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# Civil Society

## in Ukraine's

# Restoration

A Guide to CSOs Mobilizing  
for a Marshall Plan



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### The Institute of Analytics and Advocacy (IAA)

is a leading Ukrainian independent think tank that creates tools and conducts research to help authorities make effective decisions in the development and implementation of policies and to obtain sustainable results. IAA works on civil society development, policy and data analysis, development, and implementation of innovative digital solutions.

**The Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD)** at the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a nonpartisan initiative that develops comprehensive strategies to deter, defend against, and raise the costs of autocratic efforts to undermine and interfere in democratic institutions. ASD has staff in Washington DC and Brussels, bringing together experts on disinformation, malign finance, emerging technologies, election integrity, economic coercion, and cybersecurity, as well as on Russia, China, and the Middle East, to collaborate across traditional silos and develop cross-cutting frameworks.

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# Executive Summary

Ukraine has one of the most vibrant civil societies in the world. In the decade since it launched and led the Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainian civil society has held successive governments' feet to the fire while at the same time cooperating with authorities to build world-leading tools of transparent and accountable governance. In other countries, non-profit researchers, advocates, and activists are sometimes viewed as wonks and do-gooders advancing narrow or elite interests, but in Ukraine, civil society has achieved broad legitimacy as the beating heart of the nation. And while civil societies elsewhere focus mainly on the watchdog role of monitoring governance, Ukrainian civil society specialists draft the most important laws, advocate for their passage, collaborate with the government to implement policy initiatives, and send up signal flares to the Ukrainian public, diplomatic circles, and other foreign observers when reforms go off the rails.

Following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukrainian civil society mobilized like never before. In the area of humanitarian crisis response alone, the number of Ukrainian NGOs more than tripled from 150 to more than 450. Influencers with strong international ties pivoted to advocating for the provision of weapons. Researchers who are adept at tracing corporate footprints dedicated their talents to exposing international businesses that remain in Russia or have ties to actors supporting the Russian war effort. Legislative advocates pivoted to drafting the laws needed to meet the preconditions for starting the EU accession process. This has been a whole-of-society response.

Ukrainian civil society actors are also organizing to support what they hope will be a recovery and reconstruction process that features unprecedented transparency, accountability, and integrity. Three coalitions of NGOs—RISE Ukraine; Resilience, Reconstruction, and Relief for Ukraine (RRR4U); and Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR)—bring together experts to build transparent tools for reconstruction, develop recovery principles, collaborate with the government, align international engagement, and more.

This paper presents for the first time a new survey of Ukrainian CSOs focused on recovery and reconstruction. Survey respondents are listed on pages 6 and 7. Half specialize in advocacy and analysis, doing the research and promotion needed to launch projects such as platforms to index destroyed properties and new approaches to calculating compensation, as well as other tools. The other half either monitor for risks such as corruption or provide social services—for example, organizing volunteers to remove debris in the wake of Russian attacks. Only 11% of the NGO respondents in our survey operate in more than one of these functional areas, which illustrates their professional adherence to their respective areas of specialization. While this helps protect against duplicative efforts and conflicts of interests, it also underscores the need for coalitions to collaborate across silos. Half of all NGOs working on recovery and reconstruction participate in a coalition.

When asked about the key problems they face, NGOs involved in recovery and reconstruction pointed to numerous examples ranging from lack

of human capital (a challenge exacerbated by the war) to systemic funding shortfalls. Many regional and new organizations need professional capacity development in order to be institutionally prepared to receive and safeguard foreign assistance. But the most common gap NGOs mention is the absence of a mechanism of direct cooperation between Ukrainian civil society and the donor community—a need that could be met by the creation of a civil society advisory board to work with the G7's donor coordination platform.

Survey responses demonstrate that NGOs can offer donors nuanced guidance. For example, on the process of selecting implementing partners, NGOs advise that donors scrutinize the track record of potential grantees in order to safeguard funds from corruption—the biggest risk to recovery and reconstruction foreseen by survey respondents—and that donors should also work with young organizations formed in response to new needs on the ground in Ukraine.

Taking into consideration these survey responses from Ukrainian CSOs, this study makes concrete recommendations for international partners looking to help elevate Ukrainian civil society:

- Give Ukrainian NGOs an advisory seat at the donor coordination table
- Provide capacity-building support to professionalize recovery-related NGO initiatives
- Establish a system for the selection of qualified implementing partners in Ukraine
- Enter the Ukrainian context through NGO coalitions

- Use DREAM and work with Ukrainian civil society to make this the most transparent reconstruction ever
- Insist that all projects include partners not only in the public and private sectors but also Ukrainian NGOs

In addition to recommending policies and approaches for donors looking to deepen engagement in Ukraine, this study introduces donors and investors to the landscape of Ukrainian civil society. It is meant to serve as a resource guiding the international community toward segments and actors of Ukrainian civil society that can help navigate opportunities and challenges on the ground. If a donor or investor wishes to engage in a particular sector relevant to Ukrainian recovery and reconstruction—agriculture, education, energy, health, local governance, anti-corruption, digitalization, internally displaced persons (IDPs), public finances, foreign policy, and so on—this study points them toward NGOs that could serve as informed local partners.<sup>1</sup> The coalitions of NGOs focused on recovery and reconstruction are also helpful entry points.

Ukrainian civil society has hit the ground running to organize for an unprecedentedly transparent and accountable process of recovery and reconstruction. Civil society organizations know that their active involvement will be just as critical to a modern Marshall Plan as it was to meeting other historic national needs from 2014 to 2022. This should be welcomed and supported by all who hope to see Ukraine rebuild as a robust democracy under the rule of law that is ready for Euro-Atlantic integration. To lay the groundwork for that future, donors and other international partners should take steps now and throughout the process of recovery and reconstruction to coordinate with Ukrainian civil society.

# Landscape of Ukrainian CSOs (Survey Respondents)

## Preparing for a Transparent and Accountable Marshall Plan

**NGO = Non-Governmental Organization**

**PA = Public Association**

**CO = Charitable Organization**

CIVIL SOCIETY IN UKRAINE'S RESTORATION

Function	Form	Name	Expertise area	Website/Social media page	
<b>Advocacy</b>	NGO	Kirovohrad Regional Organization of the All-Ukrainian NGO "Association for the Promotion of Self-Organization of the Population"	Public finance, development of CSOs	facebook.com/samoorg.krop/	
	NGO	Civil holding "Group of Influence"	Human rights, IDPs, people with disabilities, education	vplyv.org.ua/?lang=en	
	NGO	Sports Context	Sports and youth policy	-	
	NGO	Pravosvidomi	Education, human rights	pravosvidomi.org/en	
	NGO	Modern Women of Luhansk Region	Education	Facebook profile	
	NGO	Foundation for the Development of Hrun Hromada	IDPs/work with veterans	Facebook profile	
	NGO	Community Power	Human rights	sylahromady.org	
	NGO	Sobornist 2020	IDPs/work with veterans	-	
	NGO	Zhytomyr Oblast Organization "Voskresinnia"	IDPs/work with veterans	Facebook profile	
	NGO	Poltava Agency for Territorial Development	Education	Facebook profile	
	NGO	Scientific and practical center "Unit"	Healthcare	facebook.com/unit.ukraine	
	PA	Reanimation Package of Reforms Coalition	European integration, preparation of a vision of Ukraine's recovery in various areas of public policy, decentralization and regional policy	rpr.org.ua/en	
	NGO	STEM Is Fern	Education	stemisfern.org/en	
	NGO	Fishing Club of Ukraine—UA Fishing Club	Education	facebook.com/uafishingclub.org/	
	NGO	Agronomy without Corruption	Healthcare	facebook.com/groups/1109727392107471	
	<b>Analytical</b>	NGO	The Foundation for the Development of the City of Mykolaiv	Environment, good governance, public finance, local democracy	frgm.mk.ua
		NGO	Dniprovsky Center for Social Research	Decentralization and local self-government	desi.dp.ua
NGO		Council of Informsafety and Cybersecurity	Information resilience	rik.org.ua	
NGO		The Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting	European integration, business development, development of CSOs, recovery and reconstruction	.ier.com.ua/en	
NGO		Better Regulation/Delivery Office (BRDO)	Energy, agriculture, digitalization, European integration, infrastructure, regulatory policy, construction.	brdo.com.ua/en	
NGO		Technologies of Progress	Digitalization	-	
PA		Association of Professional Real Estate Managers of Ukraine	Education	facebook.com/AssociaciaUpraviteley/	
NGO		Center for Democracy and Rule of Law	Media law, development of CSOs	cedem.org.ua/en	
NGO		Institute of Legislative Ideas	Anti-corruption	izi.institute/en	
NGO		Institute of Analytics and Advocacy	Institutional architecture of reconstruction, European integration, institutional reforms	iaa.org.ua/en	
NGO		DIXI Group	Energy	dixigroup.org/en/home-en	
NGO		Institute of Finance and Law	Public finance	institute.fi.org	
NGO		Center for Economic Strategy	Public finance	ces.org.ua/en	
NGO		Center for Society Research	Education, housing, social policy	cedos.org.ua/en	
NGO		Digital Security Lab Ukraine	Digital security and digital rights	dslua.org	
NGO		Center for Social and Gender Research "New Life"	Foreign policy, European integration	Facebook profile	
NGO		Center for Business Partnership	Development of CSOs	Facebook profile	

