

# **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**



**MECHANISMS AND STRATEGIES OF STATE AND  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE CONDITIONS  
OF WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION OF UKRAINE**

Mariupol State University (Ukraine)  
University of Economics and Humanities (Poland)

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**Collective Monograph**

<https://doi.org/10.36228/PASD24>

Kyiv-Bielsko-Biala, 2025



**UDC 316/352**  
**P 78**

Recommended for publication by the Academic Council of Mariupol State University  
(Protocol number 7 from 26.02.2025)

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Public Administration for Sustainable Development: Mechanisms and Strategies of State and Regional Administration in the Conditions of War and Reconstruction of Ukraine: Collective Monograph / The general ed. Chechel A., Zharova L., Śleziak M. Kyiv - Bielsko-Biala (Poland): University of Economics and Humanities, 2025. 285 p.

**ISBN 978-83-63649-18-0 (online edition)**

The monograph is dedicated to the pressing issues and prospects of Ukraine's recovery after the armed conflict. The study focuses on public administration reforms aimed at strengthening the country's potential during the war and in the reconstruction phase, as well as the role of these reforms in the process of European integration. The authors examine a wide range of topics, from the organizational and legal mechanisms for engaging citizens in local governance to strategies for managing public finances in wartime. Attention is given to decentralization, sustainable regional development, crisis management in the field of water use, and the restoration of key economic sectors. Particular emphasis is placed on the analysis of women's social entrepreneurship and its impact on social processes in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as a comparative study of migration policies in Ukraine and EU member states. This monograph represents a contribution from scholars and experts, offering a critical perspective and comprehensive approaches to addressing public administration and economic development challenges in the post-war recovery period of Ukraine. It aims to serve as a guide for policymakers, researchers, and all those involved in the process of recovery and sustainable development of the country, providing a solid foundation for long-term changes. The monograph is designed for scientists, graduate and undergraduate students who are researching these above-mentioned problems in the Public Administration scientific sphere.

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## ***1.2. State management of sustainable regional development in Ukraine in the context of post-war decentralisation*** <sup>1</sup>

*<https://doi.org/10.36228/PASD24/1/2>*

The issue of sustainable development is most relevant in the context of the modern decentralisation process of our state, within which a larger share of powers has been transferred to local authorities, emphasising the need to improve the state management system, especially in the context of sustainable regional development in post-war Ukraine. This will allow for effective and swift responses to new challenges and ensure timely and effective measures to address them in both the economic and social spheres of regional development. In this context, understanding and implementing effective administrative strategies will be a key factor in ensuring sustainable development in the regions. This issue provides a wide range of opportunities for research and the development of practical measures to optimise the state management process during martial law and ensure sustainable regional development. The creation of new regional communities should be based on specific tasks of the post-war decentralisation reform. Overall, decentralisation reform in Ukraine is one of the most successful and consistent reforms in recent years, and the key to this has been the long-standing European traditions of local autonomy, consistency of state leadership, and systematic methodological and institutional support from international organisations<sup>2</sup>. In the context of the war, the practice of 2023 shows that multilateralism in the process of ensuring sustainable development goals as the basis of international cooperation must be part of solving all other problems, so the issue of interaction to achieve the goals comes to the forefront. On the one hand, this once again confirms the extreme relevance of the issue of ensuring sustainable development goals, and on the other, it becomes very important to review the process of their implementation under wartime conditions.

Therefore, the research aims to highlight the issues of the development of state management of sustainable regional development in

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<sup>1</sup> The author of the chapter: **Olena Brazhko**, *Doctor of Science in Public Administration, Professor, Professor of the Department of Public Management and Administration at the Educational and Scientific Institute of Management of Mariupol State University, Kyiv (Ukraine)*.

<sup>2</sup> Nehoda, V. A. (2021). Mechanisms for ensuring local development in the context of implementing decentralisation reform in Ukraine: PhD thesis in the field 281 "Public Administration", Kyiv, 240 p.

the context of the present, consider possible ways of their solution, and justify constructive approaches to defining state management mechanisms to ensure sustainable regional development under conditions of post-war decentralisation, developing proposals to improve its functioning at the level of territorial communities and rethinking the goals of sustainable development and their implementation for Ukraine through the lens of the consequences of the war.

During martial law, when territorial communities are subjected to severe trials and challenges, the implementation of effective state management becomes very relevant. Through an effectively organised administrative system, it is possible to achieve sustainable regional development and address existing socio-economic problems. It should be noted that improving Ukraine's administrative system requires implementing a mechanism to increase efficiency. State and local authorities must establish strategic goals and aspects of the administrative system and direct it towards the development of regional communities, whose development determines the stable development of regions and the state as a whole.

Now, the resolution of the problem, which encompasses not only the social but also the economic and environmental spheres, comes to the forefront. This is due to the fact that under the conditions of the national economy's martial law, the administration must quickly adapt to changes in territorial development and strategically direct its activities towards their life support. To ensure the sustainable development of the regional community, it is necessary to identify the resource base, balance the economic and social aspects of business, and carefully analyse the situation in various economic sectors; ensure full employment of people, improve their standard of living, solve environmental problems, and determine the sustainable development of the region by increasing the economic potential of the region<sup>3</sup>.

In planning state sector management, strategic planning plays an important role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This process not only defines prospective goals but also forms specific strategies for their successful achievement. Strategic planning is a continuous process that does not end, allowing for prioritisation, efficient

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<sup>3</sup> Nair, C. (2020). *The Sustainable State: The Future of Government, Economy and Society*. Kyiv: Nash Format, 286.

resource allocation, and coordination of actions of all stakeholders. The strategic plan involves interaction between different levels of decommunisation, forming control and evaluation mechanisms for strategy implementation, adhering to the principle of constant openness to changing circumstances, and participation in the strategic development process, contributing to strengthening public trust in the activities of state and local authorities. This approach not only makes strategic planning a tool for achieving specific goals but also serves as an important factor in shaping public opinion regarding the establishment of strategic development directions and regional management. Creating an independent, democratic, and legal Ukrainian state is a long-term process that requires all governance structures to be effective and responsible for the implementation of state policy, economic and efficient use of resources under sustainable development<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, to ensure strategic regional development after the war, it is necessary to demonstrate strategic and operational goals, significantly modernise the methods and forms of resource utilisation at all levels of state management, and implement new conceptual approaches for reviewing and radically changing the strategies and projects developed and updated before the war. The negative changes in the current conditions of the national economy's functioning and its subsystems at the regional, territorial, and sectoral levels, associated with the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, require the implementation of innovative methods and techniques in administrative practice to achieve sustainable development goals, which in the long run will contribute to increasing the competitiveness of both regions and the country as a whole. Therefore, the development of innovative approaches to solving important regional problems of the respective territories and the implementation of innovative ideas in local self-government practice is today an absolute requirement<sup>5</sup>.

