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ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2023

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ACRONYMS

APDIM Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management	MTEA Mid-term Education Action Plan
CBE Competency Based Education	NDS National Development Strategy
CIS Commonwealth of Independent States	NGO Non-Governmental Organization
CSOs Civil Society Organizations	PSEA Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs	SDGs Sustainable Development Goals
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	SPECA Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia and Afghanistan
EW4All Early Warning for All Initiative	SRHS Sexual and Reproductive Health Services
GBAO Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast	TB Tuberculosis
GBV Gender Based Violence	UNCT United Nations Country Team
GDP Gross Domestic Product	UNSDCF UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
GEF Global Environment Facility	USAID United States Agency for International Development
GPE Global Partnership for Education	VLR Voluntary Local Review
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus	VNR Voluntary National Review
HLPF High-Level Political Forum	WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ICT Information Communication Technologies	Y-PEER Youth Peer Education Network
IFIs International Financial Institutions	
ISDB Islamic Development Bank	
KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency	
MIYCF Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding	



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FOREWORD



Tajikistan posted strong economic growth of 8.3% in 2023, triumphing regional and global challenges. Lower inflation, an expansionary monetary and fiscal policy, and strong consumer demand fuelled GDP growth. Income poverty has been on a downward trend, falling from 32% in 2009 to 22% in 2022. During this period, Tajikistan also made improvements across different socioeconomic indicators. However, as the Voluntary National Review 2023 (VNR) shows, even with the current positive trend, Tajikistan may reach only 30 percent of the SDG targets by 2030.

Despite the ongoing geopolitical challenges, the green and just transition provides Tajikistan with a pathway to rapid socioeconomic gains. As the VNR has underlined, low-carbon industrialization and expanding access to quality health, education, and social protection services are vital for positive change. Tajikistan is taking steps towards a greener and more inclusive development for all with assistance from and in partnership with the United Nations.

At the global level, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan continues to champion effective water management. In partnership with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan successfully organized the largest gathering of member states to deliberate on water at the UN Water Conference in March 2023 in New York. To build on this momentum, Tajikistan is hosting the 3rd High-Level Conference on Water in Dushanbe in 2024.

Recognizing the importance of social cohesion through people-to-people exchanges and cross-border trade, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan reopened its border markets with Afghanistan. Negotiations with the Kyrgyz Republic on delimitation and border demarcation have further advanced, and an agreement may be reached within 2024, thus creating opportunities for peace and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Sustained progress will depend on promoting the right to development and ensuring no one is left behind. In 2023, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the National Strategy on Human Rights (2038), an important milestone for the country to pursue human-centric development. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan invited the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues to conduct their assessments, which is another positive development and affirmation of its human rights obligations.

Now, let me highlight some of the catalytic initiatives that the UN system has rolled out as part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2023-2026). These initiatives are making a real difference in the lives of people and have the potential to bring about transformational change in Tajikistan.

- More than 550,000 schoolchildren in food-insecure regions of Tajikistan were provided with school meals, which encouraged their school attendance and cognitive development. More than 77,000 people benefited from access to clean water, while 300,000 now have access to basic sanitation.

- Together with the Global Partnership for Education and the Islamic Development Bank, the UN Tajikistan began the implementation of a USD 86 million initiative to reform the education curriculum.

- Over 13,000 people, many of them women, benefited from skills development and employment programmes. A national programme for productive employment was launched to complement the ongoing social protection reform for job creation and more rapid poverty reduction.

- Building on the launch of the first green corporate bond, technical assistance is being provided to strengthen the domestic capital market, including the formulation of a framework on green bonds to enable the government to mobilize long-term financing.

- A new state programme was initiated to end violence against women and children, building on the solid foundation laid through the Spotlight Initiative.

- An Early Warnings for All Initiative was launched to bolster national disaster risk preparedness and response.

In the coming year, the United Nations will work with the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to realize their commitments, which are at the core of the National Development Strategy (2030), through investments in food systems, actions to increase energy access and affordability, linking people and communities through digital connectivity, transforming education, creating jobs, and providing social protection, mitigating climate change impacts, curbing biodiversity loss, and eliminating pollution.

The United Nations will continue to engage with young people, creating opportunities for them to shape Tajikistan's future development. Moreover, the UN Agencies will continue to promote the inclusion of vulnerable groups to ensure that their voices are heard and that they benefit from the fruits of national development.

Lastly, on behalf of the United Nations Country Team in Tajikistan, I express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and all our partners for their unwavering collaboration. Together, we can make Tajikistan's future development more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive.

Parvathy Ramaswami
UN Resident Coordinator
Tajikistan



UN COUNTRY TEAM IN TAJIKISTAN

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tajikistan, comprising 24 resident and non-resident Agencies, Funds, and Programmes actively supports Tajikistan's development through the implementation of the UN-Government Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2026 (UNSDCF). With a longstanding presence of over 30 years in the country, the United Nations (UN) in Tajikistan continues to be the government's trusted and reliable partner in advancing sustainable development.

Guided by the UN principles and the priorities of UNSDCF, the UNCT aims to bring global expertise and innovative approaches to help Tajikistan achieve its development objectives. UNCT helps forge partnerships to support the government in tackling critical challenges and promoting

sustainable development that is good for people, prosperity, and the planet.

Aligned with UN 2.0 Vision, UNCT is committed to enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of policy advice and programme initiatives. This includes more robust internal capabilities, better programmatic and operational support by discerning emerging trends, anticipate potential shifts and build robust analytics to respond proactively. We prioritize human capital development, which bring behavioural changes and build capacities in national institutions yielding sustainable benefits for the future. UNCT is committed to assist the national counterparts in navigating transition, fostering knowledge sharing, and building resilience.

PARTNERS IN TAJIKISTAN

The UN in Tajikistan extends its gratitude and appreciation to the government, national, regional, and local-level authorities, civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, academia, media, donors, and development partners for their valuable partnerships and collaboration. Through collaborative partnerships, the UN in Tajikistan has proven to be a valued partner to all and has contributed to building human capital through strategic investments in education, health and social protection.

UN in Tajikistan is promoting inclusive and green economic growth by strengthening the investment climate, private sector development, financing, digitalization, and regional cooperation. Moreover, the UN in Tajikistan is helping

national counterparts in the integrated management of climate and environmental risks through sustainable resource management, effective climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

Additionally, the efforts of the UN in Tajikistan are focused on enhancing people-centred governance and the rule of law by improving public services, expanding access to legal services, empowering women, preventing violence against women and girls, eliminating discrimination, strengthening institutions to uphold human rights, preventing drug trafficking and crime, supporting peacebuilding efforts, and promoting cross-border collaboration.



STATE ENTITIES

- Agency for Export
- Agency for Hydrometeorology
- Agency for State Financial Control and Anti Corruption
- Agency of Labour and Employment
- Agency of Land Reclamation and Irrigation
- Agency on Drug Control under the President of RT
- Agency on Labour and Employment
- Agency on Social Insurance and Pensions
- Agency on Social Protection of the Population
- Agency on Statistics under the President of RT
- Biodiversity and Biosafety Center (NBBC)
- Border Forces of the National Committee of State Security
- Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense under the Government of Tajikistan
- Committee of Youth and Sport under the Government of Tajikistan
- Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of Tajikistan
- Committee on Religious Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan
- Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of Tajikistan
- Customs Service under the Government of Tajikistan
- State Committee on Investments and State Property Management
- Districts of Republican Subordination
- Division on Human Rights, Executive Office of the President of RT
- Dushanbe city Administration
- Executive Office of the President of Tajikistan
- Federation of Independent Trade Unions
- Forest Agency
- General Prosecutor Office
- Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Human Rights Ombudsman
- Local Development Committee under the President of Tajikistan
- Migration service
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
- Ministry of Culture
- Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MoEDT)
- Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)
- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (MoEWR)
- Ministry of Finance (MoF)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSP)
- Ministry of Industry and New Technologies (MoINT)
- Ministry of Interior (MoI)
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
- Ministry of labor, migration and employment of the population (MOLMEP)
- MOLMEP research institute
- National Bank (NB)
- National Commission on Child Rights under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (NCCR)
- National Coordination Committee on HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria (NCC)
- National Development Council (NDC) under the President of Tajikistan
- National Pediatric and child surgery
- National Reproductive Center for Perinatology and Gynecology
- National reproductive health center (NRHC)
- Ombudsman office
- Parliament of Tajikistan (Majlisi Namoyandagon, Majlisi Oli)
- Republican Center for Healthy Lifestyle
- Republican Center for Immunoprophylaxis
- Republican Centre for Medical Statistics and Information
- Republican Center for Nutrition
- Republican Center on HIV/AIDS prevention and control
- Republican Centre for SRI of Pediatrics and Surgeon
- Republican Clinical Narcological Centre
- Republican TB Control Center
- Sanitary Epidemiology Surveillance Service
- State Institution "Republican center of immunoprophylaxis"
- State Institution "Republican education and clinical centre for family medicine"
- State Institution "Formation and Development of Entrepreneurship" (Business Incubator)
- State Unitary Enterprise SUE Dushanbe Vodokanal (SUE Vodocanals)
- State unitary enterprise "KHOJAGII MANZILIU KOMMUNALI" (SUE KMK)
- Supreme Court
- Tajikistan State Committee on Investments and State Property Management
- Tajikistan State Unitary Enterprise "Orthoses and Prosthetic Plant,
- Union of Employers

LOCAL DISTRICTS ADMINISTRATIONS

- Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) Administration
- Khatlon region Administration
- Sughd region administration
- Districts of Republican Subordination

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

- Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH)
- Association of Youth organizations of Tajikistan
- Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law
- Coalition of NGOs "From de-jure Equality Towards de-facto Equality"
- CSO Network on Rule of Law
- Family Planning Association
- Guli Surkh
- Human Rights Center
- International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR)
- National Union of People with Disabilities
- PO "Akhtari Bakht"
- PO "Association of Women and Society"
- PO "Chashma"
- PO "Chashmai Hayot"
- PO "Femida"
- PO "FIDOKOR"
- PO "FSD"
- PO "Fund for Society Development"
- PO "Gender and Development"
- PO "Hamsol ba Hamsol"
- PO "Iroda"
- PO "Inson va Adolat"
- PO "Korvoni Umed"
- PO "Madina"
- PO "Maina"
- PO "Mayram"
- PO "MIR"
- PO "Network Umed"
- PO "Refugees, Children & Vulnerable Citizens - RCVC"
- PO "Ruhafzo"
- PO "Surkhob"
- PO "Women lawyers for development"
- PO "Youth Organization Peshraft"
- PO "Zanoni Sharq"
- PO Ilmkhona
- PO Right and Prosperity
- PO Rushdi Inklusia
- State Institution "Formation (Business Incubator)
- Women's Crisis Centers
- Youth Ecological Centre of t

PRIVATE SECTOR

- American Chamber of Commerce in Dushanbe
- Association of Microfinance Organizations of Tajikistan
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Commercial banks and microfinance institutions
- National Association of Small and Medium Businesses of the Republic of Tajikistan (NASMB RT)
- National Dehkan Farms Association
- Private companies
- Tourism Development Association
- Union of employers

ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS, MEDIA

- Academy of Science
- Academy of Science, Institute of Economy and Demography
- Centre for Strategic Research under the President of Tajikistan
- Higher education institutions
- National and regional mass media
- Research institute "Zerkalo"/LLC Z-Analytics
- Scientific Research Institute of Labour, Migration and Employment
- State Scientific Institution «Center for Research of Glaciers of the National Academy of Sciences of the Tajikistan»

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



KEY DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Population
10.2 million
AoS, 2023

Poverty rate
22.5 %
AoS, 2022

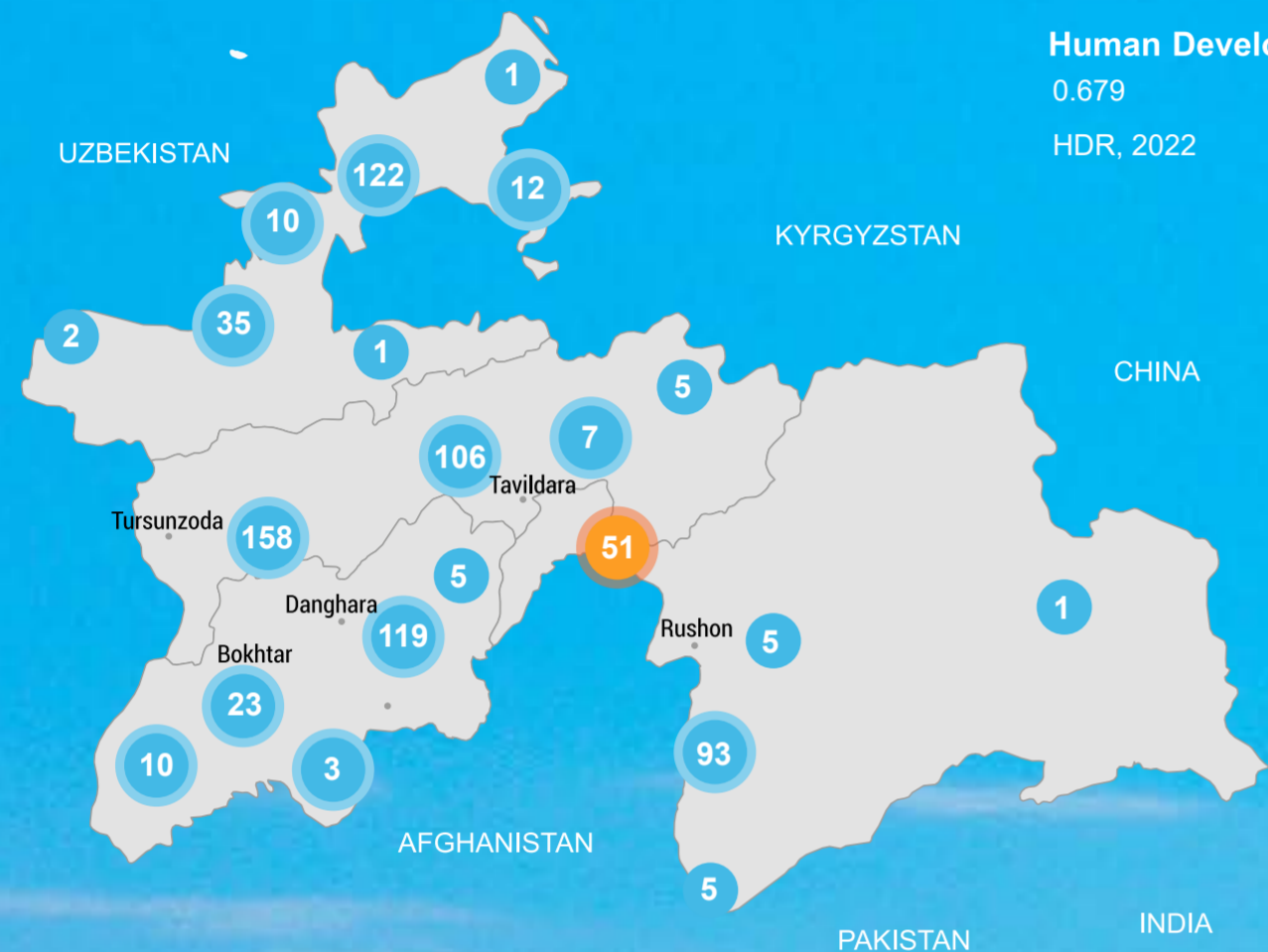
GDP growth rate
8.3%
AoS, 2023

GDP per capita
\$1,054
2022, World Bank

Population growth
2%
AoS, 2023

Personal remittances, received (% of GDP)
50.9%
2022, World Bank

Human Development Index
0.679
HDR, 2022



UNSDCF programme interventions in Tajikistan by regions.

