



UNITED NATIONS
Tajikistan



Common Country Analysis 2023

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List of Acronyms

AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
AMC/AMU	Antimicrobial Consumption/Use
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCP	Cash compensation programme
CCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CoESCD	Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EU	European Union
EW4ALL	Early Warning for All
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FITUT	Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Tajikistan
FP	Family Planning
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
HCF	Health Care Facilities
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
HMIS	Health Management Information System
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMET	Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
INFORM	Index for Risk Management
IRPT	Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan
ISIL-K	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province
IWRM	Integrated water resources management
KMK	<i>Khojagii manziliyu Kommunalii</i> (State-owned utility responsible for municipal services: water supply and wastewater services)
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex
MAPS	Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MoHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population
MSM	Men who have sex with men
MtDP	Mid-term Development Programme
NCDs	Non-communicable diseases
NDC	National Development Council
NDC	National Determined Contributions
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRIs	National human rights institutions
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OH	One Health
OOF	Other Official Flows
OOP	Out of pocket
OSH	Occupational safety and health
PDPT	People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan
PO	Presidential Office
PMT	Programme Management Team
RIA	Rapid Integrated Assessment
RRS	Regions of Republican Subordination

RSD	Refugee status determination
SASPP	State Agency on Social Protection of the Population
SCNS	State Committee on National Security
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOE	State-owned enterprise
SP-ABND	Social Protection Assessment Based National Dialogue
SPECA	Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
SPL	Social protection and labour
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infection
TajStat	Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
TI	Transparency International
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNFC	United Nations Framework Classification of Resources
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UoERT	Union of the Employers of the Republic of Tajikistan
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
VE	Violent Extremism
VG	Vulnerable Groups
VNR	Voluntary National Review
VLR	Voluntary Local Review
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

1. Executive summary

Tajikistan is a landlocked country of over 10 million¹ people in Central Asia, bordering the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan in the northwest, China to the east, and Afghanistan to the south. Tajikistan was classified as a lower-middle-income country in 2020. Apart from 2020, when the gross domestic product (GDP) growth fell to 4.5 percent, the economy has consistently recorded relatively high economic growth of around 7 percent in the last decade.² There was a sharp recovery in 2021, and, then contrary to forecasts of a major slowdown, the GDP increased by 8 percent in 2022.³

The growth momentum was maintained in 2023, with a GDP growth of 8.3 percent.⁴ The fiscal space further improved, annual inflation dropped to 3.8 percent, and the public debt to GDP ratio fell to ~30 percent. Tajikistan's economic outlook for 2024 is reasonably positive despite geopolitical tensions, the war in Ukraine, and a rise in economic nationalism that has affected global trade. According to the latest forecast, global growth will hover around 3 percent in 2024 and 2025, which is significantly lower than the historical average of 3.8 percent in recent years.⁵ While the external situation can create headwinds, thus far, the Tajik economy has shown resilience.

When the war broke out in Ukraine, and the Russian Federation came under heavy economic sanctions, several suggested that Tajikistan was likely to suffer the most in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) owing to its close economic ties with Russia. A contraction of the economy, a sharp rise in the unemployment rate, and problems with the balance of payment were some of the spillover effects expected in Tajikistan. In the end, the Russian economy did better than expected. The global energy and food prices increased initially, but starting in June 2022, the prices have been on a downward trend. After a brief period of financial volatility in the financial sector and the commodities market, there were few adverse effects on the Tajik economy.

In addition to the economy, Tajikistan has made steady progress on several sustainable development goals (SDGs). With a score of 69.2, it is ranked 85 out of 166 countries on the Global SDG Index.⁶ Tajikistan is on track to meet the target of eliminating extreme poverty as measured by the international poverty line set at USD 2.15 by 2030. Between 2003 and 2022, the national poverty rate fell from 34.3 percent to 22.5 percent.⁷ However, the national poverty rate is still relatively high. Close to 17 percent of children are poor, and out of approximately 600,000 children living in extreme poverty in Europe and Central Asia Region, around 128,000 of them live in Tajikistan.⁸

Although Tajikistan has made progress in the provision of social services, the country is still behind in providing full social protection coverage to the population. The social protection system is fragmented, and the scope of services, including cash payments, is still limited. The prevalence of stunting and malnutrition has fallen, but the country is behind in reaching "Zero Hunger". More than 8 percent of children are underweight and nearly 1 in 5 children under-five are stunted (low height for age). Around 16 percent of the households are classified *as food insecure*.⁹

¹ <https://www.stat.tj/en/>

² Calculations using data from the World Bank Database [<https://data.worldbank.org/>]

³ Current USD. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=TJ>

⁴ Agency of Statistics, Tajikistan

⁵ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2024/01/30/world-economic-outlook-update-january-2024>

⁶ <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/tajikistan>

⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=TJ&view=chart>

⁸ World Bank, Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines, 2023 – accessible here: Chrome extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/<https://www.unicef.org/media/144856/file/Global%20trends%20in%20child%20monetary%20poverty.pdf>

⁹ Special Report: 2023 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to the Republic of Tajikistan, December 2023.

There has been little progress in addressing the rise in non-infectious diseases. The current level of public spending on health (<8 percent) is insufficient to achieve universal health coverage. At 63 percent, the out-of-pocket expenses by households represent a significant share of the total health expenditure. Almost 90 percent of the primary health facilities were built between 1960 and 1980. Around 80 percent of the rural medical centres have limited or no access to water and sanitation facilities.

There is an uneven distribution of health workers in the regions and a shortage of family doctors. Close to 70 percent of the primary health centres are run by nurses. There has been an increase in the out-migration of doctors and nurses, making it challenging to fill vacancies. Efforts are also needed to improve the quality and coverage of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning. The maternal mortality ratio of 28.9 per 100,000 live births is still high.¹⁰

The enrolment rates in primary and secondary schools have increased, however, Tajikistan still has a long way to go to improve the quality of education and learning outcomes. Although Tajikistan spends a significant proportion (~17 percent) of the government budget on the education sector, the education and training system is not providing young people with sufficient knowledge and skills for success in a more dynamic labour market.¹¹ There is limited capacity to deliver digital learning and provide 21st Century skills for young people to improve their employability. To reach the NDS-2030 targets for quality education, the primary and the secondary school expenditure to GDP ratio must increase from 1.8 percent of GDP to 2.5 and the secondary school expenditure must increase by a factor of 2.5 by 2030, respectively.

Gender inequality is pervasive and systemic, deeply rooted gender stereotypes about the roles of women and men in Tajikistan, and strong patriarchy. In 2023, Tajikistan ranked 111 out of 146 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index, with especially low rankings in economic opportunity, political empowerment, and educational attainment for women.¹² Harmful social norms and attitudes favour traditionalist and restrictive attitudes to women's status and rights within the family and society. Violence against women remains widespread, aggravated by harmful practices such as polygamy, child, early and forced marriage and preference for having a son. Low legal and rights awareness of the population, and elements of a conservative, traditional and patriarchal society have all contributed to gender inequalities. Improved gender-responsive development and resilience are critical for addressing fragilities and risks, reducing disparities, and achieving the SDGs.

An underlying problem characterizing Tajikistan's economy is the weak correlation between aggregate GDP growth and productive employment. The size of non-agricultural sectors such as construction and manufacturing has increased. However, the share of employment in these sectors, usually sources of good jobs, is still relatively low. The agriculture sector in low- and middle-income countries is often associated with low productivity and wages. In Tajikistan, agriculture still provides livelihoods to more than 45 percent of the workers. Personal remittances sent by Tajik migrants have averaged around one-third of GDP, reaching over 50 percent in 2022.¹³ Remittances are a vital contributor to poverty reduction and the second most important and stable source of household income after wages.¹⁴

With population and labour force growth, the economy cannot absorb the growing number of new workers.

¹⁰ <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/376097>

¹¹ 21st century transversal skills (e.g. communication, team work and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and deep skills in one or more trades e.g. ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. EC, 2019, Skills for Industry Strategy 2030. See also: ILO, Skill-up, Nov 2019; AES, What are 21st century skills, 2020.

¹² World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2023 [<https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/>]

¹³ World Bank data, Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Tajikistan.

[<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=TJ>]

¹⁴ Agency on Statistics 'Income and expenditure of population in Tajikistan' 2016.

Moreover, there are not adequate employment opportunities for returning migrants. Currently, a large number of Tajik, averaging around half a million, go abroad for temporary employment annually. Growth has not translated fully into commensurate household income and job opportunities. A weak business environment discourages private investment. Tajikistan relies on foreign aid to finance its major public investments.

Besides improving the regulatory environment, a key ingredient for Tajikistan's sustainable economic transformation is to increase productivity within the sectors and promote decent work. A business-friendly investment environment, along with a functioning domestic capital market and reducing the footprint of inefficient state-owned enterprises (SOEs), are crucial for private sector-led growth and job creation. Although social spending amounts to over 40 percent of the total budget,¹⁵ Tajikistan must do more to align public spending with priorities in education, health, and social protection.

Due to geology, hydrology, and topography, Tajikistan is vulnerable to climate change and disasters, which result in economic losses and internal displacement. Almost every year, the country has to respond to several natural disasters, including mudflows, earthquakes, and floods. Between 1992 and 2016, natural and climate-related disasters led to monetary losses estimated at around USD 1.8 billion, affecting almost 7 million people.¹⁶

Although it has contributed little to greenhouse gases (GHG), Tajikistan is considered the most vulnerable country to climate change in Central Asia.¹⁷ The National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (2019) identified energy, water, transport, and agriculture as climate-sensitive sector priorities. Without an economic transformation underpinned by climate-friendly green industrialization and resilient public infrastructure, Tajikistan will not be able to reach many of its development targets. Tajikistan needs to realign its industrial and investment strategies to climate adaptation and environmental protection.

Major security threats emanate from violent extremism and drug trafficking. The security situation in Afghanistan remained relatively stable in 2023. However, the Taliban authorities continue to face threats from various extremist groups operating in Afghanistan. Tajikistan also sits astride a main illicit drug trafficking route from Afghanistan to Europe. The northern route from Afghanistan remains active amidst high levels of illegal drug production. Intercepted drugs are believed to form only a tiny proportion of the real flow.

Lastly, an open, transparent, and accountable governance system is critical for social cohesion and to prevent any development reversals. Shared prosperity will depend upon wealth equity, and gender-responsive and inclusive public services. Moreover, an orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people through well-managed migration policies, and stronger engagement with the diaspora will ensure remittances are channelled into development activities and migrants enjoy protection abroad.

¹⁵ Agency on Statistics

¹⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#>

¹⁷ World Bank Group, 2013, Tajikistan: Overview of Climate Change Activities. Washington, DC. [<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17552>]

Map of Tajikistan



Map No. 3765 Rev. 11 UNITED NATIONS
October 2009

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

Source: UN, December 2020. [<https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/tajikistan>]

2. Introduction

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is an evidence-based review of the national development landscape and the prospects for sustainable development. It examines factors influencing the country's development trajectory and progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, the CCA focuses on economic transformation while identifying the underlying drivers of political economy, root causes and implications of inequalities, vulnerabilities, and the state of human rights. These are examined with a holistic lens to discern the interconnected dimensions of sustainable development and alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind, the UN Charter, and international norms and standards.

Following the revised guidelines, the first CCA in Tajikistan was prepared in 2020. Since then, the analysis contained in the report has been updated annually. The present CCA Report (2023) is the fourth iteration to reflect the latest developments in Tajikistan. Among others, some sections of the narrative were updated using the latest data, and, wherever needed, additional sections were added to the narrative. The data from official sources, such as the Agency on Statistics and global data repositories, was used. However, CCA also draws from other credible data sources and academic literature, including journal articles, papers, and various global and regional reports.

It is important to note that data for national accounts is collected, processed, and published regularly, but several household surveys, such as the demographic and health survey (DHS) and the labour force survey (LFS), have been carried out infrequently. The last DHS was conducted in 2017, and the one before it in 2012. It has been eight years since the last LFS was conducted, while the last Multi Indicator Cluster Survey was conducted in 2005. Without nationally representative data that is collected regularly, it is, therefore, difficult to accurately compare Tajikistan's progress. To overcome this challenge, data was also used from ad hoc surveys, but owing to a smaller sample size, these types of surveys (e.g., Listening to Tajikistan) do not allow disaggregation at the sub-national level.¹⁸

Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the Programme Management Team (PMT), comprising senior programme staff of the UN Agencies were responsible for drafting this report. Besides serving as an analytical resource, CCAs are vehicles to promote consultations, knowledge creation, and knowledge sharing. The findings and recommendations contained in the CCA report will continue to serve as a reference for policy discussions between the UN system and the national stakeholders. The consultations with line ministries, non-state organizations, representatives of the private sector, civil society, academia, and international development partners will, in turn, also feed into future CCA updates.

3. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Tajikistan has made progress towards the SDGs, but the progress has been uneven. With a score of 69.2, Tajikistan is ranked 85 out of 166 countries on the SDG Index.¹⁹ According to the latest Voluntary National Review (VNR),²⁰ Tajikistan has made significant progress on SDG 1 (No poverty). Between 2003 and 2022, the national poverty rate fell from 34.3 percent to 22.5 percent.²¹ Tajikistan is on track to meet the target of eliminating extreme poverty as measured by the international poverty line set at USD 2.15. However, Tajikistan is behind this target in terms of the national poverty line. By 2022, the proportion of people living below the national poverty line should have reached 15 percent.

Although Tajikistan has made notable progress in providing social services, it still trails in providing full social

¹⁸ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/brief/listening2tajikistan>

¹⁹ <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/tajikistan>

²⁰ <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/tajikistan/voluntary-national-reviews-2023>

²¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=TJ&view=chart>

protection coverage to the population. Although the prevalence of stunting and malnutrition fell, the country is behind in reaching SDG 2 (Zero Hunger). Tajikistan has also made progress in improving people's health and well-being (SDG 3). Several targets for the goal are on track but there has been little progress in addressing the rise in non-infectious diseases. While there has also been progress in increasing enrolment rates at the primary and secondary school level the country lags behind a number of qualitative measurements that track the quality of education and learning outcomes under SDG 4. Several gender equality indicators (SDG 5) show a positive trend but violence against women by intimate partners remains high. The access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6) targets are showing limited progress.

Although the proportion of people having access to electricity has increased considerably, there are some reversals in the renewable energy share and increase in energy intensity, which suggests that the gap to achieve affordable and clean energy (SDG 7) is still quite wide. Tajikistan has made steady progress in promoting decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), but GDP growth per capita is still very low. Many young people are not in education, employment or training. There has also been a regression in compliance with labour rights.

Tajikistan is off track in industry, innovation, and infrastructure development (SDG 9). There has been limited progress in improving access to credit for small-scale industries. Carbon emission intensity in manufacturing has increased. The expenditure on research and development is still quite low. There is progress in reducing inequalities (SDG 10), but the targets for the population living below 50 percent of median income and labour income share of GDP are off track.

Tajikistan has made good progress on sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11). However, this can be mainly attributed to the adoption of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, reducing the impact of natural disasters on people's lives, and some improvements in urban particulate matter. There has been little progress on responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). Specifically, indicators related to domestic material consumption and hazardous waste generated or treated are regressing.

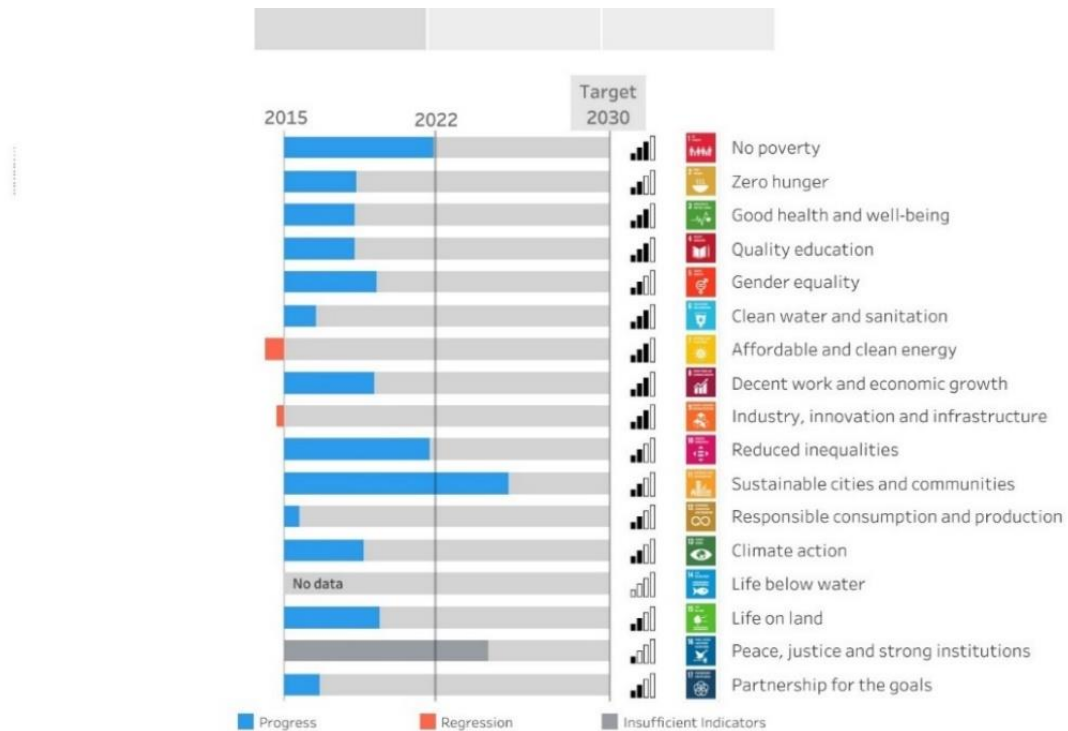
Climate action (SDG 13) and life on land (SDG 15) show improvements, but the country is not where it should have been in 2022. There is less desirable progress on peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17). The SDG Tracker underlines that there is a risk that Tajikistan will miss 70 percent of the 84 SDG targets for which sufficient data was available and included in the analysis. An analysis²² showed that SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) has the most significant multiplier effect to influence the achievement of other SDGs in Tajikistan, followed by SDG 2 (Zero hunger); SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals); SDG 4 (Quality education); SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth); and SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation). The rankings showed SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) to be the most dependent on progress in other SDGs.²³

²² Technical consultations between the UN, government partners, CSOs and think tanks to assess the extent of SDGs interrelation, 2016 (unpublished).

²³ <https://www.undp.org/tajikistan/publications/national-report-implementation-strategic-documents-country-context-sustainable-development-goals>

Figure 1. SDG Tracker: Progress shown by goals in 2020 and the gap from reaching the target by 2030

Source: VNR 2023



Credible and disaggregated data for the SDGs is limited. This makes it difficult to do an in-depth analysis of SDGs and the development and implementation of SDGs-related policies, especially for people who are being left behind. Data on vulnerable segments of the population who are at risk of being left behind is not systematically collected, which is one of the major impediments to formulating evidence-based policies and laws to address inequalities in the country. As mentioned, few national household surveys are being conducted on a regular basis, making it difficult to make comparisons.

3.1 National Vision and Agenda 2030

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted the National Development Strategy (NDS-2030)²⁴ in 2016 as an overarching policy framework, with twin goals for sustainable economic development and improved living standards of the population.²⁵ NDS-2030 focuses on economic diversification and competitiveness, sustainable jobs, improving energy supply and transport connectivity, ensuring food security, enhancing public administration, and developing human resources. The implementation of the NDS-2030 is divided into three five-year Mid-term Development Programmes (MtDPs), the first of which was for 2016 to 2020.²⁶ The second MtDP 2021-2025 was endorsed in 2021 and is currently being implemented.

SDG-related institutional mandates and responsibilities in place, but capacities are still weak. Tajikistan adopted the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development in 2015. Although SDG targets have been

²⁴ [<https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030>]

²⁵ In order to achieve it, the NDS-2030 identifies four strategic development objectives: ensuring energy security; development of the country's communication potential and turning it into a transit country; ensuring food security and access to good quality nutrition; expanding productive employment.

²⁶ MtDP 2016-2020 set several ambitious goals, including doubling the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and reducing poverty to 20 percent whilst also expanding the middle class. See also the UNDAF 2016-2020. [https://untj.org/files/Publications/UNDAF_2016-2020_eng_final_web.pdf]

nationalized in several policies, strategies, and plans, there are still some gaps. Steps have been taken to identify financing gaps and institutional mechanisms have been established to align financing to policy priorities. However, there are capacity deficits that must be addressed to improve the allocation of financial resources for advancing the SDGs. Compared to the previous MtDP (2016-2020), the current MtDP (2021-2025) action matrix is better aligned with sector strategies and programmes. However, the localization of the SDGs at the sub-national level has not happened, partly due to the centralized nature of the public administration.

The coordination of the 2030 Agenda and the implementation of the NDS falls under the responsibility of the National Development Council (NDC). Chaired by the President of Tajikistan, the NDC comprises high-level representatives from selected Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) has been assigned as the secretariat for NDC. The Agency on Statistics (AoS) in Tajikistan is primarily responsible for monitoring the SDGs. Thirteen thematic working groups were established under the NDC to ensure alignment with the NDS-2030 and strengthen cross-sector coordination. A 14th Working Group focusing was provisionally created to support the financing for development agenda in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan has presented two Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) including the latest one in 2023. With UN's support, Tajikistan presented its second VNR at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2023.²⁷ Building on the first VNR that outlined the strategic vision of the government to nationalize the SDGs, the 2023 VNR of Tajikistan focussed on "green development for shared prosperity" as the overarching theme for analysis. The VNR process included wide-ranging consultations, analysis, and policy dialogues. The preparation of the VNR also included *twinning* with Uzbekistan and Mongolia, a partnership to share lessons, conduct peer reviews, and provide guidance to each other. Following the successful launch of VNR 2023, the government is currently undertaking the first voluntary local review (VLR) that targets Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan, the outcomes of which will be formally presented in the last quarter of 2024.

3.2 Economic Transformation

Tajikistan has experienced high GDP growth since 2000. With a per capita GDP of USD 1,356 or USD 4,137 (PPP) in 2022,²⁸ Tajikistan is classified as a lower-middle income.²⁹ Between 2000 and 2022, the GDP growth averaged more than 7 percent annually.³⁰ During this period, per capita GDP increased nearly three times. There was a sharp decline in 2009 and a more recent one due to Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 when GDP growth fell to 4.4 percent. The growth momentum from 2022 carried over to 2023 with the economy recording 8.3 percent GDP growth. A stable macroeconomic situation, including less inflationary pressure, buoyed demand, and increased household spending fuelled GDP growth in 2023.

Considering close economic ties with Russia, many analysts expected an economic downturn in Central Asia when Russia invaded Ukraine. Owing to its weak external position and dependency on Russia, it was assumed that Tajikistan would suffer the most from the economic fallout of the war. A 1.8 percent contraction of the GDP, sharp rise in the unemployment rate, turmoil in the banking sector, possible balance of payment crisis, and a steep rise in food insecurity were some of the spillover effects that many predicted would engulf Tajikistan.³¹ Fortunately, after a brief period of financial volatility in the financial sector and the commodities

²⁷ <https://hlpf.un.org/countries/tajikistan/voluntary-national-reviews-2023>

²⁸ GDP in constant USD 2015 (2022). GDP per capita at the current USD is USD 1,054. The current market value of GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) adjusts for the price of non-traded goods & services. World Bank database. [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD?locations=TJ>]

²⁹ Calculations based on national poverty rate latest year in CIS, World Bank database. [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC>]

³⁰ Calculations based on World Bank data. [www.data.worldbank.org]

³¹ See among others World Bank ECA Economic Update, May 2022

market, few of the adverse spillover effects materialized. Tajikistan's GDP increased by 8 percent in 2022, which was lower than in 2021 (9.2 percent) but higher than the historical average between 2000 and 2022.³²

Tajikistan's fiscal situation further improved in 2023 with increases in tax revenues and spending. Public debt as a proportion of GDP fell (~30 percent). The fiscal deficit is expected to stay within 2-2.5 percent of GDP. The tax revenue increased by nearly 19 percent in nominal terms,³³ while public expenditure increased by more than 22 percent. The education sector accounted for 17 percent of the total expenditure, followed by social insurance and social protection (11.2 percent). Compared to 2022, the expenditure share for social insurance and protection fell slightly from 12.3 percent to 11.2 percent. A major proportion of social protection expenditure is for pension payments. Public health expenditure that has seen a gradual increase since 2020 accounted for 8 percent of the total expenditure in 2023.

Economic outlook for 2024 is reasonably positive. The risks of spillovers from the war in Ukraine and international sanctions against the Russian Federation have receded. However, if the situation worsens, in what appears to be shaping into a protracting conflict, it can cause disruptions in food and energy supply, perhaps fuelling higher inflation. A deep recession in Russia can considerably reduce employment opportunities for Tajik labour migrants and the flow of remittances, which is a major source of income for many households in Tajikistan. The number of Tajik who went abroad for employment fell from 775,578 in 2022 to 652,014 in 2023.³⁴ Preliminary data shows that personal remittances also fell by more than 15 percent in the first three quarters of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.³⁵

However, it is important to note that in 2022, there was an abnormal increase in personal remittances, rising by 83 percent.³⁶ Several factors led to a steep increase in the inflow of remittances. More transfers from permanent residents living in the Russian Federation, a stronger rouble that incentivized labour migration to Russia, and a better-than-expected economic situation in Russia, including continued demand for workers in construction, the primary source of employment for migrant labour- were some of the factors behind increased remittances. However, it is possible that the remittances will decline in light of the recent terrorist attack in Moscow in which a number of Tajiks suspects have been apprehended. After the shooting in Crocus Mall on 22 March 2024, several cases of harassment of and threats to Tajik migrants in Russia. These incidents are causing anxiety among the temporary migrants and Tajik diaspora in Russia. It will also discourage Tajiks to seek employment in Russia.

Public expenditure, as a share of the GDP, increased from 13 percent in 1998 to over 30 percent in 2022.³⁷ Average tax revenue covers around 60-65 percent of the total public expenditure, with the budget shortfall being mainly covered by grants for public investment programmes funded by International Financial Institutions (IFIs). Although public debt to GDP ratio has fallen, Tajikistan is still at risk of debt distress. Thus, any significant increase in external borrowing on commercial terms can affect debt sustainability.³⁸ More development partners are considering providing direct budget support to Tajikistan. The World Bank approved USD 53 million for direct budget support to Tajikistan. The EU and the Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development have also provided budget financing amounting to USD 40 million and USD 60 million, respectively.

³² Own calculations using latest GDP figures from countries in Central Asia, including AoS Tajikistan.

³³ Final annual budget figures have not been published yet. Some of the figures here are for the Jan-Nov 2023 period.

³⁴ <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/b000164s>

³⁵ Own calculations using the National Bank of Tajikistan's balance of payment statistics

³⁶ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=TJ>

³⁷ Calculations based on budget data, Agency of Statistics

³⁸ IMF Initial Assessment, Article IV consultations: <https://asiaplustj.info/ru/node/320340>

Exports have grown but around 70 percent of them include precious metals and minerals. Trade integration in Central Asia is constrained by the nature of the economies that are less diversified and rely heavily on the extraction of natural resources. Business and regulatory environment, including cumbersome trade procedures and gaps in infrastructure and transportation, increase the cost of trading goods. Reflecting improved conditions and domestic demand, Tajikistan's external trade increased nearly 14 percent in 2023. The growth of exports (14.3 percent) was slightly higher than imports (13.8 percent). Gold exports to Switzerland, amounting to over USD 1 billion, were the main contributor to the upsurge in exports. The trade balance was around USD 3.4 billion, equivalent to 26 percent of the GDP.³⁹ Trade with the members of CIS fell by 8.1 percent. Still, more than 42 percent of Tajikistan's total trade in 2023 was with the CIS. Among the CIS members, Russia is by far the leading trading partner of Tajikistan.

The imports from Russia and Kazakhstan amounted to more than 26 percent and 15 Percent of Tajikistan's total imports, respectively. The other major trading partner of Tajikistan is China, which accounted for nearly 21 percent of Tajikistan's imports in 2023. Besides Switzerland, Tajikistan had a trade surplus of over USD 93 million with Afghanistan. The exports to Afghanistan mainly include the supply of electricity. Approximately 70 percent of Tajikistan's exports included precious metals and mineral products. The other significant exports were metallurgical products (12.4 percent), cotton fibre (8.1 percent), and electricity (4.5 Percent). With remittances falling this year, the current account deficit in 2023 may have increased. At the end of Q2 of 2023, it was around 4.3 percent of the GDP.⁴⁰ Owing to an abnormal increase in personal remittances, Tajikistan had a current account surplus in 2022, equivalent to 15 percent of GDP.⁴¹

Limited investments are constraining broad-based economic development. China is the main foreign investor in the Tajik economy, but its investments are primarily in mining and enrichment of metal ores and mining of semi-precious stones. Since 2012, China has invested more than USD 2 billion in Tajikistan, accounting for two-thirds of the total foreign direct investment (FDI) between 2017 and 2021. Among the developed economies, the United Kingdom (financial intermediation and mining), Switzerland (hotel services, mining, and enrichment of precious metal ores) and France (retail trade and real estate development) are the key investors.

