



MetroHUB



Heritopolis - a global consortium on metropolitan heritage

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The HERITOPOLIS LevANT 2050 | Anthedon Initiative – A Vision of Hope

LevANT 2050 is an open ended Palestinian-Israeli-Jordanian team for regional planning and cooperation based on the *Anthedon Initiative*, under the auspices of the *Heritopolis Society* a UN-Habitat MetroHub | UNI- University Network Initiative partnership, being an independent international professional and academic consortium, focusing on heritage and the metropolis.

The *Anthedon Initiative* is led by an international and interdisciplinary team that, over the past 18 months and with the supported of Fidelity Charitable, developed an approach based on shared heritage and the trans-border metropolis prioritizing people, memory, and identity over the mere reconstruction of physical structures. It offers a transformative vision for Gaza's post-war recovery within a regional perspective.

LevAnt 2050 supports socio-economic and political stability in addressing population growth in the metropolises by mapping the shared cultural and natural heritage and environmental challenges.

Reconnection and Regional Integration

The recovery of Gaza cannot be isolated from its regional and global context. *LevANT 2050* envisions Gaza as part of a transboundary metropolitan region—linked economically and environmentally to Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel and beyond. This regional integration, rooted in shared resources, environmental cooperation, and trade corridors, offers a pathway to peace and mutual prosperity.

However, the *Anthedon Initiative* emphasizes that such integration must start from the ground up. Local trust-building and community engagement form the foundation for any larger framework of regional cooperation. By investing in local capacities and encouraging participatory governance, the initiative creates a model of reconstruction that combines bottom-up empowerment with long-term cross-border collaboration.

The *Anthedon Initiative* reimagines Gaza's reconstruction as a deeply social and cultural process, rooted in the vision of a two-state solution and Gaza's historic role as part of the Palestinian state as a Mediterranean hub of trade and connectivity. Rather than focusing solely on infrastructure, the initiative emphasizes restoring Gaza's social fabric, warning that technical rebuilding detached from human context risks perpetuating fragmentation and vulnerability.

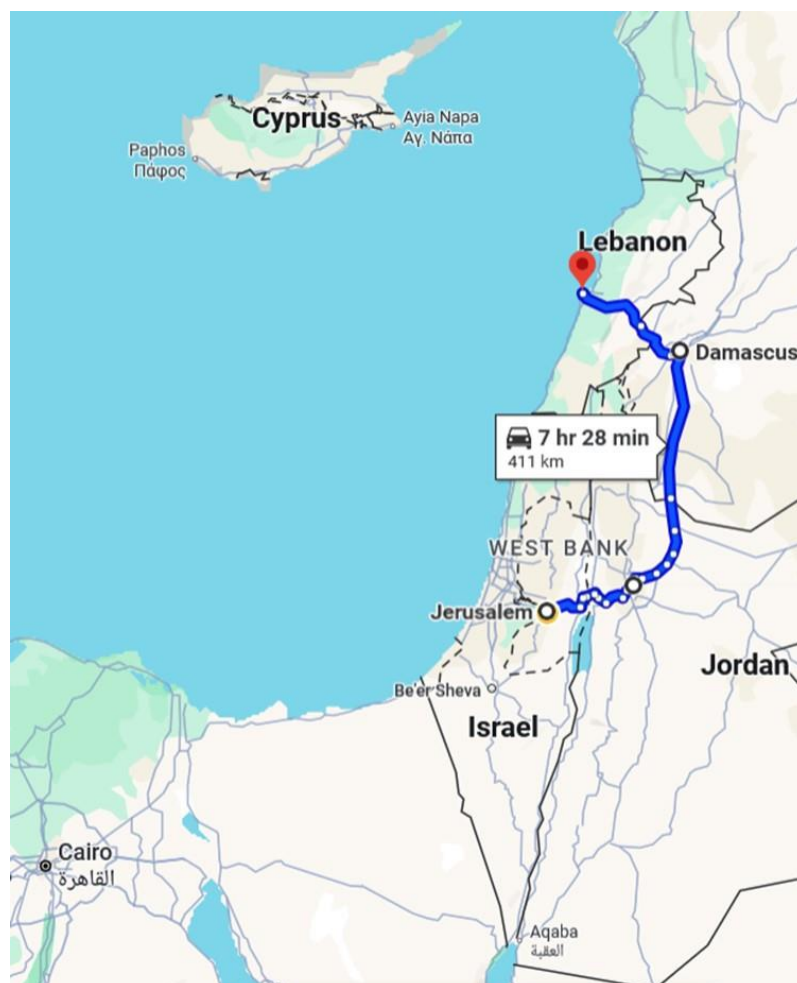
¹ The *Heritopolis Society* is registered in Korea as an NGO #603-82-78661 and a member of the Korean Research Foundation, www.kci.go.kr #8B4813 - UNI is the Universities Network Initiative of UN-Habitat;

Central to this approach is the revival of collective memory—social, cultural, and spatial—of pre-war Gaza. These memories serve not as nostalgia but as transformative tools to reconnect communities with their shared identity. Historic neighbourhoods, markets, mosques, schools, and cultural routes are seen as anchors of resilience, and their restoration is key to rebuilding both physical spaces and communal bonds.

