SOCIAL PROTECTION IN TAJIKISTAN:

ASSESSMENT BASED ON APPLICATION OF THE CORE DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT (CODI)

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Contents

Abbreviations

ALC	adult learning center
ALEP	Agency for Labor and Employment of the Population
ALMP	active labor market policy
ASIP	Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions
CBO	community-based organization
CCR	Commissions of Child Rights
CODI	Core Diagnostic Instrument
CSO	civil society organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	information technology
LMIS	labor market information system
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MIS	management information system(s)
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population
MoLMEP	Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population
MTDP	Mid-Term Development Plan
NDC	notional defined contribution
NDS	National Development Strategy
NSPS	Strategy for the Development of Social Protection of the Population for the Period up to 2040
PMT	proxy means test
SAHU	Social Assistance at Home Unit
SASPP	State Agency for Social Protection of the Population
SSMSE	State Service for Medical and Social Expertise
TJS	Tajik somoni
TSA	Targeted Social Assistance
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund

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Data collection for this assessment took place between August 2023 and February 2024. The assessment relies on inputs from a wide range of individuals from the government of Tajikistan and its supporting agencies and their development partners. Gratitude is expressed to everyone from the following ministries and agencies who provided the team with information: the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population; the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Education and Science; the State Agency for Social Protection of the Population; the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions; the Agency for Labor and Employment; the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defense; and the Agency on Statistics under the President of Tajikistan. The report was enriched by findings of the participatory assessment workshop of selected social protection programs held in Dushanbe in February 2024 as well as several rounds of internal discussions and in-country consultations with government officials, development partners, and civil society organizations.

Executive Summary

In 2022, the government of Tajikistan endorsed its first national Strategy for the Development of Social Protection of the Population for the period up to 2040, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP). It draws attention to pressing challenges and sets priorities for the reform and development of a modern social protection system.

To support implementation of the Strategy, key government ministries and development partners, with technical support from UNICEF and the World Bank, initiated an in-depth assessment of the social protection system, using the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) tool. This report presents the findings of that assessment.

Context

Tajikistan has experienced dynamic economic growth since 2010, growing at an annual average rate of 6.8 percent between 2010 and 2023. In less than 25 years, it slashed the prevalence of poverty, from 80.0 percent in 1999 to an estimated 21.2 percent in 2023 (President of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023). The economy is characterized by low-skilled human capital, with most jobs still related to climate-sensitive agriculture; a difficult business environment, that limits international competitiveness; and heavy dependence on the exploitation of natural resources. The economy has limited capacity to create employment for its growing population. Labor migration is a predominant coping mechanism, and many households depend on remittances.

The population is relatively young **(31.9 percent of the population is 12–29)**, but the share of people over 65 **(6.2 percent in 2023)** is rising (Agency of Statistics 2023a). Demographic changes are likely to increase the dependency ratio, as fertility rates are falling and the median age of the population rising.

Tajikistan is prone to both natural and economic disasters. It regularly experiences natural hazards such as avalanches, earthquakes, floods, and mud and landslides, and the frequency and intensity of natural disasters have been increasing. It is the most climate-vulnerable country in Europe and Central Asia.

Description of the Social Protection System

Since its independence from the Soviet Union, Tajikistan has made tremendous efforts to transform its social protection system to ensure the inclusion of all population groups and to provide adequate social protection to the people most in need. Social protection is enshrined in the country's Constitution and supported by a comprehensive legal framework. The social protection system is built on a well-developed range of contributory and noncontributory schemes and interventions across social insurance, social assistance, and labor market policies, supported by social services.

Public resource allocations for social protection have increased steadily. In nominal terms, spending on social protection rose by 11 percent between 2019 and 2023, accounting for 11.1 percent of aggregate government spending in 2023 (Ministry of Finance n.d.). The social protection sector was the third-largest recipient of public resources in 2023 (after energy and education).

Important reforms and programs have been initiated with the support of Tajikistan's development partners to modernize the social protection system to adapt to changing needs and face growing challenges. The MoHSPP; the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population (MoLMEP), the Agency for

Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP); and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) play the main roles in policy design, implementation, and monitoring, with the support of specialized agencies.

Despite the government's efforts, coverage of interventions varies greatly, and the response to emerging needs is still not adequate. Social insurance has the highest coverage, accounting for 75.8 percent of total expenditures in the social protection sector; it is administered directly by ASIP and financed through social contributions. In 2023, over 551,000 people (5.5 percent of the population) benefitted from a contributory pension, including pensioners, people with disabilities, and eligible pensioner survivors. Another 188,000 people (1.9 percent of the population) benefited from a social pension managed by ASIP for people who were not eligible for contributory social insurance.

The main social assistance program in Tajikistan is Targeted Social Assistance (TSA). This national flagship initiative, administered by the State Agency for Social Protection of the Population (SASPP), covers over 240,000 of the poorest households (over 1 million persons, about 12 percent of the population). TSA benefit amounts, and the related overall funding, do not adequately respond to the population's needs, however. Sector financing and the number of people benefitting from the labor market policies are extremely low and do not cover people in the large informal economy. The government is supporting a reevaluation of the program. Target coverage of employment services is theoretically high (54 percent of the working-age population), considering the economically inactive working-age population is estimated at 3.1 million people. As of January 1, 2024, only 48,300 people were officially registered as unemployed (0.8 percent of the working-age population).

Social services are transitioning from predominantly residential care to community- and home-based care for children, people with disabilities, and older adults. In 2023, only about 6,000 people were receiving home-based care, and about the same number were receiving residential care. Social services are financed largely by subnational governments, which have limited resources.

Performance of the Social Protection System

Poverty disproportionately affects children in Tajikistan. Many suffer deprivation in health, nutrition, and education, which current social protection systems address only partially. Social protection interventions targeting children consist mainly of social insurance benefits with a low transfer value provided by the contributory social protection system, such as childbirth benefits.

The lack or inadequacy of skills and competencies of job seekers explain the high level of unemployment in Tajikistan despite relatively strong economic growth. Active labor market policies do not target young people; job quota and public works and employment services and training programs offer limited options. Young people are unlikely to benefit from social protection. The share of the population over 65 will continue to increase in the coming years. Older people and the society and economy as a whole will require larger shares of expenses to address the health and other needs of older people and their increasing dependency. With 7.4 percent of the population receiving state pensions, coverage of the pension systems is adequate, according to national statistics, and the average pension value falls below the poverty line of TJS 450 a month. [1] Coverage of social services to the most vulnerable older people remains limited. Despite improvement, women continue to face major challenges in accessing higher education and the labor market, and poverty is still prevalent among women and girls, particularly in rural areas, because of their limited access to employment services, jobs, and economic opportunities. The increase in the number of older adults and children disadvantages women, who are often primary caregivers. Women are also less likely than men to receive benefits from social insurance, because of the characteristics of their occupations.

[1] The national poverty line was set at about TJS 450/month/person in 2021. In Tajikistan, poverty is measured by consumption and follows the cost-of-basic-needs (CBN) approach.

Challenges facing people with disabilities include insufficient awareness of social protection benefits, barriers to applying for them, and stigmatization in the labor market.

Recommendations

The report provides policy, programmatic, and implementation-level recommendations for the government, development partners, and civil society actors to support social protection systems and make them inclusive, adequate, efficient, effective, and transparent. Its recommendations are based on the findings of the CODI assessment and the assessment of sector performance by stakeholders. The key recommendations fall into four broad areas.

Strengthening Systems, from the Policy and Legal Framework to Governance and Delivery Systems

Tajikistan's social protection system needs to be expanded and modernized based on the building blocks of policy, a legal framework, and a delivery system, in order to ensure that all people in the country have access to social protection when they need it and are supported in accessing health, education, protection, and employment. Doing so requires stronger institutional capacities and a robust system supported by digitalization, modern technology, evidence-based decision making, and accountability at all levels.

Strengthening the Coordination of Social Protection Actors

Coordination is vital for improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of the social protection system. Stronger coordination reduces vulnerability and poverty, optimizes resource use, and ensures alignment with the National Development Strategy (NDS) and the Social Protection Strategy. Horizontal coordination across levels (policy, program, and implementation) and vertical coordination between national and subnational levels are crucial to facilitating the cohesive and efficient implementation of social protection components. Such coordination needs to be improved among the ministries and agencies in charge of social protection and social services as well as with civil society and development partners. The roles, responsibilities, and operational mandates for all ministries, agencies, and departments involved in the provision of social protection services need to be clarified. Governance should shape incentives, accountability structures, and the exercise of power and authority, guided by formal rules and cultural norms. It should focus on incentivizing desired behaviors and ensuring accountability in the delivery of social protection service by setting clear standards and monitoring performance.

Enhancing Financial Resources for Social Protection and Their Sustainability

The financing of the social protection sector is insufficient to reach the objectives set in the Strategy. The value and quality of most benefits are inadequate, and services are unpredictable. More sustainable financial resources are needed to improve social protection and its long-term impacts on human capital development. More sustainable financial resources are needed to improve social protection and its long-term impacts on human capital development.

Ensuring that the Social Protection System Is Adaptive and Shock-Responsive

With the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters and climate-induced hazards, the traditional approach to social protection is not fit for purpose; social protection programs need to be more relevant in meeting these increasing needs.

Understanding overlaps between social protection and disaster risk management and collaborating to achieve joint outcomes is crucial. The MoHSPP, the Committee of Emergency Situations, the Committee of Environmental Protection, and other entities have critical roles to play in ensuring that the social protection system is adaptive and shock responsive.

Introduction

Background

In 2022, the government of Tajikistan endorsed a Strategy for the Development of Social Protection of the Population for the period up to 2040 (hereafter "the Strategy"), under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP) (UNICEF 2022c). This framework document reflects Tajikistan's vision for the social protection sector and its development priorities, including institutional reforms and the need to foster sustainable social development, ensure social security for people across the life cycle, and enhance social justice.

The Strategy draws attention to pressing challenges and problems and sets priorities for the reform and development of the social protection system. Priorities have been defined around for the three key stages of the life cycle: pregnancy, childhood, and adolescence; working age; and old age. Disability and inclusion, shock responsiveness during emergencies and crises, and gender and governance are as cross-cutting areas. The government, with the support of UNICEF and other development partners, developed a three-year action plan defining specific measures to implement the Strategy's priorities in the short term.

To support implementation of the Strategy, address the challenges of the system, and explore the possibility of introducing universal social protection,[2] key government ministries and development partners, with technical support of UNICEF and the World Bank, conducted an in-depth assessment of the social protection system using the Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI) tool.[3] The CODI assessment builds on a range of assessments conducted to support the development of the Strategy, including the 2019 Assessment Based National Dialogue (ILO 2018) and the 2022 Public Expenditure and Institutional Review (ILO 2022). The CODI methodology takes into account the lessons learned from the CODI assessments conducted in other countries in the region, notably in Uzbekistan (Papa and others 2020) and Armenia (Ghukasyan and others 2021).

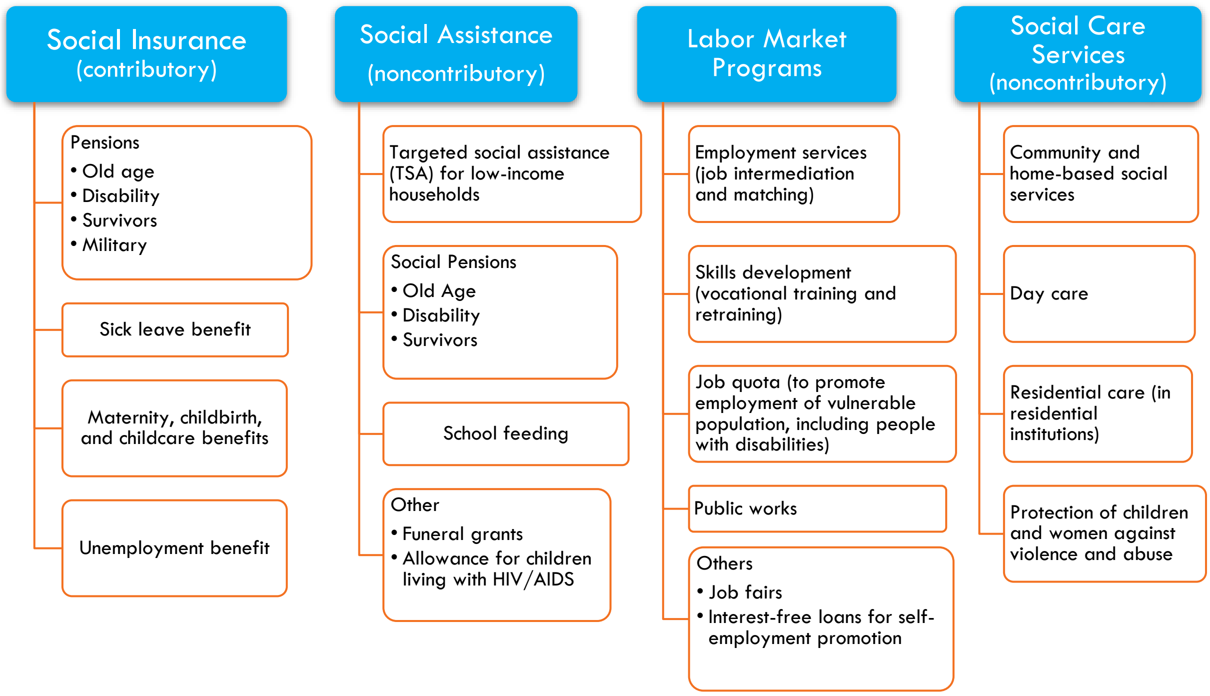
Tajikistan's Social Protection System

Social protection in Tajikistan is enshrined in the Constitution and supported by a comprehensive legal framework. Since its independence from the Soviet Union, in 1991, Tajikistan has made tremendous efforts to transform its social protection system to ensure the inclusion of all population groups and to provide adequate social protection to the people most in need.

The social protection system is built on a well-developed range of contributory and noncontributory schemes and interventions across social insurance, social assistance, and labor market policies, supported by social services (figure 1.1).

[2] *Universal social protection* refers to the set of policies and programs designed to ensure that all people have access to social insurance and assistance to protect them against economic risks and ensure that their basic needs are met.
[3] See https://ispatools.socialprotection.org/about-ispa/.

Figure 1.1 Main programs of the social protection system



Source: Authors

Public resource allocations for social protection increased steadily in recent years. Total nominal spending for the social protection sector grew 11 percent between 2019 and 2023, reaching 11.1 percent of aggregate government spending in 2023. The sector was the third-largest recipient of public resources in 2023 after energy and education (Ministry of Finance n.d.).

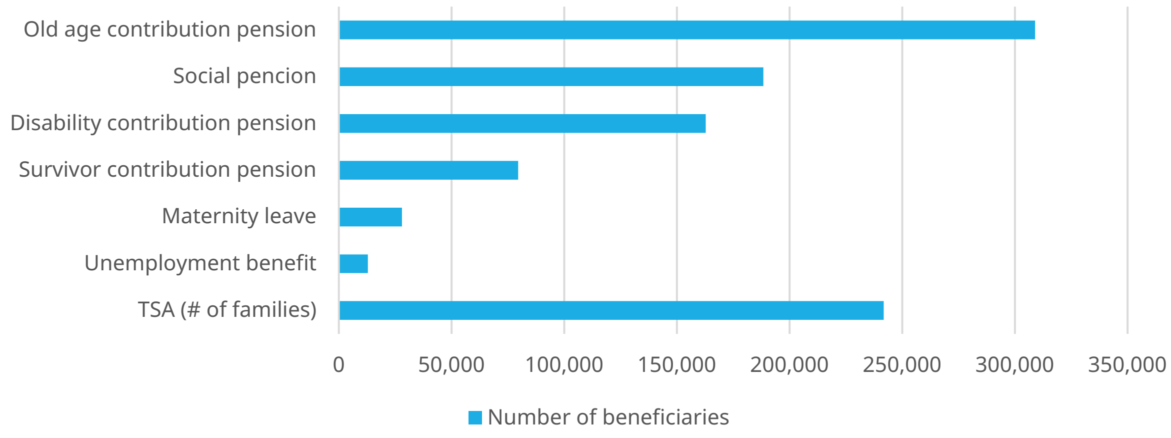
Important reforms and programs have been initiated, with the support of Tajikistan's development partners, to modernize the social protection system to adapt to changing needs and face growing challenges. The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP), the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population (MoLMEP), the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP), and the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) play the main roles in policy design, implementation, and monitoring, with the support of specialized agencies.[4]

Tajikistan is facing major demographic, social, economic, and climatic challenges, and its social infrastructure is aging. Despite government efforts, coverage varies greatly across programs, and the response to emerging needs is still not adequate.

Social insurance (mainly pensions) has the highest coverage and share of financing (Figures 1.2 and 1.3). It consists mostly of contributory social insurance for formal sector employees.

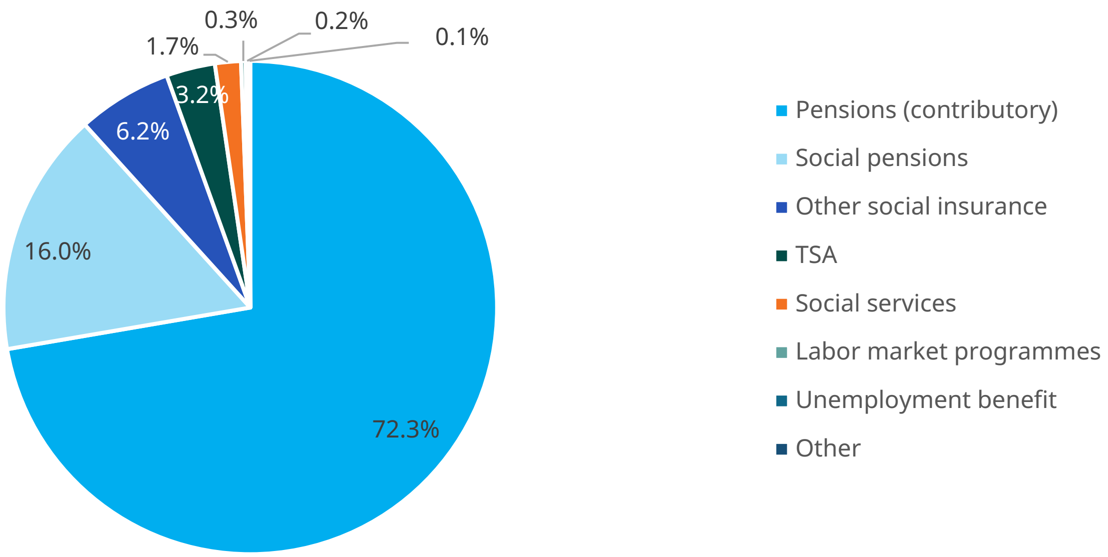
[4] In addition to preschool, early childhood development, and education interventions, the MoES is in charge of children in residential care institutions, including orphans and children with hearing and visual disabilities.

Figure 1.2 Number of beneficiaries of main social protection programs, 2023



Source: Authors, based on information provided by ministries and agencies.

Figure 1.2 Allocation of social protection budget, by program, 2023



Source: Authors, based on information provided by ministries and agencies.

Coverage of social assistance programs increased between 2019 and 2023 with the scale-up of the flagship Targeted Social Assistance (TSA) program, but benefits amounts, and funding still do not meet the population's needs. The number of people participating in labor market policies and public financing of such programs remains extremely low and does not take into account the large informal economy. Social services are in a phase of transition from residential care to community- and home-based care, offering opportunities to expand their coverage and better meet the population's needs.

Objective of the Report

This report presents the findings of the CODI assessment of Tajikistan's social protection system. It is intended to help the government of Tajikistan, its development partners, and key social protection stakeholders implement the Social Protection Strategy adopted in 2022. The assessment is evidence-based. Although the tool is descriptive, it includes a comprehensive analytical framework and participatory mechanisms to allow stakeholders to assess the system's performance in real time.

The report consists of seven sections. Section 1 describes the report and introduces the CODI assessment methodology. Section 2 outlines key elements of the country context influencing social protection needs and describes how the social protection system operates. Section 3 presents the legal and policy framework and the governance and funding structure. Section 4 overviews the state of the main social protection programs at the time the assessment was conducted. Section 5 highlights the social protection needs of population groups across the life cycle and how the system addresses them. Section 6 presents the results of the CODI performance assessment, which was conducted in a participatory manner with key stakeholders. Section 7 provides a set of recommendations based on discussions with key stakeholders during the workshop, complemented by the expert views of the authors of the report.

Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

The CODI assessment and this report are based on the methodology developed by the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) group, which comprises agencies of the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, and various bilateral donors and international development partners. The data collection, data analysis, and system assessment are based on a unified set of definitions and assessment tools validated across the social protection expert community and applied in various countries.

The CODI process includes data collection, analysis, and participatory assessment. It is based on a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative secondary and primary information collected from key social protection actors and implementers of programs at the national level. The assessment provides an overview of the social protection system. It is structured around the system's key areas, allowing stakeholders to assess the system's performance in real time (appendix A presents the detailed methodology).

The diagnostic should be based only on valid and reliable evidence; triangulation and cross-checking are therefore an essential part of the diagnostic. Accessing sufficient evidence and information is key to the success of the assessment. The process is lengthy and requires the full participation of the government and stakeholders.

The CODI assessment of Tajikistan was initiated in December 2022, when it was presented to key stakeholders as part of the Strategy. Participants included representatives of line ministries responsible for implementing social protection programs. The CODI assessment exercise was launched in August 2023.

From August 2023 to February 2024, a UNICEF and World Bank team collected data for each of the modules, in close collaboration with the MoHSPP. The team also drew on the most recent reviews conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the European Commission, and UNICEF.

Following the preliminary analysis, a workshop was held February 8–9, 2024, attended by 50 participants from ministries and agencies responsible for social protection, development partners, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and academia (table D.1, in appendix D, lists the participants). The process of validation included an assessment by participants of the system's performance against the CODI standard criteria and the identification of a set of recommendations.

Limitations

Three main limitations are identified during conducting the assessment:

- *Time constraints*: Social protection programs are dynamic and subject to continuous change in response to evolving social, economic, and political dynamics. The CODI assessment took considerable time to complete; by the time findings are published, they may already be partly outdated.

- *Methodological challenges*: The CODI assessment involves the application of diverse methodologies, including quantitative analysis, qualitative research, and policy analysis. Integrating these methodologies into a coherent assessment framework presents methodological challenges, such as data harmonization, indicator selection, and causal inference. Access to specific and disaggregated information on social protection sector and programs, especially the monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework, is still limited, constraining the depth of the assessment. Data limitations and administrative challenges also made it difficult to assess the extent of coverage and the effectiveness of targeting. Failure to address these methodological challenges can undermine the validity and reliability of CODI findings.

- *Fragmentation and complexity of social protection programs*: Tajikistan's social protection system comprises a complex array of programs administered by multiple government agencies with specific institutional procedures. Coordination gaps hinder data sharing and collaboration. Primary data collection had to follow each agency's rules and procedures. Despite efforts to engage directly with the key actors of the social protection system, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the social protection system and assessing the coherence and effectiveness of the overall system were difficult. A limited number of semi-structured interviews with individuals at ministries and agencies involved in social protection were conducted. Most of the assessment presented in this report is based on the information agencies shared, secondary information, and the workshop conducted in February 2024.

Country Context

Tajikistan is a lower-middle-income country with GDP per capita of $1,189 in 2023. In 2024, the country's population was 10.3 million people. By population and market size, it is one of the smallest countries in Central Asia. Tajikistan boasts 99 percent literacy and dynamic demographics, with population growth averaging 2.1 percent a year (Agency of Statistics 2024).

Tajikistan's economy grew steadily in the past decade, with real GDP growth reaching 8.3 percent in 2023 (Agency on Statistics). Between 2010 and 2023, economic growth averaged 6.8 percent a year— higher than both the average of other economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia region and the average for low-income countries (both 5.6 percent).[5] In 2020, the first year of the pandemic, Tajikistan's economy performed better than most of its regional neighbors. Consumer price inflation (CPI) averaged 6.9 percent a year in 2010–20, falling to 4.9 percent in 2024 (IMF 2024b).

Tajikistan drastically reduced the prevalence of poverty over the past 24 years, slashing it from 80.0 percent in 1999 to an estimated 21.2 percent in 2023 (President of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023). Domestic private investment is low, however, averaging 28.8 percent of total investment in 2023, compared with 45 percent among low-income countries.[6] The economy is characterized by low-skilled human capital, with 60 percent of jobs concentrated in climate-sensitive agriculture, a difficult business environment inhibiting international competitiveness, and a high dependence on the exploitation of natural resources. It has a low capacity to create employment for its growing population and youth and is vulnerable to external economic shocks. Labor migration is the main coping mechanism, and many households depend on remittances.

Tajikistan is prone to both natural and economic disasters. It regularly experiences natural hazards such as avalanches, earthquakes, floods, and mud or landslides. It is the most climate-vulnerable country in the region (CAREC 2020) and both the frequency and intensity of natural disasters have been increasing.

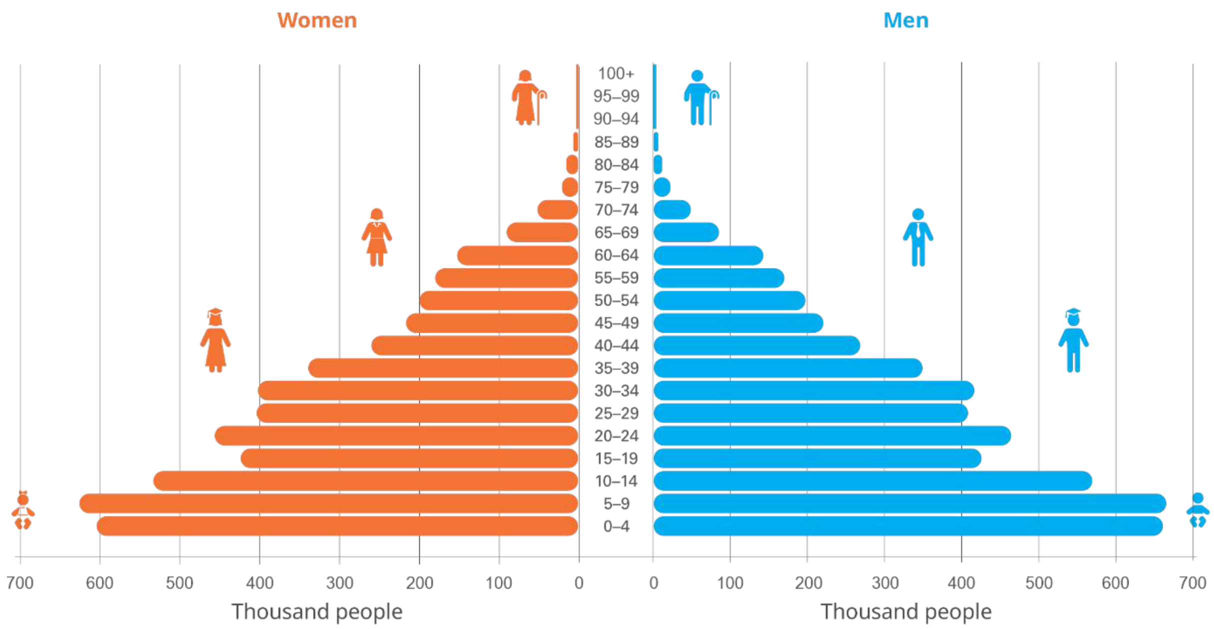
Population Structure

Tajikistan's population doubled in less than 40 years, making it one of the fastest-growing countries in Central Asia. Most of the population (71.2 percent) lives in rural areas; 35.8 percent of the population (41.4 percent of the rural population) lives in the poorest region, Khatlon (Agency on Statistics).

The population is still relatively young (figure 2.1), with a mean age of 26.1 in 2022, up from 25.6 in 2015 and 25.3 in 2010; 31.9 percent of the population are 12–29. At the same time, the share of people over 64 increased, rising from 5.7 percent of the population in 2020 to 6.2 percent in 2023.