<b>Fact-checking</b>	CO	All-Ukrainian Charitable Foundation for Relief and Development "Help Group"	IDPs/work with veterans	helpgroup.com.ua	
<b>Service</b>	NGO	Foundation for Democracy Assistance	Countering disinformation and protecting the information field	fpdi.org.ua	
	NGO	Osvitoria	Education, digitalization	osvitoria.org/en	
	NGO	Responsible Citizens	IDPs/work with veterans	resNGOnsiblecitizens.org/en/home	
	NGO	For Our Native Land	Public finance	-	
	NGO	Territory of New Changes	IDPs/work with veterans, youth, food security, education	facebook.com/TheTerritoryOfNewChanges/	
	NGO	Sustainable Development Platform "Perspective"	IDPs/work with veterans	Facebook profile	
	NGO	Another Approach	IDPs/work with veterans	facebook.com/anotherua/	
	NGO	Rotary Club "Kyiv Capital"	Charity, helping victims of Russian aggression	rotary-kyiv-capital.org	
	CO	Charitable Fund 280 Days	Healthcare	280days-en.org	
	NGO	Association of Political Psychologists of Ukraine	IDPs, education, mental health, ecological psychology, environmental education	appu.com.ua	
	NGO	Center for Support of Public and Cultural Initiatives "Tamarisk"	Development of CSOs	tamarisk.org.ua	
	NGO	Novomoskovsk Raion Public Organization "Center for Family Support"	Healthcare	-	
	NGO	Detector Media	Education	go.detector.media	
	NGO	The Lustration and Anti-Corruption Council of Prydniprovia	Anti-corruption	larp.media	
	NGO	Civil Control Platform	Anti-corruption	gromko.org.ua	
	<b>Watchdog / public control and monitoring</b>	NGO	Kharkiv All-Ukrainian Professional Public Organization "Stop Corruption"	Anti-corruption	stopcor.ngo
		NGO	Public Control. Openness. Transparency. Accountability	Decentralization and local self-government	Facebook profile
NGO		Parents SOS	Education	batkysos.org.ua	
NGO		Fiscal Policy Research Center	Public finance	Facebook profile	
NGO		Transparency International Ukraine	Anti-corruption	ti-ukraine.org/en	
NGO		Women's Anti-Corruption Movement	Media, anti-corruption	zhar.org.ua	
NGO		Public movement of ATO participants and citizens from the temporarily occupied territory "New Nation"	IDPs/work with veterans	-	
NGO		Ukrainian Nuclear Society	Energy	ukrns.org/en	
NGO		Avanpost Slobozhanshchyny	Job creation	facebook.com/avanpost.slobozhanshchyny/	
NGO		Trybuna	Education	-	
NGO		Hromadska Rada Samovriaduvamia	Decentralization and local self-government	facebook.com/hromadskarADA/	
<b>Several types of activities</b>		PA	Expert Interbranch Association of Ukraine (EMAU)	Education, IDPs/work with veterans, digitalization, European integration	ema.u.kiev.ua
		NGO	Agency for Economic Development	Development of CSOs	2018.hubs.org.ua/vz-en.html
		NGO	ReThink	Environment, circular economy, green innovations, energy, education, agriculture.	rethink.com.ua/uk
		CO	Charitable Fund "Independence.Alternative.Future."	Social and other services for families affected by the Russian military invasion, work with IDPs	-
		CO	"Courageous" Charitable Foundation	Reconstruction, urbanism, decentralization and local self-government, development of a volunteer network, youth engagement	vidvazhni.org
		NGO	NGO Edhannia (Joining Forces)—The Initiative Center to Support Social Action	Education, digitalization, IDPs/work with veterans, decentralization and local self-government, development of CSOs, human rights, foreign NGO policy, European integration	edhannia.ua/en
	NGO	Territory of Success	IDPs, human rights, development of CSOs	territory.org.ua	
	NGO	PNGO Prometheus	IDPs/work with veterans	FB	

# Ukraine's Vibrant Civil Society Since the Revolution of Dignity



## Defining Civil Society and Its Roles

Over the 32 years since Ukraine gained its independence—and particularly over the past decade—Ukrainians have built a thriving civil society. The breadth and depth of Ukrainian civil society grew out of the unique history of (a) post-Soviet governing institutions with weak governing capacity (meaning that NGOs have to step up to do things that developed states do within government, as discussed below); (b) just enough pre-2014 repression to motivate responsive civil society development without being so deadly as to entirely inhibit it; (c) the confidence and legitimacy that Ukrainian civil society accrued in the process of leading the historic wave of civic nationalism that became the Revolution of Dignity; and (d) the domestic and foreign support that has come to them since then.

A particularly striking feature of Ukrainian civil society is the broad scope of its functionality. The traditional core of civil society is made up of a self-regulating system of individual NGOs, CSOs, grassroots organizations, charities, and associations whose mission is to mediate between government authorities and society. Ukrainian civil society differs from the traditional model, however, in that its role goes well beyond the norm. In Ukraine, NGOs often conceive and even draft the most significant legislation and programs of governance. They then take responsibility for advocacy (bringing in international partners as needed), implementation (working hand-in-glove with the government to create the tools mandated by law), and monitoring (ensuring that relevant agencies are performing competently and staying true to the civic intent).

For the purposes of this policy brief, we consider the non-government sector to (a) be not-for-profit, and (b) intended to meet the needs of society or a large part thereof.

As shown in the list of respondents to our survey on pages 6-7, we divide Ukrainian CSOs focused on recovery and reconstruction into three forms based on their legal structure: non-government organizations, public associations, and charitable organizations/foundations. We can distinguish several functions inherent to CSOs:

- Public monitoring and control (the watchdog role)
- Development and strengthening of civil society
- Mediation between society and government, meaning advocacy for policies that benefit society
- Contributing to a better quality of life for the whole population or major segments of it

In addition to these traditional functions of civil society, in Ukraine, activists and CSO representatives play additional roles:

- Drafting laws or assisting legislative or executive authorities in drafting laws
- Advocating and lobbying for certain changes at the national or regional level
- Performing an advisory function by consulting with central or local authorities
- Providing expertise and analysis to government bodies to assist in policy decisions
- Providing direct public services for the common good

Actively contributing to and co-creating reforms and transformations in society (an example of co-creation is the development of transparency platforms for public procurement such as Prozorro and DREAM).

Over the past ten years, Ukrainian civil society has come roaring out of the gate to assist and complement the state, sometimes even taking over certain

of its functions. The Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of war in eastern Ukraine served as catalysts for the formalization and institutionalization of social movements.

