

SPECIAL ISSUE

UKRAINE

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NOVEMBER, 2025

STANDING WITH UKRAINE – IN PERSON, IN PROJECTS, WITH PURPOSE

EDITORIAL



When Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, GFA did not hesitate. We stood by Ukraine and its people then, and we continue to do so today – with unwavering commitment, growing partnerships, and a shared belief in Ukraine's recovery and future.

This year, I had the privilege of visiting Ukraine myself to meet our teams in person. It was an experience that left a deep mark on me. Walking through the streets of Bucha, I was overwhelmed by sadness – seeing firsthand the places where unspeakable brutality unfolded. Yet, what struck me even more was the strength of the people I met. Amid air raid sirens and daily disruptions, there is stoicism. Amid loss, there is resilience. Amid uncertainty, there is purpose. It's impossible not to be moved by the courage, humanity, and unbroken spirit of Ukrainians.

During my visit, I met some of our incredible colleagues working on projects that matter deeply. Our teams supporting health and psychological well-being – through EU and SDC-funded initiatives – are doing essential work to help address the invisible wounds of war. From building national capacity for mental health services to training psychologists and community-based care workers, they are part of a much-needed response to the trauma endured by millions.

I also met our EIB EU4U Programme Management Support team, who are providing critical advisory services to help rebuild Ukraine's infrastructure. From supporting government officials in designing and preparing investments to navigating IFI-compliant procurement procedures, their work is laying the technical and institutional foundation for recovery. It's about more than rebuilding roads and schools – it's

about helping Ukraine move forward with transparency, professionalism, and hope.

Attending the 'Rebuild Ukraine' conference in Warsaw is part of our contribution to these aims, in person, in projects, with purpose. We are here to speak directly with Ukrainian government partners and international donors – to understand their most pressing needs and ensure our future work remains practical, hands-on, and grounded in solidarity.

Ukraine doesn't just need promises. It needs committed partners. GFA is proud to be one of them.

Anja Desai
GFA Managing Director



STAND WITH UKRAINE



Read our newsletter online

JOINING FORCES FOR UKRAINE'S FUTURE: A WHOLE-OF-GFA APPROACH

GFA Consulting Group supports Ukraine with integrated, cross-sectoral expertise – helping to meet immediate recovery needs while preparing for long-term reconstruction and European Union accession.

Our portfolio for Ukraine and wider Europe, works across all of GFA's technical departments to ensure that we respond in a coherent, practical, and joined-up way to Ukraine's many-layered needs. These go far beyond physical reconstruction. They include support to resilient service delivery, EU alignment, public investment systems, environmental and social standards, and core principles of transparency and inclusion.

At GFA, we've structured our Ukraine/Europe portfolio precisely to allow this type of cross-cutting support. It connects the dots between our experts in governance, health, water and sanitation, energy, and digital services. Importantly, it also draws on our institutional memory of working in other EU candidate and neighbourhood countries – Moldova, Georgia, and across the Western Balkans – where we've helped counterparts implement structural reforms and prepare for EU integration. These shared experiences strengthen our approach in Ukraine and help avoid duplication or fragmentation of effort.

This integrated model has proven particularly valuable in managing complex, multi-sectoral projects such as the EIB Programme Management Support (EU4U PMS) and the JASPERS support assignment, both implemented by GFA. These initiatives involve advising Ukraine's ministries and municipalities on preparing investments in infrastructure – across sectors such as health, water, public buildings, and transport – for financing by the EIB and other international partners. From compliance with procurement rules to improving project pipelines and technical documentation, our teams provide hands-on guidance to ensure projects are not only technically sound but also aligned with donor requirements.

Beyond infrastructure, we're also engaged in supporting Ukraine's resilience at the human and institutional level. GFA teams are imple-

Dr. Victoria Jennett is responsible for governance projects in Ukraine and Europe. A lawyer by training, with a PhD in constitutional law and conflict transformation, she has more than 15 years' experience working with multilateral and bilateral governmental organisations and NGOs. She is an expert on justice sector reform and corruption risk assessments and an experienced trainer, tutor and facilitator.



menting mental health programmes in war-affected regions, developing secure water supply systems in Mykolaiv, and supporting Ukraine's Just Transition away from coal. All of these projects link directly to the needs of local communities and are coordinated with national reform processes.

Our Kyiv-based liaison, Iryna Lupashko, ensures we stay connected to developments on the ground. She supports the flow of information between GFA and Ukrainian authorities, donors, and local experts – so that we respond to changing needs in real time, rather than from a distance.

