

Policy Report Summary

From Fragmentation to Integration

A Roadmap for Jbeil's Territorial Resilience

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Developed by the Michel Issa Foundation (MIF)

In collaboration with the LAU Adnan Kassar School of Business (AKSOB)

Written and edited by Dr. Jad Abou Arrage¹

Reviewed and edited by Dr. Ali Fakh²

Core Message

Jbeil's central challenge is fragmentation, not a lack of assets. A resilient territorial model requires integrating infrastructure, environment, tourism, entrepreneurship, and community wellbeing through coordinated district-level action.

Policy Actions at a Glance

1. Strengthen district-level coordination and integrated municipal services.
2. Protect water resources, forests, agriculture, and environmental assets.
3. Build inclusive tourism clusters linking Byblos, villages, coast, and mountains.
4. Activate entrepreneurship, innovation, and digital municipal services.
5. Create inclusive community platforms for employment, health, skills, and participation.

¹ Part Time Lecturer at the American University of Beirut and Consultant for Michel Issa Foundation.

² Professor of Economics and Associate Dean, Adnan Kassar School of Business, Lebanese American University.

SUMMARY

Jbeil District possesses exceptional territorial assets. Its historical depth, environmental diversity, cultural heritage, agricultural landscapes, tourism potential, academic institutions, and active local communities provide strong foundations for long-term development. Yet these strengths remain underused because district development continues to be shaped by fragmentation. Services, investments, and local initiatives are often pursued in isolation, without a shared territorial framework linking infrastructure, environment, economy, and social wellbeing.

This policy report proposes an integrated territorial approach for Jbeil. It argues that resilience depends on treating infrastructure, natural resources, tourism, entrepreneurship, and community wellbeing as interconnected systems. Reliable energy, water, wastewater, waste management, transport, and digital services are necessary conditions for productive local economies, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. At the same time, agriculture, forests, tourism, innovation, and community wellbeing reinforce one another and require coordinated planning across municipalities and sectors.

The assessment identifies important assets already present in the district. These include the Jbeil Electricity Company, wastewater infrastructure, the Janneh Dam project, the Hbaline landfill, improved road connectivity, major nature reserves, diverse farming systems, rich cultural and religious heritage, universities, SMEs, and civil society organizations. However, their developmental impact remains constrained by weak coordination, incomplete implementation, uneven access, limited digitalization, and insufficient institutional continuity.

Across the five areas examined, the report identifies a common pattern. In infrastructure and municipal services, Jbeil faces persistent gaps in energy reliability, water and wastewater systems, solid waste management, transport safety, and digital service delivery. In agriculture and the environment, small-scale producers, forests, water resources, and rural livelihoods are under pressure from pollution, weak governance, overuse, and unplanned urban expansion. In tourism, visitor activity remains concentrated in Byblos and a few destinations, while many villages remain weakly integrated into tourism circuits. In entrepreneurship, local initiative and talent are constrained by regulatory burdens, weak access to finance, and limited public-private-academic coordination. In community wellbeing, vulnerable groups continue to face barriers related to information, mobility, stigma, and fragmented access to health, education, and employment support.

The report recommends a shift toward district-level coordination and practical, decentralized solutions. Priority actions include strengthening inter-municipal planning, expanding renewable energy and municipal digitalization, improving water and wastewater security, modernizing waste systems through circular approaches, protecting agricultural and forest landscapes, linking farmers to value chains, building thematic tourism clusters, supporting creative and rural enterprises, simplifying business procedures, improving access to entrepreneurial finance, and creating inclusive community platforms that connect employment, health awareness, and social participation.

