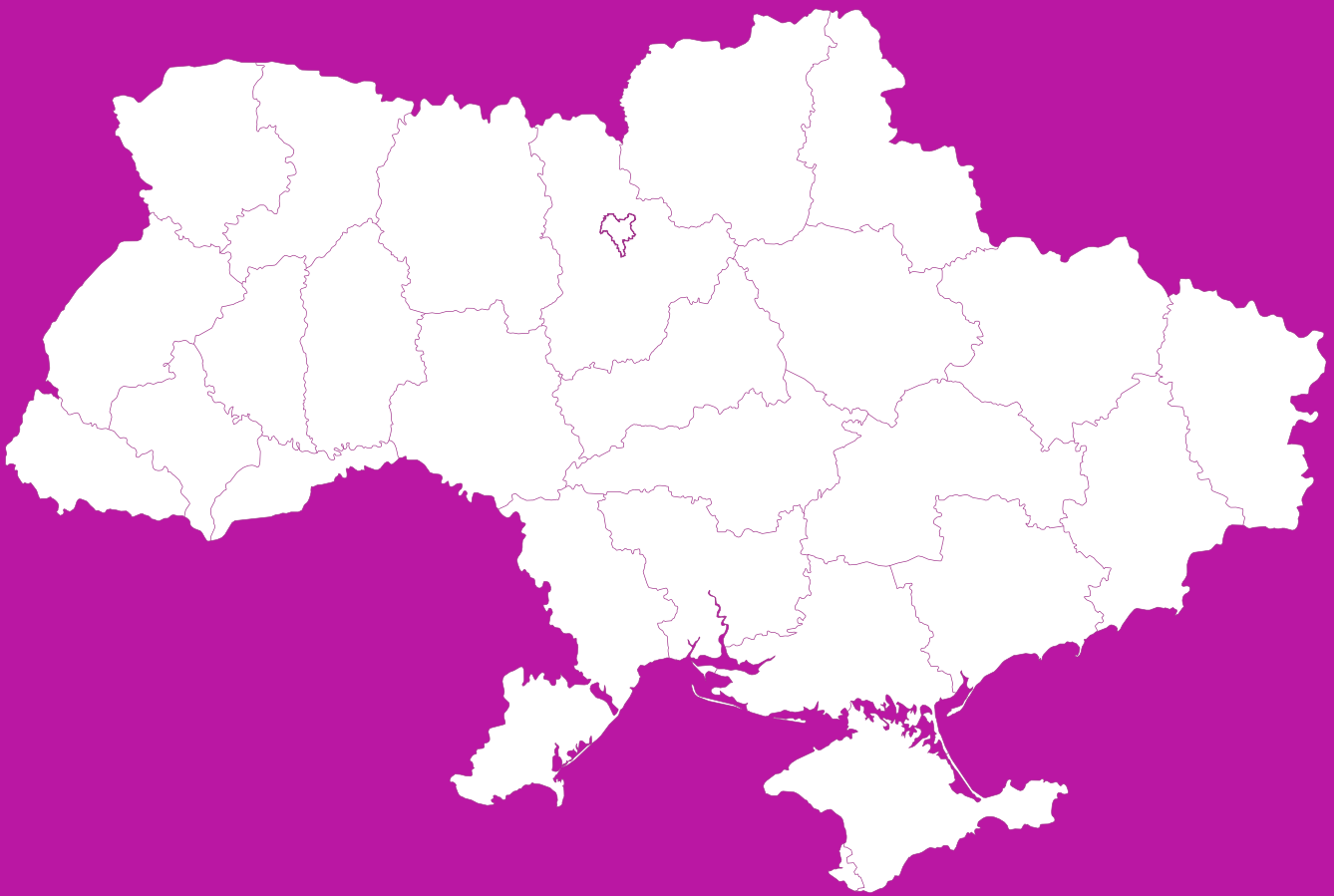


Spatial Planning in Ukraine

2023 COUNTRY PROFILE



BASED ON ADAPTED
ESPON-COMPASS QUESTIONNAIRE



Title: Spatial Planning in Ukraine: 2023 Country Profile

This country profile has been developed using an adapted version of the ESPON-COMPASS questionnaire, with data accurate as of January 1, 2023. The methodology employed for the research involved the completion of a detailed questionnaire, which was informed by the results of three focus groups comprising Ukrainian experts in relevant subject areas. Most of the supporting data is based on the thorough research of the existing legislation in spatial planning and urban development in Ukraine.

Department of Built Environment in Aalto University School of Engineering looks for practical solutions for a society whose functioning requires sustainable asset management, efficient water and waste management, sufficient water resources, reliable and safe transportation as well as valid geographic data.

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Contents

Overview	4
General information about Ukraine	5
Administrative structure and system of governance	6
Spatial Planning System	8
Structure of Spatial Planning Instruments	9
General Planning Scheme of the Territory of Ukraine	10
Planning Scheme of the Territory of Oblast	10
Comprehensive Plan of the Territorial Community	11
General Plan of the Settlement	11
Integrated Development Concept of the Territorial Community	12
Detailed Plan of the Territory	12
Plan Development Process	13
Example of a Detailed Plan	13
Production of Planning Instruments	14
National Level	14
Regional Level	15
Local Level	15
Degree of Influence of the Plans on Urban Development	16
National Level	16
Regional Level	17
Local Level	17
Spatial Planning Challenges and Debates	18
References	19

Overview

Ukraine is an Eastern European country that borders Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary in the West, Moldova, and Romania in the South, the Russian Federation in the East, and Belarus in the North. It has 2780 km of coastline on the Black and Azov Seas.

Based on the estimates of mass displacement during the Russian Invasion of 2022, Ukraine has a current population of approximately thirty-four million within a Ukraine-controlled area of 493 000 km² (1/6 of Ukrainian territory is temporarily occupied).

The development of export-oriented agriculture led to large areas of the country, especially in southern and central Ukraine, being cultivated, which amounts to a staggering 70% of the total land use in the country.

Ukrainian territories were part of the Kingdom of Kyivan Rus from the 10th to 13th centuries. After a Mongol invasion and slow recovery, in the 16th to 18th centuries, it re-emerged as a Cossack-administered autonomy (Hetmanate) and a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Tsardom of Muscovy.

The land of modern-day Ukraine was divided between the Austrian and Russian Empires between 1776 and 1917. Some Austrian and Russian influences are still visible in today's architecture and urban plans. In 1917, Ukraine gained independence, but in 1920, it was occupied by the Red Army and became a part of the Soviet Union known as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (UkrSSR). The UkrSSR experienced an artificial famine in 1932-33 that killed up to five million people.