[5] See https://data.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan?view=chart.
[6] Ibid

Figure 2.1 Age pyramid, by gender, 2022



Source: Agency on Statistics 2022*b*

Life expectancy at birth was 76.3 in 2022 (74.7 for men and 77.9 for women). The dependency ratio is therefore relatively high, with 42.4 percent of the population younger than 15 or older than 64. Demographic changes are likely to increase the dependency ratio, as fertility rates are decreasing but remained high (at 2.79) in 2022, and the median age of the population is rising (Agency on Statistics 2022b).

In 2024, more than 62,400 people received old-age pensions and 162,842 received disability pensions (Agency on Statistics 2024). In 2017, the World Bank estimated that the disability prevalence rate in Tajikistan, defined based on international criteria, was 17.7 percent (Tas 2017), slightly above the global average of 16 percent (WHO 2023) and far above the share reported in national statistics of 1.6 percent.

Demographic growth is putting pressure on the education system and the labor market in the short term. In the longer term, the increasing dependency ratio will put pressure on the social protection system, especially if the level of employment in the informal economy remains high.

The Economy

Amid regional instability and global inflation, Tajikistan experienced remarkable economic growth and achieved a record-low inflation rate in 2023 (Figure 2.2). Tajikistan's real GDP growth averaged 7.7 percent per year during 2000–23, benefiting from workers' remittance inflows and externally financed public investment. These flows helped reduce the poverty rate from over 90 percent in 1999 to 13.5 percent in 2023, as measured by the international poverty line of $3.65 a day (2017 PPP) for lower-middle-income countries (Agency on Statistics 2023). Income from labor and remittances have been the most significant drivers of poverty reduction, with remittance income an especially significant contributor to poverty reduction in the post-Covid period of 2021–23. According to the World Bank's Listening-to-Tajikistan (L2T) survey, more than a third of the bottom 40 percent of households reported having at least one labor migrant in the Russian Federation. Net remittances inflows accounted for nearly US$4.5 billion (37 percent of GDP) in 2023. The significance of these remittances in the lives of low-income households cannot be overstated.

FIGURE 2.2 MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, 2020 AND 2023

	2020			2023		
	Million TJS	GDP structure, percent	Impact on growth, percent	Million TJS	GDP structure, percent	Impact on growth, percent
GDP	82,543	100	4.5	130,791.5	100	8.3
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	18,659.8	22.6	2.4	31,769.7	24.3	1.6
Industry	14,358.2	17.4	2	21,143.1	16.2	1.2
Construction	6,173.7	7.5	0.2	10,313.2	7.9	1
Wholesale and retail trade; car repair; hotels and restaurants	13,131.8	15.9	-0.7	19,467.1	14.9	2.3
Transport activities and storage of goods; information and communication	7,583.3	9.2	-0.6	11,994.2	9.1	1.8
Other service sectors	15,113.2	18.3	0.8	22,948.1	17.5	-0.4
Net taxes on products	7,523	9.1	0.4	13,156.1	10.1	0.8

Source: Agency on Statistics 2023c

Despite strong progress in poverty reduction, a significant share of households lives close to the poverty line and remains vulnerable to falling into poverty. The informal economy employs over 40 percent of the working-age population (up to 95 percent in sectors like agriculture, trade, and construction) (World Bank 2017). Even though workers and their families make enough to live above the poverty line, they are therefore unprotected and exposed to shocks. With 73 percent of the population living in rural areas and 63 percent of the working-age population employed in agriculture, this sector remains important for the economy.[7]

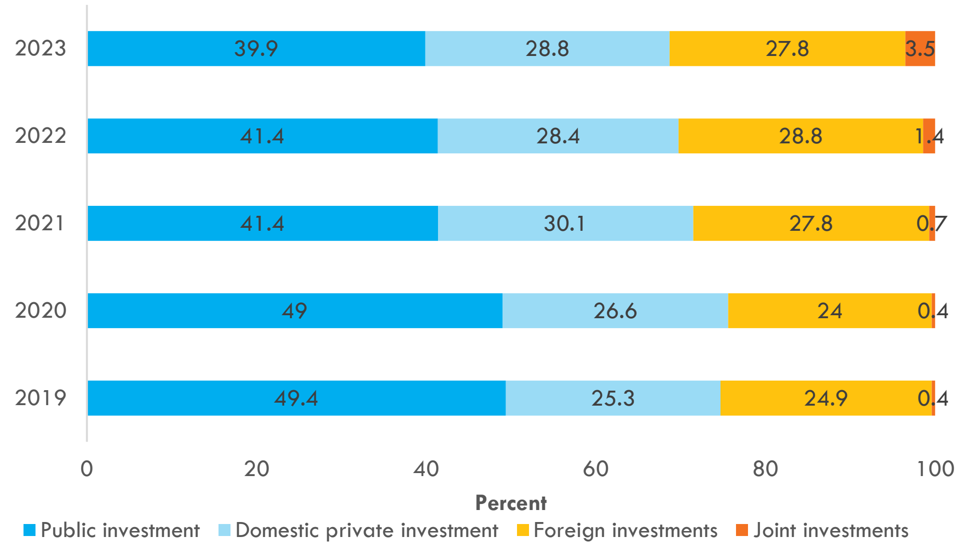
Exports constitute less than one-fifth of GDP and are dominated by basic metals and ores. Despite ample natural capital, Tajikistan's gross national income per capita (calculated using the Atlas method) remained low, at US$1,440 in 2023, making Tajikistan the poorest country in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region.

Tajikistan's labor force participation rate (LFPR) was estimated at just 41 percent in 2023. With a large gender disparity (female LFPR of 31 percent versus male LFPR of 51 percent), many women cannot access economic opportunities.

Investments make a huge contribution to the development of Tajikistan's economy. In 2023 they accounted for 15.2 percent of GDP (figure 2.3). About 40 percent of these investments (6.1 percent of GDP) are public investments; private domestic investments represented 28.8 percent of total investments (4.4 percent of GDP).

[7] The services sector created more jobs than agriculture and industry in the past decade but remains much smaller than it is in regional peers.

Figure 2.3 Structure of investment, by type, 2019–23



Source: Agency on Statistics 2023b

The somoni fell by 64.9 percent against the US dollar between January 2015 and December 2021 and by another 10.6 percent in the first three months of 2022. Its devaluation constrains consumer demand and slows business activity, particularly for firms trading internationally (World Bank 2023b).

The Labor Market

Tajikistan's robust economic growth is driven mainly by relatively low-productivity and low-paid jobs, as well as by remittances, which are highly dependent on regional and global economic dynamics.

Tajikistan had a working-age (15–64) population of 5.8 million in 2024 (Agency on Statistics 2024), among which just 2.7 million (46 percent) were economically active (MoLMEP 2024). Too few jobs are created to keep up with the country's rapid population growth. In 2023, just 23,000 new jobs were created, of which only about a third were permanent (KHOVAR 2024). The economically inactive population consists of more than 3.1 million people.[8] Labor force surplus and labor underutilization are high. In the absence of sufficient jobs, a large share of the economically active population seeks jobs overseas as labor migrants.

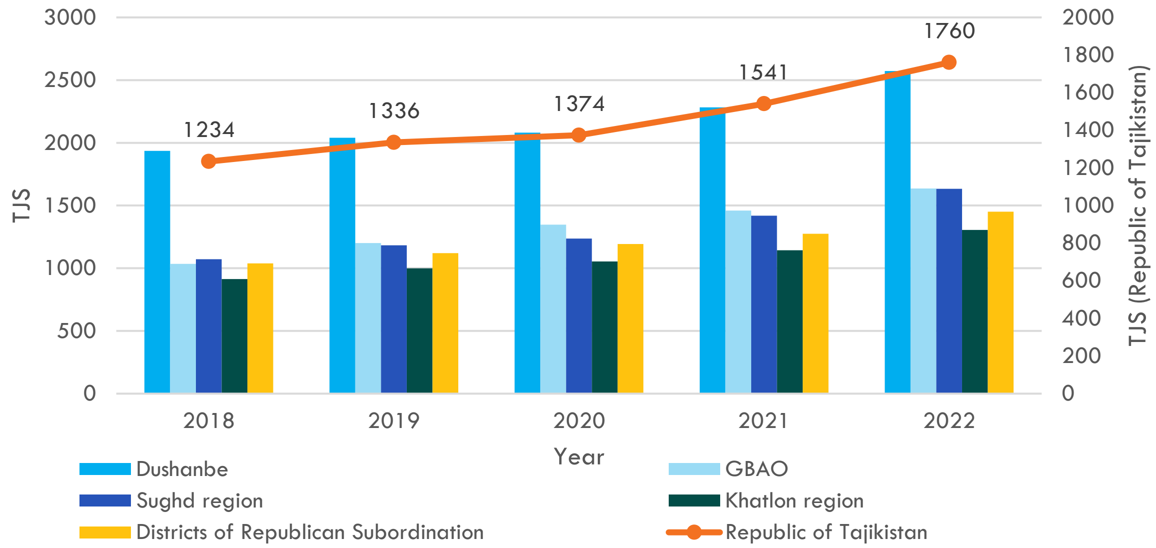
The participation of women in the economy and the labor market **is low and much lower** than men. About 69 percent of working-age women are not in paid jobs, compared with 49 percent of men (World Bank 2021b). Women contribute only one-fourth of the country's gross national income (GNI) and earn only 22 percent of what men earn a year on average ($1,440 versus $6,427 in in 2017 purchasing power parity [PPP] dollars (UNDP n.d.a)). In 2017, 49.3 percent of women 15–24 were not education, employment, or training (NEET); the figure for men was just 7.2 percent (TajStat data, cited in World Bank 2021b).

In search of employment, rural residents, especially women, increasingly move to urban areas, where the skill gap makes it difficult for them to find jobs. About 71 percent of all unemployed people did not complete general secondary education, suggesting that the cheap labor force has not become a comparative

[8] According to the government's definition, the labor force includes the economically active population (total registered employment + registered unemployment) and the economically inactive population (students and others). Others can include registered and not registered emigrants.

advantage (ILO 2022). Wages have grown steadily in recent year, but wage disparity across regions is significant and explains domestic migration (figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4 Average nominal monthly wages of employees of enterprises and organizations, by region, 2018–22



Source: Agency on Statistics 2023a

Wage disparity between men and women largely reflects the nature of the jobs they hold, with women overrepresented in low-skilled jobs and men are overrepresented in high-skilled jobs. In 2022, the average salary was TJS 1,460 for women and TJS 2,376 for men. Wage disparity is narrowing, but it is still wide between urban and rural areas and across regions and economic sectors. The private sector remains dominated by a few large firms (many of which are state-owned enterprises in capital-intensive sectors that create few jobs) and many self-employed individuals (mainly entrepreneurs and farmers, who generate little productive employment). The private sector accounts for two-thirds of total employment, but the share of active enterprises (legal entities) and individual entrepreneurs declined between 2015 and 2020, suggesting that some businesses are closing or moving into informal economic activity. Informal economic activity is widespread, but limited information is available on its extent and characteristics.

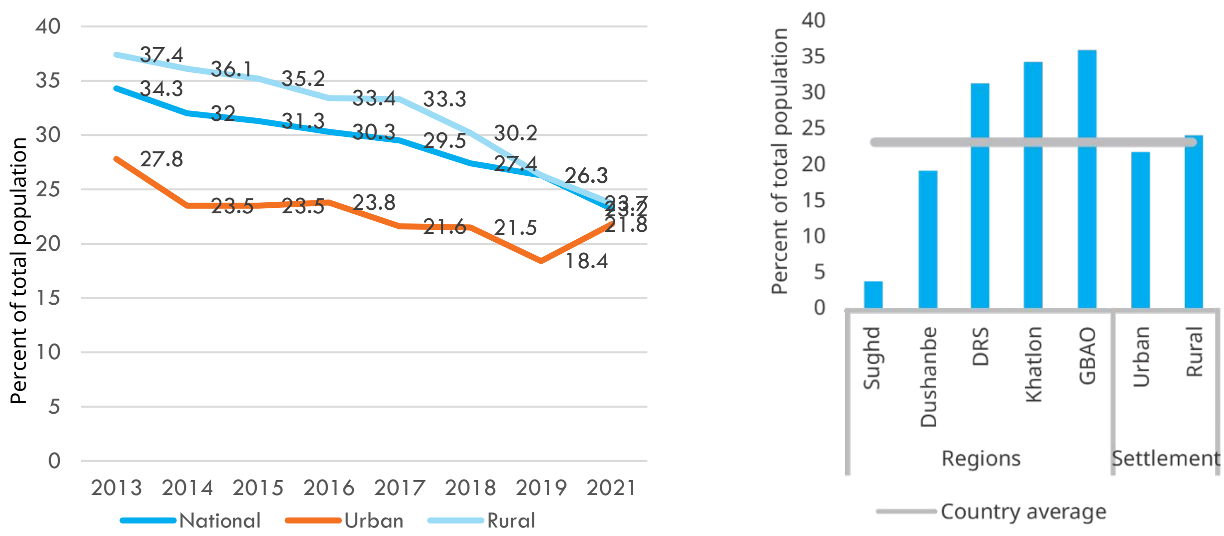
Labor migration raises incomes, consumption, and employment. It also has negative effects, especially on households, and could have a lasting impact on society. Labor migration in Tajikistan is low-skilled migration concentrated in one destination (Russia). Migrants face significant exposure to shocks and have limited access to social protection (Bossavie, Garrote Sánchez, and Makovec 2024). Increasing physical and psychosocial distress are experienced by women and children in the absence of their husbands and fathers, increasing violence, suicide, and delinquency. Abandoned families (usually female-headed) often fall into extreme poverty. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 230,880–288,600 families were economically abandoned and living at or below the poverty level in Tajikistan (ILO 2022).

Household Incomes, Poverty, and Vulnerability

In less than 25 years, Tajikistan slashed the prevalence of poverty, in both rural and urban areas, cutting the percent of the population falling under the national poverty line from 80 percent in 2000 to an estimated 21.2 percent in 2023 (President of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023) (figure 2.5). Rural poverty stood at 23.7 percent and urban poverty at 21.8 percent in 2021 (World Bank 2023b). The fact that over 70 percent of the population resides in rural areas and finds employment mostly in the low-paying agriculture sector explains the higher incidence of poor people in rural areas.

Figure 2.5 National poverty rates over time and across regions

a. a. National poverty rate in urban and rural areas, 2013–21 b. National poverty rate by region 2022



Source: World Bank (2023b).

Poverty has fallen, but many people remain in very precarious situations. In 2023, the World Food Programme (WFP 2023) estimated that about 1.56 million people in Tajikistan—about 15 percent of the population—were facing acute food insecurity. Most households spend most of their incomes on consumption, with little or no savings, limiting their resilience to shocks and crises.

Remittances have played a crucial role in reducing poverty. Over 80 percent of remittances in Tajikistan are used for food consumption; around 10 percent goes to other basic needs, including healthcare, housing, and education (Listening2Tajikistan).

Poverty disproportionately affects households with a high dependency rate. In 2018, only 16 percent of households with no children were classified as poor, compared with more than half of households with at least six children (World Bank, UNICEF, and Agency for Statistics 2018). Larger households find it more difficult to support themselves, often forcing children to leave school early in order to enter the labor market. Poverty is prevalent among women and girls, particularly in rural areas, because of limited access to jobs and economic opportunities. Households headed by women are more affected by poverty than households headed by men.

Poverty reduction and investment in the delivery of public services, particularly education, have improved the country's Human Development Index (HDI) scores. The 5.7 percent increase, from 0.642 in 2015 to 0.679 in 2022, raised Tajikistan's rank to 125th out of 192 countries (UNDP n.d.b.).

Vulnerability to Shocks, Crises, and Climate Change

Tajikistan is prone to a multitude of disasters, the regularity, magnitude, and severity of which are increasing as a result of climate change. The population remains highly vulnerable to disasters and crises and has limited resilience. Tajikistan is among the 60 countries at greatest severe risk across multiple dimensions and among the top 20 in terms of 'unfavorable environmental dimension' and exposure to hazards (OECD

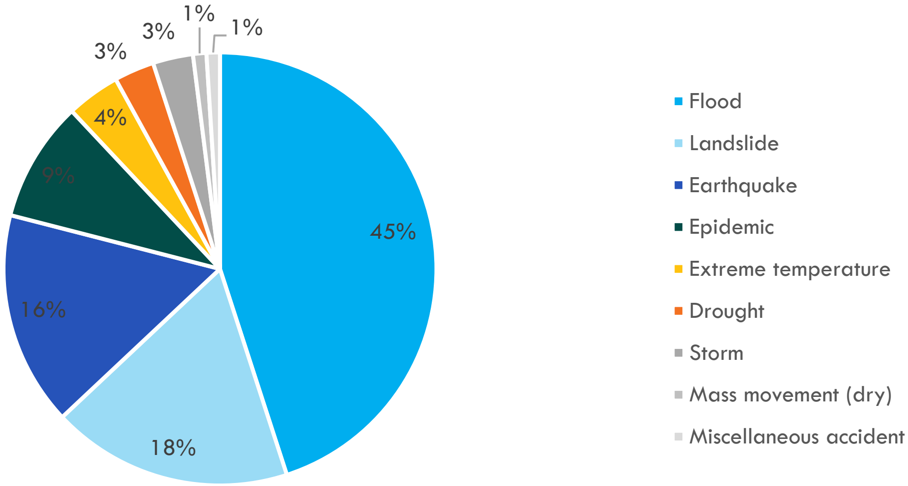
2022a). In 2023, the country's Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES) reported more than 557 incidents and emergency situations related to natural disasters, including 335 avalanches, 79 floods, 47 earthquakes, 26 rockfall incidents, 22 landslides, 10 severe windstorms, 17 instances of rising water levels, 12 instances of heavy rains, and 3 dangerous thunderstorms (CoES 2023).

More than 90 percent of Tajikistan's territory is mountainous; over half of the territory lies 300 meters above mean sea level. The country lies in an active seismic belt at the heart of Central Asia. Arable land constitutes only 6 percent of the country's territorial surface; most of the population lives in valleys (World Bank n.d.a.).

These geographical specificities leave the population vulnerable to a wide range of natural risks as well as to climate change, regional and global economic crises, and epidemics. According to a risk analysis conducted by the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC 2020), floods, earthquakes, and droughts are estimated to have affected 4.6 million people in the past three decades and resulted in over $1.1 billion in damage. [9] The 20-year return period loss for all hazards was $355 million (9.6 percent of GDP) (CAREC 2020).

Floods are the dominant risk in Tajikistan (figure 2.6); they caused average annual losses of $41.1 million. They were followed by earthquakes, which were less frequent but have more severe impacts ($18.2 million), and landslides ($16.8 million).

Figure 2.6 Average annual occurrence of natural hazards in Tajikistan in 1980-2020



Source: World Bank (n.d.b.).

Minimum and maximum temperatures are increasing throughout the country, with some areas warming faster than others. Annual mean temperatures increased by 0.1–0.2°C per decade between 1940 and 2012, and warming rates have accelerated since the late 1970s.[10] Annual mean temperatures are expected to continue to rise across the country as a result of climate change. More intense extreme precipitation events could exacerbate flash flooding risk as well as mudflows and landslides in the more mountainous regions.

[9] Although Tajikistan is susceptible to droughts, only one has been reported. It occurred in 2000, affecting 3 million people and causing $57 million of economic loss. (CAREC 2020).
[10] World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/tajikistan

The regions most susceptible to earthquake losses are Khatlon, Sughd, and the Districts of Republican Subordination; Khatlon and Dushanbe contribute most to flood losses (GFDRR 2017). These trends reflect both the high risk in these regions and the concentration of people and assets there. Extremely cold winters in recent years have had a severe impact on vulnerable populations living in the mountainous terrain. Cold waves increase demand for electricity, heating, and thermal insulation, which much of the rural population cannot afford. Frigid temperatures have caused the suspension of transportation, isolating many people in remote areas.

In 2023, Tajikistan hosted 14,964 displaced people (most of them from Afghanistan), including 8,460 refugees, 5,391 stateless people, and 1,113 asylum seekers (UNHCR 2023b). The border between Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic is vulnerable to armed clashes, which are provoking population displacement.

Social Protection Policy

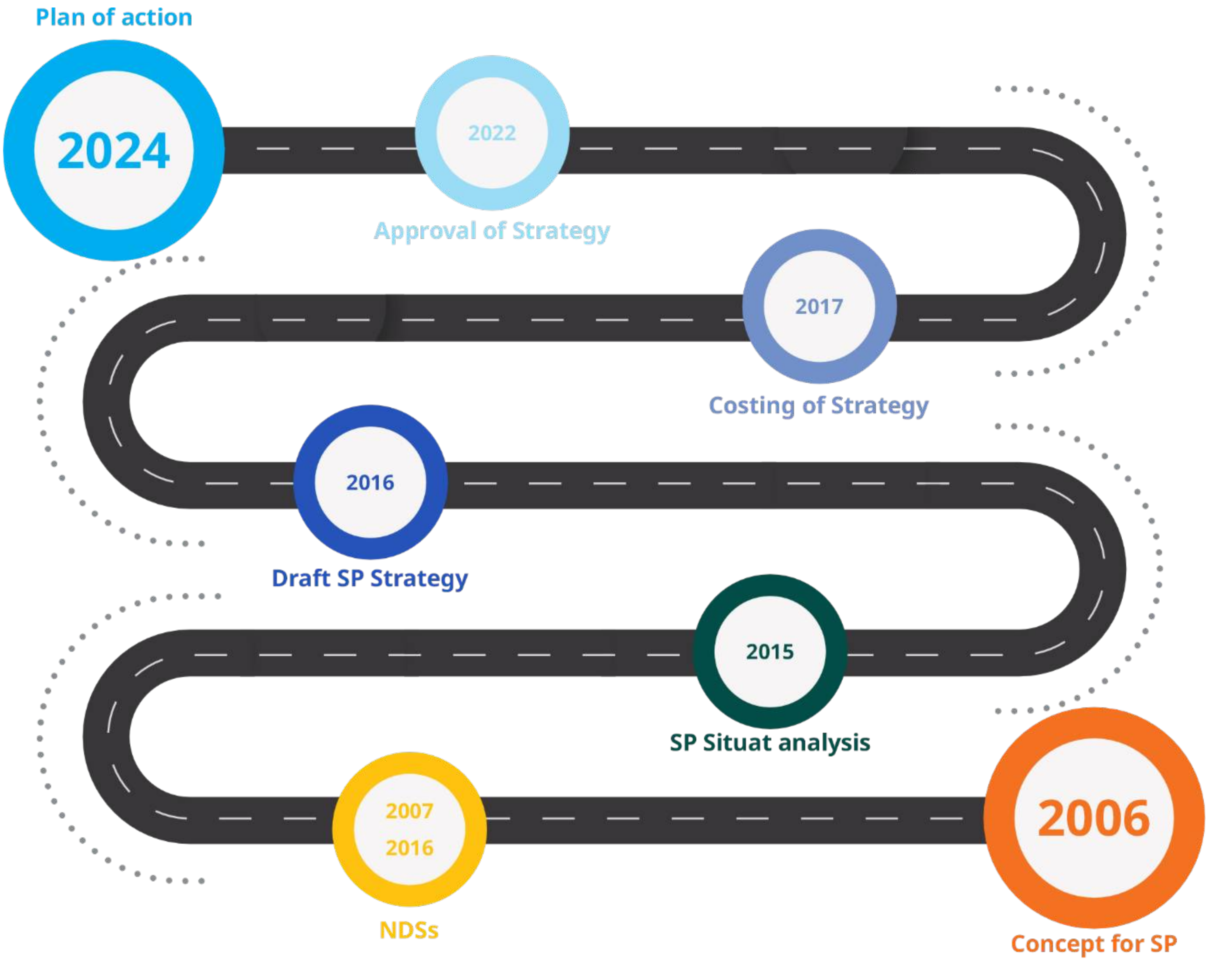
Policy and Legal Framework

Tajikistan's social protection system is based on the Constitution adopted in 1994. Article 1 states that "Tajikistan is a social state; its policy is aimed at providing conditions ensuring a dignified life and a free development for everyone." Article 39 guarantees "every person. . . social protection in old age, in the event of sickness, disability, loss of ability to work, loss of a breadwinner or in other cases provided by law." Article 17 states that "all people shall be equal before the law" and that "the state shall guarantee the rights and liberties for every person irrespective of nationality, race, gender, language, religious beliefs, political persuasion, knowledge, social and property status." The Constitution also prescribes state protection for various social groups, including mothers, children, people with disabilities, the labor force, and others. Article 35 guarantees "the right to work, to choose a profession, job, work protection, and social protection during unemployment."

Before adoption of the Strategy for the Development of Social Protection of the Population for the Period up to 2040 (NSPS), in 2022, Tajikistan's social protection policy framework was defined by the 2006 Concept of Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, reviewed and amended in 2011 and 2014. It was also defined in the overarching National Development Strategy (NDS), the Mid-Term Development Plan (MDTP), and program-specific documents and guidelines.[11] In line with the Constitution's guarantee of the right of citizens to work and receive social protection, the Concept document aimed to reform the social protection system by (a) forming a financially stable system based on insurance principles, (b) ensuring multichannel financing of the social protection system, (c) adapting asocial protection system considering emerging situations, (d) rationalizing and optimizing conditions for the provision of social benefits and pensions, and (e) reducing administrative costs. Social protection is also mentioned in the two Poverty Reduction Documents (2007–09, 2010–12) and the NDS for the period through 2015. Social protection was also mentioned in the two Poverty Reduction Documents (2007–2009, 2010–2012) and National Development Strategy up to period of 2015.

[11] Program-specific documents and guidelines include the Decent Work Country Program of the Republic of Tajikistan, 2015–17; the Targeted Social Assistance Program for 2018–20; the National Program for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities for 2017–20; the National Program for the Social Development of Youth for 2019–21; and the Concept of Social Services System Development in the Republic of Tajikistan (endorsed in 2016).

FIGURE 3.1 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION STRATEGY (TO EDIT AND IMPROVE BY DESIGNER)



Social protection is reflected in Section 4 of the NDS 2016–2030, on human capital development. Priorities include (a) modernizing the social protection system, (b) ensuring the long-term sustainability of the pension system, and (c) adopting additional protective and incentivizing measures to expand social protection coverage. The NDS also acknowledges the fiscal challenges of increasing social protection coverage given demographic growth.

The Mid-Term Development Plan (MTDP) 2021–2025, which preceded adoption of the Social Protection Strategy, set ambitious objectives to strengthen social protection systems, including (a) restructuring the institutions for targeted social protection, (b) ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the pension system, and (c) developing incentive-based areas of social insurance and social protection and more generally expanding social protection across the life cycle. Costs have been estimated for each policy action in the MTDP, but social protection measures are spread across several sectors and have not been costed specifically.

In 2014, a situational analysis of the social protection system was carried out. It led to the development of the first draft of the Social Protection Strategy, in 2015. In 2017, the Assessment-Based National Dialogue was initiated, to assess established minimum levels of social protection and identify ways to expand and increase them. The assessment identified gaps and obstacles, primarily legal and financial constraints, that hinder implementation of existing social protection programs. A set of recommendations was developed to overcome those obstacles.

The National Social Protection Strategy and the resolution “On the Strategy of the Development of Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period up to 2040” (The Strategy) was adopted on November 29, 2022. It aligned with the NDS 2030 and reflected the need for institutional reform and system strengthening. The Strategy was developed through a participatory process involving all relevant state ministries and agencies and development partners. Key government organizations involved in the consultation process included the MoHSPP, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the MoLMEP, the MoES, ASIP, SASPP, the Committee of Women and Family Affairs, and the Commission on Human/Children’s Rights. The Strategy acknowledged the progress made in deploying a comprehensive social protection system and legal framework and developed the comprehensive vision of social protection for all. It draws attention to Tajikistan’s pressing demographic, social, economic, and climatic challenges and the institutional reforms needed to ensure social security for people throughout their lifecycle through a combination of contributory and noncontributory social protection programs.
The Strategy established general objectives. An Action Plan for its implementation in 2024–26 is being developed to define specific outcomes, indicators, and timelines as well as the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. The MoHSPP is coordinating development of the Action Plan with relevant ministries and departments; local authorities; and NGOs and CSOs. In the labor, migration, and employment sector, the government has developed a Concept of Productive Employment until 2024 (approved by Resolution No. 263, dated May 28, 2022); a Mid-Term Development Program of Productive Employment for 2023–27 (approved by Resolution No. 419, dated August 31, 2023); and a Strategy for the Regulation of Migration Processes in the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period until to 2040 (approved by Resolution No. 309, dated June 30, 2023).