It should be noted that the creation of an effective administrative system is one of the key factors in ensuring the country's

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<sup>4</sup> Osypov, V.M., Pivovarchuk, I.D. (2011). Strategic planning as an effective tool for regional development management. Sumy State University Publishing. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14048816.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Chykarenko, Iryna, Mamatova, Tetiana. (2023). Strategic development of territorial communities in the post-war period: new challenges and requirements. *Scientific-practical conference with international participation*. Dnipro NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic".



competitiveness on the path to European integration. The direction chosen by Ukraine in terms of strategic regional development includes administrative reform, which involves creating an effective and transparent administrative structure that can ensure the implementation of a unified state policy aimed at sustainable social development of the region and timely response to internal and external challenges. Due to the capacity for local autonomy and deviation from the model of state centralisation to ensure the establishment of an effective system of regional governance based on the principles of complementarity, ubiquity, and financial self-sufficiency of local autonomy, decentralisation has been given an important place in administrative reform<sup>6</sup>. The reform of the regional governance structure based on the principle of decentralisation is one of the important aspects of systematic social transformations in Ukraine.

A key element of this reform is the optimisation of the spatial basis for the functioning of state institutions – administrative-territorial structures. The aim of this optimisation is to create an effective system of state bodies in administrative-territorial units that, through the rational use of potential, can provide favourable living conditions for people and opportunities for sustainable socio-economic development of the region.

We have focused on the fact that the full-scale war by Russia against Ukraine has affected all economic and social processes of the state, including decentralisation reform, which is one of the most successful and popular reforms in Ukraine. The war poses new challenges to local communities and central governments, and as practice in 2022 shows, judicial processes can only be overcome through joint efforts. At the same time, decommunisation and planning for post-war development require a change in the distribution of power between the central government and local self-government. Some of these changes are regulated by the Martial Law Code, but the details of the functioning of power in the post-war transitional period are very limited, as Ukraine's international experience in this regard is also very limited since such large-scale military operations have not been conducted in countries similar to Ukraine in terms of the

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<sup>6</sup> Movchaniuk, A. V. (2020). Conceptual foundations of public administration system reform in Ukraine. *Public Administration and Customs Administration*. 2 (25). 20 - 24.

development of democratic institutions and autonomy in recent years<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse and substantiate the latest challenges for developing new models of cooperation between central, regional, and local authorities both during the war and in the post-war period. This issue is particularly acute for restoring government operations in occupied territories, where the process of purging collaborators and addressing the consequences of occupation must occur simultaneously. A key criterion in developing a successful model will be maximum stakeholder participation in the decision-making process and the adoption of each decision based on consensus between parliamentary representatives and local self-government.

Analysing the main results of decentralisation before the full-scale invasion, we concluded that 1,470 amalgamated territorial communities were created, meaning that since 2014, Ukraine had successfully implemented local self-government reforms, which led to the consolidation of small settlements into territorial communities, helped strengthen local self-government, and ensured effective resource allocation. Consolidation was also carried out, resulting in the creation of 136 districts instead of the previously existing 490. The general fund revenues of the local budget in 2021 reached 351.9 billion hryvnias, and in 2022, state financial support for regional development and infrastructure development was planned at 1.318 billion hryvnias. Due to decentralisation, the political influence of regional elites significantly increased, mainly city mayors of large cities who retained their positions and formed coalitions with local councils<sup>8</sup>.

We would also like to emphasise the changes in regional policy and governance that were introduced during the war:

- all powers of the local state administration were transferred to the regional (district) military administration;
- staff competitions were cancelled;
- travel restrictions abroad were imposed on local council members;
- the registration of many pro-Russian parties was cancelled, which called into question the status of elected deputies of local councils.

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<sup>7</sup> Popov, I. (2023). Decentralisation: What will be the relationship between the centre and regions after the war? Retrieved from: <https://uifuture.org/publications/deccentralizacziya-2-0-yakymy-budut-vidnosyny-czentru-i-regioniv-pislya-vijny/>.

<sup>8</sup> Popov, I. (2023). Decentralisation...

Let's consider the problems of decentralisation in Ukraine during martial law:

- budget cuts led to the bankruptcy of many communities, with local budget surpluses occurring only in territorial communities where military units were stationed. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine distributed additional subsidies to compensate for tax revenues lost due to the war;

- to meet defence needs, the regional military administration appeals to the city mayor for inter-budgetary transfers to the regional budget;

- in regions where fierce battles took place, infrastructure was significantly destroyed, in some settlements it was almost completely ruined;

- the war resulted in significant population migration and, consequently, loss of labour resources: the total number of refugees is about 5 million, and internally displaced persons – 4,9 million;

- the overall financial situation in Ukraine is entirely dependent on foreign financing in the form of loans, grants, and targeted projects, a large part of which is directed to the government and distributed through budgetary mechanisms;

- at the beginning of the war, a moratorium on increasing the cost of housing and communal services was introduced, while the total debt of the population for tariffs amounted to over 100 billion hryvnias, and preferential tariffs and debts became problems in repairing infrastructure and preparing for the heating season;

- in many territorial communities, it became problematic to convene a quorum at local council sessions due to deputies' refusal or deprivation of their mandates, resulting in the territorial election commission facing difficulties in transferring powers to the next member of parliament on the list, especially in frontline regions<sup>9</sup>.

Regarding the challenges of decentralisation following the lifting of martial law, it is appropriate to note the following:

- the country's reconstruction process necessitates centralised planning: whilst a fragmented project for restoring damaged infrastructure will be supported, the majority of investments will be directed towards addressing the global task of constructing new production capacities;

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<sup>9</sup> UIFuture 2024 – where is the point of certainty. UIF experts' forecast. Retrieved from <https://uifuture.org/category/analitichni-materialy/>



- during the implementation of reconstruction projects, communities in different regions will find themselves in unequal conditions: security must be a crucial element of the plan, therefore regions that are maximally protected and distant from potential attacks should be prioritised for investment;

- the repair and construction of new transport corridors also depend on their direction: motorways, railways, and other facilities connecting Ukraine and Russia cannot be prioritized when planning reconstruction projects, and projects linking Ukraine and Belarus may also be suspended until relations with the latter country normalise;

- many companies have implemented mitigation measures and will remain in new settlements after the war, leading to an imbalance in tax revenue distribution;

- the number of population categories eligible for benefits will increase, and the government's fulfilment of obligations towards them will be associated with budgetary difficulties, resulting in disputes between central and local authorities regarding the distribution of responsibilities for tariff payments, transportation, land allocation, housing repairs, and so forth<sup>10</sup>.

Overall, regarding the process of decentralisation during the period of intensive recovery and the formation of a new security system, in our view, it is necessary to forecast the following steps.

1. The principal challenge for the legal system and society, in the period between the end of martial law and the transition to peacetime, is the scale and destructiveness of issues that prevent a complete return to the pre-war structure. Therefore, democratic procedures, decentralisation, and freedom of speech are crucial values for Ukrainian society that need protection and development. The development of a "Special Period" law, regulating the gradual transition from martial law to full restoration of institutional life in organised society, should serve as a compromise solution.