The territory that is now Western Ukraine remained under Polish and Czechoslovak control until 1939 before being annexed by the USSR and integrated as a part of UkrSSR. Ukraine proclaimed independence in 1991, effectively bringing the end of the USSR the same year.

Today, Ukraine is a unitary state with three main tiers of government: national, regional, and local. Ukraine consists of 24 regions (oblasts) and an Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Local level is represented by 1469 territorial communities (TC), of which approx. half have fewer than 10,000 residents. In 2023, Ukraine became a candidate for membership in the EU. Since February 24, 2022, the country has been under Martial Law with extended powers of the state that has suspended elections on national and local levels.

Close to 70% of the population lives in urban areas. The capital, Kyiv, is located on the Dnipro River in the north of the country. While Kyiv itself has 3.2 million inhabitants, the greater metropolitan region has close to four million.

The capital region is Ukraine's economic and cultural center. The biggest cities outside the capital area, based on their pre-war estimates, are Kharkiv (1.44 mil), Odesa (1.01 mil), Dnipro (990k), Zaporizhzhia (730k) and Lviv (725k), and the occupied city of Donetsk (approx. 900k).

Ukrainian is Ukraine's official language. While many Ukrainians are bilingual, the share of the population that regards a language other than Ukrainian as their native language is approximately 30%, with Russian, Romanian, Crimean-Tatar, and Hungarian representing the most common languages.

General information about Ukraine

Capital, population (2020)	Kyiv, 3.2 million
Surface area	603,700 km ² (110,000 km ² occupied by Russian Federation)
Total population (2023)	From 30.5 mil (IMF) to 36,5 mil (DESA-UN) excl. occupied territories
Population growth rate (2023)	-6.6 pers. /1,000 population (USSS)
Population density (2020)	60.9/km ²
Degree of urbanization (2020)	69% (IMF)
Inequality-adjusted HDI (2020)	0.728 high (45th)
GDP (2024)	\$199 billion (nominal) (IMF) \$501 billion (PPP) (IMF)
GDP per capita (2024)	\$2,460 (nominal) (IMF) \$14,878 (PPP) (IMF)
GDP growth (2014-2021)	3.3% (IMF)
Unemployment rate (2021)	9.8% (IMF)
Land use (2018)	agricultural land: 71.2% - arable land: 56.1% - permanent crops: 1.5% - permanent pasture: 13.6% forests: 16.8% other: 12% (CIA World Factbook)
Economic Sectoral Structure (2017)	Agriculture: 12.2% Industry: 28.6% Services: 60% (CIA World Factbook)

Administrative structure and system of governance

Ukraine is a unitary, non-federal state that has been organized on a decentralized basis since 2020. Ukraine is also a parliamentary-presidential republic. The Constitution of Ukraine (1996) lays out the rules for the system of government and the rights of citizens.

The head of state is the President of Ukraine. The President is elected by a direct election for a term of five years limited to two terms consecutively. The governmental powers are exercised by the President and the government (Cabinet of Ministers), which the prime minister leads. The parliament must approve the appointment of cabinet members.

The Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) exercises the legislative powers and decides on state finances. The parliament is unicameral, consisting of 450 representatives elected for a four-year term. All Ukrainian citizens above the age of 18 have a right to vote in both parliamentary and presidential elections.

Ukraine has three administrative levels: national, regional, and local. However, the national level, i.e., the central state, is represented at both national and regional levels. The national-level central government includes the ministries and public bodies subordinate to them. The regional level is an amalgam of

local government and state power, combining aspects of both (elections of the regional council and direct appointment of the head of regional state administration by the President). District-level authorities were stripped of most powers and reduced from 490 to 102 in 2020, remaining responsible for emergency services. Under martial law, some state administrations became military administrations with extended sets of powers.

The local level has recently been reformed, which has led to the establishment of autonomous authorities titled territorial communities (hromadas in Ukrainian).

As of 2023, there were 1469 TCs. Elections for the head of community and local councils are direct and held every four years. Local authorities are given administrative competencies under the law and have full planning powers spanning the territory of the relevant community. They are entitled to levy local taxes on property and transport services. However, local budgets are largely based on income taxes, with property taxes constituting less than 7% of total revenue (Decentralization, 2022).

	Level title	Number of territorial units	NUTS/ LAU level
National level	Ukraine	1	NUTS0
Sub-national level 1	Region (<i>oblast</i>); Autonomous Republic of Crimea	24+1	NUTS3
Sub-national level 2	District (<i>rayon</i>)	136	-
Local level 1	Territorial community (<i>hromada</i>) (TC)	1469	LAU 1
Local level 2 (no authority)	Settlement	29831	LAU 2