- Activities tagged with detailed locations
- Activities tagged at country level only

SDG Index Rank

85 /166

SDG Index Score



Spillover Score



SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS



Dashboards: ● SDG achieved ● Challenges remain ● Significant challenges remain ● Major challenges remain ● Information unavailable
Trends: → On track or maintaining SDG achievement → Moderately improving → Stagnating → Decreasing → Trend information unavailable

Source: Sustainable Development Report 2023 (sdgindex.org)

Chapter 1: Development trends

In 2023, Tajikistan was one of the fastest-growing economies in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Supported by a stable macroeconomic situation, the economy grew by 8.3 percent.¹ All the major sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, industry, and services, recorded relatively high growth rates. A steady inflow of remittances² and low inflation boosted household consumption.

Despite these positive trends, Tajikistan remains susceptible to external shocks. This is due to a heavy reliance on personal remittances, an undiversified economy with a low share of private sector investment, a trade deficit that has averaged around 25 percent of GDP, and risks associated with public debt. A continued slowdown of the Russian economy will affect labour migration and the inflow of remittances, a major source of income for many households in Tajikistan.

Robust economic growth and a significant inflow of personal remittances helped to reduce income poverty – one of the key sustainable development goals (SDGs) – from 32 percent in 2009 to 22 percent in 2022.³ In addition to poverty reduction, Tajikistan has also made noticeable progress towards other SDGs, but the progress has been uneven. With a score of 69, Tajikistan is ranked 85

out of 166 countries on the SDG Index.⁴ According to the 2023 Listening to Tajikistan Survey, food insecurity among households remains high. Around 15 percent of households reported experiencing hunger and 30 percent confirmed reducing food consumption in 2023.

With a young population and abundant natural resources, Tajikistan has enormous potential to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. To realize the targets articulated in the National Development Strategy⁵ (NDS), the government aims to undertake structural reforms, promote private sector growth, promote efficiency and transparency in public administration, and take necessary measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Strong growth in 2023 improved the fiscal situation with increased tax revenues and spending. In nominal terms, public expenditures increased by more than 22 percent. The government's main funding priorities are the hydropower and transportation sectors. However, limited fiscal space makes it challenging to scale up social spending and investments to spur business development and innovation and increase competitiveness and exports. While social spending accounts for more than 40% of public expenditures, it is insufficient to provide full coverage and quality services to the population.



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1. Unless indicated otherwise, all the national accounts data is from the Agency of Statistics (AoS).
 2. In 2022, increases in personal remittances contributed to a current account surplus equivalent to 15% of GDP <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BN.CAB.XOKA.GD.ZS?locations=TJ>
 3. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=TJ&view=chart>
 4. <https://dashboards.sdginde.org/profiles/tajikistan>
 5. <https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030>

Инициатива «Ранние предупреждения» Душанбе - Таджикистан, 29-30 июля 2023 года



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For example, out-of-pocket health spending by households is more than 65% of the total health expenditure. Besides financing, several other factors are affecting progress toward the SDGs. These include weak institutional and human capacities, limited coordination, and engagement with the private sector and civil society.

In 2023, the UN system made strategic and value-added contributions to assist Tajikistan accelerate progress on the SDGs. Below are some highlights of the support that the UN has provided to help Tajikistan to realize its development aspirations.

- With UN support, the government carried out the second Voluntary National Review⁶ (VNR) to gauge progress on the SDGs. With a thematic focus on 'green development for shared prosperity', the review was presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2023.
- Recognizing the importance of action at the sub-national level, the UN system supported Dushanbe, the capital city, in launching a Voluntary Local Review⁷ (VLR). Local and regional governments are at the forefront of implementing solutions to achieve the SDGs.
- A new partnership for USD \$86 million was established with the Global Partnership for Education⁸ (GPE), the Islamic Development Bank⁹ (IsDB), and the UN system to support competency-based curriculum reform and build 58 schools.
- Support was provided to the Government of Tajikistan and the Kingdom of Netherlands to co-organize the 2023 UN Water Conference in New York.
- The UN system launched the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All Initiative¹⁰ (EW4All) to promote disaster risk knowledge, detection, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting. Tajikistan is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Annual economic losses from disasters can reach up to 1.3 percent of GDP.

6. <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/tajikistan/voluntary-national-reviews-2023>
 7. <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/252225-dushanbe-city-launches-voluntary-local-review-process>
 8. <https://www.globalpartnership.org>
 9. <https://www.isdb.org>
 10. <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/243772-un-secretary-general-s-early-warnings-all-initiative-launched-tajikistan>

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

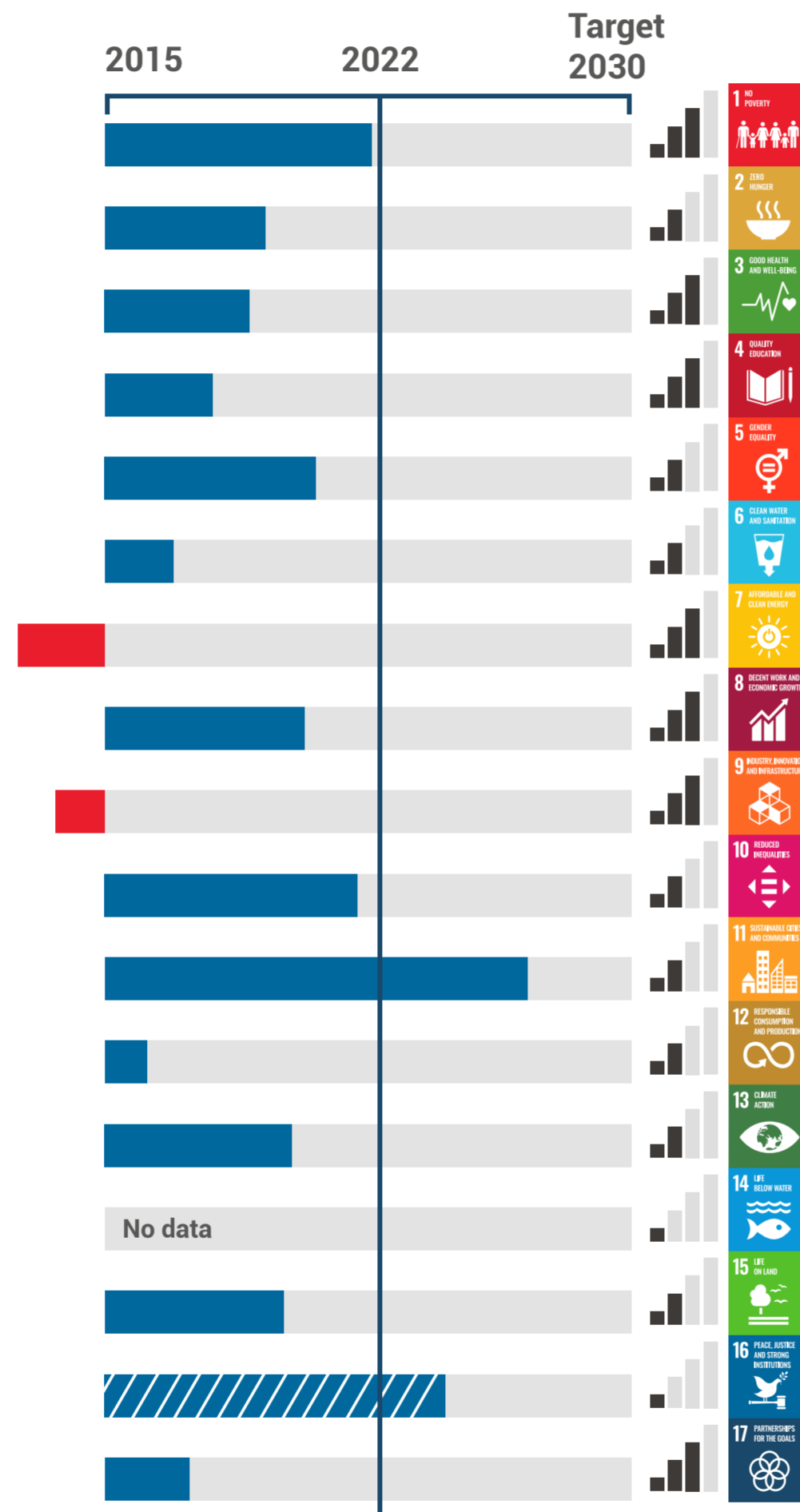
The National Development Strategy 2016-2030 is aligned with the SDGs. As part of the 2nd Voluntary National Review (VNR), the Government of Tajikistan, supported by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office in Tajikistan, assessed the progress that the country has made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A National SDG Tracker was developed to measure progress and identify areas for improvement. Tajikistan is on track reaching the targets for Goal 1 (no poverty) and Goal 10 (reduced inequalities). There is significant progress on Goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions)¹¹ and Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities). However, at the current pace, Tajikistan risks missing 70 percent of the 84 SDG targets for which sufficient data is available.

Although the use of renewable energy has increased, energy intensity continues to increase (Goal 7). Access to finance for small-scale industries is also a concern (Goal 9). Other areas requiring improvement are social protection, sustainable and resilient agriculture, inclusive educational facilities, water-use and energy efficiency, labour rights and safe working environment, management of natural resources, and diversified and sustainable financing for development.

Although data is now available for 37 more indicators,¹² almost half of the SDG targets or 78 indicators, cannot be measured due to insufficient data.¹³ Moreover, outdated household data makes it difficult to measure changes in social welfare. Despite this limitation, the National SDG Tracker provided a valuable snapshot of Tajikistan's journey towards the SDGs.

Snapshot of SDG progress in Tajikistan, 2022



© Didor Sadulloev, UN Tajikistan, 2023

■ Progress ■ Regression ▨ Insufficient indicators ▨ Strength of Evidence

11. Note that less than one-third of indicators are available for assessing goal 16
 12. DESA, Global SDG Database: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>
 13. ESCAP, Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway: <https://data.unescap.org/data-analysis/sdg-data-availability>

How the UN contributes to the SDGs

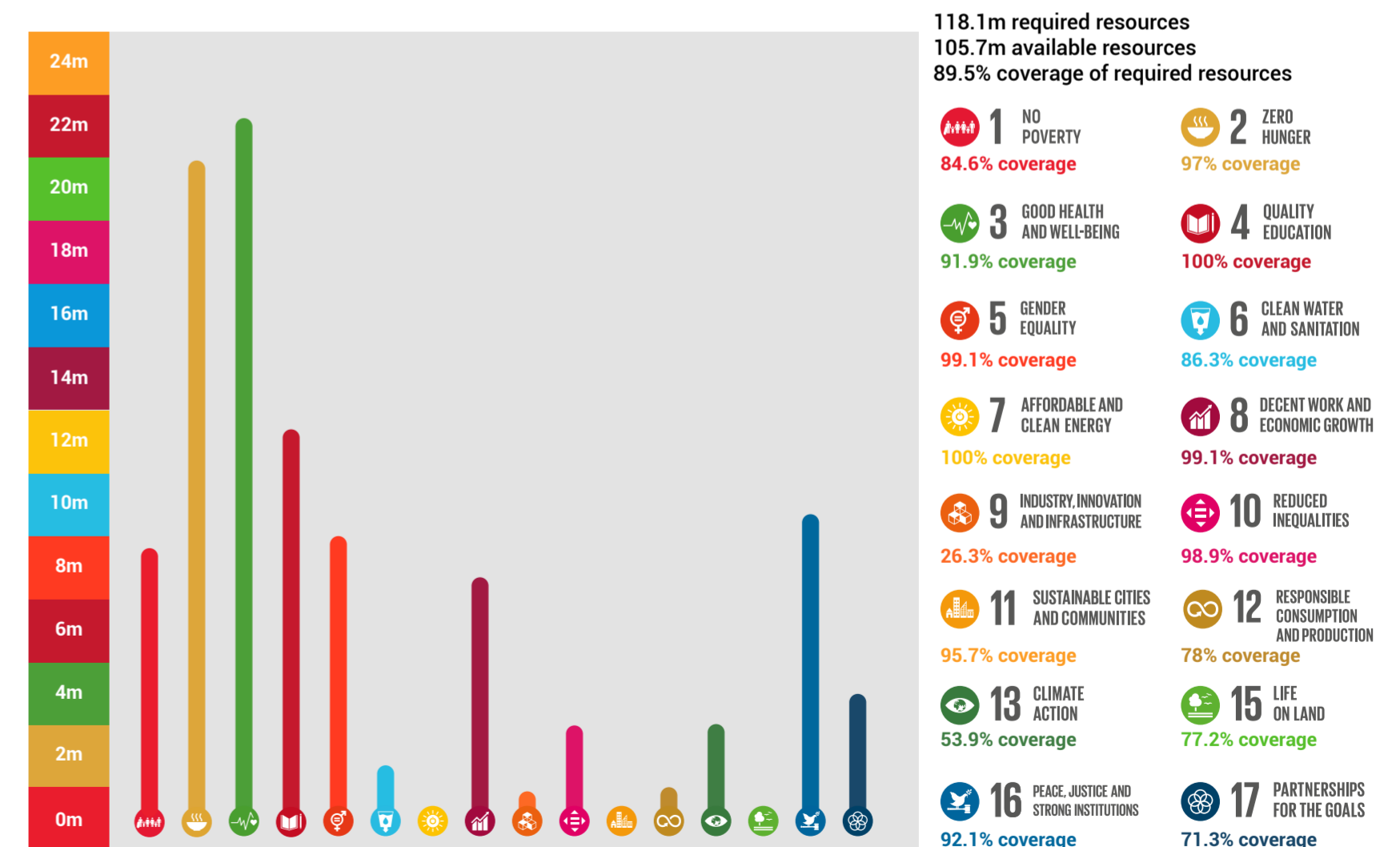
The graphic below provides a visual representation of resource allocations dedicated to each SDG by default, based on the available resources in joint workplan.