In defending against Russia's large-scale invasion in 2022, the Ukrainian government is taking on ever more responsibility for protecting the civic nation. This positive evolution may be comparable to the effect of US military successes in World War I and World War II, after which a new social contract

emerged with higher expectations of competent national governance (before that, most US government employees worked for the post office). Even so, in Ukraine's unique context, the new social contract continues to elevate and rely upon civil society more heavily than is common elsewhere. Fundamental changes occurred in this environment over the past ten years in several waves of mobilization.<sup>2</sup> Within this research framework, we can represent the Ukrainian non-government sector schematically as follows:

### Schematic Classification of the NGO Sector.

F=Level at which activity takes place; X=Civil society function; Y=Area of expertise



## Ukrainians' Rising Trust in One Another

As a legacy of the Soviet era, Ukraine inherited an overwhelming distrust of vertical power structures—that is, state or regional institutions and their representatives. Instead, they relied on “horizontal” or “human” ties such as family, friends, and colleagues. In the nearly ten years since the Revolution of Dignity, person-to-person interaction and problem-solving, as well as cooperation on a “horizontal” plane, has increased notably. The unprecedented national unity and horizontal support during the full-scale war vividly illustrates this point.

The graph below, from the World Values Survey, shows the rise of Ukrainians' participation in various groups, unions, organizations, and associations. The number of active and non-active participants or

members of such groups has doubled or in some cases tripled from 2011 to 2020.

The rise in formal civic participation is indicative of the expansion of civil society in Ukraine. The past decade in Ukraine has been marked by significant political and social turmoil. The events have motivated many Ukrainians to become more politically engaged and active within civil society.

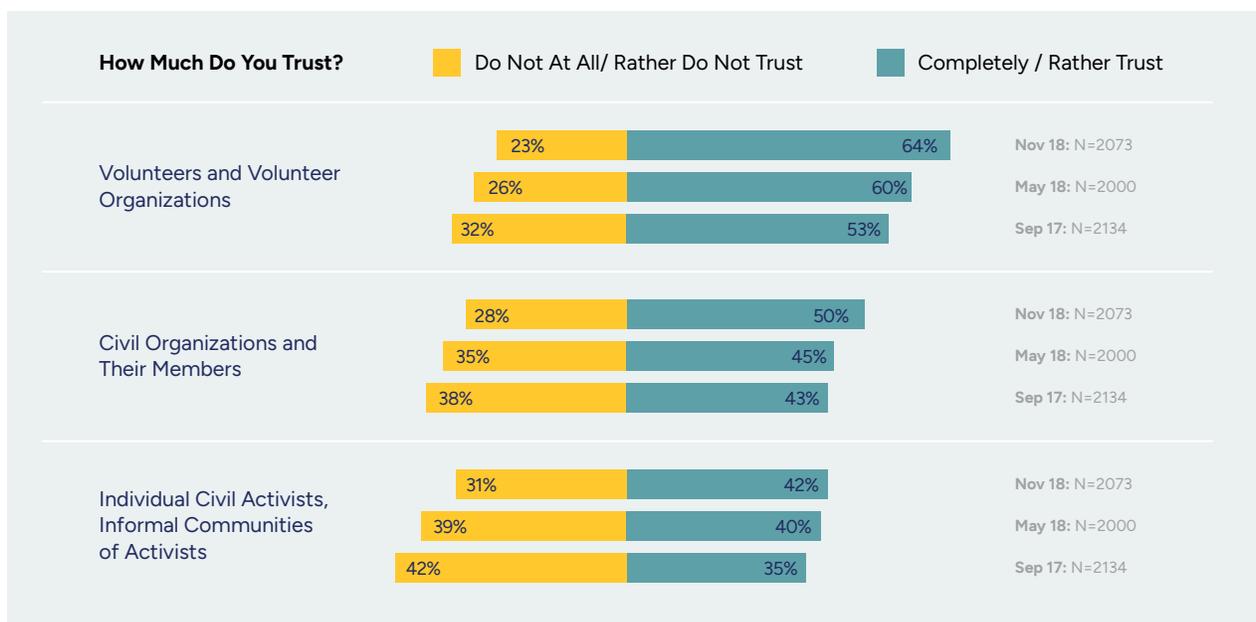
Participating in civic groups means collaborating with like-minded individuals who share common values and objectives. This collaboration can foster stronger social connections among participants and create a sense of community that extends beyond immediate family and friends. This in turn has the potential to lead to increased advocacy efforts and more effective grassroots initiatives and can drive positive social and political change within Ukraine.



Source: WVS wave 7 (2020) and wave 6 (2011) in Ukraine.

The table below depicts the rise in the level of trust in various citizen organizations and communities. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, there has been a drastic increase in the number of volunteers and volunteer associations across Ukraine. According to a UN study, in 2014, a quarter of all Ukrainians engaged in some form of volunteering, and 9% became active volunteers due to the Russian aggression of that year.<sup>3</sup> The 2022 study shows that between 60% and 80% of the population have

been engaged in various public activities since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. For example, just one initiative, the Volunteer Platform, has connected more than 400,000 users to volunteer opportunities since February 2022. According to a Zagoriy Foundation study, as of August 2022, every third Ukrainian was engaged in volunteer activities.<sup>4</sup> According to an ACAPS study, the number of Ukrainian NGOs working in humanitarian response more than tripled from 150 to over 450.<sup>5</sup>



Source: USAID/ENGAGE National Civic Engagement Poll, 2018.

Recent sociological studies and surveys confirm a higher level of citizen engagement than before the full-scale war and highlight the most common expressions of citizen support, solidarity, and charitable activity. Among the most frequent forms of engagement are financial contributions, in-kind donations, volunteering, IDP hosting, and strategic public communications.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the rising trust in person-to-person contacts, the operational environment and the

structure of civil society have changed profoundly since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began. In particular, there has been an upward trend in cooperation among NGOs on the basis of shared or similar goals. The growing number of joint initiatives aimed at eliminating the consequences of the war, combatting the aggressor, and helping the country to recover demonstrate this trend.

As an NGO that is itself a member of several large coalitions, IAA believes that, for the moment,

cooperation has displaced competition in relations among NGOs. This is likely to change after the war is won, however.

The war has greatly affected the work of Ukrainian NGOs and society's perception of these organizations. Ukrainians look to both their government and each other—through person-to-person contact and civil society structures—with growing expectations. According to the latest studies, 75% of NGOs, driven by war-related challenges, have changed or expanded the scope of their work. In particular, the non-government sector has undergone a major shift in priorities: The number of NGOs engaged in helping the army, veterans, and IDPs has increased by an average of 20%, and fewer NGOs have been focusing on education, culture, and sports.<sup>7</sup> Of course, some of these changes are of a temporary nature. Once society begins to resume normal business activity, and the issue of the country's recovery and building back better comes to the fore, the work of the non-government sector will become more relevant in other spheres as well.

### Civil Society Interaction With the Authorities

Since the Revolution of Dignity, cooperation between NGOs and the government has strengthened, and the increased impact of civil society on policy-making has been highly visible.

