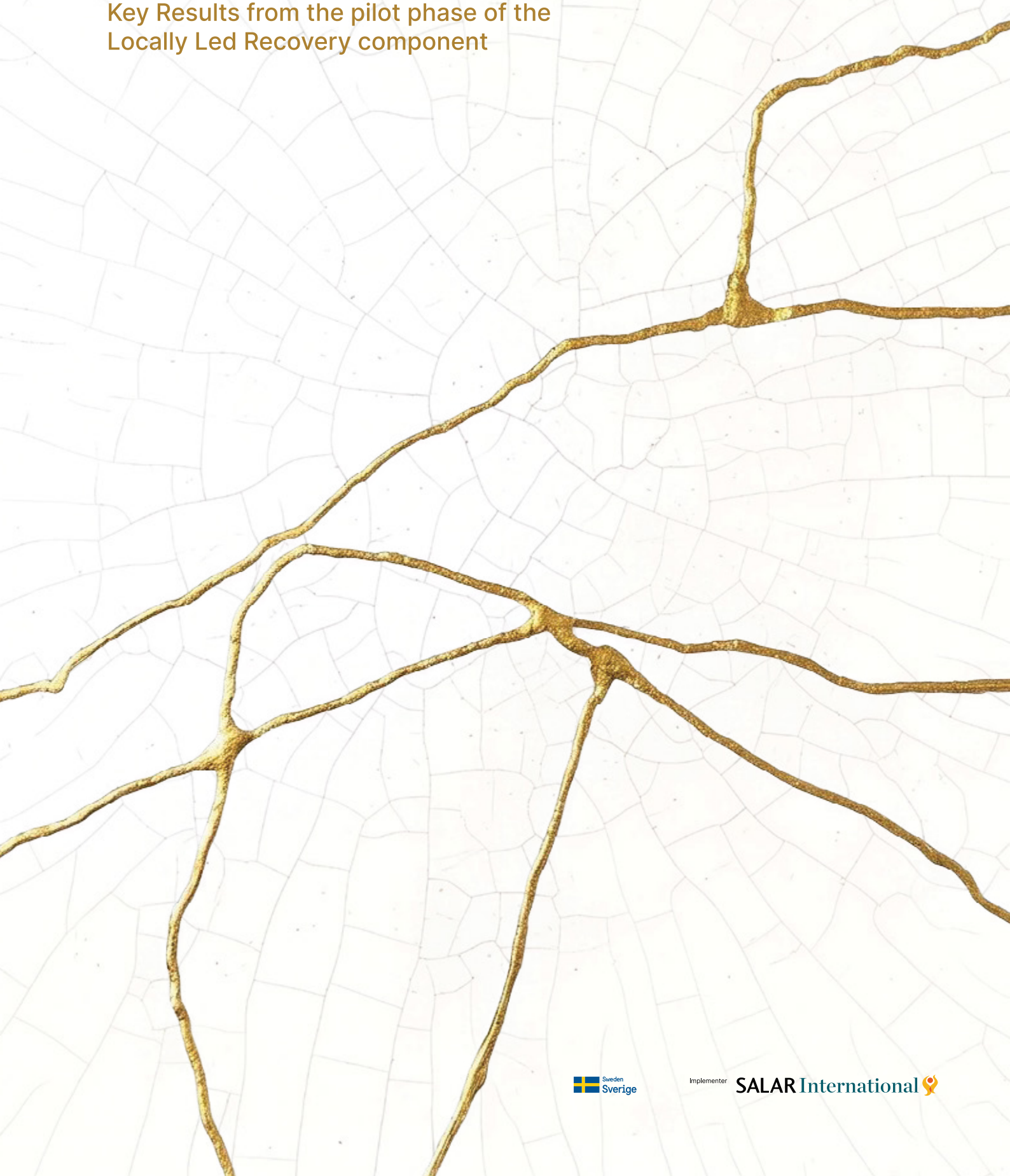
Polaris
Supporting Multilevel Governance in Ukraine

May 2026

STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE, INTEGRATED, AND PHASED RECOVERY IN UKRAINE

Key Results from the pilot phase of the Locally Led Recovery component



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SALAR International works globally to strengthen democracy and good governance at the local level. We focus on the development of well-functioning local and regional administrations. Our vision is a world where all people have the power to shape their own lives in inclusive local democracies and sustainable communities.

The Polaris Programme supports Ukraine in strengthening local self-government, improving multi-level governance, and enabling hromadas (territorial communities) to plan and implement recovery and development priorities.

About the publication: This brief provides an overview of recovery planning efforts in selected hromadas and oblast during the first phase of the Locally Led Recovery component under the Polaris Programme. It does not cover all activities and achievements made. The publication should be read together with the *"Polaris Locally Led Recovery: Supporting Ukraine's Decentralisation through Locally Led Recovery"* brief, which provides a comprehensive introduction and overview of the Locally Led Recovery approach.

Disclaimer: The views presented herein are those of Polaris and SALAR International, and not those of any central government bodies in Ukraine, nor those of the funding partner. Views of local and regional self-governments who were partners in the programme are presented in their respective pages presenting local results.

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Abbreviations and Glossary

Abbreviations

Concept	Integrated Urban Development Concept (in Ukrainian legislation Concept for Integrated Development of the Territory of Territorial Community)
CP	Comprehensive Plan for Spatial Development of the Territorial Community
CRPT	Comprehensive Recovery Program for the Territory of the Territorial Community
DREAM	Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessments
EU	European Union
GIS	Geographic Information System
HLP	Housing, Land and Property
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LLR	Locally Led Recovery
LSG	Local Self-Government
MinDevelopment	Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine
Nefco	Nordic Green Bank
Oblast	Regional Administration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMA	Oblast Military Administrations
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental analysis
PIM	Public Investment Management
RDS	Regional Development Strategies
RURI	Rapid Urban Re-Innovation Training Program
SALAR	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
Sida	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis
TC	Territorial Community (Hromada)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TOWS	Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Strengths analysis
UN	United Nations
WG	Working Group

Glossary

Classification of urban areas: Effective January 26, 2024, Ukraine officially abolished the Soviet-era "urban-type settlement" (Ukrainian: selyshche miskoho typuor SMT) category, reclassifying all 881 such entities into one of three categories: villages (selo), settlements (selyshche), or cities / towns (misto). This de-Sovietization law (No. 8263) simplifies administrative classification to town, village, or city.

Comprehensive Plan for Spatial Development of the Territorial Community (CP): A local-level planning document that includes land-use planning. It defines how the territory should be organized and used, including its functional zoning, public services, road network, engineering and transport infrastructure, land protection, environmental protection, civil protection, and cultural heritage preservation. It also sets out the sequence and stages for implementing development decisions.

Integrated Territorial Development Concept of the Territorial Community: A strategic planning document that can be developed at the request of a local self-government authority, with the involvement of residents and businesses operating or planning to operate in the community. It defines long-term development priorities, including spatial and socio-economic aspects. The document serves as a basis for preparing local urban planning documents and is guided by sustainable development principles. Its goal is to improve quality of life, ensure accessibility and equal opportunities, support social cohesion and business activity, and improve local governance. It is aligned with national and regional development programs and is approved by the relevant local authority.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Citizens of Ukraine, foreign nationals, or stateless persons who are legally present in Ukraine and have the right to permanent residence, and who were forced to leave or abandon their place of residence as a result of, or in order to avoid, the negative consequences of armed conflict, occupation, widespread violence, human rights violations, or natural or man-made emergencies.. IDPs are a key consideration in local recovery and planning.

EU Acquis: The accumulated legislation, legal acts, and court decisions forming the body of European Union law that candidate countries must adopt.

Territorial community (TC): A community of residents of settlements (villages, small towns, and cities) united by shared interests in their livelihoods, who independently, within the limits of the law, address local issues either directly or through local self-government bodies.

Locally Led Recovery (LLR): An approach empowering hromadas to take leadership in war recovery and reconstruction through participatory planning, data-driven analysis, and integration with national/ EU frameworks.

Public Investment Management (PIM): A system for evaluating, prioritizing, and financing public investment projects.

Public Investment Management Reform: Systemic changes in the processes of planning, selection, appraisal, financing, implementation, and monitoring of investment projects funded by public resources, aimed at improving the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of public spending in Ukraine.

Recovery: The process of restoring and rebuilding war-affected communities, encompassing infrastructure, housing, services, governance, livelihoods, and social cohesion, with attention to resilience and long-term sustainability.

Scenario Planning: A participatory method used to assess alternative future development pathways under conditions of uncertainty, such as war, demographic shifts, or EU integration.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): A procedure for identifying, describing, and assessing the environmental impacts of implementing state planning documents, including impacts on public health, as well as considering reasonable alternatives and developing measures to prevent, reduce, and mitigate potential negative effects..

SymbioCity Approach: A Swedish methodology promoting integrated, sustainable, and participatory urban development.

Veterans: Former members of the armed forces who have completed service, including those mobilized during the war. In recovery planning, veterans' needs—such as reintegration, livelihoods, housing, healthcare, and psychosocial support—are a priority to ensure inclusive and resilient communities.


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Foreword:
From Methodology to Impact

Recovery from the profound impacts of war is never a matter of physical reconstruction alone. It is a complex process of restoring institutions, social ties, and the psychological well-being of people. At the heart of the Polaris Programme is the conviction that for this recovery to be sustainable, it must be locally led. Local governments, as the level of governance closest to the citizens, are uniquely positioned to understand territorial needs and translate national recovery frameworks into tangible, inclusive outcomes.

In our work to date, we have operationalized Locally Led Recovery (LLR) as a structured methodology that bridges the gap between immediate crisis response and long-term resilience. This approach is built on the principle that strategic visions must be horizontally synchronized with spatial land-use realities and vertically aligned with regional and national policies. By integrating strategic planning with structured investment prioritization and "learning-by-doing" capacity building, we ensure that recovery is not fragmented but follows a cohesive, evidence-based roadmap.

This publication, "*Strategic Foundations for Sustainable, Integrated, and Phased Recovery in Ukraine: Key Results of the First Phase of the Polaris Locally Led Recovery,*" presents the key results and evidence from the first phase of this initiative during which we partnered with 13 diverse hromadas and the Kherson Regional Military Administration to move from reactive crisis management toward proactive development.

The outcomes captured here—ranging from the adoption of Development Strategies and Integrated Development Concepts to the creation of investment-ready project pipelines—demonstrate that even under the extreme uncertainties of a frontline environment, robust planning is possible. By utilizing innovative tools like scenario planning, our partners have learned to test their decisions against multiple plausible futures, ensuring that the investments made today remain viable regardless of shifting demographic or security conditions.

Furthermore, these results show how local planning can serve as a vehicle for EU integration. By aligning local projects with national systems like the DREAM digital platform and the reformed Public Investment Management (PIM) framework, our partner hromadas are establishing the transparency and procurement standards necessary to access future international financing, including from partners like Nefco.

As we conclude the first phase of the Polaris Programme and the LLR component, these results offer more than just a record of achievement; they provide the iterative foundation for scaling resilient recovery nationwide. We remain committed to the simple but powerful premise that the most enduring recovery processes are those led by the people and institutions closest to the challenges on the ground.

Ryan Knox

Managing Director,

SALAR International

Strategic Foundations for Sustainable, Integrated, and Phased Recovery in Ukraine

The context

The doctor hurries between wards in a local hospital, attending to patients. Tomorrow, a group of military personnel is expected for rehabilitation, so there will be a heavy workload. The farmer starts her tractor and heads out to the fields. She drives carefully to be able to spot any explosive hazard in time, should there be danger. The teacher is conducting a chemistry lesson online via a laptop. One of the students has temporarily turned off her camera to move to a shelter—drones are being loudly shot down in her village. The family that has just arrived from Myrnohrad is settling into a temporary mobile housing unit installed in a park in Lviv, as they adapt after relocating, search for work, a kindergarten for their son, and permanent housing.

What do these and other events have in common? They represent slices of life in a still ongoing war that has disrupted normal life for millions of Ukrainian citizens.

Ukraine's recovery from the effects of the war will be one of the most complex reconstruction efforts in recent European history. Beyond rebuilding damaged housing and infrastructure across the country, recovery must also restore and rebuild communities and their social systems, economic activities, access to basic services and natural environment, as well as—no less importantly—the restoration of social ties and people's psychological well-being.

Local and regional governments are pivotal in this process. Following Ukraine's decentralisation reform launched in 2014, functional and empowered institutions will be critical for effective recovery, the restoration of services and the development of resilient and sustainable communities. Despite significant decentralisation gains, the reform process also exposed disparities in insti-tutional capacities, for example in the fields of strategic planning, data management and investment planning. These capacity gaps became more visible as hromada and oblast administrations took on expanded responsibilities for local and territorial development. At the same time, the recovery process itself will serve as a critical litmus test for Ukraine's reform trajectory—demonstrating whether governance can effectively shift from historically centralised, top-down models toward a more decentralised, participatory, and European-oriented system rooted in local leadership and accountability.

The Polaris Locally Led Recovery Programme

The Polaris Programme, implemented by SALAR International with funding through Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) was launched in 2024 as an initiative to strengthen multilevel governance, service delivery and a dedicated support component on recovery and reconstruction efforts.

The Polaris Locally Led Recovery (LLR) aims to strengthen the institutional capacities and multi-level governance system by reinforcing local and regional authorities' capacities to respond to community needs, provide essential services and take ownership of recovery and development planning.

The Polaris LLR methodology is an agile and iterative framework designed to navigate the complexities of post-war reconstruction by anchoring recovery in evidence-based and participatory planning. Grounded in a "learning-by-doing" model, the methodology provides hands-on technical support to hromadas and oblasts as they develop mandatory and recommended planning documents.

To accomplish this, the LLR methodology integrates four interlinked pillars (Figure 1):

1. **Integrated Planning:** Synchronizing Strategic and Spatial Recovery Planning
2. **Empowering Institutions:** Capacity Building through Learning-by-Doing
3. **Operationalizing Recovery:** Project Identification and Investment Readiness
4. **Scaling Impact:** Knowledge Creation, Policy Dialogue, and Advocacy

This publication provides an overview of some key outcomes and results from the first phase of the Programme, while the overarching approach and methodology is further outlined in *Polaris Locally Led Recovery – Supporting Ukraine's Decentralisation through Locally Led Recovery*.

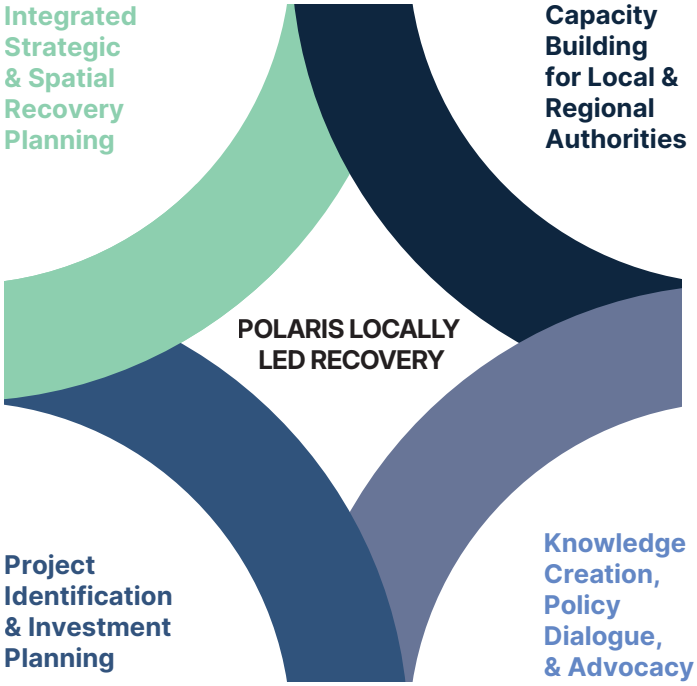


Figure 1 Polaris LLR Four Pillars

Impact from the war

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 exacerbated already existing challenges, for example in infrastructure provision at local level, fuelled by widespread damage and destruction that in particular affect sectors such as energy, housing, infrastructure and transport. In many cases, this damage is spatially concentrated, creating uneven territorial impacts and placing disproportionate pressure on specific communities and service systems. Furthermore, Ukraine is experiencing a negative population growth, triggered by declining fertility rates, loss of lives and population displacement (nationally and internationally), that collectively disrupts communities and their social and economic systems. Large-scale internal displacement has also reshaped settlement patterns, placing additional strain on host communities while accelerating depopulation in others, with long-term implications for service provision, labour markets, and spatial planning. These dynamics also raise critical housing, land and property (HLP) challenges, including issues related to tenure security, restitution, compensation, and access to adequate housing, which are essential to enabling safe return, preventing disputes, and supporting long-term recovery.

In addition, the commerce, industrial and agricultural sectors have been deeply affected by the conflict, impacting the country's overall economy, tax base and revenue as well as opportunities for sustained income and livelihoods. These disruptions have weakened local value chains and reduced fiscal space for local governments, further constraining their ability to respond to growing demands.

The impact from the conflict raises both humanitarian concerns and risks of compromising Ukraine´s long-term development. It also introduces complex, interlinked recovery challenges that go beyond physical reconstruction, including demographic uncertainty, environmental degradation (e.g. land contamination and debris), and institutional strain. Despite these challenges, hromadas and oblasts are at the forefront in responding to the crisis, including by coordinating humanitarian assistance, maintaining essential services and beginning to plan for recovery and reconstruction. This frontline role has required local governments to transition rapidly from service providers to crisis managers, often under conditions of reduced administrative capacity due to displacement and mobilisation of staff. According to the *Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment,*[1] a total of USD 587.7 billion is currently needed for recovery and reconstruction over the next 10 years.

[1] The World Bank, the Government of Ukraine, the European Union, the United Nations, February 2026. *Ukraine - Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA5) : February 2022 - December 2025 (English).* Washington, D.C., World Bank Group.

This scale of need underscores the importance of prioritised, evidence-based investment planning to ensure that limited resources are directed toward the most critical and high-impact interventions.

During the first phase, Polaris LLR engaged with one oblast and 13 hromadas, including rural, settlement, and urban communities - a significant share of which have an agricultural focus with locations in the vicinity of regional centres. The hromadas and oblast experience a negative population growth due to an ageing population, outflow of people, low child-birth and mobilisation of individuals to military service. These demographic shifts are not only quantitative but structural, altering the composition of communities and increasing the share of vulnerable groups, including elderly populations and female-headed households. The local economy is often impacted due to closure or relocation of businesses, loss of job opportunities and reduced purchasing power. In parallel, with the agricultural sector being dominant in most of the areas, there is little or no diversification of the economic base, hence a reduced economic resilience also impacting the budget of local administrations. This lack of diversification limits the ability of local and regional self-governments to absorb shocks and adapt to changing economic conditions, reinforcing pre-existing structural vulnerabilities.

The social and education sectors are impacted for example with less or imbalanced enrolment in schooling, overstretched medical facilities, and less capacity among public institutions to uphold services. At the same time, increased demand for services in certain areas—particularly in host communities receiving internally displaced persons (IDPs)—has created significant imbalances in service provision. Basic infrastructure systems (water, sewerage, waste, energy) together with transport and mobility systems, are partly damaged or destroyed and in need of repair and upgrading. Reconstruction efforts must therefore be closely aligned with land-use planning systems and HLP frameworks to ensure that rebuilding is legally sound, spatially coherent, and resilient to future risks. In many cases, reconstruction needs to go beyond restoration to incorporate modernisation, resilience, and alignment with future standards, including those linked to EU integration. While basic security and safety infrastructure in most cases is in place—although not with full coverage, the current situation needs further improvement. Most local and regional administrations experience, or has experienced, direct military aggression as well as indirect effects from the war. This combination of direct and indirect impacts reinforces the need for integrated, forward-looking recovery planning approaches that link immediate needs with long-term territorial development.

Framing Locally Led Recovery

In responding to the impact from the war, strengthening the institutional capacities and multi-level governance system is central for local authorities' abilities to address community needs, provide essential services and take ownership of recovery and development planning. Locally led recovery is not only a response mechanism but also a critical pathway for consolidating Ukraine's decentralisation reform, ensuring that recovery processes reinforce democratic governance, accountability, and the role of local self-government in line with EU principles.

The Polaris LLR supports hromadas and oblasts in establishing strategic and spatial planning frameworks that guide recovery and reconstruction in the short, medium- and long-term. Further, the LLR component promotes integrated, holistic and future-oriented approaches that in parallel address immediate needs. Locally driven recovery planning requires adequate technical capacities and effective governance systems to translate strategic goals into investment opportunities that respond to identified needs and priorities. This calls for data-driven and evidence-based processes and decision-making where recovery planning is combined with capacity building and preparation of investment opportunities. An integrated approach also calls for alignment of recovery and development efforts on different levels (national, regional and local), as well as, inter-municipal coordination and collaboration. These horizontal and vertical linkages help ensure recovery priorities are integrated and cost-effective, at various scales.

From a development perspective, the Polaris LLR considers future needs, potential risks and enhanced resilience, including sustainability, climate action and EU integration perspectives. To future-proof development, a range of scenarios for recovery and development can be considered when defining overarching longer-term planning priorities while ensuring that immediate needs can be addressed through projects of priority for investment.

In this context, locally led recovery must go beyond planning as a technical exercise, embedding iterative learning, scenario-based approaches, and structured investment prioritisation to translate local needs into coherent, future-proof and financeable recovery pathways.

Key features of the Locally Led Recovery approach

- **Local ownership and participation;** recovery planning processes are led by local authorities and involve active participation from communities, civil society organisations, and local stakeholders.
- **Inclusion and sustainability;** guiding the planning process to ensure that recovery benefits diverse population groups and contributes to long-term resilience.
- **Strategic and spatial planning integration;** using the planning tools as "connective tissue," linking socio-economic goals with spatial land-use and budgetary realities horizontally.
- **Multi-level governance;** synchronising recovery efforts across hromada, oblast, and national tiers.
- **Legislation and policy frameworks alignment;** outputs remain relevant and actionable within Ukraine's planning system.
- **"Future-proofed";** by aligning local planning with EU integration requirements.
- **Building the evidence base;** development priorities are grounded in reliable data and analysis.
- **Scenario Planning;** building plausible future scenarios to ensure robust plans.

Additionally, the LLR approach builds upon five key cross-cutting principles including Human-Rights Based, Gender Equality & Gender Mainstreaming, Anti-Corruption, Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability, and Conflict Sensitivity.

To build ownership and stewardship among partner hromadas and oblasts, the Polaris LLR combines participatory and inclusive planning processes with evidence-based analysis and institutional capacity building that collectively also contributes to increased transparency and accountability.

Developing planning responses for recovery and development

The Polaris LLR adopts a hands-on approach in providing technical support to hromadas and oblasts for recovery and strategic planning. Local and regional authorities are supported to lead data collection, community and stakeholder engagement, undertake analysis, planning and investment prioritisation. In this context, planning responses must move beyond static, sectoral approaches and instead adopt integrated, spatially grounded and evidence-based methodologies that can respond to uncertainty, territorial disparities, and rapidly evolving local conditions. This requires the systematic integration of scenario-based planning and structured investment prioritisation, ensuring that planning outputs are not only strategically coherent but also adaptable to multiple future trajectories and directly linked to feasible, high-impact investments.

The process of developing planning responses adopts an integrated and iterative approach following eight key stages (Figure 2). While responding to the context of each hromada, the approach is anchored in the Ukrainian legislative frameworks aligning to the formal requirements for strategic and spatial planning documents. The outcome of the process from the first Polaris phase resulted in both mandatory and recommended planning documentation, including *Concepts for Integrated Development*, *Development Strategies* and *Terms of References* (TORs) for development of *Comprehensive Spatial Development Plans,* and finally, support in revising the *Regional Development Strategy* for Kherson oblast.

The strategic planning documents are developed by the hromadas and oblasts with support from national and international experts of the LLR component, as well as, by technical experts from professional service providers (private sector and NGOs) and with overall strategic and advisory support from the Polaris Programme. The hromadas and oblast established working groups (WGs) as focal points for the process and engaged on a frequent basis in consultations, strategic sessions, meetings and capacity building activities. Public hearings are conducted to seek both input and validation from stakeholders and the public. The planning documents were developed between May 2025 and May 2026, and subject to formal adoption and approval by respective Hromadas and oblast.

Planning instruments in response to diverse needs

The Polaris LLR Programme supports the development of three types of planning documents across the 13 hromadas, informed by both needs and already existing strategic documentation. Further, Polaris LLR supported the revision of the regional development strategy for one oblast.

Hromada Development Strategy (Strategy)

Mandatory strategic document at the local level, aligning to strategic documents for regional and national development strategies, developed for a seven-year period. The document has a territorial and security-based approach, including strategic and operational goals and objectives for sustainable development. The Strategy is supported by an action plan for implementation, as well as, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The strategy's focus includes among other things management and awareness in the use of the environment and natural resources, improving quality of life and ensuring equal access to basic services, sustainable economy, good governance and evidence-based planning.

Integrated Territorial Development Concept of the Territorial Community (Concept)

Optional strategic planning document defining long-term, intersectoral, spatial, social and economic priorities for development, developed for a ten-fifteen years period. Introduced in 2022, the document helps coordination and linkages with the Hromada Development Strategy and is central to advance local planning leading up to the preparation of a Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan. The Concept helps among other things to define development priorities of the Hromada, promote inclusive and participatory planning processes, address resilience of infrastructure to climate change, risks and natural disasters, promote economic development and business activities etc.

Comprehensive Plan for Spatial Development of the Territorial Community (Comprehensive Plan)

The Comprehensive Plan combines spatial planning and land management documentation and provides the main spatial planning framework at local level, integrating other strategies, plans and documents, and developed with a long-term perspective. Introduced in 2020, the document determines the spatial development and functional organisation of the Hromada, hence helps inform subsequent urban planning and land management, service provision, mobility, engineering, post-war reconstruction etc. The Comprehensive Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Polaris LLR Programme has supported hromadas in the development of Terms of References (TORs) for the subsequent development of the plan.

Regional Development Strategy (RDS)

Regional Development Strategies serve as a long-term plan to meet territorial objectives, integrating diverse policy sectors to enhance productivity, attractiveness and citizen well-being. They aim to reduce disparities, promote balanced growth and to enhance regional competitiveness by leveraging local strengths and challenges. As part of a multi-level governance system, regional strategies support coordination of recovery and development efforts on local level, while ensuring alignment to national objectives and agendas.