Reconstruction is framed as a civic and participatory process. The initiative calls for grassroots leadership, especially from youth, women, and community activists, rejecting externally imposed masterplans. It promotes collaboration among local governments, civil society, and academic institutions to co-design recovery efforts that reflect Gaza's cultural and natural heritage.

Healing and rebuilding are inseparable. Schools, community centres, and cultural venues become spaces for remembrance and civic engagement, fostering hope and democratic renewal. Heritage preservation is not a luxury but a mechanism for social cohesion and economic regeneration.

Ultimately, the *Anthedon Initiative* sees recovery as reconnection—between people and place, memory and future. It urges the international community to shift from donor-driven models to partnerships that empower local leadership. Gaza's recovery with the regional context must be a human-centred process, where memory, participation, and cultural identity guide every step toward resilience, inclusion, and regional peace.



Four cities in 400 kilometres – Jerusalem West and East, Amman, Damascus, Beirut

LEVANT 2050 Living Lab

Building Reconciliation from the Ground Up

We live a moment where communities prototype themselves faster in the remains of the built environment than official master plans can be drawn up. From Gaza to Tel Aviv, to Zurich and Doha, urbanization now oscillates between physical survival and digital simulation. Amid crisis and reconstruction, there stands two realms — the tangible ground of shelter, basic services, infrastructure, food security, labour, craft, heritage and wellbeing, and the data-driven realm of design intelligence and predictive modelling. In this tension lies our laboratory.

The LEVANT 2050 Living Lab is not a metaphor. It is a real place — improvising, iterative and human. It operates where materials are scarce but ingenuity is abundant. It builds prototypes, not master plans. It tests spatial justice in fragments, data points, and prototypes made by people whose everyday life is the research medium. Ours is a practice of collaboration — between dust and code, empathy and precision.

We work on two levels the heritage of the metropolis and the architecture of the city.

A. THE METROPOLIS

METROPOLISES AS NETWORKS OF HOPE

Borders carve the Levant region into fragments, but heritage, infrastructure, environment and wellbeing ignore them. Cultural itineraries, water, waste, movement and disease flow where politics doesn't. The urban task is to build along these flows — modular, mobile, connected — forming a distributed regional urban network. Call it slow infrastructure: small interventions wired into something larger, stitched together by trust rather than control.

FROM INFORMAL TO INTELLIGENT

The informal city is not a problem to be solved but a system to be understood. We model its resourcefulness using data, sensors, and mapping — not to formalize it, but to amplify its capacities. AI serves the ground, not the other way around. Algorithms respond to local realities: cultural and natural heritage, waste flows, micro-climate, population movement, construction patterns. Informality becomes urban intelligence.

DESIGNING WITH UNCERTAINTY

We no longer wait for stability before we act. Uncertainty is our medium. Every prototype carries within it the potential to fail productively — to generate better data, better assumptions, better tools for the next iteration. Urbanism and architecture for the real world accepts volatility as a design parameter, not an obstacle. Our work joins two technologies: the ancient intelligence of local wisdoms and the contemporary intelligence of data. With this the AI-Urban Digital Twin visualizes urban metabolism — energy flows, density shifts, and human movement.

BUILDING DATA, BUILDING TRUST

Technology alone cannot rebuild a city. Trust must be designed. The Levant 2050 lab's digital twin feeds on community-led data — open, transparent, participatory. Residents own their information, co-author their spaces, and visualize change. Planning and architecture thus becomes an interface for shared governance, where each prototype leads to policy grounded in lived reality.

EDUCATION BEGINS ON SITE

Learning happens where building happens. The Levant 250 Living Lab in Palestine, Israel and Jordan will be a classroom made of brick, code, and dialogue. Students and residents co-design, prototype, and measure outcomes. Fieldwork merges with digital analytics; civic action merges with design pedagogy. The next generation of designers learns to operate across scales — from 1:1 detail to territorial simulation, from empathy to computation.

B. ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

BUILDING FOR IMPACT

We design for measurable change. Not icons, not concepts — liveable structures. Our metric is the daily usability of what we build: the roofs that keep water out, the rooms that sustain dignity, the networks that circulate resources. Real-world impact is both social and spatial. The lab engages engineering, design, data science, and community learning to quantify well-being as a design parameter.

DESIGN AS PROTOTYPE

We no longer design just to represent; we design to test. Every wall, roof, and system is a question posed to reality. The prototype is not a model of perfection but a vector of learning. Small-scale interventions, built collaboratively, feed back into larger computational systems that simulate, predict, and improve urban scenarios. Architecture becomes an instrument of iteration — neither idealized nor complete.

CODE MEETS CLAY

Building on the rubble of destruction, our work joins two scales. Bottom-up, on site prototypes evolve through local materials, vernacular skills, and open-source construction systems. Regeneration with top-down capacities may provide resources for public investment and large-scale infrastructure. Together, they create a loop between the localities of wisdom and participation, and the globalities of innovation and mutual support.

CLOSING

In Levant 2050, design is never neutral. Through the daily act of making and maintaining, building on the *Anthedon Initiative* a new urban language can emerge — one built on proximity, pragmatism, and shared survival. That is where reconciliation begins, not in conference rooms, but in the spaces people make for themselves.

15 October 2025