Fig. 1 Administrative division on the regional level

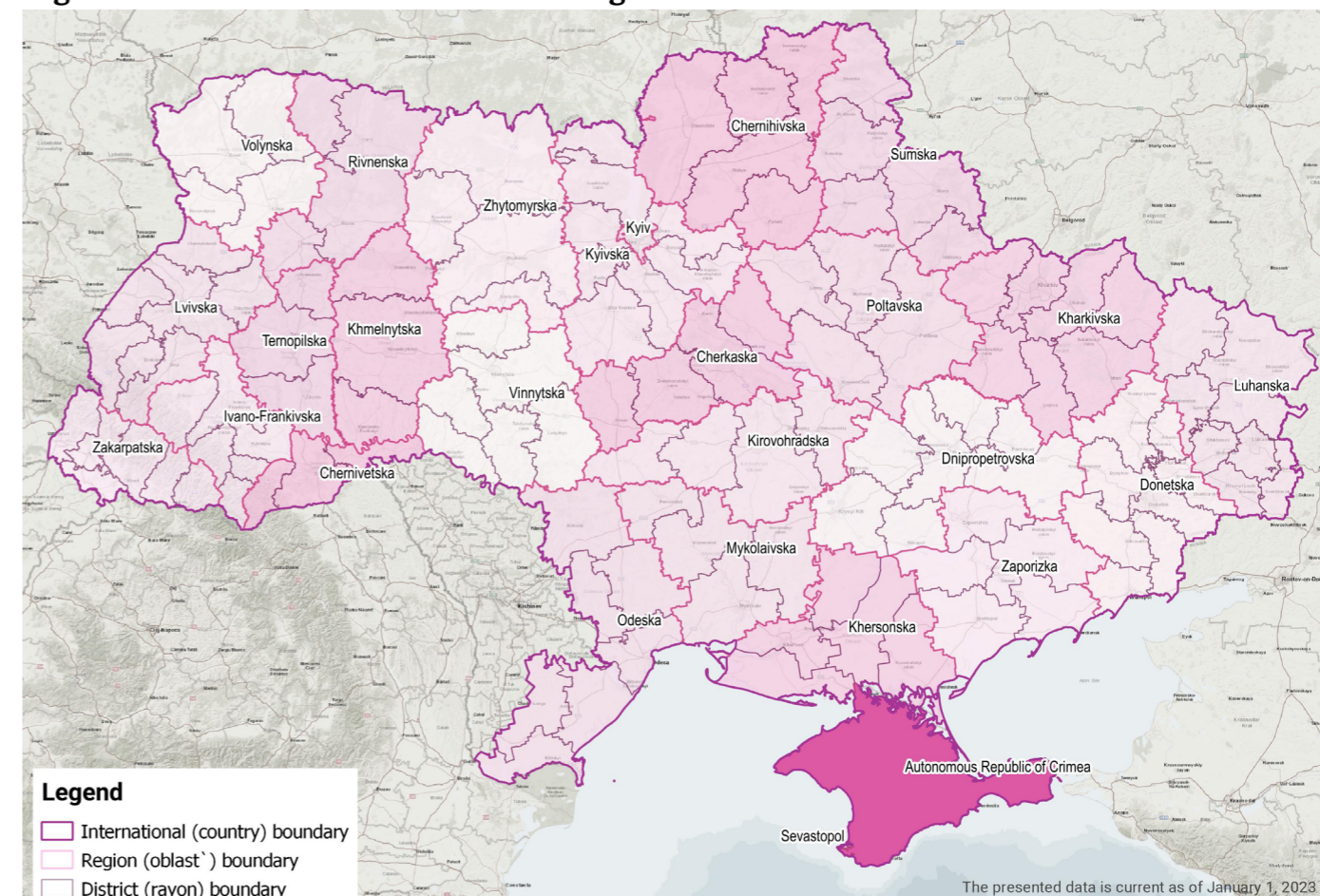
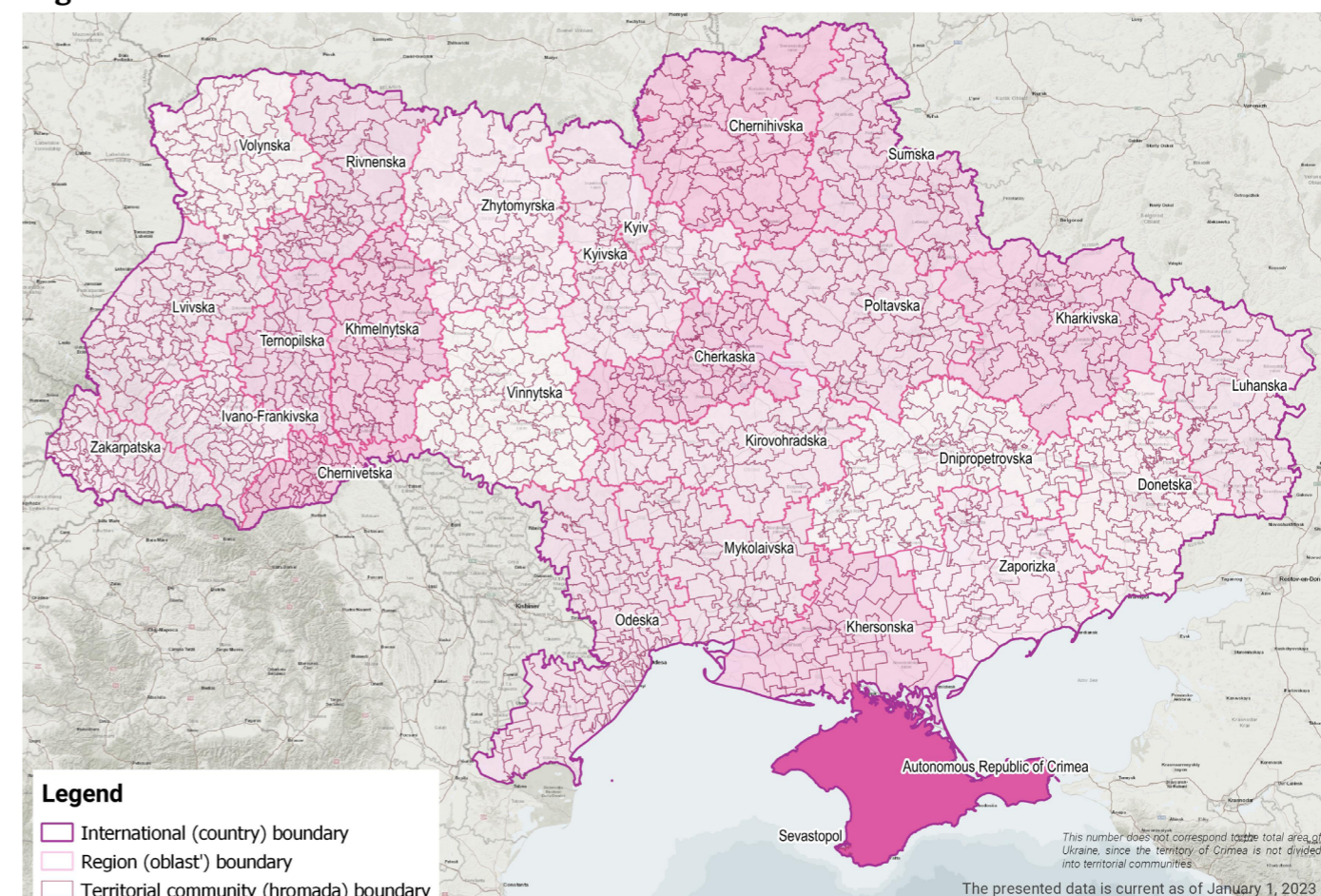


Fig. 2 Administrative division on the local level



Spatial Planning System

Spatial planning in Ukraine has been practiced professionally in some form since the 17th century, with Italian, Polish, and Ukrainian architects producing the first planned settlements. Examples of late Renaissance and Baroque planning are Zhovkva, Drohobych, and Lviv. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Ukrainian territories were under Austro-Hungarian and Muscovite rule. They developed second and third-generation systemic city plans in Poltava, Odesa, Lviv, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Mykolaiv, and Dnipro. The first universities for civil engineering and architecture were established.

Experimentation with urban development gained increased attention in the early Soviet Union. However, it was the post-WW2 period

when the expansion of industry, mass transit, and rapid urbanization drove the territorial organization of the country and chief characteristics of most cities. The late Soviet planning system matured into a multi-layered hierarchy where technocratic state institutes were competing with industrial interests regarding future development.