Among the Asian investors, besides China, the Islamic Republic of Iran (financial services and transport) and Türkiye (manufacturing of food, beverages, machines, and equipment) are the main ones. The first half of the 2010s was marked by rapidly growing FDI flows to the country. Registered at USD 157 million in 2010, FDI almost quadrupled by 2015 when it reached its all-time high of USD 572 million. Since then, FDI inflows have remained at an average of about USD 345 million annually, except for 2020, when FDI dropped by 47 percent compared to the previous year.

³⁹ In current USD based on own calculations using GDP and trade figures provided by AoS and exchange rate published on NBTJ.

⁴⁰ Own calculations using NBTJ External Statistics and AoS data on national accounts for Q2.

⁴¹ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BN.CAB.XOKA.GD.ZS?locations=TJ>

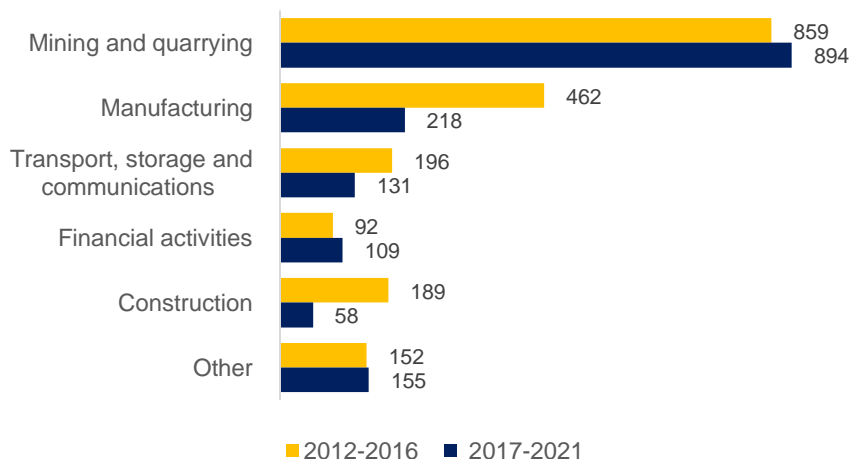
Figure 2. FDI Inflows to Tajikistan, 2010-2021 (Million USD)



Source: National Bank of Tajikistan and State Committee on Investment and State Property Management for 2021 (<https://investcom.tj/ru/invest/investicionnaja-dejatelnost/107-statistika-inostrannyh-investicij.html>) Note: * - preliminary data

At the end of 2021, the FDI inward stock of Tajikistan stood at USD 3.2 billion, which is the smallest among the CIS and exceeds only Afghanistan (USD 1.6 billion) in the Central Asian region. Over the last five years, the mining and quarrying sector has maintained its position in the total FDI inflows. Its average share in the total FDI inflows increased to 57 percent in 2017–2021.

Figure 3. FDI inflows by economic activity, 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 (Millions USD)



Sources: National Bank of Tajikistan and State Committee on Investment and State Property Management for 2021 (<https://investcom.tj/ru/invest/investicionnaja-dejatelnost/107-statistika-inostrannyh-investicij.html>)

In 2022, investments for fixed assets increased by 11.4 percent. The state continues to be the primary driver of investments. It accounted for more than 41 percent of the total investments, followed by foreign investments (28.8 percent). Almost 30 percent of fixed investment was for the production and distribution of electricity. The construction of other non-production facilities, including housing, amounted to around 26 percent of the total.

Less inflationary pressure on the economy in 2023. The annual inflation rate fell to 3.8 percent in 2023, much lower than countries in Central Asia. Although it fell in 2023, countries in the region are still experiencing above 5 percent inflation rate. There is less inflation as global food and fuel prices have moderated. FAO's Food Price Index (FFPI) continued a downward trend in 2023. By January 2024, it was 10.4 percent below what it was a year earlier.⁴² Oil prices showed some volatility during the year, but by the end of 2023, the prices were below the start of the year. The price of natural gas fell sharply in 2023 (38 percent).⁴³ Central Banks in several large economies (e.g., the USA and EU Members) pursued contractionary monetary policy by increasing interest rates and selling government securities to combat unprecedented inflation. However, these actions also led to reversals of capital flows from developing countries and an increase in the cost of borrowing.

A weak financial sector creates economic uncertainty. The country is gradually recovering from a bank crisis that hit the country in 2016. In 2021, the National Bank of Tajikistan revoked licenses of four commercial banks and seven microfinance institutions. There are now 15 commercial banks in the country along with several microfinance institutions. The financial soundness of banks has improved in the last three years, but the industry faces several challenges which can undermine financial stability. Currently, Amonat Bank, Orion Bank, and Eskhata Bank are considered systemically important or "too big to fail". Owing to the risks that these banks pose to the entire sector, the authorities are closely monitoring their portfolios. Between 2021 and 2022, bank credit increased by 13.4 percent, consistent with Tajikistan's historical average in the last five years. During the previous two years, the non-performing loan rate has fallen considerably and currently stands at 12 percent.

Although less than half of where it was in 2020, the non-performing loan, is still very high compared to international standards. The norm among banks is to limit the non-performing loan rate to below 1 percent. Almost 60 percent of the loans were denominated in USD. Around 62 percent of these are allocated to state-owned enterprises.⁴⁴ Banks have adequate capital to increase lending to businesses and individuals. However, the interest rate borrowers pay for bank loans in domestic currency is relatively high (~23 percent). With annual inflation running at less than 5 percent, the lending rate is still high, indicating a higher risk premium that banks associate with lending. However, a high lending rate is discouraging businesses from investing that is necessary for creating future jobs.⁴⁵

Limited public participation in the government budget preparations. Regarding budget transparency, the Open Budget Survey ranks Tajikistan 101 out of 117 countries.⁴⁶ In terms of public expenditure, the energy sector and social expenditure represent two main priorities. Social expenditure accounts for the largest share of public expenditure, with education receiving approximately one-third. Health expenditure has been relatively low. Social transfers target poor households, the elderly, the unemployed, and people living with disabilities, but the amounts provided are low. About 60 percent of the public economic expenditure is allocated to the energy sector,⁴⁷ while agriculture and industry account for less than 10 percent.⁴⁸ Low public investment in employment-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture and industry, limits the effect of fiscal policy as an instrument for promoting inclusive and job-rich growth.

⁴² <https://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>

⁴³ Natural gas - Price - Chart - Historical Data - News (tradingeconomics.com)

⁴⁴ Calculations based on NBT Banking Statistics No 6, 2020. [https://nbt.tj/upload/iblock/883/2020_06-6.pdf]

⁴⁵ [<https://nbt.tj/en/macroeconomic/tavarrumi-solona-iyun-2017.php>]

⁴⁶ Open Budget Survey Tajikistan 2019 | International Budget Partnership.

⁴⁷ Major expenditure under fuel & energy sector is for building the Rogun Hydropower Plant.

⁴⁸ Calculations based on data from the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, World Bank and IMF.

3.2.1 Economic structure and industrialization

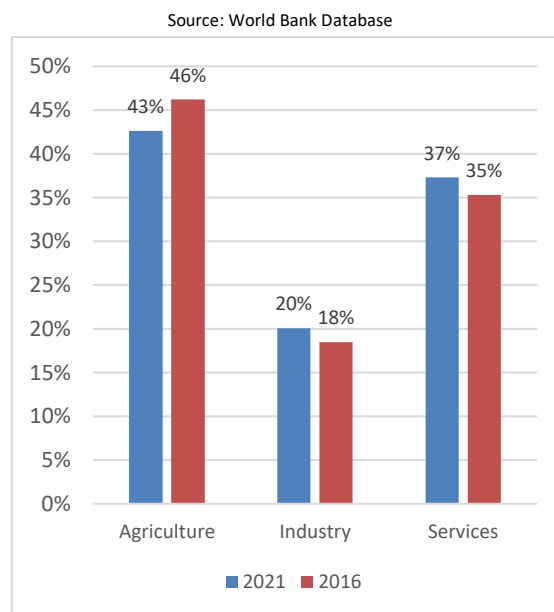
Tajikistan's economic growth in recent years can be characterized as state-driven capitalism in which the state plays an active role in steering production and investments. In several countries, in the initial stages of economic development, governments have played the role of a "market-maker" rather than setting the policy framework and regulations. The key to success has been the ability of the government to crowd in rather than crowd out the private sector and investments. Tajikistan's economy is undergoing a gradual structural transformation. The economy is characterized by low-end services, agriculture, and commodities. Although the share of agriculture has declined, there has not been adequate economic diversification. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihoods, but productivity is low.⁴⁹

The services sector is the largest contributor to the GDP (41.3 percent).⁵⁰ The services sector have recorded the fastest growth, and as a result the relative share of agriculture and industry in the GDP has declined.⁵¹ The agriculture sector has also shown relatively healthy growth, but the gross agriculture output increased less than expected⁵² due to low productivity and a lower use of land.⁵³ Between 2016 and 2021, the share of employment in the broad sectors of the economy has not changed significantly. Over 40 percent of workers are still engaged in agriculture.⁵⁴ However, agricultural wages remain amongst the lowest, amounting to only 40 percent of the average national wage in 2022. The growth of jobs in the industrial and service sectors increased marginally between 2016 and 2021. Construction accounts for around half of all industrial jobs, while the share of manufacturing employment accounts for less than 4 percent of the total. Apart from some sub-sectors such as finance, the productivity in the services sector, which is the second largest source of employment is also low.⁵⁵ It is to be added that a significant part of the Tajik labour force continues to rely on job opportunities abroad. Tajik migrant workers work primarily in construction, agriculture, and the services sector.⁵⁶

A key for economic transformation is moving out from low to high productivity within and across sectors.

Traditionally, this has happened as countries have seen the growth of non-agricultural sector. The growth of the industrial sector, specially manufacturing often played a pivotal role in this process. In many rich countries the share of manufacturing continued to increase and after reaching higher income level, the share of manufacturing started to fall as high-value services contributed more to the economy. Lately the share of manufacturing has grown faster in Tajikistan, but the growth from 2010 to 2020 has been somewhat modest, especially up to 2018. Since then, the manufacturing sector has been growing quite rapidly. The main sub-sectors of manufacturing are food and beverages and the light industry such as garments, textiles, metallic

Figure 4. Share of Employment by Broad Sectors



⁴⁹ Share of agriculture in GDP is 19 percent while employing around 60 percent workers which explains low productivity per worker. GDP data from the World Bank Database and the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics.

⁵⁰ Calculations based on data from the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, World Bank and IMF.

⁵¹ Calculations based on data from the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, World Bank and IMF.

⁵² FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2020, Food and Nutrition Note (unpublished paper jointly prepared for the 2020 CCA for Tajikistan).

⁵³ Although mountains cover 93 percent of the country's surface area, 34 percent of its land is agricultural.

⁵⁴ Based on ILO's Modelled Estimates for Broad Sectors [https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer54/?lang=en&id=TJK_A]

⁵⁵ Own calculations based on the AoS Socioeconomic Data 2022.

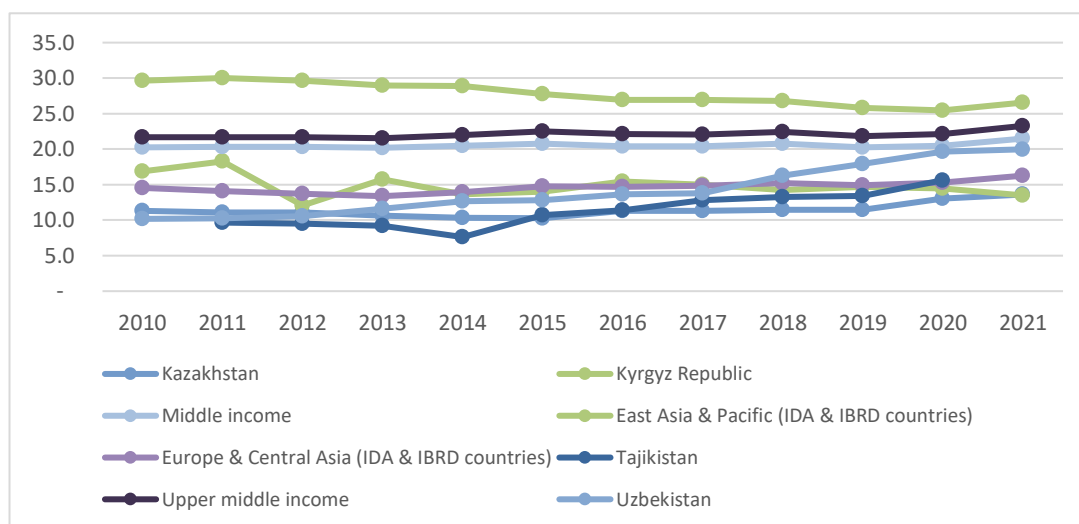
⁵⁶ Asian Development Bank, Strengthening support for labour migration in Tajikistan, 2020.

and leather products.⁵⁷

The figure below shows the comparative share of manufacturing for selected countries in Central Asia, East Asia & Pacific, and countries by income groups. East Asia has been a dominant force in global manufacturing, including manufactured goods for the global markets. The export-driven manufacturing of East Asia was the key factor for its rapid growth and unprecedented development in the last three decades. The GDP share of manufacturing in Central Asia is relatively low, with Uzbekistan’s manufacturing share close to the average for middle-income countries. Tajikistan’s share is similar to the average for low- and middle-income countries in Europe and Central Asia.

Although global manufacturing production is now more concentrated in China,⁵⁸ and there is greater competition among emerging markets, the growing trend in “fragmented manufacturing” offers opportunities for low-income countries to specialize in the manufacturing of components.⁵⁹ To avail these opportunities, Tajikistan needs to tap into global manufacturing supply-chains. This will require a series of measures ranging from improving the business environment, access to services and technology, strategic investments and time-bound support for infant industries and promoting skills and competencies of the workforce.

Figure 5. Share of Manufacturing Value added (2010-2021)



Source: World Bank Database

Competitiveness and diversification are essential for increasing industrial performance. The Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index benchmarks the ability of countries to produce and export manufactured goods competitively.⁶⁰ In the 2020 version of the CIP index, Tajikistan ranked 129th out of 152 countries, underlining weaknesses in the industrial sector.⁶¹ To increase industrial competitiveness, Tajikistan's manufacturing needs to diversify towards higher technology and higher value-added products. At present, manufactured exports are highly concentrated in basic metals (68 percent in 2018) or glass, ceramics and cement (12.9 percent in 2018). The share of manufactured goods in total exports has been on a declining

⁵⁷ Rodrik, D., 2015, Premature Deindustrialization. [<https://www.nber.org/papers/w20935>]

⁵⁸ World Economic Forum, 25 February 2020, 'These are the top 10 manufacturing countries in the world', online article. [<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/countries-manufacturing-trade-exports-economics/>]

⁵⁹ Athukorala, P., 2009, 'Working Papers in Trade and Development China's Impact on Foreign Trade and Investment in Other Asian Countries', Australian National University, Economics RSPAS, Departmental Working Papers.

⁶⁰ <https://www.unido.org/news/unidos-competitive-industrial-performance-index-2020-country-profiles-published>

⁶¹ https://stat.unido.org/content/publications/competitive-industrial-performance-index-2020%253a-country-profiles?_ga=2.115960838.1209330547.1622461282-1735454037.1621413310

trend.⁶² Tajikistan's revealed comparative advantage (RCA) is observed in raw materials such as cotton, silk, ores and basic metals. RCA of processed goods such as aluminium and other non-ferrous base metals, cement, cotton fabrics or textile yarn is much lower.⁶³ Accordingly, increasing capacities to process raw materials into final competitive export-oriented products should be one of the national priorities. Revitalization and modernization of the light industrial sector, and further development of carpets and textiles – both with export potential – can help the economy to diversify while also offering employment opportunities.

Innovation driven by research and development (R&D) is critical for economic diversification. Given the small size of the manufacturing sector in Tajikistan, its role as a driver of innovation and technological development is often overlooked. The role of medium-high and high-tech manufacturing value-added has been small (around 2 to 4 percent of total MVA over the past two decades), far below the averages in Central Asia or among developing countries in general.⁶⁴ R&D expenditure, at around 0.1 percent of GDP, is very low and most of it is publicly financed. The number of researchers is around 300 per million inhabitants, with less than 6 percent of them engaged in engineering and technology.⁶⁵ Many manufacturing sub-sectors would benefit from adopting new technology. An Agency for Innovation and Digital Technologies was recently established. Its role is to harness new technologies, including digitalization and promote innovations across different sectors of the economy.

Unmet infrastructure needs are impacting transport, logistics, and the provision of electricity. Tajikistan ranks 134th out of 160 countries on the Logistics Performance Index, the lowest ranking among the five Central Asian countries.⁶⁶ Further improving the country's transport infrastructure will result in lower trade costs and increased access to nearby markets. Roads are the most important mode of transport for freight and passengers, but most roads are unpaved, while railway infrastructure is limited. Investments as part of the CAREC Corridors passing through Tajikistan and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are important to improve connectivity.⁶⁷ Better maintenance and an improved electricity grid are necessary to combat power shortages in winter, which negatively impact both businesses and households.⁶⁸ Moreover, the recent unbundling of the electricity utility company, greater privatize sector investments, and increasing the share of other renewable sources of energy can significantly increase and improve efficiency in the provision of electricity

Limited role of the private sector is a major constraint to inclusive growth. While business reform is on the agenda and changes are being initiated, improved regulations are not producing sufficient change in terms of private sector investment and jobs.⁶⁹ A large proportion of the 315,369 registered businesses in the country⁷⁰ are microenterprises, individual enterprises, and own-account workers. Small and medium enterprises number about 20,000. There are 1,100 state-owned enterprises (SOEs) accounting for a large share of production. According to estimates, SOEs produce around 70 percent of the industrial output but available evidence suggests declining profitability and debt loads that are unsustainable.⁷¹ Private sector

⁶² <https://iap.unido.org/data/explore?p=TJK&s=CHN&t=143>

⁶³ <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/en/RcaRadar.html>

⁶⁴ <https://iap.unido.org/data/?p=TJK&s=CHN&t=143>

⁶⁵ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/tj?theme=science-technology-and-innovation>

⁶⁶ <https://lpi.worldbank.org/international/global>

⁶⁷ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/5c0e575a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/5c0e575a-en>

⁶⁸ <https://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395290598465&d=&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FDownloadDocument>

⁶⁹ Private sector investment is still low: 3-4%. World Bank, 2018, Tajikistan Country Economic Memorandum: Nurturing Tajikistan's Growth Potential. World Bank Group, May 2018, Tajikistan - Systematic Country Diagnostic.

⁷⁰ Data of the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics as reported in the UNDP's Impact Assessment on lives, livelihoods, and MSMEs, 2020.

⁷¹ World Bank Group, 2018, Tajikistan Country Economic Memorandum: Nurturing Tajikistan's Growth Potential. World Bank Group, May 2018, Tajikistan - Systematic Country Diagnostic.

investment is low, amounting to only 4-5 percent of the GDP.⁷²

Businesses are overregulated, compliance costs are high, and they are subjected to numerous inspections. On the Doing Business Index in 2020, Tajikistan ranked 106 out of a total of 190 countries. Tajikistan underperforms in several dimensions of the index: Dealing with Construction Permits, Getting Electricity, Paying Taxes, Trading Across Borders, and Resolving Insolvency.⁷³ Tajikistan is placed 104 out of 141 countries in the Global Competitiveness Index.⁷⁴ In 2021, the revised tax code was approved, and the changes took effect in the 2022 fiscal year. The revised tax code aims to reduce tax compliance costs and make it more investor friendly. The number of taxes was reduced, and some of the tax rates, such as income tax, were reduced to 20 per cent from 23 per cent and the value-added tax from 18 per cent to 15 per cent.

Greener industrialization to spur a greener economy. The data on the carbon intensity of manufacturing in Tajikistan is scarce. Available data shows that CO₂ emissions per unit of manufacturing value added (MVA) have been on an upward trend. The use of coal for energy generation and in industrial production – including the growing cement industry – has been on the rise. By 2018, Tajikistan's emission reached 1.05 kg of CO₂ per unit of MVA, a much higher level than in its neighbours.⁷⁵ To reach higher degrees of sustainability, reducing CO₂ emissions must be urgently pursued as part of an industrial strategy. Similarly, the emission of other pollutants in the manufacturing sector should be reduced. Overall, better environmental monitoring, improved waste and water management and regulatory changes to foster green industries with a lower environmental impact are needed for green industrialization in Tajikistan.⁷⁶

In 2022, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan launched the Green Economy Strategy, providing a framework for the country to decarbonize economic development. The green transformation was also taken up as the overarching theme in the Second Voluntary National Review that the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan submitted at the High-Level Political Forum at the United Nations in New York in July 2023. An analysis of Circular Economy and the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources is being conducted which will provide useful guidance for the policymakers on strategies for low-carbon economic development.

3.2.2 Regional integration and connectivity are critical for Tajikistan as a landlocked country. The development of trade and transport links, including enabling infrastructure, is critical to support income growth and economic diversification. However, benefits from greater connectivity and trade depend largely on the extent of domestic reforms to create a suitable regulatory environment and tackle logistic and transport bottlenecks. Trade facilitation efforts yield higher returns when undertaken in the context of sub-regional initiatives. Although several regional partnerships and agreements have been reached,⁷⁷ progress on regional connectivity, trade integration and economic cooperation has been relatively slow.⁷⁸ Tajikistan ranks 141 out of 188 countries on the 'trading across borders' dimension of the Doing Business Index.⁷⁹ Between 2018 and 2020, the average ratio of exports of goods and services to GDP in Tajikistan was only 15.5 percent against 23.5 percent in low-middle-income countries. Intra-regional trade amounts to only 5 percent of the total trade volume of Central Asia countries.⁸⁰ A large share of Tajikistan's trade within the region is composed

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ World Bank Group, 2020, Doing Business Index, Economy Profile Tajikistan.

[<https://www.doingbusiness.org/content/dam/doingBusiness/country/t/tajikistan/TJK.pdf>]

⁷⁴ World Economic Forum, Global Competitiveness Report, 2019. [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf]

⁷⁵ In 2018 CO₂ per unit of MVA stood at 0.93 kg in Kyrgyzstan, 0.8 kg in Uzbekistan and 0.67 in China with no data available for Afghanistan, <https://stat.unido.org/SDG/TJK>

⁷⁶ https://unece.org/DAM/env/epr/epr_studies/ECE.CEP.180.Eng.pdf

⁷⁷ For example, see UNECE, SPECA - Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity - Transport

⁷⁸ UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. [<https://unfctsurvey.org/group?id=SPECA>]

⁷⁹ Doing Business Rankings. [<https://www.doingbusiness.org/en/rankings>]

⁸⁰ International Transport Forum, 2019, 'Enhancing Connectivity and Freight in Central Asia', Policy Papers, No. 71, OECD Publishing, Paris.

of wheat imports from Kazakhstan.⁸¹ Arguably, Soviet legacies contribute to distrust and border disputes among countries in Central Asia. Tajikistan is investing in the development of roads,⁸² but there are still major gaps in infrastructure. Rail freight is used extensively for imports and exports, and Tajikistan relies upon rail networks to Uzbekistan and Russia. In the south, there are preliminary plans to extend the rail link to Afghanistan and Iran. Weak implementation of border crossing regulations, customs clearance inefficiencies, and high costs are still some of the key challenges affecting trade integration.

The work on improving the capacity of Tajikistan to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement, implement the Special Programme for Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Trade Facilitation Strategy and its national trade facilitation strategy, assistance for the digitalization of multimodal transport data and document exchange, exchange of information on trade procedures and trade facilitation among the customs services in the region are the important areas for improving regional integration and connectivity. SPECA provides an effective platform to strengthen sub-regional cooperation in Central Asia and its integration into the world economy, working in such important areas as gender and SDGs, innovation and technology for sustainable development, statistics, trade, sustainable transport, transit and connectivity, water, energy and environment. The Working Group on Trade of the SPECA facilitates trade in the region by supporting the harmonization of border-crossing procedures and the removal of barriers to trade.⁸³ In addition to the integrator role, SPECA has a good potential to become a vehicle for initiating new programmes and projects for the benefit of the whole Central Asian region. Tajikistan adopted a programme to enhance the role of customs authorities for inter-agency cooperation and integrated border management. However, an implementation mechanism for the programme has not been established yet.⁸⁴

Beyond the economic dimensions, health, migration, and environment have a transboundary dimension, which make them a prime area for international cooperation. Climate change in Central Asia is a present threat that demands prompt action. The need to address competition over water resources in a context of increasing water scarcity, low water efficiency and strong interdependencies should lead to integrated and coordinated approaches across the energy, water and land use nexus. Moreover, domestic problems regarding the management of industrial or mining facilities can lead to negative spillovers across countries, thus becoming a preventable source of tension. Overall, resource efficiency, as measured by domestic resource consumption by a unit of output, is low, although it compares favourably with other Central Asian countries. Well-managed circular or seasonal migration is a risk management strategy for households from communities that are at risk from climate change impacts. It can foster the circulation of social and financial remittances between host and home communities. With enabling conditions, remittances can be channelled into planned climate action and resilience-building in communities of origin. Lastly, infectious diseases have no national boundaries in a globalized world. There is a need to further strengthen regional and global cooperation in public health.

⁸¹ It is estimated that 29 percent of Tajikistan's trade is intraregional. Calculations based on the Agency of Statistics Trade Data, Socioeconomic Report, December 2020. [<https://www.stat.tj/en/news/publications/the-publication-social-economic-situation-in-tajikistan-for-january-december-2020-was-released>]

⁸² Minister of Transport, 15 September 2020, Opening Remarks - DCC Transport Meeting.

⁸³ [<https://unece.org/trade/events/fifteenth-session-speca-working-group-trade>]

⁸⁴ [http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/fileadmin/DAM/trade/workshop/2020_Nov_SPECAWG/Overview_BorderCrossings_Eng.pdf]

3.2.2 Poverty and Economic Inclusion

Growth has not translated into commensurate household income and job opportunities. In 2022, the Human Development Index (HDI) score for Tajikistan was 0.67 and it was ranked 126 out of 191 countries.⁸⁵ The proportion of people living under the national poverty fell to 22.5 percent in 2022.⁸⁶ Around 20 percent of the population is still vulnerable to multidimensional poverty and income inequality. The latter, measured by the Gini-Coefficient, has increased from 0.30 in 2009 to 0.34 in 2015.⁸⁷ The share of income earned by the poorest 40 percent households accounts for less than 20 percent of the total, while the richest 10 percent earns more than 26 percent of the total income. Growth has not contributed to a significant increase in formal sector jobs, especially in high value sectors such as manufacturing and high-end services. Sex-disaggregated data on poverty are missing. Residents of rural areas, Khatlon province and Regions of Republican Subordination (RRS) are particularly prone to poverty compared to urban areas and other provinces of Tajikistan.

According to the Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty,⁸⁸ 16.7 percent of children are poor in Tajikistan, living below USD 3.65 (25.7 percent in 2015), as per international poverty lines for lower-middle-income countries. In terms of extreme poverty, 3.3 percent of children live below the USD 2.15, declining from 6.1 percent in 2015. It is worth noting that in the ECA region, approximately 600,000 children live under extreme poverty, with 128,000 of them residing in Tajikistan. The poverty rate among children remains higher than among adults in Tajikistan because households with larger number of children are at higher risk of poverty. Despite sustained improvement in income and living standards in recent years, child poverty in Tajikistan remains prevalent. The share of children living in poor households in the country was 25.3 percent in 2021,⁸⁹ i.e., every fourth child in the country lives below the national poverty line. There are significant geographic differences between overall child poverty rates across the country. Sughd region has the lowest proportion of children living in poor families (3.9 percent) whilst child poverty rate in GBAO and Khatlon is 40.4 percent and 37.1 percent, respectively.

Informality remains a challenge, impeding economic inclusion. Between 2009 and 2016, informality in the economy declined from 54 to 29 percent. An increase in formalization of self-employed and small businesses contributed to this decline in informality. Paradoxically though in the same period the share of *informal employment in the formal economy* increased about 5 to nearly 14 percent. Men were more often informally employed than women. However, in the agriculture sector, where women are predominantly employed, informal employment is more widespread. Informal sector workers are more vulnerable to economic shocks. The outbreak of COVID-19 has shown the precariousness of informal jobs.

Outmigration and inflow of remittances is high. Migration is a key driver of sustainable development and with the right enabling conditions, migration can help achieve development outcomes and fulfil the aspirations of those who move and the societies they join, as well as those who stay behind. Tajikistan is one of the world's top five remittance recipient countries measured by its relative size to GDP.⁹⁰ Remittances

⁸⁵ <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>

⁸⁶ World Bank data. [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=TJ>]

⁸⁷ A higher score means greater income inequality. World Bank data, 2009 [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=TJ>] and UNDP. [<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/TJK>] The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) value is 0.029. In terms of extreme poverty, by 2015 the rate had fallen to 4.1 percent.

⁸⁸ World Bank, Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines, 2023 – accessible here: Chrome extension://efaidnbmninnbpcjpcgclefindmkaj/<https://www.unicef.org/media/144856/file/Global%20trends%20in%20child%20monetary%20poverty.pdf>

⁸⁹ Tajstat, World Bank, UNICEF. Presentation at the Poverty Reduction Council, February 2023 based on Household Budget Survey data 2021.