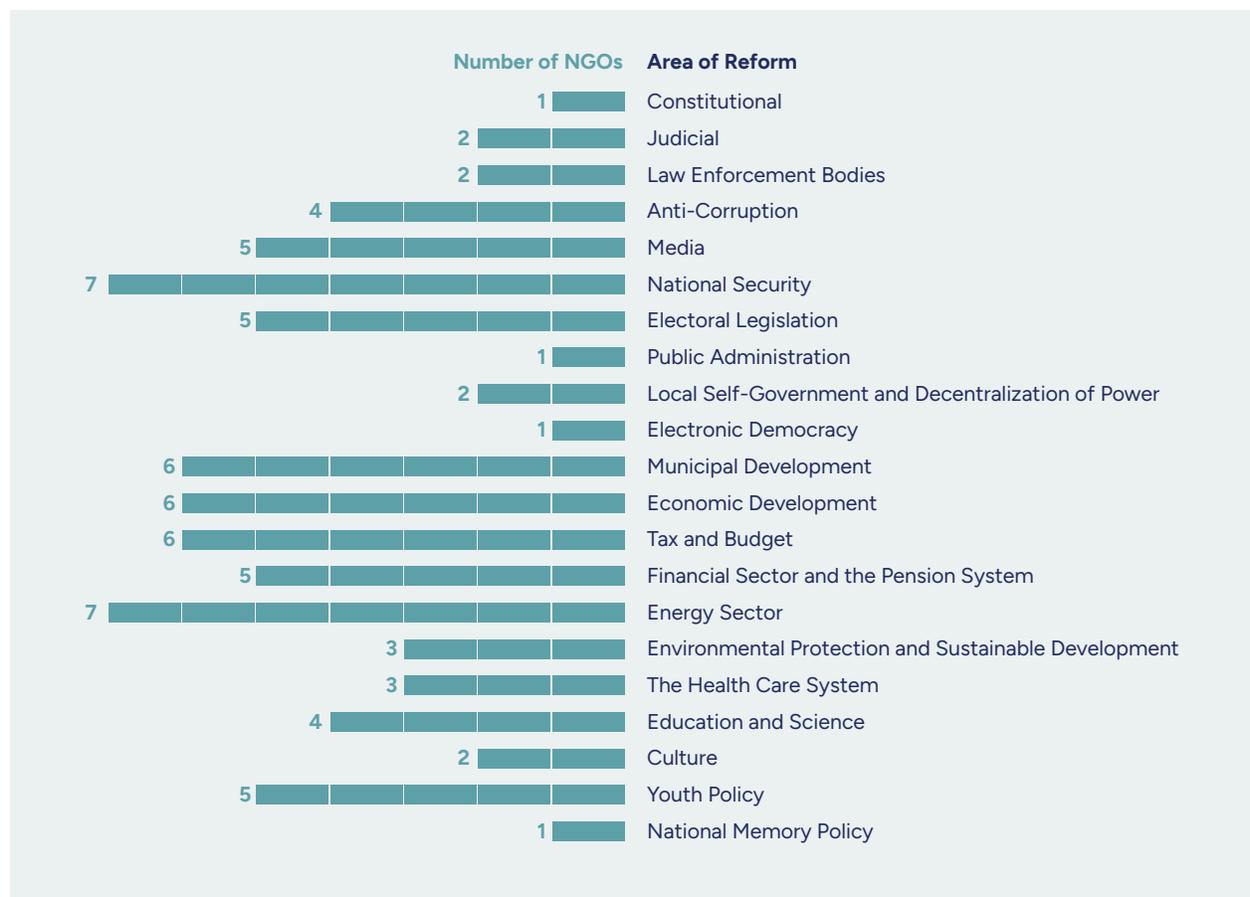
Informal associations are illustrative of the impact of the NGO sector on the government's transparency and accountability. Since 2011, government and NGO officials in 78 countries have implemented the Open Government Partnership, an international initiative promoting transparency, accountability, civic participation, and technological innovation in

the service of openness. In Ukraine, it is one of the key platforms for cooperation between NGOs and the government. Five joint action plans have been completed in the country, and a sixth is now in development.

A similar initiative provides a means for NGOs to interact with the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada). The Open Parliament initiative, of which Ukraine is a member, seeks to ensure transparent parliamentary activity and engage the public in lawmaking.<sup>8</sup> A portal for public discussion of draft laws was one of the key products of this initiative. However, since 2017, the portal and the initiative have scaled back their activities. Instead, NGOs have relied on effective informal cooperation methods such as working directly with members of parliament, sending requests and suggestions to Verkhovna Rada committees, and submitting analyses of draft laws in the form of open letters or requests to their authors. Several NGOs in Ukraine are engaged in legislative monitoring or analysis of sectoral laws and regulations. Informal cooperation has included, for example, a 2014 interaction between the Reanimation Package of Reforms (RPR) and the parliament and the government that was instrumental in advancing multiple governance reforms.<sup>9</sup> Building on its success, RPR developed a roadmap for reforming key sectors, to be implemented by the government within five years (2019–23). Fifty-eight NGOs cooperated within the RPR framework to design the plan, which included recommendations for improvement in 21 areas.<sup>10</sup>

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### Involvement of NGOs in the Development of RPR's Proposals



similar goals. The growing number of joint initiatives aimed at eliminating the consequences of the war, combatting the aggressor, and helping the country to recover demonstrate this trend.

This roadmap has yet to be adapted to the changes in the Ukrainian context that resulted from Russia's full-scale invasion. However, the document outlines the overall tendencies concerning NGOs' interest in policymaking and their capacity to act as key players.

### Civil Society and Decentralization

Apart from the rapid rise in levels of trust among social groups and networks, and in citizen participation, decentralization is likewise laying the groundwork for stronger-than-ever civic engagement. Decentralization is regarded as one of the most successful reforms since the Revolution of Dignity. Power and resources shifted away from regional offices of national organs that were opaque, clientelist fiefdoms left over from the Soviet era and run by oligarchs and mobsters. To take their place, communities voluntarily merged small municipalities into amalgamated communities that were both more responsive

and better able to provide transparent and accountable delivery of public services. The change allowed civic actors to take ownership of and responsibility for local initiatives, and this contributed to a new civic culture. This structural reform has undoubtedly increased local populations' resilience and level of preparedness to respond to the catastrophic impact of the war. It has enabled a broad spectrum of existing civil society organizations to take immediate action, building on existing networks and connections to mobilize resources.

Many national organizations are already working to build the capacity of regional organizations and support local initiatives. In particular, several network organizations—for example, the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union, the 100% Life Network, and Building Ukraine Together each have regional offices or partners in almost every part of Ukraine. Another widespread practice is to form coalitions through which local NGOs can come together to address specific regional issues. For example, in 2018 RPR created 14 regional coalitions made up of local NGOs.<sup>11</sup> Membership in civic advisory bodies remains a popular regional-level format for participation in decision-making during wartime, as public councils continue to function under oblast military administrations.

While many local NGOs are engaged in public councils, the numbers are not necessarily an indicator of effective and constructive cooperation between civil society and authorities at either local or national levels. The local-level NGO sector is not homogeneously developed, and there are many gaps on the ground. These include, among other things, a pre-existing lack of sufficient human capital that has been further exacerbated by Russia's full-scale invasion and by a lack of capacity at the regional level. In planning for Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, therefore, supporters must devote significant attention to building the capacity of regional-level NGOs.

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### Composition of Public Councils in the Regions



# A Matrix of NGOs Engaged in Recovery



When Russia's full-scale war of aggression broke out, NGOs began to address the challenges the country faced at various levels. For instance, the "Anti-Corruption Headquarters" launched the Destruction and Recovery Map, a project to collect data on all civil infrastructure damaged or destroyed due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as information about reconstruction works. The Kyiv School of Economics, together with several Ukrainian organizations, launched the "Russia Will Pay" project to document damages inflicted on Ukraine. And members of the RISE Ukraine coalition<sup>12</sup>, together with various government bodies, are developing the Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management (DREAM<sup>13</sup>), a national digital ecosystem for recovery management. DREAM collects, classifies, and displays information on recovery projects, providing a single digital pipeline for all reconstruction plans. Ukrainians have launched numerous recovery initiatives at the grassroots level. Control over the use of funds flowing to Ukraine from international partners is now one of the key tasks the national NGOs have set for themselves.

Below is a more detailed outline of NGOs involved in the recovery process and the highlights of the challenges they face in their activities.

A sample survey comprised of 14 substantive questions was conducted to create a list of NGOs working on the recovery. As of June 2023, 87 organizations with a wide range of activities and territorial coverage had submitted responses. Of these, 75 organizations (86%) indicated that they were involved in either the recovery or the reconstruction of Ukraine. Based on these answers, we mapped organizations involved in the recovery according to various criteria.

First, in describing NGOs' fields of expertise before February 24, 2022, respondents could select more than one field. The following fields had the highest number of responses (10 or more):

- Education
- Decentralization and local governance
- Internally Displace Persons (IDPs)/veterans' affairs
- Other (including sports, youth policy, construction, raising awareness of specific issues, and so on)

### NGO Areas of Expertise Before February 24, 2022



Twenty-nine percent of all respondent organizations have more than one area of expertise. Notably, organizations engaged in supporting IDPs and veterans were only third on the list. It is also worth pointing out that issues such as ecology and health care, which are so vitally important to the country's future, appeared much lower on the list.

As of mid-June, a partial re-prioritization of NGO activities was readily apparent. Education remains the most frequent area of focus, but more organizations emerged to deal with issues related to IDPs and veterans—which is unsurprising in a country suffering every day from wartime losses. Health care and human rights protection also ranked higher than they did before Russia launched its war of aggression.

**NGO Areas of Expertise Mid-2023**



The decrease in the number of NGOs engaged in decentralization and local governance is also noteworthy, since the recovery will take place primarily at the local level, and local authorities will need expert advice. Furthermore, the rankings of ecology and agriculture did not change despite the negative effects of the war in these areas.

