

# CIVIL SOCIETY IN UKRAINE DURING WARTIME, 2022–2025

Report on a Comprehensive  
Sociological Study

August 2025







# List of abbreviations

<b>Armed Forces</b>	Armed Forces of Ukraine	<b>KVED</b>	Classifier of Economic Activities (industry code system)
<b>ASC</b>	Administrative Service Centre		
<b>ATCs</b>	Amalgamated Territorial Communities (consolidated hromadas)	<b>LGBTQ+</b>	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (and others)
<b>BUR</b>	Initiative “Building Ukraine Together”	<b>Media</b>	Media (the media sector)
<b>CEDEM</b>	Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law	<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>CF</b>	Charitable Foundation	<b>NBU</b>	National Bank of Ukraine
<b>CLC</b>	Civil law contracts	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>CMU</b>	The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine	<b>OMA</b>	Oblast Military Administration
<b>CO</b>	Charitable Organisation	<b>OPORA</b>	Civil Network “OPORA”
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organisation	<b>p.p.</b>	Percentage points
<b>CWG</b>	Cash Working Group	<b>RMA</b>	Rayon Military Administration
<b>EU</b>	European Union	<b>RPR</b>	“Reanimation Package of Reforms” Coalition
<b>FOP</b>	Sole Proprietor (“Fizychna Osoba-Pidpriumets”)	<b>UAH</b>	Ukrainian hryvnia
<b>HOA</b>	Homeowners Association (Condominium association)	<b>UAV</b>	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (drone)
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons	<b>UCF</b>	Ukrainian Cultural Foundation
<b>ISAR</b>	Initiative Centre to Promote Public Initiative and Development “Ednannia”	<b>UICPR</b>	Ukrainian Independent Centre for Political Research
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>KIIS</b>	Kyiv International Institute of Sociology	<b>USA</b>	United States of America
		<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
		<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation



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# Research methodology

The sociological study “Civil Society in Ukraine During Wartime 2025” is conducted within the framework of the project “Strong Civil Society in Ukraine — a Driver of Reforms and Democracy,” implemented by ISAR “Ednannia” with funding from Norway and Sweden. The data was collected and analysed by the “Social Indicators” Centre.

The study aims to examine the activities of civil society organisations during the war, in particular the challenges faced by CSOs under martial law and their ability to adapt and participate in the recovery process.

This is the third such study; the previous two waves were conducted in 2022 and 2023. The dynamics of key indicators for 2022–2025 are reflected in this report.

Several data collection methods were used to achieve the objectives of the research project:

## 1. Telephone survey of civil society organisations.

A total of 1201 CSO representatives were surveyed<sup>1</sup>: 832 of them represented non-governmental organisations, 290 represented charitable organisations, 29 represented other legal forms (e.g., public associations), and 50 were registered as FOPs<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The survey selected economic entities (CSOs and sole proprietors) operating in the public and charitable sectors with the following KVED codes:

88.99 (KVED 2010)/85.32.5 (KVED 2005) (charitable activities)

94.99 (KVED 2010)/91.33.0 (KVED 2005) — (Activities of non-governmental organisations) — only activities of organisations not directly affiliated with political parties that influence public opinion through education, political influence, fundraising, etc.: civil initiatives and protest movements; environmental movements; organisations that support community development and educational opportunities; organisations for the protection and improvement of the living conditions of specific population groups, such as ethnic and minority groups, etc.; patriotic associations, including war veterans' associations; activities related to the provision of grants by members or other organisations.

82.99 (KVED 2010) — (Provision of other auxiliary commercial services): only activities of organisations engaged in fundraising for charitable purposes, carried out for remuneration or on a contract basis.

<sup>2</sup> In the sector of public initiatives, charity, volunteering, and social entrepreneurship in Ukraine, some specialists, experts, and activists operate as sole proprietors (FOPs). This allows them to support social initiatives without excessive bureaucracy, benefit from a simplified taxation and reporting system, work with several projects or organisations simultaneously, and combine public and paid activities, ensuring financial stability and independence, which is especially important in wartime. Therefore, the sample of the quantitative survey also included FOPs whose economic activities are focused on the public and charitable sectors.





The survey was conducted from June 13 to July 10, 2025. The primary method of data collection was telephone interviews; however, in some cases, respondents were given the option to complete an online questionnaire if they preferred. The sample is representative of public and charitable organisations with specific KVED codes that are currently active<sup>3</sup>.

The survey covered CSOs in all regions of Ukraine (except for the occupied Luhansk region and Crimea), as well as three organisations whose headquarters are currently located abroad. At the time of the survey, the largest number of CSOs had their headquarters in Kyiv (16.2%) and Kyiv region (9.7%), as well as in Dnipropetrovsk (8.7%), Lviv (7.2%), Kharkiv (5.8%), Odesa (5.4%), and Poltava (5.2%) regions. The regional focus of CSO activities was on the frontline and near-frontline areas of eastern and southern Ukraine, as well as in the city of Kyiv and the Kyiv and Lviv regions.

Overall, 47.0% of CSOs indicated that they operate locally (in individual settlements, communities, or within a single region), 21.6% identified themselves as regional organisations operating in several areas, 20.9% classified themselves as national organisations, and 10.5% responded that they operate at the international level. It should be noted that these figures reflect how organisations themselves assess their impact and geographical coverage, rather than the actual scale of their activities.

Almost three-quarters of the CSOs covered by the study (73%) operated on a purely voluntary basis, while 27% had at least one employee with whom they had concluded an employment contract, a civil law contract, or a contract with a sole proprietor. In terms of size and involvement of contract-based staff, the CSOs surveyed were distributed as follows: 52.0% consisted of 1–10 volunteers, 17.7% consisted of 11–50 volunteers, 3.3% were large volunteer associations with more than 50 volunteers, 13.8% were small CSOs with 1–10 people, including people in paid positions, 9.4% were CSOs with 11–50 people, including those in paid positions, and 3.7% were CSOs with more than 50 people, including those in paid positions.

## **2. In-depth interviews with representatives of civil society organisations and experts.**

A total of 10 in-depth interviews were conducted. The respondents were representatives of nationwide CSOs and international organisations that support the public sector. Respondents for in-depth interviews were selected considering the diversity of their areas of activity, experience, and regional representation. The CSOs represented by the participants in the in-depth interviews work in the fields of media, healthcare, strategic analytics, youth policy, support for reforms and European integration, public control, and advocacy. Respondents were selected through a combination of information from open sources, internal databases, network contacts, and with the assistance of partner organisations.

In-depth interviews were conducted online using Zoom software with audio and video recording and, in cases where respondents did not have the technical capability to use Zoom, by telephone with audio recording. Data collection took place from June 18 to July 4, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Random selection from existing databases was used to select potential survey participants. The sample was based on a list of target organisations prepared by OpenDataBot, a company that provides access to government data from major public registries. Organisations/sole proprietors with specific KVED codes that were officially registered and had not officially ceased their activities at the time of the survey were selected to participate in the study. Additional screening was used during the survey to select organisations that are actively operating. The contact rate with CSOs is 5%, and the response rate is 24%. The statistical sampling error (with a probability of 0.95 and without taking into account the design effect) does not exceed 2.8%.



### **3. Desk analysis of secondary data.**

Desk research of secondary data encompassed data from the State Statistics Service, open registries, scientific and analytical publications, results of previous studies, and other sources of information related to the activities of public and charitable organisations in Ukraine.



# Conclusions

## Quantitative Characteristics and Sector Dynamics

Based on secondary data analysis

As of 1 April 2025, the number of charitable organisations (COs) in Ukraine reached 32,974, and the number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) reached 106,720.

Since 2022, with the start of the full-scale invasion, the dynamic of the number of civil society organisations in Ukraine has undergone dramatic changes. This year marked a sharp shift in quantitative indicators: while the number of newly established charitable organisations surged, registrations of civil society organisations declined.

In 2022, the number of newly registered charitable organisations in Ukraine reached a historic high of over 6,300 — nearly eight times higher than the previous year. This surge was likely a public response to the military crisis and the urgent need to coordinate humanitarian assistance. In subsequent years, registrations gradually declined to approximately 5,000 in 2023 and around 3,500 in 2024 — but remained significantly above pre-war levels.

In contrast to the surge in charitable organisations, the full-scale war had the opposite effect on the registration of new non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In 2022, the number of new NGO registrations dropped sharply to just 2,800 — the lowest figure since 2015. **However, by 2023–2024, registrations began to recover, and the total number of NGOs increased by 10% compared to the end of 2021.** This indicates that the sector has evolved: following the initial shock of the invasion and dramatic shifts in living conditions, an active segment of society once again began to view CSOs as an effective means of civic engagement.

The volunteer movement has become a key indicator of societal mobilisation. According to official data from the State Tax Service, the number of registered volunteers increased almost 33-fold between January 2022 and November 2024 — from 320 to 10,500 individuals. The most significant surge occurred at the end of 2022, followed by a steady monthly increase of several hundred new registrations throughout 2023. **However, the accurate scale of volunteer engagement is considerably higher, as the majority of participants are not captured by official statistics.**



Since 2022, civil society in Ukraine has followed a dual trajectory: a rapid expansion of the charitable sector and volunteer engagement, alongside an initial decline in the formation of new non-governmental organisations (CSOs). However, this trend began to reverse in 2023. Taken together, these developments reflect a large-scale societal mobilisation in response to the war and a gradual return to a more balanced pattern of sectoral growth.

At the same time, both expert assessments and official state statistics — including the submission of annual financial statements by civil society organisations (CSOs) — **indicate that a large share of registered NGOs and charitable organisations (COs) are inactive and exist only on paper.** In 2024, 89% of NGOs and 77% of COs failed to submit their annual financial reports. This suggests that, out of more than 100,000 registered NGOs and over 30,000 COs, only a relatively small proportion are actually active and provide support to their declared beneficiaries.

## According to the results of the quantitative survey

**The process of surveying in 2023 and 2025 does not provide sufficient grounds to claim a significant increase or decrease (cessation of activity) in the number of active civil society organisations (CSOs) during this period.** In both waves, effective contact was established with 5–6% of registered CSOs that met the selection criteria, of which approximately two-thirds reported being active.

**The geography of CSO activities remains broadly stable.** As of 2022–2023, 12.4% of organisations have branches in other oblasts of Ukraine, and 53.0% report operating beyond their home oblast. Compared with 2023, the share of CSOs operating in Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, and the almost fully occupied Luhansk oblast decreased, while the share operating in Sumy oblast increased (all changes within 3–5 percentage points). This likely reflects a response to heightened defence needs and humanitarian challenges amid intensified hostilities in this area.

Despite the impact of unfavourable external factors (funding cuts, conscription, migration) and internal ones (burnout, reduced activity), **no large-scale outflow of staff from the public sector has been recorded. Some negative dynamics can be observed across the three waves of the survey, but CSOs themselves do not directly report significant losses.** Overall, six out of ten organisations report unchanged staff numbers. Local CSOs demonstrate the highest staffing stability: 67.7% maintained the same staff size, compared to no more than 55% among regional, national, and international CSOs. Among the remaining organisations, the share reporting an increase in volunteer engagement over the past year exceeds the share reporting a decline—particularly among those operating beyond a single oblast.

On the other hand, survey data from three waves show that after an increase in 2023, the total average number of employees<sup>4</sup> declined in 2024–2025, driven mainly by a reduction in volunteers. Meanwhile, engagement rates for staff under other forms of cooperation (employment contracts, contracting agreements, or as sole proprietors) remained consistently low. This discrepancy between observed and self-reported dynamics may occur when staff increases in some organisations are smaller in absolute numbers than staff losses in others, even if more organisations reported growth than decline.

**Female participation in civil society employment has shown a clear upward trend.** In 2023, women made up 53.6% of the workforce, rising to 62.3% by 2025. This shift may reflect the sector's adaptation to the outflow of men into the Ukrainian Defence Forces.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the trimmed mean indicator, excluding the 5% highest and 5% lowest values to eliminate the impact of outliers on the average value.



## Level of Trust and Public Attitudes Toward CSOs and Volunteers

The full-scale invasion of 2022 marked not only the organisational mobilisation of the sector and an explosive rise in newly established charitable organisations but also an unprecedented increase in public trust toward volunteers and CSOs. In 2021, trust in volunteers ranged from 64–68%, while about 47% of people trusted NGOs. Within just a few months of the invasion, these numbers surged: by August 2022, more than 85% of citizens trusted volunteer initiatives, and about 65% trusted NGOs.

Trust peaked in February 2023, when support for volunteers reached 88% and for NGOs 66%. This reflected the exceptional role they played in securing the home front, coordinating aid, and supporting the army. However, by the second half of 2023, signs of war fatigue had likely emerged: trust in volunteers fell to 83%, while trust in NGOs declined to 60%.

In early 2024, trust reached its lowest point since the outbreak of the full-scale war: 78% for volunteer organisations and 55% for civil society organisations. Over the following year, however, both sectors showed partial recovery. By early 2025, 80% of citizens expressed trust in volunteers and 61% in NGOs.

Analysis of Razumkov Centre<sup>5</sup> and KIIS<sup>6</sup> data reveals a similar pattern of change: between 2021 and 2025, trust in volunteers fluctuated by about 20 percentage points but ultimately stabilised at 80 ± 3%. Throughout the entire period, volunteer initiatives consistently maintained an average 20-point advantage over NGOs.

In broader comparison with other institutions, the volunteer sector and NGOs have proven to be the most stable in terms of public trust. While branches of government, law enforcement agencies, and the media have all experienced significant declines since their peaks in 2022, volunteers have maintained exceptionally high levels of trust, with NGOs slightly lower. A similar pattern of stability is seen only in citizens' attitudes toward the Armed Forces.

## Areas and Priorities of CSO Activities

The overwhelming majority of surveyed CSO representatives (83.5%) reported that their organisations had not changed their priorities over the past year and continued working in their usual areas. The leading field of CSO activity in 2024, which remains a stable priority, is assistance to the army and veterans (40.6%).

Another common area involves responding to humanitarian needs and addressing the long-term social consequences of the war. This includes assistance to war victims and internally displaced persons (27.9%), support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities (24.1%), provision of psychological assistance (17.5%), legal assistance (12.2%), and social services (9.9%).

A significant share of organisations also continues activities related to the preservation of identity and the restoration of human potential. Specifically, 22.6% of CSOs actively work with youth, 23.5% implement projects in education, 21.6% in culture and sports, and 9.9% in healthcare.

<sup>5</sup> Sociological research of the Razumkov Centre 2021–2025 <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia>

<sup>6</sup> Dynamics of trust in social institutions in 2021–2024. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1467&page=1>



The most common areas of activity among organisations at different levels (from local to international) are broadly similar, though notable differences exist. Local CSOs were less likely to report assisting the army and veterans (32.4%) compared with organisations operating on a broader geographical scale (46–50%).

Local and regional organisations are more active in working with youth and adolescents, as well as in healthcare and human rights protection. Regional and national CSOs tend to focus more on these latter areas. National and international organisations are more often engaged in science, analytics, and consulting. In contrast, issues of international relations and Euro-Atlantic integration remain primarily the domain of CSOs that identify themselves as international.

**The distribution of CSOs by areas of activity has remained relatively stable since 2023, with a few exceptions. Participation in culture and sports decreased from 29.4% in 2023 to 21.6% in 2025; work with youth and adolescents fell from 30.6% to 22.6%; and community development services dropped from 7.2% to 4.2%.**

Looking at longer-term trends since the beginning of the war, CSO activity in assisting vulnerable groups and people with special needs has doubled (from 12.0% to 24.1%). Animal protection has become more relevant (1.6% to 4.5%), while infrastructure reconstruction has also grown in importance (1.1% to 4.2%).

The study also highlighted areas where activity appears to be declining. Assistance to war victims and IDPs dropped from 43.2% to 27.9%, partly because the survey reclassified social services and psychological assistance as independent areas of activity in 2023 and 2025, respectively. Involvement in human rights protection declined from 13.3% in 2022 to 9.3% in 2025, while engagement in social entrepreneurship (8.4% to 3.7%), democracy building (5.6% to 3.7%), media literacy (6.3% to 3.1%), anti-corruption (5.9% to 2.7%), digital transformation (3.7% to 2.4%), and decentralisation (4.6% to 2.0%) also gradually decreased.

**Although hostilities remain the primary reason for the revision of priorities in the public sector (44.9%), the influence of other factors has increased compared to 2023.** Key drivers include changes in public demand (35.4%), the need to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine (32.8%), financial difficulties (26.8%), the inactivity of state authorities (22.2%), increased international support (10.6%), changes in beneficiaries (10.1%), and changes in legislation (8.6%). According to respondents in in-depth interviews, the landscape of CSO activities has already been significantly shaped – and will continue to be influenced – by the termination of funding for some USAID-supported regions.

**Some CSOs feel the need to reorient or expand their work: 16.1% of surveyed organisations consider it necessary to change the direction of their activities in the context of war, and more than half (59.4%) believe there is a need to develop additional areas of activity.** Since 2023, demand for changing activities has remained almost unchanged, while the need to create further areas of work has increased slightly.

CSOs most often identifying the need to change their activities include those working in decentralisation (37.5%), infrastructure restoration or construction (33.3%), media literacy (24.3%), legal aid (23.8%), and the provision of social services (23.5%).

Although the overwhelming majority of respondents consider their activities relevant in the context of war, specific fields received comparatively low assessments of relevance. Specifically, in





Community development services, 18.0% of respondents gave their work 1–3 points on a five-point scale; in decentralisation, 12.5%; in international relations and Euro-Atlantic integration, 11.8%; and in environmental issues, 11.6%.

## Groups Most in Need of Assistance, According to CSO Representatives

In 2025, two trends emerged in CSO representatives' perceptions of groups in need of support. **First, as in previous years, a large share of respondents believed that the assistance needs of different categories of Ukrainians were increasing, while only a small minority noted a decrease for some groups. Second, respondents began to identify several key groups as needing the most support, while others were mentioned far less frequently.**

**Among the groups whose needs were seen as growing, CSO representatives most often cited those most affected by the war: military personnel, veterans, their families, residents of frontline and liberated regions, and people with disabilities.** Internally displaced persons (IDPs), while still considered one of the most vulnerable groups, were viewed by the majority as having stable or even declining needs.

**According to most CSO representatives, veterans (60.9%), internally displaced persons (59.5%), residents of frontline regions (58.0%), and military personnel (56.0%) are in the greatest need of assistance.** Between one third and one half of CSOs also identified people with disabilities, family members of military personnel and veterans, and residents of liberated regions as requiring support. Compared with 2023, only the shares for veterans and IDPs remained virtually unchanged, while mentions of other groups declined.

The largest share of CSO respondents reported that needs had grown among military personnel and veterans (74.5%), residents of frontline regions (70.4%), and families of military personnel and veterans (65.7%). More than 60% also noted an increase in the needs of people with disabilities, volunteers, and the poor. Reports of decreasing needs most often referred to internally displaced persons (16.5%) and Ukrainians abroad (16.8%).

The perception of which groups are most in need of assistance, and whose needs have increased over the past year, does not differ significantly by the geography of CSOs' activities. Responses from representatives of organisations working at local, regional, national, and international levels were distributed similarly.

As noted above, the vast majority of CSOs continue to work in their traditional areas and still regard them as essential priorities. At the same time, a significant share would like to develop additional areas of activity. The survey shows that **CSOs, considering it necessary to change or expand their work in the context of war, mostly seek to focus on supporting groups most in need.** This includes assistance to the army and those most affected by the war — rehabilitation, support, and care for wounded soldiers; help for their families; aid to civilian victims of hostilities, including children; and direct assistance to the Ukrainian Defence Forces.

However, part of the civil society sector would like to move beyond responding solely to immediate defence and humanitarian challenges and instead focus on future-oriented goals. Another common vector of desired activities encompasses institutional and human development, including education, art, science, culture, spirituality, and work with children and youth.



## Involvement of CSOs in Providing Social Services

When assessing CSO involvement in social service provision overall, several optimistic trends are evident: legislative innovations that facilitate CSO work in this field, an increase in the number and share of CSOs in the Register of Social Service Providers, a slight rise (according to the quantitative survey) in the share of CSOs actually working in this area, and growing interest in social service provision as a potential source of funding.

At the same time, the share of CSOs that actually receive funding through the provision of social services remains minimal. The survey also indicated that some CSOs involved in this field would like to shift the direction of their activities.

In 2025, two laws were adopted to regulate aspects of social service provision:

- Law No. 12124 “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine ‘On Social Services’ to Improve the Procedure for Provision of Social Services”
- Law No. 4505-IX “On Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine and Other Laws of Ukraine to Expand Patient Access to Medicines Procured by an Authorised Entity in the Healthcare Sector through Managed Access Agreements”

Notably, Law No. 4505-IX exempts all social service providers from value-added tax, making these services cheaper and more affordable for end users while also enhancing CSOs’ competitiveness in the social services market.

As of May 2025, the State Register of Social Service Providers included almost four thousand entities, **with civil society organisations (CSOs) making up a steadily growing share. At the end of 2023, there were just over 500 CSOs in the register; a year and a half later, that number had risen to nearly 900. This means that CSOs accounted for most of the growth in the social services’ system, at least among new provider registrations: of 476 new providers, three-quarters were CSOs.**

In quantitative terms, the greatest progress was made by non-governmental organisations, whose number grew by more than two-thirds, and charitable organisations, whose presence increased by nearly one and a half times. As a result, the share of the civil society sector among all registered social service providers rose from 15% in 2023 to more than 22% in 2025.

**Compared with the previous wave of the CSO survey, conducted in 2023, the share of organisations actually involved in providing social services increased slightly – from 7.8% to 9.9%<sup>7</sup> in the 2025 survey. In other words, one in ten CSOs is involved in providing social services.** At the same time, a significant share (24%) of those currently engaged in this work reported that they need to change the direction of their activities.

Across the last three waves of the survey (2022, 2023, 2025), the share of CSOs identifying social service provision as an actual source of funding for their organisations has remained almost unchanged – and very low – at about 2%. However, in 2025, compared with previous years, the attractiveness of working in the field of social services as a potential funding source for CSOs increased to 15.1%.

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<sup>7</sup> The statistical significance of the difference is 0.053.





## The Impact and Role of CSOs in Ukraine

This research project examined the role and influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Ukraine using several methods. First, a quantitative survey asked sector representatives to assess the impact of civil society on processes in the country. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted, in which participants offered their own assessments and described the mechanisms through which this impact is realised. Third, a desk analysis of available information on the influence of CSOs was carried out.

According to the quantitative survey, CSOs are most appreciative of their sector's contribution to supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with almost 82% considering their role significant. Nearly all respondents in the in-depth interviews agreed, stressing that this support is critical for the country's resilience. Some noted that it is in this area that model organisations have emerged, creating highly effective approaches to CSO work under crisis conditions.

Desk research findings show that CSOs' ability to respond rapidly, directly mobilise resources, and innovate enables them to fill critical gaps and strengthen the overall effectiveness of Ukraine's defence efforts. While it is not possible to describe the entire scope of CSO military assistance in this report, the key tasks they perform can be summarised as follows:

- **Material and technical assistance:** in-house production of UAVs, robotic mine-clearing machines, and other equipment.
- **Medical support and rehabilitation:** frontline medical aid, provision of medicines and equipment to hospitals, and delivery of specialised, high-cost medical services such as prosthetics and advanced rehabilitation.
- **Psychological and social support:** providing essential psychological assistance to veterans and their families, supporting reintegration through social programs, professional retraining, and employment assistance.

CSOs often adopt a holistic approach, engaging entire families and focusing on long-term recovery and integration.

**Respondents to the quantitative CSO survey highly valued the public sector's contribution to Ukraine's recovery from the consequences of Russian aggression: 59.9% considered the role of CSOs in this area significant.** The role of CSOs in recovery is examined in greater detail in a separate section of this report.

**Participants in the quantitative survey of CSOs highly valued the sector's activities in international cooperation: 56.6% believed CSOs play a significant role in this area, and 49.2% highlighted their role in forming international coalitions supporting Ukraine. Desk research also strongly suggested that Ukrainian CSOs are among the key drivers of European integration.**

They shape the reform agenda, conduct external advocacy in Brussels, prepare alternative (shadow) reports for the European Commission, oversee the transparency of support instruments such as the Ukraine Facility, and monitor the European integration process itself. Thanks to their extensive networks and high levels of expertise, CSOs help compensate for analytical and humanitarian gaps that the state cannot always fill under wartime conditions. Analytical studies confirm the growing role of the public sector in advancing Ukraine's European integration.



A distinctive feature of Ukrainian civil society's international advocacy is the active participation not only of specialised CSOs working directly in this area but also of organisations focused on other fields – such as media, youth policy, and more – that make significant contributions. An important trend noted by respondents in the in-depth interviews is the broadening of Ukrainian CSOs' international advocacy: it is no longer exclusively “Western-centric” but increasingly includes the so-called Global South.

Concerning internal processes such as democracy building and reforms, survey respondents assessed the role of CSOs somewhat more cautiously, though still highly. **Half of respondents (50.3%) recognised the role of CSOs in democratic development as important or significant, while 44.2% highlighted their importance in the reform process.** Participants in the in-depth interviews agreed, noting that the role of CSOs in promoting reforms – and, according to some, even in preserving democracy – is significant.

The contribution of civil society to reforms in Ukraine has also been acknowledged in official international documents, such as the European Commission's 2024 report on Ukraine's progress toward the EU. Specific CSO achievements mentioned include advocacy for reforming higher legal education; support for the Law on Public Consultations; advocacy for the Law on Democracy in Communities; promotion of the Law on Administrative Procedure; and efforts to advance changes in tobacco regulation. Published research further shows that Ukrainian NGOs play a key role in the struggle for public access to open government data, even under martial law.

**The sector's self-assessments remain largely positive, though some negative shifts are also evident.** An overwhelming majority of CSOs that participated in the quantitative survey – 83.5% – rated the public sector's activities during the war in 2024–2025 as satisfactory or fully satisfactory. These assessments do not vary significantly by the geographical scope of CSO activities, whether local, regional, national, or international.

Since 2022, CSOs' self-assessments of sector performance have shown a weak but steady downward trend: from 90.1% in 2022 to 85.2% in 2023 and 83.5% in 2025. The decline is especially evident in the share of those who are completely satisfied with their activities, which fell from 47% in 2022 to 32% in 2025. Correspondingly, the share of CSO representatives who rated the sector's performance as unsatisfactory increased from 10% to about 17%. **Compared with the 2023 survey wave, fewer CSOs now believe that the performance of the public sector in Ukraine is improving, while more consider it to be deteriorating.**

**Compared with the previous survey, CSOs have become more positive about their impact on the situation in the country. The largest increase was recorded at the local level: the share of organisations that consider their impact significant in their communities rose from 54.5% in 2023 to 63.8% in 2024–2025. This is the only level where a majority of respondents view their impact as significant.**

At the oblast and national levels, fewer than half of respondents reported a significant impact – 45.5% and 33.6%, respectively – although both figures show improvement compared with 2023. CSOs perceive the least impact in supporting Ukrainians forced to go abroad because of the war: only 18% partially or fully consider their role in this area significant.

Assessments of impact at the oblast and national levels are, naturally, lower among CSOs that identify as local, and higher among regional, national, and international CSOs. As for support to Ukrainians who left the country, it is most often highlighted by representatives of international CSOs.



## Main Channels of Communication Between CSOs, Their Audiences, Authorities, and Donors

**Civil society organisations are generally positive about their communication efforts:** 90.1% of respondents reported that they manage to maintain communication with key audiences, and 76.7% rated their organisation's institutional capacity to communicate with target audiences and the public as high.

**At the same time, overall satisfaction with communication opportunities varies depending on the counterpart.** CSOs gave their highest rating to communication with beneficiaries (an average of 4 out of 5 points). Communication with donors was rated at 3.4 points, while communication with the authorities received 3.2 points. This suggests the existence of barriers for donors and authorities that are beyond the control of the civil society sector.

**In 2024–2025, digital platforms remained the undisputed core of Ukrainian CSOs' communication strategies.** Social networks and messengers were cited by 83.3% of respondents as tools for audience outreach, a figure virtually unchanged from 2023. Phone calls, while still the second most common channel, lost significant popularity: the share of organisations using them fell by more than fourteen percentage points to 31.5%.

The role of communication through local activists and volunteers also declined, with only 23.1% of respondents reporting their use, compared with almost 35% in the previous wave. By contrast, the use of organisational websites (23%) and face-to-face meetings in designated locations – from administrative service centres to hospitals and schools – remained stable. Nearly the same share of CSOs reported using traditional household visits (19.5%) and meetings at humanitarian aid points (19.8%).

Local CSOs rely most on social networks (83.2%) and personal contacts (46.5%), while also using the telephone far more often than national and international CSOs (34.0%). By contrast, they make relatively less use of websites and email newsletters (28.7%) or traditional media (15.1%).

Regional CSOs also prioritise social media (87.3%) and personal contacts (52.7%), followed by websites and email newsletters (43.8%). Like local organisations, they are more likely than national and international CSOs to reach their target groups by phone (33.8%).

National CSOs, similar to regional ones, combine communication through social networks (84.9%), personal contacts (48.6%), and websites/email newsletters (39.8%). International CSOs rely the least on social networks (73%) but most regularly use websites and email newsletters (50.8%) as their primary communication channel.

An organisation's field of activity also shapes how it communicates with its target groups. For example, websites are most often used by organisations working in digital transformation and cybersecurity; news aggregators and online media by those specialising in media literacy; and email newsletters by those active in gender equality. By contrast, organisations supporting the army and veterans rely on email newsletters less than others.

Social networks are used most intensively by organisations working with youth and adolescents. Personal household visits and communication at humanitarian aid distribution points are primarily employed by those assisting war victims and internally displaced persons (IDPs).



**Almost two-thirds of respondents identified social media as the most effective communication tool, while all forms of direct interaction combined accounted for only about 15%.** Telephone calls and activist networks are gradually fading into the background, confirming the overall digitalisation of the sector's communication practices.

**CSOs most often rely on face-to-face contacts when engaging with the state and donors.** The main channels of communication with state authorities are personal meetings with officials (64.4%), phone calls (36.9%), email (31.7%), social networks and messengers (25%), and participation in conferences and roundtables (20.3%).

For communication with donors, the most frequently used channels are personal meetings (41.8%), email (35.3%), social networks and messengers (34.4%), and phone calls (32.2%). Differences across organisations operating at different levels are minimal, except that a quarter of local organisations reported no communication with donors – a figure that did not exceed 16% among other groups.

The in-depth interviews help explain why specific communication channels are more actively used than others. **CSO and donor representatives agree that formats combining face-to-face interaction with immediate feedback are the most effective.** Informal networking events, thematic conferences, and advisory visits make it possible to assess situations and adapt programs to real needs quickly.

At the same time, structured tools such as regular monitoring and After-Action Reviews are valued for systematic project coordination. Pitching potential partners – where a donor listens to short presentations from CSOs and immediately assesses their values and competencies against the donor's mandate – has also proven to be an efficient way to identify relevant actors. Finally, research products, from opinion polls to shadow reports, remain an important foundation for decision-making and planning, as they provide objective data on public sentiment, risks, and gaps.

## **Legal Aspects, Challenges, and Necessary Changes in Regulating CSO Activities Under Martial Law**

**Between 2023 and 2025, legislative regulation of CSOs continued to evolve. Some innovations were positive, particularly those aimed at strengthening civil society's involvement in decision-making by public authorities and local self-government bodies, as well as expanding opportunities for public oversight.**

Notably, the Government approved the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Civil Society Development for 2025–2026 and the Concept of the State Programme for the Development of Volunteerism in Ukraine for 2025–2030. In addition, the draft Law “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine ‘On Bodies of Self-Organisation of the Population’ on Improving the Procedure for Organising, Operating and Terminating a Body of Self-Organisation of the Population” is being prepared for its second reading. This legislation seeks to simplify the mechanism for forming bodies of self-organisation of citizens at the local level.

As noted above, legislators also addressed aspects of social service provision through Law No. 12124 and Law No. 4505-IX, in particular by exempting all categories of providers – regardless of ownership or legal status – from value-added tax on social services. This change significantly simplifies budgeting and cooperation with international donors for CSOs operating in this area.



**At the same time, CSO representatives surveyed in the quantitative study remain critical of how far existing legislation enables civil society organisations to influence the development and implementation of state policy.** Among respondents, 34.0% rated the opportunities for influence as low, 46.6% as medium, and only 19.4% as high. Nevertheless, these figures reflect a slight improvement since 2023.

**For surveyed CSO representatives, the most noticeable changes in legislative regulation concerned reporting, financing, taxation, and the import, customs clearance, and accounting of humanitarian aid;** interaction with the authorities ranked only fifth.

The most problematic legal aspects of CSO activity were, once again, the regulation of humanitarian aid import and taxation, as well as requirements for transparency, publicity, and reporting. Compared with 2023, the first issue was mentioned less frequently, while the second became more pressing.

Concerns about the legal aspects of importing and distributing humanitarian aid were less common among local organisations but more significant for regional and national CSOs, and especially for those operating internationally.

Respondents in the in-depth interviews added further concerns to the list of the most pressing legal issues for CSOs. In particular, CSOs and volunteers that raised funds through “banks” or imported humanitarian aid to address urgent wartime needs are worried about the risk of inspections, fines, and retroactive taxation for periods when these practices were not properly regulated.

Some CSOs also face difficulties with financial transactions. These include stricter financial monitoring, bans on transfers abroad, and certain banks’ requirements to disclose information about an organisation’s ultimate beneficiaries – even though CSOs are not legally permitted to have them.

**The most frequently mentioned needed changes in the legal regulation of CSO activities during the war include strengthening transparency, tightening control over finances, introducing penalties for pseudo-volunteering, and combating corruption, while at the same time simplifying regulatory procedures, accounting, and reporting, and reducing bureaucracy.**

## **Adaptation of CSOs to Wartime Conditions**

**Ukraine’s civil society has faced a range of complex challenges during the war, particularly in the areas of finance and human resources. Analysis of published research shows that financial instability has become a central problem: insufficient funding makes it difficult not only to carry out project activities, but also to cover administrative costs and sustain the basic functions of organisations. Staffing problems have also deepened. Many skilled workers have left due to relocation, conscription, or moves to international organisations offering higher salaries. Those who remain often work on the verge of burnout, face psychological pressure, and are forced to combine multiple roles due to the inability to hire additional staff.**

Added to these difficulties are security challenges – physical, digital, legal, and psychological. Under conditions of shelling and occupation, organisations are concerned about staff and property protection: life-threatening risks, inadequate security infrastructure, dangers when travelling to de-occupied territories, and threats from certain government officials or radical groups. The mental health of teams under constant anxiety and stress also requires sustained attention.





Several studies from 2023 to 2024 emphasise that these challenges are long-term and still lack quick solutions. Civil society organisations need comprehensive support to strengthen their resilience — from access to funding and security training to assistance in developing internal policies, procedures, and crisis plans.

**At the same time, a quantitative survey of CSOs shows that despite enormous challenges, the public sector is adapting to wartime conditions quite successfully.** The share of CSOs that rated their readiness to work in wartime conditions at the highest level (“fully adapted”) rose from about 46% in 2023 to 55% in 2025. Conversely, the share of CSOs that assessed their level of adaptation as the lowest (1–3 points on a 5-point scale) decreased from 25% to 21%.

**Importantly, the share of CSOs reporting frequent or permanent difficulties in carrying out their activities has not increased over the past three years, while the proportion of those experiencing difficulties but able to overcome them has grown.** This indicates a gradual strengthening of the institutional capacity of CSOs that continue to operate.

In the 2025 survey, reported difficulties did not vary by the geographical scope of CSO activities: **local, regional, national, and international organisations gave approximately the same answers regarding the challenges they face.**

Naturally, in a study limited to active CSOs — as is the case with this project — it is impossible to eliminate the statistical influence of the “survivor effect.” Organisations that were unable to adapt and ceased operations were not included in the survey. Therefore, the results reflect only about CSOs that continue to operate.

**CSO teams have learned to stay connected with their target audiences even amid the chaos of war — an indicator that has grown across three survey waves. Currently, 90.1% of respondents reported that they manage to maintain contact with beneficiaries and partners.** According to the surveyed CSOs, the efficiency of project and activity implementation has also improved, rising from 72% in 2022 to 83% in 2025. Similarly, the situation with maintaining partnership networks has strengthened, with 74% reporting success in 2022 compared to 80% in 2025. Internal work organisation and team retention remain consistently high, with about 87% of organisations rating these areas positively. Together, these figures suggest that after the shock of the first months of the invasion, many organisations managed to establish and refine effective work formats in the new reality.

**At the same time, financial pressures intensified in 2024–2025.** In 2025, 65% of organisations reporting difficulties cited a lack of financial resources — 7 percentage points higher than in 2024 and 13 points higher than in 2022. Data from all three survey waves confirm this negative trend: while in 2022 nearly 58% of organisations managed to maintain their resource base, by 2024–2025 fewer than half (49%) were able to do so.

**Other problems have gradually become less acute. For example, challenges related to office space, electricity, or Internet access — after peaking in 2022 — are now of much less concern to organisations.** Internal processes, which many CSOs have optimised over three years of war, also demand less attention.

**Fundraising, however, remains a systemic weakness. Fewer than one-third of CSOs are confident in their fundraising skills, while nearly 37% identify this area as problematic. As a result, material support for the sector is currently the most critical issue, requiring priority attention from donors and partners.**



**The analysis of our survey indicates that the focus of CSO activities has shifted under the pressure of the protracted war. At the beginning of the invasion, many organisations urgently refocused on new tasks while still trying to sustain their pre-war programs. By 2025, however, the sector is gradually moving away from this “hybrid” model.**

Some CSOs are returning to their core mission and familiar pre-war thematic areas (34%). Another significant share, by contrast, is now fully dedicated to addressing war-related challenges – ranging from humanitarian aid and support for the military to community reconstruction and assistance to IDPs (25%). The proportion of organisations combining old and new tasks has declined notably, from 52% in 2023 to 41% in 2025.

The current focus also differs by type of CSO. National CSOs are more likely to prioritise new war-related challenges (31.5%), while local CSOs are the least likely to do so (22.7%).

**The overall mood in the sector remains cautiously pessimistic. In 2025, almost 77% of respondents believed that the most difficult challenges were still ahead, while only one in ten organisations felt that the worst was already over.**

**In terms of institutional capacity, respondents rated themselves strongest in communicating with target audiences, building partnerships, financial management and reporting, and human resources management. By contrast, fundraising, strategic planning, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation – competencies essential for long-term development and sustainability – remain the sector’s weakest areas.**

An apparent regularity emerges: the assessment of organisational capacity directly depends on the size and level of professionalisation of the CSO. **Large organisations with numerous staff members report significantly higher self-assessments across all areas – from financial management to flexibility and crisis adaptability.**

By contrast, small volunteer groups often acknowledge a lack of competencies, especially in fundraising and strategic development. Having even a few full-time employees substantially increases institutional sustainability: small CSOs with paid staff rate their management skills higher than all-volunteer initiatives.

A similar pattern is evident regarding geographical scope: the broader a CSO’s area of operation, the higher its self-assessments of key organisational capacities. **National and international organisations are far more likely to rate their capacity as “very high” across most areas compared with local organisations.**

In this context, the priority needs for CSO development clearly mirror the challenges outlined above. **Foremost, organisations seek to attract external resources and support: 39% of respondents identified building partnerships and international cooperation as a priority, while slightly fewer (34%) emphasised fundraising – an unsurprising result given the persistent shortage of funds.**

**The second key area is human capital. Many organisations recognise the importance of investing in their staff: 26% consider it essential to develop psychological support for teams, and 25% emphasise staff training.** At the same time, CSOs are increasingly focused on strategic development, with 19% wanting to strengthen strategic planning and 16% aiming to improve their communication strategies.



Slightly less attention is given to strengthening advocacy potential and improving financial management. In contrast, only a few more mature organisations have prioritised internal aspects such as updating organisational structures or implementing monitoring systems.

The results of the qualitative research show that financial pressure has become a catalyst for internal changes within CSOs. Many respondents noted a sharp decline in grant revenues, which forced them to cut non-core expenses while simultaneously seeking to diversify income more actively. Paradoxically, some CSOs view the reduction of dependence on a single donor as an opportunity for greater thematic and substantive freedom in their work.

**Staff care has emerged as one of the most pressing issues across the quantitative survey, in-depth interviews, and other published studies. Competition for resources has intensified sharply, pushing CSO teams to apply for a record number of even short-term grants, often involving nearly all staff members in drafting applications. This leads to overload and exhaustion, especially as organisations refuse to outsource services and lack the capacity to hire additional staff, forcing the same people to take on multiple support functions.**

At the same time, the sector has developed a kind of “new habit” of working under wartime conditions: despite the abnormality of the circumstances, they have become routine.

## Interaction of CSOs With Other Actors

**Between 2022 and 2025, the partnership landscape for Ukrainian civic and charitable organisations remained largely stable. The most frequent partners were volunteer initiatives:** in 2025, about 70% of respondents cooperated with them (22.4% regularly, 47.1% occasionally within individual projects). Over two years, the share of CSOs not involving volunteers at all declined from 35.9% to 30.5%, indicating a gradual strengthening of horizontal ties. The second most common partners were other civic and charitable organisations. In 2025, about 66% of respondents cooperated with colleagues at least occasionally, with 16.9% doing so regularly. Over the past three years, intra-sector networking increased by four percentage points, while the share of organisations with no intra-sector contacts dropped to 34.3%. Business remains the least popular partner sector. In 2025, about 41% of respondents reported at least occasional cooperation with commercial companies, while only 9% collaborated regularly. Compared with 2022, changes in this area are minimal.

Influencers and media personalities also remain infrequent partners: in 2025, only 33% of surveyed organisations interacted with them (6% regularly, 27% for individual projects). Still, the share of CSOs with no contact with opinion leaders decreased from 72% to 67% over three years, suggesting a slow but growing demand for media support.

**In terms of interaction with authorities, cooperation is strongest at the local level.** In 2025, 48% of respondents rated their collaboration with local authorities as good or very good. Regional and district administrations were viewed positively by 41% of respondents. By contrast, the national level remains the most challenging, with only 28% satisfied with cooperation with central authorities.





International partnerships are also taking shape. Over the past year, 48% of respondents established contacts with partners outside Ukraine. The most frequent partners were foreign volunteers (26%) and CSOs (24%), while the demand for expert advice from abroad increased to 15%. Cooperation with foreign businesses and media personalities remains rare, at no more than 6% and 4% respectively.

In 2025, 61% of respondents received invitations to partner from other CSOs, and 46% from government institutions.

**Overall, 57% of respondents rated the level of mutual support among CSOs during the war as high, with 22% describing it as very high.** The main factor driving cohesion is shared goals and values (69%), followed by established communication (36%), joint projects (34%), and donor support (31%).

**The interaction between CSOs and other actors clearly depends on the geographical scope of their activities. Local organisations were more likely than others to report a lack of cooperation with civic and charitable organisations, volunteers, businesses, and influencers in 2024–2025.** By contrast, regional, national, and international CSOs reported much higher levels of partnership both inside and outside the country. International organisations stand out in particular: more than a third engaged foreign experts, nearly half partnered with volunteers or other international CSOs/COs, and they were the most active in cooperating with businesses and foreign influencers. For local organisations, such practices remained rare.

In terms of cooperation with local self-government bodies, local and regional CSOs expectedly reported higher involvement. However, collaboration with authorities is also widespread among national and international CSOs. At the same time, when state authorities initiated cooperation, the scale of activity made little difference: about half of organisations at all levels received offers of cooperation.

**There are notable differences in how often organisations at different levels are invited to join projects aimed at supporting the Armed Forces and war-affected populations. Local organisations received significantly fewer invitations: only about one-third had experience cooperating on military projects, and around 42% on initiatives to support victims. Among regional, national, and international CSOs, these figures were closer to one-half.**

**Thus, regional, national, and international organisations are the most integrated into cooperation networks and are more likely to become partners for the public sector, businesses, and donors. Local organisations, by contrast, remain less involved — particularly in these critical sectors.**

## The Phenomenon of “Pocket” CSOs at the Local Level

Since 2022, several studies have confirmed the existence of organisations at the local level that formally present themselves as independent non-governmental structures but are, in fact, controlled by local governments or affiliated business groups. In the scientific and analytical literature, such entities are often described as “*controlled*” or “*pocket*” CSOs.

Their emergence follows a simple mechanism: most donor programs require that funding be channelled through a civil society organisation rather than a budgetary institution. In communities where no independent CSOs exist, local authorities create an affiliated organisation while retaining



managerial and financial control over its activities. On the one hand, this allows communities to attract resources for infrastructure or social projects; on the other, it mimics public participation, as key decisions continue to be made by the same officials.

The problem has been exacerbated in the context of post-war reconstruction when donor funding has increased. **A survey of CSOs conducted in 2023 as part of a study on public participation in recovery showed that 40% of respondents consider the main risk to be the channelling of funds to authorities-affiliated entities.**

The consequences of this situation are twofold.

- First, trust in civic initiatives is undermined: formally successful projects fail to deliver sustainable change because of the absence of independent oversight and genuine feedback from beneficiaries.
- Second, authentic initiatives are being pushed out: activists unwilling to operate under formal, often non-transparent rules are excluded from the funding system.

**Respondents in the in-depth interviews confirmed the prevalence of “pocket” CSOs, while noting that the motives for their creation are not always purely self-interested. In small communities with a shortage of experienced civic leaders, registering a CSO under the local council is sometimes the only way to secure external funding for basic needs** such as installing a well, establishing a computer lab, or renovating a community centre. It should be emphasised that, under most donor policies, communities cannot receive direct funding for infrastructure projects.

CSO representatives pointed out that political responsibility to residents often compels mayors and deputies to initiate the creation of such organisations, even when this does not meet standards of transparency and accountability. As a result, the phenomenon of “controlled” CSOs is controversial: it combines obvious shortcomings with pragmatic justifications and even latent positive effects. The core problem remains the absence of clear safeguards to distinguish genuine public participation from its imitation.

## Financial Capacity of CSOs

**Data from the quantitative and qualitative research conducted for this project, along with the analysis of other published studies, demonstrate that CSO funding is a critical factor in the sector’s adaptation to wartime conditions.**

The distribution of funding sources for Ukrainian civil society organisations in 2024–2025 has shifted significantly compared with the two previous waves of the study in 2022 and 2023. **Although individual donations and membership fees remain the most common sources of funding, the share of CSOs relying on them has decreased by nearly a quarter: from about 69% of respondents in 2022 and 2023 to 46.1% in 2025.**

**At the same time, the share of organisations without sustainable funding and dependent solely on volunteer labour has grown sharply** – now representing 26.7% of the sample, compared with only 12% in 2022. Possible explanations include the diversion of small donations from citizens toward



regular defence fundraisers, as well as the impact of exchange rate fluctuations and inflationary pressures that have reduced the capacity of small donors to support CSOs.

**International grants remain the second most widespread source of CSO funding, used by about a quarter of organisations (25.4%). Compared with 2022–2023, their share has even increased slightly (from about 22%). However, respondents in in-depth interviews noted that competition for each grant has intensified sharply after the U.S. government’s decision in January 2025 to suspend funding through USAID.** For some organisations, this meant the immediate loss of a significant portion of their budget. As a result, many CSOs are now submitting a record number of grant applications.

**State and local government funding, despite some positive cases, remains relatively uncommon.** Only about 8% of respondents confirmed that they receive budgetary funds from central or local authorities – a figure that has changed very little over the past three years (5.6% in 2022; 8% in 2023–2025). About 14% of CSOs reported receiving income from their own economic activities, a share that has also remained relatively stable: 15.3% in 2022, 17.5% in 2023, and 13.5% in 2024.

**According to in-depth interviews, business donations have shifted almost exclusively toward military needs.** Companies are far more willing to purchase drones or thermal imagers than to fund analytical research or cultural initiatives, and CSOs themselves recognise this prioritisation as logical and fair. This trend further compels the sector to diversify its funding sources.

Half of the organisations already have, or are in the process of developing, a strategy for attracting new donors. For the remainder, the main barriers include a lack of financial, human, and material resources, as well as insufficient information about available programs and limited fundraising experience.

Readiness to attract new donors varies depending on the geographical scope of activities. International and regional CSOs are more likely to have – or be developing – a fundraising strategy, while local CSOs are more likely to report that they lack one. Across most categories of fundraising barriers, there are no significant differences by geography, with two exceptions: lack of fundraising experience and a conscious decision not to pursue new funding at all.

In 2024–2025, the sources of funding for civic and charitable organisations varied significantly depending on the geographical scope of their activities. Local CSOs were much less likely to receive international grants (20.7%) or donations and membership fees (39.5%) and were more likely to operate without funding (33.7%).

By contrast, regional and national CSOs were more successful in attracting both international grants (33.8% and 25.5%) and donations or membership fees (52–56%). National and international organisations were also more likely to generate income from their own economic activities (about 18%), compared with just 11–12% among local and regional CSOs.

Funding from state and local budgets, the provision of social services, or support from activists remained marginal for all types of organisations (2–9%) and showed no significant differences across groups.

**When assessing which areas of funding should be developed in 2025, CSOs identified international grants as the most promising (70.9%). Donations and membership fees were also considered necessary (42.7%), while a slightly smaller share of respondents pointed to state and local budget funding (39.5%).**



Compared with previous years, CSOs in 2024 placed greater emphasis on the importance of international grants (70.9%, up from 59.2% in 2023 and 60.4% in 2022). They also attached more importance to funding through the provision of social services (15.1%, compared with 9.7% in 2023 and 12.1% in 2022). By contrast, the share of respondents who viewed funding from civic activists as a promising area declined slightly, from 21% in 2023 to 17.7% in 2024.

**In 2025, the vision of funding sources among CSOs of different geographical scopes is generally similar: international grants remain a key priority for all (69–73%),** and there are no significant differences in attitudes towards state funding, donations, social services, endowments, or support from activists. At the same time, there are significant differences in two areas. Firstly, local budgets: local organisations are more likely to see them as a prospect (37.4%), while international organisations are only 19.8%, and regional and national organisations, about a quarter. Secondly, own economic activity: national (21.5%) and international (23.0%) organisations attach more importance to it than local and regional ones (14–18%). Thus, although international grants remain the universal preferred funding model for the entire sector, the geography of activity affects priorities: local organisations are more likely to focus on local budgets. In contrast, national and international organisations are more likely to rely on their own economic activities.

**In 2024, 44.1% of organisations attempted to raise charitable donations from other organisations and individuals within Ukraine. This is the highest figure in the past three years** (36.9% in 2023 and 40.1% in 2022). Efforts to attract donations from abroad were reported by 25.3% of CSOs. Compared with 2023 (22.5%), this marks a slight increase, though the share remains lower than in 2022 (36%).

The structure of donations received from abroad remained almost unchanged in 2024 compared with the previous survey wave. About 61% of CSOs reported annual transfers of up to UAH 185,000 (equivalent to USD 4,600 at the yearly average exchange rate). The share of medium-sized budgets (UAH 185,000–740,000) declined to 16.8%, while the segment of organisations raising between UAH 740,000 and 1.85 million grew from 8.6% to 11.3%. Only 3.9% of CSOs received donations over UAH 7.4 million in 2024, down from 5.3% the year before.

Thus, while most CSOs continued to attract mainly small donations, 2024 showed a trend toward larger average amounts alongside a decrease in the share of the very largest donations.

**Virtual assets remain largely unpopular: in 2024, only 1.8% of organisations reported using cryptocurrency (compared with 1.4% in 2023).**

**Despite the overall shortage of funds, even organisations that did not attract international grants in 2024–2025 remain active. More than half of them work with the military and veterans, slightly fewer organise their own events, and more than one-third implement humanitarian programs. Notably, 31% of these CSOs reach more than 500 beneficiaries annually.**



## Impact of the U.S. Funding Suspension on Ukrainian CSOs

At the end of 2024, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was funding 39 humanitarian and development programs in Ukraine worth \$4.28 billion. Among the first to be cut were projects in energy recovery, healthcare, economic support, media, local government, and civil society development. Direct budget support to the government was also suspended. The suddenness of the decision and the absence of a clear roadmap from USAID made it impossible for beneficiaries to adapt in time.

Research and analytical reports published in the first half of 2025 not only provided the first systematic assessment of this crisis but also highlighted its systemic nature and its potential to affect entire thematic areas of the public sector significantly. A rapid survey of 73 Ukrainian CSOs that had experience cooperating with USAID or relied on its funding, conducted in February 2025, revealed a sharp deterioration in their financial situation: 25% reduced staff, 19% introduced unpaid leave, and 12% were forced to close programs.

The Legal Development Network documented similar consequences: after losing grants, 22 of its member organisations reduced mobile legal aid services and closed justice centres and IDP shelters. In the women's sector, the situation proved even more acute. A survey of 99 women-led organisations working in the field of women's rights showed that 93% suspended at least one anti-violence or gender equality program, and 44% predicted closure within three months if funding was not restored.

Consistency in these findings is evident in the results of the quantitative *Social Indicators* survey conducted as part of this project. **In previous years, 27.1% of Ukrainian CSOs received direct or indirect support from USAID, and 7.7% received funding directly from the agency.** CSOs operating at the regional level were more likely to receive USAID funding than local or national organisations.

**After the suspension of USAID's activities, 22.3% of active CSOs reported negative impacts. Almost half of them had already reduced the scale of their projects, one in three put projects on hold, and one in four closed some initiatives entirely. Most of the affected organisations (57%) were unable to compensate for the assistance previously provided by the donor.** At the same time, some CSOs managed to offset their losses partially (36.3%) or fully (6.7%) through alternative sources of funding. The hardest expenses to replace were those related to institutional support, organisational development, and salaries.

The survey of CSOs affected by the suspension of USAID funding identified a range of services that are critical for both their beneficiaries and the residents of the communities where these organisations operate. The most frequently mentioned were psychological counselling and training of mental health professionals (45.7%). These were followed by educational programs (43.4%) and humanitarian aid such as food, water, and hygiene products (41.9%).

About one-third of organisations highlighted the importance of medical care and access to medicines (34.8%), as well as support for cultural events and projects (34.8%). Other key areas included the restoration of critical infrastructure (30%), support for small and medium-sized businesses (27%), and independent media (25.8%). A somewhat smaller but still significant share of respondents pointed to legal aid (21.3%).



Thus, USAID funding supported a wide spectrum of services — from mental health, education, and humanitarian assistance to medical, cultural, economic, and legal programs. The suspension of this funding risks causing serious setbacks for many populations and communities that rely on these services.

In-depth interviews with CSO leaders confirmed that the withdrawal of U.S. funding triggered a cascade of negative consequences for the public sector. Respondents in the qualitative research described this event as a multi-level crisis that spread in a chain reaction across various aspects of organisational life.

First and foremost, it led to frozen or cancelled projects, the loss of opportunities to develop certain areas, and, in some cases, a slowdown in reforms previously implemented jointly with the government. An additional blow was the financial gap in organisational budgets, which forced CSOs to cut costs, abandon plans, and devote significant effort to securing new sources of support.

Staffing problems also intensified: many organisations reduced personnel, experienced an outflow of qualified specialists to more stable fields — notably the commercial sector — or saw employees physically leave Ukraine. As a result, the first half of 2025 became a period of instability and heightened competition for donor funding, generating pessimism and a widespread sense of “struggle for survival” within the sector.

According to several respondents in the in-depth interviews, the consequences of this process extend far beyond the financial stability and operational capacity of CSOs. The decline in support has undermined civil society’s ability to assist the state in performing oversight and expert functions, as well as the media’s capacity to counter disinformation — particularly at the regional level. Reduced funding has also jeopardised quality journalism and weakened the ability to shape the international information agenda, which could lead to diminished advocacy for Ukraine’s interests abroad during 2022–2024.

In addition, some respondents warned that the vacuum left by the withdrawal of a traditional donor may be filled by alternative actors with their own geopolitical interests who do not share democratic values. Taken together, these risks threaten not only the development of individual CSOs but also the health of democracy and Ukraine’s international standing more broadly.

## Problems of Localisation of Humanitarian Activities

The localisation of humanitarian aid in Ukraine over the three years of war has progressed more slowly than key donors have declared. Ukrainian localisation researchers argue that, despite three years of full-scale conflict, international organisations continue to retain control over funding, management, and humanitarian policy-making, while the systemic changes required for effective localisation remain insufficient.

Formal indicators show little change: the bulk of international funds are still channelled through global offices and large international organisations, with Ukrainian actors receiving only a small share directly. This persists even though national and local CSOs conduct most of the actual field operations — and do so at significantly lower cost.





**Analysis of published research shows that less than 1% of all funds tracked by the UN go directly to local or national implementers in Ukraine. Respondents in our project's in-depth interviews highlighted the same issue. Local and national CSOs carry out more than 50% of field operations but receive only 33–35% of funding. At the same time, their cost-effectiveness is significantly higher: the cost of completing tasks is 15.5–32% lower than that of international organisations.**

The main systemic barriers to the localisation of humanitarian activities, according to published research, include:

- Lack of long-term, predictable funding for Ukrainian CSOs. Without stable financial support, organisations lack the resources to develop and sustain the policies and procedures required by donors.
- Complex reporting requirements and multi-level audits. Extensive due diligence processes often place a disproportionate administrative burden on local actors.
- Insufficient administrative capacity of small CSOs. Many organisations do not have enough staff or expertise to meet demanding compliance standards.
- Delays between grant approval and the actual disbursement of funds. Such gaps disrupt project implementation and undermine trust in the funding system.

According to research, the typical strategy of large donors is to minimise their own risks by providing large grants to international intermediaries. This practice reduces the number of direct agreements with Ukrainian applicants and limits opportunities for their capacity building.

Findings from the quantitative survey conducted as part of this study show that only 26% of CSOs consider the localisation process to be fast or very successful, and only 6% rate it as very successful. Meanwhile, 41% described it as “moderately” successful, and 34% regarded it as largely unsuccessful. Respondents in the in-depth interviews frequently echoed this assessment, noting that localisation is progressing slowly and ineffectively.

The participants of the in-depth interviews emphasised two key areas for advancing localisation:

- 1. Human resources localisation.** This includes increasing the share of Ukrainians in leadership positions, ensuring knowledge transfer, and enabling the gradual transition to independent programme management.
- 2. Reforming donor approaches to cooperation with Ukrainian CSOs.**
  - Direct funding without intermediaries;
  - Simplification of reporting and compliance requirements;
  - A stronger focus on strengthening the institutional capacity of local organisations;
  - Involving Ukrainian CSOs in strategy development and decision-making in the humanitarian field.

Regarding the latter point, some studies note progress in the involvement of Ukrainian CSOs in the coordination of humanitarian response. However, other authors stress that many influential international actors still exclude Ukrainian civil society from planning processes, leaving local organisations primarily in the role of implementers.



