



Clusters4Defense Initiative —

BUILDING A JOINT
DEFENSE ECOSYSTEM





INVEST IN A COMMON DEFENSE FUTURE!

**SUPPORT THE CLUSTERS4DEFENSE
PILOT PROJECTS –
CREATING A SHARED
INNOVATIVE DEFENSE ECOSYSTEM**

The full-scale war has become a powerful catalyst for the development of the Ukrainian defense technology sector. More than 10 clusters of the Ukrainian Cluster Alliance and hundreds of innovative companies — members of the UCA — are working on the creation of modern drones, electronic warfare systems, robotics, artificial intelligence applications, communications, cyber defense, etc. However, these players face serious challenges: a lack of funding, limited access to international markets, a lack of infrastructure for innovation in Ukraine.

That is why we are launching pilot projects that will help lay the foundation for a joint Euro-Ukrainian defense industrial ecosystem.

SEARCH FOR PARTNERS TO IMPLEMENT JOINT PILOT PROJECTS

CLUSTERS4DEFENSE IS A KEY PLATFORM
FOR ACCELERATING DEFENSE INNOVATION
AND INTEGRATING UKRAINE INTO THE EUROPEAN
SECURITY AND DEFENSE ARCHITECTURE

The Ukrainian Cluster Alliance invites Western allies to collaborate with Ukrainian clusters that encompass a broad range of areas in the Dual-Use and MilTech sectors, including the production of drones, ground robots, electronic warfare systems, demining technologies, cybersecurity solutions, automation, and digitalization of the defense industry, AI applications, communication systems, and more.



Localization and scaling of production in Ukraine — increasing manufacturing volumes.



Development of military technology innovations and creating a resilient, joint defense ecosystem in the Dual-Use / MilTech segment.



Strengthening cooperation between Ukrainian clusters and partners from the Euro-Atlantic space.



Import substitution and strengthening of supply chains between the EU and Ukraine: replacing Chinese components with products manufactured in EU countries.



7 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CLUSTERS4DEFENSE INITIATIVE

1 Cooperation over competition

In the context of significant fragmentation and competition among actors in the European defense sector, we are developing an integration platform for extensive collaboration.

2 Empowering clusters and SMEs

Although European clusters are effective tools for industrial and innovation development in the EU, their involvement in Ukraine–EU cooperation remains minimal. This situation reflects both a missed opportunity and significant untapped potential.

3 Dual-Use as the foundation of the defense industrial base

We acknowledge the limitations and complexities of direct cooperation in the MilTech sectors, where state institutions play a central role. Consequently, we focus on dual-use technologies as the foundation for defense industry development.

4 Joint and integrated industrial ecosystems

We believe that joint and integrated supply chains, along with their related innovation ecosystems- collectively referred to as industrial ecosystems – are much more effective than the fragmented “islands” where most SMEs currently function.



7 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE CLUSTERS4DEFENSE INITIATIVE

5 Focus on shared key ecosystem elements

To demonstrate high levels of technological innovation, SMEs must rely on robust, shared ecosystem components such as centers of expertise by technology sector, R&D laboratories, prototyping centers, testbeds, accelerators, and certification and testing centers. Ukraine faces a critical shortage of these elements, so most of our projects concentrate on their development.

6 Effective results through stakeholder coordination

Building collaborative networks and platforms requires effective communication and coordination. Consequently, funding is also necessary for project offices and coordinators in various countries.

7 Funding through grants and public-private partnerships

We are sincerely grateful to the EU and Euro-Atlantic countries for their support of Ukraine. At the same time, the current mechanisms — such as grants — are often too slow and inefficient in this initiative. Four years into the war, we still lack stable funding for the initiative's core elements. That's why we actively seek partnerships with various foundations, including private ones.



CLUSTERS4DEFENSE

PILOT PROJECTS

THE PILOT PROJECTS FOCUSED ON FUNDING A COLLABORATIVE DUAL-USE TECHNOLOGY ECOSYSTEM



**Establishing regular exchange between clusters
(EU–Ukraine Defense Partnership)**



**Creating a unified information platform for coordination,
communication, and collaboration among ecosystem participants**



**Forming joint analytical centers and sectoral roadmap
in 7 priority technology areas:**

Drones and ground robotics.
Artificial intelligence (AI).
Cybersecurity.
Electronics and communication systems.
Photonics.
Medical technologies.
Space technologies.



**Establishing joint rapid prototyping centers
and centers of expertise in the above segments**



Launching Reskilling / Upskilling programs in the following areas

Digital skills for defense industry personnel.
Innovation management and brokerage (for centers of expertise and SME support).
Basic general military training.
Training for military hospital medical teams and civilian doctors.



**Implementing pilot Industry 4.0 projects
in the defense industrial sector**



**Improving standards and sharing best practices — in particular,
through adapting NATO standards and their implementation in
national production processes**

PARTNER SEARCH FOR PROJECT FINANCING

WE ARE OPEN TO ALL FINANCIAL
AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT
TO LAUNCH JOINT PROJECTS
WITH EU, UK, AND CANADA CLUSTERS

-  Ukrainian startups and clusters should be included in Horizon Europe and European Defence Fund (EDF) programs.
-  Establishment of bilateral programs to support startups and tech clusters in partnership with EU governments.
-  Attracting funding from EU member states' national defense funds through co-financing mechanisms.
-  Launching new initiatives such as a "European Defense Accelerator" to support dual-use startups.
-  Accessing funding through the European Innovation Council (EIC) and similar funds.
-  Developing cross-border manufacturing within joint R&D projects between Ukrainian and European companies.
-  Integrating Ukrainian manufacturers into international supply chains through investment in joint ventures.
-  Attracting resources from private company funds.



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