Type of Planning Documents Developed by Polaris LLR Partner Hromadas and Oblast:

Development Strategy

- ✔ Khmeliv
- ✔ Kobleve
- ✔ Pavlivske
- ✔ Samar

Concept for Integrated Development

- ✔ Zlatopil
- ✔ Konotop
- ✔ Blyzniuky
- ✔ Oleksandrivka

TOR for the Comprehensive Plan

- ✔ Vilniansk
- ✔ Dymer
- ✔ Novyi Buh
- ✔ Solone
- ✔ Vasylkivka

Regional planning

- ✔ Kherson Oblast

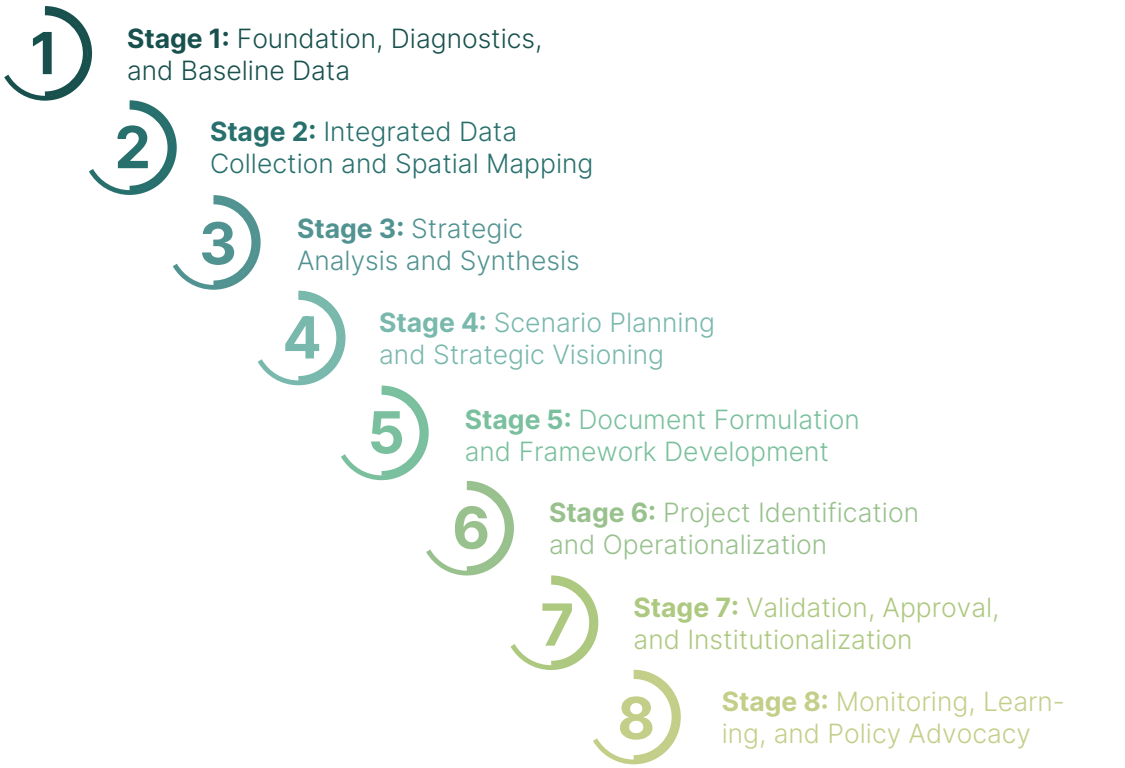


Figure 2 The Polaris Locally-Led Recovery planning process (under Pillar 1) follows a set of generic steps, adapted to each Hromada and type of planning document that is developed.

From planning to implementation

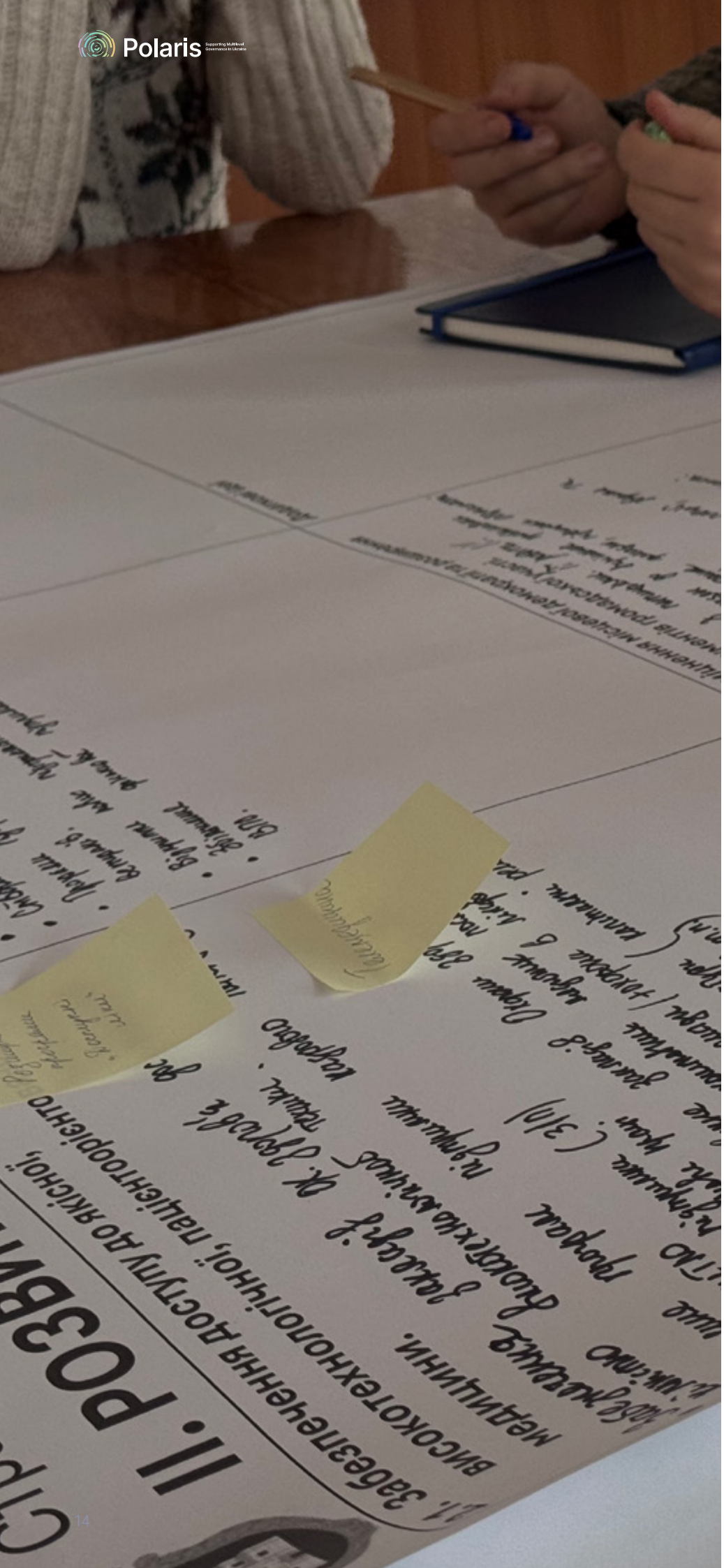
In response to recovery needs as identified through the strategic planning documentation and action plans, a set of projects were identified for implementation. Project identification was also made for those hromadas developing Terms of References (TORs) for Comprehensive Plans (see box on "Planning instruments in response to diverse needs"), although not a formal requirement. Bridging this gap requires not only technically sound planning outputs, but also institutional capacity, clear prioritisation mechanisms, and alignment with financing frameworks to ensure that identified priorities can be translated into actionable and deliverable projects.

The project identification adopted a two-stage filtering and screening process against various parameters, e.g. recovery needs, impact and transformative effect, scalability and replication, climate action etc. Hereby, potential recovery projects were first long-listed and then short-listed. The short-listed projects were further developed into financially viable proposals for investment. In addition to linking strategic planning responses with opportunities for investment and financing, projects have, when relevant, also been linked to the national system such as the Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management (DREAM) digital platform.[2]

A structured approach to investment prioritisation is therefore essential, enabling local and regional authorities to move from broad lists of needs toward a sequenced pipeline of high-impact, feasible projects aligned with strategic objectives and funding opportunities. This approach not only supports the transition from planning to implementation, but also strengthens access to financing—building on targeted investments already mobilised through the Nordic Green Bank (Nefco) with support from Sida, while positioning local and regional authorities to leverage wider national and international funding streams for infrastructure and recovery, including those linked to Ukraine's EU integration pathway.

At the same time, effective implementation requires strong accountability to communities, ensuring that investments reflect local priorities and are delivered in a transparent and inclusive manner.

[2] Ukraine launched the DREAM platform as part of a Public Investment Management (PIM) reform to strengthen transparency and how public funds are planned, allocated, and monitored, in particular for recovery and development investments—and effective preparation for EU accession.



This places a critical role on local and regional authorities—not only in project preparation and due diligence, including technical, financial and social safeguards—but also in enabling oversight mechanisms that involve communities and civil society throughout implementation.

Partnering with Hromadas and Oblasts

The Polaris LLR Programme engaged with hromadas based on a series of criteria, including: commitment of local governments to decentralisation reforms; communities and civil society were willing and able to participate despite war-related disruptions (negative impact); adequate financial and technical capacities were available to sustain planning and implementation, and finally; political and security environment allowing for participatory planning and data collection.

Through an open call, eligibility reviews, interviews and site visits, Polaris entered into an agreement of collaboration with 13 small- to medium sized hromadas primarily located in the Central and Eastern parts of Ukraine. The Programme also engaged with one oblast, the Kherson Regional Military Administration.

Overview of key results and outcomes

The Polaris Locally Led Recovery adopted a hands-on and learning-by-doing model in providing technical support to Kherson Regional Military Administration and 13 hromadas. While the support was anchored in the process of developing planning documents to support recovery, the inaugural phase spanned across all component pillars. With an agile and adaptive approach, the programme responded to both a dynamic and volatile environment as well as to the identified needs across the hromadas and oblast. Some of the key activities and outcomes under each pillar are briefly described below.

Pillar 1 Integrated Planning: Synchronizing Strategic and Spatial Recovery Planning

The first phase of the Polaris LLR supported the development of strategic planning documents for recovery and development for 13 hromadas and the Kherson Regional Military Administration. The types of planning documents developed varied in response to the needs among the regional and local governments and were aligned to the Ukrainian planning system, adhering to both technical standards and procedural requirements. At the same time, Polaris embedded key features and cross-cutting issues as a modality to strengthen the local and regional government's position to respond to local needs, but also with a forward-looking perspective in future-proofing recovery towards enhanced sustainability, resilience and adaption to EU integration. The planning process iteratively followed the eight stages and was adapted to local conditions, needs and priorities. For example, the combination of undertaking SWOT analysis and Scenario Planning proved important to allow the regional and local governments to explore alternative responses to recovery, also with a medium- to long-term outlook.

Key outcomes:

Methodological Standardization: Developed a refined LLR Methodology that integrates socio-economic, demographic, and spatial data into a unified 8-stage cycle, ensuring consistency across mandatory and recommended planning instruments.

Integrated Documents Developed: Successfully supported 13 hromadas in drafting and adopting essential planning documents, including 4 Development Strategies, 4 Integrated Development Concepts (ITDCs), and 5 Terms of Reference (TORs) for Comprehensive Spatial Development Plans. Further, support was extended to the Kherson Regional Military Administration in revising the Regional Development Strategy.

Evidence-Based Diagnostics: Completed demographic projections and financial capacity assessments for all 13 partner hromadas to serve as a baseline for realistic, "future-proof" strategic goals.

Geospatial Foundation: Established a unified geodatabase structure based on National Geospatial Data Infrastructure (NGDI) standards and produced 11 thematic sets of cartographic materials for hromadas to support informed spatial decision-making.

Scenario Planning: Organized scenario planning workshops with local and regional administration representatives over two days, identifying diverging plausible development scenarios.

Regional Integration: Formalized the update of the Kherson Regional Development Strategy (2021–2027), applying scenario-based planning to navigate the extreme uncertainties of a frontline region.

Pillar 2 Empowering Institutions: Capacity Building through Learning-by-Doing

Strengthening both institutional and technical capacities and skills was approached through a variety of approaches. The Polaris LLR's hands-on approach allowed for a direct engagement of professionals and civil servants in the process of developing the planning documents. Technical support and guidance was provided by the Polaris team of experts but also by the service providers (vendors) that were engaged to support the process. Hereby, peer-to-peer exchange, day-to-day mentorship and guidance was extended to representatives of hromadas and oblast. Facilitating exchange among partners, for example around scenario planning, contributed to insights and enhanced awareness on alternative approaches to recovery planning. For strategic planning at the regional level, inspirational seminars (online) provided introductions to planning approaches, tools and best practices. The establishment of inter-disciplinary teams, for example in the Working Groups, allowed for a diverse range of perspectives to be addressed in the process. Building capacity was embedded in all stages of the planning process, from the data collection and analysis stage, to scenario planning and vision formulation, to the development of the actual planning document.

Further, Polaris LLR provided direct trainings for partners in combination with awareness raising sessions. Of particular value were trainings on scenario planning but also on project identification and definition, as a modality to enhance hromadas' preparedness and capacity for implementation of identified projects of priority.

Key for an integrated approach to recovery planning and decision-making, is the data collection and management as it shapes evidence-based approaches to also make informed decisions. The Polaris LLR has supported hromadas on data management, including hardware and consultations in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to strengthen spatially informed analysis and planning.

Key outcomes:

High-Impact Engagement: Conducted over 45 major learning events, including 14 strategic sessions, 12 public consultations, and 4 scenario planning workshops, reaching approximately 1,000 participants across the local and regional governance system.

Technical Infrastructure: Strengthened the digital capacity of municipal staff by procuring and transferring specialized IT equipment (monoblocks and laptops) and deploying GIS software (ESRI ArcGIS) to ensure secure data storage and spatial analysis.

Cross-Cutting Competencies: Delivered targeted webinars and training modules on gender-sensitive data collection, gender-responsive budgeting, and inclusive citizen engagement, ensuring these principles are practically integrated into recovery plans.

Institutional Memory: Built long-term professional skills through a "learning-by-doing" model, where hromada working groups led data mapping and analysis under the mentorship of Polaris experts and specialized vendors.

Building GIS Capacity with Partner Communities

In strengthening the GIS capacity among parter hromadas, a comprehensive assessment was made to map general skills in working with information systems, the level of GIS use, availability of geodata, data management practices, access to state geoinformation resources and existing technical infrastructure. Rather than opting for off-the-shelf solutions, capacity was gradually built through trainings on the collection and management of data, improved technical base and digitization.

Collected geodata: the volume of geolocated data grew from ~18 GB at the start to over 100 GB by the end of the planning process. The GIS materials used were handed over by vendors to the hromadas and will serve as the foundation for further GIS development in the communities.

Provided support: including consulting community specialists and analyzing practical cases while supplying necessary data. To address gaps in GIS skills, cloud web services for geodata handling were identified. Additionally, a dedicated track for GIS training was established, alongside the development of an online platform for learning resources.

Improved technical infrastructure: computer equipment was procured and NAS servers deployed, enabling among most hromadas access to a local "cloud" for centralized data storage and backup. This service is free and with substantial capacity. Experts configured the equipment and will manage it independently going forward.

Took steps toward digitization: identification and listing of analogue materials that requires scanning and georeferencing — the first step toward a digital format. Additionally, issues with digitizing existing data and entering it into registries were identified. A procurement plan was prepared for registering functional zones in the State Land Cadastre.

Through this support, maps, GIS, and geodata has become an essential component of the recovery planning documents. Each hromada received a set of cartographic materials that visualize its specific characteristics and add substantiation to the planning decisions made.

Pillar 3 Operationalizing Recovery: Project Identification and Investment Readiness

In response to identified recovery needs, a structured approach was adopted for developing a pipeline of prioritised recovery projects, including for hromadas where Terms of References (TORs) for the Comprehensive Plans were developed. Derived from the draft planning documents, a two-stage filtering system was applied to identify and evaluate potential recovery projects based on parameters such as impact, scalability, and climate action. This approach initially resulted in a long-list which subsequently was narrowed down to a short list, capturing some 8–10 projects of which 3 were selected to be of highest priority. This process allowed for a deeper analysis of critical sectors, institutional and technical capacities as well as resources required for project implementation at a later stage.

A majority of the identified projects of priority related to the provision of infrastructure and basic services, hence a reflection of the need to recover from the war, but also to ensure enhanced resilience, protection and sustainability in the longer term. While the projects identified covered a wide range of aspects, particular needs emerged in securing energy provision, enhancing energy efficiency and the transition to renewable energy sources, e.g. solar, biomass etc. Other projects were related to water and waste management.

Overall, by linking the strategic planning responses to actionable projects enhanced preparedness for investment, including the DREAM digital platform and other financing mechanisms, e.g. Nefco. Hereby, local authorities were enabled to refine broad needs into a sequenced pipeline of high-impact projects aligning with funding opportunities. The process also helped ensure that identified investment needs meet local priorities in a transparent and accountable manner.

Key outcomes:

Structured Project Pipeline: Developed a two-stage filtering system that moved from an initial “long-list” of needs to a refined “short-list” of 8–10 priority projects per hromada.

Catalytic Investment Profiles: Selected 3 top-priority projects for each community, further developing them into “project cards” with pre-feasibility analysis to ensure readiness for external financing.

Focus on Green Recovery: Prioritized infrastructure projects cantered on energy efficiency, renewable energy (solar/biomass), and modernized water and waste management.

System Alignment: Integrated prioritized local projects into the DREAM digital platform and the reformed Public Investment Management (PIM) framework, aligning them with the standards required by donors like Nefco and Sida.

Technical Vetting: Facilitated a review of water and sanitation projects by the State Agency for Restoration and Development, providing hromadas with expert feedback on technical indicators and implementation feasibility.

Pillar 4 Scaling Impact: Knowledge Creation, Policy Dialogue, and Advocacy

During the first phase, the Polaris LLR supported knowledge generation and advocacy through a variety of interventions and activities. Capturing the experiences from the planning process has contributed to building a repository of knowledge. In turn, this provides the basis for future development of thematic or evidence-based papers, for example on the policy and legislative frameworks, EU integration etc.

Further, Polaris LLR has actively participated in various forums for knowledge dissemination and awareness raising, including roundtables, seminars and dialogues with a diverse range of actors. LLR experts have been invited and regularly participate in the Expert Group on Methodological Support for Strategic Planning of Ukraine's Regional Policy (2028–2034) under the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine coordination. This has allowed for advancing discussions on approaches to planning and recovery planning in general, but specifically on inclusion and public engagement, legislative frameworks and planning procedures. This has often been in cooperation with organisations like UN-Habitat. With Ro3kvit Coalition, Polaris LLR supported the Rapid Urban Re-Innovation (RURI) training program, aiming to enhance the skills of Ukrainian architects and planners on recovery, resilient design and sustainable urban development. The initiative is an example on strengthen professional networks, peer-to-peer learning and exchange around planning practices.

Key outcomes:

National Policy Influence: LLR experts were appointed to the Expert Group on Methodological Support for Strategic Planning of Ukraine's Regional Policy (2028–2034) under the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine coordination, the interagency Coordinating Commission on Regional Development, and the Working Group on the Development of the Urban Planning Code of Ukraine, ensuring local evidence to inform national policy.

International Visibility: Showcased the LLR framework and pilot results at major international platforms, including the UN-Habitat 2025 Forum, "Navigating the Urban Field in Ukraine: Where Are We Now?", Lviv Urban Forum, Rebuild Ukraine (Warsaw), URC2025 (Rome), and the World Urban Forum (WUF12 & WUF13).

Professional Networking: Contributed to the RURI (Rapid Urban Re-Innovation) program to enhance the recovery and resilient design skills of Ukrainian architects and planners through joint workshops and thematic lectures.

Knowledge Dissemination: Co-organized the "Recovery in Action" national conference, bringing together 80+ stakeholders to align approaches on evidence-based local planning and multi-level governance, participation in and co-organization of events as part of the Knowledge Sharing Series project (UN-Habitat Ukraine) aimed at identifying ways to enhance vendors' capacity for recovery planning.

Polaris Program events and those of its partners: Interregional Forum on Development and Recovery for heads of territorial communities in Zhytomyr, organized by the All-Ukrainian Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities to discuss recovery, security, and economic development in the context of war; Polaris Program's regional forum "Building a System of Multilevel Governance" in Poltava, where key components of decentralization policy, the financial capacity of communities and starostas, as well as opportunities for territorial recovery in wartime, were discussed.

Lessons learnt and looking ahead

The learnings are drawn from the first phase of the Locally Led Recovery component, including the process of developing planning documents and other activities. The learnings should be read as indicative and not be regarded as exhaustive, hence more as reflections to be further discussed in the realm of urban recovery planning on both regional and local levels. In view of this, they can also serve as principles that can guide future processes on strategic and urban planning in general.

Recovery planning for enhanced resilience

Resilience in the Ukrainian context must be understood not only as the ability to withstand shocks, but as the capacity of local systems to adapt to uncertainty and respond dynamically to evolving conditions. This underscores the importance of scenario-based planning approaches, which enable local and regional authorities to test strategies against multiple possible futures and ensure preparedness for a range of recovery trajectories.

Emerging from the planning process, the underlying analysis undertaken for each planning document points at the diverse range of aspects that need to be addressed. Providing essential services for communities is central for all hromadas and oblast within the LLR component, for example the need to re-establish and strengthen systems within welfare, health, social care and educational sectors. These systems are inherently interconnected and often operate across administrative and sectoral boundaries, reinforcing the need for integrated planning approaches that ensure coordinated investments and avoid fragmented or suboptimal service delivery outcomes.

Further, restoration and modernisation of various infrastructure systems is key for maintained and improved functionality, including basic infrastructure (water, energy, and waste), housing and environment. While repair and reconstruction of damaged or destroyed infrastructure systems are ongoing, there are still vast needs to address across the hromadas and oblast, in some cases also including demining and management of debris. At the same time, reconstruction efforts are closely linked to housing, land and property (HLP) considerations, including tenure security, land use regulation, and potential disputes, which must be addressed to enable effective rebuilding, support return of displaced populations, and facilitate investment.

The LLR first phase has shown that providing essential utilities – such as water, energy and sewage – is critical not only for meeting immediate needs resulting from the war, but also for advancing a transition to modern systems and standards that meet contemporary requirements, for example the EU. Several hromadas also recognised the relation between such systems and environmental improvements. The environment, including water bodies and other natural areas, has been identified as key to preserving ecological functions, addressing climate change and opportunities for improved health and well-being.

Enhancing resilience includes addressing these and other aspects of recovery, but first and foremost, in ensuring the safety and comfort of inhabitants for example through the provision and access to shelters. In this regard, resilience also implies the ability of communities and institutions to respond to future shocks and uncertainties, further reinforcing the value of integrating scenario-based and forward-looking approaches into planning processes.

A dynamic demographic and economic environment

Most of the LLR partner hromadas and oblast are experiencing demographic shifts including a decline in population. This is particularly evident in smaller and remote hromadas where possibilities to sustain economic activities and livelihoods are more limited, as well as, as a result from an ageing population, individuals mobilised for military service, or due to migration out from the hromadas. Migration trends are typically triggered by security concerns or better economic opportunities elsewhere, for example in regional centres. At the same time, the influx of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), if well integrated, has the potential to contribute to recovery of the local economy and workforce. Collectively, these fluctuations in the population add complexity and strain for the hromadas and oblasts to ensure service delivery without expanded revenue. The demographic shifts, exacerbated by the security situation, typically have a significant impact on the local economy and the generation of local revenue, as well as the appetite for investment among existing

or new businesses. The LLR programme included both a demographic analysis and a financial assessment of each hromada to inform the analysis and strategic responses. However, these dynamics also highlight the need for adaptive planning approaches that can respond to shifting population patterns and economic conditions over time, rather than relying on static assumptions.

Integrated approaches to local recovery

Against this backdrop, the LLR component has demonstrated that local and regional governments are at the forefront in responding to recovery needs, and that adopting integrated, holistic and spatially informed approaches to recovery is needed for a targeted and impactful outcome. This further demonstrates that integrated, spatially informed planning is essential not only for aligning sectoral priorities, but also for identifying where interventions can generate the greatest systemic and territorial impact. In view of the diverse recovery needs, strategies and frameworks should therefore be spatially contextualised in response to local conditions and to ideally arrive at transformative outcomes.

Integrated and holistic approaches not only relate to functional aspects and land use over time, but also require appropriate institutional arrangements and coordination. These experiences point to the need for continued refinement of the planning framework and its legislative underpinnings, particularly to strengthen alignment between strategic, spatial, and recovery planning instruments and clarify roles across governance levels. Furthermore, linking spatial strategies and plans to mechanisms for sustainable financing is key, including own source revenue, state transfers and other external financing modalities.

Ideally, integrated approaches to recovery and development planning span across different levels of intervention – horizontally and vertically. For example, strategies on hromada level should inform subsequent planning and action on settlement, neighbourhood or project level. Similarly, coordination of recovery efforts, when relevant, can cover one or several territories. Supported by spatial representation, such relations are important to inform direction, priorities and a more cohesive approach to recovery across territories.

Despite the complexity of working simultaneously with three types of documents at hromada level and one at oblast level and applying a unified development approach, alignment points were successfully identified, ensuring coherence and preventing inconsistencies even across existing strategic and planning documents within communities. At the same time, the process highlights the importance of embedding capacity development within planning processes, enabling hromada and oblast administrations to build ownership over both the outputs and the methodologies applied.

Finally, in alignment with the national planning framework, the strategic and spatial planning documents target 2027 however with an outlook to 2034 (next seven-years planning period) and beyond. This provides the framework for a phased implementation of identified actions over time.

Linking strategies to investment opportunities

Spatially informed approaches to recovery and development help identify and articulate investment needs, based on data and the spatial profile (analysis) of a particular geographic area. Through a spatial approach, prioritisation of investment needs can be made for enhanced transformational impact. Within the LLR pilot phase, planning for recovery resulted in a set of actionable projects of priority for implementation. A structured approach to investment prioritisation has proven essential in moving from broad lists of needs toward a sequenced pipeline of high-impact, feasible projects aligned with both strategic objectives and available financing mechanisms.

Some of these projects in selection are linked to potential financing mechanisms, for example, under the national digital DREAM platform, external funding opportunities, etc. Strengthening these linkages between planning and financing is critical to ensure that identified priorities can be translated into implementable projects, while also positioning local governments to access a broader range of national and international funding sources. Strengthening spatially informed capital investment planning could help making recovery even more effective with enhanced transformational outcomes.

Positioning local governments for recovery and development

Strengthening the institutional and technical capacities among local governments is pivotal for spatial planning practices to respond to the needs at local level. Further, ensuring effective recovery implies a strong and pro-active coordination and collaboration among various actors. Such

horizontal and vertical coordination supports multi-level governance systems, decentralisation efforts and strengthened local self-governance in achieving effective, cohesive and cost-efficient recovery and development. To support this approach, the LLR component identified and delivered a series of capacity building and awareness raising initiatives to help strengthen and position local and regional governments. A central lesson is that such capacity development should be closely integrated with practical planning processes, ensuring that institutions not only acquire technical skills but also retain and apply them through continued use of tools such as GIS / geospatial data systems.

Creating local ownership in response to local needs

The LLR component sought to establish an inclusive and participatory approach to recovery and development, by actively engaging not only representatives from respective hromadas and oblast (e.g. Working Groups), but also a wider range of stakeholders and the public in the planning process. Hereby, the process has fostered an owner- and stewardship of both the process and its outcomes, assumingly also contributing to enhanced transparency and accountability. The experience also highlights the potential of digital tools for public consultation to broaden participation, maintain engagement under constrained conditions, and institutionalise more transparent and inclusive planning processes.

Innovative and agile approaches in a changing environment

The process of establishing strategies for recovery and development must remain phased, agile and adaptable to effectively respond to continually shifting policy, regulatory, physical, social, and economic landscapes. This reinforces the importance of combining iterative planning processes with forward-looking methodologies that allow for continuous adjustments in response to evolving conditions. Against this backdrop, the concept of “building back better” suggests the need to identify innovative, transformative solutions that can have a catalytic impact on recovery and development, while at the same time enhance resilience and sustainability. Immediate actions may be both necessary and justified in response to urgent needs, however recovery and development in the medium- to long term requires tailoring to local conditions and context on the one hand, and on the other, an adaptation to EU policies and standards.

Exploring alternative scenarios

To explore different potential approaches and responses to recovery, the LLR component introduced a full-fledged scenario planning stage as a modality to inform strategies and plans. This allowed local and regional governments to explore and discuss alternative solutions in response to identified trends and challenges, and define the way forward based on the scenario options. The introduction of scenario planning represents a particularly valuable addition in the Ukrainian context, where uncertainty remains high, enabling more robust and resilient decision-making across different potential future trajectories. Hereby, local and regional governments could also combine different aspects under identified scenarios as a way to enhance preparedness would circumstances change.

