

Swiss-Ukrainian project

DESPRO

Decentralization Support in Ukraine



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Swiss Confederation

skat Swiss Resource Centre and
Consultancies for Development

14 YEARS OF DESPRO FOR UKRAINE SUCCESS STORY OF IMPLEMENTING THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT REFORM

OVERALL PROJECT TIMELINE



SHORT HISTORY OF THE PROJECT & CONTEXT

The DESPRO project began in 2007, in the 2nd year of the “Orange Revolution” Government. At that time, Ukraine had clearly committed itself to European integration and to increasing the effectiveness of its governance system to comply with the European Charter of Local Self-Government. Taking this window of opportunity, DESPRO designed an intervention strategy allowing it to simultaneously work at national, regional and local levels by:

preparing national framework conditions for the reform through technical assistance to the Government in designing reform concepts and basic legislation

demonstrating the benefits of a decentralised approach in one focus sector: rural water supply (the most critical service at the time for the rural population)

Despite extensive contributions into mobilising the expert community and the elaboration of national frameworks, the approved reform was not actually launched. This was due to the Government’s fear of embarking upon such a highly sensitive reform towards the end of its term, and risking challenging the political status quo on the eve of 2010 elections.

In 2010–2014 DESPRO focused on preparing the grassroots by demonstrating the practical benefits of decentralised service provision and generating demand for reform from below. Through a combination of local and district governments' capacity-building, community mobilisation and direct investments, the project managed to introduce more effective service provision models in partner regions. To prove the benefits of scaled service delivery, shared responsibility and common use of resources, DESPRO piloted inter-

municipal cooperation models in solid waste management.

The situation had drastically changed in 2014: the Euromaidan protest resulted in a dramatic political shift towards pro-EU integration leadership, Russia annexed Crimea, and the ongoing armed conflict began in the east of Ukraine. At the time of the crisis, the new Government took decisive steps by signing the Association Agreement with the European Union and launching a number of key national reforms, including the decentralisation reform.



In the process of designing and building public consensus around the local self-governance reform, the Government drew heavily on DESPRO technical assistance. On the national level, DESPRO supported communication of the reform, policy dialogue, and coordination of the platform between the Government of Ukraine and multiple international development partners. DESPRO had also consolidated experience and knowledge generated at sub-national level in the area of decentralised planning, budgeting and public service provision, produced a number of valuable learning products and tested several support service lines for

local and sub-national governments and public service agencies.

As the reform of local self-government progressed, the demand for ensuring sustainability of community development and making full use of decentralization, grew. DESPRO used this opportunity to scale up its technical support and reach out nationally.

Through strategic partnerships with local self-government associations and innovative knowledge dissemination and management tools, DESPRO became a well-established supporter to local and regional governments, and decentralised public service providers in Ukraine.



In 2020, in the sixth year of decentralization, partly thanks to the intensive communication support, a new administrative-territorial system was finally adopted in Ukraine. The government designated new administrative centers and approved the territories of 1,469 communities (instead of the previous 12,000). At the same time, the Parliament liquidated 450 old rayons (second-tier local government) and formed 136 new ones. Thus, Ukraine has created a territorial basis for effective territorial management.



Nicole Ruder,
Head of Cooperation,
Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine

I think to start on with a little secret because Switzerland is often quoted as an example when we talk about decentralization. But Switzerland never actually decentralized. We have never been centralized. We do know quite a bit how to run on a decentralized country. We do not know very much how to decentralize, how to actually get there.

What we are convinced of is that running a country in a decentralized way, having local participation, local government is really a recipe for stability, for social cohesion, for citizens' engagement. And this is also motivated us to help Ukraine, to run this project with DESPRO, to help Ukraine to become a decentralized country.

When we talk about DESPRO and the success of this project, I believe it is much due to the fact that DESPRO managed to link real experiences, real lessons learnt from individual hromadas, from individual situations, all the way up to national legislation, national regulation. Because it is only when your national laws and regulations are grounded on reality, pragmatic experience from the field, they can be truly helpful on a path towards a decentralized country.

So, we are very proud of what we have achieved, what DESPRO has achieved, but mostly of what Ukraine has achieved because in all its forms decentralization is a reform that is owned and run by Ukraine. We can help a longer way a little bit and we are happy to do so. But in the end it is Ukraine's journey.

POLICY SUPPORT FOR THE REFORM OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE



the Order
"On Approval of
the Concept of Local
Self Government Reform"
(2009)



the Order
"On Approval of
the Measures for
Implementation of
the Concept of Local
Self-Government
Reform" (2009), leading
to the development
of the draft laws:



"On Administrative and
Territorial Structure",
"On Local
Self- Governance",
"On Local State
Administrations", as well
as the required draft
amendments to the
Constitution of Ukraine

Under the shifting political environment in Ukraine, the DESPRO project supported all stages of the local self-government reform preparation and implementation. Since 2007, DESPRO supported development of the national framework of decentralization, as well as helped create conditions for the reform through technical assistance to the Government in designing reform concepts and basic legislation. In particular, DESPRO contributed to development of a number of documents which were approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:



the Order
"On approval of the
Concept for forming
the system of local
self-government
officials and
deputies of local
councils training"



the Order
"On approval
of the plan for the
period up to 2011
on implementation
of the Concept for
forming the system of
local self-government
officials and deputies
of local councils
training"



the Order
"On approval of the
Concept for forming
the system of local
self-government
officials and deputies
of local councils
training"

During the reforms' stagnation period in 2010-2014, the DESPRO project established and secured functioning of the Expert Board under the project, incl. the thematic working groups: "On Amendments to the Constitution", "On Administrative Territorial Order", and "On Fiscal Decentralization". The demand for the reform was built from bottom-up by introducing effective service provision models, local and district governments' capacity building on public service provision, raising awareness and competencies of various stakeholders on LSG reform implementation, introducing knowledge management for effective accumulation and transfer of knowledge for civil servants and LSG representatives.

