



COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROGRAMME
“DECENTRALISATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM IN UKRAINE”

TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES OF UKRAINE

ANALYTICAL REPORT

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April 2019

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List of abbreviations

ACAB	- Association of Co-Owners of an Apartment Buildings
ASC	- Administrative Service Centre
ATC	- Amalgamated territorial community
AUC	- Association of Ukrainian Cities
CEA	- Central executive authority
CMU	- Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
CSO	- Civil society organisation
HCS	- Housing and communal services
HEE	- Higher education entity
IMC	- Inter-municipal cooperation
IT	- Information Technology
KIIS	- Kyiv International Institute of Sociology
NAPA	- National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine
NAUCS	- National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service
OSA	- Oblast State Administration
RCSA	- Registration of Civil Status Acts
RD	- Regional development
REC	- Regional Excellence Centre
RSA	- Rayon State Administration
SOBP	- Self-organisation Bodies of Population
SRDF	- State Regional Development Fund
USDR	- Unified State Demographic Register
VS	- Vocational school

Executive Summary

About this report

This report has been compiled following a qualitative and quantitative research into training needs of Ukrainian local government representatives, conducted under the Council of Europe Programme ‘Decentralisation and Local Government Reform in Ukraine’. The research was conducted between September and December 2018.

This analytical report summarises the data obtained by qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and telephone interviews. These findings are presented in Sections 3–7 of the report and supported by the relevant quotations from the interviews or focus group discussions. The results of the quantitative study presented in the report contain a summary of the telephone survey data of 517 ATCs, whose representatives responded to all questionnaire questions. Appendix 6 to the report contains a presentation of the results of all interviewed representatives of the ATCs, including those who, given the duration of the interview, provided answers to some of the questionnaire questions (137 representatives of the ATCs). At the same time, the results presented in the Appendix 6 do not differ significantly from those contained in the text of the report.

This report (Section 6.6) also presents the key findings from the research into training needs of local government representatives, conducted under other international technical assistance programmes.

Section 2 provides an expert overview of the processes taking place in local self-government of Ukraine. Sections 3–7 contain the report’s key findings and recommendations prepared by the experts, following the research of training needs.

Key findings

1. The decentralisation reform initiated in 2015 has brought about significant changes in the tasks and functions of local authorities, especially where such authorities had been established following the amalgamation of territorial communities. The current pace of changes requires the availability of a flexible system to raise the professional competence level of local government officials and local councillors, and, vice versa, the efficiency and effectiveness of such changes would depend on the pace of education /in-service training of employees and their ability to exercise powers entitled in the new circumstances.

2. Among the amalgamated territorial communities, it is those who had been established on the basis of villages, settlements or cities of district significance that are most in need of training support. Indeed, before the reform, they had exercised a limited scope of powers, incommensurate with the powers vested to them following the establishment of amalgamated communities. These local authorities lack both the institutional memory of the exercise of such powers and the professionals who might be engaged in their exercise. Local authorities in these ATCs require special in-service training programmes both for appointed or elected officials and for local councillors.

3. The most significant changes caused by the decentralisation reform in the local authorities’ powers at the basic level include the provision of services in the field of secondary education and health care, along with the delivery of administrative and social services. To exercise these extended powers, the local government’s resource and financial base has been expanded. These powers, along with the procedures required to exercise them (budgetary and financial planning, contractual relations with contractors, tender procedures, community asset management, human resource management, etc.), are the source of major difficulties at the basic level of local self-government.

4. On average, after creating the amalgamated territorial community, their local self-government authorities, according to the surveyed respondents, started to provide additional 9 services (only 10% of the respondents said that they started to provide up to 5 additional services, 54% spoke about additional 5-10 services, and 36% started to provide more than 10 new services).

The highest number of respondents mentioned such “new” services as providing the general secondary education (77.0%), management of land resources (74.9%), infrastructure development (73.7%), social services and social security (70.2%), street and road maintenance (70.2%), organization of cultural and educational institution (68.7%). The absolute majority of the respondents (70.2%) see infrastructural investments as their top priority. Much more rarely, the respondents mentioned budget stabilization (30.8%), social policies (26.7%), citizens’ participation in decision-making (24.4%), improvement of the quality of services (23.8%). At the same time, the respondents stated that the special focus of the activities of their self-government bodies is school/preschool education (65.4%), road and street maintenance (41.6%), local economic development (40.2%) and health care (35.4%). The greatest difficulties in the day-to-day activities, according to the respondents, are the legislation instability (51.1%), the lack of adequate financing of delegated powers (33.8%), the lack of own revenue (33.5%) and the legal limitations of discretion in some areas (30.0%).

5. Among the 35 spheres which the respondents of telephone survey had to assess in terms of tasks fulfilment, in ATCs 4 are the most problematic: environmental protection (52.2% spoke about resolvable difficulties and 26.9% spoke about major difficulties), wastewater management and solid waste management (43.5% and 24.0%, respectively), local public transportation (43.5% and 36.4%), language training (23.0% and 32.7%). At the same time, in other spheres, mostly from one third to one half of the respondents still mentioned difficulties with task fulfilment (although these were mostly difficulties which, according to the respondents, can be resolved). The relatively best situation is in the sphere of work organization at the office (62.3% say that it is properly organized), but even in this sphere 35.8% of respondents picked the option ‘There are difficulties in fulfilling tasks, but they are resolved’.

6. A little more than a half of the surveyed respondents (50.3%) admit that the problems in the work of their local self-government authority are caused by insufficient level of knowledge of their staff, but only 16.1% of them are completely sure about it. Even in the cities of oblast significance (that had enjoyed higher levels of self-governance prior to the reform), difficulties arise in exercising the powers in the field of education, health care, provision of social services. These difficulties mostly stem from the fast pace of reforms, the lack of time for preparatory procedures, inconsistent legislation, weak communication with key ministries on the content and key objectives of reforms.

7. A little more than a half of the surveyed respondents (55.3%) claim that their ATCs have an approved Community Development Strategy. In addition, among those who do have a Strategy, 96.8% said that the residents of their municipality were, in one way or another, involved in the work on the strategy, including 82.2% who said that the residents actively participated in the actual process of developing the strategy.

8. In general, the respondents assess the efficiency of local self-government authorities of their ATCs as a little higher than average: on a 7-point scale (where 7 is very high efficiency), only 19.0% gave their local government 6-7 points, while the majority, 52.6%, gave it 5 points. At the same time, only 3.7% gave a 1-3 point evaluation. In general, the average assessment was 5.5 points. The assessment of local self-government authorities in terms of specific areas of activity is, apparently, best described as ‘nothing special, but generally alright’. Depending on the specific area, 93-99% of respondents assess the activities at least as ‘moderate’, but no more than 23.4% assess the areas as ‘very good’. On a 5-point scale, where 5 is ‘very good’, the average evaluation of each sphere varies between 3.5-3.8 points, which means that on average the assessments are a little lower than the ‘fairly good’ level, but apparently are higher than just the ‘moderate’ level. A half of the respondents (54.0%) say that in the past 2 years, their municipality assessed its efficiency. The main tools that were used to assess the efficiency were polls and questionnaires for the population (39.6% of those who have conducted an assessment chose this tool), meetings of citizens, discussions (29.1%), public reports (23.0%).

9. Although insufficient competence is not perceived by the surveyed respondents as one of

the main difficulties in the local self-government functioning of ATCs, at the same time 56.9% of respondents believe that improving competencies of the staff of executive bodies is a factor that would boost the efficiency of their work. Less frequently, the respondents named the raising staff's salaries (31.3%), introduction of performance evaluation of staff/services (26.5%) and introducing new procedures (25.3%) as ways to boost the efficiency.

10. 49.9% of the surveyed respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs at the local self-government office of ATC (they evaluated their job at 6-7 on a 7-point scale), and another 28.8% are rather satisfied (they gave it 5 points). The average level of satisfaction is 5.4 points. At the same time, only 26.9% believe that jobs at their local self-government authority are very attractive or attractive compared to other proposals on the labour market (they evaluated these jobs at 6-7 on a 7-point scale), and another 33.1% believe it is rather attractive (at 5 points). On average, the respondents evaluated the attractiveness of these jobs at 4.8 points on a 7-point scale. According to the respondents, the most important of all factors of attractiveness are good relations in the team (74.3% consider this factor very important), the opportunity to work with interesting people (67.9%), good reputation of the employer (65.8%), job stability (66.2%). As for the 'second-grade' factors, it is reasonable to include good relations with the superiors, high level of autonomy, diversity of tasks, opportunities for professional development (44.1-54.4% of respondents consider these factors very important). Other factors were named as very important by up to one third of the respondents. The top 3 factors for the respondents themselves are good relations in the team (57.3%), the possibility to work with interesting people (33.7%) and job stability (33.3%). At the same time, 83.8% of respondents think that for the 'ordinary' workers one of the top factors is the level of remuneration. In addition, top-factors for 'ordinary' workers include good relations with colleagues (62.1%), job stability (39.1%), and opportunities for professional development (33.8%).

11. Only 0.8% of the surveyed respondents believe that their staff's participation in educational events is not important or is a waste of time. Meanwhile, 57.4% say that it is an issue of primary importance. The others think it is important, but not crucial; or that sometimes it can be useful, and sometimes it is not. 98.8% of the respondents claimed that in the past 2 years at least the leadership, the heads of structural units, and the specialists participated in educational events at least 1-2 times. And in the majority of cases (at least 63.8%) they spoke about regular participation, at least once per quarter or several times per quarter. Only in the case of council members, 37.3% of the respondents said that they never participated in professional training, and only 11.4% said that they regularly participated in such events.

12. As a result of variations in the local authorities' powers, the training needs of their employees have changed significantly. The most urgent needs include the development of 'hard' competencies, without which the local government powers cannot be exercised, such as strategic planning; project management (project-based approach to all management processes); tools for interaction with various stakeholders; legal literacy; financial management; administrative services; management of community property; energy efficiency and energy management; setting up the delivery of housing and communal services; finding investments or other alternative funding sources for local development; application of e-governance and e-democracy to managerial activities; human resource management; health care management; education management; governance of culture. Significantly increased the need for local government officials to develop "soft" competencies that have no unambiguous link to a particular profession, but are to some extent cross-cutting: leadership; change management; team work; sociability; ethics; self-improvement; stress resistance.

13. According to the surveyed respondents, the top priorities for ATCs' staff training must include local economic development (48.9%), project management (40.8%), financial management (26.7%), bookkeeping (25.1%), agriculture (21.7%), planning and implementation of infrastructural projects (21.3%), provision of public / municipal services (21.1%). For the respondents themselves, the top-areas are local economic development (46.0%), project management (32.1%), financial management (28.0%), planning and implementation of infrastructural investments (23.4%),

strategic planning (20.7%).

14. In the next four years, given the course of reforms in Ukraine, changes in the labour market, global trends, developments in social relations, local authorities will have to develop the competencies to think globally (understand today's globalised world, its challenges and new approaches), support economic development (based mostly on the communities' internal resources), the use of IT tools, foreign languages. Local authorities will be in need of urban development professionals, architects, lawyers, energy managers.

With regard to the ongoing decentralisation reform and its expansion to the regional and subregional levels, as well as the establishment of the institution of prefect, it would be appropriate to initiate now the preparation both of the relevant training programmes for the newly appointed prefects (applicants to be included in the prefect pool) and of horizontal programmes on the mechanisms of interaction between local authorities and prefects in the exercise by the latter of control and supervisory functions.

15. Among various types of in-service training, almost all respondents of in-depth interviews have singled out trainings as an opportunity to acquire/develop practical skills and knowledge. Experience-sharing events involving Ukrainian and foreign local self-government authorities are becoming increasingly popular. During such events, it would be advisable to study not only best practices, but also challenging situations in order to learn from mistakes. Such a form of professional competence development as internship at other local authorities is very rarely used (only one city chairman has mentioned such internship by the city council employees). The reasons for this situation included the lack of information about any available local authorities or the relevant internship positions, the local authorities' disinterest in accepting interns, the inability to release an employee from the principal place of employment for a long-term internship.

16. The results of telephone interviews show that the most important instrument of improving the professional development of ATCs' officials is exchanging experience with colleagues from other ATCs (78.5% of respondents included this instrument in the top 2, and 56.3% considered it 'very important' in general). The 'second place' is shared, with approximately the same evaluation of their effectiveness, by studying the best practices, consultations with experts, exchanging experience with colleagues from other countries, participation in study visits, participation in seminars/workshops (21-25% respondents included each of these tools in the top 2, and 43-50% stated that they were 'very important'). The least interest is evoked by online training, which is considered 'very effective' by 19.3% of the respondents, and included in the top 2 by only 3.5%.

17. Legislative changes (including those in the field of decentralisation) provide for a 'large-scale' in-service training process for civil servants and local self-government officials through the introduction of short-term training programmes or modules, including the application of modern interactive technologies (in particular, online courses). The most acceptable duration is 2–3 days for short-term courses. The respondents stressed the need for achieving appropriate balance between external (outside a local self-government authority) and internal training. Furthermore, studying 'hard' skills is preferably to be conducted outside the local self-government authority with optional practical training, while 'soft' skills should be developed directly within such local authority.

18. At present, training events for local self-government representatives are mostly organised and funded by external institutions, primarily by international technical assistance programmes or from oblast budgets through regional excellence centres (RECs). In view of this, the available system for in-service training of local self-government representatives is financially dependent and, should such funding be terminated, unsustainable, while demand for training services on behalf of local authorities' remains inadequately supported financially or is altogether unsupported. Today, even with the predominantly external funding and free participation in training activities, some local governments experience a shortage of funds from local budgets to reimburse travel, accommodation or daily expenses.

19. The most frequent answer given by the surveyed respondents was that in 2018 ATC's staff

participated in free-of-charge training organized by regional excellence centres (94.4%), by local self-government associations (90.3%) and by external providers under technical assistance projects where their ATC was not an immediate beneficiary (82.0%). Another 51.6% spoke about free-of-charge training organized under assistance projects where their ATC was a direct beneficiary. At the same time, experiences where participation was funded from the local budget were less frequently mentioned: 42.6% recalled an experience of training organized for several local government authorities, and 39.1% recalled training sessions organized only for their communities.

20. 26% of the surveyed respondents noted that ATC's budget for 2018 did not allocate funding for professional development of the staff. Among those who said that the funding was allocated, the average allocated amount was 31K hryvnias. In total, 35.6% of respondents believe that the funds allocated for training are sufficient (including 24.4% among those who did not allocate any funding but who still claimed that their funding was 'sufficient'). Only 1.9% believed that too much money was allocated for training, and 49.1% thought that the training budget is insufficient (including 44.4% of those who allocated the highest amounts, 100,000 hryvnias and more).

21. The most frequent organizers of training events for ATCs were local self-government associations (92.2%), regional excellence centres (87.9%), international organizations (77.2%). The National Academy for Public Administration (61.1%) and non-governmental organizations (57.2%) were mentioned somewhat less often. Among the institutions which organize training, the most trusted are local self-government associations (68.3% include them in the top 3 trusted institutions), regional excellence centres (66.7%), and the NAPA (54.5%).

22. Half of the surveyed respondents (57.1%) claim that in the past year they organized internal training several times per quarter or at least once per quarter. 24.9% said that they organized internal training more rarely (1-2 times a year or once a year). At the same time, 18.0% of respondents said that they did not organize any training at all. However, almost all of the respondents noted that their officials built their competence using other forms: 97.9% spoke about participation in conferences and seminars, 85.5% about study visits, 78.7% about exchanging experience between professional groups, 60.0% about obtaining another higher education degree or completing postgraduate studies, and 53.8% about distance learning formats.

23. The main criterion for making decisions about participation in training, as telephone interviews showed, is the confidence that the teacher or trainer is competent (for 54.7% of respondents, this criterion is on the 1st or 2nd place by importance). The top criteria also include correspondence of the training topic to the job responsibilities and tasks (41.4%), interest in the training topic (39.1%), and trust in the training provider (32.7%).

24. Findings from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions indicate that almost all respondents consider it necessary to improve the skills of local councillors, especially of those exercising their councillor's powers for the first time. In-service training should be carried out in the interval between the first and second sessions of the newly elected local council. Training topics should cover general rights and duties of a councillor; competence of local self-government authorities; the ability to engage in constructive dialogue, to negotiate, to adopt coordinated decisions; the local council regulations; budget process; strategic planning; rulemaking.

In-service training of local councillors should be financed under a mixed model, i.e., combine resources from political parties that receive state budget funds to finance their programme activities; funds from local budgets; and funds from local self-government associations.

25. The development and continuous improvement of training programmes focused on shaping the competences required for the local self-government officials must be supported by an efficient system for assessing training needs. The assessment of training needs should support identification of the difference between the existing and the desired levels of competence, determine the general approach and training methods (depending on the data received), form the basis for the development of the relevant training programmes and conduct of training, ensure the most efficient use of available resources (both human and financial).

26. Findings of the research indicate that local authorities only occasionally apply

formalised tools to assess training needs of their officials, such as surveys of the employees themselves. In fact, when sending employees for training, the approach based on the proposals from the respective programmes is dominant. In very rare cases, local self-governments themselves order and pay from the local budget for the educational services necessary for their officials. In return the majority (82.0%) of the surveyed respondents claimed that their authority analysed ATCs' staff's training needs. Of those who conducted such an analysis, two thirds (68.4%) used approaches or methodological recommendations that defined how training needs should be analysed.

27. Findings from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with the management of the regional excellence centres indicate that the practice of identifying training needs on the basis of interaction with local self-governments is not universal. Only a few centres practice visits to local self-governments to identify the training needs of their officials. When developing in-service training schedule charts, the centres focus on those priority areas that have been established by the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service, as well as on the introduction of changes to legislation or new reforms agenda.

28. The regional excellence centres are flexible enough to introduce new training programmes in response to arising needs. They are able to develop and implement appropriate programmes fast enough (maximum 3 weeks). This is facilitated by their organisational and legal status and the availability of managerial and regulatory decisions by their founders, which enable such an opportunity.

29. To ensure high quality of the educational process, the interviewed managers of the regional excellence centres apply the following set of tools: entrance testing for students; exit assessment; rating of teachers; professional development for teachers; online surveys on the centres' activities. None of the RECs monitors systematically the local self-government officials' in-service training results or conducts a second-level assessment of training outcomes (2-4 months after the training). Only a few centres intend to introduce this tool in 2019.

Recommendations

The National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service should:

1. Develop guidelines to identify training needs in local self-governments, conduct communication/training events with the representatives of HR services from local self-governments and local self-government associations on the application of these guidelines.

2. Develop model regulations on training of local self-government officials and local councillors.

3. Set up and continuously update the register of educational entities that provide/offer educational services for local self-government. Define criteria under which any particular educational institution may be included in this register. Make the register publicly available.

4. Set up and continuously update the register of trainers/coaches, broken down by the training topics. Define criteria under which a trainer/coaches may be included in this register. Make the register publicly available.

5. Develop amendments to the regulations to impose an obligation on the political parties to spend funds allocated to them from the state budget towards financing the training of local councillors elected from these parties.

6. Develop a training concept for local self-government authorities which will not only be limited to determination of the necessary training activities supporting day-to-day operations of local communities but, what is of much greater importance, will determine the background for local self-government capacity building to enhance the performance of local governance in future.

Local self-government authorities should:

7. Develop and approve by local councils the regulations on training the local self-government officials and local councillors, which should provide for the application of tools to identify training needs, contain the procedure for summarising any identified needs, creation of a competency development plan, funding arrangements for attendance at training activities, training effectiveness tracking tools.

8. Allocate funds from the local budget for in-service training of local councillors. Spend these funds to reimburse expenses in connection with the councillors' attendance at free training events, as well as to pay for the services provided by educational entities.

Regional excellence centres should:

9. Compile directories of topical short-term training courses, workshops, containing a description of competencies whose development is in the focus of these training courses or workshops, specify their target audience, the format, lecturers/trainers.

10. Apply a competency-based approach to the development of the courses; in particular, the topics of the courses should be determined according to the competencies to be acquired/developed.

11. Reshape the offer of short-term training programmes with regard to the principle of in-depth analysis of relevant topics and duration of courses. It is suggested that a basic list of short-term courses be defined, including the key competencies of local self-government officials, along with a list of courses that provide advanced (specialised) studies within any particular competency.

12. In order to reduce discontinuities in the local self-government officials' service, it would be advisable to extend the offer of short-term courses by distance learning. The introduction of mixed learning courses, where some training sessions are to be held in classrooms and some — remotely, would also be advisable.

13. Introduce a second-level assessment of training outcomes (2-4 months after training) to adjust the topics and content of the curriculum.

Local self-government associations should:

14. Focus their training support primarily on those local self-government authorities that had been established at the level of villages, settlements, or cities of district significance.

15. Teach representatives of local authorities to interact effectively with the community, including through the mechanisms of local democracy; provide local self-government with methodological assistance in developing the relevant regulations and in their practical implementation.

16. Set up databases with the best local self-government practices in order to organise exchange and raise effectiveness of local services provision.

17. Set up a database of local self-governments where internships for employees from other local authorities are available.

International partners (technical assistance projects and programs that carry out their activities in the sphere of professional development of local self-government bodies) **should:**

18. When preparing and organizing training events that will be carried out for local self-government officials with the support of international technical assistance, take into account the list of topics identified by the relevant state and local self-government authorities on the basis of an analysis of the training needs of the respective categories of officials.

19. To deepen cooperation between technical assistance programs in terms of defining common approaches to the structure of programs for the professional development of local self-government officials, including local councillors.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and objective of the research

The overall purpose of the research was to identify gaps between the existing and desired level of professional competence of local self-government officials (and local councillors) and, based on this, to determine training needs required to overcome these gaps.

Objectives of the research included:

- determination of the key competencies required for local self-government officials (and local councillors) in view of new powers (tasks, functions) acquired by local self-governments following the reforms, including the decentralisation reform;
- identification of the scope and needs for obtaining/upgrading knowledge and skills by local self-government officials (and local councillors);
- definition of the most problematic competencies that local self-government officials (and local councillors) either lack or have insufficiently mastered;
- identification of the local self-government officials' (and local councillors') attitude towards professional development;
- determination of the strengths and weaknesses in the professional education system for local self-government officials (and local councillors).

1.2. Methodology

Qualitative research

The key participants for the research were selected through a purposive sampling that was most consistent with the objectives of the research. This purposive sampling allowed for a wide range of opinions to be collected from various groups of respondents.

The purposive sampling involved selecting those experts who deal with the relevant issues, work for government authorities and develop public policy in the field of regional development and local self-government, participate in the formation of public policy concerning the service at local authorities, provide training and consulting support to local authorities.

Local self-government representatives were selected to represent various local governments: amalgamated territorial communities, cities, districts, oblasts. Another consideration was the geographic factor, so that the participants of the research would represent the territory of Ukraine as wider as possible.

Two tools have been used to collect the data:

- in-depth semi-structured interviews with key interviewers according to the guide included in Appendix 1. The interview guide varied depending on the groups of key interviewers;
- focus group discussions with key interviewers groups according to the guide included in Appendix 2. The focus group guide also varied depending on the groups of key interviewers.

In-depth interviews

The in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following groups of respondents:

- chairmen (deputy chairmen, chief executives) of city, settlement, village councils — 15 interviews (including cities — 7, settlements — 4, villages — 4);
- chairmen (or deputy chairmen) of oblast councils — 7 interviews;
- representatives of local government associations — 4 interviews;
- policymakers and experts who shape public opinion on local self-government issues — 10 interviews;
- heads (deputy heads) of educational service providers entities — 6 interviews.

Altogether, 42 in-depth interviews were conducted. The interviews were conducted during personal meetings, by phone or via Skype. The list of interviewees is presented in Appendix 4.

Focus groups

Four focus group discussions were held with chairmen of district councils (10 participants), heads of regional excellence centres (18 participants), deputy chairmen/chief executive of amalgamated territorial communities (15 participants), chairmen/deputy chairmen of amalgamated territorial communities (13 participants). The total number of participants in all focus group discussions is 56 persons. The list of participants is presented in Appendix 4.

Quantitative research

A quantitative study was conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS). The main stages of the research included questionnaire design and the development of accompanying toolkit, sample design, interviews with respondents, quality control, inputting the data and checking for logical errors, preparation of the final data array, and the analytical report.

The research was carried out by computer-assisted telephone interviews. The KIIS interviewers called members of amalgamated territorial communities and arranged interview appointments with them. The respondents were interviewed using standardized questionnaires. The average length of one interview ranged between 45 and 60 minutes.

The research was conducted through an opinion survey of the representatives of local self-government authorities of the amalgamated territorial communities. The target universe is the chairmen of the ATCs; in case impossibility of conducting an interview with exactly the chairman, the interview could have been conducted with the chief executive, secretary or deputy chairman of the local self-government authority. The survey was conducted with the representatives of the leadership of 517 ATCs (73%) out of 705 where the first local elections were held by December 1, 2018.

In the table below the geographical distribution of all 705 ATCs is compared with a geographical distribution of 517 ATCs that participated in the survey. As can be seen, deviations do not exceed 1.2%, which suggests that according to the geographic distribution, the sample is representative for all ATCs.

	All 705 ATCs		517 surveyed ATCs		Difference
	Number	%	Number	%	
Vinnitska	35	5.0%	30	5.8%	0.8%
Volynska	41	5.8%	28	5.4%	-0.4%
Dnipropetrovska	60	8.5%	46	8.9%	0.4%
Donetska	10	1.4%	5	1.0%	-0.5%
Zhytomyrska	45	6.4%	35	6.8%	0.4%
Zakarpatska	6	0.9%	2	0.4%	-0.5%
Zaporizka	43	6.1%	27	5.2%	-0.9%
Ivano-Frankivska	25	3.5%	14	2.7%	-0.8%
Kyivska	9	1.3%	8	1.5%	0.3%
Kirovohradska	16	2.3%	11	2.1%	-0.1%
Luhanska	9	1.3%	7	1.4%	0.1%
Lvivska	35	5.0%	32	6.2%	1.2%
Mykolaivska	28	4.0%	24	4.6%	0.7%
Odeska	28	4.0%	18	3.5%	-0.5%
Poltavska	41	5.8%	32	6.2%	0.4%

	All 705 ATCs		517 surveyed ATCs		Difference
	Number	%	Number	%	
Rivnenska	28	4.0%	19	3.7%	-0.3%
Sumska	29	4.1%	19	3.7%	-0.4%
Ternopilaska	42	6.0%	31	6.0%	0.0%
Kharkivaska	16	2.3%	8	1.5%	-0.7%
Khersonaska	27	3.8%	26	5.0%	1.2%
Khmelnyska	41	5.8%	31	6.0%	0.2%
Cherkaska	26	3.7%	21	4.1%	0.4%
Chernivetska	28	4.0%	18	3.5%	-0.5%
Chernihivska	37	5.2%	25	4.8%	-0.4%
TOTAL	705	100.0%	517	100.0%	---

In addition, in the table below, the distribution of all 705 ATCs is compared with the distribution of 517 ATCs that participated in the survey by type. As can be seen, deviations also do not exceed 1.2%, which indicates that the sample by type is also representative for all ATCs.

	All 705 ATCs		517 surveyed ATCs		Difference
	Number	%	Number	%	
Urban	93	13.2%	71	13.7%	0.5%
Settlement	210	29.8%	148	28.6%	-1.2%
Village	402	57.0%	298	57.6%	0.6%
TOTAL	705	100.0%	517	100.0%	---

2. Legal and institutional framework for amalgamated communities

2.1. Establishment of amalgamated territorial communities

In 2014, after the Concept of the Reform of Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine¹ a number of laws, as well as amendments to the Budget and Tax Codes had been adopted, a decentralisation reform was launched in Ukraine. The decentralisation reform enabled the formation, in accordance with the provisions of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, of amalgamated territorial communities (ATCs) — an efficient and capable basic-level local self-government institution.

The actual process of establishing the ATCs in Ukraine began upon the adoption on 05/02/2015 of the Law of Ukraine No. 157-VIII ‘On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities’. In pursuance of the provisions of this law, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) approved the Methodology for formation of capable territorial communities². Both the Law and the Methodology define the mechanism for amalgamation; however, it was discovered in the process of their implementation that the laws had failed to take into consideration a significant number of issues in the amalgamation processes, thereby creating real problems in practice. Some deficiencies were removed by amending and supplementing these acts during the period of 2015–2017.

Thus, in February 2017, the Law ‘On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities’ was supplemented with Section II ‘The Procedure for Voluntary Accession to Amalgamated Territorial Communities’, which offered an opportunity for adjacent village or settlement territorial communities to join the already established ATCs³. Amendments to the law adopted on 03/04/2018 simplified the establishment of ATCs with their centres located in the cities of the republican (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) or oblast significance. Furthermore, temporarily, until the next local election, where such cities accede to the territorial communities during the voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities, the chairmen of the ATCs shall not be elected, and the incumbent chairman of the city to which the accession took place shall be declared the ATC chairmen⁴.

The practical implementation of the territorial communities’ amalgamation process began in mid-2015. In 2015, 159 ATCs were formed, amalgamating 805 territorial communities. On 25/10/2015, new local authorities were elected in these communities; on 01/01/2016, they switched to direct budget relations with the State Treasury and, based on their 2016 performance, showed noticeable positive dynamics in their development. These communities were granted extended powers and additional financial resources, allowing them to implement infrastructure development projects, such as building or renovating schools, kindergartens, water pipes, roads, street lighting systems, purchasing utility equipment, establishing communal enterprises, taking care of territorial improvement, etc. In 2016, significant progress occurred in the formation of ATCs — their number increased 2.3 times. Thus, early in 2017, there were 366 ATCs in Ukraine, uniting 1,782 local councils in which the first local elections were held.

During 2017, another 299 ATCs were established, bringing together 1,396 local councils. That year the number of ATCs almost doubled, reaching 665 early in 2018. In 2018, a decision was made to create 141 ATCs that united 562 local councils. In 2019, this process continued. The total

¹ Order 333-r of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine ‘On Approving the Concept of the Reform of Local Self-Government and Territorial Organisation of Power in Ukraine’ dated 01/04/2014.

² Resolution No. 214 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine ‘On Approving the Methodology for formation of capable territorial communities’ dated 08/04/2014.

³ The Law of Ukraine No. 1851-VIII ‘On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine in Respect of Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities’ dated 09/02/2017.

⁴ The Law of Ukraine No. 2379-VIII ‘On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities” in Respect of Voluntary Accession of Village and Settlement Territorial Communities to the Territorial Communities of the Republican (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) and Oblast Significance’ dated 03/04/2018.

number of ATCs as of 10.04.2019 is 888, which united 4 135 local councils with a population of 9.1 million people (26% of the total population of Ukraine). The amalgamated local councils make up 37.7% of the total number of local councils at the base level, which functioned as of 01.01.2015. Non-amalgamated remain 62.3% of such councils⁵.

Late in 2016, the Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities was founded, whose tasks include cooperation with local and national executive authorities, advocating the interests of its members and provision of services to them, partnership and joining efforts with all stakeholders. Since its inception, the Association has united more than 200 new communities from all regions of Ukraine⁶.

2.2. Basic laws defining the ATC powers

The Law ‘On Voluntary Amalgamation of Territorial Communities’ and the Methodology for formation of capable territorial communities govern only the process of the ATC establishment, while the ATC mandate and powers are defined by a number of legal acts:

1. *The Constitution of Ukraine that enshrines the foundations of constitutional order, rule of the people, equality between all forms of ownership*, guarantees for local self-government; regulates the local government operation to protect the rights and freedoms of a person and citizen; establishes legal, organisational, resource and financial basis for local self-government; defines legal guarantees and judicial protection of the rights enjoyed by local self-government.

2. *International documents*, with a special place among them occupied by the European Charter of Local Self-Government signed on 15/10/1985 by the Council of Europe member states⁷. The European Charter of Local Self-Government recognises the local authorities as one of the main foundations of any democratic regime; believes that the existence of local authorities with real responsibilities can provide an administration which is both effective and close to the citizen.

3. *Regulations* governing in detail the matters of establishment and operation of local self-government in Ukraine, adopted subject to the supremacy of the provisions of the Constitution of Ukraine and the laws of Ukraine, in particular of those of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’.

4. *Subordinate regulatory acts* issued by government authorities, such as decrees of the President of Ukraine, CMU resolutions, decisions adopted by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine on the matters of local self-government, and regulatory acts adopted by other government authorities.

5. *Acts of local self-government*, which, along with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, the relevant international legal instruments, decrees of the President of Ukraine and resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, represent important, vital, and, more often than not, — the most specific and effective acts intended to address various problems encountered in the lives of individuals and communities.

The Constitution of Ukraine contains more than 20 articles and a dedicated title defining the role and place of local government in Ukraine. At the constitutional level, the State recognises and guarantees local self-governance (Article 7). Article 140 stipulates that ‘local self-government shall be exercised by a territorial community in compliance with a procedure established by law, both directly and through local self-government bodies: village, settlement or city councils, and their executive bodies’. The organic law defines the system of local self-government, its functions and competence (Article 143).

⁵ Monitoring the process of power decentralisation and local government reforms as of 10 April 2019 / The Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine. Available at <https://storage.decentralization.gov.ua/uploads/library/file/396/10.04.2019.pdf>.

⁶ The history of the Association is the history of the formation of the new local self-governance in Ukraine!!! Available at <https://hromady.org/про-асоціацію/історія/>

⁷ Ratified in Ukraine by the Law of Ukraine No. 452/97-VR dated 15/07/1997.

The Law No. 280/97-VR ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’ dated 21/05/1997 establishes the forms of direct implementation of local self-governance by a territorial community (local referendum, general meeting of citizens, local initiatives, public hearings), and also defines the principles of its organisation and activities, legal status and responsibility of local authorities and its officials.

The list of legislative acts that currently regulate the functioning of local governments also includes the following laws:

- The Tax Code of Ukraine No. 2755-VI dated 02/12/2010, which establishes the list and marginal rates for local taxes and fees, as well as the powers of local self-government in the field of taxation. With the decentralisation reform, the Tax Code of Ukraine has been amended to strengthen the institution of local taxes and fees, in particular, certain inefficient taxes (whose administrative costs exceeded the revenues from such taxes and fees) have been abolished; new cost-effective taxes have been introduced; the list of taxable items has been expanded; tax rates have been changed; the range of taxpayers has been expanded; certain national taxes have been made local, etc.;
- The Budget Code of Ukraine No. 2456-VI dated 08/07/2010, which regulates the processes of drafting, reviewing, approving, implementing local budgets, reporting of their implementation and monitoring of compliance with budget laws, defines the composition of revenues and expenditures for local budgets, the principles of allocation of types of expenditures between the state budget and local budgets, as well as between different types of local budgets; regulates intergovernmental fiscal relations and the principles of financial equalisation;
- The Law of Ukraine No. 2493-III ‘On Service in Local Self-Government Authorities’ dated 07/06/2001, which regulates legal, organisational, financial and social conditions for the exercise by the citizens of Ukraine of the right to serve in local self-government authorities, defines the general principles for the local self-government officials’ activities, their legal status, the procedure and legal guarantees for serving at local authorities;
- The Law of Ukraine No. 2625-III ‘On Self-Organisation Bodies of Population’ dated 11/07/2001, which determines the legal status, the procedure for establishment and operation of self-organisation bodies of population;
- The Law of Ukraine No. 1700-VII ‘On Prevention of Corruption’ dated 14/10/2014, which determines the legal and organisational grounds for the functioning of the system of prevention of corruption in Ukraine, and defines the persons authorised to perform the functions of local self-governance, along with the local government officials to whom this Law applies;
- The Law of Ukraine No. 922-VIII ‘On Public Procurement’ dated 25/12/2015, which establishes the legal and economic principles for procurement of goods, work and services to meet the needs of the State and territorial communities.

Certain provisions that largely relate to local self-governments are contained in the sectoral laws of Ukraine; particularly in the areas where local authorities hold respective powers (see Table 1).

Table 1. Sectoral laws that define the ATC powers

Areas of powers	Laws of Ukraine
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘On Education’ No. 2145-VIII dated 05/09/2017 • ‘On Preschool Education’ No. 2628-III dated 11/07/2001 • ‘On General Secondary Education’ No. 651-XIV dated 13/05/1999 • ‘On Higher Education’ No. 1556-VII dated 01/07/2014 • ‘On Extracurricular Education’ No. 2628-III dated 22/06/2000 • ‘On Vocational Education’ No. 103/98-VRZh dated 10/02/1998
Health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The Framework Ukrainian Legislation on Health Care’ No. 2801-XII dated 19/11/1992
Social protection and social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘On Basic Principles of Social Protection of Labour Veterans and Other Elderly Citizens in Ukraine’ No. 3721-XII dated 16/12/1993 • ‘On Social and Legal Protection of Servicemen and Their Family Members’ No. 2011-XII dated 20/12/1991 • ‘On Status of War Veterans, Guarantees of Their Social Protection’ No. 3551-XII dated

Areas of powers	Laws of Ukraine
	22/10/1993 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘On Status and Social Protection of Citizens Affected by Consequences of the Chernobyl Disaster’ No. 796-XII dated 28/02/1991 • ‘On the Basic Principles of Social Protection of Disabled Persons in Ukraine’ No. 875-XII dated 21/03/1991 • ‘On the Basic Principles of Social Protection of Homeless Persons and Abandoned Children’ No. 2623-IV dated 02/06/2005 • ‘On Social Services’ No. 966-IV dated 19/06/2003 • ‘On State Social Standards and State Social Guarantees’ No. 2017-III dated 05/10/2000 • ‘On Ensuring Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced Persons’ No. 1706-VII dated 20/10/2014
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘On Culture’ No. 2778-VII dated 14/12/2010
Physical culture and sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘On Physical Culture and Sports’ No. 3808-VII dated 24/12/1993

2.3. The ATC competence, powers and services

Article 143 of the Constitution of Ukraine defines the following areas where the territorial communities of villages, settlements or cities exercise their powers either directly or through the local authorities established by them:

- managing the property held in communal ownership;
- approving the programmes of socio-economic and cultural development and monitoring the implementation thereof;
- approving the budgets of the respective administrative territorial units and monitoring the implementation thereof;
- establishing local taxes and fees in accordance with law;
- supporting the conduct of local referendums and implementing the results thereof;
- founding, reorganising and liquidating communal enterprises, organisations and institutions, as well as monitoring their activities;
- addressing other issues of local importance referred by the law to their competence.

Under the Constitution, local self-government authorities may be vested with certain powers held by the state executive authorities — the so-called ‘delegated’ powers. The State shall finance the exercise of such powers from the State Budget of Ukraine in full or through the allocation of certain national taxes to a local budget, and shall assign the relevant state property items to local authorities. Local self-government authorities, in the matters related to the exercise of executive authorities’ powers delegated to them, shall be controllable by the respective executive authorities.