Although the social protection policy framework is recent, the legal framework is comprehensive. Tajikistan has ratified 50 International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on labor and social protection, including 8 fundamental conventions, since joining the ILO, in 1993.[12] The country’s legal and regulatory framework covers all existing social protection systems and programs (Appendix B overviews the legal framework).

To align the legal framework with the Social Protection Strategy and the National Plan of Action, Tajikistan is considering ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (which it signed March 22, 2018). In a tripartite agreement, the government, employers, and trade unions agreed to examine the opportunities for ratification (or application) of several international standards, including the Convention on Minimum Standards on Social Security (No. 102) and the Convention on Maternity Protection (No. 183).

Tajikistan’s national social protection legal framework defines the specific rights and obligation, of citizens based on their specific risks, vulnerabilities, and situations. Article 4 of the Law on State Social Insurance guarantees that social insurance is universal and mandatory. Article 4 of the Law on Social Services states that social services must be provided based on the principle of social justice. The legal framework defines particularly vulnerable groups of people and their eligibility for specific benefits and services, including the following groups:

[12] The eight conventions are the 1930 Forced Labor Convention, the 1948 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, the 1949 Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, the 1951 Equal Remuneration Convention, the 1957 Abolition of Forced Convention, the 1958 Discrimination Convention, the 1973 Minimum Age Convention, the 1981 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, and the 1999 Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (ILO n.d.).

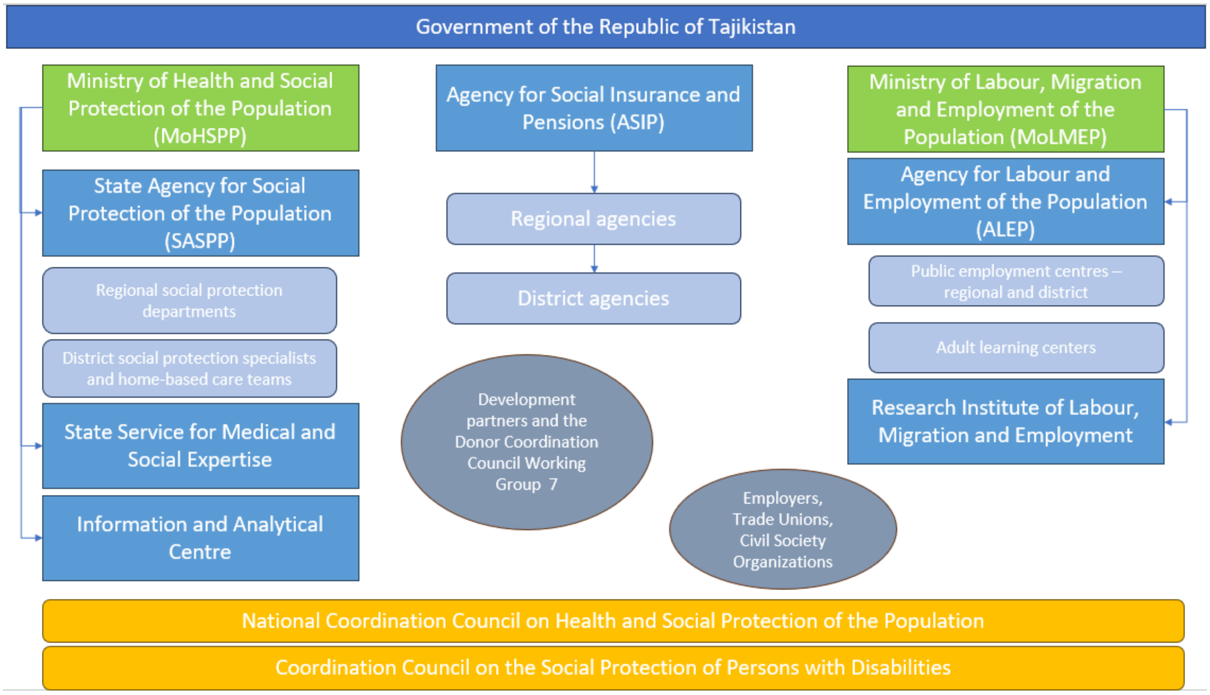
- people in difficult life situations because of disability, old age, sickness, loss of parent or guardian, the lack of a permanent place of residence, and other socioeconomic circumstances (law on social services)
- low-income households and individuals (the Law on Targeted Social Assistance)
- refugees (Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Order and Volume of Provision of Free Social Services," No. 448, dated July 2, 2015).

Article 4 also defines the rights of individuals who contribute financially to social insurance. The legal framework defines the sources of financing of the social protection programs and their key design and delivery elements. It also includes general regulations intended to reduce inefficiencies, mismanagement, fraud, and misuse and holds people responsible for financial management that applies to the social protection sector, together with specific laws on the efficient treatment of the applications. The organic budget law (the annual Law on State Budget of the Republic of Tajikistan) determines overall public resource allocations to the social protection sector by national and subnational budgets.

Governance and Institutional Set-Up

Since 2014, governance of the social protection sector in Tajikistan has been shared by the MoHSPP, the MoLMEP, the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP) under the Government, the MoES, and the two specialized state agencies responsible for program implementation, SASPP and the Agency for Labor and Employment of the Population (ALEP) (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Institutional and Governance Structure of the Social Protection Sector



Source: Authors based on ILO 2018

The MoHSPP has responsibility for designing and implementing social assistance and health care policies and programs. It also oversees the provision of social services and the inclusion of people with disabilities in society and inspects public investment programs in the social protection sector. Its responsibilities include ensuring the adequacy and appropriateness of payments and services to the most vulnerable citizens.

The MoHSPP delegates responsibility for implementing state social assistance programs and social services to SASPP, which implements the TSA program and the provision of social protection to the most vulnerable individuals and the victims of emergencies. SASPP directly oversees and administers the specialized social institutions and community- and home-based care, and it commissions social services from CSOs based on social contracting.

Within the MoHSPP, the State Service for Medical and Social Expertise (SSMSE) determines disability status and oversees the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. The State Supervision Service in Health and Social Protection of the Population was created in 2017 to handle state supervision of state and nonstate entities in the areas of healthcare and social protection. It conducts quality assurance of social services and recommends improvements, and it examines the adequacy and timely payment of social benefits and TSA to poor households. The Information and Analytical Center aims to ensure evidence-based policy making based on data collection and analysis provided to the MHSPP.

MoLMEP designs and implements labor market, employment, and migration policies and programs. It also makes recommendations on salary levels in the formal sector and benefits. Within the ministry, Agency for Labor and Employment of the Population (ALEP) implements state policy on labor market and employment promotion. Its functions include implementation of all active labor market policies, facilitation of social partnerships between employers and job seekers, and the professional development of vulnerable population groups. District-level ALEP branches serve as a public employment services centers. ALEP also oversees adult learning institutions. The Labor Research Institute provides labor market analysis and conducts research.

ASIP implements state policy and programs on the pension system (contributory and noncontributory) and social insurance. Its functions include independently forming and managing the social insurance budget, administering the sector, depositing and placing insurance contributions, maintaining invoices of insurers and insured people, financing social payments, ensuring the accuracy of the account, and calculating insurance contributions and the payment of pensions and other benefits.

The Ministry of Finance oversees public finance management and budget allocations for social protection and the development of the regulatory and legal framework. The Tax Committee collects tax revenues, including social tax financing and social insurance. Other ministries are involved in implementing specific social protection interventions.

The MoES is in charge of children in residential care institutions (including children with hearing and vision disabilities), as well as orphans, and oversees the school feeding programs.

Governance of the social protection sector is centralized at the national level; management responsibility is delegated from the national level to the 4 main regions and then to the 68 districts and cities. Local governance follows the national governance structure, dividing responsibilities between the departments for social protection responsible for social assistance and social services and the local agencies of ASIP and the public employment centers of ALEP.

Coordination Mechanisms

Between 2011 and 2014, the government created two coordination entities, which were replicated in each city and district. The first is the Coordination Council on the Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, chaired by the MoHSPP, which implements state policy on social protection of people with disabilities. The second is the high-level intergovernmental National Coordination Council on Health and Social Protection of the Population, chaired by the deputy prime minister and co-chaired by the minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population. It includes 15 government institutions and oversees implementation of the government's social protection concept.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the government established a coordination mechanism, the COVID-19 Interagency Task Force, which evolved into a Task Force on Strengthening Activities Countering COVID-19. It is composed of representatives of key government institutions and chaired by the deputy prime minister.

Coordination of development partners in the area of social protection takes place through the Working Group 7 on Social Protection of the Development Coordination Council (DCC), chaired by UNICEF. The platform provides an opportunity for policy dialogue and a coordinated approach to social protection among development partners. Its membership comprises 41 organizations, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, UNICEF, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme, UN Women, international NGOs, and national CSOs.

NDC Working Group 8, coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) and chaired by the deputy minister of Health and Social Protection, ensures the coordination of the government agencies involved in social protection. Its main objective is to ensure the coordination of efforts, objectives, and goals highlighted in NDS 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on social protection, sectoral and socioeconomic local development programs, and the budgetary process. It facilitates cooperation and coordination between state agencies, UN organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability

Monitoring of the implementation of social policies is anchored in the law that requires that the state provide the population with information and mechanisms for claims and appeals. Ministries and agencies involved in the social protection sectors confirm they have dedicated departments and staff in charge of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of social protection programs.[13]

The State Supervision Service for Health Care and Social Protection of the Population is responsible for monitoring that health and social service institutions provide the appropriate quality of medical and social services. Procedures are governed by the Order of the Minister of Health and Social Protection of the Population "On the Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Activities of Social Services Based on the Classification and Standards of Categories of Social Services," issued November 23, 2017.

The CODI assessment team was not able to access specific documents, such as results and logical frameworks or M&E reports from them. Previous assessments of the social protection systems noted the limited availability of data, particularly disaggregated data, partly because of the difficulties of retaining skilled personnel and the low digitalization of the information systems (ABND 2019; ILO 2022) (Box 3.1). Ministries and agencies use information and data predominantly for reporting to the statistics agency rather than to support evidence-based policy and program development.

[13] The MoHSPP, the MoLMEP, ASIP, SASPP, ALEP, and the MoES completed CODI questionnaires.

Box 3.1 Management information systems in social protection

A management information system (MIS) is used in this report to refer to systems that manage information in specific sectoral contexts. In social protection, *MIS* refers to systems (or software applications) that manage information for the functioning of registration and eligibility systems or the operation of specific programs to deliver benefits and services (such as payments transactions and the monitoring of conditionalities) (Lindert 2020).

Tajikistan's social protection programs are progressively moving from paper-based information repositories to digital databases, creating opportunities for data interoperability and exchange and the development of integrated MIS that links information from different public authorities. These changes make it easier to support key social protection functions, such as beneficiary and case management, program administration, data security and confidentiality, M&E, payments, financial management, planning, and user access and accountability.

To date, however, the system remains largely paper-based. MIS exist only at SASSP for the TSA program and at SSMSE for disability certification. Most information on beneficiaries of social and employment services and other forms of social assistance and social insurance is still managed outside a consolidated database, either in paper or electronic files. Weak systems and inadequate equipment, capacities, and power are major constraints to expanding the coverage of information databases across the country. Individuals applying for social protection benefits and services should still provide all evidence to support their application on paper; when reconciled, information is exchanged manually across agencies and institutions. It is not possible to retrieve or automatically cross-check information from other national databases, including the civil registry, managed by the Ministry of Justice; the ID and passports database, managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the labor and employment MIS, being developed with the support of the World Bank; or health, and education data needed to determine eligibility for and benefits of social protection programs.

ASIP manages a database of pension recipients, allowing the agency to manage benefits administration. Administrative information is still collected in hard copy forms from applicants and recipients, and there is no social insurance or pension MIS. Although some information is now digitalized, basic operations such determining eligibility, calculating pensions, reconciling payments with Amonatbank (Tajikistan's state savings bank), and updating personal data still have to be performed manually, the systems and databases are not connected, and ASIP district offices and users do not have direct access to the database. The Tax Committee separately manages a database of social security contributions received from enterprises, organizations, and individuals. Applicants for social insurance benefits have to provide all contribution evidence on paper when applying, and ASIP has to reconcile the data manually. Amonatbank manages the payments of most social insurance and social assistance benefits, but payments must be reconciled manually by the agency ordering the payment. Information on different benefits and services to the same recipients—by, for example, ASIP and ALEP for unemployment benefits or ASIP and SASPP for pensions—is not shared automatically.

In contrast, the TSA program is using an online database, ASIST MIS, which allows applications and all information from beneficiaries to be uploaded at the district level by dedicated SASPP staff. Eligibility is determined automatically by the system, and responses are provided by district officers. However, the system is vulnerable to technical issues and power availability and is not connected to other databases.

ASIP has regional M&E departments, including full-time employees engaged in information management. Enterprises, organizations, and institutions are obliged to submit reports on the payments made from the social contribution funds. Payment of insurance contributions and expenditures is monitored by representatives of the social insurance authorities and by independent audit organizations. For the TSA program, SASPP district offices, together with the representatives of *jamoats* (third-level administrative divisions similar to low-level municipalities) regularly verify payments on a sample of TSA recipients (around 5 percent). The regional TSA coordination centers verify information uploaded to the online platform (ASIST) used by the program. SASPP district and regional offices produce regular activity reports on the social assistance and social services provided and keep information on vulnerable households in their areas and the assistance received. The information is not provided in a systematic format. In 2023, the international NGO ACTED was contracted to conduct third-party monitoring of the TSA program. The collection of labor market information is supported by the Labor Research Institute under MoLMEP, which plans to establish a Labor Market Observatory.

All citizens in Tajikistan have the right to receive free information about the social protection benefits and services to which they are entitled and the procedures they need to follow to apply for, appeal rulings on, and complain about these benefits and services. A wide range of instruments—including booklets, billboards, campaigns, TV, and radio—is used to inform citizens of their rights. Information dissemination is not regular, however, and coverage is limited.

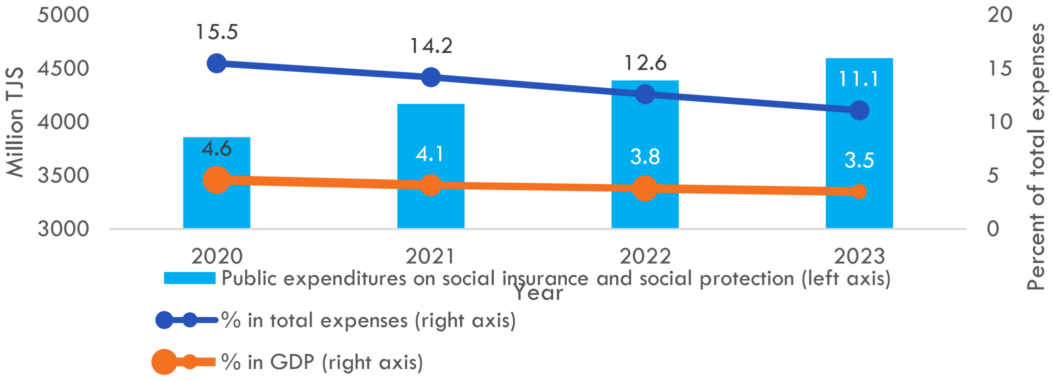
Several complaint mechanisms have been set up, including the services of the Ombudsman, the Police, the Special Compliance Service, the hotline at the State Social Protection Services, and a specific grievance mechanism for the TSA program. Most people are unaware of these mechanisms, however, turning instead to the offices and staff of ASIP, SASPP, and ALEP.

Financing and Expenditure

The social protection sector was the third-largest recipient of public resources in 2023 (after energy and education), representing 11.1 percent of total government spending. This level of spending underscores the government's commitment to and prioritization of social protection (Ministry of Finance n.d.).

Despite the government's efforts to steadily increase public resource allocations for social protection, however, the share of financial resources allocated to it remains low by regional standards**.** In 2023, Tajikistan invested the equivalent of 3.5 percent of GDP in social protection (the smallest share in Europe and Central Asia region, where the average is 9.3 percent [World Bank n.d.d.]). The share fell from 4.6 percent in 2020 to 3.5 percent in 2023 (figure 3.3).

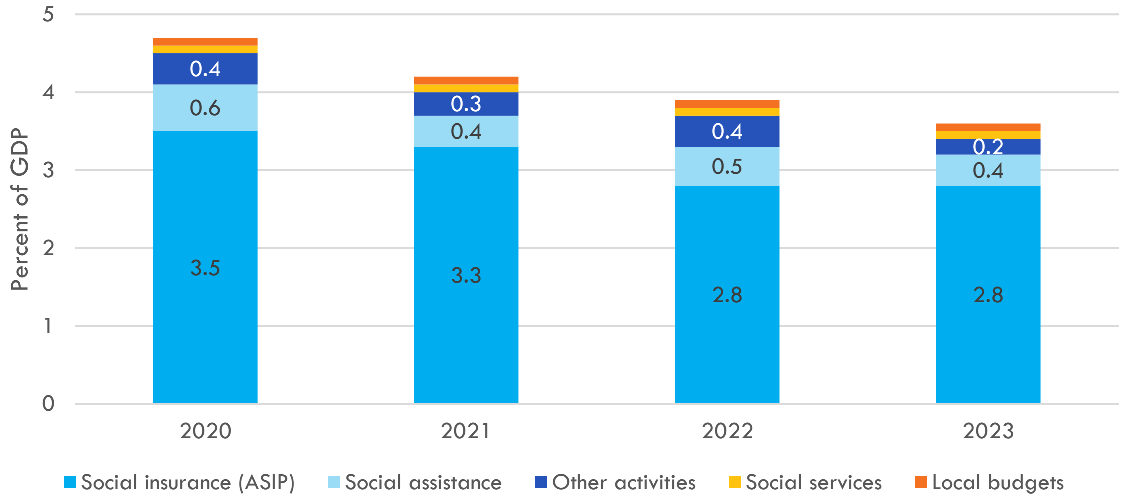
FIGURE 3.3 PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL PROTECTION, 2020–23



Source: Authors, based on data from the Ministry of Finance.

The main social protection interventions are social insurance schemes (mostly pensions) supporting formal workers. Despite being the main social protection expenditure (figure 3.4), Tajikistan's pension expenditures represent the smallest share of GDP of any country in the region (World Bank 2021a).

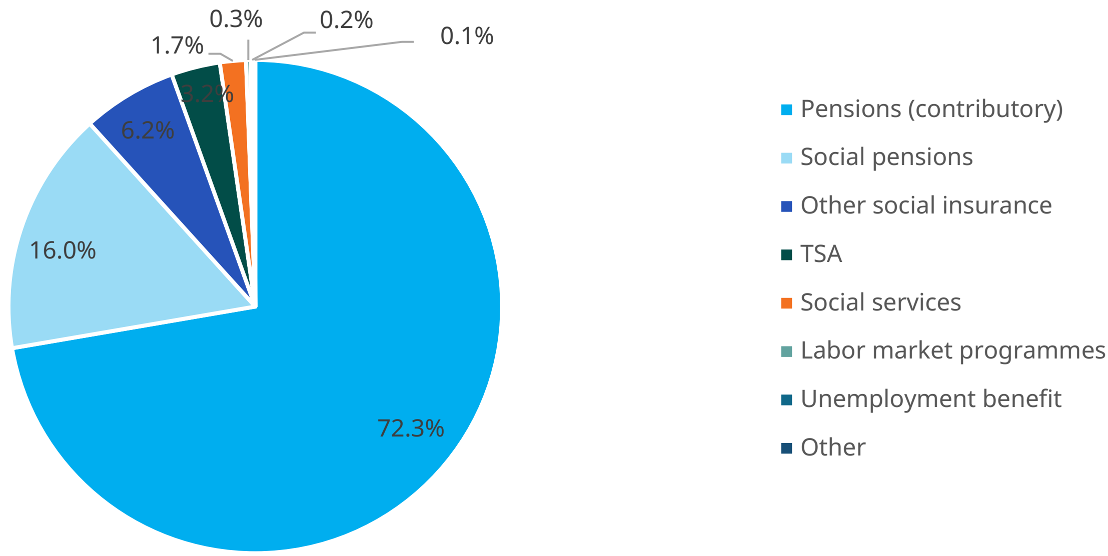
FIGURE 3.4 SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPENDITURE AS PERCENT OF GDP, 2020–23



Source: Authors, based on data from the Ministry of Finance.

Except for social insurance, the remaining significant budget (3.2 percent) is allocated to the TSA program. Expenditures on ALMPs and social services (0.3 percent and 1.7 percent) are very low (figure 3.5).

FIGURE 3.5 ALLOCATION OF SPENDING ON SOCIAL PROTECTION EXPENDITURES, 2023



Source: Authors, based on 2023 data from the Ministry of Finance.

Annual growth in total spending on social protection averaged 8.2 percent between 2019 and 2023, and the total social protection budget grew by 31 percent in nominal terms (Authors based on Ministry of Finance data). Funding increased for survivor benefits (581 percent), specialized institutions for adults (132 percent), state pensions (97 percent), benefits for families and children (76 percent), and sanatoriums and health institutions (57 percent). Spending on several expenditure categories funded entirely by subnational governments declined. Old-age benefits fell by 90 percent.

Three-quarters of expenditures on social protection are administered directly by ASIP (of which more than 90 percent are contributory and noncontributory pensions) outside the Ministry of Finance's Treasury Single Account. Another 5.2 percent of total expenditures is administered by SASPP, which is subordinate to the MoHSPP. Most social protection spending is disbursed and paid to beneficiaries by the state savings bank Amonatbank; remaining expenditures are administered by ALEP (including the 0.9 percent of total expenditure that is spent on unemployment benefits) and the MoHSPP (which administers governance and supervision). The MoHSPP designs, adjusts, and implements the state social protection policy, even though it controls less than 20 percent of social protection expenditures. Only a small portion of social protection expenditures is allocated to specialized professionals. The aggregate wage bill was 2.1 percent of sector spending, mainly because there are not many specialized boarding institutions and workers. In 2019, just 2,541 social workers were on the public payroll, of which 431 were junior-level health workers, 239 were midlevel health workers, and 1,690 workers were nonmedical social workers (ILO 2022). Social protection budget data are not available in disaggregated format, making it impossible to analyze the administrative budget for implementation of the social protection programs.

Subnational governments play a key role in funding general education and healthcare in Tajikistan. In contrast, they execute just 1.4 percent of core expenditures of the social protection sector (ILO 2022).[14] Financing varies widely across programs. Subnational governments fund specialized boarding institutions and social service centers. In 2020, they accounted for about 27 percent of spending on specialized social services institutions, such as sanatoriums and institutions for children, adults, and older people (ILO 2022).

Intragovernmental transfers are handled on an ad hoc basis, significantly reducing the quality and predictability of subnational budgets (World Bank 2021a). Although execution of social protection policy is partially delegated to subnational governments, they have limited control over or visibility on its financing. Policy priorities are formulated by the MoHSPP and implemented by SASPP, but implementation is conditional on the revenue performance of subnational governments, which fluctuate unpredictably and are difficult to forecast. SASPP's organizational structure depends heavily on the availability of financial resources from subnational governments (ILO 2022).

The multiplicity of financing procedures and channels and the presence of a large number of high-level spending units complicates allocation planning at the sector level and multiplies the number of strategic plans, which serve as the basis for determining sector expenditure ceilings, making it difficult for the Ministry of Finance to review them and establish priorities and associated funding allocations. Some transfer arrangements are also opaque, which increases the complexity of intergovernmental fiscal relations, undermines the efficiency of public spending, and prevents the application of uniform rules across subnational governments (World Bank 2021a).

Fiscal space for social protection is not likely to improve in the medium term; the financing of social protection will continue to rely on development partners. The new Strategy stipulates that TJS 333 million will be disbursed from the state budget for Strategy activities and TJS 633 million will be financed by development partners (Article 74 of the National Social Protection Strategy).Tajikistan has enjoyed steady economic growth, but rapid demographic growth is straining public services. The general government expenditure budget rose from $1.6 billion (28.4 percent of GDP) in 2010 to $2.4 billion (34.3 percent of GDP) in 2015 and expanded to $3.8 billion (31.6 percent of GDP) in 2023. Internal government resources have not increased, however, and the budget deficit reached 3.8 percent of GDP in 2019 and 5.5 percent of GDP in 2023, reducing the fiscal space for public services and social protection (ILO 2022).

[14] Almost 90 percent of funding for general education and 70 percent of funding for healthcare is channeled through subnational governments (World Bank 2021a).

Design and Implementation of Social Protection Programs

The social protection system in Tajikistan is comprehensive, including social insurance, social assistance, ALMPs, and social services. The financing and coverage of these programs varies widely. This section describes each of the country's major programs.

Social Insurance

Contributory social insurance covers workers with employment contracts, individual entrepreneurs, individuals, and Individual farmers *(dekhan)* who are registered with the social insurance system. Entitlements vary depending on employment status.

All contributory social insurance programs are managed by ASIP, through its network of regional and district agencies. Social contributions are collected by the Tax Committee, and unemployment benefits are managed jointly by ASIP and ALEP. Payments are processed through Amonatbank or directly through employers.[15] The contributory pension scheme represented 72.3 percent of social protection spending in 2023 and covered over 551,000 people (table 4.1 and figure 4.1).

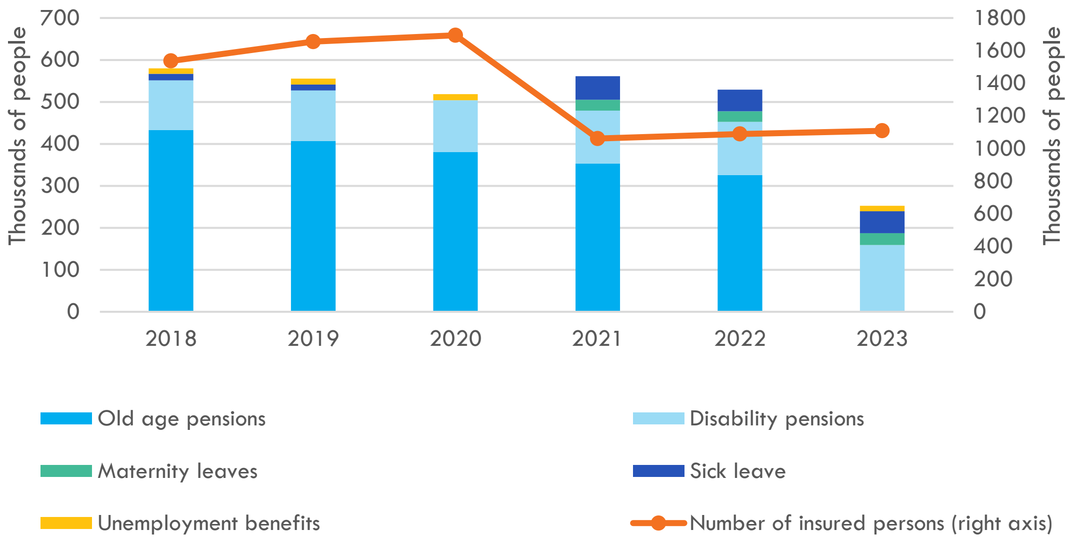
Table 4.1 Number of beneficiaries of social insurance programs, January 1, 2024

Item	Number of people	Percent of population
Total number of people insured	1,108,985	11
Old-age pensions (contributory)	308,996	3.1
Social pensions	188,352	1.9
Disability pensions (contributory)	162,842	1.6
Disability group I	17,541	0.2
Disability group II	79,422	0.8
Disability group III	32,812	0.3
Children with disabilities	33,067	0.3
Childcare benefit	119,473	1.2
Survivor pensions (contributory)	79,589	0.8
Sick leave benefits	52,266	0.5
Maternity leave benefit	28,048	0.3
Childbirth benefit	13,556	0.1
Unemployment benefits	12,899	0.1

Source: Authors, based on information from the Agency of Social Insurance and Pension (ASIP).

[15] Benefits for temporary disability and maternity and family benefits are paid by the employer from social taxes and made electronically to the beneficiary's bank account, according to the government resolution on procedures and conditions for payment, dated October 14, 2014.

