

Context

The war has significantly impacted the diversity and richness of culture and cultural heritage in Ukraine, causing damage to cultural infrastructure and assets, reducing livelihoods for cultural creators, bearers and practitioners, limiting access to culture, and impeding the exercise of cultural rights. Historic cities with heritage and monuments are under threat, and damage to museums and looting of collections have exposed the need for better inventory and collections management. Emergency measures were taken since the start of the war to secure movable cultural properties, though large-scale conservation treatments will be required due to unstable storage conditions. The war has also deeply affected the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and creativity, undermining the social fabric and interfering with the daily practices and livelihoods of living heritage practitioners, producers, community members, cultural professionals, and artists. Internal displacement and outflow of artists and cultural professionals have significantly reduced the diversity of cultural practices and expressions, particularly in eastern oblasts, and have diminished the ability of cultural institutions to cope with emergency needs. At the early stage of the war, there was a severe decrease in cultural activities and tourism. This resulted in substantial revenue losses in addition to the physical damage.

Since June 2022, some activities have gradually resumed. The market for artists and cultural professionals has shrunk, with a notable reduction in their incomes. Despite damage to the communication and broadcasting infrastructure, many media outlets and journalists have continued working to ensure access to information; many local and hyperlocal media outlets are facing severe financial constraints after a significant drop in advertising revenues and incomes. Tourism, especially international tourism, is still in decline in the country, but several religious sites and cultural institutions have reopened and are hosting temporary exhibitions, demonstrating the resilience of Ukraine's cultural sector and its importance for reestablishing a sense of normalcy and collective well-being. Due to the drop in national budget expenditure on culture, many cultural institutions are at risk of closure, with the independent sector the most impacted. However, civil society organizations, volunteers, artists, and cultural professionals have demonstrated unprecedented activism in supporting the preservation of Ukraine's culture during the war. The damage to cultural properties and looting of collections furthermore sparked public debates on national values and subsequent recovery.

Damage and Loss Assessment

As of February 24, 2023, the total damage cost from identified assets is estimated at US\$2.6 billion, distributed as follows: historic cities, buildings, and sites imbued with recognized cultural/social values—US\$1.7 billion; movable cultural properties and collections, repositories of culture—US\$143 million; buildings/workshops/ateliers dedicated to cultural and creative industries (CCIs)—US\$150 million; and tourism facilities—US\$650 million. The most impacted oblast is Kharkivska (30 percent of damage), followed by Donetsk (16 percent) and Luhanska (9 percent) (Table 17).

Losses are estimated at US\$15.2 billion and include revenue losses from tourism, art, sports, entertainment and recreation, CCIs, and cultural education, as well as valued asset protection. The most critical losses are for CCIs (US\$10.8 billion) and tourism (US\$3.2 billion). Unlike damage, losses in revenue are highly concentrated in the capital; at US\$7.3 billion, which represent about half of the

total loss. Another US\$4.6 billion in losses is not identified with specific oblasts but rather nationwide losses.

Reconstruction and Recovery Needs, Including Build Back Better

The total needs over the next 10 years for recovery and reconstruction, including service delivery restoration, amount to US\$6.9 billion, with short-term needs (2023–2026) at US\$2.3 billion and medium- to long-term needs (2027–2033) at US\$4.6 billion (Table 18). The early stage is expected to include damage assessment and documentation, emergency measures for cultural immovable and movable properties (including debris removal), stabilization and conservation measures for cultural assets, storage management, preparedness plans, and immediate conservation to prevent further loss and looting. This stage will also include support for CCIs, safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, and restoration and reconstruction of about 30 percent of assets. The remaining restoration and reconstruction (including operational costs), along with further support for CCIs and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, are reflected in the medium- to long-term needs.

It is highly recommended to increase protection of cultural heritage and undertake preventive conservation of sites and assets that risk being further damaged or destroyed. This will entail identifying each cultural asset—such as historic cities, built heritage, museums, monuments, national/regional theaters, and religious sites—and recognize culturally valued movable assets temporarily secured or held in such buildings need to be protected and more systemically managed by designated authorities.

More fundamentally, a comprehensive recovery plan is needed to rebuild the sector. This plan should include alignment with international standards, enhanced legal protection and governance, the development of protocols and guidelines for protecting and recovering cultural heritage, and a comprehensive digital architecture to document and manage cultural property. Revisions to state policies are necessary to support cultural heritage preservation and safeguarding, build institutional capacity, and develop regulations, in particular to protect heritage from demolition and urban development pressures. Incentives and conditions for the resumption of cultural activities in safe territories and the return of cultural sector professionals to Ukraine, are crucial. All these priorities must also be accompanied by development and execution of an inclusive capacity-building program for the culture sector with a view to sustain the results achieved. The recovery plan will require significant funding, with an increase in cultural expenditures from local budgets; this process had started in 2019 but has been halted since the war. Decentralization and localization are necessary for the delicate recovery and reconstruction of the sector, and a strategic reengineering of the culture sector's architecture will be required. Funding schemes will also need to be rethought for post-war transitional and recovery scenarios.

