



співпраця з
німеччиною
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by:

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



STRATEGY

FOR TRANSITION AND INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN VETERANS INTO EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

CONCEPT NOTE

2024

The concept note “Strategy for transition and integration of Ukrainian veterans into education and workforce” has been prepared by the NGO ‘Ukrainian Marketing Association’ within the framework of the program “Vocational Education in Ukraine / Skills4Recovery” implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Government.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Tetyana BEREZHNA, Deputy Minister of Economy of Ukraine

Yevheniia SMIRNOVA, Deputy Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine

Yuriy BALANYUK, Chairperson of National Qualifications Agency

Dariia ANDRIUNINA, director of the department of employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Anna SVIDRAK, deputy director of the department, head of the unit for population employment and relocation of enterprises of the department of labor and employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Andrii DUMA, chief specialist of the unit for employment of the population of the department of employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Oleksandr BOZHKO, chief specialist of the unit for employment of the population of the department of employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine.

Nataliia VASYLENKO, chief specialist of the professional development unit of the department of employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Lyudmila KHOMYCH, chief specialist of the professional development unit of the department of employment of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine

Iryna ISMAKAIEVA, head of the main department of professional education of the Directorate of Professional Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Viktoriia SYDORENKO, chief specialist of the organizational activities and social issues unit of the main department of professional education of the Directorate of Professional Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Oksana VOLKOVA, chief specialist of the preschool education unit of the Directorate of preschool, school, extracurricular and inclusive education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Serhii KOVALENKO, state expert of the Directorate of Professional Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

Lilia GRABOVSKA, head of the department on professional training and international cooperation of the State Employment Centre

Iryna GAITEROVA, head of the professional training unit of the department on professional training and international cooperation of the State Employment Centre

Tetiana ISHCENKO, director of State institution "Scientific and Methodological Center for Higher and Pre-Higher Education"

Alla CHAIKOVSKA, head of the professional development and adult education unit of the State institution "Scientific and Methodological Center for Higher and Pre-Higher Education"

Yuliya MARTYN, head of the secretariat of National Qualifications Agency

Inna KOLODKO, head of the international cooperation department of general division of the secretariat of National Qualifications Agency

Kostiantyn HALUSHKO, head of the public relations department of National Qualifications Agency

Vasyl FEDIUK, member of National Qualifications Agency

Anastasiia.ZHELIZNA, project manager of the "Touch Point" project

Iryna LYLYK, President of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Olena BUCHYNSKA, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Olena SHATILOVA, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Oleksandr PASHKUROV, veteran of military service, director of the Charitable Organization of Special Forces Veterans, expert of the Ukrainian Marketing Association NGO

Yuriy SHCHYRIN, veteran, CEO and founder of the company "Agency of Industrial Marketing"

Alona TANASIICHUK, head of the NGO 'Network of Public Organizations Supporting IDPs in Ukraine', head of the Business school of Vinnytsia Institute of Trade and Economics of State University of Trade and Economics

Iryna PEREVOZOVA, head of the regional office and co-founder of the NGO 'Network of Public Organizations Supporting IDPs in Ukraine', council head NGO 'Scientific, research, consulting and practical center for business, marketing and law'

Svitlana KOVALCHUK, co-founder of the NGO 'Network of Public Organizations Supporting IDPs in Ukraine'

Roman KORINETS, president of the National Association of Agricultural Advisory Services of Ukraine

CONTENTS

List of abbreviations	5
Introduction	6
I. PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM OF VETERAN REINTEGRATION INTO EDUCATION AND THE LABOR MARKET	13
1. Enhancing accessibility and targeting of support	13
2. Ensuring and evaluating the effectiveness of assistance services	19
3. Improving the design and institutional capacity of the system	23
4. Strategic coordination of stakeholder initiatives	28
5. Developing a culture of interaction with veterans	33
II. DECOMPOSITION OF STRATEGY GOALS	38
1. Improving veterans' access to quality and inclusive education	39
2. Increasing veterans' employment level	40
3. Developing veteran entrepreneurship	41
4. Strengthening veterans' social adaptation	42
III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY	43
Acknowledgments	44

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LU	Law of Ukraine
ATO	Anti-Terrorist Operation
JFO	Joint Forces Operation
AFU	Armed Forces of Ukraine
HP	Hostilities Participant
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
MESU	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
Mineconomy	Ministry of Economy of Ukraine
Minveterans	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine
MDU	Ministry of Defense of Ukraine
MHU	Ministry of Health of Ukraine
Minsocpolicy	Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine
Mindigit	Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine
SES	State Employment Service
SESU	State Emergency Service of Ukraine
UTC	United Territorial Community
CAS	Center for Administrative Services
CO	Charitable Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CF	Charitable Foundation
IE	Individual Entrepreneur
UISSS	Unified Information System of the Social Sphere

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The military aggression of Russia against Ukraine has led to an increase in the number of veterans – hostilities participants (HPs). Ukrainian society was not prepared to overcome such post-war challenges, and therefore the development of strategic policies in this area is a top priority. The effectiveness of state policy in returning veterans to civilian life through education and employment will contribute to the protection of their civil rights, reduce societal tension, and address labor shortages in certain sectors of the economy.

According to preliminary estimates, from February 24, 2022, about 1–1.5 million people were mobilized to defend Ukraine. In the first years of the war, the number of veterans increased by almost 1.5 times compared to pre-war times, and this figure continues to grow rapidly. According to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, as of the first quarter of 2024, the total number of veterans is 1.23 million persons, of which 0.81 million persons are HPs, 0.11 million persons have disabilities due to the war, 0.36 million persons are family members of deceased defenders, and 0.15 million persons are family members of the deceased.

The problem of reintegrating veterans through education and employment lies in the absence of effective mechanisms for returning to civilian professions, unimpeded access to jobs after military service, and active working life, including in cases of disability. The scale of this problem is unprecedented not only for Ukraine but for the entire world. Foreign experience in solving similar problems with veterans can be useful, but on the other hand, it cannot be applied without substantial adaptation to Ukrainian conditions.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This document is addressed to government authorities in the fields of education and employment at the national and regional levels, veteran support organizations, and international partners aiming to assist Ukraine in this direction. The structuring and consistent implementation of the document's tasks aim to ensure the legal rights of war veterans. The basis for determining veteran status is the current legislation in Ukraine, namely the Law of Ukraine ['On the status of war veterans, guarantees of their](#)

[social protection](#)’ No. 3551-XII dated October 22, 1993, which defines war veterans as persons who participated in the defense of Ukraine or combat operations in other countries. The category of war veterans includes HPs, persons with disabilities due to the war, and war participants.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the Strategy for the transition and integration of Ukrainian veterans into education and the workforce (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) is to develop recommendations for improving and developing state policy for returning veterans to civilian life through education and employment.

The implementation of this goal is based on the adaptation of the best global experience, in particular, the successful experience of [Canada](#) in transitioning from exclusive to inclusive support models, shifting the focus from medical/charitable assistance to the social model of EU countries, the experience of activating civil society in [the U.S.](#), [the UK](#), and [Australia](#), increasing the human-centeredness and effectiveness of veteran assistance using service design methodology in [the U.S.](#)

The development of the Strategy’s recommendations is implemented at two levels:

- at the level of the system of veterans’ reintegration into civilian life;
- at the level of individual trajectories of veterans’ reintegration into education and the workforce.

The vision of the Strategy for the transition and integration of veterans into education and the workforce is to create an ecosystem for the successful development of veterans’ professional potential for the benefit of Ukraine’s development.

The mission is the successful transition and integration of veterans into education and the workforce for the recovery of Ukraine through the formation of effective state policy and the provision of quality, targeted and accessible services and assistance.

Ensuring the effective reintegration of veterans into civilian life after the completion of military service is based on the following strategic goals:

1. Improving veterans' access to quality and inclusive education.
2. Increasing veterans' employment level.
3. Developing veteran entrepreneurship.
4. Strengthening veterans' social adaptation.

