

DRAFT Concept Note

Gaza-West Bank recovery through Jordan-West Bank-Israel humanitarian and economic corridor

1. Introduction

This concept note is a part of “*Advancing Climate Resilience: Area C Solar Power for Gaza and West Bank and Regional Water Security*” - a Joint project of the European **European Commission’s Foreign Policy Instruments** and **EcoPeace Middle East**. EcoPeace Middle East is a unique tri-lateral organization that brings together Jordanian, Palestinian, and Israeli environmentalists aiming to advance both sustainable regional development and the creation of necessary conditions for lasting peace in our region. EcoPeace has offices in Amman, Ramallah, and Tel Aviv, and its 30 years of work in Environmental Peacebuilding has been rewarded with a Nobel Peace Prize nomination in 2024.

This project’s objective is to achieve increased regional cooperation and agreement on joint action on climate, energy, and human security, through the creation of (1) increased awareness and political will of key national and international decision makers on water security as central to national and regional security; and (2) evidence base for implementation of rapid response measures to build climate resilience for Palestinians.

This concept note focuses on establishing a new corridor to support humanitarian and economic development for both Gaza and the West Bank. The opening of a new corridor aims to increase delivery of goods to Gaza by creating direct coordination between Israel, Jordan, and Palestine and to strengthen the West Bank economy as a source of goods supply and start to move in parallel both humanitarian assistance and economic recovery for both Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan.

2. Background

The recent conflict in Gaza has devastated its local production infrastructure, leaving the region in an unprecedented humanitarian and economic crisis. With local production at a standstill, Gaza now relies entirely on imports for food, medicine, and basic supplies essential for daily life. Beyond these immediate needs, the recovery process will demand massive imports of construction materials, machinery, and goods to restore homes, public infrastructure, and economic activity. This urgent reliance on external resources requires a coordinated international response to establish an efficient, secure, and scalable system for aid and trade flows.

The proposed vision of **a humanitarian and economic corridor** seeks to address these challenges by creating direct coordination between Israel, Jordan, and Palestine. This initiative aims to increase the delivery of critical goods to Gaza while strengthening the economies in Jordan and the West Bank as vital sources of supply. By facilitating humanitarian assistance alongside economic recovery, the corridor offers a pathway to ensure timely relief, support recovery efforts, and lay the groundwork for long-term regional stability.

3. Creating a sustainable recovery mechanism

The Urgency of Immediate Action

As a result of the ongoing war, Gaza faces the urgent need for a comprehensive recovery mechanism that can address the region's multifaceted challenges. The current scale of destruction and dependency on imports for basic survival has left no room for deferments. To ensure a meaningful and efficient recovery, the process must be swift, taking years not decades. If significant progress is not achieved in the initial years, the opportunity for meaningful reconstruction and economic revival may be lost. Delays risk entrenching Gaza in a cycle of dependency and vulnerability, where temporary fixes replace sustainable solutions. Early action is critical to capitalize on political will, international attention, and the momentum required to ensure both effective and enduring recovery.

A meaningful recovery mechanism must address two critical and interlinked dimensions: physical reconstruction and economic rehabilitation. These two pillars are mutually reinforcing—without physical infrastructure, economic recovery is impossible, and without economic activity, infrastructure development lacks the momentum to be maintained. To be successful, the preparations for the recovery process must begin now, while international and regional focus remains sharp and the post-conflict environment is still shaping, building upon a broader master plan that will govern the region's recovery on the day after.

The Humanitarian and Economic Corridor: A Transformative Solution

At the core of EcoPeace's recovery strategy lies the establishment of a Humanitarian and Economic Corridor—an ambitious initiative designed to address Gaza's urgent humanitarian needs while leading towards long-term regional stability. This corridor will ensure a continuous flow of essential goods, including food, medicine, and construction materials, to support immediate relief and rebuilding efforts. The corridor envisions direct coordination between Israel, Jordan, and Palestine, creating an efficient system for the timely delivery of cargo. By leveraging the economies in

the West Bank and Jordan as supply hubs and addressing logistical and operational barriers, this initiative not only meets Gaza's immediate needs but also strengthens regional economic ties, setting the stage for long-lasting cooperation. By positioning Jordanian and West Bank economies as key supply hubs, the initiative addresses Gaza's immediate needs and provides meanwhile critical economic opportunities for the regions that have faced significant economic losses due to the war. Strengthening these economic ties is an essential part of this proposal as it lays the groundwork for sustainable development across all three areas.

