

For Immediate Release



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**Opening Ceremony of “Marah” Tyre Coast Nature Reserve Hub  
in collaboration with DI-LAB (Design Impact Laboratory) from the  
Department of Architecture and Design at AUB**

Tyre Coast Nature Reserve in collaboration with DI-LAB (Design Impact Laboratory) from the Department of Architecture and Design at the American University of Beirut (AUB) held an opening ceremony of “Marah” Tyre Coast Nature Reserve Hub at the Touristic beach of Tyre.

**Marah**

Most of the coast users need environmental guidance and it is the responsibility of the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve to provide them knowledge about how to use the natural resources and to protect the marine and terrestrial life, especially threatened species. In order to activate its local activities, Architecture AUB students from the DI-LAB (Design Impact Laboratory) proposed “Marah” that acts as a hub for the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve to seize the attention of the users of the coast (both locals and visitors). Marah is directly located on the beach, highly visible and public. It will be used as a meeting point, an information point, a presentation pavilion, an exhibition space, a training center, among other things. Its structure aims to examine how the possible application of lightweight and temporary systems can have a large social and programmatic impact while having the minimum physical impact on site, be it land or sea. The deployable scissors structure introduces a modularity and mobility to the design, which can be repeated in different endangered sites along the Lebanese coast, becoming an icon of environmental awareness.

## **DI-LAB**

### Design-Impact Laboratory

DI-LAB was established in 2016 by Professor Karim Najjar at the AUB Department of Architecture and Design with the purpose of engaging architecture and engineering students and faculty in researching, designing and implementing community-based projects in Lebanon and the region. DI-Lab aims to develop design strategies for emergency projects related to post-conflict in disaster areas including the damage of vital architectural heritage sites. The lab also intends to engage in environmental issues such as marine life protection and renewable energy. It provides design and engineering services intending to improve the living conditions of marginalized communities. It aims at a participatory process that engages the beneficiaries and users in order to incubate sustainable development in Lebanon and the region.

## **Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR)**

The Tyre Coast Nature Reserve (TCNR) lies in the southern section of the city of Tyre. It is one of the most beautiful and last remaining sandy beach of significant size in Lebanon rendering its conservation a justified effort. Tyre Nature Reserve was decreed by law 708/98 and is managed by the TCNR committee under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment. It covers an area of 400 ha, including some of the best preserved sandy coastline in Lebanon. It is Recognized as a "wetlands of international importance" by the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The reserve's artesian wells are the source of fresh water; they date back to Phoenician times. The reserve is a natural habitat for many species of birds and plants that flourish in this delicate environment and it is a nesting site for the endangered Loggerhead and Green Sea Turtles. This coastal reserve is enjoyably explored by visitors on foot, by bicycle or with snorkels and diving equipment.

## **INNODEV – Innovation Development Association**

Founded in 2014 and has been informed about: 1355 in 2015. An independent non-political association based in Beirut, mainly concerned in solving environmental, social and cultural problems, assisting environmental, social and cultural activists, and supporting their activities. It also contributes in developing, training, and capacity development of NGOs and members of society opposing environmental and social problems.

INNODEV will have an awareness role in Marah by developing a program of environmental activities that will raise the awareness of the community about the problem of solid waste. We

will encourage the reduction of consumption rate especially the non-reusable and non-recyclable materials reaching the phase of zero waste.

During the opening ceremony, INNODEV organized a number of activities that raise awareness:

- 1- Presenting environmental awareness documents that monitor the types of waste, especially plastic, which are smashed in the deep sea and how they deal with water currents and how they are decomposed and disintegrated.
- 2 - Display handicraft and crafts in the framework of waste recycling.
3. Environmental educational activities for children

### **Oriental jazz music:**

The opening ceremony featured a musical performance, in harmony with the nature and sea, by Youssef El Fahel playing Alto Saxophone & Clarinet and Hussein Araawne playing Electric Piano.

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### **Note to Editors**

#### **About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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