The implementation of these strategic goals for returning veterans to active civilian life is seen as part of more systemic policies and should be considered as a component of a new progressive ecosystem of veteran support, a national veteran strategy, mechanisms of social assistance, medical rehabilitation, and more.

POLITICAL PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The recommendations of the Strategy were prepared with the participation of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the State Employment Service of Ukraine, the National Qualifications Agency, as well as representatives of executive and local government bodies, veteran associations and other public associations, employers, specialists in rehabilitation and social work, and other stakeholders.

In addition to the key partners mentioned above in the development of this Strategy, its implementation should be coordinated with the relevant committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, and other government bodies that ensure state policy in various areas of veteran support. The prepared Strategy will be useful to other veteran support bodies and state institutions in terms of designing retraining, activation, and labor adaptation of veterans.

This Strategy contributes to improving the mechanisms for developing state management decisions through a critical analysis of the existing system and the proposed recommendations agreed upon with stakeholders. The Strategy also forms the basis for effective coordination of the activities of international organizations in Ukraine, international technical assistance projects aimed at supporting the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce.

Ukraine's unpreparedness for the challenges of veterans' returning is already reflected in the fragmentation of this area, where many national, regional, and sectoral initiatives are going actively but unsynchronized. Coordinating the actions of all stakeholders is of exceptional importance due to the constant increase in the veterans' number, as well as to the limited resources available to Ukraine during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

CONNECTION WITH OTHER STATE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

As of April 2024, there were 15 programs in Ukraine to promote the education of veterans and their families at the national government level, and 12 programs to promote veteran employment. Additionally, 26 international aid projects were actively functioning, implemented by 14 agencies and foundations, 7 of which provided employment support, 14 offered retraining opportunities, and 7 supported veteran entrepreneurship.

The provisions and recommendations of the Strategy are aligned with the existing policies on veteran education and employment in Ukraine, as well as with other key regulatory documents.

In terms of the comprehensiveness of measures to support the reintegration of veterans into civilian life, the Strategy most closely correlates with [the National economic strategy for the period up to 2030](#).

An important aspect of the Strategy is the specification and implementation of certain provisions of [the Strategic plan of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine until 2027](#), in which operational goal 9.2 includes the task of providing veterans with quality educational services and psychical support for their adaptation to civilian life and the [National Strategy for the Development of Inclusive Education until 2029](#).

The proposals of the Strategy are aimed at fulfilling the requirements of the main strategic documents for achieving political association and economic integration between Ukraine and the EU. For example, Chapter 21 of [the Association agreement](#) stipulates the need to ensure decent work, employment policies, safe and healthy working conditions, social dialogue, social protection, social inclusion, gender equality, and non-discrimination.

The Strategy recommendations are also aimed at addressing issues of unsystematic normative and legal regulation of social protection for war veterans, the lack of adequate psychical assistance, medical assistance, and material and technical support for war veterans, as well as the insufficient consideration by state policy of the rights

of war veterans to meet their real needs, as outlined in paragraph 20 of [the National human rights strategy](#). Veterans should be at the center of the state's attention, as enshrined in paragraph 4 of [the National security strategy of Ukraine](#).

The implementation of a systematic state veteran policy, including through the introduction of a transition system from military service to civilian life, is provided for in goal 3 of [the Adapted annual national program of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO for 2024](#).

The Strategy's proposals, including those aimed at improving support for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce at the community level, are harmonized with the provisions of [the State regional development strategy for 2021–2027](#), in terms of enhancing the social protection of war veterans and their families in territorial communities at their place of permanent residence.

The mechanisms for achieving the goals and implementing the important recommendations of the Strategy are specified in the detailed tasks of [the Strategy of digital transformation of social sphere](#). This includes ensuring the integration of the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISSS) with the information systems of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Community and Territorial Development of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the State Tax Service of Ukraine, the State Customs Service of Ukraine, the State Treasury Service of Ukraine, the National Bank of Ukraine, and other executive authorities, as well as the automation of the management and control system in the social sphere.

The conclusions and recommendations of the Strategy are aligned with the issues and tasks of paragraph 2 of [the National strategy for promoting the development of civil society in Ukraine for 2021–2026](#), particularly in terms of the measures of state support for NGOs of veterans and the disabled, as well as operational goal 4.11 of [the Human development strategy](#) regarding the provision of professional adaptation and psychical rehabilitation services to war veterans and their families.

The recommendations of the Strategy have been developed taking into account Ukraine's strategic course towards creating a barrier-free environment and equal opportunities for every person, as enshrined in [the National strategy for creating a barrier-free environment in Ukraine until 2030](#).

In terms of developing a culture of interaction with veterans, including promoting the activities of veteran organizations, the Strategy's proposals are harmonized with the provisions and measures of [the National patriotic education strategy in Ukraine](#).

BASIS OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy is based on the results of research conducted from March to May 2024, which allowed for the identification of veterans' needs and expectations, characterization of problems, and changes in the system of support for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce, namely:

1. The number of veterans by region and trends in its change from 2019 to 2023 determined the scale of the issues of veteran support and the necessary dynamics of state policy modernization.
2. The functions and shortcomings of the coordination of activities of state authorities and other stakeholders in supporting the reintegration of veterans into civilian life.
3. Veterans' needs in terms of ensuring equality in salary policy, accessibility and targeting of assistance, preventing biased attitudes from employers, workplace discrimination, and non-acceptance by work collectives, etc.
4. Issues related to adapting workplaces to the needs of veterans, creating an inclusive learning environment, ensuring employment after retraining, and more.

Desk research was conducted from 2019 to 2023 to capture trends, accumulate statistical information from various sources, compare and forecast changes under several scenarios for the development of the situation in Ukraine.

To identify the current needs, requests, and expectations of Ukrainian veterans in their transition and integration into education and the workforce, 33 in-depth semi-structured interviews (87% men, 13% women of various age groups) were conducted from March 8 to March 24, 2024, using a pre-determined guide consisting of six thematic blocks. The study sample included war veterans from six regions of Ukraine: Vinnytsia – 5, Ivano-Frankivs'k – 6, Kyiv – 5, Kharkiv – 6, Khmelnyts'kyi – 5, and Kryvyi Rig – 6.

The conclusions and recommendations of previous studies were discussed during three workshops in Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivs'k, and Khmelnyts'kyi in April 2024. Participants focused on the following aspects: 1) returning to work or new employment for veterans, and ways to address these issues; 2) reintegration of veterans into education, and ways to address these issues; 3) development of programs to support employers in hiring and adapting veterans to workplaces.

The workshops involved 93 participants, representing all stakeholder groups, including: 25 veterans; 13 employer representatives; 6 representatives from the departments of education and science of regional state administrations and city councils, state institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine; 1 representative from the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine; 2 representatives from the territorial centers for recruitment and social support (TCR); 5 heads and employees of veteran support units (veteran policy) of regional, district, and city administrations; 10 representatives of public organizations, including veteran organizations; 5 representatives of city councils and territorial communities (departments of health, labor management, entrepreneurship development, etc.); 4 representatives of city council administrative service centers (CAS); 5 representatives of regional employment centers; 7 representatives of city departments and social service centers; 3 representatives of medical and rehabilitation institutions; and 7 representatives of educational institutions.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the regulatory framework and stakeholder interaction design, stakeholder mapping in the system of support for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce was conducted as of April 2024.

The development of a key stakeholders' map in the system of support for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce aimed at clear identification and evaluation of the effectiveness of the regulatory framework and stakeholder interaction design. The mapping of interactions among key stakeholders considered programs and initiatives of organizations at the international, national, and regional levels, state institutions and private organizations, as well as ones in the fields of education, employment, and socio-psychical support for veterans.

I. PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM OF VETERAN REINTEGRATION INTO EDUCATION AND THE LABOR MARKET

Strategic goals are implemented through the following priorities:

1. Increasing the accessibility and targeting of support.
2. Ensuring and evaluating the effectiveness of support services.
3. Improving the design and institutional capacity of the system.
4. Strategic coordination of stakeholder initiatives.
5. Developing a culture of interaction with veterans.

