

# PROSPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE COMPREHENSIVE DEFENCE CONCEPT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: A CASE STUDY OF LOCALISING NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 1325



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## ABSTRACT

The study examines how the specifics of Ukrainian lawmaking and the practices of regulatory implementation impact achieving state policy goals. The subject of the analysis is the National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for the period until 2025. Based on this, the study outlines the prospects for developing and implementing a Ukrainian counterpart to the Swedish Comprehensive Defence concept. Ensuring collective resilience during crises requires a formal legal framework and cooperation within the “government–civil society–business” triad; therefore, the constraints and enablers identified in this report regarding the current policy document will be instrumental in building a comprehensive defence system.

**Keywords:** comprehensive defence; lawmaking; Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda; state program; local self-government bodies; 1325 coalition.

*The research was conducted by the CSO “Expert Resource Gender in Detail” as part of the project “Gender Approach in the Context of Comprehensive Defence”, funded by the grant “Best Practices of the Swedish Gender Approach as a Tool for Empowering Ukrainian Women to Implement Sustainable Reforms and Promote Ukraine’s European Integration,” with financial support from the Swedish Institute and in partnership with the Swedish International Liberal Centre.*

*The project draws on gender mainstreaming practices within Sweden’s comprehensive defence system and represents the first attempt in the Ukrainian context to explore the possibilities of implementing a Swedish-style comprehensive defence strategy in Ukraine while simultaneously integrating a gender perspective across key sectors, including the economy, care work, the armed forces, civil defence, governance, information policy, and the volunteer movement.*

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## ACRONYMS

ASC	Administrative Service Centre
AUAC	All-Ukrainian Association of Communities
AUC	Association of Ukrainian Cities
CMU	Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
HR	Human Resources
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LSG	Local Self-Government
MP	Member of Parliament
MSB	Civil Contingencies Agency (Myndigheten för samhällsskydd och beredskap)
NAP	National Action Plan
NAP 1325	National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for the period until 2025
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSDC	National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine
OMA	Oblast Military Administration
OSA	Oblast State Administration
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RAP	Regional Action Plan
SALAR	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SBU	Security Service of Ukraine
SDS	Security and Defence Sector
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia
UN	United Nations
VRU	Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is dedicated to assessing the capacity to develop and implement cross-cutting inter-agency programming documents (using NAP 1325 Women, Peace, and Security as a case study) within the framework of the Comprehensive Defence concept. The objective of the study is to identify constraints and successful implementation practices of such documents, to examine the decision-making system within government authorities, and to explore the role of the local level.

Overall, the study confirmed that prior to the full-scale invasion, Ukraine had made significant progress in the field of gender equality. At the same time, numerous barriers to program implementation at the local level were identified. For instance, the analysis shows that state policies (including NAP 1325) encounter obstacles during their implementation at the local level. The study also established the critical role of funding: programs with clearly allocated resources have a higher chance of effective implementation, whereas a lack of funding leads to a formalistic approach. These generalized findings have defined the primary thematic areas (local barriers, the role of resources, and engagement with civil society) for further in-depth analysis.

### **The study encompasses the following key areas:**

1. Legislative and conceptual foundations, including an analysis of Sweden's Comprehensive Defence concept (objectives, priorities, and coordination bodies) and a comparison with Ukrainian strategies. Specifically, the study examines how Ukraine's National Security Strategy articulates societal involvement in defence and how NAP 1325 complements this approach by seeking to ensure the equal participation of women and men in security and conflict response.
2. The development and approval process of NAP 1325. The study highlights the history of the initiative (the role of women's CSOs and international organisations), the selection of the coordinating body, and an analysis of the drafting and reconciliation process (specifically, donor involvement and the availability of data and indicators).
3. Engagement of stakeholders from civil society, local authorities, the private sector, and the security and defence sector in the development and implementation of the document. The study examines communication channels between CSOs, local self-government bodies (LSGs), the central government, and the community, as well as the role of the Ukrainian-Swedish experience in networking and building coalitions (e.g., the "1325 Zakarpattia" Coalition). It was established that, in practice, community engagement remains limited. Established practice relies on a "top-down" approach to task-setting, characterized by a lack of teamwork oriented toward socially beneficial outcomes; a formalistic approach dominates the implementation of NAP 1325 at the local level.

4. Plan Localization and Implementation. The study describes the key stages: the development of Regional Action Plans (which was mandatory for all regions) and implementation at the community level (carried out on a voluntary basis). Specifically, the analysis reveals that Regional Action Plans (RAPs) 1325 were frequently developed without genuine adaptation to regional specificities. Numerous barriers to the implementation of RAPs 1325 were identified: bureaucracy (centralized management), local staffing shortages, a lack of strategic planning within communities, inter-departmental coordination issues, funding deficits, overlapping functions between programs, and weak communication.
5. A focus on vulnerable groups and gender. The study places increased emphasis on the target groups of NAP 1325 (including women, IDPs, veterans, and others). It was established that while addressing these groups is the primary goal of NAP 1325, local implementation is often reduced to formal activities and remains constrained by insufficient planning and funding.
6. The Role of Finance and Resources. The study evaluates the impact of budgetary provision on implementation effectiveness. In particular, experts noted that earmarked funding for NAP 1325 activities (at either the national or local level) significantly increases the probability of their successful implementation.
7. Swedish Experience: Lessons for Ukraine. The study compares Ukrainian practices with the Swedish experience (specifically regarding gender equality trajectories and the roles of non-governmental organisations in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325).

The analysis supports the following conclusions: state policies such as NAP 1325 face significant barriers at the local level. Local factors — including limited resources, bureaucratic hurdles, and low implementer motivation — create the greatest obstacles to execution. Secondly, the study confirms that the availability of budget funds significantly enhances the quality of plan implementation: policy documents with clearly defined funding have substantially higher chances of success than those left unfunded. Thirdly, the involvement of civil society organisations (particularly women's groups) can partially offset resource constraints and facilitate the implementation of inter-agency documents. In practice, however, local authorities often view cooperation with CSOs as an additional burden rather than a collaborative solution. Finally, the study showed that the traditional administrative culture in state and local government bodies, inherited from the Soviet era, complicates cross-cutting strategies. As a result, gender mainstreaming and related initiatives (such as NAP 1325) remain low priorities.

Thus, the study demonstrates that for the successful localisation of the Comprehensive Defence concept through a gender-responsive lens, it is essential to strengthen financial and human resources, foster inter-agency cooperation, actively engage communities and the private sector in practical implementation, and elevate the priority of gender issues within the security system.

## INTRODUCTION

2025 marked the eleventh year of the Russian Federation's armed aggression against Ukraine, a conflict in which the aggressor holds a significant advantage in terms of manpower, material resources, and military assets. This requires the defending nation to use its potential as efficiently and fully as possible, while demanding that state actors remain innovative and fully engaged.

Sweden, another state neighbouring Russia in the Baltic region and even smaller than Ukraine, also identifies a high risk of a Russian invasion; therefore, it is implementing a Comprehensive Defence system aimed at informing and, if necessary, engaging the entire population in responding to a crisis.

Comprehensive Defence remains a relatively obscure concept in Ukraine; however, when respondents unfamiliar with the Swedish model were asked to define it, a common explanation was, "It is when everyone in society knows their place and contributes to the country's defence to the best of their ability," which accurately captures the essence of the term. For such comprehensiveness to be effective, it must be:

- Supported at the legislative level (ensuring the legalisation and coordination of state and local self-government activities), which is primarily achieved through comprehensive policy documents;
- Based on the cooperation of all societal actors — authorities at various levels, civil society organisations (CSOs), businesses, and the general population.

The National Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security for the period up to 2025 (NAP 1325) is a state policy document that could serve as a model for implementing the Comprehensive Defence concept in Ukraine. It aims to involve women, a demographic historically excluded from such processes, in peacebuilding, security, and defence, while also ensuring the prevention of and protection from violence, particularly for women, who are disproportionately affected by conflicts.

A critical analysis of all lifecycles of NAP 1325, aimed at identifying the constraints and best practices in the implementation of state policy documents, forms the basis of this research.

### Methodology

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the capacity to develop and implement cross-cutting inter-agency policy documents in Ukraine.

To achieve this, the following research objectives were formulated to:

- Describe the law-making implementation system using the localisation of NAP 1325 as a case study, identifying its bottlenecks and successful practices;

- Examine the decision-making systems within state and local government bodies, identify their priorities, and analyse how these factors influence the effectiveness of policy document implementation;
- Assess the implementation of policy documents, using NAP 1325 as an example, and identify opportunities for improvement;
- Determine the interaction between state authorities, local self-governments, the civil sector, and businesses, and to describe potential engagement practices for the cross-cutting implementation of policy documents;
- Identify practices of Comprehensive Defence and gender mainstreaming in Sweden that could strengthen or enhance the effectiveness of policy document implementation in Ukraine.

The study is based on an analysis of qualitative data collected through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, and expert interviews using semi-structured questionnaires. It also incorporates an analysis of open-source data (legislation, existing research, etc.) and a comparative analysis of program implementation experiences in Ukraine and Sweden.

Swedish practices were gathered during a study visit to Sweden (Stockholm and Uppsala) in May 2025 as part of a training trip organised by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Gender in Detail as part of the project “Gender Approach in the Context of Comprehensive Defence.” This initiative was made possible through the financial support of the Swedish Institute, in partnership with the Swedish International Liberal Centre, and was further informed by an analysis of official Swedish government documents available from open sources.

Implementation period: May – October 2025.

A total of 21 in-depth and expert interviews were conducted during the study. One focus group discussion was conducted during the study; due to scheduling conflicts among the invitees, several other planned focus groups were replaced with individual interviews.

Categories of participants in the interviews and focus group:

- CSOs: nine women;
- Security and Defence Sector: seven women, one man;
- International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs): two women;
- Local Self-Government Bodies (LSGs): five women, one man.

**Study Limitations.** The researchers did not receive authorisation for interviews with representatives of government agencies and state authorities responsible for developing and implementing NAP 1325 in Ukraine. However, to the extent possible, this data gap was mitigated by analysing official reports and documents, as well as through insights from female experts involved in developing and implementing processes at the national level.

## Research Context

Russia's war against Ukraine, which began in 2014, has led to a fundamental rethinking of defence processes both within Ukraine and beyond its borders.

Although Ukraine had limited military readiness in 2014 due to a weakened army, lack of weaponry, and a political crisis, Ukrainian society self-organised to resist: volunteer military units were formed, defence gaps were closed through volunteer efforts (Blyzniuk & Sobakar, 2024), and numerous civic initiatives and organisations emerged. These groups not only addressed defence needs but also conducted evacuations, assisted affected populations, and worked to enhance security. Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 triggered an even greater wave of societal support for Ukraine's defence. As of 2025, the public continues to support military procurement, foster innovation, provide humanitarian aid to victims, and compensate for many state functions where resources are insufficient under martial law. Is such self-organisation regulated or coordinated by the state? We conducted a review of the current legislation to determine this.

The principles of Ukraine's defence are enshrined in the Military Security Strategy of Ukraine (National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, 2021) and the National Security Strategy of Ukraine (National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, 2020), which are bolstered by other laws and strategies. According to the Military Security Strategy, Ukraine's Comprehensive Defence is a set of measures focused on preventive actions and resilient resistance to the aggressor, including in cyberspace; using the full potential of both the state and society to repel aggression; and applying all forms and methods of armed struggle against the aggressor. The National Security Strategy introduces the principles of deterrence, interaction (developing strategic relations with key foreign partners), and resilience: the capacity of society and the state to adapt quickly to changes in the security environment and maintain stable functioning, specifically by minimising external and internal vulnerabilities.

The Law "On the Defence of Ukraine" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1991) defines measures to ensure mobilisation efforts and focuses primarily on the requirements of military protection.

The Law "On the Foundations of National Resistance" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2021) mandates strengthening the state's defence capabilities, ensuring the comprehensive nature of Ukraine's defence, and fostering the readiness of Ukrainian citizens for national resistance. However, the tasks outlined in the law are, once again, primarily aimed at strengthening military potential.

Civil defence was regulated by the Law "On Civil Defence" until 2013, when it was superseded by the Code of Civil Protection of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2012). During wartime and the preparatory period, this code operates with due regard for the specifics defined by international humanitarian law, defence and mobilisation legislation, and the legal regime of martial law. According to the code, the National Security and Defence Council (NSDC) and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU)

coordinate the activities of executive bodies regarding civil protection within their respective powers. Furthermore, commissions on technogenic and ecological safety and emergency situations are established at various levels to facilitate such coordination. There is no information regarding the civilian population's participation.

