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A National Recovery Strategy for Ukraine

Emergency measures can become long-term policy.

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From the first day of Russia's full-scale invasion, it has been clear that the consequences of the war would not be limited to physical destruction. What Ukraine faced was a systemic breakdown of infrastructure, the economy, social ties, and governance mechanisms. Within the first few months of the hostilities, the country suffered tremendous losses, and it became evident that the scale of the necessary recovery ahead would be unprecedented. This immediately underscored the need for strategic planning: The more complex the challenge, the more systemic the response must be.

Damage assessments conducted by international partners recorded billions of dollars in losses just for the first year after the full-scale invasion. Subsequent international assessments have shown a significant increase in losses in Ukraine's infrastructure and other assets. Yet the indirect consequences have been no less significant: The most dire challenge of all is the demographic crisis fuelled by mass migration. All of these factors have triggered a deep systemic shock, one that exists to this day and will persist until a sustainable ceasefire is established.

During a protracted war, recovery is not merely about repairing what was destroyed. It is a strategic choice and an opportunity not just to rebuild, but to reimagine the state, the economy, and national infrastructure. But in the absence of clear priorities, financing, coordination mechanisms, and performance criteria, Ukraine's recovery process has become fragmented. This is at best ineffective and at worst harmful.

It is increasingly evident that Ukraine's way out of this lack of strategic vision is through a coherent, comprehensive, and legitimate framework. A national recovery strategy can fulfill that role, not only uniting institutions, but also setting up a shared vision of the future. It is a political and governance decision to enable the country to chart the most rational path forward during wartime. The development of a national recovery strategy is not a bureaucratic formality; it is a necessary precondition for turning recovery into a structured, transparent, and results-oriented process.

The idea of a national recovery strategy is not an attempt to create a separate strategic instrument that would be inconsistent with the Public Investment Management Reform (PIM Reform), which is implemented by Ukraine and broadly supported by international partners. This strategy can be fully integrated into the PIM Reform framework to serve as a safeguard for public spending that funds wartime reconstruction objectives and ensures efficient postwar recovery.

As long as such a unified strategy is absent, Ukraine's recovery ecosystem will remain vulnerable. The country is already moving in the direction of adopting a comprehensive framework, and the question is when such a framework can be implemented. The longer this strategic decision is delayed, the greater the losses caused by duplication, inconsistency, and missed opportunities will be.

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A Strategy That Never Became Policy

Early Attempts and Unfinished Planning

The need for strategic planning for recovery became evident almost immediately after the start of the full-scale war amid widespread destruction and loss. In response, [Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy established the National Recovery Council \(NRC\)](#) in April 2022—the first coordination body intended to launch nationwide recovery planning.

The NRC [was mandated to develop an action plan for the recovery and development of Ukraine](#), covering infrastructure, the economy, social sectors, and priority reforms. The council consisted of high-level officials, members of parliament, and representatives of the expert community, all organized into sectoral working groups. Within this structure, the foundation was laid for the **Ukraine Recovery Plan (URP)**, presented in July 2022 at the **Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in Lugano, Switzerland**.

The URP [presented in Lugano](#) covered dozens of sectors and posited a financial need of \$750 billion. It was prepared through a broad consultative process that involved civil society, the expert community, and relevant ministries. This process served as an important signal to partners that Ukraine was preparing for recovery during the war itself.

Despite its scale and comprehensiveness, however, the URP did not acquire the status of an official strategic document. It was not approved by any legal act and did not become a normative or coordinating basis for state policy. It consisted mainly of general recommendations and sectoral visions, but did not contain specific goals, implementation mechanisms, cost estimates, deadlines, or responsible executors.

Although there was significant political will and broad participation, the lack of a clearly defined and approved strategy limited the effectiveness of recovery efforts. Ukraine took a step toward creating a plan, but failed to develop a strategic framework that coordinated the actions of all participants in the process.

After the URP was finalized, the work of the NRC gradually faded. The coordinating and advisory body, which had the potential to become the center of strategic recovery management, never evolved into a permanent structure with policy influence.

As of 2025, Ukraine still lacks a single nationwide recovery and reconstruction strategy. The national planning process in the form of a dedicated action plan was discontinued, and its place was partially taken by the EU's **Ukraine Facility**, initially launched in 2024. However, this plan is insufficient and does not meet the real needs of sustainable strategic planning.