An evidence-based approach

The first phase of the LLR programme confirmed that planning for recovery and development need to address complex issues that from a spatial context includes e.g. issues related to systems for land management (land use maps, cadastres, etc.) as well as the possibility to inform planning strategies and decisions based on evidence. The availability of accurate and reliable data is key, especially in dynamic crisis and recovery contexts. In addition to official sources of data from national to local governments, also in acknowledgement of data sensitivity, data from open sources and as well as other (international) organisations were used. In addition, the LLR component adopted various modalities to collect data, for example surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, strategic sessions etc., to access information directly from stakeholders and beneficiaries. The LLR also undertook a demographic survey and financial assessment to further build the evidence to inform the strategies. Ensuring long-term sustainability of these approaches requires continued strengthening of local data ecosystems and institutional capacity to manage, update, and utilise data effectively–including digitalisation of existing data and maps.

Establishing standards for data ecosystems on national to local levels can help accelerate and make recovery planning more targeted and effective. The support of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is here useful to also strengthen the spatial dimensions of recovery and development

planning. Further development of geospatial tools and data systems can support more precise targeting of interventions and strengthen coordination across sectors and territories. In this context, assessments should be made of which data sets are critical and which are of second priority, not to overburden the analysis.

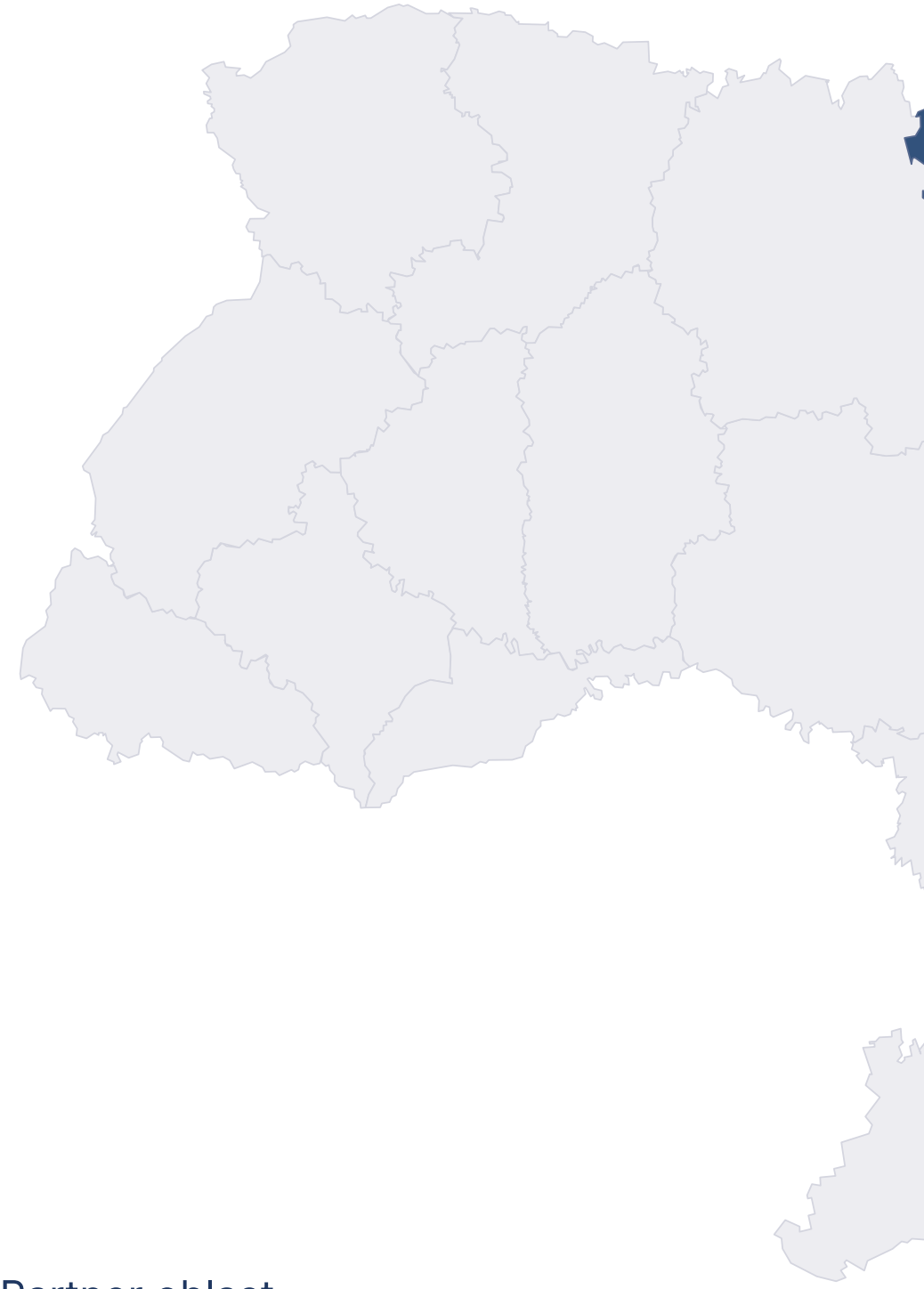
Moving forward

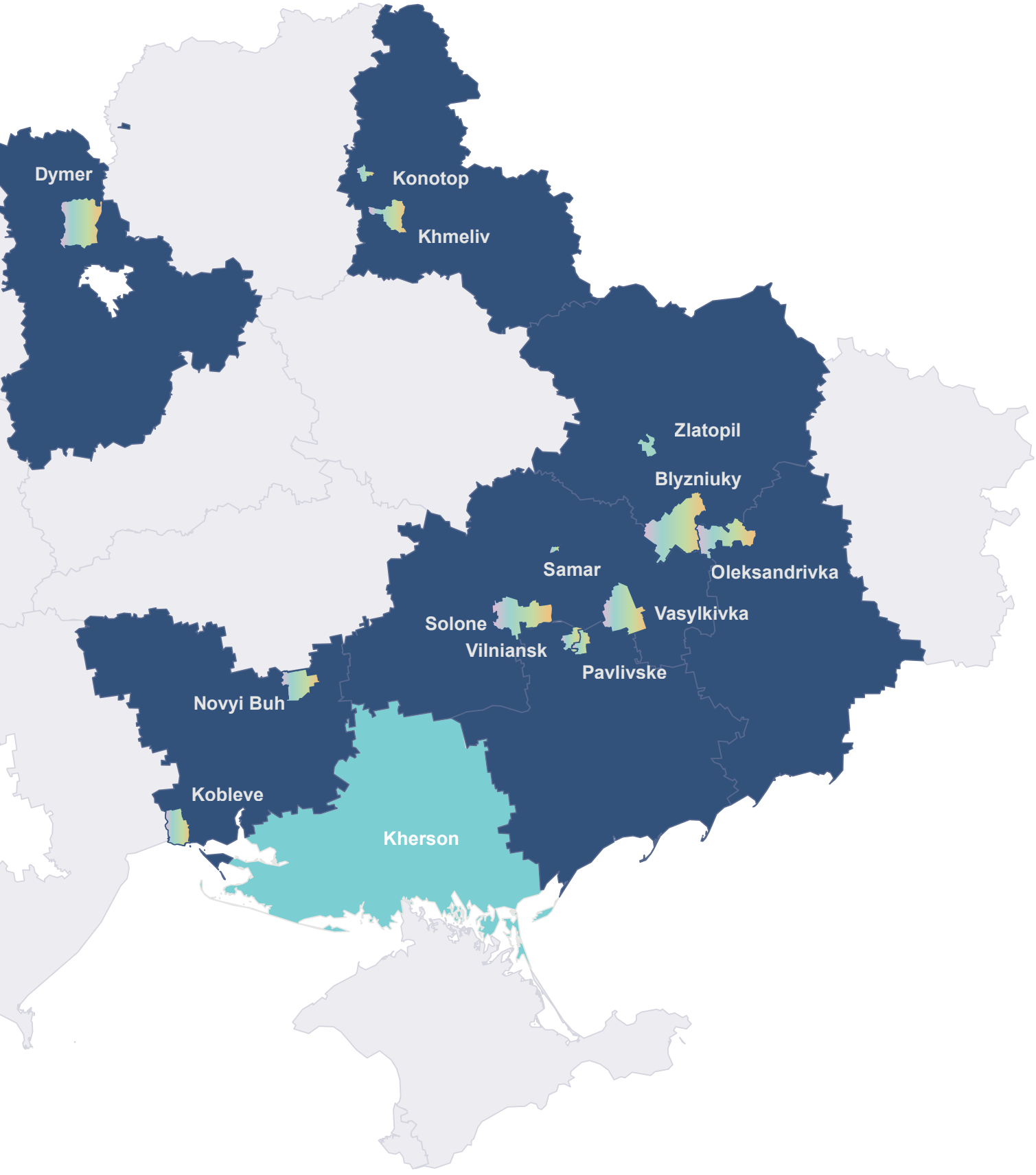
The first phase of the Polaris LLR Programme has laid a robust foundation for scaling up collaboration and support to Ukrainian counterparts on recovery planning, spanning from local government units to regional entities. The experiences and lessons learnt from the first phase can be further developed and fine-tuned to inform integrated, inclusive and participatory approaches to recovery planning. The first phase has also demonstrated the importance of strengthening models for local self-governance and the capacities of local governments to respond to the needs for recovery and development towards a resilient and sustainable future.

Looking ahead, scaling locally led recovery will require continued efforts to link planning processes more systematically with financing, strengthen multi-level governance, and ensure that lessons from local practice inform national policy dialogue and legislative reform. At the same time, embedding integrated, adaptive and investment-oriented planning approaches will be critical to ensuring that recovery contributes not only to reconstruction, but to long-term, resilient and future-proof territorial development.

Polaris Locally Led Recovery Partner Hromadas and Oblast

13 partner hromadas and one oblast · Phase 1, 2024–2026

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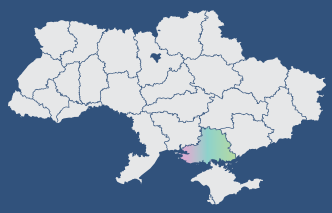


Kherson Oblast

Kherson city

Administrative centre

49 (32 temporarily occupied)

Number of hromadas

1 016 700

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

130 846

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026) in de-occupied territory only – 17 hromadas

28.5k км²

Area

2 189 817k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

35 065

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Regional Development Strategy

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

- Programme of Socio-Economic and Cultural Development of Kherson Oblast for 2026 (implementation ongoing).
- Regional Spatial Plan (2014, horizon 2036)
- Coastal spatial planning scheme (Black and Azov Seas)
- Regional Development Strategy 2021–2027 (approved in 2019)

The Regional Development Strategy is being updated in partnership with the Polaris Programme and aligned with the State Regional Development Strategy.

Planning context

Kherson Oblast has transformed from a strong agricultural and tourism hub into a frontline region facing unprecedented security and humanitarian challenges. Kherson's key assets remain its geostrategic coastal location, the Dnipro delta, and human capital, despite a 73 per cent population decline in the de-occupied territories.

The demographic situation is critical: rapid population ageing, a decline in children under five to 1.7 per cent, and near cessation of natural population growth.

Further, the full-scale war has destroyed the traditional economic base and irrigation systems, leading to acute water shortages and contamination of up to 75 per cent of agricultural land with explosive hazards.

The spatial structure of the region has been significantly transformed due to the occupation of the left bank, destruction of key transport links, and loss of logistical connectivity. Combined with depopulation of frontline settlements, this has led to fundamental changes in the settlement system.

Key drivers for development over the next 10 years will include demining, restoration of logistics infrastructure and ports, reconfiguration of irrigation systems, and incentives for the return of young people. Therefore, recovery planning must be based on adaptation to new hydrological realities and leveraging the potential of veterans and cohesive communities.

Key challenges

The region faces a number of interconnected challenges: ongoing security threats and partial occupation, limited physical access (including to the Kakhovka Hydroelectric PowerPlant (HPP) disaster zone), extensive landmine contamination, significant demographic losses and large-scale internal displacement, imbalanced age structure, and labour shortages.

A limitation for regional planning is incomplete spatial coverage of statistical and administrative data. Martial law has significantly affected the functioning of official statistics and the regularity of data collection.
Due to disruptions in time series and uneven sectoral data availability, planning must rely on flexible, adaptive scenarios, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, prioritising security considerations, gradually verifying data during recovery, and applying specific mechanisms to compensate for "blind spots" in statistics.

Public engagement

40

In-depth interviews, small-group interviews, and focus groups participants

39

Working group members

- To support the process, a working group was established with 39 participants, including: heads of regional departments, representatives of leading universities, research institutions, associations of local governments, and civil society experts.
- Given the security situation, engagement was conducted in a hybrid format (online and offline). Some sessions were held in an extended format with representatives of both de-occupied and temporarily occupied communities.
- As part of updating the Strategy, in-depth interviews, small-group interviews, and focus groups were conducted. Participants included representatives of local governments, social sectors (healthcare, social protection, education, culture), utilities, businesses, emergency services, volunteers, researchers, and NGOs. A total of 40 participants were engaged in these activities.

Development scenarios

Regional development scenarios were developed to inform the strategy, with the security situation in the region identified as the key uncertainty. During a strategic session, participants modelled four future scenarios for the region, reflecting a logical progression from crisis to development:

1. **Crisis (Active hostilities and critical danger):**
   This scenario focuses on strengthening defence functions and ensuring emergency life support under conditions of escalation.
2. **Stable Risk (Frontline status):**
   This scenario assumes adaptation of the economy and social systems to conditions of reduced intensity of threats, while persistent risks remain.
3. **Recovery of territories:**
   This stage begins when active hostilities are no longer taking place in the immediate vicinity of communities, enabling large-scale reconstruction.
4. **Development:**
   A strategic horizon following the achievement of a just peace, where the absence of military threats in the medium term allows the region to realise its geostrategic potential.

The scenarios were developed using the Scenario Canvas tool for analysis of key drivers sensitive to changes in the security environment. This approach made it possible to identify a “shared core”—resilient strategic decisions that remain relevant under any development scenario. It enables a shift from rigid forecasting to adaptive management, allowing Kherson Oblast to respond flexibly to challenges while maintaining a strategic planning horizon up to 2034.

Development Vision

A vision for development of Kherson oblast over the next 10-15 years was identified during the strategic session. Participant discussions, working in focus groups, focused on security, economic growth, reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, and creating conditions for people to return.

Draft long-term vision (up to 2034):

Kherson Oblast has progressed from near-total occupation to a territory of full recovery and growth.

It has become an attractive place where people return, community life is restored, and the economy is functioning. Ukraine's full membership in the EU has created favourable conditions for strengthening institutional capacity, expanding international cooperation, and accessing EU instruments and services.

Kherson Oblast is integrating into the global economic environment and emerging as a major logistics hub in southern Ukraine and the Black Sea region.

The region is investment-attractive and characterised by innovative economic models. It is equipped with modern, high-tech, diversified and resilient infrastructure.

The region plays an important role in ensuring global food security. The oblast has overcome critical water shortages and is reliably supplied with high-quality water. Kherson Oblast is an environmentally safe and attractive place to live.

It is a region that has not only recovered from the war but has used this experience to build a stronger, more modern and resilient economy and to ensure a high quality of life for its population.

Strategic and Operational Goals

The process has to date resulted in draft updated strategic goals of the Regional Development Strategy of Kherson Oblast for 2021–2027:

1

Strengthening comprehensive security, environmental and infrastructure resilience of the region and supporting Ukraine's security and defence forces.

2

Ensuring basic living conditions, supporting the population, and restoring human capital and social cohesion.

3

Developing a competitive and diversified regional economy based on restoring the economic base, adapting agriculture to water scarcity, developing secure logistics, and establishing territories of economic recovery and growth.

4

Strengthening multilevel governance and institutional capacity, enhancing interregional and international cooperation, and ensuring the European integration capacity of territorial communities.

Polaris Support Modality

Throughout the cooperation cycle, representatives from Kherson oblast engaged in a comprehensive package of capacity-building and technical support.

Introductory seminars

Two online seminars were conducted. The first, "*The Role of Regions and Participation in Regional Planning*," introduced participants to multilevel governance mechanisms and participatory approaches at the regional level. The second, "*Regional and Spatial Analysis: From Data to Strategic Insights*," focused on transforming raw data into actionable spatial information. Both seminars were based on international and national practices.

Analytical and methodological support

Support was provided in data collection, systematisation and analysis, including a review of the current version of the Strategy and the development of recommendations for its update. An assessment of data quality and identification of methodological constraints under martial law were conducted.

An approach to sociological research was developed, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, including secondary data analysis, focus groups and in-depth interviews.

Scenario and strategic planning

Expert support was provided for planning under uncertainty. This included developing an algorithm for building development scenarios for a frontline region and facilitating a strategic session on scenario planning, as well as support in updating the strategic vision and defining strategic and operational objectives. As part of the cooperation, methodological limitations of regional planning under martial law were identified, along with a set of tools and approaches that can be applied to support planning processes and capacity development at different stages.

Key achievements

> *We thank the Polaris Programme team for their professional support in updating the Regional Development Strategy of Kherson Oblast for 2021–2027. We appreciate the partnership, responsiveness, and genuine commitment to helping our region recover and become strong, modern, and European.*
>
> *Today, Kherson Oblast requires a clear and realistic recovery and sustainable development plan that takes into account the need to rebuild critical infrastructure; the restoration of the economy on modern, secure foundations; environmental consequences, particularly the Kakhovka HPP disaster; humanitarian and social challenges following de-occupation, and; the need to create new opportunities for returning residents and those who remained. Your support in this process is extremely important.*

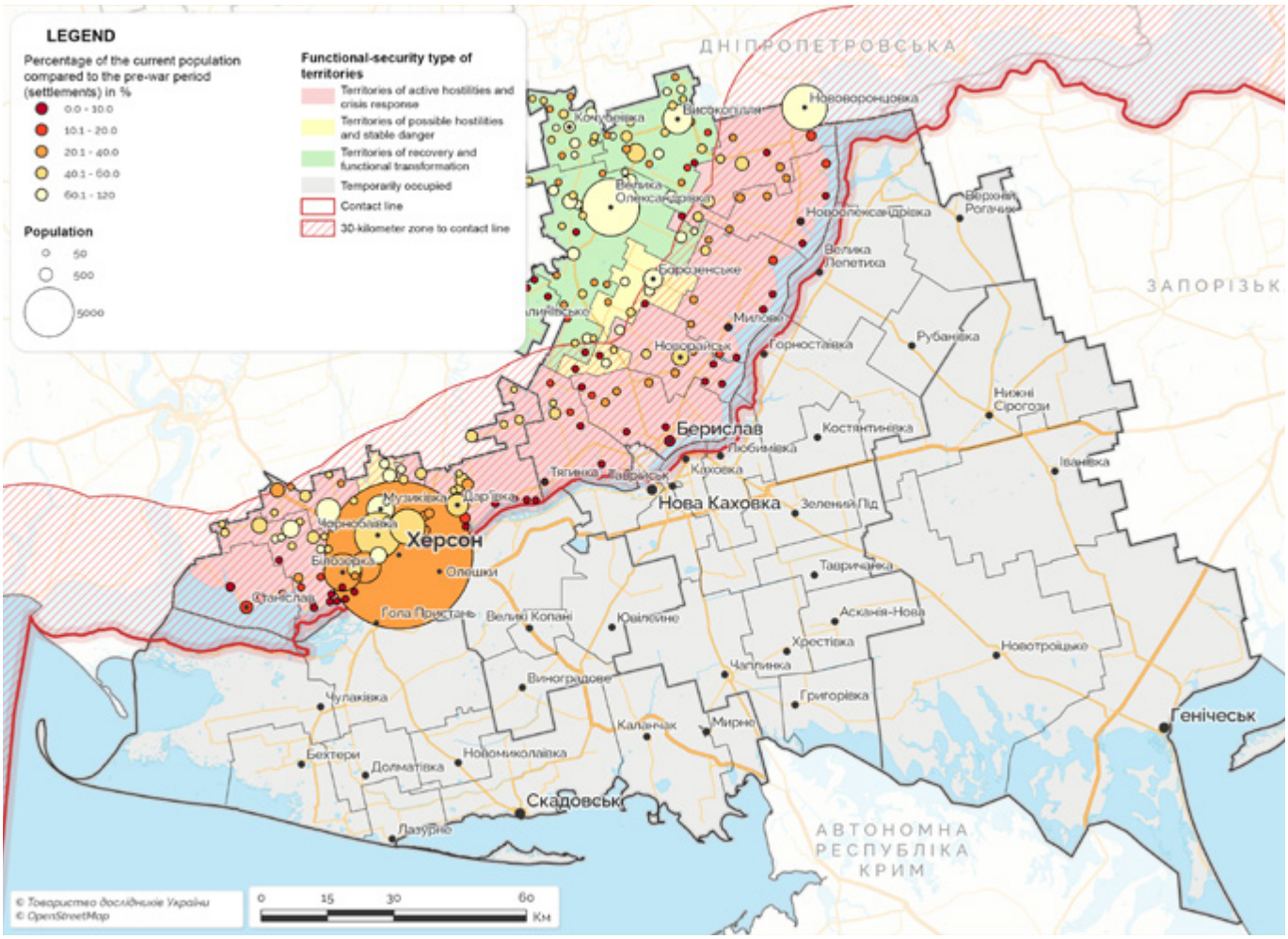
DMYTRO BUTRII,
FIRST DEPUTY HEAD
OF KHERSON REGIONAL
STATE ADMINISTRATION

The process of revising the Regional Development Strategy for Kherson oblast has resulted in a set of key achievements, including:

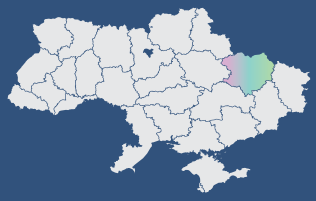
- ✔ Introduction of strategic planning approaches and international experience in multilevel governance.
- ✔ Strengthening analytical capacity, including spatial and regional analysis.
- ✔ Updating the Regional Development Strategy under radically changed conditions.
- ✔ Development of a long-term vision for the region.
- ✔ Establishment of a framework for reintegration into the national economic, social, and humanitarian space after de-occupation.

Kherson map

Map of intra-regional territorial differentiation in Kherson Oblast based on security scenarios and settlement status. The map illustrates a place-based approach to scenario planning, differentiating areas of the right-bank part of Kherson Oblast according to security conditions and demographic characteristics. It provides an evidence base for further strategic planning.



BLYZNIUKY TOWN TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY



Lozova Raion
Kharkiv Oblast

Town of Blyzniuky

Administrative centre

97

Number of settlements

19,316

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

21,915

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

1,377.7 км²

Area

12.6 persons/км²

Population density

520,751k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

4,094

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Integrated Development Concept

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

The Blyzniuky hromada has prepared a Development Strategy, Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan, and updated master plans for selected settlements. The hromada has complemented these statutory documents with additional initiatives developed on its own initiative.

In response to current challenges, the Integrated Development Concept provides a structured framework for sustainable recovery and long-term development. It serves as a comprehensive, data-driven document that guides the hromada towards greater resilience and strength.

Planning context

The Blyzniuky hromada covers a significant part of Lozova Raion and actively participates in its transport and economic system. By prioritising job creation, supporting young people and the working-age population, and expanding non-agricultural activities, the hromada can mitigate negative demographic trends over the 10-year planning horizon.

The hromada places particular emphasis on diversifying its economic base. At the same time, it recognises the urgent need to modernise engineering infrastructure. Increasing climate risks require the introduction of adaptive measures, while the consequences of hostilities continue to exert additional pressure.

The hromada uses its geographical position and agricultural specialisation to shape a spatial structure that integrates logistics hubs, agro-cluster zones, and comfortable residential areas.

Recovery unfolds along two interconnected tracks: addressing the consequences of destruction and building new resilience. The first requires investment in housing and agricultural infrastructure, while the second calls for a strategic rethinking of the economic model. The war has strengthened the hromada's role as a rear area that hosts internally displaced persons and supports the functioning of the regional economy.

Key challenges

- Prolonged war and the risk of escalation in close proximity.
- Population ageing, with more than 25 per cent aged 60+.
- Underdeveloped SME sector, limited employment structure, weak farm cooperation, and insufficient job creation.
- Poor road conditions and lack of regular bus connections between villages, leading to unequal access to services and internal territorial disparities.
- Challenges in water supply and drinking water quality.
- Unauthorised waste disposal and absence of an integrated waste management system.
- High energy losses in municipal services, shortage of shelters, and low inclusiveness of public space.
- Low levels of trust between residents and local authorities.
- Staff shortages in healthcare, education, culture, and sports.
- Risks related to agricultural export disruptions, price volatility, and trade restrictions.

Despite operating in a turbulent environment, the hromada is already identifying strategic opportunities linked to post-war recovery, agricultural transformation, renewable energy development, and access to international assistance.

Public engagement

The community organised the Strategy development process around inclusiveness and transparency.

400+

Survey Participants

3

Public Hearings

40+

Proposals for the Action Plan

- Surveys reached more than 400 residents and business representatives
- The community held 3 strategic working meetings with key stakeholders and 3 public hearings
- Participants contributed more than 40 concrete proposals to the action plan
- The team actively communicated the results of scenario planning to residents
- The process also included expert interviews, focus groups, and field assessments

Development scenarios

The hromada considered two core development approaches: distributing resources and infrastructure across four prospective growth centres or concentrating them primarily in the central settlement. It assessed both options under scenarios of increased financial inflows and potential stagnation.

The hromada defines long-term socio-economic resilience through a balanced spatial development model combined with sufficient financial capacity. At the same time, demographic decline, war-related risks, and structural economic constraints significantly limit inertial development. These factors make both excessive centralisation and underfunded growth-centre models ineffective.

Development Vision

The Blyzniuky hromada builds its development on decentralised resources and governance, prioritising the interests and well-being of its residents.

It positions itself as an innovative hub focused on energy independence and the well-being of every resident. The hromada designs its infrastructure and services to ensure a high quality of life.

At the same time, the hromada actively protects the natural environment and fosters a high level of environmental awareness among its residents.

Strategic and Operational Goals

Strategic Development Objectives include:

1 Creating Infrastructure and Institutional Conditions for Investment and Economic Development

- Enhance the business climate
- Increase the community's investment attractiveness
- Strengthen community identity
- Develop engineering infrastructure projects
- Improve road infrastructure

2 Ensuring High-Quality, Accessible, People-Centred Public Services

- Develop and improve social services
- Improve administrative service delivery
- Enhance the quality and accessibility of healthcare
- Improve education services
- Develop cultural services

3 Establishing an Effective System for Natural Resource and Waste Management

- Protect the environment and promote sustainable resource use
- Develop green entrepreneurship
- Improve waste management systems

4 Preserving and Effectively Using Tourism, Recreational, and Cultural-Historical Potential

- Develop and utilise existing tourism and cultural assets
- Create a competitive tourism product

Key Recovery Projects

Construction of the second phase of the hospital protective facility

The project includes building an underground connection between the underground hospital and the inpatient facility, installing engineering systems, and improving the surrounding area. It ensures safe and uninterrupted access to shelter for patients and medical staff in Blyzniuky hospital.

Solar energy modernisation of educational facilities

The hromada will install solar panels in three development centres (underground and above-ground schools) in Samiilivka, Kryshtopivka, and Dobrovillia villages. This will improve energy efficiency and provide backup power during outages.

Construction of a modular school-shelter in Blyzniuky town

The project foresees a rapid construction (within up to 6 months) of a safe modular school that also functions as a basic shelter.

Project Details

Key Achievements

The Concept is a step towards conscious and responsible planning. It brings together security priorities, people's needs, and a vision for the future.