Since 2011, the DESPRO project started engaging both national and Swiss expertise in developing and improving the necessary legislation, as well as supporting public discussions on the following draft laws and concepts:



the draft Law
"On Amalgamation
of Territorial Communities"



the draft Concept
"On Local Self-Government
Reform"



the draft Law "On Local
Referenda"



the 2020 State Strategy
for Regional Development

On April 1st, 2014, the "Concept of Reforming Local Self-Governance and Territorial Organisation of Power" was approved, which has put the start to the active stage of decentralization in Ukraine. DESPRO took an active part in developing the necessary legislation for decentralisation reform as well as in promoting wide public discussions and awareness raising. As a result, the legislative base on administrative and territorial set-up



started to be formed with the adoption of a package of laws, namely, the Laws of Ukraine “On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities” and “On the State Regional Policy Fundamentals”.

The intervention strategy, taken by the DESPRO project at this stage revolved around consolidating inputs, made previously. In particular, the project capitalized on its experience and commitments to decentralization, becoming the Government’s trusted partner. Since the establishment of the first 159 voluntarily amalgamated territorial communities, DESPRO has been providing advice and training to local governments on various local governance and municipal management issues. At a time of growing demand for ensuring sustainability of amalgamated communities and making full use of political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation, DESPRO responded by developing new products allowing communities to plan their

future in a sustainable manner (such as the online Budget Calculator which provides an overview of the financial resources of a community before and after amalgamation). As a result, local self-government political autonomy was enhanced, local revenue shares increased and investments in public service improvements were made.

At the national level, although no longer the largest local governance program in Ukraine, DESPRO, due to its standing commitment, flexible operating and decision-making procedures, and ability to mobilise various stakeholders, remained a close partner of the Government. It was requested to invest in most strategic and crucial aspects of the decentralization reform management – communication of the reform, policy dialogue, and coordination of the platform between the Government of Ukraine and multiple development partners.





DESPRO supported national partners in conducting open discussions on finalizing the mapping of communities' amalgamation in Ukraine as well as

on the ATCs capability criteria. The public debates "Why communities should amalgamate" brought together proponents and opponents of the reform and became influential communication platforms during the stage of voluntary amalgamation of communities.

Upon request of Minregion, DESPRO joined the national partners in organizing 3 national Forums of Local Self-Governance for up to 1000 participants each, aimed at supporting national dialogue on decentralization, discussing important topics and top priorities with the leadership of the country.

In 2017-2019, continuing tight cooperation with national stakeholders in relevant fields DESPRO contributed to drafting more policy and regulatory documents, such as



the policy on municipal waste (as a chapter of the Framework Law "On Waste Management"),



Oversight (control) of Decisions Made by Local Governments",



the "Regulations on Development and Approval of Regional Waste Management Plans" and "Methodological Recommendations on the Development of Regional Waste Management Plans",



the draft Law "On the Statutes of Territorial Communities",



the draft Law "On LSG Service",



the amendments to the already adopted Law "On LSG" (in terms of statutes of local governments), and



the draft Law "On Funds of Local Bonds", the draft Law "On State



the draft Law "On Prefects".

In 2020, in the sixth year of decentralization, a new administrative-territorial system was finally adopted in Ukraine. The government designated new administrative centers and approved the territories of 1,469 communities (instead of the previous 12,000). At the same time, the Parliament liquidated 450 old rayons (second-tier local government) and formed 136 new ones. Thus, Ukraine has created a territorial basis for effective territorial management.



Viacheslav Nehoda,
Deputy Minister of Communities'
and Territories' Development

DESPRO has become an integral part of the era of qualitative transformations in Ukraine.

DESPRO was the first to provide expert support in the preparation of the fundamental legislation on decentralization. It was the first to unhesitatingly take responsibility for implementing decentralization tasks in Ukraine. In general, professionalism, determination, efficiency, responsibility are all synonyms of DESPRO. This project is a prime example of a true team of leaders.

I agree with Ms. Nicole Ruder, Director of the Swiss Cooperation Office, that decentralization is Ukraine's journey. Yes, the ways and directions of this trip are chosen only by Ukraine. And we are very grateful that one of the most difficult periods of our trip was shared with us by the Swiss-Ukrainian Decentralization Support Project DESPRO.

The project has completed its activities in Ukraine, but there are still people who were its creators, its intellect and its voice. Each of them personally and all of them together did the over achievable and the impossible, so that today, on the thirtieth anniversary of the restoration of its independence, Ukraine can confidently, without looking back, follow the paved paths of developed European countries, building its own road to success.

Ukraine appreciates the work of the DESPRO team and thanks for its endurance, perseverance and faith in the country!

The journey is not over... So, see you soon!

COMMUNICATION SUPPORT OF THE REFORM OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

Communication support to a reform as complex as the reform of local self-government, is required at each stage: preparation and development of the legislative basis of the reform, implementation of the reform, as well as anchoring and disseminating successes of the reform. The lack of communication support at any of these stages may result in the reform's uncontrollable retreat.