In-depth interviews further indicated that the Ukrainian civil society sector has reached a level of saturation with international approaches and practices and has gained unique experience of working “on the ground” in wartime conditions. As a result, it is ready to act as an autonomous and equal partner of the state without constant oversight or methodological support from international structures.

According to several respondents, the problem of administrative intermediaries is critical. CSO representatives advocate for direct donor funding of projects, bypassing additional intermediary structures. They argue that reducing the administrative costs of coordination mechanisms would free up more resources for project activities.

**At the same time, the localisation process is hampered by the prevailing model of interaction between donors and Ukrainian recipient organisations. Several respondents noted that donors often work with a limited number of trusted CSOs and avoid engaging lesser-known ones. This creates a paradox: while funds are formally localised, they are concentrated in the hands of a few large players, leaving hundreds of smaller initiatives excluded.**

The result is a vicious circle: new CSOs cannot meet donors’ demanding requirements for applications and reporting due to limited experience and low institutional capacity, while donors, in turn, continue to prioritise organisations that have already demonstrated their capacities.

## **Participation and Plans of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Ukraine’s Recovery**

Analytical reviews published between 2023 and 2025 document the significant involvement of CSOs in Ukraine’s recovery processes – from repairing social infrastructure and implementing “green” technologies to providing expert support for communities in developing recovery strategies and programmes. For example, the *Study of Post-War Recovery Initiatives*<sup>8</sup> shows that out of 27 recovery areas identified by the authors, CSOs were engaged in 24.

According to this study, the top five areas of CSO involvement were:

- 1. Reconstruction or repair of housing, educational, and social infrastructure;**
- 2. Development of analytical recovery plans;**
- 3. Promotion and advocacy of “green recovery”;**
- 4. Expert support to central and local authorities in the field of recovery;**
- 5. Creation of GIS systems and GIS registers.**

**At the same time, analytical reports suggest that the state has not yet established precise mechanisms for the mandatory and systematic involvement of civil society in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of recovery projects.** Some studies reviewed indicate that most CSOs operating outside the capital are either not involved or only marginally involved in recovery efforts. **Thus, the growth of civil society activity is driven primarily by CSOs’ own initiative and donor support, rather than by institutional mechanisms created by the state.**

<sup>8</sup> Research on Post-War Recovery Initiatives. June 2023. [https://ednannia.ua/images/Master\\_version\\_UKR\\_Rebuilding.pdf](https://ednannia.ua/images/Master_version_UKR_Rebuilding.pdf)





Finally, analysts point out that the leading international platform for coordinating Ukraine's recovery – the Multi-Stakeholder Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine – offers little involvement of the Ukrainian public sector in decision-making<sup>9</sup>.

**The quantitative survey of CSOs showed that between the second wave of the civil society survey (end of 2023) and the third wave (summer 2025), CSO participation in post-war recovery projects increased, while the number of those planning to join in the future declined.** At the end of 2023, about 18.3% of respondents were already implementing recovery initiatives; by 2025, this share had risen to 21.6%. At the same time, the proportion of organisations that were only planning to get involved fell from 33.9% to 27.8%. Conversely, the share of those with neither current projects nor future intentions grew from 31.4% in 2023 to 40.8% in 2025.

**In 2025, the level of involvement of civil society and charitable organisations in recovery varied significantly depending on their scale of activity. Regional, national, and international organisations were the most engaged, with 25–28% already implementing relevant projects. Among local organisations, this figure was only 16.5%, and nearly half (45.6%) reported no initiatives or plans in this area at all.**

The assessment of CSOs' own capacity to contribute to recovery also shows apparent differences. **Only 9.3% of local organisations consider their capacity to be very high, compared with 24.6% of international organisations.** Regional and national CSOs fall in between, with most describing their capacity as average.

When it comes to awareness of opportunities to participate in recovery, respondents at all levels mostly rated it as medium or low. Local CSOs were somewhat more likely to report low awareness, though the differences were not statistically significant. Thus, the main gaps are not about access to information but about actual participation and capacity: the broader the geographical scope of an organisation's activities, the more integrated it is into the recovery process.

CSOs that are already engaged in, or plan to join, recovery processes in the near future tend to rate their capacity relatively highly. Their average self-assessment remains stable at around 3.5 points on a five-point scale (3.5 in 2023 and 3.4 in 2025). Only about 8% of respondents consider their capabilities to be low, while about 44% rate them as high.

By contrast, awareness of existing mechanisms and funding opportunities in the recovery sector is much lower: the average score barely reaches 2.5 points. More than a third of respondents admitted they knew very little about such opportunities, and only about 14% reported being well-informed about available sources of information in this area.

Respondents' views on the roles CSOs should play in Ukraine's recovery process fall into three main areas:

## 1. Programme and project activities

- 44.2% believe their primary role is to develop social projects;
- 33.6% emphasise fundraising;
- 13.6% highlight the direct provision of social services.

<sup>9</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January – February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)



## 2. Advocacy and oversight functions

- 37.2% point to advocating for the interests of communities and vulnerable groups;
- 35% emphasise public control over the transparency of expenditures;
- 30.3% see a role in providing expert advisory support;
- 29.6% stress ensuring public legitimization of government initiatives.

## 3. Coordination and strategic roles

- 32.7% believe CSOs should act as intermediaries between the government, business, and the public;
- 24.7% stress their involvement in developing recovery strategies that reflect the requests of all stakeholders.

Respondents paid less attention to roles related to procedural support for decision-making and the development of local democracy. Only 1% of participants saw no role for CSOs in recovery, while nearly 9% had not yet decided on their position.

# A Strategy for Supporting the Activities and Development of CSOs During the War: Priorities for the State and Donor Organisations

**The survey shows that, compared to 2023, the civil society sector has slightly improved its perception of support from key partners – central government, local government, and donors.** While in the previous wave only one in ten respondents (9.4%) gave an upbeat assessment of central government support, this figure has now risen to 14.4%. At the local government level, the changes are less pronounced: the share of positive assessments increased from 22.5% to 24.0%, while negative assessments fell from 35.2% to 31.1%. The most noticeable progress is in the perception of donor support. Currently, 44.1% of organisations are somewhat or completely satisfied with donor assistance (compared to 40.1% previously), while the share of dissatisfied organisations decreased by almost eight percentage points – from 22.2% to 14.3%. Assessments across local, regional, national, and international CSOs do not differ significantly, except that local organisations express a slightly more positive attitude toward support from local self-government (28.6% positive assessments, compared to 17–22% among CSOs with broader geographical coverage).

**Among the different ways to support the activities and development of the civil society sector during the war, no single option emerges as a clear leader. Instead, responses are distributed across several priorities. About one third of CSO representatives identified the following as the most necessary forms of support: state funding of CSOs through grants for institutional and organisational development (34.3%); establishing effective procedures for public participation in policymaking and implementation at various levels (34.0%); public consultations with CSOs and consideration of their specific needs (31.1%).** Roughly one quarter of respondents emphasised other priorities, such as strengthening CSOs' financial sustainability; stimulating their participation in the recovery process; improving the legal and regulatory framework; ensuring transparent, competitive mechanisms for distributing public funds; providing information about government initiatives and plans; and creating favourable conditions for cross-sectoral cooperation. Compared to 2023, CSOs' vision has become more focused and their priorities more precise: by 2025, respondents on average chose fewer types of support that they considered most necessary during the war.



**The main expectations of the civil society sector from donors are continuous funding, better information, more flexible procedures, and support for small local initiatives, which enable organisations to respond more quickly to the challenges of war.** About one third of respondents (34.6% of answers to the open question concerned financial support) emphasised the need for ongoing – and ideally increased – financial support for the civil society sector. Another 15.7% highlighted the importance of clearer information from donors about available opportunities, along with systematic consultations to ensure that CSOs' actual needs are considered when donor programmes and policies are developed. Support for small local initiatives was prioritised by 14.2% of respondents, while 12.4% stressed the need for greater transparency in the allocation of funds. Other expectations included reducing excessive reporting and shortening lengthy application reviews (7.7%), more training opportunities (3.7%), donor support for projects assisting the military (3.4%), and direct funding without government intermediation (2.0%).

The results of the in-depth interviews further clarify the wishes and expectations of the sector. **Many respondents suggested that the state should extend the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation model to the broader public sector.** Local councils, in turn, could significantly reduce CSOs' overhead costs by providing premises or basic equipment free of charge. Respondents also offered several proposals for donors: shorten the time from application to decision from months to weeks; balance reporting requirements by focusing on results rather than document perfection; replace lengthy bureaucratic entry procedures with a more rigorous final audit – especially important for small civic initiatives; provide institutional assistance with audits, strategic sessions, and the development of security policies, which are currently “non-project” costs excluded from most grant frameworks; hold consultations with local CSOs during donor programming to ensure that donor activities align with community needs.



# 1. Quantitative characteristics and dynamics of the sector: analysis of secondary data

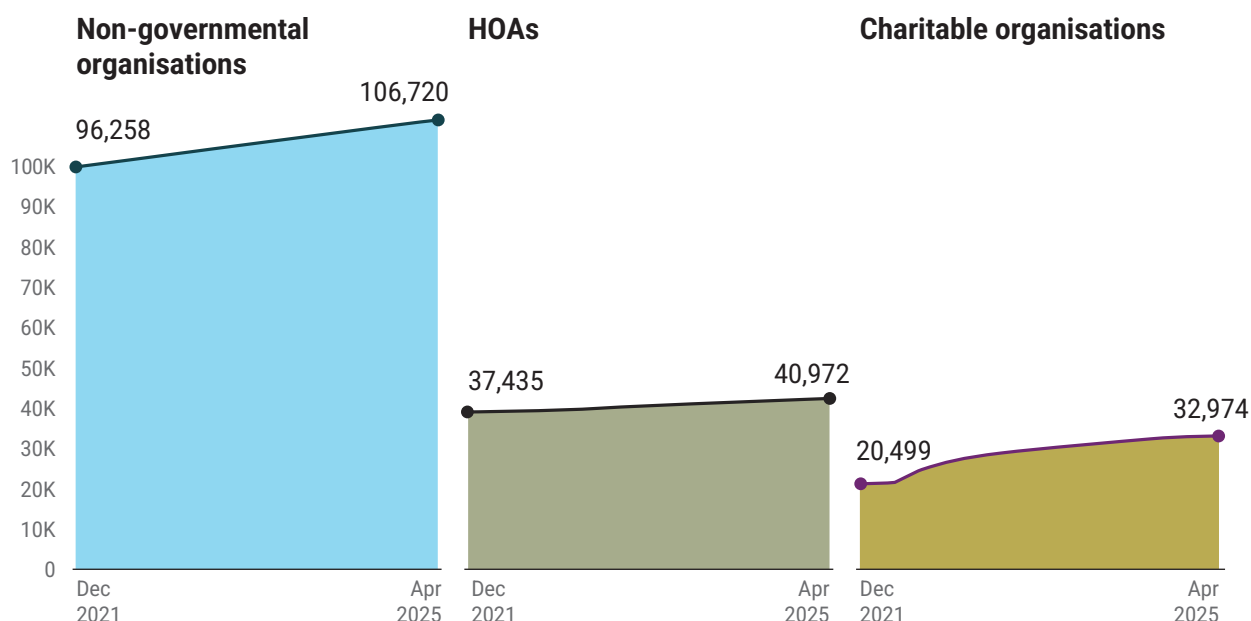
## 1.1. Dynamics of the number of registered non-governmental organisations, charitable organisations and HOAs in 2021–2025

In 2021–2025, the three segments of the non-profit sector analysed in this study – NGOs, HOAs and charitable organisations – showed steady positive dynamics. The number of philanthropic organisations (COs) grew the most significantly, from 20,449 as of 1 December 2021 to 32,974 as of 1 April 2025 (+57%). The number of NGOs increased by a more moderate 10% (from 96,258 to 106,720), and associations of co-owners of multi-apartment buildings (HOAs) by 8% (from 37,435 to 40,972).

The average quarterly growth rate was approximately: +950 COs, +805 NGOs and +267 HOAs. On average, the number of COs grew the fastest in the period 2021–2025 (+3.8% average quarterly growth), probably due to the rapid increase in 2022–2023, and then the growth rate slowed down. For NGOs and HOAs, these figures were 0.8% and 0.7%, respectively.



## Number of charitable organisations, non-governmental organisations, and condominium associations, 2021–2025



Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine.

Even before the full-scale war, some experts pointed out that not all registered CSOs actually do real work, but are simply registered. An analytical note entitled “The Development of Charity in Ukraine,”<sup>10</sup> published in 2019, indicated that despite the growth in the number of registered charitable organisations, only a relatively small proportion of them were actually engaged in real activities:

**“As of April 2019, there were 18,557 registered charitable organisations (April 2018 – 17,897, April 2017 – 17,062). However, according to experts from the Ukrainian Philanthropists Forum, most charitable organisations exist only “on paper,” and the entire basic charitable budget of Ukraine consists of 500–1,000 organisations.”<sup>11</sup>**

Another possible indicator of the actual activity of CSOs is the statistics on the submission of financial reports. An analysis by OpenDataBot showed that 89% of public organisations and 77% of charitable foundations in Ukraine, according to the State Statistics Service, did not submit financial reports for 2024<sup>12</sup>. As OpenDataBot analysts point out, **“this trend began long before the full-scale war.”<sup>13</sup>**

<sup>10</sup> Pelivanova N.I. Development of charity in Ukraine. May 2019. <https://niss.gov.ua/en/node/191>

<sup>11</sup> Pelivanova N.I. Development of charity in Ukraine. May 2019. <https://niss.gov.ua/en/node/191>

<sup>12</sup> 89% of public organisations did not submit their annual financial reports for 2024. June 18, 2025. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/foundation-go-financial-reports-2025>

<sup>13</sup> 89% of public organisations did not submit their annual financial reports for 2024. June 18, 2025. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/foundation-go-financial-reports-2025>



## 1.2. Dynamics of the number of new registrations of non-governmental and charitable organisations in 2014–2024

In 2022, there was an unprecedented increase in the number of newly registered charitable organisations — 6,367. This is almost 7.7 times more than in 2021 (830 organisations) and, in absolute terms, is the highest annual figure for the entire ten-year period from 2014 to 2024. This jump was probably a reaction to Russia's full-scale invasion and the urgent need to coordinate humanitarian aid.

In the following years, there was a gradual decrease in registrations: 4,988 in 2023 and 3,473 in 2024, but these figures are still significantly higher than pre-war levels (for comparison, in 2021, there were only 830). This indicates that the charitable sector continues to develop actively in the context of the war, although its initial mobilisation has declined somewhat.

As for non-governmental organisations, 2022 saw a sharp drop in registrations — 2,760, which is the lowest figure since 2015. In 2023, the number of NGOs will increase to 3,575, and in 2024, it will rise to 3,736. This may indicate a specific adaptation of the civil society sector to the new conditions, as well as a return to activity in areas not directly related to the emergency humanitarian response.

Overall, opposite trends are observed in 2022–2024: rapid growth and gradual normalisation in the charitable sector, and a moderate decline and subsequent recovery in the civil society sector.

### Dynamics of the number of registrations of new non-governmental and charitable organisations by year (2014–2024)



Source: Data from open registries (obtained through the Diya portal and Opendatabot service).



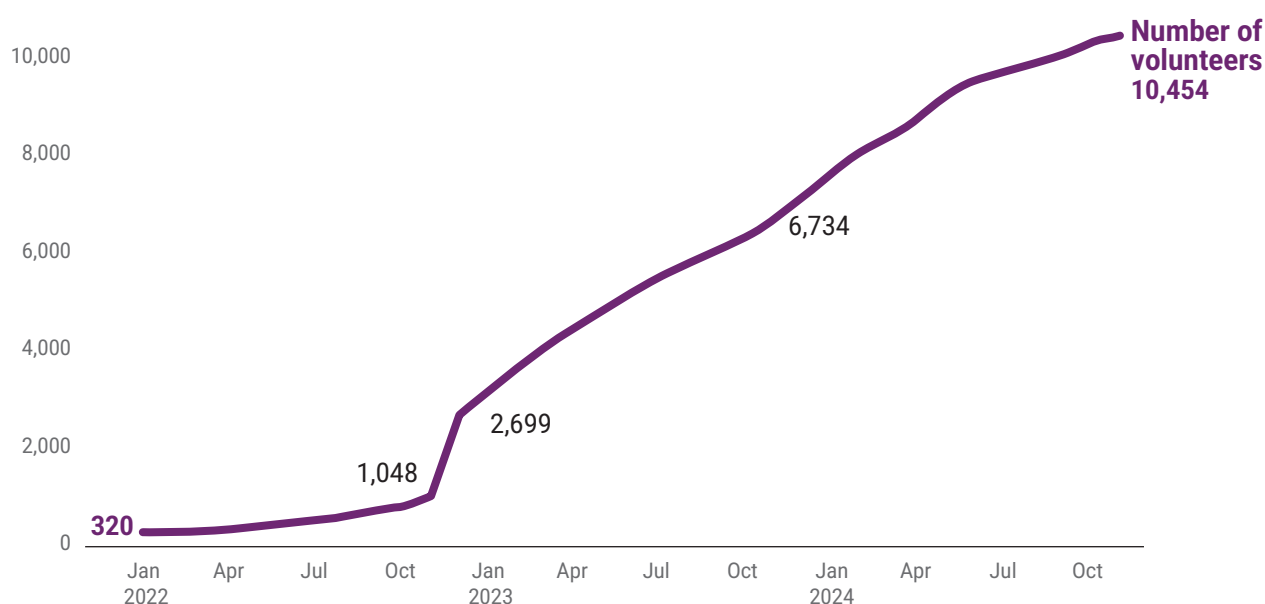
### 1.3. Dynamics of the number of officially registered volunteers

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, the number of officially registered volunteers in Ukraine has increased almost 33-fold: from 320 in January 2022 to 10,454 in November 2024 (according to the Volunteer Register maintained by the State Tax Service of Ukraine)<sup>14</sup>. The growth has a clear upward trend, which has accelerated since October 2022, when the number of volunteers began to grow by hundreds each month, and since December 2022, by thousands.

The largest jump was recorded at the end of 2022, from 1,048 in November to 2,699 in December. Throughout 2023, there was a steady monthly increase of 300–500 people, and in 2024, the pace slowed slightly.

Despite the impressive growth in official statistics, field research results unanimously indicate that most volunteers remain outside the formal registration system. Thus, although government data indicate an increase in volunteer activity, the actual level of participation significantly exceeds the registered figures, and the accurate scale of volunteering in Ukraine remains hidden from administrative statistics but is evident in the country's everyday life under wartime conditions.

#### Dynamics of the number of persons registered in the Volunteer Register maintained by the State Tax Service (January 2022 – November 2024)



Source: The register of volunteers has grown 1.5 times this year. However, the number of people who hold meetings without registering with the Tax Service is significantly higher. December 5, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> The register of volunteers has grown 1.5 times this year. However, the number of people who hold meetings without registering with the Tax Service is significantly higher. 5 December 2024. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/volunteers-2024>

## 2. Level of trust and public attitudes towards NGOs and volunteers: data from representative sociological surveys

According to the Razumkov Centre<sup>15</sup>, trust in **volunteer organisations**<sup>16</sup> rose from 64% in July 2021 to a peak of 88% in February 2023, after which it fluctuated between 78% and 84% and stabilised at 80% at the beginning of 2025. Trust in **non-governmental organisations** rose from 47% to 66% over the same period, experienced a moderate decline to 55% in early 2024, and then recovered to 61% in February–March 2025.

### Key stages of change in indicators of trust in volunteer and civil society organisations

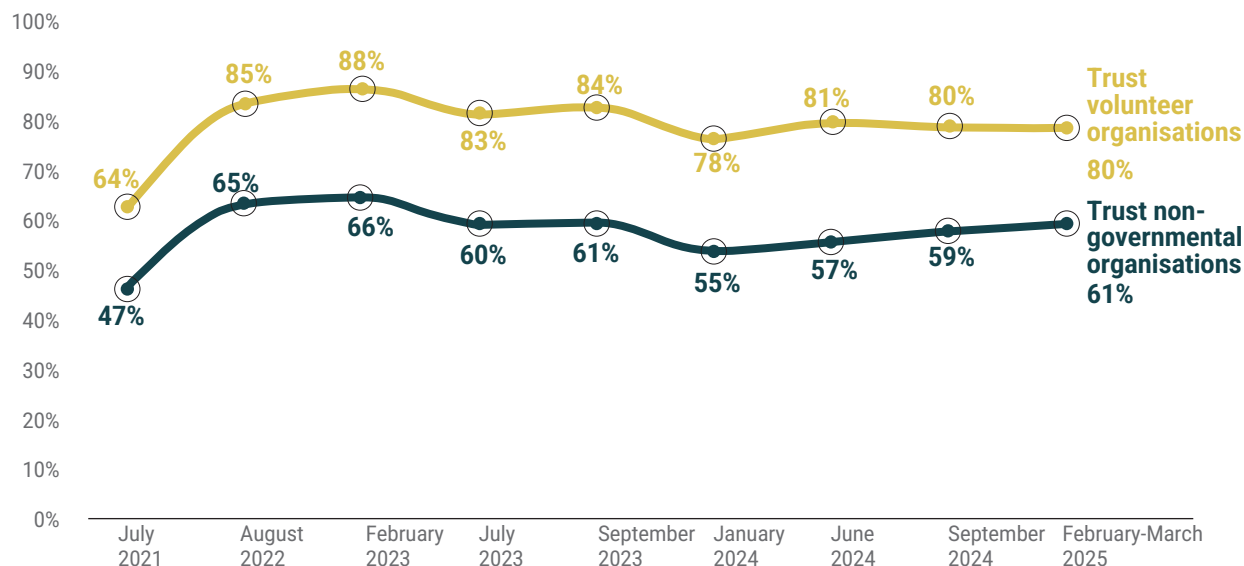
Period	Volunteer organisations	Change (p.p.)	Non-governmental organisations	Change (p.p.)	Comment
July 2021	64%	–	47%	–	Pre-war trust base.
August 2022	85%	<b>+21</b>	65%	<b>+18</b>	Rapid growth after full-scale invasion.
February 2023	88%	+3	66%	+1	Peak of social mobilisation.
July 2023	83%	–5	60%	–6	The effect of “fatigue” and adaptation to a protracted war.
January 2024	78%	–5	55%	–5	The lowest point for the entire observation period was after 2022.
February–March 2025	80%	+2	61%	+6	Partial restoration of trust.

<sup>15</sup> Sociological research by the Razumkov Centre, 2021–2025 <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia>

<sup>16</sup> Although there is no legal form of “volunteer organisation,” we use the wording from the Razumkov Centre’s press releases in the text, as this is the term used in the questionnaires. For example, here: “Assessment of the situation in the country, trust in social institutions, politicians, officials and public figures, attitudes towards elections during the war, belief in victory (February–March 2025)” <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/otsinka-sytuatsiiiv-kraini-dovira-do-sotsialnykh-instytutiv-politykiv-posadovtsiv-ta-gromadskykh-diiachiv-stavlennia-do-vyboriv-pid-chas-viiny-vira-v-peremogu-liutyiberezen-2025r>



## Percentage of Ukrainians who trust volunteer and non-governmental organisations, according to the Razumkov Centre: 2021–2025



Source: Sociological research by the Razumkov Centre, 2021–2025.

<https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhenni>

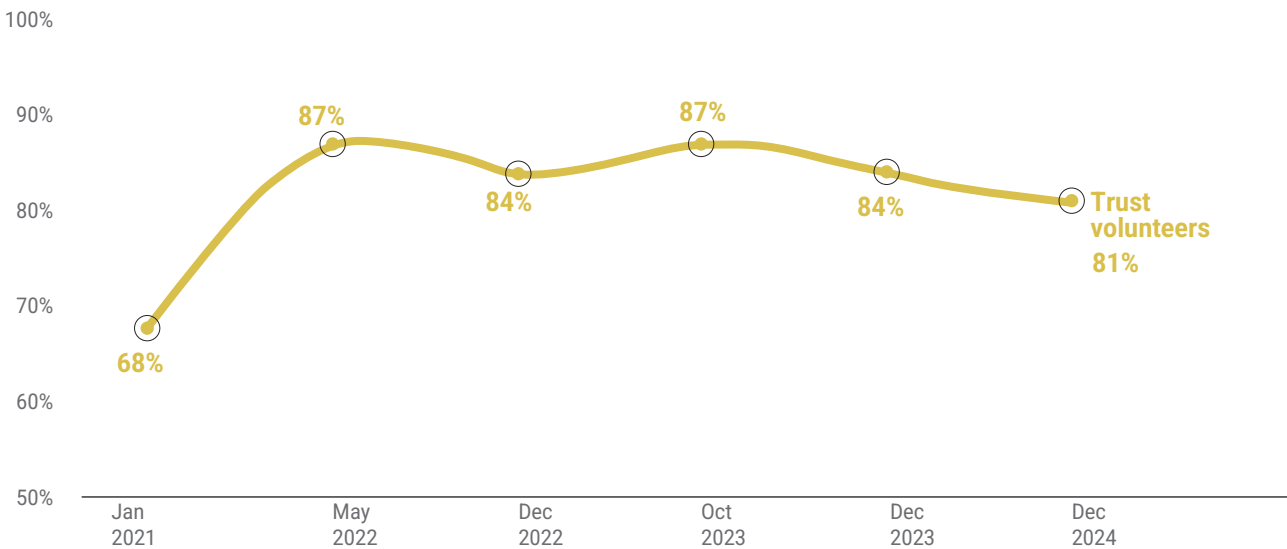
Throughout the entire period, volunteer initiatives maintained **a steady advantage** over NGOs in terms of trust, averaging **approximately 20 percentage points**. According to KIIS surveys, the dynamics of trust in volunteers<sup>17</sup> went through the following stages:

- **December 2021 – 68%:** pre-crisis level, close to the Razumkov Centre's figures (64%).
- **May 2022 – 87%:** a sharp increase immediately after the full-scale invasion, like the jump to 85% according to the Razumkov Centre (August 2022).
- **December 2022 – 84% and October 2023 – 87%:** fluctuations around a high value, confirming sustained support.
- **December 2023 – 84% and December 2024 – 81%:** a moderate decline, but the figures remain significantly higher than before the war.

<sup>17</sup> Dynamics of trust in social institutions in 2021–2024. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1467&page=1>



## Percentage of Ukrainians who trust volunteers according to KIIS data: 2021–2024



Source: Trends in trust in social institutions in 2021–2024.

## Comparison with trends according to the Razumkov Centre

Source	Beginning of 2021	Peak 2022/23	Minimum 2024
KIIS	68%	87% (V 2022 & X 2023)	81%
Razumkov Centre	64%	88% (II 2023)	78% (I 2024)

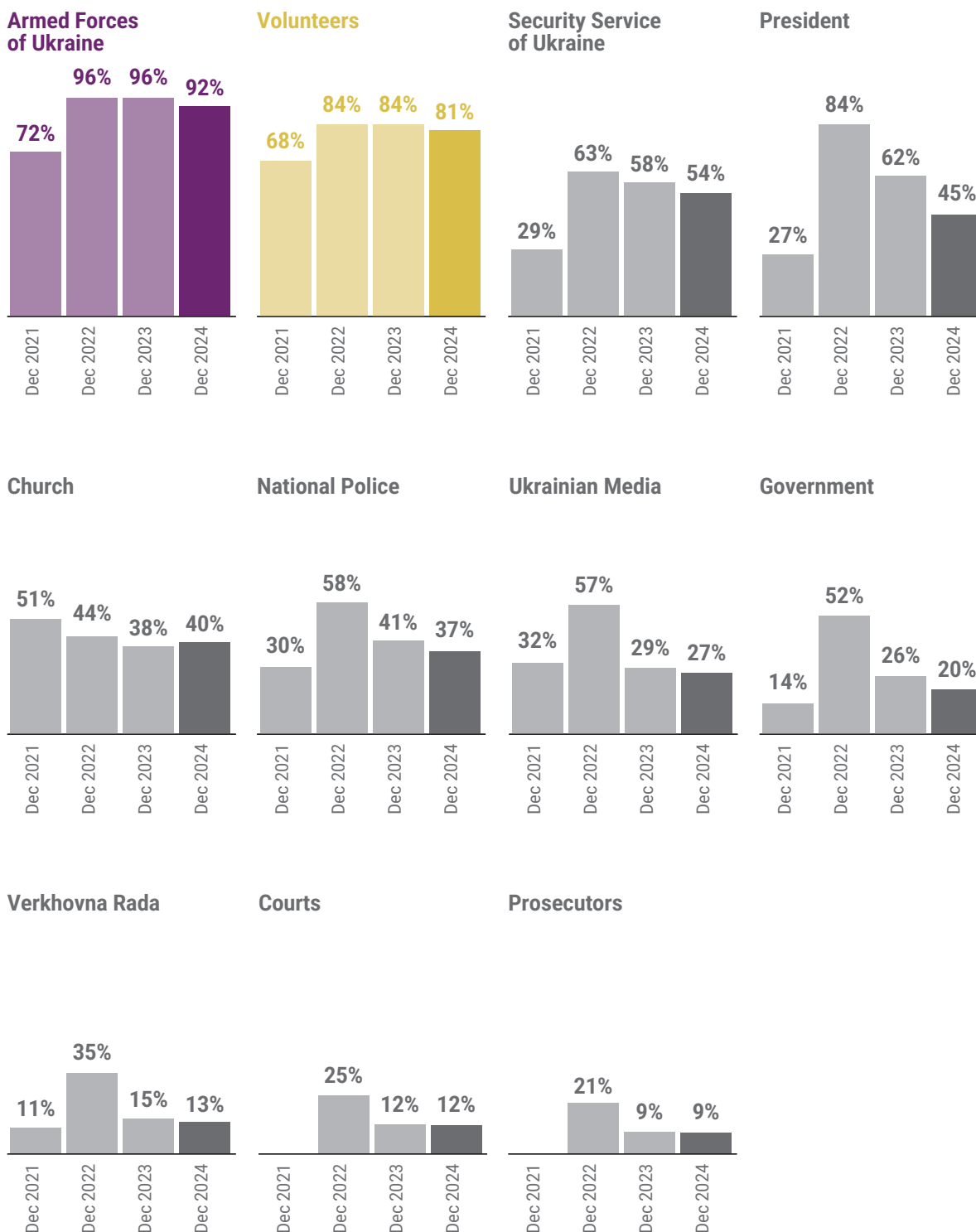
Both research organisations record almost identical changes in trust in volunteers (around 20 percentage points from the pre-war baseline) and stabilisation at **around 80 ± 3%** in 2024–2025.

A comparative analysis of public trust dynamics based on KIIS data<sup>18</sup> shows a gradual decline in indicators for most institutions after the peak values recorded in 2022. In particular, the level of trust in the President and the Government in 2024 decreased by approximately 39 and 32 percentage points, respectively, compared to peak values, but remains higher than in 2021. In 2024, the Verkhovna Rada recorded the lowest number of positive assessments and the highest share of negative responses for the entire period under review. Law enforcement agencies – the Security Service of Ukraine and the National Police – showed a similar decline in trust of 9–10 percentage points in 2023–2024. The Armed Forces of Ukraine maintain the highest ratings among state institutions, with fluctuations limited to ±4 percentage points. In the justice sector (courts and prosecutors), the level of trust is consistently low (up to 12%), while the share of respondents with negative assessments is growing. Among other institutions, there is a gradual decline in trust in the church and Ukrainian media, with the media showing the most significant decline after 2022. In contrast to these trends, the volunteer movement remains the only group whose ratings remain consistently high (over 80%) throughout 2022–2024. Thus, volunteers act as a key stabiliser of public trust, while other institutions are experiencing varying rates of decline in this indicator.

18 Dynamics of trust in social institutions in 2021–2024. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1467&page=1>



## Dynamics of Ukrainians' trust in various social and government institutions (2021–2024) according to KIIS data



Source: Trends in trust in social institutions in 2021–2024.



## 3. Characteristics of organisations

### 3.1. Activity status and experience of organisations

Among the civil society organisations with which contact was established, the survey was conducted only with those that are currently active — implementing projects, reporting to the public and beneficiaries. In 2024, the percentage of such organisations was 67.2%. Another 22.0% of organisations that were inactive at the time of contact had temporarily suspended their activities, 3.6% were planning to change their format and rebrand, and 7.2% reported that they had ceased their activities entirely.

Compared to the previous wave of the survey, there were no significant changes in the activity status of the organisations with which contact was established.

Among the CSOs that participated in the survey, 61.3% have up to 3 years of experience, 16.8% have been active for 3–5 years, 17% for 6–10 years, and 4.9% for more than 10 years.

### 3.2. Geographical location and activities of organisations

As of June-July 2025, the largest number of CSOs are based in Kyiv (16.2%) and the Kyiv oblast (9.7%), as well as in the Dnipropetrovsk (8.7%), Lviv (7.2%), Kharkiv (5.8%), Odesa (5.4%) and Poltava (5.2%) oblasts.

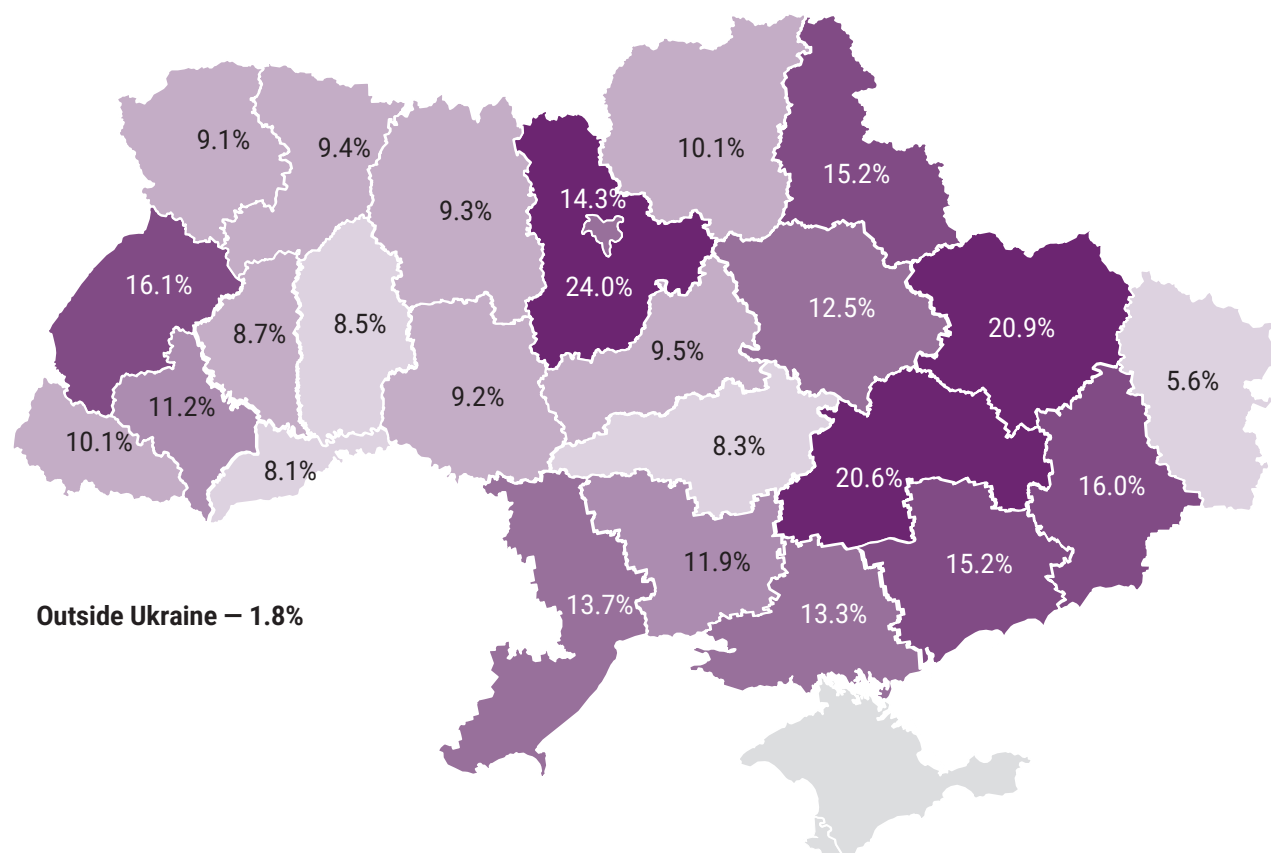




## Geography of CSO activities as of 2025

CSOs may operate in several areas, so the total percentage of responses exceeds 100%

■ < 8.7% ■ < 8.7%–11.2% ■ < 11.2%–12.5% ■ < 12.5%–15.2% ■ < 15.2%–20.6% ■ ≥ 20.6%



Question: In which oblasts is your organisation currently active?

Among active CSOs, 5.7% report that they were forced to relocate to other regions of Ukraine or abroad after the start of the full-scale invasion. Most of them (3.3%) moved during 2022, with the process slowing down in subsequent years: in 2023–2025, 2.3% of CSOs were relocated.

Most CSOs were forced to move from frontline regions and areas that were subject to intense shelling: Donetsk oblast, Kyiv city and Kyiv oblast, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk, Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts. At the time of the survey, 44.1% of relocated organisations had returned to their central region of operation.



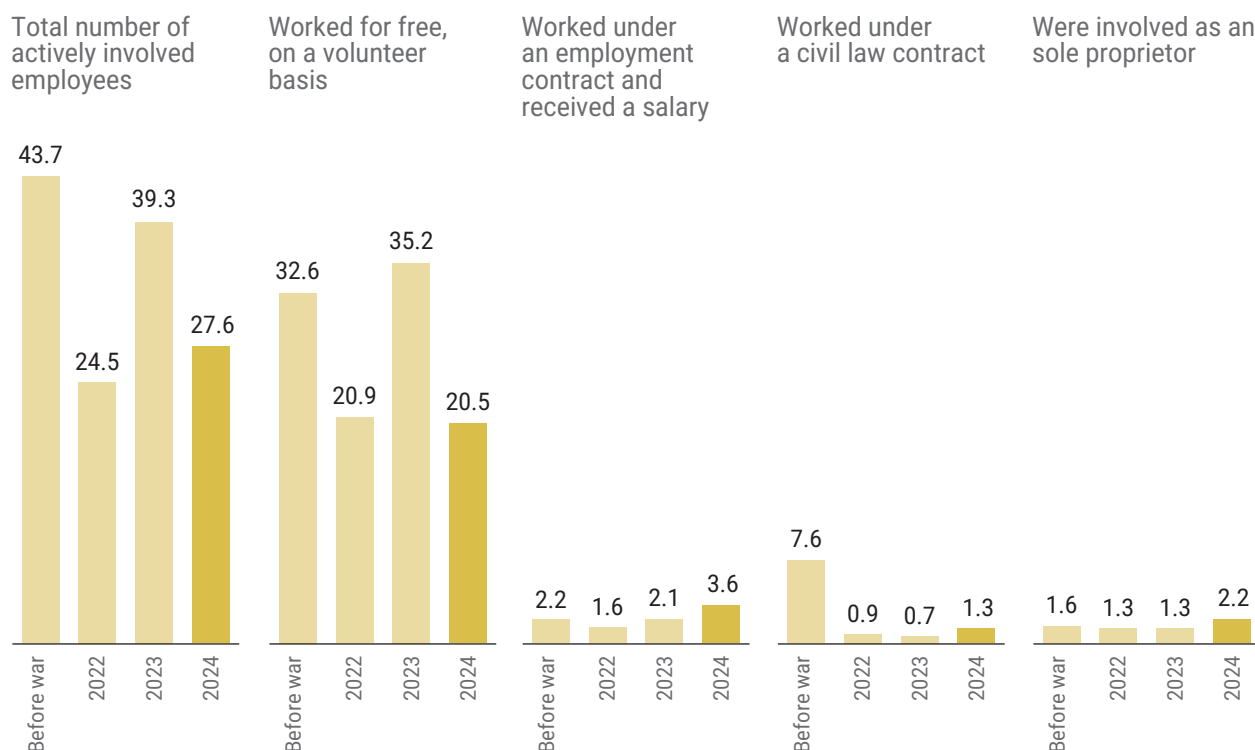
### 3.3. Staff of organisations

The diagram below shows quantitative changes in the structure and forms of employee involvement in organisational activities during 2022–2024. The data are presented as average absolute indicators (number of people), reflecting the total number of actively involved persons, as well as the distribution by primary forms of involvement: formal employment (employment contract), civil law contracts (CLC), entrepreneurial activity (sole proprietorship), and unpaid volunteer work.

The total average number of employees involved decreased significantly in 2022 compared to the pre-war period: from 43.7 to 24.5 people, which indicates crisis phenomena due to the start of a full-scale invasion. In 2023, there was a partial recovery (to 39.3), but in 2024, there was another decrease in active involvement to 27.6 people on average.

The distribution by form of involvement indicates a significant predominance of volunteer work in all years of observation. At the same time, the average number of volunteers in CSOs decreased sharply in 2024 compared to 2023. The average number of people working under employment contracts shows a stable upward trend from 1.6 in 2022 to 3.6 in 2024. Employment under the sole proprietorship model shows a similar trend: an increase from 1.3 in 2022 and 2023 to 2.2 in 2024. In contrast, the number of people employed under civil law contracts decreased significantly compared to the pre-war period (from 7.6 to 0.9 in 2022) and remained low in subsequent years (0.7 in 2023 and 1.3 in 2024).

#### Average number of actively involved employees in CSOs in general and by different legal forms of cooperation



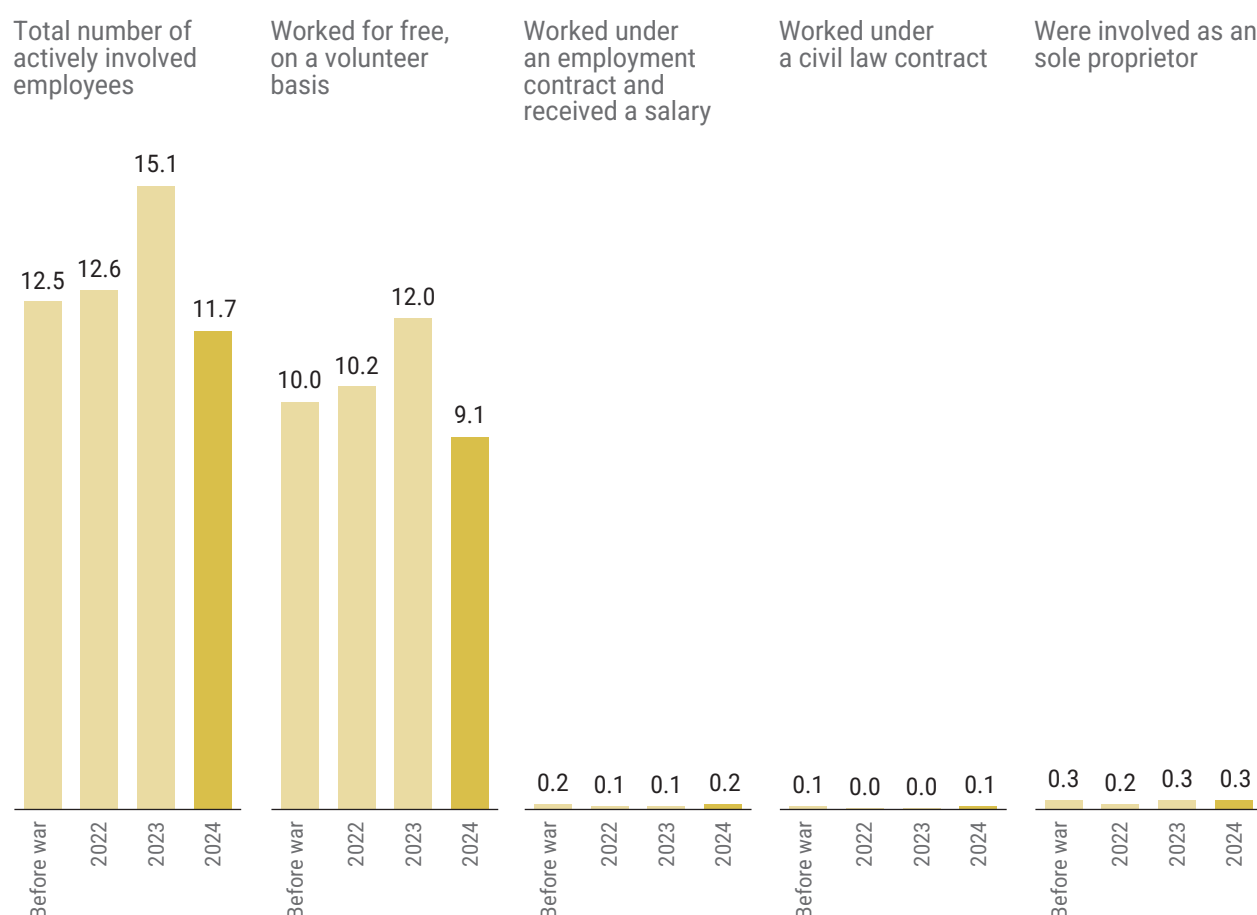




At the same time, additional calculations show that the average figures for each year are significantly influenced by several CSOs with many employees. If the average statistics are recalculated without the 5% highest and 5% lowest values to eliminate the influence of outliers, the changes from year to year are much less pronounced. In 2024–2025, there is a slight decrease in the total average number of employees involved and the number of volunteers, while the indicators of employee involvement in other forms of cooperation remain extremely low from year to year.

## Average trimmed number of actively involved employees in CSOs in general, and by different legal forms of cooperation

The average was calculated without the 5% highest and 5% lowest values (trimmed mean) to eliminate bias in the average due to outliers



In 2023, women accounted for 53.6% of all employees involved, and by 2024, this figure had risen to 62.3%. The highest share of women is recorded among persons working under employment contracts with remuneration: 67.7% in 2023 and 68.5% in 2024.

Overall, there is a clear trend towards an increase in female participation in all forms of employment in the civil society sector during 2023–2024. The highest growth rates are observed in partially formalised forms of cooperation under civil law contracts and sole proprietors. In the category of employees working under civil law contracts, the share of women increased from 56.5% to 67.5%. A similar trend can be seen among sole proprietors



(FOP): an increase from 54.4% in 2023 to 67.5% in 2024. Women also constitute the majority in the field of volunteer and unpaid work: 52.3% in 2023 and 61.3% in 2024.

Given the significant variation in the number of CSO/volunteer initiative employees, average figures may not provide a complete picture of changes in composition. Therefore, participants in the study were asked directly about changes in their staff over the past year. Most organisations (60.0%) reported that there had been no changes: 67.7% among local CSOs, 50.8% among regional CSOs, 55.4% among national CSOs, and 53.2% among CSOs that define the geography of their activities as international.

There were minor, mutually offsetting changes in the number of permanent employees under labour or civil law contracts. A slightly larger share of CSOs reported an increase rather than a decrease in the number of sole proprietors involved (this is particularly noticeable among local and regional organisations). The share of organisations that reported an increase in the number of volunteers over the past year exceeds the share that experienced a decrease among CSOs at all levels, especially among those whose activities extend beyond a single region.

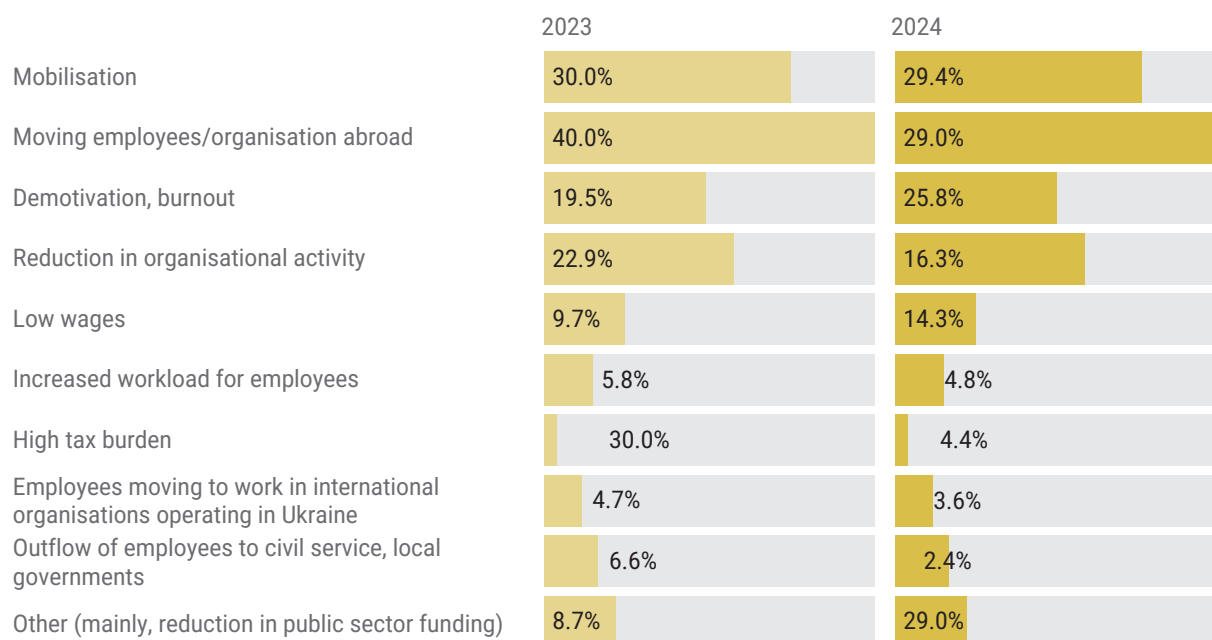
Geography of CSO activities	Changes in the number of employees in 2024–2025	Employees who entered into an employment contract and received wages	Employees working under a civil law contract	Involved as a sole proprietor (FOP)	Volunteers who worked for free
<b>All CSOs</b>	Increased	3.2%	1.9%	5.6%	21.3%
	Decreased	3.7%	2.8%	3.0%	11.5%
<b>Local</b>	Increased	2.1%	0.9%	3.2%	16.8%
	Decreased	2.1%	2.1%	1.4%	10.5%
<b>Regional</b>	Increased	4.6%	4.2%	9.2%	26.2%
	Decreased	3.8%	2.3%	3.1%	12.7%
<b>National</b>	Increased	3.6%	2.4%	6.8%	24.3%
	Decreased	5.6%	3.6%	5.2%	11.2%
<b>International</b>	Increased	4.8%	0.8%	6.3%	25.4%
	Decreased	6.3%	5.6%	5.6%	14.3%

The diagram provides a summary of the main reasons for the reduction in the number of employees involved in civil society organisations in 2023 and 2024. The decrease in the number of CSO staff in 2024 is due to a combination of external structural factors (mobilisation, funding cuts, migration) and internal organisational and psychological problems. Compared to 2023, a noticeable decrease in the share of migration reasons and an increase in the role of financial and emotional-psychological factors indicate a change, like the challenges faced by the civil society sector in the context of a protracted war.



## Reasons for the outflow of CSO staff

% of CSOs that reported a decrease in the number of actively involved employees over the past year, multiple choice



Question: What are the reasons for the reduction in the number of actively engaged employees over the past year?

Some respondents to in-depth interviews in their CSOs encountered several reasons for the outflow of employees at once:

"I would say that since spring, once a month, someone has quit because they found a better job in another industry. People are simply leaving, but not for the media, because of the instability of funding, which causes delays, uncertainty about how much they will be paid, and everything else that goes with it. We have also seen our employees from the Donetsk oblast leave the country. One valuable employee has now left for Switzerland as an internally displaced person. We experienced the suicide of a person from Kherson in our editorial office. All this happened within a year. It all has a very emotional impact on people, and accordingly on us, as we see how tragic the end can be. These are all consequences of the war and its direct impact on the organisation, and we are also seeing a great deal of exhaustion and burnout among people who work with news and complex information daily. They have no opportunity to disconnect, to switch off; they work constantly, so we work irregular hours, day and night, because when something happens, we must get involved, get to work, and after three years of war and four years of such intense work, people simply can't cope anymore and want to find other jobs. We also had mobilisation and lost someone. Not physically, but a well-trained specialist left the team. And then there is this threat, well, not really a threat, but in principle, the factor of mobilisation also affects us, because we could lose a third of our team. We have more women in our



team, but the men who remain with us could be called up to the Armed Forces at any moment. And there is another factor that affects our work: our children are serving in the army. Their mothers work for us, and this, of course, affects their morale and productivity.”

Staffing is a sore point for CSOs, judging by the results of in-depth interviews.

“I think that everyone is currently facing a labour shortage, meaning that it is somewhat difficult to find people. Many people are needed, as the amount of work is increasing in every sector. Regardless of whether you work with human capital or European integration, people are needed. Many people have left, and not everyone can work offline. So, it’s quite difficult to find people.”

According to some respondents in the qualitative study, funding cuts and instability in the public sector have significantly affected the ability to retain CSO staff, leading to a mass exodus to other sectors and industries.

“We did not close down because we managed to reorient ourselves in time and optimise our expenses, and we found new donors, but since the beginning of 2025, we have started to lose people, and this is very painful because in previous years, from 2022 to 2024, we experienced such rapid development, we grew many times over thanks to new opportunities, but in 2025 people started looking for other jobs en masse and even other industries. As a result, we lost a significant amount of intellectual horsepower and continue to lose it. People are worried about tomorrow; they are dissatisfied with their salaries, which have decreased. And the fact that there is no stability or understanding of how we will be working in a few months is, of course, stressful and demotivating for many.”

According to the respondents of the in-depth interviews, a specific correction of the “overheated” wage market towards lower wages has begun. Respondents pointed out that the increase in the cost of labour for specialists in the civil society sector, under the influence of international organisations, had caused a specific imbalance and raised expectations. Although this was beneficial to individual specialists, given the overall economic situation in Ukraine, there is a gradual return to more realistic wage levels.

“Well, there is also the problem that international organisations have raised the cost of specialists to very high levels. And I think that this is good for me, but I believe that this appetite will decrease to a more normal, adequate level, so to speak. This is because many people were forced to lose their jobs, and this was a problem for them. But with a salary of 200,000 hryvnia, you must understand that there is a reality, and this reality is different in the context of Ukraine.”



Some participants note that there is an increasing two-way exchange of personnel between the public and private sectors. Another new trend in human resources is the creation of CSOs by people with business experience (according to respondents, such organisations are relatively stable because of this).

**"I think that there is a growing exchange between civil society and the public sector in both directions. In my opinion, the most stable organisations are those founded by people who came to civil society from the business sector. And I think that civil society is becoming more professional, with greater importance being attached to, for example, specialised education, which was not very important before."**



## 4. Areas and priorities of CSO activities. New areas of activity in 2025

The leading area of activity for CSOs in 2025 remains **assistance to the army and veterans** (40.6%) – this is the most frequent area of activity, which remains a stable priority, indicating continued active support for the defence forces by the civil society sector. In second place is **assistance to war victims and displaced persons** (27.9%). Although this area is declining, it remains a key humanitarian response by civil society to the challenges of war. The third priority area is **assistance to vulnerable groups and people with disabilities** (24.1%). This area has doubled since the start of the war, from 12.0% to 24.1%, which may indicate an awareness of the long-term social consequences of the war and the growing number of people with disabilities in Ukraine. As of the end of 2023, according to the Minister of Social Policy, Oksana Zholnovych, the number of people with disabilities increased by almost 300,000 and exceeded 3 million people<sup>19</sup>. According to the Unified Register of War Veterans, in July 2024, 114,000 veterans in the register had the status of disabled persons<sup>20</sup>.

CSOs' interest in **educational projects** remains stable – in 2025, 23.5% of CSOs identified this area as one of their main areas of activity.

There has also been a significant increase in attention to psychological assistance, which has become a separate area of activity for CSOs, with 17.5% of them indicating this work as their primary area of activity in 2025. The involvement of the civil society sector in the provision of social services is becoming more widespread (9.9%) (a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon is provided in a separate section). All these point to a growing demand for mental health and social integration, which CSOs are responding to.

In 2025, almost a quarter (22.6%) of CSOs are actively working with **young people**. Despite a slight decline compared to 2023, this area remains one of the key ones.

