

ANALYSIS OF SUCCESSFUL CASES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION REFORMS AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN UKRAINE AFTER THE WAR

ANÁLISE DE CASOS DE SUCESSO DE REFORMAS ANTICORRUPÇÃO E SUA IMPLEMENTAÇÃO NA UCRÂNIA DEPOIS DA GUERRA

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Abstract: Military aggression by Russia against Ukraine continues to destroy Ukraine's economy, social, transportation, and energy infrastructure, and the lives of its people, demolishing entire cities and villages and causing irreparable losses to the Ukrainian people and ecosystem. Ukraine needs to implement a massive recovery program, including effective anti-corruption reform, to rebuild the country after the war and integrate its economy into the European space. The article aims to study successful experiences of anti-corruption reforms and outline specifics of their application in Ukraine after the war's end. Methodology. The study uses an analytical-bibliographic method to examine scientific literature on anti-corruption reforms, as well as induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis of information, systemic-structural, comparative, logical-linguistic methods, abstraction, idealization for studying and processing data, and an online survey conducted by the authors of the study to practically clarify the most critical issues related to anti-corruption policy in Ukraine and the world. Results. The study has identified the main theoretical aspects of the anti-corruption experience and examined the views of scholars and department heads of local self-government bodies on the key features of this issue.

Keywords: Anti-corruption reforms. Minimization of corruption practices. Ensuring supervision mechanisms. Corruption risks. Anti-corruption state and public institutions.

Resumo: A agressão militar da Rússia contra a Ucrânia continua a destruir a infraestrutura econômica, social, de transporte e energética da Ucrânia e a vida de seu povo, demolindo cidades e vilas inteiras e causando perdas irreparáveis ao povo ucraniano e ao ecossistema. A Ucrânia precisa implementar um programa de recuperação massivo, incluindo uma reforma anticorrupção eficaz, para reconstruir o país após a guerra e integrar sua economia ao espaço europeu. O artigo visa estudar experiências bem-sucedidas de reformas anticorrupção e delinear especificidades de sua aplicação na Ucrânia após o fim da

guerra. Metodologia. O estudo utiliza um método analítico-bibliográfico para examinar a produção

científica sobre reformas anticorrupção, bem como métodos de indução, dedução, análise, síntese de informações, sistêmico-estrutural, comparativo, lógico-linguístico, abstração, idealização para estudar e processar dados, e uma pesquisa online conduzida pelos autores do estudo para esclarecer de forma prática as questões mais críticas relacionadas à política anticorrupção na Ucrânia e no mundo. Resultados. O estudo identificou os principais aspectos teóricos da experiência anticorrupção e examinou as opiniões de estudiosos e chefes de departamento de órgãos locais de governo autônomo sobre as principais características dessa questão.

Palavras-chave: Reformas anticorrupção. Minimização de práticas de corrupção. Garantia de mecanismos de supervisão. Riscos de corrupção. Estado anticorrupção e instituições públicas.

1. Introduction

Considering international experience in anti-corruption activities, it can be concluded that all stages of this process should be as effective as possible, inspiring trust among society and international partners. Today, international experts see risks in the low speed of reforms in Ukraine's anti-corruption reform and the harmonization of legislation, security risks, etc. With an understanding of the problems and weaknesses of previous reform experience, it is necessary to improve and prepare mechanisms of state governance for transparent, fast, and effective implementation of anti-corruption procedures, as well as to study and plan all stages of this process based on existing international experience and taking into account domestic realities.

The theoretical part of this research justifies the concepts and main theoretical aspects of the global anti-corruption experience.

The practical part of the research includes an assessment of the most important processes that create corruption risks, strategic directions of activity that countries with successful anti-corruption reforms have applied, stages of implementation of investment projects that are the riskiest in terms of possible corruption activity, as well as aspects that require significant improvement as a precondition for effective implementation of anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine after the end of hostilities.

Based on the research findings, conclusions have been drawn regarding the issues raised. According to survey participants, the most significant processes that create corruption risks are the large number of institutions and processes involved in creating corruption risks and the widespread misuse of funds. At the same time, respondents identified digital transformation of administrative mechanisms, strengthening legal accountability for corruption and corruption-related offenses, and fostering societal intolerance towards corruption as strategic directions of activity that countries implementing anti-corruption reforms have successfully applied.