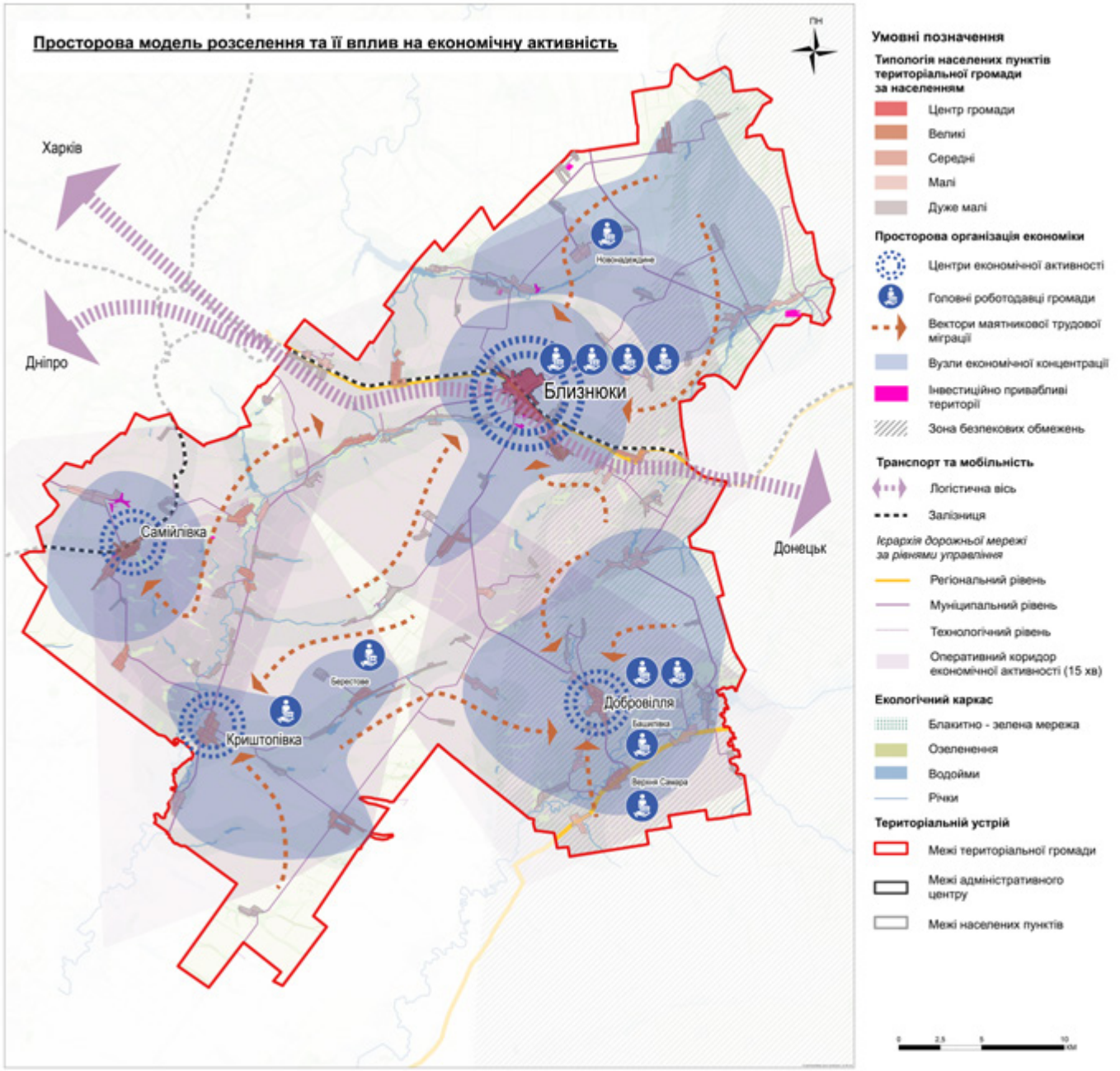
HENNADII KOROL
HEAD OF THE HROMADA

Participation in the programme gave us new tools and approaches to planning, significantly improving the quality of our work and cooperation among all stakeholders.

YULIIA ZVIAHINTSEVA,
PRINCIPAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

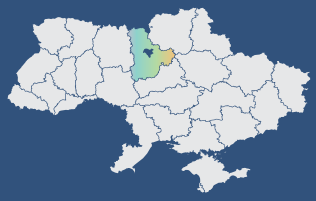
- ✔ The hromada structured its approach to recovery and development planning. With expert support, it introduced tools for high-quality data analysis and clear priority-setting.
- ✔ The hromada strengthened its institutional capacity and actively involved a wide range of stakeholders in the planning process.
- ✔ Comprehensive vision for recovery has been shaped.
- ✔ Development of conceptual approaches to recovery, identification of priority development areas, and preparation of a solid basis for attracting future investment.
- ✔ Coordination between its structural units and strengthened its decision-making processes has been improved.

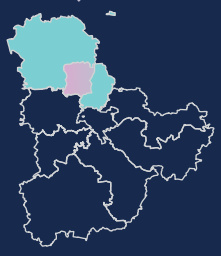
Spatial Development Model of the Hromada



The model of accelerated development based on four growth centres helps reduce spatial disparities, improve accessibility, stimulate economic activity, and strengthen social cohesion.

DYMER HROMADA





Vyshhorod Raion
Kyiv Oblast

Town of Dymer

Administrative centre

34

Number of settlements

20,987

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

19,876

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

963.65 км²

Area

12.6 persons/км²

Population density

378,100k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,564

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Terms of Reference for the development of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

The initiation of comprehensive spatial planning has made it possible to consider not only spatial and land-use aspects, but also broader strategic dimensions of the hromada's development. This provides a structured basis for the subsequent phase of preparing the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan.

The Comprehensive Recovery Programme and the Development Strategy are currently under development. Their provisions will be aligned with the analyses and proposals developed in cooperation with Polaris.

Planning context

The hromada is located in close proximity to the capital and has the potential to become part of the Kyiv agglomeration. However, rather than developing as an industrial and densely populated area, it is expected to evolve as a calm, recreational territory. This is due to its proximity to the Kyiv Reservoir, extensive forest areas, the Teteriv River, and numerous recreational facilities. To the north, the hromada borders the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

The hromada was under occupation and has sustained damage to buildings and infrastructure. In addition, the destruction of the dam in the village of Kozarovychi in 2022 resulted in the flooding of more than 2,500 hectares of land. While water levels have partially receded, a significant area remains flooded. The dam has not yet been restored.

The population is unevenly distributed across the territory: 82% of residents live in just six settlements, while the hromada comprises a total of 34 villages and towns.

More than half of the hromada's territory (55%) consists of forestry land, predominantly state-owned.

According to demographic projections, assuming the end of the war in 2027, the population is expected to decrease by approximately 15% by 2041 compared to early 2025, reaching around 16.6 thousand residents.

Key challenges

- The Kyiv Hydropower Plant, located in Vyshhorod (approximately 20 km from the hromada), may also be a potential target, which could affect water levels in the Kyiv Reservoir and alter the coastal landscape. An additional risk factor is the proximity (30 km) to the border with Belarus. These factors constrain the development of one of the community's key assets – its recreational potential.
- Another defining characteristic is the relatively low population density and its uneven spatial distribution. Settlements with critically low populations are difficult to provide with adequate public services. The issue of potential resettlement to improve access to social infrastructure, as well as reconsidering the role of such settlements, is complex but essential for long-term territorial development.
- The deterioration of technical and transport infrastructure further hampers development, necessitating both rehabilitation and investment.
- At the same time, the community's key development priorities remain the creation of jobs, the provision of high-quality basic services, and access to education for children.

Security risks remain a critical factor. While proximity to Kyiv offers opportunities, it also presents vulnerabilities, as the capital and its surrounding areas continue to be targets of Russian attacks.

Public engagement

60

Participants in Public Hearing

618

Proposal Submissions through an Interactive Map

- The collection of public input is a mandatory stage in developing the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Plan. The Dymer community carried out this process in a meaningful and substantive manner to ensure that residents' views and proposals could be genuinely reflected in spatial planning and land-use documentation.
- An effective tool for this process was an interactive map used to gather proposals. In total, 618 submissions were received and subsequently consolidated into 250 proposals grouped by thematic areas. The largest number of proposals related to public amenities, transport and logistics infrastructure, and tourism.
- A total of 60 residents from various settlements participated in public consultations held in the format of a strategic session to develop the Terms of Reference. The event took place in a shelter at the lyceum in the town of Demydiv.

Development scenarios

Four scenarios were identified by the hromada, among them a "Realistic Scenario"

The hromada is undergoing gradual renovation of engineering infrastructure, although the overall socio-economic situation in the country remains challenging and demographic trends in the hromada are negative.

Under this scenario, the hromada adopts the brand "Green Community – Healthy Living". Investments are directed towards logistics, roadside services, construction materials, renewable energy, tourism, and amateur sports activities.

A portfolio of investment projects is being developed, infrastructure is being modernised, and the quality of municipal services is improving, while expenditure in the social sector is being optimised. Although the population does not increase, residents enjoy improved living conditions. Household and business incomes are increasing, and targeted programmes are being introduced to support families and attract qualified professionals. Implementation relies on a combination of state subsidies, the State Fund for Regional Development, and extra-budgetary sources.

Development Vision

The Dymer hromada develops as a comfortable, safe, and environmentally balanced suburban area within the Kyiv agglomeration, which:

- ensures a high quality of life for its residents;
- creates favourable conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises;
- utilises its natural potential for recreation and tourism;
- establishes clear and transparent rules for land use and development.

Strategic and Operational Goals

Dymer has identified five priority directions for recovery and development.

1 Housing development, public space improvement, and engineering infrastructure

- ✔ concentrating new residential development in settlements with existing or planned infrastructure
- ✔ preventing urban sprawl into natural areas
- ✔ ensuring phased development of engineering networks (water supply, waste-water, electricity) in line with population forecasts

2 Service provision (social infrastructure), including public spaces

- ✔ adapting social infrastructure to demographic and migration trends
- ✔ repurposing existing buildings and areas for new social functions

3 Transport mobility and infrastructure

- ✔ the development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure
- ✔ the expansion of roadside services along key transport corridors

4 Forestry, environment, recreation, and tourism

- ✔ preserving and restoring forest areas
- ✔ establishing clear regulations for coastal and protected zones
- ✔ promoting sustainable green and active tourism with zero harm to the environment

5 Development of production areas

- ✔ identifying suitable locations for industrial and logistics activities
- ✔ preventing unplanned manufacturing development
- ✔ ensuring adequate transport and engineering access

Key Recovery Projects

Energy independence of the municipal sector through renewable energy

Installation of alternative energy systems (solar panels, inverters, batteries) at critical infrastructure and educational facilities to ensure uninterrupted service delivery, work of facilities and population support during power outages.

Revitalisation of the cultural centre in Demydiv

Modernisation of the cultural centre with thermal upgrading, energy independence, and accessibility compliance. The project includes the creation of a veterans' hub, media centre, and a multifunctional community space.

Comprehensive modernisation of water supply and wastewater systems

Addressing critical issues of water supply and wastewater management through reconstruction of 20 km of networks, iron removal in water treatment, reduction of losses, improved energy efficiency, and enhanced reliability of services.

Project Details

Key Achievements

VOLODYMYR PIDKURHANNYI
HEAD OF DYMER HROMADA

Our approach and vision have broadened. We previously focused on concrete issues; we now also consider more abstract aspects, which enables more effective planning and forecasting of the community's future development.

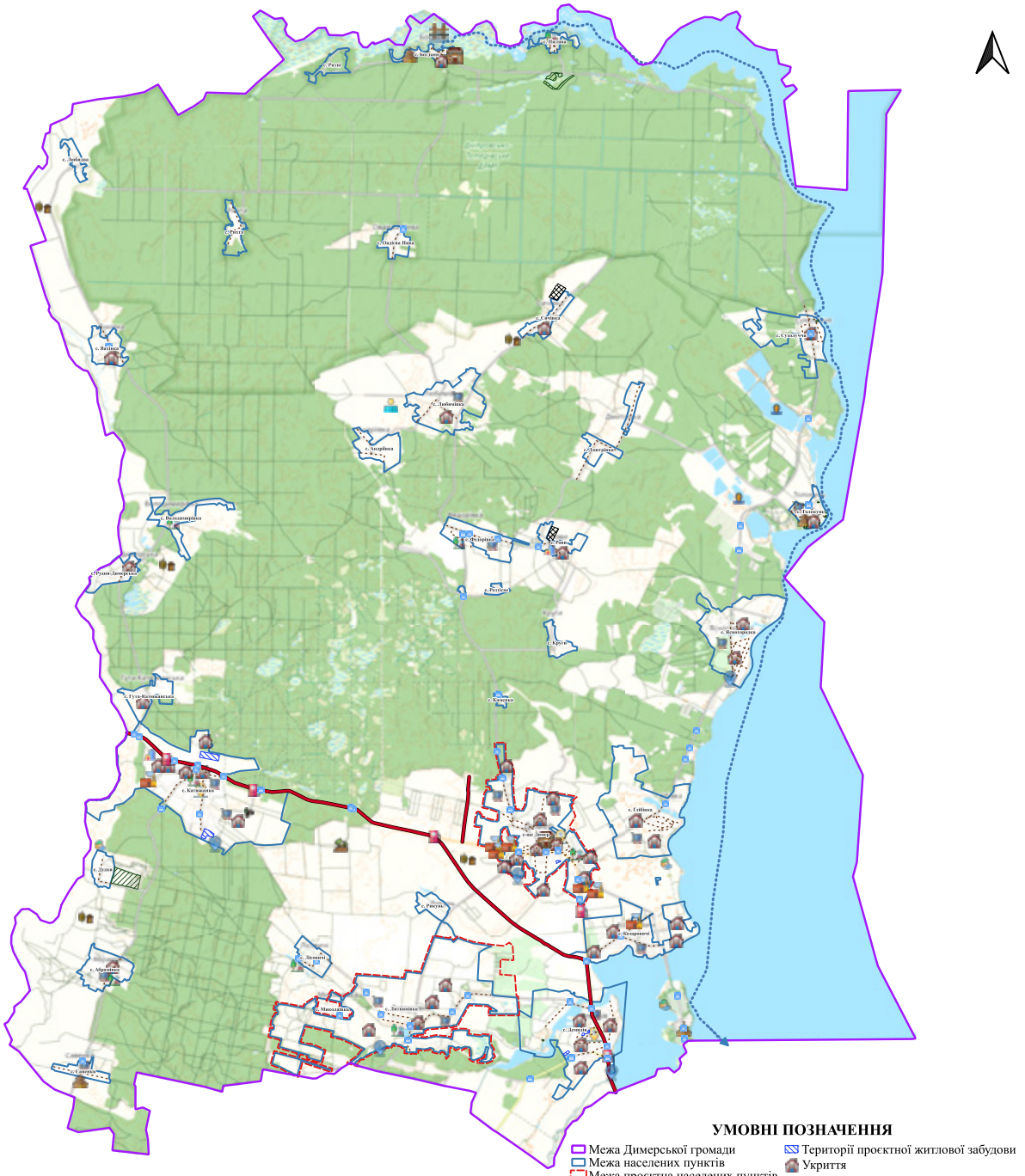
The primary outcome of the cooperation has been the high-quality preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Plan. With expert support from "BlomInfo" and the Polaris Programme, the document was developed not as a formal requirement but as a substantive planning tool, combining meaningful public participation with full compliance with regulatory procedures. The process involved the collection of extensive baseline data from relevant authorities and an unprecedented volume of public input. The experience of conducting a genuinely effective strategic session was particularly valuable.

Dymer Project Solutions Map

ДИМЕРСЬКА СЕЛИЩНА ТЕРИТОРІАЛЬНА ГРОМАДА

ФОРМУВАННЯ ЗАВДАННЯ НА РОЗРОБЛЕННЯ КОПЛЕКСНОГО ПЛАНУ ПРОСТОРОВОГО РОЗВИТКУ ТЕРИТОРІЇ

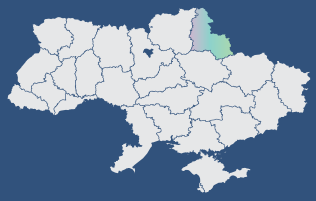
СХЕМА ПРОЕКТНИХ РІШЕНЬ РОЗВИТКУ ТЕРИТОРІЇ

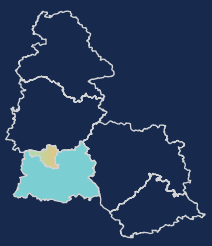


Map of the current situation and key project proposals collected from residents and incorporated into the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Plan.

Polaris BLOM

KHMELIV HROMADA





Romny Raion
Sumy Oblast

Khmeliv Village

Administrative centre

25

Number of settlements

388.2 км²

Area

14.03 persons/км²

Population density

93,260k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

560

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Development Strategy

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

5,705

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

5,600

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The Khmeliv community has developed and is implementing a Recovery and Development Plan, which defines priority needs, key infrastructure restoration measures, population support, and economic stabilisation in the current context.

At the same time, the Development Strategy and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are being prepared, marking a transition from reactive responses to systematic, long-term planning.

Planning context

The Khmeliv Rural Territorial Community is a small agrarian hromada in Sumy Oblast, comprising 25 settlements with a population of approximately 5.6 thousand residents. It is characterised by low population density, a dispersed settlement pattern, and a strong dependence on agriculture as the economic base. A key feature is its favourable location near the city of Romny, with established transport connections that create potential for economic integration and business development. The hromada possesses significant natural resource potential, including fertile soils and forest-steppe landscapes, as well as strong social capital, reflected in a high level of self-organisation and volunteerism, further strengthened during the war.

Key challenges

- The local economy remains insufficiently diversified and highly dependent on the agricultural sector.
- A significant issue is the infrastructural isolation of remote and sparsely populated villages, including Kosarivshchyna, Kharchenky, Yarove, Shkumatove, and Khreshchatyk, which are located at considerable distances from the administrative centre and have limited transport connectivity. The poor condition of roads further constrains internal integration.
- The war has increased pressure through the arrival of IDPs, population losses, and rising social needs. An additional challenge is declining household incomes due to falling agricultural prices.

Key challenges include ongoing population decline and ageing, labour outmigration, and workforce shortages exacerbated by mobilisation.

Public engagement

30

Participants in open Working Group Meeting

- Public engagement in the preparation of the Development Strategy combined both offline and online tools.
- A working group meeting was held with approximately 30 participants, including community representatives, local authorities, and experts. Online meetings were organised with starostas, officials, and entrepreneurs, alongside public announcements and the collection of proposals via the official website and social media.
- Additional outreach targeted youth engagement. This approach ensured broad stakeholder coverage and the inclusion of diverse population groups in the strategic planning process.

Development scenarios

Scenario planning identified two key drivers shaping the community's future: the pace of Ukraine's European integration (rapid or delayed EU accession) and the security context (frontline or rear-area location).

The combination of these factors resulted in four alternative development scenarios. Two were selected for further elaboration:

Scenario 2

Delayed EU accession combined with a frontline context, representing a risk scenario characterised by demographic decline, reduced economic activity, and a focus on basic resilience;

Scenario 3

Rapid EU accession combined with a rear-area context, representing the target scenario, focused on investment attraction, infrastructure modernisation, development of processing industries and services, and integration into the European community.

Development Vision

The Khmeliv hromada envisions itself as a modern, safe, and environmentally clean community with strong human potential, developed infrastructure and production, high-quality services, and digital governance.

It fosters tourism development and provides a comfortable environment where residents live well, work productively, and confidently advance along the path of European integration.

Strategic and Operational Goals

The Development Strategy is based on three strategic objectives:

1 Economically developed and safe hromada

- Operational Objective A.1. Economically developed and investment-attractive community;
- Operational Objective A.2. Safe community;
- Operational Objective A.3. Modern municipal infrastructure.

2 Socially inclusive and comfortable living environment

- Operational Objective B.1. High quality of life and comfortable living conditions for residents;
- Operational Objective B.2. Inclusive and resident-friendly environment.

3 Sustainable and environmentally clean hromada

- Operational Objective C.1. Sustainable development and effective governance;
- Operational Objective C.2. Environmental safety and environmental protection.

Key Recovery Projects

Modernisation of the water supply system of the Khmeliv community with energy independence and treatment

The project foresees a comprehensive modernisation of centralised water supply systems through the introduction of energy-efficient and autonomous solutions. Planned measures include the upgrading of 21 boreholes, installation of solar power plants to supply pumps, implementation of water treatment and iron removal systems, as well as automation of system management (dispatch control). Additional components include network expansion in the villages of Kharchenky and Yarove, and the installation of fire hydrants and reservoirs. The project will ensure reliable access to high-quality drinking water, reduce energy dependency, improve environmental safety, and establish a foundation for further infrastructure development across the community.

Energy-efficient greenhouse complex of the municipal enterprise “Khmeliv-Ahro”

The project foresees the establishment of a modern year-round greenhouse complex with a total area of 4,000 m² for the cultivation of vegetables and flowers. The facility will be equipped with a biomass-based heating system (wood chips), drip irrigation, LED supplementary lighting, automated climate control, a solar power plant, and a rainwater harvesting system. The project will create 12-15 permanent and up to 15 seasonal jobs. It will enhance food security, generate added value within the community, and is expected to achieve payback within 5-8 years.

Lean and energy-independent Khmeliv community: wood biomass processing system

The project is aimed at establishing a comprehensive system of energy self-sufficiency through the processing of wood biomass. It foresees equipment modernisation and an increase in wood chip production from 500 m³ to 12,000 m³ annually. The system will be based on the use of local raw materials (cemeteries, shelterbelts, agricultural residues, and cooperation with forestry enterprises), alongside the creation of a mobile harvesting unit. The project will enable the community to eliminate the need for purchasing firewood, reduce budget expenditures, improve the environmental condition of local territories, and introduce a support programme for vulnerable groups through fuel provision. It also includes the development of inter-municipal cooperation and the provision of services to neighbouring communities.

Project Details

Key Achievements

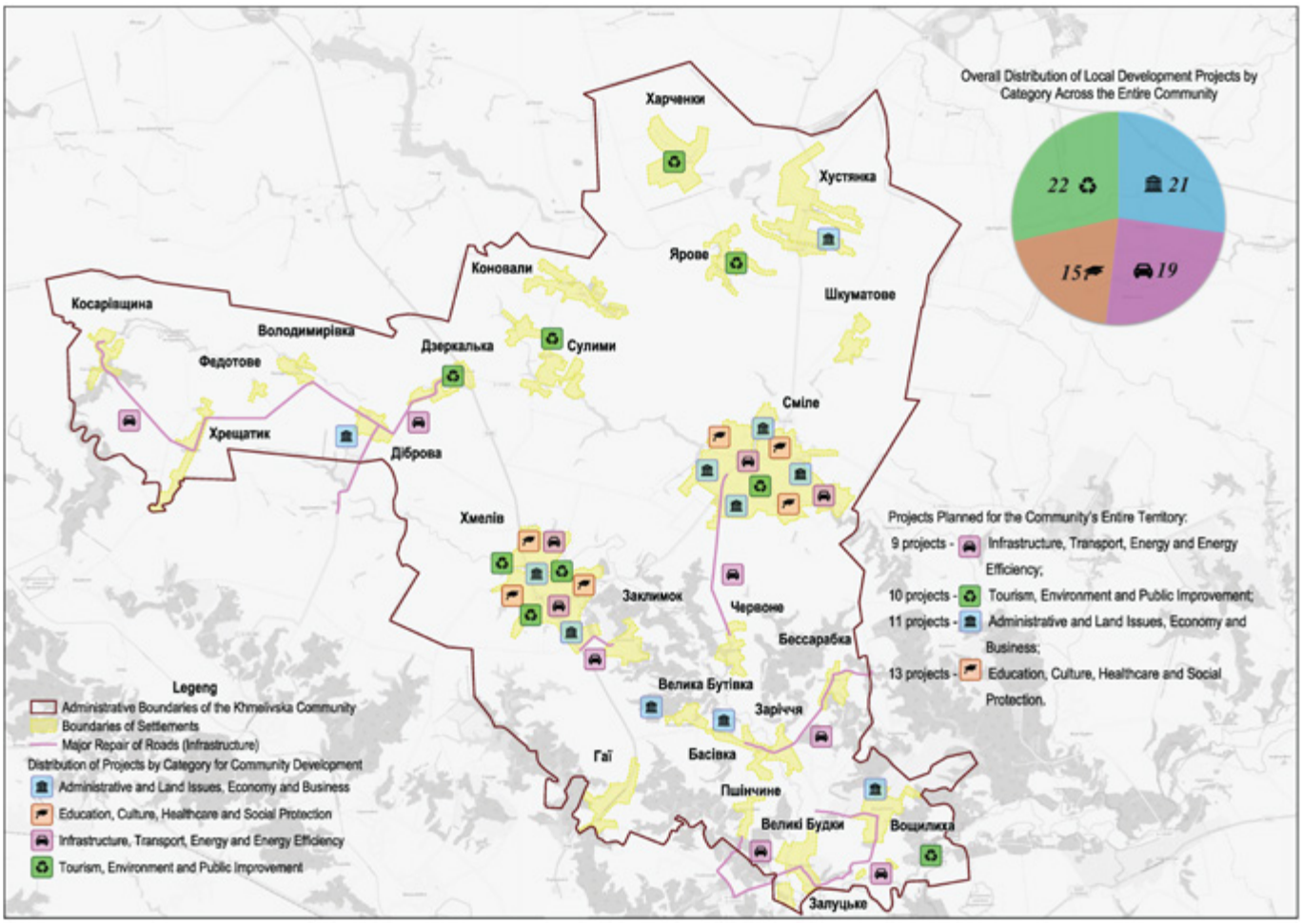
Partnership with Polaris is important for the community in terms of introducing modern approaches to strategic planning in line with the requirements of current Ukrainian legislation. Through this cooperation, we are not only developing strategic documents but also strengthening the professional capacity of the team through participation in training activities, workshops, and forums. This enables more informed and higher-quality management decision-making. It is important that all outputs are developed in line with the principles of sustainable development and the needs of the community. Such an approach provides a solid foundation for the community’s effective and systematic development.

NATALIIA BALIURA
FIRST DEPUTY HEAD OF THE
KHMELIV RURAL COMMUNITY

Key outcomes of cooperation with Polaris include the launch of a structured process for developing the Hromada Development Strategy, enabling a systematic approach to planning, priority-setting, and vision-building. An important achievement was the implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which ensured the integration of environmental considerations into development planning. Institutional capacity has improved, with enhanced knowledge, better decision-making quality, and clearer prioritisation. The process also ensured alignment of strategic documents, including integration of the Recovery Plan, and expanded stakeholder engagement in planning processes.

Spatial Layout of Projects and Measures

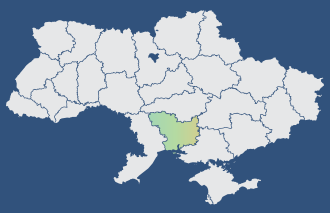
SCHEME FOR THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF MEASURES UNDER THE ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE KHMELIVSKA RURAL TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

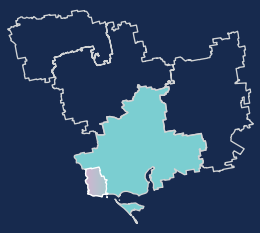


The map presents the spatial distribution of priority development projects and measures across the territory of the Khmeliv community. The projects are grouped by key thematic areas: infrastructure and energy, economy and governance, social sector, as well as environment and tourism.

The vast majority of projects are concentrated in the administrative centre and larger settlements, as well as along key transport corridors. At the same time, a number of projects are of a community-wide nature and are not tied to a specific location, as they affect the entire territory of the community or require further specification of their location at subsequent stages of planning.

KOBLEVE HROMADA





Mykolaiv Raion
Mykolaiv Oblast

Village of Kobleve

Administrative centre

12

Number of settlements

8,115

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

8,823

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

416,2 км²

Area

21,2 persons/км²

Population density

160,853k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,364

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Development Strategy

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

- Development Strategy of the Kobleve Village Council of Mykolaiv Raion, Mykolaiv Oblast, for the period 2021-2027 (currently in force)
- Municipal Energy Plan of the Kobleve Rural Territorial Community until 2030
- Environmental Safety and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy of the Kobleve Rural Territorial Community until 2030
- Draft Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan of the Kobleve Rural Territorial Community of Mykolaiv Raion, Mykolaiv Oblast (at the stage of public consultation)

The updated Development Strategy, prepared with the support of Polaris, occupies a central position within the hromada's strategic planning framework. It represents an updated version of the existing Strategy, taking into account current challenges, including the consequences of the war, demographic changes, economic and social transformations, as well as the need for recovery and increased resilience.

