WHO Country Cooperation Strategy, Ukraine 2024–2030
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMR</td>
<td>antimicrobial resistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBRN</td>
<td>chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>Country Cooperation Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>coronavirus disease</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>NCD</td>
<td>noncommunicable disease</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>nongovernmental organization</td>
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<td>NHSU</td>
<td>National Health Service of Ukraine</td>
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<td>PHC</td>
<td>primary health care</td>
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<td>PTSD</td>
<td>post-traumatic stress disorder</td>
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<td>SDGs</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>tuberculosis</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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Introduction

The World Health Organization’s Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS), Ukraine 2024–2030 – also known within Ukraine as the Ukraine Programme of Work – charts a course to a healthier future for Ukraine. It aligns with Ukraine’s health priorities, fosters resilience and, through partnership, aims to make a measurable difference. At its foundation, the CCS holds a people-centred, human rights approach to health care, and is guided by innovation, quality data and adaptability.

With an ambitious vision, the CCS takes into account Ukraine’s transformation agenda, particularly for the health sector, as well the impact of the full-scale war following the Russian Federation’s invasion in February 2022. Aligned with global and regional priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework in Ukraine, WHO’s Thirteenth General Programme of Work – also noting strong linkages to the forthcoming WHO Fourteenth General Programme of Work with its emphasis to “promote, provide and protect” health outcomes for all, globally – and the European Programme of Work, the CCS underscores WHO’s commitment to Ukraine through all stages of response, recovery and reform. For WHO, success will be measured in real-world improvements to Ukraine’s health system and to people’s health.

The CCS delineates a path for WHO collaboration, offers clarity in a period of complexity – not just for the Government of Ukraine, but also for the United Nations, development and humanitarian partners, multilateral agencies, civil society organizations and local communities – and outlines what they can expect from WHO in the forthcoming years. The CCS also emphasises national priorities, and leverages WHO’s unique strengths to advance the Regional and global health agenda. Operating amidst dynamic and challenging circumstances, the CCS for Ukraine stands as a definitive statement of WHO’s commitments, strategic objectives, roles and contributions towards enhancing resilient governance, a resilient health system and resilient people, and of actively involving all stakeholders to improve the health and well-being of all people living in Ukraine.
The World Health Organization’s vision is to maximize healthy life expectancy for all people living in Ukraine, nurturing well-being, community resilience and social cohesion, all in alignment with the health needs and health-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Central to this vision is an effective health system with robust institutions that embrace social participation and ensure that every individual has equal access to comprehensive health services and the highest quality of care when needed, free from financial hardship, regardless of their circumstances. Through collaboration with local partners and institutions, WHO aims to help build resilient governance, a resilient public health system and resilient people, capable of swift responses to emerging health threats while maintaining ongoing services for all.

“an effective health system with robust institutions that embrace social participation and ensure that every individual has equal access to comprehensive health services and the highest quality of care when needed”
WHO in Ukraine

This Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) builds on WHO's long presence in Ukraine and on its experiences regionally and globally, including leading the public health agenda and strengthening health systems, as well as on preparing for and managing crises such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and humanitarian crises. WHO has worked with and supported the Government of Ukraine and health partners since Ukraine's independence in 1991 and has had a permanent presence in the country since 1994. WHO has been a key partner throughout the Russian aggression and invasion as well as in the COVID-19 pandemic response, supporting Ukraine to overcome health crises while maintaining focus on the health system for all people living in Ukraine. WHO has contributed to public health and health system transformation over the past decade, in support of the Government's reform efforts.

WHO is the United Nation (UN) system's lead and convener for health in the continuum of the humanitarian response, early recovery and development agenda. The role and focus of WHO’s work is to provide normative and technical leadership and guidance to the government, and national, regional, local and international partners. To respond to country needs, the country presence and competencies of the WHO Country Office team in Ukraine provides policy support and full-scale technical support in range of health matters including emergency preparedness and response. The full-scale war, together with emergency response needs have broadened the
The operational role of WHO in Ukraine to include extensive field operations – providing direct support to partners and facilities, including managing medicine shortages and needs for supplies and equipment to save lives. WHO brings the resources and technical expertise present at the Country Office and also, as necessary, support from the WHO Regional Office for Europe and from WHO headquarters. The WHO Country Office in Ukraine also draws on the technical expertise of WHO collaborating centres and various networks and experts to provide high-quality advice and services.

As the lead convener for the health sector across international partners, WHO has fostered an extensive network committed to public health progress in Ukraine. This broad alliance of partners has supported the development of the National Health Strategy 2030. The alliance commends the Government of Ukraine’s progress in aligning its approach to achieving the SDGs, in addition to the progress already made, as outlined in the 2021 Voluntary National Review.

