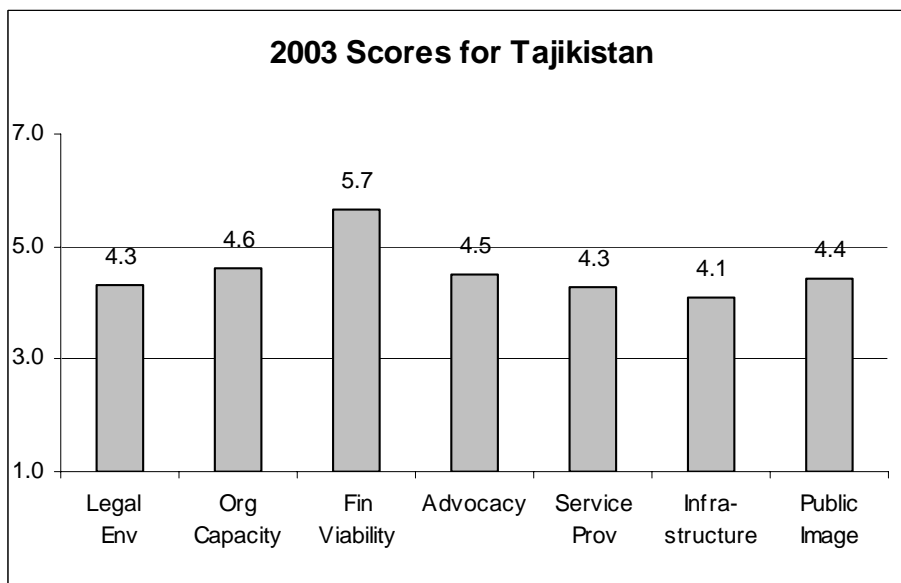


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# TAJIKISTAN

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**Capital:**  
Dushanbe

**Polity:**  
Presidential

**Population:**  
6,300,000

**GDP per capita  
(PPP):** \$1,152

## NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.6

Compared to 2002, the NGO sector experienced both minor setbacks and improvements in different areas. The enthusiasm inspired by a series of social partnership conferences faded as NGOs faced a continuing struggle with the skepticism of local authorities and an uninformed public. Frequently

### NGO SUSTAINABILITY

2003	4.6
2002	4.6
2001	5.1
2000	5.4
1999	6.1
1998	6.6

district and city officials dutifully participated in social partnership conferences without understanding the nature and purpose of NGOs, or the benefits possible through local government-NGO cooperation. The NGO sector continued to grow according to official information from the Ministry of Justice. There are now more than 1,250 officially registered NGOs, of which approximately half are believed to be active.

Whereas NGOs enjoy an enabling legislative environment, harassment from the tax police have continued, resulting in less incentive for transparency from NGOs. This in turn continues to influence a low public image and unproductive relationship with local officials. Continuing economic crisis, ineffective banking system reforms, and a lack of local philanthropy have all negatively affected NGO sustainability, and led Tajik NGOs to be dependent on international financial resources. While a few advocacy attempts were run regarding NGO-related issues like taxation and registration, there were no major NGO-led advocacy campaigns on social issues over the past year. Attempts to organize coalitions have tended to fail due to personality conflicts, as most NGOs continue to be created and run by dominant leaders, and remain unable to recognize commonality between individual NGO missions and goals.



### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 4.3

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Tajikistan's NGO legislation, modeled after that in Russia, remains fairly progres-

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT	
2003	4.3
2002	4.6
2001	4.8
2000	5.0
1999	6.0
1998	6.5

sive. After registration fees were reduced in 2001, many NGOs continued to be formed. Organizations do not face significant difficulty in the registration process, and can engage in most any kind of activity in any geographic region. However, many NGOs face challenges in dealing with the tax authorities, who often do not have a suffi-

cient understanding of NGOs or the new NGO law. Inspections by tax police are frequent, and usually follow attempts by NGOs to engage local *hukumats* (mayors' offices) and other local authorities. Despite support for social partnerships between the government and the third sector expressed by President Rakhmonov in June 2002, local governors are occasionally unsupportive of NGOs. While there are now more lawyers capable of providing legal services to the NGO sector, there is still a great deal of unmet need, and NGOs rarely attempt to influence legislation.

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### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.6

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Most Tajik NGOs were established by one or two leaders who maintain control over organizational development. Recent trends also show that many new NGOs were created by influential government officials as a source of supplemental income. Simultaneously, NGOs increased

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	
2003	4.6
2002	4.5
2001	5.0
2000	5.5
1999	6.0
1998	6.0

their reliance on international donors whose priorities continue to shape the missions and strategies of local organizations. In a few recent cases personality conflicts between NGO leaders led to break-ups into several smaller organizations, and permanent staffing usually depends on the

availability of foreign donor grants. The desperate financial pressure on most Tajik NGOs often prevents the establishment of strong financial management systems, since most organizations are project-driven, and thus temporary. The concept of a functioning Board of Directors remains poorly understood and is not developed in the NGO community.

Since paid NGO staff is usually limited to a few people, volunteerism is promoted but with mixed results. A weak culture of volunteerism prevents a significant impact, and volunteer involvement is usually related in order to gain early employment experience or obtain access to computers.

**FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.7**

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Continuing economic depression has led to a lack of available funds and resources for NGOs. Most of NGOs are completely dependent upon international donor fund-

FINANCIAL VIABILITY	
2003	5.7
2002	5.5
2001	6.0
2000	6.0
1999	7.0
1998	7.0

ing. Many NGOs lack financial transparency and accountability, and rarely publish annual reports for use by citizens, the media, or public officials. Many organizations fear raids by the tax police if too much attention is attracted to their organizations. Several attempts by NGOs to initiate social partnerships between NGOs and local government have led to greater scrutiny, as some authorities believed that NGOs had access to significant amounts of funding. In some cases local partnerships have produced positive results as NGOs received financial, technical, and administrative support from local government to implement their programs.