The general regulatory framework for volunteer activities is established by the Law "On Volunteer Activity" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2011). The National Social Service of Ukraine, as the central executive body implementing state policy on volunteering, maintains a registry of organisations that engage volunteers. As of October 25, 2025, this registry includes 2,318 organisations (National Social Service of Ukraine, n.d.). However, this registry contains only contact information and lacks descriptions of the organisations' fields of activity. The "Best Practices" section on the same website provides brief descriptions of the activities of 15 organisations.

The wartime legal regime allows for involving certain categories of citizens (e.g., the unemployed) in community service, based on the Procedure for Engaging Able-bodied Persons in Socially Useful Works under Martial Law (CMU, 2011). These activities consist of unskilled manual labour, such as clearing debris, constructing defensive structures, loading and unloading operations, and assisting the affected population.

For the most part, these documents either fail to specify how actors not directly involved in meeting military needs can contribute to national defence, or they merely establish a legal framework for specific activities without providing information on requirements, performance indicators, or priority areas. Furthermore, there is no centralised platform where these practices could be consolidated.

Sweden is one of the countries that responded to the war in Ukraine long before the full-scale invasion by restoring its system of Comprehensive Defence (Government Offices of Sweden, n.d.), a concept that had been in place until the 1950s during the Cold War. Its goal is to enhance the defence capabilities of the country and the population in the event of external aggression, contribute to the preservation of independence and sovereignty, ensure territorial integrity, and protect allies (given that Sweden joined NATO on March 7, 2024). As of today, this strategy is enshrined in the Defence Bill for 2025-2030 (Government Offices of Sweden, 2024).

Within this framework, Sweden initiated a study in 2023 of the Ukrainian experience in comprehensive defence, which is critical for the country's sustained defence capability. The findings were presented in the brochure "Building resilience for the future. Lessons from Ukraine" (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2023). These include, in particular: strategic communications, cooperation between the government and the civil sector, a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches, building trust in government institutions, investments in societal preparedness and public understanding of how citizens can contribute to defence, volunteer initiatives as key players, and developing public-private partnerships. These findings resonate with Sweden's Comprehensive Defence, which is divided into military and civil defence.

Military defence prioritises strengthening the armed forces: personnel recruitment and training and building up military equipment. The focus also remains on enhancing digitalization, innovation, and research. These focal points are also detailed in Ukrainian legislation, an analysis of which was provided in the previous section.

Sweden's civil defence is aimed at the entire population; it envisions developing collective resilience in times of crisis and operates by fostering the preparedness of every citizen, government structures, territorial units, private companies, and civil society institutions. Key messages are: society must continue to function, and the population must be protected; everyone is important, and everyone can contribute. Its focus areas include:

- Priority areas for readiness: communications (including telecommunications, internet, and postal services), food and water supply, healthcare, care and welfare, transportation, energy supply, and social protection;
- Central coordination: the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), a specialised state body, leads civil defence and coordinates its stakeholders (citizens, government structures, territorial units, private companies, and civil society institutions) by providing them with support in crisis preparedness;
- Economic security: defining the duties and roles of businesses in ensuring reliable production and supply chains, adapting production to crisis needs, and stockpiling critical goods;
- Psychological defence of the population, including the will to defend and resilience;
- Cybersecurity;
- Sweden's resilience as a constituent part of NATO.

MSB, the coordination body for civil defence, is guided in its work by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and the Swedish government's National Action Plan (NAP) for its implementation, ensuring that a gender perspective is integrated into all its activities (Carson, Remling, & Johannessen, 2013).

In Ukraine, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security is also implemented through the NAP 1325 (CMU, 2020). This document also facilitates European integration and the alignment of Ukrainian standards with NATO requirements. The goal of the NAP is to create conditions for ensuring the equal participation of women and men in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, recovery processes, and countering security challenges, as well as in systemic efforts to combat gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Thus, it is a comprehensive policy document aimed at strengthening the country's defence by ensuring the equal participation of women and men in the security and defence sector.

To fully implement the concept of comprehensive defence as outlined in Ukraine's Military Security Strategy—extending beyond purely military objectives—legislation must account for the role of the civilian population (as seen in Sweden). However,

since we have identified no other comprehensive legal acts or programs outlining how to develop the collective resilience of Ukrainian society or ensure comprehensive defence, NAP 1325 stands as the most relevant document that declares how civilians can contribute to defence, framing this through a gender perspective. Accordingly, the analysis of NAP 1325 implementation in Ukraine presented in the following section aims to identify best practices and barriers. These insights are intended to inform future legislative updates and the operationalisation of the comprehensive defence concept, ensuring broader and more visible civilian participation in national defence.

# CHAPTER 1. THE REALITIES OF DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND STATE PROGRAMS: THE CASE OF NAP 1325 ON WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY

*“I believe Ukraine has the best implementation experience. This is likely because we conduct a great deal of critical analysis—not mere criticism, but specifically implementation analysis and monitoring that yields results that are then acted upon. Therefore, I am very satisfied with the implementation. However, there are things I would like to highlight, both the positives and those we can identify as challenges.”*

*Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine.*

This section provides an analysis of the best practices and obstacles in the implementation of legislative acts and state programs in Ukraine, using NAP 1325 as a case study, based on insights shared by experts during interviews. Each identified challenge is accompanied by a description of Swedish practices, provided that such practices prevent or mitigate barriers to development and implementation. Understanding how the system for implementing legal documents functions makes it possible to outline the favourable conditions and methods for introducing and realising the concept of comprehensive defence in Ukraine.

Both legal acts (laws and bylaws) and state policy documents (strategies, state targeted programs, etc.) are developed at the national level but are implemented within local communities. The effectiveness of implementation will depend on how well communities are informed about the plans, the clarity of expectations placed upon them, and whether their capabilities and mandates align with the assigned tasks. No program or policy can be truly comprehensive unless it is implemented at the local level. To implement the principles of comprehensive defence, it is crucial to understand how local self-government bodies and the public are engaged.

The lifecycles of legal acts and state policy documents, including the role of LSG bodies, are detailed in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

The process of developing and implementing NAP 1325 in Ukraine is further analyzed according to the stages that the documents go through according to the above schemes: initiation and preparation; development and approval; implementation; control, monitoring and evaluation.

## 1.1. Initiation and Preparation

As of September 2025, Ukraine is implementing its second NAP 1325. However, considering the amendments that significantly altered the document's substance, this effectively marks its fourth revision.

Each time, the plans are developed with the involvement of CSOs, INGOs, representatives of government structures, and central and local executive authorities. The first NAP was adopted in 2016, 16 years after the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Ukraine became the first country to develop its NAP while in a state of war.

In the case of Sweden, the establishment of a special working group in December 2004 — led by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and including representatives from the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministries of Defence, Justice, Industry, Employment, and Communications — culminated in adopting the first NAP 1325 in 2006. Women's CSOs also actively contributed to advocating for and developing the plan. In 2006, several of these organisations registered an association called Operation 1325 (Operation 1325, n.d.), which promotes implementation and monitors the execution of Resolution 1325 both in Sweden and abroad, in cooperation with other organisations.

In Ukraine, the initiative to develop NAP 1325 originated from CSOs. Since 2014, female activists have been advocating for developing a NAP, having drafted a proposal and submitted it to the Ministry of Social Policy for consideration. According to one of the initiators, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) decided to take the lead in the process, which caused the development to start from scratch and delayed it until 2016. The involvement of INGOs is driven by the fact that their mandates may encompass the implementation of foreign policies of other governments within Ukraine. This aspect was addressed in detail in the study "Where is the money for women's rights in Ukraine?" (Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation and Ukrainian Women's Fund, 2025), initiated by Sweden's Kvinna Till Kvinna Foundation and supported by the Ukrainian Women's Fund. One of its key findings is that "foreign aid both empowers women's organisations and constrains their activities."

The drive to implement systemic "top-down" solutions nationwide sometimes undermines existing grassroots initiatives. By overlooking non-systemic local solutions, whether intentionally or not, these efforts create duplicates instead of fostering synergy and reinforcement. Respondents provided no instances where their developments were adopted as a baseline. Instead, they cited examples where their work was ignored in favour of parallel services, often of inferior quality, such as safety audits, safe spaces, internally displaced person (IDP) coordination hubs (replaced by IDP councils), shelters for survivors of violence, and border-based humanitarian aid. Such instances lead to a decline in service quality, growing disillusionment, and a decrease in civic engagement among grassroots initiatives.

Due to a lack of domestic financial resources and political will to prioritise human rights and implement reforms in Ukraine, international foundations and foreign

governments allocate funding and promote such changes in line with their own objectives, mandates, and standards. Sometimes these standards do not align with Ukrainian practices; however, not all recipients are willing to negotiate adjustments, perceiving the lack of localisation or adaptation as the price to be paid for support. This perspective can be influenced by the Ukrainian state entities responsible for registering international projects and technical assistance. According to the respondents, such influence is present in some cases but not in others.

The Ministry of Social Policy was selected as the coordinating body for the development and implementation of NAP 1325 because gender policy is explicitly included in this ministry's portfolio. According to the respondents, the choice of the coordinating body dictates the thematic focus of the NAP's content and determines the effectiveness with which goals regarding women's participation in decision-making within the security, defence, and peacebuilding sectors can be achieved.

***“Women, Peace, and Security... If they had read the word ‘Peace’ first, it would have gone to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; if it was ‘Security,’ it would have been the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Ministry of Defence. But they read ‘Women’ first and said, ‘That’s the Ministry of Social Policy, because that’s gender.’”***  
***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

Respondents agree that coordination should have been handled differently, either by another ministry (the Ministry of Defence), a dedicated coordination group (e.g., a liaison between the Ministry of Defence, Security Service of Ukraine, and Ministry of Internal Affairs), or the Office of the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration. This would have ensured better engagement of the security and defence sector and facilitated rapid decision-making. Under the coordination of the Ministry of Social Policy, activities risk being narrowed down to the protection of vulnerable groups, while simultaneously being sidelined by the security forces. Furthermore, international technical assistance funds for implementing NAP 1325 in Ukraine are registered under the Office of the Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration or the Office of the Government Commissioner for Gender Policy.

Another problematic issue in Ukraine while developing the concept is the availability (or rather, the lack) and quality of data required for needs assessment and concept formulation:

- Statistical data are not always valid, and during martial law, certain types of data are not collected at all, such as demographic statistics'
- There is a lack of targeted research for needs assessment and disaggregation of quantitative data, particularly by gender.

***“I lack targeted research that would allow for decision-making at my city’s level. I want to know how many women veterans with amputations are currently in Kyiv, how many have other types of disabilities, and what specific challenges they face.”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

Gender statistics were officially integrated into Sweden’s national statistics in 1994. A rule is in place there: all individual-level data must be disaggregated by gender, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. All data is publicly available on the website of Statistics Sweden, the country’s central administrative agency for official statistics (Statistics Sweden, n.d.). The handbook “Women and Men in Sweden: Facts and Figures” is published biennially (Statistics Sweden, 2024). First published in 1984, the handbook is now available in a new digital format, providing easily accessible statistics on women and men. Ukraine began implementing gender statistics in 2017, adding only a few indicators annually; consequently, the vast majority of data remains gender-disaggregated to this day.

Thus, at the initiation and preparation stage of NAP 1325, we identified the following aspects that act as prerequisites for high-quality, inclusive stakeholder engagement and will serve as the foundation for the study’s conclusions and recommendations:

- The involvement of INGOs: under martial law, they are effectively the primary source of funding. However, their lack of familiarity with the local context must be balanced by the oversight and expertise of Ukrainian institutions.
- The role of the coordinating body: since the concept of Comprehensive Defence requires representation from nearly all central government agencies, the coordinating structure itself must possess sufficient leverage over the entities responsible for implementing the framework.
- The availability and quality of gender-sensitive data: since “what gets measured gets managed,” it is impossible to discuss comprehensive inclusion without knowing the quantitative characteristics of the population. It is necessary to conduct an analysis of Ukraine’s population composition, identifying specific categories and defining their roles within the Comprehensive Defence system.

## 1.2. Development and Approval

At the program development stage, a working group is established under the leadership of the lead entity. Consultations must involve relevant stakeholders, as well as LSG bodies.<sup>1</sup>

In Ukraine, CSOs may participate in drafting the NAP 1325 by consent, and they actively do so at their own initiative. The established frameworks provide for involving LSGs in the development process (participation in roundtables and discussions, submitting comments and proposals, analysing the impact of legislation on local practices through LSG specialists, etc.). In practice, LSGs' involvement in policy drafting is largely pro forma and occurs only when a top-down request for participation is issued (as their involvement is merely recommended in the NAP).

