In 2014, Ukrainians from all social groups made common cause to promote democracy in the country. In what is referred to as the ‘Revolution of Dignity’, they came together in protest to demand their right to self-determination. Since then, Ukraine has invested more in decentralisation and in strengthening local self-government. Key laws and guidelines have already been introduced, and more are in the pipeline. For instance, budget and tax legislation has been adapted to enable local authorities to mobilise more domestic revenue and to strengthen municipal financial systems.

However, the decentralisation reform has yet to be implemented in a sustainable manner. Staff in local, regional and national administrations still do not have all of the necessary skills to take on new tasks. Aside from gaps in skills, there continues to be a lack of financial resources for removing bottlenecks. The Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine, which is responsible for implementing the decentralisation reform, needs to communicate the objectives and benefits of the reform more effectively and further strengthen its coordination role within the reform process.

**The challenge:**

**Barriers to decentralisation reform**

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**Stronger institutions, satisfied citizens**

State institutions are learning how to offer high quality and citizen-oriented services at the local level.

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**Our approach:**

**Effective institutions nationwide**

GIZ supports national, regional and local administrations in working more effectively. Seminars, advisory services and study trips allow staff to obtain the expertise they need to be able to fulfil their new tasks. For instance, experts demonstrate to the Ukrainian partners how they can communicate better with each other, improve their budget management and adopt specific financial planning measures to ensure that public sector services get the funds they need.

As service providers for the Ukrainian population, municipalities learn how they can involve citizens in their processes. This key exchange is facilitated by 24 regional development centres which cover all of Ukraine’s 24 oblasts, including the Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. This permits the Programme to operate nationwide.

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**Project title:** Supporting the decentralisation reform in Ukraine (UDU/U-LEAD with Europe)

**Commissioned by:** German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), cofinancing by the European Union

**Implemented by:** Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**Lead executing agency:** Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine (MinRegion)

**Project area:** Ukraine

**Overall term:** 10/2015 to 06/2020

**Contact:** Bastian Veigel / bastian.veigel@giz.de
The reform is of strategic importance for Ukraine. It is changing the system of public administration and bringing the country more in line with European living standards and principles of society organisation. The U-LEAD with Europe Programme ensures the logistics of positive changes and social communications.

The regional centres support local authorities in the areas of regional development, decentralisation, local finances, municipal services, communication, legal issues and land use planning. This support also seeks to improve the management of local schools and health centres, municipal services for citizens and the development of local tourism and business potential. Communities are also advised on steps to merge into larger and more effective municipalities. At the national level, the Central Reform Office has been established in order to support the partner ministry in the coordination of reform efforts with international donors.

The Programme is a multi-donor action financed by funds from Germany and the European Union as well as contributions from Denmark, Estonia, Poland and Sweden.

Reforms in the healthcare sector and training of staff improve the work in the Primary Healthcare Centre in Hnizdychiv

Our results: hundreds of thousands learning new skills

With the Programme’s support, more than 4,000 training courses, workshops, conferences and consultations have been held throughout Ukraine by autumn 2018. The measures reached around 100,000 people, of whom more than half were women and about a quarter were elected municipal representatives and municipal staff. In a survey, 70 percent of participants reported how they apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills to perform their duties better, for instance by using new tools or by working in a more citizen-oriented manner. So far, almost 400 municipalities have demonstrably adjusted their internal processes in order to be able to exercise their increased powers under the decentralisation reform. Through the work of the regional centres, municipalities were not only able to improve their internal management but also, in particular, their local services for their citizens. Ultimately, these efforts contribute towards a higher standard of living in rural areas.

The Programme has organised more than 80 dialogue events and 10 media training sessions. 12 radio and TV programmes have been produced and broadcast in cooperation with public media organisations. Public awareness and acceptance of the decentralisation reform has increased nationwide as a result of these measures.

Hennadii Zubko:
“The reform is of strategic importance”

Hennadii Zubko, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine, is responsible for implementing the decentralisation reform. He is convinced:

“Our results:
hundreds of thousands learning new skills

“The reform is of strategic importance for Ukraine. It is changing the system of public administration and bringing the country more in line with European living standards and principles of society organisation. The U-LEAD with Europe Programme ensures the logistics of positive changes and social communications.”