<sup>19</sup> In a year and a half, the number of people with disabilities in Ukraine has increased by 300,000, according to the Ministry of Social Policy. 19 September 2023. <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2023/09/19/256633/>

<sup>20</sup> Administrative data within the meaning of the Law of Ukraine "On State Statistics" collected by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. <https://data.gov.ua/dataset/034f43a4-133a-498f-8478-6076ed1013e4>

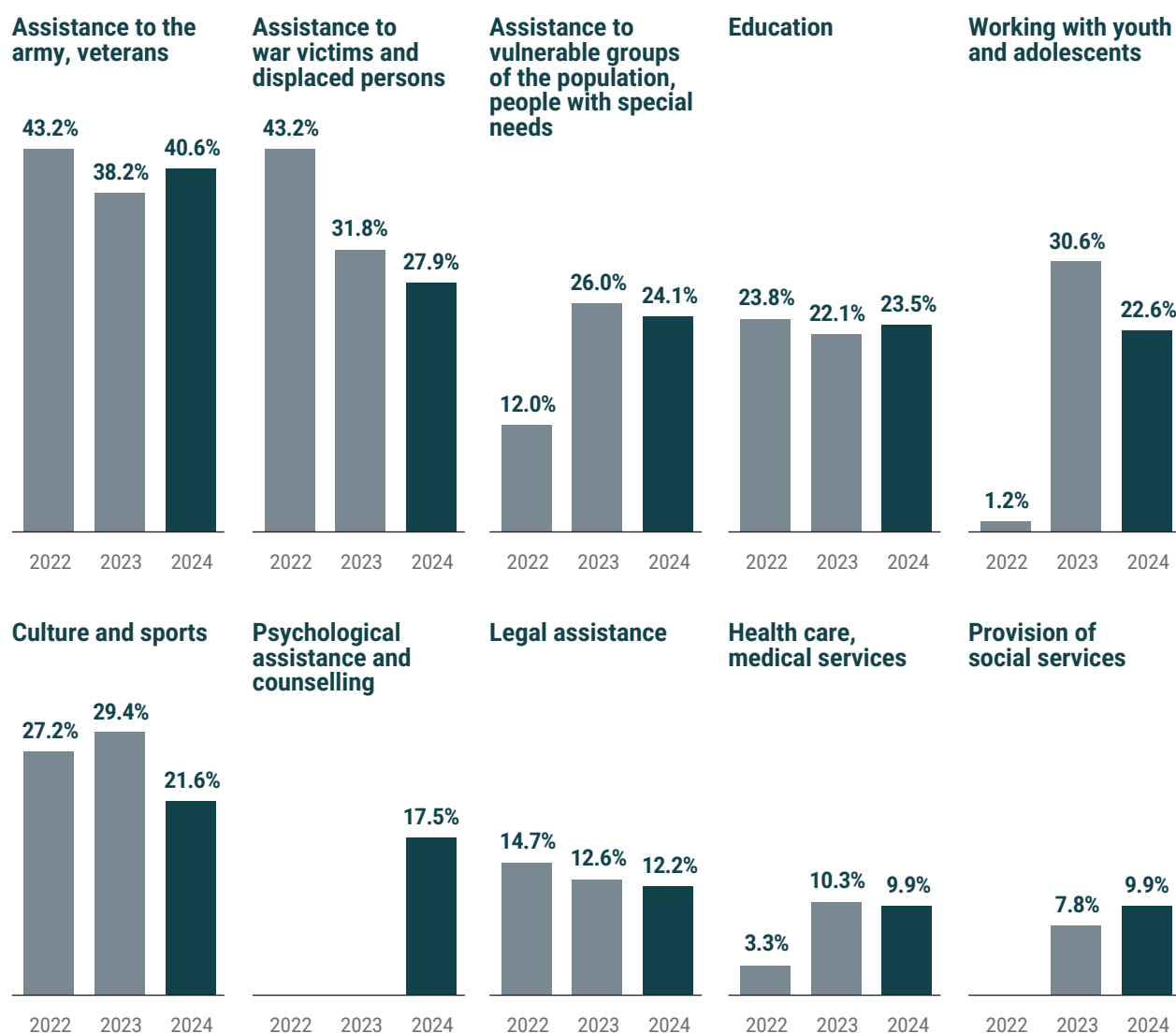


The study also identified several areas with low CSO involvement or declining activity. These include:

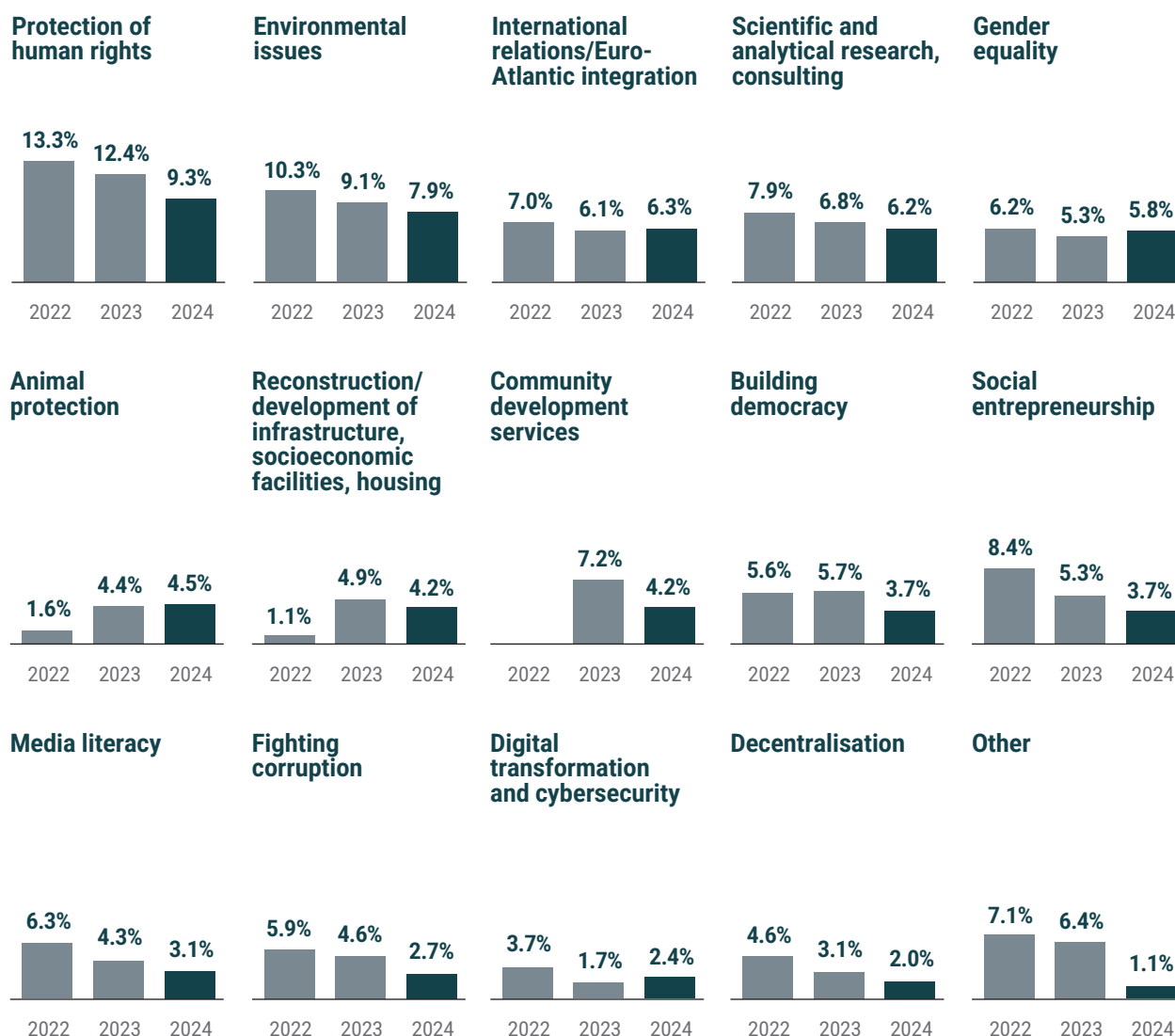
- **Human rights protection:** (decrease from 13.3% in 2022 to 9.3% in 2025);
- **Social entrepreneurship shows a decline** from 8.4% (2022) to 3.7% (2025);
- **Community development services** somewhat unexpectedly received a lower score in the latest wave of the survey than in 2025 (from 7.2% to 4.2%).
- **Democracy building (3.7%), social entrepreneurship (3.7%), media literacy (3.1%), fighting corruption (2.7%), digital transformation (2.4%) and decentralisation (2.0%)** – these strategic areas, which were important in peacetime, **are now taking a back seat in the current situation.**

## Main areas of activity of the organisation

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice







According to respondents to the qualitative study, the termination of USAID funding for specific areas has had a significant impact. It will continue to affect the landscape of places in which CSOs operate. Entrepreneurship support programmes previously implemented jointly with this donor are cited as an example. As a result, many such initiatives have been discontinued.

**“Although, well, this is also a moment when we were developing entrepreneurship support programmes, and these were programmes and projects that were jointly planned and implemented with USAID, so with the departure of USAID, this area has effectively been cancelled, liquidated.”**

In the media sector, there has been a shift from responding to disinformation to strategic work to strengthen information resilience (although, as we will show in the following sections, this sector has also been significantly affected by the termination of USAID’s work). Organisations are increasingly focusing on creating quality content and developing critical thinking rather than refuting specific fakes.

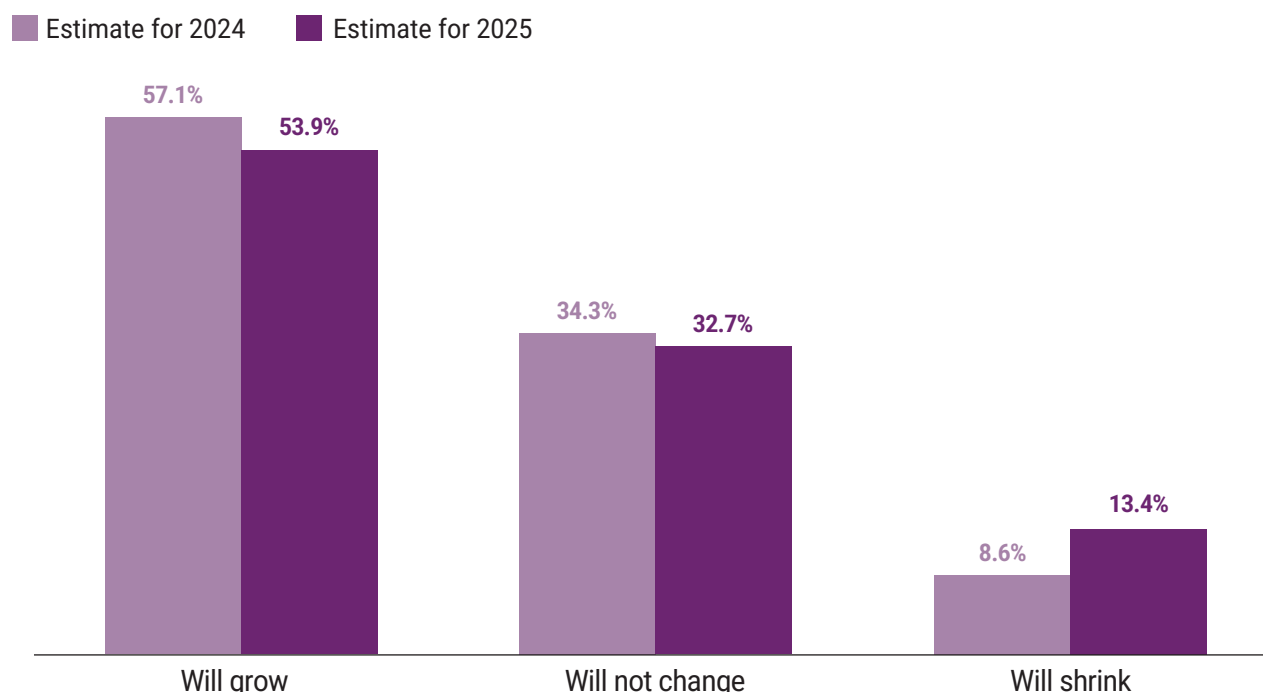


**“When it comes to the media, I think there is less work now... Well, there used to be a lot of focus and many organisations working to counter disinformation and refute all kinds of Russian propaganda fakes. Still, now, I think, this is gradually fading into the background. We have learned to deal with this very well and have reached a stage where we simply produce quality information instead of refuting every Russian fake, working hard to ensure that society has enough critical thinking skills to analyse this independently, so that we don’t have to prove to them why it’s not true, but rather work to provide people with timely and high-quality information that will allow them to think critically and not succumb to this propaganda at all.”**

CSOs’ expectations regarding changes in their workload are generally positive, but with signs of some negative dynamics. While in 2023, 57.1% of respondents expected an increase in the volume of activities in 2024, in 2024–2025, the share of those who predicted growth in 2025 decreased to 53.9%. On the other hand, the share of those expecting a decline in activity increased significantly, from 8.6% to 13.4%. This may indicate a gradual increase in uncertainty in the sector or a reassessment of growth prospects, which previously looked more optimistic. At the same time, the share of organisations that do not expect any changes remains stable (34.3% in 2023 and 32.7% in 2024).

## Expected changes in the organisation’s workload compared to the previous year

% of respondent organisations



Question (2024): In your opinion, how will the workload of your non-governmental organisation change in 2025 compared to the previous year?  
Question (2023): In your opinion, how will the workload of your non-governmental organisation change in 2024?



The survey showed that 16.5% of CSOs had changed their priority areas of activity over the past year, while 83.5% of organisations continued to work in their usual places. For comparison, in the previous wave (2023), a larger share of organisations reported a change in priorities – 23%. In 2025, the reasons for changes in CSO priorities became more diverse compared to 2023. Although military action remains the main factor driving change (44.9%), its share has decreased significantly compared to the previous wave (61.2%). Instead, other factors have become more critical, especially changes in public demand (from 26.1% in 2023 to 35.4% in 2025) and the need to help the Armed Forces of Ukraine (32.8% compared to only 4.1% a year earlier). Significantly more organisations began to cite financial difficulties (26.8%), insufficient activity by state authorities (22.2%) and changes in legislation (8.6%) as reasons for revising their priorities. The role of international factors also increased: in 2025, 10.6% of organisations mentioned increased international support as a reason for change (compared to 3.5% in 2023). Factors such as changes in beneficiaries (10.1%) and changes in legislation (8.6%) also became significant for the first time. Overall, in 2025, there is a shift in the priorities of CSOs from exclusively emergency reasons to more structural challenges, both internal (the needs of the army, changes in public demand) and external (funding, interaction with the state and donors).

## Reasons for changing priorities in areas of activity in 2024–2025

% of CSOs that changed their priorities for 2024–2025, multiple choice



Question: What are the main reasons for the changes in your organisation's priority areas over the past year?

In several areas, their priority has increased for organisations already working in these areas.



The highest increase in priority was observed in the following areas:

- **Digital transformation and cybersecurity** – 24.1% of organisations working in this area increased their priority;
- **Social entrepreneurship** – 15.6%;
- **Community development services** – 16%;
- **Psychological assistance and counselling** – 16.2%;
- **Human rights protection** – 11.6%;
- **Environmental issues** – 11.6%.

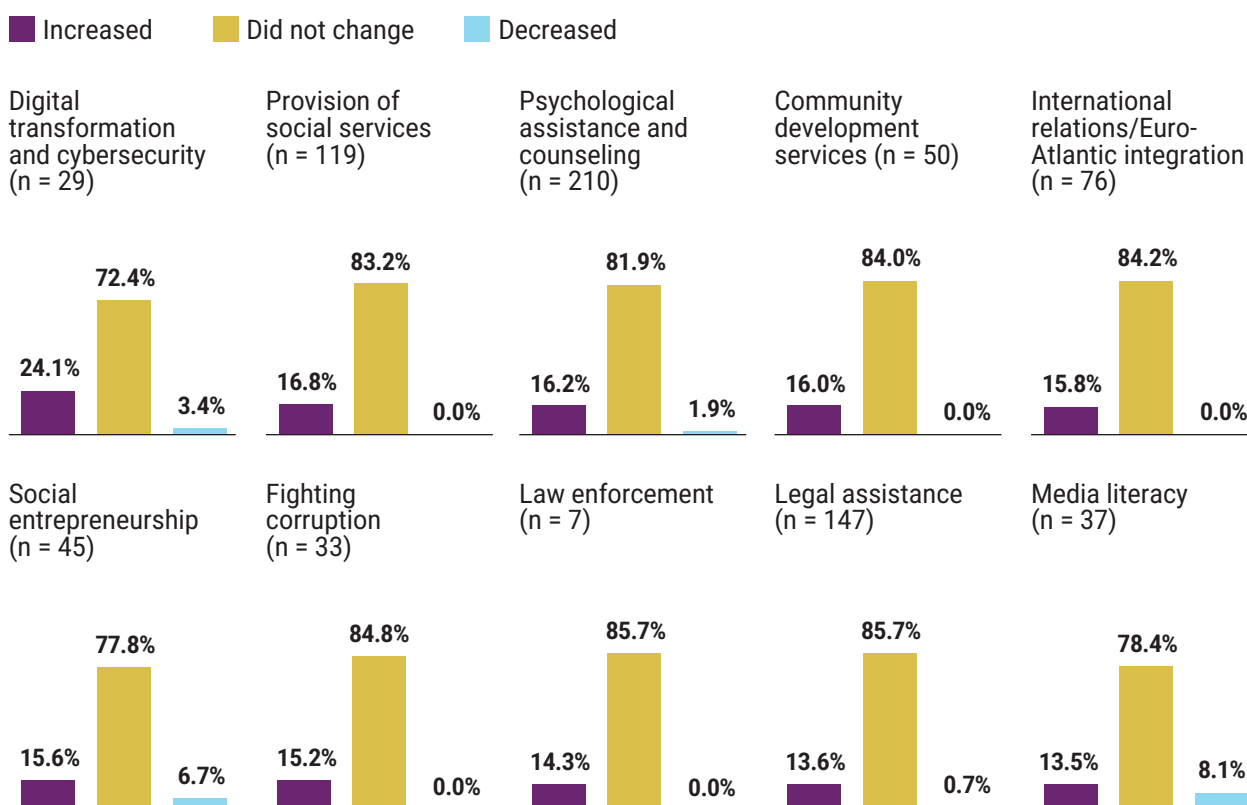
At the same time, some areas have lost some of their priority. These include **media literacy** (8.1% of organisations involved in this activity reduced their priority), **decentralisation** (4.2%), **assistance to war victims and displaced persons** (4.5%) and **democracy building** (4.5%). This may indicate both a change in strategic focus and a change in the context in which organisations operate.

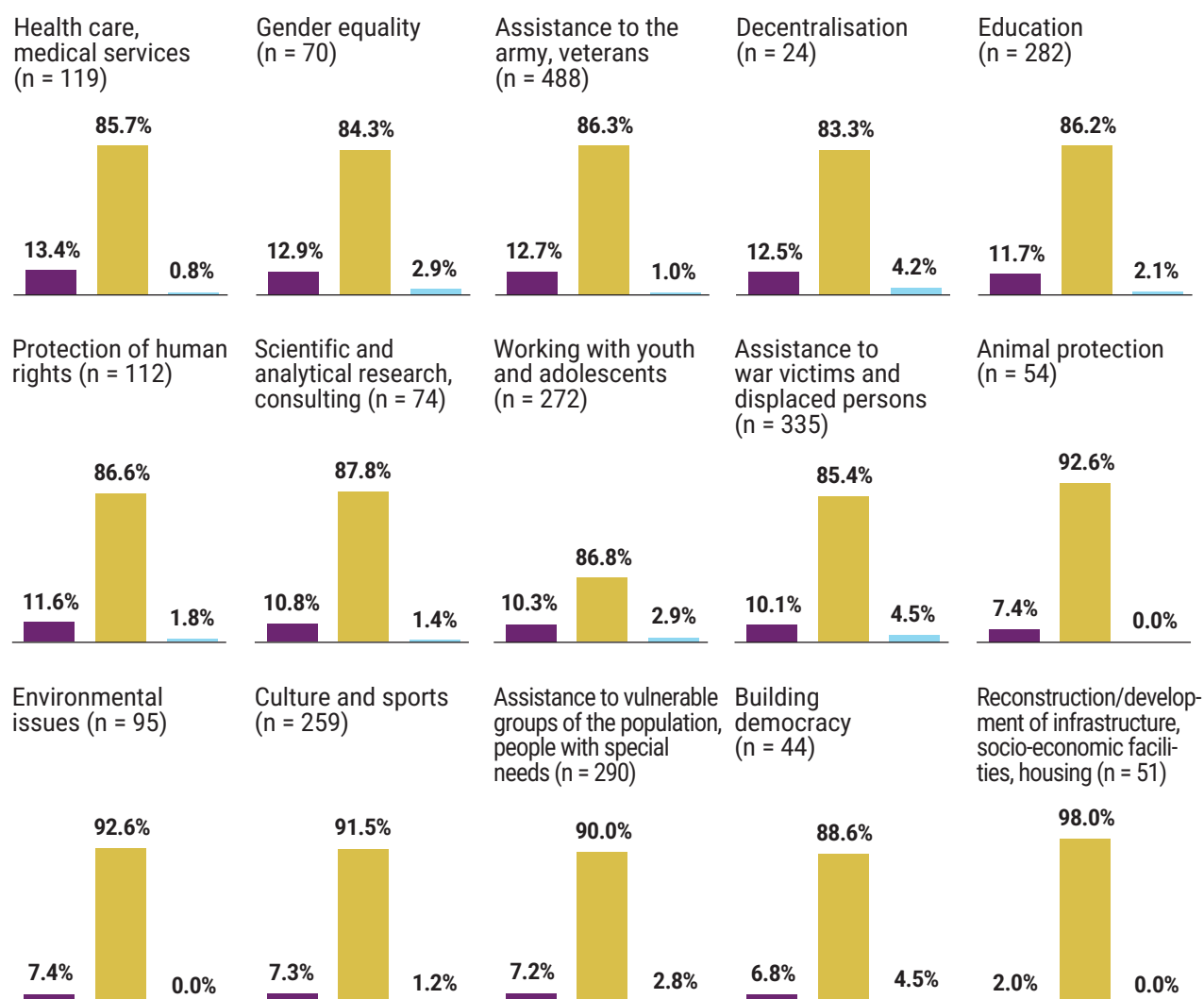
The most stable priorities remain:

- **Infrastructure and housing restoration** – 98% of organisations did not change their priority;
- **Animal protection** – 92.6%;
- **Culture and sports** – 91.5%;
- **Assistance to people with disabilities and vulnerable groups** – 90%;
- **Building democracy** – 88.6%.

## Changes in priority areas of activity over the past year

% of organisations working in relevant fields





Question: Please indicate what changes have taken place in your organisation's priority areas over the past year.

Overall, 16.1% of the organisations surveyed consider it necessary to change the direction of their activities in the context of the war. In comparison, 79.3% believe that this should not be done, and 4.7% are undecided. At the same time, more than half (59.4%) of the organisations surveyed believe that there is a need to develop additional areas of activity in the context of the war, 34.0% of respondents do not share this view, and another 6.7% are undecided.

It should be noted that in 2023, the share of CSOs that indicated a need to change the direction of their work was 18.4%, while the share of those that considered it necessary to develop additional areas of activity was 54.9%. In other words, during 2023–2025, the demand for change in activities remained almost unchanged, while the need to develop additional areas of work increased slightly.

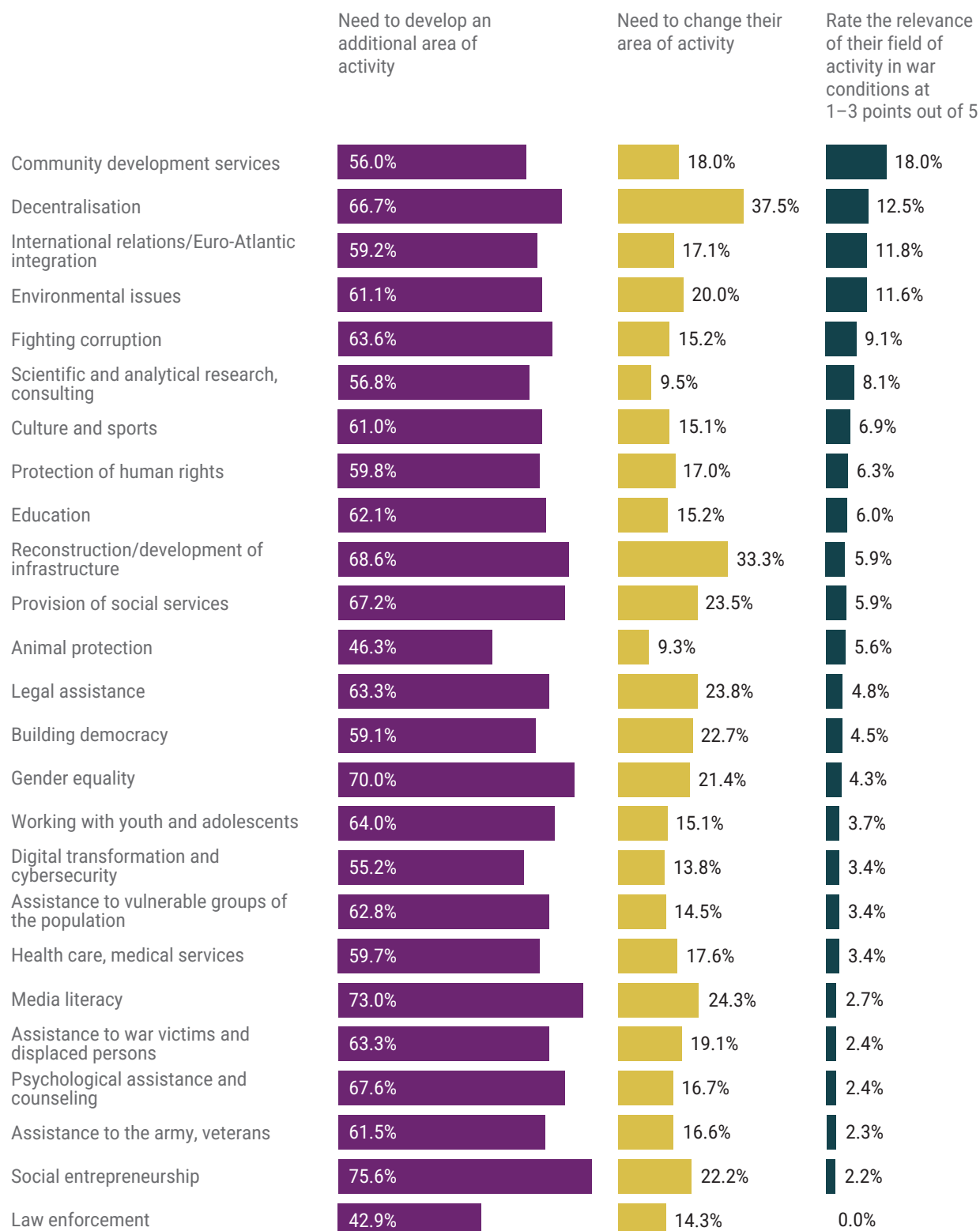
In 23 of the 25 areas analysed, more than half of the active organisations stated that they already needed **an additional area of work**. The absolute "record holders" are social entrepreneurship (75.6%), media literacy (73%) and gender equality (70%).

CSOs working in the areas of decentralisation (37.5%), infrastructure restoration/development (33.3%), media literacy (24.3%), legal aid (23.8%) and social services (23.5%) most often need to change their areas of activity.



## The need to change or develop additional areas of activity in wartime conditions

% of organisations working in relevant fields



Question: In your opinion, is there a need for your NGO/CO to develop any additional areas of activity in the context of the war? In your opinion, should your NGO/CO change its areas of activity in the context of the war? Please rate on a 5-point scale the relevance of your NGO/CO's activities in the context of the war in Ukraine, where one is not relevant at all and five is entirely relevant.



The survey shows that CSOs that consider it necessary to change or develop additional areas of activity in the context of the war consider supporting those most affected by the war to be their highest priority. Almost half of these CSOs (45.9%) consider it a priority to develop rehabilitation, support and assistance for wounded soldiers, their families and civilian victims of hostilities. The second most important area (34.7%) is social support and assistance to victims, especially children. The third priority (30.9%) is direct assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine and territorial defence units. Another group of priorities covers institutional and human development. A quarter of organisations (25.1%) want to strengthen education, awareness-raising, artistic and scientific projects, while 24.8% want to deepen cooperation with donors and international partners to attract resources. Working with children and young people (21.3%) and expanding psychological support (20.9%) also remain essential in response to the growing traumatic effects of the war. One in five organisations (19.1%) highlights the need to develop legal awareness and advocacy. In contrast, support for internally displaced persons and Ukrainian refugees abroad (16.7%) and the development of cultural and spiritual life in society (12.5%) round out the top ten, but also remain in focus.

## Top 10 areas of activity that CSOs consider worth developing

% of CSOs that consider it necessary to change or develop additional areas of activity in wartime, multiple choice



Question: Please indicate the main areas that you think your NGO/CO should develop. Indicate no more than 5 main areas.

An open question about the most priority areas of activity for the civil society sector in 2025 (asked to all CSOs), whose activity would help Ukraine survive the war, achieve sustainable peace and rebuild our country, revealed a clear hierarchy of needs determined by the war and the future recovery of the country. The majority of CSOs (50.7%) put assistance to the army and veterans first. The second most important task (18.4%) is the restoration and development of infrastructure, housing and economic facilities. The third priority (13.4%) is support for war victims and internally displaced persons. Social services (8.1%) and education (8.1%) share fourth place. CSOs consider

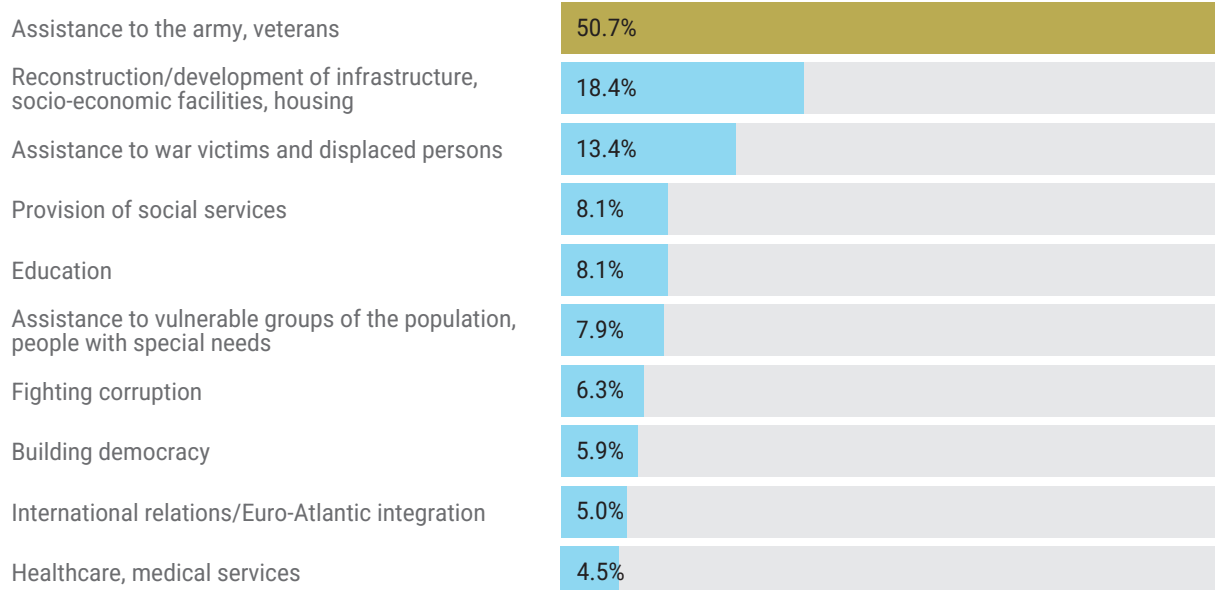




it necessary to expand access to basic services and continue educational initiatives to increase human potential even under challenging conditions. Support for vulnerable groups and people with disabilities received 7.9%, the fight against corruption 6.3%, and democracy building 5.9%. International relations and Euro-Atlantic integration received 5.0%, while healthcare and medical services (4.5%) rounded out the top ten.

## Top 10 areas of activity of civil society organisations that CSOs consider to be the most important for Ukraine in 2025

% of respondent organisations, open question



Question: Please indicate which areas of activity, topics, or projects of civil society organisations are the most important for our country in 2025 (to survive the war, achieve lasting peace, and rebuild Ukraine).

The most common areas of activity for organisations at various levels (from local to international) are quite similar, but there are also differences. Assistance to the army and veterans; work with young people and adolescents; assistance to vulnerable groups, people with special needs; culture and sports; assistance to war victims and displaced persons; work with young people and adolescents; assistance to vulnerable groups and people with special needs; culture and sports; assistance to war victims and displaced persons; and education are among the main areas of activity at all levels.

At the same time, local CSOs were less likely to report helping the army and veterans (32.4%) than organisations with a more exhaustive geographical coverage (46–50%). Local and regional organisations work more often with youth and teenagers; regional and national organisations work in the areas of health care and human rights protection; national and international organisations work in the areas of science, analytics, and consulting; and international relations and Euro-Atlantic integration are the prerogative of global organisations.



	Local	Regional	National	International
Assistance to the army and veterans	32.4%	46.2%	50.2%	46.8%
Work with youth and adolescents	27.3%	23.8%	14.3%	15.9%
Assistance to vulnerable groups, people with special needs	25.7%	26.9%	20.3%	19.0%
Culture and sports	25.5%	17.7%	15.1%	24.6%
Assistance to war victims and displaced persons	25.0%	32.7%	29.5%	27.8%
Education	24.1%	23.8%	21.5%	23.8%
Psychological assistance and counselling	16.1%	21.5%	17.1%	15.9%
Legal assistance	11.2%	13.5%	15.5%	7.9%
Provision of social services	11.2%	10.4%	8.0%	7.1%
Environmental issues	10.1%	6.5%	6.4%	4.0%
Healthcare, medical services	7.8%	11.2%	13.9%	8.7%
Human rights protection	7.1%	11.2%	13.1%	7.9%
Gender equality	6.0%	6.2%	6.0%	4.0%
Animal protection	5.0%	3.8%	3.2%	6.3%
Restoration/development of infrastructure, socio-economic facilities, and housing	5.0%	3.8%	3.2%	4.0%
Community development services	3.7%	4.2%	4.8%	4.8%
Democracy building	3.4%	3.1%	5.2%	3.2%
Media literacy	3.0%	3.1%	2.4%	4.8%
Scientific and analytical research, consulting	2.8%	6.2%	11.2%	11.1%
Social entrepreneurship	2.8%	4.6%	4.0%	5.6%
Fight against corruption	2.5%	3.5%	3.2%	1.6%
International relations/Euro-Atlantic integration	1.6%	4.2%	8.4%	27.8%
Digital transformation and cybersecurity	1.4%	2.7%	3.2%	4.8%
Decentralisation	1.2%	3.5%	2.0%	2.4%
Law enforcement	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	0.8%



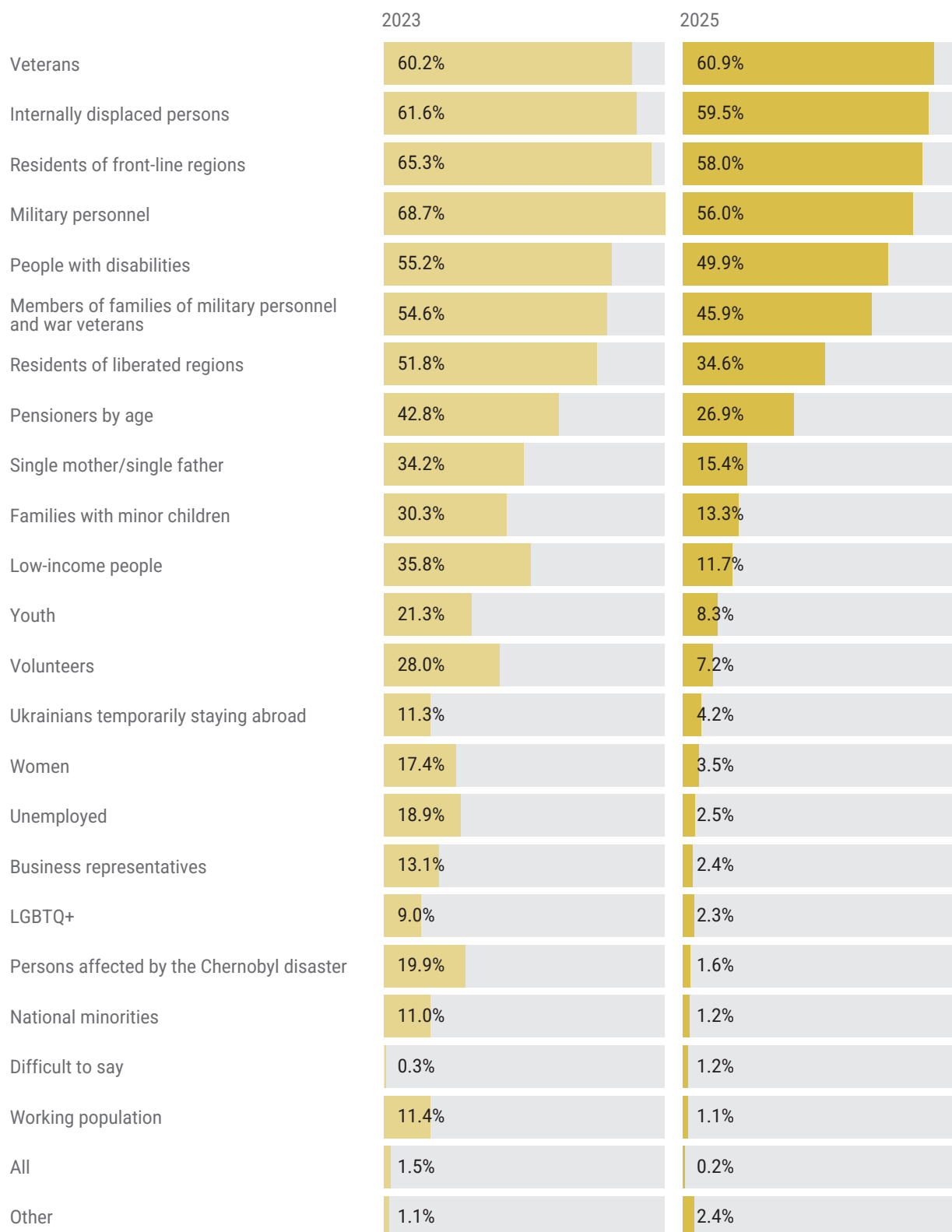
## 5. Groups most in need of assistance, according to CSO representatives

The highest priority areas for CSOs in 2025 remain the following categories of beneficiaries: war veterans (60.9%), IDPs (59.5%), residents of frontline regions (58.0%) and military personnel (56.0%). **Compared to 2023**, only the share of veterans as beneficiaries among the leading options remained virtually unchanged (60.2% and 60.9%). The other three leading groups saw a decrease: military personnel, minus 12.7 percentage points; residents of frontline regions, minus 7.3 percentage points; and IDPs decreased by 2.1 percentage points. In the middle segment, people with disabilities were the priority group, accounting for 49.9% (-5.3 percentage points compared to 2023); family members of military personnel and veterans – 45.9% (-8.7 percentage points); residents of liberated regions – 34.6% (-17.2 percentage points). Population groups such as pensioners (26.9%), single parents (15.4%), families with minor children (13.3%) and low-income families (11.7%) show significant losses in the percentage of respondents compared to the previous wave of the survey (a decrease of 16–25 percentage points compared to 2023). Young people, volunteers, Ukrainians abroad, women, the unemployed, business representatives and LGBTQ+ people accounted for between 2.3% and 8.3%, with each group seeing a decline compared to 2023. The data show that four to six key priorities remain unchanged, while the rest of the groups are seeing a noticeable decrease in attention to assisting.



## Categories of people in Ukraine who are most in need of assistance, according to CSOs

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice

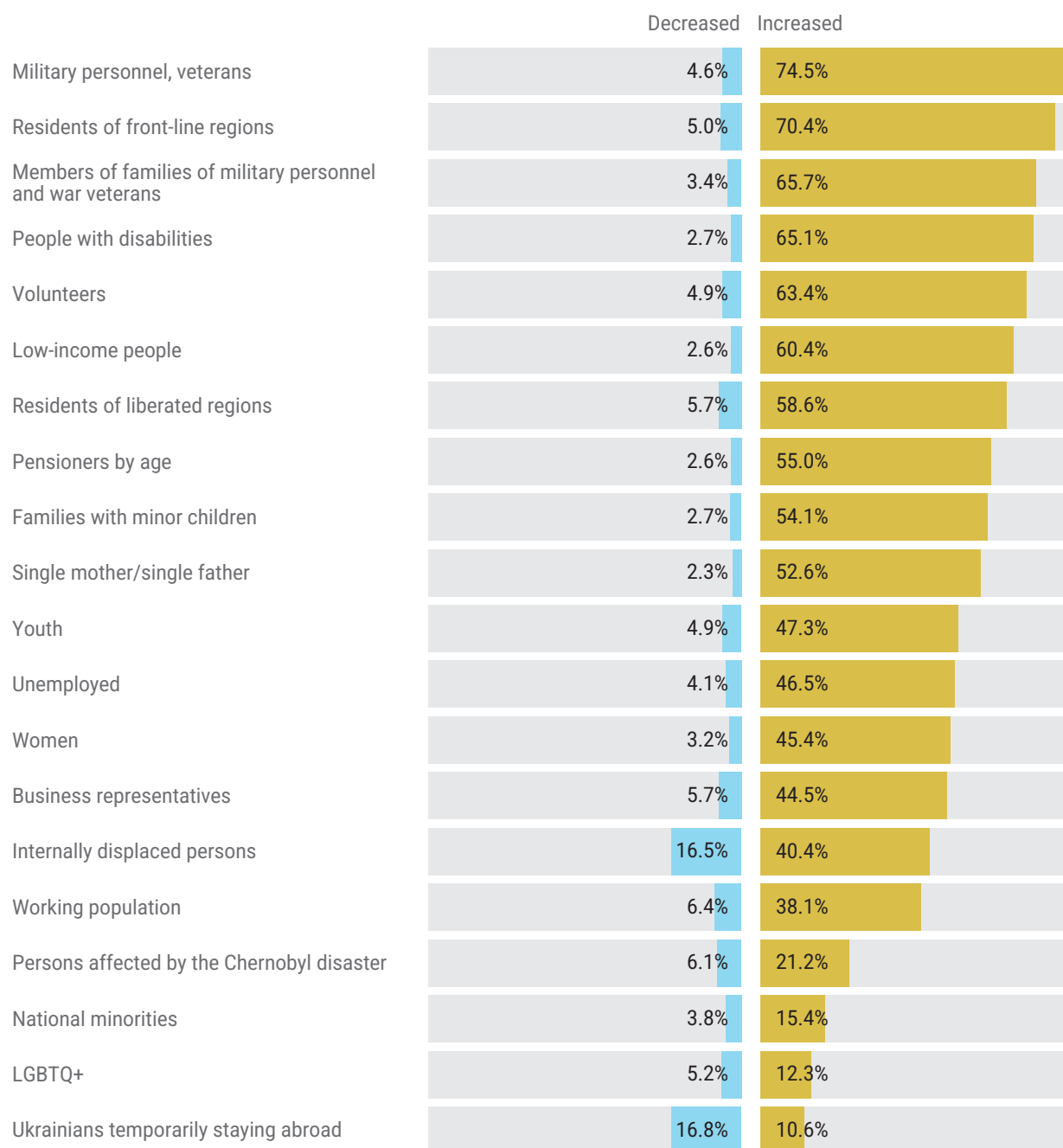


Question: In your opinion, which categories of people in Ukraine are most in need of assistance?



## Changes in the needs for assistance of different categories of people in Ukraine in 2024–2025, according to CSOs

% of respondent organisations



Question: How do you think the needs of these groups for assistance have changed over the past year?



**According to CSO respondents, the most significant increase in needs** was among military personnel and veterans (74.5% of respondents), residents of frontline regions (70.4%) and families of military personnel and veterans (65.7%). **More than 60%** of respondents also noted an increase in the needs of people with disabilities (65.1%), volunteers (63.4%) and low-income people (60.4%). **A moderate increase (50–59%)** was observed among residents of liberated regions, pensioners, families with children and single parents. **40–47% of respondents believe that** the needs of young people, the unemployed, women and businesses **have increased**. **The lowest rates of increase** in needs were recorded for national minorities (15.4%), LGBT+ people (12.3%) and Ukrainians temporarily residing abroad (10.6%). **The most frequent responses regarding a decrease in the need for assistance** relate to internally displaced persons (16.5%) and Ukrainians abroad (16.8%); for other groups, the share of “decreased” does not exceed 6.5%.



## 6. CSO involvement in the provision of social services

### 6.1. Legislative changes in the regulation of social services provision

In March 2025, Law No. 12124 “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Social Services” regarding the improvement of the procedure for providing social services” was adopted. The law regulates certain issues related to the provision of social services, such as the mechanism for providing social services for which there is no state standard; introduces the concepts of “services of national importance,” “case management,” and “multidisciplinary team”; establishes the organisational and legal form of a social service provider as a “municipal non-profit enterprise”; and details the liability for violations of social services legislation, etc.<sup>21</sup>

In July 2025, Law No. 4505-IX “On Amendments to the Tax Code of Ukraine and Other Laws of Ukraine Regarding Expanding Patient Access to Medicines Subject to Purchase by a Person Authorised to Make Purchases in the Field of Healthcare by Concluding Managed Access Agreements” came into force. The law provides for the exemption of social services from value-added tax for all categories of providers, including CSOs, which will make their services cheaper for the end consumer or donor, facilitate budgeting, etc. According to experts, the adoption of Law No. 4505-IX is a landmark step for civil society in Ukraine.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Новий закон про соціальні послуги: як зміни допоможуть вразливим категоріям.  
<https://zmina.info/news/novyj-zakon-pro-soczialni-poslugy-yak-zminy-dopomozhut-vrazlyvym-kategoriyam/>

<sup>22</sup> Соціальні послуги без ПДВ: які зміни приніс новий закон для ГО та БО.  
<https://www.prostir.ua/?kb=sotsialni-posluhy-bez-pdv-yaki-zminy-prynis-novyj-zakon-dlya-ho-ta-bo>

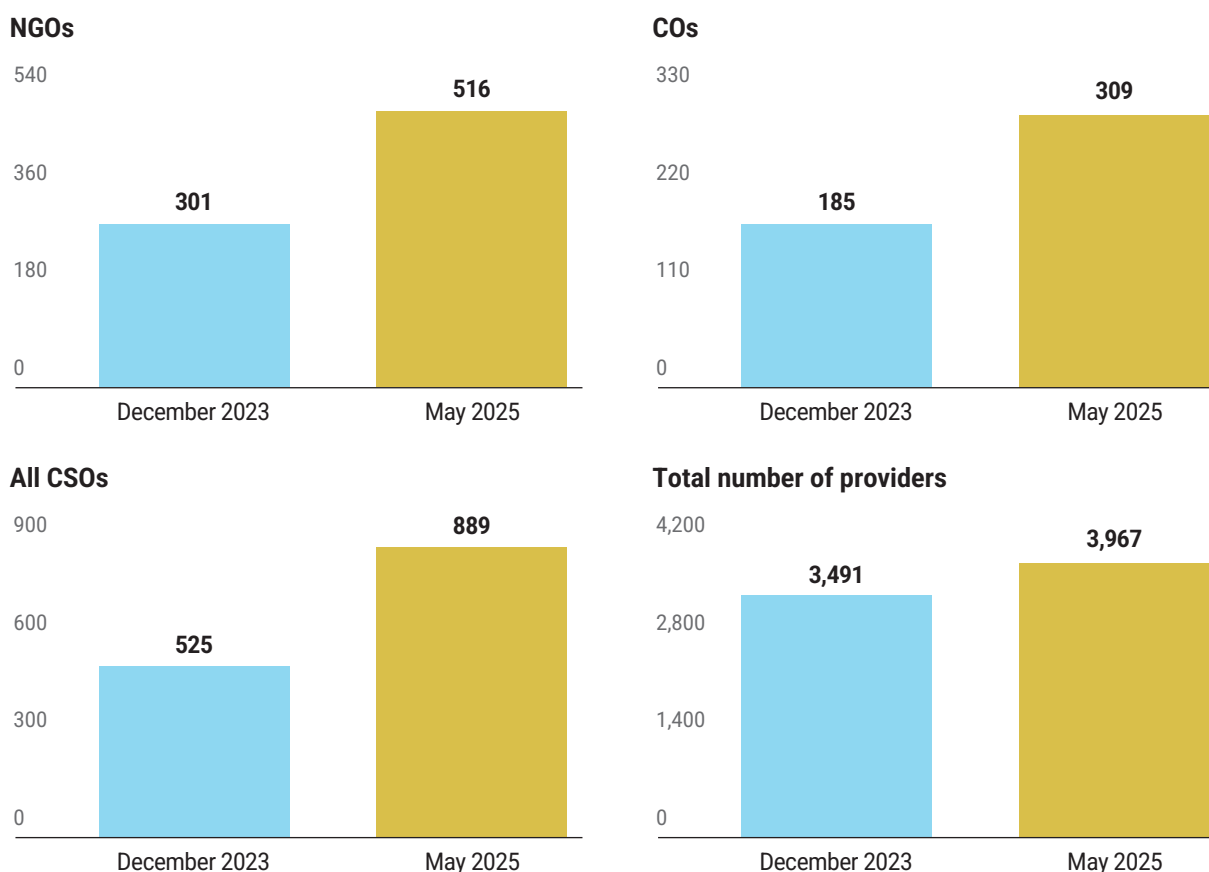




## 6.2. Quantitative data on CSO involvement in the provision of social services

As of 31 May 2025, there were 3,967 entities listed in the State Register of Social Service Providers<sup>23</sup>, of which 889 were civil society organisations (CSOs)<sup>24</sup>. The largest share in the CSO provider segment is held by NGOs – 516 providers, while 309 charitable organisations are registered; the rest are public associations, religious and professional associations<sup>25</sup>. Thus, the share of the third sector in the system of official social service providers reached 22.4%, while at the end of 2023 it did not exceed 15% (525 CSOs out of 3,491 providers)<sup>26</sup>. Compared to 2023, the number of NGOs in the Register increased by more than two-thirds (from 301 to 516), and the number of charitable organisations increased from 185 to 309, i.e., almost one and a half times.

### Dynamics of the number of CSOs providing social services and growth rates: 2023–2025



Source: Social service providers.

<sup>23</sup> Social service providers. <https://www.ioc.gov.ua/analytics/nadavachi-sotsialnykh-posluh>

<sup>24</sup> The following categories were included in CSOs: non-governmental organisations, charitable organisations, public associations, enterprises of citizens' associations (religious organisations, trade unions), organisations of citizens' associations (religious organisations, trade unions, etc.), religious organisations, trade unions, etc., self-government bodies, associations, unions of citizens' associations.

<sup>25</sup> The following categories were included in CSOs: non-governmental organisations, charitable organisations, public associations, enterprises of citizens' associations (religious organisations, trade unions), organisations of citizens' associations (religious organisations, trade unions, etc.), religious organisations, trade unions, etc., self-government bodies, associations, unions of citizens' associations.

<sup>26</sup> Interest and capacity of CSOs to provide social services. April 2024.

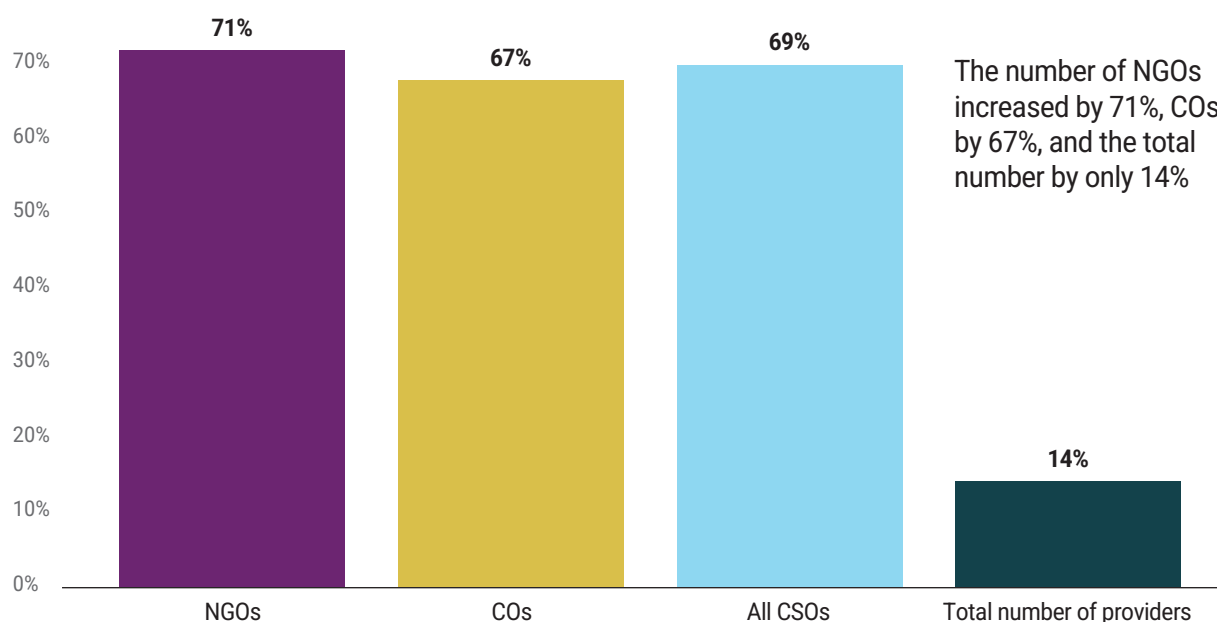
<https://ednannia.ua/attachments/article/12720/Дослідження%20про%20соціальні%20послуги.pdf>



While the total number of providers in the Register increased by 14% during this period, the number of CSO providers increased by 69%. CSOs accounted for 76% of the total increase in social service providers in Ukraine over the past year and a half (between the end of 2023 and May 2025, the number of providers increased by 476 entities, 364 of which were CSOs).

## Growth rates in the number of social service providers: 2023–2025 in the Register

Δ, %



Source: Social service providers.

Indicator	06.12.2023	31.05.2025	Change, absolute numbers	Change, %
NGO	301	516	+215	+71 %
CO	185	309	+124	+67 %
All CSOs	525	889	+364	+69 %
Number of all providers	3,491	3,967	+476	+14 %
Share of CSOs	15 %	22.4 %		+7.4 p.p.

An example of CSOs' contribution to the provision of social services is **the piloting of supported living models for adults with mental disabilities**. In December 2024, the CMU approved the National Strategy for Reforming Psychoneurological and Other Residential Institutions and Deinstitutionalising Care for Adults with Disabilities and Older Persons by 2034<sup>27</sup>. The Strategy aims to create conditions for the social integration and realisation of the right to independent living for adults with disabilities and older persons in local communities,

<sup>27</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1315-2024-%D1%80#n14>



including access to necessary care and support without removal from their familiar social environment, a change of lifestyle and living conditions. The Strategy aims to move from institutional care (in nursing homes, hospitals) to providing people with the support they need to live in the community and participate in community life. To achieve this goal, in 2024, the CMU adopted a resolution on the implementation of a pilot project to organise the provision of social services for inpatient care and supported living for internally displaced elderly persons and persons with disabilities based on the principle of “money follows the person.”<sup>28</sup> Several CSOs already have experience in providing social services for supported living for persons with disabilities and are advocating and disseminating this experience. In 2024, WHO supported several such organisations: **the Kolping Family NGO** (Vinnytsia)<sup>29</sup>, **the Family for Persons with Disabilities NGO** (Kyiv)<sup>30</sup>, **the Caritas Stryi NGO**<sup>31</sup> and several others. All of them have introduced supported living and/or transitional living services for people with mental or combined disabilities, offering housing and support/training in independent living skills (such as hygiene, cooking, cleaning, basic financial management, etc.), as well as making separate efforts to integrate their clients into community life. In addition to providing social services, the organisations interact with other stakeholders: for example, **the NGO “Kolping Family”** provided recommendations on standardising supported transitional housing services to local and state authorities, established a thematic working group with the Vinnytsia City Council, and conducted training and seminars on supported housing services for a wide range of interested parties.

<sup>28</sup> <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/888-2024-%D0%BF#Text>

<sup>29</sup> WHO to fund social project for young people with disabilities in the Vinnytsia region.

<https://vinnitsa.info/article/vooz-profinansuye-sotsialnyy-proyekt-dlya-molodykh-lyudey-z-invalidnistyu-na-vinnychchyni>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/gornyatkodobroty/posts/842835068055142/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/stryicaritas/posts/pfbid023aAkqXbx2njAER3T5pidJGvcy4icdtpiYKbqKyY682TyMe1NU6oNLXELBdzNYUTxl?rdi d=lsGNMV8Ow8aPuXXt#>



## 7. The influence and role of CSOs in Ukraine

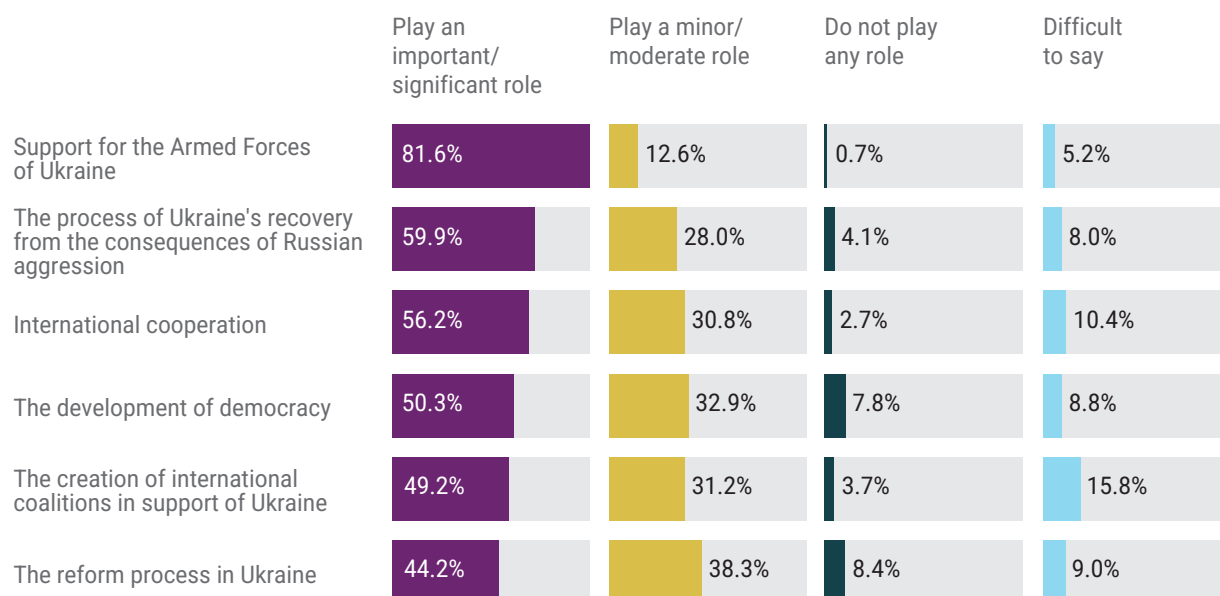
### 7.1. The role of CSOs in reforms, recovery, democracy building, support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine, international cooperation and advocacy: results of a quantitative study

CSO representatives highly value the role that the civil society sector plays in key areas of Ukraine's social and political life. Respondents rate CSOs' contribution to supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine highest: 81.6% believe that CSOs play a substantial role in this process. The contribution of the civil society sector to Ukraine's recovery from the consequences of Russian aggression is also highly rated, with 59.9% believing that CSOs play a significant role in this area. Respondents also appreciate the efforts of CSOs in the field of international cooperation: 56.6% indicated that CSOs play a significant role in international cooperation, and 49.2% in the creation of international coalitions in support of Ukraine. About internal processes, such as democracy building and reform, the assessment of the role of CSOs is slightly more restrained, although still high. Half of respondents (50.3%) recognised the role of CSOs in building democratic processes as important or significant; 44.2% of respondents consider the role of CSOs important or significant in the reform process. It should be noted that for each of the social processes, apart from assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, there is a significant number of sceptics who believe that CSOs play an insignificant or moderate role: from 28% regarding Ukraine's recovery from the consequences of Russian aggression to 38.3% (the highest figure) who think that CSOs have little influence on the reform process in Ukraine. Not many respondents deny entirely the influence of CSOs on social processes in Ukraine: the largest group (approximately 8%) believes that CSOs play no role in the development of democracy and reform in Ukraine.



## Assessment of the role currently played by Ukrainian CSOs in key social processes

% of all CSOs



Question: Please rate on a scale of 1 to 5 the importance of the role currently played by Ukrainian CSOs in the following processes, where 1 means they play no role in this process and 5 means they play a significant role.