These figures exclude an additional \$9.1k of programmes available resources that are currently not yet attributed to a particular SDG on UNINFO.

UNSDCF Funding gap by SDGs

This visual does not represent the total funding gap for the achievement of each SDG in the country.



UNCT data-driven approach to sustainable development

UN in Tajikistan supported the Agency of Statistics to undertake pivotal initiatives to bolster its analytical capabilities aimed to promote evidence-based solutions for advancing the SDGs.

Key highlights in 2023

- Launched the “2023 Demographic and Health Study of Tajikistan MHS” with UNFPA, UNICEF, and USAID support, aiming to enhance decision-making with results expected in 2024.
- The UN-EU “Spotlight Programme” supported development of guidelines and an electronic system for documenting and analyzing violence against women and children.
- The UN RCO, the Agency of Statistics (AoS) and organizations of persons with disabilities collaboration resulted to advance data collection and analysis for persons with disabilities.
- A National SDG tracker developed with ESCAP and the UN RCO in collaboration with the Agency of Statistics under the President of Tajikistan to inform the 2nd Voluntary National Review presented during a High-level Political Forum in New York. This collaboration will be continued in 2024 as part of a Voluntary Local Review of Dushanbe city.
- Strengthened demographic statistics and supported the 2020 Population and Housing Census through the UNFPA partnership, contributing to the development of a demographic policy concept for Tajikistan up to 2040.
- Enhanced the nationalization of SDGs, improved data collection, and established an SDG tracking system with UNICEF’s cooperation, leading to statistical reporting enhancements.
- Focused on food security with FAO’s collaboration, conducting pilot surveys and capacity building on SDG indicators, contributing to accurate data gathering for the FIES report and crop production estimates.
- Prepared for the implementation of the World Health Survey Plus in Tajikistan with WHO, aiming to enhance health care, disability, and social protection data collection and analysis.



Chapter 2: Overview of UNSDCF Results

The UN and Government of Tajikistan Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2026 (UNSDCF) was formulated through a consultative process, with engagement of national authorities, civil society, private sector, academia, media and international development partners. UNSDCF represents a joint commitment of the Government of Tajikistan and UN in Tajikistan to work together and in partnership with relevant stakeholders to realize Tajikistan’s development priorities as articulated in the National Development Strategy 2016-2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, the Government of Tajikistan and the UN system in Tajikistan will work hand-in hand to ensure:

- 1) Inclusive Human Development
- 2) Sustainable, inclusive, and green economic growth
- 3) Integrated management of climate and environmental risk
- 4) People-centred governance and rule of law

UNSDCF aims to contribute towards sustainable economic growth, the creation of decent jobs, more effective and accountable public institutions, the delivery of quality social services, promoting social inclusion, and building national capacities and resilience. The Annual Results Report 2023 presents a summary of the progress towards each of the four outcomes of the UNSDCF. The summary also includes challenges and human stories from the field.



Outcome 1. Inclusive human development

By 2026, health, food security and nutrition, education and social protection systems and services are more effective, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and adequately financed



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Aligned with



UN Agencies



Funding partners



\$49,194,959

Budgeted

\$ 43,023,497 (87%)

Delivered



Well-financed and quality public services are crucial for improving human development in Tajikistan. UN system collaborated with the government to promote service delivery and make efficient use of limited public resources, while prioritizing services for vulnerable segments of the population and underserved areas.

Between 2019 and 2023, public spending on social protection, health, and education increased in nominal terms. However, in proportional terms, only in the health sector there has been a slight increase. Public expenditure on health accounted for 8 percent of the government expenditure in 2023 which is still low. The out-of-pocket share of households in total health expenditure is over 65 percent.¹⁴

With UN support, 97 percent of targeted children were immunized against preventable childhood diseases, such as measles and rubella, under the national programme. The government allocated USD 740,000 to improve the quality and outreach of reproductive health services under the UN-supported State Reproductive Health Programme. As a result, 86 percent of births are now attended by a skilled health professional. Furthermore, the UN system supported the government to provide services to prevent and treat HIV and TB for over 41,000 vulnerable people, including children and adolescents.

Progress

The UN system worked with the government, CSOs, and international development partners to further improve the delivery of essential social services, such as health care, education, social protection, water and sanitation, and food security and nutrition. Tangible results achieved through these partnerships in 2023 include:

Health

- Country-wide measles and rubella immunization campaigns conducted for children ages 6 months to 15 years.
- 14 national policies and regulations revised to strengthen public services in sexual and reproductive health, infection prevention and control and management of non-communicable diseases.
- Capabilities built in a quarter of health facilities to deliver a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services (SRHS).
- Improved capacities resulted in decreasing vertical HIV transmission rates. Further, for the first time ever, HIV treatment services made available to labor migrants in destination countries.

Social Protection

- A 3-year plan of action formulated to operationalize the National Social Protection Strategy and make it more responsive to external shocks such as disasters and pandemics.
- A Strategy for Regulation of Migration with key priorities and a set of expected results launched to promote safe and orderly migration.
- Over 3,700 refugees and asylum seekers served through tailored social protection interventions to ensure their well-being.
- Contingency plans and capacities of relevant government

14. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.OOPC.CH.ZS?locations=TJ>

agencies and CSOs developed to rapidly scale-up humanitarian cash transfers in the event of disasters and shocks.

Education

- A Mid-term Education Action Plan (MTEA 2024-2026) developed that includes in-service teacher training and efforts to prevent exclusion of vulnerable children and adolescents.
- MTEA also supports the implementation of the Competency Based Education (CBE) reform, one of the priority reforms of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES).
- A National Roadmap on Education System Digital Transformation endorsed that sets out a policy framework for guiding sustainable implementation of digitalization in the education sector.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- A costed strategic plan formulated to achieve universal hand hygiene in institutions and homes across the country.
- A WASH sector review and the adoption of the National Water Strategy. The government has made commitment to increase funding and access to clean water and sanitation, focusing on schools and healthcare facilities.
- Around 77,000 and 300,000 people have access to clean water and basic sanitation, respectively.

Food Security and Nutrition

- New strategies and plans developed for school feeding, micronutrient fortification, and eradication of hunger in targeted food insecure regions.
- Over 550,000 school children living in food insecure regions enrolled in grades 1 through 4 and provided with school meals. Around half of the children were girls.
- More than 205,000 people provided with food assistance in 42 districts and towns, including those affected by floods.
- 126 school-based food and income generation projects implemented, including greenhouses, and animal, bee, and fish farms in 118 schools across 31 districts.
- 1.5M people reached through media-based SBCC interventions promoting healthy food, dietary diversity, and hand hygiene. 58,000 pregnant/lactating women received nutrition/breastfeeding counseling. 281,000 children aged 6-11 months and 2.1M children aged 12-59 months received Vitamin A supplements. 5,600 children aged 6-59 months treated for acute malnutrition.



© WFP Tajikistan, 2023

Challenges

- Weak health infrastructure, especially at the district level, unequal distribution of health personnel between urban and rural areas, and frequent staff turnover.
- Silos and fragmentation in policy development and programme delivery is one of the key concerns. For example, social protection programmes require greater coordination, integration, and harmonized targeting criteria.
- Similarly, the implementation of the competency-based education reforms require a shared vision among stakeholders and a consolidated action plan with adequate budget.
- Connectivity mapping revealed that only 16 percent of schools have internet access, making internet connectivity a key area of concern.
- High levels of stigma and discrimination against persons living with HIV. The criminalization of HIV transmission affects the delivery of prevention and treatment services.
- Treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition is hampered by a government ban on the import of some therapeutic milk and food and a reliance on non-standard and riskier therapies.
- Refugees are not included in the national social protection and pension system.
- There is a general lack of disaggregated data for defining vulnerability and targeting social services to the most vulnerable.
- Despite the progress made since 2020, government budget allocations for essential social services are still insufficient. Expenditure on social assistance in Tajikistan remains the lowest in the region with inadequate coverage for the poorest households.¹⁵

Stories from the field

Legal support for women and children 'left behind': Momai Shakar's journey.

In a village in Dushti District, Khatlon region, lives a remarkable woman named Mahmurodova Shakarmokh or 'Momai Shakar'. Now 78, she has endured poverty and overcome challenges to raise a family of 10 children and 7 grandchildren. Few of her family members had proper identity papers and all her grandchildren were without birth certificates.

This made them 'invisible' and unable to access several basic social services including education, health care and social protection. People who do not have identity papers face challenges. It affects every aspect of their life, including registering for employment, marriage, and participation in elections and other civic affairs.

A UN-supported programme to empower women and children left behind by migrant workers strove to address

this gap. The programme was run by IOM, UNICEF, and UN Women. In close collaboration with municipalities, Momai Shakar and families like hers were provided legal services to obtain birth certificates for their children.

Through this programme, more than 400 women and 2,200 children have secured civil documentation and gained access to the essential social services. With proper documents, Momai Shakar and her family and many other families are now able to seek better education, livelihoods, and it helps them to break from the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

The journey of Momai Shakar and her family is a testament to the power of perseverance and information which can help people secure lives of dignity.

¹⁵ Spending was 0.8 percent of GDP compared to an average of 2 percent of GDP amongst regional comparators IMF, Republic of Tajikistan: 2022 rticle IV Consultation-Press Release, March 2023.



© UN Tajikistan, 2023



© Judith Sprunken, WHO Tajikistan, 2023



Immunization and health care at -45° C

Isolated, harsh weather, poor roads – this is the reality for people living on the Murghab plateau in eastern Tajikistan. At nearly 4,000 m above sea level, winter temperatures can drop to -45° C. The plateau is also home to some of the most dedicated health workers in Tajikistan.

Nurse Yunus and Doctor Abdimanap serve Karakul village (pop. 762) and Murghab Town (pop. 6,000). With their health team members, they worked tirelessly in 2023 to carry-out a nationwide immunization campaign to stop a measles outbreak and prevent rubella infection. Running a campaign is even harder in Murghab because the people are mostly nomadic and move with their livestock.

Joint work by WHO and UNICEF has helped to train health providers and equip local health facilities with essential equipment, vaccines, and a cold chain. Health staff are now confident to explain the benefits of vaccination, and, together with local religious leaders and elders, to build the trust of the community and counter disinformation.

Yunus regularly crosses rough terrain to provide care to those who are living in yurts and settlements in remote areas and to locate children not yet vaccinated:

"It is difficult here in the winter months...but we go. We help people round the clock. It is a tough job, but it has been my childhood dream to have a medical education and to serve."

At the health centre in Murghab town, the hall is filled with parents, grandparents and their children who have come to be vaccinated. Trained as a surgeon, Dr. Abdimanap chose to return to the plateau to serve his community. After a general health check-up, the children are invited with their parents to be immunized. Dr Abdimanap acutely understands the importance: **"This campaign is crucial. I got sick with measles as a child. I hadn't been vaccinated, and I fell very ill. This is why I want to protect all children in Murghab from preventable illnesses."**

Conditions have improved significantly on the Murghab plateau. The primary health care facility is in better condition, allowing the doctor and his staff to provide essential health services to the entire population.

This story is adapted from: <https://www.who.int/tajikistan/news/item/11-09-2023-providing-health-care-at--45--c--tajikistan-s-heroes-of-the-world-s-highest-plateau>

Outcome 2. Sustainable, inclusive, and green economic growth

By 2026, public institutions and the private sector collaborate to implement innovative and gender-responsive policy frameworks and actions to green the economy and strengthen inclusion of vulnerable groups



© Julia Wimmerlin, 2023

Aligned with



UN Agencies



Funding partners



\$ 8,329,887

\$ 7,482,564 (90%)

● Budgeted

● Delivered



The UN system continued to work with national partners to promote green and people-centered economic development. UN Agencies provided evidence-based and risk-informed policy solutions and programmes to enhance productivity, promote sustainable food systems, and increase job creation, and the adoption of international standards and good practices in economic governance.

A range of initiatives were rolled out to spur business development, increase competitiveness and value chain development, particularly in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is the main source of livelihoods and contributes to about a quarter of GDP. The UN system worked with partners to promote innovation with a focus on digital economy and entrepreneurship and interventions to enable job seekers, especially young people, labour migrants, and vulnerable groups to engage in productive and decent employment.

Progress

- A National Action Plan for agricultural reform, including a digitalization strategy was finalized. Amendments to the law on cooperatives will benefit smallholder farmers, including women producer groups improving their access to critical agricultural inputs.
- A new legislation and digital tools streamlined quick approval, certification and registration of seeds for farmers, reducing duplication and delays. Access to high quality seeds is essential for boosting agricultural productivity and advancing the agri-food industry.

- A national gap analysis and road map prepared for improving the traceability in value chains for the circular economy transition. The adoption of circularity in product development benefits business, people, and the environment.
- A National Programme for Productive Employment (2023-2027) was launched. Decent work is a key policy objective of the government along with reforms in the social protection system.
- Over 170 businesses with enhanced tools and resources improved their productivity and competitiveness. Small businesses play a vital role in driving economic growth and generating employment opportunities.
- A new policy on car sharing and car-pooling initiatives was developed to promote urban mobility.
- Over 13,000 people, with over half of them being women, benefited from employment and market aligned skills development programmes. UN support led to the establishment of remote job centers customized for youth in Dushanbe, Khorogh and Panjikent.
- The National Food Fortification Law 2019 rollout strengthened through study tours to Philippines, training of 20 master trainers, establishing national standards for wheat flour fortification premix, and developing a roadmap for fortification.



© WFP-Tajikistan, 2023

Challenges

- Low investment in digital technologies and equipment coupled with poor internet access makes it difficult to provide skills development training to more young people, especially girls in rural areas. School connectivity mapping (see Outcome 1) shows that only 16 percent of schools have internet access.
- There is limited private sector investments in the economy, limiting employment creation. The growing informality is also a concern. The country is over-reliant on remittances as fewer formal sector jobs are being created locally.
- Major gaps in investment policies and regulatory environment undermine the growth of a vibrant private sector and effective mobilization of domestic and foreign direct investment.¹⁶ Less diversified economy is limiting the creation of more and better jobs for young people who are entering the labour force.
- Limited fiscal space of the government and underdeveloped capital market is a constraint. There is a need for the government to develop innovative financial solutions, including green bonds and blended finance in collaboration with the business sector to finance the SDGs.