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Fragmented Planning

What Exists—and What’s Critically Missing

Foundations already exist for strategic planning for recovery in Ukraine. The country is in a phase best described as “fragmented planning”—a landscape populated by numerous stand-alone, substantively relevant, and formally approved documents that, nonetheless, do not form a coherent system. The legal basis for producing such strategies exists: Some have been adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, others are embedded in national legislation. Several were developed through open, consultative processes involving experts, think tanks, and international donors. This groundwork indicates that the institutional capacity to develop and approve strategic documents does, in fact, exist within parts of the government. That capacity is a critical asset—and one worth building on.

As of 2025, Ukraine has developed a number of strategic documents outlining visions for specific sectors such as transportation, energy, and regional development. These documents define long-term goals and, in some cases, contain implementation roadmaps and action plans. However, they are not enough to overcome the scale of the current challenges and ensure a sustainable, long-term recovery. What is missing is a unifying framework—one that integrates these sectoral documents into a single logic of action that sets clear priorities, sequences initiatives, and identifies synergies among sectors.

Each national or sub-national reconstruction-related decision tends to focus narrowly on addressing a specific issue, without fully considering the broader trajectory of the country’s postwar reconstruction. The result is a rather incoherent picture of the reconstruction efforts.

Key examples of existing strategic planning documents:

The State Strategy for Regional Development of Ukraine (2021–2027)

This strategy is mandated by the [Law of Ukraine “On the Principles of State Regional Policy”](#) and was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on August 5, 2020, by [Resolution No. 695](#). It outlines three main goals: enhancing regional competitiveness, ensuring territorial cohesion, and developing effective multi-level governance. Based on this strategy, regional strategies are developed at the oblast level, and projects are financed through the State Regional Development Fund.

Although the document was updated after the start of Russia’s full-scale aggression, its framework remains too general and does not account for the full complexity of postwar recovery as a multidimensional and multi-level process. The strategy fails to set out a clear logic for territorial recovery in light of the scale of destruction, population displacement, and the need to rethink spatial planning policy.

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Ukraine's National Transport Strategy Through 2030

Approved by Cabinet [Resolution No. 1550](#) on December 27, 2024, this strategy outlines key priorities for developing Ukraine's transportation system, including integration with the European network, multimodal logistics, transport safety, digitalization, and environmental sustainability. An operational action plan for 2025–2027 was approved alongside the strategy. Notably, the updated version reflects the consequences of the war, addressing infrastructure restoration, the creation of resilient logistics routes, and the development of a transport system that accounts for security risks. However, the document still falls short of serving as a coordination framework for the sector's recovery within the broader national context. It remains isolated from other sectors and lacks alignment with an overarching postwar recovery approach.

Special attention must also be paid to planning efforts at the local level because local governments and regional authorities are the first to respond to the consequences of armed aggression. It is at this level that decisions are made about rebuilding schools, water systems, housing, and roads. In response to these urgent needs, two new planning tools emerged in 2022–2023 to support postwar recovery efforts at the territorial level: Comprehensive Recovery Programs and Territorial Recovery and Development Plans. These plans represent an important step forward, but they are not substitutes for a unified national recovery strategy.

The **Comprehensive Recovery Programs**, adopted under Cabinet Resolution No. 1159 of October 14, 2022, were designed to enable rapid response during wartime. They include damage assessments, spatial planning, identification of urgent needs, and monitoring tools. In essence, they serve as a “technical inventory” of needs—useful for generating early project packages. Their key strength lies in their specificity, proximity to real problems, and ability to jumpstart local recovery processes.

In 2023, **Territorial Recovery and Development Plans** were introduced under Cabinet Resolution No. 731 of July 18, 2023. These plans go beyond reacting to damage—they aim to articulate a vision for sustainable development over the medium term. They include goals, indicators, projected financing, and lists of potential projects. Importantly, these plans are designed to address not just physical reconstruction, but also social services, economic revitalization, and institutional capacity-building.