DESPRO was among the first international assistance projects to start the communication of the LSG reform under the leadership of the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development and the Secretariat



of the Cabinet of Ministers, with other development partners.

Since 2015, the Communication Task Force within the Central Office of Reforms directly worked on the LSG reform promotion. To intensify the reform implementation, the activities of the Communication Task Force focused on building acceptance of the proposed reform by the general public and specific target groups (e.g. representatives of local self-government, non-governmental and

civil society organizations) by developing and implementing the LSG reform communication strategy.

The strategic outline for the communication of the LSG reform is continuously provided by the relevant donor coordination-working group. The working group # 6.1. on Communication, set up as part of the Donor Board on decentralization reform, is coordinated by DESPRO jointly with the Ministry of

The screenshot displays the website 'Децентралізація' (Decentralization) with the tagline 'ДАЄ МОЖЛИВОСТІ' (GIVES OPPORTUNITIES). The header includes navigation links for 'МІЖНАРОДНА СПІВПРАЦЯ', 'ЗАКОНОДАВСТВО', 'КАЛЕНДАР', 'БІБЛІОТЕКА', 'ФОТОГАЛЕРЕЯ', 'ЕКСПЕРТИ', and social media icons. A search bar and a language selector (English) are also present.

The main navigation menu includes: 'ПРО РЕФОРМУ', 'НОВИНИ', 'ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНІ ГРОМАДИ', 'НОВІ РАЙОНИ', 'ОБЛАСТІ', 'НОВИЙ АТУ', and 'КАТАЛОГ УСПІШНИХ ПРАКТИК'. A secondary menu lists: 'ЗМІНИ ДО ЗАКОНОДАВСТВА', 'СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВО ГРОМАД', 'СТАРОСТА', 'СОЦІАЛЬНІ ПОСЛУГИ', 'ЦНАП', 'ФІНАНСИ', 'ОСВІТА', 'МЕДИЦИНА', and 'ЩЕ МЕНШЕ'.

The 'Усі новини' (All news) section on the left lists several articles with dates and brief descriptions:

- 19.05.16.32: Спільно до нових послуг: керівництво з впровадження інтегрованих соціальних послуг для сімей з дітьми в громадах
- 19.05.15.59: У Гребінківській громаді відкрили Центр надання адміністративних послуг (Кієвська область, Програма U-LEAD)
- 19.05.10.25: Яким чином можна використовувати майно ліквідованих закладів дошкільної освіти
- 19.05.10.21: Відміна ДПА, нуш в 5-9 класах та нове шкільне харчування. Освітній маркер №8
- 19.05.10.16: Про закупівлю продуктів харчування на Prozorro Market та особливості роботи з е-каталогом розкажуть на вебінарі 20 травня
- 19.05.09.56: Менторська програма для жінок-лідерок місцевого самоврядування: розпочався набір учасниць (Проект DESPRO)
- 19.05.19.09: В Україні запроцює проект «ГОВЕРЛА» на підтримку розвитку громад
- 18.05.15.55: Як сприяти розвитку місцевого бізнесу – досвід данської громади
- 18.05.11.47: У Баранінській громаді відкрили новий ЦНАП

The central section features a large image of a meeting with the caption: 'В Україні запроцює проект «ГОВЕРЛА» на підтримку розвитку громад' (18 травня 2021).

Below this is a portrait of a man with the caption: 'Для Парламенту важливим залишається питання завершення реформи децентралізації, - Дмитро Разумков' (11 травня 2021).

At the bottom of the central section is a photo of a large assembly hall with the caption: 'У Баранінській громаді відкрили новий ЦНАП'.

The 'КОЛОНКИ' (Columns) section on the right includes:

- Ольга Корцова: Формула префекта
- Дмитро Сімак: Шукати інвестиції, любити пресу і не ремонтувати все під'ярд
- Яніна Карюк: Навіщо треба впорядкувати розміри плати за адмінпослуги: коротко про законопроект №4380

Additional elements include a 'Портал спроможності територіальних громад' (Territorial Communities Competence Portal) and a 'НОВИЙ АТУ' (New Territorial Communities) interactive map.

Communities and Territories Development. The working group involves representatives of the Ministry, international assistance projects working on local self-governance reform in Ukraine, as well as associations of local self-governance bodies, NGOs and experts.

To ensure better visibility of the reform, DESPRO supervised the development of the logo, identity, and brand book of the reform related materials. Most materials covering the reform feature the Decentralization logo. In 2015, the Government's informational web portal decentralization.gov.ua was developed and launched with the support of DESPRO. It has since become the main source of information on the reform for target

audiences and general public all around Ukraine. The core of the audience is representatives of local self-government, state bodies and non-governmental organizations.

In cooperation with national partners and other international assistance projects, DESPRO organized national events on decentralization reform. 3 LSG Forums have been organized since 2016, with around 1000 participants each time. The Forums featured addresses by the President, the Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Parliament, and representatives of international partners of Ukraine. Each year, the most important topics of LSG are discussed, and priorities for the following year are determined.

