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## **Making sense of multi-level and multi-actor governance of recovery in Ukraine**

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### **Abstract**

The article sheds light on the complex recovery governance in Ukraine by providing a snapshot of the evolving national recovery actors' networks and examining it through a multi-level governance framework. It highlights the ambiguity of the multi-level recovery governance structure in Ukraine, which shows characteristics of decentralization while representing a rather centralized machine; tend to be multi-actor, but also leave some groups of actors behind. The article offers suggestions for improvements but concludes that a bottom-up recovery process that leverages the decentralization potential and multi-actor energy is needed to benefit the current system constellations. In general, the article provides a starting point for further research and analysis to deepen our understanding of emerging Ukraine's recovery governance landscape.

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## **I. Introduction**

The world was shocked by Russia's full-scale military attack on Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Despite the ongoing war, the impact of the war is already apparent and far-reaching, with significant displacement of the population, increased unemployment, economic recession, and widespread physical destruction, among other effects. The UNDP (2022) assessed that the war caused a loss of 18 years of socio-economic progress in Ukraine.

This means that the scale of recovery projects is already immense and complex. However, the Ukrainian people remain hopeful, with the recovery motto of "we will build back better" and "becoming part of the EU" lifting their spirits and giving hope for the future (KISI 2022).

A vast development gap created by war, paired with high societal future expectations, requires work not to be limited to a single region or territory and cannot be designed and executed by one agency or department. It also requires substantial resources exceeding the actual cost of damaged and destroyed assets, already exceeding by far the capacities of Ukraine's state budget and pre-war economy. This means that a good deal of the required funding for recovery is expected to come from international partners among many other sources (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2022; Kiel Institute 2023)

Recovery can quickly become a complex and messy situation, with international actors rushing to help and adding to the already chaotic network of national actors struggling to find their place in the new governance landscape (O'Driscoll 2018). To bring clarity to this situation, this study aims to make sense of and visualize the emerging complexity of Ukraine's recovery governance.

Considering that the information about international actors has been analyzed (Asdourian 2022; Bergmann and Romanyszyn 2022; OECD 2022; KPMG 2023), the study focuses specifically on the national system and national actors, this is enabled by knowledge of national complexities, languages, and local realities that the authors of this study do possess.

The study will use the multi-level governance (MLG) theoretical framework to analyze this emerging system. It has often been used for describing and analyzing this type of complex systems, in terms of vertical interplay of different levels of government and multi-actors relationships horizontally (Bache, Bartle, and Flinders 2022).

This study is not meant to be a comprehensive representation of the MLG of recovery in Ukraine, but rather a snapshot and an initial step to make sense of the emerging complexity. In analogy with the blind man and an elephant, this study attempts for

collective exploration of the elephant”<sup>1</sup>, by using interviews, sense making workshops in combination with quantitative data collection and analysis.

## **II. Theoretical Framework:**

### **2.1. Multi-level Governance (MLG)**

There are a number of definitions of Multilevel Governance (MLG). The most common is dispersion of the central government authority among levels of government vertically and different actors horizontally (Bache, Bartle, and Flinders 2022; Stephenson 2013; Hooghe and Marks 2010).

In general, vertical interactions in MLG are based on the principle of subsidiarity, which states that decisions should be made at the lowest possible level of government that is capable of effectively addressing the issue at hand (Estella de Noriega 2002).

In general, MLG can be understood both as a normative and an analytical framework. As a normative framework, multi-level governance refers to the idea that governance should be dispersed, and that power should be shared among different levels of government and other actors to promote greater accountability, participation, and effectiveness in policy making.

As an analytical framework, multi-level governance is used to study and understand the reality of governance in contemporary societies. This approach focuses on the ways in which governance is actually organized and conducted across different levels and sectors, and the relationships between different actors and institutions involved in governance.

In this study, we will use MLG as an analytical framework to investigate the case of Ukrainian governance and will look at the normative aspects to draft possible improvement suggestions.

#### **Vertical interactions in MLG**

The concept of MLG was introduced by Gary Marks at the beginning of the 1990s (Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996), targeting the institutional future of the EU. In this early view, multi-level governance was considered as a system of continuous negotiation among institutions at different territorial levels. The concept has expanded

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<sup>1</sup> *A group of blind people encounter an elephant and try to understand it by touching different parts. One person mistakenly believes they are touching a tree when they are actually touching the elephant's leg, while another person mistakenly claims it is a snake by touching the trunk. The parable highlights how humans tend to claim absolute truth based on their own limited perspectives, ignoring others' equally valid experiences. It originated in ancient India and emphasizes the importance of recognizing diverse viewpoints.*

further, as supra-national (e.g. international global governance) and sub-national (decentralization to the cities and communities) levels gained more and more importance globally.

While looking at the post-conflict or post-disaster recovery governance, supra-national vertical interactions are crucial. The United Nations (UN) and other international organizations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), often play an important role in coordinating post-disaster/conflict reconstruction efforts and shaping policies and decisions, of course interacting closely with the national governments of the affected countries (Jabareen 2013; Cogen and De Brabandere 2007; Hooghe and Marks 2010).

The sub-national level is also critical in recovery governance, as it is often closest to the communities affected by conflict or disaster and can therefore better understand their needs and respond to them effectively (Baser 2011). According to (Collier 2009), a bottom-up approach that empowers local communities to take part in the reconstruction process leads to more sustainable outcomes, as it creates a sense of ownership and investment in the recovery process. In addition Kern has shown that cooperation among different subnational levels (though e.g. transnational climate city networks) can speed up knowledge and technology transfer; and can lead to even faster international transformations, bypassing national level (in case of international cities networks).

Despite many studies highlighting the benefits of cooperation and coordination between different levels of governance, numerous government layers can also lead to confusion, delays, and conflicts (Hooghe, Marks, and Marks 2001). That is why scholars recognize the importance of establishing clear “rules of the game” defining roles and responsibilities, as well as vertical interactions and coordination mechanisms, such as intergovernmental agreements, joint policy-making bodies, and regular meetings and information-sharing (Stephenson 2013; Hooghe and Marks 2010; Bache, Bartle, and Flinders 2022).

### **Horizontal interactions in MLG**

Early MLG theory focused on vertical interactions between government institutions and was criticized for not considering non-state actors; since successful governance requires cooperation among different actors. To address this, horizontal interactions were added to include a range of actors such as government, private sector, civil society, academia, and citizens (Stephenson 2013).

Similar to the criticism of vertical interactions, horizontal interactions among multiple actors can also lead to confusion, delays, conflicts and significantly slow down the decision-making process (Ongaro 2015).

According to (Burt 2004), the increase of the density of the multiple actors’ network can be the possible way to improve the situation, by enhancing the flow of

information, resources and opportunities among actors and levels, leading to greater effectiveness, collaboration, innovation, and creativity by providing a diverse range of perspectives and ideas. This can be done by actively encourage the formation of new relationships and connections among actors, through events (conferences, events, forums), online spaces (such as digital platforms) and physical spaces (such as Living Labs, citizen science spaces and similar) (Bulkeley and Castán Broto 2013; Stephenson 2013)

Furthermore, Wolfram (Wolfram 2016) highlights the importance of working across levels and actors by recognizing, acknowledging and sustaining broker organizations. They can act as facilitators, providing technical assistance, building relationships, and coordinating activities. Usually, organizations are doing this job in an informal capacity. One proposed strategy to strengthen this role is to formalize such a role (Borgström 2019).

Creating formal mechanisms for cooperation is yet another option for effectiveness of the horizontal interactions' improvement. For example, creating multi-actors task forces or committees can help to promote cooperation and coordination between different actors (Borgström 2019).