These documents are steps in the right direction. They provide a planning horizon for local authorities, encourage citizen engagement, and lay the foundation for resource mobilization. But their effectiveness is significantly reduced in the absence of a national recovery strategy, as there are no established common principles or evaluation criteria.

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Moreover, the actual capacity of local governments to engage in meaningful strategic planning must be viewed realistically. Many communities have lost critical staff, technical capacity, data access, and analytical tools due to the war. According to the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities, only a small share of local self-government bodies (as of 2025) have developed and approved recovery plans or comprehensive programs that both meet regulatory standards and reflect their communities' real needs. The barriers include not just shortages of personnel and funding, but the complexity of the planning process itself—which requires spatial analysis, financial forecasting, and input from engineers, economists, and project managers.

In most cases, these plans are not developed internally, but with support from international technical assistance programs that fund external experts, facilitators, and analytical teams. As a result, planning capacity across the country remains uneven and heavily dependent on outside support, creating yet another challenge for achieving a balanced and equitable national recovery.

Missed Potential

The Ukraine Facility Plan, the Project Preparation Facility (PPF), and the PIM Reform

In preparation for launching financial support under the Ukraine Facility, the Ukrainian government attempted to create a more systematic approach to project planning. One of the most important initiatives is the Ukraine Government Project Preparation Facility (PPF), which is being set up with the support of international partners. Its aim is to help prepare priority recovery projects in line with international quality, fiduciary, and environmental standards, so that donor and budget resources can be used more effectively in the near term. The PPF is also laying the groundwork for public-private partnerships and private investment in the medium term.

At the same time, Ukraine is in the process of introducing the PIM Reform. This reform is intended to build a unified and standardized project cycle, replacing fragmented channels with a single approach. It foresees the creation of a single project pipeline (SPP) of public investments that would include national, regional, and municipal projects identified as priorities. A Strategic Investment Council has been set up as an advisory body to define these priorities and oversee the formation of the pipeline.

These reforms are crucial steps toward building a more transparent and efficient investment system. Yet, they remain in the early stages of implementation and, most importantly, cannot substitute for a national recovery strategy. PIM procedures and the PPF can help determine which projects should be prioritized and implemented, but they do not set the overarching vision for what Ukraine's recovery should achieve in the long term. Without such a vision, even the most technically sound project portfolio risks remaining fragmented and disconnected from the broader logic of reconstruction and modernization.

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A Unified Logic for Fragmented Decisions

Why Ukraine Needs a Recovery Strategy

For a country that is simultaneously fighting a war, rebuilding infrastructure, implementing reforms, and moving toward EU membership, a national recovery strategy is not a luxury—it is a practical and essential tool for state management during the most complex transformation in its modern history. This is not just about producing a document; it is about making a political decision to follow a shared roadmap—one that guides all branches of government, regions, international partners, and businesses.

In a country where hundreds of schools, hospitals, bridges, and water supply systems have been damaged or destroyed, recovery efforts without prioritization or logic risk becoming a disorganized patchwork.

Today, Ukraine has dozens of documents—from sectoral strategies and state programs to integrated recovery plans and policy concepts. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, most projects—both large and small—have been submitted based on specific funding sources, such as the Consequences Elimination Fund, EU instruments, or grant programs from international organizations. Each time, the criteria and priorities shift, and due to limited time, their appropriateness often goes unexamined. As a result, the government, regional authorities, and implementing agencies are forced to balance conflicting approaches instead of working within one agreed-upon strategic framework.

The situation is further complicated by the frequent implementation of “experimental projects”—initiatives that fall outside the broader planning system but are carried out as pilots or emergency responses to the consequences of Russian aggression. Without a single strategic framework, it is difficult to determine whether these initiatives will evolve into scalable models or remain isolated exceptions.

A unified strategy would allow for the evaluation of each project’s impact on the economy, public services, and regional stability—ensuring that funds are directed where they can deliver the greatest value. It would also enable donors to align their support with long-term national priorities, instead of scattering aid across disconnected individual initiatives.