To reach beneficiaries of the reform regionally and locally, DESPRO organized regional public events aimed at discussing the most important and sensitive aspects of the LSG reform:

Debates on communities' amalgamation

Panel discussions

Study visits/experience exchanges for the communities

Press tours for media representatives to the successful communities to demonstrate the benefits of the reform

To provide reliable content for numerous communication mediums, DESPRO involved a pool of key national experts who were spokespeople on the reform

and clarified all its nuances to the public and professional audiences. More than 40 specialists in different areas of expertise of local self-governance are

trained speakers on decentralization for Ukrainian media. These include both independent experts, and representatives of government and LSG bodies.

To inform the public on the details of the decentralization reform, a series of visual materials were produced and disseminated by the DESPRO team. Posters and info-educational leaflets were disseminated among village councils and public spaces of local self-government. DESPRO has also produced more than a 100 information and educational videos, covering various reform-related topics, which have been viewed by millions of Ukrainians.

In 2020, to assist the Government in overcoming the effects of COVID-19 and to support the smooth implementation of the reform during lockdown, DESPRO supported over 50 online meetings of the Government, the Ministry of Communities and Territories Development, the



Parliament, representatives of the regional and local authorities.

DESPRO's support to the communication of the LSG reform led to Ukrainians' attitude towards the reform shifting to positive, and decentralization being widely discussed at all governance levels. This played a crucial role during the stage of voluntary amalgamation of communities, which created the basis for reforming the administrative-territorial set-up of the country in 2020, and made the reform effective and irreversible.





Florian Klingel,

CEO, Skat – Swiss Resource Centre and Consultancies for Development

Skat Consulting and its DESPRO team are looking back on 14 extremely eventful years. Since the project inception in 2007, the country went through many difficult stages such as the Euromaidan in 2013, the annexation of Crimea (one of the oldest partner regions of the project, which was lost) and since 2014 the never-ending conflict in the East. The past years were also characterised by dramatic political changes and huge economic challenges. It has been a difficult time for Ukrainian citizens, who have been waiting for more democracy, decentralisation and the necessary reforms.

However, despite of all these challenges DESPRO persistently pursued its aim to contribute to the decentralisation reform process at national, regional and local level. It was a demanding but rewarding journey and the achievements can be seen now, particularly regarding the demonstration of different models of decentralised service provision in numerous communities through social mobilisation and active participation of partners at the local and regional levels.

We are very proud of DESPRO's work in supporting the efforts of the Ukrainian government in the decentralisation reform process, which has empowered Ukrainian citizens to take control of the issues that matter to them locally.

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

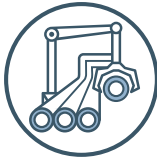
At the start of the DESPRO project in 2007, many of Ukrainian rural citizens' right to water and sanitation was compromised. The water sector in rural areas was dealing with damaged and aged networks, decreased or non-existing funds for water supply systems' operation and maintenance, and overall lack of local capacities.

DESPRO and Skat developed a community-based model for water supply provision, operation and maintenance, which has been implemented in more than 100 rural communities in 5 partner regions across Ukraine. Different management models have been used for implementation, with the most promising model being the service cooperative.

The defining features of DESPRO approach were: application of social mobilization and "social cases",

integration of direct support into existing power bodies, and substantial capacity development for representatives of local self-government and communal enterprises.

This approach proved beneficial to growing bottom-up demand for local self-government reform in Ukraine by showing the restrictions of post-soviet governance style in water sector. Still, 98,5% of the projects were successful, and over 87'500 citizens gains access to water supply, and over 500 local authority officers, community leaders, representatives of district and regional authorities developed capacities and underwent extensive training. The implemented water projects had many indirect positive outcomes: creation of new jobs, "activation" of communities and local authorities, leading to independent implementation of socially important initiatives.



137 projects implemented



over 87'500 beneficiaries

98.5%

project functionality rate

80-90%

customer satisfaction with the quality of water supply service provision



the service cooperative as a legal form of service provider was developed and introduced by DESPRO for the first time in Ukraine



the support and administering of local projects was fully institutionalized at sub-regional and regional level



allocation of additional financial resources in the regional and local budgets for water-related projects made possible

3 out of 6

regions replicated the DESPRO support modalities and procedures into the regional budget grant programmes for local communities

250

new jobs created, mostly through new official job positions in newly established CBOs acting as water supply service providers

54%

average total contribution by the community households to the water supply project

30%

max contribution by the DESPRO project to each water supply project

16%

co-funding provided from budgets (local, district, regional)

500

local authority officers, community leaders, representatives of district and regional authorities developed their capacities in course of project implementation



for a great number of partner communities, the implementation of a water project with DESPRO became a new reality of local development boosting ambition for more local project



series of manual, practical guides, videos, and an online training course have made this specific knowledge available for dozens of thousands of stakeholders



Decentralization in Ukraine was launched in 2014, transferring the power and resources from the state to the local self-government. From then onwards,

DESPRO has been focusing on “local government-led projects”, providing direct support to local self-government bodies to deliver WSS services.

The DESPRO support to communities since 2014 consisted of two interrelated components:

Participatory WSS sector planning

Improving the performance of WSS service operators (communal enterprises)

The following activities characterize the approach used: comprehensive audit of the system, participatory sector planning, communal enterprise development

plan, introduction of QGIS-based asset management system, performance based co-financing of hard- and software, training, coaching and monitoring.

