



# PROJECT FACTSHEET

Ukraine February 2016

## UKRAINE: FEWER, MORE EFFICIENT MUNICIPALITIES



Specialists from the regional offices supporting the decentralisation reform at a training course in Kyiv in November 2015.

**The Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine project offers technical and practical support to the Ukrainian authorities in implementing the decentralisation reform which involves merging municipalities. The reform should eventually allow municipalities to operate more efficiently and to provide citizens with good-quality public services.**

The decentralisation reform has been on Ukraine's political agenda for several years. Nevertheless, the central government that has been in office since 2014 seems to be determined to breathe new life into the reform by granting more powers and resources to regional and local governments. In April 2014 it adopted the Reform of Local Governance and the Territorial Organisation of Power concept, which defines the framework and timeline of the process. However, the fact remains that the decentralisation reform is a technically complex and politically sensitive project. The fragmentation of Ukraine's territory – with nearly 12,000 local governments – complicates the task. This fragmentation of resources, coupled with an almost total lack of cooperation between municipalities, has resulted in paradoxical situations, such as, an oversupply of infrastructures, for example,

le, schools and sports facilities on the one hand, but with poor services on the other hand.

To put an end to or at least reduce these inefficiencies, the decentralisation reform involves an extensive process of merging municipalities and streamlining services. The SDC is supporting this process through the Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine project, which is part of the Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017 of the Council of Europe, whose mission is to promote human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

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### ENHANCED COOPERATION

The success of the decentralisation and territorial consolidation process largely depends on efficient communication and cooperation between national authorities and regional and local partners. The SDC is providing support in setting up and running a central office tasked with coordinating the reform as well as 24 regional offices. Specialists to staff the regional offices have already been recruited and given training in the experience gained from previous municipal mergers carried out in Europe, and in EU financing mechanisms that are accessible to local and regional authorities in Ukraine.

The regional offices serve as a liaison to inform the public about the reform and help local and regional authorities implement it. They also convey to the central government the concerns, questions and needs of local and regional actors (elected officials, businesses, civil society representatives, etc.).

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### TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT

The second component of the project focuses specifically on territorial reform. The Ukrainian authorities are given technical and legal assistance in drawing up laws and complementary strategic regulations to carry out the territorial reform. The project also promotes the sharing of experience with European counterparts. For example, in September 2015 sever-

al members of the Ukrainian parliament and government travelled to France for a study visit.

The local authorities, which are at the forefront of the actual implementation of the reform, are not being ignored. They also receive support, mainly in the form of practical advice, training and the exchange of best practice.

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## 159 NEW MUNICIPALITIES

Thus far the regional offices have focused on implementing the Law on the Voluntary Merging of Municipalities, which encourages municipalities to merge and enables the newly formed entities to benefit from additional financial resources. Adopted in 2015, this law has already produced encouraging results, with 7% of local governments having already merged. During the local elections of October 2015, 159 new municipalities that had resulted from the merger of 793 municipalities elected their representatives.

## PROJECT AT A GLANCE

### Project title

Contribution to the Council of Europe Action Plan to Ukraine 2015-2017

### Duration

2015 - 2017

### Budget

2,40 million CHF

### Implementing agency

Council of Europe

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## COUNTRY FACTS (Source: World Bank)

### Population (2014)

Ukraine : 45,4 million

Switzerland : 8,1 million

### Life expectancy at birth (2013)

Ukraine : women 76 years, men 66 years

Switzerland : women 85 years, men 81 years

### Gross domestic product per capita (2014)

Ukraine : 3 082 USD

Switzerland : 85 594 USD

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## IMPRINT

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