2. The distribution of powers between central and local authorities is advisable to temporarily shift towards increasing the authority of representatives of central government bodies.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

3. Due to the prolonged duration of the war and the expansion of the legal framework of martial law, it is necessary to refine the functionality model of military administration through legislative changes. These changes should address the synchronisation issues between community leaders and the military administration, such as granting civil servants the legal right to work in military administration and counting their service towards civil service tenure. Furthermore, it involves strengthening the role of regional juntas in coordinating the activities of the territorial military government.

4. Administrative functions of the territorial council concerning the use of local budget funds need to be strengthened, even if the primary decision-making is undertaken by the territorial military administration. MPs should participate in budget preparation decisions and receive timely reports on fund utilisation<sup>11</sup>.

5. Transitional periods should be implemented in liberated territories with restricted local self-government powers. Here, functions of local state administrations will be performed by the local military administration, even if local council and administrative powers are restored in other regions.

6. Post-victory, Ukraine will need to continue decentralisation reforms, including the introduction of prefects: non-political figures overseeing local administration. Prefects ensure the constitutionality of local decisions, drawing on proven European effectiveness<sup>12</sup>.

7. The process of change in administrative-territorial structures must involve public and regional integration. The Ukrainian Budget Code will be reviewed to accommodate the needs of internally displaced persons.

8. Following victory and the initial reconstruction phase, a constitutional reform is necessary to regulate the powers of local authorities and their relations with the central government. This will mark the completion of decentralisation and the establishment of new institutional mechanisms with a revised system of administrative-territorial structures, a list of local taxes, and sources of local budget

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<sup>11</sup> Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine. (2024). Retrieved from: <https://minre.gov.ua/2024/05/28/nam-neobhidno-gotuvatysya-do-podalshoyi-deokupa-cziyi-ukrayinskyh-terytorij-vzhe-zaraz-adzhe-same-zarady-czogo-my-i-vedemo-borotbu/>

<sup>12</sup> Ukrinform. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-polytics/3645977-v-ukraini-zaprovadat-institut-prefektiv-u-mezah-reformi-decentralizacii.html>.

revenue. It may also define an updated role for prefects, particularly in administrative oversight.

9. The Ministry of Communities, Territory Development, and Infrastructure of Ukraine has announced a communication platform for managing the DREAM Electronic Ecosystem Restoration project, coordinating not only major national projects but also smaller local initiatives with nationwide priorities for more efficient resource utilisation<sup>13</sup>.

10. After the cancellation of martial law, one of the challenges will be the increase in tariffs for electricity, housing, and communal services. The new tariff plan should be a joint responsibility of both central and local authorities. Open dialogue should address privileged categories of the population and distribute the burden between central and local budgets.

Regarding sustainable development, analysis of international legal norms and scientific literature indicates that, although the overall goal of sustainable development is defined, Ukraine's management aspects for achieving these goals are insufficiently developed. At the highest state level, Ukraine supports the global sustainable development goals outlined by the UN General Assembly resolution for the period up to 2030. Specifically, the President of Ukraine has signed a corresponding decree integrating these goals into state policy, calling for a forecast project and programmatic document direction, as well as drafts of regulatory legal acts concerning economic, social, and environmental aspects of Ukraine's sustainable development<sup>14</sup>. According to the decree, monitoring systems were to be developed and sustainable development goals integrated into existing national strategies and programmes.

The sustainable development goals of Ukraine until 2030 establish guiding principles for the development of forecast projects and programmatic documents, the preparation of regulatory acts to ensure a balance of economic, social, and environmental aspects of Ukraine's sustainable development. The integration of sustainable development goals into state governance promotes the development of national institutions responsible for state and regional development in thematic

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<sup>13</sup> Government Portal (2023): Unified web portal of executive authorities of Ukraine. Retrieved from <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/mininfrastruktury-prezentuvalo-komunikatsiinu-platformu-elektronnoi-ekosystemy-upravlinnia-vidnovlenniam-dream>.

<sup>14</sup> On the Sustainable Development Goals of Ukraine for the period up to 2023. №722/2019. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/156-19#Text>



areas of the country's sustainable development, as well as the potential of local autonomy. As a result, the implementation of sustainable development goals remains a matter of constant attention for national leaders. The necessity of integrating sustainable development goals into Ukraine's state policy was proclaimed at the legislative level. It is important to note that a law, based on the principles of state regional policy, consists of five elements: planning, financing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as institutions. All elements of managing Ukraine's regional development are interrelated, and inefficiency in at least one element affects the functioning of the entire system<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, the regional policy of the Ukrainian state should be oriented towards people and their welfare. The strategic goal of this policy until 2027 is the development oriented towards people and decommunisation in a harmonious, decentralised, competitive, and democratic Ukraine, where the restoration of war-affected territories and the effective utilization of the region's internal potential are ongoing, and close cooperation between regions and European partners will undoubtedly accelerate growth and sustainable regional development for the benefit of the entire Ukraine.

Regarding the legislative framework, in particular the Law "On the Principles of State Regional Policy", which amends the framework for the recovery of conflict zones, includes the definition of a three-stage system of strategic planning: national, regional, and local development strategies, and establishes the details of the recovery of regions and settlements affected by armed attacks on Ukraine<sup>16</sup>.

European Commission conclusions indicate that the aforementioned amendments to the law provide the basis for recovery and development, as well as appropriate types of functional territorial communities. Similarly, various regional strategic documents are needed, including regional development strategies, reconstruction and development plans, comprehensive territorial development plans, etc., should be refined, mutually agreed upon, and linked to relevant sources of funding. Overall, there is a need to develop a clear conceptual basis for organizing regional

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<sup>15</sup> Chykarenko, Iryna, Mamatova, Tetiana. (2023). Strategic development of territorial communities in the post-war period: new challenges and requirements. *Scientific-practical conference with international participation*. Dnipro NTU "Dnipro Polytechnic".

<sup>16</sup> On the principles of state regional policy. № 3460-IX (2023). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2389-20#Text>

policy in Ukraine and to align it with the recovery and reconstruction process<sup>17</sup>. By the way, since the establishment of the Ministry of Regional Development, various attempts have been made to shift the direction of the state's regional policy towards housing and communal services and construction, but these experiments have not yielded positive results, and the Ministry of Regional Development has gradually transformed into a fairly powerful ministry capable of building a policy based on European approaches and Ukraine's opportunities. The decision to liquidate the Ministry of Regional Development in 2022 and establish a new Ministry for Community Affairs, Territories and Infrastructure in early 2023 significantly slowed down all processes towards the implementation of a real European model of regional development in Ukraine. The newly established Ministry failed to formulate and implement a regional policy that would meet the complex challenges arising from the full-scale invasion and utilize the opportunities associated with obtaining EU candidate status. In 2023-2024, instead of progress based on European Commission recommendations, a decline was observed in all aspects of state regional policy management<sup>18</sup>.