The survey asked respondents about their primary work mode to relate specific activities to thematic areas.

Analytical and advocacy NGOs together make up the largest share of responding organizations, or about half (47%). Service organizations and NGOs engaged in public oversight and monitoring make up almost equal shares.

## NGO by Type



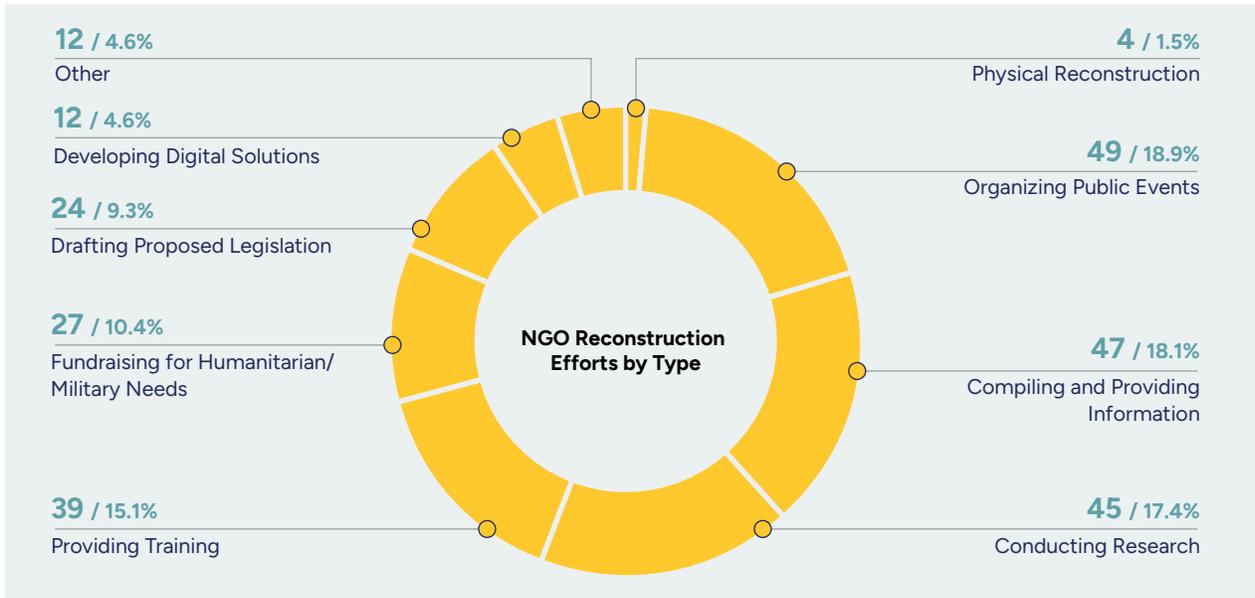
Some EU officials worry that Ukrainian NGOs too often try to “do it all”, with functions that overlap across analysis, advocacy, service provision, and monitoring. The risk is that this could create conflicts of interest or anti-democratic power concentrations, whereby a particular organization might propose and advocate for rules and then implement and monitor them. But in our survey results, only 11% of respondents indicated involvement in more than one main area of activity.

Key methods that NGOs use to aid recovery include:

- Organizing public events
- Compiling and providing information
- Conducting research
- Providing training

In NGO recovery work overall, drafting proposed legislation or regulations and developing digital solutions account for a relatively low percentage. The lowest proportion was physical reconstruction. However, when asked about their key achievements in recovery, most NGOs indicated successes in the form of specific products (a draft regulatory act, a portal or electronic service, the number of buildings reconstructed or persons evacuated, and so on). These results may be an indication that attention is focused on projects where results can be seen in the short term, and long-term recovery projects are given short shrift.

Modes of NGO Participation in the Recovery



The high demand for research, public events, and information is also due to the fact that almost half of the responding NGOs present themselves as analytical centers.

Funding is the biggest challenge for NGOs engaged in the recovery. When Russia’s full-scale war of aggression broke out, donors quite naturally ad-

justed their priorities. This change has created new challenges for some organizations, however, with a significant portion regarding support from the government and donors as insufficient. Another common problem is the lack of personnel, as about 8 million individuals have fled the country since the beginning of the war.<sup>14</sup>

Challenges for NGOs in Reconstruction



Ukraine has faced a number of challenges related to transparency and accountability since long before the start of the war in 2014, and Russia's full-scale invasion has only exacerbated them. Among these systemic problems are corruption, the lack of civil servants, and the fact that NGOs are blocked from receiving information and communications. The latter issue, it should be noted, typically arises at the regional level.

### Recovery Challenges by NGO Areas of Expertise



A key problem is the lack of qualified personnel—a shortcoming that can affect both the quality and the speed of the recovery process. “Insufficient funding” and “lack of access to information” received almost equal scores. Insufficient information about the recovery is due to the fact that under the martial law regime imposed at the beginning of the full-scale war, the authorities have blocked access to a number of resources and registries. As of mid-2023, some have reopened and resumed their functions, but it is as yet too early to expect a return to the prewar level of information disclosure.

According to our NGO respondents, corruption continues, despite the war, to constitute a major obstacle to the development of the country. In this light, it is worth emphasizing the importance of completing the judicial, law-enforcement, and anti-corruption reforms, and introducing new modalities of over-

sight of recovery funds.

The “other” category included problems of a non-systemic nature: the powerful influence of Russian propaganda, the lack of a unified donor database, the low level of engagement and indifference on the part of the general population, and so on.

### The Successes of NGO Recovery Efforts



Among their main successes of 2022, the organizations surveyed listed initiatives related to the integration of IDPs, international advocacy for European integration, fundraising for Ukraine's recovery, engagement with local and regional communities, and recovery planning. A number of the NGOs were implementing initiatives of their own design. For example:

- Detector Media has implemented an ongoing project titled “Board of Shame”, which compiles information about companies that remained in Russia after its invasion of Ukraine and keeps records of Kremlin-produced disinformation.
- The Lustration and Anti-Corruption Council of Prydniprovya has created a map entitled “Companies with Russian, Belarusian, and Iranian Ties” to prevent local governments from cooperating with businesses supporting the war against Ukraine.

- Technologies of Progress, in cooperation with numerous national and international partners, launched the "Russia Will Pay" portal to collect and store information about the destruction Russia has caused. This data can later be used to calculate reparations.
- Digital Security Lab drafted the law "On Media" to meet one of the EU criteria for granting Ukraine EU candidacy.
- The NGO "Group of Influence", together with its partners, drafted the "Strategy for State Policy on Internal Displacement for the Period Up to 2025."
- The Center for Democracy and Rule of Law advocated for legislative changes to encourage, facilitate, and regulate volunteering.
- The Institute for Legislative Ideas worked to change the government's approach to the allocation of funds from the Fund for the Liquidation of Consequences of the Armed Aggression and to calculating compensations within the eVidnovlennia initiative.
- For members of the Rise Ukraine Coalition, establishing the coalition's modes of cooperation was the key accomplishment of the year.
- The Initiative Center to Support Social Action "Ednannia" provided support for more than 200 IDPs immediately after the invasion and continued to award grants to IDPs working in deoccupied areas.
- The public association (PA) Osvitoria helped 46 war-stricken schools to resume learning promptly.
- PO Pravosvidomi provided legal support for the reconstruction of Irpin City.
- The Rotary Club Kyiv Capital raised funds and installed three prefabricated houses in the Chernihiv region.

This finding indicates that partnerships among NGOs have deepened.

In addition to initiatives of their own design, some NGOs achieved outstanding results in routine but very important projects:

- The Charitable Foundation "Brave" gathered more than 2,000 volunteers to clean debris and restore more than 130 social facilities.

These examples represent only a small portion of the NGO sector's efforts and successes since the beginning of the full-scale invasion; however, their variety illustrates the increase in NGOs' potential far beyond traditional areas and modes of work in this sector.