Stories from the field

Tackling the impact of labour migration for women and their families

Seasonal labour migration is a fact of life for many Tajik households. Every year around half a million working-age people, mostly men, leave the country to work as temporary labour migrants.¹⁷ The remittances they send home account for an estimated 27 percent of GDP.¹⁸

But not all families of labour migrants thrive. Many are 'left behind' or abandoned. This happened to Dilafruz Pakhlavonova from Dusti district of the Khatlon region.

When her husband migrated abroad for work, she was left without any means to support herself or to raise and educate her child. Labour migration can lead to numerous hardships for the women and their families left behind, including divorce, homelessness, poor access to land and assets, and food insecurity.

A UN joint programme involving FAO, IOM, UNICEF, and UN Women sought to change this all-too-common story. Groups of women in under-served rural areas received

training and support to grow food, diversify production, and improve their livelihoods.

The participants in the programme were taught organic farming methods, received seeds and tools, set up plant nurseries and greenhouses, and cultivated higher value market garden produce such as mushrooms for sale in local and regional markets.

Dilafruz after completing her training, prepared a business plan and now cultivates a 100m² greenhouse which helps her to earn a living and provide for her family. Twenty women's groups participated in this joint programme. Today over 500 women and their families enjoy better food security and the opportunity to sell surplus produce to earn an income.

¹⁶ For example, there are concerns related to double taxation, compliance with ILO labour standards, and limited judicial independence. Investment Policy Review, UNCTAD, November 2022.
¹⁷ Asian Development Bank, December 2020. Strengthening Support for Labor Migration in Tajikistan: Assessment and Recommendations.
¹⁸ World Bank data, 2020 in UN, CCA, *ibid*.



Dilafruz standing at the entrance of her greenhouse, Dusti Tajikistan @FAO Tajikistan



Outcome 3. Integrated management of climate and environmental risks

By 2026, natural resources management is inclusive and sustainable with integrated policy frameworks and actions to enhance climate-change adaptation and livelihoods of vulnerable groups.

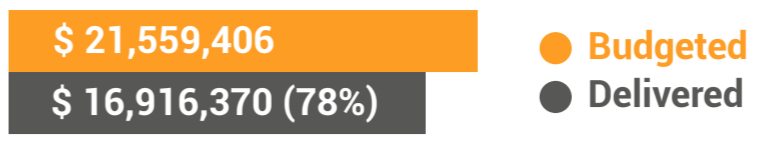


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Aligned with

UN Agencies

Funding partners



The unsustainable management of natural resources in Tajikistan is negatively impacting livelihoods and putting vulnerable groups at risk. Human induced climate change is contributing to abnormal variability in rainfall and increasing temperatures, which are causing more frequent and intense droughts and storms. The degradation of water, air, forests, and agricultural land are undermining biodiversity. Vulnerability to disaster risks underscores the importance of sustainable economic growth and effective management of natural resources.

During the reporting period, the UN system supported the government in the design of a set of policy frameworks and plans to strengthen natural resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. These included a national renewable energy programme and climate change adaptation plans for the water, energy, transport, and agriculture sectors.

The UN system supported the government in co-organizing the 2023 UN Water Conference in New York to promote global targets for sustainable water resources management. With assistance from the UN, the government formulated the National Water Strategy 2040. Moreover, support was provided to strengthen capabilities and funding for River Basin authorities to coordinate work among national institutions.

Tajikistan is disaster-prone and annual economic losses from disasters can reach up to 1.3 percent of GDP. To reduce disaster risks, the UN system launched the Early Warnings for All Initiative¹⁹ (EW4All) to enhance disaster risk knowledge, detection, observation, monitoring, analysis and forecasting.

At the local level, the UN system supported the government and civil society partners in improving the livelihoods of over 67,000 vulnerable people in under-served areas of the country with community-based interventions on natural resource management, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

In a first for Tajikistan, a green loans programme was launched to support households living in remote and

mountainous areas of the GBAO region to install solar technologies. Over 500 loans have been issued, half of them to women, which has indirectly improved the living conditions of nearly 6,000 people.

Progress

- Watershed management plans were formulated for the Kafernigan River Basin with concrete actions to prevent water pollution from mine tailings.
- A national environmental performance review was carried out with 60 national experts. Legal and policy recommendations were provided on greening the economy and actions for climate change, air protection, water and waste management, biodiversity, and protected areas.
- Across 35 districts, over 7,179 people, including smallholder farmers, learned new skills to plan and implement ecosystem-based interventions to enhance the productivity of their farms and businesses.
- Through a 'food assistance for asset scheme' in 16 districts, highly vulnerable to climate change and disasters, food-insecure households received cash assistance to build assets such as greenhouses and irrigation systems.
- To sustain the implementation of EW4All, the capabilities of 670 technical specialists across different sectors were strengthened to carry out effective emergency and disaster preparedness planning and response.
- Together with the government and Red Crescent Society, the UN system offered immediate humanitarian assistance to over 214,000 people affected by avalanches, earthquakes, floods, and landslides.
- Pollution abatement measures were implemented for the Syr Darya river, and a new initiative rolled out will improve energy efficiency in the construction supply chain industry.

19. <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/243772-un-secretary-general-s-early-warnings-all-initiative-launched-tajikistan>

© UN Tajikistan, 2023



Challenges

- Better coordination is needed for horizontal policy design and implementation across environment, energy, agriculture, and livelihoods, particularly for rural communities and vulnerable groups.
- The national social protection system can be further expanded to address climate-induced shocks and stressors.

Stories from the field

Solar-powered poultry farming: Mahbuba's green journey

In the village of Dara in Khatlon oblast, Mahbuba and her family operate a mid-sized poultry farm with 2,000 chickens producing about 1,200 eggs daily. High demand encouraged Mahbuba to expand egg production. But poultry farming in remote areas comes with many challenges.

'We had a hard time taking care of our chicken in the wintertime due to blackouts. We had to rely on expensive firewood or a diesel generator,' says Mahbuba. Heating and hot water are essential for running a poultry farm.

Under a UN-supported green energy programme funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Mahbuba discovered the potential of solar energy. A grant enabled her to install a 5 kW solar system. Since the installation, product quality has improved, and annual profit is up by 9 percent.

Mahbuba now relies less on expensive fossil fuels and firewood. She has become a role model in her area in the use of green technology. Her farm is also creating

- Inter-governmental cooperation in Central Asia on urgent cross-boundary issues is still too limited, especially in the management of water resources and climate risks. Greater cooperation among countries in the region can reduce tensions over access to natural resources.

employment for other women in the community. Mahbuba has gone on to form a network with other women entrepreneurs in the region to share experiences and best practices.

Under the programme, the grant recipients are assessed rigorously for financial feasibility and environmental sustainability. The programme has improved the livelihoods of 34 small and medium-sized business owners.

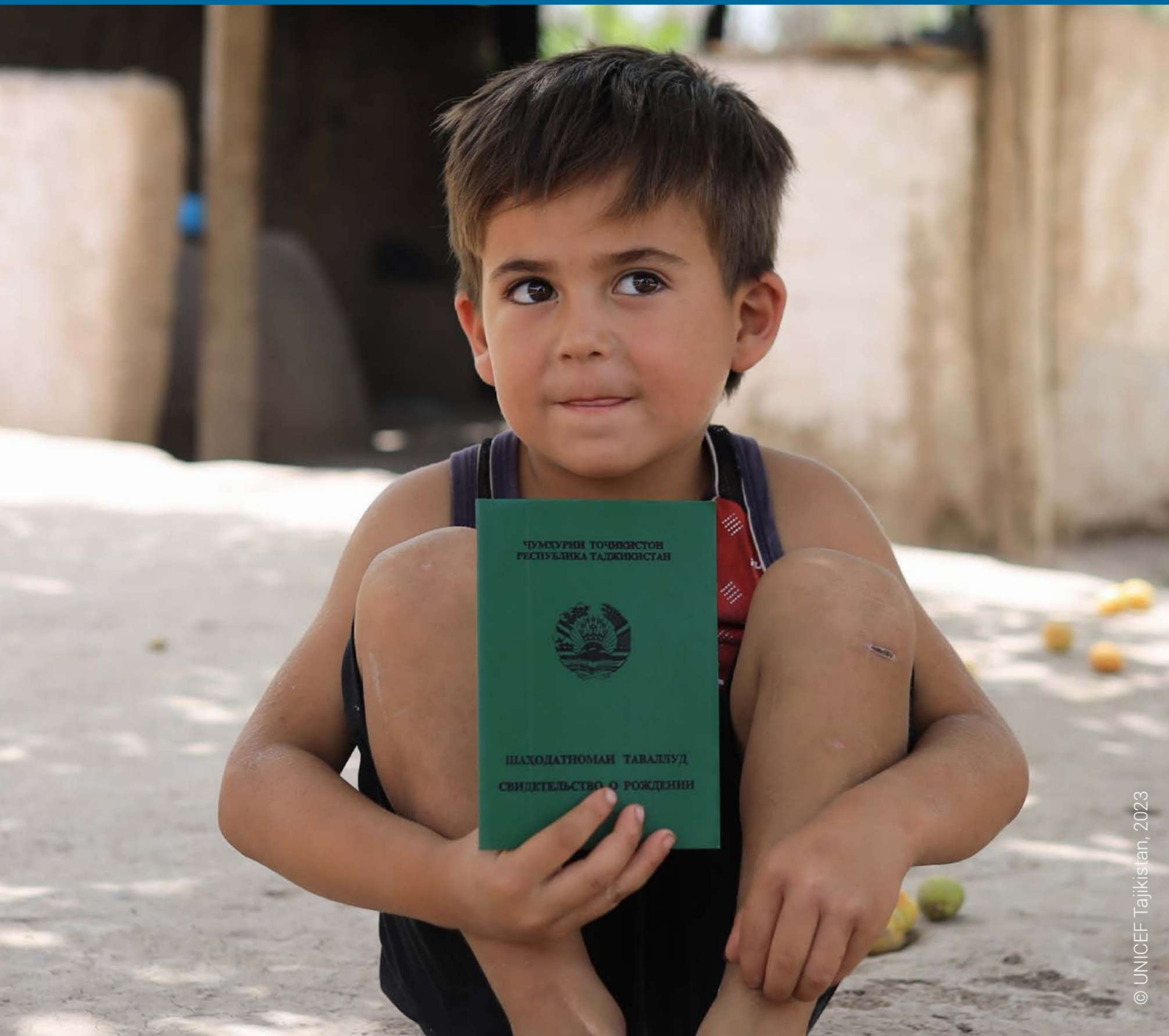
'The solar system provides enough power to meet the needs of my business and my family, and we no longer worry about blackouts or fuel shortages. Our energy costs are down by more than 50 percent. This solar system has been a lifesaver for us.' -- Mahbuba

This story is adapted from: <https://www.undp.org/tajikistan/stories/mahbubas-green-journey-dara-village-tajikistani-rural-woman-inspires-community-solar-powered-poultry-farm-0>



Outcome 4. People-centered governance and rule of law

By 2026, governance is more inclusive, transparent and accountable, serving to protect human rights, empower women, and reduce violence and discrimination in alignment with the international commitments of Tajikistan



© UNICEF Tajikistan, 2023

Aligned with



UN Agencies



Funding partners



\$ 18,598,596

\$ 14,386,524 (77%)

Budgeted

Delivered



The UN system partnered with the government and other stakeholders to support pragmatic governance reforms to strengthen accountability systems, including in the public administration, the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, and human rights institutions. These reforms can enable the government to engage more effectively with people to shape and deliver transparent, fair, and more gender-responsive services.

With UN support a first-ever National Human Rights Strategy, 2038 was adopted to translate and implement the country's human rights commitments. The strategy provided the basis for a National Action Plan for the period 2023-2025. The plan will strengthen institutions and enable the government to implement recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review.²⁰

Furthermore, the government launched a new state programme to end violence against women and children. Advocacy and technical assistance from the UN system led to changes in 14 related laws and policies, bringing them into alignment with international commitments and standards.

UN advocacy and support led to the adoption of legal amendments to introduce prohibition of all forms of violence against children, including sexual and gender-based violence, to remove age limitations for children to submit complaints and to be heard in judicial proceedings; this is a very important progress for all children and young people to be heard by social services, police and the courts and to be protected from violence.

Progress

- Over 3,800 women and girls of reproductive age received free professional services during the Mobile Health Fairs, including consultations on family planning and reproductive health and essential GBV services.
- Over 4,800 stateless persons and asylum seekers received counseling and legal advice which helped to resolve their cases.
- Identified 1,832 stateless individuals, helped 3,379 gain Tajik citizenship, 11 acquired nationality elsewhere, and documented 410 as stateless. Provided legal support to 1,389 asylum-seekers, resulting in 651 being recognized as refugees in Tajikistan.

- The Supreme Court clarified HIV-related criminal proceedings to recognize that people living with HIV with an undetectable viral load cannot transmit HIV sexually.²¹
- Partnerships with 56 CSOs and youth organizations were established to promote women's leadership and increase participation of vulnerable groups in public life and policymaking. This included a new network of CSOs: 'Life without Violence'.
- CSOs were supported to interact with the government and international partners to explore funding opportunities.
- 80 journalists and bloggers learned to use social networks to advocate for freedom of speech and gender equality.
- Over 2,000 civil servants and 330 staff of CSOs increased their capabilities to implement governance and judicial reform measures.
- The list of prohibited jobs for women in Tajikistan was revised, including removing 141 out of 336 restricted occupations.
- In 2023, the UN supported important systemic changes to prevent and respond to violence:
 - The Office of the Ombudsman was supported to monitor and respond effectively to cases of sexual and gender-based violence.
 - Police services in cities and districts across the country implemented procedures to offer coordinated services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.
 - The Agency of Statistics created an electronic database to record sexual and gender-based violence with standardized indicators.
 - 15 CSOs/ Women's Crisis Centers used the online data registration for reporting on GBV while assisting survivors.
 - Survivor support services were further boosted with new support rooms and 24/7 health and counseling services offered together by the Ministry of Health and CSOs.



UNDP Tajikistan, 2023

20. UN. Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Tajikistan, A/HRC/49/12. See Matrix of recommendations: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/hrbodies/upr/documents/session39/tj/2022-07-14/UPR39_Tajikistan_Thematic_List_of_Recommendations.docx
21. See Undetectable = Untransmissible: https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/undetectable-untransmissible_en.pdf

Challenges

- Reform of the Civil Registration System and universal birth registration regardless of the legal status and possession of identity documents by parents remains a challenge and the scope of statelessness in the country is unknown. Undocumented citizens, mostly women and children, face statelessness due to financial barriers in obtaining documentation and accessing public services.
- 15 refugees and asylum-seekers were refouled in 2023 (163 since 2021) in breach of international and national

law. Tajikistan did not yet accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; Tajikistan has not yet established statelessness determination procedures and does not make available disaggregated statistics on stateless people.