⁹⁰ <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2020-interactive/>

account for an estimated 29 percent of GDP,⁹¹ a key factor in poverty reduction and the second most important and most stable source of household income after wages.⁹² With population and labour force growth, the economy cannot absorb the numbers of new workers. This is due mainly to the focus of economic development on extractive industry, energy, road, and communication infrastructure that are capital, but not labour-intensive. It is estimated that around 500,000 working-age people, mostly men (85.5 percent), leave the country every year to work overseas as temporary labour migrants.⁹³ Although figures vary depending on the sources, the Russian Federation accounted for 2.1 million Tajik arrivals in 2023.⁹⁴

There is a lack of diverse labour migration pathways, and a great dependence is placed on migration to the Russian Federation (97.6 percent).⁹⁵ Other destination countries include the United Kingdom as part of the UK Seasonal Workers Scheme, Germany, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan. Tajik migrants in Russian Federation are primarily employed in the construction, agriculture, and the services sector. Many of them are low-skilled and economically desperate leading to several protection issues such as forced labour or exploitation by employers, abuse at the hands of police and extortion by criminal gangs. Xenophobic attitudes towards Central Asians migrants are also on the rise in Russia. Tajikistan's migrants also face challenges accessing services, including workplace health and safety, adequate living conditions and access to health services both in host countries and once they return to Tajikistan. In regard to mental health and psychosocial needs, labour migrants experience large numbers of potentially traumatizing events, have elevated stress level, possible indications of depression and PTSD, but virtually with no access to mental care and psychosocial support services in Russia and Kazakhstan.⁹⁶

Employment disparities are related to sex, age, and skills. The labour force participation rate in Tajikistan is lower than the global average (42 percent compared to 61 percent).⁹⁷ The labour force participation rate of women ages 15 to 64 is only 33 percent compared to 53 percent for men. High labour migration, mainly by men, partially explains their low participation rate and reduces incentives for female members of the same household to seek employment.⁹⁸ Women's lower employment is also hindered by their high engagement in unpaid care work.⁹⁹ Regardless of their economic activity and employment status, women spend over 70 percent of their time on unpaid care work. The lack of affordable and quality pre-school education facilities, especially in rural areas, impedes women's employment.

In 2016, nearly 1 in 3 young people (ages 15 to 24) were not employed, not receiving education, or enrolled in training (NEET).¹⁰⁰ As a result, many young Tajiks migrate abroad seeking opportunities, either for study or work in the Russian Federation¹⁰¹. The rate among young women was much higher (49 percent) compared to

⁹¹ World Bank data, Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) - Tajikistan.

[<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=TJ>]

⁹² Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, 2016, 'Income and expenditure of population in Tajikistan'.

⁹³ Asian Development Bank, December 2020, Strengthening Support for Labour Migration in Tajikistan: Assessment and Recommendations.

[<https://www.adb.org/publications/support-for-labor-migration-tajikistan>]

⁹⁴ <https://www.rbc.ru/business/03/02/2024/65bcbba99a79474ea327c8de>

⁹⁵ <https://www.adb.org/publications/support-for-labor-migration-tajikistan>

⁹⁶ International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. Mental Health Problems of Returned Tajik Labour Migrants and their Experiences Seeking Mental Health Care and Psychosocial Support. IOM, Geneva.

⁹⁷ Modelled ILO estimates for 2020. [<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.CACT.NE.ZS>]. According to the Labour Force Survey 2016, the rate was almost similar: labour force participation rate (male and female: 42.4 percent; male: 52.9 percent; female: 32.6 percent)

⁹⁸ Murakami, E., Yamada, E., Sioson, E., 2019, 'The Impact of Migration and Remittances on Labour Supply in Tajikistan', JICA Ogata Research Institute, Working paper n. 181.

⁹⁹ Unpaid care work comprises of child care, care of sick or old members of families, household chores work, production of goods and services for own consumption. This includes agriculture activities, livestock etc.

¹⁰⁰ Labour Force Survey, 2016. Routine employment data that are periodically updated by the Tajikistan Agency on Statistics do not include disaggregated figures; the Labour force survey is a household survey which better captures the employment situation in a country including unemployment, labour underutilization, and NEET.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.adb.org/publications/support-for-labor-migration-tajikistan>

young men (7 percent).¹⁰² For young women aged 20 to 24, the NEET rate increases to 66 percent. Poor qualifications, especially to offer active teaching and learning methods, poor ICT access to promote 21st century skills,¹⁰³ are major challenges that affects employability of young people. The teaching of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects is impeded by lack of facilities and equipment. More than half of university students enrol in humanities, economics, and law. There are few business incubators and accelerators. At present, the numbers of programmers, data scientists, and other technical professionals are insufficient to generate an entrepreneurial ‘start-up’ ecosystem. The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system is supply-driven and mostly outdated, resulting in a mismatch between available skills and those in demand. The vocational education system does not meet the needs of employers and entrepreneurs are not engaged to contribute to the development of the TVET system.¹⁰⁴

Traditional social norms discourage women and limit their contributions to the economy. Family preference on investing in boys’ education, early marriages, limited/lack of decision-making authority in the family (especially for young women) provides women with the only option of doing unpaid care and domestic work. Additionally, with existing social norms, it expected that male head of households will migrate, leaving women behind to care of children and the elderly, often under mother-in-law’s guidance. Notably, economic activity of women reduced from 55.4 percent in 2004 to 32.6 percent in 2016 and during the same period, employment of women decreased from 46.6 percent in 2004 to 40.5 percent of all employed in 2016.¹⁰⁵ The reasons behind such trends are high concentration of women’s labour in agricultural sector, which employs 60.8 percent of all women and where informal employment is widespread; their high engagement in unpaid work is related to childcare and care after sick and disabled members of the families, and household duties. Regretfully, due to the skewed social norms, young rural women engaged in work more than any other age group and gender, are spending approximately 11 hours per day for unpaid work.¹⁰⁶

3.2.3 Population Dynamics and Demographic Dividend

In 2023, the population of the country reached 10.2 million, growing at around 2 percent or 200,000 thousand people annually. Population growth is continuing and will continue even with a slight decline in fertility and birth rates. Around 50 percent of the female population are of reproductive age (15-49 years).¹⁰⁷ Migration is an important demographic factor in Tajikistan. Net migration is negative but offset by natural population growth (births *minus* deaths).

¹⁰² Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, 2017, Situation in the Labour Market in the Republic of Tajikistan (Report on findings of the labour force survey conducted from 20 July to 20 August, 2016), pp.87-88.

¹⁰³ 21st century *transversal* skills (e.g. communication, team work and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and *deep skills* in one or more trades e.g. ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. See: ILO, Skill-up, dtd Nov 2019; AES, What are 21st century skills, dtd 2020.

¹⁰⁴ ILO (2020). Assessment Report State Strategy for Labour Market Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020. Working Paper. ILO: Moscow (forthcoming).

¹⁰⁵ Labour force survey, 2016

¹⁰⁶ Asian Development Bank, 2020, Women’s time use in rural Tajikistan. [<https://www.adb.org/publications/womens-time-use-rural-tajikistan>]

¹⁰⁷ Demographic Yearbook Republic of Tajikistan 2023. Agency on Statistics

There are sub-national disparities in demographic processes and population dynamics. Khatlon and Sughd regions have higher fertility rates and about 64 percent of the country's population is living in these regions. In comparison, GBAO, with the largest area (64,200 sq. km or 45 percent), has the lowest fertility rate and is facing decline in birth rates. It also has the lowest density and share of the total population (232,000 or 2.3 percent).¹⁰⁸ Observed depopulation is boosted by internal (including climate migration) and international outmigration. Among the consolidated regions of the country, migration losses associated with resettlement are highest in GBAO. The internal migration, mostly of young and economically active generations to other regions and abroad is resulting in the increase of the share of the older people thus contributing to the ageing of the population of GBAO. It's projected those other biggest regions – Sughd and Khatlon are already reaching the threshold of ageing of population.¹⁰⁹ Internal migration due to climate change and environmental degradation of the environment is a new reality for the country.

Figure 6. Demographic Dividends (ESCAP Data portal)

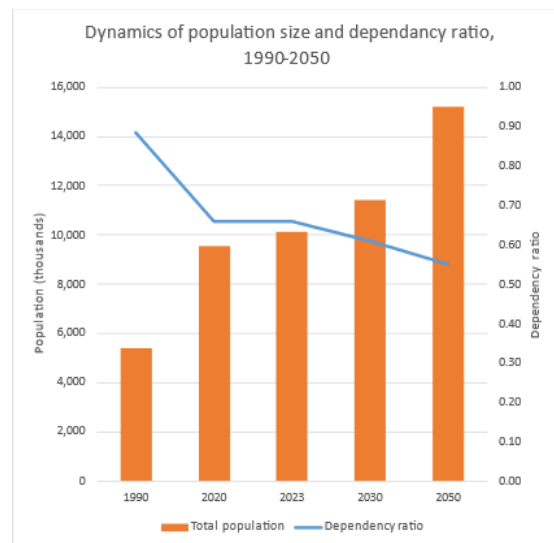


Figure 7. Population size by age groups in Tajikistan, 1990-2050 (thousands)

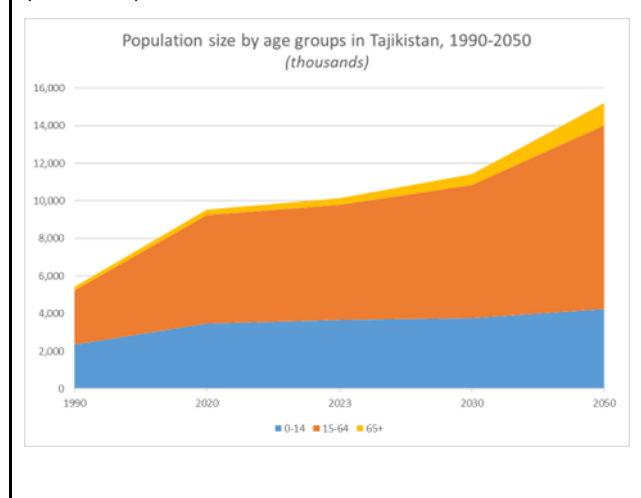
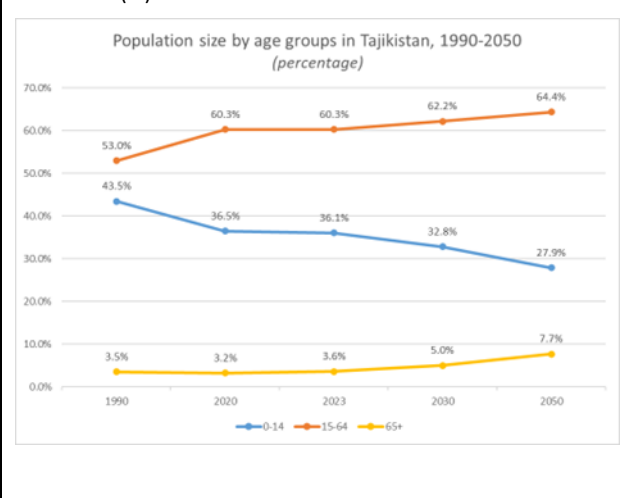


Figure 8. Population size by age groups in Tajikistan 1990-2050 (%)



Lower fertility rates and a declining dependency ratio¹¹⁰ will create a demographic dividend.¹¹¹ Matched with significant, quality investments in health, education, and employment activation, especially for women, and family planning services, this can foster rapid, more inclusive economic growth and improve Tajikistan's human development indicators. While the country is at the beginning of a third stage of demographic transition¹¹² its population and labour force are growing faster than in other countries in Eastern Europe and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

¹⁰⁹ Based on UN ESCAP, population ageing is a process defined as the number of years required or expected for the percentage of the population aged 65 or over to rise continuously from 7 to 14 per cent. Source: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing>

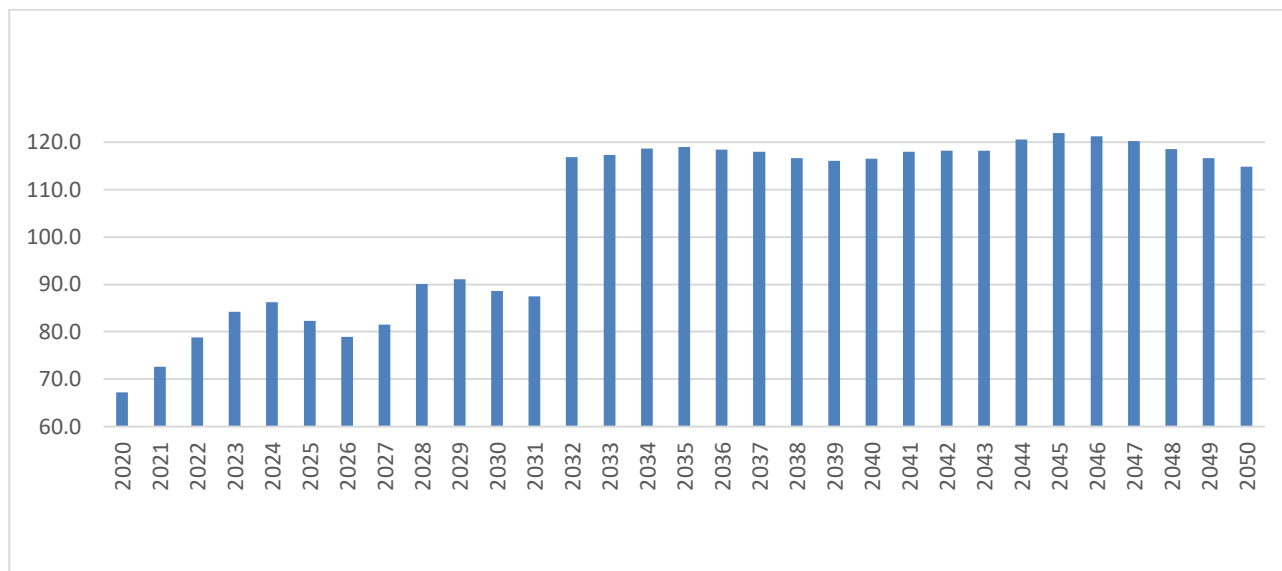
¹¹⁰ The dependency ratio is the ratio of working-age population (15-64 years old) to non-working age population (below 15 and over 65 years old). United Nations.

¹¹¹ This is the boost to economic growth that occurs when there are more working age people relative to dependents. UNFPA, 2020, *ibidem*.

¹¹² In Stage 3 of the Demographic Transition Model, the pace of total population growth slows due to low death rates and low birth rates that usually result from improved economic conditions, an increase in women's status and education, and access to contraception. The age structure of

Central Asia (EECA).¹¹³ The share of working-age-population is around 60 percent and projected to reach 65 percent from 2030 to 2050.¹¹⁴ Since gaining the independence the population of the country almost doubled from 5 million in 1990 to 10 million in 2023.¹¹⁵ The rapidly growing population will have a major strain on the economy, from public goods and services, food supplies, to the availability of jobs in the future.¹¹⁶

Figure 9. New jobs required (projected, thousands)



Source: UNFPA, 2023, *National Report "Current state and Prospects of demographic development of the Republic of Tajikistan"* ¹¹⁷

Economic development and future jobs should be examined within a broader context. Analytical instruments such as the demographic dividend model and national transfer accounts' analysis can help to develop adequate public policies and public budgeting based on the study of intergenerational economic systems, macroeconomic effects of population changes, pensions, health care, education, and fertility. The figure below shows projections of future trends of per capita GDP and human development with a set of different policy actions.

Looking forward, Tajikistan needs to revisit its industrial, employment, and investment strategies: future policies should focus more on green industry growth, digital infrastructure and digital skills, high technology adoption, and a well-managed mitigation system. Tajikistan needs to look at economic sectors more holistically and with an environmental lens to ensure a light carbon footprint. When manufacturing is better integrated into global value-chains, and when it is linked to agriculture and services in the domestic market, it yields welfare-enhancing growth. Greater digitalization will be a key determinant in promoting productivity. Tajikistan needs to invest more to address the digital divide. Tajikistan ranks low on ICT adoption (121 out of 141 countries) and innovation capability (120 out of 141 countries).¹¹⁸ Broadband coverage remains low, while the cost of accessing the internet is very high.¹¹⁹ Deregulations in the telecommunication

the population thus changes. The youth dependency ratio decreases, creating the opportunity for economic growth through an increase in the ratio of working age to dependent population (demographic dividend).

¹¹³ 2 percent annual growth rate over the last 30 years. The high fertility rate is the main driver of population growth. At the same time, neonatal, infant and child mortality rates considerably decreased throughout the country. Source: 2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

¹¹⁴ Estimates based on data from the Agency on Statistics and UN ESCAP Data Portal, Source: <https://www.population-trends-asiapacific.org/population-ageing>

¹¹⁵ Demographic yearbook Republic of Tajikistan 2023. Agency on Statistics

¹¹⁶ World Bank Group, May 2018, Tajikistan - Systematic Country Diagnostic.

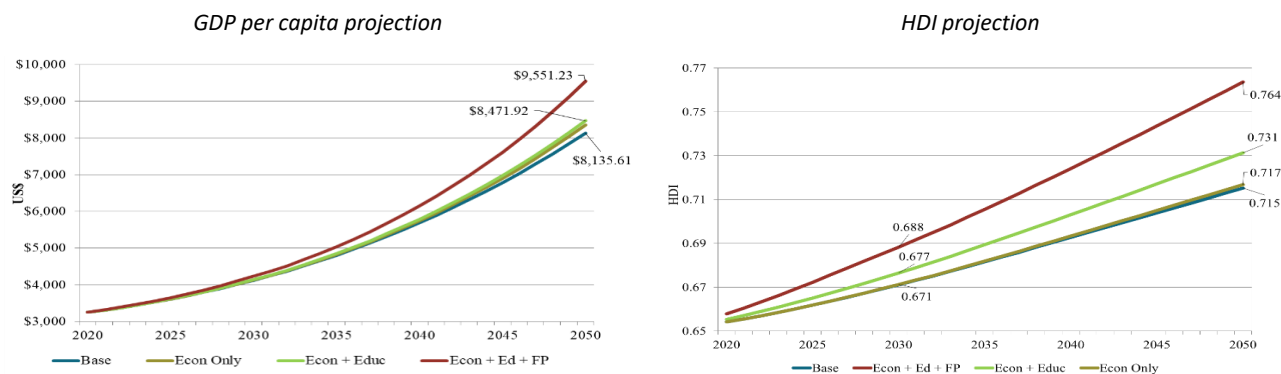
¹¹⁷ The report has not been published yet.

¹¹⁸ [www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_TheGlobalCompetitivenessReport2019.pdf]

¹¹⁹ Kelly, T., Liaplina, A., Tan, S.W., Wingler, H., 2017, 'Reaping Digital Dividends - leveraging the Internet for Development of Europe and Central Asia', World Bank Group. [<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/publication/digital-dividends-in-eca>]

sector to allow more private sector participation can promote competition and help in improving internet services and reducing costs which are currently quite high. A combination of tourism promotion and inviting private sector involvement can also provide a boost to the local economy, help in diversification, and create more jobs.

Figure 10: GDP Scenarios (Econ) with investments in education (Educ) and in family planning services (FP)



Source: UNFPA, 2020, Population Situation Analysis Report for Tajikistan

A reset is necessary to charter a greener path to industrialization. With a small industrial base, Tajikistan's carbon emissions are relatively low, but likely to increase as the country further industrializes. The country can pursue a different form of industrialization which is good for its long-term growth and environment. To avoid environmental damage and pollution, irreversible biodiversity loss, and increasing disaster risks, industrial policy must be underpinned by renewable energy, low-carbon technologies, and green jobs. There is an opportunity for Tajikistan to champion green and technologically driven industrialization with a human focus. Given the large-scale migration, and demand for migrant workers in the Russian Federation in the next 15 years, Tajikistan also needs to move towards a well-managed labour migration system.

3.3 Environment and climate change analysis

High vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards are major threats. According to the OECD's multidimensional fragility framework 2022¹²⁰, Tajikistan falls under the 60 fragile contexts, with severe risks and poor coping capacities across multiple dimensions. The country is experiencing severe fragility in the environmental dimension and is vulnerable to high exposure to hazards and low capacity in food supply adequacy among others. Tajikistan is also experiencing high fragility in the economic dimension with weak coping capacities, particularly in financial inclusion and women's employment in the non-agricultural sector. The country is also experiencing severe fragility in the political dimension. Tajikistan has vast natural wealth, including minerals,¹²¹ rivers with hydropower potential, and rich biodiversity for eco-tourism.¹²² According to estimates, Tajikistan's economic losses from weather-related disasters vary from 0.4 percent to 1.3 percent of Tajikistan's GDP per annum.

Climate projections point to higher temperatures and reduced precipitation, reduction in ice cover and changes in hydrological cycles. These will increase the frequency of extreme events such as flooding, droughts, and storms.¹²³ Besides high vulnerability and low adaptive capacity, there is limited gender analysis of the impact of natural hazards and climate change. The country experiences lack of substantive

¹²⁰ State of Fragility 2022, <https://www3.compareyourcountry.org/states-of-fragility/countries/TJK/>

¹²¹ [<https://eiti.org/tajikistan>]

¹²² World Bank Group, May 2018, Tajikistan - Systematic Country.

¹²³ The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2014, Third National Communication of the Republic of Tajikistan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. [https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/tjknc3_eng.pdf]

participation and leadership of women in climate change action; lack of gender analysis and sex-, age- and diversity-disaggregated data; lack of capacities for addressing the gendered dimension of policies and platforms on disaster risks; and untapped opportunities to promote women's economic empowerment and resilience through their direct involvement in climate action, sustainable energy, and agriculture sectors.¹²⁴

When extreme events, such as storms and floods, occur, for example, poor women are 14 times more likely to die than men; this is due to factors including higher responsibilities at home, little decision-making power within the family, and lack of education or access to information. Gender inequality can also shape women's migration decision-making in slow-onset situations and create barriers that often limit women's opportunities to use migration as an adaptation strategy. Women in Tajikistan who stay behind are particularly vulnerable to climate change as they are highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. They also face higher agricultural workloads and responsibilities.¹²⁵

It is important to support the development of bankable climate projects and initiatives that are aligned to a market driven transformation. Without creating these vehicles, it is difficult to attract sizable public and private investments. Closing the financing gap also requires close coordination between the public and private sector, and improved institutional capacities for the effective deployment and management of financing while considering the environmental, social, and fiduciary risks.

3.3.1 Natural Hazards and Climate Change

Due to its geology, hydrology, and topography, Tajikistan is disaster-prone. Between 1992 and 2016, natural and climate-related disasters led to GDP losses of roughly USD 1.8 billion, affecting almost 7 million people.¹²⁶ Susceptibility to landslides is classified as high and damaging and life-threatening floods occur at least once every 10 years.¹²⁷ In 2019, disasters triggered internal displacement of 4,800 people.¹²⁸ Tajikistan is considered the most vulnerable country to climate change in Central Asia.¹²⁹ According to Tajikistan's Third National Communication to the UNFCCC (2013), climate change is expected to cause (i) an increase in air temperature, (ii) more volatile precipitation, (iii) accelerated melting of glaciers, and (iv) an increase in both frequency and magnitude of climate-induced extreme weather events.¹³⁰ The National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (adopted in 2019) identified four climate sensitive priority sectors: energy, water resources, transport, and agriculture.¹³¹ The table below show the risks and levels of risks in these sectors.

¹²⁴ UN Women, UNEP, 2019, Strengthening Human Rights and Gender Equality Through Climate Change Action and DRR in Asia and Pacific.

¹²⁵ <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/3-ways-which-gender-equality-interlinks-climate-migration-adaptation-strategy-exploring-links-between-migration-environment-and-sdg-5>

¹²⁶ [<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#>]

¹²⁷ [<https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/239-tajikistan>]

¹²⁸ IDMC, 2020, Global Report on Internal Displacement. [<https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2020/>]

¹²⁹ World Bank Group, 2013, Tajikistan: Overview of Climate Change Activities. Washington, DC.

[<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/17552>]

¹³⁰ The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2014, Third National Communication of the Republic of Tajikistan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. [https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/tjknc3_eng.pdf]

¹³¹ [<https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=119703>]

Table 1: Climate change associated risks, ranking in four priority sectors.

Risks	Energy	Water	Transport	Agriculture
Rising average temperature	10	10		7
Greater intensity of precipitation	9	9		
Increased precipitation and flooding			9	
Permanent ice thawing			9	
Mudflows, land and rock slopes collapse			9	
More extreme weather events, including flooding	9	9		9
Drought				9
More frequent extreme temperatures, higher evaporation		9		8
Seasonal rain shift-mismatch current use and future availability	8	8		
Freeze-thaw cycles			8	
Reduction in spring snow depth and earlier runoff		7.5		

Source: Extracted from the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (2019)

Climate change is increasing the magnitude and frequency of climate-related hazards.¹³² Potential risks for the agriculture sector include increased temperatures and disrupted precipitation patterns, higher crop evapotranspiration rates, reduced water supply, climate-induced droughts, decreased rain-fed irrigation, reduced crop yields and production. Agricultural risks could lead to food insecurity, poor nutrition and worsened livelihoods of the rural population, especially women, young persons, and vulnerable groups, who are less likely to have access to information and resources.¹³³ By threatening the agricultural sector, climate change puts the country's short- and long-term economic performance at risk. Urgent action is required to build resilience, especially in agriculture, promote low-emission land use and meet the country's adaptation and mitigation targets. With the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2019-2034), the country is shifting from emergency response towards a proactive risk reduction approach.

In accordance with the 2010 UNFCCC's Cancun Adaptation Framework, the government acknowledges the importance of integrating approaches to manage migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation. Migration can be an adaptation mechanism to climate shocks and stressors by reducing vulnerabilities and pressure on natural resources environmental shocks and during a disaster or lean season, remittances are essential to sustain livelihoods. Well-managed circular or seasonal migration, both international and internal, is a risk management strategy for households from communities that are at risk from climate change impacts. It can foster the circulation of social and financial remittances between host and home communities. With enabling conditions, remittances can be channelled into planned climate action and resilience-building in communities of origin. Furthermore, circular migration schemes and skills mobility partnerships could also fill labour market gaps and increase economic activity in host countries.

Though not yet a Party of the UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents,¹³⁴ Tajikistan is a beneficiary of the Convention's Assistance and Cooperation Programme and made a high-level

¹³² Some scenarios predict that by the end of the century warming will exceed 5°C in the southern districts of Tajikistan, as well as in the mountains of central Tajikistan and western Pamir. GIZ, Land Use Sector Analysis for Tajikistan's National Determined Contributions (NDC): Revision and Updating in Tajikistan.

¹³³ For more information, please consult FAO. 2016. National gender assessment of agricultural and rural livelihoods. Tajikistan. Country gender assessment series. [<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5766e.pdf>]

¹³⁴ The Convention helps countries prevent industrial accidents that can have transboundary effects, prepare for and respond to such accidents, if they occur. [<https://unece.org/environment-policy/industrial-accidents>]

commitment in 2005 to implement the Convention.¹³⁵ Under the Programme, the country receives support for the prevention, preparedness and response to industrial accidents and accidental water pollution and strengthened inter-institutional and sub-regional cooperation on prevention. In 2022 and 2023, Tajikistan made significant progress in the area of technological disaster risk reduction, specifically in relation to mine tailings management facilities and the prevention of accidental water pollution.

Notably, in 2022, the country formally established an Inter-institutional Working Group (IIWG), which acts as a platform for a sustainable national cooperation mechanism to jointly identify and agree on the management of technological/industrial risks and risks related to accidental water pollution, including transboundary risks and consequences, discuss and agree on policy reforms and ways to elaborate the coherent national position on transboundary cooperation. IIWG held its second meeting in April 2023 and prepared the Work Plan for the year. Tajikistan hosted the Sub-Regional Workshop on Mine Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Central Asia on 25-26 May 2023 in Dushanbe.¹³⁶

The meeting brought together high-level representatives from the Central Asian countries and authorities dealing with the prevention, preparedness and response to industrial accidents and accidental water pollution to develop a common regional approach. Representatives from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan pointed out the importance and need to further strengthen transboundary cooperation and develop joint contingency plans, notably in river basins in Central Asia. Indeed, transboundary cooperation between Central Asian countries is key to building resilience and preventing industrial accidents and accidental water pollution.

During the 2021-2023, UNECE in cooperation with the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), implemented a project on the compilation and analysis of information on existing national and joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution in the Syr Darya river basin in emergency situations. The project resulted in the development of an in-depth report on addressing the state of water resources, water quality issues and issues related to policies and institutions for water management, industrial safety and prevention of accidental water pollution, as well as an inventory and map of 61 tailings management facilities (TMFs) – 9 in Kazakhstan, 30 in Kyrgyzstan, 12 in Uzbekistan, and 10 in Tajikistan – and 133 other hazardous industrial facilities, including 33 TMFs with potential transboundary effects in the Syr Darya River Basin.