It has been established that among the stages of implementing investment projects, which are the riskiest in terms of potential for corrupt activity, the most important are project reassessment and resource allocation. In addition, the survey allowed identifying aspects that require significant improvement as preconditions for the effective implementation of anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine after the end of hostilities, namely the need to ensure the effectiveness of financial and human resource mobilization, a quality staffing of anti-corruption organizations, and the creation of an effective mechanism for normative and legal anti-corruption activities.

2. Literature review

Corruption is one of the most pressing social problems of our time, the solution of which is currently the responsibility of individual countries and the international community as a whole. Corrupt practices have an extremely negative impact on the pace of economic development of a country, as well as on the government and society as a whole. For many nations, corruption has historically become a characteristic feature of their national culture for various reasons. Given this, the destructive impact of corrupt actions is extremely dangerous and extensive. Therefore, all developed countries in the world, as well as international organizations and institutions, are currently paying close attention to the constant deep analysis of ways to neutralize its causes, as well as the development and implementation of various measures to overcome the manifestations of this extremely dangerous phenomenon (Reznik et al., 2023; Matera, 2022; Olekseyuk & Baliesteri, 2018).

In Ukraine, corruption primarily manifests itself in the form of intentional abuse of office by officials of state authorities, state-owned and municipal enterprises, and institutions. Therefore, the widespread practice of selecting public servants and leaders of state-owned enterprises through open competitions, as well as the introduction of reporting requirements for certain individuals regarding their income, property, and obligations, after further analysis of information, should become an effective preventive measure against the appointment of persons with a propensity for corruption to such positions.

The presence of the political will of the state leadership to curb corruption is a crucial factor in the success of anti-corruption reform. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the attitudes of the leading carriers of political will toward implementing reform, the correspondence of their statements to actions, and the reasons and motives for their behavior in conducting/stifling reforms. Such analysis makes it possible to forecast the reaction of society,

the international community, and other participants in the processes of anti-corruption policy and to develop a plan of action with safeguards against politicians' ineffectiveness in implementing their program documents (Rabinovych, 2022; Carloni & Paoletti, 2022).

In many countries around the world, corruption as a phenomenon affects not only the stability of society's economic life but also its moral principles. Yet, typically, it spreads, remaining practically unpunished (Lennon, 2020; Nekrasenko et al., 2023; Petrov, 2018).

The minimization of corrupt practices in recent centuries has been done differently in various countries. The experience of Sweden, where corruption played a significant role until the mid-19th century, can benefit our country. The government implemented a series of reforms, one of the consequences of which was a range of measures to promote social responsibility. However, the state regulation of existing corrupt problems has had a more significant impact on households than on businesses and is based more on incentives (through taxes, exemptions, and subsidies) than on prohibitions and permissions.

Corruption and bribery are regulated by the general legislation of many European countries, including the Criminal Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, legislative acts on auditing, and other statutory and derivative legislation. Currently, public opinion in this country is so influential that mistrust of an official can deprive him of immunity. In addition, such an official may be dismissed with a further ban on holding public office and/or engaging in private business (Rabinovych, 2022; Ferguson, 2018).

3. Aims

This study aims to determine the position of scientists and executives of local government departments on the specifics of possible application of the successful experience of anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine after the hostilities.

4. Materials and methods

A practical study of current anti-corruption reform trends and prospects for implementation in Ukraine was conducted by interviewing 322 scientists and 243 executives of local government departments in Chernihiv, Volyn, Khmelnytskyi, Zhytomyr, and Kyiv regions of Ukraine. The survey was conducted using the Survey Nuts service.

5. Results

According to the survey participants, the most significant processes that create corruption risks today are as follows (Figure 1):

- a large number of institutions and processes involved in creating corruption risks;
- widespread misuse of funds and difficulty in controlling this process.

The respondents have identified the following strategic areas of activity that countries have applied as part of successful anti-corruption reforms (Figure 2).