Beyond WHO’s role as a partner to the Ukrainian government, Ukraine is a critical actor shaping the global health agenda as a WHO Member State and, from 2023–2026, holds a position on its Executive Board. In addition, Ukraine’s active participation in the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee of WHO Europe from 2022–2025 reflects its commitment to contributing to regional health policy and strategy development. Moreover, Ukrainian authorities and experts are dedicated to sharing their public health experiences and insights with other countries, enhancing global health knowledge and practices.
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers a universal framework for improving health in Ukraine and aligns with WHO’s mission. There are six years until 2030, and Ukraine is far behind achieving targets in many areas. However, it is continuing the fundamental health sector reforms as well as both emerging from a pandemic and facing a full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation.

There is an imperative to support Ukraine to ensure urgent health services for those affected by the war, while also striving towards nationwide universal health coverage, bolstered by robust institutions that are aligned with future needs. Achieving the health-related SDGs in Ukraine requires a concerted effort in the health sector and beyond to ensure health and well-being for all, embodying resilience, adaptability and a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda.

Although not exhaustive, the following observations will shape, and must be the focus of, Ukraine’s health system from 2024 to 2030.
The war’s impact will be far reaching

Invest now to mitigate long-term consequences

The war has significantly affected Ukraine’s economy, resulting in the destruction of essential health services and infrastructure, population displacement and dire economic forecasts. Should the war continue in the medium to long-term, early projections indicate that up to 90% of the people living in Ukraine could face poverty and extreme economic vulnerability, and the country’s socioeconomic progress could be set back by almost 20 years. Every effort needs to be made to ensure this does not happen. These adversities underscore the importance of continued investment in health for economic recovery and growth.

Prepare for demographic shifts

The full-scale invasion has led to a sharp decline in population numbers. By mid-2023, the population had dropped from approximately 41 million to 33 million. As of the end of 2023, around 6.2 million people – 15% of the total pre-war population – had been displaced from Ukraine, in addition to the 5.1 million internally displaced persons. Population numbers may continue to change through 2030. This situation is compounded by a relatively faster aging population, as many in the younger and female strata have left the country. Additionally, there has been a noticeable decrease in birth rates, further contributing to the demographic shifts and challenges Ukraine will face in the coming years.

Prioritize mental health

Mental health issues, including depression, were seen as a hidden challenge even before the start of the full-scale invasion. Today, the mental health repercussions of the war in Ukraine extend across all age groups and diverse backgrounds. Veterans, women who have experienced sexual violence, the elderly who have remained in their communities, and youth who have lost a family member are amongst those severely affected. The demand for mental health and psychosocial support services will continue to grow, with a significant portion of the population living with a mental health condition. WHO estimates that over 10 million people in Ukraine are currently experiencing mental health problems as a result of the war. This includes symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. Children are exceptionally vulnerable, with many experiencing PTSD and other anxiety-related disorders.
Act on growing rehabilitation needs

The war in Ukraine has created an urgent need for specialized trauma and rehabilitation care, particularly for severe injuries like burns, spinal cord injuries, complex limb injuries, and amputations. The availability of specialized rehabilitation services has been limited, highlighting a critical gap in the health system. Many people living in Ukraine require immediate and long-term rehabilitation, spanning months to years. Addressing these needs is imperative for their physical recovery and psychological well-being and the continued support and provision of crucial supplies to front line facilities is critical. Disability inclusion is a further area that must be made a priority. Further, rehabilitation needs in Ukraine extend beyond war trauma. There is a significant demand for services addressing conditions such as stroke, chronic diseases and other non-war-related injuries and illnesses, underscoring the need for a comprehensive and inclusive rehabilitation approach.

Focus on reintegration of all persons affected by the war

The reintegration of displaced and affected persons, such as veterans, into Ukrainian society presents a multifaceted challenge, and requires a tailored, comprehensive approach that includes health. Those displaced also include vulnerable populations such as the elderly, women and girls, minorities and LGBTQI+ populations. These individuals, having faced the traumas of displacement, require tailored health-care services that address not only their immediate physical needs but also the psychological aftermath of their...
experiences. The reintegration process must therefore encompass a robust support system, integrating mental health services, trauma counselling and community-based rehabilitation programmes. Collaborative efforts with local communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international aid organizations are crucial for the development of effective reintegration programmes, while also fostering tolerance, acceptance and a focus on key areas such as the rights of disabled persons.

Rebuild the damaged and disrupted health system

The war in Ukraine has significantly damaged and disrupted the health system, which is an essential social infrastructure. This disruption includes attacks on health facilities and breakages in medical supply chains. Furthermore, continuous attacks to civilian infrastructure, impacting electricity, water and telecommunications, affect the ability to provide health-care services and essential public health functions. A region-specific approach to rebuilding health systems, fit for local needs, will be critical. The Government of Ukraine, with reference to the Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, measuring the impact of one year of full-scale invasion and other priorities, recognizes the need to scale up primary health care (PHC), ensure enhanced disease surveillance, and rebuild health-care infrastructure. This reconstruction is vital not only for addressing immediate health concerns but also for future resilience against disease risks and other health-care challenges.