In brief, of the 86% of the NGOs surveyed that are working towards Ukraine's recovery, most are engaged in analysis and advocacy. The war notwithstanding, Ukrainian NGOs emphasize corruption, the lack of qualified personnel, and the closed nature of information as the key recovery-related challenges. However, the successes of NGOs in the variety of fields in which they have been working since the start of the full-scale invasion prove that this sector is well able to adapt to challenges; it has an advanced capacity for mobilization, and the issues it takes up are tailored to the needs of the population.

# Recovery-Related Networking and Cooperation Among NGOs (As Of June 19, 2023)



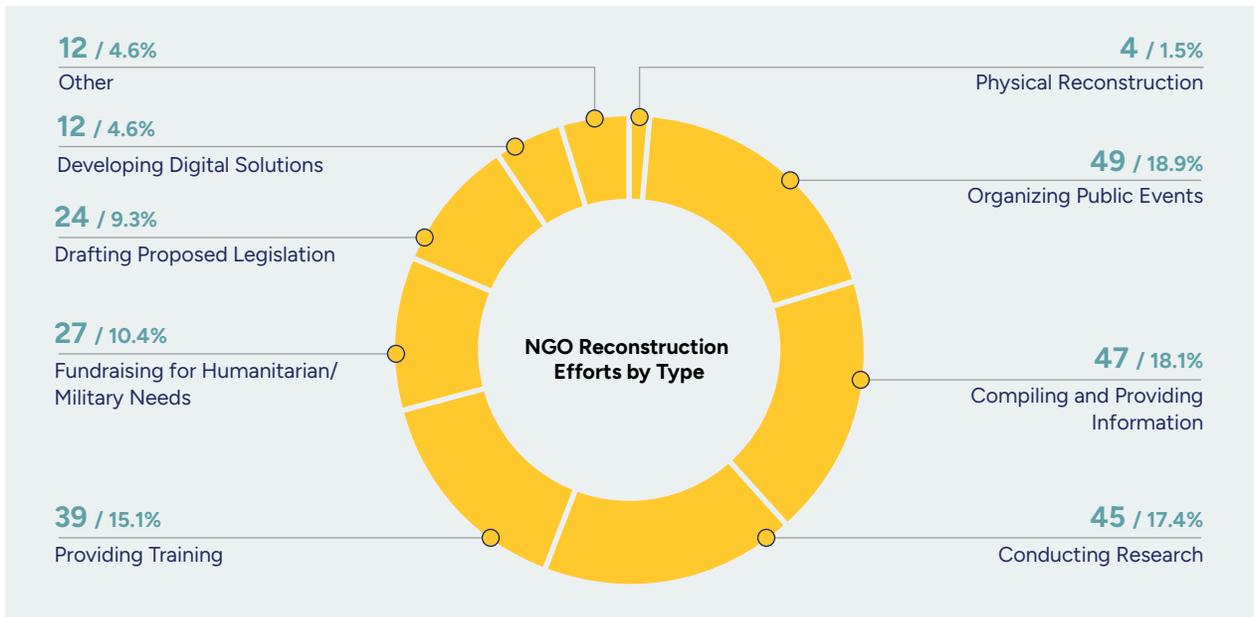
In our analysis, we aimed to identify sustainable NGO partnerships and explore their role in recovery. For this purpose, the respondents were interviewed about their participation in coalitions and associations.

Half of the survey participants said that they were not part of any coalitions or associations, with the other 50% reporting membership in one or more.

The most popular coalitions, according to the results of the survey, were the following:

- RISE Ukraine
- PA "Reanimation Package of Reforms Coalition"
- RRR4U Consortium

### NGO Participation in Coalitions and Associations



The "Other" category includes coalitions mentioned only once by survey participants.

**RISE Ukraine** is a coalition that brings NGOs together to build recovery-related accountability mechanisms, ensure timely data disclosure, and develop digital solutions for the recovery and the further engagement of citizens and businesses in planning, monitoring, and oversight. RISE now comprises some 50 NGOs.

Survey respondents believed that the coalition's main success was the creation of DREAM, the electronic ecosystem for recovery management that will greatly improve the transparency and accountability of the recovery process. Coalition members pointed out that RISE Ukraine has established wide-ranging and effective communications between the national executive authorities and NGOs.

**RRR4U (Resilience, Reconstruction, and Relief for Ukraine)** is a consortium of four Ukrainian think

tanks working towards a fair, green, and human-oriented economic recovery. Its members mentioned fundraising for Ukraine as one of their key successes. They also mentioned the "Ukraine Recovery Cookbook", a document with a clear outline of proposed principles for Ukraine's recovery.

The Public Association **Reanimation Package of Reforms** is a coalition of NGOs and experts that was founded in the wake of the Revolution of Dignity to develop a consolidated position on necessary reforms and their appropriate implementation. It now comprises 26 NGOs.

Respondents mentioned the expert recommendations prepared for the Ukraine Recovery Plan discussions at the 2022 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano as a key success of the association, as well as its effective advocacy for the interests of civil society in Ukraine.

Members of these three NGO coalitions presented their deliverables at this year's URC conference in

London. The Ukrainian non-government sector's high level of visibility at the forum serves as an indicator of the recognition NGOs have received for their role, and of the significance of their cooperation with the government for the difficult work of recovery.

Despite the growing trend toward networking and cooperation among NGOs and between NGOs and the government, coordination within the sector and between NGOs and the donor community remains a major challenge.

On the question of NGOs' engagement with the various authorities on recovery efforts, half of our respondents reported that they had interacted with local authorities, and one-third had interacted with executive authorities (ministries, in Ukraine's case). Only a relatively small number of organizations surveyed stated that they had not interacted with authorities at any level. Nineteen percent of the responding NGOs reported that they engage with authorities at more than one level.

**Engagement of NGOs With Authorities**

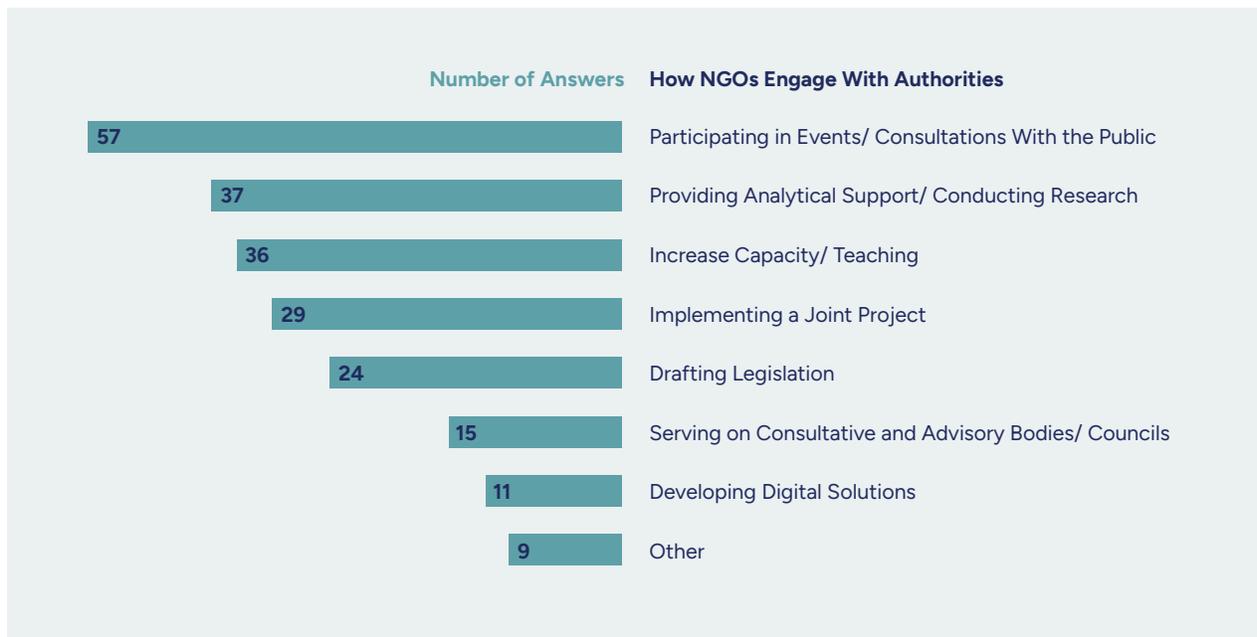


NGOs engage with authorities primarily through attendance at events and public consultations. Analytical support, research, and training are also widespread means of interaction. Notably, NGOs tend not to use public council membership as a mechanism for contact with authorities.