The participatory model for developing the NAP 1325 in Ukraine is based on a combination of formal state mechanisms and engaging civil society. The primary starting point is independent monitoring of the previous plan's implementation, conducted by CSOs and expert communities with support from INGOs and commissioned by the coordinating body. They not only track the implementation process but also publicize the findings at forums and roundtables, establishing a foundation for public dialogue with executive branch agencies and identifying a list of issues that require correction in the new document.

During the development of the updated NAP 1325 through 2025, an inter-agency working group was established, and CSOs were given the opportunity to submit proposals via consultation platforms, ensuring that the experiences of diverse groups were taken into account.

The respondents highlighted the following features of the development process.

Although the involvement of LSG bodies in the drafting of regulations and programs is provided for, it has not yet become effective. Communication with communities follows this formula: the ministry sends a letter to the Oblast State (Military) Administration (OSA/OMA); subsequently, communication may proceed down the vertical line of a specific state structure (e.g., to the oblast Social Policy Department, which then delegates tasks to district-level executors), follow a geographic principle (from the OSA/OMA to districts and territorial communities), or involve all these tiers simultaneously, from the OSA/OMA down to the regional department. These units, in turn, assign tasks to the districts; the districts send formal requests to community heads, who then delegate them to the relevant deputy mayors, and finally, to local departments or offices. As a result, in most cases, the task is delegated to a single structural unit that senior management deems "relevant." When developing a document requires complex data (as is the case with the NAP 1325), comprehensive engagement across different stakeholders based on geographical criteria often fails

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, the term local self-government (LSG) bodies is used as an umbrella term encompassing both representative bodies (community heads, deputies, local councils) and executive bodies (executive committees and specialised departments funded by the local government).

to materialize fully. Specialised departments are essentially hybrids: on one hand, they act as local representatives of the ministry; on the other, they are funded and maintained by LSG bodies. A legal conflict arises: the department is not an autonomous entity and lacks the authority to initiate requests for policy development; only the city council or the governing body can do this. However, the city council typically distances itself from topics that are either non-mandatory or outside their direct sphere of interest.

Insufficient participation in identifying needs and issues (specifically the failure to submit systematized data or provide adequate justification) hinders including the actual local context. Weak inter-level communication, characterised by a lack of substantive dialogue or purely formal interactions between local and central authorities, as well as the untimely or perfunctory submission of data, results in local proposals being ignored or not properly taken into account. A pro forma approach to consultations erodes public support, often due to a lack of understanding within society.

Due to the sheer number of territorial communities in Ukraine, it is impossible to involve all of them in the process. Engagement is conducted through focus groups, consultations, or via networks such as the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC). However, we are not aware of any instances where the AUC was involved in developing the NAP 1325.

The Swedish organisational structure of central and local executive bodies mirrors that of Ukraine: the government, central executive authorities, regional administrations, districts, and local communities. However, the number of entities is significantly smaller: for instance, Sweden, with a population of approximately 10 million, has 290 municipalities, 21 counties, and six regions. In contrast, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast alone (one of Ukraine's 27 oblasts), with a population of 1.3 million as of early 2022, comprises 62 communities and five districts. Communication with communities regarding the development and implementation of legislative requirements is conducted through the mediation of Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), the Swedish counterpart to the AUC.

The administrative tradition of drafting documents (which belongs to the Romano-Germanic legal tradition<sup>2</sup>) makes Ukrainian legislation complex in both structure and the formulation of its language. Documents often span dozens or even hundreds of pages and require further by-laws, instructions, and supplementary regulations to become operational. Documents often contain broad, abstract concepts that require further interpretation for those responsible for implementing them.

The NAP 1325 is no exception: the action plan spans 99 pages, plus another 10 pages for the plan itself, along with various other annexes. This leads to the following consequences:

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<sup>2</sup> Sweden uses the Nordic legal system, which is characterised by greater simplicity and ease of understanding.

- A superficial review of the document or, in some cases, a total failure to read it at all.
- A loss of the document's internal logic and substance during the drafting and approval process; for instance, the more generalised the language and the larger the volume of text, the harder it becomes to maintain a consistent logic in action planning.

***“We have objectives, and we have measures. If you try to draw a parallel—what is this measure actually aimed at? In reality, it's impossible to guess what the objective is, let alone the strategic goal. There's a somewhat formal approach during the approval stages: working groups draft a plan, and then it's sent off. Then, oblast administrations start crossing things out. Regrettably, the current plan looks inconsistent; the measures don't align with the objectives, and it's very difficult to see how these objectives could demonstrate any dynamics in achieving operational and strategic goals.”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine***

- Experts attribute the absence of indicators for monitoring and evaluation to gaps in organisational capacity, Soviet-era legacies, and a lack of institutional memory. This is consistent with reality, given that the Ministry of Social Policy takes into account research evaluating the effectiveness of NAP 1325 implementation to identify and address gaps (Information and Consultative Women's Centre, 2025).

***“Despite the fact that some people never experienced the Soviet era, we still live in a ‘cycle of execution’, where, figuratively speaking, a task is handed down from Moscow, and we simply carry it out. We have not yet transitioned to a cycle of ‘implement, evaluate, and move forward.’ Additionally, periodic changes in the government and the officials in charge affect this as well; people don't see the completion of the cycle.”*** ***Expert in lawmaking and legislative drafting in Ukraine***

- Barriers to further localisation in communities. In Ukrainian practice, any provisions specified in a document are perceived as mandatory, even if they are advisory in nature or presented as model regulations or annexes. Consequently, legal departments and designated officials typically block any initiatives not explicitly mentioned in the primary document or return them for revision if any element is missing. The design of the NAP 1325 envisioned that its implementation would be carried out based on geographic criteria. Oblasts are required to develop their own plans, which has led to a conflict of objectives: on one hand, the plans are expected to be localised, while on the other, they must strictly align with the provisions detailed in the national NAP 1325.

- Limited public engagement: CSOs are included in the NAP 1325 “by agreement,” which often leads to them not being perceived as legitimate stakeholders. Consequently, they are excluded from the localisation process, and their proposals may not be properly considered, as they are not under the control of state institutions or LSG bodies. Furthermore, engaging highly expert actors or those who demonstrate superior results creates competition and a need to match their standards. In other words, it demands more work, which is not always viewed positively by state officials. Another aspect is the lack of understanding among CSOs regarding the drafting process, where to direct their efforts, and how regional organisations — physically distant from the capital — can exert influence. One potential path is forming coalitions with national CSOs; however, it is not always clear which organisations are already involved, who they are, or what the “rules of engagement” are.
- The lack of financial backing for implementing the NAP undermines how seriously it is perceived. While the procedure requires the program developer to conduct consultations on financial backing and specify its scope and sources, in practice, any recorded funding remains “virtual” or is shifted onto the expenditures of local communities. Communities are well aware of this and lack the motivation to focus on budget calculations that will ultimately go unused or, worse, be offloaded onto local budgets. If there is no funding, implementation is perceived as optional, especially when the document is not the primary regulatory act governing the official’s daily responsibilities.

***“Populism is frequently observed: there is a strong desire to pass and enact a law. Sometimes, amidst the war, there is a lack of financial capacity, so we pass the law while knowing its implementation will be delayed due to insufficient budgeting. Currently, this is tied to Euro-integration processes. We adopt everything at once, realising that implementation either won’t happen or won’t occur on the scale intended.”***  
***Expert in lawmaking and legislative drafting in Ukraine***

Swedish legislative documents are far more readable than Ukrainian ones, as they follow a different tradition: the Scandinavian legal tradition. The tasks and measures are highly specific and limited in number, with clearly defined priorities.

According to the respondents, the focus on protecting target groups is more prominently featured in the NAP 1325 than, for instance, violence prevention or women’s participation in decision-making. One reason cited is that the plan was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Social Policy, which views protection as its primary mandate. Many target groups have nonetheless remained overlooked (Information and Consultative Women’s Centre, 2025, p. 7).

The duplication of content across various national and regional policy documents leads to significant overlap with the NAP 1325. Consequently, the same issues, such as conflict-related sexual violence or domestic violence, are reported multiple times in

different frameworks. Developers are systematically informed of these issues; however, this feedback has been ignored to date.

Since the NAP 1325 encompasses a wide range of sectors, validating its text with implementers must involve the expert communities within those specific fields. In contrast, oblast action plans may be developed by a single department and only communicated to others after they have already been approved.

***“Civilian experts who are unfamiliar with our specific operations often don’t know what progress the National Guard has already made or our current strategic direction. Consequently, the plan includes items that we already completed in 2018-2019. This devalues our efforts and prevents us from moving forward.”***  
***Respondent 3 from the security and defence sector***

Under the “Development and Approval” section, the following points should be incorporated into the conclusions and recommendations to ensure comprehensiveness:

- Engagement with local communities must be practical rather than formal. Conducting qualitative focus groups and in-depth interviews, alongside involving the AUC in the drafting process, will ensure that the specific operational realities and diverse capacities of territorial communities are fully integrated. Such an approach will reduce resistance to implementation and enhance overall understanding;
- The rigid administrative tradition of legislative drafting, which remains resistant to immediate change, necessitates additional preparation to make documents usable for implementers, specifically regarding their volume, content, and internal logic. Essential criteria include well-developed monitoring and evaluation indicators, due recognition of the contributions made by CSOs, and a comprehensive analysis of funding needs followed by the guaranteed allocation of resources;
- Engaging more than just national CSOs, informing regional organisations on how to join the drafting process, and consequently implementing the Comprehensive Defence concept, will foster a platform for future implementers based on horizontal ties. This will ensure deeper penetration of legal frameworks across all layers of society;
- Analysing legislation related to the Comprehensive Defence concept to identify both regulated aspects and gaps requiring further attention, combined with validating draft documents with key stakeholders, will reduce the administrative burden on implementers and integrate the concept into existing policy frameworks.

## 1.3. Implementation

The NAP 1325 implementers include central and local executive authorities, educational institutions providing training and professional development for their staff, CSOs, and INGOs. The implementation of NAP 1325 is designed in two stages: localisation (developing Regional Action Plans) and the direct execution of planned activities at the local level.

NAP 1325 implementation is defined in the document as follows:

- Central executive authorities, along with OSAs and Kyiv and Sevastopol city state administrations, shall ensure NAP implementation within the budget allocations provided for the responsible bodies. They are required to submit annual progress reports to the Ministry of Social Policy by February 10. The Ministry then consolidates this information and submits it to the CMU by March 1.
- The Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, OSAs, Kyiv and Sevastopol city state administrations, and the Kyiv City Military Administration are responsible for developing local action plans.
- LSG bodies, the State Judicial Administration, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the Office of the Prosecutor General, the National School of Judges, and the State Concern Ukroboronprom are recommended to ensure NAP implementation within the scope of their respective mandates.
- State bodies within Ukraine's security and defence sector are recommended to develop and approve departmental action plans aimed at implementing the NAP.

Thus, while regional plans have been developed, they sometimes lack genuine localisation. In contrast, when plans are created at the community level, they are tailored to address specific local challenges.

Achieving the strategic NAP 1325 goals is also supported by a range of regulatory acts that directly or indirectly relate to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

Regulatory acts are primarily narrow in scope, focusing on specific issues within the jurisdiction of a single agency. In cases of shared responsibility among multiple stakeholders, their respective powers and liabilities are clearly defined within the document and reinforced by amendments to the secondary legislation of the responsible entities. In contrast, State Action Plans are complex and characterised by blurred lines of responsibility. Specific mandates are not explicitly separated, as it is assumed that all stakeholders will work collectively to achieve the shared objectives.

A lack of self-organisation within state and local authorities leads implementers to favour the "top-down" rigidity of regulatory acts over collaborative frameworks. When implementation requires coordination, as with the NAP 1325, the lead agency often struggles to ensure the execution of joint tasks locally. This is because such initiatives demand cross-sectoral engagement and proactive decision-making, which are not deeply rooted in these administrative systems. Consequently, sector-specific plans for

NAP 1325 implementation prove to be more predictable than localised ones. At the very least, when discussing tangible implementation results, respondents frequently highlighted, for instance, the integration of women's needs within the security and defence sector.