Crucially, our approach is not siloed. Themes like anti-corruption, gender equality, inclusion, and environmental sustainability are embedded across all of our projects, rather than treated as separate workstreams. Whether supporting Ukraine's cyber-defense capacities, water utilities, or financial systems, we see these transversal priorities as essential to any credible and effective recovery strategy.

It's this 'whole-of-GFA' mindset that allows us to design and deliver truly integrated solutions – and it's why we've earned the trust of partners like the EIB, European Commission, SDC, GIZ, ICRC, and others. Our goal is to help Ukrai-

nian institutions not only navigate the immediate aftermath of war, but also build the systems and skills needed for long-term recovery and EU membership.

We know the road ahead will be long. But by walking it together – with professionalism, partnership, and pragmatism – we believe Ukraine's future will be one of resilience, renewal, and democratic strength.

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REBUILD UKRAINE – 5TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY

The conference takes place in Warsaw, Poland from 13-14 November 2025. It is the offline platform for recovery projects, material, technologies, equipment and investments required to rebuild Ukraine's war-torn economy with an emphasis on infrastructure, industry, energy and housing.

<https://rebuildukraine.in.ua/>

SELECTED GFA PROJECTS AND STUDIES IN UKRAINE

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INVESTMENT FOR UKRAINE'S RECOVERY: EIB PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT SUPPORT (EU4U PMS)

Ukraine's recovery needs more than financing – it needs strong institutions to use it well. Through the EIB EU4U Programme Management Support (PMS) for Ukraine, GFA helps make that happen.

The programme supports Ukraine's central and regional authorities in preparing and managing investment projects financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) – spanning critical sectors such as health, transport, education, water and sanitation, and public buildings. From the early design of investments to procurement and implementation support, the project provides technical assistance that helps ensure public funds are translated into real, impactful infrastructure.

GFA, together with its partner OCA Global, manages a multidisciplinary team – including over 50 long- and short-term experts – that works closely with national implementing agencies and line ministries across Ukraine. The team offers hands-on assistance to strengthen project preparation, financial planning, environmental and social safeguards, and stakeholder coordination. One of the core activities includes building capacity among Ukrainian public servants to ensure compliance with EIB and IFI (international financial institutions) procurement standards, environmental procedures, and reporting obligations. This type of institutional support is especially critical in times of war, when operational environments are



Meeting with EIB President Nadia Calviño: GFA's EIB EU4U PMS project organised the Ukrainian Delegation's EIB meetings in Luxembourg, September 2025

complex and needs are urgent. Despite security challenges and logistical hurdles, the team has facilitated dozens of trainings, reviewed multiple procurement plans, and supported the submission of project documentation to move forward urgently needed investments. Advisory missions and stakeholder dialogues are also key components, helping align priorities across donors, beneficiaries, and government counterparts.

The programme also contributes to longer-term resilience and transparency. By supporting

Ukraine's efforts to streamline internal project pipelines and harmonise approaches with IFIs, the PMS project is reinforcing the foundations of public investment governance. This means that not only are projects better prepared for implementation now, but the systems being strengthened will also serve Ukraine well into the future.

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EIB JASPERS – JOINT ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT PROJECTS IN EUROPEAN REGIONS

Ukraine's key investments – national and urban transport infrastructure, schools, hospitals, housing, heating, water – need more than funds. They need well-prepared projects. The JASPERS programme helps Ukraine turn plans into ready-to-implement action.

JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions) is a technical assistance initiative of the European Commission, the EIB,

and other IFIs. It helps partner countries prepare high-quality, investment-ready projects, ensuring that public and donor funds can be disbursed effectively and efficiently. GFA's role is to support the JASPERS activities in Ukraine with on-the-ground expertise and coordination, together with its partners Corporate Solutions and PINI Smart Engineering.

Under the current assignment, GFA experts are providing technical, procedural, and advisory

support to Ukrainian national and regional stakeholders. This includes assistance with project definition, feasibility studies, procurement documentation, spatial data analysis, and the application of environmental and social safeguards in line with EU and IFI standards.

Since the start of the assignment, the GFA team has supported more than 30 mission visits across Ukraine, engaging with public authorities on issues ranging from urban development



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JASPERS experts and Anja Desai, GFA Managing Director (second from the left)

strategies to school and hospital reconstruction. These consultations are helping to define clear investment pipelines, improve cost estimates, strengthen project logic, and enhance readiness

for donor financing. The team's work also facilitates communication between Ukrainian stakeholders and international institutions, helping to align investment priorities and resolve technical

bottlenecks. In many cases, GFA provides embedded support to ensure day-to-day responsiveness and practical follow-up.