Address environmental impact and health risks

The degradation of environmental health is a crucial public health issue, as it directly affects the well-being of the population and complicates the recovery and rehabilitation efforts. The environmental impact of the Russian Federation’s war on Ukraine is profound, with significant concerns regarding air and environmental pollution, the aftermath of the Kakhovka Dam incident, and damaged water systems. Additionally, extensive areas have been mined and pose long-term hazards. Addressing these environmental challenges is essential for the overall health and safety of the Ukrainian people and the restoration of their living environment.

Plan and prepare for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats

Addressing the potential risks associated with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats is also an imperative component of Ukraine’s national health security strategy. The current geopolitical climate, coupled with the technological advancements in these fields, necessitates a proactive and comprehensive approach to CBRN preparedness and response. This includes developing robust detection systems, enhancing laboratory capacities for rapid identification of CBRN agents, and implementing effective emergency response protocols. Training health-care professionals in CBRN threat recognition and management is also essential, as is public education on protective measures and response in the event of a CBRN incident.
“Despite facing a war and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as disease outbreaks, health reforms and innovations have continued, and hold the potential to propel the nation’s health system closer towards universal health coverage.”

“Empowering communities to participate in health planning and decision-making is also key for creating a more responsive and patient-centred health system.”

**Reforms to build robust institutions and systems**

**Continue reforms despite adversity**

Ukraine has been on a path of health-care improvement for the past decades, marked by significant reforms initiated in 2016. The governance of the health system has changed dramatically with new institutions being established – such as the National Health Service of Ukraine (NHSU) a single purchaser of health services, the Medical Procurements of Ukraine as a central procurement agency, and the Ukrainian Public Health Center along with a network of regional centres for disease control and prevention, as a new approach to public health functions in Ukraine. The capacity and continuously improving operations of these national institutions and their regional units are an important pre-requisite for health reform and recovery progress. Despite facing a war and the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as disease outbreaks, health reforms and innovations have continued, and hold the potential to propel the nation’s health system closer towards universal health coverage. Investment in health and human capital is vital for Ukraine’s economic recovery and sustainable growth. Reforms need to remain at the centre of the recovery process.

**Reinforce governance and transparency**

Strengthening governance and enhancing transparency in Ukraine’s health-care sector are pivotal, and effective governance is crucial for efficient, equitable and responsive health systems. Ukraine’s aspiration for European Union (EU) integration provides an opportune moment to implement reforms, enhance transparency, accountability and improve overall governance in the health-care sector. Addressing key dimensions such as governance reforms, inclusiveness, decentralization, digitalization and area-based approaches will be vital to enhance the health and well-being of Ukraine’s population.

**Build a community approach to primary care**

Revitalizing primary care is critical. This includes upgrading facilities, implementing modern health information systems, and ensuring the availability of essential medicines and supplies. Community-oriented approaches are key, where health-care services are tailored to meet the specific needs of local populations including for those who are most vulnerable, and incorporate preventive care, health education and chronic disease management. Empowering communities to participate in health planning and decision-making is also key for creating a more responsive and patient-centred health system.
Improve financial protection and ensure adequate public spending on health

The establishment of the Program of Medical Guarantees and the NHSU in 2017 has led to change in the health system. Before the full-scale invasion, Ukraine’s public spending on health increased annually but remained below global averages as a percentage of the gross domestic product, and the invasion hindered further increases. The economic situation has impacted public revenues and the government’s ability to invest in the health and social sectors.

Out-of-pocket payments, including spending on medicines and informal payments, are common and place a significant financial burden on people. Ukraine has a high share of out-of-pocket payments as a share in health-care spending (48% in 2020) which is almost 2.5 times higher than the EU average of 19%. In 2021, about one in five households, primarily among the poor and elderly, experienced catastrophic health-care expenses, notably for medication and inpatient care, which may have increased over the past year with rising poverty.

It is vital that core PHC services and access to medicines remain a priority in each health budget.

Address health-care workforce shortages

There is a shortage of health-care personnel, particularly in rural areas. Since 2018, there has been a reduction in the number of doctors, nurses, paramedics and obstetricians. Specifically, the ratio of nurses to doctors has been consistently decreasing, primarily attributed to a significant decline in the number of nurses. The number of nurses and midwives in Ukraine has declined from 1103 per 100 000 population in 2000, to 743 in 2019. Understanding the needs, distribution and perspectives of the current generation of health-care workforce is critical to ensure access to health care. Conducting a health labour market analysis is important to guide decision-making and policy actions. Alignment of pre-graduate and post-graduate training curriculums and continuous education approaches with the EU is another area that can improve the quality of medical services. With the reduction in the number of doctors available, task shifting and nursing empowerment is another area which requires attention.