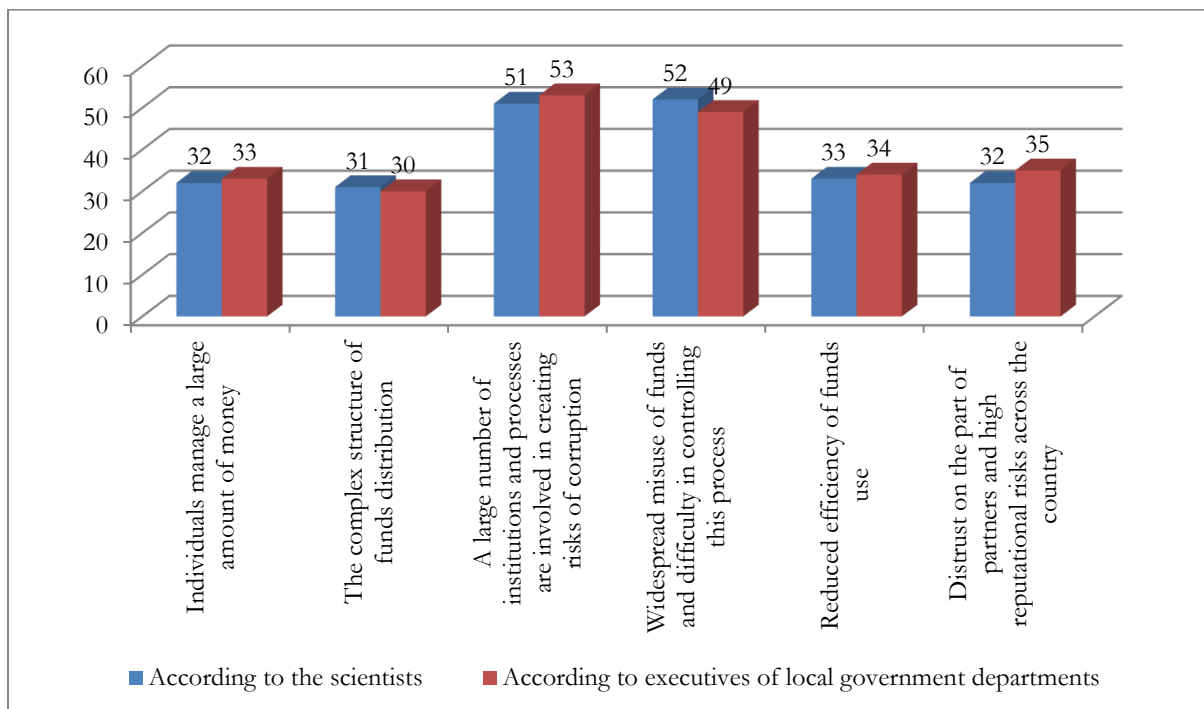


Figure 1. The most significant processes that create corruption risks, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