3.3.2 Management of Natural Resources

An increase in the loss of biodiversity. Tajikistan is recognized by the NGO Conservation International as a hotspot of biodiversity. The country hosts part of the Central Pamir-Alai region, supporting 4,300 species and 1,400 endemic plants. Despite this richness, there is no valid information about the number of threatened vascular plant species present in Tajikistan or the locations of endangered plants. The first application of the IUCN Red List criteria, a system for classifying species at high risk of global extinction, reveals that 38 percent of all native species in Tajikistan are endangered, and about half are vulnerable.¹³⁷ The majority of extinct species are in the densely populated Syr Darya River Valley (Prisyrdarian subregion) and the Panj River Valley (West Pamirian subregion). The highest number of threatened species is located in the species-rich South Tajikistan subregion, an area strongly influenced by agriculture. The highest proportion of threatened flora is in West Pamir, South Tajikistan and Alaian subregions.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ [<https://unece.org/introduction-18>]

¹³⁶ Subregional Workshop on Mine Tailings Safety and the Prevention of Accidental Water Pollution in Central Asia - Website

¹³⁷ Arkadiusz & Świerszcz et al (2020). Red List of vascular plants of Tajikistan – the core area of the Mountains of Central Asia global biodiversity hotspot. Scientific Reports. 1,627 taxa, of which 23 are extinct, 271 are critically endangered, 717 endangered and 639 vulnerable.

¹³⁸ Nowak, A. et al., 2020, Red List of vascular plants of Tajikistan – the core area of the Mountains of Central Asia global biodiversity hotspot.

Forests cover less than 3 percent of the total land area.¹³⁹ This is a decrease from about 25 percent in the 19th century attributed to population growth, fuelwood demand, and cotton production. Plantation forests constitute almost 20 percent of the total forest area, predominantly assigned to fruit production.¹⁴⁰ All forests in Tajikistan have a protection function, recognized under the Forest Code and most are under the responsibility of the Forestry Agency. Commercial harvests are forbidden, and all wood products are imported, predominantly from the Russian Federation. Although over 70 percent of forests are reported as “primary”,¹⁴¹ all forests have been influenced by human activities, such as grazing and fuelwood harvesting. There are no plantations for wood production and recorded wood removals are reported to be at a very low level (under 10 thousand m³), although it is acknowledged that the real level is much higher. The estimate of people who depend on firewood is about 10-20 percent of the population.

Desertification and land degradation represent further risks. In 2018, Tajikistan joined the global Bonn Challenge and pledged to restore over 66,000 ha of degraded and deforested land by 2030. Further, Tajikistan adopted the Astana Resolution, welcoming efforts of national forest authorities in the Caucasus and Central Asia to increase forest cover and halt processes of desertification and land degradation.¹⁴² Land degradation and desertification or other forms of disruption of ecosystem services can increase competition over natural resources and exacerbate communal tensions. It can also impact the drivers and experiences of migration as individuals may have no other choice than to migrate to areas where there is a more secure and sustainable food and income source. On the other hand, migration can also be a form of adaptation to diversify a household’s livelihood portfolio; generate social and financial remittances that can be channelled into environmental protection, conservation, resilience building activities; and reduce pressure on ecosystem services.¹⁴³

Obligatory measures to conserve and enhance biodiversity have not been fully implemented. In 2016, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 was adopted as part of the country’s obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, but progress has been limited. Existing programmes and strategies to support biodiversity conservation and management of protected areas are insufficiently funded. Also, initiatives are not well monitored, and there is limited data and information sharing among different institutions.¹⁴⁴ For example, weather data from the Agency for Hydrometeorology are not available to the Ministry of Agriculture. The network of 20 hydro-meteorological stations present in the country is not adequate for agrometeorological monitoring. Real-time data production and information sharing are needed, as well as a comprehensive list of endangered species, in order to feed policy development.

A long-term strategy is needed to manage the mining industry sustainably. Tajikistan is rich in ferrous and alloying metals, tungsten, molybdenum, lead, zinc, gold, silver, copper, antimony, mercury, tin, bismuth, strontium, and aluminium. Recently, deposits of fluor spar, boron, glass sand, and rock crystal were discovered. Other mineral deposits include dolomites, rock salt, limestone, gypsum, marble, granite, lapis lazuli, spinel, turquoise, amethyst, garnet, tourmaline, and sapphire. The system of classification and inventory accounting developed in the Federation of Socialist Republics is still in use by the State Commission

¹³⁹ [<http://www.fao.org/3/cb0076en/cb0076en.pdf>]

¹⁴⁰ [<https://unece.org/forests/publications/overview-state-forests-and-forest-management-tajikistan>]

¹⁴¹ Primary forests are forests of native tree species, where there are no clearly visible indications of human activities and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed. Secondary forests regenerate on native forests, which have been cleared by natural or man-made causes, such as agriculture or ranching.

¹⁴³ <https://migration4development.org/en/resources/integrating-migration-environment-and-climate-change-interventions-toolkit>

¹⁴⁴ See the Report of the state of environment in Tajikistan for 2018. [http://stat.wv.tj/publications/October2019/tphifzi_muhibi_zist_-2019_nav.pdf]

for Reserves, while the use of the United Nations Framework Classification of Resources (UNFC)¹⁴⁵ for the sustainable management of resources has been recommended by UNECE.¹⁴⁶

Water resources are critically important for the region's economy. The main sources of Central Asia's water are found in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan. The competing demands for irrigation in downstream countries and hydropower generation in upstream countries fuel serious political disputes in the region, putting water at the heart of regional security and stability concerns. Despite the presence of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, established after the collapse of the Soviet Union to coordinate the management of transboundary water resources in the Aral Sea Basin, water management in the area is characterized by ongoing controversies over hydropower projects between upstream and downstream countries.¹⁴⁷ Improved transboundary cooperation at the regional level and a unified information system are needed. Tajikistan has actively promoted water management at the international level.¹⁴⁸

An integrated water resources management needs to be fully operationalized. Following the achievement of important legislative and strategic milestones, such as the adoption of the Water Sector Reform Programme until 2025, of the new Water Code in 2020, and the elaboration of the draft National Water Strategy until 2030, the country needs to establish and operationalize basin organizations and basin councils in all its basin districts. The country also needs to finalize the River Basin Management Plans and implement the Gender Roadmap which was developed at the Women's Water Forum in 2018. There is also a need for a detailed water safety action plan that should be based on the national water strategy.

A transboundary approach to water management is essential. Identifying, and coordinating with both national and international stakeholders at the nexus between climate change, water management, and sustainable use of natural resources can be complex. To ensure well-planned implementation and integration of interdependent transboundary activities strong implementation and coordination capacity is required. Formal agreements on the issue of transboundary water management are not common in Central Asia. Many stakeholders are involved from community up to government level, however, there is little coordination or clarity between the different parties. This can hinder decision-making processes and delay the maintenance and modernization of irrigation and drainage infrastructure and technologies.

A balance is needed between energy security, environment, and the management of renewables sources. Tajikistan has unique hydropower resources which account for about 4 percent of the economically efficient hydropower potential of the globe. It ranks eighth worldwide in terms of gross theoretical capability of hydropower resources.¹⁴⁹ About half of its total capacity is technically possible and economically feasible today (total capacity of all rivers of the country is estimated at 32.3 million kW in power or 527 billion kW/h in energy production). The country exports electricity to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Afghanistan. In 2019 Tajikistan exported more than 2.5 billion kWh of electricity, valued at USD 72.5 million.¹⁵⁰ A centrepiece of Tajikistan's future energy generation is the ongoing construction of the Roghun HPP. Hydropower energy

¹⁴⁵ UNFC and Sustainable Resource Management. [<https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/unfc-and-sustainable-resource-management>]

¹⁴⁶ UNECE Project on "Improving national capacities of Central Asian countries to harmonize and implement an internationally applicable system of classification and sustainable management of energy and mineral resources." [<https://unece.org/sustainable-energy/unfc-and-sustainable-resource-management/unfc-central-asia>]

¹⁴⁷ Global Water Partnership, 2014, Integrated water resources management in Central Asia: The challenges of managing large transboundary rivers, technical focus paper. [<https://www.gwp.org/globalassets/global/toolbox/publications/technical-focus-papers/05-integrated-water-resources-management-in-central-asia.pdf>]

¹⁴⁸ Tajikistan is a member of the High-Level Panel on Water launched by the World Bank and the UN, and it hosted the Water Action Decade in 2018.

¹⁴⁹ Out of the potential 527 billion kWh per year, the country's technical exploitable and economic capabilities are estimated to be 264 billion kWh per year, out of which very modest resources have been exploited so far. WEC, 2010, Survey of Energy resources.

¹⁵⁰ Ministry of energy and water resources of Tajikistan.

production is seasonal.¹⁵¹ Previously a vertically integrated monopoly, Barki Tojik has been unbundled into separate entities for power generation, transmission, and distribution. As a monopoly in the past, Barki Tojik was plagued by inefficient operations, power theft, illegal power connection, low billing and collections, and non-payment of arrears, massive financial losses. Barki Tojik has also started outsourcing some of its operations to improve the billing and collection of payments.

Remote mountainous areas of the country host about 10 percent of the total population who are not served by centralized power supply systems. The hydro-energy of small rivers, solar energy, geothermal waters, wind energy and bioenergy are potential energy sources of the country. The solar energy potential is estimated to be around 25 billion kWh / year¹⁵² and it can satisfy between 10 and 20 percent of energy demand. Several experimental biogas generators are currently operating. There is potential for energy production through conversion of biomass from industrial waste but technologies and investment are lacking. The development and utilization of these resources will require a sustainable approach to energy production, such as integration of renewable energy sources.

Local oil and gas production are limited. According to estimates, Tajikistan has undeveloped capacity of about 113 million tons of oil, 863 billion cubic meters of gas and 36 million tons of gas condensate. However, physical access to these potential resources is severely limited by poor infrastructure. The coal reserve of the country is estimated to be 14 billion tons. In 2019 the industry produced more than 2 million tons of coal. More than half of total sales were delivered to the heating plant Dushanbe with small percentages exported to Pakistan and Uzbekistan. The government plans to increase coal production from 1.7 million tons (2017) to 10.4 million tons by 2030 with significant implications for increasing GHG emissions.¹⁵³

Agriculture accounts for 50 percent of GHG emissions. With improved land use and livestock management practices, the annual mitigation potential of Tajikistan's agriculture sector amounts to approximately 11.3 million tons of CO₂ from pastures, livestock, and forestry.¹⁵⁴ Building a robust GHG monitoring system is needed to effectively enhance Tajikistan's National Determined Contributions (NDC) implementation.¹⁵⁵ The burning of fossil fuels is on the rise due to rapid population growth and urbanization. Heat and power plants, the chemical industry and manufacturing industries also contribute to emissions and air pollution. Many central heating systems in residential areas are run by electricity or coal-fired stoves.¹⁵⁶ Tajikistan is not yet a Party to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and its protocols. Accession to the Convention would give the country access to the knowledge and expertise to develop its air quality management system further.

Legislative framework to manage environmental resources has been broaden.¹⁵⁷ These include legislations related to land, water, flora, and fauna, as well as management and supervision of business activities to protect the environment. Integration of environmental considerations and international standards from ratified multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into sector legislation is at a preliminary stage.¹⁵⁸ Technical and coordination weaknesses and a lack of funding for the Committee for Environmental Protection¹⁵⁹ impede implementation of relevant NDS-2030 priorities and national strategies and

¹⁵¹ [<https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/gee21/projects/others/Tajikistan.pdf>]

¹⁵² Ministry of energy and water resources of Tajikistan.

¹⁵³ Industry Development Strategy of Tajikistan.

¹⁵⁴ The Tajikistan's National Determined Contributions (NDC - country's obligations under UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) mentions that the land use sector could contribute to around 0.9 tCO₂e out of the 1.2 – 1.7 tCO₂e per capita emission reduction.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid

¹⁵⁶ UNECE, Third Environmental Performance Reviews. [https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/epr/epr_studies/ECE.CEP.180.Eng.pdf]

¹⁵⁷ [www.eco.tj]

¹⁵⁸ See ratified Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) by Tajikistan at InforMEA. UNECE, ibidem.

¹⁵⁹ [<http://tajnature.tj/>]

programmes.¹⁶⁰ While the NDS-2030 contains ambitious targets for environmental protection, funding is limited and environmental programmes rely heavily on donor funding.

The environmental monitoring networks, especially under the Committee for Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP), are poorly equipped. The environmental monitoring and information system of Tajikistan, which is key for measuring progress against set targets, is insufficient as well as the development of high-quality environmental data and statistics. Tajikistan does not produce national state of the environment reports on a regular basis. Tajikistan participates regularly in activities of the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment and the Joint Task Force on Environmental Statistics and Indicators. However, further support is needed to enhance regular and high-quality environmental monitoring and assessment.

Environmental protection requires strengthening governance, rule of law, and transparency. Tajikistan continues to participate in the work under the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). However, Tajikistan has not submitted 2021 national implementation report and has not ratified the GMO Amendment on genetically modified organisms and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. The country has a wide network of the Aarhus Centres in Dushanbe, Garm, Khorog, Khunjand, Kurgan-Tyube, Tursinzoda and Jayhun¹⁶¹ that were established with the OSCE support to carry out awareness-raising, capacity-building, and outreach activities about environmental rights to promote environmental protection and sustainable development. The country's efforts should be scaled up in (a) promoting effective online access to environmental information, including as open data, pollutant release and transfer register, and multi-hazard early warning system; (b) strengthening capacities for inclusive and effective public participation in decision-making related to environment, including energy; and (c) raising awareness among the judiciary, review bodies and law enforcement institutions about the Aarhus Convention's obligations.¹⁶²

3.4 Social Exclusion

Weaknesses in governance, public finance, and programmes have excluded some segments of the population. Poor households are often the most vulnerable: this segment of the population is not homogenous, and different levels of vulnerabilities require differentiated responses. Vulnerabilities also exist among other segments of the population. Those who are marginalized or discriminated because of their gender, age, disability, or ethnic identity are more likely to face deprivations and vulnerabilities to shocks. In Tajikistan, children and women, particularly those from excluded groups, are most affected by poverty, which is concentrated in remote, rural areas such as the GBAO. Persons at greatest risk of exclusion and being left behind include some groups of women,¹⁶³ children from low-income and single-parent households, persons with disabilities and especially children with disabilities in residential care,¹⁶⁴ people living in isolated rural communities, seasonal migrants and their families who have been abandoned by their primary breadwinner¹⁶⁵, older persons, LGBTQI+ people, stateless persons and refugees, asylum-seekers, return

¹⁶⁰ Including: the State Ecological Programme 2009-2019; the State programme for exploration and preservation of glaciers during 2010-2030; a National Waste Management Strategy for the period up to 2030.

¹⁶¹ See <https://aarhus.osce.org/tajikistan>

¹⁶² Aarhus Convention national implementation report, 2017. [<https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports>] [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/a.to.j/AnalyticalStudies/EECCA_study_AJ/EECCA_study_EN_Final.pdf] [https://unece.org/DAM/env/pp/a.to.j/AnalyticalStudies/2013_EECCA_Standing/2014_EECCA_standing_Eng_062014_final.pdf]

¹⁶³ Amongst women: Older women, women in rural areas, women heads of households and particularly women "left behind" receiving no or too little remittances, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, and refugee and asylum-seeking women.

¹⁶⁴ Children living in poor households constitute 34 percent of the child population in the country. Of them, 16 percent live in extreme poverty and struggle with multiple deprivations. Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, 2018, Child poverty report.

¹⁶⁵ IOM defines abandoned families as "families who have received insufficient or no remittances from their migrant workers in the last 12 months."

migrants, especially those with re-entry-bans to the Russian Federation, Afghan communities that arrived after the fall of Kabul, and migrants.

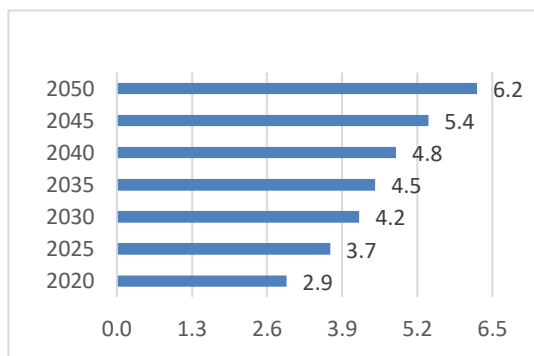
Several deprivations and vulnerabilities in Tajikistan are correlated to gender, age, and geography. A large proportion of rural residents face multidimensional deprivation. About 40 percent of the population are children, adolescents, and youth, and approximately 68 percent are under the age of 30, while 70 percent live in rural areas. Young people and adolescents, especially adolescent girls, have limited opportunities to gain education, knowledge, and skills that could lead to their social and economic advancement and bring them financial and personal security. The lack of quality physical infrastructure and the lack of access to services, including quality education, health, social protection, reliable transportation, and safe drinking water, negatively affect rural households' living conditions and resilience. In 2018-2019, around one-third of the population in rural areas was experiencing poverty.¹⁶⁶ Extreme poverty is more common among female-headed households than male-headed households.

In rural areas, women own fewer assets in comparison to men, have less time for recreation and recuperation,¹⁶⁷ and carry the burdens of care responsibilities and unpaid agricultural work. The underrepresentation of girls in higher education is more evident in rural areas, where poverty and social norms are more pervasive. Living in rural areas is also a determinant for labour migration. In 2019, nearly 90 percent of Tajik labour migrants originated from rural areas. Almost half of Tajik labour migrants were aged 15 to 24¹⁶⁸ and 75 percent were men.¹⁶⁹ It is estimated that approximately 30 percent of migrants' wives, who remain in Tajikistan, are abandoned.¹⁷⁰ In this context, women disproportionately experience higher poverty rates, as they have restricted access to productive resources, and may face estrangement from family members.

3.4.1 Health

Health spending is insufficient to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC). UHC is a national priority under the NDS-2030, but investment is insufficient for its achievement. Despite CESC recommendations about increasing budgetary allocations and ensuring access to adequate healthcare for vulnerable individuals and groups,¹⁷¹ public investment in health is little over 2 percent of GDP and accounts for about 7 percent of the total public spending (less than USD 20 per person)¹⁷² This is the lowest in the CIS region and out of pocket (OOP) spending by households is high at 63 percent of health expenditures¹⁷³ High levels of out-of-pocket

Figure 11: State health expenditure, projections % of GDP



Source: UNFPA 2020 Population Situation Analysis Report for Tajikistan

¹⁶⁶ 30.2 percent in rural areas, 18.4 percent in urban areas. World Bank Group, 2020, Poverty in Tajikistan 2020 infographic.

[<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2020/10/15/poverty-in-tajikistan-2020>]

¹⁶⁷ Asian Development Bank, 2020, Women's time use in rural Tajikistan. [<https://www.adb.org/publications/womens-time-use-rural-tajikistan>]

¹⁶⁸ Asian Development Bank, 2020, Migration in Tajikistan.

¹⁶⁹ Ministry of Labour, August 2020, Migration and Employment of Population.

¹⁷⁰ Asian Development Bank, 2020, referring to the studies by the IOM, UNICEF, and OSCE.

[<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/656481/support-labor-migration-tajikistan.pdf>]

¹⁷¹ CESC Concluding Observations, 2015, para. 30.

¹⁷² Health spending as share of GDP calculated based on Tajikistan Agency on Statistics and World Bank data. Data on spending per person based on WHO-GHO and the Republican Center of Medical Statistics (RCMS), 2018.

¹⁷³ RCMS, 2018. WHO, November 2020, Global Health Expenditure database.

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

spending exclude many people, especially the poor, from health care services. Informal payments persist despite the introduction of a basic benefit package.¹⁷⁴

Other challenges include inequities between rural and urban areas and fragmentation of services and approaches. Tajikistan also faces the challenge of out-migration of health professionals to Russia and other countries in the CIS. This can lead to a shortage of health workers in the future. To achieve the NDS-2030 and UHC targets and to strengthen the health system response to COVID-19, the government plans to increase public health spending to more than 4 percent of GDP¹⁷⁵ ¹⁷⁶ but a higher level of public investments in health are needed. The government also needs to revisit the governance of the health system which is still very centralization which makes service delivery more cumbersome. There are also several infrastructure gaps in the health sector at both primary and secondary level. There is also need for medical equipment. This has to happen through proper public procurement processes consistent with needs and value for money. Tajikistan should also promote digitalisation in the health facilities for efficiency gains, better analytics, and improving delivery and outreach to the population.

Birth rates for adolescents are high and too many women and new-borns die from complications related to childbirth.

There have been improvements in sexual and reproductive health: a downward trend in maternal mortality rate, increasing use of contraception, improved birth spacing, and decrease in abortion rates.¹⁷⁷ In August 2023 the government approved the new State Reproductive Health Programme for the period 2023-2027, and allocated USD 740,000 for improving accessibility, quality, and efficiency of reproductive health and family planning services, with a particular emphasis on serving the most vulnerable citizens.¹⁷⁸ Despite these gains, challenges persist, including a low utilization rate of modern contraceptive methods among married women, with only one in four utilizing such methods¹⁷⁹ and the adolescent birth rate is high at 54 births per 1,000 women, ages 15-19.

Every year over 200 women ages 15 to 49 are diagnosed with cervical cancer; in 2019, 116 women died from it.¹⁸⁰ Although the maternal mortality ratio is decreasing, at 28.9 per 100 000 live birth,¹⁸¹ it still remains the third highest in Central Asian after Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.¹⁸² Efforts are needed to improve the quality, accessibility and coverage of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccination, with a focus on adolescents, young people and most vulnerable, as well as to ensure integration with primary health care meeting the demand at last mile. Despite formal obligation to provide education on sexual and reproductive health and rights¹⁸³ through 21 Youth Friendly Service Centres, schools and reproductive health centres, age and culturally appropriate sexual education has not been introduced in Tajikistan. Some attempts to include it in the school curricula for children aged 12 years and above in selected schools were piloted. But, due to social and cultural taboos the subject does

¹⁷⁴ Lancet, 2017, Causes of Death Collaborators. Global, regional, and national age-sex-specific mortality for 282 causes of death in 195 countries and territories, 1980–2017: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study, 392(10159): 1736–1788. [[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)32203-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32203-7)]. Task Force for Global Health, 2020, Decatur (GA). [<https://www.globalhep.org/country-progress/tajikistan>, accessed 19 May 2020]

¹⁷⁵ UN Tajikistan, 2020, Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework to COVID-19 for Tajikistan (ISEF).

¹⁷⁶ According to UNFPA projections, the population at high health risk, 0-5 aged people and childbearing women aged 15-49, will increase by 19 percent and 58 percent in 2030 and 2050, respectively. UNFPA, 2020, Population Situation Analysis Report for Tajikistan.

¹⁷⁷ MoHSPP, 2019, medical statistics. The coverage of contraception among women of fertile age increased from 25.4 (2010) to 40.1 percent (2018), the interval between births of less than 2 years fell from 37.2 to 30 percent, and abortions decreased from 87.8 (2010) up to 55.3 (2018) per 1000 live births. Family planning and contraceptives are provided free of charge.

¹⁷⁸ MoHSPP and UNFPA annual report (2023)

¹⁷⁹ [<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr341-dhs-final-reports.cfm>]

¹⁸⁰ [https://hpcvcentre.net/statistics/reports/TJK_FS.pdf]

¹⁸¹ <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/376097>

¹⁸² MMR, WHO data

¹⁸³ 9789289055680-eng.pdf (who.int) (2021) p.vii

not fully cover important topics.¹⁸⁴

Perinatal mortality is still high and preventable disabilities are frequent.¹⁸⁵ The top three causes of infant deaths are birth asphyxia, respiratory distress, and birth trauma.¹⁸⁶ The percentage of home birth remains high in some districts and cities. Many deaths are attributed to lack of resources, poor quality of care, poor quality of delivery services, lack of essential medicines in maternity and neonatal units,¹⁸⁷ and healthcare-associated infections result from inadequate water, hygiene, and sanitation (WASH) as well as infection prevention and control (IPC).^{188,189,190} A baseline assessment in 2022 concluded that the core components for implementation of infection prevention and control system in the country was inadequate and in need of significant improvement.¹⁹¹

About 80 percent of 3,500 rural medical centres have limited or no access to adequate WASH services. There is a significant gap in WASH in HCFs. Consumables that are key to effective infection prevention and control such as soap, hand sanitizers and chlorine are not always available. According to the WHO-UNICEF JMP data, only 24.1 percent of the HCFs have basic access to drinking water supply. However, there is a gap in terms of available data on access to sanitation, hygiene, waste management and cleaning environment at HCF level. Most challenging situation with access to WASH is in 3,500 rural medical centres (primary health care level). Up to 80 percent of these facilities have limited or no access to WASH services. The health waste management (HWM) at primary and secondary level HCFs also falls short of established standard. Largely, the effectiveness of HWM is left to its individual health facility management prioritization and affordability of each health care facility. In 2017, out of 73 maternity hospitals (including at the central district hospitals, which accounted for more than 80 percent of births annually, in 65 institutions (89 percent), access to WASH did not meet the standards. This figure fell to 47 institutions (65 percent).

The situation at primary health care level remains the most challenging as majority (up to 90 percent) of primary health-care facilities were built between 1960 and 1980 and now require rehabilitation and upgrade, including access to WASH services. Effective referral mechanisms are not functioning, and maternity hospitals are not compliant with neonatal protocols and quality of care standards.¹⁹² Poverty and knowledge of effective care-seeking practices are also key determinants for maternal and child health.¹⁹³ The COVID-19 pandemic further lowered coverage of antenatal care, quality delivery, postnatal care, and exclusive breastfeeding support. Though the MoHSPP reports high coverage of childhood vaccination, the country remains vulnerable to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. There is need for committed domestic financing as well as an efficient supply chain management for vaccines.

Unnecessary hospitalization and polypharmacy. Observations from WHO assessment show that children and pregnant women with common conditions are often admitted to hospital when they could be managed safely in primary care. Previous observations also suggest that treatment of common childhood conditions often includes multiple unnecessary and invasive drugs, use of which is neither evidence-based nor in line

¹⁸⁴ UNFPA and BZgA (2018), *Sexuality Education in Europe and Central Asia*, p.163.

¹⁸⁵ For every 100,000 live births, 24 women die from pregnancy related causes. According to the MoHSPP in 2018 around 80 percent of deaths of children under five years of age occurred among children younger than twelve months out of which 60 percent occurred during the neonatal period.

¹⁸⁶ 2012 Causal Analysis of Infant Death conducted by UNICEF and MoHSPP.

¹⁸⁷ MoHSPP, 2017, *Population health and health facilities; performance in 2016 (in Tajik)*, Dushanbe.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, 2020, *Levels & trends in child mortality: Report 2020, estimates of the United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality (UN IGME)*, New York [www.childmortality.org] (Accessed: 10/10/20).

¹⁸⁹ Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, MoHSPP, 2017, *Demographic and Health Survey*.

¹⁹⁰ MoHSPP, 2017, *ibidem*.

¹⁹¹ Baseline assessment report on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Programme in Tajikistan | UNICEF Tajikistan

¹⁹² UNICEF & MoHSPP, 2013.

¹⁹³ Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2019, *Health-related SDGs*. [<https://vizhub.healthdata.org/sdg/>, accessed 20 December 2019]

with international guidelines. The health systems evaluation was carried out in Tajikistan with the overall goal of strengthening primary health care (PHC) in the country.

Among 440 children and 422 pregnant women, unnecessary hospitalisations accounted for 40.5 percent and 69.2 percent of hospitalisations, respectively, ranging from 0 percent to 92.7 percent across the hospitals. Among necessary hospitalisations, 63 percent and 39.2 percent were unnecessarily prolonged in children and women, respectively. Prior to admission, 36.8 percent of children had received antibiotics, in which more than half received them intramuscularly. During hospitalisation, 92.5 percent of children and 28.9 percent of women received antibiotics. Children and women received an average of 5 and 6.5 drugs, respectively; most were not indicated or with no evidence of benefits.

Children with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in Tajikistan. As of 01 May 2022, there were 31,939 children with disabilities but the actual number may be nearly six times than the officially registered.¹⁹⁴ Inclusive, quality services for these children and their caregivers, mostly women are severely limited. Despite increasing political will and expanding budget allocations and services, persons with disabilities are still often viewed as individuals in need of protection and charity. Often, persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers do not know how to exercise the rights guaranteed by the State. While reliable statistics on the situation of girls and women with disabilities are not available, NGOs assert that there is high gender inequality among persons with disabilities.¹⁹⁵

Other challenges are:¹⁹⁶

- Gaps in laws and policy frameworks compared with Tajikistan’s international commitments that enable discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- An outdated system for disability assessment, registration, and certification often leads to the exclusion of many children in disability assessment and early detection. Limited quality and accessibility of rehabilitation services and the availability of trained human resources, including for early diagnosis and care for children, particularly in rural areas, where over 70 percent of the country’s population live;
- Inconsistent application of quality standards and adequate monitoring of disability and rehabilitation services;
- Gaps in coordination and referral mechanisms among service providers and more secure, long-term funding.