Digitalize systems to secure future health care

A separate but important area is the digitization of processes in the field of health care, which not only simplifies the conduct of medical practice and improves the population’s access to services, but also establishes an essential new, integrated list of data that is important for forecasting, planning, monitoring the quality of health care, tracking systematic gaps in its provision, access to medicines, and making balanced and effective managerial decisions.
Improve life expectancy and healthy years

Based on the most recent data available (2020), life expectancy in Ukraine was 76 years for women and 66 for men. According to The Human Capital Index 2020 Update: Human Capital in the Time of COVID-19, Ukraine’s life expectancy ranks 53rd out of 174 countries in the world, ranking amongst the lowest in Europe. In Ukraine, low life expectancy is significantly attributed to high rates of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, exacerbated by lifestyle factors including high tobacco and alcohol consumption, and inadequate health-care infrastructure. Environmental factors, including poor air quality and exposure to industrial pollutants, coupled with economic challenges leading to limited access to quality health care and nutritious food, contribute substantially to the lower life expectancy observed in Ukraine.

Tackle NCDs

NCDs pose a significant and persistent challenge to the health of Ukraine’s population, constituting nine out of 10 primary causes of premature death and contributing to 84% of the total annual mortality. Among NCDs, cardiovascular diseases and neoplasms contribute the most to mortality rates. Prior to the war, the STEPS prevalence of noncommunicable disease risk factors in Ukraine 2019 study revealed that a substantial portion of those in need, particularly those with hypertension, did not have access to essential medications such as hypertensive drugs, and similarly, a significant number of diabetics lacked access to insulin. Early diagnostics for cancer remain a critical gap, with many cases being detected at advanced stages, thereby reducing the efficacy of treatments and increasing mortality rates. Addressing the urgent need for appropriate treatment and continuity of care, especially in the context of a prolonged emergency, is vital to mitigate the escalating burden of NCDs. This necessitates an immediate primary care focus and coordinated, multisectoral action to improve health outcomes.

Confront the risks of tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy nutrition and rising obesity

Tobacco use is one of the main causes of NCDs and premature deaths in Ukraine. A pre-war survey shows that 34% of the population are smokers (male 50%, female 17%). However, there are encouraging trends. The prevalence of daily smoking in Ukraine decreased by 20% between 2010 and 2017, with tobacco use among teenagers also on the decline. Pre-war survey data also reveals that approximately half of the people living in Ukraine consume alcohol, and a quarter of the population face obesity. These numbers are anticipated to rise further following the February 2022 full-scale invasion. Further focus needs to be given to improving nutritional outcomes, especially in schools.
Build strong public health infrastructure

Strengthening the public health infrastructure in Ukraine is a foundational step towards improving the overall health of the population. This encompasses enhancing disease surveillance systems, expanding preventive health services, and ensuring equitable access to health care. Public health efforts must also focus on addressing the social determinants of health, such as poverty, education and living conditions. This requires intersectoral collaboration, including with communities, to develop policies and programmes that address these broader determinants.

Maintain focus on communicable diseases

Ukraine grapples with persistent infectious disease challenges. HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) mortality rates are decreasing, but Ukraine remains a high-burden country for HIV. Progress is being made towards the HIV 95/95/95 targets, an ambitious global health goal set by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS, which aims for 95% of people living with HIV to be diagnosed, 95% of those diagnosed to be on antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of those receiving therapy to achieve viral suppression. However, Ukraine struggles with early HIV detection. Ukraine also faces a significant burden of TB, with a high number of TB/HIV coinfection cases and difficulty in the management of multidrug-resistant TB, a particularly complex aspect of the TB epidemic. Ukraine has been proactive in adopting new treatment regimens for TB, placing it at the forefront of combatting this disease. Addressing HIV and TB effectively demands a sustained focus on vulnerable populations, including those in crowded living conditions, sex workers, men who have sex with men and injecting drug users. Effective management and control of these diseases are key to mitigating their impact on the health system and society at large.
Improve immunization rates and rigorously address vaccine preventable diseases

Immunization coverage in Ukraine is low, and the ongoing war has threatened to reverse past gains. The conclusion of the 2019 measles and 2023 polio outbreaks were significant achievements. Despite these successes, achieving target rates of immunization coverage remains a public health challenge. Vaccination coverage in Ukraine is among the lowest in the WHO European Region and is at or below the target threshold for several critical vaccines: the Bacille Calmette-Guérin vaccine (which prevents TB); the Diphtheria, Tetanus, Toxoid and Pertussis vaccine; the Polio vaccine; the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella vaccine; and the Hepatitis B vaccine. Increasing investment in immunization programmes will have immediate and longer-term positive effects on the health of people in Ukraine. Additionally, the ongoing COVID-19 vaccination programme is a critical component of the public health response, requiring sustained effort and resources to ensure wide-reaching coverage and protection against emerging health threats.

Adopt a One Health approach

A One Health approach, recognizing and addressing the interconnection between human, animal and environmental health, is essential to reduce the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, including of novel pathogens. The country ranks low in overall health security, particularly in detecting and responding to pandemic threats. While Ukraine made significant improvements in its laboratory network following the COVID-19 pandemic, it lags in real-time surveillance and in implementing travel restrictions. There remains much work to be done.