32`000

beneficiaries received access to water and sanitation

the DESPRO programmatic approach allowed local self-governments and communal enterprises to adequately plan the development of the sector for the whole community over a 4-year period

the development of WSS in partner communities was integrated into local policies and procedures, also considering issues of strategic development for the relevant community

50%

of the project costs were mobilized by communities

Cooperation with local governments means a new step for public service provision projects. With DESPRO expert support and opportunities provided by the reform of local self-government, the window of opportunity is open for sustainable development of WSS in Ukrainian communities. In particular, the programmatic approach to WSS sector development implemented by DESPRO in partner communities allowed local self-governments and communal enterprises to plan adequately the development of the sector for the whole community over a 4-year period, including the allocation of financial resources at mid-term basis. The development of WSS in partner

173`000

residents benefited from improved WSS services

the introduction and installation of an asset management system using QGIS software allowed mapping of the status of the WSS network and plan for capital and operational maintenance and further development

a series of manuals, practical guides, videos have made this specific knowledge available for thousands of other local government and WSS professionals, reaching thousands of practitioners

100

people successfully reinforced capacities

communities was integrated into local policies and procedures, considering also issues of strategic development for the relevant community.





Jürg Christen,
CEO Skat Consulting Ltd and DESPRO
Project Director (2006-January 2020)

In this brochure we are looking back on almost 15 years of DESPRO life during which the project went through an extremely important and most challenging time in recent Ukrainian history.

However, despite the numerous challenges we persistently pursued our aim to contribute to the initiated reform process. It was a demanding but ultimately rewarding journey we have been undertaking in partnership with communities and authorities at all levels.

Since the beginning of the project we have made good progress in demonstrating the benefits of different models of decentralised services provision. Thanks to this a large number of communities and small towns got access to improved water supply, sanitation and solid waste management services, and active replication can be observed.

At the national level DESPRO actively participated in the decentralisation process through various measures, channels and strategic partnerships which are described in this brochure.

Highlights in the work during my time as Project Director and thematic backstopper of the project were the visits to numerous project sites in our partner communities and the interaction with actors at all levels. Although all partner communities, rayons and regions are unique, all of them had something in common: they were open towards the concept of decentralisation. All of them were eager to learn about new approaches and ready to take over responsibility and contribute within their financial and physical possibilities. These joint efforts substantially contributed to social cohesion and the improvement of the living conditions in communities.

The achievements at the local and regional levels were the basis and the ingredients for DESPRO to support meaningful and targeted interventions at the national level which brought about changes which have been acknowledged and appreciated by all of our partners.

I sincerely hope that the wealth of lessons learned and the experience gained by the project and its competent team will be further utilised in future projects and interventions.

I am proud and thankful to have been part of this great project from the very outset and wish to thank all our partners at local, regional and national levels for their excellent cooperation. Particular thanks go to our longstanding funding agency SDC for its continuous support and trust. But most importantly I wish to thank my project team for the tireless efforts and dedication.



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT





Since 2010, DESPRO provides expert and consultative support to improving waste management in partner regions. Before the active phase of the local self-government reform in 2014, DESPRO supported the initiatives of selected communities in improving waste management based on intermunicipal cooperation in Tulchin (Vinnytsya region),

and at later stage in 2 other regions of Ukraine, more specifically in Novi Sanzhary (Poltava) and Hlukhiv (Sumy) districts.

DESPRO takes a holistic approach to the “waste problem” by applying the concept of Integrated Solid Waste Management. The waste management planning is organized as a stepwise process: the results of the first stage are taken as the basis for planning the next stage. As a result of the planning process, an Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy is designed for a given territory. Sustainability and efficiency are the main features of this approach.

Since 2010, DESPRO has taken the 3-level intervention approach:



On the community level, DESPRO provides expert and consultative support for communities in strategic planning for waste management, with special focus on inter-municipal cooperation

On the regional level, the project has supported the development of the Regional Waste Management Plan for Vinnytsia region in cooperation with Minregion and Minecology

On the national level, DESPRO provided expert and consultative support for line Ministries on the development of the draft Framework Waste Law, the sectoral decree by the Ministry of Ecology on regional waste management planning, and the sectoral decrees by the Ministry of Regional Development in the framework of the 2030 National Strategy of Waste Management in Ukraine.

The integration of the DESPRO-supported projects into local and sub-regional level policies made it possible to allocate additional financial resources to the relevant budgets for waste management-related projects. At the same time, the results achieved at the local level have made it possible to provide a significant contribution to the waste management

sector at the level of national policy. The Guidelines on regional waste management planning elaborated by DESPRO and tested in Vinnytsia region, endorsed by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural resources in 2019 now forms the basis for further regional waste management planning in the whole country.



FINANCIAL TOOLS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT



As the existing forms of local borrowing in Ukraine are not adequate to meet the current requirements and needs of communities in a long-term financing of infrastructure, DESPRO has taken action to promote local government borrowing tools among both the stakeholders and the public, to influence the regulatory environment development in this area. Since 2017, DESPRO initiated the creation

of the Stakeholder Platform involving the key players in the local borrowing sector, issued 5 educational and practical publications enabling local governments to make extensive use of municipal bonds, disseminated the methodology during offline and online events, and developed the curriculum for the “Financing Local Investment Projects” course jointly with the National Economic University of Kyiv.