Figure 4.1 Number of people insured and benefiting from social insurance, 2018–23

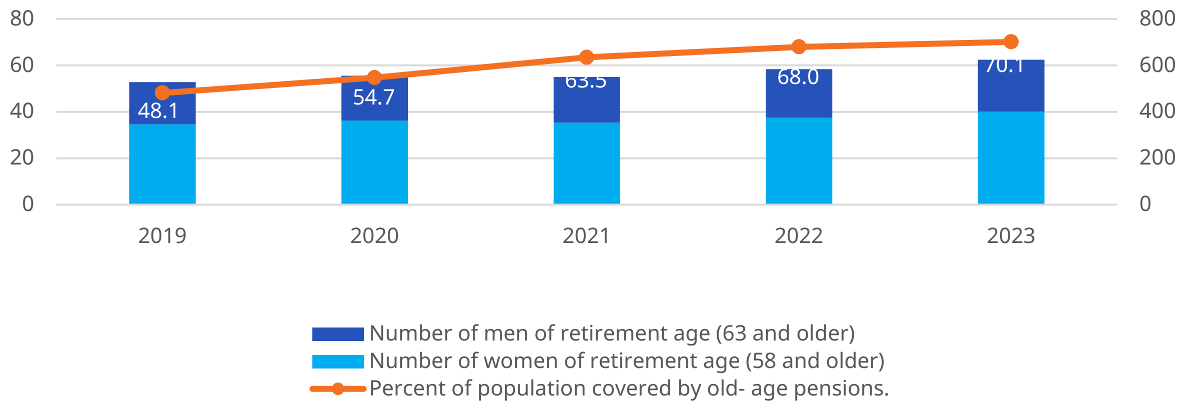


Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency of Social Insurance and Pension (ASIP).
Note: Data are not available for old-age pension in 2023; maternity leave in 2018–20; sick leave in 2020; and unemployment benefit in 2021–22.

Pensions

Contributory pensions include pensions for people who have reached retirement age (old-age pension), pensions for people with disabilities (disability pension), and pensions for breadwinner loss (survivor pension). Groups eligible for these pensions (table 4.2) can also claim a social pension if they have not contributed to or made insufficient contributions to social insurance.[16] The coverage of old-age pensions increased between 2019 and 2023, as the population aged (figure 4.2).[17]

Figure 4.2 Population reaching retirement age and old-age pension coverage, 2019–23



[16] The Ministry of Defense manages schemes for veterans; this report does not cover them.
[17] There is a discrepancy between national statistics and the data provided by ASIP on the number of people receiving a pension. According to national statistics, 325,863 people received old-age pensions from the social insurance contributory system in 2022; according to ASIP, 183,771 people received social old-age pensions. Some people over retirement age may also receive disability or survivor pensions; as the data are not disaggregated by age, it is not possible to estimate the number.

Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency on Statistics 2023c.

Pension programs are governed by the Law on Insurance and State Pensions, No. 595, 2010, updated by Laws No. 1199 and No. 1200, dated March 18, 2015. There are no private pension funds in Tajikistan, although national legislation allows the creation and implementation of nonstate pensions.
Coverage of the disability pension is difficult to determine.

The MoHSPP is responsible for providing disability certificates; ASIP provides disability pensions. According to the latest statistics, almost all people with disabilities receive either a contributory or a social pension; the official number of people with disabilities corresponds to the number of beneficiaries of disability pensions (figure 4.3). However, many people with disabilities appear not to register, probably because of the difficulty of obtaining and renewing disability certificates and the relatively low level of the monthly pensions (figure 4.4).

FIGURE 4.3 NUMBER OF DISABILITY PENSION BENEFICIARIES AND AVERAGE AMOUNT BY DISABILITY GROUP

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022	
Disability group	No. of beneficiaries	Average pension (TJS)	No. of beneficiaries	Average pension (TJS)	No. of beneficiaries	Average pension (TJS)	No. of beneficiaries	Average pension (TJS)	No. of beneficiaries	Average pension (TJS)
Group I	15105	339,9	15454	323,5	16176	312,6	16863	395,1	17254	392,2
Group II	69880	311,4	71368	307,4	74402	313,1	75652	333,1	76747	329,2
Group III	33356	295,8	33206	284,3	33185	312,7	33466	306	32763	300,3
Children under 18	27555	237,1	28320	241,5	29793	311	31798	307,6	32382	308,5
Total	145896	296,7	148348	291,3	153556	312,5	157779	328,8	159146	325,8

Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency of Social Insurance and Pension (ASIP).

Table 4.2 Eligibility for, duration of, and value of old-age, disability, and survivor pension schemes

Type of pension	Eligibility and duration[a]	Transfer value
Old age	• Men reaching 63 and women reaching 58. • Duration of retirement.	• Seven laws are applicable to calculating the pension amount, creating considerable discrepancies.[b]
Disability	• People with disabilities, subject to assessment and certification in categories I, II, and III.[c] • Paid whether disability occurred before, during, or after entering work. • Disability certificate should be renewed regularly to maintain eligibility.	• Disability group I and II: 70 percent of average monthly salary. • Disability group III: 50 percent of average monthly salary. • Minimum pension for disability groups I and II: 100 percent of minimum old-age pension. • Minimum pension for disability groups I and II: 100 percent. • Minimum pension for disability group III: 50 percent of minimum old-age pension.
Survivor	• Eligible dependents of an insured person who dies. • Children until the age of 18 or up to 23 if students.	• For each family member: 50 percent of breadwinner's salary and no less than 50 percent of minimum old-age pension.

Type of pension	Eligibility and duration[a]	Transfer value
	• Direct relatives if unable to work because of old age or disability	• For single orphans or children of a single mother: No less than 100 percent of minimum old-age pension for each child. • For each disabled family member: 100 percent of breadwinner's average monthly salary and no less than minimum old-age pension.

Notes:

a. The eligibility criteria and application process for social pensions are similar, but the benefits calculation varies.

b. Instructions on the procedure for assignment and payment of unemployment benefit. The instructions are drawn up on the basis of Articles 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Promoting Employment of the Population, Article 169 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, taking into account changes and additions to the Law "On Promoting Employment of the Population."

c. Group I disability includes people who need constant care and cannot work under normal conditions; Group II includes people who do not need care but cannot work under normal conditions. Group III includes people who do not need care and can work but sometimes required easier working conditions (IPHR 2018).

Labor migrants may be eligible for contributory pensions if they can provide evidence of their contributions. In September 2021, Tajikistan and the Russian Federation signed a treaty that entitles labor migrants from Tajikistan to insurance pensions in Russia if they paid social contributions there.

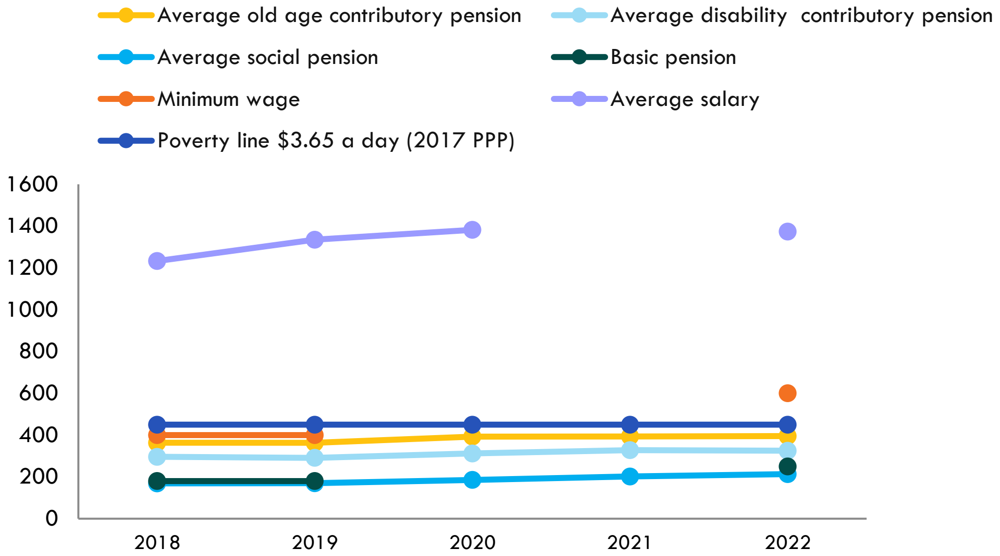
Pension values are reviewed regularly to adjust them for the inflation. The benefit value is based on the set basic pension value, which is adjusted annually and set in consultation with representatives from the labor market and employment sector, trade union, the association of employers, and health professionals.[18] Legislation stipulates the way the benefit value of old-age pensions is calculated, but conflicting legislation, making the calculation of the transfer value nontransparent.

Pension expenditures in Tajikistan represent a smaller percentage of GDP than they do in all other former Soviet republics. The low share of GDP reflects both the country's youthful demographic profile and low participation in the formal labor market, significant labor migration, and low average wages.

Despite regular reviews, pension values remain low compared with the poverty line and the official minimum wage (figure 4.4). High inflation and low salary growth together with the changes in the calculation method explain the deterioration of pension values. According to the World Bank's 2021 Public Expenditure Review, the poorly calibrated switch to a new notional defined contribution (NDC) scheme reduced the average pension by 25 percent. The gap between men's and women's retirement ages coupled with the new NDC is unfavorable to women, who generally have shorter careers and contribution periods than men, increasing the risk of women falling into poverty.

[18] The basic pension is an indicator for calculating pensions and top-ups to them provided under the Law on Insurance and State Pensions.

FIGURE 4.4 VALUE OF PENSIONS AND WAGES, 2018–22



Source: Authors, based on date from the Agency on Statistics and the Agency of Social Insurance and Pension (ASIP).

Note: Data are not available for basic pension and minimum wage in 2020–21 and average wagen 2021.

Recipients of pensions may be entitled to other social protection benefits and services, such as free public transport and social care. However, there is no systematic case management or referral to help pensioners access other services they may need.

People reaching retirement age or fulfilling pension eligibility criteria have to apply for their pension at an ASIP branch. They must fill out a paper application and provide the necessary documents to support their application. The application is free, but many supporting documents are required (box 4.1). Applicants may also incur direct and indirect costs, such as obtaining a disability certificate, requesting copies and duplicates of lost documents, and visiting the ASIP branch or having a designated legal representative do so.

Box 4.1 Documents and information required to apply for a pension

Applicants for a pensions must provide the following information:

- copy of passport or national ID card
- Social Identification Number, link with social and tax contributions
- personal data (street address, phone number, e-mail address)
- information on work and contribution history (work book (employment records book), evidence of all salaries received and payments made)
- copy of dismissal order or salary certificate or disability certificate provided by the State Service of Medical and Social Expertise (under the MoHSPP for applications for a disability pension)
- death certificate and information on relationship with the deceased pensioner if applying for a survivor pension
- information on relationship with disabled family member if applying for a survivor pension
- education certificates for family members in school if applying for a survivor pension.

ASIP and its branches must inform citizens about their rights through public information campaigns and individually when they apply. People who are illiterate or digitally illiterate may not be aware of benefits to which they are entitled. ASIP workers could help applicants overcome accessibility problems during the application process. There are no time limitations to apply, and pension rights are paid retroactively. Application can be rejected if documentation is incomplete, and the verification process can be lengthy and include home visits by ASIP staff. National identification is required at all stages of the application, including by the bank, to create a bank account. At the end of the verification procedure, the ASIP focal point informs the applicant of the decision, in person or by phone. If the pension is approved, the pensioner receives a free bank card from Amonatbank and monthly payments. Pensioners can access their pensions through an automatic teller machine (ATM) or directly from a bank office using their national identity card or passport and the bank card. They can designate relatives to withdraw money. Reconciliation between Amonatbank and ASIP databases is done manually. Some delays occur in detecting inactive accounts or deceased pensioners and regularizing accounts.

Box 4.2 Social tax contributions

Tajikistan's public finance management system includes a range of taxes and revenues managed by the Tax Committee (table 4.2.1).

Box table 4.2.1 Taxes and revenues managed by the Tax Committee

Type of tax	Description
Value added tax (VAT)	Base rate is 18 percent.
Personal income tax (PIT)	Tax is imposed on people living in Tajikistan, who pay progressive rates of 13–23 percent.
Social tax	Employers pay 20–25 percent of employee's gross salary on behalf of their employees. Social security contributions fund social security benefits, including healthcare, pensions, and other social protection programs
Property tax	Tax is levied on property owners.
Other taxes and fees	Examples include vehicle taxes, customs duties, and fees related to permits and license.

According to official statistics, 2.6 million people were employed in 2023, out of working-age population of 5.8 million (Agency on Statistics 2023**a).** However, only 1 million people contributed to social insurance, and the number has plummeted, from over 1.5 million persons in 2018 (ILO 2022). The level of taxation of individuals and companies in the formal economy and the social tax rate for the employers are high compared with regional and international standards and may be a significant deterrent to job creation, particularly for low-wage and other jobs in formal economy (World Bank 2021a).

The gaps between the sizes of the active population and the contributing population and between planned and actual revenues from the social tax contributions are explained partly by the importance of the informal economy and partly by payment evasion. The private sector is dominated by individual entrepreneurs and labor migrants, only a small share of whom makes social insurance contributions. The latest tax code, amended in March 2023, reduced the social tax rate from 25 percent to 20 percent for nongovernmental companies. As a result, term, revenues fell to 93 percent of the previous level. In the longer term, the lower rate may increase the attractiveness of the formal sector. Digitalization of tax declaration and payments is also occurring, to facilitate compliance with tax obligations.

The new tax code increased the insurance contribution employees must pay to 2 percent of salary, up from 1 percent. It is payable to local tax offices monthly. This measure was introduced in 1999 to create incentives for the working population to contribute to the pension system.

Individuals, including labor migrants, may also pay the social tax voluntarily by applying to the local tax authority in their place of residence in Tajikistan. The social tax is collected by the Tax Committee but then used by ASIP to provide benefits. It represented 85.8 percent of total ASIP revenues in 2019.

Sick leave benefits

A temporary disability or sickness benefit is granted if a disease or injury prevents a previously employed individual from returning to work. Sick leave benefits are provided for no more than two consecutive months (up to a maximum of three months a year). If the disability or illness is prolonged, the worker is referred by a doctor or board of doctors at the medical institution where the person is being treated to the State Service of Medical and Social Expertise (under the MoHSPP) to determine the extent of the disability. The benefit can be extended in the case of a severe work injury or chronic illness. If the expert assessment establishes a permanent disability, the person can request a disability pension.

In 2023, 52,266 people (around 2.5 percent of the employed workforce) received sick leave benefits of 60–100 percent of their wages, with benefits based on the applicant's professional experience and number of dependents. The benefit is paid from the first day of loss of working capacity established by a medical certificate delivered by an authorized medical institution. It may also be granted to care for a sick or quarantined family member. In the case of a domestic injury, the benefit is granted from the sixth day of incapacity for work. Temporary disability allowance is not granted if workers have deliberately harmed their health. The benefit is financed by social contributions funds of ASIP but paid out by employers.

Maternity, childbirth, and childcare benefits

National social insurance covers maternity benefits, a childbirth allowance, and a childcare benefit. In 2023, 28,048 women received maternity benefits; 13,556 parents received the childbirth allowance; and 119,473 parents received childcare benefits. All applications are made through employers and paid by the employer out of social contribution funds. Employers must make the necessary declarations to ASIP and organize the payments to the employees.

Maternity benefits are granted for 20 weeks. Pregnant women apply for a benefit by submitting a medical certificate to the administration of the enterprise for which they work. Women are entitled to maternity leave and an allowance equivalent to their full salary for 70 days before childbirth and 70 days after childbirth (140 days in total). In the event of complicated deliveries, the duration of maternity leave and paid allowance increases to 156 days; in the case of multiple births, maternity leave is provided for 180 days. These provisions exceed the international standards of 98 days and 84 days respectively. The benefit is paid regardless of how many days of leave were taken before and after birth. Adoption of newborns qualifies public sector workers for 70 days of paid parental leave.

The childbirth allowance is a one-time payment made upon the birth or adoption of a child. It is paid to the contributing parent applying for it upon submission of the childbirth or adoption certificate issued by the civil registry office, no later than six months after the birth or the adoption. The childbirth allowance is calculated based on the budgetary unit,[19] valued at TJS 72 in 2024:

- first child = 3 budgetary units (TJS 216 in 2024)
- second child = 2 budgetary units (TJS 144 in 2024)
- third and successive children = 1 budgetary unit (TJS 72 in 2024).

In the case of multiple births, the benefit is calculated per child, taking into account the number of children in the family.
The childcare benefit can be requested by the contributing parent who suspended work to look after the child until the child is 18 months old. Leave without pay to care for a child up to the age of three can also be granted. Benefits are granted upon request by the contributing parent, who is entitled to a monthly allowance of 1 budgetary unit (TJS 72 in 2024), far below the minimum wage.

Unemployment benefits

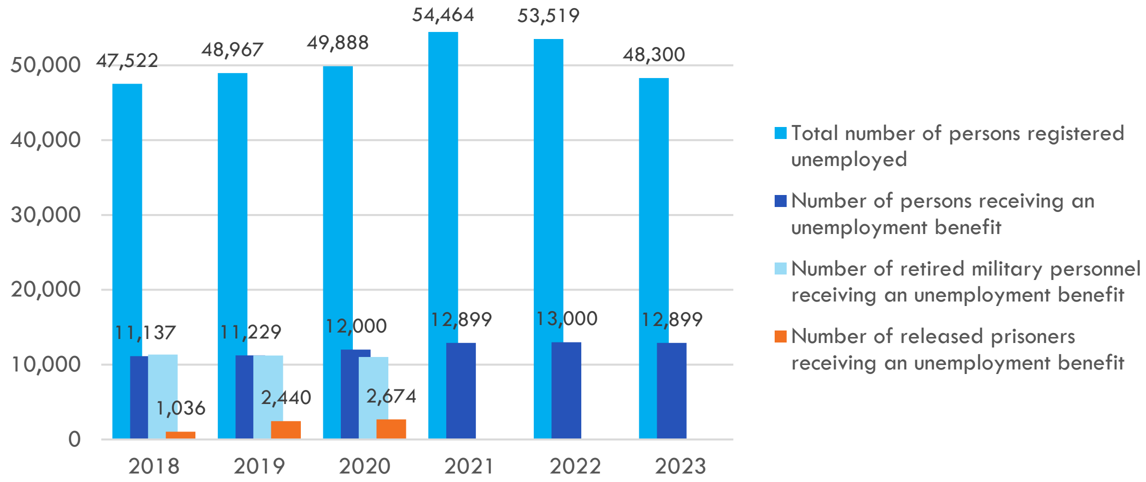
Unemployment benefits provide a minimum income to people who lose their jobs because of staff reduction, liquidation, bankruptcy, or dismissal from the military forces, within the limits of the available budget. They can also be provided to individuals released from detention or compulsory treatment.

Unemployment benefits are paid by ASIP upon request from ALEP. They accounted for about 40 percent of all unemployment benefit disbursements in 2020. ALEP and subnational governments provide unemployment benefits to former military personnel and people released from prison.

Unemployment benefits are provided only to people registered as unemployed with the public employment services. Individuals are eligible for unemployment benefits if they are above 15 and below retirement age, have at least 18 months of professional work experience in the past 3 years, have paid mandatory social insurance contributions, and have no other significant sources of income.

Just 48,300 people (0.8 percent of the working-age population) were registered as unemployed in 2023, among whom 12.899 received benefits (figure 4.5). Eighty percent of recipients were former military personnel.

FIGURE 4.5 NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE AND PEOPLE RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, 2018–23



[19] The budgetary unit is the index for calculations of taxes, duties, other compulsory payments, penalties, social transfers and also for calculation of any value limit (lower or higher) values applied in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan. It is updated each year in the State Budget Law and has been set at TJS 72 for 2024.

Source: Authors, based on data from ILO (2022) and the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population (MoLMEP).
Note: The number of retired military personnel and released prisonners receiveing unemployment benefit was not available for 2021–23.

Unemployment benefits are paid monthly, by ASIP or the subnational authorities, for a maximum of three months. They are administered by the public employment services deciding on granting unemployment benefits no later than on the 11th day from the date of person's registration, along with the decision on recognizing the citizen as unemployed. Benefits decline over time, falling from 50 percent of the average wage the previous six months the first month to 40 percent the second month and 30 percent the third month. If the unemployed individual has a dependent under the age of 15 with a disability, subnational municipalities may approve top-ups from their own funds worth an extra 10 percent of the benefit amount for each dependent. The benefit value cannot be lower than the minimum wage. In 2022, the average size of monthly unemployment benefits in Tajikistan was equivalent to TJS 735—above the minimum wage of TJS 600 but well below the average salary of TJS 1,760. Together with the complexity of the application process, the low level of payment may discourage some unemployed workers from applying for benefits.

Payment of unemployment benefits may be terminated, suspended, or reduced if the recipient undertakes training or public work, engages in temporary work, starts receiving a pension, or refuses two suitable job offers. For recipients who are entitled to a pension in less than one year, the payment of unemployment benefits is extended until they receive a pension.

Public employment services at the local level process the application for unemployment benefits together with the registration as unemployed. The application form is filled out on paper and submitted with a large number of supporting documents.[20] The registries of unemployed individuals are mainly paper-based and subject to insufficient cross-referenced validation by the central government agencies. Validation and quality assurance are carried out by subnational municipalities in coordination with ALEP, MoLMEP, and the Supervision Service, but the workforce is insufficient to undertake regular validation and quality assurance at the level of public employment services managing the applications and maintaining the registries.

Social Assistance

Social assistance in Tajikistan consists mainly of the TSA, which consolidated and replaced the energy compensation and school children allowances for low-income families under a single social assistance one. The TSA, administered by SASPP, has become the national flagship social assistance initiative. It seeks to improve the living standards of the poorest families.

Other social assistance programs include the social pensions program, administered by ASIP, which provides old-age or disability pensions to people who made insufficient social contributions; a national school feeding program, administered by the MoES, which is progressively expanding; and cash allowances for children living with HIV/AIDS, implemented by the MOHSPP (box 4.3).

[20] Information required includes average wages for the last 18 months from the last place of work (salary slips), passport or other identity document, work book (labor records book), document confirming professional qualification, social insurance certificate, certificate from the tax authorities confirming that the individual is not an entrepreneur, and a certificate from the state social insurance agency confirming that the potential beneficiary is not a pensioner. Failure to provide even one of these documents can deny a person from being registered as unemployed.

Box 4.3 Cash allowances for children living with HIV/AIDS

In 2010, Tajikistan established a program for children under 16 living with HIV/AIDS. In 2023, it supported 823 children.

The program is fully financed from the state budget and consists of a monthly cash allowance of TJS 476 (seven budgetary units) in 2023, paid to the legal representative of the child. To receive the benefit, the legal representative must apply to the local office of the Commission on Child Rights, providing the child's birth certificate, identity documents, and a medical certificate. Payments are made through Amonatbank.

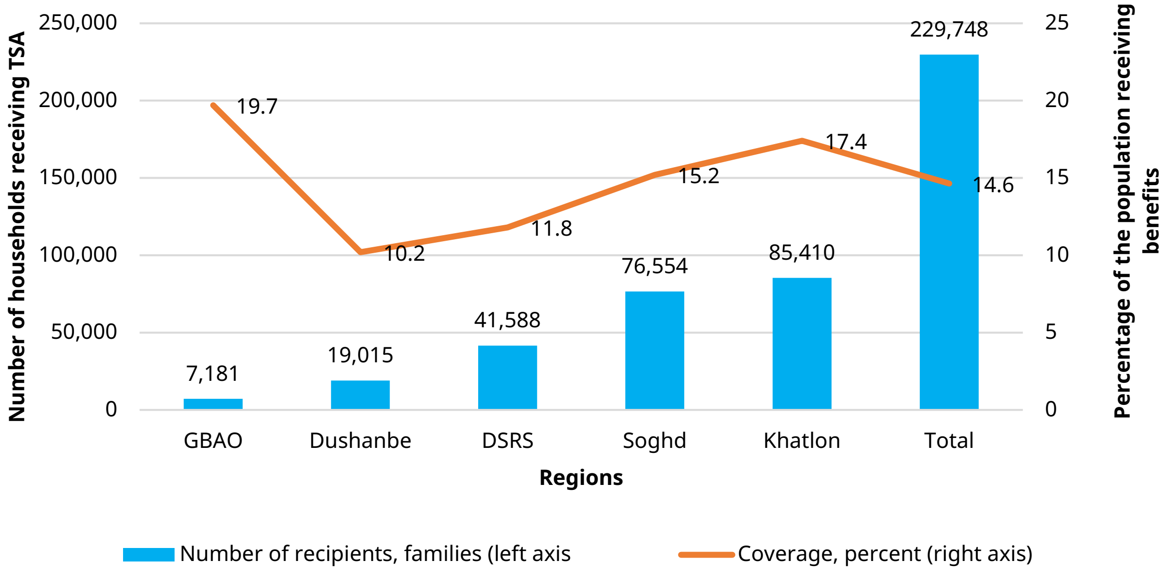
Targeted Social Assistance

TSA was launched as a pilot in two districts in 2011, with the support of the European Union and the World Bank. It provides quarterly unconditional cash transfers to targeted families for one year. It can be renewed if the family's socioeconomic situation does not improve.

The program was extended to all 68 districts in 2021, in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In 2023, 241,758 families received TSA, about two-thirds of the population living in poverty. The coverage varies across regions (figure 4.6).

Application to TSA is free, but the process and the documentation requirements are cumbersome and lengthy, disincentivizing some people from applying. Distribution of the program varies across localities, ranging from 10 percent to 20 percent depending on the accessibility of services. Households are informed of their application results by the district SASPP staff. Ineligible households are entitled to reapply after six months if their socioeconomic situation worsens. Eligible households receive quarterly cash payments made to their Amonatbank accounts. They can withdraw cash from an Amonatbank branch or from decentralized offices at the *jamoats*. If a household does not withdraw cash within six months of its transfer, the amount automatically goes back to the state budget. For other social protection cash transfers, Amonatbank services and charges are paid from the state budget at a rate of 0.8 percent.[21]

FIGURE 4.6 COVERAGE OF TARGETED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE, BY REGION, 2022



Source: Authors, based on information from the State Agency for Social Protection of the Population (SASPP).

[21] According to the Decree No. 488, dated August 30, 2024, the charges for Amonatbank services is established at a rate of 0.5 percent.

Regular TSA payments are funded by the state budget. The annual benefit per household increased from 8 inflation-adjusted budgetary units (TJS 512) before July 2023 to 9 (TJS 612) in July–December 2023 and 10 (TJS 720) in January 2024. Top-up payments per child under 16 of 0.5 budgetary units (34 TJS) in 2023 and 1.0 units (72 TJS) in 2024 were also added, per Government Resolution No. 548 dated, November 23, 2022. The government is planning a progressive increase of the TSA benefit value, raising both the basic annual value and the children's allowance, starting in January 2025, when the TSA benefit will be 11 budgetary unit (around TJS 800) and 2 budgetary units (around 150 TJS) per child under 16.[22] According to the government, the limited benefit value and scope of the TSA reflects state budget financial constraints.

Eligibility for the TSA program also entitles households to other types of social benefits, such as subsidized medical treatment of serious illnesses, funeral grants (of TJS 1,100 per family), subsidized higher education and scholarships for orphaned children, and free vocational training and other social protection and social support measures determined by subnational governments. TSA beneficiaries will also be entitled to economic inclusion services that are being developed, including short-term training and investment grant for income generating activity.

Eligibility for TSA is determined using a proxy means test (PMT)–based targeting approach. The PMT formula uses proxy and observable indicators to estimate the economic status of families and determine their eligibility for social assistance. In Tajikistan, 22 indicators are used for families living in urban areas and 44 indicators for families in rural areas. They include the level of education of the head of the family, the number of family members, the number of students in rural households, main sources of financial income, property, the plot of land near the house and other lands owned by the family, the condition of the residence, and the number and types of livestock.
On October 6, 2022, the MoHSPP adopted Order No. 738, which introduced a new PMT formula based on the latest household survey, effective from January 1, 2023. The new formula is expected to increase coverage of the poorest deciles and reduce the number of beneficiaries in higher deciles. The TSA process and results evaluation is expected to be conducted by the MHSPP and World Bank in 2025, which will allow to assess inclusion and exclusion errors.