Adolescents and young people, representing 1 in 4 of the population, need more attention. Young people have a variety of health concerns: mental health, depression, obesity, violence, stigma and discrimination, suicide, unwanted pregnancies, and growing problem of STI/HIV. Adolescent-friendly health services are not widespread or commonly known about among youth themselves. Youth are able to access health care systems but face similar constraints of out of pocket costs and limited services owing to under-qualified or over-strained medical staff working in under-resourced facilities. A recent survey revealed that 79 percent of adolescents miss classes due to health issues, and that social media is negatively affecting their mental

¹⁹⁴ UNICEF, 2016, Evaluation of UNICEF Tajikistan’s work in priority districts during the 2010–2015 Country Programme. [<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/reports#/>]

¹⁹⁵ Women with disabilities are subject to double and even triple discrimination being women, disabled and often living in poverty. Women with disabilities are more likely to have a lower literacy level than men and a greater percentage are unemployed compared to men with disabilities. National legislation and policies on gender equality and social protection of persons with disabilities lack a gender dimension. Human Rights Council, 23 March 2016, Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Compilation by OHCHR, A/HRC/WG.6/25/TJK/2. OHCHR, 2015, Shadow Report from CSOs.

¹⁹⁶ WHO, 2019, Organizational and Policy Analysis: Tajikistan National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, 2017-2020.

health well-being.¹⁹⁷ ¹⁹⁸ The Committee on Rights of Children has noted a shortage of qualified mental health service providers to meet the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents in Tajikistan. It was recommended that the country should increase the number of psychological counselling services and trained social workers in schools and communities.¹⁹⁹

Countering antimicrobial resistance and promoting One Health in Tajikistan. Tajikistan is committed to adopting a One Health approach for tackling the threat of antimicrobial resistance and to address foodborne and zoonotic diseases. These commitments are reflected in the multisectoral Draft Strategy Roadmap for Ensuring Food Safety at the All-national Level Action Plan and National Action Plan to Tackle Antimicrobial Resistance in Tajikistan (2018 -2022) which has been recently revised. Inappropriate use of antimicrobials is one of the priority areas in combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in human, animals, agriculture and environment which is recognized globally and Tajikistan's national action plans on AMR.²⁰⁰ ²⁰¹

The current attitudes and practices, affected by promotional activities of the pharmaceutical industry, partly explain the reasons for the variations in the availability of antibiotics. Moreover, there are issues with sale of antimicrobials without prescription. A study conducted in 2020 showed that only 23 percent of antimicrobials sold by the pharmacies were with a prescription.²⁰² There has been an increase in antimicrobial use from 16 per 1,000 inhabitant in 2016 to 30 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2021.²⁰³ The second round of National Multisectoral AMR Action Plan considered adaptation of AWaRe categorization²⁰⁴ to the national standards and regulation under the current law on pharmaceuticals and medical products which was revised and approved in July 2022.

Under the Antimicrobial Resistance Multi-Partner Trust Fund, Tajikistan is receiving assistance in the operationalization of the One Health approach. The multisectoral plan focuses on the prevention of foodborne diseases (FBDs) and zoonotic diseases, outbreaks and growing burden of AMR in an increasing animal-human contact.²⁰⁵ Tajikistan needs to enhance the surveillance of FBDs, zoonotic diseases and their AMR using EUCAST standards. There is a need to improve laboratory capacity to produce high-quality microbiological data for patient management and support surveillance in both human and animal health and agriculture sectors; strengthening data collection and analysis; improving laboratory capacity to perform susceptibility testing, quality control, data interpretation and reporting; strengthening data management and looking into possibilities to integrate surveillance data from multiple sources.

Tajikistan has to strengthen its antimicrobials use surveillance system for public health, as well as for veterinary and agriculture sectors. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, support was provided to the laboratory system in the country on identification, reporting and data management. However, the

¹⁹⁷ DHS Programme and ICF, 2018, Tajikistan demographic and health survey report 2017, Rockville (MD). [<https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR341/FR341.pdf>, accessed 19 May 2020]

¹⁹⁸ Survey of health behaviour of school aged children.

¹⁹⁹ CRC Concluding Observations, 2017, para. 34.

²⁰⁰ Global action plan on antimicrobial resistance. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2015 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/193736>)

²⁰¹ Tajikistan: National action plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance in the Republic of Tajikistan. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018 (<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/tajikistan-national-action-plan-to-tackle-antimicrobial-resistance-in-the-republic-of-tajikistan>)

²⁰² Antimicrobials supplied in community pharmacies in eastern Europe and central Asia in the early phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2022 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/355796>)

²⁰³ MoHSPP data 2021

²⁰⁴ The selection and use of essential medicines: report of the WHO Expert Committee, 2017 (including the 20th WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and the 6th Model List of Essential Medicines for Children). Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259481/9789241210157-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>).

²⁰⁵ One Health and AMR through Quadripartite (FAO/UNEP/WHO/WOAH) partnership (please see: <https://www.who.int/news/item/27-03-2023-quadripartite-call-to-action-for-one-health-for-a-safer-world>)

bacteriology and parasitology units have been sharing staff, space and equipment to respond to the pandemic. For early detection and management of different diseases, national protocols have been developed. However, the capacity and quality of detection of different pathogens and their resistance require improvements. Tajikistan needs to increase its efforts to develop capacities to effectively prevent, manage, prepare for and respond to foodborne, zoonotic disease outbreaks, particularly with AMR patterns using the One Health approach and improve the capacity of points of entry and strengthening the country's IHR implementation capacity related to pandemics.

Tajikistan has made progress in scaling up effective communication, education, and large-scale advocacy and awareness campaigns to ensure doctors, nurses, veterinarians, farmers, as well as the general population understand the health risks of foodborne and zoonotic diseases, including antimicrobial resistance. However, due to high staff turnover, it is hard to retain knowledgeable specialists in the country. The Quadripartite²⁰⁶ is looking for joint project funding to support Tajikistan to improve the systems through capacity building and improving knowledge and skills of different staff on food-borne and zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance, prudent use of antimicrobials in human, animals, agriculture and environment, and related topics.

Tajikistan aims to strengthen its capacity in understanding the role of environment in One Health, including biodiversity, land degradation, environmental pollution and climate change. In public health sector, it aims to develop a stepwise approach, identify research priorities for responsible use of antimicrobial agents, develop and enforce legislative measures on antimicrobial use and promotion and follow up of implementation of WHO AWaRe categorization.

The "Roadmap for Health and Well-Being in Central Asia (2022-2025)" (CARM) was developed and adopted by the five ministers of health of the Central Asian countries in 2022 as the first sub-regional strategy for health and well-being endorsed under the auspices of the 72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Tel Aviv. CARM encompasses multi-country efforts and adds to tailored country support to advance CACs and partners coalescing in working towards attaining vital milestones. It includes policy, investment and technical goals and objectives that will accelerate the implementation of Central Asia's global, regional, and national commitments to promoting health and well-being.

Uneven distribution of health workforce (especially of doctors) across regions: There is uneven distribution of the health workforce, especially of doctors, across the regions. Health workforce density in all regions is lower than Euro average, except for Dushanbe. There is concentration of Doctors in Dushanbe, which is the capital city of Tajikistan, with the more rural regions having lower densities. Doctor density in Dushanbe is five times of Khatlon and Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS); three times of Sughd and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO). Nurse densities vary across regions but are relatively less skewed. The regions with health workforce shortages are also the ones showing lower service utilization.

High vacancy and inequitable distribution of family doctors. There is huge shortage of Family Doctors when compared to norms as per Decree number 584 of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan date 31 October 2005. Meeting the norms require triple increase of the current number of Family Doctors at the national level. Among regions, least shortages are seen in Dushanbe. There is 31% of vacancy of Family Doctors in the health system nationally. Khatlon (56%) has the highest vacancy of doctors, followed by DRS (31%) and Sughd (27%). There has been a decrease in the density of Family Doctors overall in the country in last 7 years. Region-wise, there has been higher decreases in DRS and GBAO. It could be related to

²⁰⁶ Quadripartite includes partnership among FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA. H.

the internal and external migration of doctors, as well as due to doctors leaving after completion of mandatory work of three years after graduation and increasing population density.

Nearly two-third of the PHC facilities are led by nurses. Nurses lead 63.8% of PHC facilities (Medical posts and Health Houses). The roles they play include clinical management, population health management and facility management, and are often providing midwifery care, including management of deliveries, which is not accounted for in the professional standards, and roles therefore not protected, nor accounted for in the curriculum to prepare them for these roles both theoretically and practically. Nevertheless, the Nurses are playing a significant role in ensuring coverage of services and providing primary health care. In many regions they are also having to fill the clinical gaps left due to unavailability of doctors with little preparation or regulation to support them. While they are performing important functions and multiple roles, these are not only inadequately reflected in their education, job profiles and their posting but are also missing avenues for professional development and career progression. The number of nursing graduates is increasing annually, and the country needs to take the opportunity to improve the quality of education and expand their scope of practice and leadership role.

Uneven distribution of narrow specialists in the health system. Sub-national analysis reveals the uneven distribution of the specialists. Dushanbe has the highest density of narrow specialists, such as, Gynaecologists (5.9 per 10,000 population), Surgeons (5.0), Anaesthesiologists (2.2) and Paediatricians (3.3). Khatlon and Sughd have extremely low density of specialists and GBAO fares better than them. Concerns have emerged regarding optimal use of narrow specialists in Primary Health care. There are stark regional variations in the density of female doctors.

The number of medical graduates has doubled over the last eight years (105 percent increase from 2014 to 2022). This is higher than Central Asia region (62 percent) and Euro (37 percent) averages (WHO Euro 2022). There has been 79 percent increase in female graduates and 130 percent increase in males from 2014 to 2022. The number of medical graduates per 100,000 population for Tajikistan is 16.7 which is higher than the Euro regional average of 15.3 (WHO Euro 2022). The trends in the number of graduates per 100,000 population vary across regions. GBAO has seen a decrease while Sughd and Khatlon have seen a significant increase. Tajikistan does not have an aging workforce when it comes to doctors, which is an advantage. The percentage of doctors aged 55 years and over in 2021 is 22 percent which is lower than the Euro regional average of 30 percent (WHO Euro 2022). However, it is a concern in two regions – Sughd (31 percent over 55 years) and GBAO (35 percent over 55 years).

Salaries of health workers is lower than the national average wages. Salaries for Health workforce in PHC is 23 percent higher than for those working in Hospitals, which is a positive aspect. However, the average monthly salary in healthcare (USD 95) is 34 percent lower than average monthly salary in the country (USD 143). Moreover, when calculated as Average hourly wages, salaries are much lower than other countries in the region. The amounts may be slightly higher for some of the health workforce employed in facilities that have licensing of Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated 02 December 2018, number 600 on the procedures for providing health services to citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan in institutions of the state healthcare system, or for those who are allocated more than one post. But overall, for the country, the low wages are of concern, and can lead to de-motivation, attrition, and migration of the health workforce.

Out-migration of doctors and nurses makes it difficult to provide quality services. There is a problem of migration of doctors, nurses, and other health staff especially from the rural and remote regions of the country. In order to address this problem, motivational measures for doctors and nurses are needed. Proportion of medical students under free education scheme has decreased, leading to challenges in recruitment. There has been an increase in the number of medical students under contract, i.e., of students

who pay for their education and the proportion of students under the free education scheme has decreased. While there is good absorption of medical graduates by government, a higher proportion of medical graduates under free scheme could be recruited than those under contract.

Moreover, they are also mandated to work in the region where there are shortages. Therefore, increasing the number of students under free education scheme would lead to higher recruitment and also contribute to equitable distribution of the health workforce. There is a large number of narrow specialists posted at secondary and primary health care level, which may not be an optimal use of their skills and services, considering the levels of utilization of their services. The attraction of doctors to narrow specialties may be leading to undermining Primary Health Care and Family Medicine.

HIV infections are increasing. By the end of 2023, 16,129 cases of HIV were registered in Tajikistan, including 1,100 cases in 2023. Over a third of these cases (36.3 percent) are women. Epidemic remains concentrated, but structural barriers and challenges, such as continued shrinking of civic space, widespread inequalities, stigma and discrimination, and HIV criminalization are major barriers to HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support. These factors have resulted in a decrease in the coverage of comprehensive HIV prevention services and testing of key population (KPs) who are at higher risk, such as people who inject drugs, sex workers, etc. The services have dropped from 46,302 (coverage) and 36,435 (testing) in 2022, to 44,739 (coverage) and 34,366 (testing) in 2023. PreP uptake increased from 72 KPs in 2021 to 932 KPs in 2023 and further expansion is planned. The proportion of new HIV cases among children decreased from 6.3% in 2021 to 5.3% in 2023. In 2023 Tajikistan reached 73-90-90 cascade (72-87-88 in 2021) and 98 percent PMTCT coverage of tested women, a 3% increase from 2020. In 2023 over 95% of PLWH received combined ART.

According to the 2023 Mid-term Review of the National HIV Programme (WHO), every year, on average, over a 1,000 people are newly diagnosed. Around a quarter of new infections are diagnosed among people with history of migration and are thus likely to have occurred abroad. COVID-pandemic affected case detection, and the number of newly diagnosed in 2022 is still below 2019 level. Around 52 percent of new HIV diagnoses are late presenters (CD4 count <350). While estimates show that most cases are likely to be transmitted among key population and their sexual partners, while two thirds of new diagnoses are not attributed to key population codes in the routine statistics, a common trend in countries where stigma, discrimination and criminalization of HIV transmission affect reporting.

There are gaps in the quality of HIV testing and counselling services, particularly in rural areas. Stigma and gender discrimination contribute to the spread of HIV and hinder access to adequate testing and treatment services.²⁰⁷ While there has been an uptick in public budget allocations for HIV programmes, prevention programmes for key populations have been largely overlooked. As a recent National AIDS Spending Assessment showed, the National HIV/AIDS Programme, Tajikistan heavily relies on external funding. Less than 20 percent of AIDS-related expenditures come from domestic sources. Primarily, the domestic funds are utilized for purchasing HIV tests for pregnant women, blood safety, feeding formulas, and social benefits for children living with HIV. The assessment showed a slight increase (1.1 times) in domestic funding in 2022 compared to 2021.

Tajikistan is one of the few countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia where HIV prevalence increased by more than 45 percent in the last 10 years.²⁰⁸ Most women living with HIV report that they married HIV-positive men who did not disclose their status. It is now compulsory for men and women to provide a medical certificate before marriage which raises human rights concerns, related to non-discrimination standards. In

²⁰⁷ SPIN-Plus, 2015, The People Living with HIV Stigma Index, Analytical report, Dushanbe.

²⁰⁸ UNAID, 2021. (Figure 1. source Infor Data, UNAIDS 2021).

2018, CEDAW recommended Tajikistan to eradicate the practice of mandatory check-ups.²⁰⁹ However, the country still practices it. The number of persons receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) increased from 4,891 in 2017 to 7,055 in 2019.²¹⁰ Increasing ART coverage is constrained by labour migration, side effects, distrust of treatment, and denial of HIV status.²¹¹

The prevention of mother-to-child transmission is a government priority. Around 81 percent of women are tested and know their HIV status during antenatal care. There are gaps in the quality of HIV testing and counselling services provided to pregnant, particularly those living in rural areas. Out of 1,083 children, more than 60 percent have “unknown” HIV transmission. According to the AIDS Centre, children with ‘unknown’ transmission have healthy and HIV negative parents. Around 92 percent of pregnant women with HIV positive status are housewives and more than 50 percent of them have intimate partners or husbands who are working and living overseas. According to the bio-behavioural sentinel surveillance study (RAC, 2020) the prevalence of HIV, HCV and Syphilis is 0.4 percent, 0.8 percent and 0.2 percent respectively among Tajik migrants.

Article 125 of the Criminal Code on Intentional HIV Transmission has been used to persecute persons with HIV.²¹² However, the Plenum of the Supreme Court took an important decision based on the principle of Undetectable=Untransmittable, a significant step towards decriminalization of HIV exposure.²¹³ HIV-related stigma worsens pre-existing social inequities based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Widespread sexual violence exacerbates the risk of HIV transmission. In addition, women with HIV are exposed to various forms of domestic violence.²¹⁴ Women and children generally assume a disproportionate burden of care for others who are HIV-positive. Sex work is illegal and police raids against sex workers are required by law. Sex workers are detained, fined, and undergo compulsory testing for HIV and syphilis. Only recently, local governments and health organizations started to acknowledge the need to prevent HIV transmission among sex workers. Voluntary sex between adult men in the country is not illegal, however, it is culturally not accepted. There are no systemic data of violence against men who have sex with men. They keep their sexual orientation hidden as they are commonly subjected to physical and psychological violence.

Health system is under-prepared to tackle the rise of non-communicable diseases. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading cause of death worldwide and are particularly prevalent in Tajikistan.²¹⁵ The risk of premature mortality (death before the age of 70) from the four major NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease) is 25 percent more among men.²¹⁶ This is in part due to tobacco and alcohol use among men.²¹⁷ These global trends also hold true for Tajikistan. The detection and management of cardiovascular disease risk in primary health care is an urgent priority given the burden of cardiovascular disease and the suboptimal state of primary health care in Tajikistan. Population health data is scarce in Tajikistan but the best estimate (WHO STEPS Survey) is that 44.3 percent of men and 24.7 percent

²⁰⁹ CEDAW Concluding Observations, 2018, para. 46.

²¹⁰ Republican AIDS Centre, Tajikistan.

²¹¹ RAC data.

²¹² In 2019, 67 sentences were issued using this article, mainly against women engaged into sex work. In 2018, 33 criminal cases were brought against 26 people with HIV in Sughd region and in 2019, 39 against 32 HIV positive people. OHCHR, 2019, Shadow report on Tajikistan for 126 Session.

²¹³ https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2024/january/300124_Tajikistan_decrim_steps_hiv_exposure

²¹⁴ Alternative Report of the Coalition of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Republic of Tajikistan on the CEDAW, 2018

²¹⁵ World Health Organization. Global Health Observatory - Total NCD Mortality by Country [Internet]. Geneva; 2018. Available from: <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.A857?lang=en>.

²¹⁶ World Health Organization. Risk of Premature Death from the Four Target NCDs. 2018.

²¹⁷ Collins DRJ, Laatikainen T, Shoismatuloeva M, Mahmudzoha I, Rahimov Z, Sulstonova D, et al. Evaluation and pilot implementation of essential interventions for the management of hypertension and prevention of cardiovascular diseases in primary health care in the Republic of Tajikistan [version 1; peer review: awaiting peer review]. F1000Research. 2019;8(1639).

of women have never had their blood pressure measured. Among adults aged 40–69, the rate is lower (13.8 percent). NCDs are the leading cause of premature death.²¹⁸

The most common risk factors are related to lifestyles including tobacco and alcohol use, inadequate physical activity, and unhealthy diets. Around 9 percent of boys and 5 percent of girls are overweight in Tajikistan. Consumption of tobacco, especially its smokeless forms, is considered to be moderate to high among men. Smokeless forms of tobacco appears to be the main area of concern which requires attention.²¹⁹ Services are inadequate for early detection, referral, treatment and provision of palliative care.²²⁰ Despite the growing burden of mental illness, there has been little change in the public provision of mental health services.²²¹ The infrastructure for the diagnosis and treatment of NCDs is also poorly developed and funding for specialized services is insufficient. Cervical cancer ranks as the 5th leading cause of female cancer in Tajikistan. There is national cervical cancer screening programme but it is not adequately implemented.²²² The Ministry of Health is working with partners to introduce the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine in the national immunization calendar targeting young girls (11 years) in 2024, a game-changer for cutting cervical cancer rates in the long term.

Governance of health care is top-down with limited decentralization. There is little emphasis on patient rights and public involvement in health policy. The numbers of doctors, nurses, and especially mid-level health providers have increased with the highest density of medical personnel in Dushanbe and the lowest in Khatlon Oblast. The average monthly salary for medical personnel is 30 percent lower than the average salary for all sectors and there are significant pay inequalities among medical personnel.^{223 224} Inadequate legislation and regulations, as well as public health infrastructure, are impeding effective implementation of the Health Management Information System (HMIS), e-health, digital health, and telemedicine. The quality of data does not meet the required standards and existing standards need to be adjusted to international data standards.²²⁵

3.4.2 Food Security and Nutrition

A large proportion of the population are at risk of becoming food insecure. According to the latest food security assessment, 16 percent of households in Tajikistan were classified as food insecure, with 0.5 percent (nearly 50,000) found to be severely food insecure.²²⁶ Improvements were also seen in the severity of the coping strategies of households. The proportion of households employing emergency livelihood coping strategies decreased by more than half compared with the same period in 2022 year, from 21 to 9 percent. Food consumption has also improved over the last year, with a reduction in the prevalence of households with insufficient food consumption from 11 to 8 percent.

Nationwide, 750,000 people are estimated to have insufficient food consumption, with nearly 110,000 of them having poor food consumption. Meeting micronutrient requirements remains challenging, especially

²¹⁸ Over 15,000 individuals with neoplasms were registered in 2018 and the incidence is rising (35.5 per 100,000 population in 2018). Most of the cancers were detected late at stages II and III.

²¹⁹ <https://www.euro.who.int/en/countries/tajikistan/news/news/2018/5/understanding-the-health-needs-of-tajikistan>

²²⁰ Communication from the Republican Oncological Research Centre of the MoHSPP. For example, only 0.2percent of hospitalized patients in the cardiology centre in Dushanbe in 2018 had a referral. There are over 4,000 adults in need of palliative care and it is estimated that about 8,550 children each year would benefit from palliative care.

²²¹ Patients in need of intensive treatment are placed in large public institutions with dilapidated infrastructure and poor quality services, where acceptable quality standards and basic human rights are not fully met.

²²² Human Papilloma Virus and Related Diseases Report, 2019

²²³ Khodjamurodov, G., Sodikova, D., Akkazieva, B., Rechel, B., 2016, 'Tajikistan: health system review. Health Systems in Transition', 18(1), pp. 1–114.

²²⁴ Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, 2019, Health in the Republic of Tajikistan, Dushanbe. [<http://stat.wv.tj/publications/C6percent20-здравpercent20-выпускpercent202018-2019.pdf>] accessed 19 May 2020.

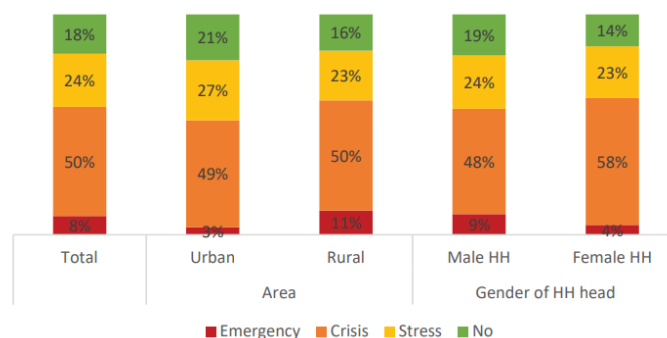
²²⁵ MoHSPP, 2020, National Health Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2021-2030, Third draft.

²²⁶ Special Report: 2023 FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) to the Republic of Tajikistan , December 2023.

for iron. However, resorting to livelihood coping strategies, such as reducing expenses on health or education, spending savings, or borrowing money, is an extended practice in the country and it has increased over the last year, from 68 to 82 percent of households, driven by the increment in the crisis coping strategies, such as reducing expenses on health, which has almost doubled over the last year. The most common coping strategy, reported by 42 percent of households, was the reduction of expenses on essential health. This choice underscores the difficult decisions families often face when financial constraints compel them to prioritize the immediate needs over long-term well-being.

Around 35 percent households resorted to spending their savings, reflecting the economic strain that many are grappling with. Additionally, 30 percent turned to borrowing money to cover their food needs, highlighting the financial precariousness experienced by a significant portion of the community. These livelihood-based coping strategies, according to their severity, were classified into stress, crisis, and emergency strategies. Around 50 percent of the households were adopting crisis coping strategies such as reducing expenses on health, consuming seed stocks or selling productive assets, 24 percent of the households were adopting stress coping strategies such as spending savings, borrowing money to cover food needs, reducing expenses on education or sold more animals (non-productive) than usual.

Figure 12. Proportion of households by livelihood-based coping strategies by area and gender of household head



Source: WFP, 2023, Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) Report for Tajikistan

Malnutrition continues to be a major public health challenge. According to the Global Hunger Index, Tajikistan has the highest level of hunger among the former Soviet republics.²²⁷ Annually, malnutrition is estimated to cost Tajikistan about USD 41 million or 1 percent of GDP in economic losses.²²⁸ It contributes to more than 7,600 deaths of children under the age of 5 years. Local capacities are inadequate to implement effective and integrated food security and nutrition policies and programmes.²²⁹ More than 8 per cent of children are underweight. Nearly 1 in 5 children (18 percent) under-five are stunted (low height for age), rising to 32 percent in under-served areas such as GBAO. There is no difference in stunting rates among children living in urban and rural areas. Although the prevalence of undernutrition has decreased in the last decade, the number of those undernourished has remained stagnant.²³⁰

Wasting affects about 6 percent of children,²³¹ it is more prevalent in children under two, with infants under

²²⁷ Global Hunger Index. [<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/tajikistan.html>]

²²⁸ UNICEF and World Bank, 2012, Nutrition situation analysis report.

²²⁹ MoHSPP, 2019, Health behaviour of school aged children pilot survey in Tajikistan, accessed February 2020.

²³⁰ According to the 2017 Demographic and Health Survey, stunting among children under 5 years of age fell from 27 percent in 2012 to 17 percent in 2017. With an annual population growth rate of 2.5 percent, however, the current decline rate is insufficient to meet the 2025 target of a 40 percent reduction in the number of stunted children under five years of age.

²³¹ Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF, 2018, Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. [<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr341-dhs-final-reports.cfm>] (Accessed: 10/10/20).

6 months being the most affected.²³² Micronutrient deficiencies, such as anaemia, iodine deficiency and vitamin A deficiency, are persistent, affecting multitudes of health, development and educational outcomes among children and women.²³³ About 1 in 3 children are exclusively breastfed, but the law on protecting breastfeeding is not effectively enforced and the programmes for breastfeeding promotion are also not properly implemented.²³⁴ Only half of all infants are introduced to complementary foods at appropriate ages, only 9 per cent of children between 6-23 months of age are given a minimum acceptable diet, and 58 percent of children do not consume any vegetables or fruits.²³⁵

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised concerns about inadequate food consumption of children in rural areas. It also took note of target 2.2 of the SDGs on ending all forms of malnutrition, and recommended Tajikistan to fully implement its NDS (2030) to ensure food security and people's access to good quality nutrition, inter alia, through adopting the intersectoral framework plan of action on nutrition to ensure the functioning of the National Nutrition Platform.²³⁶ On the opposite end of the spectrum, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has been steadily increasing, especially among women of reproductive age, contributing to increasing non-communicable diseases, higher burden on the national health system, and low productivity. In 2015, Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights recommended Tajikistan to take steps to address chronic food insecurity, chronic malnutrition and, in particular, the critical nutritional needs of children and pregnant women.²³⁷

Vulnerability to climate change further threatens food security. The country is experiencing severe fragility in the environmental dimension and is vulnerable to high exposure to hazards and low capacity in food supply adequacy among others.²³⁸ More frequent droughts, floods and landslides have reduced agricultural productivity, increased losses, and damaged farming livelihoods which can act as a driver or accelerator to economic or social migration drivers. Small agricultural plots limit household production and income, while climate change, manifested in rainfall variability and increasing temperatures, compounded by limited livelihood diversification, hampers smallholder productivity and incomes.²³⁹ The impacts of climate change in rural areas may impact rural-urban migration flows within Tajikistan, however, it is vital to recognise that the cost of migration is often high, and the most vulnerable may be those who do not have the economic and social capital to move to seek new opportunities. Overall, insufficient resources are being deployed for climate change adaptation and emergency response.

Food availability is affected by low agricultural production and reliance on food imports. Tajikistan is highly dependent on imports for food staples and processed food. Around half of the wheat is imported while imported retail food products account for 60 percent of the total.²⁴⁰ A large number of agricultural producers have small landholdings. They face challenges accessing quality seeds, fertilizers, machinery, technology, and financing. Moreover, there are inadequate storage facilities resulting in post-harvest losses. There are limited

²³² Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF, 2018, Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. [<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr341-dhs-final-reports.cfm>] (Accessed: 10/10/20).

²³³ Anemia: 28 percent; Iodine deficiency: 55 percent. UNICEF & MoHSPP, 2016.

²³⁴ UNICEF, Drexel University & Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2016, Formative Research on Infant and Young Child Feeding and Maternal Nutrition in Tajikistan, Dushanbe: Polygraph. [<https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/resources.html>] (Accessed: 10/10/20).

²³⁵ UNICEF, 2019, The State of the World's Children.

²³⁶ CRC COs 2017, para. 31-32

²³⁷ CESCR Concluding Observations, para. 29.

²³⁸ OECD, States of Fragility; <https://www3.compareyourcountry.org/states-of-fragility/countries/TJK>

²³⁹ World Bank Group, 2009. [<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/0,,contentMDK:22196205~pagePK:146736~piPK:226340~theSitePK:258599,00.html>]

²⁴⁰ Tajikistan Zero Hunger Strategic Review, 2018. [https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000105066/download/?_ga=2.250635268.348631303.1606121088-1907830739.1600833421]

agro-processing enterprises, which weakens forward and backward linkages between manufacturing and on-farm production. Although agricultural output, on average, increased 5.3 percent annually between 2016 and 2019, it is much lower than the projected annual growth of 8.4 percent. The growth in the livestock subsector has been more impressive with significant increase in the production of eggs and poultry meat, most likely as a result of tax incentives.²⁴¹

3.4.3 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Significant gaps in access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services. The National Water Strategy 2030 asserts that “drinking water supply and sanitation are essential life support systems for the population and of significant importance for development”. Most water supply and sewerage systems were built in the 1960s and 1980s, primarily in large and medium-size cities and urban settlements, and they lack adequate maintenance and investments. Smaller secondary towns and rural areas experience systematic and widespread service deficiencies. The provision of drinking water and sanitation services is characterized by weak governance, institutional gaps, overlaps between institutional mandates, poor regulatory environment, and concerns for financial sustainability issues.²⁴² Given the present COVID-19 pandemic situation, access to WASH services in social institutions have become an urgent priority keeping in view the dependence on it. Sex-disaggregated data on access to water, sanitation and hygiene are not available.