It should be noted that the basic law ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’ fails to differentiate between the scopes of competence of the local authorities from ATCs and from those villages, settlements or cities that remain outside amalgamated communities. Under this law, the powers held by village, settlement, city councils (Article 26), executive bodies of village, settlement, city councils (Articles 27–40), village, settlement, city chairmen (Article 42) are the same both for the ATC and other (not amalgamated) communities. The Budget Code of Ukraine is the regulatory act that currently determines the specifics of the powers held by the ATCs’ local authorities, as distinct from not amalgamated communities. In particular, due to the manner in which the composition of expenditures made from the budgets of amalgamated territorial communities (Article 89) has been determined, the ATCs’ local authorities are virtually given equal standing with the cities of the republican (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) and the oblast significance, as well as with districts.

The powers of local authorities in ATCs are summarised in Figure 2.1.

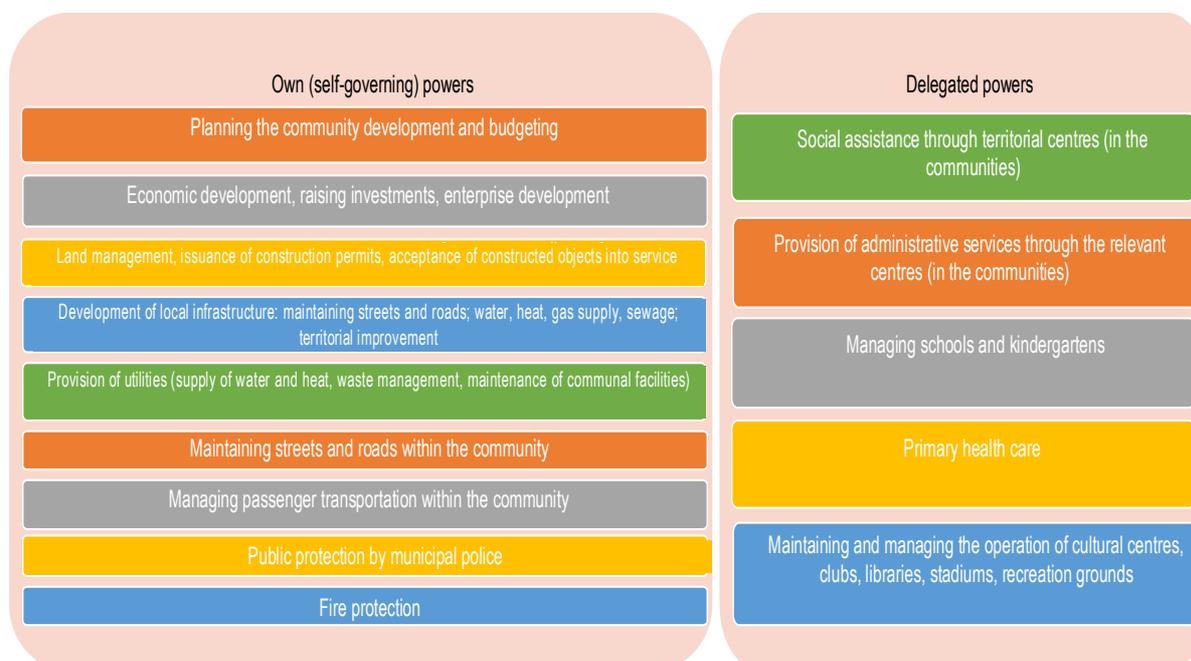


Figure 2.1. ATCs' own (self-governing) and delegated powers

The practice of establishing the ATCs has shown that problems generally arise because of the lack of legislative provisions stipulating the clear-cut division of powers between the newly formed ATCs and the districts within which such ATCs have been established. According to the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine, in 15 instances, the amalgamation resulted in the establishment of one or more ATCs whose boundaries coincide with those of the respective districts⁸. In 6 instances, the territory of a single ATC fully covers that of the respective administrative district: in the Lyman ATC (Donetsk Oblast), the Narodychy ATC (Zhytomyr Oblast), the Stara Synyava and the Letychiv ATCs (Khmelnyskyi Oblast), the Snovsk ATC (Chernihiv Oblast), and in the Apostolove ATC (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast). Only in the case of the Lyman ATC, under a decree adopted by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR on 17/10/1988, the Krasny Lyman City Council of People's Deputies and the Krasny Lyman District Council of People's Deputies had been merged into a single council — the Krasny Lyman (now — the Lyman) City Council of People's Deputies, with the district administratively subordinated to the Krasny Lyman City Council. In the other five districts, the district councils and district state administrations continue to operate and maintain their staff, despite the fact that, under the law, most of their powers must be relinquished to the ATCs. Thus, problems occur, associated with the division of powers and organisation of power in these territories, which requires finding a legislative solution.

The provision of administrative services has become one of the most important areas of activities for the ATC authorities. According to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, as of 01/10/2018, 775 administrative services centres (ASCs) were established in Ukraine, 123 of which operate in the ATCs⁹. The establishment of ASCs in the ATCs was necessitated by the assignment to them from the central executive authorities of new powers to provide administrative services. In particular, the following powers have been assigned:

- provision (since 01/09/2015) of the State Architectural and Construction Inspection's services, under the Law of Ukraine No. 320-VIII 'On Decentralisation of Powers in the Field of

⁸ Local self-government in Ukraine: 2017. Association of Ukrainian Cities, 2018, p. 4.

⁹ Report on the development of the Administrative Service Centre network in Q3 2018. Infographics about administrative service centres in Ukraine as of 01/10/2018. Available at <http://www.me.gov.ua/Documents/Download?id=4288d3e5-5080-4dcb-8faf-91ee68e38223>

Architectural and Construction Supervision and Improvements to Urban Planning Legislation’ dated 09/04/2015;

- provision (since 01/01/2016) of company and property registration services, under the Laws of Ukraine No. 835-VIII ‘On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On State Registration of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs” and Certain Other Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Decentralisation of Powers to Perform State Registration of Legal Entities, Individual Entrepreneurs and Community Groups’ dated 26/11/2015, and No. 834-VIII ‘On Amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On State Registration of Titles to Immovable Property and Encumbrances Thereon” and Certain Other Legislative Acts of Ukraine Regarding the Decentralisation of Powers to Perform State Registration of Titles to Immovable Property and Encumbrances Thereon’ dated 26/11/2015;

- provision (since 01/03/2016) of information from the State Land Cadastre, under the Law of Ukraine No. 888-VIII ‘On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine as to the Expanded Powers of Local Self-Government Authorities and Optimised Provision of Administrative Services’ dated 10/12/2015;

- provision (since 04/04/2016) of residence registration services, under the Law of Ukraine No. 888-VIII ‘On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine as to the Expanded Powers of Local Self-Government Authorities and Optimised Provision of Administrative Services’ dated 10/12/2015 and the CMU Resolution No. 207 ‘On Approval of the Rules for Residence Registration and of the Procedure for the Delivery of the Information to the USDR by the Registration Authorities’ dated 02/03/2016;¹⁰

- provision (since 01/10/2018) of registration of civil status acts(RCSA) services (for oblast centres and cities of oblast significance), under the Order No. 2825/5 ‘On approval of the amendments to certain regulations in the field of state civil registration’ adopted by the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine on 29/08/2018.

2.4. The ATC management

Under the Law of Ukraine ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’ (Article 5), the system of local self-government at the basic level (a territorial community level) comprises:

- a territorial community;
- a village, settlement, or city council;
- a village, settlement, or city chairman;
- executive bodies of a village, settlement, or city council;
- a starosta;
- self-organisation bodies of population (SOBPs).

Article 1 of the mentioned Law defines *territorial community* as residents consolidated by permanent residence within a village, settlement, or city that constitute independent administrative territorial units, or a voluntary amalgamation of residents from several villages that have a common administrative centre. Territorial community is a primary subject of local self-government; it elects a local council, village, settlement or city chairman and the starostas who represent and protect the interests of the entire community.

A *village, settlement or city council* is elected by residents of the village, settlement, city on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot. A village, settlement, city council is vested by the law with a number of powers that are conditionally divided into constitutive, normative and monitoring. The constitutive powers include the authority to establish permanent or temporary council committees, and to form executive bodies of the council. The council’s normative powers include the right to adopt decisions of a normative nature, which are binding throughout the council’s jurisdiction, if adopted in accordance with the competence vested by the

¹⁰ The ASC operation and assessment of the quality of administrative services. Practical guide. The Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance (PLEDDG) International Technical Assistance Project. Kyiv, 2017. Available at <http://pleddg.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Reports-color-web.pdf>

law and within the council's powers. The monitoring powers include monitoring of the budget implementation, activities of the bodies formed by the council, or of their officials¹¹.

A village, settlement or city chairman heads the council's executive body and presides at the meetings of the executive committee and the council. The Law of Ukraine 'On Local Self-Government in Ukraine' vests village, settlement and city chairmen with significant powers in the field of managing the operation of local councils and their executive bodies, as well as with broad representative powers. The chairman's personnel powers include submitting for the council's consideration nominees for the position of the council secretary, proposals concerning the quantitative and personal composition of the council's executive committee, the structure and status of the council's executive bodies, the council's administrative staff and executive committee, appointments and dismissals of heads of departments, divisions or other executive bodies of the council, community-owned enterprises, institutions or organisations.

The chairman's financial and resource powers include supporting preparation for the council's consideration of draft programmes of socio-economic and cultural development, special-purpose programmes related to other matters of self-governance, a draft local budget and a report of its implementation. The chairman is the administrator of budgetary funds and applies them only for the intended purpose determined by the council. Organisational and representative powers include chairing the meetings of the council and executive committee, signing and publishing the decisions adopted by them. The chairman represents the council and the community at public events and visits, negotiates and enters on behalf of the community, without a power of attorney, into various contracts, including those with foreign counterparts.

Under the Law of Ukraine 'On Local Self-Government in Ukraine', *executive bodies* of village, settlement, city councils include their executive committees, departments, divisions or other executive bodies established by such councils. These executive bodies are controllable by and accountable to the respective councils, and, in the matters related to the exercise of executive authorities' powers delegated to them, are also controllable by the respective state executive authorities. In village councils that represent territorial communities comprising up to 500 residents, a decision may be adopted by the respective territorial community or village council not to establish the executive body of such council. In this instance, functions of the executive body of a council (save for the disposal of land and natural resources) shall be performed solely by the village chairman.

The executive committee is a collegiate body formed by the council's decision. The chairman has the right to submit nominees to the positions in the executive committee. Acting legislation imposes no clear-cut requirements on the number or composition of the executive committee. However, it must include the chairman, deputy (deputies) chairman, the council secretary and the starosta of the relevant community.

Under the Law of Ukraine 'On Local Self-Government in Ukraine', powers of the executive committee extend to the following:

- the field of socio-economic and cultural development, planning and accounting (Article 27);
- the field of budget, finance and prices (Article 28);
- the field of communal property management (Article 29);
- the field of housing and communal services, domestic, commercial services, catering, transportation and communications (Article 30);
- the field of construction (Article 31);
- the field of education, health care, culture, physical culture, and sports (Article 32);
- the field of regulation of land relations and environmental protection (Article 33);

¹¹ A. F. Tkachuk. Activities of local authorities and village, settlement, city councillors (training module). Anatoliy Tkachuk. Kyiv. 'Legal Status' Information & Advisory Centre, 2016. Available at <https://www.csi.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Diyalnist-oms.pdf>

- the field of social protection of the population (Article 34);
- the field of foreign economic activity (Article 35);
- the field of defence work (Article 36);
- the field of administrative territorial structure (Article 37).

A *starosta* representing the interests of the territorial community residents shall be elected at the level of the village or settlement that has acceded to the ATC. Under Article 14¹.2 of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’, a starosta shall be elected by the residents of the village(s) or settlement(s) located within the respective starosta district, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot, and shall exercise his/her powers on a permanent basis.

The starosta, as a local self-government official, is vested, under Article 54¹ of the Law of Ukraine ‘On Local Self-Government in Ukraine’, with the following powers:

- 1) represent interests of the respective village or settlement residents before executive bodies of village, settlement, or city council;
- 2) attend plenary sessions of the village, settlement, city council and meetings of its standing committees;
- 3) be entitled to make a guaranteed statement at plenary sessions of the village, settlement, city council or meetings of its standing committees on the matters concerning the interests of the respective village or settlement residents;
- 4) assist village or settlement residents in preparation of documents to be submitted to local authorities, etc.

This list is not exhaustive, since Article 54¹.13 of this Law states that the starosta may exercise other powers determined by this or other laws.

Self-organisation bodies of population are representative bodies that are established by a part of the residents who temporarily or permanently reside in the respective territory within a village, settlement, or city. SOBPs include house, street, block committees, microdistrict committees, committees of districts in the cities, village or settlement committees. Their operation is governed by the Law of Ukraine No. 2625-III ‘On Self-Organisation Bodies of Population’ dated 11/07/2001. SOBPs are created on the initiative of a meeting (conference) of residents and subject to a permission granted by the respective local council.

SOBPs exercise their own (referred by the law to the competence of these bodies) and delegated powers. The SOBPs’ most significant powers include the following: keeping record of the age, place of work or study of the citizens residing within the SOBPs’ area of operation; representing the interests of the residents from the respective territory before the local council and its executive bodies; submitting proposals to the draft local programmes and local budgets; monitoring the quality of housing and communal services provided to the public; engaging the public in the activities related to land improving, gardening, equipping playgrounds and sports grounds, etc. As regards the powers delegated to the SOBPs, they may include certain powers of a village, settlement, city, or city-district council delegated by it to the SOBPs with a simultaneous transfer of the relevant funds, logistical or other resources.

2.5. Human resources of ATC

With the introduction of the decentralisation reform and expansion of the ATC powers, the demand for human resources in the relevant local authorities has noticeably increased. The practice of the ATC formation shows that those ATCs that have formed around inhabited localities, such as district centres, are better supplied with human resources. In these communities, employees from district state administrations usually transfer to the newly formed local authorities of amalgamated communities. However, the managerial and professional staff of the newly formed ATCs faces a new system of managerial and organisational relations that are becoming more complex and unconventional. Therefore, even the available experience of an individual officials or an entire

organisation fails to address the diverse, extraordinary or singular managerial situations that call for new technologies in order to respond or to make professionally sound managerial decisions.

In the instances where village ATCs has been established around the inhabited localities without the previous status of an administrative centre, the situation with human resources is much worse. Professionals capable of operating in the conditions of expanded local self-government powers and handling issues that were not previously addressed by local authorities of villages, settlements or cities (i.e., cities of district significance) are now in demand.

While it is possible to assess in advance the amount of financial resources or the state of the infrastructure items, the management of human resources in rural areas is a virtually unpredictable process. However, a strong management team is a key to the community's success. Equally important in the ATC operation is the qualitative composition of the councillors and the efficient work by starostas.

The shortage of the key professionals in the ATCs, insufficient skills of the available officials in performing new powers/ functions result in the inefficient use of financial resources in territorial communities and the inability to channel state subventions towards the community development. Local authorities in rural ATCs are often unable to prepare high-quality investment projects in order to secure state support or international assistance funds, and are unready to implement strategic planning and programming of the community development.

Thus, many ATCs face the problem of insufficient professionalism in local government officials. Besides, the problem of recruiting managers continues to be relevant for the ATCs as a result of the local authorities' low competitiveness in the labour market and falling prestige of employment at local government. As of 01/09/2018, according to the State Employment Service, there were 9 thousand vacancies in the ATCs¹².

Handling the existing problems in the human resources management of the ATCs should be focused on making the service in local government fully professional, on the introduction of effective in-service training programmes for local government officials, creation of legal prerequisites for boosting the prestige of the service at local self-government authorities, career promotion, depoliticisation of the service at local authorities, the introduction of a new model of remuneration. These issues could be addressed with the adoption of the new Law 'On Service in Local Self-Government Authorities'.

The draft Law on amendments to the Law of Ukraine 'On Service in Local Self-Government Authorities' (reg. No. 8369 dated 17/05/2018, new revision) stipulates the development of legal prerequisites for:

- defining the status of local self-government officials and elected local government officials;
- ensuring the political neutrality of local self-government officials;
- an open competition as the main procedure for taking the position of a local self-government official and for the promotion to higher-category positions;
- vesting the local authorities with the powers to address independently the matters related to the remuneration conditions for local self-government officials, other matters of service at local authorities, and introducing general rules and guarantees for the exercise of such powers;
- adapting the basics of service at local authorities in line with the conceptual approaches laid down by the Law of Ukraine 'On Civil Service', in particular, concerning the classification of positions and ranks, assessment of official performance, the procedure and grounds for bringing officials to disciplinary liability, types of disciplinary offences and disciplinary sanctions, grounds for termination of service, etc.;

¹² Decentralisation of employment. Which professionals are need in the communities, are they out there in the labour market and how supply and demand should be linked? Available at <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-presshall/2542639-decentralizacia-zajnatosti-akih-fahivciv-potrebut-gromadi.html>

- moving the positions of the council committees' chief executive from the category of elected positions to the category of appointed official, assigning to them a significant portion of HR powers;
- streamlining the wage structure by increasing the share of basic salaries, reducing the number and share of allowances and bonuses to increase wage stability for local self-government officials;
- creating environment for in-service training of elected officials and local self-government officials.

2.6. Local finances

Local finances are one of the most important types of resource support for the community. Voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities allowed the newly formed local governments to acquire the relevant powers and resources, previously held by cities of oblast significance and districts. Article 64 of the Budget Code of Ukraine determines the composition of revenues in the general fund of ATC budgets. The most significant items of the ATC revenues include the following:

- 60 per cent of the personal income tax paid (remitted) according to the Tax Code of Ukraine in the respective territory;
- local taxes and fees (property tax, single tax, parking fee, tourism fee);
- excise tax on sales by retail trade economic entities of excisable goods;
- payments for the provision of administrative services and administrative fees for state registration, collected at the place of the service delivery;
- proceeds from the rent for use of a property complex or other community-owned property founded by the ATC;
- rent for use of subsoil resources for the extraction of minerals of local significance; rent for special use of water from water bodies of local significance; rent for special use of forest resources;
- rent for water bodies (parts thereof), which are provided for use on lease terms by local councils;
- concession fees with regard to community-owned facilities founded by the ATC;
- part of net profit/income of communal unitary enterprises and their associations, which is withdrawn into the budget according to the procedure established by respective local councils, etc.

As a result of variations in the structure of local taxes and fees, their portion in the local budget revenues has increased significantly in recent years. Although being at 1.1–1.4% between 2007 and 2010, this portion, beginning in 2011 and until 2014, grew up to 8.8%, reaching 24.7% in 2017. Revenues from land fees (50%) and single tax (over 44%) take up the largest percentage in the structure of local taxes and fees¹³.

The ATCs maintain direct intergovernmental fiscal relations with the state budget. Before the reform, these relations were only available to the budgets of oblasts, districts, and cities of oblast significance. For the purpose of exercising the powers delegated by the state, they are supported by the appropriate transfers: grants, educational and medical subventions, subventions for community infrastructure development, etc.

As part of the state budget, the State Regional Development Fund (SRDF) has become an additional financial tool stimulating the ATC development. The SRDF may co-finance (with a 10% participation from local budgets) investment programmes and projects that must comply with the priorities defined in the State Regional Development Strategy or regions' development strategies

¹³ Local taxes and fees. Financial monitoring teams of the Central Office for Reforms under the Ministry of Regional Development (supported by the U-LEAD with Europe Programme and the SKL International Project). Available at <http://www.tsatu.edu.ua/ipod/wp-content/uploads/sites/46/miscevi-podatky-i-zbory.pdf>

and action plans for their implementation, or be implemented as cooperation projects between territorial communities, or support voluntary amalgamation of territorial communities.

In 2015, 877 projects were selected from the SRDF, but, because of the complicated approval procedure, only about 60% of the funds — UAH 2.38 billion — had been used for their implementation. In 2016, 777 projects worth almost UAH3 billion were funded, in 2017 — about 800 projects at UAH3.5 billion. The state budget allocates UAH6 billion to the SRDF in 2018.

In order to stimulate amalgamation of territorial communities and to provide additional financial resources for the newly created ATCs, provision of subventions from the state budget to local budgets was introduced in 2016 for the development of the ATC infrastructure. The key condition for granting a subvention is that it must be applied to capital expenditures only, subject to the availability of the relevant targeted projects. Furthermore, each project must be included in the community's socio-economic development plan. In 2016, a UAH 1 billion subvention was earmarked to amalgamated communities from the state budget to support infrastructural development. The subvention funds were distributed among 159 amalgamated communities according to a clear formula, depending on the size of the population and the community area. In 2017, the subvention amounted to UAH1.5 billion. The 2018 state budget allocated UAH1.9 billion of funds to implement infrastructure subvention projects; however, the number of ATCs also increased. Accordingly, each community received even fewer resources to finance its own projects.

As a result of decentralisation, amalgamated territorial communities, in addition to their growing financial capacity, have acquired other means of supporting their economic development. For example, amalgamated territorial community council is empowered to raise borrowings both locally and internally, including loans from international financial organisations. Borrowings are made into the development budget, and funds are allocated towards implementation of investment programmes (projects) aimed at the development of communal infrastructure, the introduction of resource-saving technologies; creation, growth or renovation of strategic long-term use facilities or of the facilities that support the completion of the tasks facing the city councils, focused on meeting the interests of their communities' population.

However, a common problem encountered by many communities, including the ATCs, is that the implementation of certain initiatives is hindered by insufficient amount of resources raised — not so much because of their inaccessibility, but because of the lack of experience, the inability to prepare project applications or other necessary documents and to conduct presentation of the investment or other projects before all stakeholders. Developing skills in raising financial resources from all the available sources remains a key factor in the success of any local development initiatives.

2.7. Professional development system

The processes of power decentralisation and local self-government reform put forward new requirements on the professional level of local self-government officials, determine the development of their professional competence, including through training.

The national professional development system for local self-government officials in Ukraine includes the following institutions:

- the National Academy for Public Administration Under the President of Ukraine (the National Academy) and its regional institutes;
- other higher education entities that offer master and bachelor degrees in 'Public management and administration';
- regional excellence centres for employees of government, local self-government authorities, state-owned enterprises, institutions and organisations;
- state (sectoral) postgraduate education entities.

The mission of the National Academy is to maintain and improve the effectiveness of the Ukrainian public administration system; provide government and local self-government authorities

with highly skilled professional administrative personnel; develop the 'Public administration' educational and academic sector in line with the value aspect of democracy; support personal rights and freedoms and sustainable socio-economic and political development of the state. Within the structure of the Academy, the educational and academic process, as of 01/03/2018, was provided by the Institute of Public Management and Administration (Kyiv), the In-Service Training Institute for Senior Executives, the Institute of Expert Analytical and Academic Research, four Regional Institutes of Public Administration in the cities of Dnipro, Lviv, Odesa and Kharkiv, 9 faculties, 44 departments (eleven of them — in Kyiv). The National Academy currently offers master's degree in the 'Public management and administration' of the 'Public management and administration' field of knowledge. Since 1995, the National Academy has prepared about 30 thousand masters (including more than 20 thousand under government contracts), almost 10 thousand bachelors and specialists.

In 2017, 6,176 people were undergone at the National Academy and its regional institutes under master's programmes in the 'Public management and administration' and 'Public administration' fields, including 3,222 individuals under government contracts, with 1,374 persons acquiring related specialities. In 2017, 1,582 masters were trained, 980 of them — under government contracts. In 2017, 16,695 individuals were covered by in-service training, including 4,480 individuals under government contracts, 1,944 — under oblast council contracts, and 356 — under city council contracts.¹⁴

In terms of quantity, the National Academy is one of the largest schools of public administration in the world. For example, about 130 students are admitted to the National School of Administration (ENA) in France annually. The Harvard Kennedy School trains 295 students under master's programmes each year, including 70 students in public administration and 225 — in public policy. At present, the National Academy represents a hybrid of various models. Thus, the idea of turning the National Academy into a higher education entity has been promoted for quite a while, involving an increase in the number of employees and students (masters), postgraduate and doctoral students, as well as setting up new departments and structural subdivisions¹⁵.

The network of educational entities for in-service training of local self-government officials, whose positions are included in Categories 1–7 of local self-government, is formed by the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service on a competitive basis, according to the procedure established by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

Oblast (regional) excellence centres have been set up in each region of Ukraine, except where regional institutes of the National Academy operate. The ATC village, settlement and city chairmen, local self-government officials, local councillors are offered an opportunity to improve their professional competence at these centres.

Local authorities themselves play an important role in managing the education and in-service training of the local self-government officials. In Ukraine, the ATCs have been increasingly placing themselves the orders for training of local councillors and local self-government officials.

¹⁴ Summarised data on the activities of the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine in 2017. Available at <http://academy.gov.ua/pages/dop/181/files/965bc1fe-a887-4cb4-b856-1b62b2601dc2.pdf>

¹⁵ Analysis of the situation around professional training, retraining and advanced training of civil servants and local government officials in Ukraine. A research and analysis report. The Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance (PLEDDG) International Technical Assistance Project, p. 15. Available at http://pleddg.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Analytical-report_Institution-Training-2017_7July_Final.pdf

3. Decentralisation reform impact on the local self-government system

3.1. Changes in the local self-government tasks and functions

Initiated in 2015, the decentralisation reform is still being implemented across numerous areas. This reform has brought about significant changes in the tasks and functions of local authorities established upon amalgamation of territorial communities. Amalgamated communities are the spaces where actual changes occur, even in the absence of any constitutional amendments or new laws on local self-government or administrative territorial structure. In the course of the research, respondents were asked which tasks and functions, in their opinion, were most important today for various local authorities and what changes in their tasks and functions had occurred over the past three years.

On average, after creating the amalgamated territorial community, their local self-government authority, according to the surveyed respondents by telephone, started to **provide additional 9 competences/functions** (only 10% of the respondents said that they started to realize up to 5 additional competences, 53% spoke about additional 5-10, and 36% started to implement more than 10 new competences). **The highest number** of respondents mentioned such **‘new’ competences/functions** as providing the general **secondary education** (77.0%), **management of land resources** (74.9%), **infrastructure development** (73.7%), **social services** and social security (70.2%), **street and road maintenance** (70.2%), organization of **cultural and educational institution** (68.7%) (Figure 3.1).

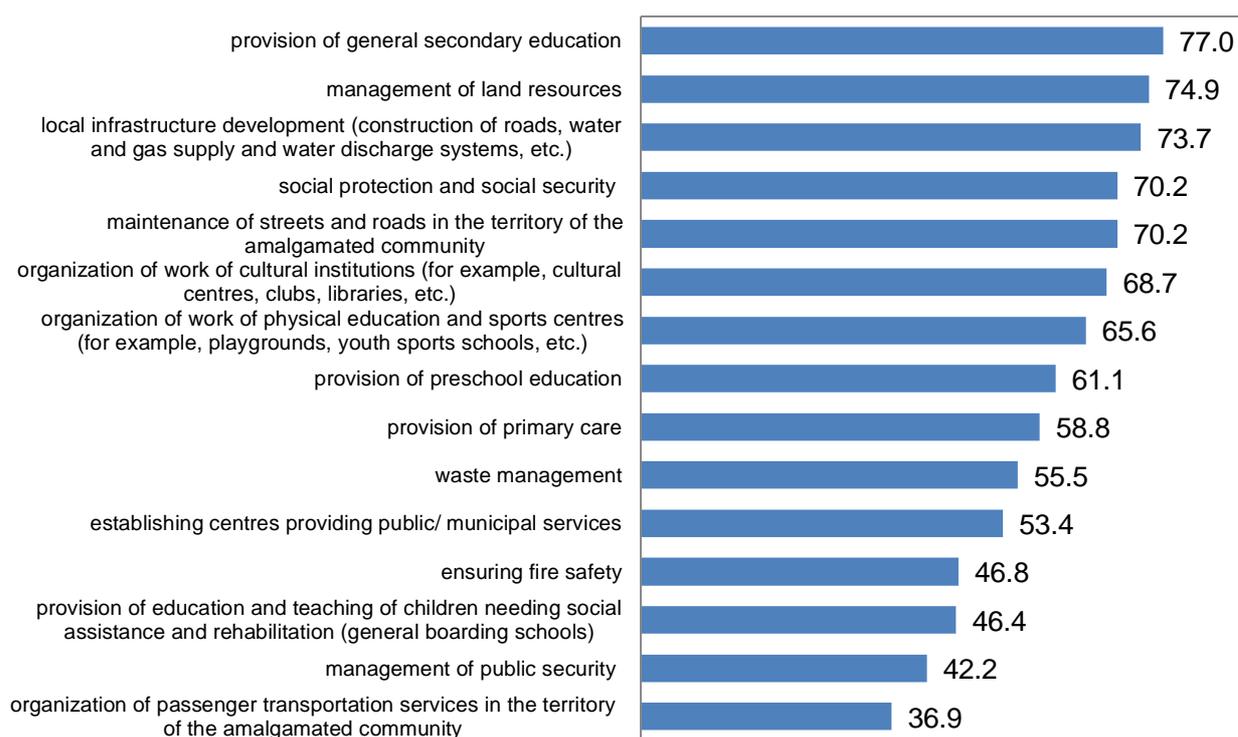


Figure 3.1. New responsibilities that has been implemented by local self-government bodies over the past 3 years (% among all respondents)

Among these changes was an increase in the resource and financial base to provide decentralised powers with the appropriate resources for high-quality performance. Amalgamated territorial communities have direct intergovernmental fiscal relations with the state budget. For the purpose of exercising the powers delegated by the state, they are supported by the appropriate transfers: grants, educational and medical subventions, subventions for community infrastructure development, etc. Legislative changes have also given local self-governments the power to approve local budgets irrespective of the adoption of the law on the state budget.

Amalgamated territorial communities, in addition to their growing financial capacity, have acquired other means of supporting their development, such as making external borrowings, independent selection of institutions to service local budget funds related to the development and the budget-funded entities' own revenues. Competencies in the field of architectural and construction supervision and urban planning have been decentralised, local authorities have been given the power to independently determine their urban planning policy. Communities have been granted the power to dispose of lands situated outside inhabited localities. The laws passed by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine offer an opportunity to decentralise certain powers held by the central executive authorities in the provision of basic administrative services (such as registration of real estate, businesses, or residential addresses) by transferring them to the community level.

The transfer to local self-government authorities of powers in the field of secondary education and health care services represent extremely important aspects of the decentralisation reform. In June 2018, 5,855 schools, or 38% of all schools in Ukraine, were managed by local authorities in the cities of oblast significance or in the ATCs. Furthermore, 530 schools were given the status of the so-called 'pivot' schools. The mission of these pivot schools is to support the 986 branches that operate in smaller inhabited localities. However, the new pivot schools have so far been established only in less than one-third, i.e., in 224 of all ATCs.

The main challenge facing the educational reforms is raising the quality of educational services despite the differences in the professional capacity between various communities. And, in particular, bridging the gap in the quality of secondary education between urban and rural schools. More than 60% of all schools are still waiting to be re-subordinated to the local self-government authorities from the local state administrations. And only a third of the already amalgamated communities exercise in full their new powers in the field of secondary education. Therefore, successes in decentralised provision of educational services are somewhat patchy. Amalgamation of this process requires, in particular, involving ATCs in greater numbers, building up their institutional capacity and improving consistency in the transfer of institutions in order to fund secondary education locally.

The decentralisation process in the field of medical services has also been initiated in Ukraine. Improvements to their quality have been suggested through, in particular, creation of hospital districts to serve as the basis for functional amalgamation of hospitals within a relevant district. The new hospital districts would bring together several communities in the provision of medical services. They will also represent a framework tool for long-term development of local hospitals and their personnel. The adopted reform allows communities to choose different ways of providing the public with high-quality medical services, from establishing their own communal hospitals to contracting private health care institutions or individual practice doctors.

The reform is also intended to improve the accessibility of primary health care in the ATCs' remote areas, make more efficient use of medical subventions, support the creation of high-quality development plans for hospital districts, and the provision of specialised (secondary and tertiary) medical care to indigent patients. At the moment, however, the new health system implies that (while local self-governments will either remain or become the owners of hospitals and related facilities) the funds to support the operation of these institutions will still be allocated by the national health care agency, rather than from local budgets.

As a result of changes in the scope and range of their powers, the ATCs now face such challenges as contractual work, public procurement arrangements, which had been unfamiliar for the majority of the local authorities prior to amalgamation. Many of the newly established ATCs lack institutional memory of these procedures. As a result, bidding is conducted with delays, construction is launched behind schedule; consequently, infrastructure facilities are commissioned later than expected.

There is insufficient managerial and professional capacity in the exercise of almost all powers by those ATCs that were created on the basis of villages, settlements or cities of district significance. *If they have no experience of self-governance, they are unable to handle the new*

powers and use the resources obtained in the process of amalgamation'. These ATCs lack both professionals and, sometimes, even premises where they can be accommodated. Problems arise across almost entire range of public services that are to be delivered by local self-government authorities. These include administrative services, health care services, education, and other areas. Accordingly, the role of the professional development system is growing, which should be primarily focused on developing the professional capacity of local self-government officials in these ATCs (and local self-government not covered by amalgamation as well).

For oblast councils, the most important functions at present include economic development and attracting investors, since no ATC is able to address these issues alone. The matters of inter-municipal cooperation and cross-border cooperation (in the border areas) are also among the top priorities of the oblast councils.

At the same time, in the opinion of some respondents, humanitarian issues, in particular, the maintenance of the social security infrastructure, remain beyond the focus of the local self-government attention. For example, following the ATC establishment, those facilities (service centres for the elderly people or child development centres) that were previously financed from the district budgets, have found themselves in a difficult situation because of the lack of financial resources for their maintenance. Amalgamated communities are now unwilling to take over the maintenance of these entities, while there is no money left for their upkeep at the district level.

The issue of the maintenance of vocational schools remains critical. The government has been postponed with this matter for several years. In 2016, local self-governments were charged with financing of vocational entities through their local budgets. When a complete collapse ensued, financing of all vocational schools was transferred to oblast budgets, and subventions from the state budget were provided. However, in oblast centres, vocational schools continued to be financed from the budgets of these cities. This is an additional burden for the cities of oblast significance, costing between 60 and 400 million hryvnias (depending on the size of the oblast centre and the number of vocational entities). In fact, each city council maintains these entities, uses its own funds to train non-resident students, while the state remains the property manager. The city council cannot replace or appoint vocational school principals. Each vocational school principal is vertically subordinated to the oblast authorities.

The absolute majority of the surveyed representatives of amalgamated communities (70.2%) see **infrastructural investments** as their **top priority** (Figure 3.2). Much more rarely, the respondents mentioned budget stabilization (30.8%), social policies (26.7%), citizens' participation in decision-making (24.4%), improvement of the quality of services (23.8%).

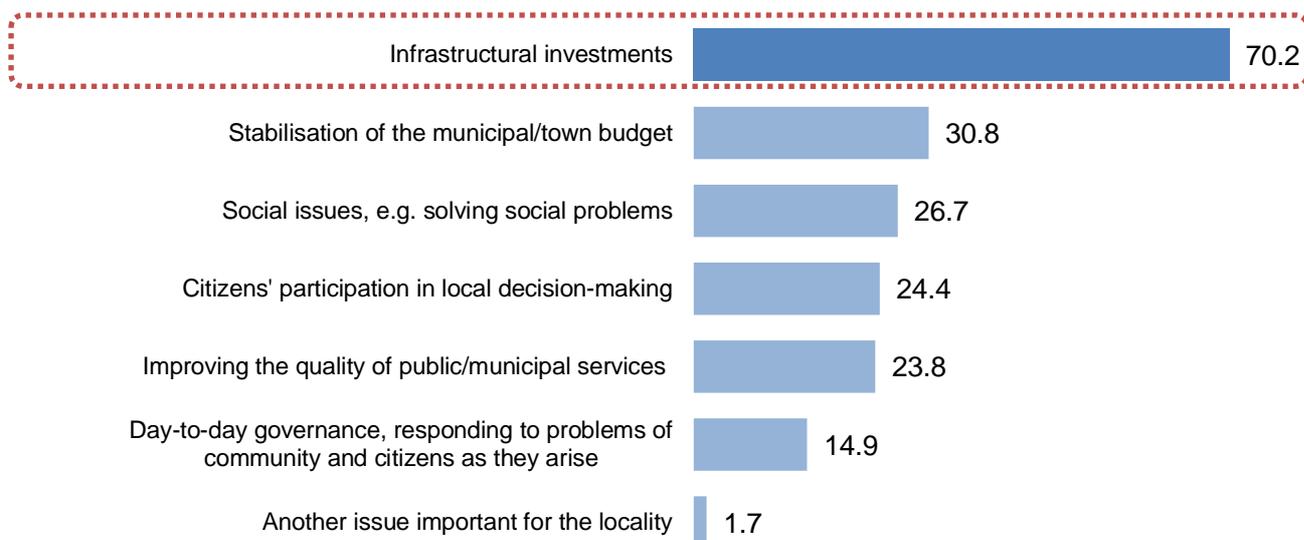


Figure 3.2. Priorities of the activities of local self-government bodies for the for the acting period (% among all respondents)

The law requires that the amalgamated community should fulfil multiple tasks simultaneously and no task can be abandoned. But some of them can be treated as more important for budget planning purposes, that's why the representatives of amalgamated communities stated that the **special focus** of the activities of their self-government authorities is **school/preschool education** (65.4%), **road and street maintenance** (41.6%), **local economic development** (40.2%) and **health care** (35.4%) (Figure 3.3).

