

Ukraine and Beyond:

The Role and Potential of UK Aid in the UK's International Strategy

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Executive Summary

- The UK Government, private sector and UK NGOs have led the way internationally with generous donations and support for Ukraine since Russia's invasion.
- The UK's vast knowledge and expertise in a wide range of areas, including not only defence and security in its broadest sense but also health, education and governance, have uniquely positioned the UK in supporting Ukraine to shore up its national resilience.
- Internationally, the UK's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine is respected as dynamic, holistic and impactful, including in humanitarian aid. This has served to strengthen positive perceptions of the UK internationally and position the UK as a leading and trusted global partner.
- The extensive damage inflicted on Ukraine by Russia will necessitate significant investment in Ukraine's reconstruction by the UK and its allies. Given the UK's wide range of expertise in many of the key priority areas for Ukraine's reconstruction and the clear public mandate for the UK to continue supporting Ukraine, the UK should strive to play a leading role in this reconstruction.
- · Although it has often proven difficult to demonstrate to public opinion a convincing connection between specific aid projects, UK national interests and causes which the British people care about, the example of Ukraine has shown that there is strong support for action in response to clearly communicated examples of need that align with broadly held values. There has been demonstrable pride in both public and private sector contributions. This suggests that there is a case to be made for development assistance as a powerful component of UK foreign policy in support of British values.

Introduction

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has inflicted untold devastation on the nation. Over 16,000 civilians have been killed, 120,000 houses and 16,000 apartment buildings have been destroyed or damaged and an estimated \$350 billion has been lost in infrastructure and economic output.1

- 1. When the UK's Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (IR) was published in March 2021, it was designed as a blueprint for the UK's position in the world post-Brexit. However, in the year and a half since its publication the world has faced major geopolitical upheaval. Its key values and objectives have quickly been put to the test, not least its commitment 'to demonstrate to our allies, in Europe and beyond, that they can always count on the UK when it really matters'.2
- 2. When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, the UK responded swiftly and effectively, supplying rockets and armoured vehicles and resettling hundreds of thousands of refugees. The UK is now the second largest military donor to Ukraine and the economic sanctions imposed by the UK and its allies on Russia are unprecedented.³ However, while the UK's economic and military response to Russia's invasion is well documented, the equally active and similarly impactful role of UK humanitarian/crisis aid to Ukraine has been much less discussed.
- 3. In part this is because aid and development spending has, historically, been met with a degree of resistance by Britons who broadly tend to believe that 'charity should begin at home'. However, the response to the Ukraine crisis has painted a rather different picture of reception to UK aid. It has seen a groundswell in public support for Ukrainians, a great generosity of spirit from the British people and an acceptance from much of Europe of the value of British leadership.
- 4. This paper looks at the scale and impact of UK aid delivered in an environment where stark images of suffering have prompted a generous and comprehensive response from Britons, the private sector and the Government alike. It asks whether this (unwanted) showcase for the UK aid sector's delivery capabilities should be viewed as a one-off, or whether it should prompt a re-evaluation of the role of the aid sector in delivering the UK's vision for 'Global Britain'.

A Comprehensive Response: Mapping UK Aid to Ukraine

- 5. Since the outbreak of war in Ukraine, nations, organisations and individuals all over the world have scrambled to provide support. Indeed, globally over US\$19 billion in grant funding has been donated to Ukraine by national governments, multilateral agencies and major philanthropic foundations to support humanitarian activity and maintain essential infrastructure.4
- 6. The UK has helped lead the way, with the Government alone providing almost £400 million in grant aid.⁵ This includes £220 million in humanitarian assistance, which is providing support for the most vulnerable Ukrainians, both in Ukraine itself and in neighbouring nations. It also includes £100 million in Official Development Assistance to support Ukraine's economy and increase its energy resilience, as well as £74 million to support the critical functioning of the Ukrainian state and safety nets for Ukrainians.6
- 7. These commitments build on the strong foundations built by the UK's existing commitments to the country, with the UK committing US\$173 million in bilateral aid to Ukraine from 2010 to 2020.7
- 8. However, the Government has not acted alone. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has elicited a whole-of-society response in the UK. From winter clothing donations from the UK's biggest retailers to the delivery of aid by the UK's transport companies, there has been a vast array of support from UK businesses and organisations.8 Meanwhile, the response from ordinary Britons has been extraordinary. As well as donations of essential goods and commitments to personally house refugees, Britons have raised hundreds of millions of pounds for Ukraine, including nearly £400 million for the Disasters Emergency Committee.9 In turn, the UK's aid sector has been central to the on-the-ground delivery of much of this aid, providing the knowledge and expertise to provide urgent support to those most in need and to help build the foundations essential to Ukraine's longer term social and economic functioning.
- 9. Although the detail of much of the UK's activity in Ukraine remains private for security reasons, it is important for governmental decision-making, the aid sector and for public discourse, that the full suite of the UK's effort in Ukraine is understood and recognised. We therefore here explore further some of the most important ways in which the UK is providing support to Ukraine.

