



Postwar Recovery of Ukraine's Cities: Green Reconstruction and Green Transformation

**Policy Paper
Summary**



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Introduction

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is bringing huge damage to our country: destroyed houses and infrastructure facilities, the entire cities and villages. After all, the lives of millions of Ukrainian men and women have been ruined. The plans of Ukrainian cities have also been destroyed for their strategic development, modernization, and improving the quality of life and green transformation. In the dire situation, there are only two key tasks: to survive and to maintain the independence and identity.

Ukraine is holding on to its optimism. Even with hostilities underway, the country is considering the recovery. Ukraine presented its vision for the postwar reconstruction at the international conference in Lugano (Switzerland) on July, 4-5, 2022. Furthermore, working groups within the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine developed a draft Plan for the Recovery of Ukraine.

Cities will certainly be the basis for the future postwar recovery of Ukraine. However, different cities will face different challenges. For the fully and partially ruined cities, the priority will be to rebuild; the unaffected cities will focus on further growth and transformation.

Since the current vision of Ukraine's postwar recovery is still under development by the Ukrainian Government, international partners, civil society, and expert communities, we can still promote and include green principles into the recovery process, when cities are the full-fledged participants of the process, both in the context of planning, and in terms of the recovery and transformation per se.

The green reconstruction and green transformation of Ukrainian cities is enhanced by two factors. Back in early 2020, Ukraine announced its aspiration to become part of the European Green Deal. In addition to current decarbonisation trends of economy and the integration of environmental and climate issues into all areas of policy-making, economy, and the everyday life of citizens, the European Green

Deal also offers specific tools for cities that will contribute to their green transformation. Instruments such as the European Climate Pact, the New European Bauhaus, the Green Cities Accord, as well as other best practices of EU cities, can be used for both the reconstruction and green development of Ukrainian cities.

In addition, in June 2022, Ukraine received the status of the EU candidate country, which means that we face many new opportunities and the need to bring our legislation in conformity with the EU acquis, in particular in the field of environment and climate change.

All Ukrainian cities faced unprecedented challenges during the Russian aggression in 2022. Many cities have suffered significant destruction. Critical infrastructure of cities and regions was deliberately targeted by the strikes by the Russian Federation. Devastatingly large migration processes impose additional difficulties for the operation and restoration of cities.

In this policy paper, we attempted to analyze the problem of postwar reconstruction and urban development, to identify key challenges for the process of planning the postwar reconstruction of Ukraine. We also suggest new approaches to building the cities of future in Ukraine, such as the green reconstruction and green transformation of cities in the postwar period.

The paper was prepared by the team of the Resource and Analysis Center "Society and the Environment" (Andriy Andrusevych, Nataliya Andrusevych, Zoryana Kozak, Svitlana Romanko), as part of the research project "European Green Deal Tools for Postwar Urban Recovery of Ukraine" funded by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ukraine.

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War-Related and Postwar Problems of Ukrainian Cities

Cities have faced a number of new challenges and problems. For cities directly affected by hostilities, the challenges include the following:

- destruction of critical infrastructure (energy, road, water);
- significant destruction of the housing stock;
- destruction and loss of utility infrastructure (buildings, archives, equipment, etc.);
- departure of residents and personnel (educators, doctors, managers, etc.);
- destruction of enterprises;
- business relocation;
- loss of local tax revenues.

Other cities, that have not suffered significant destruction and are located in the rear, have their own specific challenges:

- significant number of internally displaced persons and the associated challenges (housing, work, integration into the community, uncertainty about their further intentions, etc.);

- risks of new waves of people moving in wintertime from regions where it will be impossible to provide heating;
- limitations on the use of funds of the city budget;
- significant risk of loss and regular disconnections from the main energy grids and infrastructure (mainly, electricity);
- difficulties in the implementation of pre-war strategies and development plans;
- outflow of personnel and residents abroad;
- suspending and/or complicating the implementation of major pre-war projects, including loan-based;
- security challenges (functioning of educational institutions, health care, public transport, shelters).

In addition, all cities function in the settings of major limitations in terms of transparency, openness of data, public participation, or, generally speaking, the limitations in good governance.