Identification and registration of families is administered at the *jamoat* level, based on paper-based applications. Other documents have to be submitted with the application, including copies of identity cards for all the members of the families, certificates of disability, and documents confirming the presence of orphans or other vulnerable groups in the family.[23] Information is verified by the *jamoat* representative and SASPP district office, which consists of just two officers. The verified data are uploaded to the online ASIST database at the district level by one of the two dedicated SASPP staff to the TSA data entry, automatically establishing eligibility by the central system using the PMT formula. In the most densely populated areas, managing the administration of the TSA program takes up most staff time, to the detriment of other activities and programs.

Social pensions

Noncontributory, or social, pensions are provided to individuals who have reached retirement age (old-age pension), people with disabilities (disability pension), and their survivors (survivor pension) who are not

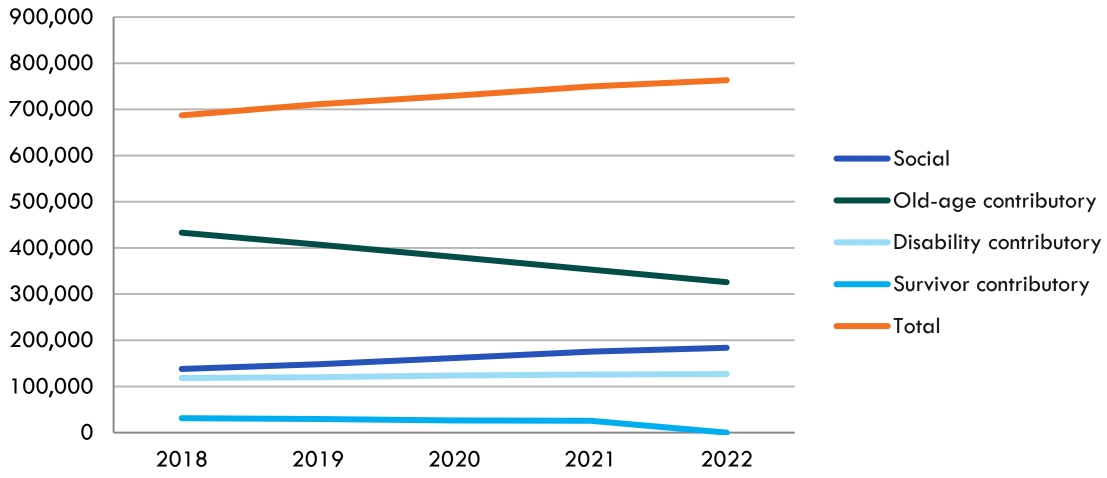
[22] Decree No. 488, issued August 30, 2024, introduced top-up payments of one budgetary unit (about 72 TJS) per household beginning in September 2024 and two budgetary units (about 150 TJS) beginning in January 2025 for households with two and more people with disabilities and two budgetary units for households with a member 80 years old or older beginning in January 2025.

[23] There is inconsistency between the government's Decree No. 328, dated June 21, 2018, and MOHSPP's Order No. 384, dated May 21, 2020, regarding the documents that must be submitted to apply for TSA.

benefiting from a contributory pension. People eligible for more than one type of pension must choose which one they want to receive.

Social pension coverage increased steadily between 2018 and 2022, but the benefits it provides remain lower than the poverty line. In 2022, 183,771 people received social pensions, including 159,146 adults with disabilities and 32,382 children with disabilities.

Figure 4.7 Number of pension recipients, 2018–22



Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency on Statistics 2023b

The social pension benefit ranges from 60 percent to 200 percent of the basic pension (TJS 250 in 2023), depending on the type of pension (old-age, disability, or survivor); the disability group; the number of dependent family members; and other circumstances (table 4.3). In 2022, the average monthly pensions were TJS 213 for social pensions, TJS 325 contributory disability pensions, and TJS 395 for contributory old-age pensions. All are lower than the monthly minimum wage of TJS 600 and the poverty line of TJS 450 (corresponding to the $3.65 a day in 2017 PPP threshold for lower-middle-income countries).

Table 4.3 Pension benefit amounts 2023

Type of pension	Benefit amount (percent of basic monthly pension of TJS 250)
Old-age social pension	60
Disability social pension	
Group I disability	100
Group II disability	80
Group III disability	60
Survivor pension (if child has lost both parents)	
One child in the family	60–100
Two children in the family	90–150
Three children in the family	100–200
Children with disabilities who lost a conscript parent (or guardian) serving in military forces	100

Pension entitlement is determined based on a paper-based application submitted to an ASIP office by the person seeking the pension or his or her representative. The application should be accompanied by a set of documents that includes document confirming the person's identity, age, place of residence, and citizenship. Certificates of disability are required for people applying for a disability pension. After reviewing the application, the ASIP office informs the citizens of the outcome. Information on entitlements and the application process are not always widely accessible depending on literacy levels and physical access to the services. The procedure is considered cumbersome, as the documents required can be difficult and costly to obtain, discouraging application, especially given the low benefit values. Benefits are paid through Amonatbank.

School feeding program

The school feeding program was initiated in 1999, by the World Food Programme (WFP). In 2023, an agreement was signed between the government and the WFP to gradually transition school feeding activities to the MoES. In 2024, the MoES implemented school feeding in 43 schools, serving 25,723 schoolchildren (up from 15,400 in 2022). The MoES provides cash transfers to the schools to organize daily meals. In 2023, the WFP provided daily hot meals to 552,800 schoolchildren (49 percent of them girls) in grades 1–4 in 200 schools across 52 rural districts. The WFP covers 70 percent of the budget for school feeding, with the government providing 17 percent and parent-teachers associations providing 13 percent (MoES).

Active Labor Market Policies

Active labor market policies (ALMPs) are publicly financed interventions intended to improve the functioning of the labor market by inducing changes in labor demand and labor supply, as well as their matching process (Ernst and others). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) database classifies ALMPs into six broad categories:

- training
- employment incentives
- direct job creation
- start-up incentives
- public employment services and administration
- sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation.

ALMPs can be associated with social protection transfers, such as unemployment insurance, and unemployment assistance protecting workers against labor market risks. ALEP implements state policies in the areas of labor relations and employment promotion. It is responsible for (a) employment promotion advisory services and job matching, including job fairs; (b) job quotas; (c) training; (d) assistance with self-employment (interest-free loans); and (e) public works. It is also involved in the management of unemployment benefits (see section on social insurance).

ALEP consists of 1 central agency, 5 regional offices, and 68 district-level branches, which serve as public employment services centers. It works through a network of 74 public employment services across the country. In 2023, 389 workers were employed in public employment services, including 131 women (ALEP).

The costs of these services and programs are covered by the government budget, complemented by external funding for specific projects. Between 2011 and 2022, the government increased the state budget for labor and employment by 118 percent in nominal terms. Despite the increase, it remains lower than the average for countries in Europe and Central Asian. This budget includes skills training (56.6 percent of the budget), unemployment benefits (30.5 percent), paid public work (7.7 percent), and job intermediation and matching services (5.2) percent. Job quotas are financed directly by employers.

Employment services

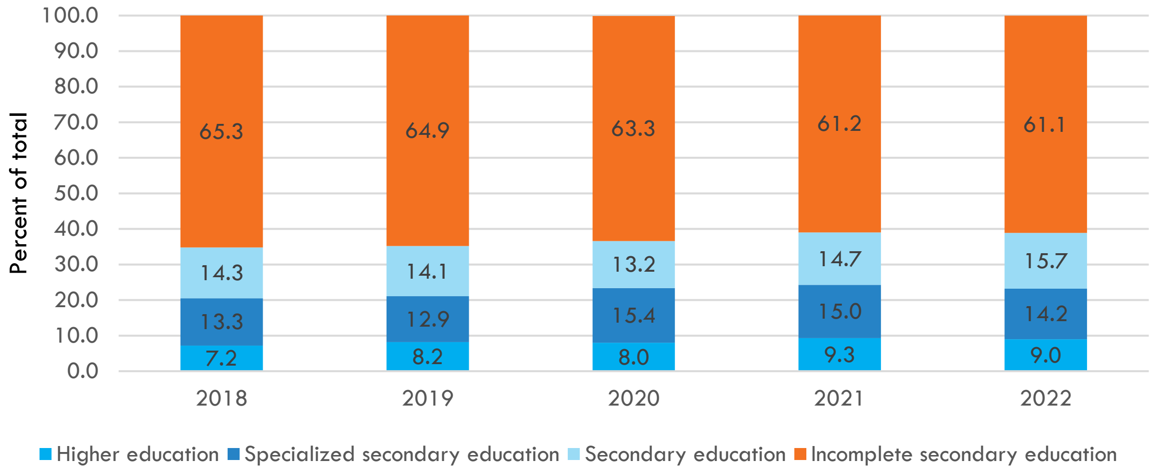
The target coverage of employment services (job intermediation and matching) is high, given the large size of the unemployed active workforce (estimated at 2.3 million people.) In 2022, 110,484 people were registered with the public employment services as seeking a job, including over 5,300 registered as unemployed. As of January 1, 2024, 48,300 people were officially registered as unemployed (MoLMEP n.d.) (table 4.4). Women and young people are underrepresented, despite their higher vulnerability to unemployment. In 2022, youth (people 15–29) accounted for 30.7 percent and women for 24.0 percent of the people registered with the public employment services. The majority of people who registered as unemployed have low skill and competencies profiles (figure 4.8).

Table 4.4 Number of people participating in active labor market programs, 2023

Item	Number
Registered as unemployed	48,300
Receiving unemployment benefits	12,899
Beneficiaries of public works	6,132
Beneficiaries of self-employment preferential loans	3,323
Beneficiaries of job quotas	815[a]
Students in adult learning centers	41,641
Women	25,196
People with disabilities	167

Source: Authors, based on information from the Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population (MoLMEP).
Note: a. Figure is for 2022.

FIGURE 4.8 LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF PEOPLE REGISTERED AS UNEMPLOYED, 2018–22



Source: Agency on Statistics 2023a

Unemployed people often choose not to register in the public employment services if they are not entitled to unemployment benefits. In 2022, the employment services received 18,935 requests for workers from 1,214 enterprises, both private and public (Agency on Statistics 2022**a).** Job vacancies registered through the public employment services are limited, because of insufficient resources to incentivize employers to use them to recruit workers.

Although public employment services do not attract many enterprises at scale, they do a good job helping the unemployed find jobs and offer guidance and counselling. In 2022, the public employment services helped 74,529 people find employment, including through job quotas and public works. In support of entrepreneurial activities, 3,323 unemployed people engaged in business activities and received interest-free loans in 2023 (Agency on Statistics 2022a).

Skills development programs

The lack and inadequacy of skills of job seekers partly explain the high level of unemployment in Tajikistan despite strong economic growth. Skills development programs prioritize unemployed people with disabilities and long-term unemployed citizens.

In 2023, 2,500 people benefited from training through the network of 46 adult learning centers (ALCs) across the country. ALCs provide certified training in 119 specialties. In 2022, 10 new professions were added, including nurse educator, barman, packer, secretary, and carpenter. Public employment services refer potential trainees to the training programs and ALCs.

Training programs and ALCs received limited resources in recent year years. As a result, their curricula and equipment are out of date, and they have difficulty retaining and recruiting human resources. Demand for training programs from both job seekers and employers is therefore limited. Many job seekers cannot afford the indirect costs of training, such as transport and opportunity costs.

In 2022, the national assessment of education and skills gap undertaken jointly by MoLMEP and UNICEF found that 31 of 119 surveyed enterprises (26 percent) did not express interest in cooperating with training institutions (UNICEF 2022a). They were concerned about the quality of the teaching at the institutions. The 2022 EU–commissioned labor market review also noted that lack of resources to mobilize instructors and equipment was hampering private sector interest in these programs.

Female participation in skills development is significantly lower than male participation. The following factors contribute to their lower participation:

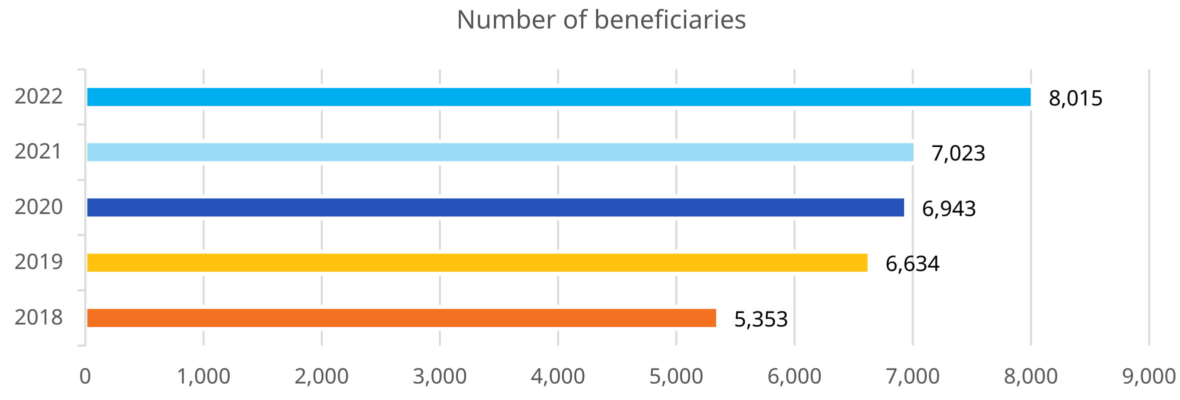
- location of facilities
- lack of appropriate student accommodation
- lack of courses in nontraditional areas in which women can find work
- lack of job placement support
- paucity of women instructors
- high costs and limited family investment in girls' education
- widespread gender stereotypes about women's employment.

In September 2023, the government established a new committee for primary and secondary vocational education to strengthen the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector. The TVET Committee is finalizing all legal regulation documents. One of the committee's priorities is to prepare a critical mass of skilled workers to ignite development. Another is to make TVET more attractive to young people, especially girls, in order to increase the share of women in the workforce.

Job quotas

Tajikistan promotes the employment of vulnerable population groups by establishing job quotas in state enterprises and institutions. Quotas are determined by ALEP and representatives of employers' associations and professional unions, based on labor market demand and the population's needs. Job quotas are reserved for people with disabilities, orphans, veterans, people released from detention or compulsory treatment, single parents of young children with disabilities, parents of children under 18 years and recent high school graduates referred by state employment agencies. ALEP implements the program, which enrolled 8,015 people in 2022 (table 4.5).

Table 4.5 Number of job quota beneficiaries, 2018–22



Source: ALEP (2024).

Potential beneficiaries are verified for eligibility and referred by the public employment services to potential employers. People employed through the programs are remunerated by their employers, who are supposed to ensure that the job and its conditions correspond to the person's profile and capacities. No system monitors how long these people are employed; the current reporting system reveals only whether the jobs reserved for the vulnerable categories are filled.

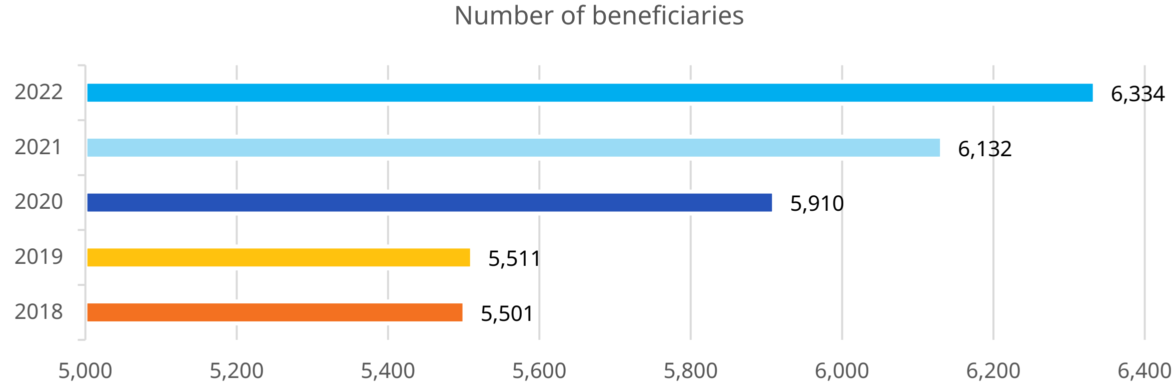
The job quota program is complemented by a system of tax concessions to support the employment of vulnerable people. If an enterprise has more than 20 workers, 5 percent of its jobs must be reserved for people with special needs if it is to receive a tax deduction.[24] For businesses with fewer than 20 employees, the 5 percent rule does not apply.

Public works programs

Tajikistan's public works program aims to develop and promote employment by engaging people with low skills in temporary public works organized by government authorities, enterprises, institutions, and organizations. The program is implemented with the support of the employment services centers. It targets unemployed workers who just stopped receiving unemployment benefits. The conditions for the program are determined in coordination with representatives from ALEP, trade unions, associations of employers, and health professionals. The health status, age, and work background of the applicants are assessed before they are admitted to the program.

Employers are predominantly departments of local governments or public enterprises, who hire the workers for jobs such cotton harvesting and lawn mowing. The public works are financed by the employers, which may receive financing support from the subnational authorities and ALEP. The amount of transfer to each employer is determined by ALEP on a case-by-case basis. The jobseeker signs a temporary employment contract with the employer, usually for a one-month duration, which can be extended for up to three months. In 2022, 6,334 people were engaged in public works.

Figure 4.9 Number of beneficiaries of public works, 2018–22



Source: ALEP (2024).

Social Services

Social care services are noncash interventions, such as family support services to prevent family breakdown, child protection services to respond to abuse and neglect, alternative care for children, and social work support for people with disabilities and older people. They address the interaction between social, economic, and health vulnerabilities and needs. The social service workforce provides direct outreach, case management, and referral services to children and families (UNICEF 2019). It also often provides immediate relief to people affected by shocks, crises, and emergency situations.

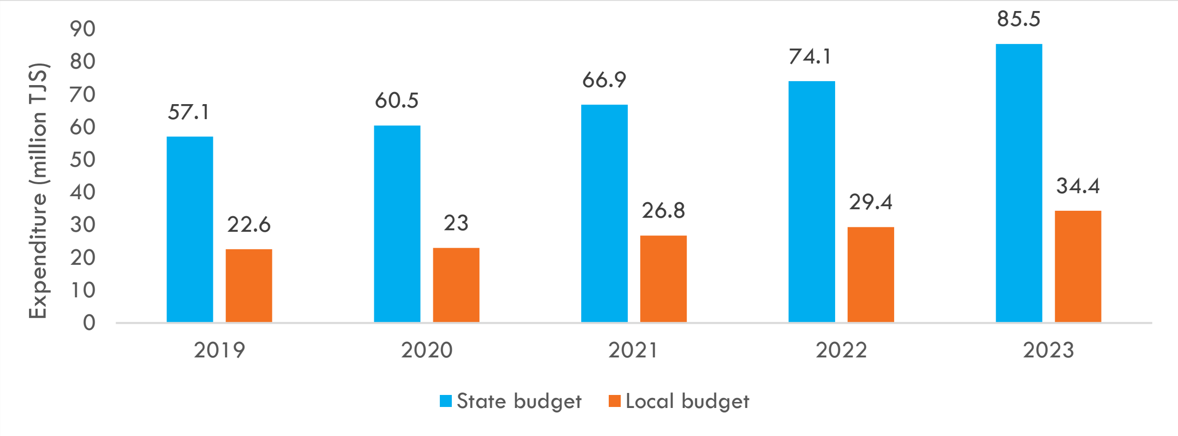
Social care services are considered part of the social protection sector in Tajikistan. The government aims to enhance the overall social protection delivery system and access to services for existing social protection beneficiaries and vulnerable groups to effect sustainable change. The CODI assessment analyzes the social services that fall under the MOHSPP's social protection mandate. It includes social services provided to individuals who cannot, either partly or fully, care for themselves, at home, in day care, or in residential care and protection services.

Tajikistan's social protection system includes the provision of social services through residential care, daycare, and home-based care for children, people with disabilities, and older people. The system is moving from predominantly residential care to community- and home-based care, a gradual transition that is being supported by a network of civil society organizations (CSOs).

The amount of financing for social protection purposes from general government expenditure increased from TJS 52.5 million in 2019 to TJS 74.1 million in 2023 (figure 4.10).[25] The number of children receiving services rose from 5,772 in 2018 to 6,807 in 2023. In 2023, there were 59 daycare centers, including 31 for rehabilitation of children with disabilities, 23 centers for people in difficult situations, 2 for supporting people living with HIV/AIDS, 1 for victims of domestic violence, 1 for victims of human trafficking , and 1 for people with tuberculosis.

[26] This financing was approved by the Minister of Health and Social Protection on March 19, 2020. https://www.covidlawlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TJK-COVID19-CPRP_19032020_Approved.pdf

FIGURE 4.10 STATE AND LOCAL SPENDING ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CARE SERVICES, 2019–23



Source: Authors, based on data from the Ministry of Finance.

Social services are implemented by SASPP, its network of offices, and CSOs contracted by the MoHSPP across the country. Free social services are provided based on individual needs, temporarily or permanently. Working with CSOs began in 2009. CSOs now provide almost half of all social services . They are selected through a tendering process. The regulatory framework does not allow private companies to provide social services.

The financing of social services is often devolved to subnational authorities (table 4.6). Despite budget increases in recent years, resources from the subnational governments are limited and unstable and cannot address the increasing demand.

Table 4.6 Share of social services financed by subnational budget, by type of service

Type of service	Percent financed by subnational budget
Regional social services centers for older people and people with disabilities	100.0
Home-based social services units	100.0
Institutions for older people	92.1
Specialized institutions for adults	86.9
Specialized institutions for children	86.7

Source: ILO 2022

Demographic changes have put considerable strains on social protection and social care services in recent decades. The number of older people has increased steadily, and a growing number of them are living alone and/or experiencing physical and mental disability. Physical and mental disabilities among children and adults are increasingly detected, and demand for rehabilitation has soared.

In 2020, the social protection system's Preparedness and Response Plan to COVID-19 estimated that more than 200,000 older people were living alone, 79,000 children were living without parental care, 5,100 people were living with tuberculosis, and 800 people were living with HIV/AIDS.[26] According to official Tajik statistics, in 2023, 162,842 people were registered to receive disability pensions.

[26] This financing was approved by the Minister of Health and Social Protection on March 19, 2020. https://www.covidlawlab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/TJK-COVID19-CPRP_19032020_Approved.pdf

Community- and home-based social services

The government has made commitments, including in the NSPS, for a gradual transition from residential institutions to community- and home-based social care provided by the Social Assistance at Home Unit (SAHU), as community-based services provided in dedicated centers or at home are considered more appropriate and efficient than residential institutions (box 4.4). Residential institutions have very limited coverage and provide limited services, preventing residents from participating in society, perpetuating marginalization and stigma, and limiting opportunities for rehabilitation. Community-based services have the potential to provide individualized services with a greater involvement from the user and its family and community.

Box 4.4 Reforming social services for people with disabilities through community-based rehabilitation centers

The National Rehabilitation Program for Persons with Disabilities 2017–2020 was developed with the participation of organizations of people with disabilities. It empowers people with disabilities and their families by trying to secure their active participation in social life.

Primary health care units at the community level are ill-equipped to provide nonmedical rehabilitation services. The program therefore planned to provide more adequate rehabilitation services in specialized centers and community-based rehabilitation (CBR) centers. The development of CBR is supported by the CBR network, which brings together state bodies, public organizations, established groups of parents of children with disabilities, the Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities, and private sector and other entities at the community level engaged in working with or supporting people with disabilities.

Home-based care social services are provided in 43 of 68 districts, through SASPP's network of regional and district offices. In 2022, 5,328 people benefitted from SAHU services. Priority for home-based social services is given to people who have lost their autonomy and mobility and require constant support and care because of old age, disability, illness, or the loss of family support; veterans are also prioritized.
People who pose a threat to their families or social workers are not entitled to receive social services at home.

In each district, a team of social workers provides services to beneficiaries. They include performing household tasks and basic medical assistance and helping with administrative tasks, such as submitting applications for social insurance or social assistance, obtaining identity cards, and applying for and withdrawing pensions. Each social workers makes two visits a week to 8–10 individuals in the *jamoat*. NGOs also provide home-based care, through social contracts with the state. About 800 people were served in 2023 under these contracts. [27]

Six regional social service centers provide support to older people and people with disabilities in three cities (Dushanbe, Khujand, and Istaravshan) and three districts (Devashtich, Vash, and Kushoniyon). These centers provide medical, psychological, pedagogical, legal, and social care. Social services are provided based on applications from individuals, their legal representative, a public authority, the municipality, or public associations. For other social protection benefits, applicants, or their representative, must provide a series of documents and evidence, including an identity document; medical certificates; information on material and living conditions and family composition; and certificates on pension tax, benefits, and allowances.[28]

[27] Interviews conducted by the authors and information provided by SASPP
[28] According to interviews conducted as part of the CODI, most beneficiaries of these services also receive pensions.

Social protection services also verify the information with the local authorities. The special commission of the social service considers the documents and makes a decision within 30 working days.

Daycare

Health centers and community-based organizations (CBOs) contracted by the MoHSPP and funded through the state budget provide daycare services to people with disabilities and older people. In 2023, 59 CBOs were working with SASPP to provide daycare services to 3,752 people, and 10 government daycare centers provided services to over 1,100 children and 3,500 adults.

Daycare centers provide various services, including rehabilitation, education (home schooling), and shopping; aides also accompany beneficiaries to rehabilitation centers and doctors. Beneficiaries can come daily for six months only, because of capacity limitations, although management of the center can decide to extend care beyond this period. In Vakhsh and Kushoniyon, centers provide only home-based services, because they do not have the needed workspace.

Four of the regional social care centers also provide seasonal 24/7 shelter for homeless and stateless people without IDs. Their capacities are limited, however, and shelters are often full, especially in winter.

Residential institutions

Although significant effort has been put into developing community- and home-based services in recent year, residential care still provides care for a larger number of people. Various ministries and departments manage these facilities (table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Management of residential institutions

Ministry or department in charge	Number of institutions
Departments of Education and Science	64
Ministry of Education	14
Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population	3
Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population	3
Total	84

Several types of semi-closed institutions provide care to people who cannot live independently. Residents of residential care facilities usually have no relatives, or their relatives are unwilling or unable to take care of them.

Placement in residential care is often the consequence of extreme poverty. For placement in residential institutions, individuals or their legal representative apply to SASPP or are referred by health or social services, which provide the required documents, including medical expertise certificates. Individuals may be placed in residential institutions without their consent if they are deprived of care and support from relatives or other legal representatives and are unable to independently meet their vital needs. In this case, the decision is made by a court of justice on the recommendation of the social protection or health care authorities.

In 2021, 6,482 children lived in residential institutions, including 4,554 boys and 1,929 girls (UNICEF 2022a). A key achievement has been the completion of the reorganization of baby homes as family and child support centers. The MoHSPP reports that, in 2009, approximately 250 children were placed in baby homes; as of 2023, that figure had been reduced by 70 percent. Reforms of the baby homes were complemented by the MoHSPP's increase in the commissioning of daycare centers run by CSOs. There were two such centers in 2008 and 58 in 2023, 33 of which focus on children with disabilities.

Of the country's seven specialized boarding institutions, four are neuropsychiatric institutions and three are specialized boarding institutions for older people and people with disabilities located in Tursunzoda, Panjakent, and Yovon, two of which also accept children with disabilities. Together these institutions care for 1,255 people, including 87 children, according to the MoHSPP. In 2020, the occupancy rate of all seven specialized institutions averaged 87 percent. The state of infrastructure, equipment, and services does not meet modern requirements, and the organization of social services and the implementation of individual care plans are carried out irregularly. The institutions lack sufficient specialists in medical and social rehabilitation for people with disabilities.

Institutions withhold 90 percent of residents' old-age pensions in exchange for permanent residence. They do not accept seniors who do not receive pensions. Seniors thus must first register for a pension before applying for residency in a residential institution. The four regional 24/7 social care centers issue IDs and then pensions to people in difficult life situations, to enable them to enter residential institutions.

