Gaza Hi-Tech Park: United Nations of Innovation

A Concept for Post-Conflict Development through Knowledge and Institutional Cooperation

Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID)
New York / London/ Geneva/ 2025

Executive Summary

The Global Alliance for ICT and Development proposes the creation of a special economic and educational zone designed to transform Gaza from a post-conflict territory into a functioning, knowledge-based economy. The initiative combines legal reform, spatial planning, and international cooperation in one coherent framework. Its principal goal is to generate sustainable employment, connect local universities with global industry, and establish a long-term **model of reconstruction based on human capital** rather than humanitarian dependency.

The project is conceived as a hybrid between a technology park and a cultural campus. It is not meant to replicate industrial free zones, based on manual labor, but to create an environment where research, higher education, entrepreneurship, and cultural exchange operate side by side. Its governance model brings together the Palestinian Authority, international financial institutions, and partner governments, ensuring operational continuity beyond political cycles.

Drawing on experience from similar projects in transitional economies, the Park demonstrates that even in politically fragile environments, economic normalization can begin in the knowledge sector — a field that requires limited material infrastructure and produces long term sustainable effects.

1. Introduction: From Post-Conflict Recovery to Economic Normalization

Gaza's economy remains dependent on external assistance and constrained by isolation. A highly educated population faces structural unemployment due to the absence of a productive private sector. The initiative is designed to accompany political negotiations

and serve as a practical instrument for postwar reconstruction. Its implementation will proceed in three stages:

1. **Legislative foundation** — establishing the legal, regulatory, and educational framework that ensures international protection and fiscal transparency;

2. **Industry development** — enabling the growth of the IT sector throughout Gaza, regardless of specific location, to create jobs and attract investment;

3. **Special zone creation** — forming a dedicated, extraterritorial territory focused on intellectual and technological work, where education, innovation, and enterprise converge under stable international oversight.

2. Conceptual Vision

The Gaza Hi-Tech Park is planned as a Special Economic and Educational Zone integrating business, research, and academia within one coordinated system. Education produces skilled professionals; enterprises create jobs and attract investment; transparent regulation ensures fairness and stability.

The guiding idea — the United Nations of Innovation — envisions many countries contributing to the Park's development. Each nation designs and funds its own building or cluster reflecting national culture and technical strengths, while adhering to shared environmental and safety standards.

Unlike traditional free zones centered on manual labor, the Gaza Hi-Tech Park will focus on **knowledge-based industries** such as software development, engineering design, and applied sciences. By engaging Gaza's youth in intellectually meaningful work, the Park transforms frustration into purpose and offers an alternative to radicalization. When young people apply their skills to real

technological challenges, their energy is directed toward innovation and creativity rather than extremism and destruction.

Architecturally, the Park will feature low-rise, human-scale buildings reflecting cultural diversity: Mediterranean, Nordic, Asian, and Arabian clusters forming a cohesive urban landscape. For young people, the Park becomes both a workplace and an international learning space — combining work, education, diplomacy, and culture in one environment.

3. Legislative and Institutional Framework

The Gaza Hi-Tech Park will operate under a Special Economic Zone Law that ensures fiscal stability, transparent governance, and investor protection. This law, drafted in alignment with international standards, will define the Park as an administratively distinct area with its own fiscal regime, investment guarantees, and arbitration-based dispute resolution.

The Park's institutional management is built on a three-tier structure: Supervisory Board (authorities, agencies, partner governments, and universities), Managing Company (independent operator for daily activities), and Advisory Council (international experts from academia, business, venture and capital funds). This system balances local accountability with international reliability and embeds Gaza's recovery into a multilateral framework — ensuring the Park's stability beyond politics.

4. Fiscal and Economic Design

The Park's fiscal model prioritizes clarity, simplicity, and digital administration. Its purpose is not to maximize short-term revenue but

to create long-term compliance and attract investment in a transparent environment.

<u>Flat Personal Income Tax</u>: 5% for all employees, regardless of salary level.

<u>Corporate Tax</u>: 15-year exemption, followed by a flat 5% rate.

<u>Social Contributions</u>: Mandatory 2% from employers and employees; voluntary increase up to 10%.

<u>Customs and VAT</u>: Full exemption for all R&D-related imports, software, and services.

<u>Currency Operations</u>: Free use of international currencies; unrestricted profit repatriation under AML standards.

Administration will be digital — a one-stop electronic platform for registration and tax reporting. This framework ensures predictability, minimizes corruption, and allows business decisions to depend on innovation rather than negotiation.

5. Spatial and Functional Planning

The Gaza Hi-Tech Park will form a compact, walkable district combining education, business, and housing in one location. It will occupy land within the Knowledge Triangle, connecting the Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, and the University College of Applied Sciences. This location enables constant exchange between universities and industry, making research immediately applicable.

Transport will rely on pedestrian routes and electric shuttles, avoiding heavy traffic. Buildings will be low rise (3-4 story), ensuring natural ventilation and human scale. Sustainability is built into the design — solar panels, water recycling, shaded walkways. Mediterranean vegetation — olive trees and palms — will provide shade and reduce

energy demand. The Park will thus function as an environmentally integrated urban system.

6. Architectural Composition and International Representation

The architectural strategy treats diversity as a form of diplomacy. Each donor country may finance and design its own cluster while following shared planning and sustainability standards. This approach distributes cost, promotes cultural plurality, and symbolizes collaboration through architecture.