Thus, the effectiveness of a state management system capable of achieving specific sustainable development goals should be based on the unification of legislative norms governing the activities of executive authorities at all levels, the participation of local self-government bodies and civil organizations, and subjects of various forms of ownership. This system should be based on the concept and doctrine of Ukraine's state strategy for sustainable development. At the scientific-methodological level, measures have been identified to expand the production of high-value-added products, digitalisation, complete reforms in the fields of education, healthcare, and the judicial system from the standpoint of reviewing the feasibility of sustainable development goals during wartime<sup>19</sup>. Key factors influencing the energy sector in the regional context are identified, and types of energy development strategies based on

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<sup>17</sup> Tkachuk, A., Tretiak, Yu., Lukeria, I. (2023). State regional policy 2023: to be or not to be? Retrieved from <https://zn.ua/ukr/internal/derzhavna-rehionalna-politika-2023-buti-chi-nebuti.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Decentralisation (2024). Retrieved from: <https://decentralization.ua/news/18126?page=57>.

<sup>19</sup> Kichurchak, M. (2023). *Sustainable development and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine's economy*. Reconstruction for development: foreign experience and Ukrainian perspectives: international collective monograph. Kyiv.

sustainable development principles are determined; a scientific approach to the post-war recovery of creative industries in the Ukrainian economy has been established<sup>20</sup>. Taking this into account, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive vision of tasks and perspectives for sustainable regional development in conditions of war. The tasks of sustainable regional development and transformation of indicators in the conditions of war and post-war recovery are based on monitoring the main indicators of the country's economy functioning by regions. In Ukraine, depending on the degree of influence of military actions on economic, social, and ecological spheres, three regions can be distinguished:

1) Southeastern: significant portions of territories occupied, active combat operations, high degree of mine contamination and high level of migration;

2) Central: acts as a military centre meeting all regional needs where military operations are conducted;

3) Western: considered a rear region performing the role of an economic and social stabilizer of the country: receives relocated enterprises, forcibly displaced persons, ensures economic development and logistics of all commodity flows<sup>21</sup>.

To ensure that Ukraine can align its strategy for sustainable regional development with the consequences of prolonged conflict, specify intermediate tasks and indicators for achieving goals by 2030, it is necessary to propose an approach to adapting the region's sustainable development to wartime conditions and post-war national economic recovery, taking into account determinants of economic and social development and the ecological situation during conflict. This includes strengthening institutional capacity, defence and security; rebuilding and modernising housing and regional infrastructure; restoring and modernising social infrastructure; ensuring effective social policy, employment, and social protection; war-oriented foreign economic activity; informal economy and corruption, among others. To achieve this, the working group should update objectives considering sustainable development goals in terms of adaptation to post-war recovery needs and current planning, and the effectiveness of state governance decisions made

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<sup>20</sup> Antoniv V., Datskiv N., Paslavaska I. (2022). Modelling the dynamics of fuel and energy complex development in the western region of Ukraine. *Bulletin of Lviv University*. 63. 67-78.

<sup>21</sup> Kichurchak, M. (2023). *Sustainable development...*



within specific sustainable development goals should be analysed through monitoring regional development indicators, which dynamically achieve economic, social, and environmental indicators accordingly. The institutional framework for sustainable development of regional communities is defined by legal norms of Ukrainian Law<sup>22</sup>.

Local self-government, in the context of sustainable regional development of communities, regulates and ensures the creation of a unified safety zone at the local level, laying the foundation for the implementation of constitutional rights and freedoms of local residents, meeting the population's needs for receiving quality administrative and social services, and supporting the development of democratic principles and regional initiatives to achieve sustainable development goals.

Today, amidst Ukraine's state of war, local authorities must clearly formulate strategic and operational goals to ensure sustainable development of regional communities. Strategic goals for achieving sustainable regional development should be based on:

- attracting grants, state and local financial resources, and interacting with the external and internal environment;
- cooperation with state civic organizations in developing investment projects;
- enhancing the experience and skills of specialists in management bodies and executive authorities;
- creating information-analytical databases of performance indicators and the effectiveness of budgeting methods used in social, civic, and environmental issues<sup>23</sup>.

Furthemore, in our view, in the context of the current decentralization process, it is also necessary to use effective mechanisms of state governance to achieve sustainable development goals. Specific instructions for ensuring sustainable regional development require the implementation of appropriate mechanisms for managing regional communities.

The concept of "management mechanism" is widely used in scientific literature and has various interpretations. In general, the concept of a

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<sup>22</sup> On local self-government in Ukraine. № 3633-IX. (2024). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/280/97-вп#Text>.

<sup>23</sup> Patyka N., Sokolova A., Movchaniuk A., Sysoieva I., & Khirivskyi R. (2023). Ukraine's rural areas in the conditions of decentralisation and local self-government reform: challenges and prospects. *Agricultural and Resource Economics*, 9 (3). 266-295.

“mechanism” is used in a figurative sense and means “internal structure, system of something”<sup>24</sup>.

The mechanism of state governance is an integral part of the management system that influences factors affecting the results of managed activities. Factors of organizational management can be internal, concerning mechanisms of organizational management, or external, concerning mechanisms of interaction with other organizations. The actual mechanism of state governance is aimed at achieving specific goals by influencing factors, and this influence depends on the use of specific resources<sup>25</sup>.

Therefore, in our opinion, the management mechanism should be considered as an artificially organized system with clearly defined structures, regulatory and legal norms, methods, tools, and levers of influence to achieve clear goals. In general, sustainable regional development involves improving responses to negative risks in economic, social, and environmental spheres, ensuring harmonious development and self-regulation to meet the social needs of territorial communities. In our opinion, it is advisable to assign four main mechanisms of state governance for sustainable territorial development: politico-economic, organizational-institutional, regulatory-legal, and informational.

The politico-economic mechanism comprises a set of methods, tools, and incentives of financial and economic management based on the main functions and principles of economic policy aimed at achieving specific goals, neutralizing threats, and eliminating negative consequences. The organizational-institutional mechanism should be aimed at ensuring the effective operation of all subjects located in a particular territorial community and ensuring a high level of efficiency considering the complexity of development.

The regulatory-legal mechanism determines the necessary regulatory and legal support designed to regulate the interests and powers of the object and subject of management for sustainable regional development. The use of this mechanism is possible with a system of legal relations that will prevent discrimination of citizens in various spheres of

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<sup>24</sup> Fedorchak, O. (2008). Classification of public administration mechanisms. *Democratic Governance*. Retrieved from <https://science.lpnu.ua/sites/default/files/journalpaper/2022/-jan/26465/ofedorchak.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Honcharuk O. B., Savychuk N. O. (2021). The concept of public administration mechanisms and their practical significance. *Investments: Practice and Experience* 7. 76-83.

public life and transform Ukraine into a truly legal state. The informational mechanism defines the details of forming state governance for sustainable development of regional communities using information and communication technologies, includes automation of state management systems for sustainable development and informing society, as well as conducting social monitoring<sup>26</sup>.