The One Health approach necessitates an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration to tackle health issues that transcend these domains but depends heavily on strong health leadership. For instance, the emergence of zoonotic diseases, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the health impacts of environmental degradation require a unified response that integrates veterinary medicine, public health, environmental science and other relevant fields. Developing a national One Health strategy requires creating cross-sectoral platforms for collaboration, including health, agriculture, environment and wildlife, to address shared health threats and promote sustainable practices.

Respond to AMR as an urgent public health issue

AMR in Ukraine, exacerbated by the war and health-care challenges, has emerged as a critical public health issue, and demands an immediate and strategic response. The increase in multidrug-resistant infections, identified among soldiers and hospitalized patients, highlights the urgency of addressing this problem. A National Action Plan to combat AMR has been developed to optimize the use of antimicrobials in health-care settings, ensure rigorous infection control practices and surveillance systems to monitor resistance patterns, although implementation challenges have been faced during the ongoing war.
While facing numerous challenges within Ukraine, successful WHO support must also factor in key global issues as presented below.

- **Climate change exacerbates all risks**: Climate change extends its impact beyond health, influencing energy security, infrastructure durability, population movement and economic resilience. These environmental shifts intensify social and economic vulnerabilities.

- **Biodiversity loss affects us all**: It’s evident that the loss of biodiversity impacts food security and medicinal resources, crucial for maintaining health. In countries like Ukraine, this can lead to challenges in sustaining agricultural productivity and livelihoods.

- **Pandemics disrupt systems**: Pandemics significantly strain all systems. For Ukraine, grappling with both a pandemic and regional stability issues, the impact on health infrastructure and services is profound, affecting the well-being of its population.

- **Geopolitical tensions strain resources**: Geopolitical instability not only threatens peace but also diverts resources away from critical public needs, impacting all of society.

- **Technological advancements can be double-edged**: While technological advancements have revolutionized all areas of our life, they also pose challenges in terms of accessibility and ethical use. In Ukraine, leveraging technology for health amidst socio-political challenges is a delicate balance between benefit and risk.
WHO’s commitment to Ukraine

Strategic priorities – overview

Whether in emergency response, early recovery or supporting reforms, WHO will focus on three overarching strategic priorities, and will rapidly adapt to tailor activities to the operational context, aligning with the National Health Strategy 2030 and other medium- and long-term government development and recovery plans. An overview is given here, with more detail provided below within this CCS.

Strategic Priority 1. Access to universal quality health services for all, regardless of ability to pay: Ensure universal access to quality health services in Ukraine. This priority includes supporting emergency health care, primary care reform, health workforce development and the development of an integrated health service package supported by robust health financing reforms.

Strategic Priority 2. Prevention and reduction of major health risks: Mitigate health risks exacerbated by the war, address the significant NCD burden and communicable diseases, and invest in comprehensive health services, including vaccination programmes and environmental-health initiatives, with an emphasis on mental well-being, community empowerment, and climate-health co-benefits for Ukraine’s long-term recovery and societal well-being.

Strategic Priority 3. Building robust institutions: Support health system reforms, enhance public health capabilities, and align with EU standards. This includes strengthening capacities for health emergency preparedness and response, policy implementation and governance, while emphasizing stakeholder engagement for a resilient health system.

Response, recovery and reforms

The changing health situation in Ukraine, heavily impacted by the ongoing war, necessitates both investment in immediate life-saving services and a continuum of care across the entire country to serve all people. Despite the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine, substantial efforts are being directed towards planning and implementing health system reforms, as well as strategizing for comprehensive recovery programmes in the future. It is critical that these activities are supported.

WHO’s work in Ukraine will be grounded in the present emergency as well as in the epidemiological trends and long-term health needs through 2030 and beyond. WHO will sustain the capability to adapt to different needs and operational contexts, and tailor its support to address complex challenges, whether nationwide, or in specific oblasts, regions, facilities and institutions. WHO will maintain a dynamic approach in pursuing these three areas, while noting that while response, recovery and reforms will continue to co-exist, the degree of focus will vary given the country context and health needs.

- **Response**: WHO will continue its support for immediate actions to meet the urgent direct and indirect health emergency needs resulting from the ongoing Russian aggression and invasion, as well as scaling up to respond to public health emergencies as needed.
- **Recovery**: WHO will support Ukraine to rebuild and strengthen the health system, with an aim to ensure universal access to essential services such as mental health, rehabilitation, PHC, health promotion, disease prevention and public health surveillance.
- **Reforms**: WHO will support the ongoing, systematic changes to Ukraine’s health sector in order to align the country’s health system with EU and international best practices, together with strengthened institutions.
The strategic/dynamic framework presented in Fig. 1 outlines the identified priorities, activities and approach in the operational context.