- There is a limited interface between the government and CSOs. Increasing space and collaboration with civil society can improve public accountability and delivery of services to the people.



Stories from the field

From violence to independence: Helping survivors to become entrepreneurs.

Zulaikho²², a 35-year-old Tajik woman, lives with her 8-year old daughter in a modest one-room apartment in Hissar, west of Dushanbe. Born with cerebral palsy, Zulaikho endured discrimination and mockery from a young age. In the 10th grade, she enrolled in a sewing lyceum for persons with disabilities and secured a job in a sewing factory in Dushanbe. At 25, Zulaikho married and returned to live with her husband's family in Hissar. But the family became abusive and humiliated her endlessly. Her health deteriorated and rather than endure further abuse she divorced. At that time, she was three months pregnant. Determined to be self-reliant, she started a small business selling children's toys, sweets, and drinks from a cart. She also worked in a shoe shop.

Zulaikho's life took a positive turn when she joined a UN-supported entrepreneurship programme for survivors of gender-based violence, funded by the global Spotlight Initiative.²³ Following business training, she prepared a plan and received funding and an electric scooter.

The scooter enabled her to expand her business and increase her income by selling more products and providing delivery services. Zulaikho can now afford a safe, furnished home for herself and her daughter – something previously beyond reach. Since the programme began over 120 women have been assisted.

'One thing I regret is that I tolerated domestic violence for too long,' she reflects. "I lost my health in that relationship, and that's something you can't get back. My advice to women suffering from violence is not to tolerate it.' -- Zulaikho

There is #NoExcuse for gender-based violence. If you, your loved ones or friends have experienced or witnessed any form of gender-based violence, do not stay silent. Reach out to the hotline at 1313 – they are always ready to provide assistance and support.



22. Name changed to protect the survivor's identity.
23. <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org>. See: <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/tajikistan>

Partnerships and Financing for 2030 Agenda



A key ingredient for promoting sustainable development is partnerships with the government, civil society organizations, academia, the private sector, and international development partners. Partnerships are essential for knowledge sharing, co-creation, and mobilizing financing for development. Below are some highlights of such partnerships that the UN system has harnessed in Tajikistan.

With UN support, the government carried out the 2nd Voluntary National Review²⁶ (VNR) to gauge progress toward the SDGs. Tajikistan presented its review at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), July 2023. The UN system facilitated wide-ranging consultations with CSOs, vulnerable groups, the private sector and media organizations. A national data platform is now available to assess progress against the 127 of 231 SDG indicators for which data is available.

Local and regional governments are at the forefront of implementing solutions to achieve the SDGs. The UN system is now supporting Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan, to undertake a Voluntary Local Review²⁷ (VLR) to promote strategic and sustainable urban development. In the face of increasing rural to urban migration, the VLR promotes strategic and sustainable urban planning and development.

Tajikistan is disaster-prone and annual economic losses from disasters can reach up to 1.3 percent of GDP. The UN and the Government of Tajikistan launched the Secretary-General's Early Warnings for All Initiative²⁸ (EW4All) to enhance disaster risk knowledge, detection, observation, monitoring, analysis and forecasting. This initiative brings together the state, international partners, civil society and private sector to implement actions for strengthening the early warning system in Tajikistan.

The UN system works to enable youth (15-30 years), especially young women, to have a greater stake in the development of the country. In 2023, Y-PEER Tajikistan (Hamsol-ba-Hamsol) was recognized by the Global Y-PEER Network as a top country network to design and implement sustainable development initiatives for young people.

A partnership with the Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School will strengthen training programmes for social workers, health professionals, and teachers about mental health and psycho-social care for children and their caregivers recovering from conflict and trauma. This is being done in collaboration with the Psychology Department of Tajikistan National University.

A new partnership for USD 86 million was established with the Global Partnership for Education³⁰ (GPE), the Islamic Development Bank³¹ (IsDB), and the UN system to support competency-based curriculum reform and to build 58 schools. Equipped with ICT equipment, furniture, and lab items, the schools will offer spaces to over 15,000 children in rural areas³².

Together with USAID, the UN system launched a new programme for USD 7.5 million to improve school readiness by providing modern, inclusive, student-centered, and Tajik-appropriate early childhood education. It will cover more than 200 early childhood education centers throughout the country, and be inclusive of all children, including girls, and children with disabilities³³.

A USD 10 million partnership with the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to promote climate change adaptation and building resilience.

A USD 5 million programme partnership with USAID to eliminate gender-based violence.

The UNRC served as the Deputy Chair of the Development Coordination Council³⁴ to promote UN-led initiatives, enhance collaboration with development partners, and increase financing for development. One such example is the collaboration between the World Bank and the UN system to modernize the social protection system in the country.

The UN system convened several events to solicit the participation of the government and non-state entities in regional exchanges, training and workshops to foster south-south cooperation and enhance regional policy and technical cooperation.

³² <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/tajikistan>

³³ <https://www.usaid.gov/tajikistan/press-releases/dec-07-2023-usaid-and-unicef-launch-75-million-activity-inclusive-pre-primary-education-tajikistan>

³⁴ <https://untj.org/dcc/>

Civic activism for gender equality and women's empowerment

Nigora Valikhodjaeva is a passionate gender activist. With UN support, Nigora was able to complete an advanced course from the School of Gender Activists in Tajikistan. Through intensive training, she learned about the intricacies of gender equality, exploring various facets in Tajikistan from legislation to social and traditional norms to the role of media in perpetuating gender stereotypes. This broadened her perspective, leading her to challenge personal stereotypes and prioritize women's rights.

Equipped with newfound knowledge and skills, Nigora applied her expertise as a programme manager and Gender Specialist at Y-PEER Tajikistan³⁵, an NGO. She initiated changes within the organization, conducting gender analyses of policies and project proposals. Her efforts were recognized when her independent project proposal, addressing gender-based violence among youth, secured a grant, marking a significant step towards social innovation and awareness.

'Big changes must start with yourself' -- Nigora Valikhodjaeva

³⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ypeer.tj/>



© GNWP, 2023

UN system working together

The UN system provides strategic and value-added contribution towards the goals of the National Development Strategy and SDGs. In 2023, UN system worked with government and other partners to identify more integrated solutions to address development priorities. These include:

Investing in people

- Evidence-based advocacy with the government for increased and more effective social sector spending and coverage of essential health services, especially in under-served rural areas.
- Strengthened systems and policies to improve food security and nutrition, including a crop and food security assessment, an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, and strategies and plans for school feeding and micronutrient fortification.



© Didor Sadulloev, UN Tajikistan, 2023

- Major advances in promoting public health services for women and increasing immunization against preventable childhood diseases like measles and rubella.
- Convened national and international stakeholders to conduct a WASH sector review that provided the basis for a national water strategy and commitments from government to improve access to clean drinking water and safely managed sanitation services, especially in schools and health care facilities.

Making growth sustainable and inclusive

- A national action plan for agricultural reform, including digitalization, gives smallholders greater access to agricultural inputs.
- Improved traceability of value chains for a circular economy transition that is good for business, people, and the environment.

- A national programme for Productive Employment (2023-2027) to accompany ongoing social protection reform which is critical for rapid poverty reduction.
- A national strategy for regulation of migration processes in the Republic of Tajikistan that lists priorities in external and internal migration, ecological migration, labour migration, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- Employment and skills development programmes that reached 13,000 people, half of them were women.

Managing natural wealth and responding to climate change

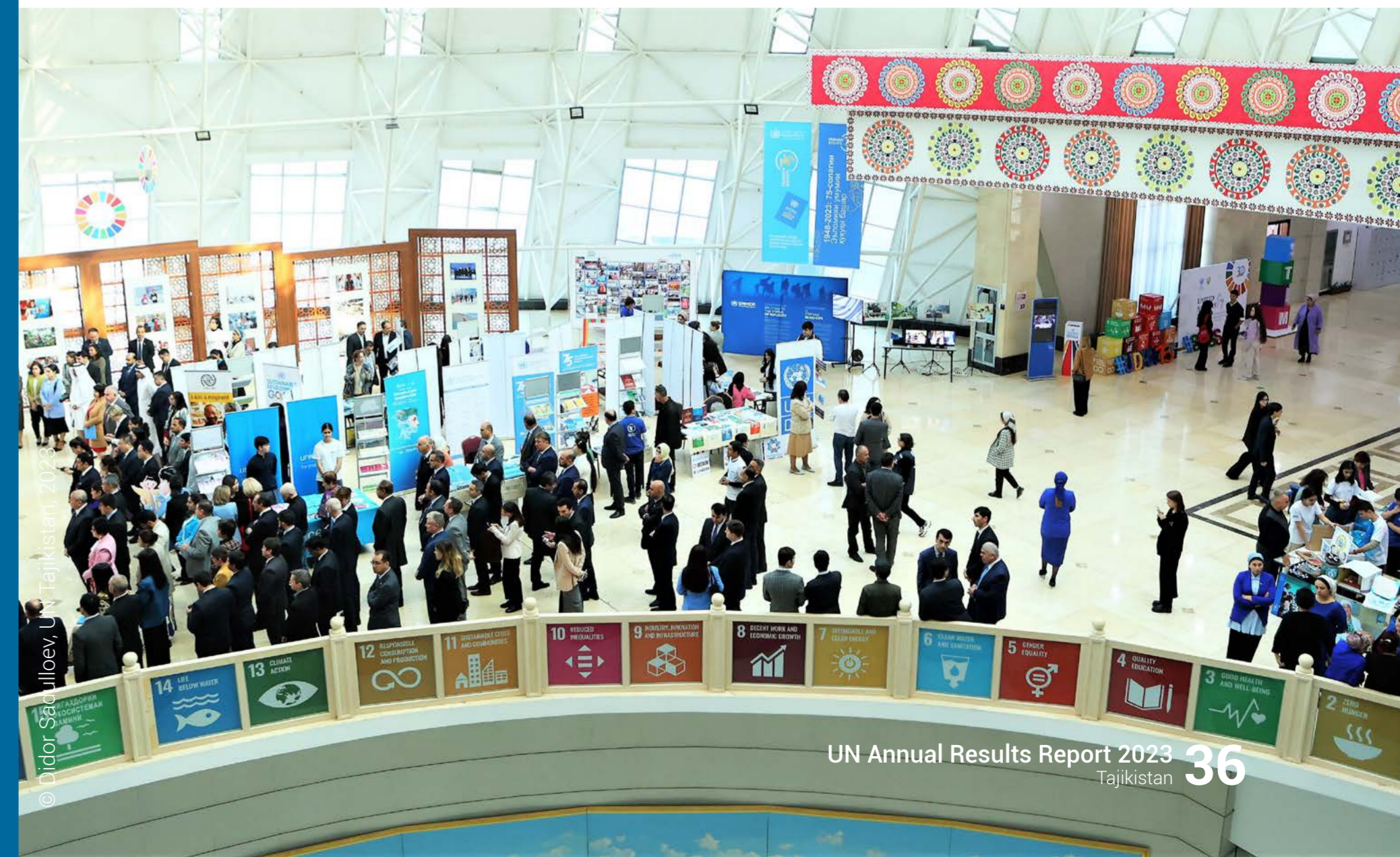
- A national renewable energy programme and climate change adaptation plans for the water, energy, transport, and agriculture sectors.
- Support for the government to co-organize with the Kingdom of Netherlands the 2023 UN Water Conference to promote global targets for sustainable water resources management and to update the National Water Strategy to 2040.
- Support to organize the international conference "Central Asia: Towards a sustainable future through strong regional institutions" dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
- Organization of the 8th session of the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) in Dushanbe and election of Tajikistan as a Chair for the next term.
- Launch of the Early warning for All Initiative (EW4All) to enhance disaster risk knowledge, detection, observation, monitoring, analysis and forecasting.
- Introduction of a green loans programme to expand use of solar power in the GBAO region, which helped nearly 6,000 people.

Good governance and rule of law

- The adoption of a first-ever National Human Rights Strategy, 2038.
- A draft state programme to end violence against women and children and the adoption of legal amendments to remove age limitations for people to report on violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.
- Partnerships with 56 CSOs and youth organizations were established to promote women's leadership and increased participation of vulnerable groups in public life and policymaking; this included a new network of CSOs: 'Life without Violence'.

Looking forward into 2024, the UN system will:

- Expand partnerships with civil society organizations to sustain investments in social services, localize best practices, and share knowledge.
- Engage more strategically with the private sector, particularly around IGA opportunities for youth, especially girls.
- Sustain dialogue with the government and development partners to embed the SDGs into laws, policies and programmes and increase financing for development.
- Continue to use the UNSDCF Results Groups to ensure coherence, harness the potential for joint work, and work with government partners through joint monitoring and performance reviews.

