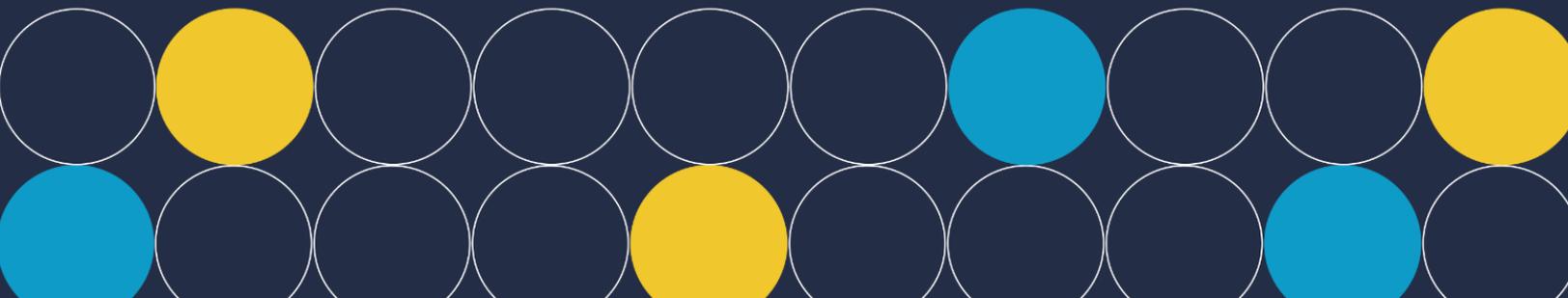


Annual Report

EASY BUSINESS

Pioneering Economic
Recovery Strategies

2020-2021



KEY CHALLENGES

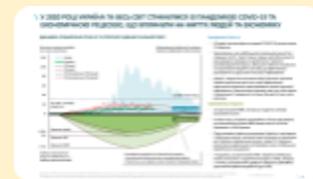
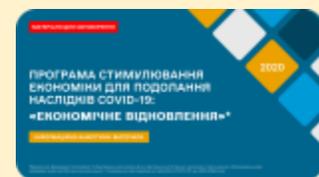
- Economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created an urgent need for recovery strategies and long-term economic planning. In addition to the severe impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Ukraine lacked a coherent long-term economic strategy to fully open-up the potential for growth, development and prosperity for Ukrainian society and integration to the EU and worldwide value chains. Moreover, in public administration Ukraine faced a challenge of inconsistency between 100+ nation-wide governmental strategies and plans that often lacked coherence between one another, clear goals and KPIs, measurable activities with clear budgets and timelines.
- Quarantine measures have disrupted the implementation of ongoing investment projects, while expectations of a prolonged and severe recession have dampened investment activity. International companies and financial institutions were reconsidering the viability of planned investments. Additionally, government policies introduced during the crisis further constrained investment activity. Despite these challenges, this period marked the start of transformative changes for many businesses.

To help the country address COVID-19 crisis, EasyBusiness co-founded an analytical platform Centre for Economic Recovery (CER) for supporting evidence-based policy making through public-private dialogue with active involvement of civil society, experts and think tanks. CER has provided expert and advisory support to the Government of Ukraine on the topic of economic recovery and response during the COVID-19 crisis. We also supported developing the interventions for ensuring sustainable long-term economic growth.

Centre for Economic Recovery's (CER) activities were focused on three main directions: (1) economic sustainability, which has encompassed social aspects and considered energy as one of its main foundations for sustainability, (2) institutional capacity which has referred to improving the capacity of the government by providing it with analytical and consulting support, assistance in the development of strategic documents, (3) a dialogue platform for development of strategically important national level documents.

CASE STUDY: CREATION OF CER AND DESIGNING ANTI-COVID ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROGRAM

- The key goals of establishing the CER was to find responses to the COVID-19 crisis and the systemic economic challenges. EasyBusiness and CER's management became advisors to the Prime Minister of Ukraine on a voluntary basis to guide economic recovery efforts.
- Based on consultations with over 100 business representatives, sectoral experts, and CSOs the team developed the Economic Stimulus Program to overcome the consequences of COVID-19 epidemic. The Program included initiatives in the areas of SME support, access to finance, access to markets, deregulation, modernization and development, and access to infrastructure.

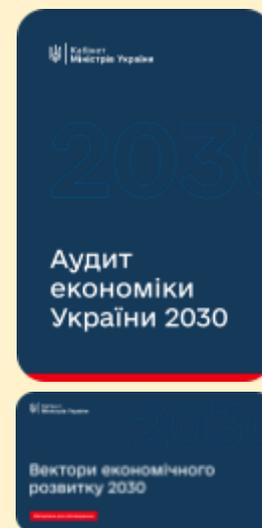


- More than 220 initiatives in total were proposed and adopted by the Government of Ukraine on 27th of May 2020.