Protection of children and women

The state provides social and legal protection against violence and abuse. The Committee on Women and Family Affairs oversees the provision of services to the victims of violence and abuse.[29] Victims of violence are entitled to free medical, psychological, legal, and social assistance at a support center and placement in a temporary shelter. Victims are also entitled to legal counselling and support. Support centers and departments for the medical and social rehabilitation of victims provide immediate assistance and refer victims for treatment and rehabilitation. Medical and social rehabilitation centers or units are established at city, district, and central hospitals and polyclinics. The costs of victims' care is paid by the perpetrators.

Temporary shelters are available only in hospitals, for a maximum of 14 days.[30] The Committee on Women and Family Affairs cooperates with NGOs and refers victims to them. In addition, the NGO Korvoni Umed operates seven shelters at which victims can remain for three to six months. These shelters provide medical, psychological, and legal services as well as vocational training courses, giving women the opportunity to acquire a profession and find a job.

Crisis centers and organizations that work with victims of violence do not conduct large-scale information campaigns. As a result, awareness of the problem remains low, especially in rural and remote areas.[31]
The Commissions of Child Rights (CCRs) are one of several structures and institutions in Tajikistan that protects children's rights. They operate throughout the country, down to the level of districts/towns. Commissions render services and take concrete measures regarding children and families in need, the placement of children in alternative or residential care, access to education, the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, child-related issues in cases of divorce disputes, and many other areas.

The structure of the CCRs follows the administrative division of the country, with offices at the central (one national CCR); province (three CCRs, including one in an autonomous province and one in Dushanbe City) **;** and district/town (including 13 local commissions under the Direct Rule Districts) levels. There are no CCRs at the levels of settlements or *jamoats*. The local executive bodies of state power and self-government bodies

29 Regulation on the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, approved by Government Decision No. 608, dated December 28, 2006).
30 The regional hospitals in Bokhtar, the Kulyab Maternity Hospital, and one room at the National Medical Centre and one at Maternity Hospital No. 2 in Dushanbe provide up to 14 days of shelter services for female victims of domestic violence.
31 Assessment of gender-based violence against women and girls in target areas of the Republic of Tajikistan. UNDP in Tajikistan with the support of the Rule of Law and Access to Justice initiative.

of towns and districts are responsible for implementing state policy to protect the rights of children.[32] The availability and quality of local service providers; the accessibility of services (in mountainous and remote areas, for example); and human capital varies across regions (human capital is strongly affected by out-migration). All CCR members are volunteers; the composition of the CCR is partly defined by regulations.

Identification of child protection cases follows the provisions of the 2017 Regulation on the Commission on Child Rights, children are allowed to apply on their own. About 1 out of every 10 cases is referred to local CCR meetings for review and decision. The rest, including cases regarding guardianship and trusteeship, are handled by the secretaries under the supervision of the CCR chair. The referral mechanism and management of child protection cases do not exist as formal procedures; referral practices depend very much on subjective views and the availability of service and care placement options. Cases handled by the CCR secretary are managed by examination of relevant documents, site visits, meetings, and inquiries from relevant institutions (such as schools, health facilities, citizen registries, and social protection institutions). After the CCR Secretary collects the necessary information, the local CCR reviews each case and renders its decision.

[32] See the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Protection of Child Right, amended January 3, 2024.

Social Protection Needs across the Life cycle

Social Protection for Children

Despite the country's economic growth and the decline in poverty, children in Tajikistan are still disproportionately affected by poverty and face a range of deprivation in health, nutrition and education, which the current social protection systems only partially address. In 2022, the population of children and adolescents under 20 numbered over 4 million people, representing 43 percent of the total population.[33] This age group is growing and will continue to grow in the coming years.

In 2022, 3.3 percent of all children in Tajikistan were living in extreme poverty (less than $2.15 a day) and another 16.7 percent lived in poverty (less than $3.65 a day) (Salmeron-Gomez and others 2023). The incidence of poverty remains higher among children than adults, especially in rural areas (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023). Children living in poor households are at much higher risk of school dropout and poor nutrition than other children, reducing their opportunities in life. In 2017, 69 percent of children 1–14 experienced some type of violent discipline (Agency on Statistics 2017).

Child malnutrition has declined. Between 2012 and 2022, the share of children under five who were stunted (too short for age) decreased from 25.7 percent to 13.1 percent, and the share that were wasted (underweight for age) fell from 9.9 percent to 5.6 percent.[34] Malnutrition prevalence is still well above the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030 targets, however.

For many children, lack of civil registration hampers access to education, basic services, and social protection. In 2017, 9 percent of children did not have a birth certificate, and 4 percent of births were not registered with the civil authorities (Agency on Statistics 2017). An unpublished study conducted by UNICEF (UNICEF 2023a) on civil registration estimates the cost of obtaining a birth certificate at TJS 47–TJS 286 per child. During this period, the one-time childbirth benefit was TJS 68–TJS 204.

Access to preschool services is still very limited, with just 15 percent of children three to six enrolled in 2021 (NSPS 2022). So few children attend preschool because the number of public and other free schools is limited and the costs of private schools prohibitive for most families.

In contrast, access to primary and secondary education is almost universal, with 96.9 percent of children 7–17 enrolled in 2021. These figures have risen since 2015.

Many children with disabilities or health needs are not registered with the authorities, because of fear of stigma; their numbers and needs are underreported. Only 12 specialized schools offer education services for children with disabilities and special needs.

The Action Matrix of the Mid-term Development Program for 2021–25 includes a child poverty indicator, and the social protection of mothers and children is one of the main priority of the National Social Protection Strategy adopted in 2022. The Strategy aims to create a favorable environment to support the development of children, especially vulnerable children. Children's protection and children's development have a

[34] https://data.who.int/indicators/i/5F8A486 Joint Malnutrition Estimates issued by WHO, UNICEF, and World Bank in 2023

[34] https://data.who.int/indicators/i/5F8A486 Joint Malnutrition Estimates issued by WHO, UNICEF, and World Bank in 2023

significant place in national social protection systems. Interventions targeting the children are limited, however. Tajikistan does not provide a universal child benefit or financial assistance for children's education (ABND 2019). Because information and data are not disaggregated, it is difficult to evaluate the number of children that benefit from each social protection intervention and the resources dedicated to addressing their needs.

Social protection interventions targeting children consist mainly of social insurance benefits provided by the contributory social protection system. Contributing parents could claim a one-time childbirth benefit of TJS 68– TJS 204 in 2023 and a monthly childcare allowance of TJS 68 provided over a maximum of 18 months. The incentive to apply for these benefits is low, given their low value and the administrative burden and cost of providing birth certificates and other documents.

Children who have lost one or both parents can also benefit from social insurance pensions of 60–200 percent of the basic pension of TJS 250 beginning July 1, 2023. The size of the pension depends on the number of children (Table 4.2). The monthly average survivor pension was TJS 413 in 2021 (Agency on Statistics 2023b. In 2018, just over half of the estimated 50,800 children with disabilities in Tajikistan, were benefiting from a basic social pension. In 2024, children under 16 living with HIV/AIDS were also eligible for a monthly allowance of TJS 72.

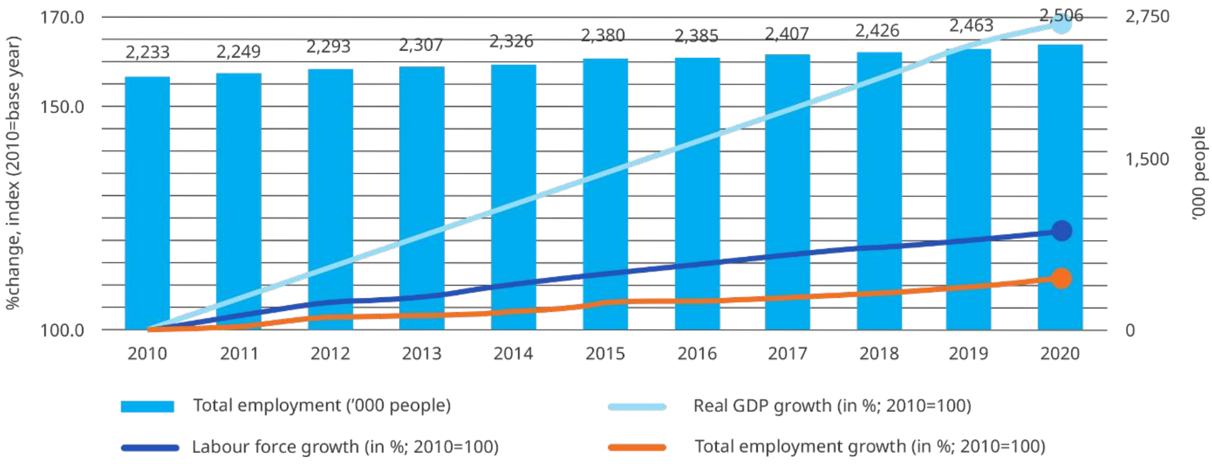
Social assistance benefits are provided mainly to households, calculated based on the number of dependents in the family. TSA provided regular cash transfers of TJS 720 a year in 2024 (10 budgetary units) plus one budgetary unit (TJS 72) per child under 16. The government planned to expand the school feeding program to provide free school meals to additional school children. No support is provided to improve access to preschool, primary and secondary education, or basic healthcare services. Over 1,100 children in Tajikistan are living in boarding institutions. Many of them are not orphans but come from extremely poor households. A large number of children with disabilities are institutionalized. Institutional placement is still pre-eminent in the development of home-based care and adequate social protection for children.

Social Protection for Youth

In 2022, 52 percent of the population was under 25, and this proportion is growing (Agency on Statistics 2023c). Almost three-quarters of young people ((73 percent) live in rural areas, but they are increasingly attracted to urban areas, which offer more job opportunities and services. Migration from rural to urban areas has put pressure on the urban labor market and may be the main factor behind the high urban unemployment, which was twice as high as the rural area rate (11.0 percent versus 5.5 percent) in 2021 (NSPS 2022).

Tajikistan's working-age population (15–65) numbered about 5.7 million people in 2022, including 2.8 million between the ages of 15 and 29. Tajikistan's labor force continues expanded by 10.1 percent between 2015 and 2020 (and by 24.2 percent between 2010 and 2020). Total employment during this period rose by only 5.3 percent (12.2 percent between 2010 and 2020). In 2020, according to the National Statistical Office, 2.4 million people (41.4 percent of the working-age population) were neither studying nor contributing in any way to economic activity. Part of this population worked informally or emigrated. This proportion rose steadily between 2010 and 2020 (figure 5.2).

FIGURE 5.2 GDP, LABOR FORCE, AND EMPLOYMENT, 2010–20



Source: Mirzoev (2022).

Youth unemployment rate is very high. About 200,000 young people enter the labor force each year. Between 2017 and 2022, 900,000 jobs were created, including 190,000 in 2022 (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023). In 2020, youth accounted for 37.1 percent of the registered unemployed; a large share had low skills and competencies (incomplete secondary education and no vocational or higher education).

The number of registered unemployed is low; most unemployed youth are not registered. Some are probably working informally or have migrated abroad. Too few jobs are created to accommodate the country's growing workforce. Micro, small, and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) accounted for about 35 percent of total employment in 2020 and the private sector for 67 percent. The private sector remains dominated by a few large firms (many of which are state-owned enterprises) and many self-employed individuals and *dehkan* farmers. The formal labor market therefore has a low potential to create new jobs, driving many workers toward the informal economy.

A large share of the economically active population is also seeking jobs overseas as labor migrants. In 2020, people 18–29 represented 41 percent of registered international labor migrants (129,807 people). This proportion decreases with age. In 2010, 52 percent of all migrant workers were young, suggesting that people over 30 are now more inclined to travel overseas in search of employment. The number of Tajik citizens who went abroad for employment as labor migrants fell from 775,578 in 2022 to 652,014 in 2023.[35]

Inadequate skills and competencies are barriers to unemployment in Tajikistan, especially in new technologies. Employers experience challenges finding the skills and competencies they require. Many employers do not have the means or desire to train their workers, and some do not wish to engage with training institutions. Government-led training programs and learning centers have received limited resources, resulting in the aging of their curriculum and equipment and difficulties in retaining and recruiting human resources. The demand for training programs from both job seekers and employers is therefore limited. Many job seekers also lack the resources to attend training. The agricultural sector is the main employer in Tajikistan, although the proportion of workers employed in the sector declined is from 64.9 percent in 2015 to 60.6 percent in 2021 (Government of the Republic of Tajikistan 2023). The sector still employs 65 percent of young people, despite paying relatively low wages.

[35] https://www.pragueprocess.eu/en/countries/914-tajikistan?tmpl=component&ml=1

ALMPs do not target young people, and young people are unlikely to benefit from social insurance, unless they are living with a disability, given their short work and contribution history. They are also unlikely to benefit from TSA or other forms of social assistance. They are at the margin of the current social protection system, even though they constitute the country's main productive and human capital. Among the 5.7 million people in the active workforce, only about 1 million contributed to the social insurance system in 2023. The Strategy acknowledges the limits of the current social insurance system and recognizes that most youth do not have social insurance.

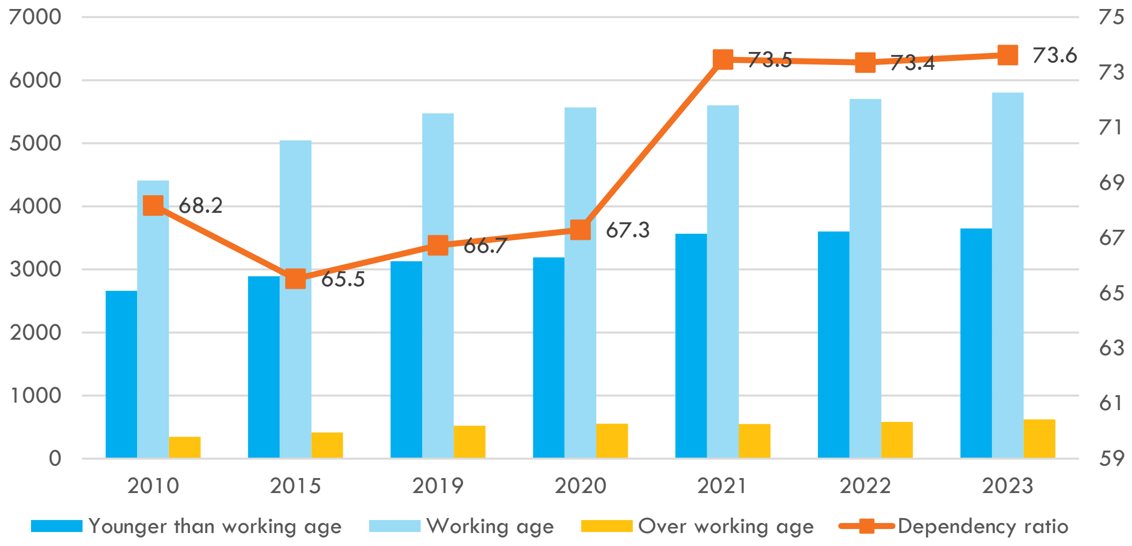
Recognizing the employment challenges facing youth, the government has developed specific policy and legal frameworks, including the National Strategy for Youth 2030 and the National Program for Youth Social Development in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2022–26. The main strategy for youth development is also reflected in the NDS for the period up to 2030 and the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) 2040. The NSPS includes specific objectives to improve the policy framework to support the creation of productive jobs, the development of training programs, especially for youth, and increases in the share of formal employment. One of its objectives is to create a system of active services for temporarily unemployed job seekers, including career guidance, vocational training, retraining, advanced training, self-employment, and services targeting migrant workers.

The MoLMEP's Concept for Productive Employment focuses on youth employment. The ministry has also developed a comprehensive five-year operational roadmap for 2022–26, which aims at developing the labor market and stimulating the creation of a skilled workforce and productive jobs. The roadmap is expected to be co-implemented by the MoES and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies (MoINT). Analysis of the labor market is not supported by a unique labor market information system (LMIS). The analysis of youth is partial and obtained by collating information, potentially inconsistent, from different ministries and agencies dealing with education, internal and foreign affairs, and labor and employment. In support of the implementation of national strategies, international development partners such as the World Bank, the ILO, and UN agencies are planning to support actions such as the establishment of a unified LMIS and actions to strengthen labor market systems. The World Bank's Social Protection Modernization and Economic Inclusion Project 2023 includes a component in support of the labor market intended to strengthen employment services to better support getting the unemployed back to work, to develop an LMIS and promoting graduation from social assistance through an economic inclusion program.

Social Protection for People over 65

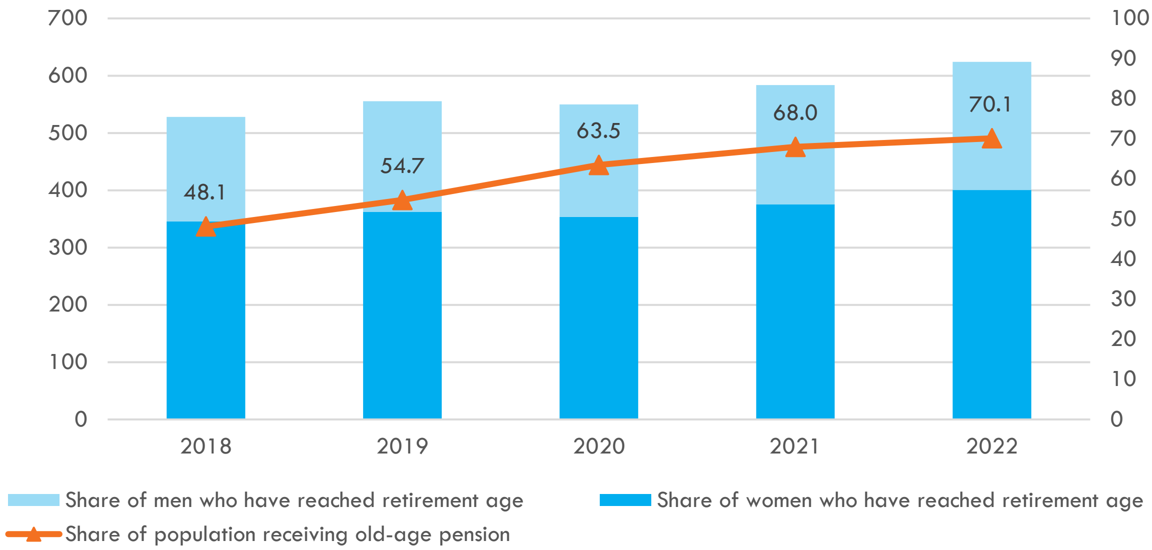
The population over 65 in Tajikistan increased by an average rate of 4.8 percent between 2010 and 2022; people over 65 represented 5.9 percent of the total population in 2022 (Agency on Statistics 2023c)**.** Both the dependency ratio (the ratio of people under 15 and over 65 to the working-age population [people 15–65]) (figure 5.3) and the share of the population reaching retirement age (figure 5.4) are rising.

FIGURE 5.3 WORKING POPULATION AND DEPENDENCY RATIO, 2010–23



Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency on Statistics 2023c

FIGURE 5.4 NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT OR BEYOND RETIREMENT AGE AND PERCENTAGE OF THEM RECEIVING OLD-AGE PENSIONS, 2019–23



Source: Authors, based on data from Agency on Statistics 2023c

The pension system is Tajikistan's largest social protection program in budgetary and coverage terms. Men and women reaching retirement age are eligible for a social insurance pension if they made social contributions during at least 25 years for men and 20 years for women. Men and women who are not eligible for social insurance pensions are guaranteed a minimum pension. In 2022, contributory pensions administered by ASIP accounted for 87 percent of total public spending on pensions. The remaining 13 percent went to noncontributory social pensions. Coverage of the pension systems is reasonably high According to ASIP data, the number of people receiving contributory old-age pensions declined, from 433,026 in 2018 to 325,853 in 2022 (in contrast, thanks to an increase in the number of recipients of old-age social pensions, the total number of pensions recipients rose). The decline corresponds to a sharp decrease in the number of people contributing to social insurance from over 1.5 million in 2018 to just over 1 million in 2022, which could be partly explained by the low value of the pensions and the cumbersome process of applying for them.

In 2022, the average old-age contributory pension was TJS 395, representing 28.7 percent of the average salary. The average social pension was TJS 213, close to the basic pension level of TJS 250. Both figures are considerably lower than the poverty line of TJS 450 per month (based on the international poverty line 2017 PPP). Despite regularly increases in the size of the basic and old-age pensions, the value of the pensions is still insufficient to meet the needs of older people (NSPS 2022).

Health care is provided by the state to everyone in the country (including noncitizens). Patients often have to pay a part of the costs, however. This copayment places a burden on older people with limited income and increasing healthcare needs. In 2022, a public expenditure review estimated that over 5,000 people past retirement age were working in the formal sector. Older people are entitled to other social protection services, whether or not they receive a pension. They can apply individually or with their family. Poor older adults may be eligible for TSA, for example.

In 2022, 860 people over 65 (605 women and 255 men) received social services provided by regional social centers, notably hot meals, and more than 5,500 people received home-based social services. The level of coverage of users of community- or home-based services, which are financed mainly by subnational administrations, is growing but still relatively low. Some cities and districts are not able to provide any services at all.

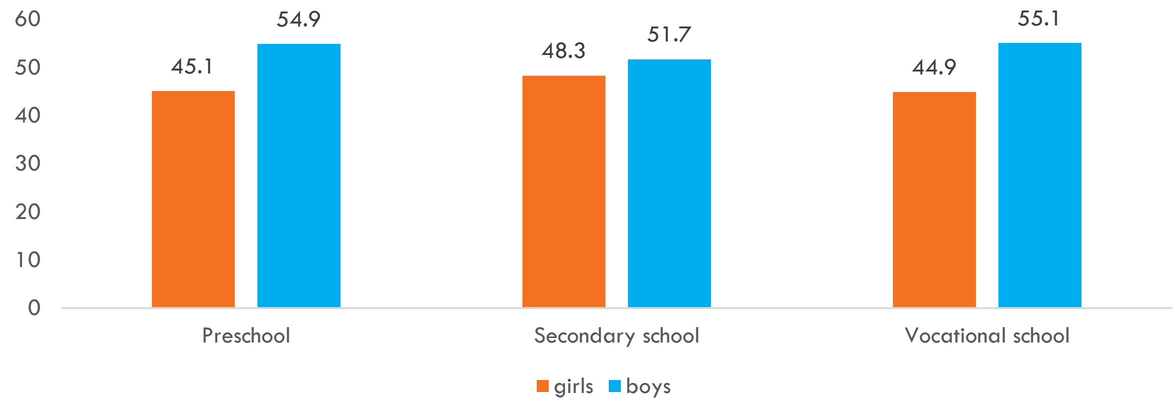
Only 356 people over 65 received residential care in 2022. Institutions often do not accept older citizens who do not receive pensions, as according to Article 48 of the Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on Insurance and State Pensions (point 5), specialized institutions for old people can withhold 90 percent of old-age pension in exchange for permanent residence and continued social assistance (ILO 2022).

The design and delivery of social protection programs needs to be adapted to the needs of older people. Pension and social services application processes are often cumbersome. Applicants have to provide their work history records and certificates, which may be unavailable or difficult to obtain. Social services have limited capacities and resources to provide adequate information and support to older people to access social protection services and benefits. The Strategy for the period through 2040, adopted in 2022, defines the challenges of providing adequate social protection to older people in the context of demographic changes and includes a provision to reform the pension system and increase the size of the pension. It also promotes the expansion of home-based services for older people, the mobilization of resources to improve service quality, and the establishment of a national program of the social protection of older people.

Social Protection for Women and Girls

Tajikistan's Constitution stipulates the equality of men and women and establishes the right of every person to social protection and social security. Women and girls continue to face gender-related challenges, however. Enrollment at all levels of education is lower for girls (figure 5.5), women continue to face major challenges accessing higher education and the labor market, and poverty is still more prevalent among women and girls than among men and boys, particularly in rural areas, because of their more limited access to jobs and economic opportunities. In 2023, Tajikistan had a Gender Inequality Index value of 0.317, ranking it 69th out of 160 countries, the same value it had in 2013 (when it ranked 75the out of 149 countries).

FIGURE 5.5 ENROLLMENT IN PRESCHOOL, SECONDARY SCHOOL, AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOL, BY GENDER, 2021



Source: Agency on Statistics 2022b

Women's labor force participation (employed or looking for work) is among the lowest in the world. Only 58.7 percent of women were engaged in the labor market in 2020 (the figure for men was 76.9 percent). Most young men transition from school to work, including in the informal sector. In contrast, most young women transition from school to inactivity. Women in employment are overrepresented in low-paid sectors (cleaners, servants, seamstresses, unskilled workers). Women are also overrepresented in the informal economy and in often unpaid subsistence farming, reinforcing the cycle of poverty.[36] Wage age disparity between women and men is gradually shrinking but remains wide

The main causes of women's low participation in the labor market are household and childcare responsibilities.[37] One in four women is already a mother by the age of 19 (ADB2020) Women with young children are normally unemployed or hold low-skilled positions. Older women have higher workforce participation than younger women. It is, however, difficult for both women and men over 40 years to find work. Current demographic trends, which force many women to take care of both very young children and older people, make it difficult for many women to participate in the labor force.

Only a tiny share of women receives unemployment benefits from the state— just 272 of 14,308 recipients of unemployment benefits (1.9 percent) in 2020 (ALEP) In most cases, women submit applications to their public employment services in order to complete professional development courses. In 2019, women comprised 78 percent of all those who completed professional development courses in adult learning centers (13,330 out of 17,180 unemployed people). Value for money is high, with 68 percent of those completing such courses reportedly finding jobs (ALEP **)**

Women's health and nutrition are exacerbating gender inequality and represent a barrier to a productive life. Micronutrient deficiencies remain widespread among women. Forty percent of women in Tajikistan are anemic, including almost 25 percent of women of reproductive age, a rate the World Health Organization considers a severe public health problem.

Few women work abroad: In 2020, only 16,880 women were registered as international labor migrants (13 percent of the total). When men migrate, women have to assume the role of head of household, often for a

[36] In rural areas in 2020, 84 percent of work by women but just 30 percent of work carried out by was unpaid (ADB 2020).

[37] In 2016, the domestic responsibilities was the primary reason cited for not participating in the labor force, cited by 60.5 percent of women. That figure is much higher than in Kazakhstan (11 percent) or the Kyrgyz Republic (35 percent) (Khitarishvili 2016).

long period, which also affects women's position in the labor market and their vulnerability to economic downturns. Half of all households in Tajikistan have at least one labor migrant in the family, and four out of every five of these households lack sufficient income to support its basic needs. Women also assume most of the social and psychological burden of labor migration. Increased responsibilities, economic difficulties, and stress experienced by women in the absence of their husbands are to contribute to the high prevalence of women suicide cases.

In 2017, 21 percent of all households in Tajikistan were headed by women and 6,000 consisted of single mothers with children (Agency on statistics 2017). While female-headed households are more common among nonpoor than poor households, many abandoned families (usually female-headed) live in extreme poverty (World Bank 2021b).

Women covered by national social insurance and engaged in official work are paid maternity leave for 20 weeks at their full salary and are entitled to a pension when they reach 58 or suffer from a disability. On top of a childbirth allowance, women and men are entitled to a small (TJS 68) monthly childcare benefit for 18 months if they suspend their work to look after their child. Unregistered unemployed women, women working in the informal sector, and nonworking women are very vulnerable to social and economic risks. They can claim only limited social assistance benefits such as TSA, which provides social pensions for the poorest households.

Social Protection for People with Disabilities

While developing its first social protection strategy, Tajikistan also engaged in the process of ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in line with the National Development Strategy 2030, approved in 2020. Its ratification demonstrates the state's commitment to expanding the rights of and service provision for people with disabilities and to creating favorable conditions for their participation in civil society and the economy.

The social protection strategy adopted in 2022 acknowledges that people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable and poorest population groups and that the number of registered people with disabilities increased steadily in recent years. The Strategy highlights challenges with the current provision of social protection, notably the insufficient coverage of social services and specialized health care and the focus on institutional care, which needs to be modernized. To address these needs and challenges, the Strategy focuses on improving access to healthcare, training, and employment opportunities through 2040. The Strategy and Draft Action Plan highlight specific actions, such as reform of the prevention, detection, and assessment of disabilities; the development of home-based care and capacities of social services; and improved access to social benefits. The Action Plan 2023–2026, which supports the implementation of the National Health Care Strategy 2030, cites the use of social rehabilitation and assistive technologies to support the integration of people with disabilities in society.