Fig. 1. WHO Country Office in Ukraine’s Strategic/Dynamic Framework

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- **SP1:** Access to universal quality health services for all, regardless of ability to pay
- **SP2:** Prevention and reduction of major health risks
- **SP3:** Building robust institutions

**OPERATIONAL CONTEXT**

As operational context changes, WHO will adjust focus to ensure operational and technical support are fit for purpose.

**ACTIVITIES**

Activities will be tailored to needs, whether national, in oblasts, rayons or facilities.

**WHO APPROACH**

WHO will use this framework to communicate its focus with national partners, donors and the Government.

**Notes:** SP = Strategic Priority
Strategic priorities: building on what works
Strategic Priority 1: Access to universal quality health services for all, regardless of ability to pay

Provide access to health services for all

WHO will continue to support access to universal quality health services for all in Ukraine, regardless of the ability to pay, whether in emergency response, recovery or health system reforms.

WHO will continue its support and work in line with the main goal of the draft National Health Strategy 2030 and ongoing reforms, which is to restore and develop the health system to ensure better quality and accessibility of services to meet the needs of citizens and the “Health Recovery Plan (2023) – Building Back Better.”

WHO will continue to support access to timely and effective lifesaving health services. In addition, WHO will support the coordination and management of the emergency response, leveraging relevant national and international capacities focused on primary care.

The plan to place PHC at the forefront necessitates a restructuring of the health system. WHO will prioritize PHC, emphasizing the establishment of multidisciplinary health centres and an expansion of outpatient care. WHO will also support the design and implementation of an integrated package of health services for all that includes prevention, control and management of communicable diseases such as HIV and TB; NCDs; maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health; sexual and reproductive health; immunization; and mental health, psychosocial support and rehabilitation services.

In response to the urgent challenges posed by persistent infectious diseases and low immunization rates in Ukraine, WHO’s strategy prioritizes a proactive and targeted approach. Recognizing the ongoing struggles with HIV and TB, particularly in vulnerable populations, WHO will focus on enhancing early detection mechanisms, strengthening health-care infrastructure, and tailoring prevention and treatment interventions for at-risk groups. This will also include seasonal immunization for COVID-19, influenza and the respiratory syncytial virus.

Support for improved access needs is to go-hand-in-hand with enhanced and rational use of resources. To this end, WHO will advance reforms for an efficient health system with fair and equitable financing. WHO will provide advice to decrease fragmentation in public health and various disease programmes, improve health financing arrangements, and address the challenges of the purchaser-provider split and decentralization reform through policy dialogue.

While WHO focuses on response, needs will centre around addressing chronic health needs under challenging circumstances and providing immediate health-care access in conflict areas. As the context shifts from response to recovery, focus will be placed on providing services to war-affected persons, emphasizing physical, mental and social coverage and reintegration. Reform activities will be sustained
throughout, with activities including developing inclusive health policies to achieve universal health coverage, ensuring equitable health care for all.

**Deliverables include:**

- timely and effective response to health emergencies, while maintaining and strengthening essential health services and systems;
- health system reforms based on PHC;
- the design and implementation of integrated packages of health services; and
- strengthened health financing reforms.

**Strategic Priority 2: Prevention and reduction of major health risks**

**Preserve life and promote healthier living**

The evolving health situation, heavily impacted by the ongoing war, necessitates both immediate life-saving services and a continuum of care across the entire country. WHO will work to meet immediate needs, and also show leadership to mitigate risks to health, which will be key for the country’s recovery over the medium to long term.

Healthy and well-educated people are indispensable for the nation’s progress. The fact that Ukraine has one of the shortest life expectancies in Europe, and that the gap between life expectancy for men and women is nine years, clearly points to the need for further investment in an effective health system which provides everyone with good quality services.

The major burden of NCDs and resulting premature deaths and severe economic consequences, highlight the need for a much stronger focus on addressing the major NCD risks and the underlying structural factors, while placing equal emphasis on disease prevention and treatment. This requires partnership from government sectors beyond health given the commercial and social determinants of NCDs.

A priority for WHO will be to work with the Government and partners on cost-effective actions. WHO will promote community approaches to empower people to make healthier choices for themselves and their families. The dimensions of mental well-being and the risk for tensions and violence associated with post-war integration of individuals and societies will be a focus. WHO will also ensure that individuals have access to mental health, psychosocial support and rehabilitation services, while continuing to support the healing and rebuilding of affected communities.

There is a close correlation between climate-based actions and health co-benefits, especially at the local level. WHO will support initiatives that integrate environmental and health policies. This approach involves promoting sustainable practices that improve both public health and the environment, such as reducing pollution
and enhancing green spaces. These coordinated efforts aim to create healthier living environments, reduce disease risk factors, and contribute to overall societal well-being.

As WHO focuses on response, needs will centre around the implementation of rapid educational initiatives to empower communities with knowledge and skills to help prevent war-related health risks. As the context shifts from response to recovery, focus will be directed to paving the way for healthier communities through extensive post-war health assessments to identify and mitigate prevalent health risks. Reform activities will be sustained throughout, with activities including engaging in robust policy development and providing technical support to the Government to ensure reforms maximize the prevention and reduction of health risks.