Planning context

Recovery planning for the Kobleve community is based on adaptation to wartime conditions and the utilisation of its key assets: access to the Black Sea, the Tylihul Estuary, the M-14 highway, and a developed wine industry (JSC "Koblevo"). Over the next ten (10) years, priorities include ensuring coastal safety through demining and restoring access to the sea, diversifying the economy from seasonal tourism towards agricultural processing and renewable energy, developing human capital through the integration of internally displaced persons and the retention of youth, as well as strengthening institutional capacity through effective cooperation with international partners.

The community benefits from a favourable location near Mykolaiv, significant tourism and recreational potential, 34.4 thousand hectares of agricultural land, and a developed wine-making sector. Experience in cooperation with donors and a strong governance team create favourable conditions for economic diversification, logistics development, and investment in renewable energy.

At the same time, the war has had a substantial impact on the community: restricted access to the coastline has weakened the tourism sector, population outflow has driven demographic changes, and the arrival of internally displaced persons has increased pressure on the social sector. Security risks remain a determining factor, constraining investment and long-term development despite active cooperation with international partners in the field of recovery.

Key challenges

Security concerns

Security and mine contamination. Restricted access to the sea and mine hazards prevent the functioning of the tourism cluster (Kobleve, Rybakivka), which previously constituted the main source of income.

Budget deficit

A sharp decline in revenues from tourist taxes and related sources necessitates the development of new economic models, particularly in agricultural processing.

Environmental risks

There is a need to protect the coastline and the ecosystem of the Tylihul Estuary under conditions of limited resources.

Deteriorated infrastructure

There is a critical need for the modernisation of water supply, wastewater systems, and energy networks to ensure the functioning of settlements.

Integration of IDPs.

More than 1,200 displaced persons increase pressure on healthcare and education systems, requiring the construction of permanent housing and the creation of employment opportunities.

The recovery of the hromada is based on a transition from purely seasonal tourism towards a sustainable agricultural and energy model with a strong emphasis on security.

Public engagement

The process of developing the Strategy was based on principles of inclusiveness and transparency.

400+

Survey respondents

45+

Stakeholders participating in Strategic Sessions

60+

Project proposals collected

- Surveys covering more than 400 residents and business representatives;
- Strategic sessions: three working meetings involving more than 45 key stakeholders (councillors, activists, entrepreneurs);
- Proposals: more than 60 concrete ideas collected for the action plan;
- Tools: expert interviews, focus groups, and online platforms for collecting feedback and revisions.

Development scenarios

Key trends influencing the development of the community have been identified, including demographic decline characterised by population outflow (particularly among youth and skilled workers), declining birth rates, and population ageing; access to external resources for infrastructure and investment; and security challenges linked to proximity to areas of hostilities.

For medium-term planning, two principal scenarios have been developed:

Realistic scenario

Reflects the current development trajectory under conditions of continued access to external resources alongside a negative demographic trend. Its impact includes gradual income growth, population ageing, labour shortages constraining economic development, and limited effectiveness of infrastructure projects due to demographic factors. The key strategic challenge is the reallocation of resources to stabilise the demographic situation.

Optimistic scenario

Assumes stabilisation of the security situation, population return, and increased investment, marking a transition from adaptation to recovery. This scenario would support increased civic engagement, economic diversification, systematic implementation of infrastructure projects, and strengthened environmental initiatives. The key challenge lies in maintaining strategic focus on this vision during decision-making processes.

Development Vision

The Kobleve hromada is a safe, investment-attractive and environmentally sustainable agro-recreational hub. The vision envisages a diversified economy (viticulture, energy, year-round tourism), modernised infrastructure, and a high quality of life. The hromada integrates the potential of internally displaced persons, fosters human capital development, and functions as a cohesive territory where innovation is combined with careful stewardship of the marine coastline and estuarine ecosystems.

The Kobleve hromada is a green, sun-rich and thriving hromada.

A space of hromada between people and nature, comfortable for living, recreation, and development.

A hromada of sustainable and competitive economic growth: a resort that blends the rich character of grapes with the freshness of the sea breeze.

An open and welcoming hromada for global partnerships, where everyone – from children to veterans, from residents to visitors – feels at home.

Strategic Directions

The Kobleve community has defined the following objectives to guide recovery and development:

1 A COMMUNITY FOR RESIDENTS

Enhancing quality of life and social cohesion.

- ✔ Ensuring basic conditions for a dignified and safe life for all residents.
- ✔ Improving accessibility and quality of public service.
- ✔ Strengthening social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

2 A COMMUNITY FOR BUSINESS

Developing a sustainable, competitive, and resilient economy with high added value.

- ✔ Development of human capital and the labour market.
- ✔ Development of economic specialisation.
- ✔ Promotion of entrepreneurship and investment attractiveness.

3 A COMMUNITY FOR GUESTS AND PARTNERS

Development of tourism, strengthening partnerships, and enhancing visibility.

- ✔ Development of the tourism and recreational ecosystem.
- ✔ Branding and increased recognition of the community.
- ✔ Development of inter-municipal and international partnerships.

Key Recovery Projects

Water supply and wastewater system

A comprehensive solution aimed at improving water supply and wastewater management across the entire community.

Modern waste management complex

Includes the construction of a solid waste sorting line, modernisation and procurement of municipal equipment, and the establishment of a closed-loop waste management system.

Energy modernisation of the Kobleve Lyceum

A project aimed at ensuring energy independence, reducing heating costs, and improving learning conditions. It includes an energy audit, thermal insulation of façades and roofs, installation of a combined heating and cooling system, modernisation of the gas boiler house, and replacement of heating systems with fan coil units.

Project Details

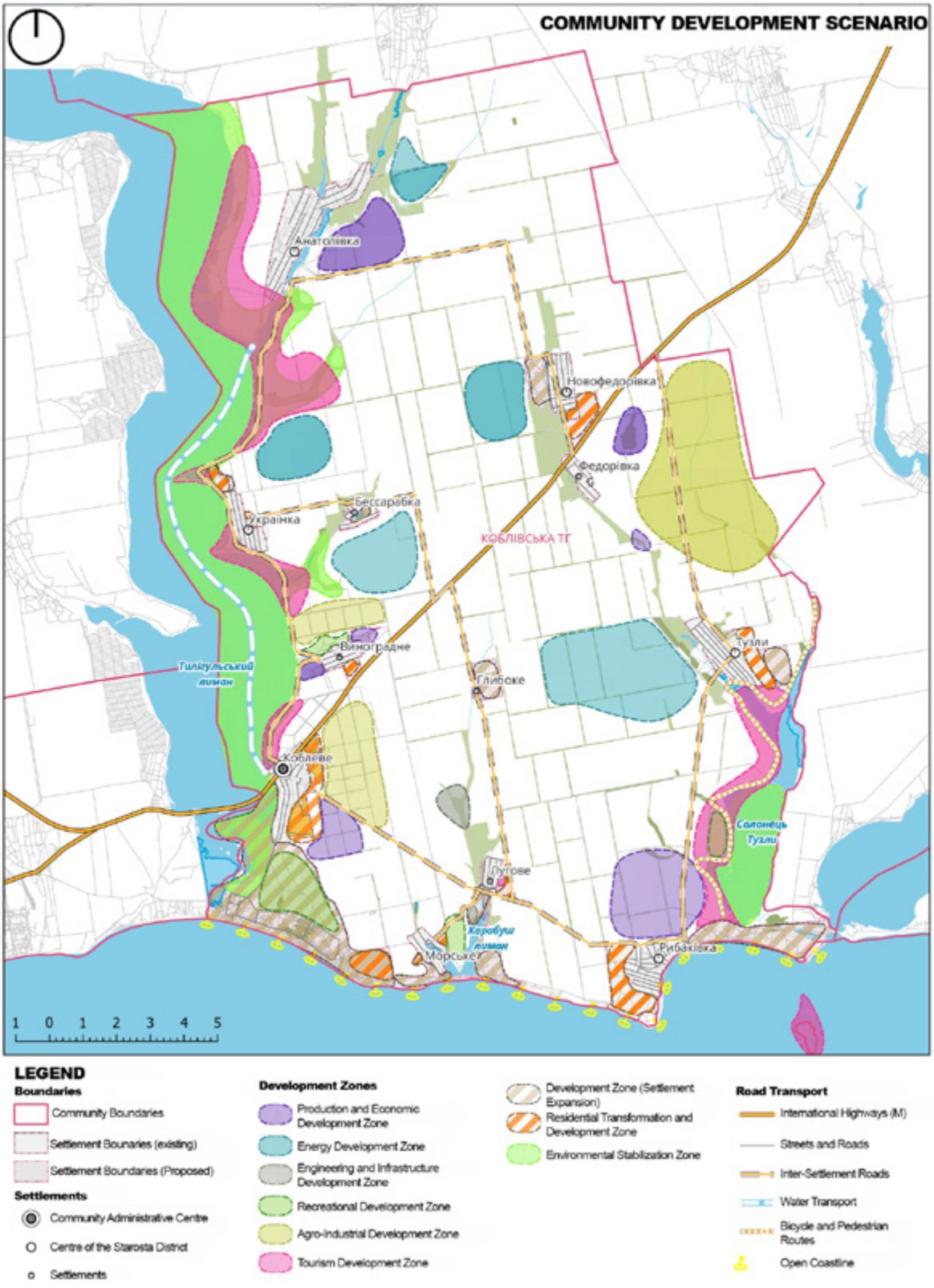
Key Achievements

VOLODYMYR PANYCH
HEAD OF THE KOBLEVE HROMADA

Support from Polaris has been timely and critically important for our community. At a time when the war has fundamentally reshaped our priorities, we have received not only expert assistance but also a clear understanding of how to move forward. The updated Strategy and spatial planning work enable us to take a comprehensive view of development, combining recovery with long-term planning and making more informed decisions. This forms the basis for building a resilient, safe, and attractive community for living and development.

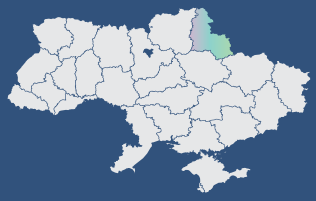
Cooperation with Polaris has transformed the hromada's approach from reactive responses to strategic recovery management. Through broad stakeholder engagement and expert data analysis, an updated Development Strategy has been prepared, aligning spatial development with the needs of internally displaced persons and businesses. The key outcome is the establishment of a structured portfolio of investment projects in housing and utility services, security, and agricultural processing, positioning the community as a transparent and potential partner for international donors.

Optimistic Development Scenario of the Community



The development scenario defines a territorial organisation model focused on economic diversification and the restoration of the community's recreational status. The spatial framework includes existing and planned settlement boundaries, with the administrative centre located in the village of Kobleve. The map identifies priority zones for industrial, agro-industrial, and energy development, as well as areas designated for infrastructure modernisation. The recreational and tourism framework encompasses maritime and estuarine areas, with provisions for the establishment of safe and accessible coastal zones and residential transformation areas. Environmental sustainability is ensured through designated ecological stabilisation zones. The transport system integrates major highways, internal road networks, waterways, and a network of newly planned pedestrian and cycling routes.

KONOTOP HROMADA



Konotop Raion
Sumy Oblast

City of Konotop

Administrative centre

4

Number of settlements

87,403

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

67,720

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

102.9 км²

Area

658 persons/км²

Population density

887,819k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

3,771

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Integrated Development Concept

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

The Konotop Territorial Community has already approved a Development Strategy to 2030, a Comprehensive Recovery Programme, a Local Energy Plan, and a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan, among other documents. The Integrated Development Concept brings these sectoral and strategic documents together into a single spatially oriented development vision. In practice, it translates strategic priorities onto the territory, ensuring consistency between policy objectives and their spatial implementation.

At the same time, the Development Strategy and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are being prepared, marking a transition from reactive responses to systematic, long-term planning.

Planning context

The administrative centre, Konotop, forms a compact yet highly functional urban core, combining industrial capacity with an operational tram network. Its position at the intersection of the Kyiv-Sumy-Kharkiv and Kyiv-Shostka corridors makes it one of the key logistics hubs in north-eastern Ukraine. This role has remained significant both prior to 2014, throughout the period of full-scale invasion, and continues to define the city today.

The hromada's economic potential builds on a combination of industrial capacity and transport and logistics functions. Enterprises in machine-building and processing industries of national importance create a solid foundation for economic modernisation, revitalisation of industrial areas, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The hromada demonstrates a high level of governance and institutional capacity. It actively operates a Recovery Office, a Multifunctional Hub, and a Creative Industries Development Centre, while also maintaining a well-developed pipeline of projects for implementation in the short and medium term. At the same time, demographic trends shape the hromada's development trajectory. Residents aged 65 and over account for a substantial share of the population (28-30%), and projections indicate a decline to around 62,000 inhabitants by 2041. While this constrains the potential for extensive economic growth, it also creates a clear strategic direction centred on expanding the service sector, strengthening healthcare and social care systems, and ensuring a safe and inclusive urban environment.

In the post-war period, the hromada has the potential to emerge as one of the principal recovery centres in north-western Sumy Oblast, with a strong emphasis on safety-oriented planning and resilient infrastructure.

Key challenges

- Demographic decline continues to deepen due to mobilisation and migration, reducing the available labour force and creating shortages of skilled workers, medical personnel, and technical specialists.
- Ageing infrastructure and worn-out networks require urgent modernisation. Delays increase the risk of destabilising critical infrastructure, particularly in the context of ongoing damage and power outages.
- A large privately owned industrial enterprise in the city centre has ceased operations, creating a rupture in the urban fabric; however, the site also presents clear brownfield redevelopment potential.
- Digital gaps persist, with fragmented sectoral statistics and geospatial data at the community level limiting effective planning and decision-making.
- The community competes with others for limited resources, including investment, grants, and human capital, while security risks continue to constrain investment inflows.
- At the same time, long-term priorities remain clear: economic development, social and physical inclusion, high-quality basic services, and strengthened spatial planning with coordinated recovery measures.

The community's location in Sumy Oblast, bordering the aggressor state, exposes it to heightened security risks, including potential escalation of hostilities and shelling along this axis.

Public engagement

352

Survey Participants

65

Participants in Strategic Session

- To inform the Integrated Development Concept, Konotop conducted both online and paper-based surveys, receiving a total of 352 responses. Participation was led primarily by women and working-age residents, most of whom live in Konotop. Importantly, the survey also captured the perspectives of people with disabilities, internally displaced persons, war veterans, and families of service members, enabling a more inclusive and responsive approach to drafting the document.
- A strategic session brought together 65 participants, including local government officials, representatives of municipal institutions, businesses, and civil society.

Development scenarios

As part of developing the Integrated Development Concept, the community explored two development scenarios based on a key variable: the ability of local enterprises to adapt under challenging conditions and the prospects for reindustrialisation.

Scenario A (optimistic)

The optimistic scenario envisages industrial recovery and modernisation, revitalisation of former industrial sites, and the development of new production capacities alongside improvements in education, culture, social infrastructure, transport, and energy resilience. It also anticipates population growth. Key elements include:

- Establishing centres and sub-centres that provide a full range of services, retail, and leisure opportunities for residents;
- Developing housing and public functions along public transport corridors;
- Transforming industrial production, developing industrial parks, and revitalising the “Chervonyi Metalist” plant;
- Strengthening Konotop’s role as a logistics hub and constructing a bypass road;
- Decentralising engineering infrastructure and expanding backup energy and water supply systems;
- Preserving and enhancing the natural framework.

Scenario B (inertial)

The inertial scenario reflects the prolonged impact of war, including declining production, continued population outflow, optimisation of service networks, and dependence on external support. At the same time, it allows for gradual development through small business growth, workforce retraining, veteran support, and the restoration of critical infrastructure.

Development Vision

Konotop Territorial Community is a strong regional centre that serves as a hub for innovative development, social support, and resilient infrastructure.

It fosters tourism development and provides a comfortable environment where residents live well, work productively, and confidently advance along the path of European integration.

Strategic and Operational Objectives

The Concept identifies seven integrated development goals aligned with the Community Development Strategy, namely:

1. A competitive hromada
2. A resilient hromada
3. A comfortable hromada
4. A safe hromada
5. A caring hromada
6. A recognisable hromada
7. An active hromada

Key Recovery Projects

Comprehensive modernisation of water supply and wastewater systems in Konotop Community, including the introduction of modern management systems and the provision of energy resilience

The project will reconstruct gravity collectors, upgrade water supply and sewerage networks, and introduce an automated dispatch system for real-time monitoring of water infrastructure. As a result, residents will gain reliable access to high-quality drinking water.

Construction of a cogeneration plant for the municipal transport enterprise (“Konotop Transport Department”)

The facility will operate continuously using biomass gasification. During the day, it will generate electricity to power the tram contact network and traffic signals; at night, it will supply street lighting. The generated heat will serve to heat the enterprise’s premises and provide hot water for vehicle maintenance.

Installation of solar power plants in educational institutions

Most educational institutions in the community do not have access to renewable energy sources. They rely primarily on centralised electricity supply or, when necessary, resort to generators. However, centralised supply remains unstable due to ongoing damage to energy infrastructure caused by the full-scale war, while generator fuel is costly. Installing solar power systems in schools ensures an uninterrupted electricity supply, even during scheduled or emergency outages, and reduces dependence on external energy sources.

Project Details

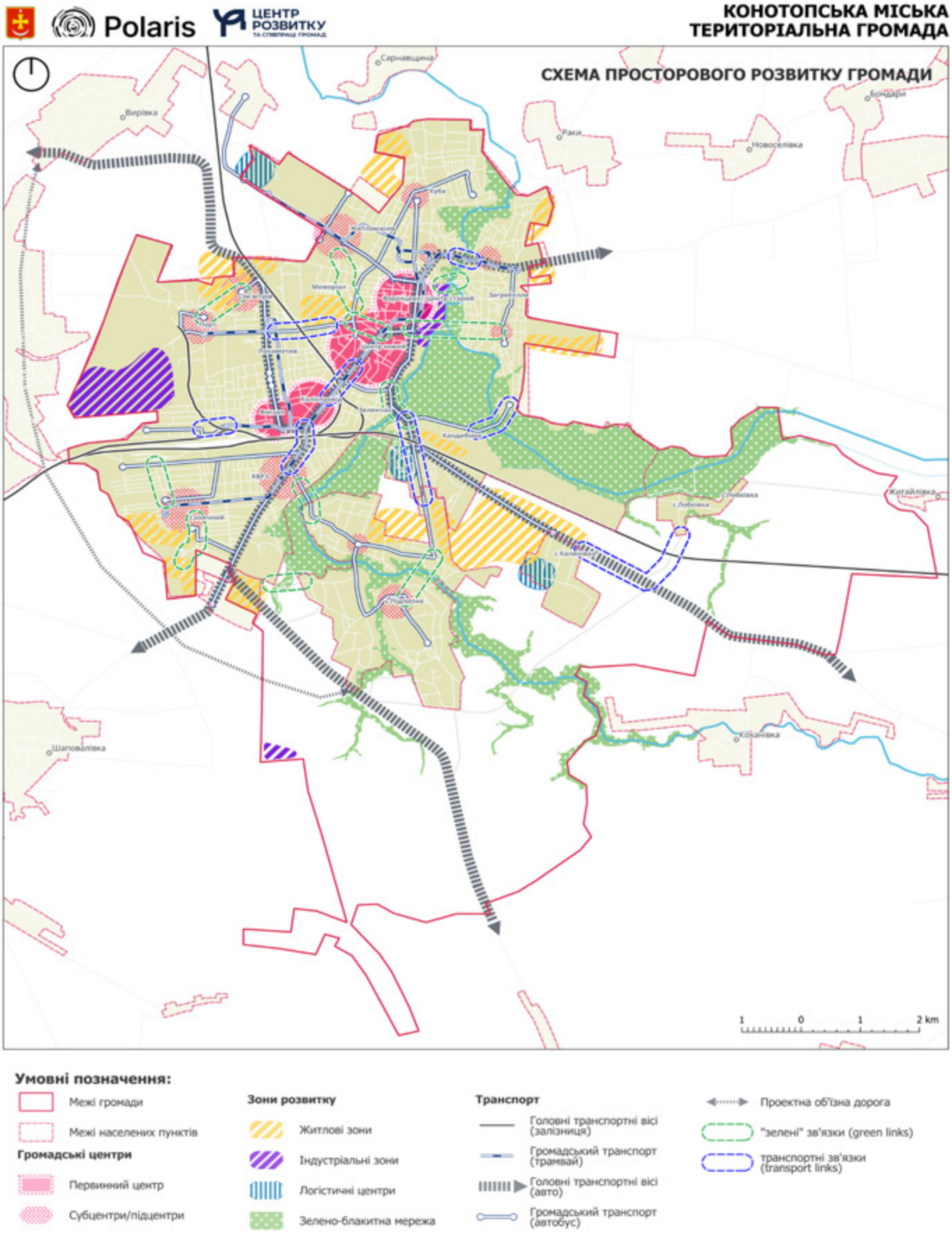
Key Achievements

ARTEM SEMENIKHIN,
HEAD OF KONOTOP HROMADA

"Moving from short-term crisis response to a long-term development strategy allows us to allocate resources more effectively, create modern living conditions for residents, and make the community attractive to investors, even in the face of security challenges."

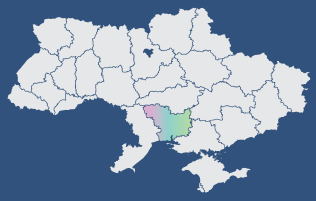
The partnership with Polaris' central achievement is the development of the Integrated Development Concept, which will serve as the foundation for spatial recovery planning and long-term development up to 2036. The community gained access to expert support and modern project preparation tools, improving both the quality of proposals and their alignment with international donor requirements.The process also strengthened institutional capacity, enhancing the team's skills in strategic planning and project management. At the same time, it fostered more effective cooperation between local authorities, businesses, and the wider community, creating a solid basis for coordinated decision-making. In addition, the partnership delivered tangible support through modern computer equipment and opened opportunities to attract financial and technical assistance from Polaris and Nefco for infrastructure projects.

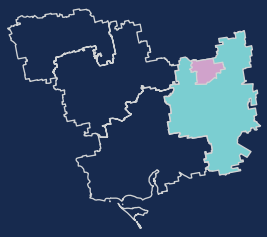
Spatial Development Scheme



The map (scheme) presents the proposed conceptual zoning of the territory, highlighting public centres, development areas, and key transport connections.

NOVYI BUH HROMADA





Bashtanka Raion
Mykolaiv Oblast

City of Novyi Buh

Administrative centre

12

Number of settlements

455 км²

Area

36 persons/км²

Population density

256,055k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,129

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

18,078

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

17,408

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The Novyi Buh Hromada has adopted a Development Strategy for 2025-2027 and a Municipal Energy Plan. The Strategy sets out the vision, while the Comprehensive Plan defines the spatial framework – land use, boundaries, and development regulations (land management). Polaris support in preparing the Terms of Reference adds economic and social substance to these spatial designations, ensuring that planning decisions translate into practical development outcomes.

At the same time, the Development Strategy and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are being prepared, marking a transition from reactive responses to systematic, long-term planning.

Planning context

The hromada benefits from a railway station that serves both freight and passenger transport, with direct connections to Kyiv and Mykolaiv.

A key demographic strength lies in the predominance of the working-age population (27-59 years), which accounts for 49.7% of residents. At the same time, the share of people aged over 60 reaches 24.7%, indicating ongoing demographic ageing. According to the demographic forecast, assuming the war ends in 2027, the population may decline by approximately 7% by 2041 compared to early 2025, reaching around 15,200 residents.

The land-use structure clearly reflects an agricultural profile, while the industrial base remains underdeveloped. The community hosts more than 100 farms, most of which focus on primary agricultural production without further processing. This creates economic dependence on raw production but also opens opportunities to diversify the economy through processing industries.

The hromada also includes valuable natural assets, notably the "Pryinhulskyi" Regional Landscape Park (part of the Emerald Network) and the "Sofiivka Reservoir" hydrological reserve of local importance.

Overall, the hromada requires a more balanced development approach – strengthening the production sector while expanding recreational and green areas to improve quality of life and ensure sustainable spatial development.

Key challenges

- The hromada's location in southern Ukraine significantly increases its exposure to climate change, with a particularly strong impact on agricultural production and overall living conditions compared to communities in other regions.
- The hromada faces ongoing population outflow, leading to a reduction in available labour resources.
- Large-scale missile attacks targeting energy infrastructure have triggered an energy crisis and continue to complicate preparations for the heating season.
- Hostilities are moving closer to the hromada's territory, increasing security risks.
- Missile strikes have damaged several infrastructure facilities; in particular, the city's wastewater system has sustained the most severe damage and now requires comprehensive restoration.
- In the short term, the community prioritises support for internally displaced persons (IDPs), the restoration of damaged infrastructure – especially wastewater systems – and the construction or reconstruction of damaged and destroyed residential and non-residential buildings.

In the longer term, the hromada focuses on economic diversification, strengthening social and physical inclusion, ensuring access to high-quality basic services, and providing quality education for children.

Public engagement

110

Participants in Public Discussions

160

Project proposals collected

- A working group of 13 members led the preparation of the Terms of Reference, ensuring both operational efficiency and regular engagement. The group brought together representatives of local authorities, civil society, education, and business, with balanced gender representation and participation from different settlements. Over the course of the process, the working group held 10 meetings.
- To gather input, the hromada relied primarily on an interactive map and an online survey, which generated 160 proposals. In addition, 110 residents and experts from across the hromada took part in public discussions organised as a strategic session. Participants worked in eight thematic discussion groups.

Development scenarios

Within its scenario planning process, the Novyi Buh community identified two key drivers shaping its future spatial and strategic development: demographic dynamics (population growth or decline within the community), and demand for agricultural products generated locally (either expansion with export orientation or contraction with a focus on internal consumption). By combining these drivers, the community developed four possible development scenarios. From these, two were selected as the most probable, namely:

Optimistic scenario

The community achieves dynamic growth driven by population inflow, expansion of agribusiness, logistics and tourism, and large-scale infrastructure modernisation.

Realistic-optimistic scenario

The community follows a path of moderate development by modernising its existing economic base, improving service provision, and gradually upgrading infrastructure while navigating demographic challenges.

Development Vision

The community aims to create a people-centred, investment-attractive, and business-friendly environment. It prioritises high-quality infrastructure, balanced spatial development, and the responsible use of natural resources to ensure sustainable economic growth and improve residents' quality of life.

Strategic Directions

Following the public consultation event on defining the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan, participants identified a set of strategic directions to guide the community's recovery, development, and long-term spatial planning. The strategic directions were formally recorded in the event minutes and subsequently incorporated into the Terms of Reference. The strategic directions include the following:

1. Development of logistics and production hubs, alongside support for farming and processing industries based on local raw materials.
2. Strengthening tourism potential through modern, environmentally sustainable recreational areas.
3. Formation of an optimal network of social infrastructure and services, aligned with inclusivity and accessibility principles.
4. Ensuring access to engineering infrastructure, transport connectivity, and mobility across the entire territory, alongside the development of alternative energy sources.
5. Implementation of effective waste management solutions.

Key Recovery Projects

Ensuring energy independence of Novyi Buh Gymnasium No. 7

The project includes thermal modernisation of the building, reconstruction of the roof and heating system, and installation of a solar power plant with energy storage. It will secure children's right to continuous, high-quality education in safe and comfortable conditions, regardless of disruptions to external energy supply. At the same time, it will demonstrate innovative approaches to sustainable development as part of the educational process in a modern school.

Reconstruction and thermal modernisation of the city stadium and establishment of a Social Interaction Centre

The project delivers a comprehensive upgrade of sports infrastructure, including full thermal modernisation of all facilities. This will reduce operating costs and improve energy efficiency. The community will gain safe and inclusive spaces for sports, rehabilitation services for veterans, and broader opportunities to engage residents and IDPs in healthy lifestyles.

