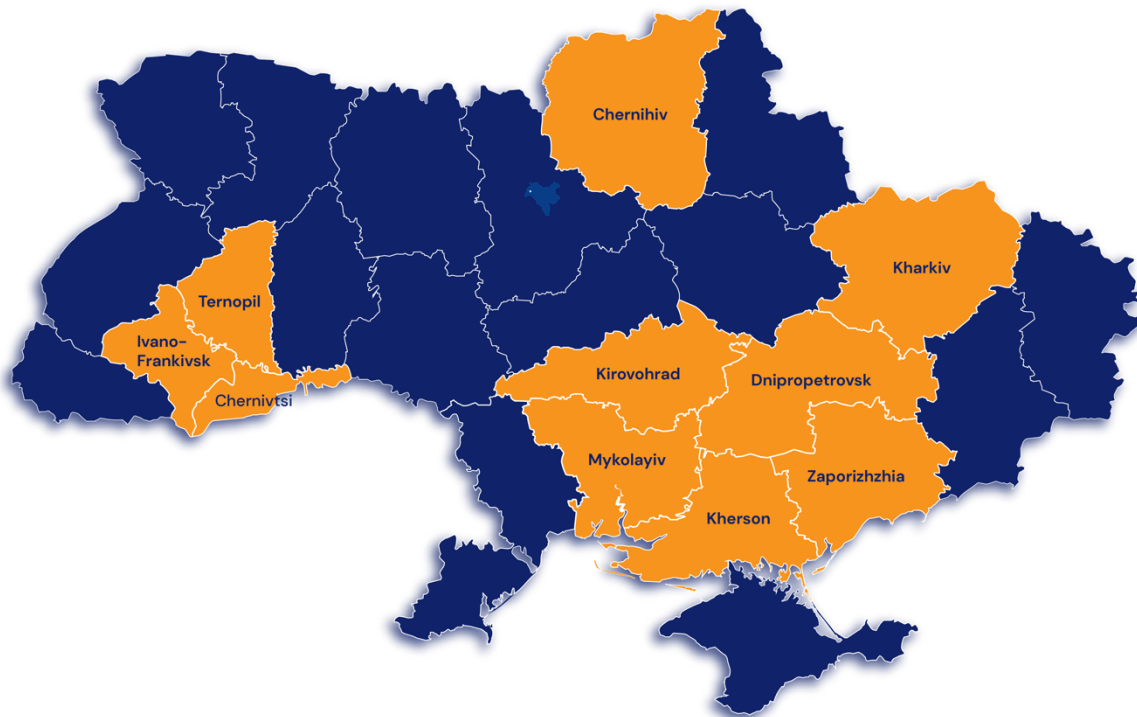


The USAID “Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency” (DOBRE) in Ukraine

Overview

The USAID Program, “Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency” (DOBRE), is a nine-year program, implemented by Global Communities and funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

DOBRE began its work in 2016, and since that time has been helping territorial communities (TCs) to take advantage of the opportunities and meet the challenges presented by decentralization. Over the first six years, DOBRE worked closely with **100 TCs**, pursuing two primary objectives – to help the TCs govern themselves effectively, openly, and accountably; and with the active and effective participation of their citizens in decision-making and community affairs.



Following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, DOBRE redirected nearly **\$1million to eight partner TCs in Western Ukraine** to help them cope with the large influxes of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in those communities.

In the Fall of 2022, USAID awarded the DOBRE Program a three-year extension and additional funding of \$40 million. During these three years, DOBRE is providing comprehensive assistance to **60 TCs** (33 of which have worked with DOBRE previously). The technical assistance is designed help the TCs recover from the war and resume their development. The support encompasses strategic planning; financial management and asset management; service delivery; local economic development; crisis management; modern communications; civic engagement; and capacity building. This technical assistance is augmented with material assistance. DOBRE’s

partner TCs are in **ten oblasts** of Ukraine: Dnipropetrovsk; Chernihiv; Kharkiv; Zaporizhzhia; Kherson; Kirovohrad; Mykolayiv; Ternopil; Ivano-Frankivsk; and Chernivtsi.

At the same time, DOBRE is conducting **an Emergency Response** to provide 67 TCs in regions close to combat zones with material assistance to help them meet their immediate needs. To date, DOBRE has committed nearly \$6 million to the Emergency Response.