Basic Care

- 10. The devastating bombardment of Ukraine's civilian and urban infrastructure by Russian forces has left 11.2 million Ukrainians in need of emergency shelter or vital household items and 9.3 million requiring food and livelihood assistance. 10 In response, UK NGOs, development suppliers and private sector organisations have made generous donations and harnessed their unique capabilities in aid delivery, to shore up Ukrainian access to basic humanitarian care.
- 11. On the financial side, UK organisations have been some of the most generous donors to major INGOs' humanitarian efforts and to the work of UK NGOs operating in Ukraine. Donations to the British Red Cross' Ukraine Crisis Appeal, including £1.2 million from John Lewis Partnership and £375,000 from Vodafone and its customers, have provided valuable support for the British Red Cross and its international humanitarian network's efforts to provide emergency relief and improve access to water in Ukraine and its neighbouring nations.11

- 12. Not only have British organisations flocked to provide critical financial support but mass donations of essential items have spanned all basic care categories. Tesco has provided over 1,000 pallets of food to humanitarian organisations operating in Ukraine, while Marks & Spencer has donated 12,000 coats and thermals for those displaced by the conflict and Unilever has donated US\$5.5 million worth of essential products.¹² The UK government has also sent significant donations of essential supplies including £15 million to provide food, water and sanitation to 200,000 of the most vulnerable Ukrainians. The UK Government is also the largest donor to the UN Humanitarian Fund. 13
- 13. Government, private sector actors and NGOs have also come together to ensure the delivery of this aid. The Government-funded Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team, which is led by Palladium, is playing a particularly crucial role in the UK's humanitarian response, improving Government capacity and shoring up its specialist expertise.¹⁴ These initiatives have also been brought together in more ad hoc ways. UK Rail for Ukraine, a cross-industry initiative led by Network Rail, London North Eastern Railway and Avanti, has been developed to support the delivery of critical supplies from the UK into Ukraine, including non-perishable food, hygiene products and basic living equipment.¹⁵
 - Similarly, Virgin Atlantic has partnered with Airlink and Convoy of Hope to transport thousands of items of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighbouring nations. So far, more than 27,000kg of food, hygiene kits, and baby care items have been transported by the partnership free of charge, ensuring that the UK's and allies' generous donations find those most in need.16
- 14. The UK has also been able to draw on the skills and expertise of specialist aid and defence organisations to support the provision of such aid. The charity HALO Trust, which specialises in clearing landmines and other explosives, has collaborated with Esri, a geographic information systems company, to map areas of Ukraine that are contaminated with explosives. This has enabled them to locate safe land to house displaced families and clear routes to enable humanitarian aid to reach those in desperate need.¹⁷ In doing so, HALO Trust and other UK development actors have been able to use their technical and logistical expertise and contacts to offer critical support to reduce the logistical burdens on the Ukrainian government in addressing the humanitarian elements of the crisis.

Education

- 15. The UK's education sector is world renowned, with the UK home to four of the top ten universities in the world. 18 Through knowledge transfer and training, the UK is therefore uniquely positioned to support Ukraine's education sector and it has sought to take up this mantle throughout the crisis. The Cambridge Partnership for Education, for example, is working with Ukraine's Ministry for Education to support curriculum mapping, teacher professional development and the monitoring of Ukrainian students in other education systems. The Partnership is also helping devise strategies for the long-term reintegration of students back into the Ukrainian education system to ensure the system's long-term functioning and the educational success of current Ukrainian students, which will be a key part of Ukraine's reconstruction.19
- 16. The UK's support runs through every level of Ukraine's education system. Cormack Consultancy Group and Universities UK, for example, are co-leading a university twinning initiative. Through the initiative, Ukrainian universities are partnered with international universities of a similar size and profile, to improve understanding of the specific needs of different Ukrainian universities and to ensure they are able to receive targeted support to meet these needs. This will serve to improve the experience of current Ukrainian university students but also to support the longer-term research and knowledge capabilities of Ukraine, key to its long-term economic success.²⁰