Reconstruction of the pumping station with integration of a solar power system (Municipal Enterprise "Water Supply Networks")

The community currently supplies water on a scheduled basis to reduce operational costs, which creates significant inconvenience under conditions of limited access to drinking water. The project will reduce resource consumption by 50-60%, ensure continuous access to safe drinking water for residents of the Novyi Buh and Sofiivka communities, and strengthen the financial sustainability of the utility.

Project Details

Key Achievements

Cooperation with Polaris enabled the hromada to reassess its capacities, identify bottlenecks, and actively involve residents in decision-making processes. The preparation of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan has begun, but the most important outcome has been the activation of community participation.

Key achievements include:

- ✔ Written and approved Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan
- ✔ Defined portfolio of priority sustainable development projects
- ✔ Upgraded technical capacities for municipal staff
- ✔ Strengthened community cohesion around development priorities and articulated needs of different population groups through strategic sessions
- ✔ Increased confidence among local government staff in their ability to plan and implement recovery and development projects

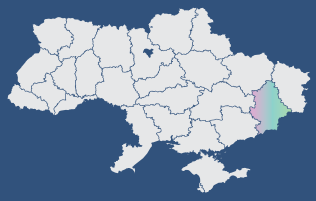
Our partnership with Polaris has continued for over a year. It has inspired us and stimulated new development ideas. The Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan is a crucial document for every community.

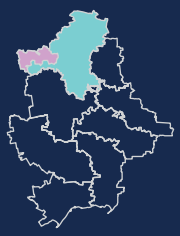
MAKSYM LAHODIIENKO
Head of the Novyi Buh Hromada

Spatial Development Scenario

Conceptual zoning of Novyi Buh Hromada, highlighting key public proposals across five thematic areas to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

OLEKSANDRIVKA HROMADA





Kramatorsk Raion
Donetsk Oblast

Town of Oleksandrivka

Administrative centre

42

Number of settlements

733 км²

Area

22.6 persons/км²

Population density

208,495k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

5,436

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Integrated Development Concept

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

12,500

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

16,130

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The Development Strategy of the Oleksandrivka Territorial Community until 2027 has been updated for the period 2025-2027.

The Concept complements the Strategy by providing spatial and intersectoral detailing and serves as a tool for integrating strategic objectives into specific territorial decisions and projects. It also constitutes the Terms of Reference for the future development of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan of the community territory.

Planning context

The Oleksandrivka hromada is located in eastern Ukraine, in close proximity to the frontline. The population is declining, with approximately half of the current residents being internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The territory is subject to anthropogenic pressures; however, available natural resources create future potential for development. Agriculture remains the primary driver of economic activity and a key stabilising factor during the crisis period.

The main wartime challenges include the lack of adequate shelters in institutions and facilities, disruptions in energy supply and communications, and a decline in economic activity. Additional negative factors affecting the socio-economic situation include active migration and mobilisation processes, as well as reduced investment activity.

At the same time, the hromada is actively adapting to new conditions. The education process has been transitioned to a remote format; housing and infrastructure are being restored; vulnerable groups are supported; and local social assistance programmes are being implemented.

Recovery prospects are linked to improving safety conditions, modernising infrastructure, developing healthcare and education services through telemedicine and digital technologies, and integrating IDPs into the social and economic life of the community.

Key challenges

- Prolonged war and the proximity of the frontline as a primary constraint on strategic planning
- Reduction in international financial assistance
- Increasing social tensions due to rising prices for energy, goods and services
- Shortage of personnel, particularly qualified specialists in social, educational and healthcare sectors
- Insufficient stock of civil protection shelters and low levels of barrier-free accessibility, which is critical under martial law conditions
- Lack of transport connections to certain settlements and poor condition of transport infrastructure
- Absence of high-value-added sectoral clusters and a low share of small enterprises in the economic structure
- Need for renovation of public buildings and social infrastructure
- Insufficient level of digitalisation in governance processes and communications
- Unsatisfactory condition of wastewater treatment facilities

The development of the Oleksandrivka territorial community is taking place under conditions of frontline proximity. Ensuring recovery and transitioning towards integrated development is directly dependent on the end of the war in Ukraine.

Public engagement

The process of developing the Integrated Development Concept followed the principles of inclusiveness and transparency.

350+

Survey respondents

3

Public hearings

20

Proposals collected

- The hromada engaged more than 350 residents and business representatives through surveys
- It organised 3 working meetings with key stakeholders and held 3 public hearings as part of the strategic sessions
- Participants contributed more than 20 concrete proposals to the action plan
- The community actively communicated the results of scenario planning to residents
- Additional tools included expert interviews, focus groups, and field-based assessments of the territory

Development scenarios

The baseline development scenarios focus on enhancing planning culture and establishing a system of recovery and development documents – ranging from a comprehensive set of documents to a minimum required package for communities in recovery areas. Planning support was considered in light of potential acceleration or deceleration of depopulation trends.

Effective recovery includes upgrading transport and engineering infrastructure, constructing social housing, developing economic clusters, and strengthening intermunicipal cooperation. This requires the implementation of integrated planning and resource management both under conditions of proximity to active hostilities (within 30 km of the frontline and closer) and during the post-war recovery period.

Development Vision

The Oleksandrivka territorial community serves as the northern gateway of the Donetsk region – an agricultural, environmentally clean, and safe hromada that acts as a centre of transformation and cooperation, where active and proactive residents create comfortable living conditions.

Through its human capital, innovative approaches and effective governance, the hromada ensures a high quality of life, a competitive economy, and a comfortable environment for living and development.

The Oleksandrivka territorial community is a strong and united hromada that is recovering, modernising and moving forward.

Strategic Development Objectives

1 Development of Entrepreneurship as the Basis of Economic Growth

- Increasing the investment attractiveness of the community
- Raising awareness among entrepreneurs and improving business support systems
- Supporting residents engaged in agribusiness
- Improving road safety and transport accessibility

2 Ensuring Sustainable Environmental and Energy Development

- Ensuring preservation of the natural environment
- Establishing an efficient solid waste management system
- Modernising water supply and wastewater systems
- Ensuring reliable, energy-efficient and environmentally safe heat supply
- Introducing alternative energy sources for municipal infrastructure

3 Ensuring Social Stability and Development

- Strengthening social protection for vulnerable groups
- Modernising and improving the network of healthcare facilities
- Establishing an optimal and safe network of educational and cultural institutions
- Restoring infrastructure to meet safety and accessibility standards

4 Development of Cultural, Tourism and Recreational Potential

- Developing tourism and cultural infrastructure
- Preserving, researching and promoting historical and cultural heritage
- Promoting healthy lifestyles among residents

Key Recovery Projects

Creating conditions for agribusiness development

The project includes modernisation of agricultural enterprises, particularly upgrading aquaculture technologies in the villages of Mykhailivka, Oleksandrivka, Petrivka Druha and other settlements within the community.

Restoration and modernisation of critical and social infrastructure

Transition to renewable energy sources, implementation of automated regulation and dispatching systems, construction of solar energy facilities, reconstruction of wastewater treatment plants and construction of shelters, as well as development of stormwater and meltwater drainage infrastructure. Also includes reconstruction of the Administrative Service Centre (ASC) building, healthcare facilities, and construction of a sports and rehabilitation complex in Oleksandrivka town.

Restoration of natural areas

The project includes restoration of the Hnylusha riverbed, modernisation of solid waste management systems, development of wastewater infrastructure in Oleksandrivka settlement, and creation of a recreational public space – the "Buzkovyi" (Lilac) park.

Project Details

Key Achievements

Implementing spatial planning approaches is essential, as it allows us to use resources rationally, allocate facilities effectively, and ensure balanced development across all settlements of the community.

LIUDMYLA BORYSEVYCH
HEAD OF THE HROMADA

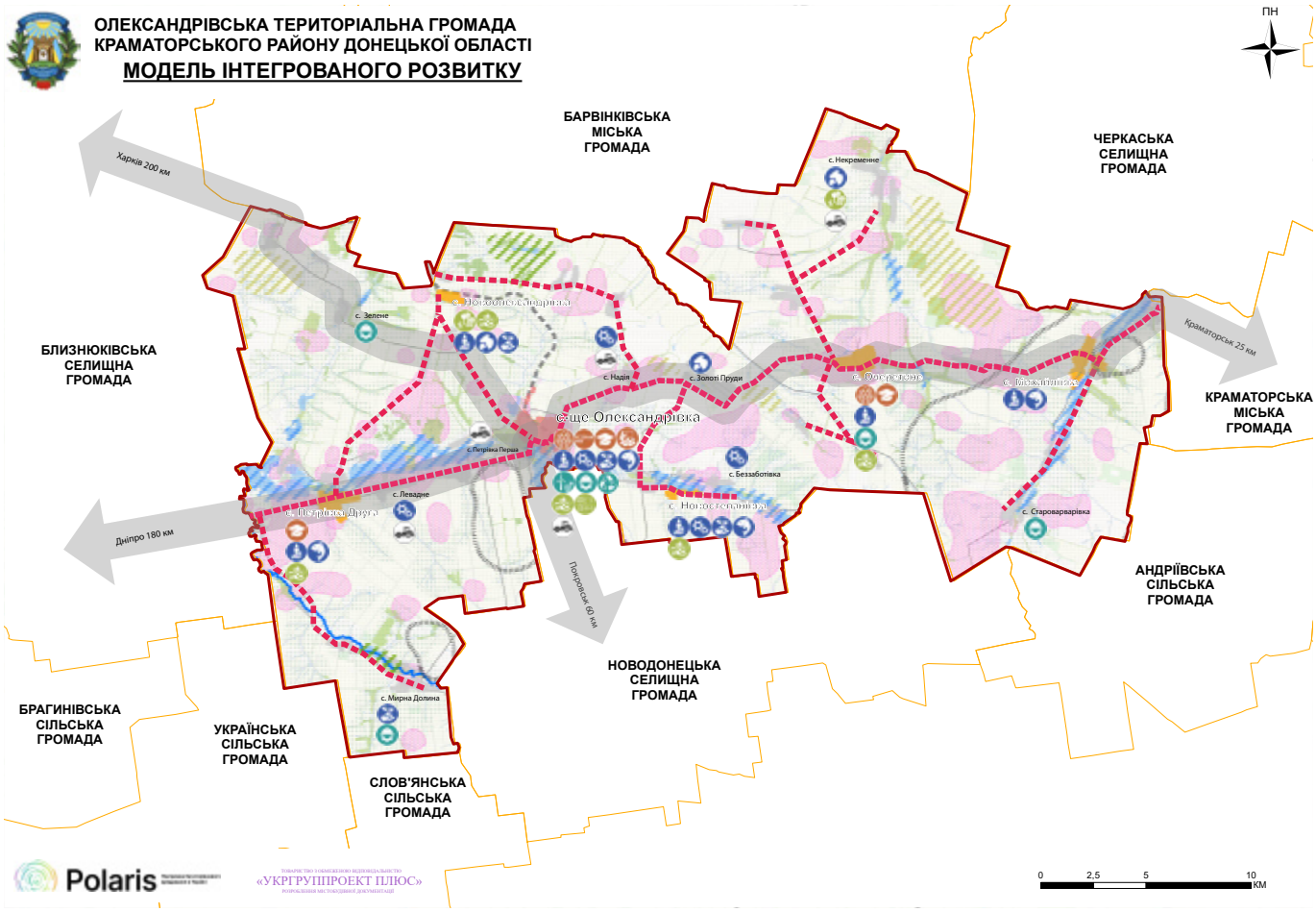
The Programme contributes to the development of the Integrated Development Concept, ensuring in-depth elaboration of spatial solutions, intersectoral interaction, and a practical focus on results.

VASYL LUKIANCHYKOV
SECRETARY OF THE OLEKSANDRIVKA TOWN COUNCIL

The partnership with the Polaris Programme has enabled the hromada to transition towards high-quality, modern territorial development planning. With expert support, the hromada received methodological and practical assistance in developing the Integrated Development Concept, which integrates spatial planning, economic development, and infrastructure recovery into a unified system of solutions.

Expert support strengthened institutional capacity, introduced modern approaches to decision-making and intersectoral coordination, and established a foundation for preparing high-quality, well-substantiated investment projects aimed at attracting external financing. These outcomes lay the groundwork for sustainable, comprehensive and spatially balanced recovery of the community.

Spatial Map of Integrated Development



Умовні позначення

Умовні позначення

Соціальний напрямок

- Соціальне житло
- Ветеранський простір
- Модернізація закладів освіти
- Інформаційно - просвітницький центр

Економічний напрямок

- Центр підтримки підприємців
- Розвиток локального виробництва
- Розвиток агровиробництва
- Розвиток тваринництва
- Розвиток риборозведення
- Пасовища
- Території економічної активності
- Сільськогосподарські території
- Поклади корисних копалин

Екологічний напрям

- Відновлювальні джерела енергетики
- Модернізація інженерних мереж
- Система поводження з ТПВ
- Блакитно - зелена мережа
- Зелені насадження
- Водойми
- Річки
- Очищення річки

Рекреація та історико - культурна спадщина

- Туристичний комплекс
- Рекреаційна зона
- Спортивний комплекс
- Туристичні локації
- Ареали розміщення пам'яток культури

Транспортна інфраструктура

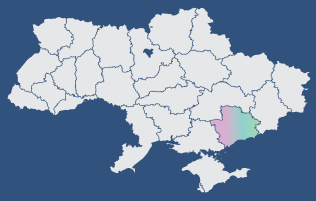
- Ремонт дорожнього покриття
- Головні зовнішні транспортні зв'язки
- Головні внутрішні транспортні зв'язки
- Автомобільні дороги
- Залізниці місцеві

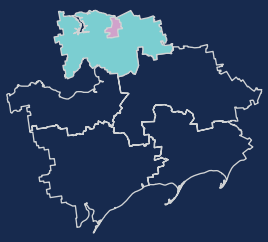
Територіальний устрій

- Межі територіальної громади
- Межі суміжних громад
- Головний центр громади
- Субцентр громади
- Інші населені пункти

The integrated development model reflects development axes within the system of interaction with the cities of Kramatorsk, Kharkiv and Dnipro, as well as centres, sub-centres, and prospective sub-centres of community development.

PAVLIVSKE HROMADA





Zaporizhzhia Raion
Zaporizhzhia Oblast

Pavlivske village

Administrative centre

21

Number of settlements

4,900

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

4,860

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

169.8 км²

Area

28 persons/км²

Population density

159,795k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,113

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Development Strategy

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

Strategic document alignment

The community has developed and is implementing:

Development Strategy of the Pavlivske Rural Territorial Community for the period 2022-2027.

The updated Development Strategy, revised with the support of Polaris, occupies a central position within the community's strategic planning system. It represents an updated version of the existing Strategy and reflects current challenges, including the consequences of the war, demographic shifts, economic and social transformations, as well as the need for recovery and increased resilience.

Planning context

The Pavlivske Rural Territorial Community is an agricultural community with a well-developed land resource base and a favourable location near the regional centre. Its key assets include agricultural land, human capital, local businesses, and basic social infrastructure.

Over the next 10 years, the main drivers of development will include the security situation, demographic changes, restoration of economic activity, infrastructure modernisation, and integration of IDPs. Demographic trends are characterised by population ageing and partial outmigration of youth, further intensified by the war.

The full-scale invasion has significantly affected the community: pressure on the social sector has increased due to the arrival of IDPs, infrastructure challenges have intensified, and economic activity has declined. At the same time, the community retains strong potential for the development of the agricultural sector, processing industries, and local entrepreneurship.

Key challenges

Security risks

Proximity to the active hostilities zone constrains investment and long-term planning.

Limited financial resources

The community budget requires more efficient planning and mobilisation of external funding.

Demographic changes

Population decline and ageing create labour shortages.

Worn-out infrastructure

There is a need to modernise water supply systems, energy networks, and social facilities.

Pressure from IDPs

A significant number of displaced persons require housing, employment, and access to services.

Recovery is focused on strengthening resilience, developing the agricultural economy, and improving the quality of life for residents.

Public engagement

The Strategy update followed a participatory approach, helping to build broad ownership of the shared development trajectory, independent of political factors.

95+

Survey respondents

20

Members in the working group

- A 20-member working group played a central role, bringing together representatives of local authorities, business, and civil society.
- To gather input, the community conducted surveys among 83 residents and 12 business representatives. Throughout 2025-2026, it organised a series of strategic sessions to review analytical findings, discuss the SWOT matrix, and explore development scenarios.
- Polaris experts facilitated the dialogue between residents and local authorities, ensuring that the needs of different social groups were properly reflected in the draft Strategy.

Development scenarios

Optimistic scenario

The community selected an optimistic scenario, based on strengthening financial capacity and improving demographic trends. It envisages the return of young families and professionals, which will stimulate business development and improve service quality. Through the attraction of grants and investments, the community plans large-scale infrastructure modernisation and the development of agricultural processing.

Pessimistic scenario

An alternative pessimistic scenario foresees a population decline of 19% by 2041 in the case of stagnation and lack of external support. The chosen pathway is oriented towards sustainable growth through innovation in the agri-food sector, energy efficiency, and strengthened social cohesion.

Development Vision

We are creating a space for a dignified life, where the traditions of the Zaporizhzhia region and nature form the foundation for sustainable development, entrepreneurship, and community cohesion. A competitive, investment-attractive, financially independent, and people-centred community – a territory where high-tech export-oriented processing and extractive industries, advanced agricultural production, and traditional crafts coexist in harmony.

Strategic Directions

1 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Improving economic well-being through effective use of local potential and stimulation of agricultural processing and entrepreneurship.

- Support for local businesses and investors
- Development of new spaces for economic activity
- Support for extractive industries
- Transition to renewable energy
- Development of tourism capacity

2 DEVELOPED INFRASTRUCTURE, QUALITY OF LIFE, PARTNERSHIPS

Improving comfortable and safe living conditions through sustainable territorial development and modernisation of utilities and road infrastructure.

- Development of municipal service infrastructure
- Improvement of transport infrastructure
- Environmental protection and natural resource management
- Community improvement and public space development

3 SAFE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITY

Strengthening social cohesion through a people-centred approach, effective cooperation between authorities and residents, and investment in human capital.

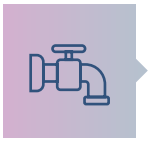
- Enhancement of public safety
- Development of an inclusive and cohesive community
- Development of veteran policy and social services
- Development of cultural environment
- Ensuring access to quality education

Key Recovery Projects

Safety Centre (Semenenkove village)

Reconstruction of a building to integrate fire, police, and medical services.

Water Supply and Wastewater System (Solone village)



Construction of distribution networks to ensure access to safe drinking water.

Modernisation of the Administrative Service Centre (Pavlivske village)

Establishment of an inclusive hub providing over 200 public services.

Veteran Space (Solone village)

Creation of a hub within the cultural centre for rehabilitation and reintegration of veterans.

Energy modernisation of the outpatient clinic (Solone village)

Installation of a solar power plant and thermal insulation to ensure uninterrupted medical services.

Project Details

Key Achievements

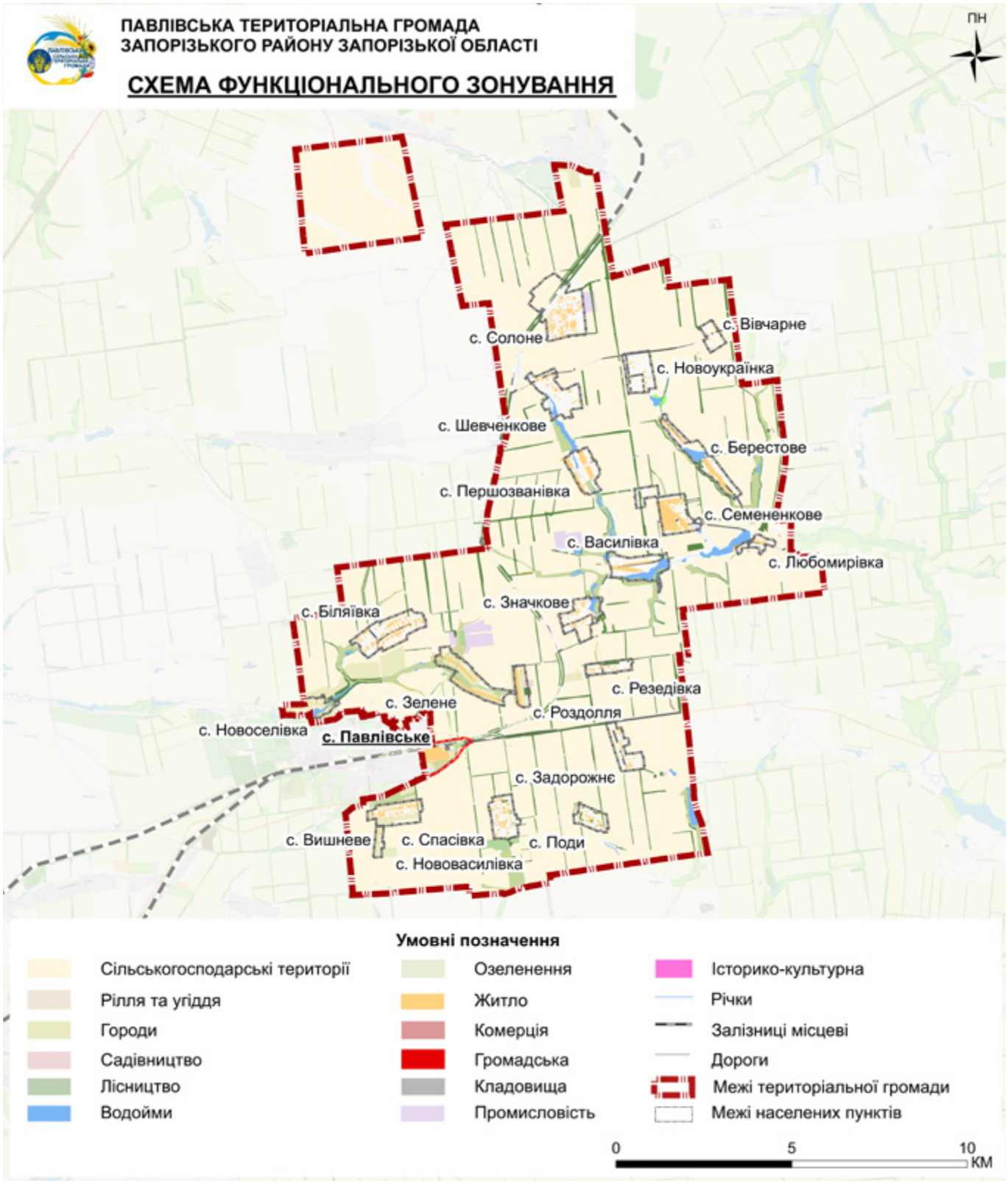
Support from the Polaris Programme has helped us not only update the Strategy but also establish a systematic and consistent approach to recovery and long-term development. We have gained a clear vision of priorities, tools for evidence-based decision-making, and confidence in our next steps.

ANATOLII KLYMENKO
HEAD OF THE PAVLIVSKE
TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

The key achievements of the cooperation between the Pavlivske territorial community and the Polaris Programme, as well as the outcomes of the recovery planning process, include:

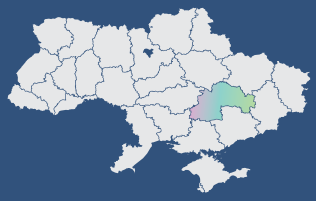
- ✔ Updated Development Strategy until 2027: The community prepared the document using a modern methodology that places sustainable development and social integration at its core. The Strategy aligns fully with national and regional strategies, enabling the community to access state resources and international assistance.
- ✔ Professional expert support: Polaris experts facilitated dialogue between residents and local authorities, processed the outcomes of consultations, and led the facilitation of strategic sessions throughout 2025-2026.
- ✔ In-depth analysis and forecasting: The community carried out a comprehensive demographic forecast up to 2041, including pessimistic, baseline, and optimistic scenarios. This enabled an informed choice of the optimistic development scenario, focused on the return of young people and investment in agricultural processing.
- ✔ Concrete Action Plan: The planning process resulted in a portfolio of 26 local development projects, of which 10 have been identified as priorities.
- ✔ Introduction of a governance system: The community established a two-tier system for monitoring and updating the Strategy (political and technical levels) and created a dedicated Strategy Implementation Committee to coordinate actions among local authorities, business, and the community.
- ✔ These results have transformed the Strategy from a formal document into a practical management tool grounded in real community needs and supported by robust analysis and professional forecasting.

Functional Land Zoning in the Pavlivske Territorial Community



The functional zoning scheme presents the community's agricultural profile, its settlement structure, and prospective industrial sites for the implementation of investment projects. It reflects its strong agricultural specialisation, with arable land and agricultural areas occupying most of the territory. The spatial structure is centred around the administrative centre (Pavlivske village) and a network of rural settlements that combine residential development with public and commercial functions. Industrial areas and prospective investment sites are primarily concentrated near the villages of Vasylivka and Semenenkove, as well as in the southern part of the community. The transport and spatial framework relies on a network of roads and railway connections, while rivers, water bodies, and forested areas form the natural and ecological backbone of the territory.

SAMAR HROMADA



Samar Raion
Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

City of Samar

Administrative centre

1

Number of settlements

36 км²

Area

1,910 persons/км²

Population density

1,060,720k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

9,475

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Development Strategy

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

69,279

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

60,215

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The hromada has already elaborated and adopted a Programme for Social, Economic, and Cultural Development of the City of Samar for 2026, alongside approximately 25 targeted local programmes across different sectors.

It has also approved a Medium-Term Priority Public Investment Plan for 2026-2028.

In partnership with Polaris and the contractor “Mezha Vsesvitu” LLC, the hromada is currently developing its Development Strategy. The Strategy acts as a coordinating framework: it does not replace existing programmes but establishes a coherent logic for their design and implementation. In practice, local programmes and investment plans are to be aligned with the strategic objectives and priorities defined in the Strategy.

Planning context

Samar Urban Territorial Community is a compact, highly urbanised area (36 km²) with a high population density (around 1,900 persons/km²). It performs key administrative and economic functions at the district level. Its proximity to the city of Dnipro (25 km) and its location at the intersection of major transport routes position it as a potential logistics and industrial hub. The local economy relies on industry and small and medium-sized enterprises, with emerging opportunities in innovation and the creative sector. The city of Samar also carries historical significance as the centre of the Samar Cossack Palanka (since 1734) and remains an important hub of Ukrainian Cossack culture and folk traditions.

Key development assets include its location, industrial base, human capital, cultural heritage, and attractive natural landscapes rich in biodiversity. At the same time, development trajectories depend strongly on proximity to Dnipro, economic transformation, demographic trends, and the security situation.

The population continues to decline and age. Internally displaced persons (11.6%) partially offset depopulation, but projections still indicate a further decrease in population.

The full-scale invasion has caused damage to housing and critical infrastructure (particularly in 2022 and 2024-2025), led to workforce outflow, and reduced budget revenues. Demand for humanitarian support and security measures has increased significantly, ranging from shortages of shelters to the need to strengthen alert systems and civil protection mechanisms.

Key challenges

- The hromada faces interconnected challenges shaped by both wartime conditions and structural constraints. War and security instability remain central pressures. At the same time, demographic decline, youth outmigration, and the integration of a large number of IDPs place sustained strain on local systems. A high level of built-up area (62%), combined with extremely limited forest coverage (below 1%), restricts environmental resilience and spatial flexibility. The absence of formally established hromada boundaries further complicates effective spatial planning. In parallel, ageing infrastructure and increasing service loads continue to intensify pressure on existing systems.
- The high centralisation of critical life-support systems creates additional vulnerability under current conditions. The war further amplifies the need to strengthen security measures and enhance the overall resilience of the community.
- Infrastructure challenges include deteriorating utility networks, reliance on a single water supply system, and a shortage of shelters in educational and healthcare facilities.
- Environmental risks relate to pollution of the Samara River and the concentration of industrial facilities within the urban area.
- Economic constraints stem from a limited number of jobs, the prevalence of informal employment, and continued workforce outflow. Due to high building density, the industrial sector has virtually no room for spatial expansion, making the modernisation of existing facilities the only viable pathway for economic development.
- The proximity to Dnipro city creates a structural risk that the community may gradually evolve into a commuter or “dormitory” area rather than maintaining an independent economic role.