Research conducted to prepare for the ratification of the convention highlights the challenges faced in realizing the rights of the people with disabilities across sectors.[38] In particular, it highlights the insufficient awareness and public attitudes toward people with disabilities as rights holders and active social actors. Stigmatization is still widespread, hampering access to basic services and active participation in social and economic spheres.

According to official Tajik statistics, the number of people receiving disability pensions was 162,842 in 2024. It increased at an average rate of 2.2 percent a year. This number does not provide an accurate estimate of

[38] Research in support to the Convention ratification - Unpublished yet

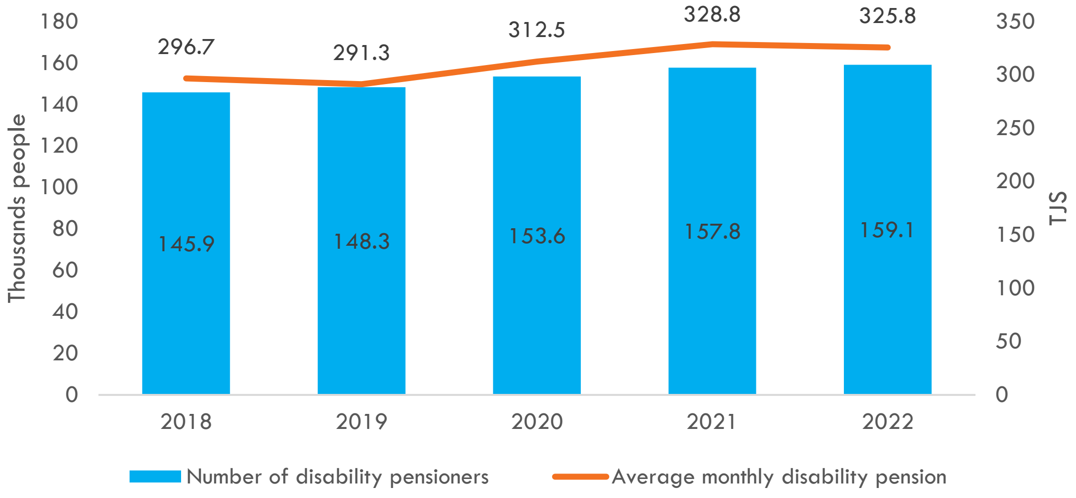
the disability prevalence in Tajikistan, however, because of the difficulties involved in obtaining disability certificate and shortfalls in statistics. Statistics about people with disabilities and access to service are not disaggregated by gender, age, and location. Tajikistan's health information system is undergoing reforms to allow it to collect disability-disaggregated data. As of January 1, 2024, the information system of the State Medical and Social Expertise agency included about 17,000 adults and 4,500 children with disabilities; these data are in the process of being updated and cleaned.

Tajikistan is also in the process of reviewing the national definition of disabilitiesto make it consistent with the international standards. Social protection of people with disabilities would also benefit from the overall reforms of the social protection system, including the development of an improved disability identification, assessment, registration, and certification process, taking into account functioning, unified registry, and integrated case management system and improved M&E and accountability to better evaluate and respond to needs.

There is growing recognition in the government that long-term institutional care is inadequate for most cases and is insufficiently resourced to provide quality care. The transition from residential to community- and home-based social care provided by the Social Assistance at Home Unit (SAHU) is also benefitting people living with disabilities, even if coverage is still low.

Initial screening of and medical care for people with disabilities is provided at primary health care units, which are often ill-equipped to provide rehabilitation and specialized services or to provide disability certificates to access social protection and other services. People with disabilities can apply for disability pensions provided by the contributory or noncontributory systems. Between 2016 and 2021, the budget for disability pensions increased by 35 percent (ILO 2022). However, the average disability pension remains low, at just TJS 325.8 in 2022, almost half the minimum salary (figure 5.6). People with disabilities make up the smallest group of pensioners, at 8.5 percent of all pensioners in 2021.

Figure 5.6 Number of disability pensioners and average monthly disability pension, 2018–22



Source: Authors, based on data from the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP).

People with disabilities can also benefit from the TSA if they meet the eligibility criteria. It entitles them to one-time financial support of TJS 300 and monthly TJS 90 benefit to fund a social assistant. The value of these benefits is low; most people eligible for them do not apply, because of the financial and nonfinancial opportunity costs of applying, including obtaining disability certificates, and the limited accessibility of social infrastructure.

The Tajik Constitution protects the rights of people with disabilities to work. Article No. 1329 of the Labor Code, adopted on July 23, 2016, regulates the basic rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. Labor market interventions for people with disabilities financed by the state budget include the following:

- Registration as unemployed, to grant access unemployment benefits (no disaggregated data available).
- Support for self-employment (no disaggregated data available).
- Temporary employment through public works (no disaggregated data available).
- Vocational training for registered unemployed. According to ALEP, in 2021, out of 21,207 jobless who received training to improve their employability, 81 had disabilities. ALEP and adult education centers provide vocational support for people with disabilities.
- Employment through job quotas. People with disabilities are supposed to be prioritized in job quotas. However, in 2021, only 3.5 percent of job quotas were filled by people with disabilities (unpublished).
- Tax incentives for employers. Enterprises in which at least 5 percent of the workforce has a disability are tax-exempt.

Lack of awareness of social protection benefits by people with disabilities, their families, and employers is a major challenge to improving access to entitlements and their involvement in the labor market. Official publications and communications on services and benefits are not systematically published in an accessible format for people with disabilities, such as sign language, Braille, or audio, and physical access is often difficult. The shortage of skills and qualified staff to provide adequate services and work against stigmatization and discrimination is also a major challenge. The current level of resources, facilities, and capacities are insufficient and cannot withstand and cope with the growing number of people with disabilities in Tajikistan. These challenges increase the risk of exclusion and deny people with disabilities their rights to social protection, social and economic inclusion, and a dignified life. The development of rehabilitation centers at the community level by local authorities and their civil society partners can be one way to improve services and awareness, especially in hard-to-reach areas.

Assessment of Social Protection System Performance

On February 8 and 9, 2024, the MoHSPP organized a workshop, with the support of UNICEF and the World Bank. It brought together 50 actors in the social protection sector to assess the performance of the social protection system against the CODI criteria (see table D.1, in appendix D, for a list of participants). A four-point scale was used to assess each of the defined criteria, where 1 indicates the system is undeveloped, 2 that it is emerging, 3 that it is progressing, and 4 that it is advanced on each of the 10 criteria.

The CODI criteria are often qualitative and cannot be easily assessed. Workshop participants were asked to use their knowledge but to base their assessment on evidence to increase objectivity. The scoring for each criterion provides an indicative and relative measurement of the performance of the social protection system and is not valid on its own.

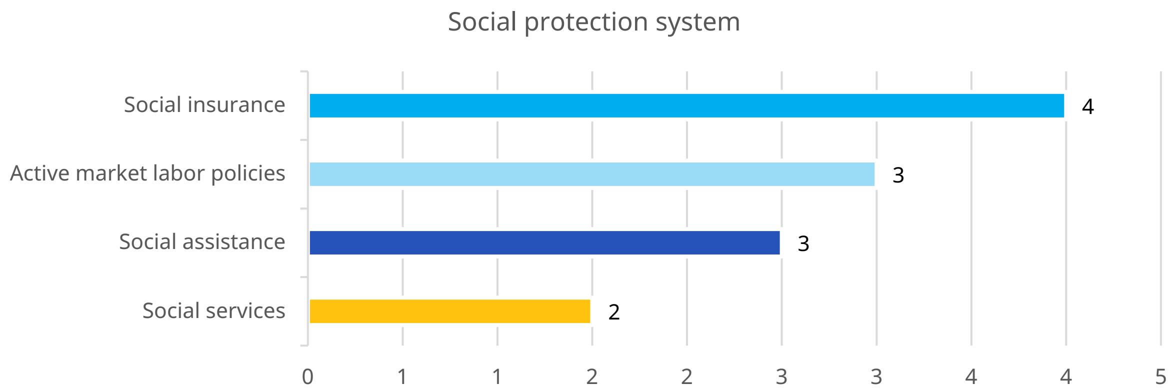
Participants were divided into four groups to assess the four components of the social protection system: social insurance, social assistance, ALMPs, and social services. Participants assessed the social protection programs they were involved in or most familiar with. All participants were involved in implementation of at least one social protection program, but not all had a clear view of social protection systems in Tajikistan.

This problem and the absence of evidence on some programs or elements of the social protection systems limited the assessment. The fact that participants assessed the programs they were most familiar with probably created a bias in the scoring. The report therefore presents only the overall score for each criterion; the level of detail in the analysis of each criterion varies greatly. In this report the analysis provided for each criterion compiled the inputs from the workshop and elements from the CODI analysis itself.

Inclusiveness

Inclusion refers to guaranteeing that all members of society are protected along the lifecycle, with special consideration for the most vulnerable, including people in the informal economy. It includes specific dimensions such as nondiscrimination; gender equality; the availability of and accessibility to social protection programs and benefits (e.g., distance, literacy, information awareness, transaction costs); and the design of schemes and programs that respond to the needs of people with different characteristics, circumstances, and vulnerabilities. The goal is to eliminate coverage gaps and secure the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable.

Table 6.1 Inclusiveness of social protection system, by component



Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1	INCLUSIVENESS				4		2.5					3		1.5			

Participants felt that very limited information and evidence was available to support this assessment. Data and information on the social protection system are generally not disaggregated by gender, age, or other criteria. Programs are not systematically monitored and evaluated to understand inclusion aspects. The main indicator available to assess this criterion is often coverage.

Based on their experience, participants scored high on the inclusiveness of social insurance and ALMP programs and low on the inclusiveness of social assistance and social services. However, the groups probably did not use similar criteria and approaches across programs. Each program tends to target specific groups in society; the analysis focused on the inclusion of the targeted group rather than the overall inclusiveness of the system.

The social protection system provides a strong framework on gender equality, nondiscrimination, and the protection of the most vulnerable citizens. Workshop participants noted that the legal framework was more neutral with respect to gender, age, and disability than proactively sensitive and transformative. The policy framework has not yet translated into appropriate legislation or into program design elements and implementation process.

The CODI assessment includes examples of family benefits and ways in which the pension system considers gender inequality. Inadequate accessibility of social protection programs for vulnerable groups affects inclusiveness and coverage. Across programs, potential beneficiaries lack information on entitlements, benefits, and services. Few programs conduct outreach activities or information campaigns. Particularly vulnerable people often face accessibility constraints because of their remoteness and lack of mobility and literacy. Accessibility is better in urban than rural areas. Indirect costs to access the necessary documentation and the costs of transport and transactions to access training and social services constitute further obstacles.

The CODI assessment notes that the social protection system does not adequately address the needs of children, persons with disabilities, women, or youth. People with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS are vulnerable to violence; social services are unable to offer them sufficient assistance.

The TSA program design is evolving to take into account the needs and vulnerabilities of women and children. Social services for people with disabilities, particularly rehabilitation services, tend to prioritize children over adults. Migrant workers and their families have limited access to contributory social insurance. The state lacks data and information on their specific vulnerabilities.

Workshop participants highlighted the low representation of women among recipients of social insurance and beneficiaries of ALMPs, such as business loans. Because of stigma and discrimination, people with disabilities have a low level of participation in the labor market and rarely benefits from ALMPs.

The system is not close to reaching universal coverage. According to workshop participants, coverage of TSA and the pension system is good (although there appear to be major discrepancies in TSA coverage across districts). In contrast, the number of people benefiting from social services and ALMPs is low, and the needs of migrants and people in the informal economy are not addressed.

Adequacy

Adequacy refers to the extent to which social protection benefit levels and service quality respond to needs and achieve national objectives. Benefits contribute to poverty reduction, equity, income security, and access to health and other services along the lifecycle and promote productive economic activity. Tajikistan has clearly defined standards for the delivery of benefits and services.

Across social protection programs, the M&E system is insufficient to assess the impact social protection has on poverty reduction and other national development objectives. The adequacy of benefits and services is low and insufficient to meet the needs of the population and therefore probably to achieve the national objectives. Only ALMPs received a score above 2 (table 6.2) No information is available on the impact of the loans provided to develop economic activity, and limited information is available on the impact of the employment promotion services under the other ALMPs.

Table 6.2 Adequacy of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2	ADEQUACY		2			1.5						3		1.6			

Over the past several years, the government has increased the budget allocations to social protection programs and mobilized financial resources from development partners. Most benefits are revised regularly to take account of increase in the cost of living. By design, the benefit values calculation is not clearly related to achieving national development goals or even basic needs, and service quality is hampered by insufficient resources. Challenges include the following:

- The average contributory pension amount (TJS 320) corresponds to 40 percent of the national minimum salary (TJS 800) and is below the poverty line for low-middle income countries. The new NDC scheme introduced in 2021reduced the average pension by 25 percent. In addition, calculation of the pension amount varies widely across individuals, because seven different laws are applicable to calculating the pension amount, causing confusion and discrepancies. Social pensions are based on the basic pension amount and are also well below the poverty line. Tajikistan's contributory pension amount is not consistent with the ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102).

- The TSA transfer value is well below the poverty line, and its short duration limits its impact on poverty, which it treats as a transitional rather than a chronic condition. The law and procedures were updated in 2023 to allow for a progressive rise in the TSA value to improve its adequacy, but their application depends on financing.

- Unemployment benefits have a limited duration and value insufficient to support training or an economic activity.

- The lack of financial and human resources makes it difficult to provide quality services. Training services do not fully meet the needs of the labor market, and employment services have insufficient resources to support return to employment. Residential social services are provided with inadequate qualified staff and old and insufficient equipment and infrastructure.

Appropriateness

Appropriateness refers to arrangements of the system that ensure optimal protection and responsiveness to social protection needs. At a policy level, it means the formulation of clear and realistic targets and timeframes to address social protection needs over time, taking into account financing and institutional capacities. Policy decisions and program design are guided by evidence.

Table 6.3 Appropriateness of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
3	APPROPRIATENESS			3			2.3					3.5					4

Workshop participants scored this criterion highly, except for the social assistance. However, the workshop discussions and the CODI assessment highlight that the alignment of policies and programs varies across population groups and needs. Analysis of vulnerabilities and needs in support of policy and program design is limited and does not reflect the needs of population groups such as people with disabilities, migrants, and people working in the informal economy. Alignment and complementarity across programs are more effective for recipients of social pensions, notably with social services, but limited for social assistance recipients.

The lack of resources generates important trade-offs affecting the formulation of clear and realistic targets. For home-based social services, coverage is often traded off against the quality of the services; in social transfers, values are often traded off against coverage (as is the case of TSA). The lack of coordination hampers the alignment of social protection policies and programs. The social protection sector is fragmented across ministries and agencies, and coordination is limited. Policies and strategies are not systematically associated with a costed action plan or results framework. The design of programs generally corresponds to policy goals, but programs lack realistic action plans and timeframes for implementation. Except for the labor market, assessments are not disaggregated by age, gender, and other criteria and are often insufficient to support program design.

Across programs, the lack of data, information, and evidence hampers evidence-based policy and program design, information exchange, and efforts to develop systems. Most programs still use paper-based information systems, which limits access to and analysis of the information and evidence to support decision making. The ongoing digitalization effort does not include provisions for data interoperability across databases or the development of an integrated management information system.

Respect for Rights and Dignity

Respect for rights and dignity refers to the alignment of national laws and regulations with human rights and dignity standards and principles. Key dimensions include the anchoring of entitlements and qualifying conditions in law; the existence of enforcement mechanisms, including complaint and appeal processes; the design and delivery of services in a way that ensures respect for dignity and human rights; the maintenance of the confidentiality of private information; and the accessibility of relevant information by all.

All programs except social services received high ranks on this criterion (table 6.4). However the discussions among participants on specific program aspects and the CODI assessment provides more nuanced conclusions. The social protection system has a strong legal basis and framework, and rights are enshrined in the Constitution. The strengths of the legal framework vary across programs, however. For social services, standard specifications are not prescribed for all categories of people, and current legislation does not reflect recent changes as well as not include the rights of migrants and remote workers.

Table 6.4 Respect for rights and dignity of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
4	RESPECTFOR RIGHTS AND DIGNITY				4				4				4	1.8			

The system culture does not systematically allow for the creation of instruments to enforce rights. Sufficient instruments and resources are not in place across all programs. Information on legislation, rights, and entitlements is not shared adequately or with the population made sufficiently accessible. Employees in the social protection sector are not sufficiently trained on these aspects.

Respect for dignity is not systematically embedded into program design and translated into practice. For example, people can be labelled based on their benefits as for the TSA beneficiaries and their "poor family" certificate they should present to access other services or the social pension beneficiaries identified as such when using their discounted transport card.

Discrimination and stigma persist, and mechanisms are not in place to address them and ensure that the law is enforced. The legislation on data protection needs to be updated and enforced, and paper files need to be stored in restricted areas.

Individuals have no access to grievance mechanisms except for the general social protection services hotline and reporting mechanism. Only the TSA has a grievance mechanism embedded into its MIS. Awareness of the population of these options remains limited, and there is no information on their efficiency.

Governance and Institutional Capacity

Governance and institutional capacity refer to the clear definition of the system's rules, regulations, roles, and responsibilities; the institutionalization of structures, systems, and implementation capacities; and the allocation of sufficient resources. Key dimensions include institutionalized and well-functioning structures and processes to ensure stakeholder participation.

Social protection stakeholders are informed and able to participate in the design, implementation, and monitoring of social protection programs. Accurate, reliable, accountable, and transparent financial and delivery systems exist, reducing errors, fraud, and mismanagement (both internally and externally) and building the confidence of people in the system and its administration.

Both workshop participants give low rating to this criterion (table 6.5). Both the 2022 World Bank Public Expenditure Review and the 2022 ILO Public Expenditure and Institutional Review highlight the current state and issues with the governance and capacities of the social protection system.

Table 6.5 Governance and institutional capacity of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
5	GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTION		2				2.4				2				2		

According to workshop participants, the roles and responsibilities of the social protection actors are generally well-defined and operational procedures and reporting mechanisms are in place. However, investments and resources are often insufficient to support all functions and activities. Workshop participants noted the insufficient number of staff involved in program implementation and the lack of specialized professionals and training offered to them. They cited the insufficiency of resources provided to support policy objectives and the weakness of reporting and M&E. Information flows between agencies and staff implementing programs are limited. Reporting is sparse, M&E is not conducted consistently, and data are not disseminated.

Subnational authorities and administrations play a critical role in program implementation. Their own resources and the national resources devoted to them are insufficient. Social protection programs have no dedicated staff at the municipal/*jamoat* level and only a limited number at the district and regional levels. Infrastructure and equipment are insufficient and dated, particularly for social services providing care to very vulnerable individuals. Lack of coordination across social protection actors hampers many initiatives and the government's commitment to modernize the social protection system.

Financial and Fiscal Sustainability

Financial and fiscal sustainability refers to the alignment of financial resources raised and allocated with the expected social protection outcomes and capacities and considerations for long-term financial requirements and commitments. Key dimensions include domestic and external financing, contributory capacity, alignment of budget allocation with policy priorities, long-term budget planning in line with demographic developments, and the reliability and progressivity of social protection financing.

Financial resources dedicated to social protection are insufficient to achieve Tajikistan's ambitious policy objectives as reflected in the scoring from the workshop participants (table 6.6). Long-term financial planning does not take into account of regional and global risks, resources are highly dependent on migration and remittances, and the country is highly vulnerable to disasters and climate change. In addition, the financing system does not take sufficient account of demographic trends, including the increases in the size of both young and very old cohorts. The current pension financing system is fragile and has limited attractiveness, because of the low level of payments.

Table 6.6 Financial and fiscal sustainability of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
6	**FINANCIAL AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY**		2				2.4					3.5				3	

Addressing demographic shifts and social pressures requires reform of the pension system. From 2020 to 2025, the number of pensioners expected to rise by 30 percent, reaching 958,000, potentially surpassing the number of active social tax contributors, and the ratio of pensions to wages is projected to decline from 23 percent to 15 percent. If the system remains unchanged, nominal pension expenditures will increase by 1.5 times the current level and pension benefits will lose 20 percent of their purchasing power.

Subnational financial contributions are limited and unstable. The programs they are supposed to fund, such as social services and public works, have to receive subsidies from the state budget. Despite budget increases in recent years, social services are not able to keep with increasing demand, mostly because subnational budget lines for social services come from the central government budget. The central government strictly prescribes the subnational spending parameters (number of staff, salary rates, utility consumption), limiting the ability of subnational governments to effectively manage funds and possibly reducing their motivation to develop home-based social services (World Bank 2021a). International development assistance—in the form of technical assistance, budget support, and grants—still represents a substantial part of social protection funding. Planning is required to sustain and continue the momentum of social protection expansion.

Coherence and Integration

This criterion refers to the coherence and alignment of policies, programs, and administrative structures so that they provide a coordinated response to needs. Key dimensions include the coherence of policies contributing to social protection; the complementarity and integration of social protection programs; the integrated analysis of social protection; the degree of duplication and overlap; and the presence of institutional arrangements that promote coordination across institutions responsible for the design, administration, and delivery of social protection programs.

As reflected in the scoring by workshop participants, the governance framework offers limited opportunities for coherence and integration across policies and programs (table 6.7). Social protection policies, programs, and functions are shared by numerous ministries and agencies, and no coordination structure is in place at the national level to achieve coherence and integration. At the program level, implementing actors have established connections and sought to integrate operations, but these efforts have not been systematized. The lack of coordination and integration across programs and services reduces the adequacy of the social protection programs. Benefits and services are not designed as part of an overall package that could support people in need and at risk of poverty and vulnerability more comprehensively and efficiently. No provisions are made, for example, to ensure that recipients of social transfers have access to training, education, or social services that could help pull them out of poverty.

Table 6.7 Coherence and integration of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
7	COHERENCE AND INTEGRATION		2			1					2.5				2.2		

There are some complementarities between social pensions and social services and TSA, health, transport, and education benefits. Workshop participants noted the important role daycare centers and rehabilitation facilities play in allowing parents and caregivers to continue economic activities and preventing them from falling into a poverty trap. But they also noted the absence of connection between social insurance and labor market programs. Coordination at the district level does not operate smoothly, and coordination across different levels of government, from *jamoats* to ministries, is weak. Lack of coordination partly reflects the absence of case management systems, the fragmentation of roles and responsibilities, and limited information and data flows. The low level of digitalization represents an important barrier to data interoperability across programs to support case management. The objective is to have an integrated beneficiary databases and management information systems and reduce duplication and overlap.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to the ability of the system to adapt to changing needs, shocks, and crises, including by generating sufficient information. Key dimensions include the responsiveness of budget and implementation mechanisms; the availability, quality, and timeliness of data on needs and programs; mechanisms for parametric adjustments; the coverage, timeliness, adequacy, and comprehensiveness of emergency responses; and the coordination of social protection and disaster and humanitarian responses across the delivery chain.

The system is not responsive to changes, crises, and disasters, as reflected in workshop participants' scoring (table 6.8). The new policy framework, especially the Social Protection Strategy, takes these vulnerabilities into account, incorporating lessons from the response to the COVID-19 crisis and from recent initiatives to improve the national capacities to prepare and respond more generally to crises and shocks of lower magnitude. The system is not yet risk-informed, adaptive, or responsive to shocks, however (box 6.1). Information systems, program elements, and delivery mechanisms are not designed or equipped to respond to changing needs as a result of crises and shocks, and financing mechanisms are not in place to support timely responses. Responses are often ad hoc, based on a specific government decision or local responses, and managed mainly by disaster response management actors, with limited coordination with social protection actors.

Table 6.8 Responsiveness of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
8	RESPONSIVENESS		2			1					2			1			

Box 6.1 How well did Tajikistan respond to the COVID-19 crisis?

In 2020, the government developed a Social Protection System's Preparedness and Response Plan to COVID-19, under the MoHSPP. For the first time ever, social assistance was scaled up to provide emergency assistance to particularly vulnerable households affected by the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19. The project, which was initially funded by the World Bank, provided a one-time cash transfer of TJS 500 to low-income households with young children under the age of three. The government also provided one-time cash transfers to 487,000 vulnerable households between 2020 and 2022. The government also increased disability pensions by 20–50 percent and intensified the creation of public works.
Program implementation benefited from the preparedness initiated by the MoHSPP and UNICEF in 2017 as well as the rapid scale-up of TSA.

Development of a national Adaptive Shock Responsive Social Protection strategy is still facing many challenges. However, social protection and disaster risk management actors are increasingly working together, as evidenced by the agreement signed in 2023 by the MoHSPP, the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defense (CoES), the Red Crescent, and UNICEF to provide coordinated emergency response.

The new Social Protection Strategy highlights the role social protection could play in responding to the needs of the population in emergency and crisis situations. It notes the benefits of building on the existing collaboration between social protection and disaster risk management actors to address the population's needs more efficiently. An adaptive, shock-responsive social protection system that considers preparedness, response, and recovery could improve the timeliness and adequacy of the response; reduce the costs of delivering the response; limit duplications and gaps; and improve national capacities to manage disasters.

Cost-Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness refers to the systems in place to ensure the delivery of benefits and outcomes with as few resources as possible. Lack of disaggregated data and information on both benefits and outcomes made it impossible to evaluate this criterion. Overall, the costs of delivering programs seem low, however, because they are implemented with limited human and technical resources and provide a limited range of services.

Incentive Compatibility

Incentive compatibility refers to programs designed to create incentives to social protection actors, employers, recipients, and program administrators to contribute, participate, and deliver quality services. Participants gave the three programs they evaluated the lowest scores (table 6.9). Employers and employees participate in contributory social insurance largely because they are required by law to do so. Incentives to contribute to the financing of social insurance are low. The high social tax rates for employers (20–25 percent) discourage formal sector job creation and financial contributions.

Table 6.9 Incentive compatibility of the social protection system, by component

Area		Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
10	INCENTIVE COMPABILITY	1				1				1				1			

Benefits are low and services limited. Some groups, such as individual entrepreneurs, are required to make contributions but are not entitled to benefits such as maternity leave or sickness leave. A large portion of the working population remains in the informal sector. The number of people contributing to social insurance decreased from almost 1.5 million in 2018 to about 1 million in 2023.

Employers seldom use employment services to recruit workers, despite the legal obligation to do so, because of the poor quality of the workers who come through such services. For all programs, contributory and noncontributory, the application procedure is complex and requires many documents. Obtaining them is often costly, encouraging some workers to remain in the informal economy and/ or not apply for social protection. Salaries and benefits in the social protection sector are low, no other incentives are provided, and work in the sector is not highly respected.

Recommendations for Strengthening the Social Protection System

This section provides policy, programmatic, and implementation-level recommendations for the government, development partners, and civil society actors to support social protection systems and make them inclusive, adequate, efficient, effective, and transparent. The recommendations are based on the findings of the CODI assessment and the assessment of sector performance by stakeholders.

The key recommendations fall into four major areas:

1. Strengthening social protection systems, from the policy and legal framework to governance and delivery systems, in order to provide efficient, effective, and comprehensive social protection to the population. Development of systems needs to be supported by investment in appropriate institutional capacities at all levels.
2. Strengthening the coordination of social protection actors, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall system and the quality of social protection delivered to the population. Stronger coordination between government authorities, development partners, and civil society will enhance all aspects of social protection system, from the development of systems to their financing and delivery.
3. Enhancing financial resources and their sustainability, in order to both improve social protection coverage and increase the impact on national goals and ensure that the system can address increasing needs and future challenges created by demographic trends, frequent natural disasters, and risks of climate change.
4. Ensuring that the system is adaptive and shock-responsive, in order to reduce vulnerability to future crises, shocks, and disasters. Adaptive social protection can help households and children prepare for, anticipate, respond to, and recover from shocks and stresses including risks of climate change.

Each recommendations includes proposed actions for both the short term (1–3 years) and the medium to long term (4–10).