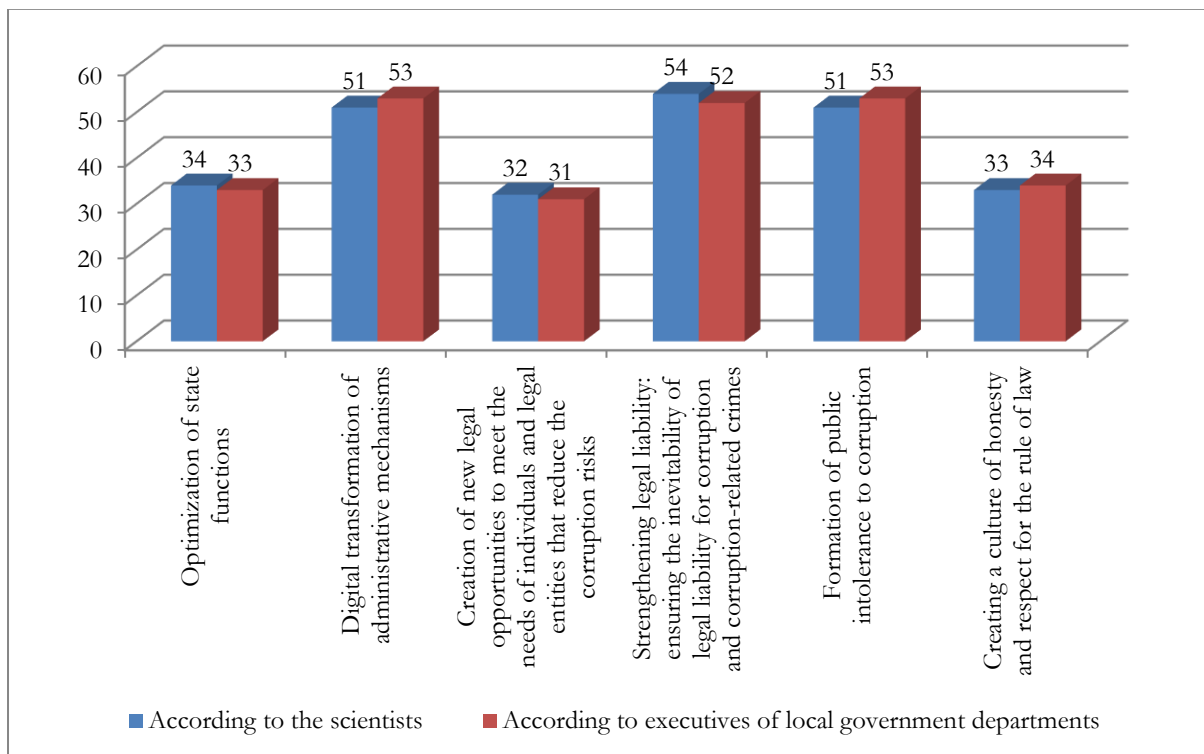


Figure 2. Strategic areas of activity that countries have applied as part of successful anti-corruption reforms, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

As shown in Figure 2, the most indicative vectors of state bodies' work that have been followed in the process of anti-corruption reform are the digital transformation of administrative mechanisms, the strengthening of legal liability for corruption and corruption-related offenses, and the formation of public intolerance to corruption.

The survey allowed us to identify the stages of investment project implementation that are the riskiest in terms of the risk of corruption (Figure 3):

- project evaluation;
- resource assignment.

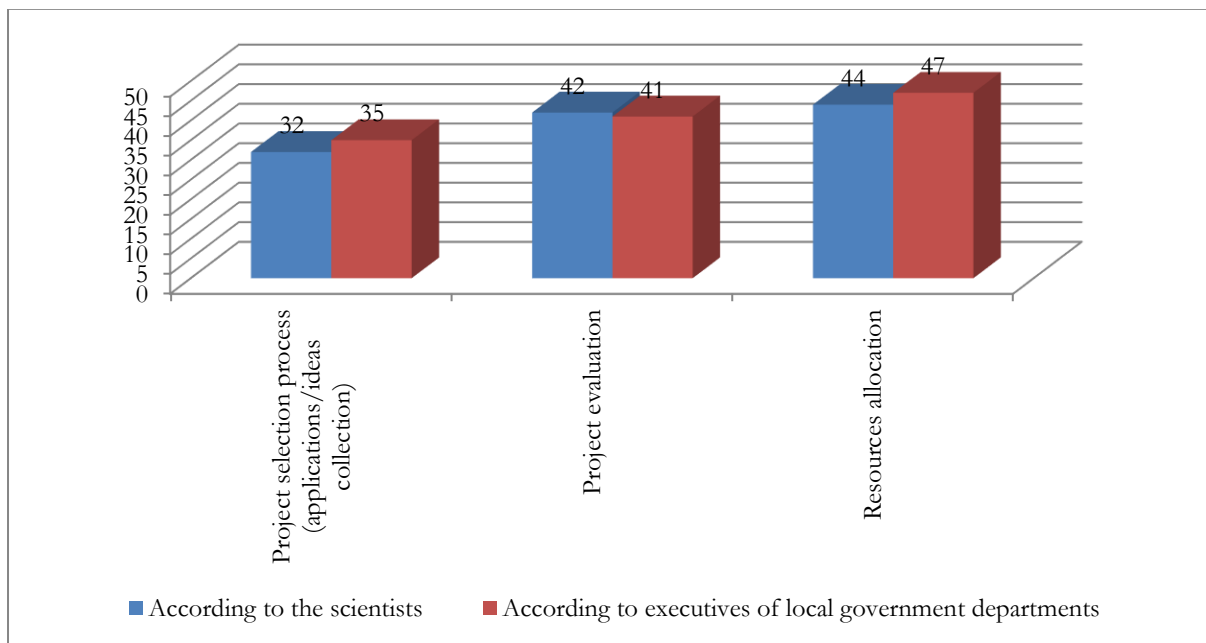


Figure 3. The stages of investment project implementation that are the riskiest in terms of the risk of corruption, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