"By enabling Ukrainian partners to prepare strong, fundable projects, the JASPERS assignment is playing a pivotal role in accelerating recovery - not just in terms of construction timelines, but also in terms of institutional preparedness and absorptive capacity", says Ievgenii Cherviachenko who manages the project at GFA Consulting Group.



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ADJUSTING HEALTH CARE PROVISION DURING WAR TIMES

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, the SDC-funded Act4Health project has added new activities to meet the needs of patients and institutions providing health care and health education in this challenging environment. New service models have been adopted, and existing services reshaped.

The Act4Health Project, launched in 2020, represents a major milestone in Ukraine's efforts to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory illnesses. Funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), it stands as one of the most sig-

nificant and long-term international investments dedicated to combating NCDs in Ukraine. Operating across seven regions: Lviv, Poltava, Dnipro, Rivne, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, and Cherkasy the project continues to make meaningful progress despite the immense challenges in the country. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG 3 (ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), Act4Health directly contributes to reducing premature mortality from NCDs through prevention, treatment, and health promotion. Its approach also supports Ukraine's EU accession plan, which places strong emphasis on harmonising health and social policies with European standards, advancing universal health coverage, and strengthening health system governance. Moreover, the project is fully consistent with the priorities outlined in Ukraine's National NCD Action Plan, and reinforces Ukraine's strategic pathway toward European integration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ukraine's health system has faced a triple threat in recent years: the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the full-scale war, and widespread



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The Medical Mobile Team together with GFA Senior Consultant Dr Juma Khudonazarov (third from the left) during his visit in the Ukraine

economic hardship. These overlapping crises have placed unprecedented strain on the health-care infrastructure and on the population's overall well-being. In this difficult context, Act4Health has served as a critical lifeline, supporting both immediate and long-term health needs while strengthening the resilience of the national health system.

The project's interventions are built upon four key pillars: policy dialogue, primary healthcare improvement for better NCD management, behavioral change communication, and an emergency response mechanism. Through these pillars, Act4Health has supported the establishment of 14 medical mobile teams and six home-based care teams, ensuring essential health services reach people in even the most affected and remote areas. Furthermore, the project has implemented a range of evidence-based activities including the COSI survey, ESPAD study, and cost-benefit analysis of NCD interventions to guide strategic decision-making and strengthen public health policy. One of the current project priorities in Ukraine focuses on integrating health and social care services through the use of digital tools and innovative approaches. This initiative aims to improve coordination between healthcare providers, social workers, and local authorities. This includes conducting integrated communication campaigns and behavioral change interventions at the national and community levels:

1. The '365 Days of Care' project aimed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 complications among older adults and individuals with noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) in Ukraine, reaching over 3.5 million contacts.
2. The 'Diabetes Hunters' campaign focused on raising awareness about type 2 diabetes and engaging family doctors in prevention and early detection, reaching over 8 million contacts.
3. The 'Guard Your Heart' project informed Ukrainians about risk factors for cardiovascular diseases and promoted healthy behaviors, reaching over 10.5 million contacts.
4. The 'Healthy Libraries' project raised awareness about NCD prevention through libraries. 33 health corners were established in libraries, and the online course 'Libraries for Community Health' was completed by 474 participants.



The Medical Mobile Team visiting hard to reach areas of Ukraine and providing health services

5. The 'Healthy Workplace' initiative provided practical recommendations for employers to create healthier work environments. 13 organisations implemented activities in line with this approach, supported by a dedicated guide.

MOBILE MEDICAL TEAMS

Ever since the war broke out, the Act4Health project team has supported new service models and reshaped existing services related to health care and health education in a challenging environment. With the 'Leave no one behind' principle in mind 130,983 people have accessed health services via project.

The project is strengthening nursing capacity through the Advanced Centers of Continuum Care (ACCC) model, focusing on non-communicable disease management and integrated care approaches. The project has also developed standard operating procedures and educational videos and webinars on 'Clinical examination of people with amputations in the context of NCDs'.