17. The unique position of the UK to support Ukraine's education sector is reinforced by the global reach of the English language - a quarter of the world speaks English and 51% of Europe can speak it as a first or second language.²¹ For Ukrainians in Ukraine liaising with NGOs, international private sector actors and foreign governments, as well as Ukrainians seeking refuge in other nations, the English language is improving communication and access to resources and support. The British Council's free online English-speaking clubs and online resource hub for adults and young learners are therefore providing crucial support for Ukrainians in accessing support, resources and opportunities.²²

Healthcare

- 18. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its humanitarian consequences have placed immense strain on Ukraine's health system, with one in five Ukrainians, and one in three in Ukraine's occupied territories, unable to access the medicines they need.²³ UK actors have therefore been working tirelessly as part of the wider humanitarian relief effort to ensure that much needed medicine and equipment reaches patients and facilities in Ukraine and neighbouring European states.
- 19. A key component of this has been the UK's flourishing health, pharmaceutical and medical sector, which in developing, manufacturing and selling world-leading medicines and medical equipment is uniquely positioned to provide access to much needed medical aid. Much of this has come in the form of material donations. The British-Swedish pharmaceutical and biotechnology company, AstraZeneca, for example, has donated medicines worth US\$3 million, while pharmaceutical giant, GSK, has donated over 500,000 units of medicines and relief products, including antibiotics, pain relief, and asthma and epilepsy treatments, at the urgent request of the Ukrainian Ministry of Health. GSK is also supporting the work of the World Health Organisation, national AIDS programmes and NGOs, through donations of anti-retroviral medicines and in doing so has helped improve access to regular healthcare which has been severely disrupted by the need to meet urgent war-induced healthcare needs.²⁴
- 20. The delivery of this aid has been supported by the UK's international development sector and has built on the longstanding footprint the sector has in Ukraine. Crown Agents, which has been undertaking development work in Ukraine for 25 years, has harnessed its existing networks and expertise to establish a humanitarian base in neighbouring Poland to support aid efforts.²⁵ From this base it has transported supplies including 350,000 medicines, 153,000 medical devices, 97,000 trauma kits, 50,000 food kits, 36,000 hygiene kits, 400 oxygen concentrators, 192 generators and 91 premature baby incubators to hospitals and health workers across Ukraine.²⁶ Crown Agents has also successfully imported critical drugs to Ukraine, including an order of polio vaccines to enable the continuation of Ukraine's infant vaccination campaign, in the face of the nascent outbreak.²⁷ This work has drawn on funding and support from a wide range of partners including the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Ministry of Defence, the Embassy of Ukraine, and countless private and charity sector organisations and illustrates the value of drawing on organisations with existing roots in-country when responding to urgent crises.²⁸
- 21. Alongside financial and in-kind donations, the UK has also helped enhance Ukraine's capacity to deliver health services to civilians. A central part of this has been providing additional staff to support on the ground delivery - UK-Med, for example, has established a surgical field hospital staffed by NHS surgeons specialising in treating the war-wounded, provided surgeons to work alongside Ukrainian medical professionals in hospitals in eastern Ukraine and created health clinics to provide primary healthcare to those displaced by the conflict.²⁹ The UK has also worked to enhance the capacity of Ukraine's own healthcare professionals to respond to the specific healthcare issues emerging from conflict. The David Knott Foundation has delivered war surgery training to almost 600 doctors working in Ukraine, while UK-Med has trained 950 first responders in mass casualty

- and chemical biological radiological nuclear training in response to hospital requests to prepare for potential attacks. Capacity has also been raised by efforts by UK organisations such as HALO Trust to train civilians in emergency first aid to help deliver urgent healthcare.30
- 22. The UK's domestic expertise and success in healthcare and pharmaceuticals is therefore providing a critical contribution, alongside allies, in propping up an otherwise crumbling healthcare and emergency aid system, following Russia's targeted attacks on hospitals and civilian infrastructure.