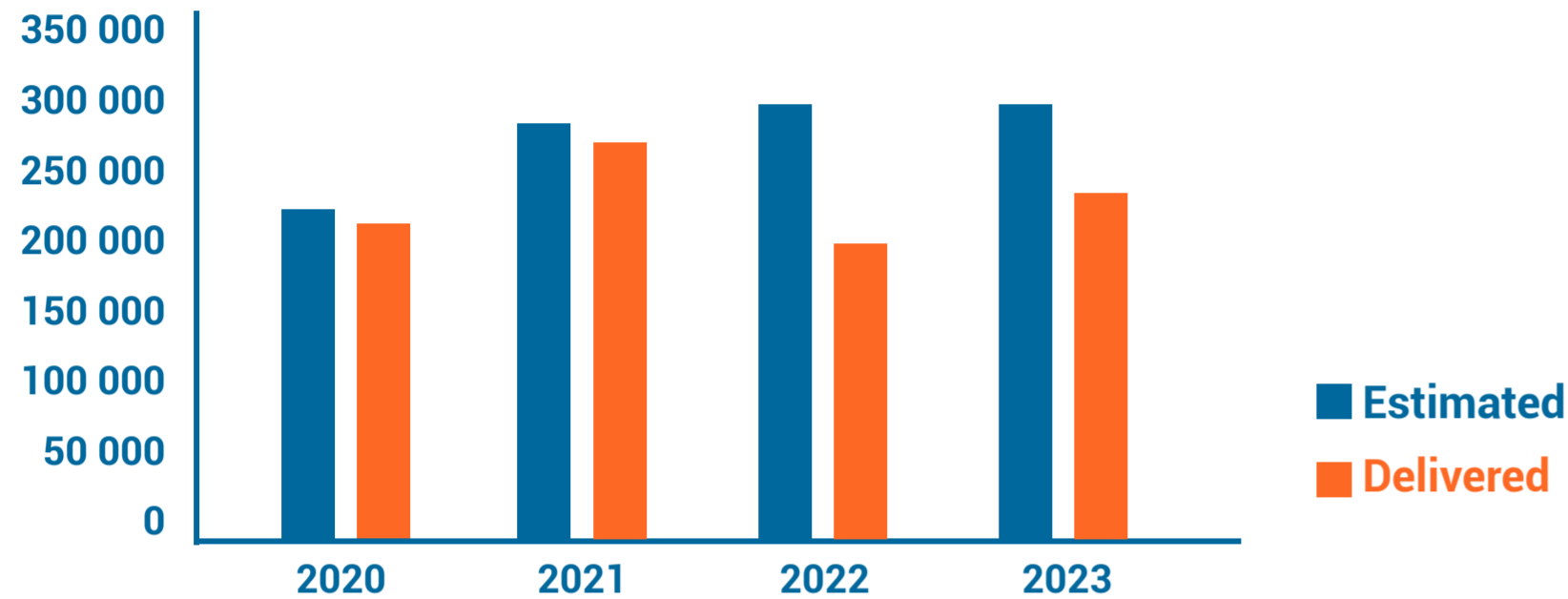


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Operating as One

In 2023, the UN in Tajikistan continued the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS). Endorsed in 2020, the BOS aims to improve the UN's operational efficiency across six common service lines: procurement, ICT, administration, human resources, logistics, and finance. The BOS identified the potential of gaining USD 1.5 mln over five years through direct savings in goods and services across the different service lines. Based on the BOS Annual Review, the realized cost avoidance for 2023 was USD 235,977, and the actual cumulative total from 2020 to 2023 was USD 968,459, or 65 percent of the overall target.

Estimated vs realized cost avoidance by year



Despite several challenges faced by the UN agencies during this period, the cost avoidance rate was quite significant. The COVID-19 which impacted some BOS activities in previous years gradually eased in 2023 while the continued war in Ukraine and its impact saw UN Entities having to be careful not to procure goods/services from sanctioned suppliers thus limiting supplier choices. In addition, UN Agencies experienced difficulties in logistics and traditional value chains that increased cost of goods and transportation.

Highlights

- As part of the "Greening the Blue" agenda, a solar system was installed at the UN House. The system now contributes around 30 percent of the office's electricity, resulting in significant cost savings and reducing the office's carbon footprint. In the coming year, solar batteries are planned for the security room and ICT servers.
- The vehicle pooling service shared by UNICEF, WFP, RCO, and UNESCO continues to save costs. There are plans to expand vehicle pooling.

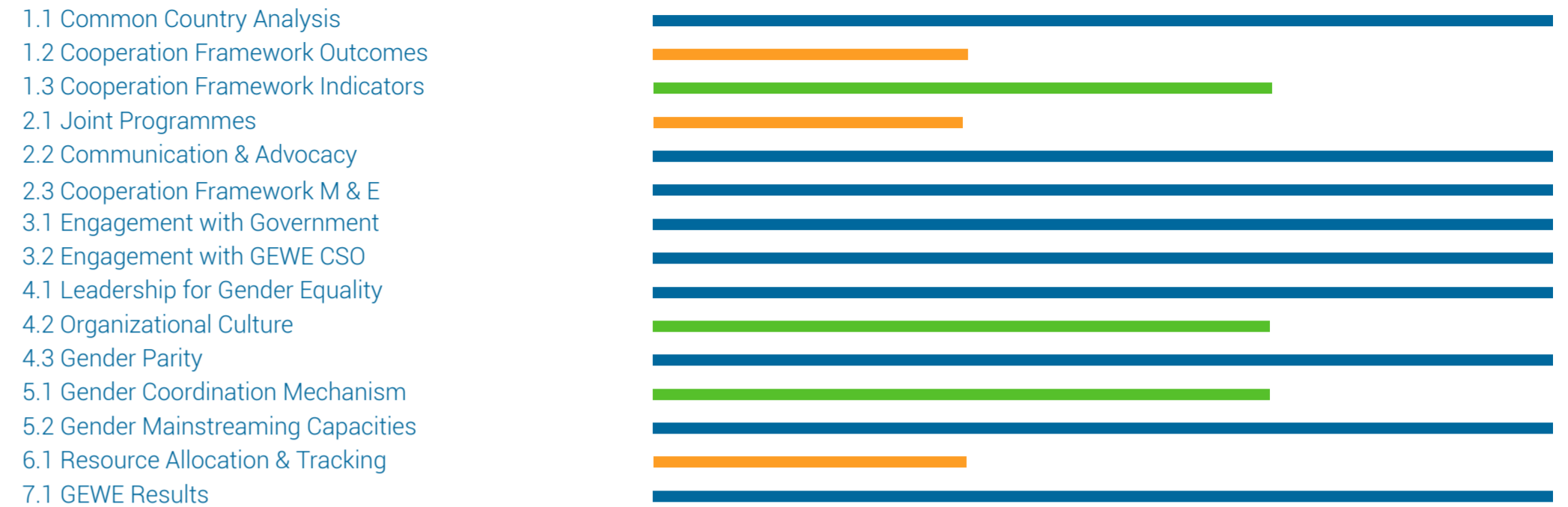
- Following the UNCT Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2023 and accessibility audit of UN common premises conducted in 2022, UN Agencies in Tajikistan strengthened their collaboration while implementing accessibility action plans to achieve higher accessibility levels. The UN House achieved Level 2 accessibility target during 2023. Agencies will continue to closely collaborate in this field to achieve at least level 1 accessibility in all common premises across the country.

- OMT also addressed several issues related to the delivery of goods and services, customs procedures, and payments to further harmonize the UN's business operations.

- The OMT, in 2024, will continue to strengthen its coordination, apply learning from current approaches to BOS and common premises (CP) management, and prepare collectively for the new BOS cycle starting in 2025, with an aim to further increase UN Efficiency Agenda in the country.

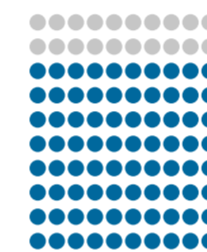
UNCT's Progress on Inclusion

Gender Equality Scorecard



Scorecards

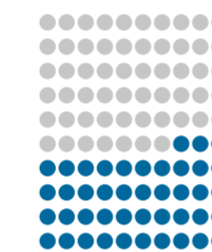
Gender Scorecard



80%
12 out of 15 indicators

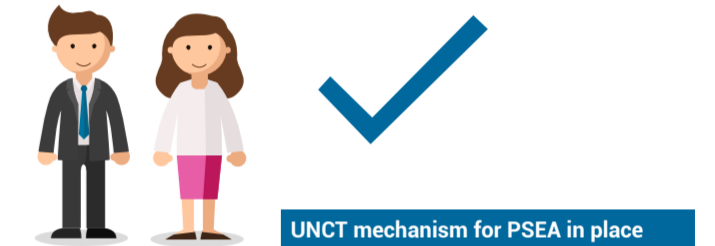
Meet or Exceed Minimum Requirements

Disability Scorecard



43%
6 out of 14 indicators

Meet or Exceed Minimum Requirements



Communicating as One



In 2023, the UN started the implementation of UNSDCF Joint Communications and Advocacy Strategy to support programme delivery and raise public awareness in Tajikistan through the following:

- A country-wide campaign with the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to commemorate the 30th anniversary of UN's presence in the country and highlight joint results.
- Joint campaigns for national and international days, including the UN Day, UDHR75 and 16 Days of Activism against GBV
- Focus on gender and disability inclusive communications through production of a Guideline for Disability-inclusive Communications, writing series of articles about disability inclusion, running campaigns to promote gender equality and reduce GBV, including within the EU-UN joint Spotlight Initiative³⁶ programme.
- Communications support for key initiatives, including the Voluntary National Review³⁷ (VNR) and the Early warnings for All Initiative³⁸ (EW4All).
- Addressing prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) with updated materials
- National youth-focused consultation to come up with inputs for a global UN Code of Conduct for Information Integrity
- Coordinated over 30 joint communications and advocacy actions reaching over 1,000,000 people.
- Received award for best storytelling from the UN in the Europe and Central Asia region.

36. <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org>. See: <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/tajikistan>
 37. <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/tajikistan/voluntary-national-reviews-2023>
 38. <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/243772-un-secretary-general-s-early-warnings-all-initiative-launched-tajikistan>

Lessons Learned

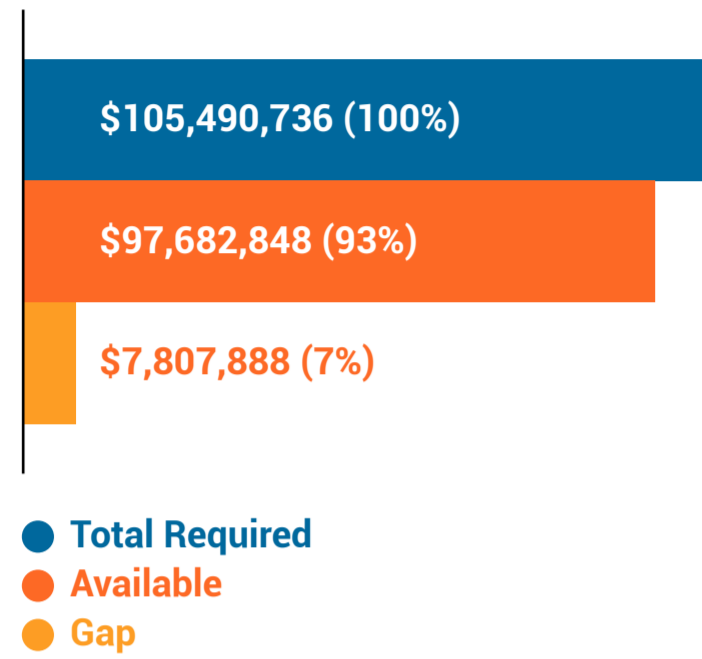
- Social protection is an important area of cooperation between the UN system and International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Among others, work has included joint assessments and evidence generation, coordinated policy advocacy, and piloting.
- Some parts of the country show a high prevalence of food insecurity, leading to poor dietary diversity and feeding practices. The UN system will continue to share evidence about the problem and strongly advocate with government and other partners for increased funding and effective response.
- Poor internet access is hampering efforts to reach more young people, especially girls in rural areas, and to facilitate their access to education, skills development, and opportunities for decent work. More accurate costing and evidence is needed about 'last mile' digital connectivity to communities and schools.
- Increasing rural to urban migration is placing greater strain on housing and municipal services. The experience with the City of Dushanbe and the Voluntary Local Review³⁹ (VLR) can be expanded to other cities in Tajikistan to promote strategic and sustainable urban planning and development.
- Strong, persistent high-level advocacy and engagement with the national human rights bodies is essential to make progress on the legislative and policy agendas. For example, advocacy with the National Commission on Child Rights shifted efforts to reintegrate repatriated children from the Ministerial level to the Office of the President. An improved human rights situation can strengthen the investment climate and help to attract more domestic and foreign investments that crucial for Tajikistan to meet its SDGs.
- UNSDCF Results Groups are working to ensure a coherent UN system approach to implement, monitor and report on the expected results. But some important links and synergies between the outcomes are being missed. More collaboration across the different streams of UNSDCF is needed.
- As the VNR has shown, almost half of the SDG targets or 78 indicators, could not be measured by Tajikistan due to missing or insufficient data⁴⁰. Lack of reliable, disaggregated statistics continues to hamper programme design and delivery. This will be a major focus of UN system advocacy and support in 2024.
- The UNSDCF Results Groups conducted an Annual Performance Review and based on this review agreed that no amendments were needed in UNSDCF, Joint Work Plans or in the UNCT configuration.

39. <https://tajikistan.un.org/en/252225-dushanbe-city-launches-voluntary-local-review-process>
 40. ESCAP, Asia-Pacific SDG Gateway: <https://data.unescap.org/data-analysis/sdg-data-availability>