Acting now - Laying the Foundations for Long-Term Recovery

Timing is critical. Decisions made now will have a lasting impact on the trajectory of Gaza's recovery for decades to come. Quick action is required not only to provide humanitarian assistance as early as possible but also to initiate the urgent resolution of bottlenecks in the current system. By addressing logistical constraints, increasing capacity at key crossings, and modernizing infrastructure already now, a recovery mechanism can be set into motion in time when post-conflict rebuilding begins. This preparatory work allows a smoother transition to large-scale recovery operations, ensuring that the needs of the population are met while creating the conditions for long-term economic stability.

Expert Team and Research Foundation

In order to create the framework for this proposed corridor to be implemented, EcoPeace Middle East hired a team of three consultants - two Palestinians and an Israeli - with significant economic and commercial expertise, especially in regards to the economic relations between Jordan, Palestine and Israel. In February 2025, the final study was submitted to EcoPeace. The study outlines the streams of aid and trade that the Corridor needs to facilitate, and the components of the Corridor - logistical hubs and crossing points. It provides estimates for the required capacities of these components, analyzes bottlenecks across these logistical chains (infrastructures, constraints, procedures and other factors), and suggests logistically, economically and politically feasible solutions.

4. Findings and recommendations: Humanitarian and Trade Corridor

a. Analysis of the Magnitude of Needs

The magnitude of aid and trade needs in Gaza is unprecedented. The war has been leaving a trail of unprecedented loss of life, injuries, housing and infrastructure damage, alongside displacement of most of the population. As of end-January 2025, approximately 90 percent of the housing stock in Gaza Strip has been reportedly

destroyed (160,000) or damaged (276,000), as well as more than 80 percent of commercial facilities and 70% of the road network.¹

The study by EcoPeace's expert team concludes, based on detailed assessments and consultations with stakeholders, that **over 5,500 truckloads** will be required daily to address immediate post-conflict needs. This includes shipments of food, medical supplies, construction materials, and industrial inputs to support rebuilding efforts in Gaza and revitalize the economy in Gaza, the Westbank and Jordan. This demand represents a tenfold increase compared to the pre-October 7 daily average of approximately 550 truckloads, which served as the baseline for recent operations. Historical data from 1997 to 2023 highlights fluctuations in truckload entries during various periods of conflict. For instance, in 2016 the daily average of truck entries marked one of the highest points recorded, but declined sharply during escalations, falling to just 67 in late 2023 following the outbreak of war. Drawing on these historical trends and projections for reconstruction, the study estimates that rebuilding and economic recovery will necessitate²:

Category of goods	Description	Truckloads Daily
Residential and Public Construction Materials	Cement, iron, bricks, infrastructure materials for homes, businesses, and public buildings	2,347
Roads and Open Public Spaces	Gravel, asphalt, sand, sidewalks, and urban public areas	1,225
Industrial, Agricultural, and Infrastructure Inputs	Equipment, machines for industry, agriculture, and infrastructure	500
Fuels, Oils, and Vehicles	Fuel, oils, cars, trucks, spare parts	450
Food, Beverages, and Essential Household Items	Cereals, meat, dairy, bottled water, baby products, and non-food household essentials	298
Medical and Emergency Shelter Supplies	Medical equipment, temporary prefabricated houses, and sheltering items	461
Other Goods	Miscellaneous goods not included elsewhere	200
Grand Total		5,584

¹ UN, OCHA Gaza Strip reported Impact Snapshot, 28 January 2025

² The methodology involved comparing past import data from sources like UN OCHA, IMF, and COGAT with projections for post-crisis needs. Key assumptions include full operational capacity at crossings, stable political conditions, and uninterrupted supply chains.