During the study, the survey identified the aspects that require the most significant improvement as a prerequisite for effective anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine after the end of hostilities (Figure 4).

According to the survey, to effectively implement anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine, it is necessary to ensure the efficiency of attracting financial and human resources, high-quality staffing of anti-corruption organizations, and to create a mechanism for the effective legal regulation of anti-corruption organizations.

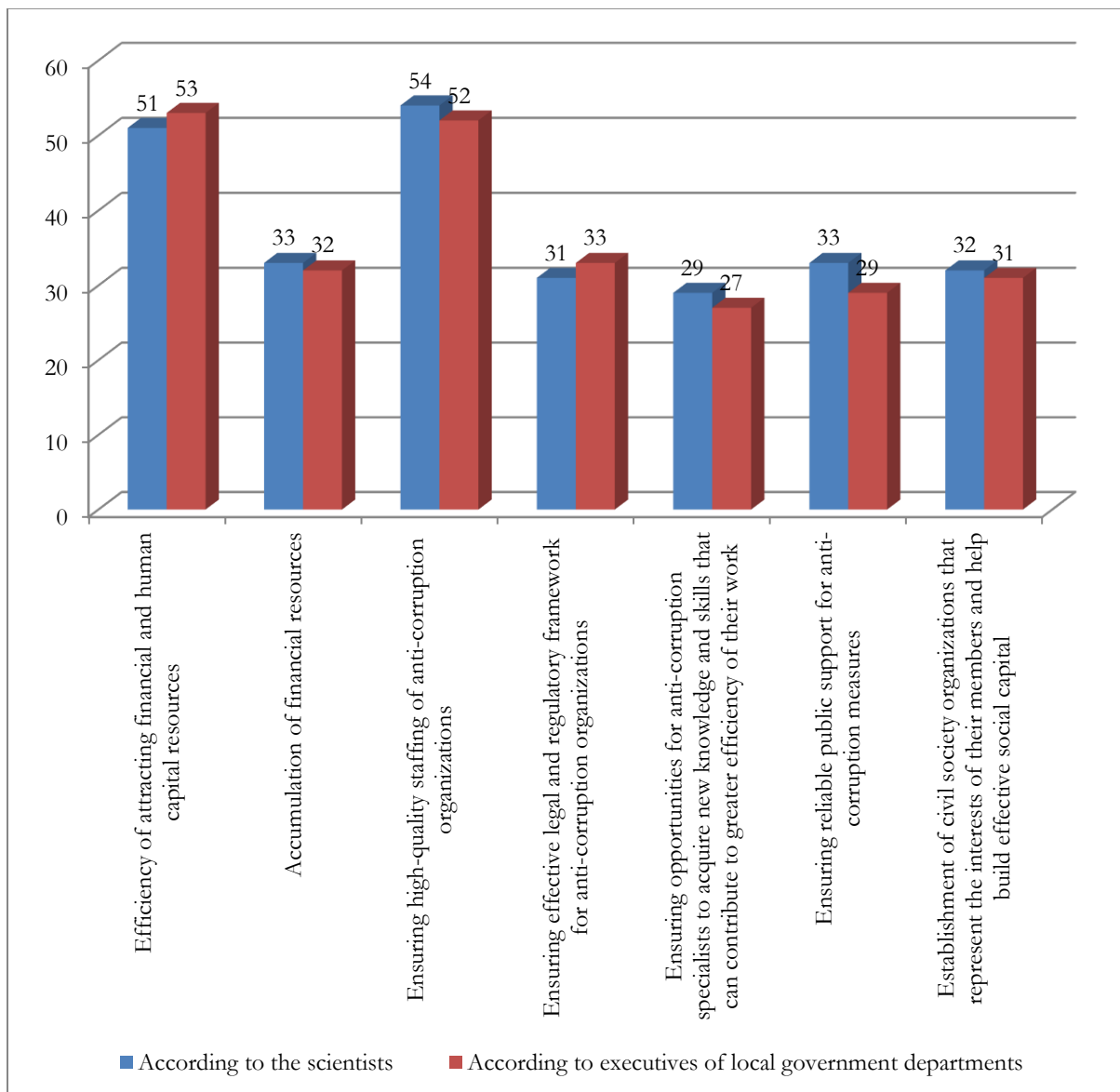


Figure 4. The aspects that require the most significant improvement as a prerequisite for effective anti-corruption reforms in Ukraine after the end of hostilities, %.

Source: compiled by the authors.

6. Discussion

Corruption remains a widespread phenomenon in Ukraine today, hindering its democratic and economic development. The lack of effective anti-corruption reforms can explain citizens' high negative perceptions of corruption. Corruption has recently become an abstract concept in the minds of citizens that exists on its own. Everyone talks about and fights against it but with varying degrees of success. Many use the curb against corruption for political

purposes. However, for the vast majority of citizens, it is pretty challenging to understand precisely what is meant, as the term "corruption" covers many different manifestations of human weakness (Dabrowski, Dominguéz-Jiménez & Zachmann, 2020; European Commission, 2022).

At the same time, there is currently no defined model for anti-corruption reform, nor are there answers to questions such as who will manage the process, what principles will guide it, what the centralized management will be like, how the relationship between local and central government will be in decision-making, whether civil society will be involved, whether new preventive measures against corruption and inefficient use of funds are being taken and whether existing anti-corruption mechanisms are being questioned, among others. In addition, whether money should be provided immediately or later, in large or small sums, for specific projects/obligations or without them, etc., are also important considerations (Becker et al., 2022; Melkozerova, 2023).