Infrastructure

- 23. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has, as of September 2022, caused more than US\$127 billion worth of damage to Ukraine's infrastructure, indiscriminately destroying schools and hospitals and causing significant disruption to supply chains and the functioning of dayto-day life in Ukraine. This figure is likely to continue to grow substantially.³¹
- 24. Over 40% of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed by Russian attacks, leaving millions of Ukrainians without stable access to electricity. The British Government has led the way in providing much needed support to urgently repair Ukraine's energy infrastructure, funding 850 generators to support the functioning of public services and providing a US\$50 million financing guarantee for Ukraine's stateowned energy provider, Ukrenergo, to ensure it can continue to provide energy to Ukrainian civilians.32
- 25. The UK's private and third sectors have also played a key role in supporting Ukraine's energy infrastructure, not only in donating materials - SP Energy Networks, for example, has donated 21 power generators - but also in utilising their own networks and expertise to facilitate government donations.³³ Plant and machinery hire group Speedy, who were contracted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to source almost 200 generators to donate to Ukraine, leveraged their own relationship with manufacturer Pramac to ensure swift delivery of these generators and maximise the timeliness and effectiveness of the UK Government's response to Ukraine's energy challenges. UK expertise is also being utilised to advise Ukraine on how to shore up its energy infrastructure and support with the development of energy management solutions to optimally balance available energy with types of demand.34
- 26. The UK Government and private and third sector actors have also acted swiftly together to help support Ukraine's transport infrastructure. Through a UK-Ukrainian joint action plan, the UK has agreed to share expert advice from private-sector organisations on airport, runway and port reconstruction, work with the Ukrainian Ministry of Infrastructure to identify on-the-ground training opportunities for airport and aviation staff, send five buses from the Go Ahead Group, and commit more than £10 million worth of equipment to repair transport routes which are critical to the movement and exportation of grain.³⁵ These commitments will be crucial in keeping Ukraine's transport infrastructure, and in turn its economy, moving.

National Resilience

27. Given the long-term geopolitical and strategic pressures in Eastern Europe, Ukraine, alongside other nations in the region such as Moldova and Romania, has long received aid and support from the UK and its allies in shoring up their national resilience. The FCDOfunded Good Governance Fund (GGF), which is delivered by ABT Associates, for example, has assisted the reform of Ukrainian labour laws, provided support for small and medium enterprises, helped design a new energy strategy and completed modelling around the

- economic impact of Covid-19. Projects such as this have been crucial for strengthening Ukraine's national economic, political and social infrastructure and have helped provide a strong foundation for Ukraine's social functioning going into the conflict.
- 28. The well-established roots of UK aid programmes in Ukraine have also enabled them to pivot swiftly and effectively to provide the immediate governmental and social support needed during the conflict. GGF, for example, has shifted to supporting the implementation of policies to improve fiscal and macroeconomic stability, assessing war damage and aiding SMEs in responding to the new economic context.³⁶
- 29. The UK's resilience-building efforts in Ukraine are already laying the foundations for Ukraine's post-recovery and reconstruction. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), for example, has, in recent years, supported the Ukrainian parliament in strengthening government scrutiny, legislative accountability and the inclusion of marginalised groups. Even in the face of conflict, much of this work is ongoing, and WFD continues to work with the Ukrainian parliament on effective law drafting, the development of online and hybrid procedures and improving cooperation between parliament and government. Such work is essential to the Ukrainian government's functioning now but also longer term as it looks to rebuild post-conflict.³⁷