1. ENHANCING ACCESSIBILITY AND TARGETING OF SUPPORT

Ensuring targeted assistance and creating a support ecosystem for veterans is crucial amid the increasing strain on state aid mechanisms, which are already experiencing failures. Research indicates that over 60% of veterans have faced accessibility issues with benefits and support services provided by current Ukrainian legislation* .

The quality of medical care and rehabilitation for veterans is crucial for assessing and restoring their work capacity (within a certain range), ensuring successful reintegration into civilian life overall. Approximately 75% of veterans reported physical and/or mental health issues that limit their ability to return to education and the labor market*.

Notably, despite the current scale of combat injuries in Ukraine, only about 14% of veterans have been classified as having a disability of the 1st or 2nd group due to the

* March – April 2024, UMA research

war. In the U.S., this figure is several times higher, approaching 30%. The discrepancy in veteran categories and statuses, that are relative to their actual health conditions, is due to bureaucratic procedures, outdated assessment approaches, difficulties in obtaining statuses that entail increased financial support and compensation from the state, and insufficient legal accountability of medical commission specialists. This leads to inaccurate determinations of veterans' disability levels, increasing errors and risks in support programs.

Research has found that about 45% of veterans change their place of work and/or field of employment after returning from service, with over 35% doing so due to traumatic impacts on their physical and mental health from combat, as well as negative relationships within their work environment*.

Approximately 25% of veterans express interest in education (retraining, acquiring new professions, etc.), and about 80% consider decent employment one of the most important factors for successful reintegration into civilian life. Social and professional adaptation has been established as one of the main priorities of state veteran policy, with funding continuously increasing: UAH 30 million in 2022, UAH 36 million in 2023, and UAH 71 million in 2024.

However, according to specialists from the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine and the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, in 2022, UAH 30.3 million was allocated for measures related to the social and professional adaptation of victims of the Revolution of Dignity and participants in the ATO/JFO, as well as family members of deceased (fallen) individuals, but only UAH 5.3 million was used. The number of enterprises (organizations) that signed contracts to provide professional adaptation services for veterans was 205 (out of 650 planned). The average cost of professional adaptation for one veteran was UAH 8,099.2.

In 2023, UAH 27.9 million was allocated for measures related to the professional adaptation of war veterans, their family members, and equivalent persons. Only UAH 23.6 million of that was used. The compensation per veteran was reduced. The number of veterans who received professional adaptation services was 2,241, compared to the planned 2,128.

In 2024, the budget for veteran policy allocated to the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine is approximately UAH 14 billion. However, it is not possible to determine the exact amount that will be directed towards professional adaptation (according to published information – UAH 71 million, or only 0.5% of the veteran policy budget), as the directions for the use of funds under this program, approved by the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, do not include these funds.

Research results indicate that obtaining additional funding for the education of veterans' family members was important for 70% of study participants. Effective implementation of educational mechanisms should help the veteran's family improve their education level and acquire new professional skills, which would enhance employment opportunities and ensure a stable income. However, as of April 2024, only 10% of surveyed families had access to financial support for education*.

It is important to note that the provision of guaranteed veteran benefits largely relies on local budgets. Given the significant differences in the socio-economic capabilities of regions and communities, the accessibility of these benefits for veterans often varies greatly. Since additional subsidies to local budgets from the state are not allocated, the issue of benefit implementation through local self-government bodies will persist.

Strategic action priority goal: ensure awareness and accessibility of support mechanisms for veterans, guaranteeing each of them the freedom to choose its targeted and mandatory provision.

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure objective assessment of the actual loss of work capacity and special needs of veterans in education and employment.
- Adapt state aid proposals to the needs, rather than to the veteran status in general, and differentiate it by the veteran categories.
- Provide veterans with the opportunity to choose support options for reintegration into civilian life according to their legally enshrined rights.
- Increase veterans' awareness of their rights and options for receiving assistance in reintegration into education and the workforce.
- Improve logistical, financial, and other accessibility of veteran assistance, with systematic monitoring of its level.
- Create a single digital entry point for veterans into the support system for their reintegration into education and the labor market.

* March – April 2024, UMA research

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

URGENT

1.1. Prioritize veterans in competitive selection for vacancies in the public sector and civil service, particularly in non-military structures.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.1.1. Review conditions and evaluation criteria for candidates for public positions, considering their military experience.

1.1.2. Facilitate the priority employment of veterans in government bodies and state companies that match the veterans' moral and psychical state, and physical capabilities.

1.2. Encourage educational institutions to update the range of educational services by including educational and professional programs with tuition costs covered by vouchers to maintain competitiveness in the labor market.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.2.1. Develop specialized programs for veterans, adhering to inclusivity requirements.

1.2.2. Develop mechanisms by educational institutions to compensate for the cost of veterans' retraining, provided that established quality standards for obtaining qualifications are met.

1.3. Expand the network of qualification centers that can assign/confirm professional qualifications related to those acquired in the military.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.3.1. Develop methodics for assessing and recognizing learning outcomes, skills, and experience acquired in the military for assigning or confirming professional qualifications.

1.3.2. Increase the number of qualification centers that assign or confirm professional qualifications related to those acquired by veterans in the military.

1.4. Promote the retraining of female veterans for professions traditionally dominated by men and underrepresented by women, developing training programs that help female veterans acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for successfully performing new roles in professions where women are traditionally underrepresented, and supporting female veterans in the labor market so that they feel comfortable and can realize their potential.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.4.1. Develop training programs that help female veterans acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for successfully performing new roles in professions where women are traditionally underrepresented.

1.4.2. Review the requirements for professions where women are traditionally underrepresented.

1.4.3. Conduct a gender-oriented analysis of female veterans' opportunities in the labor market to ensure accurate career guidance and support their successful self-realization.

1.5. Develop practices for specialists supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals using best models and experiences, such as case managers' models.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.5.1. Implement methods for assessing needs and expanding tools for specialists supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals, with monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness.

1.5.2. Enhance the qualifications of specialists supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals using international case management practices.

1.5.3. Integrate the infrastructure and services of veteran assistants, particularly through existing projects:

- administrators of CAS (created 'single windows') for veterans and their families;
- social workers in battalions who help resolve civilian issues and problems of servicemen and their families during service;
- specialists supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals (formerly veteran assistants), etc.

STRATEGIC

1.6. Improve the accessibility and quality of physical and psychical health assessments using modern methodics.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.6.1. Develop methodics based on international standards for assessing the loss of work capacity and special needs of veterans in education and employment.

1.6.2. Implement adaptive packages of medical and rehabilitation services for veterans that consider their specific needs, but within the general support system with universal coverage and easy accessibility.

1.7. Develop online converters of competencies acquired during military service into civilian ones for resume preparation and successful employment.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.7.1. Considering international experience, create online converters of competencies acquired by veterans during military service into civilian ones for resume preparation during employment.

1.7.2. Integrate resume creation modules for veterans into the functionality of existing digital services supporting veterans' reintegration into education and the workforce.

1.8. Implement an 'E-consultant' based on modern artificial intelligence tools to interactively assist veterans in choosing and implementing individual trajectories for their reintegration into civilian life.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

1.8.1. Create artificial intelligence tools for personalized proposals and recommendations in veterans' reintegration into education and the workforce based on their needs and capabilities.

1.8.2. Ensure the integration and automation of 'E-consultant' modules with existing digital services and platforms for veteran assistance (Diia, UISSS, etc.).

2. ENSURING AND EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Effectiveness of services and efficient use of resources are key to developing the support system for the reintegration of Ukrainian veterans into education and the workforce.

The budget for veteran policy, allocated by the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine after 2021 (UAH 1 billion), has been steadily increasing: UAH 6.2 billion in 2022, UAH 6.8 billion in 2023, approximately UAH 14 billion in 2024. The budget for 2025 is planned to be UAH 25 billion, and for 2026 – to be UAH 35 billion. However, research results indicate that the level of satisfaction with services and the organization of support for the reintegration of veterans into civilian life has not significantly changed, with 57% of veterans negatively evaluating their experience with state assistance services.* .