Since independence in 1991, several structural processes have been present. First, there has been a decreased role of the state in spatial planning, especially urban development. Rather, the last three decades saw the establishment of private building laws and the formalization of private land and property ownership. The first two decades of independence

were characterized by a significant slowdown in planning activity and a backlog in legislation to keep pace.

In 2011, major planning documents were made public, and the involvement of the public in the planning process became mandatory. Since 2014, the deliberate increase in the fiscal and administrative capacity of local councils, as well as a decentralization reform, laid out preconditions for full-fledged local self-governance, culminating in a transfer of control and responsibility for land and spatial planning to local authorities from the state regional administrations. The system was recently updated in 2020 and 2021 with the introduction of unified, comprehensive planning for the whole local territorial scale of communities.

Following this shift, planning was gradually transformed from a tool for executing state directives to a mechanism for harmonizing the interests of diverse parties, including those of the public, private sector, and the state (Lytvynchuk & Denysenko, 2022). Since 2023, the new Building (Urban Development) Code has been under development.

In Ukraine, the definition of spatial planning is to this day absent in the legislation. "Urban development documentation" is a designation of all legally binding plans, as outlined in the Law "On the Regulation of Town Planning Activity".

Fig. 3 Administrative competences of different levels of government in spatial planning

	Law-making	Policy-making	Plan-making	Decision-making	Monitoring/supervision
National level	Parliament (Verkhovna Rada)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Cabinet of Ministers	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Ministry of Development of Communities, Territories and	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Ministry of Culture and Information Policy	No	Yes	No	Yes
Regional level	Oblast Council/ Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea/	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Oblast state administration/ State administration of Kyiv and Sevastopol	No	No	No	Yes
	Authorized body of architecture and urban planning	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Rayon (district) council	No	No	No	Yes
	Rayon (district) state administration	No	No	No	Yes
Local level	Council and Executive body of the territorial community	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Authorized body of architecture and urban planning	No	No	Yes	Yes

Structure of Spatial Planning Instruments

Spatial planning instruments are closely linked to the levels of governance and the structure of the country. According to the law, urban planning documentation is also divided into three levels: state, regional, and local.

The first (national) level includes the state and supra-regional levels and such instruments as Ukraine's general planning scheme, regional state strategy (RSSU), and Recovery Plan.

The second (regional) level includes the oblast and district levels. It consists of regional strategies for regional development, planning schemes for regions and districts, as well as comprehensive recovery programs for regions.

The third (local) level includes the territorial communities and settlements. At this level, a breadth of instruments are present: development strategy, concept of integrated development, comprehensive spatial development plans, general plan with the historical-architectural reference plan and zoning schemes, detailed land use plans, and comprehensive recovery programs.

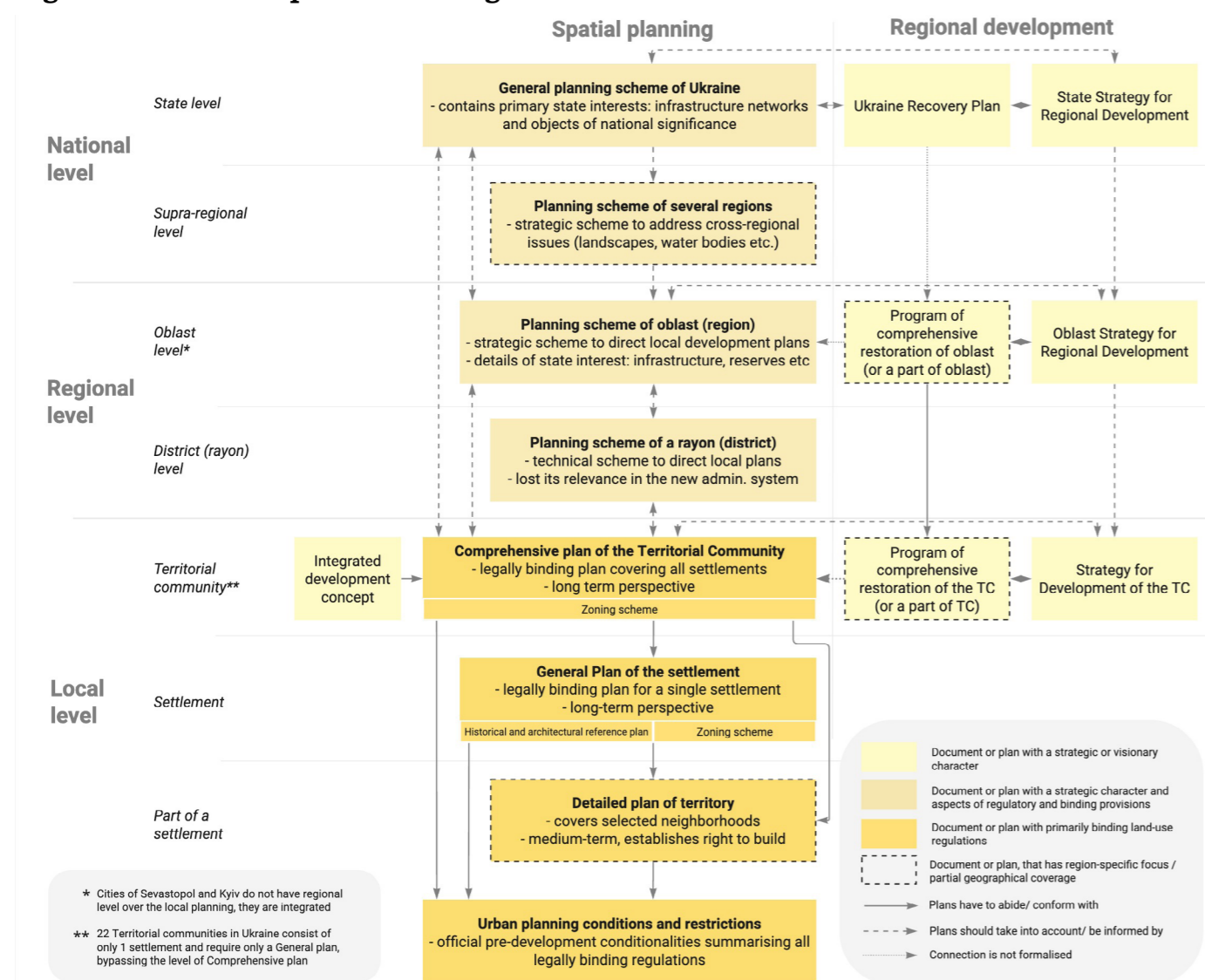
The local level has undergone the most significant changes since 2011. This included

introduction of alterations to the development of graphic and textual materials, adding new spatial tools to enhance planning, and incorporating formal but non-binding planning instruments. Additionally, the planning process has become more public (Lytvynchuk & Denysenko, 2022).