The study of the influence of local civil society organizations on the implementation of anti-corruption reforms in different countries is highly relevant, as today, the main challenge for anti-corruption reforms is their successful implementation at the regional and local levels, especially in the context of decentralization. Accordingly, the question of the ability of local civil society organizations to be effective agents of change in the regions is of particular importance. Most respondents from regional and local anti-corruption organizations emphasize that due to the lack of political will at the regional and local levels, their activities are ineffective enough and do not have a significant impact. The lack of financial and human resources, the passivity of the public, and intimidation by the authorities or other actors are also the most frequently mentioned reasons for their limited effectiveness (Jarábik et al., 2018; Kadej, 2019), (Melkozerova, 2023).

Although Ukraine is a unitary state, the political dynamics within the country can vary greatly. These different dynamics are reflected, among other things, in the degree of political will of regional and local political authorities to curb corruption (Rabinovych, 2019; Sydorenko, 2022).

The main goal of state anti-corruption policy today is to create an effective system for preventing and countering corruption, identifying and overcoming its social prerequisites and consequences, exposing corrupt acts, and holding those responsible accountable (Popova & Beers, 2020; Ceschel, Hinna & Homberg, 2022).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the scientific literature on the research topic and the questionnaire survey results showed that anti-corruption reforms should be at the center of Ukraine's recovery plans after the end of hostilities. This type of reform should be implemented not for the sake of donor activities but to ensure that all funds in the reconstruction process are used for the benefit of the citizens of Ukraine. It, in particular, will allow for the release of additional funds for reconstruction and support the long-term growth of the post-war country. A prosperous Ukraine has every chance of becoming a full-fledged member of the European Union, but to do so, it will require support for current anti-corruption reforms and further comprehensive development of socio-economic processes.

It is crucial to involve all parts of society to reduce the level of corruption. Therefore, the priority should be the civil community's involvement in rebuilding Ukraine and ensuring its further participation in the transparency program and monitoring of socio-economic activities.

It will also be necessary to support the post-war media environment, which becomes part of the discussion on using funds for the common good and exposes those who use state funds to fill their pockets.

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