BRDO Position Paper for International Partners

DEFENCE FIRST

Reframing defence as a domain of reform: an invitation to donors, investors, and partners

BRDO
Better regulation
Delivery Office

Russia's full-scale invasion has not only changed the lives of millions of Ukrainians; it has also called Europe's security architecture into question. Today, Ukraine is more than a state defending its borders — it is the country that every day holds the fracture line between authoritarian aggression and the values at the heart of democracy.

We understand that defence can be a sensitive topic for donors whose mandates have historically centred on development, human rights, and sustainable growth, and we respect that. Yet today, we are not asking you to change your mission; we are inviting you to view security differently — as a prerequisite for achieving those very values.

In wartime, security is more than weapons. It is institutions that function. It is digital services that optimise accounting, reporting, and other key processes within the Armed Forces. It is fairness and transparency in recruitment. It is a system able to adapt, respond, and manage — even under fire.

Since the full-scale invasion, BRDO has applied its expertise in public policy, regulation, and digital transformation to Ukraine's defence sector — developing digital tools now used by over 1,500 military units and 3.7 million citizens, introducing standards for transparency, and streamlining procedures that previously took months. This work demonstrates that **credible, values-driven support for defence**

We invite international financial institutions, donors, civil society organisations, banks, investors, businesses, and investment funds to join this emerging space — not only as supporters, but as co-creators of new standards, safeguards, and scalable solutions. Now is the time to shape a model of defence-sector engagement that upholds democratic values, delivers measurable impact, and accelerates both security and recovery.

This is an area in which donor support is not only possible but indispensable, because it addresses the very dimensions of defence that have long been the focus of your assistance — reform, digitalisation, accountability, and trust.

We also recognise your concerns: the difficulty of measuring impact in wartime, the risks of opacity, and reputational exposure. We want to be partners who do not ignore these challenges but work with them. We are ready to co-develop tools that will enable donors to support defence transformation as responsibly as they support education or healthcare.

We are not asking you to choose between security and recovery.
We speak frankly: **without security, there will be no recovery** — no schools that are safe to attend, no businesses planning years ahead, no people returning home. A contribution to security is not an "alternative" to recovery; it is kilometre zero of recovery.

We address our international partners with deep respect and a desire for an honest, substantive dialogue about how we can jointly support Ukraine in its hardest hour — and at the same time invest in a stable, inclusive, European future. Not just for us.
For everyone.

Traditional Assistance Area	Defense-First Programming Examples		
Economic Policy	Boosting defence production capacity	Incentives for dual-use industry development (civilian-defence production)	Secure domestic civilian-defence supply chain development
Agrifood & Food Security	Enhancing resilience of food supply chains	Strategic food reserves planning and management	Cotton production for ammunition manufacturing
Infrastructure & Reconstruction	Resilient energy grids and logistics for wartime needs	Dual-use infrastructure (roads, bridges, energy systems)	Fortification of critical civilian infrastructure
Education & Research	STEM education targeting defence technology innovation	Cybersecurity workforce development	Military-civilian joint research projects
Social Policy	Veteran reintegration programs	Psychological resilience training	Military families support networks
Transparency & Anti-corruption	Streamlining defence procurement processes tor transparency and efficiency	Implementing anti-corruption safeguards in defence-related contracting and oversight	Strengthening public accountability mechanisms in defence budgeting

BRDO ANNUAL REPORT 2024

We are preparing a research paper investigating barriers to international aid in Ukraine's defence sector.
Scan the QR code to share your insights and contribute to the study.