# Ukraine: Contribution to Better Standards in the Planning and Implementation of Reconstruction at Local Level (the REPAIR Ukraine Initiative)

**Budget**: 111,000 Euro (BMZ PTF Europe/Czech MFA) **Duration**: March 2024 – April 2025

**Key objective**: Standards provide guidance for reconstruction at the local level.

## Background

PTF Europe worked with its Ukrainian partner CVU Odesa and three regional CSO partners in four regions of Ukraine. Implementation ran from March 2024 to April 2025. The project aimed to strengthen procedural, transparency, accountability, and public participation standards in war-impacted municipalities for reconstruction planning. It also piloted civil society monitoring of selected municipal reconstruction projects.
CVU Odesa called this interlinked approach the REPAIR Ukraine Initiative.

Ukraine has 1,470 municipalities, called territorial communities or hromadas. They were created during the decentralisation reform of 2014–2020. These municipalities play a key role in reconstruction. Many have limited staff and expert resources to manage this complex task. The legal and regulatory framework is challenging to implement. This situation can increase the risk of corruption. Our project took account of pleas from municipal officials such as "We need guidance and partnership, not just oversight."

The project, funded through the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development's BENGO, with additional support from the Czech Development Cooperation – Czech Aid. It covered 10 municipalities in the Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv regions of Ukraine.

## Tools for assessing reconstruction planning and projects

**Index for municipal performance in reconstruction |** Working with legal and local governance experts, CVU Odesa firstly established a coherent outline of the reconstruction planning process for municipalities from what is still a disjointed, incomplete legal and regulatory framework. Secondly, it applied integrity and accountability benchmarks to this roadmap, aligning with the Council of Europe's 12 Principles of Good Governance. Thirdly, CVU Odesa drew upon its long experience of assessing municipal budget transparency across Ukraine to transform the benchmarked roadmap into a performance index. This index allowed regional partner CSOs to guide municipalities in their reconstruction planning. It also helped them assess each step of the process. The CSOs could then grade the municipalities' performance. This made the municipal planning process more transparent and measurable.

**Integrity and compliance index reconstruction projects |** A second and complementary monitoring index was developed by CVU Odesa. It assessed the integrity and compliance risks of 10 individual reconstruction projects underway in the same or neighbouring municipalities. These included administrative buildings, kindergartens, apartment blocks and shelters. The phases of tender preparation, award and implementation were examined.

The regional CSOs were trained in both methodologies, applying them in municipal and site visits, meetings and correspondence over 4 months, and meeting regularly with CVU Odesa, PTF Europe and the expert panel to exchange information and ideas.

**Key results**

The results of the **reconstruction project monitoring** showed that half largely complied with the award regulations, while the other half only complied to a limited extent. Corruption risks in reconstruction projects were identified. The highest risk level was identified in the actual award phase (submission of bids, selection of bids), indicating for development of additional monitoring focus and instruments for this phase in the next, expanded stage of the project. Key findings and recommendations were shared with municipalities. Where appropriate, particular issues were referred to the State Audit Service.

The assessment of the selected municipalities' **reconstruction planning process** showed all 10 emerging with a similar satisfactory rating score. Comparative assessment scores tangibly motivated municipalities to better performance. The collaboration between regional CSOs and municipal officials showed more areas where reconstruction planning and oversight could improve. Best practice standards could be applied and assessed, for example in how committees are set up and how they monitor and review recovery and development plans. For the next project stages, municipalities have asked for training and mentoring on how to involve the public in these processes.

**Our Implementing Partner**

**The Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU) Odesa** is implementing the project. The organization has since the late 1990s engaged in election training and monitoring, gradually expanding into broader democratization support. Over the past 15 years, it has joined and created national NGO networks on its own account, independent of the national CVU organization. CVU Odesa coordinates the national monitoring projects "For the Transparency of Local Budgets" and "Performance Review of Local Council Deputies".