The estimated reconstruction cost of \$100 billion encompasses infrastructure repairs, housing, public facilities, and the reactivation of industrial and agricultural sectors. This extraordinary scale necessitates a paradigm shift in logistical and operational planning to ensure effective aid delivery and rebuilding efforts.

b. Potential Routes to Deliver Convoys

Delivering the projected aid and trade projected volumes to Gaza requires a combination of ground, maritime, and air routes, each tailored to specific logistical and operational needs.

Ground routes will play a critical role, utilizing key crossings such as the King Hussein Bridge (KHB, also known as the Allenby Bridge), Rafah, Erez, and Kerem Shalom. The King Hussein Bridge is expected to handle substantial volumes of cargo entering from Jordan and the Gulf states, with shipments processed through the Jericho National Logistical Hub before reaching Gaza. Aid and commercial cargo from Jordan will also flow through this route, supported by the Jordan Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO). West Bank commercial cargo will traverse the Shaar Ephraim and Tarqumiyah crossings, while goods from Egypt will be routed via land crossings such as Nitzana and Rafah. A southern route connecting the Jericho hub to Gaza has been proposed to bypass densely populated urban areas and reduce delays.

Maritime routes provide an essential alternative for large-scale shipments, particularly when land crossings face constraints. A temporary maritime corridor between Cyprus and Gaza, supported by Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) mechanisms, is envisioned to ensure high-capacity aid delivery. The temporary pathway is underlined by long-term plans for an international seaport to support both humanitarian relief and economic development. This route will include shipments from Ashdod and Haifa ports, facilitating the transfer of humanitarian supplies such as food, water, and medical equipment. Over time, this infrastructure could evolve into a permanent international seaport, serving both immediate needs and Gaza's long-term economic development.

Air routes offer a rapid-response solution for urgent humanitarian needs, especially in areas where ground and sea access is challenging. Helicopter airdrops will be coordinated from a central base near the North Gaza Central Logistical Hub (see below). This operation will include a fleet of 10-15 helicopters capable of multiple daily flights, delivering critical supplies such as water purification systems, medical kits, and food to high-need zones. Ben Gurion Airport and other regional air corridors will

facilitate cargo entry to support these efforts. Helipads will be strategically located within secure areas of Gaza to ensure safe and efficient operations.

c. The Need for Logistic Hubs

The establishment of logistical hubs is essential to manage the anticipated volume of aid and trade. In the West Bank, the **Jericho National Logistical Hub**, located near the King Hussein Bridge incorporated with the logistic hub in Jordan, will serve as a key facility for storing, sorting, and processing aid shipments originating from Jordan and the Gulf states. The hub aligns with the Palestinian government's Road and Transport Master Plan of 2018 and is calculated to have 5,000 daily truckloads passing.

Inside the Gaza Strip, the **North Gaza Central Logistical Hub** (CLH-NG) near the Karni Crossing is expected to serve up to 4,000 incoming truckloads, supported by facilities for bulk goods, refrigerated items, and manufacturing essentials like ready-to-eat meals. **A secondary hub in South Gaza** is planned to handle 3,000 truckloads daily, focusing on shipments from Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings.

d. Expected Challenges, Bottlenecks, and Proposed Recommendations

Challenge 1: Capacity Constraints at Key Crossings

Our expert team identified several critical bottlenecks that hinder the efficient delivery of aid and trade to Gaza: The King Hussein Bridge (KHB) and Rafah crossings face significant capacity limitations, which severely restrict the flow of goods into Gaza. Only 200 import trucks per day are currently processed at the KHB currently, far below the projected demand of 4,000 trucks daily. Compounding this issue are limited scanning facilities, manual inspections, and insufficient infrastructure on the Jordanian side. Rafah also requires enhancements to handle the expected 1,000 truckloads per day necessary for recovery efforts. Similarly, the Kerem Shalom crossing lacks the capacity to process the 4,000 daily truckloads destined for the North Gaza Central Logistical Hub.

Proposed recommendation: Upgraded Infrastructure and Streamlined Processes

To address these constraints, Ecopeace recommends adding three advanced scanners at the King Hussein Bridge. These scanners are designed to expedite the inspection process by allowing non-invasive, high-speed scanning of truckloads, enabling each scanner to process up to 16 trucks per hour. An enhancement like this would significantly reduce delays caused by manual inspections, ensuring a

smoother and more efficient flow of goods while maintaining stringent security protocols. Additionally, the extension of working hours, and the improvement of the facilities on the Jordanian side is vital. Similarly, Rafah and Kerem Shalom crossings require modernization to increase their capacity and streamline their procedures.