***“The review does not strongly correlate with the activities of coalitions specifically, but it speaks to the overall results of 1325. First, there are visible shifts and changes within the security and defence sector, ranging from combating sexual harassment to providing uniforms and other essentials. We have begun working with educational institutions and intend to continue. Notably, while the security and defence sector also lacks funding, the ‘command mechanism’ is effective there; once an order is issued, the work continues to move forward.”***  
***Expert 1 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

***“When there is clear oversight and specific tasks assigned directly to a structure, then you feel as if you are strictly obligated to perform them.”***  
***Representative 8, security and defence sector***

To ensure effective implementation, the procedures include briefings for civil servants and implementers, internal audits to assess which community functions are affected by the law, and ongoing monitoring and feedback mechanisms. Analysis of the interviews reveals that, in practice, these instruments are implemented purely as a formality, if they are applied at all.

The bureaucratization of the NAP 1325 localisation process, rooted in traditional management practices, creates barriers to further regional implementation. Aware of the “top-down” requirements, regional implementers lack the motivation to exercise initiative or propose tasks and activities tailored to the local context. Despite a ministry representative's recommendation to develop measures independently, legal departments consistently blocked non-standard proposals. In the next NAP 1325 cycle, experts hope to overcome these challenges by adopting development guidelines for regional plans that outline a clear formula for defining tasks.

Unlike its Ukrainian counterpart, the Swedish government is constitutionally barred from interfering in the operations of state agencies; its only leverage is through legislative amendments.

Shifting the responsibility for national issues to the local level leads to implementation resistance, regional service disparities, and perfunctory compliance, especially when there is no financial support.

***“Currently, it is convenient for the state to see local 1325 action plans emerge because there are no national programs for veteran rehabilitation or recovery. This burden falls entirely on***

***local communities. Today, one community might provide a soldier's family with 20,000, another with 200,000, and a third with nothing at all... This should not be a matter of local policy; it should be a matter of national policy."***

***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine***

The chaotic influx of additional plans and reports throughout the year, delivered via a top-down directive approach, causes priorities to blur. Consequently, implementers often lose sight of the big picture and struggle to understand how various documents and actions interrelate. For instance, officials may be ordered to report on specific activities for the entire year, even if no such task was assigned at the beginning of the period and no relevant data were collected. For the same reason, even if a regional plan is disseminated, by the time monitoring occurs two or three years later, the reporting request may reach a responsible party who was either not informed at the time of adoption or was not yet employed there.

In Sweden, a better understanding of priorities is facilitated by a more accessible legislative format and a three-tiered policy of objectives:

- Relevant agencies have their own job descriptions and performance indicators;
- Once a year, civil servants receive a "letter of regulation" (regleringsbrev), which establishes work priorities for the year (mostly focusing on human rights, such as the equal participation of women and men);
- For the duration of the national strategy (5 years), a special directive is in place to focus on a specific area (e.g., comprehensive defence).

A mismatch between the community's context and the document's focus minimizes the chances of effective implementation: each community faces unique lived challenges that LSG bodies are mandated to address in response to citizens' needs. If a program includes measures that fail to address these challenges, implementers have no incentive to take on additional work beyond the formal requirements. This is particularly evident in frontline communities, where hospitals are non-operational and social services, or even law enforcement agencies, are no longer present. While mobile teams responding to violence or the impacts of hostilities are a necessity in some areas, they remain a formal requirement for rear regions. Nonetheless, reporting is mandatory as all oblast administrations are listed as lead implementers.

It is also noteworthy that LSG bodies perceive gender equality issues as "artificial," in contrast to the "real-life" concerns brought to them by the local population. Even the issue of domestic violence is not perceived as a problem that requires preventive measures. However, communities and institutions that recognise the needs addressed by the NAP 1325 receive expert support for both high-quality document development and their subsequent advocacy and implementation.

Political will and the personal interest of leadership or decision-makers are decisive factors; their personal biases can either facilitate implementation or undermine all efforts from both above and below, causing overall systemic harm. The

monopolisation of operations, for example, relying on a single funding source, encourages the abuse of such an approach. Consequently, activists may be excluded from advisory bodies, funding may be allocated to organisations regardless of their performance quality, best practices may fail to gain visibility or public recognition, and program implementation may be entirely dropped from the agenda.

***“On the one hand, it’s great that a system of coalitions exists. But is it great that it’s monopolised? No. Do the members have a free voice within these coalitions? No.”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

***“Somehow, with a mere stroke of a pen, our leaders believe that if they lack the political will or don’t personally agree with the concept, they can simply abolish gender units or dismiss gender experts.”***

***Representative 6 of the security and defence sector***

According to respondents, the range of stakeholders involved in NAP 1325 implementation is expanding: agencies that were not previously included in the action plan are now initiating participation themselves, which is a highly positive development.

Among the tools that help overcome biases, respondents highlighted collective action around a common idea, advocacy, and networking.

***“These are the basics of advocacy. You have to find those who actually want to do the work. And I personally hold on to these people.”***

***Expert 1 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

The availability of state funding and the financial capacity of the community or oblast itself have already been noted as primary factors in the preceding stages. Programs handed down without financial backing are perceived locally as an unwelcome additional burden; consequently, no time is invested in their high-quality development.

However, even those communities that take a diligent approach to localising the action plan do not always find the necessary opportunities or mechanisms to fund the activities. Local organisations lack sustainable funding; when they do receive it, the funds are strictly allocated to activities predetermined by the grant. State support is non-existent. What, then, is the way forward? The first successful case of budget allocation for implementing a Regional Action Plan (RAP) 1325 occurred in Zakarpattiya Oblast. International organisations (especially at the regional level) lack budgetary flexibility. The direct testimony of Marianna Kolodii (Gender Advisor to the Head of the Zakarpattiya Oblast State Administration, Director of the Gender Education Centre at Uzhhorod National University, and Head of the Secretariat of the

1325 Zakarpattiya Coalition) regarding the budget allocation process for Zakarpattiya RAP 1325 implementation is in [Appendix C](#).

On the other hand, the lack of state funding fosters cooperation between LSGs and CSOs, as the latter can use their available resources to fill gaps in local authorities' activities. Respondents provided numerous examples of implementers uniting in the absence of funds.

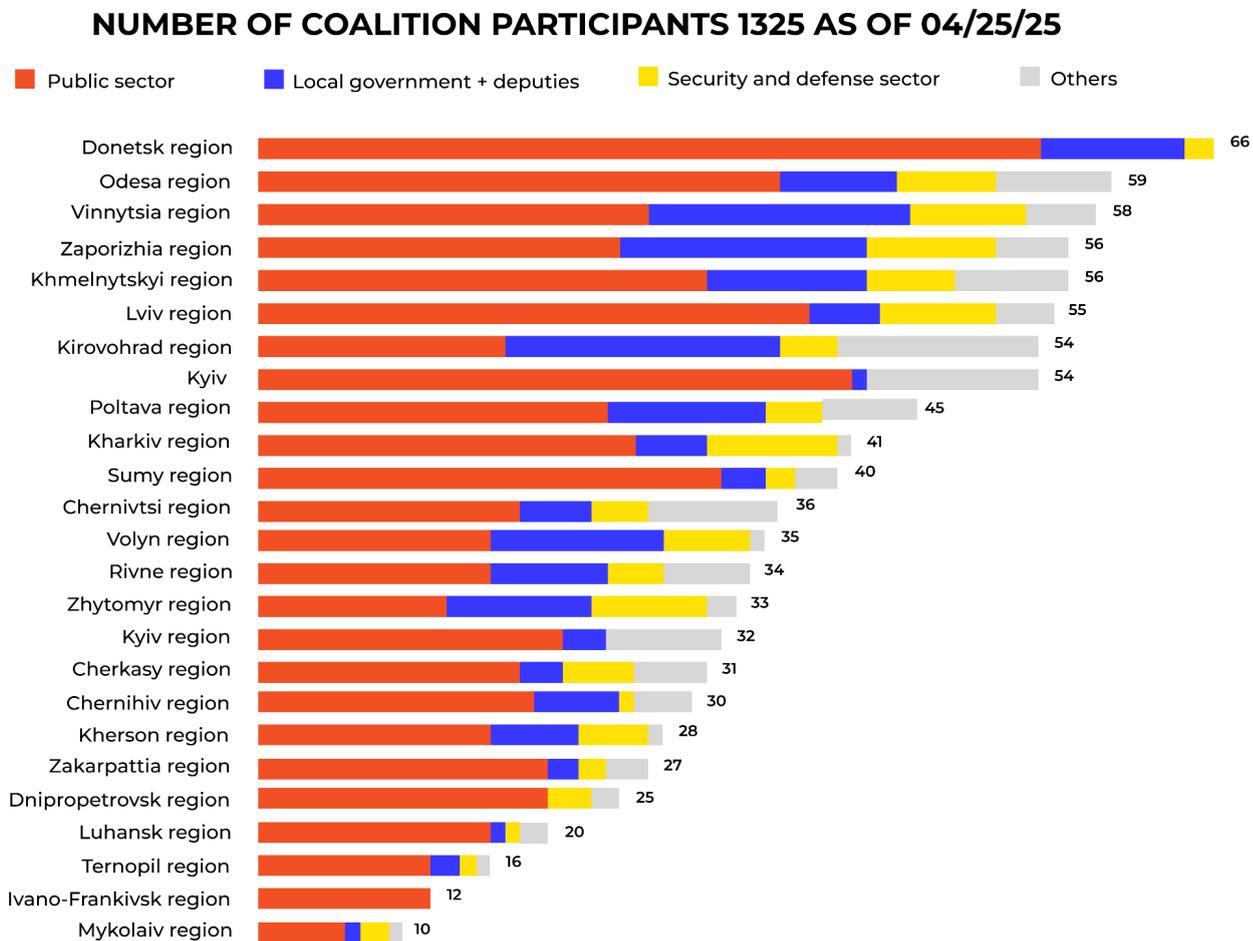
What matters most is not the funding itself, but rather the allocation of responsibilities and how those resources are used. Increased funding often attracts opportunistic institutions that lack thematic expertise but possess the organisational capacity to secure grants. In such cases, activities are highly likely to be performative, ineffective, or unsustainable. Donor organisations promote their own priorities, which may not align with local challenges; however, organisations undertake them to secure staff salaries, as institutional funding for CSOs is extremely rare. As a result, the quality of the expert community is being eroded.

***“So, we met with the coalition yesterday, and I'm looking at the presentation the PR team is showing us...and all I see is sheer ignorance. 'We recommend introducing sister resolutions to 1325.' I said, 'So sorry. But have you even read the NAP clause stating that sister resolutions are, of course, taken into account — how could it be otherwise?'”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

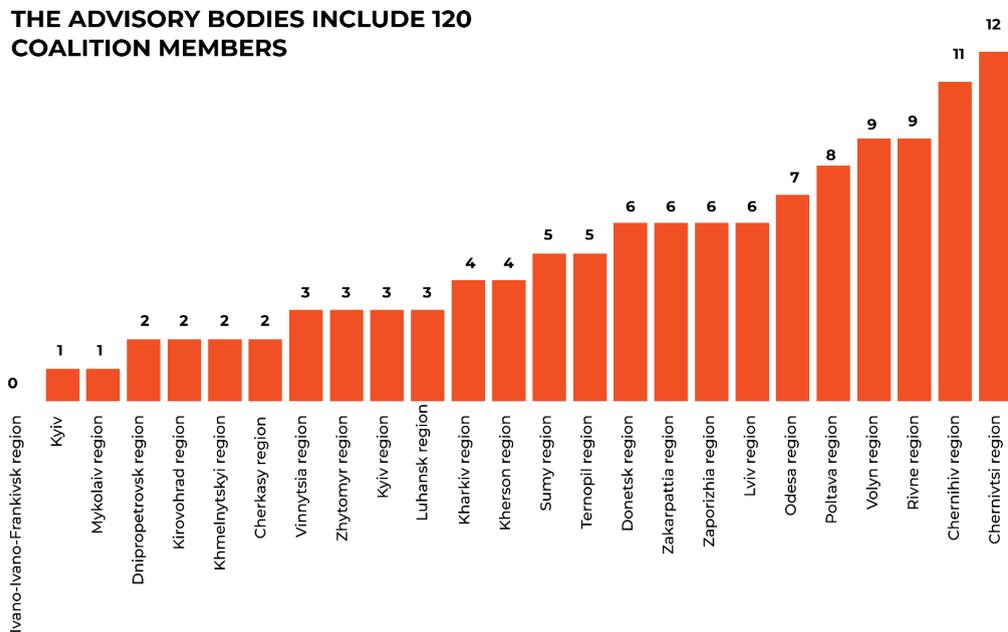
The lack of coordination among plan implementers means that not only can the RAP be developed without involving other stakeholders, but they are often not even briefed; instead, letters are merely sent “for their information.” Coordination can be facilitated through inter-agency councils or 1325 Regional Coalitions; however, by no means are all implementers members. Many coalitions were founded by NGOs, with LSGs and state bodies being underrepresented.