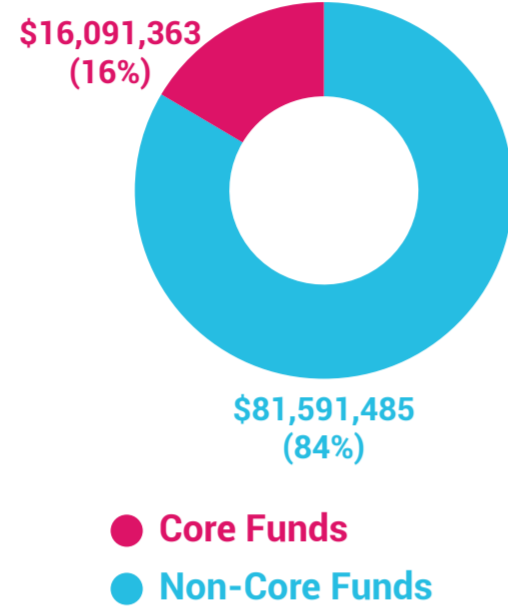


UNSDCF FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT 2023

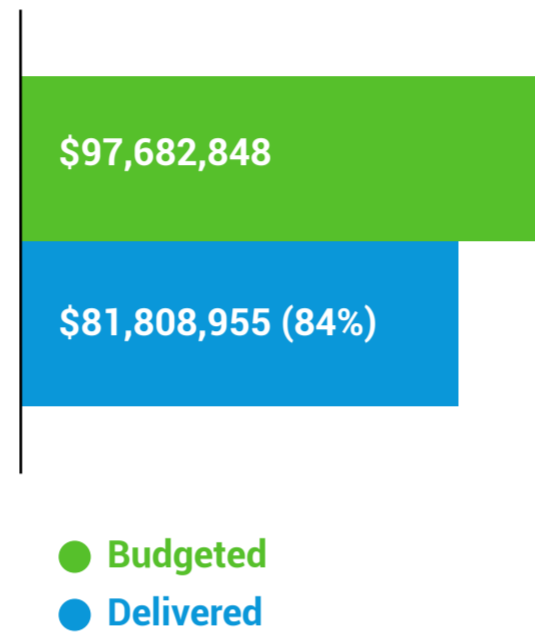
UNSDCF Funding Framework



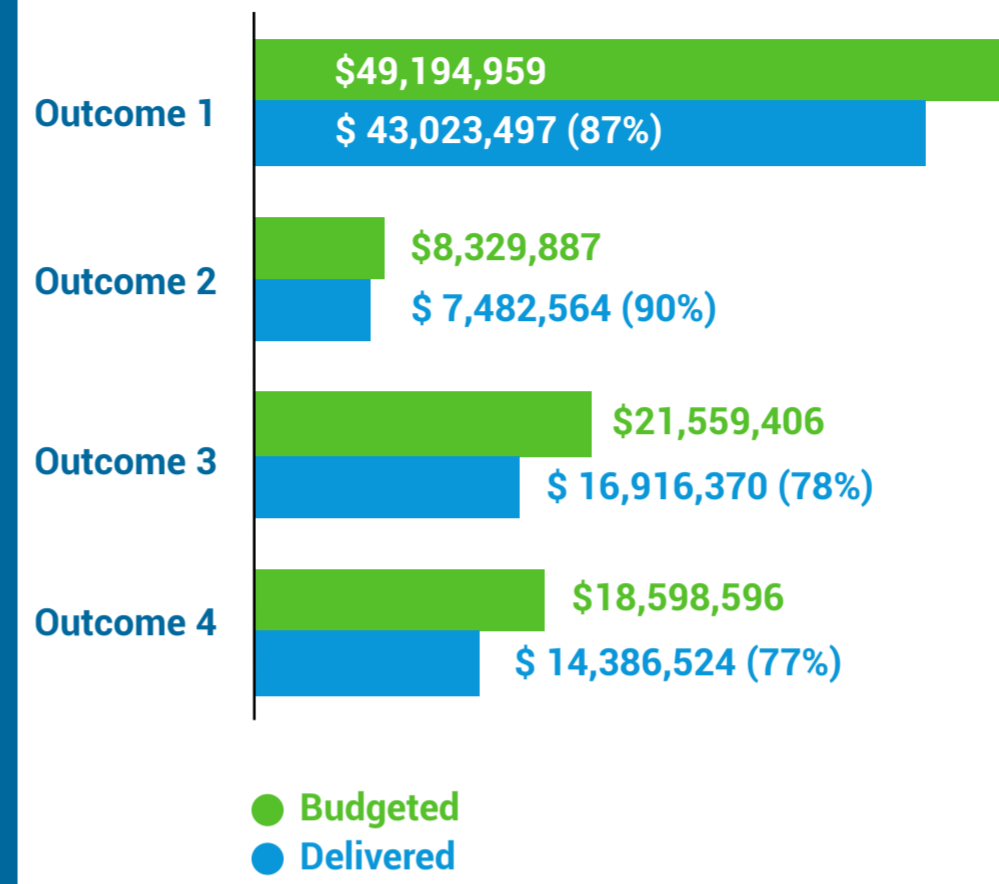
CF Core Funds vs Non-Core Funds



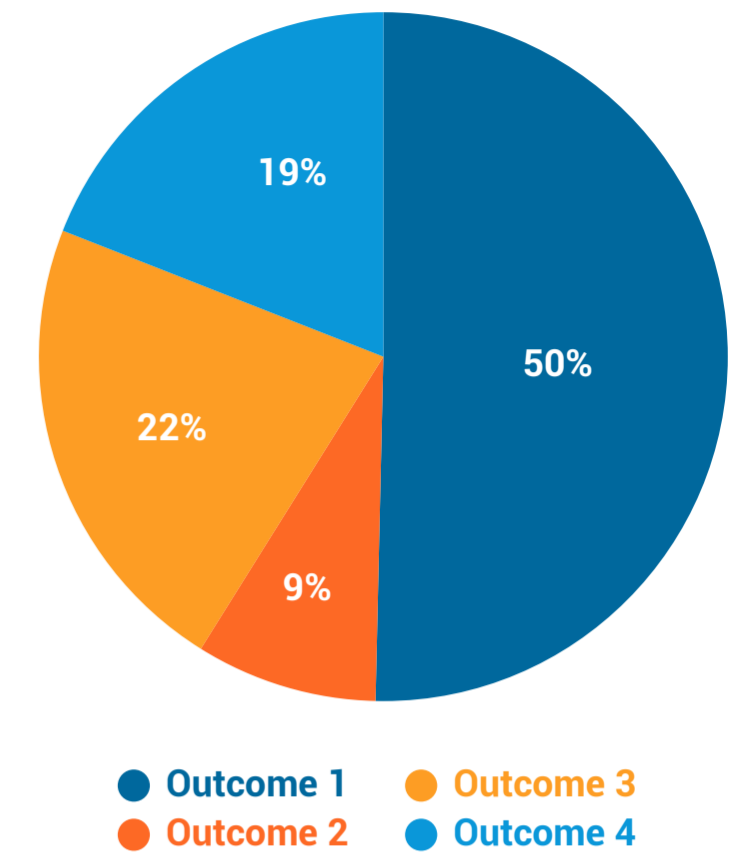
CF Budgeted vs Delivered



Budgeted vs Delivered by Outcomes

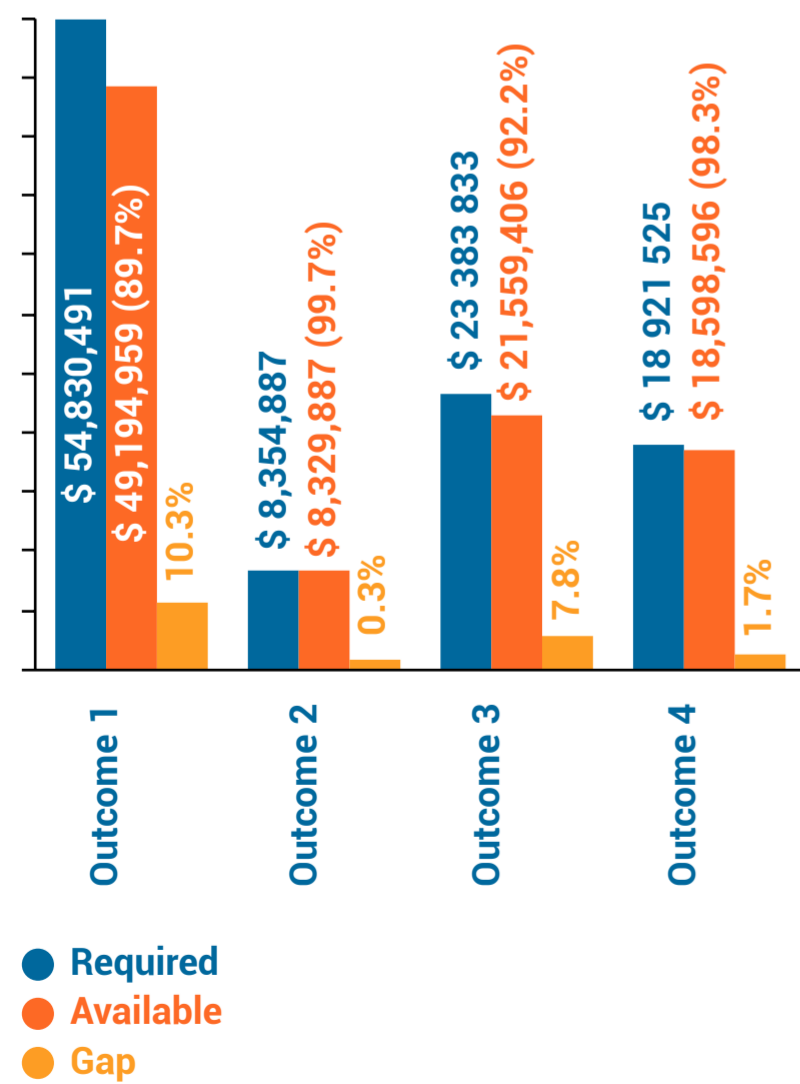


Funding ratio by Outcomes

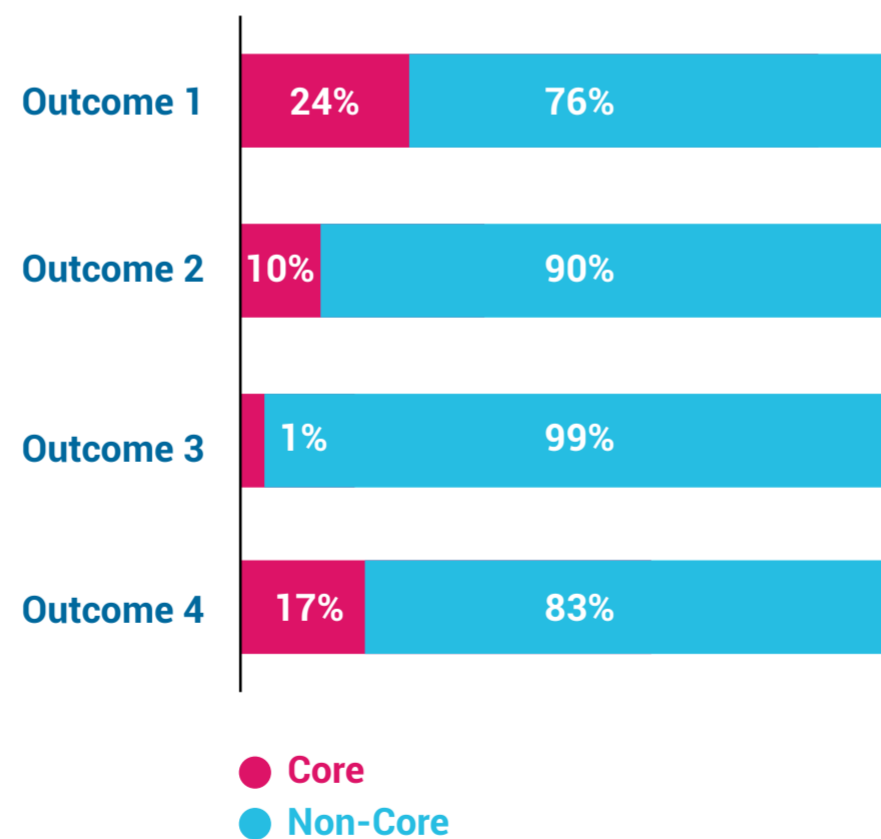


Funding Framework by Outcomes 2023

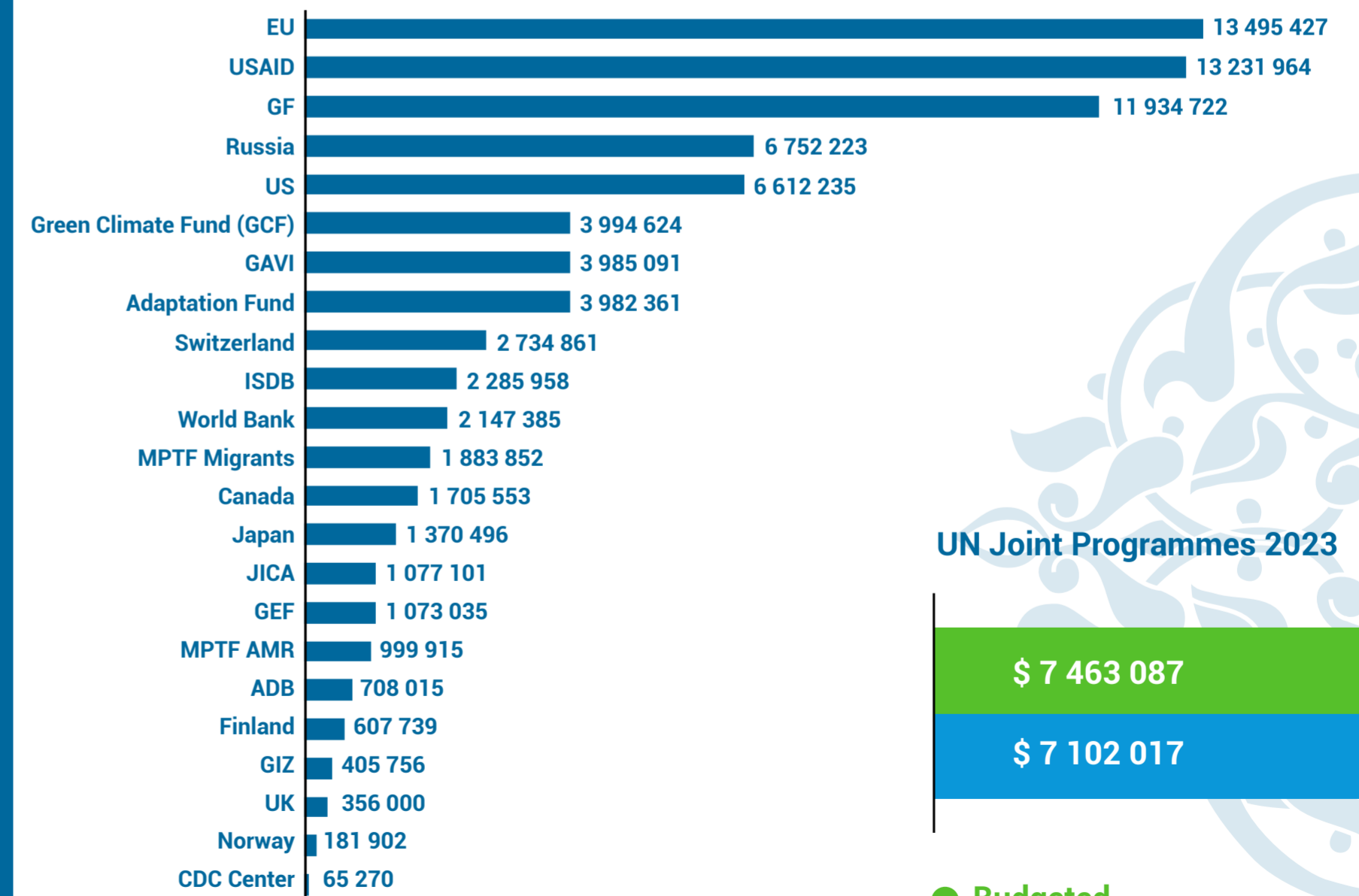
Funding Framework by Outcomes



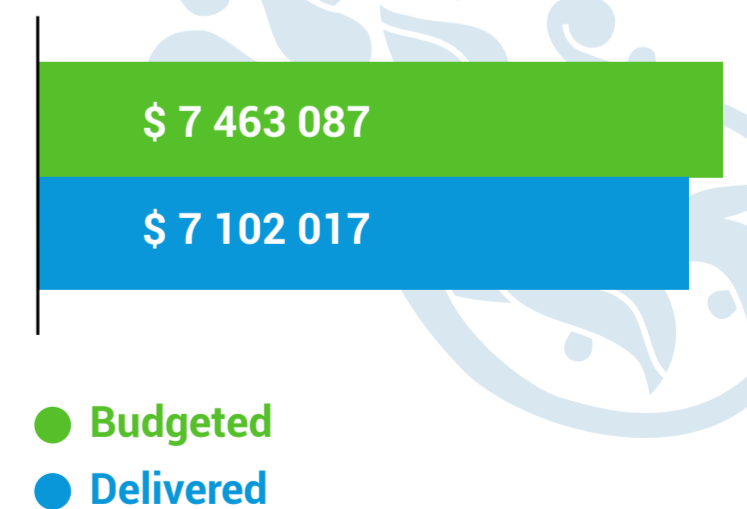
Core vs Non-Core by Outcomes



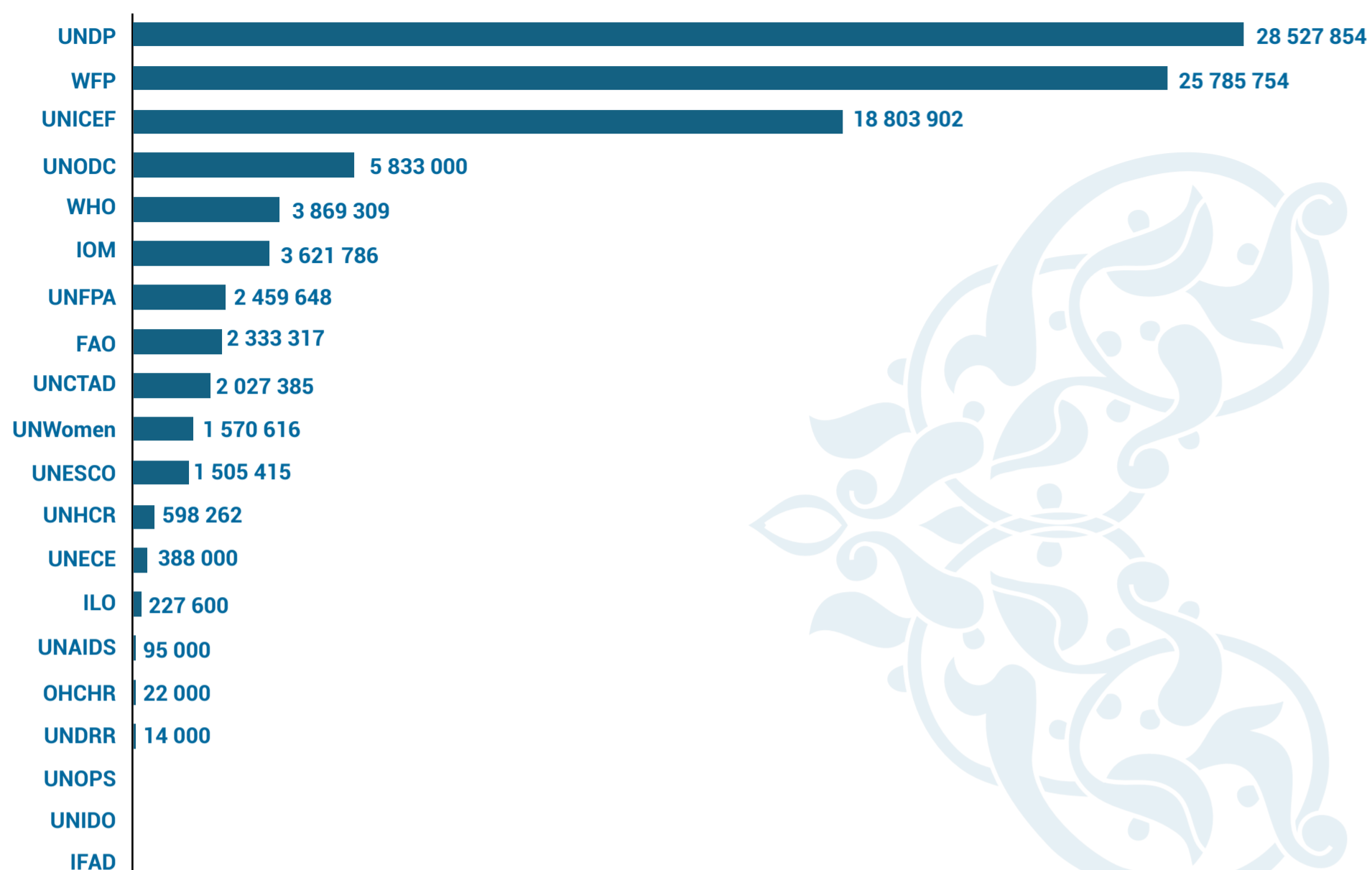
UNSDCF Funds by Donors 2023 (US dollars)



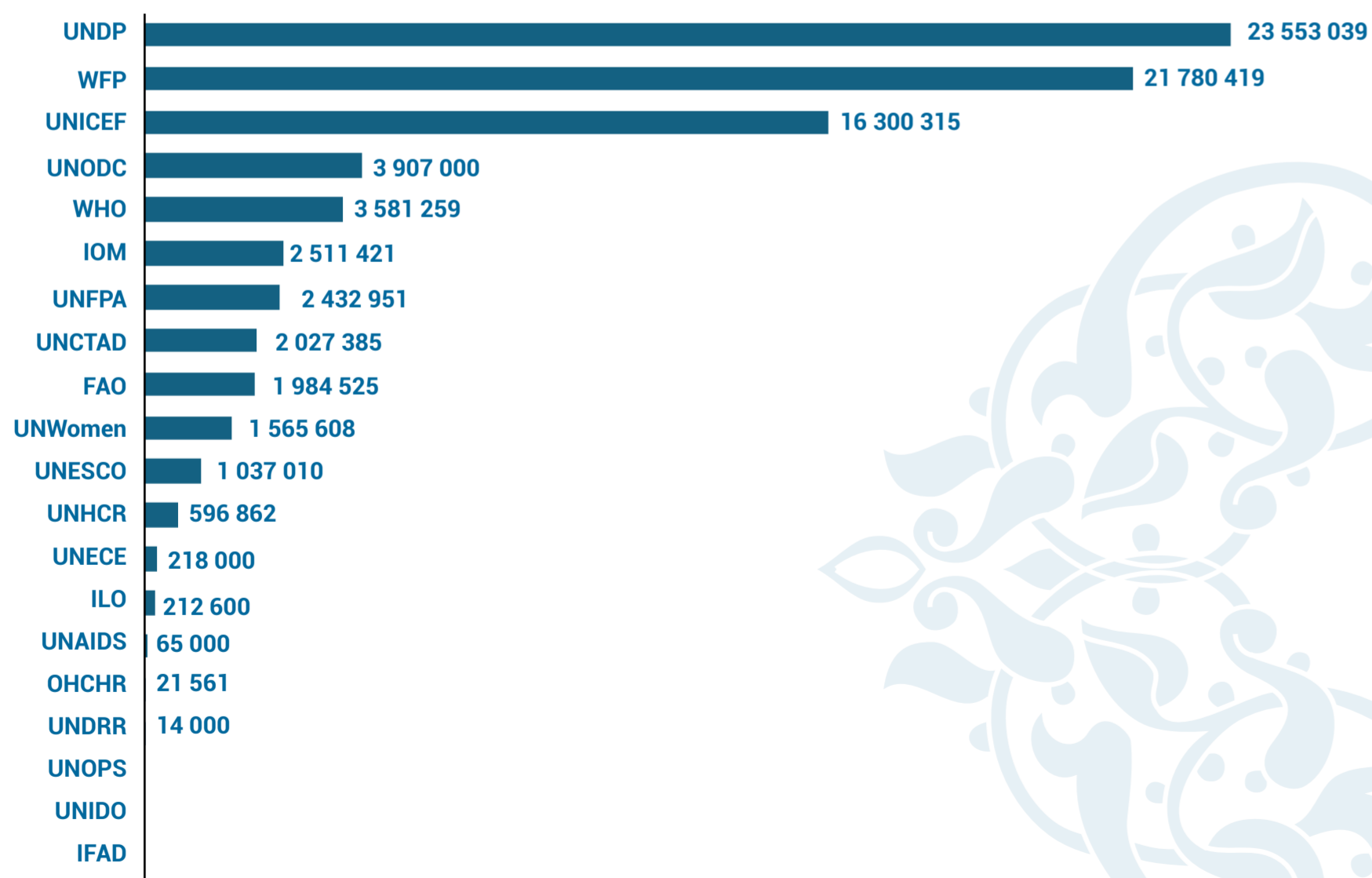
UN Joint Programmes 2023



UNSDCF Funds by UN Agencies 2023 (US dollars)



UNSDCF Delivery by UN Agencies 2023 (US dollars)



Chapter 3: Key Focus for 2024

The year 2024 marks the second year of joint implementation of the the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. No major changes are expected in the configuration of the UN Country Team. The UN system will continue to support the government with cost-effective options and solutions to achieve the SDGs and building partnerships to finance development. To support the government and other partners in this work, the UN system will continue to advocate for actions that address the drivers of vulnerability and exclusion in Tajikistan.

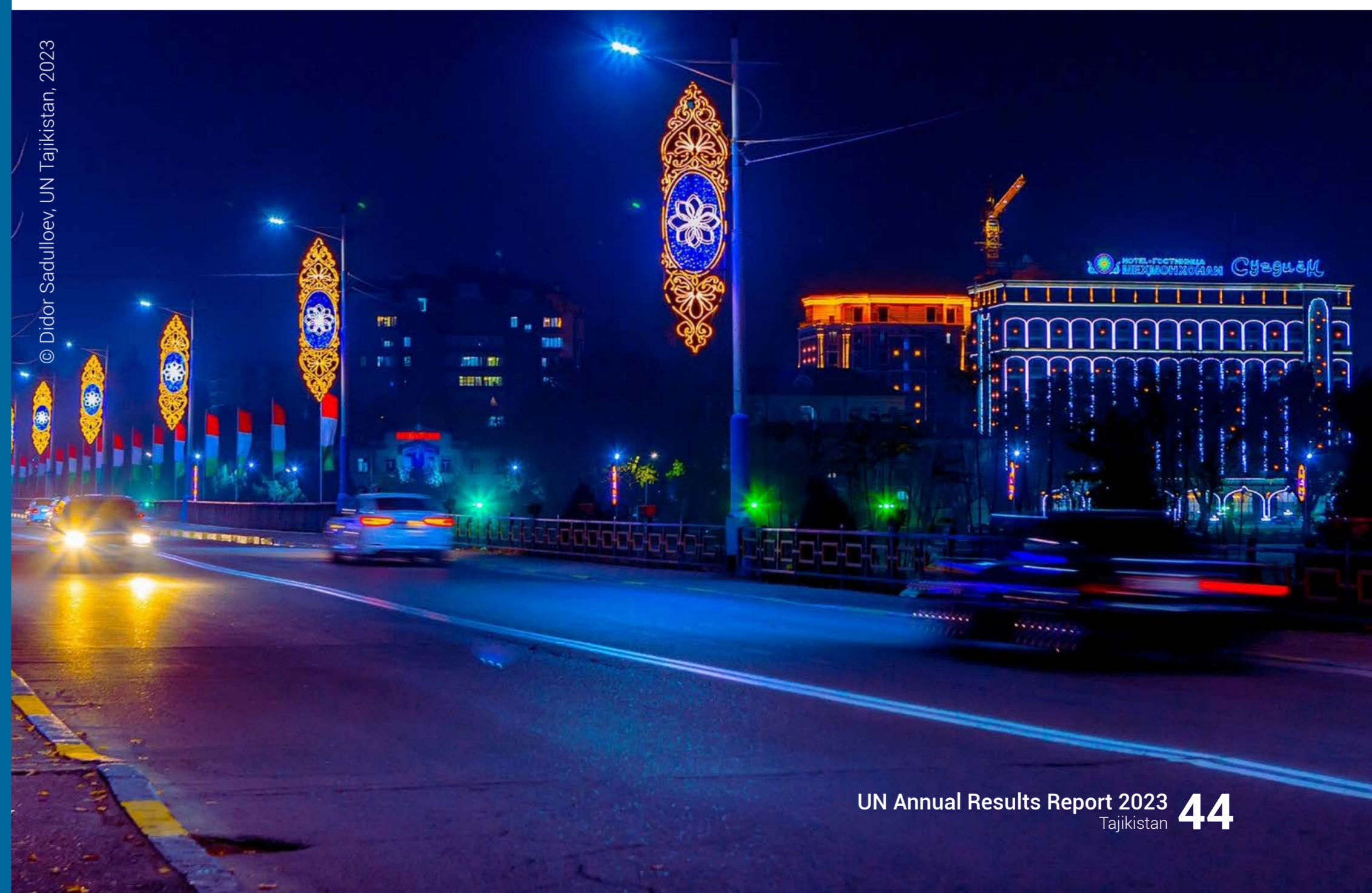
The UN system in Tajikistan will further strengthen its prioritization to invest in strategies that can not only transform the quality of life of the people in Tajikistan but also the quality of institutions vested with the responsibility to provide services and promote a conducive investment climate. Towards this end, the UN will take actions that have potential multiplier effects across multiple SDGs and targets, and assist the government to build resilient food systems; increase access to affordable energy; expand digital connectivity; invest more in education, with a focus on improved learning outcomes; provide decent jobs and social protection; and accelerate actions and investments for climate change adaptation and mitigation and reducing pollution and biodiversity loss.