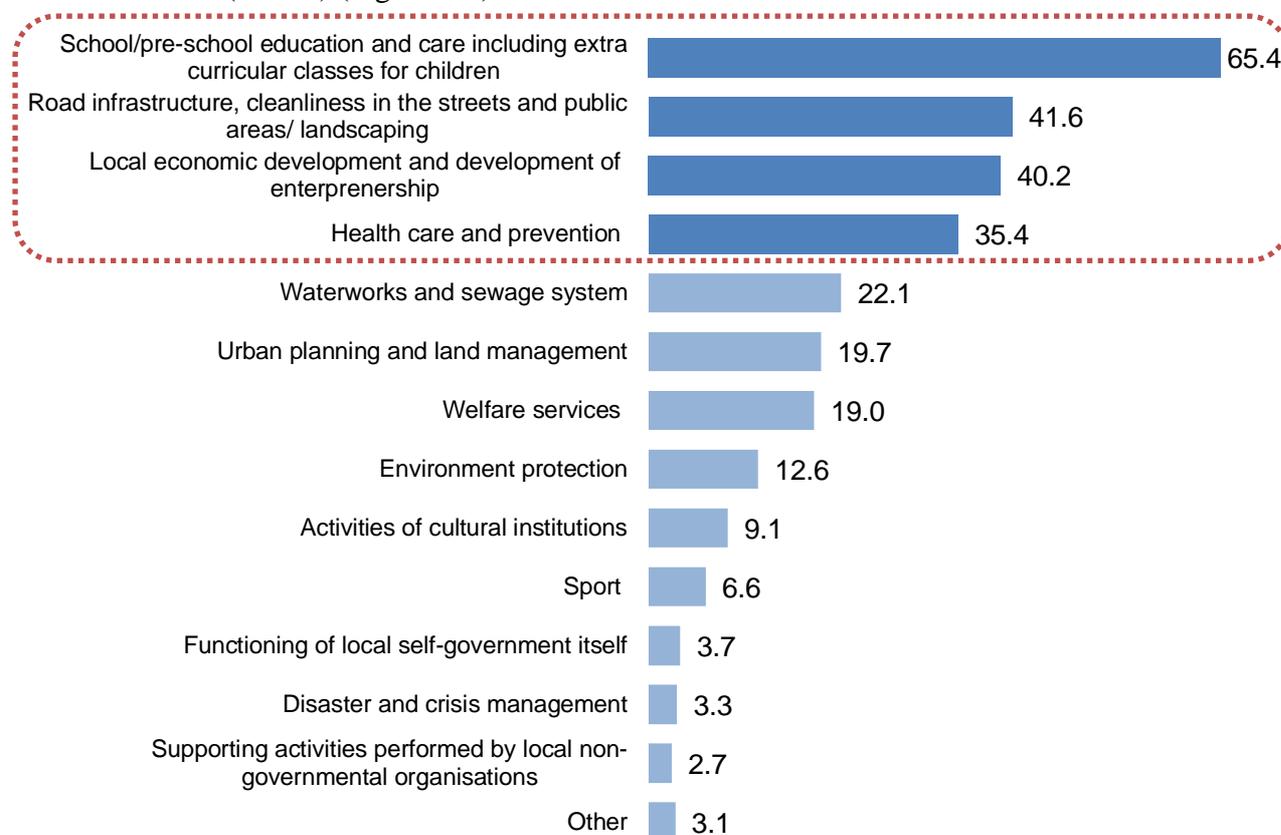


Figure 3.3. Priority areas of responsibilities of local self-government bodies (% among all respondents)

3.2. Successes in the decentralisation reform

Almost all survey participants were unanimous in the positive assessment of the decentralisation reform, regarding it as the most significant reform among numerous others initiated by the Ukrainian government. Some believe that it is, perhaps, the only reform actually working in the country.

Among the major changes is the increase of the level of self-governance, namely, the emergence of a real local government at the basic level (villages, settlements, cities of district significance). In other words, the basic level has finally started to turn into something that may be called a real self-government, since no actual self-government had existed at this level prior to the reform. *‘There were no resources, no powers, no responsibilities then. It was just a name’*. That is, the greatest achievement is that a real self-government began to take shape at the basic level. This happened thanks to the decentralisation of powers and resources.

As noted by one of the survey participants, *‘we have been operating as an amalgamated community since 2015. We were among the first who were amalgamated three years ago. We walked the untrodden path. Of course, the changes have been profound. I believe that, before 2015, local self-government had not existed as such. Everything was decided by local state administrations and other authorities up the power vertical. Local self-governance existed only in Kyiv and Sevastopol. The overwhelming majority of local budgets were subsidised. Funds were allocated under some arbitrary rules, and there was never enough money. Therefore, I regard the*

revival of local self-government, vesting local communities with actual powers and resources as the most positive aspect of the reform’.

Among the undeniable successes of the decentralisation reform is the fact that decentralisation of powers and resources have provided local self-government authorities with more opportunities to develop territories, create up-to-date educational, medical, transport, housing and communal infrastructure. Local authorities are now interested in the development of their territories’ investment appeal for the public benefit, since, after all, any taxes paid here would be channelled to raise the quality of life of local residents. Communities may raise investment independently, contributing to the socio-economic development. Various permits and registration documents required to conduct business may be obtained locally. Naturally, there is a question of how each local self-government authority is able to cope with these new powers, but, undoubtedly, the establishment of ATCs and expansion of their powers and resources point to the success of the reform.

Changes caused by the decentralisation reform have been observed virtually throughout the entire local self-government. At the same time, most of the positive changes and successes have been achieved at the basic level of local self-government. The reform gave impetus to the full-fledged development of the communities and an opportunity to improve life in each inhabited locality and across the entire country, while enabling its citizens to become independent masters of their neighbourhoods.

The benefits of the reform have been currently felt by numerous local communities — roads are repaired, water networks are built, medical and educational entities are renovated in their cities, villages and settlements after decades of decline. *‘Of course, there are more funds now. Before 2015, we could not build, repair, or even talk of any kind of development in the community (we only paid salaries to the public employees, obtaining the rest of the funds elsewhere). Now we have resources for the development. We determine ourselves which road to repair, which school, kindergarten or clubhouse to renovate. In the three years, we have renovated five of the six clubhouses’.*

With the decentralisation of financial resources, communities began to regard themselves as masters and to count the money collected locally or provided in the form of state support. *‘Now they estimate the costs of work or services and where they may be ordered cheaper. Before that they didn’t care, they had no voice in this. Funds were transferred to the village council via the district council’.*

The expanded powers and resources have raised the level of transparency in the activities of the newly formed communities. *‘Local self-governments are trying to become more transparent in their activities and to attract local residents to their work’.* The emergence of undisputed community leaders has become the uncontested result of the first wave of the ATC creation. In the opinion of numerous respondents, the communities formed in 2018 were mainly established for political reasons or in business interests of certain influential persons or groups.

In the view of these respondents, the first communities established in 2015 made the most of the benefits offered by the decentralisation reform. They are currently showing significant achievements and demonstrating many successful practices.

Among other positive changes brought about by the decentralisation reform is the opportunity for small communities to join the already established ATCs or the cities of oblast significance. These opportunities have intensified the processes of communities’ amalgamation and, to a certain extent, made it possible for the cities of oblast significance to address problems of further development.

The emergence at the basic level of capable local authorities has catalysed other processes that were developing rather slowly until now. Namely, the processes of cooperation between territorial communities. Where common issues of local development were previously addressed at the district level, the establishment of the ATCs has allowed them to combine their resources and efforts and address local issues more quickly and effectively.

Certain positive changes are also observed at the oblast level. The interviewed chairmen of oblast councils have noted that their oblast councils had become more active, discussions — more wide-ranging, any issues raised — subjected to in-depth analysis. *‘Issues are raised that would usually be disregarded by the oblast state administrations. The biggest benefit for the oblast council is that there is a better dialogue between local self-government authorities, namely, between the amalgamated communities and the oblast council’.*

3.3. Challenges facing the decentralisation reform

However, in the opinion of certain respondents, one should speak of the decentralisation reform successes with caution. A considerable number of unresolved issues remain, which have become even more acute in the course of the reform, while numerous new problems have emerged, caused by poor decision-making. The greatest difficulties in the day-to-day activities, according to the respondents, are the legislation instability (51.1%), the lack of adequate financing of delegated powers (33.8%), the lack of own revenue (33.5%) and the legal limitations of discretion in some areas (30.0%) (Figure 3.4).

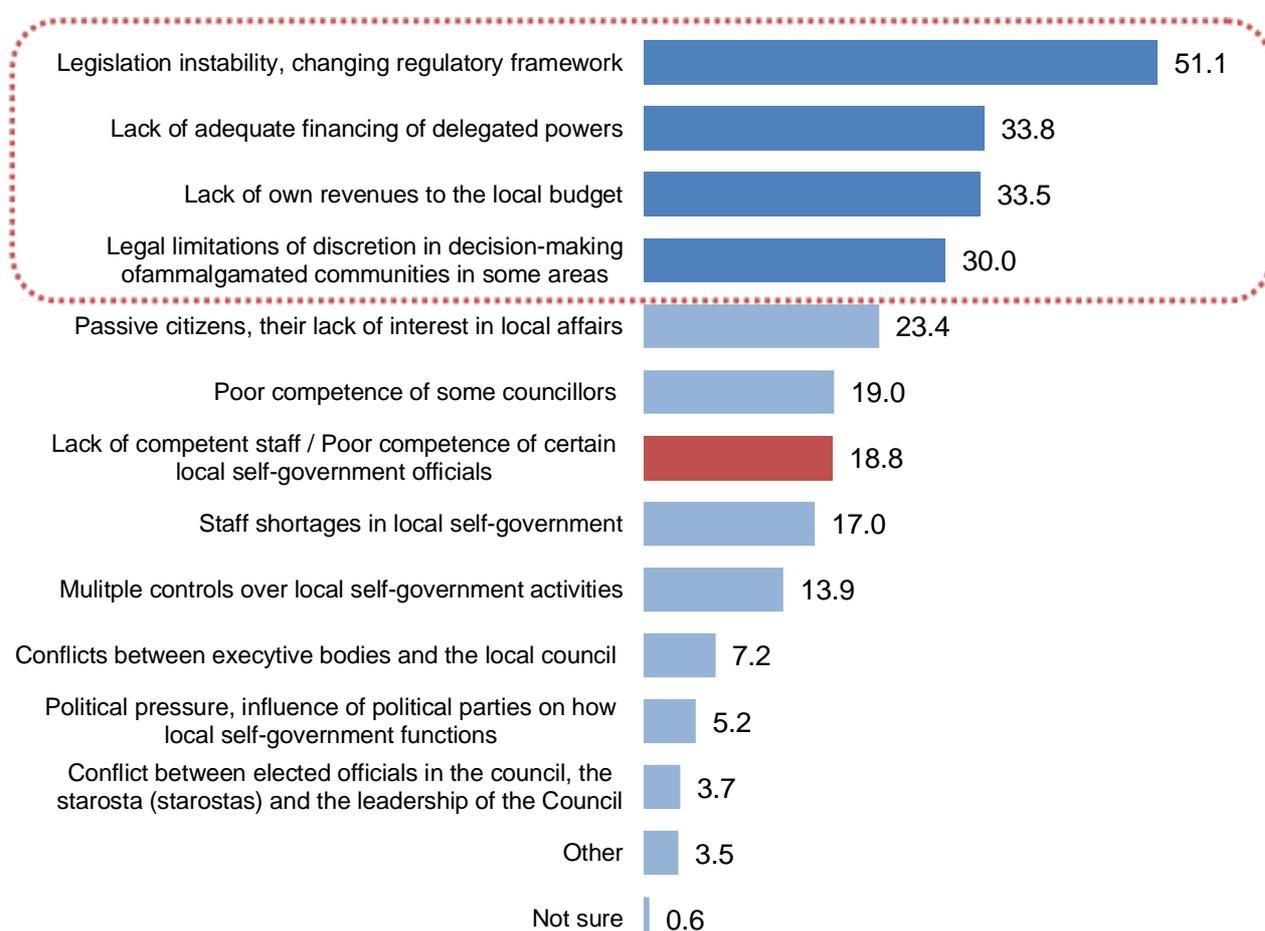


Figure 3.4. The greatest difficulties in the current activities of local self-government bodies (% among all respondents)

The respondents of telephone survey were asked to evaluate how well the tasks in 35 different spheres are carried out. According to the assessments we obtained, the spheres can be divided into the following categories:

- 1) The ones where the majority of tasks are fulfilled properly. Respondents often mention some difficulties, but in the absolute majority of cases these are difficulties that can be overcome.
- 2) The ones where there are frequent difficulties, but mostly these difficulties can be resolved, and the tasks that are problematic to fulfil are rare.

3) The ones where the majority of respondents speak about difficulties, and quite often about tasks which are problematic to fulfil.

Among the 35 spheres which the respondents had to assess in terms of task fulfilment, 4 are the most problematic: environmental protection (52.2% spoke about resolvable difficulties and 26.9% spoke about major difficulties), wastewater management and solid waste management (43.5% and 24.0%, respectively), local public transportation (43.5% and 36.4%), language training (23.0% and 32.7%).

At the same time, in other spheres, mostly from one third to one half of the respondents still mentioned difficulties with task fulfilment (although these were mostly difficulties which, according to the respondents, can be resolved). The relatively best situation is in the sphere of work organization at the office (62.3% say that it is properly organized), but even in this sphere 35.8% of respondents picked the option "There are difficulties in fulfilling tasks, but they are resolved." (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Assessment of various areas where local self-government bodies fulfil their tasks or activities (% among all respondents)

100% in line	Area where tasks are fulfilled smoothly	Fulfilling tasks is somewhat problematic	Major difficulties in fulfilling tasks	Not sure / No experience
In most cases, tasks are performed properly, although there are difficulties that are, however, resolved				
Work organization at the office	62.3	35.8	1.5	0.4
Management of educational institutions	59.8	36.4	2.9	1.0
Public procurement and tender procedures	58.2	37.3	3.5	1.0
Ethics and prevention of corruption	54.2	38.5	2.3	5.0
Bookkeeping	52.8	42.9	3.5	0.8
Management of cultural institutions, implementation of cultural policy	50.9	44.3	3.7	1.2
Work time management	50.7	42.9	5.0	1.4
Management of sports centers	45.3	32.9	5.6	16.2
Protection of minority rights	42.2	16.2	4.3	37.3
There are often difficulties, but they are resolved. Those which solution is problematic rarely exist				
Managing human teams, team work techniques, conflict resolution etc.	48.5	46.2	3.7	1.5
Provision of public/ municipal services	47.0	40.8	7.0	5.2
Public property management	46.4	44.9	5.8	2.9
Planning and implementation of infrastructural investments	45.8	49.7	3.7	0.8
Collaboration with non-governmental organizations	43.5	43.3	7.5	5.6
Communication with citizens	43.1	50.7	5.6	0.6
Computer/IT literacy, use of IT tools	42.2	50.9	6.2	0.8
Managing the finances of the local self-government, local taxes and fees	42.0	53.4	4.3	0.4
Services to customers, organization of	39.8	33.8	6.6	19.7

100% in line	Area where tasks are fulfilled smoothly	Fulfilling tasks is somewhat problematic	Major difficulties in fulfilling tasks	Not sure / No experience
the center of administrative services				
Strategic planning and strategic management of the local self-government	39.8	48.7	7.0	4.4
Social policy	39.5	51.5	5.4	3.7
Implementation of e-government and computerization of the office	39.3	43.5	8.7	8.5
Creation of youth and cultural policies at the local level	36.6	52.0	8.7	2.7
Project management	34.8	52.4	10.8	1.9
Use of technical assistance funds	34.0	27.1	9.5	29.4
HR management, HR policy	30.8	56.5	8.9	3.9
Disaster and crisis management	26.3	52.8	12.0	8.9
Management of healthcare institutions	24.2	39.8	12.2	23.8
Urban/spatial planning and management of real property	23.8	44.1	18.6	13.5
Local economic development and Investment Attraction	23.4	54.7	18.4	3.5
Internal audit, management audit	21.3	49.7	9.9	19.1
Agriculture and rural development	20.5	58.4	8.9	12.2
In most cases, there are difficulties. Quite often they are non-decisive				
Environment protection	16.2	52.2	26.9	4.6
Wastewater and solid waste management	12.4	43.5	24.0	20.1
Local public transport and local roads	11.4	43.5	36.4	8.7
Language training, selected foreign language	9.9	23.0	32.7	34.4

Among the biggest challenges facing the reform is the vagueness of the laws on the distribution of powers between the ATCs, and local state administration at district and oblast level. First and foremost, it concerns the unclear status of district councils and district state administrations. Indeed, in the instances where the entire district is amalgamated into a single community or several ATCs cover the entire district (even if some not amalgamated communities still remain in the district), the district councils are virtually deprived of any powers. *'What kind of a district council is that which is looking for something to do, because no one really needs them?'* Thus, among the decentralisation reform failures is the insufficient reform of the territorial structure, including districts. This entails delays in the adoption of necessary decisions, additional obstacles in transferring the infrastructure facilities for upkeep to the ATCs, losses in efficiency (due to the expenditures on the district councils' officials).

In the opinion of the interviewed experts, communities, in many cases, may have lost the understanding of the importance of interaction with the district and oblast state administrations, of the need for certain relations to be maintained with other authorities. *'They have mistaken permissiveness for self-sufficiency'*. The main reason for this situation, in the respondents' opinion, is the fact that politicians are not ready to waive their central-level influence and resources and, therefore, vote very slowly for certain laws that need to be adopted sooner. This legislation is intended to speed up the decentralisation process, the development and improvement of the initiated

actions. *'For example, the red tape around the law enabling accession to the ATCs had lasted for almost a year; the law on the accession to the cities of oblast significance also took a very long approval path. The law on spatial planning (that is, the ubiquity of local self-government; in other words, empowering the ATC council, rather than the StateGeoCadastré, to plan the entire area) has been tied up in red tape for two years now'*. In other words, slow political decision-making has become a significant obstacle on the path to decentralisation.

Along with the delays in the political decision-making, some actions are often turned out to be ill-conceived, while certain decisions entail unpredictable and random consequences. When enacting the legislation, persons directly affected by any particular legal act are not always consulted. *'For example, village councils that amalgamated with a city 30 km away have lost her status, since they are no longer in a position to provide notary services. Under the law, these services must be provided by the city'*. At present, ensuring the consistency between the laws and a new format of managing the local development has become quite an important task.

A significant part of the problems is associated with ambiguous regulation of the matters concerning the amalgamation of communities or accession of new communities to the existing ATCs. The principle of voluntariness turned out to be the most problematic in the course of amalgamation: *'A nasty trick was played by the voluntariness principle. In our district, half of the communities are amalgamated, while another half — not'*. Many issues arise during implementation of certain provisions of the law on amalgamation of territorial communities. Those long-term plans adopted by oblast councils and subsequently approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine are generally far from the reality and the communities' desire to accede. *'For some cities, it is a mere formality. As soon as they have taken in one inhabited locality, they become amalgamated city community'*.

A significant part of the problems in the course of the decentralisation reform is due to the fact that the government sometimes fails to meet its obligations, for example, concerning subventions, the State Regional Development Fund, various financial instruments, taxation, redistribution of taxes (like the excise tax on fuel). The government policy is not always consistent; changes are being introduced each year, significantly affecting the level of financial support for the local self-government competencies.

The amount of financial resources transferred in the form of subventions is insufficient to ensure appropriate provision of the relevant services. Thus, *'in 2019, the educational subsidy was underfunded by about 25%, while the medical subvention— by 35%. Most local authorities lack money to provide missing funds for the relevant services. This means that somewhere around this summer, maybe even early summer, there will be no money left for salaries, because this underfunding involves not the teachers' or doctors' salaries, but those of the support staff. Neither debts nor gas or electricity bills had been taken into consideration'*.

Another significant disadvantage is the fact that the secondary health care lags behind the primary health care reform. Although changes occur at the primary level, with money following the patient and being paid to the doctor treating this patient, the secondary health care is stalled. *'This is a major problem in our district. There is a maternity hospital, where up to 3 or 4 children are born each month. It's an enormous maintenance expense. Thus, the question is: Is it really advisable to maintain this hospital, wouldn't it be better to give birth in some other place? Without having any child delivery practice, isn't it likely that these doctors would do more harm than good during the childbirth? However, no one is brave enough to demand closing the hospital, because it is a political question. For whom would dare to close the hospital, given our demographic situation?'*

Thus, the principal decentralisation reform failures listed by the respondents included its incompleteness, not going beyond the basic level of local self-government, lack of synchronicity with other socio-political reforms, and ongoing changes in the distribution of financial resources between budgets.

4. Cooperation between local self-government authorities and key stakeholders

4.1. Interaction with the territorial community

While vesting the local self-government with more resources and responsibilities, it is important to create the environment for efficient public monitoring of their use, as well as to engage as many community residents as possible in the local decision-making processes. This may be supported by the existing direct democracy instruments, such as public hearings, meetings of citizens, local initiatives and petitions, self-organisation bodies of population, etc. However, this component of a fully-fledged decentralisation reforms is still the weakest. Since the start of the reforms, virtually nothing has changed in this field, except that, in 2015, an opportunity appeared for submission of local electronic petitions, with the participatory budget being actively implemented everywhere. As a consequence, many researches show that citizens have not been properly involved in the process of amalgamation of communities and subsequent development of the newly established ATCs. Also, they do not feel that they have enough influence on local self-government.

The essence of the problem lies in the fact that applicable laws of Ukraine in the field of direct local democracy are incomplete and largely obsolete. Under the model that has taken root in previous years, the ability of citizens to participate in local decision-making depends on the good will of the local councils and their officials, as well as on the availability of high-quality local regulations, in particular, the charter of a territorial community, the adoption of which is not mandatory. Therefore, if the community's leaders wish to involve the public in the decision-making, they will do it; if not (in the majority of cases), then there are numerous ways to undermine the public initiative completely.

Findings of the research show that the interaction between the local self-government authorities and the territorial communities' residents takes on different forms. A common problem for all local self-governments is the public distrust in the authorities, which significantly affects public activity in addressing the local issues. Thus, the newly created ATCs have a great need in overcoming the citizens' inertia, reinvigorating and convincing them that the local authorities work in their interests. This process is very complicated and requires a lot of time. Nevertheless, certain progress has been achieved in this field. One such example is a participatory budget that is becoming quite popular in the Ukrainian cities and beyond. When people see that their opinion is taken into consideration during the allocation of even a small percentage of the local budget and that there is an opportunity to address a certain local problem, they begin to look more favourably at other initiatives of the local self-government authority.

The amalgamation of the communities played an important role in enhancing the territorial communities' involvement in the development and adoption of local decisions. Indeed, prior to amalgamation, certain promises had been given to the residents, especially at the meetings held in inhabited localities, where campaigning was conducted in favour of amalgamation into a single territorial community. Bargaining had to be carried out with the public; otherwise, no amalgamation would be possible. Thus, a dialogue and cooperation are now maintained to monitor keeping these promises. Local self-governments actually have to explain, inform, and report before the community, for example, on why the things that had been promised before the amalgamation cannot be achieved for another year or two. Nevertheless, this dialogue is altogether different — it is constructive and based on the principles of cooperation between the local self-government and the public. According to some respondents, *'the trust gained during the amalgamation is a great asset that should be preserved. The ATC chairmen wish to preserve this trust and work to strengthen it, therefore, do a lot to engage people in local initiatives. I think this cooperation will only grow'*.

The process of amalgamation itself has changed the relations between the residents of the community and local authorities. *'Citizens have become partners. Residents of the community have*

become partners to changes on the territorial community level. Thus, the balance of forces is now in the citizens' favour. How they are going to use it is an entirely different matter'. Naturally, citizens are not interested in the amalgamation process per se, or in the issues related to the formation of the relevant institutional structures or executive bodies in the city council. They are interested in a very simple question — they must be provided with services on a daily basis, and these services should be preferably delivered in the localities where they reside. And all this — without the need to travel to the administrative centre, or even to the starosta district centre.

At the same time, some ATC chairmen note that the expectations of the territorial community residents keep growing all the time and out of proportion with the local authorities' capacity. *'The more we do, the more they think that we are doing nothing and demand more. It is a never-ending process'*. Public expectations are too high, and no one would be able to meet them now. It would only be achievable in financially capable communities; however, these communities (local authorities) have previously never had any problems with the implementation of local initiatives.

'An active dialogue should be maintained with the residents, because their demands must be put under control. Local residents thus need to be involved in both planning and implementation of all local initiatives without exception. One has to talk to them, engage them, and explain both the successes and, even more so, the failures'. Developing amalgamated territorial community without the participation of the community residents has become simply impossible. This participation starts with planning the community development and ends with determining the facilities that are to remain and to be developed within the community.

Many territorial communities, thanks to the international technical assistance projects and programmes, have progressed much in terms of cooperation with their residents and have implemented best practices, such as mediation or participatory budget, which are being actively applied locally. Most local authorities have adopted local acts that provide for the introduction of public expertise, conduct of public discussions, etc. *'However, the application practice is very patchy and is, in fact, very weak. There are two reasons for this. One reason is the local self-governments themselves. It is their position "Now that we are in power, who cares about someone else's opinion," rather than their inability to talk to the public. Second, they miss the importance of this. A year before the elections, they become aware of the importance of involving the public and begin to work in this area on the eve of the elections'*.

In the opinion of the interviewed experts, the extent and 'depth' of public involvement in the local council's decision-making process depend on the personal awareness of this need by, respectively, the village, settlement, or city chairman and, consequently, by the local councillors, as it is them who are in charge of decision-making to ensure openness in the local council activities and, therefore, in the procedure for engaging the citizens in the development process. *'Approaches that involve public engagement in the decision-making processes have yet to acquire firmness, popularity, and critical mass. The vast majority of the ATCs generally avoid using those mechanisms. There are also some local authorities that treat the public engagement mechanisms as a mere formality, sticking to the principle "if they want it, let them have it"'*.

In the opinion of the representatives from local authorities and the experts, there is a flip side to the relationship between the local self-government and the community, namely, the community itself, as *'at least 80% of the citizens do not want to participate in anything. This is an indicator of the community's passivity, of the immature expert and civil society environment. The majority of the civil society organisations can be divided into a number of categories: 1) those that have been merely registered and do nothing at all, biding their time, expecting, perhaps, that someone might need them at some point; 2) those that merely protest against everything, often negatively, just for the sake of rejecting everything; 3) those that live on grants and somehow always manage to communicate with the authorities, because otherwise they would not get letters of support; 4) "regular" ones that operate, exist, while, perhaps, not working at full capacity, such as volunteer organisations'*. In other words, there is a disparity between the level of territorial

community residents' activity and the activity of civil society environment represented by civil society organisations.

Citizens' passivity is a major challenge in engaging the public in participation in the community life. *'They are used to the old ways of living. Why bother getting up, going somewhere, etc. For 27 years they had not been engaged in anything, and another young generation has grown up in this environment. In other words, is very hard to reinvigorate the community'*.

Thus, many respondents recognise the important role played by the territorial community residents in the identification of local issues, and this role has increased significantly in the course of the decentralisation reform and the ATC establishment. The processes of the ATC establishment have effectively resulted in the greater role of a territorial community as a local self-government medium. Still, problems exist related to the citizens' activity, unreasonably great expectations, uneven public engagement processes, and the inability to interact with the public.

4.2. Relations with local executive power authorities

In the course of the research, respondents were asked for their assessment of the cooperation between the local self-government and local executive authorities, and on which issues the local self-government cooperates (if such cooperation exists) with the oblast and district councils. The findings of the in-depth interviews and focus groups show that relations between the local self-government and local executive authorities are uneven, i.e., some maintain positive relations, while in other cases confrontation occurs between them.

In the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the respondents, positive cooperation becomes possible not because of the established rules or practices, but mainly thanks to the personal contacts between the heads of the local self-government and local executive authorities. Currently, the relations between the ATCs and local executive authorities, rather than being an institutional collaboration, constitute personal liaisons between the ATC employees and the employees of the local state administrations at district and oblast level. *'Since the amalgamation, we have been left alone, and the more the ATC is developing, the more we lose understanding on behalf of the local state authorities'*.

The respondents' opinions were divided in the assessment of the relations between the ATCs and the oblast state administrations. For example, some ATCs have formed the best relations with the OSAs, since *'the process of decentralisation is being handled by the oblast state administrations, and they know more about the ATCs. All financial programmes are subsequently distributed at the oblast level with the ATCs' involvement'*. However, this key partner has been helpful not in every oblast. *'Indeed, the ATCs in the Khmelnytskyi, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, and Ternopil oblasts relied on a genuine support in the process of amalgamation. And not only during the amalgamation, but also in the first steps after the ATC establishment. But when we turn to the Odesa, Kherson or Kirovohrad oblasts, the picture is completely different — the OSAs neither accepted nor supported the newly formed amalgamated communities'*.

It is precisely the oblast state administrations that have currently achieved the highest cooperation levels with the amalgamated communities. Previously, this was not the case. Before that, for the chairmen of the community, the district state administration was the highest level of contact with the authorities. Today, the oblast state administration communicates with the ATCs chairmen directly. *'When talking about our oblast, the OSA is also one of the ATC's key partners. This is because the state subventions for the construction of outpatient clinics, upgrades in the education sector come only from the cooperation with the oblast state administration'*.

According to other respondents, the OSA — a key partner in the decentralisation process — does not support territorial communities. In the opinion of certain interviewees, today there is no effective cooperation with the local executive authorities at all. By way of example, here is the situation in the field of housing and communal services: *'Our professional in the field of housing and communal services is involved in the compilation of an extremely large number of reports. In*

fact, one can say that our professionals work all day long for the OSA only — some sort of data has to be delivered each Wednesday, each Friday, etc. The OSA employees had simply shifted to us all their functions and responsibilities. Moreover, we can't get any help or even information from the OSA'.

The source of the bulk of the problems in the ATCs is the district state administrations. *'The district state administrations never seriously considered or believed in the decentralisation reform'. These problems and even the confrontation started early in the amalgamation process. 'This was especially true when we tried to make changes to our institutional structure and sought to recruit professionals to the city council. We, of course, also searched for professionals among the DSA employees, and, naturally, they did not like it, although they were aware that sooner or later the reorganisation of the district state administration would start in connection with the reduction in the powers exercised at the district council and district state administration level. We had very difficult relations when we took the primary health care, education and culture over to the ATC level. Also, certain work was to be conducted with the district state administration and the district council; however, the DSA would not give us a helping hand, and, in fact, we had to handle all these matters on our own'.*

Problems in the relations with the DSAs often stem from the vague division of powers and financial resources between various government authorities. Thus, according to the respondents, *'now we face problems with the social protection. The DSA lacks funds, so they shift this function to us, arguing that it is us who mostly require social security within our ATC'.* The matter of data collection and compilation and reporting to other authorities also remains unresolved. Thus, *'as regards reporting to the oblast state administration, certain data was previously delivered through the DSA, where it was collated and summarised. Now we do it directly, and the DSA claims to have nothing to do with it. In fact, the DSA sometimes even forgets to include us in the process of addressing those issues where common interests exist, especially the infrastructure or roads, where the ATC is unable to handle these matters itself'.*

In the matters of interaction with territorial bodies of central executive authorities, the situation varies between different districts and oblasts. The level of relationship again depends on personal relations between the leaders of various authorities. *'While the Treasury works like clock, and there are no grudges against it, the tax inspectorate, for example, has suffered from massive redundancies, and the administration of tax collection has deteriorated here at the district level. Perhaps, the administration of tax collection has become completely neglected in our district. Reforming the tax service during the transition period is not a very good idea'.*

Thus, the process of the community amalgamation gradually leads to a situation where the local executive power authorities on district level are becoming redundant in their present form. This applies both to the district councils and, to a considerable degree, to the district state administrations. Therefore, in the districts where all or most of the communities have amalgamated, the existence of a district council as such loses its meaning, and the DSA powers are significantly narrowed. At the same time, in a situation where the reform at the subregional level of the territorial structure has been actually stalled, the amalgamated communities need to communicate with the district authorities. On the whole, the culture of interaction with both the district authorities and the oblast-level executive authorities needs to be improved. The ATCs need to build up their capacity for dialogue with executive authorities and the ability to engage in constructive interaction.

4.3. Cooperation with other stakeholders

Civil society organisations are among the ATCs' key external partners. In a democracy, they play a leading role in communications between the authorities and the community; it is them who represent the interests of their target groups when specific problems are being considered and addressed. Local self-governments cooperate with these organisations by informing them, engaging them in consultations on draft decisions, holding joint events with them, acting as their partners in the implementation of various projects.

In the interviewed experts' opinion, the amalgamated territorial communities begin to realise now that working with passive residents is inefficient, the public should be engaged as much as possible. Therefore, collaboration with civil society organisations has currently become one of the top priorities for the ATCs. Civil society organisations act as the ATC partners on numerous projects.

Businesses represent another important group of partners. Businesses are taxpayers that create jobs for the community residents and may take on corporate responsibility, thus contributing to the solution of the problems facing the community and to its development. Businesses can be partners of the local self-government authorities in the implementation of investment projects and attraction of external investors on the territory.

Among companies of various sizes, medium-sized enterprises are the most important for the ATCs: *'Medium-sized businesses are currently the key partners for any local self-government. Of course, local authorities usually dream of having large businesses around, such as a large solar power station. Well, obviously these investors appear with the help of OSA. Meanwhile, a medium-sized business would be today for the ATCs the most desirable structure to work with and to develop themselves. And this is what they are trying to do. The focus on medium-sized businesses is quite predominant in the communities today'*.

Educational entities (in particular, the regional excellence centres) were also among the key external partners mentioned by the interviewed local self-government officials. However, the assessment of their activities has not always been positive. *'Educational entities are not as flexible, and are more ossified. They are rigidly restricted to the yearly-based training schedule, thus being unable to respond quickly to challenges. Meanwhile, local self-government authorities sometimes require quick decisions, quick support'*.

Almost all the interviewed respondents referred to the international technical assistance projects as the most influential partners of local self-government, allowing it to apply best practices and, of course, receive resources for its development. The U-LEAD project and its regional local government development centres have become, to a certain extent, support for the newly created ATCs. *'They were independent; they did not require any support from the OSA for them to operate. Moreover, they didn't have to coordinate their activities with the OSA employees, and it worked'*.

In the opinion of an ATC chairman, *'thanks to the collaboration with the international technical assistance programmes, we are entering a new level of extra-budgetary relations. As of September, we have raised UAH30 million from different sources, from infrastructural subventions to foreign grants, in the past three years. They cooperate with us because they understand what the community is, unlike a village council or local administration. They include U-LEAD, USAID, the Ukrainian Social Investment Fund, followed by UNDP'*.

At the same time, in the opinion of the representatives from the expert community, *'the international technical assistance may sometimes be a "handicap" — not because of the projects themselves, but because of the policy pursued by the donors who finance these projects. Each donor has its own interests at heart. Here, not only and not so much the projects or the donors are to blame, but rather the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, inside which there is a department whose only task is to register these projects. This department should be working on the policy of assistance. However, no general government strategy on working with the donors or projects exists'*.

Furthermore, despite the extensive training support provided to the local self-government in the matters of preparing and managing the international technical assistance projects, many communities are yet to build up adequate capacity. The respondents referred to the following main problems in raising funds from the international community development programmes — the lack of long-term strategic plans for community development; the lack of skills and professionalism in the local self-government officials and local authorities; no readiness on behalf of local authorities to assume responsibility for the implementation of international technical assistance projects.

At the same time, largely through the operation of the international technical assistance projects and programmes, pools of experts, who may be regarded as key prospective external partners, started to emerge at the level of districts and oblasts. However, a full-fledged consulting services market for local self-governments is yet to appear. *‘Local self-governments and their leaders do not understand that this work also costs something and should be paid for. Experts must be engaged to develop local regulations, create a favourable regulatory environment, draft high-quality policy documents’.*

In the opinion of many respondents, local authorities need to establish contacts with various institutions capable of providing them with resources — not only financial, but any resources — or with delivering any forms of technical assistance. They should develop a network of such partners, a network of various expert organisations, in order to rely on their resources and build up their own capabilities, their own organisations that would subsequently continue to maintain the sustainability of the initiated processes.

4.4. The role of local self-government associations

Almost all the interviewed respondents named local self-government associations among the local authorities’ key external partners. Associations played an important role in the process of the ATC establishment and launching. Associations advise local authorities intending to amalgamate on the process of such amalgamation and the actions to be taken.

The role of these associations, in the respondents’ opinion, should encompass a number of areas. First and foremost, associations should represent the ATC interests before the government. *‘Associations should play this role, for example, by providing advisory support or drafting the relevant programmes’.* *‘The only system that local self-governments are capable of creating is an association. And if they set up a powerful association, they would talk to the government then as one system to another. This is their only chance to be heard’.* At the level of the oblast and all-national associations, representatives of local self-government present their views before the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Local Self-Government, the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services.

In the opinion of the associations’ representatives, the Swedish model of a local government association (SKL) may be introduced in Ukraine. *‘They had a few associations, and after that they set up a national congress. Under the applicable laws, we also have three all-Ukrainian associations, such as the Association of Ukrainian Cities, the Association of Oblast and District Councils, and the Association of Village and Settlement Councils. The remainder that is in the process of formation would be unable to obtain the all-Ukrainian status. There is a national congress that unites all local self-governments, although it exists merely on paper in Ukraine. Sooner or later, after completing the reforms in Ukraine, we would need to create a unified national local government congress having appropriate sections, that would lobby (in a good sense) for the local self-government and help to support the state policy in this field’.*

Secondly, associations will have to create accessible resources. Wide online networks must exist. They should operate as expert platforms in order to provide maximum consulting, expert, and educational support on the issues that may be raised by the local authorities. *‘This is where the NAUCS’s concept of a professional training system for the civil servants and local self-government officials fits in well, allowing the associations to use their potential and to become a real partner for the local self-government authorities’.*

In this respect, the introduction of certain elements from the Swedish model would also be appropriate. In Sweden, the state, after creating the necessary conditions and seeing that a powerful congress of associations is in operation, delegated to it the authority to train personnel. A national congress is not only a customer, but a provider of the educational services.

An example of such operation is the Kharkiv Oblast Local Self-Government Association. *‘We collaborate on a permanent basis with the Kharkiv Regional Institute of NAPA and with higher*

education entities, engaging their experts. A resource centre has been established under our Association, four agreements have been signed with the leading higher education entities that specialise exactly in the capacity building of local self-government officials on the community development issues. They include the Karazin National University, the Beketov National University of Urban Economy, the Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, and the Kharkiv Regional Institute of the National Academy for Public Administration under the President of Ukraine. We hold events at their facilities and always invite their experts to our discussions. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement, allowing the practitioners to acquire theoretic knowledge and a systemic approach, and the academics — to think systemically and to obtain practical experience’.

Thirdly, a local self-government association is a very useful tool and platform for communication exchange of best practices and dissemination of success stories. The Local Self-Government Association’s operation may serve as a model for such a communication platform. *‘In the oblast, the Local Self-Government Association unites all the local self-government authorities. This isn’t just a token association. One of its vice presidents also chairs the district councils’ section. Another vice president heads the cities’ section, while yet another vice president chairs the village councils’ section. A recently created amalgamated communities’ section also exists, headed by a vice president. Thus, it is possible to identify any problems, generate solutions and achieve balance in the relations between the districts, the oblast, and the basic-level communities’.*

Despite the undeniably important role played by the local self-government associations, not all local authorities are aware of this. *‘They must recognise the need to interact with each other, to set up and strengthen the associations to form a single voice. This is why they have to understand the need to associate, unite into associations’.*

5. Activities by the local self-government authorities

5.1. Assessing the local self-government authorities' performance

The respondents were asked to assess the operation of local self-government in Ukraine on a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 is the highest score. The overwhelming majority of the interviewed local self-government representatives and experts noted that, in general, the efficiency of the local self-government performance had improved. Following the decentralisation process initiated in the country, the environment in which these authorities operate has changed. At the same time, giving an overall performance assessment for all the local authorities has turned out to be a rather complicated affair, since, while some local authorities have been operating for a longer time, others have just been formed as amalgamated territorial communities and are only starting out.