Table 2: Access to WASH, key indicators (coverage, %)

Access to WASH Indicators	National	Urban	Rural	Source
WASH services access (% of the population)				
Access to safely managed drinking water	48	87	36	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, Joint Monitoring Programme report (JMP); World Bank data
Access to basic water supply	81	96	76	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
Access to safely managed sanitation	34	80	18	World Bank data. Data of the State Unitary Enterprise “Khojagii manziliyu Kommunalii” (KMK)
Access to improved sanitation	96	95	98	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
Access to basic hygiene services (availability of handwashing facility on premises with access to water and soap)	73	92	67	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
WASH in Health Care Facilities (%)²⁴³				
Access to basic drinking water services	36	N/A	N/A	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
Access to basic sanitation services	1	N/A	N/A	MoHSPP-WHO-JICA “National situation assessment of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in health care facilities in Tajikistan 2021”
Access to basic hygiene services	12	N/A	N/A	WHO/JICA

²⁴¹ Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, Ministry of economic development and trade of Tajikistan.

²⁴² The current organizational structure imposes several complexities in decision making, covering subsidies from scarce and underfunded budgets, and developing tariff policies. World Bank, 2017, ‘Glass Half Full: Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan’.

²⁴³ MoHSPP, 2017, Population health and health facilities; performance in 2016 (in Tajik), Dushanbe.

Access to WASH Indicators	National	Urban	Rural	Source
Access to basic healthcare waste management services	47	N/A	N/A	WHO/JICA
Access to HCFs practicing basic environmental cleaning	17	N/A	N/A	WHO/JICA
WASH in Schools (%)				
Access to basic water services	79	93	73	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
Access to basic sanitation services	47	57	43	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP
Access to basic hygiene services	25	41	20	WHO, UNICEF, 2017, JMP

Equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a concern. In 2015, the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation visited Tajikistan. Among others, the Special Rapporteur recommended to the authorities to translate the commitment made at the global level as a champion of water into national legislation and policies, budgetary allocation and implementation, particularly to eliminate disparities in access to water and sanitation and to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls in rural areas, resettled people and refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.²⁴⁴ However, the government did not adopt action plans or take any other meaningful steps to implement these recommendations. In 2018 national inter-sectoral targets for water, sanitation and health were aligned with SDG targets. Tajikistan is engaged in activities under the Protocol on Water and Health and the discussions to become a Party to the treaty are ongoing.

Only 48 percent of the population has access to safely managed drinking water services.²⁴⁵ Although 81 percent of the population have access to basic drinking water, only 73 percent nationally have access to basic hygiene services (availability of a handwashing facility on premises with soap and water). However, in terms of access to safely managed sanitation, the data available is limited. Large disparities exist in the availability of handwashing facilities at home between the poorest and richest, e.g., 23 percent of the population has limited and 5 percent no access to handwashing facilities. Although 97 percent of the population reported as having basic access to sanitation, there are questions about the cleanliness of these facilities. Children in particular continue to be adversely affected by poor sanitation and hygiene. The recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on taking all the necessary measures to improve access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and reducing disparities between urban and rural areas have not been addressed.²⁴⁶

Rural areas lack access to water and sanitation. According to the 2017 World Bank report, access to improved water on premises is 87 percent in urban areas, and only 36 percent in rural areas.²⁴⁷ Untreated effluent is discharged into rivers, affecting waterway health. It is estimated that only 5 percent of the sewerage systems in rural areas are functional. This is exacerbated by high nutrient load from non-point sources draining into both surface and groundwater. Discharge into sewerage system without effective treatment is a serious health consideration as it has a potential to recirculate pathogens into the

²⁴⁴ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation on his mission to Tajikistan; para.56 Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/151/61/PDF/G1615161.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁴⁵ WHO, UNICEF, 2017, Joint Monitoring Programme report (JMP).

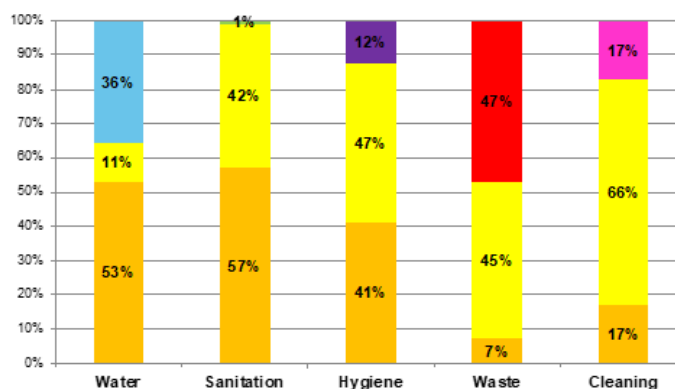
²⁴⁶ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of Tajikistan, 2015, para. 28. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/TJK/CO/2-3&Lang=En

²⁴⁷ Results of the Population and Housing Census of the Republic of Tajikistan. Volume VIII. Housing and living conditions of the population of the Republic of Tajikistan. (latest census where data is available).

environment. Two in three households have neither running water nor a place in/nearby their toilets to wash hands.²⁴⁸ Urban households are more likely to have soap and water for hand washing than rural households. In some households, soap is kept in a separate room and brought out only for guests. Poor water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in rural areas, in the absence of the management by the government, are contributing to high rates of infant and under-5 mortality and childhood malnutrition caused by waterborne diseases.²⁴⁹ Therefore, it is essential to develop the appropriate water and sanitation management infrastructure in order to capture, transport, manage and provide water to the most vulnerable areas in Tajikistan and provide adequate sanitation standards.

Inadequate adherence to WASH standards in public facilities are a concern that are also undermining other rights, such as the right to health, education, work and life.²⁵⁰ Quality gaps in sterilization practices, compliance with clinical protocols and oversight of quality of care management is of concern. WASH conditions in most health facilities in Tajikistan have deteriorated due to infrastructural and maintenance gaps. The absence of running water and adequate sanitation facilities in the majority of maternity hospitals discourages healthy hygiene practices. Only 24 percent of health care facilities (HCFs) have access to basic water (improved source and within premises), 1 percent to basic sanitation (usable with at least one toilet for staff and one sex separated toilet with MHM facilities and one with people with limited mobility), 12 percent have access basic hygiene services (functional hand hygiene facilities with water and soap available), 47 percent having access to some sort of waste management facilities/services (safety segregated, treated and disposed) and 17 percent practising basic environmental cleaning.

Figure 13. Coverage in the provision of WASH services across the country (n=350 HCFs)



The results of “National situation assessment of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in health care facilities in Tajikistan” provide important insights into the prevailing conditions in HCFs in the Republic of Tajikistan and the priorities for future efforts and investments. By using health-relevant evidence-based indicators, recommended by WHO and UNICEF to monitor progress towards the SDGs, the results will not only support the country in their work at the national level, but they also allow facilitating international policy dialogue, responding to the WHA resolution on WASH in HCFs.

The results of the survey confirm the challenges that emerged in previous data collections conducted on smaller regional samples or some WASH areas.²⁵¹ They highlight an urgent need to increased efforts to ensure minimum infrastructural provisions as well as for improved operation and maintenance. Even if the observed

²⁴⁸ World Bank, 2017, ‘Glass Half Full: Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Conditions in Tajikistan’.

²⁴⁹ Above source para. 57

²⁵⁰ Above source, para. 56.

²⁵¹ Khodjamurodov G, Sodiqova D, Akkazieva B, Rechel D. Tajikistan: health system review. Health Systems in Transition, 2016;18(1):1-114. World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund, WASH in health care facilities: Global Baseline Report 2019, WHO and UNICEF, Geneva, 2019.

needs seem particularly challenging, especially in an unstable time such as during a pandemic, improvements are essential for the proper function of health care services and to respond to the public health emergency, while strengthening the preparedness for future outbreaks. The most important priority areas for improvement are drinking-water, sanitation, and hand hygiene, as between 40 percent and 60 percent of visited HCFs in the country do not provide any health-essential service in these areas.

Disparities in access to water and sanitation are reflected strongly in schools. Many school facilities fall well below minimum standards for drinking water, hygiene and sanitation and are unable to create a conducive environment for children to practice safe WASH behaviours.²⁵² Only about half of school have access to piped water and most do not have water storage facilities. Sanitation facilities are generally available, but they are basic pit latrines (84 percent) away from school buildings. Only 47 percent have access to basic sanitation facilities that are single-sex and usable, and only 26 percent have water and soap available for handwashing.²⁵³ Few schools have private spaces for girls with appropriate menstrual hygiene disposal systems: their absence offers girls little choice but to remain at home.

A recent study also highlights that nearly 1 in 5 girl drop-outs identified poor sanitation facilities for their non-attendance.²⁵⁴ The majority of the primary health care facilities (almost 90 percent) were built during the 1960-1980s and require rehabilitation, including access to WASH.²⁵⁵ While not yet a Party to the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention, Tajikistan has made a step towards improving its situation with water, sanitation and hygiene by setting in the overall context of the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogue on IWRM. In 2017, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended Tajikistan to allocate necessary resources to implement the NDS (2030) with particular attention to improving the living standards of children, including guaranteeing their access to safe drinking water and sanitation.²⁵⁶

3.4.4 Education and Training

The NDS-2030 defines human capital as the main contributing factor for sustainable development.²⁵⁷ The National Strategy for Education Development (2021-2030) calls for an educational system that offers equal opportunities to all and enables people to develop intellectual abilities, seek productive and gainful employment, and improve their social wellbeing. However, according to the World Bank, a child born in Tajikistan today is expected to be 53 percent as productive as he or she could be with full health and complete education.²⁵⁸ A comprehensive framework for Early Childhood Development (ECD) is yet to be developed.²⁵⁹

Compulsory education is until grade 9 and current legislation excludes segregation based on sex. Gender inequality in access to education is decreasing, but a gender gap in secondary school participation still exists. Girls are more likely to continue their education in the vocational schools, where they outnumber boys. However, this is due to their high enrolment to pedagogical and medical vocational schools. Due to social norms and stereotypes about roles of men and women, and occupational stereotyping, girls have fewer

²⁵² World Bank and UNICEF, 2019, 'Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools', Joint Policy Brief.

²⁵³ World Bank, 2017, *ibidem*.

²⁵⁴ UNICEF, 2018, Adolescents Baseline Study.

²⁵⁵ CAREC Institute, 2020, 'Development of sustainable water and sanitation systems in rural, irrigated areas of CAREC region', Tajikistan National Report – DRAFT.

²⁵⁶ Concluding observations on the combined third to fifth periodic reports of Tajikistan, para. 37. Available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/TJK/CO/2-3&Lang=En

²⁵⁷ In the framework of the implementation of recommendations and action plans of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo 1994).

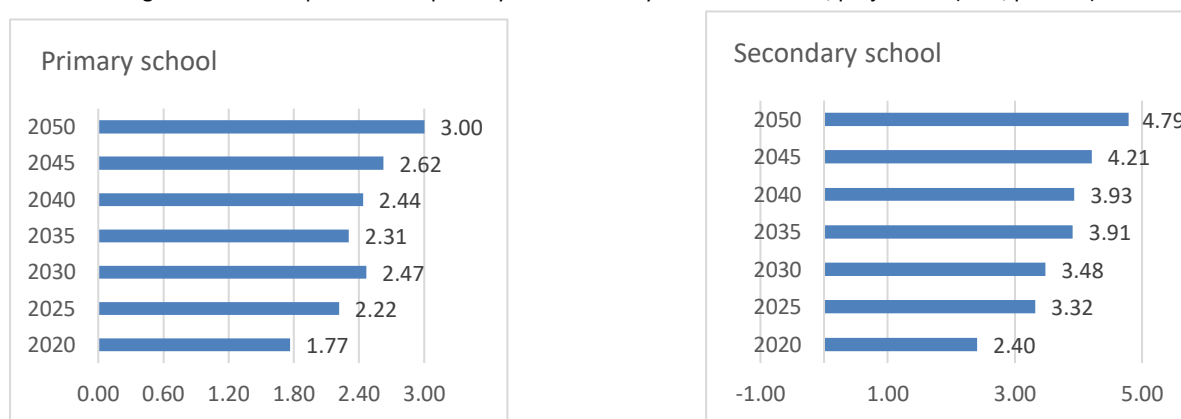
²⁵⁸ World Bank, 2019, Early Childhood Education and Care: A Focused Review of Preschool Education in Tajikistan.

²⁵⁹ UNICEF and MoHSP, 2013, Causal analysis of infant death in Tajikistan.

opportunities to obtain professional education. Gender stereotypes also affect the choice of courses pursued by girls. Girls studying at vocational schools and higher educational institutions mainly select such fields as education, health, social science studies. Of the many children engaged in some form of household work when not in school, girls undertake a greater share of housework than boys.

Public spending on education was 18.9 percent of the total government budget in 2023 which is about 5.7 percent of GDP.²⁶⁰ The average for countries in Central Asia and Southern Caucasus is approximately 4.5 percent.²⁶¹ Budgeting is decentralized and funds are transferred to education facilities through the sub-national governments, however the fragmentation of education financing and limited capacity in evidence-based planning are affecting the efficient and effective use of available resources.²⁶² The projected increase of primary and secondary school students²⁶³ will continue to put pressure on the education sector, with higher demand for school infrastructure and teachers, requiring strengthened sector coordination and efficient use of national resources. Educational infrastructure must be further developed along with support to improve teaching and IT connectivity.

Figure 14. State expenditure in primary and secondary school education, projections (GDP, percent)



Source: UNFPA, 2020, Population Situation Analysis Report for Tajikistan

Quality of education is a significant constraint. Education and training systems are not yet providing young graduates with the knowledge and skills for success in a more dynamic and digital labour market, including critical thinking, analytical skills, and problem solving.²⁶⁴ According to projections, to achieve the NDS-2030 targets for quality education, the primary school expenditure to GDP ratio will need to increase from 1.8 percent of GDP to 2.5 percent by 2030 and 3.0 percent by 2050, while the secondary school expenditure must increase by 2.5 and 13 times in 2030 and 2050 respectively.

Access to quality pre-primary education is a major challenge. Tajikistan lags behind the Central Asian countries, as well as lower-middle income countries, in the coverage of pre-primary education. Only 15.6 percent of children aged 3-6 are currently enrolled in early childhood education and only 45 percent are girls.²⁶⁵ Pre-school education for children below 3 years of age is almost not available thus making overall enrolment of children aged 1-6 years of age 12.2 percent.²⁶⁶ While more children are enrolled, they are failing

²⁶⁰ MoES, 2023, Education Management Information System (EMIS).

²⁶¹ Republic of Tajikistan, 2020, Draft National Strategy for Education Development 2021-2030.

²⁶² In 2016, for instance, 94 percent of school funding came from local budgets. Tajikistan, June 2019, Budget Brief for preschool and general secondary education.

²⁶³ UNFPA, 2020, Population Situation Analysis Report for Tajikistan.

²⁶⁴ 21st century transversal skills (e.g. communication, team work and networking, critical thinking and problem solving, initiative and resilience) and deep skills in one or more trades e.g. ICT, boilermakers, millwrights, welders. EC, 2019, Skills for Industry Strategy 2030. See also: ILO, Skill-up, Nov 2019; AES, What are 21st century skills, 2020.

²⁶⁵ MoES, 2023, EMIS.

²⁶⁶ MoES, 2023, EMIS.

to learn essential skills for life and work. Around 23 percent of adolescent girls in rural areas believe that knowledge and skills they gain in school is insufficient for them to realize their personal goals.²⁶⁷ The competency-based education reform has not been finalized yet, and teachers' qualifications and professional development are not at the required level.

Children from vulnerable groups and with special needs face numerous barriers. Only some 7,030 children with disabilities (less than 27 percent of identified children) have access to education, while a third of them are in residential care institutions rather than mainstream schools.²⁶⁸ There are challenges in the access to education for refugee children and undocumented children. A total of 415 refugee children identified are not benefiting from primary and secondary educational opportunities, including children with special needs and disability. Families and authorities often give preference to boys over girls when dealing with the costly paperwork to obtain legal identity documents, excluding girls from education.

Despite measures being taken, girls still do not enjoy equal access to education all levels compared to boys. From 2010 to 2018, the Gender Parity Index score for compulsory education improved from 0.88 to 0.93. Unequal access to education is still prevalent in upper secondary education (grades 10-11) with a gender parity score of 0.87.²⁶⁹ While education to grade 9 is compulsory, restrictive gender norms and conservative societal practices prevent girls from continuing secondary education and taking active part in society.²⁷⁰ As many girls do not graduate from the secondary schools, they have fewer opportunities to obtain professional education. While the share of girls in higher educational institutions increased over the years, boys considerably outnumber girls. Girls made up 41 percent of all students in higher educational institutions in 2022/2023.²⁷¹ Comparable data on learning outcomes of boys and girls is missing due to lack of standardized national assessment and the minimal participation in international assessments.

National education system is vulnerable to shocks. Across all school levels, the learning of an estimated 2 million children ages 7 to 17 was severely interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is limited capacity and preparedness to deliver digital learning,²⁷² hampered by low rates of internet coverage, especially in rural areas.²⁷³ In addition, due to low ICT infrastructure access, only about a third of teachers use desktop computer/laptops and mobile phones/smartphone on a daily basis. The majority of educators assessed their ICT competencies for ICT-supported tasks in the teaching process as low.²⁷⁴ While health promotion is a part of the school curriculum²⁷⁵ only 9 percent of schools have dedicated health personnel, impeding effective communication about infection prevention and treatment.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is provided by a network of 61 vocational lyceums under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment. The vocational lyceums provide training in 14 occupational areas: economics, technology, transport and equipment, electronic equipment, energy, chemical industry, light industry, mining, architecture and construction, agriculture, metallurgy, telecommunications, tourism and hotel services, consumer services, and public food. The tuition fee charged is nominal, which is why lyceums are attractive to many low-income households. Nearly 25 percent of students admitted into TVET do not complete the programme. Despite international support, most vocational lyceums face serious challenges, including dilapidated facilities and shortage of equipment and

²⁶⁷ [<https://www.unicef.org/tajikistan/media/626/file/Adolescents%20Baseline%20Sudy%202018.pdf>]

²⁶⁸ MoES, 2023, EMIS.

²⁶⁹ Republic of Tajikistan, 2020, Draft National Strategy for Education Development, 2021-2030.

²⁷⁰ Tajikistan is a patriarchal society in which males are considered the future providers and heads of household and females are expected to become housewives and mothers.

²⁷¹ MoES, 2023, EMIS.

²⁷² UNICEF and EU, May 2020, Rapid Education Needs Assessment.

²⁷³ Ibidem. For example, 48 percent of urban and 32 percent of rural adolescents have access to internet. Rates are lower for girls.

²⁷⁴ UNESCO Almaty Office, 2020, Report on ICT Competency Assessment of Teachers in the Republic of Tajikistan.

²⁷⁵ Including physical activity, nutrition and their importance in tackling obesity.

learning material.

The Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment operates 35 Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) offering short-term basic skills training and skills upgrading courses of up to 6 months. The principal target groups are returning migrants, vulnerable youth, especially women, and, to a lesser extent, adults with limited literacy skills. Pre-Departure Orientation Centres also exist in Dushanbe, Bokhtar, Khorogh and Khujand and provide ad-hoc pre-departure orientation or pre-employment orientation on labour migration pathways. These centres are being strengthened with international support, primarily the International Organization for Migration, to develop formalised PDO and PEO sessions for all aspirant migrants before departure – however, these are currently not mandatory.

3.4.5 Gender Equality

Women still face major barriers. Due to strong gender stereotypes and patriarchy, they are often being placed in subordinated positions compared to men. While the Constitution guarantees equal rights to both men and women and the principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in the legislation, harmful social norms and practices continue to perpetuate gender inequality. In 2023, Tajikistan ranked 111 out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index (0.672), (rank change +3 compared to 2022), still showing particularly low ranking in economic empowerment and opportunity followed by political empowerment and educational attainment.²⁷⁶

Compared to other regions, Eurasia and Central Asia has the lowest gender parity in Political Empowerment and suffers a 1 percentage-point setback since 2022. Its score of 10.9 percent is barely half the global score of 22.1 percent. Only Armenia, Ukraine and Tajikistan have made at least a 1 percentage-point improvement. Among the 18,500 civil servants in 2023, around 25 percent were women.²⁷⁷ Currently, only two women are in ministerial posts, while 16 women out of 63 are members of the Lower Chamber of Parliament. According to a Country Gender Assessment Report, Tajikistan has made progress in gender equality, but significant challenges remain. Women’s labour force participation is comparatively low, about 69 percent of working-age women are not working for pay, and women’s contribution to gross national income is 4.5 times less than that of men.²⁷⁸

In Tajikistan, as per the Global Social Norms Index (GSNI), 99.9 percent of the population exhibits at least one form of bias.²⁷⁹ There is a prevalent bias regarding women’s ability to assume political leadership, with 78.33 percent of the population holding such views. Economic biases are also common - 78 percent of the population believe that men have a greater right to employment during crises and that men are more capable in executive roles. GSNI also shows a deeply ingrained bias related to men’s perceived “right” to use violence against their wives. More than 97 percent of people hold such belief.

Women and girls face barriers to sexual and reproductive health and rights, education, and economic participation and political empowerment, because their agency to make decision over their lives, access to service and participation in the society is restricted by their families and societal perceptions about centrality of women’s role in the family and household.²⁸⁰ Women are systematically denied the same work rights as men due to strong patriarchy and lack of effective policy and institutional frameworks aimed at achievement

²⁷⁶ World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2023 [<https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/>]

²⁷⁷ According to the Civil Service Agency as reported in the media. <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20230430/zhenschiny-politika-tadjikistan-ravnopravie-1056784859.html>

²⁷⁸ [https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/country-gender-assessment#:~:text=The%20report%20provides%20recommendations%20for,assets%2C%20and%204\)%20enhancing%20women%27s](https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/country-gender-assessment#:~:text=The%20report%20provides%20recommendations%20for,assets%2C%20and%204)%20enhancing%20women%27s)

²⁷⁹ <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2023-gender-social-norms-index-gsni#/indicies/GSNI>

²⁸⁰ For example, as mentioned elsewhere, labour force participation rate among women is quite low compared to men (men: 52%, women: 32%); number of female parliamentarians 14 out of 63.

of gender equality. They face sexual violence and exploitation and an unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work.

Climate change and disasters continue to have a disproportionate effect on women and children, as do conflict and migration. Environmental migration is largely determined by people's exposure to environmental and climatic risks, and their capacity to anticipate, cope with, adapt, and recover from the consequences of natural hazards and environmental degradation. Overall, those who are economically, politically, and socially marginalized within communities affected by natural hazards and environmental degradation experience the effects of climate change most acutely – this is very often women and children. As a result, women often have fewer opportunities to access information, to prepare for the impacts of climate change, and to migrate and are more likely to remain in communities of origin with dependent family members to face disasters and environmental degradation.²⁸¹ Inequality of opportunity is especially high for rural women due to limited choices and the low quality of infrastructure and access to civil registration services.

Weak enforcement of legal guarantees exacerbates gender inequality in Tajikistan. The country has a dedicated Committee on Women and Family Affairs (CWFA) under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, an inherited institution from the Soviet past, which is mandated to implement gender equality policy in Tajikistan and has branches in districts and regions and enjoys state funding. The country has relatively strong legal guarantees of gender equality and protection of women's rights that mostly comply with CEDAW. However, the effective enforcement of these guarantees and their monitoring are not developed.²⁸² The National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan lists concrete actions to improve women's participation in education, in the economic sector, including women's entrepreneurship and labour market, and in politics, however, it has weak implementation mechanisms also at the regional and district levels, suffers from lack of funding, clear timeframes for achievement of set goals and objectives. It was poorly monitored. Mechanism for gender mainstreaming in national and subnational planning is absent.

Due to its status under the government, the CWFA, acting as the authorized agency for conducting state policy to protect women's rights, has difficulties implementing its authority without the active involvement of line ministries and agencies. However, the recommendation of the CEDAW Committee to create gender units or assign responsible persons in ministries has not been fully implemented. Gender priorities and tasks set in the NDS-2030 are not integrated into the most state programmes for industry development. The Seventh CEDAW Report notes the creation of an Interagency Group on Gender Equality #12 headed by the CWFA within the National Development Council under the President of Tajikistan, and the UN invests in gender capacity of this group. Nonetheless, this group does not work on a standing basis and its decision-making authority is vague. Additionally, most civil servants fall out of ongoing programmes to improve gender capacity. It is required that senior staff of ministries and committees attend the special trainings, as they are responsible for developing and implementing policies in their respective structures.

Gender objectives are included in long-term national strategies until 2030 on Disaster Risk Reduction, on Adaptation to Climate Change, on Development of Statistics, on Development of Education. Also, concepts of direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, affirmative action, and others were introduced with the adoption of the Law on Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (2022). After a series of egregious cases of sexual violence against underage girls, the Administrative and Criminal

²⁸¹ <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/mmicd/environment-climate-change-toolkit.pdf>

²⁸² These include: the national framework for gender equality includes the Law on State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women, laws on combating human trafficking, preventing domestic violence, and the Family code that was amended to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 years and Administrative and Criminal Codes that outlaw violation of gender equality, violence against women (not all forms) and early and forced marriage.

Codes have been amended to introduce punishment for corporal punishment or threat of physical abuse of children and toughened criminal punishment for sexual violence against children. To strengthen their practical implementation, complaint mechanisms were established in pilot districts, but those require continuous support and rolling out.

The new Equality and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Act lays down rules for the adoption of temporary special measures to support vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, members of ethnic, religious, national or linguistic minorities, women, children, young people, the elderly and other socially vulnerable persons, survivors of criminal proceedings, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers to ensure their full participation in all areas of life. The impact of state programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment is weak. Neither national nor sectoral strategy has fully attained its gender objectives. Many planned initiatives were not implemented at all, including gender measures of the Action Plan for implementation of the MTDP 2020.

Lack of a systematic mechanism to monitor gender equality. Gender statistics whilst available are mainly focused on the social sectors, but these are insufficient to monitor implementation of international agreements such as the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and the SDGs, especially in relation to groups left behind (girls and women facing multiple forms of discrimination). Responding to this situation requires: a) Enhanced collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data, including at the sub-regional level and across all sectors of national development; b) Improved use of data, across all sectors, to inform and monitor the implementation of all sector policies and programmes, especially those still considered “gender neutral”; and c) Increased public access to data to strengthen advocacy and monitoring by partners in civil society.

Compared to men, women face more barriers to economic participation. In 2019, the percentage of working age women who were in the labour force was less than 29 percent compared to over 50 percent for men.²⁸³ Since 2000, the gender pay gap has narrowed but, on average, women still only receive about 64 percent of the monthly wage for men. While reliable statistics on women's access to land and assets are missing, representative sample studies demonstrate that women own only a small share of land and assets.²⁸⁴ Migration from Tajikistan is male dominated. The largest group of migrants is 15–29 years old (45.4 percent) followed by the group aged 30–44 (39.5 percent). Although in 2019 female migration increased by double the increase in male migration (24 percent increase, compared to 12 percent increase in male labour migrants), women's participation in labour migration has remained between 12 percent and 16 percent in the last 5 years.²⁸⁵

The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) revealed that just 1.8 percent of surveyed women owned land on their own in 2012. In rural areas women are mainly informal farm workers and seasonal wage workers, and the ratio of women to men is considerably lower for shareholders and formal employees of *dehkan* farms.²⁸⁶ Between 2012 and 2017, the proportion of women who owned a house alone and/or jointly with someone else declined sharply from 53 percent to 36 percent. Just one percent of surveyed women had a bank account. With regards to entrepreneurship, women are mainly individual entrepreneurs working under certificate and patent and mostly for subsistence. Women accounted for 25 percent of all entrepreneurs in Tajikistan in 2019.²⁸⁷

²⁸³ ILO Modelled Estimate for 2019 [<https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/population-and-labour-force/>]

²⁸⁴ For example: a study on *dehkan* farms revealed that, between 2014 and 2019, the percentage of women-headed *dehkan* farms increased from 13 to 22.1 percent, but the share of arable lands used by them remained at the same level (10.2 percent of all arable lands).

²⁸⁵ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/681666/support-labor-migration-tajikistan.pdf>

²⁸⁶ Mukhamedova, N., Wegerich, K., 2018, *The feminization of agriculture in post-Soviet Tajikistan*, Journal of Rural Studies, 57, pp.128-139.

²⁸⁷ Tajikistan Agency on Statistics, forthcoming, Women and Men in the Republic of Tajikistan.