At the current stage of developing the support system for the reintegration of Ukrainian veterans into education and the workforce, critical losses in effectiveness are quite predictable but require rapid strategic changes. Following the trust crisis in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2014, due to cases of negligence and poor service to veterans, comprehensive strategies 'MyVA' and 'I Care' were launched. Thanks to clear goals for improving the experience of veterans and employees, creating a culture of continuous improvement, and strengthening strategic partnerships, satisfaction with interactions and trust in the government agency increased from 47% to 70% over three years.

During the research, about 70% of veterans indicated employment and job search issues with decent pay as the dominant factor in the integration process into society after demobilization. The number of registered unemployed veterans (HPs) increased to 4.8 thousand in 2023, compared to 3.8 thousand in the previous 2022.

[The National economic strategy for the period up to 2030](#), which the recommendations of this Strategy are aligned with, states, in particular:

- insufficient employment level of war veterans, military personnel who have completed service in military formations and special law enforcement agencies;
- limited access opportunities for vulnerable population categories to the labor market;
- insufficient level of practical knowledge of businesses regarding the selection of candidates with disabilities and their support in the workplace;

* March – April 2024, UMA research

- mismatch between professional and general competencies of workers and labor market needs;
- structural imbalance between labor supply and demand;
- insufficient cooperation of employment centers with private organizations and other participants;
- predominance of passive support methods (financial payments) in the work of employment centers.

During the research, veterans who sought assistance from the State Employment Service (SES) predominantly negatively evaluated the quality of provided career guidance services (over 75% of them), mostly explaining this by the lack of an individual approach and insufficient understanding of veterans by the SES employees.

The fact that, according to the SES statistics, only 27% of veterans who had official unemployed status were employed with the assistance of SES during 2019–2023 confirms veterans' assessments and the need for strategic changes aimed at increasing effectiveness.

Research results indicate the presence of problems and strategic gaps mainly at the stage of scaling and improving veteran support programs (low effectiveness, lack of funding, development pace and scale, etc.). Relaunches without scaling and integration between projects of veteran assistants from different departments, etc., have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the use of veteran assistance funds and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of veterans directly.

Strategic action priority goal: ensure the quality and effectiveness of veteran support services while maintaining the efficiency of resource expenditure.

OBJECTIVES:

- Develop a methodology and tools for monitoring the observance of veterans' rights during employment and education.
- Engage veterans as experts to evaluate the inclusivity of proposed educational programs and employment measures, and the effectiveness of their implementation locally.
- Organize monitoring of the development of veteran entrepreneurship projects after the allocation of initial funding, and create mechanisms for further support.
- Ensure monitoring of the quality of services provided to veterans and their families as stipulated by current legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

URGENT

2.1. Implement monitoring of veterans' requests for legal assistance as a tool to track systemic issues in veterans' labor relations with employers.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.1.1. Organize monitoring of veterans' complaints regarding labor law violations by employers and respond promptly.

2.1.2. Regularly prepare and publish reports on resolving veterans' issues.

2.2. Conduct audits of 'contact points' and information channels for veterans by veteran representatives (veteran community) to improve and enhance user convenience.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.2.1. Adapt methodics for identifying 'contact points' and auditing their effectiveness in informational and service support channels for veterans' reintegration into education and the workforce.

2.2.2. Involve representatives of veteran organizations in monitoring the effectiveness of informational and service support for veterans' reintegration, organizing their training and briefings.

2.3. Systematically update the list of professions and specialties for which veterans will be issued vouchers to maintain competitiveness in the labor market, considering stakeholders' requests.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.3.1. Conduct regular research on veterans' needs and specific requests in education and employment.

2.3.2. Expand training and qualification upgrade offerings, including ones based on monitoring the structure of demand and requirements of the regional labor market.

2.4. Develop indicators for monitoring and auditing the effectiveness of financial mechanisms supporting veteran entrepreneurship.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.4.1. Develop methodologies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of veteran entrepreneurship support programs.

2.4.2. Conduct regular audits of veteran projects' effectiveness, collecting and processing feedback data from program participants.

2.5. Ensure veterans' participation in developing and evaluating the effectiveness of programs stimulating veteran business.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.5.1. Develop public-private partnership programs in the development and implementation of initiatives to stimulate veteran business.

2.5.2. Engage veteran business networks to provide support and mentorship in a 'peer-to-peer' format from successful comrades to prevent problems and increase the effectiveness of assistance to novice entrepreneurs.

2.5.3. Involve representatives of veteran organizations in public discussions of draft decisions and existing government committee projects.

STRATEGIC

2.6. Create a system for processing veterans' requests to hotlines with the publication of annual reports analyzing requests to identify shortcomings in the state assistance system for veterans.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.6.1. Implement continuous automatic tracking of veterans' requests to advisory and emergency hotlines.

2.6.2. Systematically process reports on veterans' requests by responsible government bodies.

2.6.3. Develop a system of indicators for the effectiveness of support for veterans in their reintegration into education and the workforce.

2.7. Improve the system of providing educational benefits to veterans and/or their family members by identifying shortcomings based on mandatory surveys.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.7.1. Organize regular research on veterans' educational needs, including conducting surveys and interviews, and evaluating the effectiveness and accessibility of their provision.

2.7.2. Increasing accessibility of legislated and state-initiated benefits, implementing additional financial support tools for veterans and/or their family members to obtain education, such as in the project for implementing grant support for education seekers.

2.8. Initiating the practice of annual (quarterly) diagnostics of the quality of services provided to veterans by the SES to develop recommendations for improving veterans' employment.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

2.8.1. Improving the system of indicators and monitoring the effectiveness of SES services in terms of enhancing the quality of interaction and promoting the employment of Ukrainian veterans.

2.8.2. Expanding the functionality of digital monitoring and the set of public indicators (dashboards) of the quality of assistance provided to veterans in key priority areas.

3. IMPROVING THE DESIGN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY OF THE SYSTEM

For various preferential categories of citizens (veterans, internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, etc.), and often for different areas of state assistance, separate state institutions are created in Ukraine with a weak level of coordination with other government bodies, as well as with complex and multi-level bureaucratic processes. According to the results of research and mapping of stakeholder interactions in the system of support for the reintegration of veterans into civilian life (April 2024), almost 150 regulatory documents governing the provision of assistance

were identified. Radical simplification of procedures and improvement of the veteran support effectiveness within the framework of integrated solutions of the UISSS, as provided by [the Digital transformation strategy of the social sphere](#), has not yet occurred.

The insufficient organization of state assistance significantly reduces its effectiveness, institutional capacity, and results for veterans. Extremely negative consequences of this are the reduction of support accessibility for veterans. This also occurs due to the redistribution of resources not to meet the needs of combatants, but to maintain the growing departmental network, which operates at the expense of the state budget and on the principle of 'self-ordering'.

According to the audit results of the use of state budget funds allocated for measures to support the reintegration of veterans into civilian life in the period from 2019 to 2022 by [the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine](#), the state, represented by authorized bodies and institutions, did not develop and implement a strategy, i.e., a step-by-step algorithm, for the transition of citizens from military service to civilian life, and did not form a proper system for providing rehabilitation and re-adaptation services at the expense of budget funds. As a result, in 2019–2022, more than 83 thousand affected participants did not receive quality, accessible, and free rehabilitation and re-adaptation services.

Moreover, in 2019–2022, a complete package of rehabilitation and adaptation services for this category of citizens was not formed, and they were deprived of timely and reliable information about the content of services and the procedure for obtaining them. Directly, citizens who need such services and are legally entitled to receive it are not even informed about it.

The shortcomings recorded in the conclusions of the Accounting Chamber remain relevant both for strategic guidelines for the development of support for veterans' reintegration into civilian life and the organization of the state authorities' current activities. The reasons for the ineffective management of budget program funds are the lack of a mechanism for calculating the need for budget funds for the corresponding purpose, improper accounting of the real needs of affected participants, lack of regulation of requirements for the provision of rehabilitation and re-adaptation services, and lack of accountability and control over the activities and expenditure of budget funds by lower-level managers. The latter, in particular, determines the problem of forming an effective management infrastructure for the implementation of veteran policy on the principle of 'from the center to the community'. Many services for war veterans are provided in the communities where they reside, which places a burden on local governments and the institutions they create, given the lack of resources – financial, time, and human ones.

