

Creating pathways towards EU integration

Stronger institutions and innovative ideas are paving the way for vital reforms



The challenge: sluggish reform processes

Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe and one of the continent's poorest. In a bid to improve living conditions, the country is seeking an association with the European Union. The government is thus keen to strengthen political and economic cooperation in particular, with the aim of bringing prosperity to Ukraine.

In 2014, Ukraine signed the EU Association Agreement, which outlines comprehensive reforms to be implemented in sectors such as technology and innovation, public procurement, free trade and political dialogue. Since signing the Agreement, Ukraine has made significant progress in fulfilling its digital agenda and modernising civil services in ministries and government agencies. However, in other areas, the reforms have been harder to implement. Inefficient coordination and implementation have proven to be the main challenges, civil servants often lack the skills and knowledge to carry out EU-related tasks and fulfil their role as coordinators on European integration matters.

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In addition, line ministries lack a clear focus and systems to learn from one another. Highly qualified professionals often prefer to work in the private sector, where jobs are better paid.

Our approach: efficient institutions

GIZ has been commissioned by the German Government to support the Ukrainian Government in implementing the EU Association Agreement. Working with the Government Office for Coordination of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the partnership aims to make communication between institutions more efficient. The partners devise new strategies and methods, allowing the Government Office to perform better in its role as the central EU coordination unit, contributing to the national position on all EU integration policies and guiding line ministries to implement and prioritise activities along the EU Association pathway. The Ministry of Digital Transformation, meanwhile, creates the technological foundation for the necessary tools to be deployed in public services.



Improved cooperation between governmental institutions

Together with the Government Office, GIZ launched a Laboratory programme designed to encourage line ministries to implement projects linked to the EU Association Agreement goals. This programme will be adapted and sustainably anchored in the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine. Within the re-framed Lab program for Digital Transformation of public services, GIZ organises technical assistance to the chief digital transformation officers (CDTOs) to improve their digital transformation methodology and knowledge management. Clearly defined responsibilities and regular opportunities to exchange ideas help to make their work more efficient. In addition, a flexible fund will be made available for short-term, ad-hoc requests related to the EU Association Agreement.



Development of citizen-oriented services

Our results: hundreds of employees are learning new skills

Based on the results of previous cooperation with Ukrainian partners, more than 500 technical and managerial staff from 75 Ukrainian state agencies have learned to adapt their work to meet EU standards. Thanks to 16 new working processes and services, civil servants have structured their activities more effectively, which has led to better results, thereby pushing forward the reforms necessary for EU Association.

GIZ has supported the development of initiatives via the incubation programme. Initiatives have included: proposals for digital public services in public procurement, product safety for consumer goods, national cultural heritage, and anti-corruption measures.



Presenting the services



Oleksandr Kozlov: “The training was the best for reform specialists”

Oleksandr Kozlov, governmental expert for electronic trust services at the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Transformation, took part in a training supported by GIZ. “The training was probably the best for reform specialists, because it provided practical tools for our work with the Association Agreement”, says Oleksandr.

“We learned what is required by European documents, how to identify the key points in these documents, and how to communicate with the European side. We even got an approval for a separate sectoral cooperation plan, which we had been struggling to approve for three years! And I’m sure that GIZ played a significant role in this. Therefore, I’m grateful to the project and hope it will continue.”

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