Gender inequality fuels high levels of violence against women and girls. Reliable statistics on prevalence of violence against women in Tajikistan are lacking. Violence against women, including spousal abuse, remains widespread and pervasive despite the adoption of the 2013 Law on Prevention of Violence in the Family. The 2017 Demographic and Health Survey revealed that 24 percent of women between the ages of 19-49 in Tajikistan have experienced physical or sexual violence.²⁸⁸ A third of these women reported violence happening in the past year. The most common perpetrators of violence were current or former husbands (97 percent) and 80 percent of married women reported that their husbands exhibited at least one form of marital control. Despite this, domestic violence is not criminalised.

Violence against women and girls is aggravated by a high tolerance to violence. Family violence is often dismissed as a “family matter”. Despite ongoing lobbying by civil society and numerous recommendations by international actors, Tajikistan has not yet criminalized all forms of violence against women in line with CEDAW recommendations to Tajikistan made in 2013.²⁸⁹ Violence is under-reported from fear of reprisal or inadequate response by police and the judiciary. The quality and availability of health, psychosocial, legal and recovery services for victims of GBV is limited, especially in rural areas. Other major drivers of VAW and domestic violence are: the lack of effective state mechanisms to prevent violence, protect victims and punish perpetrators, no single coordinated protection strategy, and a lack of data for policy and programme design and monitoring.²⁹⁰ In 2020, there was a feasibility study on electronic platform where line committees and governmental institutions, including law enforcement entities, can record administrative data on GBV cases. The study has not yet finalized, but that will serve as an additional element of improving data collection system. A Working Group chaired by the Agency of Statistics was established to coordinate the collection of administrative data on GBV. The relevant members of the Working Group received training to set up mechanism for tracking GBV data.

Women and girls are subjected to illegal practices such as polygamy and early marriages. Around 9 percent of women are married before the age of 18.²⁹¹ Changes made to the family code to increase the age of marriage from 17 to 18 years old, but early marriages are still too common. Child, early and forced marriage is closely linked to higher levels of fertility and the perpetuation of poverty across generations, undercutting a productive, skilled workforce. Women are also adversely affected by security threats and violent extremism. Moreover, as per the 2016 amendments to the Family Code²⁹², mandatory medical examinations have been established prior to marriage. There have been cases when the medical examination was used for virginity tests for women and girls.²⁹³ The National Centre of forensic examination checks the virginity of about 600 girls annually.²⁹⁴

Violence against children and girls-children is still widely acceptable. The amendments to the Law on Child rights for ban of corporal punishment in all settings drafted. With support of development partners, State bodies must raise awareness of all segments of the population to prevent stereotypes and stigma towards persons with disabilities, women and children. In 2022 a network “Life Without Violence” was formed under the joint support of EU and UN Agencies. The Coordinating Council included members of the Network of women with disabilities, the NGO Coalition “From legal equality to de facto equality”, the Network of women

²⁸⁸ Demographic and Health Survey, 2017, p. 208. [<https://dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr341-dhs-final-reports.cfm>]

²⁸⁹ [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Sharedpercent20Documents/TJK/INT_CEDAW_CSS_TJK_32597_E.pdf]

²⁹⁰ [<https://tj.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/143/TAJIKISTAN-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>]

²⁹¹ UNICEF. [<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>]

²⁹² Article 15

²⁹³ An alternative report of the coalition of public associations of the Republic of Tajikistan "From legal equality to actual equality" on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action +25, 2019.

²⁹⁴ Source : <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/31077326.html>

living with HIV. In 2023 the CSOs have continued their dialogue, including use of the established Knowledge Hub <https://ogoplatforma.tj>. The network continued its work as Action Coalition, actively cooperating with the Regional Alliance on ending SGBV, which envisages to bring together Governments, Parliaments, CSOs, academia, media, youth, development partners and the UN to share a common goal – ending violence against women and girls.

3.4.6 Social Protection and Vulnerability

Social protection system is fragmented. The social protection system in Tajikistan combines compulsory state social insurance for different groups of employed people with targeted social assistance and services for people living in poverty and challenging life situations. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan endorsed the Social Protection Strategy in December 2022 but a lot of reforms are needed to address the fragmentation and duplication of efforts. The social protection system in Tajikistan can be broadly divided into four pillars: (1) social insurance and pensions are managed by the Agency on Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP); (2) social assistance cash benefits such as the targeted social assistance, social allowance for children living with HIV and disability allowance remain within the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSPP) and a subordinate institution, the State Agency on Social Protection of the Population (SASPP); (3) social care services under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSPP) which covers various day care, home care, temporary and permanent social care services provided for vulnerable groups at home units, day care centres, territorial and residential care institutions which are administered by local or national governments; and (4) unemployment benefits are managed by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment (MOLMEP).

Despite government efforts to expand social protection services, the coverage is limited. Around 12.6 percent of the 2022 public expenditure accounted for social transfers. Moreover, the public health expenditure amounted to 7.6 percent of the budget.²⁹⁵ A significant proportion of social transfers include pensions. The elderly, people with disabilities, including children, victims of domestic violence and trafficking were the main recipients. Only 46 percent of the poorest 20 percent of the population receive social protection and labour (SPL) programme benefits.²⁹⁶ There is limited or no data about other vulnerable groups including children left behind by migrant parents, stateless children, or victims of labour exploitation. Tajikistan's social protection system is characterized by low capacity and limited financial resources. In addition to limited financing, there is no standard and unified approach for determining the criteria and eligibility of population, especially those who receive cash transfers. Despite the challenges, an action plan was prepared to strengthen the shock-responsive features in the social protection system. This is linked with the work on disaster risk reduction and the launch of the Early Warning for All (EW4ALL) initiative.

The identification and registration procedures are cumbersome and there is no consolidated database of beneficiaries and limited data-sharing amongst responsible institutions. Another bottleneck is the lack of a qualified social protection workforce.²⁹⁷ In the context of growing needs and limited resources greater balance is needed between programmes, population and the size of benefits and type of services. Changes are needed to enhance capacities at the SASP to: (1) strengthen budget formulation and execution with the introduction of results-based budgeting; (2) improve the targeting and delivery of benefits; and (3) enhance the performance monitoring system. As part of the Social Protection Assessment Based National Dialogue (SP-ABND), recommendations to close protection gaps included: i) free basic medical care for the entire

²⁹⁵ AoS: Socioeconomic Report January 2023.

²⁹⁶ These include: social insurance, social safety nets, and unemployment benefits and active labour market programmes. World Bank, November 2020, ASPIRE.

²⁹⁷ There is only one University that trains social workers at bachelor and master's level. Initial and para-professional vocational education is non-existing.

population; ii) extending maternity protection coverage; iii) universal child benefits; and iv) gradual increase of social pension in line with the poverty line.

Cash transfers are hampered by limited coverage, low benefit amounts, and inefficient targeting.

Information on cash benefits, eligibility criteria and application procedures are not always accessible and clear. Despite progress in reducing income poverty, more than 22 percent of the population is poor.²⁹⁸ A Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) scheme was expanded to all the 68 districts. Around 160,812 households living below the poverty line receive cash transfers every quarter.²⁹⁹ To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the benefit amount was increased (from USD 39 per year to USD 45 every three months), but this is still less than 40 percent of the minimum monthly wage. It is unclear how many beneficiaries will be targeted in the future and how long the revised scheme will continue. Eligible beneficiaries must renew their application annually, which envisages additional expenses to the poor families.

Current social protection schemes do not cover workers in the informal economy. People working in the informal economy are not enrolled in the national pension or unemployment benefit scheme. They are also ineligible to receive cash transfer which is intended to target the poorest households. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected small businesses and workers in the informal economy.³⁰⁰ One-off payments were provided to limited categories of unemployed workers with insufficient coverage. Such ad hoc measure does not provide for a responsive social safety net for workers in the informal economy who due to vagaries of business cycles or an economic slowdown may lose their livelihoods or cannot find enough work to cover their basic needs.

Although primary and lower secondary school is free, parents still have to bear considerable costs. The objective of the conditional cash compensation programme for education (CCP), which targets the neediest 15 percent of school children, is to promote school attendance. Education can prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The benefit is limited to a maximum of three students per household. However, the benefit is too low to incentivize parents to send their children to school, as it covers only approximately 30 percent of the annual costs incurred when sending a child to school.³⁰¹

Stateless people, refugees and asylum-seekers are excluded from social protection. The phenomenon of statelessness arose in Tajikistan after the dissolution of the USSR. Displacement was driven by civil war, migration, mixed marriages, and gaps in nationality legislation and policy that prevented the acquisition or confirmation of nationality. Stateless persons and persons with unconfirmed nationality are extremely vulnerable. The real extent of statelessness in Tajikistan is still unknown and identification continues. To meet SDG target 16.9, it is paramount to revise the Law on Civil Registration.³⁰² Refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons are excluded from the existing social protection schemes which target Tajik citizens. No provisions were made for stateless persons in the National COVID-19 Response Plan. In January 2022, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan accounted for 6,081 Afghan refugees and 404 Afghan asylum seekers.

²⁹⁸ World Bank, 2019, Country Context.

[<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview#:~:text=Banking%20sector%20profitability%20also%20continued,a%20recovery%20in%20remittance%20inflows>]

²⁹⁹ Tajikistan Agency on Social Protection, 2020.

³⁰⁰ UNDP, 2020, 'COVID-19 Social and Economic Impact Assessment Report: Women and youth at higher risk of long-term unemployment as pandemic exacerbates inequalities', Press release.

[<https://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/09/undp-covid-19-social-and-economic-impact-assessment-report--wome.html>]

³⁰¹ WFP, 2018 (tbc), Scoping Study on Social Protection and Safety Nets for Enhanced Food Security and Nutrition in Tajikistan.

³⁰² 2017 Tajikistan Demographic Health Survey. The rate of birth registration among children aged 0-5 in the country is estimated at 96 percent (with notable increase from the 88 percent in 2012).

3.4.7 People Living with Disabilities

By signing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the President on 22 March 2018, Tajikistan demonstrated its commitment to pay utmost attention to the rights of this vulnerable group of population. However, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has not been ratified yet. According to official statistics, there are 149,704 registered persons living with disabilities, including 29,517 children.³⁰³ Unfortunately, these statistics only include registered individuals, and there are probably more who are not registered or not aware of such a registry. Prior to signing the CRPD, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted several important policies, such as the National Programme on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities for 2017-2020, which is aligned with the SDGs. It aims to address the rights of people with disabilities in health, education, social protection, culture, and justice. In February 2020, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan issued Decree # 116 on the Action Plan/Road Map for the ratification of the CRPD. In February 2021, a new state programme on “Accessible Environment for 2021-2025” was adopted.

Despite various measures to create equal opportunities for people living with disabilities, there are still many unresolved issues. The situational analysis “State of Rehabilitation in Tajikistan” estimated that only 12 percent of all registered children with disabilities attended state schools.³⁰⁴ Children with disability living in remote areas often face barriers. Due to the lack of qualified teachers, children with sensory impairments living in remote areas need to go to specialized boarding schools to receive education. Women and girls with disabilities living in rural areas usually face numerous barriers to accessing legal support. Most of the service providers are located in urban areas and some of the specialized services are provided only in the provinces. To further improve the situation, the government should continue to further strengthen existing policies and engage more with organizations supporting people living with disabilities. The government also needs to ratify the CRPD, monitor its implementation through the National Human Rights Institution, and tackle disability-based stigma. Moreover, the government needs to improve the outreach and quality of services to the people living with disabilities.

State Enterprise Orthopaedic and Prosthetic Plant is the only State organization responsible for procurement, distribution, and some limited Assistive Products (AP) service provision. With support of WHO, the Priority list of AT procurement had been revised and the number of AP items had been increased up to 41 currently. According to 2021 WHO Rapid Assistive Technology Assessment (rATA) in Rudaki District that covered 2,510 randomly selected respondents, 6.9 percent needed at least one type of AP or there is a need to change the existing one.

The vast majority of people who reported a functional limitation had some difficulty with activities in each domain – these are people who typically benefit from simple assistive products such as reading glasses, crutches, canes, etc., these devices can easily be provided within the community, so it is unnecessary for people to travel long distances to get needed AP services. At least 6/10 of top 10 most needed products can be provided through local HCF. Other findings from the rATA include: 1 in 4 people (24.6 percent) had functional limitations and half of them (12.3 percent) had limitations in 2 or more domains, around half were satisfied with the services, while a quarter with unmet needs identified the lack of appropriate AP service provision as a barrier. Almost half of the respondents who had some functional difficulty in one domain (for

³⁰³ Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population. Statistics published in 2016 by the Agency on Statistics under the President of Tajikistan: http://oldstat.ww.tj/ru/img/958885d5dec55ce6eba4ebdeac71c911_1470381040.pdf

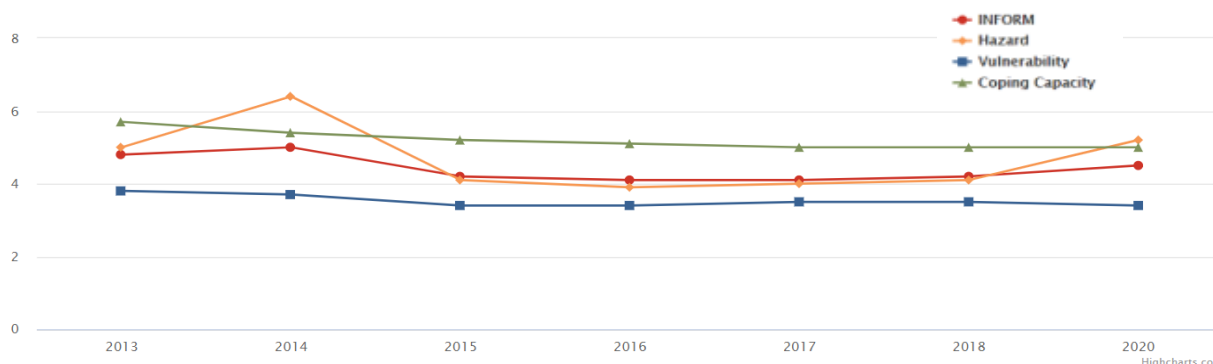
³⁰⁴ WHO, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the population of Tajikistan. Situational analysis “State of rehabilitation in Tajikistan”, 2015, 88 pages. https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/276480/State-Rehabilitation-Tajikistan-Report-en.pdf

example mobility) also had difficulty in other domains, such as hearing, vision, or self-care. There is clearly a need to establish a National Assistive Technology Centre to provide all assistive products through a single-window and integration of provision of simple AP services through the Primary Health Care Centres.

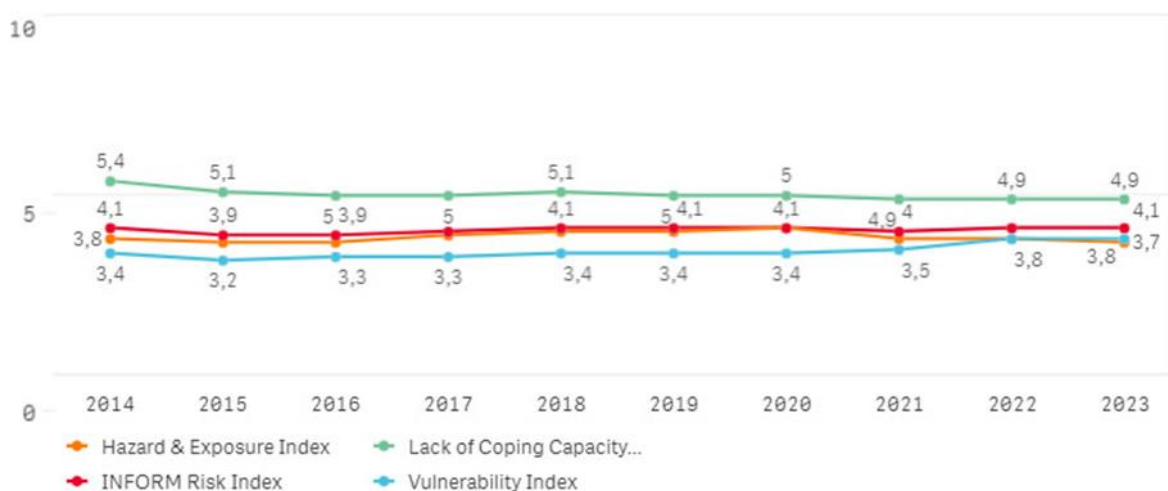
3.5 Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus

Tajikistan is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the Europe and Central Asia region. 93 percent of the territory of Tajikistan is mountainous. There is only 0.06 ha of irrigated land per inhabitant. More than a third of the population is children who are one of the largest segments of the population affected by disasters and climate change. According to the latest data 88.3 percent of children in Tajikistan live in the high-risk seismic zones (mountainous and disaster risk prone areas). Over the past decades, the number of disasters in the country has increased significantly. Disasters have caused enormous socio-economic and environmental damage. In recent years there has been an abnormal increase in the melting of glaciers, and more frequent periods with extreme weather conditions (such as hail, snowfall, drought). Relative to global standards of disaster risk, Tajikistan is at a “medium” level of disaster risk in terms of exposure to natural and human hazards.³⁰⁵ While the country’s disaster risk has decreased from “high” to “medium” since 2020, the country is still prone to numerous environmental hazards: floods, earthquakes, mud flows, landslides, epidemics, droughts, avalanches, insect infestations and pollution.

Figure 15. Tajikistan risk levels over the period 2014-2023 (INFORM Global Risk Index 2023)



³⁰⁵ European Commission, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness, Index For Risk Management (INFORM), Country Profile – Tajikistan. [<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Country-Risk-Profile>]



Source: INFORM Global Risk Index 2023

In Central Asia, Tajikistan is the most exposed country to natural hazards, with earthquakes as the major risk. At the sub-national level, all regions in Tajikistan have the highest overall disaster risk in the region.³⁰⁶ The main drivers of the very high overall risk in Tajik regions are attributable to all INFORM dimensions, but mainly on the Hazard and Exposure dimension. In fact, the natural risk category (landslides, floods, and earthquakes) is a major risk driver in the region. In particular, Dushanbe falls into the high risk, due to very high scores in earthquake exposure and economic volatility. In 2021, Dushanbe had the lowest Hazard & Exposure score of 5.7, which in 2022 increased to 6.0, representing a shift from ‘Medium’ risk to ‘High’ risk. Conversely, Sughd region dropped from 7.3 to 7.2, passing from a ‘Very high’ risk level to ‘High’ risk. Except GBAO, the vulnerability of all the regions fell while the score for the Republican Subordination Region (5.6). The level of vulnerability of Sughd changed from ‘High’ risk of 5.2, to a ‘Medium’ risk of 4.4.

Figure 16. Vulnerability Levels in Tajikistan

COUNTRY	FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL	Natural	Human	HAZARD & EXPOSURE	Socio-Economic Vulnerability	Vulnerable Groups	VULNERABILITY	Institutional	Infrastructure	LACK OF COPING CAPACITY	INFORM RISK	RISK CLASS	Rank	Reliability Index (*)
(a-z)	(a-z)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(0-10)	(V.Low-V.High)	(1-83)	(0-10)
Tajikistan	Districts of Republican Subordination	8.2	6.7	7.5	5.8	5.3	5.6	6.9	5.5	6.3	6.4	High	2	7.5
	Dushanbe (city)	5.1	6.7	6.0	5.3	5.0	5.2	7.2	4.6	6.1	5.8	High	4	7.6
	Mountain Badakhshon Autonomous Region (GBAO)	8.3	6.7	7.8	6.0	7.0	6.5	6.6	5.6	6.1	6.7	High	1	7.5
	Khatlon	8.2	6.7	7.5	5.9	4.7	5.3	7.1	5.3	6.3	6.3	High	3	7.5
	Sughd	7.7	6.7	7.2	5.3	3.3	4.4	7.0	5.3	6.2	5.8	High	4	7.5

According to the latest data of Global CCRI (Children’s Climate Risk Index, 2021), children in Tajikistan are ranked 6.7 (level of high-medium) to climate and environmental factors (exposed to natural hazards: floods, mudflows, landslides, heatwaves, droughts and earthquakes), 3.6 (high-medium) indicating the child vulnerability in the country and overall score on CCRI with 5.4 (high-medium) exposed to climate and

³⁰⁶ INFORM Subnational Risk Index for Central Asia region [https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Subnational-Risk/Central-Asia]

environmental shocks and stresses as well as the natural disasters. Out of all risks and exposures, droughts and floods have affected the most people. Floods were responsible for 1,662 deaths in the past twenty years.³⁰⁷

Although most floods in the past caused only minor impact, a major flood event like in 2004 can have devastating long-term consequences. GBAO is especially susceptible to floods, with average yearly GDP losses of 5 percent.³⁰⁸ Tajikistan faces significant risks from flash floods, and notably glacier lake outburst floods (GLOFs), which occur when moraine dams holding back accumulated meltwater in high altitude areas are breached. These events can also happen as a result of, or cause, landslides, and dangerous mudflows. Climate change is likely to alter slope and bedrock stability through changes in precipitation and/or temperature. It is difficult to determine future locations and timing of large rock avalanches, as these depend on local geological conditions and other non-climatic factors. It has been reported that up to 36 percent of Tajikistan's land area may be at risk of landslides, and climate changes are projected to compound this risk.

With 63 percent of the population living in highly seismic areas, earthquakes are also a major risk. There is a 20 percent chance of a highly damaging earthquake occurring in Tajikistan in the next 50 years.³⁰⁹ In 2015, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake in GBAO and Khatlon triggered landslides affecting 124,000 people and destroying 660 houses. Emergency response was inadequate due to the remote location and the lack of alternative transport routes. The effects of earthquakes are aggravated by climate change, deforestation, and farming practices. Natural disasters have sizeable negative effects on livelihoods and the overall economy: Between 1992 and 2016, disasters caused by natural hazards and climate-related events led to GDP losses of roughly USD 1.8 billion, affecting almost 9 million people.³¹⁰

The Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoESC) reported that the total economic damage of disasters in Tajikistan in 2022 was 53.2 million TJS (5.2 million USD). Approximately 380 disasters occurred in the country between 2015 and 2021, which translates into one disaster every six days. Around 19 earthquake-related disasters have been reported annually during this period.³¹¹ Carefully planned, fast-acting, and inclusive preparedness, response and recovery planning can help to avert, minimize, and address disaster displacement. In addition, it is important to consider the gender dimension in preparedness plans as many women and girls are more vulnerable to hazards than men.³¹² Systematic efforts to analyse, anticipate and reduce disaster risks and support greater preparedness and response at community level is crucial for sustainable development.

Facilitating internal and international migration flows from communities sensitive to climate impacts can strengthen household and community resilience to climate change or natural hazards by providing livelihood diversification, reducing pressures on natural resources in communities of origin, leading to the acquisition of new adaptive skills, and increasing household savings via financial remittances. People without resources to migrate can be “trapped” in environmentally fragile areas and unable to move, lacking the resources or opportunities for migration. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan plans to relocate households from

³⁰⁷ European Commission, Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness, Index For Risk Management (INFORM), Global Risk Index results 2020. [<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk/Results-and-data/moduleId/1782/id/386/controller/Admin/action/Results>]

³⁰⁸ World Bank, GFDRR. [<https://www.gfdr.org/sites/default/files/Tajikistan.pdf>]

³⁰⁹ GFDRR, ThinkHazard! Platform. [<https://thinkhazard.org/en/report/239-tajikistan/EQ>]

³¹⁰ Central Asia and Caucasus Disaster Risk Management Initiative (CAC DRMI). [<https://archnet.org/publications/6972>]

³¹¹ INFORM Subnational Risk Index for Central Asia region [<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Subnational-Risk/Central-Asia>]

³¹² <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/mmicd/environment-climate-change-toolkit.pdf>

environmentally fragile areas.³¹³ Even when well planned, relocation can have adverse socioeconomic effects and at worst, if this process is managed poorly, it can result in disenfranchisement and reduced social cohesion and have a maladaptive outcome.³¹⁴

Disaster risk governance and development needs to be further strengthened. Disaster risk reduction is gaining attention as a priority for sustainable development of the country. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and specialized structures are beginning to invest more in building the necessary capacity in disaster risk reduction at all levels. This includes the adoption of legislative and regulatory acts, development of national strategic documents, programmes and action plans, expansion of cooperation with development partners, and coordination with different stakeholders. Since 2005, Tajikistan has supported the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, and since 2015 – implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR) has been functioning since 2012 and includes representatives of various ministries. NPDRR is a structure for planning and coordinating disaster risk reduction activities as well as an additional platform for dialogue with international organizations, donors. However, better cross-sectoral coordination and the implementation of disaster risk management policies are needed.

The National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (2019–2034) is aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030. Given the high vulnerability of Tajikistan to climate change and disasters, the country, along with the National Strategy for DRR, is also implementing the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the period up to 2030, which outlines priorities and key areas of action.³¹⁵ Despite some progress, there are a number of areas where DRR measures are needed. Disaster risk reduction is not sufficiently mainstreamed into policies and investments in different sectors. A significant part budgetary and extrabudgetary funds for DRR are used for the resettlement of affected population. There is very limited budget funding to implement the National DRR Strategy. The damage assessment procedures used by government agencies do not provide the full range of information that meet the requirements of the Sendai Framework and accepted international methodologies for damage and needs assessment.

Relief and recovery planning and coordination procedures need to be improved among development and humanitarian partners in order to develop a unified approach and increase the transparency of decisions, considering the promotion of gender equality and the development of other sectors. It is also important to continue building institutional capacity for risk assessment, disaster preparedness and response at the national and local levels. It is necessary to develop a system for monitoring the implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2019-2034 in accordance with the monitoring targets of the Sendai Framework and the SDGs. There is also a need to deepen the dialogue with the private sector, civil society, and local communities on participation in disaster risk management. Moreover, there is need to reach out to women, persons with disabilities and youth and fully engage them in developing disaster preparedness plans, response, and recovery.

Tajikistan continues to face the threat of extremism and radicalism. Tajikistan and Afghanistan have deep cultural, ethnic, and linguistic ties and before the takeover by the Taliban, the two countries enjoyed good neighbourly relations. Tajikistan has hosted several Afghan resistance leaders in the past. However, Tajikistan still maintains trade relations with Afghanistan, including export of electricity and food commodities. Several markets at the borders with Afghanistan in the Badakhshan region was re-opened. The Taliban takeover had

³¹³ Government of Tajikistan, 2018/512, On the Procedure for Internal Migration of Populations from Densely-Populated Mountainous Areas with Limited Available Land to Lower-Laying Valleys of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2019-2021, Dushanbe.

³¹⁴ <https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/mmicd/environment-climate-change-toolkit.pdf>

³¹⁵ Tajikistan's Voluntary National Report for the Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (MTR SF). [<https://sendaiframework-mtr.undrr.org/publication/tajikistan-voluntary-national-report-mtr-sf>]

raised concerns that Afghanistan could attract various extremist groups. However, the Taliban authorities face threats from various extremist groups operating in Afghanistan. ISIS in Afghanistan has re-constituted itself under the guise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-K). There are also several groups that are indigenous to the region, such as Jamoat Ansorulloh, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and Islamic Movement of Eastern Turkestan (IMET) who swore their allegiance to Al Qaeda and ISIL-K.

Tajikistan sits astride a main illicit drug trafficking route from Afghanistan to Europe. The northern route from Afghanistan remains active amid continued high levels of illicit drug production. Intercepted drugs are believed to form only a small proportion of the real flow. Illicit trafficking is related to cultural heritages and assets. The border with Tajikistan is known to be porous and is used by organised crime groups as a staging point for trafficking into Central Asia. In 2021 and 2022, Tajikistan reported increase in drug trafficking from Afghanistan. In 2021, 4,83kg of drugs were seized in Tajikistan; in 2022, 4,165kg of drugs were seized, which represent doubling of drug seizures from 2019 and 2020. Organised crime groups from Afghanistan are able to cross the border and travel several kilometres to smuggle illicit goods or seize livestock and villagers. Tajikistan’s border troops occasionally launch cross-border raids to free captives.

3.6 Financing Landscape

Tajikistan is not mobilizing and spending adequate financing for sustainable development. Domestic and international private capital need to be complemented by efficient allocation of public investment. Of the total planned expenditure for the NDS-2030 (USD 118 billion), shares are split about evenly between the state budget and private sector, with about 6 percent from development partners. The increased emphasis on private sector investment requires structural reforms to improve the business and investment environment. The COVID-19 pandemic, the Ukraine conflict, and a global economic slowdown undoubtedly affect investments while the financing needs have increased.