Strengthen Systems, from the Policy and Legal Framework to Governance and Delivery Systems

Tajikistan's social protection system needs to be expanded and modernized based on building blocks of policy, legal framework, and delivery system, to ensure that everyone in the country has access to social protection when they need it and is supported in accessing health, education, protection, and employment. Doing so requires stronger institutional capacities, and a robust system supported by digitalization, modern technology, evidence-based decision making, and accountability at all levels. Table 7.1 summarizes the recommended actions.

Table 7.1 Recommended actions for strengthening social protection systems

Action	Short term (1–3 years)	Medium to long term (4–10 years)
Legal and regulatory framework		
Review legislation related to social protection to weed out discrepancies and enhance the provision of integrated services protected by the law.	✓	✓
Develop, review, and regularly update three-year social protection action plans that operationalize the priorities set out under the Social Protection Strategy.	✓	✓
Improvement and expansion of social protection programs		
Simplify and streamline implementation processes of social assistance programs (targeting, registration, beneficiary outreach, payments, complaints, feedback)	✓	
Develop online services for applications, updates, access to information, and complaints mechanisms while reinforcing staff and program capacities in order to include the most vulnerable people.	✓	
Expand and increase the quality of social services.	✓	
Establish a case management system that includes digitalization of the system to ensure an integrated approach to social protection benefits and social and other services for vulnerable people.	✓	
Better integrate and consolidate different cash programs into a single comprehensive program to avoid duplication and fragmentation across programs and ensure support to the poorest and most vulnerable people and help develop human capital across the life cycle.	✓	✓
Enhance the process of assessing, registering, and certifying people with disabilities by adopting the bio-psycho-social model based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) by • reviewing the existing process • piloting and introducing the ICF (including required training, adjustments in the legislation for the ICF implementation). • enhancing integration with other sectors, in order to support early initiation/detection and support to children during the first 1,000 days of life.	✓	✓
Enhance the inclusion of particularly vulnerable groups in all programs, by strengthening the gender adaptiveness of the systems and supporting the inclusion of migrants and informal sector workers.	✓	
Improve graduation from social assistance by introducing activation measures such as skills and income-generation activities to members of low-income households who are able to work.	✓	
Expand the coverage and improve the performance of TSA, by • ensuring flexible coverage by linking annual budget allocations to the poverty level • revisiting the proxy means test formula based on the latest household survey–based data available • conducting a process and impact evaluation of TSA, to generate evidence and improve program design and implementation	✓	

• strengthening the delivery mechanism based on the results of the process evaluation • ensuring that business processes and flows are clear and based on the findings of process evaluation and develop instructions and training for staff.		
Improve the provision of employment support services and employability of vulnerable populations/jobseekers by • strengthening business processes at ALEP branches • improving job-matching and migration services • adjusting training programs to match labor market demand for skills and occupations • creating self-employment programs aimed to support economic inclusion, including of informal sector workers.	✓	
Improve performance of the pensions system, including by • developing mechanisms for extending social security to informal workers and migrants • improving the coverage and adequacy of pensions (especially social pensions).	✓	✓
Monitoring and delivery systems		
Develop comprehensive and interoperable management information technology (IT) systems by • strengthening the national registry for social protection (NRSP) by improving TSA and disability IT modules and introducing a social services module • developing a management information system (MIS) in the social protection sector, including for labor and for social insurance and pensions.	✓	✓
Improve the interoperability of social protection MIS and data exchange with other sectors and databases (such as civil registration, vital statistics database, birth registration, case management, health data, CoES database etc.), including by enhancing linkages among them.	✓	✓
Develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, by • clarifying roles and responsibilities in implementation of M&E activities • developing forms and business processes for data collection and analysis • conducting regular M&E activities for social protection programs (including process, formative, and impact evaluations) to generate evidence, lessons, and best practices.	✓	✓
Promote evidence-based policy and programming by improving the quality and availability of social protection data, by • ensuring qualified staffing and efficient functioning of the Information and Analytical Center under the MoHSPP • organizing the collection, monitoring, and analysis of labor market and employment data by the Labor Market Observatory to be established under the MoLMEP and the Labor Research Institute • collecting and analyzing microdata on social benefits jointly with Agency on Statistics.	✓	

Capacity building		
Conduct a capacity needs assessment of the ministries, agencies, and departments involved in making policy on and delivering social protection programs.	✓	
Operationalize recommendations from the functional mapping of the social service workforce.	✓	
Develop and operationalize a capacity development strategy for enhancing skills and capacity at the national and subnational levels for social protection staff, including the social service workforce.	✓	
Awareness and communication		
Develop/strengthen beneficiary outreach and communication strategy, and inform beneficiaries and stakeholders about social protection programs and how they work.	✓	
Develop protocols, tools, and instruments for communication, beneficiary outreach, and a complaint and feedback mechanism (to be integrated into the MIS).	✓	
Engage civil society and the community in strengthening outreach, complaint and feedback mechanisms, and oversight of programs.	✓	
Assess opportunities of social protection programs to deliver social and behavioral messaging (on early childhood development, childcare, nutrition, child labor, education, and other issues).	✓	

Improve the Coordination of Social Protection Actors

Coordination is vital for improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of the social protection system. Stronger coordination would reduce vulnerability and poverty, optimize resource use, and ensure alignment with the NDS and the Social Protection Strategy. Horizontal coordination across levels (policy, program, and implementation) and vertical coordination between national and subnational levels are crucial to facilitating cohesive and efficient implementation of social protection components. Such coordination needs to be improved among the ministries and agencies in charge of social protection and social services as well as with civil society and development partners.

The roles, responsibilities, and operational mandates for all ministries, agencies, and departments involved in the provision of social protection services need to be clarified. Governance should shape incentives, accountability structures, and the exercise of power and authority, guided by formal rules and cultural norms. It should focus on incentivizing desired behaviors and ensuring accountability in the delivery of social protection service by setting clear standards and monitoring performance. Table 7.2 summarizes the recommended actions.

Table 7.2 Recommended actions for strengthening the coordination of social protection actors

Action	Short term (1–3 years)	Medium to long term (4–10 years)
Establish, strengthen, and fully operationalize the National Coordination Council on Health and Social Protection of the Population, chaired by the deputy prime minister, to monitor progress of the Social Protection Strategy by • enhancing the terms of reference to support an integrated approach by social sector ministries (MoHSPP, MoLMEP, and ASIP) • convening high-level biannual meetings • convening an annual joint meeting with the Social Protection Working Group of the Development Coordination Council and humanitarian coordination mechanisms such as the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) to review implementation of Social Protection Strategy and its action plan, including progress on adaptive and shock-responsiveness framework.	✓	
Establish/strengthen social protection working groups at the district (*khokumat)* and regional (*oblast)* levels, chaired by the chair/governor, by • developing terms of reference • convening biannual meetings at the regional level, with the participation of district-level authorities • holding quarterly *oblast* and district-level awareness-raising sessions on the social protection sector and programs.	✓	
Establish coordination between ministries, agencies, departments, and programs to provide cash and services to the people most in need (e.g., activation measures for unemployed and underemployed, social services, social and behavioral change messaging).	✓	
Conduct periodic reviews (at least every two years) of coordination mechanisms to capture changes/updates in the terms of reference and the composition of the social protection coordination platforms at different levels.	✓	

Enhance Financial Resources for Social Protection and Their Sustainability

The financing of the social protection sector is insufficient to reach the objectives set in the Strategy. The value and quality of most benefits are inadequate, and services are unpredictable. More sustainable financial resources are needed to improve social protection and increase its long-term impacts on human capital development. Table 7.3 summarizes the recommended actions.

Table 7.3 Recommended actions for enhancing financial resources for social protection and increasing their sustainability

Action	Short term (1–3 years)	Medium to long term (4–10 years)
Develop a costing and financing strategy for the social protection sector, taking into account demographic trends, the life-cycle approach, internal and external migration trends, and climate change and natural disasters.	✓	
Conduct modelling/simulation to demonstrate how social protection programs reduce poverty and vulnerability, by • conducting a cost–benefit analysis of social protection programs to find inefficiencies and duplication and exploring better-consolidated programs to address the vulnerabilities of those most in need to support human capital development in a more cost-efficient manner • developing a feasibility and investment case for consolidated and integrated allowances, to support efficient and effective social assistance programs linked with insurance, labor markets, and social services with overall objective to invest in human capital development.	✓	
Establish a mechanism for increasing the state budget allocation for social protection sector based on GDP growth by regularly increasing payments based on inflation and relevant socioeconomic indicators.	✓	
Introduce reform measures recommended in the pensions chapter of the World Bank's 2022 public expenditure review (World Bank 2021a) to support the social and financial sustainability as well as the resilience of the pension system.	✓	✓

Ensure that the Social Protection System Is Adaptive and Shock-Responsive

Social protection, disaster risk management, and humanitarian sectors address household needs arising from poverty, vulnerability, or shocks. With the increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters and climate-induced hazards, the traditional approach to social protection is not fit for purpose. Social protection programs need to be more relevant in meeting these increasing needs. Understanding the sectors' overlaps and collaborating toward joint outcomes between social protection and disaster risk management is crucial. The MoHSPP, the Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES), and the Committee of Environmental Protection (CoEP), among others, should play pivotal roles in this effort. Table 7.4 summarizes the recommended actions.

Table 7.4 Recommended actions for ensuring that the social protection system is adaptive and shock-responsive

Action	Short term (1–3 years)	Medium to long term (4–10 years)
Raise awareness and capacity of social protection and climate change disaster risk management actors on Adaptive and Shock Responsive Social Protection (ASRSP).	✓	
Develop a framework for ASRSP that embeds risk information into the overall system, by • developing an options paper to adjust policy, programs, and implementation in the social protection sector • developing a roadmap to operationalize key elements of the ASRSP framework • conducting modelling/simulation on the value addition of humanitarian cash transfers in reducing poverty following natural hazards • assessing disaster risk financing/pre-agreed financing options to use emergency funding for social protection as contingency actions • including social protection in the upcoming notional defined contribution (NDC 3.0), to ensure comprehensive coverage of vulnerable populations and enhance resilience against climate shocks and other risks.	✓	
Enhance cash preparedness (the ability to quickly disburse cash) in response to disasters, by • developing/enhancing standard operating procedures for disbursing cash for humanitarian purposes through the national social protection system • strengthening the capacities to rapidly disburse cash for humanitarian purposes and link disbursements with the social protection sector • strengthening coordination among government, humanitarian actors, and development partners on emergency cash transfers.	✓	✓
Improve coordination and information sharing among key players at the national level by • introducing adaptive procedures and developing practical public administrative tools to facilitate coordination • clearly delineating responsibilities, coordination, flows of information, and information systems to be used during emergencies • developing a unified information system to coordinate efforts and activities during emergencies, including by (a) developing a social registry with interoperable social protection MIS and (b) potentially establishing a social registry with information on the residence and vulnerability of people identified as in need during a disaster or crisis.	✓	✓

Develop labor market and employment policies on climate change, green jobs, and green mechanisms to be embedded in social protection programs based on the new future of work.	✓	✓
Adjust and improve social protection programs so that they sharpen their focus on risk reduction and prevention, by • introducing an exit (graduation) strategy for TSA • reforming public works to prepare for future risks and emergencies • enhancing flexibility across all programs (particularly social pensions and unemployment benefits), in order to implement vertical and horizontal expansions by reviewing and revising program rules and core delivery procedures (delivery chain) to ensure their flexibility for rapid response in case of shocks and stresses.	✓	✓

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Appendix A The CODI Methodology

The CODI assessment and report are based on the methodology developed by the Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessments (ISPA) group, which comprises UN agencies, the World Bank, and bilateral donors and international development partners. The data collection and analysis and system assessment are based on a unified set of definitions and assessment tools validated across the social protection expert community and applied in various countries.

The CODI tools were designed to
- map the elements of a social protection system, including national objectives, strategies, policies and programs, in a country
- compare the performance of a country's social protection system against its own social protection objectives and a standardized set of performance criteria
- serve as evidence for country dialogue on how to strengthen the social protection system and identify a set of priorities, given the national context and the specific needs of the population
- promote exchange and coordination among stakeholders (government and nongovernmental, national and international).

The CODI process includes data collection, analysis, and participatory assessment (tables A.1 and A.2).

Table A.1 Modules of CODI tool for policy, program design, and program implementation

Policy	Program Design	Program Implementation
1. Legal & Policy Framework 2. Alignment of Policies with Needs of Population 3. Policymaking Process 4. Policy Implementation & Capacity 5. Public Expenditure & Financing 6. Information Dissemination & Raising Awareness 7. Monitoring & Evaluation Systems	8. Eligibility Criteria 9. Benefit Design 10. Expenditures & Financing 11. Incentives	12. Identifications 13. Eligibility Verification 14. Enrollment 15. Benefit Delivery 16. Monitoring & Evaluation 17.Complaint &Appeals Mechanism 18. Information Dissemination % Raising Awareness

Source: CODI (2014).

The CODI data collection and analysis process includes the following:
- a detailed review of the literature
- interviews of key national, regional, and local stakeholders using the CODI questionnaire, adapted to the country context and each stakeholder's functions and programs
- formal requests for and review of complementary information, data, and documents
- interviews with key staff on specific topics
- triangulation and cross-checking of data
- analysis and rating of the assessment criteria
- drafting of technical briefs on selected programs and topics
- in-country workshop at which final assessment of the system's performance is made.

Table A.2 CODI criteria for assessing performance of social protection system

Criterion	Description
Inclusiveness	Capacity of the system to protect all members of society throughout the life cycle, with special consideration for the most vulnerable
Adequacy	Sufficiency of system's benefit levels
Appropriateness	Ability of the system to respond to national context and needs
Respect for rights and dignity	Anchoring of entitlements and implementation arrangements in law
Governance and institutional capacity	Rules, regulations, roles, responsibilities, and related implementation capacities
Financial and fiscal sustainability	Financial and fiscal sustainability of the system
Coherence and integration	Alignment and coherence of system's policies, programs, and administrative structures, as well as coherence with related policy areas
Responsiveness	Monitoring and evaluation framework and flexibility to adjust/adapt in response to socioeconomic crises
Cost-effectiveness	Cost-effectiveness of those financing and those benefiting from a program (apply only if evidence exists)
Incentive compatibility	Lack of distortionary effects (apply only if evidence exists)

Source: CODI (2014).

Triangulation and cross-checking are an essential part of the diagnostic. The process is lengthy and requires the full participation of the government and social protection stakeholders.

Appendix B Legal Framework Governing Social Protection in Tajikistan

Table B.1 Legislation and regulatory documents governing social protection

Program, legislation, or regulatory document	Link
Social insurance and pensions	
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Insurance and State Pensions," No. 595, January 12, 2010	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On State Social Insurance," No. 893, August 1, 2012	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Compulsory Pension Insurance," No. 955, March 19, 2013	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Provision of Pensions to the Citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan," No. 796, June 25, 1993, amended March 18, 2015	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities," No. 1739, December 17, 2020	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Social Services," No. 359, January 5, 2008, amended November 13, 2023 (Law No. 1998)	Link
Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Procedures and Conditions for Payment of Allowances in Case of Temporary Disability, Pregnancy and Childbirth and Family Allowances," No. 630, October 14, 2014	Link
Procedure for Applying for a Pension and Maintaining Pension Documentation, approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 90, March 2, 2013	Link
Procedure for Assigning and Paying Insurance and State Pensions, approved by Order of the Director of the Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions No. 11, February 5, 2016	Link
Procedure for Pension Payment to Pensioners Who Are in State Stationary Social Service Institutions with Full State Support, approved by the Resolution of the Government the Republic of Tajikistan, No. 371, August 23, 2016	Link
Procedure for Registering Pensions, described on the ASIP webpage	Link
Social assistance	
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Social Protection of Citizens Affected by the Disaster at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant," No. 242, March 5, 2007	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On State Social Standards," No. 528, May 19, 2009	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Prevention of Domestic Violence," No. 954, March 19, 2013	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Targeted Social Assistance," No. 1396, February 24, 2017	Link
Regulations on the Committee for Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, approved by Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 608, December 28, 2006	Link
Regulations on the State Agency for Social Protection of the Population of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan, approved by Resolution of the Government, No. 168, March 4, 2014,	Link

Procedure for Conducting a Medical and Social Examination, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 177, April 4, 2022	Link
"Cash Allowance for HIV Positive Children Has Been Implemented in Accordance with Article No. 167 of the Health Code of the Republic of Tajikistan," adopted under No. 1413, May 30, 2017, and per Resolution No. 232 of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan from May 3, 2010 "On Allocation and Payment of State Benefits for Children up to 16 Years, Who Are Infected with HIV or Have Acquired AIDS"	Link
Rules for Providing Disabled People with Technical Means of Rehabilitation, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 604, December 3, 2011	Link
National Program for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People for 2017–2020	Link
National Program for Provision of Targeted Social Assistance, 2030	Developed in 2024
Action Plan for Implementation of National Program for Provision of TSA, 2030 (for 2024–26)	Developed in 2024 under approval
Social services	
Health Code, March 30, 2017, No. 1413, adopted by the Resolution of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population , No. 712, March 15, 2017	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Social Services," No. 359, January 1, 2018	Link
Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Amount and Procedure for Expenditure of the State Social Insurance Funds on Sanatorium and Resort Treatment," No. 34, January 25, 2017	Link
Procedure for Social Services at Home, in Temporary Residence Institutions, Stationary Institutions of Social Services, Requirements for Employees of These Institutions and the List of Social Services Provided, No. 489, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, October 4, 2019	Link
Procedure for Social Services qt Home, in Temporary Residence Institutions, Stationary Institutions of Social Services, Requirements for Employees of These Institutions, and the List of Services Provided by Social Services, No. 489, dated October 4, 2019,	Link
Procedure for Providing Free Social Services, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan No. 724, December 13, 2012	Link
Rules on the Procedure for Drawing Up, Submitting, and Approving the Budget of the State Agency for Social Insurance And Pensions, approved by a Resolution of the Government of the Republic Of Tajikistan, No. 345, August 3, 2012	Link
National Program for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People for the Period 2017–2020	Link
Labor market programs	
Labor Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, July 16, 2023	Link
Law of Republic of Tajikistan "On Employment of Population," No. 44, August 1, 2003	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Higher and Postgraduate Professional Education," No. 531, May 19, 2009, amended January 3, 2024	Link
Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the Vocational Training Program for Citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2021–2025," No. 703, December 31, 2020	Link
Decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the State Program to Promote Employment of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2023–2027," No. 135, March 28, 2023	Link

Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the List of Artistic Professions," No. 253, June 26, 2021	Link
Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan "On the State Program to Support the Employment of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2023–2027," No. 135, March 28, 2023	Link
Medium-Term Program of Productive Employment Development in the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period 2023–2027	Link
Concept of Productive Employment Development in the Republic of Tajikistan until 2040	Link
National Program for Decent Work for the Period 2020–2024	Link
General regulatory documents	
Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan	Link
Code of Labor of the Republic of Tajikistan, , No. 1329, July 23, 2016	Link
Code of Health of the Republic of Tajikistan, No.1413, March 15, 2017	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Migration," No. 881, December 11, 1999	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On Education," No. 1004, July 22, 2013	Link
Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On State Budget for 2023," No. 1916, December 7, 2022 Law of the Republic of Tajikistan "On State Budget for 2024," No. 2012, October 18, 2023	1.Link 2. Link
National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period until 2030	Link
Medium-Term Development Program of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period 2016–2020	Link
Strategy of the Development of Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan for the Period up to 2040	Link

Appendix C Tajikistan at a Glance

Table C.1 Tajikistan at a glance, 2018–2022

Area	Social Insurance				Social Assistance				ALMPs				Social Sevices			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1 INCLUSIVENESS				**4**		**2.5**					**3**		**1.5**			
Gender equality, non-discrimination and consideration for specific needs						3								2		
Coverage						3								2		
Effective coverage					2								1			
Accessibility					2								1			
2 ADEQUACY		**2**			**1.5**						**3**		**1.6**			
Benefits level compared to social protection needs					1									2		
Benefits level compared to national benchmarks					1								1			
Impact of benefits on economic activity					1											
Benefits compared to national / programme objectives					1											
Redistributory or poverty reduction effects					2									2		
3 APPROPRIATENESS			**3**			**2.3**					**3.5**					**4**
Formulation of objectives, disaggregated targets, and timeframes						2.5										4
Alignment of social protection policies/programmes/ strategy						2										4
Combination of schemes and programmes					1.5											
Composition of expenditure						2										
Evidence based policy and programme design							3									
Programme types/risks covered vs. social protection needs																
4 RESPECT FOR RIGHTS AND DIGNITY				**4**				**4**				**4**	**1.8**			
Entitlements and qualifying conditions anchored in law														2		

Enforcement mechanisms: public authority, complaint and appeal mechanisms, public awareness													1			
Respect for dignity and Human Rights														2		
Confidentiality of private information														2		
Accessibility to information and complaint and appeal procedures especially for the most vulnerable																
5 **GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**		**2**				**2.4**				**2**				**2**		
Reporting mechanisms, roles and responsibilities anchored in law							*3*							*2*		
Program implementation guidelines / operational manuals state reporting mechanisms, roles and responsibilities							*3*							*2*		
Enforcement mechanisms							*3*							*2*		
Institutional supervisory capacity						2									3	
Staff implementation capacity						2								2		
Inclusive stakeholder participation						2								2		
Infrastructure and equipment						2							1			
6 **FINANCIAL AND FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY**		**2**				**2.4**					**3.5**				**3**	
Domestic or external financing															3	
Contributory capacity taken into account in financing arrangements																
Alignment of budget allocation with policy priorities															3	
Long term budget planning in line with demographic developments														2		
Long term financial commitments considered in															3	

legal framework and social protection strategy																
Reliability and progressivity of social protection financing																4
7 COHERENCE AND INTEGRATION		**2**			**1**					**2.5**				**2.2**		
Coherence of social protection policies																
Complementarity of social protection schemes/ degree of duplication and overlap													1			
Institutional framework to ensure coordination														2		
Integration of programme implementation													1			
Possibility of integrated analysis of social protection financing																4
Coherence with other policy areas															3	
8 RESPONSIVENESS		**2**			**1**					**2**			**1**			
Responsiveness of budget and implementation mechanisms													1			
Availability, quality and timeliness of data on trends and social protection programs																
Information dissemination mechanisms																
Mechanisms for parametric adjustments																
Coverage and timeliness of emergency response operations in practice																
Adequacy and comprehensiveness of emergency response operations in practice																
Institutional framework and information systems to ensure coordination between social protection and emergency operations																
9 COST-EFFECTIVENESS																
Cost and impact of program delivery	**N/A**				**N/A**							3				

10	**INCENTIVE COMPATIBILITY**	**1**				**1**				**1**							
Consideration of incentives in programme design																	
Incentives for persons covered																	
Incentives for employers																	
Incentives for scheme administrators																	

Indicator	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Economic indicators					
GDP per capita (current $)	7,870	8,580	8,922	10,312	11,839
GDP per capita (PPP $)	860	900	864	912	1,074
CPI index	103.8	108	108.6	109.4	108.6
National average wage (TJS)	1,234	1,336	1,394	1541	1789
Average wage in the country ($)	134.8	140.1	135.0	136.3	175.6
Minimum wage (TJS)	400	400	400	400	600
Minimum wage ($)	43.7	42.0	38.8	35.4	54.4
Demographic indicators (thousands of people, except where indicated otherwise)					
Total male population	4,627	4,724	4,930	5,017	5,117
Total female population	4,499	4,590	4,787	4,870	4,961
Population below working age	3,130	3,191	3,565	3,600	3,650
Male	1,628	1,664	1,843	1,863	1,891
Female	1,502	1,527	1,722	1,737	1,758
Working-age population	5,474	5,567	5,602	5,703	5,805
Men	2,817	2,867	2,890	2,946	3,003
Women	2,657	2,701	2,712	27,57	2,802
Population past working age	522.8	555.4	549.9	583.5	624.1
Men	182.2	193.1	196.5	207.9	223.6
Women	340.5	362.3	353.4	375.7	400.5
Dependency rate (percent)	66.7	67.3	73.5	73.4	73.6
Fertility rate (percent)	25.6	25.4	25.8	22.1	23.2
Life expectancy at birth (years)	75.0	75.1	72.6	73.3	76.3
Men	73.3	73.5	69.9	71.8	74.7
Women	76.9	76.8	76.1	74.9	77.9
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000**)**	n.a.	10.5	9.6	9.1	8.3
Maternal mortality rate (per 1,000**)**	n.a.	15.4	18.5	5.3	5.6
Labor market indicators (thousands of people, except where indicated otherwise)					
Employed	2,426	2,463	2,506	2,534	2,545
Unemployed	52	51	51	53	55
Inactive	92.6	106.5	103.5	106.3	110.5
Employed by the state	484.5	490.7	497.5	509.9	502.4
Employed by the private sector	1,729	1,752	1,771	1,776	1,785
Employed by a collective	207.8	216.0	216.2	226.2	235.5
Employed by a mixed-ownership enterprise with foreign participation	4.3	4.3	4.8	4.9	5.1
Employed by a mixed-ownership enterprise without foreign participation	n.a	19.3	17.2	17.0	17.1
Social indicators					
Poverty headcount based on national poverty line (percent)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	25.6	21.7
Rural poverty rate (percent)	30.2	18.4	n.a.	27.3	25.0
Urban poverty rate (percent)	21.5	21.5	n.a.	21.4	13.6
Secondary-school completion (per thousand people of secondary-school age)	118.5	114.7	116.3	112.9	n.a.

Secondary-school completion by girls (percent)	53.7	53.2	54.2	52.5	n.a.
Human Development Index	0.650	0.656	0.668	0.685	n.a.
Total public expenditure for social sector (percent of GDP)	33.9	29.9	29.7	29.1	30.0
Education	5.4	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.5
Health	2.2	2.3	3.1	2.8	2.3
Social protection	2.3	4.4	4.6	4.1	3.8
Total government revenue (million TJS)	23,386	23,216	24,325	29,597	36,339
From domestic sources	16,786	17,787	17,250	21,309	24,235
From external sources	6,601	5,429	7,075	8,288	12,104
Total health expenditure (million TJS)	1,552	1,804	2592	2863	2633
Number of physicians and nurses per 10,000 people	80	80	83	80	n.a.
Expenditure on health (million TJS)					
General government	1,552	1,804	2,592	2,863	2,633
Private expenditure	238.13	238.13	228.58	282.54	305.00

Appendix D List of Workshop Participants

Table D.1 Participants at CODI validation workshop held in Dushanbe February 8–9, 2024

Name	Title/organization
Government officials	
Bakhtiyor Abdurahimov	Lead Specialist, Department of Social Services Provision in Residential Institutions, State Agency for Social Protection of the Population (SASPP)
Munisa Alizade	Labor Market Specialist, Ministry of Labor, Migration and Employment of the Population (MoLMEP)
Firuza Ayubi	Lead Research Fellow, Institutional Studies Department of the Institute of Economics and Demography, National Academy of Sciences
Abdurasulova Gulraftor	Head, Social Assistance Department, SASPP
Bezhan Jaborov	Director, Information and Analytical Center under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP)
Shodikhon Jamshed	Deputy Minister, MoHSPP
G.A. Jonakova	Specialist, National Academy of Sciences
Jamshed Karimov	Project Manager, Project Implementation Unit under MoHSPP to implement the Social Protection Modernization and Economic Inclusion Project
Abdullo Khojozoda	Lead Specialist, Department of Legal Relations, Ministry of Justice
Kudratullo Kurbanov	Head of Social Protection Department, MoHSPP
A.K. Kurbonbekov	Chief Specialist, Agency for Social Insurance and Pensions (ASIP)
F. Miraliev	Deputy State Sanitary Epidemiological Surveillance service under MoHSPP
Soima Muhabbatova	Head of Social Policy Division, MoHSPP
Umeda Munavvarova	Coordinator of the Branch of the Association Caritas Germany in Tajikistan, National Association of Social Workers
F.J. Nazarov	Specialist, Ministry of Finance
T.J. Nazrieva	Research Fellow, Institutional Studies Department of the Institute of Economics and Demography, National Academy of Sciences
I. Nozanini	Specialist, MoLMEP
Qadriddin Ostonaev	Leading Specialist, Agency on Statistics
Olimjon Saidov	Chief Specialist, Agency on Statistics
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