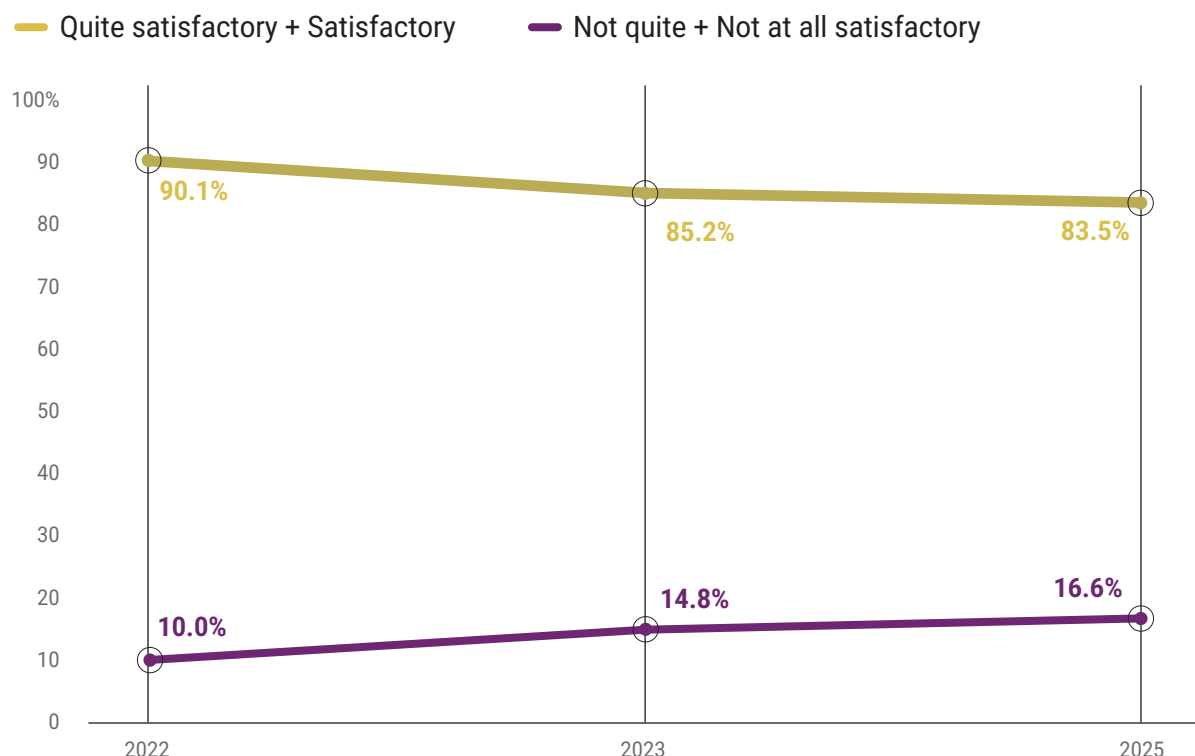
### 7.2. Assessment of CSO activities and influence: results of a quantitative study

Most respondents (83.5%) are satisfied (completely satisfied and satisfied) with the activities of CSOs during the war in 2024–2025. These assessments are not statistically significantly dependent on the geographical scope of the CSO's activities, whether it is a local, regional, national, or international organisation.

Since 2022, there has been a slight but steady downward trend in the assessment of the sector's activities: from 90.1% in 2022 to 85.2% in 2023 and finally to 83.5% now. Particularly noticeable is the decline in the share of those who are completely satisfied with the activities, from 47% in 2022 to 32% now. Accordingly, the number of CSO representatives who are dissatisfied with the sector's activities has increased from 10% to 17%.



## Assessments of CSO activities during 2022–2025

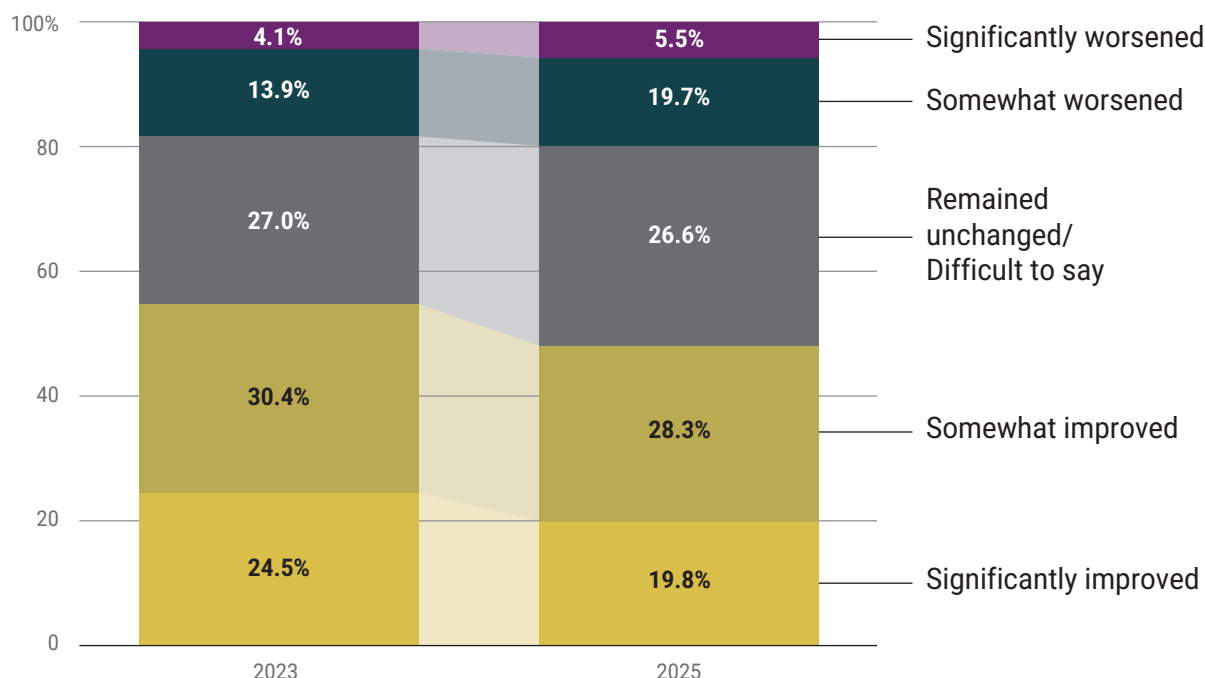


Question: How would you assess the overall activities of non-governmental and charitable organisations in Ukraine during the war in 2024–2025?

About half of the respondents (48.1%, compared to 54.9% in 2023) say that CSO activities in Ukraine improved during 2024–2025. 25.2% say that activities have deteriorated (compared to 18% in 2023). The rest (27.6%) believe that nothing has changed overall (in 2023, the figure was 27%). These estimates are also statistically significantly independent of the geographical scope of CSO activities.



## How the activities of NGOs and charitable organisations in Ukraine have changed in the context of war



Question: In your opinion, how has the activity of non-governmental and charitable organisations in Ukraine changed overall during the war in 2024–2025?

Compared to the previous survey, CSOs' assessments of their influence on the situation in the country have become more positive. **The most noticeable increase in influence is at the local level:** the share of CSOs that consider their influence in communities to be significant increased from 54.5% in 2023 to 63.8% in 2024–2025. This is the only level at which most respondents consider their organisation's influence to be significant. At the regional and national levels, less than half of the CSOs surveyed consider their influence to be substantial (45.5% and 33.6%, respectively), although assessments have improved slightly compared to 2023. CSOs see their influence as least significant in terms of assisting Ukrainians who were forced to leave the country due to the war – 18% consider it important to some extent.

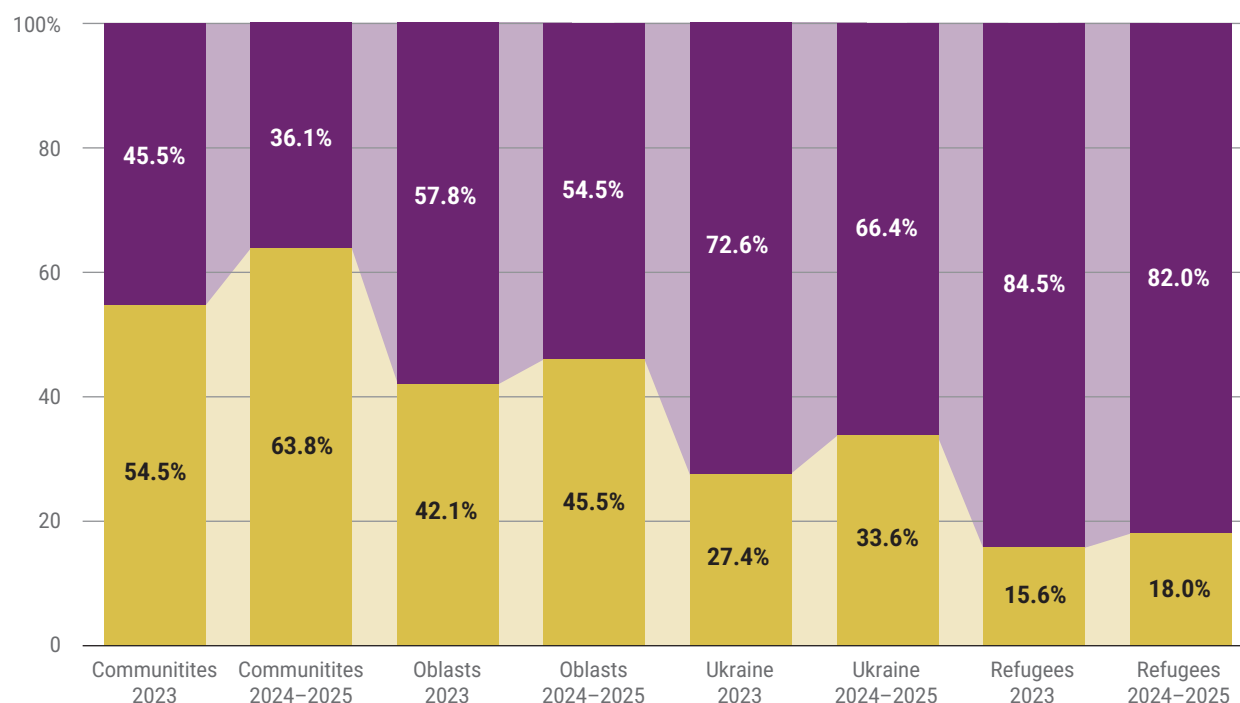
The assessment of the level of influence at the regional and national levels is naturally lower among CSOs that identify themselves as local, and higher among regional, national, and international CSOs. As for the influence on Ukrainians who were forced to leave the country, it is most often mentioned by representatives of international CSOs.



## Assessment of whether the CSO's own influence was significant at different levels: comparison of 2023 and 2024–2025

■ No ("More likely no than yes" + "No, there was no significant impact")

■ Yes ("Yes, definitely" + "More likely yes than no")



Question: Do you think your NGO/CO had a significant impact on the state of affairs in the country at the following levels in 2024–2025?

### 7.3. The role of CSOs in reforms, democracy building and overcoming the consequences of war: results of a desk research

#### 7.3.1. The role of CSOs in overcoming the consequences of the war: Solving the housing problem of IDPs: case study

The work of CSOs in solving the housing problem of IDPs demonstrates the range of tasks that the civil society sector can solve and the diversity of skills and abilities of its representatives. We will briefly outline the types of functions CSOs perform in providing housing for IDPs.





## 1. Financial support

Humanitarian and civil society organisations often provide direct financial assistance to IDPs or communities to purchase or rent housing. For example, Caritas Odesa, as part of the project “Housing for Vulnerable Households in Ukraine III,” paid IDP families for rent and utilities for six months<sup>32</sup>. Such financial support allows families to settle into their new communities quickly.

## 2. Expert assistance

Caritas Ukraine has formed groups of engineers who can participate in inspecting real estate properties for inclusion in the state “Register of Affordable Housing for IDPs.”<sup>33</sup> With the help of these experts, communities can obtain professional assessments of the condition of buildings and solutions to technical issues related to reconstruction. At the same time, local authorities can receive methodological recommendations for planning long-term housing construction.

## 3. Partnership with local authorities

Civil society organisations often cooperate with ATCs and city councils to implement housing projects. For example, in the Kyiv region, **the Housing for IDPs Charitable Foundation**, together with the Irpin City Council, renovated an abandoned dormitory: the city authorities allocated funds for electricity (300,000 UAH) and gasification (400,000 UAH), and engaged utility workers to repair the water supply and sewage systems. As a result, the building was renovated into 19 “smart apartments” for IDPs<sup>34</sup>. In the Vinnytsia region, **the Housing for IDPs Charitable Foundation** signed a charitable assistance agreement with the local community of Stryzhavka to renovate a non-residential building in the village of Miziakivski Khutory for housing 16 families<sup>35</sup>. In such initiatives, civil society organisations act as intermediaries between donor funds and local authorities: they prepare project and cost estimates, attract funding and oversee the implementation of works, while the authorities provide permits, land or co-finance resources (land, utilities). This interaction speeds up decision-making and supports the community at all stages of the project.

<sup>32</sup> Assistance in renting housing – an effective tool for IDP integration (successful examples from Caritas Odesa UGCC). <https://caritas.ua/news/dopomoga-v-orendi-zhytla-%E2%80%92-efektyvnyj-instrument-integraciyi-vpo-uspishni-prykłady-karitasu-odesa/>

<sup>33</sup> “Caritas Ukraine is ready to help fill the register of affordable housing for IDPs more quickly,” says Serhiy Pyzhov, social housing expert at Caritas Ukraine. <https://caritas.ua/news/karitas-ukrayiny-gotovij-spryaty-shvydshomu-napovnennyu-reyestru-dostupnogo-zhytla-dlya-vpo-%E2%80%92-zaznachaye-ekspert-z-soczialnogo-zhytla-karitasu-ukrayiny-sergij-pyzhov/>

<sup>34</sup> Smart apartments for displaced persons: 19 families celebrate housewarming in the Kyiv region. <https://housing-idp.in.ua/ua/news/smart-kvartiri-dlya-pereselenciv-19-rodin-svyatkuyut-novosillya-na-ki%D1%97vshhini/>

<sup>35</sup> Report from the construction site: renovation of a house for IDPs in the village of Miziakivski Khutory. <https://housing-idp.in.ua/ua/news/zvit-z-budivelnogo-majdanchika-pereoblashtuvannya-budinku-dlya-vpo-u-selishhi-miziakivski-hutori/>



#### 4. Community capacity building

Civil society organisations strengthen the capacity of local communities to address housing issues independently. International NGOs (including IMPACT Initiatives) and Ukrainian NGOs (the Cedos analytical centre) have held training seminars and workshops for community representatives. For example, a workshop on “Housing and social protection in frontline communities” was held in Kyiv with the participation of more than 20 representatives from 14 frontline villages and settlements (from the Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia regions)<sup>36</sup>. The workshop discussed algorithms for developing local housing programmes and attracting resources. Such events raise community awareness of available housing programmes, train local government officials to assess needs, write grant applications and communicate with donors. Through training, methodological guidelines and experience sharing, organisations strengthen communities’ capacity to implement housing initiatives independently.

#### 5. Advocacy and participation in policymaking

Non-governmental organisations participate in developing of legislative and policy decisions related to social and affordable housing. Caritas Ukraine joined the legislative process to create a register of affordable housing for IDPs (Law 4080-IX) and actively encourages filling this database<sup>37</sup>. The fund’s experts gave presentations and proposed that their engineers be included in commissions for rapid housing inventory (so that the authorities and donors have a complete picture of the available housing stock).

### 7.3.2. The role of CSOs in Ukraine’s European integration and international advocacy

Ukrainian civil society organisations are one of the key drivers of European integration: they shape the reform agenda, provide external advocacy in Brussels, produce alternative(shadow) reports for the European Commission, monitor the transparency of support instruments such as the Ukraine Facility, and monitor the European integration process. Thanks to their extensive networks and expertise, they fill analytical and humanitarian gaps that the state cannot always cover during wartime. Analytical studies point to the growing role of CSOs in Ukraine’s European integration. For example, the authors of the report “**Review of Democratic Institutions in Ukraine during the War**”<sup>38</sup> note:

<sup>36</sup> Cedos involved 14 frontline communities in discussions on housing and social protection issues. 18 March 2025.

<https://cedos.org.ua/news/cedos-zaluchyv-14-pryfrontovyyh-gromad-do-obgovorennya-pytan-zhytla-i-soczialnogo-zahystu/>

<sup>37</sup> “Caritas Ukraine is ready to help speed up the filling of the register of affordable housing for IDPs,” says Serhiy Pyzhov, social housing expert at Caritas Ukraine. <https://caritas.ua/news/karitas-ukrayiny-gotoviy-spryaty-shvydshomu-napovnennyu-reyestru-dostupnogo-zhytla-dlya-vpo-%E2%80%92-zaznachaye-ekspert-z-soczialnogo-zhytla-karitasu-ukrayiny-sergij-pyzhov/>

<sup>38</sup> Yulia Kirichenko, Olga Ivasiuk, Roman Smalyuk, Oleksandr Saienko, Vitaliy Zagai, Olena Ovcharenko, Iryna Shostak, Anna Isichko, Tetiana Pechonchik, Ihor Rozkladai. Review of democratic institutions in Ukraine during the war. Interim report – 2024. <https://pravo.org.ua/books/oglyad-demokratychnyh-instytutiv-ukrayiny-pid-chas-vijny-promizhnyj-zvit-2024/>



**“The influence of civil society organisations (CSOs) on European integration processes has increased, particularly through interaction with the EU Delegation to Ukraine. CSOs provided substantial support to the Ukrainian government in preparing responses to the European Commission’s questionnaire, which helped to make the responses more comprehensive. The European Commission’s report on Ukraine’s progress, published in November 2023, noted the role of civil society. Civil society organisations also help draft legislation, conduct analytical research, and advocate for public policy at both the Ukrainian and EU levels. Civil society has reached a new level of recognition of its influence on Ukraine’s recovery processes, with its representatives participating in almost every panel and event of the Berlin Conference on the Recovery of Ukraine, which took place in June 2024.”<sup>39</sup>**

The key areas of influence of CSOs in European integration and international advocacy are as follows.

Policy formation and monitoring, expert and analytical support for European integration

## **1. Work within the EU–Ukraine platform**

This platform brings together representatives of the Ukrainian government, the EU and civil society. The EU–Ukraine Civil Society Platform is a unique institutional mechanism established under the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union to ensure civil society participation in the European integration process. This joint body, operating based on Articles 469–470 of the Association Agreement, serves as an essential instrument for public scrutiny and promotion of the implementation of European standards in Ukraine. At its 16th meeting (December 2024), participants discussed implementing the European Commission’s “seven steps” and working within the Ukraine Facility<sup>40</sup>.

## **2. Involvement of CSOs in providing analytical support to the Ukraine-EU negotiation process, expert support for legislative reform for successful European integration**

The civil society sector of Ukraine has become an active participant in the EU membership negotiations, providing expert support to the authorities and ensuring communication with stakeholders. According to Oleksandr Ilkov, Director General of the Government Office for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, the volume of work on European integration is huge, so the authorities are involving CSOs to help:

<sup>39</sup> Yulia Kirichenko, Olga Ivasiuk, Roman Smaliuk, Oleksandr Saienko, Vitalii Zagaii, Olena Ovcharenko, Iryna Shostak, Anna Isichko, Tetiana Pechonchyk, Ihor Rozkladai. Review of Ukraine’s democratic institutions during the war. Interim report – 2024.

<https://pravo.org.ua/books/oglyad-demokratychnyh-institutiv-ukrayiny-pid-chas-vijny-promizhnyj-zvit-2024/>

<sup>40</sup> 16th meeting of the EU–Ukraine Civil Society Platform. 10 December 2024.

<https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/16th-meeting-eu-ukraine-civil-society-platform>



**“That is why we are interested in young, talented people who know two or three languages and are ready to work 24/7, but opportunities are limited. Therefore, civil society was involved in the design of our negotiating structure. We see them in this process as playing the classic role of a ‘watchdog’ who monitors the government and checks that everything is in order, but also as providing real assistance and strengthening our capabilities.”<sup>41</sup>**

For example, a team of experts **from the NGO Easy Business** is involved in the work of 20 of the 36 negotiation working groups preparing Ukraine for EU membership<sup>42</sup>, while analysts from OPORA and IEP–Berlin are implementing the “Rule of Law for EU Accession” project, helping the Ministry of Justice and the Verkhovna Rada to harmonise Ukrainian legislation with the EU<sup>43</sup>. The Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law is represented in four working (negotiating) groups. It has developed proposals for the National Bank of Ukraine to amend Ukrainian national legislation in the field of banking services and financial monitoring of non-profit organisations, developed by CEDEM experts as part of the preparation of Ukraine’s negotiating position on EU accession regarding Section 4 of Cluster 2 “Free Movement of Capital.”<sup>44</sup> The role of civil society in the European integration process is also highly appreciated by EU representatives.

**“Ukraine has made incredible progress, and civil society plays a key role in this,”** said Asier Santillan, Head of the European Integration, Governance and Rule of Law, Civil Society Section of the EU Delegation to Ukraine<sup>45</sup>.

- **Shadow reports.** A coalition of think tanks led by the Agency for Legislative Initiatives has prepared the first alternative report to Section 23, “Justice and Fundamental Rights” (2024)<sup>46</sup>.
- **European integration tracker.** The Reanimation Package of Reforms coalition regularly publishes an interactive tracker; in April 2025, it recorded the implementation of 81% of the commitments under the Association Agreement<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> Ukrainian civil society organisations involved in EU accession talks — Dmytro Shulga. 3 April 2025.

<https://www.irf.ua/ukrayinski-gromadski-organizacziyi-zalucheni-do-peregovoriv-pro-vstup-do-yes-dmytro-shulga/>

<sup>42</sup> Ukraine on the path to the EU: How to ensure the success of reforms in 2025?

<https://easybusiness.in.ua/ukraina-na-shliakhu-do-yes-yak-zabezpechty-uspikh-reform-u-2025/>

<sup>43</sup> Pathways to Progress: Germany–Ukraine Dialogues on Rule of Law for EU Accession.

<https://iep-berlin.de/en/projects/enlargement-neighbourhood-and-central-asia/pathways-to-progress/>

<sup>44</sup> CEDEM submitted proposals for European integration legislative changes to the NBU. 25 February 2025.

<https://cedem.org.ua/news/cedem-nbu-propozytsiyi/>

<sup>45</sup> Ukraine on the path to the EU: How to ensure the success of reforms in 2025?

<https://easybusiness.in.ua/ukraina-na-shliakhu-do-yes-yak-zabezpechty-uspikh-reform-u-2025/>

<sup>46</sup> Shadow report on Section 23 “Justice and Fundamental Rights” of the European Commission’s 2023 Report on Ukraine.

<https://zmina.ua/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/10/tinovyj-zvit-ukrayina-yes-prava-lyudyny-rozdil.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Tracker of Ukraine’s European integration. <https://rpr.org.ua/accession-to-the-european-union/>



### 3. Advocacy at the international level

A characteristic feature of Ukrainian civil society's activities in the field of international advocacy for Ukraine's interests is the active participation of both specialised civil society organisations working directly in this area and the significant contribution of organisations with other main areas of work, such as media, youth policy, etc. As for the first type of organisations, for example, **the Ukrainian Civil Society Hub** and several specialised CSOs (such as **Promote Ukraine**<sup>48</sup>) operate in Brussels, which last year held 89 advocacy events in the European Parliament, NATO and national parliaments<sup>49</sup>. **Razom Advocacy**, an organisation that coordinates over 2,000 activists in 50 states, operates in Washington<sup>50</sup>. Ukrainian civil society organisations abroad are, among other things, intensively lobbying to supply weapons to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. For example, **Razom Advocacy**, as a member of the American Coalition for Ukraine, is organising the Ukraine Action Summit in the US Congress, where hundreds of activists are meeting with congressmen and demanding the acceleration of deliveries of the latest weapons (tanks, aircraft, long-range missiles) to Ukraine<sup>51</sup>. Ukrainian civil society organisations are raising the issue of human rights violations and war crimes at the international level. Nova Ukraine is actively promoting the #BringKidsBack campaign for the return of Ukrainian children who were forcibly taken to Russia<sup>52</sup>. However, in-depth interviews have shown that representatives of "non-profile" CSOs who visit other countries and meet with foreign politicians, officials, journalists, and ordinary people actively advocate for Ukraine's interests, even though their main activities in Ukraine have a different focus.

"...and our group showed our photos of what the arrivals look like, what the front-line newspaper looks like, how the rear in Volyn lives, and this aroused extraordinary interest.

We specifically divided up who would be responsible for which topic. My topic was Telegram. Now I can say that I have done something for this country by talking to an Italian senator about Telegram. And this must continue, especially now that new investigations about Telegram have been published. Who will go and tell them about this?"

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.promoteukraine.org/>

<sup>49</sup> Ukrainian Civil Society Hub in the EU. <https://www.ukrainianhub.eu/>

<sup>50</sup> Razom Advocacy <https://www.razomforukraine.org/advocacy/>

<sup>51</sup> Razom Advocacy <https://www.razomforukraine.org/advocacy/>

<sup>52</sup> April Impact: Lives Saved, Hope Restored. 5 May 2025. <https://novaukraine.org/april-impact-lives-saved-hope-restored/>



Other organisations add international advocacy to their main activities:

“...let’s call it youth diplomacy, that is, more advocacy stories, representative stories at the EU level, at the European level. This has been added and has become quite a large platform, a lot of work – various visits, different municipalities, speeches at various events. Just recently, we were in Strasbourg, and now we are criticising the European Parliament because they invited Navalny’s daughter to this event, so this kind of international diplomatic youth diplomacy has been added.”

A significant trend reported by one of the in-depth interview respondents is the broadening of the focus of international advocacy by Ukrainian CSOs – it is ceasing to be “Western-centric.”

“...over the last two years, we have expanded our areas of activity in the sense that we have started to focus more on not just, let’s say, Western audiences. Previously, the focus was on Europe and North America, but now we are trying to build partnerships with the so-called ‘global south.’”

### 7.3.3. The role of CSOs in reform processes

Civil society organisations are among the key actors in public administration reform, transparency and citizen engagement. One respondent to the qualitative study suggested that CSOs play a crucial role in reform and, more broadly, preserving democracy in Ukraine.

“However, of course, I would say that civil society plays a significant role because we are not a dictatorship yet, and this is thanks to civil society and the fact that many reforms are being pushed through by civil society organisations and are not being left to their own devices.”

The contribution of civil society to the implementation of reforms in Ukraine has been noted in official international documents such as the European Commission’s report on Ukraine’s progress towards the EU in 2024<sup>53</sup>. Experts from **the Reanimation Package of Reforms** who analysed the report point to the following achievements of CSOs: advocacy for reforming higher legal education; support for the Law on Public Consultations; advocacy for the Law on People’s Power in Communities; advocacy for the Law on Administrative Procedure; and advocacy for changes

<sup>53</sup> COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Ukraine 2024 Report Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF REGIONS 2024 Communication on EU enlargement policy. [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1924a044-b30f-48a2-99c1-50edeac14da1\\_en?filename=Ukraine%20Report%202024.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/1924a044-b30f-48a2-99c1-50edeac14da1_en?filename=Ukraine%20Report%202024.pdf)





to tobacco regulation, etc.<sup>54</sup>. Experts from **the Reanimation Package of Reforms and the Centre for Political and Legal Reforms** were also actively involved in the work on draft law No. 4298 on oversight of local government decisions<sup>55</sup>. Experts conducted research on foreign experience in administrative oversight, participated in discussions on the draft law, and made proposals regarding the status of officials and the procedure for holding competitions for the positions of heads of district state administrations (based on the results of the discussions, a significant portion of the recommendations were considered).

Anti-corruption and transparency practices are another area where CSOs are leading the way. A coalition of CSOs, including the RPR, the Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law, Transparency International and others, also actively joined the discussion on the law on lobbying. For example, civil society representatives openly explained why the initial draft law on lobbying was dangerous and needed to be revised<sup>56</sup>. Thanks to this advocacy, amendments proposed by the public were partially considered in the law's final version. As the authors of the report **"Review of Democratic Institutions in Ukraine during the War. Interim Report – 2024"** point out<sup>57</sup>

**"Civil society organisations actively participated in and influenced the revision of the draft law on the regulation of lobbying, which was adopted in February 2024 as the Law of Ukraine "On Lobbying." The involvement of civil society organisations made it possible to transform it from a source of threat to civil society into a compromise that lays the foundations for transparency in the process of shaping public policy and decision-making."**<sup>58</sup>

Ukrainian civil society organisations and their coalitions are consistently promoting reforms through advocacy and participation in the drafting of legislation. They monitor government and parliamentary initiatives, prepare expert opinions, hold public discussions and act as intermediaries between citizens and the authorities. Thanks to this work, transparency standards, anti-corruption mechanisms and public consultation procedures are incorporated into new laws, and controversial provisions are being amended at the drafting stage. In addition, CSO coalitions develop joint roadmaps for change, proposing specific amendments to existing legislation and initiatives to bring it closer to European standards. Their analytical notes and appeals are sent to relevant committees of the Verkhovna Rada and ministries, and representatives of organisations regularly participate in working groups. This ongoing dialogue helps to keep the reform agenda on track even in wartime and ensures the gradual introduction of more open and accountable governance rules.

<sup>54</sup> European Commission report: RPR Coalition once again confirms systematic reforms. 19 November 2024.

<https://rpr.org.ua/news/zvit-yevropeyskoi-komisii-koalitsiia-rpr-vkotre-pidverdzuie-systemnist-reform/>

<sup>55</sup> Ensuring the legality of local government decisions: when, how and why? Summary of the discussion. 2 September 2024.

<https://decentralisation.ua/news/18554>

<sup>56</sup> Olga Lymar, Yuriy Mykytiuk. The Law on Lobbying. We must vote. The question is: for what? 13 February 2024.

<https://glavcom.ua/publications/zakon-pro-lobizm-treba-holosuvati-pitannia-za-shcho-985804.html>

<sup>57</sup> Yulia Kirichenko, Olga Ivasiuk, Roman Smaliuk, Oleksandr Saienko, Vitalii Zagaii, Olena Ovcharenko, Iryna Shostak, Anna Ischko, Tetiana Pechonchik, Ihor Rozkladai. Review of democratic institutions in Ukraine during the war. Interim report – 2024.

<https://pravo.org.ua/books/oglyad-demokratychnyh-instytutiv-ukrayiny-pid-chas-vijny-promizhnyi-zvit-2024/>

<sup>58</sup> Yulia Kirichenko, Olga Ivasiuk, Roman Smaliuk, Oleksandr Saienko, Vitalii Zagaii, Olena Ovcharenko, Iryna Shostak, Anna Ischko, Tetiana Pechonchik, Ihor Rozkladai. Review of Ukraine's democratic institutions during the war. Interim report – 2024.

<https://pravo.org.ua/books/oglyad-demokratychnyh-instytutiv-ukrayiny-pid-chas-vijny-promizhnyi-zvit-2024/>



**The Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2021–2026 for 2025–2026<sup>59</sup>**, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 21 March 2025, provides for the involvement of civil society organisations in analytical work and the preparation of proposals for many legislative and regulatory acts. For example, work on regulatory and legal acts aimed at implementing the Law of Ukraine “On Public Consultations”; “On Amendments to Certain Laws of Ukraine on People’s Power at the Local Self-Government Level”; for the development of a draft law aimed at taking into account international standards for regulating the right to freedom of peaceful assembly; support in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for the draft Law of Ukraine “On Appeals, etc.<sup>60</sup> The “Action Plan 2025/26” provides for the involvement of such organisations as the Association for the Promotion of Self-Organisation of the Population; the Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors in Law Enforcement; the Bohdan Hawrylyshyn Family Charitable Foundation; the charitable organisation “International Renaissance Foundation”; All-Ukrainian Organisation of Disabled People “Ukrainian Society of the Blind”; All-Ukrainian Organisation of People with Hearing Disabilities “Ukrainian Society of the Deaf”; Public Union “Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union”; Public Organisation “Inna Zhinka”; Initiative Centre for the Promotion of Activity and Development of Public Initiatives “Yednannia”; “Odessa Institute of Social Technologies”; Plast – National Scout Organisation of Ukraine; “Union of Entrepreneurs of Mykolaiv Region”; “Forum for the Development of Civil Society”; “Eastern Europe Foundation” (international charitable organisation); “Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law”; “Human Rights Information Centre” (ZMINA); “Centre for Political and Legal Reforms”; “School of Governance”; Ukrainian Independent Centre for Political Research (UICPR)<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> “Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2021–2026 in 2025–2026.” APPROVED by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 246-r of 21 March 2025.  
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/file/text/125/f543699n13.docx>

<sup>60</sup> “Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2021–2026 in 2025–2026.” APPROVED by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 21 March 2025. No. 246-r.  
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/file/text/125/f543699n13.docx>

<sup>61</sup> “Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2021–2026 in 2025–2026.” APPROVED by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 21 March 2025. No. 246-r.  
<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/file/text/125/f543699n13.docx>





#### 7.3.4. The role of CSOs in ensuring access to open data

According to the authors of the study “**The Impact of Ukrainian Civil Society on Preserving and Strengthening the Right to Access Information During War**,”<sup>62</sup> Ukrainian non-governmental organisations play a key role in ensuring that society does not lose access to open data, even under martial law. They not only publicly defend the right to information but also engage in systematic dialogue with the state: it was thanks to the **OpenUp** initiative that the fifth Closed Data Conference was held in Kyiv in 2023, bringing together activists, representatives of the Ministry of Digital Transformation and judges of the Supreme Court. The main practical result of these meetings was joint work on a new version of Cabinet Resolution No. 835, which defines the lists of mandatory open data sets. At the same time, the organisations strengthened the capacity of information managers.<sup>63</sup> **Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law (CEDEM)** alone trained over two thousand officials in 2022 on how to work with public information correctly and prepared detailed analytical reviews on access to data during the war. Other relevant NGOs, including the Human Rights Platform and the Training and Advisory Centre on Access to Information, published practical guides for journalists, activists and officials, and provided individual consultations on personal data protection and the legal regime of martial law<sup>64</sup>. In the legal sphere, the civil society sector focused on two areas: analysing court decisions on access to information and advocating for legislative changes. The **DEJURE** Foundation systematised court practice in open data cases, while **the Independent Anti-Corruption Commission** proposed amendments to the draft law on classified information security to prevent the unjustified classification of public data<sup>65</sup>. Finally, with UNDP support, independent monitors assessed for the second time since the start of the full-scale aggression how authorities are fulfilling their information obligations on the ground, helping to identify systemic problems and set benchmarks for further reforms<sup>66</sup>.

#### 7.3.5. The role of CSOs in supporting the Armed Forces

According to participants in in-depth interviews, the role of the civil society sector in supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine is very significant and critical to the country's stability. Some respondents note that it is precisely in the field of assistance to the Armed Forces that exemplary organisations have emerged, developing highly effective models of CSO work under crisis conditions. This distinctly Ukrainian know-how could not have been adopted from international experience.

<sup>62</sup> Tetiana Oleksiuk. The influence of Ukrainian civil society on preserving and strengthening the right to access information during wartime. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283)

<sup>63</sup> Tetiana Oleksiuk. The influence of Ukrainian civil society on preserving and strengthening the right to access information during wartime. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283)

<sup>64</sup> Tetiana Oleksiuk. The influence of Ukrainian civil society on preserving and strengthening the right to access information during wartime. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283)

<sup>65</sup> Tetiana Oleksiuk. The influence of Ukrainian civil society on preserving and strengthening the right to access information during wartime. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283)

<sup>66</sup> Tetiana Oleksiuk. The influence of Ukrainian civil society on preserving and strengthening the right to access information during wartime. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/283)



“Well, of course, as someone who is very well informed, I see this, and I have already mentioned the support for the army. The public sector is the driving force here. Take whatever you want: organisations that have been working for a long time, those involved in supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine, new ones that have sprung up spontaneously, those that have become institutionalised, and those that remain informal associations. Of course, all of this is the asset, the golden fund on which everything rests.”

“For some reason, the example of ‘Come Back Alive’ comes to mind. This is not my example, it is not from my sector, but I believe that this is an organisation with a unique structure and unique influence, which has effectively rebuilt the mechanics of working with state bodies and foreign suppliers and built a unique structure. People who join them go through, God, what’s it called, a polygraph test when they join the organisation, and a polygraph test every quarter. Because they have access to classified information, they have access to confidential data. This is fair and right, and of course, the level of this organisation and this structure make these approaches difficult to emulate. And that is why I am still a proponent of the idea that Ukrainians can create better solutions by looking, for example, at “Come Back Alive,” because no international structure could have done something like that.”

However, support for the Armed Forces has become more of a manifestation of civic duty for the Ukrainian civil sector than an attempt to replace state functions.

“When it comes to supporting the Armed Forces, it’s obvious that we’re involved in fundraising, encouraging young people to donate or support the Armed Forces in other ways, but this is more about civic duty than replacing state functions.”



According to the results of the study “Civil Society in Ukraine in the Context of War,”<sup>67</sup> as of 2023, 38% of CSOs and 46% of volunteers named helping the army and veterans among their primary areas of work. Naturally, this area of activity has come to the fore after the full-scale invasion. The civil sector’s support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine is multifaceted, complementing and sometimes replacing state functions, especially in the context of rapid changes on the front lines, where state mechanisms can be less flexible or slower. The ability of CSOs to respond quickly, directly engage resources and take an innovative approach allows them to fill critical gaps and increase the overall effectiveness of defence efforts. It is not possible to describe the entire CSO military assistance sector in detail within this report, so we will briefly summarise the key tasks that CSOs perform to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

## 1. Material and technical assistance to the Armed Forces

In 2024, foundations and volunteer communities donated thousands of pieces of equipment to the military. For example, the Free Spirit Charitable Foundation provided the Armed Forces with over 1,300 vehicles (cars, trucks, specialised equipment, etc.). The fund also organised the production of UAVs, such as hexacopters and strike FPV drones. It purchased a ground-based robotic drone with a machine gun and enemy drone analysers<sup>68</sup>. The Come Back Alive Foundation raised 4.4 billion hryvnia in 2024 (about 15 billion hryvnia over three years of war)<sup>69</sup> and directs the money to cars, drones, electronic warfare, communications and other equipment<sup>70</sup>. Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation raised 2.1 billion hryvnia in 2024<sup>71</sup> and purchases reconnaissance, strike and ground drones, optics, communications, military transport, electronic warfare equipment, and organises military training and education for civilians and military personnel<sup>72</sup>. In addition to procurement, some CSOs are directly developing equipment, such as the Engineering Corps, a volunteer team of designers that has created dozens of its drones and robots – mine clearance robots and remotely controlled machine gun turrets for the army’s needs<sup>73</sup>. The examples given mainly concern large foundations and teams, but numerous small CSOs and individual volunteers are also involved in fundraising, procurement and production for the army’s needs. The acquisition of advanced technologies, such as access to ICEYE satellite data (Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation), specialised drones, Kropyva fire control systems (Army SOS) and the development of innovative devices, shows that CSOs are not simply responding to needs, but are proactively identifying and meeting high-tech military demands, often ahead of traditional government procurement processes.

67 KIIS. Civil society in Ukraine during the war. February 2024. [https://ednannia.ua/images/Procurements/%D0%93%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B5\\_%D1%81%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE\\_%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D0%B8\\_%D0%B2\\_%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%85\\_%D0%B2%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%B8\\_%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82\\_%D0%B7\\_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE\\_%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE\\_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F.pdf](https://ednannia.ua/images/Procurements/%D0%93%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B5_%D1%81%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE_%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D0%B8_%D0%B2_%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%85_%D0%B2%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%B8_%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82_%D0%B7_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F.pdf)

68 Free in spirit: report for 2024. <https://vilny-dukhom.com.ua/report-2024>

69 The three largest funds collected 28% more donations in 2024. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/donates-in-war-2024>

70 Come Back Alive projects. <https://savelifeline.in.ua/projects/military/>

71 The three largest funds collected 28% more donations in 2024. <https://opendatabot.ua/analytics/donates-in-war-2024>

72 Serhiy Prytula Foundation. Aid to the army. <https://prytulafoundation.org/help-army>

73 Drones, mine-clearing robots, turrets. How the “Engineering Corps” brought together technical specialists to help the Armed Forces of Ukraine. <https://dou.ua/lenta/articles/engineering-corps-organisation/>



## 2. Medical support and rehabilitation

CSOs provide direct medical assistance on the front lines and supply hospitals with medicines and equipment. For example, the Hospitallers' medical battalion works directly on the front lines, rescuing defenders in active combat. They provide first aid and pre-medical care, carry out evacuations, provide post-hospital support and rehabilitation, and actively train paramedics<sup>74</sup>. In addition, CSOs contribute to the provision of high-cost, specialised medical services such as prosthetics and advanced rehabilitation. Superhumans is a modern prosthetics and rehabilitation centre in Lviv Oblast, built with funds from private investors<sup>75</sup>. The Come Back Alive Foundation implements rehabilitation projects for veterans, which is a long-term contribution to the recovery of defenders<sup>76</sup>. Other foundations and organisations worth mentioning in the context of prosthetics, treatment and rehabilitation include: the Citizen Charitable Foundation as part of the Cyborgs programme, Future for Ukraine, the Svoi Charitable Foundation, the UNBROKEN Charitable Foundation and others<sup>77</sup>.

## 3. Psychological support and social adaptation

CSOs provide vital psychological assistance to veterans and their families, facilitating their social adaptation through reintegration programmes, professional retraining and employment assistance. Their approach is often comprehensive, involving the whole family and aimed at long-term recovery and integration. For example, Veteran Hub, which specialises in providing psychological assistance and employment support, refers veterans to the following CSOs in particular: Legal Hundred and Principle (free legal aid), Free Choice, Worth Living, Blue Bird (psychological assistance), Ukrainian Society of Occupational Therapists, Centre for Physical and Psychological Rehabilitation of the Way to Health Charitable Foundation (rehabilitation, treatment of veterans with disabilities), League of the Strong and Public Organisation Active Rehabilitation Group (creation of an accessible environment), Employment Centre for Free People (employment)<sup>78</sup>. This list is far from complete, but it demonstrates the diversity of tasks that CSOs are addressing in this area.

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.hospitallers.life/about-us>

<sup>75</sup> <https://superhumans.com/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://savelifeline.in.ua/projects/veteran/>

<sup>77</sup> For the unbreakable: five foundations that help military personnel with prosthetics and rehabilitation: <https://tykyiv.com/health/dlia-nezlamnikh-6-fondiv-iaki-dopomagaiut-viiskovim-z-protezuванням-i-reabilitatsiieu/>

<sup>78</sup> Organisations that support veterans. <https://veteranhub.com.ua/veteran-way/organizacziyi-yaki-pidtrymuyut-veteraniv/>



#### 4. Educational, cultural and media initiatives

CSOs are actively developing projects that strengthen morale and increase civic resilience. Charity concerts and exhibitions are held supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine, and educational programmes on the history of the war and national traditions are organised for young people. All these cultural and educational activities are aimed at fostering social unity, preparing the home front for the challenges of war, and supporting Ukraine's image in the world. CSOs actively invest in human capital by training military personnel in various fields (from tactical medicine to UAV operators) and organising basic military training for civilians, which increases the country's overall defence capability. For example, the Come Back Alive Foundation has its training programmes and trains military personnel in several areas, including firing from covered positions, training sappers, drone operators, artillerymen and snipers, as well as teaching first aid and conducting covert missions<sup>79</sup>. Serhiy Prytula Charity Foundation, through its military school "Boriviter," has trained over 28,000 cadets in nine training courses<sup>80</sup>; in addition, through the Civilian Preparedness Centre, it has organised basic military training for 75,000 civilians throughout Ukraine<sup>81</sup>.

### 7.4. CSO leadership: results of a qualitative study

Respondents in in-depth interviews largely concur that civil-society organisations (CSOs) are the driving force – or at least key actors – in reform, recovery, democracy-building, advocacy for Ukraine's interests, and support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Arguments in favour of this position include CSOs' ability to generate ideas, implement changes in the country and assist the state by advocating for necessary decisions and providing expert support in implementing reforms. It was noted that the civil society sector is a driving force in many processes and plays a significant role in the resilience of Ukrainian society in these difficult times of war.

**"I fully agree with each of these slogans and statements. CSOs and the public have become the cornerstone of the state's defence capability and support for reforms, without a doubt... Their roles are extensive, and the range of public involvement is quite significant in all areas and functions."**

<sup>79</sup> <https://savelifе.in.ua/projects-vyshkil-kapitaniv/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://prytulafoundation.org/help-army/direction/vijskova-shkola-boriviter>

<sup>81</sup> <https://prytulafoundation.org/help-army/direction/czentr-gotovnosti-czivilnih?city=kyiv>



**“The civil sector is the driving force here. Take any organisation, whether it has been operating for a long time, is involved in supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine, is new, has formed spontaneously, has become institutionalised, or remains an informal association. Of course, all this is an asset, a golden fund on which everything rests... I would say that the fact that we are not yet a dictatorship is also due to the significant role played by civil society and the fact that many reforms are being pushed through by civil society organisations.”**

At the same time, other participants emphasised that the very wording of the question about “leadership” is not very productive or correct.

**“...civil society is now one of the stakeholders or one of the pillars of society... I mean, it is certainly a powerful driving force, but the government and the state administration are also working on this. So, the term ‘leader’ is not the right term... They have enormous expertise in certain areas... I would not single out civil society as a leader now.”**

**“I wouldn’t look for a leader here at all. I think that’s a bit of a wrong approach. CSOs cannot be the only leaders of reform at this stage. Reforms are always carried out by the state, whether it is now, in 2025, in 2014 or 2000 – decisions are made by those who have the authority to do so, and civil society can push this process forward, can move this process forward. Still, I think Ukrainian civil society is mighty, especially compared to other countries... We must strive for strong state institutions and a strong state. This is what we are working for, not to replace it... I agree that Ukrainian civil society is unique; it does a lot that similar organisations in other countries do not do. But we understand that our goal is not to replace the state, but to support it. And that civil society and charitable foundations cannot replace the state in the context of supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Of course, this is a unique experience, this is unique assistance, but it does not replace it.”**

In their opinion, it is more appropriate to talk about the distribution of roles and responsibilities between civil society, the government, business and other actors, as well as the need to combine the efforts of all interested parties to achieve maximum efficiency.

**“In recent years, a kind of triangulation has developed in Ukraine: there is, conditionally speaking, a state that has no money and no capacity to do anything on its own; there are donors who have money but cannot do anything themselves... There is civil society, which has capacity but no official status and no money. And so it is that these three corners of the triangle come together, and a great deal is being done by CSOs, including research, conceptualisation of various issues, and sometimes project management.”**



Respondents indicated that civil society cannot and should not seek to replace the state or other social institutions in performing their functions. However, this may be possible temporarily in specific crisis periods (examples include assistance to hospitals at the beginning of the war, ongoing assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, etc.).

**"I disagree with this statement because it is not about leadership; it is about each party's separate roles and areas of responsibility. Regarding the development of democracy, the authorities have their platform of responsibility and duties, civil society has its own, and business also has its own."**



## 8. Main channels of communication between CSOs and their audience, authorities and donors

In 2024, CSOs continued to rely primarily on social networks and messengers as channels of communication with their target audience: they were mentioned by 83.3% of respondents, which is practically unchanged from 2023 (83.9%). This confirms that digital platforms remain the primary channel for rapid information dissemination. Popular communication channels include telephone calls (31.5%), contacts through local activists and volunteers (23.1%), organisation websites (23.0%), face-to-face meetings in special locations (e.g., at ASCs, social assistance centres, hospitals, schools, etc.) (21.1%) and personal meetings at humanitarian aid distribution points (19.8%), personal visits to households.

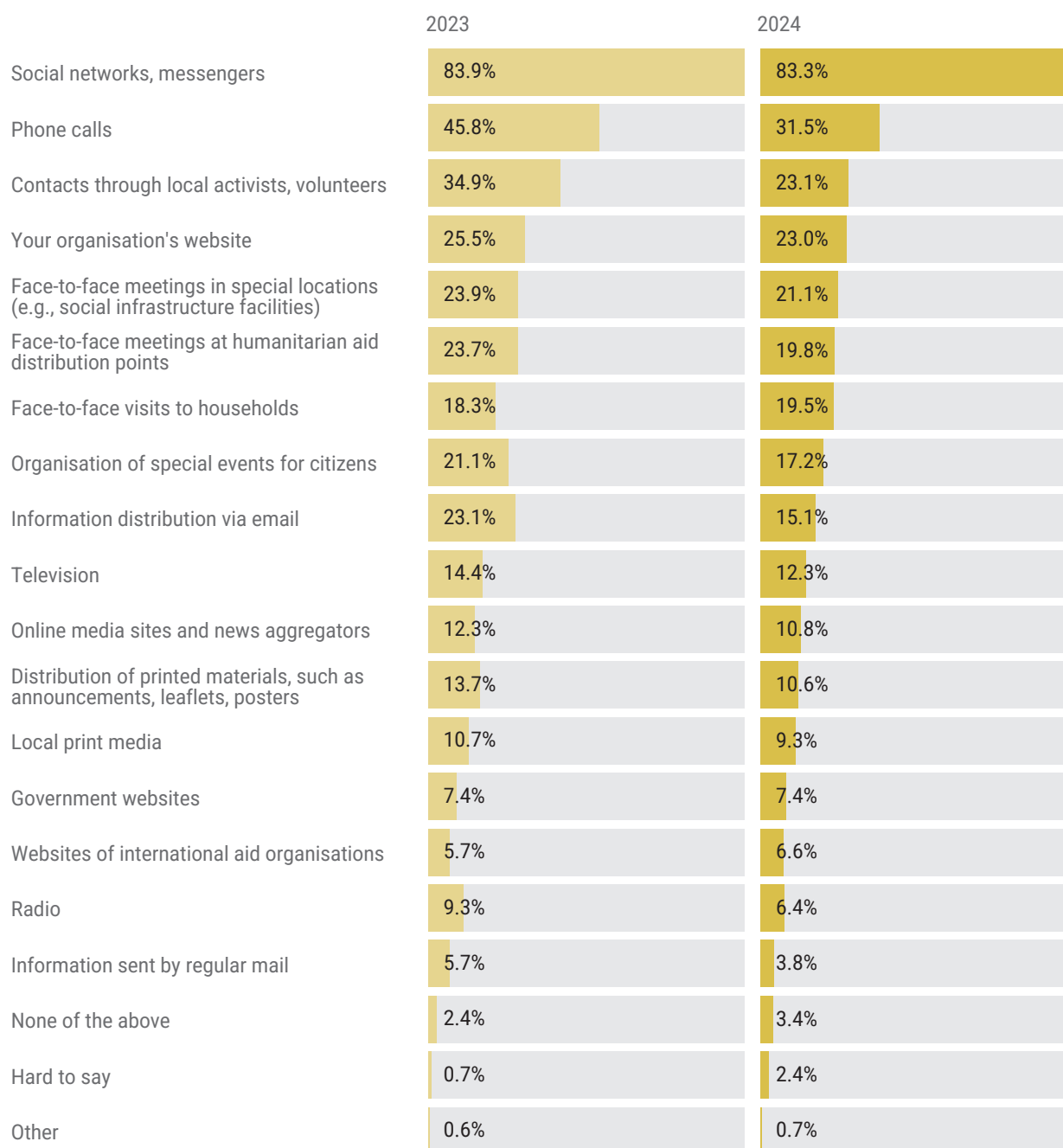
Compared to the previous wave, the most noticeable decrease was in the popularity of telephone calls (-14.3 p.p.) and communication through local activists (-11.8 p.p.).





## Communication channels with the target audience used by CSOs in 2023 and 2024

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice



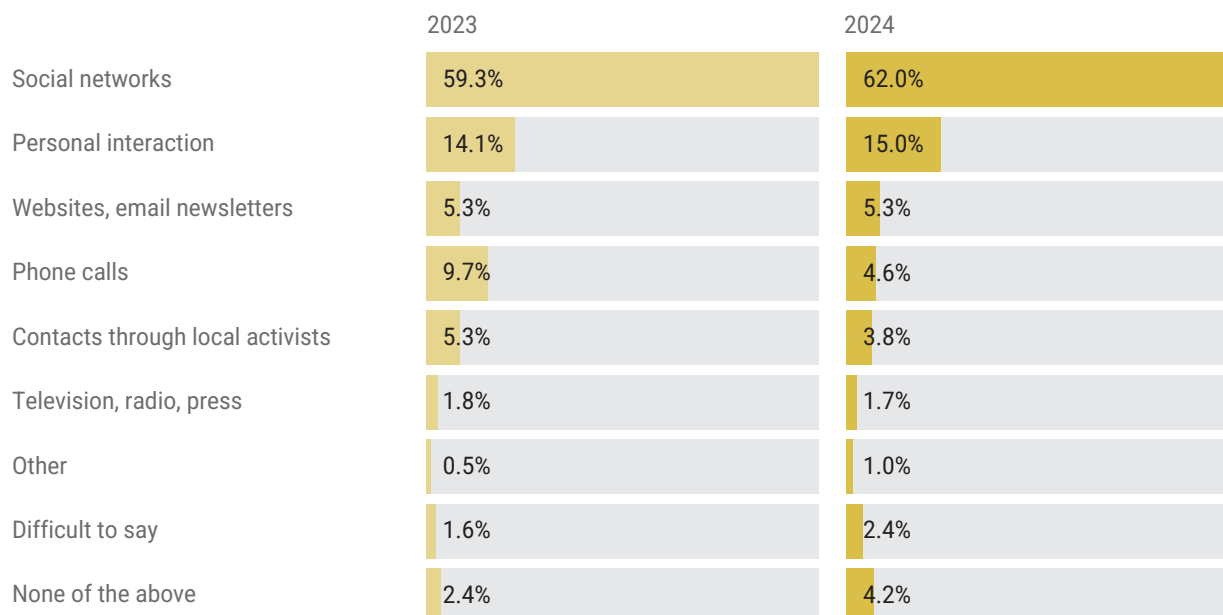
Question: What channels did you use in 2024 to communicate with your target audience?

Social networks and personal interaction (in various forms) are by far the most effective channels of communication with beneficiaries (62% and 15%, respectively). Telephone calls and activist networks are gradually losing popularity.



## The most effective channel of communication with the target audience in 2023 and 2024, according to CSOs

% of respondent organisations



Question: Which of these channels of communication with your target audience is most effective?

Social media is the main channel of communication with the target audience for CSOs of any geographical coverage. Personal contacts (meetings, gatherings, household visits, contacts through activists and volunteers) are the second most used channel of communication at all levels, except for the international level, where it ranks third.

Local CSOs rely most on social media (83.2%) and personal contacts (46.5%), but at the same time, they use the telephone (34.0%) much more often than national and international CSOs. On the other hand, they communicate relatively less through websites, email newsletters (28.7%), and traditional media (15.1%).

Regional CSOs also use social media the most (87.3%) and communicate through personal contacts (52.7%), with websites and email newsletters in third place (43.8%). Like local organisations, they contact their target audience by phone (33.8%) more often than national and international CSOs.

National organisations, like regional ones, combine communication via social media (84.9%), personal contacts (48.6%), and websites and email newsletters (39.8%).

International CSOs use social media the least (73%), but websites/email newsletters the most (50.8%), which is their second most popular communication channel. They are also more likely than others to consider this channel the most effective (17.2% versus 3–6% among the rest).



	Local	Regional	National	International
Social media	83.2%	87.3%	84.9%	73.0%
Personal contacts	46.5%	52.7%	48.6%	41.3%
Telephone	34.0%	33.8%	26.7%	24.6%
Websites, email newsletters	28.7%	43.8%	39.8%	50.8%
Television, radio, press	15.1%	23.1%	20.3%	23.8%
Distribution of printed materials and mailings	12.4%	17.3%	10.8%	9.5%
Difficult to say	2.3%	1.5%	2.8%	4.0%
None of the above	5.7%	1.9%	0.8%	1.6%

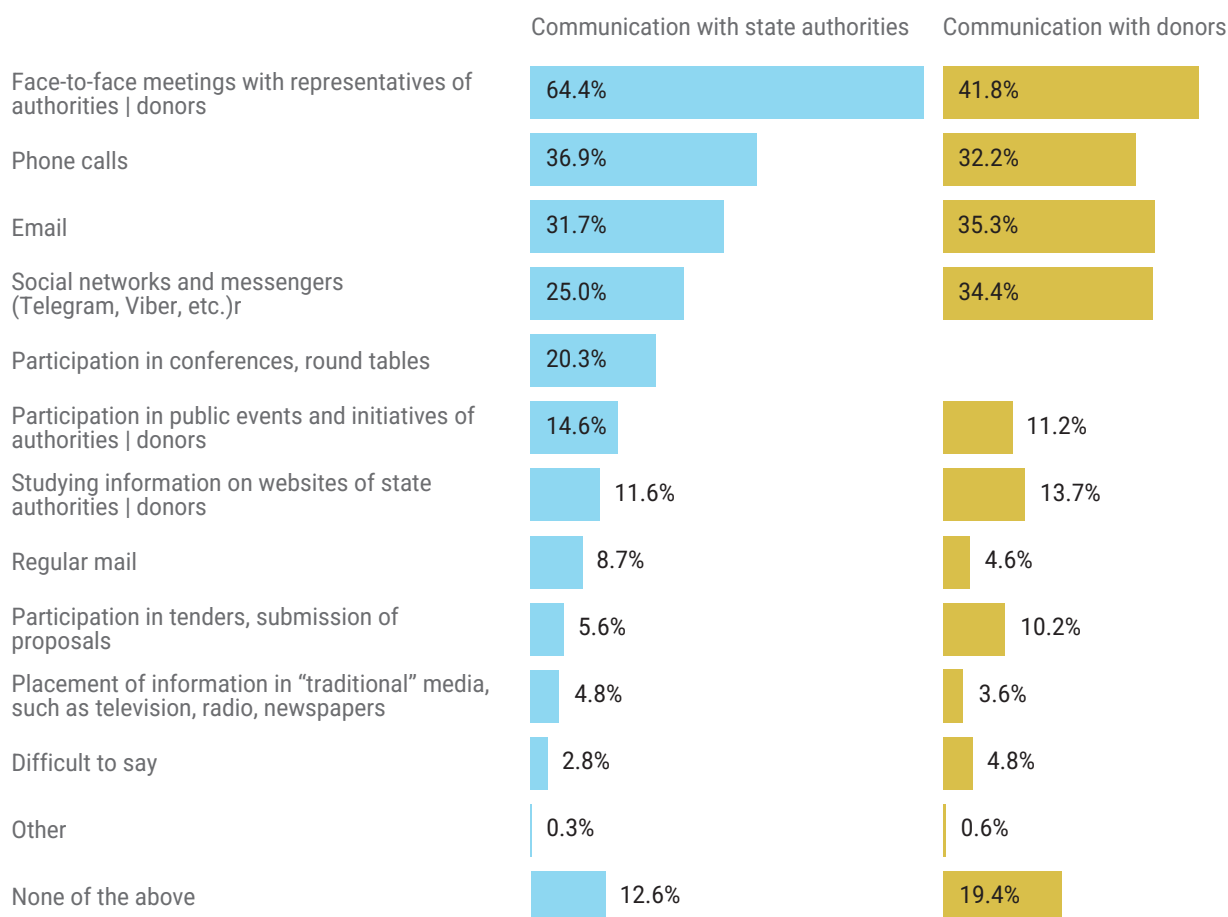
The organisation's field of activity also influences the methods of communication with its target audience: for example, organisations working in the field of digital transformation and cybersecurity most often use their own websites; news aggregators and online media are used by those specialising in media literacy; email newsletters are used by those working in the field of gender equality. On the other hand, those involved in helping the army and veterans disseminate information via websites and email are fewer than others. Social networks are most often used by those who work with young people and teenagers. Personal visits to households and communication at humanitarian aid distribution points are the primary channels of communication for those who assist war victims and displaced persons.