'VSETURBOTA': INTEGRATED HOME-BASED MEDICAL AND SOCIAL CARE

'Vseturbota' is an initiative that helps people with limited mobility and non-communicable diseases – many of whom live alone – access essential medical and social services at home. The project also supports caregivers and pro-

motes an integrated model of cooperation between social and medical services in communities. The model relies on community-based mobile teams – typically a nurse and a social worker who provide medical and social support directly at home. The project also empowers informal caregivers through training and peer-support groups. Since its launch, 15,180 people with limited mobility have received assistance through 'Vseturbota', helping to ensure continuity of care and dignity for vulnerable populations in their own communities. A documentary film about caregivers was viewed by over 400,000 people.

HEALTHY SCHOOL

In partnership with local institutions, the Act4Health team is implementing the Healthy School approach to effectively prevent non-communicable diseases and to preserve and improve health in educational settings, in line with the National Strategy for the Development of a Safe and Healthy Educational Environment. This approach includes eight components for creating a healthy and safe educational environment.

1. In collaboration with the architectural research initiative 'Playin', the project held training sessions on the principles of inclusive design of educational spaces. As a result, 10 new sports grounds, mini skate parks, and play areas were created across nine communities, ensuring that every child

has access to safe and engaging environments for physical activity.

2. Together with Poltava State Agrarian University, the team launched the 'Green School' initiative, promoting environmental responsibility and sustainable habits among students.
3. In cooperation with the NGO CultFood and chef Yevhen Klopotenko, the project developed and published a 'Collection of Recipes for Children's Meals' – over 600 healthy and appealing dishes inspired by Ukrainian and European school menus. The collection, freely available on znaimo.gov.ua, has already reached more than 5,000 schools.
4. A 14-episode video podcast series was also produced for school cooks, health workers, and parents, covering key aspects of organising nutritious school meals.
5. Furthermore, 136 cooks from partner schools completed hands-on training, and kitchen equipment was delivered to 74 educational institutions in four regions.
6. The 'Healthy Nutrition' exhibition introduces the basics of healthy eating and food safety in an interactive way. Educators trained by the project now organise local exhibitions in their own schools, fostering awareness among both children and adults.
7. Together with the Lviv Medical Professional College of Postgraduate Education, the project designed a professional training programme for school nurses, 'Healthy School: Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in Educational Institutions'. Over 1,360 nurses have already completed the course.
8. Finally, a dedicated training programme for physical education teachers helps make PE lessons more inclusive, engaging, and beneficial for every child.

Despite the war, the health and education system has been taking steps forward to ensure the health and well-being of the Ukrainian population.

More information (in Ukrainian) on the entire scope of activities can be found on:

www.actforhealth.in.ua/
www.facebook.com/actforhealth.in.ua
www.instagram.com/act.4health
[//t.me/actforhealth](https://t.me/actforhealth)
www.youtube.com/@actforhealth



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STRENGTHENING MYKOLAIV'S WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

Following the completion of a comprehensive diagnostic study in 2023 and the identification of priority actions, the GFA team, with financial support from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), launched an important initiative in close cooperation with Mykolaiv Vodokanal (MVK). This partnership has laid the essential groundwork to improve the city's water supply system.

From April to December 2024, extensive data collection was carried out throughout Mykolaiv. Enumerators, together with MVK personnel,

surveyed and mapped manholes and key infrastructure of the water distribution network. All collected data was entered into GIS software, forming the basis for the development of a hydraulic model of the city's water supply system. The hydraulic model is a crucial tool designed to identify weak points within the network, enabling



Installation of flow measurement equipment

the project team to focus on rehabilitation efforts where they are most needed. Thanks to the dedication of MVK staff and the project team, the hydraulic model has been calibrated and is fully operational since September 2025. This marks a significant milestone and provides a clear starting point for the next steps of system improvement. Currently, the project team in Mykolaiv is conducting flow and pressure measurements in two zones of the city where the highest levels of water loss are suspected. These measurements, taking place from 23 to 30 October 2025, will provide a more accurate understanding of the network's performance and help determine the overall water balance. Based

on the results, the team, in collaboration with MVK, will propose a division of the network into six zones and indicate the necessary works to be carried out in the near future. This will allow better control over the system and faster detection and repair of leaks. In parallel, the project team is working on the Network Rehabilitation Plan, identifying priority measures to be implemented in the coming years to increase the hours of water supply and ensure better water quality for the residents of Mykolaiv. Through the joint efforts of GFA, ICRC, and Mykolaiv Vodokanal, substantial progress has already been achieved toward building a more resilient and efficient water supply system. With the hydraulic model in place and

field measurements underway, the project is entering a decisive phase that will shape the future of water management in Mykolaiv and contribute to the well-being of its community.