### **III. Research questions, methods and approaches**

This study aims to map and analyze the ecosystem of national actors involved in the reconstruction of Ukraine. To achieve this, we address the following research questions:

- Who are the main actors involved in planning and acting on recovery strategies?
- What are the interactions among these actors in terms of Multi-Level Governance (MLG)?
- What potential improvements can be identified from an MLG perspective?

#### **3.1. Identification of actors in the emerging recovery governance**

In the initial phase of the research, we collected secondary data through desk research, including publications, news reports, official websites, and policy documents. We complemented these data with participatory observations and informal conversations during key events such as the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC 2022) in Lugano, the World Urban Forum (WUF 2022) in Katowice, the International Expert Conference on the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine (2022) in Berlin, and the ReBuild Ukraine Conference in Warsaw (2023). These sources helped us develop a preliminary understanding of the recovery governance system in Ukraine.

Based on this understanding, we constructed a background for this article and conducted basic stakeholder mapping. The stakeholders selected for further interviews

included national government, local government, civil society organizations, academia, private sector entities, and urbanist organizations. We conducted a total of 20 in-depth interviews (see Annex 1).

The interviews were conducted between November 2022 and May 2023. We used a semi-structured interview guide consisting of open-ended questions, allowing participants to provide detailed and in-depth responses. The interviews served two primary purposes:

- Identification of main recovery planning documents to identify actors involved in the planning process.
- Identification of main recovery action initiatives to identify actors involved in implementing recovery actions.

We focused on well-known cases and those developed by multiple organizations.

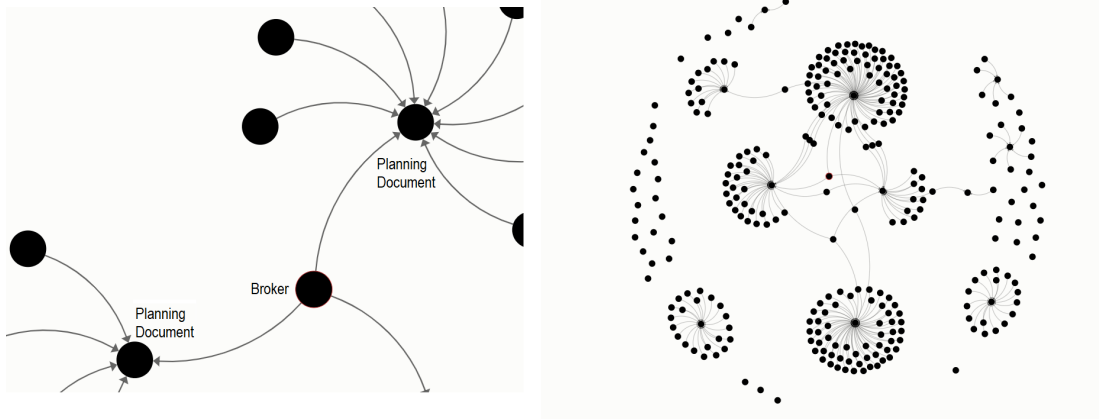
The interviews were conducted in person, by telephone, or via video conference, depending on the participants' preferences. They were conducted in the participants' native language and ranged in duration from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Following the initial research phase, we compiled a list of 10 planning documents and 14 action initiatives. We then identified the organizations involved in writing these documents and participating in the action initiatives. This resulted in a list of 351 actors.

### **3.2. Analysis of interactions among actors**

Interactions among organizations became evident as they were found to be associated with the same planning documents or action initiatives. To visualize these interactions, we employed the kumu.io software.

The visual representation and simple social network analysis allowed us to identify organizations that were involved in multiple documents/initiatives. These organizations can be considered brokers within the analyzed system (See fig.1). Additionally, we employed social network analysis (SNA), to identify influencers within the network.



**Figure 1. Visualization of the brokers in the mapped system.**

We utilized the Multi-Level Governance (MLG) framework to structure and analyze the collected data. The framework provided a comprehensive lens to understand the interplay between actors in the recovery governance system. We enriched this analysis with information collected from the interviews.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the MLG governance system, we conducted a sensemaking seminar with the interviewees. During the seminar, we presented the results generated from the analysis and incorporated feedback from the participants. This iterative process led to a simplified depiction of the MLG governance system, analogous to the story of the blind man and the elephant, providing a more profound understanding of the overall system.

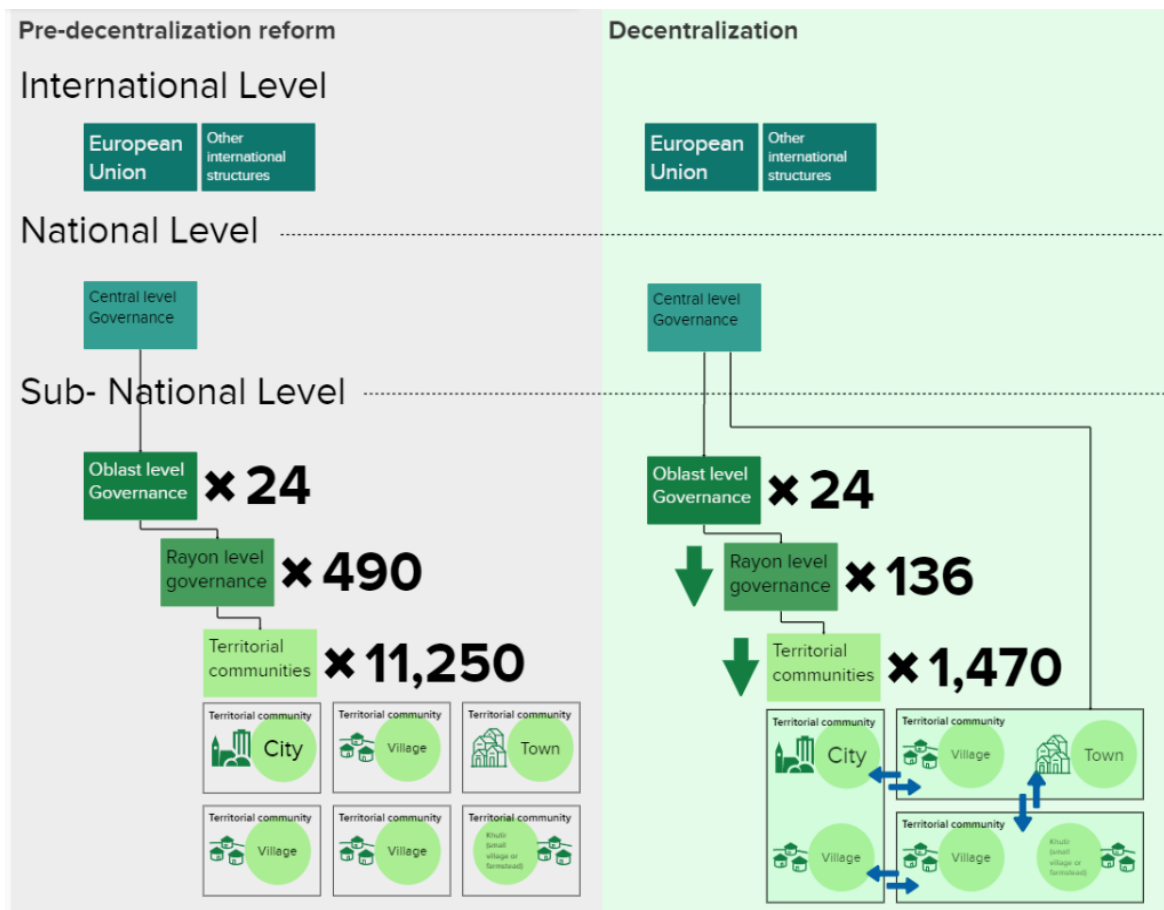
#### **IV. Background, marking the scene**

##### **4.1. Main governance structures in Ukraine and their transformation during the war.**

Since Ukraine's independence, the country has undergone a series of transformations, both gradual and accelerated, due to three revolutions (the 1990 Revolution on Granit, the 2004/05 Orange Revolution, and the 2013/14 Revolution of Dignity or Euromaidan).