In 2024, CSOs demonstrate slightly different patterns of communication with authorities and donors. Face-to-face contact was most used in relations with authorities: 64.4% of respondents mentioned personal meetings, while 41.8% of respondents used this format when working with donors. Telephone calls ranked second in communication with the authorities (36.9%) and remained slightly less common in interactions with donors (32.2%). Email was equally common in both areas, but its importance was slightly higher in communication with donors: 35.3% compared to 31.7% when contacting government authorities. A similar picture can be observed for social networks and messengers: they were used by 34.4% for communication with donors and 25.0% in interaction with the authorities. There are no significant differences between organisations operating at different levels, except that a quarter of local organisations did not communicate with donors (among the rest, this figure did not exceed 16%).



## Channels of communication with authorities and donors used by CSOs in 2024

% of CSO respondents, multiple choice



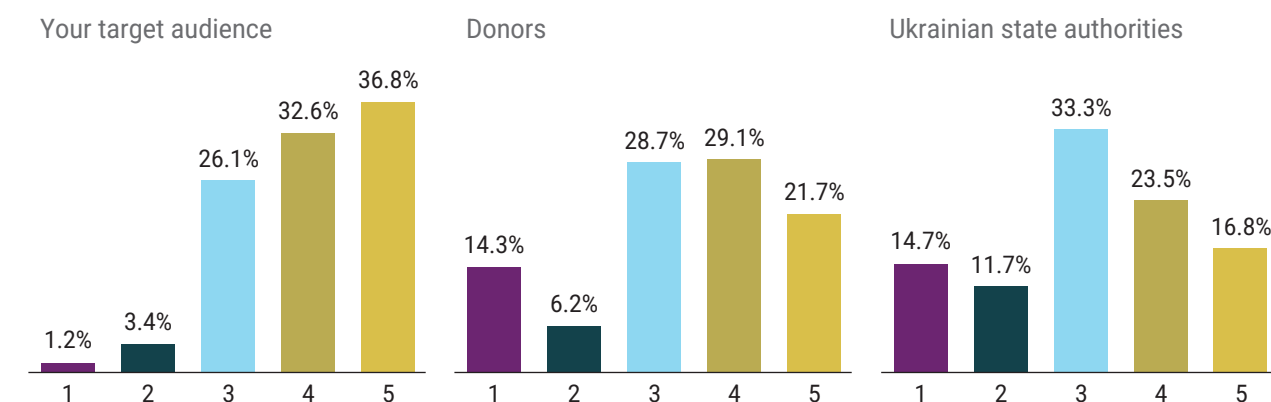
Question: What channels did you use in 2024 to communicate with the authorities? What channels did you use in 2024 to communicate with donors?

When assessing their satisfaction with the available communication opportunities, CSOs gave the highest average rating (on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is completely dissatisfied and 5 is completely satisfied) to interaction with their target audience — 4.0. Next, in terms of satisfaction with existing opportunities for communication with donors, the score was 3.4, and in last place were the Ukrainian authorities with a score of 3.2. No significant changes from the previous wave were observed.



## CSOs' satisfaction with existing opportunities for communication with target audiences, donors, and state authorities

% of all CSOs, rated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 — completely dissatisfied, 5 — completely satisfied



Question: How satisfied are you with the available opportunities for communication with...

In the qualitative study, CSO representatives and experts identified the following effective models of communication between donors and civil society representatives.

### 1. Consultation and networking formats

Face-to-face meetings, informal networking events and thematic conferences provide a deeper understanding of the context, the effectiveness of initiatives already implemented and promising areas for cooperation. This format also allows for quick feedback from CSOs openly and informally.

**"And if we talk about the general pool, it is often simple networking within the framework of certain events, and usually these events are organised by civil society organisations, and they broadcast them there. These forums and conferences are essential for understanding the 'temperature in the room', any pain points and feelings, etc. Round tables are also important, i.e., more offline formats — there you can gain a deeper understanding than you can from a simple questionnaire."**

**"Well, I'm a fan of networking, of course. But the question is generally difficult for me. How can we determine and find some grain from this whole mass? Well... visits are needed. And I would not refuse a survey. How to explain it correctly? A survey of people who can independently evaluate one activity or another."**



"I would say that consultations and networking would be more effective to understand the environment, to understand the effectiveness of the work that has been done and the prospects for effective progress. So, it would be something like consultations or networking. Well, consultations work well during networking."

"Just hypothetically, during networking, when some grant writer comes up to you and says, 'You know, to be honest, your new requirements are nonsense, or 'it would be good if someone financed this project,' I think that in Ukraine, a lot depends on personal communication and good personal relationships."

## 2. Systemic feedback mechanisms

Regular monitoring, after-action reviews, and other structured assessments by the **Initiative Centre to Promote Public Initiative and Development, "Ednannia,"** and partners were mentioned as important for adjusting joint programmes.

"Well, the classic forms, that is, what ISAR "Ednannia" does there, regular monitoring, these kinds of forms are essential there. However, very often now organisations have their implementation partners, i.e., donors, who have been there for several years, and here the form of feedback is important. That is, After Action Review, etc..."

## 3. Pitching and preliminary selection of partners

Holding competitive presentations among organisations allows you to quickly compare their values, mandates and priorities with the donor's goals and identify the most relevant implementers.

"For example, I would choose this method: I would hold a pitching session among organisations, listen to their requests and their responses, and form an understanding of which of these organisations are relevant in terms of values, working principles, and overall relevance to my mandate, their mandates, directions and priorities. That is how I would do it."

## 4. Analytical products and research

Thematic and "shadow" reports, sociological surveys, and other research materials remain reliable sources of information about public sentiment, needs, and threats, and support the soundness of decisions.



“Probably because of civil society organisations’ tools — various analytical products, research, thematic reports. Shadow reports are a good source for understanding and familiarising oneself with certain sectors of society, economic reforms, and so on... Some kind of... well, ultimately, sociological research has always been a good source for understanding public sentiment, trends in society, needs, threats, priorities, and so on.”



## 9. Legal aspects, challenges and necessary changes in the legal regulation of CSO activities under martial law

Throughout 2023–2024, legislative regulation of CSO activities continued. According to the authors of the report **“The State of Civil Society Development in Ukraine in 2023–2024,”**<sup>82</sup> the changes affected all areas of these organisations’ activities. The implementation of the adopted regulations and those at various stages of preparation will make it possible to expand civil society’s influence on social processes, including recovery.

The main positive innovations in the legal regulation of CSO activities are related to the following regulatory acts:

- The process of European integration (in particular, the reform plan for obtaining financial support from the EU under the Ukraine Facility programme) accelerated the adoption of the Laws of Ukraine “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine” to Ensure Transparency of Local Self-Government” (No. 6401) and “On Public Consultations” (No. 4254) and “On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Local Self-Government in Ukraine” and Other Legislative Acts of Ukraine on People’s Power at the Local Self-Government Level” (No. 7283). These laws:

**“...are intended to promote the involvement of civil society in decision-making, regulate the use of local democracy tools, and establish the obligation to hold public consultations.”<sup>83</sup>**

<sup>82</sup> Kaplan Yu., Skvortsova V., Valevsky O. et al. The state of civil society development in Ukraine in 2023–2024 – 2024. [https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2024-11/ad\\_gromad\\_suspilstvo-2023\\_15112024.pdf](https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2024-11/ad_gromad_suspilstvo-2023_15112024.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Maria Krasnenko. CSO Barometer 2024: Ukraine. A benchmark for a favourable environment and empowerment. – 2024. [https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024\\_UKR.pdf](https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024_UKR.pdf)





Law No. 7283 clarifies the specific forms of participation of the territorial community (including IDPs and young people) in local self-government and the mechanisms for considering public opinion. The law obliges local self-government bodies to include in the community charter the principles of relations between local self-government bodies and civil society organisations, forms of public control over the work of local self-government bodies, and principles of openness and transparency of local self-government activities. Law No. 4254 obliges state authorities and local self-government bodies to consult with the public when making important decisions and defines the mechanisms for their implementation. Law No. 6401 requires local authorities to broadcast and store recordings of sessions and standing committee meetings, publish draft decisions and certain other documents, which will strengthen public control.

- In March 2025, the Government approved an action plan to implement the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development for 2025–2026<sup>84</sup>. The plan contains a list of 34 measures of various kinds, including improving mechanisms and procedures for public participation (including bringing them into line with EU legislation) and improving conditions for civil society activities. The action plan identifies partner organisations, including CSOs, that will be involved in implementing the planned tasks.
- The government, together with CSOs, is developing a Concept for a State Programme for the Development of Volunteer Activities in Ukraine for 2025–2030. As of April 2025, consultations on this issue were ongoing<sup>85</sup>. A law amending the Law of Ukraine on Self-Organisation Bodies is also being prepared for its second reading, to improve the procedure for organising, operating and terminating self-organisation bodies. Such bodies will have specific powers to address local issues related to providing specific social, cultural or domestic services to community residents<sup>86</sup>.

At the same time, some laws and practices remain potentially problematic for CSO activities:

- The Law of Ukraine “On Lobbying” received a lot of attention from civil society during its drafting stage, as it had the potential to restrict the activities of advocacy organisations severely. The concerns were taken into account, and the law adopted in 2024 does not consider CSOs to be lobbyists, except in cases where their advocacy activities relate to commercial interests. There are concerns that this wording may still pose enforcement risks<sup>87</sup>.
- The Law on Public Consultations does not oblige MPs to hold public consultations when drafting legislation, and the implementation of measures specified in the law will only begin one year after the end of martial law.
- There are obstacles to accessing banking services at the national and international levels:

<sup>84</sup> Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. On approval of the action plan for the implementation in 2025–2026 of the National Strategy for the Promotion of Civil Society Development in Ukraine for 2021–2026. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/246-2025-%D1%80#Text>

<sup>85</sup> Online meeting: Development of volunteering and civic initiatives in wartime.

<https://psi.org.ua/onlajn-narada-rozvitok-volonterstva-ta-gromadyanskih-iniciativ-v-umovah-vijni>

<sup>86</sup> Kaplan Yu., Skvortsova V., Valevsky O. et al. The state of civil society development in Ukraine in 2023–2024 – 2024.

[https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2024-11/ad\\_gromad\\_suspilstvo-2023\\_15112024.pdf](https://niss.gov.ua/sites/default/files/2024-11/ad_gromad_suspilstvo-2023_15112024.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> Maria Krasnenko. CSO Barometer 2024: Ukraine. A benchmark for a favourable environment and empowerment. – 2024.

[https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024\\_UKR.pdf](https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024_UKR.pdf)



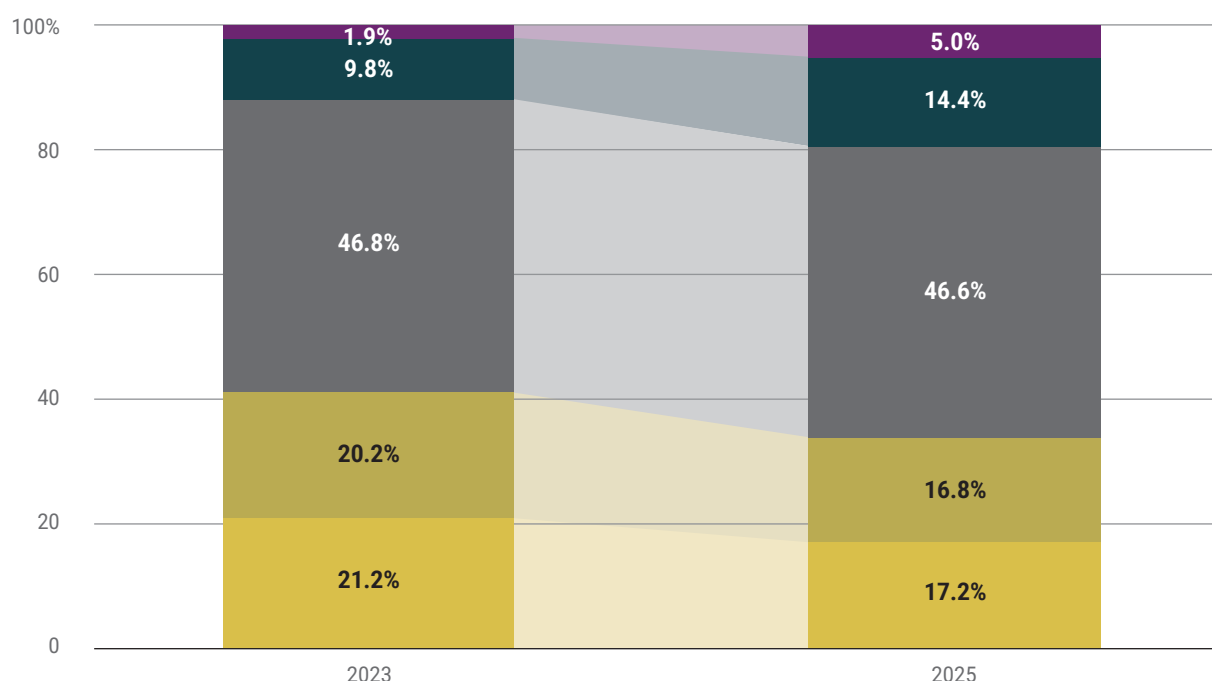
**“Ukraine is a party to an armed conflict, and a full-scale war is being waged on its territory. This leads to more intensive financial monitoring following international standards and delays in financial transactions, which hinders or slows down/stops the operational activities of CSOs, in particular those that raise funds from private individuals to support their work. Civil society organisations are engaged in dialogue with the National Bank of Ukraine and the banking sector to monitor and prevent such problems.”<sup>88</sup>**

CSOs participating in the quantitative survey continue to be somewhat critical of the extent to which existing legislation allows civil society organisations to influence the formulation and implementation of public policy. At the same time, assessments have improved slightly compared to 2023. Thus, 19.4% rated the opportunities provided by existing legislation as relatively high or very high (in 2023, this figure was 11.7%). On the other hand, the number of those who consider the opportunities to be rather low/very low has decreased: 41.4% in 2023, 34.0% in 2025. Another 46.6% rated the opportunities as average, at 3 out of 5 (almost the same as in 2023).

## Assessment of the extent to which existing legislation enables CSOs to influence the formulation and implementation of state policy

% of CSO respondents

■ 5 – Very high ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1 – Very low



Question: How would you generally assess the extent to which existing legislation allows civil society organisations to influence the development and implementation of state policy?

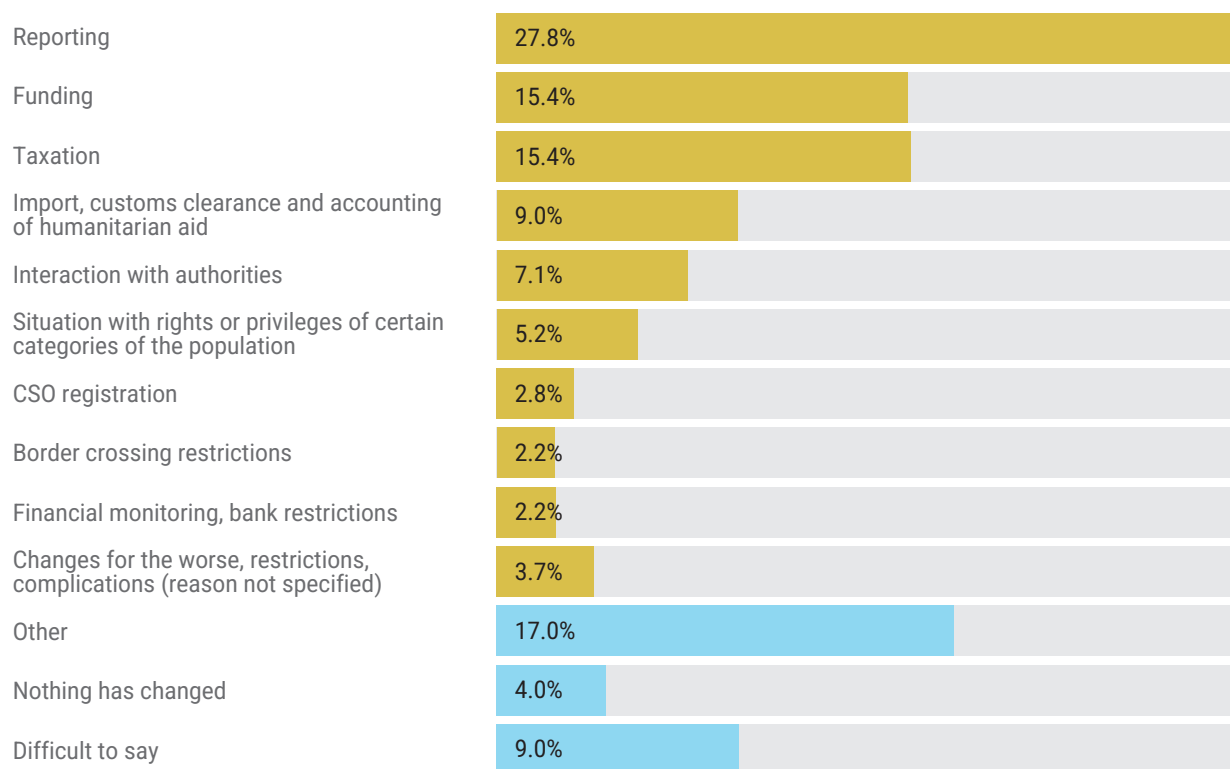
<sup>88</sup> Yulia Kirichenko, Olga Ivasiuk, Roman Smalyuk, Oleksandr Saienko, Vitalii Zagaii, Olena Ovcharenko, Iryna Shostak, Anna Isichko, Tetiana Pechonchyk, Ihor Rozkladai. Review of democratic institutions in Ukraine during the war. Interim report – 2024. <https://pravo.org.ua/books/oglyad-demokratychnyh-instytutiv-ukrayiny-pid-chas-vijny-promizhnyj-zvit-2024/>



When asked which changes in legislation had the most significant impact on their activities, CSOs most often mentioned changes related to reporting (27.8%). Some respondents spoke positively about these innovations, while others were negative. The second place regarding the share of mentions was shared by financing and taxation issues (15.4% each). Other changes that CSOs felt most strongly were related to the import, customs clearance and accounting of humanitarian aid (9.0%), interaction with authorities, both positive and negative (7.1%), new rights/privileges/opportunities or, conversely, cuts to existing ones for specific categories of the population, such as IDPs, veterans, national minorities and young people (5.2%). Restrictions on border crossing for volunteers (2.2%), issues related to financial monitoring, and restrictions on financial transactions imposed by banks (2.2%) were also mentioned. Some complained about the deterioration of the situation in general, without specifying the reason (3.7%). Another 17.0% of respondents cited other issues, such as legislation on social services, difficulties in assisting the Armed Forces of Ukraine, restrictions on freedom of speech, conscription and mobilisation, etc.

## Changes in legislative regulation that had the most significant impact on the activities of CSOs

% of CSO respondents who felt the impact of changes in legislation regarding the activities of NGOs/COs in Ukraine in 2025, open question



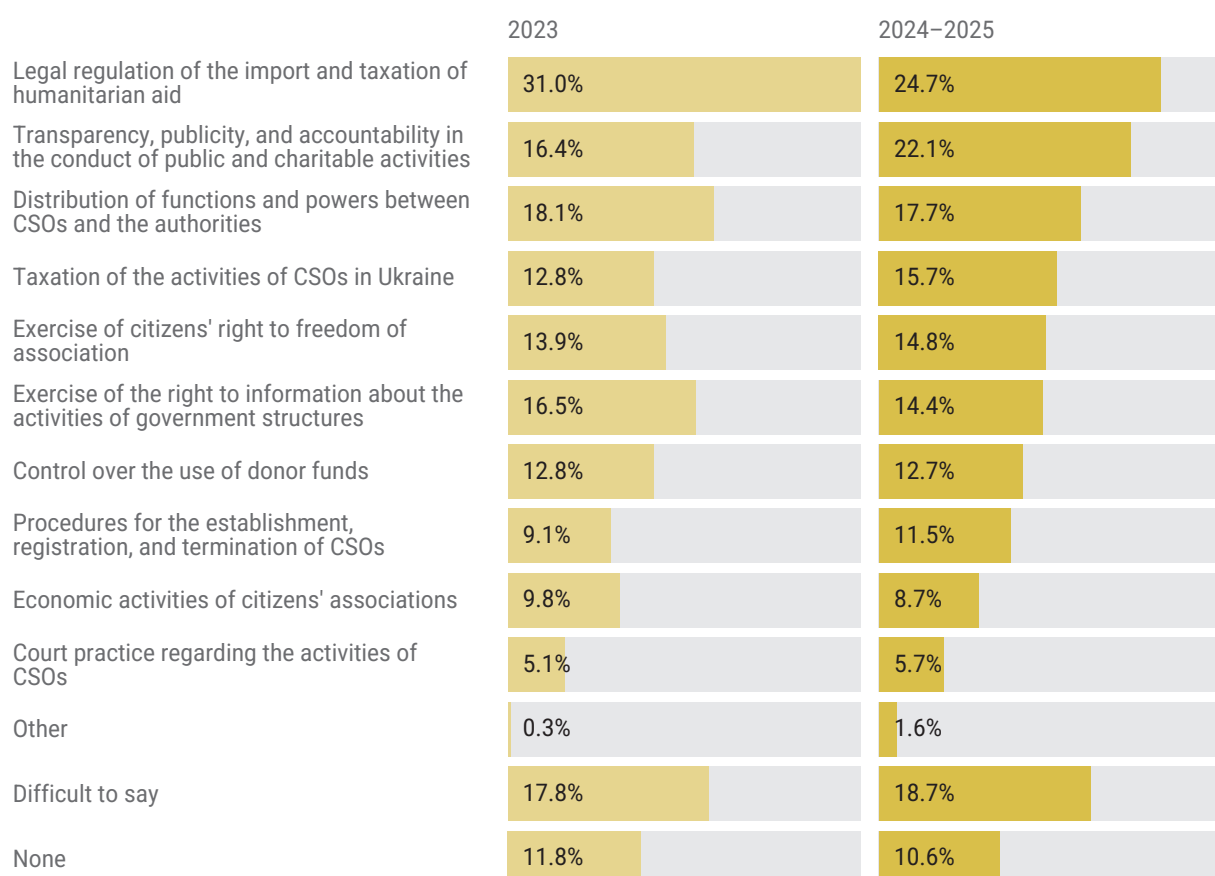
Question: What specific changes in the legislative regulation of NGO/CO activities have had the greatest impact on your activities?



When asked what they considered the most problematic aspects of their activities regarding legal support for Ukrainian civil society organisations, 70.7% of respondents (roughly the same as in 2023) could name at least one aspect. The most frequently mentioned issues were legal regulation of the import and taxation of humanitarian aid (24.7%) and transparency/publicity in the conduct of activities (22.1%). Legislation on the import and taxation of humanitarian aid and on the right to information about the activities of government bodies was mentioned less frequently as problematic aspects in 2025 than in 2023, while the share of those who mentioned transparency, publicity and accountability, as well as taxation of CSOs, increased.

## The most problematic aspects of CSO activities from the point of view of legal support

% of CSO respondents, multiple choice



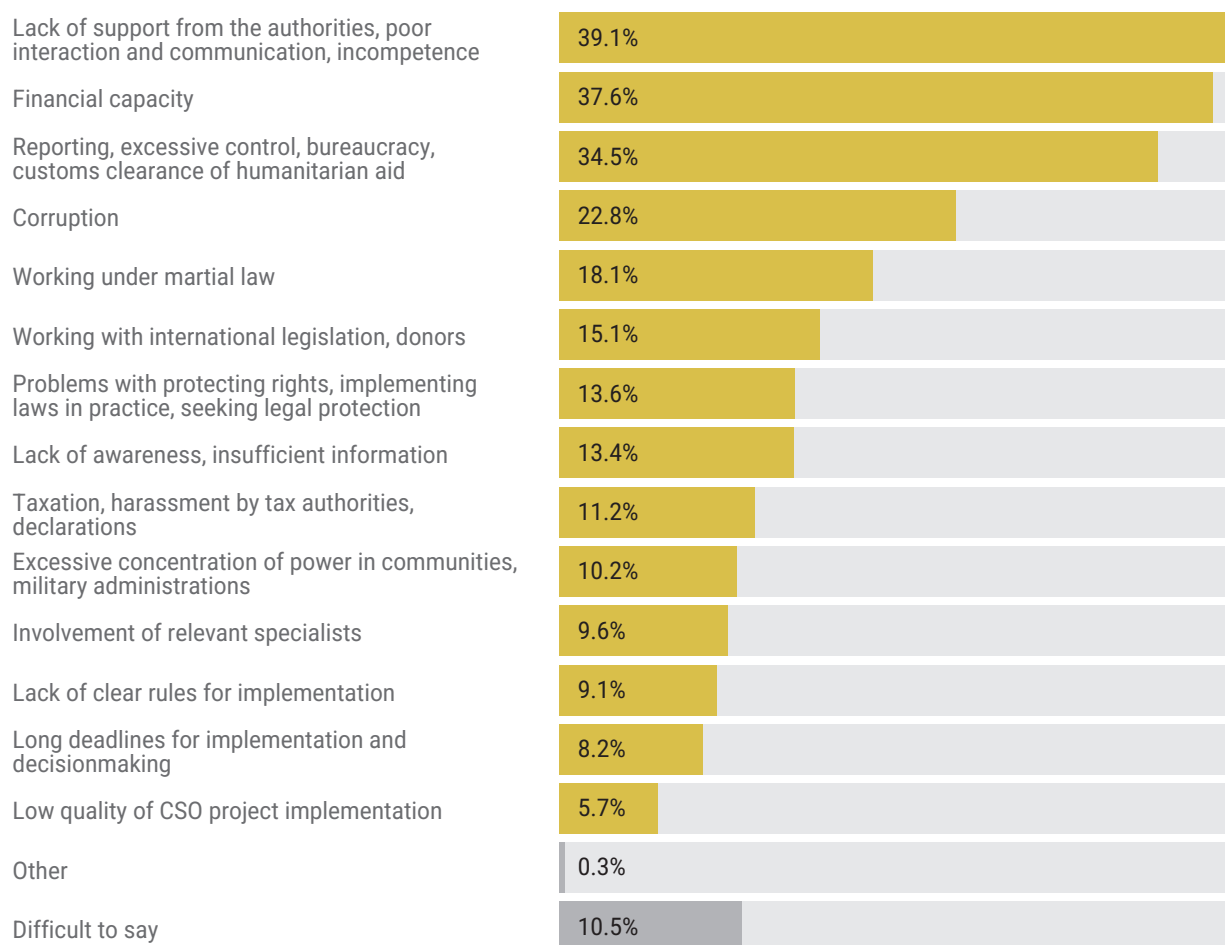
Question: Which aspects of the activities of Ukrainian civil society organisations in 2024–2025 are the most problematic from a legal perspective? Please select no more than 5 answers.

According to respondents, the main challenges in the legal regulation of CSO activities are insufficient support, weak interaction and incompetence of the authorities (39.1%), financial capacity (37.6%) and accountability, bureaucracy, excessive control and customs clearance of humanitarian aid (34.5%). The following most frequently mentioned issues are corruption (22.8%), working under martial law (18.1%), and working with international legislation and donors (15.1%).



## Key challenges in the legal regulation of CSO activities

% of CSO respondents, multiple choice



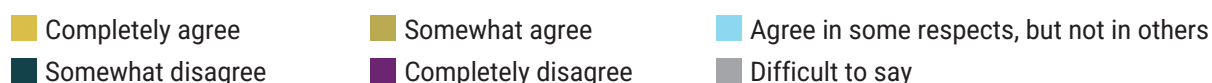
Question: What do you consider to be the main challenges in the legal regulation of an organisation such as yours? Please list no more than 7 challenges.

Respondents were divided on how clear, consistent and stable the legislation governing CSO activities is and how consistent, thorough and predictable the explanations provided by state and local administrations are. Thus, 35.0% tend to agree that the legislation is clear, 36.6% partly agree, partly disagree, and 19.1% disagree with the statement. At the same time, 28.5% consider the explanations provided by administrations to be consistent, thorough and predictable, 33.0% agree only partially, and 29.1% do not consider them so. Compared to 2023, the level of agreement with both statements has increased slightly.

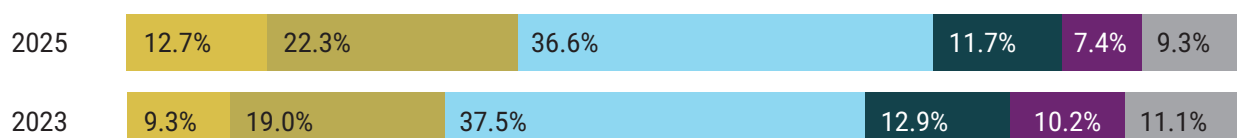


## Clarity of legislation and consistency of explanations from state administrations regarding the activities of CSOs

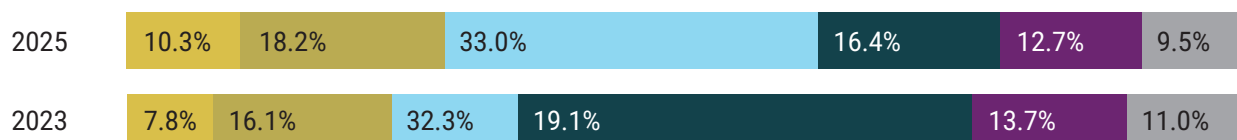
% of CSO respondents



### Legislation and regulatory acts related to the activities of CSOs are clearly defined, consistent, and do not change too often



### Clarifications by state and local administrations of legislation and regulatory acts concerning CSO activities are consistent, thorough, and predictable



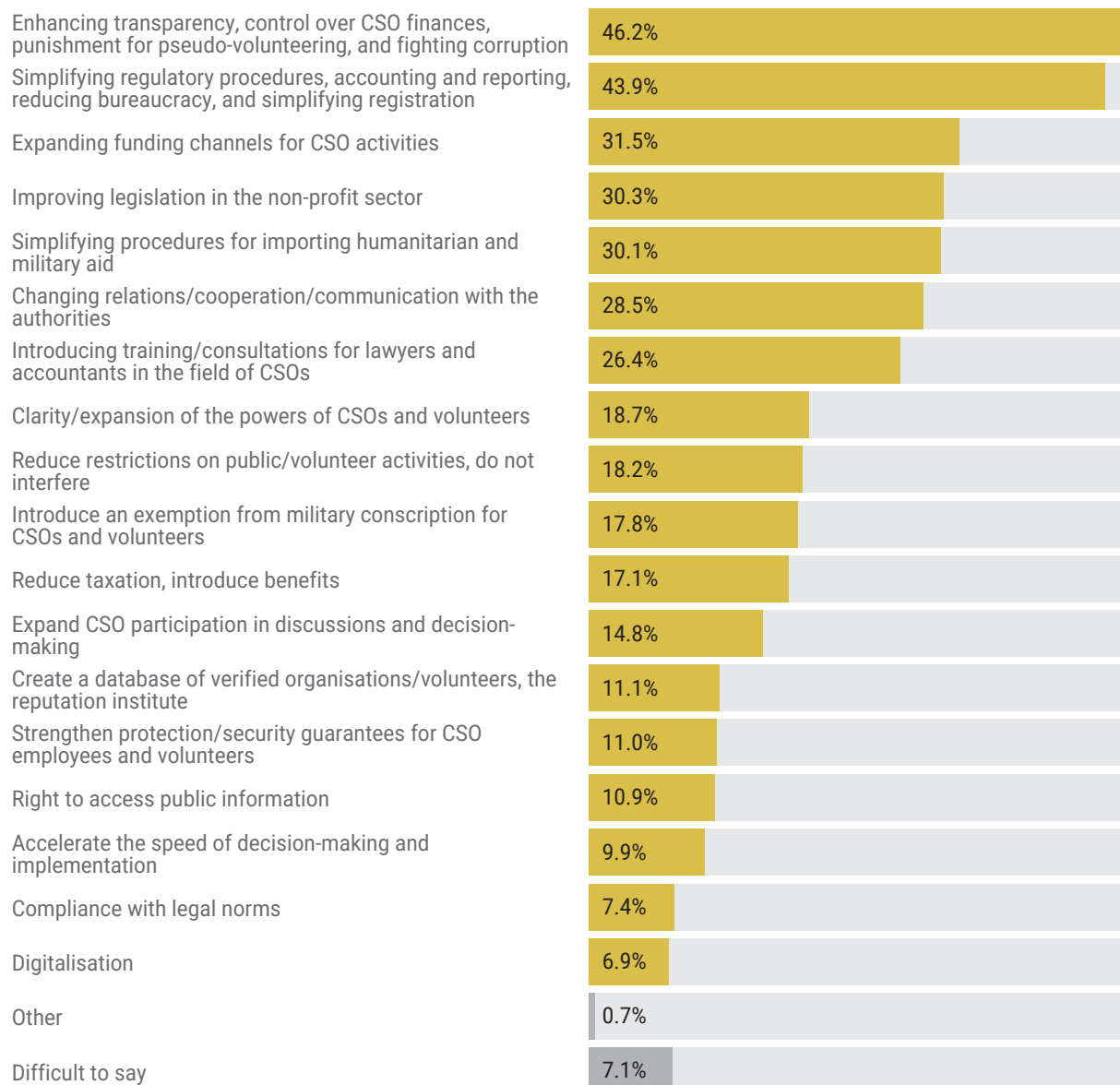
Question: How much do you agree with the following statements? Please rate them on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "I completely disagree" and 5 means "I completely agree."

According to respondents, the most necessary changes in the legal regulation of CSOs in wartime are increasing transparency, control over CSO finances, punishment for pseudo-volunteering and combating corruption (46.2%), and simplification of regulatory procedures, accounting and reporting, and reduction of bureaucracy (43.9%). Other common requests relate to expanding the ways of financing CSO activities (31.5%), improving legislation in the non-profit sector (30.3%), simplifying the import of humanitarian and military aid (30.1%), changing relations with the authorities (28.5%), and training for lawyers and accountants in the NGO sector (26.4%).



## Necessary changes in the legal regulation of CSOs' work in wartime

% of CSO respondents, multiple choice



Question: What changes should be implemented first in the legal regulation of civil society organisations during wartime? Please select no more than 7 answers.



Respondents to in-depth interviews explain the nature of the most pressing legal problems for CSOs, the issue of taxation of volunteer meetings:

**“...there is always this spectre of taxation hanging over us. I think it would be difficult to find anyone who is even remotely public and has never organised a meeting. There is always some kind of fuss about declaring donations and paying tax on them. It’s always there... some changes in legislation create a tense atmosphere, and people who are not officially registered as volunteers start to avoid larger meetings. For example, I stopped collecting large amounts for my banks because at some point, I am afraid that I will start receiving limits or taxes that I am not prepared to pay.”**

CSOs involved in the import of humanitarian aid are concerned about possible inspections of their activities during the period when this issue was not clearly regulated and when they were engaged in attracting humanitarian aid for the benefit of the community at their own risk:

**“...there have already been cases of organisations actively attracting aid from abroad, and they have already been inspected. So, in my opinion, this is one of the threats that civil society organisations may face when someone somewhere starts, well, someone will start. Some organisations have already experienced this, raising questions such as, ‘What did you bring in? Where did you put everything you brought in? We know that there have been negative experiences with the receipt and transport of humanitarian aid to Ukraine by unscrupulous organisations. Still, some organisations really did carry out such missions and even met the specific needs of a city or community. Through their letters and channels, they attracted this aid to themselves, as if they had officially taken responsibility for it. And now they are starting to take credit from the authorities, because someone has come with inspections and is looking at who did what and where.”**

Another problem may be the ban on currency transactions, currency transfers or remittances abroad by civil society organisations, which limits their ability to obtain services or place orders outside the country. Some respondents also encountered difficulties with banking services due to the unlawful application by banks of requirements to indicate the ultimate beneficial owners of the organisation:

**“...after martial law, public organisations must hypothetically record the ultimate beneficial owners, which, in essence, cannot exist in a public organisation. And after martial law, when this becomes mandatory, it may lead to certain problems. This is probably quite strict financial regulation on the part of the National Bank of Ukraine and, accordingly, other banks, especially considering that each bank interprets the NBU’s instructions in its own way, sometimes introducing overly strict requirements unjustified by law. For example, we had a situation where the bank forced us to block our funds and identify the ultimate beneficial owners. I showed them documents stating that we did not have them and were not required to identify them then. Only a letter, or rather a threat to write a letter to the NBU, led to our funds being unblocked.”**





Some difficulties arise at the stage of registering public organisations due to inconsistencies in the decisions of different authorities or at the stage of introducing changes to registration data:

**“And at this stage, even if the same charter has already been registered and everything has gone well with the tax and justice authorities, another justice or tax authority may not let it pass. Or they may say that certain changes need to be made. So, I would synchronise this somehow so that it is also done in a more centralised way.”**

**“We often talk about how good it would be to register a public organisation online, but registering changes online is impossible in Ukraine. Are there many risks involved? Of course, there are. Personal data, certain incorrect data, etc. But this situation exists, and it is complicated. It is even difficult to access information about your organisation. For example, as a manager and signatory, I cannot access our organisation in the Ministry of Justice. And if, for example, we lost information, I don’t know if a hacker broke into our office, or a cyberattack or something, we would never find out what exists in the Ministry of Justice.”**

Although reporting and control are burdensome and cause concern for many CSOs, some respondents emphasise that transparency and accountability are in the interests of reputable civil society organisations and that state auditing should therefore be strengthened:

**“There should also be some control over CSOs. Secondly, I would conduct more thorough audits of CSOs’ activities... I know some civil society organisations do not operate entirely lawfully, which discredits our sector. I believe this is wrong, and the state should exercise a certain supervisory function. So, I would still talk more about certain monitoring and auditing, about some kind of reporting, not just once a year, but something more like... I don’t know — once a quarter, for example.”**



## 10. Adaptation of CSOs to working in wartime

### 10.1. Problems and needs of CSOs as of 2024: review of literature and existing research

According to the results of the study “**Civil Society in Ukraine in the Context of War**,”<sup>89</sup> as of 2023, the main problems of CSOs were related to financial and material security, as well as personnel. Financial difficulties affected not only project activities, but also administrative costs (maintaining the organisation between projects, organisational development, purchasing equipment, paying for office space, etc.). Less experienced and capable organisations also had difficulties in financing their activities, due to a lack of fundraising skills and an undeveloped reputation. Staffing problems included a lack of qualified employees due to relocation, mobilisation, staff moving to better-paid positions in international organisations, a lack of skills, problems with organising education for employees’ children, and staff burnout. Security issues, insufficient interaction and coordination with authorities, local self-government, and donors/grantors were also frequently mentioned.

**Later studies in 2024 continue to focus on the same challenges**, indicating their long-term nature and the lack of conditions and opportunities for a quick solution to these problems.

For example, the report “**CSO Barometer 2024**”<sup>90</sup> identifies the main challenges as ensuring (financial) sustainability, shortage of specialists to work in the civil society sector, and sufficient consistency and coordination in CSO interaction with authorities.

<sup>89</sup> KIIS. Civil Society in Ukraine in the Context of War. February 2024. [https://ednannia.ua/images/Procurements/%D0%93%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B5\\_%D1%81%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE\\_%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D0%B8\\_%D0%B2\\_%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%85\\_%D0%B2%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%B8\\_%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82\\_%D0%B7\\_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE\\_%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE\\_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F.pdf](https://ednannia.ua/images/Procurements/%D0%93%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%8F%D0%BD%D1%81%D1%8C%D0%BA%D0%B5_%D1%81%D1%83%D1%81%D0%BF%D1%96%D0%BB%D1%8C%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE_%D0%A3%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%97%D0%BD%D0%B8_%D0%B2_%D1%83%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%85_%D0%B2%D1%96%D0%B9%D0%BD%D0%B8_%D0%B7%D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82_%D0%B7_%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%86%D1%96%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE_%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%96%D0%B4%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D1%8F.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Maria Krasnenko. CSO Barometer 2024: Ukraine. A roadmap for a favourable environment and empowerment. — 2024. [https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024\\_UKR.pdf](https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/03/11/CSO%20Meter%20Ukraine%202024_UKR.pdf)



In the CEDEM study **“Security needs of CSOs, activists, volunteers and human rights defenders in 2024,”**<sup>91</sup> in which 63 representatives of various types of organisations and areas of activity, mainly human rights, took part, the majority of respondents were concerned about physical, mental, digital and legal security issues. Physical security has been the biggest problem for three years in a row. Among the physical threats, respondents cited general risks associated with the war in Ukraine; lack of adequate protection infrastructure; dangers when travelling to de-occupied territories; threats from representatives of the authorities and right-wing radical movements; and risks associated with landmines. Threats to mental security include professional burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, depression, exhaustion and fatigue. Overall,

**“CSOs need multifaceted support to strengthen their resilience, including access to knowledge and funding, training on various aspects of security, crisis planning and security audits. The development of security policies and procedures is also an urgent need for many organisations. There is significant demand for additional security training among CSOs, particularly digital security, first aid, mental health and legal security.”**

According to the results of a survey of CSOs in **the “Charity Sector Study,”**<sup>92</sup> CSOs rate the psycho-emotional state of their staff, as well as the regulatory framework and interaction with regulatory authorities, as the best areas: almost half (44–45%) indicated that the situation in these areas is good, approximately the same number (44–47%) called it satisfactory, and about 8–9% gave an “unsatisfactory” rating. Organisational capacity received 33% of “good” ratings, 51% “satisfactory,” and 15% “unsatisfactory,” while staffing received 30%, 44% and 23% respectively. CSOs rate their financial stability the worst: only 16% say that it is good, 38% say that it is satisfactory, and 42% say that it is unsatisfactory.

In addition to various problems with funding, staffing and physical security, participants in the qualitative component **of the “Charity Sector Survey”** also mentioned the threat of tax audits due to humanitarian aid or assistance provided to the military, the inability to operate within the framework of current legislation; expectations that too close cooperation with state bodies could lead to absorption, loss of identity and autonomy, or corruption risks; lack of public relations and networking.

<sup>91</sup> Centre for Democracy and Rule of Law. Security needs of CSOs, activists, volunteers, and human rights defenders in 2024. — 2024. <https://cedem.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bezpekovi-potreby-zvit.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> Zagoriy Foundation, Giving Tuesday. Comprehensive report “Research on the Charitable Sector.” — 2024. [https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02\\_12\\_2\\_doslidzhennya\\_sektoru\\_blagodijnosti.pdf](https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02_12_2_doslidzhennya_sektoru_blagodijnosti.pdf)



Overall resilience and capacity, according to CSO representatives, tend to be deteriorating:

“A significant proportion of NGOs report a deterioration in the situation of organisations since 2022. There is no aspect of activity where the proportion of positive assessments (“improved”) exceeds the proportion of negative assessments (“deteriorated”). For example, despite positive assessments of the psychological and emotional state of the team, almost half of NGOs (48%) say that the state of the team has deteriorated. A significant deterioration is also noted in financial stability, with 44% reporting a deterioration in this area. A parity of positive and negative assessments of dynamics is observed only in such aspects as organisational capacity and interaction with control bodies. Organisational capacity is the only aspect where a significant proportion of NGOs reported an improvement in the situation (24%).”

On the other hand, the difficulties and challenges of wartime have forced the public sector to adapt and improve. Some of the CSOs that participated in one study or another report that they have “adapted to the challenges, strengthened their capacity, grown, and achieved good results,”<sup>93</sup> “became more active, tried to attract more human and financial resources, and scale up their activities,”<sup>94</sup> which was facilitated in particular by cooperation with foreign donors and the need to adapt to their requirements for transparency and accountability. However, the report “**Challenges and Needs of the Ukrainian Non-Profit Sector**” also notes that:

“Some regional organisations note that, more recently, the pace of organisational growth has gradually slowed. The main factors behind this process are staff turnover, reduced funding, and the scaling back of crisis response projects (and a return to their original activities).”<sup>95</sup>

The main requests of CSOs have also remained unchanged since 2022. When talking about the needs of CSOs, participants in the study “**Challenges and Needs of the Ukrainian Non-Profit Sector**” mentioned grants for institutional development (resources for administrative and operational expenses, primarily for competitive salaries), the availability of human resources, training and information support, including networking and exchange of experience.

93 Zagoriy Foundation, *Giving Tuesday*. Comprehensive report “Research on the Charitable Sector”. — 2024. [https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02\\_12\\_2\\_doslidzhennya\\_sektoru\\_blagodijnosti.pdf](https://zagoriy.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/02_12_2_doslidzhennya_sektoru_blagodijnosti.pdf)

94 *Philanthropy in Ukraine*. Challenges and needs of the Ukrainian non-profit sector. — 2024. <https://api.philanthropyinukraine.org/upload/publication/1-67153392545d3111398496.pdf>

95 *Philanthropy in Ukraine*. Challenges and needs of the Ukrainian non-profit sector. — 2024. <https://api.philanthropyinukraine.org/upload/publication/1-67153392545d3111398496.pdf>



## 10.2. Results of the quantitative study

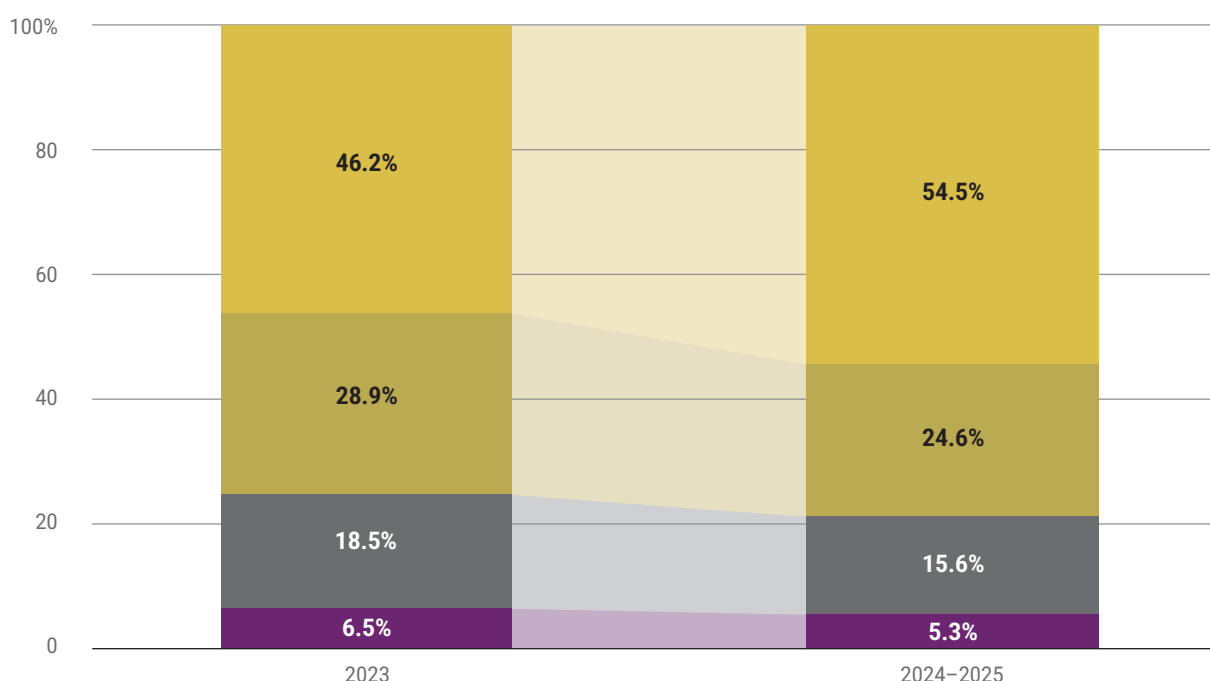
Self-assessment of organisational readiness to work in wartime shows moderate but clear progress. In 2023, almost half of the organisations surveyed (46.2%) rated themselves “5 – fully adapted.” Over the following period, this figure rose to 54.5%, an increase of 8.3 percentage points. At the same time, the share of respondents who reported a high but not maximum level (“4”) decreased from 28.9% to 24.6%. The share of average ratings (“3”) also decreased, from 18.5% to 15.6%. The lowest scores (“1” or “2”), indicating no or minimal adaptation, were recorded in only 5.3% of organisations (6.5% in the previous wave). There are no fundamental differences in the level of adaptation among CSO groups based on the geographical scope of their activities (local, regional, national, international).

Of course, when interpreting these data, one must consider the statistical phenomenon of “survivor bias” – those CSOs that failed to adapt may have ceased operations and were not included in the study. Therefore, these conclusions can only be applied to CSOs that continue to be active.

### Self-assessment of the level of adaptation of CSOs to working in wartime conditions

% of CSO respondents

■ 5 – Fully adapted ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 1 / 2 – Not adapted at all, or rather not adapted



Question: Please rate on a 5-point scale the level of adaptation of your NGO/CO to working in wartime conditions in 2024–2025, where 1 means not adapted at all and 5 means fully adapted.



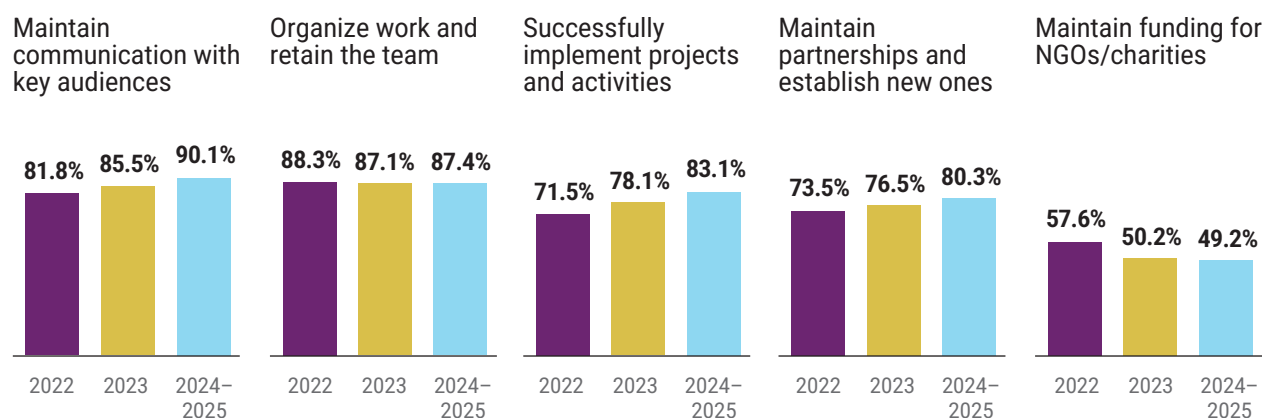
A comparison of the three waves of the survey shows a gradual improvement of most internal processes in public and charitable organisations. Still, at the same time, it confirms growing financial risks. The most significant progress was recorded in external communication: the share of respondents who believe that they have “rather” or “completely” succeeded in maintaining contact with key audiences increased from 81.8% in 2022 to 90.1% in 2024–2025. Similarly, the indicators for successful project implementation and activities improved: 71.5%, 78.1%, and 83.1% in 2022, 2023, and 2024–2025, respectively, as well as for maintaining and expanding partnerships (73.5%, 76.5%, and 80.3%). This indicates a build-up of operational capacity even in an unstable environment.

Work organisation and team retention remain stable: after peaking at 88.3% in 2022, the indicator fluctuates slightly and remains close to 87% in the following two periods. However, as demonstrated in other chapters of this report, staffing issues may become a pressing concern for CSOs soon.

The only parameter with negative dynamics is the preservation of funding. The share of organisations that managed to maintain their resource base decreased from 57.6% in 2022 to 49.2% in 2024–2025. This means that approximately every second organisation is experiencing financial pressure despite improvements in other areas of activity.

## Ensuring sustainability in wartime conditions according to specific parameters

% of CSO respondents who answered “somewhat successful” or “completely successful”



Question: Has your organisation been able to maintain consistency in the following areas while adapting to working conditions during wartime in 2024–2025 compared to 2023?

As for the prevalence of difficulties in CSO activities, the picture has remained almost unchanged since 2022: about a quarter of CSOs/COs report fairly frequent or constant challenges (2022 – 26.4%; 2023 – 24.3%; 2025 – 23.8%), and almost half report occasional problems (2022 – 41.0%; 2023 – 47.3%; 2025 – 46.1%), while the share of those who had no difficulties at all decreased from 32.6% (2022) to 28.4% (2023) and partially recovered to 30.1% (2025). In the 2025 survey, these assessments did not depend on the geographical scope of CSO activities, i.e., local, regional, national, and international organisations gave approximately the same answers to questions about difficulties in their activities.



Among those CSOs that encountered difficulties, the ability to successfully overcome them is increasing: the proportion of cases where “it was rather or completely unsuccessful” decreased from 29.4% (2022) to 27.3% (2023) and 23.2% (2025); on the other hand, the proportion of “yes, completely” responses increased from 30.1% to 33.7% and 34.2%, while “usually, yes” remained at a high level with an increase in 2025 (40.5%; 39.0%; 42.6%).

Thus, we can see that the share of CSOs that have experienced frequent or constant difficulties in carrying out their activities over the past three years has at least not increased, while the share of those that have experienced problems but can overcome them has increased.

In 2024–2025, financial stability became the main challenge for public and charitable organisations that have faced difficulties: 64.8% of respondents reported a lack of resources, which is six points more than a year earlier and 13 points more than in 2022. Against this backdrop, other challenges either remained unchanged or gradually eased.

Problems related to infrastructure – office accessibility, electricity supply and internet – continue to lose relevance: their share decreased from 43.1% in 2022 to 20.4% in 2024–2025. A similar trend can be observed regarding technical equipment: 27.7% in 2022–2023 and 21.6% this year.

The issue of internal process organisation is also gradually receding into the background: in 2022, it was mentioned by 25.9% of CSOs, in 2023 – 20.2%, and in 2024 – only 10.0%. Similarly, the share of respondents reporting unemployment is decreasing (14.4%, 13.4%, and 6.8%, respectively).

The physical safety of the team and property remains a moderately stable risk (30.1% in 2022, 20.5% in 2023, 21.8% in 2024). After a slight increase in 2023 (34.3%), the difficulty indicator “team status” has returned to below 30% (27.9%).

Among the newer or specific challenges for 2024–2025, poor communication with the authorities stands out (25.0%) – this alternative was not included in the questionnaires of previous waves.

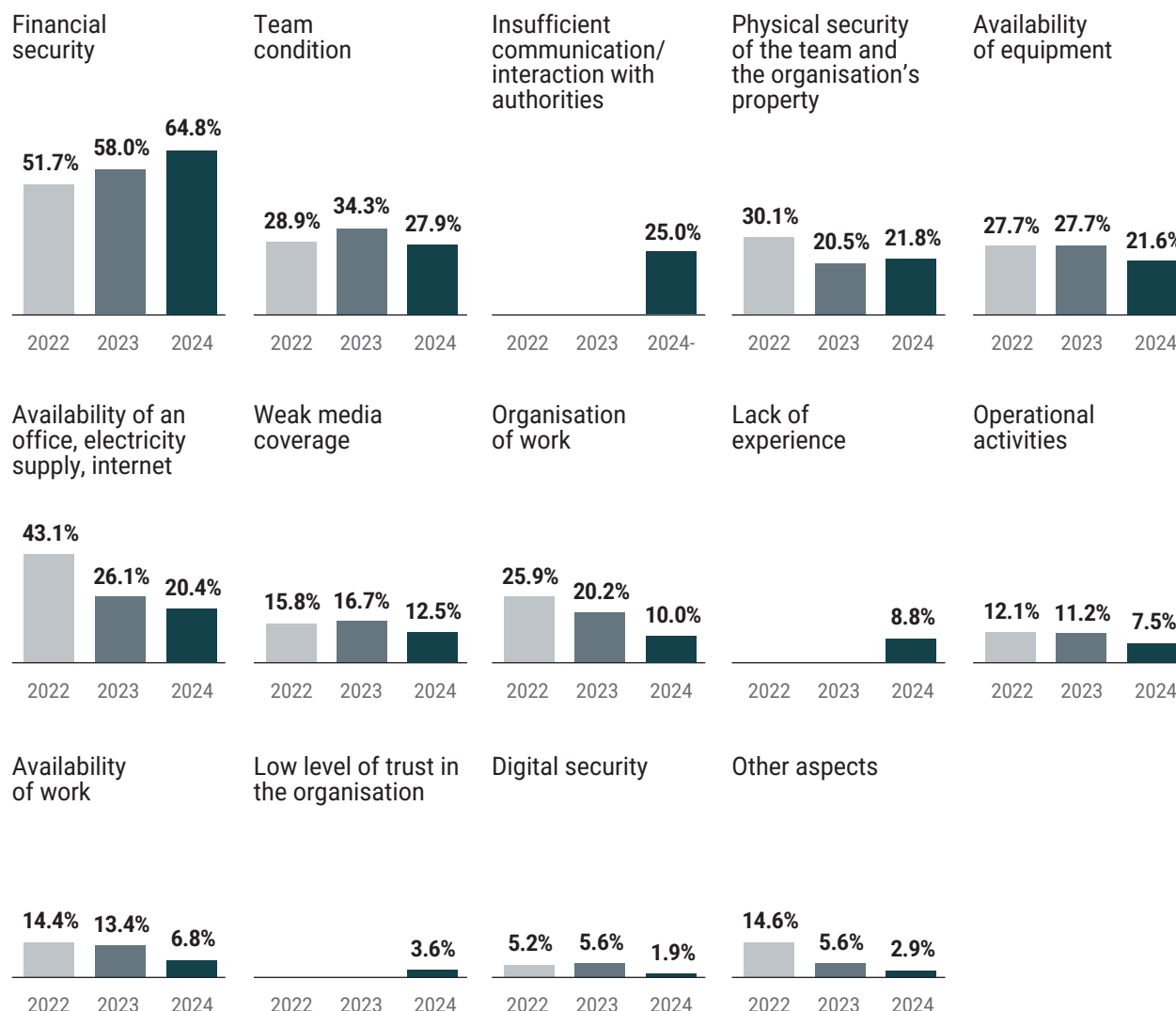
The remaining challenges – digital security and low trust – remain below 8% and show a downward trend.

Thus, over the past three years, we have seen a clear shift in the focus of problems: infrastructure and organisational barriers have decreased significantly, while financial security has become the most critical issue requiring urgent attention from donors and partners.