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UNICEF ENERGY EFFICIENCY CAMPAIGN

UNICEF has engaged EkoCentric and GFA Consulting Group to design and implement a national 'quick-win' energy-efficiency campaign for Ukraine's water and wastewater utilities – combining targeted diagnostics with implementable upgrades and a coordinated roll-out to cut costs, safeguard services, and reduce emissions.

Amid ongoing energy disruptions and war-related damage, UNICEF has engaged our team to design a practical, fast-acting pathway to keep water and sanitation services running while reducing electricity costs across Ukraine's vodokanals (municipal water and sewage companies). In June 2025, we launched a nationwide technical assessment and the design of a national campaign for rapid energy-efficiency upgrades in centralised water supply and sanitation systems.

The assignment focuses on two things at once: mapping 'quick-win', high-impact measures that can be deployed within months, and translating those measures into a coordinated, country-level implementation plan under the leadership of Ukraine's State Agency for Restoration, aligned with EU directives and international best practice. The EkoCentric – GFA team is conducting a structured desk review, surveys, and field assessments of representative samples of vodokanals. These visits will document current infrastructure and operations, identify the most energy-intensive bottlenecks, and gather the technical and com-



Industrial wastewater treatment plant

mercial data needed to act quickly. The work will culminate in detailed specifications and roll-out guidance for a shortlist of measures, each with costs, expected savings, payback, supplier options (with a focus on Ukrainian providers), and practical implementation steps. In parallel, we will develop the national campaign plan: a clear roll-out sequence, roles and responsibilities for ministries, utilities, and service companies, indicative budgets, and a monitoring and evaluation framework. The design will prioritise utilities where an early wave of projects can deliver visible savings in 2026, while building a pipeline for broader replication. The expected outcomes are straightforward and measurable: lower electricity consumption and bills for utilities, more reliable

service for households, and reduced greenhouse-gas emissions. Just as importantly, the campaign model will make it simpler to access financing, standardise technical choices, and keep implementation moving despite staffing and access constraints.

At its core, the project has a simple aim: to safeguard essential water and wastewater services for people by helping utilities do more with less. By focusing on implementable measures and a pragmatic nationwide roll-out, the project turns pressing challenges into immediate, actionable steps.

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BUILDING THE PIPELINE: PREPARING BANKABLE WATER & WASTEWATER PROJECTS FOR EIB FINANCING – FELICITY II

Initiating important interventions amidst the challenges posed by the war in Ukraine, GFA carried out a diagnosis study to analyse the current status of the Mykolaiv Vodokanal's water supply system and to recommend areas for improvement.

To move priority water investments from ideas to tender, GFA Consulting Group, working with GKW Consult – its sister company under the umbrella of the GFA GROUP –, P&P and CDM Ukraine, provides technical assistance under the GIZ/EIB FELICITY II programme. The work blends targeted appraisals, improvements to studies and hands-on capacity development so a first set of projects can progress to financing and implementation. The assignment combines rapid appraisals and targeted preparation with hands-on capacity development to enable a first cohort of projects to move efficiently toward financing and implementation.

Through targeted technical support, GFA assesses project readiness, defines practical next steps, and sets out a clear, sequenced roadmap that keeps responsibilities and timelines visible. In parallel, we help refine studies and documentation in order to make them decision-ready and aligned with applicable requirements.

Where needed, GFA assembles missing pieces so projects can advance cleanly toward financing and tender. We also put the environmental lens front and centre, prioritising lower energy use, reduced emissions, resilient designs for heat, drought and flooding, and improved water qual-

ity, and we build in simple safeguards and monitoring so benefits are measurable and durable. In addition, the project team establishes clear delivery arrangements – roles, responsibilities, timelines, budgets and straightforward reporting – so decisions move quickly and risks are managed early. GFA helps with procurement – drafting and aligning the key documents and step-by-step handovers that move a project from studies to tender and through contracting into delivery.

Finally, we capture lessons and build a structured knowledge inventory so experiences can be shared and scaled across the sector and other applicants can move faster and apply with confidence. Success will be visible on the ground: the first utility projects moving to competitive tender and financing, clean application files that

stand on their own, and a core team in each utility ready to run the next project without outside help. Utilities will be positioned to cut energy use and emissions and keep services steadier, with results reported in a way financiers and regulators can trust. The short guides and tools created here will be reused by other applicants, turning one cohort into a repeatable pipeline.



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Industrial sewage treatment plant for water treatment

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