**Deliverables include:**

- multipronged and multisectoral approaches to address NCD risk factors;
- enhanced community engagement to promote healthier lifestyles;
- improved access to mental health and psychosocial support and rehabilitation services;
- robust vaccination programmes and maintained focus on communicable diseases; and
- momentum for health-care climate actions.
Strategic Priority 3: Build robust institutions

Strong institutions are the key

The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian Federation’s invasion have interrupted Ukraine’s work to reform its health system and strengthen institutions. WHO is committed to continue support to Ukraine in reforms that will improve health outcomes for all, and to facilitate its eventual accession to the EU.

Experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic and full-scale war make clear that more investment is needed in the capacity to prepare for, prevent and manage health emergencies. New disease outbreaks, extreme weather and other health emergencies will arise in the future. The overall objective should be to protect and empower people to remain healthy.

As it supports the implementation of key health-related laws, WHO will help build even stronger capacities for rapid response and emergency preparedness including for coordination, surveillance and the necessary human resources.

WHO will support capacity-strengthening activities for the implementation of reforms, innovation and the execution of essential public health functions with a strong emphasis on participatory processes. These include stakeholder engagement, co-creation of actions and fostering joint responsibility for implementation.

WHO will continue to support Ukraine to align its public health and health system with EU standards according to the EU acquis. This includes in areas such as aligning regulatory and quality control for clinical trials; procurement of medical goods; health worker education standards; One Health policies; health information standards; environment and climate change policy related to health and health infrastructure; and consumer protections.

WHO will contribute to strengthening institutional capacity, including in public health workforce planning, development, distribution and professional competencies to meet the public health system needs as well as facilitating policy dialogue on health. A critical aspect will be enhanced local capacities for implementation research to guide policy decision-making. WHO will specifically support the NHSU to increase the institution’s capacity, ensure accountability and enhance financing reform, as well as provide support to the National Procurement Agency, the Ministry of Health, the Regional Health Authorities and health facility managers. Support will also be provided for decentralization, capacity and stronger institutions in oblasts.

As WHO focuses on response, needs will revolve around establishing adaptive and effective emergency health governance to maintain service continuity and policy implementation during the crisis. As the context shifts from response to recovery, focus will be directed to strengthening health system resilience in post-war environments through targeted training and capacity building of health personnel. Reform activities will be sustained throughout, with activities including aligning national health regulations with EU standards to elevate health-care quality to support the EU accession process.
Deliverables include:

- implementation of health regulations;
- stronger capacities for health emergencies prevention, preparedness, response and resilience;
- improved health workforce planning and distribution; and
- developed capacities of national institutions and agencies for public policies and good governance.
WHO role and functions

The CCS aligns with the ongoing WHO transformation, which aims to keep the world safe, serve the vulnerable and promote, provide and protect health outcomes for all, in order to ensure impact in-country, enable a fit-for-purpose organization and work with partners nationally, regionally and globally. WHO’s key functions are:

- **Leadership, coordination and convening**: WHO will assume a leadership role in coordinating and convening stakeholders to foster collaborative efforts and teamwork in the health sector.

- **High-quality technical support**: Provide expertise for policy development, set norms and standards (including for EU accession), and bring value to health policy dialogues.

- **Institutional capacity development**: Support the government to enhance institutional capacity and to implement necessary reforms to strengthen the health system.

- **Country-to-country cooperation**: Facilitate country-to-country cooperation and innovation in the Region and across the world with countries with similar challenges and needs, where countries can also learn from Ukraine’s experiences and competencies.

- **Health data and Information systems**: Facilitate integrated health management, surveillance, and information systems to enhance data-driven decision-making.

- **Operational research**: Contribute to operational research with a focus on health policy and systems performance and effectiveness. Ukraine has much to offer in terms of experiences, innovation and knowledge.
Collaboration and partnerships

In this intricate context, WHO’s unequivocal objectives are to strengthen Ukraine’s health-care sector and improve overall health outcomes. The national government and its structure, encompassing entities such as the President’s Office, the Prime Minister’s Office, the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health, local civil-military and/or civil government structures and parliament, establishes priorities and policies. WHO’s primary role is to assist national stakeholders in convening and coordinating efforts, policy dialogues, building capacity, providing targeted supplies and offering full-scale technical assistance. To achieve these objectives, WHO will focus on the following areas:

Use of WHO’s convening power

Ukraine’s path to a healthier future relies on effective partnerships and strategic alliances. As a pivotal partner, WHO coordinates these efforts by co-chairing the health sector working group along with the Ministry of Health and continues to regularly convene health sector development partners to ensure transparency and information exchange. In an emergency setting WHO continues leading the global health cluster with appropriate structures established in Ukraine. WHO will
continue to use its convening power to drive change and ensure that health reforms and recovery include all relevant stakeholders including communities.