Another advantage of a national strategy is its potential to ensure geographic balance. Ukraine is undergoing a spatial transformation. While some regions have suffered immense destruction, and others are experiencing depopulation, still other areas have emerged as hubs of economic activity. Decisions on locating new regional hospitals, restructuring energy infrastructure, or restoring de-occupied territories should not be made through fragmented ministerial programs—they must follow a unified strategic vision. A national recovery strategy would support the development of a spatial logic for growth—one that reconnects regions into a cohesive framework, rebalances investments across oblasts, and prevents the concentration of resources in areas that shout the loudest rather than those with the greatest need.

Moreover, analysis of current recovery projects within state programs reveals a chronic issue with short-term budgeting. The government may designate certain projects high priority, but funding is then delayed or halted altogether. The result is frozen construction sites, wasted resources, loss of public trust, and in some cases, complete project abandonment. A well-defined strategy would prevent this by replacing ad-hoc funding decisions with a consistent mechanism—one that ensures financial continuity regardless of political cycles or shifting priorities.

The role of a national recovery strategy for the business sector

Business is a key player in Ukraine's postwar recovery. But to invest, launch production, or build facilities, the private sector needs clarity. A recovery strategy is precisely what provides that certainty.

- **Visibility and Predictability**

A strategic document offers insight into which sectors will be in demand, which regions will receive support, where logistics networks will be developed, and how the energy sector will evolve. For example, if the strategy highlights railway electrification or the development of processing clusters in a specific region, businesses know where projects will be implemented and can shape their portfolios accordingly.

- **A Pipeline of Infrastructure Projects as a Market Signal**

A well-structured strategy enables the creation of a clear pipeline—a set of prepared and prioritized projects slated for implementation. Without a strategy in place, such a list is essentially meaningless. The pipeline serves as a critical signal for contractors, suppliers, banks, and investment funds.

- **Coordination and Alignment of Expectations**

The private sector gains the ability to align its plans with those of the government. For instance, if an investor plans to build a concrete plant, they need to know whether there will be regional demand for that product—specifically, whether actual road reconstruction is planned rather than just temporary roadworks.

- **Attracting External Capital**

Foreign companies, financial institutions, and private funds all require a strategic framework. It is essential for investment protection, planning, and risk assessment. A national strategy answers key questions: “Where is the country headed over the next ten years?” and “Does my project align with that direction?”

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A National Strategy

The Foundation for the Institutional Architecture of Recovery

It is impossible to seriously consider strategic planning without having a responsible institutional architecture in place. A strategy is not just a document about roads, schools, and water pipelines—it is about who makes the decisions, how government bodies coordinate, what the planning horizon is, and who is accountable for ensuring that recovery plans do not turn into wish lists.

At present, Ukraine's institutional model for recovery remains underdeveloped. In July 2022, a decision was made to merge the Ministry of Infrastructure with the Ministry for Communities and Territories Development. This move was presented as a step toward enhancing the state's recovery capacity. In practice, however, it was largely political and did not lay the foundation for a comprehensive institutional architecture to manage the recovery process.

The newly formed ministry—informally dubbed the “Ministry of Recovery”—essentially remained responsible for policymaking in infrastructure, regional development, construction, and housing and utilities. Its mandate did not extend to the broader range of areas critical to comprehensive national recovery.

It is important to emphasize that recovery is not solely an infrastructure process. It affects virtually all sectors and requires the involvement of multiple central executive bodies: healthcare, education, economy, energy, environment, digital transformation, social policy, and more. Recovery is a cross-sectoral task that demands independent coordination, priority alignment, and a shared vision.

Assigning de facto coordination responsibilities to the merged ministry—which is itself an implementer of recovery projects—narrowed the planning perspective and reduced the comprehensiveness of the process. As a result, Ukraine still lacks a systemic and independent body responsible for strategic recovery planning.

A Model: The United Kingdom's Infrastructure Planning Architecture

In the United Kingdom, the [National Infrastructure Strategy](#) sets long-term priorities for decades ahead. It evolved from a simple project list into a comprehensive system based on regular assessments of national needs and financially realistic recommendations. The government is legally required to respond to these recommendations, ensuring a transparent dialogue between experts and policymakers.

In 2025, the UK consolidated this approach into a new body (NISTA), tasked with implementing a ten-year strategy, combining long-term vision with practical execution.