An assessment of their authorities' performance was also given by the local self-government representatives. In the opinion of the ATC chairmen, the performance assessment should take into consideration the changes that have taken place in the communities, i.e., comparison should be made between the situation that had existed before the amalgamation and the outcome of the ATCs' activities. The ATC chairmen mostly gave themselves a score of 4 (since there is still room for improvement in their work), or, in some cases, 5. Some ATC chairmen believe only the territorial community itself may give the highest score to their work.

This assessment was supported by following arguments: a coordinated work by the local council; arrangements for the operation of an administrative service centre (*'today the Centre provides 160 types of administrative services, despite a significantly lower number of services in the beginning'*) relaunching the operation of educational entities (*'they were renovated, a new catering system was put in place'*) etc.

In general, the telephone surveyed representatives of amalgamated communities assess the efficiency of their activities as a little higher than average: on a 7-point scale (where 7 is very high efficiency), only 19.0% gave their local self-government 6-7 points, while the majority, 52.6%, gave it 5 points (Figure 5.1). At the same time, only 3.7% of representatives gave a 1-3 point evaluation. In general, the average assessment was 5.5 points.

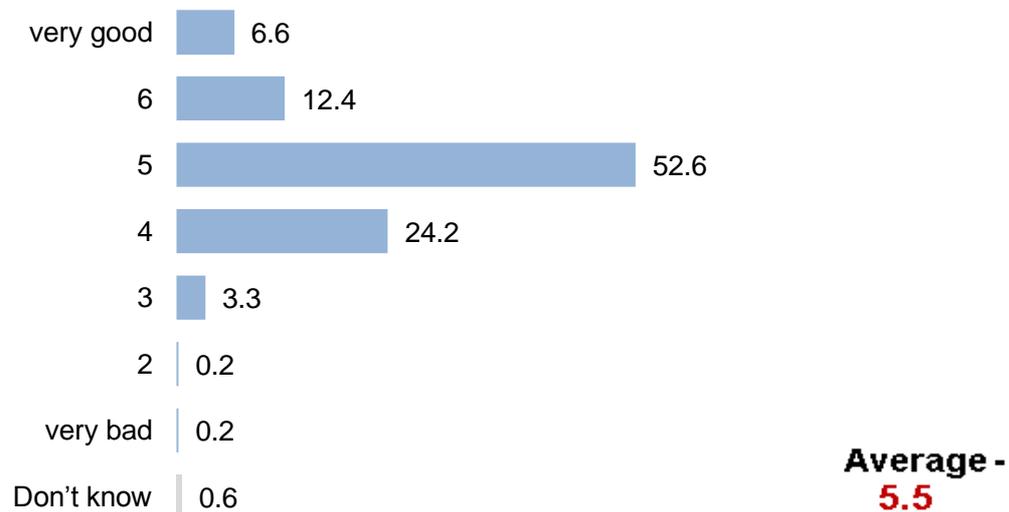


Figure 5.1. Assessment of the effectiveness of the work of the local self-government bodies of ATC (% among all respondents)

Efficiency of amalgamated communities' functioning as well were assessed in terms of specific areas and can be best described as 'nothing special, but generally alright'. Depending on the specific area, 92.5-99% of respondents assess the activities at least as 'moderate', but no more than 23.4% assess the areas as 'very good' (Figure 5.2). On a 5-point scale, where 5 is 'very good', the average evaluation of each sphere varies between 3.5-3.9 points, which means that on average

the assessments are a little lower than the ‘fairly good’ level, but apparently are higher than just the ‘moderate’ level.

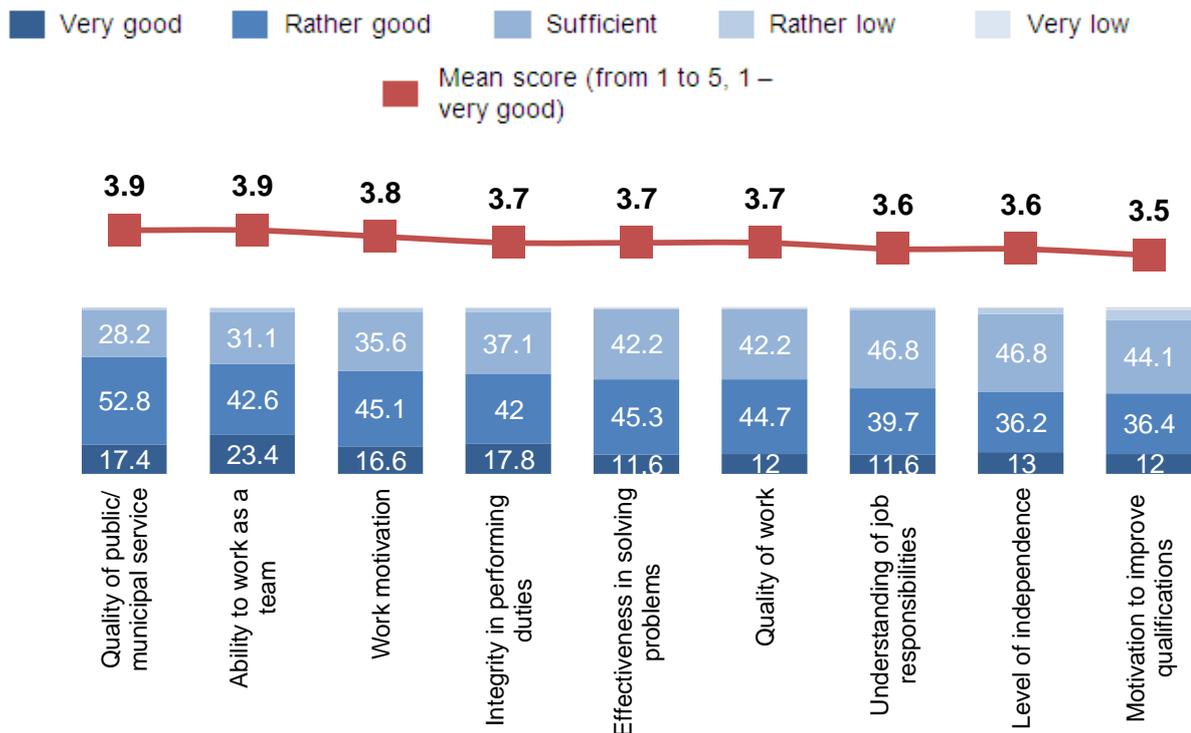


Figure 5.2. Mean scores of local government bodies in some areas (% among all respondents)

All the ATC chairmen interviewed by in-depth interviews share the opinion that some things turn out well and some — not. Nevertheless, failures also present opportunities for improvements. *‘We learn from our failures and move on’*. At the same time, certain problems persist, for example, in the field of secondary health care, whose resolution depends not as much on the ATCs as on the central executive authorities. Sometimes financial resources become limited, or there is not enough time, or other challenges arise, making it possible to achieve something or to prevent it.

Chairmen of the oblast councils also gave high scores — 4 and 5 — to their activities. In the instances where the chairmen of oblast councils rated their activities at 4, they believed that achieving the highest mark was impossible because of the extreme political motivation of the oblast councillors.

Representatives of local self-government associations gave very different marks to individual levels of local self-government. The district self-government was rated at 1 on the average, with few exceptions; village and settlement councils — between 1 and 1.5, the ATCs — close to 3, *‘since local self-government is the one than is most actively working and progressing in the ATCs today’*. However, certain amalgamated territorial communities exist, whose performance may only be rated at 2.

Marks are generally higher for the cities of oblast significance, as they stand out from this range of local governments, and their ratings may reach 4 or even more. The average ratings given to all local self-government authorities by the association representatives vary between 2 and 3.5–4.

The experts’ ratings also differ for individual levels of local self-government. Those ATCs that had been amalgamated earlier were rated at 3 to 4 points. The highest marks were given to the urban amalgamated territorial communities, although there are certain village and settlement communities whose activities may also be given better ratings. At the same time, *‘generally, assessing the performance of the newly established ATCs is difficult, as they have just started to function’*. *‘The newly created local authorities in the voluntarily amalgamated communities need to learn more about the capabilities and skills related to administrative and managerial tools, exercise*

the acquired powers, build up the personnel's analytical component in order to make the use of available resources more efficient, strengthen the project management to improve investment attraction skills, etc.'.

Those village, settlement, and city councils (usually in the cities of district significance) that have not been amalgamated and have neither adequate financial sources for replenishing the local budgets nor, respectively, the powers to implement the 'full-fledged' local self-government have been rated at 2 by the experts. The same low scores — 2 points — were given to the performance of the district councils that, against the background of transformations taking place at the basic level of local self-government, require the review of their powers.

According to some experts, it would be advisable to assess the performance of local authorities by individual aspects, such as efficiency, transparency, incorruptibility. *'In principle, efficiency may be rated at 4, even at 4+ for certain authorities'*. In terms of transparency, it's relatively high level, almost at 'five-minus' (access to local council sessions, openness, publication of draft decisions, etc.) has been singled out, despite certain instances of non-compliance with the transparency principle in the local self-government operation. In the experts' opinion, the local authorities' incorruptibility may be rated at 1, since the local self-government officials, as a result of their low remuneration, fail to share responsibility for the local authorities' operation

In addition, the study was interested in determining which tool used the ATCs to assess the efficiency of their activities. A half of the representatives (54.0%) of amalgamated communities surveyed by telephone interviews say that in the past 2 years, their municipality assessed its efficiency (Figure 5.3).

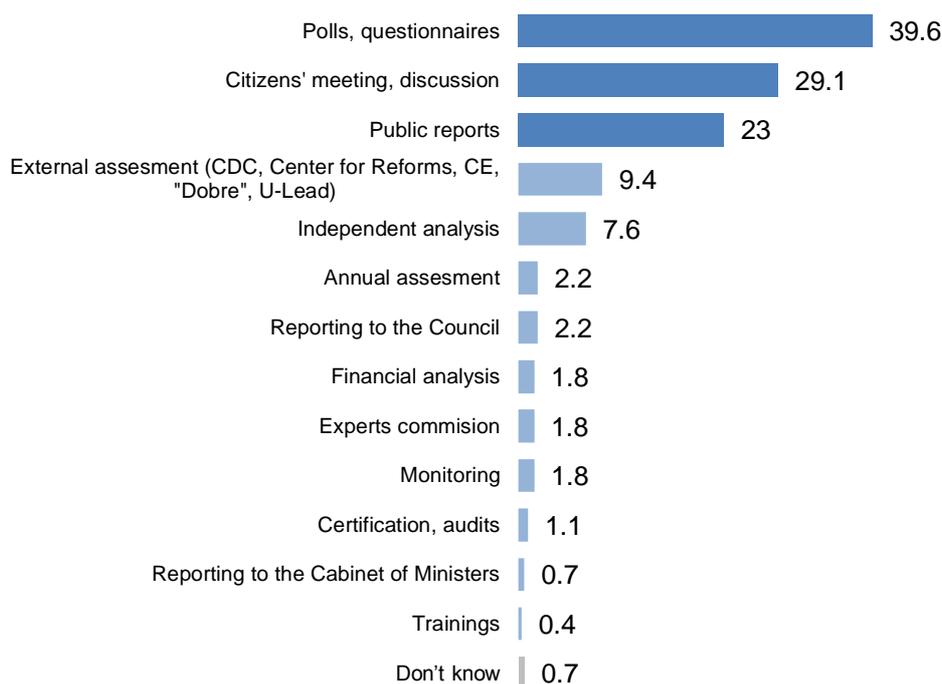


Figure 5.3. Tools of assessment (self-assessment) of local governments' effectiveness (% among all respondents)

The main tools that were used – polls and questionnaires for the population (39.6% of those who have conducted an assessment chose this tool), citizens' meetings, discussions (29.1%), public reports (23.0%).

The respondents were also asked what, in their opinion, an efficient local government authority might look like. On the whole, an efficient local self-government authority should be characterised by the following:

- adopts balanced, appropriate, informed decisions under which the relevant territorial community in a city, village, settlement, district or oblast could develop;
- ensures the community development, i.e., improves the well-being of its residents; unlike internal political interests or interests of individual groups, the community's interests and welfare are always a priority;
- provides access for the community residents to high-quality services (administrative, social and other) delivered at the established standards;
- supports rational use of all available resources, such as natural, financial, human;
- applies the principles of good governance to its operation, i.e., is a transparent and open body that functions according to the principle of participatory decision-making;
- knows how to prioritise, i.e., is firmly aware of its capabilities and sets relevant targets;
- has the sufficient staff possessing adequate capacity and professionalism, capable of ensuring the high quality of the delivered services;
- is the community leader;
- is capable of reaching political compromises with various interest groups;
- operates within the legislative framework;
- makes the most of filling the local budget with tax revenues from job creation, de-shadowing of businesses;
- spends rationally the local budget funds to maintain local facilities (energy audit, energy saving).

In addition, the research analysed the factors that influence or may have an impact on the efficiency of the activity of the amalgamated territorial community. Although insufficient competence is not perceived by the surveyed respondents as one of the main difficulties in the activities of the local self-government, at the same time **56.9% of respondents believe that improving competencies of the staff of executive bodies is a factor that would boost the efficiency of their work** (Figure 5.4). Less frequently, the respondents named the raising staff's salaries (31.3%), introduction of performance evaluation of staff/services (26.5%) and introducing new procedures (2.35%) as ways to boost the efficiency.

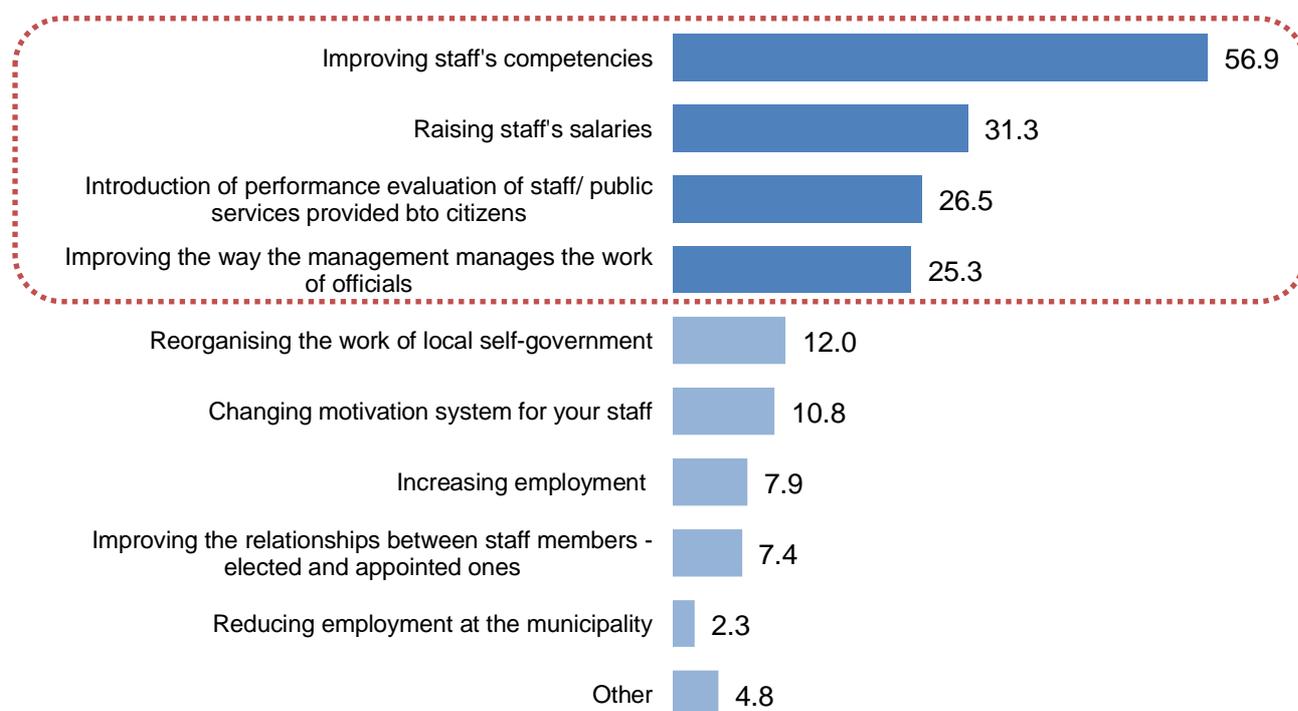


Figure 5.4. Factors enhancing the effectiveness of the executive bodies of ATC (% among all respondents)

5.2. Problems in exercising the local self-government authorities' powers

The research participants were asked which areas of activity (powers), in their opinion, posed the greatest difficulties for the local self-government operation, as well as about the causes of these problems. In the opinion of the ATC chairmen, *'all the powers assumed by the ATCs have caused problems. The new powers demanded the use of new mechanisms, tools to implement these powers'*. The local self-government, in the view of the majority of the respondents, faces the biggest challenges in the following **areas of responsibilities**:

1. Health care. According to the respondents, problems arise because the local authorities are not prepared to assume the responsibilities, given their low awareness of the scope, possibilities, goals, and content of the reform, and the health workers' unreadiness to reform. Most of the respondents believe that health care problems occur due to a certain policy pursued at the national level, the lack of communication about the reform, and the failure to give due regard in the law to all the circumstances that may arise during its practical application. Thus, communication with all stakeholders, meetings, clarifications, discussions, presentations, etc. plays a crucial role in this area.

2. Education. Many research participants regard education as, perhaps, the most complicated area of responsibility for the local authorities. Local government officials lack the knowledge of how to manage the network of educational entities in the community better and more efficiently. A lot had to be done in a very short time and without all the tools available at the time.

Problems also arise due to the fact that, in the process of the reform, local authorities are vested with powers; however, the allocated financial resources are disproportionate to these powers. Many issues remain unaddressed. For example, the formula for calculating the amount of the 2018 educational subvention had reduced the revenues expected in the cities of oblast significance comprising village councils (in an urban ATC, the subvention standards for cities, rather than for villages, apply to all inhabited localities).

The biggest problems are usually associated with the optimisation of the network of educational entities. Fearing any conflicts with the community residents and the adoption of unpopular decisions concerning the closure of particular entities, the optimisation of educational entities continues at a slower pace than expected, against the background of the dispersal of resources that could otherwise be allocated, for example, on the territorial community's development. The criteria for the establishment of pivot schools disregard the specifics of rural communities, where, even if a pivot school is set up, the criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Science for the receipt of subventions for the pivot school development can never be met.

In education, similar to health care, employees of educational entities are not ready to reform. The root of the problems once again lies in the area of communication, including advisory support or promotion of the reform in the manner that is inconsistent with the ATCs' expectations.

3. Social services. Social services remained 'orphaned' because the ATCs have failed to understand, while the government has failed to make it clear, that social services are one of the key services transferred to the ATCs. The problem is also associated with the preciseness of the reform, its clarity to all the actors involved, and the lack of information resources. *'There is no understanding of how to implement them; how resources and responsibilities are divided between various levels, and, of course, the professionals' skills are also low'*.

4. Land resources and spatial planning. The number of problems in this area continues to increase, according to the interviewed ATC chairmen and experts. Firstly, prior to amalgamation, those professionals who had been previously handling the land relations matters dealt with much narrower tasks. Secondly, the legislation in the area of land relations change very rapidly, requiring fast response on behalf of the officials in the newly created communities. For example, on January 1, 2019, a new law on land raiding comes into force, which means that the procedure for land valuation will be changed. Meanwhile, this matter is of great importance for the ATCs, because they are empowered to dispose of the state-owned land located outside inhabited localities.

The issues of spatial planning have become particularly difficult for urban ATCs. They lack the feeling of ‘common space’, i.e., the integration of all elements into a single whole and the coherent prioritisation in the spatial planning of the territory. *‘They knew how to develop their city, but were faced with the fact that they did not know how to approach the development of those inhabited localities that had acceded to the city. In other words, spatial planning goes beyond the space that has always been a point of reference for them’.*

Difficulties in exercising these powers have had their negative consequences for all entities at the territorial community level. Failure to understand land management results in problems for the farmers or entrepreneurs; lack of knowledge of architectural planning affects businesses; however, all these areas, without a single exception, pose problems for the local self-government officials themselves, as they often do not know how these powers is to be realised.

5. Economic development. Ukrainian communities lag behind in investing. Despite awareness of the risks facing the investors in Ukraine, any further development would be very slow without attracting foreign investment. Therefore, communities need to learn how to work with investors, how to draft an investment dossier for the territory, how to prepare investment proposals and implement investment projects. As a rule, economic departments or divisions perform quite different tasks and functions. Few communities have really strong economic subdivisions in charge of investments, foreign economic activities, and support for businesses.

6. Communal improvements. The difficulty in meeting the responsibilities arises because of the lack of a professional approach to the performance of the tasks in this field. For example, solid domestic waste management is a problem facing the entire Ukraine, which it is yet to be resolved holistically.

7. Managing the communal property. The communities virtually lack the professionals capable of managing the communal property on market principles, i.e., as an asset that can generate additional revenues to the local budget.

As regards the **general management functions** in the local authorities, the majority of the problems, according to the interviewed participants, have to do with the performance of the following functions:

1. Planning. In the opinion of the ATC chairmen, the planning process (initially at the operational level, followed by the strategic level) turned out to be the most difficult, including the respective budgeting. Moreover, it is difficult to set clear medium-term priorities and to concentrate resources and efforts on their achievement.

2. Financial resources management. In fact, the amalgamated territorial communities had to face an enormous challenge — where previously using the financial resources transferred to them from the district level, now they were required, following the amalgamation, to implement comprehensive budget planning. The ATCs, particularly the village and settlement ones, were not ready to perform these functions because of the lack of budget planning specialists at all. Application of the performance budgeting also turned out to be too complicated for the amalgamated communities.

3. Project planning and project management. Significant opportunities in obtaining project-tied lending have opened for the ATCs, especially for the pioneering ones, although they had to possess the relevant skills to take advantage of these opportunities. This function had never been taken seriously at all levels of the local government. Many local authorities were not even ready to raise funds from the State Regional Development Fund, including the drafting of project proposals or the application of the allocated funds to implement a project.

4. Human resources. There has always been a shortage of professionals in local self-government. The establishment of amalgamated communities has only exacerbated this problem. Certain functions appeared that had to be performed immediately, despite the lack of specialists ready to perform them. The HR departments were not ready to apply new HR management tools.

5. Contractual relations and public procurement. Prior to amalgamation, most of the local authorities have never had to deal with it. They have no institutional memory of these procedures. As a result, bidding is conducted with delays, construction is launched behind schedule; consequently, infrastructure facilities were or could be commissioned later than expected.

Political factors are also behind the problems in the operation of certain local self-government authorities. In particular, the instances of removal of community leaders from their positions through a vote of no-confidence by a local council have become a menacing trend. These cases indicate, on the one hand, the intensified political struggle at the territorial level, and, on the other hand, the inability to negotiate, talk, or reach a compromise. Local authorities need to learn a lot in this regard. This affects everyone and, of course, the public is the first to suffer. After all, with this struggle going on, decisions important for the community are not adopted, and local development programmes are not approved in certain areas. The community is actually stagnating.

In the cities, these problems are caused by the existing imbalance between the elected bodies, as both the city chairman and the city council are elected by direct vote. In the absence of a sufficiently developed political culture in the society, community leaders are sometimes elected on the basis of their personal qualities, rather than with regard to their political preferences. At the same time, city councils are formed from party lists. A newly elected city chairman subsequently fails to gain political support from the local councillors because of the differences in their views.

5.3. Practical identification of problems facing the local self-government authorities' operation

The respondents were asked how the local authority identified the problems associated with their activities and which methods (formal or informal) were used in their identification. The answers to this question have shown that local authorities apply different practices.

Those local self-governments (especially the ATCs) who have functioned for some time (e.g., a year) are already aware of their problems. Those who are yet to assume their new powers believe that they will manage. And those who try are already aware of their shortcomings. At the same time, local authorities often lack a system that would allow them to identify and assess these gaps objectively. A system should be put in place to allow local authorities to have an objective view of their capacity, to identify and fill their gaps.

According to the interviewed experts, many local authorities are still groping their way, i.e., act by trial and error. *'Tried, did not work, let's do it differently then'*. Local authorities often fail to identify problems. They just do not understand that they are facing a problem, continuing to work in the same vein instead. Sometimes they get inundated by the problem. For example, while reforming the education sector, understanding the problem could have prepared for dealing with it, since some period of delay was available, when certain work was carried out elsewhere. The authorities thus could have understood or at least suspected that a problem existed in the field of education, but made no preparations in order to address it.

In the experts' opinion, local government today basically functions according to the principle *'it must be right, because the chairman said so'*. Most of the community leaders believe that they know everything. They lack comprehensive understanding of the existing problems and the ways to handle them, i.e., of the required set of skills or administrative and professional capabilities.

As noted by the experts, local authorities seem to be talking about their problems, although they fail to identify them correctly. In other words, they believe that the lack of funding is the only problem. However, this is not a problem. Lack of funding stems from another, much deeper, problem involving low capacity, unprofessional local staff, misunderstanding of the strategy. This is where the available funds become insufficient.

The majority of local self-government authorities are unable to identify problems independently (without the support from the international technical assistance projects), because it

has been ‘hard-wired’ into the issue of the formation of executive bodies and the local council itself, namely, the impact of political factors. For example, deputy city chairmen are nominated by the parties and, in most cases, do not meet the requirements placed on the professional skills. Therefore, they often lack knowledge and ability to do something and to implement the right decisions in the spheres entitled.

Certain local authorities study the residents’ opinion before drafting a document. This is mostly true for the cities working under the international technical assistance projects, especially when drafting their development strategies. In this case, residents are being surveyed; involved into the relevant strategic or task groups, i.e., the community’s problems and needs are identified and addressed through participatory democracy.

Problems are often detected, for example, when a general SWOT analysis of a community is made. However, *‘in most cases, local authorities are aware of the problems; despite that, many people tend to mention such matters as (roughly speaking) a leaking roof, or a pothole, or something like that. Although these are the consequences of a problem, rather than the problem itself. The problem itself is somewhat different. In many cases, local authorities are unable to identify independently these problems and their causes’*.

In some cities, such tools as Open City are becoming widespread, supported by international technical assistance projects. Thanks to the IT tools, it is possible to get quick feedback from the community, see the problems that the citizens wish to share with the authorities. And, most importantly, all this is happening transparently, all the information is displayed on the respective website. The same can be said about e-petitions.

For many local self-governments, such problem identification tools remain relevant as the analysis of the citizens’ appeals concerning any particular issues. Moreover, a variety of issues are discussed by the local councils’ standing committees according to their areas of responsibility. This enables identification of various problems that are to be addressed later.

Local authorities often identify problems when planning their subsequent activities. *‘When planning their activities, even for a short term, they start to think about the issues that they may be facing. Of course, not all the problems are immediately identifiable, but most of them can be detected’*. Also, in the opinion of the interviewed ATC chairmen, the sources for the problem identification include the local self-government officials: *‘Where earlier we had 10 people, now we have 55. Thus, at the territory level, there are plenty of people to identify problems’*.

In addition, the Strategy for the Development of the Territorial Community can be another instrument for identifying problems. A little more than a half of the surveyed respondents (55.3%) by telephone interviews claim that they have an approved Community Development Strategy (Figure 5.5).

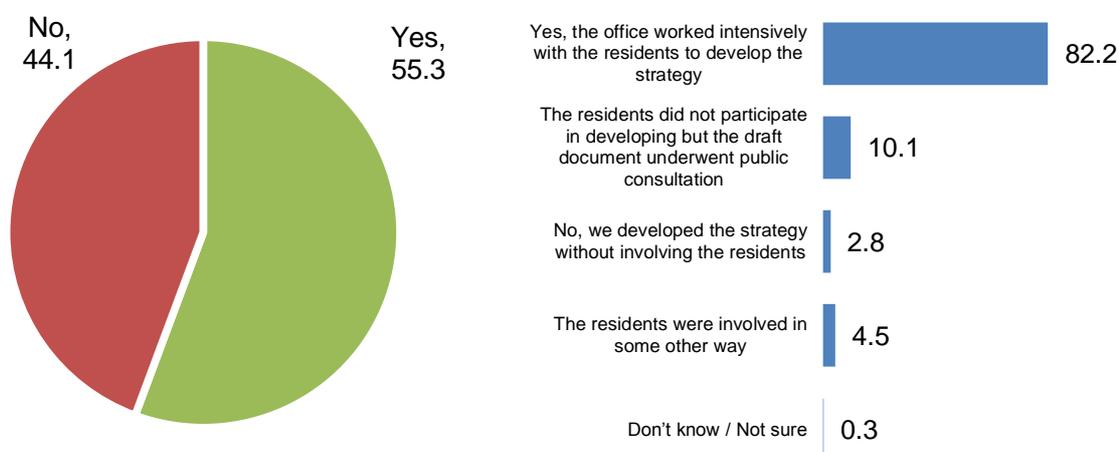


Figure 5.5. Availability of a community development strategy and involvement of citizens in its development

In addition, among those who do have a Strategy, 96.8% said that the residents of their municipality were, in one way or another, involved in the work on the strategy, including 82.2% who said that the residents actively participated in the actual process of developing the strategy.

5.4. Changes in the local government authorities' functions

In the period since the launch of the decentralisation reform in Ukraine, the priorities in the performance of duties by the local self-government officials have shifted significantly. It is they who should be the initiators and chief designers of democratic transformations in the local self-government, efficient managers, team leaders, for whom merely having the sufficient knowledge in the economic, social or legal fields and the ability to apply them in practice is not enough today. They should also possess numerous managerial and communication skills. The principal changes are associated with the local self-government authorities' ability to exercise effectively the growing number of powers vested in them by the executive authorities with the aim of providing better and more accessible services to the public.

During the research, the participants were asked if any changes had occurred recently in the structure of the local self-government bodies and whether there was a need for further changes. As the findings show, the apparatus of oblast council currently represents the most stable unit, especially where the oblast council chairmen were re-elected for the second or more terms: *'The staff is already formed in the oblast council. I came here in 2006, and it is the third time that I have been elected the oblast council chairman. The oblast council's administrative staff is almost the same, now they are doing everything right, they have learned everything'*. In some oblast councils, however, changes only occur in response to the objectives set: *'Another communal property managerial position has been introduced recently, as the oblast council's powers in managing the common property held by the territorial communities in the oblast are being expanded'*.

The most profound changes in the institutional structure of the local self-governments occur in the amalgamated communities, and, in the words of the interviewed ATC chairmen, the need for such changes will remain on the future agenda. The changes are mainly due to the assumption of new powers and the need to set up new administrative structures to exercise such powers: *'Every year we change the structure, and if the state gives us more powers, we have to vest them in someone'*.

Another important factor in the organisational changes is the desire for ongoing improvements in certain services and higher efficiency in the application of budgetary funds, which entails the appropriate adjustments in the institutional structure of local authorities. *'For three years I have been reducing the staff, eliminating positions in it. If we saw something as being inefficient, we merged two structures into one. Our "Social Service" communal entity has two divisions. One of them provides services to the elderly, while the other provides services to support disadvantaged families. In contrary two communal structures exist in the district today, we only have one with two divisions under a single manager'*. At the same time, as noted by some respondents, there are ATCs that spend 80% of the community budget on their staff.

The most significant institutional changes, in the opinion of many respondents, have occurred in the provision of services. This is particularly evident in the delivery of administrative services, either through the establishment of an administrative service centre or through dedicated local officials. At the same time, thanks to the establishment of the ASCs, the amalgamated communities have acquired new powers and have ensured the delivery of the relevant services, such as the registration of real property, place of residence, etc.

Several interviewed ATC chairmen and focus group participants referred to the absence of any recommended or typical ATC institutional structure as the third factor of changes in the organisational structure. Thus, each ATC had to develop its own organisational structure independently, often copying the respective structure from the district state administration, save for a smaller number of employees. Certain problems and inconsistencies were discovered during the subsequent activities, entailing adjustments to the institutional structure to meet the ATC needs.

Other ATC chairmen believe that it would not be advisable to develop a typical organisational structure for the ATCs, as there are considerable differences between them, precluding any common institutional structure. *'Communities number between 2 thousand and 40 thousand people, and each of them develops a specific structure according to the population size. They face different problems, such as the issue of children and families — this may be a dedicated service in some communities, while some of them have to join efforts with neighbouring communities and to finance this service together. If you have 3.5 thousand people, you develop a structure to suit your needs. Accordingly, you set up a structure that is nowhere to be found, if you want to use funds on your staff efficiently. In other words, a problem exists, where a chairman, together with the staff, has to decide, how many people to hire in order to deliver the same service, given the size of the population'*.

The positions of the starostas, who are intended to play an important role in providing communication with the amalgamated communities' residents, were new to the ATCs. *'A starosta in a starosta district is at the receiving end of all the satisfaction/dissatisfaction from the local residents'*. Many ATCs apply an approach designed to preserve a certain number of local officials in the starosta district, who had previously worked at the village council that became integrated into the ATC. Some interviewed ATC chairmen noted that, with this approach, problems emerge later and, consequently, there is a need to review the composition of the starosta districts and officials in each starosta district. For example, the Lyman ATC determined the number of officials in each starosta district depending on its population and, accordingly, established the positions of chief specialists (taken up by the former village council secretaries) and clerk (usually, former passport office inspectors). These officials are engaged in the provision of services directly at the starosta district level. A specialist on land issues is employed on a permanent basis as a remote workplace in certain starosta districts (for the most remote inhabited localities). In other words, although being a specialist of the land resources division of city council, (s)he serves the population within the specific territory covered by starosta district. In the Lyman ATC, mobile teams also operate, providing services in inhabited localities according to schedule. For example, provision of subsidies or financial support to vulnerable people has been arranged in this manner. This example clearly shows the need for flexible approaches to the formation of organisational structures in the ATCs.

The research shows that most of the issues occur in the process of establishment of an education management system in the ATC, since previously, at the level of villages, settlements or cities of district significance, these functions had been performed by the district education departments of local state administration. With the subordination of general education secondary schools to the ATCs, the ATCs also have to provide methodological guidance to educational entities. According to the survey findings, different approaches to handling this problem exist, not all of them successful. Indeed, certain communities establish division of education whose staff even exceeds the number of personnel previously employed at the district level: *'For example, there are two schools in the ATC, while the education division created by ATC employs 6 people. Even education unit under the district state administrations in Zaporizhia did not have so many full-time employees. There are certain distortions'*. *'Four communities have been formed in our district. Each has its own head of the education division, that is, four heads of education units in total. The district used to have only one, with four officials and a teaching methods specialist. Now we have 12. Have things become better with the education as a result? We understand that there are no results so far'*. Moreover, upon establishment of the divisions of education in the ATCs, their heads and employees have been mostly recruited from among the former headmasters or teachers who, *'apart from educational work, have never been doing anything else, including managerial functions'*.

However, there are positive examples of education management systems established in certain ATCs. For example: *'We have signed an agreement with a local teachers' training college on the methodological support for the education process. In practice, it means that the local self-government no longer needs teaching methods specialists within the education division. I can talk,*

or raise the issue, of the number of officials to be employed by the education unit, depending on the tasks or functions they continue to perform’.

A similar situation is observed in the field of social protection. Here, too, several options may be available. The ATCs may cooperate in this matter with the district council by entering into an agreement with the district department of social protection. Thus, the district would in fact provide services to such ATCs. Another option is when the ATCs try to establish their own social protection structure — a division with officials, which, over time, turns out to be inefficient. A third option is available, when several ATCs unite to set up a common structure for the provision of social protection services.

In other words, as the ATCs’ practical functioning has shown, in order to exercise certain powers and to establish management systems across certain areas of authority, cooperation between territorial communities would be appropriate, offering significant improvements to the efficiency of budget spending and ensuring the high quality of the services.

5.5. Competence of local self-government officials

The research participants were offered to assess the competence (professional level) of local self-government officials on a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 is the highest score, as well as to express their opinion, whether such officials possess the knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient for the efficient performance of their duties. When answering this question, the research participants expressed their vision of a competent local self-government official. Thus, in their opinion, the following competencies are critical for the elected officials (chairmen):

- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Creativity

According to some respondents, candidates for elected offices in local self-government, prior to submitting their documents to the election commission, must present a document evidencing their skills or that they have some idea of what public administration or local government is.

A competent (appointed) local self-government official, in the opinion of the research participants, must possess the following competencies:

- Leadership
- Communicativeness
- Ability to interact with various stakeholders
- Project management
- Spatial planning
- Knowledge of all working tools
- Assume responsibility for the team and the scope of powers vested in him/her
- Cultivating and developing his/her abilities (be motivated, focused on developing the community)

Besides, such a person must be fully professional in the relevant field, hold the appropriate educational and qualification degree and have a public service experience.

Assessment of the professional competence of local self-government officials varies both among the local self-government representatives and among experts. The local government representatives agree that an average score of 4 could be given, with variations for certain local authorities: *‘4 — to district and city councils and, probably, 3 — to the ATCs’.*

Local self-government officials themselves were mostly given the score of 4 by the community chairmen. *‘However, this is a today’s score. Tomorrow everything can change, because there will be new tasks, and so something new may be needed. I hope that this level is sufficient, and we try to keep it up’.*

Some community chairmen emphasise higher overall professional skills of their employees, as compared to other territorial communities: *'My demands are steep on the whole. If we compare our employees with those from the other communities that I know, our personnel are head and shoulders above. But, with due regard to self-criticism and self-orientation, I give them a firm 4'*. There is not enough time to get a perfect score: *'Given the number of reforms and the challenges we are facing, we probably do not have enough time. If only these processes could take a little longer, then everything would be fine'*.

Meanwhile, in the words of those community chairmen who generally rated the professional competence of their officials at 4, some of those officials work better, and some — worse: *'Everything depends on the individuals'*.

Virtually all of them referred to the attendance at various training events as the indisputable key to the adequate professional competence of local self-government officials: *'I myself attended them, and my officials have all been involved to varying degrees. I try to take any such opportunity to train my people and the city councillors'*. *'For three years, we have been participating in all educational events, in all grant-based, training, and foreign programmes. We attend all the educational events, especially since training abroad is free, with everything financed under the various European grant-based programmes'*.

In the opinion of the expert community representatives, the situation with the officials' professional skills varies between different local self-government authorities. The district councils and their staff have been mostly given the lowest scores, at about 1. The professional competence of the ATC officials has been assessed more positively — the average score was 3, according to various estimates, with positive dynamics, i.e., the ongoing process of professional development. *'They are fast learners, they just don't have the time — have to learn everything on the go'*.

