



The Israeli Trail Project

A National Digital Platform for Accessible Non-Motorized Nature-Based Activity in Israel

Purpose

The purpose of the Israeli Trail Project is to provide people with a practical, accessible tool that enables them to get out into nature and experience Israel's trail network—supporting active movement, exploration, health, and meaningful connection to the land and to others.

Through a single national digital platform for planning and exploring non-motorized routes—including hiking, trekking trail running, cycling, and mountain biking—the project makes Israel's natural landscapes accessible and navigable across the country. In this framework, outdoor movement functions as a shared public resource that strengthens social ties, supports wellbeing, encourages independent exploration, increase sport-based tourism and deepens everyday engagement with the landscape.

The Problem

Information about trails, routes, and current conditions is fragmented across regions, dispersed among informal online sources, multiple government agencies, NGOs, and sport-specific initiatives. Even within these sources, information is often partial, outdated, or inconsistent, making it difficult to form a complete picture of any given route or area.

Because of this fragmentation, personalized planning is either impossible or highly complex. Routes cannot easily be adapted to different abilities, experience levels, or types of non-motorized activity, and users are often forced to rely on local, tacit knowledge held by a limited group of experienced insiders, effectively excluding most people from independent and informed planning.

Effective outdoor planning also requires the ability to adapt plans to changing conditions—such as weather, trail accessibility, safety risks, or temporary closures—in real time. At present, there is no unified, reliable system that integrates this dynamic information, leaving users without the situational awareness necessary for safe and confident outdoor movement.

The Solution

The Israeli Trail Project proposes a one-stop, national, multi-sport, multi-language digital platform (website and app) that brings together Israel's non-motorized trail and route network into a clear, inclusive, and connected system.

The platform will integrate real-time, AI-driven capabilities that enable route planning and recommendations based on live weather forecasts, route conditions and other safety-relevant factors—alongside personalized planning support tailored to

users' abilities, interests, and activity types.

Users will be able to discover routes and experiences matched to their needs—from short, stroller-friendly walks to multi-day desert treks; from beginner cycling routes to advanced mountain and e-bike trails; and from brief family outings to extended journeys that cross entire regions.

With an emphasis on accessibility, clarity, reliability, and high-quality mapping, the platform will enable people to explore Israel independently through non-motorized movement and sport, with confidence, adaptability, and ease.

Impacts

Belonging & Identity

Moving through the land by foot or bicycle fosters deep attachment to place. Research on long-distance hiking shows that such movement strengthens identity, emotional resilience, and a sense of rootedness—especially important in a society shaped by stress, service, and displacement. Embodied, self-directed movement through familiar and unfamiliar landscapes supports meaning-making, continuity, and a lived sense of belonging.

Aliyah & Integration

Outdoor activity functions as a shared, non-verbal language. Accessible, well-mapped trails offer potential immigrants and Olim a direct, confidence-building way to connect to the country, its geography, and its people—without institutional, financial, or linguistic barriers. Evidence from integration and community-health research suggests that such low-threshold, place-based engagement can facilitate social connection and orientation in new environments.

Economic Asset & Tourism

Israel attracts many international visitors, yet the absence of a unified, high-quality national trail platform leaves a growing tourism market untapped. Independent adventurers and nature-oriented travelers—solo hikers, cyclists, trail runners, and outdoor enthusiasts, Jewish and non-Jewish alike—seek well-mapped, self-guided experiences. By presenting Israel's landscapes as a coherent, accessible adventure system, the Israeli Trail Project can position the country as a destination for independent outdoor tourism, increasing visitor stays, distributed local spending, and overall tourism revenue.

Health & Resilience

A robust body of research demonstrates that regular movement in natural environments reduces stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms; supports cognitive restoration and emotional regulation; and contributes to improved physical health across the life course. At the population level, accessible nature-based movement is associated with increased physical activity, lower health disparities, and improved community resilience. By lowering informational and practical barriers to safe, independent outdoor activity, the Israeli Trail Project positions nature-based movement as a low-cost, high-impact public health intervention rather than a privilege limited to those with prior knowledge or high mobility. Create economic opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in trailside communities.

Strengthening the Periphery

Connected trail journeys encourage longer stays, slower travel, and distributed local spending in the Galilee, Negev, Golan, Arava, and Judean Desert. Improved access and navigability support small communities, local services, and sustainable tourism, contributing to long-term regional resilience rather than short, extractive visitation.

What Makes This Solution Different

- National scope that connects regions into a single, coherent system
- Multi-sport integration across hiking, trail running, cycling, and mountain biking
- Inclusive design serving families, outdoor enthusiasts, and semi-athletes alike
- A highly functional, visual, and intuitive interactive map
- Public-interest orientation: open access, non-commercial, and non-exclusive
- Multi-language platform designed for Israeli residents, the global Jewish community, and international visitors
- Regularly updated information linked to real-time conditions and forecasts
- AI capabilities for personalized planning and real-time weather and other varying conditions
- A clear and comparable grading system indicating required skills and abilities

Comparable Successful References

In Switzerland, [SwitzerlandMobility](#) operates as a federally supported national digital system that integrates hiking, cycling, and mountain biking into a single, standardized, GPX-based national network. Clear grading, regional continuity, and up-to-date information allow users to move confidently across the country through non-motorized activity.

Similarly, the hiking and biking sections of [MySwitzerland](#) present outdoor movement as a connected national experience, enabling multi-day journeys across regions rather than isolated outings.

These platforms demonstrate that when trails are treated as a connected national system, they improve accessibility for non-experts, strengthen regional economies through slow travel, and deepen connection to landscape and place.

The Israeli Trail Project builds on this proven approach, adapted to Israel's geography, social fabric, and security context, with a clear focus on accessibility, public value, and inclusiveness.

Proposed Operating Model

The Israeli Trail Project will operate through a collaborative, multi-sector model linking government, philanthropy, NGOs, and responsible business partners.

Philanthropic Foundations

Support long-term planning and help ensure the platform remains independent, public-oriented, and accessible to all.

Government Agencies

Share data, maintain trails, set accessibility standards, and align the project with national goals in health, environment, and regional development.

Business Partners

Offer technology, sponsorships, and responsible services that enhance user experience while respecting the project's public mission.

NGOs and Community Organizations

Provide local knowledge, volunteers, and field expertise to ensure the platform reflects best practices, real field conditions, and community needs.

Together, these partners create a hybrid structure combining vision, collaboration, and innovation to build a sustainable national platform.

Current Status & Next Step

The current focus is on building awareness, convening natural partners, and defining a shared roadmap for implementation. This includes identifying and engaging public agencies, NGOs, philanthropic foundations, and other stakeholders whose mandates align with trail accessibility, non-motorized outdoor activity, public health, regional development, and connection to the land of Israel.

The next planned phase is a 12-month development cycle leading to a functional beta platform. This phase will include:

- Defining partnership structures
- Consolidating, validating, and standardizing core route data
- Designing and developing the digital platform
- Piloting the system in selected regions

Philanthropic and institutional support is sought to enable this one-year development phase and support the launch of an initial beta platform.

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