Refugees

- 30. The war in Ukraine has left lives and livelihoods destroyed, with over seven million Ukrainians taking refuge across Europe.³⁸ Neighbouring nations are struggling to cope with the increased pressure this has placed on national infrastructure and with meeting the needs of this influx of refugees. UK actors have therefore been striving to support Ukrainians seeking refuge in neighbouring nations, as well as in the UK.
- 31. Alongside the provision of essential care to refugees addressed earlier in this paper, UK organisations are supporting Ukrainians in their journeys to seek refuge. The British energy giant, BP, has been distributing fuel cards for those transporting refugees between Ukraine and Poland to enable their swift and safe refuge.³⁹ Meanwhile, the 'Packed with Hope' initiative, which has been supported by Bloomsbury, has seen 10,000 backpacks sent to children displaced by the invasion. The backpacks contain a selection of books, head torches, drinking bottles, notebooks and colouring pencils, as well as food and letters from children in the UK, and are designed to provide children with some comfort and escape at a time of great upheaval in their lives. 40
- 32. British organisations are also providing significant support to refugees once they reach a place of refuge. Under the UK-Ukraine Business Consortium, employers - including AerFin, Kier, PWC and Gleeds, among many others - are each sponsoring up to 50 refugees through the non-profit, RefuAid, to access language, loan and employment programmes, with a view to also offering employment opportunities to these individuals once they are work ready.⁴¹ Meanwhile, Techfugees has launched a website aggregating and mapping all of the long-term support initiatives available to refugees across Europe to improve access to support, while XTX Markets, the British electronic trading company, has donated £3 million to King's College London to create opportunities for displaced students and academics.⁴² Projects such as these, of which there are many, are crucial to providing stable, long-term foundations for those displaced by the crisis.

How We're Perceived: Reception of British Aid to Ukraine

Domestic Reception

- 33. Despite broad concern about humanitarian challenges abroad, public support for aid and development spending among Britons is, in general, lukewarm. Research suggests this is driven by concerns about cost and a perception that charity should begin at home. Indeed, there is a clear sense among many Britons that the UK should prioritise tackling its own domestic challenges, particularly poverty and homelessness, before addressing these issues in other nations.43
- 34. These perceptions are felt particularly acutely during times of domestic upheaval BFPG's 2021 annual survey, conducted in the midst of the global pandemic, found that just 28% of Britons thought the UK should maintain or increase its spending on foreign aid in response to the pandemic. Meanwhile, 36% of Britons thought aid spending should be reduced and 23% thought the UK should stop aid spending completely until the UK economy recovered. A further 13% thought the UK should permanently cease all aid and development spending.44
- 35. However, quantitative and qualitative research by BFPG has shown that perspectives on UK aid spending are nuanced. While Britons are concerned about the opportunity cost of aid spending, they are not opposed to the principles behind Britain funding aid and development. Further, support for aid spending is driven primarily by values: the focus is I ess on specific potential benefits to the UK, which may be difficult to identify, and more led by the belief that the UK has a 'moral duty' to act. Crises, particularly those which are well publicised in the media, play directly into this sense of moral obligation and arouse significant sympathy among Britons, prompting a desire for the UK to play a leadership role. 45
- 36. In these cases, support is often for a specific intervention rather than for aid spending in general. During the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, there was clear support for reducing aid spending while the UK faced its own economic difficulties but, nonetheless, 76% of Britons supported providing health services and vaccinations to nations in need.46 Targeted aid investments are, therefore, generally more popular than long term aid programmes: results are more immediate, more tangible and the financial commitment is seen to be temporary.
- 37. This trend is particularly apparent in public perceptions of aid to Ukraine. While the proportion of Britons who believe overseas aid is the area the Government overspends most on now sits at 60%, up from 51% at the start of 2022, there has been substantial support for UK aid to Ukraine.⁴⁷ In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, 88% of Britons supported the UK sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine, making the UK the third most supportive nation out of 17 European nations surveyed. This support translated into swift action, with 130,000 Britons registering to house Ukrainian refugees within days of the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme launching.⁴⁸ Financial commitments have also flown in, with Britons' response to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Humanitarian Appeal for Ukraine setting a new world record for the most money raised by an online campaign in a week, raising over £60 million.⁴⁹
- 38. This support has largely endured even as the Ukraine crisis has begun to fall down news bulletins and as of October 2022, 74% of Britons support sending humanitarian aid to Ukraine with just 7% opposed. And in contrast to wider aid spending where there is clear pressure from Britons for the UK to cut back, only 17% of Britons believe the UK is doing too much to support Ukraine. Rather, 51% of Britons think the UK is doing about the right amount and 19% think the UK should be giving more support.⁵⁰