As noted by the REC representatives, during the first and second years of the ATC establishment, the general competencies were critical for them (such as holding meetings, managing the executive committee functioning, creating an organisational structure, allocating the responsibilities, etc.). In the following years, the specialised, more professional competencies are coming to the foreground, such as change management, strategic planning, budgeting, human resources management, development of territories, etc. In the communities that have already been formed, such competencies already exist. At the same time, the basic level of local self-government where no ATCs have been established faces a much worse situation with the professional competence of its officials: *'The liability system in them is much looser, therefore, they don't have the same knowledge. They do not manage any resources, it is the district that manages the resources'*.

As regards the cities of oblast significance, the competence of the relevant local self-government officials is generally assessed higher than that of the others, as a certain level of self-governance had existed there before the decentralisation reform. However, according to the experts, *'cities of oblast significance and large cities have the capacity, but they lack dynamics. Many of them have stopped in their professional development. This is why some of them are now complaining about the reform, because the adjacent villages have amalgamated. Before that, they kept saying, for quite a long time, that they were doing fine. Meanwhile, many villages around them have amalgamated. And now they complain of not having the territory for expansion. Thus, there is competence, but its development there lacks any dynamics'*.

According to some experts, *'strong, capable, professionally competent officials constitute critical mass in less than a quarter of local self-governments. And this is the situation even there, where strong local authorities had existed before. The newly established ATCs have not become any stronger. Unfortunately, these matters recede into the background, that is, they are no longer among the priorities'*.

Nevertheless, the experts note that *'there is awareness among the officials of how to act, how to exercise powers, but the skills and knowledge is still inadequate. However, the very important thing is that they know how to approach a problem. They don't sit in their offices for*

months; instead, they try to address problems in the field. And, of course, they change their attitude to work and try to find the right solutions'. 'Their confidence has definitely grown'.

The lack of professional lawyers who know the local self-government specifics has been named the largest gap in the provision of local authorities with competent officials. 'This is because the vast majority of lawyers is concentrated in cities. Luring a lawyer into a village is very hard. Accordingly, drafting various documents or session resolutions becomes a problem for these local self-government authorities'. Another gap in the provision of local authorities with professionals is that no specialised accountants/financiers are being trained for the public sector. 'The only university or college that was training public sector accountants has been closed recently'.

The key reason for the insufficient professional competence of local self-government officials is, in the experts' words, the advanced age of many of such officials and the lack of young professionals. 'Thus, the reform of local self-government and decentralisation of power face a global staffing problem — not only in terms of the local government personnel, but also on the whole, within the sectoral policies'. In the experts' opinion, there is a need to introduce or re-establish certain tools to regulate the distribution of professionals across the country (placement in rural areas). Besides, the local self-government should be more active in attracting the required professionals and channel its own resources to this end, including provision of municipal housing. In Ukraine, the ATCs have been increasingly creating conditions to lure professionals in the required field from other places. 'Here (in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), many communities built municipal housing and distributed it among young professionals in 2018. These professional would receive one-, two-, or three-room flats, depending on their marital status. The ATCs are perfectly aware that if they fail to retain the youth today, there will be no one left with them tomorrow'.

In certain ATCs, as the practice shows and confirmed by the research participants, the problem of recruiting the required professionals has been alleviated to some extent by engaging certain employees from district state administrations. However, this does not work in all cases, because such professionals 'are not ready to work in the local self-government. They only work under instructions. To put it differently, they have no initiative, no desire to be proactive or to invent something. With us, this is impossible. We have a crazy pace that we have to stick to'.

At the same time, virtually all interviewed participants are unanimous in their opinion that local self-government officials need to improve their professional skills continuously in response to any changes in legislation, overall social development, the development of innovative methods and technologies. In addition, there can be a direct relationship between the efficiency of local government activities and the competence of local self-government officials. About 50.3% of the surveyed respondents by telephone interviews admit that the problems in the work of their units are caused by insufficient level of knowledge of their staff, but only 16.1% of them are completely sure about it (Figure 5.6).

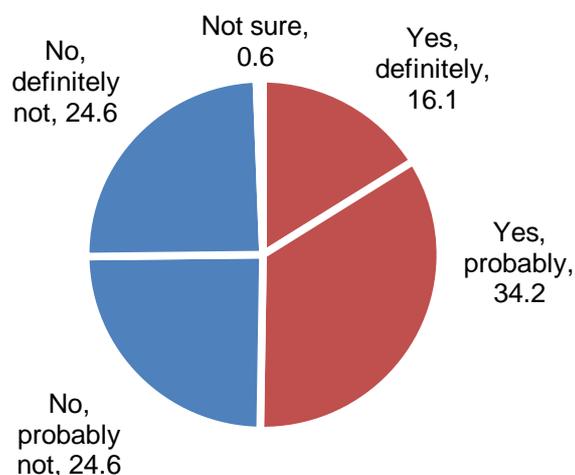


Figure 5.6. Influence of insufficient knowledge of local self-government officials on problems in the activities of local self-government bodies of ATC (% among all respondents)

According to the representatives of amalgamated communities, **the top priorities for staff training must include local economic development (49%), project management (41%), management of financial resources (27%), agriculture (22%), planning and implementation of infrastructural projects (21%), provision of public / municipal services (21%)** (Table 5.1).

5.6. The appeal of positions in local self-government

During in-depth interviews the respondents were asked to name the factors that influence the level of the officials' motivation and the appeal of positions in local self-government. In general, all the mentioned factors, listed according neither to their priority nor importance, include:

- **The level of remuneration.** According to a few of the surveyed ATC chairmen, *'salaries are the key motivating factor. Higher salaries usually stimulate employment of new people by the city council, and the service in local self-government becomes more attractive to young people'*. Furthermore, *'salaries should reflect the level of professional training and personal skills'*.
- **The career development potential.** A local self-government employee must be *'confident of career development opportunities, depending on the individual tasks performed on the job'*.
- **Personal development opportunities.** According to some respondents, the learning opportunities currently offered by the local self-government are attracting young people who want to acquire certain competencies with a view of potential employment in other sectors. At the same time, some (mostly urban) community leaders believe that there is nothing wrong with this, given the constant staff turnover in local authorities. And those young employees, who have developed their professional skills and gone on to work in other sectors, also benefit the community.
- **Interesting job and unusual challenges,** especially those currently facing the local self-government. *'At last, working for many local authorities became interesting, because self-governance has appeared. People tend to move to the ATCs from the district or oblast centres to find employment. Everything is changing rapidly in the ATCs, with numerous practical cases being accumulated over a short time. And those people who wish to explore these practical cases seek employment by the local self-government precisely for this reason'*.
- **The opportunity to change communities.** For certain persons currently being employed by the local authorities, the motivating factor is *'the ability to engage in and actually implement certain initiatives within the community. This is because a person living in the community is interested in its development. Therefore, being involved in the changes is the motivation here'*. *'The outcome of their work is now the greatest motivating factor. New high-quality educational services, pivot schools, renovated or newly built kindergartens, outpatient clinics — the available infrastructure is being restored. This is the key motivation'*.
- **No other job opportunities.** This is especially true of rural areas. *'If a person is close to the retirement age, there is no other alternative but to wait for the retirement'*.
- **Social status.** This is a particularly motivating factor for community leaders or for heads of structural divisions within local executive authorities.
- **Stable employment.**
- **Team relationships.**
- **Social advantages of the position.**

It should be noted that the respondents' opinions were divided in the assessment of remuneration as a critical motivating factor in working for the local self-government. Some of them think that salary is precisely such a factor. Changes in the remuneration of government and local self-government officials have been given as a reason: *'At first, there was a personnel outflow from the local self-government authorities to the state executive authorities, when a new law on civil service became effective. Afterwards, when the amount of remuneration became balanced between civil servants and local self-government officials, the outflow reversed to the local self-government authorities. The more powers are transferred to the local self-government level, the more people from state executive authorities will be needed in the local self-government. And salaries will only*

contribute to this'. Other respondents believe that the level of remuneration does not appear to be a critical motive today, while other motives, mentioned above, dominate.

At the same time, when responding to the question 'What actions (steps) do you (or top managers of the local self-government authority where you are employed) take to motivate employees?', community chairmen referred to various material incentives, such as the establishment of incentive pay, bonuses for top achievements or for having specific skills (for example, knowledge and application of a foreign language). *'We pay high salaries. We keep employees thanks to high remuneration. I give them 80% bonuses. Employees with lower salaries receive a 100% bonus. Their salaries are very high now. Because we multiplied them by 2 or 3 times. Salaries are competitive for the city.'* *'We have been abandoning automatic payments of bonuses. Previously, everyone was getting a 50% bonus and took it for granted. We are now introducing a system where the division heads would approve the relevant orders for payment of incentives on a monthly basis. If someone performs well in any particular month and, because of this, the entire oblast council achieves certain advantages; such person should be encouraged with a higher bonus. If someone interferes with this or performs poorly, which is obvious to absolutely everyone, this should be taken into consideration'*.

For rural communities located near large cities, the issue of motivation and retention of officials becomes extremely difficult, as they cannot compete with the cities: *'We are a village council a few kilometres away from Odesa. It is one thing for us as a local authority to compete in the labour market, and quite another — to compete with Odesa, where opportunities for employment and higher wages are simply incredible. We are faced with permanent processes of employee migration; moreover, our motivating factors are very limited'*. In the communities that have fewer opportunities to use incentives, non-use of punitive measures is regarded as a kind of motivation: *'At least we do not punish'*.

Along with financial incentives, local self-government authorities make wide use of non-financial ones, such as preferential promotion, early promotion to the next rank, recognition of the performance by awarding the certificates of honour, professional or local prizes, etc. *'We use the oblast council awards. We try to do it publicly. We bring people together for study trips, competitions, entertainment events'*.

Using a democratic style in the community management was also listed among the means of employee motivation: *'I allowed independent decision-making for the heads of structural divisions, subject to the agreed targets that we want to achieve in each area. Relationships in the team, non-authoritarian management style that I profess. Treating local self-government officials as my partners and co-workers, delegating the powers'*.

49.9% of all surveyed respondents by telephone interviews **are very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs at the local self-government authority** (they evaluated their job at 6-7 on a 7-point scale), and another 28.8% are rather satisfied (they gave it 5 points) (Figure 5.7). The average level of satisfaction is 5.4 points.

At the same time, **only 26.9% believe that jobs at their local self-government authority are very attractive or attractive compared to other options on the labour market** (they evaluated these jobs at 6-7 on a 7-point scale), and another 33.1% believe it is rather attractive (at 5 points). On average, the respondents evaluated the attractiveness of these jobs at 4.8 points on a 7-point scale.

According to the respondents, **the most important** of all factors of attractiveness **are good relations in the team** (74.3% consider this factor very important), **the opportunity to work with interesting people** (67.9%), **good reputation of the employer** (65.8%), **job stability** (66.2%) (Figure 5.8).

In your personal opinion, is a job at the local self-government authority ATTRACTIVE or UNATTRACTIVE in comparison with other available employment opportunities?

Please evaluate how are you personally satisfied with work in local self-government authority

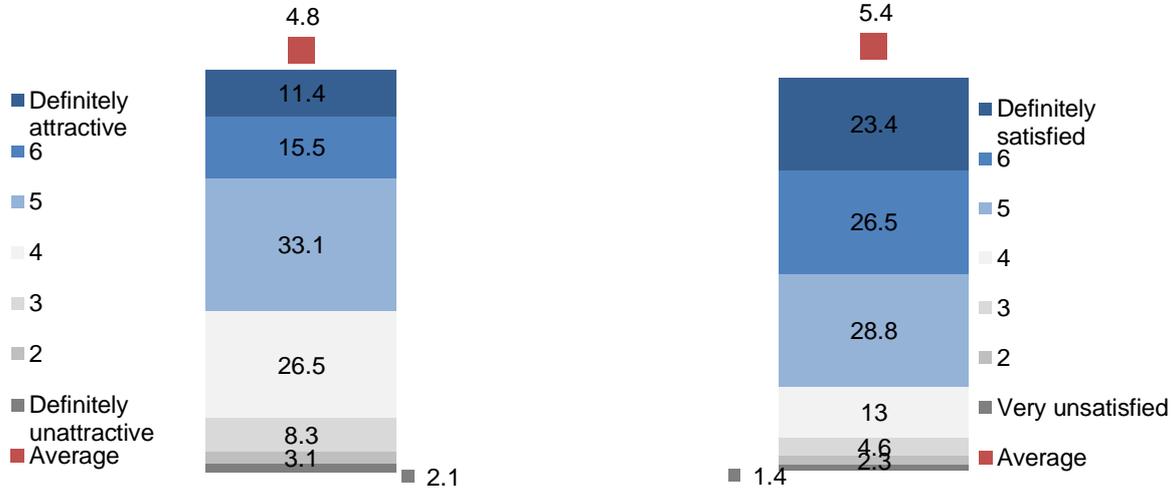
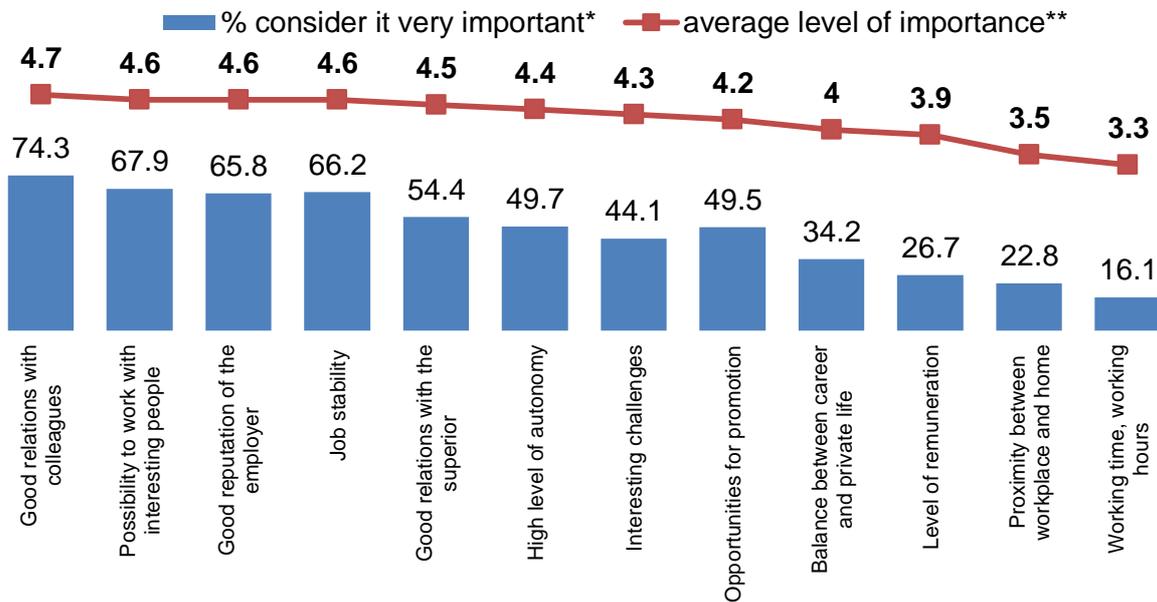


Figure 5.7. Assessment of attractiveness and satisfaction with work in the local government (% of all respondents)



* Those who answered 'very important'.

** The average is on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'totally unimportant', and 5 is 'very important'.

Figure 5.8. List of factors which influence on job attractive at local self-government authority (% among all respondents)

As for the 'second-grade' factors, it is reasonable to include good relations with the superiors, high level of autonomy, diversity of tasks, opportunities for professional development (44-54% of respondents consider these factors very important). Other factors were named as very important by up to one third of the respondents. The top 3 factors for the respondents themselves are good relations in the team (57.3%), the possibility to work with interesting people (33.7%) and job stability (33.3%) (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.9. Factors influencing the level of attractiveness of work in a local government body personally for respondents interviewed (% among all respondents)

At the same time, 83.8% of respondents think that for the ‘ordinary’ officials one of the top factors is the level of remuneration (Figure 5.10). In addition, top-factors for ‘ordinary’ officials include good relations with colleagues (62.1%), job stability (39.1%), and opportunities for professional development (33.8%).



Figure 5.10. The most important factors for local self-government officials that make local self-government body an attractive place to work (% among all respondents)

6. Local self-government officials' needs in the professional competence development

6.1. Training needs of local self-government officials

As regards the competencies to be developed in the local self-government officials and the extent of the importance of such competencies for a local authority, the respondents were unanimous in the opinion that the list of competencies is largely derived from those areas of responsibilities of local self-government in which problems with their implementation are being experienced. **The participants of in-depth interviews** also noted that the training needs of local self-government officials were constantly changing. In the last three years, they have obviously become different, along with the changes in the tasks and assumption of the powers not previously exercised by the local self-government authorities. Training needs also vary between local authorities in terms of detailed studies in any particular area.

Almost all the respondents referred to the so-called 'hard' competencies as the key ones that have to be developed by the local self-government officials:

1. **Strategic planning.** *'For the overwhelming majority of the ATCs, strategic planning is something entirely new, never done by them before. In other words, - absolute ignorance, misunderstanding. Only recently, they have been drafting socio-economic development plans or programmes 2–3 pages long, whereas now they need to write a large tome'. The lack of a Strategy for territorial development has checked the progress in some of the first newly established communities: 'Two years have passed without any Strategy, and now they lag behind. This clearly indicates the lack of understanding of the Strategy on behalf of these communities'.*

Those communities where strategic planning was applied had faced the lack of the necessary skills and even of strategic thinking: *'Even a simple matter of distinguishing between the objectives, such as strategic objectives, and the authority's current operations turned out to be difficult'. According to the interviewed experts, the vast majority of local authorities are accustomed to thinking parochially, and it is hard for them to step beyond the operational planning horizon. Furthermore, implementing the approved Strategies remains a significant problem; a strategy is often a matter of form, never used to plan the entire local self-government functioning, and its contents are not quite known even to the immediate implementers. 'We asked one community: Do you have a Strategy, what it contains, what its key focus is? We were given the following answer: Yes, we do have a strategy, it is posted on our website, you can read it there'.*

2. **Project management.** The importance of learning this competency was noted by the representatives both from the expert community and from the local authorities themselves. This competency includes both mastering the skills of preparing projects to attract grant resources, of managing such projects (*'because now [...] very few communities are able to attract them appropriately, to develop high-quality projects for the receipt of grants and international technical assistance'*), and *'the overall project-based approach to all management processes'*. The local self-government activities *'should be approached as a project from the very beginning, from the first session. Because project management enables forming a team, identifying the necessary resources, etc. Through project management, one can show how the municipality's overall operation should be organised'*.

3. **Tools for interaction with various stakeholders,** such as the community, authorities, international technical assistance projects, all stakeholders; engaging them into managerial decision-making. *'Local self-government authorities and their officials must learn to navigate this space. S(h)e who knows where to knock, opens the door faster — communication, diplomacy, interaction is important here'.*

4. **Legal literacy** — *'how to apply the laws, both general (the law on local self-government, on service in local self-government, on prevention of corruption), and special legislation'.*

5. **Financial management.** Never before had the ATCs had to handle such amounts of

revenues and expenditures in the local budgets, *'their budgets have 'jumped' seven- to tenfold'*. Local self-government officials should be taught how to predict and plan local budget revenues and expenditures, how to allocate budget resources in conjunction with the strategic goals of the community development, how to manage financial resources efficiently.

Teaching the gender responsive budgeting should also be provided in the context of managing the local budget funds, as *'local self-government officials have very little knowledge in this field now. Although it's no longer at a zero, it's only at an entry level so far'*.

6. **Administrative services.**

7. **Management of communal property.**

8. **Spatial planning**, including land management. *'These matters must be addressed in the understanding that there will be new powers to be entitled to local self-government. That is, the legal aspects relating to land management'*.

9. **Energy efficiency and energy management.**

10. **Arrangements for the provision of housing and communal services.** *'For example, directors of communal enterprises must be taught how to deal with solid domestic waste'*.

11. **Raising investments and other alternative funding sources for local development.**

12. **The application of e-governance and e-democracy to the management activities.**

13. **Human resources management.**

14. **Health care management.**

15. **Education management.**

16. **Culture management.** *'We renovated our clubhouses, but our culture professionals are all self-taught. We have no trained specialists at all. We would like to recruit educated young people who could tell us what to do. In the meantime, we have to rely on the available old cadres'*.

Concerning the last three competencies, the respondents noted that, to ensure better development in these sectors, educational events should be attended not only by the top managers or employees of the relevant entities, but also by the representatives of the local self-government authorities who supervise the respective sectors. *'My employees would become more familiar with the matters and, naturally, with the problems relating to licensing, contracting the National Health Service [...] as it turns out, I have only partial knowledge, especially as regards system administration and monitoring/supervision in education [...] It would be appropriate to conduct joint training sessions, where each category of people might better understand the problems facing the other category and treat such problems differently'*.

The listed 'hard' competencies are critical, since, without them, exercising the powers of local self-government would be impossible. At the same time, 'soft' competencies are gaining importance. Unlike the hard ones, i.e., special functional skills, soft competencies are not directly linked to any specific profession and are cross-cutting to some extent. Soft skills are also referred to as universal or functional competencies of a modern employee. The interviewed respondents included the following into the list of these skills:

1. **Leadership**, which is an important factor in the community development. *'The ATCs have been given new opportunities, but taking advantage of them is only possible in the presence of a leader'*. Therefore, through training, leaders must be formed. Leaders are needed to set up efficient local self-government teams and to respond flexibly to any changes in the environment.

2. **Change management.** Modern management in local self-government should focus on ensuring the community's adaptation to the ever-changing environment in order to achieve the best results, together with the highly efficient use of resources. Local self-government officials should master the change management tools to be able to identify when changes are needed in the local self-government, to plan changes, to apply a standard model of change management; they should be able to develop an effective action plan to implement changes, to manage the change process at different stages, etc.

3. **Teamwork.** *'Heads of structural divisions [...] should be able to work with people, to delegate powers. These issues may seem not to be directly related to official duties, but they greatly influence the employees' performance, and, therefore, that of the entire city council'.*

4. **Communicability,** finding the opportunities for a dialogue. *'The following things are very important for an executive authority: talking to each other, to local councillors, to local governments from various communities, districts, communications with investors, international organisations. These things have to be learned'.*

5. **Ethics.** *'Quite often, people do not understand how it is applied and the consequences it may have, therefore, a course in ethics is a must for each employee'.*

6. **Self-improvement.** *'Officials should have a self-development quality and approach the division head and managers with proposals, rather than wait for my instructions'.*

7. **The ability to handle stresses** and to adapt quickly to a new work environment.

According to some interviewed experts, special attention should be paid to the **training of community leaders.** *'They must be taught how to manage the community holistically. In other words, they should be made aware of interrelations between various sectors, spheres, and issues. They need to study an integrated approach. So that they would draft strategies not for the sake of drafting, but would apply them to their work. So that they would understand the entire process, beginning with strategizing, deliberation, and ending with implementation. That is, to do everything in an integrated way'.*

Along with the list of current training needs, the respondents were asked during the in-depth interviews, how the training needs were likely to change in the coming two, three or four years, which competencies or professionals would be required by the local self-government, given the course of reforms in Ukraine, changes in the labour market, global trends, the developing social relations. After all, *'the professional training system should be proactive, rather than responding to yesterday's demands. At the moment, officials lack budget knowledge, and, naturally, it has to be developed, because this knowledge will always be needed by the local self-governments. Awareness in the area of land management must be raised. The main thing, however, is to understand what will be lacking tomorrow'.*

According to the experts, *'officials must be taught to think globally [...] because it is exactly this global philosophical approach that is required in planning the community development'.* It is becoming increasingly important for the local self-government officials *'to be able to understand the today's globalised world, its challenges, its new approaches. They need to be put into practice'.* *'The training programmes should include those things that concern global changes and responses to them. For now, most people do not understand global challenges and how to respond to them'.*

*'More attention should be paid to the issues of the **communities' economic development.** We need to learn more about new technologies and industries that will provide a breakthrough in the economic development'.* At the same time, when studying local economic development models and tools, more *'focus should be made on the economic development based on the use of internal resources. This is the inclusive economic development, finding all the possible benefits in the community, the so-called creative industries (based on the fact that the community has something that its neighbours lack), the regions' economic specialisation or smart specialisation, local brands, crafts. In other words, building a small-sized, compact economy based on the community's advantages, the cultural background of this community, for example, a unique borscht recipe from this community'.* Collaboration between communities is vital in this model of economic development. For example, *'in the Poltava oblast, five communities have joined efforts to create a common tourist area, realising that a single community's destinations would be not enough to keep the tourists longer. This is mutual cooperation to avoid developing any excessive infrastructure. It means streamlined expenses and actively trying to find the ground for their own, original, creative, unique economy'.*

Given the current urbanisation processes in the world and in Ukraine, the cities' growing

role in economic and cultural life, the demand for *urban planning experts* in the cities is growing, 'because few people talk about it now. There is only the GIZ project, but the proper urban development, new trends — no one knows and nobody teaches it. Things they teach in, for example, the Kyiv National University of Construction and Architecture has nothing to do with what is needed in the 21st century'. Cities already lack *professional architects*. 'The integrated harmonious development must be inherent in the community planning, guided by certain spatial specifics. Meanwhile, it's almost impossible to find a professional architect today'.

Given the rapid development of information technologies and their penetration in all areas of public life, high-in-demand competencies of local self-government officials will include *'the use of IT tools, artificial intelligence in managerial decision-making, and the networking ability'*.

Also, according to the community chairmen, they already lack *professional lawyers, energy managers* (to support high-quality management of energy resources), and they need to learn *foreign languages*.

With regard to the prospects of a new administrative territorial structure to be introduced in the Ukrainian districts, and of reforms at the subregional level of government, *'it will be necessary to study the issues of interaction between prefectures and amalgamated territorial communities'*.

According to the surveyed respondents, the top priorities for ATCs' staff training must include local economic development (48.9%), project management (40.8%), financial management (26.7%), bookkeeping (25.1%), agriculture (21.7%), planning and implementation of infrastructural projects (21.3%), provision of public / municipal services (21.1%). For the respondents themselves, the top-areas are local economic development (46.0%), project management (32.1%), financial management (28.0%), planning and implementation of infrastructural investments (23.4%), strategic planning (20.7%) (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Priority areas of professional development of local self-government officials
(% among all respondents)

Areas of professional development	Top-areas for other employees	Top-areas for respondents themselves	% state that there are difficulties (decisive and not) in the area
Local economic development and Investment Attraction	48.9	46.0	73.1
Project management	40.8	32.1	63.2
Managing the finances of the local self-government, local taxes and fees	26.7	28.0	57.6
Bookkeeping	25.1	18.2	46.4
Agriculture and rural development	21.7	17.0	67.3
Planning and implementation of infrastructural investments	21.3	23.4	53.4
Provision of public/ municipal services	21.1	14.5	47.8
Internal audit, management audit	17.2	15.3	59.6
Communication with citizens	16.2	19.5	56.3
Computer/IT literacy, use of IT tools	16.1	13.9	57.1
Environment protection	16.1	12.4	79.1
Creation of youth and cultural policies at the local level	15.7	12.6	60.7
Local public transport and local roads	15.3	14.9	79.9
Implementation of e-government and computerization of the office	14.9	11.4	52.2

Areas of professional development	Top-areas for other employees	Top-areas for respondents themselves	% state that there are difficulties (decisive and not) in the area
Language training, selected foreign language	13.7	18.6	55.7
Strategic planning and strategic management of the local self-government	13.2	20.7	55.7
Management of healthcare institutions	12.4	10.4	52.0
Wastewater and solid waste management	12.0	12.2	67.5
Disaster and crisis management	10.8	10.1	64.8
Management of educational entities	10.4	9.3	39.3
Public property management	10.1	12.0	50.7
Collaboration with non-governmental organizations	9.9	8.9	50.9
Public procurement and tender procedures	8.7	10.1	40.8
Urban/spatial planning and management of real property	8.3	11.8	62.7
HR management, HR policy	7.5	11.6	65.4
Social policy	6.8	9.5	56.9
Managing human teams, team work techniques, conflict resolution etc.	6.2	10.6	49.9
Use of technical assistance funds	6.2	9.3	36.6
Ethics and prevention of corruption	4.8	5.0	40.8
Management of cultural institutions, implementation of cultural policy	3.3	2.5	48.0
Management of sports centres	2.3	1.9	38.5
Work organization at the office	2.3	2.9	37.3
Services to customers, organization of the centre of administrative services	2.1	4.8	40.4
Work time management	2.1	4.3	48.0
Protection of minority rights	0.2	0.0	20.5

It should be noted that these areas where the competence of local self-government officials needs to be improved can be **considered key or strategic** as they have a direct influence on the effectiveness of the local self-government body. It is the lack of the above-mentioned competencies in local government officials that leads to a low level (or a decrease in the level) of the fulfillment of the powers / tasks of local self-government bodies.

Officials do not always feel the correlation between lack of competencies and performance. Therefore, **potential "competency niches"** that need to be developed by local self-government officials are those where there are difficulties in performing official tasks and duties, as shown by the analysis - local public transport and local roads (79.9%), environment protection (79.1%), wastewater and solid waste management (67.5), agriculture and rural development (67.3%).

In addition, based on the training needs analysis of local self-government officials and the planning of appropriate in-service training programs, it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the local self-government body - the rural, village or city council. As shown in Figure 6.1, competence in the field of local economic development and investment attraction; internal audit, audit of management activity; communication with the citizens needs to be developed by all local government bodies, while accounting competence requires the greatest development in rural and village councils (that can be explained by the increase in tasks after the amalgamation).

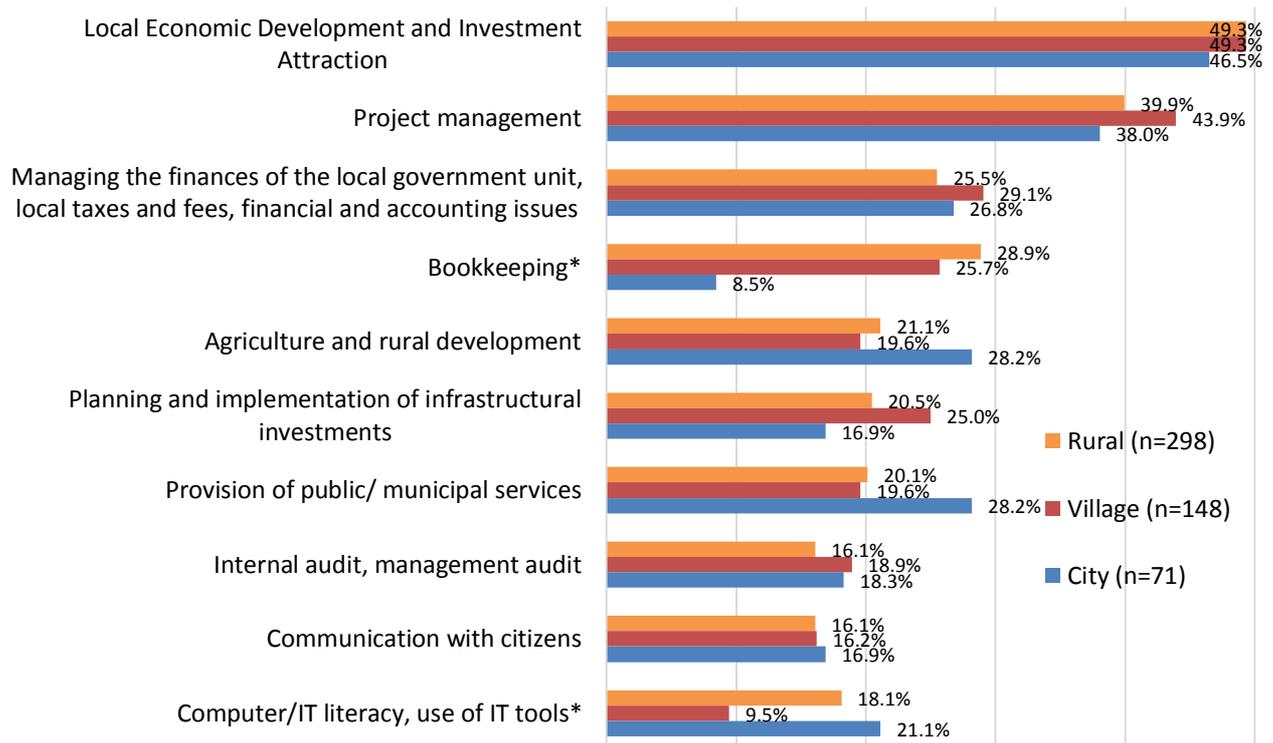


Figure 6.1. Priority areas for improvement of local self-government officials' competences, profile of communities (% among all respondents)

6.2. Local councillors' training needs

Article 33-1 of the Law of Ukraine 'On the Status of Local Council Deputies' stipulates that a local councillor shall be entitled to in-service training. The procedure for managing in-service training of local councillors shall be established by the respective council. However, in Ukraine, there are few established practices of local councillors' in-service training conducted according to the procedure determined by the local council. Training of local councillors is recognised as a prerequisite for the establishment of cooperation and relations of partnership between local councillors and appointed local self-government officials, as well as a means of raising the quality of the decisions developed and approved by the relevant local council.

As a rule, in-service training events are included in the local self-governments' development and financial support programmes, often providing for the councillors' attendance at the training activities, as well as at the events focused on studying, analysing, summarising and implementing the domestic and international experience of the local government development. For example, *'we have a specially developed programme for local government development that envisages in-service training for councillors. Occasionally, we conduct training for councillors' assistants (who may number up to 5 persons working for a single councillor on a pro bono basis). Using funds from the Centre for Local Self-Governance Development, we take oblast councillors to the ATCs to make them understand what the amalgamation of territorial communities is needed for'*.

The interviewed participants are almost unanimous in the opinion that the level of the local councillors' professional competence must be raised, thereby enabling better performance by the local government and positive influence on the territorial community's overall development. A territorial community will develop successfully only where local councillors are professional and competent. *'It would be great to have competent people in the community. The local authority will definitely feel better and implement its decisions faster with a skilled councillor around'*. *'We try to involve our councillors in the educational or training events held by the city council for its officials,*

because we are confident — the better they understand the system, the easier it is for us to implement jointly any municipal initiatives'

Observations show that 60% of all councillors get replaced with each convocation, therefore, on the one hand, questions arise as to the advisability of investing in the councillors' training. *'A minimum training package should be in place for the newly elected councillors — a kind of briefing to be conducted just after the first council session [...] If you put money in the councillors from your community, this will benefit the community, even if they are not re-elected'*.

This minimum training package for the newly elected councillors should support the development of the following competencies:

- General rights and duties of a councillor
- Competence of local authorities
- The ability to engage in constructive dialogue, to negotiate, to make concerted decisions, because *'councillors act solely in the interests of their voters and do not want to look at the bigger picture, namely, that they represent the entire community. Hence, the never-ending problem with priorities, when everything — communal improvements, lighting, etc. — has to be done using limited resources. The main issue is that they do not want to work as a coherent whole'*.
- Local council's Regulations
- Budget process
- Strategic planning
- Rulemaking (as concerns local councillors).

Training of newly elected councillors should be conducted *'early into their mandate — since they do not identify themselves with the city council, such questions arise as what a permanent committee is, what it does, what the councillor's powers are, or a conflict of interest for elected officials is'*.

For the councillors re-elected to the local council, training in other competencies would be required, *'because they already understand and know many processes. Among our councillors are former deputy chairmen, a farmer, a director of a large enterprise. That is, we have some strong councillors on whom we count'*. Naturally, the councillors need to be taught for the duration of their mandate. *'Not all of them, unfortunately, know what local government is doing [...] Therefore, we pay great attention to raising their awareness and will continue to do so'*. *'The oblast councillors include many those who have already served as local councillors. Still, they sometimes adopt really "strange" decisions'*. In this context, certain experts even suggested that it might be necessary to embrace a model adopted in other countries, for example, in Canada. *'They have fewer councillors there, who possess the required professional skills and perform their duties on a professional basis'*.

In the opinion of many local council chairmen, local self-governments play an important role in raising the councillors' professionalism, communicating to them the gist of the prepared draft resolutions. *'We always hold the "councillor's day" before the session [...] to discuss more efficiently the issues on the agenda'*. In the words of some respondents, *'an aware city council is the one that is able to work even with an untrained councillor and, in a language that is understandable to him or her, can explain the budget or other processes occurring in the community. Then there will be no clashes or other conflicts [...] The task of the city council's professionals is to work very carefully with the councillors and to help them exercise their powers. Not to be in opposition'*. *'In the oblast council's staff, a respective expert is in charge of each committee. This expert tells the councillors what to do and how'*.

Despite the indisputable need to train local councillors, the issue of their motivation to participate in such training remains open, in view of the local councillors' legal status. In fact, the Law of Ukraine 'On the Status of Local Council Deputies' establishes the right, rather than the duty, of local councillors to undergo in-service training. Besides, councillors exercise their powers on a pro bono basis and, beyond this, are engaged in their principal activities. Thus, there is a

problem with the availability of extra time to be spent on attending any training events. Some respondents admitted that they had virtually no means to motivate the councillors to participate in the training events: *'A councillor is actually a volunteer, performing his or her councillor's duties on a voluntary basis'. 'We tried to teach them, but they are not particularly willing. I don't know how to motivate them'. 'They work at their offices and live their own lives'.*

The opinions of the respondents were divided on who should finance the training of local councillors. Here, several views have been expressed regarding potential funding sources:

1. Political parties funded from the state budget. *'It should be up to the political parties, not the local self-government. Besides, they have resources for it. We proposed a very simple approach some time ago. Political parties here, in the centre, should invite local councillors — for example, at the oblast level — and conduct centralised short training sessions on land issues, budget, etc., and then similar events are to be conducted in clusters at lower levels'. 'The same should be done at the basic level of local self-government'.*

However, some experts consider this an unlikely possibility: *'I don't believe that local councillors could be trained at the expense of political parties'.*

2. Using funds from the relevant local budgets: *'I think that they should be trained at the expense of the local budget, since they work for the local community's benefit'. 'The government is definitely not supposed to be training them. Their training should be funded from the local budget. Who vote for the local budget? The councillors. If they want to study, let them allocate money for it and select appropriate entities'. 'It is for a local authority, rather than for the state to be concerned with in-service training of local councillors. And a certain percentage should be allocated in the budget, let's say, 1% of the total budget, but these funds must be in place for the councillors' in-service training'.*

3. Local self-government associations. However, as stressed by the representatives of the ATC association themselves, *'being an association, we will not be able to occupy this niche anywhere soon, although it looks promising and will be developing, as nobody has ever been systematically involved with this target group'.*

6.3. Practical identification of training needs in the local self-government authorities

One of the objectives of the research was to identify the current practice of determining the local government officials' training needs, how the information about the needs is collected and/or obtained, how formalised this analysis is and how regularly it is performed. As the in-depth interviews show, certain sections of the local self-government use no formal tools to study the employees' training needs: *'No, we don't use anything like this yet'; 'We don't have this practice of identifying the training needs'; 'I am not aware of this practice'; 'We don't have it. I'm sure about that'.*

The overwhelming majority of the interviewed community leaders noted that their local authorities did not study the training needs specifically; instead, they determined who was to be sent for training, depending on the topics of the training events and the range of official duties. *'We receive invitations in which the training topics or areas are listed. We find the persons who work in this area and send, for example, the lawyer or the press service head'. 'I decide, depending on the training focus. If it's land issues, the head of the land resources division would be sent'. 'I look at the topic listed in the invitation. If the topics make me feel that there are professionals who need to enhance their knowledge and skills, I immediately write a memo to the administrative division to arrange for a business trip for this person'.*

However, this approach (offer-driven training) no longer meets the needs of local self-government, since the topics of certain educational events repeat themselves, although not all the existing training needs are being covered. *'We tend to decline offers to train on particular topics. For example, training sessions on planning. We attended all the proposed events, including those sponsored by donors (UNDP works with us). After a third or fourth training round on this topic, we*

realised that there is no more added value in it — they were telling us things that we already knew, so, from now on, we do not go there. In fact, we are becoming selective, wanting the training to be effective, and not merely for its own sake’.