EasyBusiness and CER's efforts were not limited exclusively to reacting to urgent challenges. In addition to the severe impact of COVID-19 pandemic, Ukraine lacked a coherent long-term economic strategy to fully open-up the potential for growth, development and prosperity for Ukrainian society and integration to the EU and worldwide value chains. On the platform of the CER, EasyBusiness experts joined the development of the Audit of Ukraine's Economy and Vectors of Economic Strategy 2030, which created the basis for designing and adoption of the National Economic Strategy (NES) 2030.

CASE STUDY: AUDIT OF UKRAINIAN ECONOMY AND VECTORS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- EasyBusiness experts supported development of the Audit of Ukraine's Economy and Vectors of Economic Development 2030 with structured initiatives across 20 economic sectors and areas.
- The Audit included conduction of full-fledged diagnostics of Ukrainian economy, identification of Ukraine's natural, geographical and talent potential, analysis of governments' public policies for the last 30 years that limited the utilization of this potential.
- To develop the Vectors, the project team conducted interviews and focus groups with ~300 stakeholders, identified key barriers that hinder the development of different sectors of Ukraine's economy, and designed over 1,500 initiatives aimed to facilitate Ukraine's economic growth.
- We also supported the government in transforming the Vectors into the National Economic Strategy 2030, which was officially adopted by the Government of Ukraine on March 3, 2021.



Following-up the successful adoption of the National Economic Strategy 2030, EasyBusiness' experts joined efforts to improve institutional capacity and policy implementation capabilities of the Government of Ukraine by supporting development of the Program of the Cabinet of Ministers (CMU) based on the result-based management (RBM) principles and in line with NES2030. These activities were supported by the ITA SURGe project, which was implemented by Alinea International and funded by the Government of Canada.

In June 2021, EasyBusiness, in collaboration with the Centre for Economic Recovery, served as the analytical platform that initiated the development of a Roadmap for IT education reform in Ukraine. This effort was led by the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Ministry of Education and Science. CER coordinated the inter-ministerial working group, chaired by Mykhailo Fedorov, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine. In December 2021, the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Ministry of Education and Science successfully adopted the Roadmap

for IT Education Reform, marking a significant step toward modernizing Ukraine's IT education system.

Apart from working with the Centre for Economic Recovery, EasyBusiness actively collaborated with USAID on a range of initiatives aimed at supporting Ukraine's economy amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts focused on addressing critical economic disruptions, fostering resilience among businesses, and creating actionable solutions to mitigate the impact of the crisis on key sectors of the Ukrainian economy.

During this period, we also implemented several strategic initiatives, including the establishment of the Export Alliance of Ukrainian IT companies. The project facilitated the selection of Ukrainian businesses and established an export alliance of IT companies, followed by a comprehensive assessment of members' capacities and market priorities. As a result, we prioritized potential markets and developed a practical export promotion strategy to drive international market entry.

CASE STUDY: BUSINESS INSPECTION MANUAL FOR SMES



- With financial support from USAID CEP, we created a Business Inspections Manual for SMEs to enhance SMEs' legal literacy regarding business inspections. The step-by-step guide explains the inspection process in detail and equips entrepreneurs with practical tools for legal protection and effective interaction with state inspection bodies.
- The project also included the development of four videos covering the manual, inspection preparation, the inspection process, and post-inspection steps, along with publishing articles on state control and hosting a public presentation of the materials.
- As a result, over 1,200 entrepreneurs downloaded the manual, the videos garnered an average of 3,000+ views on Facebook, and the articles received a total of 20,000+ views.



At the same time, EasyBusiness focused on advancing Ukrainian agriculture by conducting a Political Economy Analysis of the Melioration Sector and a Rapid Assessment for USAID AGRO, in partnership with Civitta Ukraine. These projects involved comprehensive research and analysis to support decision-making and strategy development. For USAID AGRO, the team conducted a rapid assessment through desk research and 60+ in-person interviews across six cities, resulting in a final report with actionable recommendations. Similarly, the Melioration Sector analysis included desk research, expert validations, interviews across five regions, and focus groups, delivering robust insights and practical solutions for sectoral challenges.

IMPACT OF OUR WORK

- From 2020 to 2021, EasyBusiness made significant contributions to Ukraine's economic recovery and long-term planning amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Centre for Economic Recovery (CER), we guided the development of over 220 initiatives in the Economic Stimulus Program, which were adopted by the government, directly supporting SMEs, infrastructure development, and market modernization. Our efforts culminated in the creation of the National Economic Strategy 2030, a transformative roadmap for Ukraine's growth, designed in collaboration with 300+ stakeholders and incorporating over 1,500 actionable initiatives.
- We also advanced institutional capacity-building, supported reforms in IT education, and empowered SMEs through practical tools like the Business Inspections Manual, downloaded by 1,200+ entrepreneurs. By leveraging partnerships with USAID, Civitta Ukraine, and others, we delivered actionable insights across sectors, from IT to agriculture, demonstrating our ability to address immediate needs while laying foundations for sustainable growth and resilience.