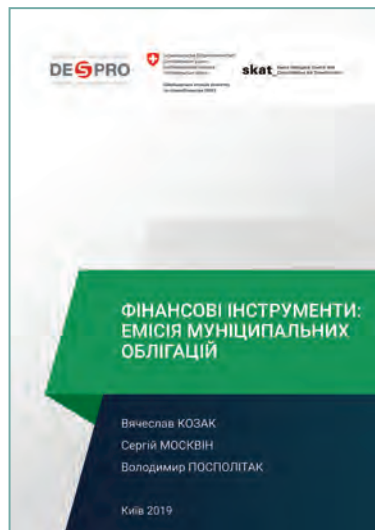
Draft Law **“On Bonds of Local Development Funds”**



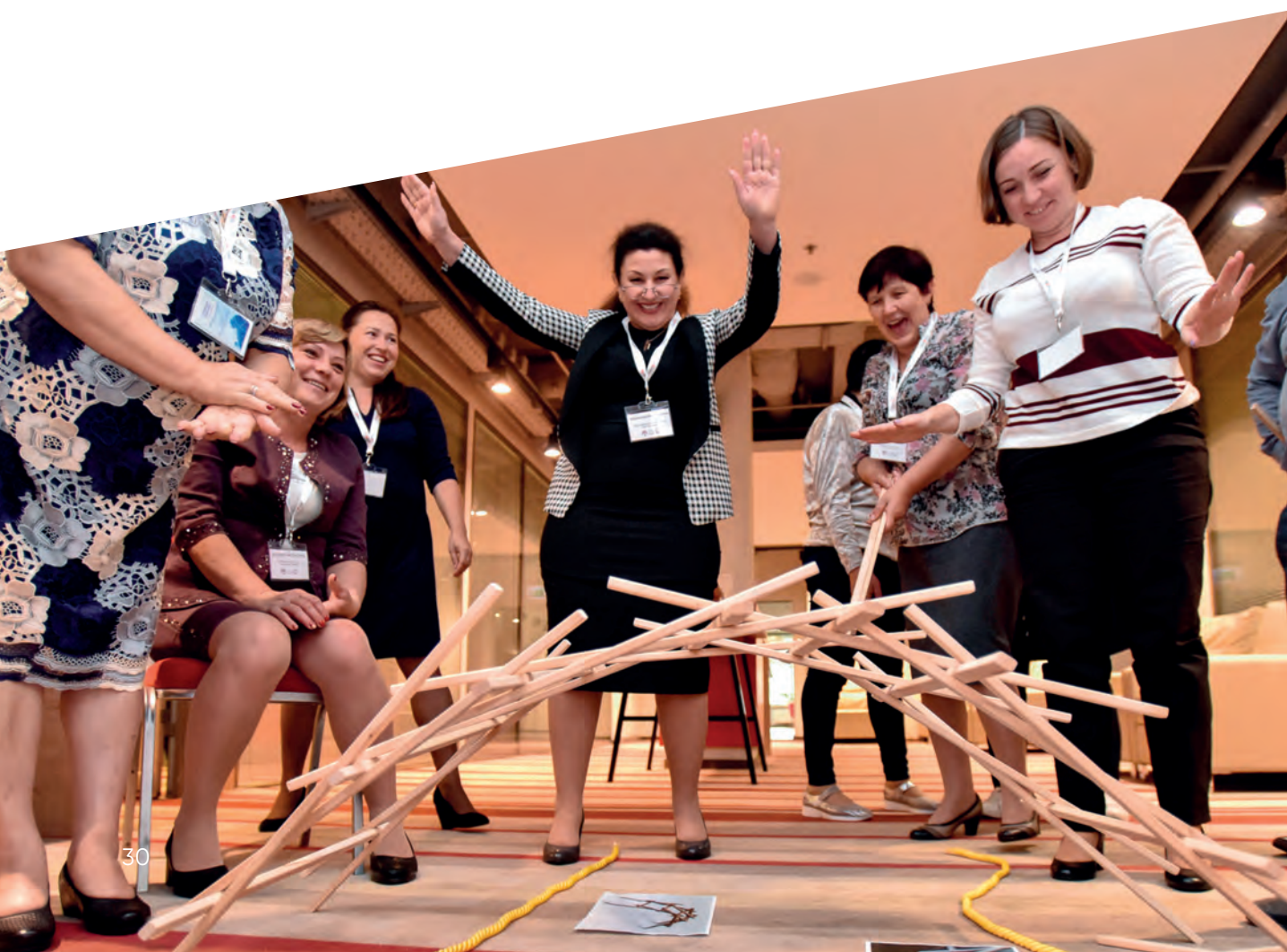
amendments to the Law of Ukraine **“On Securities and Stock Market”**, the introduction of which will accelerate the development of local borrowings to finance infrastructure projects in Ukraine



amendments to the Law “On Securities and Stock Market”, which will be reformatted into the Law on **Capital Markets and Organized Commodity Markets**, which opens up new opportunities for using the Local Development Funds instrument and others



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING



DESPRO COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

is a local self-governance sector-specific online resource for local authorities' representatives, community leaders from all over Ukraine.



Over 13'000 of its participants share a common purpose of using problem solving approach in local development, knowledge creation and sharing in local self-government, exchanging best practices in project management, and introducing innovation in economic growth.



The Community of Practice was launched in 2012 with a Project Management course which was held continuously since then and proved to be the most successful. It's well-known for the constantly updated syllabus and its practical approach. During the course, participants develop and present project concepts which then go through the peer-reviews. Since 2012, 10 all-Ukrainian and a number of regional Project Management e-courses have taken place. Over 3,000 participants have successfully completed the training programme so far, and over 1,000 project

concepts were developed and went through peer review.

