EMPOWERING CITIZENS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN UKRAINE

U-LEAD with Europe contributes to the establishment of multilevel governance that is transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs of citizens of Ukraine.

PARTNER: Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine (MinRegion)
SUPPORTED BY: European Union and its member states Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Poland and Sweden
DURATION, BUDGET: 2016–2020, EUR 102 million

CURRENT STATUS OF THE DECENTRALISATION REFORM

The decentralisation of power in Ukraine began with the approval of the Concept of Reform of Local Governance and Territorial Organisation of Power according to the government’s order No 333-r dated 1 April 2014.

- 4,004 communities were merged into 874 amalgamated hromadas (AHs), including 24 cities of oblast significance (as of 10 December 2018)
- 705 of 874 AHs have elected bodies while 169 AHs are still awaiting their elections (as of 10 December 2018)
- The total number of AH residents is 9.1 million (25.8% of Ukraine’s population)
- The average number of residents in an AH is 10,442
- Own revenues of local budgets grew 2.8-fold from UAH 68.6 billion (2014) to UAH 192 billion (2017)
- 24 Local Government Development Centres (LGDCs) were established by U-LEAD
- 26 Administrative Service Centres (ASCs) were opened of up to 600 ASCs to be supported by U-LEAD

For the decentralisation and regional policy reform to be comprehensive, further legislative steps, supported by the donor community, are required. If adopted, they will allow speeding up and consolidating the ongoing processes and make the decentralisation reform even more successful.
Ukraine - Local Empowerment, Accountability and Development Programme

Contribution of U-LEAD

Local Government Development Centres (LGDCs) and Expert Pool

- U-LEAD with Europe works in all 24 oblasts of Ukraine. With the support of U-LEAD, LGDCs have been founded in all oblasts, including the vulnerable Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasst in the east of Ukraine.

- U-LEAD provides support in the fields of finance, decentralisation, regional development, communications, municipal services and spatial planning. Altogether, U-LEAD has developed a powerful network of long- and short-term experts, who also cater to the healthcare and education reforms. Through transparent and fair competitions, out of 3,200 applicants about 1,000 persons were interviewed and 289 experts selected for the expert pool.

Their mandate is to provide permanent support to local self-government and state bodies, primarily to AHs, through training, expert advice and consultations on the topics related to local self-government and regional development.

Central Reform Office (CRO)

- The CRO is the joint effort of MinRegion and the donor community to promote the implementation of the decentralisation reform. The CRO is the main provider of strategic and policy advice and support to LGDCs.

- The CRO is pivotal in ensuring strategic orientation of reform implementation through conveying the perspectives and political intentions of MinRegion and Ukrainian line ministries to U-LEAD and other donor programmes.

Capacity Development of Hromadas

- More than 4,500 events of varying formats (excluding on-site consultations and working meetings) were held until 10 December 2018 with over 115,000 participants, more than half of whom were female, from the national, regional and local levels.

- U-LEAD is developing 12 “Thematic Support Packages - Successful hromada: step-by-step” that offer a comprehensive set of training and support measures aimed specifically at officials of AHs on topics of highest demand.

- U-LEAD supported the development of a National Training Strategy on reforming the professional training system of civil servants and government officials in cooperation with the Council of Europe and the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service.

- A leadership network of female heads of AHs from all oblasts of Ukraine was formed to provide a platform for exchange and discussions, knowledge sharing and joint learning.

EU Commissioner Johannes Hahn visited U-LEAD with Europe in 2018.
U-LEAD aims at increasing the accessibility and efficiency of service delivery at the local level through supporting establishment of up to 600 Administrative Service Centres (ASC).

- During the Inception Phase (2016-2018) 26 ASCs were piloted, including the very first mobile Administrative Service Centre (ASC) in Ukraine and the most energy efficient ASC building in Ukraine. More than 400,000 residents of hromadas received access to better administrative services.

- The Roll Out Phase (2018-2020) aims at multiplying the results of the Inception Phase in up to 600 hromadas and small cities, and is carried out in four rounds, targeting 150 hromadas per round.

- In 2018, three rounds have been advertised, 403 applications from hromadas and small cities were received and 180 Terms of References for ASC creation and modernisation were developed.

U-LEAD support project EGOV4UKRAINE improves public service provision and makes the governance more transparent and effective by developing and implementing the governmental data exchange system (Trembita) and the information system for ASCs (Vulyk).

- Trembita is ready to integrate state databases and registers. Trembita has been developed, implemented and delivered to the State Agency for e-Government of Ukraine and certified by the State Service of Special Communications and Information Protection of Ukraine.

- Vulyk has been developed and piloted in 10 ASCs.

U-LEAD supports local and regional development through a variety of measures:

- 9 pilot projects were designed to contribute to local and regional development, including evidence-based decision-making, mobility, social services, civil protection systems, waste management, energy efficiency, spatial planning, rural-urban partnerships and capacity development of local deputies.

- Facilitation of targeted municipal partnerships through a Peer-to-peer-approach with the additional support of the European Committee of the Regions

- 80 AHs receive direct counselling and expertise on the creation of local development strategies.

- Four public-private partnerships are being supported in different regions.

Three projects were launched to support the establishment of agroecological clusters in the Odesa Oblast and a creative economy cluster in Kherson, as well as to develop business skills for secondary students and young entrepreneurs in Mariupol (Donetsk Oblast).

U-LEAD offers ongoing assistance to further develop and enhance national funding instruments like the State Fund for Regional Development (SFRD) and the Call for Proposals for regional development projects including from EU sector budget support. An analysis was performed in 2018 of current budgetary planning, allocations and disbursement practices to identify constraints of the SFRD. Consequently, legal amendments were developed and presented to the Ukrainian Parliament.
U-LEAD supports sector decentralisation in the areas of healthcare and education.

- A network of healthcare reform implementers was created to provide technical support to local self-governance bodies and primary healthcare facilities;
- 11 study tours to Poland were held for representatives of 13 oblasts on education management (in cooperation with SKL International and Solidarity Fund Poland). As a result, regional reform networks were established to spearhead the education reform implementation;
- Training and mentoring packages were developed for strategic planning in healthcare;
- Recommendations and trainings for effective regional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Councils were integrated into the national TVET concept adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science.

U-LEAD contributes to raising the awareness of Ukrainian citizens on the benefits of the decentralisation reform and the opportunities for citizen engagement due to strong local self-governance. U-LEAD with Europe has:

- Established a strong partnership with the Ukrainian Public broadcaster, which resulted in 62 radio broadcasts and 50 TV programmes rebroadcast by national and regional channels as well as social media, receiving about 1.1 million views;
- Entered cooperation with 15 civil society organisations that work on citizen engagement in about 370 AHs, e.g. joint planning workshops on community development strategies, participatory budgeting, public consultations, branding of AHs.
- Conducted 48 media trainings on the decentralisation reform and the reforms in the education and healthcare sectors, building up a network of around 720 print, online and radio journalists who work at the regional and local level all over Ukraine;
- Conducted four “Dehack for decentralisation” hackathons with 250 people, including software developers, graphic designers and representatives of AHs. Amongst other ideas, teams are still working on a website for analysing the effectiveness of using solar power in a hromada, a bracelet for gathering data for preventing heart attacks and an application for hromada citizens to pay their utility bills and have real-time conversations with local authorities.

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