**Figure 1. Composition of 1325 Coalitions by oblast. Source: UWF presentation “Impact of 1325 Coalitions on RAP Implementation in 2024.”**



A similar situation exists regarding membership in advisory and consultative bodies, such as inter-agency councils.

**Figure 2. Representation of 1325 Coalitions in regional advisory and consultative bodies. Source: UWF presentation “Impact of 1325 Coalitions on RAP Implementation in 2024.”**



In Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast, for example, the coalition consists entirely of NGOs. Although the Department of Social Policy was informed and invited to coordinate, the implementers formally declined to engage and did not include coalition members in the inter-agency council, despite official requests.

Even within identical institutions across different regions, decisions regarding the appointment of a focal point (delegation) can be driven by varying logic.

***“It was decided by luck of the draw who gets to be the implementer. In our documents, if there are words like ‘children,’ ‘violence,’ or other unclear things, it all goes to the Community Policing Unit. Then it’s up to you to sort out whether you need to involve HR or pass it to others, so you end up pulling them in yourself.”***

***Representative 8 of the security and defence sector***

Despite the challenges outlined above, work within local coalitions enhances cooperation between LSGs, CSOs, and the private sector, which was highlighted by many respondents. Furthermore, the examples often pertained to units where implementation is recommended rather than mandatory, such as individual territorial communities or clusters.

***“The coalition’s work is systemic; they meet every month. Everyone who joined as a stakeholder identifies as a coalition member. They remain, for instance, an NGO, but from the moment they sign the memorandum of joinder, they act as***

***members of the 1325 Coalition. This leads to greater cohesion and the pursuit of shared goals.”***

***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

A shortage of local competencies and personnel results in a lack of analytical capacity, risk management skills, and strategic vision (including strategic planning in territorial communities). Experienced specialists are scarce due to a reluctance to enter civil service, low salaries, and a lack of local budget funds to create dedicated positions, leading to the consolidation of multiple portfolios under a single role. A single individual within a department is typically tasked with a broad range of issues, such as child wellness, combating domestic violence and human trafficking, gender equality, and support for large families. In village territorial communities, an entire department often consists of just one person. If this individual resigns or takes sick leave, there is no one else capable of providing information or taking action. Consequently, when additional requests arrive, not everyone can find the time, which may simply not exist, to address them, especially if the task is not subject to rigorous monitoring.

In Sweden, the scope of professional duties for specialists is relatively narrow. Gender equality specialists hold dedicated positions rather than combining this role with other responsibilities. They analyse whether their workload corresponds to their working hours and focus on a realistic work plan. In Ukraine, female specialists described their task lists as mandatory objectives that must be met, even if it requires working unpaid overtime. Complaining about overwork is frowned upon.

***“Frankly speaking, there are several regions where they’d bluntly tell you how fed up they are with 1325, given their heavy workload in other areas, and now they have to manage veteran affairs alongside the Ministry of Veterans Affairs. They say, ‘We see how passionate you are, and it’s great you like it, but what you’re proposing will only make our lives harder.’ In such moments, I always advise them to tap into the coalition’s resources.”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

Another problem is the internal transfer of trained personnel to other positions. Training is typically provided to only one person, preventing institutional memory from forming. Resilience rooted in past crisis management is also failing to take shape: while in 2022, temporary shelters were rapidly established and resources like mattresses and hygiene products were secured through collective effort, the closing of these centres saw the loss of protocols, contacts, and resource maps. Consequently, new mandates for evacuation readiness now place LSGs in a difficult position.

Weak institutional memory is partially explained by the vulnerability of established achievements and professional development to political and career-driven purges. Highly qualified specialists do not cling to their positions; however, there is a

challenge in dismissing incompetent or even unethical employees whose primary goals are personal gain or securing a government pension.<sup>3</sup>

The quality and sustainability of outcomes deteriorate when top-down mandates, driven by the aforementioned bureaucracy, must be executed at any cost, or when the primary focus shifts to “absorbing funds” allocated for implementation. Numerous conferences, workshops, roundtables, and the printing of materials without concrete problem-solving decisions lead to declarations of intent but fail to improve the situation for target populations.

***“Many regions were boosting their numbers by holding countless roundtables. But what’s the point? Either you provide this assistance and people can actually access it, or you don’t.”***  
***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

It is far easier to conduct training for others than to implement actual changes, especially since there is no mid- to long-term evaluation of the results of the trainings. The same individuals are repeatedly delegated to attend these sessions, where they hear the same information over and over, while the quality of the services they provide remains unchanged.

***“There are plenty of people teaching others about 1325, but a lack of people who can actually implement anything into local policies or decisions. It’s similar to the difference between knowing the Ten Commandments and actually living by them.”***  
***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace, and Security in Ukraine***

Even achieved results can be short-lived, disappearing as soon as oversight and enforcement are removed.

***“Under the first plan, we established both a dedicated structural unit and a team of advisors. Now, the advisors are gone; they are no longer part of the official staff. Only the unit remains; it used to have four people, but now it’s down to just two.”***  
***Representative 3 of the security and defence sector***

Due to leadership indifference, staff burnout, lack of clear mandates, and the sheer complexity of the documents, respondents from local governments and the security sector essentially do not plan specific activities for many programs, including 1325. Instead, they attempt to “retrofit” their daily routine tasks into the reporting templates to satisfy the requirements. Essentially, this results in the simulation of implementing additional programs.

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<sup>3</sup>For instance, when preparing this report, an appellate court in Ivano-Frankivsk reinstated an educator who had been involved in an embezzlement scheme (Informator, 2025).

***“A great many of the plan’s activities can simply be retrofitted to match a job description. They are structured in such a way that everything is related. And at least 50% is just what is already being done on a regular basis.”***

***Representative 5 of local self-government***

Information regarding innovations is disseminated, for example, as follows: materials are sent out, and those in charge are requested to report back confirming that all relevant personnel have been familiarised with the information. Responsible officers forward the materials and report the task as completed, even though they themselves may not have actually reviewed the content.

One of the interviewees shared that while attempting to implement gender-responsive approaches, she received warnings from institutional heads to “not interfere.” She interpreted this as a sign of corrupt activity, noting that transparent, gender-oriented practices play a crucial role in the eradication of corruption.

***“When we begin to analyse the needs of people across all levels—in the rear, personnel, procurement, supply chains, logistics, and the arms sector—we are essentially touching upon the centres of power and money.”***

***Representative 6 of the security and defence sector***

Gaps in engagement with the private sector lead to a whole range of obstacles emerging during the implementation of state programs. Firstly, there is a lack of established practice regarding the dual-use of facilities, particularly those within the private housing stock. Secondly, the private sector is viewed as a source of charity rather than as equal partners. The interviews provide an example where a business approached local authorities with a request to secure its production site. Upon being refused, the company organised employee safety at its own expense; this effectively saved lives during a missile strike that otherwise completely destroyed the facility’s assets. As a result, the city lost a significant taxpayer and hundreds of jobs. Now, when the authorities offer assistance, it is no longer relevant or effective. Other examples outline an extractive attitude toward local businesses. The third aspect is the prevalence of control functions within state structures over the principles of cooperation and client-orientation. It is economically disadvantageous for businesses to strengthen public safety (e.g., by equipping shelters or temporary housing) due to the risk of facing additional complications from regulatory inspections, such as those by the State Emergency Service. In addition, the mechanisms for mobilising business resources to support national defence, such as constructing fortifications or socially useful labour, remain opaque.

To complement the identified implementation challenges, one might reference the relevant Swedish experience. To coordinate local actions within their comprehensive defence framework, Sweden developed a guide, an action plan for maintaining vital societal functions and critical infrastructure (Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, 2014). Key stakeholders were also involved in the development process, including

executive bodies at various levels, local communities, and the private sector. The action plan outlines a mechanism for local-level crisis preparedness that takes into account all relevant stakeholders. For Sweden, implementing the NAP 1325 is a priority, integrated into routine operations, job descriptions, operational planning, reporting, and performance evaluations. Efforts are directed toward ensuring that actions are accompanied by clear planning, strong leadership, and accountability. All heads of relevant ministries, foreign missions, government agencies, and educational institutions are responsible for ensuring the NAP's integration and implementation and reporting on strategic and operational work for their respective departments, embassies, and delegations.

The following are conclusions and recommendations of the legal compliance unit regarding the implementation of the comprehensive defence concept.

- A lack of self-organisation culture within state authorities and local self-governments suggests that documents specifying the precise mandates of each actor and implemented through governmental channels lead to better results. Implementation on a geographical basis should be strengthened through coalitions involving a triad of authorities, CSOs, and businesses; such collaboration must remain a core focus. Coalitions also help compensate for limited staffing and enhance personnel qualifications, serving as a guarantee for the development of institutional memory.
- Moving beyond a bureaucratic approach to document localisation is a necessity. This can be achieved by conducting briefings for both local executive bodies and the entities involved in approval processes, as well as by analysing task prioritization based on the specific situation in each region. Shorter plans with fewer indicators have a higher probability of being implemented; however, the capacity to execute them (including financial resources) must be taken into account. Implementing the Swedish three-tier policy framework (or at least prototyping its structure) would significantly enhance the strategic vision of those responsible for its execution.
- Advocacy support and creating an implementation network at all levels help overcome the lack of political will, ensure the high quality of the expert community, and maintain the consistency and sustainability of results. It is also advisable to use Swedish resources that describe the concept, experience, and implementation formulas in concise analytical materials written in plain language accessible to the general public.

## 1.4. Oversight, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The Ministry of Social Policy conducts monitoring and control of NAP 1325 implementation annually in January. In addition, monitoring is conducted monthly every third and final year of the NAP's implementation: OSAs receive a letter with a monitoring form (distinct from the standard reporting form), which is then forwarded to the respective departments. Monitoring is conducted by independent experts (at least in 2024 and 2025). They are responsible for consolidating and supplementing the data (including information on CSO activities supporting local action plans), after which the reports are submitted to the Ministry.

***“Monitoring is doing better than evaluation. To be honest, the evaluation of implementation is just a total disaster; it didn't work out. In the displacement-related sectors I work closely with, evaluation is extremely problematic. No one understands how to do it, so everyone just sticks to monitoring.”***

***Legal drafting expert, Ukraine***

The reporting and monitoring forms are distinct and voluminous. The separation of reporting and monitoring functions already presents a challenge, given that the action plans are extensive while human resources remain limited. Filling out two different forms for the same purpose is demotivating, leading to a decline in both quality and responsiveness.

The monitoring report includes dozens of tasks and actors, making it impossible to oversee everything. For a single oblast, there can be dozens of tasks and up to 20 categories of implementers, including district administrations and various local councils, which scales the total number of potential performers into the hundreds.

The action plan lacks indicators, which remains one of the most common challenges. Although the monitoring form requires specific indicators, responsible officials provide information in an arbitrary format: some offer descriptive accounts of activities (listing topics), others state the number of events, very few include the number of participants, and almost none address the actual impact on achieving the goals. Consolidating these indicators for evaluation purposes proves impossible. Although the upcoming NAP 1325 draft includes indicators, they do not always reflect the quality of implementation, and in the case of localised plans, aligning them with the NAP will be difficult.

***“Last year's report was 560 pages long and completely meaningless. It's unreadable. And that's just the consolidated version! ...Every region and every agency required to report between December and January suffered through producing something that would later be merged. But it gives me nothing — no way to actually see any progress toward our goals.”***

***Expert 3 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine***

Data quality and reliability are very low, as communities lack incentives for reporting (since they often fail to integrate the NAP 1325 into their actual work plans). Consequently, when a reporting request arrives, they either fill out the forms with whatever information is available from their core activities or leave them entirely or partially blank. Factors such as lack of time, competency, and motivation among implementers play a role, ranging from a deficit in analytical skills and misunderstanding of goals to a lack of technical capacity, including access to hardware (computers) and proficiency in software like Excel. Many communities maintain their records manually on paper. Reports and documents are presented in an impractical format. For instance, the NAP is a text-based table, and the monitoring form follows the same document format, which prevents most users from navigating the data quickly and efficiently.

Data remain unverified; the analysis is conducted based on whatever information is entered under an activity, even if it is irrelevant and provides no evidence of actual implementation.