UN Agencies will continue to offer advice and technical support, across these strategies, to enhance policy and regulatory frameworks, identify evidence-based and scalable national programmes for public and private investment, and build the 'delivery' capabilities of government and civil society partners, especially at local and municipal levels.

Technical assistance to the national counterparts will be further complemented through UN 2.0, a workforce strategy of forward thinking and upgrading the skills of UN staff, especially in data and digital expertise and innovation capacity. UN will continue to improve its operational efficiency and harmonization of business approaches for operating as ONE UN through the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy.

The UN system will focus more on engaging with and harnessing capabilities of young people as a catalyst for growth. UN will ensure the inclusion of vulnerable groups so that they have a greater stake in the future development of the country. UN Agencies will support Tajikistan in the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, the UN system will support the implementation of the Early Warnings for All National Roadmap.

Furthermore, the UN will continue to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation measures across all outcomes, drawing support from the regional UN Issue-Based Coalition. Support will be provided to the government in organizing the 3rd High-Level Water Conference 'Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028' in Dushanbe, from 10-13 June 2024 and to prepare for the UN Summit of the Future, in September 2024. In support of the government, to implement the Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia and Afghanistan (SPECA), which it will chair in 2024, the UN will offer its assistance to operationalize the commitments made at the 2023 SPECA conference in Baku, Azerbaijan.





UNITED NATIONS TAJKISTAN



United Nations in Tajikistan

Address: 5/1 Lohuti Street,
734013 Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Tel: +992 (44) 6005854

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Julia Wimmerlin, 2023

www.tajikistan.un.org