BEIRUT CAMPUS

P.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran
Beirut 1102 2801
Lebanon
T +961 1 786 464
+961 1 786 456

BYBLOS CAMPUS

P.O. Box: 36
Byblos
Lebanon
T +961 9 547 254
+961 9 547 262

NEW YORK CAMPUS

211 East 46th Street
New York, NY
10017-2935
United States
T +1 212 203 4333

MICHEL ISSA FOUNDATION

IPT Headquarters
Amchit Highway
Lebanon
T +961 9 624 111

Jbeil's central challenge is therefore one of integration. The district does not lack assets, institutions, or local readiness. It requires a coherent territorial model that aligns governance, investment, environmental stewardship, livelihoods, and inclusion. By moving from isolated initiatives to coordinated action, Jbeil can become a national model for resilient, inclusive, and place-based development in Lebanon.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Fragmentation is the central challenge: Across infrastructure, environment, tourism, entrepreneurship, and community wellbeing, Jbeil has significant assets and local readiness to act. Progress remains constrained by weak coordination, uneven implementation, and the absence of a shared territorial framework.

Jbeil has a strong foundation to build on: The district benefits from exceptional historical and cultural depth, environmental diversity, agricultural resources, tourism potential, academic institutions, active municipalities, civil society organizations, and entrepreneurial energy. The main issue lies in limited integration rather than a lack of assets or local capacity.

Infrastructure underpins territorial resilience: Reliable energy, water security, wastewater systems, solid waste management, safe transport, and digital municipal services are essential for daily life, economic activity, environmental protection, and social inclusion across the district.

Landscapes and livelihoods are interconnected: Agriculture, forests, water systems, coastal and mountain ecosystems, and local livelihoods form a single territorial system. Protecting these assets requires stronger coordination across land use, water governance, and forest management, as well as support for climate-resilient agriculture and local value chains.

Tourism should be more territorially inclusive: Tourism activity remains concentrated in Byblos and a limited number of destinations, while many villages with valuable cultural, ecological, and spiritual assets remain marginal to tourism circuits. A more integrated district-wide tourism model can distribute benefits more equitably and strengthen local livelihoods.

Entrepreneurship needs an enabling ecosystem: Administrative bottlenecks, weak access to finance, limited digitization, and insufficient public-private-academic coordination continue to constrain enterprise development. Supporting innovation in tourism, green sectors, creative industries, and local services can expand economic opportunity, especially for youth.

Community wellbeing is a development priority: Access to employment, health awareness, education, mobility, and inclusive participation remains uneven, particularly for vulnerable groups. Stronger community platforms and better coordination among local actors are needed to connect people with services, opportunities, and support.

Coordination is essential for implementation: Jbeil's long-term resilience depends on moving from isolated municipal and sectoral initiatives toward shared planning, practical decentralization, and action-oriented partnerships that align infrastructure, environment, economy, and social well-being.

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Lebanon
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PERSPECTIVES

Jbeil District's foremost challenge is not a lack of resources, ideas, or local capacity, but persistent fragmentation in governance and sectoral interventions. In a national context characterized by weakened central institutions and uncertain long-term public investment, building territorial resilience requires coordinated, decentralized, and action-oriented strategies at the district level. The district's sustainable development depends on its ability to function as an integrated system. Reliable energy, water security, wastewater management, solid waste services, transport, and digital infrastructure are not merely technical issues—they are critical enablers for sustainable agriculture, forest and coastal protection, tourism, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion. Protecting water basins, forests, agricultural land, and coastal ecosystems is inseparable from safeguarding livelihoods, ensuring food security, and supporting long-term economic viability, while tourism, innovation, and creative industries rely on functioning infrastructure, skilled human capital, and cohesive communities. Effective governance must prioritize integration by establishing district-level coordination mechanisms that align municipal actions, guide investments, and reduce duplication. Decentralized and pragmatic solutions—such as renewable energy systems, village-level wastewater treatment, circular waste initiatives, community-based forest management, and digitally enabled municipal services—can deliver faster, lower-risk, and locally owned results. Livelihoods and inclusion must remain central to development strategies. Policies in agriculture, tourism, innovation, and social wellbeing should be evaluated for their ability to generate decent work, retain youth, reduce inequality, and rebuild trust between citizens and institutions. By leveraging its cultural depth, geographic diversity, active municipalities, academic institutions, and civil society networks, Jbeil can serve as a national model for integrated, resilient, and inclusive territorial development, demonstrating how infrastructure, environment, economy, and society can be aligned toward a sustainable future.

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