***“Some say, ‘We were crafting,’ others say, ‘We spent 100 hryvnias,’ a third group says, ‘We have gas in our apartment,’ and a fourth, ‘We have a gas mask.’ The final report ends up looking like this: they spent 100 hryvnias, have a gas mask, have gas, and... they cut out a snowflake. That’s what the report looks like at the national level, and you wonder: what will someone reading this report on the National or Regional Action Plan 1325 think? Who is this document for? People who like snowflakes, or gas workers? And what exactly were those 100 hryvnias spent on?”***

***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine***

The inclusion of tasks in the NAP 1325 that are irrelevant at the regional level (yet are incorporated into RAPs simply because OSAs/PMAs are listed as implementers) was already highlighted during the implementation stage for localisation. Consequently, if such activities are included at that stage, the corresponding data will inevitably be missing during the monitoring phase.

At the same time, high-quality localised plans that prioritise only relevant goals rather than the entire set are difficult to integrate into the general monitoring framework, as the specific tasks can vary significantly.

A lack of interagency cooperation and the limited influence of the coordinating body lead to implementers feeling no obligation to report, claiming, “There is nothing for us here.” This point is directly linked to the lack of awareness regarding the NAP 1325 and the failure to involve key actors in implementing it, as described previously. For example, implementers read “Women, Peace, and Security” and perceive it strictly as a document concerning gender equality or domestic violence, issues they believe belong to the Department of Social Policy rather than, say, Healthcare or the Prosecutor’s Office. On the other hand, the Ministry of Social Policy lacks the leverage

to ensure the engagement of the security and defence sector. Furthermore, collecting data through individual expert outreach is overly resource-intensive and unlikely to succeed due to bureaucratic hurdles.

***“The Ministry of Social Policy simply cannot monitor the implementation of 1325. Why? Because when they send inquiries to, say, the SBU, the SBU basically says, ‘We wish you health and happiness.’ And the Prosecutor’s Office says the same, and the Border Guard units will say the same.”***

***Expert 2 on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security in Ukraine***

The reporting system fails to account for the activities of CSOs, which carry out a significant portion of the work required to implement the NAP 1325. This means that for three out of five years, these results are completely ignored.

The absence of feedback following the reporting process diminishes implementers’ future motivation; they perceive that regardless of the report’s quality, no action or change follows. For instance, they identify violations, yet there is no subsequent response or resolution of the situation.

However, according to the respondents, the organisational capacity of implementers is growing; thus, there is hope that the quality of both implementation and evaluation will gradually improve.

***“As a state and as government authorities, we have at least learned how to write, collect, and formulate tasks and activities. Now, some agencies are finally saying, ‘Let’s talk about indicators.’ Take the Civil Society Development Strategy through 2026, for example; I am currently involved in that process. It focuses much more on evaluation. Within the Secretariat and the Cabinet of Ministers, there is a clear understanding that the current indicators are insufficient for high-quality monitoring and evaluation. For the next cycle, they are prioritising a deep dive to truly understand the gaps and enter the process properly. This understanding exists among the people in charge. They’ve completed one cycle, realised what went wrong, and now they are actively seeking consultants to help formulate the right way forward.”***

***Expert in lawmaking in Ukraine***

By way of comparison, the annual report on implementing Sweden’s NAP 1325 is prepared under the leadership of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. To ensure continuous oversight of the action plan and to facilitate mutual learning and experience exchange, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs convenes bi-annual meetings involving ministries, government agencies, diplomatic missions, and representatives of target groups. Group members participate in monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. At the end of the implementation period, an external evaluation is

conducted to analyse results, identify challenges, and document lessons learned in preparation for Sweden's next action plan. For instance, the 2015 findings were: the previous action plan contained a vast number of sub-goals and activities lacking a clear division of responsibility regarding implementation, reporting, and oversight, which diminished the plan's practical utility. Furthermore, the indicator-based reporting system failed to account for the activities of Swedish government agencies and diplomatic missions.

### **Conclusions regarding oversight, monitoring, and evaluation**

Key features to consider when implementing the comprehensive defence concept:

- Reporting and monitoring forms should be designed with consideration for staffing shortages and limited technical capacity. Indicators should be few in number, easy to track, and clearly understood by implementers, allowing for simple verification and analysis.
- Implementers must provide data on designated focal points, as well as representatives from CSOs and the private sector. If they participated in implementation, their contributions must be integrated into the reporting and monitoring process. Furthermore, all implementers must receive feedback on the evaluation results, including the findings and any subsequent changes planned based on those results.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the NAP 1325 is examined as an example of deploying the comprehensive defence concept with gender-sensitive considerations at the local level. The NAP 1325 is a cross-cutting, inter-agency policy document that spans the security, defence, and civilian sectors. It aims to foster cooperation among central executive authorities, LSG bodies, the security and defence sector, civil society, and the business community. The NAP 1325 integrates a gender perspective and addresses the needs of vulnerable populations by engaging groups historically excluded from peace and security processes, primarily women, while also ensuring their protection and support. The comprehensive nature of the NAP 1325 makes it a highly relevant case study for assessing local-level readiness to implement the comprehensive defence concept.

The study identified the primary systemic barriers to implementing the NAP 1325 at the local level. The analysis revealed a number of fundamental obstacles that hinder the implementation of such cross-sectoral initiatives and will similarly impact comprehensive defence in the future:

- 1. Lack of funding.** Often, plan activities are declared without providing actual funds, relying instead on “virtual” financing from local budgets. Consequently, implementation becomes optional, and many planned actions remain merely on paper. This lack of resources encourages a “box-ticking” approach and undermines implementation effectiveness.
- 2. Staffing shortages and low capacity.** In many communities, there is a lack of trained specialists capable of implementing complex cross-sectoral tasks. A single employee is often forced to juggle multiple roles (e.g., social protection and gender policy), which results in planning and implementation being carried out superficially and formally.
- 3. Bureaucratic procedures and formalism in implementation.** The lack of clear monitoring indicators and feedback demotivates implementers, while cumbersome, multi-stage approval procedures lead to constantly revising documents. As a result, local implementers sometimes fulfil requirements merely for the sake of appearances: they conduct activities and prepare reports that do little to actually resolve the underlying issues.
- 4. Inconsistency between different levels of government and weak coordination.** A gap was identified between national policy and its localisation, where several key NAP 1325 tasks remained unimplemented at the local level due to unclear division of responsibility between central and local authorities. Issues with inter-agency coordination and the duplication of functions lead to the same matters being addressed by multiple parallel programs, increasing the bureaucratic burden (e.g., double reporting). Communication between national and local levels is often reduced to formal correspondence and untimely exchange of information. Such misalignment within the governance

vertical poses a serious threat to comprehensive defence, which requires a clear understanding of roles at all levels.

- 5. Limited integration of civil society.** Despite the fact that involving NGOs has proven effective in compensating for the lack of local resources and expertise, cooperation between authorities and CSOs remains largely ad hoc and based on voluntary efforts. Local authorities often perceive involving activists as an additional burden rather than a partnership. CSOs lack the formal status of plan implementers; consequently, their initiatives may remain outside of official consideration. The problems identified in localising the NAP 1325 mirror the core elements of the Swedish Comprehensive Defence model and demonstrate the areas where Ukraine needs further progress. First, Sweden has implemented a powerful coordination mechanism: a separate government agency (MSB) was established to lead civil defence and coordinate all its actors (citizens, government bodies, local communities, private companies, and NGOs). In contrast, Ukrainian practice has revealed a lack of permanent inter-agency mechanisms, with individual departments developing regional action plans without involving other implementers, coupled with weak vertical communication. Therefore, for comprehensive defence, it is necessary to institutionalise coordination based on the Swedish model to ensure that all actors operate in sync, especially in the face of security challenges.

The Swedish approach to planning is characterised by specificity and a clear prioritisation; policy documents contain few tasks, but they are narrowly focused with clearly designated responsible implementers. In contrast, the Ukrainian NAP 1325 is bloated to approximately 150 pages with vague formulations, which complicates the understanding and practical application of the document. This breeds formalism, where implementers focus solely on “closing” reports on activities without understanding their strategic objectives. Adapting Swedish policy planning practices within the comprehensive defence framework would allow NAP 1325 localisation to focus on truly vital goals and avoid excessive bureaucratic burden.

Sweden provides the necessary resource and staffing foundation for comprehensive defence. Critical roles are distributed among specialized experts. Specifically, gender equality issues are handled by dedicated officers rather than as a secondary duty. Each agency reports annually to the government on its activities and results, fostering a culture of accountability. The Ukrainian experience demonstrates the opposite. LSC bodies face acute staffing shortages, with numerous responsibilities piled onto the same individuals, while systemic monitoring of plan implementation is virtually non-existent. This necessitates changes, including creating staff positions (e.g., gender advisors in communities) and establishing regular tracking of task execution with clear feedback. Without proper financial backing and staffing capacity, any strategy — no matter how perfectly drafted — risks remaining unimplemented.

The Swedish model is built on the principle that “everyone and the whole of society are involved.” The issues identified during NAP 1325 implementation indicate that Ukraine has yet to build such a culture of cooperation. In our reality, the private sector and volunteers often engage in security issues only on an ad hoc basis. Involving

women and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups is still perceived as a secondary task, whereas integrating a gender perspective can enhance the effectiveness of comprehensive defence. As one expert aptly noted, gender policy acts as an anti-corruption lens: by analysing the diverse needs in the rear, personnel, and logistics, it sheds light on the areas where resources and power are concentrated. In other words, comprehensive defence requires transparency and strengthening trust, which is impossible without the equal involvement of diverse social groups. The lesson of the Swedish model for Ukraine is that inclusivity and trust between the state and society are the primary conditions for resilience.

Positive practices were also identified that serve as a foundation for local comprehensive defence. Despite the challenges listed above, the study confirmed the existence of local initiatives that are already operational and can serve as drivers of change for implementing comprehensive defence on the ground. Specifically, regional 1325 coalitions have formed across the country: informal networks of activists, officials, and experts united by a common goal. Their activities have yielded tangible results, strengthening gender policy at the regional level.

The best practices for NAP 1325 localisation identified in this study demonstrate the opportunities for building a community resilience system: regional 1325 coalitions and activist networking, targeted local funding (notably the Zakarpattiya case, where the regional 1325 coalition secured oblast budget allocations for the local action plan), and public-private security partnerships (in Zakarpattiya, a local company self-funded a bomb shelter for 2,600 employees after municipal authorities failed to provide one, viewing the region as a “rear” area).

Consequently, the lessons from NAP 1325 implementation for Ukraine’s comprehensive defence lie in the need to strengthen “comprehensiveness” not only on paper but in practice. This means it is time to move from declarations to real mechanisms by ensuring financial and staffing capacity at the local level, establishing vertical and horizontal coordination, streamlining processes, and actively engaging communities and businesses. The experience of NAP 1325 localisation demonstrates that without these changes, even the best intentions will remain unrealized. On the other hand, if these lessons are taken into account and the identified barriers are removed, the concept of comprehensive defence can become a powerful tool for strengthening national resilience at the community level, bringing Ukraine closer to Swedish standards of security and the capacity to withstand security challenges.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations for the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament)

1. Codify the concept of comprehensive defence in legislation. Establish a clear regulatory framework by codifying the Comprehensive Defence Concept into law (building upon the Military Security Strategy approved by Presidential Decree #121/2021), with a distinct definition of roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. Legislation should also establish the principle of financial responsibility: if central executive authorities introduce new social programs or guarantees, the state must provide the funding. The requirement to “allocate funds for every new obligation” will make program implementation mandatory and resource-backed.
2. Institutionalise the positions of Gender Advisors. A priority is to amend the Law “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” and related acts to strengthen gender mainstreaming. It is necessary to explicitly mandate creating independent gender units within all government bodies, including civil-military administrations, oblast state administrations, and the main directorates of Ukraine’s security and defence sector, clearly defining their powers and ensuring they report directly to agency heads (following the model of the chaplaincy service).
3. Conduct a comprehensive review of existing legislation to identify barriers to the inclusive engagement of all citizens in national defence. Where necessary, introduce amendments to simplify procedures for voluntary emergency preparedness training, while expanding national-patriotic education and civil protection programs. Legislative acts must incorporate a gender perspective and support women’s representation.