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Between Complexity and Opportunity

The Political Nature of Strategic Planning

Developing a national recovery strategy is not merely a matter of analytics or methodology. It is a political process in which the main challenge is the necessity of making decisions that only government authorities are empowered to take. This is why a strategy cannot be written solely by external consultants, but requires an internal mandate, political will, and interagency alignment. It is not a technical document; it is a framework for decision-making and accountability—one that obligates action.

One of the key barriers is the tension between short-term political cycles and long-term development needs. In democratic systems, the electoral horizon is typically four to five years, whereas infrastructure cycles span decades. Politics tends to demand quick, visible results—new roads, schools, and hospitals that can be shown to voters. Strategy, on the other hand, requires calm, consistency, and action in advance. This is why comprehensive strategies remain the exception rather than the rule in most countries. Successful examples require a strong institutional center capable of coordinating government actions, setting the rules, and overseeing implementation.

War creates an additional barrier: environmental volatility. Priorities shift constantly under the pressure of missile strikes—from logistics to energy, water supply, or heating system protection. But this does not mean that a strategy is unnecessary—on the contrary, it is precisely what allows a country to avoid chaotic responses and be prepared to reallocate resources. A strategy is not a to-do list of projects for tomorrow—it is a mechanism that answers essential questions: who makes the decisions, what are the sources of funding, what is the order of implementation, and who is responsible for delivering results.

Ukraine also lacks the institutional architecture necessary to develop such a strategy. There is no single body empowered to create and implement a long-term vision—one with the political weight, access to resources, and authority to coordinate across ministries. Without such a center, even the best strategy risks remaining on paper—without influence over real decisions or budgets.

Despite all these barriers, Ukraine finds itself in a unique situation. The political cycle is temporarily suspended, and core institutions—given the context of full-scale war—are functioning with relative stability. Now is the moment to lay the foundation for systemic recovery. If this opportunity is missed, the cost of inaction will be significantly higher in the future.

Recommendations

The Path to a Coherent Recovery Strategy

To turn Ukraine's recovery into a well-managed and results-driven process, it is essential to move beyond project-based thinking and adopt a strategic governance model. This requires the development of a comprehensive infrastructure policy—complete with priorities, institutions, rules, tools, and a portfolio of projects.

Develop a Comprehensive National Infrastructure Strategy

- The strategy must be more than a list of projects—it should be a unified document outlining priorities, infrastructure networks, modernization principles, and spatial development for the next 10–30 years.
- It must include all building blocks of the system: legislation, contract standards, methodologies, project pipelines, financing, management capacity, and monitoring.
- The strategy should reflect all three phases of recovery—wartime, postwar, and modernization—tailoring goals, instruments, and project types accordingly.
- Planning must begin immediately. The strategy is needed now to guide spending and reforms now, not just after the war ends.

Establish Clear Principles for Prioritization

- Project selection should be based on strategic value—not political pressure—considering long-term impact on the economy, society, security, and EU integration.
- The strategy must embed the principles of “build back better” and the green transition, aligning with climate commitments, strengthening resilience, and attracting green financing.
- A spatial approach should ensure regional balance, with a focus on the most affected areas—not just politically visible demands.

Create an Institutional Architecture for Strategic Governance

- A designated authority is needed to shape long-term infrastructure policy, coordinate ministries, manage the project portfolio, and serve as an analytical hub.
- In parallel with executive functions, an independent institution should be created to provide evidence-based long-term recommendations.
- To ensure political durability, a national consensus is needed—the strategy must become a tool that outlives changes in government.

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Develop and Publish a Project Pipeline

- Move from strategic vision to a real package of ready-to-implement infrastructure programs and projects for the next 5–10 years—not the other way around.
- Each project in the pipeline must be linked to strategic goals and include cost estimates, financing sources, responsible implementers, and timelines.

Adopt Modern Approaches to Project Implementation

- The focus should extend beyond new construction to include modernization and more efficient use of existing assets.
- Apply lifecycle project management methodologies—from planning to operation—and use digital tools such as building information modeling.
- Use standardized solutions, contract templates, and centralized expertise to accelerate implementation without compromising quality.

Establish a System for Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adjustment

- Regular reporting on project portfolio implementation should include clear key performance indicators, budget parameters, and identification of bottlenecks.
- Public monitoring must be part of the accountability framework for donors, businesses, and civil society.