## Difficulties faced by CSOs in implementing their activities

Percentage of CSO respondents who indicated that they “sometimes,” “quite often,” or “constantly” encountered difficulties



Question: Please briefly describe the specific difficulties your NGO/CO faced in 2024. Select no more than 5 answers.

The survey shows that in 2024–2025, the most pressing adaptation challenges for CSOs will remain those directly related to the war: 22.7% of organisations identified these as their main challenges. In second place is financial insecurity: 18.3% of respondents reported a loss of donor support or the need to seek new sources of funding. Another 10.7% identified interaction with government authorities as the main problem, and 9.7% cited the search for effective formats for cooperation with partners.

Team safety ranked fifth (8.7%), emphasising that staff protection remains an issue, albeit less pressing than financial and institutional challenges. Internal organisation of work (5.6%) and staff reductions (4.6%) are of concern to a smaller but significant proportion of CSOs; the same proportion (4.6%) is looking for better ways to communicate with target groups.

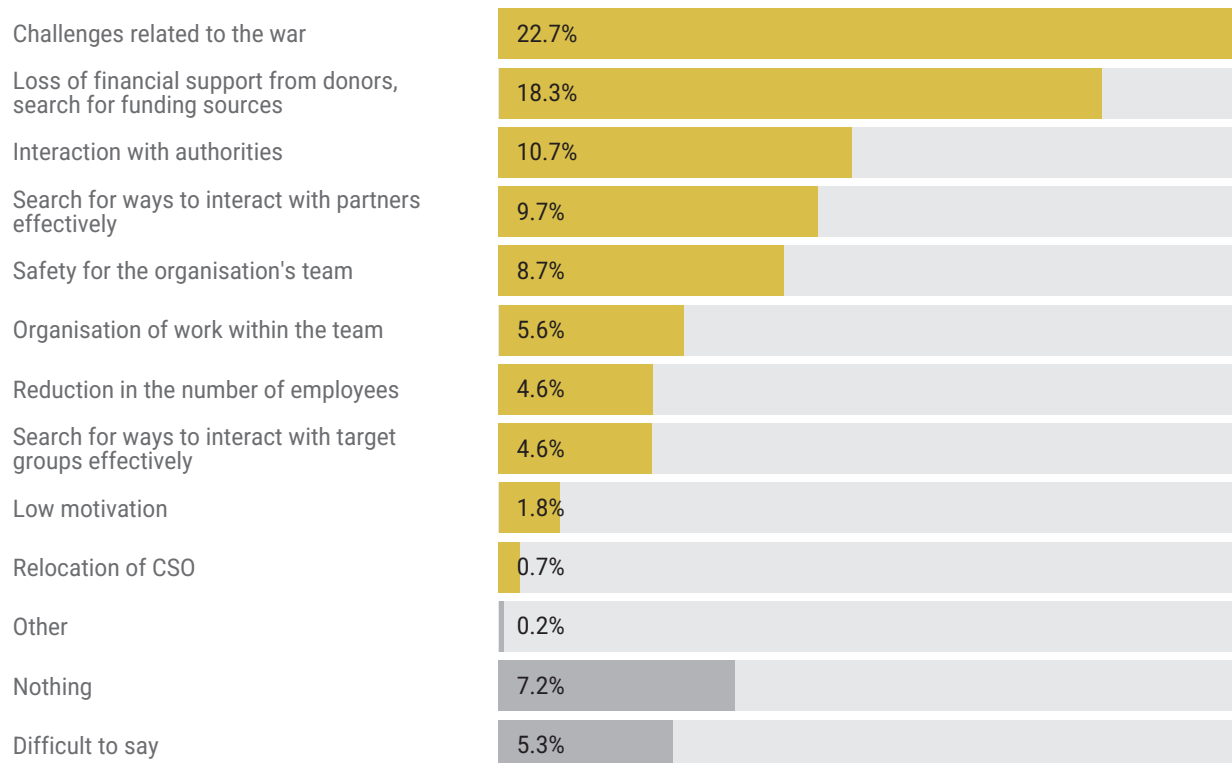
Only 1.8% of participants mentioned low motivation as a key barrier, and 0.7% mentioned relocation. At the same time, 7.2% responded that they did not feel any critical challenges.





## The main challenge of adapting CSOs to working conditions during the war in 2024–2025

% of CSO respondents



Question: What was the main challenge in adapting to working conditions during the war in 2024–2025?

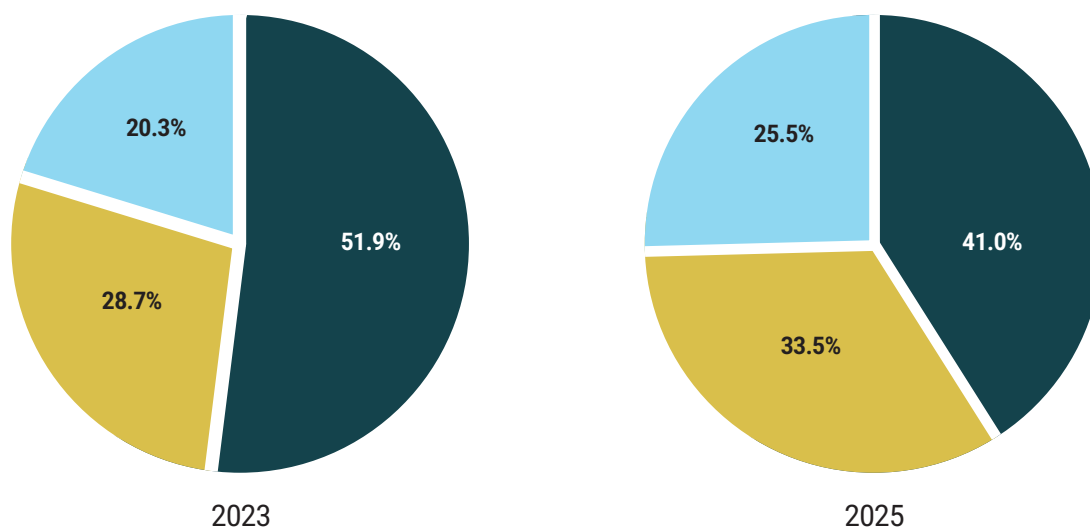
The data show that, compared to the previous wave, there has been a noticeable reorientation of CSO priorities. While in 2023 more than half of respondents (51.9%) combined pre-war areas of activity with new tasks, in 2025 this share decreased to 41%. At the same time, the popularity of two other strategies has gained ground: 33.5% of organisations now remain mainly in their usual areas of activity, compared to 27.8% previously, while another 25.5% have focused entirely on challenges arising from the war (up from 20.3%). Thus, the sector is gradually moving away from a “hybrid” model, in which old and new tasks were combined, and towards clearer specialisation. Some organisations are returning to pre-war issues, while others are deepening their work in new military areas.



## Current focus of CSO activities

% of CSO respondents

- Combines pre-war priorities with new areas of focus
- Continues work in traditional areas
- Focuses on new challenges



Question: Currently, your organisation primarily...?

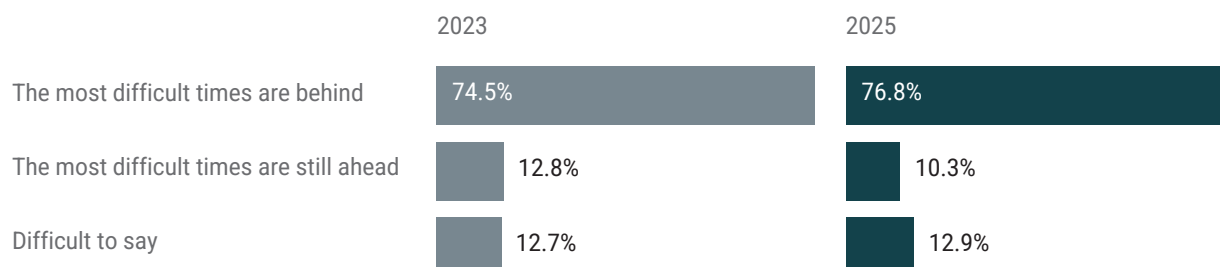
The current focus varies depending on the type of CSO – local, regional, national, etc. Nationwide CSOs tend to focus more on new challenges of war (31.5%), while local CSOs concentrate on this issue the least (22.7%).

Optimism in the civil society sector remains limited. In 2023, almost three-quarters of the organisations surveyed (74.5%) believed that the most difficult times were still ahead; in the 2025 survey, this share rose to 76.8%. At the same time, the share of those who believe that the most challenging times are behind us has decreased from 12.8% to 10.3%. The share of respondents who could not decide remained virtually unchanged (around 13% in each wave). Thus, the overall expectation of difficulties has increased, while confidence that “the most difficult times are still ahead” is weakening slightly, and the level of uncertainty remains stable.



## Views on the future of Ukraine's civil society sector

% of CSO respondents



Question: Overall, do you think that the most difficult times for Ukraine's civil society sector are behind us, or are the most difficult times still ahead?

The survey reflects a differentiated picture of the institutional capacity of civil society organisations. Participants rated the ability of their CSOs to **communicate with target audiences** most highly: a total of 76.7% of respondents rated their level as “very high” or “rather high,” with almost no “very low” ratings (2.2%). **Financial management and reporting** also received relatively high ratings (65.0% in the upper grades), although there is a noticeable segment of critical self-assessments: 10.1% of organisations recognise their capacity in this area as “very low.”

The management competencies block shows relative balance. Human **resource management** and **flexibility/crisis management** received over 70% of high scores, with the share of minimum ratings not exceeding 4%. **Partnership building** has a similar distribution but a slightly wider range of low scores (5.2% “very low” level).

The situation with **project management** is more ambiguous: only 53.4% of respondents rated themselves as highly capable in this area, while almost 18.6% gave a rating of “2” or “1.” There is even less confidence in **advocacy capacity**: only 44.6% of ratings were in the top categories, while the share of “very low” ratings reached 17.9%. A similar profile was observed for **monitoring and evaluation** competencies, where one-third of organisations remained in the middle range (“3”), and a total of 17% reported low or very low capacity.

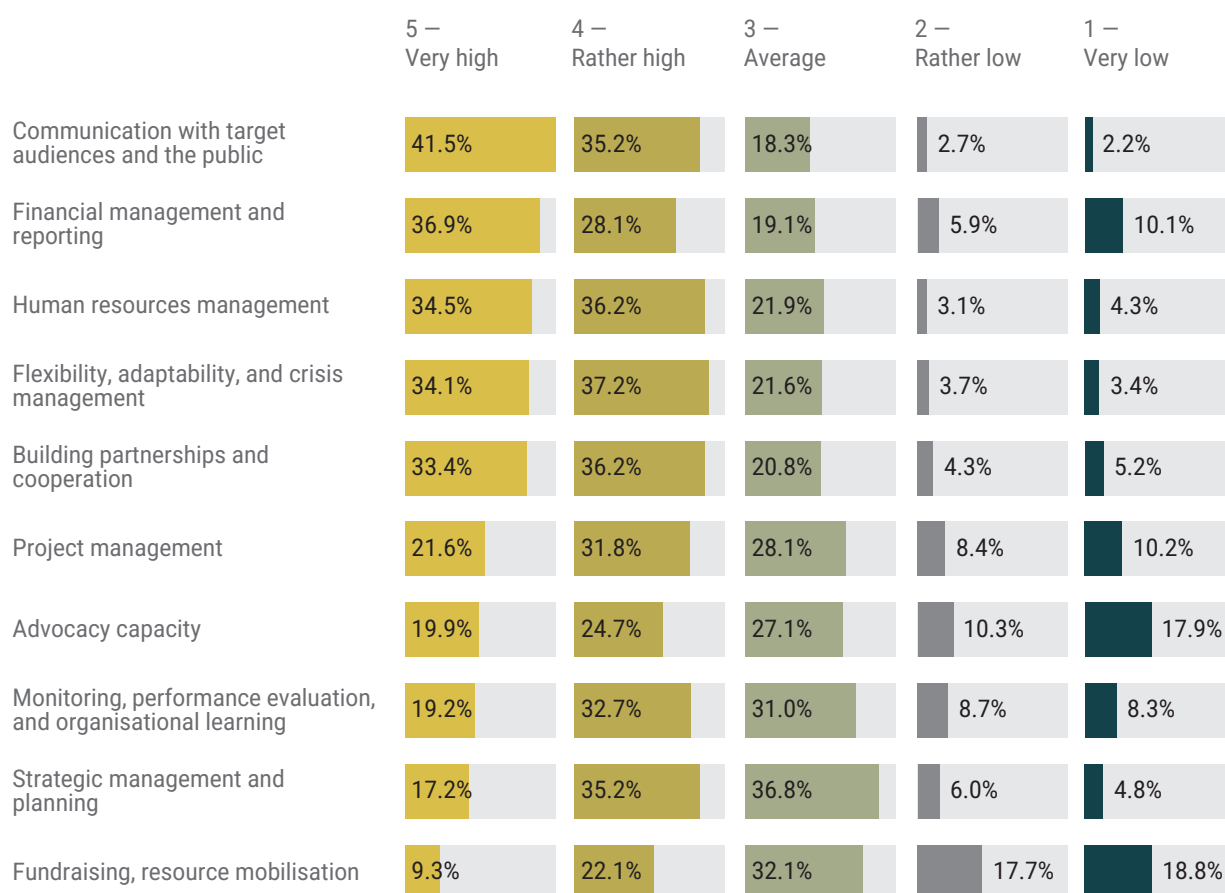
Respondents identified **fundraising** as the most vulnerable skill area. Only 31.4% rated it highly, while 36.5% rated it very low or relatively low. In other words, finding and attracting resources remains a systemic weakness, potentially exacerbating the sense of financial instability observed in different parts of the study.

Overall, the data shows that communication, financial accounting and human resource management are already close to maturity. In contrast, project management, monitoring and fundraising skills require additional investment in training and development.



## Self-assessment of the level of institutional capacity of CSOs

% of all CSOs



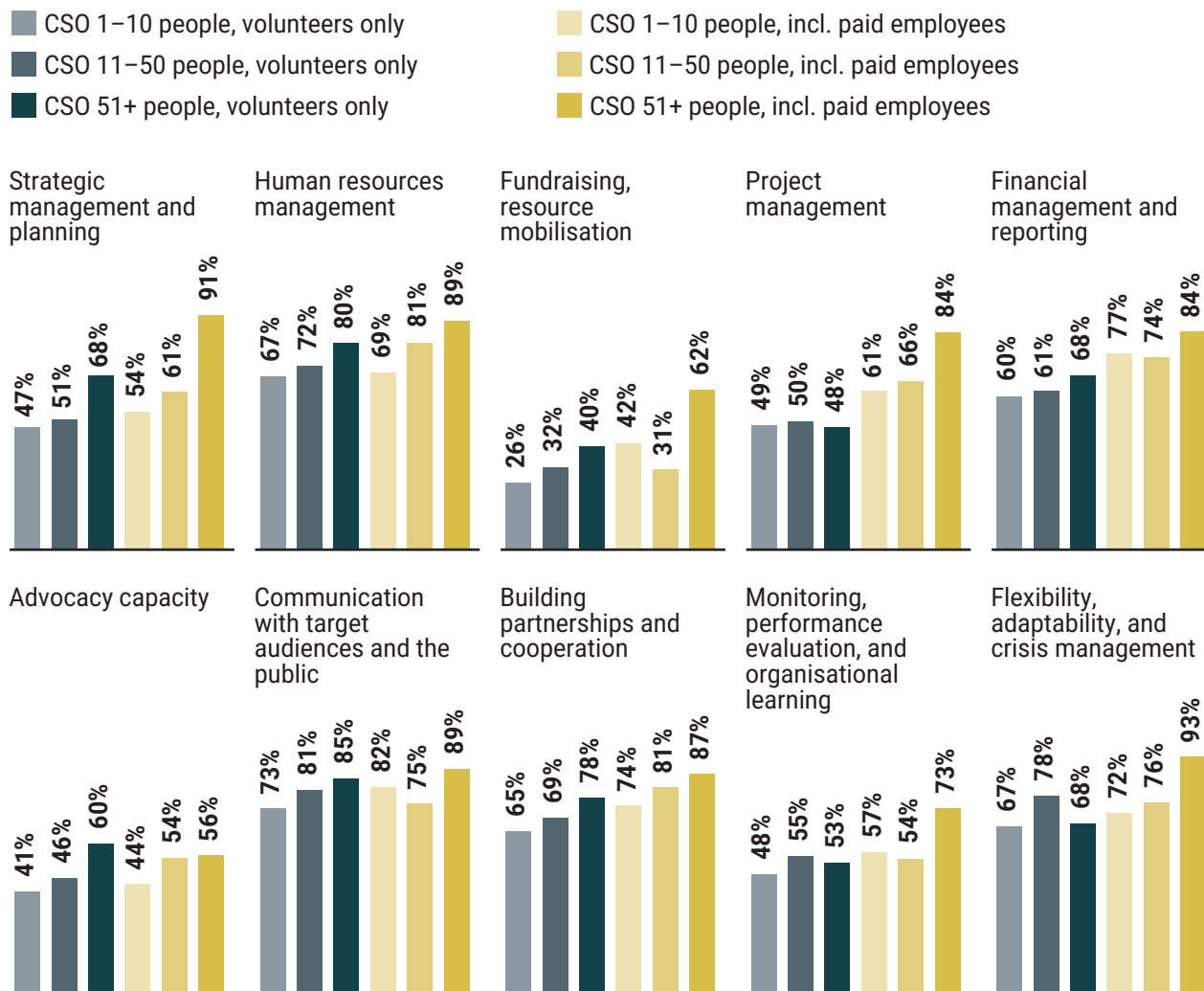
Question: Please rate your organisation's institutional capacity on a 5-point scale for each of the following areas, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high.

The larger the organisation and the more paid employees it has, the higher the self-assessment of capacity in virtually all areas. The group of "51+ employees, including paid staff" leads in financial management (84%), project management (84%), flexibility (93%) and fundraising (62%). Small teams consisting only of volunteers (1–10 people) rank last, especially in fundraising (26%) and strategic planning (47%). Having at least a minimal staff significantly improves performance even in small CSOs: for example, "1–10 people, including paid staff" scored 61% compared to 54% for volunteer-based organisations in strategic planning. Thus, full-time staff and the size of the organisation remain key factors in institutional capacity.



## Self-assessment of the level of institutional capacity of CSOs by type of organisation

% of all CSOs who answered “very high” or “rather high”



Question: Please rate your organisation’s institutional capacity on a 5-point scale for each of the following areas, where 1 is very low and 5 is very high.

Regarding the geographical scope of CSO activities, the pattern is as follows: the broader the geographical scope of CSO work, the higher the self-assessment of key organisational capacities. In international and national organisations, the share of “very high” ratings is significantly higher than in local ones: in particular, in flexibility and crisis management (local 26.6% vs. 42.2–48.4% in national/international ones), strategic management (12.9% vs. 19.1–34.1%), advocacy capacity (16.0% vs. 24.7–29.4%), project management (15.6% vs. 25.4–29.4%), financial management (32.6% vs. 38.2–47.6%), and human resources management (32.6% vs. 33.8–44.4%). In building partnerships, local organisations also lag in self-assessment (28.0% “very high” vs. 34.3–41.3%). At the same time, there are no significant geographical differences in communications with the target audience: all groups rate their own capacity highly.



For most organisations, external interaction remains a priority area for development: 38.6% of respondents primarily seek to strengthen partnerships and international cooperation. Fundraising (34.2%) ranks second, consistent with the sector's dominant financial challenge. The third set of priorities is focused on human resources: psychological support for the team (25.9%) and staff training (25.2%). Slightly less, but still significant attention is paid to strategic planning (18.7%) and improving communication strategy (15.5%). Strengthening advocacy capacity (12.7%) and improving financial management (11.3%) are in the "medium" zone of importance, while updating the organisational structure (7.7%) and developing monitoring and evaluation systems (5.9%) are still considered priorities by only a few organisations. Thus, CSOs are primarily seeking external resources and support, while recognising the need to strengthen their internal teams and long-term strategic management.

## The most important areas of development for CSOs

% of CSO respondents



Question: Which areas of development are the highest priority for your organisation to ensure smooth operation and improve service quality?

The size of the organisation and the number of full-time staff significantly influence the setting of development priorities. External interaction remains the most critical factor in all segments: more than a third of respondents in each group seek to strengthen partnerships and expand international cooperation, with the highest percentage among volunteer teams of 11–50 people (46%).

For organisations with full-time staff, the issue of resource mobilisation is particularly acute: in the smallest ones (up to ten people), fundraising is mentioned in almost half of the responses (45%), while in large professional teams, this figure remains at 36%.



In large teams, regardless of whether they are volunteer or full-time, staff care is becoming increasingly important: psychological support is mentioned by about a third of respondents. There is also growing interest in systematic staff training: among organisations with more than 50 paid employees, one in three (38%) indicate competence development as a priority, while in large volunteer organisations, only one in five do so.

Internal management issues — strategic planning, improving financial procedures, restructuring and establishing monitoring — are becoming important mainly in organisations with a stable staff. Such teams typically lag their volunteer counterparts by about twofold. For example, improving financial management is of interest to one-third of large staffed CSOs, but only about 12% of the smallest volunteer groups.

As a result, volunteer organisations focus on expanding their network of contacts and supporting people. At the same time, professional teams work in parallel to attract resources, develop their team and strengthen internal management systems.

## The most priority areas of development for CSOs by type of organisation

% of CSO respondents



Question: Which areas of development are the highest priority for your organisation to ensure smooth operation and improve service quality?



Some participants in in-depth interviews believe that 2023–2024 will mark the final transition for the civil sector from the “sprint” of the first months of full-scale war to long-term “marathon” resilience. One respondent put it this way:

**“And since we are entering a long war with no end date in sight, the most important thing that has happened to civil society over the past year is the shift from a sprint to a marathon for organisations, essentially a transition to a mode of sustainability.”**

Financial pressure has been a catalyst for internal change. Many interviewees noted a sharp decline in grant revenues and the need to cut non-core expenses while diversifying funding.

**“As an organisation, we’ve had to tighten our belts. That is, let’s say, when you reach a critical point, you start to look more intensively for ways to resolve the situation, and some other ways of thinking come into play, and you start to think about it; that is, we understand that we have lost a third/half/quarter of our funding, support, etc. So, you either must optimise your structure and eliminate the excess or go straight to downsizing. Or switch to other forms of funding, become commercial.”**

Paradoxically, some see reducing dependence on a single donor as an opportunity for greater freedom in their organisation’s work:

**“...It’s about the consequences, the positive impact of these organisations becoming more resourceful, certainly more self-sufficient in that sense, and perhaps to some extent more independent.”**

**Because we understand that funding from international organisations often dictates the rules of the game and dictates your agenda, sometimes even dictates your content, so in the absence of this funding, dependence on a single organisation, a single donor, makes you freer.”**

Almost all interviewees talk about the need for strategic diversification: no single source of funding should exceed one-third of the budget. This is particularly relevant in the context of potential cuts in external support and increased security risks, particularly in the east and south of the country.





Some organisations are finding new demands and niches for their activities that they had not previously been involved in. For example, organisations that did not previously work on civil society development are now helping establish and register local CSOs, seeing “great potential both from the people and local authorities.”

**“But we started communicating with many communities and saw a demand for institutionalisation, i.e., the creation of civil society organisations, and we are trying to support them in this direction. This is something new; we had not formerly worked to support the development of civil society in terms of institutionalisation, but now we have started to work more in this area and have begun to work in communities that are a little further from the centre. We have noticed great potential in people and demand from the local government.”**

The emphasis on caring for staff, which is also evident in the quantitative survey data, is due to the high pressure on CSO staff because of the past year’s events. Competition for resources has intensified: teams are applying for a record number of even short-term competitions, involving almost all team members in writing applications. This workload has a direct impact on people. Due to the refusal to use outsourcing services and the inability to hire additional staff, “a large part of the additional functions falls on the shoulders of others, which leads to exhaustion.” At the same time, respondents note the formation of a “new habit” of working in wartime conditions: despite the abnormal circumstances, they have become familiar with them.

**“Rather, the intensity has changed; we have started to apply for more competitions than before and even consider competitions that were previously less interesting to us because they were shorter, and we could not plan such systematic advocacy campaigns. If it is not a completely formal procedure, more team members must get involved in preparing projects and application forms.”**

**“The most significant change happened in 2022 and 2023, but in the fourth year, everyone has just settled in and formed new habits. Of course, these are abnormal working conditions, but they have become normal because people and organisations adapt to everything. So, I wouldn’t say anything has changed significantly over the last year.”**



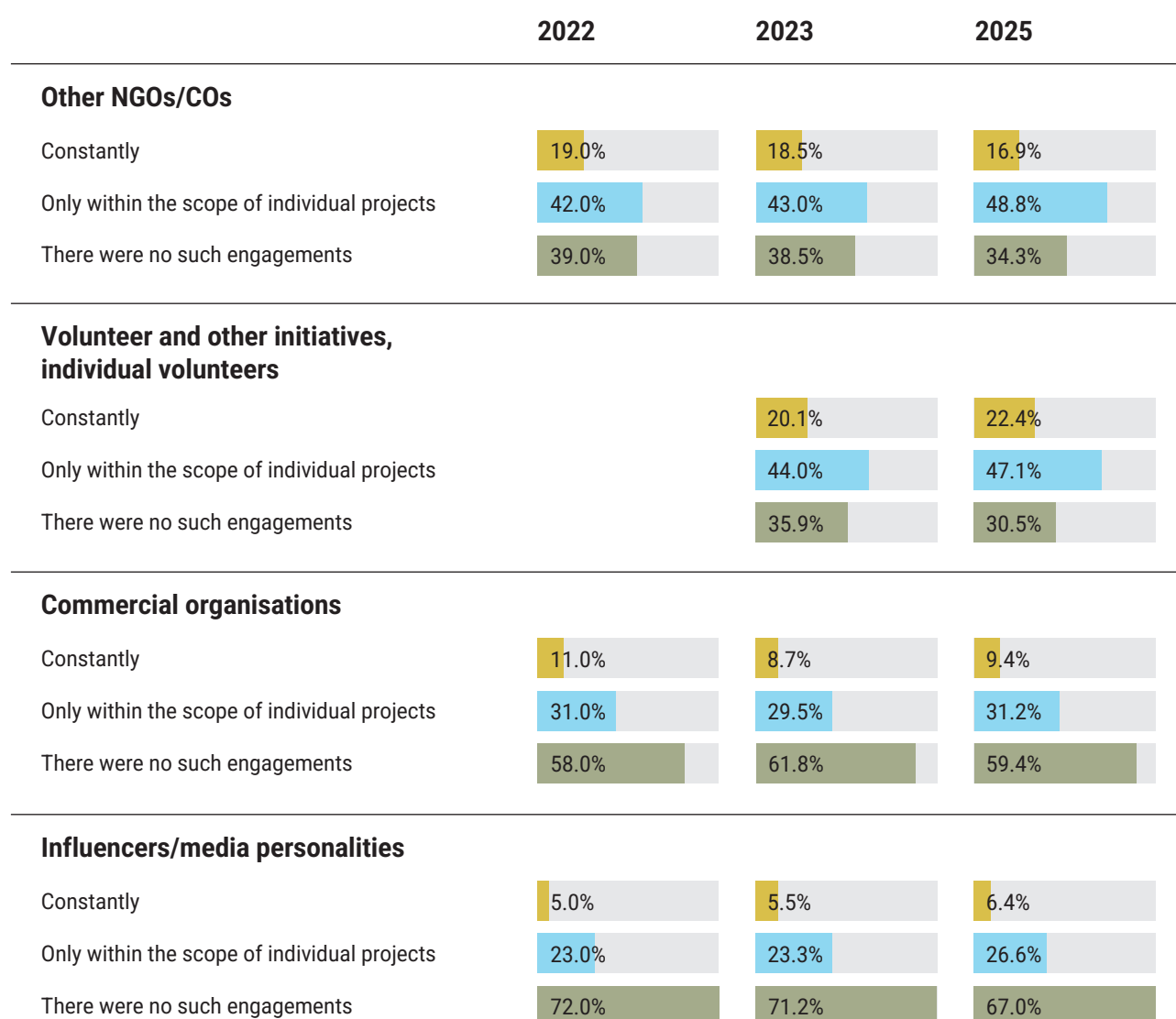
## 11. Interaction between CSOs and other actors

Over the past three years, the interactions between Ukrainian civil society and charitable organisations have remained unchanged: their partners are most often volunteer initiatives and other CSOs, while business and media figures are involved less frequently. At the same time, the overall share of participants who at least occasionally cooperate with any partner is gradually, but very slowly, increasing, primarily due to project-based rather than permanent formats. Volunteer initiatives are the sector's leading partner. In 2025, 69.5% of the organisations surveyed had contact with volunteers (22.4% permanently, 47.1% for specific projects). For comparison, in 2023, this figure was 64.1%. Over two years, the share of respondents who do not work with volunteers decreased by 5.4 percentage points (from 35.9% to 30.5%), indicating increasingly active engagement of volunteer resources. Cooperation between CSOs and CSOs remains the second most common form of cooperation: in 2025, 65.7% of respondents at least occasionally joined forces with colleagues (16.9% regularly, 48.8% on a project basis). In 2022, the overall level of interaction was lower, at 61.0%, and the share of no contacts was 39.0% compared to the current 34.3%. In other words, the network within the third sector is slowly but steadily expanding. Commercial companies remain a relatively inaccessible partner: in 2025, only 40.6% of organisations had at least some joint activities with them (9.4% – constantly, 31.2% – occasionally). This is almost the same as in 2022 (42.0% involvement). Two-thirds of the sector (59.4%) still do not engage with commercial structures, and no noticeable dynamics are observed here.

Almost a third of organisations (33.0%) cooperated with opinion leaders in 2025 (6.4% consistently, 26.6% for specific campaigns). This is 5.8 percentage points more than in 2022 (28.0%), while the share of those who do not turn to media figures at all fell from 72.0% to 67.0%. This category of partners remains the least developed, but there is a slow expansion.



## Who and how often did CSOs engage in cooperation in 2022–2025?



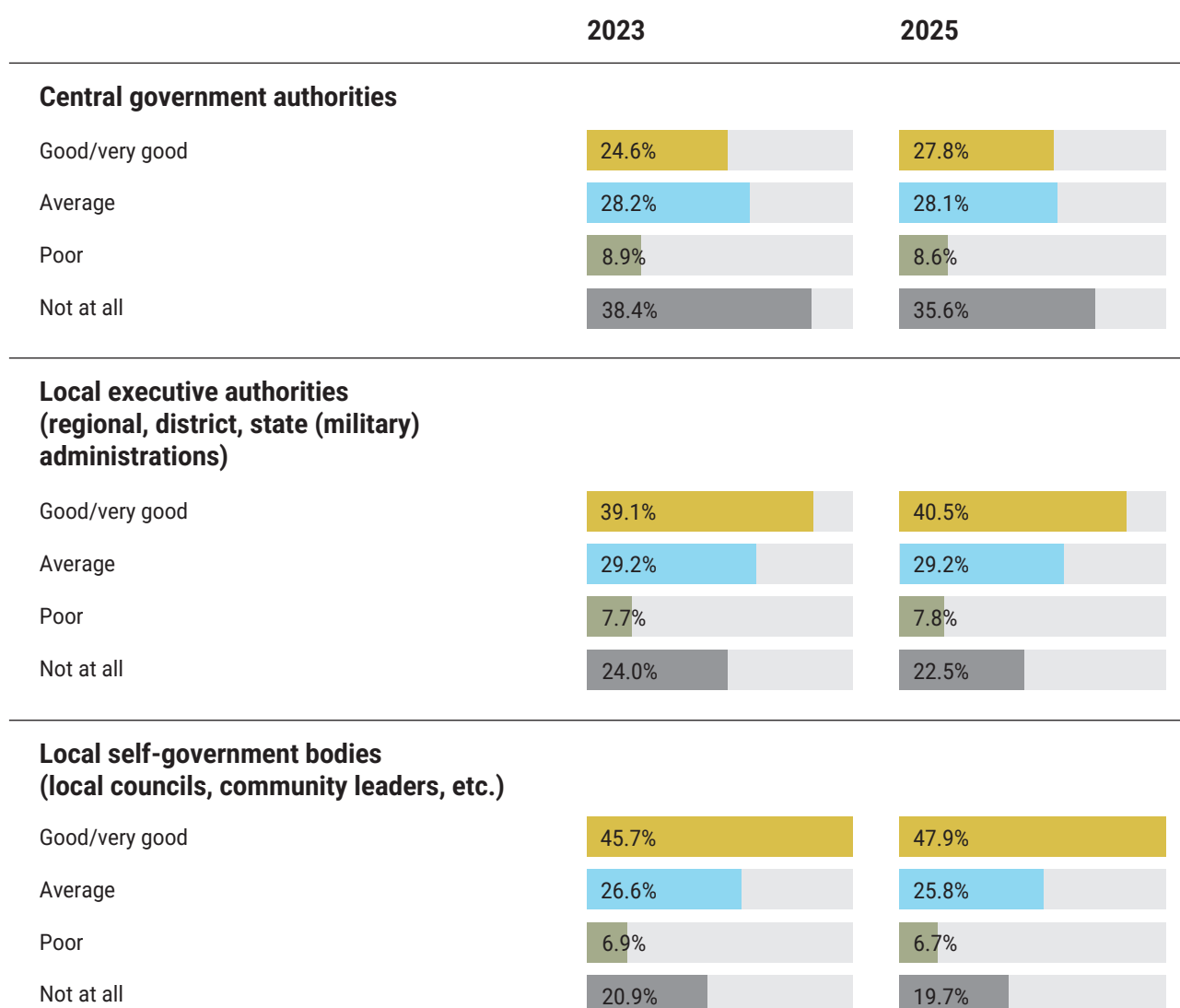
Question: Please indicate whether your NGO/CO cooperated with other charitable/non-governmental organisations in 2024–2025. / Please indicate whether your NGO/CO collaborated with volunteer and humanitarian initiatives and individual volunteers in 2024–2025. / Please indicate whether your NGO/CO engaged commercial organisations in cooperation in 2024–2025. / Please indicate whether your NGO/CO conducted campaigns to engage influencers/media personalities in cooperation in 2024–2025.

According to surveys conducted in 2023 and 2025, local government bodies remain the most reliable partner for public and charitable organisations. Almost half of the respondents (48% in 2025) rate their cooperation with community leaders as good or very good. At the same time, only one in five organisations has been able to establish contact with this level of government, and this share has remained almost unchanged since 2023. Somewhat more modest but still positive results are observed in cooperation with regional and district military administrations. Forty-five per cent of those surveyed in 2025 report successful cooperation, which is slightly more than two years ago. Approximately one-third of respondents still describe this interaction as “mediocre,” and the number of organisations that have not been able to establish cooperation with the OMA–RMA at all is slightly more than 22%. The central level remains the most difficult. Only slightly more than a quarter of organisations (27.8% in 2025) are satisfied with their contacts with ministries and other national



institutions. The exact number assesses these ties as “mediocre,” and more than a third (35.6%) say they have been unable to establish contact with central government bodies. Thus, the closer the level of government to the community, the easier it is to develop productive cooperation.

## How successful have CSOs been in establishing contacts with state authorities: 2023–2025



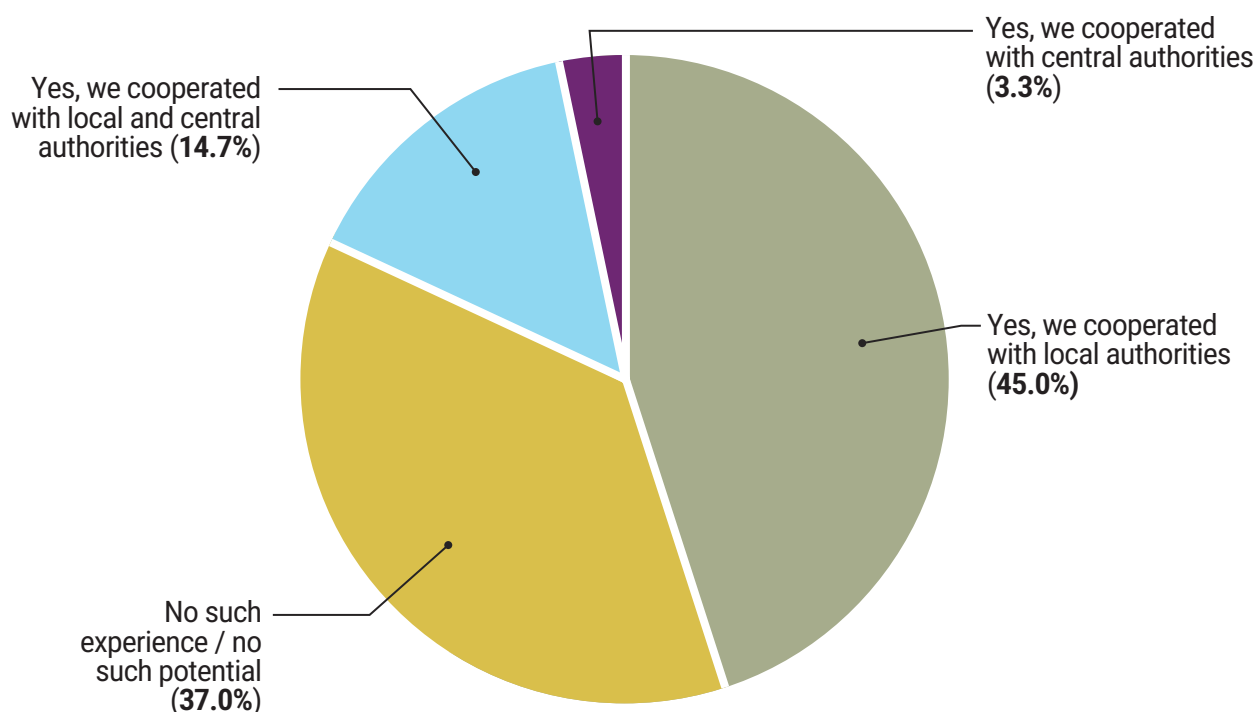
Question: How well did your NGO/CO manage to establish contacts with the authorities to jointly overcome the consequences of the war: very good, good, average, poor, or not at all?

According to the survey results, local government structures are the leading platform for CSO interaction. More than two-fifths of respondents (45%) worked exclusively with local authorities – city and village councils, executive committees, communities, etc. Almost one in six organisations (14.7%) cooperated with local and central authorities. Cooperation with central authorities alone is rare: only 3.3% of participants have experience working exclusively with ministries or other national agencies. A significant proportion (37%) are organisations with no experience or potential for cooperation with the authorities during the year.



These figures highlight a trend: local authorities remain the most convenient and quickest partners for the civil society sector, while access to the national level requires additional resources and well-established channels.

## CSO's experience of cooperation with the authorities over the past year



Question: Within the scope of your organisation's activities, have you had any cooperation experience with local or central authorities over the past year?

Among those with cooperation experience with local authorities, the most common topics (in terms of successful examples) were receiving material and technical support, assistance to military personnel/veterans/family members, assistance to vulnerable groups, and assistance in organising events. These four areas account for more than half of all examples:

- Material and technical assistance – allocation of funds, premises, equipment (15.8%).
- Support for military personnel, veterans and their families – from resource collection to rehabilitation programmes (14.1%).
- Assistance to vulnerable groups – internally displaced persons, children, low-income families (11.7%).
- Facilitation of events and paperwork – coordinating locations and permits (11.2%).



Initiatives where the authorities can quickly provide resources or simplify bureaucracy are likely to work best. Long-term development issues — ecology, infrastructure, youth participation — remain on the back burner for now.

## Examples of successful cooperation with local authorities

% of those who had experience of cooperation with local authorities

Area of activity	Share of examples, %
Receiving material and technical support	15.8
Assistance to military personnel, veterans, and military families	14.1
Assistance to vulnerable groups (IDPs, children, etc.)	11.7
Organisation of events, projects, and assistance with documentation	11.2
Cooperation on various current issues	8.2
Cultural and educational initiatives	7.7
Educational initiatives, courses, and training	6.3
Implementation of humanitarian initiatives	5.9
Housing and infrastructure projects	4.7
Psychological assistance	3.5
Youth councils, youth work	2.8
Organisation of sporting events	2.5
Environmental projects	1.8
Experience was gained, but it was unsuccessful	1.5
Animal welfare	1.1
Cannot describe/no experience	16.7
Other	4.5

Question: Can you describe a successful experience of joint resolution of socially important issues or implementation of projects by your organisation in cooperation with local authorities over the past year? (open question)

In the case of cooperation with central authorities, respondents most often mentioned the development and implementation of legislative changes (15%), communication on various issues (12%) and assistance to military personnel/veterans/their families (11%).



## Examples of successful cooperation with central government authorities

% of those who had experience of cooperation with central authorities

Area of activity	Share of examples, %
Development and implementation of legislative and regulatory changes	15.3
Existing cooperation/communication on various issues	12
Assistance to military personnel, veterans, and family members of military personnel	10.6
Educational and awareness-raising initiatives, training, and forums	9.7
Assistance with organising events/projects, maintaining documentation	8.3
Assistance to vulnerable groups, IDPs, and children	6
Cultural and educational initiatives, lectures, and festivals	5.1
Obtaining material and technical support (funds, premises, etc.)	3.7
Housing and infrastructure projects, reconstruction, and improvement	2.8
Experience, but unsuccessful	2.8
Work with young people	2.3
Organising sporting events	1.9
Environmental projects	1.9
Psychological assistance to the population	1.4
Other	4.2
Cannot describe/no experience	23.6

Question: Can you describe a successful experience of joint resolution of socially important issues or implementation of projects by your organisation in cooperation with central government bodies over the last year? (open question)

In 2025, 48% of the organisations surveyed reported at least one attempt to cooperate with people or institutions outside Ukraine; the remaining 52% had no such experience. Volunteers and international CSOs remain the main partners. In 2025, 26.3% and 24.1% of organisations tried to engage them, respectively. The demand for expert advice is growing: the share of cooperation with foreign experts increased to almost 15%. Business partnerships have remained within 5–6% for three years, indicating a consistently low demand among CSOs for contacts with the international commercial sector. Cooperation with foreign influencers does not yet exceed 4%.



## Attempts by CSOs to engage people/organisations outside Ukraine in cooperation

Direction of engagement	2022	2023	2025	Dynamics 2023 – 2025, p.p.
Foreign volunteers	21.1%	20.5%	<b>26.3%</b>	+5.8
International CSOs	21.9%	18.8%	<b>24.1%</b>	+5.3
Foreign specialists/experts		10.7%	<b>14.7%</b>	+4
Commercial organisations	5.7%	4.9%	<b>5.4%</b>	+0.5
Influencers	2.5%	2.8%	<b>3.5%</b>	+0.7

Question: Please indicate whether your CSO/NPO has attempted to engage people/organisations outside Ukraine in cooperation.

In 2025, 61.2% of the organisations surveyed received offers of cooperation from other public or charitable structures. In 2022, such invitations accounted for 54%, so over the three years, horizontal contacts within the sector have become somewhat denser, and the share of organisations that no one approached decreased from 41% to 34.6%.

Initiatives from government institutions grew more slowly. At the beginning of the observation period, 42% of respondents reported them; in 2023, the figure decreased slightly, and by 2025, it rose to 46.2%. Despite this, almost half of the organisations still do not receive offers of cooperation from either the central government or local authorities.

The content of the proposals remains stable. About 43% of respondents proposed projects to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine throughout the three years. Assistance to affected groups of the population was mentioned by 49% of organisations in 2022, 44.4% in 2023, and 46.2% in 2025; i.e., no significant changes have taken place.

Respondents assessed the level of cohesion among CSOs during the war as positive, but rather cautiously. Overall, 57% rated cohesion as high or very high. However, only 22% consider it very high, while the remaining 35% consider it relatively high. Another 33% rated cohesion as “average,” and 10% thought it was relatively low/very low.

Most respondents (69%) are convinced that shared goals and values contribute most to improving the level of CSO cohesion during the war. Other factors were mentioned less frequently. These include well-established communication (36%), joint projects (34%), financial support from donors (31%), and joint training (25%).





## Whether other actors approached CSOs for cooperation, and the areas of such cooperation

	2022	2023	2025
<b>Other CSOs</b>			
There were attempts	54.0%	56.2%	61.2%
There were no attempts	41.0%	39.7%	34.6%
Difficult to say	5.0%	4.1%	4.2%
<b>Central or local authorities</b>			
There were attempts	42.0%	40.5%	46.2%
There were no attempts	55.0%	56.2%	50.5%
Difficult to say	3.0%	3.3%	3.2%
<b>Proposed cooperation projects aimed at supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine</b>			
Yes	43.0%	43.4%	42.9%
No	54.0%	52.0%	54.0%
Difficult to say	3.0%	4.5%	3.1%
<b>Proposed cooperation projects aimed at helping affected population groups</b>			
Yes	49.0%	44.4%	46.2%
No	48.0%	52.4%	50.7%
Difficult to say	3.0%	3.2%	3.1%

Question: Were there any attempts to engage your NGO/CO in cooperation with other non-governmental, charitable organisations, and volunteer initiatives in 2024–2025? / Were there any attempts to engage your NGO/CO in cooperation with state bodies or local self-government in 2024–2025? / Were your NGO/CO offered cooperation projects aimed at assisting the Armed Forces of Ukraine in 2024–2025? / Were your NGO/CO offered cooperation projects aimed at helping affected population groups in 2024–2025?

CSO interaction with other actors often depends on the geography of CSO work – whether local (individual settlements, communities, or regions), regional (several areas), or national or international. Local CSOs most often report that they did not engage other non-governmental or charitable organisations in cooperation in 2024–2025 (41.1% compared to 28.5% among regional organisations, 29.9% among national organisations and 24.6% among international organisations). The situation is similar to the involvement of volunteers in cooperation – most often, representatives of local organisations report that they did not do so in 2024–2025. The same is true for cooperation with businesses and influencers/media personalities: local organisations more often than regional, national, and international ones reported that they did not have such experience in 2024–2025.



As expected, local and regional organisations are more likely to say that they cooperated with local authorities in 2024–2025 (48.6% and 51.5%, respectively) than national and international organisations (34.3% and 37.3%, respectively). It should be noted that although the prevalence of cooperation between national and international organisations and local authorities is slightly lower than that of local and regional organisations, it is still a widespread practice for them. Local organisations hardly ever cooperated outside the country: only 7.1% had experience working with foreign experts, 15.2% with foreign volunteers, and 15.1% with international NGOs. Regional and national CSOs showed moderate levels of international cooperation (about 16–37% had relevant experience), but a significant proportion remained focused only on domestic connections. The most active were CSOs that indicated an international geography of work: more than a third of them involved foreign experts (36.5%), almost half worked with volunteers (44.4%) or other international organisations (46.8%). In addition, it was CSOs with an international scope of work that most often collaborated with foreign businesses (10.3%) and foreign influencers (8.7%). In comparison, for local CSOs, these figures were minimal (2.8% and 1.6%, respectively). Thus, the geography of CO/NGO activities is a key factor in international integration: the broader the scope of work, the higher the likelihood of reaching the international level.

In the case of cooperation with other COs/NGOs and volunteer initiatives, local organisations again stand out: more than half of them (52.5%) had such offers, but this is significantly lower than among regional (70.4%), national (66.9%), and international (69.8%) structures.

On the other hand, in the case of proposals from state bodies and local self-government bodies, no dependence on the geography of CSO work was found: the share of organisations that received such proposals fluctuates between 45% and 47%, regardless of the geographical coverage of the organisation.

Significant differences emerged when analysing cooperation initiatives in projects to assist the Armed Forces of Ukraine: local CSOs received such proposals much less frequently (35.6% compared to 47–50% for regional, national, and international organisations).

A similar, albeit less pronounced, picture can be observed for projects aimed at helping affected populations: the share of local CSOs offered cooperation in this area was 41.7%, while among national, international, and regional organisations it was 47–52%.

Thus, regional, national, and international organisations often receive invitations to cooperate. Local structures are significantly less integrated into such processes, especially when it comes to assisting the army and affected populations. In contrast, state authorities and local self-government demonstrate the same relatively low level of initiative in working with all levels of CSOs.



## 12. The phenomenon of “pocket” CSOs at the local level

### 12.1. Review of existing research and publications

So-called “pocket” civil society organisations are structures that, although they position themselves as independent, are controlled by local authorities or influential groups. Such CSOs are usually created to obtain state or donor funding, while only pretending to involve the community. Such a model of interaction may undermine public trust and reduce the effectiveness of project implementation: authorities can use organisations under their control to manipulate public hearings or the selection process for contractors, as loyal structures do not resist ineffective decisions or corrupt practices. Before the full-scale war, “pocket” CSOs were used by local authorities and individual politicians for political struggle and electoral gains. Here is a quote that describes how this mechanism works:

**“It is no secret that this is a well-established practice, where regular material and social assistance, gifts, invitations to ‘holiday balls for the elderly’ are not received by all pensioners, and far from those who need it, but only those who are under the patronage of “pro-government” CSOs. And this applies not only to pensioners. There are many more categories of the population with whom they work. What is the purpose of this? It is obvious that, in this way, the local authorities are buying the loyalty of voters. The same applies to cultural projects: the same ‘hand-picked’ NGOs organise the celebrations – the city is full of ‘buckwheat festivals.’ And this process is only gaining momentum.”<sup>96</sup>**

<sup>96</sup> Provision of social services: cooperation between NGOs and local authorities. 5 February 2018. <https://gurt.org.ua/news/recent/43120/>



Studies conducted after the full-scale invasion, such as **“Mapping and assessing the capacity of local organisations involved in community development,”**<sup>97</sup> conducted in autumn 2024, indicate that this problem persists. One of the study respondents, representing a donor organisation, describes the situation as follows:

“There is a particular lack of activists and public figures at the local level, so usually the active people are local council members, local council chairpersons, and businesspeople. They are embedded in the local government system. It was therefore natural for these organisations to register and become part of what are effectively local government pocket organisations. We had many cases when we came to the city council or village council, and the head opened the safe, took out the seals of various public organisations and said: ‘Which one should I put on the project application?’. This is everywhere, and other projects then continued this practice, unfortunately, because it is challenging to create public organisations at the local level. These organisations are created and controlled by local authorities to attract donor funds. One of the conditions for donor funding is that it must be a public organisation to which we give funding, even if it goes to infrastructure projects implemented by the local authorities, because we cannot give funding directly. But this has distorted what we call civil society. This is not civil society; these are essentially front organisations that implement projects in collaboration with the authorities. We give funds to local authorities through an intermediary. And this, unfortunately, is a road to nowhere; in most cases, this is exactly how it works. Only a few organisations, one might say, have freed themselves from such pressure from local authorities and patronage and have become truly independent.”  
(Representative of a donor organisation)<sup>98</sup>

The reconstruction processes, which require significant funding, according to CSO representatives themselves, encourage the creation of “pocket” civil society organisations. The authors of the study **“Civil Society Participation in Ukraine’s Recovery: How Authorities, Citizens, and Donors Can Strengthen Public Trust,”**<sup>99</sup> published in 2023, cite the following data from a survey of CSO representatives themselves:

<sup>97</sup> Mapping and studying the capacity of local organisations involved in community development. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/374](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/374)

<sup>98</sup> Mapping and studying the capacity of local organisations involved in community development. [home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/374](https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/374)

<sup>99</sup> Civil society participation in Ukraine's recovery. How authorities, citizens and donors can strengthen public trust. June 2023. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/2023-06-15-giving-civil-society-stake-ukraines-recovery-lutsevych-ukrainian.pdf>



**“Civil society groups have been surprisingly sober in assessing their vulnerability and the risks facing the non-governmental sector. Among the additional risks described, 74% of respondents pointed to those related to CSOs’ involvement in reconstruction. These mainly concern the flow of funds to groups affiliated with local or central authorities (mentioned by 40% of respondents), low levels of professionalism (18%) and perceptions of corruption within the sector itself. Respondents expressed concern that local authorities may be tempted to create ‘pocket’ CSOs to mimic genuine engagement or to involve only loyal groups willing to support ineffective decisions and cover up potentially corrupt schemes. A smaller proportion of respondents also pointed to the likelihood that business interest groups would attempt to lobby or influence the recovery process by creating or recruiting CSOs to work on their behalf.”**

The mechanism of ‘pocket’ CSOs is an adaptation of local authorities to the formal requirements of donors to finance specific initiatives exclusively through CSOs. To maintain control over resources, officials register loyal structures that only pretend to be independent: the same people prepare applications, “conduct” public hearings and report back, without allowing any critical analysis. This substitution turns genuine community participation into a controlled ritual and at the same time serves as a tool for providing targeted material support to community members (voters), strengthening clientelist ties.

The consequences are twofold. First, trust is undermined: formally successful projects do not bring about lasting change because there is no independent oversight or honest feedback from beneficiaries. Second, living initiatives are squeezed out — activists who do not want to work under imposed rules are left without access to resources.

## 12.2. Results of qualitative research

CSO representatives and experts are aware of the phenomenon of “pocket” CSOs and believe it is prevalent.

**“Yes, of course, there are controlled CSOs, controlled charitable foundations, even controlled armed groups, various territorial defence forces under someone’s patronage.”**

At the same time, however, respondents in in-depth interviews have ambivalent attitudes towards this phenomenon, believing it has both negative and positive aspects. They often point out that the creation of CSOs by local authorities usually has a simple pragmatic goal — to obtain grants for their community, which they cannot obtain as local self-government bodies.



**"I have encountered such cases. Well, it's not much for imitation, but you must understand... They are not creating partnerships for the sake of imitation, but for the opportunity to attract grants. It is more their motivation to create a civil society organisation to receive grants, because there are no other organisations there, for example, or they cannot cooperate with them. They create their own civil society organisation to receive grants."**

Although respondents are aware that local authorities can use this practice for corrupt purposes, they often emphasise its primary purpose – to attract funds to the community for infrastructure, social or educational projects that directly improve the lives of residents. Among the main reasons for this approach, respondents cite the political accountability of local authorities to the community, a lack of their own resources, and the opportunity to attract grant funding, even if this method is not always transparent and honest.

**"Well, I recently saw a study that 67% of local organisations are either founded by or represent local authorities... And I thought, well, it looks a bit like corruption... On the other hand, representatives of the authorities are the ones who are asked, and who will be asked, why there is no well? Why isn't there this? Why isn't there that? Why aren't there computers in classrooms? And so on."**

**"...a lot is being built thanks to proactive people, and they, the local authorities, understanding that they are on the receiving end of these comments and criticism, have created NGOs that carry out tiny projects and receive funding of \$2,000 for these small projects. You need \$5,000 for a well there. I don't know, for playgrounds... Are they doing a bad thing for the community? Not really, because they will still have to report to the donors, they will report this and that. So, is there a certain amount of corruption, and do I see it? Well, a little bit, and now I'm in this situation... I don't know where there is more benefit, where there is more value, well..."**

**"It's hard for me to be specific. I'm 90% sure this is the case, but unfortunately, I can't give any specific examples right now. But I think it exists. Perhaps sometimes it's not even done with malicious intent, but to implement practical projects, or sometimes it's the only way to get a grant for something socially useful. So, I wouldn't say that it's always 100% motivated by self-interest. At the same time, I suspect that it is quite likely that there are many such organisations, because sometimes it is the only way to get something done there."**



## 13. Financial capacity of CSOs

### 13.1. Sources of funding used by CSOs

The primary sources of funding for CSOs in 2024 remain donations, membership fees, and contributions (46.1% of respondent organisations chose this answer). However, there has been a noticeable decrease in their role compared to previous years: in 2022–2023, this figure was 69.3% and 69.1%, respectively. The number of organisations that have no funding or operate voluntarily has increased: 26.7% in 2024 compared to 12% in 2022. As in the previous two years, international grants (25.4%) and income from own economic activities (13.5%) continue to play an essential role in 2024. About 8% receive funding from state or local budgets. This figure is higher than in 2022 and the same as last year. The prevalence of financing from civil society activists decreased from 21.8% in 2023 to 9.4% in 2024. The share of organisations using income from their economic activities (13.5%) also declined in 2024. The share of CSOs using social services as a source of funding remains unchanged at 2.2%. Funding through CSOs – endowments – remains rare (0.7%).

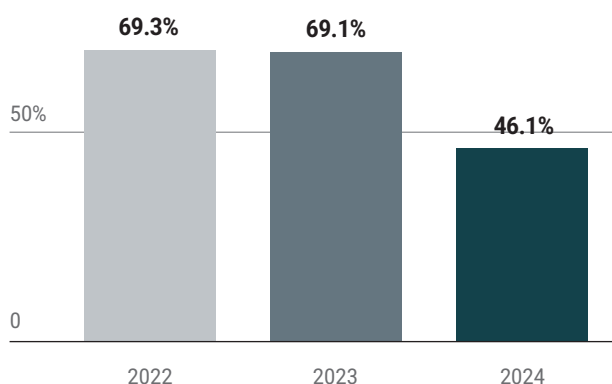
The sources of funding for non-governmental and charitable organisations vary significantly depending on the geography of their activities. The most significant differences were observed in using international grants and donor funds (donations, crowdfunding, membership fees, support from local businesses). Among local organisations, only 20.7% worked with international grants, while among regional organisations this figure reached 33.8%, and among international organisations, 28.6%. Nationwide structures were at an average level (25.5%). A similar picture about donations, membership fees, and contributions can be seen: their use is most common in regional and nationwide organisations (52–56%) and least common in local organisations (39.5%). Income from own economic activities was used relatively more often by national and international organisations (approximately 18%), while local and regional organisations showed lower rates (11–12%). On the other hand, working without funding was most common among local CSOs (33.7% compared to 19–22% among other types of CSOs). The use of state and local budgets and income from the provision of social services or support for civic activists remains low (2–9% on average), and there are no statistically significant differences between CSO groups operating at different geographical scales.