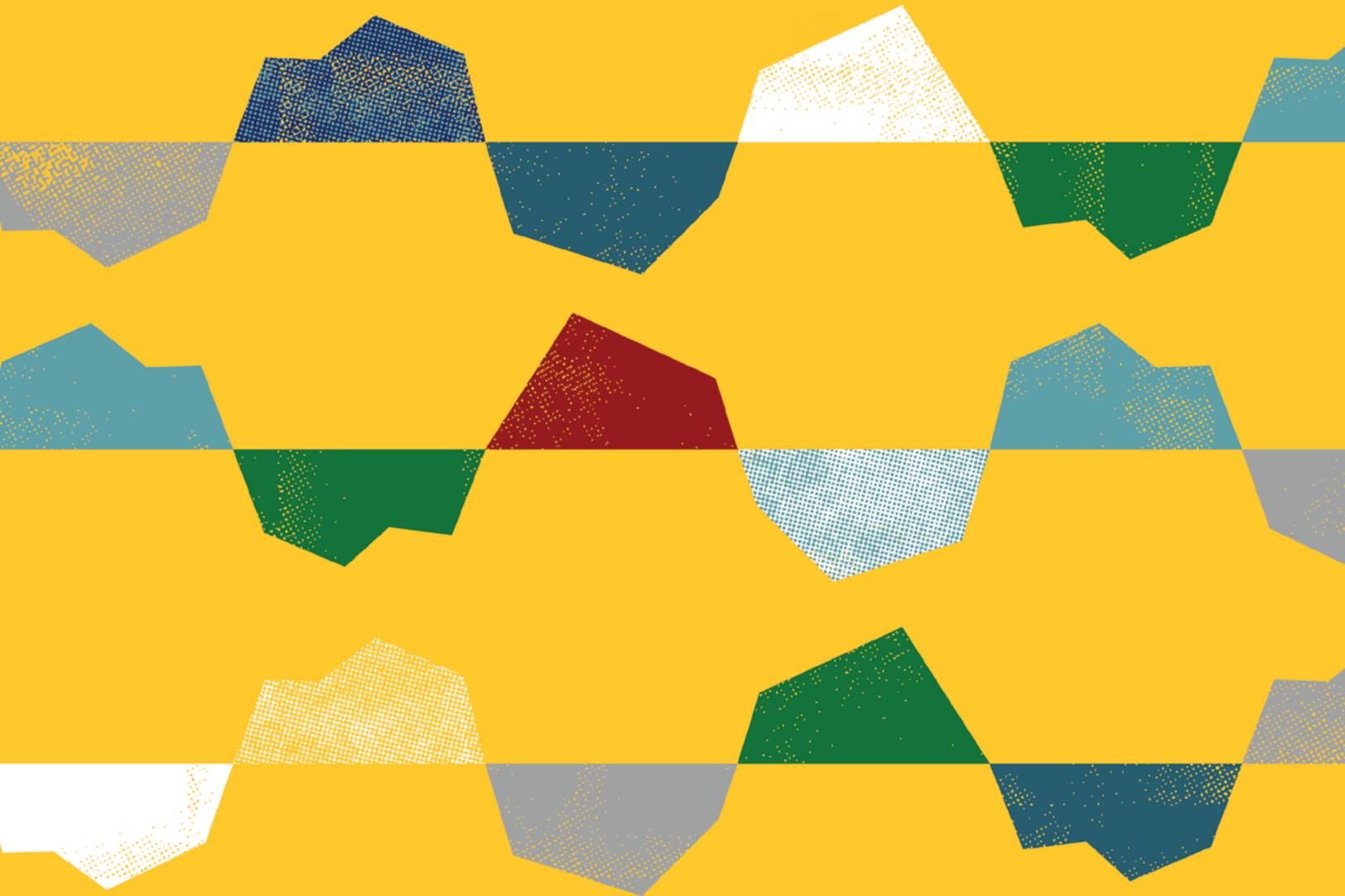
Ukrainian NGOs remain optimistic about associating with sector peers to strengthen recovery, but they

also recognize the importance of building collaboration with the key players in the recovery decision-making—the executive authorities. Overall, half of the NGOs surveyed seek to coordinate simultaneously with sector peers and authorities. In our view, a networking strategy such as this will be the most effective for achieving the common goals of the country's recovery.

### Types of Engagement With Authorities



# Gaps and Opportunities



The survey asked the organizations to provide advice or warnings to donors supporting the recovery of Ukraine. The NGOs' responses can be divided into those related to the institutional element of cooperation and those related to financial support. Most

often, NGOs gave advice related to establishing mechanisms or building systems of cooperation between Ukrainian civil society and the donor community (42 responses). Less often, the advice related to project funding (28 responses).

### NGOs' Advice Regarding the Institutional Element of Cooperation

Category	Number of responses
Thoroughly vet grantees	10
Increase oversight over the agreements and money	7
Establish coordination among NGOs and between NGOs and donors	6
Consult with Ukrainian NGOs	4
Work on transparency	3
Keep supporting Ukraine	3
Take the context into account	3
Prioritize recovery projects	2
Respond to challenges more promptly	2
Increase cooperation with NGOs	1

Most NGOs expressed similar ideas for building and improving cooperation, which is an indication of existing gaps in selecting grantees and in coordination within the donor community, within the NGO sector, and between the two. The respondents also identified drawbacks related to oversight over the use of grant funds and the implementation of measures for evaluating project effectiveness.

In particular, the respondents identified the following challenges:

- Fears that Ukraine's future will be decided without the Ukrainians

- Lack of communication between the donor community and NGOs about prioritization of tasks
- Lack of qualified personnel and difficulties in identifying expertise necessary to the recovery
- The potential for corruption due to weak control over the use of funds raised

Another large cluster of responses relates to the funding of projects, initiatives, and areas that are in need of support. Here, NGOs' responses are more fragmented, and most ideas have only one supporter behind them.

## NGOs' advice regarding kinds of support for initiatives

Category	Number of responses
Support for new/local NGOs	5
Support for recovery monitoring	3
Support for personnel training for the recovery	2
Support for long-term projects	2
Support for systemic decisions	2

The following project areas received only one response:

- Partnerships between civil society and local governments,
- Combatting corruption
- Institutional development of NGOs
- Curbing the demographic crisis
- Energy and housing reconstruction
- Infrastructure projects
- Culture
- Economy

The small sample size prevents us from speaking about NGO sector priorities in general, but we can outline the range of issues that Ukrainian civil society considers urgent.

Warnings were the least frequent responses, and they mostly concerned the lack of concrete details, ongoing warfare, and cooperation with authorities without proper public control. The warnings indicated a key trend: NGOs fear that donors tend to interact with insufficiently qualified professionals from various sectors. These fears are behind the NGOs' advice to more thoroughly vet grantees.

In sum, the organizations remind donors above all that it is important to strengthen oversight over funds allocated for recovery, and they insist that the Ukrainian government enact effective transparency measures. The process of grantee selection is another important area about which NGOs warn. The organizations emphasize that donors must scrutinize the track record of receiving entities to ensure their most effective use of donated funds.<sup>15</sup>

Further, NGOs urge donors to support not only experienced grantees, but also young organizations that lack a strong grantee record but are ready and willing to implement changes. Finally, all stakeholders have recognized Ukrainian ownership of the recovery, so another piece of advice to donors is that they must consult with Ukrainian NGOs.

# Recommendations

1

## Give Ukrainian NGOs an Advisory Seat at the Donor Coordination Table

NGOs in our survey emphasize the importance of consultations with the donor community at the planning stage of their Ukraine-related initiatives. Donors are coordinating among themselves (via the Multi-Agency Donor Coordination Platform) and NGOs are coordinating among themselves (via coalitions), but the two are not coordinating with each other. Thus far, the Multi-Agency Donor Coordination Platform has approached “Ukrainian ownership” for the most part as Ukrainian government ownership, thus failing to recognize and tap into the unique legitimacy and depth of expertise within Ukrainian civil society. Nor does the donor coordination platform have sufficient internal capacity to develop options for policies that would address tricky substantive issues. The platform brings together government officials who look to the World Bank or other IFIs when they need analysis that is beyond their own capacity. Donors could fill this gap by creating a board of leading civil society experts to advise the platform.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of principle, the NGO community should be present in any coordination mechanism that support the recovery of Ukraine.