## Recommendations for Central Executive Bodies

1. Mainstream the Women, Peace, and Security agenda into the operations of all ministries. Each line ministry and agency is recommended to develop its own action plan, incorporating the NAP 1325 goals. This will enable implementing gender mainstreaming across all sectors (social, defence, economic, etc.) and ensure a clear distribution of responsibilities. Establish a statutory obligation for every central executive body to report on the implementation of its assigned tasks. This would ensure that all agencies are accountable to a single coordinating body (as currently, for instance, law enforcement and military structures do not consider themselves accountable to the Ministry of Social Policy). Furthermore, it is essential to resolve ambiguities in interpreting the Women, Peace, and Security agenda by harmonising terminology and clearly defining the scope and framework of NAP 1325 at the national level.
2. Institutionalise gender policy through legislation and ensure the cross-cutting integration of gender equality in reform planning. Amend regulatory acts to establish dedicated gender equality units within each ministry, moving away from the formal assignment of these functions to HR or legal departments. This ensures

that gender integration units or officers remain autonomous from internal hierarchies and report directly to the agency's leadership. This step will ensure confidential and effective handling of discrimination and harassment cases without pressure from the chain of command, while strengthening the capacity for gender mainstreaming at all levels.

3. Foster sustained inter-institutional cooperation within the framework of the comprehensive defence system. Establish coordination mechanisms or working groups at both central and regional levels, involving representatives from the security and defence sector, social services, local authorities, and the private sector. Pilot models have already demonstrated the effectiveness of such interaction (for instance, the interagency working group for developing the new NAP 1325, which engaged CSOs and incorporated diverse expert perspectives). Grant these platforms an official mandate to oversee the implementation of the comprehensive defence system. This will eliminate the fragmentation of responsibility and ensure a comprehensive approach.
4. Secure funding for the 1325 Action Plan and gender-related programs. Allocate dedicated funds in the state budget for implementing NAP 1325 and related programs, while ensuring targeted financial support from the state budget for Local Action Plans and adjacent initiatives. It is necessary to move away from the practice of adopting "declaratory" plans lacking resource allocation; task implementation must be backed by real budgets rather than relying solely on international assistance. Specifically, provide funding from regional budgets to support localising the NAP 1325. This approach has been successfully piloted; for example, in Zakarpattiya Oblast. Incorporate expenditures for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda into the state budget and local community budgets, applying gender-responsive budgeting.
5. Strengthen financial accountability. Implement transparent reporting and oversight mechanisms to monitor the use of funds. All expenditures (both state-funded and donor-supported) must be subject to performance monitoring to prevent the misuse of resources, such as funding formal events that lack real impact. The availability of actual funding, backed by audits, will increase the accountability of implementers and motivate communities to execute the plan effectively, ensuring the sustainability of initiatives amid security challenges.
6. Establish a clear mechanism for implementing and monitoring the NAP 1325. Develop a delivery system for the NAP 1325, identifying responsible agencies, specific indicators, and unified reporting formats. Establish unified, simplified indicators and introduce a standardised reporting form (e.g., an online platform) for all implementers to ensure that monitoring is harmonised, transparent, and user-friendly. This will enable shifting from a purely declaratory plan to achieving measurable results.
7. Support local monitoring mechanisms by strengthening the role of the public, Regional 1325 Coalitions, and other civic initiatives in tracking the implementation of Regional 1325 Action Plans. Instead of issuing "top-down" directives, it is necessary to establish two-way communication, explain the strategic vision to

communities, and co-create implementation methods. Experts from the regions should be involved in developing national programs to account for local specificities and avoid creating documents that are “perfect on paper” yet detached from reality. This approach will help communities better adapt the NAP 1325 strategy to their local realities and reduce the risk of formalistic copying of provisions without the possibility of actual implementation.

8. Expand the participation of women in the security and defence sector. Uphold the principle that national defence is the shared responsibility of both women and men. The possibility of introducing basic military training for all citizens, regardless of gender, should be considered, covering weapons handling, tactical medicine, and emergency response in a streamlined format. These skills will bolster the overall defence capability of society.
9. Recognise the contributions of women to the security and defence sector and peacebuilding. State institutions should publicly recognise and highlight the roles of women service members, volunteers, medics, diplomats, and politicians. This will help dismantle stereotypes regarding “male” and “female” roles and prevent devaluing the experience women gained during the war.
10. Act pre-emptively rather than merely responding to crises. In cooperation with international partners, the government should shift its focus from emergency response to long-term resilience building. Donor coordination should be directed toward strategic planning (professional development, community capacity building) rather than merely “extinguishing fires” after the fact. Proactive planning for comprehensive defence will ensure sustainable results and mitigate losses from potential future shocks.

### **Recommendations for Local Self-Government Bodies**

1. Incorporate objectives from national programs into local action plans. Integrate the objectives of the NAP 1325 and other security programs into community development strategies and local budgets. To achieve this, conduct an impact assessment, update local programs, and allocate the necessary resources (personnel, infrastructure, and training). Such an approach will enable executing tasks within the scope of the community’s mandate. Institutionalising these initiatives within local governance strengthens comprehensive defence by optimising resource allocation.
2. Strengthen the personnel and expert capacity of local communities. Establish dedicated positions to implement the Women, Peace, and Security agenda (e.g., Gender Advisors) and ensure systematic training for the responsible personnel. This builds institutional memory and enhances the effectiveness of NAP 1325 localisation.
3. Implement results-oriented strategic planning. Introduce strategic planning and Management by Objectives practices at the community level. Local development planning ought to be adjusted to incorporate comprehensive defence goals, thereby improving coordination and impact.

4. Engage the community and CSOs in the needs assessment process. LSG bodies should collaborate closely with the population and NGOs on action planning. Specifically, use community surveys to identify needs (such as training, services, etc.) and co-develop projects with NGOs to address these demands. This participatory approach (for instance, by engaging activists from regional 1325 coalitions) ensures prompt strategy adjustments, monitoring, and feedback between the authorities and the community, fostering the successful implementation of initiatives.
5. Orient local plans toward concrete results. Regional 1325 action plans (specifically community-level 1325 plans) must focus on achieving measurable results and impact. It is necessary to establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and regularly assess how implementing measures enhances security and meets the needs of target groups. This will ensure the accountability of NAP 1325 implementers regarding their actual contribution to comprehensive defence and integrating a gender perspective at the local level.

### **Recommendations for Ukraine's Security and Defence Sector**

1. Introduce comprehensive training for all citizens by providing basic military and tactical preparation.
2. Institutionalise the gender perspective by establishing permanent, paid positions for Gender Advisors or Coordinators in every security agency, with clear mandates, specialised training, and independence from the chain of command.
3. Ensure the equal participation of women in service by creating barrier-free access to all specialties: housing, equipment, infrastructure, logistics, and career advancement opportunities.
4. Strengthen personnel training by integrating gender equality, sexual harassment prevention, and psychological support into the professional development programs and curricula of all security and defence higher education institutions. Conduct regular training for personnel.
5. Strengthen institutional capacity and monitoring by clearly assigning responsibility for NAP 1325 tasks within each institution, avoiding the duplication of efforts in departmental documents, and ensuring regular progress reporting.
6. Protect personnel from harassment by approving guidelines on promoting equal rights and opportunities for women and men and preventing violations related to gender discrimination or sexual harassment in service. Ensure an independent grievance redressal mechanism (via dedicated gender integration units outside the chain of command).

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A. The Cycle of Legislative Adoption and Implementation in Ukraine

The cycle encompasses key stages, from initiation to implementation, that account for legal, institutional, and procedural aspects, as well as execution at the local level.

Current Status (What is happening)	Local Level Engagement Mechanisms	Summary and Outcomes
<p><b>I. Planning and Development</b></p> <p>The legislative work plan, the list of government initiatives, and other relevant documents are taken into account.</p> <p>Public policy analysis and public policy forecasting documents are taken into consideration.</p>		
<p>A concept note for the legislative initiative is being formulated.</p> <p>Problem analysis and legal expertise are conducted.</p> <p>The draft law is being prepared.</p>	<p>Participate in public discussions, roundtables, and consultations with the public and stakeholders, which can and should involve local authorities and NGOs.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Formats can be monitored on official websites (where consultation announcements are published), through invitations to roundtables, e-democracy platforms, and national organisations or associations. It is also advisable to send formal requests for inclusion.</p> <p>Provide data and information regarding local-level implementation to the process initiator.</p>	<p>A legislative package has been prepared.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The draft legal act itself (draft code, draft law, draft resolution, etc.);</li> <li>- Supporting documents (explanatory note, comparative table, financial and economic justification, etc.).</li> </ul>
<p><b>II. Registration and Preliminary Review</b></p> <p>The right of legislative initiative belongs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The President;</li> <li>● Members of Parliament (MPs), individually or in groups;</li> <li>● The Cabinet of Ministers.</li> </ul>		

<p>The bill is formally submitted to the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (VRU).</p> <p>↓</p> <p>It is assigned a registration number.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The draft is published on the VRU website.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>It is referred to the lead committee, and other relevant committees are identified.</p>	<p>Submit comments and proposals to the lead committees.</p> <p>Communicate with MPs regarding the community's position.</p> <p>Participate in public discussions initiated by the VRU or the bill's sponsors.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Engagement opportunities can be tracked via official websites (where notices, announcements, and invitations are posted) and through national organisations or associations. It is also advisable to send direct requests for inclusion.</p> <p>Analyse the bill's impact on local practices through LSG practitioners.</p>	<p>The lead committee conducts a preliminary analysis and prepares a conclusion on its feasibility. Other committees prepare opinions within their areas of competency. The Main Research and Expert Department provides a legal assessment.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The preliminary review is completed (including issuing opinions from the lead committee and committees on international obligations, anti-corruption, etc.)</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Expert reviews have been conducted (legal, gender-legal, anti-discrimination, etc.).</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The committee may recommend to approve, revise, or reject the bill.</p>
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**III. Consideration and Adoption of the Bill**

As a rule, the VRU considers bills through a three-reading procedure.

Final adoption of a bill (excluding draft codes and bills containing more than 100 articles or clauses) is permitted immediately after the first or second reading, provided the bill is deemed to require no further revision.

<p>A discussion takes place on the session floor during the first reading.</p> <p>Based on the voting results, the bill is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted in the first reading (as a basis), then proceeds to the second reading;</li> <li>• Rejected;</li> <li>• Remitted for further development.</li> </ul> <p>If adopted as a basis:</p>	<p>Analyse the draft bill following its first reading.</p> <p>Prepare amendments to be submitted through MPs or associations.</p> <p>Submit the community's position paper.</p> <p>Exert influence to ensure local needs are incorporated into the legislative wording.</p>	<p>Based on the voting results, the bill is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted in its entirety as a law;</li> <li>• Remitted for a repeat second reading;</li> <li>• Rejected.</li> </ul>
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<p>↓</p> <p>MPs submit amendments (10 days).</p> <p>↓</p> <p>A comparative table containing all amendments is compiled.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The committee reviews the amendments and prepares the final version.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>The bill is reconsidered at a plenary session.</p>	<p>Participation in public consultations and parliamentary events.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Participation formats can be tracked on the official websites of national organisations and associations (where notices, announcements, and invitations are posted). It is also advisable to send individual requests for inclusion.</p>	
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LSGs can influence the development of legislative initiatives through specialised associations and platforms, such as the AUC and the All-Ukrainian Association of Communities (AUAC). These bodies represent their interests at the national level and forge consensus positions on key policy areas, including housing, social services, and funding.

Local CSOs can join initiatives launched by national organisations.

**IV. Signing and Publication**

Once the VUR has adopted an act has been adopted in its entirety, the following are conducted:

- Final editorial processing;
- Final legal expertise.

<p>Once adopted, the law is signed by the VRU Chairperson.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>It is then transmitted to the President of Ukraine for signature. The president has 15 days to either sign or veto the law.</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Upon signing, the law is officially promulgated.</p>	<p>Monitor the final text of the law.</p> <p>Inform local departments about the new regulations.</p> <p>Prepare for implementation (analysis, resources).</p> <p>Submit observations to the president before the law is signed, if necessary.</p>	<p>Laws signed by the president are published in the “Holos Ukrainy” newspaper and the “Bulletin of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine,” and are posted on the VRU website.</p>
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**Entry into force**

After 10 days or within another period specified by the law.

Current practice often involves a three-month transition period before the law enters into force to bring all bylaws into compliance.

**V. Execution and Implementation**

#### At the national level:

The CMU and central executive bodies (ministries, agencies, etc.) draft secondary legislation:

- CMU resolutions;
- Ministerial orders;
- Methodologies, instructions, etc.

In parallel, amendments are made to existing regulations, procedures, and registries. Additionally:

- Briefings for officials, implementers, and Administrative Service Centre (ASC) staff are conducted (information on these can be obtained via inquiries);
- Fact sheets, checklists, and action processes are developed;
- Information dissemination is ensured (via official websites, media, handouts, etc.).

#### At the local level:

Impact assessment of local policies and services.

An internal audit must be conducted to identify which municipal functions are affected by the law (this may include internal documents, legal opinions, inquiries to the AUC, etc.). The analysis focuses on whether the law requires:

- Amendments to local programs;
- Creating new services or agencies;
- Additional funding, personnel, or property.