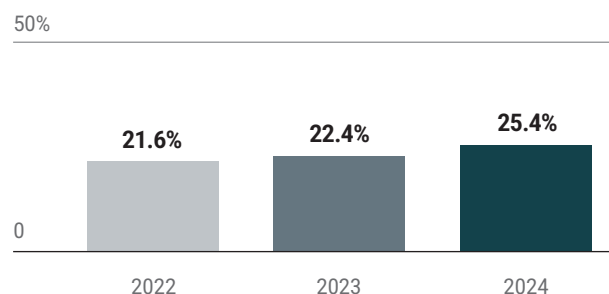
## Sources of funding actively used by CSOs in 2022–2024

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice

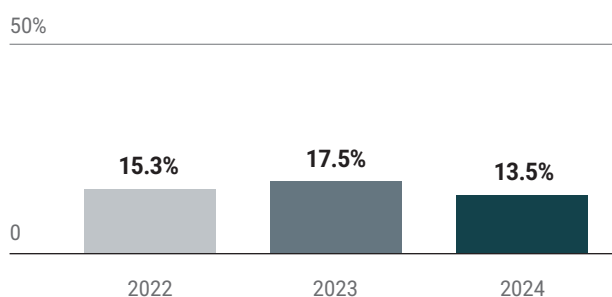
Donations/membership fees/donations/  
crowdfunding proceeds/support from local  
businesses



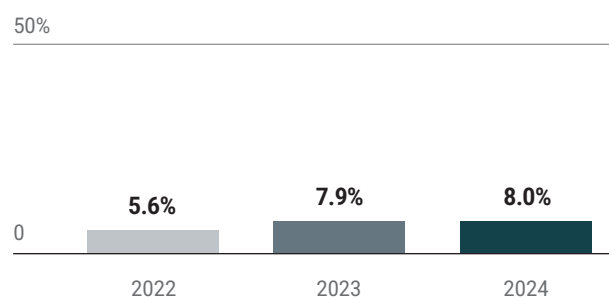
International grants



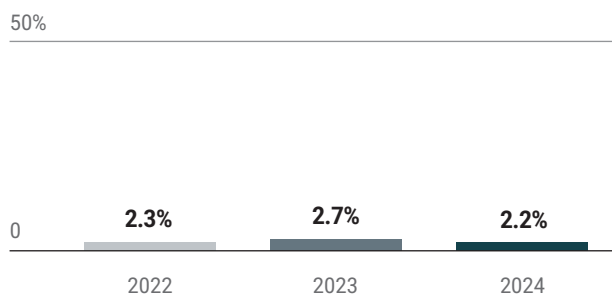
Income from own economic activities



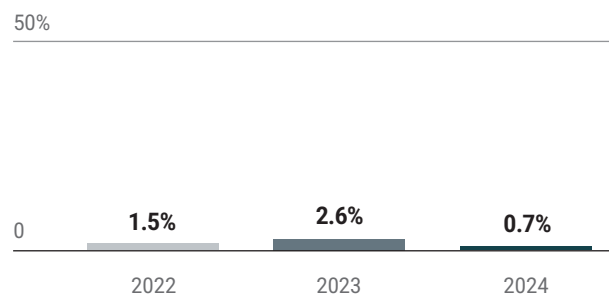
Funding from the state budget/local budget



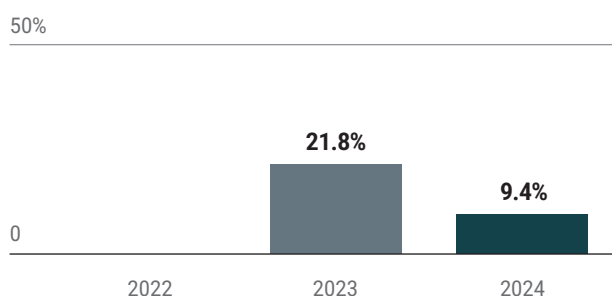
Provision of social services



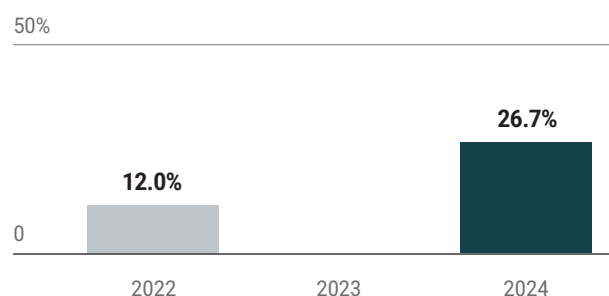
NGO endowment (targeted capital)



Funding from civil society activists



No funding/volunteer work







## 13.2. Sources of financing that CSOs should develop

When assessing sources of funding that should be developed in 2025, CSOs identify international grants as the most promising (70.9%). Donations, membership fees, and contributions are also important areas for development (42.7%). A slightly smaller proportion of respondents consider it necessary to develop their CSOs' funding from the state and local budgets (39.5%).

Compared to previous years, in 2024 CSOs began to rate the importance of developing international grants more highly (70.9% compared to 59.2% in 2023 and 60.4% in 2022), and social services (15.1% compared to 9.7% in 2023 and 12.1% in 2022). The share of responses regarding the advisability of developing funding from civil society activists decreased slightly: from 21% in 2023 to 17.7% in 2024.

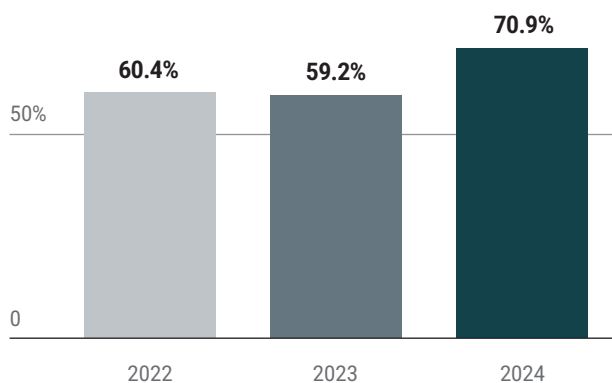
In 2025, the views of public and charitable organisations operating at different geographical scales (local, regional, national, international) on which sources of funding should be developed were generally similar. Still, there were noticeable differences in certain areas. Common to all types of CSOs is the desire to create international grants as a source of funding: from 68.5% in national organisations to 73.0% in international organisations. The differences between the groups are statistically insignificant, indicating the universal priority of this source for the sector. Similarly, there are no differences in attitudes towards public funding (25–30% in all groups), donations and contributions (around 40–48%), social services (14–16%), support from civic activists (17–18%) and endowments (7–9%). At the same time, there are areas where the difference is significant. First, there are local budgets: local organisations are much more likely to see potential in them (37.4%), while only one in five international organisations (19.8%) and about a quarter of regional and national organisations (28–27%) do so. Interest in working with local budgets monotonically declines with the growth of the geographical scale of CSOs from the local to the international level. Second, differences can be seen in the priority given to own economic activity as a source of funding: national (21.5%) and international organisations (23.0%) are most focused on this area, while only 14–18% of local and regional organisations are. Thus, the entire sector is oriented towards international grants, but the geography of work influences the priority of some other sources. Local organisations seek to strengthen their ability to obtain funding from local budgets, while national and international organisations rely more on their own economic mechanisms.



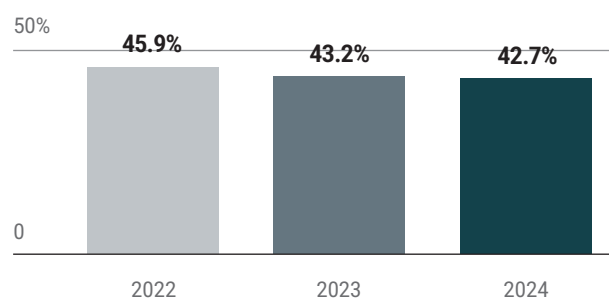
## Funding sources worth developing next year

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice

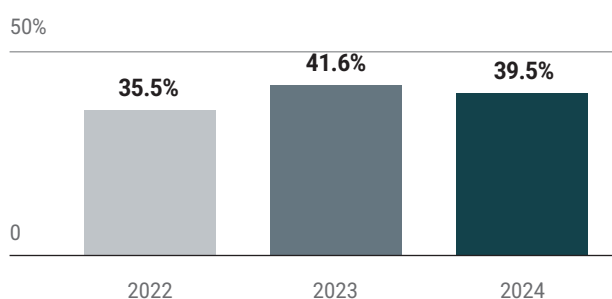
International grants



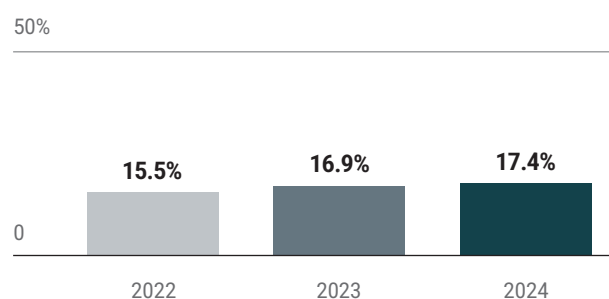
Donations/membership fees/donations/  
crowdfunding proceeds/support from local  
businesses



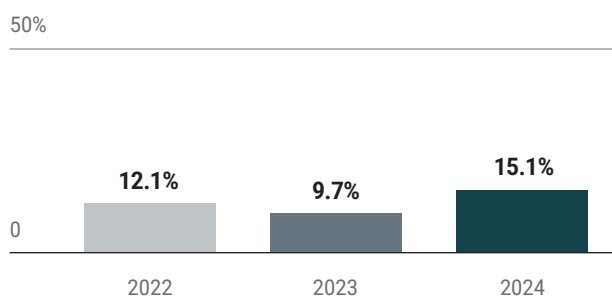
Funding from the state budget/local budget



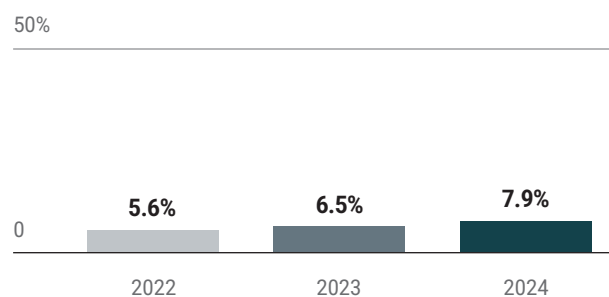
Income from own economic activities



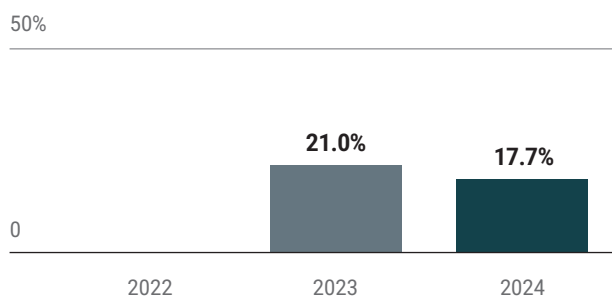
Provision of social services



NGO endowment (targeted capital)



Funding from civil society activists





According to the respondents of in-depth interviews, compared to 2022–2023, CSOs' access to funding has become significantly more difficult, due to external factors (the rollback of USAID programmes, the economic crisis) and high competition within the sector. Following the US government's decree to suspend funding through USAID in early 2025, many Ukrainian CSOs lost their core budgets. *"Some organisations received 50–70% of their funding from the US... the impact is significant,"* explained one expert. The result is a sharp increase in competition for other grants. *"I don't remember such a difficult search for funding even during COVID or at the beginning of the invasion,"* said one respondent, adding that the number of applications for each grant competition has now increased significantly. Some respondents indicate that the EU has tried to partially replace USAID funding, but this process is very slow and faces bureaucratic obstacles.

**"We are, let's say, disappointed by the inertia of European donors, who should have stepped in quickly. There was even a case when the European Union announced large funds for the Ukrainian media, but the process has not yet started... We had a case when an agreed grant was cancelled... This was explained by the fact that the European Commission did not have time to carry out some procurement procedures..."**

Thus, according to respondents, in 2025, the situation with international funding for CSOs will be complex and unpredictable: European funds are replacing American funds slowly and in smaller amounts. As for internal sources of funding, such as government programmes, some organisations, according to respondents, tried to take advantage of them (e.g., compensation for employing people with disabilities), but faced difficult conditions (first spending their funds, then waiting a long time for compensation). A barrier to working with state funds for CSOs is the complexity of administering payments and the long time it takes to receive funds. At the same time, respondents in in-depth interviews often pointed to the experience of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation as a good model of competitive state funding for CSOs.

**"But we still expect that the state budget will create a fund like the UCF for the media or create a separate section within the UCF where it will be possible to compete for state grant funding. However, we are very wary of state funds because of the complexity of their administration. There are risks associated with non-payment of bills. Our media holding company has a radio station that has dealt with the UCF, and... well, even though the projects were implemented successfully, there is still serious tension because the funds are not paid on time. But we still hope that in the context of the war, the state will reconsider its attitude towards media funding."**



At the local level, according to respondents, the situation is also tricky: local councils either do not cooperate with independent NGOs or only finance “pocket” media and organisations.

**“...we see a practice where local budget funds are simply poured into media outlets controlled by the authorities in incredible amounts. This phenomenon exists, and we understand that independent broadcasters and media cannot simply fight for these funds but openly compete for them because ‘everything is divided among us.’**

Attracting funding from businesses for CSO activities is not very successful because it is mainly aimed at supporting the army, for example, purchasing drones for the military and meeting other military needs. The respondents themselves, who are CSO representatives, believe that this is the proper and logical prioritisation of spending – business support for the army is more important right now.

**“Business – well, I think that lately business has been less involved... it wasn’t super involved before, but now, hypothetically, if you have a choice between buying 100 drones for the 3rd assault brigade or paying some analytical centre for some research, well, the choice is obvious. Yes, there are simply more pressing issues that businesses are more willing and eager to spend money on, and that’s probably the right thing to do.”**

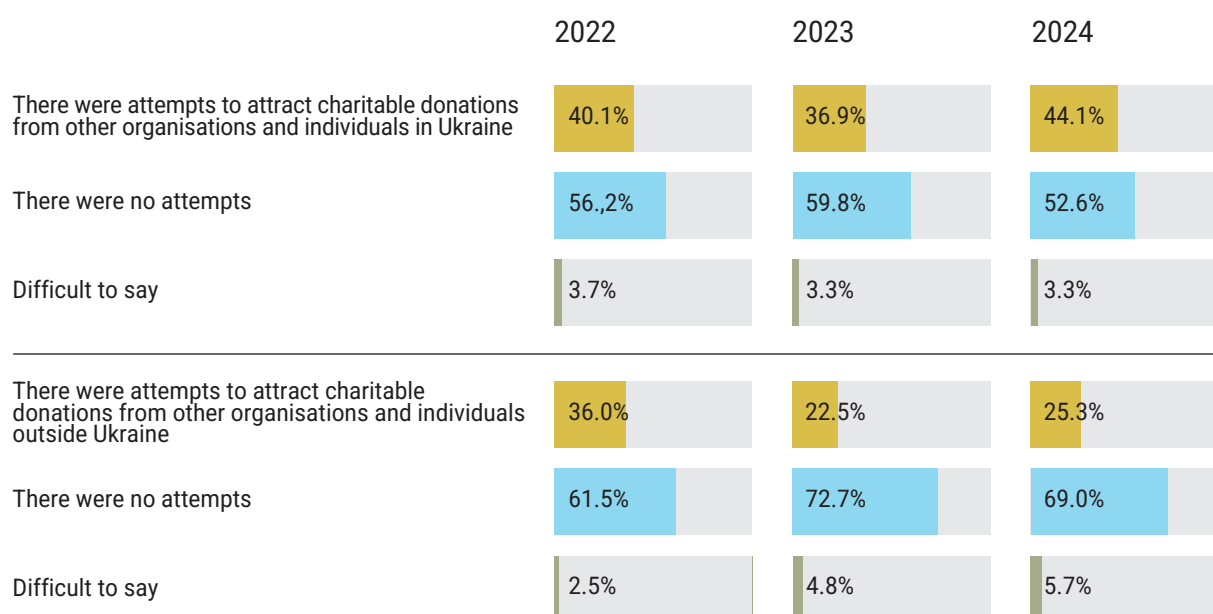
Due to a lack of grants and rising uncertainty, in 2026, CSOs were forced to intensify their fundraising efforts and diversify their sources of funding. Many now spend the lion’s share of their employees’ time looking for money, and, according to respondents, for many CSOs, this search will not be successful, and they may have to close. *“The chances of winning a competition have decreased significantly... donors are looking for the strongest, and the weaker ones are allowed to die a successful death.”* Some respondents predict a “market cleansing”: the most capable will survive, but overall, there may be a reduction in the diversity of CSOs, which will hurt society (fewer voices, less competition of ideas). According to in-depth interviews, the sectoral funding picture looks worrying: international funding has decreased, access to state funding is difficult, and donations from citizens are unstable.



### 13.3. Raising charitable donations

In 2024, 44.1% of organisations tried to attract charitable donations from other organisations and individuals in Ukraine. This is the highest figure in the last three years (36.9% in 2023 and 40.1% in 2022). Attempts to attract charitable donations from other organisations and individuals **outside Ukraine** were reported by 25.3% of organisations. Compared to 2023 (22.5%), the share of organisations that attempted to attract charitable donations from abroad increased slightly, but it is still lower than in 2022 (36%).

#### Attempts to attract charitable donations from other organisations and individuals in Ukraine and abroad in 2022–2024



In 2024, trends in the size of donations from abroad were essentially in line with the previous year. Thus, most organisations (60.9%) received relatively small contributions of up to UAH 185,000, which, considering the average annual exchange rate of<sup>100</sup>, amounted to \$4,605 in 2024 (in 2023, the corresponding amount was \$5,027, with 59.5% of organisations receiving such donations).

At the same time, the share of organisations receiving donations ranging from UAH 185,000 to UAH 740,000 (in 2023 – \$5,027–\$20,109, in 2024 – \$4,605–\$18,420) decreased from 20.1% to 16.8%. On the other hand, there was a noticeable increase in the category of 740,000 to 1,850,000 UAH: from 8.6% in 2023 to 11.3% in 2024.

<sup>100</sup> Average annual exchange rates are taken from here <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/USD-UAH-spot-exchange-rates-history-2023.html>; <https://www.exchangerates.org.uk/USD-UAH-spot-exchange-rates-history-2024.html>



There was also an increase in the share of organisations that received donations ranging from 3,700,000 to 7,400,000 UAH (100,543–201,087 USD in 2023 and 92,100–184,200 USD in 2024): from 2.1% to 3.6%.

At the same time, the share of organisations that attracted the most significant amounts (over 7,400,000 UAH, equivalent to over \$184,200 in 2024 and over \$201,087 in 2023) decreased from 5.3% to 3.9%.

Thus, most CSOs continued to attract mainly small donations, but there is a trend towards an increase in the average size of donations and a decrease in the share of the largest donations in 2024.

Donation size in hryvnia	Equivalent in US dollars	Share of organisations, % (2023)	Share of organisations, % (2024)
Up to 185,000 UAH	2023: up to \$5,027	59.5	60.9
	2024: up to \$4,605		
From 185,000 to 740,000	2023: from \$5,027 to \$20,109	20.1	16.8
	2024: from \$4,605 to \$18,420		
From 740,000 to 1,850,000 UAH	2023: from \$20,109 to \$50,272	8.6	11.3
	2024: from \$18,420 to \$46,050		
From 1,850,000 to 3,700,000	2023: from \$50,272 to \$100,543	4.4	3.0
	2024: from \$46,050 to \$92,100		
From 3,700,000 to 7,400,000	2023: from \$100,543 to \$201,087	2.1	3.6
	2024: from \$92,100 to \$184,200		
Over 7,400,000	2023: over \$201,087	5.3	3.9
	2024: over \$184,200		



## 13.4. Use of virtual assets

The use of virtual assets among public and charitable organisations remains limited. In 2025, only 1.8% of organisations reported using them, which is almost the same as in 2023 (1.4%). 1.1% of organisations used coins (Bitcoin, Ethereum, XRP, Solana, Tezos, EOS, etc.) and 0.7% used tokens pegged to a currency or asset (e.g., USDT). For comparison, in 2023, these shares were 0.9% and 0.5%, respectively.

In 2023, the primary purpose of using virtual assets was to exchange them for hryvnia or other currencies for further use for the organisation's needs (50%) and to purchase goods necessary for its activities (44.4%), as well as to collect donations (8.3%). In 2025, 52.4% of respondents indicated that they purchased goods necessary for their activities, while 42.9% exchanged collected assets for hryvnia or other currencies for further use for the needs of the organisation. Another 9.5% of respondents indicated that they had different purposes for using virtual assets. The absolute number of CSOs in the 2023–2025 samples that used virtual assets was so small that these differences are not statistically significant.

## 13.5. The existence of a strategy for attracting new donors and difficulties in finding funding

Half of the organisations (50.3%) indicated that they have a strategy for attracting other donors, which is either under development (the majority, 39.1%) or has already been developed and implemented (a minority, 11.2%). In contrast, 49.7% of organisations do not have such a strategy, which may indicate potential difficulties for them in diversifying their funding in the event of possible changes in the donor environment.

The share of CSOs that have a donor engagement strategy depends on the scale of the organisation's activities: it clearly increases from local to international. The share with an implemented strategy: local 6.7%, regional 14.2%, national 13.5%, international 19.8%; while the absence of a strategy is more common among local CSOs (56.6%) and less common among regional (41.2%), national (46.2%), and international (43.7%) CSOs. In other words, international and regional CSOs demonstrate higher organisational capacity in fundraising. In contrast, local CSOs are more likely to have no strategy and/or not seek new funding.

The most common difficulties in finding new funding are a lack of financial, human and material resources (38.6%), a lack of information about possible sources of funding (34.4%), and a lack of experience in attracting funding (32.8%). Respondents also cited administrative/bureaucratic barriers (19.3%) and insufficient skills (13%) as factors that make it difficult to attract new financial resources. Lack of donor interest (1.7%) and high competition (0.5%) were mentioned less frequently. 9.2% of CSOs reported no difficulties finding new funding, while 12.4% said they were not looking for new financial resources.



In general, the geography of CSO activities is not related to most of the reported barriers to finding new funding: the proportions of responses are almost identical for “no difficulties,” “insufficient resources,” “insufficient level of competence,” “lack of information,” “administrative/bureaucratic barriers,” and “lack of donor interest.” Two statistically significant themes stand out: “lack of experience in attracting funding” is more often mentioned by local organisations (38.3%) and less often by regional (26.9%) and international (24.6%; nationwide – 30.7%) organisations. “We are not looking for new funding” is also more common among local organisations (16.7%) than regional (7.7%), national (9.2%), and international (9.5%) ones.

### **13.6. Activity of CSOs that did not receive international funding in 2024–2025**

The activities of CSOs that did not use international funding in 2024–2025 are primarily related to assistance to the military, veterans and their families (53.8%). This is the most common area of focus for the entire sample of CSOs. Such CSOs are also involved in organising their events (46.7%), providing humanitarian aid (36.9%), organising cultural events (30.4%), coordinating or participating in volunteer initiatives within the scope of their activities (30.1%), and providing legal, psychological and social services (27.7%). A slightly smaller proportion of CSOs that did not receive international funding in 2024 are involved in documenting the war, preserving historical memory (12.6%), and developing/advocating for changes to local policies (11.6%). Only 8.5% of such organisations reported no active activities last year. The majority of CSOs that did not use international funding in the previous year carried out their activities even without external financial resources.

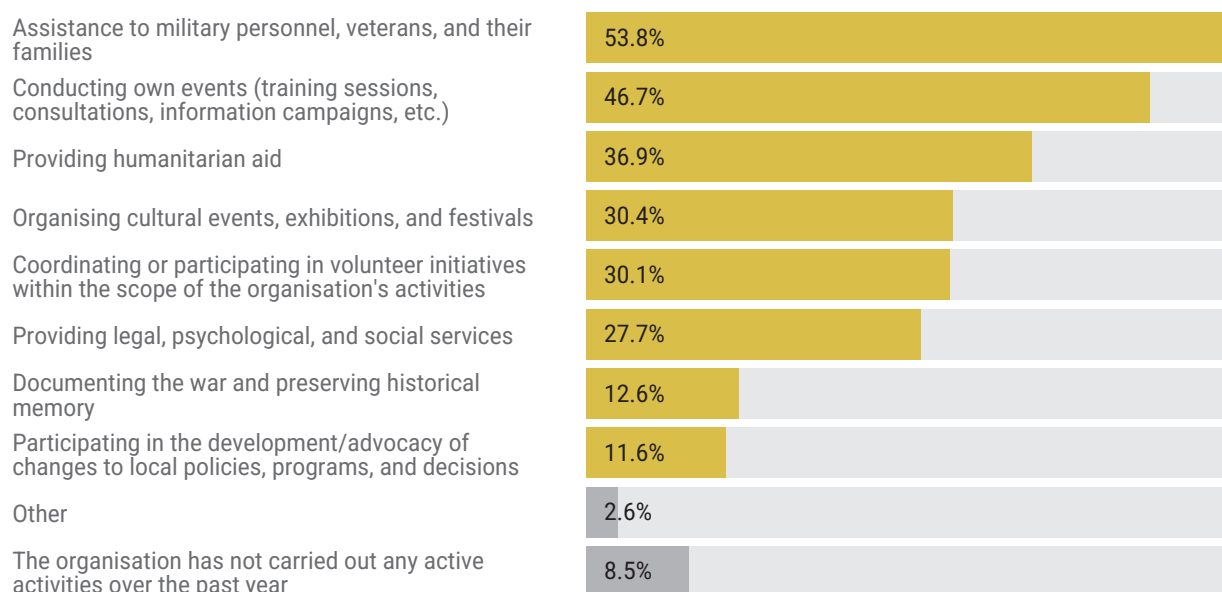
Almost every third organisation (30.5%) that did not receive international funding in 2024–2025 covered more than 500 people with its activities, including both event participants and aid recipients. One in five CSOs (21.5%) reached between 101 and 500 people, 15.5% between 51 and 100 people, 13.7% between 11 and 50 people, and 4.9% up to 10 people.





## Types of CSO activities that did not use international funding during 2024–2025

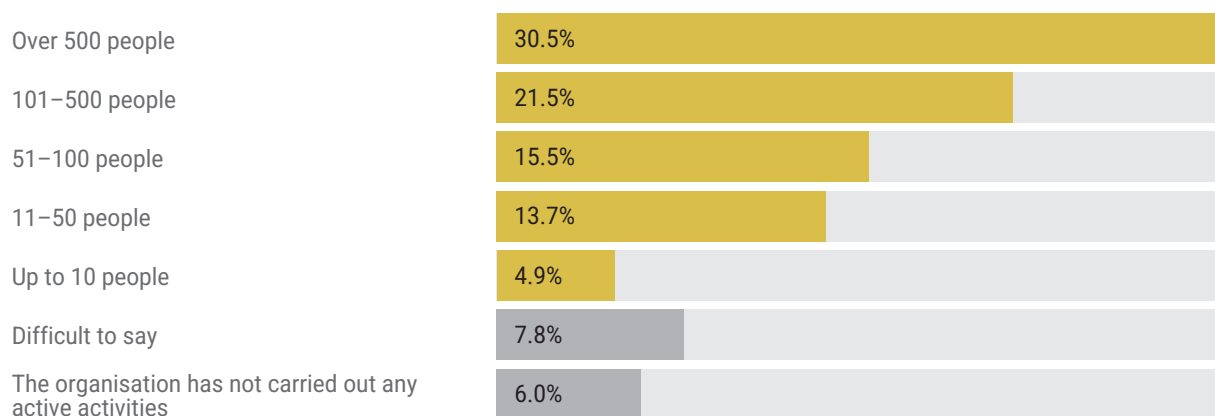
% of CSOs that did not receive international funding in 2024–2025, multiple choice



Question: Which of the following activities has your organisation carried out over the past year?

## Estimated number of CSO beneficiaries who did not use international funding during 2024–2025

% of CSOs that did not receive international funding in 2024–2025



Question: How many people (approximately) have been involved in your activities over the past year (e.g., event participants, aid recipients)?

The majority (70.3%) of organisations that did not receive international funding during 2024–2025 sometimes or regularly publish the results of their activities. Another 9.9% of such organisations plan to introduce this practice in the future, but do not currently apply it. At the same time, 14.2% of such organisations do not consider it necessary to publish the results of their work.



Over the past year, 65.2% of organisations that did not receive international funding during this period participated in events organised by other CSOs. 22.4% of organisations did so very often, 37.9% several times, and 4.9% once. 34.7% of the CSOs surveyed did not participate in events organised by other organisations. Accordingly, two-thirds of organisations without international funding were involved in sectoral communication to varying degrees, while one-third were not involved in events organised by other CSOs.



## 14. Impact of the suspension of US funding on Ukrainian CSOs

### 14.1. Review of existing research and publications

According to the analytical document **“Implications of the US foreign aid cuts on humanitarian, development, and government-led programmes,”**<sup>101</sup> at the end of 2024, USAID was implementing 39 active humanitarian and development programmes in Ukraine with a total budget of \$4.28 billion. Still, by the end of March 2025, only about 30% of these funds remained active. The largest cuts were made to projects related to energy infrastructure, health care, economic recovery, media, local self-government, and civil society development. As of the end of March, there were reports of the suspension and potential termination of humanitarian funding, which in 2022–2024 accounted for about 30% of all funds allocated for humanitarian needs. The suspension also affected direct budget support to the Ukrainian government. However, Social Policy Minister Oksana Zholnovych stated at a press conference on 27 January that the temporary suspension of funding had not yet had a significant impact on state programmes<sup>102</sup>. The situation was complicated by the fact that the suspension was sudden, and USAID’s communication was unclear, which added uncertainty and made it impossible to prepare adequately for the termination of assistance. According to the authors of **“Implications of the US foreign aid cuts...,”**

<sup>101</sup> Implications of the US foreign aid cuts on humanitarian, development, and government-led programmes. ACAPS Analysis Hub. 31 March 2025. [https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/04/04/20250331\\_ACAPS\\_Thematic\\_report\\_Ukraine\\_Implications\\_of\\_US\\_foreign\\_aid\\_cuts.pdf](https://api.home.ednannia.ua/upload/kch/25/04/04/20250331_ACAPS_Thematic_report_Ukraine_Implications_of_US_foreign_aid_cuts.pdf)

<sup>102</sup> Anastasia Ivantsiv, Nikita Galka, Anna Sergiets. “There will be no language development.” What is known about the temporary suspension of USAID-fund — projects and who will be affected. — 28 January 2025. <https://suspilne.media/934877—pro—rozvitok—movi—ne—bude—so—vidomo—pro—timcasovu—zupinku—proektiv—aki—finansue—usaid—i—kogo—vona—torknetsa/>



**“The sudden and disruptive nature of the suspension and subsequent termination of most US foreign aid means significant gaps in funding for humanitarian, development and governance programmes in Ukraine. This will create a vicious circle of increasingly unmet needs. Although the total amount of humanitarian funding is smaller compared to the US budget and development support, it plays a critical role in addressing urgent needs that the crisis-affected government cannot meet. With simultaneous reductions in government and development funding, the government’s capacity will be further strained, forcing Ukrainian authorities to seek additional support from humanitarian organisations, whose resources are also significantly depleted. This cascading effect threatens both the immediate and long-term well-being of a significant number of Ukrainians.”**

A rapid study, **“The Impact of USAID Funding Suspension on Ukrainian CSOs,”**<sup>103</sup> conducted in February 2025, showed that

**“...most Ukrainian CSOs have faced serious financial difficulties due to the suspension of USAID funding, leading to forced staff reductions (25% of organisations), unpaid leave (19%) and even the closure of some programmes (12%). At the same time, 75% of respondents are actively seeking new sources of funding, but only 1% have already received new support. [...] The main adaptation strategies include switching to a business model, optimising programme activities and seeking funding from local donors. Respondents’ assessments of the situation vary: 34% consider the situation catastrophic for the civil sector, 51% see opportunities for adaptation, and 5% even see it as a chance for transformation.”**

It is important to note that the express survey is based on an online poll conducted among representatives of 73 Ukrainian non-governmental organisations that have experience working with USAID or depend on its funding. Only 10% of respondents had no experience of cooperation with USAID, and 8% had negotiated funding; the rest had received grants from USAID, acted as contractors or implementing partners, or participated in USAID programmes or events. As demonstrated below, based on the results of the “Social indicators” quantitative survey, the entire sample of CSOs is characterised by a significantly lower degree of connection with USAID. Logically, the organisations that participated in the express survey felt a significant negative impact from the termination of funding.

<sup>103</sup> The impact of USAID funding cuts on Ukraine's civil society: research findings. 17 February 2025.

<https://ngonetwork.org.ua/vplyv-prypynennya-finansuvannya-usaid-na-gromadskyj-sektor-ukrayiny-rezultaty-doslidzhennya/>



**The Legal Development Network**<sup>104</sup> reports<sup>105</sup> that the termination of USAID funding has significantly affected the activities of 22 member organisations of the union: justice centres, shelters for IDPs, resource centres have suspended their work, advocacy campaigns, training for vulnerable groups, outreach consultations, and retraining programmes have been put on hold. This has reduced the number of legal consultations, fewer trips to remote settlements and a decrease in legal awareness-raising activities. Organisations risk losing experts and winding down their activities, especially in communities with urgent social needs. Due to a lack of funding, they are forced to seek alternative resources and adapt their working models to maintain support for the population during the war.

The suspension of USAID funding in 2025 has caused a systemic crisis among **Ukrainian women's human rights CSOs**<sup>106</sup>. A survey of 99 women-led organisations and women's rights organisations found that 73% of them experienced significant disruptions to their work, and 93% reported the suspension of at least one programme around equality, diversity and inclusion. The areas most affected were gender-based violence, psychosocial support, women's economic empowerment and gender advocacy. In total, at least 109,000 beneficiaries lost access to basic services. As a result of the suspension of funding:

- **67% of organisations** have reduced their staff;
- **64%** have unpaid bills;
- **53%** are unable to fulfil their contractual obligations;
- **44%** predict closure within three months.

Financial instability threatens the long-term sustainability of the sector, and 40% of women's rights CSOs do not have access to additional resources. This situation is expected to lead to a deterioration in the situation of women and girls, increased competition between organisations and a decline in the influence of the women's movement. Despite this, organisations are demonstrating resilience by seeking new sources of funding, expanding partnerships and forming coalitions.

Available data show that the suspension/termination of US assistance had a significant negative impact on CSOs that received US funding, including many capable and effective organisations that helped address critical social needs. However, the limited nature of this data, which is relevant to specific areas of CSO activity or to those who dealt with USAID, does not allow these findings to be extrapolated to the entire civil society sector. Even if a CSO did not receive USAID funding, its situation could still have deteriorated due to increased competition for remaining funding and the broader impact of reduced US support on the financial capacity of the state and the population.

<sup>104</sup> All-Ukrainian public union uniting legal aid providers.

<sup>105</sup> Yulia Bilyk. 19 February 2025. How the termination of USAID funding affected the work of member organisations of the Legal Development Network. <https://ldn.org.ua/event/yak-prypynennia-finansuvannia-usaid-vplynulo-na-robotu-chlenskykh-orhanizatsiy-merezhi-pravovoho-rozvytku/>

<sup>106</sup> The impact of the suspension of US foreign aid on Ukrainian women's organisations. Rapid assessment. 12 March 2025. [https://reliefweb.int/attachments/56307c6c-a13f-42a3-904a-e39bfc32b777/UA\\_FINAL\\_Rapid%20Assessment\\_Report.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/attachments/56307c6c-a13f-42a3-904a-e39bfc32b777/UA_FINAL_Rapid%20Assessment_Report.pdf)



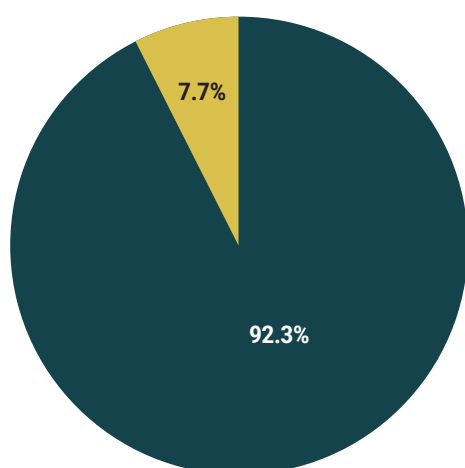
## 14.2. The extent of civil society engagement with USAID: results of a quantitative study

By January 2025, when funding for all USAID programmes and projects in Ukraine was suspended, 7.7% of the organisations that participated in the “Social indicators” quantitative study received funding from this donor. CSOs operating at the regional level were more likely than local and national organisations to receive USAID funding—12.3% versus 6.2% and 5.3%, respectively. However, a much larger share – 27.1% of the organisations that participated in the study – benefited from or received support from USAID-funded programmes, even if they did not receive funding directly.

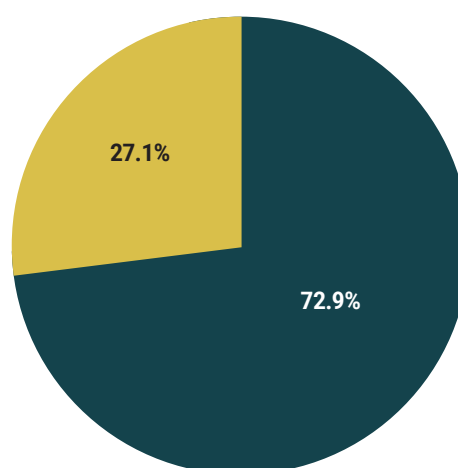
### Percentage of CSOs that received funding from USAID and benefited from or were supported by USAID-funded programs (e.g., training, participation in events, access to platforms for sharing experiences, etc.)

% of all CSO respondents

■ Did not receive    ■ Received



Funding from USAID



Benefits or support from USAID-funded programs

Question 1. Did your organisation receive funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) before January 2025?

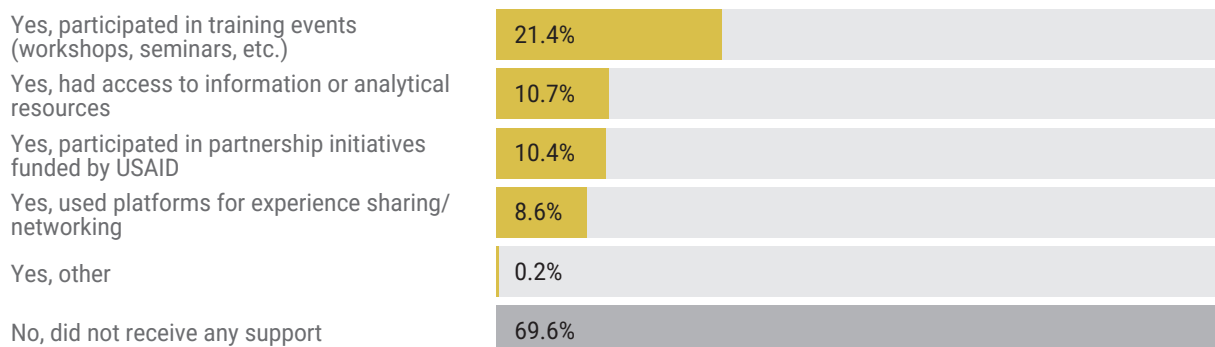
Question 2. Did your organisation receive any benefits or support from USAID-funded programs (e.g., training, participation in events, access to platforms for sharing experiences, etc.), even if you did not receive funding from USAID directly?

These organisations participated in training events (21.4% of the total sample), received access to information and analytical resources (10.7%), participated in partnership initiatives funded by USAID (10.4%), used platforms for experience sharing/networking (8.6%), and received other support (0.2%).



## Receiving indirect benefits or support from USAID-funded programs

% of all NGOs/COs, multiple choice



Question: Did your organisation receive any benefits or support from USAID-funded programs (e.g., training, participation in events, access to platforms for sharing experiences, etc.), even if you did not receive funding from USAID directly?

### 14.3. Impact of the termination of USAID funding: results of a quantitative study

57% of CSOs that received either international funding, USAID funding, or indirect benefits from USAID-funded programmes felt a direct (22%) or indirect (35%) impact on their activities from suspending USAID projects and programmes in Ukraine. At the same time, 43% of CSOs that received either international or USAID funding did not feel the impact of the suspension of funding for USAID projects and programmes in Ukraine

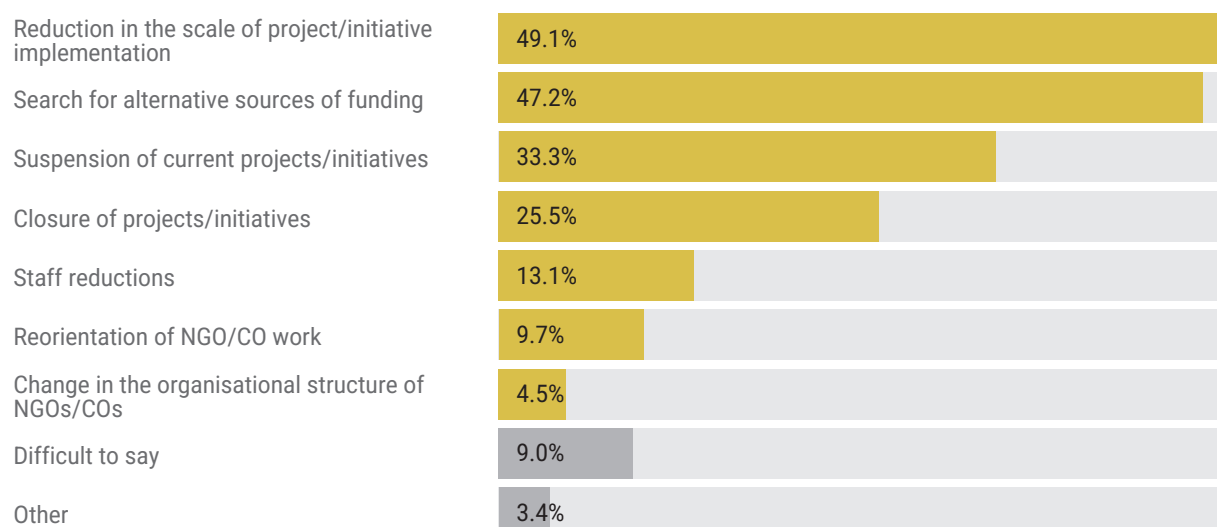
**In other words, one in five Ukrainian CSOs (22.3%) felt either a direct or indirect impact from the suspension of USAID operations.**

For those organisations affected by the suspension of funding, the most common consequence is a reduction in the scale of projects or initiatives (49.1%). CSOs also felt the need to seek alternative sources of funding (47.2%) and faced the suspension (33.3%) and closure (25.5%) of ongoing projects or initiatives. Respondents also highlighted staff reductions (13.1%), reorientation of CSO activities (9.7%) and changes to the organisational structure of their CSOs (4.5%) as consequences.



## Consequences of the suspension of USAID-funded projects and programs for the functioning of CSOs

% of NGOs/COs affected by the suspension of USAID funding, multiple choice, n=267



Question: What are the consequences for the functioning of your NGO/CO of the suspension of funding for projects and programs in Ukraine by the US Agency for International Development (USAID)?

Survey participants who had already experienced staff reductions due to the suspension of USAID-funded projects and programmes were asked to estimate potential staff losses in case of a permanent halt to USAID funding. 29.4% of organisations estimated potential staff losses at up to 10% of their total workforce, while another 20.6% estimated losses at 11–25% of their workforce. At the same time, more than a quarter (26.5%) of participants indicated a risk of losing 26–50% of their staff, and another 8.8% – 51–75% of their staff. Complete or almost complete loss of staff at the level of 75–100% threatens 14.7% of such organisations. Although the number of organisations that have had to reduce their staff due to the suspension of USAID funding is small in the data set, the potential loss of human resources for these organisations will be significant.

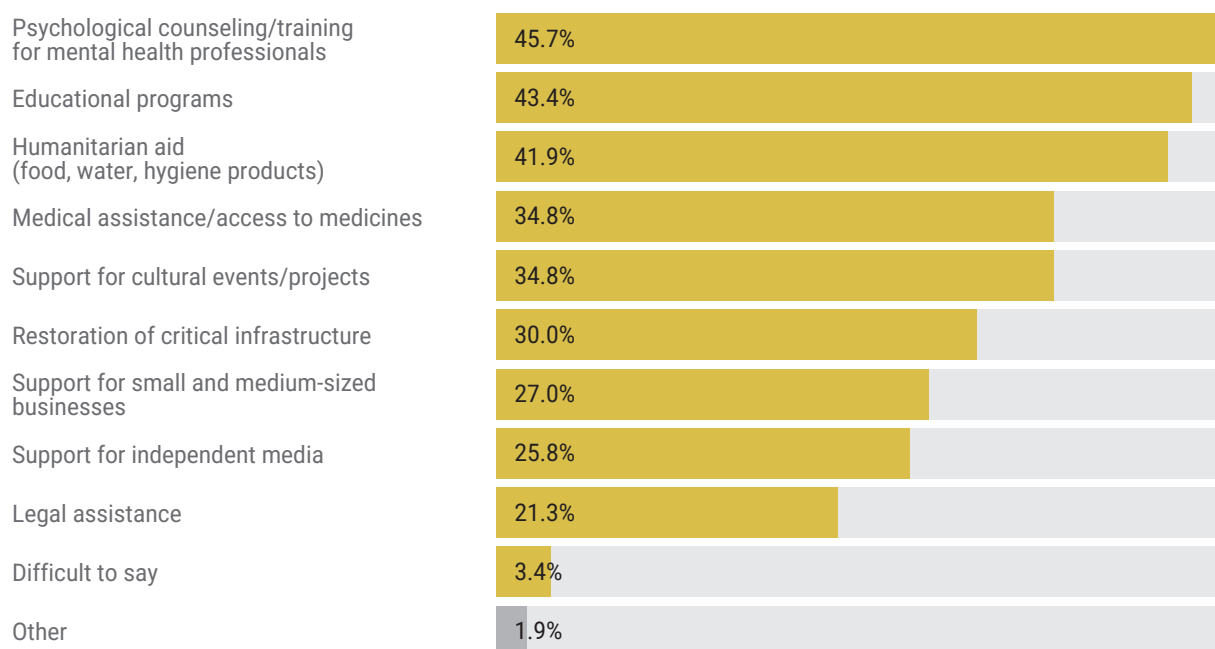
The range of services funded by USAID that remain critical to beneficiaries and the CSO community is quite broad. According to respondents, the most essential services are psychological counselling and training for mental health professionals (45.7%), educational programmes (43.4%) and humanitarian aid (41.9%). Next in priority are medical assistance (34.8%), support for cultural events (34.8%), and restoration of critical infrastructure (30%). To a lesser extent, but also critically important, are support for small and medium-sized businesses (27%), support for independent media (25.8%) and legal assistance (21.3%). This list reflects the wide range of activities that USAID supported in Ukraine, which are now at risk of significant regression.





## USAID-funded services that are critical to CSO beneficiaries and community members where the organisation operates

% of NGOs/COs affected by the suspension of USAID funding, multiple choice, n=267



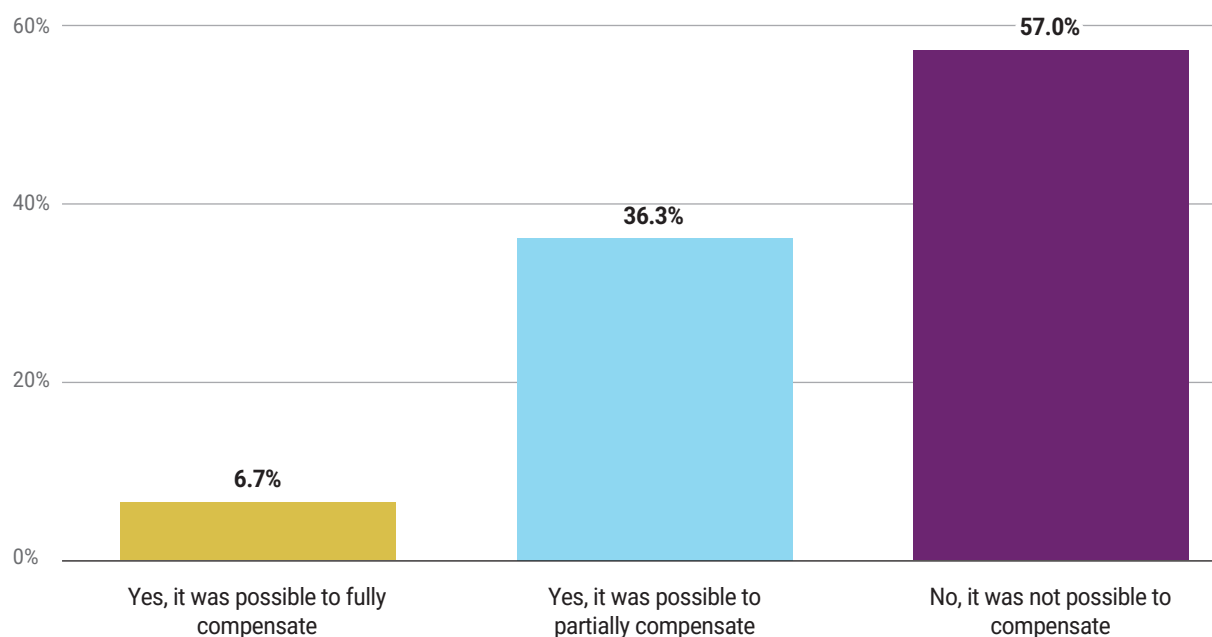
Question: Which USAID-funded services are critical to your beneficiaries and your community?

Most organisations affected by the suspension of USAID funding – 57 % – have been unable to compensate for the assistance provided by this donor. At the same time, some organisations have managed to pay for the lost USAID funding either partially (36.3%) or fully (6.7%) by finding new sources of funding.



## The extent to which CSOs have been able to compensate for the loss of USAID funding through other donors

% of CSOs affected by the suspension of USAID funding, n=267



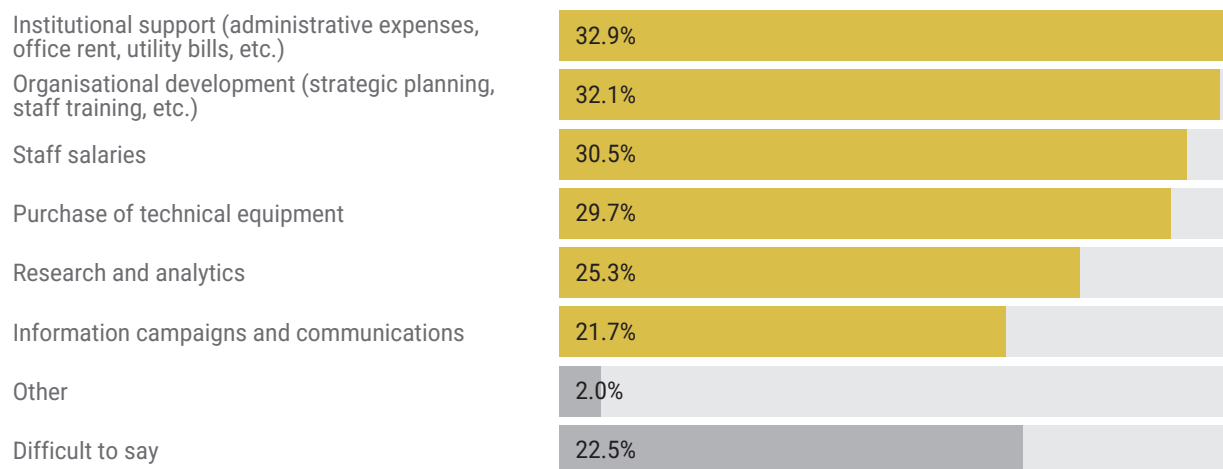
Question: Have you been able to compensate for the loss of USAID funding with other donors?

Organisations that were unable to wholly or partially compensate for the loss of USAID funding cited the following as the most vulnerable items of expenditure not covered by other donors: institutional support (32.9%), organisational development (32.1%) and staff salaries (30.5%). In addition, items such as the purchase of technical equipment (29.7%), research and analysis (25.3%) and information campaigns and communications (21.7%) were also identified as problematic areas for funding. This may indicate limited availability of alternative funding for specific areas that are important for maintaining the institutional capacity of CSOs.



## Expenses financed by USAID and not covered by other donors

% of CSOs that managed to partially/failed to compensate for the loss of USAID funding, multiple choice, n=249

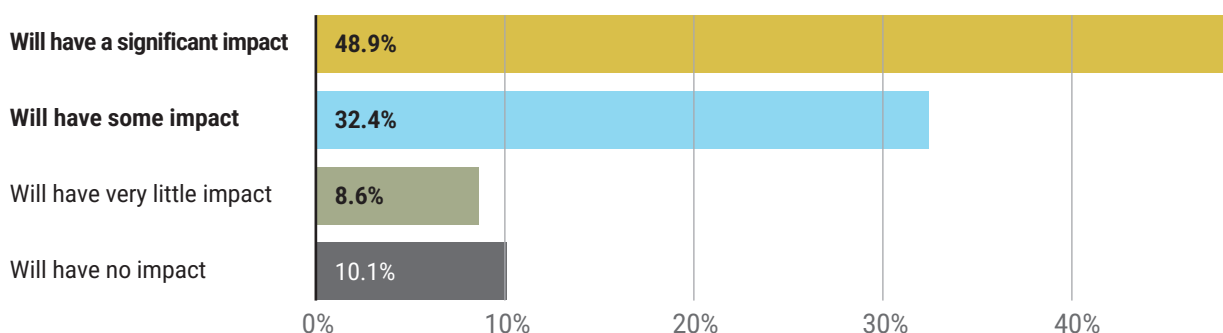


Question: From your personal experience, which of your organisation's USAID-funded expenses are NOT covered by other donors?

Almost every second respondent (48.9%) — this question was asked to all CSOs — believes that the suspension of USAID funding will have a significant impact on the activities of the civil society sector in Ukraine. In comparison, almost every third respondent (32.4%) thinks that it will have “some impact.” Only about 19% of respondents believe that the impact will be small or non-existent.

## Assessment of the impact of the suspension of USAID funding on the overall activities of the civil society sector in Ukraine

% of all CSOs



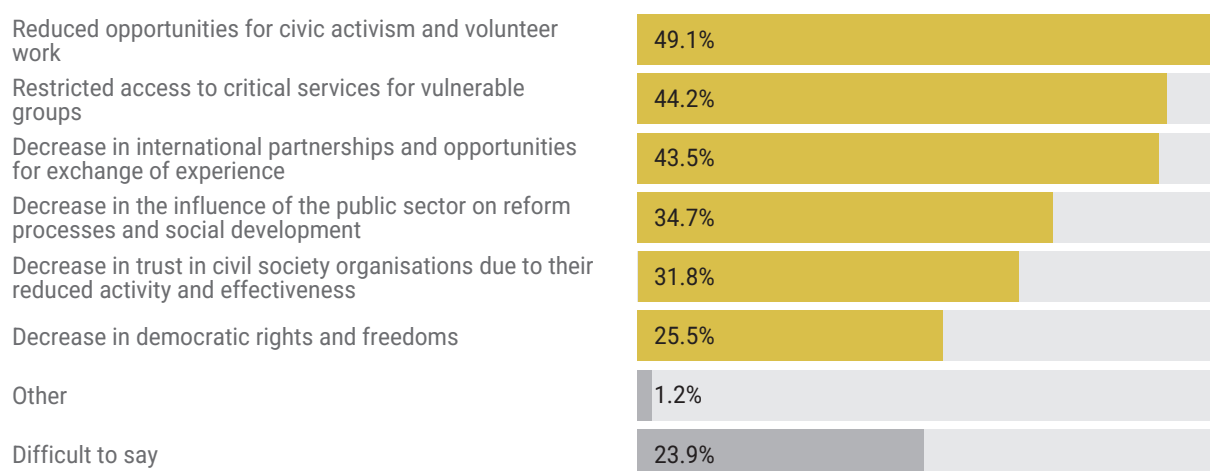
Question: Do you think that the suspension of funding for projects and programs by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) will affect the overall activities of the civil society sector in Ukraine? If so, to what extent?



According to respondents, the global consequences of the reduction in USAID assistance to the civil society sector and society in Ukraine will primarily be a reduction in opportunities for civic activism and volunteerism (49.1%), restricted access for vulnerable groups to critical services (44.2%), and fewer international partnerships and opportunities to share experiences (43.5%). In addition, other essential consequences include a reduction in the influence of the civil society sector on reform processes and societal development (34.7%), a decline in trust in civil society organisations due to their reduced activity and effectiveness (31.8%), and a decline in democratic rights and freedoms (25.5%). These potential consequences point to risks for the sustainable development of organisations and highlight the need to rethink approaches to financing and supporting the civil society sector to minimise the complex negative impact of losing this source of funding in the future.

## Potential consequences of USAID aid cuts for Ukraine's civil sector and society

% among CSOs, multiple choice



Question: What global consequences will the reduction in assistance from USAID projects and programs have for the civil sector and society in Ukraine?

According to respondents who answered an open-ended question (without suggested answers), the termination of USAID funding will most significantly affect areas that support socially vulnerable people and promote systemic change in society. These primarily include:

- **Assistance to vulnerable groups and IDPs** — 13.1% of respondents mentioned this area as the most sensitive.
- **Health care** — 11.9%.
- **Educational, training and awareness-raising initiatives** — 11.6%.
- **Culture, media and independent journalism** — 9.2%.



In addition, there are significant risks in the following areas:

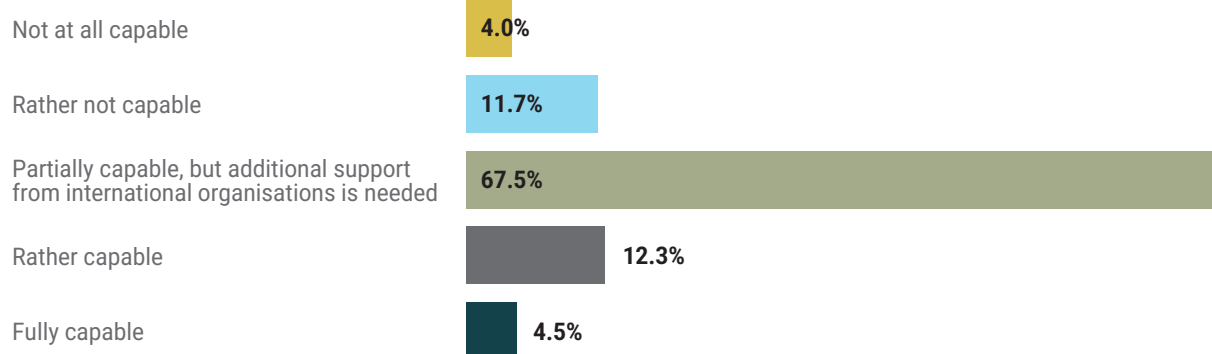
- **Humanitarian aid** – 7.1%.
- **Support for the army and veterans** – 6.8%.
- **Social services and protection** – 6.4%.
- **The entire public sector as a whole** – 6.3%.

Other areas that may be affected but received less than 5% of mentions include democracy development, infrastructure and reconstruction projects, institutional development of CSOs, anti-corruption initiatives, support for small and medium-sized businesses, youth work, human rights protection, volunteer development and environmental programmes. A significant proportion of respondents (39.1%) could not predict which areas would be most affected by the termination of USAID funding.

More than two-thirds of Ukrainian CSOs surveyed (67.5%) believe that the civil society sector is partially capable of addressing pressing issues related to supporting Ukrainian society that were previously discussed with assistance from USAID projects and programmes, provided that international organisations provide additional support. Another 12.3% of respondents assessed the sector's capacity as somewhat positive, while 4.5% are convinced of the civil society sector's complete self-sufficiency. At the same time, 11.7% of respondents tend not to believe in the ability of CSOs to perform these tasks independently, while 4% are confident that they can.