Numerous other courses and information resources of various formats were implemented at the Community of Practice, covering topics such as local budgets, anti-corruption, decentralization, human resources management in addition to the DESPRO's key thematic areas such as rural water supply and solid waste management.

The substantial experience of Community of Practice proved useful and reliable during continuous and tight cooperation of DESPRO and the National Agency of Ukraine for Civil Service. The number of e-courses, developed as part of this cooperation, were not only useful for their content, but also provided course credit in academic programs for civil servants. This has brought Community of Practice to the new level: the effective and timely knowledge management e-service was integrated in existing state educational programs for civil servants.

DESPRO LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE SCHOOL (LSG SCHOOL)

was developed and launched in 2014 as a response to tremendous changes following the start of decentralization in Ukraine. Local self-government representatives required assistance in strengthening their capacities on the specificities of the reform, new legislation, responsibilities and functions.



DESPRO
LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE
SCHOOL



Since 2014, the LSG School has developed and implemented 55 training modules on strategic planning, marketing of territories, local economic development, local financial resources and investments attraction, interpersonal and external communications, community-building and social cohesion, land regulations and spatial planning, branding of territories and e-governance, intermunicipal cooperation and participatory decision-making.





Since 2014, DESPRO has conducted 7 LSG Schools with 445 graduates (271 women and 174 men), representing 89 amalgamated communities, and 110 certified trainers (58 women and 52 men). Up to 15 professional trainers have been selected and constantly engaged into the School since its launch. In 2021, to respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 restrictions, the LSG School was held on the gamified online platform zMEET. The new format and dedication to the LSG School's high standards of capacity development attracted over 150 participants for 2 study program cycles.

The defining feature of the LSG School is its strong focus on Community Development Strategies. Availability of a Community Development Strategy of the participating community is an important criteria during the selection process. As a result of participating in the DESPRO LSG School, community teams have their

strategies updated to make them realistic, feasible, up-to-date, locally bound and applicable in the concrete community.

DESPRO LSG School is known for its innovative approaches and adaptability to the ever-changing circumstances of local self-governance under the reform. Among the adaptations made throughout the years were: inclusion of "Young Professionals" group and study program for LSG representatives under 35 y.o., additional "Training of Trainers" for best graduates of LSG School to be certified as trainers and continue teaching at LSG School and elsewhere, and also introduction of the "case" method for development projects by the participating communities.

GENDER EQUALITY IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

WOMEN-LEADERS IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

Equal participation of women and men in decision making plays a significant role in the process of reforming local self-government and decentralization in Ukraine. In accordance with the vision of the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development, the issue of gender equality is transversal for the DESPRO project. Since 2018, DESPRO develops a network of women-leaders to increase the leadership potential of women in local self-government, to drive change at the local level and support sustainable regional development in Ukraine.

DESPRO launched the support program for female local self-government leaders in 2018. Over the following 2 years, three workshops for 76 women (representatives of amalgamated territorial communities) were conducted. Within the framework of the workshops, the participants learned effective communicative techniques, developed their team work skills, and learned the basis of negotiation practices with a specific emphasis on introducing changes at the local level. In 2020, the support program went online and focused on women running in the the local elections, held in October.

At the same time, to meet the demand to understand gender aspects better and in a more differentiated way, and facilitate gender equality at the local level, DESPRO activities aimed at awareness

raising among male and female local self-government representatives on gender while creating public services in their communities. A special online course on gender equality in local self-government was developed and launched by the DESPRO Community of Practice.

The support of gender equality in local self-government by DESPRO is accompanied by a number of publications and research papers which guide the project activities and provide the data and analytics needed for the growth of women decision making in local governance. In total, 5 publications were produced.

The group of women-leaders in local self-government was launched in 2018 as well, serving as a platform for active women to share knowledge and experiences and build a community around shared goals of equal opportunities in local self-government. As of 2021, 1.7K participants have joined the community.





Oksana Garnets,
DESPRO Senior Project Manager
in Ukraine

In 2007, when DESPRO was created, we had a fairly theoretical idea of what local government reform should look like. But confidence in its necessity was firm. We understood all the complexity of implementing changes, as well as the fact that mistakes will happen. But this did not frighten us.

The path of decentralization in Ukraine has been intensive, dotted with ups and downs. Together with the whole country, through trial and error, the project has moved with this reform, making efforts, integrated Swiss experience and expertise where it was most relevant.

Our readiness to change approaches and operational goals in different political circumstances allowed us to maintain the primary goal of the project and promote the development of local self-government by optimizing the management system and supporting effective local development in Ukraine.

The various activities described in this publication have created a platform for

the development of local self-government. We helped to create the conditions for local development to be initiated not "from above", but in the communities themselves.

Today, looking back, we see that there is a lot to be proud of. DESPRO's activities have brought together completely different social and organizational structures: our communication platforms have become a core of the reform for local governments, executive branch, opinion leaders, international and Ukrainian partners.

The community of our partners is made up of people from different levels of local self-government, the Government, rural communities, regional and rayon administrations, experts and civil society activists. I would especially like to single out the Ministry of Communities' and Territories' Development, with which we have actually "lived through" all 14 project years in close and fruitful cooperation.

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who cooperated with us and joined the success of the reform and the success of Ukraine!