Local philanthropy is virtually non-existent due to the absence of a healthy economy, established business sector, and because of a lack of tax incentives for social sector donations. The existing law does not provide for any tax exemptions for organizations involved in charity, and this prevents additional funds that might otherwise be made available as grants to the NGO sector. A number of NGOs have created commercial entities to provide certain fee-based services, which do help them raise funds for their activities. However, there is significant danger that this will lead many NGOs to lose their original missions and convert to purely commercial organizations. The tendency for local officials to create their own NGOs in order to receive grants from international donors has also tarnished the image of the sector among the general public and business.

**ADVOCACY: 4.5**

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The NGO sector in Tajikistan is generally

ADVOCACY	
2003	5.7
2002	4.5
2001	5.0
2000	5.5
1999	6.0
1998	6.5

unable to openly advocate for their interests, preventing the public and local authorities from being informed about the role of NGOs in civil society. In urban areas, some NGOs have begun to specialize in law and advocacy, and some lobbying of public interests by NGOs has taken place with assistance from civil society support centers. For example, the Turchid Community located in Khorog laid a 1,800 meter water pipeline to an existing water reservoir to provide 2,000 people in

the community with potable water. After the project was completed, the employees of the city's water supply authority decided to replace a part of the pipe that connects the water pipeline to the reservoir, which would have prevented sufficient supplies of water from reaching the community. The community launched a campaign which led the local government to revoke the order to cut and change the pipe.

While there are a few examples of this kind of advocacy at the local level, national advocacy campaigns were rare in 2003, and usually related to issues of immediate material interests to the NGOs (NGO status and registration). Several NGOs

participated in the drafting and discussion of national programs for the rights of children and women. However, these advocacy efforts have been sporadic and not well coordinated. NGOs will need increased knowledge and experience in lobbying and advocacy before they become successful in large nationwide and regional campaigns.

There has been an increase in interest from some local governments to cooperate with the NGO sector. However, attitudes

towards NGOs often remain dependent on the personalities of local governors. When such cooperation is offered, it is usually only enjoyed by NGOs involved in non-controversial social service provision activities. The general population continues to be reluctant to defend their rights and publicly express their interests, and occasional NGO coalitions on current issues often fail because of leadership personality conflicts and an inability for NGOs to unite on common ground.

### **SERVICE PROVISION: 4.3**

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Most likely driven by the strategic priorities of donors, NGOs usually focus on providing services in the following areas: micro-

<b>SERVICE PROVISION</b>	
2003	4.3
2002	4.5
2001	5.0
2000	5.5
1999	5.5

finance, ecology, and social infrastructure. The practice of having local governments, as well as government-supported organizations (i.e. research institutions), and religious organizations, apply to NGOs for assistance has increased. Additionally, NGOs have become more effective in civic education efforts, the dissemination of information on human rights, and the provision of services from qualified lawyers. NGOs also play a sig-

nificant role in donor-driven microfinance programs in rural areas, where weak governmental structures are incapable of providing economic development services. Some local governments have come to believe that NGOs may be a crucial tool to help resolve local issues under the existing difficult economic conditions.

nificant role in donor-driven microfinance programs in rural areas, where weak governmental structures are incapable of providing economic development services. Some local governments have come to believe that NGOs may be a crucial tool to help resolve local issues under the existing difficult economic conditions.

Community-based organizations grew in number, as a result of international donor initiatives in this area of development. Usually, communities target infrastructural and social needs, due to a lack of funding from local sources. Because of the inability of local community members to pay for services, cost recovery for these organizations is almost non-existent.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE: 4.1**

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The network of Civil Society Support Centers expanded from five to seven, to address the need for civil society development in two areas (Rasht, the stronghold of the opposition during the civil war, and Panjakent, a remote area, isolated geographically, economically and socially from

the rest of the country). The network offers training courses, organizational development assistance, and informational and technical support, as well as small grants to NGOs and local communities.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

2003	4.1
2002	4.1
2001	4.8
2000	5.0
1999	6.0

In addition to the network, there are a number of foundations that manage and distribute funds obtained from international donors.

vate businesses). Efforts are now underway to train NGOs in the basics of forming coalitions and networking, since horizontal links between NGOs remain very weak, reflecting the general weakness of the sector itself. Most organizations struggle to obtain enough funding to continue basic operations, leaving little time or energy for internal development or coalition-building.

Contributions from local sources are usually in-kind (labor from beneficiary communities, technical and administrative support from the local government, and occasional cash donations from local pri-

**PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.4**

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**PUBLIC IMAGE**

2003	4.4
2002	4.5
2001	5.0
2000	5.0
1999	6.0
1998	7.0

Relations with local authorities gradually improved after a successful social partnership conference in 2002. Public awareness of NGO activities increased via efforts such as

cent of those polled responded that NGOs had positively affected them, and 5.7 percent claimed membership in an NGO. A meeting in 2003 between President Rakhmonov and a group of NGO leaders endorsed a goal for increased recognition and cooperation between the NGO sector and authorities at the national, regional, district and city level.

the media development project in the Ferghana valley. According to a public opinion poll conducted in October 2003, 11 percent of people polled stated that they were positively affected by NGOs and 7 percent said they were members of NGOs (one of the highest rates in Central Asia). This is a significant improvement from the last year's results when 5.5 per-

Communities targeted by the community-based development initiatives have increased public knowledge about NGOs, but on a national level, transparency remains a problem, often hindered by NGO reluctance to increase their profile with local officials and the prohibitive costs of media advertising space.