Therefore, the process of state governance in Ukraine necessitates the use of appropriate management mechanisms that can ensure effective resolution of existing issues in this sphere. Administrative mechanisms are typically viewed as a set of practical measures, tools, and levers enabling state and local authorities to effectively influence society to achieve clearly defined goals. In democratically developed countries, state mechanisms are seen as specialized instruments aimed at directly or indirectly influencing the country's development and its regional communities to create favorable conditions for societal life. Thus, it can be argued that all mechanisms of state governance aimed at sustainable regional development must be comprehensive and purposeful, and should be utilized at all levels of administration to help protect the interests of the territorial community, its citizens, and economic entities.

Emphasis is placed on the fact that in challenging times for the country, the combination of decentralized governance principles and a centralized decision-making system, their interaction should be directed towards addressing priority tasks, ensuring maximum efficiency of local authorities in managing the region's resource potential, coordinating the activities of all state structures, and seeking approaches and methods to facilitate the activities of economic entities. This, in turn, will actively impact the level of economic growth in the industrial segment and ensure a profitable segment of the local budget.

The decentralization process will enhance the accountability of local authorities and, based on their institutional potential, will depend on the likelihood of achieving sustainable development goals by regions. In the process of implementing decentralization reforms by expanding the capabilities of local authorities, the national strategy aimed to apply a new approach to regional policy by encouraging local communities through innovation, investment, inclusive development, rational resource

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<sup>26</sup> Diachenko V.S. (2019). Features of the mechanism for ensuring sustainable development of regions. *Economic Bulletin of Donbas*. 1 (55). 90-93.

management, financial decentralization, and creating their own competitiveness<sup>27</sup>.

At the same time, the issue of sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of decentralization remains unresolved due to current challenges and the situation currently facing the Ukrainian state. Their sustainable development pertains to the process of creating and supporting self-sufficient communities at the local level capable of enhancing the quality of life of the population in the long term. The main goal of this development is to create a stable and healthy environment for the development of citizens towards meeting current needs and preserving resources for future generations. This development is based on the territorial community, which scholars interpret as a concept from the perspective of a unique socio-economic system whose components are interconnected, occupy important territories, and expend significant resources on their own development. In other words, regional community is an autonomous social entity, and sustainable development is the basis for the formation of civil society<sup>28</sup>.

The development of territorial communities is considered in the context of sustainable development, according to which specific concepts that have received international recognition and define the movement and interaction of economic systems and communities, as well as their interaction with nature, are of particular concern. Today, this concept reflects a qualitatively new state of society's development, perceived as post-industrial<sup>29</sup>.

On the whole, the theory of sustainable development has deep roots and has long undergone significant transformations, as reflected in relevant declarations and international documents. These documents delineate the priority direction for future global development based on a balanced approach to global environmental and socio-economic systems.

The term "sustainable development" can be interpreted as the improvement of human quality of life whilst maintaining the stability of

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<sup>27</sup> Lopushynskyi I.P. (2022). Mechanisms for ensuring sustainable development of territorial communities in the conditions of decentralisation of power in Ukraine. *Bulletin of KhNTU*. 4 (83). 154-160.

<sup>28</sup> Kotov I.V. (2023). Theoretical foundations of managing sustainable development of territorial communities. *Law and Public Administration*. 3. 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.32782/pdu.2023.3.12>

<sup>29</sup> Raszkowski A., Bartniczka B. (2019). On the Road to Sustainability: Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Poland. *Sustainability*. 11. 366.

natural ecosystems. According to international standards, sustainable development is intended to meet the current needs of communities without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>30</sup>. These approaches allow summarising that, in the context of changes in decentralisation, the sustainable development of territorial communities is designed to ensure effective changes at the level of individual regions, taking into account the decentralisation that began in Ukraine in 2014 and was supported by numerous regulatory acts.

The new reality has necessitated the improvement of the regulatory framework for developing the foundations of state regional policy, particularly in accordance with martial law conditions and territorial recovery policies. In 2022, the Law of Ukraine “On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Principles of State Regional Policy and the Policy of Recovery of Regions and Territories” was adopted, introducing provisions on the need to develop strategies for regional community development, taking into account priorities defined by relevant regional development strategies. For planning recovery and stimulating regional development, the Law defines four functional types of territories: recovery, regional growth, those with special development conditions, and sustainable development territories<sup>31</sup>.

Moreover, there is an urgent need to amend the Law on the functions of civil servants and local self-government during martial law. To this end, consultations and meetings are being held with representatives of local authorities, and in 2024, a survey of these representatives was conducted to ascertain their views on legislative initiatives necessary in the current year. The survey involved 310 territorial communities from 354 regions of Ukraine, and several priority draft laws were identified for adoption in the current year, necessary for the effective operation of local authorities and successful implementation of reforms. These include draft law No. 8056 “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine Regarding the Improvement of Powers of Local Self-Government Bodies and Their Officials During Martial Law” and numerous other amendments<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> ISO 26000:2010 Guidance on social responsibility. Retrieved from: <http://isotc.iso.org>

<sup>31</sup> On amendments to some legislative acts of Ukraine regarding the principles of state regional policy and policy of restoration of regions and territories. № 2389-IX. (2022). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2389-20#Text>

<sup>32</sup> *Decentralisation* (2024). Retrieved from <https://decentralization.ua/news/18126?page=57>.

The continued implementation of reforms is also evidenced by strengthened cooperation with foreign partners. The Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine is working in this direction, and in 2022, they developed “Methodological Recommendations on International Municipal Partnership” in collaboration with the Council of Europe<sup>33</sup>.

The situation with decentralisation reform in Ukraine was discussed in Brussels in 2022 at the fourth annual EU-Eastern Partnership Local Leaders’ Forum on “How to Advance Decentralisation Reform and Localise”, and local leaders reached a consensus to promote decentralisation reform as a foundation for regional democracy, stability, and development, as well as a fundamental source for localising the EU Eastern Partnership agenda. One of the main themes this year was the current situation in Ukraine, decentralisation reform in Georgia and Moldova, and the necessary tools to support local authorities and their associations to ensure a smooth and continuous successful decentralisation process<sup>34</sup>.

As a result, local authorities and government institutions are effectively overcoming war-related challenges. Certainly, this has been made possible by more active citizen participation in social processes, particularly in volunteer movements. Lauren Van Metre highly values the activities of the volunteer movement, which considers civil society to play an important role in supporting Ukraine’s local self-government, which has gained more powers since 2014 as a result of significant efforts in democratic reforms – decentralisation and amalgamation, which also provided more powers and funds. Our country’s victorious response to full-scale aggression is, at least in part, the result of the agility and authority of local governments, which support civil society in its resources, coordination, and contacts with international donors. The Ukrainian volunteer movement has played a crucial role at the regional level<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> *Partnership for Recovery and Development*. (2022). Retrieved from <https://decentralization.ua/twincities>.