In terms of horizontal interplays of MLG, this transformation has been described as a change from a society that values passive acceptance of government actions, respect for hierarchy and bureaucracy (so called Homo Sovieticus by Zinov'ev 1983) to a society that values horizontal social links and independent decision making (sometimes called as Homo Dignus, after Revolution of Dignity) (Boulègue, Mathieu; Lutsevych, Orysia 2020; Pesenti 2020; Asmolov 2022; Romanova, Valentyna 2022; Shapovalova and Burlyuk 2018; Udovik 2017; Sigov, Constantin 2022).

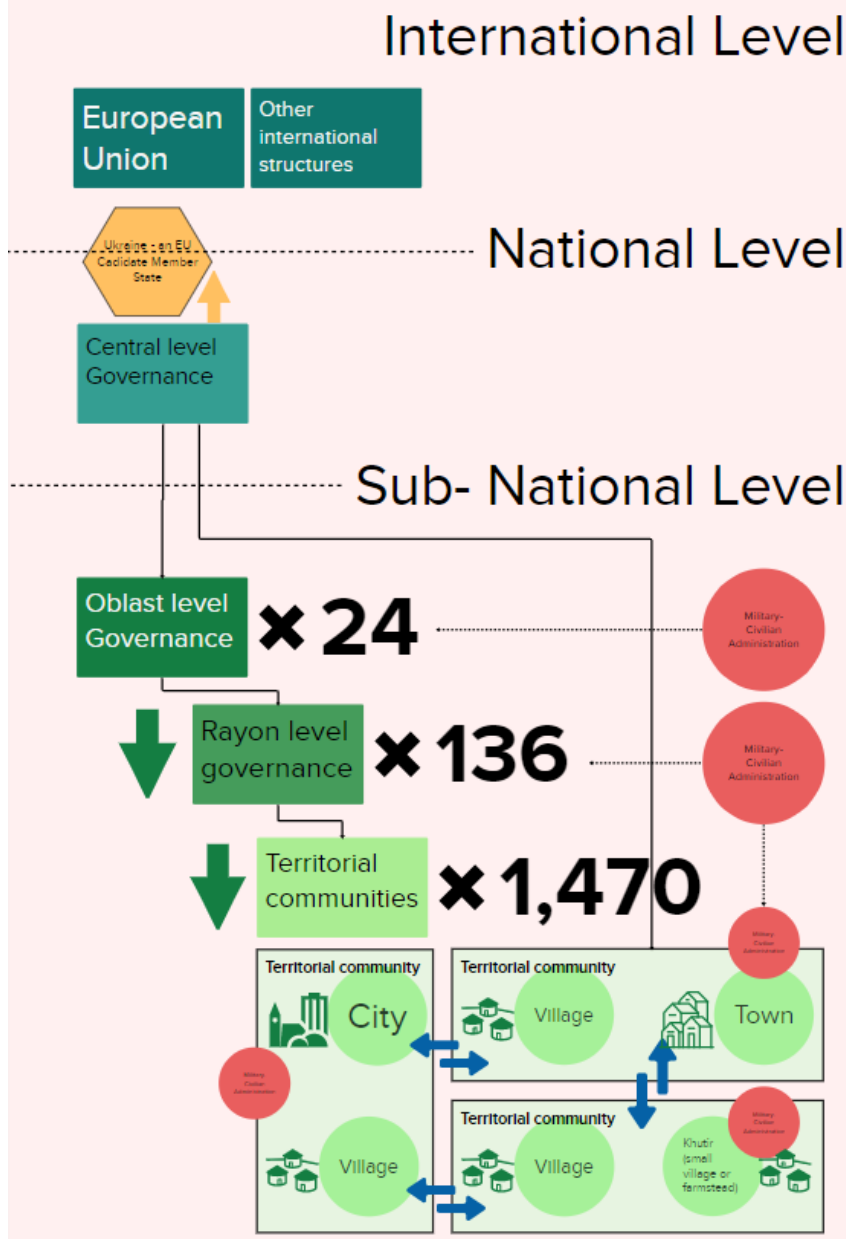
In terms of vertical interactions of MLG, the main transformation trends have been a decentralization (subnational level transformation) (see fig.2) and focus on EU integration (supranational level aspirations) (see fig.3)



**Figure 2. Simplified representation of vertical government structure in Ukraine**

Ukraine has three levels of sub-national government: (1) oblasts, (2) rayons, and (3) territorial communities. The top level includes 24 oblasts, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and two cities with special status: Kyiv and Sevastopol. The middle level includes 136 rayons, and the last level includes 1470 territorial communities. In 2015-2021, as a part of national decentralization reform, the third level underwent a significant consolidation, forming empowered territorial communities into self-governing units with independent budgets and locally elected representatives (Romanova and Umland 2019).

## Martial Law



**Figure 3. Simplified representation of vertical government structure in Ukraine during the war time (martial law).**

Due to the Russian invasion, martial law was introduced in Ukraine, temporarily putting military-civilian administrators appointed by the President of Ukraine on top of the subnational governance structure, including most territorial communities (see red circles).

Ukraine has been on the path to EU integration for over 20 years, but this agenda gained special attention after the Orange Revolution (2004) and the Euromaidan (2014), and further accelerated when Ukraine gained EU candidate status in June 17, 2022 (Sologoub 2022) (See EU is colored orange (important) among other supra-national actors).

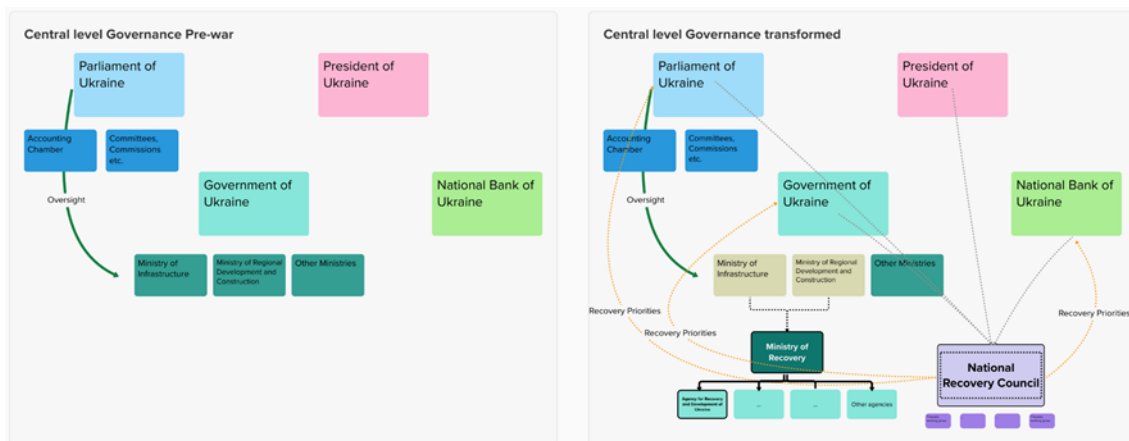
All these trends have become even more important during war, as decentralization and horizontal social interlinks have been credited for successful resistance against the Russian invasion (Romanova, Valentyna 2022).

