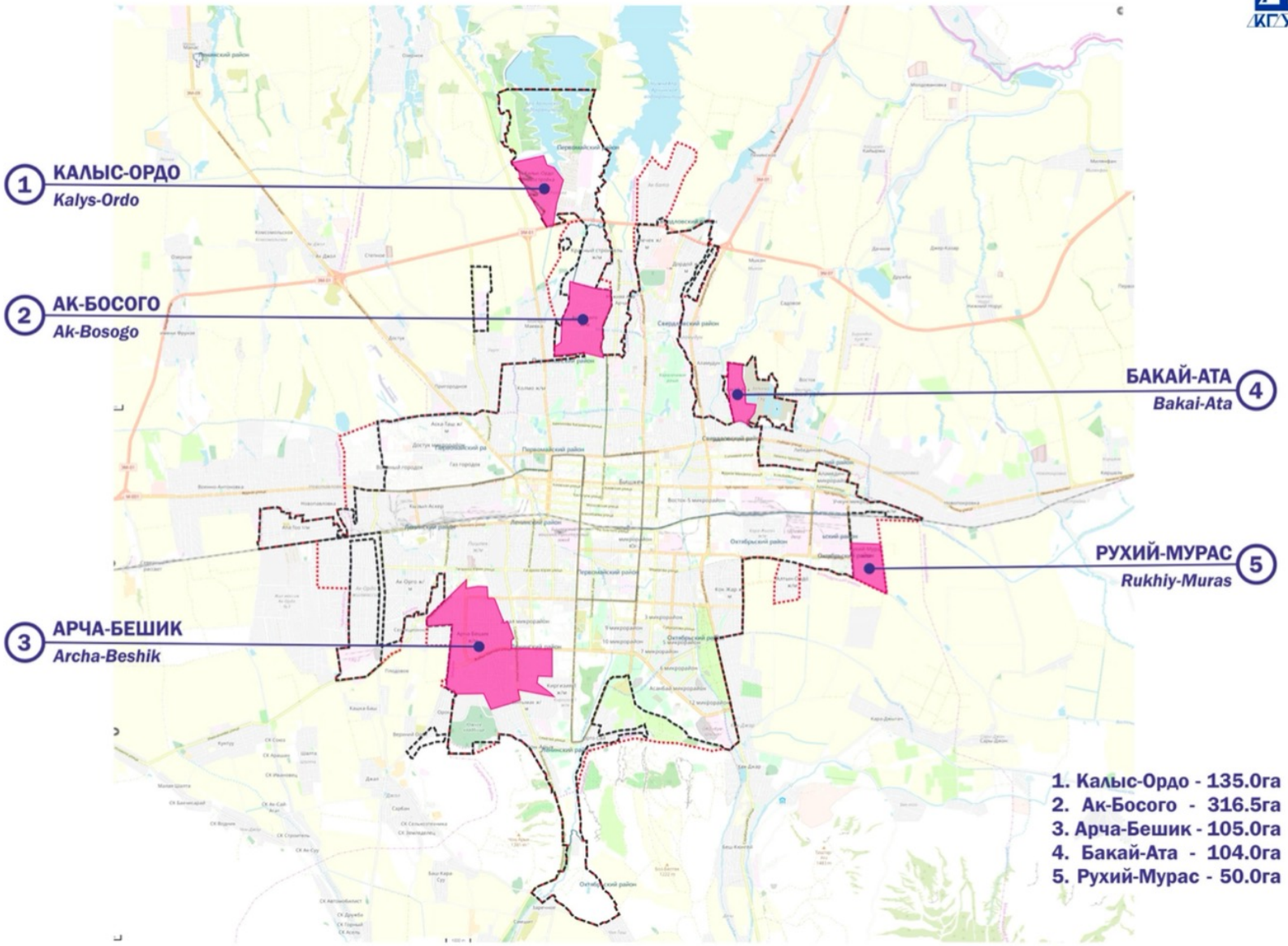
Pilot Informal Settlements

The study covered five pilot informal settlements of Bishkek city:

1. Archa-Beshik,
2. Ak-Bosogo,
3. Kalys-Ordo,
4. Bakay-Ata,
5. Ruhiy-Muras



СИТУАЦИОННАЯ СХЕМА ГОРОДА БИШКЕК



UNECE

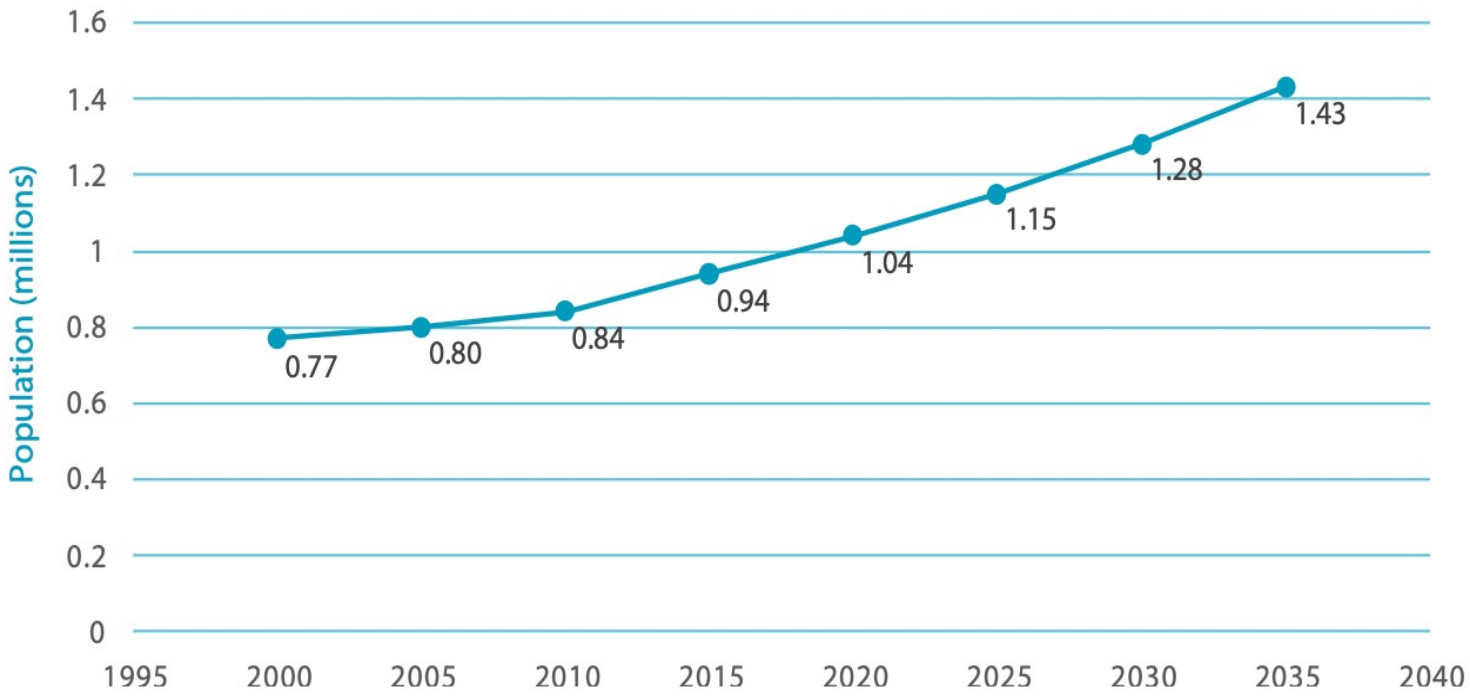
Smart Sustainable Cities Profile
BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

UNITED NATIONS

Bishkek underwent rapid urban development between 2000 and 2020

- Population size nearly doubled since 1989.
- 250,000 new urban dwellers since 2000.
- **400,000 new residents expected to move to Bishkek by 2035**.
- Critical window of opportunity → new Master Plan 2025.

Figure 1 Population of Bishkek, 2000-2035



Sustainable Smart Cities Profile of Bishkek (2022)

Urban planning did not keep pace with population growth

- informal settlements growth and urban sprawl; **47 to 53 informal settlements** in Bishkek today, hosting between **18 and 30% of overall city population**.

- Large number of **unregistered** plots (e.g., *Kalys Ordo* 89% unregistered).

- Major issues accessing key infrastructure such as **water and sanitation** (e.g., *Ak-Basogo* 31% have access to a toilet or bathroom) and **urban services** (education, formal employment, healthcare.

Environmental conditions such as air, soil and water quality are deteriorating at a worrying pace.

- **Coal-based energy supply**, not only in informal settlements → major source of PM2.5 emissions.
- Dominance of **old private cars and vans** in urban mobility → lack of formal public transport system, often unpav roads.
- In December 2020, **air quality index was 184 µg/m^3** (unhealthy).
- **80% of respiratory diseases in Bishkek** are attributable to **air pollution**, where 300,000 children live.

Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in Bishkek

Photo credits: Petr Makeev, Shutterstock.

- USD 400-500 million in national level budget deficit, **GDP down by 8.6% in 2020** → (-25% remittances in first 5 months of 2020).
- Bishkek faced **financial shortfall of 1.5 billions KGS soms** (close to USD 18 million) in 2020; tourism sector's contribution to municipal GDP fell from 5.1% in 2019 to 2.9% in 2020.
- **40,000 jobs lost nationwide** in 2020 - construction workers, sowers, small-scale traders, drivers etc.
- Major impacts on informal workers (23% of country's GDP) → **65% of all poor households** in Bishkek suffered some degree of **financial stress** due to COVID-19.

UNDA12th Smart Sustainable Cities with Innovative Financing 2020-2023 and link with CDIA

- **June 2021:** identification of potential CDIA support to advance with project preparation on prioritised area.

- Supported Bishkek in developing application for **CDIA Virtual Clinic**.

- **September 2021 CDIA Virtual Clinic with Bishkek**

- **Coordination** between Bishkek and CDIA during grant application process

UNECE support to CDIA and Bishkek going forward

- In-kind technical support during CDIA project preparation process – flexible

- Paying close attention to **capacity building under CDIA project** and aim to synergise support for Bishkek in **establishing a municipal unit to coordinate donor support** → connection with UNDA12th tranche project Tbilisi (Georgia) and Podgorica

- UNDA14th tranche project in Bishkek (2022-2025) **Voluntary local reviews: evidence for greener, resilient and sustainable urban recovery in Eastern European and Central Asian countries in transition**