<sup>34</sup> Council of Europe supports continuation of decentralisation reform. (2024). *Council of Europe Office in Ukraine*. Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv>

<sup>35</sup> Van Metre, Lauren. (2023). Voices from the Frontlines of Democracy in Ukraine: Supporting and Protecting Civil Society. *Just Security*. Retrieved from <https://www.justsecurity.org/tag/democracy/page/4/>.



Consequently, within the framework of these changes in decentralisation, it became possible to establish a system of local self-government as an authoritative and competent means closest to citizens. Specifically, this was designed to allow newly created local authorities to obtain appropriate powers and resources previously held by cities of regional significance. The expansion and amalgamation of communities, considering citizens' opinions when planning the creation of voluntary communities, the potential resource capabilities of the community for economic and social development, and the provision of high-quality services should be carried out in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine "On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities"<sup>36</sup>.

In our view, it is prudent to mention some key features that characterise the sustainable development of regional communities in the context of decentralisation transformation:

1. Economic sustainability: a developed community economy based on diverse industries and income sources, guaranteeing sustainable financial security.

2. Social integration: ensuring sustainable growth in quality of life, access to education, healthcare, housing, and other social services for all community residents.

3. Ecological balance: preservation and protection of the environment, rational use of natural resources, and implementation of environmentally friendly technologies.

4. Partnerships and civic participation: active citizen involvement in decision-making and project implementation, promoting interaction between the public, corporations, and government.

5. Infrastructure development: availability of high-quality and accessible infrastructure: communications, water supply, and other utilities.

6. Cultural and historical heritage: preservation of the community's cultural and historical heritage as an essential element of sustainable development.

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<sup>36</sup> . On voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities. № 562-IX. (2020). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/157-19#Text>.

7. Effective governance: transparent and efficient management and decision-making mechanisms that allow the community to develop according to its needs and potential<sup>37</sup>.

These characteristics indicate that the sustainable development of territorial communities, in the context of decentralisation reforms, encompasses not only economic aspects but also social, environmental, cultural, and governance aspects.

Meanwhile, as the war in Ukraine has demonstrated, peace, sustainable economic development, justice, the value of life, and human rights are fundamental, without which it is simply impossible to live. Therefore, the goals of socio-economic development of the state have become the main priority of sustainable development during the war.

It has become evident that the destructive consequences of the war were significant for virtually all domestic economic indicators, not only in Ukraine but also in other European countries, where imbalances in all macroeconomic indicators led to a domino effect reaction. Thus, international legal settlement, sanctions pressure on the aggressor's economy, restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, regulation of the migration process, reintegration of temporarily occupied territories, and combating unemployment and low incomes of the population should become important contributions to achieving the set goals.

The destruction of infrastructure and loss of human capital will lead to a serious economic decline, hindering future recovery. In the context of decentralisation in Ukraine, infrastructure plays a crucial role in transforming the local self-government system and improving the quality of life for the population. Communities can independently decide which infrastructure projects and facilities are better: improving roads or utilities, developing education and healthcare, cultural and sports facilities, etc. Decentralisation should promote the efficient use of resources and increase the responsibility of local authorities for the results of activities in the field of infrastructure<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Pitiulych M.M., Hotra V.V., Chubar O.H. (2023). Factors of increasing financial capacity and development of territorial communities in the conditions of modern challenges. *Ukrainian Journal of Applied Economics and Technology*. 2.(8). 341–346.

<sup>38</sup> Denysenko S. (2022). Developing communities: how infrastructure reconstruction gives new life to communities. *Ukrainska Pravda*. Retrieved from <https://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2022/-08/19/7363958/>

Creating “sustainable infrastructure” is a process of modernisation or changes resulting in infrastructure becoming more resilient, efficient, and modern. This can be the result of investments, reforms, technological development, or other changes aimed at improving infrastructure. In another context, “sustainable infrastructure” may refer to structures or systems that maintain functionality and stability after challenging situations or events that may harm them, such as crises, natural disasters, or military conflicts.

The prospects for developing sustainable infrastructure for post-war reconstruction are associated with the following tools:

1. Sustainable financing for infrastructure recovery and development, which may include investments from the government, international funds, and private investors.

2. When restoring and developing infrastructure, it is important to implement innovative technologies that will help us become more resilient to future challenges and more efficient.

3. It is crucial to consider the needs and opinions of local residents and involve them in planning and managing infrastructure projects.

4. The development of green infrastructure helps reduce the impact of climate change and promotes sustainable development of local communities<sup>39</sup>.

The considerations of local government representatives about security are grouped into categories:

1. Infrastructure security: improvement of public spaces, street lighting, resilience of social infrastructure.

2. Protection from emergencies and crime.

The Law of Ukraine “On Critical Infrastructure” states that the security of critical infrastructure is defined as “the state of protection of critical infrastructure, which guarantees functionality, continuity of operation, reproducibility, integrity, and stability of critical infrastructure”<sup>40</sup>. In our view, it is appropriate to define infrastructure security as a state of uninterrupted functioning of the national economy’s infrastructure, ensuring stable and effective implementation of the social

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<sup>39</sup> Integrated Approaches to Sustainable Infrastructure, UN Environment, Geneva. UN Environment. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/>.

<sup>40</sup> On critical infrastructure. № 1882-IX. (2023). Retrieved from <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1882-20#Text>

renewal process, security of individuals, economic entities, and the entire state as a whole, and reliable access to infrastructure at affordable prices.

Ensuring infrastructure security requires a special system for assessing important parameters, as it takes into account not only the largest global, macroeconomic, technological, and financial risks but also specific management methods. In a crisis situation, infrastructure companies are obliged to maintain the stability and reliability of the system at the same level, so they cannot reduce costs and staff proportionally to the reduction in the volume of services provided. This is one of the reasons why the state, which owns most infrastructure companies, began to implement a crisis model of infrastructure management. We believe that when developing infrastructure solutions, it is important to consider the assessments of experts involved in city evaluation.

Infrastructure security includes measures and policies to protect critical systems and infrastructure from various threats, including cyberattacks, technical failures, and natural disasters. In the digital economy, where data and information are important, infrastructure security requires additional content.

The Committee on Digital Transformation conducted public hearings, during which it was noted that prior to the war, the issues of regional digitalisation, smart cities, and the implementation of innovations in cities, communities, and regions were a matter of choice and priority. However, the war has made digitalisation, the development of digital infrastructure, and innovations essential for survival. It was demonstrated how to respond to these threats, counteract our adversaries, and ensure resilience to new challenges. The event identified key issues that contribute to the recovery and further development of the region. These include creating a comprehensive approach to planning, ensuring community and regional leadership, providing digital tools and solutions for databases, developing methodologies for prioritising restructuring projects, engaging companies in the implementation of joint initiatives, and ensuring coordination among a wide range of stakeholders. The community's needs for digital solutions were identified, specifically in national electronic

document management systems, alert systems, secure cities, faster internet, online services, and so forth<sup>41</sup>.