Meanwhile, recent EU candidate status and positive societal outlook at the EU accession, gives clear direction to supranational development. Thus, some researchers suggest combining Ukraine's recovery process with EU integration. For example, (Sologoub, Ilona; Weder di Mauro, Beatrice; Gorodnichenko, Yuriy 2022) are proposing to create a Ukraine Recovery and European Integration Agency that will both lead the recovery process and prepare Ukraine for EU accession (the agency would 'sunset' on the date of EU accession).

Since the beginning of war, the government has made several transformations on the central level with the aim to ensure strong coordination and governance of recovery and development projects. First, it established the **National Recovery Council** as an advisory body under the President of Ukraine and is chaired by three co-heads: the Prime Minister of Ukraine, the Speaker of the Parliament of Ukraine, and the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine - bringing executive and legislative branches of power together to work on recovery and development agenda. The Council's work was organized into 23 working groups, where over 2000 various stakeholders had an opportunity to participate (experts, CSOs, academia) in developing the National Recovery Plan.

Next, the most recent change on the central governmental level is the transformation of two major ministries into one "super" ministry: the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Ukraine was merged with the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine into one Ministry of Communities, Territories and Infrastructure development, or in short - **Ministry for the Restoration** (MTU, 2023) (see fig. 4). This new ministry has a complex mandate ranging from decentralization, building and construction standards to road, ports, airports development etc. Such a transformation puts in the hands of one ministry nearly the full scope of policy development and implementation mandates that are required to ensure recovery projects, while the Government, represented by the Prime Minister, is responsible for planning the full-scale recovery and development.

Lastly, the Ministry of Restoration also established **The State Agency for the Restoration**. It is a project agency that, like any state agency, can work not only with budget money, but also with other funds. The main task of the Agency is the coordination and support with reconstruction projects, whether they are financed with the state budget or other financial sources.



**Figure 4. Simplified representation of Emerging recovery governance on the central level in Ukraine.**

While this information about transformation on the central level government is relatively easy to find and navigate, what are the transformations and actors on the different MLG levels vertically and horizontally. Keeping in mind the previously described background on horizontalization, decentralization and EU integration; it is logical to assume that we will see many more actors engaged with recovery governance. Who they are and what their relationship and position in the MLG constellations will be explored further in this article.

## V. Results

### 5.1. Actors mapping

#### Governmental Actors

National governmental actors play a central role in the recovery governance according to all the respondents. They serve the coordination function, ensure international and state actors' coordination, develop guiding visions and act on implementing them.

The major efforts in terms of planning were made by the national government actors in connection to the Ukraine Recovery Conference, Lugano, July 2022. Just a few months after the start of the war, the National Recovery Council was created with a task to develop a **National Recovery Plan** to be presented in the conference. *"This was the first and very powerful attempt to co-create a country strategy involving as many actors as possible"* was commented by the respondent from the national government. Indeed, the work of the National Recovery Council has been done in 24 working groups involving all the Ministries and more than 2000 national and international experts and

stakeholders (see section 4.2). The plan has become the main reference document regarding Ukraine's planning on national and international levels; highlighted by all interviewees.

In terms of actions, national government actors oversee rebuilding Ukraine from the first day, whether critical infrastructure or homes of people. "It is impossible to name one initiative out of millions" was added by the respondent. At the same time, several respondents highlighted **UNITED24**, created by the President of Ukraine to mobilize funding, in particular donations, for specific recovery projects and development of **DREAM** - the digital system to manage recovery in a transparent way. *"The idea is to create a platform where everyone can see everything about reconstruction in Ukraine"*, was commented by the respondent.

Subnational governmental actors are also present in the governance picture. Being the closest to the actual destruction and facing impact of war, they are the key actors of recovery. Understanding such an important role, several sub-national governmental actors started to develop their own vision and master plans of recovery. Interviewees mentioned efforts of Bucha, Irpin, Mykolaiv, Chernigiv and number of oblasts.

However, most of the interviewees agreed that the **Kharkiv Master Plan could be the exemplary planning** document. Being the second biggest city in Ukraine, Kharkiv attracted the attention of world-famous architect Norman Foster, Arup and various UN agencies that are now working on the new Master Plan for the city.

Interviewees also shared examples of other cities collaborating with their contact cities and contact countries (the case of Mykolaiv and Denmark) abroad. Here, they highlighted the role of Cities, Territorial Communities, Oblast and Rayon's associations in such 'sister-cities' cross regional and transnational cooperation. **Cities4Cities/United4UA** platform was discussed as one of the good examples of the action initiatives, uniting Ukraine with EU counterparts to enable such relationships and exchange. All mapped governmental planning documents and action initiatives have been summarized in Table 1

**Table 1. Governmental planning documents and actions initiatives identified.**

Planning Document	Details	Level
National Recovery Plan	Document envisioning post-war recovery for the whole country, developed by the National Recovery Council (an advisory body under the President of Ukraine) that is comprised of 24 working groups chaired by the Heads of Parliamentary Committees and includes representatives of executive power, mobilizing more than 2,500 experts, and business and civil society representatives. Presented during the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC 2022) in Lugano	National
Kharkiv Master Plan	Master Plan developed jointly by Norman Foster, Arup, UN agencies and local Kharkiv architects on invitation by the city administration	Subnational

Action Initiatives	Details	Level
UNITED24	The platform launched by the President of Ukraine and Ministry of the Digitalization, as the main venue for collecting charitable donations in support of Ukraine's recovery	National
DREAM	Digital Platform developed by the Ministry of Restoration, Agency of Restoration, Ministry of Digitalization, RISE coalition	National
Cities4Cities/United4UA	The platform that stimulates partnerships between municipalities in Ukraine and in other countries for short- and long-term revitalization of institutional, societal, entrepreneurial, and physical structures, developed by the Association of Ukrainian cities with EU counterparts	Subnational, going supranational

### Private sector organizations

The private sector was highlighted as a key player in post-conflict recovery in our interviews, as it is seen as a major source of funding for reconstruction and a crucial component of a country's new economy. Despite not being prominently featured at the Lugano and other high-level conferences, businesses arrange parallel events during each of those conferences *“being less visible, but not less important”*, as was commented by the respondent from the business.

There are not many publications on the topic of the future of Ukraine coming from individual companies. However, there are visions produced by the business coalitions

and associations (e.g. **Memorandum of the Coalition of Business Communities for Modernization** see table 2).

According to a private sector respondent, Ukrainian companies are more visible in actions than in written plans and visions: "*We are acting on the recovery of the country, not writing about it*". Companies that despite facing economic challenges caused by war continue to pay taxes, maintain jobs, and hire new employees are already making a significant contribution to the current and future of the country according to the respondent. In addition to the existing companies, a number of new companies that aim to address the recovery and reconstruction demand emerged, for example companies like **TerraMonada** that are creating modular homes that can be installed in 5 hours.

The IT sector is noteworthy. Most of the IT companies were able to maintain almost all their contracts during wartime conditions, according to the government respondent. Currently, IT companies and government partnerships are seen as one of the important partnerships for Ukraine's among respondents from government and business. For example, respondents highlighted, collaboration of EVO IT company with the government to create a major international digital marketplace (**Made with bravery**), allowing Ukrainian companies to sell globally.

Finally, construction companies are among important actors in the physical reconstruction process. Not surprisingly, around 300 companies from 22 countries have registered to participate in the Rebuild Ukraine conference, which was focused on the physical rebuilding of Ukraine. In our interviews, Saga construction company and partners planning work in **Trostanets Inclusive train station** has been highlighted as an example of the current type of reconstruction action initiatives.

