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 the population 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 commenced 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.

- 3,264 communities (1,518 in 2017) have been merged into 699 amalgamated hromadas (AHs)
- 665 out of 699 AHs have their elected bodies while 34 AHs are still awaiting their elections (as of 10 January 2018)
- The total number of AH residents is 6 million (14.3% of Ukraine’s population)
- The average number of residents in an AH is 8,760
- Own revenues of local budgets grew 2.8-fold from UAH 68.6 billion (2014) to UAH 192 billion (2017)
- 24 Regional Centres (RC) established by U-LEAD in 2017
- 25 Administrative Service Centres (ASC) and 1 mobile ASC started out 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

Establishment of Regional Centres and Expert Pool

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

- Each of the 24 RCs is staffed with permanent employees and provides support through up to six long-term experts 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 2,100 applicants 507 persons were interviewed and 234 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 built to be the main provider of strategic and policy advice and technical support to RCs. It 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.

- U-LEAD aims at accelerating the building-up of the CRO and is fielding sectoral coordinators to ensure that all programme activities move in line with Ukraine’s strategic priorities.

Launch of Administrative Service Centres

- Fifteen ASCs have been launched, and eleven more ASCs will be opened in early 2018 out of up to 600 ASCs to be supported by U-LEAD.

- The first Mobile ASC in Ukraine was launched to serve residents of remote towns and villages on a regular basis, with five routes covering 20 settlements weekly. It provides 80 types of services for more than 8,000 citizens in and around Slavuta community, including pensioners and people with disabilities.

- The mobile ASC is equipped with a terminal for cashless payments to credit revenues from administrative services to the community budget.

Ukraine’s first mobile ASC was presented on 4 December 2017 at the “2nd Forum of Amalgamated Hromadas” which was supported by U-LEAD and attended by President Petro Poroshenko, Parliament’s Chairperson Andriy Parubiy, Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman and 900 invited participants, mainly from AHs.
U-LEAD has supported:

- MinRegion to finalise the 2018–2020 Action Plan to implement the SSRD 2020.
- The identification of constraints in the utilisation of the State Fund for Regional Development (SFRD) and has proposed amendments to overcome these.
- Six public-private partnership (PPP) projects to improve municipal services. The selected initiatives are municipal-level PPP projects which have the potential to be rolled out nationwide.
- Capacity building measures to enhance investment attraction potential for national (UkraineInvest and Export Promotion Office) and subnational stakeholders (Oblast State Administrations and hromadas).

AHs with managing their increased budgets since the state support to AHs has grown 32-fold thanks to subventions and EU funds.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PACKAGE FOR NEW AHS

U-LEAD has developed a comprehensive capacity development package to support newly established AHs to build effective management systems. The pilot approach consists of four modules:

- Operational planning for AHs;
- Financial management;
- Human resource management;
- Municipal service provision.

The capacities are strengthened through workshops, “on-the-job” training, expert consultations, guidelines, manuals etc. supported by U-LEAD and its partners. In 2017, U-LEAD units and RCs contributed to capacity development in the framework of the reform by:

- Organising over 3,700 capacity building events (including trainings, study trips, and onsite consultations);
- Enabling over 88,000 people to directly benefit at national, regional, and local level from the trainings supported by U-LEAD.

SUPPORT TO SECTORAL DECENTRALISATION

U-LEAD is supporting two milestone sectoral reforms of healthcare and education. This support focuses mainly on capacity development for managing local healthcare and education systems and targets AH officials as well as healthcare professionals and educators.

Key activities in 2017:

- Contributed to the development of training manuals and guidelines for primary healthcare management and formed a pool of trainers.
- Organised study tours for representatives of 4 oblasts to Poland on education management.
- Developed intervention package on technical and vocational education (TVET) to establish evidence-based management of TVET in Ukraine as well as the institutionalisation of cooperation with employers.
In this field, U-LEAD has:

- Developed a network of regional journalists, currently representing 100 regional media regularly covering the decentralisation reform;
- Established a network of regional and local civil society organisations, currently implementing projects to promote citizens’ engagement in community development;
- Conducted a consultancy to compile feedback (in 22 oblasts on health and education reforms, with involvement of local professional groups, such as doctors, teachers, nurses) for ministries for policy formulation support;
- Supported the decentralisation.gov.ua website, providing the newsfeed from RCs and translating the whole contents of the website into English. This helps to exchange best practices of AHs between them throughout Ukraine and also informs donors and international stakeholders about the current affairs and news of the decentralisation reform.

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