Of particular importance is the implementation of modern European standards and approaches to the digitalisation of cities and communities, as well as the possibility of legislative adaptation for post-war reconstruction and development. This is based on both unique digitalisation experiences and successful EU standards and approaches, which Ukraine aspires to become part of in the near future. It is crucial that Ukrainian cities and communities become safer and more resilient through the implementation of standards based on new technologies in terms of comfort and quality of life, European projects, and joint programmes with international partners, primarily from the European Union.

New challenges for infrastructure security arise in the digital economy:

1. Cybercrime is always a result of vulnerability and can cause serious problems that may lead to theft, fraud, and other cybercrimes.
2. Technical issues that can affect the continuity of infrastructure service provision.
3. Natural disasters, particularly floods, earthquakes, etc., can damage infrastructure and result in loss of access to digital services.
4. Human factors, especially errors of misuse, can contribute to data destruction and infrastructure security<sup>42</sup>.

In the era of the digital economy, infrastructure security becomes an integral part of ensuring stability and productivity. Digital systems and services can help solve many community problems, but they also create new threats. Enhancing infrastructure security requires a comprehensive approach that includes technical, organisational, and educational measures, as well as measures to strengthen infrastructure security:

1. Cyber defence: development and implementation of strategies involving the use of modern identification and encryption methods.
2. Backup: regular data and system backups for recovery in case of failure.

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<sup>41</sup> Smart infrastructure for post-war recovery and development of communities and territories. Press Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. (2023). Retrieved from [https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/news\\_kom/239493.html](https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/news_kom/239493.html).

<sup>42</sup> Thacker S. (2019). Infrastructure for sustainable development. *Nature Sustainability* 2(4). Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332134540\\_Infrastructure\\_for\\_sustainable\\_development](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332134540_Infrastructure_for_sustainable_development).

3. Development of a risk assessment and management plan.

4. Training and capacity building through educational activities to raise awareness about infrastructure security.

5. Prevention strategy: development and implementation of policies and procedures aimed at preventing security incidents.

6. Collaboration with other organisations, including governmental and public structures, for joint response to threats<sup>43</sup>.

Thus, the importance of human factors leads to public participation in the infrastructure recovery process being a key component of its successful development and restoration. The active role of communities and companies in infrastructure renewal has many advantages, namely:

1. Community and business participation in the development and implementation of infrastructure projects helps to consider genuine human needs and priorities. Residents better understand which infrastructure facilities are most important to them and what problems they face, and their participation allows for the creation of infrastructure that meets needs and leads to an improved quality of life.

2. Social participation helps increase the responsibility and involvement of residents in the community development process: they become active participants and bear partial responsibility for the maintenance and support of infrastructure.

3. Public participation helps strengthen the community and increase the likelihood of reunification: working together to restore infrastructure creates opportunities for residents to jointly solve problems and achieve common goals<sup>44</sup>.

Therefore, community participation in reconstruction projects contributes to the creation of more resilient, efficient, and open infrastructure that meets the interests of all participants. Infrastructure created in collaboration with the community is much more effective than state-created infrastructure, all of which demonstrates the importance of encouraging and supporting active resident participation.

In the context of implementing Ukraine's European integration vector, it is recommended to note that the sustainable development of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Smart infrastructure for post-war recovery and development of communities and territories. Press Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. (2023). Retrieved from [https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/news\\_kom/239493.html](https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/news_kom/239493.html).

regional communities involves changes to the system of social relations that promote harmonious interaction of interests between local self-government bodies, communities, and commercial organisations. The aim of these changes is to meet the needs of the population and society, taking into account compliance with European standards and norms both at the current stage and in the future development of Ukrainian society. It is worth noting separately the experience of active European decentralisation in the context of the possibility and necessity of its implementation in Ukrainian reality. This point is important because the sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of Ukraine's decentralised transformation should be supported by European countries, particularly Poland, Germany, Austria, the Baltic countries, etc., which have gone through all stages of decentralisation<sup>45</sup>.

Speaking about the sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of decentralisation, it is worth noting that local authorities address the following issues: general air pollution, rising levels of reservoirs and zones; lack of water resources; low level of infrastructure and entrepreneurship development; social inequality; growing number of unemployed and lack of income; economic decline in the national economy.

Therefore, changes in Ukraine today are necessary to ensure effective sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of decentralisation, namely:

- Ensuring public participation in the management of sustainable regional development in the decision-making process.

- Strengthening regional development based on partnerships between private and public structures.

- Using strategic planning methods, taking into account the peculiarities of the development zone.

- Ensuring that all administrative decisions taken are aimed at improving the quality of life of residents of a particular territorial community.

The sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of post-war decentralisation requires a comprehensive approach based on several crucial principles, including improving residents' quality

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<sup>45</sup> Center of expertise for good governance. (2022). Retrieved from: <https://rm.coe.int/cegg-pad-on-ukraine-recovery-strategy-in-lsg-area-ukr-final/1680aef3fb>.



of life, implementing strategic planning adapted to regional needs, strengthening innovative development and partnerships between various sectors, and ensuring broad public participation in decision-making processes. These principles are vital for ensuring sustainable and balanced community development that meets current needs whilst preserving resources for future generations. Concurrently, the war complicates the entire decentralisation process, as the current state of communities varies significantly depending on their proximity to the front line and the extent to which they suffer from military actions. Conversely, there is a clear consensus among Ukrainian practitioners that the reforms of previous years, which endowed local authorities with greater responsibility and resources, contribute to enhancing community resilience in today's challenging conditions.

Specifically, this is evident in the execution of new functions related to ensuring supplies for the deployment of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and internally displaced persons, as well as continuing to provide basic services to community populations severely affected by the conflict. Many interviewees indicated and evaluated this, noting that most local authorities, whether on the front line or under occupation, continue to function. Thus, the Ukrainian authorities have reaffirmed their determination to continue reforms regarding the renewal of the administrative-territorial structure at local and sub-regional levels, as well as addressing shortcomings that have remained unresolved since 2022<sup>46</sup>.

In the short term, existing laws concerning compensation and assistance for internally displaced persons should be reviewed and made more flexible, considering the various circumstances that have occurred over the past years of war. The compensation plan has several limitations that were justified before the invasion but have since lost their relevance.

In such communities, individuals who have been under occupation or military blockade in recent months and have since been liberated, but not fully displaced, often experience destruction of property and sources of income on par with the status of internally displaced persons. The distribution of powers and responsibilities between local authorities and state bodies should be envisaged and clearly enshrined in new laws and regulations applicable at both local and regional levels. Under martial law,

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<sup>46</sup> Center of expertise for good governance. (2022). Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/cegg-pad-on-ukraine-recovery-strategy-in-lsg-area-ukr-final/1680aef3fb>.

it is impossible to amend the Constitution, but this does not preclude discussions to ensure that these changes are directed in the right direction and are formalised as soon as the situation normalises<sup>47</sup>.