**Table 2. Private sector planning documents and actions initiatives identified.**

Planning Documents	Details	Level
Memorandum of the Coalition of Business Communities for Modernization	Coalition of Business Communities for Modernization of Ukraine unites 77 leading business associations to promote, advocate, and implement the agreed principles of post-war economic policy.	National
<b>Action Initiative</b>		
Made with bravery	The official international marketplace where one can find items made by Ukrainian businesses. Part of the profit is transferred to United24 to reconstruct Ukraine.	National
A brick for the family	a Ukrainian social startup founded in 2022 with the main mission to build quality housing for Ukrainian people who lost their home in the war.	Subnational
Trostenets Inclusive train station	The reconstruction projects of the Trostenets railway station and the station square	Subnational

### Civil organizations, grassroots, and individuals

A large number of Ukrainian civil groups have formed coalitions to propose plans and visions for recovery of Ukraine. The largest coalition (Lugano Coalition) was created around the first Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano. During side event, coalition presented its own plan - **Manifesto of recovery**, affirming the vital importance of civil groups involved in efforts to rebuild Ukraine's infrastructure and institutions, and contribute to sustainable reforms; not just as watchdogs, but as true partners throughout the process (See Lugano Manifesto in table 3).

Another coalition emerged after Lugano, **RISE**, united more than 50 organizations to promote integrity and participation in the recovery process and published its own vision of recovery - Principles for Ukraine's Reconstruction and Modernization. Currently RISE is growing in size and importance and developing with the government of Ukraine a digital DREAM system mentioned earlier.

Ukrainian environmental organizations have also formed coalitions to develop their own visions for reconstruction, emphasizing the importance of the environmental dimension of the planned recovery and development activities (see **Green Reconstruction of Ukraine** in table 3).

In terms of action initiatives, there is a growing number of cleaning and rebuilding volunteer initiatives (such as **Dobrobrat** and **BUR**). While Dobrobrat emerged after

ruddian invasion in 2023, Building Ukraine Together (BUR) dates back to 2014. Over the course of 8 years, the BUR team not only helped tens of thousands of Ukrainians rebuild their homes but also created a real community around them with mentorship programs, training, camps, toolkits, and more.

Meanwhile urban makers groups are organizing repair parties, hackathons, workshops (see e.g. **TOLOCAR**) in order to help local communities to rebuild what has been lost in the war.

Additionally, many individuals have taken it upon themselves to rebuild their own homes, towns and country in general, by volunteering in a number of initiatives at the same time. “Ukraine turning into a beehive of individuals working on common good” was commented by the active individual respondent. But it is impossible to cover all those initiatives in one single article.

**Table 3. Civil groups planning documents and actions initiatives identified**

Planning Documents	Details	Level
United Civil Society Manifesto (Lugano Manifesto)	More than 100 Ukrainian civil groups presented Manifesto at the Lugano conference, laying down their version of the recovery principles, red lines and priority tasks for Ukraine’s recovery.	National
Green Reconstruction of Ukraine: Position of Civil Society	More than 50 Ukrainian civil groups working on environmental aspects of Ukraine’s recovery.	National
The institutional architecture of Ukraine’s Recovery: proposals of RISE Ukraine Coalition	The RISE coalition consists of more than 40 Ukrainian and international civil society organizations. With this document, RISE aspires to start the discussion for a meaningful conversation both among the participants of the RISE coalition and the general public.	National
Action Initiatives	Details	
Building Ukraine Together (BUR)	Volunteering rebuilding groups and organizations.	Subnational
Dobrobat		
TOLOCAR	A Tolocar is a converted van that offers the possibilities of a makerspace or fablab on wheels.	Subnational

## Urbanist, Architects, Designers

“Rebuilding under shelling is a crazy thing to do... But here we as architects and urbanists have a chase to jump in before developers that build fast and cheap....we could try to change the usual ways things are done and build back better...”

Like many Ukrainian organizations, architecture, designers and urbanism studios, have most commercial projects on hold, some staff fighting on the front line and the rest spread around different countries. At the same time, rebuilding needs make those types of organizations among the most important players in the ecosystem of Ukrainian recovery.

Our interviews have mentioned a number of very interesting initiatives, but among them there were few that gained the most of attention.

In the first days of war, the Architectural Chamber of the National Union of Architects of Ukraine, the National Union of Architects of Ukraine - NSAU, the NGO Ukrainian BIM Community, and other architectural bureaus and architects compiled the text, which they called the "**Manifesto of Architects of Ukraine**" where they united to ensure that the new architecture of Ukraine will be modern, European, based on the continuity of ukrainian traditions, without typical Soviet narratives and forms.

"**What shapes the future of Ukrainian cities?**" is a visionary draft of the strategy or even methodology for the urban and community spatial development created by Restart Ukraine. The initiative also emerged in the first days of the war, after the Facebook post of the Ukrainian urbanist calling for friends to unite on the common goal to develop a roadmap of Ukraine's recovery.

Several action initiatives are emerging around practical rebuilding. For example, the METALAB urban planning laboratory and partners launched project **CO-HATY**, to create comfortable and decent housing for people who were forced to leave their homes due to the Russian invasion. They are transforming abandoned houses into a comfortable space for internally displaced people; with successful pilots in Ivano-Frankivsk city.

**Ro3kvit**, a coalition of 80 experts in architecture from Ukraine and abroad, also emerged in the first months of the war and created a number of capacity building programme. The interviews mentioned their webinar course with the New European Bauhaus, ReThink, ACE, CoME, Eurocity, Housing Europe.

**Table 4. Urbanists documents and actions initiatives identified**

Planning Documents	Details	Level
Manifesto of Ukrainian Architects	The Architectural Chamber of NSAU and around 100 other architects, urbanist, and designers' organizations drafted their own vision of Ukrainian recovery.	National
What shapes the future of Ukrainian cities?	ReStart Ukraine coalition	
Action Initiative	Details	Level
CO-HATY	a co-housing project for people who lost their homes due to war.	Subnational
Ro3kvit Capacity building Course	Kharkiv School of Architecture, New Housing Policy and around 50 architects, urbanists, and designers from Ukraine and abroad working on envisioning the future of Ukraine. Running number of capacity building programmes in forms of webinars, seminar and now #NewEuropeanBauhaus initiative for Ukrainian municipality.	National, going supranational

## Universities, Academia, Think Tanks

Universities, academia, and think tanks play an important role in Ukraine's recovery as a driving force for ideas, innovations, and knowledge to "building back better" Ukraine. *"The new economy of Ukraine has to be a knowledge economy and thus the role of education and science is enormous here"* was mentioned by the respondent from the government.

The Ukrainian research community is supporting developments of plans and ideas as part of the National Council, with a focus on of the scientific sector rather than the country as a whole: *"Ukrainian scientists see the postwar period as a crucial moment to revamp the research system, with this sentiment reflected in their plans, visions, and papers"*.

Some relatively new universities and think tanks, such as the Kyiv School of Economics, the Ukrainian Catholic University, National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" went beyond focus on the research sector and started working on science-based visions for the country's development, often in partnership with international colleagues and institutions. For example, as early as 7 Apr 2022, Kyiv School of Economics and international scientists under the **CEPR research network** umbrella put forward a proposal of Blueprint for the Reconstruction of Ukraine. **"Ukraine After the Victory. Imagining Ukraine in 2030"** is yet another proposal for Ukraine's recovery developed by National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" and other think tanks researchers and practitioners.

In terms of actions, many Ukrainian universities and research institutions have shown resilience and solidarity during the war. They welcomed displaced students, faculty, and researchers. Despite the war, many universities have continued to admit a similar number of full-time students, by adopting hybrid or online format and thus, acting as the main driver behind developing talents for the future of Ukraine, according to the respondents from the university.

Curriculum changes have also been made to be more relevant to the future recovery. For example, the Kharkiv School of Architecture moving to Lviv (**KHSA In Displacement**) refocused the curriculum to the post-war reconstruction.