The **DOBRE Consortium** is led by Global Communities and includes the following partner organizations:

- **The Ukrainian Crisis Media Center (UCMC)** is implementing a robust communications strategy that strengthens public awareness of the benefits of decentralization, trains stakeholders in effective communications, and maximizes the dissemination of results achieved by TCs and the DOBRE program.
- **The Jerzy Regulsky Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD)** is providing expertise and guidance to TCs in strategic planning and other issues to help TCs recover and move forward.
- **The Malopolska School of Public Administration at the Krakow University of Economics (MSAP/UEK)** is providing instruction to TCs in crisis management and effective approaches to governance in current circumstances.

(During the first six years of DOBRE's work, the Consortium also included the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and SocialBoost. NDI elevated gender equity and promoted women's empowerment, while providing expertise in quantitative and qualitative research design and analysis. SocialBoost promoted innovative and demand driven ICT solutions for inclusive and participatory local governance.)

DOBRE's Technical Assistance

Strategic Planning: DOBRE's partner, FSLD, initially conducted a series of nation-wide webinars on a variety of topics to help TCs recover from the crisis and resume development. FSLD augmented these trainings with extensive written materials and follow-up consultations. FSLD has now launched the second phase of its assistance -- to work directly with DOBRE partner TCs to help them revise and implement their strategic plans to reflect the TCs' current needs and priorities.

Budgeting and Financial Management: DOBRE is advising TCs to help them apply open and effective financial management, asset management, and procurement, with a focus on challenges TCs face in operating under the limitations imposed by martial law. DOBRE has also created a methodology for developing Comprehensive Territorial Recovery Programs for TCs, which is an essential first step towards recovery. The Ministry of Restoration is mandating that DOBRE's methodology be used for developing Recovery Programs. DOBRE has also assisted 18 TCs in developing Recovery Programs and is assisting 14 additional TCs and 3 Regional administrations in developing Recovery Programs. DOBRE is also supporting spatial planning in three TCs.

Service Delivery Improvement: DOBRE helps TCs to identify, in an open and inclusive manner, their top priorities for restoring and/or improving their services to citizens; DOBRE then helps each TC to develop and implement a Service Delivery Improvement Plan to meet its goals. DOBRE supports these initiatives with material assistance to help the TCs implement their SDIPs effectively. By December 2023, DOBRE had assisted 52 TCs in conceptualizing SDIP projects for implementation, including 18 TCs that DOBRE assisted in developing Recovery Programs.

Effective Public Administration in TCs: DOBRE's partner, MSAP/UEK, commenced its work under DOBRE's extension with a series of nation-wide webinars to provide TC officials and staff with instruction on best practices in crisis management. MSAP/UEK has now launched the second phase of its assistance, a program of intensive training for TC officials in best management practices to help their TCs recover and resume development.

Local Economic Development: DOBRE helps partner TCs identify priority projects for local economic development, taking into consideration each TC's resources, needs, and challenges. This includes providing guidance to TCs on how to support local entrepreneurship, accommodate relocating businesses, support cooperatives, attract outside investment, and other matters. DOBRE also provides material assistance to support specific projects. As of December 2023, DOBRE has assisted 52 TCs in conceptualizing LED projects for implementation, DOBRE has also produced a how-to guide for TCs on designing public spaces, drawing on DOBRE's accumulated experience in this area.

Capacity Building: This component includes several initiatives: helping TCs develop cooperation with communities outside of Ukraine; providing instruction to TCs on developing and managing projects; and helping TCs conceptualize and implement joint projects. DOBRE has also provided a grant to the Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities, to help it to effectively support its 700+ TC-members by disseminating knowledge and learning, sharing relevant experience, and advocating TCs' interests and positions at the regional and national levels.

Citizen Engagement and Support for Youth: DOBRE is working through regional civil society organizations to foster the active participation of citizens in local decision-making and community affairs, and to foster social cohesion in the wake of the substantial demographic changes that many TCs have experienced because of the war. DOBRE is also supporting a range of initiatives to help TCs identify and address the concerns and priorities of youth in their communities, create more opportunities for their youth, and help them contribute to their communities and realize personal aspirations.