Public engagement

609

Survey respondents

2

Strategic session

- The planning process actively engaged a broad range of stakeholders, including local authorities, educators, healthcare professionals, civil society, and a limited number of business representatives.
- The team conducted online surveys targeting residents, municipal staff, and businesses to capture needs and expectations. In total, 589 residents and 18 representatives of local self-government participated, while business engagement remained limited (2 responses).
- The process included two strategic sessions, a series of working group meetings, and team workshops, where participants jointly developed development scenarios, objectives, and priorities.

Development scenarios

The community structured its scenarios around two key drivers: the rate of workforce outflow and the pace of Ukraine's EU integration. Based on these factors, the team developed two core scenarios. These do not aim to predict the future but to support strategic decision-making by highlighting risks, opportunities, and required policy responses.

Scenario 1 – "Island Without Inflow"

Low EU integration combined with continued population outflow leads to demographic decline, labour shortages, and economic stagnation. Service quality deteriorates, and the community's fiscal capacity weakens.

Scenario 2 – "Transitional Hub"

Active EU integration opens pathways for economic modernisation, investment inflows, business development, and improved social and infrastructure services.

Both scenarios point to a shared strategic priority: retaining population and improving quality of life as the foundation for long-term development.

Development Vision

By 2034, Samar is a city where people choose to live, work, and spend.

It is a safe, post-war recovered city with a revitalised industrial base, employment opportunities for young people, and a comfortable everyday environment – including reliable water supply, efficient transport, and safe schools and kindergartens. It is a place where entrepreneurs can grow businesses, veterans can reintegrate into civilian life, and families can plan their future with confidence.

The community pursues this vision through three interconnected priorities: (1) resilient and secure infrastructure as the foundation of daily life; (2) a competitive economy built on industrial capacity, small business, and innovation; and (3) strong human capital supported by modern education, healthcare, cultural identity, and active civic participation.

Strategic and Operational Objectives

The Strategic vision of Samar Territorial Community defines three overarching strategic goals:

1 Competitive Economy and Innovation-Driven Development

- Modernise industrial enterprises and stimulate innovation
- Support creative industries and promote local cultural identity
- Develop hospitality, tourism products, and services
- Create favourable conditions for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
- Strengthen the community's capacity to attract investment and deliver development projects

2 Human Capital Development and Quality of Life

- Ensure access to high-quality, patient-centred healthcare
- Support veterans' reintegration, IDP integration, and vulnerable groups
- Develop modern educational, sports, and cultural environments
- Advance digital transformation for effective governance
- Strengthen local democracy and expand participation tools

3 Security and Resilience of Urban Infrastructure

- Strengthen civil protection systems and expand shelter networks
- Improve urban amenities and transport infrastructure
- Increase energy efficiency, conservation, and independence
- Ensure reliable water supply and wastewater management
- Implement a sustainable waste management system

Key Recovery Projects

Construction of an Autonomous Water Intake and Supply System for the City of Samar

The project aims to secure water independence for the community, which currently relies entirely on a single, ageing “Dnipro – Samar” pipeline with losses of up to 32% and a high risk of failure. The project will establish a fully independent water supply system, including deep wells, a new main pipeline, pumping stations, and water storage facilities. It will also integrate energy-efficient solutions (solar power, variable frequency drives) and digital control systems (SCADA). This approach will reduce water losses, stabilise tariffs, and ensure reliable supply under crisis and wartime conditions.

Project Details

“Samar Neighbourhood” Development Project

The project will create an innovative 145-hectare urban territory where modern development integrates seamlessly with a recreational landscape. A network of parks and boulevards (52 hectares) will provide each neighbourhood with direct access to green space and the river. The design prioritises inclusivity and walkability while maintaining efficient transport connections. The residential area (650,000 m²) will combine multi-storey buildings with a low-rise cottage neighbourhood, organised around a central school and kindergartens. A strong commercial zone (over 150,000 m²), including retail, restaurants, and sports facilities, will create a self-sufficient environment for living, working, and leisure. The district is designed as a major attraction point for both residents and visitors from the whole country.

Industrial Park “Samar”

The project establishes a modern 80-hectare industrial ecosystem focused on processing industries, logistics, and green energy. It will offer investors fully serviced plots with connected infrastructure, zoning for different production types, and access to state support mechanisms. Its strategic location and integration into national logistics networks will enable rapid business start-up and access to international markets. The park will serve as a key driver of economic growth, job creation, and stable tax revenues.

Key Achievements

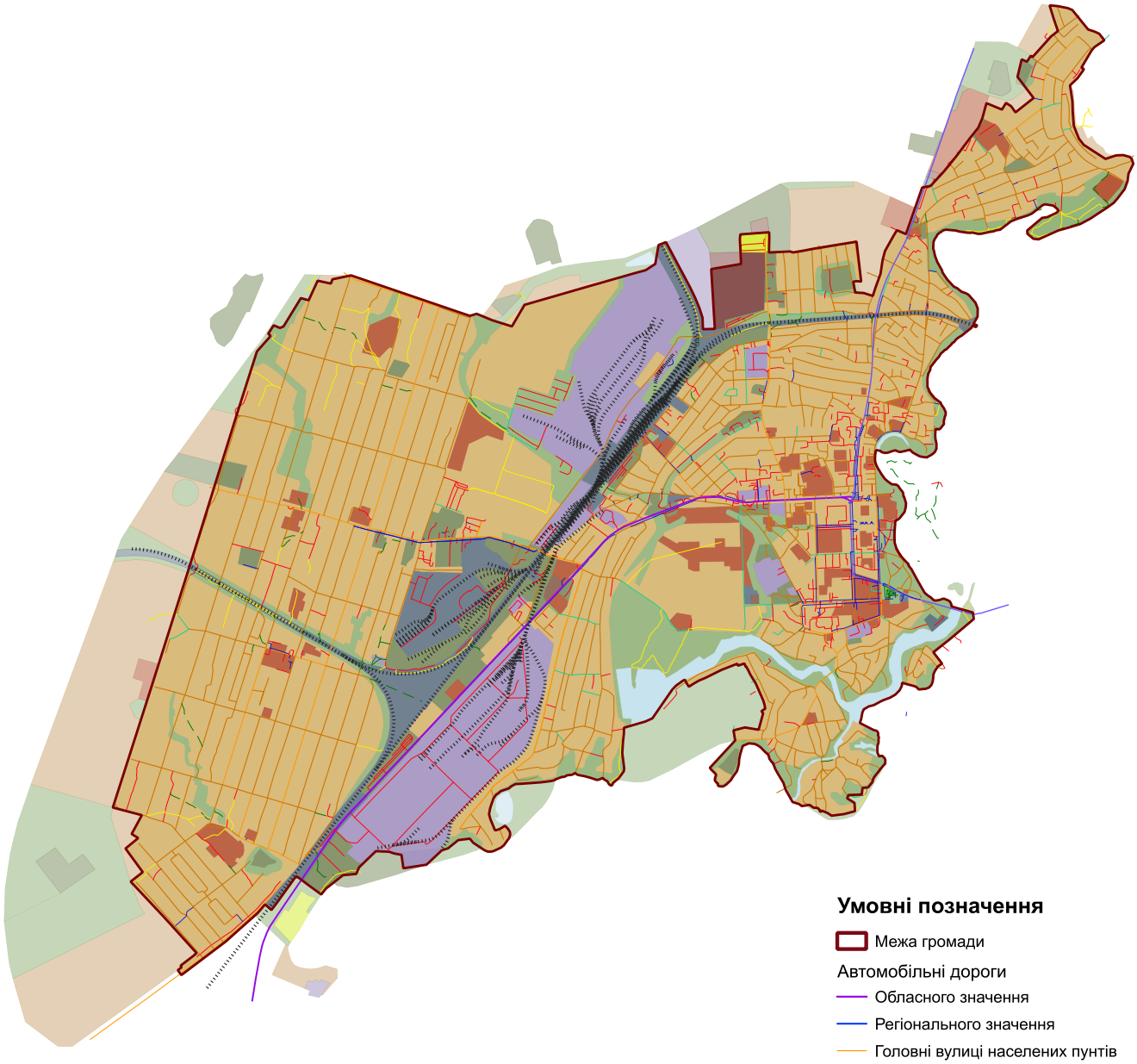
SERHII REZNIK
HEAD OF THE TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

Support from Polaris is extremely important for our community, particularly under wartime constraints and limited resources. It allows us not only to respond to immediate challenges but also to approach recovery systematically and shape a clear long-term vision. Strategic and spatial planning are essential tools for sustainable development, efficient land use, and attracting investment. With this support, we can take better-informed decisions and create a safe, comfortable, and modern environment for our residents.

We sincerely thank the Polaris team for their professionalism, expertise, and strong understanding of our needs, and we look forward to continued cooperation that will support further development and improve quality of life.

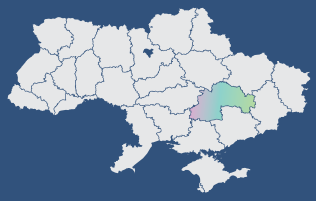
The cooperation has transformed strategic planning from a formal exercise into an effective, practice-oriented management tool. A key achievement is the preparation of the Development Strategy in line with international standards. For the community, this document serves as a “passport of trust”, providing international investors and donors with clear assurance of transparency, predictability, and professionalism in the implementation of investment projects.

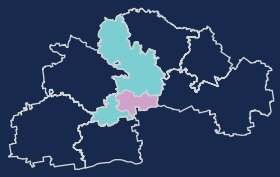
Spatial Layout of Projects and Measures



The zoning map provides a foundation for strategic planning and spatial development. It reflects the existing territorial structure, defines spatial boundaries, and highlights development potential. Within this framework, the community will plan its future and implement recovery projects in a coordinated and structured way.

SOLONE HROMADA





Dnipro Raion
Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

Town of Solone

Administrative centre

51

Number of settlements

903 км²

Area

21.2 persons/км²

Population density

343,276k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,757

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Plan

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

24,537

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

25,539

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The hromada has developed and is implementing the following strategic documents:

- The Development Strategy of the Solone Town Territorial Community for 2022-2027
- The Action Plan for the implementation of the Development Strategy
- The Communication Strategy of the Solone Community

The Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan occupies an important position within this system of strategic documents and represents the next stage in the evolution of the community's strategic planning framework. The Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Plan constitute the subsequent step in this process.

Planning context

The Solone territorial community is located in the southern part of Dnipro Raion in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, in close proximity to the city of Dnipro, which facilitates its integration into agglomeration, labour, and economic processes of the region. The community benefits from a favourable transport and logistics location, as its territory is crossed by the national highway H-08, has railway connectivity, and provides access to the Dnipro River. This creates significant potential for the development of multimodal logistics.

The economic base of the community is characterised by an agricultural specialisation, with fertile chernozem soils and a high share of agricultural land. Prospective areas for development include processing industries, logistics, and small-scale entrepreneurship.

Demographic trends indicate population ageing and natural decline, partially offset by the inflow of internally displaced persons (6.5%). Forecasts suggest a continued decrease in population and an increase in demographic dependency.

Key assets of the community include its advantageous geographical location, land resources, human capital, transport infrastructure, and proximity to a major regional centre. The decisive factors for future development will include economic diversification, logistics development, investment attraction, infrastructure rehabilitation, and the preservation of human capital.

Key challenges

- High level of deterioration of engineering infrastructure, particularly water supply and wastewater systems, which affects service quality and living conditions. Significant territorial disparities and a dispersed settlement structure complicate access to basic services and increase the cost of their provision.
- The demographic situation is characterised by population ageing and projected decline, placing additional pressure on the social sector and labour market. The local economy remains insufficiently diversified and highly dependent on agriculture, limiting job creation.
- Additional challenges stem from the consequences of the war, including increased pressure on infrastructure, damage to certain facilities, and the need for recovery and enhanced territorial resilience.

The hromada faces a combination of infrastructural, demographic, and economic challenges.

Public engagement

Several instruments of public participation were applied during the preparation of the document.

521

Survey respondents

34

Participants at the Strategic Session

- An online survey of residents and entrepreneurs (500 residents and 21 entrepreneurs) was conducted, enabling the collection of information on key issues and development priorities.
- A working group was established, and a series of meetings were held to discuss analytical results and SWOT findings.
- A key stage was the strategic session with public consultations on the Terms of Reference, attended by 34 participants. In addition, an open call for proposals was organised, resulting in one formal submission.

Development scenarios

Four development scenarios were developed, combining two key variables: energy capacity and demographic dynamics. During the strategic session, participants selected two scenarios for further elaboration:

Scenario 1: Energy poverty, increasing tariffs for resources and improving demographic situation through inflow of youth

Scenario 2: Decentralisation of energy systems, strengthening energy independence, and worsening demographic trends with youth outflow.

The first scenario assumes population growth under conditions of energy dependence and high tariff pressure, creating risks of infrastructure overload. The second scenario focuses on energy independence and renewable energy development in the context of demographic decline, with the concentration of services in the administrative centre and sub-centres. Both scenarios were complemented with proposals for economic development, infrastructure, recreation, and environmental measures.

Development Vision

The Solone community is a community with a favourable geographical location that rationally utilises natural resources, has an optimised spatial structure, and is oriented towards increasing energy efficiency and decentralisation of energy systems, where residents receive high-quality services and enjoy a high standard of living.

Strategic Directions

The Solone territorial community has identified the following strategic directions for development:

1 Economy, entrepreneurship, land relations, engineering and transport infrastructure

Within the economic direction, provision is made for the designation and development of areas for business activities, including the expansion of agricultural production (livestock farming, greenhouse cultivation, and horticulture), as well as the development of logistics and roadside infrastructure along the H-08 highway. The introduction of renewable energy solutions also constitutes an integral component of this direction.

2 Social sphere and social protection

This direction includes the development of social housing, healthcare and educational facilities, sports and inclusive infrastructure, as well as the establishment of rehabilitation centres and youth spaces.

3 Recreation and historical and cultural heritage

This direction focuses on the development of tourism infrastructure, parks, and both land-based and water-based recreational activities.

4 Environment

The environmental direction includes greening measures, landfill reclamation, cleaning of water bodies, and the development of renewable energy sources.

Key Recovery Projects

Modernisation of water supply and wastewater systems of the Solone community

The project aims to address critical issues related to water quality, infrastructure deterioration, and service reliability. It foresees the renovation of the key assets, including treatment facilities, pumping and filtration stations, as well as the upgrading of main pipelines.
Implementation will reduce water losses, improve treatment quality and service stability, and minimise environmental risks associated with untreated wastewater discharge. While not covering the entire territory, the project will significantly improve service quality for the majority of residents and establish a basis for further system modernisation.

Project Details

Improving energy efficiency and climate resilience of the hospital

This project involves comprehensive modernisation of the Solone hospital buildings, with a focus on energy efficiency and climate resilience. It includes insulation of buildings, upgrading of engineering systems, and implementation of energy monitoring systems. The project will reduce energy consumption, improve conditions for patients and staff, and ensure stable operation of the facility.

Energy-efficient modernisation of street lighting

The project includes upgrading the outdoor lighting system across 51 settlements through the installation of LED lighting and infrastructure modernisation. This will significantly reduce electricity consumption, improve lighting quality and safety, and strengthen the community's energy resilience.

Key Achievements

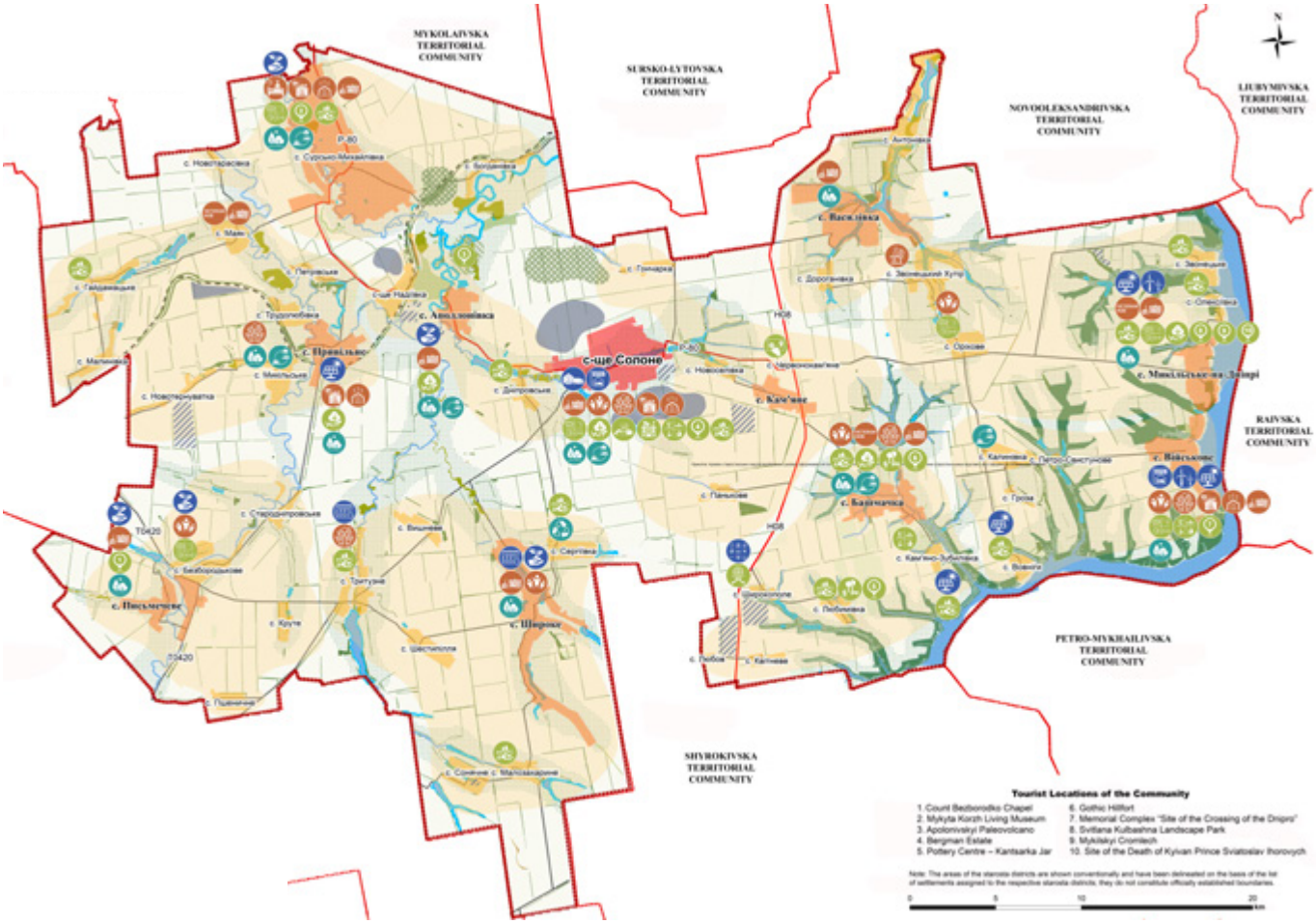
MYKHAILO KOPEIKO
Head of the Solone Community

Support from the Polaris Programme has enabled the Solone community to move from reactive responses to challenges towards comprehensive development management. For us, it is important not only to restore infrastructure but to create a high-quality living environment for years ahead. Thanks to expert support, we have gained modern spatial planning tools that allow us to make informed decisions, attract investment, and ensure sustainable development even under wartime conditions.

- The partnership with the Polaris Programme enabled the Solone community to transition to a systematic approach to recovery and territorial development planning. One of the key outcomes was the initiation of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan based on an integrated approach combining spatial planning, economic development, social infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.
- A series of strategic and working sessions were conducted with the participation of residents, starostas and starosta districts, businesses, and civil society organisations, thereby strengthening public participation in decision-making.
- The community also received expert support in structuring investment needs and developing a portfolio of project ideas ready for further external financing. An important achievement has been the enhancement of professional capacity of local government staff in the fields of spatial planning, strategic management, and preparation of investment projects in line with European standards.

Integrated Development Model

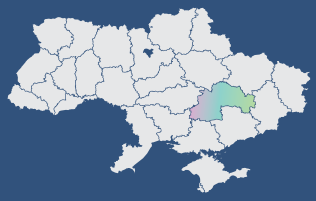
The integrated development model of the Solone territorial community is aimed at strengthening the role of the administrative centre as the key development core, supported by a network of sub-centres, efficient use of agricultural potential, and rational management of community resources.

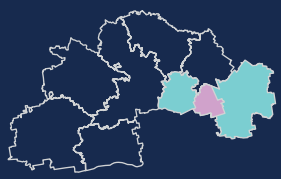


Within the spatial structure, the administrative centre (the town of Solone) is identified as the primary core, complemented by a network of sub-centres in rural settlements, as well as zones of economic activity, particularly along the H-08 transport corridor with concentration in the villages of Vasylivka, Bashmachka, and adjacent areas.

The transport and spatial framework establishes key connections within the community and with neighbouring territories. The map also reflects the distribution of social infrastructure, recreational and tourism areas – particularly along river valleys – the natural and ecological framework, and zones designated for environmental measures.

VASYLKIVKA HROMADA





Synelnykove Raion
Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

Vasylkivka Town

Administrative centre

56

Number of settlements

882.4 км²

Area

23 persons/км²

Population density

378,629k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

1,764

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

22,273

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

19,399

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The hromada has already adopted a number of strategic documents, including:

- Development Strategy to 2027 (with a horizon to 2034)
- Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan to 2030
- Programme for Social, Economic, and Cultural Development for 2026
- Local Economic Development Programme (2024-2026).

The preparation of the Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan, carried out in partnership with Polaris, complements this framework by providing a spatial foundation and ensuring the coordinated implementation of established development priorities.

Planning context

The Vasylkivka Town Territorial Community lies in Synelnykove Raion of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and covers an area of 882.4 km², with a population of approximately 20,000 residents. It includes 2 towns and 54 villages organised within a dispersed settlement system. The community has a strong agricultural specialisation based on substantial land resources – more than 75% of its territory consists of agricultural land – and fertile chernozem soils. Additional assets include water and forest resources, as well as proximity to major cities such as Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia, which creates opportunities for economic integration and cooperative development.

Key challenges

- Demographic decline, population ageing, and the continued outflow of labour reduce the available workforce and place additional pressure on local services.
- The dispersed settlement pattern makes it more difficult to deliver services efficiently and to plan and maintain infrastructure.
- The local economy relies heavily on agriculture, which highlights the need for diversification.
- Environmental pressures remain significant: soil degradation, declining water quality, and weak waste management practices continue to affect the community.
- Martial law directly constrains economic activity and restricts the use of part of the community's resource potential, further complicating recovery and development efforts.

The community faces a combination of structural and external challenges.

Public engagement

424

Survey respondents

37

Participants in Strategic Session

- At the initial stage, the community conducted a survey among residents and entrepreneurs, engaging 411 residents and 13 businesses. The team prepared and approved questionnaires and ensured outreach through official communication channels.
- The process then moved to a strategic session involving representatives of local authorities, experts, and residents (37 participants). During this session, participants reviewed analytical findings and formulated proposals across key development areas.

Development scenarios

Within the scenario planning process, the community developed four alternative development pathways. These scenarios reflect different combinations of two key drivers:

Scenario 1: The quality of social service provision together with the level of infrastructure wear and tear

Scenario 2: Changes in quality of life alongside the level of planning culture and the efficiency of resource use

These scenarios range from negative trajectories – declining quality of life, infrastructure degradation, and stagnation – to positive pathways that include recovery of the social sector, infrastructure modernisation, and increased investment attractiveness. Some scenarios also address the risks of uncontrolled development and inefficient spatial planning.

The analysis highlights a clear conclusion: the level of planning culture and the effectiveness of governance directly determine the community's resilience and its capacity for recovery and long-term development.

Development Vision

The Vasylkivka community envisions itself as a spatially well-organised territory with a modern network of social institutions, committed to improving the well-being of its residents.

Strategic Directions

The Development Strategy of the Vasylkivka community defines the following strategic objectives:

1. Economic development of the community through diversification of the local economy
2. Improvement of living conditions and quality of life for residents
3. Social development and integration, including strengthening civic engagement, public awareness, and local self-governance
4. Post-war recovery of the Vasylkivka Town Territorial Community

These objectives guide the preparation of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan and define its priorities.

Key Recovery Projects

Social Taxi: Mobility and Accessibility in the Vasylkivka Community

The project establishes an integrated transport system for people with limited mobility through the procurement of specialised vehicles equipped with lifts. It also integrates this service into the broader social support system. Implementation will ensure equal access to services, support social inclusion, and improve the quality of life for vulnerable groups.

Mobile Administrative Service Centre (Mobile ASC)

The project aims to ensure maximum accessibility of public services across remote settlements in the Vasylkivka Territorial Community. It introduces a fully equipped "office on wheels", fitted with the necessary equipment, secure communication systems, and an autonomous power supply to support on-site service delivery. This solution enables administrative staff to provide outreach services directly in villages, allowing residents to access public services at their place of residence. As a result, it reduces travel time and costs for citizens while improving the overall efficiency and responsiveness of municipal service delivery.

Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Healthcare System

The project strengthens the energy resilience of the community's healthcare system through the integration of renewable energy solutions. It includes the installation of a solar power plant on the roof of an outpatient clinic. By securing an independent energy source, the project ensures the uninterrupted provision of medical services during power outages and enhances the overall reliability of healthcare delivery.

Restoration and Modernisation of Hub Lyceum No. 1 named after M. M. Kotsiubynskyi

The project focuses on the comprehensive restoration of the community's main educational institution, which sustained damage as a result of military aggression. It includes a full capital refurbishment of the building, complete restoration of the roof and structural elements, and replacement of engineering systems with the integration of energy-efficient technologies. The project also creates a modern, inclusive educational environment. As a result, the community will gain a safe and innovative learning space that ensures secure conditions for students, improves comfort, and reduces energy consumption.