Finally, an exponential increase in collaboration with international partners has been mentioned by the interviews as the main backbone for the future knowledge economy development in Ukraine. Examples include the **Ukrainian Global University, and the international campuses of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy**. All those documents and action initiatives have been summarized in Table 5.

**Table 5. Academia planning documents and actions initiatives identified**

Planning Documents	Details	Level
Ukraine After the Victory	Document envisioning future of Ukraine, written by a coalition of around 50 different organizations	National
A Blueprint for the Reconstruction of Ukraine	Document envisioning the future of Ukraine, written by researchers under the CEPR umbrella.	Supranational

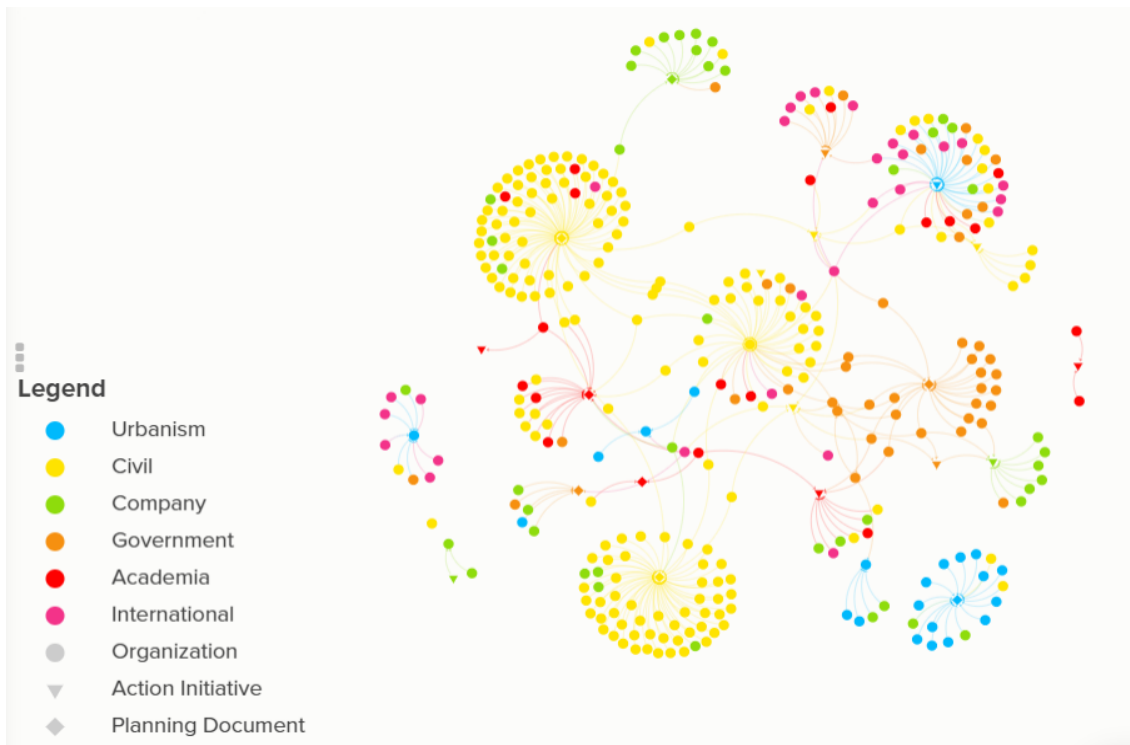
  

Action initiative	Details	
Ukrainian Global University	is a vast network of educational institutions that join efforts to rebuild Ukraine by supporting Ukrainian high school and university students, scholars, tutors by providing them with scholarships, fellowships and postgraduate programs.	National, going supra-national
The international campuses of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy	Kyiv-Mohyla Academy opens its campuses in Europe and North America	Subnational, going supranational
KHSA In Displacement	When Russia declared war against Ukraine, the faculty and students of the Kharkiv School of Architecture (KhSA) were forced to flee from Kharkiv to Lviv	Subnational

## ***5.2. Attempt to see the elephant: analyzing interactions among actors***

### **5.2.1. Interactions from the social network analysis perspectives**

In the results section, we presented a comprehensive list of 10 planning documents and 14 action initiatives that were identified during our research. By examining these documents and initiatives, we were able to identify the organizations involved in writing the planning documents and participating in the action initiatives or coalitions. This resulted in a total of 351 actors associated with the mapped recovery governance system in Ukraine (see fig.5).



**Figure 5. Visualization of networks of organizations that are parts of mapped planning documents, action initiatives and coalitions.** See the full version [here](#)

Furthermore, we see that many organizations are associated with more than one planning document or action initiatives, acting as a glue or “brokers” in the system (that have outdegree more than 2)<sup>2</sup> (see full list in the [Annex1](#)).

By looking only at the relations among those organizations in the system, we can “trimm” the system to the more simplified version (fig. 6).

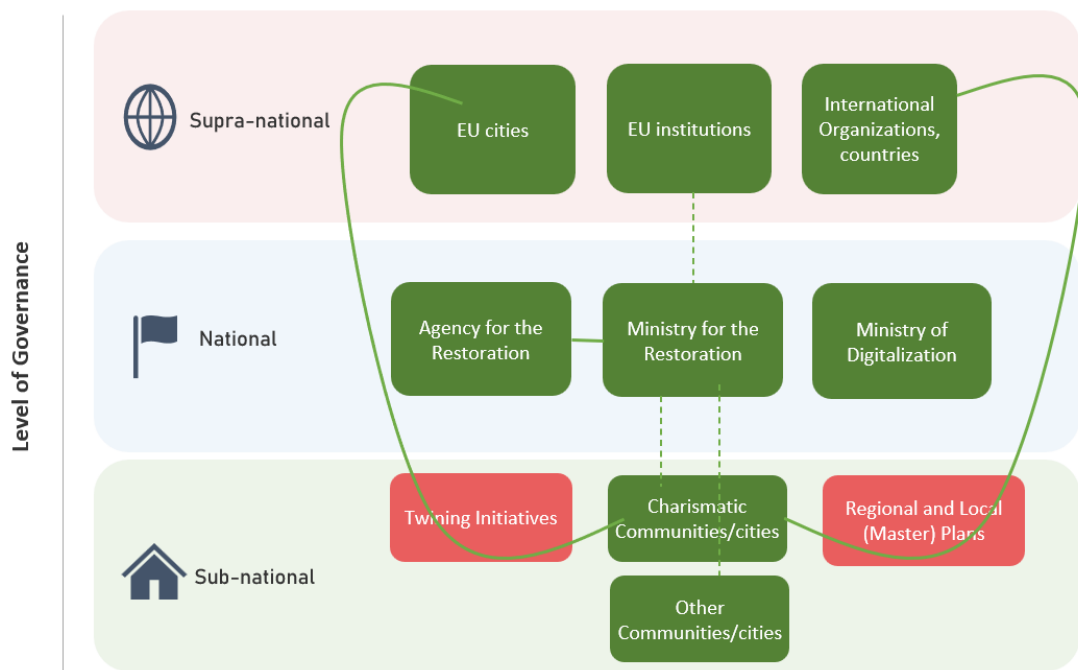
<sup>2</sup> Outdegree - Outdegree measures the number of outgoing connections for an element. In general, elements with high outdegree can reach a high number of elements and spark the flow of information across a network.



### 5.2.2. Vertical and Horizontal interactions, though interviews and sensemaking workshop

#### Vertical interactions

The complex picture we have observed reveals numerous connections, indicating a highly intricate and diverse system. The interviews and subsequent sensemaking seminar allowed to generate a simplified picture of the emerging recovery governance (see fig.7).