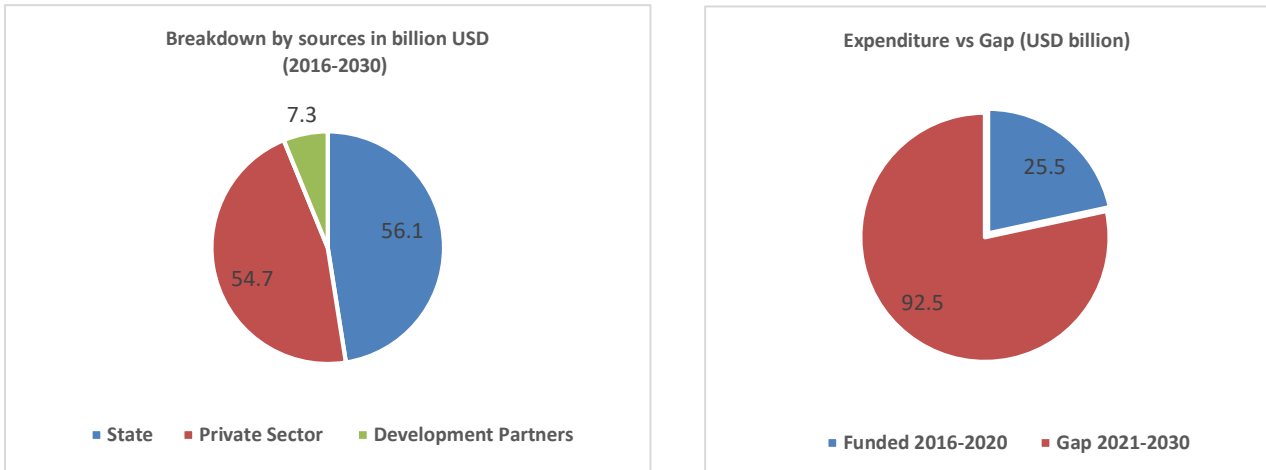
Table 3: Classification of financial flows for the NDS-2030 and SDGs implementation

Financial flows	Public	Private
Domestic	Tax revenues	Domestic equity
	Non-tax revenues	Domestic credit
External	Official Development Assistance (ODA), grants and loans	International financial markets
		International Aid (private, NGOs)
	Government borrowing (external)	Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

The achievement of the SDGs will depend upon diversified financial resources and stable financing of the NDS-2030. Domestic sources of finance include tax and non-tax revenues, borrowing (public and private), and investments. government revenues provide the lion’s share of domestic finance. Tajikistan’s tax revenue is higher than the average for low-income countries and equals 22 percent of GDP.³¹⁶ There is limited private investments and difficult for the government to significantly raise tax revenues. A significant part of public investment is for the energy sector, including the construction of the Roghun Hydropower Plant.

³¹⁶ World Bank, 2020, Tajikistan Economic Update – Fall 2020. [<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/economic-update-fall-2020>]

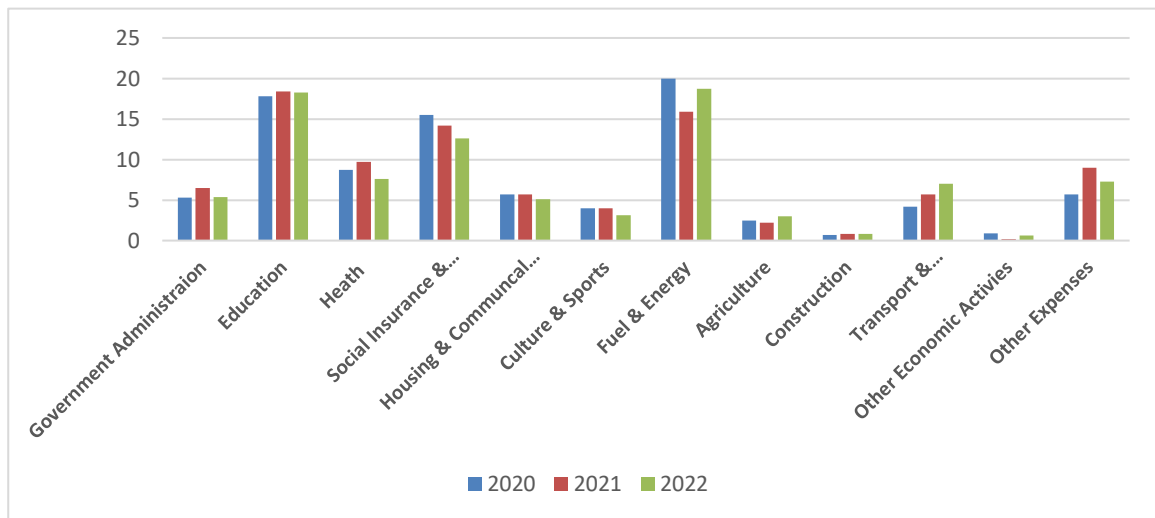
Figure 17: Financing for NDS-2030



Source: Roadmap for Financing NDS and SDGs in Tajikistan

Education, energy, and social protection are three major sources of public expenditure. However, the public expenditure in education, health and social protection is lower than other countries of the region.³¹⁷ In nominal terms, the share of expenditure in these three sectors slightly declined in 2022 compared to 2021. The share of expenditure increased for transport & communication and agriculture, but the proportion of budget allocated for agriculture is still very low.

Figure 18: State Budget Expenditure 2022 (Percent of Total)



Source: AoS, Socioeconomic Report, January 2022 and 2023

Fiscal deficits are covered by selling gold reserves and through loans and grant funds from IFIs. More IFIs are considering direct budget support to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. The reason for the resumption of budget support can be attributed to several factors. Greater willingness of the national government to enact reform, the liquidation of two banks, openness and willingness to engage on Roghun, etc., have all contributed to creating a more conducive environment for budget support. Between 2020 and 2022, the government received USD 440 million in direct budget support, including USD 240 million in concessional credit from IMF and Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSD) and USD 100 million grants from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2020 and 2022. In 2023, World Bank, EFSD, and the EU allocated more than USD 140 million for direct budget financing. Out of this total, the World Bank

³¹⁷ Claussen, J., Sultanov, F., 2018, Financial Analysis to support the SDGs implementation in Tajikistan. [https://untj.org/depositary/economy/UN-in-Tajikistan-financial-analysis-to-support-SDGs-implementnation-in-Tajikistan-2018-47-pages.pdf]

contributed USD 53 million as a grant which is part of its development policy operation facility and EFSD contributed USD 60 million in the form of a loan.

According to the OECD³¹⁸ the main contributors to external financial inflows are the Asian Development Bank, the International Development Association, the United States, the EU, Japan, and Germany. The focus of aid and investment was mainly on economic development, health, education, social protection, human rights, vulnerable groups, food security, environmental protection, and climate change. Tajikistan continues to receive concessional grants and budget support. The country also attracts other forms of finance from multilateral and bilateral donors, such as equity, quasi-equity and concessional credits directed at public corporations and the private sector.³¹⁹ Such type of financing is important for Tajikistan otherwise it will increase the debt servicing burden. This, in turn, will squeeze public expenditure and probably reduce social spending which has been on an upward trajectory.

Public debt to GDP ratio has been on a downward trend, reaching 30 percent of GDP in 2023. However, considering its macroeconomic outlook, including financial inflows, external trade, and fiscal space, Tajikistan is at a high risk of “debt distress”.³²⁰ The main creditors are: Eximbank of China, World Bank, ADB, Islamic Development Bank.³²¹ Foreign aid and loans alleviate short-term financial pressures and allow the financing of infrastructure, including roads and energy. Tajikistan is able to attract low volume of FDI. Chinese investments for the Belt-and-Road Initiative account for more than three-quarters of the total FDI. The private sector accounts for about 60 percent of the GDP.

Domestic private sector investment has been declining and is low compared with similar countries. FDI is also low with net inflow estimated at around 3.8 percent of GDP in 2021.³²² The investment inflow is negatively affected by the poor business environment and lack of regulatory and legal protections for investors. Although the equivalent size compared to GDP is high, personal remittances mainly support consumption. There are also challenges to reform the public finance management. There are issues related to transparency, efficiency, and equity of public spending. The government still relies on line-item budgeting and little progress has been made to move towards programme budgeting, fiscal decentralization, including the formula for intra-governmental transfers, and control and accountability of public expenditures. An improved public finance management can also have a knock-on effect and possibility attract more ODA and FDI in the country.

A Roadmap for Financing the NDS 2030 and the SDGs has been formulated. A multi-stakeholder dialogue platform on financing has been established under the National Development Council. The platform will help to align financing to development priorities and identify different financing options that Tajikistan can pursue. Several innovative financing schemes can be considered in partnership with the private sector and IFIs. Besides private investment in businesses, public and private partnerships, issuance of bonds, debt swaps, social impact investments, business challenge funds, and blended finance are some of the options that Tajikistan can tap into for development financing. Personal remittances can also play a crucial role in Tajikistan’s development. However, most of the remittances are being mainly used for household consumption. Very little is being put into savings and investments. The government can create incentives for migrants and Tajik diaspora to channel remittances into priority investments. Tajikistan has also made progress to strengthen its capital market. A well-functioning capital market will enable the government and the private sector to raise long-term financing. Eshkata Bank issued the first corporate green bond worth USD 10 million in 2023. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is now planning to issue a government green

³¹⁸ OECD DAC-CRS Aid Activities Database.

³¹⁹ Claussen, J., Sultanov, F., 2018, Financial Analysis to support the SDGs implementation in Tajikistan, p. 15. [https://untj.org/?page_id=9821]

³²⁰ [<http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/209181595281237113/pdf/Tajikistan-Joint-World-Bank-IMF-Debt-Sustainability-Analysis.pdf>]

³²¹ Ministry of Finance data.

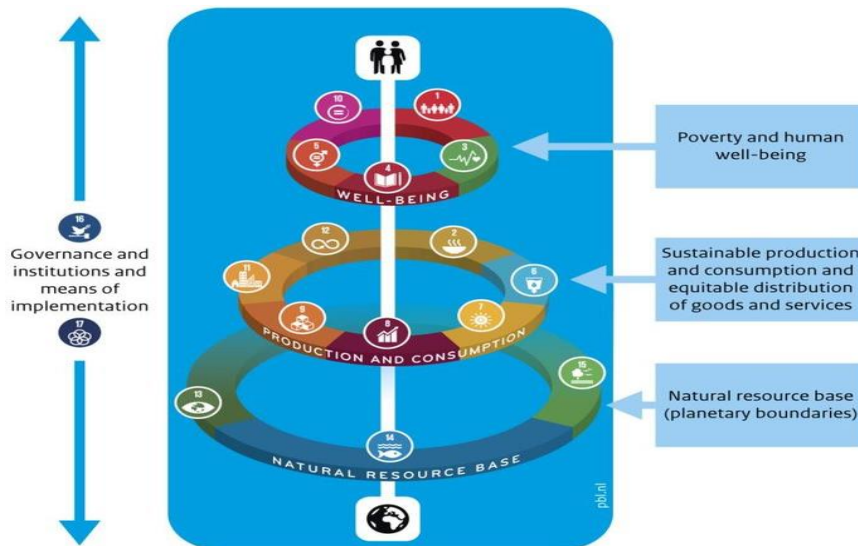
³²² Own calculation based on preliminary data on FDI and GDP 2021

bond.

4. Conclusions

Tajikistan’s national development vision calls for: ‘a steadily growing, competitive country that provides decent living standards and equal opportunities for each person to realize his or her potential based on equality, justice and human dignity’.³²³

Figure 19. SDGs causality framework



National Strategy serving as the policy Tajikistan has progress sustainable and the SDGs. several

including cooperation

justice and human

With the Development (NDS-2030) overarching framework, made tangible toward development achievement of There have been positive developments, closer between the

Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and development partners. As a result, there are opportunities to further scale up programme initiatives to address national capacity constraints and financing gaps to enable Tajikistan to pursue green and inclusive development in the future.

The strategic objectives of the NDS-2030 include energy security, connectivity, food security, and productive employment, reflecting national priorities. The NDS-2030 objectives also mirror the Six Transitions that the UN has identified as investment pathways for delivering the SDGs.³²⁴ These include food systems, energy access, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate change, environment and biodiversity. The Six Transitions and the NDS-2030 is a robust framework with drivers of change that provides the basis for scaling up capacities, policies, and financing necessary for Tajikistan to meet its development aspirations. Improvements in these priority areas can be catalytic and have positive spillover effects across the SDGs.

4.1 Challenges and opportunities

SDGs can be clustered into a causality framework of four broad groups.³²⁵ At the top are people and social goals which offer minimum standards for human well-being and equality of opportunity. Achieving these goals depend upon inclusive economic growth and shared prosperity defined by the sustainable production and consumption of goods and services. From an ecosystems perspective these goals call for the *decoupling* of economic development from environmental degradation. At the third, foundational level realisation of

³²³ Government of Tajikistan, 2016, National development strategy of the republic of Tajikistan for the period up to 2030, p. 8 [https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030]

³²⁴ https://unsdg.un.org/resources/six-transitions-investment-pathways-deliver-sdgs

³²⁵ Adapted from: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2018, Using planetary boundaries to support national implementation of environment-related Sustainable Development Goals.

sustainable consumption and production and greater human well-being depends upon effective management and conservation of the natural resource base including air, land, fresh water, biodiversity, and climate related risks. Instrumental to all three clusters is a cross-cutting one to strengthen governance, rule of law and human rights.

Well-being: *Invest in people*

While poverty rate has fallen significantly, Tajikistan remains the poorest country in Central Asia. A child born in Tajikistan today is expected to be only half as productive as he or she could be with good health and education³²⁶ and 1 in 4 persons is vulnerable to multi-dimensional poverty.³²⁷ Low investments in people and especially women and other vulnerable groups will impede Tajikistan from taking full advantage of its demographic dividend. Universal health care (UHC) is a national priority under the NDS-2030 but the current health spending is insufficient.

Malnutrition is a significant health problem, health and wellness services for young people are inadequate, out-of-pocket spending is too high. The health system is under-prepared to tackle the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Poor quality of education, including related infrastructure and training, is a barrier as are the curriculum, teaching methods and training systems. The education and training system is not providing young graduates with the knowledge and skills for success in the labour market.

A social protection system exists but it is fragmented with a limited coverage that does not target all the vulnerable segments of the population. The provision of quality and accessible infrastructure and services in the areas of education, affordable health care, social protection, water supply and sanitation are central for Tajikistan to achieve its NDS goals and related SDGs. Ensuring access to quality social services and public infrastructure can better protect vulnerable groups, reduce pressures for seasonal migration, and help to counteract polarization, including having a positive impact across a majority of the SDGs.

The diversification of labour migration pathways and facilitation of orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people with specific focus paid on remittance-based development activities would enable migration to be a powerful driver of sustainable development and would reduce serious protection concerns faced by migrants abroad. More investment in people depends, in part, upon economic diversification and increasing fiscal space that creates a virtuous loop: healthy, productive population can better support the shift to a more diversified, digital, and knowledge-based economy.

Sustainable, inclusive economic growth: *Unleash private sector capabilities for job creation, develop skills, green the economy*

More inclusive economic growth is needed to create decent jobs, to improve household income, and to create the fiscal space for investments in human capital. Despite impressive aggregate economic growth, not enough decent jobs have been created to help people move out of low-productive employment. Informality remains a concern. A key driver of economic growth has been domestic consumption while private investment remains low.

Despite the growth in the agriculture sector, the concentration of workers in agriculture and the relatively small size of industry and construction sector has meant that welfare enhancing benefits for the population have been limited. Tajikistan needs to develop skills and competencies of its people to enable them to participate in and benefit from wealth-creation. Given the reliance of the economy on remittances from

³²⁶ World Bank, 2019. Early Childhood Education and Care : A Focused Review of Preschool Education in Tajikistan. World Bank, Washington, DC.

³²⁷ Government of Tajikistan, 2017, Voluntary National Review, p. 9.

migrant labour, limited commodity exports (aluminium and cotton), and the dependence on imports for food, fuel and consumer products, the country is highly vulnerable to external economic shocks.³²⁸

There are five areas for action: First, weaknesses in manufacturing growth must be countered through greater private sector investment, improved economic governance, and a transparent regulatory environment. These are necessary ingredients for decent jobs. Second, Tajikistan must target green industrial development and investments. Moreover, future policies must prioritize investments in digital infrastructure and skills, high technology adoption, and effective climate change adaptation and mitigation to charter an alternative path for economic diversification and sustainable growth.

Third, agricultural development must not undermine environmental sustainability. Inclusive and resilient growth must enhance small-holder productivity, increase farm incomes, and generate decent employment, with a more inclusive focus on women farmers. This will depend upon increased access to effective extension services, new technologies, and integration with regional value chains to improve access to markets. Investments in agriculture and small-holder productivity will also help to reduce regional disparities and GHG emissions.

Fourth, effective skills training suited to market demand are needed to promote private sector growth, increased productivity, and competitiveness. These must include specific, targeted measures for women, young people and excluded groups. Fifth, and last, a well-managed and forward-looking labour migration strategy is needed. In order to minimize the risks emanating from economic and business downturns in Russia, Tajik workers need support to find high-value and well-paid jobs in other countries with high labour demand and that offer adequate legal protection.

Natural resource base: *Integrated management of environmental and climate fragilities*

Sustainable economic growth and the health and wellness of the population are at risk from the degradation of water, air, forests, and agricultural land, and accelerated biodiversity loss. Due to its location in a mountainous and seismic zone, Tajikistan is disaster-prone and climate change is expected to cause an increase in the magnitude and frequency of climate-related hazards such as flooding and drought. This threatens agricultural productivity and food security and undermines resilience. Sustainable management of the country's natural resources will depend on policy and regulatory change and capacity development for climate change adaptation and mitigation, more efficient use of ecosystem resources, especially water, effective disaster risk management and increased community readiness to respond to disasters and emergencies. Effective management for sustainable economic growth requires a functional, country-wide coordination mechanisms for 'horizontal' policy design and implementation among relevant institutions at all levels, focused on the inter-actions between environment, energy, agriculture, and livelihoods, especially for rural communities and vulnerable groups.

Governance and rule of law: *Increase effectiveness and accountability of public institutions, open civic space and rebuild trust*

Many problems in Tajikistan such as weak governance, ineffective accountability systems are rooted in capacity deficits. Strong and transparent governance institutions are needed that are accountable and free from corruption. These are essential for greater transparency and more effective public administration. Efforts to strengthen the independence, integrity and professionalism of the civil service, must be complemented by measures to increase peoples' understanding of, and participation in, making and monitoring policies, laws, and strategies. Embedding equality and non-discrimination in the legislative

³²⁸ Report of MAPS mission in Tajikistan, November – December 2016. Internal document (unpublished).

framework and ensuring participation are central to enhance the fairness and build trust and social cohesion.

Underlying these challenges there are two bottlenecks:

- » **Gender-based discrimination and exclusion** exists at many levels and traditional gender roles are still widespread and can be seen in a range of indicators ranging from child marriage and gender-based violence, women's labour force participation and their representation on national and local councils. Women have a critical role to play in all the SDGs. Investing in expanded opportunities for women and girls and advancing their economic, legal, and political empowerment is an 'enabler'. Future cooperation efforts must support the government to meet their international commitments by addressing gaps in legislative and institutional frameworks and building capacities for gender analysis and gender-responsive programming.
- » Sound policies and effective strategic planning, budgeting, and performance management will depend upon **reliable, disaggregated statistics** and a greater focus on **actual implementation** and performance monitoring. Attention is needed to produce data disaggregated by gender, age groups, income groups, employment, education, and disability status, and for systematic sharing and communication. Future cooperation must strengthen the work of the Agency on Statistics and statistical capacity within the ministries to produce and share high quality, disaggregated data for effective policymaking and programme implementation.

4.2 Persons at risk of being left behind

While global indices offer broad measures of human well-being, they are not always sufficient to understand vulnerability and social exclusion. The challenges discussed above demonstrate that major gaps exist in health, education, social care, and protection systems. Children and women, particularly those from excluded groups, or migrant sending families who are abandoned by their primary breadwinner, are most affected by poverty. Many of them vulnerable live in remote rural areas such as the GBAO.

Persons at greatest risk of exclusion and being left behind include: some groups of women,³²⁹ children from low-income and single parent households, persons with disabilities and especially children with disabilities in residential care, people living in isolated rural communities, seasonal migrants and their families that have been 'left behind', older persons, LGBTQI+ people, and refugees, asylum-seekers, return migrants who are jobless, along with informal sector workers, lacking access to healthcare, social protection or any other form of income support.

Specifically, there are four major drivers of vulnerability and exclusion:

- » **Few decent, formal sector jobs:** Unemployment, low wages and informality are major determinants of vulnerability especially for women and young people. Creating opportunities for productive employment is critical for inclusive economic development and poverty reduction. It can also help to reduce dependence on seasonal out-migration. The provision of more diverse labour migration pathways with mandatory pre-departure orientation services would reduce dependency on informal, unsafe, and irregular migration to the Russian Federation and would allow for the enhanced circulation of social and financial remittances, contributing to development outcomes. Restrictions to labour market access for displaced persons, refugees, or asylum seekers, cemented by an absence of social protection, leave many displaced communities highly vulnerable.

³²⁹ Amongst women: Older women, women in rural areas, women heads of households, Roma and Egyptian women, women with disabilities, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women, women in detention, women survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, women with HIV, stateless women, and women refugees and women seeking asylum.

- » ***Under-investment in social services and social protection for the poorest and excluded:*** In a time of pandemics, trade disputes and increasing economic nationalism, remittances alone cannot serve as the primary stop-gap for poor families, those at-risk-of poverty, and excluded groups – especially many remittances are channelled into subsistence needs. Major new fiscal investments are needed in quality, inclusive, and affordable health, education, and social protection services, along with quality assurance and monitoring mechanisms.
- » ***Weaknesses in governance:*** Governing institutions must be re-oriented toward service delivery with a focus on the poorest and excluded groups. This requires stronger public sector accountability systems and capacities, including public financial management and procurement, and more effective judicial and law enforcement practices. Stronger, more independent NHRIs are needed to help excluded groups, especially women, to voice their concerns, claim their rights in legal processes and to seek remedies for violations. More robust mechanisms for civic participation are essential to increase transparency and accountability and create incentives for more effective and evidence-based decision-making and spending by governments.
- » ***Degradation of natural resources, disasters, and pandemics:*** These reduce resilience, threaten livelihoods and future economic diversification and growth, and can impact internal migration patterns as agricultural livelihoods alone becomes unsustainable. The most vulnerable may be those who do not have the economic and social capital to migrate to seek new opportunities and diversify livelihoods as a means of adaptation to climate change, and therefore the most vulnerable may be “trapped populations”. Fragmented responses to climate change are aggravating disaster risks thereby worsening poverty and vulnerability in the population.

Annex 1. Tajikistan Country Risk Analysis

Vulnerable Groups (VG) include low-income families, female-headed households, poor households living in remote areas, persons with disabilities, unemployed persons, particularly young men and women, migrants (stranded & returnees) unable to find employment, and other segments of the population without access to public services and social protection schemes.

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood <i>(High-Medium-Low)</i>	Impact <i>(High-Medium-Low)</i>	Mitigation and Response measures	Risk monitoring
1.	<p>Democratic Space: [Risks to human, civil and political rights]</p> <p>(SDG 16 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly centralized political system with executive control of legislative and judiciary Shrinking political pluralism, intimidation, and no viable opposition Limited engagement with and efforts to further weaken civil society Severely restricted press freedom and censorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to implement UPR recommendations Encourage greater engagement with civil society organizations and communities in development planning and budgeting Strengthen interface between the government and the private sector representatives including employer associations Strengthen the role of trade unions and freedom of association Strengthen quality reporting and access to information towards to SDG 16.10.1 and SDG 16.10.2 	RCO, OHCR, UNESCO
2.	<p>Political Stability: [Risks to human, civil and political rights]</p> <p>(SDG 16 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in the political system and transition of power Also see # 1 [Democratic Space] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure under # 1 [Democratic Space] Support initiatives to foster political dialogue 	RCO & UNCT
3.	<p>Economic Stability: [Risks to macroeconomic stability, jobs, and poverty reduction]</p> <p>(SDG 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrinking fiscal space as a result of economic slowdown, widening current account balance, depreciation of local currency, and abnormal food inflation Increase in external debt to finance budget resulting in higher level of debt-distress Highly vulnerable banking sector: further increase in non-performing loans which in turn will increase lending rate and dampen investment Rising unemployment, underemployment, and growing “idleness” (employed, or receiving education or training: NEET) among youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue monitoring the macroeconomic situation, identify risks, and provide policy advice Support economic diversification including greener industrialization while harnessing digitalization Promote private sector development: improve governance and support for enterprises, especially small businesses 	RCO & UNDP

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood (High-Medium-Low)	Impact (High-Medium-Low)	Mitigation and Response measures	Risk monitoring
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for youth to improve their employability and school-to-work transition 	
4.	<p>Environment & Climate: [Risks to food security and household welfare]</p> <p>(SDG 13, 15 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued loss of biodiversity: In 2015, the average terrestrial biodiversity intactness was 57%, indicating a medium level of biodiversity remaining relative to a baseline ecosystem with minimal human impact. UN Biodiversity • Inadequate regional response for effective management of water resources: 47% extraction from freshwater reserves - annual freshwater withdrawals, total (% of internal resources) (SDG 6.4.2) Percentage of domestic wastewater safely treated. • Annual: Water stress, 70% of renewable water resources withdrawn (UN Water) • Ineffective use of water & other resources for energy security • Adopting harmful agriculture practices to improve productivity and land use • Lack of incentives and regulations to encourage green and carbon neutral investments in industry and services • Environmental Performance Index: Score 37.10 (Rank 117) • Deforestation: In 2010, Tajikistan had 31.7kha of tree cover, extending over 0.22% of its land area. In 2020, it lost 428mha of tree cover (Global Forest Watch map) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation policies/measures into the national policy and budget-making processes • Promote water-use efficiency, biodiversity protection, green technologies • Support national and local Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) measures • Also, implement measures under # 2 (Economic Stability) 	FAO & UNDP
5.	<p>Public Health: [Risks to the population from COVID-19 & other infectious and non-infectious diseases]</p> <p>(SDG 3 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 pandemic further strains an already weak health sector and thereby undermining critical services • Insufficient public health measures including effective communication and enforcing social distancing regulations to contain infection • Increased vulnerability of health care workers and domestic care providers • Adequate public investments are not made to build a resilient health system, improve quality of services, and achieve universal health coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve testing, tracing, and therapeutics for those who are infected • Secure adequate supply of COVID-19 vaccines; help develop a national plan for vaccination and support implementation • Support strategies for improvement of essential health services in line with guidance from the global and national plans 	WHO & UNICEF

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood (High-Medium-Low)	Impact (High-Medium-Low)	Mitigation and Response measures	Risk monitoring
6.	<p>Food Security & Agriculture: [Risks to food availability, food production, and nutrition]</p> <p>(SDG 2 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on imports for major food staples • Devaluation of local currency which can feed into food inflation • Fall in agricultural production through ineffective land use, natural disasters, and access to agricultural inputs • Increase in malnutrition rate among children and household food insecurity health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor food security in the country including prices and availability • Support implementation of Sustainable Food Systems drawing on best practices and increasing investment • Health measures and supplementary feeding targeting undernourished children and women 	WFP & UNICEF
7.	<p>Infrastructure & Social Services: [Risks to population from lack or limited access to physical infrastructure & social basic services]</p> <p>(SDG 4, 6, 7, 9, 11 & 17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less funding towards quality, resilient and green infrastructure & provision of basic services • Quality of spending does not improve • Real or perceived bias in providing services to vulnerable people • Limited access to adequate WASH services in HCF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular analysis of expenditure on basic services • Review private & public investment on energy, roads, water & sanitation 	RCO, UNDP & UNICEF
8.	<p>Social Protection: [Risks to the vulnerable groups of population, economy and political stability]</p> <p>(SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to fiscal pressure unable to increase coverage of social protection schemes for vulnerable segment of the population • Increase in gender-based violence (GBV) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support ongoing initiatives of consolidating various social protection schemes • Improve systems for identifying vulnerability criteria, tracking, and monitoring of support services • Promote ongoing initiatives designed to address GBV in the country 	UNICEF, ILO & UNFPA
9.	<p>Migration: [Risks to household welfare as a result of fall in labour migrants]</p> <p>(SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of the economic situation in Russia • Rise in unemployment among migrants • Returnees increase pressure on domestic labour market • Fall in remittance and household consumption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe migration for labour migrants • Assist the government to gather labour market intelligence from potential labour migrant countries to diversify • Support pre-departure system and training for labour migrants 	IOM & ILO

	Risk Areas	Key Risk Factors	Likelihood (High-Medium-Low)	Impact (High-Medium-Low)	Mitigation and Response measures	Risk monitoring
10.	Regional & Global: [Risks to cross-border trade, peace with neighbours, and management of natural resources] (SDG 16 & 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flareups in COVID-19 cases will undermine regional cooperation including trade Protectionism can affect availability of food and other essential goods; energy supply will get affected Increase in cross-border incidents involving communities or security forces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote regional bodies and mechanisms to coordinate COVID-19 response Continue supporting efforts of SPECA and other such regional initiatives to promote regional trade and transport Support efforts on border demarcation and bilateral dispute mechanisms 	RCO & UNCT
11.	Internal Security: [Risks to internal security, people, and infrastructure] (SDG 16 & 17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Violent extremism owing to dissatisfaction with the political system Radicalization of youth Spillovers from extremism in Afghanistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures under "Democratic Space" (#1) Support employment opportunities for and employability of young people Promote dialogue with youth Support regional peace initiatives 	RCO & UNCT
12.	Social Cohesion: [Risks to social capital and unity leading to horizontal conflict] (SDG 1, 5, 10, 17)	<p>Factors emanating from several aforementioned risk areas can also undermine social cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrinking "Democratic Space" (#1) Weakened "Economic Stability" (#2) resulting in widespread job losses Insufficient "Social Protection" (#6) and exclusion of some groups from social services Increased "Violent Extremism" (#8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See mitigation and response to #1, #2, and #6 	RCO & UNCT