## Assessment of the ability of Ukrainian CSOs to independently address pressing issues related to supporting Ukrainian society, which were previously implemented with assistance from USAID

% of all CSOs



Question: How do you think Ukrainian CSOs are doing on their own these days in dealing with pressing issues related to supporting Ukrainian society, which used to be handled with help from USAID projects and programs?



## 14.4. Impact of USAID funding termination: qualitative research findings

The results of the qualitative interviews are consistent with the quantitative survey data and allow us to describe the impact of the termination of USAID funding as a chain reaction of negative consequences that lead to further problems. Respondents highlighted the specific following implications:

- **Frozen or cancelled projects.** *"Some had signed contracts that were simply stopped at once," "some had been negotiating for several months and also came to a complete halt."* This set back the development of specific areas: ideas were left without resources, and teams without work. Even within the government, some reforms stalled because, as some respondents noted, *"much of the work was done by USAID contractors for government stakeholders."* In other words, it not only halted CSO projects but also joint initiatives with government agencies.
- **Financial shock and a hole in the budgets of organisations.** Some CSOs had to take emergency measures to save money: cutting costs, abandoning expansion plans, freezing hiring, etc. Organisations overworked themselves in search of alternative funds, as they had to compensate for lost budgets quickly. This distracted CSOs from their core activities and increased the workload on managers and grant writers. In fact, for some CSOs, the first half of 2025 was marked by a search for money to survive.
- **Staff reductions and brain drain from CSOs.** Some CSOs faced the need to reduce their staff and lay off employees at their request. This was a direct consequence of the uncertainty following the disappearance of part of the sector's funding, which USAID had provided. Specialists began to look for more stable jobs (sometimes in the commercial sector or abroad). Respondents emphasise that 2025 differs from 2022–2023 precisely in terms of a "staff shortage": at that time, there was growth and an influx of people, and now there is an outflow. This is particularly noticeable in the media sector, which has historically been heavily dependent on donors (investigative and regional media projects). Now these projects are under threat: journalists have either been laid off or demotivated due to funding cuts.

**"...in 2025, people started looking for other jobs en masse and even other industries. As a result, we lost a significant amount of intellectual horsepower and continue to lose more. People are worried about tomorrow; they are dissatisfied with their salaries, which have decreased. And the fact that there is no stability or understanding of how we will be working in a few months is, of course, stressful and demotivating for many."**



- **Increased competition and pessimism in the sector.** The disappearance of USAID has created an effect that one respondent described as follows: *“The expectation is that things will only get worse.”* Competition between CSOs for grants from other donors has increased sharply. However, as mentioned, this has significantly reduced everyone’s chances – *“the chances have decreased significantly... the competition is fierce.”* According to respondents, there is a mood of anxiety in the sector: those who *“miraculously survive in such conditions”* will remain, while many CSOs may close by the end of 2025.
- **Negative impact on the capacity of the authorities and the ability of civil society to monitor their actions.** Respondents note that some of the expert work for the authorities, as well as measures to monitor the authorities, was carried out by CSO experts funded by donor programmes, as the state and society cannot afford to pay for their work at market prices.

“Well, we have many processes related to monitoring the activities of government structures at various levels, strengthening their expertise at various levels and in various areas, which depend heavily on donor support. This is because the government doesn’t always have the right structures to bring in the right experts, either from abroad or within the country. After all, they don’t have the right budgets or funds, and you need to have the resources to bring in skilled people. That’s why donor organisations have played and continue to play a big role here, which I think is one of the key factors.”

“This means that the state may also not receive the support it previously received. In the long term, this could lead to a certain loss of our capacity, not only as civil society organisations, but also as a state as a whole.”

- **Weakening of democracy and increased risks of disinformation, due to reduced media funding.** According to the respondents of in-depth interviews, regional media projects are likely to suffer the most among CSO activities. This, in turn, will weaken resistance to disinformation and negatively affect the level of democracy in the country.

“This even affects the level of democracy, because if many media outlets, especially local ones, have been developed with USAID funding, they will no longer exist, and we understand that the media is one of the pillars of democracy... Fewer media organisations will be able to counter disinformation, and in a war situation, this is also a major threat.”



**“And quality journalism in the regions is now at risk of disappearing as a field of activity. I have concluded that all the previous efforts that have been invested by us as an editorial office, donors and the international community in the development of regional journalism could be wiped out and lost this year.”**

According to one of the respondents, the negative impact on the media sector will be long-term due to the destruction of the established “workshop” of professionals who have already mastered the necessary skills but are now leaving the sector due to payment problems and instability.

**“The loss of strategic optimism, specifically in our field, means that if the war ends in some form and reconstruction begins, everything risks spiralling out of control due to the weakening of the media. First and foremost, people will leave. Instead of getting involved right away in covering the processes and monitoring the money, we will have to start from scratch, hire students, and learn how to use Prozorro. And then there is the question of who will teach them? If we all scatter like mice among people?”**

- **The possibility of new alternative donors emerging who will pursue their interests, incompatible with the values of democratic development.** The reduction of grant support from traditional “value-based” donors creates a vacuum that other actors can quickly fill with their geopolitical ambitions. For Ukraine, this means not only a shortage of funds, but also the risk of a regulatory rollback. Donors focused primarily on political or resource influence may have their own goals and not require adherence to democratic principles, transparency and accountability. If CSOs are forced to accept their funds, they will gradually lower the bar for democratic standards in their activities.

**“...the fact that the amount of donor money that works following the principles of transparency, accountability, reporting and all that is decreasing will have a negative impact, because it will create an opportunity not only in Ukraine for other money to come in that will not be so principled, such as Chinese or Russian money, which is less ethical, and then we will either be left without funding for important projects that we simply cannot do with other funds, or other donors will come in who have a completely different agenda that is not always compatible with ours.”**





- **Risk of Ukraine's reduced presence in the international information space and opportunities to lobby for assistance.** Reduced international support for CSOs may lead to a reduction in Ukraine's information presence abroad. Previously, Ukrainian organisations worked actively to ensure that Ukraine's voice was heard in the media and among Western politicians, lobbying for important issues through real-life examples and personal stories. The scale of this activity has already been reduced and could potentially weaken Ukraine's position in the war by reducing the volume and responsiveness of Western support, which largely depends on constant communication and information pressure on decision-makers

**"...the most obvious risk is a reduction in Ukraine's visibility and voice abroad. Previously, there was a lot of this; there were many organisations, the media there could write in English, and it was all about Ukraine's presence in the information space and in activities in the West. Now there will be much less of this, and it is already happening."**

Thus, the consequences of the suspension of USAID funding, which are already being observed and predicted by respondents in in-depth interviews, can be summarised as follows: financial crisis for many CSOs; the curtailment/pause in the implementation of some projects; the outflow of personnel to other sectors; a sharp increase in competition for available resources; an increase in the workload and burnout of CSO staff; pessimistic moods in the public sector; and, as a result, the weakening of civil society and the state in the short term. This, in turn, harms society (less government control, less assistance to people, less independent information, less international advocacy).



## 15. Problems of localising humanitarian activities

### 15.1. Review of existing research and publications

The problem of localising humanitarian response and CSO work has existed in Ukraine for a long time, but it has become even more relevant since the start of the full-scale war in 2022. For example, in June of that year, the **Humanitarian Outcomes** programme, commissioned by the **UK Centre for Humanitarian Innovation**, conducted and published an express review entitled “**Supporting local initiatives: New humanitarian priorities in Ukraine. March–May 2022.**”<sup>107</sup> In the summary of the study, the authors, who analysed international aid to Ukraine, use the term “localisation failure” to critically assess the slow and insufficient involvement of local CSOs and volunteers by international organisations in the first months of the war. The latest published studies, such as the “**Annual Survey on the State of Localisation in Ukraine for 2024,**”<sup>108</sup> which was released in December 2024, indicate that no significant progress has been made in this area in the three years since the start of the full-scale invasion:

“Almost three years have passed since the start of the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but international organisations continue to maintain a monopoly on the financing of humanitarian response, management processes and policymaking in this area. Despite significant funding, support for pilot projects on localisation and the active participation of Ukrainian organisations, structural changes for the effective localisation of humanitarian aid have proved insufficient.”<sup>109</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Support local initiatives: New humanitarian priorities in Ukraine. March–May 2022. June 2022.

[https://humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/ukraine\\_review\\_june\\_ukr.pdf](https://humanitarianoutcomes.org/sites/default/files/publications/ukraine_review_june_ukr.pdf)

<sup>108</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>

<sup>109</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>



The authors of the study **“Expectations and Challenges of Grantmakers in Ukraine,”**<sup>110</sup> published in April 2025, come to the same conclusion:

**“The ‘localisation’ of aid has also intensified, i.e. an increase in the share of resources provided directly to local organisations, bypassing large international organisations involved in re-granting and managing grant funding. As part of a broader global trend, Ukrainian activists and organisations called on international donors to give them more power and direct resources, as local structures often worked faster and more efficiently than cumbersome external mechanisms. In response, the largest donors declared their support for these principles. However, in practice, the implementation of these intentions has encountered several obstacles. As of early 2023, large agencies still mainly funded Ukraine’s humanitarian response indirectly, through international NGOs and institutions, while direct funding of Ukrainian organisations remained rather exceptional. Progress began to emerge in the spring of 2023 only a year after the full-scale invasion. The UHF<sup>111</sup> announced a new round of grants fully focused on local principles, with almost half of the funds (about \$35 million) going directly to Ukrainian NGOs (compared to about 18% a year earlier).”**<sup>112</sup>

The authors of the **“Annual Survey...”**<sup>113</sup> indicate that less than 1% of humanitarian aid funding tracked by the UN was directed directly to local/national Ukrainian actors<sup>114</sup>. Citing economic analysis presented in the publication **Passing the Buck: The Economics of Localising Aid in Ukraine**<sup>115</sup>, the authors report that **“local/non-state organisations are 15.5%–32% more cost-effective than international actors.”** According to the “Annual Survey...,”<sup>116</sup> local and national Ukrainian NGOs carry out more than 50% of humanitarian work but receive only about 33–35% of funding, often in kind rather than cash. The researchers emphasise that well-known localisation problems remain:

**“These are primarily: 1) lack of access to sufficient multi-year funding; 2) burdensome reporting requirements and lengthy due diligence processes; 3) lack of administrative resources to successfully navigate these processes; 4) long waiting times for grants and significant delays in the disbursement of funding tranches.”**<sup>117</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Expectations and challenges of grantmakers in Ukraine. 29 April 2025.

[philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina](https://philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina)

<sup>111</sup> The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund (UHF) <https://response.reliefweb.int/ukraine/uhf>

<sup>112</sup> Expectations and challenges of grantmakers in Ukraine. 29 April 2025.

[philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina](https://philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina)

<sup>113</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>

<sup>114</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>

<sup>115</sup> Passing the Buck: The Economics of Localising Aid in Ukraine. 23 July 2024.

<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports-briefs/passing-the-buck-the-economics-of-localizing-aid-in-ukraine/>

<sup>116</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>

<sup>117</sup> Annual survey on the state of localisation in Ukraine for 2024. 24 December 2024.

<https://east-sos.org/publications/shhorichne-opytuvannya-shhodo-stanu-lokalizacziyi-v-ukrayini-za-2024-rik/>



The authors of the report **“The Impact of the Freeze and Reduction of U.S. Foreign Aid to Ukraine,”**<sup>118</sup> published in March 2025, indicate that the situation with the localisation of humanitarian aid and the work of CSOs will deteriorate due to the reduction in U.S. funding:

**“Almost all clusters and working groups surveyed reported the loss of NGO co-chairs or coordination capacity at the subnational level. These included representatives of international and local NGOs, who often speak Ukrainian and have successful links with national and local NGOs and CSOs at the subnational level, posing significant risks to localisation efforts (KII 04/03/2025 b; KII 06/03/2025 a). Funding cuts are likely to affect ongoing discussions on changing the coordination of the response to the situation in Ukraine.”**<sup>119</sup>

The authors of the study **“Expectations and Challenges of Grantmakers in Ukraine”**<sup>120</sup> identify the following structural reasons for the relative failure of localisation: a significant proportion of Ukrainian CSOs (especially new ones) do not have sufficient skills and resources to meet donors’ strict requirements for financial reporting and due diligence, and the donors themselves are unable to manage a large number of small grants adequately:

**“This leads donors to prefer funding a few large international implementers, who then sub-delegate funds to local actors. This approach reduces risks for donors but also weakens the direct capacity development of the Ukrainian sector and limits the amount of funds directly directed to addressing local problems. In addition, donors are traditionally wary of corruption risks and the possible misuse of funds – this is often used to explain the limited direct funding of local organisations.”**<sup>121</sup>

The problem of due diligence for Ukrainian CSOs is also highlighted by the authors of the report **“No More Excuses: Prioritising Local Leadership in Cash Assistance Programmes in Ukraine”**<sup>122</sup>:

**“Finally, another serious problem for local organisations remains the need to overcome the bureaucratic burden of regular comprehensive financial and legal due diligence and capacity assessments, which require significant resources.”**<sup>123</sup>

<sup>118</sup> UKRAINE: Implications of the US foreign aid cuts on humanitarian, development, and government-led programmes. 31 March 2025.

<https://home.ednannia.ua/analytics/data-catalog/408>

<sup>119</sup> UKRAINE: Implications of the US foreign aid cuts on humanitarian, development, and government-led programmes. 31 March 2025.

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<sup>120</sup> Expectations and challenges for grantmakers in Ukraine. 29 April 2025.

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<sup>121</sup> Expectations and challenges of grantmakers in Ukraine. 29 April 2025.

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<sup>122</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, Open Space Works Ukraine (2025) “No More Excuses: Prioritising Local Leadership in Cash Assistance Programmes in Ukraine”, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)

<sup>123</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, Open Space Works Ukraine (2025) “No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine”, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)



The two studies mentioned above (“**Annual Survey...**” and “**Expectations and Challenges...**”) reach similar conclusions that the declared localisation goals are being implemented very slowly by donors in Ukraine due to significant inertia in bureaucratic requirements and procedures on their part, which are changing very slowly. To minimise risks and the amount of administrative work, donors

**“...mostly direct grants to partners with established experience and reputation. This practice, although not intentional, limits access for new or inexperienced NGOs that have not yet gone through complex due diligence procedures.”<sup>124</sup>**

This situation creates a vicious circle: new CSOs cannot “jump over” the high requirements of donors for the quality of applications and reporting due to their lack of experience and low institutional capacity, while donors take the easy way out: they choose to work with experienced, capable organisations that can meet these high requirements.

The possibility of solving the problem of increasing the capacity of local CSOs through mentoring and support from more experienced and powerful national players is described by the authors of the study “**No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine.**”<sup>125</sup>

**“A key trend in localising humanitarian response is the growing role of national-level organisations in providing mentoring support to small local CSOs. This model strengthens the sustainability of aid initiatives, increases local ownership and provides smaller organisations with the skills and resources they need to operate independently. National organisations such as the Right to Protection Charitable Foundation have launched peer-to-peer capacity-building initiatives that enable local organisations to participate more actively in the planning of cash assistance. Similarly, Caritas Odesa is working to formalise volunteer activities by transforming active community groups into legally recognised CSOs. Through training in financial management and grant writing, these newly established organisations have gained access to various funding sources and the ability to work autonomously, reducing their dependence on a single donor. Although many of these groups continue to operate voluntarily, their acquisition of official status marks an essential shift towards strengthening local leadership in humanitarian response initiatives.”<sup>126</sup>**

<sup>124</sup> Expectations and challenges of grantmakers in Ukraine. 29 April 2025.

[philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina](https://philanthropyinukraine.org/knowledge-hub/research/ochikuvannya-vyklyky-grantodavtsiv-ukrayina)

<sup>125</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, *Open Space Works Ukraine* (2025) “No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine”, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)

<sup>126</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, *Open Space Works Ukraine* (2025) “No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine”, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)



An obvious problem is not only the limited access of Ukrainian CSOs to funding, but also their exclusion from the planning and coordination of international humanitarian organisations' activities in Ukraine. The authors of the study **"Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation"**<sup>127</sup> believe that:

**"The planning of UNDP and other UN agencies' activities in Ukraine is not carried out with public involvement, and there is no public oversight of their activities."**<sup>128</sup>

Researchers who worked on the report **"No More Excuses: Prioritising Local Leadership in Cash Assistance Programmes in Ukraine"**<sup>129</sup> agree that there is a problem with the participation of Ukrainian CSOs in the coordination of humanitarian response, but they also note some progress:

**"Progress has also been made in ensuring greater involvement of Ukrainian CSOs in official coordination structures. The Cash Assistance Working Group (CWG) has adopted a more inclusive approach, providing simultaneous interpretation and more space for local actors. This has led to increased visibility for CSOs and strengthened their leadership roles, particularly now that the Ukrainian Red Cross Society has become co-chair of the Cash Working Group (CWG) and the Right to Protection Charitable Foundation co-chairs the Protection Cluster – important milestones on the path to achieving the localisation goals. However, participation in coordination structures does not always provide full decision-making powers, as humanitarian clusters often remain closed platforms that can only be accessed with the right connections."**<sup>130</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January–February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>128</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report, January–February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>129</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, *Open Space Works Ukraine* (2025) No More Excuses: Prioritising Local Leadership in Cash Transfer Programmes in Ukraine, DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)

<sup>130</sup> Ground Truth Solutions, *Open Space Works Ukraine* (2025) "No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine," DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)



The lack of voice and expertise of local organisations in programme planning and implementation reduces their effectiveness and inclusiveness, according to the authors of the study **“No more excuses...”**:

“One of the most pressing obstacles is that aid programmes are designed ‘at the top’, primarily in line with the requirements of international organisations and external political and strategic considerations, rather than based on direct requests from affected communities. Ukrainian CSOs often find themselves in the role of implementers who have no decision-making authority and must implement pre-planned aid projects that are difficult to adapt to local needs. The rigidity of the proposed programmes prevents CSOs from using their knowledge of the local context to improve the effectiveness and inclusiveness of cash assistance programmes.”<sup>131</sup>

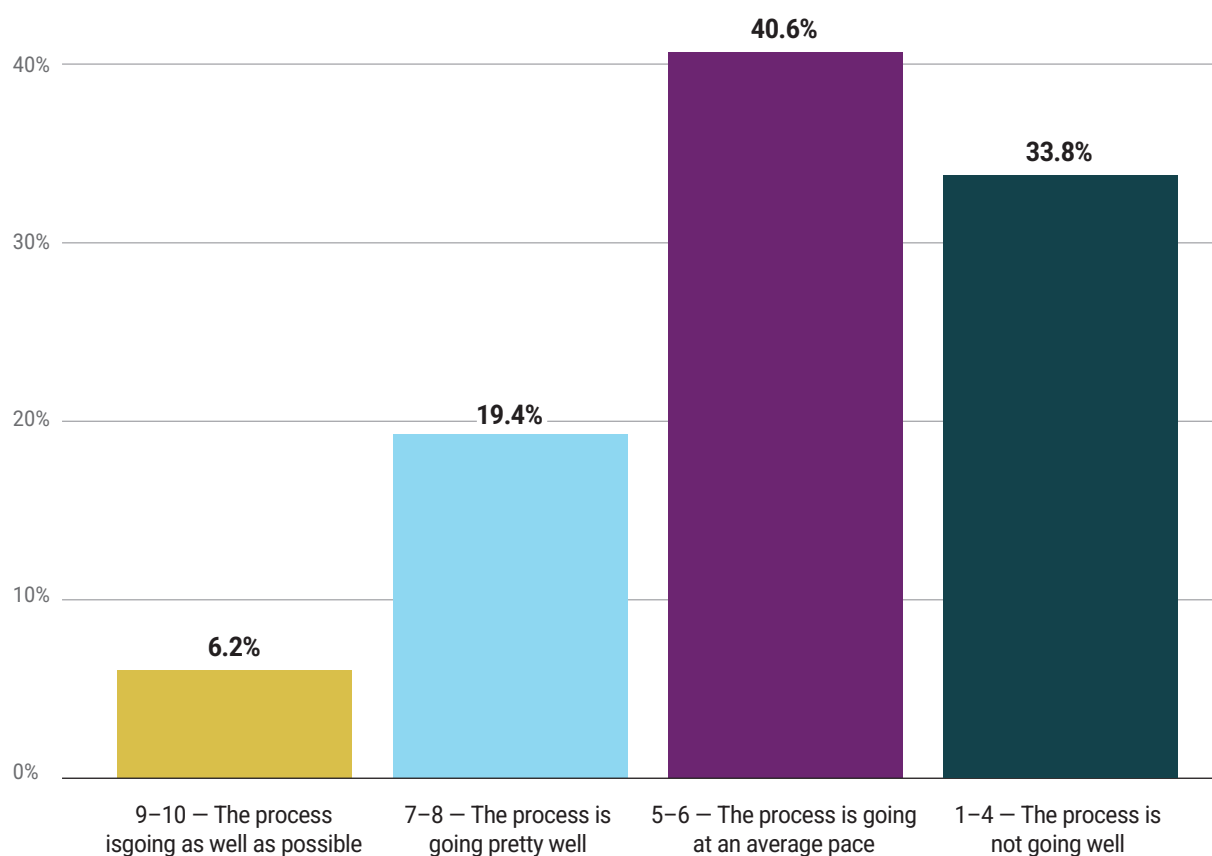
## 15.2. Quantitative survey results: assessment of localisation success

Respondents to the quantitative study are pretty sceptical about the localisation process — only 26% believe that it is proceeding rather/as successfully as possible (and only 6.2% consider it to be as successful as possible). Of the remaining 40.6% rated the success as “average” and 33.8% believed it to be unsuccessful overall. The assessment of the success of the localisation process does not depend on the geographical scope of CSO activities: local, regional, national, and international organisations give approximately the same answers to this question.

<sup>131</sup> *Ground Truth Solutions, Open Space Works Ukraine* (2025) “No more excuses: prioritising local leadership in cash assistance programmes in Ukraine,” DAI Global UK Ltd, United Kingdom. [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS\\_OpenSpace\\_STAAR\\_Ukraine\\_March2025\\_UKR.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62e895bdf6085938506cc492/t/68220e151b28c66b81ce6fae/1747062295796/GTS_OpenSpace_STAAR_Ukraine_March2025_UKR.pdf)



## Assessment of the localisation process – transfer of functions and responsibilities from international structures to Ukrainian CSOs



Question: Please assess how, in your opinion, the process of transferring functions and responsibilities from international structures to Ukrainian CSOs (localisation) is going. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means that this is almost or entirely absent, and 10 means that the process is going as successfully as possible.

### 15.3. Qualitative research results: the problem of localisation

Respondents to in-depth interviews also often believe that the localisation process is not progressing very quickly or successfully. According to respondents, international players declare their intention to transfer powers to Ukrainians, but for various reasons are often unwilling to trust local expertise fully. *“Local staff can only reach a certain level; all management positions are reserved for international experts,”* says one respondent. This means that even if the project implementers are Ukrainians, the head of the mission or programme director is often a foreigner who approves decisions. Respondents consider this approach not always justified. Respondents advocate, first, for localisation of personnel: more Ukrainians in management positions, transfer of knowledge and gradual independent programme management; second, for a change in donors’ approaches to working with local CSOs: direct funding of Ukrainian organisations without intermediaries, simplification of requirements, and a focus on strengthening local actors.





According to some respondents, the problem of administrative intermediaries is quite acute, and CSO representatives advocate direct funding of projects by donors, without the accumulation of unnecessary structures. Reducing the costs of administering CSO work by coordinating structures and increasing the costs of the CSOs' project activities would be beneficial. This opinion was expressed in the responses of several respondents.

**"...and when the money was distributed through 3–4 companies, that is, some received a grant, which was distributed among the other four, and those four then distributed it through... and it was a cascade and a thick layer of organisations that passed the money through themselves, they simply ate up a large share, and this is also a big problem. There were a lot of organisations that distributed this aid and did not do any real work, but simply distributed the money. This is a huge minus, which must also be considered and considered strategically."**

Respondents to in-depth interviews confirm the conclusions of the literature review regarding the very low percentage of international funding received by Ukrainian CSOs themselves.

**"We realised for the first time that it looks very unfair that 0–6% of funds go to Ukrainian organisations, while all the rest receive a lot of money for management and very high salaries for functions and roles that we can perform not only better, but also without additional effort, such as translators or something else. In other words, it became clear that something needed to be addressed, and today I can see how localisation is moving out of obscurity."**

Representatives of Ukrainian CSOs are trying to raise these problematic issues at public events openly:

**"...at several events, I asked the question, 'Do you consider it fair that only 20% of funding goes to Ukrainian organisations on the front line? Well, the share should be increased; as far as I know, it should be between 20 and 50%. How are you working on this?'"**

Overall, in-depth interviews show that Ukrainian CSOs are eager and ready to take on a leadership role in development and humanitarian aid projects. They have proven their ability — often, according to respondents, they do the job better and faster because they understand the context and have unique experience and working approaches. *"Ukrainians can create better solutions... no international structure could do something like [our successful foundations],"* one respondent said emotionally, pointing to the example of the Come Back Alive Foundation, which has built a unique system of assistance to the army. Sub-grant mechanisms and simplified reporting for local partners are considered valid, as they will ensure the real transfer of knowledge and funds to the ground. The war has shown that Ukrainian civil society can do a considerable amount of work — now international



actors should be bolder in delegating powers and resources to local CSOs. According to CSO representatives, the Ukrainian civil society sector has passed a particular point of saturation with international experience, practices and approaches. It has gained its own unique experience “on the ground” in the unique and challenging conditions of war. It is therefore ready to be an autonomous and successful partner of the Ukrainian authorities without exceptional control or methodological assistance from international structures.

**“At the very beginning, we needed their help. Today, I believe that we have learned a lot from the standards they wanted to share with us, from protocol policies... They gave us a lot, and I am very grateful to their citizens, country, and governments for this assistance. But today, in the fourth year of the war, when our system has demonstrated the maximum capacity of our institutions and shown maximum stability, today, as representatives of local actors, we can be excellent assistants to our ministries, each in our sector, filling in the gaps and fixing the bugs that arise where our help is needed, so that the ministry’s strategy is in line with our vision. We can move forward not in opposition to the ministry’s strategy, but in support of it.”**

At the same time, according to respondents, the process of localisation in a broad sense is hampered by monopolisation within the Ukrainian civil society sector itself. They believe that donors are used to working with a limited circle of well-known CSOs and do not always trust lesser-known ones. This can lead to a paradoxical situation: money is localised, but it goes to the same big players, while hundreds of small initiatives are left out. One of the respondents drew attention to this, warning of the risk of the sea of CSOs turning into a “swamp” with a few stakeholders. That is why successful localisation must include decentralisation within the sector.

**“And again, diversification, because very often in Ukraine, the same organisations receive funding from the same donors for many years, because ‘we already know them, we have already worked with them, so that’s how it should be, we trust them and that’s it’. This is bad practice. We need to diversify a little, because this long-term cooperation with the same people is very disruptive. Because the same ones, over time, are not very conscientious, being confident that they have a steady income for many years, that they are trusted, they do not make any progress, no changes, but simply work as they did 10 years ago, because they are confident that there will be funding.”**

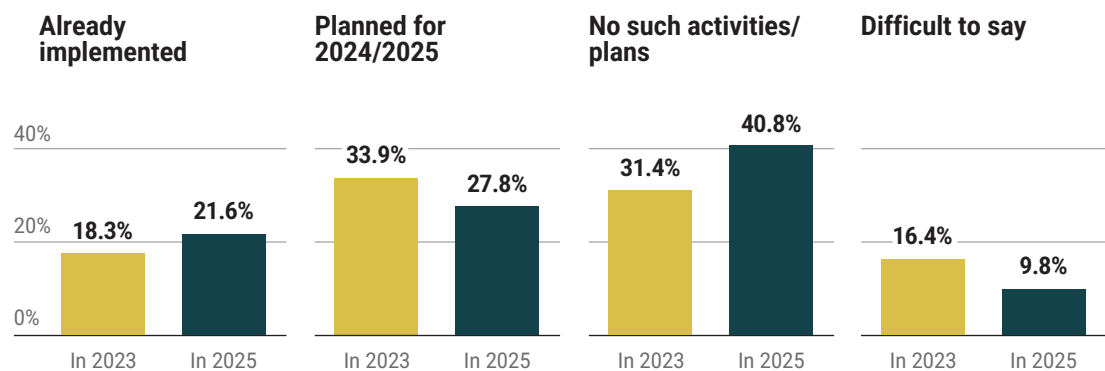
# 16. Participation and plans of CSOs in the Recovery of Ukraine

## 16.1. Results of the quantitative survey

A comparison of the results of two waves of CSO surveys shows that in 2025, the share of organisations implementing projects for the recovery of Ukraine increased slightly from 18.3% to 21.6%<sup>132</sup>. On the other hand, significantly fewer CSOs plan to implement such initiatives in 2025: the indicator decreased from 33.9% to 27.8%<sup>133</sup>. At the same time, the segment of CSOs with neither relevant activities nor intentions to start them has grown from 31.4% to 40.8%<sup>134</sup>, while the share of those who are undecided (“difficult to say”) has decreased from 16.4% to 9.8%.

### Current involvement and plans to participate in Ukraine’s recovery

% of all CSOs



Question (2025): Are your organisation’s projects and initiatives for the reconstruction of Ukraine currently being implemented or planned for 2025? Question (2023): Are your organisation’s projects and initiatives for the reconstruction of Ukraine currently being implemented or planned for 2024?

<sup>132</sup> The difference in proportions is significant at the level of  $p = 0.032$

<sup>133</sup> The difference in proportions is significant at the level of  $p = 0.001$

<sup>134</sup> The difference in proportions is significant at the level of  $p = 0.001$



In 2025, the participation of non-governmental and charitable organisations in recovery processes will vary significantly depending on the scale of their activities. Regional, national, and international structures are most actively involved in recovery: 25–28% of them are already implementing relevant projects. Among local organisations, only 16.5% are involved, and almost half (45.6%) have no initiatives or plans in this area at all.

The assessment of their own capacity to participate in recovery also shows a clear difference. Local organisations rarely report a high level (only 9.3% – “very high”), while international structures are much more confident in their capabilities (24.6% rated them very high). Regional and national CSOs occupy intermediate positions, predominating average ratings. Most respondents in all groups rated awareness of opportunities to participate in reconstruction as average or low; although local respondents were slightly more likely to report low awareness, no statistically significant differences were found here. Thus, the main gaps relate not to access to information, but to actual participation and capacity: the broader the geography of an organisation’s activities, the greater its integration into the recovery process.

Organisations implementing or planning to join the recovery processes in Ukraine soon consider their capacity to be above average – the overall assessment on a 5-point scale for 2023–2025 is 3.5 and 3.4 points, respectively. The results of the last two waves of the survey are quite similar: 7.4% of CSOs that were involved or planned to join the recovery in 2023 and 7.7% in 2025 considered their capacity in this area to be low/very low, 44.2% in 2023 and 45.4% in 2025 considered it average, and 44.2% in 2023 and 43.9% in 2025 considered it high or very high.

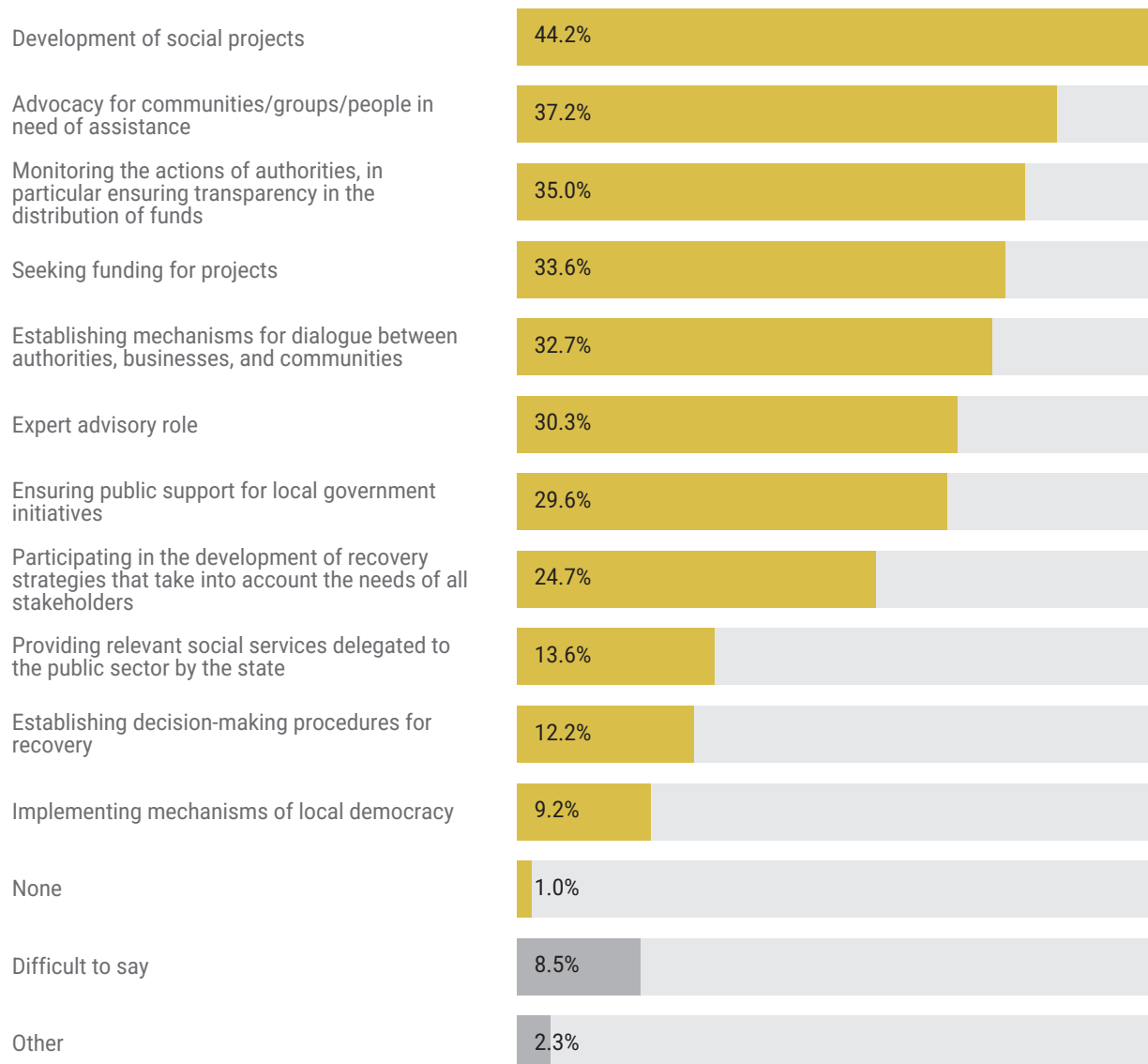
However, the assessment of awareness of existing opportunities for CSOs in the field of recovery is significantly lower than the assessment of their own capacity to participate in reconstruction processes. The average awareness rating on a 5-point scale was 2.6 points in 2023 and 2.5 points in 2025. The trends from the previous wave remain unchanged: one third (33.4% in 2023 and 34.7% in 2025) consider their level of awareness to be low or very low, 40.2% in 2023 and 37.7% in 2025 consider it average, and only 13.4% in 2023 and 13.7% in 2024 assess it as high or very high. Thus, although organisations mostly rate their ability to participate in recovery processes as above average, a lack of information about the opportunities available to them may hinder their involvement and prevent the civil society sector from realising its potential in the field of recovery and reconstruction.

Respondents’ answers about CSOs’ roles in the country’s recovery process can be divided into three types. First, programme and project work: developing social projects is the most popular response (44.2%), while seeking funding for projects (33.6%) and directly providing social services (13.6%) complement this practical area. Second, advocacy and monitoring: more than a third of respondents (37.2%) emphasise advocacy for the interests of communities and vulnerable groups, and almost as many (35%) emphasise public control over the transparency of government spending. This is complemented by expert and advisory support (30.3%) and ensuring public legitimacy for government initiatives (29.6%). Thirdly, a coordinating and strategic role: one third of organisations (32.7%) believe that CSOs should act as intermediaries in the dialogue between the authorities, business and the community, while a quarter (24.7%) believe that they should participate in the development of recovery strategies, based on the requests of all interested parties. Responses such as participation in procedural support for decision-making and the development of local democracy are less common. Only 1% of participants do not see any role for CSOs, while almost 9% are undecided.



## The roles that CSOs should play in recovery

% of all CSOs, multiple choice



Question: What is the main role that civil society organisations (CSOs) should play in Ukraine's recovery process?



## 16.2. The role of CSOs in Ukraine's recovery: an overview of existing research and publications

Ukrainian CSOs were key participants in the country's recovery in 2024–2025: they not only carried out humanitarian tasks but also were directly involved in planning reconstruction, searching for resources and monitoring their use. Researchers have noted this role of civil society in the past. For example, the authors of the analytical report **"Research on Post-War Recovery Initiatives"**<sup>135</sup> pointed to the key role of civil society in the recovery process:

**"The role of CSOs in recovery is vital: they are involved in almost all areas of recovery. Some needs, such as helping people repair and rebuild their homes, were met much more quickly by CSOs than by the state. CSOs play a key role in analysing and advocating for a 'green recovery' in Ukraine. CSOs partially address the problem of providing expert assistance to communities in developing recovery plans. Still, the scale of this task is so great that the efforts of CSOs and international donors alone may not be enough. Civil society plays a key role in the fight for open government data."**

According to this study, out of the 27 areas of recovery identified by the authors, CSOs were involved in 24. The top five areas in which the civil society sector was involved were

1. Reconstruction or repair of housing, educational and social infrastructure
2. Development of analytical plans for recovery
3. Promotion and advocacy of "green recovery"
4. Expert support to central and local authorities in the field of recovery
5. Creation of GIS systems/GIS registers<sup>136</sup>.

More than 52% of local communities that had a recovery plan as of April–May 2023 involved CSOs or community activists in its development<sup>137</sup>.

<sup>135</sup> Research on Post-War Recovery Initiatives. June 2023. [https://ednannia.ua/images/Master\\_version\\_UKR\\_Rebuilding.pdf](https://ednannia.ua/images/Master_version_UKR_Rebuilding.pdf)

<sup>136</sup> Research on Post-War Recovery Initiatives. June 2023. [https://ednannia.ua/images/Master\\_version\\_UKR\\_Rebuilding.pdf](https://ednannia.ua/images/Master_version_UKR_Rebuilding.pdf)

<sup>137</sup> Yashnik M. Research on recovery initiatives in Ukraine and the role of civil society in recovery processes: main findings of a comprehensive sociological study conducted in April–May 2023. 21 July 2023. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=1268&page=1>



However, despite the actual involvement of civil society in reconstruction, some analysts point out that the state has not created the legal and organisational framework for this participation:

**“None of the institutional and organisational processes we identified contain specific mechanisms for public participation in the planning or implementation of post-war reconstruction (recovery).”<sup>138</sup>**

**“In 2023, it became clear that the organisational and institutional processes of recovery from the consequences of Russian aggression would not include special mechanisms to ensure public participation. An exception may be the DREAM system, one of the unfinished elements of which is the eDem module, which is being developed to involve the public.”<sup>139</sup>**

The same opinion is expressed in the results of the study **“Civil Society Participation in Ukraine’s Recovery: How Authorities, Citizens, and Donors Can Strengthen Public Trust,”** published in 2023:

**“Work on planning the recovery is already in full swing, but there is still a lack of a clear basis for ensuring meaningful involvement of citizens and civil society in these processes.”<sup>140</sup>**

The Ukrainian Donors’ Platform emphasises the important role of Ukrainian civil society in the recovery process<sup>141</sup>, a coordination forum for major international donors and the Ukrainian authorities:

**“Ukrainian civil society offers innovative solutions for recovery and reconstruction, thereby contributing to the activities of the Ukrainian Donors’ Platform. This includes ideas and recommendations from civil society on areas for improvement; good practices and recommendations; insights on reform implementation; areas of support for recovery at the local and regional levels; and approaches to promoting inclusive, gender-sensitive and effective recovery, etc.”**

<sup>138</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January – February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>139</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January – February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>140</sup> Civil society participation in Ukraine’s recovery. How authorities, citizens and donors can strengthen public trust. June 2023. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/2023-06-15-giving-civil-society-stake-ukraines-recovery-lutsevych-ukrainian.pdf>

<sup>141</sup> Ukrainian Donors’ Platform. <https://ukrainedonorplatform.com/uk/main/>



**“The Ukrainian Donor Platform regularly cooperates with civil society within the Steering Committee and the Expert Group.**

**To date, the Ukrainian Donor Platform has held two events with civil society, including a dialogue event with the Steering Committee in Kyiv in April 2024 and an online meeting with the Expert Group in November 2024.”<sup>142</sup>**

However, civil society representatives are much more sceptical about their interaction with this institution. Here is how the authors of the study **“Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation”<sup>143</sup>** comment on this issue:

**“The Multilateral Donor Coordination Platform for Ukraine works closely with Ukrainian authorities and international financial institutions, but it is virtually closed to the public.”<sup>144</sup>**

The study **“Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society: Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update,”<sup>145</sup>** conducted by Chatham House in 2024, demonstrates the active participation of civil society in the processes of recovery and improvement of the quality of interaction with the authorities in this process:

**“Ukrainian civil society is already actively engaged in supporting recovery. Civil society organisations based in Kyiv report improvements in the state’s efforts to engage civil society compared to 2022.”<sup>146</sup>**

According to the results of this study, civil society considers the reintegration of veterans and support for the generation of children and young people who grew up in wartime and whose education was interrupted or terminated due to the war to be one of the key tasks for the country<sup>147</sup>. A survey of 218 CSOs showed that almost 80% of organisations are already implementing recovery measures at both national and regional levels. Compared to 2022, the level of involvement in recovery in Ukraine’s regions has increased significantly, by 21 percentage points<sup>148</sup>. The results of our quantitative survey of CSOs show a lower figure – about 22% of CSOs are implementing recovery initiatives.

<sup>142</sup> Civil society engagement. <https://ukrainedonorplatform.com/civil-society-engagement/>

<sup>143</sup> Andriy Andrusevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January – February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>144</sup> Andriy Andrusevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January – February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

<sup>145</sup> Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

<sup>146</sup> Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

<sup>147</sup> Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

<sup>148</sup> Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs – 2024 update. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>





According to the author of the study **“Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society: Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs — 2024 update,”**<sup>149</sup> CSOs mainly assist IDPs; children affected by the war; older people, people with disabilities and women (including female military personnel, victims of violence and those in need). Increasingly, CSOs, especially local ones, are supporting the mental health of the population — the level of involvement in this activity has increased from 27% in 2022 to 48% in 2024. In the regions, CSOs mainly provide practical assistance, while Kyiv-based and national organisations (about 60%) are involved in recovery planning with the government<sup>150</sup>.

Assessing the extent to which the state involves CSOs in the recovery process, the authors note that the situation has improved at the national level compared to 2022. At the regional level, the problem is less encouraging. As in 2022, most CSOs working outside the capital (63% of this cohort) report that the authorities involve them either to a limited extent or not at all in the recovery process<sup>151</sup>. At the same time, the authors of the study **“Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation,”** published in 2024, noted an increase in cooperation between civil society organisations and local authorities in specific post-war reconstruction projects in 2023<sup>152</sup>.

What types of CSO participation in reconstruction can be identified?

## 1. Assistance to communities in reconstruction

Civil society organisations work closely with communities to help develop comprehensive recovery plans and strengthen the capacity of local authorities. For example, expert CSOs (Spilno HUB, Agency for Recovery and Development, Cedos, Centre for Economic Strategy, etc.) train community representatives to write project documents, conduct workshops and provide practical advice on preparing comprehensive recovery strategies<sup>153</sup>. CSOs are also actively involved in the physical restoration of infrastructure and the creation of new infrastructure that did not exist before the start of the full-scale war. For example, ISAR “Ednannia,” together with partner CSOs, has opened 10 new youth centres and renovated two centres in the Lviv, Volyn and Zakarpattia regions<sup>154</sup>. The NGO Building Ukraine Together (BUR) organises short-term volunteer campaigns (“burchiki”) to restore socially critical infrastructure in the Mykolaiv and Kherson regions. Volunteers (10–30 people) carry out repair work in schools, hospitals, cultural centres and other facilities over 1–3 days, involving local youth<sup>155</sup>. The NGO provides communities with materials, tools and mentoring support, as well as conducting training modules on leadership and management. Through such actions, communities not only restore buildings but also develop project management skills and form coordinated teams of local activists.

149 Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs — 2024 update.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

150 Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs — 2024 update.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

151 Orysia Lutsevych. June 2024. Ukraine’s wartime recovery and the role of civil society Chatham House survey of Ukrainian CSOs — 2024 update.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/2024-06-05-ukraine-wartime-recovery-role-civil-society-lutsevych.pdf.pdf>

152 Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January — February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

153 Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green recovery of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report January — February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)

154 Youth capacity building in western Ukraine 2023–2024. <https://ednannia.ua/our-programs-and-activities/pidtrymani-proiektu/12617-rozvitok-potentsialu-molodi-v-zakhidnikh-oblastyakh-ukrajini>

155 Communities affected by the war are invited to join the BUR project on community recovery. 28 May 2024. <https://mykolaiv.rayon.in.ua/news/709197-gromadam-yaki-postrazhdali-vnaslidok-viyni-proponuyut-doednatisya-do-proektu-bur-pro-vidnovlennya-gromad>



## 2. Advocacy and implementation of green technologies

Environmental CSOs focus their efforts on “green recovery” – installing renewable energy sources in communities. For example, CSOs are implementing pilot projects for “green” reconstruction: with EU funding, they support communities in installing solar power plants and heat pumps in social institutions. A striking example is the green renovation of a clinic in the village of Horenka (Kyiv oblast). On the initiative of the Gostomel District State Administration, together with international partners and the NGOs “Ekodia” and “Ekoklub,” the building was renovated, installing a ground-water heat pump (20 kW) and a solar power plant (12 kW) with a battery<sup>156</sup>. As a result, 43% of the clinic’s heating needs and 55% of its electricity consumption are now provided by clean energy.

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<sup>156</sup> Andriy Andrushevych, Zoryana Kozak. Post-war green reconstruction of Ukraine: processes, stakeholders, public participation. Analytical report, January–February 2024. [https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report\\_2024-5-13-1\\_ukr.pdf](https://ua.boell.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/racse-report_2024-5-13-1_ukr.pdf)



## 17. The need for a strategy to support the activities and development of CSOs during the war from the state and donor organisations

A comparison of the two waves of the survey shows a moderate but consistent improvement in the assessments of the support that civil society organisations receive from various actors during the war.

**At the central government level**, the share of respondents satisfied with CSO support increased from 9.4% to 14.4%. Accordingly, the share of those who tend to give a “two” rating decreased – negative assessments fell from 42.6% to 37.7%. Support for CSOs from **local authorities** is traditionally perceived somewhat better, and this difference remains. The share of high ratings increased from 22.5% to 24.0%, while the number of negative responses decreased from 35.2% to 31.1%. The most significant improvement has been observed in **interaction with donors**. The share of those who rate this support as “very” or “rather” high increased from 40.1% to 44.1%, while the share of negative assessments decreased by almost eight points, from 22.2% to 14.3%. Overall, the data show a slow improvement in the situation with CSO support from key partner institutions.



## Assessment of support for CSO activities and development during the war by central and local authorities and donors

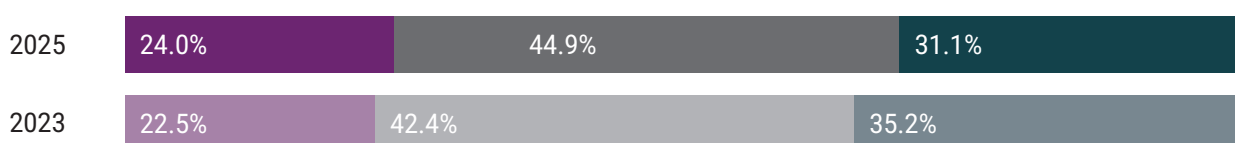
% of CSO respondents

Very high + rather high      Average      Very low + rather low

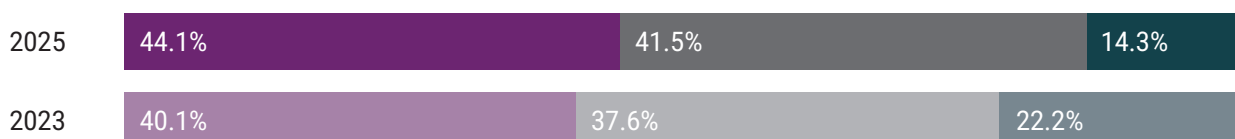
### at the central government level



### at the local government level



### from donor organisations



Question: How would you generally assess the work done to support the activities and development of CSOs during the war?

Over the past year, the list of the most necessary forms of support, according to CSOs, has remained almost unchanged, but the need for each item has decreased by 5–17 percentage points. The most notable decrease was in requests related to state financial instruments: grants for institutional development, transparent competitive mechanisms and financial sustainability programmes all lost about a quarter of the votes. The need for state co-financing is now mentioned by 34% of respondents, compared to 46% in 2023; transparent competitions – 25% compared to 42%.

A smaller but significant group of instruments for involving the public in policymaking remains. Demands for effective participation procedures and public consultations have fallen from 38–41% to a third of the sample, but stay at the top of the ranking.

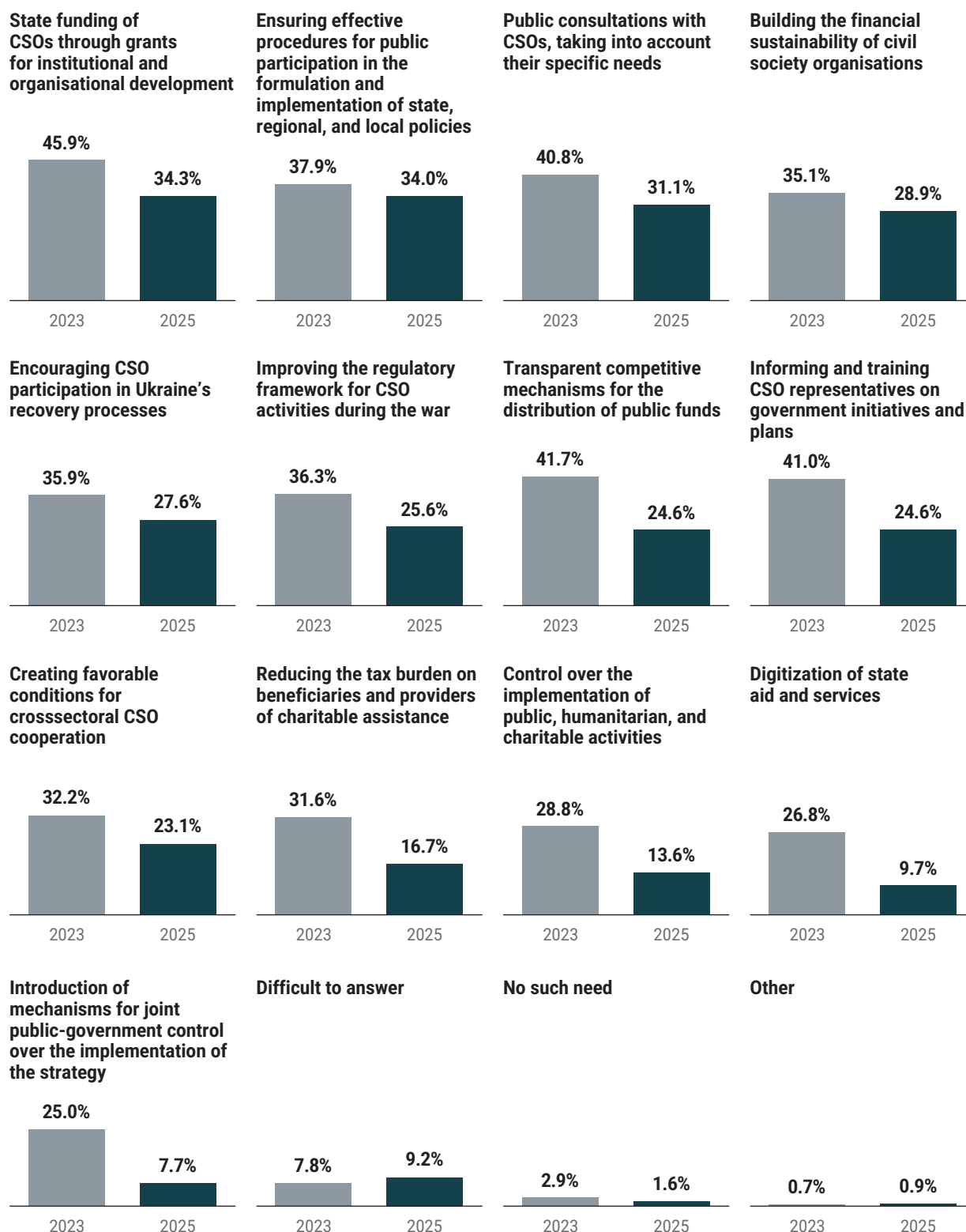
In the “legal environment” segment, regulating CSO activities is currently essential for 26% of respondents (down from 36%), while tax relief for philanthropists fell from 32% to 17%. Issues that were in the second tier in 2023 have fallen even further: digitalisation of public services, control of humanitarian programmes, and cross-sectoral cooperation now concern less than a quarter of organisations.

The overall picture is as follows: organisations still expect financial and procedural tools from the state above all else, but the scale of expectations has decreased significantly.



## The most essential support for the activities and development of CSOs during the war

% of respondent organisations, multiple choice



Question: What, in your opinion, is most necessary to support the activities and development of CSOs during the war?



The quantitative survey shows the sector's main expectation from donors: more than a third of organisations (34.6%) primarily ask donors **not to stop their support and, if possible, to increase the amount of aid** (responses to an open question coded by researchers into categories were analysed). The second most popular group of requests is communication and consultation needs: **15.7%** of respondents want to receive clearer information from donors about available opportunities, as well as systematic consultations to consider the current needs of CSOs when developing donor programmes and policies.

In third place is **support for local and small initiatives (14.2%)**. Various sources of information used in this study indicate that small CSOs and their projects often remain outside large grant programmes but play an important role in the real work of the civil society sector. Slightly less, but still significant attention is paid by respondents **to transparency and control over the distribution of resources**: this is expected by 12.4% of respondents.

The fifth set of wishes concerns **simplifying bureaucracy**: 7.7% of organisations ask for less reporting, faster application processing, and wider use of digital tools. This is followed by specific requests: **training and capacity building (3.7%)**, **increased assistance to the military (3.4%)** and **direct interaction with CSOs without the mediation of government agencies (2.0%)**.

Overall, the picture reveals two key trends: first, the basic need for continuous funding remains a priority; second, there is a growing demand for greater awareness, more flexible procedures and support for small local initiatives, enabling organisations to respond more quickly to the challenges of war.

In-depth interviews outline several specific expectations of the state, donors and local authorities, where financial resources and procedural flexibility remain key. About state instruments for financing CSOs, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF) model is very popular among respondents, who consider it successful and call for its scaling up to the sphere of CSO support.

**"Well, I will repeat myself about the state budget, which should scale up the UCF model to other sectors."**

**"But we still expect the state budget to create a fund similar to the UCF for the media or to create a separate direction within the UCF where it is possible to compete for state grant funding."**



Donors are asked, first, to maintain and increase the amount of aid, and second, to make the process of obtaining grants faster and simpler — perhaps through more thorough and rigorous analysis of reports on projects that have already been completed:

**“Donor organisations would do a great service by simplifying the process of obtaining funding... reporting requirements can be tightened, but the process itself needs to be simplified and made more compact... You apply and get a response within a few weeks.”**

Donors are also expected to help strengthen the institutional sustainability of both individual CSOs and the sector. This assistance could take the form of creating a proactive environment involving CSOs and community representatives; establishing networking mechanisms between CSOs; and funding important activities that are not directly covered by programme budgets (e.g., financial audits of CSOs).

**“I would talk about networking. But not in such a regional format, perhaps a thematic format, so that people working in a certain field or in a certain region have more opportunities to communicate with each other, not just a single small event or presentation, but so that they can really communicate with each other. And the formation and creation of these partnerships.”**

**“Well, first, I mentioned certain things that would strengthen us institutionally and are related to our financial stability. And this is not just about funds, but also, for example, conducting financial audits, because we have not had the resources to do this in recent years. It’s about strategising and establishing certain policies.”**

Donors are also expected to shift their focus in assessing the work of CSOs from ideal bureaucratic reporting to a more meaningful immersion in the results of the activities of CSO recipients. According to some respondents, technical assistance from donors in preparing documentation would significantly “unburden” CSOs.

**“Donors, it seems to me, are often fixated... I don’t know about the perfection of documentation, but instead, I look at what the organisation is doing. And maybe donor organisations could provide support with the paperwork, like project applications or reports, to reduce the burden, but let people do what they do.”**

An essential request to donors is, first, to consider the opinions and expertise of CSOs themselves regarding which projects and areas of work are most relevant; Secondly, creating a certain institutional “resilience” for CSOs that would allow them not only to follow grant competitions, but also to carry out their stable, long-term work on specific social issues.



**"There is no question that projects on women and LGBT support are important, but I am saying that when formulating the mandate, it is also necessary to consult with the local level about their needs, because when you arrive, hypothetically, with a new programme from Brussels or Berlin... Well, maybe Berlin is a little far away to see what's going on here, so I think that when programming, it's important to consult with the local level and better understand the needs and be more flexible in how funds are allocated, to whom and for what purposes."**

**"I think it is strategically important to understand and support organisations institutionally. Because I think it is a big problem that CSOs must adapt to donors' interests and very often do what is important to donors, rather than what they see as more important and obvious to do here on the ground, because they know better."**

At the local level, resource support could be provided by local authorities through assistance to CSOs with premises or equipment for their work:

**"...very often local authorities have some ability to provide CSOs with some kind of premises, for example, for their institutional activities, or some kind of material and technical resources so that CSOs can function."**

One media representative expressed the wish that the state should consider the media as critical infrastructure:

**"The media is not critical infrastructure. In my opinion, only certain organisations are selectively perceived as critical. These are mainly TV channels that participate in the 'marathon.' Therefore, I would like to see greater recognition by the state of the media as critically important employees."**



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities related to the project.

2. It then outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups.

3. The next section describes the results of the data collection and analysis, highlighting the key findings and trends.

4. Finally, the document concludes with a summary of the overall findings and recommendations for future research and practice.

5. The document also includes a list of references and a glossary of key terms used throughout the study.

6. The document is organized into several sections, each focusing on a specific aspect of the research process.

7. The first section provides an overview of the research project and its objectives.

8. The second section describes the research methodology and the data collection process.

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