Here, we outline in detail the plans, directly related to spatial planning. There is a hierarchical relationship among the documents that is intended to ensure sustainable and consistent development of the territory. Recently, the hierarchical "conforming" principle was partially substituted with the requirement of considering higher-level state interests in the development of plans on the regional and local levels. However, the hierarchical compliance requirements for the plans on the local level are very strict.

All of the documentation is developed in a digital format only and is publicly available on the community's city-building cadaster.

Fig. 4 Structure of Spatial Planning instruments



General Planning Scheme of the Territory of Ukraine

(Генеральна схема планування території України)

Urban planning documentation determines priorities and conceptual solutions for the planning and use of the territory of the country. It is a legally binding basis for all strategic and vision documents below in the hierarchy.

The general planning scheme of Ukraine is a planning tool (or urban planning documentation) that outlines the conceptual decisions for planning and land use in Ukraine. The process of development, implementation, and monitoring is outlined in the Law “On the General Planning Scheme of Ukraine”. According to legislation, the General Plan was initially

designed for a 20-year period and is no longer valid. In 2020, a draft law proposing amendments to the Law of Ukraine “On the Regulation of Town Planning Activity” to update the General Scheme was registered but remains in the parliament committee to this day.

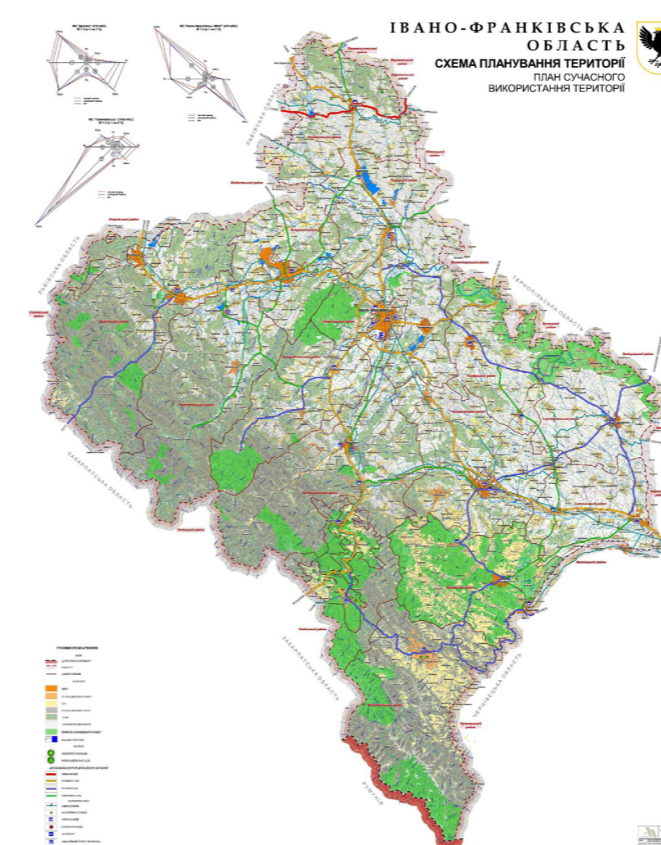
Planning Scheme of the Territory of Oblast

(Схема планування території області)

This scheme is prepared by the oblast state administration and approved by the oblast council. It is a statutory document with partial binding powers, outlining key objects and areas of state interests. The methodology of this type of plan is described in State building norms B.1.1-21:2017: “Composition and con-

tent of the spatial planning scheme ...”.

The scheme determines the priorities of the use of territorial resources, taking into account national objectives and the interests of adjacent administrative and territorial units (transport, economic growth, social facilities of regional significance, key water and energy infrastructure). It establishes and secures key areas for environmental protection and contains instructions for the development of



Planning Scheme of the Territory of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast – map of current use

comprehensive plans. In sectoral plans, the provisions of the scheme must be considered.

Comprehensive Plan for the Spatial Development of the Territory of the Territorial Community

(Комплексний план просторового розвитку території територіальної громади)

A comprehensive plan of a TC is a statutory binding plan that integrates spatial planning and land management documentation. It cov-

ers the territory of the entire community. Its aims are twofold: to establish a vision of the desired spatial form and structure of the territory and to provide detailed regulations (zoning) of the land use, including housing, forests, agriculture territories, and other functions.

This new type of planning instrument emerged after amendments to the Land Code and the Law of Ukraine “On the Regulation of Town Planning Activity” in 2020. Subsequently, in 2021, the Cabinet of Ministers approved a resolution outlining the organizational process and procedures for developing comprehensive plans. Amendments to the Law “On Land Management” ensured the inclusion of the comprehensive plan in the list of land management instruments. Following these changes, the zoning plan ceased to be a separate type of urban planning documentation. However, it became an integral component of the comprehensive plan, the general plan of a settlement, and the detailed plan.

Effectively, in a single community, there should be one comprehensive plan and several general plans for each of the settlements. However, a comprehensive plan is not developed if the territorial community consists of one settlement, for example, Mykolaiv, Odesa, or Nikopol urban territorial communities. These communities commission only the general plan.

General Plan of the Settlement

(Генеральний план населеного пункту)

A general plan is simultaneously local town planning and land management documentation that defines the development, planning, construction, and other land use of the settlement's territory, according to the Law of Ukraine “On the Regulation of Town Planning Activity.” The General plan of the territory is developed and approved in the interests of the respective territorial community, taking into account state, public, and private interests. For settlements with a population of up to 50 thousand people, general plans can be com-

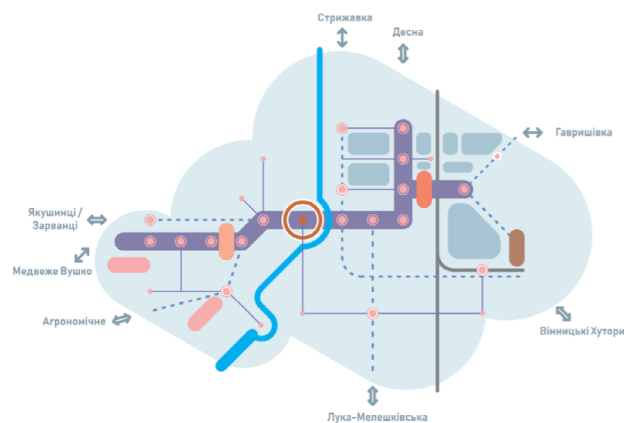
bined with detailed plans for the entire territory of such settlements. Historical settlements are obliged additionally to develop a historical-architectural reference plan as a part of the General Plan.