Updating the community's regulatory framework.

New acts are adopted or existing ones are updated: local council resolutions, executive committee regulations/procedures, and inter-municipal agreements or cooperation protocols.

Resource planning and financing.

Funding sources are identified (local budget, state subventions, donors).

Funds are allocated for staffing, infrastructure, procurement, information campaigns, and staff training.

A corresponding budget resolution is drafted or amendments to the program are adopted.

Training and outreach are conducted.

Information campaigns, public consultations, or hotlines are organised for the community.

Monitoring and feedback.

## Appendix B. The Development and Implementation Cycle of State Policy Documents

The cycle covers the main stages together with the implementation at the local level. The adoption cycle is considered based on the example of CMU program documents and is presented in a generalised manner. Strategies, state target programs, other documents of a program nature may have features determined by the relevant legislation.

State program documents may be aimed at solving problems of state development or a significant number of its regions, have a long-term implementation period and are implemented by central and local executive bodies; other programs, the purpose of which is to solve individual problems of economy and society development, problems of developing individual sectors of the economy and administrative-territorial units that require state support.

<b>Current Status (What is happening)</b>	<b>Local Level Engagement Mechanisms</b>	<b>Summary and Outcomes</b>
<b>I. Initiation and Preparation</b> The CMU and central executive bodies are the initiators of the development. In the case of state target programs, initiators also include: the National Bank; National Academy of Sciences; Verkhovna Rada of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea; oblast, Kyiv city, and Sevastopol city councils; the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea; and oblast, Kyiv city, and Sevastopol city state administrations.		
<p>Needs are identified, and a concept is formulated. The draft concept includes an analysis of the problem and its root causes, justification for a program-based approach, definition of the goal, the optimal solution, implementation methods, timelines, expected results, efficiency, and resource assessment.</p> <p>The target program concept is subject to official publication and public consultations.</p>	<p>LSGs bodies identify urgent needs based on the analysis of regional specifics, the socio-economic situation, and community demands. They define priority measures and target groups for implementation at the local level and submit them as proposals to the initiators for integration into the document.</p>	<p>Approved concept.</p> <p>In the case of target programs, the concept, accompanied by a review from the Ministry of Economy, is approved by the Government, followed by a formal decision to draft the program itself.</p>
<b>II. Development phase</b>		

During the development of policy documents subject to approval by the President or VRU, the lead developer shall conduct consultations on the structure and general content of such documents with: the Office of the President, the NSDC Staff, or the relevant VRU committees.

To develop the document, broad consultations are conducted with stakeholders, particularly through a working group. An analysis of resources and risks is conducted (identifying necessary funding and human resources and assessing potential risks and barriers to program implementation).

Specific measures are formulated (concrete actions, implementation timelines, and responsible parties).

In specified cases, state expertise, environmental assessment, etc., are conducted.

The lead developer coordinates the process.

Consultations with stakeholders, as well as local authorities, must take place during the development process. This is necessary to identify specific needs, conditions, and capacities within particular territories in order to create tailored interventions that reflect local realities.

LSGs must assess the draft document's alignment with local strategies. They must be coordinated with local development plans to avoid duplication or conflicts between state and local initiatives.

A draft policy document has been prepared in accordance with the established requirements. The following must be defined: implementation period and goal; ways and means of solving the problem; tasks and measures; expected results and efficiency; and the volume and sources of funding.

A package of supporting documents is also prepared for approval, along with the conclusions of the interested central executive bodies.

Strategies must include an Action Plan for their implementation.

### III. Coordination and Approval

After development, the program is submitted to the Government for consideration, where its alignment with national priorities is reviewed.

The Government approves the program (together with the Action Plan for its implementation) based on an assessment of its expediency, financial justification, and expected results.

### IV. Implementation

The implementation of policy documents is ensured through multi-level cooperation among authorities: central executive bodies, state (military) administrations, and LSG bodies carry out measures within their own mandates and budget allocations.

At the local level, adapting and integrating national plans into local policies are envisaged through developing Local Action Plans (or other formats).

Implementers are required to submit regular reports for centralised monitoring, while institutions not directly listed as primary implementers are involved on a recommendatory basis or through departmental plans.

Following the document's approval, the tasks and measures are executed within the specified timelines and with appropriate funding.

Both state executive bodies (at various levels) and LSGs (subject to their consent) participate in this stage. Private companies, institutions, and organisations, as well as international and national entities, may join subject to their consent or in accordance with agreements.

There may be several implementers simultaneously. The lead implementer is listed first.

Local authorities are responsible for implementing the specific measures defined in the document. Measures implemented by LSGs are defined in the document as being "subject to consent," in accordance with the principles of decentralisation and local self-governance.

LSGs specify measures from state programs to meet the needs of their communities; in particular, they may develop local programs or implementation plans.

Local authorities must coordinate with other key stakeholders to implement tasks and measures: enterprises, civil society organisations, and citizens.

Local authorities allocate funding from local budgets to implement tasks and measures, as well as through subventions or state budget financing. Funding from other sources (international technical assistance, grants, etc.) may be

Implementing tasks and measures within the specified deadlines has been ensured.

Information on implementation progress is available in the performance reports.

	<p>leveraged to implement the measures.</p> <p>LSGs may develop and approve their own programs.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>V. Monitoring and Reporting</b></p> <p>The lead responsible entity (typically a central executive body whose mandate covers this policy area) is designated by the approval act (a government resolution). The approval decision defines annual and interim reporting deadlines.</p>		
<p>The lead responsible entity analyses and comprehensively evaluates the results of tasks and measures, the targeted use of funds, and prepares annual and, if necessary, interim progress reports. The analysis is conducted based on information provided by all implementers. Consolidated information is submitted to the Government annually (within the timeframe specified in the document).</p> <p>In parallel, civil and parliamentary oversight may be exercised through initiatives of VRU committees (or temporary special/inquiry commissions), financial audits by the Accounting Chamber and the State Audit Service, and public assessments conducted by think tanks and NGOs.</p>	<p>Monitoring of local implementation (collection, analysis, and evaluation of information on program progress, achievement of indicators, and compliance with deadlines).</p> <p>Preparation and submission of reports (to the Oblast Council, OMA, or OSA, as well as central executive bodies according to the distribution of powers). They provide documents and information for audits (to the State Audit Service, the Accounting Chamber, etc.) and ensure the implementation of recommendations following such controls.</p> <p>LSGs inform the community through public reports, council sessions, official resources, and open hearings, ensuring transparency in the document's implementation.</p> <p>They submit proposals for</p>	<p>Analytical reports on implementation progress, alignment with expectations, and problem identification have been prepared and made public.</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Implementing target programs requires posting progress information on the official government website responsible for the program. While publishing reports on the strategy's implementation results is not mandatory, it is considered a best practice and is recommended for adoption.</p> <p>Interim adjustments are prepared (as needed). Changes are introduced via a relevant government decision and must undergo all mandatory development stages.</p>

	<p>program improvement based on community needs, serving as a source of initiatives for policy adaptation at the local level.</p> <p>They also prepare alternative implementation reports.</p>	
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## VI. Evaluation and Final Reporting

This stage is pivotal for summarising outcomes, determining the results achieved, assessing the efficiency of resource utilisation, and planning future actions. It provides the feedback loop necessary for updating policies, launching new programs, or phasing out ineffective ones.

<p>Upon completion of the program's implementation period, a final report is prepared. The preparation timeframe may be specified for a particular document type (e.g., three months for target programs) or set forth in the approval decision. The report details: the program's objectives and outcomes; funding volumes and sources; information on implementing tasks and measures; and an evaluation of implementation effectiveness. The final report is submitted to the CMU. Depending on the type, it may be accompanied by consolidated conclusions prepared by the Ministry of Economy in cooperation with other central authorities</p>	<p>The local level ensures the collection, analysis, and transmission of factual data on program implementation on the ground, facilitates an objective efficiency assessment (particularly by cooperating with oversight and audit bodies), and represents the communities' perspective (either directly or via associations) within the national reporting process.</p> <p>Local government representatives may be involved in public presentations of program results, roundtables, and public consultations.</p> <p>They conduct their own reporting to the community on how the program was implemented within the</p>	<p>The final report has been prepared and made public.</p> <p>The report is published for the general public and submitted to the VRU or other relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>The final report serves as the basis for decision-making regarding future actions: whether to extend, adjust, or conclude the program. However, the decision to extend a strategy or program or develop a new one for a subsequent period is made before the current one expires to ensure policy continuity.</p>
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<p>(Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Environment, etc.) based on the program's focus.</p> <p>Concurrently, the Accounting Chamber, the State Audit Service, and other bodies verify the expenditure of funds.</p> <p>Consultations and discussions take place through the public presentation of results (briefings, roundtables, public reports). Discussions are held with experts, communities, and stakeholders. Comments and proposals are reviewed.</p>	<p>territorial community.</p>	
<p><b>State strategic document:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Extended;</li> <li>● Revised;</li> <li>● Concluded.</li> </ul> <p>This leads to a new cycle of policy development and creating corresponding strategic documents.</p>		

## **Appendix C. Case Study: The 1325 Zakarpattiya Coalition and Budget Allocation for the Regional 1325 Action Plan**

Maryana Kolodiy, Gender Advisor to the Head of the Zakarpattiya OSA, Director of the Centre for Gender Education at Uzhhorod National University, and Head of the Secretariat of the 1325 Zakarpattiya Coalition, regarding the funding process for implementing the Regional 1325 Action Plan in Zakarpattiya:

Should we be crowdfunding the Regional Action Plan or what? I asked them, “Do you really expect us to start a fundraiser and crowdfund the government’s own regional action plan?”

Back then, I believed it was a matter of principle: if a plan is developed as a regional document and approved by the governor’s decree, it must be funded by the Oblast State Administration. They told us, “Absolutely not. Your plan, in a time of war?” And we replied, “Then we don’t want you to approve it at all. What’s the point?”

A rather lengthy advocacy process began. We approved our Action Plan in July 2023. We spent six months in discussions. By the way, the discussion was very straightforward. We were determining the funding model and considered two possible methods. Initially, there was even a third option: we thought perhaps an international NGO might cover at least part of the expenditures for the first year of the action plan, since it was adopted for a three-year term. At least for the first year, and then we’ll communicate and advocate further. There was simply very little time. However, since international organisations declined, only two options remained: either everything stipulated in the Regional Action Plan would become a separate targeted program under the same name — the Regional Targeted Program for the Implementation of National Action Plan 1325 Women, Peace, and Security until 2025 — or the measures outlined in the action plan would be integrated into various targeted programs across different executive bodies. Accordingly, our action plan at that time involved 20 implementing agencies. Does the education sector have its own program? Yes, it does. The education sector has its own programs, such as “Youth of Zakarpattiya.” Activities related to youth education are funded through that specific program. These were the kinds of discussions we had.

By late spring 2023, it became clear that a separate targeted program would definitely not be approved, as funds were unavailable and the future remained highly uncertain. So we began pushing to include these measures in various targeted programs, but with the strict condition that they must be fully resourced.

Ultimately, in June 2023, we reached a consensus: funds would be allocated across various targeted programs to implement these measures, specifically within the budgets of the Departments of Social Policy, Education, and Health.

This was, admittedly, a more complex scenario. We now had to coordinate all these different actors and analyse their reports, only to face the fact that while the Department of Social Protection was responsible for monitoring the Regional Action

Plan, the funds sat with other departments. The Department of Social Protection lacked both the experience and the authority to oversee activities in other sectors. This was precisely where the coalition stepped in.

But I'm glad that we pushed it through and communicated our case effectively back then, securing those initial funds. While only a small amount was planned for the first year — 300,000 — the actual expenditure turned out to be around 500,000.

The point wasn't even about the amount of money; it was about the precedent itself: the fact that this was a first, both for our region and for all other regions in Ukraine. And now, funds are being allocated, more or less, but they are being allocated. What mattered most was being the first to break through.

I know of cases in some oblasts where funds for the action plan were provided solely through the targeted program of the Social Protection Department. However, this touches upon the varying capacities of different regions. For example, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast has UAH 500,000 allocated within a single Social Protection Department program covering gender equality and anti-trafficking. Meanwhile, other oblasts can only dream of such figures for that specific program, if they even have such programs at all. Personally, however, I am against such an approach because of the current challenges we face. I personally would not associate implementing Resolution 1325 with programs for preventing human trafficking or domestic violence and promoting gender equality — that “triune” program found in many oblasts — because the contexts are entirely different.