2023 Recovery and Reconstruction Priorities

During 2023, physical recovery and reconstruction includes protecting and conserving valued assets, urgent repairs, and preventing demolition of sites/buildings of cultural significance (Table 19). For nonphysical but essential measures, 5-7.5 percent of all necessary restoration activities over the next 10 years is allocated to 2023 needs per component. These activities include (i) continued monitoring, assessment, and documentation of damaged cultural heritage using geographic information system (GIS) satellite imagery; (ii) enhancement of legal protection and normative frameworks for heritage; (iii) emergency management measures, inventories, storage management, preparedness plans, and

urgent conservation to avoid loss and looting; (iv) repair of assets as feasible to restore function and preservation of heritage and cultural infrastructure to prevent demolition of assets of cultural significance; (v) support for CCIs to support broader access to cultural life, the continuation of artistic creation, resumption of cultural events, and development of community plans and practices for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage; and (vi) reinforcement of capacities of culture professionals. The total 2023 needs amount to US\$108.5 million.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Assessments

RDNA2 benefits from information improvements over RDNA1, including a more accurate overview of damage categories through a proxy calculation. RDNA2 includes communications and broadcasting,⁷⁶ CCIs, and partially also intangible cultural heritage. However, given the absence of on-site inspection, calculations of damage levels rely on reports from regions and relevant authorities, with some assumptions applied. Monitoring cultural properties in inaccessible areas, especially smaller-scale properties with local significance, remains challenging. Assessing damage to underwater heritage is also difficult at this stage, given Ukraine's 2,700 km of coastline. Intangible cultural heritage losses have not been fully estimated. Additionally, quantitative data on the loss of human resources in the cultural sphere are not yet available, hindering the development of necessary restoration measures for cultural institutions. Loss data collection was more difficult compared to damage and needs, especially for revenue losses, as the most recent data were as of 2021, meaning that the finalization period was already affected by the war. Hence, 2020 and 2021 data to get counterfactual revenue, and assumed severity level to get losses. However, many assumptions had to be applied, and a more rigorous estimation based on more facts will need to be carried out in the near future.

Table 17. Damage, loss, and needs by oblast (US\$ million)

Oblast	Damage	Loss	Needs
Cherkaska	4.6	41.3	9.0
Chernihivska	96.7	72.1	246.9
Chernivetska	1.1	5.7	2.2
Dnipropetrovska	63.1	379.4	134.9
Donetska	414.4	172.1	1,007.3
Ivano-Frankivska	1.7	14.9	3.3
Kharkivska	809.9	1,017.5	2,194.5
Khersonska	87.3	59.8	191.1
Khmelnyska	5.3	11.0	12.2
Kirovohradska	1.9	9.4	3.7
Kyiv (City)	54.9	7,340.7	134.5
Kyivska	118.6	155.4	305.3
Luhanska	242.5	70.7	584.8
Lvivska	7.8	528.4	17.8
Mykolaivska	177.1	75.3	481.8
Odeska	132.8	205.3	349.0
Poltavska	4.6	31.7	9.0
Rivnenska	1.4	3.4	2.8
Sumska	86.6	38.8	227.1
Ternopilska	1.3	7.4	2.5
Vinnyska	16.0	143.4	42.9

⁷⁶ Culture and Tourism sector calculations included programming and broadcasting activities as part of losses; while Telecommunications and Digital included calculations of damage and needs related to broadcasting, and losses related to physical damage.

Volynska	1.3	7.5	2.5
Zakarpatska	1.3	10.2	3.2
Zaporizka	138.1	122.6	317.6
Zhytomyrska	17.4	28.7	43.5
Nationwide (no specific region)	143.0	4,608.2	557.8
Total	2,630.8	15,160.9	6,887.5

Source: Assessment team. Note: loss includes additional 18 months beyond the 12 months between February 24, 2022, and February 24, 2023.

Table 18. Recovery and reconstruction needs (US\$ million) as of February 24, 2023

Category	Types of activities/investments	Short term (2023–2026)	Medium to long term (2027–2033)	Total (2023–2033)
Reconstruction needs	Damage assessment, detailed documentation, & harmonized digitalization	173.4	80.0	253.4
	Emergency measures for cultural immovable properties (shoring, propping, structural reinforcements, sheltering and protection measures, including debris removal) and movable properties (inventories, preparedness plans, storage management, etc.)	780.5	0.0	780.5
	Repair of assets as feasible to restore function and ensure preservation and restoration of built heritage, historic cities, and cultural infrastructures to prevent/mitigate demolition of sites/buildings of cultural significance	520.3	0.0	520.3
	Reconstruction/restoration of assets	260.2	3,483.7	3,743.9
Service delivery restoration needs	Strengthen legal protection of the cultural sector and normative frameworks during and after the war	29.1	10.1	39.2
	Reinforce capacities of professionals	204.0	201.3	405.3
	Support restoring the creative industry and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage	262.3	372.5	634.7
	Operational cost	87.4	422.8	510.2
Total		2,317.3	4,570.3	6,887.6

Source: Assessment team.

Table 19. Estimated 2023 implementation priorities (US\$ million) as of February 24, 2023

Category	Types of priority activities/investments	Estimated Cost
Reconstruction needs	Damage assessment, detailed documentation, harmonized digitalization, and emergency measures, including debris removal	35.8
	Repair of assets as feasible to restore function and ensure preservation and restoration of built heritage, historic cities, and cultural infrastructures to prevent/mitigate demolition of sites/buildings of cultural significance	13.0
Service delivery restoration needs	Strengthen legal protection of the cultural sector and normative frameworks during and after the war	17.5
	Reinforce capacities of professionals	29.1
	Support restoring the creative industry and safeguarding intangible heritage	13.1
Total		108.5

Source: Assessment team.