Each cluster will combine educational, business, and cultural spaces, creating an environment where learning, work, and exchange naturally interact. Public areas — pedestrian streets, plazas, and green corridors — will encourage communication between clusters. The architecture will remain practical rather than monumental, with low-rise buildings designed for comfort, accessibility, and environmental efficiency. Within each national cluster, small cultural spaces — such as galleries, libraries, or exhibition rooms — will showcase art, innovation, and ideas from participating countries. Taken together, the Park will resemble a modern international campus: diverse in design, united in purpose.

7. International Partnership Mechanism

The Gaza Hi-Tech Park is not an aid project but a structured cooperation platform. Its concept replaces temporary donations with permanent participation. Governments, corporations, and universities become co-owners of functions, ensuring long-term continuity.

Forms of participation include: Governments financing national clusters and encouraging companies to locate in Gaza; Universities opening joint laboratories; Private Companies supporting

accelerators and training; and Development Banks providing financing and ensuring compliance of shared facilities and infrastructure.

Oversight will rest with the Supervisory Board, including the International Administration, the UN, and key partner states. Daily operations will be handled by the Managing Company, coordinating all stakeholders transparently. This model secures investment and independence from political interference.

8. International Advisory Council of Technoparks

To ensure that the Gaza Hi-Tech Park develops with world-class expertise, accountability, and transparency, the Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) will establish the International Advisory Council of Technoparks — a global mentoring and coordination body guiding the Park's institutional evolution.

The Council will unite directors and experts from leading technology parks, innovation agencies, and academic institutions worldwide. It will operate as a professional forum to review progress, assess compliance with international standards, and recommend policy, operational, and training improvements.

- Meetings: held quarterly online and annually in person;

- Reporting: an annual report will be submitted to the **United Nations Secretary-General** and the Gaza Supervisory Board;

- Chairmanship: GAID will serve as the coordinating body, with the **Chairman rotating** among participating technoparks to ensure inclusiveness and shared responsibility.

- Through this structure, Gaza's transformation will be guided by collective expertise — translating the world's best practices into a sustainable model of postwar development.

9. Global Network of Technoparks — Partners in the United Nations of Innovation

GAID is simultaneously launching the Global Network of Technoparks, a partnership platform connecting innovation ecosystems across continents that share knowledge, infrastructure, and mentorship with the Gaza Hi-Tech Park.

Participating technoparks will:

- Exchange operational experience and technological expertise;

- Host joint training programs, internships, and accelerator initiatives;

- Co-organize global events linking innovation with peacebuilding and reconstruction;

- Recommend policy alignment, operational improvements, and international partnerships.

This network transforms the Gaza Hi-Tech Park into a **living laboratory of international cooperation**, where every partner contributes not only resources, but also knowledge, talent, and institutional culture. Together, they form the foundation of the **United Nations of Innovation** — a new model of peacebuilding through technology, education, and shared human creativity.

10. Education and Human Capital

The Park's success depends on its ability to connect education with production. Local universities will expand into the Park, sharing labs, classrooms, and research facilities with private firms. This integration turns the Park into an extension of Gaza's academic system.

Foreign universities will establish joint degree programs and research partnerships focusing on software, renewable energy, and design. The Park will also implement the Computer Class to Every School in Gaza initiative — redistributing used corporate computers to schools and providing free educational software. This ensures digital literacy from an early age.

A Training and Retraining Center will offer short courses (3–9 months) to upgrade IT and business skills, with special focus on women. Technology companies will be encouraged to register in Gaza and open labs in universities, giving students direct job pathways. The goal is to create a continuous educational pipeline from school to industry, turning Gaza's educated youth into an active part of the global digital economy.

11. Implementation and Risk Management

The Park will begin with an international design competition under UNDP or EBRD supervision. This ensures transparency, environmental compliance, and the highest design standards. The winning plan will define infrastructure, zoning, and sustainability systems, forming a blueprint for phased development.

Implementation will proceed gradually and transparently, with each stage evaluated through measurable benchmarks. Funding will come from multiple sources — partner governments, international institutions, and private investors — ensuring diversification and resilience. A public digital portal will display all tenders, contracts, and progress reports in real time. Annual independent audits will verify financial and operational integrity. This disciplined approach will build confidence among partners and establish the Park as a credible, long-term institution.

12. Expected Results:

Economic: The Gaza Hi-Tech Park will create thousands of jobs in technology and related services, shifting the local workforce from aid dependency and manual workforce to intellectual productive employment. Export-oriented digital services will stabilize middle-income households and generate secondary growth in housing, education, and commerce.

Educational: By linking universities with industry, the Park will establish a network of applied research and innovation. International partnerships will raise academic standards, expand practical training, and reduce brain drain by creating domestic career opportunities for skilled graduates.

Institutional: Transparent and rule-based management will provide a model for broader governance reforms in Gaza, including the modernization of e-governance, customs, and local administration.

Social: The Park will engage the young generation in creative, future-oriented work, channeling their energy toward innovation rather than extremism, and fostering a culture of critical thinking and collaboration.

Symbolic: The Gaza Hi-Tech Park will stand as a visible architectural and cultural symbol of cooperation over division, demonstrating how innovation and education can serve as enduring foundations for peace and recovery.

Conclusion: Institutional Reconstruction as Peacebuilding

The Gaza Hi-Tech Park: United Nations of Innovation is a practical model of modernization. It shows that peace can begin through competence — through transparent law, international cooperation, and the productive use of knowledge.

By focusing on education, research, and digital innovation, the Park demonstrates that reconstruction is not only about rebuilding structures, but about rebuilding systems. It positions Gaza not as a recipient of aid, but as a participant in the global knowledge economy.

If implemented with discipline and transparency, the Park will stand as evidence that even in fragile contexts, rational design and sustained cooperation can turn recovery into renewal.