Regarding regional development policy, many European countries have experimented with regional governance over the past 20-30 years, sometimes on a universal, sometimes on an experimental basis. If we examine numerous European examples, we can conclude that even with an inclusive culture of decentralisation, there are options: countries can achieve greater decentralisation at the local or regional level, but this need not occur simultaneously at both levels. Decentralisation is necessary for a qualitative, open, and mutually acceptable vertical distribution of power between the new community and elected authorities at the local level.

In regions designated for post-war reconstruction, the pace of actions should be aligned with the need to minimise rational urban spatial planning, taking into account environmental issues, joint planning, and budgets. Long-term policies promoting building insulation, energy consumption reduction, and fossil fuel abandonment should be adopted, even if implemented gradually over years depending on available resources. This approach facilitates obtaining financial support from the European Union, as it has advantages and potential for synchronisation with EU strategy. The issue of human resources in local self-government bodies is important from the perspective of all aspects defined in the reorganisation plan: recruitment, remuneration, motivation, professional prestige, and ethical standards. However, the reform of services in local self-government bodies should be a component of broader efforts at the national level to create public services within the framework of administrative reform. This is because many problems and potential solutions for this are analogous to those implemented at the central level. At the very least, selection, promotion, and remuneration systems are often defined by common internal norms, where precise requirements and coefficients may differ, and rules for combating conflicts of interest and non-compliance are part of the same laws and verification mechanisms<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Government Portal. (2024). Retrieved from <https://www.kmu.gov.ua/news/mistseva-statystyka-formuvannia-polityky-vidnovlennia-ta-rozvytku-hromad-shcho-bazuietsia-na-danykh>

<sup>48</sup> Center of expertise for good governance. (2022). Retrieved from <https://rm.coe.int/cegg-pad-on-ukraine-recovery-strategy-in-lsg-area-ukr-final/1680aef3fb>.

Consequently, the cumulative impact of the factors considered in the study not only reinforces existing trends in public administration of sustainable regional development but also imparts new content, which is manifested in the expansion of the region's role, that is, in deepening the process of post-war decentralisation.

This study has examined the issue of sustainable development within the context of the contemporary decentralisation process in our nation, wherein a significant portion of authority has been devolved to local governing bodies. This shift underscores the necessity for refining the system of public administration, particularly in relation to sustainable regional development in post-war Ukraine. Consequently, the current paradigm of public administration presupposes the existence of a strategic planning system to ensure sustainable regional development. The attainment of sustainable development for territorial communities should be viewed through the lens of collaboration between civic organisations, the public sector, and business entities. Decisions regarding capacity expansion through judicious utilisation of industrial, natural, human, financial, and investment resources, interaction with local enterprises, ensuring environmental sustainability, and expanding innovative investment projects should be prioritised management areas. These are crucial for enabling regional communities to foster their own sustainable development.

The study has analysed and substantiated recent challenges in developing new models of cooperation between central, regional, and local authorities, both during wartime and in the post-war period. This issue is particularly acute for restoring governance in occupied territories, where the process of purging collaborators and addressing the consequences of occupation must occur concurrently. A key criterion in developing a successful model will be maximum stakeholder participation in the decision-making process and the adoption of each decision based on consensus between parliamentary representatives and local self-government.

The research has forecast measures pertaining to the decentralisation process during the period of intensive recovery and the formation of a new security system. These include: protecting and developing democratic procedures, decentralisation, and freedom of speech, which are crucial values for Ukrainian society; drafting a law "On

the Special Period” to regulate the gradual transition from martial law to full restoration of institutional activities in organised society, which should serve as a compromise solution; a temporary shift towards increasing the authority of central government representatives, considering the balance of powers between central and local authorities; improving the functionality model of military administration through legislative changes to address synchronicity issues between community leaders and the military department; strengthening the role of regional juntas in coordinating territorial military government activities; enhancing the administrative functions of territorial collegiums regarding local budget expenditure; introducing a transition period with limited local self-government powers; continuing decentralisation reforms, particularly by introducing the institution of prefects as local administrative supervisors, incorporating best European practices; and revising the Budget Code of Ukraine to account for the needs of internally displaced persons.

The study has outlined that post-victory and after the initial reconstruction phase, constitutional reform will be necessary to regulate local authorities; powers and their relations with the central government. This will mark the completion of decentralisation and the establishment of new institutional mechanisms, featuring a new system of administrative-territorial structures, a list of local taxes, and sources for replenishing local budgets. The updated role of prefects, particularly their administrative supervisory functions, may also be defined at this stage.

The research has determined that in the context of the current decentralisation process, it is also necessary to employ effective public administration mechanisms to achieve sustainable development goals. In our view, it is advisable to allocate four primary mechanisms of public administration for sustainable territorial development: political-economic, organisational-institutional, regulatory-legal, and informational. It has been demonstrated that all mechanisms of public administration for sustainable regional development should be comprehensive and purposeful, and should be utilised at all levels of governance, helping to safeguard the interests of the territorial community itself, its citizens, and economic entities.

The study has established that infrastructure plays a crucial role in the post-war recovery of local communities, contributing not only to the provision of basic services but also to resilience, economic development,

and social stability. During post-war reconstruction, it is important to prioritise innovative development and infrastructure modernisation to enhance quality of life and sustainable regional development. Consequently, post-war infrastructure requires significant reconstruction and repair, which, as proposed, should be implemented on principles of security and sustainability.

It has been ascertained that the sustainable development of territorial communities in the context of post-war decentralisation requires a comprehensive approach, predicated on several crucial principles. These include enhancing residents' quality of life, implementing strategic planning tailored to regional needs, bolstering innovative development and partnerships across various sectors, and ensuring broad public participation in decision-making processes. These principles are vital for ensuring sustainable and balanced community development that meets current needs whilst preserving resources for future generations. Concurrently, the war complicates the entire decentralisation process, as the current state of communities varies significantly depending on their proximity to the front line and the extent to which they suffer from military actions. Conversely, there is a clear consensus among Ukrainian practitioners that the reforms of previous years, which endowed local authorities with greater responsibility and resources, contribute to enhancing community resilience in today's challenging conditions.

It has emerged that the decentralisation reform has not halted and continues amidst full-scale war and the imposition of martial law. Overall, the completion and achievement of planned objectives is a matter of principle, as it demonstrates the effectiveness of decentralisation reforms and allows for the creation of efficient local self-governance and anticipates more successful development during the post-war reconstruction period.

An approach has been proposed to adapt the region's sustainable development to martial law conditions and post-war national economic recovery, taking into account the determinants of economic and social development and the environmental situation under war conditions. These include: strengthening institutional capacity, defence and security; restoration and modernisation of housing and regional infrastructure; restoration and modernisation of social infrastructure; ensuring effective

social policy, employment and social protection of the population; war-oriented foreign economic activity; shadow economy and corruption, among others. To this end, a working group should be established to update objectives, considering sustainable development goals in terms of adaptation to post-war recovery needs and current planning. The effectiveness of public administration decisions made within the framework of specific sustainable development goals should be analysed by monitoring regional development indicators, in the dynamics of which economic, social and environmental indicators are achieved accordingly.