The scaling up of financial investments and support from international organizations and financial institutions such as the World Bank, the European Investment and Reconstruction Bank and the European Commission can benefit even more from WHO’s technical advice on maximizing the health impact.

**Continue to listen**

Civil society, national and international NGOs are vital stakeholders. They play a crucial role in holding the government accountable, identifying needs and providing essential services. WHO will maintain close collaboration with many of the main civil society organizations and NGOs; ensure that health-care workers are heard; and ensure that communities have a say, including through behavioural surveys.

European institutions, like the European External Action Service, European Commission and European Parliament, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority play a strategic role in aligning with Ukraine’s goal of European integration and EU accession.

Notably, health may not always be a top priority amid various competing interests. Thus, WHO will promote continued dialogue and advocacy for health, backed by evidence, facts and opportunities.

**Multisectoral partnerships**

The success of the implementation of the CCS will depend on engagement with sectors beyond health, including other United Nations (UN) agencies and international partners. WHO will continue to strengthen its collaboration with the UN Country Team and other partners, through clear delineation of roles and improved communications, and will ensure the timely and effective implementation of the Transitional Framework and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

WHO will implement its humanitarian response in line with key strategic documents such as the Ukraine Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024 and WHO appeals, critical for ensuring coordination with partners and funded capacities.
CCS process: establishing objectives and consultations

The drafting process for the CCS began in 2023, after an initial delay due to the onset of the full-scale war, and involved a comprehensive and collaborative approach. The first step was to establish clear objectives, with a focus on creating a joint vision for Ukraine’s long-term health goals, while also addressing immediate needs. Under the leadership of the WHO Country Office in Ukraine, extensive consultations were conducted to gather insights and inputs. These consultations included a wide array of stakeholders: partners within the Ministry of Health and other government entities, the UN system, civil society organizations, development partners, and teams within WHO at the Country Office, Regional Office and headquarters. These discussions were vital to ensure the CCS was comprehensive and reflective of the diverse perspectives and expertise of each involved party.

Towards a joint vision while addressing immediate needs

These consultations led to the establishment of a joint vision, which is critical for the longer-term health strategy in Ukraine. In parallel, the immediate health needs for the years 2024 and 2025 are being addressed through the forthcoming programme budget and emergency appeals. This two-pronged approach ensures that while the CCS sets the stage for long-term health improvements and resilience, the urgent and pressing health challenges posed by the current situation are not overlooked. This comprehensive strategy underlines WHO’s commitment to immediate relief and sustainable health development in Ukraine, aligning with the broader goals of the UN and its partners.
WHO’S operational pillars

Based on the evolving health needs in Ukraine, WHO will continue to sustain and adapt its core functional areas, where possible, in the WHO Country Office in Ukraine. These areas will have varying degrees of scalability depending on the health needs identified. Under the leadership of the WHO Representative, the Country Office expanded to a team of around 300 personnel in 2023. This team encompasses a range of technical and support areas, reflecting a significantly strengthened office structure. Moreover, WHO’s presence is not only centralized in Kyiv but also extends through hubs in operational areas across Ukraine. This expanded and decentralized structure allows for a more responsive and tailored approach to health challenges in different regions and ensures that WHO’s support and interventions are as effective and relevant as possible to the diverse health needs across the country. WHO’s operational pillars are as follows:

- Leadership/executive office;
- Emergency response programme (e.g. Health Operations, Health Information and Risk Management, Operations Support and Logistics, Health Cluster);
- Health systems and public health programme (e.g. Health Governance, Service Delivery, Mental Health, Rehabilitation, Vaccine Preventable Diseases, NCDs, Joint Infectious Disease, Labs and Surveillance, Health Financing, Public Health);
- Business operations support (e.g. Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Staff Health and Well-being); and
- Cross-cutting functions (e.g. Programme Management Office, Communications, Security, Preventing and Responding to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment).
Monitoring and evaluation

Based on the identified strategic priorities and deliverables, WHO has worked with the Government to formulate a theory of change (Fig. 2). The theory of change outlines a comprehensive description on how changes will happen in order to achieve the overarching vision to maximize healthy life expectancy for all people living in Ukraine, nurture well-being, community resilience and social cohesion, and the strategic role of WHO in this process.

WHO will regularly assess progress in relation to the strategic priorities and deliverables through the results framework of the CCS (See Fig. 1).

In addition, a mid-term review and stocktaking will be scheduled in 2027 and a final evaluation will be initiated in 2030.

**Figure 2 – The theory of change**
“An effective health care system with robust institutions that embrace social participation, and ensure that every individual has equal access to comprehensive health services and the highest quality of care when needed”
The WHO Regional Office for Europe

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations created in 1948 with the primary responsibility for international health matters and public health. The WHO Regional Office for Europe is one of six regional offices throughout the world, each with its own programme geared to the particular health conditions of the countries it serves.

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