Integrated Development Concept of the Territorial Community

(Концепція інтегрованого розвитку територіальної громади)

The Integrated development concept (IDC) is a formal spatial planning tool that is not urban planning documentation. The tool originated in Germany and became promoted as a pillar of Leipzig Charta. According to the regulations, it can be commissioned by a local self-government body, which must provide for meaningful involvement of local residents and businesses in the development process. This concept establishes medium to long-term (10-20 years) spatial, environmental, and socio-economic development priorities for a territory based on sustainable development principles. The concept should align with state and regional development programs.

The IDC serves as the basis for developing local urban planning documentation, specifically comprehensive plans and/or general plans. In cases where there is no approved IDC, the terms of reference for the comprehensive plan are created via public discussions.



Spatial development model from the Integrated Development Concept of Vynnytsia 2030

This type of spatial instrument emerged after changes to the Law of Ukraine “On the Regulation of Town Planning Activity” and a new Decree “On Approval of the Procedure for Developing the Integrated Development Concept of the Territorial Community” in 2022.

Detailed Plan of the Territory

(Детальний план території)

A detailed plan is also simultaneously local planning and land management documentation that defines the land uses, social infrastructure provision, street layouts, and other infrastructure objects on a given territory. Detailed plans are most often developed for areas expecting new construction or a change in the type of development (residential from industrial or agricultural etc.). Detailed plans can function as substitutes if a valid general plan is lacking. When approved, it becomes an integral part of the comprehensive plan. Making changes to the detailed plan of the settlement is allowed, provided they conform with the comprehensive plan and the general plan.

According to recent legislative changes, an obligatory component of the detailed plan of a settlement is the territory zoning plan, and its duration is no longer limited until a decision is made to update the data or make changes to its provisions. Sale or lease of communal land without a detailed plan is prohibited.

Urban planning conditions and restrictions

(Містобудівні умови та обмеження)

This document is issued at the request of the developer/owner of the land plot (construction customer) as the last stage before the construction of objects. It integrates the main provisions of the plans that are higher in the hierarchy in relation to a certain land plot. At the moment, local authorities are deprived of the right to expand or change the requirements for future construction in relation to the template specified in the Law “On Regulation of Urban Development Activities”.

Plan Development Process

Example of a Detailed Plan

The development of the plan begins with assigning the task for its development, following the procedure for developing, updating, making changes, and approving urban planning documentation. In the case of a detailed plan, the landowner can finance it, but the ‘client’ of the plan development is the municipality.

The procedure includes an open price-based tender for companies holding architectural licenses, which can be substituted with a competition and subsequent commission, depending on the decision of the authority.

By 2023, no compulsory pre-development public involvement was stipulated for a de-

tailed plan. The process, nevertheless, requires a public hearing procedure when the draft plan is ready, and the public hearing can have a significant impact if conducted properly. After COVID-19, however, a lot of public hearings were held online, and this unfortunate trend continues to this day.

Planning council review is another step that depends on whether a municipality has a planning council. In the case of its absence, the regional body for architecture and urban planning provides its comments. If the plan is approved, it is published on the website and local online cadaster and becomes a legally binding document.

Fig. 5 Stages of detailed plan development



Production of Planning Instruments

Following the implementation of decentralization reforms starting in 2014, which catalyzed the evolution of Ukraine's spatial system, there has been an acceleration and improvement in the creation of urban planning instruments, a new framework, manifested in the comprehensive plans and integrated development concepts, effectively decentralized planning to the local level. However, the full-scale invasion necessitated a paradigm shift in planning strategies and brought new planning instruments to the system. This shift is characterized by an increased focus on reconstruction initiatives, economic restructuring, and the

integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) into the planning process.

National Level

There has been a notable disparity in the production and relevance of various planning instruments. Instruments such as the planning schemes of the territory of the Black and Azov seas, though conceptualized, were never developed. The general planning scheme has been outdated since 2021, and currently, no monitoring of its implementation is conducted. Its continuous ephemeral validity in the form of law is strictly formal.

Regional Level

The territory planning schemes at the oblast level stand out as the most produced and pertinent planning instrument in Ukraine's current planning landscape. This prominence is largely attributed to the centralized nature of their creation and updating processes, coupled with their direct alignment and coordination with state-level bodies. Notably, there has been a significant evolution in the approach to producing these plans. The process has become increasingly inclusive and locally oriented, shifting away from a sole focus on central state interests and objectives.

Rayon planning schemes, have not been developed extensively and now have lost legally-binding power over the territory. Although still legally valid, they are to be completely taken out from the system.

Local Level

The efficacy of existing and relatively recent planning instruments also varies significantly. The general plan – a direct legacy of the Soviet era – is especially outdated in many settlements.

According to new provisions, only a certain old-generation general plans can be included in the comprehensive plans, as their provisions (and even language) are contrary to what is allowed, essentially meaning that even those currently legal will be rendered illegal in the upcoming review. The zoning scheme and historical-architectural reference plan are examples of instruments that have not been effectively produced or updated in many settlements. Now, their status has changed as well, and it remains to be seen if the existing plans are still valid.

It must be noted that the planning instruments introduced in response to the invasion are still in the nascent stages of development, with their practical application yet to be realized.

These instruments are currently evolving, and their effectiveness and impact will likely be the subject of future research. As of early 2023, none of the hromadas have approved a comprehensive plan. However, the development of these plans has gained traction in 2023, engaging a number of experts and urban planners.

The increased production and attention to plans and policies on the local level indicates a move towards a more balanced consideration of both local and national priorities in the planning process.