Identifying those persons who need to improve their skills in order to comply with the statutory requirements on the frequency of in-service training has become a common practice: *‘Training is mandatory for those who have been just appointed or haven’t improved their skills in the last three years’.*

Thus, officials in these local authorities are more likely to be sent for training as a response to the offer of training topics, rather than in order to satisfy actual needs in improving the professional competence. In a situation like this, a risk exists that training might fail to meet the actual training needs and that those employees might be sent who do not actually need this training. On the whole, this affects the outcome of the training and the efficient application of the funds allocated on the training.

Another, fairly common, approach to the local self-government training is based more on the needs, where local authorities forward requests to the relevant educational service providers in respect of training in the newly assumed powers (*‘if a sectoral reform is systematic’* if there is *‘insufficiently clear instrumental understanding of the available legislation, for example, in the field of the health care reform. Many communities had requested this training, because their knowledge of this topic was insufficient’*). There are also instances where local authorities are aware of the need to train their officials, if *‘they have come across the same problem several times and many professionals are in charge of this matter [...] Starostas are a vivid example. It’s a new position; there are a lot of them in the community, for example, 11 starostas in one community. This is the issue of the starosta’s interaction with the councillors and the public, performance of functions’.*

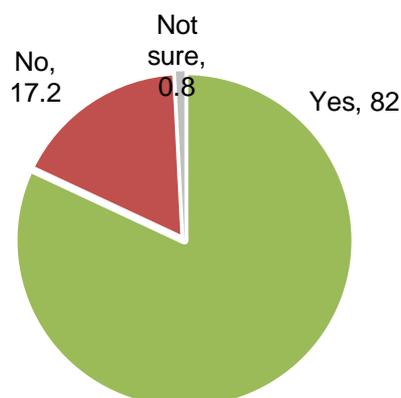
Some local authorities practice a more demand-driven approach, where their employees initiate themselves their participation in training events and, in certain cases, the provision of the relevant educational services is paid from the local budget: *‘There are examples when courses are selected optionally or attendance at the in-service training courses is more targeted — the HR manager selects the courses herself, and the land surveyor also himself chose the in-service training courses. We have to pay for the employee training’.* *‘Sometimes the employees approach me and say that they would like to learn something specific. We are looking for such training opportunities and turn to the international technical assistance programmes. We have paid from the local budget for our employees’ training in land issues and finance’.* *‘Some people were sent to the courses on writing grant-based projects. We even paid money to teach our employees these things’.*

Only in isolated cases, as the survey has shown, local authorities apply more formalised tools to identify their officials’ training needs. These tools may include brainstorming and questionnaires. *‘We hold small meetings, and identify the most urgent needs through brainstorming. We are currently drafting the local self-government development programme, and the in-service training plan is the part of this programme. In this plan, we respond to the identified problems. However, a training follow-up system has to be implemented. Accordingly, proper environment must be provided, so that an official would be able to apply the new knowledge’.*

‘We conduct surveys of local self-government officials on an annual basis. This allows us to understand more clearly the interests and needs that really exist at the city council level and to fill in the gaps’. *‘Indeed, this practice exists, although, perhaps, not structured (there is no relevant established procedure); however, through the management of our structural divisions we collect data about the interests in raising professional skills and submit appropriate requests to our regional centre’.*

The majority (82.0%) of surveyed respondents by telephone interviews claimed that their local self-government authority analysed its staff’s training needs (Figure 6.2). Of those who conducted such an analysis, two thirds (68.4%) used approaches or methodological recommendations that defined how training needs should be analysed.

Does your municipality analyse the training needs of its staff?
(% among all respondents)



Is there a procedure, recommendation or a rule which defines how training needs should be analysed?

(% among those who are undergoing analysis of training needs)

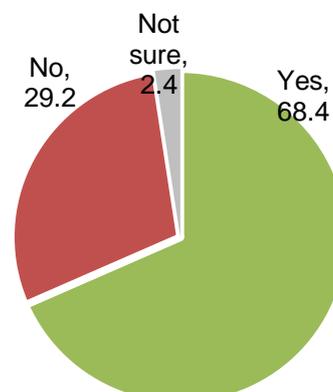


Figure 6.2. Conducting the analysis of training needs of local self-government officials

6.4. Types and forms of raising the professional competence of local self-government officials

The most frequent answer given by the respondents interviewed by telephone was that in 2018 their staff participated in free-of-charge training organized by regional excellence centres (94.4%), by local government associations (90.3%) and by external providers under technical assistance projects where their ATC was not an immediate beneficiary (82.0%) (Table 6.2). Another 51.6% spoke about free-of-charge training organized under international technical assistance projects where their ATC was a direct beneficiary.

At the same time, experiences where participation was funded from the local budget were less frequently mentioned: 42.6% recalled an experience of training organized for several local self-government authorities, and 39.1% recalled training sessions organized only for their communities.

Table 6.2. Participation of local self-government officials in training activities (external) in 2018 (% among all respondents)

100% in line	Yes	No
FREE training organized by REGIONAL EXCELLENCE CENTERS	94.4	5.6
FREE training organized by LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS	90.3	9.7
Free-of-charge training organized by an external provider under a project where your local government was not an immediate beneficiary	82.0	18.0
Free-of-charge training organized under project(s) where your local government was an immediate beneficiary	51.6	48.4
Open paid training for staff of various public offices, organized by an external provider, with participation financed by your local government	42.6	57.4
Training organized specifically for the staff of your local government by an external provider, financed by your local government	39.1	60.9
Training paid by the staff who participated in it upon the consent of the local government	22.2	77.8
Staff of our local government has not participated in any training in 2018	0.6	99.4

The most frequent organizers of training events were local self-government associations (92.2%), regional excellence centres (87.9%), and international organizations (77.2%) (Figure 6.3). The National Academy for Public Administration (61.1%) and non-governmental organizations (57.2%) were mentioned somewhat less often.

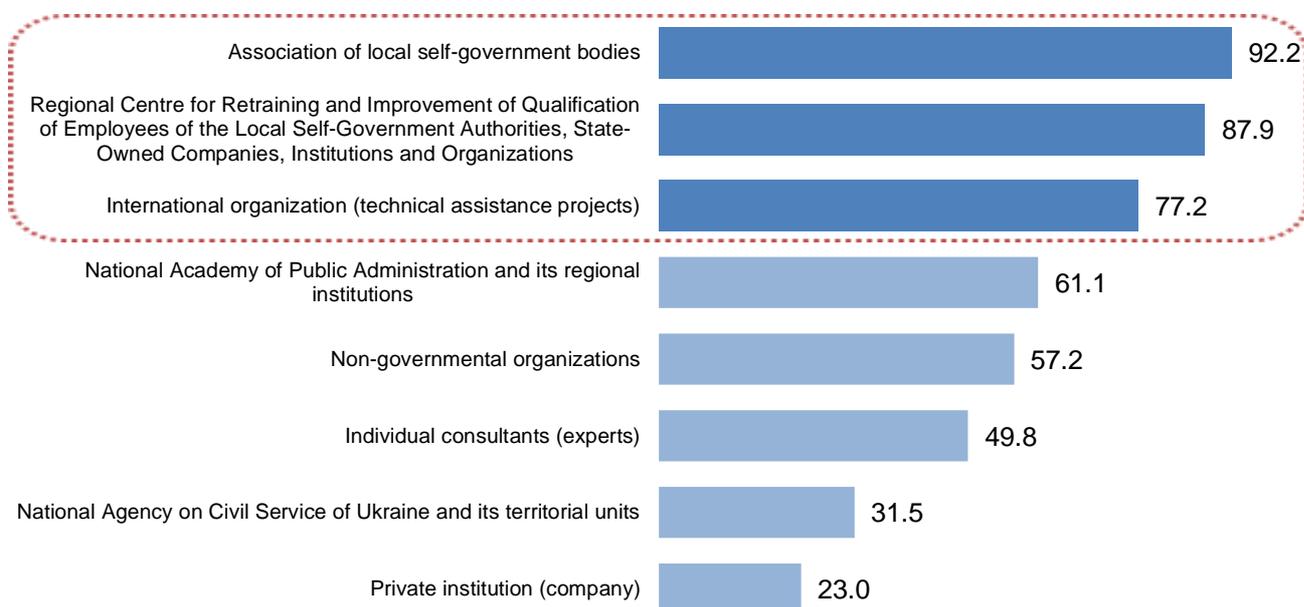


Figure 6.3. Providers of training activities for local self-government officials (% among respondents, whose staff participated in trainings in 2018)

Half of the respondents (57.1%) claim that in the past year they organized internal training several times per quarter or at least once per quarter (Figure 6.4). 24.9% said that they organized internal training more rarely (1-2 times a year or once a year). At the same time, 18.0% of respondents said that they did not organize any training at all.

However, almost all of the respondents noted that their officials built their competence using other forms: 97.9% spoke about participation in conferences and seminars, 85.5% about study visits, 78.7% about exchanging experience between professional groups, 60.0% about obtaining another higher education degree or postgraduate studies, and 53.8% about distance learning formats.

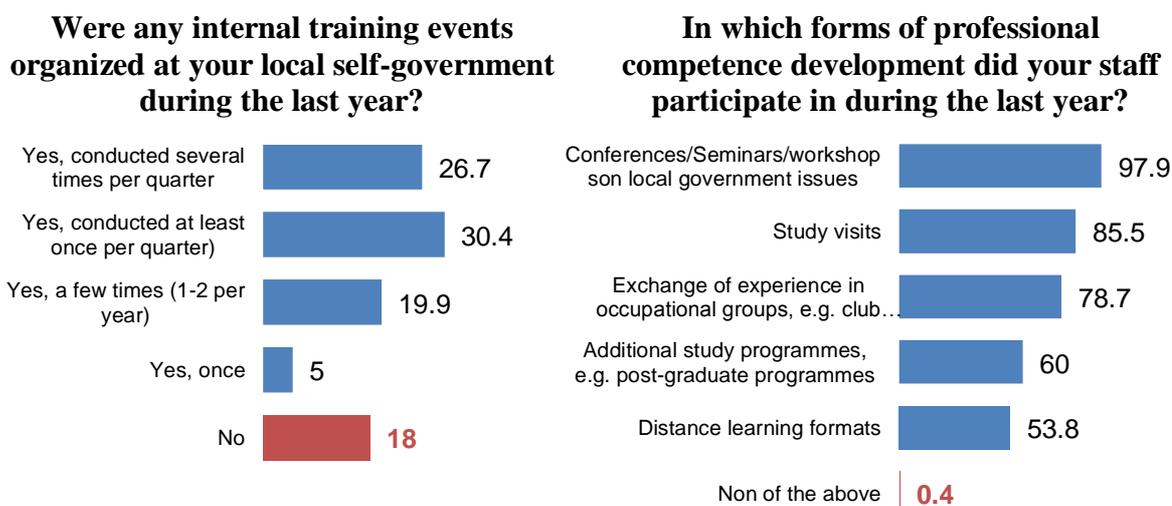


Figure 6.4. Forms and types of professional development of local self-government officials (% among all respondents)

98.8% of the respondents claimed that in the past 2 years at least the leadership, the heads of structural units, and the specialists participated in educational events at least 1-2 times. And in the majority of cases (at least 63.8%) they spoke about regular participation, at least once per quarter or several times per quarter. Only in the case of council members, 37.3% of the respondents said that they never participated in professional training, and only 11.4% said that they regularly participated in such events (Figure 6.5).

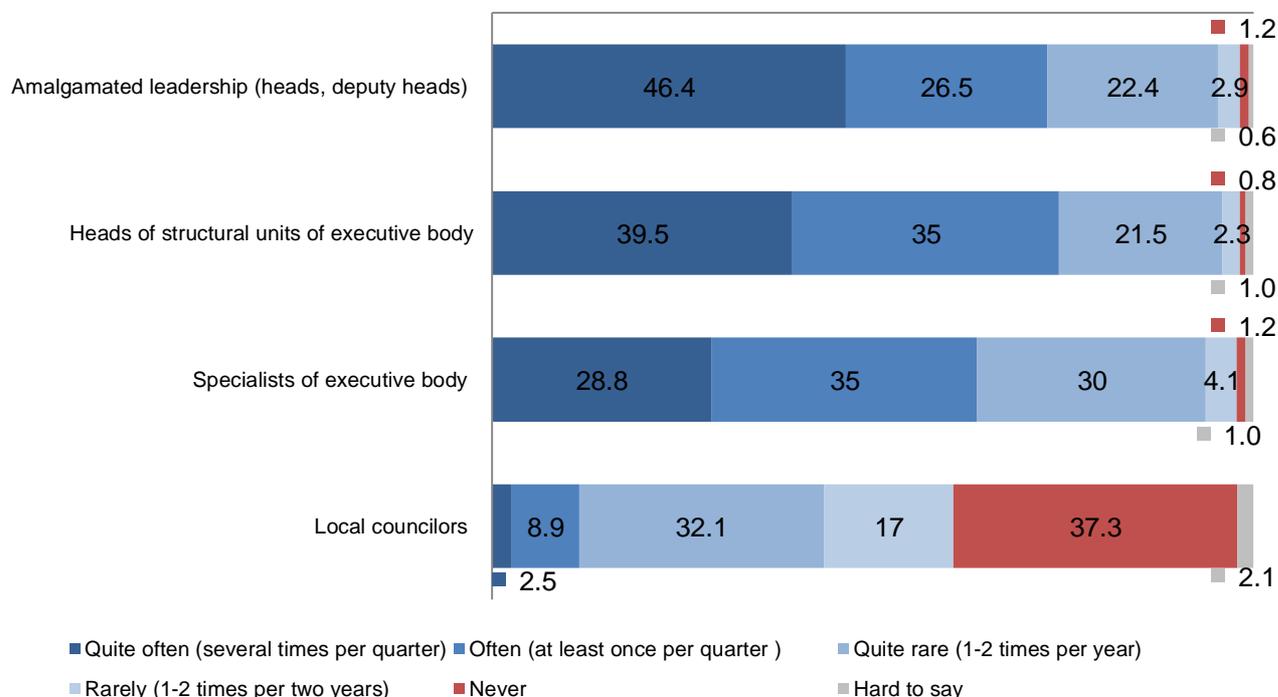


Figure 6.5. Frequency of participate in training of some categories of employees in amalgamated community (% among all respondents)

The participants of in-depth interviews were asked which types of in-service training were the most popular among the local self-government officials and local councillors — training sessions, workshops, exchange of experience, others; why exactly these types of in-service training were preferred. In general, all the respondents are almost unanimous in their opinion that different types of in-service training should be combined, depending on the topics of the training and the types of competencies that have to be developed.

As noted by the respondents, local self-government officials are generally willing to participate in various training events. However, the requirements on training are becoming more exacting. Many officials have no desire to listen to theoretical lectures anymore; everybody wants to acquire skills to address specific problems. Therefore, among the types of in-service training listed above, training sessions and exchange of experience are the most popular.

Training sessions, *'particularly those held under the international technical assistance projects'* are more popular because they involve the acquisition of practical skills. *'The ATC officials need to learn new things very fast, and nothing is better perceived as practical coverage — a really efficient, approved and tested tool that is widely applied and ensures adequate results — of the way and tools to exercise powers, address a situation or perform a task'*. Local self-government employees want to see specific solutions to certain problems, they are interested in the ready-made algorithms that can be adapted and used locally. Training sessions involve interactive forms of learning. The attendees at such events are much more active.

Among the most popular training events, those dedicated to writing projects have been singled out by the interviewed participants: *'The best were the training sessions on infrastructure*

subventions (how to apply grant funds, how to write grant applications)'. Those training events are also useful that involve the delivery of a specific product at the end. 'For example, DESPRO teaches project management, and the outcome must be a project to be submitted to the State Regional Development Fund. In other words, there is a certain practical end result, because the attendees have a practical need'.

Various events intended to exchange experience between local self-governments, as well as informal communication with peers, also compete in popularity with training events: *'We travelled to the Poltava Oblast and other oblasts. We saw how communal services operate or roads are maintained in other communities. We travelled to Poland and to other countries [...] I learn something from every trip, and try to implement it in my community'*. The exchange of experience is gaining popularity among the ATCs, as their numbers increase and the practices that they apply are getting more diversified. Accordingly, there is a growing number of successful practices that may be of interest to other communities.

Particularly useful are the events designed to exchange experience between the recently amalgamated communities. Learning from the peers who had amalgamated earlier and have already achieved certain success is particularly interesting. Exchange of experience can help the newly formed communities avoid the mistakes made by their peers. It also makes sense to visit and share experience not only with successful communities, but also with those that have failed for any reason. *'You've done nothing in three years — why is that? Not only the best, but also the worst should be visited. We must learn from the mistakes. Failures also need to be explored'*.

Workshops are also sought-after events for gaining new knowledge, as they are more informative. They may be appropriate for getting familiar with changes to the laws, for the entry-level introduction to new tools of the local development management.

As regards the duration of training, holding short-term training events seems the most appropriate option to the respondents, for example, *'2–3 days, when practice and theory merge, and interactive training is applied, allowing for new knowledge to be accommodated, while the main thing is the availability of practical examples'*. *'Brief training events have more practical content, therefore, more appeal. Besides, local authorities cannot afford sending their employees away for long-term studies now'*.

In this context, when organising training events, the question arises as to which training is more efficient — internal or external, i.e., outside the local self-government authorities. When answering this question, the participants of in-depth interviews generally agreed that either option could be efficient. Internal training may be arranged in distant local authorities, so that their employees could be trained locally, rather than having to travel elsewhere. Sometimes external training may be more appropriate, especially when it involves the exchange of experience or internships at the leading local authorities.

According to some respondents, it is advisable to combine external and internal training when studying comprehensive topics: *'It is possible to teach strategic planning in a city, but it should be done in a comprehensive manner. For example, some lectures at the workplace and, preferably, a trip to see first-hand how it works in a community either in Ukraine or abroad. Or, for example, the developments in small business, or some agricultural projects in the communities'*. *'Mixed forms should be used, either take them somewhere, or gather them somewhere. It would certainly be more difficult to take them to some other place, so it's best to assemble them at their workplace'*. *'A local government may arrange for a short-term training, more focused on the development of "soft skills". Working in Excel may be taught at the workplace. There's no need to travel to an oblast centre for that. And, naturally, more important and substantial things have to be done outside the community'*.

Only some respondents believe that it would be more appropriate to arrange for external training outside the inhabited locality hosting the local authority: *'Training outside the local authority is more efficient [...] At the workplace, one is inclined to do something else. But when a*

person has left, he/she is completely delegated, relieved of performing the tasks that he/she would be performing at the workplace’.

The respondents also noted the growing role of distance learning. *‘Recently, we have been getting a lot of requests for distance courses’. ‘The future may well lie with online courses, online consultations in the groups comprised of the same authorities or facing the same problems’. ‘In our community, the distance learning programmes offered by the AUC are very popular’.*

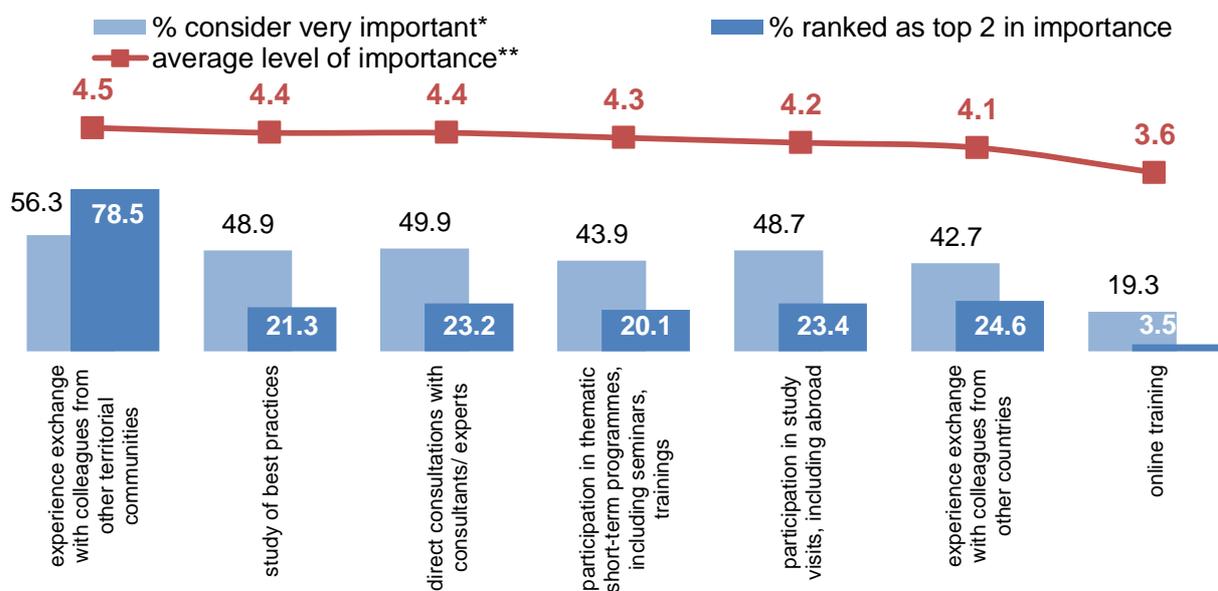
Nevertheless, in the opinion of some respondents, the disadvantage of distance courses is that *‘not all providers of such training courses monitor the quality of the knowledge gained or issue a document following a distance course, at least an electronically generated certificate. This, meanwhile, could be a relevant motivating factor for a participant’.*

To satisfy promptly the needs for new knowledge, certain communities organise internal training held by their own employees. For example, in the Chuhuiv City Council, Kharkiv Oblast, *‘the legal division is in charge of this. Internal training is organised according to the following scenario: a new provision of the law comes into force, lawyers analyse these provisions, define the divisions/officials to which these provisions would apply directly and provide appropriate training or clarifications of new legislation’.*

In addition, another urban educational initiative has been implemented recently, namely, a municipal management faculty has been established. Members of the faculty, which was formed under the city council, may include various professionals — not only the city council officials, but also businessmen, councillors, youth, representatives of ACABs. *‘Our main mission in creating this faculty was to raise the community’s awareness of the council operation, since we still are a “black box” for the majority of the territorial community residents. Meanwhile, within this faculty, whose lecturers include officials from the city council, some citizens become our partners, rather than opponents and, eventually, even become our employees. We have a practice, whereby the faculty graduates join the city council’s candidate pool and are recruited by the city council’.*

The local self-government representatives were also asked whether they practised sending their employees for internships to other local authorities in Ukraine or abroad. This practice was found to be the case only in one community. The representatives from other local authorities and the experts emphasised the usefulness of the internship, but noted the challenges in applying this type of the professional competence advancement to local self-government officials. *‘Internships require using the community’s own funds, because grant programmes do not envisage this. There should be more best practices locations offering internships. However, those who offer internships should also be willing’. ‘Actually, here is a problem — I do not know where to send my employees. I don’t know who’s more successful than me, for example, in the HCS sector, where to go to and who might help me’. ‘We received invitation from Poland for the HCS representatives to travel there for a three-month internship. No one could be found, so they reduced the internship period to three weeks, and some people went there. It would be difficult to snatch away for a three-week internship someone who works in the community, performs certain duties, or signs documents’.*

To the respondents surveyed by telephone the most important instrument of improving the professional development of local self-government officials is **exchanging experience with colleagues from other ATCs** (78.5% of respondents included this tool in the top 2, and 56.3% considered it ‘very important’ in general) (Figure 6.6). The ‘second place’ is shared, with approximately the same assessment of their effectiveness, by studying the best practices, consultations with experts, exchanging experience with colleagues from other countries, participation in study visits, participation in seminars/workshops (21-25% respondents included each of these tools in the top 2, and 43-50% stated that they were ‘very important’). The least interest is evoked by online training, which is considered ‘very effective’ by 19.3% of the respondents, and included in the top 2 by only 3.5%.



* Those who answered 'very important'.

** The average is on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means 'totally unimportant', and 5 is 'very important'.

Figure 6.6. Assessment of usefulness of activities/tools for the professional development (improvement of competence) of the local self-government officials (% / average among all respondents)

The main criterion for making decisions about participation in training, as telephone interviews showed, is the confidence that the teacher or trainer is competent (for 54.7% of respondents, this criterion is on the 1st or 2nd place by importance). The top criteria also include correspondence of the training topic to the job responsibilities and tasks (41.4%), interest in the training topic (39.1%), and trust in the training provider (32.7%) (**Figure 6.7**).

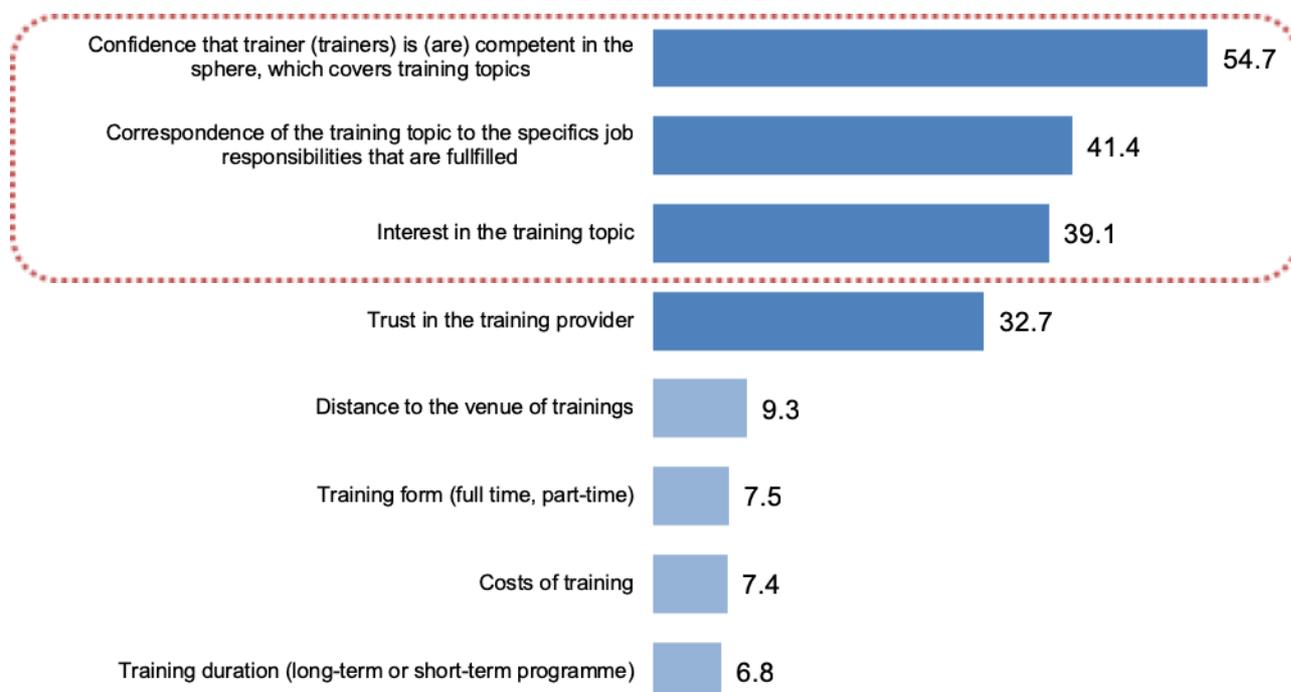


Figure 6.7. The most important factors influencing the participation in short-term trainings or professional development programmes (% of respondents who consider the factor for themselves №1 or №2 as important)

6.5. Effectiveness of the local self-government officials' professional competence development

In the course of the in-depth interviews and focus groups, the respondents were asked about the results of the training conducted at the local authorities, whether attendance at the training resulted in an increase in the local government performance, and which were the most visible results (effects) (for example, whether it meant higher quality of the services provided). Also, during the survey, an attempt was made to establish interdependence between improved competence of local self-government officials and higher quality of public services.

Almost all the interviewed participants agreed that, without a doubt, an increase in the local government performance should be the outcome of the training. However, it requires a number of prerequisites to be in place for this purpose — firstly, studying the actual training needs; secondly, developing the training programmes that would satisfy these needs; thirdly, engaging professional trainers; fourthly, offering an opportunity to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace. It often happens that, while the first three conditions have been met, the employee, upon return to his/her workplace, is unable to implement all this because the manager is not interested, resources are lacking, there is no desire to change anything, etc. The interdependence is obvious if all the above conditions are met. To put it differently, this is a closed circuit, beginning with the study of needs and ending with the performance of professional duties.

Better local government performance following the attendance at the (in-service) training events is observed where *'exchange of experience takes place between local authorities, rather than mere participation in training events [...] This would make it a more efficient component of the local self-government officials' professional development'*. *'It all depends on how the training is organised and who conducts it. Any training that is designed to respond to our day-to-day needs will always be important. By giving consent to my employee's absence at the workplace, I expect that the educational institution (whatever it may be) would provide answers to the problems facing my employee'*.

The positive impact of training on the local authority' efficient performance also depends on the availability of a practical component in the training programme. *'If the training has a certain practical component that can be afterwards applied locally, there will be impact. Here too, one has to be careful [...] whether the individual attending the training is really sure that the things told to him can be put in practice in his own territorial community'*.

The respondents, referring to their own local authorities, confirmed the positive impact of the local self-government officials' attendance at training events. *'After training, the lawyers collated all our resolutions and reviewed them. The same happened to the communal property management'*. *'Employees of the media relations division were the first to attend the courses. E-document flow has been introduced. It is already in place at the council, and we intend to expand it to communal enterprises. Following the energy audit and land management training, the officials approached us with their proposals too (now they are handling the forest resources). We have restored the operation of a communal enterprise that will be in charge of forests and quarries'*. *'One of our officials attended training in writing projects and grant-related activities. In 2018, she drafted 58 projects and submitted them to various international funds. We won in 11 or 14 contests. This, I believe, was the result of participation in training, study visits, internship, and expanding one's outlook'*. *'In our [Dnipropetrovsk] oblast, the Mezhova Amalgamated Territorial Community won five grant competitions recently announced by the U-LEAD with Europe Programme. This is the result of the community studying at the project courses, project management courses, attending a project school. In other words, an obvious result'*.

Despite the existence of a positive link between training and the local authority's better performance, it should also be borne in mind that these effects may not be immediately apparent. Certain time lags may be observed here. *'Study visits, shared experience may deliver the fastest benefit, because you see how it works and replicate it back at home. Training in "hard" skills has a longer-term effect. "Soft" skills may manifest faster'*. *'For example, a person has learned today*

how to draft investment projects or technical assistance projects. Meanwhile, the ATC will receive funds a year later, and the impact of the project will be felt in five years. Will anyone be associating these two factors — training and actual results — by that time?

Given this, local self-government authorities should implement a training follow-up system for their officials in order to define the most relevant avenues of training and to identify better any training needs. Generally speaking, *'a training follow-up system has to be implemented. Accordingly, proper environment must be provided, so that an employee would be able to apply the new knowledge'*.

A set of questions in the survey concerned identification of the local self-government officials' attitude to attending the training and whether examples exist of in-service training/training programmes in which the officials do not want to participate, or if there are any problems associated with the employees' participation in training events.

Answering a question about the local self-government officials' attitude to attending the training, most respondents indicated that it depends on the *'specific values held by the employee'*. However, the majority of the interviewed community leaders noted that their employees would like to participate in training activities, being fully aware of their value. However, they note that *'the contents of the training are not always consistent with what we would like to hear. For example, once we attended a training event dedicated to medical reform. Everything was great, there were professional instructors, but they talked about the establishment of medical institutions using those in Kyiv as an example. Do you think I can apply it to the village? Hardly'*. Refusals to attend training activities are associated with the fact that training services sometimes fail to meet expectations put on the content and professionalism of trainers/experts. *'Things that mostly "kill" the desire to study are incompetence, the trainer's ignorance of the realities of life, of the specifics and the subject matter of the training, the inability to answer practical questions from the audience. It torpedoes the entire system of building up the capacity of local self-government officials'*.

Only 0.8% of the surveyed respondents believe that their staff's participation in educational events is not important or is a waste of time (Figure 6.8). Meanwhile, **57.4% say that it is an issue of primary importance**. The others think it is important, but not crucial; or that sometimes it can be useful, and sometimes it is not.

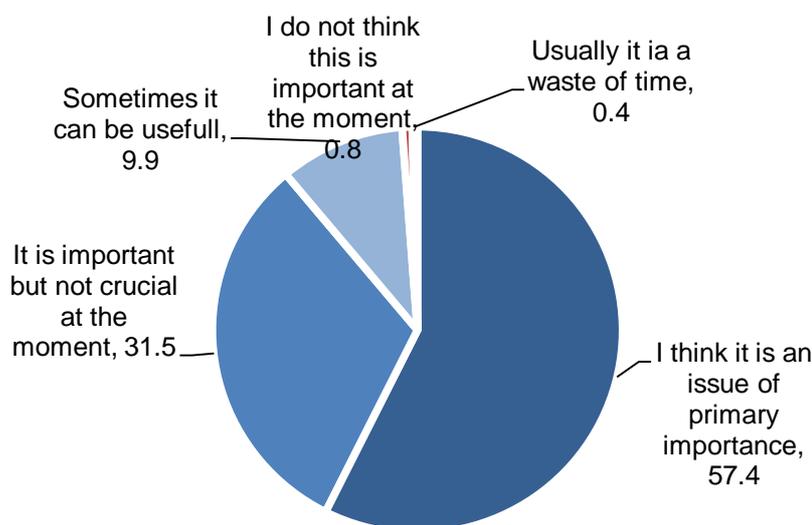


Figure 6.8. Attitude to participation of officials in professional training (% among all respondents)

According to the respondents interviewed by in-depth interviews the problems of financial nature that create obstacles to the attendance by the officials at training events include a shortage of

funds from local budgets to reimburse travel, accommodation or daily expenses. *‘Under the international projects, participants are usually provided with everything, but if such training events are arranged by the state or communal educational entities, these expenditures must be financed from the respective local budget’*. Therefore, the respondents believe that the introduction in the ‘Concept of reforming the professional training system’ of the provision concerning mandatory allocation of funds from local budgets to finance in-service training has been justified. According to some experts, local self-government associations could reduce the cost of training services for the communities less rich in resources: *‘associations should become key players in the educational services market, they have to pool their funds to hire educational service providers at better prices’*.

26.1% of the surveyed respondents noted that their budget for 2018 did not allocate funding for professional training of the staff (Figure 6.9). Among those who said that the funding was allocated, the average allocated amount was 31K hryvnias.

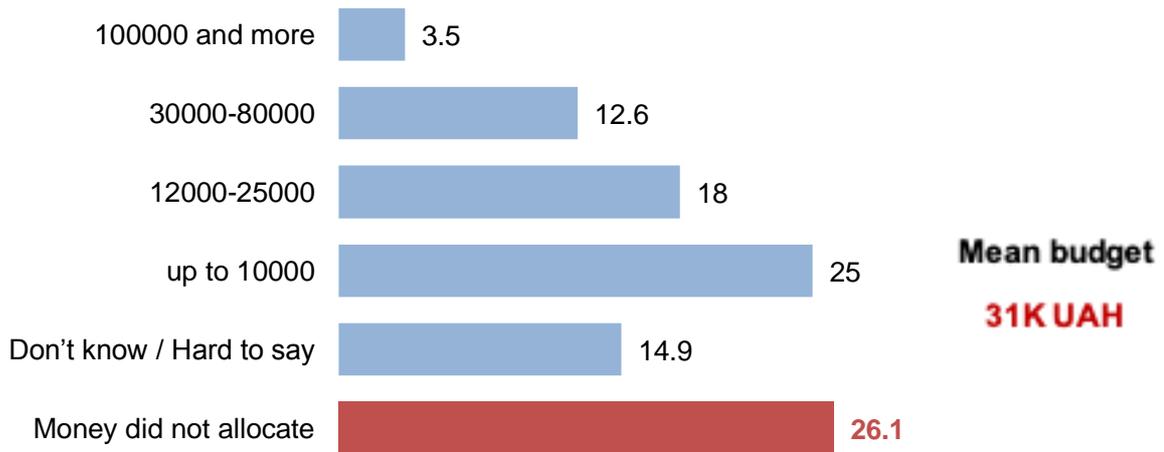


Figure 6.9. Amount of money allocated in local budget for the training of its staff, including local councillors in 2018 (% / average among all respondents)

In total, **35.6% of respondents believe that the funds allocated for training are sufficient** (including 24.4% among those who did not allocate any funding but who still claimed that their funding was ‘sufficient’) (Figure 6.10). Only 1.9% believed that too much money was allocated for training, and 49.1% thought that the training budget is insufficient (including 44.4% of those who allocated the highest amounts, 100,000 hryvnias and more).