Previously approved and existing program documents and regulatory acts in the field of social support for war veterans do not pay sufficient attention to the issues of their comprehensive reintegration at the community level and the provision of support to veterans' family members. [The National economic strategy for the period up to 2030](#), with which the recommendations of this Strategy are aligned, states, in particular:

- the low capacity of territorial communities to provide quality and timely social services, including ones for vulnerable groups, which is resulting in a low level of coverage by such services;
- insufficient funding for the effective functioning and support of social infrastructure institutions;
- insufficient staffing levels and a lack of qualified personnel providing social services and ensuring social protection.

Despite the provision of equal opportunities to exercise the rights to benefits and assistance in the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce, in reality, they face significant limitations. The accessibility of support varies for residents of different regions and is insufficient for remote settlements and rural areas, as well as for members of communities with low socio-economic development potential. This problem is often noted by veterans, representatives of local authorities and self-government, as well as other stakeholders* .

The remaining funds in the accounts of local budgets and budgetary institutions in the general and special funds as of January 1, 2024, amount to UAH 112.9 billion. These resources allow local governments to finance priority needs, including the implementation of effective veteran policies at the local level. However, ensuring the institutional capacity of the veteran reintegration support system into civilian life requires a differentiated approach to communities.

The burden on communities varies significantly in terms of the veterans' number, and fluctuates considerably: from about 65,000 people in Dnipro region, 48,000 people in L'viv region, 44,000 people in Kyiv city and Kharkiv region, to 12,000 people in Zakarpattia and Chernivtsi regions.

Strategic action priority goal: ensure institutional capacity and improve the design of the veteran support system.

* March – April 2024, UMA research

OBJECTIVES:

- Enhance the institutional capacity of the veteran support system in the fields of education and employment, including enhancing through its modernization.
- Improve the effectiveness of interactions and the implementation of veteran assistance programs in the 'from center to community' system.
- Establish centers for coordinating educational initiatives and employment support for veterans.
- Conduct training and education for employees of state and non-state institutions involved in veteran support.
- Develop online platforms and resources that consolidate information on educational opportunities, employment, and available benefits for veterans.
- Engage community organizations in supporting and implementing programs for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce.
- Partner with international organizations to adapt global experience and attract additional resources to support the reintegration of veterans into civilian life.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

URGENT

3.1. Expand the functionality and popularize the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere (UISS) according to the needs of veterans.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

3.1.1. Create a personal account for each veteran, where they can access personalized services, information on available benefits, medical care, educational opportunities, and employment programs.

3.1.2. Implementation of the function for submitting electronic applications for social services, including registration for education, scholarships, medical services, and employment.

3.1.3. Ensure the integration of the UISSS with other registries and databases, allowing veterans centralized access to all necessary information.

3.1.4. Conduct an information campaign using media, social networks, and public events to inform veterans about the opportunities and benefits of using the UISSS.

3.1.5. Ensure full accessibility of the system for veterans with special needs, including adapting the interface for people with visual or hearing impairments.

3.2. Develop measures to promote the combination of veterans' education in educational institutions and workplaces at enterprises.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

3.2.1. Conduct information campaigns through mass media, including social networks, webinars, and meetings, to familiarize veterans with the advantages and opportunities of implementing integrated programs for veterans' education in educational institutions and workplaces.

3.2.2. Create informational materials for veterans (brochures, booklets, videos, etc.).

3.2.3. Encourage enterprises to participate in veterans' training programs.

3.2.4. Conduct training and professional development for teachers and mentors involved in implementing integrated veterans' education programs.

3.2.5. Share success stories of veterans' education and employment.

3.3. Develop measures to promote and inform veterans about opportunities for non-formal education.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

3.3.1. Create an online platform where veterans can find information about educational offerings in one place.

3.3.2. Conduct a communication campaign about the opportunities for non-formal education.

STRATEGIC

3.4. Improve the inclusivity of the educational environment based on international standards and psychical support.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

3.4.1. Develop and implement educational programs adapted to veterans' needs, with the possibility of distance learning.

3.4.2. Integrate methodics that meet psychical support international standards into the educational process, including courses on stress management, emotional resilience development, and psychosocial support.

3.4.3. Open support centers for veterans on education and employment issues, as well as access to resources that facilitate veterans' integration into the educational environment.

3.4.4. Conduct training for teaching staff and administrative personnel.

3.4.5. Develop online platforms that provide access to educational materials and support courses.

3.4.6. Use inclusive virtual classrooms and simulators to create a safe and adaptive educational environment.

4. STRATEGIC COORDINATION OF STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES

Significant problems for the effective improvement and scaling of best practices and the efficiency of veteran support services are caused by the lack of a comprehensive and effective strategy, insufficient coordination of activities, and duplication of functions among participants in the system of support for the reintegration of Ukrainian veterans into civilian life.

During the development of stakeholders' interaction maps, an increase in the number of their joint programs and projects to promote the reintegration of Ukrainian veterans into education and the workforce was identified. In particular, at the beginning of 2024, 27 state initiatives were being implemented with the participation of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine.

However, research results indicate that among veterans, the opinion is spreading that the relevant state institutions do not fully fulfill their purpose, and their activities to

support veterans in professional and career development are ineffective (65% of respondents have a negative tone) *.

Due to insufficient coordination of actions and duplication of functions among stakeholders, the accessibility of veterans' assistance (informational, bureaucratic, logistical, etc.) is complicated, and the effectiveness of administering state support programs is reduced. For example, the state program for compensating businesses for equipping workplaces for their veteran employees with disabilities is implemented by the SES in parallel with the programs of the Social protection fund for persons with disabilities. The latter offers various program options with both repayable and non-repayable funding.

Additionally, it should be noted that veterans can take advantage of preferential admission conditions directly at educational institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, but they can only obtain vouchers for education through the SES.

Departmental educational institutions that develop and offer educational services to veterans in parallel with the institutions of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, particularly the SES, have similar systemic problems with service efficiency. These include, for example, the mismatch between the quality of graduates' training and labor market needs, quantitative and structural imbalances between different levels of education, the mismatch of educational content with modern requirements, structural asymmetries and 'gray zones' in the labor market, low economic activity, and high unemployment rates among educated individuals.

Due to the low effectiveness of further employment, 11% of veterans indicated the effectiveness of training in the vocational training centers of the SES. Statistical data from the SES confirm the sufficiently low effectiveness of training in the vocational training centers of the SES for veteran employment. During 2019–2023, only about 3.5 thousand veterans underwent vocational training with the assistance of the center, with an annual decrease in the number of veterans seeking training.

The increase in the number of stakeholder projects creates additional problems regarding the effective informing of veterans about current opportunities to participate in programs and initiatives supporting their return and integration into civilian life. Each project involves specific conditions and participation procedures, complicating the bureaucratic burden on the veteran support system.

* March – April 2024, UMA research

The goal of implementing the strategic priority of stakeholder initiative coordination is to ensure effective coordination of stakeholders' interaction to avoid resource loss and maintain the quality of assistance to veterans in the fields of education and employment.

OBJECTIVES:

- Identify and eliminate the duplication of functions and programs among participants in the veteran reintegration support system.
- Ensure the prerequisites and improve the effectiveness of stakeholders' activity coordination.
- Strengthen interagency cooperation, establish effective interaction between government institutions, educational institutions, employers, and organizations that support veterans in their reintegration into civilian life.
- Ensure regular data exchange, reporting, and sharing of best practices among government institutions, public associations, businesses, and international partners.
- Implement systematic monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of cooperation among stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

URGENT

4.1. Conduct an audit of the regulatory framework and organizational mechanism of stakeholders' interaction to eliminate duplication of functions and programs, as well as excessive bureaucratic barriers in providing assistance to veterans.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.1.1. Review the veteran reintegration support system with the involvement of relevant experts and veteran public associations.