Priority Challenges and Tasks for Postwar Urban Recovery

- **Human-centricity** should be a key pillar of postwar urban regeneration. People are a central element in the urban system: cities are created for people, by people and are used by people.
- **Bringing people back** is a key task of the government and of cities. Postwar recovery and urban development have no sense without people. Human capital is a key determinant to the development of cities and of the country. The state and cities shall actively build and impact people's aspirations to return.
- **It is necessary to distinguish between cities that have suffered significant or total destruction, and the cities that have remained unaffected (or low affected).** The needs of different cities are different, that is why their approaches to development and reconstruction shall also be different. The formers require green reconstruction, the others need green transformation in the postwar period.
- The reconstruction of destroyed cities shall be based on a **single vision**. It shall be the green reconstruction of cities.

- The **reconstruction dilemma: “fast and cheap” or “long but modern”** shall be taken as a challenge rather than a verdict. The dilemma may often be resolved and sometimes it is even far-fetched.
- **Reconstruction of the critical infrastructure** during the war shall account for the principles of future development of the city and the country. This type of infrastructure can continue the operation for many decades to go, and impede the energy transition for cities.
- **Small towns** affected by destruction will find themselves in an especially vulnerable situation. The people will not be likely returning there without any additional encouragement.
- A balance must be struck between the fast **“standard” solutions** (such as the rebuilding of housing) and **customized solutions** for communities in the process of urban development.
- **We must not forget about the cities in the rear** aspiring for or requiring green transformation.
- **Support programs for green transformation of cities** that were running in the previous years shall resume.
- **Capacity** is a critical issue relevant for all cities. A systemic approach is required to enhance the capacity of cities for the reconstruction, for their development and for green transformation. One such tool may be the regional offices to support green transformation of cities that should be created in each Oblast capital.

How to implement the vision for the postwar recovery and transformation of cities?

Planning

- Ukraine continues to sway between the first two stages of planning for the postwar recovery: **understanding challenges and searching for solutions**.
- **Planning capacity** to design the future social and economic development of territories is a major challenge. It applies to cities and to the country at large. Cities are not isolated and will depend on the regional development scenarios.
- **National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine** shall receive the new specific mandate to develop further versions of the postwar recovery plan. In our opinion, the mandate will need to include a clear strategic mission to use green postwar recovery approach.
- In the context of cities, **further development of the national recovery plan** shall be based on the set principles and rules such as energy efficiency, zero waste, climate change adaptation, etc.
- Further operations of the National Council for the Recovery shall provide for proper **engagement of cities**. This has not been provided yet.

Search for solutions

- The complexity of challenges faced by the cities means that there are no **off-the-shelf solutions** available. That is why the process of postwar recovery shall include the tools to search for solutions to key issues and challenges arising from the recovery.

- We suggest **creating a Postwar Bauhaus-Ukraine**, a platform for searching solutions for green reconstruction and transformation of cities. The platform may be established similarly to the New European Bauhaus.
- Ukraine and the EU shall start the large-scale program to **engage Ukrainian cities to all European platforms and initiatives** that help cities in their green transformation. Green City Accord, initiatives for transition to circular economy, New European Bauhaus, support for participation in LIFE and Horizon programs.
- The Parliament and the Government of Ukraine shall **provide for new legal framework for solutions** to be developed for green postwar reconstruction and transformation of cities.
- Most cities do not and will not have sufficient financial resources for postwar reconstruction and transformation. A big part of resources will be composed of international aid, reparations, government budget, and private investment.
- Public funds should act as a multiplier to create preconditions for engaging private capital (investment).
- Potential international (multilateral) funding mechanisms should be unified and simplified to the maximum extent, provide for the transparent process of their engagement and use.
- Government support for the postwar development of cities shall rely on and require the plans of green transformation (development) of cities.
- In general, cities must see clear, transparent, and realistic mechanisms to obtain funding for reconstruction and transformation. On their side, cities must offer clear and realistic plans for their own postwar development and build their own capacity to implement complex programs (projects) for postwar recovery.

Funding

- The amount of funding needed and the speed of their use in the process of reconstruction require new approaches to administering financial resources.