- 39. That said, support has faced some challenges in the context of the UK's cost of living crisis. 38% of Britons would now prefer the Government to 'do more to help Britons with the increasing cost of living, even if it means withdrawing some or all support for Ukraine and making a Russian victory more likely. This suggests that there are limits on the financial costs that individuals are willing and able to bear in order to support Ukraine, but it has not undermined support for the fundamental principles behind aid to Ukraine.⁵¹
- 40. Public support for the UK's aid efforts in Ukraine has visibly demonstrated that, far from the perception that Britons are consistently uncomfortable with UK aid and development spending, there are circumstances in which they will, overwhelmingly, support it even when the UK economy is itself struggling. Arguably, the Ukraine crisis satisfies all the key conditions for public support - the crisis is evidently urgent, the support needed is seen to be time limited, the strategic intent is clear and results are tangible. This sense of urgency and moral duty are likely compounded by the proximity of Ukraine to the UK both geographically and culturally.
- 41. Even when geographical proximity is not a consideration, other factors: humanitarian urgency, achievable short-term objectives and an ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of specific interventions can weigh positively with public opinion. It also shows that in these circumstances, where there is public consent, UK aid initiatives – involving both public and private sector - can be a powerful source of pride as part of a broader foreign policy agenda.

International Reception

- 42. Internationally, the UK's response to the crisis in Ukraine has served to strengthen and improve perceptions of the UK among the public and officials alike. Among G7 citizens, Britain's response to Russia's invasion is seen to be the best of all the leading Western powers, with a net rating of +24, outperforming both the United States (+22) and France (+21).⁵² Meanwhile allies' officials, after vocally critiquing the UK's approach to Ukrainian refugees in the early stages of the crisis, have become increasingly supportive and appreciative of the UK's efforts.53
- 43. In the United States, the UK's response to Ukraine led the United States Secretary of Defense, Lloyd J. Austin III, to declare that 'the US-UK relationship is strong and even more viable after Russia's invasion of Ukraine', while former US National Security Advisor John Bolton declared that the UK's response in many regards has been swifter and more effective than the United States' response.⁵⁴ The American public is also inclined to believe the UK's response has been particularly strong, receiving an average net rating of +35 among Americans, narrowly trailing the support for the United States' own response (+37).55 This strengthening of the UK-US relationship is particularly important in the context of recent tensions over the Northern Ireland protocol and in re-asserting the UK's position as one of the United States' key allies post-Brexit.
- 44. Crucially, the UK's response has also been particularly well received in Ukraine itself. Owing to the UK's rapid response to the outbreak of war, Ukrainians already considered the UK to be among its closest allies in March 2022. By the end of June, Boris Johnson had amassed a 90% favourability rating among Ukrainians, making him the most popular foreign politician in the country. Meanwhile, President Zelenskyy has been vocally appreciative of the UK's support for Ukraine, consistently celebrating the UK for 'helping more' than other Western allies.⁵⁶ Despite several changes of Government, the UK's support for Ukraine has helped forge an enduring UK-Ukrainian partnership which will no doubt play dividends for the UK in years to come.

How We're Perceived: Reception of British Aid to Ukraine

- 45. Crisis responses are often viewed holistically: the UK's military contribution to Ukraine has probably been the dominant driver of international opinion of Britain's role, but our support for refugees and humanitarian and reconstruction aid play an essential role in demonstrating what kind of a country we are. It is clear that UK aid has not only had significant and important implications for Ukraine but that it has also helped to improve perceptions of the UK internationally, particularly among key allies, re-asserting the UK's position as a trusted, values-driven global partner, with the geopolitical and geostrategic benefits that brings.
- 46. The UK response to Ukraine may be appreciated by key international players more readily than by domestic audiences in the broader context of development and humanitarian policy: the British aid programmes in Africa and Asia, in particular, often play a larger and more positive role in international perceptions of the UK's profile than they do at home. Addressing this disconnect may suggest ways to broaden and deepen UK public support for the aid programme as a strategic tool, particularly if seen through the prism of the Ukraine effort, i.e. a focus on humanitarian urgency and specific time-limited interventions with tangible results.

Looking Forwards: A Renewed Role for International Development?

- 47. The UK's response to the crisis in Ukraine has vividly illustrated the immense real-world impact of UK aid. Most importantly, the whole-of-society mobilisation that has taken place has helped strengthen Ukraine's capabilities and resilience and ultimately mitigated the humanitarian impacts of the crisis. In turn, the national response has garnered public support in the UK, secured respect from allies and highlighted the important role that UK aid has to play in achieving the ambitions of the Integrated Review.
- 48. Looking forwards, what could, and should, such a role look like?