Challenge 2: Operational Inefficiencies and Infrastructure Deficits

Operational inefficiencies further compound these challenges. The reliance on a "back-to-back" cargo handling system, where goods are offloaded and reloaded multiple times, leads to unnecessary delays and increased costs. Limited working hours and outdated equipment at crossings restrict operational throughput. Infrastructure deficits, such as inadequate storage facilities for perishable goods and insufficient road networks for high-volume truck convoys, add to the obstacles. Security concerns delay the movement of goods due to stringent inspections and the absence of secure corridors within Gaza.

Proposed immediate intervention: Infrastructure Enhancements and Alternative Transport Corridors

To tackle these issues, the report emphasizes the importance of installing refrigerated storage units at key crossings like KHB and Rafah to support the transport of sensitive cargo such as medical supplies and agricultural products. Establishing additional logistical hubs in Jericho and South Gaza would help manage cargo flows more effectively. Improved road connectivity, including a dual-route system for Gaza-destined trucks from KHB, would facilitate better traffic management. Introducing night convoys would further optimize road usage. In order to enlarge the capacity of all those crossings, it is also necessary to upgrade the scanning capabilities installed there (as well as in West Bank-Israel crossings such as Tarqumiyah and Sha'ar Ephrayim), allowing a larger flow of trucks towards Gaza.

Additionally, sea and air corridors are integral components of the proposed solutions. A temporary maritime corridor from Cyprus to Gaza, supported by Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) mechanisms, would facilitate large-scale aid deliveries. Helicopter operations, based at the North Gaza Central Logistical Hub, would provide rapid-response solutions for urgent humanitarian needs. These measures require enhanced coordination with international donors to secure financial support and foster collaboration with third-party actors to ensure efficient implementation.

5. Steps Ahead: Building a Sustainable Recovery and Economic Resilience

The next phase focuses on developing a detailed master plan to operationalize the corridor, based on our in-depth assessments of import needs, optimizing logistics at key crossings and hubs and efficient supply sources. This includes streamlining customs procedures, expanding capacity, and ensuring the seamless flow of goods. To mobilize financing and implementation, we will engage public-private partnerships (PPP), securing investment from regional and international stakeholders. This will include structuring agreements with private sector logistics firms, leveraging humanitarian aid flows as an economic driver, and ensuring political backing for a stable and secure trade corridor.

The following steps include pilot infrastructure upgrades to accelerate the corridor's operational launch. With a strong emphasis on maximizing economic benefits for the West Bank and Jordan, the corridor will be integrated into broader regional cooperation initiatives, aligning with Gaza's long-term development plans, including a future seaport and expanded transportation networks. In the light of Gaza's urgent need for recovery, the corridor will not only provide immediate relief but also catalyze economic growth for Palestinians and Jordanians alike, reinforcing the interdependence necessary for long-term regional prosperity.

The way forward for this corridor would need an intensive involvement of the international community, and especially of the European Union. First, the EU experience and expertise would be beneficial to the planning and implementation processes, which are the next phases as mentioned above. Second, and more importantly, the EU should have an active role in gaining the support and agreement of all relevant governmental parties (Israel, Palestine and Jordan) for the implementation of the proposed mechanism. EcoPeace believes that an effective advocacy in that sense would relate both to the immediate benefit for all parties due to the enhanced commercial activities, and also to the fact that all proposed steps, by upgrading the infrastructure serving trade and transit of commodities from east to west would also serve, when the time comes, the implementation of the broader India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which all parties see as highly important for their national interest.

The Proposed Call to Action:

1. Political Convener: Act as a neutral arbiter to broker the necessary trilateral (Israel-Jordan-PA) agreements for the corridor.

2. Technical and Financial Partner: Provide funding and expertise for the immediate infrastructure upgrades (e.g., funding the scanners at Allenby Bridge, supporting hub construction).
3. Implementation Champion: Appoint a dedicated EU envoy or task force to oversee and coordinate the initial phase of this project, ensuring momentum.

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