

BIZERTE'S URBAN FUTURE LAB:

**A SMART AND RESILIENT CITY IN
THE HISTORIC CENTER**

ÉCOLE
POLYTECHNIQUE
PRIVÉE IBN KHALDOUN

ROUTE JAWDAT EL HAYAET
2036
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SUMMARY

This workshop explores innovative strategies for sustainable urban transformation, focusing on Bizerte's historic core. The aim is to envision a city that is both smart—connected, efficient, and inclusive—and resilient, capable of adapting to environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Anchored in Bizerte's rich cultural and architectural heritage, the workshop addresses the urgent need to reconcile heritage preservation with digital innovation and ecological transition.

Participants will engage with themes such as participatory governance, soft mobility, public space revitalization, and smart technologies for urban resilience.

By fostering collaboration between architects, planners, students, local authorities, and citizens, this workshop serves as a living laboratory, offering scalable and adaptable solutions for other historic Mediterranean cities navigating the balance between legacy and future-readiness.

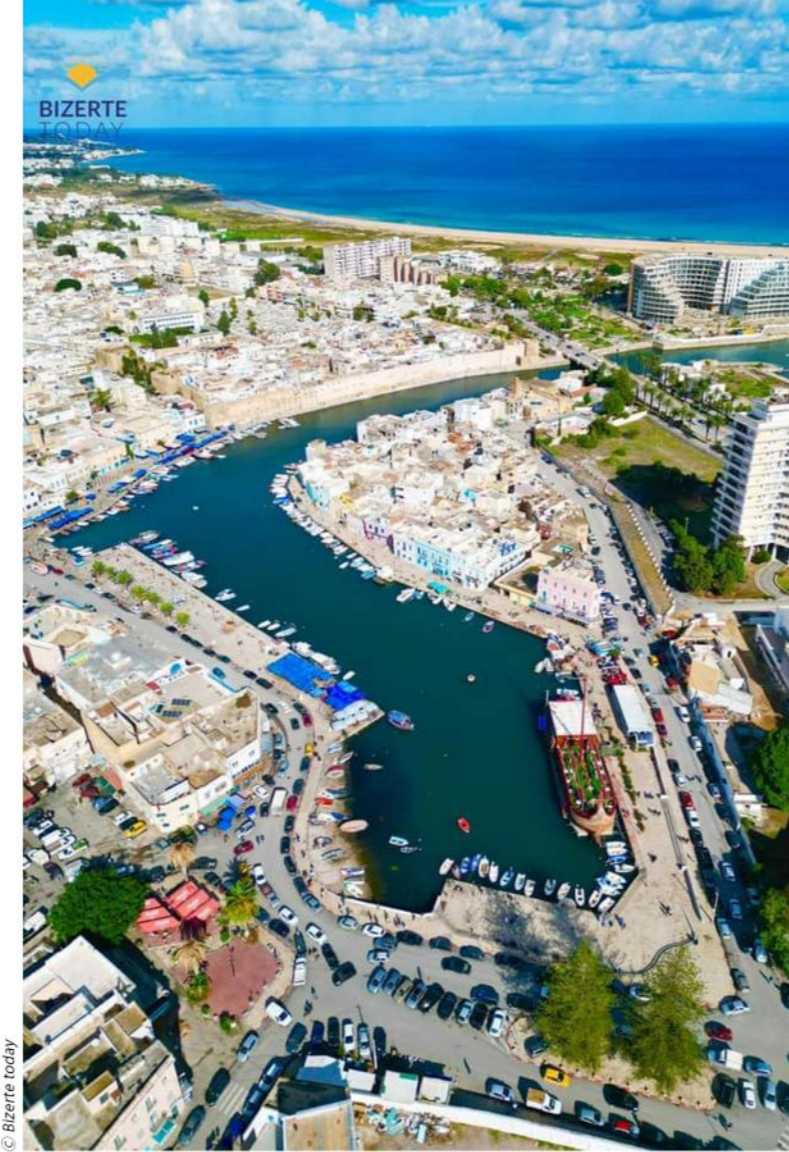
CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

In the face of contemporary upheavals, cities — and especially their historic centers — must undergo profound transformation to ensure their long-term viability. Climate change, uncontrolled demographic growth, aging infrastructure, degradation of built heritage, erosion of social cohesion, and evolving citizen expectations place Mediterranean urban territories at a pivotal point in their development.

In this context, it is essential to imagine new models of cities that are smarter, more sustainable, and more resilient, capable of blending tradition with innovation, and memory with progress.

The city of Bizerte, with its strategic geographical location between the sea and the lagoon, its rich historical and cultural heritage — shaped by Andalusian, Ottoman, Italian, and French influences — and the current complexity of its urban dynamics, offers an exceptional setting to explore integrated urban transition strategies that respect the past while looking to the future.

This workshop aims to transform Bizerte's historic center into a true Urban Future Lab — a living laboratory for urban experimentation where three key pillars converge: academic reflection (driven by students, teachers, researchers, and experts), citizen action (through the involvement of residents, local associations, artisans, and city users), and technological innovation (including digital tools, smart urban systems, and environmentally responsible practices).