Reconstruction in Ukraine

- 49. First, there remains a clear need for the UK to play a continued leading role in assistance to Ukraine, both as the conflict continues and in Ukraine's reconstruction, which is expected to cost around \$750 billion.⁵⁷ The sheer scale of the reconstruction required will necessitate significant intellectual, physical and financial input from the UK government, its allies, the private sector and aid agencies. Maximising the effectiveness of these efforts will necessitate close collaboration between sectors and with all countries involved in the effort.
- 50. However, it is also the case that nations that seize the initiative and lead the way in shaping and delivering Ukraine's reconstruction process will be afforded a variety of opportunities to not only support Ukraine's future success but also to showcase on the world stage their commitment to shared values as well as their competitive capabilities and expertise. For the UK this task presents an opportunity to exhibit effective and ambitious aid delivery, demonstrate commitment to European security and deepen its relationships with European partners and the United States.
- 51. The UK is already well positioned to do this. From its strength as a convener, strategist and diplomatic player with global reach, to its experience in conflict resolution, humanitarian response and development aid, the UK has the intellectual architecture to provide expertise in the key fields underpinning reconstruction. Domestic private sector expertise in research and innovation, education, regulation, and financial and legal services as well as supply chain and logistics, can also be drawn upon to bring valuable insights to the reconstruction process.
- 52. Much of the groundwork has already been laid: an MOU signed in June 2022 committed the UK to a range of reconstruction efforts and established a joint task force to help build partnerships between UK and Ukrainian businesses to assist with the reconstruction.⁵⁸ UK Export Finance has also pledged to retain its £3.5 billion worth of financial support for trade to Ukraine, helping the country to fund its reconstruction projects and allowing UK exporters and Ukrainian buyers to access the finance they need to trade commercially. The UK has also committed to host the Ukraine Recovery Conference in 2023 and join a Supervisory Board to coordinate the recovery process between Kyiv and Ukraine's allies, which will include the establishment of a dedicated office in London. UK financial expertise is also being harnessed to lead financial modelling for reconstruction, identifying areas of damage and priority areas to address.⁵⁹
- 53. Meanwhile, private sector organisations such as Mott MacDonald are already pledging to support Ukraine's reconstruction, and will no doubt draw on the expertise they have acquired from previous conflicts.⁶⁰ For example, in Syria Adam Smith International

continues to work to strengthen local governance and restore safety and security to populations affected by its civil war, while Crown Agents has been reconstructing urban street lighting and clearing debris, to protect public services.⁶¹ The UK's efforts to reconstruct Ukraine should therefore be able to draw on the wealth of knowledge and expertise that already exists in the UK's private and charity sectors to maximise the effectiveness of such efforts.

Aid as a Strategic Foreign Policy Tool

- 54. The UK's response in Ukraine is seen to play to Britain's wider position in the world and has implications for how it is respected as an actor internationally. There is a clear opportunity for UK aid to be strategically utilised in achieving the ambitions outlined in the Integrated Review, going beyond the focus on responding to current threats to European security, also working to create conditions which will make further costly crises less likely.
- 55. There are also clear wider strategic and security benefits, particularly as China and Russia increasingly look to engage with developing nations. Nearly 150 countries have now signed up to China's Belt and Road initiative which seeks to connect Asia with the rest of the world, and China's investments into Africa have trebled in recent years, from just over £1 billion in 2009 to £3.8 billion in 2018. Such investments are significantly impacting public opinion of China, particularly in Africa.⁶² If the UK wishes to address the security implications of these investments, it must more comprehensively consider how we can utilise aid and development to demonstrate a genuine commitment to British values, including the role of the private sector, against competition from autocracies.
- 56. This task emerges against the backdrop of significant economic difficulty in the UK, with the UK aid budget cut to 0.5% of GNI in 2021 and the most recent budget confirming that the aid and development budget will not return to 0.7% GNI 'until the fiscal situation allows'. However, the Ukraine crisis has shown how UK aid can be utilised to authentically support the UK's international objectives and has emphasised the importance of both investment and maximising the effectiveness of UK aid, in order for it to best support the UK, allies and most importantly those in need, even in times of economic difficulty. The updating of the Integrated Review offers an opportunity, drawing on the experience of Ukraine, to position humanitarian and development aid, and reconstruction, as a key enabler of the UK's sovereignty, security and prosperity objectives.

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