# EU/UNDP – CBA Project Evaluation Report

# executive summary

This report reflects on the results of the evaluation of the EU/ UNDP Community Base Approach to Local Development (CBA) project conducted in September-November 2013. The evaluation concluded that:

Relevance

The project is highly relevant to national development priorities, the local governance reform agenda and the national energy efficiency strategies. CBA methodology is appropriate and well accepted by partners at all levels.

Effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability

In terms of***establishing partnership***, CBA uses well elaborated and transparent procedures for selecting partner rayons and villages/towns but targeting of most socio-economically vulnerable rayons and villages can be compromised by a lack of local government commitment and inability to meet the co-funding requirements. Besides, the less than 10,000 population criterion deprives large villages and small towns from participation in CBA, although these communities face very similar development challenges.

Current ***support arrangements*** established at the rayon and oblast level appear to be appropriate and effective for project coordination and steering, although their role is still limited to facilitating CBA implementation and their general impact on overall development, development planning and participatory budgeting at these levels remains modest. The project national support structures steer project implementation, but their leverage in facilitating project implementation at regional and national level is underutilized.

The most fruitful cooperation is achieved in oblasts and rayons where collaborations are created through partnerships between elected councils and local administrations.

Rayon Resource Centers (RRC) are playing a crucial role in the CBA support system to communities. They are very successful, and sustainability prospects of their work are greater where they are well established structurally/ institutionalized.

In ***social mobilization of communities*** previous experience of collective action is an important asset. Social mobilization appears to be the domain of women.

Establishment of community organizations (CO) is a very effective approach for CBA implementation but overall effectiveness of these organizations beyond CBA is still difficult to judge. Wide population coverage and democratic governance and management of established COs is among their most valued assets and are an important provision for their future sustainability. However, their sustainability depends mainly on their leadership and resources mobilization capabilities.

***Capacity-building*** of RRCs and COs is a very important investment in their effectiveness and maturity. RRCs are gradually built into expertise centers but many are still limited in their technical base, and human capacities and abilities for resource mobilization beyond CBA. Peer exchange proves to be one of the most effective and welcome ways of learning among the CBA partners.

CBA achieves relatively high ***micro-project implementation*** efficiency through good standardization of project implementation procedures. Micro-projects are very effective in producing desired results. Although CBA does not always target the most urgent priorities it serves the purpose of providing the community with a tool for mobilization and solving its problems. Besides, communities’ financial participation in micro-projects boosts their sense of responsibility and increases prospects for sustainable operation and maintenance of the established or improved infrastructure. Overall, CBA has had an impressive impact on both communities and local authorities.

Multiple examples of retrospective adjustment to the rayon development programs, and plans to accommodate community priorities defined in the CBA process, and to allow budget co-funding reveals that the practice of participatory planning and budgeting is not yet a widely spread practice in the country.

Sustainability of most infrastructures established or improved as a result of micro-projects is secured. It is more difficult to ensure sustainability in cases of communal infrastructure projects that imply paid services/a need to introduce tariffs (such as water supply or waste collection and disposal) or agricultural service cooperatives.

The CBA ***methodology replication scheme*** introduced by the project is in demand among better off rayons and communities.

In terms of supporting, ***rural economic development,*** there are early signs of success in the functioning of agro-service cooperatives (ASC) established under CBA II but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. It remains to be seen how effective is the CBA approach is in targeting the poor and reaching the 80% coverage of community residents. Besides, the vision with regards to social and economic vision of the cooperatives and their performance criteria are not yet well defined yet.

Clearly, the ASC component has the potential to better mobilize the men and youth part of the rural population, yet this does not seem to be done at the expense of excluding the women.

With the establishment of a cooperative and purchasing assets necessary for its functioning (basically, completion of CBA micro-project in technical terms) the project of making a cooperative function is only the beginning for the community, which implies a need for still intensive technical support in the future. Success in the development of ASCs is largely dependent on adequate support for infrastructure and basic regulatory environment. CBA efforts in supporting ASCs are still somewhat isolated from the overall ASC movement in Ukraine.

The ***energy efficiency component*** of CBA is in high demand but its effective implementation requires a high level of awareness and intensive capacity-building inputs. CBA assistance to regional authorities to develop Energy Efficiency Strategies is important, given the national energy efficiency program, but their implementation remains a challenge. Potential for energy efficiency projects replication is limited unless a supporting environment is created.

The micro-projects are able to raise awareness and demonstrate an impact on efficient energy use. Often these micro-projects have more of a technological demonstration and social mobilization value but are not necessarily justified from a cost-benefit perspective.

In the ***knowledge management domain***, cooperation with UADRC has a strong potential for dissemination of CBA-generated knowledge and for addressing wider local governance concerns. Securing outreach and sustainability of the knowledge web platform is a challenge that still lies ahead. Cooperation with Universities opens multiple win-win opportunities that can be further deepened.

***At the policy level,*** through cooperation with UADRC, CBA is cementing the ground for a strategically important partnership. Project potential to influence directly policy and regulatory environment is still underutilized.

Project management

CBA is implemented by a very capable team of people but they are working under difficult conditions. Accelerated speed of CBA II implementation is associated with certain efficiency and effectiveness gains, but compromises the project capacity-building objectives. Further, the project clearly faces a dilemma between investment into further staff capacity-building and outsourcing of narrow expertise.

Visibility

The project is less visible among non-partners and at the national level. The role of EU as the main funder of the project, and UNDP as implementer, is known among partners at all levels. The project has clear visibility guidelines that are respected.

Media coverage of CBA at the local level is extensive but the message content (in relation to promoting CBA approach) is weak and needs improvement.