Project Details

Key Achievements

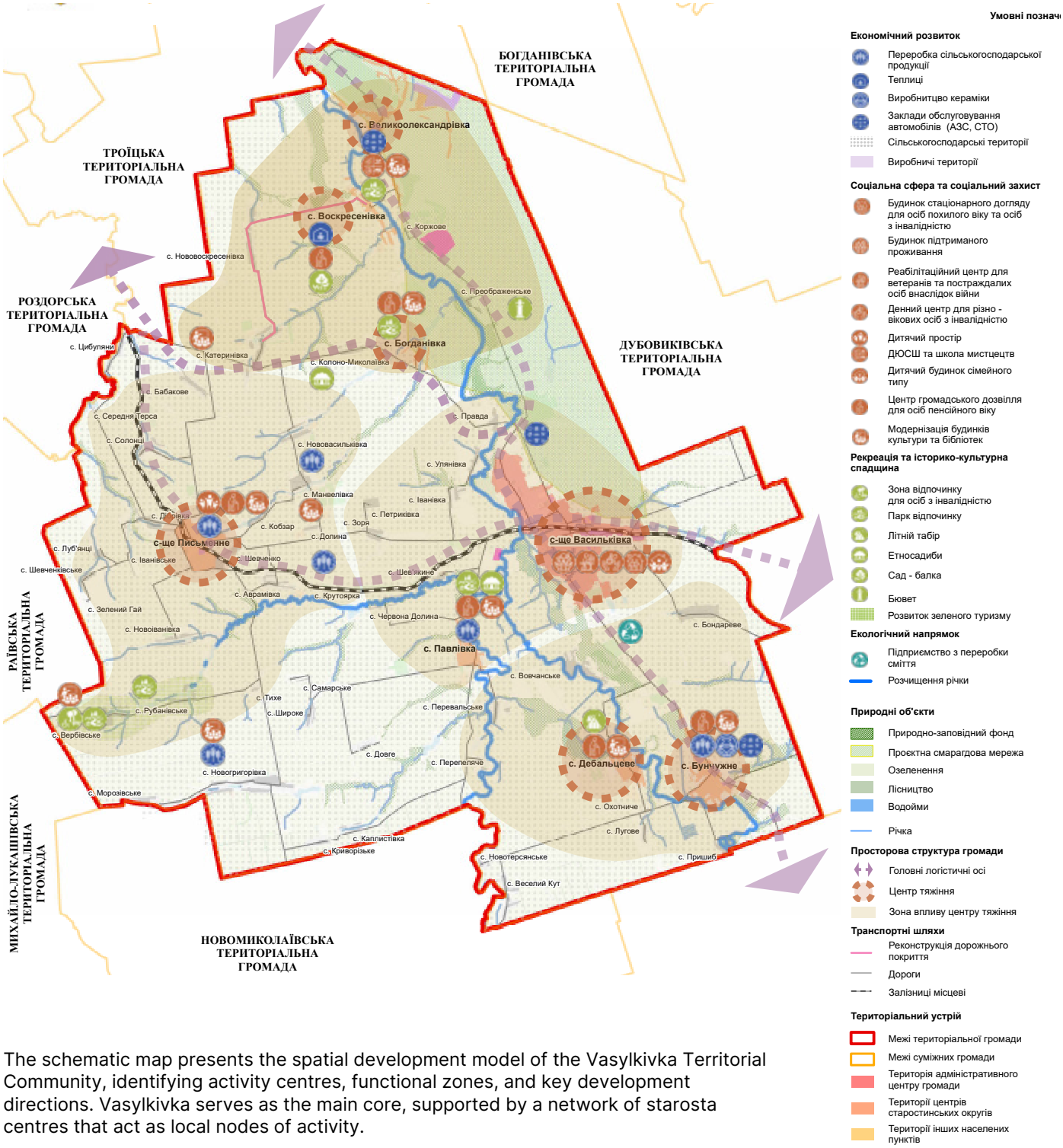
Cooperation with Polaris has primarily strengthened the community's institutional capacity in spatial planning and strategic territorial development. The process actively engaged community representatives and increased awareness among local officials and active residents of sustainable development principles, spatial planning practices, and integrated approaches to recovery.

At the same time, the partnership fostered effective cooperation between the local authority, the expert community, and residents. This strengthened interaction now provides a solid foundation for the high-quality preparation of the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan and supports its effective implementation in the future.

Participation in the Polaris Programme has given us a clear understanding of the structure of the recovery plan and helped us systematise the community's work. With expert support, we have improved the quality of planning documentation and strengthened the justification of our project proposals.

SERHII PAVLICHENKO
Head of the Territorial Community

Schematic Spatial Development Map

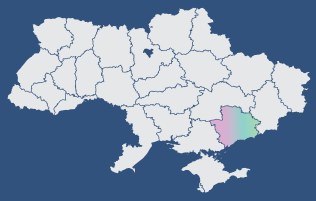


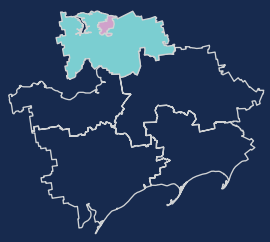
The schematic map presents the spatial development model of the Vasylkivka Territorial Community, identifying activity centres, functional zones, and key development directions. Vasylkivka serves as the main core, supported by a network of starosta centres that act as local nodes of activity.

The model promotes economic development – including processing, manufacturing, and greenhouse farming – along transport corridors, alongside the development of social infrastructure and services. It also designates recreational and environmentally protected areas.

Overall, the model strengthens territorial connectivity, supports the development of local centres, and ensures balanced use of community resources.

VILNIANSK HROMADA





Zaporizhzhia Raion
Zaporizhzhia Oblast

City of Vilniansk

Administrative centre

16

Number of settlements

158.4 км²

Area

116.8 persons/км²

Population density

420,271k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

3,342

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Terms of Reference for the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

16,822

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

18,508

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The following strategic and planning documents have been developed and are being implemented in the community:

- Programme of Economic and Social Development of the Vilniansk Urban Territorial Community for 2026
- Decision “On the initiation of the Development Strategy of the Vilniansk Urban Territorial Community until 2027 (with a perspective until 2034)”
- Medium-Term Plan of Priority Public Investments for 2026-2028

The development of the preparatory stage of the Comprehensive Plan is particularly relevant for the Vilniansk community under current conditions. The community requires a systemic vision for recovery, territorial development, efficient land use, and alignment of spatial planning documentation with current population needs.

The development of the Terms of Reference represents the starting point and the first step in strategic planning within the community. While a full Development Strategy is still needed, the working group sessions have enabled the community to define priority directions for recovery and development.

Planning context

The Vilniansk Urban Territorial Community is located at the border between Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts, providing a transit function and potential for interregional interaction. Proximity to the city of Zaporizhzhia creates competitive pressures, influencing spatial development and the community's self-sufficiency. The absence of integration into international transport corridors limits external connectivity, while at the same time encouraging the development of local communication networks. In wartime conditions, the geographical position acquires strategic importance, combining risks with the need for resilient development.

The hromada's economy operates in an adaptive mode: despite losses, industry and the agricultural processing sector remain key pillars. Some enterprises have resumed production and tax contributions, indicating gradual recovery of the financial base. Growth in the number of sole proprietors reflects a simplified business model under risk conditions. At the same time, in March 2026 the hromada experienced a 7% shortfall in personal income tax revenues due to the relocation of two budget-forming enterprises.

Key challenges

Security

Proximity to the frontline

Budget deficit

Decline in revenues due to relocation of key enterprises.

Environmental risks

Climate change-related risks, including droughts and declining groundwater levels, which may negatively affect agricultural production as a key economic sector.

Deteriorated infrastructure

Critical need for modernisation of water supply, wastewater, and energy networks to ensure functioning of settlements.

Integration of IDPs

More than 3,342 displaced persons place pressure on healthcare and education systems, requiring permanent housing and job creation.

Recovery efforts are focused on improving quality of life and are based on strengthening governance capacity, preparing strategic documents, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and restoring infrastructure.

Public engagement

The process was based on inclusiveness and transparency. Key engagement indicators include:

374

Survey respondents

40+

Stakeholders participating in Strategic Session

30+

Proposals collected

- 353 residents and 21 business representatives participated in the survey.
- Public consultations were conducted.
- Six working meetings were held with broad participation of community representatives.
- More than 30 concrete proposals were collected for the action plan.
- A strategic session was conducted with the participation of over 40 key stakeholders (councillors, activists, entrepreneurs).

Development scenarios

The Vilniansk community has defined key development trends and elaborated corresponding scenarios. Among these, two priorities stand out: strengthening planning culture and advancing the recovery and modernisation of infrastructure.

The community considered four development scenarios. The optimistic scenario assumes the following:

Optimistic Scenario

The Vilniansk community enters a new stage of development, marked by a stronger planning culture and enhanced governance capacity, enabling a shift from formal documentation to practical implementation. The community establishes a clear vision for economic development zones, actively attracts investment, and generates new employment opportunities. At the same time, the community modernises its transport, engineering, and social infrastructure, improves quality of life, strengthens social cohesion, and advances the implementation of sustainable development programmes.

Development Vision

The Vilniansk community defines its development directions and has undertaken spatial planning while preserving the legacy of a former district centre. It creates a safe and comfortable environment for individuals, businesses, and social and transport infrastructure, as well as tourism.

The community becomes a point of attraction and a reliable partner, transitioning from planning to implementation. This ensures economic growth, modernisation, social advancement, and sustainable development, combining care for people and the environment.

Strategic Objectives

The hromada has defined the following strategic objectives:

1 Improvement of quality of life and social cohesion

Safety, infrastructure improvement, and enhanced accessibility and quality of public services.

2 Economic development of the community

Support and development of business, development of human capital and the labour market, strengthening investment attractiveness, and development of the tourism sector.

3 Social sector and social protection

Development of healthcare and educational institutions, construction of social housing, and expansion of sports infrastructure and youth spaces.

4 Environment and sustainability

Cleaning of water bodies, greening of the community, elimination of illegal dumpsites, and development of renewable energy sources.

Key Recovery Projects

Municipal solid waste collection

Development of municipal solid waste collection infrastructure in residential areas of multi-apartment buildings aimed at improving waste management efficiency and enhancing the condition of residential areas.

Water supply and wastewater system

Water supply and wastewater system: Major overhaul of the existing water supply and wastewater systems, and construction of a new water pipeline to ensure centralised drinking water supply to the community's villages.

Barrier-free routes and public space

Creation of barrier-free routes and development of public space infrastructure, development and upgrading of public spaces in settlements in compliance with accessibility and inclusiveness requirements.

Project Details

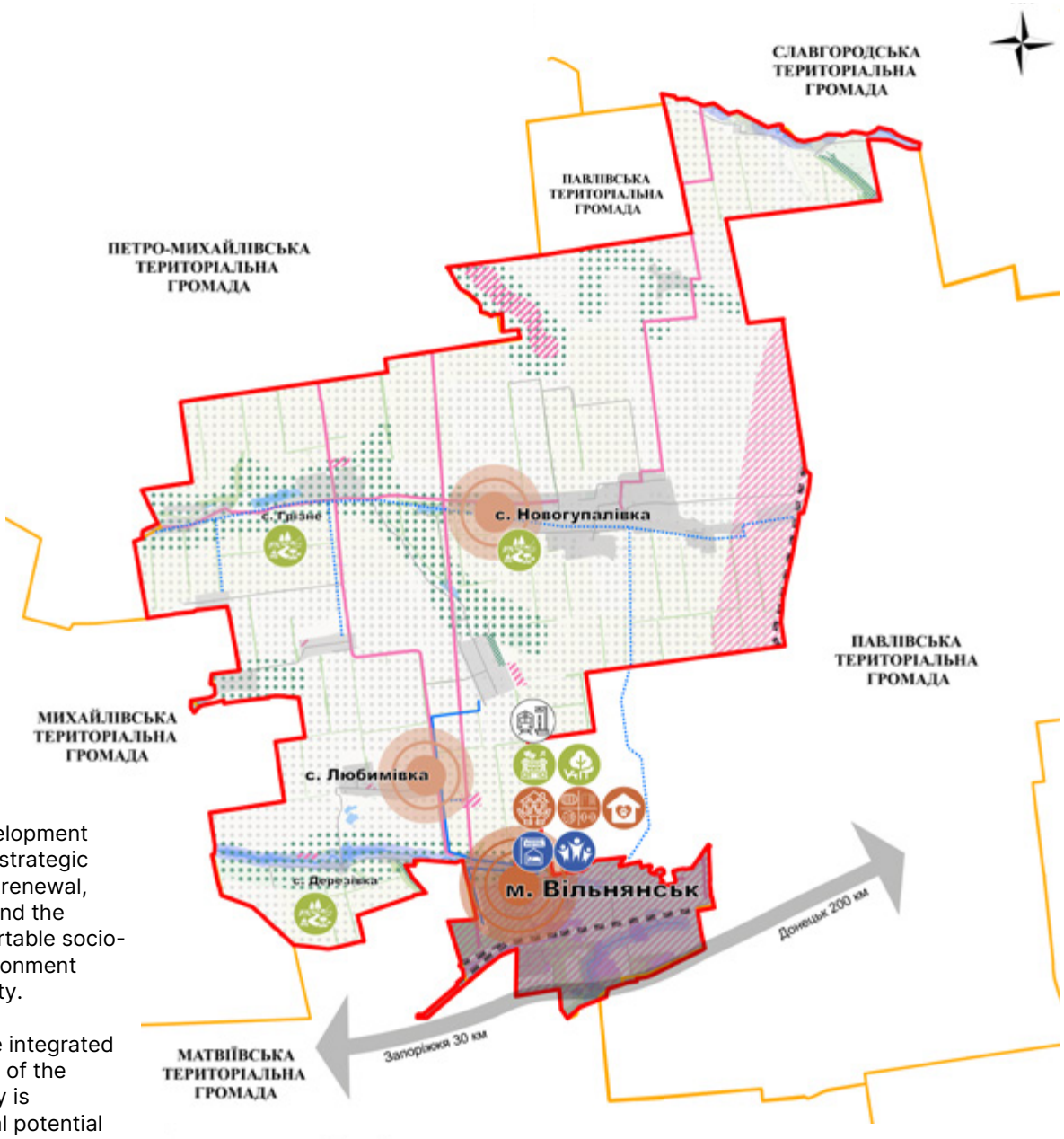
Key Achievements

NATALIIA MUSIIENKO
Mayor

"Support from Polaris is extremely important for our community. Strategic planning is a system of interconnected documents, and their high-quality preparation is only the beginning. Implementation, recovery, and development lie ahead. We hope that Polaris will continue supporting us. Thank you for your cooperation."

The cooperation enabled an objective analysis of the current situation regarding strategic documents, providing an external perspective rather than internal bias. It allowed the community to structure its understanding and clearly grasp the mechanism for developing the Comprehensive Spatial Development Plan.

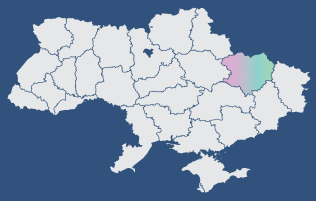
Integrated Development Model Map



The integrated development model map defines strategic priorities for spatial renewal, economic growth, and the creation of a comfortable socio-environmental environment within the community.

The objective of the integrated development model of the Vilniansk community is revitalising industrial potential and strengthening its role as a transit and logistics hub. The spatial structure is based on a dominant urban core and a network of rural sub-centres (Liubymivka, Novohupalivka). The economic component integrates industrial zones, agricultural areas, and sites for prospective development. The transport framework ensures internal cohesion and connectivity with interregional logistics flows. The social dimension focuses on modernisation of social infrastructure and development of the housing stock. Environmental sustainability is ensured through the development of a “blue-green network” and the preservation of protected natural areas.

ZLATOPIL HROMADA



Lozova Raion
Kharkiv Oblast

City of Zlatopil

Administrative centre

9

Number of settlements

732.95 км²

Area

145.3 persons/км²

Population density

421,119k UAH

Community budget, including transfers (2025), in thousand UAH

7,462

Internally Displaced Persons (as of 1.01.2026)

Integrated Development Concept

Type of document developed in partnership with Polaris

29,256

Population before the full-scale invasion (01.01.2022)

35,058

Current population including IDPs (1.01.2026)

Strategic document alignment

The hromada has already adopted several strategic documents, including:

- Development Strategy for 2024-2030
- Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan for the city of Pervomaiskyi* up to 2030
- Municipal Energy Plan up to 2030

The Integrated Development Concept establishes a spatial vision for the community. It integrates economic, social, infrastructural, and environmental dimensions, takes into account wartime challenges and post-war recovery needs, and ensures territorial coordination in the implementation of development measures.

* The name Pervomaiskyi appears in a number of earlier strategic and planning documents due to historical naming conventions. The city currently known as Zlatopil was officially called Pervomaiskyi from 1952 until 2024, following a renaming during the Soviet occupation. References to Pervomaiskyi in existing documentation should be understood as referring to the present-day city of Zlatopil and the corresponding territorial community.

Planning context

Zlatopil Community lies in Lozova Raion, approximately 85 km from Kharkiv. It functions as an integrated and interconnected territorial system structured around a single dominant urban core – the city of Zlatopil.

The city concentrates humanitarian services and infrastructure development, while road connectivity ensures access to essential services for residents of rural settlements. At the same time, engineering and transport infrastructure require substantial rehabilitation and modernisation. Key issues include the deterioration of road surfaces and utility networks, insufficient waste sorting, as well as outdated equipment and machinery. Through active partnerships, the community continues to implement infrastructure recovery and development projects.

The local economy operates as a multi-component, interconnected system. Agribusiness forms its backbone, providing up to 25% of all jobs and generating a significant share of annual income. At the same time, agricultural processing increasingly drives industrial development.

The community places strong emphasis on environmental protection. Key ecological challenges include a high proportion of ploughed land, the need to rehabilitate the former state enterprise “KhimProm” site, rapid climate change, and limited access to high-quality drinking water.

Key challenges

Recovery planning in Zlatopil Community brings a set of complex, interlinked challenges that call for coordinated and integrated action. The community needs to shape a balanced spatial structure that brings together residential, economic, and public functions in a coherent way. At the same time, it must modernise ageing engineering and transport infrastructure, while creating conditions that encourage entrepreneurship and attract investment despite elevated risks. Improving the quality of education, healthcare, and administrative services remains a central priority. In parallel, the community seeks to strengthen environmental safety and actively advance a green transition. Another key task is to create an inclusive, comfortable, and barrier-free environment that meets the needs of all residents.

Public engagement

The preparation of the Integrated Development Concept followed principles of inclusiveness and transparency, with broad public engagement.

350+

Survey respondents

60+

Proposals for the Action Plan

- The process included a survey of more than 350 residents and business representatives, as well as a strategic session involving key stakeholders and active members of the community.
- Participants submitted over 60 concrete proposals for the action plan.
- The team openly communicated the results of scenario planning to residents.
- Expert interviews and focus groups supported a deeper qualitative analysis.

Development scenarios

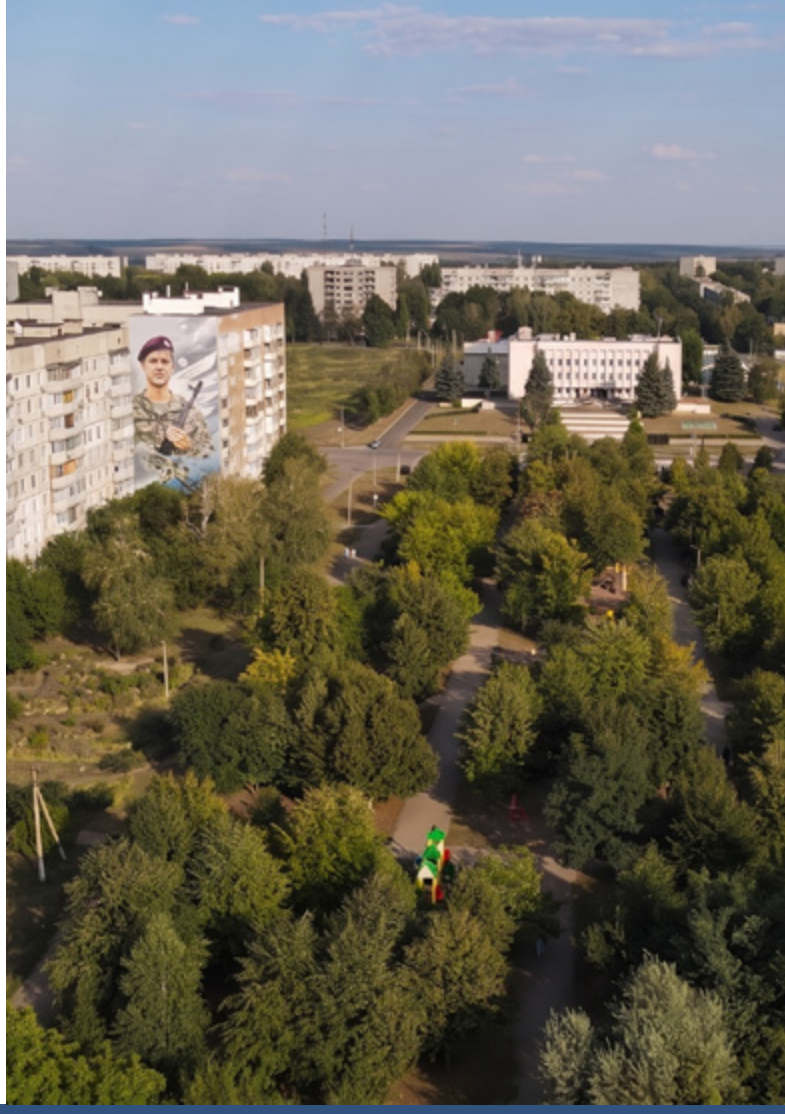
Scenario modelling for Zlatopil Community builds on two key uncertainties: the level of European integration and the intensity of hostilities. Together, these factors shape alternative development trajectories. The most favourable scenario, "European Recovery", envisages a transformation of the spatial structure, inflow of investment, and the development of a polycentric model. By contrast, the "Prolonged Instability" scenario leads to spatial fragmentation, degradation of peripheral areas, and concentration of resources in safer core zones. Other scenarios reflect intermediate pathways of adaptation or development under sustained risk, where the effectiveness of local governance plays a decisive role.

European Recovery

Prolonged Instability

Development Vision

Zlatopil Community is developing as a modern, safe, and comfortable place to live, where each settlement fulfils a clear and meaningful role within the wider territorial system. The city functions as a centre of opportunities and services, while rural areas provide space for living, employment, and agricultural development. At the same time, natural areas underpin environmental safety and the overall quality of the living environment. The local economy builds on a balanced combination of agricultural production, processing industries, manufacturing, and emerging service sectors.



Strategic Directions

Zlatopil Community guides its development through a combined approach that integrates a resilience framework with designated growth areas, shaping a coherent and adaptable spatial model. This approach prioritises strengthening environmental and infrastructure resilience, developing a polycentric settlement structure, driving economic transformation through territorial revitalisation and the introduction of production and logistics functions, and improving the overall quality of the living environment.Four interrelated strategic objectives underpin this model:

1

To establish a resilient and safe spatial system capable of operating under crisis and risk conditions

2

To develop a polycentric structure through a network of local centres with equitable access to services

3

To transform the local economy through revitalisation and the introduction of new production and logistics functions

4

To ensure a high-quality, comfortable, and safe living environment.

Key Recovery Projects

Modernisation of the district heating system in the city of Zlatopil (Phase I)

The project will upgrade boiler house equipment, introduce automated control and dispatch systems, and replace heating networks across six of the city's largest heating districts.

Modernisation of the wastewater treatment plant complex (Phase I)

The project focuses on replacing physically worn infrastructure components, improving the quality of biological wastewater treatment, reducing energy consumption, and strengthening environmental safety.

Creation of a safe, accessible, and green public space "Microsad" ("Microgarden") in the city of Zlatopil, Kharkiv Oblast

The project addresses the shortage of high-quality public spaces, limited safety, low environmental resilience of the urban environment, insufficient adaptation to climate risks, and restricted accessibility for people with reduced mobility.

Project Details

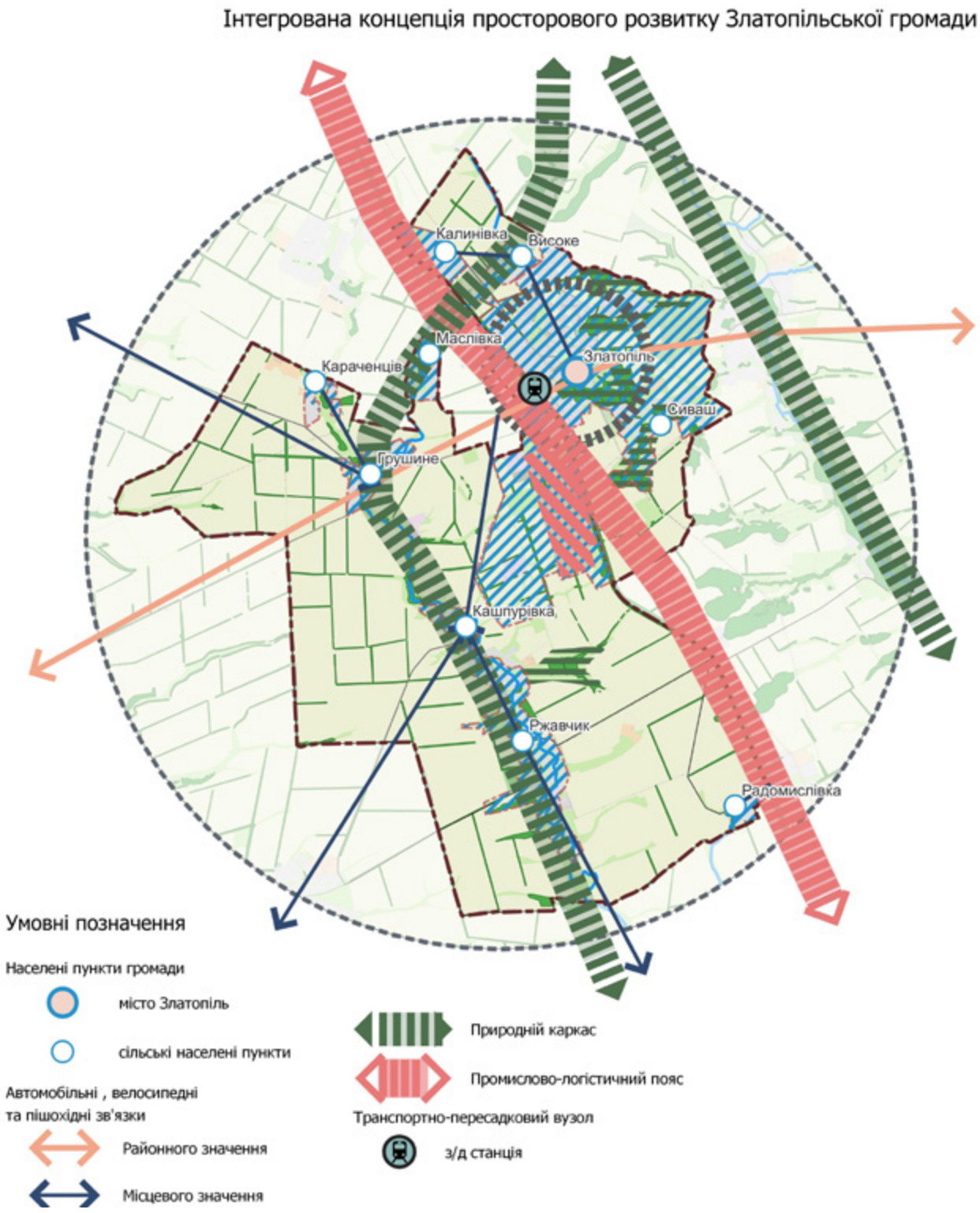
Key Achievements

We have gained a clear understanding of how to plan recovery in a systematic way. This allows us to make well-informed decisions and start building the future of the community today.

MYKOLA BAKSHEIEV
HEAD OF THE TERRITORIAL COMMUNITY

- ✔ Targeted expert support in both strategic and spatial planning, which is particularly important in the recovery context.
- ✔ Hromada has strengthened its institutional capacity and refined its approach to preparing key development documents.
- ✔ Structured planning processes and defined recovery priorities in a consistent and evidence-based manner. Important step towards a more systematic approach to territorial community development in both the short and long term.
- ✔ Not only a strategic document has been developed, but also a practical tool to guide recovery planning and support the attraction of investment.

Integrated Spatial Development Map



The integrated spatial development map of Zlatopil Territorial Community illustrates the interplay between the resilience framework and strategic growth areas. It presents the green-blue natural framework, a connected infrastructure system, and a polycentric settlement network as the foundation of the community's viability. The map identifies key transformation zones, including the city of Zlatopil as a multifunctional centre and an industrial and logistics belt, which together underpin economic development and contribute to improving the quality of life.

About the cover

The cover of this publication and the cover of the “Strategic Foundations for Sustainable, Integrated, and Phased Recovery in Ukraine: Key Results from the pilot phase of the Locally Led Recovery component” publication form a diptych: the black fractures of the first publication become the golden seams of the second. The visual draws on kintsugi — the craft of mending broken ceramics in which the cracks are not concealed but filled with gold. The metaphor speaks to the idea of locally led recovery: recovery is not a return to what was, but a deliberate rethinking of what is being rebuilt. Hromadas and oblasts lead this work themselves — not as recipients of recovery, but as those shaping it.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