© Bizerte today

The goal is to reimagine the historic center not as a frozen or museum-like space, but as a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready urban territory. The workshop will focus on designing revitalization strategies that incorporate: smart flow management (soft mobility, accessibility, urban logistics), adaptive reuse and enhancement of architectural heritage, environmental resilience (resource management, climate adaptation, biodiversity), and co-construction with local stakeholders, to ensure lasting and legitimate transformations.

In this dynamic, the Tunisian Smart Cities association, which leads an ambitious national program for smart cities, aims to support Bizerte's transition. This program, inspired by early Smart City initiatives launched in Tunisian cities such as Bizerte and Kairouan, seeks to establish a national network of smart territories.

Through this initiative, the association strives to help Tunisian cities evolve toward innovative, inclusive, and sustainable governance, by promoting collective, technological, and ecological intelligence in service of the territories. The goal is clear: to move Tunisia from a group of cities aspiring to be smart, to a nation that embodies intelligence in support of its cities and regions.

THEMATIC AXES

In relation to issues of heritage, environment, smart cities, and the urban landscape — and in order to encourage the transversality and complementarity of our respective specialties and disciplines — this workshop will address:

1. Heritage revitalization:

The historic center of Bizerte boasts a rich and diverse urban heritage. However, this legacy is currently facing degradation, progressive depopulation, and a loss of function. This thematic axis aims to rethink how we live, work, and move through the old city by combining conservation with innovation.

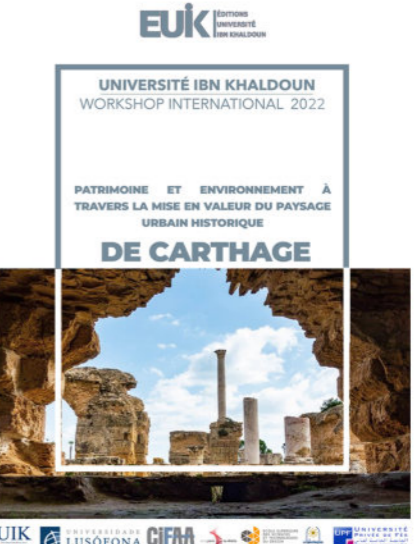
2. Urban intelligence and digital transition:

Digital technologies today offer unprecedented opportunities to better understand, manage, and anticipate urban dynamics—even in historic settings. This axis invites participants to explore the smart integration of technology in Bizerte's historic center while respecting its urban identity.

Workshop participants will be encouraged to propose tools such as interactive heritage mapping or smart systems for soft mobility management. The objective is to envision a connected and inclusive city that serves its residents while respecting the physical and aesthetic constraints of the historic environment.

3. Territorial resilience and climate change adaptation:

Located in a coastal zone, Bizerte's historic center is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change: rising sea levels, flooding, heat stress, marine pollution, and more. This axis aims to reimagine the historic center as a resilient urban ecosystem, capable of adapting to crises while preserving its resources and quality of life. It promotes the integration of nature into the city and positions ecological transition as a driving force for urban transformation.



© UIK – Our various publications from the international workshops organized by UIK

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

- The workshop will include several types of collective activities:
- Project and research workshop: Presentation of research and discussion of topics related to heritage and/or the environment;
 - Urban excursion and meetings with local stakeholders;
 - Reflection workshop on (inter)disciplinary approaches;
 - Thematic lectures.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

- Be enrolled in one of UIK's partner universities;
- Have an interest in comparative approaches, interdisciplinarity, and acquiring knowledge in the fields of heritage and smart cities.
- Have at least a passive understanding of French or English, both written and spoken;
- Participants must commit to attending all activities from August 19 to 27, 2025, in Tunis.



The workshop is aimed at students in architecture and design. It is also open to Master's (M2) students or PhD researchers. This international workshop offers participants the opportunity to engage in a collective reflection on the different tools, approaches, and concepts related to heritage, the environment, and their interrelations, all within a multidisciplinary framework.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

For logistical reasons, please confirm your participation before July 19, 2025 via the following email address:
amine.bellalouna@uik.ens.tn

COVERAGE

Each partner institution will be represented by one (1) faculty member and four (4) students.

IBN KHALDOUN University will cover the travel expenses (airfare + local transportation) and full-board accommodation for participating faculty members throughout the duration of the workshop.

IBN KHALDOUN University will also cover local transportation and full-board accommodation for participating students throughout the duration of the workshop.

Students will be accommodated in dormitories with shared restrooms and showers at the UIK residence on the Chotrana campus.

SCIENTIFIC COORDINATORS

- Fatma HIZAOUI, PhD in Architecture, Director of UIK, Full-time Faculty Member
- Amine BELLALOUNA, Architect-Urban Planner, PhD in Design, Head of the Architecture Department at UIK, Full-time Faculty Member at UIK
- Adam SAKLY, architect, tenured lecturer at UIK
- Chedi GDOURA, architect, tenured lecturer at UIK
- Rym TOUNSI, PhD candidate in Art Sciences and Practices, Deputy Head of the Design Department, tenured lecturer at UIK

AMENITIES AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Swimming pool + Outdoor showers / Private kitchen / Air conditioning / Free Wi-Fi / Non-smoking rooms / Sports grounds (football-volleyball-basketball) / Airport shuttle / Cleaning service / Private parking.



**ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE PRIVÉE IBN KHALDOUN
DÉPARTEMENT ARCHITECTURE ET DESIGN
WORKSHOP INTERNATIONAL - JUILLET 2025**

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