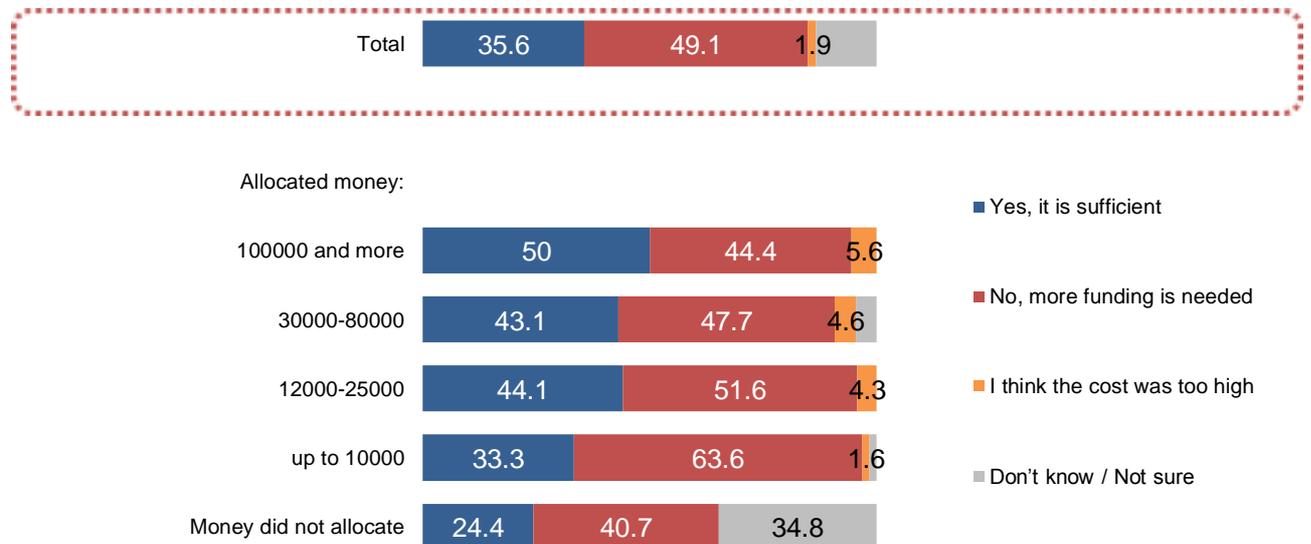


Figure 6.10. Assessment of the adequacy of local budget funds for professional training (% among all respondents / % among those who noted the allocate of money)

6.6. Training needs of local self-government officials in the light of international technical assistance projects

Despite the relatively high level of the local government officials' formal education (72.7% have complete higher education and are university graduates), only a small proportion of employees are involved in the system of training or in-service training throughout their service in local self-government. This is due to a number of factors. First, local government officials and councillors do not have the appropriate experience; in particular, between 40 and 60% of the employees perform their functions and duties for the first time, resulting in the lack of the required knowledge, skills and abilities at the local level of governance. Second, the high turnover of local self-government officials also affects the level of the employees' competence.

According to the DOBRE Programme, the prospective group (including both officials and local councillors) eligible for participation in in-service training programmes grows with each year, especially from among the representatives of amalgamated territorial communities, which in turn leads to the changes in the approaches to organisation and conduct of training events (Table 6.3).

The international technical assistance projects working in the field of local self-government have a component aimed at building the capacities of local self-government officials and/or local councillors, with special emphasis on the amalgamated territorial communities. It should be noted that investments in the development of human resources in the ATCs, compared to those in other local authorities (the latter's proportion, despite the decentralisation reform and the process of accession/amalgamation of communities, remains significant), prevail and create a significant gap — the number of training events (training sessions, workshops, study visits, both domestic and abroad) that can be institutionally and financially offered by the technical assistance projects far exceeds that of the training events that can be offered by the retraining and in-service training system.

Table 6.3. Quantitative training needs of ATC representatives

Month	New employees in ATCs	New employees in ATCs from the oblasts — DOBRE participants	New councillors requiring support	New councillors requiring support in the Programme regions
Before 2017	16,515	5,500	3,600	1,200
05/2017	3,001	995	659	218
08/2017	3,309	978	726	214
11/2017	3,475	997	763	218
02/2018	3,632	1,012	797	222
05/2018	3,783	1,023	830	224
08/2018	3,927	1,029	862	226

As shown by a survey conducted under the U-LEAD GIZ project, the regional excellence centres **do not single out** the ATC representatives in their professional training curricula, holding joint training sessions both for them and the local authorities not covered by the amalgamation process.

Educational events are usually dedicated to those key areas in which the technical assistance projects operate; for example, if a project is focused on local economic development, the training events would accordingly be taking place precisely in this field. On the one hand, this approach allows for problems in any specific area of local self-government to be addressed comprehensively, while, on the other hand, it fails to establish a proper basis for in-service training of local self-government officials and the development of cross-cutting training programmes or modules for the respective categories of local self-government representatives.

Despite attempts on behalf of various technical assistance projects that operate today (or functioned in the past) to coordinate efforts in developing the institutional capacity of local self-government, no database is available of teaching programmes (modules) that have been accessible to

the local government representatives in the last four years. Furthermore, a regional imbalance exists between training programmes, with regard to the regional component of the technical assistance projects.

The current approach applied by the technical assistance projects to the educational process management, instead of strengthening the existing structure (educational service providers), destroys from the inside the system of in-service training of local self-government officials.

The in-service training system is characterised by the following features:

1. The available offer of educational services fails to satisfy the current requirements in full because of the high dynamics of the decentralisation process in Ukraine.
2. Few educational or training opportunities are available for the newly created amalgamated territorial communities.
3. The lack of skilled experts (trainers) who are interested in providing educational services for the amalgamated territorial communities.
4. Significant territorial diversification in the educational and training capacity of entities offering educational services for the amalgamated territorial communities.
5. Workshops/training sessions and master classes are the most convenient forms of training and in-service training for the representatives of local authorities, while distance learning is the least attractive.

Providers of educational services to local government representatives

Providers of educational services to local government representatives include:

- The U-LEAD with Europe Programme — a technical assistance programme,
- A Local Empowerment, Accountability and Development Programme for Ukraine,
- Decentralisation Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE),
- DESPRO — Swiss/Ukrainian Decentralisation Support Project,
- The UNDP/CoE ‘Community-Based Approach to Local Development’ Project,
- Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance (PLEDDG),
- The USAID Policy for Ukraine’s Local Self-Governance (PULSE) Project,
- The UNDP ‘Civil Society for Enhanced Democracy and Human Rights in Ukraine’ Project

Findings of a survey conducted under the U-LEAD GIZ project in 2017 show that, in 2013–2016, despite the available capacity and legal framework (licence) for the provision of educational services in the field of in-service training of the local government representatives, higher education entities failed to implement any in-service training programmes for the groups of local government officials (although some representatives were included, together with civil servants, into general programmes, such as ‘European integration’, ‘Euro-Atlantic cooperation’ and ‘Prevention of corruption’, financial audit aspects, ACAB, and customs clearance issues).

The main obstacles faced by higher education entities (according to the survey conducted by DOBRE) included the following (Figure 6.11).

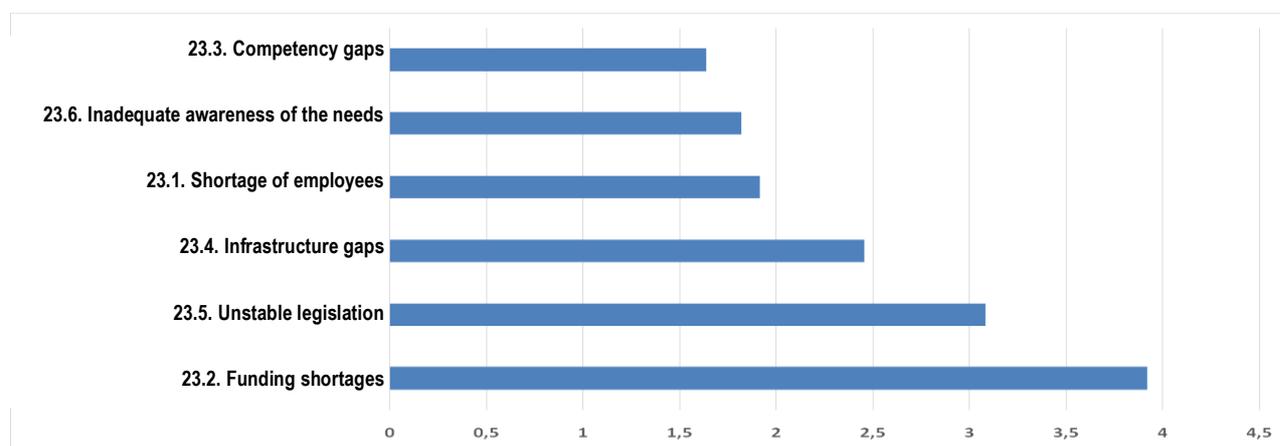


Figure 6.11. Obstacles in the operation of higher education entities

By contrast, the RECs increased the number of training programmes for the ATC representatives and were responsive to the local authorities' needs when the decentralisation reform was initiated. The topics related to innovations in laws (56% of attendees in Chernivtsi, 41% — in Volyn, and 40% — in Chernihiv) and to corruption (50% of attendees in Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi) generated substantial interest. In 2016–2017, seven RECs (covered by the DOBRE survey) introduced 34 new programmes for the students from among the local government representatives. Here, the Khmelnytskyi REC, with its 21 programmes for the local authorities (Table 6.4), was the leader.

Table 6.4. REC operation between 2013 and 2016

Year	REC	Funding (deviation from the average), UAH.	Average funding, UAH	Number of students at the REC
2013	Zakarpattia	841,901 (-29%)	1,179,586	1,889 (-52%)
2014	Kherson	853,574 (-25%)	1,141,926	4,098 (+33%)
2015	Kherson	883,624 (-27%)	1,206,507	4,641 (+65%)
2016	Sumy	1,006,108 (-20%)	1,263,569	3,319 (-2%)
2013	Vinnitsia	1,572,455 (+33%)	1,179,586	4,436 (+12%)
2014	Vinnitsia	1,501,238 (+32%)	1,141,926	3,336 (+8%)
2015	Zaporizhia	1,621,261 (+34%)	1,206,507	3,173 (+13%)
2016	Zaporizhia	1,763,536 (+40%)	1,263,569	3,257 (-5%)

The obstacles faced by the RECs also include the lack of financial resources and the dropping number of trainers/lecturers involved in the educational process (between 2013 and 2016, the average number of lecturers/trainers decreased by 16%).

In turn, those CSOs that had provided training were conducting educational events either jointly with the RECs or using their facilities in the respective oblasts.

The capacity of educational service providers varies — in terms of human potential development and the capacity of their own trainers/lecturers (i.e., those directly employed), it is the highest in civil society organisations. Not only have they trainers, but also a pool of these experts is used to conduct training events at the REC facilities (thereby intensifying the practical focus of the training events, as well as the process of updating skills, abilities and the lecturers'/trainers' knowledge). It should be noted that, despite the extended network of RECs, only the regional institutes of the National Academy for Public Administration Under the President of Ukraine have their own pool of lecturers/trainers, although the system of in-service training of lecturers/trainers does not function — their professional development usually happens through participation in the training of trainers (ToT) programmes organised with the funds from technical assistance projects.

Approaches to identification of training needs of local self-government representatives

1. Formal responsibility for arranging the training of local self-government representatives must remain with the personnel service that should collaborate with other structural divisions in the local authority to address such tasks as analysis of training needs; development of training programmes (that can be implemented as internal programmes) to satisfy the above needs; implementation of training programmes within the allocated financial resources; the employee training follow-up, subject to the impact from the application of the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities on the employees' everyday work. In reality, however, local self-governments have limited resources (both human — the personnel service staff is limited, the personnel service staff's capacity and knowledge of modern HR management tools, including the efficient management of training processes, is negligible — and financial).

2. Technical assistance programmes and civil society organisations analyse training needs of different categories of participants, including local self-government officials, before holding any training events. Typically, such tools are used as interviewing the employees themselves (including managers from the relevant local authorities) through surveys/questionnaires, as well as conducting

in-depth interviews, which allows for quantitative and qualitative data to be obtained. Furthermore, such programmes as DOBRE and U-LEAD's GIZ have conducted in-depth interviews with educational service providers (mostly RECs and HEEs, although U-LEAD's GIZ Programme has also singled out such group of providers as civil society organisations, which are quite active locally in the field of in-service training — the survey covered 21 civil society organisations).

3. The key areas where the competencies of local self-government representatives need to be developed (according to the survey carried out by the DOBRE Programme)¹⁶ are shown in Figure 6.12.

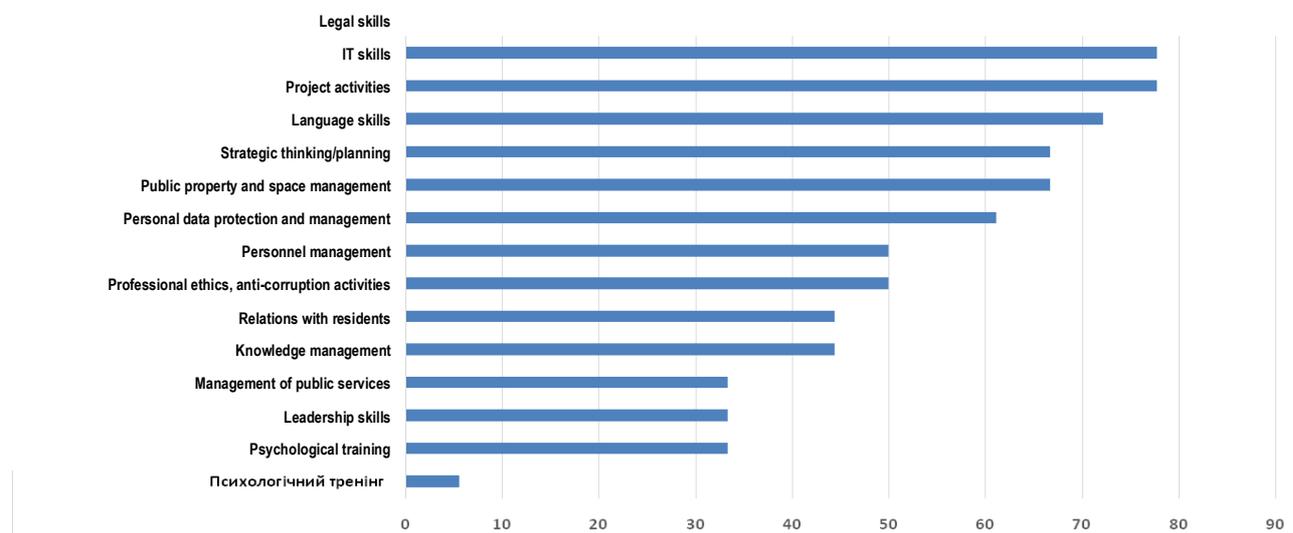


Figure 6.12. Local self-government officials' needs in the key competency development

The findings of the survey show that such areas as public finance, public procurement, HR management, leadership, application of information technologies, public ownership and public space management have the highest priority. Another priority group included ethics, prevention of corruption, project management, data security, legal and regulatory expertise.

Besides, the survey has identified the percentage of local self-government representatives who need to raise their competence in certain areas (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5. Needs of local self-government representatives in raising their competence

	Public finance	IT	Public procurement	Public property, public space management	Personnel management	Knowledge management	Ethics	Procedural law	Strategic management, including leadership skills
Estimated percentage of officials	≈ 20%	>50%	≈ 30%	11–12%	≈ 20%	≈ 25%	90%	90%	≈ 20%

4. Priority areas for raising the competence, according to the survey conducted under the U-LEAD's GIZ Programme:¹⁷

¹⁶ Target groups in the analysis of training programmes (under the DOBRE programme) included local government employees (20 persons) covered by the survey; representatives of 26 educational entities (17 universities, 5 regional excellence centres, and the National Academy for Public Administration Under the President of Ukraine and its regional institutes in Kharkiv, Dnipro and Odesa) covered by in-depth interviews; representatives of 13 HEEs offering training in the relevant areas, covered by interviews.

¹⁷ Target groups in the analysis of training needs included questionnaires completed by 331 respondents (central executive authorities (Ministry of Regional Development) — 7.3%, OSAs — 60.7%, oblast councils — 5.4%, ATCs

- Regional development policy
- Industry issues

In the field of regional development policy, the ATC representatives have been most interested in developing competencies related to the system of regional development planning, while oblast council representatives required knowledge about drafting and implementing regional development projects (Figure 6.13).

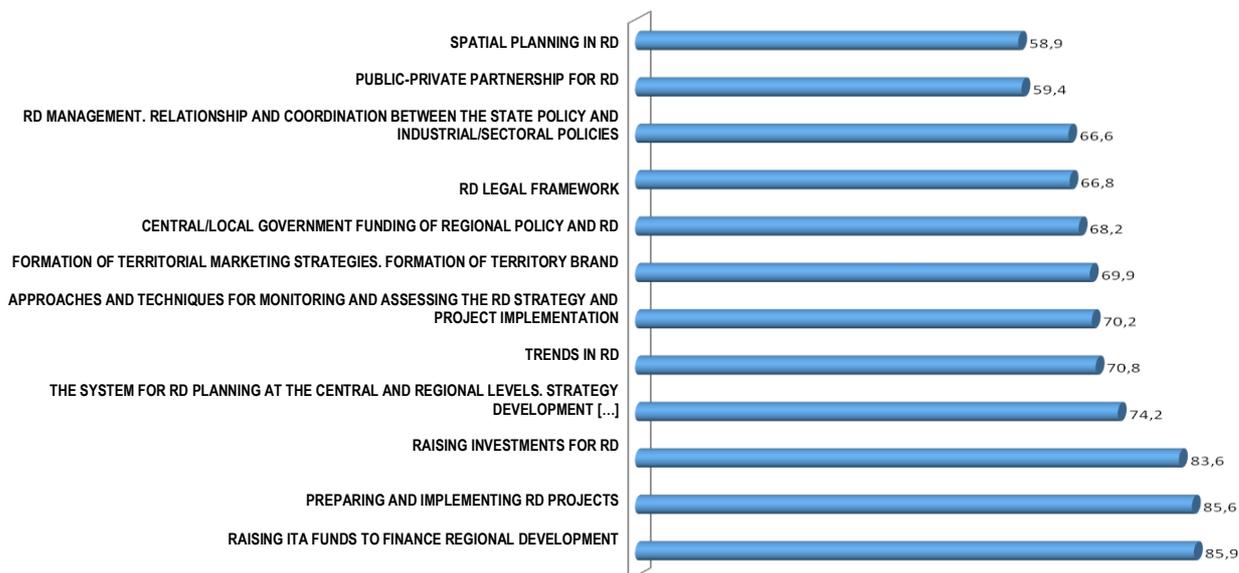


Figure 6.13. The ATC representatives' competence development needs in the field of 'regional development policy'

Where sectoral matters are discussed, the greatest attention should be given to the issues of community development and project management (31%), education — innovations, the matters of educational institution management, especially in the inclusive education environment (22.2% of the oblast council representatives) (Figure 6.14).



Figure 6.14. The ATC representatives' needs in the development of industry competencies

and others — 26.6%), most of the respondents work in the field of economy(18.8%), education (15.4%), general management (12.3%), other areas (IT, housing & communal utilities, social services) — 14.2%.

7. Offer of training programmes for local self-government officials and local councillors

7.1. Types of in-service training programmes

During the research, individual in-depth interviews were conducted, as well as a focus group with the heads of regional excellence centres, and individual in-depth interviews with the representatives of the National Academy for Public Administration Under the President of Ukraine. This section mainly presents the results obtained from the top managers of regional excellence centres, including the assessment of their performance given by the local self-government representatives during the in-depth interviews. The objective of this part of the research was to identify the offer of training programmes by the educational service providers to local government officials (local councillors), the manner in which this offer is formed, and how the in-service training follow-up is arranged.

Given the fact that, within reform, those needs in developing the competencies of local self-government officials come to the forefront which are associated with preventing and combating corruption, having the grasp of e-governance tools, better proficiency in foreign languages, skills in drafting community development projects, using the potential of international technical assistance, raising investment, having the grasp of innovative approaches in the field of economics, support for small and medium-sized businesses, and the ability to translate this knowledge into practice, etc., the regional excellence centres have focused their activities on satisfying these needs.

Against this background, the regional excellence centres also require qualitatively new changes to develop innovative approaches to new managerial competencies addressing local problems and to form innovative and analytical abilities in the employees to identify the territorial development priority areas and the needs of various social groups. Namely, having grasp of various techniques to address the community's common problems, being able to analyse and to take promptly any efficient managerial decisions, to apply communication skills to practice, giving due regard to the interests of various social groups. In this aspect, local government officials must possess leadership qualities, while taking into consideration the interests of all public policy actors, be aware of and be able to apply the methods and forms of cooperation between government authorities and civil society organisations, with due regard to the interests of the community and each of its inhabitants. Officials must know the basics of business communication, be able to prevent conflicts and coordinate managerial decisions with the community.

The standard list of types of training programmes offered by the regional excellence centres includes:

1. A professional programme for the newly employed by, or elected to, the local government. This programme runs on a permanent basis, with 2–3 programmes usually offered every year.
2. Short-term topical workshops.
3. Continuing topical workshops (for example, the ATC development planning strategy, the development of e-governance in the ATC, the e-declaration aspect of implementing the law on prevention of corruption).
4. For councillors — the continuing topical workshop on the current issues in the local councillors' activities in the context of decentralisation

Among the short-term and continuing topical workshops, the most popular ones include the study of a foreign language or such topics as 'Managing the activities of a village council secretary', 'Practical aspects of the land law implementation', 'Accounting and reporting in state-owned institutions', 'The Ukrainian identity phenomenon', or 'Information war as a hybrid war component', 'E-declaration features', 'Inter-municipal cooperation', 'Managing the ASC operation and delivering higher quality services to the public'. *'The workshop on project management is very popular, it is attended not only by community leaders, but also by other stakeholders. Attendees*

even bring their own projects, refining and correcting them during the training. Another popular workshop is dedicated to strategic planning’.

The interviewed heads of regional excellence centres noted that, in response to the community amalgamation processes, they had developed specific training programmes for the amalgamated community representatives. Such is, for example, the ‘Managing the activities of an ATC chairman’ short-term topical workshop (because certain specifics are inherent in the amalgamated community leaders’ activities, and in the activities of the leaders whose communities are not yet amalgamated or undergo amalgamation). *‘We invite representatives of ATCs together with those from other local authorities to certain workshops, but if any narrow topic is discussed, we attempt then to present more practical aspects and split them’.*

As concerns the duration of training events, the heads of the centres say that *‘two-day training courses and workshops are the most popular. We offered a programme that lasted one day and a few days. Local self-government representatives usually choose a two-day programme, because it is wider and deeper, and has more practical classes. Distance should also be taken into consideration. In fact, attendees are able to come to us at ten o’clock in the morning, and they already depart at five o’clock in the afternoon. Where ATCs are involved, their representatives have to get to a district centre first, and then travel even farther, back to their communities. If they stay for two days, we can work until six o’clock in the afternoon and have more in-depth discussions’.* The main reason for the prevalence of short-term courses is the fact that local self-government representatives *‘have little time for long-term studies, therefore, we are flexible in our approach to training. We offer them various options, especially where ATCs are involved’.*

In other words, the popularity of short-term training events has to do with the following factors:

- short-term programmes, in the opinion of both attendees and the REC employees, help to acquire knowledge about the application of new laws;
- they are more practical in nature and provide a narrow topical focus of the training;
- they are more frequently updated and adapted to dynamic external challenges (including changes to laws or the need to develop new competencies in local government officials in connection with the acquisition of new powers);
- not much money is required for travels, and there is no need for long absence from the workplace.

It should be noted that, unlike the centres, the NAPA regional institutes noted the local authorities’ interest in participating in the long-term in-service training programmes, since this approach, in their opinion, offers an opportunity to obtain more comprehensive and systematic knowledge, as well as to expand more on the topics covered by such long-term training programmes.

As part of short-term training programmes, regional excellence centres mostly apply various interactive techniques, such as training sessions, round tables, practical classes, workshops, discussions, brainstorming, topical meetings, debates, and exchange of experience. Besides, it should be noted that some educational entities also use business games, online advice, world cafe (e.g., the Chernihiv REC), case studies (the Mykolaiv REC), interactive lectures.

Findings of the assessment surveys (conducted by the centres themselves) show that the most popular events among the attendees — local self-government officials and local councillors — include practical classes, training sessions, workshops, webinars, guest workshops — especially the last two categories, as they allow on-the-job or workplace training.

Some centres practice splitting the training programme into two sessions with a certain time interval between them. *‘Suppose we can have four days, so we dedicate two days to the first session, and then another two days — to the second one. It’s an accumulative system of sorts. Local government representatives are able to learn something independently in the inter-session period,*

so we can take their needs into consideration and deliver a more varied component during the second session. This is because, after the first session, we already know what their needs are’.

However, none of the surveyed regional excellence centres offer distance or videoconference learning. *‘We are ready, they aren’t. We are not interested in having this training just for the sake of it. This format lacks communication, contact, and when the question time begins, some people cannot be heard, are asked to say it again, and so on. The technical quality does not yet allow holding classes in this format’.*

According to the REC heads, taking into consideration new training needs of local self-government may be done quite flexibly. During the year, the in-service training schedule may be amended up to ten times. *‘Our founder is the oblast state administration, while the training is ordered by local self-government authorities. They may give us their proposals, and we can adjust our schedule accordingly. A dedicated schedule may also be drafted. After discussing some question at a meeting, an instruction may be issued to the chairman of the oblast administration, and a separate schedule or an additional plan is drafted. That is, there is an instant response to new needs’.* *‘We have very flexible options for amending the in-service training schedule. The head of the state administration keeps the preamble allowing us to make changes to the schedule (without any corresponding changes to the order itself) during the year, if such changes have been approved by the centre founder. It really helps us — if necessary, we can modify the schedule promptly and conduct the training that is needed at that moment’.*

It should be noted that the RECs generally do not have on their staff the lecturers (trainers) involved in the process of teaching in-service training programmes (both long- and short-term). Only two centres (on Kirovohrad and Volyn) mentioned during the survey that their own lecturers were involved in the in-service training programmes.

Typically, the RECs enter into civil law contracts with the lecturers engaged in professional training. Their number, depending on the REC, varies between 100 and 300 during the year. It should also be stressed that, in the RECs, most of the lecturers/trainers comprise lecturers from higher education entities located within the respective territory, along with active or former civil servants and/or local self-government officials (their proportion, on average, is between 30 and 70 per cent). *‘We engage practitioners from the oblast state administration departments, territorial departments of central executive authorities, other central institutions within the oblast into training. For example, we work closely with the oblast department of justice, the treasury, the department of finance, and others’.*

Where the NAPA regional institutes or HEEs involved in the in-service training of local self-government officials, including local councillors, are concerned, the lion’s share of lecturers there is made up of their own lecturers (trainers) (the proportion of lecturers ranges between 75 and 90 per cent in the regional institutes and comprises about 25 per cent in other higher education entities), although these educational entities also invite active or former civil servants and/or local self-government officials (depending on the topic, since the content of certain topics specifically calls for the engagement of this category in the training).

7.2. Determining the training programme offer

In the opinion of the heads of the centres, the RECs are the most flexible and mobile educational entities in the system of in-service training of local self-government officials (local councillors), capable of responding promptly and efficiently to any changes in society or the challenges of time. Most of the surveyed REC managers assess independently the training needs of local self-government representatives by forwarding relevant inquiries (specially compiled questionnaires) to those authorities whose employees are subject to mandatory training. In their inquiries, the centres include a list of both long-term and short-term training programmes. Besides, these inquiries suggest that the authorities (and, accordingly, the HR department personnel) themselves propose the training topics that they might be interested in. Even if such a training programme has never existed before, but, given a great interest in it, along with, for example,

additional circumstances, such as the amendments to the law in this area, the RECs would always consider the expediency of organising and conducting this training event and include it in its schedule, requesting the appropriate funding.

During the focus group discussion, representatives of several RECs noted that they had developed and applied an online survey of training needs. However, as the survey findings show, online tools for identification of training needs are still not being used widely by the regional excellence centres.

On the basis of the responses received, it is determined annually which training programmes generate the greatest interest and how many attendees for each programme may be expected (for example, a programme is included in the schedule, if it attracts at least 15 potential attendees). In 2018, following the needs assessment, the Khmelnytskyi REC summarised all the responses to its inquiries and identified 11 topics for which the training programmes had to be developed. There was a variety of programmes, such as topical or short-term, from green tourism in a community to project management, etc.

While requests from local authorities are being processed, communication with them is being maintained to clarify the training areas that they are interested in. Thus, in August 2018, representatives of the Khmelnytskyi REC met leaders of all amalgamated territorial communities in the cities of oblast importance within the Khmelnytskyi Oblast. A total of 47 such meetings took place. A common practice also exists in the Volyn REC, where its employees travel to certain districts in the oblast and discuss the content of training programmes with the local self-government representatives.

When structuring the responses to the inquiries concerning the training topics, these responses are generally divided into four levels: 1) the national level; 2) the regional level; 3) the community level; 4) personal needs of the officials. *‘For example, we have certain established national priorities given to us by the National Agency for Civil Service and regarded by it as a priority (for example, European integration, gender issues). We must convey this during the training, this is a mandatory component’.*

The REC’s methodological department gives its suggestions in accordance with the law and in response to socio-economic and political changes or reforms in the country. Following the analysis of all suggestions, the centre’s academic and methodological board delivers its assessments and conclusions. In this manner, customer-approved annual schedules are drafted.

In 2018, the Kyiv City Excellence Centre changed its approach to the determination of training programmes and activities, in particular, by offering a list of training events focused on the development of a specific competency. *‘For example, the “efficient decision-making” competency. A special training course, such as strategic planning, is offered to develop this competency. Or the “focus on the end result” competency’.*

The respondents were asked how soon the RECs could develop and implement any new training programmes (‘from scratch’), if needed. Answers to this question — 2 or 3 weeks — did not differ significantly: *‘If from scratch, then, subject to the availability of the lecturers or trainers who work in this field, we are able to develop and launch the programme in a few weeks. Everything depends on the scope of the programme, the number of topics that are afterwards reflected in any type of training that we offer’*, if the lecturer is ready to instruct on this topic. If the lecturer is unfamiliar with the topic, more time would be required then for him/her to master it. This, of course, is only possible if the topics are accessible and the lecturers are available. Otherwise, no training events could be launched.

Almost all RECs cooperate with various stakeholders, conduct joint videoconferences with them or webinars as part of training events. However, in the opinion of some interviewees, although taking place, this cooperation is not systematic. Naturally, there are memoranda signed with educational entities, but these agreements are usually signed only to include certain events and do not go any further. Almost all the interviewed RECs cooperate with regional local government development centres under the U-LEAD Programme. Some training events are developed and

conducted jointly, at least on the topics that interest both the REC and the local government development centre.

Other key REC partners often include oblast local self-government associations and regional branches of all-Ukrainian local self-government associations. The REC partners also often include local higher educational entities whose lecturers, as already mentioned, are frequently engaged in teaching at the RECs. In some RECs, *‘working with civil society organisations offers particularly good results. Public figures who are disengaged from government affairs have indeed fresh, unbiased opinions and are well aware of public needs. We intend to continue and expand this cooperation in the future’*.

7.3. Effectiveness of the local self-government officials’ training

The surveyed representatives of educational entities use the following set of tools to ensure high quality of the training process:

- **Entrance testing of the participants.** *‘Before launching any training programme, we test our participants in order to understand their entry knowledge levels’*. Entrance assessment is carried out both for professional and short-term programmes.

- **Exit assessment.** This tool is not universally used in short-term training. Generally, exit assessment is not performed during the events that last one day. The results of this assessment are communicated to the lecturer or trainer so that they may be taken into consideration when the programme is taught the next time. *‘We also have a system that allows us to track our participants’ professional development. We keep their history since 2009, and some state authorities — I wish there were more of them — request this information from us, particularly about their staff who had been sent for in-service training.*

- **Ratings of lecturers.** Initial assessment includes ratings given to the lecturers by the students. *‘Sometimes, following major training events, we ask questions about the depth of interaction with the trainer. We name the trainer and ask the attendees to rate him or her. In this way, we select the best trainers for further teaching’*. *‘We have always assessed and rated the lecturers to understand with whom we will continue to cooperate in the future. We developed our own questionnaires that we have been using all this time. In 2018, the NAUCS suggested to us that their approach to determining the training process quality be used, so we tried to combine the two approaches and continue to use it’*.

- **In-service training of lecturers.**

- *‘The Centre as viewed by local authorities’ online questionnaire.* In certain centres, this tool is used to improve the REC activities and the ways in which the centre interacts with the government and local self-government authorities.

None of the RECs monitors systematically the local self-government officials’ in-service training results. *‘We get zero feedback as soon as the attendees return to their workplaces. We may have trained a perfect official, but there are no indicators to show how much his or her skills have increased’*. At present, to verify the training effectiveness, the RECs may only rely on indirect indicators that evidence positive changes in the areas on which the training has been focused.

For example, in mid-2017, the Vinnytsia REC *‘analysed the current state of the inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) project implementation. The conclusion was that the oblast “was stuck” in this field and that the community leaders urgently needed to be trained on the IMC aspects. Thus, training (on top of the approved schedule) in selecting partners and negotiating the IMC contracts began. The outcome was negligible. Therefore, the next step was to engage the local self-government development centre and the oblast local self-government association to travel to the districts and to continue the fieldwork. As a result, 24 cooperation agreements between the communities were signed in the following two months’*. *‘We can see the outcome of certain programmes. For example, we taught project management. We saw one community winning a project, and another community — some other project. But there are no direct indicators to measure it’*. *‘We developed and conducted training in project management and now see that,*

whereas previously there were 12, 16, or 18 SRDF projects, they numbered 56 this year'. 'We had a problem with the ATCs — only 5% of them were receiving and processing mail using an e-document flow system. We gathered these people at the Centre and conducted hands-on training. Today, the oblast state administration department says that 80% of the ATCs work in this system'.

Most of the REC heads agree that the second level of learning outcome assessments (2–4 months after undergoing in-service training) should be provided by the personnel of the relevant state executive authorities: *'It is difficult to assess this. Measuring is not our task. HR departments should do that'*. However, according to some REC heads, it is the state authorities themselves that are not interested in the outcome of such assessment: *'I am personally aware of these techniques, but we do not apply them so far. Moreover, as of today, not even all the state executives or local self-government authorities inquire about the performance or achievements of the officials have sent for training. So far it doesn't go beyond issuing a certificate that indicates the score received during the training. Then, of course, this document is filed by the HR department in the employee's personal file'*.

Today, only a few cases are known where the REC has attempted to conduct a second-level learning outcome assessment. *'We distribute questionnaires online. However, since we have to process thousands of people, we can't trace each and every person. Local authorities have HR departments, and it is their task to trace, they are the intermediary between us and the employees. The HR department should study, assess, and monitor what is missing'*.

In some RECs, the introduction of a second-level learning outcome assessment has been scheduled for 2019: *'We don't do it yet, but we are aware of the existence of these tools. This is another qualitative level of monitoring the training process. We plan to introduce this set of tools in 2019'. 'We work together with our German colleagues (because they have this capability) to assess the training outcomes based on the employees' performance. We must do this together with the personnel management departments. They won't be able to do this without us, because we have to provide the personnel management departments with what we have taught, so that they could ask the employees about it. Of course, training outcomes of a two-day workshop held in the workplace are hard to assess. It may be done under a professional programme'*.

Appendices

Appendix 1: In-Depth Interview guide

Approaches to conducting in-depth interviews

Following the in-depth-interviews:

- the key areas (competencies) required for local self-government officials in view of new powers (tasks, functions) acquired by local self-governments following the reforms, including the decentralisation reform, will be identified;
- the scope and needs for obtaining/upgrading knowledge and skills by local self-government officials (local councillors) will be identified, and the officials' attitude to attending the training will be studied

In-depth interviews are conducted with the following groups of participants:

- (deputy) chairmen of oblast councils
 - (deputy) chairmen of district councils
 - heads of local government associations
 - heads of amalgamated territorial communities
 - policymakers and experts who shape public opinion in the field of self-government
 - educational service providers
-

Section I. Description of the local authority

(This section is used for the purpose of in-depth interviews only with the amalgamated territorial community representatives)

1. In your opinion, which tasks and functions are the most important for the local authority where you are employed? Please describe the structure and resources of the local authority and give your assessment of whether they support efficient performance of the tasks mentioned by you.

Section II. Assessing the local authorities' performance

2. How do you assess the local authorities' performance in Ukraine (on a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 is the highest score)?
3. What in your opinion an efficient local authority looks like? What, in your opinion, should be changed in local authorities' functioning to ensure their efficient work?
4. Which were the most significant changes in the local self-government operation in the past three years (please list 2–3 changes that you view as the most significant)? What do you regard as success in the local self-government reform, and what — as failure(s)? Did these changes have a positive impact on improving the local authority's performance? Please substantiate your position.
5. Are there, in your opinion, any areas of activity (powers) that pose the greatest difficulties for the local self-government operation? What are these areas (powers)? Please name them. What negative consequences do you observe in these areas? Has the number of these 'problem' areas been diminishing or growing lately (in the course of the decentralisation reform)?
6. Who is the most affected by these difficulties/problems (please rate on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is the most affected)?
 - Local self-government officials?
 - Entrepreneurs?
 - Representatives of civil society organisations?
 - Communal enterprises that provide services (e.g., schools, hospitals, etc.)?
 - Citizens or the entire territorial community?
7. What is the source of the problems mentioned by you earlier? What causes them? (please support, where possible, your conclusions with examples of activities by particular local self-government authorities).

8. How does the local authority identify the problems associated with its functioning? Which methods (formal or informal) are used to identify problems? Please give specific examples of identification of any encountered social problems and of the ways to handle them used by the local authority where you work.
9. Have you achieved the expected result (how successful were the efforts taken by the authorities in overcoming the problems/difficulties) when addressing the problems (listed by you as an example)? What, in your opinion, can increase the authority's entire capability (potential) to address any emerging problems?
10. Whether, in your opinion, any changes are required in the local authority functioning? If so, which changes you
 - as the head of the local authority are able to implement?
 - as a professional/expert may recommend to the local authorities for implementation?
11. What, in your opinion, are there problems associated with supervising the activities/operation of the executive body? What are these problems associated with? How are these problems addressed? (please provide examples, if possible)

(The questions listed below are used for the purpose of in-depth interviews only with the amalgamated territorial community representatives)

12. Does your local authority have the Strategy for Community Development? If so, does the Strategy contain provisions for improving the performance of the local authority (and its structural divisions)?

Section III. The degree of cooperation between the local authority and the key stakeholders

13. What are the expectations of the territorial community residents in respect of the local government functioning? Does the local authority where you are employed have sufficient powers and resources to meet these expectations? Whether, in your opinion, the local authority meets the public's expectations? Whether local authorities take into consideration the public's expectations when planning their activities? If so, how?
14. Who, in your opinion, are the key external partners of the local authority? What exactly determines their importance or key role? How does the local authority cooperate with the key stakeholders?