**Figure 7. Visualization of the vertical interactions in the mapped and discussed recovery governance in Ukraine.**

On a vertical scale, the Ministry of Reconstruction and the Agency of Restoration, as well as the Ministry of Digitalization within the national government stand out as prominent and increasingly influential actors. The first two are straightforward options, since their mandate is specifically focused on reconstruction. The Ministry of Digitalization “shows - up” both in mapping, interviews and sensemaking exercises proving importance of the “smart-digital” aspect of the reconstruction and also the influence and power of this relatively new Ministry.

The majority of interviewees agreed that the recovery process should be led by the national government; as commented by one of the respondents, "Recovery should be centralized since its speed, quality, and effectiveness require centralization."

At the same time, during the sensemaking workshop, respondents highlighted that many actions are taking place at the local government level. As expressed by a respondent from the local government, "It is easier to address visible and tangible

needs, such as rebuilding kindergartens, rather than waiting for everyone to agree on a 'common religion' of the National Recovery Plan."

We also can observe more direct connections between Ukrainian cities and European Union cities through platforms like cities4cities/United 4 Ukraine, or directly with international organizations, charitable foundations, and so on (e.g., the case of Kharkiv)(see fig 7).

The national government respondent stated that cities and communities indeed were encouraged to collaborate directly with other countries on humanitarian and reconstruction actions. One respondent said, "the Government of Ukraine has requested foreign countries to "adopt a Ukrainian city" and work with it directly. We already have a clear pair of Mykolaiv and Denmark, along with many smaller city-to-city collaborations".

However, this approach was criticized by some respondents. While some "charismatic" cities are actively engaged in this process and have received significant attention from donor communities or twinning cities (e.g., the case of Kharkiv), many small cities and towns, especially, have yet to receive any attention or sufficient support. This was discussed during the interviews as an issue related to the city's size, media attention, the charismatic nature of the Mayor, the capacity of the authorities, and even fast road connections (e.g., internationals visit Irpin due to its one-hour easy connection from Kyiv or Lviv), rather than considering the recovery needs of the city.

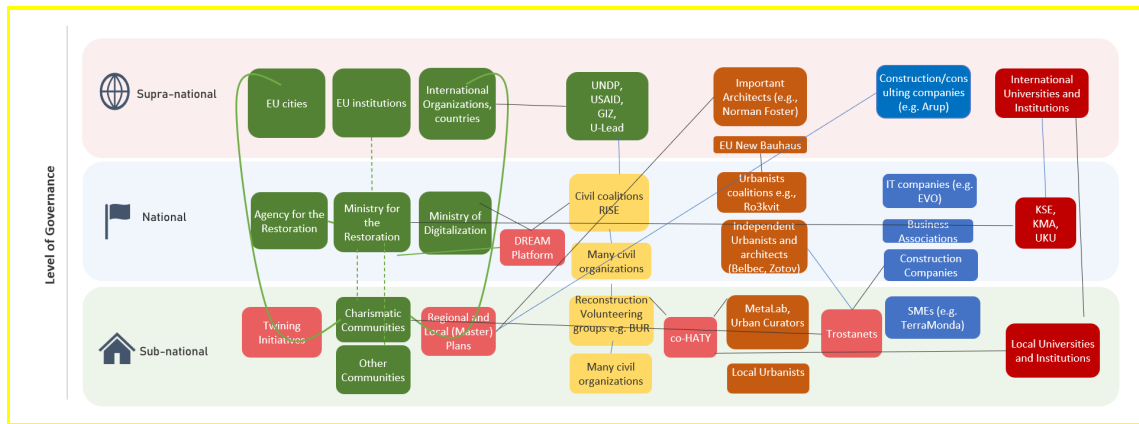
Regarding the application and receipt of funds from the state budget and international donors to finance local recovery projects, smaller communities also fear receiving less support overall, as mentioned by a respondent. This fear stems from limited capacities, including human resources, training, and experience, not only in writing grant proposals but also in ensuring the quality implementation of projects.

There was a general fear for "chaotic" and unequal reconstruction in different communities. In this regard, creating national reconstruction guidelines and rules, as well as straightening direct connections between local and national governments were discussed in the sensemaking workshop. Currently there are a number of institutional connections between communities and national government: regional military administrations, local self-government bodies and communal enterprises are sending reconstruction needs petitions to the Ministry for the Restoration; while the Agency is further looking at the petitions. What was indicated in the workshop is a need to create a specific forum, structure, agency in the Ministry for the Restoration that would be dedicated to constant "listening" and communication with the communities; creating better mechanisms of this communications and interactions and co-creating wider reconstruction vision from the bottom-up.

### **Horizontal interactions**

The inclusion of non-government actors in the system adds another layer of complexity. We observe the presence of civil societies, private organizations,

urbanists/architects, and academia operating at different levels: subnational, national, and supranational (see fig. 8).



**Figure 8. Visualization of the multi-actors interactions in the mapped and discussed recovery governance in Ukraine.**

In our sensemaking workshop, it becomes evident that civil organizations constitute the majority of actors involved. Among them, the coalition known as RISE holds a prominent position and serves as the voice of civil society. RISE maintains close ties with established structures within the national government and actively contributes to the development of the new digital DREAM platform in collaboration with responsible Ministries.

While there are numerous connections among these civil organizations, the number of connections with other actors is comparatively fewer. During our sense-making seminar, we discovered strong connections between civil organizations and various international donors and development organizations. The UNDP, USAID, GIZ, and ULEAD emerged as the most prominent organizations among these connections.

Additionally, urbanists, architects and designers play a significant role, as recognized by the interviewees. However, their connections with other actors in the system are relatively weak in this exercise. Among them, the Ukrainian-international specialists coalition of Ro3kvit demonstrates stronger ties with European Union institutions like the New European Bauhaus rather than the national ecosystem.

Ukrainian - international coalition like Ro3kvit and cooperation with EU urbanism initiatives were seen as positive developments. At the same time, the invitation for the Norman Foster and Arup company to develop master plan for Kharkiv was criticized, mentioning the need for caution in dealing with international partners, emphasizing the importance of local expertise and vision for rebuilding the country: "While foreign architects may and should certainly take part, it is us, the architects who have grown up here in Ukraine, who know our country's nuances and are closer to the people's vision for post-reconstruction, should lead the process...".

Moving on to private companies, our mapping exercise reveals their relatively disconnected status within the system. It is through business associations and their

unity, such as Memorandum of Business Coalitions, that organized connections to the system are established. The exceptions are construction companies. Those seem to have better connections to the reconstruction network, at least we see that in the case of the Trostyanets train station and square reconstruction. However those connections are more difficult to trace and concerns have been raised regarding the mechanisms used to select these actors for reconstruction projects, such as Trostyanets.

Lastly, academia, think tanks, and similar entities are also present in the simplified picture. Local university institutions undertake numerous micro-level initiatives in collaboration with international partners, primarily within the European Union, through specialized exchange programs that emerged after the war. Our social network analysis and sense-making exercise highlight three universities that hold significant influence in the system: Kyiv School of Economics, Kyiv Mohyla Academy, and Ukrainian Catholic University. These universities exhibit stronger connections to initiatives at other levels and the national government's endeavors.

The diversity of actors and visions poses a significant challenge for creating a common plan and taking unified actions, as mentioned by the government respondent. This is where coalitions like RISE can help ensure that the voices of actors are heard, according to the government respondent. Additionally, a digital system and platform like DREAM, can play a role in addressing this challenge. The government respondent commented that the new IT system will enable monitoring of the entire project cycle, from design to audit of finished facilities, with the principle of "everyone sees everything".

