GOVERNANCE AND DECENTRALIZATION

OVERVIEW

USAID promotes participatory, transparent, and accountable democracy in Ukraine through a bottom-up approach that focuses on strong local democratic governance. Local governance has become even more important as Ukraine’s communities respond to the humanitarian crisis caused by Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Amid Russia’s invasion, USAID is supporting emergency response efforts in 36 communities in eight oblasts in western, central, and southern Ukraine (Lviv, Volyn, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Chernihiv, Poltava and Zaporizhzhia), delivering supplies and providing technical assistance to help local governments deliver critical services to local residents and internally-displaced persons (IDPs).

At the local level, USAID assistance: (1) empowers government officials, civil society, and the private sector to work together toward effective and accountable local governance; (2) strengthens the legislative and constitutional framework for the decentralization of governance; (3) stimulates local economic development; (4) improves public service delivery; (5) promotes independent and transparent financial planning and management strategies; and (6) increases revenue and resources for Ukraine’s cities, towns, and villages.

Nationally, USAID also works with Ukraine’s parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, to expand public representation in the legislative process; expand the role of citizens in monitoring the work of the parliament; and strengthen the legislature’s role in providing independent oversight of the Presidential Administration, the Cabinet of Ministers, and other public institutions.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

● Continued decentralization and territorial reorganization of Ukraine.
● Strong local governance systems, processes, and institutions that are self-reliant, accountable to citizens, inclusive, and capable of providing effective public services.
● Local governments that effectively use their increased authority, resources, and responsibilities.
● A more open and representative parliament with enhanced capacities to make laws and oversee the executive branch.
● Increased citizen engagement in, and oversight of, local government and parliament.

OUR ACTIVITIES

USAID GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACTIVITY
USAID’s Governance and Local Accountability Activity (HOVERLA) is a five-year, $74 million activity to support the Government of Ukraine’s decentralization reforms. The activity helps create and strengthen local governance systems, processes, and institutions that are more self-reliant, inclusive, effective, and accountable to citizens. HOVERLA also supports the development of a strong legal framework for local governance to ensure an appropriate balance of authority and responsibility between local government institutions, primarily at the consolidated community level and on a more limited basis at the rayon (county) and national executive levels. The activity supports sectoral and fiscal decentralization.

Amid Russia’s invasion, HOVERLA is supporting emergency response efforts in 36 communities in eight oblasts in western, central, and southern Ukraine (Lviv, Volyn, Ternopil, Ivanо-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, Chernihiv, Poltava and Zaporizhzhia). The activity is procuring laptops, printers, Wi-Fi routers, power generators, firefighting equipment and uniforms, public warning systems, beds, kitchen and laundry equipment, and hygiene kits to help local governments deliver critical services to local residents and IDPs. In addition to providing emergency assistance, USAID continues to build the governance capacity of more than 500 communities in 14 oblasts, providing training on land management, spatial planning, human resource management, budgeting, and legislative reforms, including local regulations. USAID also continues to support the implementation of local service improvement and local economic development projects in partner communities.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE EAST

USAID’s Democratic Governance East (DG East) is a five-year, $57 million activity launched in 2018 to promote an inclusive civic identity, democratic civic values, and a more unified Ukraine by addressing the divisive impacts of Russia’s aggression on communities in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. In partnership with local governments and communities, DG East strengthens connections and trust between government and citizens and fosters citizen participation in community development and local decision-making, thus building support for reform processes, European integration, and Ukraine’s democratic transition. DG East has provided a range of capacity building assistance to 23 departments of social protection and administrative service centers in the government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. Supported communities have improved service delivery to citizens, with a focus on support for IDPs and persons crossing the line of contact. DG East also works with civic groups and activists to foster greater acceptance of a shared civic culture and stronger relations between citizens and government. Amid Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, DG East pivoted to providing emergency assistance to war-affected communities. Notably, the activity provided Bakhmut City Council in Donetsk Oblast with washing machines for its residence center, which has operated as a transit center for IDPs since 2014. The activity provided IT equipment to Zaporizhzhia City Council to help it better coordinate assistance to an influx of roughly 1,400 IDPs per day following Russia’s invasion.

DECENTRALIZATION OFFERING BETTER RESULTS AND EFFICIENCY

USAID’s Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) is a six-year, $67 million local government activity launched in 2016 to help 100 local communities build effective and responsible local governance processes that better serve citizens. The activity promotes the effective implementation of decentralization reform and territorial reorganization in all of Ukraine’s oblasts. During Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, the activity has supported local governments in six recently-liberated communities, three in Chernihiv oblast, two in Kherson oblast (which is partially liberated from Russia’s forces), and one in Kharkiv Oblast. All liberated communities have received assistance in the following areas: service delivery, local economic development, financial management, civic engagement, and emergency assistance. In terms of emergency assistance, two communities in Chernihiv oblast have received humanitarian assistance such as food kits and hygiene items. Three communities (two in Kherson oblast and one in Kharkiv oblast) have received Starlink satellite Internet terminals.

RADA NEXT GENERATION

USAID’s Rada Next Generation is a five-year, $10 million activity launched in 2021 to advance the “next generation” of reforms in the Verkhovna Rada. The activity supports the Rada to become a modern, effective institution advancing accountability and democratic development in Ukraine. The activity is focused on expanding public participation in legislative processes, including stronger engagement between MPs and their constituents. The activity also strengthens the Rada’s analytical and oversight capacity. Amid Russia’s invasion, RADA Next Generation has provided legal and expert advice to the Rada in the development of emergency legislation during wartime, and has supported a public information campaign to explain requirements under martial law. The activity also provided the Rada with 15 satellite Internet terminals to ensure its continued work during the war.