



► The context

29 per cent drop in GDP

2.4 million jobs lost

5.1 million IDPs

6.2 million refugees

7.1 million in poverty

17.6 million in need

The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine is causing significant losses to life, incomes, employment and livelihoods, partly due to widespread internal displacement and large refugee flows.

Consider the recent numbers about Ukraine. Such stark figures make it clear that now is the time to act on development goals. The ILO is spearheading a transitional effort to set Ukraine on the path to decent work by investing in people, creating quality employment and improving labour market governance.

► Workers, employers and families

Since the 2022 invasion, according to ILO estimates, 2.4 million jobs have been lost. In parallel 1.6 million Ukrainians of working age have left the country. An overwhelming majority were women, once employed as professionals and technicians in clerical support, services, and sales among others. Sixteen per cent of them worked in education and another seven per cent in health and social services.

Meanwhile Ukraine's enterprises have been ravaged by the war. Infrastructure alone is estimated to have been damaged in the amount of approximately US\$ 125 billion, with transportation, commerce and industry, energy and agriculture among the worst hit.

Organized labour also has been dramatically affected. Membership and finances have plummeted, both for trade unions and Employer and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs) – compromising their capacity to respond to complex demands for new services and thereby their own continuity.

Undoubtedly, the refugee outflux has been detrimental to Ukraine's labour market.

► The challenge

Developing resilience and social cohesion should be at the fore of any investment to mitigate the consequences of the war on Ukraine's people and workers. High on the list is the reintegration of war veterans, returning refugees and IDPs into the workforce.

Labour shortages are acute in today's Ukraine. They also have created employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, women and youth, and suggest that a more inclusive labour market is on the horizon. So far, cash transfers financed mainly through humanitarian aid have offset income losses. However, a sustainable social protection system that fights poverty and supports labour market reintegration needs to be established.

Without efficient and well-functioning enterprises – employing adequate numbers of workers with the right skills – Ukraine's chances at reconstruction will founder. Reconstruction is an opportunity to enshrine safe working conditions and eliminate labour exploitation. Such preconditions are vital if Ukraine is to attract growth to its labour market. Quality employment that respects rights and responsibilities at work is a key indicator to that success.

New structural reforms in labour market governance are already underway in anticipation of Ukraine's recovery. Ukraine's accession process to the EU will require important reforms to align its political, institutional, legal and economic framework with the EU *acquis*. Guaranteeing rights and responsibilities at work is equally a part of this process as labour market reforms and social protection. These complex technical negotiations – while difficult to navigate for almost any candidate country's institutions and social partners – no doubt will guarantee that decent work and its principles will become the fabric of Ukraine's labour market dynamics.

► The ILO response

Ukraine's ultimate recovery and labour market resilience are goals held by the ILO and likeminded partners.

The ILO proposes an integrated, multi-track and three-pillar approach to recovery – shaped by recent consultations with its constituents in Ukraine and aligned with ILO principles on decent work.

PILLAR 1 ► Invest in people to mitigate the impact of the war and to increase resilience

PILLAR 2 ► Create quality employment and sustainable enterprises for reconstruction and recovery

PILLAR 3 ► Improve labour market governance, including social dialogue, in line with international labour standards and related EU *acquis*

Investing in people



Creating quality employment



Strengthening labour market governance



PILLAR 1 ► Investing in people

The successful inclusion of a diverse labour force requires tailored strategies for individuals to build and fulfil their labour market trajectories, in step with close collaboration between social and labour market institutions. The prospects for reconstruction and, ultimately, economic recovery, rest on mutual interaction and support from Ukraine's people and institutions.

Expected results

- Adequate social protection to support labour market integration of a diverse workforce
- Employment for war veterans, persons with disabilities and IDPs
Inclusive labour market policies for people who face multiple forms of discrimination
- Increased and more equal integration of women in the labour market driven by an enabling business environment

PILLAR 2 ► Creating quality employment and sustainable enterprises

Reconstruction and recovery processes that promote quality employment and sustainable enterprises are proven to encourage future economic diversification, engender higher valued-added activities and enable just transition principles in business operations and practices. To reap the decent work opportunities from reconstruction and recovery, labour exploitation and informality need to be stamped out, while fundamental principles and rights at work should be promoted for sustainable growth in areas like construction, agriculture, transport and energy.

Expected results

- Implementation of Local Employment Partnerships, with tailored support to small and medium-sized enterprises
- Mitigation of labour exploitation and informality, while Occupational Safety and Health are enhanced in select sectors like construction and agriculture
- Skills forecasting and reform of the learning system, prioritizing an upgrade to Technical and Vocational Education and Training, to support the growth of select sectors like IT and energy

PILLAR 3 ► Improving labour market governance and social dialogue

The EU accession process also requires reforms to Ukraine's labour market governance, legislation and regulations, and alignment with Chapter 19 of the EU *acquis*. Accession to the EU requires a well-functioning system of social dialogue to ensure informed and balanced policymaking. Finally, compliance with existing legislation needs enhancement.

Expected results

- Better informed policy/legislative development
- Enhanced local labour inspectorates
- Enterprises equipped with tools on responsible business conduct and due diligence
- Improved infrastructure and social dialogue processes
- Strong social partners



► Implementation

► Financing the Transitional Strategy

The ILO Country Office in Kyiv will implement the Strategy, with technical support from the ILO Office for Central and Eastern Europe and in collaboration with the UN and development partners.

The Transitional Strategy requires US\$ 30 million in 2024–25 to achieve its objectives. To ensure effective and timely on-site support, during the first quarter of 2024 the ILO has opened its Country Office in Kyiv. In support of this strategy the ILO has also provided seed-funding from its regular budget, in addition to funds already mobilized through development cooperation projects. While further internal resources and technical expertise are being mobilized, the ILO is reaching out to bilateral and multilateral development partners, along with non-traditional donors and the private sector for their contribution. The ILO is also developing joint programmes with UN sister agencies and approaching other development partners for further support.

The ILO has a proven ability to scale up, and its durable ties with tripartite constituents in Ukraine have generated returns on investments from those labour market institutions that could deliver. The ILO's comparative advantage and mandate in promoting decent work – full and productive employment, universal social protection, rights at work and social dialogue and tripartism – is clear. Such a position allows the ILO to support the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine, build resilience and help the country progress towards the requirements of EU accession related to the world of work.

► The choice

The choice is simple: either, with well-managed strategic and policy support, Ukraine can reconstruct and can establish a better and lasting peace for the recovery of its economy and its people, or the country is left to struggle with no end in sight to the compounded human and economic damage of war.

Now is the moment to help set Ukraine on the path to achieving its aspirations by shaping the engine of a skilled, organized and regulated labour market.

► Contact

International Labour
Organization
Country Office for Ukraine

75 Zhylanska str.
PO Box 20
Kyiv 01032
Ukraine

Aida Lindmeier, Director

kyiv@ilo.org

Tel: +380 67 413 6661

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► More about Ukraine in statistics

[ILO Monitor on the World of Work, 10th edition](#)

► More on the ILO and Ukraine

The ILO's commitment is underpinned by the ILO Governing Body Resolution Concerning the Russian Federation's Aggression against Ukraine, adopted on 18 March 2022

[GB.344/Resolution: Resolution Concerning the Russian Federation's Aggression against Ukraine from the Perspective of the Mandate of the International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#)

► More on Post-conflict Societies and Decent Work

Recent insights on post-conflict societies date to the ILO Recommendation on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, 2017 (No. 205)

[106th Session of the International Labour Conference: Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 \(No. 205\)](#)