In this regard, the respondent from the civil society mentioned, Electronic Management System can only communicate e.g. a number of destroyed schools, it does not give a space to questions "will we need to rebuild all the schools we had? Or should we build one school for the whole town since almost all the kids are abroad? or should we start a new digital education hub? And what kind of initiatives are already innovating on this in our city? And this is something that we all as a society have to discuss."

While the majority agrees that the National Government, along with the National Recovery Council, the new Recovery Ministry, and Agency, should lead the process, many doubt the government's capacity to manage such a complex multi-actor process, especially considering the ongoing challenges. For instance, the National Recovery Plan is referred to as a huge co-creation success, it involved 24 working groups with more than 2,500 experts, business representatives, and civil society representatives. However, concerns were raised by civil organizations representatives regarding the transparency of inclusion in these groups and the inclusive and structured nature of meetings conducted through numerous Zoom calls.

The need for multi-actor participatory planning has been often discussed in the interviews and also in the sensemaking workshop.

## VI. Conclusions and Discussion

To bring clarity to the post-conflict recovery muddle, this study attempted to make sense of the emerging recovery governance picture in Ukraine, using a Multi-Level Governance framework.

**First of all, it showed that the picture is complex and crowded,** similar to other international cases (O'Driscoll 2018). In this complex muddle, we could see a number of actors (Governmental, private, civil, academic) interacting horizontally and vertically, whether by participating in the planning space or practically acting on the field.

**Second, the article showed the multi-level nature of the recovery project.** It shows that planning and acting on recovery is happening on both national, subnational and supra-national levels. It highlights the importance of the sub-national level actors, but it also showed that the governance constellation tends to have rather centralized logic; where the Ministry for the Restoration and other National government actors are in lead.

**Third, this article showed the multi-actor nature of MLG constellations.** In addition to the national government actors, non-governmental actors are developing their own plans for Ukraine's future and are already acting and innovating in the recovery field. The study shows a number of horizontal interactions organized in clusters (coalitions) among different actors. However, often coalitions do not interact among themselves, as well as a number of actors are less connected to the mapped network.

**Thus, the MLG of recovery in Ukraine has rather ambiguous settings.** On the one hand it shows characteristics of decentralization, while on the other it represents a rather centralized machine. It shows multi-actors' nature, but also shows the number of coalitions and actors being disconnected.

**In general, we see that the current governance constellation does not seem to fully benefit from multi-level and multi-actor potential that exist in the system.**

One possible way to sustain well-functioning of the current constellation **vertically** is by establishing clear national recovery guidelines, as well as interactions and coordination mechanisms, such as intergovernmental agreements (Hooghe & Marks, 2003), joint policy-making bodies (Jacqué & Menon, 2002), and regular meetings and information-sharing (Tawil, 2008) or "listening" agency under Ministry for the Restoration, as was mentioned in the sensemaking workshop. This type of structure would enforce multi-level governance dynamics, providing both top-down and bottom-up interaction mechanisms.

We also see the enormous potential to build on already established city-to-city projects and ties with EU cities. This could be the way to softly include Ukrainian cities into the EU urban governance system, following the logic of transnational cities networks (Carmichael 2004; Kern and Bulkeley 2009; Fuhr, Hickmann, and Kern 2018; Kern 2019).

**Horizontally, the current constellation could better use the benefit from multi-actor energy in the system.** Active civil society, committed private sector and motivated academia in addition to a powerful network of individuals are *“turning Ukraine into a beehive of individual bees working on common good”*. Indeed, around 80% of the population is somehow involved in volunteering activities right now (Rating 2022). This is something that researchers observe as the transition from Homo Sovieticus to Homo Dignus and we depict here in a dense network of horizontal connections. And this energy needs to be carefully channeled into Ukraine’s recovery project.

Another way to improve the system is by supporting so-called brokers, as described by (Wolfram 2016; Borgström 2019). This study did identify the number of brokers in the network that we have mapped. At the same time, it is important to note that the study is explorative and mapped scratched parts of the network. Expanding this analysis further would provide better suggestions on “brokers that would be able to “glue” the system even further.

The constellation can be improved by the establishment of “spaces” for actors to interact and learn in real time about each other's activities, ensuring synergies and observing so that there is no fragmentation, duplication or even contradicting actions. Digital platforms, such as the Unified Electronic Management System for the Reconstruction by RISE can be a possible connecting space. At the same time, the way the system is planned right now, is to increase transparency rather than specific projects rather than multi-level actor’s dynamics.

But also this space needed to generate different types of multi-actors discussions: instead of typing in details to the earlier prepared national framework or the Electronic Management System e.g. a number of destroyed schools, there is a need for a space to question “will we need to rebuild all the schools we had? Or should we build one school for the whole town since almost all the kids are abroad? or should we start a new digital education hub? And what kind of initiatives are already innovating on this in our city?”

Instead of attempts to stretch National Recovery Planning, by involving yet more actors, the local bottom-up process could be an alternative “space” for such discussion and ideas co-creation. The local process could be not about identifying what has been damaged, how much it cost and who will get a contract to build it; but provide a space for innovating to “building back better”. EU examples of Living Labs, deep demonstrations, citizen science initiatives, and similar, in combination with Ukrainian practices of public budgeting worth exploring for the case of bottom-up recovery.

This process would require a new role of local public administration, as argued by (Lund 2018). This means providing the opportunities, arenas, and power for civic networks to form and act. While (Siriani 2010) presents several examples of enabling local public administrations, he also warns of the need for a cultural change in many public organizations before this becomes mainstream practice.

As argued by (Abbott et al. 2015) such a local bottom-up process does not always need to be led by the local public authorities. Spaces, platforms, and areas for discussions and co-creation could be facilitated by other organizations (International organizations, Academia). This goes in line with current debates on the concepts of orchestration of collective actions (Abbott et al. 2015).

At the same time, there needs to be national guiding principles and “clear rules of the game” to ensure that this process is accessible for all the communities and the results of the process can feed into the national reconstruction structures ; since there seems to be an agreement that the national government should be leading this, at least in this study.

### **Final remarks**

It is important to acknowledge that mapping a complex system is a challenging task. The system is constantly evolving and emerging, making it difficult to capture all its intricacies accurately.

By treating the map as a living document and open for collective inputs, we can continuously update and expand it. This dynamic approach allows us to include new actors, documents, initiatives, and observe how they interact and form new constellations within the system.

However, it is essential to consider that adding more details to the model might not necessarily bring more clarity. There is a fine balance between providing sufficient information and overwhelming the model with unnecessary intricacies. It is crucial to exercise judgment and prioritize relevant factors that contribute significantly to the system's dynamics.

In navigating these challenges, drawing on the literature of multi-level governance proves valuable. Applying this approach to the initial messy mapping allows us to initiate discussions and formulate basic recommendations based on the available information.

Finally adding sensemaking exercise, and bringing knowledge back to the community of the interview respondents, allowed to simplify and thus, enrich the mapping picture significantly. As Donella Meadows (2008), notes that a system is not just the sum of its parts, and just by looking at the actors map we would not see the “elephant”. To gain a comprehensive understanding, we must continually seek for the collective interpretation of results.

In addition, it is worth noting that this explorative article could also serve as a base in developing a more specific actors ecosystem. For example focusing on a particular aspect of the recovery (e.g. net-zero reconstruction) and/or specific territory (e.g. one city) would instantly become practical. And could be potentially a good starting point to the development of the local multi-actor spaces mentioned in this article.

In summary, while the initial mapping of the complex system may be messy and incomplete, it serves as a starting point for discussions and basic recommendations. By treating the mapping as a living document and incorporating additional actors and information gradually, and interpreting results collectively, we can gain a better understanding of the system and uncover new insights. Further specialization of the topic or territory of concern can make the mapping exercise more practical.

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