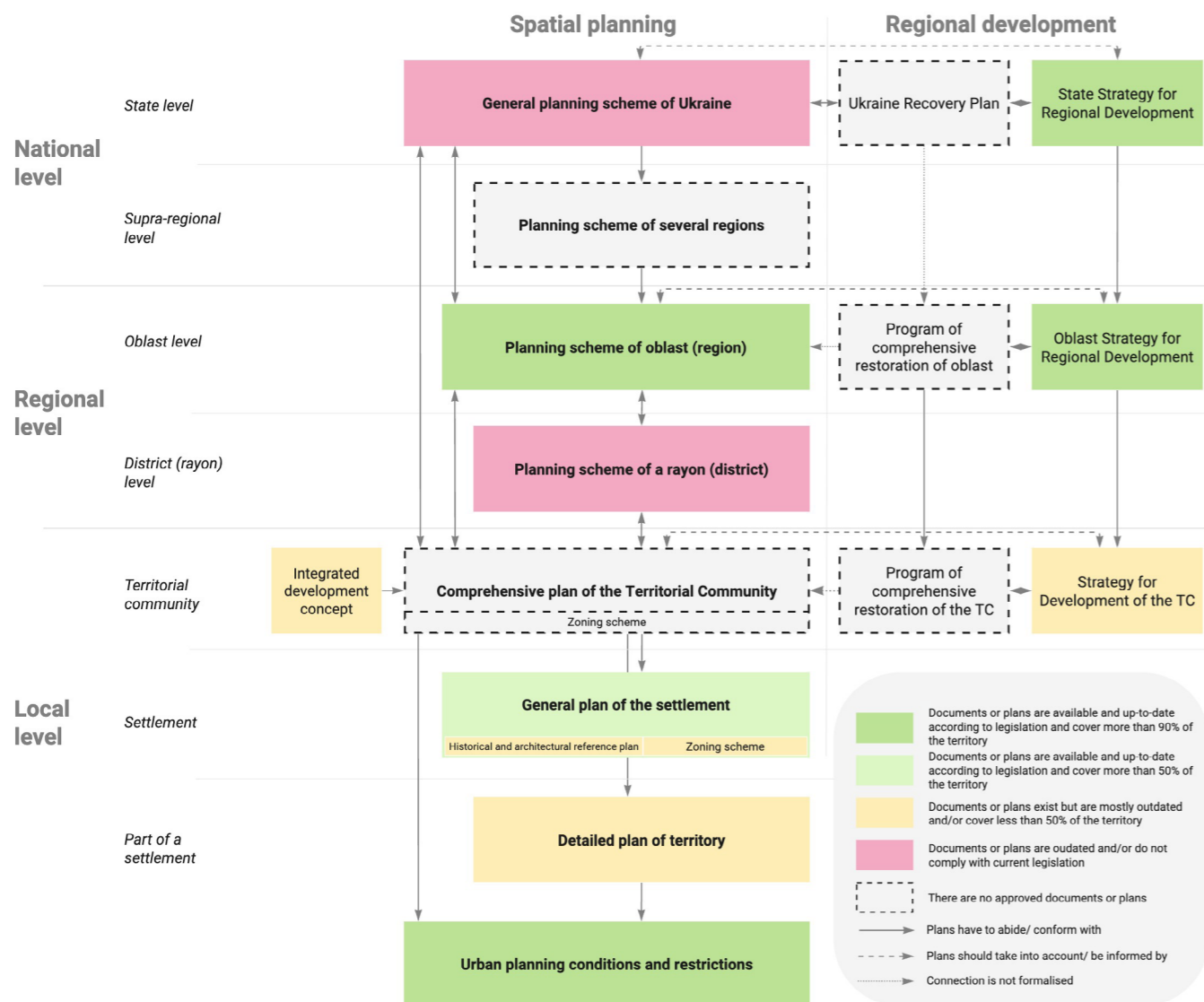
Over the past decade there is a shift towards a more participatory and inclusive planning process and an increased capacity to deliver it in Ukraine. It is a result of the concerted efforts of numerous non-profit organizations and international agencies, including the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Case for reflection

The issue of scaling up the plan development processes is, however, open. There might not be enough capacity on both the client and planners' side to catch up with the expected number and complexity of the system in the upcoming years. If we consider Lviv oblast (region) of approx 2mil. people, according to the current system it needs to develop and keep updated:

- 1 Planning scheme of the region
- 7 Planning schemes of districts
- 73 Comprehensive plans (per each TC)
- up to 73 Integrated development concepts (at the request of the TC)
- 44+ General plans (depending on whether detailed plans are integrated)
- 54 Historical and architectural reference plans (per each historical settlement)
- 3650+ Detailed plans (calculated as 50 per TC)

Fig. 6 Degree of Production of Planning Instruments



Degree of Influence of the Plans on Urban Development

While Ukraine's spatial planning instruments are constantly evolving, their effectiveness is varied, influenced by regional contexts, ongoing conflict, and legislative changes. Their adaptability and responsiveness to local needs remain key challenges in the face of the war and dynamic socio-political landscapes.

Additionally, the new process of identification, deliberation, and integration of objectives and land uses of national interest with the local and regional plans has not been extensively tested and it is hard to evaluate its current impact.

National Level

The general planning scheme, initially intended to guide national and regional plans, has seen diminished influence after the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Lugansk regions in 2014. The uncertainties surrounding Ukraine's territorial integrity, infrastructure prospects, legal ownership regimes, and population migration render the scheme impractical for current and future planning needs. For the current conditions, its provisions are completely outdated, but even earlier, its directive nature often overlooked regional specifics and local interests, leading

to decisions outside its framework.

The 2021-2027 State Strategy of Regional Development of Ukraine, despite surpassing the 2020 strategy in its impact (Kharchenko, 2023), remains limited by its insensitivity to regional contexts. The ongoing conflict further constrains its effectiveness.

The Ukrainian Recovery Plan (in a draft stage), a recent response to the full-scale invasion, lacks a defined process for development and execution. However, its potential for influence is significant, given the centralization of decision-making and resources at the national level that the ministries can direct.

Regional Level

Regional development strategy is crucial for securing national budget funds. It guides the oblasts in setting priorities and resource allocation. However, the influence of this document on actual spatial development remains low.

Most territory planning schemes at the oblast level align with regional strategies, bridging strategic planning with spatial planning at this level. These schemes are influential in infrastructure and lawful decisions within the oblast, though their translation into local decisions can sometimes be unclear due to scale limitations.

Local Level

The impact of the programs of comprehensive restoration of Oblast and Hromada is yet to be determined, as they are still in development. They could significantly influence local recovery policies, especially with the top-down allocation of rebuilding resources. If adopted by a significant number of hromadas within an oblast, these programs will necessitate corresponding oblast-level strategies.

The comprehensive plan, as a relatively new addition to the Ukrainian spatial planning system, is expected to be highly influential, particularly in merging planning and land-use documentation. Its effect on local-level decisions is yet to be fully assessed.

The influence of Integrated development concepts is limited due to their advisory status. It is not mandatory for adoption by hromadas; their influence is contingent on local council acceptance. These concepts focus on long-term planning and community participation.

