During the period of April-June 2019, the DB Secretariat focused on supporting Minregion in further advancing the e-system of reporting by international technical assistance projects related to the implementation of the decentralization reform in Ukraine. The system is based on the DB’s Common Results Framework (CRF) and is to be tested in December 2019. Following the approval of the new decentralization reform Roadmap by the Government of Ukraine on January 23, 2019 (Decree N77), the CRF was aligned with the Minregion’s Operational Plan elaborated in the framework of the Roadmap.

A number of DB's WGs had their meetings during April-June 2019, dedicated to issues related to the reform implementation and their solutions.

2 LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT FINANCES AND BUDGETING

The WG proposed adjustments to the CRF. These were based on international projects and programs activities suggested in the support of the Minregion's Operational Plan priorities. The proposed adjustments were further supplemented by the Minregion, aligned with the decentralization reform priority tasks and reviewed with the WG members.

For a qualitative and efficient implementation of the tasks related to delineation of powers between executive authorities and local self-government bodies (p.16 of the Operational Plan), the Minregion has proposed the creation of several sub-groups that would elaborate their proposals for power redistribution in different sectors.

The group also discussed the issue of amalgamating communities around the cities of oblast significance, in particular, defining budgetary relations for this type of amalgamation. As a result, it was recommended to consider the budget of such a hromada as a budget of the city of oblast significance or as the budget of the united territorial community.

The WG also provided recommendations for modification of the software program “Financial sustainability calculator for perspective on sustainable hromadas” (in the framework of the on-going program upgrade by DESPRO, following the Minregion's request to align it with the 2019 Budget Code). Recommendations were also made for increasing access to the program by potential users (for info on the financial sustainability calculator see - https://decentralization.gov.ua/finance/calculator).
The WG members, jointly with the WG established under the auspices of OSCE on local elections, and in coordination with the CoE, elaborated a draft Concept for improving the local elections legislation to ensure proportional representation and relevant draft laws. The draft Concept was presented at the DB meeting on June 21, 2019 (for details see – https://donors.decentralization.gov.ua/donor_board_meetings). The WG also finalized its joint work on the methodological recommendations on designing the statutes of hromadas (https://storage.decentralization.gov.ua/uploads/library/file/391/Recommend.pdf).

The WG 4 has not convened in the last months. However, the outcomes of its previous work, the issue of regional policy and regional development, were discussed at the DB meeting on June 21, 2019, during which Minregion presented its vision on advancing regional policy reform that was elaborated in the consultations with the WG members over the last year (for details see – https://donors.decentralization.gov.ua/donor_board_meetings).

Alignment of approaches to establishing centers for merged provision of administrative and social services between Minregion, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Social Policy and international technical assistance projects was the main focus of the WG in the past months. Following a joint meeting with the participation of the three Ministries on 07.05.2019, the WG members concentrated on elaborating a Roadmap for integrating provision of administrative and social services (under the technical lead of the “ULEAD with Europe” project). It was recommended that: integrated services centers will in the future be established where neither administrative nor social centers yet exist; and that the Ministry of Social Policy should engage the other two Ministries in decision-making with regards to approval of new social services centers. It was also decided that the Ministry of Economy will recommend to hromadas the use of software that allows integration/compatibility of social and administrative services provision in the future.

A need to conduct web-consultations with oblasts, as well as ensure access to the Ministry of Social Policy’s registries, and establish collaboration with the Pension Fund, was also discussed. In addition, the WG discussed the issue of further advancement of the TSNAPs network, including a need to define strategies on filling in the “gaps” on the perspective national map of TSNAPs (this can be viewed at http://map.cnap.in.ua/): of 240 “gaps” identified only 60 are being currently addressed.

The WG is finalizing the Manual for hromadas on volunteer management in the public security domain, to be published by UNDP. The Manual and some recommendations of the WG regarding organization of decentralized public security services at the local level will be presented at the Forum planned for July 11-12, 2019 in Svyatogorsk city (Donetsk region).
6 COMMUNICATION, TRAINING SYSTEMS AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

6.2 Training System and Knowledge Management

The WG members exchanged detailed updated information on the plans of all key international assistance projects with regards to capacity-building of hromadas. They also took into account the Report of the training needs analysis of local self-government authorities of Ukraine presented by the Council of Europe (see the report at https://nads.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/tna_ukraine-2018-2019-final-report_ukr_f-1.pdf). The National Civil Service Agency also presented its new electronic platform, meant to match demand and supply for training of public servants and local self-government officials. All international assistance projects active in training local self-governments are invited to start loading relevant information onto the platform from September 2019. It was also decided to further systematically share all published and electronic materials related to local governments’ capacity-building at the Decentralization website.

Pending issues requiring attention

Among the remaining issues requiring donors and the Minregions’ discussion and decisions are:

- Making decision by donors (at strategic and operational levels) regarding the possibility of supporting the implementation of the section of the Minregions’ Operational plan related to sectoral decentralization in coordination with other relevant Ministries, which will have implications for further functioning of the sectoral WGs under the auspices of the DB.

- Review by donors and Minregion of the WGs coordination arrangements (the issue of WG coordinators) and the implications of the recent transformation of the Central Reform Office for the Minregion’s capacity to manage and coordinate the reform.