2

## Provide Capacity-Building Support to Professionalize Recovery-Related NGO Initiatives

Ukrainian civil society is mobilizing rapidly around recovery and reconstruction—a flowering of hundreds of new NGOs organized into several coalitions. But as with the deepening of Ukrainian civil society following past national calls to action—from anti-corruption needs after the Revolution of Dignity to wartime humanitarian needs since February 2022—such rapid establishment of so many new NGOs preparing for recovery and reconstruction means that many will need cultivation and incubation services such that they build the professional capacities to sustainably receive and oversee foreign assistance.

3

## Establish a System for the Selection of Qualified Implementers

Most NGOs understand the donor community’s concerns about the integrity and capacity of Ukrainian organizations and emphasize that the most qualified professionals must be selected to implement projects. This requires a system of unbiased verification of organizations’ selection processes—a system that should simultaneously satisfy both the needs of the donor community for screening future partners and the needs of Ukrainian organizations to improve their work under clear criteria. A digital system based on independent evaluation could, in our view, satisfy such needs.

## 4 Enter the Ukrainian Context Through NGO Coalitions and Localization of Aid

This study highlights the growing trend among NGOs in Ukraine toward teaming up, as fully half of the organizations in our survey cooperate with their peers in joint initiatives. We have recorded the work of 21 coalitions within the first stage of the study alone. Given the need for donors supporting Ukraine to understand the Ukrainian context, preliminary consultations with NGO coalitions are an essential first step, as they help to identify sector gaps, experts, and priority requests.

## 5 Work with Ukraine Civil Society to Make This the Most Transparent Reconstruction Ever

Ukrainians see corruption as the biggest threat to the future of Ukraine and therefore see transparency as a cornerstone of recovery. NGOs see public and international oversight over decisionmaking processes and the use of recovery funds as essential to the recovery. We expect the DREAM digital recovery management system to help create these mechanisms. But this Ukrainian tool must be supported by several forms of international assistance: financial and technical resources, capacity development among Ukrainian authorities, cultivation of support communities able to train other stakeholders in how to use the system, and perhaps most important and most challenging—because it would bring more transparency than the donors are accustomed to—using DREAM themselves by integrating it into their own data systems and requiring their implementing partners to use it.

## 6 Insist Upon Cooperation with Ukrainian NGOs

International support is now an important component of the work of NGOs, the central government, and local governments. However, issues of their transparency and accountability remain critical. NGOs stress that all authorities should function transparently, and that this should be a requirement for receiving funding from partners. Strengthening oversight over the transparency and accountability of agencies receiving international support can become a powerful motivation for cooperation with Ukrainian NGOs, which, among other things, are able to provide additional public oversight. Donors should insist that all projects involve partners not only among the public and private sectors but also among Ukrainian NGOs.

Looking to the future, it is clear that these six opportunities offer a promising path to a more effective and collaborative approach to Ukraine's postwar reconstruction. Despite the many challenges, Ukrainian civil society's unique experience and perspective, combined with its commitment to transparency and accountability, give reason for optimism. By engaging actively with Ukrainian non-governmental organizations and establishing robust coordination mechanisms on the model of the G7 donor coordination platform, the international community can play an important role in building a brighter future for Ukraine.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 We will update this report in early 2024. If you are a member of an NGO that tackles issues related to Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery, please fill in this questionnaire and we will include your data in the next material update: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfprCHlpx5E8rom5kAhMlpfLwkisUaGWYnHb-Crz2EC3yebjAA/viewform>
- 2 Kateryna Zarembo and Eric Martin, [Civil society and sense of community in Ukraine: from dormancy to action](#), European Societies, March 2023. (<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616696.2023.2185652>).
- 3 Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, "Інформаційна довідка щодо волонтерства та благодійництва" [Informational Guide on Volunteering and Charity], December 13, 2016 (<https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/12101.html?PrintVersion>).
- 4 Zagoriy Foundation, [Благодійність у часи війни—кількісне дослідження](#), [Charity During Times of War—Quantitative Study], August 09, 2023 (<https://zagoriy.foundation/publications/blagodijnist-u-chasi-vijni-kilkisne-doslidzhennya/>).
- 5 ACAPS Analytical Hub, [Perceptions of localisation in the humanitarian response](#), June 16, 2023 (<https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/acaps-thematic-report-ukraine-perceptions-localisationhumanitarian-response-16-june-2023>).
- 6 The Rating Group, ["The Eighth National Poll: Ukraine During the War \(April 2, 2022\)"](#), April 6, 2023 ([https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/vosmoy\\_obschenacionalnyy\\_opros\\_ukraina\\_v\\_usloviyah\\_voyny\\_6\\_aprelya\\_2022.html](https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/vosmoy_obschenacionalnyy_opros_ukraina_v_usloviyah_voyny_6_aprelya_2022.html)).
- 7 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Ukrainian civil society under the war, January 2023 (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/<https://ednannia.ua/attachments/article/12447/Ukrainian%20civil%20society%20under%20the%20war.pdf>).
- 8 Transparency International Ukraine, [Ініціатива «Відкритий Парламент»](#) ["Open Parliament" Initiative], December, 2016 (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/[https://tiukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UA\\_infogr\\_print\\_OpenParl.pdf](https://tiukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/UA_infogr_print_OpenParl.pdf)).
- 9 RPR is the association of NGOs and experts who joined forces after the Revolution of Dignity in March 2014 to consolidate a position on necessary reforms and their proper implementation. The founders of the association are 25 NGOs.
- 10 Yuliya Kyrychenko, Bohdan Bondarenko, Markiy Galabala, et al., ["Дорожня Карта Реформ 2019-2023"](#) [Reform Road Map 2019–2023], Center for Democracy and Rule of Law, 2018, p. 74 (<https://rpr.org.ua/achievement/roadmap-of-reforms/>).
- 11 Ivan Omelyan, [Recommendations for the further development and support of civil society organization coalitions in Ukraine](#), August 2020, p.19 (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/[https://cedem.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/RE-KOMENDATSIYI\\_dlya\\_podalshogo\\_rozvytku\\_ta\\_pidtrymky\\_koalitsij.pdf](https://cedem.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/RE-KOMENDATSIYI_dlya_podalshogo_rozvytku_ta_pidtrymky_koalitsij.pdf)).
- 12 RISE UA is a coalition of Ukrainian and international public organizations, initiatives, state institutions and activists who support [Principles for Ukraine's Reconstruction and Modernization](#) through constructive dialogue with the authorities and international partners (<https://www.rise.org.ua/#principles>).
- 13 DREAM collects, organizes, and publishes open data across all stages of reconstruction projects in real time, implementing the highest standards of transparency, and accountability. Anyone, anywhere, can monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of project delivery, and use these insights to mitigate risks, conduct accurate reporting, and improve overall project performance.
- 14 Yaroslav Pryshchepa, ["З України виїхали майже 8 мільйонів біженців — омбудсман"](#) [Almost 8 million refugees have left Ukraine – Ombudsman], Suspilne News, December 14, 2022 (<https://suspilne.media/338594-z-ukraini-viihali-majze-8-miljoniv-bizenciv-ombudsman/>).
- 15 It is important to note here that while Ukraine has faced challenges related to corruption, the government and civil society have undertaken substantial efforts to address this issue. The country has implemented a range of anti-corruption reforms and established new institutions to combat corruption at various levels. In addition, Ukraine boasts adequately qualified non-governmental organizations working in the field of anti-corruption. These NGOs often play a pivotal role in advocating for transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption. For more on this, see Josh Rudolph, Norman L. Eisen, and Cameron Bertron, [Ukraine's Anti-Corruption Front](#), German Marshall Fund, June 2023 (<https://www.gmfus.org/news/ukraines-anti-corruption-front>).
- 16 See Rudolph, Eisen, and Bertron, [Ukraine's Anti-Corruption Front](#), page 49.



September 2023

**Civil Society**

**in Ukraine's**

**Restoration**

A Guide to CSOs Mobilizing  
for a Marshall Plan