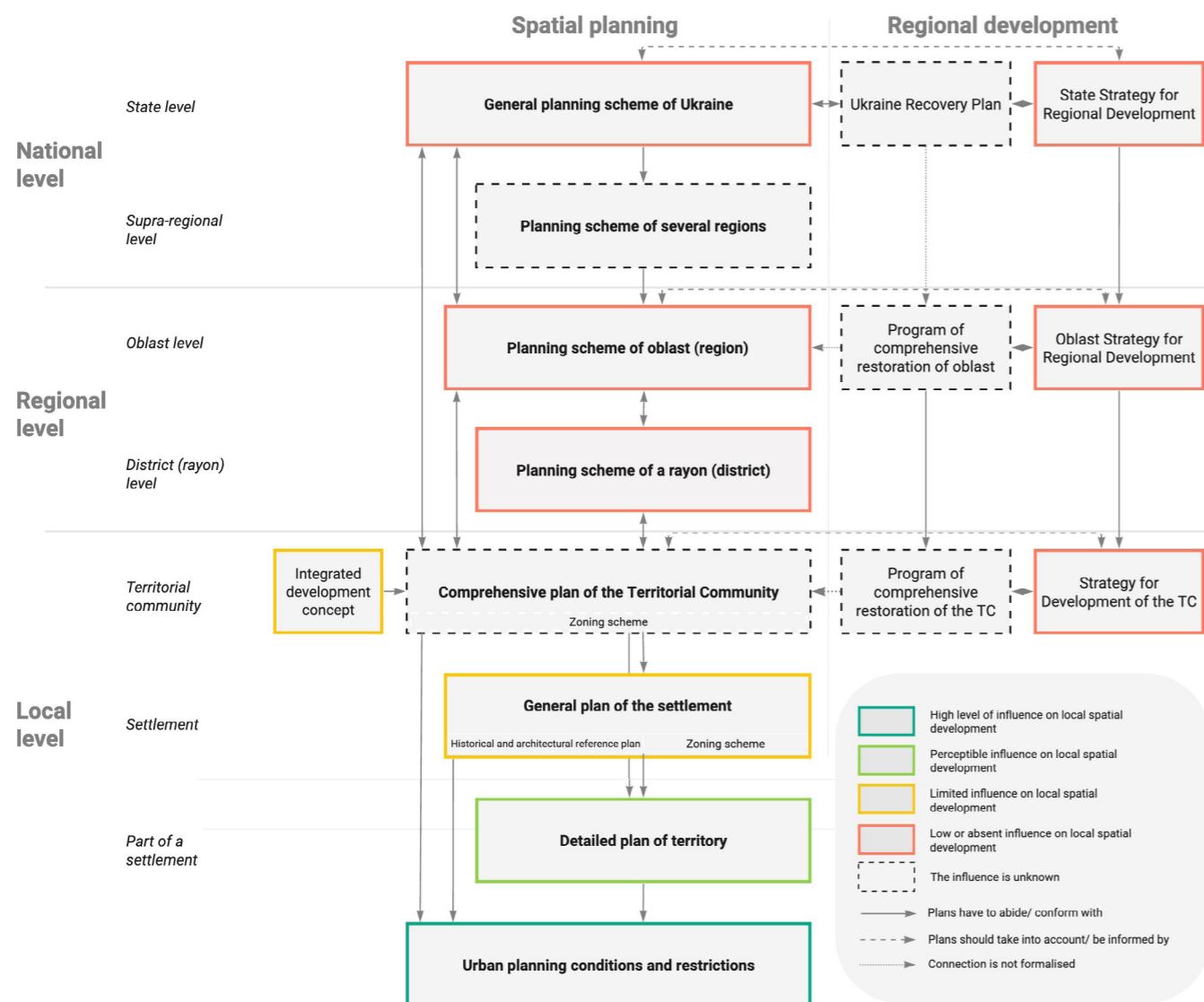
Post-2020 legislative changes have set to integrate various instruments into the comprehensive plan, diminishing their individual influence. Despite this, the general plan and zoning scheme continue to impact land use within settlements. Historical and architectural reference plans, although legally significant, are often bypassed in the development of historical city areas due to the pressures of developers' investment and rent expectations. These tools were often influenced by private interests, undermining their integrity and utility.

The detailed plan of the territory, a primary instrument for local planning and distribution of building rights, significantly influences land use decisions, investment, and spatial development.

In many communities it is used and developed most often, functioning as a problem-solver in adapting the general plan provisions to resolve immediate issues on the ground, sometimes in contradiction to the overarching plans.

Urban planning conditions and restrictions have the most direct impact on spatial development, among other instruments, but are often violated with minimal consequences. Recent legislative changes have reduced municipal authorities' discretion and control, paving the way for potential future automation of these processes. This might undermine the capacity to guide development on the local level, unless alternate instruments are developed.

Fig. 7 Degree of Influence of the Planning Instruments



Spatial Planning Challenges and Debates

Just prior to the war, Ukraine was in the midst of a transformation of its planning system. Further development has taken place under emergency conditions, and many state and donor programs have been canceled and funds redirected, which has impacted the production of plans and regulations.

There is a distinct institutional separation between spatial planning and regional development. Governed by different legal frameworks, these sectors have evolved into separate communities of practice with little interaction and exchange.

There is little to no spatial dimension in strategic development plans, which are mostly focused on socio-economic growth. In contrast, spatial plans have their own caveats, as they are often treated merely as 'documents', reducing the attention to the mechanisms of facilitation, implementation, and monitoring.

There is also a challenge of coherence among existing planning instruments. The "Recovery" planning instruments have generated considerable confusion within the professional community. A primary point of ambiguity is the interaction of existing planning tools with these new instruments. It seems that the establishment of a parallel hierarchical planning framework tied to recovery funds might add to a competitive, rather than a productive relationship between regional development and spatial plans. Some experts argue that the "Recovery" instruments replicate functions of existing planning tools in many aspects. They stress that hromadas could address reconstruction challenges using existing instruments, such as the planning schemes at the regional level and local comprehensive plans.

As many communities suffered blows to their populations and budgets, they might re-

quire simpler and more adaptive solutions to guide recovery efforts.

In fact, the capacity of local authorities is at the center of this debate. Local authorities often lack fiscal resources to commission the plans, human resources to guide plan development, and knowledge of how to use and implement them.

Subsequently, a major debate is about the potential effectiveness of the comprehensive plan that merges spatial planning with land use at the local level. The issue is whether communities can effectively use this costly and unwieldy plan to effectively guide spatial development in Ukrainian realities.

Lately, issues of how to effectively integrate the response to climate change into planning at different levels and the role of strategic ecological assessment have come to the fore of resilience planning. While the emergency of war rages on, the effects of climate change also require immediate attention, especially regarding access to fresh water, which is becoming a large problem in the southern regions. Currently, Green city plans have been developed only in a limited number of urban communities, and separate ecological planning has had a very limited impact on spatial development. The need to balance priorities and keep complexity at an adequate level makes decisions on these issues a topic of hot conversations.

In 2023, Ukraine embarked on a path to develop a comprehensive building code, which might establish a renewed system of planning, tackling, or leaving out the aspects outlined above. However, this is yet to be realized.

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