4.1.2. Ensure representation and real participation of veteran public associations in central and local government bodies that develop and implement veteran reintegration support programs.

4.1.3. Conduct regular evaluations of the effectiveness of stakeholders' interactions and joint projects.

4.2. Create an integrated system for processing veterans' inquiries to hotlines with the publication of annual reports analyzing inquiries to identify shortcomings in the state assistance system for veterans.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.2.1. Implement continuous monitoring of veterans' inquiries to advisory and emergency hotlines.

4.2.2. Systematically process stakeholders' reports based on the monitoring of veterans' inquiries to identify current problems and improve the effectiveness of stakeholders' interactions in supporting veterans' reintegration into education and the labor market, as well as implement appropriate organizational changes and rapid response measures.

4.3. Integrate veteran support initiatives and networks based on educational institutions, which are simultaneously developed by various stakeholders, with coordination by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.3.1. Form and enhance the potential for veteran support based on a unified network of veteran development centers, such as the 'Norway-Ukraine' and 'NATO-Ukraine' projects, and on educational institution campuses, operating in a harmonized format and coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

4.3.2. Facilitate the placement of veteran public associations on educational institution campuses.

4.4. Develop international cooperation of veteran business associations and enterprises.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.4.1. Hold annual international veteran forums.

4.4.2. Facilitate the participation of Ukrainian veteran enterprises in international exhibitions, fairs, and business expos to help find new markets and expand the partnership network.

4.4.3. Initiate the creation of a global/European/Euro-Atlantic network of veteran business associations.

STRATEGIC

4.5. Improve the mechanism of public-private partnership and coordinated efforts of stakeholders to promote the reintegration of veterans into education and the labor market.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.5.1. Create new digital resources or expand the functionality of existing digital resources for data consolidation and project alignment (DREAM, Ukraine Support Tracker, etc.).

4.5.2. Increase the share of state funding for the budgets of veteran public associations.

4.6. Implement comprehensive and long-term interagency programs to support veteran businesses.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.6.1. Create a specialized fund with state participation to invest in and support veteran enterprises and startups.

4.6.2. Create conditions for the effective participation of veteran businesses in state tenders and orders, promoting their development at the state level.

4.7. Digitization of documents and services related to working with veterans, including the integration of all registries for receiving services through a single application form, similar to the 'eMaliatko' service, where all documents from a unified list are automatically uploaded.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

4.7.1. Phased integration of data from registries and digital services (Diia, Reserve+, etc.) coordinated with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine to create a single 'entry point' to the reintegration support system for veterans.

4.7.2. Improvement of the functionality of existing resources for aggregating and adapting educational and employment options for veterans, including the verification of documents or other means of confirming rights and receiving benefits, vouchers, grants, etc.

5. DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF INTERACTION WITH VETERANS

Developing a culture of interaction with veterans is a foundational strategic priority essential for the successful implementation of all other initiatives. All respondents (100%) in the studies emphasized the need for developing a culture of interaction with veterans and highlighted the negative consequences of a lack of understanding and support among the public *. They stressed that preparing society for communication with veterans could help reduce the stigma associated with participation in combat and create more favorable conditions for veterans' reintegration into civilian life.

However, research results indicated a low level of actual readiness of society for effective interactions with veterans, and signs of discrimination during veterans' employment. About 50% of veterans faced limitations and obstacles in the employment process. The average job search duration for a veteran is 9–10 months, while the average job search duration in Ukraine is 6–7 months.

40% of respondents reported experiencing biased attitudes during employment; 12% indicated that there was a discriminatory approach towards veterans when returning to their previous job or seeking new employment. According to 15% of respondents, some veterans faced complete misunderstanding from colleagues regarding their condition due to a lack of adequate information about the psychical and emotional issues that veterans might experience after returning from war. Often, team members do not understand the challenges veterans face, leading to feelings of alienation and rejection*.

In developing a modern culture of interaction with veterans and other categories of the population affected by the war, it is important to shift from a medical and charitable model of assistance to a social (civil society) model. Veteran public associations are an important element in ensuring effective assistance and developing a culture of interaction with HPs in society.

100% veterans who participated in the studies confirmed repeatedly receiving assistance from volunteers and other public figures for resolving everyday issues, psychical support, or participating in social events for veterans. 45% of respondents

* March – April 2024, UMA research

noted that they had no problems preparing resumes, as veteran organizations were always nearby to help with document preparation for job searches*.

The uneven availability and unpredictable stability of volunteer and other initiatives, which significantly depend on financial, regulatory, and other constraints, remain problematic.

The goal of implementing the priority of developing a culture of interaction with veterans is to create a society where veterans feel and realize positive attitudes, ensure their rights and needs, and actively engage in social, economic, and cultural life.

OBJECTIVES:

- Organize communication campaigns aimed at raising public awareness about the importance of supporting veterans.
- Development of mentorship programs where veterans can share their experiences and support each other in the process of reintegration into civilian life.
- Engage veteran organizations in cooperation with state and local authorities for the joint implementation of support programs that will facilitate the integration of veterans into communities and their professional development.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND INITIATIVES

URGENT

5.1. Promote veteran businesses as part of modern business culture through nationwide events such as forums and national veteran entrepreneurship weeks.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.1.1. Organize an annual National veteran business forum for exchanging ideas, experiences, and establishing contacts with potential investors, partners, and colleagues.

5.1.2. Conduct national veteran entrepreneurship weeks, during which fairs, exhibitions, lectures, and panel discussions will be organized.

5.1.3. Engage media to cover veteran entrepreneurship events.

5.1.4. Develop an online platform where veteran entrepreneurs can promote their products and services, establish partnerships, and access business resources and consultations.

5.1.5. Create an interactive catalog that allows consumers to quickly find veteran businesses in their region or across the country.

5.2. Organize special training and courses to adapt veterans to work in the public sector, local government, public associations, etc., including peer-to-peer support.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.2.1. Create specialized training programs focused on adapting veterans to work in government institutions, local government bodies, and public associations.

5.2.2. Implement mentorship programs where veterans who are already working in the public sector or public associations can act as mentors.

5.2.3. Create support networks where veterans can share experiences, provide advice to each other, and support the development of professional skills in the workplace.

5.3. Organize events for veterans, such as job fairs for veterans, meetings between veterans and employers at business incubators, veteran development centers, or other formats for employer–veteran meetings.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.3.1. Organize regular thematic job fairs at business incubators and veteran development centers, where employers interested in hiring veterans can present their vacancies.

5.3.2. Organize networking sessions at business centers or other locations where veterans and employers can freely communicate, exchange contacts, and discuss employment opportunities.

5.4. Develop recommendations and mechanisms to help veterans promote their brands in the domestic market and abroad under the ‘Ukrainian Veteran Business’ brand and as part of the ‘Made in Ukraine’ project.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.4.1. Develop a national program and recommendations for veterans on building and promoting brands.

5.4.2. Develop mechanisms to support veterans in entering foreign markets.

5.4.3. Introduce special labeling 'Ukrainian Veteran Business' as part of the 'Made in Ukraine' project.

5.5. Develop recommendations (guide) for creating a veteran-friendly and inclusive educational environment for veterans and their families.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.5.1. Create a working group involving multidisciplinary experts, including specialists in inclusive education, psychologists, veterans, and representatives of the education sector, to develop recommendations for creating an inclusive educational environment that considers the specific needs of veterans and their families.

5.5.2. Conduct consultations, surveys, and focus groups among veterans and their families to identify needs and challenges in the educational environment to develop recommendations that are highly relevant to this audience.

5.5.3. Conduct training for the educational community on effectively applying the recommendations in practice.

STRATEGIC

5.6. Promote the establishment of educational programs aimed at training specialists in supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals, as well as psychologists trained to work with veterans and/or their families according to international standards.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.6.1. Initiate cooperation with educational institutions in Ukraine and international organizations to develop educational programs for training specialists in supporting veterans and demobilized individuals, as well as veteran psychologists.