DONOR COORDINATION FOR DECENTRALIZATION IN UKRAINE





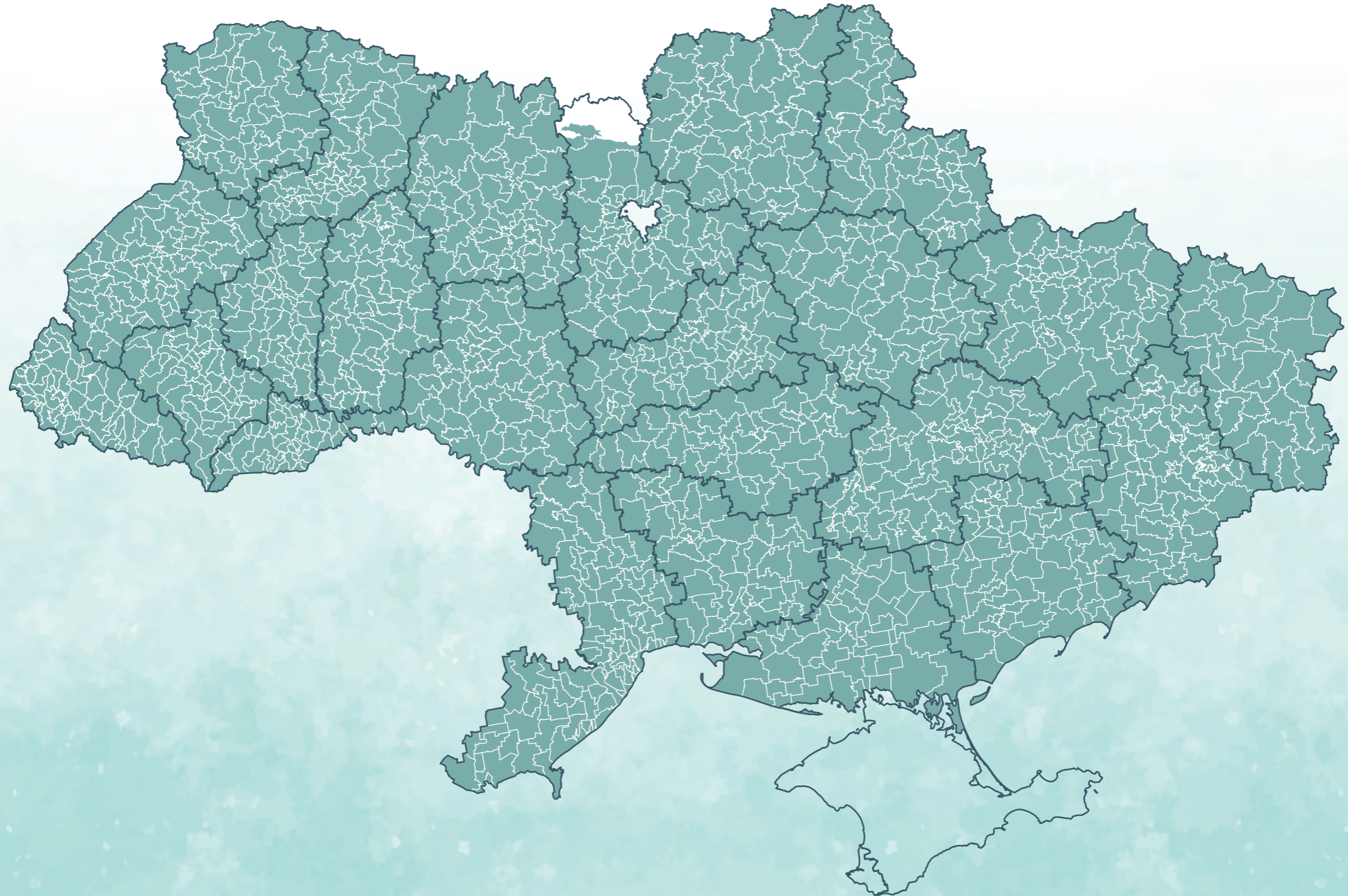
The Donor Board on Decentralization Reform in Ukraine was established in 2017, at the request of MinRegion, to ensure effectiveness and synergies between the Government's reform plans and the international projects supporting the reform. The establishment of the board was a joint initiative of the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC), whereby DESPRO as an SDC flagship project in the governance domain provided technical support to design the Board and then to maintain its work through a Secretariat.

The work of the Donor Board is structured at strategic and technical levels. At the 1st level, coordination and dialogue between the heads of development agencies and MinRegion is taking place quarterly, and at the 2nd level, international assistance projects, specialists of Minregion, other relevant governmental agencies and local experts regularly meet.

The Common Results Framework, based on reform objectives and international projects inputs, is instrumental for monitoring of results and progress, decision-making and collaboration amongst stakeholders. A clear vision, concepts and strategies on decentralization for particular sectors, as well as funding for their implementation is an important pre-condition for establishing results-based cooperation.

The experience of the Donor Board demonstrates how it is important to support and provide capacity building to the Ministry to systemically work with donors and international projects, for M&E and decision making. This will lead to institutionalization of the Donor Board Secretariat to the division in the Ministry which works with international organizations. The ability of the donor community to respond to emerging needs and decentralization priorities is crucial for ensuring smooth decentralization reform across the sectors.

**NEW ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL
ORDER OF THE BASIC LEVEL,**
approved by the Government of Ukraine in June, 2020



Swiss-Ukrainian project
DESPRO
Decentralization Support in Ukraine



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Confédération suisse
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