(The questions listed below are used for the purpose of in-depth interviews only with the amalgamated territorial community representatives)

15. Please name the key objectives set by the local self-government authority. What are the local authority's key priorities for the next three years?
16. Please describe the interaction between the local authority and the territorial community residents. To what extent are the latter involved in addressing local problems or local policy-making? Do the territorial community residents show any interest in addressing local issues (issues specific to the community)? If so, how is this interest manifested?
17. How do you assess the cooperation between the local self-government and the local executive authorities? On which issues does the local self-government cooperate (if such cooperation exists) with the oblast and district councils? How do you assess this cooperation? Do you think it is necessary to introduce changes in such cooperation, and if so, which ones?

(The questions listed below are used for the purpose of in-depth interviews only with the leaders of the oblast and/or district councils)

18. How do you assess the interaction between the local authorities and the territorial community residents? To what extent are the latter involved in addressing local problems or local policy-making? Do the territorial community residents show any interest in addressing local issues (issues specific to the community)? If so, how is this interest manifested? Do you think that this interaction needs to be developed?
19. How do you assess the interaction between your council and the amalgamated territorial communities?
20. On which issues do you cooperate with the amalgamated territorial communities? How do you assess this cooperation? Do you think it is necessary to introduce changes in such cooperation, and if so, which ones?

Section IV. Attitude to the in-service training/professional development of local self-government officials and/or local councillors

21. How do you assess the competence (professionalism) of local self-government officials (on a scale from 0 to 5, where 5 is the highest score)? Do these officials possess the knowledge, skills and abilities sufficient for the efficient performance of their official duties?

22. Which competencies do you think need to be developed? To what extent are these competencies important for the local authority? What impact do they have on the overall performance of the local authority?
23. Should the professional competence of local councillors be raised? In your opinion, which competencies should be developed? Will the local councillors' participation in in-service training be able to improve performance by the local government and to have impact on the territorial community's overall development?
24. How would you describe the attitude of local government officials to participation in training? Which types of in-service training are the most popular among the officials and local councillors — training sessions, workshops, exchange of experience, others (please name)? In your opinion, why exactly is preference given to these types of in-service training?
25. Are there any examples of in-service training/training programmes in which the officials do not want to participate? (please give examples, if any). What kind of training do you think is more efficient — internal? Or external, outside the local authority?
26. Does the attendance at the (in-service) training result in an increase in the local self-government performance? What are the most visible results (effects)? (Does this mean, for example, better quality of the delivered services?)
27. How interdependence can be established between improved competence of local self-government officials and higher quality of public services? Does the training bring tangible benefits to the local authority? If so, which ones exactly?
28. Are there any problems associated with the employees' attendance at training events? If so, please name them. How does the local authority address them?

Section V. The local self-government officials' motivation as a component in building up the local authority's institutional capacity (the local authority as an organisation that 'invests' in the employees' capability)

29. Please name the factors in ascending order (from one to five, according to the relevant scale) which influence the motivation of local self-government employees
30. What actions (steps) do you (or top managers of the local authority where you are employed) take to motivate employees? Please give examples and name those that, in your opinion, are the most efficient
31. Does your local authority have a practice of identifying the training needs? How does your authority collect and/or obtain information about the employees' needs? Has this analysis been implemented on a regular basis? If so, how does this process take place? Who is involved in collecting information about the employees' needs? What further use is made of the obtained information?

Section VI. Training events organised by educational service providers offering in-service training

(this question is used for the purpose of in-depth interviews only with the representatives of educational service providers)

32. What types of in-service training programmes has your educational institution provided for local government employees in the last three years? What were the topics (agenda) of the in-service training programmes referred to above?
33. Who was lecturing during the in-service training programmes — invited international or local experts/trainers? Lecturers /trainers from your institution? state servants and local self-government officials, etc.
34. How were the topics (agenda) of the in-service training programmes determined? Why have exactly these types of in-service training programmes been chosen to organise and conduct training?
35. How were the training needs identified? Who assessed the training needs? Have you consulted the local authority whose officials were to undergo an in-service training programme about the training content? Have you discussed it (consulted) with other educational service providers? If so, how were these consultations held?
36. Did you cooperate with other educational service provider(s) when providing training under the professional programmes? If so, how do you assess this cooperation
37. What were the outcomes of the training? Were the employees assessed at their workplace following the training?

Appendix 2: Focus group guide

1. *Objectives of the research.*

- Identify the most problematic competencies lacking in the local self-government officials (local councillors)
- Identify the scope and needs for obtaining/upgrading knowledge and skills by local self-government officials
- Identify the local self-government officials' (local councillors') attitude towards professional development and the interdependence between professional development and more efficient performance of the local authority
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses in the professional training of local self-government officials (local councillors).

2. *The group composition:*

- *Heads (or deputy heads) of the amalgamated territorial communities*
- *Heads (or deputy heads) of educational service providers*
- *Heads (or deputy heads) of the RECs*

3. *Introduction by the moderator.*

Topic of the discussion — Analysis of the needs in training (improving the professional competence) of local self-government officials and local councillors.

The focus group duration — up to 2 hours

Instructions (guidelines) for the focus group participants (the rules are to be agreed before the discussion):

- each participant may express his or her position on each of the issues discussed during the scheduled survey
- each participant respects the opinion of another participant (his/her peer)
- there are no right or wrong answers, everyone's opinion is very important for the survey
- each speech (proposal) may not exceed 3 minutes
- only one person is allowed to speak in the hall (room)!

4. *Introductory part.* {Introducing each focus group participant and defining the general aspects of the investigated problem}

Reforming the professional training system, including the one that covers of local self-government officials and local councillors; the coming reform in the institution of local self-government service; the introduction of new HR management tools.

It is important to regard the process of professional development as:

- part of 'lifetime employment' by the employer — a local authority
- an element of the local self-government officials' motivation system
- a component of institutional development of the organisation itself — the organisation is as competent as its employees are, and, consequently, as the territorial community residents are satisfied with the level (quality) of the delivered services
- the logical continuation of the identification of training needs and the choice of the educational service provider

5. Discussion of the main problem.

{Examining broader topics that are directly related to the survey problem}.

1. Which were the main problems facing the local self-government after the launch of the decentralisation reform?
2. How does the local authority overcome the difficulties (problems) facing it in its day-to-day activities?
3. How do local self-government officials cope with new challenges, difficulties?
4. The most sensitive areas (powers) that require new competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) from local self-government officials.
5. As an employer, is the local authority satisfied with the degree of professional competence of its employees (local self-government officials and local councillors)?

6. Detailed discussion of the questions raised (checking the basic hypotheses).

{This part of the guide should contain a list of specific issues and aspects about which the customer wishes to receive detailed information. Thus, a transition occurs from general questions to specific ones, as well as the discussion of the hypotheses that had been drafted by the moderator before the survey}

Points of discussion:

1. Who is a competent local self-government official? Who is a competent local councillor? Please provide a perfect portrait using the list of competencies that the person has to possess. Which competencies do you think will be needed in the near future?
2. Which competencies of local self-government officials do we 'go shopping for'?
3. Does the official's professionalism have an impact on the performance of the entire local authority?
4. What motivates an employee (a local self-government official or a local councillor) to join in-service training programmes?
5. Who should pay for the local self-government official's attendance at the in-service training programmes? (the employing authority? The central government? The political party with which the councillor is affiliated?)

7. Concluding part. {Includes summary (review) of the positions taken by the focus group participants, additional discussion of the opinions expressed during the survey. Thanking all the focus group participants for their input}.

Appendix 3: Survey questionnaire (REC)

Questionnaire for providers of educational services to civil servants, local self-government officials, local councillors

Description of the educational service provider

1. *Name of the educational service provider, year of incorporation*

2. *Pattern of ownership, founder*

3. *The number of full-time lecturers (trainers) involved in the professional training process, and that of the freelancers working under the civil law contracts*

4. *The number of students in 2016 and 2017 (broken down by groups: civil servants — local government officials — local councillors)*

5. *Funding sources*

Professional education arrangements

6. *The types of in-service training programmes (broken down by general and special programmes). Please include the list of programmes*

14. What category of persons prevails among the lecturers (trainers) of in-service training programmes at your institution? (please select two categories from the following)

- government officials (or local government officials), active or former
- lecturers of your educational entity
- lecturers from other educational entities
- international experts or advisors
- independent experts

15. How is the quality of the completed training monitored (assessed)? Is the training content of the in-service training programmes reviewed following the assessment? If so, how often.

Prospective areas of professional training

16. In your opinion, competencies in which areas should be developed in local government officials, taking into consideration, in particular, the reforms happening in the field of decentralisation?

- local economic development and infrastructure development
 - project management
 - spatial planning of territory development
 - financial resources management, planning and application of budgetary funds
 - social protection of the population, including vulnerable groups
 - provision of administrative services
 - tax laws
 - health care
 - energy efficiency
 - if other, please specify
-

17. Which competencies of local government officials do you think will require development in a year's time? In two years?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix 4: List of in-depth interviewees and focus group participants

In-depth interviewees

Chairmen (deputy chairmen, chief executives) of city, settlement, village councils

1. Maryna Arkhiryi, First Deputy Village Chairman, Krasnosilka Village Council, Lymansky District, Odesa Oblast
2. Yuriy Bova, City Chairman, Trostyanets City Council, Sumy Oblast
3. Vadym Hayev, Settlement Chairman, Novopskov Settlement Council, Novopskov District, Luhansk Oblast
4. Ihor Hnatusha, Settlement Chairman, Komyshe-Zorya Settlement Council, Bilmak District, Zaporizhia Oblast
5. Yuriy Drach, First Deputy City Chairman, Lyman City Council, Donetsk Oblast
6. Velina Zayats, City Chairman, Dunayivtsi City Council, Khmelnytskyi Oblast
7. Petro Kiyashko, Settlement Chairman, Vesele Settlement Council, Vesele District, Zaporizhia Oblast
8. Oleksandr Korinnyi, City Chairman, Novoukrayinka City Council, Novoukrayinka District, Kirovohrad Oblast
9. Halyna Minayeva, City Chairman, Chuhuiv City Council, Kharkiv Oblast
10. Volodymyr Mitsuk, Village Chairman, Bilozirya Village Council, Cherkasy District, Cherkasy Oblast
11. Volodymyr Pletyuk, City Chairman, Shumsk City Council, Shumsk District, Ternopil Oblast
12. Hryhoriy Rudyuk, Settlement Chairman, Nova Borova Settlement Council, Khoroshiv District, Zhytomyr Oblast
13. Oleksiy Ryabokon, City Chairman, Pyryatyn City Council, Poltava Oblast
14. Vasyl Toderenchuk, Village Chairman, Velykyi Kuchuriv Village Council, Storozhynets District, Chernivtsi Oblast
15. Oleksandra Sheremetyeva, Village Chairman, Omelnyk Village Council, Kremenchuk District, Poltava Oblast

(Deputy) Chairmen of Oblast Councils

1. Oleksandr Velbivets, Chairman, Cherkasy Oblast Council
2. Maryna Honcharova, Chief executive, Executive Office of the Donetsk Oblast Council
3. Oleksandr Danylchuk, Chairman, Rivne Oblast Council
4. Mykhaylo Zahorodnyi, Chairman, Khmelnytskyi Oblast Council
5. Viktor Ovcharuk, Chairman, Ternopil Oblast Council
6. Hlib Prygunov, Chairman, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Council
7. Oleksandr Chornoivanenko, Chairman, Kirovohrad Oblast Council

Representatives of local government associations

1. Ihor Abramyuk, Director for Development, Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities
2. Valentina Poltavets, Executive Director, Association of Amalgamated Territorial Communities
3. Mykola Fursenko, Chairman, All-Ukrainian Association of Village and Settlement Councils
4. Serhiy Chernov, President, 'Ukrainian Association of District and Oblast Councils' All-Ukrainian Local Self-Government Association

Policymakers and experts who shape public opinion on local self-government issues

1. Alyona Shkrum, People's Deputy of Ukraine, Chairman of the Civil Service and Local Self-Government Service Subcommittee, the Verkhovna Rada Committee on State Building, Regional Policy and Local Self-Government
2. Vira Kozina, lawyer, key expert of the U-LEAD Programme on legal issues
3. Volodymyr Kupriy, First Deputy Chairman, National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service
4. Yuriy Hanushchak, expert on territorial organisation of power and decentralisation
5. Ihor Lepyoshkin, Senior Expert, Head of Experts Group, Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance Project
6. Tetyana Matiychyk, Coordinator, Central Reform Office under the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services
7. Yulia Molodozhen, Director, Odessa Centre for Local Self-Governance Development
8. Olena Tertyshna, Director, Dnipropetrovsk Centre for Local Self-Governance Development
9. Anatoliy Tkachuk, Director for Science and Development, Civil Society Institute CSO
10. Serhiy Sharshov, Director General, Directorate for Local Self-Governance Development, Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine

Heads (deputy heads) of educational service providers

1. Mykola Bayuk, Director, Khmelnytskyi Excellence
2. Volodymyr Boyko, Director, Chernihiv Excellence Centre
3. Viktoriya Havryshchuk, Director, Kyiv Excellence Centre
4. Vasyl Kuybida, President, National Academy for Public Administration Under the President of Ukraine
5. Tetyana Lytvynenko, Director, Volyn Excellence Centre
6. Tetyana Pashynina, Director, Vinnytsia Oblast Excellence

**Participants of the focus group held in Zatoka, Odesa Oblast
11 September 2018**

#	Surname, name, patronymic	District Council	Oblast
1.	Stefanyuk, Larysa Viktorivna	Kehychivka District Council	Kharkiv
2.	Vandzhurak, Pavlo Ivanovych	Kosiv District Council	Ivano-Frankivsk
3.	Lyvch, Myroslava Mykhaylivna	Svalyava District Council	Zakarpattia
4.	Sitarskyi, Serhiy Mykolayovych	Vinnytsia District Council	Vinnytsia
5.	Khrapal, Anatoliy Oleksandrovych	Lokhvyytsia District Council	Poltava
6.	Belyankina, Tamara Mykolayivna	Dobropillya District Council	Donetsk
7.	Ptyshnyk, Volodymyr Oleksandrovych	Krasnohrad District Council	Kharkiv
8.	Dyachuk, Roman Vasylyovych	Kolomyia District Council	Ivano-Frankivsk
9.	Bondar, Anatoliy Petrovych, Deputy Chairman	Bakhmach District Council	Chernihiv
10.	Lyubomska, Valentyna Oleksandrivna	Talne District Council	Cherkasy

**Focus group with heads of regional excellence centres
Odessa, September 20, 2018**

#	Surname, name, patronymic	Regional REC	Position
1.	Havryshchuk, Viktoriya Anatoliyivna	Kyiv City REC	Director
2.	Dudych, Marianna Ivanivna	Zakarpattia REC	Deputy Director
3.	Oleksyuk, Oksana Ihorivna	Zhytomyr REC	Director
4.	Osypenko, Nataliya Mykhaylivna	Poltava REC	Director
5.	Lytvynenko, Tetyana Mykolayivna	Volyn REC	Director
6.	Lukin, Serhiy Yuriyovych	Kyiv Oblast REC	Director
7.	Shmatovalenko, Lyudmyla Serhiyivna	Odesa Regional Institute of Public Administration, NAPA Under the President of Ukraine	Head of the Sector for Management of Workshops Under the Contracts with the In-service Training Department
8.	Lypovksa, Svitlana Oleksiyivna	Odesa Regional Institute of Public Administration, NAPA Under the President of Ukraine	Head of the In-service Training Department
9.	Khaletska, Alina Anatoliyivna	The All-Ukrainian Centre for In-service Training of Government Employees and Local Self-Government Officials	Deputy Director
10.	Bilurusov, Serhiy Georgiyovych	Kherson REC	Director
11.	Dybchenko, Dmytro Mykolayovych	Mykolayiv REC	Director
12.	Boyko, Volodymyr Mykolayovych	Chernihiv REC	Director
13.	Kononenko, Tetyana Oleksandrivna	Ternopil REC	Deputy Director
14.	Yarmysty, Mykola Vasylyovych	Chernivtsi REC	Director
15.	Yanchyk, Tetyana Yakivna	Rivne REC	Director
16.	Bayuk, Mykola Ivanovych	Khmelnitskyi REC	Director
17.	Zelinskyi, Serhiy Eduardovych	Kirovohrad REC	Director
18.	Varukha, Svitlana Mykolayivna	Sumy REC	Director

**Focus group with participants of the 'Modern HR management tools in local self-government' training workshop
Kozyn, September 27, 2018**

#	Surname, name, patronymic	Council, district, oblast	Position
1.	Horyachov, Volodymyr Yevhenovych	Mykulyntsi Settlement Council, Terebovlya District, Ternopil Oblast	Deputy Chairman for Executive Authorities
2.	Dychok, Oleg Romanovych	Serhiyivka Village Council, Hadyach District, Poltava Oblast	Deputy Village Chairman, Village Councillor
3.	Bulavina, Karina Vadymivna	Mala Danylivka Settlement Council, Derhachi District, Kharkiv Oblast	Village Council Secretary
4.	Levkevych, Halyna Borysivna	Terebovlya Settlement Council, Terebovlya District, Ternopil Oblast	Chief of the Record Management and Control Department
5.	Shtrykun, Lyudmyla Ivanivna	Stary Saltiv Settlement Council, Vovchansk District, Kharkiv Oblast	Village Council Secretary
6.	Litvin, Olena Yuriyivna	Kreminna City Council, Luhansk Oblast	Chief executive
7.	Savchenko, Nadiya Volodymyrivna	Krasnorichenske Settlement Council, Kreminna District, Luhansk Oblast	Category 2 Expert
8.	Syebova, Olena Oleksandrivna	Krasnosilka Village Council, Lymansky District, Odesa Oblast	Head of the HR Sector of the executive authority
9.	Bogdanova, Larysa Mykolayivna	Novoukrayinka City Council, Kirovohrad Oblast	Chief executive (Secretary)
10.	Frolova, Olena Volodymyrivna	Balta City Council, Odesa Oblast	Chief executive
11.	Sherstyuk, Maryna Mykhaylivna	Illinivka Village Council, Kostyantynivka District, Donetsk Oblast	Acting Head of HR Sector
12.	Polyvoda, Lyubov Vasylivna	Siversk City Council, Donetsk Oblast	Chief executive
13.	Vakal, Svitlana Vitaliyivna	Komysh-Zorya Settlement Council, Bilmak District, Zaporizhia Oblast	Head of the HR Department of the executive authority
14.	Chubyk, Andriy Vitaliyovych	Pochayiv City Council, Ternopil Oblast	Deputy City Chairman
15.	Drach, Yuriy Anatoliyovych	Lyman City Council, Donetsk Oblast	First Deputy City Chairman

**Focus group with the Leadership Academy students
Kozyn, November 10, 2018**

#	Surname, name, patronymic	Council, district, oblast	Position
1.	Sereda, Olena Volodymyrivna	Borovenky Village Council, Kreminna District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Chairman
2.	Litvinova, Yana Mykolayivna	Starobilsk City Council, Luhansk Oblast	City Chairman
3.	Ostroverkhova, Nataliya Anatoliyivna	Yepifanivka Village Council, Kreminna District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Chairman
4.	Kayika, Tetyana Valeriyivna	Olhinka Settlement Council, Volnovakha District, Donetsk Oblast	Settlement Chairman
5.	Horbunova, Olga Mykhaylivna	Sotenne Village Council, Stanytsia Luhanska District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Chairman
6.	Solyona, Lyudmyla Petrivna	Komyshne Village Council, Stanytsia Luhanska District, Luhansk Oblast	Acting Village Chairman
7.	Tsykunova, Olena Mykolayivna	Mykolayivka City Council, Donetsk Oblast	City Chairman
8.	Petrova, Liliya Feliksivna	Bilolutsk Settlement Council, Novopskov District, Luhansk Oblast	Deputy Village Chairman
9.	Huselnikova, Nataliya Anatoliyivna	Mistky Village Council, Svatove District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Council Secretary
10.	Lyashenko, Myroslava Anatoliyivna	Pryvillya Village Council, Troyitske District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Chairman
11.	Hatala, Ihor Viktorovych	Shulgynka Village Council, Starobilsk District, Luhansk Oblast	Village Chairman
12.	Balabay, Oleksandr Ivanovych	Petropavlivka Settlement Council, Stanytsia Luhanska District, Luhansk Oblast	Settlement Chairman
13.	Yakovlev, Mykola Dmytrovych	Novodmytrivka Village Council, Kostyantynivka District, Donetsk Oblast	Village Chairman

Appendix 5: Questionnaire for telephone interview

A study of training needs assessment of local self-government authorities - a questionnaire for the head, deputy heads, heads of structural units of the executive bodies of the Amalgamated Territorial Community (ATC)

Dear participant,

The purpose of this study is to define the training needs of members of the executive bodies of the ATC. This is an anonymous survey. The survey results will be generalized and will serve as a basis for drafting an analytical document on the improvement of the qualification/competence of the employees of local self-government authorities. The survey is conducted under the Council of Europe Programme 'Decentralization and Local Self-Government Reform in Ukraine'.

Your opinion is very important for us. Thank you for cooperation.

1. What is the PRIORITY of your local council in the current term of office?

Please choose UP TO 2 ANSWERS FROM the following list:

- Infrastructural investments
- Social issues, e.g. solving social problems
- Stabilisation of the municipal/town budget
- Day-to-day governance, responding to problems of community and citizens as they arise
- Citizens' participation in local decision-making
- Improving the quality of public/municipal services
- Another issue important for the locality (→ ask Q1a)
- Don't know, not sure

1a) You selected 'another issue important for the locality' as the priority of the municipality, please describe this priority in brief:

☞

2. What services, after the territorial community amalgamation, did your municipality start to additionally provide?

- management of public security
- provision of preschool education
- provision of general secondary education
- provision of education and teaching of children needing social assistance and rehabilitation (general boarding schools)
- organization of work of physical education and sports centres (for example, playgrounds, youth sports schools, etc.)
- organization of work of cultural institutions (for example, cultural centres, clubs, libraries, etc.)
- establishing centres providing public/ municipal services
- social protection and social security
- provision of primary care
- maintenance of streets and roads in the territory of the amalgamated community
- local infrastructure development (construction of roads, water and gas supply and water discharge systems and development of territories)
- organization of passenger transportation services in the territory of the amalgamated community
- waste management
- management of land resources
- ensuring fire safety
- other (please specify the service): ☞

3. In your opinion, what are the sources of the GREATEST difficulties in the day-to-day management of your amalgamated community?

Please choose up to 3 categories

- Legislation instability, changing regulatory framework

- Legal limitations of discretion in decision-making of amalgamated communities in some areas
- Multiple controls over local self-government activities
- Staff shortages in local self-government
- Lack of competent staff / Poor competence of certain local self-government officials
- Poor competence of some councillors
- Lack of own revenues to the local budget
- Lack of adequate financing of delegated powers
- Passive citizens, their lack of interest in local affairs
- Conflicts between executive bodies and the local council
- Conflict between elected officials in the council, the starosta (starostas) and the leadership of the Council
- Political pressure, influence of political parties on how local self-government functions
- Another source of problems(→ask Q3a)
- Not sure

3a) You mentioned ‘another source of problems’ as one of the difficulties in day-to-day management of your amalgamated community. Please describe this source of problems briefly:

✂

4) The law requires that the amalgamated community should fulfil multiple tasks simultaneously. No task can be abandoned but some of them can be treated as more important for budget planning purposes. Which areas do you think should be particularly SUPPORTED in the specific situation of your local self-government?

Please choose UP TO THREE most important items from the list below:

- School/pre-school education and care including extra curricular classes for children
- Activities of cultural institutions
- Supporting activities performed by local non-governmental organisations
- Local economic development and development of entrepreneurship
- Welfare services
- Sport
- Health care and prevention
- Functioning of local self-government itself
- Road infrastructure, cleanliness in the streets and public areas/ landscaping
- Waterworks and sewage system
- Disaster and crisis management
- Environment protection
- Another area(→ask Q4a)

4a) When asked about budgeting priorities at your municipality, you mentioned ‘another area’. Which area did you have in mind?

✂

5) Does your municipality have DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (defining priorities for territory development)?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know/ Not sure

5a) Were the RESIDENTS of your municipality were involved in the work on the development strategy?

Please choose one answer only

- The residents actively were involved in developing the strategy
- The residents did not participate in developing the document but the draft document underwent public consultation
- No, we developed the strategy without involving the residents
- The residents were involved in some other way (please specify): ✂.....
- Don't know / Not sure

6) In the last two years, did your municipality conduct any self-assessments using any systematic tool?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes (---> ask question 7a)
- No (---> skip to question 8)
- Don't know(---> skip to question 8)

6a) And which tool did you use for the self-assessment?

Please provide the name or describe the tool briefly:

.....

7) Generally speaking, how would you assess the EFFICIENCY of your municipality?

Enter a digit from 1 to 7 where 1 is the leftmost value and 7 is the rightmost value

very bad (1)	(7) very good
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8) In your opinion, what would be the most effective way to boost the performance of your municipality?

Please choose up to two key instruments

- Improving staff's competencies
- Reorganising the work of local self-government (please specify the purpose of such reorganisation):
- Increasing employment
- Raising staff's salaries
- Improving the way the management manages the work of officials
- Reducing employment at the municipality
- Changing motivation system for your staff (how? Please indicate):
- Improving the relationships between staff members – elected and appointed ones
- Introduction of performance evaluation of staff/ public services provided to citizens
- Some other way

9) What is your overall assessment of the following at your municipality:

Please choose one answer only in each row

	Very good	Fairly good	Moderate	Fairly poor	Very poor	Not sure
Employees understanding of their job responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Quality of work provided by local self-government officials	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Level of officials' independence within their responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officials' motivation to improve their professional qualifications	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Staff's ability to work as a team	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officials' commitment and their work motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officials' integrity in performing their work duties	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Quality of public/ municipal service	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Officials' effectiveness in solving problems that arise	<input type="checkbox"/>					

10) In your personal opinion, is a job at the municipality ATTRACTIVE or UNATTRACTIVE in comparison with other available employment opportunities?

Enter a digit from 1 to 7 where 1 is the leftmost value and 7 is the rightmost value

Definitely unattractive (1)	(7) Definitely attractive
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11) Please evaluate how are you personally satisfied with work in municipality:

Enter a digit from 1 to 7 where 1 is the leftmost value and 7 is the rightmost value

Very unsatisfied (1)	(7) Definitely satisfied
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12) Below is a list of various issues which may make a municipality job attractive. Please specify if each of them is important or unimportant TO YOU PERSONALLY in the context of working for local self-government?

Please choose one answer only in each row

	Totally unimportant	Fairly unimportant	Fairly important	Very important	Not sure
Level of remuneration	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Good relations with colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Good relations with the superior	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Possibility to keep a balance between career and private life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Opportunities for promotion, personal growth and gaining experience	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Good reputation of the employer (municipality)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Job stability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Possibility to work with interesting people	<input type="checkbox"/>				
High level of autonomy when accomplishing tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Varied tasks and responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Proximity between workplace and home	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Working time, regular working hours	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Something else is important (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>				
☒.....					
Don't know/ not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>				

→ ASK Q13 only for items marked as 'very important' in Q12

13) And which of those factors play the most important role for you?

Please name up to 3 most important factors (**ONLY factors described as very important should be asked, Q12**)

- Level of remuneration
- Good relations with colleagues
- Good relations with the superior
- Possibility to keep a balance between career and private life
- Interesting challenges involved in fulfilling job responsibilities
- Opportunities for promotion, personal growth and gaining experience
- Good reputation of the employer (municipality)
- Job stability
- Possibility to work with interesting people
- High level of autonomy when accomplishing tasks
- Working time, working hours
- Something else (please specify): ☒.....

14) Which of the factors listed do you consider to be the most important ones FOR THE STAFF at your municipality, making your local self-government body attractive as a place to work at?

Please name up to 3 most important factors

- Level of remuneration
- Good relations with colleagues
- Good relations with the superior
- Possibility to keep a balance between career and private life
- Interesting challenges involved in fulfilling job responsibilities
- Opportunities for promotion, personal growth and gaining experience
- Good reputation of the employer (municipality)
- Job stability

- Possibility to work with interesting people
- High level of autonomy when accomplishing tasks
- Working time, working hours
- Something else is important (*please specify*): ☒
- Don't know / Not sure

15) Below mentioned are various areas where local self-government bodies fulfil their tasks or activities. Please provide a GENERAL ASSESSMENT using the scale below.

(1) tasks are fulfilled smoothly and without major obstacles; (2) there are difficulties in fulfilling tasks but they are resolved; (3) there are major difficulties in fulfilling tasks and their resolution is highly problematic.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Area where tasks are fulfilled smoothly | (1) |
| Fulfilling tasks is somewhat problematic | (2) |
| Major difficulties in fulfilling tasks | (3) |
| Not sure / No experience | (4) |

Agriculture and rural development	☒
Internal audit, management audit	☒
Bookkeeping	☒
Communication with citizens	☒
Collaboration with non-governmental organisations	☒
Computer/IT literacy, use of IT tools	☒
Creation of youth and cultural policies at the local level	☒
Project management	☒
Disaster and crisis management	☒
Environment protection	☒
Ethics and prevention of corruption	☒
Provision of public/ municipal services	☒
HR management, HR policy	☒
Implementation of e-government and computerisation of the office	☒
Language training, selected foreign language	☒
Local economic development and Investment Attraction	☒
Local public transport and local roads	☒
Management of cultural institutions, implementation of cultural policy	☒
Management of educational entities	☒
Management of healthcare institutions	☒
Management of sports centres	☒
Managing human teams, team work techniques, conflict resolution etc	☒
Managing the finances of the local self-government, local taxes and fees	☒
Planning and implementation of infrastructural investments	☒
Protection of classified information and personal data	☒
Protection of minority rights	☒
Public procurement and tender procedures	☒
Public property management	☒
Services to customers, organisation of the centre of administrative services	☒
Social policy	☒
Strategic planning and strategic management of the local self-government	☒
Urban/spatial planning and management of real property	☒
Use of technical assistance funds	☒
Wastewater and solid waste management	☒
Work organisation at the office	☒
Work time management	☒

16) Can you see any problems in the work of your municipality caused primarily by insufficient knowledge or insufficient skills of officials?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes, definitely (*--> ask question 16a*)
- Yes, probably (*--> ask question 16a*)
- No, probably not (*--> skip to question 17*)

- No, definitely not (*--> skip to question 17*)
- Not sure(*--> skip to question 17*)

16a) Please describe those problems briefly:

✎

17) Which of the areas of training listed below would you consider to be MOST NEEDED for your STAFF in the current situation?

(indicate in total at least 1 and no more than 5 answers)

- Agriculture and rural development
- Internal audit, management audit
- Bookkeeping
- Communication with citizens
- Collaboration with non-governmental organisations
- Computer/IT literacy, use of IT tools
- Creation of youth policies at the local level
- Project management
- Disaster and crisis management
- Environment protection
- Ethics and prevention of corruption
- Provision of public/ municipal services
- HR management, HR policy
- Implementation of e-government and computerisation of the office
- Language training, selected foreign language
- Local Economic Development and Investment Attraction
- Local public transport and local roads
- Management of cultural institutions, implementation of cultural policy
- Management of educational entities
- Management of healthcare institutions
- Management of sports centres
- Managing human teams, team work techniques, conflict resolution etc
- Managing the finances of the local government unit, local taxes and fees, financial and accounting issues
- Planning and implementation of infrastructural investments
- Protection of minority rights
- Public procurement and tender procedures
- Public property management
- Services to customers of the office, organisation of the secretarial office, customer service centre etc.
- Social policy
- Strategic planning and strategic management of the local self-government
- Urban/spatial planning and management of real property
- Use of technical assistance funds
- Wastewater and solid waste management
- Work organisation at the office
- Work time management
- Not sure / hard to say

18) Do you see any other training needs regarding the staff of your municipality which have not been mentioned above?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes (*--> ask question 18a*)
- No (*--> skip to question 19*)
- Don't know (*--> skip to question 20*)

18a) Please provide a short description of those training needs:

19) Given the list of the above areas, please choose 5 areas most important for improvement of your professional level and more efficient exercise of tasks entitled to you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

20) What is your attitude to participation of officials in professional training?

- I think it is an issue of primary importance
- It is important but not crucial at the moment
- Sometimes it can be useful
- I do not think this is important at the moment
- Usually it is a waste of time
- Don't know

21) How often do the following categories of employees in your amalgamated community participate in training?

	Quite often (several times per quarter)	Often (at least once per quarter)	Quite rare (1-2 times per year)	Rarely (1-2 times per two years)	Never	Hard to say
Amalgamated community leadership (heads, deputy heads)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heads of structural units of executive bodies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22) What kind of (external) training did your staff participated in 2018?

More than one answer allowed

- Open paid training for staff of various public offices, organised by an external provider, with participation financed by your office
- Training organised specifically for the staff of your office by an external provider, financed by your office
- Free-of-charge training organised by an external provider under a project where your office was not an immediate beneficiary
- Free-of-charge training organised under project(s) where your office was an immediate beneficiary
- FREE training organized by CENTERS FOR FURTHER PROFESSIONAL TRAINING
- FREE training organized by local government associations
- Training paid by the staff who participated in it upon the consent of the office
- Other training (please specify):
- Staff of our office has not participated in any training in 2018 → skip to Q23
- Don't know / Not sure → skip to Q23

23) Who was the organiser of those training events?

More than one answer allowed

- National Academy of Public Administration and its regional institutes
- Regional Centre for Retraining and Improvement of Qualification of Employees of the Local Self-Government Authorities, State-Owned Companies, Institutions and Organizations
- Local government associations
- National Agency on Civil Service of Ukraine and its territorial units
- International organization (technical assistance projects)
- Non-governmental organizations
- Private institution (company)

- Individual consultants (experts)
- Other provides (please indicate)

24) Please evaluate the extent to which the said activities/tools are useful for the professional development (improvement of competence) of the local self-government officials:

Use the scale from 1=not useful at all, to 5=very useful:

	1	2	3	4	5
1) experience exchange with colleagues from other territorial communities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2) experience exchange with colleagues from other countries	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3) direct consultations with consultants/ experts	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4) study of best practices	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5) participation in thematic short-term programmes, including seminars, trainings	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6) participation in study visits, including abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7) online training	<input type="checkbox"/>				

24a) And, in your opinion, which of the activities/tools are most efficient?

Choose no more than 2 answers

Enter numbers corresponding to selected categories from Q28: ✎

25) Decisions to participate in short-term trainings or professional development programmes depend on many factors. Please range them from the most important to the least important.

Opposite each factor specify figures ranging from 1 to 7, where 1=most important factor, 7=least important factor. Use one figure only once

Trust in the training provider	✎
Confidence that trainer (trainers) is (are) competent in the sphere, which covers training topics	✎
Costs of training	✎
Training duration (long-term or short-term programme)	✎
Training form (full time, part-time)	✎
Distance to the venue of trainings	✎
Interest in the training topic	✎
Correspondence of the training topic to the specifics job responsibilities that are fulfilled	✎
Other	✎

25a) You mentioned 'other factor' influencing decisions related to participation in training. What kind of factor is that?

✎

26) How much money did your amalgamated community allocate LAST YEAR (2018) FROM ITS OWN BUDGET for the training of its staff, including local councillors?

✎

27) Do you consider the financing of staff's training to be adequate?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes, it is sufficient
- No, more funding is needed
- I think the cost was too high
- Don't know / Not sure

28) Were any internal training events organised at your municipality during the last year?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes, conducted several times per quarter

- Yes, conducted at least once per quarter)
- Yes, a few times (1-2 per year)
- Yes, once
- No
- Don't know / Not sure*

29) In which other forms of professional competence development did your staff participate in during the last year?

Please choose all applicable categories

- Additional study programmes, e.g. post-graduate programmes
- Distance learning formats
- Study visits
- Exchange of experience in occupational groups, e.g. club meetings, forums etc.
- Conferences/Seminars/workshops on local government issues
- Other forms of training
- None of the above

30) Does your municipality analyse the training needs of its staff?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes (*--> ask questions 30a*)
- No (*--> skip to question 31*)
- Don't know / Not sure* (*--> skip to question 31*)

30a) Is there a procedure, recommendation or a rule which defines how training needs should be analysed?

Please choose one answer only

- Yes
- No
- Don't know / Not sure*

31) If training (professional development programme) is proposed to you, which of the above institutions do you PERSONALLY trust most of all?

- National Academy of Public Administration and its regional institutes
- Regional Centre for Retraining and Improvement of Qualification of Employees of the Local Self-Government Authorities, State-Owned Companies, Institutions and Organizations
- Local government associations
- National Agency on Civil Service of Ukraine and its territorial units
- International organization (technical assistance projects)
- Non-governmental organizations
- Private institution (company)
- Individual consultants (experts)
- Other provides (*please indicate*)

32) How many officials are employed at your municipalities?

Please specify the number of FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS for local self-government officials and employees

✎

Finally, we would like to ask a few questions for statistical purposes. We would like to remind you that THIS SURVEY IS COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS. Information from specific, individual questionnaires will not be made available anywhere and in any manner, and your local government unit could not be identified in any way.

Sex

- Female Male

Age

✎

Position

Please select a category corresponding with your position:

- Head of the amalgamated community
- Deputy head
- Secretary
- Head of executive
- Local councillors
- Head of structural unit

Service length at local self-government/ including length of holding elected position at local self-government:

✂

Did you work in one of the communities before it joined the Amalgamated Territorial Community?

- Yes
- No

If yes, which position?

✂

Education

Please choose one answer only

- Incomplete general secondary education
- Complete general secondary education
- Vocational education
- Initial level of higher education (junior specialist)
- First level of higher education (bachelor's degree)
- Second level of higher education (master's degree)
- Third level of higher education (candidate of science, doctor of philosophy)

Profile of amalgamated community:

Please choose one answer only

- Country
- Village
- City

Size of your local government unit

Please choose one answer only

- Up to 5,000 residents
- From 5,000 up to 15,000 residents
- From 15,000, up to 100,000 residents
- Over 100,000 residents

Indicate the region, where amalgamated community situated

- Vinnytska
- Volynska
- Dnipropetrovska
- Donetska
- Zhytomyrska
- Zakarpatska
- Zaporizka
- Ivano-Frankivska
- Kyivska
- Kirovohradska
- Luhanska

- Lvivska
- Mykolaivska
- Odeska
- Poltavska
- Rivnenska
- Sumska
- Ternopilska
- Kharkivska
- Khersonska
- Khmelnytska
- Cherkaska
- Chernivetska
- Chernihivska

Thank you for cooperation!

Appendix 6: Presentation «Training needs analysis of the amalgamated territorial communities in Ukraine»

Please see here: http://www.slg-coe.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/TNA_Ukraine-2018-2019-Final-Repor-App6_presentation-eng.pdf