5.6.2. Implement financial support programs (scholarships/grants) for students who wish to study in educational programs focused on training specialists in supporting veterans and psychologists.

5.7. Develop a culture of interaction with veterans, overcoming the stigma of the complexity of working with veterans through social advertising and information campaigns.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.7.1. Create and disseminate through the media a content that promotes deeper understanding and empathy in society towards veterans by explaining the specifics of working with veterans, their needs, and the challenges they face.

5.7.2. Hold regular forums, seminars, and round tables for employers, civil servants, and the public to discuss issues of interaction with veterans, including overcoming stigma and dispelling myths about the complexity of interacting with them in the workplace.

5.7.3. Implement special training for employers and HR specialists to teach effective communication with veterans, taking into account their needs and adapting the work environment for their successful integration, which will help overcome biases and develop a culture of support for veterans in work collectives.

5.8. Improve mechanisms for encouraging employers to hire veterans, training employers in effective interaction with veterans, and disseminating successful cases.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES:

5.8.1. Introduce flexible motivation tools for companies that actively employ veterans.

5.8.2. Implement a system for recognizing employers who demonstrate success in integrating veterans into the workforce, including special awards at the state level and participation in national competitions that emphasize corporate social responsibility.

5.8.3. Disseminate successful cases of veteran employment.

II. DECOMPOSITION OF STRATEGY GOALS

With the increasing number of veterans in Ukraine, the issues of targeting, accessibility, and individualization of support trajectories for reintegration into civilian life, systematic integration of stakeholder efforts, and a results-oriented approach for veterans come to the forefront.

Successful scenarios and cases of support for Ukrainian veterans, made possible by initiatives from the state, employers, public associations, etc., require effective scaling and utilization by stakeholders to improve the system of assistance for veterans in their return and integration into education and the workforce.

The Strategy envisages the improvement of state policies and programs in the field of developing support for the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce, including:

- creating conditions for the progress and effectiveness of the digital ecosystem for veteran assistance, particularly through increased accessibility and targeting;
- increasing the employment rate of veterans, including doing this through the creation of new jobs, self-realization of veterans in entrepreneurship, and effective innovations in the education field;
- transitioning from medical and charitable models to social models of veteran assistance, forming a fully inclusive environment for their activities;
- enhancing institutional capacity on the path to European integration, and developing international cooperation to restore Ukraine's socio-economic potential.

The implementation of recommendations and initiatives to achieve the goals of the Strategy is planned for the period 2025–2029, taking into account the division of measures into urgent and strategic ones (Tables 1–4).

TABLE 1 – IMPROVING VETERANS’ ACCESS TO QUALITY AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Recommendations and initiatives	Priority coordination	Expected results
Urgent actions		
Organizing the development of recommendations (guide) for creating a veteran-friendly and inclusive educational environment for veterans and their families. Developing measures to promote the combination of veterans’ education in educational institutions with on-the-job training at enterprises, institutions, and organizations to acquire specific qualifications (dual education system). Developing measures to promote and inform veterans about opportunities for non-formal education. Developing training programs that will help female veterans acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully perform new roles in professions where women are traditionally underrepresented. Promoting the retraining of female veterans for professions where women are traditionally underrepresented. Developing and placing a catalog of non-formal education platforms (programs) on web resources, providing preferential conditions for veterans. Encouraging educational institutions to update the range of educational services by including educational and professional programs with tuition fees covered by vouchers to maintain competitiveness in the labor market. Abolishing the time limit (within three years from the date of discharge) for veterans to receive a voucher to support competitiveness in the labor market. Providing veterans and demobilized servicemen with disabilities with state funding for the arrangement of not only workplaces but also educational places. Providing demobilized disabled servicemen with access to the project for organizing vocational training in educational institutions of the State Employment Service, not only for HPs and persons with disabilities due to war. Developing and expanding adaptive and conducive to employment special programs for the training and certification of rehabilitation specialists, social and psychological (medical) support for veterans, including doing this directly for HPs and persons who have or are gaining experience in caring for them on a non-professional basis. Providing preferential conditions for obtaining funding for family members of combatants in an experimental project to introduce grant support for students.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. National Qualifications Agency. Educational and Methodological Centers of the Ministry of Education and Science. Providers of education and employment services. State Employment Service.	Increasing to 15% the share of financial support for the educational needs of veterans and their families in the area of socio-professional adaptation in the veteran policy implementation budget. Abolishing the time limits for veterans to receive a voucher to support competitiveness in the labor market. Providing preferential grant support conditions for family members of combatants pursuing education. Having 25% of family members of veterans, who have or are gaining experience in caring for them on a non-professional basis, have undergone training and received qualification certificates.
Strategic measures		
Developing an online map to enable the formation of an individual trajectory for the return and integration of veterans into the education field, with a detailed list and accessible explanations of possible retraining options, as well as available benefits and procedures. Systematically updating the list of professions and specialties for which vouchers will be issued to support competitiveness in the labor market, taking into account stakeholder requests. Promoting the establishment of educational programs aimed at training specialists in supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals, as well as psychologists trained to work with veterans and/or their families according to international standards. Improving the system of providing educational benefits to veterans and/or their family members by identifying shortcomings based on systematic surveys.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. State Employment Service.	Financial support for the established needs of veterans in specific areas of socio-professional adaptation, as provided by the state, at a level of no less than 30%. Creating conditions for veterans to implement their individual educational trajectories. Training specialists in supporting veterans of various specializations at a rate of no less than 4% of the expected number of veterans.

TABLE 2 – INCREASING VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT LEVEL

Recommendations and initiatives	Priority coordination	Expected results
Urgent actions		
Developing online converters to translate competencies acquired during military service into civilian ones for resume preparation and successful employment. Organizing special training and courses to adapt veterans to work in the public sector, local government bodies, public associations, etc., including peer-to-peer support. Supporting female veterans in the labor market to ensure they feel comfortable and can realize their potential. Establishing a mechanism for subsidies from the state budget to local budgets to provide rental housing for veterans who need improved living conditions, have the opportunity and express willingness to work in the community. Providing access to state-funded programs for employers to equip workplaces for disabled veterans who are demobilized servicemen. Giving priority to veterans in competitive selection for vacancies in the public sector and civil service, particularly in non-security structures, when candidates have equal qualifications. Developing a mechanism to harmonize military experience and specialties/positions of veterans with civilian professional qualifications and learning outcomes. Expanding the network of qualification centers that can assign/confirm professional qualifications related to those acquired in the military (e.g., drone operators). Initiating the practice of annual (quarterly) diagnostics of the quality of services provided to veterans by the State Employment Service in career guidance, skill enhancement, and retraining, to develop recommendations for improving the employment rate of veterans after completing relevant training.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. State Employment Service. National Qualifications Agency. Employers. Providers of education and employment services. Departments and specialized government bodies responsible for implementing specific policies in the field of veteran support.	Creating an online competency converter to assist veterans in employment. Increasing the employment rate of veterans by 50%. Raising the share of veterans employed in the public sector to 30%.
Strategic measures		
Improving mechanisms to encourage employers to hire veterans, training employer specialists in effective interaction with veterans, and disseminating successful cases. Organizing job fairs for veterans, meetings between veterans and employers at business incubators, veteran development centers, or other formats for veteran–employer meetings. Implementing monitoring of veterans' requests for legal assistance as a tool to track systemic issues in veterans' labor relations with employers.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. State Employment Service. Employers. Providers of education and employment services. Departments and specialized government bodies responsible for implementing specific policies in the field of veteran support.	Increasing the proportion of employers with knowledge and skills in interacting with veterans to 60%. Raising to 50% the proportion of employers offering veterans programs to support their adaptation to work (team, conditions, workplace, etc.).

