EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FORM

This document should outline the main ideas of your Vision Statement. It will serve as a synopsis of your project to facilitate referring to it during deliberations.

a) Brief summary of your intervention proposal/strategy (up to 250 words)

Proceeding from our analysis of the housing problem in Beirut and expanding on the ideas set out within the Towards Affordable Housing and the Inclusive City report,

1.0 We assert that Housing must be made available on the principle of socially determined need, not profitability. We call upon the city- both its planners and inhabitants- to employ a degrowth strategy which would utilize the existing housing stock and built fabric of Beirut as a shared urban resource.

1.1 What we propose aims not to function as a complete narrative for Beirut’s de-growth, but rather as a socio-spatial imaginary of a city which no longer blindly follows a culture and model of economic growth that has operated more as an amplifier of spatial and social injustices than a means to mitigate them.

1.2 Through a mechanism of equitable resource allocation and social ownership (both at the community and individual level) the real estate economy could be freed from the limitations of binary constructs such as public versus private and communal versus individual, and could harness their inherent potential for meaningful and affordable spaces in the city.

2.0 We call for the decommodification of housing, by strengthening the role the Public Corporation for Housing plays in facilitating the needs of the city through the conception of a new forum for research and exchange within an already existing mechanism of governmental collaboration. The sustained oversight of the Equitable Rent Program (ERP) and its independently managed Housing Research Cluster (HRC), will act towards regulating the real estate sector to ensure the socio-economic health of Beirut's Housing ecologies and the utilization of its existing fabric by tackling issues of vacancy and instances of old rent law agreements.

2.1 It is exactly the co-fertilization of the practices of the Public Corporation for Housing and decommodification of its housing fabric that can give new meaning to the reorganization of Beirut's housing. Beirut will no longer be the privileged terrain of growth for the few, but will flourish with commoning activities, use values and collective creation towards our ultimate objective… us, its inhabitants, regaining our right to the city.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FORM

This document should outline the main ideas of your Vision Statement. It will serve as a synopsis of your project to facilitate referring to it during deliberations.

b) Implementation mechanism (including the legal framework that allows the proposed intervention to be applied)

The Equitable Rent Program (ERP) is implemented through a mechanism of equitable resource allocation, public spending, and social ownership. Landlords/property owners with uninhabitable, vacant, or stagnant properties as well as limited income tenants register within the (ERP) - which under the supervision of the Public Corporation for Housing- will mediate between existing housing stock and the demand for affordable housing. Landlords agree to a limited deduction from their rent income in exchange for the services provided by the scheme, which functions by disassociating individual units from their rent value within a new economy of supply versus of demand overseen by the Housing Research Cluster (HRC). Any housing unit in the city can become affordable for a limited income tenant while remaining at an almost market price income to the landlord. The strategy begins to function independent of governmental subsidies because of its non-speculative approach in maintaining equilibrium between the overall supply of market price units and affordable price users.

c) Funding mechanism

A major shift in public spending priorities (most notably from increased taxes on corporate and individual property gains tax) would be required to generate the initial revenues for the Equitable Rent Program (ERP) in a progressive way. Within this economy of housing supply versus of demand overseen by the Housing Research Cluster (HRC), The ERP would then function through a maintained equilibrium between the overall supply of market price units and affordable price users, and ultimately in the redistribution of rents across the city.

Tenants eligible for affordable housing, can choose a suitable available unit in the city (registered as part of the program) at a cost proportional to their income determined through the eligibility process. Standard Tenants, who are registered to rent within the program but who are not eligible for affordable rent subsidies are also allowed to access the market of available units based on a continuous appraisal of demand. Landlords/property owners registering their units to the scheme will receive rent earnings which are at percentage of market values, regardless of whether their tenant is paying affordable value rent or market value rent.

The funds generated by rents of the properties registered at market price (from standard tenants) will begin to collectively finance the value difference for affordable units, the equilibrium of which will be overseen the ERP and HRC. It is the role of both these entities to find the equilibrium in both the demand/supply economy of the scheme, as well as the redistribution of surplus value from market value units to subsidize affordable rent properties.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FORM

This document should outline the main ideas of your Vision Statement. It will serve as a synopsis of your project to facilitate referring to it during deliberations.

d) Actors involved/targeted

Proceeding from the ideas set out within the Towards Affordable Housing and the Inclusive City report, we invoke upon existing governmental forums to support and develop the Equitable Rent Program (ERP). In addition to the pivotal responsibility assigned to the Public Corporation for Housing, especially in manifesting the ERP and Housing Research Cluster (HRC), as well as the Ministry of Finance and Banque du Liban in reallocating funds generated from new tax reforms, the most essential actor in our scheme is the city of Beirut and its diverse citizenship.

Rather than developing a rigid mechanism to be enforced upon the city, the Equitable Rent Program (ERP) is based on the direct involvement (and social investment) of the citizens of the city- property owners and tenants alike.

e) Impact in relation to the competition objectives (how your proposed intervention achieves one or more of the objectives)

The proposal aims at fostering a culture of inhabiting the environment rather than setting parameters and building frameworks within which perceptions of housing are confined. By encouraging communal strategies towards the degrowth of the city and by engaging existing governmental forums to participate at the scale of its neighborhoods, we believe that a healthy ecology of living would be made sustainable within the diverse citizenship of Beirut. With the increase in affordable housing units across the city, and an assimilation of those units within the existing fabric (as opposed to their segregation within designated zones), we would pave the road towards a socially conscious transformation aimed at engaging the city housing ecologies as a shared urban resource.