TABLE 3 – DEVELOPING VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Recommendations and initiatives	Priority coordination	Expected results
Urgent actions		
Expanding support programs for veteran startups and innovative projects. Providing informational assistance for the creation and development of veteran businesses. Establishing specialized business incubators and networks of mutual support for veterans, including mentorship, psychical and financial support. Developing indicators for monitoring and auditing the effectiveness of financial mechanisms to stimulate veteran entrepreneurship. Ensuring veterans' participation in the development and evaluation of the effectiveness of programs to stimulate veteran businesses. Improving mechanisms to assist in finding domestic and foreign investors for the development of veteran businesses.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. Employers. Departments and specialized government agencies responsible for implementing specific policies in the field of veteran support.	Having the proportion of veterans who have acquired entrepreneurial, managerial, and communication skills at 50%. Ensuring veterans' participation in the evaluation of each state assistance program for veterans.
Strategic measures		
Creating an online map for veteran entrepreneurs with detailed descriptions of services, benefits, programs, and organizations that can provide assistance at each stage. Developing recommendations and mechanisms to assist veterans in promoting their brands in the domestic market and abroad under the 'Ukrainian Veteran Business' brand and as part of the 'Made in Ukraine' project. Developing international cooperation among veteran business associations and enterprises. Implementing comprehensive and long-term support programs for veteran businesses. Promoting veteran businesses as part of modern business culture through national events such as forums and national veteran entrepreneurship weeks.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. Employers. Departments and specialized government agencies responsible for implementing specific policies in the field of veteran support.	Having the proportion of veterans who are self-employed in entrepreneurship at 30%.

TABLE 4 – STRENGTHENING VETERANS’ SOCIAL ADAPTATION

Recommendations and initiatives	Priority coordination	Expected results
Urgent actions		
Expanding the functionality and promoting the Unified Information System of the Social Sphere according to the needs of veterans. Increasing the amount and duration of unemployment assistance, considering the actual recovery periods of veterans after returning to civilian life. Implementing an ‘E-Consultant’ based on modern artificial intelligence tools to interactively assist veterans. Conducting audits of ‘contact points’ and veteran information channels with the participation of the veteran community to improve and enhance user convenience. Developing practices for specialists supporting war veterans and demobilized individuals, using best models and experiences such as case managers’ models. Digitizing documents and services related to working with veterans, including integrating all registries to receive services through a single application form (all documents from a unified list should be automatically retrieved). Creating an integrated system for processing veterans’ inquiries to hotlines, with the publication of annual reports analyzing inquiries to identify shortcomings in the state assistance system for veterans.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. Ministry of Social Policy. National Agency of Qualifications. Public associations of veterans. Departments and specialized authorities responsible for the implementation of certain policies in the field of support for veterans.	Increasing the satisfaction level with services and the organization of support for veterans’ reintegration into civilian life to 60%. Ensuring veterans’ access to a ‘single window’ (user account) for obtaining all types of state assistance without additional bureaucratic procedures. Reducing the proportion of veterans who have encountered accessibility limitations to benefits and support services to 30%.
Strategic measures		
Improving the accessibility and quality of physical and psychical health assessments using modern methodics. Creating a clear and effective online map for veterans to access consolidated information on benefits, rehabilitation programs, compensations, retraining, etc. Developing a culture of interaction with veterans, overcoming the stigma of the complexity of working with veterans, particularly through social advertising and information campaigns.	Ministry of Veterans Affairs of Ukraine. Ministry of Social Policy. Ministry of Health of Ukraine. Ministry of Economy of Ukraine. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Departments and specialized authorities responsible for the implementation of certain policies in the field of support for veterans.	Increasing the proportion of economically active veterans to 70% by improving the quality of their medical care and rehabilitation. Increasing the number of actively functioning veteran public associations with effective scales of activity to 200 organizations.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The materials and recommendations of the Strategy will assist the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the State Employment Service, and other stakeholders in developing policy recommendations for the transition and integration of veterans into civilian life and employment, effective management of state support in the fields of education and training for veterans, and planning interventions to facilitate their transition from education to the labor market and vice versa.

The document is advisory in its nature and can serve as a basis for the development of program materials by state management bodies and other stakeholders. Strategic aspects of the distribution of tasks and responsibilities among participants in the veteran support system for their reintegration into civilian life, financial support for programs and projects, etc., will require further detailing and clarification.

Monitoring and evaluating the success and effectiveness of the changes envisaged by the Strategy create the necessary prerequisites for improving the system of reintegration of Ukrainian veterans into education and the workforce.

The provisions and recommendations of the Strategy are aligned with the relevant policies and strategies which are currently in force in Ukraine, related to the reintegration of veterans into education and the workforce, and approved by the country government, as well as other existing regulatory documents. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed solutions is partially ensured by its context and realization.

The necessary funding for the implementation of the goals, recommendations, and measures of the Strategy can also be provided by funds planned by executive authorities to cover expenses related to the implementation of veteran policy tasks, as provided for by other related state strategies and projects. In this regard, the funding sources for the implementation of the Strategy may include the State Budget of Ukraine, local budgets, funds from international technical and financial assistance programs and projects, as well as other sources not prohibited by the legislation of Ukraine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project team would like to express its sincere gratitude to the organisations and experts who joined the implementation of this vital social initiative and provided valuable input into the development of the Strategy for the transition and integration of Ukrainian veterans into education and workforce:

TO THE VETERANS:

Andrusiv Ljubomir, Andriy Hrabchuk, Yuriy Gurynetskyi, Hutsol Pavel, Ihor Dilny, Andriy Lupychuk, Vitaliy Levchyn, Teodor Martyschuk, Volodymyr Popik, Yuriy Sosnovsky, Vadim Khodak, Oleksandr Bilotskyi, Volodymyr Kosolapov, Andriy Kotsyubynskyi, Serhiy Kurovets, Vitaliy Kuchak, Nalyvaiko Taras, Ivan Yurchenko, Ilko Yarem, Andriy Saikovych, Vitaliy Matsypura, Tetyana Parfyonova, Dmytro Sivak, Black Dmytro;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS:

Diana Chernyak and Yarova Anastasia, specialists of CU "Veterans' Space. Protection 4.5.0"; Olga Yaremchuk, veteran, military paramedic, head of the Veterans Hub in Khmelnytskyi; Serhiy Palamarchuk, a veteran, head of the NGO "Legion of the Invincible"; Abdulin Timur, deputy head of the NGO "Veteran Hub", Irina Bilous, lawyer of the NGO "Veteran Hub", Maria Dovzhik, executive director of "Veterans' Space"; Natalia Melnikova, Municipal Enterprise 'Warrior's House' in Ivano-Frankivsk;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF AUTHORITIES AND MILITARY ADMINISTRATIONS:

Akhmerova Yulia, Barabash-Timofieva Olena, Borodinova Irina, Svitlana Gavrylyuk, Zahhoya Olga, Zinchuk Olga, Ignatenko Olena, Kozlova Tetyana, Kulik Yuri, Kulik Petro, Lubetskaya Maryana, Pikalo Inna, Savelieva Olga, Scibarovskyi Oleksandr, Boris the Weaver, Lesya Furmanyuk, Oleksiy Khokhlov, Nataliya Dmitrash, Oksana Dyakiv, Kosmiya Oleksiy, Andriy Lysa, Nina Pelikan, Nataliya Tarasevich, Lyudmila Babik, Iryna Bozhok, Iryna Voytenko, Nataliya Zamkov, Tetyana Krasnozhon, Pavlyshina Svitlana;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

Tsurska Bohdana, Tetiana Lyashuk, Yevgenia Zaburmesa, Ihor Rosypail, Mykola Stovban;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EMPLOYERS:

Vitaliy Verbovy, Chornia Nataliya, Uzhva Roman, Trubaichuk Roman, Hikita Protsanyuk, Lyudmila Voytyuk, Oleg Vintonyak, Tetiana Hrytsak, Hrystyna Dragomiretska, Serhiy Pobigun, Filipchuk Andriy, Mykhailo Gavenko, Hanchuk Mykhailo, Volkova Inna, Horchakova Kateryna, Kovalenko Olena, Svitlani Kryvenko, Marini Oliynyk;

TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF REHABILITATION AND RECREATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS:

Kateryna Litvin, Iryna Babii, Dychkivska Galina, Vyshnevskaya Maryna, Pronina Olga.